

# Your guide to Winter Fuel Payments 2006/2007



Part of the Department  
for Work and Pensions

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## 1 Introduction

This guide gives information about Winter Fuel Payments and answers any questions you may have.

The Government pays Winter Fuel Payments to people aged 60 or over to help with the costs of keeping warm in winter.

You do not pay tax on Winter Fuel Payments.

This guide tells you:

- whether you qualify;
- how much you should get;
- how you will get it;
- when you will get it;
- whether you need to claim; and
- what to do if you live outside the UK, but in the EEA or Switzerland.

# 2 Winter Fuel Payments 2006/2007

## Do I qualify for a Winter Fuel Payment?

You may qualify for a Winter Fuel Payment for the winter of 2006/2007 if:

- you will be aged 60 or over on or before 24 September 2006; and
- you normally live in Great Britain or Northern Ireland on any day in the week of 18 to 24 September 2006.

(If you live abroad see page 22).

You will not qualify for a payment if, during that week, you are:

- in hospital getting free in-patient treatment and have been getting such treatment for more than 52 weeks;
- in custody serving a sentence imposed by a court;
- subject to immigration control and not eligible for help from the Department for Work and Pensions (for example, an asylum seeker who claimed asylum at the port of entry after 3 April 2000); or

- living in a care home, an independent hospital or Ilford Park Polish Resettlement Home (and have been for the preceding 12 weeks or more), and get Pension Credit or income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (see Note 1).

Couples who qualify and who are receiving Pension Credit or income-based Jobseeker's Allowance will get one payment made to the person receiving that benefit, other couples will get £100 each if both partners (see Note 2) are aged 60 or over (£150 each if both partners are aged 80 or over) and entitled to a Winter Fuel Payment.

You might need to claim your Winter Fuel Payment. The way you do this is explained on page 10.

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Note 1: A care home is an establishment which provides accommodation together with nursing or personal care and includes: residential homes, nursing homes, and local authority residential accommodation. An independent hospital is a hospital which is not a National Health Service hospital.

Note 2: We use partner to mean a person you are married to or a person you live with as if you are married to them or a civil partner or a person you live with as if you are civil partners.

### How much Winter Fuel Payment will I get?

If you are aged 60 to 79 and you are entitled to receive a Winter Fuel Payment, you will get either £100 or £200, depending on your circumstances in the qualifying week (18 to 24 September 2006).

If you are aged 80 or over and entitled to a Winter Fuel Payment, you will get an extra £50 or £100 depending on your circumstances in the qualifying week, so you could get up to £300.

### How will my circumstances affect whether I get a Winter Fuel Payment?

If you qualify, and:

- you live alone; or
- you are the only person in your household who qualifies for a Winter Fuel Payment; or
- you get Pension Credit or income-based Jobseeker's Allowance;

you should get:

- £200 if you are aged 60 to 79; or
- £300 if you are aged 80 or over.

If you qualify, and:

- you don't get Pension Credit or income-based Jobseeker's Allowance; and
- you live with at least one other person who qualifies;

you should get:

- £100 each if you are both (or all, if you live with more than one other person) aged 60 to 79;
- £150 each if you and at least one other person are aged 80 or over; or
- £200 if you are the only person aged 80 or over (others in the household will get £100).

If you live in a care home, an independent hospital or Ilford Park Polish Resettlement Home and, during the week of 18 to 24 September 2006, you are **not** getting Pension Credit or income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, you should get £100 if you are aged 60 to 79 or £150 if you are aged 80 or over.

### **I got a Winter Fuel Payment last year. What do I need to do?**

If you got a Winter Fuel Payment last winter, you should automatically get a Winter Fuel Payment for this winter **as long as your circumstances have not changed** and you still satisfy the conditions.

**If your circumstances have changed**, such as a change of address, change of bank details or if you are no longer getting a social security benefit, you need to tell us (see pages 16 to 18 for more details). This will help us to pay you the right amount of Winter Fuel Payment.

All automatic Winter Fuel Payments should be made by Christmas 2006. If you have not had a Winter Fuel Payment by then, you should call the office that pays your benefit or the Winter Fuel Payment Helpline on **08459 15 15 15** (**0845 601 5613** for textphone users). Lines are open from **8.30am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday**. Charges are the same as for local calls.

## 2 Winter Fuel Payments 2006/2007

If you were getting a State Pension or other social security benefit last year (not including Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit or Child Benefit), but you will not be getting one in the week of 18 to 24 September 2006, you will need to make a claim for this winter's payment. You can get a claim form by calling the Winter Fuel Payment Helpline on **08459 15 15 15** (**0845 601 5613** for textphone users). Charges are the same as for local calls. If you have access to the Internet, you can get a claim form from the website at [www.thepensionservice.gov.uk/winterfuel](http://www.thepensionservice.gov.uk/winterfuel)

### **I did not get a Winter Fuel Payment last year. What do I need to do?**

You should get your Winter Fuel Payment automatically if, during the week of 18 to 24 September 2006, you are aged 60 or over and will be getting a State Pension or other social security benefit (but not including Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit or Child Benefit). You should not have to do anything to get your Winter Fuel Payment.

Otherwise, if you are aged 60 or over and think you may be eligible for a Winter Fuel Payment, you need to make a claim. You can get a claim form by calling the Winter Fuel Payment Helpline on **08459 15 15 15** (**0845 601 5613** for textphone users). Lines are open from **8.30am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday**. Charges are the same as for local calls. If you have access to the Internet, you can get a claim form from our website at **[www.thepensionerservice.gov.uk/winterfuel](http://www.thepensionerservice.gov.uk/winterfuel)**

If your claim last year was unsuccessful and your circumstances have changed, you might now qualify for a Winter Fuel Payment. Call the Winter Fuel Payment Helpline for more information.

### When will I get my Winter Fuel Payment for winter 2006/2007?

We are making automatic payments over a number of weeks from early November 2006 until Christmas 2006. So don't worry if you get your payment at a different time to someone else in your household or other people who live near you.

If you have not had an automatic payment by Christmas 2006, please refer to page 9, which explains what you will need to do.

If you are making a claim for a payment for winter 2006/2007, you should return your claim form as soon as possible.

We expect to make payments by Christmas 2006 for successful claims that we receive by 22 September 2006. You can still claim after that date but it may mean that you don't get your payment before Christmas. If you make a successful claim for a Winter Fuel Payment for this winter and remain eligible, you should get your payment automatically in future, as long as you let us know about any changes in your circumstances.

We must receive all claim forms for winter 2006/2007 by **30 March 2007**.

### How will you pay me my Winter Fuel Payment?

We will pay your Winter Fuel Payment into your bank, building society or post office card account, or as a cheque or payable order sent to your home address. We will send you a letter telling you when and how we will make the payment.

#### **If you are getting a State Pension or other social security benefit**

If you are getting Pension Credit or income-based Jobseeker's Allowance during the week of 18 to 24 September 2006, we will pay your Winter Fuel Payment straight into your bank or building society account if this is the way we normally pay you.

If you get another benefit or pension paid direct into a bank or building society account, we will normally pay your Winter Fuel Payment into the same account.

Otherwise, we will send a cheque to your home address. We may send some people a payable order instead.

### **If you are not getting a State Pension or other social security benefit**

If you received a Winter Fuel Payment last year and your circumstances have not changed, and you still satisfy the conditions, we will pay you in the same way we paid you last year.

### **If you are making a claim for a Winter Fuel Payment for the first time this year**

The claim form will ask you how you would like your payment to be made. We can pay your money straight into an account of your choice, such as a bank or building society account. The claim form will ask you for your account details.

### **How long do I have to cash a cheque or payable order?**

If we send a cheque to your home address, you will need to cash it at your local Post Office branch within one month of the date shown on it, or you will need to pay it into your bank or building society account within six months of the date shown on the cheque.

If we send a payable order to your home address, you will need to cash it within six months of the date shown on it. You can pay your payable order into your bank or building society.

If you cannot cash your cheque or payable order in time, contact the office that sent you the payment as soon as possible.

### How do I tell you about a change in my circumstances?

You must let us know straight away of any changes in your circumstances, for example:

- if you go into residential care;
- if there is a change in your household;
- if you have moved house;
- if you have changed your bank account details;
- if you are no longer getting a social security benefit.

If you do not keep us up-to-date with all changes in your circumstances, you may not automatically get a Winter Fuel Payment. Keeping us up-to-date also helps us to pay you the right amount of Winter Fuel Payment. We explain how you can contact us on pages 17 to 19.

### **If you get a State Pension or other social security benefit (not including Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit or Child Benefit)**

Please check your details on any recent letter we have sent you about your State Pension or benefit. If your address or postcode is wrong, please write to the pension centre, Jobcentre Plus office, Jobcentre or social security office that normally deals with your pension or benefit. You will also need to tell them of other changes, for example, if you change your address or your bank account details in the future. For your nearest office, look under Jobcentre Plus, Jobcentre or social security office in your local phone book.

### If you made a claim for a Winter Fuel Payment last year

If you made a claim last year and your circumstances have changed, such as a change of address, new bank account details, or if you are now in one of the groups that cannot get a Winter Fuel Payment (see pages 4 and 5), please write to the Winter Fuel Payment Centre at the following address:

Winter Fuel Payment Centre  
Freepost  
NAT 15404  
Cardiff  
CF91 1WF

If you are not sure if you need to claim, you can check by calling the Winter Fuel Payment Helpline on **08459 15 15 15** (**0845 601 5613** for textphone users). Lines are open from **8.30am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday**. Charges are the same as for local calls.

### Who can I contact about Winter Fuel Payments?

#### Winter Fuel Payment Helpline

You can phone the Winter Fuel Payment Helpline on **08459 15 15 15** if you are not sure about any of the information in this guide or need to ask for a claim form.

We also provide a service for textphone users on **0845 601 5613**. Lines are open from **8.30am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday**. Charges are the same as for local calls.

We may monitor your call to check the quality of service you receive.

For more advice or if you have questions about Winter Fuel Payments, ask your pension centre, Jobcentre Plus office, Jobcentre or social security office.

Other organisations, such as your local Age Concern or Citizens Advice Bureau, may also be able to help. Look in your local phone book for their details.

### Can I get a Winter Fuel Payment for past winters?

Winter Fuel Payments were introduced from the winter of 1997/1998. In winter 2000/2001, the Government extended Winter Fuel Payments to most men and women aged 60 and over. So, people no longer need to be getting a State Pension or other social security benefit to qualify for a Winter Fuel Payment.

This means that people who did not previously get a Winter Fuel Payment may now be able to get a payment for past winters.

Payment for backdated claims can be made for the years 1997/1998 to 1999/2000.

From 2000/2001 time limits for claims were introduced. This means that payments cannot be made for late claims for any of the years 2000/2001-2005/2006. Claims for these years had to be made by 30 March for that winter, for example, a claim for winter 2005/2006 had to be made by 30 March 2006.

For the winters of 1997/1998, 1998/1999 and 1999/2000, the amount of payment is shown in the table below.

Winter	Qualifying week	If you are the only person in the household who qualifies	If there is more than one person in the household who qualifies
1997/1998	5 to 11 January 1998	£20	£10 for each person
1998/1999	9 to 15 November 1998	£20	£10 for each person
1999/2000	20 to 26 September 1999	£100	£50 for each person

If you did not get a Winter Fuel Payment for any of these three past winters and think you may qualify for one, you should phone the Winter Fuel Payment Helpline on **08459 15 15 15 (0845 601 5613 for textphone users)** and ask for a claim form for these past winters. Lines are open from **8.30am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday**. Charges are the same as for local calls. You can also find a claim form for past winters on our website at [www.thepensionservice.gov.uk/winterfuel](http://www.thepensionservice.gov.uk/winterfuel)

### 3 Winter Fuel Payments to residents outside the UK

#### Can I get a Winter Fuel Payment if I live abroad?

In some circumstances, Winter Fuel Payments can be made to people who live outside the UK, but within the European Economic Area (EEA) or Switzerland.

If you have previously qualified for a Winter Fuel Payment in the UK, you may be able to continue to receive your Winter Fuel Payments if you move to another EEA country or Switzerland. The Winter Fuel Payment scheme began in 1998 and the first qualifying week was 5 to 11 January 1998. This means that if you left the UK before 5 January 1998, you will not be able to claim a Winter Fuel Payment outside the UK. A list of EEA countries and notes on Switzerland are on pages 31 and 32.

### Claiming a Winter Fuel Payment for 2006/2007

You may be able to receive a Winter Fuel Payment outside the UK this year if you have previously qualified for a payment in the UK and, during the qualifying week of 18 to 24 September 2006, you:

- live in another EEA country. Your nationality does not affect your entitlement unless you live in:
  - Denmark where you must be an EEA or Swiss national; or
  - Iceland, Liechtenstein or Norway where you must be an EEA national; or
  
- live in Switzerland where you must be:
  - a Swiss national; or
  - an EU national.

You do not qualify if you are in custody serving a sentence imposed by a court during the week of 18 to 24 September 2006.

#### If you have previously qualified for a payment and stop living in the UK during the qualifying week or after 24 September 2006

You should receive your Winter Fuel Payment, unless you are in an excluded group. But you should tell us when you do leave the UK, to make sure that we know where to send your payment for this year or future years.

You must satisfy the conditions to continue to receive a Winter Fuel Payment outside the UK. These conditions are given on pages 22 and 23.

If you think you are eligible to continue to receive your payment outside the UK, you should **contact the Winter Fuel Payment Centre** (see page 29). This will help us to pay you correctly. We may ask you to complete a claim form or ask you for further information.

### Claiming for past years

If you left the UK after qualifying for a Winter Fuel Payment, and you normally live (or, in the year you are claiming for, you lived) in another EEA country outside the UK, you may be able to get Winter Fuel Payments for some past years.

There are no time limits for claiming for the years 1998/1999 and 1999/2000. Time limits apply from 2000/2001 onwards. The qualifying weeks for each year are given on page 30, and remember that you must satisfy the conditions on pages 22 and 23 in the qualifying week of each year that you wish to claim for.

Winter Fuel Payments became available at different times in different countries and sometimes depended on other factors, including your nationality. A quick guide is:

#### **From 2002**

- In July 2002 payments became available with effect from the winter of 1998/1999 to eligible EEA nationals living in other EEA countries who had previously qualified for payment in the UK.

### 3 Winter Fuel Payments to residents outside the UK

#### From 2002/2003

- Payments were extended to Switzerland for EU and Swiss nationals only.
- Swiss nationals could receive payments in EU countries.

#### From 2003/2004

- Payments were extended to non-EEA nationals in all EU countries except Denmark.

#### From 2004/2005

- Payments were extended to the ten new EU states for all nationals.
- Payments were not extended to nationals of the ten new EU states living in Switzerland.

#### From 2006/2007

- Payments extended to nationals of the ten new EU states living in Switzerland.

If you previously received or claimed a Winter Fuel Payment as a UK resident (even if you claimed and were turned down), you should **only complete the WFP2** claim form for EEA residents.

If you have **not** previously received or claimed a Winter Fuel Payment as a UK resident, you should **complete the WFP1R** claim form for UK residents (for the years you lived in the UK) **and the WFP2** claim form for EEA residents.

But please note that time limits apply for claiming.

We must receive all claim forms for winter 2006/2007 by **30 March 2007**.

Once we have paid you for previous years, you will normally be paid automatically for the current year, which is 2006/2007, and for future years. But we may ask you to complete a claim form in some circumstances. If you do not get a payment by the end of January 2007, please contact the Winter Fuel Payment Centre (see page 29).

#### **If you live outside the UK now – claiming for the current year 2006/2007**

If you have received all your payments for past years in the UK and wish to be paid for this year, you should contact the Winter Fuel Payment Centre (see page 29). We may need to write to you for further information or ask you to complete a claim form.

### Claim forms and further information

Claim forms and further information for people who live in the EEA and Switzerland are available:

- at [www.thepensionsservice.gov.uk/winterfuel](http://www.thepensionsservice.gov.uk/winterfuel)
- by writing to: Winter Fuel Payment Centre  
Southgate House  
Cardiff Central  
Royal Mail  
Cardiff CF91 1ZH  
UK;
- by faxing the Winter Fuel Payment Centre on  
**+44 29 2042 8676 (029 2042 8676 in the UK);** or
- by phoning the Winter Fuel Payment Centre on  
**+44 29 2042 8635 (029 2042 8635 in the UK).**

*Lines are open Monday to Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm UK time.*

Exclusions and time limits apply in some circumstances. For advice on these you should contact the Winter Fuel Payment Centre.

### 4 The qualifying weeks

Winter of	Qualifying week
1997/1998	5 to 11 January 1998 (payable to people who were ordinarily resident in the UK in the qualifying week)
1998/1999	9 to 15 November 1998
1999/2000	20 to 26 September 1999
2000/2001	18 to 24 September 2000
2001/2002	17 to 23 September 2001
2002/2003	16 to 22 September 2002
2003/2004	15 to 21 September 2003
2004/2005	20 to 26 September 2004
2005/2006	19 to 25 September 2005
2006/2007	18 to 24 September 2006

# 5 Definitions used in this guide

### **The United Kingdom (UK)**

The UK comprises England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. It does not include the Isle of Man or the Channel Islands.

### **The European Union (EU)**

The EU comprises Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Gibraltar, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Ireland, Spain, Sweden and the UK. In May 2004, ten further countries joined the EU – Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

### **The European Economic Area (EEA)**

The EEA comprises all 25 EU countries and Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, who are not members of the EU.

### Switzerland

Switzerland is not a member of the EEA, but signed an agreement with EU countries in June 2002 to apply EU rules on social security which was extended in May 2006 to include the ten countries that joined the EU in May 2004. The agreement does not currently extend to EEA countries of Iceland, Liechtenstein or Norway.

### Winter Fuel Helpline

A contact number you can ring for help and advice about Winter Fuel Payments. The telephone number is **08459 15 15 15** or for textphone users **0845 601 5613** – available from **8.30am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday**. Charges are the same as for local calls.

This contact number is for customers claiming as residents of Great Britain and Northern Ireland only.

### **Winter Fuel Payment Centre**

If you live in the European Economic Area or Switzerland, you can contact the Winter Fuel Payment Centre for a claim form or further information about Winter Fuel Payments. Their address is

Winter Fuel Payment Centre  
Southgate House  
Cardiff Central  
Royal Mail  
Cardiff  
CF91 1ZH

**Tel: +44 29 2042 8635 (029 2042 8635 in the UK)**

**Fax: +44 29 2042 8676 (029 2042 8676 in the UK)**

# 6 Useful contacts

### **Pensioners' guide**

For information on the wide range of help and advice available through central and local government please refer to the Pensioners' guide England and Wales (PG1) or Pensioners' guide Scotland (PG3).

To obtain a copy of the guide call **0845 6 065 065**.

If you have speech or hearing difficulties call textphone **0845 6 064 064**. Charges are the same as for local calls.

The guide is also available on the Internet  
[www.thepensionservice.gov.uk/resourcecentre/home.asp](http://www.thepensionservice.gov.uk/resourcecentre/home.asp)

### **Pension Credit**

Call Freephone **0800 99 1234** to find out if you are eligible for Pension Credit or to apply for Pension Credit, Council Tax Benefit and Housing Benefit at the same time.

If you have speech or hearing difficulties call textphone **0800 169 0133**.

For more information about Pension Credit visit  
[www.pensions.gov.uk/pensioncredit](http://www.pensions.gov.uk/pensioncredit)

### **The Pension Service and State Pension**

Call The Pension Service on **0845 60 60 265** for information about your State Pension, Pension Credit and other benefits or to find out what you can expect when you reach State Pension age.

If you have speech or hearing difficulties call textphone **0845 60 60 285**. Charges are the same as for local calls.

For more information visit [www.thepensionservice.gov.uk](http://www.thepensionservice.gov.uk)

### **For help with heating and insulation improvements to your home**

Call **0800 316 6011** to find out if you may qualify for a grant which could help provide heating and energy efficiency measures in your home. For more information visit [www.eaga.co.uk](http://www.eaga.co.uk)

### **For advice on keeping warm and well during winter**

The Keep Warm Keep Well booklet, published by the Department of Health, has advice on how to stay warm and well this winter. Look for the free winter guide in places like your GP surgery and local pharmacist, or visit [www.dh.gov.uk/socialcare](http://www.dh.gov.uk/socialcare)

### 7 Can I get this information in other formats?

You can get additional copies of this guide or alternative versions in Welsh, Braille, large print or on audio cassette from pension centres, Jobcentre Plus offices, Jobcentres or social security offices. For your nearest office, look under Jobcentre Plus, Jobcentre or social security office in your local phone book.

You can read, download or order this information on the Internet at [www.thepensionsservice.gov.uk/winterfuel](http://www.thepensionsservice.gov.uk/winterfuel)

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Remember that this guide is for guidance only. It is not a complete statement of the law. Please also remember that the law can change and this may affect Winter Fuel Payments in the future.

