

DEBT ADVICE TEAM FACTSHEET

DEBT ADVICE LINE
0121 303 2087

WINTER FUEL PAYMENTS

A Winter Fuel Payment is a tax-free payment paid to help with the cost of winter fuel bills. It is paid to people of the qualifying age (in general anyone aged 60 or over). Winter Fuel Payments do not depend on how cold the weather gets.

WHO CAN GET A WINTER FUEL PAYMENT

People aged 60 or over and who are normally resident in the UK during the qualifying week 20 – 26 September . There are a few circumstances where payment does not apply, for example, you were not resident in the UK during the qualifying week, you were resident in a care home, you were previously in hospital for 52 weeks as an inpatient, or you were subject to immigration control – if you are not sure whether or not you should be getting a Winter Fuel Payment you should consult either the Winter Fuel Payments Helpline or an independent advice agency.

HOW MUCH IS A WINTER FUEL PAYMENT

The rate of the Winter Fuel Payment is usually announced in the summer before the qualifying week in September. The Winter Fuel Payment is paid at various rates depending on your circumstances. The payment is normally made either directly into your bank account or by cheque sent to your address.

If you are not sure which rate of Winter Fuel Payment you are entitled to, you should consult an experienced adviser. There are other payments that are only paid when the weather reaches a certain temperature, called Cold

Weather Payments. These are made to people on some income related benefits during cold weather. If you think you should have received Cold Weather Payments, you should contact your pension centre or Jobcentre Plus.

HOW TO GET A WINTER FUEL PAYMENT

If you successfully claimed a Winter Fuel Payment in a previous year and your circumstances have not changed, you do not need to make a claim again. If you think you may be entitled to a Winter Fuel Payment you should request an application from the Winter Fuel Helpline **0845 9151515**.

CHANGE OF CIRCUMSTANCES

It's important to tell the office that deals with your payments if:

- you move home
 - someone moves into or out of your household
 - you change your bank account details
 - you stop getting benefits except Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit and Child Benefit
- there are any other change of circumstances. This will ensure you continue to get the right payment and you are kept informed of any changes.

HELPLINE

The Winter Fuel Payments helpline is on **0845 9151515**. You can use this helpline for any queries you have about Winter Fuel Payments, or to find out what is happening if you are expecting a payment and it is late.

PROBLEMS WITH PAYMENTS

If you have made a claim for a Winter Fuel Payment and do not get one, or get less than you think you should, you can challenge the decision which has been made on your claim. If you have not made a claim, you should get in touch with the Winter Fuel Payments helpline and ask for a formal decision to be made. Once you have a decision, you can ask the office to look at the decision again or you can appeal. If you are not happy with the service provided by the Winter Fuel Payments helpline or the Pension Service because of mistakes or delays or any other issue, you can complain. You can do this whether or not you also want to challenge a decision. You should also consult an independent advisor to assist you with this.

FURTHER INFORMATION

www.direct.gov.uk and type Winter Fuel Payment in the search box.

www.dwp.gov.uk and search for SB16 A Guide to the Social Fund

The information provided in this factsheet is for guidance only. Before you take any action it is important to seek advice

Debt Advice can be obtained from Birmingham City Council on **0121 303 2087** or ask at your local Neighbourhood Office (please call **0121 303 1111** for your nearest office). You can also visit the Council's website:

www.birmingham.gov.uk/debtadviceteam

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