

An Official Statistics publication for Scotland

Social Security Scotland Statistics

Winter Heating Payment Statistics: Winter 2022/2023

Key figures

As of 30 April 2023:

- A total of 394,135 Winter Heating Payment payments had been issued for Winter 2022/2023 **[Table 1]**.
- The total value of Winter Heating Payment payments issued for winter 2022/2023 was £19.7 million **[Table 1]**.

Frequency of publications

The next publication, covering Winter Heating Payment for Winter 2023/2024 will be released in 2024.

Under the Code of Practice for Official Statistics¹ we publish a timetable of statistical releases for the twelve months ahead².

¹ The Code of Practice for Statistics is available on the [UK Statistics Authority website](#).

² The forthcoming publication timetable is available on the [Scottish Government website](#).

Introduction

This publication provides information on recipients of Winter Heating Payments for winter 2022/2023. This publication covers payments issued to 30 April 2023. Winter 2022/2023 refers to payments relating to the qualifying week of November 2022.

Winter Heating Payment replaced the UK Government's [Cold Weather Payment](#) in February 2023. It provides consistent and dependable annual support to assist low-income households with their heating expenses each winter. This includes older people, disabled people and families who are responsible for children under the age of five or disabled children.

In 2022/2023, Winter Heating Payment was £50. Next winter, Winter Heating Payment will be £55.05 as we will uprate it because of inflation.

This support aims to ease some of the impact of additional domestic heating costs in winter by providing targeted, reliable financial support to households with low incomes, who have a greater need for household heat.

Unlike the Cold Weather Payment, Winter Heating Payment does not depend on how cold the temperature gets. Removing the reliance on weather conditions means that every person identified as requiring that additional support will receive it.

Eligibility for Winter Heating Payment is assessed by Social Security Scotland. This will depend on what benefits clients are receiving and their circumstances from 7 November to 13 November 2022. This is the 'qualifying week'.

Everyone who was previously eligible for Cold Weather Payment will be eligible for Winter Heating Payment (without the need for a sustained period of very cold weather to trigger a payment), as long as (during the qualifying week in November), they are:

- Resident in Scotland

In receipt of one of the following benefits during the qualifying week:

- Universal Credit
- Pension Credit
- Income Support
- Income based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income Related Employment Support Allowance
- Support for Mortgage Interest.

There are also additional qualifying criteria in relation to premiums paid because the person is disabled or has a young or disabled child. The [Background Note](#) has further detail on eligibility.

Most eligible clients will receive this payment automatically.

All tables and charts relating to this publication can be found at the [Social Security Scotland website](#).

The statistics for Winter Heating Payment are being published as experimental statistics, which are defined in the Code of Practice for Statistics as “new official statistics undergoing evaluation. They are published in order to involve users and stakeholders in their development and as a means to build in quality at an early stage.” These statistics have not yet been assessed by the UK Statistics Authority, so have not been designated as National Statistics³.

³ For more information on experimental statistics please see the [Office for Statistics Regulation website](#).

Winter 2022/2023

Number of eligible clients

- At 30 April 2023, there were 399,770 clients known to have been eligible for Winter Heating Payment during the qualifying week in November 2022.
- Number of eligible clients consists of those who were identified as eligible as part of the data transfer from the Department for Work and Pensions, and where new applications were processed and approved by 30 April 2023.
- There are a number of cases requiring manual intervention prior to payments being made, for example where the agency is awaiting further information about the client, such as where a next of kin is required. This includes a number of applications from clients whose data was not received from Department for Work and Pensions, or who have become retrospectively eligible and applied.

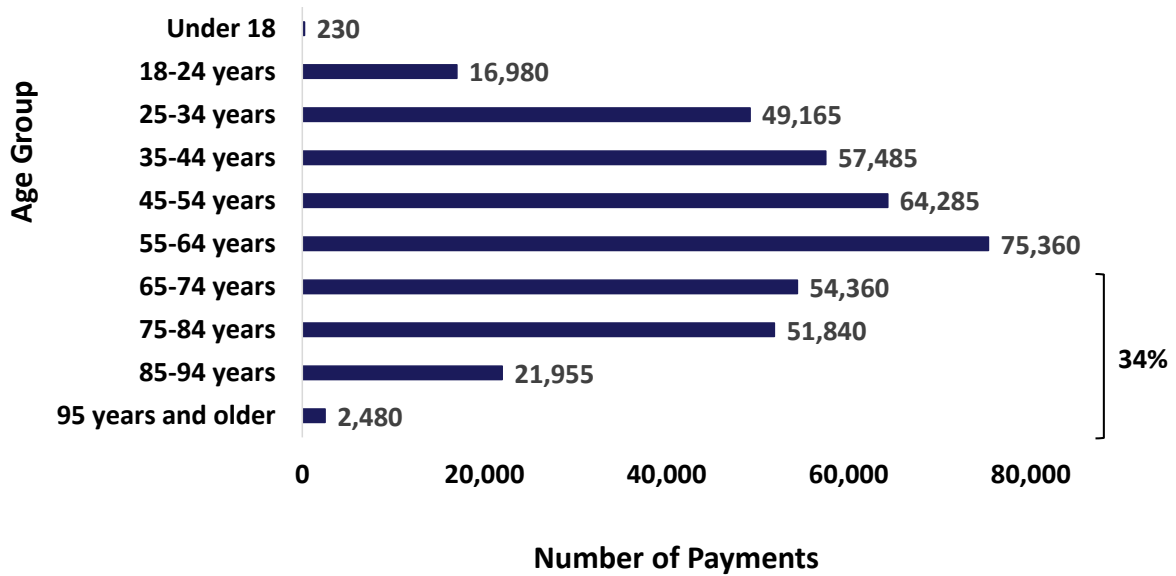
Number of payments issued

- By 30 April 2023, 394,135 Winter Heating Payments have been issued for clients eligible in the qualifying week of November 2022 **[Table 1]**.
- Each payment was for £50. The total expenditure for winter 2022/2023 by 30 April was £19.7 million **[Table 1]**.
- The number and value of payments issued may increase as payments for Winter 2022/2023 continue to be made after the cut-off date of the publication.

Payments by client's age

- The most common age group of clients receiving Winter Heating Payments was 55 to 64 with 75,360 payments which was 19% of total payments [Table 2, Chart 1].
- Around 34% of recipients receiving payment were aged 65 and over [Chart 1].

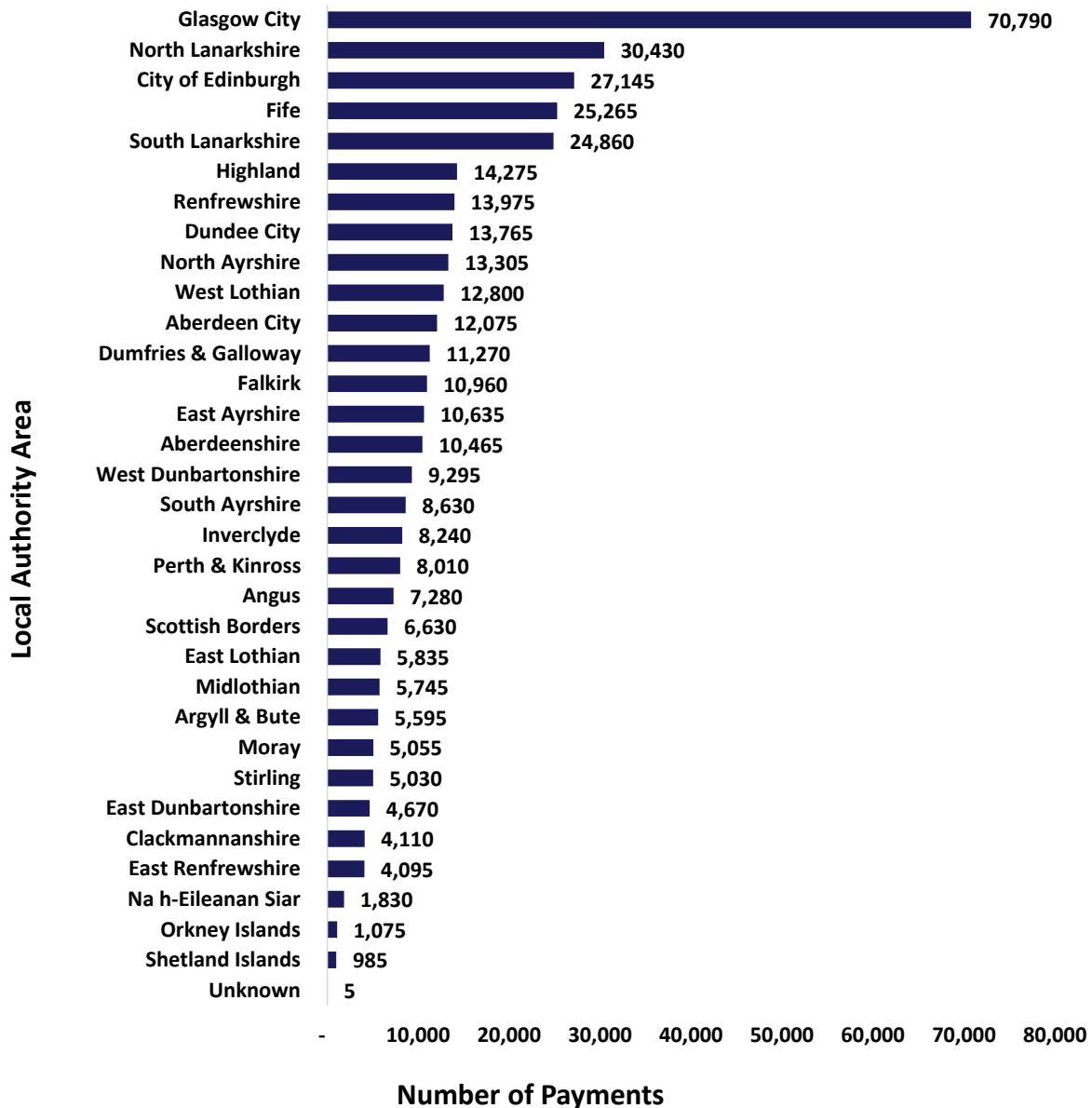
Chart 1: Number of payments by age of client



Payments by local authority area

- Payments were issued for clients living in all 32 local authority areas in Scotland. The local authorities with the greatest proportion of payments were Glasgow City with 18% of payments, North Lanarkshire with 8% and City of Edinburgh with 7% [Table 3, Chart 2].
- A small number of payments were for clients for whom the postcode was missing. These payments account for less than one per cent of the total number of payments issued. More information about this can be found in the [data quality section](#).

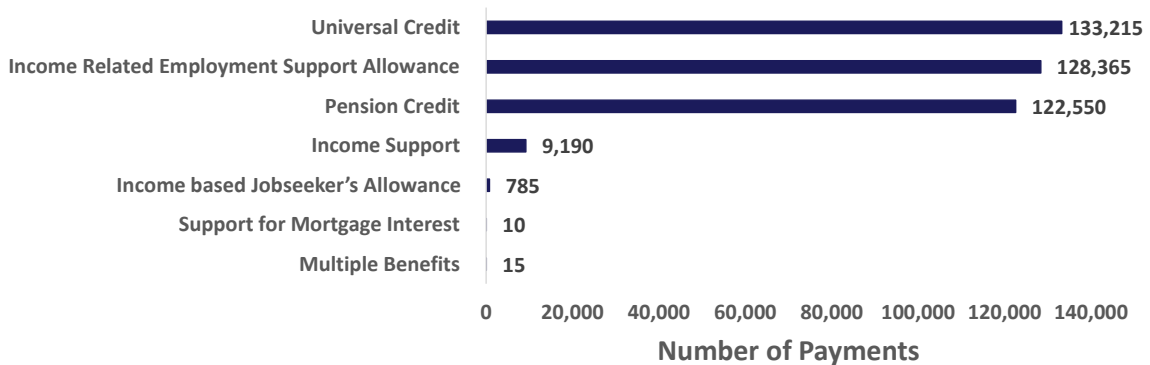
Chart 2: Number of payments by local authority area



Payments by qualifying benefit

- As of 30 April, 34% of payments were issued for clients eligible through Universal Credit. A further 33% of payments were issued for clients eligible through Income Related Employment Support, 31% for clients eligible through Pension Credit and 2% for clients eligible through Income Support. Less than 1% of payments were issued for clients eligible through either Income based Jobseeker's Allowance, Support for Mortgage Interest or those eligible through multiple benefits [Table 4, Chart 3].

Chart 3: Number of payments by qualifying benefit



Payments by month

- There were 34,165 payments processed in February 2023, followed by a further 358,905 payments processed in March 2023 and 1,125 payments processed in April 2023. This corresponds to proportions of around 9% of payments processed in February 2023, followed by 91% payments processed in March 2023 and less than 1% in April 2023 [Table 1].
- The majority of Winter Heating Payments were issued in March 2023, with around 99% of all the payments issued [Table 1].

Payments by method

- The vast majority of eligible clients receive Winter Heating Payment automatically. In case a client thinks they are eligible for Winter Heating Payment but have not received a payment, they can apply for it.
- Of the 394,135 payments issued to 30 April 2023, 393,940 payments were for clients whose cases had been transferred from the Department for Work and Pension. A further 170 payments were for clients who applied for Winter Heating Payment by phone and 20 payments were for clients who applied for Winter Heating Payment with a paper form. In five cases it was not possible to determine whether clients had their cases transferred or if they had to apply manually [Table 5]. A table with numbers of payments by method is presented below.

Method	Transfer	New Application - Phone	New Application - Paper	Unknown
Number of Payments	393,940	170	20	5

Applications received and processed

- As of 30 April 2023, 1,370 new applications have been received for Winter Heating Payment. By 30 April, 225 applications have been processed, 93% of which were approved and 7% were denied [Table 6].
- Of the applications received, 10 were received in February, 860 in March and 500 in April 2023 [Table 6].

Application Channel (Method of Application)

- In total, 1,265 Winter Heating Payment applications were made through a telephone application and 105 were made through paper application [Table 7].
- The [About the data](#) section has further information about the application channel data.

Processing Times

- The processing times presented below relate only to manual applications and not to the automated payments. Payments resulting from manual applications form a small subset of total payments.
- The median average⁴ processing time for applications processed was 3 days for March and 5 days for April 2023 [**Table 8**].
- Processing times were calculated by determining the time between an application being received and a decision being made or the application being withdrawn. This includes the time spent waiting to receive evidence from clients to allow a decision to be made, which should be considered when interpreting these processing times. See the [about the data](#) section for further information on processing times.

⁴ The median average is the middle value of an ordered dataset, or the point at which half of the values are higher and half of the values are lower.

Background to Winter Heating Payment

Winter Heating Payment was introduced in February 2023 by the Scottish Government. It is paid once a year by Social Security Scotland. The payment for winter 2022/23 was £50. Clients in Scotland can get the assistance if they get one of the following 'qualifying benefits':

- Universal Credit,
- Pension Credit,
- Income Support,
- Income based Jobseeker's Allowance,
- Income Related Employment Support Allowance,
- Support for Mortgage Interest.

They must be getting this on at least one day in the qualifying week. In 2022, this was 7 November to 13 November 2022. They must also meet one other specific requirement of their qualifying benefit.

For Universal Credit, clients also have to have any of the following additional requirements:

- a limited capability for work element,
- a limited capability for work element with a work related activity element,
- young person disability element,
- a child under 5.

For Pension Credit, clients do not need any other additional requirements.

For Income based Jobseeker's Allowance or Income Support, clients also have to have any of the following additional requirements:

- a disability premium,
- a severe disability premium,
- a pensioner premium,
- a child disability premium,
- the disability element of Child Tax Credit,
- a child under 5.

For Income Related Employment Support Allowance, clients also have to have any of the following additional requirements:

- placed in a support group or a work related activity group,
- a severe or enhanced disability premium,
- a pensioner premium,
- the disability element of Child Tax Credit,
- a child under 5.

For Support for Mortgage Interest, clients also have to have any of the following additional requirements:

- a disability premium,
- a pensioner premium,
- a child disability premium,
- the disability element of Child Tax Credit,
- a child under 5.

The majority of Winter Heating Payments are issued automatically without requiring an application. In limited circumstances clients may have to apply for Winter Heating Payment. This can be done over the phone, by submitting a paper form or in person.

About the data

How data is collected

The Department for Work and Pensions runs a scan of the information they hold on those resident in Scotland during qualifying week who were also in receipt of the qualifying benefit and fulfil additional criteria. The Department for Work and Pensions then securely transfers the necessary data to Social Security Scotland to allow them to issue Winter Heating Payments.

Clients may also apply for Winter Heating Payment separately through a paper form, by telephone or in person. This includes clients that were not included in the Department for Work and Pensions scan and are making backdated applications for Winter Heating Payment.

Winter Heating Payment cases and payments are managed through the Social Security Scotland case management system. A cut of data was extracted from the case management system on 2 May 2023. This includes information about each case that has been created in the system since the introduction of Winter Heating Payment in February 2023 to 30 April 2023.

Data quality

Payments

This publication presents data for Winter Heating Payment cases where a payment value had been recorded on the case management system by 30 April 2023. This accounts for over 99% of the cases that were on the case management system at this date. A recorded payment value indicates that a client had been found to be eligible, and that an instruction had been sent to Social Security Scotland finance to make a payment. The majority of recipients for winter 2022/23 were paid by 31 March 2023. It can take up to four working days for payments to reach recipients' accounts once issued, so it is possible that a small number of payments had not been received by this date.

The remaining less than 1% of cases that are not included in this publication may not have had payment values for a variety of reasons. For example, the client was found to be ineligible or Social Security Scotland needs further information.

In this publication breakdown of payments by month includes both processed payments and issued payments. Processed payments relate to an award being created whereas issue date relates to the payment being issued to client.

Missing and duplicate information

The data comes from 100% data cut of the Winter Heating Payment cases on the Social Security Scotland case management system. National Insurance Numbers are 'hashed', or turned into a string of letters and numbers that analysts cannot use to identify people, but can be used as a unique anonymous reference for clients. Information about National Insurance Number and date of birth was complete for all cases. Information about postcode was missing for less than 1% of cases.

Age

Age of clients is based on age at the start of the qualifying week.

Local Authority

Payments are assigned to local authority by the residential postcode of the client, using a Scottish Government lookup file. In this publication, all postcodes provided matched the lookup file. A small number of client's postcodes were missing.

Qualifying benefit

The qualifying benefit information is based mainly on the data file provided by the Department for Work and Pensions. Whilst the data file contains a small number of clients being qualified through multiple benefits, it is possible that the total number of such clients is higher.

Rounding

Number of payments have been rounded to the nearest five payments for disclosure control. Value of payments have been rounded to the nearest £500 for disclosure control. Percentages have been rounded to the nearest 1%. Data has been suppressed where it would disclose fewer than five payments.

Channel

Clients can apply for Winter Heating Payment over the phone, by submitting a paper form or in person. In this publication, the number of in-person applications was suppressed due to disclosure control.

Re-determinations

At the time of the publication's release, data extraction on Winter Heating Payment re-determinations was still under development. It is expected for the data on re-determinations to be included in future publications.

Related publications

Statistics published by Social Security Scotland can be found at:

<https://www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/about/statistics/social-security-scotland-statistics-publications>

Winter Heating Payment replaced Cold Weather Payment which was provided by the Department for Work and Pensions to clients living in Scotland. Official statistics published by the Department for Work and Pensions for 2022/23 do not include Scotland. These statistics can be found at:

[Cold Weather Payment estimates: 2022 to 2023](#)

Statistics for 2021/22, which did include Scotland, are also available at: [Cold Weather Payment estimates: 2021 to 2022](#).

An Official Statistics publication for Scotland

Official and National Statistics are produced to high professional standards set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. Both undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs and are produced free from any political interference.

Correspondence and enquiries

For enquiries about this publication please contact:

Maciej Dybala

Social Security Statistics

e-mail: MI@socialsecurity.gov.scot

For general enquiries about Scottish Government statistics please contact:

Office of the Chief Statistician, Telephone: 0131 244 0442,

e-mail: statistics.enquiries@gov.scot

How to access background or source data

The data collected for this statistical bulletin:

are available in more detail through statistics.gov.scot

are available via an alternative route. Summary tables are available at:

<https://www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/about/statistics/social-security-scotland-statistics-publications>

may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors. Please contact MI@socialsecurity.gov.scot for further information.

cannot be made available by Scottish Government for further analysis as Scottish Government is not the data controller.

Complaints and suggestions

If you are not satisfied with our service or have any comments or suggestions, please write to the Chief Statistician, 3WR, St Andrews House, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG, Telephone: (0131) 244 0302, e-mail statistics.enquiries@gov.scot.

If you would like to be consulted about statistical collections or receive notification of publications, please register your interest at www.gov.scot/scotstat

Details of forthcoming publications can be found at www.gov.scot/statistics

Crown Copyright

You may use or re-use this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. See:

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/