

**EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO**  
**THE SOCIAL FUND**  
**COLD WEATHER PAYMENTS (GENERAL) AMENDMENT**  
**REGULATIONS 2006**

**2006 No. 2655**

1. This explanatory memorandum has been prepared by the Department for Work and Pensions and is laid before Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.
2. **Description**
  - 2.1 This instrument amends the Social Fund Cold Weather Payments (General) Regulations 1988.
  - 2.2 Its provisions make minor technical changes to the scheme, following advice from the Meteorological Office, to ensure that postcodes are linked to the most appropriate weather station.
3. **Matters of special interest to the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments**
  - 3.1 None
4. **Legislative Background**
  - 4.1 Cold Weather Payments provide help to vulnerable people receiving Pension Credit, Income Support or income based Jobseeker's Allowance to meet heating costs incurred, or likely to be incurred, in cold weather. That is when the average of the daily temperature for a period of seven consecutive days at a given weather station is recorded as, or is forecast to be, 0 degrees Celsius or below.
  - 4.2 Every residential postcode in the country is linked to one of the 74 weather stations used in the scheme. The Meteorological Office uses data from these weather stations to calculate a rolling seven day average temperature. DWP is then notified of any "triggers" so that payments can be made to eligible customers. The payment is currently £8.50 for each period of cold weather.
  - 4.3 Every year the Cold Weather Payment legislation is amended following expert advice from the Meteorological Office about the continued availability of any weather station and whether any new stations are more suitable and should be introduced into the scheme. The Meteorological Office also consider the effect of any changes to the postcode system made by the Royal Mail and consider any representations from MPs made since the previous winter about the

suitability of postcode to weather station links affecting their constituents.

- 4.4 Regulation 3 and Schedule 1 of the instrument detail the revised postcode to weather station links. Regulation 4 and Schedule 2 detail the revised specified alternative weather stations.

## **5. Extent**

- 5.1 This instrument applies to Great Britain.

## **6. European Convention on Human Rights**

- 6.1 As the instrument is subject to negative resolution procedure and does not amend primary legislation, no statement is required.

## **7. Policy background**

- 7.1 Cold Weather Payments provide help for vulnerable groups in receipt of Pension Credit, Income Support or income based Jobseeker's Allowance when the temperature criterion is met for their postcode.
- 7.2 Each year the scheme is reviewed, expert advice sought from the Meteorological Office, and changes made where necessary prior to the following winter to ensure that postcodes are linked to the most appropriate weather station.
- 7.3 These regulations detail the revised postcode to weather station links and the revised specified alternative weather stations.
- 7.4 No formal consultation has taken place. The Social Security Advisory Committee did, however, consider the proposed amendments in September 2006 and agreed that they need not be formally referred to it.
- 7.5 Informal consolidation of the instrument will be included in due course in the department's "The Law Relating to Social Security" (The Blue Volumes) which are available on the internet at [http://www.dwp.gov.uk/advisers/docs/lawvols/bluevol/pdf/a6\\_8301.pdf](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/advisers/docs/lawvols/bluevol/pdf/a6_8301.pdf) at no cost to the public.

## **8. Impact**

- 8.1 A Regulatory Impact Assessment has not been prepared for this instrument as it has no impact on business, charities or voluntary bodies.
- 8.2 The impact on the Public sector is Nil.

## **9. Contact**

9.1 Chris Etty at the Transformation and Product Management Directorate of the Department for Work and Pensions Tel: 0113 23 24811 or e-mail: [chris.etty@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:chris.etty@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk) can answer any queries regarding the instrument.