

# Benefits Bulletin

## Help with the Cost of Living...

17<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Issue **3** [2023]

## 1. Introduction

Most householders have received automatic discounts on their energy bills this winter worth up to £400 through the Energy Bills Support Scheme (EBSS).

In addition, those who receive certain Social Security benefits have been promised additional financial support with the cost of living.

This Benefits Bulletin explains:

- how people who have hitherto not been eligible to an EBSS discount, perhaps because of the type of accommodation they live in or because of the way they pay for their energy, may now apply for assistance.
- which Social Security benefit recipients will be eligible to a cost of living payment, the amount of payment and when they can expect to receive that payment.

It also provides links to information about the Department for Work and Pensions Cold Weather Payment and Winter Fuel Payment schemes.

Help with the cost of living...




## 2. The EBSS...

Access to the EBSS scheme has been broadened beyond simply households who have a domestic energy meter and pay for their bill directly to an energy supplier such as British Gas, EDF, Octopus or E.ON.

Now people who live:

- in a care home and pay for some or all or their care home fees
- in an 'assisted living facility' (such as supported living or extra care) and pay for some or all or their care
- in a residential park home
- on a boat with a permanent residential mooring
- on a permanent Gypsy and Traveller site
- in social or private rented accommodation which has a business energy connection or a communal electricity supply

- in a separate domestic home within a non-domestic property (such as a farmhouse or a flat above a shop)
- off the mains electricity or gas grid or people whose home is part of a heat network without an electricity meter

may apply on-line for a one-off payment of £400.00 which will be paid to them by their local authority. See below for details.

People will not be able to apply for this payment if they are living in a care home where all of their fees are paid by a local authority or the NHS.

Equally a person will not be eligible to the payment if, for example, they live in purpose-built student accommodation or premises provided by their employer or in business premises such as a pub or hotel. Moreover, as things stand, those living in a non-permanent caravan or mobile home or a boat as a continuous cruiser may not apply, although this position is under review meaning that such groups may become eligible in the future.



People are expected to apply online.

Apply online: [LINK](#)

However, if they cannot do this then they can contact the EBSS helpline on 0808 175 3287 which operates Monday to Friday between 8.00 am and 6.00 pm.

A person will need an email address or phone number and their bank details (sort code and account number) when applying.

See this [LINK](#) for more information about the Energy Bills Support Scheme (EBSS) as it applies to these new groups who may now qualify for a payment.



Households with a domestic electricity connection have been eligible for the EBSS discount. The discount has been made on electricity bills automatically with people receiving discounts of:

- £66.00 per month in October 2022 / November 2022; and
- £67.00 per month in December 2022, January 2023, February 2023 and March 2023.

The discount has been applied either as: a reduction to the monthly Direct Debit amount people have paid or as a refund to your bank account after any monthly direct debit collection.

People who have already been getting help through this discount scheme cannot apply for the new £400 one-off payment.

See this [LINK](#) for more information about the Energy Bills Support Scheme (EBSS) as it has applied to households with a domestic electricity connection.

## 3. Cost of Living Payments...

In [Benefits Bulletin 4 \[2022\]](#) (dated 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022) we reported how people receiving certain Social Security benefits were to be paid a Cost of Living Payment which in some cases would be worth up to £900.

At the time we were not able to report details of when the payments would be made. This was because these details were not announced.

### £900 to those who are getting a means-tested benefit...

We now know that those people who qualify for assistance because they are getting a 'means-tested benefit' (see below) will receive a Cost of Living Payment worth £900.00 and that this will be paid to them in three installments. The first payment of £301.00 will be made during Spring 2023. The second payment of £300.00 will be paid during the Autumn of 2023 with the third payment of £299.00 being made in Spring 2024.

By 'means-tested benefits' we mean Universal Credit, Pension Credit, Income-based JSA, Income-related ESA, Income Support, Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit.



### £150 to those getting a disability benefit...

We now know that those people who qualify for assistance because they are getting a 'disability benefit' (see below) will receive a Cost of Living Payment worth £150.00 paid to them during the Summer of 2023.

By 'disability benefit' we mean Personal Independence Payment, Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance. We should say that those receiving the [Armed Forces Independence Payment](#), [Constant Attendance Allowance](#) or [War Pension Mobility Supplement](#) will also receive this payment.

If someone is getting both a 'means-tested benefit' and a 'disability benefit' then they will be eligible to both the £900 Cost of Living Payment and the £150 Cost of Living Payment.

### £300 to pensioners...

We now know that pensioners will receive a Cost of Living Payment worth £300.00 paid to them during the winter of 2023 / 2024.

If a pensioner is getting a 'means-tested benefit' (see above) and a 'disability benefit' (see above) then they will be eligible to both the £900 Cost of Living Payment, the £150 Cost of Living Payment and the £300 pensioner Cost of Living Payment.



Please see this [LINK](#) for more information on the Cost of Living Payments and when they will be made.

The payment also comes on top of:

- any £25.00 Department for Work and Pensions **Cold Weather Payment** that a person may receive for a recognised period of cold weather because they have been receiving a 'means-tested benefit (see above) and are disabled or have a young child; and
- any Department for Work and Pensions **Winter Fuel Payment** that a person may qualify for because they are a pensioner which may be worth up to £600.

Please see here for more information about the [Cold Weather Payment](#) and the [Winter Fuel Payment](#).

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