



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Jo Churchill MP
Minister for Employment

Rt Hon Sir Stephen Timms MP
Chair, Work and Pensions Select Committee
House of Commons

14 February 2024

Dear Sir Stephen,

Thank you for your letter regarding the Government's response to the cost of living support payments Report, and for requesting further information.

The Government's responses to your follow up questions are provided below.

Question 1

Confirmation that the Government will publish its evaluation of cost of living payments and the Department's expected timeline for doing this;

Response

The Government can confirm that it will publish its evaluation of the Cost of Living Payments subject to usual quality assurance. Fieldwork for the evaluation has recently commenced and the current expected timetable for publication is Autumn/Winter 2024.

Question 2

Data, similar to that provided in response to the recommendations at paragraphs 26 and 27, for later tranches of cost of living payments on those not eligible, when such data is available;

Response

In line with the Code of Practice for Statistics, the number of those not eligible for later tranches of Cost of Living Payments is the subject of an upcoming statistical release, and cannot be released before that publication is ready, subject to usual quality assurance. We will write to the Work and Pensions Select Committee when the data is published.

Question 3

Data on the other reasons (i.e. not earnings-this is provided in response to paragraphs 26 and 27) why people did not receive the first 2022 cost of living payment;

Response

As previously shared, 85% of those who received no Universal Credit award during the qualifying period for the first 2022 Cost of Living Payment of £326, had no award due to earnings. Of the remaining 15% with no Universal Credit award during this period, 2% had no award due to capital, other income or other benefits, 1% had no award due to sanctions while 12% was due to a combination of these reasons including earnings. The vast majority (84%) of those with combined reasons included earnings as a factor.

More information on those with no award of Universal Credit during the first qualifying period can be found in Table 13 of the impact assessment:

[SocSec\(AdditionalPayments\)IA.pdf \(parliament.uk\).](#)

Question 4

What stakeholder representations Ministers have received on extending the Household Support Fund into 2024-25;

Response

The Department has received representations from a number of stakeholders and organisations regarding the Household Support Fund, such as local authorities and their representatives, Members of Parliament and their constituents and interested third party stakeholders. These have been obtained via correspondence and Parliamentary Questions, and are in keeping with usual policy delivery and parliamentary activity.

Question 5

Further information on the Invitation to Claim trial for Pension Credit, including the trial's timescale, when the evaluation is taking place, whether the evaluation will be published, and whether further trials are planned

Response

The Invitation to Claim trial took place between July and December 2023. This was a targeted mailing exercise to invite a sample of approximately 2,400 pensioner households to claim Pension Credit. The households were selected based on information available to the Department, namely those we identified as being in receipt of Housing Benefit and who might be entitled to Pension Credit if they made

a claim. A small sample of those participating households were subsequently invited to take part in qualitative research interviews.

The evaluation of the Invitation to Claim trial will help to inform the Department whether targeting households potentially eligible for Pension Credit in this way would be an effective way to increase take-up. Subject to Ministerial approval, we hope to publish the results before Spring Budget.

Question 6

A more detailed explanation of how the Department reached £150 as the value of the disability cost of living payment.

Response

The Disability Cost of Living Payment should be viewed in the broader context of the other Cost of Living Payments and the wider support the Government provided. As referenced in our response, we estimate that nearly 60% of individuals that receive a qualifying disability benefit will receive additional support through a means-tested benefit Cost of Living Payment, and over 85% will receive either or both of the means-tested and Pensioner Cost of Living Payment. The rate of the Disability Cost of Living should therefore be considered in that context and as a direct, additional and personal contribution towards the additional costs that disabled people face.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Jo Churchill', with a decorative flourish underneath.

Jo Churchill MP
Minister for Employment



Work and Pensions Committee

25 January 2024

Jo Churchill MP

Minister for Employment
Department for Work and Pensions
(By e-mail only)

Dear Jo,

Cost of living support payments: Government response

Congratulations on your appointment—we look forward to hearing from you on 31 January in relation to our Statutory Sick Pay inquiry.

The Committee is grateful to the Department for its response to the Committee's Cost of living support payments Report. The Committee would be grateful if you could work with Ministerial colleagues to provide some further information, specifically:

1. Confirmation that the Government will publish its evaluation of cost of living payments and the Department's expected timetable for doing this;
2. Data, similar to that provided in response to the recommendations at paragraphs 26 and 27, for later tranches of cost of living payments on those not eligible, when such data is available;
3. Data on the other reasons (i.e. not earnings—this is provided in response to paragraphs 26 and 27) why people did not receive the first 2022 cost of living payment;
4. What stakeholder representations Ministers have received on extending the Household Support Fund into 2024–25;
5. Further information on the Invitation to Claim trial for Pension Credit, including the trial's timescale, when the evaluation is taking place, whether the evaluation will be published, and whether further trials are planned; and
6. A more detailed explanation of how the Department reached £150 as the value of the disability cost of living payment.

I would be grateful for your response to these questions by Wednesday 14 February. As is usual practice with the Committee's correspondence, I will be publishing this letter and your response on the Committee's website.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon Sir Stephen Timms MP
Chair, Work and Pensions Committee