

Q&A FOR THE RESTORATION OF CONCESSIONARY FUEL ENTITLEMENT TO FORMER UK COAL EMPLOYEES

On the 15th of November the Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, announced that the government would guarantee the concessionary fuel allowance of the 1,500 former miners who lost their entitlement as a result of the restructuring of UK Coal in July. The Chancellor went on to say that “they will be entitled to choose up to £1,300 of free coal or up to £600 cash in lieu of coal per year – in line with the current beneficiaries of the scheme”.

1. On what basis will the entitlement be restored?

Individual concessionaire’s entitlement will be restored on the same terms as when it was lost in July and will be dependent on which specific scheme they were a member of.

The c1,400 concessionaires whose entitlement was transferred from British Coal to UK Coal on TUPE will continue to receive it under the terms of the UK Coal TUPE Scheme and those 47 who were employed post 1994 will receive it under the terms of UK Coal’s Non-TUPE Scheme.

2. When will the entitlement be fully restored?

We are working closely with our contractors, Capita, who used to administer both schemes on behalf of UK Coal, and with CPL, who distribute the solid fuel, to ensure that arrangements are put back in place as expeditiously as possible.

Capita will have written by Friday 22nd November to all those concessionaires who lost their entitlement as a result of the restructuring of UK Coal in July 2013 to ensure that they have their up to date details and that their personal circumstances have not changed in a way that impacts on their entitlement.

We hope to have fully restored and backdated all fuel concessionaires’ entitlements as soon as possible and to have added them to the normal delivery programme by March 2014. If individual concessionaires find they are running out of fuel and require an urgent delivery they should contact CPL on 0845 5215214 who will register your needs

In relation to cash in-lieu concessionaires, Capita will be carrying out a normal quarterly pay run on 31st December 2013 and are hoping to include any concessionaires who have responded to them with confirmation of their payment details by the 13th December 2013. Capita will then carry out an emergency pay run in January 2014 to pick up any responses received after the December run. Any responses received after January 2014 will be added to the normal March 2014 quarterly pay run. Payments will then be made by BACS on a quarterly basis thereafter.

3. Will the entitlement be backdated?

Yes. The Government is backdating all entitlements to July 2013 subject to any change in personal circumstances.

4. Can I change from fuel to cash in-lieu?

Individual concessionaire’s right to change from fuel to cash and back again has not changed. The same terms and conditions and the criteria to be awarded cash in lieu under both schemes will continue to apply.

5. Due to the loss of the entitlement I changed my heating system. Will the Government compensate me for this expenditure?

There is no provision for compensating for the installation of alternative heating sources.

The Government is backdating all entitlements to July 2013. Those who have changed their heating source since July 2013 and are no longer burning solid fuel will be allowed, in these exceptional circumstances, to receive the regular payments of cash in-lieu under the relevant scheme.

This does not apply to anyone who converts the heating source after the reinstatement of the entitlement was announced on 15th November 2013.

6. I made a number of purchases of fuel whilst I was without my entitlement. Will I be refunded for these?

Capita will refund the cost of any fuel purchased since July 2013 where evidence of the purchase, such as a receipt, delivery note or invoice with the tonnage of coal purchased included, is supplied. The tonnage of fuel purchased will also be deducted from your outstanding annual entitlement.

7. Since I left UK Coal in July 2013, I have found alternative employment which breaches the rules under my particular scheme for continuing to receive my entitlement. What will happen to my entitlement?

You will receive a backdated entitlement from July 2013 until the date you took up alternative employment. If applicable under the terms of the relevant scheme your entitlement will then remain dormant until you reach retirement age and will then be reinstated.

8. Under the terms of the scheme that I received my entitlement I lost the right to concessionary fuel as my employment with UK Coal ceased. Will my entitlement be reinstated?

Yes, your entitlement will be reinstated under the same terms as the scheme you were under and will only be terminated if you find alternative employment, retire or your personal circumstances change.

9. I left UK Coal before the July 2013 restructuring and lost my entitlement. Will my entitlement be reinstated?

No, only those directly affected by the July 2013 restructure will have their entitlement restored.

10. Do I still have a claim in the liquidation against UK Coal estate for the loss of the entitlement?

The Government is currently working with the administrators of UK Coal but it is understood that as the entitlement has been restored individual concessionaires will no longer have a claim against UK Coal for the loss of entitlement as the taxpayer is now meeting the obligation.

- 11. The announcement by the Chancellor refers to an annual fuel entitlement of c£1,300 and an annual cash in-lieu entitlement of c£600, my entitlement was more/less than this. Will the level of my entitlement change?**

The figures used in the announcement were average figures based on the full cohort of concessionaires. All concessionaires will revert back to the same entitlement levels provided by the relevant schemes unless their personal circumstances have since changed.

- 12. I am currently not in receipt of fuel or cash in-lieu due to my current circumstances but believe I do have an entitlement arising from my employment with UK Coal. If my circumstances change will I be able to come back into the schemes?**

The Government is aware that there are “dormant” claims where people have an entitlement but it is currently not active due to their personal circumstances. If their circumstances change and their entitlement becomes active they will enter the relevant scheme in the same way they would have done before. Capita, as the administrators of the Scheme, will manage this process consistent with the eligibility rules.

- 13. What if I need fuel now?**

If individual concessionaires find they are running out of fuel and require an urgent delivery they should contact CPL on 0845 5215214 who will register your needs.

- 14. What if I need my cash in lieu now?**

Capita has written to all concessionaires to ask them to confirm their personal circumstances have not changed since July 2013. Capita will be carrying out a normal quarterly pay run on 31st of December 2013 and are hoping to include in this pay run any concessionaires who have responded to them by the 13th of December 2013. Capita will then carry out an emergency pay run in January 2014 to pick up any responses received after the December 2013 run. Any subsequent responses will be added to the normal March 2014 quarterly pay run.

- 15. I am unclear if I still have an entitlement?**

Capita, the administrators of the Scheme, can be contacted on 0845 7590529 and will respond to any queries you may have relating to your entitlement

- 16. I was not previously entitled to receive concessionary fuel but I work or have worked in the UK coal industry. Will I receive an entitlement following this announcement?**

No, the terms and conditions for entry to these schemes will remain the same. It only relates to those whose entitlement was lost with the restructuring of UK Coal in July 2013.