



Public Health  
England

## Cold Weather Plan for England

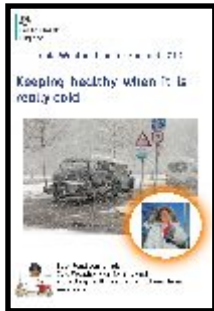
# Keeping healthy when it is really cold



Easy Read version of:  
Cold Weather Plan for England:  
Protecting health and reducing harm from  
severe cold.

# What is in this booklet?

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# About the Cold Weather Plan for England



Public Health  
England

Public Health England wrote the plan.



It says how to get ready for winter and stay healthy when it is really cold.



This is important because lots of people get ill or die each winter because of the cold.



Cold weather can also make it harder to run services that support people to stay healthy.



The plan is for everyone - councils, health and care services and communities.



The plan includes advice to keep people healthy and make sure services can help people in cold weather. For example:



- injections to stop people getting flu



- telling people how to keep warm and keep well



- where to get more information and help.



# How does cold weather harm health?



Cold weather can cause lots of health problems:



- more people have heart or breathing problems, or illnesses like flu



- people slip and hurt themselves



- more people go to their doctor or hospital



- more people die in cold weather than at other times.



# Who is at risk?



We know the cold weather can make things worse for people who have problems with their health or where they live.

People might need more support if they are:



- over 75 years old



- have problems with their heart or with breathing



- people with a serious mental illness



- people with dementia (a brain disease that can affect your memory when you get older)



- people with learning difficulties



- people who find it difficult to walk



- young children



- living in cold or damp houses



- spending a lot of their money keeping warm



- older people who live on their own



- homeless or sleeping on the streets



- other groups that miss out on services and support.





# Top tips for staying well and healthy



1. Get your flu jab. Especially if you are:



- aged 65 or older



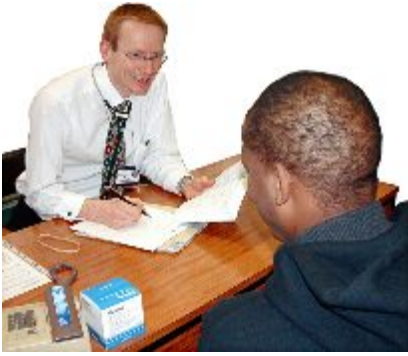
- have a disability



- are a carer



- live in a care home.



**2.** Ask your GP, nurse or carer about staying well.



**3.** Keep warm. Use a thermometer to check your dayroom and bedroom are at least 18°C.



**4.** Look after yourself and check on neighbours to make sure they are safe, well and warm.



**5.** Wear lots of layers and good grip shoes or boots if you have to go outside.



**6.** Have hot food and drinks.



7. Keep moving about at home.



8. Get help with money. There are benefits and other help you can get to keep your house warm.



9. Have your gas heating and gas cooker checked to make sure they are safe.



10. Get more advice form NHS Choices at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)



11. If you are worried about your health or that of someone you know ask your GP or carer or call the NHS on **111**.

# The Cold Weather Warnings



The Cold Weather Plan has 5 different steps or **levels**.



These levels are linked to how bad the **Met Office** thinks the weather will be.



Between November and March the Met Office gives **alerts** or warnings about **severe weather**.



**Severe weather** means really bad weather that is very cold, or with lots of ice or heavy snow (or all these things together).





## Level 0 – Getting ready for winter

This is to help people get ready for winter. This happens all year round.



## Level 1 – Keeping people well in winter and having plans in case of really bad weather

Between 01 November and 31 March, keeping people healthy in winter and making sure plans are all ready to help services carry on in any bad weather.



## Level 2 – Warning bad weather on the way

A warning when we think there will be severe weather in the next two days.



## Level 3 - Bad weather is here

When we have weather bad enough to have a severe effect on people's health and health and social care services.



## Level 4 – An emergency due to really bad weather for a longer time



An emergency happens when severe weather gets really, really bad or goes on for a long time.

This will affect more than health and social care services. There might be:



- power cuts



- not enough water



- buses and trains not working.

This could cause health problems for anyone.



The government will decide when it is time to call a Level 4 emergency as it will mean they need other services to help as well.



# Telling people about the bad weather

We will tell people about bad weather by giving out a warning called an alert. The plan says the alerts must be passed on by:



- TV, radio and newspapers



- NHS services



- the NHS website



- local councils



- local services and organisations like schools, doctors and care homes.



Each local area will have its own plan for doing this.



## More details about the levels



The next pages tell you what each level means and the sort of things you could be doing.



### Level 0 – Getting ready for winter



- find out about staying warm and keeping your house warmer



- make sure water pipes will not freeze up



- ask for help if your heating isn't working properly



- ask for help if you don't have enough money to pay for heating



- have gas heaters and boilers serviced



- have a carbon monoxide (CO) alarm as well as a fire alarm



- get a flu jab if you are at risk.





## Level 1 – Keeping people well in winter and having plans all ready in case



- get good information about your health. Try NHS Choices at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)



- check you are getting the benefits you should get



- get a flu jab if you are at risk, if you haven't already



- make sure water pipes are protected



- make sure your home is as warm as possible and your heating works well



- ask your GP or support about keeping well and if there are any other services you could get



- have a list of emergency numbers to call for help



- look out for your neighbours and help them



- think about other things you could do to help yourself or others, like volunteer.



## Level 2 – Warning bad weather on the way



- listen to the weather forecast
- make sure you have plenty of food and any medicine you need
- try not to go out if you are at risk from the cold
- talk with friends about clearing snow and ice for those who cannot do it themselves
- keep in touch with local people at risk and make sure they have enough to eat and drink and check they have a warm room.

## Level 3 – Bad weather is here



- listen to the weather forecasts



- check that your home is warm enough.  
It should be 18°C



- dress up warmly if you have to go out and wear non slip shoes or boots



- tell someone where you are going



- take your mobile if you have one and make sure it is charged





- keep moving about



- have warm meals and drinks



- check people who might be at risk



- tell the emergency services if you are worried about someone



- clear ice and snow if you can.





## Level 4 – An emergency due to really bad weather for a longer time



The government decides what people must do when the weather is this bad but everyone should:



- keep doing things they did at level 3



- listen carefully to, and follow the advice given by authorities.



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Published January 2015

PHE publications gateway number: 2014380

