



UK Health
Security
Agency



Cold Weather Plan for England: Action cards for Cold Weather Alert Service

Commissioners (health and social care) and local authorities

Level

0 Year-round planning

- work with partner agencies to ensure that cold weather planning features within wider winter resilience planning
- work with partners to ensure that a strategic approach to the reduction of Excess Winter Deaths (EWDs) and fuel poverty is taken across the local health and social care economy
- work with partner agencies to:
 - develop a shared understanding of EWDs and what partners can do to reduce them
 - identify those most at risk from seasonal variations
 - improve winter resilience of those at risk
 - ensure a local, joined-up programme is in place to support improved housing, heating and insulation, including uptake of energy-efficient, low-carbon solutions
 - achieve a reduction in carbon emissions and assess the implications of climate change
- consider how your winter plans can help to reduce health inequalities, how they might target high-risk groups and address the wider determinants of health.
- ensure that organisations and staff are prompted to signpost vulnerable clients onwards (for example for energy efficiency measures, benefits or related advice).
- work with partners and staff on risk reduction awareness (for example flu vaccination for staff in September/October), information and education.
- engage with local VCS organisations for planning and implementation of all stages of the plan.

Level

1 Winter preparedness and action programme 1 November to 31 March

- communicate public health media messages
- work with partner agencies to coordinate locally appropriate cold weather plans
- ensure key partners, including all managers of care, residential and nursing homes are aware of the alert system and can access advice
- review the distribution of the cold weather alerts across the system and ensure staff are aware of winter plans and advice
- ensure that local organisations and professionals are taking appropriate actions in light of the Cold Weather Alerts in accordance with the local and national Cold Weather Plan
- ensure that organisations and staff are prompted to signpost vulnerable clients onwards (for example for energy efficiency measures, benefits or related advice)
- liaise with providers of emergency shelter for homeless people to agree plans for severe weather and ensure capacity to scale up provision
- support communities to help those at risk. Support the development of community emergency plans
- identify which local health, social care and voluntary and community sector organisations are most vulnerable to the effects of winter weather. Agree plans for winter surge in demand for services. Make sure emergency contacts are up to date

Level

2 Severe winter weather is forecast – Alert and readiness

Mean temperature of 2°C and/or widespread ice and heavy snow are predicted within 48 hours, with 60% confidence

- continue to communicate public health media messages
- communicate alerts to staff and make sure that they can take appropriate actions
- ensure key partners, including all managers of care, residential and nursing homes, are aware of the alerts and can access DHSC and other advice
- ensure that organisations and staff are prompted to signpost vulnerable clients onwards (for example for energy efficiency measures, benefits or related advice)
- support local community organisations to activate community emergency plans
- activate business continuity arrangements and emergency plans as required
- consider how to make best use of available capacity, for example by using community beds for at-risk patients who do not need an acute bed and enabling access to step-down care and reablement
- work with partner agencies (for example transport) to ensure road/ pavement gritting preparations are in place to allow access to critical services and pedestrian hotspots

Level

3

Response to severe winter weather – Severe weather action

Severe winter weather is now occurring: mean temperature of 2°C or less and/or widespread ice and heavy snow

- continue to communicate public health media messages
- communicate alerts to staff and make sure that winter plans are in operation
- ensure key partners are undertaking action in response to alerts
- support local community organisations to mobilise community emergency plans
- ensure continuity arrangements are working with provider organisations
- work with partner agencies (for example transport) to ensure road and pavement gritting arrangements are in effect to allow access to critical services and pedestrian hotspots

Level

4

Major incident – Emergency response

Central government will declare a Level 4 alert in the event of severe or prolonged cold weather affecting sectors other than health

- continue level 3 actions during a Level 4 alert, unless advised to the contrary
- implementation of national emergency response arrangements by central government