

NHS

Cold Weather Plan for England 2012

Protecting health and
reducing harm from
severe cold



NHS



Produced in association
with the Met Office



Cold Weather Plan Warm Homes Healthy People Fund

CAN TrainingDay -
28 January 2013

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Cold Weather Plan

Health effects of cold weather

The cold facts



- More people die during the winter than at other times of the year
- 22,900 excess winter deaths in England in 2011-12 (5% reduction). Between 2001/02 to 2010/11, the avg number of excess winter deaths in England has been just over 25,100)
- This number can rise during very severe weather – 34,000 deaths in winter 2008-09

Direct effects	Heart attacks, stroke, respiratory disease, flu, falls & injuries, hypothermia
Indirect effects	Poor mental health, carbon monoxide poisoning
Health services	Increased demand on health & emergency services

Vulnerable groups

- Older people (age 75+)
- Young children
- Pre-existing medical conditions
- Living in poor quality housing
- Living in fuel poverty

Preventable

- These are predictable and largely preventable causes
- In most cases, simple actions could prevent illness, injury and death
- Colder countries in Europe have fewer excess winter deaths
 - e.g. Finland has half the excess winter death rate of England
- Colder countries are much better prepared for cold weather:
 - Well-insulated, well-heated, energy-efficient homes
 - Warm outdoor clothing

Indoor temperatures

Recommended by WHO:

- **21°C** Recommended minimum daytime temperature for main rooms
- **18°C** Recommended minimum bedroom temperature at night

World Health Organization (1987) *Health Impact of Low Indoor Temperatures: Report on a WHO meeting*. Copenhagen: World Health Organization.

Available at: <http://tinyurl.com/3ghblbm>

Cold Weather Plan

Summary of Plan

What is the CWP?

- The CWP is a **public health** plan. First published in Nov 2011 and republished in Oct 2012.

Aims

- to avoid the adverse health effects of winter by raising public awareness and triggering actions by those in contact with people most at risk, and
- to reduce demand on the NHS
- Sets out what needs to happen before and during periods of severe winter weather in England

Cold Weather Plan



- Cold Weather Plan 2012 published 26th October
- The updated plan:
 - Helps the NHS and LAs prepare for the winter
 - Emphasises the need for local health and social care organisations to recast the suggested actions in more meaningful ways
 - Lays out the actions to be undertaken at each alert level: each area is being asked to review current alerts and ensure appropriate actions are being taken according to the national plan.

Who is the CWP for?

- The CWP sets out a series of clear, co-ordinated actions to be taken by the NHS, social care and other public agencies and professionals who interact with those most at risk from cold weather
- The CWP is also intended to mobilise individuals and communities to help protect their neighbours, friends, relatives and themselves against avoidable health problems in winter

How does it link with existing winter actions?

- Builds on established national and local actions by creating a co-ordinated, strategic approach
- Provides strategic guidance and a framework which local organisations can incorporate into their winter planning arrangements
- It underpinned by the Met Office Cold Weather Alert system.

Cold Weather Plan

Cold Weather Alerts

What is the Cold Weather Alerts system?

- The CWP will work through a system of Cold Weather Alerts, provided by the Met Office
- In operation from 1st Nov – 31st March
- Issued on the basis of low temperatures (average of 2°C), widespread ice or heavy snow forecast to last at least 48 hours
- Dissemination of alerts to organisations and via weather forecasts

Cold Weather Alert levels



- A series of escalating alerts will be issued depending on severity, duration & geographical spread of cold weather conditions

Level 0	Long-term planning <i>All year</i>
Level 1	Winter preparedness programme <i>1 November to 31 March</i>
Level 2	Severe winter weather is forecast – Alert and readiness <i>Mean temperature of 2°C and/or widespread ice and heavy snow are predicted within 48 hours, with 60% confidence</i>
Level 3	Response to severe winter weather – Severe weather action <i>Severe winter weather is now occurring: mean temperature of 2°C or less and/or widespread ice and heavy snow</i>
Level 4	Major Incident – Emergency response <i>Central Government will declare a Level 4 alert in the event of severe or prolonged cold weather affecting sectors other than health</i>



Cascade of Cold Weather Alerts

Level 2 - Alert and Readiness

There is a 60% probability of severe cold weather between 0600 on Friday and 0600 on Saturday in parts of England

Region	Risk	Comments
North East England	60 %	Sharp overnight frosts will lower the mean temperature during the period. The low overnight temperatures, brings an increased likelihood of ice on surfaces. Freezing fog is also likely.
North West England	60 %	Sharp overnight frosts will lower the mean temperature during the period. The low overnight temperatures bring an increased likelihood of ice on surfaces. Also, freezing fog patches will be slow to clear.
Yorkshire and the Humber	60 %	Sharp overnight frosts will lower the mean temperature during the period. The low overnight temperatures bring an increased likelihood of ice on surfaces. Freezing fog is also likely.
West Midlands	40 %	Freezing fog patches may be slow to clear.
East Midlands	30 %	Overnight frosts will lower the mean temperature during the period.
East of England	20 %	Low risk of mean temperatures reaching the alert level.
Southeast England	20 %	Low risk of mean temperatures reaching the alert level.
London	10 %	Low risk of mean temperatures reaching the alert level.
Southwest England	20 %	Low risk of mean temperatures reaching the alert level.

Cold Weather Plan

Cold Weather Actions

Cold Weather Plan



Actions are set out for:

- NHS, Social Care and LA Commissioners
- NHS, Social Care and LA Providers
- Health, Social Care and Community Professional Staff
- GPs and Primary Care Teams
- Community and Voluntary Sector
- Individuals

Figure 2.1: Summary of Cold Weather Plan levels and actions

3.2 Health, social care and local authorities: commissioners

Level 0	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<p>Long-term planning All year</p>	<p>Winter preparedness programme 1 November to 31 March</p>	<p>Severe winter weather is forecast – Alert and readiness <i>Mean temperature of 2°C and/or widespread ice and heavy snow is predicted within 48 hours, with 60% confidence</i></p>	<p>Response to severe winter weather – Severe weather action <i>Mean temperature of 2°C or less and/or widespread ice and heavy snow</i></p>	<p>Major Incident – Emergency response <i>Central Government will declare a Level 4 alert in the event of severe or prolonged cold weather affecting sectors other than health</i></p>
<p>Work with partner agencies to ensure that new arrangements for EPR are in place for April 2013 and that cold weather planning features within wider winter resilience planning</p> <p>Work with emerging new structures (CCGs, HWBs) to ensure that a strategic approach to the reduction of EWDs and fuel poverty is taken across the local health and social care economy</p> <p>Work with partner agencies to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 for insulating and heating • assess responses to climate change issues • achieve a reduction in carbon emissions and prepare for the expected health impacts <p>Consider how your winter plans can help to reduce health inequalities and how they might target high-risk groups</p>	<p>Consider the revisions to the 2012 CWP and ensure that the changes are understood across the system. Work with partner agencies to coordinate locally appropriate CW plans</p> <p>Make sure staff are aware of winter plans and advice</p> <p>Review the distribution of the CWAs across the system</p> <p>Ensure that local organisations and professionals are taking appropriate actions in light of the CWAs in accordance with local and national CWP</p> <p>Work with partners and staff on risk reduction awareness (e.g. flu jabs for staff), information and education</p> <p>Support communities to help those at risk. Support the development of Community Emergency Plans</p> <p>Identify which local health, social care and voluntary sector organisations are themselves most vulnerable to the effects of severe winter weather. Agree plans for winter surge in demand for services. Make sure emergency contacts are up to date</p>	<p>Communicate public media messages</p> <p>Communicate alerts to staff and make sure that they can take appropriate actions</p> <p>Ensure key partners, including all managers of care, residential and nursing homes are aware of the alerts and can access DH and other advice</p> <p>Ensure that organisations and staff are prompted to signpost vulnerable clients onwards (e.g. for energy efficiency measures, benefits or related advice)</p> <p>Support local community organisations to activate community emergency plans</p> <p>Activate business continuity arrangements and emergency plans as required</p> <p>Consider how to make best use of available capacity, for example by using community beds for patients at risk who do not need an acute bed and enabling access to step-down care and reablement</p>	<p>Communicate public media messages</p> <p>Communicate alerts to staff and make sure that winter plans are in operation</p> <p>Ensure key partners are actioning alerts</p> <p>Support local community organisations to mobilise community emergency plans</p> <p>Ensure continuity arrangements are working with provider organisations</p> <p>Work with partner agencies (e.g. transport) to ensure road and pavement gritting arrangements are in effect to allow access to critical services and pedestrian hotspots</p>	<p>Level 4 alert declared by central Government</p> <p>Response likely to involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • national government departments • executive agencies • public sector, including health sector • voluntary sector <p>All Level 3 responsibilities must be maintained during a Level 4 incident</p> <p>Implementation of national emergency response arrangements by central Government</p>

Examples of actions



GPs and Primary Care teams

GPs and primary care teams

Department
of Health

Level 0 Long-term planning *All year*

- Consider the central community role of general practice, particularly in rural areas, and work with local resilience forums and other stakeholders in resilience planning
- Promote flu immunisation for both staff and patients*
- Discuss and agree with your local partners the arrangements for 'signposting' to other services such as affordable warmth and benefits
- Staff training should include sessions on seasonal weather and the identification of vulnerable individuals to help staff be more aware of: the effects of cold weather on health; those groups of patients likely to be most vulnerable; and how they can signpost patients onto other services
- Consider using opportunistic approaches to signpost appropriate patients to other services when they present for other reasons (see Figure 3.3, Cold Weather Plan). For example, flu jab clinics can be an opportunity to promote core public health messages with vulnerable individuals
- Discuss available tools and toolkits with practice and community nursing staff to aid systematic identification of vulnerable people

Level 1 Winter preparedness programme *1 November–31 March*

- Staff training should include a specific session on the Cold Weather Plan and cold weather resilience where required, relevant and appropriate to local conditions
- Consider how you can promote key public health messages in the surgery
- Consider how you can adapt your team's capacity to a possible surge in activity and/or disruptions in transport links; patient access to pharmaceutical supplies; etc.
- Get a flu jab to help protect yourself and your patients
- Use the start of the Cold Weather Alerts season as an opportunity to review business continuity arrangements

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

- Take advantage of clinical contacts to reinforce core public health messages about the effects of cold weather and cold homes on health
- Activate systems to help signpost patients to appropriate services from other agencies
- Consider how forecast weather conditions may impact on your work – and make appropriate arrangements. For example, how will it affect home visits and what alternatives are available?
- Your primary care team should, when making home visits, be broadly aware of the room temperature in the household and, if required, know how to advise on levels that are of concern and signpost to other services

GPs and Primary Care Teams (actions – cont'd)

Level 3 Response to severe winter weather – Severe weather action

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

- Work with other NHS and social care, community and voluntary organisations to ensure strategic coordination of response, taking into account the likely surge in demand for primary care in the days following a cold spell
- Be prepared to activate the business continuity plan
- Ensure that staff are aware of cold weather risks and are able to advise patients appropriately

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 actions as per Level 3 unless advised to the contrary

Examples of actions



Voluntary and Community Sector

 **Level 0**

Level 0 Long-term planning All year

- Work within your organisation and with partner organisations to ensure that systems are developed to support the identification and sharing of information between agencies of people who may be vulnerable to cold weather and other seasonal variations
- Systematically work to improve the resilience of vulnerable people to severe cold
- Ensure that all staff have been made aware of the Cold Weather Plan and the dangers of cold weather to health and know how to spot signs and symptoms

 **Actions for
Level 1**

Level 1 Winter preparedness programme 1 November–31 March

- Identify those at risk on your caseload and necessary changes to care plans for high-risk groups
- For those with multiple-agency inputs, ensure that the key worker is clearly identified
- Work with at-risk individuals, their families and carers to ensure that they are aware of the dangers of cold weather and cold housing and that they know how to keep warm
- Ensure that there are clear arrangements for 'signposting' those at-risk clients/patients to other services (e.g. home insulation schemes, benefits entitlements) when identified in 'clinical' situations or consultations (see also Figure 3.3, Cold Weather Plan)
- Work with partners to ensure that vulnerable patients and clients have access to fuel supplies. Link to energy supplier priority service registers as required.
- Ensure that clients and colleagues are aware of, and take advantage of, flu and other vaccination programmes
- Identify the resources available to you for raising awareness of the health risks associated with winter weather and cold housing (e.g. pharmacists have a key role in reminding people to have sufficient medicine and helping with preventive medicines management)

 **Actions for
Level 2**

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

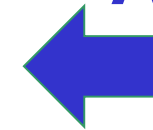
- As appropriate, contact those most at risk and implement care plans
- When making home visits, be aware of the room temperature in the household and be able to advise on recommended room temperatures (see Figure 3.2, Cold Weather Plan). Know how to signpost clients onto other services, especially for those at high risk
- Remind clients of the actions they can take to protect themselves from the effects of severe cold
- Consider how forecast weather conditions may impact on your work and make appropriate arrangements
- Make sure you and your teams are prepared for a potential influx of weather-related injuries and illnesses

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

- Implement local plans for contacting the vulnerable. If appropriate, consider daily visits or phone calls for high-risk individuals living on their own who have no regular contacts
- Ensure staff can help and advise clients
- Other actions as per Level 2
- Maintain business continuity

**Actions for
Level 3**

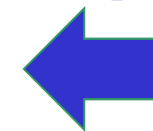


Level 4 Major incident – Emergency response

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**Actions for
Level 3**



Positive Ageing in
London (PAiL) -
13 December 2012

Warm Homes, Healthy People Fund



NHS



Met Office

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with the Met Office

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Benefits of housing improvements



- Improving housing conditions can lead to significant improvements in health and wellbeing (Howden-Chapman et al, 2007)

Better self-rated health	50% ↓ in fair/poor health
Fewer days off school	51% ↓
Fewer days off work	38% ↓
Fewer visits to GP	27% ↓

- A recent study showed that investing £1 in keeping homes warm could save the NHS up to 42p in health costs

(Liddell, 2008)

Warm Homes, Healthy People Fund

to support local authorities and their partners in reducing the levels of death and morbidity in England due to cold housing.

Warm Homes Healthy People Fund

keeping people warm in winter

“I cannot tell you how pleased Mum is with her Stay Warm things. She says the slippers are the best she has had in years as they grip her feet and keep her warm. Mum says that whoever put the pack together has really used a lot of thought and care, as all is so very useful”

WHHP fund recipient 2012

WHHP: Results of the Evaluation



- An independent ‘process’ evaluation was carried out by the Health Protection Agency
- From the survey results it is estimated that:
 - 130 000 - 200 000 residents in England received interventions delivered to their homes
 - Of these, 62% were older adults (>75)
 - 9000 - 15 000 residents received training (to understand the impacts of cold weather and protective measures)
 - 30 000 - 47 000 residents received benefits advice
 - 1 - 1.4 million residents received booklets/leaflets
 - 5300 - 9700 staff/volunteers received fuel poverty/cold weather awareness training

Warm Homes Healthy People Fund

examples



- **Emergency Heating & Heating supplements**
- **Warm Packs/ Hot Drinks/Soup**
- **Coordination/ Referral Systems**
- **Public Awareness & Communication**
- **Improving Energy Efficiency /Energy Advice**
- **Practical help & support**
- **Voucher Packs**
- **Training (Professionals/ Volunteers)**
- **Volunteer Network**
- **Community Engagement**

Warm Homes, Healthy People Fund

2012/ 2013

- 149 projects funded in 135 upper tier LAs
- Bids to the fund totalled £30m against £20m available
- All areas now notified of their allocation and implementing projects

Knowledge Hub



Information about all the projects can now be found on the Local Government Association (LGA) – Knowledge Hub

<https://knowledgehub.local.gov.uk>