

**HELP US
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STAY WELL THIS WINTER

Stay Well this winter Communications Toolkit 2021/22

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Background

For a number of years now, partners from the local health and social care system (including both statutory and non-statutory sectors) across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have collaborated to mitigate the risks associated with cold weather upon the health and wellbeing of our most vulnerable groups.

Purpose of this toolkit

An important element of this work is to ensure that over the course of the winter, partners communicate appropriate, correct, consistent and effective messaging, using a range of media to both the public, especially to those most at risk.

These messages provide them with the information and awareness that enables them to take preventative actions (getting a flu vaccination) and seek support in times of crisis (access grants for fuel poverty). An important element is signposting them to the sources of help and support provided by voluntary organisations and statutory authorities etc.

This toolkit also aims to support and safeguard those organisations with frontline staff out in the community.

Who should use this toolkit?

This toolkit should be used by statutory and non-statutory sectors, district councils, parish council's communication teams, provider services, frontline staff etc.

What does this toolkit consist of?

This toolkit contains a range of key messages that can be used across different media. They include tweets, Facebook posts and news articles that can be shared in community newsletters, internal messages and the media. The general messages and the articles can be used and shared throughout the winter period usually 1 November – 31 March but outside of these timeframes if necessary.

The Met Office issues cold weather alerts which are widely circulated. The toolkit includes messages related to different cold weather alerts. Please use these messages at the appropriate time indicated within this toolkit.

KEY MESSAGES

HELP US HELP YOU: STAY WELL 2021/22

National winter pressure messages

These messages are to be used in general communications to the public to increase people's understanding of the actions they can take to help the NHS to help them, take the best course of action and get well again sooner.

Flu Vaccination

- This year – winter 2021 the eligibility for a free flu vaccine has changed. The flu vaccine is given free on the NHS to people who:
 - are 50 and over (including those who'll be 50 by 31 March 2022)
 - have certain health conditions
 - are pregnant
 - are in long-stay residential care
 - receive a carer's allowance, or are the main carer for an older or disabled person who may be at risk if you get sick
 - live with someone who is more likely to get infections (such as someone who has HIV, has had a transplant or is having certain treatments for cancer, lupus or rheumatoid arthritis)
 - frontline health or social care workers

If you have a long-term health condition like COPD, bronchitis, emphysema, diabetes, heart or kidney disease, or have suffered a stroke; cold weather can make health problems like these much worse. If you start to feel unwell, don't put it off – contact your GP or pharmacist to get the flu jab now. It's free because you need it.

- The flu vaccine is also free for children who:
 - Who are aged 2 or 3 years on 31 August 2021 – born between 1 September 2017 and 31 August 2019
 - all primary school children (reception to year 6)
 - all year 7 to year 11 children in secondary school
 - children aged 2 to 17 years with long-term health conditions

If your child is aged between 6 months and 2 years and has a long-term health condition that makes them at higher risk from flu, they'll be offered a flu vaccine injection instead of the nasal spray.

If your child is eligible for a flu vaccine and has missed it, contact your GP surgery and they will advise you on how you can catch-up on any missed vaccinations.

Stay Well this winter

- Winter can be seriously bad for our health but there are a number of things you can do to keep you and your family well this winter. Visit [nhs.uk/staywell](https://www.nhs.uk/staywell) for helpful tips and advice.

Pharmacy First

- If you start to feel unwell, even if it is just a cough or cold, don't wait until it gets worse. Get the help and advice you need, and all without an appointment from your pharmacist. To find your nearest pharmacy, visit: www.nhs.uk/service-search/pharmacy/find-a-pharmacy

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NHS 111

- If you do need help over the holiday period when your GP surgery or pharmacy is closed, call NHS 111 to get the right medical attention urgently or visit www.nhs.uk which can direct you to a local service that is open.

Help to heat your home messages

These messages are to be used in general communications to the public throughout winter between November and March and include tips for staying warm, how to access grants and support in crisis.

Winter Fuel Payment 2021

- If you were born on or before 26th September 1955 you could get between £100 and £300 to help you pay your heating bills. This is known as a 'Winter Fuel Payment'. You will get your Winter Fuel Payment automatically (you do not need to claim) if you're eligible and either:
 - get the State Pension
 - get another social security benefit (not Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction, Child Benefit or Universal Credit)
 - If you've got a Winter Fuel Payment before, you do not need to claim again unless you've deferred your State Pension or moved abroad.
 - The deadline for you to make a claim for winter 2021 to 2022 is 31 March 2022.

Most payments are made automatically in November or December. You should get your money by 14 January 2022. For more info visit: www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment

Warm Home Discount Scheme 2021

- You could get £140 off your electricity bill for winter 2021 to 2022 under the Warm Home Discount Scheme. The money is not paid to you - it's a one-off discount on your electricity bill, between October and March. There are 2 ways to qualify for the Warm Home Discount Scheme. You will be eligible if:
 - you get the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit - known as the 'core group'
 - you're on a low income and meet your energy supplier's criteria for the scheme - known as the 'broader group'

To apply visit: www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme

Cold Weather Payment 2021

- The Cold Weather Payment scheme runs from 1 November 2021 to 31 March 2022. You'll get a payment if the average temperature in your area is recorded as, or forecast to be, zero degrees Celsius or below over 7 consecutive days. You'll get £25 for each 7 day period of very cold weather between 1 November and 31 March.

You may get Cold Weather Payments if you're getting:

- Pension Credit
- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Universal Credit
- Support for Mortgage Interest

For more information visit: www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment

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Household Support Fund

- On 30 September 2021, the government announced that vulnerable households across the country will be able to access a new £500 million support fund to help them with essentials over the winter. This funding covers the period 6 October 2021 to 31 March 2022 inclusive. Support is means tested and is offered in two ways:
 - Support with food, household energy and other essentials for individuals and families
 - Direct food voucher scheme

More information can be found at:

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/coronavirus/household-support-fund>

Local Winter Appeal Grant

- This winter, the appeal needs the help of the local community more than ever. The fuel crisis is set to take hold of the nation and one in eight homes in Cambridgeshire live in fuel poverty, meaning that they spend more than 10% of their income on fuel. This will lead to the terrible choice for many “eat or heat” this winter. Please support at <http://cambscf.org.uk>

UK Power Networks Priority Services Register

- Do you rely on medical equipment, refrigerated medicines, or have children under five in your household, then register on [UK Power Networks Priority Services Register](#) to ensure you receive extra support when you experience a power cut.

Be a good Neighbour:

- Check on older neighbours or relatives to make sure they are safe and well. Make sure they're warm enough, especially at night, and have stocks of food and medicines so they don't need to go out during very cold weather. If you're worried about an older person, contact a family member, your local council or ring the Age UK Cambridgeshire and Peterborough helpline on 0300 6669860 or speak to the national helpline on: 0800 678 1602. For more information visit: www.ageuk.org.uk

For simple advice on Energy bills:

- For advice on energy bills and energy efficiency, contact Simple Energy Advice: **0800 444202** / <https://www.simpleenergyadvice.org.uk/>

Winter holidays be prepared messages

- If you've been prescribed medication, don't forget to pick up your prescription before the winter holidays start. Many GPs and pharmacies will close over the holidays.

General 'How to stay well this winter' messages

Keeping seasonal coughs and colds at bay

Ask your pharmacist what medicines should be in your cabinet and how to help you and your family get through the winter season.

Many over-the-counter medicines (including paracetamol and ibuprofen) are available to relieve symptoms of common winter ailments such as cold, sore throat, cough, sinusitis or painful middle ear infection (earache). Always seek advice from your pharmacist at the first sign of a cough or cold before it gets more serious.

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Stay warm

It is important to keep warm in winter – both inside and outdoors. Keeping warm over the winter months can help to prevent colds, flu and more serious problems such as heart attacks, strokes, pneumonia and depression. To protect your health against the cold, follow these steps to keep yourself well and your home warm during winter:

Inside:

- Heat your home to at least 18C (65F). You might prefer your main living room to be slightly warmer.
- Draw curtains at dusk and keep doors closed to block out draughts
- Keep your bedroom window closed on winter nights – breathing cold air can be bad for your health as it increases the risk of chest infections.
- Layer your clothing. They trap warm air better than one bulky layer.

Outside:

- Keep active when you're indoors. Try not to sit still for more than an hour or so.
- Wear several layers of light clothes outside; they trap warm air better than one bulky layer.
- Wrap a scarf around your mouth to protect your lungs from the cold air
- Wear shoes with a good grip if you need to go outside.

Stay active

Keep active when you're indoors. Try not to sit still for more than an hour or so. Wear several layers of light clothes. They trap warm air better than one bulky layer.

Stay informed

Make sure you're receiving all the help that you're entitled to. Learn how to make your home more energy efficient, improve your heating and keep up with your energy bills at

www.gov.uk/government/publications/keep-warm-this-winter

And check your heating and cooking appliances are safe. Contact a Gas Safe registered engineer to make sure these are operating properly.

Catch it. Bin it. Kill it.

Flu is very infectious and spread by germs from coughs and sneezes, which can live on hands and surfaces for 24 hours.

To reduce the risk of spreading flu:

- use tissues to trap germs when you cough or sneeze
- wash your hands often with warm water and soap
- bin used tissues as quickly as possible

Be Prepared

The Met Office provides weather forecasts on radio and TV, so people can listen in to these bulletins regularly to keep up to date with the weather. Severe weather warnings are also issued on the Met Office website, through the Met Office Twitter feed, or you can call the Weather Desk on 0370 900 0100 or 01392 885 680.

The Met office also has advice on getting ready for winter. This includes suggestions for practical things you can do to prepare for winter weather, including cold, ice and snow, high winds and flooding.

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Look after others:

- Make sure you follow the COVID-19 [guidance](#) while looking out for others.
- All of the advice for looking after yourself can be used to plan how to help others.
- Check on frail or older neighbours or relatives, especially those living alone or who have serious illnesses to make sure they are safe, warm and well.
- Ask about living in a cold home and support vulnerable individuals to access existing resources to keep warm.
- Ensure that those at risk have homes heated to at least 18C and have plans in place to be able to check on others safely in advance of the cold weather (e.g. over the phone)

SOCAL MEDIA

COLD WEATHER ALERTS

The cold weather alert service comprises five levels (Levels 0-4), from year-round planning for cold weather, through winter and severe cold weather action, to a major national emergency. While these messages are divided into different levels of alert, the messages apply at whatever levels with the exception of the weather forecast.

#winterready for 'winter preparedness and action' alert levels 0 to 1

This phase is to encourage people to be alert, and prepare for cold, i.e. have flu jabs ahead of winter, ensure houses are properly insulated/ boilers serviced etc.

#weatheraware for 'weather warning' alerts levels 2 to 4

This phase is about preparing to take action and action – wearing more layers and non-slip shoes if you go out, clearing pavements, take action for weather alerts etc.

Level 1: Winter Preparedness

Level 1	Winter preparedness and action
#WinterReady	1 November – March 31

Level 1 Twitter – post throughout the winter

- Heating your home to at least 18C reduces the risk to health of someone wearing suitable winter clothing. #WeatherReady
- Older people are entitled to help with energy bill payments over winter – to find out more visit:
<https://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment/eligibility> #WeatherReady
- For info on assistance for older people (winter fuel payments & cold weather payments) see <https://www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment/overview> #WeatherReady
- Contact your landlord about ways to improve the energy efficiency of your home & staying warm in winter #WeatherReady
- Get your boilers, heaters & cookers regularly serviced by a registered engineer to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning #WeatherReady
- If cold weather is forecast, stock up on tinned and frozen foods, warm clothes and any medication #WeatherReady
- If you have a chimney or flue, ensure it is regularly checked for blockages and swept if needed #WeatherReady
- Look out for vulnerable people, prepare emergency contact numbers & protect water pipes from freezing by insulating them - follow social distancing [guidance](#) for Covid-19 #WeatherReady
- Tips to prevent illnesses associated with #coldweather from @NHS
<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/keep-warm-keep-well/>

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- Check the @MetOffice weather forecast before heading out. Be #WeatherReady for the cold, dress warmly, look out for vulnerable people & remember to follow Covid-19 social distancing [guidance](#).

Level 2: Severe Winter Weather is Forecast

Level 2 #WeatherAware	Severe winter weather is forecast – Alert and readiness <i>Temperature of 2°C or less for a period of at least 48 hours and/or widespread ice and heavy snow are predicted, with 60% confidence</i>
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Level 2 Twitter

- @UKHSA says be #WeatherAware and look out for vulnerable people but keep safe from [Covid-19](#). Stay tuned to @MetOffice forecasts as cold temperatures predicted
- Have plans in place to check on others safely in advance of the cold weather (e.g. by phone)
- Heating your home to at least 18C reduces the risk to health of someone wearing suitable winter clothing. #WeatherAware. Keeping curtains closed and tucked behind radiators helps to trap heat. Keep homes heated to at least 18C #WeatherAware
- When indoors, try not to sit still for more than an hour. Get up and stretch your legs #WeatherAware
- During #coldweather make sure you are stocked up with food and medicine to minimise the need to leave home #WeatherAware
- Keeping warm keeps you well: have regular hot meals & drinks, wear a few layers of thin clothing rather than 1 thick layer #WeatherAware
- Check @MetOffice forecasts, wear thin clothing layers rather than 1 thick one and soles with good grip if heading out #WeatherAware
- @MetOffice forecasts snow and ice this week. Top tips to clear snow and ice from pavements here #WeatherAware
- Limit time outdoors if you're at a higher risk of cold-related illness or falls #WeatherAware
- Get help if you need it. Call your GP, pharmacist, carer or health professional for advice #WeatherAware

Level 2 Facebook

Severe weather is forecast across England

Cold weather (or heavy snow and ice IF APPROPRIATE) is predicted to be widespread. Keep wrapped up warm and check on older people and neighbours. Talk to neighbours and friends about clearing snow and ice in front of your house and public walkways nearby if you can't do this yourself. Try to keep your home heated to at least 18C. [Follow COVID-19 guidance](#).

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Encourage those who may find it more difficult to cope in cold weather to request help through volunteer networks, for example the [Royal Voluntary Service website](#)

Advice on keeping warm is available from <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/winterhealth/Pages/KeepWarmKeepWell.aspx>

Level 3: Response to Severe Winter Weather

Level 3 #WeatherAware	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>
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Level 3 Twitter:

- @MetOffice says #coldweather across areas of **INSERT AREA AND TIME**. Keep yourself warm and look out for others, whilst following Covid-19 guidelines #WeatherAware
- Heating your home to at least 18C reduces the risk to health of someone wearing suitable winter clothing. #WeatherAware. @MetOffice issued #coldweather alerts across **INSERT PLACE**. Dress warmly, keep active and clear icy pavements if possible. #WeatherAware
- Throughout #winter, have plenty of warm food and drinks to keep you warm & safely check on vulnerable people #WeatherAware
- When indoors, try not to sit still for more than an hour. Get up and stretch your legs #WeatherAware
- IF APPROPRIATE With #ice & snow outside – if you can, clear your drive & paths to prevent accidents #WeatherAware
- @MetOffice forecasts #coldweather in **INSERT AREA AND TIME** Be #WeatherAware before going out, dress warmly, wear shoes with good grip

Level 3 Facebook:

Severe winter weather

The Met Office is urging caution during the severe weather conditions. Dress warmly, wear shoes with good grip if heading outside, and look out for vulnerable people. If able clear your drive & pathways to prevent accidents and keep your home heated to at least 18C if you can.

Ensure you have plenty of warm food and drinks to keep you warm. More info on <http://www.nhs.uk/LiveWell/Winterhealth/Pages/Winterhealthhome.aspx>

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Level 4: Major Incident, Emergency Response

Level 4

#WeatherAware

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

During a level 4 incident, all of the messages from Level 3 still apply; however, further messages are likely to follow from Central Government and the Cabinet Office. Please keep an eye on Cabinet Office's website and social media channels for these.

Cabinet Office updates:

- Visit website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/cabinet-office>
- Follow their twitter feed: <https://twitter.com/cabinetofficeuk>

Level 4 Twitter

Public messages:

- @MetOffice issued Level 4 #coldweather alert – More info on @cabinetofficeuk website #WeatherAware
- Heating your home to at least 18C reduces the risk to health of someone wearing suitable winter clothing. #WeatherAware IF APPROPRIATE With #ice & heavy snow across the country – if you can clear your drive & pathways prevent accidents #WeatherAware
- @MetOffice says #coldweather across areas of **INSERT AREA AND TIME** keep yourself warm and look out for others #WeatherAware
- @MetOffice forecasts severe #coldweather in **INSERT AREA AND TIME**. Be #WeatherAware before going out, dress warmly, wear shoes with good grip
- Throughout #winter, have plenty of warm food and drinks to keep you warm & check on vulnerable people #WeatherAware [Stay safe from Covid-19](#), follow social distancing guidance.
- @MetOffice issued Level 4 #coldweather alerts across **INSERT AREA**. Dress warmly, keep active and clear icy pavements if possible. #WeatherAware

Level 4 Facebook:

Severe cold weather – emergency response

Central Government has declared a major 'Level 4' cold weather incident due to the harsh weather conditions affecting England.

Take care and refer to the Cabinet Office's website for further instructions

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/cabinet-office>

Dress warmly, have plenty of warm food and drinks to keep warm and look out for vulnerable people.

(Insert advice/links relevant at the time) Follow [COVID-19 guidance](#).

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COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

This can be adapted and sent out to individuals, local communities and voluntary groups.

Stay Well This Winter Campaign

Visiting the pharmacist at the first signs of illness, staying warm and checking in on elderly neighbours and friends are just some of the ways you can 'help us help you' this winter.

Cold winter weather can affect your health. Every winter there are about 25,000 extra deaths caused by cold weather

Winter conditions are associated with an increase in injuries and illnesses such as heart attacks, strokes and pneumonia. It can be particularly harmful to those that are older, under the age of five or have a long term health condition such as heart, lung and kidney problems.

In winter, the number of A&E attendances increase substantially, putting an additional, but sometimes avoidable, burden on the NHS.

Cambridgeshire County Council / Peterborough City Council along with local partners is supporting the *Stay Well This Winter* campaign, which this year has evolved towards a new brand style called 'Help Us, Help You.' This is a joint initiative from NHS England and UK Health Security Agency based on the concept of reciprocity, encouraging people to take appropriate actions (be that getting the flu vaccination or accessing the appropriate service) to better enable the NHS to help them.

The campaign is encouraging the most vulnerable people in society – frail, older people and those with underlying health conditions – to take better care of their health as the colder months approach, by promoting self-care and driving an uptake of pre-emptive health measures.

Winter can be seriously bad for our health but there are a number of things you can do to keep you and your family well this winter:

- Keep warm and healthy by keeping rooms heated to at least 18C.
- Don't put off getting the flu vaccination. If you're eligible get it now. It's free because you need it.
- Look out for friends, relatives and neighbours who may be vulnerable to the cold.
- Stay tuned to the weather forecast and plan ahead with supplies.
- If you meet the criteria register for priority service with your energy and water suppliers.
- Have regular hot meals and drinks throughout the day and keep active to help you stay warm.
- Get financial support to make your home more energy efficient, improve your heating or help with bills.
- Have your heating and cooking appliances checked regularly.

Wear a few layers of thin clothing rather than one thick layer, and when you need to go outside wear shoes with slip resistant, good grip soles.

- Make sure rubber tips on the end of sticks have a good tread – when they wear smooth they can skid on wet surfaces and should be replaced.

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Where you can get help

- If you start to feel unwell, at the first sign of a winter illness, even if it is just a cough or cold, get advice from your pharmacist before it gets more serious.
- Make sure you speak to your pharmacists about medicines you should have in stock to help get you and your family through the winter season.
- Make sure you're receiving all the help to heat your home that you are entitled to. Find out more here: nhs.uk/staywell
- Keeping an eye out for elderly relatives and neighbours and supporting them in the cold weather can help them Stay Well This Winter.
- Help Us, Help You Stay Well This Winter. Visit nhs.uk/staywell for more information.
- Winter can be seriously bad for our health but there a number of things you can do to keep you and your family well this winter. Visit nhs.uk/staywell for helpful tips and advice.
- If you have a long-term health condition like: breathing problems; bronchitis, emphysema; diabetes; heart or kidney disease or have suffered a stroke, cold weather can make health problems like these far worse. If you start to feel unwell, at the first signs of symptoms of winter respiratory illness, even if it's just a cough or cold, get advice from your pharmacist, before it gets more serious.

Get financial support:

- there are grants, benefits and sources of advice to make your home more energy efficient, improve your heating or help with bills. It's worthwhile claiming all the benefits

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INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

To be sent out to frontline health and social care staff

Stay Well This Winter Campaign

As temperatures drop and the nights draw in, we want frontline teams working with vulnerable people and families to prepare for the cold weather and to look out for them when the cold snap hits.

Cold and wintry conditions are associated with an increase in injuries and illnesses such as heart attacks, strokes and pneumonia. It can be particularly harmful to those that are older, under the age of five or have a long term health condition such as heart, lung and kidney problems.

We are working with a range of local organisations to promote staying warm and well this winter. Partners include Care Network Cambridgeshire, Age UK Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group, and District Councils.

We will be sending cold weather alerts to frontline staff through team managers and at this time we would like you to be extra vigilant with your service users. Your support can help keep someone warm and well and out of hospital this winter.

In the run up to winter and when a cold snap occurs here are some top tips when meeting with service users for keeping warm them and well:

- Keep warm and healthy by keeping rooms heated to at least 18C.
- Don't put off getting the flu vaccination. If you're eligible get it now. It's free because you need it.
- Look out for friends, relatives and neighbours who may be vulnerable to the cold.
- Stay tuned to the weather forecast and plan ahead with supplies.
- If you meet the criteria register for priority service with your energy and water suppliers.
- Have regular hot meals and drinks throughout the day and keep active to help you stay warm.
- Get financial support to make your home more energy efficient, improve your heating or help with bills.
- Have your heating and cooking appliances checked regularly.
Wear a few layers of thin clothing rather than one thick layer, and when you need to go outside wear shoes with slip resistant, good grip soles.
- Make sure rubber tips on the end of sticks have a good tread – when they wear smooth they can skid on wet surfaces and should be replaced.

Help Us, Help You Stay Well This Winter. Visit nhs.uk/staywell for more information.

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NEWS RELEASES

To be sent out throughout the winter depending on the cold weather alert received. The Met Office Cold Weather alerts operate from November 1 to March 31. Organisations are able to sign up (if they haven't already) to receive these alerts directly with the Met Office.

Once the alert system is activated, UKHSA Regional Communications colleagues will work in partnership with local organisations to provide necessary advice and support on local communication activity which will be dependent on the level declared locally and nationally.

Level 1

Stay warm to stay well this Winter - for general release about the cold weather.

Visiting the pharmacist as first signs of illness, staying warm and checking in on elderly neighbours and friends are just some of the ways you can 'help us help you' this winter.

Cold winter weather can affect your health. Every winter there are about 25,000 extra deaths caused by cold weather – and around 240 of these are in Cambridgeshire alone.

Winter conditions are associated with an increase in injuries and illnesses such as heart attacks, strokes and pneumonia. It can be particularly harmful to those that are older, under the age of five or have a long term health condition such as heart, lung and kidney problems.

In winter, the number of A&E attendances increase substantially, putting an additional, but sometimes avoidable, burden on the NHS.

Cambridgeshire County Council along with local partners is supporting the *Stay Well This Winter* campaign, which this year has evolved towards a new brand style called 'Help Us, Help You.' This is joint initiative from NHS England and UKHSA based on the concept of reciprocity, encouraging people to take appropriate actions (be that getting the flu vaccination or accessing the appropriate service) to better enable the NHS to help them.

The campaign is encouraging the most vulnerable people in society – frail, older people and those with underlying health conditions – to take better care of their health as the colder months approach, by promoting self-care and driving an uptake of pre-emptive health measures.

Val Thomas, Consultant in Public Health at Cambridgeshire County Council, said: "If you have a long-term health condition like COPD, bronchitis, emphysema, diabetes, heart or kidney disease, or have suffered a stroke; cold weather can make health problems like these much worse.

"While winter can be seriously bad for our health but there are a number of things you can do to keep you and your family well this winter. If you start to feel unwell, even if it is just a cough or cold, don't wait until it gets more serious – get help from your pharmacist. The sooner you get advice the better – pharmacists are here to help you stay well this winter.

"It is important to keep warm in winter – both inside and outdoors as it can help to prevent colds, flu and more serious health problems, such as heart attacks, strokes pneumonia and depression. Heat your home to at least 18°C (65°F), if you can, you might prefer your living room to be slightly warmer.

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“We are also asking people to keep an eye out for elderly relatives and neighbours, and support them in the cold weather to help them Stay Well This Winter.”

There are a number of things which can help people prepare against the cold weather.

If you start to feel unwell, even if it is just a cough or cold, don't wait until it gets more serious – get help from your pharmacist. The sooner you get advice the better – pharmacists are here to help you stay well this winter.

If you have a long-term health condition like COPD, bronchitis, emphysema, diabetes, heart or kidney disease, or have suffered a stroke; cold weather can make health problems like these much worse. If you start to feel unwell, at the first signs of winter respiratory illness, even if it's just a cough or cold, get advice from your pharmacist, before it gets more serious.

If you've been prescribed medication, don't forget to pick up your prescription before the Christmas holidays start. Many GPs and pharmacies will close over the holidays.

If you do need help over the holiday period when your GP surgery or pharmacy is closed, call NHS 111 to get the right medical attention urgently or visit www.nhs.uk which can direct you to a local service that is open

The free flu vaccination is particularly important for those who are at increased risk from the effects of flu. These include people aged 65 and over, pregnant women and those with long-term health conditions like; bronchitis, diabetes; heart or kidney disease or for those who have suffered a stroke. Check if you are eligible here nhs.uk/staywell

If you are pregnant flu can cause serious complications for you and your baby - you could both get seriously ill. Vaccination is the safest way to help protect you and your baby against flu.

So don't put it off, ask your GP, pharmacist or midwife about the free flu jab today it's free because you need it, however many months pregnant you are and however fit and healthy you might feel.

The flu vaccine for children from 2 to 8 years old is just a quick nasal spray. For children aged 2 and 3 their nasal spray vaccine is available through their GP. School children from reception class through to year 4 will get their nasal spray through their school.

If you do need help over the holiday period when your GP surgery or pharmacy is closed, call NHS 111 or visit www.nhs.uk.

Help Us, Help You Stay Well This Winter. Visit nhs.uk/staywell for more information.

Top advice to keep warm and well this winter:

- Keep warm and healthy by keeping rooms heated to at least 18C.
- Don't put off getting the flu vaccination. If you're eligible get it now. It's free because you need it.
- Look out for friends, relatives and neighbours who may be vulnerable to the cold.
- Stay tuned to the weather forecast and plan ahead with supplies.
- If you meet the criteria register for priority service with your energy and water suppliers.
- Have regular hot meals and drinks throughout the day and keep active to help you stay warm.
- Get financial support to make your home more energy efficient, improve your heating or help with bills.

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- Have your heating and cooking appliances checked regularly. Wear a few layers of thin clothing rather than one thick layer, and when you need to go outside wear shoes with slip resistant, good grip soles.
- Make sure rubber tips on the end of sticks have a good tread – when they wear smooth they can skid on wet surfaces and should be replaced.

Follow #winterready and #weatheraware on Twitter for winter health advice.

Level 2

Health experts are urging people to look out for others, to keep warm indoors and to take care when out and about as the Met Office has forecast severe wintry conditions for Cambridgeshire.

Over the [insert period] temperatures of [insert] are expected for [insert area] and/ or [weather type eg. widespread ice / snow etc] predicted triggering a Level 2 Cold Weather Alert in [regions affected].

Severe cold weather can be very harmful, especially for people aged 65 or older, the very young or those with chronic disease.

Val Thomas, Consultant in Public Health at Cambridgeshire County Council, said: “It’s so important to remember that cold does kill, even in places where the temperatures aren’t at their lowest. Most of our advice on keeping warm in cold weather may seem like common sense, it’s important that we make the point that people should think about how cold can affect them.

“If indoors, keep your heating to the right temperature as heating your home to at least 18°C in winter poses minimal risk to your health when you are wearing suitable clothing. Try to avoid going out in cold icy weather but if you do need to go outside wear shoes with slip resistant grip, good grip soles and wear a few layers of thin clothing rather than one thick layer.

“We are also asking everyone to remember the needs of friends, relatives and neighbours who could be at risk during this period of cold weather. If you, or they, are eligible for a flu vaccination make sure you get it as soon as you can.”

Help Us, Help You Stay Well This Winter. Visit nhs.uk/staywell for more information.

Follow #winterready and #weatheraware on Twitter for winter health advice.

Top tips to keep warm during cold weather:

Keep your home warm, efficiently and safely:

- heating your home to at least 18°C in winter poses minimal risk to your health when you are wearing suitable clothing (see page 40 for full advice).
- get your heating system and cooking appliances checked and keep your home well ventilated
- use your electric blanket as instructed and get it tested every 3 years

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- never use a hot water bottle with an electric blanket
- do not use a gas cooker or oven to heat your home; it is inefficient and there is a risk of carbon monoxide poisoning and this can kill
- make sure you have a supply of heating oil or LPG or solid fuel if you are not on mains gas or electricity – to make sure you do not run out in winter

Keep in the warmth by:

- fitting draught proofing to seal any gaps around windows and doors
- making sure you have loft insulation. And if you have cavity walls, make sure they are insulated too
- insulate your hot water cylinder and pipes
- draw your curtains at dusk to help keep heat generated inside your rooms
- make sure your radiators are not obstructed by furniture or curtains

Look after yourself:

- food is a vital source of energy and helps to keep your body warm so have plenty of hot food and drinks
- aim to include 5 daily portions of fruit and vegetables. Tinned and frozen vegetables count toward your 5 a day
- stock up on tinned and frozen foods so you don't have to go out too much when it's cold or icy
- exercise is good for you all year round and it can keep you warm in winter
- if possible, try to move around at least once an hour. But remember to speak to your GP before starting any exercise plans
- wear lots of thin layers – clothes made from cotton, wool or fleecy fibres are particularly good and maintain body heat
- wear good-fitting slippers with a good grip indoors and shoes with a good grip outside to prevent trips, slips and falls
- make sure you have spare medication in case you are unable to go out
- check if you are eligible for inclusion on the priority services register operated by your water and power supplier

Look after others:

- Check on older neighbours or relatives, especially those living alone or who have serious illnesses to make sure they are safe, warm and well

Get financial support:

- There are grants, benefits and sources of advice to make your home more energy efficient, improve your heating or help with bills. It's worthwhile claiming all the benefits you are entitled to before winter sets in

Level 3

With temperatures set to plummet over the next [insert time period], Cambridgeshire health experts are urging people to look out for others as the cold weather bites.

A Level 3 Cold Weather Alert has been triggered in [regions affected] as temperatures of [insert]] and/ or [weather type eg. widespread ice / snow etc] are forecast.

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Severe cold weather can be very harmful, especially for people aged 65 or older, the very young or those with chronic disease.

Val Thomas, Consultant in Public Health at Cambridgeshire County Council, said:

“It is really important to keep warm during this cold weather – both inside and outdoors as it can help to prevent colds, flu and more serious health problems, such as heart attacks, strokes pneumonia and depression. Cold weather can be very harmful, especially for people aged 65 or older: it weakens the immune system, increases blood pressure, thickens the blood, and lowers body temperature; increasing the risk of high blood pressure, heart attacks, strokes, and chest infections.

“Wear a few layers of thin clothing rather than one thick layer when out and about, and when you need to go outside wear shoes with slip resistant, good grip soles. If indoors, keep your heating to the right temperature as heating your home to at least 18°C in winter poses minimal risk to your health when you are wearing suitable clothing.

“Older neighbours, relatives, friends and other elderly members of the community are more vulnerable in the winter months and may need a bit of extra help this winter, so make sure you keep in touch, check if they are feeling under the weather, help them stock up on food supplies and make sure they have the necessary medication during this spell of bad weather.”

Help Us, Help You Stay Well This Winter. Visit nhs.uk/staywell for more information. Follow #winterready and #weatheraware on Twitter for winter health advice.

Top tips to keep warm during cold weather:

Keep your home warm, efficiently and safely:

- heating your home to at least 18°C in winter poses minimal risk to your health when you are wearing suitable clothing (see page 40 for full advice).
- get your heating system and cooking appliances checked and keep your home well ventilated
- use your electric blanket as instructed and get it tested every 3 years
- never use a hot water bottle with an electric blanket
- do not use a gas cooker or oven to heat your home; it is inefficient and there is a risk of carbon monoxide poisoning and this can kill
- make sure you have a supply of heating oil or LPG or solid fuel if you are not on mains gas or electricity – to make sure you do not run out in winter

Keep in the warmth by:

- fitting draught proofing to seal any gaps around windows and doors
- making sure you have loft insulation. And if you have cavity walls, make sure they are insulated too
- insulate your hot water cylinder and pipes
- draw your curtains at dusk to help keep heat generated inside your rooms
- make sure your radiators are not obstructed by furniture or curtains

Look after yourself:

- food is a vital source of energy and helps to keep your body warm so have plenty of hot food and drinks
- aim to include 5 daily portions of fruit and vegetables. Tinned and frozen vegetables count toward your 5 a day

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- stock up on tinned and frozen foods so you don't have to go out too much when it's cold or icy
- exercise is good for you all year round and it can keep you warm in winter
- if possible, try to move around at least once an hour. But remember to speak to your GP before starting any exercise plans
- wear lots of thin layers – clothes made from cotton, wool or fleecy fibres are particularly good and maintain body heat
- wear good-fitting slippers with a good grip indoors and shoes with a good grip outside to prevent trips, slips and falls
- make sure you have spare medication in case you are unable to go out
- check if you are eligible for inclusion on the priority services register operated by your water and power supplier

Look after others:

- check on older neighbours or relatives, especially those living alone or who have serious illnesses to make sure they are safe, warm and well

Get financial support:

- there are grants, benefits and sources of advice to make your home more energy efficient, improve your heating or help with bills. It's worthwhile claiming all the benefits you are entitled to before winter sets in

Level 4

People are being urged to dress warmly, have plenty of warm food and drinks and look out for vulnerable relatives and neighbours as a prolonged spell of severe cold weather sweeps the county.

The Government has declared a major 'Level 4' cold weather alert in [insert area] due to the harsh weather conditions affecting the country.

[Insert line about weather forecast here]

Severe cold weather can be very harmful, especially for people aged 65 or older, the very young or those with chronic disease.

Val Thomas, Deputy Director of Public Health at Cambridgeshire County Council, said: "It is vital that during this prolonged period of severe weather, people act to keep themselves and their home warm. Cold weather can be very harmful, especially for people aged 65 or older: it weakens the immune system, increases blood pressure, thickens the blood, and lowers body temperature; increasing the risk of high blood pressure, heart attacks, strokes, and chest infections.

"If indoors, keep your heating to the right temperature as heating your home to at least 18°C in winter poses minimal risk to your health when you are wearing suitable clothing.

"We're also urging people to assist their members of their local community, who could be at risk during this period of severe cold weather. Make sure they know what to do to stay warm and are well stocked with food and medications. If you, or they, are eligible for a flu vaccination make sure you get it as soon as you can."

Help Us, Help You Stay Well This Winter. Visit nhs.uk/staywell for more information.



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Follow #WinterReady and #WeatherAware on Twitter for winter health advice.

Top tips to keep warm during cold weather:

Keep your home warm, efficiently and safely:

- heating your home to at least 18°C in winter poses minimal risk to your health when you are wearing suitable clothing (see page 40 for full advice).
- get your heating system and cooking appliances checked and keep your home well ventilated
- use your electric blanket as instructed and get it tested every 3 years
- never use a hot water bottle with an electric blanket
- do not use a gas cooker or oven to heat your home; it is inefficient and there is a risk of carbon monoxide poisoning and this can kill
- make sure you have a supply of heating oil or LPG or solid fuel if you are not on mains gas or electricity – to make sure you do not run out in winter

Keep in the warmth by:

- fitting draught proofing to seal any gaps around windows and doors
- making sure you have loft insulation. And if you have cavity walls, make sure they are insulated too
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- make sure your radiators are not obstructed by furniture or curtains

Look after yourself:

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- exercise is good for you all year round and it can keep you warm in winter
- if possible, try to move around at least once an hour. But remember to speak to your GP before starting any exercise plans
- wear lots of thin layers – clothes made from cotton, wool or fleecy fibres are particularly good and maintain body heat
- wear good-fitting slippers with a good grip indoors and shoes with a good grip outside to prevent trips, slips and falls
- make sure you have spare medication in case you are unable to go out
- check if you are eligible for inclusion on the priority services register operated by your water and power supplier

Look after others:

- check on older neighbours or relatives, especially those living alone or who have serious illnesses to make sure they are safe, warm and well

Get financial support:

- there are grants, benefits and sources of advice to make your home more energy efficient, improve your heating or help with bills. It's worthwhile claiming all the benefits you are entitled to before winter sets in

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[Approval protocol](#)

Where possible, only approved messages and content should be used for this campaign. However, circumstances and situations do change and if something different is required, for approval please email both Matthew.Hall@cambridgeshire.gov.uk sion.james@cambridgeshire.gov.uk and Val.Thomas@cambridgeshire.gov.uk