

Summary cold weather actions for health and social care organisations and professionals, communities and individuals

	Level 0	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
	Long-term planning <i>All Year</i>	Winter preparedness and action <i>1 November to 31 March</i>	Severe winter weather forecast – Alert and readiness <i>Mean temperatures of 2°C and/or widespread ice and heavy snow predicted with 60% confidence</i>	Severe weather action <i>Mean temperatures of 2°C and/or widespread ice and heavy snow</i>	Major incident – Emergency response
Commissioners of health and social care	1) Take strategic approach to reduction of EWDs and fuel poverty. 2) Ensure winter plans reduce health inequalities. 3) Work with partners and staff on risk reduction awareness (eg flu vaccinations, signposting for winter warmth initiatives.	1) Communicate alerts and messages to staff/public/media. 2) Ensure partners are aware of alert system and actions. 3) Identify which organisations are most vulnerable to cold weather and agree winter surge plans.	1) Continue level 1 actions. 2) Ensure partners can access advice and make best use of available capacity. 3) Activate business continuity arrangements as required.	1) Continue level 2 actions. 2) Ensure key partners are taking appropriate action. 3) Work with partners to ensure access to critical services.	Level 4 alert issued at national level in light of cross-government assessment of the weather conditions, coordinated by the Civil Contingencies Secretariat (CCS) based in the Cabinet Office. All level 3 responsibilities to be maintained unless advised to the contrary.
Provider organisations	1) Ensure organisation can identify and support most vulnerable. 2) Plan for joined up support with partner organisations. 3) Work with partners and staff on risk reduction awareness (eg flu vaccinations, signposting for winter warmth initiatives.	1) Ensure cold weather alerts are going to right staff and actions agreed and implemented. 2) Ensure staff in all settings are considering room temperature. 3) Ensure data sharing and referral arrangements in place.	1) Continue level 1 actions. 2) Ensure carers receiving support and advice. 3) Activate business continuity arrangements as required; plan for surge in demand.	1) Continue level 2. 2) Implement emergency and business continuity plans; expect surge in demand in near future. 3) Implement local plans to ensure vulnerable people contacted.	
Frontline staff – care facilities and community	1) Use patient contact to identify vulnerable people and advise of cold weather actions; be aware of referral mechanisms for winter warmth and data sharing procedures. 2) Ensure awareness of health effects of cold and how to spot symptoms. 3) Encourage colleagues/clients to have flu vaccinations.	1) Identify vulnerable clients on caseload; ensure care plans incorporate cold risk reduction. 2) Check room temperatures and ensure referral as appropriate. 3) Signpost clients to other services using 'Keep Warm Keep Well' booklet.	1) Continue level 1 actions. 2) Consider prioritising those most vulnerable and provide advice as appropriate. 3) Check room temperatures and ensure urgent referral as appropriate.	1) Continue level 2 actions. 2) Implement emergency and business continuity plans; expect surge in demand in near future. 3) Prioritise those most vulnerable.	
GPs and their staff	1) Be aware of emergency planning measures relevant to general practice. 2) Ensure staff aware of local services to improve warmth in the home including the identification of vulnerable individuals. 3) Signpost appropriate patients to other services when they present for other reasons.	1) Consider using a cold weather scenario as a table top exercise to test business continuity arrangements. 2) Be aware of systems to refer patients to appropriate services from other agencies. 3) When making home visits, be aware of the room temperature.	1) Continue level 1 actions. 2) Take advantage of clinical contacts to reinforce public health messages about cold weather and cold homes on health. 3) When prioritising visits, consider vulnerability to cold as a factor in decision making.	1) Continue level 2 actions. 2) Expect surge in demand near future. 3) Ensure staff aware of cold weather risks and can advise appropriately.	

The Cold Weather Plan for England 2013: Protecting health and reducing harm from cold weather

	Level 0	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Community and voluntary sector	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Engage with local statutory partners to agree how CVS can contribute to local community resilience arrangements. 2) Develop a community emergency plan to identify and support vulnerable neighbours. 3) Agree arrangements with other community groups to maximise service for and contact with vulnerable people. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Test community emergency plans to ensure that roles, responsibilities and actions are clear. 2) Set up rotas of volunteers to keep the community safe in cold weather and check on vulnerable people. 3) Actively engage with vulnerable people and support them to seek help. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Activate the community emergency plan. 2) Activate the business continuity plan. 3) Continue to actively engage vulnerable people known to be at risk and check on welfare regularly. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Continue level 2 actions. 2) Ensure volunteers are appropriately supported. 3) Contact vulnerable people to ensure they are safe and well and support them to seek help if necessary. 	<p>Level 4 alert issued at national level in light of cross-government assessment of the weather conditions, coordinated by the Civil Contingencies Secretariat (CCS) based in the Cabinet Office.</p> <p>All level 3 responsibilities to be maintained unless advised to the contrary</p>
National level	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) CO will lead on co-ordinating cross-government work; individual government departments will work with partners on winter preparations. 2) DH, PHE and NHS England will look to improve the CWP and the monitoring and analysis of winter-related illness and deaths. 3) PHE and NHS England will issue general advice to the public and professionals and work closely with other government departments and other national organisations that produce winter warmth advice. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Cold Weather Alerts will be sent by the Met Office to the agreed list of organisations and Category 1 responders. 2) PHE and NHS England will make advice available to the public and professionals. 3) NHS England will continue to hold health services to account for action and PHE will routinely monitor syndromic, influenza, norovirus and mortality surveillance data. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Continue level 1 actions. 2) DH will ensure that other government departments, particularly DCLG RED, are aware of the change in alert level and brief ministers as appropriate. 3) Government departments should cascade the information through their own partner networks and frontline communication systems. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Continue level 2 actions. 2) NHS England will muster mutual aid when requested by local services. 3) Met Office will continue to monitor and forecast temperatures in each area, including the probability of other regions exceeding the level 3 threshold. 	
Individuals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Seek good advice about improving the energy efficiency of your home and staying warm in winter; have all gas, solid fuel and oil burning appliances serviced by an appropriately registered engineer. 2) Check your entitlements and benefits; seek income maximisation advice and other services. 3) Get a flu jab if you are in a risk group (September/October). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) If you are receiving social care or health services ask your GP, key worker or other contact about staying healthy in winter and services available to you. 2) Check room temperatures – especially those rooms where disabled or vulnerable people spend most of their time 3) Look out for vulnerable neighbours and help them prepare for winter. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Continue to have regular contact with vulnerable people and neighbours you know to be at risk in cold weather. 2) Stay tuned into the weather forecast ensure you are stocked with food and medications in advance. 3) Take the weather into account when planning your activity over the following days. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Continue level 2 actions. 2) Dress warmly; take warm food drinks regularly; keep active. If you have to go out, take appropriate precautions. 3) Check on those you know are at risk. 	<p>Follow key public health and weather alert messages as broadcast on the media.</p>