

Cold Weather Plan for England 2013

SUMMARY

- 1.1 The impact of cold weather on health is recognised as a major public health challenge, with associated increasing winter pressures on all services.

There are too many avoidable deaths each year. Cold temperatures predominantly affect older age groups, children and those with chronic illnesses. Approximately 40% of cold-related mortality is due to cardiovascular disease and 33% to respiratory disease. Snow and ice have smaller but direct effects through rising falls and injuries.

The causes are complex, linked with fuel poverty, poor housing, and health inequalities, as well as circulating infectious diseases and the extent of snow and ice.

- 1.2 The Cold Weather Plan for England 2013 aims to prevent avoidable harm to health by alerting people to the negative health effects of the cold weather and enabling them to prepare and respond accordingly.

The plan builds on those of previous years to:

- highlight the increasing emphasis of the importance of year round planning and winter preparedness, based on evidence that the total greatest burden on health occurs at relatively moderate cold temperatures
- emphasise the distinction between health effects and interventions for low temperatures and those for snow and ice
- advise organisations to seek assurance that local plans, systems, staff training, cold weather alert cascade systems and resilience planning have been adapted and tested in line with recent organisational changes

- 1.3 A large number of agencies and organisations have worked in partnership across Derby city over the last few years to deliver a range of services, interventions and practical help as part of the Affordable Warmth Strategy and to deliver key Public Health messages around staying warm. However external funding from the Department of Health which supported this work is not available for 2013/14. This leads to concerns that the services will be more restricted for 2013/14 and vulnerable people will be at risk of health effects from the cold weather. Increasing fuel costs may also increase the number of people at risk.

Local resilience plans are also in place to address responses to severe winter weather and ensure business continuity.

A presentation will be made to the Board to provide fuller details regarding the

arrangements in place for 2013/14.

RECOMMENDATION

2.1 The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to:

- Note the recommendations of the Cold Weather Plan 2013 and the local systems and planning arrangements currently in place
- Seek assurance that the plan and the Cold Weather alert service is understood across Derby and that local plans, systems, staff training, cold weather alert cascade systems and resilience planning have been adapted and tested in line with recent organisational changes

2.2 Support the strong local leadership and partnership working by:

- Including the reduction of cold-related harm in the JSNA and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Including longer term strategic preparation for cold winter and climate change as part of an all-year work programme
- Adopting a system-wide approach to assess ways in which partnership working can be enhanced to make the most effective and efficient use of resources

2.3 Monitor effectiveness of systems and plans by:

- Reviewing “Lessons Learnt” after the winter season regarding performance and robustness of plans
- Monitoring the Public Health Outcomes Framework indicators to reduce winter excess deaths and address fuel poverty

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

3.1 To provide assurance to the Health and Wellbeing Board that local winter plans are in place to reduce avoidable illness and death due to the cold weather and local organisations are aware of their responsibilities following changes made to health and social care in April 2013.

To reduce avoidable deaths and associated winter pressures on services provided by Hospitals and emergency services, Primary, Community and Social care.

To highlight the importance of long-term strategic planning and commissioning.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

4.1 A presentation will be made to the Board to provide fuller details regarding the arrangements in place for 2013/14.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 None

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer Financial officer Human Resources officer Service Director(s) Other(s)	Derek Ward, Director of Public Health
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For more information contact: Background papers: List of appendices:	Suzanne Meredith, Speciality Registrar in Public Health Presentation to the Health and Wellbeing Board Appendix 1: Implications Appendix 2: Joint letter from Public Health England, Local Government Association and NHS England dated 25 th October 2013 re Cold Weather Plan for England 2013 Appendix 3: Cold Weather Plan for England 2013: Summary cold weather actions for organisations, communities and individuals
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IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

- 1.1 Local implantation of the cold weather plan could have associated cost savings in terms of reducing the numbers of people with serious illnesses requiring health and social care. Plans should take into account cost/benefits and make the most effective and efficient use of shared resources by working together in partnership across agencies and the community.

Legal

- 2.1 The Cold Weather plan 2013 is good practice guidance.

Personnel

- 3.1 Staff across all organisations should be made aware of the plan, the health risks from cold weather and their role in identifying and supporting vulnerable, at risk people.

Equalities Impact

- 4.1 The most at risk groups are identified and supported as part of local plans.

Health and Safety

- 5.1 Implementing the cold weather plan will reduce the numbers of avoidable illness and death due to the cold weather. This includes falls and seasonal flu vaccination programmes.

Environmental Sustainability

- 6.1 None

Asset Management

- 7.1 None

Risk Management

- 8.1 The risks of cold weather on health and severe weather in terms of business continuity are mitigated by the measures put in place through local plans.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 9.1 The Cold Weather Plan contributes to the priorities of Good health and well-being and Being safe and feeling safe.

