

Cold Weather Health Watch Action Card

Commissioners of Health & Social Care and Local Authorities

Level 0: Year-round planning - all year

- Work with partner agencies to ensure that cold weather planning features within wider winter resilience planning.
- Work with partners to ensure a strategic approach to the reduction of 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, target high risk groups and address the wider determinants of health.
- Ensure that organisations and staff are prompted to signpost vulnerable clients onwards (eg for energy efficiency measures, benefits or related advice).
- Work with partners and staff on risk reduction awareness (eg 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 & action programme - 1 November to 31 March

- Communicate public health media messages.
- Consider the revisions to the CWP and ensure that the changes are understood across the system. Work with partner agencies to co-ordinate 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 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 local and national CWP.
- Ensure that organisations and staff are prompted to signpost vulnerable clients onwards (eg 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.

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Level 2: Severe winter weather is forecast - Alert and readiness

Mean temperatures of 2°C and/or widespread ice and heavy snow is predicted with 60% confidence

- Continue to communicate public health messages.
- Communicate alerts to staff and make sure that they can take appropriate actions.
- Ensure partners, including all managers of care, residential & nursing homes are aware of the alerts and can access advice.
- Support local VCS 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 (eg 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

Mean temperatures of 2°C and/or widespread ice and heavy snow

- Continue to communicate public health 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 voluntary and community sector organisations to mobilise community emergency plans.
- Ensure continuity arrangements are working with provider organisations.
- Work with partner agencies (eg transport) to ensure road/ 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.

Response likely to involve:

- National government departments
- Executive agencies
- Public sector, including health sector
- Voluntary and community sector

All level 3 responsibilities must be maintained during a level 4 incident

Implementation of national emergency response arrangements by central government