



Level 0: Long-term planning – All year

- seek good advice about improving the energy efficiency of your home and staying warm in winter; undertake energy efficiency improvements to your home or encourage your landlord to do so
- seek advice from your local authority environmental health department if as a tenant your heating is defective or you cannot affordably heat your home
- check your entitlements and benefits; seek income maximisation advice to get benefits and other services; seek advice from your fuel supplier or local advice provider if you have fuel debt or difficulties paying for or affording sufficient fuel
- ask your fuel supplier about their Priority Service Register for vulnerable customers, what this provides and if you are eligible
- check that your heating is working properly; make sure that you have access to sufficient fuel supplies for the winter period especially if you rely on oil, LPG or wood deliveries. Consider alternative heating measures if required
- have all gas, solid fuel and oil burning appliances (ie boilers, heaters and cookers) serviced by an appropriately registered engineer. Malfunctioning appliances can release carbon monoxide – a gas that can kill. Have flues and chimneys checked for blockages and swept if needed. Fit an audible carbon monoxide alarm (EN50291 compliant)
- get a flu vaccination if you are in a risk group (September/October)

Level 1: Winter preparedness and action programme – 1 November to 31 March

- find good information about health risks. Try NHS choices at www.nhs.uk
- 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. Make sure you have a list of emergency numbers if you need to call for assistance or advice during cold weather
- check room temperatures – especially those rooms where disabled or vulnerable people spend most of their time. Homes should be heated to at least 18°C to minimise risk to health
- if you or someone else is likely to be restricted to one room during the winter period or during a cold spell make sure that it can be kept at or above recommended temperatures (which are at least 18°C to minimise risk to health) and that you plan what resources you/they need to keep them safe and warm – seek energy advice as necessary
- protect water pipes from freezing by insulating them
- look out for vulnerable neighbours and help them prepare for winter (eg with key contact numbers for emergency situations). Ensure they have access to warm food and drinks and are managing to heat their home adequately
- consider other preventive action you can take (eg perhaps volunteering to help implement the community emergency plan)
- consider using the Keep Warm, Keep Well booklet for up-to-date information and advice for patients

Cold Weather Plan for England: Action cards for Cold Weather Alert Service

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

- continue to have regular contact with vulnerable people and neighbours you know to be at risk in cold weather – ensure they have access to warm food and drinks and are managing to heat their home adequately. Homes should be heated to at least 18°C to minimise risk to health
- stay tuned into the weather forecast, and ensure you are stocked with food and medications in advance (have deliveries or ask a friend to help)
- take the weather into account when planning your activity over the following days. Avoid exposing yourself to cold or icy outdoor conditions if you are at a higher risk of cold-related illness or falls
- discuss with friends and neighbours about clearing snow and ice from in front of your house and public walkways nearby, if you are unable to do this yourself

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

- stay tuned into the weather forecast
- heating your room to at least 18°C in winter poses minimal risk to your health when you are wearing suitable clothing
- if you have to go out, dress warmly and wear non-slip shoes. Tell someone where you are going and when you will get back. Keep your mobile phone (if you have one) on you and charged
- dress warmly, eat warm food and take warm drinks regularly; keep active
- check on those you know are at risk
- if you are concerned about your own health or that of other people, alert emergency services
- clear pavements of ice or snow if you are able and it is essential

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
- implementation of national emergency response arrangements by central government
- follow key public health and weather alert messages as broadcast on the media

The Cold Weather Plan for England and associated documents can be accessed at:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/cold-weather-plan-for-england