



Public Health
England



**To: Local Authority Chief Executives
Local Authority Directors of Public Health
NHS England Area Teams
Clinical Leads of Clinical Commissioning Groups**

CC: Accountable Officers of CCGs, LA Emergency Planning Officers, NHS Trust CEs, NHS Foundation Trust CEs, NHS Trust Medical Directors, NHS Trust Nursing Directors, Foundation Trust Medical Directors, GPs, Directors of Housing and Planning, Directors of Adult Social Services, Directors of Children Social Services, DCLG Resilience and Emergencies Division and Local Resilience Forums, PHE Region and Centre Directors, Cabinet Office Civil Contingencies Secretariat, Healthwatch England CE, Monitor CE, Care Quality Commission CE, Professional Bodies (RCGP, RCP, RPSGB, RCN, CPHVA, FPH), Carers UK

PHE publications gateway number: 2014380

NHS England publications gateway number: 02402

21 October 2014

Re: COLD WEATHER PLAN FOR ENGLAND 2014: *Protecting health and reducing harm from cold weather*

The Cold Weather Plan for England 2014 has been released today. Recommended steps and key changes to this year's edition are summarised below.

The following documents are available online at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cold-weather-plan-for-england>

- The Cold Weather Plan for England 2014
- Making the Case: why long-term strategic planning for cold weather is essential for health and wellbeing
- "Action cards" based on the plan
- Four page summary document (new edition this year and will be published shortly after the Cold Weather Plan)

Recommended steps

The plan is a good practice guide and the actions denoted within it are illustrative. There are five key messages we recommend to all local areas:

1. All local organisations should consider this document and satisfy themselves that the suggested actions and Cold Weather Alerts are understood across the system, and that **local plans are adapted as appropriate** to the local context.
2. NHS and local authority commissioners should satisfy themselves that the distribution of **Cold Weather Alerts will reach those that need to take action**, especially in light of recent structural changes.
3. NHS and local authority commissioners should satisfy themselves that **providers and stakeholders will take appropriate action** according to the Cold Weather Alert level in place and their professional judgements.
4. Opportunities should be taken for closer partnership working with the **voluntary and community sector** to help reduce vulnerability and to support the planning and response to cold weather.
5. Long-term planning and commissioning to reduce cold-related harm is considered **core business by health and wellbeing boards** and should be included in joint strategic needs assessments and joint health and wellbeing strategies.

Summary of key changes to the Cold Weather Plan for England 2014

Following consultation with partners, the Cold Weather Plan 2014-15 remains largely the same as 2013-14, with only the following essential changes to content:

- revision of the indoor temperature guidance in light of a recent literature review and stakeholder consultation to a broad minimum temperature threshold for homes in winter of at least 18°C (65F), with additional flexibility of advice for vulnerable groups and healthy people
- updating the advice on flu vaccination to be consistent with this year's recommendations
- publication of a 4-page stand-alone electronic brochure containing the key actions to reduce the harm from cold this winter: 'Making Every Contact Count for Winter' This will be made available shortly after the Cold Weather Plan on the same webpage.

As in previous years, we would like to take the opportunity to emphasise the actions to be taken at level 0 (year round planning) and level 1 (winter preparedness and action) which are aimed at preventing the greatest burden of morbidity and mortality.

In addition, the distribution list for the cold weather alerts is now being managed directly by the Met Office. For New registrations and amendments to existing

registrations please contact the Met Office using Enquiries@metoffice.gov.uk providing the information requested on the final page of this letter. Existing users (and those who updated their details ahead of the heat-health watch) do not need to re-register.

Background

Despite the warming effects of climate change, cold weather remains, the biggest cause of weather related mortality in England. The Cold Weather Plan for England ('the plan') aims to prevent avoidable harm to health, by alerting people to the negative health effects of cold weather, and enabling them to prepare and respond appropriately.

The plan recommends a series of steps, to be taken throughout the year, to reduce the risks to health from cold weather for:

- the NHS, local authorities, social care, and other public agencies
- professionals working with people at risk
- individuals, local communities and voluntary groups

The plan is published by Public Health England but developed in partnership with the Department of Health, NHS England, the Local Government Association, the Voluntary and Community sector and other stakeholders.

Cold Weather Alerts

To support the plan, the Met Office will issue Cold Weather Alerts from 1 November 2014 to 31 March 2015. There are five levels:

- Level 0 (year-round planning, all year)
- Level 1 (winter preparedness and action, 1 Nov to 31 March)
- Level 2 (severe winter weather is forecast – alert and readiness¹)
- Level 3 (response to severe winter weather – severe weather action²)
- Level 4 (major incident – Emergency response - declared by central government)

¹ mean temperature of 2°C and/or widespread ice and heavy snow are predicted within 48 hours, with 60% confidence

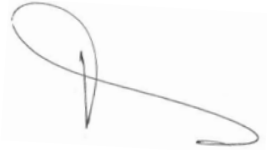
² mean temperature of 2°C and/or widespread ice and heavy snow is now occurring

We hope that you and copy recipients of this letter will discuss the suite of documents that make up the Cold Weather Plan with those organisations and teams that need to take action, in order to protect our population from cold-related harm.

Yours sincerely,



Paul Cosford
Director of Health Protection and Medical Director, Public Health England




Felicity Harvey
Director General for Public Health, Department of Health



Jon Rouse,
Director General for Social Care, Local Government and Care Partnerships,
Department of Health



Sarah Pinto-Duschinsky,
Director of Operations and Delivery, NHS England



Councillor Izzi Seccombe
Chair of Community Wellbeing Board, Local Government Association



Cold Weather & Heat Health Alert Service Administration message

Tel: 0870 900 0100
www.metoffice.gov.uk

Message Issued on Friday, 11 April 2014 at 12:21

Change of recipient list management procedure

For your information, please note that all future requests regarding inclusion in Cold / Hot Weather Alerts should be sent directly to the Met Office.

Please ensure you use the following format:

Send requests to: enquiries@metoffice.gov.uk

Requests must include the following minimum information:

Name:

New registration /Delete registration/Amend registration (delete as appropriate)

Name of Organisation:

e-mail address (new registration):

existing e-mail address (amending current registration):

[Please note: e-mail address should be .nhs or .gov. If this is not possible please state: Organisation type:]

Regards,
Met Office