

Cold Weather Plan for England 2012: Action cards for Cold Weather Alert Service

Health, social care and community professional staff

Level 0 Long-term planning *All year*

- Work within your organisation and with partner organisations to ensure that systems are developed to support the identification and sharing of information between agencies of people who may be vulnerable to cold weather and other seasonal variations
- Systematically work to improve the resilience of vulnerable people to severe cold
- Ensure that all staff have been made aware of the Cold Weather Plan and the dangers of cold weather to health and know how to spot signs and symptoms

Level 1 Winter preparedness programme *1 November–31 March*

- Identify those at risk on your caseload and necessary changes to care plans for high-risk groups
- For those with multiple-agency inputs, ensure that the key worker is clearly identified
- Work with at-risk individuals, their families and carers to ensure that they are aware of the dangers of cold weather and cold housing and that they know how to keep warm
- Ensure that there are clear arrangements for 'signposting' those at-risk clients/patients to other services (e.g. home insulation schemes, benefits entitlements) when identified in 'clinical' situations or consultations (see also Figure 3.3, Cold Weather Plan)
- Work with partners to ensure that vulnerable patients and clients have access to fuel supplies. Link to energy supplier priority service registers as required.
- Ensure that clients and colleagues are aware of, and take advantage of, flu and other vaccination programmes
- Identify the resources available to you for raising awareness of the health risks associated with winter weather and cold housing (e.g. pharmacists have a key role in reminding people to have sufficient medicine and helping with preventive medicines management)

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

- As appropriate, contact those most at risk and implement care plans
- When making home visits, be aware of the room temperature in the household and be able to advise on recommended room temperatures (see Figure 3.2, Cold Weather Plan). Know how to signpost clients onto other services, especially for those at high risk
- Remind clients of the actions they can take to protect themselves from the effects of severe cold
- Consider how forecast weather conditions may impact on your work and make appropriate arrangements
- Make sure you and your teams are prepared for a potential influx of weather-related injuries and illnesses

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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

- Implement local plans for contacting the vulnerable. If appropriate, consider daily visits or phone calls for high-risk individuals living on their own who have no regular contacts
- Ensure staff can help and advise clients
- Other actions as per Level 2
- Maintain business continuity

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