



Public Health
England

Local
Government
Association

NHS
England

**To: Local Authority Chief Executives
Local Authority Directors of Public Health
Local Authority Directors of Adult Social Services
Local Authority Directors of Children Social Services
Chairs of Health and Wellbeing Boards
NHS England Regional Directors
Clinical Leads of Clinical Commissioning Groups**

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

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19 October 2016

Dear Colleague

Cold Weather Plan for England: *Protecting health and reducing harm from cold weather*

As we approach winter, this letter is to draw your attention to the Cold Weather Plan for England (background in Annex 1).

The following documents are available online at www.gov.uk/phe/cold-weather-plan:

- the Cold Weather Plan for England
- making the Case: why long-term strategic planning for cold weather is essential for health and wellbeing
- action cards based on the plan
- “Keep Warm Keep Well” booklet

As indicated last year, the 2015 edition of the plan remains in place until further notice. Information on flu vaccine eligibility has been simplified and directs attention to the winter 2016/17 flu plan (Annex 2).

Also as last year, Public Health England and NHS England are running an integrated marketing campaign, Stay Well This Winter (see Annex 3).

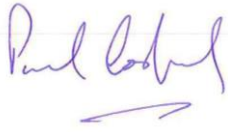
Recommended steps

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, especially in light of any recent structural changes:

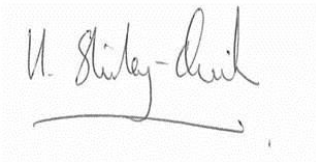
1. All local organisations should consider the Cold Weather Plan for England and satisfy themselves that the suggested actions and Cold Weather Alerts are understood across the system, and that **local plans are adapted as appropriate** to the local context.
2. NHS and local authority commissioners should satisfy themselves that the distribution of **Cold Weather Alerts will reach those that need to take action**.
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 both within and outside the home is considered **core business by health and wellbeing boards** and should be included in joint strategic needs assessments and joint health and wellbeing strategies.

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.

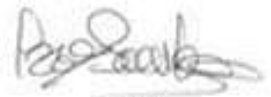
Yours sincerely,



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



Helen Shirley Quirk
Director for Emergency Preparedness and Health Protection Policy, Department of Health



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



Tim Young,
Director of Operations and Delivery (Interim), NHS England

Annex 1 - Background to Cold Weather Plan

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 2016 to 31 March 2017. 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 or less for a period of at least 48 hours, and/or widespread ice and heavy snow are predicted, with 60% confidence

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

New registrations and amendments to existing registrations need to contact the Met Office using Enquiries@metoffice.gov.uk providing name, organisation and email address (.nhs or .gov or provide organisation type).

Annex 2

Free flu vaccinations are available for those who:

- are aged 65 or older
- are aged two, three or four years old (but not five years or older) on 31 August 2015
- are children of school years 1 to 3
- are primary school-aged children in areas that previously participated in primary school pilots in 2014/15
- are pregnant
- have a serious medical condition such as chronic heart, lung, neurological, liver or kidney disease, or diabetes
- have a weakened immune system due to disease or treatments that suppress the immune system such as chemotherapy
- have had a stroke or transient ischaemic attack (TIA) or post-polio syndrome
- are living in a long-stay residential care home or other long-stay care facility (not prison or university halls)
- are the main carer for an elderly or disabled person whose welfare may be at risk if you fall ill

For more information see the Flu plan, Winter 2016/17

www.gov.uk/government/collections/annual-flu-programme#2016-to-2017-flu-season

Annex 3

Stay Well This Winter

The Public Health England and NHS England marketing campaign, **Stay Well This Winter**, will run again this year starting in October. This campaign aims to help those with long-term health conditions (particularly respiratory conditions), 65 or over, pregnant women and parents of under-5s stay well and keep their loved ones well this winter.

The behaviour change campaign targets a range of self-care behaviours including:

- Encouraging flu vaccination
- Heating your home to at least 18 degrees (65 Fahrenheit)
- Seeking early advice and help from pharmacists
- Preparing ahead of holiday periods or bad weather (ensuring you have prescription medicine, food supplies and looking out for others).

Further information is available from:

<https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources/campaigns/34-stay-well-this-winter/overview> which also provides a link to sign up for email updates.