

Cold Weather Health Watch Action Card

Provider Organisations for Health & Social Care

Level 0: Year-round planning - all year

- Ensure that you are engaged with local EPRR and other strategic arrangements.
- Ensure that your organisation can identify those most vulnerable to cold weather and draw up plans for joined-up support with partner organisations.
- Agree data-sharing arrangements within information governance principles.
- Assess the longer-term implications of climate change; reduction in carbon emissions; and sustainability for longer-term business continuity.
- Consider how to best mobilise and engage voluntary and community sector organisations and support the development and implementation of community emergency plans.
- Make sure that staff have identified all those vulnerable to cold weather and that arrangements are in place to support and protect them appropriately.
- Work with staff on risk reduction awareness, information and education. Encourage staff to be vaccinated against flu before winter starts.
- Ensure that the business continuity plan includes severe winter weather. Plan for a winter surge in demand for services.
- Consider carers needs and support they can continue to give.
- Work with environmental health officers on HHSRS hazard identification.

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

- Ensure that CW alerts are going to the right staff and appropriate actions are agreed and able to be implemented, especially to protect vulnerable clients.
- Make sure that staff have identified all those vulnerable to cold weather and that arrangements are in place to support them appropriately.
- Ensure staff are undertaking appropriate home checks when visiting clients, eg room temperature; medications and food supplies.
- Hospitals and care, residential and nursing homes:
 - ensure that rooms, particularly living rooms and bedrooms are kept warm and that staff are taking appropriate action to protect residents from cold weather.
- Work with partner agencies to co-ordinate cold weather plans; ensure data sharing and referral arrangements are in place.
- Continue to work with staff on risk reduction awareness, information and education. Encourage staff to be vaccinated against flu, if not already.
- Work with local authority teams to identify accident hotspots on pavements or roads, advise on gritting priorities to prevent accidents, and ensure access by utilities and other essential services.
- Ensure staff aware of the business continuity plan for winter weather; plan for a winter surge in demand.
- Ensure carers are receiving advice and support.

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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

- Communicate alerts to staff and ensure that locally agreed CWP actions take place, especially those to protect vulnerable patients/ clients.
- Continue to ensure local actions for the vulnerable such as:
 - arranging daily contacts/visits
 - ensuring staff are undertaking appropriate home checks when visiting clients, eg room temperature; medications and food supplies
 - ensure carers are receiving appropriate advice and support.
- Hospitals and care, residential and nursing homes: continue to ensure that rooms, particularly living rooms and bedrooms are kept warm.
- Activate business continuity arrangements and emergency plans as required. Activate plans to deal with a surge in demand for services.

Level 3: Response to severe winter weather - Severe weather action

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

- Communicate alerts to staff and ensure that locally agreed actions take place, especially those to protect vulnerable patients/clients.
- Implement local plans for contacting the vulnerable. Consider daily visits/ phone calls for high-risk individuals living on their own who have no regular contacts.
- Ensure carers are receiving appropriate advice and support.
- Implement plans to deal with surge in demand.
- Implement business continuity arrangements.

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