

## **Working Together to Help Leeds Stay Well this Winter 2023/24**

We are writing to services in Leeds who work with those who may be more at risk of poor health due to the impact of cold weather to ask that you are prepared and that your workforce is confident in supporting people to protect their health and wellbeing during winter.

We would like to highlight the [Adverse Weather and Health Plan 2023/24](#) produced by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and to ask for your support in implementing the recommendations within this plan. The plan provides guidance on how services can protect the population from cold weather and aims to prepare, alert, and prevent the major avoidable effects on health during periods of cold weather in England.

Cold-related deaths represent the biggest weather-related source of mortality in England. The reasons more people die in winter relative to other times of the year are complex and interlinked and include:

- poor quality housing, particularly cold homes
- circulating infectious diseases including flu and norovirus
- physical hazards such as snow and ice
- health inequalities

As well as the significant rise in deaths, the winter period also sees a substantial increase in illnesses. Eligible people can get vaccinated to help reduce the risk of respiratory illnesses during the winter. This is particularly important if they have certain long-term health conditions that means they are more vulnerable to the effects of cold weather. You can check eligibility for a [flu vaccination](#) or [COVID-19 booster](#) online. People can contact their GP, local pharmacy offering the vaccine [www.nhs.uk/flu-pharmacy](http://www.nhs.uk/flu-pharmacy) or visit the NHS England website to learn more.

Whilst exposure to cold weather can affect anyone, some people are particularly at risk. These include:

- older people (aged 65 years and over)
- people with long-term health conditions such as cardiovascular or respiratory disease, or a mental health condition
- pregnant women
- young children (particularly those aged 5 and under)
- people with learning disabilities
- people at risk of falls
- people who live alone and may be unable to care for themselves.
- people who are housebound or have low mobility
- people living in deprived circumstances

There are many reasons for the increased risk of ill-health in cold weather. These include:

- poor quality housing and particularly cold homes
- higher frequency of circulating infectious diseases, such as flu and norovirus during the winter months
- physical hazards such as snow and ice.

During cold weather, people may also use malfunctioning or inappropriate appliances to heat their homes. This can increase the risk of [carbon monoxide poisoning](#). When a house is damp as well as cold, mould is more likely to occur. This can increase the risk of illness,

especially from asthma. A short video which provides helpful tips to prevent mould in the home is listed below along with a leaflet.

There are certain factors that increase an individual's risk during cold weather spells, identified in the Adverse Weather and Health Plan 2023/24 for England which includes:

- **Population factors:** Older people, people living with frailty, people with chronic and severe illness, children under the age of five, pregnant women, people with learning disabilities, homeless people/street sleepers
- **Housing / Economic factors:** Fuel poor homes, individuals who live in houses with mould and individuals living in deprived circumstances
- **Behaviour factors:** People less able to adapt behaviour to cold weather

**The cost-of-living crisis further exacerbates these risk factors for many vulnerable people.**

Although there are several factors that contribute to poor health during winter, there are some simple, preventative actions we can all take to minimise the risk of deaths, illnesses and injuries associated with the cold. Many of these measures need to be planned and undertaken in advance of cold weather.

**As a service you can play your part and help protect the health of your service, service users and communities against the impacts of cold weather by following some simple steps:**

1. **Sign up** to the [Met Office's weather alerts](#) (If you registered before 2020, the system has now changed so you will need to re-register)
2. **Visit**
  - [Adverse Weather and Health Plan](#) to access the full plan with suggested social media assets to use in bulletins, newsletters and web-based platforms
  - Visit West Yorkshire ICB winter wellness campaign [Winter protection - NHS - Together We Can \(togetherwe-can.com\)](#)
3. **Display** the posters in this pack in your venue or local community (Printed versions of the attached resources are available via the Leeds Public Health Resource Centre by contacting 0113 378 6200 or [phrc@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:phrc@leeds.gov.uk)):
  - Keeping warm and well poster [Keep Warm Keep Well 2023.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
  - Top tips for keeping warm and well this winter poster: [winter-leaflet-v3.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
  - Direct/indirect effects of cold weather poster and list of services
4. **Click** on The Leeds Clean Air [website](#) which provides information on air quality in Leeds, air pollution forecasts and alerts, and important messaging on how to protect ourselves from air pollution.
5. **Read and promote** the [Winter wellbeing checklists](#). The checklist provides useful prompts for discussions with people and contact details for services that can support vulnerable people in Leeds.
6. **Familiarise yourself with useful resources** to support people to stay safe and well this winter. The Public Health Resource Centre (PHRC) offers support to anyone with a responsibility for or professional interest in public health or promoting health and wellbeing in Leeds, including students and volunteers. The PHRC stocks a wide variety of free [leaflets, posters](#) and resources that can support different audiences, topics and challenges we face during Winter – these include flu, malnutrition, falls prevention and fuel poverty. As well as the winter planning checklists which could help you or members of your wider team. More information

can be found on the [Public Health Resource Centre webpage](#) under 'Seasonal Health (summer and winter planning)'.

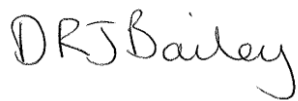
**7. Support your Workforce to have confident and compassionate conversations**

- By encouraging them to watch the [Winter friends animation](#)
- Leeds City Council's [Winter Wellbeing](#) and [Together Leeds](#) webpages provide information for key support around the city, including cost-of-living support, COVID and flu, and welcome spaces.

**8. Watch** a [short video](#) from Leeds City Council which provides helpful tips to prevent mould in your home. More advice is provided [here](#). If you live in a council property and are affected by damp and mould you can contact the damp and mould team for advice and guidance by calling 0800 188 4000 or emailing [d&mteam@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:d&mteam@leeds.gov.uk).

Thank you for all your support.

Yours sincerely,



Dawn Bailey  
Chief Officer – Health Protection and Sexual Health  
Public Health – Leeds City Council

Pip Goff  
Director, Volition  
Forum Central



## Cold-Health Alert summary action card for the voluntary and community sector (VCS)

This is a summary of the suggested actions for each Cold-Health Alert level. Check the [Cold-Health Alert action card for the voluntary and community sector](#) for more detail, including the required actions for winter preparedness, and adapt actions to your service as appropriate.

### Summary actions for Yellow Alert

- Confirm that relevant staff are aware of contingency plans, have received the Cold-Health Alert and know how to access relevant guidance and advice
- Use the Cold-Health Alert impact matrix to inform the local risk assessment for, and response to, cold weather
- Activate Community Emergency Plans as required
- Share and emphasise the importance of [Keeping warm and well: staying safe in cold weather](#) messages to clients and staff
- Support the provision of information about health risks from reliable sources – especially to vulnerable groups and underserved populations
- Monitor temperatures in places where people who are at risk spend substantial time. Ensure staff know how to check and record these and to follow internal procedures
- Check that individuals at risk of cold-related illnesses have appropriate support arrangements in place

### Summary actions for Amber Alert

- Continue Yellow Alert actions
- Work with providers and other partners to mobilise Community Emergency Plans
- Monitor at-risk individuals during cold-weather episodes, ensuring they have visitor or phone-call arrangements in place
- Ensure staff are undertaking appropriate home checks when visiting clients, for example room temperature, medications and food supplies
- Consider how local VCS organisations can provide resources (for example equipment, facilities and people), insight and advice and help share information

### Summary actions for Red Alert

- Continue Amber Alert actions
- Follow all local emergency response plans
- Increase communication of key public health messages, especially to underserved populations and at-risk groups



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# Keeping warm and well: staying safe in cold weather

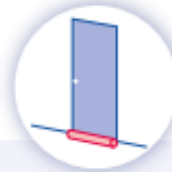
## Plan ahead



Check the weather  
forecast and the news



Make sure you have sufficient  
food and medicine



Take simple measures to  
reduce draughts at home

## Keep yourself warm



Heat rooms you spend most  
time in to 18°C if you can



Keep bedroom  
windows closed



Wear multiple layers of  
thinner clothing

## Prepare your home



Check what financial support  
may be available for you



Use energy saving tips to  
save money on heating



Make sure appliances are  
safe and working well

## Look after yourself and others



If you're eligible, get  
vaccinated against flu and  
COVID-19



Check on others  
who may be  
vulnerable



Get help if needed.  
Call NHS 111 or in an  
emergency 999

For more information go to:

[Top tips for keeping warm and well this winter - www.GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)





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# Top tips for keeping warm and well this winter



## KEEP WARM

You should heat your home to a temperature that's comfortable for you. Try to heat rooms that you regularly use, such as your living room and bedroom, to at least 18°C if you can. You should also keep your bedroom windows closed at night. Exposure to low temperatures indoors can have a serious impact on your health as you get older, particularly for people living with health conditions or reduced mobility. Wearing several layers will keep you warmer than one, thicker layer.

## GET FINANCIAL SUPPORT

There are grants, benefits and sources of advice available to increase your income, make your home more energy efficient and improve your heating. There are also support measures in place to help with the cost of living.

For further advice on these support measures, visit Age UK's website [www.ageuk.org.uk/financial-support](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/financial-support) or call **0800 169 6565**

## LOOK AFTER YOURSELF

- If you're aged 65 or over or a carer you're eligible for a free flu jab and an Autumn Covid-19 booster this winter. Contact your GP or pharmacist or visit the NHS website [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) to learn more.
- Don't delay treating minor winter ailments like colds or sore throats. Visit your local pharmacist for advice on treatment.
- Keep in touch with your friends, neighbours and family. Reach out if you need any practical help and tell somebody if you're feeling under the weather.
- Wear shoes with good grip when you go outside to avoid slips and falls on slippery or icy surfaces.
- When you're indoors, try not to sit still for more than an hour or so. If you find it difficult to move about, stretching your arms and legs can also help keep you warm.
- If bad weather is forecast, make sure you have everything you need at home. Check you've got enough medication and food in case it's harder to leave the house.
- Eat well and stay hydrated. It can sometimes be difficult to keep up the motivation to prepare meals in winter, but our diet, including how much we eat, is an important part of staying healthy and well.
- If you have visitors, it can help stop the spread of germs to ventilate the room for a few minutes before and after they arrive. You might be more comfortable leaving the window open during their visit, if it's not too cold.
- If you are worried about your health or feeling down, contact your local pharmacist, 111 or your GP, who will all be able to offer advice and support. In an emergency dial 999.


## PREPARE YOUR HOME

- Have your heating and cooking appliances checked by a Gas Safe® registered engineer to make sure they are working safely.
- Contact your water and power suppliers to see if you can be on the Priority Services Register, a free support service that helps people in vulnerable situations.










For more information about how to stay warm and well in winter visit Age UK's website [www.ageuk.org.uk/winterprep](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/winterprep) or call **0800 169 6565**.

This leaflet was prepared by UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and Age UK. If you have questions about this publication please contact [enquiries@ukhsa.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ukhsa.gov.uk) ID205107 08/23

# The direct and indirect effects of cold weather



Exposure to cold weather can affect your health in different ways, even at temperatures as mild as 4 to 8°C

Direct effects	Indirect effects
 <b>heart attack</b>	 <b>disruption to healthcare services</b> caused by snow and ice
 <b>stroke</b>	 <b>carbon monoxide poisoning</b> from faulty boilers, cookers, heaters and fires
 <b>increased risk of respiratory disease</b>	 <b>poorer mental health</b> and reduced educational and employment attainment have been linked to cold homes and fuel poverty
 <b>hypothermia</b>	
 <b>falls and injuries</b>	
 <b>weakened lung function</b> causing an increased risk of influenza	

### Things we can all do to stay warm

			
<p><b>Heat rooms to 18 degrees</b> if you can</p>	<p><b>Keep bedroom windows closed</b></p>	<p><b>Wear plenty of layers</b></p>	<p><b>Eat well and stay hydrated</b></p>



## Services in Leeds that could help and support your service users.

Contact these services or visit their websites to get the most up to date info on current service delivery.

### Citizens Advice Leeds (CAL)

0808 278 7878

[www.citizensadviceleeds.org.uk/need-advice](http://www.citizensadviceleeds.org.uk/need-advice)

Access free, confidential and impartial advice around financial, housing, work and many other problems. You may be facing a crisis, or just considering your options.

### Leeds City Council social care and support

0113 222 4401

Email: [leeds-adults@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:leeds-adults@leeds.gov.uk)

For an assessment call the contact centre or a local Community One Stop Shop or Hub, once an assessment is completed information will be sent to Adult Social Care. Support offered can include a personal alarm, sensors in a chair or bed and falls alarms which sends an alert to a response centre.

### Leeds Directory

0113 378 4610

[www.leedsdirectory.org](http://www.leedsdirectory.org)

Find local support by contacting the directory, weekdays 9am to 5pm or complete the online form.

### Leeds Housing Options

Leeds Housing Options aims to prevent homelessness, they offer advice and assistance to those in housing and homelessness related need. They offer advice on how to secure a home whether this is council housing, housing association housing or privately rented accommodation.

Find more information on how the team can help and how you can contact Leeds Housing Options.

0113 222 4412

Email: [housing.options@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:housing.options@leeds.gov.uk)

[www.leedshomes.org.uk/content/Information/AlternativestoCouncilhousing](http://www.leedshomes.org.uk/content/Information/AlternativestoCouncilhousing)

### Mental Health support

For mental health information in Leeds visit MindWell: [www.mindwell-leeds.org.uk](http://www.mindwell-leeds.org.uk)

For mental health services in Leeds, contact Leeds Mental Wellbeing Service by calling 0113 843 4388 or [www.leedscommunityhealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services-a-z/leeds-mental-wellbeing-service/home](http://www.leedscommunityhealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services-a-z/leeds-mental-wellbeing-service/home)

### Together Leeds

You can access services to support cost of living around finance, emergency food, heating, water, help at the hubs, housing, jobs, welcome spaces.

[www.leeds.gov.uk/campaign/cost-of-living](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/campaign/cost-of-living)

### Money Information Centre (MIC)

[www.leeds.gov.uk/leedsmic](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/leedsmic)

Home Access free, confidential and impartial advice and information on a range of money related matters such as debt, money, energy and utilities. In addition to this site, the Together Leeds website is the short term hub for accessing a range of local information this winter

[www.leeds.gov.uk/campaign/cost-of-living](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/campaign/cost-of-living)

### Home Plus Leeds (Care and Repair)

0113 240 6009

Email:

[homeplus@care-repair-leeds.org.uk](mailto:homeplus@care-repair-leeds.org.uk)

Offer comprehensive home assessment to identify client needs, rails and equipment support to reduce the risk of falls, servicing and repairs to heating and hot water systems, draft proofing and insulation measures, provide convenient and lower costs means of cooking and heating e.g. slow cookers, electric blankets and advice on issues as a change in housing or financial circumstances.

### Linking Leeds

0113 336 7612

Email: [linking.leeds@nhs.net](mailto:linking.leeds@nhs.net)

City-wide social prescribing service for all people in Leeds, aged 16 years +. Referrals can be made via clinical systems or self-referrals can be made by calling the Linking Leeds Hub or by completing an online introduction form.

### Leeds City Council Welcome spaces

[www.leeds.gov.uk/campaign/welcome-spaces](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/campaign/welcome-spaces)

Access information on voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations which are offering warm spaces across Leeds this winter. These include libraries, community centres, community hubs and other places offering a warm welcome and free to use for anyone struggling to heat their home.

### Enhance Programme

Enhance supports safe and sustainable discharge from hospital and Neighbourhood Teams into a secure home environment. The programme links third sector organisations with Neighbourhood Teams and other agencies to avoid delayed discharges and readmissions for individuals, and to enhance capacity throughout the system. Enhance programme - Leeds Older People's Forum ([opforum.org.uk](http://opforum.org.uk))

### Leeds Food Aid Network

[www.leedsfoodaidnetwork.co.uk](http://www.leedsfoodaidnetwork.co.uk)

Information on the location of food providers (e.g. foodbanks, community kitchens, social pantries) across is available on the Leeds Food Aid Network map.



## Adults and Children Winter Wellbeing Checklist



The Winter Wellbeing Checklists are useful resources which can prompt discussion and help signpost patients to additional support. It can be used in regular or annual health checks with patients who are 'at risk' of illness due to cold weather. There are checklists for Children and Families and for Adults, and they can be accessed via the Public Health Resource Centre website: <https://www.leeds.gov.uk/phrc/public-health-training/winter-wellbeing-checklists>

### Winter Workforce Animation and Supporting Resources

*Support your Workforce to have confident and compassionate conversations:*

By watching a short animation, anyone working or volunteering in Leeds can increase their knowledge of the evidence based, high impact interventions to support people in Leeds during winter. There are two animations available: Leeds Winter Workforce – Helping everyone stay safe, warm and well [video](#) and Winter Health – Vitamin D [video](#)

Free resources can also be accessed from the Public Health Resource Centre, a list of these resources is found on the [Public Health Resource Centre webpage](#) under 'Seasonal Health (summer and winter planning)'. Contact the PHRC to arrange collection of resources to help signposting, referrals and support materials to help Leeds Stay Well this Winter: Public Health Resource Centre, Technorth, 9 Harrogate Road, Chapel Allerton, Leeds, LS7 3NB, T: 0113 378 6200 or E: [phrc@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:phrc@leeds.gov.uk)

### Stay Well this Winter campaign

The National Stay Well this Winter Campaign focuses on high impact interventions such as promoting flu vaccinations, increasing medicine uptake, keeping warm and eating well. The campaign also tackles issues such as fuel poverty and social isolation. The campaign helps to raise the public's awareness of the harm to health from cold and provides guidance on how to prepare for and respond to cold weather which can affect everybody's health at any age.

Visit this website page for more information and resources:

<https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/winterhealth/Pages/KeepWarmKeepWell.aspx>



## Condensation prevention check list

### General home checklist

- In colder weather try to keep temperatures between 18 - 21c
- Dry washing outside where possible, if you have to dry clothes indoor place in a sunny room, leave a window opened slightly and close the door
- Open trickle vents on windows during the day, or open windows for at least 10 minutes
- Don't put furniture, including beds, against any outside walls and try and leave a gap between the wall and furniture to allow airflow

### Kitchen checklist

- Close internal doors whilst cooking and open window(s)
- Use an extractor fan if you have one
- Put lids on pans (this also reduces boiling times and helps save money)
- Only boil as much water as you need in a kettle to reduce steam and save money

### Bathroom checklist

- Open windows whilst bathing/washing and leave them open for 20 minutes after (if safe to do so)
- Use an extractor fan if you have one
- Take shorter and cooler showers
- When running a bath put cold in first, this significantly reduces condensation
- Wipe down windows, mirrors, tiles, shower doors with a squeegee, mopping up any moisture

### Decorating checklist

- When wallpapering use a paste containing a fungicide to prevent further mould growth
- Use mould resistant paint on areas prone to mould such as ceilings above windows.

## Reporting repairs

You should report any repairs or damage straight away. Before you report any damp problems, please read all of the information in this leaflet and make sure you have followed the practical advice. Wipe down and remove any condensation daily and follow the advice on how to remove mould growth. If problems persist please contact us by:



**0800 188 4000**

(Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 9am to 5pm; Wednesday 10am to 5pm)



**[www.leeds.gov.uk/housing](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/housing)**



**Visiting your local Hub / Housing Office**

(General office hours are 9-5pm, but may vary on location. For more info check online at [www.leeds.gov.uk](http://www.leeds.gov.uk))

You can report **emergency repairs** at any time of day via the above 0800 number.

Emergency repairs are when there is a serious risk of harm or damage to property that cannot wait until the next working day.

### Swarcliffe (PFI)



Contact **Yorkshire Housing** on

**0345 366 4403**

(Available 24hrs / 7 days a week)



**[www.yorkshirehousing.co.uk](http://www.yorkshirehousing.co.uk)**

### Little London / Beeston / Holbeck (PFI)



Contact **Equans** on **0808 168 7335,**  
or **0333 121 0074**



**[sc4services.uk-kmr@engie.com](mailto:sc4services.uk-kmr@engie.com)**

More information on housing disrepair and the effect it has on the council can be found online at:

**[www.leeds.gov.uk/Pages/Housing-disrepair](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/Pages/Housing-disrepair)**

## Dealing with damp and condensation

During the colder months condensation can become a major problem.

It is caused when warm moist air hits a cold surface such as a window or external wall and condenses, causing water droplets to run down the cold surface. If left, this can develop into black mould which looks unsightly and can cause health problems if not treated.

Good ventilation and air circulation around the home is essential in the prevention of condensation, as well as effectively heating the home.

The major difference between condensation and other forms of damp, such as rising or penetrating damp is that you have the ability to reduce the problem through a few simple steps.



## Damp

**Rising or penetrating damp can cause problems in your home although it is less common than condensation. If you think damp is causing a problem in your property you will need to report it to us so that we can investigate.**

**Rising damp** is caused by a failed or 'bridged' damp-proof course. This allows moisture in the ground to rise up through the walls, sometimes to a height of one metre.

You can usually identify rising damp because it is often associated with a tide mark at the edge of the damp area caused by salt deposits.



**Penetrating damp** is classed as any water that finds its way inside from the outside. It can occur at all levels of the building but is usually higher up.

Overflowing gutters, missing roof tiles, leaking pipes and downspouts, badly fitted windows/doors and damaged pointing, cladding, flashing or render as well as covered air bricks can all be sources of penetrating damp.

Typical signs of penetrating damp are:

- Growing or blotchy areas of damp on walls or ceilings
- Wet and crumbly plaster
- Signs of spores or mould
- Drips and puddles.



## Condensation

**Condensation can cause mould to form in your home, leading to staining of wallpaper, wall surfaces and window frames and damage to furniture and clothing.**

Water vapour is generated in your home in many ways, but the main causes are:

- Steam from cooking and boiling the kettle
- Baths and showers
- Drying clothes inside
- Unsuitable venting of tumble dryers.



Mould and spores have a musty smell, often associated with a damp house.

The best way to deal with mould is to remove it from walls using a fungicidal wash, in line with the manufacturer's instructions.

Special paint is also available that will delay the return of mould, but unless you take steps to reduce condensation it will eventually come back.



## Three steps to prevent condensation and mould

### Heating

Condensation is most likely to be a problem in homes which are under heated:

- Try to keep temperatures between 18 - 21c as this will reduce condensation from forming on cold surfaces.

### Ventilation

Condensation will be reduced if you allow air to circulate freely. Make sure vents and air bricks are not obstructed. Open windows in kitchens and bathrooms to air the house and reduce steam and use extractor fans.

### Remove the moisture

Condensation in the home occurs when there is too much moisture in the air. Take steps to reduce the amount of moisture in the air by following the checklists overleaf.

## Did you know?



- A family of four can add moisture to the air equivalent to **30 to 40 litres of water** a week just by breathing
- Showering, cooking, bathing and washing can add **15 to 20 litres a week**
- Drying clothes indoors can add **10 to 15 litres a week**.