



Provider organisations: health and social care (community services, hospitals, care homes and prisons)

Level 0: Long-term planning – All year

- ensure that you are engaged with local emergency preparedness response and recovery and other strategic arrangements – especially for winter planning
- ensure 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 best to mobilise and engage community organisations and support the development of community emergency plans
- make sure that staff members 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 Housing Health and Safety Rating System hazard identification

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

- undertake internal reviews to ensure that cold weather alerts are going to the right staff and that appropriate actions are agreed and able to be implemented when received, especially to protect vulnerable service users
- make sure that staff members have identified all those vulnerable to cold weather and that arrangements are in place to support and protect them appropriately
- ensure staff members 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 are aware of the business continuity plan for winter weather; plan for a winter surge in demand
- ensure carers are receiving advice and support

Cold Weather Plan for England 2013: Action cards for Cold Weather Alert Service

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

- communicate alerts to staff and ensure that locally agreed Cold Weather Plan actions take place, especially those to protect vulnerable service users
- 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
 - ensuring carers are receiving appropriate advice and support
- hospitals and care, residential and nursing homes: 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

Severe winter weather is now occurring: mean temperature of 2°C or less and/or widespread ice and heavy snow

- communicate alerts to staff and ensure that locally agreed actions take place, especially those to protect vulnerable service users
- 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

- continue actions as per level 3 unless advised to the contrary
- implementation of national emergency response arrangements by central government

The Cold Weather Plan for England 2013 and associated documents can be accessed at www.gov.uk/phe