STAY WARM
STAY WELL
STAY SAFE

Connect Housing Association

A charitable housing association
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Introduction

Government statistics show that in a typical winter there are 22,000 excess deaths of people aged 65 and over in England and Wales.

The health effects of cold has been calculated to cost the NHS £1.36 billion annually. In very Cold Countries such as Norway and Russia winter deaths are much lower and this is attributed to the preparations they take.

This booklet aims to prepare people for the winter months by providing tips, advice and information to reduce the impact the cold has on our health and well-being.

Although for some winter weather and snow can be fun for others it can mean months of struggle, isolation, illness and increased risk of injury.

We will look at ways to stay informed; and how to prepare for winter and any adverse weather conditions it may bring so that we can stay Warm, Well and Safe
There are many ways to keep up to date with local and national weather forecasts

- Watch weather forecasts which follow national and regional news programmes.
- Tune into your local radio station
- Those with access to the internet can view long range weather forecasts on the BBC website [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk) and type your postcode in the search box. You can also check for weather alerts on the Met Office website [www.metoffice.gov.uk](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk)

The Met Office operates a National Weather Warning Service which sends alerts of severe weather including, snow, ice, heavy rain, strong winds etc., to Care providers as they have a particular responsibility to ensure that they can plan and deliver services to the most vulnerable during bad weather.
Before winter sets in there are several things you can do to prepare.

- Make sure your heating is working properly. If it is not contact Connect Housing and ask for a heating engineer to check it.

- Make sure all your lights are working, remember it drops dark quickly in winter and poor lighting can increase the risk of falls.

- If you use an electric blanket make sure that is has been serviced inline with the manufactures guidelines. Faulty electric blankets can cause fires and severe burns.

- Make sure that you are claiming any benefits to which you are entitled. If you were born before July 6th 1951 you are entitled to Tax Free Winter Fuel Payment of between £100-£300 – See contacts page for more information.
Be Prepared cont’d

- Check that your home is insulated and free from draughts but **DO NOT** cover air vents.

- Keep your cupboards and freezer well stocked with food and essentials in case you are unable to get to the shops.

- Make sure you have the correct telephone numbers for people you may need to contact in an emergency.

- If you have Care Alarm installed make sure you test it by initiating a call to the call centre by pressing the pendant or pressing the button on the base unit or pulling the orange cord and remember to keep them informed of any changes to your emergency contacts details/telephone numbers.

- If you have a car make sure it is in safe working order, many garages offer a winter safety check.
Stay Warm

During the Cold Winter months it is important to keep warm.

- Keep your heating on but to save money turn the thermostat down a notch, this is more efficient and cost effective. The recommended temperature for a living room is 70 degrees Fahrenheit/ 21 degrees Celsius.

- Cold Weather Payments are paid at £25 a week when the average temperature has been or is expected to be 0 degrees or below for seven days in a row. It is paid automatically to those people on Pension Credit or certain other means tested benefits.

- Wrap up in several layers of clothing, this will keep you warmer than one thick layer.

- Heat up from the inside by eating hot foods such as soups and casseroles. If you live alone why not cook one big dish of stew and then divide it into portions to eat later or to freeze. This is also a more cost effective way of cooking as produce is usually cheaper if you buy in bulk.
Stay Warm cont’d

- Drink hot drinks, if you struggle to carry hot drinks why not make up a flask and keep it by your chair.

- Wear a hat, we lose most of our body heat through our head.

- Compare energy prices to make sure you are on the best tariff.

- If you are struggling to heat your home try staying in one room and keeping that room as warm as possible.

- Keep active, especially if your mobility is restricted, there are simple chair exercises you can do which will help to keep your circulation flowing, which in turn will help to keep you warm.

- Contact Connect Older People’s Strategists (COPS) and request the booklet ‘Gentle Exercise in the Chair for the Elderly’

TEL: 0113 2311561 remember to consult your GP or Practice Nurse about what exercise is safe to do
Stay Well

We all know that during winter months we seem more vulnerable to coughs and colds and other bugs, particularly the elderly and those with long term health conditions.

It is not just our physical health which can suffer in winter and it is not uncommon for people to feel low due to the lack of day light hours, so what can we do to keep well?

- If you are in a high risk category you will be invited to have a Flu Jab by your GP. This will reduce the risk of catching the Flu.
- Eat a healthy diet.
- If you have repeat prescriptions delivered make sure you order them in plenty of time especially if severe weather is forecast
- Keep simple remedies for common coughs and colds in stock but remember to consult with your GP or pharmacist if you are unsure what it is safe for you to take.
Stay Well  cont’d

- Don’t put off seeing your GP if you feel unwell, early intervention reduces recovery time and the risk of further complications. Your GP surgery will offer a home visiting service for those unable to attend the surgery.

- Keep active as we’ve said many people can feel low in Winter. Why not consider joining a local social group, exercise class, book club etc. Your local authority website should provide a list of groups in your area, visit:
  - www.calderdale.gov.uk
  - www.kirklees.gov.uk
  - www.leeds.gov.uk

- Even just having a chat on the telephone can help to lift your spirits.

- For health advice and reassurance, 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year, you can contact NHS Direct TEL: 0845 46 47
Stay Safe

Winter conditions can increase the risk of falls and injury. If the conditions outside are severe, consider if you really need to go out? Again - whether we are staying in or going out, we can do a number of things to help to reduce the risks.

- If you are planning to journey by car make sure you have enough petrol (I know it sounds obvious but often we are stuck in traffic when it snows and what is usually a 10 minute journey can take hours and may catch us out) keep a blanket and some boots in the car.

- If you have one take a mobile phone out with you, make sure it is charged up and has credit on it

- Wear sensible footwear something with a thick sole and a good grip.

- Wrap up well remember lots of thinner layers are good remember …. keep your head covered to prevent heat loss.

-
Stay Safe cont’d

- Make any journeys in daylight hours it is safer, because as night falls the temperature can drop quickly.

- Keep in touch with family, friends or neighbours, that way if something is wrong they will be able to raise the alarm.
Stay Connected

If you know someone who is vulnerable and you can spare a few minutes to pop in and check that they are alright, why not do so? Your actions may save a life and at the very least will brighten someone’s day!

At the back of this booklet there are a number of telephone numbers and website address which you may find useful.

Remember ..................Keep Warm, Well & Safe
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<tr>
<td>Connect Housing</td>
<td>03005000600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contact the Elderly</td>
<td>0800 716543</td>
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<td>offer advice for the cold weather</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.contact-the-elderly.org.uk">www.contact-the-elderly.org.uk</a></td>
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<td>Winter Fuel Payments Helpline</td>
<td>0845 915 1515</td>
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<td>Citizens Advice Consumer Service</td>
<td>0845 404 0506</td>
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<td>A consumer advice and complaints service.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Directgov</td>
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<tr>
<td>Includes advice on taking care of yourself in winter.</td>
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<td><a href="http://www.direct.gov.uk">www.direct.gov.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Energy Saving Trust</td>
<td>0300 123 1234</td>
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<td>Provides free advice on saving energy.</td>
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Your Contacts

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Phone: 0300 5000 600
Web:

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