**Berkshire Public Health Team**

**Cold Weather Plan**

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# **Abbreviations**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| BC | Business Continuity |
| BCP | Business Continuity Planning |
| BFC | Bracknell Forest Council |
| CCG | Clinical Commissioning Group |
| DHSC | Department of Health and Social Care |
| DPH | Director of Public Health |
| EOC | Emergency Operations Centre |
| LA | Local Authority |
| LRF | Local Resilience Forum |
| NHS | National Health Service |
| NSWWS | National Severe Weather Warning Service |
| PWS | Public Warning System |
| RBC | Reading Borough Council |
| RBWM | Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead |
| SBC | Slough Borough Council |
| SCG | Strategic Coordination Group |
| TCG | Tactical Coordination Group |
| WBDC | West Berkshire Council |
| WBC | Wokingham Borough Council |

# **Document Control**

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# **Part 1 – Background**

## **Introduction**

The winter period not only sees a significant rise in deaths but also a substantial increase in illnesses. The [Cold Weather Plan for England](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/cold-weather-plan-for-england) has been published annually since 2011 to help the raise awareness of the harm to health from cold.

This plan should be read in conjunction with the Cold Weather Plan for England and the tables of actions shown in Annex A.

## **1.2 Aim of the Plan**

The aim of this plan is to provide a coordinated public health response across Berkshire during the cold winter weather period from 1st November to 31st March.

## **1.3 Objectives of the Plan**

Key objectives of this plan are to:

* Define the roles of Berkshire Public Health Team during the cold weather period from 1st November to 31st March.
* Define the coordinated public health response across Berkshire Local Authorities.
* Provide key warning and informing messages during the cold weather period.

## **1.4 Scope**

This plan provides guidance on implementing the National Cold Weather Plan in Berkshire relating to Public Health. It does not cover other cold weather impacts such as impacts on highways.

## **1.5 Cold Weather Risks**

The impact of cold weather on health is predictable and mostly preventable. Direct effects of winter weather include an increase in incidence of:

* Heart attacks
* Stroke
* Lung illnesses
* Flu
* Falls and injuries
* Hypothermia

Indirect effects of cold include mental health illnesses such as depression, and carbon monoxide poisoning from poorly maintained or poorly ventilated boilers, cooking and heating appliances and heating.

For the purposes of this plan, key groups considered to be particularly at-risk in the event of severe cold weather are summarised below:

**Groups at greater risk of harm from cold weather**

* older people (in particular those over 75 years old, otherwise frail, and or socially isolated)
* people who are currently suffering with an infectious disease, such as flu, COVID-19, norovirus
* people with pre-existing chronic medical conditions such as heart disease, stroke or transient ischemic attack (TIA), asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and/or diabetes
* people with mental ill-health that reduces individual’s ability to self-care (including dementia)
* pregnant women (in view of potential impact of cold on foetus)
* children under the age of five
* people with learning difficulties
* people assessed as being at risk of, or having had, recurrent falls
* people who are housebound or otherwise low mobility
* people living in deprived circumstances
* people living in houses with mould
* people who are fuel poor
* homeless or people sleeping rough
* other marginalised or socially isolated individuals or groups

On average, there are around 35,000 excess winter deaths each year in England. Excess winter deaths are the observed total number of deaths in winter (December to March) compared to the average of the number of deaths over the rest of the year. Excess deaths are not just deaths of those who would have died anyway in the next few weeks or months due to illness or old age. There is strong evidence that some of these winter deaths are indeed extra and are related to cold temperatures and living in cold homes as well as infectious diseases such as influenza.

Additional pressure is also put onto NHS organisations with increased admissions and attendance at A&E Departments which in turn causes a surge in capacity within health and social care settings. NHS systems meet daily to manage capacity.

Annex C recommends indoor temperatures during cold weather.

## **1.6 Cold weather health risks and COVID-19**

COVID-19 is likely to amplify the risks of cold weather therefore it is crucial that actions to mitigate the risks of cold weather continue.

Fear of COVID-19 should not prevent action to tackle the risks from cold temperatures and winter weather.

It is critical that actions to prevent health harms from cold temperatures and winter weather continue – including identifying and supporting those at risk – with necessary adaptations in line with coronavirus guidance to keep everyone safe.

Risk factors linked with worse outcomes from COVID-19, that are also risks for cold-related harms, are:

* Age (65+ for cold, 70+ for COVID-19)
* Underlying health conditions – chronic respiratory and heart disease
* Diabetes
* Pregnancy

Factors that impact on ability to adapt to cold, such as severe mental illness, cognitive impairment, drug and alcohol dependencies and disability, may also impact on ability to reduce exposure to COVID-19 – for example, through reduced ability to maintain good respiratory and hand hygiene.

For more information and details on actions, see the “Berkshire cold weather preparedness and response during COVID-19: actions to prevent harm” slide set.

## **1.7 The Met Office**

The Met Office is the UK’s national weather service. Its Public Weather Service (PWS) provides forecasts for the public to help them make informed decisions about their day-to-day activities. The National Severe Weather Warning Service is part of this, providing advance notice of weather which could affect public safety.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Met Office service and notifications Service**  | **Purpose**  | **Distribution**  | **Timing**  |
| **General weather forecast**  | To enable the UK public to make informed decisions about their day-to-day activities  | Internet, Mobile App, Broadcast and Social Media | Every day  |
| **National Severe Weather Warning Service (NSWWS)**  | Provision of weather warnings to:a) alert the public in advance of weather that could potentially lead to impacts and to prompt considerationsb) Civil emergency authorities and the MoD to trigger their plans to protect the public from impacts in advance of an event, and to help them recover from any impacts after the event.  | Internet, Mobile App, Broadcast and Social Media | When required  |
| **Cold Weather Alerts**  | To provide early warning of low temperature and or widespread ice/heavy snow to health and social care organisations and professionals registered with the service  | Internet, Mobile App, Broadcast and Social Media | Alert issued as soon as agreed threshold has been reached and when there is a change in alert level. Issued between 1 November and 31 March.  |
| **Cold Weather Planning Advice**  | To provide planning advice throughout the winter period relating to low temperatures or widespread ice/heavy snow to health and social care organisations and professionals registered with the service  | Email  | Twice a week (9am each Monday and Friday from 1 November to 31 March.  |

### **1.7.1 National Severe Weather Warning Service (NSWWS)**

The Met Office’s National Severe Weather Warning Service (NSWWS) warns organisations and the public about potential impacts caused by severe weather. Warnings are issued for Rain, Thunderstorms, Wind, Snow, Lightning, Ice and Fog. This service operates year-round across the UK and can be found on the Met Office website.

A warning will be issued when snow and ice is forecast to cause an impact across several sectors, including health. It is issued based on a combination of the impact of the weather, and the likelihood of the weather happening. A NSWWS warning can be issued up to seven days in advance of the expected event.

Warnings are based on a combination of:

* **likelihood** – the likelihood of impacts occurring
* **impact** – the level of impacts expected

Warnings are allocated a colour (Yellow, Amber or Red) depending on the likelihood of seeing impacts and the level of impacts expected.



### **1.7.2 Met Office – Hazard Manager Service**

The Met Office provides a range of services through [Hazard Manager](https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/services/government/environmental-hazard-resilience/hazard-manager-services) that help agencies prepare for and respond to emergency incidents that are caused or influenced by the weather.

Hazard Manager is a one-stop information source for the emergency response community. It is an interactive web portal using maps which can be overlaid with weather and incident related information. It allows users to access their services in one location, using a single username and password. "Events" are posted when there is an active incident, essential for keeping Category 1 and 2 emergency responders up to date with the very latest information and developments as they happen.

The following services can be accessed through Hazard Manager:

* Flood Forecasting Centre
* Severe Weather Warning
* Daily Hazard Assessment
* FireMet
* Chemical Meteorology (CHEMET)
* CBRN Incident Management
* Animal Health

## **1.8 Cold Weather Alert Service**

A Cold Weather Alert Service was established in 2011 in collaboration with DH and the Met Office. It operates in England from 1 November to 31 March. During this period, the Met Office may forecast severe cold weather, as defined by forecasts of mean temperatures of 2°C or less for at least 48 hours, and/or snow and ice.

The Cold Weather Alert service comprises five main levels (levels 0-4) outlined below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Level 0  | **Year- round planning** All year |
| Level 1 | **Winter preparedness and action programme**1st November to 31st March  |
| Level 2 | **Severe winter weather is forecast – alert and readiness**60% likelihood of an average temperature of 2°C or less for at least 48 hours, and/or heavy snow/ widespread ice, in the coming days |
| 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 heavy snow/ widespread ice |
| 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 |

## **1.9 Definition of Cold Weather Alerts**

An alert will be issued for ‘cold’ temperatures if there is a high likelihood (60% or more) that the mean temperature is expected to be at or below 2°C for a period of 48 hours, and/or heavy snow/ widespread ice, in the coming days. A level 2 will be issued when these conditions are forecast and a level 3 when they are occurring.

**Heavy snow** – Snow that is expected to fall for at least two hours. Geographic extent is not considered, and sometimes the event can be quite localised, but the Met Office will always try to indicate which area will be affected in the alert.

**Widespread ice** – Ice forms when rain falls on surfaces at or below zero; or already wet surfaces fall to or below zero. The ice is usually clear and difficult to distinguish from a wet surface. It usually forms in sheets. Warnings are issued when any depth of ice is expected over a widespread area. Warnings will also be issued after a snowfall when compacted snow is expected to cause an ice risk.

The term “widespread” indicates that icy surfaces will be found extensively over the area defined by the Met Office in the alert. The Met Office issues these alerts down to a county level, so either of the warnings above could be issued even if only one county is likely to be affected.

Action checklists can be found at Annex A detailing what action should be taken at each alert level.

### **1.9.1 Level 0 – All year round**

This emphasises that year-round planning is required to build resilience and reduce the impact of cold weather. This level of alert relates to those longer-term actions that reduce the harm to health of cold weather when it occurs (e.g. housing and energy efficiency measures, benefits (see section 2.4) and long-term sustainable approaches to influence behaviour change across health and social care professionals, communities and individuals).

These measures can also address other important health, sustainability and inequalities issues, such as addressing fuel poverty, building community resilience, providing employment opportunities, reducing carbon emissions, and the burden on health and social care services.

In 2015 the Department for Energy and Climate Change published [Cutting the cost of keeping warm: A fuel poverty strategy for England](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cutting-the-cost-of-keeping-warm). It emphasises the role the health and social care sector can play in tackling fuel poverty. The strategy is underpinned by the fuel poverty target for as many fuel poor homes as reasonably practicable to achieve an energy efficiency standard of Band C by 2030, which became law in December 2014.

The affordable warmth charity, National Energy Action (NEA), advocates asking 3 key questions at contact assessment stages to identify those who are at risk of living in fuel poverty and in cold homes.

1. Is your whole house warm in winter? (This question helps to identify how people are heating their home and whether they are limiting heating to certain rooms)
2. Can you afford to heat your home to a comfortable level? (This question helps to identify whether occupants are meeting ‘minimum’ recommended temperatures all the time)
3. Can you afford to pay your fuel bills? (This question will flag whether someone has sufficient income to spend on the fuel they need for warmth and comfort).

PHE publishes data in an online tool (PHE Fingertips) that allows local authorities to compare themselves with other authorities in the region and benchmark themselves against the England average.

Outcome indicators are directly linked to efforts to reduce harm from cold: excess winter deaths (4.15) and fuel poverty (1.17), although up to 17 others can be linked to long-term planning for cold weather.

The PHOF EWD indicator is produced by age-group and sex at ‘lower tier’ local authority level, allowing comparison between local authorities and examination of trends over time. It is based on ONS estimates of EWDs published annually in November of each year, which compares the number of winter deaths (deaths occurring in December to March) with the average of non-winter deaths. This data is not timely enough to guide urgent public health action, but is important for longer-term monitoring, commissioning and advocacy.

### **1.9.2 Level 1 Winter Preparedness and Action Programme**

Level 1 is in force throughout the winter from 1 November to 31 March and covers the moderate temperatures where the greatest total burden of excess winter death and disease occur. This is because the negative health effects of cold weather start to occur at relatively moderate mean temperatures (4-8°C depending on region) and there are normally many more days at these temperatures each winter.

Actions described at this level should be being taken throughout the winter to protect and improve health. Preparations should also be in place to protect health and ensure service continuity in the event of severe cold, and for episodes of heavy snow and/or widespread ice.

### **1.9.3 Level 2 Severe Weather is forecast – Alert and Readiness**

Level 2 is triggered when the Met Office forecasts a 60% chance of severe winter weather, in one or more defined geographical areas for a period of at least 48 hours. Severe winter weather is defined as a mean temperature of 2°C or less and/or heavy snow/ widespread ice.

Although there are usually fewer days at these low temperatures, the risk of negative health impacts increases as the temperature falls. Reactive action to prevent harm to health and manage business continuity by services would be proportionately more important were we to experience an extremely cold spell for a prolonged period. Aside from cold temperatures, snow and ice are associated with an increase in injuries and severe disruption to services.

### **1.9.4 Level 3 – Response to Severe Winter Weather – Severe Weather Action**

This is triggered as soon as the weather described in level 2 happens. It indicates that severe winter weather is now happening and an impact on health services is expected.

### **1.9.5 Major Incident – Emergency Response**

This is reached when cold weather is so severe and/or prolonged that its effects extend outside health and social care, and may include for example power or transport problems, or water shortages, and/or where the integrity of health and social care systems is threatened. At this level, multi-sector response at national and regional levels will be required.

The decision to go to a level 4 is made at national level and will be taken considering a cross-government assessment of the weather conditions, co-ordinated by the Civil Contingencies Secretariat (Cabinet Office).

## **1.10 Website Sources of Information**

Further information can be found at the following links:

**The** [**Cold Weather Plan for England**](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/cold-weather-plan-for-england) **collection includes:**

* Cold Weather Plan for England (reviewed annually)
* Cold Weather Plan for England: easy-read guide
* Cold weather plan for England: making the case why long-term strategic planning for cold weather is essential to health and wellbeing
* [Action cards](Cold%20weather%20plan%3A%20action%20cards%20for%20cold%20weather%20alert%20service) for:
	+ Commissioners (health and social care) and local authorities
	+ Provider organisations
	+ Frontline health and social care staff in community and care facilities
	+ GPs and practice staff
	+ Individuals
	+ Voluntary and community sector
* Cold weather health risks and COVID-19: actions to prevent harm (slide set)
* ‘Keep Warm Keep Well’ leaflet
* Top tips for keeping warm and well
* NICE guideline NG6: Excess winter deaths and illness and the health risks associated with cold homes
* A quick guide for home care managers: a NICE resource to aid the implementation of NICE guideline 6
* Quality standard QS 117: Preventing excess winter deaths and illnesses associated with cold homes
* Helping People Living in Cold Homes - a Health Education England and PHE e-module on cold homes and health for frontline practitioners
* Training slide sets on Excess Winter Deaths and the winter of 2017 to 2018 are available for free download: one tailored for NHS colleagues and one for Local authorities
* Cold weather plan for England: research and literature review

**PHE:** South East PHE Centre issues Norovirus and Influenza–like-illness packs annually

For further links, see the “Berkshire cold weather preparedness and response during COVID-19: actions to prevent harm” slide set.

## **Related Plans**

This plan should be read and used in conjunction with:

* Thames Valley LRF Adverse Weather Plan – stored on Resilience Direct
* Thames Valley LRF Strategic Roads Plan (see Section 11 ‘Welfare’ and Annex 3, ‘Welfare Provision Process’) – stored on Resilience Direct
* Local authority Severe Weather / Adverse Weather plans
* [Adult social care: coronavirus (COVID-19) winter plan 2020 to 2021](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-social-care-coronavirus-covid-19-winter-plan-2020-to-2021)
* Describes the key elements of national support that will be available for the health and social care sector for the winter of 2020/21.
* Main actions to take for local authorities, NHS organisations, and social care providers, including in the voluntary and community sector.
* Aim is to ensure that high-quality, safe and timely care is provided to everyone who needs it, whilst protecting people who need care, their carers’ and the social care workforce from COVID-19.
* The plan applies to all settings and contexts in which people receive adult social care. This includes people’s own homes, residential care homes and nursing homes, and other community settings.

# **Part 2 Activation and Command and Control**

## **2.1 Cold Weather Alert Mechanism**

Cold Weather Reports are circulated by the Met Office by email to subscribing agencies daily. These reports include a link to the Met Office and weather pattern map. While the Cold Weather watch is in operation, Public Health England (PHE) will routinely monitor outputs from real-time syndromic surveillance systems. Information on cold weather-related illnesses and mortality will be included in weekly surveillance bulletins. These will include:

1. **Outputs from real-time syndromic surveillance** systems including calls to NHS 111, GP in hours and out of hours consultations, and sentinel emergency department attendances for the impact of seasonal infections and cold weather-related morbidity using a range of syndromic health indicators. A [routine weekly syndromic surveillance bulletin](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/syndromic-surveillance-systems-and-analyses) and summary report is produced throughout the year.
2. **Seasonal influenza surveillance**: PHE routinely analyses and collates influenza data from a variety of sources producing a [national flu report once a week](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-flu-and-covid-19-surveillance-reports) during the winter season. For 2020, this report is combined with data on COVID-19.
3. **Mortality surveillance**: PHE continues to carry out [weekly surveillance](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/weekly-all-cause-mortality-surveillance-2020-to-2021) to detect acute increases in mortality over and above what is expected for a given time of the year. The death registration data is provided by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and is available by age-group and region.
4. **Norovirus and rotavirus surveillance**: PHE will continue to monitor outbreak reports from hospitals and laboratory reports of cases of norovirus and rotavirus throughout the winter and will publish a [weekly norovirus bulletin](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/norovirus-guidance-data-and-analysis).

**2.2 Activation and Actions to be taken at Alert Levels**

The plan should be activated following a Met Office cold weather alert; the cascade mechanism for the alerts is shown in Figure 1. Local Authority Chief Executives, Directors of Adult Social Services (DASS), Directors of Children’s Services (DCS), the Strategic Director of Public Health (DPH) for Berkshire, Consultant responsible for Emergency Preparedness, Resilience and Response (EPRR), Local Authority Emergency Preparedness Officers (LA EPO) and Local Authority Public Health EPRR representatives should be registered to receive Met Office alerts. Annex A details what actions need to be taken at each alert level.

* 1. **Situation Reporting**

If a Thames Valley SCG is sitting it will be necessary to establish a daily reporting schedule (battle rhythm) and methodology for situation reporting. This will be agreed by the SCG and collating of situation reports will be done at all levels of command and control. Berkshire Public Health Teams will need to ensure it provides situation reports to the respective Berkshire LA EOCs (if up and running) so information can be fed up to the SCG. The format and timings will be dictated by the SCG.

## **Communications Strategy**

Annually in advance of the cold weather period, PHE will implement a national communications strategy from 1st November and these messages will form part of the Berkshire Communications Strategy. See the [Cold Weather Plan for England](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/748492/the_cold_weather_plan_for_england_2018.pdf).

The [PHE Campaign Resource Centre](https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources) has a range of resources available to download for free covering winter health and flu.

Local PH teams should ensure they are aware of the range of resources available and develop winter communications campaigns that use national messaging and are coordinated across local partners e.g. CCGs and Integrated Care Systems.

The communications strategy should include information on how residents can access benefits related to cold homes and cold weather.

[**Cold weather payments**](https://www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment)

Cold Weather Payment for those who receive:

* Pension Credit
* Income Support
* Income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance
* Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
* Universal Credit
* Support for Mortgage Interest

Winter Fuel Payment for those:

* Born on or before 5 October 1954
* AND lived in the UK for at least one day during the week of 21 to 27 September 2020 - this is called the ‘qualifying week’

Warm Home Discount Scheme for those:

* Who receive Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit - known as the ‘core group’
* On a low income and meet your energy supplier’s criteria for the scheme - known as the ‘broader group’

Figure 1: Cold Weather Alert Cascade



# **Annex A – Specific Actions at Alert Levels**

The following tables outline specific actions required at Cold Weather Alert levels

## **Alert Level 0 All year round**

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| **Level 0 All year round** |
| **Action – Level 0 All year round** | **Timing and or Criteria for Action** | **Responsible Person** |
| The strategy for cold winter weather includes medium- and longer-term measures that are elsewhere within the overall Cold Weather Plan for Berkshire (see Section 1.8.1). During Level 0 a communications plan will be established to:* Provide advice to local authority services, partner agencies etc.
* Support local NHS and Public Health colleagues to raise awareness within their respective organisations and networks of the rationale for the Cold Weather Plan for England and how it is implemented locally.
	1. Cold weather plan for England: Making the case why long-term strategic planning for cold weather is essential to health and wellbeing
	2. Use and share relevant slides (covering rationale) from “Berkshire cold weather preparedness and response during COVID-19: actions to prevent harm” slide set
* Encourage services, agencies and others to adopt the good practice guidelines set out in the Cold Weather Plan for England. An example might be to ask 3 key questions at contact assessment stages to identify those who are at risk of living in fuel poverty and in cold homes:
1. Is your whole house warm in winter? (This question helps to identify how people are heating their home and whether they are limiting heating to certain rooms)
2. Can you afford to heat your home to a comfortable level? (This question helps to identify whether occupants are meeting ‘minimum’ recommended temperatures all the time)
3. Can you afford to pay your fuel bills? (This question will flag whether someone has sufficient income to spend on the fuel they need for warmth and comfort).
* Utilise the wider local authority network to encourage the community and voluntary sector to also adopt the good practice guidelines.
* Information on how residents can access benefits related to cold homes and cold weather.

These actions are all year round. | All year round | All agencies |

## **Alert Level 1 Winter Preparedness and Action**

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| --- |
| **Level 1 Winter Preparedness and Action** |
| **Action – Level 1 Winter Preparedness and Action** | **Timing and or Criteria for Action** | **Responsible Person** |
| Level 1 is in force from 1st November to 31st March. 1. At Level 1, PHE will routinely monitor for the impact of cold winter weather related morbidity using a range of syndromic health indicators outputs from real-time syndromic surveillance systems in readiness for movement to Level 2.
2. The Berkshire Cold Weather Plan will be reviewed then activated.
3. Arrange a check-in telecom with the Berkshire wide Cold Weather Incident Coordination Group (list of recommended people below)
4. Make sure contact lists are up to date for email cascades
5. Inform local stakeholders of the start of the Cold Weather Reporting period and share appropriate resources to aid stakeholders
6. Begin public communications on health impacts of cold weather in collaboration with LA communications colleagues drawing on national campaigns.
7. Check that Local Authority Chief Executives, Directors of Adult Social Services (DASS), Directors of Children’s Services (DCS), the Strategic Director of Public Health (DPH) for Berkshire, Consultant responsible for Emergency Preparedness, Resilience and Response (EPRR), Local Authority Emergency Preparedness Officers (LA EPO), Local Authority Public Health EPRR representatives and Local Authority comms are registered to receive Met Office cold weather alerts.
8. Consider exercising the plan, such as using a PHE off the shelf exercise.
9. Monitor weather alerts for potential move to level 2.

Berkshire wide Cold Weather Incident Coordination Group – recommended people:* PHE Consultants in Communicable Disease Control (PHE CCDC) for East and West Berkshire
* Public Health representatives Consultants for each unitary authority and the Consultant responsible for Emergency Preparedness, Resilience and Response (EPRR)
* Local Authority Emergency Planning representative(s)
* A media and communications adviser/s for the unitary authorities
* The Clinical Commissioning Groups via their chosen lead
* Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
* Frimley Health (Heatherwood and Wexham Park) NHS Foundation Trust
* Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust
* Local Authority nominated leads for social services, education and highways

This coordination group will remain in place for the remainder of the cold winter weather period to support:1. The exchange of risk information and advice
2. An understanding of actions taken, or required, to achieve the aims of this plan
3. The coordination and dissemination of advice to the wider community
 | 1st November | PHEPublic HealthSupported by all agencies |

## **Alert Level 2 Severe Winter Weather is forecast – alert and readiness**

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| --- |
| **Level 2 Severe Winter Weather is forecast – alert and readiness** |
| **Action – Level 2 Severe Winter Weather is forecast – alert and readiness** | **Timing and or Criteria for Action** | **Responsible Person** |
| Actions:1. Start cold weather alert level cascade for relevant personnel within the local authority. See email templates in Annex F.
2. Convene the Berkshire Health Cold Weather Incident Coordination Team via teleconference or email as appropriate to assess the current situation within the NHS and Social Care to ensure all agencies are monitoring the cold weather alerts and taking relevant action.
	* A suggested agenda is provided in Annex B
	* Start a log of actions and decisions made
3. Contact NHS lead (CCG Emergency Planning lead) for capacity issues and disseminate relevant public health advice as required
4. Activate the Berkshire Health Protection Communication Plan
5. Encourage partner agencies, providers and businesses to coordinate cold weather plans, ensuring vulnerable and marginalised groups are appropriately supported
6. Advise partners and staff regarding risk reduction (key public health messages)
7. Ensure care homes and hospitals are aware of the cold weather plan and are engaged in preparing for cold winter weather
8. Engage the Community and Voluntary Sector to support communities
9. Ensure other institutional establishments (e.g.schools and nurseries) are aware of cold weather guidance
10. Ensure organisers of large events take account of possible cold weather risks
11. Readiness for a level 3 event by providing a core response team in readiness
12. For LA Public Health teams in particular: contact the LA Emergency Planning Officer – discuss whether a group should be pulled together with key leads from across the LA to assess the likely impact of the alert and anticipate next actions should level 3 be activated. Use this Annex as a reminder of actions that are required. Identify whether any other LA Adverse Weather groups are being activated.
13. Monitor weather alerts for potential move to level 3
 | Once the alert level is activated | Public HealthSupported by all agenciesFor action k) SAG Chairs via LA EPO |

## **Alert Level 3 Severe Weather Action**

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| **Level 3 Severe Weather Action** |
| **Action – Level 3 Severe Weather Action**  | **Timing and or Criteria for Action** | **Responsible Person** |
| 1. Start cold weather alert level cascade for relevant personnel within the local authority. See email templates in Annex F.
2. Re-convene the Berkshire Health Cold Weather Incident Coordination Team via teleconference or email as appropriate to assess the current situation within the NHS and Social Care to ensure all agencies are monitoring the cold weather alerts and taking relevant action.
	* A suggested agenda is provided in Annex B
	* Start a log of actions and decisions made
	* The Berkshire Health Cold Weather Incident Coordination Team should help prioritise and triage health and public health service delivery with the aim to maintain essential services.
3. Confirm whether an Adverse Weather SCG has been established or likely to be – also confirm the battle rhythm (timings of teleconferences and completion of situation reports) and method for completion of situation reports.
4. Contact Berkshire Emergency Planning Group to determine whether a TCG is likely to be activated. Consider the Berkshire Health Cold Weather Incident Coordination Team as a conduit for TCG activity rather than have two coordination groups running.
5. Contact NHS lead (CCG Emergency Planning lead) for capacity issues and disseminate relevant public health advice as required
6. Provide effective monitoring and communications systems and dialogue to ensure a timely exchange of essential information needed for the management of the incident and local messaging to the public, staff and external agencies. See [Cold Weather Plan for England](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/cold-weather-plan-for-england) Comms will include:
* Media alerts about the need to keep warm
* Advice to reduce unnecessary travel
* A review of safety of public events in the county
* Mobilising community and voluntary support
1. For LA Public Health teams in particular: Represent Berkshire Public Health Team at any LA Adverse Weather Group, Adverse Weather briefings or EOC meetings or identify LA PH representative from appropriate LA. Use this annex as a reminder of actions that are required.
2. Prepare for the restoration of business as usual services – including catching up with activity that will have been scaled down as part of the response.
3. Monitor staff exhaustion and any human aspects that have arisen as part of the response.
4. Carry out a post incident review, sharing of information lessons identified and plan review.

Each Berkshire local authority may establish a Local Authority Cold Weather Incident Coordination Team to carry out actions locally and feed into the Berkshire Cold Weather Incident Coordination Team. | Once the alert level is activated | Public HealthSupported by all agencies |

## **Alert Level 4 Major Incident**

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| **Level 4 Major Incident** |
| **Action – Level 4 Major Incident**  | **Timing and or Criteria for Action** | **Responsible Person** |
| Central government will declare a Level 4 alert in the event of severe or prolonged cold winter weather affecting sectors other than health and if requiring a coordinated multi-agency response. Actions for Level 3 should be followed. These will be augmented by any further measures recommended by Government and / or the Thames Valley LRF Multi Agency Plan. | Declared by Central Government  | All agencies |

# **Annex B – Berkshire Health Cold Weather Incident Coordination Team: initial actions, draft terms of reference and draft agenda**

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| **Initial Actions of the Berkshire Health Cold Weather Incident Coordination Team** | **Completed / date / sign** |
| 1. Agree a meeting schedule (teleconference).
 |  |
| 1. At the first meeting agree a Chair, Deputy and membership.
 |  |
| 1. *S*ecretarial support will be provided from the Berkshire Public Health Shared Team.
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| 1. Agree terms of reference - draft terms of reference / draft agenda can be found below.
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| 1. Establish reporting mechanism into any other TCG or SCG established
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| **Berkshire Health Cold Weather Incident Coordination Team - Draft terms of reference** |
| 1. To develop a strategy to respond and recover from the incident.
2. To monitor human health impact of the incident within the community, local authority and NHS.
3. To provide public health support to the TCG and Local Authority EOCs.
4. To collate local situation reports and provide a mechanism for reporting to the TCG and the DPH at SCG.
5. To develop an effective communications strategy to advise the local community on the human health impacts of the incident.
6. Carry out a post incident review, sharing of information lessons identified and plan review.
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| **Berkshire Health Cold Weather Incident Coordination Team Draft Agenda** |
| **Date, time and venue**1. Introductions
2. Apologies
3. Declaration and decisions of items for urgent attention
4. Minutes of previous meeting (for subsequent meetings)
	1. *Purpose of meeting*
	2. *At first meeting agree chair, deputy and membership of the group*
5. Terms of Reference
6. Confirm Battle Rhythm and timings for situation reports – including SCG/STAC/TCG and local
7. Critical information or decision points coming up
8. Current Risk Assessment
9. Assess actions required (*see Annex A)*
10. Community Impact
11. Local Authority Impact

*Are business continuity arrangements in place?*1. NHS impact including update from System Resilience Groups
2. Control Measures e.g. public health advice
3. Communications
	1. Public
	2. Media
	3. Staff
	4. Healthcare providers (e.g. GPs, Emergency Departments, etc.)
	5. Others
4. Identification of other agencies who should be represented
5. Agreed Actions
6. Any other business
7. Next Meeting
 |

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# **Annex C – Recommended Minimum Indoor Temperatures for Homes in winter**

Heating homes to at least 18°C (65F) in winter poses minimal risk to the health of a sedentary person, wearing suitable clothing.

Daytime recommendations:

* the 18°C (65F) threshold is particularly important for people 65 years and over or with pre-existing medical conditions; having temperatures slightly above this threshold may be beneficial for health
* the 18°C (65F) threshold also applies to healthy people (1 to 64 years)**\***; if they are wearing appropriate clothing and are active, they may wish to heat their homes to slightly less than 18°C (65F)

Overnight recommendations:

* maintaining the 18°C (65F) threshold overnight may be beneficial to protect the health of those 65 years and over or with pre-existing medical conditions; they should continue to use sufficient bedding, clothing and thermal blankets, or heating aids as appropriate
* overnight, the 18°C (65F) threshold may be less important for healthy people (1 to 64)\* if they have sufficient bedding, clothing and use thermal blankets or heating aids as appropriate

**\*There is an existing recommendation to reduce sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Advice is that rooms in which infants sleep should be heated to between 16 to 20°C (61 to 68F).**

# **Annex D – Key Public Health Messages**

Public Health information and leaflets can be found under section 1.9.

Key messages are:

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| **Free Flu Jab**Contact your GP or pharmacist if you think you, or someone you care for, might qualify for a free flu jab. If you are pregnant, you can have the NHS flu vaccine via your midwifery service.There are four [flu leaflets](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-flu-immunisation-programme-plan): one general, one for pregnancy and, an easy read version, and one about children. They are available in different languages.**For 2020/21 free flu vaccinations** are available for those who: * are aged 65 or older (including those who'll be 65 by 31 March 2021)
* are aged two to twelve years old
* are aged two to seventeen years with long-term health conditions
* aged between 6 months and 2 years and is in a high-risk group for flu
* have certain health conditions, see link [here](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/flu-influenza-vaccine/)
* are pregnant
* are living in a long-stay residential care home or other long-stay care facility (not prison or university halls)
* receive a carer's allowance, or are the main carer for an older or disabled person who may be at risk if you get sick
* live with someone [who's at high risk from coronavirus](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk/whos-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/) (on the NHS shielded patient list)
* are aged 50-64 years, link [here](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/flu-influenza-vaccine/) to guidance
* frontline health or social care workers, including those employed by a registered residential care or nursing home; registered homecare organisation; hospice
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| **Keep your home warm, efficiently and safely by:** * Heating your home to at least 18°C in winter poses minimal risk to your health when you are wearing suitable clothing
* Get your heating system and cooking appliances checked and keep your home well ventilated
* Use your electric blanket as instructed and get it tested every three years.
* Never use a hot water bottle with an electric blanket
* Do not use a gas cooker or oven to heat your home; it is inefficient and there is a risk of carbon monoxide poisoning and this can kill
* Make sure you have a supply of heating oil or Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) or sold fuel if you are not on mains gas or electricity – to make sure you do not run out in winter
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| **Keep in the warmth by:*** Fitting draught proofing to seal any gaps around windows and doors
* Making sure you have loft insulation. And if you have cavity walls, make sure they are insulated too
* Insulate your hot water cylinder and pipes
* Draw your curtains at dusk to help keep heat generated inside your rooms
* Make sure your radiators are not obstructed by furniture or curtains
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| **Look after yourself:*** Food is a vital source of energy and helps to keep your body warm so have plenty of hot food and drinks
* Aim to include five daily portions of fruit and vegetables. Tinned and frozen vegetables count toward your five a day
* Stock up on tinned and frozen foods so you don’t have to go out too much when it’s cold or icy
* Exercise is good for you all year round and it can keep you warm in winter
* If possible, try to move around at least once an hour. But remember to speak to your GP before starting any exercise plans
* Wear lots of thin layers – clothes made from cotton, wool or fleecy fibres are particularly good and maintain body heat
* Wear good-fitting slippers with a good grip indoors and shoes with a good grip outside to prevent trips, slips and falls
* Make sure you have spare medication in case you are unable to go out
* Check if you are eligible for inclusion on the priority services register operated by your water and power supplier – more details may be found [here](https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/consumers/household-gas-and-electricity-guide/extra-help-energy-services/priority-services-register)
* Make sure you get your prescription medicines before pharmacies close on Christmas Eve
* Always take your prescribed medicines as directed
* If you start to feel unwell, even if it’s just a cough or a cold, then get help from your pharmacist quickly before it gets more serious.
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| **Look after others:*** Check on older neighbours or relatives, especially those living alone or who have serious illnesses to make sure they are safe, warm and well
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| **Get financial support:** * There are grants, benefits and sources of advice to make your home more energy efficient, improve your heating or help with bills. It’s worthwhile claiming all the benefits you are entitled to before winter sets in
 |

# **Annex E – Suggested Cold Weather Resources to share with stakeholders ahead of 1st November each year**

The Met Office uses hashtags #winterready for winter preparedness and #weatheraware for levels 2-4, which will be supported by PHE, DHSC and other government departments when appropriate in social media communication.

|  |  |
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| **Recipient** | **Suggested text for local editing** |
| **Everyone listed under Annex F receives****NHS and CCG colleagues** | Suggested text to send out in lead up to 1st November. Attach “Berkshire cold weather preparedness and response during COVID-19: actions to prevent harm” slide set and [‘Keep Warm Keep Well’](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keep-warm-keep-well-leaflet-gives-advice-on-staying-healthy-in-cold-weather) leaflet.Dear …As the days grow colder and shorter, we again ask your valued help with cold weather preparedness and response over the coming months. This year we have the added challenge of the ongoing **COVID-19 pandemic.** COVID-19 is likely to ***amplify*** the risks of cold weather. We know that people who are vulnerable to dying from the impact of cold temperatures overlap with those who are susceptible to illness from COVID-19. These shared risk factors mean the cold weather period is of even greater importance this year if we are to protect the health of our communities.We know that cold weather increases the risk of heart attacks, strokes, lung illnesses, flu, falls and injuries, particularly in older people and those with long-term health conditions. It is therefore important that swift action is taken when a cold weather **Level 2 alert** comes to you (Level 2 alert = 60% likelihood that the mean temperature is expected to be at or below 2°C for a period of 48 hours, and/or heavy snow/ widespread ice, in the coming days). Alerts are operational between now and 31st March 2021.Attached to this email are two key resources:* [‘Keep Warm Keep Well’](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keep-warm-keep-well-leaflet-gives-advice-on-staying-healthy-in-cold-weather) leaflet for the public and professionals, which has been updated in view of COVID-19, giving advice on staying well in cold weather, covering issues such as financial help, healthy lifestyles, the flu vaccine and heating advice
* A slide deck with all the key messages and actions for cold weather preparedness during COVID-19 – all in one place. This year Public Health England has recommended some **additional considerations to mitigate and manage the concurrent COVID-19 risks**, alongside the action tables in the Cold Weather Plan for England. These are all in the slide deck for ease.

An additional resource is this [short video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=byuhXtEKCuY&feature=emb_title) from Public Health England which provides an overview of cold weather and COVID-19.Information can be added on the staff flu vaccine programme (where applicable).Please take the time to look through these resources and communicate them to your teams and colleagues, and update your websites as necessary.If you have any questions or would like to speak with a member of the team, please do feel free to contact me.Best wishes,*(Insert your name here)* |
| **LA comms****LA Chief Exec/ SLT****LA emergency planning****NHS and CCG colleagues** | Berkshire Public Health Team Cold Weather Plan (this plan) |

# **Annex F – Email Templates level 2 and 3**

There is no need for LA leads to send Level 2 and 3 alerts to NHS and CCGs, as our NHS/CCG colleagues have their own messaging they send out.

**Cold Weather email templates – Level 2**

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| **Recipient** | **Route** | **Suggested text for local editing** |
| Chief Executive / SLTEmergency planning | Direct | Dear colleague,A level 2 cold weather alert has been issued from [insert date] to [insert date]. This means that temperatures are likely to drop to levels that increase the risk of ill health among vulnerable adults, particularly older people, those with long term conditions and those living in cold homes.The Public Health Team are working with our communications team to ensure messages go out to our staff and residents and a (virtual) Berkshire Health Cold Weather Incident Coordination has been set up to facilitate a coordinated response and ensure that departmental and service level cold weather plans and business continuity plans are in place and staff are aware of the actions they will take to protect vulnerable residents. (EDIT AS REQUIRED)  |
| LA comms | Direct | Dear colleague,A level 2 cold weather alert has been issued from [insert date] to [insert date]. This means that temperatures are likely to drop to levels that increase the risk of ill health among vulnerable adults, particularly older people, those with long term conditions and those living in cold homes.Can I ask for your support in ensuring that our staff and residents are able to access information and resources to help them protect themselves and support vulnerable family, friends and neighbours should the warning be raised to level 3? Also your continued support disseminating information on the flu vaccine for residents and the staff flu vaccine programme.Key public health messages can be found in the Berkshire Public Health Team Cold Weather Plan (Annex D) and are also available via NHS Choices ([www.nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/winterhealth/Pages/KeepWarmKeepWell.aspx)).The Met Office is using hashtag #weatheraware for levels 2-4, which will be supported by PHE, DHSC and other government departments when appropriate in social media communication**“Severe cold weather can be dangerous, especially for the very young or very old or those with chronic disease. Advice on how to reduce the risk either for yourself or somebody you know can be obtained from the winter health pages at NHS Choices (**[**www.nhs.uk**](https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/winterhealth/Pages/KeepWarmKeepWell.aspx)**) or from your local chemist. If you are worried about your health or that of somebody you know, ring NHS 111.”**  |
| Adult Social Care (incl community health practitioners)Care HomesNursing HomesDomiciliary CareDay Care centresChildren’s Services (incl schools nurses and health visitors)Learning Disability TeamsLA housing (including caretakers and wardens)LA parksLA Transport / HighwaysLA Events Management (SAG) LA Facilities ManagementCommissioned services | Direct or via reps in your LA | Dear colleague, A level 2 cold weather alert has been issued from [insert date] to [insert date]. This means that temperatures are likely to drop to levels that increase the risk of ill health among vulnerable adults, particularly older people, those with long term conditions and those living in cold homes.Please ensure that cold weather plans and business continuity plans are in place and staff are aware of the actions they will take should the alert level move to level 3.The Public Health Team are working with our communications team to ensure messages go out to our residents.**“Severe cold weather can be dangerous, especially for the very young or very old or those with chronic disease. Advice on how to reduce the risk either for yourself or somebody you know can be obtained from the winter health pages at NHS Choices (**[**www.nhs.uk**](https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/winterhealth/Pages/KeepWarmKeepWell.aspx)**) or from your local chemist. If you are worried about your health or that of somebody you know, ring NHS 111.”**  |
| Schools and nurseries | Direct or via reps in your LA | Dear colleague, A level 2 cold weather alert has been issued from [insert date] to [insert date]. This means that temperatures are likely to drop to levels that increase the risk of ill health among young children and vulnerable adults, particularly older people, those with long term conditions and those living in cold homes.Please ensure that cold weather plans and business continuity plans are in place and staff are aware of the actions they will take should the alert level move to level 3.The Public Health Team are working with our communications team to ensure messages go out to families.**“Severe cold weather can be dangerous, especially for the very young or very old or those with chronic disease. Advice on how to reduce the risk either for yourself or somebody you know can be obtained from the winter health pages at NHS Choices (**[**www.nhs.uk**](https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/winterhealth/Pages/KeepWarmKeepWell.aspx)**) or from your local chemist. If you are worried about your health or that of somebody you know, ring NHS 111.”**  |
| Voluntary Groups / informal Carers / Older people’s networksCharitiesCommunity HubsParish councils in rural areas and neighbourhood forums in urban areasHomeless servicesLA Community Safety Partnership | Direct or via reps in your LA | Dear xxxxx, A level 2 cold weather alert has been issued from [insert date] to [insert date]. This means that temperatures are likely to drop to levels that increase the risk of ill health among vulnerable adults, particularly older people, those with long term conditions and those living in cold homes.The[Cold Weather Plan for England – easy read version](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/652817/Cold_Weather_Plan_Easy_Read.pdf) **i**s a useful resource to share with your staff, clients and community membersAs appropriate: Age UK has produced the attached guidance which I would be grateful if you could share with your staff and clients and community members: [Winter Wrapped Up – Age UK](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/information-guides/ageukig27_winter_wrapped_up_inf.pdf)**“Severe cold weather can be dangerous, especially for the very young or very old or those with chronic disease. Advice on how to reduce the risk either for yourself or somebody you know can be obtained from the winter health pages at NHS Choices (**[**www.nhs.uk**](https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/winterhealth/Pages/KeepWarmKeepWell.aspx)**) or from your local chemist. If you are worried about your health or that of somebody you know, ring NHS 111.”**  |

**Cold Weather email templates – Level 3**

There is no need for LA leads to send Level 2 and 3 alerts to NHS and CCGs, as our NHS/CCG colleagues have their own messaging they send out.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Recipient** | **Route** | **Suggested text for local editing** |
| Chief Executive / SLT | Direct | Dear colleague,A level 3 cold weather alert has been issued from [insert date] to [insert date]. This means that temperatures are likely to drop to levels that increase the risk of ill health among vulnerable adults, particularly older people, those with long term conditions and those living in cold homes.The Public Health Team are working with our communications team to ensure messages go out to our residents and a (virtual) Berkshire Health Cold Weather Incident Coordination has been set up to facilitate a coordinated response and ensure that departmental and service level cold weather plans and business continuity plans are now activated and staff are aware of the actions they will take to protect vulnerable residents. (EDIT AS REQUIRED)  |
| LA commsEmergency planning | Direct | Dear colleague,A level 3 cold weather alert has been issued from [insert date] to [insert date]. This means that temperatures are likely to drop to levels that increase the risk of ill health among vulnerable adults, particularly older people, those with long term conditions and those living in cold homes.Can I ask for your support in ensuring that our staff and residents are able to access information and resources to help them protect themselves and support vulnerable family, friends and neighbours? Also your continued support disseminating information on the flu vaccine for residents and the staff flu vaccine programme.Key public health messages can be found in the Berkshire Public Health Team Cold Weather Plan (Annex D) and are also available via NHS Choices ([www.nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/winterhealth/Pages/KeepWarmKeepWell.aspx)).The Met Office is using hashtag #weatheraware for levels 2-4, which will be supported by PHE, DHSC and other government departments when appropriate in social media communication* **Heating homes to at least 18**°**C (65F) in winter poses minimal risk to the health of a sedentary person, wearing suitable clothing.**
* The 18°C (65F) threshold **is particularly important for people 65 years and over or with pre-existing medical conditions**; having temperatures slightly above this threshold may be beneficial for health
* Maintaining the 18°C (65F) threshold overnight may be beneficial to protect the health of those **65 years and over or with pre-existing medical conditions**; they should continue to use sufficient bedding, clothing and thermal blankets, or heating aids as appropriate
* There is an existing recommendation to reduce sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Advice is that rooms in which infants sleep should be heated to between 16 to 20°C (61 to 68F)

**“Make sure that you stay warm. If going outside, make sure you dress appropriately. If indoors, make sure that you keep your heating to the right temperature; heating your home to at least 18°C in winter poses minimal risk to your health when you are wearing suitable clothing. If there is anyone you know who might be at special risk, for example, an older person living on their own, make sure they know what to do to stay warm and are well stocked with food and medications. If you are worried about your health or that of somebody you know, ring NHS 111** **More information is available on the winter health pages at NHS Choices (**[**www.nhs.uk**](https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/winterhealth/Pages/KeepWarmKeepWell.aspx)**)”** |
| Adult Social Care (incl community health practitioners)Children’s Services (incl schools nurses and health visitors)Learning Disability TeamsLA housing (including caretakers and wardens)LA parksLA Transport / HighwaysLA Events Management (SAG) LA Facilities ManagementCommissioned services | Direct or via reps in your LA | Dear colleague, A level 3 cold weather alert has been issued from [insert date] to [insert date]. This means that temperatures are likely to drop to levels that increase the risk of ill health among vulnerable adults, particularly older people, those with long term conditions and those living in cold homes.Please ensure that departmental and service level cold weather plans and business continuity plans are now activated, and staff are aware of the actions they will take to protect vulnerable residents* **Heating homes to at least 18**°**C (65F) in winter poses minimal risk to the health of a sedentary person, wearing suitable clothing.**
* The 18°C (65F) threshold **is particularly important for people 65 years and over or with pre-existing medical conditions**; having temperatures slightly above this threshold may be beneficial for health
* Maintaining the 18°C (65F) threshold overnight may be beneficial to protect the health of those **65 years and over or with pre-existing medical conditions**; they should continue to use sufficient bedding, clothing and thermal blankets, or heating aids as appropriate
* There is an existing recommendation to reduce sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Advice is that rooms in which infants sleep should be heated to between 16 to 20°C (61 to 68F)

The Public Health Team are working with our communications team to ensure messages go out to our residents. **“Make sure that you stay warm. If going outside, make sure you dress appropriately. If indoors, make sure that you keep your heating to the right temperature; heating your home to at least 18°C in winter poses minimal risk to your health when you are wearing suitable clothing. If there is anyone you know who might be at special risk, for example, an older person living on their own, make sure they know what to do to stay warm and are well stocked with food and medications. If you are worried about your health or that of somebody you know, ring NHS 111** **More information is available on the winter health pages at NHS Choices (**[**www.nhs.uk**](https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/winterhealth/Pages/KeepWarmKeepWell.aspx)**)”** |
| Schools and nurseries | Via LA education | Dear colleague,A level 3 cold weather alert has been issued from [insert date] to [insert date]. This means that temperatures are likely to drop to levels that increase the risk of ill health among young children, those with long term conditions and those living in cold homes.Please ensure that departmental and service level cold weather plans and business continuity plans are now activated, and staff are aware of the actions they will take to protect students.The Public Health Team are working with our communications team to ensure messages go out to families.**“Make sure that you stay warm. If going outside, make sure you dress appropriately. If indoors, make sure that you keep your heating to the right temperature; heating your home to at least 18°C in winter poses minimal risk to your health when you are wearing suitable clothing. If there is anyone you know who might be at special risk, for example, an older person living on their own, make sure they know what to do to stay warm and are well stocked with food and medications. If you are worried about your health or that of somebody you know, ring NHS 111** **More information is available on the winter health pages at NHS Choices (**[**www.nhs.uk**](https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/winterhealth/Pages/KeepWarmKeepWell.aspx)**)”** |
| Care HomesNursing HomesDomiciliary CareDay Care centres | Direct or via reps in your LA | Dear xxxxx, A level 3 cold weather alert has been issued from [insert date] to [insert date]. This means that temperatures are likely to drop to levels that increase the risk of ill health among vulnerable adults, particularly older people, those with long term conditions and those living in cold homes.Please ensure that departmental and service level cold weather plans and business continuity plans are now activated, and staff are aware of the actions they will take to protect vulnerable residents* **Heating homes to at least 18**°**C (65F) in winter poses minimal risk to the health of a sedentary person, wearing suitable clothing.**
* The 18°C (65F) threshold **is particularly important for people 65 years and over or with pre-existing medical conditions**; having temperatures slightly above this threshold may be beneficial for health
* maintaining the 18°C (65F) threshold overnight may be beneficial to protect the health of those **65 years and over or with pre-existing medical conditions**; they should continue to use sufficient bedding, clothing and thermal blankets, or heating aids as appropriate
* There is an existing recommendation to reduce sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Advice is that rooms in which infants sleep should be heated to between 16 to 20°C (61 to 68F)

Age UK has produced the attached guidance which I would be grateful if you could share with your staff and clients: [Winter Wrapped Up – Age UK](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/information-guides/ageukig27_winter_wrapped_up_inf.pdf)**“Make sure that you stay warm. If going outside, make sure you dress appropriately. If indoors, make sure that you keep your heating to the right temperature; heating your home to at least 18°C in winter poses minimal risk to your health when you are wearing suitable clothing. If there is anyone you know who might be at special risk, for example, an older person living on their own, make sure they know what to do to stay warm and are well stocked with food and medications. If you are worried about your health or that of somebody you know, ring NHS 111** **More information is available on the winter health pages at NHS Choices (**[**www.nhs.uk**](https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/winterhealth/Pages/KeepWarmKeepWell.aspx)**)”** |
| Voluntary Groups / informal Carers / Older people’s networksCharitiesCommunity HubsParish councils in rural areas and neighbourhood forums in urban areasHomeless servicesLA Community Safety Partnership | Direct or via reps in your LA | Dear xxxxx, A level 3 cold weather alert has been issued from [insert date] to [insert date]. This means that temperatures are likely to drop to levels that increase the risk of ill health among vulnerable adults, particularly older people, those with long term conditions and those living in cold homes.* **Heating homes to at least 18**°**C (65F) in winter poses minimal risk to the health of a sedentary person, wearing suitable clothing.**
* The 18°C (65F) threshold **is particularly important for people 65 years and over or with pre-existing medical conditions**; having temperatures slightly above this threshold may be beneficial for health
* Maintaining the 18°C (65F) threshold overnight may be beneficial to protect the health of those **65 years and over or with pre-existing medical conditions**; they should continue to use sufficient bedding, clothing and thermal blankets, or heating aids as appropriate

As appropriate: Age UK has produced the attached guidance which I would be grateful if you could share with your staff and clients and community members: [Winter Wrapped Up – Age UK](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/information-guides/ageukig27_winter_wrapped_up_inf.pdf)**“Make sure that you stay warm. If going outside, make sure you dress appropriately. If indoors, make sure that you keep your heating to the right temperature; heating your home to at least 18°C in winter poses minimal risk to your health when you are wearing suitable clothing. If there is anyone you know who might be at special risk, for example, an older person living on their own, make sure they know what to do to stay warm and are well stocked with food and medications. If you are worried about your health or that of somebody you know, ring NHS 111** **More information is available on the winter health pages at NHS Choices (**[**www.nhs.uk**](https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/winterhealth/Pages/KeepWarmKeepWell.aspx)**)”** |
| Voluntary Groups / informal Carers / Learning Disability Teams | Direct or through local VCS or similar | Dear xxxxx, A level 3 cold weather alert has been issued from [insert date] to [insert date]. This means that temperatures are likely to drop to levels that increase the risk of ill health among vulnerable adults, particularly older people, those with long term conditions and those living in cold homes.* **Heating homes to at least 18**°**C (65F) in winter poses minimal risk to the health of a sedentary person, wearing suitable clothing.**
* The 18°C (65F) threshold **is particularly important for people 65 years and over or with pre-existing medical conditions**; having temperatures slightly above this threshold may be beneficial for health
* maintaining the 18°C (65F) threshold overnight may be beneficial to protect the health of those **65 years and over or with pre-existing medical conditions**; they should continue to use sufficient bedding, clothing and thermal blankets, or heating aids as appropriate

**“Make sure that you stay warm. If going outside, make sure you dress appropriately. If indoors, make sure that you keep your heating to the right temperature; heating your home to at least 18°C in winter poses minimal risk to your health when you are wearing suitable clothing. If there is anyone you know who might be at special risk, for example, an older person living on their own, make sure they know what to do to stay warm and are well stocked with food and medications. If you are worried about your health or that of somebody you know, ring NHS 111** **More information is available on the winter health pages at NHS Choices (**[**www.nhs.uk**](https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/winterhealth/Pages/KeepWarmKeepWell.aspx)**)”** |

# **Annex G – Public Health and Agency Leads and Contacts**

Each local authority will have their own contact sheet for emails going to recipients in Annexes E and F.

The list of contacts for the Berkshire-wide Cold Weather Incident Coordination Group will be circulated each year separately.