THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KINGSTON UPON THAMES

VCSEs Get Winter Ready

Winter Preparedness 2026/27

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Sue Webster
RBK Public Health









Aims of the session

To understand:

- which groups are most vulnerable to the impacts of cold weather
- how cold weather events can impact health
- the actions that need to be taken for winter preparedness and in the event of different weather-health alerts
- how to keep warm
- what winter vaccination offers are available
- where the relevant resources can be found relevant to your service area
- role of a cold weather champion

Cold Weather Preparedness

- All staff should be familiar with the [UKHSA Adverse Weather and Health resources]
- Ahead of the winter community groups should review their winter plans
- Please share the guidance and information with colleagues and service users and residents so they can ensure they know what actions need to be taken and when
- You should also be familiar with any plans your organisation has in place and [Health and Safety Executive - Temperature]
- Remember to register to receive Weather-Health Alerts if you have not already done so: [Weather-Health Alert sign up]





Cold Weather and Health



Exposure to cold weather can affect anyone, however some people are at particular at risk. They 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

Cold Weather and Health



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. See UKHSA How to protect your home and family from the invisible danger of carbon monoxide

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

Alert levels for Cold Weather

Green (Preparedness) - 1st November - 31st March weather- health alerts active - Business as usual but health and social care services need to review **winter planning and preparedness**

Yellow (Response) - Alert and Readiness - 60% Risk of cold weather in the next 2 or 3 days. May also be issued during periods of cold which would be unlikely to impact most people, but could impact those who are particularly vulnerable

Amber (Enhanced Response) - Cold Weather Action - Weather impacts are likely to be felt across the whole health service, with potential for the whole population to be at risk. Non-health sectors may start to be impacted

Red (Emergency Response) - Major Incident - Emergency Response - Central Government will declare a red alert in the event of severe or prolonged cold weather affecting sectors other than health. A Red alert indicates significant risk to life for even the healthy population

Cold weather messages

Here are ways people can keep themselves and others safe during periods of cold:

- Check on family, friends and neighbours who may be at higher risk of becoming unwell, and if you are at higher risk, ask them to do the same for you
- Check the weather forecast and the news
- Make sure you have sufficient food and medicine
- Take simple measures to reduce draughts at home
- Heat rooms you spend most time in to 18℃ if you can
- Keep bedroom windows closed at night
- Wear multiple layers of thinner clothing



Looking after yourself and others

- When you are 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 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
- When out and about, wear shoes with good grip to avoid slips and falls on slippery or icy surfaces
- If you're eligible, get vaccinated against flu and COVID-19
- Get help if needed. Call NHS 111 or in an emergency 999

Keeping warm and well: staying safe in cold weather - GOV.UK



Flu Vaccination Programme 2026



Flu vaccination will run until 31st March 2027 for the following cohorts:

- pregnant women
- all children aged 2 or 3 years on 31st August 2026
- primary school aged children (from Reception to Year 6)
- secondary school aged children (from Year 7 to Year 11)
- all children in clinical risk groups aged from 6 months to less than 18 years
- 65 or over (including those who will be 65 by 31 March 2027)
- 18 to 64 and have certain long-term health conditions
- live in a long-stay residential care home
- are the main carer for an older or disabled person, or receive a carer's allowance
- live with someone who has a weakened immune system
- are experiencing homelessness or staying in a homeless hostel or night shelter
- Frontline health and social care workers



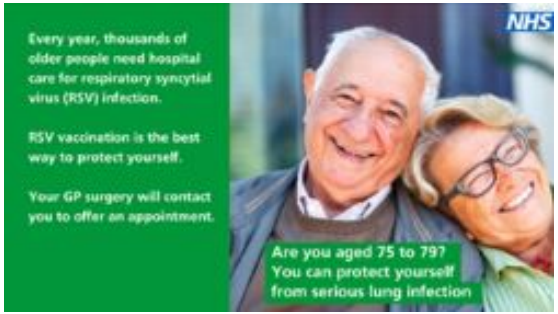
See: **[Flu vaccine - NHS](#)).** Those aged 18 or over, can [book a flu vaccination appointment online](#) or in the [NHS App](#)

FAIRER KINGSTON · SAFER KINGSTON · GREENER KINGSTON · KINGSTON TOGETHER

Covid Vaccination Winter Programme 2026/27

The covid vaccination programme will run until 31st January 2027:

- adults aged 75 years and over
- residents in care homes for older adults
- individuals aged 6 months and over who are immunosuppressed



See: [COVID-19 vaccine - NHS]

SWL ICB Immunisation Service have plans in place to support vaccinations for the housebound, residential care settings and outreach programmes

Warmer Homes Better Health

Thinking Works
for a brighter tomorrow

Warm Home Better Health

Public Health commissions the Warm Homes better Health service which targets households at risk of fuel poverty in line with national recommendations This includes people with mental health conditions, people with disabilities and people aged 65+

The service provides:

- Crisis support: The crisis team deal with fuel voucher requests, emergency heating repairs and emergency heating
- Energy assessment with behaviour change advice and onward referrals e.g. housing, financial and health assessments.
- Small measures installation and heating check e.g. LED lights, radiator reflector panels and CO detectors
- Onward casework support: A dedicated Grants Support Officer helps hand-hold through grant applications for large heating and insulation works.

Referrals can be made by clicking the envelope at the top of this page Kingston Warm Home Better Health or the enquiries@thinkingworks.co.uk button at the bottom.

Staff should attend training about the service. Contact enquiries@thinkingworks.co.uk to arrange

http://www.thinkingworks.co.uk/kingsto

Cold Weather Champion Role

The role can include:

- registering to receive adverse weather and health alerts and sharing the information as required
- acting as the focal point for implementing adverse weather plans, ensuring the safety of vulnerable individuals in your communities
- responsibility for coordinating preparedness and response actions during adverse weather and health alerts
- disseminating guidance and information to prevent weather-related illnesses including ‘Keeping Warm, Keeping Safe’ and winter vaccination messaging with your communities and colleagues and volunteers

Winter preparedness resources 1/2

- Cold-Health Alert action card for the voluntary and community sector - GOV.UK - Information and guidance for VCSEs on how to protect those most at risk from the health impacts of cold weather
- Cold-Health Alert summary action card for voluntary and community sector Summary Action card for VCSEs on how to protect those most at risk from the health impacts of cold weather
- Tips for keeping warm and well this winter - GOV.UK in partnership with Age UK
- For people struggling to afford heating bills, Find ways to save energy in your home - GOV.UK provides free advice on energy efficiency
- Keeping warm and well: staying safe in cold weather - GOV.UK - this resource is available in different languages, Easy Read and BSL video

Winter preparedness resources 2/2

- Helping People Living in Cold Homes (HOU): an e-module on cold homes and health for frontline practitioners - you will need to register with elfh (e-learning for Healthcare)
- Kingston webpages: Keeping warm in winter, Staying safe in winter
- Connected Kingston - advice and services that support residents covering topics including cost of living, mental health, disabilities and inclusion, employment and skills and children and young people
- UKHSA Cold weather Communications Toolkit for promotional messages and assets
- Winter vaccinations and winter health - NHS
- Encourage vulnerable residents to join the Priority Services Register