

# Cold Weather Plan for Coventry 2018/2019

Protecting health and reducing harm from severe  
cold in Coventry

**For Roles and Responsibilities including Action  
Cards turn to page 12**



## - COLD WEATHER PLAN FOR COVENTRY -

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The CSW Resilience Team is responsible for the drafting, issuing, continuous review, maintenance and updating of this document.

<b>Address:</b>	CSW Resilience Team Room 66, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor Coventry Council House Earl Street Coventry CV1 5RR
<b>Tel:</b>	<b>02476 833 576</b>
<b>Email:</b>	cswrt@warwickshire.gov.uk

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### Plan Activation

This plan will be activated annually in line with the Met Office Cold Weather Health Watch Service on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November until the 31<sup>st</sup> of March, after this time the risk of severe cold weather is negligible.

The plan will be circulated by the CSW Resilience Team via multiple channels including the email distribution lists, the plans will also be hosted on the CSW Intranet pages. **Please note CSW Resilience will not be issuing Cold Weather Alerts and those who need to receive them must sign up with the Met Office. Please see section 1.1.1 on details of how to do this.**

### Associated Plans & Documents

The Cold Weather Plan for England
Making the Case: Why long term strategic planning for cold weather is essential to health & well-being
Severe Weather Warning Policy for Coventry, Solihull & Warwickshire

### Acronyms

CCC	Coventry City Council
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group
CSWRT	Coventry, Solihull & Warwickshire Resilience Team
CWPfE	Cold Weather Plan for England
DH	Department of Health
EPRR	Emergency Planning, Resilience and Response
HWT	Health & Welfare Team
JSNA	Joint Strategic Needs Assessment
PHE	Public Health England
SEDs	Seasonal Excess Deaths
SWWP	Severe Weather Warning Policy

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### **Aim**

The aim of this plan is to outline the processes and arrangements in place and actions to be taken in Coventry to prepare for, alert people to and ultimately prevent the major avoidable effects of winter on the health of the population.

### **Objectives**

1. To describe the functions in place in Coventry to deliver long term, co-ordinated, interagency cold weather planning;
2. To outline the Met Office Cold Weather Health Watch alert system and how it will be delivered in Coventry;
3. To describe the actions taken across the Authority and with partner organisations in response to prolonged periods of cold weather;
4. To illustrate the local distribution of Cold Weather Health Watch Alerts and outline the roles, responsibilities and expectations of those in receipt of them with reference to the Cold Weather Plan for England (CWPfE); and
5. To adapt recommendations made in the CWPfE to locally relevant procedures.

This will ensure:

- Advanced warning and advice is available to staff and partner agencies leading up to and during periods of cold weather;
- Care providers are aware of actions necessary to support vulnerable people and put appropriate measures in place to do so;
- Carers, the voluntary sector, and appropriate partner agencies are mobilised in a timely manner to support vulnerable people;
- All service providers consider the impacts of cold weather and have appropriate business continuity plans in place to ensure minimal disruption; and
- The wider population of Coventry are aware of the risks and actions they can take to protect themselves and support those most vulnerable to cold weather conditions.

It should be noted that this plan does not describe those actions that should be considered business as usual during the winter period - all partners and services are themselves responsible for considering weather conditions against service delivery at this time of year.

This plan will provide an overview of resources and working arrangements across Coventry supporting the local population along with roles, responsibilities and actions to prevent excess deaths prior to and upon alert of severe, prolonged winter weather.

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### Introduction

Recent winters have delivered significant periods of severe and sustained cold weather, highlighting the need for effective plans to mitigate the effects of cold weather on health.

An estimated 43,900 excess winter deaths occurred in England and Wales in 2014/15; the highest number since 1999/00, with 27% more people dying in the winter months compared with the non-winter months. The majority of deaths occurred among people aged 75 and over; there were an estimated 36,300 excess winter deaths in this age group in 2014/15, compared with 7,700 in people aged under 75.

Cold weather increases the incidence of various health conditions including: heart attacks and strokes; respiratory diseases; influenza; and hypothermia. Cold weather can also negatively affect mental health conditions such as depression.

For children and adolescents, living in cold homes can have many negative impacts on their health and development. In the report 'The Health Impacts of Cold Homes and Fuel Poverty' (The Marmot Review Team, 2011) it is noted that "More than 1 in 4 adolescents living in cold housing are at risk of multiple mental health problems compared to 1 in 20 adolescents who have always lived in warm housing." Infant weight gain, hospital admission rates, development status and educational attainment are also negatively affected by living in cold homes.

The preliminary findings of the 2012-2013 Evaluation of the Cold Weather Plan indicates that the majority of the burden of cold-related ill-health occurs at moderate outdoor winter temperatures (from 4-8<sup>0</sup>C depending on region). These findings require an increased emphasis on year-round (Level 0) and winter preparedness and actions (Level 1) to be taken by the NHS, social care and other agencies throughout the year.

Whilst the CWPfE focuses on the effects of cold weather on health, severe cold weather is often accompanied by ice and snow which can cause severe disruption to services and access to services for patients, staff and the wider public. For this reason the Cold Weather Plan for Coventry will reflect all partnership arrangements and local initiatives across the Borough. It should also be emphasised that this plan details those actions to be taken at times of heightened alert, not business as usual during winter periods.

The Cold Weather plan for England and accompanying guidance is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/cold-weather-plan-for-england>

## Plan Structure

There are two parts to this plan:

Part 1 – Contains the essential Emergency Planning Information:

- Cold Weather Alerts – This provides an overview of the Cold Weather Alerts, the Alerts are used as triggers for actions.
- Notification Process – To receive Cold Weather Alerts you should self-register for Cold Weather Alerts directly with the Met Office.
- Roles and Responsibilities – These are provided as checklists for frontline staff and action cards for service management.

Part 2 – Contains supporting information:

- At Risk Groups – Outlines the groups most at risk from cold weather
- Local Implementation – Provides an overview of how the Coventry cold weather plan is implemented.
- Local Services and initiatives
- National Services & Initiatives
- Impacts of Cold Weather on other sectors

# 1.0: Part One – Core Information

## 1.1 Triggers – Met Office Cold Weather Alerts

A core element of the CWPfE is the Met Office Cold Weather Health Watch alert service, designed to provide planning advice and early warning of cold weather annually from 1<sup>st</sup> November to 31<sup>st</sup> March. The service aims to help ensure staff and resources are fully prepared for cold weather periods that might impact on health and to raise awareness for those individuals who are more vulnerable to cold weather conditions. The system includes four levels of alert to be issued on the basis of two independent thresholds;

- Mean temperatures below 2°C for 48 hours or longer
- Heavy snow and/or widespread ice

A Level 1 alert is issued on 1<sup>st</sup> of November and remains the minimum state of preparedness throughout the winter period. Subsequent escalation alerts are issued when the likelihood of the described thresholds being met reaches a predefined confidence percentage; this assessment is made by the Met Office. An overview of alert levels and triggers is as follows:

Cold Weather Health Watch	Level 0	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<b>Description</b>	Long Term Planning	Winter Action Programme	Severe winter weather is forecast	Severe winter weather is occurring	Major incident – emergency response
<b>Trigger</b>	All Year	Minimum stage of vigilance from 1 <sup>st</sup> Nov. – 31 <sup>st</sup> Mar.	Risk is 60% or above for either threshold to be breached	Cold weather is currently breaching either threshold	Cold weather is so severe/prolonged that effects extend outside the health and social care system



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### **Level 0: Long term planning**

This emphasises that to build resilience for the coming winter requires long lead-in planning times. This level of alert is aiming to emphasise the need to prepare for, adapt to and mitigate climate change and develop long-term sustainable approaches which seek to ensure behaviour change across the general population, community and health care professionals. Level 0 denotes that these are actions that should be taken throughout the year, and certainly before Level 1 starts for winter preparedness at the start of winter.

### **Level 1: Winter action programme**

This is in force throughout the winter from 1<sup>st</sup> November to 31<sup>st</sup> March and indicates that preparations should be in place to protect health and ensure service continuity in the event of severe cold and winter weather.

### **Level 2: Severe winter weather is forecast**

This is declared when the Met Office forecasts a 60% risk of severe winter weather in one or more defined geographical areas in the days that follow. This usually occurs two to three days ahead of the event. A Level 2 alert would be issued when a mean temperature of 2°C is predicted for at least 48 hours, with 60% confidence, and/or widespread ice and heavy snow are forecast, with the same confidence.

### **Level 3: Severe winter weather is occurring**

This is issued when the weather described in Level 2 is being experienced. It indicates that severe winter weather is now occurring and is expected to impact on people's health and on health services.

### **Level 4: Major incident – emergency response**

This is reached when a period of cold weather is so severe and/or prolonged that its effects extend outside health and social care and may include, for example, transport or power or water shortages; and/or where the integrity of health and social care systems is threatened. At this level, illness and death may occur among the fit and healthy, not just in high-risk groups, and will require a multi-sector response at national and regional levels. The decision to go to a Level 4 is made at national level and will be taken in light of a cross-Government assessment of the weather conditions, coordinated by the Civil Contingencies Secretariat (Cabinet Office). A Level 4 alert is a judgement made in light of this cross-Government assessment and depending on the severity of the conditions and impact could be declared over any time period.

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### 1.1.1 Notification Process – How to receive Cold Weather Alerts

To receive Cold Weather Alerts you must register with the Met Office by emailing them at [enquiries@metoffice.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@metoffice.gov.uk). When doing so you should request Cold Weather and Heatwave Alerts for the West Midlands<sup>1</sup>. The CSW Resilience Team will not be sending out Cold Weather Alerts so you must register directly with the Met Office to receive them. It is the responsibility of heads of service (or nominated individuals) to register to receive the alerts.

The further distribution of alerts to staff and commissioned services with allocation of specific actions is the responsibility of the recipient(s) from each appropriate service area.

The Cold weather plan, action cards, checklists and other associated guidance will be available on CSW Intranet pages as well as being emailed to recipients at the beginning of the Cold Weather period.

The current Cold Weather Alert level and relevant information can also be found via the following link:

<https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/cold-weather-alert/#?tab=coldWeatherAlert>

### 1.1.2 Advice for cascading and distribution of alerts

The following advice is for senior or nominated staff from directorates, services or organisations who are responsible for distributing the alerts and associated supporting information to their staff/volunteers and other recipients.

If the Alert Level is frequently moving between Levels 2 and 3 it may be more effective to maintain a state of Level 3 responsibilities and actions until the Alert Level has returned to Level 1. This should enable a simpler, more efficient and consistent approach.

### 1.1.3 Additional Actions

During a Level 3 alert, alongside assessment of local conditions and forecasts, the CSWRT Duty Officer will contact appropriate Duty Officers across the Authority to assess the current level of service delivery and any need for support or coordination. This information is fed back to the Strategic Team and if necessary, a teleconference held to coordinate an appropriate response.

Figure 1 illustrates the further cascade of alerts from the Resilience Team to all responsible services within Coventry City Council, external community/voluntary agencies and self-subscribed recipients.

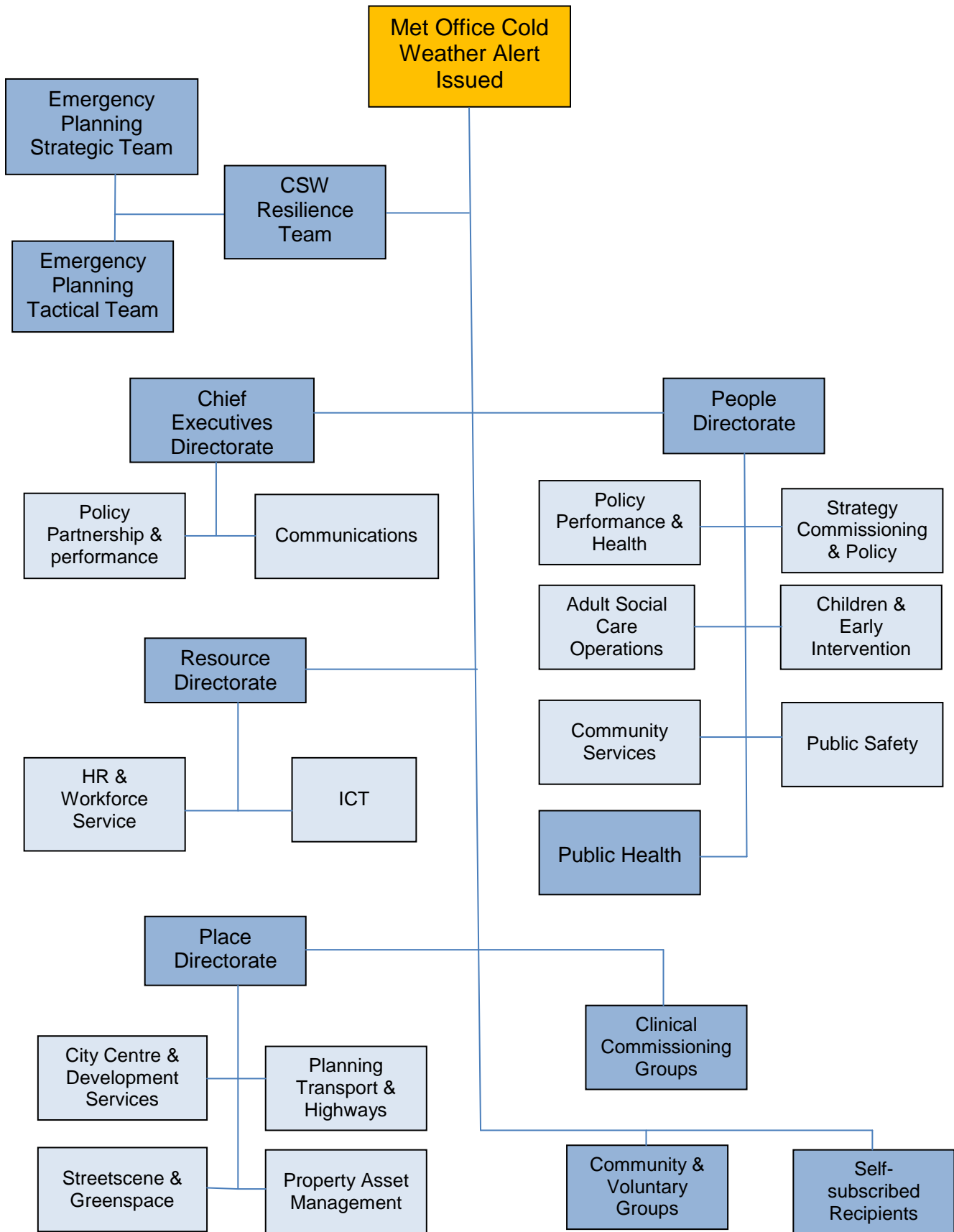
For the national cascade structure for alerts please see [Appendix B](#).

#### A1.1.1 \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>1</sup> Cold Weather Alerts are provided on a regional level by the Met Office, Coventry is located within the West Midlands Alert region.

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Figure 1: Coventry City Council Internal Cold Weather Alert Cascade



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### 1.2 Roles and Responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities have been identified for both frontline staff / care providers and for the management of Coventry City Council services.

#### 1.2.1 Actions for Frontline and voluntary sector staff and care providers

The material in this section is aimed at providing the key actions and information to frontline council, volunteer and care provider staff to help them perform their roles and responsibilities during the cold weather period. Individual services may wish to include their own messages and information as well.

The table below outlines the key material available to be supplied to frontline staff, volunteers and care providers. Some of this material is hosted within the plan itself or available through external links. The third column also recommends the Alert level when the material should be distributed to staff.

Level 1 - 3 Frontline staff Alert checklists and key information table:

Alert Level / Information (Link enabled)	Page numbers	Supply to staff in
<a href="#">Cold Weather Checklist for staff</a>	14	All Alert levels (1-3)
<a href="#">Key Public Health Messages</a>	15	All Alert levels (1-3)
<a href="#">Signs of Hypothermia</a>	16	All Alert levels (1-3)
<a href="#">Level 1 Alert – Frontline and volunteer staff</a>	Online document	Level 1 Alert
<a href="#">Level 2 and 3 Alert – Frontline and volunteer staff*</a>	Online document	Level 2 and 3 Alerts
<a href="#">Level 1 Alert – Care providers</a>	Online document	Level 1 Alert
<a href="#">Level 2 and 3 Alert – Care providers*</a>	Online document	Level 2 and 3 Alerts

\*Actions for Alert Levels 2 and 3 have been merged. This simplifies the messages and actions that are expected to take place.

In Level 4 staff should continue all existing actions.

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**1.2.2 Directorate / Service Management – Action Cards**

The roles and responsibilities for Coventry City Council services involved in the response to Cold Weather have been identified. These roles, responsibilities and additional agreed actions are outlined in the below action cards by service.

Level 1 - 4 Service Management Action Cards table:

<b>Service (Link enabled)</b>	<b>Page numbers</b>	<b>Additional information</b>
<a href="#"><u>CSW Resilience Team</u></a>	17 – 18	
<a href="#"><u>Public Health</u></a>	19 – 20	
<a href="#"><u>People Directorate</u></a>	21 – 23	
<a href="#"><u>Place Directorate</u></a>	23	
<a href="#"><u>Communication Team</u></a>	24 – 25	
<a href="#"><u>Health and Welfare Team</u></a>	26	Only Level 3 and 4 Actions
<a href="#"><u>Multiagency Cold Weather Communications Group / Keeping Coventry Warm Operational Group</u></a>	27	Only Level 1 Actions

(For your services action cards please click on the links to the relevant action cards or go to the page number).

Roles and Responsibilities for the services during the long-term planning period can be found in section 1.5.

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**1.3 Material for Frontline Staff, voluntary sector workers and Care providers**

**Cold Weather Checklist**

<b>Cold Weather Checklist applicable in all alert levels:</b>
<b>When meeting vulnerable People:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If you come into contact with vulnerable individuals, checking they are well as often as possible. If you visit, checking that indoor temperatures remain at recommended levels (above 18°C/ 65°F), that individuals take warm meals and drinks regularly and that they wear adequate warm clothing.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage vulnerable individuals to have the flu vaccine, especially if they are eligible. See <a href="http://www.coventry.gov.uk/flujab">www.coventry.gov.uk/flujab</a> for more information.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage individuals to remain active if possible, even light exercise around the house helps.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If you are able to; check on older neighbours or relatives, especially those living alone or who have serious illnesses to make sure they are safe, warm and well</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek early medical help if an individual starts to become unwell (see <a href="#">signs of Hypothermia</a>); and ensure that discharge planning (if applicable) takes into account the temperature of accommodation and level of daily care during the winter period.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If you are concerned about somebody who is unable to adequately heat their home, for advice about keeping energy bills down, benefits entitlements and qualification for loft and cavity wall insulation and other heating measures, please contact: <b>024 7683 2330 for the Coventry Affordable Warmth team</b> (please note this is not an emergency).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Check that vulnerable individuals are following the advice given in the <a href="#">Key Public Health Messages</a>.</li> </ul>
<b>When preparing to meet vulnerable people</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make sure that staff /volunteers have identified all those vulnerable to cold weather and that arrangements are in place to support and protect them appropriately</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take account of weather-related road conditions when planning home visits</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that you do not put yourself in danger; if you are concerned about someone but are not able to contact them yourself, consider if there are other more appropriate ways for them to be checked on, or seek medical help if you are particularly concerned about their welfare</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure that you are able to contact your colleagues and customers if visits need to be rearranged</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If you represent an organisation, ensuring you have winter business continuity plans in place.</li> </ul>

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### **Key Public Health Messages**

#### **Looking after yourself or others;**

- Food is a vital source of energy and helps to keep your body warm so have plenty of hot food and drinks
- Stock up on tinned and frozen foods so you don't have to go out too much when it's cold or icy; aim to include five daily portions of fruit and vegetables. Tinned and frozen vegetables count toward your five a day
- 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

#### **Encouraging people to keep their homes warm, efficiently and safely;**

- Your home should be heated to at least 18°C (65°F) during the day and at night. Above this and you may waste money; below this you may risk your health. This will keep your home warm and may lower your bills
- 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
- Switch your appliances (such as TVs and microwaves) off rather than leaving them on standby
- 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 LPG or solid fuel if you are not on mains gas or electricity – to make sure you do not run out in winter

#### **Keeping the warmth in;**

- Ensuring radiators are not obstructed by furniture or curtains
- Drawing curtains at dusk to help keep heat generated inside your rooms

Please also see Stay Well in Winter advice at:

<https://www.nhs.uk/staywell/>

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### Signs of Hypothermia

Hypothermia is a dangerous drop in body temperature below 35°C. Normal body temperature is around 37°C. **Hypothermia can be serious if not treated quickly. You should call 999 and give basic first aid if you notice signs of hypothermia.**

Symptoms of hypothermia – early signs include

- Shivering
- Cold and pale skin
- Slurred speech
- Fast breathing
- Tiredness
- Confusion

These are symptoms of mild hypothermia, where someone's body temperature is between 32C and 35C. If their temperature drops to 32C or lower, they'll usually stop shivering completely and may pass out. This is a sign that their condition is getting worse and emergency medical help is needed.

### Treating Hypothermia

Call 999 and follow these 5 steps to warm the person up:

- Move them indoors if not already
- Remove any wet clothing and dry the person
- Wrap them in blankets
- Give them a warm, non-alcoholic drink, but only if they can swallow normally
- Give sweet energy food such as a chocolate bar, but only if they can swallow normally

If the person can't be moved indoors, find something to put under them to protect them from the cold ground.

If the person doesn't appear to be breathing, and you know how to do it, give them CPR.

Things to avoid:

- Don't put the person into a hot bath
- Don't massage their limbs
- Don't use heating lamps
- Don't give them alcohol to drink.

These actions can cause the heart to suddenly stop beating (cardiac arrest).



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**1.4 Directorate / Service Management Action Cards**

**CSW Resilience Team Action Cards**

<b>Level 1 (Winter Preparedness &amp; Action)</b>	
<b>Action</b>	<b>Complete</b>
Contribute to Multi-agency Cold Weather Communications group and Keeping Coventry Warm Operational Group	
Review the distribution of the alerts across the system and ensure staff are aware of winter plans and advice;	
Distribute the revised CWP and ensure that the changes are understood across the system	
Ensure key staff are aware of winter plans and arrangements and have access to relevant advice	
Support communities to help those at risk and develop Community Emergency Plans	
Identify which local health, social care and voluntary sector organisations are themselves most vulnerable to the effects of severe winter weather	
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	
Agree plans for winter surge in demand for services including any arrangements with external partners / organisations	
Ensure emergency contacts are up to date	
Communicate public media messages and guidance	

<b>Level 2 (Alert &amp; Readiness)</b>	
<b>Action</b>	<b>Complete</b>
Ensure organisers of events (particularly outdoors) take into account possible cold weather risks through the Safety Advisory Group	
Monitor local conditions and cascade any pertinent information to those in receipt of Cold Weather Health Watch alerts	
Provide guidance to community organisations and support activation of community emergency plans	
Activate business continuity arrangements and emergency plans as required	
Work with partner agencies (e.g. transport) to ensure road / pavement gritting preparations are in place to allow access to critical services and pedestrian hotspots	

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<b>Level 3 (Action)</b>	
<b>Action</b>	<b>Complete</b>
Ensure key partners and undertaking action in response to alerts	
Communicate alerts to staff and make sure that winter plans are in operation;	
Review the safety of any planned public events;	
Communicate public media messages to comms team	
Support local community organisations to mobilise community emergency plans;	
Work with partner agencies (e.g. transport) to ensure road and pavement gritting arrangements are in effect to allow access to critical services and pedestrian hotspots;	
Activate business continuity arrangements and emergency plans as required;	
Support essential services where possible, troubleshooting any issues as they arise across the Authority	

<b>Level 4 (Emergency)</b>	
<b>Action</b>	<b>Complete</b>
Activate and implement procedures described within Coventry's Major Emergency Plan	
Maintain all Level 1, 2 & 3 responsibilities	

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**Public Health Action Cards**

<b>Level 1 (Winter Preparedness &amp; Action)</b>	
<b>Action</b>	<b>Complete</b>
Contribute to Multi-agency Cold Weather Communications group and Keeping Coventry Warm Operational Group	
Ensure that local organisations and professionals are taking appropriate actions in light of alerts in accordance with local and national cold weather plans	
Make sure staff are aware of winter plans and advice	
Work with partners and staff on risk reduction awareness (e.g. flu jabs for staff), information and education	
Support communities to help those at risk;	
Communicate public media messages and guidance	
Ensure emergency contacts are up to date	

<b>Level 2 (Alert &amp; Readiness)</b>	
<b>Action</b>	<b>Complete</b>
Communicate public media messages to comms team – especially for ‘hard to reach’ vulnerable groups;	
Communicate alerts to staff and ensure that they can take appropriate actions;	
Activate business continuity arrangements and emergency plans as required;	
Engage with key partners including CWPT, UHCW and CCGs to ensure appropriate arrangements/actions have been taken within their Cold Weather plans	

<b>Level 3 (Action)</b>	
<b>Action</b>	<b>Complete</b>
Communicate public media messages to comms team;	
Support CCG in implementation of plans to deal with surge in demand;	
Communicate alerts to staff and ensure that winter plans are in operation; and	
Ensure key partners action alerts	

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<b>Level 4 (Emergency)</b>	
<b>Action</b>	<b>Complete</b>
Act on responsibilities as outlined within Coventry's Major Emergency Plan	
Maintain all Level 1, 2 & 3 responsibilities	

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**People Directorate Action Cards**

<b>Level 1 (Winter Preparedness &amp; Action)</b>	
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Complete</b>
Contribute where appropriate to Cold Weather Steering Group responsibilities and associated actions	
Ensure that CW alerts and the appropriate material highlighted in section 1.2 are going to the right staff and appropriate actions are agreed and able to be implemented, especially to protect vulnerable clients	
Ensure staff aware of the business continuity plan for winter weather; plan for a winter surge in demand	
Make sure emergency contacts are up to date	
Work with staff on risk reduction awareness, information and education. Encourage directly employed staff who provide direct personal care to be vaccinated against flu before winter starts. Assure themselves that social care commissioned services are aware of and act upon their responsibilities for vaccinating their own staff	
Use resources available to you for raising awareness of the health risks associated with winter weather and cold housing (for example, pharmacists have a key role in reminding people to have sufficient medicine and help with preventive medicines managements)	
Continue to “signpost” those at risk clients/ patients to the Affordable Warmth team in Coventry City Council for advice around fuel bills, home energy management, home insulation schemes, benefits entitlements, etc. See <a href="http://www.coventry.gov.uk/energymatters">http://www.coventry.gov.uk/energymatters</a>	
Encourage clients and colleagues to be vaccinated against flu, if not already. See <a href="http://www.coventry.gov.uk/flujab">www.coventry.gov.uk/flujab</a>	
Identify those at risk on your caseload and make necessary changes to care plans for high-risk groups	
For individuals with multiple agency inputs, ensure that the key worker is clearly identified and care plans consider measures to reduce risk from cold weather	
Ensure key partners, including all managers of care, residential and nursing homes are aware of the alert system and can access advice	

<b>Level 2 (Alert &amp; Readiness)</b>	
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Complete</b>
Communicate alerts and the appropriate material highlighted in section 1.2 to staff and make sure that they can take appropriate actions	
Ensure partners, including all managers of care, residential & nursing homes are aware of the alerts and can access	

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advice;	
Activate business continuity arrangements and emergency plans as required. Activate plans to deal with a surge in demand for services	
Consider how to make best use of available capacity, for example by using community beds for at risk patients who do not need an acute bed and enabling access to step-down care and reablement	
Consider how forecast weather conditions may impact on your work – and make appropriate arrangements	
Make sure you and your teams are prepared for an influx of weather-related injuries and illnesses	
As appropriate, contact those most at risk and implement care plans	
Work with staff on risk reduction awareness, information and education. Encourage directly employed staff who provide direct personal care to be vaccinated against flu before winter starts. Assure themselves that social care commissioned services are aware of and act upon their responsibilities for vaccinating their own staff	

<b>Level 3 (Action)</b>	
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Complete</b>
Continue to communicate public health messages	
Communicate alerts and the appropriate material highlighted in section 1.2 to staff and make sure that winter plans are in operation	
Ensure key partners are undertaking action in response to alerts	
Ensure continuity arrangements are working with provider organisations	
Ensure staff can help and advise clients	
Maintain business continuity	
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	
As appropriate, contact those at risk (visit, phone call) daily	

<b>Level 4 (Emergency)</b>	
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Complete</b>
Continue to execute responsibilities associated with alert levels 1 - 3	
If notified of activation, act on responsibilities outlined within Coventry's Major Emergency Plan	

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**Place Directorate Action Cards**

<b>Level 1 (Winter Preparedness and Action)</b>	
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Complete</b>
Contribute to Keeping Coventry Warm operational group	
Provide training and support to frontline health and social care staff to enable 'signposting' to assistance with home insulation, heating and fuel costs	
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.	
Maintain and update advice on home insulation, heating and fuel costs at <a href="http://www.coventry.gov.uk/energymatters">www.coventry.gov.uk/energymatters</a> web pages	
Maximise the number of Coventry homeowners that can benefit from funding schemes for home insulation and heating	
Provide advice and information to Coventry homeowners and tenants on energy efficiency and assistance available, provide help to find the cheapest domestic gas electricity tariffs to suit people's needs, and help people to understand their domestic energy use and how to control it	
<b>Level 2 (Alert &amp; Readiness)</b>	
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Complete</b>
Communicate alerts and appropriate material highlighted in section 1.2 to staff and make sure that they can take appropriate actions	
<b>Level 3 (Action)</b>	
<b>Action</b>	<b>Complete</b>
Continue to communicate public health messages	
Communicate alerts and appropriate material highlighted in section 1.2 to staff and make sure that they can take appropriate actions	
<b>Level 4 (Emergency)</b>	
<b>Action</b>	<b>Complete</b>
<b>Actions – addition to those described at Level 0, 1, 2 &amp; 3</b>	
If notified of activation, act on responsibilities outlined within Coventry's Major Emergency Plan	

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**Communications Team Action Cards**

<b>Level 1 (Winter Preparedness &amp; Action)</b>	
<b>Action</b>	<b>Complete</b>
Publicise the beginning of the Cold Weather Health Watch period (along with messages from each service area) to public and staff through appropriate / available channels, including but not exclusively: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Stay Well This Winter” national campaign published on the internet/Intranet;</li> <li>• Keeping Coventry Warm details published on the internet/Intranet; and</li> <li>• Publicise School Closures Alerts system to parents.</li> </ul>	
Work with partners and staff on risk reduction awareness (e.g. flu jabs for staff), information and education. <a href="http://www.coventry.gov.uk/flujab">www.coventry.gov.uk/flujab</a>	
Contribute to Multi-agency Cold Weather Communications group and Keeping Coventry Warm Operational Group	
Make sure emergency contacts are up to date	

<b>Level 2 (Alert &amp; Readiness)</b>	
<b>Action</b>	<b>Complete</b>
Issue agreed messages from all service areas to the public and staff through all available channels	
Ensure Communications Teams for key partners are aware of the messages being issued by CCC	
Publicise forecast weather conditions and CSWRT advice	
If appropriate, activate Out of Hours School Closure Line monitoring team	
Activate business continuity arrangements as required	

<b>Level 3 (Action)</b>	
<b>Action</b>	<b>Complete</b>
Issue agreed messages from all service areas to the public and staff through all available channels	
Activate Out of Hours School Closure Line monitoring team and publish on internet / local media	
Manage relevant press interest	
Maintain level 2 actions	



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<b>Level 4 (Emergency)</b>	
<b>Action</b>	<b>Complete</b>
<b>In addition to Level 2 &amp; 3 actions:</b>  If notified of activation, act on responsibilities outlined within Coventry's Major Emergency Plan	

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**Health and Welfare Team**

<b>Level 3 (Action)</b>	
<b>Action - To be taken only upon specific request from CSWRT*</b>	<b>Complete</b>
Ensure members of the Health & Welfare Team are on standby / activated as appropriate	
Activate and co-ordinate secondary support teams	
Support delivery of exceptional activities (e.g. opening / running of a Rest Centre)	
Continue to liaise with CSWRT until activities are stood down	

\*Note: Activities described may be requested in response to localised incidents and do not reflect an activation of the Major Emergency Plan.

<b>Level 4 (Emergency)</b>	
<b>Action - To be taken only upon specific request from CSWRT</b>	<b>Complete</b>
If activated, act on responsibilities as outlined within Coventry's Major Emergency Plan;	
Continue to execute responsibilities associated with alert levels 1 - 3.	

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**Multiagency Cold Weather Communications Group / Keeping Coventry Warm Operational Group**

<b>Level 1 (Winter Preparedness and Action)</b>	
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Complete</b>
Communicate public health media messages	
Note: other groups such as the CCG-led Systems Resilience Groups and Local Health Resilience Partnership have direct responsibilities related to winter resilience;	
Ensure that local organisations and professionals are taking appropriate actions in light of the cold weather alerts in accordance with local and national CWP through the established multi-agency communications group;	
Ensure that organisations and staff are prompted to signpost vulnerable clients onwards (e.g. for energy efficiency measures, benefits or related advice) to the Fuel Poverty Team in Coventry council – see <a href="http://www.coventry.gov.uk/energymatters">www.coventry.gov.uk/energymatters</a>	
Support communities to help those at risk.	

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**1.5 Long Term Cold Weather Planning (Alert Level 0) Responsibilities**

The table below outlines the responsibilities of the Multiagency Cold Weather Communications Group / Keeping Coventry Warm Operational Group, and individual services during the Long Term Cold Weather Planning period (Alert Level 0) running from the 1<sup>st</sup> April to the 31<sup>st</sup> October each year.

**Level 0 Responsibilities**

<b>Alert Level 0: Long Term Planning</b>	
<b>Service Area / Team</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
Multiagency Cold Weather Communications Group / Keeping Coventry Warm Operational Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A multi-agency cold weather communications group involving, Public Health, social care CCGs, ArdenGEMCSU and CSW Resilience convene to cascade agreed messages out to all health and social care providers across Coventry and Warwickshire when alert levels change.</li> <li>• Work with partner agencies to develop a shared understanding of excess winter deaths and other impacts of cold weather on health and what partners can do and ensure that cold weather planning features within wider winter resilience planning.</li> <li>• Note: other groups such as the CCG-led Systems Resilience Groups and Local Health Resilience Partnership have direct responsibilities related to winter resilience.</li> <li>• The Keeping Coventry Warm operational group ensures a local, joined-up programme is in place to support improved housing, heating and insulation, including uptake of energy efficient, low carbon solutions</li> <li>• They also ensure that organisations and staff are prompted to signpost vulnerable clients onwards (e.g. for energy efficiency measures, benefits or related advice)</li> <li>• Work with partners and staff on risk reduction awareness (e.g. flu jabs for staff in Sept/Oct), information and education; see flu poster and leaflet resources on <a href="http://www.coventry.gov.uk/flujab">www.coventry.gov.uk/flujab</a></li> </ul>
CSWRT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribute to Multi-agency Cold Weather Communications group and Keeping Coventry Warm Operational Group</li> <li>• Review and distribute the Cold Weather Plan for Coventry and the Severe Weather Warnings Policy against national guidance, organisational changes and lessons learnt;</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review cold weather resilience arrangements against national guidance, local practice and lessons learnt;</li> <li>• Work with partner agencies to co-ordinate locally appropriate cold weather plans;</li> <li>• Work with all relevant CCC service areas and partner agencies to ensure Cold Weather Planning features within wider resilience planning;</li> <li>• Review internal CW alert and cascade processes including distribution lists, roles and responsibilities;</li> <li>• Support the development of Community Emergency Plans including severe weather planning.</li> </ul>
Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member of the Multi-agency Cold Weather Communications group and Keeping Coventry Warm Operational Group</li> <li>• Review Public Health arrangements against national guidance, local practice and lessons learnt;</li> <li>• Review internal alert and cascade processes including distribution lists, roles and responsibilities; and</li> <li>• Review any internal and external message templates to health and social care providers, as well as to the voluntary and community sector.</li> </ul>
People Directorate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Social Care Winter Capacity Plan and People Group arrangements against national guidance, local practice and lessons learnt</li> <li>• Review internal alert and cascade processes including distribution lists, roles and responsibilities</li> <li>• Review any internal and external message templates</li> <li>• Work with staff on risk reduction awareness, information and education. Encourage directly employed staff who provide direct personal care to be vaccinated against flu before winter starts. Assure themselves that social care commissioned services are aware of and act upon their responsibilities for vaccinating their own staff.</li> <li>• Work within your organisation and with partner organisations to ensure that systems are developed to support the identification and sharing of information between agencies of people who may be vulnerable to cold weather</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Systematically work to improve the resilience of vulnerable people to severe cold</li> <li>• Ensure that all staff have been made aware of the cold weather plan and the dangers of cold weather to health and know how to spot signs and symptoms.</li> <li>• Use clinic attendances and home visits as opportunities to identify vulnerable people and discuss winter preparedness.</li> <li>• Work with at-risk individuals, their families and carers to ensure that they are aware of the dangers of cold weather and cold housing and how access support; ensure that there are clear arrangements for ‘signposting’ to other services (e.g. home insulation schemes; benefits entitlements) when identified in “clinical” situations.</li> <li>• Work with partners to ensure that vulnerable patients/clients have access to fuel supplies. Link to energy supplier priority service registers as required.</li> <li>• Ensure that clients and colleagues are aware of and taken advantage of flu and other vaccination programmes. Please see <a href="http://www.coventry.gov.uk/flujab">www.coventry.gov.uk/flujab</a> for campaign resources.</li> </ul>
Place Directorate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribute to Keeping Coventry Warm Operational Group</li> <li>• Provide training and support to frontline health and social care staff to enable ‘signposting’ to assistance with home insulation, heating and fuel costs</li> <li>• Maintain and update advice on home insulation, heating and fuel costs at <a href="http://www.coventry.gov.uk/energymatters">www.coventry.gov.uk/energymatters</a> web pages</li> <li>• Maximise the number of Coventry households that can benefit from funding schemes for home insulation and heating</li> <li>• Provide advice and information to Coventry homeowners and tenants on energy efficiency and assistance available, provide help to find the cheapest domestic gas and electricity tariffs to suit people’s needs, and help people to understand their domestic energy use and how to control it</li> </ul>
Communications Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop / review message distribution channels especially those for hard to reach groups; and</li> <li>• Review internal alert and cascade processes including distribution lists, roles and responsibilities.</li> </ul>

## 2.0: Part Two – Supporting Information

### 2.1 At Risk Groups

The following are examples of sub-categories, as well as living and health conditions, which may place people at risk:

<p align="center"><b>Age</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over 75 years old</li> <li>• Otherwise 'frail' older people*</li> <li>• Children under the age of 5</li> </ul>
<p align="center"><b>Living conditions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housebound or otherwise low mobility</li> <li>• Living in deprived circumstances</li> <li>• Living in houses that have inadequate insulation or heating</li> <li>• Living in houses with mould</li> <li>• Fuel-poor (where the household has fuel costs that are above average (the national median level) and if they were to spend that amount, they would be left with a residual income below the official poverty line)</li> <li>• Older people who live alone and do not have additional social services support</li> <li>• Homeless people or people sleeping rough</li> </ul>
<p align="center"><b>Health</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-existing chronic medical conditions such as heart disease, stroke or transient ischaemic attack (TIA), asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or diabetes</li> <li>• Mental ill-health that reduces individual's ability to self-care</li> <li>• Dementia</li> <li>• Learning disabilities</li> <li>• Assessed as being at risk of, or has had, recurrent falls</li> <li>• Pregnant women (in view of potential impact of cold on foetus)</li> </ul>

*\*People, usually older, who have impairment of their activities of daily living. Though more often used in research settings, the frailty phenotype or a frailty index can be used to quantify frailty.*

## **2.2 Local Implementation**

### **Affordable Warmth Team**

The Affordable Warmth Team at Coventry City Council can provide residents with the following;

- Advice on how to keep warm, save money on gas and electricity bills, and reduce energy use
- Free energy saving gadgets
- Support with getting the best deals from energy suppliers
- Eligibility checks for insulation and heating grants, and financial help with fuel bills including the £140 Warm Home Discount
- Help with fuel bill problems

Coventry residents (or professionals) can call the Affordable Warmth Team on 02476 832 330 or e-mail [energy.matters@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:energy.matters@coventry.gov.uk)

More information regarding energy matters can also be found on the Coventry City Council website at: [www.coventry.gov.uk/energymatters](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/energymatters)

### **Health and Welfare Team**

This team is a Coventry City Council (CCC) function and operates under the direction of the Tactical Team Lead for Health & Welfare and the Resilience Team. During periods of heightened alert or upon declaration of a major incident, the CCC Health & Welfare Team will support services as necessary with implementation of activities outside of normal operations. During extreme conditions the Team will be responsible for activating any secondary support such as Rest Centre teams. Further details of this team, its activation and operation can be found in the Coventry City Council Major Emergency Plan.

## **2.3 Local Services & Initiatives**

Within Coventry there are many local initiatives and multi-agency partnerships providing and supporting vital services throughout the year and during periods of severe winter weather. Descriptions of these partnerships and the functions they provide are as follows:

### **Homelessness / Rough Sleeper Assistance**

The CCC Housing Options team provide assistance to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. The team offer a range of services such as;

- Advising on landlord and tenant issues
- Your rights to stay in your home
- Housing debt such as mortgage or rent arrears



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- Affordability issues
- Homeless support

To contact the Housing Options team call 024 7683 4025. You can find further information online at <http://www.coventry.gov.uk/homelessness>

### **2.4 National Services & Initiatives**

Further winter information and advice is published by Public Health England, the Met Office and NHS, this can be accessed via their websites:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cold-weather-plan-action-cards-for-cold-weather-alert-service>

<http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/learning/get-ready-for-winter>

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Winterhealth/Pages/Winterhealthhome.aspx>

<https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources/campaigns/34/overview>

### **2.5 Impacts of Cold Weather on other sectors**

The risks to other sectors and services from prolonged periods of cold weather can have an equal impact on the health of the population and so are considered equally in the planning stages. These wider risks, which have the potential to generate disruption at a national, regional and local level, include the following:

#### **Transport infrastructure**

- Motorways, trunk roads and smaller roads that lead to national or critical infrastructure, including hospitals, will need clearing of ice and/or snow. The majority of this clearing will be by the spreading of salt. Given that the number of suppliers is limited, it is likely that arrangements for 'salting' the roads will be carefully co-ordinated through a national strategic salts plan.
- Highways England will take responsibility for keeping traffic moving on motorways and trunk roads, whereas all other roads will remain the responsibility of the relevant local authorities. Traffic congestion has potentially serious consequences for those stranded in vehicles, particularly vulnerable people such as older people or young children.
- The rail network will be susceptible to ice on the rails and high levels of snow. Public transport networks are particularly at risk, with potential subsequent knock-on effects.
- Airlines require large supplies of de-icer to get planes ready to move. Runways need clearing of snow, but approach roads to all airports also need to be clear to allow passengers and staff access to airports.

## **Power supplies**

- In preparation for winter, National Grid carries out a 'what if' scenario-based analysis to determine the likely risks and consequences of infrastructure failure. The most recent exercise shows that unless there is an unlikely combination of unusually high gas demand combined with multiple infrastructure failure, all emergency requirements could be met through fuel switching, for example from gas to coal. Supplier companies are strongly incentivised to supply the fuel that their customers need.

## **Environment and agriculture**

- Falling temperatures might require animals to be temporarily housed on farms, or they may be unable to get to markets and slaughterhouses.
- Milk-collecting tankers might be unable to reach farms.
- Freezing temperatures, snow and ice can disrupt the growth of plants and can delay planting.

## **Water shortages**

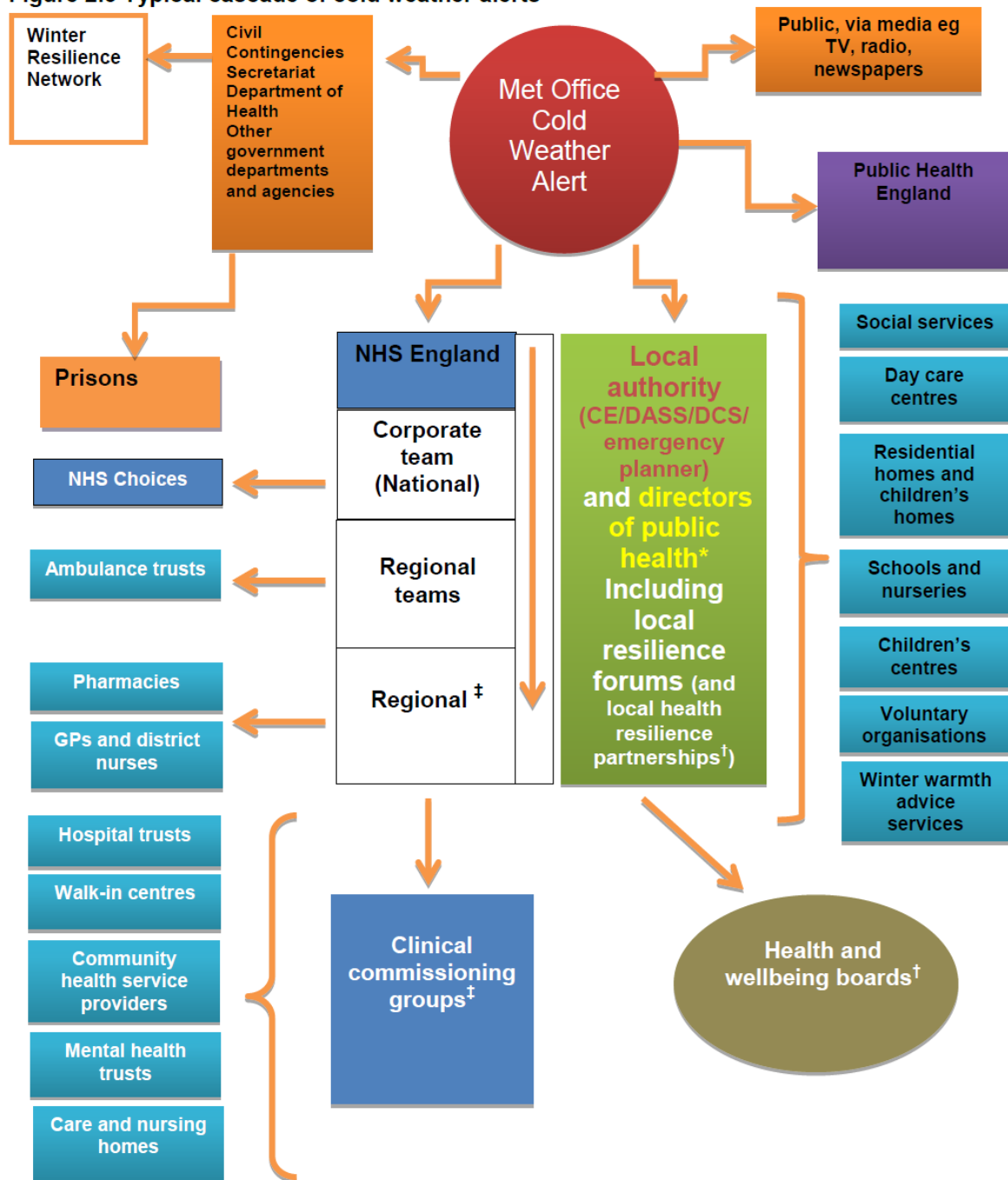
- Individual householders have a responsibility to protect their pipes against freezing and bursting as a result of cold weather. Advice on pipe protection and what to do in the event of bursts is given by most water companies on their websites.
- Water companies have plans in place to deal with failure in the supply of mains water or sewerage services. These plans are regularly reviewed and tested by the water companies and are independently certified every year.
- In the event of a loss of mains supply, water companies will supply water by alternative means such as in static tanks in the street, or bottled water. There is a requirement to provide not less than 10 litres per person per day, with special attention given to the needs of vulnerable people, hospitals and schools. Where an interruption to the piped water supply exceeds five days, the requirement rises to 20 litres per person per day.

## **Culture and sports**

- Large numbers of outside entertainment events will be cancelled.
- Loss of revenue from sporting fixture

## Appendix 1: National Cold Weather Alert Cascade

Figure 2.5 Typical cascade of cold weather alerts



NHS England Regional and CCGs should work collaboratively to ensure that between them they have a cascade mechanism for cold weather alerts to all providers of NHS commissioned care both in business as usual hours and the out-of-hours period in their area.

## Appendix 2: Alerts, Messages and Press Releases

### Press Releases (Coventry & Warwickshire)

Level 1: Protect Yourself, Feel Well and Be a Good Neighbour this wintertime

In the run up to the festive season, as the nights draw in and the weather turns colder, local NHS and council professionals urge people to make sure they keep themselves well this winter, and to be a good neighbour.

**XXXX** says: “It is this time of year we start to see a variety of viruses circulating, including colds, the flu, and norovirus (or “winter vomiting disease”). We know that handwashing with soap and water, although simple, is a really effective way to stop the spread of these illnesses. Better still, make sure you have your flu vaccination if you are eligible, in order to protect yourself for the whole winter.

1 in 3 people in Coventry and Warwickshire are eligible for a free flu vaccination. This includes: adults and children with a variety of chronic diseases, pregnant women, carers and people aged 65 years and over. A simple nasal vaccine is also available this year for all 2 year olds and children in Years 1 and 2 at school.

**XXXX** adds: “The cold can cause real health problems, particularly for people who have chronic medical conditions, or who may be frail, less mobile, or living alone. So we are encouraging people to stay as active as they can whilst it is cold, to wear enough clothing layers and to heat their house, so that living rooms are kept at 21 degrees Celsius at a minimum. We also ask people to make sure that their house is as well insulated as it can be. Please also be a good neighbour, check on neighbours who may be more vulnerable than you, make sure they have an emergency contact number and enough food, drinks and medicines for if the weather gets particularly cold and they can’t get out.”

Advice about making your home more energy efficient, and whether you are entitled to any financial support, can be obtained by ringing the Act on Energy helpline on 0800 988 2881 for Warwickshire and the Fuel Poverty Team on 024 7683 2330/1297 for Coventry.

For more tips and advice, please visit:

[www.nhs.uk/livewell/winterhealth/pages/winterhealthhome.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/winterhealth/pages/winterhealthhome.aspx)

Level 2/3: Take care outside, Get stocked up, and be a good neighbour

With severely cold temperatures and snow forecast over the next 48 hours, local NHS and council professionals are urging people to take care if they need to go out, to make sure they have an adequate supply of food, drink and medications, and to look out for their neighbours.

(INSERT) says: “Try to take the weather into account when planning activities. If you have to go out in the snow, Make sure driveways and public walkways near your home are kept clear of snow, and drive carefully on the roads, particularly in small roads that haven’t been gritted. Also, remember to dress warmly and wear non-slip shoes.

(INSERT) says: “Make sure you have sufficient supplies of food for hot meals, plenty of drinks and your regular medications, just in case you are not able to get out to the shops for several days. Stocking up on tinned and frozen food is a good idea. Check in on neighbours who are elderly, vulnerable, or less mobile, and make sure that their house is adequately heated, that they have enough supplies and that they have an emergency contact telephone number. Rooms should be kept at a minimum of 18 degrees Celsius.

Make sure you seek medical help if you are concerned about someone. You can ring NHS 111, speak to a GP or pharmacist, attend a walk-in-centre, or if more serious it may be necessary to attend A&E or alert the emergency services. ”

For more tips and advice, please visit  
[www.nhs.uk/livewell/winterhealth/pages/winterhealthhome.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/winterhealth/pages/winterhealthhome.aspx)

## **Voluntary Sector (Coventry & Warwickshire)**

Dear Volunteers, Voluntary Groups and Health Champions,

Level 1\*

As we approach winter – although cold weather and snow can be fun for some - the cold weather can be particularly dangerous for certain groups of people such as those with existing medical conditions, the very young or older people, or people who may be housebound or homeless. Cold weather increases the risk of heart attacks, strokes, lung illnesses, flu and other diseases. People slip and fall in the snow or ice, sometimes suffering serious injuries.

Level 2\*

We have been advised by the Met Office that in the next few days there is a good possibility that we will be experiencing very low temperatures and perhaps widespread ice or snow.

Although winter weather and snow can be fun for some, these weather conditions are also associated with an increase in illness and injuries. Cold weather increases the risk of heart attacks, strokes, lung illnesses, flu and other diseases. People slip and fall in the snow or ice, sometimes suffering serious injuries. Some groups, such as older people, very young children, and people with serious medical conditions are particularly vulnerable to the effects of cold weather.

### Level 3\*

You may have received a similar letter to this in the last few days asking for your help in looking out for people you know who may be more vulnerable to the effects of the cold weather. As you are undoubtedly aware, we are experiencing severe weather conditions. We wanted to write to you to reiterate the important role that you as a volunteer or voluntary organisation can have.

These weather conditions are associated with an increase in illness and injuries. Cold weather increases the risk of heart attacks, strokes, lung illnesses, flu and other diseases. People slip and fall in the snow or ice, sometimes suffering serious injuries. Some groups, such as older people, very young children, and people with serious medical conditions are particularly vulnerable to the effects of cold weather.

#### **\*Insert as appropriate**

In your valuable work as volunteers you may come into contact with people from these groups or people who might not be able to cope as well as others if the weather was to turn bad.

If you do, your help if the weather turns cold would be invaluable. If you are able, we ask you to be extra vigilant if you know people to be on their own or without support, and ensure that messages are passed on about the cold.

Some of the key things you can do to help as a volunteer or volunteer organisation include;

- If you are able to; check on older neighbours or relatives, especially those living alone or who have serious illnesses to make sure they are safe, warm and well
- If you come into contact with vulnerable individuals, checking they are well as often as possible. If you visit, checking that indoor temperatures remain at recommended levels (see below), that individuals take warm meals and drinks regularly and that they wear adequate warm clothing. Also providing advice about the cold and preventative action.
- Take account of weather-related road conditions when planning home visits.
- Ensure that you do not put yourself in danger; if you are concerned about someone but are not able to contact them yourself, consider if there are other more appropriate ways for them to be checked on, or seek medical help if you are particularly concerned about their welfare.
- Ensure that you are able to contact your colleagues and clients if visits need to be rearranged.
- If you represent an organisation, ensuring you have winter business continuity plans in place.

Some of the key messages you might pass on to those who you think might benefit include;

Encouraging those who are eligible to receive a flu jab; the list of those people at risk from flu is available at NHS Choices ([www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk))

Looking after yourself or others;

- Food is a vital source of energy and helps to keep your body warm so have plenty of hot food and drinks
- Stock up on tinned and frozen foods so you don't have to go out too much when it's cold or icy; aim to include five daily portions of fruit and vegetables. Tinned and frozen vegetables count toward your five a day
- 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

Encouraging people to keep their homes warm, efficiently and safely;

- Heating homes to at least 18<sup>0</sup>c (65F) in winter poses minimal risk to the health of a sedentary person, wearing suitable clothing. Vulnerable groups (such as the very old and very young) are advised by the World Health Organization to have indoor temperatures set to 21°C.
- If you can't heat all the rooms you use, heat the living room during the day and your bedroom just before you go to bed
- 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
- Switch your appliances (such as TVs and microwaves) off rather than leaving them on standby
- 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 LPG or solid fuel if you are not on mains gas or electricity – to make sure you do not run out in winter

Keeping the warmth in;

- Ensuring radiators are not obstructed by furniture or curtains
- Drawing curtains at dusk to help keep heat generated inside your rooms

These simple messages can be life-saving, and we really value your help in both distributing these and being extra vigilant and checking on those who might be vulnerable to the effects of the cold.

## **Public Health England**

### **Level 1**

This is in force from 1<sup>st</sup> November to 31<sup>st</sup> March and indicates that actions should be taking place to protect health from cold weather, and that preparations should be in place to ensure service continuity in the event of severe winter weather. No warning is required, unless the situation worsens to warrant a level 2 alert. A spell of chilly weather might warrant a message along the lines of:

“If this does turn out to be a spell of severe cold weather, we’ll try to give you as much warning as possible. But in the meantime, if you want advice about protecting your health from the cold go to the winter health pages at NHS Choices ([www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)). If you are worried about your health or that of somebody you know, ring NHS 111.”

### **Level 2**

The Met Office, in conjunction with PHE, is issuing the following cold weather warning for the West Midlands:

“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](http://www.nhs.uk)) or from your local chemist. If you are worried about your health or that of somebody you know, ring NHS 111.”

### **Level 3 and 4: Severe Cold weather action/emergency**

The Met Office, in conjunction with PHE, is issuing the following severe cold weather advice for [regions identified]:

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<sup>0</sup>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”