



# THE COLD WEATHER CHECKLIST



**22 °C THIS WINTER STAY WITHIN YOUR WARM ZONE!**

**← 21 °C The minimum for your LIVING ROOM**  
Ideally keep a constant temperature between 18 to 21°C in your home. If this is not possible or affordable, keep one room warm but pre-heat the bed and bedroom before you go to bed

**← 18 °C The minimum for your BEDROOM**  
The combination of sticky blood, weak lungs and raised BP leads to rise in strokes, heart and lung problems within 1-2 weeks. This risk remains high for up to 2 weeks after the cold spell has ended. Risk of falls & fractures also goes up during cold weather.

## LOCAL HELP, ACT NOW

**Age UK Hillingdon Harrow & Brent 0208 756 3040**  
Information, advice & help with applying for welfare benefits and grants, e.g. Warm Home Discount: Warm Home Discount Scheme (£140 cold weather payment)

**Hillingdon Council Adult Social Care 01895 556 633**  
Keeping warm in winter - Hillingdon Council  
Anyone can have an assessment for social services support. People with over £23,250 savings are classed as self-funders and will be directed to another service)  
Winter Heater Loan Scheme: short-term loan (up to 2 weeks) to Hillingdon homeowners aged 65+

## LOOK AFTER THOSE AT HIGH RISK OF PROBLEMS

those living in deprived areas  
those having fuel poverty  
those living in cold homes  
the homeless  
older, frail people  
long term condition (heart, stroke, asthma & COPD, diabetes, arthritis, Parkinson's, etc.)  
low immunity from treatment or disease  
the disabled  
mental health  
dementia  
poor mobility & tendency to falls  
on multiple medicines  
whose with unhealthy lifestyles (smoking, excess alcohol)

## REFERENCES

- The Cold Weather Plan for England: Protecting health & reducing harm from cold weather UK Health Security Agency (2022) [www.gov.uk/government/publications/cold-weather-plan-cwp-for-england](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cold-weather-plan-cwp-for-england)
- Improving winter health and well-being and reducing winter pressures in Wales: A preventative approach (2019) [phw.nhs.wales/news/winter-health-how-we-can-all-make-a-difference/technical-report/](http://phw.nhs.wales/news/winter-health-how-we-can-all-make-a-difference/technical-report/)

### 1. IMMUNIZE TO PREVENT SERIOUS INFECTIONS

- ▶ Covid vaccine: prevents serious Covid
- ▶ Flu vaccine: prevents Influenza illness
- ▶ Pneumococcal vaccine: prevents pneumonia & sepsis; This is usually a one-off injection
- ▶ Shingles vaccine: 50% of 80+yr painful nerve damage
- ▶ Winter travellers: don't forget vaccines to prevent typhoid, hepatitis A & anti-malarial tablets...others

### 2. MY MEDICINES

- ▶ Ensure adequate supplies: know how to order
- ▶ Seek a medicine review with pharmacist: what they are for, how they work, how to take, side effects
- ▶ Seek a medicine review with your GP: simplify regime, stop some (if possible), timings, flares & rescue packs, personalised plans, etc.)
- ▶ Unless high Vit D in diet - consider 1000 units/day caps

### 3. MY CONDITIONS

- ▶ Ensure you understand your long term conditions  
*Are your conditions under control and stable?*  
*Are you up-to date with the check and tests?*  
*Are you able to recognise early signs of a flare?*  
*Do you know how to manage a flare up*  
*Do you know when and how to seek help?*

### 4. PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- ▶ Stay active - movement generates warmth!  
*Do activities within your limits and rest in between*  
*Activity = toning, stretching, reflexes, strengthening*
- ▶ Safety first - avoid falls & accidents  
*Good grips (shoes, stick, gloves). Build up gradually-with lots of rest in between. Incorporate into daily routine & your muscle & joint can regain strength*

### 5. CLOTHING

- ▶ Thin loose layers of clothing- light, easy to dry:  
*Also helps to cover hands, head, neck & feet*
- ▶ Hot water bottle: avoid boiling water & old bottles
- ▶ Electric blanket don't use hot water bottle at same time  
*Avoid getting wet e.g. with urine or catheters)*
- ▶ Open fire: risk of serious burns with leg dressings
- ▶ The GP can arrange incontinence checks +/- pads

### 6. FIRST-AID KIT & THE MEDICINE CABINET

- ▶ Keep a first-aid kit (in the kitchen)  
*Plasters, dressings, cling film (burns), antiseptic cream, bandages, ice pack*
- ▶ Medicines Cabinet paracetamol/ ibuprofen (pain killer & fever. Anti-histamine (allergies, insect bites), Anti-diarrhoea medicine (e.g. imodium), Mild laxatives, Antacids (heart burn), etc.

### 7. USEFUL MEDICAL KIT

- ▶ Thermometer: fever = temperature of 38°C & over
- ▶ Automated BP machine: average value is important
- ▶ Pulse Oximeter: for Covid, chest infection & pulse
- ▶ Smart phone: GPs use photos & video consultations
- ▶ Private sector: falls detector, family CCTV, trackers, remote monitoring)

### 8. STAY CONNECTED

- ▶ Update your call/contacts list
- ▶ Get to know your pharmacist and how to access GP
- ▶ Ensure GP has your carer's (or kins) contact details
- ▶ Social Prescribing Link Workers: via GP
- ▶ Get digitally savvy: will open up useful e-doors
- ▶ Befriending services: helpful if you are isolated
- ▶ Personal Alarms (e.g. neck alarms): monthly tariffs

### 9. NUTRITION

- ▶ Keep hydrated Cold weather, dehydration & immobility causes clots. Legs (DVT), brain (stroke) & heart (attack)
- ▶ Ensure balanced diet: stock up storable staples; wholegrains, fresh fruit & veg, protein-rich food
- ▶ Learn how to order food online: as a back-up
- ▶ Avoid putting on excess weight: slows mobility
- ▶ Ensure good dental, oral & sinus health

### 10. AVOID FALLS

- ▶ Get a falls prevention MOT eyes, hearing check, feet, nails, footwear
- ▶ If your fall is triggered, then check it out with GP: also get your medicines checked as they can contribute
- ▶ Avoid dehydration drink to avoid concentrated urine
- ▶ Make your home fall-proof Age UK
- ▶ If you keep falling: GP can assess & refer to falls school

### 11. BE PREPARED FOR HOME EMERGENCIES

- ▶ Contact of utility suppliers: including a plumber  
*Do you know where your stopcock is?*
- ▶ Prepared for possible blackouts?  
*No candles (fire risk) use torch, stock up on batteries*
- ▶ Rock salt for icy paths, patio and porch: risk areas
- ▶ Check alarms smoke, carb monoxide,buglar, door bell
- ▶ Master your heat control system: timer

### 12. FINANCIAL PREPAREDNESS

- ▶ Ensure you claim any due winter benefits:  
*Contact your Citizens Advice Bureau*
- ▶ Energy bills support scheme, cost of living payment
- ▶ Check local authority for home insulation grants
- ▶ Secure the most appropriate fuel provider/tariff
- ▶ Some utility service have priority registers
- ▶ Beware of scams: the elderly are targets

### 13. IS YOUR HOME PREPARED?

- ▶ Insulation: where does your home lose most heat?  
*Do your external pipes needs insulation?*
- ▶ Are there any signs of dampness?
- ▶ Thermal lined curtains: draw curtains at dusk
- ▶ Open fire? chimney, vents, guards, fire risk, CO monitor
- ▶ Is your car winter ready? tyres, warm clothes/blanket
- ▶ Security: door bells, camera, PC, safe

### 14. MORE TIPS

- ▶ Keep thermometers (internal & external)  
*some external window ones are visible from inside*
- ▶ Keep a list of emergency contacts  
*add the main ones into your phone memory*
- ▶ Quick win: draft proofing windy gaps (windows, doors)
- ▶ Digital Shortcuts: Get help to do this. Place your key reference documents & websites on your screen

### 15. DID YOU KNOW?..

- ▶ Alcohol does not keep you warm
- ▶ Sleeping in a cold bedroom is unhealthy
- ▶ Don't use your gas cooker/oven to heat home
- ▶ In the vulnerable 'mild' Covid can be dangerous

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