



Working Together to Help Leeds Stay Well this Winter 2023/24

We are writing to services in Leeds who work with those who may be more at risk of poor health due to the impact of cold weather to ask that you are prepared and that your workforce is confident in supporting people to protect their health and wellbeing during Winter.

We would like to highlight the [Adverse Weather and Health Plan 2023/24](#) produced by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and to ask for your support in implementing the recommendations within this plan. The plan provides guidance on how services can protect the population from cold weather and aims to prepare, alert, and prevent the major avoidable effects on health during periods of cold weather in England.

Cold-related deaths represent the biggest weather-related source of mortality in England. The reasons more people die in winter relative to other times of the year are complex and interlinked and include:

- poor quality housing, particularly cold homes
- circulating infectious diseases including flu and norovirus
- physical hazards such as snow and ice
- health inequalities

As well as the significant rise in deaths, the winter period also sees a substantial increase in illnesses. Eligible people can get vaccinated to help reduce their risk of ill health from respiratory illnesses during the winter. Children can catch and spread flu easily. Children aged 2 or 3 years old on 31 August 2023 and school-aged, from reception to school year 11 are eligible for a flu vaccine. Vaccinating them also protects others who are vulnerable to flu, such as babies, family members with long term health conditions and older people. Flu is caused by the influenza virus. It can be a very unpleasant illness for children and can lead to more serious problems, such as bronchitis and pneumonia. Visit www.nhs.uk/child-flu for more information (some campaign graphics are embedded in this letter).

There has been a steady rise in cases of Measles reported to the UK Health Security Agency this year. Measles is an infection that spreads easily. It can cause serious problems. The majority of measles cases have been detected in London although cases have been seen in the Yorkshire & Humber Region. The only protection from Measles is the MMR vaccination delivered as part of the childhood routine vaccination programme at 12 months and 3 years 4 months. It is very important that children are up to date with childhood vaccinations, please encourage parents to contact their GP or speak to their health visitor to arrange vaccination.

Please visit the [Measles NHS website](#) for more information and a leaflet is embedded below.

Whilst exposure to cold weather can affect anyone, some people are particularly at risk. These 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

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](#). 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. A short video which provides helpful tips to prevent mould in your home is listed below along with a leaflet.

Although there are several factors that contribute to poor health during Winter, there are some simple, preventative actions we can all take to minimise the risk of deaths, illnesses and injuries associated with the cold. Many of these measures need to be planned and undertaken in advance of cold weather.

As a service you can play your part and help protect the health of your service, service users and communities against the impacts of cold weather by following some simple steps:

1. **Sign up** to the [Met Office's weather alerts](#) (If you registered before 2020, the system has now changed so you will need to re-register)
2. **Visit**
 - [Adverse Weather and Health Plan](#) to access the full plan with suggested social media assets to use in bulletins, newsletters and web-based platforms
 - Visit West Yorkshire ICB winter wellness campaign [Winter protection - NHS - Together We Can \(togetherwe-can.com\)](#)
3. **Display** the posters in this pack in your venue or local community (Printed versions of the attached resources are available via the Leeds Public Health Resource Centre by contacting 0113 378 6200 or phrc@leeds.gov.uk).
 - Keeping warm and well poster [Keep Warm Keep Well 2023.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
 - Top tips for keeping warm and well this winter poster: [winter-leaflet-v3.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
 - Direct/indirect effects of cold weather poster and list of services
4. **Click** on The Leeds Clean Air [website](#) which provides information on air quality in Leeds, air pollution forecasts and alerts, and important messaging on how to protect ourselves from air pollution.
5. **Read and promote** the [Winter wellbeing checklists](#). The checklist provides useful prompts for discussions with people and contact details for services that can support vulnerable people in Leeds including the Healthy Start Voucher Scheme.
6. **Familiarise yourself with useful resources** to support people to stay safe and well this winter. The Public Health Resource Centre (PHRC) offers support to anyone with a responsibility for or professional interest in public health or promoting health and wellbeing in Leeds, including students and volunteers. The PHRC stocks a wide variety of free [leaflets, posters](#) and resources that can support different

audiences, topics and challenges we face during Winter – these include flu, malnutrition, falls prevention and fuel poverty. As well as the winter planning checklists which could help you or members of your wider team. More information can be found on the [Public Health Resource Centre webpage](#) under 'Seasonal Health (summer and winter planning)'.

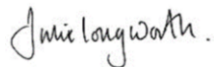
7. Support your Workforce to have confident and compassionate conversations

- By encouraging them to watch the [Winter friends animation](#)
- Leeds City Council's [Winter Wellbeing](#) and [Together Leeds](#) webpages provide information for key support around the city, including cost-of-living support, COVID and flu, and welcome spaces.

8. Watch a [short video](#) from Leeds City Council which provides helpful tips to prevent mould in your home. More advice is provided [here](#). If you live in a council property and are affected by damp and mould you can contact the damp and mould team for advice and guidance by calling 0800 188 4000 or emailing d&mteam@leeds.gov.uk.

Thank you for all your support.

Yours sincerely,



Julie Longworth
Director, Children & Families
Leeds City Council



Kathryn Ingold FFPH
Chief Officer/Consultant in Public Health
Adults and Health Directorate
Leeds City Council



UK Health
Security
Agency

Keeping warm and well: staying safe in cold weather

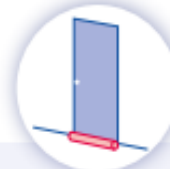
Plan ahead



Check the weather
forecast and the news



Make sure you have sufficient
food and medicine



Take simple measures to
reduce draughts at home

Keep yourself warm



Heat rooms you spend most
time in to 18°C if you can



Keep bedroom
windows closed



Wear multiple layers of
thinner clothing

Prepare your home



Check what financial support
may be available for you



Use energy saving tips to
save money on heating



Make sure appliances are
safe and working well

Look after yourself and others



If you're eligible, get
vaccinated against flu and
COVID-19



Check on others
who may be
vulnerable



Get help if needed.
Call NHS 111 or in an
emergency 999

For more information go to:

[Top tips for keeping warm and well this winter - www.GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)

The direct and indirect effects of cold weather



Exposure to cold weather can affect your health in different ways, even at temperatures as mild as 4 to 8°C

Direct effects



heart attack



stroke



increased risk
of respiratory disease



hypothermia



falls and injuries



weakened lung function
causing an increased risk
of influenza

Indirect effects



disruption to healthcare services
caused by snow and ice



carbon monoxide
poisoning from faulty
boilers, cookers,
heaters and fires



poorer mental health and reduced
educational and
employment attainment
have been linked to
cold homes and fuel
poverty



Things we can all do to stay warm



Heat rooms
to 18 degrees
if you can



Keep
bedroom
windows
closed



Wear plenty
of layers



Eat well
and stay
hydrated

Services in Leeds that could help and support your service users.

Contact these services or visit their websites to get the most up to date info on current service delivery.

Citizens Advice Leeds (CAL)

0808 2 787878

www.citizensadviceleeds.org.uk/leeds-advice

Access free, confidential and impartial advice around financial, housing, work and many other problems. You may be facing a crisis, or just considering your options.

Leeds City Council social care and support

0113 222 4401

leeds-adults@leeds.gov.uk

For an assessment call the contact centre or a local Community One Stop Shop or Hub, once an assessment is completed information will be sent to Adult Social Care. Support offered can include a personal alarm, sensors in a chair or bed and falls alarms which send an alert to a response centre.

Leeds Directory

0113 378 4610

www.leedsdirectory.org

Find local support by contacting the directory, weekdays 9am to 5pm or complete the online form.

Leeds Housing Options

Leeds Housing Options aims to prevent homelessness, they offer advice and assistance to those in housing and homelessness related need. They offer advice on how to secure a home whether this is council housing, housing association housing or privately rented accommodation.

Find more information on how the team can help and how you can contact Leeds Housing Options.

0113 222 4412

housing.options@leeds.gov.uk

www.leeds-homes.org.uk/content/Information/AlternativesToCouncilHousing

Mental Health support

For mental health information in Leeds visit MindWell: www.mindwell-leeds.org.uk

For mental health services in Leeds, contact Leeds Mental Wellbeing Service by calling 0113 843 4388 or www.leedscommunityhealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services-a-z/leeds-mental-wellbeing-service/home

Together Leeds

You can access services to support cost of living around finance, emergency food, heating, water, help at the hubs, housing, jobs, welcome spaces.

www.leeds.gov.uk/campaign/cost-of-living

Enhance Programme

Enhance supports safe and sustainable discharge from hospital and Neighbourhood Teams into a secure home environment. The programme links third sector organisations with Neighbourhood Teams and other agencies to avoid delayed discharges and readmissions for individuals, and to enhance capacity throughout the system. Enhance programme - Leeds Older People's Forum (opforum.org.uk)

Leeds Food Aid Network

www.leedsfoodaidnetwork.co.uk

Information on the location of food providers (e.g. foodbanks, community kitchens, social pantries) across is available on the Leeds Food Aid Network map.

Money Information Centre (MIC)

www.leeds.gov.uk/leedsmic

Home Access free, confidential and impartial advice and information on a range of money related matters such as debt, money, energy and utilities. In addition to this site, the Together Leeds website is the short term hub for accessing a range of local information this winter

www.leeds.gov.uk/campaign/cost-of-living

Home Plus Leeds (Care and Repair)

0113 240 6009

homeplus@care-repair-leeds.org.uk

Offer comprehensive home assessment to identify client needs, rails and equipment support to reduce the risk of falls, servicing and repairs to heating and hot water systems, draft proofing and insulation measures, provide convenient and lower costs means of cooking and heating e.g. slow cookers, electric blankets and advice on issues as a change in housing or financial circumstances.

Linking Leeds

0113 336 7612

linking.leeds@nhs.net

City-wide social prescribing service for all people in Leeds, aged 18 years +. Referrals can be made via clinical systems or self-referrals can be made by calling the Linking Leeds Hub or by completing an online introduction form.

Leeds City Council Welcome spaces

www.leeds.gov.uk/campaign/warm-spaces

Access information on voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations which are offering warm spaces across Leeds this winter. These include libraries, community centres, community hubs and other places offering a warm welcome and free to use for anyone struggling to heat their home.



The Winter Wellbeing Checklists are useful resources which can prompt discussion and help signpost patients to additional support. It can be used in regular or annual health checks with patients who are 'at risk' of illness due to cold weather. There are checklists for Children and Families and for Adults, and they can be accessed via the Public Health Resource Centre website: <https://www.leeds.gov.uk/phrc/public-health-training/winter-wellbeing-checklists>

Winter Workforce Animation and Supporting Resources

Support your Workforce to have confident and compassionate conversations:

By watching a short animation, anyone working or volunteering in Leeds can increase their knowledge of the evidence based, high impact interventions to support people in Leeds during winter. There are two animations available: Leeds Winter Workforce – Helping everyone stay safe, warm and well [video](#) and Winter Health – Vitamin D [video](#)

Free resources can also be accessed from the Public Health Resource Centre, a list of these resources is found on the [Public Health Resource Centre webpage](#) under 'Seasonal Health (summer and winter planning)'. Contact the PHRC to arrange collection of resources to help signposting, referrals and support materials to help Leeds Stay Well this Winter: Public Health Resource Centre, Technorth, 9 Harrogate Road, Chapel Allerton, Leeds, LS7 3NB, T: 0113 378 6200 or E: phrc@leeds.gov.uk

Stay Well this Winter campaign

The National Stay Well this Winter Campaign focuses on high impact interventions such as promoting flu vaccinations, increasing medicine uptake, keeping warm and eating well. The campaign also tackles issues such as fuel poverty and social isolation. The campaign helps to raise the public's awareness of the harm to health from cold and provides guidance on how to prepare for and respond to cold weather which can affect everybody's health at any age.

Visit this website page for more information and resources:


<https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/winterhealth/Pages/KeepWarmKeepWell.aspx>



GET VACCINATED. GET WINTER STRONG.

If your child is 2
or 3 years old
you can book a
flu vaccination
appointment
at their
GP surgery



 UK Health Security Agency



GET WINTER STRONG

Get
vaccinated

**Flu and COVID-19 spread more easily
in winter and can hit children hard.** Help them
to defend themselves with a quick and easy
nasal vaccine spray. If you have a child aged 2 or 3
contact your GP practice to book their vaccine.





European
Immunization
Week

Prevent. Protect. Immunize.



MEASLES

Don't let your child catch it
– get them vaccinated with the MMR vaccine

The number of young people catching measles has risen. It's never too late to be vaccinated. You need two doses of MMR one month apart to be fully protected against measles, mumps and rubella.

It's time to make measles a disease of the past.

If you have symptoms of measles, stay at home and phone your GP or NHS 111 for advice. STAY AWAY from GP surgeries and A&E departments – you could spread the illness to others.

Measles symptoms include: high fever; sore, red, watery eyes; coughing; aching and feeling generally unwell; a blotchy red brown rash, which usually appears after the initial symptoms.

i mmunisation

the safest way to protect your child

For more information contact your local GP surgery or visit: www.nhs.uk/mmr

Condensation prevention check list

General home checklist

- In colder weather try to keep temperatures between 18 - 21c
- Dry washing outside where possible, if you have to dry clothes indoor place in a sunny room, leave a window opened slightly and close the door
- Open trickle vents on windows during the day, or open windows for at least 10 minutes
- Don't put furniture, including beds, against any outside walls and try and leave a gap between the wall and furniture to allow airflow

Kitchen checklist

- Close internal doors whilst cooking and open window(s)
- Use an extractor fan if you have one
- Put lids on pans (this also reduces boiling times and helps save money)
- Only boil as much water as you need in a kettle to reduce steam and save money

Bathroom checklist

- Open windows whilst bathing/washing and leave them open for 20 minutes after (if safe to do so)
- Use an extractor fan if you have one
- Take shorter and cooler showers
- When running a bath put cold in first, this significantly reduces condensation
- Wipe down windows, mirrors, tiles, shower doors with a squeegee, mopping up any moisture

Decorating checklist

- When wallpapering use a paste containing a fungicide to prevent further mould growth
- Use mould resistant paint on areas prone to mould such as ceilings above windows.

Reporting repairs

You should report any repairs or damage straight away. Before you report any damp problems, please read all of the information in this leaflet and make sure you have followed the practical advice. Wipe down and remove any condensation daily and follow the advice on how to remove mould growth. If problems persist please contact us by:



0800 188 4000

(Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 9am to 5pm; Wednesday 10am to 5pm)



www.leeds.gov.uk/housing



Visiting your local Hub / Housing Office

(General office hours are 9-5pm, but may vary on location. For more info check online at www.leeds.gov.uk)

You can report **emergency repairs** at any time of day via the above 0800 number.

Emergency repairs are when there is a serious risk of harm or damage to property that cannot wait until the next working day.

Swarcliffe (PFI)



Contact **Yorkshire Housing** on

0345 366 4403

(Available 24hrs / 7 days a week)



www.yorkshirehousing.co.uk

Little London / Beeston / Holbeck (PFI)



Contact **Equans** on **0808 168 7335,**
or 0333 121 0074



sc4lservices.uk-kmr@engie.com

More information on housing disrepair and the effect it has on the council can be found online at:

www.leeds.gov.uk/Pages/Housing-disrepair

Dealing with damp and condensation

During the colder months condensation can become a major problem.

It is caused when warm moist air hits a cold surface such as a window or external wall and condenses, causing water droplets to run down the cold surface. If left, this can develop into black mould which looks unsightly and can cause health problems if not treated.

Good ventilation and air circulation around the home is essential in the prevention of condensation, as well as effectively heating the home.

The major difference between condensation and other forms of damp, such as rising or penetrating damp is that you have the ability to reduce the problem through a few simple steps.



Damp

Rising or penetrating damp can cause problems in your home although it is less common than condensation. If you think damp is causing a problem in your property you will need to report it to us so that we can investigate.

Rising damp is caused by a failed or 'bridged' damp-proof course. This allows moisture in the ground to rise up through the walls, sometimes to a height of one metre.

You can usually identify rising damp because it is often associated with a tide mark at the edge of the damp area caused by salt deposits.



Penetrating damp is classed as any water that finds its way inside from the outside. It can occur at all levels of the building but is usually higher up.

Overflowing gutters, missing roof tiles, leaking pipes and downspouts, badly fitted windows/doors and damaged pointing, cladding, flashing or render as well as covered air bricks can all be sources of penetrating damp.

Typical signs of penetrating damp are:

- Growing or blotchy areas of damp on walls or ceilings
- Wet and crumbly plaster
- Signs of spores or mould
- Drips and puddles.



Condensation

Condensation can cause mould to form in your home, leading to staining of wallpaper, wall surfaces and window frames and damage to furniture and clothing.

Water vapour is generated in your home in many ways, but the main causes are:

- Steam from cooking and boiling the kettle
- Baths and showers
- Drying clothes inside
- Unsuitable venting of tumble dryers.



Mould and spores have a musty smell, often associated with a damp house.

The best way to deal with mould is to remove it from walls using a fungicidal wash, in line with the manufacturer's instructions.

Special paint is also available that will delay the return of mould, but unless you take steps to reduce condensation it will eventually come back.



Three steps to prevent condensation and mould



Heating

Condensation is most likely to be a problem in homes which are under heated:

- Try to keep temperatures between 18 - 21c as this will reduce condensation from forming on cold surfaces.



Ventilation

Condensation will be reduced if you allow air to circulate freely. Make sure vents and air bricks are not obstructed. Open windows in kitchens and bathrooms to air the house and reduce steam and use extractor fans.



Remove the moisture

Condensation in the home occurs when there is too much moisture in the air. Take steps to reduce the amount of moisture in the air by following the checklists overleaf.

Did you know?



- A family of four can add moisture to the air equivalent to **30 to 40 litres of water** a week just by breathing
- Showering, cooking, bathing and washing can add **15 to 20 litres a week**
- Drying clothes indoors can add **10 to 15 litres a week**.