

Safety tips for cold weather

Keep your home warm, efficiently and safely, by:

- heating your home to at least 18°C in winter poses minimal risk to your health when you are wearing suitable clothing
- getting your heating system and cooking appliances checked and keeping your home well ventilated
- using your electric blanket as instructed and getting it tested every 3 years – never use a hot water bottle with an electric blanket
- not using 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
- making 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

Keep in the warmth by:

- fitting draught proofing to seal any gaps around windows and doors
- making sure you have loft insulation and, if you have cavity walls, making sure they are insulated too
- insulating your hot water cylinder and pipes
- drawing your curtains at dusk to help keep heat generated inside your rooms
- making sure your radiators are not obstructed by furniture or curtains

Look after yourself by:

- having plenty of hot food and drinks – food is a vital source of energy and helps to keep your body warm
- aiming to include five daily portions of fruit and vegetables in your daily diet – tinned and frozen vegetables count toward your five a day
- stocking up on tinned and frozen foods so you don't have to go out too much when it's cold or icy
- exercising – it's good for you and it can keep you warm in winter
- if possible, trying to move around at least once an hour, but remember, if you have any health concerns, speak to your GP practice before starting any exercise plans
- wearing lots of thin layers – clothes made from cotton, wool or fleecy fibres are particularly good and maintain body heat
- wearing good-fitting slippers with a good grip indoors and shoes with a good grip outside to prevent trips, slips and falls
- making sure you have spare medication in case you are unable to go out
- checking if you are eligible for inclusion on the priority services register operated by your water and power supplier

Look after others by checking on older neighbours or relatives, especially those living alone or who have serious illnesses to make sure they are safe, warm and well.

Get financial support. There are grants and benefits available to help you with your bills and sources of advice to make your home more energy efficient. It's worthwhile claiming all the benefits you are entitled to before winter sets in