

# [News story: Cold weather prompts further health warnings from PHE](#)

*Updated:* Updated story with latest warning.

## **Latest update**

Forecasts that current cold weather is here to stay for a while, have prompted PHE to urge people to check on older friends, family and neighbours, who may feel isolated.

The Met Office has said that cold conditions, presently affecting all parts of the country, are likely to stay in place for several days, meaning most people will have to contend with snow, ice and low temperatures.

Spells of weather like this can put older people, those with underlying health conditions and young children, at risk from a range of conditions because cold weather forces their bodies to work much harder than usual.

Dr Angie Bone, of PHE's Extreme Events team, said:

In events like this it's possible that some people who are not in the best of health will stay at home, rather than risk venturing out in cold and icy conditions, and this can lead to feeling more isolated than usual.

That's why as this colder period continues we should all check in on those we know, whether they're friends, family or neighbours, who may be at risk, and offer to lend a helping hand. Do they need shopping or a prescription collecting? Can they get to GP or hospital appointments? Do they just need some company?

It can be all too easy for those of us who are fit and well and able to cope with the cold – but it's really important to remember that it can leave some people feeling a bit cut off.

[Read top tips for staying safe in colder weather.](#)

## **Previous updates**

## **17 January 2018**

Colder weather has arrived in northern England prompting PHE warnings.

The Met Office today said North East, North West and Yorkshire and the Humber regions were all experiencing cold weather and were likely to continue doing so until the weekend.

Dr Thomas Waite of the Extreme Events team said:

Cold weather like this is part of winter – but just because we're used to it doesn't mean we shouldn't take steps to protect ourselves from falling ill. Every winter thousands of people die from illnesses linked to exposure to the cold when indoor and outside – that's why it's so important we all look out for each other.

If you can check on family, friends and neighbours who are older, have young children or who have heart and lung conditions all these groups are particularly vulnerable to cold.

Keep a close eye on weather forecasts so you're up to date with what's happening in your area, keep homes heated to at least 18C and remember wearing several thin layers can be more effective than fewer thicker ones.

## **5 January 2018**

Another wave of cold weather, including the chance of ice and snow for some, has prompted PHE to urge people to keep homes warm and to keep an eye out for friends, family and neighbours.

The Met Office says that the weather will start to turn much colder from tonight (Friday 5 January 2018) with the cold creeping down the country from the north and that the bad weather could remain until early next week.

Dr Thomas Waite, of the PHE Extreme events team, said:

As temperatures drop it's really important to think about what you can do to prepare for the cold and protect more vulnerable friends and family from the ill-effects of the cold.

Ensure they wear lots of thin layers, have plenty of warm food and drinks to stay warm and check weather forecasts before heading out. Also wear shoes with a good, slip-resistant grip to prevent any accidental falls and when indoors stay warm and heat homes to at least 18°C.

This advice is important for everyone but particularly important if anyone in the home is very young, 65 or over or has a long term

health condition.

## **27 December 2017**

Arrival of cold weather across Yorkshire and the Humber, the North East and North West of England that is due to spread across the rest of the country has prompted further warnings from Public Health England to look out for others and to take extra care during the cold, snowy conditions.

A band of rain, sleet and snow followed by a very cold and frosty period is forecast to spread southeast across the country from today until Saturday. Because every winter cold triggers thousands of illnesses and deaths across the UK, PHE is urging people to wrap up warm and take extra care when out and about.

Dr Thomas Waite of the Extreme Events team at PHE said:

Cold weather like this is part of winter – but just because we're used to it doesn't mean we shouldn't take steps to protect ourselves from falling ill. Every winter thousands of people die from illnesses linked to exposure to the cold when indoors and outside – that's why it's so important we all look out for each other.

During this Christmas period many people will be out and about more, so it's important to make sure you're prepared when leaving the home. Also, there will be a number of people who will have been on their own all this time. If you can, check on family, friends and neighbours who are older, have young children or who have heart and lung conditions. All these groups are particularly vulnerable to cold.

Keep a close eye on weather forecasts so you're up-to-date with what's happening in your area, keep homes heated to at least 18°C and remember wearing several thin layers can be more effective than fewer thicker ones.

Steve Willington, Chief Meteorologist at the Met Office said:

A band of rain, sleet and snow will slowly clear east during Wednesday, with sunny but cold weather following. However some wintry showers could also move into North Sea coasts. A cold, breezy night follows with widespread frost, and a risk of ice. Thursday will then be cold and sunny, although wintry showers are likely to spread southeast from Northwest England into the Midlands. This will be followed by winds easing, and a very cold, and frosty overnight period. Milder conditions are expected to move across all parts by Saturday morning.

## **6 December 2017**

Weather forecasters are warning that all parts of England could experience cold, snow and ice over the next week, prompting PHE to again warn people to plan ahead.

The change of weather will bring cold air to all parts of England from Thursday and is likely to affect all areas of the country over the weekend says the Met Office. At the same time, the Flood Forecasting Centre has reported a risk of coastal flooding impacts as high tides and strong winds affect the whole of the east coast of England and Cumbria.

Dr Thomas Waite of the Extreme Events team at PHE said:

It is unusual that we are warning about the risks from cold and floods at the same time, but that's why it's absolutely critical that people keep up to date with the Met Office's weather forecasts and the Environment Agency's flood warnings. There is lots we can do to prepare for cold weather. We can all keep an eye out for family, friends and neighbours who may be at risk.

Those with heart and lung conditions, younger children and older people, are at particular risk during cold weather. Experience shows us that every winter thousands of people are seriously affected and even die from illnesses linked to the cold. That's why it's so important that we all play a part in minimising the risks to health this winter.

If your home or business is at risk of flooding, you can sign up for flood warnings by phone, email or text message.

Steve Willington, Chief Meteorologist at the Met Office, said:

Cold Arctic air is expected to spread south across all parts of England through Thursday and Friday. A brisk northerly wind will give significant wind chill. Whilst many areas will remain dry with sunny spells through the day, occasional snow showers are expected giving localised accumulations and icy patches. These are possible anywhere, although most likely in north-west and north-east England, and east coastal areas. A band of rain moving east on Sunday and Monday may turn to sleet or snow in Midlands, and areas northwards, potentially producing further accumulations. This period of cold weather is then likely to continue into next week.

## **27 November 2017**

PHE is issuing further take-care warnings after forecasts have predicted a prolonged cold spell for all of England.

On Friday, the Met Office issued warnings that the north was likely to see colder weather. Today (27 November 2017), they have extended that warning for the whole of England and said that cold conditions could last until Saturday.

Dr Thomas Waite, of PHE's Extreme Events team, said:

As the weather is going to get colder everywhere in the coming days, this is a really good time to check on those who may be at risk. People with diseases such as heart and lung conditions, older people, and young children can feel the ill-effects of cold weather more than the rest of us.

To stay well this winter, we all need to play a part. Is there someone you know who could be at risk when the weather gets cold? Could you help them out by fetching shopping or prescriptions?

When the colder weather arrives there are several things we can do to keep well: wear several thin layers instead of fewer thicker ones, keep parts of the home you're using heated to at least 18°C and keep a careful eye on the weather forecasts.

Laura Paterson, Chief Operational Meteorologist for the Met Office, said:

Colder air will gradually spread south during Monday and Tuesday, with overnight frosts becoming more widespread, along with a brisk northerly breeze.

A period of more widespread cold temperatures is then expected from Wednesday onward, whilst showers down the east coast are also expected to be wintry at times with some snow and ice possible.

## **24 November 2017**

Keep warm keep well warnings are being issued by Public Health England (PHE) today (24 November 2017), as weather forecasts suggest the winter's first blast of cold weather is on its way.

Met Office forecasters have said today that by tomorrow (Saturday) temperatures in the north east, north west and Yorkshire and the Humber will fall below 2°C.

This first drop in temperatures has prompted PHE's Extreme Events team to remind people all over the country that before cold weather arrives is the best time to prepare.

Dr Thomas Waite of PHE's Extreme Events team said:

We're well used to winter in this country so most people know what to do to protect their health before and during cold spells.

But there are people who may not take precautions and who are at a very real risk. We know that every winter thousands of people fall ill and many die because of exposure to cold both in the home and while outdoors.

Those most at-risk include older people, very young children and those with conditions like heart and lung disease. That's why every cold season we urge people to look out for family, friends and neighbours who may be at risk. Ask yourself if you could check on a neighbour to see if there's anything they need?

Paul Gundersen, Chief Operational Meteorologist at the Met Office, said:

Colder air has now reached most parts of England, with temperatures expected to fall further by Saturday, when the cold will be accentuated by strengthening winds. Wintry showers are also likely in places, but any snow showers are expected to be confined largely to higher ground. A temporary incursion of warmer air is expected on Monday, with the colder air forecast to return by Tuesday.

## Top tips to prepare for colder weather

You should:

- look out for friends and family who may be vulnerable to the cold and ensure they have access to warm food and drinks and are managing to heat their homes adequately
- try to maintain indoor temperatures to at least 18°C, particularly if you are not mobile, have long term illness or are 65 or over
- stay tuned for weather forecasts, ensure you are stocked with food and medications in advance, have deliveries or ask a friend to help
- take weather into account when planning your activity over the following days
- seek entitlements and benefits such as Winter Fuel Payments and Cold Weather Payments, which are available to some
- avoid exposing yourself to cold or icy outdoor conditions if you are at a higher risk of cold related illness or falls.
- discuss with friends and neighbours about clearing snow and ice from in front of your house and public walkways nearby

Power and utility companies have schemes which make at-risk groups a priority for reconnection following power cuts. Find out if you meet the criteria and if so, sign up. Visit [ofgem.gov.uk](https://www.ofgem.gov.uk) for more information.

There's lots of useful advice on the [Stay Well This Winter website](#).

Dr Waite added:

We know that more deaths occur every winter in the UK than in the

summer due to a wide range of causes including cold weather, influenza and other respiratory infections. The flu vaccination is the best protection we have against flu and it's really important to have it if you are eligible. If we all keep a close eye out for each other over the coming months hopefully we'll all be able to stay well this winter.