

Environment Agency rules out chemical pollution as likely cause of Teesside crab deaths

- The Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) continues to analyse samples for signs of disease
- Undersea cabling, seismic survey activity or dredging have also been ruled out as possible causes

The investigation into the deaths of thousands of crabs and lobsters along the North East coast has ruled out chemical pollution as a likely cause.

The Environment Agency, the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas), North Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (NEIFCA), the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), Food Standards Agency, UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and local authorities are collaborating on the investigation, which is trying to establish what could have caused the crabs and lobsters to die off the coast between Hartlepool and Robin Hoods Bay.

Investigators have previously ruled out sewage, undersea cabling, seismic survey activity or dredging as likely causes.

Sarah Jennings, Operations Manager from the Environment Agency, said:

“We understand how distressing this incident is for the local shellfish industry and for members of the public, so this investigation has been a top priority for Environment Agency and Cefas laboratories.

“We’ve used both traditional and innovative screening methods to analyse samples of water, sediment and crab looking for traces of contamination. We’ve screened for over 1,000 potential chemical contaminants but found no anomalies that could lead to an event of this scale.

“Our environment officers have also reviewed environmental permits and scrutinised industrial sites in the Teesside area, but again found no evidence of abnormal discharges that could lead to an event of this scale.

“In a bid to better understand the scale of the incident, our survey vessel the Humber Guardian has taken samples from the seabed, which show that only crabs and lobsters appear to be affected.

“By combining this evidence we have ruled out chemical pollution and sewage as likely causes, and the investigation will now focus more on whether disease or a natural event could have been responsible for the deaths.”

Mike Gubbins, head of the Fish Health Inspectorate at Cefas, said:

“We are continuing to investigate whether an aquatic animal disease has caused this mortality.

“Our Fish Health Inspectorate have been analysing shellfish samples collected from the area for listed and other non-listed diseases, but none have been detected so far.

“We will continue to work with partner agencies to try and find answers for the local community.”

Anyone who finds dead crustaceans (crabs or lobsters) or other dead wildlife, should report them to the Environment Agency on 0800 80 70 60.

[PCA publishes new factsheet on Code rights for those renewing a pub agreement](#)

News story

Our latest factsheet helps those who are renewing a pub agreement with a regulated pub company to understand their Code rights



The new [factsheet](#) explains the Pub Company’s Code duties when a tenant is renewing their pub agreement. This guide will help to clarify which duties apply depending on whether the tenant is renewing under the Landlord and Tenant Act or the terms in their tenancy.

It also reminds tenants about their right to request a Market Rent Only (MRO) option at renewal. For more information about MRO see our [factsheet](#).

Information about pub companies' duties when a tenant takes on a new agreement is covered in a separate [factsheet](#).

If you have any queries about your rights as a renewing tenant, speak to your [Code Compliance Officer](#) or contact the PCA team at office@pubscodeadjudicator.gov.uk.

Find out more

Published 26 November 2021

[Oral Statement on B.1.1.529 variant](#)

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. With permission I'd like to update the House on COVID-19.

But before I begin, I want to wish the Shadow Secretary of State well, as he recovers from COVID-19.

Madam Deputy Speaker, over the past 48 hours, a small number of cases of a new variant have been detected on our international genomic database.

I want to reassure this House that there are no detected cases of this variant in the UK at this time but this new variant is of huge international concern.

The World Health Organisation has called a special meeting this morning – and that meeting is taking place right now.

I want to update the House on what we know so far, why we're concerned, and the action that we are taking although I must stress, that this is a fast-moving situation, and there remains a high degree of uncertainty.

The sequence of this variant – currently called B.1.1.529 – was first uploaded by Hong Kong, from a case of someone travelling from South Africa.

The UK was the first country to identify the potential threat of this new variant and alert international partners.

Further cases have been identified in South Africa and in Botswana and it is highly likely that it has now spread to other countries.

Yesterday, the South African government held a press conference, where they provided an update on what they know so far.

I want to put on record my thanks to South Africa, not only for their rigorous scientific response but the openness and transparency with which

they have acted much as we did here in the United Kingdom, when we first detected what is now known as the Alpha variant.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we are concerned that this new variant may pose a substantial risk to public health.

The variant has an unusually large number of mutations.

Yesterday, the UK Health Security Agency classified B.1.1.529 as a new Variant Under Investigation and the Variant Technical Group has designated it as a Variant Under Investigation with Very High Priority.

It's the only variant with this designation, making it higher priority than Beta.

It shares many of the features of the Alpha, Beta and Delta variants.

Early indications show this variant may be more transmissible than the Delta variant and current vaccines may be less effective against it.

It may also impact the effectiveness of one of our major treatments, Ronapreve.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we're also worried about the rise in cases in countries in Southern Africa especially as these populations should have significant natural immunity.

In South Africa in particular, there has been exponential growth, with cases increasing fourfold over the last two weeks.

In Gauteng Province – which includes Johannesburg and Pretoria –some 80 percent of cases, when tested with a PCR test, have shown something that is known as the 'S-Gene dropout' which we associate with this variant.

So while we don't know yet definitely whether the exponential growth in South Africa is directly associated with this new variant, this PCR test analysis does indicate that there could many more cases of this new variant than just those that have been sequenced so far.

So Madam Deputy Speaker, even as we continue to learn more about this new variant, one of the lessons of this pandemic has been that we must move quickly, and at the earliest possible moment.

The UK remains in a strong position.

We've made tremendous gains as a result of the decisions that we took over the summer and the initial success of our booster programme.

But we're heading into winter and our booster programme is still ongoing. So we must act with caution.

So we're taking the following steps:

Yesterday I announced that – from midday today – we're placing six countries

in Southern Africa on the travel red list.

Those countries are: South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Eswatini, Namibia, and Zimbabwe.

Anyone who is not a UK or Irish resident who has been in one of these countries in the last 10 days will be denied entry into England.

UK and Irish residents arriving from these countries – from 4 am on Sunday – will enter hotel quarantine.

Anyone arriving before those dates should take PCR tests on day 2 and day 8 – even if they are vaccinated and isolate at home – along with the rest of their household.

If you've arrived from any of these countries in the last 10 days NHS Test and Trace will be contacting you and asking you to take a PCR test.

But do not wait to be contacted – you should take PCR tests right away.

We have been working closely with the Devolved Administrations on this, and they will be aligning their response.

In recent hours, Israel has also taken similar precautions.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I wish to stress that we're working quickly, and we're working with a high degree of uncertainty.

We are continuing to make assessments, including about those countries with strong travel links to South Africa and we're working with our international partners – including South Africa and the European Union – to ensure an aligned response.

But this variant is a reminder for all of us that this pandemic is far from over.

We must continue to act with caution, and do all we can to keep this virus at bay including, once you are eligible, getting your booster shot.

We've already given over 16 million booster shots.

The booster jab was already important before we knew about this variant – but now, it could not be more important.

So please, if you're eligible get your booster shot, do not delay.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we've made great progress against this virus – progress that we're determined to hold on to.

This government will continue do whatever is necessary to keep us safe – and we've all got our part to play.

I commend this statement to the House.

[Cold weather alert issued by UKHSA](#)

Latest update

UKHSA issues cold weather alert for northern regions of England

With icy conditions and heavy snow forecast across the north of England from Friday, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is encouraging people to stay warm and look out for those most at risk from the effects of cold weather.

The Met Office is warning that the North West, North East and Yorkshire and Humber regions will experience cold weather from midnight on Thursday 17 February to 9am on Saturday 19 February.

Agostinho Sousa, Consultant in Public Health Medicine at UKHSA, said:

Cold weather can have a serious impact on health, particularly for older people and those with heart and lung problems, as it increases the risks of heart attacks, strokes and chest infections.

Remind those most vulnerable to heat their home to at least 18 Celsius, 64.4 Fahrenheit, particularly if they have reduced mobility, are 65 and over, or have a health condition. Should they need to go outside, it's important for them to wear shoes with a good grip.

Helen Caughey, Deputy Chief Meteorologist at the Met Office, said:

Temperatures are expected to fluctuate around average over the next few days. While milder conditions are expected to dominate in the south, temperatures will be colder in northern England.

Storm Eunice will bring snow to some northern areas on Friday and the very windy conditions will contribute towards a marked wind chill. Widespread frost is probable on Saturday morning.

UKHSA has supplemented the [Cold Weather Plan for England](#) with [useful resources and advice](#) on the concurrent risks of cold weather and coronavirus (COVID-19) and [Keep Warm Keep Well](#) guidance.

For people struggling to afford heating bills, [Simple Energy Advice](#) provides free advice on energy efficiency and national grants that are available to help keep you warm this winter.

If people can't heat all the rooms they use, it's important to heat the

living room during the day and the bedroom just before going to sleep. Wearing a few thin layers is better at trapping heat than wearing one thick layer. Having plenty of hot food and drinks is also effective for keeping warm.

Previous updates were published by [Public Health England](#).

Previous

Friday 21 January 2022

UKHSA extends cold weather alert in southern regions of England

Further to the cold weather alert issued on 18 January, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is again encouraging people to stay warm and look out for those most at risk as freezing conditions persist across the south of England.

The Met Office is warning that the East, South East and South West regions of the country will all experience cold weather from 9am on Friday 21 January to 9am on Wednesday 26 January.

Met Office Chief Meteorologist, Neil Armstrong, said:

With the extent of overnight cloud increasing in many places across the UK, the forecast shows that frost and sub-zero temperatures will become more confined to areas with clearer skies for the next few days, notably sheltered parts of Wales, southern and eastern England, and parts of eastern Scotland.

This is an update to the cold weather alert issued on 18 January, which can be found below.

Previous updates were published by [Public Health England](#).

Tuesday 18 January 2022

UKHSA issues cold weather alert for central and southern England

With freezing conditions and widespread frosts forecast across central and southern England this week, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is encouraging people to stay warm and look out for those most at risk from the effects of cold weather.

The Met Office is warning that the West Midlands, East Midlands, East, South East, and South West regions will experience cold weather from 6pm on Wednesday 19 January to 9am on Sunday 23 January.

Agostinho Sousa, Consultant in Public Health Medicine at UKHSA, said:

Cold weather can have a serious impact on health, particularly for older people and those with heart and lung problems, as it increases the risks of heart attacks, strokes and chest infections.

Remind vulnerable relatives and neighbours to heat their home to at least 18°C – particularly if they have reduced mobility, are 65 or older, or have a health condition. Should they need to go outside, it's important for them to wear shoes with a good grip.

Steve Ramsdale, Met Office Chief Meteorologist, said:

A change in conditions brings cold air to the UK, spreading from the north later on Wednesday then lingering over England and Wales for the rest of the week and into the weekend.

With easing winds and good clear spells, a widespread frost is likely on Thursday and Friday morning with temperatures recovering somewhat by day. Into the weekend more cloud is likely to spread over England and Wales with less of a frost by night.

UKHSA has supplemented the [Cold Weather Plan for England](#) with [useful resources and advice](#) on the concurrent risks of cold weather and coronavirus (COVID-19) and [Keep Warm Keep Well](#) guidance.

For people struggling to afford heating bills, [Simple Energy Advice](#) provides free advice on energy efficiency and national grants that are available to help keep you warm this winter.

If people can't heat all the rooms they use, it's important to heat the living room during the day and the bedroom just before going to sleep. Wearing a few thin layers is better at trapping heat than wearing one thick layer. Having plenty of hot food and drinks is also effective for keeping warm.

Previous updates were published by [Public Health England](#).

14 January 2022

UKHSA extends cold weather alert to 8 regions of England

Further to the cold weather alert issued on 11 January, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is again encouraging people to stay warm and look out for those most at risk.

The Met Office is warning that the North West of England, Yorkshire and Humber, West Midlands, East Midlands, East of England, London, South East England and South West England regions will all experience cold weather from 6pm on Thursday 13 January to 9am on Monday 17 January.

Frank Saunders, Chief Meteorologist at the Met Office, said:

Temperatures in England are expected to continue below normal in the coming days, with overnight minimum temperatures possibly getting to -4°C in some rural areas again tonight, and perhaps approaching this value again on Sunday night. Freezing fog will also form again across some areas on Friday night and Saturday morning.

Areas covered by the alert are likely to see highs remain in the mid-to-low single figures through the weekend, especially in places where any fog or low cloud lingers throughout the day.

Previous updates were published by [Public Health England](#).

11 January 2022

UKHSA issues cold weather alert for central and southern England

With a risk of freezing conditions and prolonged periods of fog across the centre and south of the country in the coming days, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is encouraging people to stay warm and look out for those most at risk from the effects of cold weather.

The Met Office is warning that the West Midlands, East Midlands, East of England, London, South East England and South West England regions will experience cold weather from 6pm on Thursday 13 January to 9am on Monday 17 January.

Agostinho Sousa, Consultant in Public Health Medicine at UKHSA, said:

As we continue to experience very low temperatures this winter it's important to remember to check on those who are more vulnerable to cold weather, such as elderly or frail friends and family, especially if they live alone or with a serious illness.

Remind those most vulnerable to heat their home to at least 18 Celsius, 64.4 Fahrenheit, particularly if they have reduced mobility, are 65 and over, or have a health condition. Should they need to go outside, it's important for them to wear shoes with a good grip.

Met Office Deputy Chief Meteorologist Dan Rudman said:

Temperatures in central and southern England are expected to trend downwards from Thursday, with overnight minimum temperatures possibly getting to -4 °C in some rural areas, but widespread below-freezing conditions elsewhere overnight in the following days. This will result in some harsh frosts and possible freezing fog in some places.

Temperatures will stay subdued through the next few days from Thursday in the alerted areas, with highs likely to remain in the mid-to-low single figures through the weekend, especially in places where any fog or low cloud lingers throughout the day.

UKHSA has supplemented the [Cold Weather Plan for England](#) with [useful resources and advice](#) on the concurrent risks of cold weather and coronavirus (COVID-19) and [Keep Warm Keep Well](#) guidance.

For people struggling to afford heating bills, [Simple Energy Advice](#) provides free advice on energy efficiency and national grants that are available to help keep you warm this winter.

If people can't heat all the rooms they use, it's important to heat the living room during the day and the bedroom just before going to sleep. Wearing a few thin layers is better at trapping heat than wearing one thick layer. Having plenty of hot food and drinks is also effective for keeping warm.

Previous updates were published by [Public Health England](#).

6 January 2022

Cold weather set to remain across several English regions

With cold weather set to remain across a number of English regions over the coming days, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is encouraging people to stay warm and look out for those most at risk from the effects of cold weather.

The Met Office is warning that the North East, North West, Yorkshire and Humber, West Midlands, East Midlands and East of England regions will experience cold weather from 9am on Thursday 6 January to 9am on Monday 10 January.

Agostinho Sousa, a Consultant in Public Health Medicine at UKHSA, said:

It's important to try to heat your home to at least 18 Celsius, 64.4 Fahrenheit, particularly if you have reduced mobility, are 65 and over, or have a health condition.

Please check on those who are more vulnerable to cold weather, such as elderly or frail friends and family, especially if they live alone or with a serious illness. This can make all the difference.

Met Office Deputy Chief Meteorologist, Rebekah Sherwin, said:

Cold air drawn quickly across the Atlantic from the Canadian Arctic will bring low temperatures to much of northern England, with

strong winds and wintry showers making it feel even colder in exposed areas. From Saturday onwards, temperatures will return to near normal for January.

UKHSA has supplemented the [Cold Weather Plan for England](#) with [useful resources and advice](#) on the concurrent risks of cold weather and coronavirus (COVID-19) and [Keep Warm Keep Well](#) guidance.

For people struggling to afford heating bills, [Simple Energy Advice](#) provides free advice on energy efficiency and national grants that are available to help keep you warm this winter.

If people can't heat all the rooms they use, it's important to heat the living room during the day and the bedroom just before going to sleep. Wearing a few thin layers is better at trapping heat than wearing one thick layer. Having plenty of hot food and drinks is also effective for keeping warm.

Previous updates were published by [Public Health England](#).

4 January 2022

UKHSA extends cold weather alert to the whole of England

With cold weather becoming established across all regions of England this week, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is encouraging people to stay warm and look out for those most at risk from the effects of cold weather.

The Met Office is warning that each of the nine regions of England will experience cold weather from midnight on Tuesday 4 January to midday on Thursday 6 January.

Agostinho Sousa, a Consultant in Public Health Medicine at UKHSA, said:

Cold weather can have a serious impact on health, particularly for older people and those with heart and lung problems, as it increases the risks of heart attacks, strokes and chest infections.

It's important to check on those who are more vulnerable to cold weather, including older neighbours or relatives – especially those living alone or those who have serious illness.

Remind them to heat their home to at least 18 Celsius, 64.4 Fahrenheit and to keep up to date with the forecast.

Met Office Chief Meteorologist, Andy Page, said:

A cold northerly flow will be bringing a drop in temperature to most of the UK for the next few days, particularly when compared with the recent mild weather. Wednesday night will see a sharp

frost across most of the UK, with temperatures dropping below freezing across much of the country.

UKHSA has supplemented the [Cold Weather Plan for England](#) with [useful resources and advice](#) on the concurrent risks of cold weather and coronavirus (COVID-19) and [Keep Warm Keep Well](#) guidance.

For people struggling to afford heating bills, [Simple Energy Advice](#) provides free advice on energy efficiency and national grants that are available to help keep you warm this winter.

If people can't heat all the rooms they use, it's important to heat the living room during the day and the bedroom just before going to sleep. Wearing a few thin layers is better at trapping heat than wearing one thick layer. Having plenty of hot food and drinks is also effective for keeping warm.

Previous updates were published by [Public Health England](#).

3 January 2022

UKHSA issues cold weather alert for northern regions

With a risk of severe cold weather, icy conditions and heavy snow across parts of the country, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is encouraging people to stay warm and look out for those most at risk from the effects of cold weather.

The Met Office is warning that the North East of England, North West of England and Yorkshire and Humber regions will experience cold weather from midnight on Tuesday 4 January to midday on Thursday 6 January.

Agostinho Sousa, a Consultant in Public Health Medicine at UKHSA, said:

Cold weather can have a serious impact on health, particularly for older people and those with heart and lung problems, as it increases the risks of heart attacks, strokes and chest infections.

It's important to check on those who are more vulnerable to cold weather, including older neighbours or relatives – especially those living alone or those who have serious illness.

Remind them to heat their home to at least 18 Celsius, 64.4 Fahrenheit and to keep up to date with the forecast.

Met Office Chief Meteorologist Neil Armstrong said:

Following an exceptionally mild spell, temperatures are set to drop for many in the north of England from late on Monday and into Tuesday. This drop in temperatures will spread further south later

on Tuesday.

This change is being brought on by a cold northerly flow, which brings with it the risk of some wintry showers in places in northern England, especially over high ground. Minimum temperatures over the next few days are expected to drop below freezing, heightening the risk of some ice formation.

UKHSA has supplemented the [Cold Weather Plan for England](#) with [useful resources and advice on the concurrent risks of cold weather and COVID-19](#) and [Keep Warm Keep Well](#) guidance.

For people struggling to afford heating bills, [Simple Energy Advice](#) provides free advice on energy efficiency and national grants that are available to help keep you warm this winter.

If people can't heat all the rooms they use, it's important to heat the living room during the day and the bedroom just before going to sleep. Wearing a few thin layers is better at trapping heat than wearing one thick layer. Having plenty of hot food and drinks is also effective for keeping warm.

Previous updates were published by [Public Health England](#).

24 December 2021

UKHSA issues cold weather alert

With cold weather forecast across parts of the country over the coming days, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is encouraging people to stay warm and look out for those most at risk from the effects of cold weather.

The Met Office is warning that the North East of England, North West of England, Yorkshire and the Humber, and East Midlands regions will experience cold weather from midday on Saturday 25 December until midday on Tuesday 28 December.

Agostinho Sousa, a consultant in Public Health Medicine at UKHSA, said:

It's important to check on those who are more vulnerable to cold weather, including older neighbours or relatives – especially those living alone or those who have serious illness.

Remind them to heat their home to at least 18 Celsius, 64.4 Fahrenheit. It's also helpful to check they have enough food and drinks and any medicines they need.

Met Office Chief Meteorologist, Frank Saunders, said:

A cold air mass across the north of the UK will mean temperatures

could fall as low as -2 in areas of north and east England.

As a weather front moves up from the south west we could see snow falling on its leading edge as it meets this cold air, bringing snow and ice risks particularly to higher ground in the north of England. This will be coupled with some gusty winds which means it will feel even colder for many.

To check the latest weather forecast updates visit the [Met Office website](#) or [app](#).

UKHSA has supplemented the [Cold Weather Plan for England](#) with [useful resources and advice on the concurrent risks of cold weather and COVID-19](#) and [Keep Warm Keep Well](#) guidance.

For people struggling to afford heating bills, [Simple Energy Advice](#) provides free advice on energy efficiency and national grants that are available to help keep you warm this winter.

If people can't heat all the rooms they use, it's important to heat the living room during the day and the bedroom just before going to sleep.

Wearing a few thin layers is better at trapping heat than wearing one thick layer. Having plenty of hot food and drinks is also effective for keeping warm.

20 December 2021

Cold weather alert extended to cover 6 regions of England.

With cold weather becoming established across several regions of the country through the first part of the week, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is encouraging people to look out for those most at risk.

The Met Office is warning that the North East of England, North West of England, Yorkshire and the Humber, West Midlands, East Midlands and East of England regions will likely experience cold weather from today until midday Thursday 23 December.

Agostinho Sousa, a Consultant in Public Health Medicine at UKHSA, said:

Cold weather can have a serious impact, particularly for older people and those with heart and lung problems, as it increases the risks of heart attacks, strokes and chest infections.

It's really important to keep checking on older neighbours or relatives, especially those living alone or those who have serious illness. Remind them to heat their home to at least 18 Celsius, 64.4 Fahrenheit. It's also helpful to check they have enough food and drinks and any medicines they need.

Met Office Chief Forecaster, Dan Suri, said:

Cold and mostly dry conditions with overnight frosts will persist through the early part of this week with high pressure nearby. Milder but more unsettled conditions will then spread across England and Wales during the mid-week period, potentially preceded by some hill snow over northern England.

To check the latest weather forecast updates visit the [Met Office website](#) or [app](#).

UKHSA has supplemented the [Cold Weather Plan for England](#) with [useful resources and advice on the concurrent risks of cold weather and COVID-19](#) and [Keep Warm Keep Well](#) guidance.

For people struggling to afford heating bills, [Simple Energy Advice](#) provides free advice on energy efficiency and national grants that are available to help keep you warm this winter.

If people can't heat all the rooms they use, it's important to heat the living room during the day and the bedroom just before going to sleep. Wearing a few thin layers is better at trapping heat than wearing one thick layer. Having plenty of hot food and drinks is also effective for keeping warm.

17 December 2021

UKHSA issues cold weather alert for northern regions

With cold weather forecast across parts of the country over the coming days, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is encouraging people to stay warm and look out for those most at risk from the effects of cold weather.

The Met Office is warning that the North East of England, North West of England and Yorkshire and the Humber regions will experience cold weather from 9am on Sunday 19 December to 12pm on Friday 24 December.

Agostinho Sousa, Consultant in Public Health Medicine at UKHSA, said:

It is important to try to heat your home to at least 18 Celsius, 64.4 Fahrenheit, particularly if you have reduced mobility, are 65 and over, or have a health condition.

Please check on those who are more vulnerable to cold weather such as elderly or frail friends and family, especially if they live alone or with a serious illness. This can make all the difference.

Met Office Expert Operational Meteorologist Dan Rudman said:

As we head into next week, we will see a fall in temperatures as colder, clearer air moves across much of the UK. Northern areas will feel the cold most keenly, with maximum temperatures likely to sit in the single figures.

Towards the middle and end of the week, there is an increasing chance of more unsettled and windier weather affecting the UK with rain, and perhaps snow, possible for some places.

To check the latest weather forecast updates visit the [Met Office website](#) or [app](#).

UKHSA has supplemented the [Cold Weather Plan for England](#) with [useful resources and advice on the concurrent risks of cold weather and COVID-19](#) and [Keep Warm Keep Well](#) guidance.

For people struggling to afford heating bills, [Simple Energy Advice](#) provides free advice on energy efficiency and national grants that are available to help keep you warm this winter.

If people can't heat all the rooms they use, it's important to heat the living room during the day and the bedroom just before going to sleep. Wearing a few thin layers is better at trapping heat than wearing one thick layer. Having plenty of hot food and drinks is also effective for keeping warm.

Previous updates were published by [Public Health England](#).

30 November 2021

UKHSA issues cold weather alert for North, East and Midlands

With cold weather forecast across parts of the country over the coming days, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is encouraging people to stay warm and look out for those most at risk from the effects of cold weather.

The Met Office is warning that the North East of England, North West of England, East of England, Yorkshire and the Humber, West Midlands and East Midlands regions will experience cold weather from 9am on Wednesday 1 December to midnight on Friday 3 December.

Agostinho Sousa, a Consultant in Public Health Medicine at UKHSA, said:

As we experience low temperatures this winter it's important to remember to check on those who are more vulnerable to cold weather. A call or socially distanced doorstep visit to look out for old or frail friends and family, especially if they live alone or with a serious illness, can make all the difference.

Remind them to heat their home to at least 18 Celsius, 64.4 Fahrenheit and to wear shoes with a good grip if they need to go

outside.

Met Office Expert Operational Meteorologist Helen Caughey said:

Temperatures are set to drop once again for much of the UK in the coming days, with cooler air being brought down from the north accompanied by some gusty winds.

With winds forecast to be in excess of 40mph in some areas it will feel much colder than temperatures indicate, especially in exposed coastal locations. There is also a chance of some snow, predominantly over high ground, but which may reach lower levels at times, mainly as sleet.

To check the latest weather forecast updates visit the [Met Office website](#) or [app](#).

UKHSA has supplemented the [Cold Weather Plan for England](#) with [useful resources and advice on the concurrent risks of cold weather and COVID-19](#) and [Keep Warm Keep Well](#) guidance.

For people struggling to afford heating bills, [Simple Energy Advice](#) provides free advice on energy efficiency and national grants that are available to help keep you warm this winter.

If people can't heat all the rooms they use, it's important to heat the living room during the day and the bedroom just before going to sleep. Wearing a few thin layers is better at trapping heat than wearing one thick layer. Having plenty of hot food and drinks is also effective for keeping warm.

Previous updates were published by [Public Health England](#).

26 November 2021

With a risk of severe cold weather, icy conditions and heavy snow across parts of the country, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is encouraging people to stay warm and look out for those most at risk from the effects of cold weather.

The Met Office is warning that the North East of England, North West of England, South East of England, East of England, Yorkshire and the Humber, West Midlands and East Midlands regions will experience cold weather from 6pm on Friday 26 November to 3pm on Monday 29 November.

Agostinho Sousa, a Consultant in Public Health Medicine at UKHSA, said:

Cold weather can have a serious impact on health, particularly for older people and those with heart and lung problems, as it

increases the risks of heart attacks, strokes and chest infections.

It's really important to keep checking on older neighbours or relatives, especially those living alone or those who have serious illness.

Make a call, or a socially-distanced doorstep visit if they live close by, to remind them to heat their home to at least 18 Celsius, 64.4 Fahrenheit and to keep up to date with the forecast. It's also helpful to check they have enough food and drinks and any medicines they need.

Will Lang, Head of Civil Contingencies at the Met Office, said:

The UK will see temperatures drop to below average in the coming days, as cold air is drawn in from the north. This is coupled with the strong winds associated with Storm Arwen, which means it will feel especially cold in the wind.

Areas in the north will see temperatures below freezing overnight, with daytime maximum temperatures only getting into the low single figures. It's important to note that strong wind speeds, in excess of 65mph in exposed locations, will exacerbate the cold temperatures we'll be seeing over the weekend.

To check the latest weather forecast updates visit the [Met Office website](#) or [app](#).

UKHSA has supplemented the [Cold Weather Plan for England](#) with [useful resources and advice on the concurrent risks of cold weather and COVID-19](#) and [Keep Warm Keep Well](#) guidance.

For people struggling to afford heating bills, [Simple Energy Advice](#) provides free advice on energy efficiency and national grants that are available to help keep you warm this winter.

If people can't heat all the rooms they use, it's important to heat the living room during the day and the bedroom just before going to sleep. Wearing a few thin layers is better at trapping heat than wearing one thick layer. Having plenty of hot food and drinks is also effective for keeping warm.

Previous updates were published by [Public Health England](#).

Keyworkers helped on to the housing ladder through flagship government scheme

- Keyworkers in Derbyshire are among the first to get keys to discounted homes through government's First Homes scheme.
- 1,500 First Homes to be built across the country and sold at 30% market discount as contracts awarded to housebuilders.
- £150 million Help to Build scheme prospectus launches to make it easier and more affordable for people to build their own home.
- Both schemes part of government's plan to help first-time buyers, young people and families on to the housing ladder

A nurse and a police officer are among the first people to be helped on to the housing ladder through a new affordable home ownership scheme, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities announced today (26 November 2021).

The keyworkers from Bolsover, Derbyshire, are benefiting from the government's First Homes scheme, which offers homes at a discount of at least 30% of the market price to local first time buyers and keyworkers – helping young people and families stay in the communities where they want to live and work.

In addition, a total of 1,500 First Homes will now be built in over 100 locations across England by March 2023 following successful bidding by housebuilders. This follows plans by Eastleigh Borough Council to deliver 200 First Homes in the borough – the single largest to date.

The scheme is helping the government deliver on its mission to level up communities across the country by increasing the supply of affordable housing and creating jobs.

The government has also today published the [prospectus for Help to Build](#), a £150 million scheme announced in April to make self and custom build housing a realistic and affordable option.

The prospectus outlines how the scheme works, so that those thinking about building their own homes but are held back by affordability, can plan their projects and apply when applications are open.

The self and custom build sector could deliver up to 40,000 new homes a year, providing opportunity for small building firms and creating jobs.

Housing Minister Rt Hon Christopher Pincher MP said:

I am absolutely delighted that the first people to benefit from

First Homes include a nurse and police officer. They have been helped to own a home in the community where they have worked tirelessly during the pandemic to keep people safe.

This scheme is putting local people first and creating opportunities for young people and families to feel the sense of pride that comes with homeownership.

We are determined to help more people on to the housing ladder and are providing significant funding to regenerate derelict land, deliver new homes and create prosperous local communities across the country.

Nurse Laura said:

It feels very surreal now we have moved into our house, it has been a long time coming and something we have worked towards for the past few years.

When the First Homes scheme became available it was too much of a good opportunity to miss, it enabled us to put down a 10% deposit on our house – something we would probably not have been able to do without the scheme.

There are so many advantages with the scheme and it gave us a chance to own a 3-bed detached house and our first home to grow in to.

Police officer Phoebe said:

I've always wanted to own my own home, I secured my dream career at 22 and worked so hard to save up. It's such a nice feeling knowing you have something to call your own, it's my pride and joy.

It's great that through First Homes you can get a discount on a house which you would be saving up years and years for. It's also nice that the scheme prioritises people who are in key working environments – giving something back to keyworkers.

NHS worker Nicky Bembridge said:

I've been looking for a place since probably the end of last year and came across a few of the houses at Keepmoat and enquired about them.

It's just going to be nice to have my own space, that is actually mine, not rented or anything like that. It's just going to be fantastic.

First Homes is currently in its pilot phase with a number of early delivery projects supporting the roll out of the scheme. Sites in Bolsover, Cannock and Newton Aycliffe are among the first to put homes on the market. The government estimated that at least 10,000 First Homes will be delivered across the country each year by 2027/28.

The Help to Build scheme will help people onto the housing ladder through lower deposit mortgages. Lowering the required deposit will free up capital, so people can build the home that they want and need whether it's a commissioned, made to order home or a new design from scratch. The scheme will provide an equity loan on the completed home, similar to the Help to Buy scheme.

Today's prospectus launch follows on from Richard Bacon's review into Self and Custom Build in the summer, which proposed a major scaling up of self-commissioned homes to boost overall housing supply.

First Homes and Help to Build are among a range of flexible home ownership options from the government to help make buying a home more affordable. First-time buyers can visit the government's [Own Your Home website](#) to find out more about routes on to the housing ladder and the range of flexible home ownership options available.

Schemes such as Help to Buy and Shared Ownership have helped over 700,000 households on to the housing ladder since 2010. In April this year, the government launched the 95% mortgage guarantee scheme which helps first-time buyers secure a mortgage with just a 5% deposit.

Peter Denton, Chief Executive Officer of Homes England, said:

Helping people like Laura and Nicky take their first step on the housing ladder is the reason we're here, and we can't wait to see even more key workers and others get the keys to their own front door. Taken together, these two schemes will not only provide thousands of new homes, but will also support smaller builders and improve consumer choice.

Tim Beale, CEO of Keepmoat Homes, said:

We were delighted to support our partners at the DLUHC, Homes England and Bolsover District Council to pilot the First Homes Scheme at our Meadow View Development in Shirebrook. The scheme has proved extremely popular with local first time buyers and key workers who would otherwise be unable to buy their own homes.

It's great to be part of an initiative that helps even more people get a foot on the property ladder and fantastic to see the first customers enjoying their new homes at Meadow View.

Richard Fearon, Chief Executive Officer of Leeds Building Society, said:

First time buyers are the lifeblood of the housing market so we were proud the very first buyers through First Homes chose us as their mortgage lender.

Our purpose as a mutual is to put home ownership within reach of more people so we welcome innovative ideas such as First Homes. It's fantastic to see the scheme already delivering on its objective to enable more people to step onto the property ladder.

Eastleigh Borough Council Leader, Keith House said:

This is fantastic news that the government has again supported our groundbreaking One Horton Heath development. It's really important for Eastleigh Borough Council to be the forefront of any housing initiatives and projects that benefit our residents.

Being part of this new government initiative will help us provide more affordable homes for local first time buyers. The discounted homes will be available to first-time buyers for almost a third off compared with the market price so will really help to provide a route for them to get onto the housing ladder and stay in their local area.