

Winter Resilience: Supporting Older People To Be Winter Ready

2023/24

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Impact of Winter on older people

- Winter can be an extremely challenging time for people in later life.
- A combination of cold weather, seasonal infections and difficulties sustaining activity levels and social connection all substantively increase the risk of an adverse health event leading to a hospital admission.
- Once in hospital, older people living with frailty and/or multiple health conditions are more likely to have longer stays and require additional support on discharge.
- Between 2020 and 2022, there was a 52% increase in the number of (typically older) people staying in hospital for 2 weeks or more, while those aged 65+ account for an estimated 85% of delayed discharges.



Why is Winter particularly hard for older people?

- 1. Living with long term health conditions**
- 2. Lower temperatures**
- 3. Increased risk of falls**
- 4. Loneliness and isolation – impact on physical and mental health (including malnutrition)**
- 5. Respiratory diseases**



Additional challenges this Winter:

1. **Staying warm in an energy crisis,**
2. **Managing finances and the cost of living,**
3. **Potential co-circulation of influenza, Covid-19, and other respiratory viruses,**
4. **Health and care system capacity.**



Impact of Winter on older people

Heading into Winter 2022/23, Age UK's research showed that:

54% of older people (8.8 million) said the cost-of-living increase would affect their health and care needs.

52% of older people (8.5 million) were concerned or very concerned about winter.

20% of older people (3.3 million) were worried that they would not be able to eat enough.

45% of older people (7.4 million) were worried that they would not be able to heat their home.

What older people are telling Age UK

“I cannot be cold as it makes my condition more painful. So if I have to - I will choose heat over food”

“I’m scared I will die this coming winter because of lack of money to survive the cold weather”

“I’ll probably end up in hospital again. I would love to be able to get myself back on my feet again but I’m unable to afford to”

“I dread winter, the dark days make me very depressed, like I’m cut off from everything and everyone”

“Like last year, I’ll go to bed earlier and stay in bed later. Feeling alone and lonely and not worthy!”

How can we support older people this Winter?

The Problem

- Anticipated **surge in hospital admissions over the upcoming winter period**, exacerbated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the anticipated resurgence of flu, Covid-19 and other respiratory viruses.
- **Older people at risk of health problems related to the cold and winter** including poorer mental health, increased risk of respiratory illness, hypertension, heart attacks, stroke, worsening arthritic symptoms and increased risk of falls.

Intervention

- **Crisis Prevention, Crisis Intervention, Sustaining Older People's Health and Well-being**
- Address the main causes of hospital admissions in the 65+ cohort by preventing falls, malnutrition, influenza, excess cold and fuel poverty.
- Ensure older people are supported and educated to ensure they stay warm, keep hydrated and eat well, have a winter-ready and fall-proof home, keep moving, look after their mental health, get vaccinated, access all the financial benefits they are entitled to.

Outcomes

- Older people **stay warm, safe, and well-nourished.**
- Older people are **less likely to experience cold- related illness or have a fall.**
- **Reduced number of hospital admissions/ readmissions and excess winter deaths.**

How can we support older people this Winter?

What Age UK is doing:

Our 2023/24 Winter Health Campaign

- Sending **Winter packs** to all our network including Winter resources (posters, postcards, Winter Wrapped Up Guides),
- Cascading Met Office **Cold Weather Alerts**,
- Using our Age UK Winter Hub, Media, and Social Media to provide **information and advice** to older people,
- Partnering with UKHSA and NHSE to send out **top tip information leaflets** to all those receiving a cold weather payment,
- Supporting our local Age UKs to run a range of **support services** from welfare checks, to befriending calls and visits, emergency heaters, hot meals, and advice on keeping homes warm,
- Supporting Age UK London with **vaccine uptake information sessions** and a vaccine toolkit.



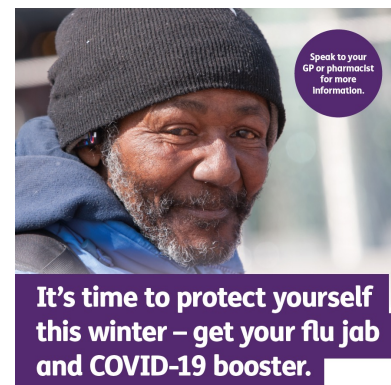
How can we support older people this Winter?

Examples of our Age UK Winter resources:

- 1 Get your free flu jab and COVID-19 autumn booster** if you're 65+ or a carer. Check which other vaccines you may be eligible for, such as the shingles and pneumococcal vaccine.
- 2 If you're worried about your health, get it checked out.** Speak to a health care professional, call 111, or go to a local pharmacy.
- 3 Talk to someone if you're feeling out of sorts or lonely.** Your mental health matters.
- 4 Wrap up and keep your home warm enough.** As we get older, changes to our bodies may mean the cold affects our health more than it used to.
- 5 Get support if you're struggling with your finances.** Visit our website or call our helpline if you need energy advice or you're struggling to pay your bills.
- 6 Keep moving and eat enough this winter.** It's important to stay hydrated too.

For more tips, advice and ways to get support this winter, visit www.ageuk.org.uk/winter or call the Age UK Advice Line free on **0800 169 65 65** (8am-7pm, 365 days a year)

Age UK is a registered charity, number 1128267. ID205107 08/23.



If you're 65+ or a carer, you can get a free flu jab and COVID-19 booster this winter. You should also check which other vaccines you are eligible for.

Find out more at www.ageuk.org.uk/winter or call the Age UK Advice Line free on **0800 169 65 65** (8am-7pm, 365 days a year)

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Speak the warmth this Winter

How can we support older people this Winter?

New Age UK Professional Hub:


- [Information and advice for professionals | Age UK](#)
- Tailored information for professionals on key topics relevant to older people
- Sign up for our monthly professional newsletter
- Visit the Winter section of the Professional's Hub to access all our Winter resources and I&A – which can be signposted to and used to support older people this Winter:
[Winter advice for professionals | Age UK](#)



Thank you

- Please get in touch if you have any questions or require any further information: Sophie.Barrett@ageuk.org.uk



 **We're here to help**

We offer support through our free advice line on 0800 678 1602. Lines are open 8am-7pm, 365 days a year. We also have specialist advisers at over 140 local Age UKs.