

Cold Weather Alert Cascade 2017/18

Protecting health and reducing harm from cold weather

Last updated 19 December 2017

INTRODUCTION

Cold winter weather is associated with a rise in illness and injuries; it increases the risk of heart attacks, strokes, lung illnesses, flu and other diseases and people also slip and fall in the snow and ice, sometimes suffering serious injuries. Older people, young children and people with certain underlying medical conditions are particularly vulnerable to the effects of cold weather.

The Cold Weather Plan for England (Public Health England) is a framework intended to protect the population from harm to health from cold weather. It aims to prevent the major avoidable effects on health during periods of cold weather by alerting people to the negative health effects of cold weather, and enabling them to prepare and respond appropriately.

The Plan recommends a series of steps to reduce the risks to health from cold weather and describes the actions to be taken by all health and social care agencies to prepare for and respond to winter so as to protect the vulnerable in the event that cold temperatures and/or widespread ice and heavy snow occur.

This document supports the London Borough of Southwark in its responsibilities detailed in the Cold Weather Plan around cold weather alerts and actions, and works alongside the CCG's alert systems. It clarifies arrangements around:

- The alert cascade for cold weather alerts, and
- Actions to be taken at each level

Further information on responsibilities, the effect of cold on health and detailed actions by level of cold weather alert are available in the Cold Weather Plan for England:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cold-weather-plan-cwp-for-england>

COLD WEATHER ALERT LEVELS

Level 0	Long term Planning <i>All year</i>
Level 1	Winter preparedness and action programme <i>1 November – 31 March</i>
Level 2	Severe winter weather is forecast – Alert and readiness <i>Mean temperature of 2^oC and/or widespread ice and heavy snow are predicted within 48 hours, with 60% confidence</i>
Level 3	Response to severe winter weather – Severe weather action <i>Severe winter weather is now occurring: mean temperature of 2^oC or less and/or widespread ice and heavy snow</i>
Level 4	Major incident – Emergency response <i>Central government will declare a level 4 alert in the event of severe or prolonged cold weather affecting sectors other than health</i>

CASCADE ALERT

Met Office Alerts are directly received within the Public Health Department and Emergency Planning team during office hours, and they will be forwarded to key local leads for onward cascade, according to the Southwark cascade flowchart below.

These key local leads are responsible for ensuring the relevant information goes to all relevant frontline teams and commissioned services in their areas, that their responsibilities are understood and that actions are being undertaken as outlined in the guidance.

The actions to be taken at each cold weather alert level and by each staff group are clearly laid out in the Cold Weather Plan (see link above). There are specific actions for:

1. Provider organisations: health and social care (community services, hospitals, care homes and prisons)
2. Frontline health and social care staff working with people at risk
3. Commissioners of health and social care and local authorities
4. Individuals, local communities and voluntary groups

Action cards for each group have been developed alongside this cascade plan for easier reference to the actions that should be taken at each alert level.

VULNERABLE GROUPS

Groups at greater risk of harm from cold weather include:

- Older people (in particular those over 75 years old, otherwise frail, and or socially isolated)
- People with pre-existing chronic medical conditions such as heart disease, stroke or TIA, asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or diabetes
- People with mental ill-health that reduces individual's ability to self-care (including dementia)
- Pregnant women (in view of potential impact of cold on foetus)
- Children under the age of five
- People with learning difficulties
- People assessed as being at risk of, or having had, recurrent falls
- People who are housebound or otherwise low mobility
- People living in deprived circumstances
- People living in houses with mould
- People who are fuel poor
- Homeless or people sleeping rough
- Other marginalised or socially isolated individuals or groups

KEY PUBLIC HEALTH MESSAGES

The Cold Weather Plan outlines some key public health messages:

Free flu vaccinations are available for those who are at risk:

- Contact your GP or pharmacist if you think you, or someone you care for, might qualify for a free flu jab. For a list of who is eligible see the annual flu plan, available at: www.gov.uk/government/collections/annual-flu-programme
- A list of pharmacies in London that can provide the flu vaccination can be found at the London Flu website: www.londonflu.co.uk/

Keep your home warm - efficiently and safely:

- Heating your home to at least 18⁰C in winter (see The Cold Weather Plan for full advice)
- Getting your heating system and cooking appliances checked and keep your home well ventilated

- Use your electric blanket as instructed and get it tested every three years. Never use a hot water bottle with an electric blanket.
- Do not use 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.
- Make 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, make sure they are insulated too
- Insulate your hot water cylinder and pipes
- Draw your curtains at dusk to help keep heat generated inside your rooms
- Make sure your radiators are not obstructed by furniture or curtains

Look after yourself:

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

Look after others:

- Check on older neighbours or relatives, especially those living alone or who have serious illnesses to make sure they are safe, warm and well

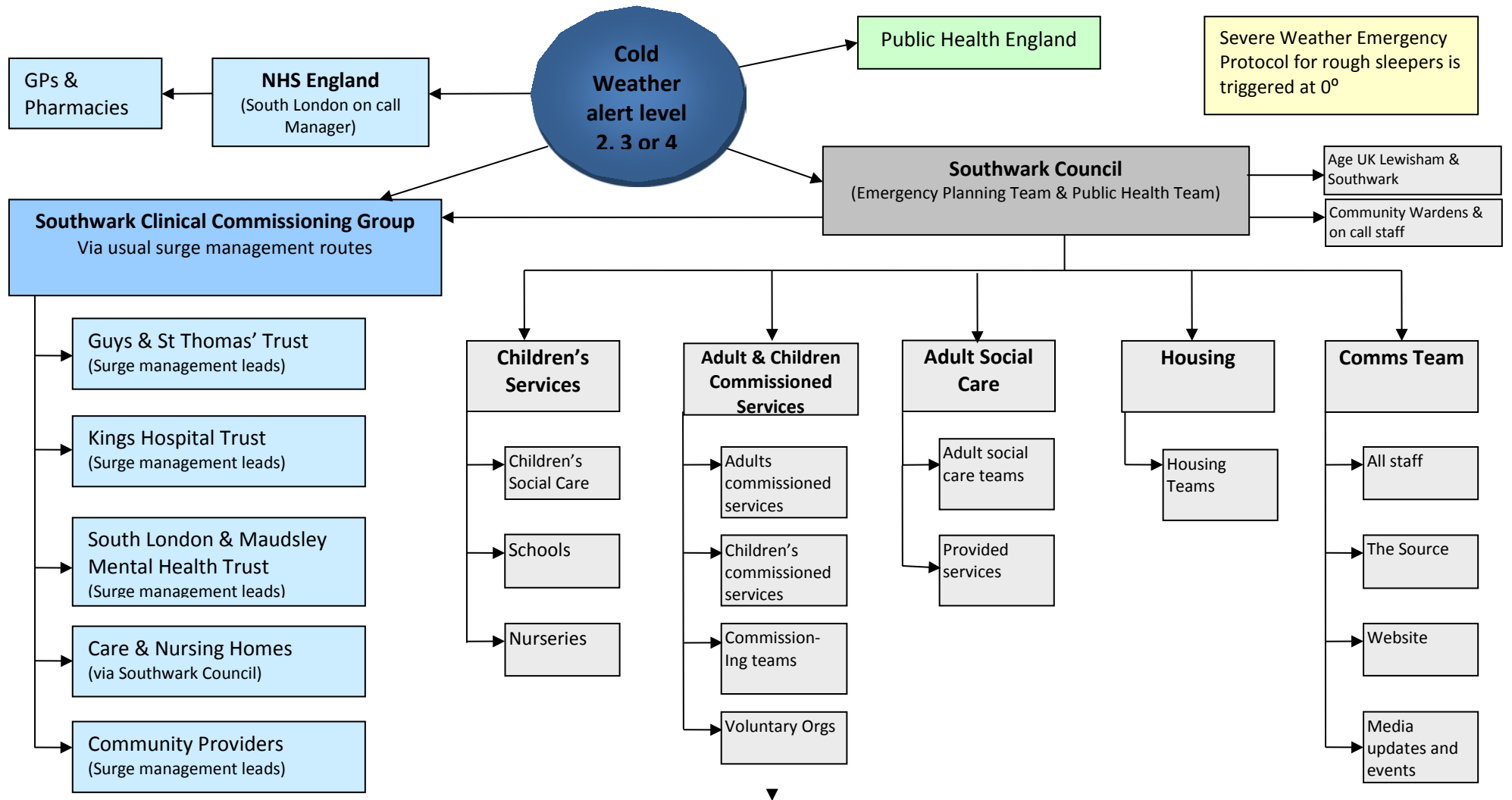
Get financial support:

- There are grants, benefits and sources of advice to make your home more energy efficient, improve your heating or help with bills. It's worthwhile claiming all the benefits you are entitled to before winter sets in

Southwark Cold Weather Alert Cascade 2016/17

The alert cascade will be initiated in Southwark if the Met Office declares Levels 2, 3 or 4, and a full contact list of key local leads can be found below.

Key local leads should ensure the relevant information goes to frontline teams and commissioned services, that their responsibilities are understood and that actions are undertaken at each alert level as outlined in the guidance.



Key Local Leads Contact List

Cascade Group	Lead Name	Position or Department	Will Cascade to	Email
Public Health	Sarah Robinson	Public Health Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All email addresses on this list for onward cascade 	Sarah.robinson@southwark.gov.uk phadmin@southwark.gov.uk
Emergency Planning Team	Barry Hall	Emergency Planning Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Wardens on call staff 	barry.hall@southwark.gov.uk emergency.planning@southwark.gov.uk Andy.Snazell@southwark.gov.uk
Rough sleepers	Natty St Louis	Rough Sleeper Street Population Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outreach teams 	Natty.StLouis@southwark.gov.uk
Children's Services	Jackie Cook	Children's Social Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children Social Care Teams 	Jackie.cook@southwark.gov.uk
	Nina Dohel Daphne Macarthy	Head of Standards 0 - 19 0-19 Standards Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools 	Wendy.Heller@southwark.gov.uk daphne.macarthy@southwark.gov.uk
	Wendy Heller	Early Help Central Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nurseries & early years provisions 	nina.dohel@southwark.gov.uk
Adult Social Care	Simon Rayner Pauline O'Hare Kerry Florish Chloe Wellings		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adult social care teams Adult provider services team 	Pauline.OHare@southwark.gov.uk Simon.Rayner@southwark.gov.uk Kerry.Florish@southwark.gov.uk Chloe.Wellings@southwark.gov.uk
Adult's and Children's Commissioned Social Care Services	Dimitra Nikoloudaki Lesley Osei	Quality and Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Care & N Homes (not Queens Oak) Adult Day Centres Vol Orgs (those this team contracts with) C & A commissioning & brokerage teams Supported living and residential Children's fostering and semi-independent services 	Dimitra.Nikoloudaki@southwark.gov.uk Lesley.Osei@southwark.gov.uk backup - LTCadmin@southwark.gov.uk
Housing	Sandra Pass	Southwark Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing Teams 	Sandra.Pass@southwark.gov.uk Sheryl.charles@southwark.gov.uk
	Sheryl Charles	Private Sector Housing		
Communications	Wendy Foreman	Head of Campaigns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff Events management Intranet/website/Source 	Wendy.foreman@southwark.gov.uk Louise.neilan@southwark.gov.uk Kim.hooper@southwark.gov.uk Louise.Timms2@southwark.gov.uk
	Louise Neilan	Media Manager		
	Louise Timms	Snr Campaigns Officer		
	Kim Hooper	Snr Media Officer		
Environment Protection	Sarah Newman	Environment Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teams 	Sarah.newman2@southwark.gov.uk
Southwark CCG	Sheetal Mukkamala Catherine Worsfold SEL Surge Hub	CCG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CCG contracted services CCG staff 	sheetal.mukkamala@nhs.net catherine.worsfold@nhs.net selsurgehub@nhs.net
Age UK Lewisham & Southwark	Susan Underhill		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For information 	susan.underhill@ageuklands.org.uk