

Leeds Public Health Winter Messages

November 2022



Introduction:

This short report is based on a presentation to Enhance delivery partners from Hannah McGurk, Advanced Health Improvement Specialist (Older People) in the Adults and Health Directorate at Leeds City Council.

Context

Last winter there were an estimated 63,000 excess winter deaths in England and Wales, 6 times higher than the previous year. Excess winter deaths are the observed total number of deaths between December and March compared with the average of deaths over the rest of the year. Even with climate change, cold-related deaths will continue to represent the biggest weather-related cause of death.

Hannah's presentation contained key winter messages to share with older people. It also contained links to a variety of websites which offer help, support and information. Here is a summary:

Sources of up-to-date information

Leeds City Council has created two web pages to collate all the information about Cost of Living and Winter Wellbeing support.

www.leeds.gov.uk/campaign/cost-of-living

www.leeds.gov.uk/campaign/winter-wellbeing

Key messages

Keep warm - the inside of your home should be between 18 and 21 degrees and the [Together Leeds](#) website has information to help people on low incomes. It includes lists of [Warm Spaces](#) where people can gather for free in a warm, safe, welcoming place. There is also a [Leeds Winter Coat Appeal](#) to collect and redistribute good quality coats to people who need them. The [Leeds Money Information Centre](#) has printed leaflets and services available. [Care and Repair Leeds](#) provides heating and energy efficiency support, including fitting carbon monoxide detectors, for people who are eligible.

Have hot food, drinks and snacks - alternative methods of cooking such as slow cookers, air fryers and microwaves can be more energy efficient and help reduce costs. For people in need of food support, the [Leeds Food Aid Network](#) map shows different food providers across the city.

Be prepared! - by knowing there is a cold snap on the way, we can get the essentials ready both for ourselves, in our own homes, or for others who may struggle. You can register to receive email alerts from the [MET office](#). The [UK Health Security Agency Cold Weather Plan](#) has action cards for the voluntary and community sector detailing the actions to take at each cold weather alert level.

Get your winter vaccines (Flu and COVID-19 seasonal booster) - for people over 50, getting a COVID-19 booster and flu vaccine is one of the most important things you can do to protect your health. You can have both flu and COVID vaccines together. There's more information about the winter booster programme and why it's so important for older people to be vaccinated on the [national Age UK website](#). You can also book a COVID booster at www.nhs.uk/get-vaccine or at [local walk-in clinics](#). For more information, including eligibility, visit www.nhs.uk/wintervaccinations.

Keep yourself and others safe - by washing your hands often, social distancing and choosing to continue to wear a face covering in crowded spaces.

