STAY SAFE
WARM AND WELL
THIS WINTER

Part of the Healthy Homes initiative
STAY SAFE AND WARM

Although the cold can be fun for some, it can make many people feel ‘under the weather’.

Low temperatures and the shorter winter days can affect how we feel as well as our general health from time-to-time. Unfortunately, they can easily lead to severe illness or even death.

If you or someone you know is struggling to keep safe and warm, there are lots of practical things you can do, as well as sources of help and advice, to make sure things stay safe and comfortable.

KEEP YOUR HOME WARM

Getting cold can really affect your health.

During the daytime, heating your home to at least 18°C (65F) in winter poses minimal risk to your health when you are wearing suitable clothing.

Keeping your bedroom at 18°C (65F) overnight may be beneficial to protect your health as long as you use sufficient bedding, clothing and thermal blankets, or heating aids as appropriate.
MANAGING YOUR ENERGY BILLS

Make sure you are paying the right price for your gas and electricity!

The cost of gas, electricity and heating oil has a major impact on some people’s ability to keep their homes warm - but help is available!

A Social Tariff is the cheapest rate and is available to people on certain benefits. People who may be struggling should also ask their supplier about what other help is available.

Changing your method of payment can also reduce your payments, the cheapest tariffs are usually direct debit or online. A family member or friend can set up and monitor this for you if you do not use the internet.

The organisations mentioned on the back of this booklet offer information and practical help in lots of ways, including, insulation, winter fuel payments, fuel poverty, fuel debt, welfare benefits and cold weather payments.

TOP TIPS FOR STAYING WARM

* Close your curtains as soon as it starts going dark outside to stop heat escaping through the windows.

* Check for draughts around windows and doors and make sure any gaps are filled.

* Dress for the weather - wear several thin layers of clothing and wrap up warmly before you go out. Clothes made from cotton, wool or fleecy materials are particularly good at keeping you warm. Try to stay indoors when it’s really cold outside.

* Keep your heating on low to maintain safe temperature.

* Get your heating system checked and serviced every year to make sure it’s working safely and efficiently.
STAY SAFE

Regular contact with family, friends and neighbours helps everyone stay safe.

Be on the lookout for signs that something might be wrong, including:
- Milk still out on the doorstep late in the day
- Newspapers and post stuck in the letterbox
- Curtains drawn during the day
- Lights on during the day
- A home in darkness when there should be someone at home
- A dog barking all day or the cat scratching to be let in
- Bins not put out on collection days

A quick door knock to see if your neighbour is ok can make the difference between life and death.

Make sure you have a working smoke alarm.

CARBON MONOXIDE

Carbon Monoxide is a very dangerous, odourless and tasteless gas. Accidental exposure is often due to faulty appliances, such as boilers, heaters and cookers or a blocked flue.

It is important to have all gas appliances checked at least once a year by a Gas Safe Registered Engineer.

If you have any of the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning - including, headaches, drowsiness, dizziness, chest pains, nausea and vomiting - seek medical help immediately.

HOT WATER BOTTLES AND ELECTRIC BLANKETS

Hot water bottles and electric blankets can be a great way of staying warm in bed, but they must never be used at the same time - water and electricity don’t mix!

Take extreme care when filling hot water bottles.

Around 5000 fires are caused every year by faulty electric blankets. It is therefore very important to check them regularly and replace them as required.

Keeping your home in good repair and clutter free can also help you stay safe.
Healthier people are the less likely to be affected by the cold weather, so it is important to take extra care of yourself.

**BE PREPARED - GET A FLU JAB**

If you’re over 65 or have certain health conditions, including asthma, diabetes, stroke, problems with your immune system, or heart, lung, kidney or liver disease, please speak to your doctor about a flu jab. **Prevention is better than cure!**

**EAT WELL**

Regular hot meals will help to keep your energy levels up and hot drinks throughout the day will help you stay warm. **Remember to keep a good supply of foods in store for when it’s too cold to go out to the shops.**

**STAY ACTIVE**

There’s lots going on in most communities, including, coffee mornings, lunch clubs, library activities and church services and events. You’re sure to get a warm welcome, so give them a try!

Physical activities like taking a walk or even doing your household chores can improve your mood and help you to stay warm.

If you can’t get out of the house don’t sit for long periods - try to get up and walk around the room at least once every hour. If you’re unable to get around try some chair based exercises if you can.
There is lots of help available to help you stay safe and warm this winter.*
Contact the organisations below to see how they can help.

**Age UK Wirral - Advice 4 All**
Tel: 0300 3300 111 (local rate)
Provides advice on housing, benefits, transport, health, care at home, education and local services for over 50’s.

**Energy Projects Plus**
Tel: 0800 043 0151
Provide advice on switching energy supplier, managing fuel bills and debt, grants towards home insulation and heating systems.

**Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service**
Tel: 0800 731 5958
Offers free fire safety advice, raises awareness around fire prevention including the importance of having working smoke alarms fitted and supports those in need who have been affected by fire or other emergencies.

**Livewell**
Tel: 0151 630 8383
Offer a wide range of services and advice to keep people healthy and independent including flu jabs and advice on exercise, diet and how to stop smoking.

**POPIN**
Tel: 0151 666 4659
Advisors visit people over 65 in their own homes to help them maintain their independence, promote health and wellbeing, and reduce the need for domestic support or residential care.

**Wirral Well**
Tel: 0151 638 9179 / www.wirralwell.org
An online one stop shop information hub for wellbeing, health and social care services.

**Wirral Council Adaptations Team**
Tel: 0151 691 8090
Provide advice and support on a range of services to older and disabled people and their families to help people live independently at home, including Disabled Facilities Grants.

**Wirral Healthy Homes**
Tel: 0151 691 8114
A joint project with Wirral Council and Wirral Community NHS Trust providing a free home safety check for people concerned about the condition of their property as well as a free mini health "MOT".

**Streetscene**
For any general Streetscene issues please contact 0151 606 2004.
If you are unsure which organisation to contact call **0151 691 8114** or Email: staywarm@ wirral.gov.uk
You can also get a copy of this document in other formats such as large print, Braille, audio or in a different language by contacting: **0151 691 2020**.

* Assistance is subject to meeting certain criteria and the availability of funding.