



2 March 2018

Dear colleague,

**Re: Severe cold weather across the UK –update and public health advice for your constituents**

As you know, many parts of England are facing the coldest weather they have had this winter. Over the coming days, a further episode of severe weather is expected with temperatures remaining below freezing in many places and more persistent snow expected to move northwards across southern England and Wales. This snow will be accompanied by strong winds and could be followed by a spell of freezing rain with additional ice hazards.

From a health perspective cold temperatures, indoors and outdoors, directly increase the risk of heart attacks, strokes, lung disease, flu, falls and injuries and hypothermia. Some groups, such as older people, very young children, and people with existing medical conditions such as heart and lung diseases are particularly vulnerable to the effects of cold weather.

The Government's [Cold Weather Plan](#) exists for the health and social care sector in England to raise both public and professional awareness of the health impacts of cold weather and the actions that can be taken to protect health. As part of that Plan, an alert has been issued by the Met Office and Public Health England to all regions of England.

The steps Public Health England recommends everyone can take to protect their health, and those of neighbours and relatives include:

- **Preparedness:** Ensuring a sufficient supply of essential medications and other necessary consumables for the coming days



- **Keeping warm and well** by keeping homes heated to at least 18C, keeping the warmth in by closing curtains at dusk and having plenty of hot food and drinks.
- **Looking after others** by checking on vulnerable neighbours or relatives, especially those living alone or who have serious illnesses.

The leaflet “[Keep Warm Keep Well](#)” gives advice on staying well in cold weather, covering issues such as financial help, healthy lifestyle, flu jabs and heating. This work is coordinated by Public Health England working with all Devolved Administration’s public health services. I would encourage you to draw the attention of your constituents to this resource.

I would also encourage you to use any social media accounts or other opportunities you have to highlight this public health advice to your constituents.

**STEVE BRINE**