

Age NI is the new charity combining

AGE and **HELP THE AGED WE WILL**
Concern



Winter wrapped up

.....
A guide to keeping well, warm and in touch for older people
.....



**SPREAD
THE
WARMTH**

Insulation for the nation

FREE loft and cavity wall insulation* or a grant of up to £300! See if you qualify and get top tips on how to save energy and money.

Visit www.powerni.co.uk today
or call freephone **0800 0321 894**
(Lines open Mon to Fri 9am - 5pm).

*Criteria apply. Subject to availability.



power ni

The new name for **NIE** Energy

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Introduction

Winter isn't everyone's favourite season and there's no doubt that the cold weather can be a worry for those in later life. However, with a little preparation, and by following some simple suggestions, it is possible to stay healthy, safe and as comfortable as possible this winter. This booklet explains what you can do to get yourself and your home ready for winter, as well as where to go for further information and support if you do encounter problems or are in need of emergency support.

Here are five of the most important things you can do to stay warm and well this winter:

1. **Heat your home well.** By setting your heating to the right temperature (18–21°C or 64–70°F), you can keep your home warm and your bills as low as possible.
2. **Get financial support.** There are grants, benefits and sources of advice available to make your home more energy efficient, improve your heating or help with bills. It is worthwhile checking that you are claiming all the benefits you are entitled to.
3. **Eat well.** Food is a vital source of energy, which helps to keep your body warm. Try to make sure that you have hot meals and drinks regularly throughout the day.
4. **Get a flu jab.** You can get a free jab from your GP to protect against seasonal flu if you are over 65.
5. **Look after yourself and others.** On extremely cold days try to avoid going outside. If you do need to, remember to wrap up warm.

The logo consists of the words "SPREAD THE WARMTH" in a bold, white, sans-serif font, stacked vertically within a solid orange square.

Preparing for winter

Getting ready for the cold weather means you are more likely to keep warm and well this winter. Here's a list of things you can do to help ward off the winter chills:

Home

- Have your heating system serviced and chimney swept
- If you have wood-burning, coal or gas heaters, make sure you have adequate ventilation
- Check with Power NI to find out if you qualify for free insulation
- Check your water stopcock is working properly
- Have your electric blanket serviced – this should be done at least every three years
- Make sure your smoke alarm and carbon monoxide alarm are working.

Health

- Be sure you have some warm shoes or boots with non-slip soles
- Keep a mixture of salt and sand handy to put on steps or paths in icy weather
- Keep simple cold, flu and sore throat remedies in the house. Your pharmacist can make suggestions and can also advise on how to manage minor illnesses
- Follow up your GP's invitation to have a flu jab
- Order repeat prescriptions in

plenty of time, particularly if bad weather is forecast

- Keep basic food items in the cupboard or freezer in case it's too cold to go shopping
- If you smoke, think about trying to stop.

Income

- Make sure you claim all the financial support to which you are entitled
- Contact the Age NI Advice Service for a free Benefits Check on **0808 808 7575**
- If you have not been eligible for the Winter Fuel Payment before, contact the Winter Fuel Payment Helpline on **0845 9 15 15 15** for more information
- For up-to-date information on fuel payment methods and fuel stamps, visit **www.rights4seniors.net**
- Check if you are entitled to help for home energy improvements from the Warm Homes Scheme. Visit **www.warm-homes.com** or call free **0800 988 0559**.

‘If it had not been for the help and support I received I don’t know what would have happened.’



Joyce’s story

Joyce* lived alone and was struggling to heat her home and she could not afford her rent. She also suffered from rheumatoid arthritis and angina.

‘I had no oil and no heat for well over a month and I had been spending all day in bed to try and keep warm. I was living in private rented accommodation because six months previously my landlord had put my home on the market and I was given four weeks to leave. I didn’t know that I could have applied to the Housing Executive as homeless at that time and so, in a panic, I found accommodation at a price I couldn’t afford.

‘I contacted Age NI and received so much help and support from their Advice and Advocacy service. Firstly they contacted a local

charity who arranged for emergency heating oil to be delivered to my home. The advisor then worked tirelessly on my behalf with the Housing Executive and I was finally accepted as homeless and in priority need. I was allocated a pensioner bungalow and Age NI helped me apply for a Community Care Grant. I was awarded a grant to help me buy essential items of furniture, bedding and kitchen utensils. A few months later, I rang the advisor back to say thank you and to let them know that I had settled in well to my new home.

‘If it had not been for the help and support I received I don’t know what would have happened. Age NI made a real difference to my life. Their support I received came at just the right time’.

** name changed to protect identity.*



Staying healthy

Cold weather means the beginning of the flu season and can cause particular difficulties if you have breathing and circulation problems. To help you stay well, it's important to keep warm at home and outdoors, follow as healthy a lifestyle as you can and have a flu jab.

Keep moving

Keeping active generates heat and helps to keep you warm. It's good for general fitness and wellbeing too. So when you're indoors, try not to sit still for more than an hour. Get up and walk around, make yourself a warm drink, and spread any chores throughout the day. Chair-based exercises and simply moving your arms and legs and wiggling your toes are helpful if walking is difficult.

Eat well

Hot meals and drinks help keep you warm, so eat at least one hot meal and have hot drinks during the day. Include a good range of foods in your diet and aim for five portions of fruit and vegetables each day so that you're getting plenty of nutrients and vitamins. Remember that frozen vegetables are as good as fresh.

Have a seasonal flu jab

If you're over 65 be sure to have a seasonal flu jab. Seasonal flu viruses are always changing, so you need to have a jab every year, using the latest vaccine.

Check you've had the 'pneumo' jab

The 'pneumo' (or pneumococcal) jab is a one off jab that helps protect you against pneumonia, meningitis and septicaemia.

Give up smoking

This is a good thing for your overall health. If you have a lung condition, you'll quickly notice your breathing is easier and doing any exercise is more comfortable. Ask at your GP practice about NHS services to help you give up.

Protect yourself against chilblains

Chilblains are itchy, red swellings that occur when your skin gets cold and you try to warm up too quickly, often by sitting close to the radiator. Your feet, fingers, nose and earlobes are particularly vulnerable. You may also be susceptible to chilblains if you have circulation problems. Dab the swellings with calamine or witch hazel to reduce itching, but don't scratch them as this could cause an infection. To help prevent chilblains, keep your whole body warm at all times – there are helpful tips on the pages that follow. Wear trousers, socks or thick tights and a scarf, hat and gloves when out in the cold. Speak to your pharmacist for advice on treating chilblains and to your GP if you get them regularly or have diabetes.

Keep your spirits up

It's not unusual to feel a bit down in winter – particularly when the days are short and it gets dark by 4pm. Try to keep to your usual routines and, if you can't visit friends, make sure you phone them regularly for a chat. It helps to do something you enjoy every day. If you feel down for several weeks and it's stopping you going out, making you feel listless and lacking in energy, it's very important to share these feelings with someone, perhaps a friend or your GP.

Flu is more serious than you think.



The Public Health Agency, (PHA), is urging anyone aged 65 or over, even if they feel fit and healthy at the moment to get the flu jab early in order to reduce the risk of catching flu.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Does the vaccine have side effects?

Flu vaccinations are very safe. You may get some soreness where the vaccine was injected. Less often, people get a slight temperature and aching muscles for a couple of days after being vaccinated. Other reactions are very rare. The flu vaccine cannot give you the flu.

How does the vaccine work?

About a week to 10 days after you get the flu vaccine, your body makes antibodies to it. These antibodies help to protect you against any similar viruses you then come into contact with.

When is the best time to be vaccinated for flu?

It is important that you get your flu vaccination in October or early November to be ready to fight off infection. The earlier you get the vaccine, the sooner you will develop protection. You need to get a new dose of the vaccine before each winter, as protection doesn't last from one year to the next.

How do I get the vaccine?

Simply contact your GP surgery and the receptionist will be able to tell you the arrangements for flu vaccination in your practice. For more information about the flu vaccine talk to your GP, practice nurse, district nurse or pharmacist, or visit:

www.fluawareni.info

www.publichealth.hscni.net

www.nidirect.gov.uk



'I get extra money and I feel on top of things again.'

'My neighbour suggested I ring Age NI because I wasn't coping very well. I now get Attendance Allowance and help with my rates, and I have a home help who comes in once a week. I am not dreading winter this year.'

Call Age NI Advice Service on freephone **0808 808 7575** for a free benefits check or visit www.age ni.org for more information.



Keep warm indoors and out

Several thin layers of clothing will keep you warmer than one thick layer, as the layers trap warm air. If you are sitting down, a shawl or blanket will provide a lot of warmth. Use a hot-water bottle or an electric blanket to warm the bed, but never use the two together. Check whether your electric blanket can be kept on all night or whether it is only designed to warm the bed before you get in and make sure you get it checked every three years.

Keeping your home warm

Most of us spend a lot of time indoors in winter, so it's important that you are comfortable and safe. Get to know how the timer and thermostat on your heating system work. If it's very cold, set the timer to switch the heating on earlier rather than turning the thermostat up to warm your house quickly. Close the curtains and fit thermal linings if you can.

Save energy wherever you can!

Switch off appliances rather than leaving them on standby, replace normal light bulbs with energy efficiency bulbs which use one fifth of the electricity, and only boil as much water as you need in the kettle.

Heating your home

Heating your home is easier and cheaper if it is well insulated and your central heating works properly. Have your heating system serviced each year and check that it's working before the cold weather starts. Gas heating must be serviced by a Gas Safety Registered engineer.

Draught-proof doors and windows, insulate the loft and walls, lag the hot-water tank and pipes. The Energy Saving Trust can advise you whether or not you may be able to get financial help to do this – call **0800 512 012**.

There are grants available from the government and energy suppliers to help heat and insulate your home.

Contact the Warm Homes Scheme to find out if you are entitled to help for home energy improvements. If you are in receipt of Pension Credit, Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance or Housing Benefit, you may be eligible. Visit **www.warm-homes.com** or call free **0800 988 0559** (Housing Executive and Housing Association tenants do not qualify).

Contact your energy supplier if you are having trouble paying your bills. Companies should not disconnect all-pensioner households during winter months. Also ask about their Priority Service Register for older and disabled people, and if you are eligible for free energy efficiency and insulation.

People of pension age, and over are entitled to the Winter Fuel Payment to help with heating costs. If you have not been eligible before, contact the Winter Fuel Payment Helpline **0845 9 15 15 15** for more information.

If you receive Pension Guarantee Credit, you are automatically paid an extra cold weather payment when the temperature is at freezing or below for seven days in a row. To find out if you are receiving the benefits you are entitled to, call Age NI on freephone **0808 808 7575** from 8.00am to 7.00pm. Our Advice Service offers free, confidential and impartial advice from trained advisors to older people, their relatives, friends and carers.

Insulating your home

Having your home insulated is an easy thing to do to stay warm whilst saving around £150 off energy bills each year. You can find out more about insulation offers at **www.powerni.co.uk/savingenergy** or contact **0800 0321 894** today.

Personal Alarm Service



*Independence
when you want it,
help when you
need it.*



The Age NI Personal Alarm service gives you independence and your family peace of mind.

To arrange a no-obligation demonstration

ask here or call **0808 100 4545**

or save money if you buy online **www.ageni.org/alarm**

AGE
Concern



The new force combining
Age Concern and Help the Aged

Age NI benefits from the sale of Age NI Personal Alarms.

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In an emergency

Where can I get information in an emergency?

Tune into your local radio or TV station for up-to-date news bulletins. The media will normally broadcast the latest updates on the situation and publicise phone numbers to contact. You can also use the emergency contact details in this booklet (see pages 14 & 15) if you have a specific issue, for instance, burst pipes or an electricity failure.

What can I do if I have a burst pipe?

Turn off the water supply by turning the stopcock clockwise. The stopcock is usually found in your kitchen, below the sink unit. However in some houses it is found in a front or back hall. Try and block the water with thick cloths. Contact a reputable plumber, your Housing Association, Landlord or the NI Housing Executive. If water has come into contact with electrical fittings, electricity should be turned off at the mains.

I'm worried about Carbon Monoxide poisoning – what do I do?

Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning to look out for are headaches, nausea, dizziness, shortness of breath, collapse and loss of consciousness. Anyone who experiences one or more of these symptoms should seek medical advice straightaway. Remember to have all household appliances safety checked and serviced on a yearly basis by a competent engineer. You can find a registered engineer in your area by visiting www.gassaferegister.co.uk or by calling **0800 408 5500**.

What should I do if my water is cut off?

If your supply fails, there may be a burst pipe somewhere in your home or there may be a leak in the mains system. Call NI Water on **0845 744 0088** if you think the problem is an issue with the mains.

I'm worried about bogus callers in my area. What should I do?

Sometimes people claim to be from reputable organisations so that they can trick their way into people's homes. It is very important to be wary and if you suspect that someone isn't who they say they are, call Quick Check on **0800 013 2290**, a 24 freephone service to verify the identity of your caller.

Who can I call?

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Police Service of Northern Ireland

Tel: **0845 600 8000**

(Non-emergency)

Tel: **999** (Emergency)

www.psni.police.uk

Quick Check

Verify the identity of an unexpected caller

Tel: **0800 013 22 90** (24 hours)

Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service

Tel: **028 9266 4221**

(Non-emergency)

Tel: **999** (Emergency)

www.nifrs.org

Northern Ireland Ambulance Service

Tel: **028 7134 7134**

(Non-emergency)

Tel: **999** (Emergency)

www.niamb.co.uk

UTILITIES

Northern Ireland Water

Tel: **08457 440088**

Tel: **0300 2000 100** Flooding Incident Line (24 hours)

www.niwater.com

Northern Ireland Electricity

Tel: **08457 643 643** (24 hours)

NIE Transmission and Distribution is responsible for operating and maintaining the electricity network in Northern Ireland, no matter which supplier you are with. Contact them if there is a power cut.

www.nie.co.uk

Power NI

Tel: **08457 455 455**

www.powerni.co.uk

Airtricity

Tel: **08457 643 643** (24 hours)

Phoenix Gas

Tel: **0845 900 5253**

www.phoenixsupplyni.com

Firmus Energy

Tel: **08456 08 00 88**

www.firmusenergy.co.uk

If you smell gas call **0800 002 001** (24 hours)

HOUSING

Northern Ireland Housing Executive

Tel: **03448 920 900** General enquiries (8.30am - 5pm)

Tel: **03448 920 901** Repairs (8.30am-5pm, 24 hours for emergency)

www.nihe.gov.uk

CHARITIES

St Vincent de Paul

Tel: **(028) 9035 1561**

www.svp-ni.org

Salvation Army

Tel: **(028) 9032 0320**

British Red Cross

Tel: **(028) 9073 5350**

www.redcross.org.uk

MOTORING

Travelwatch

www.trafficwatchni.com

In the case of a vehicle breakdown contact:

Automobile Association (AA)

Tel: **0800 88 77 66** (24 hours)

Tel: **0121 275 3746** (24 hours)

Tel: **0844 873 0087** (From mobile phones 24 hours)

www.theaa.com

RAC Motoring Service

Tel: **0844 891 3111**

www.rac.co.uk

COUNCILS

Contact details for all 26 councils in Northern Ireland:

www.nidirect.gov.uk

Tune in to your local radio stations

Keep up-to-date with radio news bulletins for localised information

BBC Radio Ulster	94.5FM
U105	105.8FM
Cool FM	97.4FM
Citybeat	96.7FM
Downtown	1026AM

Useful organisations

Age NI

Age NI is the new charity combining Age Concern NI and Help the Aged in Northern Ireland. We deliver care services, provide advice and advocacy, fundraise and influence our decision-makers to improve later life for us all. We tackle ageism where we face it, fight for enough money for older people to live in dignity and demand the quality of care that people in later life deserve. We provide advice, information and advocacy for people in later life through our Advice Service.

Age NI Advice Service: freephone **0808 808 7575**

www.ageni.org

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

National network of free advice centres

Tel: **020 7833 2181** (local contact details only)

www.citizensadvice.org.uk for local CAB details

www.adviceguide.org.uk for online information

DSD Benefit Enquiry Line

Contact the DSD Benefit Enquiry Line for general information and advice on the full range of benefits and personal benefit calculations

Freephone **0800 220 674**

Energy Saving Trust

Call freephone **0800 512 012** to be put through to your nearest centre

www.energysavingtrust.co.uk

Gas Safety Register

You can check if an engineer is on the register by visiting the website

www.gassaferegister.co.uk

If you suspect a gas leak freephone **0800 002 001**

Health Trusts

Belfast: www.belfasttrust.hscni.net

Northern: www.northerntrust.hscni.net

South Eastern: www.setrust.hscni.net

Southern: www.southerntrust.hscni.net

Western: www.westerntrust.hscni.net

Met Office

Check your local weather forecast and get advice about managing in severe weather conditions

www.metoffice.gov.uk

NI Direct

Includes advice on taking care of yourself in winter

www.nidirect.gov.uk

Power NI

To find out about energy schemes available for older people

Freephone **0800 0321 894**

www.powerni.co.uk

Rights 4 Seniors

Rights 4 Seniors is a vital rights-reference for older people in Northern Ireland and those who work with them

www.rights4seniors.net

Warm Homes

Freephone **0800 988 0559**

www.warm-homes.com

Winter Fuel Payment Helpline

08459 15 15 15

Are you signed up to a Care Register?

Some utility providers in Northern Ireland offer additional services for customers with specific needs. Contact the relevant organisation below if you wish to register.

NIE: The Critical Care Register offers a critical care information service to customers who are dependent on life supporting electrical equipment. Call **08457 643 643** to find out more.

Northern Ireland Water: If you depend on equipment that is vital to your health and requires a water supply you should register at **08457 440088**.

Phoenix Gas: The Phoenix Energy Care Scheme is designed for customers who are 60 years of age or older, disabled (including those who are deaf or blind), or chronically sick. Find out more on **0845 900 5253**.

Power NI: Power NI cares about all its customers but is particularly concerned about those with special requirements. They have a range of services available through the confidential Customer Care Register. Call **08457 455 455** to join and benefit from the services offered.



First Connect

Enabling you to live life your way by offering emotional and practical support



First Connect offers emotional and practical support at difficult times to people in later life. The service improves quality of life and helps maintain independence. It is available to older people who need support at home or in the community to access local services.

If you or an older person you know might benefit from First Connect, contact Age NI on freephone **0808 808 7575** to find out more in confidence.

Spread the Warmth this winter

For many older people winter means loneliness, poverty and ill-health. Some older people find it difficult to pay their heating bills and keep their homes warm enough. Others can become bed-ridden with illness. Many struggle to leave the house in extremely cold and icy conditions and don't see anyone for weeks. Age NI believes this must change. Our *Spread the Warmth* campaign is about making winter better for people in later life.

If you have picked up this brochure for an older friend, relative or neighbour, you might like to help Age NI *Spread the Warmth* this winter. It's easy to get involved.

Take part. Log on to www.ageni.org/spreadthewarmth and find out all about the campaign and events taking place in your area.

Donate: Support our *Spread the Warmth* campaign by visiting www.ageni.org/donate or text AGE to 70007 to donate £3*. You can also complete the form opposite.

Be kind. *Spread the Warmth* by doing something kind for an older relative, neighbour or friend to show you care. Give a lift to someone with no transport; offer a steadying arm on an icy day; cook a little extra dinner for someone who lives alone. You can find even more ideas at www.ageni.org/spreadthewarmth

*You will be charged £3.00 plus one message at your standard network rate. Age NI will receive a minimum of £2.81 from each message sent.

Nearly half of older people in Northern Ireland feel more isolated from their communities than ever before.



Can you help Spread the Warmth?

With your help Age NI can make a real difference to the lives of older people in need this winter. If you can make a small contribution to support our work, please complete the donation form below with a gift of whatever you can afford and return to: Age NI, Freepost, RRTU - HSZY - LTHZ, 3 Lower Crescent, Belfast, BT7 1NR. Alternatively you can phone **028 9024 5729** or visit **www.ageni.org/donate**

Personal details

Title:	Initials:	Surname:
Address: _____ _____		
		Postcode:
Tel:		Email:

By providing your email address and/or mobile number you are agreeing to us contacting you in these ways. You may contact us at any time to unsubscribe from our communications.

Your gift

I would like to make a gift of: £

I enclose a cheque/postal order made payable to Age NI.

Card payment

I wish to pay by (please tick) MasterCard Visa Maestro

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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Expiry date / Issue no. (Maestro only) Security code

Signature

Gift Aid declaration

Yes, I want Age NI and its partner organisations* to treat all donations I have made for the four years prior to this year, and all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise, as Gift Aid donations. I confirm I pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax that the charity will reclaim on my donations in the tax year. Date ___/___/___ Please complete.

*Age UK, Age Scotland and Age Cymru



We will use the information you have supplied to communicate with you in line with Data Protection guidelines. Age NI (registered charity no XT14600) comprises the Charity, its group of companies and national partners (Age UK, Age Cymru and Age Scotland). If you would prefer not to hear from them or carefully selected third parties, let us know by phoning 028 9024 5729.





Age NI, 3 Lower Crescent, Belfast BT7 1NR

t 028 9024 5729 f 028 9023 5497

e info@ageni.org www.ageni.org

Age NI is a company limited by guarantee registered in Northern Ireland and recognised as a charity by HM Revenue and Customs: registered office address 3 Lower Crescent, Belfast, BT7 1NR. Company number NI071940, HMRC Charity Reference number XT14600.