

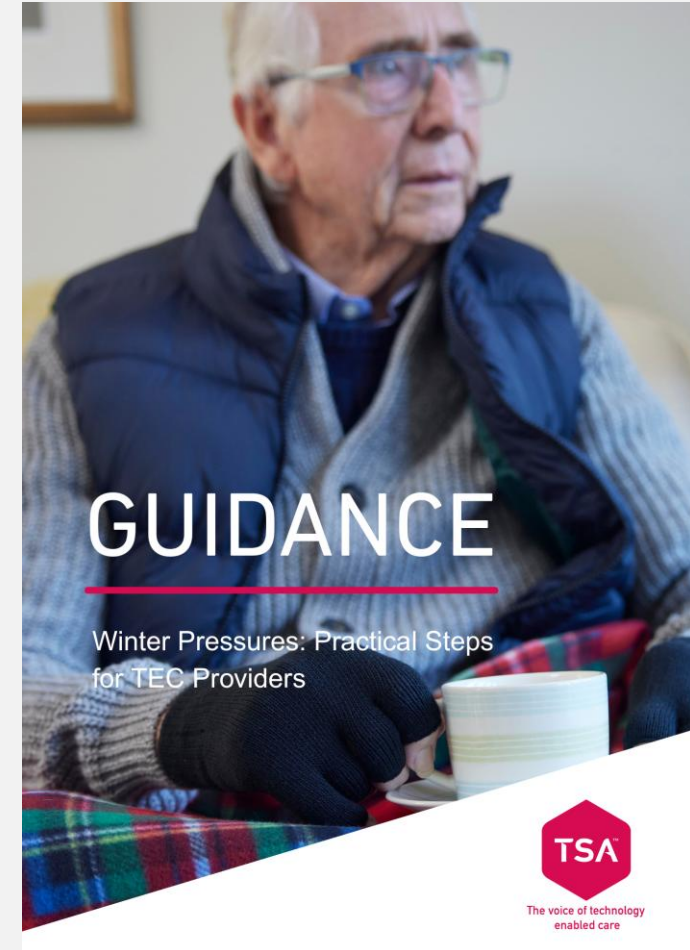
Winter Pressures

Why winter pressures matter, and how we can mitigate them



Understanding the Pressures This Winter

- **Key Drivers of Winter Pressures:**
 - Increased demand for urgent and emergency care
 - Staffing shortages across health and social care
 - Hospital capacity constraints and delayed discharges
- **Data Insights & Trends:**
 - Rising hospital admissions during colder months
 - Increased reliance on TEC solutions for remote monitoring
- **Case Study / Real-World Example:** [a-coordinated-response-to-winter-pressures---working-together-to-support-older-people-through-winter.pdf](#)



ARCs – Winter Preparedness Checklist

- ✓ Backup Systems:
 - Do you have a generator suitable to back up your systems?
- ✓ Connectivity & Contingency:
 - Plans for loss of Wi-Fi (home workers & office-based)?
 - Support from IT – are they contactable out of hours?
- ✓ Staff Logistics:
 - Where do staff live? Can they travel in bad weather?
 - Options: 4x4 vehicles, buddy lift sharing agreements
- ✓ OOH Coordination:
 - Liaise with Local Authorities for OOH calls – any changes to usual procedures?
- ✓ Customer Communication:
 - Confirm corporate customers' winter plans
 - Advise customers to have winter warmer packs ready
- ✓ Staffing & Rotas:
 - Standby workers for bad weather
 - Train backup staff for call handling
 - Set up groups for low-level calls (wellbeing checks, medication reminders)
- ✓ Disaster Recovery Plans:
 - Can staff WFH if needed?
 - Agreements for call transfer to another ARC if primary ARC & DR impacted

Recommended Resources



UK Health
Security
Agency

Cold-Health Alert summary action card for commissioners

This is a summary of the suggested actions for each Cold-Health Alert level. Check the [Cold-Health Alert action card for commissioners](#) for more detail, including the required actions for winter preparedness, and adapt actions to your service as appropriate.

Summary actions for Yellow Alert

- ☐ Confirm that relevant staff are aware of contingency plans, have received the Cold-Health Alert and know how to access relevant guidance and advice
- ☐ Use the Cold-Health Alert impact matrix to inform the local risk assessment for, and response to, cold weather
- ☐ Communicate public health messages to help the public, and especially at-risk groups, identify risks of cold exposure and how to manage them
- ☐ Activate Business Continuity Plans and emergency plans as required
- ☐ Ensure partners and staff communicate [Keeping warm and well: staying safe in cold weather](#) public health messages to the public, specially underserved or vulnerable groups
- ☐ Ensure partners and staff signpost vulnerable people to sources of support such as energy efficiency measures, benefits or related advice
- ☐ Activate road or pavement gritting to allow access to critical services and pedestrian hotspots, if ice or snow occur

Summary actions for Amber Alert

- ☐ Continue Yellow Alert actions
- ☐ Activate business continuity and/or local cold weather plans
- ☐ Increase the volume and frequency of messages aimed at the public to help them identify risks of cold exposure and understand how to manage them
- ☐ Support partner organisations to prioritise travel especially if ice or snow occur
- ☐ Engage the community and voluntary sector to mobilise additional support (for example equipment, facilities) to help those most at risk, where necessary

Summary actions for Red Alert

- ☐ Continue Amber Alert actions
- ☐ Follow all local emergency response plans, supporting local coordination
- ☐ Issue media alerts about keeping warm and well in extreme cold weather
- ☐ Mobilise support from the voluntary and community sector to ensure sufficient resources are available to support at-risk people during cold weather

[Cold-Health Alert summary action card for voluntary and community sector](#)

[Cold-Health Alert summary action card for commissioners](#)

[Cold-Health Alert summary action card for providers: care homes](#)

[Cold-Health Alert Summary action card: people in their homes](#)

[Cold-Health Alert summary action card: hospitals](#)

[Top tips for keeping warm](#)



Recommended Resources

Winter checklist

This checklist is intended to support BGS members across the system to make changes to ensure that winter is a little easier for older people this year. Not everyone will be able to do everything on this list, but we hope that it helps healthcare professionals to think about what they can do to make this winter a bit better for their older patients.



Local services

- ☐ Are there local charities that will provide support to keep homes warm, help with shopping upon discharge from hospital, and support older people who can't get out if it's icy? Age UK, British Red Cross and RVS are good places to start.
- ☐ Which local charities provide services to help with loneliness or offer exercise classes? Mind provide loneliness services and information about exercise classes can be found from Move It or Lose It.
- ☐ Where can older people find advice about home energy use and benefit entitlements? Ofgem provide energy advice.
 - What do the local authority or other services provide over winter?
 - Warm spaces in libraries or community centres. Warm Welcome has details of warm spaces.
 - Fire safety checks and smoke alarm fittings. These are usually provided by the local fire brigade.
- ☐ What adverse weather events are likely to affect your patients over winter (snow, flood, ice)? What is the plan to identify patients who might need additional support in extreme weather?
- ☐ Which local charities will provide draught excluders and reflective radiator panels?

Questions to ask patients before the winter (in GP surgeries / in their homes)

- ☐ Do they have an advance care plan in place? If they were ill enough, would they want to go to hospital? Marie Curie has information about advance care planning.
- ☐ Is their home warm enough in winter? Support is available through the Great British Insulation Scheme.
- ☐ Do they have family/friends who would look in on them in winter?
- ☐ Are they claiming all the benefits they are entitled to? Age UK have information about benefits entitlements.
- ☐ Are they on the Priority Services Register?

Patient records and connections

- ☐ Is a CFS score recorded in all patient notes?
- ☐ Do you have the relationships needed with social care, Hospital at Home, UCR, SDEC in order to help avoid unnecessary admissions for older people over winter?
- ☐ Have all older patients in the community and in hospitals been offered the appropriate vaccinations?
- ☐ Have staff been encouraged to be vaccinated?
- ☐ Can you provide written information with details of support services to patients when they are discharged?

Hospital/system level

- ☐ Are there changes that you can make now to avoid unnecessary hospital admission over winter? Can a Hospital at Home or Front Door Frailty service be introduced?
- ☐ Can you take steps now to avoid provision of corridor care over winter?
- ☐ Do you have discharge services in place to ensure that planning for discharge starts as soon as an older person is admitted to hospital?
- ☐ Can all ED staff be trained to recognise frailty at the front door? The BGS Frailty e-learning module is free to all staff.
- ☐ Is there an Integrated Neighbourhood Team that can support with step down services?

The British Geriatrics Society

[Preparing for winter | British Geriatrics Society](#)

[Winter poster 2025 0.pdf](#)



Useful winter contacts

Use this poster to document and display details of local services for older people

Warm spaces are provided at:

Home fire safety checks are provided by:

Help with food shopping is available from:

Loneliness and befriending services are provided by:

Home discharge support is available from:

Draught excluders and reflective radiator panels are available from:

Social care can be contacted on:

The Hospital at Home team can be contacted at:

The Urgent Community Response Team can be contacted at:

Frailty training available from the BGS:

Available for free at: www.bgs.org.uk/frailtyelearning

Advice about home energy use is available from:

For a full checklist to help your service prepare for winter, visit: www.bgs.org.uk/winterchecklist

Recommended Resources

- [TSA - TEC Responders & Winter Resilience](#)
- [NHS England » Winter planning and preparedness](#)
- [a-coordinated-response-to-winter-pressures---working-together-to-support-older-people-through-winter.pdf](#)
- [Winter Wellness and Operational Resilience in Care Homes](#)



Key Actions for TSA Members

01

Review and update Winter Plans

Ensure contingency plans cover staff shortages, supply chain issues and surge demand

Align with local ICS winter plans

02

Strengthen Workforce preparedness

Cross train staff for critical roles

Promote wellbeing initiatives to reduce burnout

03

Enhance Operational resilience

Test backup systems and remote monitoring capabilities

Review escalation protocols for emergency responses

04

Communicate with people in receipt of services

Provide clear guidance on what to expect during winter

Ensure emergency contact details are up to date



The voice of technology
enabled care

Thank you

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