



MAKING
EVERY
CONTACT
COUNT

Keep warm Keep well

Key messages

- We are all more likely to feel the chill in winter but living in a cold home can lead to serious health problems and consequences, whatever your age.
- If you or a member of your family suffers from a long term health condition, or if you are very old or very young, it is even more important to keep warm in your home.
- Every winter people in Dudley borough die as a result of being too cold in their home. These winter deaths are not from hypothermia but are from sitting or sleeping in cold rooms, which causes existing medical conditions to get much worse.

What can you do to keep warm and well?

1. Keep your home warm and cosy - your main living room should be heated to around 21°C, your bedroom should be 18°C and the rest of the house at least 16°C. Sitting or sleeping in a room below 16°C can harm your health.
2. Don't waste energy. Get advice specific to your home and your needs to make the most of the energy you are using.
3. Get the best energy deal - Dudley's winter warmth team can help you find the best energy supplier and tariff for you and support you to make the switch.
4. Make sure you eat well - a balanced diet will help you stay warm, boost your immune system, fight off colds and make you more energetic. Try to have at least one hot meal a day and hot drinks throughout the day.
5. Keep moving - being active keeps you warm. Try not to sit still for more than one hour. If walking is difficult, moving your arms and legs and wiggling your fingers and toes can help.
6. Wear the right clothes - several thin layers are better than one thick layer. When going outside don't forget your hat, scarf, warm winter coat and shoes with a good grip.
7. Keep upto date with immunisations. See MECC sheet on immunisation'.
8. Be prepared - stock up with over the counter medicines and if you take any prescription medicine make sure you have a good supply at home.
9. Make sure you access the right care, advice and treatment as quickly as possible if you feel unwell this winter. Your local pharmacist can provide confidential, expert advice and treatment for a range of common illnesses and you don't need to make an appointment.
10. Take care when going outside - use grit on your path, and check out the forecast before going outside. The latest weather updates are available by calling **0370 900 0100** 24 hours a day, 7 days a week or via www.metoffice.gov.uk/

For more information on how to keep warm and well in winter visit www.dudley.gov.uk/winterwellbeing

Why is it important?

Living in a cold home can lead to serious health problems and consequences, whatever your age. As well as aggravating existing health conditions, living in a cold home can also lead to:

- Breathing problems, heart and circulatory problems, problems with moving around and mental health problems

Children living in cold homes are more likely to:

- Suffer from asthma, bronchitis and other respiratory illness, and to have more severe symptoms
- Have a poor diet and lower than average weight gain in infancy
- Have lower educational attainment, emotional well-being and resilience
- Experience mental health problems in adolescence
- Have more severe colds and flu

There doesn't have to be snow and ice on the ground for a person who has reduced mobility or long term condition to be at higher risk. **In Britain a cold spell even during a mild winter is followed:**

- Two days later by a sudden rise in heart attacks
- Five days later by a big rise in the number of strokes
- Twelve days later by a big rise in respiratory illness

Local services

Dudley Energy Advice Line (DEAL) Winter Warmth Service offers free impartial advice and practical assistance to help you keep your home warm and comfortable, no matter what your circumstances. Help is tailored to your needs: including home energy advice, benefits checks and advice on financial support, help with switching tariffs/ energy suppliers, small home improvements such as insulation, and replacement boilers and heating systems (criteria apply to all).

For more information call **01384 817086** email winterwarmth@dudley.gov.uk visit www.dudley.gov.uk/energyadvice or www.dudley.gov.uk/council-community/cost-of-living/

Be prepared

If you have an elderly neighbour, friend or relative try to look out for them, especially during the winter months when they may not be able to get out and about.

Prepare for colder weather by building up credit on your energy account throughout the autumn ready for higher cost winter months. Ensure that your pre-payment meters are topped up in advance of cold snaps, snow and ice, to avoid using emergency credit or going off supply.

Have your heating system checked and boiler serviced annually, test that everything is working. Get advice and learn how to program your timer and thermostat before cold weather sets in, so it is ready to be used during winter months.



**Keep warm
Keep well**

