

Prevention and Wellbeing Factsheet: Older People's Health - Winter Wellness

Key messages

- Winter can be a vulnerable time for some, particularly older people.
- Many people die needlessly every year because they are living in cold housing.
- Keeping warm over the winter months can help reduce the risk of developing illnesses such as colds, flu (which can be life-threatening, particularly in over-65s and those with long-term conditions such as diabetes and kidney disease) and pneumonia.

Why is it important?

- Some people are more vulnerable than others. This can be due to physical factors, such as the vulnerability of young children and people over 60 years, a long-standing illness or a disability.
- Vulnerability to excess winter cold may also be caused by a psychological factor, such as a mental disability.

The picture in Barnet

- Data produced by the Department for Energy and Climate Change shows that in 2011 10.6% of Barnet's households, or 13,628 homes, were fuel poor.
- The level of excess cold hazards is considered an issue given the increasing numbers of older residents in Barnet.

Other important messages to consider

- Keeping warm both inside and outside your home can help reduce your risk of serious health problems that are more common in the colder months, such as pneumonia, heart attacks and strokes.
- Preparing for the cold weather – which can start as early as October – means that you're more likely to keep warm and well.

Signposting to local services and online support

Preparing for next Winter

Council advice for Barnet residents to help them stay warm and well in winter

- <https://www.barnet.gov.uk/citizen-home/public-health/health-advice/keeping-warm-in-winter>
- Barnet Council's Social Care Direct is able to offer assistance to vulnerable Barnet Residents in an emergency situation. Where there is someone vulnerable in a household and emergency heating measures are required. Please call Social Care Direct on 020 8359 5000 or 020 8359 2000 in an out of hours situation.

Barnet Age UK Neighbourhood services

Provides a wide range of activities, services and information about issues of interest to older people through its centres and in the community including a befriending service

- <http://www.ageuk.org.uk/barnet/neighbourhood-services/>
- Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, London, N2 8LT
- info@ageukbarnet.org.uk
- 020 8203 5040

Keep Warm and Well Scheme

Winter Well grants provides help with costs of heating and insulation improvements. It is available to Barnet residents who own their house, are vulnerable to excessively cold housing and have a long term health condition

- www.barnet.gov.uk/winterwell

If you would prefer to talk to one of the Keep Warm and Well team they will be happy to advise you, please call them on 0208 359 7441 or email them on winterwell@barnet.gov.uk

Some people with a high level of need require support from a **health or social care professional**. They can be directed to their GP or Social Care Direct (020 8359 5000; socialcaredirect@barnet.gov.uk; 07506 693707 for text messages; 020 8359 2000 for urgent out of hours queries) as appropriate.

For anyone with **caring responsibilities** who lives or works in the borough, Barnet Carers Centre can offer advice, information, emotional and practical support. They can be contacted on the following numbers: 020 8343 9698 (Adult Carers Outreach & Support Service and Carers Hospital Discharge Coordinator); 020 8432 2092 (Barnet Young Carers and Siblings); 020 8432 2091 (Community Home & Support Services) or via email admin@barnetcarers.org.