

Winter care readiness check

Free action checklist for adult social care in England

Version 1.0 | Guidance checked 11 October 2026 | England

Use this three-page check to identify a small number of winter readiness gaps before severe weather disrupts care. It is for care managers and team leads in homecare, supported living and residential care. Adapt it to the support you provide, people's own wishes, local arrangements and staff competence.

UKHSA guidance asks providers to prepare for cold weather, use local business continuity arrangements and respond to Cold Health Alerts. The suggested actions differ by setting. This resource helps record your own checks; it is not the official alert card or a clinical assessment.

Readiness check	Evidence or gap	Owner and date
Who checks alerts and briefs the team?		
Which people may need extra contact?		
What happens if a visit is delayed?		
Who deals with heating or power concerns?		
How are food and essential supplies checked?		
Are emergency contacts accessible?		
What is the staffing and travel fallback?		
Have we tested one disruption scenario?		

Do not score a serious safety gap as a minor paperwork task. Take immediate action under your existing procedures if someone may be unsafe.

Turn a gap into a tested action

A fictional example

A homecare team finds that the out of hours contact list is only on a laptop kept at the office. The manager provides an approved secure copy to the on call lead, tests access during a practice call and records who will maintain it. The result is evidenced by the access test, not simply by writing a new policy.

Action record	Your entry
Gap and who could be affected	
Immediate protective action if needed	
Person responsible for the fix	
Completion date agreed locally	
What will demonstrate the fix works	
Test date and what happened	
Remaining problem and next action	

A ten minute team discussion

- A worker cannot reach a planned visit. Who receives the call and reviews the person's immediate needs?
- The main record system is unavailable. Where is the approved fallback information?
- A person says their home is too cold but declines help. Who supports a respectful, individual response?

Use fictional cases for practice. Do not copy personal care records into a training handout. A real emergency needs your emergency response, not completion of this checklist.

Use the right guidance for your setting

For homecare, focus the discussion on continuity of essential visits and how staff report concerns in people's homes. For residential care, identify who takes responsibility for building and service disruption. In supported living, be clear about the responsibilities of the care provider, landlord and person; do not assume the provider controls the home.

Free check or full workbook

This check supports a short readiness review and one improvement action. The paid Winter Care Continuity Workbook adds a responsibility map, individual support prompts, staffing and visit fallback records, an alert decision log, a scenario exercise, communication templates and a recovery review. Buying it is optional.

Official sources and review

The sources below were checked on 11 October 2026. Reopen them before relying on a requirement: this download is a dated working tool, not a live update service. Looking Glass Care is independent and is not endorsed by the organisations linked below.

UKHSA Cold Health Alert action card for health and social care providers

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/cold-health-alert-action-card-for-health-and-social-care-providers>

UKHSA guidance for adult social care managers

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/supporting-vulnerable-people-before-and-during-cold-weather-for-adult-social-care-managers>

Use and support

Use and adapt this resource within your own family or purchasing organisation. You may share completed records securely with the people supporting the case. Do not resell or publicly redistribute blank paid templates. Free resources may be shared intact with attribution. Copyright Looking Glass Care 2026.

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