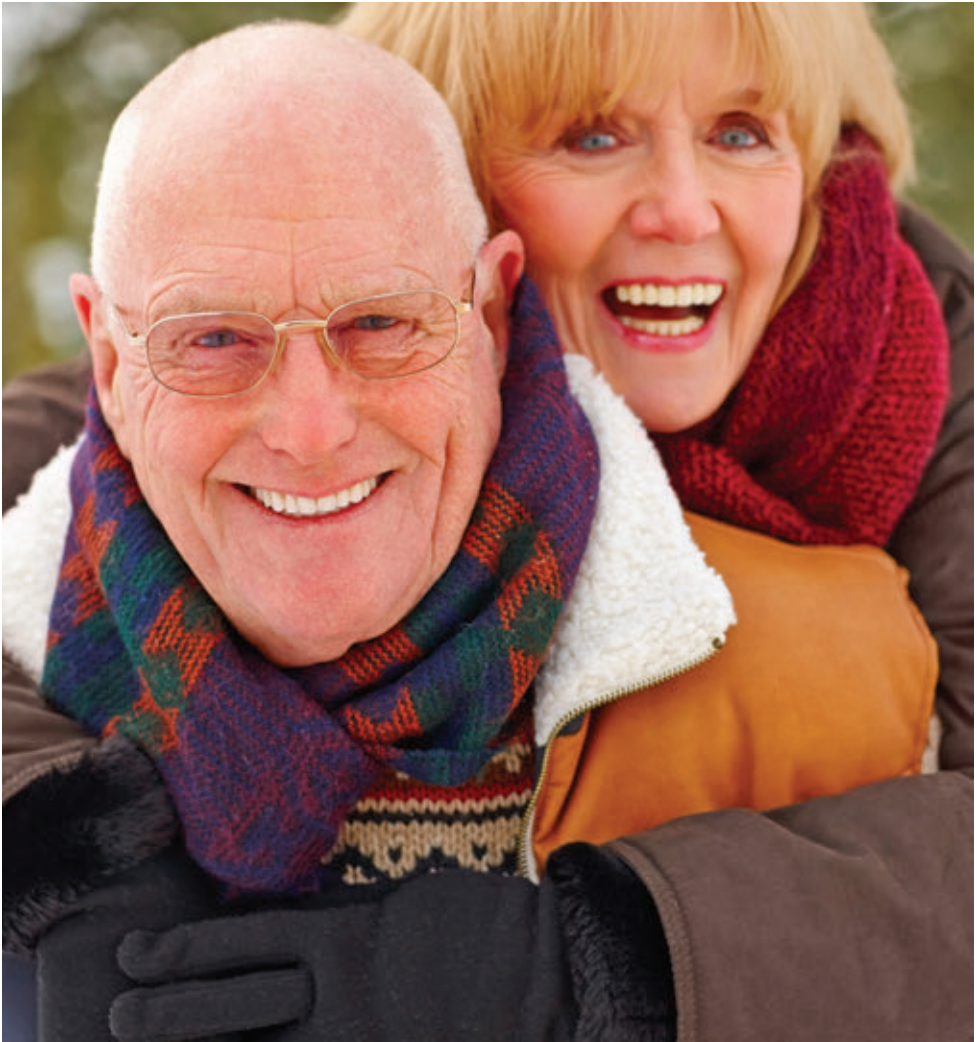


Winter Wrapped Up

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



Keep warm this winter with an oil or gas boiler service from Power NI

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- ✓ We have experts you can trust to work on all types of boilers
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Contents

Introduction	4
Preparing for Winter	5
Roy's Story	6-7
Staying Healthy	9-10
Keep Warm Indoors and Out	13-14
In an Emergency	16
Who can I call?	17-18
Useful Organisations	19-20
Are you signed up to a Care Register?	21
Donate today!	23

All information in this booklet is correct at time of going to print, October 2015.

Introduction

Winter isn't everyone's favorite season and there's no doubt that the cold weather can be a worry for those in later life. As we get older, our bodies respond differently to the cold. This can leave us more vulnerable in cold weather. But with a little preparation, and by following some simple suggestions, we can help ourselves 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.

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 if you qualify for a new boiler by contacting Housing Executive Grants on **0344 892 0900** or **boiler-replacement@nihe.gov.uk**
The scheme has been extended until 31 March 2016.
- 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 benefits check on freephone **0808 808 7575** or visit **www.ageni.org/moremoney**
- If you have not been eligible for the Winter Fuel Payment before, contact the Winter Fuel Payment Helpline on **08459 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 eligible for support with an Affordable Warmth Grant. More details on page 14.

Roy's story

'Before getting help from Age NI, I'm not afraid to say that I was in a bad way. I felt as though my world had ended when my darling wife died. We had been married for 44 years and we had no children, so our worlds had always revolved around each other. We had spent 17 years in rented accommodation which had badly deteriorated over the years. It had no central heating, draughty doors and windows and was very damp. Hot water was at a premium as we were scared about turning on the immersion heater in case bills rocketed. We struggled to make ends meet and we did...just about. We had no idea at the time that we might have any other options. There was never any money left over to save for a rainy day. Every day was a rainy one! But we coped and we had each other.

In the days and weeks after my wife's funeral I was so unhappy. I didn't want to tell anybody how bad things were and truthfully, I often cried myself to sleep. Matters eventually came

to a head when I fell and broke several ribs. I finally confided in a close friend just how bad things had become and that's when she contacted Age NI for me.



‘However difficult life may seem, help is at hand. You must ask. I nearly didn’t and look what I would have missed out on.’

‘I was in pain, I was scared and I felt very low. But with the help of the Age NI Advice Service, suddenly I realised I was not alone. Age NI worked with me to get help with my money worries, to move home, to have a second chance at life. My life has totally transformed. In less than six months I changed from a depressed, broken man to a man who views the world in a new light. I have a lovely, secure, affordable place to live. I am making new friends. However difficult life may seem, help is at hand. You must ask. I nearly didn’t and look what I would have missed out on.

I would love to think that somebody reading this could be helped as I was. Just lift that phone to Age NI and see what you might be entitled to. Everything is totally confidential. What have you to lose? Don’t wait!’



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.

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.

#LoveLaterLife



Emily, Age NI Volunteer

Age is just a number

For information and advice on
staying independent, talk to us.

0808 808 7575



S

SMOKE ALARM

T

TEST ALARMS WEEKLY

O

OBVIOUS DANGERS

P

PLAN YOUR ESCAPE



**Northern Ireland
Fire & Rescue Service**

Protecting Our Community

For more information
nifrs.org  

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 1422 865**.

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

Homeowners and private tenants living in areas with high levels of fuel poverty may be eligible for support with an Affordable Warmth Grant, a targeted scheme delivered across NI on behalf of the Department for Social Development by the Housing Executive and local councils. To qualify you will have a total gross annual household income of less than £20,000 per year. Contact Age NI on freephone **0808 808 7575** for more details.

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

There are ongoing grant schemes available for home insulation including loft and cavity wall in association with the Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme (NISEP). Call Age NI on freephone **0808 808 7575** for more details.

***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*
call **0808 100 4545**
or visit **www.ageni.org/alarm**



Age NI (registered charity no. XT14600) benefits from the sale of Age NI Personal Alarms.

Age NI Personal Alarms are provided by Aid-Call Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of Age UK (registered charity no. 1128267) which gift aids its net profits to Age UK. Aid-Call Ltd is registered in England and Wales (registered company no. 1488490), Registered office: Tavis House, 1-6 Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9NA. Aid-Call Ltd's use of the name and logo 'Age NI' is done so under licence.

***Demonstration does not apply if you buy online and Self-Connect.**

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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 17 & 18) 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: **101** (Non-emergency)

Tel: **999** (Emergency)

www.psnipolice.uk

Quick Check

Verify the identity of an unexpected caller

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

Northern Ireland Ambulance Service

Tel: **028 7134 7134** (Non-emergency)

Tel: **999** (Emergency)

www.niamb.co.uk

Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service

Tel: **028 9266 4221** (Non-emergency)

Tel: **999** (Emergency)

www.nifrs.org



UTILITIES

Northern Ireland Electricity Network

Tel: **03457 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: **03457 455 455**

www.powerni.co.uk

SSE Airtricity

Tel: **0345 601 9093**

www.airtricity.com

SSE Airtricity Gas

Tel: **0345 900 5253**

www.airtricitygasni.com

Firmus Energy

Tel: **0800 032 4567**

www.firmusenergy.co.uk

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

Northern Ireland Water

Tel: **03457 440088**

Flooding Incident Line

Tel: **0300 2000 100** (24 hours)

www.niwater.com

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

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

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

COUNCILS

Contact details for all 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
Q On Air	96.7FM
Downtown	1026AM

Useful organisations

Age NI

Age NI is the leading charity for older people in Northern Ireland. Our vision is a world where everyone can love later life, and our mission is to help people enjoy a better later life. We deliver care services, provide advice and advocacy, offer products and services, fundraise and influence our decision-makers to improve later life for us all. Age NI wants to make people think differently about what it means to get older, because age affects everyone in different ways.

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

www.ageni.org

Email: **info@ageni.org**

Facebook: **www.facebook.com/agenicharity**

Twitter: **[@Age_NI](https://twitter.com/Age_NI)**

Bryson Energy

Freephone **0800 142 2865**

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

National network of free advice centres

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/nireland (for local CAB office details)

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 022 4250**

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**

Housing Advice NI

028 9024 5640

www.housingadviceni.org

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 saving 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

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.

Firmus Energy: The firmuscare scheme has been set up to provide customers with a range of services that meet their differing needs. To find out more call **0800 032 4567**.

NIE: The Critical Care Register offers a critical care information service to customers who are dependent on life supporting electrical equipment. Call **03457 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 **03457 440 088**.

SSE Airtricity: The SSE Airtricity 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 **0345 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 **03457 455 455** to join and benefit from the services offered.



Products and services designed for the over 50s

- Home Insurance
- Travel Insurance
- Funeral Plans
- Car Insurance
- Weekly Lottery
- Personal Alarms



For a no obligation quote, visit:

Age NI Enterprises Ltd
10 College Street, Belfast, BT1 6BT
0808 100 4545

Open: Monday to Friday - 9am to 5pm

or visit

www.ageni.org/products



Buying Products & Services through Age NI helps to fund our charitable work

Age UK Home, Car and Travel Insurance are provided by Ageas Insurance Limited. The Age UK Funeral Plan is offered by Advance Planning Limited. Age UK Personal Alarms are provided by Aid-Call Limited.

Age NI Enterprises Limited is a joint venture trading company owned by Age NI (registered charity number XTI4600) and Age UK Enterprises Limited. Age UK Enterprises Limited is a wholly owned subsidiary of Age UK (registered in NI number 1128267). Net profits are split between Age NI and Age UK. Promoter: Age NI Enterprises Limited, 10 College Street, Belfast BT1 6BT.

MP5590V1SEPT15

Donate today!

Age NI relies on donations to ensure that we continue to support people in Northern Ireland to love later life. Please complete and return the form to Age NI, Freepost RRTU-HSZY-LTHZ, 3 Lower Crescent, Belfast, BT7 1NR. Alternatively call **028 9024 5729** or visit **www.ageni.org/donate**

Every donation makes a difference. Thank you.

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

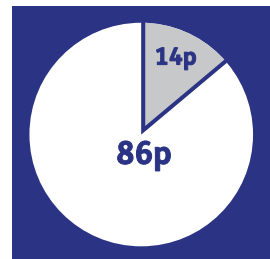
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Expiry date / Issue no. (Maestro only) Security code

Signature:

For every £1 you donate, 86p directly benefits older people.

By leaving a gift in your will to Age NI, you'll help us be here for everyone who needs us
www.ageni.org/giftsinwills



You may be interested in our other publications including:

- More money in your pocket
- Care at home
- Age NI Life magazine

To request a free copy, or for more information on the issues covered in this guide, contact the Age NI Advice Service on freephone **0808 808 7575** or email **advice.ageni.org**

Age NI offers free, independent and confidential advice to older people, their carers and families on a range of issues including care, health, housing and money.



Age NI, 3 Lower Crescent, Belfast BT7 1NR

t 028 9024 5729 e info@ageni.org

w www.ageni.org