

Tips for keeping warm and well this winter



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For more details about Age UK Blackburn with Darwen's services and activities please visit our website www.ageukbwd.org.uk , call 01254 266620 or scan the QR code.



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Check your finances

Money is tight right now with the continuing cost of living crisis in the UK and rising heating costs. If you are struggling to make ends meet or are worrying about how you will afford to keep your house warm this winter then please check what you may be entitled to. Many older people automatically rule themselves out because they have savings or a private pension, but you can still be eligible for some entitlements with these. It costs nothing to find out so please pick up the phone or come into the Age UK offices



If you are a pensioner find out what you can claim



If you are struggling to manage household bills you could be entitled to additional income and/or support and it costs nothing to find out

Our Advice and information offices can offer a free benefit check. Telephone, email or drop in

Blackburn Office

Blackburn Central Library
Town Hall St, Blackburn BB2 1AG
Monday to Friday 10am - 4pm
Tel: 01254 266620

Darwen Office

Darwen Town Hall
Croft St, Darwen BB3 1BQ
Mon, Thurs, Fri 9.30am - 1pm
Closed Tuesdays/Wednesdays
Tel: 01254 773440

Email: advice@ageukbwd.org.uk

Registered charity no 1143809

Look after your health

Winter can be a difficult time for many people and particularly those who are older, who may be living with a number of health conditions – there are some simple hints and tips that we can all follow though to keep as well as possible.

Eating Well in Later Life



Having nutritious and varied food is important for good health and well-being throughout life. As we age, it becomes even more important, and it is estimated that one in ten people over the age of 65 are at risk of malnutrition.

Ageing puts us all at risk of becoming undernourished and this is a concern as poor nutrition can be both a cause and a consequence of ill health. This can lead to more visits to the GP, increased chances of being admitted to hospital and longer recovery times from illness.

We are so used to following public health messages that are focused on weight loss, eating low fat products, eating more fruit and vegetables, less sugar, treats and puddings. This style of eating is not always recommended for people who have a small appetite, find they are losing weight, or who are finding it difficult or tiring to eat.

Weight Loss

Losing weight is not an inevitable part of ageing and unintentional weight loss in older adults can be a serious issue. Undernourishment often occurs because there is a perception that losing weight is 'normal' in later life and that being overweight is more of a concern. But this isn't the case. It is a good idea to keep a record of your weight to notice any fluctuations and speak to your GP or Health professional if you have any concerns.

Nutritional needs can vary as our bodies and health needs change. Life changes as we age, such as bereavement, long term health conditions, caring responsibilities, loneliness, and worries can all affect our appetite, and it can be easy to slip into eating less without noticing.

Top tips for eating well:

- Eat more protein - eggs, yoghurt, nuts and seeds, tofu, soya, fish, chicken
- Eat food that you enjoy
- Try eating small meals and snacks six times a day rather than three bigger meals
- Eat small portions - little and often
- Move to full-fat foods like milk, yoghurt and cheese
- Have milky drinks with full-fat milk and a biscuit between meals
- If you have difficulty chewing, try eating soft foods such as scrambled eggs or yoghurts
- Ready meals, packet and frozen foods are fine



Try and make sure that you have three day's worth of food in your fridge and store cupboard

Keep your fridge and cupboards stocked up with ready meals, small packets of snacks like sausage rolls or falafels; yoghurts; biscuits and cakes or chocolate bars; cereal; ready cooked rice; tinned vegetables, beans, and pulses; and cheese and crackers. Small packets or portions are ideal; Supermarkets often sell ready-chopped fruit and vegetables in small packets.

The Malnutrition Task Force have some useful resources to read about living and eating well, they can be downloaded from their website www.malnutritiontaskforce.org.uk

If you are vegetarian the vegetarian for life website has some useful resources also <https://vegetarianforlife.org.uk/>

Vitamin D Supplements



Vitamin D plays an important role in helping the body absorb and use calcium and to support bone health and other functions. It also helps to support the immune system. Older people are advised to take Vitamin D supplements throughout the winter as the sun is too low in the sky to benefit us.

Drink More

Look out for some early warning signs of dehydration

- Feeling thirsty, lightheaded, tired and confused
- Dry mouth, lips and tongue
- Passing urine less than usual
- Constipation



It is just as important to also keep hydrated. You are hydrated if your urine is the same colour as 1,2 or 3 on this chart. If your urine is the same colour as 4,5,6,7 or 8 then it's time to rehydrate and have a drink

Top tips to help yourself:

- Drink 6 or 8 cups of fluid everyday - all hot and cold drinks count towards hydration
- Make sure you have the time and fluids available that you enjoy
- Drink little and often if you find it hard to drink a whole glass at once
- Make sure you are in the correct position to drink
- Make sure you have the right cups and accessories such as straws or bottles
- Try to eat foods with high water content for example fruit and vegetables, stews and soups, milk based puddings, jelly, ice cream, yoghurt and custard
- If you are worried about getting up in the night to go to the loo, don't drink alcohol or caffeine close to bed time





Winter vaccinations

Look out for invitations for winter vaccinations and get them booked in

Flu

People sometimes think a bad cold is flu, but having flu can often be much worse than a cold and you may need to stay in bed for a few days. In the worst cases, flu can result in a stay in hospital, or even death. Eligibility for a free flu vaccination is below

- those aged 65 years and over
- those aged 18 years to under 65 years in clinical risk groups
- those in long-stay residential care homes
- carers in receipt of carer's allowance, or those who are the main carer of an older or disabled person
- Close contacts of immunocompromised individuals

Covid - 19

You are eligible for the 2025 Covid-19 vaccine if you:

- Are aged 75 or over
- Live in a care home for older adults
- Are immunosuppressed

Mental Wellbeing

What is mental wellbeing?

Mental wellbeing doesn't have one set meaning. We might use it to talk about how we feel, how well we're coping with daily life or what feels possible at the moment. Good mental wellbeing doesn't mean that you're always happy. Or that you're unaffected by your experiences.

And having good wellbeing doesn't always mean that you don't have a mental health problem. You may live with a mental health diagnosis but have good wellbeing right now. Or you might not have a mental health diagnosis but be struggling with your wellbeing at the moment.

Poor mental wellbeing can make it more difficult to cope with daily life.

Keep your spirits up

These tips may work for different people at different times. Only try what you feel comfortable with. And try not to put too much pressure on yourself if anything doesn't feel possible right now

Stay connected

You might choose to meet in person less often in winter – but a phone or video call can make a huge difference to how you feel

Keep moving and eat well

- Being active – even just a little bit – can help to give your mood a boost. A quick walk down the street, a dance around the kitchen or a stretch in the bed or a chair are all good pick-me ups
- Keep an eye on your appetite. If you're finding it difficult to cook and manage big meals, try eating what you fancy little and often. Something is better than nothing.
- Keeping moving and eating well can help reduce falls and maintain mobility.

Do something you enjoy every day

- Lots of people find a daily routine helpful. Have regular times to do things like get up, have a cup of tea or prepare food, and a small task to each day can make all the difference
- Do things that you enjoy doing and make them part of your routine. Maybe an old hobby you used to enjoy that you could pick up again? Are there any books you've been meaning to read or films that you want to watch?
- If you're not feeling very motivated to do things, you're not alone. You might find that you start to enjoy things more as you get more into the habit of doing them

Reach out when things are feeling tough

- Lots of things can leave us feeling anxious and worried – whether it's to do with our personal lives or things that are happening around the world. It's important to remember that you're not alone in feeling this way
- If you've been feeling down for a while and it's stopping you from doing the things that matter, making you feel listless or like you don't have any energy, you don't have to go through it alone
- Talk to friends or family, and if things have been this way for a while or are starting to worry yourself or those around you, speak to a healthcare professional. Health care services are here for you, and it's important to get support when you need it

Adapt your routine for winter

It may be helpful to think about how you can adapt your routine for the winter months. For example, you could spend time doing crafts, perhaps join a new group, or learning a new skill.

Try to get some natural light as part of your routine. For example, you could try sitting by a window where you can look at the sky or trees or watch birds and other animals. This can help give you a sense of space.

You could change rooms during the day depending on which rooms get the most light at different times if this is possible where you live. And when it does get dark, try to keep your living space well-lit so that you're not straining your eyes and to avoid trips and falls.

Look at photos or pictures of your favourite places in nature. Listen to natural sounds, like recordings or apps that play bird songs, ocean waves or rainfall.

There are lots of different ways that you can relax, take notice of the present moment, and use your creative side to express your feelings. These include:

- arts and crafts, such as sewing, drawing, colouring, painting or collage
- upcycling or finding creative new uses for things
- DIY
- playing musical instruments, singing, or listening to music
- writing
- yoga or exercise
- mindfulness/meditation

Check out this website for more information <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/>

Keep as active as possible

Trying to incorporate a little activity into your daily routine is just as important as attending classes or exercise sessions and can help improve your strength, balance, mobility and mental wellbeing. Why not get into the habit of doing this cuppa routine every time you are in the kitchen making a drink.

Move it or Lose it | For healthier, happier, more active lives



The cuppa routine

4 simple exercises in the time it takes to boil the kettle!

1 10 x heel raises

- Feet hip width apart, hold onto the work surface for support
- Raise your heels then lower back down slowly



2 10 x arm raises

- Start with arms by side
- Lift up no higher than shoulder height, then lower (use tinned food as weights)



3 10 x sit to stand

- Place chair against wall or cupboards
- Sit on front third of chair - stand up, then slowly sit back down



4 10 x leg raises

- Hold on to work surface or chair
- Keep feet facing forwards, lift leg to the side and lower slowly



Watch the full routine on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w3VICljvWsY&t=3s>

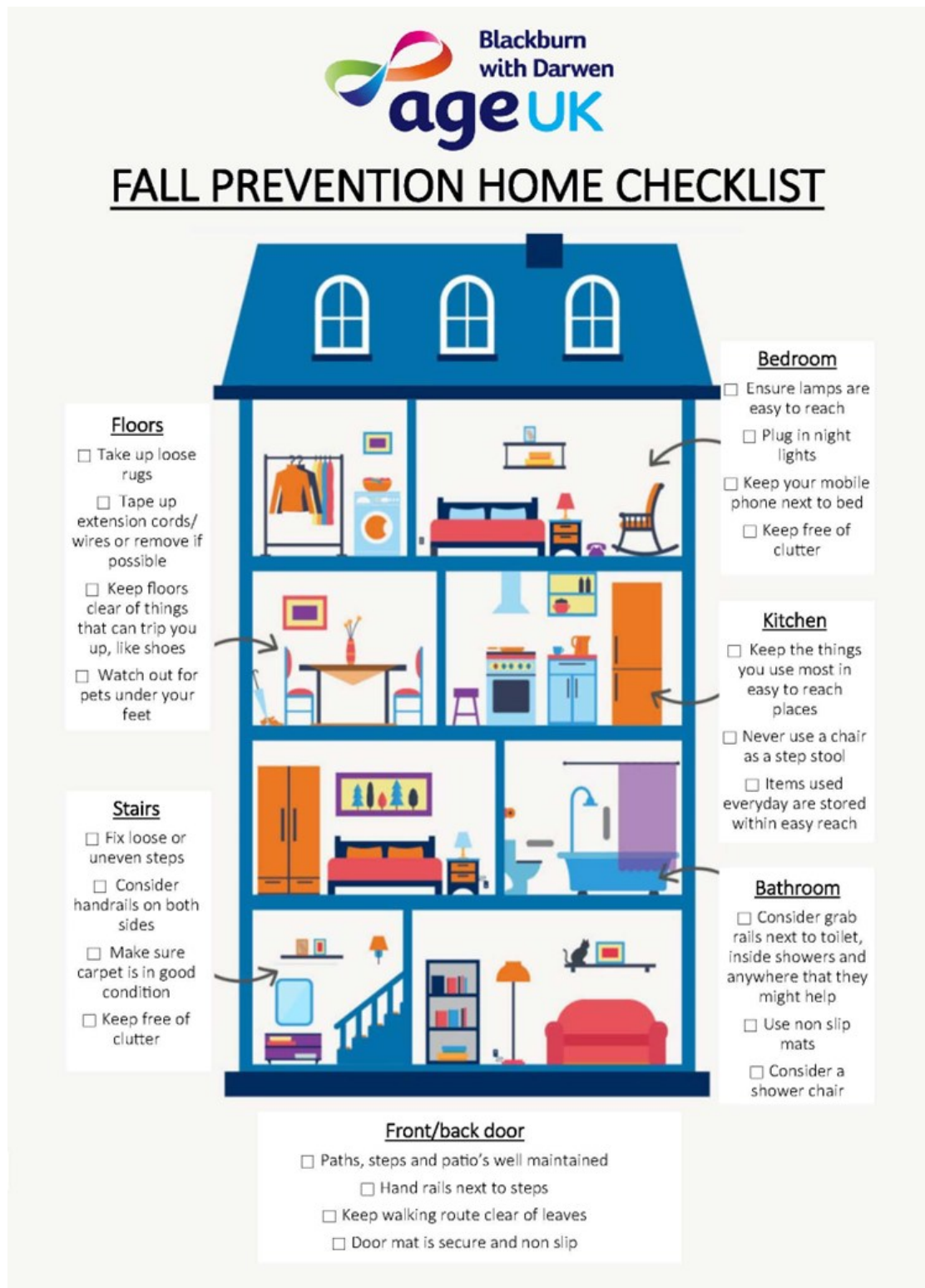
For more information on Move it or Lose it go to: www.moveitorloseit.co.uk

or email us at info@moveitorloseit.co.uk

**MOVE IT
OR LOSE IT!®**

Avoiding Falls

Having a fall as you get older can cause serious problems health wise so maintaining strength and balance as you age is very important. Why not check out our top tips for both yourself and your home to help prevent a fall. If you are worried about falling please get in touch with us and we will try to help.



- Get your eyes tested and wear glasses if needed – keep them next to your bed at night
- Get your hearing checked and wear your hearing aids
- Get regular medication reviews
- Check footwear fits correctly and is fastened securely
- Make sure clothing doesn't trail on the floor

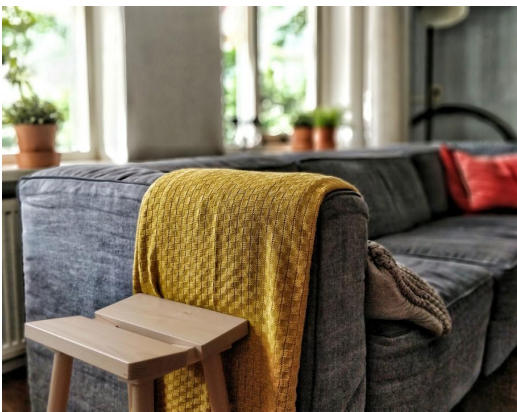
Keeping your home warm and dry

Try to keep as much heat in the house as possible

As soon as the sun goes down and stops feeding warmth into any room of the house, drawing a thick pair of curtains is a great way to add an extra layer of insulation. Heat escapes out of windows due to their lack of insulation, but by adding a layer between the windows and a room, you create another barrier to keep warm air in and cold air out. However, if the sun is shining in, pull the curtains back and allow the rays to heat the room throughout the day, then as soon as the room falls into shadow close the curtains to preserve heat.



Move your sofa

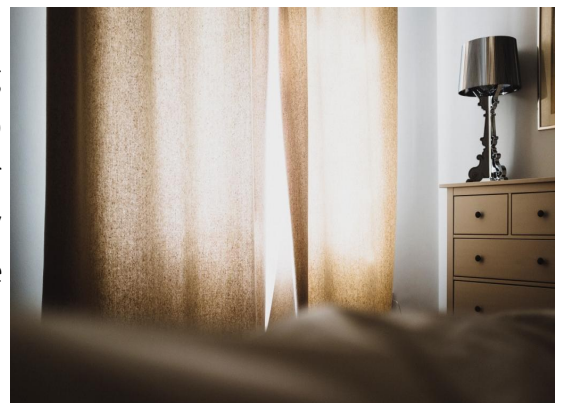


Having a sofa in front of the radiator may seem like a good idea, but it prevents a lot of the heat from being able to properly circulate. Keeping all radiators uncovered will mean they can work to their full potential, and you'll feel the full benefit when your heating is on.

To get even more benefit from radiators, you can buy or make radiator panels, which reflect the heat produced back into the room. These reflective panels are easy to install and ensure that no heat is lost to the wall.

Block out draughts

It may seem obvious but blocking draughts can make a big difference. Using draught excluders that sit along the bottom of a door frame or getting a handyman in to reseal doors and windows can stop unwanted cold air getting into any room. Draught excluders are relatively cheap and do not need installation, plus they can be moved so they are great for doors that are constantly in use.



Wrap up well and stay stocked up

Layering's the best way to keep warm in winter. If you're heading out, don't forget the temperature can drop drastically as the sun goes down so take woollies out with you, even if you don't need them immediately. It could be a good idea to stock up on cold and sore throat remedies. Your pharmacist can give you advice if you're feeling under the weather about what might help. Heat escapes from the head, so wearing a hat even indoors can help you keep warmer.

Keep moving

Try not to sit still for more than one hour at a time. Try our Cuppa exercises in the pack when you make a brew. Just keeping arms and legs moving as much as possible when you are seated also makes a difference.

Prescriptions



The poster features the NHS logo in the top right corner. On the left, a blue vertical banner contains the text 'GOOD HEALTH starts at HOME' in white. Below this, a quote reads: '“My daughter collects my prescriptions for me.”'. Underneath the quote, it says: 'Not taking medications correctly can lead to conditions getting worse or making you more poorly.' and 'If you are struggling to collect your prescription why not ask a neighbour, friend or relative to collect instead?'. At the bottom of the banner is a QR code and the text 'Find out more here about how good health can start at home.' The background of the poster shows an elderly woman with short white hair, wearing a pink top, sitting at a wooden table. A pharmacist's hand is visible, handing her a small white pill bottle. A white paper, likely a prescription, lies on the table.

Have a contingency plan in place if you are unable to leave the house to collect your prescriptions. Speak to your pharmacist about getting medication delivered if you do not have anyone to collect it for you

Avoiding damp and condensation

The winter weather and the often damp conditions in Blackburn with Darwen can often lead to an increase in condensation. Care Network's Healthy Homes project offers all adults and families in Blackburn with Darwen expert knowledge, advice and support to help you to achieve a warm, hazard-free and energy-efficient home. For more information visit www.carenetwork.org.uk/Listing/Category/healthy-homes or telephone 01254 507255 (option 3)



Reduce moisture in the air:

To save money, **keep lids on saucepans when cooking**, so you can cook on a lower heat setting & it reduces the amount of steam formed.

More ventilation is needed in the kitchen & bathroom when cooking, washing up, bathing & drying clothes. To help, **open the windows**, but keep the doors shut.

When filling up the bath, run the cold water first then add the hot water – this will help to reduce the steam (which leads to condensation) **by as much as 90%!**

Whilst in the bath or shower, **keep the door closed** to stop moist air getting all around your home.

When you finish bathing, **open the window for 10 minutes** or so to let the moist air out still keeping the door closed.

Where possible, **dry your washing outdoors**.

Try to avoid hanging your washing on radiators. Use a **clothes horse in the bathroom** with the extractor fan on or the window open & keep the door closed.

Open the windows to allow the moisture out if you're drying clothes indoors.

If you use a tumble dryer, ensure that the **ventilation pipe leads outside**. If it's a condensing tumble dryer, **open a window** to allow the moisture out.

Increase the airflow:

Don't **overfill** your cupboards.

Open windows when possible to allow the moisture out.

Make sure that any vents in your walls or windows are **open** & not blocked or covered.

Try to leave space **between the furniture & the walls**.

Where possible, **position wardrobes & furniture against internal walls** (walls which have a room on both sides) rather than against outside walls.

Heating your home:

When a home is heated to a high temperature very quickly it **can make condensation worse**. Try to avoid this.

Bringing the home to a high temperature quickly is **more expensive** than maintaining a stable temperature.

Heating your home to **between 18-21 degrees**, with 40-60% humidity helps to avoid damp & mould occurring.

Try to keep **unused rooms heated to a low temperature** to help ward off any condensation & mould.

How to deal with mould:

Wipe down **windows & window sills when they get wet**, or if you see condensation.

Wipe down mouldy surfaces with a **mould cleaner** (always follow the manufacturer's instructions).

When decorating, **use an anti-mould paint** where you've had problems (area must be completely clear of mould first).

Don't brush or Hoover the mould as this can **spread the number of spores** in the air.

To help support people with damp & condensation, or to find out more, get in touch via the [Care Network website](#) or give us a call on the number below (choose option 3)

Fuel Suppliers priority registers

It's always worth adding yourself to fuel suppliers priority register – this ensures that you are prioritised in the event of a supply failure as well as other benefits



Utility suppliers' Priority Service Register for vulnerable people

Utility companies offer a Priority Services Register for customers whom require extra support and additional services (vulnerable people).

You can sign up to this service register if you are:

- a pensioner
- disabled or chronically sick
- have a hearing or visual impairment

When on the register you can get the following support:

- free advice on being more energy-efficient
- protection from cold callers with a password protection scheme to keep you safe
- your meter moved free of charge if it's hard for you to use or read the meter
- a free quarterly meter reading if you can't read your meter
- bills sent to a relative, carer or friend to help you check them
- your bills and meter readings in braille, large print, audio tape, textphone or typetalk if you're visually impaired
- advance notice if your supply is going to be interrupted
- priority reconnection if your supply is interrupted

Free gas safety checks

You may also be eligible for a free gas safety check, for this you must own your home and get a means tested benefit such as Pension Credit or Income Support. In addition, one of the following must apply:

- you live alone
- you live with other adults who are aged over 60, disabled and or chronically sick



Monday - Friday 9am to 5pm
0800 072 8625, or 0800 294 8604



0808 501 200
If you're deaf or have hearing loss you can email
deaf.contact@eonenergy.com



Fill out the online Priority Services Register form
www.unitedutilities.com/priorityservice
Call on 0345 672 288

To find out more about the priority services register please visit <https://www.thepsr.co.uk>

Useful Contact Numbers

-  Age UK Blackburn with Darwen - 01254 266620 www.ageukbwd.org.uk
-  Blackburn with Darwen Help Hub - 01254 588111
-  Care Network Hub - 01254 507255 www.carenetwork.org.uk
-  Age UK Advice Line - 0800 678 1602 www.ageuk.org.uk
-  Blackburn with Darwen Healthy Living Bill Busters - 01254292650 billbuster@bwdhl.org.uk
-  Blackburn Food Bank - 01254 672756 info@blackburn.foodbank.org.uk
-  Darwen Food Larder – www.darwenf1@gmail.com
-  The Wish Centre Blackburn 0300 5610440 info@thewishcentre.org
-  Lancashire Women - 0300 330 1354 talktous@lancashirewomen.org
-  Lancashire & South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust Metal Health Helpline - 0800 953 0110
-  Lancashire Mind - www.lancashiremind.org.uk
-  Samaritans - 116 123 free at any time jo@samaritans.org
-  Shelter emergency national helpline - 0800 800 4444
-  Asthma and Lung UK - 0300 222 5800 www.asthma.org.uk
-  The Wellbeing service and RE:FRESH - 01254 682037 wellbeing@blackburn.gov.uk
-  Bewell BwD - 01254 585570 www.bewellbwd.com
-  National Domestic Abuse Freephone Helpline - 0808 2000 247
-  Alzheimer's Society 0333 150 3456 - www.dementiaconnect.alzheimers.org.uk/
-  Diabetes UK - 0345 123 2399 - www.diabetes.org.uk
-  **Gas Emergency Service 0800 111 999**- free number 24 hours a day, if you can smell gas, think you have a leak or are worried about carbon monoxide fumes
-  **Electricity Northwest 0800 195 4141** - emergency number
-  United Utilities 24/7 emergency line on **0345 672 3723**
-  **National Power Cut Helpline** - If you have or suspect an electrical power cut, call the National Power Cut Helpline on **105** (24 hours, 7 days a week).