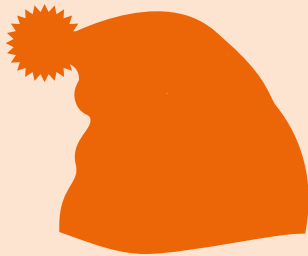


# Winter wrapped up

A guide to keeping warm, safe and well this winter

*Health & wellbeing*



**SPREAD  
THE  
WARMTH**

# **We are Age Cymru.**

Age Cymru is the national charity for older people in Wales.

We campaign, we research and we fundraise to make sure we build a better life for all older people. We ensure older people's voices are heard, we challenge and change attitudes and we fight discrimination wherever we find it.

We provide a range of national and local services and programmes directly to older people in the community and we ensure the highest standards so you can be assured of consistency and quality wherever you see the Age Cymru name and logo.

Our family includes local Age Cymru partners and national partners, Age NI, Age Scotland and Age UK.

Age Cymru  
Mariners House  
Trident Court  
East Moors Road  
Cardiff  
CF24 5TD

**029 2043 1555**

**[www.agecymru.org.uk](http://www.agecymru.org.uk)**

Registered Charity 1128436

Date of publication: October 2021

---

***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.***

---



**Thank you to the Welsh Government Warm Homes Nest scheme for kindly sponsoring this guide. Since 2011, the Nest scheme has installed improvements in over 46,800 homes across Wales and helped thousands of customers to reduce their energy bills. Call free phone 0808 808 2244 or visit [www.nest.gov.wales](http://www.nest.gov.wales) to find out more.**

## **Contents**

What this guide is about	<b>4</b>
Coronavirus (COVID-19)	<b>5</b>
Preparing your home for winter	<b>7</b>
Your winter health	<b>10</b>
Keeping yourself warm	<b>17</b>
Keeping your home warm	<b>19</b>
What extra money could I be eligible for?	<b>21</b>
Heating your home efficiently	<b>22</b>
Spread the Warmth this winter with Age Cymru	<b>26</b>
Useful organisations	<b>27</b>
Helpful telephone numbers	<b>31</b>
Help us be there for someone else	<b>32</b>

# What this guide is about

This guide explains what you can do to get yourself and your home ready for winter, as well as where to go for more information and support.

Throughout this guide you will find suggestions for organisations that can offer further information and advice about your options. Their contact details can be found in the 'Useful organisations' section (see pages 27-30).

You can also call Age Cymru Advice on 0300 303 44 98 for further information.

This guide is applicable across Wales. In England, Northern Ireland and Scotland contact Age UK, Age NI and Age Scotland respectively for equivalent information.

## Key

what  
next?

This symbol indicates who to contact for the next steps you need to take.

# Coronavirus (COVID-19)

At the time of writing (October 2021), COVID-19 remains a serious global health concern. Even with the vaccine programme, the outlook for winter 2021-22 is difficult to predict. If you have not yet had your vaccine, NHS Wales and the Welsh Government strongly recommend that you book one (the Government has also now announced a booster vaccine programme for people who are most at risk - see below). Further information can be found at:

**[www.gov.wales/get-your-covid-19-vaccination](https://www.gov.wales/get-your-covid-19-vaccination)**

Alternatively, if you don't have internet access, you can contact your GP.

In addition to the vaccine, some of the basic measures for protecting yourself are similar to the advice for flu contained later on in our guide, such as washing your hands regularly or using hand sanitizer. However, there are also additional measures in regard to COVID-19, some of which (at the time of writing) are Government requirements, such as wearing face coverings on public transport and indoor settings (with the exception of hospitality premises - though this is being kept under review by the Welsh Government).

As rules may be subject to change, for reliable and up to date information, visit the Welsh Government's website at:

**[www.gov.wales/coronavirus](https://www.gov.wales/coronavirus)**

At the end of September 2021, the Welsh Government announced that people who were eligible and received their vaccinations in Phase 1 of the COVID-19 vaccination programme should be offered a third dose COVID-19 booster vaccine (however, there will need to be a minimum 6-month interval after someone's second dose before a booster can be given).

People eligible under Phase 1 included the most at risk groups, such as people living in care homes, those aged 50 and over, people with underlying health conditions and carers. Further details are available on our website at:

**[www.ageuk.org.uk/cymru/information-advice/coronavirus/coronavirus-vaccine](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/cymru/information-advice/coronavirus/coronavirus-vaccine)**

There may be opportunities to co-administer the COVID-19 booster vaccine and flu vaccine, but this is only where timing and other logistics allow.

The Welsh Government has advised that it is important that those now eligible for a booster dose take up the offer, as there is the possibility of reduced immunity from their previous doses over time.

People who didn't receive their initial vaccine under Phase 1 are not eligible for the booster vaccination at the time of writing, but the situation will be kept under review by the Government and they may become eligible at a later date.

**For up to date information on booster vaccines during winter 2021-22, visit the Welsh Government or NHS 111 Wales websites.**

**For further information on flu (influenza) and the annual flu vaccination programme see our section starting on page 10, 'Your winter health'.**

# Preparing your home for winter

Here are some things you can do before winter sets in to help keep you warm, safe and well this winter.

## Check your heating system

- If your home has gas central heating, this needs to have an annual safety check. All gas appliances in your property need to be safety checked by a Gas Safe registered engineer every year and serviced according to the manufacturer's instructions. As well as making sure that there is no risk of carbon monoxide leaks, the boiler will also be checked to make sure that it is in good working order. If you're a tenant, your landlord is legally required to arrange gas safety checks at least once a year. They must keep records of these checks, which you can ask to see.



## Gas-Safe registered engineer

- When an engineer comes to your home, ask to see their Gas Safe ID card, note down their licence card number. Visit the Gas Safe Register website or call the free helpline to find out how to check their licence, or to find a registered engineer in your area (see page 28).

## Chimney sweep

- A good chimney is essential to efficient and safe operation of all solid fuel burning heating and cooking appliances. HETAS (Heating Equipment Testing and Approvals Scheme) recommends that chimney sweeping is best carried out by a HETAS Approved Chimney Sweep *at least* once a year, depending upon the appliance and fuel being used.
- Never block air vents. If you have wood-burning, coal or gas heaters make sure there's enough fresh air circulating.

**See our free guide *Save energy, pay less* for tips and our factsheet *Help with heating costs in Wales* for more in-depth information.**

### Staying safe

- Put guards on open fires, never hang washing near to an open fire. Don't place damp clothing on warm radiators. Don't block up air vents, as fires and heaters need ventilation. Good ventilation also helps to prevent condensation.



### Insulating and draught-proofing your home

- Contact your energy supplier to see whether they have further advice to help you prepare your home for winter.

### Your main stopcock

- If water pipes freeze they can burst, so you need to be able to turn off the water at the main stopcock. You will need to check that it's not jammed, it must be easy for you to turn. If it's jammed, you may need to get it replaced.

### Make Tuesday 'Test-it Tuesday'

- Get into the habit of testing your smoke alarms regularly to make sure they're working and so that you're familiar with the sound.
- The fire service offers a free home fire safety check and advice. To book your free check call 0800 169 1234. You can also find out more information on the Fire Service website: [www.fireservice.co.uk/safety/](http://www.fireservice.co.uk/safety/)



### Carbon monoxide - The silent killer

- You should have a carbon monoxide alarm fitted in each room that has a gas appliance, as there is a risk of carbon monoxide poisoning if air vents become blocked. It's possible to buy alarms that are audible, visible and or vibrate. For more information on this contact Age Cymru Advice or the Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID) (see the useful organisations section on pages 27-30).



### Get Gritting

- Grit the ground around your home. Keep a mixture of rock salt and grit handy to put on steps or paths in icy weather. If temperatures have dropped below freezing you will need to scatter more of the mixture. Some councils provide free bags of the mix. Local DIY shops and larger supermarkets may also sell it.



### Flood warnings

- Sign up for free flood warnings from Floodline (see page 28).

### Grab rails

- Consider fitting a grab rail if you have steps at your front or back door. Contact your local Age Cymru for more information.

### Be prepared for a power cut

- Keep a battery operated radio, torch and spare batteries handy in case severe weather causes a temporary power cut. Keep your mobile phone, laptop or tablet fully charged, so you can use the battery power if ever you're without electricity.

**POWER CUT?  
CALL 105**



### Walking the dog

- If you're worried about walking your dog in icy weather, contact The Cinnamon Trust (see page 28). They may be able to match you with a dog-walking volunteer in your area.

### Keep useful numbers to hand

- Use page 31 to write down emergency numbers, dates and appointments and keep this by your phone.

### Financial support

- Make sure you claim all the financial support you can to help with heating bills. Your local Age Cymru can advise you.

# Your winter health

## Keep moving

Keeping active actually boosts your immune function. You needn't worry about joining a gym or donning the lycra and sweat bands! Everyday chores such as washing up and Hoovering all count as physical activity. Keeping active can lift your mood as well as boosting your energy levels. While you may not feel like it at the time, try to do little and often. If you're able to get up and walk around, this is an opportunity to make yourself a warm drink or snack.

## Eat warm, eat well

Hot meals and drinks help to keep you warm, so eat at least one hot meal each day and have hot drinks during the day. Keep basic and long life food items in the cupboard or freezer in case it's too cold to go out shopping. You could also do your food shopping online and get it delivered to your door. Include a good range of foods in your diet and aim for at least five portions of fruit and vegetables each day, so that you're getting plenty of nutrients and vitamins.



Frozen vegetables are as good as fresh, if not better. Your body needs proper nutrition at all times, but especially during cold and flu season when your immune system is under threat. You need to drink plenty too. If you're worried about a poor appetite, speak to your GP. Having a hot drink before bed and keeping one in a flask by your bedside can offer warmth, comfort and hydration if you wake early feeling the chill.

## Have a seasonal flu jab

Flu (also known as influenza) can be serious for some people. Flu viruses change regularly and immunity wanes, so it's advisable to have a flu jab every year if you are in one of the groups the Welsh Government lists as most vulnerable - see below. Flu is not only unpleasant, it can increase your risk of developing more serious illnesses such as bronchitis and pneumonia, or can make existing conditions worse. In the worst cases, flu can result in a stay in hospital, or even death. Every year people die from the complications of flu.

The Welsh Government's 'national influenza immunisation programme 2021 to 2022' indicates that this year the following will be eligible for a free flu jab:



- people aged 50 and over\*;
- people under 50 who have a long term health condition;
- someone who is a carer for an older person or someone with a long term health condition or disability (for example, if you help to look after a family member or friend);
- people with a learning disability;
- healthcare workers with direct patient contact;
- staff providing homecare services, or working in care homes who have regular contact with vulnerable people.

**If you think you could be eligible for a free flu jab ask at your local pharmacy or your GP practice.**

\*This is based on what someone's age will be on 31 March 2022. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic the age group started at 65 and older; however, it was extended to over 50s for winter 2020-2021 and the Welsh Government have confirmed this will continue for winter 2021-2022.

Flu vaccinations are very safe but your vaccinated arm may be sore afterwards, or you may have a slight temperature or aching muscles for a few days - other side effects are rare. The flu jab cannot give you flu as the adult vaccine does not contain a live virus.

**A booster vaccine for COVID-19 may be offered to you at the same time as your flu vaccine - see the earlier section of this guide on the coronavirus for further information.**

### **Check you've had a 'pneumo' jab**

The 'pneumo' (pneumococcal) jab is a one-off jab that helps protect you against pneumonia, meningitis and septicaemia. Ask your GP about it if you're 65 and over and haven't had one or simply aren't sure.

### **Have good hand hygiene**

Good hand hygiene is a simple way to help prevent the spread of all germs and flu - including bacteria and viruses. It has also become very important in light of the coronavirus (COVID-19). Make sure you wash your hands regularly with soap and warm water. Where it is not possible to wash your hands with soap and warm water immediately, use an alcohol based, anti-bacterial hand sanitizer. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers can reduce the number of germs on hands in some situations, but sanitizers do not eliminate all types of germs. Clean surfaces that are likely to come into contact with your hands like your telephone, door handles, light switches, taps, books, kindle, ipad and computer keyboard regularly to get rid of any germs.

### **Coughs and sneezes - Catch it. Bin it. Kill it.**

Use disposable tissues to cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze and place used tissues in the bin as soon as possible and wash your hands again.



Don't scrunch up your used tissue in your hand and carry it around with you. If you feel a sneeze coming and you're not prepared with a tissue, sneeze into the fold of your arm as you're less likely to spread germs this way.

---

### ***Always use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol.***



### **Consider taking a vitamin D supplement**

Our bodies create vitamin D from sunlight when we're outdoors. We need it for healthy bones, teeth and muscles. During the winter months in the UK the sun isn't strong enough for our bodies to make vitamin D, and it's difficult to get the amount we need from food alone. You might want to speak to your GP or pharmacist to discuss taking a supplement to boost your levels in winter.

### **Protect yourself against chilblains**

To help prevent chilblains, keep your whole body warm at all times – have a look at the tips on the pages that follow. Wear trousers, socks, thick tights, leggings or leg warmers and a scarf, hat and gloves whenever you go out in the cold. Avoid trying to warm up too quickly, by sitting with your skin in direct contact with a radiator, hot water bottle, hot running shower, bath or other heat source. Talk to your GP if you get chilblains regularly or have diabetes.

## Contact burns

- When using a heating pad or electric blanket, choose one that has a timer that will shut off the device automatically.
- Avoid placing a heating pad or hot water bottle directly onto the skin.
- Place beds at least 4 feet from radiators, pipes, and heaters.

Use a hot-water bottle with a secure fitting cover, wheat bag or an electric blanket to warm the bed, but never use a hot-water bottle and an electric blanket together - remember water and electricity just don't mix.

- Check the stopper to see if the rubber has perished.
- Don't use if there's signs of a leak or the rubber has split.
- Be careful not to squeeze the bottle as you fill it as you risk scalding.
- Don't over fill.

### Safety tip

Remember to test your hot water bottle for leaks by filling with cool water first. Turn the bottle upside down over an empty sink.



## **Get a personal alarm**

Personal alarms allow you to call for help if you're unwell or have a fall and can't reach a telephone. You press a button on a pendant you wear around your neck or as a wrist band. This will connect you to a 24-hour call centre, where you can talk to someone who will contact a designated person to help you – usually a neighbour, friend, relative or the emergency services.

Contact your local council to see whether they run a personal alarm scheme. The Welsh Government has a list of all the local councils in Wales, together with links to their sites at: [www.gov.wales/find-your-local-authority](http://www.gov.wales/find-your-local-authority)

## **Keep your spirits up and stay connected**

It's not uncommon to feel a little low during the winter, especially when the days are short and darker by 4pm.

Try to stick to your usual routine and if you can't visit friends or relatives, make sure you phone them regularly to talk. Alternatively, if you have a computer or smart phone, you can use video call programs, such as Zoom or Skype.

If you feel lonely, contact your local Age Cymru to see if they are offering a befriending service. If there are no local services, contact Age Cymru Advice on 0300 303 44 98 for information on other services that may be available, such as friendship telephone calls.

If you are well enough to do so, try and get out in the fresh air whilst there is daylight by going for a short walk or a stroll in the middle of the day. Remember to dress for warmth and comfort - be mindful not to over exert yourself and keep your mouth and nose covered to protect your lungs from taking in that very cold air.

There may be local classes or social groups you can attend. Check your local community centre or library noticeboard to find out what opportunities there are in your area or contact our Age Cymru Advice line.

If you feel down for several weeks and you find little pleasure and interest in anything that you once enjoyed, making you feel listless and lacking in energy, it's very important to share these feelings with someone, perhaps a friend or your GP. Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a condition that strikes at a certain time of year - with most sufferers feeling worse in winter, when the days are shorter. Speak to your GP. For more information, see our free guide *Your mind matters*.

---

***Shorter daylight hours can leave us feeling low. It helps to do something you enjoy every day. If possible, go for a short walk in the middle of the day, if it's not too cold, or at least go outside while there is daylight.***

---





## Keeping yourself warm

Cold weather can have serious health risks, particularly as we get older and if we already have what health experts call a ‘chronic health condition’, such as diabetes, heart disease, or COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease).

If you’re exposed to a cold environment for a long time, or to extreme cold for only a short time, your blood pressure rises which means that there is added pressure being placed on your circulatory system, putting you at risk of a heart attack or stroke.

Even if it isn’t a severe winter, cold weather makes us more vulnerable to certain illnesses. Follow these tips to stay healthy and keep warm whether you’re indoors or heading out.

### Keep your hands and face warm

- As well as wearing gloves and a hat, always wrap a scarf around your face when you go out in cold weather, even for short intervals. This helps to warm the air you breathe.



---

***Even if it isn’t a severe winter, cold weather makes us more vulnerable to certain illnesses.***

---

## Layer up

- Several thin layers of clothing will keep you warmer than one thick layer, as the layers trap warm air. Clothes made from wool or fleecy synthetic fibres such as polyester are a better choice than cotton. Start with thermal underwear, warm tights or socks. A shawl or blanket will provide a lot of warmth whilst seated. Try to keep your feet up, as the air is cooler at ground level.
- Wear warm clothes in bed. When it's very cold, wear thermal underwear, bed socks and maybe even a hat – a lot of heat is lost through your head.

- Keep your feet warm. As with your hands and face, cold feet can trigger a potentially dangerous rise in blood pressure. Choose boots with non-slip soles and a warm lining, or wear thermal socks.



- Check local news and weather forecasts for advice when bad weather is forecast.

## Speak to your pharmacy

- Speak to your pharmacist about over the counter remedies for minor common ailments.
- Your pharmacist is best placed to advise, particularly if you are already taking prescribed medication.



# Keeping your home warm

Most of us spend a lot of time indoors in winter, so it's important that you are comfortable and that you keep your home warm. Low temperatures increase the risk of flu and other respiratory problems and can raise blood pressure. Blood pressure takes longer to return to normal in older people who have been out in the cold, increasing the risk of heart attacks and strokes. The colder your home, the higher the risk is to your health.

## Monitor the temperature in your home, as prevention is key!

- Keep your main living room around 70°F/21°C and the rest of your home heated to at least 65°F/18°C. Contact your local Age Cymru for a free thermometer card. You may want your main living room to be warmer than this, and if you feel cold, turn the heat up regardless of what the thermometer reads.
- 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. If you have individual thermostats on your radiators, make sure they're set at the right temperature in the rooms where you spend time. For more information about how to understand your heating controls, see our free guide *Save energy, pay less*.

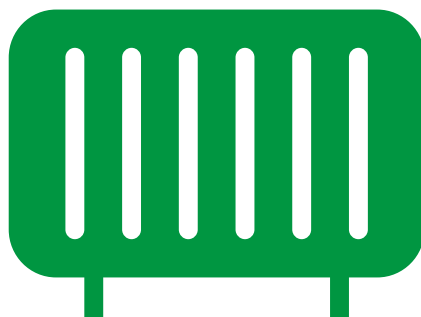


- Close the curtains at dusk and fit thermal linings if you can.



- Keep your bedroom window closed at night when the weather is cold. The coldest time of the day is just before dawn. Remember breathing in cold air raises the risk of chest infections, heart attack and stroke.

***If you feel cold, turn the heat up regardless of what the thermometer reads.***



## What extra money could I be eligible for?

Many of us worry about rising fuel costs, so it's important to make sure you're not missing out on any benefits or discounts you're entitled to that will help you keep your home warm.

In 2021-22, most people born on or before 26 September 1955 are entitled to the Winter Fuel Payment to help with heating costs. This is a tax-free payment of between £100 and £300 paid to you between November and December. Previous recipients should get the payment automatically, but if this is the first year that you are eligible, contact the Winter Fuel Payment helpline (see page 30) to ensure that you don't miss out.

If you receive Pension Credit, or certain other benefits, you're automatically paid a Cold Weather Payment when the temperature is at 0°C (32°F) or below for seven days in a row.

You may be entitled to a Warm Home Discount on your electricity bill if you receive the Guarantee Credit part of Pension Credit or if you're on a low income. It's a one-off discount usually made between October and March. If you have a prepayment electricity meter, you can receive the discount as a voucher to top up your meter. Check with your energy supplier or ask an advice agency such as Age Cymru. Find out more at [www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme](http://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme).

**what  
next?**

Contact your local Age Cymru to arrange a benefits check (see page 27) or use our online benefits calculator – go to [www.agecymru.org.uk/letstalkmoney](http://www.agecymru.org.uk/letstalkmoney). For further information also see our free guide *More Money in your pocket* and free factsheet *Help with heating costs in Wales*.

# Heating your home efficiently

Energy prices are high at the moment, but heating your home is easier and cheaper if it is well insulated and your heating works properly.

Nest or the Warm and Safe Homes (WASH) advice line should be able to advise you (see pages 29 and 30). For more energy saving tips see our free information guide *Save energy, pay less*.

## Priority Services Registers

Energy suppliers and distribution network operators have Priority Services Registers for people who need extra help. This could be because you're over pension age or living with a long-term health condition or disability. You might need support temporarily following an injury or illness. If you sign up for priority services you could get extra help and support, such as a unique password for you to confirm the identity of an electricity or gas employee calling at your home; or moving a prepayment meter if you are no longer able to access it.

You pay your gas and electricity bills to your energy supplier, and your distribution network operator is the company in charge of the supply to your area. Contact the Energy Networks Association to find out who your network operator is. To make sure you get as many services as possible you should join both your supplier's register and your distribution network operator's register, as they may offer different services.

## What to do if you can't pay your bill

Contact your energy supplier if you're having trouble paying your bills. Companies should not disconnect all-pensioner households during the winter months. You may be able to set up a repayment plan, or have a prepayment meter installed.

For more information on getting support to keep your home warm see our free guides *More money in your pocket* and *Save energy, pay less*. Also, see our free factsheet *Help with heating costs in Wales*. For further advice contact Citizens Advice or the WASH advice line (pages 28 and 30).

### The Welsh Government Warm Homes Nest scheme

The Nest scheme aims to reduce the number of households in fuel poverty by making homes more fuel-efficient.



This can lower your energy bills and benefit your health and wellbeing. Nest can offer free and impartial advice to all households in Wales and, if you are a homeowner or privately rent your home, you may be eligible for a package of free home energy efficiency improvements\*.

If you meet the eligibility criteria you will progress to a whole house assessment. This assessment will recommend appropriate energy efficiency measures for your property. Depending on individual circumstances, this might include:

- a new boiler;
- installation of central heating systems; or
- various insulation measures.

\* If you privately rent your home, you must get your landlord's permission before Nest can carry out any work. If you rent your home from the local authority (council) or a housing association you won't be eligible. However, social landlords must work to improve their housing stock, including that it is adequately heated, fuel efficient and properly insulated. If you live in social housing and feel that it needs energy efficiency improvements or repairs to the heating system, you could seek advice from Shelter Cymru or Citizens Advice (see pages 30 and 28).

There are a couple of ways in which you may meet the eligibility criteria:

**1. Based on you, or someone who lives with you, receiving a qualifying means tested benefit**

The qualifying benefits include Pension Credit; Housing Benefit; Universal Credit or an award from your local authority's Council Tax Reduction Scheme. You would also need to be living in a home that is energy inefficient and, therefore, expensive to heat.

**2. Based on you, or someone who lives with you, having a chronic respiratory, circulatory or mental health condition.**

In addition to the health condition, you would also need to have a household income below a defined threshold and live in a home that is energy inefficient and, therefore, expensive to heat.

More detailed information on the eligibility requirements can be found in our free factsheet *Help with heating costs in Wales*.

If Nest determines from your initial contact with them that you do not meet the eligibility criteria mentioned above, then they will seek to instead provide advice on:

- saving energy and water;
- making sure you are on the best energy and water tariffs for your needs;
- money management;
- benefit entitlements; and/or
- provide a referral onto other schemes or grants which may be able to carry out home energy efficiency improvements.

**For further information, you can contact Nest on freephone 0808 808 2244 (lines open Monday-Friday, 9am-6pm) or visit [www.nest.gov.wales](http://www.nest.gov.wales).**



## Energy Companies Obligation scheme

You might qualify for help from the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) scheme if:

- you receive certain qualifying benefits and are an owner-occupier or private tenant; or
- live in social housing with a low energy efficiency rating.

The qualifying benefits for owner-occupiers and private tenants include:

- the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit; or
- Attendance Allowance.

If you receive either of these, you do not have to meet any other criteria to qualify. For certain other benefits, there is an income threshold above which you cannot get help.

If you don't meet the conditions above, you can still get help if your local authority assess you as needing it. They may do this if you are in fuel poverty; are on a low income and vulnerable to the effects of cold; or your property has solid walls and neighbouring properties are having solid wall insulation carried out.

The WASH advice line may also be able to offer further information on accessing ECO measures (see page 30).

## Switching energy supplier

Check your current energy tariff and shop around to see if you can get a better deal. See our free guide *Save energy, pay less* and our factsheet *Getting the best energy deal* for more information.

It should be noted, however, that due to uncertainty in the energy market at the time of writing (October 2021) it might not necessarily be advisable, or even possible, to switch energy suppliers for a cheaper tariff at the current time. Contact Age Cymru Advice on 0300 303 44 98 for the latest information.

# Spread the Warmth this winter with Age Cymru

Spread the Warmth is a winter health and resilience campaign led by Age Cymru together with partners. Its aim is to raise public awareness of the health risks posed to older people during the colder weather. Each year too many older people die during the cold weather from cold related illness. Many of these deaths are preventable.

Age Cymru offers information and advice to empower older people to do everything they possibly can to protect themselves during colder weather. Spread the Warmth offers health information and advice to promote winter health and resilience to older people across Wales.

Our campaign aims to tackle the problems that winter brings and make it easier for thousands of older people in need to manage during the colder months.

Some older people find it difficult to pay their heating bills and keep their homes warm. We know that thousands live in just one room to keep warm and make difficult choices between heating and eating. It's a fundamental human need to have a warm home and nutritious food. Many older people are considered to be in fuel poverty, having to spend 10 per cent or more of their income on energy costs.

Working with our partners across Wales, we hope to reach the most vulnerable older people in Wales to ensure that they have access to the most appropriate service and support for their needs.

**SPREAD  
THE  
WARMTH**

Please help us to reach those people who desperately need our help to keep warm, safe and well this winter. You can help us spread the word on 'Spread the Warmth'.

[www.agecymru.org.uk/stw](http://www.agecymru.org.uk/stw)

Call us: **029 2043 1555**

# Useful organisations

## Age Cymru

We provide information and advice for people in later life through our bilingual advice line, publications and online.

To find out if there's a local Age Cymru near you and to order free copies of our information guides and factsheets call:

**Age Cymru Advice 0300 303 44 98 (9am to 4pm, Monday - Friday) or email: [advice@agecymru.org.uk](mailto:advice@agecymru.org.uk)**

If you prefer, you can also contact us by letter at:  
Age Cymru, Ground Floor, Mariners House,  
Trident Court, East Moors Road, Cardiff CF24 5TD

Website: [www.agecymru.org.uk/advice](http://www.agecymru.org.uk/advice)

In England, contact

**Age UK Advice:** 0800 678 1602

[www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)

In Northern Ireland, contact

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

[www.ageni.org](http://www.ageni.org)

In Scotland, contact

**Age Scotland:** 0800 124 4222

[www.agescotland.org.uk](http://www.agescotland.org.uk)

## Care and Repair Cymru

Older people's housing champion working to ensure all older people have homes that are safe, secure and appropriate to their needs.

Call your local agency: 0300 111 3333

[www.careandrepair.org.uk](http://www.careandrepair.org.uk)

### **Cinnamon Trust**

Charity for older people and their pets. They have volunteers who may be able to walk your dog for you in icy conditions.

Tel: 01736 757 900

[www.cinnamon.org.uk](http://www.cinnamon.org.uk)

### **Citizens Advice Bureaus (CABs)**

National network of free advice centres offering confidential and independent advice, face to face or by telephone.

Tel: 0800 702 2020

Details of your nearest CAB can be found at:

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk/wales](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/wales)

### **Energy Networks Association**

Contact them to find out who your network operator is.

Tel: 020 7706 5100

[www.energynetworks.org](http://www.energynetworks.org)

### **Energy Saving Trust**

Provides online advice on saving energy.

[www.energysavingtrust.org.uk](http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk)

### **Floodline**

Free 24-hour service that provides flood warnings by phone, text or email.

Tel: 0345 988 1188

### **Gas Safe Register**

You can check if an engineer is on the register by visiting the website.

Tel: 0800 408 5500

If you suspect a gas leak, call the 24-hour National Gas Emergency Helpline on 0800 111 999

[www.gassaferegister.co.uk](http://www.gassaferegister.co.uk)

## **Heating Equipment Testing and Approvals Scheme (HETAS)**

A specialist organisation approving biomass and solid fuel heating appliances, fuels and services. They also keep a register of competent installers, servicing engineers and chimney sweeps.

Tel: 01684 278170  
[www.hetas.co.uk](http://www.hetas.co.uk)

## **Help Me Quit**

Find your local group and for general advice on quitting.

Tel: 0800 085 2219  
[www.helpmequit.wales](http://www.helpmequit.wales)

## **Nest**

Welsh Government scheme to reduce the number of households in fuel poverty.

Tel: 0808 808 22 44 (free from landlines or a mobile)  
[www.nest.gov.wales](http://www.nest.gov.wales)

## **NHS 111 Wales**

NHS 24-hour helpline for advice if you feel unwell.

Tel: 111

They also have a website that provides information about NHS services, healthy living and health conditions.

[www.111.wales.nhs.uk](http://www.111.wales.nhs.uk)

## **Power Up Energy Advice**

A scheme run by Western Power Distribution and the Energy Saving Trust, covering Mid and South Wales. Offers a range of income, tariff and energy efficiency advice to vulnerable people.

Tel: 0808 808 2274  
[www.westernpower.co.uk/power-up](http://www.westernpower.co.uk/power-up)



### **Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID)**

A charity which works to make life fully inclusive for deaf people and those with hearing loss or tinnitus.

Tel: 0808 808 0123

Website: [www.rnid.org.uk](http://www.rnid.org.uk)

### **Shelter Cymru**

A charity providing telephone advice to people with housing problems.

Housing advice helpline: 08000 495 495

[www.sheltercymru.org.uk](http://www.sheltercymru.org.uk)

### **Warm and Safe Homes (WASH) Advice line**

The WASH Advice Service is operated by the charity, National Energy Action (NEA). It provides free, confidential advice on energy bills and keeping warm and safe in your home.

Tel: 0800 304 7159

Website: [www.nea.org.uk/advice/wash-advice/](http://www.nea.org.uk/advice/wash-advice/)

### **Welsh Government**

The devolved government for Wales.

Tel: 0300 060 4400

[www.gov.wales](http://www.gov.wales)

### **Winter Fuel Payment Centre**

Tel: 0800 731 0160

Website: [www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment/how-to-claim](http://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment/how-to-claim)

This information leaflet has been prepared by Age Cymru and contains general advice only, which we hope will be of use to you. Nothing in this leaflet should be construed as the giving of specific advice and it should not be relied on as a basis for any decision or action. Neither Age Cymru, nor any of its subsidiary companies or charities accept any liability arising from its use. We aim to ensure that the information is as up to date and accurate as possible, but please be warned that certain areas are subject to change from time to time.

# Helpful telephone numbers

Gas supplier .....

.....

Electricity supplier .....

.....

Water supplier .....

.....

Plumber .....

.....

My local pharmacy .....

.....

My GP practice .....

.....

.....

My local Age Cymru .....

.....

.....

Flu jab date .....

Boiler check date .....

Other .....

.....

# Help us be there for someone else

We hope you found this guide helpful. When times are tough, it's so important to get some support. Do you know you could help us reach someone else who needs a little help?

## 1 Volunteer with us

All volunteer roles at Age Cymru support us to improve lives and help us work towards an age friendly Wales. However you'd like to get involved, we'd love to hear from you –

**[www.agecymru.org.uk/volunteer](http://www.agecymru.org.uk/volunteer)**

## 2 Remember us in your will

With a gift to Age Cymru in your will, you can do so much to make sure older people have the support they deserve in the years to come. Leave a world less lonely –

**[www.agecymru.org.uk/legacy](http://www.agecymru.org.uk/legacy)**

## 3 Donate to us

Every donation we receive helps us be there for someone when they need us.

- **£10** helps towards a fully trained expert to investigate queries from callers to our free telephone information and advice service.
- **£20** helps towards the cost of us producing our information guides and factsheets for older people.

**To make a donation, call us on 029 2043 1555 or [www.agecymru.org.uk/donate](http://www.agecymru.org.uk/donate)**

**Thank  
you!**



# Do you worry about your energy bills?

Welsh Government's Warm Homes Nest scheme is working to make Welsh homes warmer and more energy-efficient places to live. The Nest scheme looks to support people in Wales living on a lower income who receive a means tested benefit or live with a respiratory, circulatory or mental health condition.



Nest offers a range of free, impartial advice and, if you are eligible, a package of free home energy efficiency improvements such as a new boiler, central heating or insulation. This can lower your energy bills and benefit your health and wellbeing.

Want to find out more? Visit

[nest.gov.wales](https://nest.gov.wales)

Call Freephone

**0808 808 2244**

# What should I do now?

For more information on the issues covered in this guide, or to order any of our publications, please call us free on **0300 303 44 98** or visit **[www.agecymru.org.uk](http://www.agecymru.org.uk)**

The following may be useful:

- Age Cymru's information guide, *More money in your pocket: How to claim the right benefits in later life*
- Age Cymru's factsheet, *Help with heating costs in Wales*

If contact details for your local Age Cymru are not in the box below, call free on **0300 303 44 98**.

