

Keep warm, safe and well this winter



Be prepared for the cold weather

As the cold weather approaches, it's important to be prepared.

The cold weather affects all of us, including our relatives, friends and neighbours, but particularly older and vulnerable people in our community.

This leaflet provides you with some handy tips on how to get ready, keep warm and stay well this winter.

Keeping your home warm

It's important that you test your heating and make sure it's working correctly to help avoid any loss of heating or hot water when you need it most. Please check that your boiler has had its annual service and that your home is ready for the cold weather.

- If you haven't used your heating for a while, turn it on for 20-30 minutes to make sure it's working properly and all radiators are heating up as expected
- Make sure you know how your thermostat and radiator valves work
- Set your heating to come on earlier, rather than just turning up your thermostat to warm your house quickly, and set your radiator valves higher in rooms where you spend the most time
- Make sure you have sufficient credit on your gas and electric meter
- Keep your windows and curtains closed at dusk to keep out draughts
- If you're going away during winter, set the thermostat to **5°C** to help prevent frozen pipes
- Know where your stop cock is and how to turn your water off if your pipes freeze to prevent them from bursting.





The recommended temperature for your main living area should be between **18-21°C**.

21°C+ for elderly customers.

Other areas of your house should be kept at a minimum of **16°C**.



Get ready for winter

You can help yourself by getting your home ready for winter. Remind yourself what your repairs responsibilities are and know what to do in an emergency.

- Check your lights inside and outside of your home and make sure you have the right bulbs in stock so you're able to replace them
- Stock up on spare batteries in case you need to replace them in your thermostat or smoke alarms
- Keep a torch handy in case of power cuts
- Remember, there's lots of things you can do to help prevent condensation and mould in your home. Keep your home well ventilated if you're drying washing indoors, cooking and using the shower
- Sign up for free flood alerts at <https://check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk/>
- Store emergency and useful contact numbers in your phone. You can call 105 to report or get information about power cuts in the local area.

Important information about repairs

- Make sure you know your responsibilities when it comes to repairs in your home. Emergency repairs are defects which put your health, safety or security at immediate risk. These must be reported by phoning **0300 111 1000**. We aim to complete emergency repairs within 24 hours from the time it is reported to us.
- Following heavy rain, the rainwater will soak away, so there's no need to report it unless you are worried that the water will access your home
- Occasionally, during periods of severe weather, we may need to cancel non-urgent appointments so that we can carry out emergency repairs. Non-urgent appointments will be re-arranged during these times
- If you notice that your fence, gate or guttering has been damaged in the bad weather, please let us know and place any loose, broken sections on the ground in a safe place to prevent anyone from tripping over it
- Always let us know about any health problems or disabilities in your household, so we can update your records and respond to calls and emergencies appropriately

How to report a repair

You can report a repair by:

- Reporting through www.mythirteen.co.uk
- Contacting our customer service centre on **0300 111 1000**
- Emailing us at: customerservices@thirteengroup.co.uk

When you report a repair you'll be asked for:

- Your full name and address
- If you're making the request on behalf of another customer, we'll need to know both your names
- A clear description of the repair needed
- The best time for us to carry out the work
- Arrangements for gaining access to the property
- Any special circumstances, for example if you're elderly or disabled.

Taking care of yourself

There's lots you can do to help yourself stay warm and healthy, whether you're at home or outdoors:

- Keep a hot water bottle and a blanket to hand
- Have regular hot drinks and at least one hot meal a day, as eating regularly helps to keep energy levels up during the winter
- Wear several layers of clothing instead of one thick one, as warmth from your body can be trapped between the layers
- Always wear hats, scarves and gloves when you go out and in severe weather conditions stay inside, especially if you have heart or breathing problems
- Keep your mobile phone charged whether you're staying in or going out
- Keep extra food items in the cupboards and freezer in case you're not able to get out to the shops
- Keep a mixture of salt and sand handy to put on steps or paths in the icy weather
- Have you had your flu jab? It's free if you're over 65, so speak to your local GP practice or pharmacist
- Order repeat prescriptions in plenty of time, particularly if bad weather is forecast. Ask your local pharmacy if they offer a prescription pick-up and delivery service – this could be helpful if you can't leave your home
- Keep simple cold, flu and throat remedies in the house
- Light exercise will keep you warm, so keep active and try to avoid sitting down for long periods of time.



Help with your heating costs

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.

You may be able to claim financial and practical help with heating your home. Grants available include the Winter Fuel Payment and the Cold Weather Payment. You could also receive a discount off your electricity bill for winter under the Warm Home Discount Scheme.

Find out more

www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment

www.gov.uk/cold-weather-payment

www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme

Take control of your energy bills

We're working with Energy Angels to help our customers manage their energy bills. You can access the free energy comparison service, find out about government funded discounts and the support available if you're struggling with your energy bills: <https://energyangels.co.uk/thirteen>

Contact us

If you have any questions please get in touch:

 customerservices@thirteengroup.co.uk

 0300 111 1000

 www.thirteengroup.co.uk

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