



Healthy Homes

Professionals Winter Warmth Pack



Preparing For Winter Living in a Cold Home

Fuel Poverty

- Fuel poverty is when households cannot afford to heat their home consistently to a comfortable and healthy level.
- 16.1% of households in Doncaster are experiencing fuel poverty, compared to 11.4% in England and 14.7% in Yorkshire & the Humber (DESNZ, 2023).

Health Impacts of Living in a Cold Home

Temperature	Health Impacts
18°C	Minimal risks to health for a sedentary person wearing suitable clothing
Under 18°C	May increase blood pressure and risk of cardiovascular disease
Under 16°C	Risk of respiratory illness starts to rise (pneumonia, colds/flu, bronchitis)
12°C	Prolonged exposure to this temperature can result in high blood pressure or stroke
9°C	Body temperature will fall. This causes serious long term health risks and high risk of hypothermia
4 - 8°C	Increased risk of death observed at population level

Direct Health Impacts

- Heart Attack
- Stroke
- Respiratory Disease
- Influenza
- Falls and Injuries
- Hypothermia

Indirect Health Impacts

- Depression
- Reduced educational and employment attainment
- Increased risk of carbon monoxide poisoning
- Social Isolation



Preparing For Winter Assessment

Identifying Cold Homes

A warm, dry home is key to keeping people healthy in cold weather. By spotting the signs of a cold home and taking action, you might be able to stop health conditions from getting worse. People who are older, recently left hospital, are dealing with poor health, or have physical and/or mental disabilities are most at risk.

Households Most at Risk

Disabled people	Low-income households	Families with children
Ethnic minorities	Older people (over 65)	Pregnant women
People with physical illness	People with addictions	People with mental health conditions
Recent immigrants	Asylum seekers	People who move in and out of homelessness

Spotting Coping Strategies

 Going to bed early to stay warm	 Using unsafe, unserviced heating appliances or inappropriate devices like ovens to stay warm	 "Marking" the bath to reduce the amount of water used each time
 Only heating one room, or avoiding using central heating at all	 Cutting back on electricity and using candles instead of lights	 Showering away from the home in workplaces or leisure centres
 Spending the day in heated spaces such as a library, café or even A&E	 Leaving curtains closed all day or putting newspaper over windows	 Cutting back on personal hygiene products
 Cooking using alternative sources such as a barbecue or portable stove	 Cutting back on buying essential personal items, food, eating only cold meals or reliance on food banks	 Bathing less often, or resorting to a "sink wash"
 Not inviting friends or family in to the home	 Formal borrowing (credit cards and loans) or informal borrowing from friends and family	 Deciding not to pay the water bill in order to pay a higher priority bill (such as energy or council tax)

National Energy

Preparing For Winter Energy Saving Tips

Food and cooking



Try alternative ways to cook such as a slow cooker or an air fryer, these appliances use less energy



Keep lids on saucepans and pots to reduce condensation and the amount of gas required, and use the extractor fan where possible



Do not open the oven door repeatedly to check in on your food. You'll let out heat and waste energy.



Defrost your freezer regularly as a build up of ice means the freezer has to work harder to keep food cool.

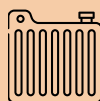
Heating system



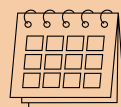
Spend time getting to know your heating system, using it effectively will help save money



Turn your boiler flow temperature down to 60 degrees



Put radiator foils behind your radiators, which will reflect heat back into the room



Make sure you have a yearly service of your heating system by a professional

Appliances



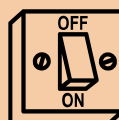
Wait until you have a full load before putting on a wash, wash clothes at 30C



Having a shower over a bath uses less water and less energy to heat the water.

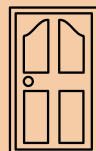


Avoid overfilling your kettle and only boil the water that you need.

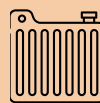


Turn off non-essential appliances when not in use and switch lights off when you leave a room

Around the house



Keep doors closed to reduce draughts and use draught excluders to reduce the loss of heat between rooms



Move your furniture away from radiators to let heat circulate and avoid drying clothes on radiators



Close curtains or blinds at dusk to prevent heat escaping through the window



Use draught-proofing strips around the window frame to stop heat escaping and prevent the cold getting in



Preparing For Winter National Support

Warm Homes Discount

- The Warm Home Discount Scheme is a one-off £150 discount off your electricity bill.
- Open in October 2025.
- If you're eligible, your electricity supplier will apply the discount to your bill.
- The money is not paid to you.
- For more information visit [Warm Home Discount Scheme.Gov.UK](https://www.warmhomediscount.gov.uk)

Winter Fuel Payment

- Those born before 22 September 1959 get between £100 and £300 to help heating bills for winter 2025 to 2026.
- For those with an income **below £35,000** (If your income is above £35,000, HMRC will take the payment back).
- If you're eligible, you'll get a letter in October or November 2025 saying how much you'll get (based on age).
- Most eligible people will be paid in November or December 2025.
- For more information visit [Winter Fuel Payment.Gov.UK](https://www.winterfuelpayment.gov.uk)

Priority Services Register

- The PSR is a free UK-wide service offering extra advice and support if there's an interruption to your electricity, gas, or water supply.
- Get in touch with your **supplier or network operator** directly and give them as much information as you can about your needs.
- Support available includes: Priority support in an emergency, advanced notice of scheduled power cuts, regular meter reading services and assistance reconnecting your gas supply.
- You can ask to join your providers register if you: have reached state pension, are pregnant or have children under 5, struggle with speaking English or have a long term disability or health condition.



Preparing For Winter Local Support

Service	Support	How to Access
Citizens Advice Doncaster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefit Checks as part of income maximisation • Dealing with energy debts • Home visiting • Energy efficiency support and guidance • Information and support on the Priority Services Register, Warm Homes Discount and other possible scheme and grants • Advice on energy complaints • Smart meter information & advice • Carbon monoxide awareness • Low carbon support – including guidance on reducing energy consumption and applying for relevant grants (e.g. insulation, efficient heating systems) • Help accessing low carbon and retrofit grants • Fuel vouchers • Energy efficiency measures (radiator covers, window films door stops etc. worth over £100) • White Goods grant application (washers, dryers, fridges, dehumidifiers etc) • Hive Home equipment (subject to eligibility) 	<p>Visit: https://www.cadoncasterborough.org/online-referrals/ to make a referral on behalf of yourself or a client.</p> <p>Alternatively call 01302 243057.</p> <p>General guidance and advice can be accessed directly on the <u>Citizen's Advice Doncaster Borough web page.</u></p>
Live Inclusive	<p>Live Inclusive is a disability charity based in Doncaster. They support anyone with any kind of disability or long term health condition.</p> <p>They offer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefit checks & support to claim • Advice and information to enable independent living • Support to register with Utility Providers for Priority Services • Access to our peer support group - Inclusive Voices 	<p>Call: 01302 592400</p> <p>Email: admin@liveinclusive.org.uk</p>
Doncaster Council Sustainability Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice and support on accessing energy saving grants and guidance 	<p>Webform: http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/doitonline/energy-efficiency-grants-funding</p> <p>Email: Energy.team@Doncaster.gov.uk</p>
Green Doctors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household visits to provide practical solutions to reduce energy costs • Installation of small energy saving measures e.g. LED lightbulbs • Energy advice talks for community groups • Monthly Fuel Poverty Awareness course online to train front line staff to deliver basic energy advice • The minimum criteria for referrals is household income under £30,000, with savings less than £16,000 	<p>To refer into the service, please complete the online referral form: https://groundwork.my.salesforce-sites.com/CadentEnquiryForm</p> <p>Phone: 0113 238 0601 Email: Greendoctoryorkshire@groundwork.org.uk</p>

Preparing For Winter Grants

Grant	Support	How to Access
Boiler on Prescription Grant	<p>For homeowners with broken boilers who don't have the finances to fit them, if you experience ill health such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chronic Heart conditions • Respiratory conditions • Stroke • Cancer • Mental Health conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each case assed by the Council's Sustainability Unit • Please fill in the webform at: https://www.doncaster.gov.uk/doitonline/energy-efficiency-grants-funding • If you are helping someone who does not have internet access call 01302 737053. • On average applications take between 4 to 6 weeks depending on installer availability.
Energy Company Obligation Scheme	<p>Partially funded energy efficacy measures for recipients of particular benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Benefit* • Pension Guarantee Credit • Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) • Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) • Income Support • Universal Credit • Pension Credit Savings Credit • Housing Benefit <p>*Child Benefit qualification is subject to gross annual household earnings</p>	<p>Visit: https://www.trustmark.org.uk/homeowner to find approved contractors who support the scheme in your area and ask what support they can offer</p>
Household Support Fund	<p>One off payment of £100 - £300 to households who receive any of the following: Housing Benefit,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Council Tax Reduction • Universal Credit which includes the housing element • Means-tested free school meals 	<p>Visit: https://www.doncaster.gov.uk/doitonline/household-support-fund-application-form</p> <p>Phone: 01302 735336</p>
Local Assistance Grant	<p>Help to meet an immediate short-term need for goods or services that has arisen due to an emergency, disaster or unforeseen circumstances. To receive support you must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aged 16 or over and have no other form of immediate financial assistance • Live in Doncaster or be planning to move to Doncaster following a period in supported accommodation <p>One of the following must also apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be in receipt of a means-tested benefit • Be on a low income • Be temporarily without any income, for example, if you are fleeing domestic violence 	<p>Visit: https://www.doncaster.gov.uk/services/council-tax-benefits/local-assistance-scheme</p>
Yorkshire Water Schemes	<p>Yorkshire Water offer several schemes that could help you save money on your water bills including price caps for those on low income or debt support for those unable to pay their bill.</p>	<p>Visit: https://www.yorkshirewater.com/bill-account/help-paying-your-bill/</p> <p>Phone: 0345 124 2424</p>

Preparing For Winter Boiler Servicing

What is a Boiler Service?

A boiler service is similar to an MOT for a car. It's an annual check by a qualified engineer to make sure everything is running as it should. Servicing your boiler also helps spot any issues so they can be resolved before they become a problem.

Why is a Boiler Service Important?

Safety: Regular servicing helps identify and fix potential safety hazards like gas leaks or faulty safety devices.

Efficiency: A well-maintained boiler operates more efficiently, potentially saving you money on your energy bills.

Avoiding Breakdowns: Servicing can identify potential problems early on, preventing breakdowns and costly repairs down the line.

Warranty: Regular servicing is often a requirement to keep your boiler warranty valid.

What does a Boiler Service Include?

Visual Checks: For any issues like leaks or corrosion to pipework.

Gas Safety Checks: This includes a tightness test to check for gas leaks, a check of the flue and ventilation, and ensuring that all safety devices are functioning correctly.

Control Checks: The engineer will ensure boiler and heating controls are working as they should.

Cleaning: The engineer will check and clean various components like the burner, heat exchanger, and condensate trap.

Pressure Checks: The engineer will check the system pressure and top it up if needed.

Documentation: You should receive a service report confirming that the service has been carried out.

How long does a boiler service take?

A service can take around 40 minutes to an hour, but this depends on your boiler, its age and its condition.

How do I find someone to service my boiler?

Use the Gas Safe register's 'find and check' tool to [find a Gas Safe registered engineer near you](#). You can also use it to check whether a business is Gas Safe registered.

How often should I get my boiler serviced?

It's recommended to have your boiler serviced at least once a year. Some manufacturers may recommend more frequent servicing, especially for newer boilers or those with complex systems.

When should I get my boiler serviced?

Your boiler should be serviced in the warmer months, especially July - September so any problems can be fixed before winter. This means that if you have any issues that require your heating to be switched off, you won't be stuck in a cold home.

Preparing For Winter Damp & Mould Checklist

WHAT CAUSES DAMP AND MOULD?

Damp and mould are caused by excess moisture, often from condensation when moist air meets cold surfaces like walls or windows. Everyday activities like showering, cooking, drying laundry and even breathing can contribute to this moisture. Damp can also result from leaks, damaged window frames, roof tiles, plumbing issues, or rising water.

HOW CAN DAMP AND MOULD AFFECT HEALTH?

Damp and mould can affect health in many ways:

- It can cause coughing, wheezing or shortness of breath.
- It can make respiratory conditions such as bronchitis, asthma, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) worse.
- It can make skin conditions such as eczema, itchy skin, or rashes worse.
- It can impact mental health and depression.

WHO IS MOST SENSITIVE TO THE EFFECTS OF DAMP AND MOULD?

- People with lung conditions such as asthma, COPD, or cystic fibrosis.
- People with cardiovascular disease.
- People with a weakened immune system, such as people with cancer undergoing chemotherapy, people who have had a transplant, or those taking medications to suppress the immune system.
- People who spend more time at home, such as young children or older people, who can spend up to 90% of their time indoors.
- Pregnant women and their unborn babies are also at risk.

SPOTTING DAMP AND MOULD

- ☐ Does your wall feel damp when you touch it?
- ☐ Does your paint or wallpaper peel or become crumbly when you touch it?
- ☐ Do you have black mould? Damp can cause spores of black mould to form on walls, ceilings, furniture and around window frames and doors.
- ☐ Check behind furniture for signs of condensation.

HELP AND SUPPORT

If you're experiencing problems with damp and mould in your home, support and advice is available.



Scan the QR code or visit:

www.yourlifedoncaster.co.uk/healthy-homes-damp-and-mould

VENTILATION TIPS

Here are some practical steps to try to reduce condensation in the home:

- ☐ When cooking, keep lids on pots, close doors, and open windows to reduce moisture and improve ventilation.
- ☐ When showering, keep bathroom doors closed, open windows, and use extractor fans or trickle vents. Leave windows open for 30 minutes after showering.
- ☐ Dry clothes outside when possible; if drying indoors, keep the door closed and a window open.
- ☐ Check behind furniture for damp or mould, as furniture against walls can cause damp.
- ☐ Leave a gap between walls and furniture to allow airflow and reduce moisture build up.
- ☐ Maintain a temperature between 18-21°C and use heating controls to manage costs.



Preparing For Winter Further Resources

National Energy Action Training

NEA's dedicated training team offers FREE courses covering topics including fuel poverty, vulnerability, energy efficiency, health, decarbonisation and more.

The courses are designed for frontline advice workers and anyone with an interest in fuel poverty and the issues surrounding it.



[National Energy Action Training](#)



[Warm Spaces](#)

Warm Spaces

There are lots of spaces across Doncaster that provide a safe, supportive, warm space to help relieve the pressure of heating a home, as well as providing access to information, advice and guidance.

Direct people to the Warm Welcome map to find their local warm spaces.

Make Every Contact Count (MECC)

MECC helps you to raise awareness, motivate and signpost people to help them to improve their health and wellbeing.

Guidance is available to support conversations with [Damp and Mould](#) & [Affordable Warmth](#)



[Damp & Mould](#)



[Affordable Warmth](#)

