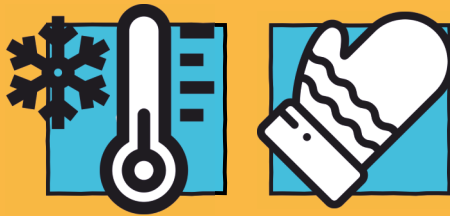


Groundswell

Out of homelessness

Health guide Top tips for looking after your health this winter



Top tips from staff with experience of homelessness

"Keep warm"

"Keep dry"

"Remember covid-19 is still here"

"Get vaccinated for flu and covid-19"

"Let people know what you need"

"Register with a GP"

"Let someone know if you feel unwell"

"Get an advocate or support worker to help"

"Keep engaging with services"

"Flu can be as bad as covid-19"

"Find out where to get warm clothing"

"Have your property checked for energy efficiency if you're indoors"

"Check out the warm home discount scheme if you're indoors and get £150 off your energy bills"

"Wear a mask"

"Find out where your local services are. In some areas, the list in the Pavement Magazine is a great help."

Top ways to look after yourself and protect your health

1. If you have a health problem or worry you can talk to your GP about it

Everyone has the right to register with a GP:

You don't need a fixed address

You don't need to show identification

Your immigration status doesn't matter

If you're struggling to get a health appointment, ask a support worker for help

2. Try to attend any health appointments you have

You have the right to access your healthcare appointments.

If you have a GP or hospital appointment you can ask your support worker about help getting there or to accompany you to the appointment. You can also request a remote appointment or phone call.

3. Get out of extreme weather if you're rough sleeping

- You have the right to additional assistance if you are rough sleeping.
- Every local authority in England should have a Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (you might hear it called SWEP).
- SWEP means that if you're rough sleeping then you should be offered assistance to keep yourself safe.
- This assistance varies depending on your area, it could be shelter, accommodation, a warm space, food, sleeping bags etc.
- You will be entitled to this assistance regardless of your local connection or status.

Find out about SWEP in your area:

- Ask someone from a local service you know (e.g., an outreach worker, or support worker, or a health professional).
- Search online for 'SWEP' on your local authority's website or on their social media channel.

4. Protect yourself against flu and covid-19

Both winter flu and covid-19 can cause serious illness and death, especially for people with underlying health conditions.

Vaccination significantly reduces this risk.

You can get a flu vaccine free on the NHS:

- if you are homeless in London, whatever your age
- if you are not in London ask your pharmacy or a GP if you are eligible for a free vaccine

Other people eligible for a free flu vaccine are those:

- with long-term health conditions
- who are pregnant
- with a [weakened immune system](#), for example, those living with HIV and people having cancer treatment.



You can get the Covid-19 vaccine free on the NHS if:

- you are an immunocompromised person in a younger age group (your immune system isn't working as well as it could)
- you are an adult aged 75 years and over
- a resident in a care home for older adults
- an individual aged 6 months and over who has a weakened immune system, for example, those living with HIV and people having cancer treatment.

If you are registered with a GP and are part of the above groups, they will usually invite you for a vaccination. If not, the best way to book is by visiting nhs.uk/bookcovid.

If you or someone you know can't get online, book by calling 119 free of charge.



www.groundswell.org.uk
Socials: @ItsGroundswell

Everyone has the right to good health and to access healthcare. People experiencing homelessness face health inequalities, they are often excluded from information and services. That's why Groundswell produces accessible health guidance for people experiencing homelessness, so they can make informed decisions about their health.

All our health guides are created alongside people with experience of homelessness and reviewed by relevant professionals.