**Help Us, Help You - Before It Gets Worse**

**Engagement: Long and short copy and suggested social media posts**

December 2019

This pack includes suggested copy that can be used to communicate winter messages to your audiences throughout the winter months.

Included are a recent press release and long and short copy. These can be used across a range of channels, for example websites, e-bulletins and newsletters.

Social media advice with suggested posts then follows and a summary of the key winter messages.

Alternative formats of the Winter leaflet, more detailed toolkits and other information about the campaign is available on the PHE Campaign Resource Centre at **campaignresources.phe.gov.uk**

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**ENGAGEMENT PRESS RELEASE (480 words)**

**‘Help Us Help You’ campaign returns to support the public over the winter months**

This winter, NHS England and NHS Improvement is relaunching its Winter Response ‘Help Us, Help You campaign’ to help the public understand how they can stay well this winter and get the best out of their NHS.

The NHS is here to help you when you’re poorly. Every 24 hours the NHS comes into contact with more than a million people and it can be especially busy during the winter months.

Exposure to cold indoor or outdoor temperatures increases blood pressure and can increase the risk of heart attacks, stroke and other cardiovascular diseases.i Research also shows that for every one-degree centigrade drop below five degrees in outdoor average temperatures, there is more than a 10 per cent increase in older people consulting their GP for breathing problems, a 0.8 per cent increase in emergency hospital admissions, and a 3.4 per cent increase in deaths.ii

The ‘Help Us, Help You’ campaign highlights that the public can benefit by following the expert advice of NHS staff; to prevent an illness getting worse; to take the best course of action; and get well again sooner. This includes:

* Encouraging people to call NHS 111 or visit [111.nhs.uk](https://111.nhs.uk/) online to find out what to do and where to go when they have an urgent but non-life-threatening medical concern instead of worrying, self-diagnosing, or second-guessing what they should do. NHS 111 can also be contacted via Next Generation Text on 18001 111 or by NHS 111 BSL interpreter service. To use the BSL service and for more information in alternative formats visit **nhs.uk/111**
* Asking pharmacists, who are qualified healthcare professionals, for advice before minor ailments or winter illnesses get worse. For more information including alternative formats about how your pharmacy team can help visit **nhs.uk/pharmacyadvice**
* Using evenings and weekends appointments with a GP, nurse or other healthcare professional at a local practice or another nearby NHS service
* Checking in on older neighbours, relatives, and friends who may need a bit of extra help this winter
* Encouraging those who are most at risk from cold weather – over 65s and those with long term health conditions – to prepare for the lower temperatures by stocking up on food supplies and making sure they have any necessary medication

People who could be at particular risk from flu including people with underlying health conditions, a learning disability and adults aged 65 years old and over are still encouraged to get the free flu vaccination. The vaccination is the best protection we have against an unpredictable virus. That’s why the flu vaccine is free for those who are eligible because they really need it. If you are eligible for the flu vaccine, contact your general practice or pharmacist to get it now.

To find out more about how you can stay well this winter visit [**nhs.uk/winteradvice**](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/keep-warm-keep-well/)

Or you can download the easy read version of the Winter leaflet at tinyurl.com/SWTWer or watch the BSL version of the leaflet at tinyurl.com/SWTWbsl

**End**

i Jevons, R. Minimum indoor temperature threshold recommendations for English homes in winter – a systematic review. *Public Health*. 2016 Jul;136:4-12.
ii Hajat, S. *et al.* Increase in deaths and emergency admissions per degree centigrade drop in temperature. *Public Health.* 2016 Aug:137:36-34

**Long copy (410 words)**

**‘Help Us Help You’ campaign returns to support the public over the winter months**

The NHS’ winter campaign – ‘Help Us, Help You’ – is here to help make it easier to understand the things you can do to manage your health during winter and get the best out of your NHS.

We all know that the NHS can be especially busy during the winter months, and everyone can benefit by following the expert advice of NHS staff; to prevent an illness getting worse; take the best course of action; and get well again sooner.

For example, you can ask a pharmacist for advice before minor ailments or winter illnesses get worse. Community pharmacists are qualified healthcare professionals who can offer clinical advice and over the counter medicines to effectively and safely manage a range of health concerns, such as coughs, colds, sore throats, earaches, eye infections and many more. Most people live within easy reach of a pharmacy, it’s quick and convenient – you don’t need to book an appointment and can be seen by a pharmacist in the privacy of a consultation room.

If you need to see a GP but find it hard to access your practice in routine hours, appointments with a GP, nurse or other healthcare professionals are available in the evenings and at weekends through your practice or other local NHS services.

If you’re unsure where to go and think you need urgent medical attention, but it’s not life-threatening, contacting NHS 111 can help you make sure you reach the best NHS service for your health need. NHS 111 is available online at **111.nhs.uk** as well as by phone, Next Generation Text on 18001 111 and NHS 111 BSL interpreter service. You can find out more about NHS 111 and access the BSL interpreter service by visiting **nhs.uk/111**

The ‘Help Us, Help You’ campaign also encourages the most vulnerable people in society – over 65s and those with underlying health conditions – to take better care of their health during the colder months approach. Older neighbours, relatives, and friends may need a bit of extra help this winter, so make sure you keep in touch, check if they are feeling under the weather, help them stock up on food supplies, and make sure they have any necessary medication and are keeping warm.

Help Us, Help You – Before It Gets Worse

To find out more visit **nhs.uk/winteradvice**.

Or you can download the easy read version of the Winter leaflet at tinyurl.com/SWTWer or watch the BSL version of the leaflet at tinyurl.com/SWTWbsl

And for information in alternative formats about how pharmacies can help visit **nhs.uk/pharmacyadvice**

**Short copy (226 words)**

**‘Help Us Help You’ campaign returns to support the public over the winter months**

The NHS’ winter campaign – ‘Help Us, Help You’ – is here to help make it easier to understand the things you can do to manage your health during winter, and get the best out of your NHS.

For example, you can ask a community pharmacist for advice before minor ailments or winter illnesses get worse - for this you don’t need to book an appointment and can be seen in the privacy of a consultation room. You can also visit a healthcare professional in the evenings and weekends through local NHS services and sometimes your own GP practice. If you have an urgent but non-life-threatening medical need and you’re unsure what to do you can contact NHS 111 online at 111.nhs.uk, by phone, Next Generation Text on 18001 111 and NHS 111 BSL interpreter service. You can find out more about NHS 111 and access the BSL interpreter service by visiting **nhs.uk/111**

It’s also important during winter to check in on older neighbours, relatives and friends who may need a bit of extra help this winter, to keep warm, and stocked up on food and medication.

Help Us, Help You – Before It Gets Worse

To find out more visit **nhs.uk/winteradvice**. Or you can download the easy read version of the Winter leaflet at tinyurl.com/SWTWer or watch the BSL version of the leaflet at tinyurl.com/SWTWbsl

And for information in alternative formats about how pharmacies can help visit **nhs.uk/pharmacyadvice**

**SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDANCE**

Please follow the NHS UK Twitter ([@NHSuk](https://twitter.com/NHSEngland?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor)) and @NHSEngland page and retweet/share posts during the winter months to help amplify support for the campaign on social media.

Below we have provided some suggested wording for your own social media posts which can be adapted and contain key information about the ‘Help Us, Help You – Before It Gets Worse’ campaign. We would recommend using **#HelpUsHelpYou** wherever possible.

There is also a wider social media calendar, as well as additional campaign materials and visual content, on the **campaignresources.gov.uk** which you can use alongside your posts.

**Suggested Winter posts**

* You don’t need to suffer in silence. For expert advice, talk to your pharmacist about that winter bug. #HelpUsHelpYou <embed visual content>
* This winter there are things you can do to stay well and NHS services to help when you need it. Visit nhs.uk/winteradvice for advice this winter. #HelpUsHelpYou <embed visual content>
* If you have a long-term health condition cold weather can make it worse. If you start to feel unwell, #HelpUsHelpYou by getting advice from your pharmacist <embed visual content>
* #HelpUsHelpYou and don’t forget to pick up your prescription before the Christmas holidays start. <embed visual content>

Older neighbours and relatives are more vulnerable in the colder months and may need a bit of extra help this winter, so make sure you keep in touch and check in on them when you can. #HelpUsHelpYou <embed visual content>

Winter isn’t easy for everybody. Check in on your older neighbours, relatives, and friends who may need a bit of extra help this time of year. Visit nhs.uk/winteradvice for more information. #HelpUsHelpYou <embed visual content>

This winter consult a pharmacist for advice before minor ailments like coughs or colds get worse. No appointment needed and get seen in the privacy of a consultation room. #HelpUsHelpYou nhs.uk/winteradvice <embed visual content>

**Suggested NHS111 posts**

Think you need medical help right now? Call 111 or go online to get the right medical attention urgently #HelpUsHelpYou know what to do To find out more about NHS 111 and to contact 111 via the NHS 111 BSL interpreter service visit nhs.uk/111 <embed BSLversion of TV ad>

This winter, #HelpUsHelpYou by making sure you call 111 or visit 111.nhs.uk if you have an urgent, but non-life-threatening medical need. To find out more about NHS 111 and to contact 111 via the NHS 111 BSL interpreter service visit nhs.uk/111 <embed BSLversion of TV ad>

**KEY MESSAGES**

The following outlines the key messages for the **‘Help Us, Help You – Before It Gets Worse’** campaign, and can be used in communications throughout winter 2019/20.

**Winter response**

* You don’t have to suffer in silence. For expert advice, talk to your pharmacist about that winter bug.
* If you start to feel unwell, even if it is just a cough or cold, don’t wait until it gets worse– get help from your pharmacist. The sooner you get advice the better – pharmacists are here to help you stay well.
* Winter can be seriously bad for your health but there are a number of things you can do to keep you and your family well this winter. Speak to your pharmacist for helpful tips and advice.
* If you have a long-term health condition like COPD, bronchitis, emphysema, diabetes, heart or kidney disease, or have suffered a stroke; cold weather can make health problems like these much worse. If you start to feel unwell, at the first signs of winter respiratory illness, even if it’s just a cough or cold, get advice from your pharmacist, before it gets more serious.
* If you’ve been prescribed medication, don’t forget to pick up your prescription before the Christmas holidays start. Many GPs and pharmacies will close over the holidays.
* If you do need help over the holiday period when your GP surgery or pharmacy is closed, contact NHS 111 to get the right medical attention urgently or visit 111.nhs.uk which can direct you to a local service that is open.
* Older neighbours, relatives, friends and other elderly members of the community are more vulnerable in the winter months and may need a bit of extra help this winter, so make sure you keep in touch, check if they are feeling under the weather, help them stock up on food supplies and make sure they have the necessary medication before a spell of bad weather.
* The ‘Help Us, Help You’ campaign aims to increase peoples’ understanding of the actions they can take to help the NHS to help them before it gets worse.

**Cold weather**

* Cold weather can be very harmful, especially for people aged 65 or older: it weakens the immune system, increases blood pressure, thickens the blood, and lowers body temperature; increasing the risk of high blood pressure, heart attacks, strokes, and chest infections.
* It is important to keep warm in winter – both inside and outdoors as it can help to prevent colds, flu and more serious health problems, such as heart attacks, strokes, pneumonia and depression.
* Heat your home to at least 18°C (65°F), if you can – you might prefer your living room to be slightly warmer.
* Keep an eye out for elderly relatives and neighbours and support them in the cold weather to help them stay well.
* The ‘Help Us, Help You’ campaign aims to increase peoples’ understanding of the actions they can take to help the NHS to help them before it gets worse.
* Visit nhs.uk/winteradvice for helpful tips and advice.