# Providers’ checklist for winter planning

Many providers have their own action plan – a checklist of things to do both before and during the winter. The following action points have been compiled with the help of providers, to help guide homecare services through the winter planning process:

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| 1. Download national and local winter plans by government, health authorities and local councils. See what resources are available to help your planning.
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| 1. Check and revise your emergency plans, so they are fit for this winter. Check you have current emergency and family contact details for people using homecare services. Sign up for severe weather warnings and weather forecasts, so you are aware of any predicted snow and ice.
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| 1. Review care plans to identify ‘at risk’ people in your care. Put in place plans to ensure clients can be reached if the usual methods of transport are not possible. Business continuity plans should include specific measures to make sure people continue to receive care.
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| 1. Check ‘at risk’ people in your care are ready for winter. Make sure your staff have access to essential supplies to keep clients warm and stocked with essential provisions. Be prepared to handle any emergency medication issues.
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| 1. Liaise with your local council so you are part of its emergency planning process. Develop plans with them to support those in remote areas. Consider making reciprocal arrangements with other providers.
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| 1. Address workforce planning issues and decide what happens if key managers or staff are sick or unable to get to the office or visit clients.
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| 1. Make sure you know which staff are likely to have difficulty with transport and work out how you can help them. Develop facilities to run your office remotely if you can’t use your usual office; consider if staff need to be set up to work remotely from home or an alternative address. Review your lone working policy so you can support staff working alone in adverse weather conditions. Make sure you know where everyone is.
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| 1. Plan for using alternative transport in poor weather, for example, four-wheel drive vehicles that could help your staff reach people living in remote areas. Make sure your drivers are competent and experienced enough to drive in adverse conditions.
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| 1. Ensure careworkers’ vehicles are properly maintained so that they are safe in poor weather.
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| 1. Be aware of road closures and delays in general and check your insurance policy to make sure you have suitable cover.
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| 1. Equip your vehicles with shovels, snow tyres or chains, if necessary. Consider if your staff can walk to people receiving care, or use alternative transport.
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| 1. Ensure that your staff can communicate with your operations centre. Have a stock of portable mobile phone battery banks to charge mobile phones in an emergency. Make sure your staff know who to contact if they run into difficulty and distribute an emergency phone list.
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| 1. Risk assess the places your workers need to access and check they have suitable protective clothing and footwear to visit people safely.
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| 1. Make sure people receiving homecare services have access to contact numbers for utility companies if their heating breaks down or they have burst water pipes.
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| 1. When things return to normal, review your experiences, and those of your staff, so you can learn from what happened and incorporate that in next year’s plan. Don’t forget to thank your staff for their hard work and effort.[[1]](#endnote-1)
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The Homecare Association’s winter planning guidance for members is available at [Winter planning guidance and checklist for homecare providers](https://www.homecareassociation.org.uk/resource/winter-planning-guidance.html).

1. This checklist is based on an action plan originally produced by Homecare Association members Scott Care. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)