

# Winter checklist

This checklist is intended to support BGS members across the system to make changes to ensure that winter is a little easier for older people this year. Not everyone will be able to do everything on this list, but we hope that it helps healthcare professionals to think about what they can do to make this winter a bit better for their older patients.

## Local services

- ☐ Are there local charities that will provide support to keep homes warm, help with shopping upon discharge from hospital, and support older people who can't get out if it's icy?  
Age UK, British Red Cross and RVS are good places to start.
- ☐ Which local charities provide services to help with loneliness or offer exercise classes? Mind provide loneliness services and information about exercise classes can be found from Move It or Lose It.
- ☐ Where can older people find advice about home energy use and benefit entitlements? Ofgem provide energy advice.
  - What do the local authority or other services provide over winter?
  - Warm spaces in libraries or community centres. Warm Welcome has details of warm spaces.
  - Fire safety checks and smoke alarm fittings. These are usually provided by the local fire brigade.
- ☐ What adverse weather events are likely to affect your patients over winter (snow, flood, ice)? What is the plan to identify patients who might need additional support in extreme weather?
- ☐ Which local charities will provide draught excluders and reflective radiator panels?

## Questions to ask patients before the winter (in GP surgeries / in their homes)

- ☐ Do they have an advance care plan in place? If they were ill enough, would they want to go to hospital? Marie Curie has information about advance care planning.
- ☐ Is their home warm enough in winter? Support is available through the Great British Insulation Scheme.
- ☐ Do they have family/friends who would look in on them in winter?
- ☐ Are they claiming all the benefits they are entitled to? Age UK have information about benefits entitlements.
- ☐ Are they on the Priority Services Register?

## Patient records and connections

- ☐ Is a CFS score recorded in all patient notes?
- ☐ Do you have the relationships needed with social care, Hospital at Home, UCR, SDEC in order to help avoid unnecessary admissions for older people over winter?
- ☐ Have all older patients in the community and in hospitals been offered the appropriate vaccinations?
- ☐ Have staff been encouraged to be vaccinated?
- ☐ Can you provide written information with details of support services to patients when they are discharged?

## Hospital/system level

- ☐ Are there changes that you can make now to avoid unnecessary hospital admission over winter? Can a Hospital at Home or Front Door Frailty service be introduced?
- ☐ Can you take steps now to avoid provision of corridor care over winter?
- ☐ Do you have discharge services in place to ensure that planning for discharge starts as soon as an older person is admitted to hospital?
- ☐ Can all ED staff be trained to recognise frailty at the front door? The BGS Frailty e-learning module is free to all staff.
- ☐ Is there an Integrated Neighbourhood Team that can support with step down services?

For links to some of the above listed organisations and a downloadable information poster for your workplace, visit: [www.bgs.org.uk/winterchecklist](http://www.bgs.org.uk/winterchecklist)