

# Winter Wellness Guide

Health and Advice for you and your family to stay safe over Winter



[Shropshire Carers | Shropshire Council](#)

# Keeping Safe and Well



It's the time of year again when the colder weather creeps in and the winter months may start to feel a bit gloomy. Energy levels and motivation can drop and many of our activities and habits can start to dwindle away, so time to prepare for when the cold weather hits us by making sure it does not harm us and those around us.

## Flu Vaccine - Protect yourself and your family and friends from flu.

It's easy to pass on flu viruses without knowing.



The flu vaccine is a safe and effective vaccine. It's offered every year on the NHS to millions of people, including children and those at risk of getting seriously ill from flu.

### Why should you get a flu jab?

- We may be more likely to get flu this winter as fewer people have built up natural immunity during COVID-19.
- If you get flu and COVID-19 at the same time, research shows you're more likely to become quite ill.
- Getting vaccinated against flu and COVID-19 will provide protection for you and those around you for both serious illnesses.

Some people will be invited to have both flu and COVID-19 booster vaccines. If you are offered both vaccines, it's safe to have them at the same time or at different times.

If you receive carers allowance or are the main carer for an older or disabled person who may be at risk if you are ill, you are eligible for a free vaccine from the NHS. The flu vaccine is available at GP practices and pharmacies

Find out more about winter vaccinations, including who can get one for free at:

[www.nhs.uk/wintervaccinations](http://www.nhs.uk/wintervaccinations)



# Support for long-term effects of COVID-19

For some people, COVID-19 can cause lasting symptoms long after the infection has gone, sometimes known as 'long COVID'.

There are many symptoms you can have after COVID such as:

- **Difficulty sleeping**
- **'Brain fog'**
- **Dizziness**
- **Loss of appetite**
- **Others**

If symptoms are having an impact on your life, contact your GP who may give you advice on how to manage and monitor your symptoms at home or refer you for some tests such as a blood test.

For more information on long COVID, visit [Long-term effects of COVID](#)

Those eligible for this autumn's COVID vaccine, will be able to get their vaccines from 3 October

The groups to be offered a COVID-19 vaccine in autumn/winter 2024/25 are:

- Residents in a care home for older adults  
All adults aged 65 years and over
- Persons aged 6 months to 64 years in a clinical risk group,

More information on Covid vaccinations can be found at: [COVID-19 vaccination - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)



# Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

RSV is a leading cause of infant mortality around the world, is a common cause of coughs and colds but can lead to severe lung infections like pneumonia and infant bronchiolitis, which are highly dangerous to older people and young children.



UK Health Security Agency

**You'll be offered the RSV vaccine once you turn 75**

RSV can cause pneumonia and other **life-threatening conditions in older adults**, with thousands needing hospital care every year.

From Sep 2024 the vaccine will be offered to adults when they turn 75. There will be a one-off catch-up programme for those already aged 75-79.

NHS

Icons: Two people, a checkmark.

From September pregnant women at week 28 or later and everyone aged 75 to 79 or turning 75 years old on or after the 1 September will be offered a vaccine to protect themselves or their babies against RSV.

Find out about the new vaccination programme launching this autumn to help thousands of children & older adults: [RSV vaccine - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk) or speak to your GP.



**Protect yourself from serious lung infection**

NHS

If you're aged 75 to 79, your GP will contact you about getting your free respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccine

Illustration: A person in a wheelchair being pushed by another person, with other people in the background.

# Plan Ahead - Stay safe at home

Did you know, if you are eligible, you can book a free Safe and Well visit to have your home checked for hazards and get fire safety advice?

Through a visit carried out by operational firefighters, you'll receive guidance on staying healthy and active, including how to prevent falls.

A handbook is given, providing vital fire safety guidance and much more. If you're not eligible for a home visit, you have the option of an online home safety check, you can also download the Safe and Well handbook.

For full information, please visit:

<https://www.wmfs.net/our-services/safe-and-well/>



## Indoor Checks

- ❖ Check your home is ready by installing insulation.
- ❖ Ensure letterbox shuts securely to avoid losing heat.
- ❖ Use draught excluders.
- ❖ Clean out gutters and repair roof leaks. Keep chimneys swept.
- ❖ Use thermal linings on curtains.
- ❖ Have heating appliance serviced.
- ❖ If you can't heat all the rooms, heat the most used room in the day and the bedroom before you go to sleep.

Consider a Smart Meter to give you more control over energy bills. to request a smart meter free of charge or visit [Smart Meters](#)

Keep a supply of warming drinks and foods in.

# Prepare

Have your car serviced, maintain antifreeze, check tyres/tread and replace as necessary.

## Car



Have your car serviced:

- Check the battery.
- check tyres/tread and replace if needed
- Keep fuel tank at least half full to avoid ice in the tank.
- Keep a can of antifreeze and a scraper in the car.

Prepare a winter emergency kit to keep in the care to include:

- o Blankets
- o Spare Tyre
- o A shovel
- o Hi-visibility vest
- o Screen wash
- o Emergency Contact Numbers
- o Portable phone charger
- o Torch
- o First aid kit
- o Food and drink

## Outdoor Precautions

Wear appropriate outdoor clothing, inner layers of light, warm clothing. Gloves, hats, scarves, waterproofs. 40% of body heat is lost from the head. Tight fitting mittens are better than gloves.

- o Sprinkle salt, cat litter or sand on icy patches.
- o Walk slowly if doing outside tasks.
- o Carry a mobile phone.
- o Carry emergency contact numbers.
- o Check latest weather forecasts either by radio, TV,

# Urgent health care that isn't an emergency? Think 111 first

The NHS 111 service does not diagnose but directs you to the best place to get help for your symptoms.

You can call 111 or visit [111.nhs.uk](https://111.nhs.uk) to be triaged (via a series of questions), based on your answers, you will be directed to a range of local services.

NHS 111 can book you an appointment with your GP, Pharmacist or Urgent Treatment Centre or arrange for an ambulance to be sent if you need one.



The online system and health advisers have all the healthcare service information within the local community at their fingertips using the NHS Pathway triage system, they know the best place for you, or the person you are calling on behalf of, to receive care.

You can also use the NHS 111 service for help with your mental health - call and select option 2 to be put straight through to someone who can advise you.

**Need help in other languages?**

Call 111 and ask for an interpreter

For less urgent health needs during normal opening hours, you should still contact your GP or visit or talk to your local pharmacist.

To find out which service is right for you, you can also refer to the following guidance for help and advice: [Think Which Service](#).

**In an emergency call 999**

# Cost of living

No one should be hungry or cold this winter.

If you need help paying the bills, are worried about the cost of food or cannot afford to heat your home, you may be able to get support. If you are struggling to make ends meet, there is advice available to you.

To read about affordable warmth and energy efficiency, see latest offers in Shropshire [Here](#)

Shropshire Council Advice, Advocacy and Welfare Benefits service. Four local free, independent, confidential and impartial registered charities are working together to deliver this service in Shropshire.

Read [Shropshire - Worrying about Money?](#)– to find out more about what options are available. Link contains a few short questions, poster and useful leaflet to download.

[Shropshire Larder](#) provides a wide range of information/advice on maximising income, budgeting, debts, and household bills



## Sources of financial advice

Citizens Advice Service: <https://www.cabshropshire.org.uk/> Call free on **0808 278 7894**

National debt line:

[www.nationaldebtline.org](http://www.nationaldebtline.org)

**0808 808 4000**

Shropshire Council Advice, Advocacy and Welfare Benefits [Welfare Provision](#)

Barnabus Money Advice (Shrewsbury) 01743 364114



# Are you one of Shropshire's unpaid or Adult Carers?

If you are an unpaid family carer providing vital support to someone who needs your care, the carers team is available to make support a little easier.

Whether it's making sure you are getting all the financial help you are entitled to, helping you get a break from caring, looking into employment and learning opportunities, planning for the future or even how to get support as a carer, help is at hand.

## Shropshire Carers Support Team

A dedicated team providing information, advice, and support to carers over the age of 18. Our vision is to enable carers to live their best lives. Find out more at – [Shropshire Carers](#)

## Carers Assessments

An opportunity for you to speak to someone about your caring role and the impact it can have on your life.

## GP Awareness

Let your GP know about your caring role. Read about the benefits [here](#)

## Emergency Planning

It is important for all carers to make contingency plans with the person they care for to use in circumstances where help from other people to deliver care may be required. More information on carer emergency plans and a template to complete can be accessed [here](#)

## Hospital Carer Support Worker

Hospital admissions can be a stressful and worrying time for you and the whole family.

Many of Shropshire's unpaid family carers begin their caring role for the first-time following hospital admission of the person they care for. For support call, **Tel:** 01743 256879 or **email:** [hospitalcarers@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:hospitalcarers@shropshire.gov.uk)

To book a carers assessment, telephone: **First Point of Contact**  
on **0345 678 9044**.

To find out more, contact Shropshire Carers, 01743 341995 or  
[shropshire.carers@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:shropshire.carers@shropshire.gov.uk)



# Shropshire Carers Register

## Have you signed up?

As an unpaid carer, it can be difficult to know where to find information that is current and correct. Shropshire Carers Team have developed a [Carers Register](#) which holds carers details so we can share information relevant to you, the carer, in a way that suits you best.

With enrolment to the register, you will receive a carers ID card/emergency card, emergency plan template and a free 5-part email course delivered by Mobilise online support for carers. Carers can de-register at any time by notifying Shropshire Carers.

Carers can sign up by completing our form [Carers Register form](#)

Signing up to the carers register you'll receive a carers identification card, a small credit card size that let's others know in an emergency that the person you care for relies on you.



Carry the card in your purse/wallet for reassurance that the person you care for, won't be left without support.

Find out how Shropshire Carers can help you:

[shropshire.carers@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:shropshire.carers@shropshire.gov.uk) or call **01743 341995**



# Do you need help to use a computer or smart phone?

There's a lot of support available in Shropshire to give you the skills you need to get online and stay connected to family and friends.

You can attend a weekly one-hour session to learn (free) and staff/volunteers are on hand to help you. [Digital Support - Shropshire Council](#)

Try [Learn my way](#) for courses on internet safety, online shopping and video calling.



[Computer skills for all](#) - Help to get online and use the internet safely for over 65's.

Mobilise Shropshire is an online service for unpaid carers, which brings together the collective knowledge, wisdom and expertise of unpaid carers. Mobilise offers a range of information and facilitated opportunities to join them, link is [Support for unpaid carers in Shropshire \(mobiliseonline.co.uk\)](#)

Carers can support each other via Facebook, attend Virtual cuppas, 1:1 support via a phone call and website live chat. Take a look and see how they may help you.



If you or someone you know needs help and support to get, online contact the Shropshire carers team on 01743 341995 - email [shropshire.carers@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:shropshire.carers@shropshire.gov.uk) or visit [Shropshire Carers](#)

# Protect yourself from Scams and Fraud

Getting educated and taking a few basic steps may help to keep you from becoming a victim of scams and Frauds.

Scam crimes appear in many different forms, such as emails, post, social media, phone calls, text messages or someone at your door.

To find out what to look for and what to do, visit: [Action Fraud](#)

Shropshire Council also have information, visit: [How do I protect myself](#)

If you need help, contact Citizens Advice on **0808 223 1133** or visit: [Citizen's Advice Consumer Service](#)

[Friends Against Scams](#) is a National Trading Standards Scams Team initiative which aims to protect and prevent people from becoming victims of scams by empowering people to take a stand against scams.

## Top 3 tips to be scam safe

1) Don't respond to any unexpected call, email, or text, without checking first. If it's out of the blue, check it's for you:

- If it's a call, hang up, find a number you can trust, and call back on that.
- If it's your bank, you can call back using the number on the back of your card.
- Or, if concerned, dial 159 to be connected securely to most UK banks.

2) Stop and get a second opinion if you're being forced to make a decision, or if you feel rushed:

- No legitimate organisation will object to you asking a friend, family member, or colleague for an opinion. Nor will it object to you saying no, or delaying your decision.

3) Report every scam, even if it didn't work on you, to help others:

- Forward suspicious texts to **7726**, and emails to **report@phishing.gov.uk**
- Report fraud directly to companies involved, so they can alert other customer.

# Managing your Mental Health

Equally as important as our physical health

Winter can be very isolating for many people. Bad weather, shorter days, lack of support, depressing news, all contribute to lowering our mental health.

If you are feeling low this winter, please reach out and speak with someone.

If you would like some practical tips and advice about ways to boost your mood, a place to feel heard, please visit: [Shropshire MHS](#)

Whether you're concerned about your own mental health or that of someone else, Shropshire Council has information to hand, please visit: [Mental Health and wellbeing](#) or contact First Point of Contact on 0345 678 9044.

## Support for children and young people

Resources and advice to help young people manage their emotional wellbeing are available at Shropshire Council, please visit:

[Bee U](#)

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## Are you experiencing domestic abuse?

If you, or someone you know, is experiencing domestic abuse, such as violence or controlling behaviour, then advice, support and services are available.

Contact West Mercia Women's Aid on **0800 783 1359**. More information is available from: [Domestic Abuse](#)

**In an emergency, always call  
999**

# Support in your community

Keeping active and connected can increase our sense of belonging, which in turn improves wellbeing

Social prescribing' is a free service withing GP practices in Shropshire which helps you find enjoyable activities in your local area. For more information, visit: [Social Prescribing in Shropshire](#)

## Shropshire Carers

First stop for information on a variety of health and social care needs support. Full information at: [Shropshire Carers](#)



## Healthy Shropshire

There are free resources locally with friendly staff who will help you find the right advice and support to stay healthy and well; from looking after your mental health or stopping smoking to managing your weight or simply being more active.



For full information, visit:

[Healthy Shropshire](#)

# Informational and Emotional Support in your community

If you are feeling low this winter, please reach out and speak to someone.

**Shropshire Carers Support team** – we offer a listening ear. By talking through your situation, we can establish your needs and help you to reach solutions that assist you to move forward. Tel: 01743 341995 Mon-Fri 9.00am till 5.00pm, Tues 9.00am till 7.30pm and Saturday 9.30am till 12.00.



## Mobilise Shropshire

### we offer free call

with our carer support team. A friendly ear, the opportunity to get clarity around muddled thoughts, or simply just to connect.



## SHOUT

You don't need to hide behind a smile.... you can talk with SHOUT over text 24/7, it's a free service available to everyone in the UK and it won't show up on your phone bills. When you text there's a trained volunteer at the other end to talk with you – silently, by text message – until you feel calmer. Why not look at SHOUT's

[Little Book of Coping Skills](#) booklet with plenty of tips or visit: [Give us a shout](#).

## Samaritans Self-help

Keep track of how you're feeling, get tips on what you can do to help yourself cope, visit: [Samaritans | Every life lost to suicide is a tragedy | Here to listen](#)

## Community Directory

Gives information on where you can find help including benefits, groups, community transport....

[Community Directory](#)

# Community Directory



# Be Winter Ready

## Our top 10 tips

### To help you stay safe and well this winter



#### Eat a balanced diet and stay hydrated

Good nutrition is vital to help keep us healthy and well. Eat meals with a mix of protein, dairy, carbohydrates, fruit and **vegetables**. Drink lots of **water** (and **warm drinks** or **soup** in cold weather) and try not to exceed recommended alcohol limits.



#### Keep a well-stocked medicine cabinet

You can buy useful remedies for lots of minor illnesses from your **local pharmacist** or supermarket, often at very little cost. Own-brand versions are often cheaper but just as



#### Boost your vitamin levels

Get outside in the **sunshine** for **15-20 minutes** a day and take a **vitamin D** supplement to avoid vitamin D deficiency.



#### Stay active

**30 minutes** a day,

including strengthening exercises, can help you to stay strong and independent.

**Shropshire's health walks** are a free, fun and sociable way to be active. You can search for local walks at [Walking for Health](#)



#### Sleep well

Establish a **bedtime**

**routine** and use relaxation exercises to improve sleep. Tips at:

[Sleep Foundation](#)



## Keep warm



Heat your home to at least **18 degrees** – if

you can't heat the whole house, heat the room you are in. Help to carry out energy efficiency improvements may be available. Visit: [Energy Savings Trust](#)



## Keep your home

**safe** Check your

home for trip hazards or electrical concerns and ensure you have a **working smoke alarm** - a **free Safe and Well** visit can help with this (see page 4 for details).



## Be prepared

Keep your **car**

**Winter read'** with an emergency kit in the boot. Keep a few extra store cupboard items i.e., **tins/long-life milk** at home,

## Prevent falls



**Move around regularly** and use

gentle exercises to stay strong and supple. Wear **slip-resistant shoes** with good grip and replace worn slippers.

**Secure rugs and mats** and move obstacles. There's lots of information to help prevent falls at: [Falls Therapy Service](#)



## Stay connected

**Keep in touch** with

people, keep a list of useful contacts in or by your phone in case of emergencies and please **look out for friends and neighbours**. There are good neighbour schemes across the

Further information and support on these tips are available at [www.shropshire.gov.uk](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk)

# For Advice on any of the information in this booklet, or if you're not sure where to go for help, contact Shropshire Carers Team

We are here to listen and help you find the independent support, guidance, and information you need to live your best life.

For information, guidance, and support, contact Shropshire Carers on 01743 341995, [shropshire.carers@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:shropshire.carers@shropshire.gov.uk)

Visit:

[Shropshire Carers](#)



For the latest health and wellbeing information in Shropshire, visit:

[Healthy Shropshire](#)



For all news and all other information, visit: [www.shropshire.gov.uk](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk)

**\*Please print off**

<b>EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST</b>	<b>Supplier/Company/Contact</b>	<b>Name and Telephone Number</b>
	<b>First Point of Contact (Shropshire Council)</b>	<b>03456 789044</b>
	<b>Emergency Contact</b>	
	<b>Emergency Contact Gas supplier</b>	
	<b>Gas Supplier</b>	
	<b>Electricity Supplier</b>	
	<b>Water Supplier</b>	
	<b>Plumber</b>	
	<b>Local Pharmacy</b>	
	<b>GP practice</b>	
<b>NHS</b>	<b>111</b>	

**In an emergency, always dial 999**