

'Weather Ready' Communications Plan 2018

Summary

The Met Office run an annual public information campaign which is aimed at raising awareness of, and encouraging the public to think about, risks associated with winter weather and the steps they could take to be better prepared.

The 2018-19 campaign is launching on the 14th November 2018 via a Met Office press release and promoted on social media. LRFs and their members are invited to support the campaign at the launch and throughout the winter by promoting key messages both over social media and utilising the template resources for local distribution.

Annex A provides an overview of the campaign, Annex B details the key messages, Annex C outlines the key messages in the 10 step checklist for the public.

Background

The National Risk Register 2017 explains the risks of major emergencies that could affect the UK in the next five years and provides resilience advice and guidance. The most serious risks include pandemic influenza, severe cold and snow, widespread power failure and flooding. This campaign highlights a number of simple actions that the public can take to prepare for severe weather, reducing the impact of these events on themselves and the most vulnerable.

There are a variety of risk specific messages promoted by government agencies and Category 1 & 2 responders. The Met Office campaigns are well placed to bring together these messages, providing a coherent narrative and amplifying their impact, as the public look to the Met Office as a trusted source of information in severe weather events.

Since 2011 the 'Get Ready for Winter' campaign has been run and implemented by the Met office and Cabinet Office and supported by a range of partner organisations with the same aim - of protecting life and wellbeing, especially during the winter months. There have also been various versions of summer campaigns including 'Get Ready for Summer' and 'Out and About' with a mix of weather-related safety messaging and also some more lighthearted content around enjoying the weather.

Met Office research in 2016 told us it is powerful working with partners and influencers who give credible endorsement to a campaign or message. The same research has led us to develop our emotive campaigns, using individuals to build an emotional connection.

A review held after the 17/18 winter ('Get Ready for Winter') campaign indicated the need for some changes to be made, starting with the 18/19 campaign. In brief, the following was agreed upon:

- With snow in March 2018, the name 'Get Ready for Winter' felt less appropriate than ever. With this in mind, the name and remit of the campaign will change and will be year-round with a 'launch' during the Autumn and increased activity leading up to periods of severe weather.
- Previous campaigns have been purely digital. To reach the vulnerable we need to expand the non-digital content, using partners as the conduit for this information.



ANNEX A: Campaign overview

Objectives

- Increase public reach and awareness of the importance and benefits of preparing for weather - particularly severe weather - all year round.
 - Increase reach across digital (reaching at least 350,000 people in winter 2017/19) and non-digital channels (targets TBC)
 - Increase reach of campaign in public spaces using printed materials.
- Increase awareness in key severe weather preparedness messages for the public to take action

Secondary objective

- Improve engagement amongst partners.

Target audience

The audience is the British public, with a focus on the elderly and vulnerable* via two routes:

- 1) Indirectly to the public (the ultimate audience are the elderly and vulnerable who may not have access to or skills to access website or social media) through:
 - a. MO Advisors
 - b. Local Authorities
 - c. Category 1 & 2 emergency responders through Local Resilience Forum structures
- 2) Directly to the public.

*All members of the public may be vulnerable during extremely severe weather – some may be more vulnerable and harder to reach so are a priority.

Evaluation/Measurement

- Social media reach and engagement
- Digital reach (website)
- Clicks on downloadable posters (assuming it means people will print)
- Survey of behaviour change before and after (TBC)

Contributors and partners

- Emergency responders
- Government Departments
- Voluntary Sector
- Commercial organisations affected by severe weather

Social media activity

- Social media activity will be planned on a daily basis dependent on the forecast weather conditions
- #WeatherReady to be used across campaign all year round, with #WinterReady also used during the winter weather to ensure we don't miss any previous users of the #WinterReady hashtag. We will encourage partners to move away from #WinterReady to #WeatherReady.



ANNEX B: Key messages (Under review in line with developing campaign content)

The campaign overall

- Prepare your property and vehicle ahead of winter, and take responsibility for your own safety.
- Be aware of the latest weather forecasts and warnings from the Met Office and be prepared to alter your plans in times of severe weather. Listen to local radio for updates during times of bad weather.
- Check on the elderly and more vulnerable in your community and check on the safety of your neighbours in the case of an emergency.

Help communities

- Keep an eye on vulnerable members of your community this winter: check on them in times of severe weather; discourage them from going outside when it's icy; help them with errands/shopping if possible.
- Cold weather affects the health of the elderly and those with pre-existing health conditions. Snow and ice can result in slips and falls, and cold temperatures can affect circulation and breathing-related issues, which can be fatal. Keep an eye on those who might be vulnerable and ensure they are well looked after and warm.

Keep warm, keep well

- Cold weather brings with it bugs and viruses, many of which can be safely managed yourself.
- Keep warm and well this winter by taking steps to stay healthy, and prepare for potential illness, especially if you (or your loved ones) suffer from asthma, CoPD or other illnesses where sudden drops in temperature can affect health.
- Call 111 if you are concerned and want medical advice.
- Flu vaccinations are available free of charge to certain groups of individuals.

Protect your home and business

- Be prepared for bad weather, especially if you are at risk of flooding.
- Take preventative steps to protect your home and business ahead of the winter, your property is your responsibility.
- In case of bad weather or power cut, prepare a 'grab bag' of basic supplies including bottled water, medication, blankets, torches, batteries, key information and documents – don't forget that your smartphone may not work in the event of a power cut.
- Prepare a Business continuity plan so your business is prepared for potential weather disruption
- Call 105 in the event of a power cut.
- Consider backup childcare plans in case of school closures

Travel advice

- Check weather information before travel. Being informed is the best way to minimise disruption to your plans and to know if you might have to avoid travelling.
- Driving in hazardous conditions can be challenging, familiarise yourself with our dedicated pages on driving in the rain, snow and ice.
- Keep up to date with vehicle maintenance during the winter. Your vehicle is your responsibility. Have it serviced and check it before taking long journeys.
- When travelling – by road or rail - in potentially bad weather, prepare for the unexpected by packing a survival kit should you be stranded somewhere.



ANNEX C - 10 Step winter readiness checklist – final content TBC and in depth info provided on website.

1. Get your flu jab
2. Top up anti-freeze screen wash, check your tyres and think about winter kit for your car.
3. Consider alternative commuting plans for severe weather and childcare plans if schools are closed.
4. Check your heating – your home should be heated to at least 18 °C
5. Consider how you would access vital information if a storm takes out power and phonelines
6. Think about what may be impacted by strong winds or floods – garden items, guttering, pipes, roof tiles/slates, items stored on your ground floor.
7. Check your pipes are insulated and know where your stoptap is.
8. Make sure you have basic supplies in case you have to leave home quickly or your power and water are disrupted.
9. Share this checklist with your neighbours, see if they have any other tips and tell them if you can help in severe weather.
10. Find out what else you can do to help your community prepare for severe weather.

[link to this page with more detailed information:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-for-emergencies/preparing-for-emergencies>]