

WINTER WELLNESS FACT SHEET

SHINE - the Seasonal Health Interventions Network

SHINE provides support to residents who aren't able to keep warm in the place that they live. They provide advice and can help you access energy grants, discounts, and services for vulnerable people. They can also offer home visits for in person advice. Help is offered with complex cases to resolve billing errors and utility debts.

SHINE accepts referrals for households with an income below £16,190 (regardless of the type of tenancy/leaseholder status) or where a household member falls under a SHINE target group:

- Has a disability
- Has a long-term health conditions worsened by the cold
- Is a child under 15
- Is an adult over 60

You can access the service by calling **0300 555 0195**, or emailing shine@islington.gov.uk

Self-care for keeping warm and well

- Heat your home to at least 18 degrees
- Wear multiple layers of clothing instead of one bulky layer
- Use hot water bottles and/or electric blankets
- Eat hot food and drink hot drinks regularly
- Try and stay active indoors, and not sit down for more than an hour at a time.

Where to access healthcare

- **NHS 111** - When it's urgent but isn't a life-threatening illness or injury, visit www.111.nhs.uk or call 111 free from mobiles and landlines (available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)
- If you have a serious or life threatening medical emergency, call 999 or go to accident and emergency (A&E)
- Your **local pharmacist** can give you friendly, expert advice about over-the-counter medicines for common conditions, without the need for an appointment.
- **GP practices** continue to offer face-to-face, video and telephone appointments.
- **Evening and weekend GP appointments** are also available. Call your own GP practice 8am to 8pm, seven days a week and ask for an [I-HUB appointment](#). If your GP practice is closed when you call, your call will be automatically diverted to an I-HUB call handler.
- It can be difficult to get an **NHS dental appointment** at the moment but emergency dental care should be available and can be accessed via NHS 111. [Cloudesley](#) (a local charitable Trust) provides small grants to Islington residents who are in physical or mental ill health and/or who are disabled, and facing financial hardship. They have recently given grants for emergency dental care, where residents had not been able to access emergency dental care via the NHS, so had to pay for this privately. You can contact one of [these local organisations](#) (who distribute this funding on their behalf) to see if you can access this support.

COVID-19 vaccinations

- It's important to get vaccinated even if you've already had Covid. The body's immune response varies hugely between people, and it's possible to get Covid more than once.
- The protection provided by the vaccines is significantly improved by a booster dose.
- Although the vaccines might not stop you catching COVID-19, they are highly effective at protecting you from severe illness and death.

[More information from the NHS about COVID-19, the flu, and your winter health](#)

Which COVID-19 test do I need?

- **PCR Test:** these are the tests to take if you have symptoms
- **Lateral Flow Test:** these are the tests you take if you don't have symptoms. They are the ones often used by teachers, care home staff, and students. A positive result means you have Covid. If you are positive, you don't need a PCR test you have to isolate for up to seven days (this is changing to five) from the day of your test result. You must also take Lateral Flow Tests on days six and seven, 24 hours apart, and both must be negative for you to be able to stop isolating.

COVID-19 symptoms and precautions

- Keeping distance, wearing face masks, and ventilation work really well as precautionary measures to prevent catching Covid, even when other household members have the virus.
- The 3 main symptoms of Covid are cough, high fever and loss of taste or smell. If you any of those you should self-isolate and get a PCR test.
- Omicron may have a broader range of symptoms. Some people with Omicron report having a scratchy throat, runny nose, cold symptoms, even lower back pain and diarrhoea, but you should only get a PCR test if you any of the 3 symptoms mentioned above.

Flu

- Flu can be a very serious illness. The flu vaccine reduces the risk and is available for children aged 2 and over, pregnant women, and people aged 50+ or with long term health conditions
- It's possible to have both flu and COVID-19 at the same time. When people have both infections, research shows that people are sicker and are at higher risk of death
- It's particularly important that pregnant women do have the flu and the Covid vaccines because they are at higher risk of complications.
- If you do get offered both vaccines at the same time – it is safe to have them both together.

Mental health

Having good mental health helps us relax more, achieve more and enjoy our lives more. It's important to make time in our lives to connect with family and friends, keep active, keep learning, and help others when we can. [There are also mental support services available in Islington](#)

More information

If you have a question that is not covered in this resource you can contact the Healthwatch Islington advice and information service. [Please visit our website for more information.](#)