



The Regional Community Resilience Group (RCRG) Newsletter – Keeping members weather ready

## Welcome to the Autumn/Winter 2021 edition of RCRG News

COP 26 has been one of the main talking points on almost every news bulletin over these past weeks.

COP26 is another name for the 26th United Nations Climate Change conference. It took place in Glasgow from late October to early November and brought together countries and organisations working on the frontline of climate change to inspire actions that will tackle the climate change emergency now and for future generations.

The extreme heatwave of the summer seems like a distant memory but it demonstrated clearly how we are already experiencing weather extremes caused by climate change. With many organisations gearing up for COP26 it has been a busy few months but in this edition of the newsletter we want to look at how our communities are preparing for the incoming winter period. Some helpful articles with tips and

advice on how to protect homes are provided and we will look at travelling safely in winter weather conditions. There are also updates on several schemes on the ground that will help mitigate against the impacts of flooding along with other key information from partners who are working together to help 'Get Weather Ready'!

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31 OCT - 12 NOV 2021  
GLASGOW

# COP26

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ITALY



# NI Community Resilience is showcased at COP26

The Regional Community Resilience Group (RCRG) is pleased to have been asked to partner with the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) to promote Northern Ireland's approach to community resilience at COP26, the UN Climate Change Conference held in Glasgow from 31 October to 12 November 2021.

Delegates from around the world were invited to attend, or join online, to discover and learn from the various projects from around the world which are being developed to promote adaptation to, and to help mitigate against, the effects of climate change.

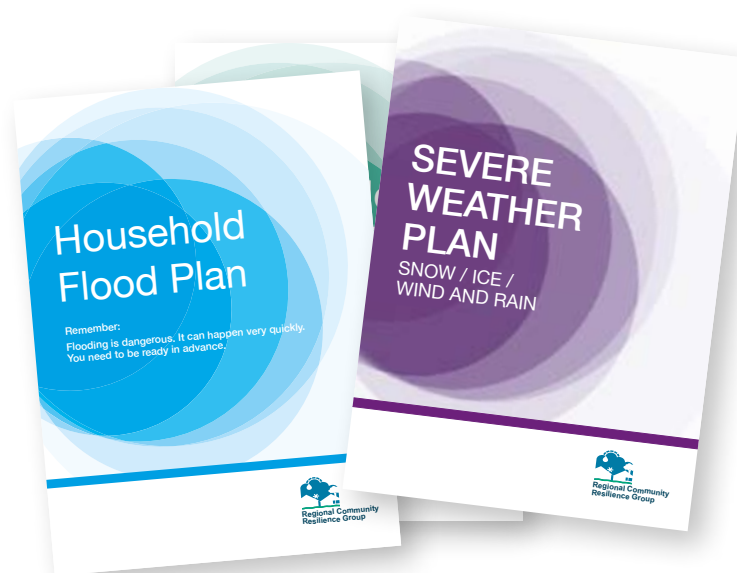
The RCRG produced a short video to outline the work of communities and agencies in Northern Ireland, who have been working in partnership since 2013, to allow better preparation for severe weather emergencies. The video was shown on 'Adaptation Day',

a designated day for Local Government in Northern Ireland to outline the issues we are facing and to showcase how everyone is working together to adapt to the impacts of climate change. It reflects the challenges that local communities are facing and how it impacts their homes, businesses and daily lives and we hope it can be shared widely to aid the promotion of further resilience work in communities across Northern Ireland.

An integral part of the video message is the input from some of our community resilience group members about their personal experiences of severe weather and flooding and

how community and agency partners continue to work together. The provision of physical measures, direct contact routes to provide support and reassurance, and the ongoing engagement with communities is also highlighted.

We would like to thank all those who were so willing to give their time to contribute to the video and who work so hard on an ongoing basis within their communities. You can watch the video here: <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/regional-community-resilience-group>.



# Building Resilience Together – a new Framework



The Executive Office is pleased to inform you of the recent launch of a new Northern Ireland Civil Contingencies Framework Document – Building Resilience Together.

Delegates from around the world were invited to attend, or join online, to discover and learn from the various international examples of projects which are being developed to promote

adaptation to, and to help mitigate against, the effects of climate change.

The new framework document formalises the relationships and protocols between the strategic and operational areas of civil contingencies within Northern Ireland. It has replaced multiple documents into a single reference for use by the resilience sector. This document has been written to be accessible to everyone and is designed to work as the foundation for all governance structures and procedures in the civil contingencies

arena. This framework has the principles and terminology of emergency management embedded within it and has the 3 phases of prepare, respond, and recover at its core.

The real strength of the framework however is that it ingrains collaboration, communication and partnership working across Northern Ireland and, going forward, central government structures will work together with local government, communities and responding agencies to harness that collective strength to become more resilient. This will mean Northern Ireland has the tools to prepare for, respond to, and recover from, any type of emergency.

Finally, thank you to everyone in the civil contingencies community for all their engagement and positive contributions to the drafting and design of the final framework document. The framework is very much a product of collaboration across the whole resilience sector. Also, many thanks to all those who have endorsed the framework to date – the positive response has been very encouraging.

The framework can be accessed on-line here: [www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-civil-contingencies-framework](http://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-civil-contingencies-framework)

# First Extreme Heat Warning issued for Northern Ireland

On the 1st June this year the Met Office introduced an Extreme Heat warning into the suite of weather warnings that can be delivered under the National Severe Weather Warning Service.

This proved timely as in mid-July it became apparent that record breaking temperatures were possible across Northern Ireland. With many people holidaying at home, ongoing pressures on health services and growing concerns about water supplies, the Met Office consulted with partner agencies and decided to issue the first ever amber warning of Extreme Heat across Northern Ireland on Tuesday 20th July valid for three days between 21st and 23rd July.

Temperatures during the week of 17th to 24th July breached previous records on three separate occasions and a new regional temperature

record of 31.3C was recorded at Castleterg on Wednesday 21st with many inland areas exceeding 30C on three consecutive days. This was only the second time this has happened in Northern Ireland since 1960 – the previous occasion having been just three years ago in late June 2018.

The increasing incidence of high temperatures and longer duration heatwaves has been a key concern over recent years and it would appear that Northern Ireland is, like many other parts of the world, no longer immune from these extremes.

Another consequence of summer heatwaves is the risk of more intense rainfall events. Storms and heavy rain arrived in late July and early August and this brought some local flooding to a number of locations across Northern Ireland.

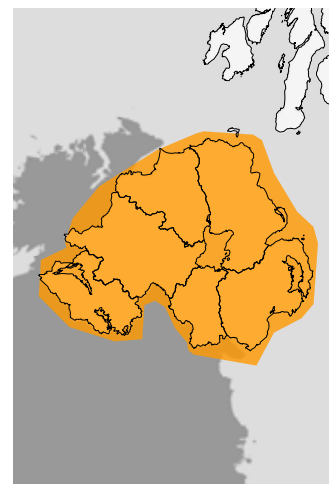
Clearly we must continue to prepare for extremes of both temperature and rainfall in the decades ahead as these events become ever more likely due to climate change.

 Met Office

National Severe Weather Warning Service

 Amber warning  
Extreme Heat

Between  
**08:00 Wed 21 Jul 2021** and  
**23:59 Fri 23 Jul 2021**



**Temperatures both by day and night will increase this week leading to public health impacts**

What to expect

- Adverse health effects are likely to be experienced by those vulnerable to extreme heat
- The wider population are likely to experience some adverse health effects including sunburn or heat exhaustion (dehydration, nausea, fatigue) and other heat related illnesses
- Ongoing pressures on water resources
- An increased chance that some heat-sensitive systems and equipment may fail, leading to power cuts and the loss of other services to some homes and businesses
- More people are likely to visit coastal areas, lakes and rivers leading to an increased risk of water safety incidents
- Some delays to road, rail and air travel are possible, with potential for welfare issues for those who experience prolonged delays

## Further details

The current hot weather is expected to continue until later this week, with daytime temperatures peaking on Wednesday and Thursday.

High overnight temperatures are also expected before temperatures fall on Friday.



# Beware of Frozen Pipes & Check Vacant Buildings

As in previous years, NI Water has embarked on its annual winter campaign to highlight its key winter readiness messages for its customers and stakeholders.

The Company will continue to engage with a wide variety of stakeholders to further promote its 'be prepared' winter message.

The key message is to protect your property against the effects of freezing temperatures now before it's too late.

Des Nevin, NI Water's Director of Customer Operations, comments;

"With the continued impact of Covid-19 on our community, it is more vital than ever that we protect our water supplies through the winter. This means taking action now to ensure that pipes are lagged, inside and outside the house, and that everyone in the property knows where the stop valve is located. It is also vital that you have a plan to ensure your property is protected if it had to close suddenly for a period of time due to restrictions.

"Some buildings and businesses may not be occupied in the lead up to winter and will have had no build-up of residual heat

to protect pipes. We are therefore asking the public to also check pipework within vacant buildings."

"The traditional Christmas holiday time, from 23rd December 2021 to 2nd January 2022, is a particularly critical period when student accommodation and business premises may lie vacant with no heating to prevent pipes from freezing. It is therefore vital you have a plan to ensure your property is protected if it has to close suddenly for a time or through the holiday period.

"We would encourage farmers to check drinking troughs for leaks after freezing temperatures.

"On a wider scale, the impact of thousands of litres of water pouring out of burst water pipes can put a huge strain on the distribution network. NI Water staff will be working hard to urgently fix burst watermains after very cold weather and the public has an important role to play in quickly repairing any breaches in their property plumbing."

**How to get started:**



Wrap up pipes and water tanks with lagging.

Fix dripping taps.

Find your property's stop tap and make sure you can turn it off.

Keep the name of an approved plumber handy - type in your postcode at [www.watersafe.org.uk](http://www.watersafe.org.uk) to find your nearest accredited plumbing business.

Plumber's number



Visit [niwater.com/winter-proof-your-home](http://niwater.com/winter-proof-your-home) for further advice on how to protect your property this winter.



**FROZEN PIPES CAN FLOOD HOMES**

Insulate your pipes properly this winter

**Winter - When you need your water supply the most; don't wait, insulate.**

With the continued impact of Covid-19 on our community, it is more vital than ever that householders, landlords and businesses are ready for winter. This means taking action now to ensure pipes are well insulated to avoid a frozen pipe or losing your water supply. Everyone in the property needs to know where the stop tap is located so if there is a burst, you can turn it off to stop water damage.

It is also vital you have a plan to ensure your property is protected if it has to close suddenly for a period of time or through the holiday period.

**northern ireland water**

Delivering what matters

[niwater.com/winter](http://niwater.com/winter)

# Translink - keeping you moving safely

As the leaves fall and temperatures drop across Northern Ireland, autumn and wintry weather can pose a challenge for our transport services.

This period is a busy time for passengers, and Translink are committed to keeping everyone connected, moving and safe.

During the colder months, conditions can get quite difficult, this can include heavy rain, wind, ice, and snow. As one of the top performing train companies within the UK, Translink aim to minimise the impact of the winter

weather for customers by taking action to combat the effects of leaf fall and colder weather. The following proactive steps have made a considerable impact and we will continue to develop and build on these.

Thousands of trees line Northern Ireland's railways and every autumn hundreds of tonnes of leaves fall on the tracks. As the leaves become compacted, they form a smooth and slippery layer that sticks to the tracks making it difficult for trains to accelerate and stop. A special application machine fitted to trains will be working round the clock to keep the tracks clear. Specially adapted night trains that clear the tracks with a high-pressure water jet, before applying Sandite (a sandy, gel-like substance to

help prevent wheel slip), will also be deployed.

A close eye on weather forecasts will be maintained and a team will be in place to ensure de-icing is carried out and that snow is removed from platforms and bus stations. Extra training will be provided for drivers to navigate through any adverse conditions and work will continue to guarantee buses and trains are ready for the worst weather conditions.

It's important to keep everyone moving and each year Translink make a significant investment for the safety of our passengers and works hard to keep services running on time and minimise the delays.



## Is Your Vehicle Winter Ready?

By the time winter arrives most people are armed with a wardrobe full of coats, scarves and boots. But, is your car as prepared as you are for the winter weather?

Find out what The Highway Code advises on how to stay safe and how to keep your vehicle in good working order during the winter at: <https://www.sharetheroadtozero.com/winter-is-coming>

Remember, it's the vehicle owner's responsibility to make sure their vehicle is in a roadworthy condition to be used on a public road. Owners should continue to service their vehicle and carry out basic checks such as regularly checking tyre pressures and tread depths, looking out for brake wear, and ensuring that all lights are working.

The PSNI and Insurance Companies expect drivers and riders to comply with their legal obligations to keep their vehicles in a roadworthy condition.

Advice and guidance on DVA (Driver and Vehicle Agency) services is regularly updated on NI Direct at:

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-and-motoring>

Winter car care is not only essential to keep your vehicle protected from snow, ice, and plummeting temperatures – it could also save your life.

Before you start any journey make sure your vehicle is fit for the road, ensure that the battery is well maintained and that there are appropriate anti-freeze agents in your radiator and windscreen bottle.

More information on the maintenance of your vehicle is available on NI Direct at: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/vehicle-maintenance-safety-and-security>

For more road safety and sustainable travel advice, sign up to 'Share The Road to Zero' - zero road deaths in Northern Ireland. Pledging is quick, easy and free, so sign up today at: [www.sharetheroadtozero.com](http://www.sharetheroadtozero.com) because EVERY road death is one too many. You can follow the 'Share The Road to Zero' social media pages at: [@ShareTheRoadToZero](https://www.facebook.com/ShareTheRoadToZero) on Facebook and at [@roadtozero](https://twitter.com/roadtozero) on Twitter.

# NIE Networks increasing support for vulnerable customers

NIE Networks has launched a new public information campaign to raise awareness of the many specialist services the company offers to help those customers who may have vulnerabilities or require additional support.

The campaign comes just a few months after NIE Networks launched its new Vulnerable Customer Strategy. The strategy defines how every customer needing extra support, including customers with communication barriers, translation requirements, the elderly, those who are visually impaired or those reliant on life saving medical equipment, receives the help they need.

Speaking at the launch of the campaign, Customer and Market Services Director for NIE Networks, Ronan McKeown, said;

“Our new public information campaign aims to increase awareness of the 20 services we offer to help ensure the most vulnerable in society are cared for as customers of NIE Networks.

“For example, the NIE Networks Medical Customer Care Register offers a telephone



information support service to customers who are dependent on life supporting medical equipment in the event of a power cut. Currently, over 10,000 people are registered but we want to increase the number of customers on the register by 25% by 2024.”

NIE Networks is also an accredited JAM Card friendly organisation, with over 90 per cent of staff trained to provide the highest standard of service to those customers with a learning difficulty, autism or communication barrier.

The company is also developing a specialist team so those customers who may have a vulnerability can speak to specially-trained agents. Employees will be up-skilled to improve their communications with those with hearing or speech difficulties by introducing the RNID-approved Relay UK service, and improve employee ID cards to

make them easier for customers to check when calling at properties.

“As a business, our customers, and particularly customers who may have a vulnerability, sit at the heart of everything we do. Each year we invest around £0.5 million on support services and we want every customer to feel connected with us.

“We are a dementia friendly organisation, we have Browsealoud on our website for those customers with visual impairment and our metering team can arrange an appointment for those customers who need to be accompanied by a friend or family member. That’s just some of the ways we can help.”

To find out more about the NIE Networks Medical Customer Care Register or the other tailored support services available, visit: [www.nienetworks.co.uk](http://www.nienetworks.co.uk)

## Join NI Water's Customer Care Register

NI Water is encouraging customers who may need that extra bit of help because of a medical condition or any other vulnerability to sign up to its Customer Care Register.

Some of the benefits of joining this register include:

- Doorstep Service
- Password scheme
- Carers Contact Service

Customers can register for the service via <https://www.niwater.com/customer-care-register/>



# Sicily Park Flood alleviation Scheme

Local residents recently visited work on the first phase of the Sicily/ Marguerite Park Flood Alleviation Scheme and gained an insight into this major £8million engineering feat!

The project involves laying 1300 metres of pipework in total and 800 metres of this will be tunnelled – reducing disruption to the public.

Work is progressing well, with four of the six sections to be tunnelled now complete. Over the next 2 years NI Water will reduce the risk of out-of-sewer flooding in the Marguerite Park area of south Belfast and pave the way for works at Sicily Park under Phase 2.

Over recent years, capacity issues within the existing sewer network have contributed to some homes within the Marguerite and Sicily areas experiencing internal and external property flooding.

The project involves the construction of over 1.3km of new large sewer pipes up to 1500mm in diameter, from the Groveland's area of Musgrave Park



through the park grounds/Musgrave Park Hospital/Malone College, crossing under the railway line and through private lands into Diamond Gardens/ Marguerite Park and Donegall Park.

Around 800m of the new sewer will be constructed using 'trenchless' tunnelling techniques. This method of construction will substantially reduce disruption within Musgrave Park/ Musgrave Park Hospital and Malone College.

Works commenced in April 2021 and are progressing well with just over half of the tunneling works now complete, and work on the fifth of the sixth tunneled sections now ongoing. The final section of tunneling, a 95m drive under the Belfast to Dublin rail line, is programmed to be completed between December 2021 and January 2022. Work to construct the final tunnel

reception pit, within private lands adjacent to Creighton's Car Repair Workshop on Diamond Gardens, is underway.

The open cut pipe laying works are continuing within the Groveland's area of Musgrave Park, and will connect into the section of tunneled sewer.

Due to the number and location of existing underground services, the new sewers within the Diamond Gardens/ Donegall Park and Marguerite Park areas will be undertaken by the traditional 'open-dig' method. NI Water anticipate this section of the works will commence during Spring 2022, subject to progress on other elements of the project.



## Department for Infrastructure (DfI) - Flood Alleviation Schemes

DfI Rivers has progressed a number of flood alleviation schemes (FAS) which represents a significant investment in this key area of work.

Once complete it is hoped that these measures will bring some comfort and reassurance to the communities in these areas. A breakdown of these schemes and their benefits is detailed as follows:

- A £17m contract has been awarded to Lagan Construction, a member of the Charles Brand group, for the Design & Build of the Belfast Tidal FAS. The scheme will reduce tidal flood risk to over 1500 properties in the City and involves the detailed design and construction of over 8.5km of flood defences along the tidal River Lagan, covering the area from Belfast Harbour to Stranmillis Weir. The project aims to provide a long term approach to tidal flood risk management for Belfast and has been designed to allow future adaption to mitigate against potential sea level rises. The detailed design and construction stages are estimated to take at least

18 months to complete and it is expected that works will commence on site in early 2022.

- The £2.9 million Newry FAS on the tributaries of the Newry River is underway. AG Wilson have been awarded the contract with work started on 16 August 2021. The scheme will see the construction of approximately 990 metres of new 1350 millimetre diameter concrete culvert and 2000 metres of new flood wall and embankment works. This is the first of three planned phases of flood alleviation measures for the City. This initial scheme will provide reduced flood risk to homes and businesses located at Armagh Road, Downshire Road, Craigmore Way and Greenbank Industrial Estate, Newry. The work is expected to take 12 months to complete.
- Works are underway at the £5.1 million Shimna FAS for Newcastle. Dawson WAM Ltd have been awarded the contract to take forward this vital construction project and they have been carrying out preliminary site investigation and enabling works over the past couple of weeks. Over the next 12

months approximately 1430 metres of flood walls and embankments will be built to reduce flood risk to 312 homes and businesses in the area. Works are commencing on the flood defence in Islands Park, with the construction of the remaining sections in 2022.

- A £365k FAS on the La Salle Stream in the Riverdale Park East area of West Belfast is nearing completion. The scheme has involved the construction of approximately 180 metres of new culvert and manholes and will reduce the risk of flooding to approximately 10 residential properties in the Riverdale Park East area.
- A £750,000 project to refurbish Stranmillis Weir is now fully complete. The main part of the refurbishment scheme was the upgrade of the three vertical lift gates, each approximately 7.5 metres long and 1.7 metres high. These gates control the upstream water levels to

help reduce the risk of flooding during severe weather. New lighting and safety equipment has also been installed, alongside other infrastructure repairs including the upgrading of mechanical and electrical equipment to ensure that the weir can continue this key function. This will safeguard its structural integrity for many years to come so that it can continue to offer much needed protection during severe weather events. This was part of the £5 million Lagan Gateway project which is led by Belfast City Council. The Department worked with Belfast City Council and other partners including Ulster Garden Villages, Department for Communities and the Lagan Navigation Trust.

The refurbished Stranmillis Weir in operation.



## Bag It & Bin It

NI Water has recently launched an awareness campaign highlighting the ongoing effects of flushing inappropriate items into the public sewerage network and how cooking fat, oil and grease can clog the sewerage pipes when dumped down the sink.

NI Water's Head of Wastewater, Davy McCullough, explains why NI Water is appealing to customers to bag and bin their bathroom rubbish:

"My team recently undertook a deep clean under Waring Street in Belfast. Staff cleared a fatberg made up of wipes, sanitary items, grease and much more from the sewerage system. We rely on these sewers to operate effectively, out of sight and out of mind, to take away wastewater from homes, bars and restaurants, and it just wouldn't be possible for any of us to enjoy a night out in the town without them.

NI Water teams have cleared thousands of wipes from the sewerage system all over Northern Ireland this year. The wet wipe rose to prominence at the start of the pandemic when toilet roll was in short supply and unfortunately, most of them made their way into the sewerage system.

"Unlike toilet roll, wet wipes do not break down easily and can adhere to other inappropriate items that are flushed. These create blockages that often contribute to out of sewer flooding.

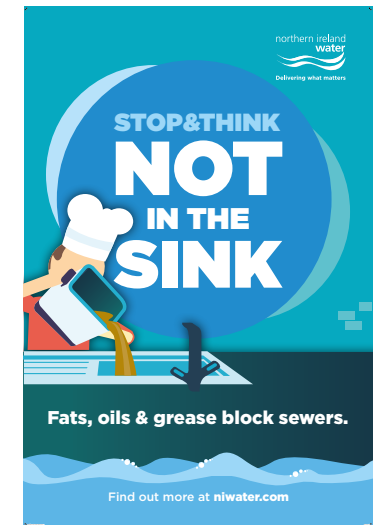
"The solution is very simple, if those items are not flushed then they can't end up in the environment. So NI Water is appealing to customers to remember the three 'P's: only flush pee, poo and toilet paper; everything else needs to go in the bin.

"If we all make changes to our flushing habits, then incidents like the Waring Street fatberg, and overflowing manholes, can be avoided in the future."

Davy concludes; "We have spent billions of pounds investing in water and wastewater infrastructure in Northern Ireland, but no

amount of investment will prevent blocked pipes and pollution of the environment unless we become more circumspect about what we flush down the toilet."

Visit [www.niwater.com/bag-it-and-bin-it/](http://www.niwater.com/bag-it-and-bin-it/) for further information.





# New allergen labelling law goes live!

Millions of people living with food allergies, intolerances and coeliac disease are now able to make safer choices about the food they buy as a new allergen labelling law comes into effect.



The new allergen labelling changes for 'prepacked for direct sale foods', also known as Natasha's Law, came into effect on 1 October 2021. From this date all food known as 'prepacked for direct sale' needs to be labelled with the name of the product and full ingredient information, with allergens emphasised.

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) would like to thank all partners for their support in making sure every business impacted has had the information and support it needs to make the necessary changes.

To mark the date, the FSA will be pro-active in the media and are hoping to achieve significant coverage about these changes, sharing relevant messaging to both businesses and consumers using the Social Media Toolkit.

The Social Media Toolkit has a range of consumer-focused messages to inform the general public and people with food hypersensitivities, intolerance and coeliac disease about the changes they will begin to see from 1 October.

A new FSA Explains video has also been created which will help explain the allergen labelling law. You can watch it [here](#).

The FSA is also encouraging consumers to make their allergies known to food-business staff. This message was highlighted in their #SpeakUpForAllergies campaign earlier this year which encouraged young people to always speak about their allergies when ordering food.

More details and a list of top tips for safely buying takeaway food is available on the [FSA website](#).

# Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service Learning and Development facility

The Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS) provided its multi-agency partners with a tour of its new Learning and Development facility at Desertcreat, near Cookstown in July this year. This exciting new facility will enable NIFRS to exercise and train in near "real life" simulation scenarios and the Service is looking forward to putting the new facilities to good use in future years.



## PSNI - Supporting Safer Communities – We Care We Listen We Act

Now that autumn has arrived it is vitally important that we take some additional steps to review and improve our home security. We've put together some practical advice that can help you stay safe and secure in your home.



Please share this with your older relatives, neighbours and friends and take a few minutes of your time to chat through all things security and put in place these preventative measures.

### Home Security

As the darker evenings draw in, you can significantly reduce the chance of your home being burgled by taking a few precautions:

- A well-lit home gives the impression that someone is in.
- Use timer switches to turn lights on while you are out and make the house look occupied.
- Save energy and money with low energy dusk to dawn light bulbs. (A low-energy bulb costs less than 5p per week to run if left on for six

hours per day.)

- Close and lock all doors and windows even if you are only going out for a few minutes and keep gates well secured.
- Check all your external lighting is in good working order and replace bulbs if necessary.
- Don't leave car keys near your door, letterbox or windows.
- Always check who is at the door. Not sure? Don't open the door.
- Set your alarm when going out and at night. If you don't have an alarm, consider installing one. For further details contact your local Crime Prevention Officer on 101.

For further information on Crime Prevention please visit <https://www.psnipolice.uk/advice-information/protecting-your-home/>

## Scams

As we approach the Christmas period, it is likely that scams will increase. They come in many different forms but some of the more commonly used ones are telephone and internet scams. Please be careful when contacted by anyone over the phone who is asking for your personal details. Remember financial institutions, utility companies, law enforcement, HMRC, internet and telephone providers or other public bodies will **NEVER**

ask for your personal details over the phone. They **NEVER** accept vouchers or bank transfers, and will **NEVER** use threatening behaviour over the phone. Remember if it seems too good to be true it usually is!

To avoid becoming the victim of a scam visit ScamwiseNI at [www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/scamwiseni](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/scamwiseni) or the ScamwiseNI Facebook page [@scamwiseni](https://www.facebook.com/scamwiseni).

REPORT ALL SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY online at [www.psnipolice.uk](http://www.psnipolice.uk). Call 101. In an Emergency call 999.

If you have any concerns about unsolicited calls, emails or letters then please report it to Action Fraud via their website [www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk) or by phoning 0300 123 2040. You can also call police on the non-emergency number 101.

If you receive a suspicious message, whether by email, website or text message you can take the following actions:

**Email** – if you feel unsure about an email you have received, you can forward it to the Suspicious Email Reporting Services at [report@phishing.gov.uk](mailto:report@phishing.gov.uk)

**Website** – If you have come across a website which you think is fake, you can report it [here](#).

**Text message** – Report suspicious text messages for free to 7726. Your provider can investigate the text and take action if found to be fraudulent.

# Boost your immunity this winter by getting the free flu vaccine

## The Public Health Agency is urging everyone who falls into an eligible group to get the free flu vaccine, with the aim of boosting your immunity this winter.

The call comes as the agency launches this year's flu vaccination programme, offering vaccines which are specially formulated to tackle the strains of the virus which are expected to be circulating this winter.

The 'Boost your Immunity this Winter' campaign combines the flu vaccine programme with the COVID-19 vaccine programme to help reduce the spread of flu and COVID-19 and lower hospital-related admissions for both. This is particularly important at this time when the health service is under severe strain.

In addition to most children and adults being eligible for the

free flu vaccine, some groups will also be eligible for a first dose COVID vaccine or booster. Flu and COVID-19 can both be life-threatening and spread more easily in winter, when we are more likely to be crowded together inside. Getting vaccinated is the most effective way to boost our natural immunity and protect ourselves from these viruses.

Everyone who is eligible for vaccination should make themselves aware of their own GP surgery's or community pharmacist's flu vaccination arrangements, or look out for the consent form for their children coming home in school bags.

Eligible groups for flu vaccine in 2021 to 2022 are:

- All preschool children aged 2 to 4 years on 1 September 2021
- All primary and secondary (up to year 12) school children
- Those aged 6 months to 2 years and 16 to 49 years in clinical risk groups
- Pregnant women
- Those aged 50 years and over

- Those in long-stay residential care homes
- Carers
- Close contacts of immunocompromised individuals

For further information on who is eligible to boost your immunity this winter see [www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/flu-vaccine](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/flu-vaccine)

**BOOST**  
YOUR IMMUNITY  
THIS WINTER

FLU vaccine

IF YOU'RE ELIGIBLE GET THE  
FREE FLU VACCINE

[www.nidirect.gov.uk/101](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/101)



 ScamwiseNI  
[nidirect.gov.uk/scamwiseni](http://nidirect.gov.uk/scamwiseni)

**scamwiseNI**  
PARTNERSHIP



## The Regional Community Resilience Group (RCRG) Newsletter – Keeping members weather ready

The Regional Community Resilience Group Newsletter aims to keep its members up to date on getting weather ready.

The Regional Community Resilience Group (RCRG) was formed in 2013 to help

local communities prepare for and respond to weather related emergencies.

The group brings together Multi-Agency Partner Organisations from government, utilities and the voluntary sector to work for and with Communities at Risk of Severe Weather.

The RCRG aims to provide a forum to facilitate co-ordination, communication, partnership

working and capacity building on community resilience issues. The group is currently working with over 30 communities across Northern Ireland ready to inform and resource them and improve preparedness and community resilience measures.

Unfortunately, severe weather events will continue to occur but through good communication, accessible, reliable information and established practical

measures, communities can and have applied self-help measures to reduce impacts and protect property.

This newsletter will be used to highlight important developments to enhance community resilience, provide an opportunity for communities to share experiences to the benefit of others and highlight key responder contacts to help readers to **Get Weather Ready!**

### Partner Organisations:



## Emergency Numbers

No matter how prepared we are for inclement weather, there's always the chance of an emergency at home. Here's a list of phone numbers you might find useful should the unforeseen happen:

Emergency Services:  
**999 or 112**

Housing Executive:  
**03448 920 901**

Northern Ireland Electricity Networks:  
**03457 643643**

NI Gas Emergency Service:  
**0800 002 001**

NI Water Waterline:  
**03457 440088**

Flooding Incident Line:  
**0300 2000 100**

For advice and information on dealing with emergencies visit:

[www.nidirect.gov.uk/be-ready-for-emergencies](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/be-ready-for-emergencies)

Problems with Roads & Streets:  
[www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/travel-transport-and-roads/problems-roads-and-streets](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/travel-transport-and-roads/problems-roads-and-streets)