



London Borough of Camden and London Borough of Islington: Preventing Winter Deaths

Excess winter deaths affect the entire population but particularly older people and those on low-incomes. Cold weather exacerbates minor and pre-existing medical conditions, and mental health is negatively affected by fuel poverty and cold housing. Camden and Islington Public Health have been working with teams in both councils to improve access to seasonal health interventions and refer residents to available support.

“Camden and Islington have been working to improve access to seasonal health interventions across both councils”

These local authorities have created seasonal health and referral hub initiatives across both Camden and Islington to reach residents most in need of support, particularly during winter where people are at their most vulnerable. Factors that contribute to the success of these initiatives include:

- shared priorities across Public Health and council departments
- partnerships with local voluntary sector and public sector organisations
- shared expertise across departments
- maintenance of relationships amid transition and restructures
- ability to share information and success across both boroughs.

WISH Plus (Warmth, Income, Safety and Health) in Camden works to improve health and wellbeing by offering packages of support and onward referral for a wide range of services such as health, safety and security measures in the home and benefits advice and support for those in need. In 2012/13 the service had 1,492 partner referrals with 197 people referred for health interventions and 393 referred for affordable warmth interventions. Recently, the WISH Plus referral hub relocated to Housing and Adult Social Care, meaning closer integration with core teams who work within deprived communities and with vulnerable people. This will ensure that the health interventions generated by WISH Plus are better targeted to the residents with the most need.

Camden also delivers a service called ‘Well and Warm’ which helps residents make their homes warmer and more energy efficient by installing small energy saving measures and providing energy advice. WISH Plus makes reference to the ‘Well and Warm’ service.

In April 2013, responsibility for public health was transferred to local authorities. This case study is part of a series highlighting the innovative work London local authorities have done to promote healthier lifestyles and reduce health inequalities since taking on this new role. For more information, email addicus.cort@londoncouncils.gov.uk



The Public Health and Housing team have also recently supported North London Cares, a local charity, to deliver a door-knocking campaign to up to 1,000 Camden and Islington households with residents aged over 65 to provide advice and information on winter warmth and a range of public health services. This project was funded by Public Health and delivered in partnership with the Housing Support Group. Teams of volunteers knocked on doors and had 299 conversations with residents over 65 on their doorsteps. These were followed up with practical support such as delivering blankets and warm clothes, inviting people to local social clubs, referring people into Camden council services, such as WISH Plus, and distributing small grants. Information has also been delivered to 701 households in the area.

In Islington, SHINE (Seasonal Health Interventions Network) is a one-stop referral system for affordable warmth and seasonal health interventions. A single referral to SHINE leads to an assessment for more than twenty potential interventions. In 2013/14, SHINE processed a total of 2,830 referrals. The Public Health team is currently working with the Seasonal Health team to improve the targeting of SHINE interventions so those who are most vulnerable during winter will have better access to the services and support available.

Camden and Islington Public Health have also partnered with the Seasonal Health and Affordable Warmth team to develop 'Well Winter – Your Winter Warmth and Health Guide' to provide information and raise awareness of what is available to support people to manage winter and stay warm and well in Islington. It includes information on keeping warm, cutting bills, benefits, preventing cold and flu, staying active and eating well, and reducing the risk of falls.

Public Health has also recently partnered with the Housing department at Islington, who have installed insulation at Holly Park, a council estate in Crouch Hill. Public Health has supported the housing team to evaluate the impact of the insulation project to ensure the benefits and outcomes associated with the insulation are monitored and captured.

In Camden, Public Health has been involved in supporting the development of WISH Plus and providing links to Camden CCG, who also support this service financially. It will continue to link with WISH Plus following its move to Housing and Adult Social Care at Camden council. The Housing Support Group, Public Health and North London Cares worked in partnership to deliver the winter door-knocking campaign.

In Islington, Public Health has a strong relationship with the Seasonal Health and Affordable Warmth team who are part of the Environment and Regeneration Directorate. This facilitates collaboration across various projects such as SHINE, Well Winter Guide and seasonal health chapters of the JSNA. Public Health supported SHINE in Islington to work with North London Cares and other local third-sector organisations such as Age UK Islington and the Friendship Network to deliver a Well Winter Campaign reaching 4,900 households.

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