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VEG VAN

Dave Gardner is trying to establish regular Veg Van rounds in the Forest. As well as vegetables, he can also supply bread and milk. To find out when he delivers in your village, phone him on 01594 823192 or mobile 07909 962109. (Remember that in some areas of the Forest there is no mobile reception/signal.)

SUPPORT FOR OLDER PEOPLE IN THE SNOW

Important things to check on are heating arrangements: many people turn on extra heating units that they might not normally use, such as a portable gas heater which creates the risk of fire. Many people rely on coal and wood for heat but icy paths to the wood or coal shed can be very dangerous. Make sure that paths are cleared and well salted, or even better make sure there is a supply of fuel within safe reach. Older people are worried about falling on icy paths and shopping is difficult so check that elderly neighbours have enough food and milk to last over the snowy period. Cold weather can affect people with respiratory difficulties so help getting prescriptions might be needed.

It can be very lonely and isolating for people who can normally get out and about but who are temporarily housebound. If it's safe, an extra bit of help and support to enable people to get to normal social activities or the bus stop can make a lot of difference to coping in this weather. If that's not possible a phone call cheers people up, but being able to have a chat and a cup of tea is even better.

Less activity also can result in people getting too cold – there is always the risk of hypothermia so suggest a rug or dressing gown whilst sitting in a chair, and frequent hot drinks. If an older neighbour or relative seems less with-it than usual it could be that the cold is affecting them – get more advice from NHS Direct if necessary. Everyone should check their older friends, relatives and neighbours – just knowing that someone is there to help if necessary can remove a lot of worry and anxiety.

KEEP WELL IN WINTER

It seems obvious that you should want to keep warm in the winter, but many people don't realise the serious threat to health posed by not keeping warm. As the weather gets colder, we are all more susceptible to colds and "flu" and a drop in body temperature can increase the risk to our health. Older people are particularly

vulnerable to the effects of cold weather. But there are some simple things you can do to keep warm and healthy such as eating well, drinking hot drinks, dressing warmly and exercising as much as possible.

Remember to:

Eat for warmth - eating properly plays a big part in keeping warm and well. Regular hot meals and hot drinks provide warmth and energy. Keep active – any activity, even vacuuming, will improve circulation. Dress warmly – wrap up warm, ideally with several layers of thin clothing to trap the heat. Get a flu jab – the flu jab is available to anyone over 65 and people in “at risk” groups. Your GP will be able to help with this. A booklet giving detailed advice on keeping warm and well this winter can be downloaded at [keeppwarmkeepwell.direct.gov.uk/index.html](http://www.keeppwarmkeepwell.direct.gov.uk/index.html)

THE HOME HEAT HELPLINE

can also advise you on benefits, grants for free home insulation, reduced tariffs and special payment options your energy supplier provides to help those struggling with their fuel bills. Their experts are always happy to help. To chat to a specially trained advisor, call for **FREE on 0800 33 66 99** or visit their website at <http://www.homeheathelpline.org.uk/>

WINTER FUEL PAYMENT

If you are aged 60 or over, you may get a winter fuel payment to help pay for keeping warm in winter. The Winter Fuel Payments Helpline **0845 915 1515** is open from Monday to Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm. More information can be found at www.direct.gov.uk/en/Pensionsandretirementplanning/Benefits/BenefitsInRetirement/DG_10018657

BE A GOOD NEIGHBOUR – WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

If someone has had an accident in their home, fallen and injured themselves or been taken ill, they may not be able to attract the attention of neighbours, passers-by or people who call at the door. Always be on the look-out for signs that something might be wrong, especially when the weather is cold. There are many signs to look out for: newspapers stuck in the letterbox, curtains drawn during the day, lights burning during the day, home in darkness when there should be someone at home, dog barking all day or the cat scratching to be let in.

USEFUL LINKS AND MORE INFORMATION

Gloucestershire County Council Adult Helpdesk

Tel: 01452 426868 (8am to 5pm Monday - Friday)

Email: socialcare.enq@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Online form: Complete the [Social Care - the services we provide: will you be able to get help?](#) Form

Age Concern Gloucestershire

Bleak House, 26 Station Road, Gloucester, GL1 1EW

Telephone/Fax General Enquiries: 01452 422660

Office hours: Monday – Thursday 9.00am - 4.00pm Friday 9.00am - 3.30pm

Help the Aged

The Help the Aged website offers advice and support on winter fuel bills.

<http://www.helptheaged.org.uk/en-gb/>

NHS Direct

24 hour health advice & information service. Tel:08454647 www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk