



November 2012

SPARE SOME TIME TO ' KNOCK ON YOUR NEIGHBOUR' THIS CHRISTMAS

NACC campaign encouraging communities to look in on their elderly neighbours

While families up and down the country are gearing up for the festive season, the National Association of Care Catering is urging everyone to spare a thought for the 50% of older people who live alone.

The campaign is simply asking everyone to spare some time to call in on at least one elderly relative or neighbour during the festive season to make sure they are keeping well and warm throughout the period.

More than 300,000 UK pensioners have died of cold related illnesses since 1997 and nine elderly people died every hour from cold-related illnesses last winter against a background of soaring energy bills. The announcement of an average 7% or £90, which will force the average household energy bill up from £1,259 a year to £1,334.

The winter 2012/2013 in the UK will be another cold one, according to several sources There are several key factors influencing this:

Low solar activity this year. The sun is 'always on' but actually varies in intensity, and a small change in this can affect the overall temperature of the planet.

The gulf stream shifting. The gulf stream is what creates our weather here in the UK, this is a stream of air that flows across the Atlantic, and brings different weather to our shores. The shifting gulf stream has benefited us at points, bringing warm weather, however the shift can also cause very cold winters.

Weather specialists say that they expect large parts of this winter to be very cold and exceptionally snowy in comparison to last year (forecasting confidence is quite high). They also expect these conditions to arrive earlier, rather than later this winter. There may even be the potential for some of the coldest/snowiest conditions in at least a century at times within the upcoming winter.

Older people can struggle with everyday tasks many of us take for granted, such as shopping for groceries, carrying shopping home or even make it to the shops. This can become even harder in the winter months as the cold weather also marks the arrival of winter illnesses, such as colds and flu, which are most likely to effect the more vulnerable, including the elderly.

For half a million people who spend Christmas alone the Community Meals on Wheels Service is a vital lifeline as they deliver thousands of meals over the festive period. Without this service and no transport available, some older people can quickly become isolated with no human contact, other than the television, for long periods of time.

Karen Oliver NACC Chair explains, For those elderly people who live alone the festive season can seem endless and Christmas Day just another day. Many older people are not able to put up decorations or cook the traditional Christmas dinner. The NACC believes the most valuable Christmas present you can give this year is simply a visit to an older person to make sure they are healthy and happy.

The NACC also, along with other Local Authorities have developed a “Keeping Well in Winter” guideline document which is issued throughout the UK and available on our website as a free download. While this will go some way to helping older people, it is still vital people visit their elderly neighbours throughout the Christmas break to check they are heeding the advice and keeping safe and well.

Key things to look out for when you visit

- Are they keeping warm

Check they are wearing several layers of clothes rather than one thick layer
There have warm slippers that fit correctly

- Are they keeping their home warm

Make sure the main living room is at a minimum temperature of 21C

- Are they eating well

Check they have had at least one hot meal a day and have food in to cover the following days
Check they have the availability and are able to make hot drinks throughout the day and night if required

Join our campaign and make some time to “Knock on your Neighbour” this festive season.
For further information or to download a copy of this leaflet please log on to www.thenacc.co.uk or Phone 08707 480180 to get a copy.

Ends

Notes to editors