



citizens  
advice

Uttlesford

# KEEPING WARM

in Uttlesford



NEW YEAR'S  
RESOLUTIONS

"We all start January full of good intentions. Rather than spending on a gym membership this year, why not make a resolution to put some money back in your pocket or make a pledge to support someone vulnerable nearby? Read on for some more ideas to help you keep warm and well this winter."

## RESOLUTION 1

# BE A GOOD NEIGHBOUR

**Make a pledge this winter to support an elderly friend or neighbour to make sure they are warm and coping well. Any of these ways could help:**

- \* Pop in once a week – more often if the weather turns very cold
- \* Make sure their living rooms are warm (around 21°C and 18°C for bedrooms)
- \* Ensure the person you are looking in on is eating well and has food in the cupboard
- \* Ask if you can collect a prescription or take the person to the GP for any appointments
- \* If it snows, clear their path or door for them



**If you're worried about a relative or elderly neighbour, contact Essex County Council Adult Social Care Team on 0345 603 7630. If you're concerned about their health contact NHS 111 for advice.**

## RESOLUTION 2

# USE LESS ENERGY

**A lot of wasted energy, particularly in older homes, is the result of overdue maintenance. Here are some quick, cheap jobs or changes you can make that can be just as effective as expensive home improvements.**

- \* Clear out gutters and drains. Blockages cause rainwater to soak into your walls making them damp and cold.
- \* Draught proof your home. Fix broken window panes, fit draught excluders to windows, doors and loft hatches. Don't forget the letter box.
- \* Fill gaps between bare floorboards with sealant strips; lay down a rug in winter to provide extra insulation and keep your toes toasty.
- \* Avoid blocking radiators with furniture or curtains.
- \* Draw your curtains at dusk to keep warm air in, but open during the day to let the sun warm your home. Thicker curtains will be more effective at keeping out draughts.
- \* 4% of a home's heat can be lost up the chimney. Fit a chimney draught excluder, which can be removed when you want to light a fire. Alternatively a chimney balloon can be fitted if you don't use the fireplace. [www.chimneysheep.co.uk](http://www.chimneysheep.co.uk).
- \* Insulate your loft. A quarter of your home's heat can be lost through an uninsulated loft. Most people have some loft insulation but many are not aware that the depth recommended is currently 270mm or 11 inches.

## HOME INSULATION – FREE OR HEAVILY DISCOUNTED

Aran Services are working in partnership with Uttlesford District Council to offer various services including free\* or heavily discounted loft, cavity wall or external wall insulation. Everyone is entitled to a grant regardless of income.

\*Funding is dependent on criteria and availability.

**To arrange a free, no obligation, survey, please contact Aran services on 0800 587 7795 or email [info@aranservices.co.uk](mailto:info@aranservices.co.uk). Alternatively speak to your energy provider about schemes available.**

### RESOLUTION 3

## KEEP MONEY IN YOUR POCKET

60% of households are still on standard variable tariffs for their gas and electricity and are overpaying by around £300 a year. For a step by step guide to switching go to [www.goenergyshopping.co.uk](http://www.goenergyshopping.co.uk)

- \* Ask your current supplier to move you to a cheaper tariff
- \* Use a non-profit comparison site such as <https://energycompare.citizensadvice.org.uk/>
- \* Call the energy helpline on 0800 074 0745 or Uttlesford Citizens Advice on 01799 618840 if you need help to switch
- \* Register for Essex Energy Switch [www.uttlesford.gov.uk/essexenergyswitch](http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/essexenergyswitch) and it will all be done for you! If you don't have internet access call Braintree and Uttlesford Energy Advice Team on **01376 552525**.

### WARM HOME DISCOUNT

Are you entitled to the Warm Home Discount? You could get £140 credit on your electricity bill. Contact your supplier or call the Warm Home Discount Helpline on **0345 603 9439**



- \* If you use heating oil always check prices online and then haggle with suppliers to get the best price. Never leave buying oil until the last minute as emergency deliveries are more expensive.
- \* Join a local oil club or go to [www.essex.communitybuying.org.uk/](http://www.essex.communitybuying.org.uk/) to join an Essex-wide scheme.
- \* Check regularly to make sure you are getting the best deal on other bills too – telephone and broadband, mobile phone, house and car insurance. Pick a memorable date to remind you.

### RESOLUTION 4

## STAY SAFE

- \* Make sure your chimney or wood burning stove is well maintained and swept regularly and fires are properly out before going to bed. Do not stack logs or other combustible materials next to a stove or boiler.
- \* Test your carbon monoxide and smoke alarms every week – to arrange a free home fire safely visit [www.essex-fire.gov.uk/](http://www.essex-fire.gov.uk/)
- \* Your boiler should have a safety check every year, if you're a tenant, this is the responsibility of your landlord – chase it up if you know it is overdue.
- \* Don't block air vents. Fires and heaters need ventilation – good ventilation also prevents condensation and mould problems.
- \* Use your electric blanket as instructed and never together with a hot water bottle.
- \* Be prepared for power cuts – keep a torch handy and an old fashioned corded phone; cordless phones will not work without power. Call **105** to report or get information about a power cut or to report damage to power lines or substations.

### PRIORITY SERVICES

Join the Priority Services Register, which offers extra FREE services to people who are of a pensionable age, are registered disabled, have long term ill health, have a hearing or visual impairment or are vulnerable. For further information contact your energy supplier.

- \* Uttlesford District Council's Lifeline community alarm service allows users to call for assistance in an emergency 24 hours a day. For more information call **01799 510510**.
- \* Make sure your car is prepared for winter. If you are worried about driving visit [www.uttlesfordfrontline.org.uk](http://www.uttlesfordfrontline.org.uk) and search 'Transport' for a factsheet of local travel options.





## RESOLUTION 5

# BE A HEALTHY HOUSEHOLD

- \* **Keep your spirits up:** It's not unusual to feel down in winter – particularly when the days are short. It can help to do something you enjoy every day. If you've been feeling listless and lacking in energy for several weeks, it's important to share this with someone – perhaps a friend or your GP.
- \* **Look after your heart:** Heart attacks and strokes increase when the temperature drops suddenly. If you have heart problems, wrap up and keep your house at 21C. (Wear several light layers of clothes, rather than one chunky layer.) Avoid hard physical exertion on very cold days and don't get into a freezing car as this is very taxing on your coronary arteries.
- \* **Chilblains:** They are small, itchy, red swellings that occur when your skin gets cold and you try to warm up too quickly. If you suffer from these, dab the swellings with calamine or witch hazel to reduce itching, but don't scratch them as this can cause infection. Speak to your pharmacist for advice.

- \* **Keep up the exercise:** Keep moving - if bad weather means you can't go out for a walk, catch up on some housework or try to move around the house every hour.
- \* **Eat a balanced diet:** Make sure you eat at least one hot meal a day. Soup is nutritious, warming and inexpensive to buy or make.

## AVOID COLDS & FLU

Getting cold does not cause a cold, but a drop in body temperature can weaken your immune system.

- \* People who do five 30-minute sessions of exercise a week have less time off work with colds.
- \* Commuting on trains or buses doubles your chances of catching a cold or flu, so walk to work if you can.
- \* Wash your hands regularly and scrub under the nails, which is where the cold virus is most likely to lurk.
- \* Protect yourself – make sure you've had your flu jab if you are over 65, pregnant, have certain medical conditions, live in residential care or are the main carer for someone whose welfare may be at risk if you fall ill.

## RESOLUTION 6

# SLEEP WELL

**If money is tight and you are having trouble paying your bills there is help available.**

- \* Contact your energy supplier. They may be able to change your payment options or move you to a cheaper deal.
  - \* Uttlesford Citizens Advice can help with:
    - \* Benefit entitlements, including disability benefits
    - \* Winter fuel and cold weather payment.
    - \* Budgeting and debt
    - \* Emergency support if you have no money for food or to heat your home
    - \* Affordable warmth grants for energy saving improvements if you are on certain benefits and privately rent or own your own home
    - \* Help with waste water or sewerage charges
- Call 01799 618840 to make an appointment.**



## UDC ENERGY ADVICE TEAM

To get advice from UDC's Energy Advice Team about energy efficiency and grants that may be available to help cover the cost of improvements, visit [www.uttlesfordfrontline.org.uk](http://www.uttlesfordfrontline.org.uk) or call **01376 552525**

## LIVE IN RENTED ACCOMMODATION?

If you live in privately rented accommodation and it is in a poor state of repair, for example if it is damp, cold, if the roof leaks or the windows are broken or rotten, tell your landlord. If your landlord does not carry out the necessary repairs call the Environmental Health Service at Uttlesford District Council on **01799 510482** or Uttlesford Citizens Advice on **01799 618840** for advice.

## DID YOU KNOW?

You cannot be disconnected in the six months between October to March if you are of pensionable age and live alone or if you live with people who are of pensionable age or under 18.

# USEFUL CONTACTS

<b>Affinity Water</b> (Advice on special tariffs, water saving home visits and problems paying your bill)	<b>0800 697 982</b>
<b>Age UK Essex</b> (advice for later life)	<b>01245 346 106</b>
<b>Adult Social Care Team</b> (worries about someone vulnerable)	<b>0845 603 7630</b>
<b>Community Agents</b> (advice on independent living)	<b>0800 977 5858</b>
<b>Energy Savings trust Advice Service</b> (energy saving advice)	<b>0300 123 1234</b>
<b>Essential Living Fund</b> (means tested emergency fund)	<b>0300 790 0124</b>
<b>Floodline</b> (flood advice)	<b>0345 988 1188</b>
For the loan of medical equipment	
<b>The Lions Club</b>	<b>07761 602 678</b>
<b>The Red Cross</b>	<b>0344 412 2772</b>
<b>Medical help and advice</b> (free NHS service 24/7)	<b>111</b>
<b>Essex Community Oil Buying Scheme</b>	<b>01473 345400</b>
<b>Salvation Army</b> (local charitable support)	<b>01799 510798</b>
<b>Samaritans</b> (emotional support if you are in despair or feeling suicidal)	<b>116 123</b>
<b>Silver Line Confidential Helpline</b> (friendship and advice for older people)	<b>0800 470 8090</b>
<b>UK Power Networks</b> (For information on power cuts)	<b>105</b>
<b>Uttlesford Citizens Advice</b> (free advice to help with problems, including money & legal issues)	<b>01799 618 840</b>
<b>Uttlesford Community Travel</b>	<b>01371 875 787</b>
<b>Uttlesford District Council</b>	<b>01799 510 510</b>
<b>Braintree and Uttlesford District Council Energy Advice Team</b>	<b>01376 552 525</b>
<b>Uttlesford District Council Environmental Health</b>	<b>01799 510 482</b>
<b>Winter Fuel Payments helpline</b>	<b>0345 915 1515</b>
<b>Warm Home Discount Helpline</b>	<b>0345 603 9439</b>