Welcome to the fourth online newsletter from the East Ayrshire Protecting People partners.

This is a special festive edition filled with advice and tips on how to stay safe and healthy over the winter months.

It also contains useful contact details just in case you or someone you know needs help.

Wishing you a merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and safe New Year!
Keeping kids safe in cold weather

When temperatures drop, children need extra attention to stay warm, safe and healthy. Young children are less likely to recognise when they are cold and more likely to lose body heat quickly due to their smaller size. Here are some tips to protect children when the thermometer dips:

1. **Think layers.** Put several layers of clothing on your child and make sure their head, neck and hands are covered. Dress babies and young children in one more layer than an adult would wear.

2. **Beware clothing hazards.** Scarves and hood strings can strangle smaller children so use other clothing to keep them warm.

3. **Check in on warmth.** Tell children to come inside if they get wet or if they’re cold.

4. **Install alarms.** More household fires happen during the winter so make sure you have smoke and carbon monoxide alarms in your home.

5. **Get equipped.** Children should always wear helmets when snowboarding, skiing or sledging. Any sports equipment should be professionally fitted.

6. **Teach technique.** It takes time to master fun winter activities like sledging, so make sure children know how to do the activity safely.

7. **Keep them hydrated.** In drier winter air children lose more water through their breath. Keep them drinking and try giving them warm drinks and soup for extra appeal.

8. **Watch for danger signs.** Signs of hypothermia are shivering, slurred speech, and unusual clumsiness. If you think your child has hypothermia call 111 immediately.

Why hang about in the cold this winter?

There’s no need to be out in the cold over the winter months when you could be having a great time at some of the activities available for young people throughout the area.

There are loads of activities available and what’s even better is that many of them are completely free! There are Sports Clubs, Night Leagues, Youth Clubs or you could gain a qualification like a Duke of Edinburgh’s Award.

For more information contact Vibrant Communities on 01563 576354, message us on Facebook [www.facebook.com/eavibrantcommunities](http://www.facebook.com/eavibrantcommunities) or take a look at ‘The Buzz’ [www.eac.eu/thebuzz](http://www.eac.eu/thebuzz) for a list of activity dates and venues.
Toy safety

In the run up to Christmas each year, the shops are full of children’s toys and games. During that time the Trading Standards Service takes steps to try to make sure the toys being sold in local shops are safe for our children.

Each November it visits toy retailers to inspect goods and make test purchases of toys they think may not come up to scratch. These toys are thoroughly tested at a laboratory and any that fail the rigorous safety testing will be investigated.

Here are some tips for buying toys at Christmas:

1) Look for the CE mark

The CE mark and the name and address of the supplier is legally required to appear on all toys sold in the European Union. This is a declaration by the manufacturer that they have checked that the product meets EU safety requirements. If there is no CE mark on the toy, don’t buy it.

2) Toys for children under 3 years old

Make sure you look at the age range on the toy packaging, as babies and toddlers can choke on small parts or swallow harmful parts of the toy. Toys that are not meant for young children should carry a statement to this effect and display the age symbol warning.

3) Be careful where you buy from

You may see toys at bargain prices either on the street or online, but can you be sure the trader is reputable? Will the trader still be around after Christmas if there is a problem with your purchase? Sometimes what may appear to be a bargain may not turn out that way.

4) Additional reassurance

The ‘Lion Mark’ is a symbol introduced by The British Toy and Hobby Association. Toys which carry this mark have been classified as safe for children to use.
When you’re ill, know who to turn to

If you were ill, would you know who to turn to? NHS Ayrshire & Arran and the three Health and Social Care Partnerships in East, North and South Ayrshire are encouraging you to choose the right option for your condition.

Re-launched as part of this year’s winter plan, the ‘When you’re ill, know who to turn to’ campaign outlines the eight options available when you need medical assistance, alongside a list of symptoms that could be appropriately dealt with by each option. These include:

- **Self care**: for minor illness or injury you can deal with yourself, such as hangover, grazed knee, sore throat, coughs and colds
- **Pharmacist**: for expert advice or information on medicines and healthcare, including the Minor Ailment Service. Examples of minor ailments include coughs and colds, indigestion, constipation, aches and pains
- **Dentist**: for regular check-ups, routine treatment and emergency care
- **Optometrist (optician)**: for any eye problems including blurred vision, difficulty seeing well or discomfort - red eyes, irritated eyes
- **Family doctor**: when your illness or injury just won’t go away make an appointment to see your GP who can provide advice and information about conditions such as vomiting, ear pain, sore belly, backache
- **NHS out-of-hours service**: Turn to your NHS out of hours service when you are too ill to wait until your GP or dental surgery is open. Call NHS 24 on 111
- **Minor injuries service**: if you require urgent care for a minor injury such as cuts, minor burns, sprains
- **Accident and emergency**: Turn to 999 or your hospital’s A&E department only for serious illness or accidents such as suspected stroke, heart attack, head injuries, fractures or wounds requiring stitches

Liz Moore, Director for Acute Services, explains: “All too often we see people coming into accident and emergency when they would have been better using one of their local services such as their pharmacist, GP or dentist. Knowing which NHS service to use, and when, is extremely important both in terms of patient care and the running of the NHS.”

Eddie Fraser, Director of East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership and lead for primary care and out-of-hours service for the whole of Ayrshire, added: “Choosing the right service can lead to better patient satisfaction and a speedier recovery.

“So take some time to find out what services are available, so that when you’re ill, you know who to turn to.”

To find out more about the campaign, visit [www.nhsaaa.net](http://www.nhsaaa.net) and click on the ‘When you’re ill, know who to turn to’ icon.

Left to right: Liz Moore, Director for Acute Services, NHS Ayrshire & Arran; Eddie Fraser, Director of East Ayrshire Health & Social Care Partnership; Iona Colvin, Director of North Ayrshire Health & Social Care Partnership and Tim Eltringham, Director of South Ayrshire Health & Social Care Partnership.
Aim for a stress free Christmas

Christmas can be a challenging time for our stress levels and it’s even harder for those of us with mental ill-health.

So many things that are part of our routines and that we take for granted become disrupted by the change of pace in our lives around the festive period.

Leaving all your preparations for Christmas until the last minute can cause unnecessary stress, but planning ahead can save you time and money. Making lists for jobs to do, presents to buy and groceries you’ll need helps to organise your thoughts, prevents you forgetting something (or someone) and makes it easier to stick to a budget.


Tips for good mental health

1. Talking about your feelings can help you stay in good mental health and deal with times when you feel troubled. Talking about your feelings isn’t a sign of weakness - it’s a part of taking charge of your wellbeing and doing what you can to stay healthy.

2. Keep in touch with family and friends who can help you deal with the stresses of life and make you feel included and cared for. There’s nothing better than catching up with someone face to face, but that’s not always possible. Give them a call, drop them a note or chat to them online instead. Keep the lines of communication open. It’s good for you.

There are also organisations which are there to help if you need it:

Breathing Space 0800 83 85 87

Samaritans 08457 90 90 90

For further information on Choose Life in East Ayrshire contact 01563 576972.

Staying warm

Wrap up warm, inside and out. Wear lots of thin layers - clothes made from cotton, wool or fleecy fibres are particularly good and help to maintain body heat. Wear shoes with a good grip to prevent slips and falls when walking outside. If possible, stay inside during a cold period if you have heart or respiratory problems.

For more information contact Vibrant Communities on 01563 576399 or look at ‘The Buzz’ www.eac.eu/thebuzz for dates and venues.

Help to keep you on your feet this winter!

If you’ve had a fall or feel you’re a bit shaky on your feet, you might benefit from coming along to an Invigor8 class.

These classes will help you to improve your balance and even give you hints and tips to help you get back on your feet if you do have a fall.

For more information contact Vibrant Communities on 01563 576399 or look at ‘The Buzz’ www.eac.eu/thebuzz for dates and venues.
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Domestic Violence Helplines

Domestic violence typically increases over the festive season. No-one should suffer in silence – call a helpline for support and advice.

The National Domestic Violence Helpline is a service for women experiencing domestic violence, their family, friends, colleagues or others calling on their behalf. Callers may first of all hear a recorded message before speaking to a person.

Call 0808 2000 247 or email helpline@womensaid.org.uk

A special helpline is also available for men.
Abused Men in Scotland (AMIS) is a national organisation supporting men over 16 who are experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse, regardless of sexual orientation, gender inequality, disability or ethnic origin.

Call 0808 800 0024 or email contact@amis.org.uk

East Ayrshire Women’s Aid
Telephone 01563 536001

Break the Silence is an independent Voluntary Organisation established to provide a range of free and confidential support services to adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse from Ayrshire.
Telephone 01563 559558

Action under way to end violence against women

Eliminating violence against women and children is the aim of ‘16 days of action’, an international campaign which we support every year – asking men to never commit, condone or stay silent about violence against women.

Marked by a white ribbon, the campaign encourages men to pledge their support to end violence against women and we work in partnership with a host of other agencies to try and make this happen – promoting the campaign in workplaces, schools and football clubs.

Most men are not violent and by educating them and campaigning we can work towards a society where no men are violent and no woman has to experience domestic, sexual, emotional or physical abuse.

This year, we’ve again been holding many events and activities and, in particular, we’ve used social media to raise awareness of the campaign. One of the key events was ‘One in Five’ where supporters were asked to paint one fingernail a different colour, to show their commitment to the campaign.

We also recognise that men can experience many of these issues, as can people in same sex relationships. To find out more about the issues and how you can make your own pledge visit:

http://www.whiteribbonscotland.org.uk/

PROTECTING PEOPLE in East Ayrshire

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
**Party Safe: ten top tips**

If you’re going for a festive night out, be ‘aware’ and follow these simple rules:

1. Plan your Christmas night out – charge your mobile, remember to take it with you and think about how you’ll get home.
2. Book a taxi from a reputable company or arrange for a family member or friend to pick you up.
3. If drinking alcohol, be sensible about how much you consume; a drunk person is a far easier target for a criminal.
4. Don’t leave drinks unattended.
5. Don’t use drugs or New Psychoactive Substances, sometimes misleadingly called ‘legal highs’. Legal doesn’t mean safe – they can contain toxic and harmful chemicals.
6. Stick with friends – don’t leave nights out on your own or with strangers.
7. Take care of each other and make sure you all get home safely.
8. Stay safe on your journey home - never take isolated short cuts. Keep to busy areas and on public transport, sit where there are lots of other people. If you’re using a taxi, make sure it’s licensed.
9. Taxi marshals are part of the East Ayrshire Festive Action Plan which runs in December. It sees additional officers deployed in hotspot areas to prevent and detect crime and offer reassurance to members of the public. The marshals work at the busy taxi ranks in the town to ensure people get home safely.
10. Drivers should be mindful that partygoers, particularly those under the influence of alcohol, can step out/stagger onto the road without warning. Slow down when in crowded areas.

**Alcohol and fire**

Every year the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service attends a large number of alcohol related fires. Most of these fires start because people are cooking or smoking whilst under the influence of drink.

A person who has been drinking is less likely to be aware if a fire takes hold, particularly if they do not have working smoke alarms. People under the influence of alcohol are also more likely to feel disorientated if fire breaks out, making it more difficult for them to escape. Don’t fuel fire with alcohol - it only takes one act of carelessness when smoking or cooking to result in someone losing their home, their possessions or, ultimately, their life.

For more information on Alcohol and Drugs support: liam.wells@east-ayrshire.gov.uk
COMMUNITY SAFETY

Online safety
Think before you post photos of your Christmas night out online! What may seem funny in private could embarrass or humiliate someone in public. If in doubt, don’t click! Remember, what goes online stays online.

When shopping online, make sure your web browser and internet security is up to date. Check the website payment page is secure and look for the padlock in the address line before you enter any card details.

If you’re buying your child a mobile or tablet for Christmas, think about how you can keep them safe online.

And if you’ll be away from home over Christmas or even just out and about, be careful about what you say on social networking sites – don’t let thieves know your house will be empty.

Keeping safe at home

- Get a door chain and viewer fitted, so that you can feel as safe as possible when you answer the door. If it’s dark outside, put a light on before you open the door.

- If anyone arrives at your door out of the blue or without prior arrangement and claim to be a maintenance or service man, do not let them in. This includes anybody who offers to do any seemingly innocent odd jobs for you like clearing your garden or washing your windows. If you think you’ve been visited by a ‘rogue trader’ call Trading Standards on 01563 576602 for advice.

- Remember, anyone working for, or on behalf of the Council, Police or Health will always have identification and you should ask to see this. If they are genuine callers they will always be happy to give you a number to call to check their identity. If you are worried, call 999 and ask for the police.

- Never give your personal details – including credit card information - to anyone who knocks on the door or calls your phone. You could end up the victim of identity fraud. For further information on bogus callers, visit https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/Resources/PDF/B/Bogus-caller-Ayrshire-Leaflet-for-Carers.pdf

- If a streetlight isn’t working on your road, then let the Council know as it’s important to have good lighting around your property, especially in the dark winter months.

For further advice on keeping safe at home: https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/CommunityLifeAndLeisure

PROTECTING PEOPLE in East Ayrshire
Christmas fire safety
Christmas is a special time for celebration and shouldn’t end in tragedy because of the extra hazards that are around at this time of year. So when you’re decking the halls, make sure you follow Scottish Fire and Rescue’s simple advice and stay safe.

Adaptors
Whether it’s fairy lights or new electronic toys, most of us will be plugging in more than usual at this time of year.

Many of us use extension leads in our homes all the time, using four-way bar adaptors to increase the number of appliances we can plug into a wall socket.

But although there is space to plug in four appliances, this doesn’t mean it’s always safe to do so. Different electrical appliances use different amounts of power. To avoid the risk of overheating and possibly fire, you should never plug appliances into an extension lead that together use more than 13 amps or 3000 watts of energy.

Fairy lights
• Unplug fairy lights or other electrical Christmas decorations when you leave the house or go to bed.
• Check fairy lights are in good working order and replace any bulbs that have blown.
• Bulbs can get very hot, so don’t let them touch materials that can scorch or burn easily, such as paper or fabrics.

Decorations
• Decorations made of light tissue paper or cardboard burn easily.
• Don’t attach them to lights or heaters.
• Don’t put them immediately above or around the fireplace.
• Keep them away from candles.

Christmas trees
Special fire safety precautions need to be taken when keeping a live tree in the house. A burning tree can rapidly fill a room with fire and deadly gases.
• Don’t place your tree close to a heat source, including a fireplace, heat vent or candles. The heat will dry out the tree, causing it to be more easily ignited by heat, flame or sparks.
• Be careful not to drop or flick cigarette ashes near a tree.
• Do not put your live tree up too early or leave it up for longer than two weeks.

Keep the tree stand filled with water at all times.

Other potential hazards
• Extinguish all candles before you go to bed. Never leave a burning candle in a bedroom and always put candles on a heat resistant surface/holders.
• Check your electric blanket, plug and flex regularly for damage. If you’re in any doubt, don’t use the blanket.

For more fire safety tips, visit: http://www.firescotland.gov.uk/your-safety/winter-safety/at-home.aspx
Shop safe

Use cash machines in well lit, non-secluded areas and stay alert. Check the machine hasn’t been tampered with, hide your PIN, be aware of who’s behind you and keep your cash out of view.

When you’re out Christmas shopping, you might not realise how much all the presents you’re carrying around with you are worth – look after your shopping bags and don’t leave them out of sight.

If you’re driving to the shops, park your car in a busy, well-lit area. Don’t keep any presents you’ve bought in the car for longer than you have to and always keep them out of view.

Ensure your bag is closed and your purse or wallet is not easily accessible when not being used.

Avoiding theft

Thieves know that over Christmas there will be high value presents and maybe more cash in your house than normal. Keep your home secure - lock all windows and doors, don’t leave gifts in view of the windows and keep cash in your home to a minimum.

If you’re going away for Christmas, lock all windows and doors, set your house alarm if you have one, use timers on lights, cancel any deliveries and ask a neighbour or friend you trust to keep an eye out while you’re away.

If you’re having a house party with lots of guests, it can be all too easy for a thief to slip in unnoticed. Make sure you know everyone who is there. If you’re going to a party, don’t let anyone tailgate you into a house or through a controlled entry door who may not be a guest.

Protect any gifts you’ve bought for your friends and family. Get them to register mobiles, tablets, laptops and cameras at [www.immobilise.com](http://www.immobilise.com). Don’t give them a good quality bike without giving them a good quality lock, and register bikes at [https://www.bikeregister.com/](https://www.bikeregister.com/)
If you have any suggestions for articles that could feature in the next edition of the Protecting People newsletter, please email caroline.gordon@east-ayrshire.gov.uk.

If you are worried about someone’s safety or need advice, call:

**Police Scotland**  
**Telephone** 101 (or 999 in an emergency)

**Social Services (Kilmarnock)**  
The Johnnie Walker Bond, 15 Strand Street, Kilmarnock KA1 1HU  
**Telephone** 01563 554200  
**Email** social.work@east-ayrshire.gov.uk

**Social Services (Cumnock)**  
Rothesay House, Greenholm Road, Cumnock KA18 1LH  
**Telephone** 01290 427720  
**Email** social.work@east-ayrshire.gov.uk

**Emergency Out of Hours Social Work Service**  
**Telephone** 0800 328 7758

**Note:** The Emergency Out of Hours Social Work Service is available after 5pm until 9am, Monday to Friday and throughout the weekend, including public holidays. You will be put through to the Ayrshire Social Work Out of Hours Response Service. A qualified Social Worker will assess the circumstances referred.