City residents with long-term health conditions and those over 65 are being given advice on how to Stay Well This Winter.

The campaign is being held on a local and national level with the aim of helping people at risk prepare for winter and protect their health from the effects of cold weather.

NHS England and Public Health England are leading the campaign, with the Healthy Peterborough Partnership advising city residents of the steps they can take to prepare themselves and the support that is available in the city.

For those with long term health conditions such as COPD, bronchitis, emphysema, diabetes, heart or kidney disease or for those who have suffered a stroke, cold weather and winter illnesses such as flu, can make health problems far worse.

Cold weather can also be harmful for older people or very young children. Getting too cold can raise your risk of chest infections and can also raise your blood pressure and increase your risk of heart attack or stroke.

There are a number of things which can help people prepare against the effects of cold weather.

- **Keep Warm** - Staying warm, both inside and outdoors can help to prevent more serious health problems, such as chest infections, heart attacks and strokes. Heat your home to at least 18°C (65°F), if you can. You might prefer your living room to be slightly warmer.

- **Get medicine at the first sign of a cough or cold** - Get help from your pharmacist before it gets more serious and make sure you speak to your pharmacist about medicines you should have in stock to help get you and your family through the winter season. Make sure you pick up prescription medications before the Christmas holidays start, as many GPs and pharmacies will close over the holidays.

- **Get vaccinated** - The free flu vaccination is particularly important for those who are at increased risk from the effects of flu. These include people aged 65 and over, pregnant women and those with long-term health conditions like COPD, bronchitis, emphysema, diabetes, heart or kidney disease or for those who have suffered a stroke. Check if you are eligible on the NHS Stay Well This Winter website [here](https://www.nhs.uk/staywell/#02Q58cc71i82LyL.897).

Further advice and information about keeping warm this winter is available on the Healthy Peterborough website [here](http://www.healthypeterborough.org.uk/nov-dec-2017), including a video of tips for keeping warm and staying well [here](http://www.healthypeterborough.org.uk/nov-dec-2017/slideshow/tips-for-keeping-warm-and-staying-well-this-winter).

If you are pregnant flu can cause serious complications for you and your baby - you could both get seriously ill. Vaccination is the safest way to help protect you and your baby against flu. So don’t put it off, ask your GP, pharmacist or midwife about the free flu jab today. It’s free because you need it, however many months pregnant you are and however fit and healthy you might feel.

The flu vaccine for children from two to eight years old is just a quick nasal spray. For children aged two and three the nasal spray vaccine is available through their GP. School children from reception class through to year 4 will get their nasal spray through their school. If you’re eligible for the free flu vaccine, get it now. It’s free because you need it.

Councillor Diane Lamb, cabinet member for public health said: "Winter illnesses and colds are unfortunately part of day to day life for many of us at this time of year, however for the elderly and those with long-term health conditions catching flu can be very harmful.

"Fortunately there is a deal that can be done to reduce the risk and these simple steps are what this campaign is highlighting. I would
urge all members of the public to adhere to the advice above, particularly those aged 65 or older and anyone with a long term health condition."

If you do need help over the holiday period when your GP surgery or pharmacy is closed, call NHS 111 or visit the NHS website (https://www.nhs.uk/pages/home.aspx).