PEOPLE'S EMERGENCY BRIEFING · NOVEMBER 2026

Prepare now: a checklist for heat, smoke, power cuts and flooding

Practical steps for everyone, especially people with higher health risks and the people they live with. Tick them off as you go.

Clinically Vulnerable Families

1 Wildfire smoke

Fine particles can reach deep into your lungs. Early research found Pennine smoke got into all 23 homes monitored, even with windows shut.

- [ ] Choose a clean room, ideally where you sleep
- [ ] Keep its window and door closed when there is smoke
- [ ] Get a portable air filter that is correctly sized for the room, and keep spare filters
- [ ] If you have air conditioning, know how to set it to recirculate
- [ ] Keep a well-fitting FFP2 or FFP3 mask for each person in your household, with your first aid kit. Surgical masks are not usually recommended for smoke.

2 Power cuts

Oxygen, ventilators, nebulisers, feeding pumps and refrigerated medicines all need power.

- [ ] Join the Priority Services Register with your energy supplier
- [ ] Ask your electricity network operator to add you too: each keeps its own register
- [ ] Join your water company's priority services register
- [ ] Keep power banks and battery packs fully charged, and check them regularly
- [ ] Save **105**, the free power cut number (England, Scotland and Wales)

Being on a register won't get your power back faster, but it means extra support during a power cut.

3 Flooding

Floods can make health conditions worse and cut off access to medicines and care.

- [ ] Check your flood risk
- [ ] Sign up for free flood warnings
- [ ] If you rely on oxygen, dialysis or care at home, make a plan with your care team
- [ ] Keep essential medicines and equipment ready to take with you

Never run a generator indoors. It can cause carbon monoxide poisoning, which can kill.

4 Medicines and supplies

Government Be Ready advice: supplies for at least 3 days. If you rely on medicines, we suggest at least 14 days.

- [ ] Keep at least 14 days of essential medicines and supplies at home
- [ ] Order repeat prescriptions in good time, at least 5 working days ahead
- [ ] Ask your care team or supplier what to do with medical equipment if the power fails
- [ ] Keep important phone numbers written down, somewhere easy to find

5 Protect the places we share

Preparation shouldn't depend on every individual getting everything right. If you're part of a school, workplace, village hall or community group, ask:

- [ ] Is the air clean?
- [ ] Is there backup power for essential equipment?
- [ ] Is there a plan for people who might struggle most?

Why this matters: summer 2026

Warmest
summer on UK record, since 1884 (Met Office, provisional)

130 times
more likely because of climate change, say Met Office scientists

2,877
deaths in England linked to two heatwaves in May and June (UKHSA, interim)

5
heatwaves, late May to August, with a rare red extreme heat warning in June

July
was the busiest month on record for wildfires in England and Wales (NFCC)

6.3m
properties in England are in areas at risk of flooding (Environment Agency)

None of us is outside this, but people with heart or lung conditions, older people, pregnant women and young children are particularly at risk. Heat, smoke, drought, power cuts and floods can also arrive together.

Useful numbers and links

Power cut	Call **105** (free, England, Scotland and Wales). Northern Ireland: **03457 643643**
Priority Services Register	Ask your energy supplier **and** your electricity network operator to add you. Water: ask your water company
Flood risk and warnings	England: search “check flood risk” and “flood warnings” on GOV.UK. Wales: Natural Resources Wales. Scotland: SEPA Floodline
Getting prepared	The government’s Be Ready advice: beready.campaign.gov.uk
Medical help	**NHS 111** for urgent advice. **999** in an emergency
This checklist online	**clinicallyvulnerable.org/prepare**

Contacting your MP?

Ask them to consider the additional needs of Clinically Vulnerable and disabled people in emergencies, so that warnings and plans include us too. If you’d like help, get in touch through clinicallyvulnerable.org. We’re happy to help.

About Clinically Vulnerable Families

We represent people living with higher health risks, and their households, and have been working on these issues since 2020. Our experience has taught us that the people who struggle most in an emergency are often those whose needs nobody planned for. When we plan for them, we protect the whole community.

Scan for this page online

Sources

- Met Office, summer 2026 provisional statistics and climate attribution, 1 Sept 2026 (updated 17 Sept 2026); red extreme heat warnings, 22 and 25 June 2026
- UK Health Security Agency, interim heat mortality monitoring report, England, May and June 2026 (30 July 2026); wildfire smoke advice blog, 14 July 2026
- National Fire Chiefs Council, 11 Aug 2026; University of Manchester, early findings on indoor air and wildfire smoke, 6 Aug 2026
- Environment Agency, national flood and coastal erosion risk assessment, Dec 2024; Ofgem and Ofwat priority services guidance; Be Ready (Cabinet Office), Oct 2026
- FFP2 and FFP3 masks are tested to filter at least 94% and 99% of particles (EN 149). They only work that well if they fit closely.