

coldAlert Service

Evaluation Report 2019/20

1. SERVICE DESCRIPTION

This report provides evaluation of the coldAlert service for the winter period 1 November 2019 to 31 March 2020.

For information on how the coldAlert service operates, visit the website www.coldalert.info

2. MET OFFICE SUMMARY OF WINTER WEATHER 2019/20

The following represents an assessment of the weather experienced across the UK during Winter 2019/20 (December, January and February) and how it compares with the 1981 to 2010 average.

The winter was notably milder than average, and broadly unsettled, though with a few interludes of quieter weather. February was particularly wet and stormy, and included three named storms, with widespread high rainfall totals and associated impacts. Frosts were fewer than average and although there were some snowfalls in certain areas, these were of limited severity. Overall this was the fifth mildest winter in a series from 1884, and the fifth wettest since 1862.

The Met office summary above is reflected in the number, duration and timing of coldAlerts issued this winter.

3. SERVICE DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE

3.1 coldAlerts issued 2019/20

Two coldAlerts were issued for the 2019/20 winter, both Alerts were at Level 2 – ‘Alert and Ready’.

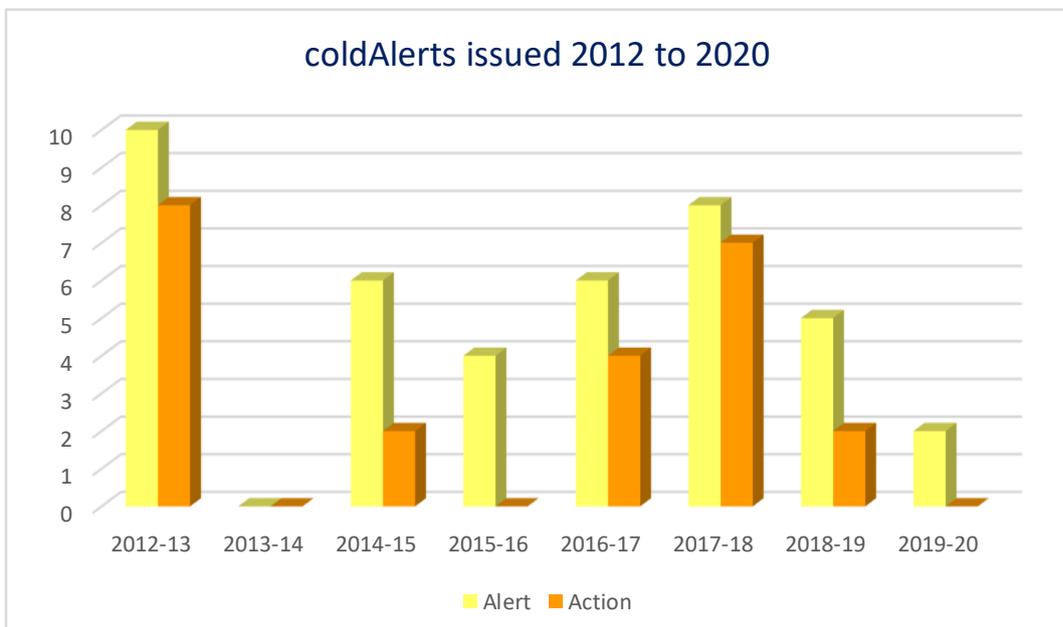
Date	Alert Level	Duration
03.12.19	2	48 hours
19.01.20	2	48 hours

Table 1: coldAlerts sent between 1 November 2019 and 31 March 2020

Alerts were issued to cover 2.6% of the winter period days (4 days out of 152).

This is significantly fewer than in previous years. See the graph below which details the number of coldAlerts issued each winter since 2012/13 (there is no data for the winter 2013/14).

coldAlerts issued during winter periods November 2012 to March 2020



3.2 coldAlert subscribers at 31 March 2020

There are currently **1103** subscribers to the coldAlert service in East Sussex: (an increase of 57)

Total number of subscribers to the service: **1631** (an increase of 203)

See the graph below which indicates the peaks in subscriptions to the service, these coincide with the promotional activity carried out in November 2019 at the launch of the service. It is likely that the low number of subscribers to the service in 2019/20 is due to the unseasonably warm and wet winter weather.

ColdAlert registrations 2019/20

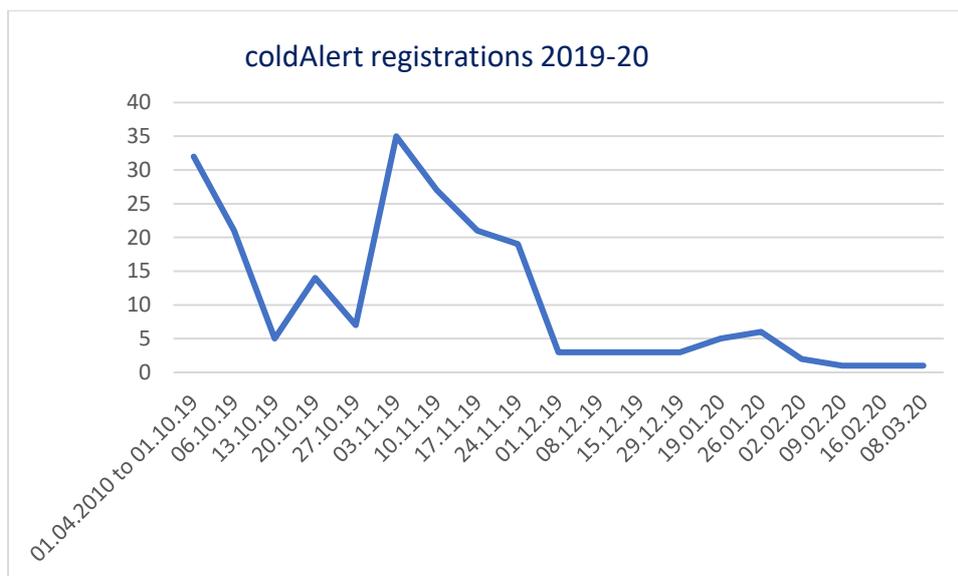


Figure 1: Peaks in coldAlert registrations 2019/20

3.3 Delivery methods

The coldAlerts are delivered to subscribers by mobile text, voicemail, email and app notification. Delivery of coldAlerts to the 1631 subscribers has been via the following methods:

Method	
Text message (to mobile phone)	665
Voice message (to landlines)	420
Email	428
iOS App	69
Android App	49
Total active subscribers	1631

Table 2: Delivery methods of coldAlerts

3.4 GDPR

Due to the introduction of GDPR legislation in May 2019, the amount of data held by Sussex-air has been reduced significantly. The service captures subscriber names and postcodes, however the service

can no longer capture health conditions or ethnicity of subscribers, with age and full address being optional, as we have no legal basis on which to ask for this information.

Subscribers to the coldAlert service create a username and password when they register for the service and can manage their subscription, including suspending and deleting the account. Where subscribers are unable to access the website, they can call the coldAlert contact number and the Sussex-air project officer will make amendments to the account on their behalf.

4. SERVICE COSTS

Item	Cost (£)
Project Officer (registration & support, issuing alerts, marketing, evaluation)	£8,400.00
Website hosting & security	£175.00
Messaging costs (texts)	£660.00
Marketing	£1,000.00
Total service cost	£10,235.00

Table 7: Breakdown of costs to deliver the coldAlert service in Sussex in 2019/20.

The coldAlert service uses the Gov.uk Notify service to deliver the alerts free of charge to text and email subscribers, there is a nominal cost of 0.05p for each coldAlert message sent by voicemail. The voicemail text credits are bought from 24X.com and the alerts delivered in the usual way via the coldAlert website. We have made the saving of £109.30 by sending text and emails through the Notify service this winter.

The cost for 2019/20 equates to £6.28 for each service user, this is the unit cost for all 1631 subscribers, not just those in East Sussex. This shows a reduction in cost from £7.17 per person in 2018/19 and a continual reduction in service costs year on year for the last four years.

It is anticipated that costs of delivering the service will reduce further in 2020/21 as subscriber numbers continue to increase and service costs remain relatively low.

Despite the very low number of cold alerts during this last winter, we believe that coldAlert provides a valuable service to vulnerable people and healthcare professionals across Sussex and continues to show value for money.

5. PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES

The coldAlert service was promoted throughout the winter period starting in October 2019. Promotional information, including a combination of hard copy leaflets and email electronic leaflets, were sent to Breathe Easy groups, hospitals, GP surgeries and 3rd sector partners and Children's centres across Sussex.

A social media campaign was launched in November 2019 by ESCC communications team with regular posts on the ESCC Facebook page and via Twitter. The coldAlert service has also been promoted through the coldAlert Twitter account with information re-Tweeted by CAB, Sussex FRS, Care for the Carers, Sussex Young Carers, third sector organisations and individuals. Care for the Carers hosted coldAlert information on their Sussex site during the winter months.

Information regarding the coldAlert service was published in Brief Encounter, To the Point and the Public Health Bulletin in November 2019 and in the electronic edition of Your County magazine.

In addition, the service paid for £200 of Facebook (FB) adverts through the ESCC FB site, the adverts ran for a 6-week period in Nov/Dec 2019. There is a noticeable spike in the number of subscribers

during the period of social media activity (*see figure 1, page 2*) and we know that this is a cost-effective way of promoting the service to the public.

In addition, the service was promoted through partners at the East Sussex Energy Partnership, Fuel Poverty Network and Sussex-air Quality Partnership meetings.

The service continues to engage with health professionals and Public Health partners, targeted health groups (respiratory, cardiovascular groups, British Lung Foundation, British Heart Foundation, Age UK, Age Concern, Care for the Carers, Young Carers, GP surgeries), as well as local authority housing and fuel poverty partnership groups.

5.1 Warm home check service

The Warm Home Check service has been promoted alongside coldAlert again this winter. Advice messages were sent in December 2019 and January 2020 to all registered coldAlert subscribers, to promote the East Sussex Warm Home Check (WHC) Service. The coldAlert service has also promoted the WHC service regularly through the coldAlert Twitter account.

6. KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The winter of 2019/20 was notably milder than average, this is reflected in just two coldAlerts being issued and the low take up in subscribers to the service compared to previous years. However, the arrival of Covid-19, which may peak again during the next winter, indicates the continued need for alert services such as Cold Alert and Air Alert, to assist local residents to manage risks to their health.

6.1 Collaborative approach to marketing

We continue to promote the coldAlert service across Sussex via social media and traditional methods of promotion (postcards, newsletters and via websites.)

We have developed good relationships with the Havens CCG and will build on this to work with other CCGs and frontline staff to promote the coldAlert service to individuals accessing healthcare services across East Sussex. We look to further develop this in the coming winter (2020/21.)

Outcome:

We will continue to explore marketing opportunities for reaching vulnerable people in deprived areas of East Sussex by working closely with Public Health colleagues and front line services.

We promote the service across Sussex and Brighton and Hove and will continue to use best practice in sharing information with Sussex-air partners, Public Health colleagues and communications teams in other authorities to ensure we are reaching as many people as possible, who could benefit from the service.

7. CONTACT INFORMATION

The coldAlert service is managed by the Sussex Air Quality Partnership (Sussex-air.)

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