Bearing
SAFETY & SECURITY
Know your bearing.

HOME READY

Three to seven days

Household preparedness from a standing start.

Three days is the minimum. Seven days is what we recommend.

What this is

In October 2026 the Government asked every household in the UK to hold three days of supplies. This guide takes that instruction and makes it workable. It sets a minimum for each of eleven domains, tells you what to add once the minimum is done, and works the quantities from who is actually in your household.

How to use it

- **Work down the MINIMUM column first, across all eleven domains. Finish it before you start the ADD ON column.**
- Buy a few items on each normal shop. Nobody does this in one trip, and spreading it is how it gets done.
- Start from the household table on page two. Your numbers are not the same as anyone else's.
- Come back to it twice a year. Kit that is out of date or already used is not kit.

The eleven domains

1 · Water	**7 · Communications**
2 · Food	**8 · Money and documents**
3 · Power and light	**9 · Animals**
4 · Warmth	**10 · Children**
5 · Sanitation and hygiene	**11 · Mental resilience**
6 · Medical and medication	

- **ANYTHING IS BETTER THAN NOTHING. A torch, a full water container and a charged power bank already put you ahead of most households. Three days beats nothing, and seven beats three.**

STEP ONE

Work out your numbers

Everything that follows is per person, per day. Count the people and the animals in your household, then multiply by the number of days you are planning for.

Who	Water to drink, a day	Food a day	Also hold
Adult	3 litres	2,000 to 2,500 kcal	Warm layers, sturdy footwear, gloves
Child 4 to 12	2-3 litres	1,200 to 2,000 kcal by age	Familiar food, a comfort item, spare clothing
Baby or toddler	0.6 to 1.2 litres, almost all of it as made-up formula, by age and weight	Formula, ready-to-feed by preference	Nappies four to six a day, wipes, bottles
Older or less mobile	3 litres	2,000 kcal, easy to open and chew	Medication, spare glasses, mobility aid
Dog or cat	Cat about 0.5. Dog 0.5 to 2.5 by size	Normal food, measured out	Bowls, lead or carrier, litter, poo bags

Three litres is the Government's figure and it is for drinking only. Add about a litre each for cooking. Washing, cleaning and flushing need five litres or more each again, and that water does not need to be bottled — fill the bath, every pan and every container while the supply is still on.

Basic Four

Domain	MINIMUM · three days	ADD ON · towards seven days and beyond
1. Water	Three litres per person per day to drink, bottled and sealed. Nine litres per person covers three days.	A fourth litre a day for cooking and washing. Two 20-litre containers to fill when a warning comes. Purification tablets and/or filter pump.
2. Food	Three days of food needing no fridge, no cooking and no water. Tinned meat, fish and vegetables, long-life milk, cereal bars, nuts.	A gas stove and two cartridges, and a carbon monoxide alarm to go with them. Stock out to seven days. A tin opener that is not electric.
3. Power and light	A torch and spare batteries for every person, not one for the house. One charged power bank per phone, enough for two full charges each.	A head torch each, battery lanterns, a solar or crank charger, a larger power station. A generator is a step beyond that, and never runs indoors.
4. Warmth	Thermal layers, hats, blankets and sleeping bags for everyone. One room chosen to live in, doors shut, curtains closed at dusk.	Sleeping bags rated for outdoors, foil blankets, draught excluders, and a heater rated for indoor use.

- **CARBON MONOXIDE. Fit an alarm before you add a gas stove or any fuel-burning heater. Never cook or burn fuel in a sealed room, a tent, a garage or a van, and never run a generator indoors. It kills people in power cuts every year, and you cannot smell it.**

STEP TWO
The eleven domains

continued

Staying well

Domain	MINIMUM · three days	ADD ON · towards seven days and beyond
5. Sanitation and hygiene	Heavy-duty bin bags, bleach, hand sanitiser, wet wipes, two weeks of toilet roll. Nappies and sanitary products to the same count.	A bucket toilet with liners and gel, disposable gloves, a camping shower.
6. Medical and medication	An in-date first aid kit everyone can find. Two weeks of any regular prescription. Names and doses written on paper.	A larger trauma kit, thermometer, rehydration salts, and a first aid course for at least one adult.

Staying in touch and in funds

Domain	MINIMUM · three days	ADD ON · towards seven days and beyond
7. Communications	A wind-up or battery radio. Key numbers on paper, not only in a phone. One agreed contact outside your area that everyone rings or texts.	A spare basic phone holding a second or third network SIM. MiFi router with sim. Starlink. A written message plan everyone has read.
8. Money and documents	Cash in small notes and coins. Passports, certificates, insurance and tenancy or mortgage papers together in one wallet.	A photographed set held somewhere else, a USB copy, and a second cash reserve kept apart from the first.

The people and animals in your care

Domain	MINIMUM · three days	ADD ON · towards seven days and beyond
9. Animals	Food, water, bowls, litter, a lead, and a carrier the animal will actually go into.	Microchip details current, an out-of-hours vet number written down, and somewhere agreed that will take them.
10. Children	Formula, nappies and wipes for a baby. Familiar food and a comfort item. Spare clothing and footwear that still fits.	Something to do without power. Your school and nursery collection procedure confirmed, and who is on the authorised list.
11. Mental resilience	Keep meals, bedtimes and small routines going. Give everyone a role. Agree who you check on, and who checks on you.	Watch for withdrawal, short temper, broken sleep and not eating, in yourself as much as anyone else. Talk the plan through before you need it.

STEP THREE

Doing it

Build it in three shops · nobody buys it all at once

Shop 1	Water for three days. A torch and spare batteries for every person. One power bank per phone. A tin opener that is not electric.
Shop 2	Three days of no-cook food. First aid kit. Bin bags, bleach, hand sanitiser, wet wipes, toilet roll.
Shop 3	Wind-up or battery radio. Cash in small notes. A document wallet. Blankets and warm layers.
Then	Start again at the top and work the add on column, building towards seven days.

One bag, by the door

Most of what you hold stays in a cupboard. One bag does not. Keep it where everyone can reach it in the dark.

- Water, a day of food that needs no cooking, first aid kit, any regular medication.
- Torch, spare batteries, power bank and cable, wind-up or battery radio.
- Cash, copies of documents, spare keys, key numbers written on paper.
- A warm layer and spare socks each, wet wipes, hand sanitiser.
- For a baby: formula, bottles, nappies, wipes. For an animal: carrier, food, lead.

- **IF IT HAPPENS. Fire, gas, explosion, structural damage or a threat inside: get out, stay out, call 999. Nothing is collected.**
- **Anything outside: go in, stay in, tune in. Lock up, account for everyone, and follow official alerts over anything in this guide.**
- **Told to leave: people, animals, the bag, documents, keys. Say where you are going before you move.**

Where to start this week

- Buy the water. Three litres per person per day, three days to begin with.
- Fill the bag. Write your household numbers and key contacts on paper and put a copy in it.
- Test every smoke and heat alarm. Find your water, gas and electricity isolation points.
- Swap numbers with two neighbours and agree who checks on whom.
- Look up your Local Resilience Forum community risk register, and sign up for Met Office and flood warnings.

Keep it alive

- Check dates every six months. Eat and replace anything close to expiry rather than binning it.
- Used it? Reset it. Recharge, replace and repack the same week, not at the next check.
- Children grow. Re-size clothing, footwear and nappies twice a year.
- Tell everyone in the household where it all is. A plan one person knows is not a plan.

Aligned to the Government's Be Ready guidance, October 2026. Follow the emergency services and official alerts over anything written here. This guide is a starting point, not a plan. The Home Ready Handbook takes you from here to a plan your household can run.