

ADULT AND LOCAL SERVICES HEATWAVE PLAN

Updated July 2016

The National Heatwave Plan for England is a public health plan which is intended to protect the population from heat-related harm to health. It aims to prepare for, alert people to and prevent the major avoidable effects on health during periods of severe heat in England.

The national plan recommends a series of steps to reduce risk to health from prolonged exposure to severe heat for:

- NHS, local authorities, social care and other public agencies
- Professionals working with people at risk
- Individuals, local communities and voluntary groups.

The full plan is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heatwave-plan-for-england>

HEATWAVE ALERT LEVELS

The Heat-Health Watch System comprises four main levels (Levels 0 – 4). Each alert level has a series of appropriate actions to be implemented. Met Office heatwave levels are colour coded to indicate more easily the regions affected by a change from one heatwave level to another (e.g. from Level 2 to Level 3). This will help responders to clarify the actions that will need to be taken.

The Heat-Health Watch system will operate in England from 1st June to 15th September each year. The system comprises of four main levels, outlined in Figure 1. It is based on the threshold day and night-time temperatures as defined by the Met Office. These vary from region to region. In the North the temperature threshold is lower than that for the South of England. In the North West the threshold temperature is 30°C during the day and 15°C overnight. Annex 1 summarises the key trigger temperatures during a heatwave.

Figure 1

Level 0	Long Term Planning All year
Level 1	Heatwave and Summer Preparedness 1 June – 15 September
Level 2	Heatwave is forecast – Alert and Readiness 60% risk of heatwave in the next 2-3 days
Level 3	Heatwave Action Temperature reached in one or more Met Office National Severe Weather Warning Service regions
Level 4	Major incident – Emergency Response Central Government will declare a Level 4 alert in the event of severe or prolonged heatwave affecting sectors other than health

AT RISK GROUPS

There are certain factors that increase an individual's risk during a heatwave.

These include:

- **Older age:** especially women over 75 years old, or those living on their own who are socially isolated, or in a care home.
- **Older women** appear to be more vulnerable to the effects of heat than older men, possibly due to having fewer sweat glands and being more likely to live on their own.
- **Chronic and severe illness:** including heart conditions, diabetes, respiratory or renal insufficiency, Parkinson's disease or severe mental illness. Medications that potentially affect renal function, the body's ability to sweat, regulate body temperature or balance electrolytes can make this group more vulnerable to the effects of heat.
- **Infants:** infants: are vulnerable to heat due to immature thermoregulation, smaller body mass and blood volume, high dependency level, dehydration risk.
- **Homeless people** (those who sleep in shelters as well as outdoors) may be at increased risk from heatwaves. Higher rates of chronic disease (often poorly controlled), smoking, respiratory conditions, substance dependencies and mental illness are more frequent in homeless populations than in the general population. These risk factors increase the risks of heat related morbidity and mortality, on top of social isolation, lack of air conditioning, cognitive impairment, living alone and being exposed to urban heat islands.
- People with **alcohol dependence and drug dependence** often have poorer overall health and increased social isolation which can increase their risk of heat stress.
- Inability to adapt behaviour to keep cool such as having **Alzheimer's, a disability, being bed bound, drug and alcohol dependencies, babies and the very young.**
- **Environmental factors and overexposure:** living in urban areas and south-facing top-floor flats, being homeless, activities or jobs that are in hot places or outdoors and include high levels of physical exertion.

LEVEL 0	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4
Long Term Planning – All Year	Summer preparedness – 1 June to 15 September	Heatwave is forecast – alert and readiness 60% risk of heatwave in the next 2-3 days	Heatwave Action Temperature reached in one or more Met Office National Severe Weather Warning Service regions	Major Incident – Emergency Response
NATIONAL HEATWAVE PLAN <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop systems to identify and improve resilience of high risk individuals. 	NATIONAL HEATWAVE PLAN <p>CARE HOMES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure business continuity plans are in place and implement as required. Identify or create cool rooms / areas (able to maintained below 26°C) Install thermometers where vulnerable individuals spend substantial time. <p>SOCIAL CARE / CUMBRIA CARE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify high risk individuals on your caseload and raise 	NATIONAL HEATWAVE PLAN (see Annex 3) <p>CARE HOMES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check that indoor temperatures are recorded regularly during the hottest periods. Ensure cool areas are below 26°C. Review and prioritise high risk people. Ensure sufficient cold water and ice. Consider weighing clients regularly to identify dehydration and rescheduling physio to cooler hours. Communicate alerts to staff and ensure awareness of the heatwave plan. 	NATIONAL HEATWAVE PLAN (see Annex 4) <p>CARE HOMES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activate plans to maintain business continuity – including a possible surge in demand. Check that indoor temperatures are recorded regularly during the hottest periods. Ensure staff can help and advise clients including access to cool areas, close monitoring of vulnerable individuals, reducing internal temperatures through shading, turning off unnecessary lights / 	NATIONAL HEATWAVE PLAN <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue actions as per Level 3 unless advised to the contrary. Central Government will declare a Level 4 alert in the event of severe or prolonged heatwave affecting sectors other than health and if requiring coordinated multi agency response.

	<p>awareness of heat illnesses and their prevention among clients and carers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Include risk in care records and consider whether changes might be necessary to care plans in the event of a heatwave. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement business continuity. ▪ Prepare cool areas. ▪ Ensure sufficient staffing. <p>SOCIAL CARE / CUMBRIA CARE (see Annex 2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check high risk people have visitor / phone call arrangements in place. • Reconfirm key public health messages. (See Annex 6) • Check customer's room temperature if visiting. 	<p>equipment, cooling building at night.</p> <p>SOCIAL CARE / CUMBRIA CARE (see Annex 2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit/phone high risk people. • Advise carers to contact GP if concerns regarding health. 	
	<p>DIRECTORATE MEASURES</p> <p>CARE HOMES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cool areas to be created. ▪ Awareness among care home managers and staff on the health risks of a heatwave. ▪ Indoor thermometers installed in each 	<p>DIRECTORATE MEASURES</p> <p>CARE HOMES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Business continuity plans in place. ▪ Process in place to record temperatures. ▪ For detailed measures, see 	<p>DIRECTORATE MEASURES</p> <p>CARE HOMES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ For detailed measures, see Annex 4 <p>ALL SOCIAL CARE / CUMBRIA CARE STAFF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to distribute 	<p>DIRECTORATE MEASURES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All Level 3 measures to continue.

	<p>room that vulnerable individuals spend substantial time in.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Indoor temperatures monitored regularly. ▪ Business continuity plans in place. <p>ALL SOCIAL CARE / CUMBRIA CARE STAFF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Practitioners to identify most vulnerable and record on IAS. ▪ Information on at risk groups and potential impact of heatwave made available to staff. ▪ Information guides circulated to key managers to cascade. ▪ Information leaflet available to issue to individuals with advice on keeping cool. 	<p>ALL SOCIAL CARE / CUMBRIA CARE STAFF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Arrange, where appropriate, for a daily visit / phone call by a formal or informal carer (family, neighbour, friend, voluntary) during the heatwave period. ▪ Distribution of all Department of Health advice to all staff. ▪ Distribution of Department of Health advice to managers of private care, residential and nursing care homes. 	<p>advice to people at risk, and managers and staff of care homes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure that health and social care staff are aware of risk and protective factors. Consider where appropriate, daily visits / phone calls for high risk individuals living on their own who have no regular daily contacts ▪ Advise social care or informal carers to contact the GP if there are concerns about an individuals health ▪ Ensure that the Department of Health advice reaches private and local authority care, residential and nursing care home managers as soon as the heatwave starts. 	
--	--	---	--	--

INFORMATION GUIDES

The Department of Health provides a series of information guides which aim to provide an authoritative source of additional information about the effects of severe hot weather on health. The following are available by clicking on the link below:

- Heatwave Plan for England
- Advice for Health and Social Care Professionals: Supporting Vulnerable People Before and During a Heatwave
- Advice for Care Home Managers and staff: Supporting Vulnerable People Before and During a Heatwave
- Looking After Children and Those in Early Years Settings During Heatwaves: Guidance for Teachers and Professionals

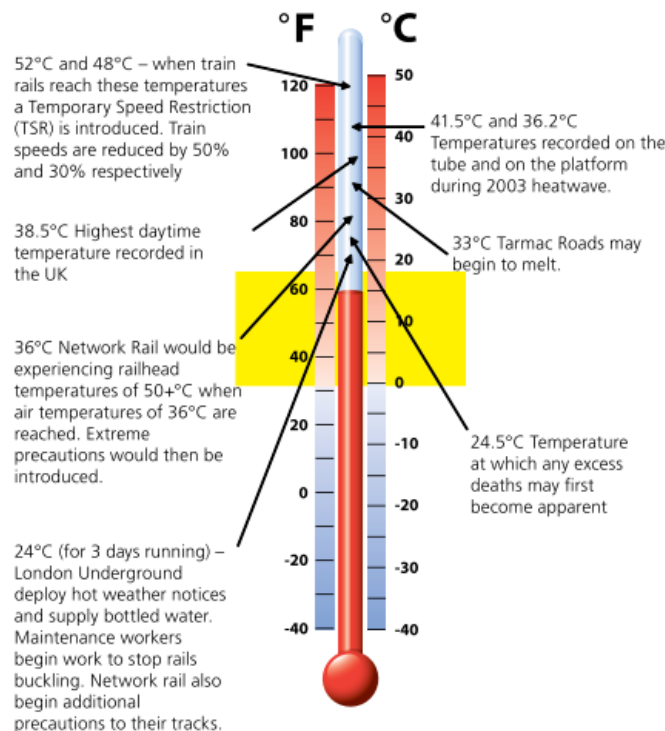
[Heatwave Plan for England - Publications - GOV.UK](#)

Annex 1

Key trigger temperatures

Figure 4 summarises the key trigger temperatures during a heatwave. Although excess seasonal deaths start to occur at approximately 25°C, for practical reasons the health heatwave alert system is based upon temperature thresholds where the odds ratio is above 1.15 to 1.2 (a 15 to 20% increased risk). The different trigger temperatures for local areas are summarised below with regional variations due to relative adaptation to heat, however, a significant proportion of excess summer deaths occur before the health heatwave alert is triggered, which emphasises the importance of long-term planning actions by local authorities and the health sector.

Figure 4. Trigger temperatures



ANNEX 2: PROFESSIONAL STAFF IN ALL SETTINGS SHOULD:

Level 2

- Check high-risk people have visitor / phone call arrangements in place
- Reconfirm key public health messages to service users (Annex 5)
- Check service user's room temperature if visiting

Level 3

- Visit / phone high-risk people
- Reconfirm key public health messages to service users
- Advise carers to contact GP if concerns re health

ANNEX 3 - LEVEL 2

CARE HOMES AND HOSPITALS SHOULD:

- Check indoor temperatures are recorded regularly during the hottest periods for all areas where service users reside
- Ensure cool areas are below 26°C
- Review and prioritise high-risk people
- Ensure sufficient cold water and ice
- Consider weighing service users regularly to identify dehydration
- Reschedule physiotherapy to cooler hours
- Communicate alerts to staff and make sure that they are aware of heatwave plans
- Ensure sufficient staffing
- Implement business continuity plans

ANNEX 4 – LEVEL 3

CARE HOMES AND HOSPITALS SHOULD:

- Activate plans to maintain business continuity – including a possible surge in demand
- Check indoor temperatures are recorded regularly during the hottest periods for all areas where service users reside
- Ensure staff can help and advise clients including access to cool rooms
- Close monitoring of vulnerable individuals
- Reduce internal temperatures through shading, turning off unnecessary lights / equipment
- Cooling building at night
- Ensuring discharge planning takes home temperatures and support into account

ANNEX 5 GUIDANCE FOR THOSE LOOKING AFTER SCHOOLCHILDREN AND THOSE IN EARLY YEARS SETTINGS DURING HEATWAVES

Outdoors:

- On very hot days (i.e. where temperatures are in excess of 30°C) children should not take part in vigorous physical activity
- children playing outdoors should be encouraged to stay in the shade as much as possible
- loose, light coloured clothing should be worn to help children keep cool and sunhats with wide brims should be worn to avoid sunburn
- thin clothing or sunscreen (at least factor 15 with UVA protection) should be used to protect skin if children are playing or taking lessons outdoors for more than 20 minutes
- children must be provided with plenty of water (such as water from a cold tap) and encouraged to drink more than usual when conditions are hot

Indoors:

- Open windows as early as possible in the morning before children arrive, or preferably overnight to allow stored heat to escape the building – it is important to check insurance conditions and the need for security if windows are to be left open overnight
- Almost close windows when the outdoor air becomes warmer than the air indoors – this should help keep the heat out while allowing adequate ventilation
- Use outdoor sun awnings if available, or close blinds / curtains, but do not let them block window ventilation.
- Keep the use of electric lighting to a minimum
- All electrical equipment, including computers, monitors and printers should be switched off when not in use and should not be left in 'standby mode' as this generates heat
- If possible use those classrooms or other spaces which are less likely to overheat, and adjust the layout of teaching spaces to avoid direct sunlight on children
- Oscillating mechanical fans can be used to increase air movement if temperatures are below 35°C. At temperatures above 35°C fans may not prevent heat-related illness and may worsen dehydration

- If necessary, consider rearranging school start, finish and play times to avoid teaching during very hot conditions
- Encourage children to eat normally and drink plenty of cool water

Further information is available in the PHE leaflet: *Looking after children and those in early years settings during heatwaves: guidance for teachers and professionals.*

[CLICK](#) here.

ANNEX 6 – KEY PUBLIC HEALTH MESSAGES

Stay out of the heat:

- keep out of the sun between 11am and 3pm
- if you have to go out in the heat, walk in the shade, apply sunscreen and wear a hat and light scarf
- avoid extreme physical exertion
- wear light, loose-fitting cotton clothes

Cool yourself down:

- have plenty of cold drinks, and avoid excess alcohol, caffeine and hot drinks
- eat cold foods, particularly salads and fruit with a high water content
- take a cool shower, bath or body wash
- sprinkle water over the skin or clothing, or keep a damp cloth on the back of your neck

Keep your environment cool:

- keeping your living space cool is especially important for infants, the elderly or those with chronic health conditions or who can't look after themselves
- place a thermometer in your main living room and bedroom to keep a check on the temperature
- keep windows that are exposed to the sun closed during the day, and open windows at night when the temperature has dropped
- close curtains that receive morning or afternoon sun, however, care should be taken with metal blinds and dark curtains, as these can absorb heat – consider replacing or putting reflective material in-between them and the window space
- turn off non-essential lights and electrical equipment – they generate heat
- keep indoor plants and bowls of water in the house as evaporation helps cool the air
- if possible, move into a cooler room, especially for sleeping
- electric fans may provide some relief, if temperatures are below 35°C²

1 Adapted from: [WHO Europe public health advice on preventing health effects of heat](#)

2 NOTE: Use of fans: at temperatures above 35°C fans may not prevent heat related illness. Additionally fans can cause excess dehydration ([Cochrane Review](#)). The advice is to place the fan at a certain distance from people, not aiming it directly on the body and to have regular drinks. This is especially important in the case of sick people confined to bed.

(Longer-term)

- consider putting up external shading outside windows
- use pale, reflective external paints
- have your loft and cavity walls insulated – this keeps the heat in when it is cold and out when it is hot
- grow trees and leafy plants near windows to act as natural air-conditioners (see 'Making the Case')

Look out for others:

- keep an eye on isolated, elderly, ill or very young people and make sure they are able to keep cool
- ensure that babies, children or elderly people are not left alone in stationary cars
- check on elderly or sick neighbours, family or friends every day during a heatwave
- be alert and call a doctor or social services if someone is unwell or further help is needed

If you have a health problem:

- keep medicines below 25 °C or in the refrigerator (read the storage instructions on the packaging)
- seek medical advice if you are suffering from a chronic medical condition or taking multiple medications

If you or others feel unwell:

- try to get help if you feel dizzy, weak, anxious or have intense thirst and headache; move to a cool place as soon as possible and measure your body temperature
- drink some water or fruit juice to rehydrate
- rest immediately in a cool place if you have painful muscular spasms (particularly in the legs, arms or abdomen, in many cases after sustained exercise during very hot weather), and drink oral rehydration solutions containing electrolytes.
- medical attention is needed if heat cramps last more than one hour
- consult your doctor if you feel unusual symptoms or if symptoms persist

