

Heatwave Plan for Gateshead

July 2011

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1. Introduction

- 1.1** The Heatwave Plan for England, first published in 2004 and updated regularly since then, was re-launched by the Department of Health in June 2011. It sets out the arrangements that will apply, and the actions required, in advance of, and during, a heatwave. It is an important component of overall emergency planning and its purpose is to enhance resilience in the event of a heatwave.
- 1.2** A plan is needed to prepare for a recurrence of the situation in the summer of 2003, in which there were problems of excess deaths in many parts of Europe (particularly France) in a two-week period as a result of excessively hot weather.
- 1.3** This plan is based on the Department of Health (DH) Heatwave Plan, specifically those elements relating to health and social care professionals. It deals with the practical application of the National Heatwave Plan, as it pertains to Gateshead Council.

2. Purpose of the Plan

- 2.1** Climate change is increasingly acknowledged to be a serious threat to population health. These impacts are highlighted in the updated report *Health Effects of Climate Change in the UK 2008*. The Climate Change Act 2008 now makes it a requirement for all statutory sectors, including local authorities, to have robust adaptation plans in place.
- 2.2** Heatwaves are forecast to increase in frequency in the coming years – this plan provides important guidance on how to reduce the impact they will have upon health and in doing so, will save lives. Climate change is increasingly acknowledged to be a serious threat to population health.
- 2.3** During relatively mild heatwaves, excess death rates are significantly, but avoidably, higher in this country. Timely preventative measures can reduce these excess death rates. In contrast to deaths associated with cold snaps in winter, the rise in mortality as a result of very warm weather follows very sharply, within one or two days of the temperature rising.
- 2.4** This plan is designed to be proactive via long term planning and also to provide a prompt reaction through clear alert levels, clear instructions and clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
- 2.5** The plan compliments Gateshead's Climate Change Strategy: 'A *Climate Change Strategy Document for 2010*', as approved by the Gateshead Strategic Partnership. One of the two main elements of this Strategy is '*Adaptation – adjusting to changing climate and protecting our communities from the detrimental effects of climate change*'. The main priority within this element is particularly relevant; '*Protecting our communities and the natural and built environment from adverse weather impacts resulting from a changing climate and developing our response to severe weather events through robust emergency planning*'.

3. National Plan Summary

The core elements of the National Plan are:

- A Heat-Health Watch system operating from 1 June to 15 September, based on Met Office forecasts, which will trigger levels of response from the Department of Health and other bodies.
- Advice and information issued by the Department of Health directly to the public and to health and social care professionals, particularly those working with at-risk groups, both before a heatwave is forecast and when one is imminent.
- The Strategic Health Authority (SHA) role in a heatwave is to ensure that local services have the capacity and capability to deliver their functions as laid out in this plan. The SHA will hold the local NHS to account for implementation. Specific guidance for SHA's will be outlined under each alert level.
- Hospitals and care, residential and nursing homes to provide cool areas and monitor indoor temperatures to reduce the risk of heat-related illness and death in the most vulnerable populations.
- Extra help, where available, from health and social care services, the voluntary sector, families and others to care for those most at risk, mainly isolated older people and those with a serious illness or disability. This will be determined locally as part of individual care plans, and will be based on existing relationships between statutory and voluntary bodies.
- Using the media to get advice to people quickly, both before and during a heatwave.
- Long-term multi-agency planning to adapt to and reduce the impact of climate change, including 'greening the built environment', increasing shading around and insulation of buildings, increasing energy efficiency and reducing carbon emissions.

4. 'Heat-Health Watch'

Levels of response and action to be taken

- 4.1 A 'Heat-Health Watch' system will operate in England from 1 June to 15 September each year. During this period, the Met Office may forecast heatwaves, as defined by day and night time temperatures and their duration. In addition to this the Health Protection Agency will monitor the number of calls made to NHS Direct and a sample of visits to GP's and report to the DH to help to assess the affects the weather is having on people's health and how well the service is responding.

The system comprises of four levels of response and is based on threshold day and night time temperatures as defined by the Met Office. In the North East, thresholds are 28°C during the day and 15°C overnight.

The four levels of response are as follows:

Level 1: Long Term Planning and Summer Preparedness

Level 2: Alert and Readiness

Level 3: Heatwave Action

Level 4: Emergency

Sections 4.2 to 5.4 on the following pages provide details of the actions required within each alert level.

4.2 Summary of heatwave plans and actions

LEVEL 1

Long-term planning

- All year

Summer preparedness

- 1 June – 15 Sept

Long-term planning

- Increase trees and green spaces
- External shading
- Reflective paint
- Loft and wall insulation
- Water features
- Reduce internal energy and heat

Summer preparedness

- Identify high-risk individuals
- Include risk in Common Assessment Framework and Care Programme Approach
- Install thermometers
- Identify cool areas
- Increase staff awareness



LEVEL 2

60% risk of heatwave in 2-3 days *

Alert & readiness in community

- Public media messages
- Increase advice to health & social care workers
- Check high-risk people
- Have visitor/phone call arrangements in place

Alert & readiness in care homes and hospitals

- Monitor indoor temperatures 4 times a day
- Prepare cool areas
- Ensure sufficient staffing
- Identify high-risk people
- Sufficient cold water & ice



LEVEL 3

Heatwave temperature reached in one or more regions

Heatwave action in community

- Media alerts about keeping cool
- Visit/phone high risk people
- Look out for neighbours
- Reduce unnecessary travel
- Review safety of public events

Heatwave action in care homes & hospitals

- Monitor indoor temperatures 4 times a day
- Maximise external shading & night time ventilation
- Ensure cool areas do not exceed 26°C
- Provide regular cool drinks

LEVEL 4

Heatwave for four or more days in two or more regions

EMERGENCY

If severe or prolonged heatwave affecting sectors other than health

High-risk Groups

Community: Over 75, female, living alone and isolated, severe physical or mental illness; urban areas, south facing top flat; alcohol and over-exertion

Care home or hospital: Over 75, female, frail, severe physical or mental illness; multiple medications; babies and young children

*Because Level 2 is based on a prediction, there may be jumps between levels. Following Level 3, wait until temperatures cool to Level 1 before stopping Level 3 actions.

5. Local Authority Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Level 1: Long-Term Planning and Summer Preparedness

In conjunction with Gateshead's Climate Change Strategy – '*Climate Change Strategy Document 2010*', we need to ensure that The Council and its partner organisations are aware of the risks faced by severe weather such as heatwaves and what can be done to reduce our carbon footprint and protect our communities.

Long Term Planning

During the summer months, the Council and social care services need to ensure awareness and background preparedness. Long-term planning includes year-round joint working to reduce the impact of climate change and ensure maximum adaptation to reduce harm from heatwaves.

As part of long term planning, the following considerations should be made:

- Architectural services, housing services/providers, schools, residents and carers and social care organisations should maximise the opportunities of 'greening the built environment' along streets and around buildings. Trees, plants and green spaces act as natural air-conditioners, provide shade and absorb carbon dioxide.
- Council and housing associations and social care residential facilities should increase the use of reflective paint and external shading around south facing windows, around top floor flats or where indoor temperatures exceed 26°C to protect high-risk residents who are vulnerable to the effects of heat. It may be appropriate to move high risk residents into cooler properties.
- Cavity wall and loft insulation keeps the heat in during winter and also helps to keep homes cooler during the summer. Local communities should work together and have a better awareness of grants that may be available to them. Additionally, care facilities and institutions should ensure they are well insulated and increase external shading.
- Insulating buildings, undertaking carbon audits, promoting the use of public transport, switching to energy-efficient vehicles and appliances and recycling should all be considered in long term plans.

In preparation there will be a lot of work carried out at a national level and also at a local level by the local authority prior to the commencement of summer, including:

- A public information leaflet will be available to be downloaded from the Department of Health web address: http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_126666
- The same advice will also be posted on NHS Direct Online (www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk), NHS Choices (www.nhs.uk), with links to the Health Protection Agency (www.hpa.org.uk) and Department of Health websites (www.dh.gov.uk). Printed leaflets will be available upon request to professionals and the public.
- This advice will also be available on the Council's website and staff will receive information and regular updates via team briefs and email updates from the Resilience and Communication Teams.
- A number of specific factsheets aimed at social care professionals, including residential and care home staff, are now available and can be found on the Department of Health website at www.dh.gov.uk

Summer Preparedness

The period of summer preparedness begins on the 1st of June and ends on the 15th September, the highest heatwave risk period of the year. It is during this period that the Council will:

- Ensure that care, nursing and residential homes are aware of the Heatwave Plan; are engaged in preparing for heatwaves; and include heatwave planning on their risk registers.
- Identify individuals who are at particular risk from the extreme heat (see page 6), many of whom will already be receiving care.
- Identify any changes to individual care plans for those in high-risk groups, including those with chronic illness or severe mental illness, which might be necessary in the event of a heatwave, including initiating daily visits by formal or informal carers, wardens, housing officers, meals on wheels, domiciliary care or the voluntary sector to check on people living alone.
- Work with the families and informal carers of at-risk individuals to ensure awareness of the dangers of heat and how to keep cool and to put simple protective measures in place, such as installing proper ventilation and ensuring that fans and fridges are available and in working order.

- Raise awareness among care home managers and staff about the very significant heat-related health risks, and will encourage additional staff training in line with the Department of Health factsheet. They will encourage the organisation of large, outdoor events taking into account the dangers of heat by ensuring the provision of shade, cold water and information for individual protection.
- Review surge capacity and the need for, and availability of, staff support in the event of a heatwave, especially if it lasts for more than a few days.

The following advice will also be made available by the Council:

- During periods of hot weather housing conditions could, due to excess heat affect a persons health. If an individual or health professional is concerned about this then they should contact Environmental Health. Excess heat will be considered as part of a housing condition assessment using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). This will determine the level of risk to the occupier, the action that can be taken and by whom.
- In summer months especially, cycling and walking should be encouraged as a means of transport as this will help to reduce overall heat levels and poor air quality in urban areas due to car use.

5.2 Level 2: Alert and Readiness

This is triggered as soon as the Met Office forecasts threshold temperatures for at least two to three days ahead in any one region, or forecasts that there is at least a 60% chance of temperatures being high enough on at least two consecutive days to have significant effects on health. As most deaths occur in the first two days, this is an important stage at which to ensure readiness and swift action to reduce harm from a potential heatwave. The Met Office will notify local authorities, as well as providing information to the public via the usual routes of weather forecasts and news reports.

As per the planning stage set in Level 1, the Council must ensure:

- That social care workers, independent care providers and housing associations (Council and Private) have identified those in their community who are particularly at high risk from a heatwave. They

should arrange, where appropriate, for a daily visit/phone call by a formal or informal carer (family, neighbour, friend, and voluntary and community sector workers), housing officer, warden or other provider such as meals on wheels services during the heatwave period. Visits should be considered especially for those living on their own and without the contact of a daily carer.

- The distribution of Department of Health advice to social care workers (Council and independent) who are in contact with all those defined as at risk living at home.
- The distribution of Department of Health advice to the managers of local authority funded and private care, residential and nursing care homes.

Care, residential and nursing homes must:

- Ensure that cool rooms are ready and constantly at 26°C or below
- Check that outdoor thermometers are in place and recording sheets printed to measure temperature four times a day
- Identify naturally cooler rooms that vulnerable patients can be moved to as necessary
- Identify particularly vulnerable individuals (those with chronic/severe illness, on multiple medications, or who are bed bound) who may be prioritised for time in the cool room
- Obtain supplies of ice/cool water
- Ensure that staffing levels will be sufficient to cover the anticipated heatwave period
- Repeat messages on risk and protective measures to staff
- In the context of mental health trusts and community teams, ensure that visits or phone calls are made to advise high-risk individuals (those with severe mental illness, living on their own, or without regular contact with a carer).

5.3 Level 3: Heatwave Action

This is triggered as soon as the Met Office confirms that threshold temperatures have been reached in any one region or more. This stage requires specific actions targeted at high-risk groups.

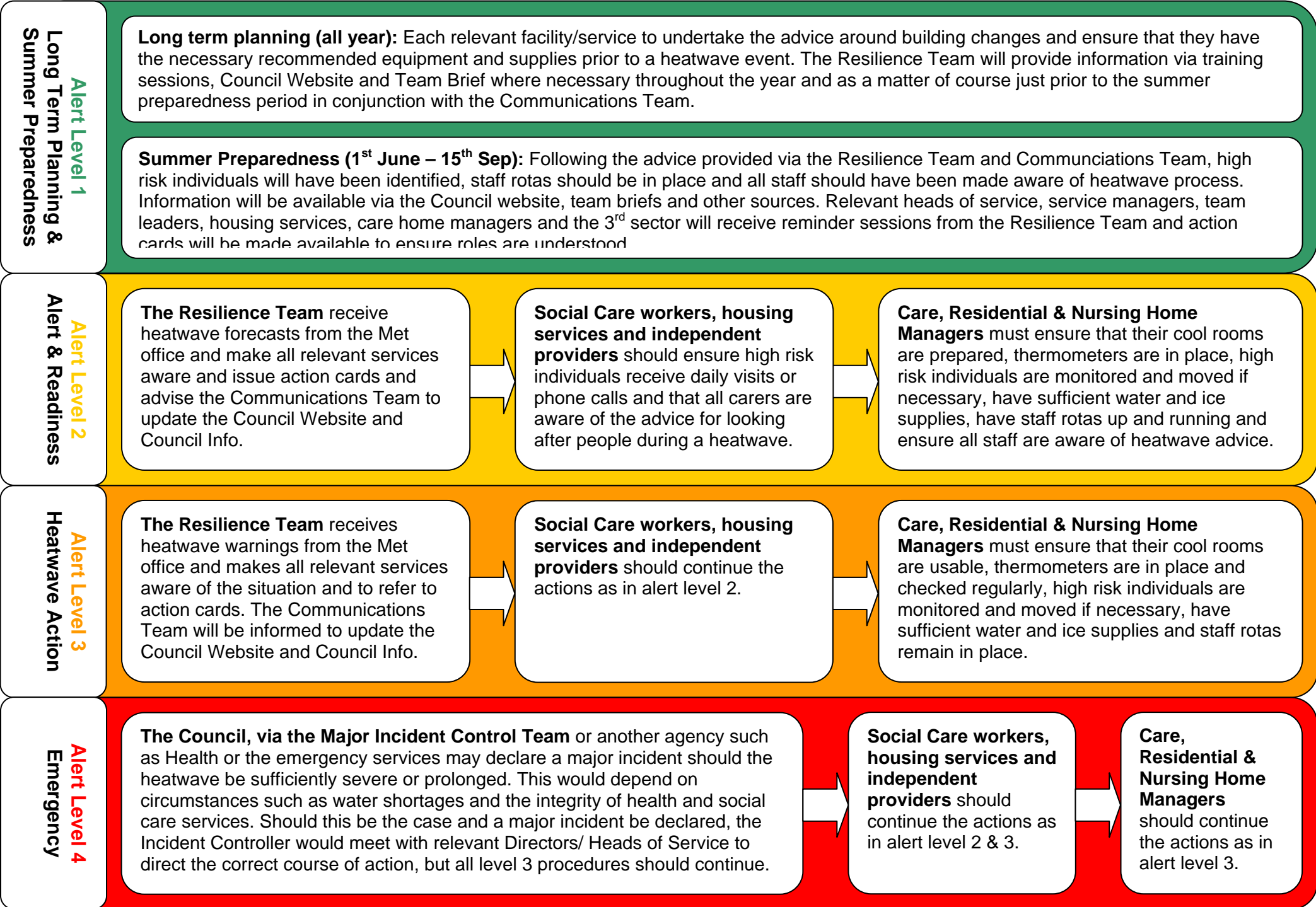
Social services and care and residential homes must ensure that the actions set out in Level 2 continue and are monitored, seeking the early intervention of GP's should anyone start to become unwell.

5.4 Level 4: Emergency

This is reached when a heatwave is so severe and/or prolonged that its effects extend outside health and social care, such as power or water shortages, and/or the integrity of health and social care systems is threatened. At this level, illness and death may occur among the fit and healthy and not just in high-risk groups.

In the event of a major incident being declared, all existing emergency policies and procedures will apply. All Level 3 responsibilities will also continue.

Appendix 1 – Action Plan Chart & Action Cards



**Alert Level 1 – Summer Preparedness & Long Term Planning
Action Card 1 – Disseminating heatwave guidance to relevant
officers and organisations**

Area of responsibility

- Resilience Team

Actions

- In the event of a new National Heatwave Plan being developed, the Resilience Team will update the Council Heatwave Plan and Action Cards accordingly.
- Regardless of the plan being updated, prior to a heatwave (preferably before the 1st June of each year) the Resilience Team will:
 - Advise the Council's Communications Team to update the Council Website with the relevant guidance and brief staff via Team Briefs and Council Info emails
 - Order any new leaflets from the Department of Health and circulate to the relevant services and organisations
 - Arrange for briefing sessions to be held by the Resilience Team across the borough to enable as many staff to attend as possible
 - Arrange meetings with any service particularly affected by changes to the National Plan.

Responsible Staff

- Resilience Manager
- Resilience Officer

Alert Level 1 – Summer Preparedness
Action Card 2 – Identifying people in the community and in residential care who are at particular risk from extreme heat

Area of responsibility

- Domiciliary Care
- Day Care
- Local Authority Residential Care Homes
- Social Work Teams
- Independent care providers
- Sure Start
- Schools and Nurseries
- Private Residential Care Homes
- The Gateshead Housing Company
- Housing 21
- Housing Associations
- Voluntary Organisations

Actions

Identify a list, in advance of hot weather, of all people within the community and residential care who may be at particular risk from extreme heat, including:

- The over 75's, especially women, those living alone, socially isolated or living in a care home
- Those with chronic or severe illness such as heart conditions, diabetes, respiratory or renal insufficiency, Parkinson's disease or severe mental illness. Additionally people on medication that can potentially affect renal function, the body's ability to sweat, thermoregulation or electrolyte balance may be more vulnerable
- People with an inability to adapt their behaviour to keep cool such as Alzheimer's sufferers, those who are disabled, bed bound, alcohol dependent, babies and the very young
- People living in urban areas and south-facing top floor flats, the homeless and those with jobs or activities in hot places, outdoors or involve high levels of physical exertion.

Responsible staff

Those responsible for the commencement and upkeep of these lists for each organisation/residential home are:

- Heads of Service
- Service Managers
- Team Leaders
- Officers in charge in local authority residential care homes
- Officers in charge in private residential care homes
- Head teachers
- Housing Managers (Older Persons Housing)
- Sheltered scheme officers
- Voluntary Organisation Staff looking after vulnerable people

Alert Level 1 – Long Term Planning
Action Card 3 – Identifying changes to premises

Area of responsibility

- Domiciliary Care
- Day Care
- Local Authority Residential Care Homes
- Social Work Teams
- Independent Care Providers
- Sure Start
- Schools and Nurseries
- Private Residential Care Homes
- The Gateshead Housing Company
- Housing Associations
- Housing 21
- Architectural services
- Spatial Planning

Actions

The following updates and checks should be considered in advance of hot weather for all existing buildings that may house those most at risk, (see Action Card 1) and all future buildings:

- Check windows can be shaded, preferably by curtains with pale reflective linings rather than by metal Venetian blinds, which can make conditions worse. If fitted, check they can be raised.
- Check there are no problems opening windows, including security considerations.
- Increase outside shading, in the form of shutters, shades, trees or leafy plants. Reflective paint can also assist in keeping the building cool. Increase outside greenery, especially in concreted areas, as it increases moisture content and aids cooling as a natural air conditioner. A water feature would also act as a natural coolant for the surrounding air.
- Cavity wall and loft insulation help to keep the building warm in winter and cooler in the summer. Contact the Council's energy efficiency officer or your energy company to see what grants are available.
- Cool areas can be developed with appropriate indoor and outdoor shading, ventilation, the use of indoor and outdoor plants and, if necessary, air conditioning.
- Create cool rooms or cool areas. High-risk groups that are vulnerable to the effects of heat are physiologically unable to cool themselves efficiently once temperatures rise above 26°C. Therefore every care, nursing and residential home should be

able to provide a room or area that maintains a temperature at 26°C or below.

- If one exists, check the cooling or air conditioning system works properly. It should be able to keep the air temperature at or below 25°C in at least one large room. Otherwise consider installing or renting an air conditioning unit.
- Make sure you have enough thermometers to monitor accurately temperatures throughout the building. These should be placed in rooms inhabited for a substantial time by vulnerable people (bedrooms, living and eating areas) and should be monitored at least four times a day.
- If temperatures exceed 26°C, high risk individuals should be moved to a cool area below this temperature.

Responsible staff

- Heads of Service (Social Care)
- Service Managers (Social Care)
- Team Leaders (Social Care)
- Heads of Service (Planning)
- Service Managers (Planning)
- Team Leaders (Planning)
- Officers in charge in local authority residential care homes
- Officers in charge in private residential care homes
- Head teachers
- Sheltered scheme officers within CBS
- Housing Associations

Alert Level 2 – 60% risk of heatwave in 2-3 days
Action Card 4 – Alert & readiness in the community

Area of responsibility

- Resilience Team

Actions

This is triggered as soon as the Met Office forecasts threshold temperatures for at least two to three days ahead in any one region, or forecasts that there is at least a 60% chance of temperatures being high enough on at least two consecutive days to have significant effects on health. The Met Office will notify local authorities, as well as providing information to the public via the usual routes of weather forecasts and news reports.

The Resilience Team will advise all relevant service managers and organisations of the likelihood of heatwave temperatures and will also issue the relevant action cards. The Council's Communications Team will also be advised to update the Council Website and issue a Council Info email.

Responsible staff

- Resilience Manager
- Resilience Officer
- Head of Communications

Alert Level 2 – 60% risk of heatwave in 2-3 days
Action Card 5 – Alert & readiness in the community

Area of responsibility

- Domiciliary Care
- Day Care
- Social Work Teams
- Voluntary Organisations
- Independent Care Providers
- The Gateshead Housing Company
- Housing Associations
- Housing 21

Actions

This is triggered as soon as the Met Office forecasts threshold temperatures for at least two to three days ahead in any one region, or forecasts that there is at least a 60% chance of temperatures being high enough on at least two consecutive days to have significant effects on health. The Met Office will notify local authorities, as well as providing information to the public via the usual routes of weather forecasts and news reports.

As per the planning stage set in Level 1, Social Services must ensure:

- That social care workers have identified those in their community who are particularly at high risk from a heatwave. They should arrange, where appropriate, for a daily visit/phone call by a formal or informal carer (family, neighbour, friend, and voluntary and community sector workers) during the heatwave period. Visits should be considered especially for those living on their own and without the contact of a daily carer.
- The distribution of Department of Health advice to community health and social care workers who are in contact with all those defined as at risk living at home.
- The distribution of Department of Health advice to the managers of local authority funded and private care, residential and nursing care homes.

Responsible staff

- Heads of Service (Social Care)
- Service Managers (Social Care)
- Team Leaders (Social Care)
- Voluntary Organisation staff looking after vulnerable people

Alert Level 2 – 60% risk of heatwave in 2-3 days
Action Card 6 – Alert & readiness in care, residential & nursing homes

Area of responsibility

- Domiciliary Care
- Day Care
- Local Authority Residential Care Homes and sheltered schemes/ RSL schemes
- Social Work Teams
- Private Residential Care Homes

Actions

This is triggered as soon as the Met Office forecasts threshold temperatures for at least two to three days ahead in any one region, or forecasts that there is at least a 60% chance of temperatures being high enough on at least two consecutive days to have significant effects on health. The Met Office will notify local authorities, as well as providing information to the public via the usual routes of weather forecasts and news reports.

As per the planning stage set in Level 1, care, residential and nursing homes must:

- Ensure that cool rooms are ready and constantly at 26°C or below
- Check that outdoor thermometers are in place and recording sheets printed to measure temperature four times a day
- Identify naturally cooler rooms that vulnerable patients can be moved to as necessary
- Identify particularly vulnerable individuals (those with chronic/ severe illness, on multiple medications, or who are bed bound) who may be prioritised for time in the cool room
- Obtain supplies of ice/cool water
- Ensure that staffing levels will be sufficient to cover the anticipated heatwave period
- Repeat messages on risk and protective measures to staff
In the context of mental health trusts and community teams, ensure that visits or phone calls are made to advise high-risk individuals (those with severe mental illness, living on their own, or without regular contact with a carer).

Responsible staff

- Heads of Service (Social Care)
- Service Managers (Social Care)
- Team Leaders (Social Care)
- Council Officers in charge in local authority residential care homes and sheltered schemes
- Officers in charge in private residential care homes and private sheltered housing

**Alert Level 3 – Heatwave temperature reached
Action Card 7 – Heatwave action in the community**

Area of responsibility

- Resilience Team

Actions

This is triggered as soon as the Met Office confirms that threshold temperatures have been reached in any one region or more. This stage requires specific actions targeted at high-risk groups.

The Resilience Team will advise all relevant service managers and organisations that heatwave temperatures have now been reached and advise them to use the relevant action cards. The Council's Communications Team will also be advised to update the Council Website and issue a Council Info email.

Responsible staff

- Resilience Manager
- Resilience Officer
- Head of Communications

Alert Level 3 – Heatwave temperature reached
Action Card 8 – Heatwave action in the community

Area of responsibility

- Domiciliary Care
- Day Care
- Social Work Teams
- Sheltered scheme officers within the Council
- Council Communications Team
- Private Residential Care Homes
- The Gateshead Housing Company
- Housing Associations
- Housing 21
- Voluntary Organisations

Actions

This is triggered as soon as the Met Office confirms that threshold temperatures have been reached in any one region or more. This stage requires specific actions targeted at high-risk groups.

- Health and social care workers should, where appropriate, ensure that those identified as vulnerable are receiving daily visits/phone calls from a formal or informal carer (family, neighbour, friend, and voluntary and community sector workers) during the heatwave period. Visits should be considered especially for those living on their own and without the contact of a daily carer.
- The Council Communications Team will ensure that heatwave information is available to the public via the Council's website.
- The Gateshead Housing Company and Private Housing Associations who have teams dedicated to older tenants, should work in partnership with the Council's social services. This will hopefully ensure that all older people who may be alone and/or vulnerable to the heat receive a visit from a social worker, sheltered scheme officer or housing representative.

Responsible staff

- Heads of Service (Social Care)
- Service Managers (Social Care)
- Team Leaders (Social Care)
- The Gateshead Housing Company Manager (Older Persons Housing)
- Private Housing Associations (Older Persons Housing)
- Officers in charge in local authority residential care homes
- Officers in charge in private residential care homes
- Voluntary Organisation staff looking after vulnerable people

Alert Level 3 – Heatwave temperature reached
Action Card 9 – Heatwave action in Care, Residential & Nursing Homes

Area of responsibility

- Domiciliary Care
- Day Care
- Social Work Teams
- Council Communications Team
- Private Residential Care Homes

Actions

This is triggered as soon as the Met Office confirms that threshold temperatures have been reached in any one region or more. This stage requires specific actions targeted at high-risk groups.

- Ensure that cool rooms are kept constantly at 26°C or below
- Ensure that outdoor thermometers are in place and recording sheets printed to measure temperature four times a day
- Move vulnerable patients to naturally cooler rooms as necessary
- Move particularly vulnerable individuals (those with chronic/severe illness, on multiple medications, or who are bed bound) to cool room as a matter of priority
- Provide supplies of ice/cool water
- Ensure that staffing levels are sufficient to cover the anticipated heatwave period
- Repeat messages on risk and protective measures to staff
- In the context of mental health trusts and community teams, ensure that visits or phone calls are made to advise high-risk individuals (those with severe mental illness, living on their own, or without regular contact with a carer).

Responsible staff

- Heads of Service (Social Care)
- Service Managers (Social Care)
- Team Leaders (Social Care)
- Head of Service (Communications Team)
- Officers in charge in local authority residential care homes
- Officers in charge in private residential care homes

Alert Level 3 – Heatwave temperature reached
Action Card 10 – Heatwave action for schools & other young persons facilities

Area of responsibility

- Schools and Nurseries
- Sure Start

Actions

This is triggered as soon as the Met Office confirms that threshold temperatures have been reached in any one region or more. This stage requires specific actions targeted at high-risk groups.

Outdoors:

- On very hot days (i.e in excess of 28°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 hats of a closed construction with wide brims should be worn to avoid sunburn
- Thin clothing or suncream 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 cool water (tap water is adequate) and encouraged to drink more than usual.

Indoors:

- Windows and other ventilation openings should be opened during the cool of early morning or preferably overnight to allow stored heat to escape from the building.
- Windows and other ventilation openings should not be closed, but their openings reduced when the outdoor air becomes warmer than the air indoors. This should help keep the room cool while allowing adequate ventilation.
- Use outdoor sun awnings if available, or indoor blinds, but do not let solar shading devices block ventilation openings or windows.
- 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 'stand by' mode.

Maintaining children's health during hot weather conditions:

- Encourage children to eat normally
- Encourage children to drink plenty of cool water (tap water adequate)
- If possible, rearrange school start and finish times to avoid teaching during very hot conditions
- Use classrooms or other spaces which are less likely to overheat in preference to others, and adjust the layout of teaching spaces to avoid direct sunlight on children
- Oscillating mechanical fans can be used to increase air movement if necessary

Actions to be taken if heat stress, heat exhaustion or heat stroke is suspected:

- **Heat Stress:** Children suffering from heat stress will show general signs of discomfort, these will worsen with physical activity or if left untreated and can lead to heat exhaustion or heat stroke. It is advisable to move a child showing these symptoms somewhere out of the sun, in a cooler environment and given plenty of water or fruit juice to drink.
- **Heat Exhaustion:** Symptoms of heat exhaustion include headaches, dizziness, nausea and vomiting, muscle weakness or cramps, pale skin, and a high temperature. You should move the affected child somewhere cool and ensure they drink plenty of water or fruit juice and if possible enable them to take a lukewarm shower, or sponge themselves down with cold water.
- **Heatstroke:** Heatstroke can develop if heat exhaustion is left untreated, but it can also occur suddenly and without warning. Symptoms include headaches, nausea, an intense thirst, sleepiness, hot, red and dry skin, a sudden rise in temperature, confusion, aggression, convulsions and loss of consciousness. Heatstroke can result in irreversible damage to your body, including the brain, or death. **If you suspect someone has heatstroke, call 999 immediately.**
- **While waiting for the ambulance**
 - If possible, move the person somewhere cooler.
 - Increase ventilation by opening windows or using a fan.
 - Cool them down as quickly as possible by loosening their clothes, sprinkling them with cool water or wrapping them in a damp sheet.
 - If they are conscious, give them water or fruit juice to drink.
 - Do not give them aspirin or paracetamol.

Responsible staff

- Head Teachers
- Supervisors of children/young people

Alert Level 4 – Emergency: Heatwave for 4 or more days in 2 or more regions

Action Card 11 – If severe or prolonged heatwave affecting sectors other than health

Area of Responsibility

- Resilience Team
- Emergency Response Team (from various services)

Actions

This is reached when a heatwave is so severe and/or prolonged that its effects extend outside health and social care, such as power or water shortages, and/or the integrity of health and social care systems is threatened. At this level, illness and death may occur among the fit and healthy and not just in high-risk groups.

In the event of a major incident being declared, all existing emergency policies and procedures will apply. The Resilience Team and Head Quarters Coordinators, as directed by the Incident Controller, would coordinate actions for the duration of the major incident or until such time as normal services resume. All Level 3 responsibilities will also continue.

The Resilience Team would also work in conjunction with the Communications Team to ensure any information updates appear on the Council Website and Council Info email updates.

Responsible staff

- Resilience Manager
- Resilience Officer
- Incident Controller(s) (Emergency Response Team)
- Head Quarters Coordinators (Emergency Response Team)
- Head of Communications

Alert Level 4 – Emergency: Heatwave for 4 or more days in 2 or more regions

Action Card 12 – If severe or prolonged heatwave affecting sectors other than health

Area of responsibility

- Council Communications Team
- Domiciliary Care
- Day Care
- Local Authority Residential Care Homes
- Social Work Teams
- Sure Start
- Schools and Nurseries
- Private Residential Care Homes
- The Gateshead Housing Company
- Housing Associations
- Voluntary Organisations

This is reached when a heatwave is so severe and/or prolonged that its effects extend outside health and social care, such as power or water shortages, and/or the integrity of health and social care systems is threatened. At this level, illness and death may occur among the fit and healthy and not just in high-risk groups.

In the event of a major incident being declared, all existing emergency policies and procedures will apply. All Level 3 responsibilities will also continue.

- Heads of Service (Social Care)
- Service Managers (Social Care)
- Team Leaders (Social Care)
- The Gateshead Housing Company Manager (Older Persons Housing)
- Private Housing Associations (Older Persons Housing)
- Officers in charge in local authority residential care homes
- Officers in charge in private residential care homes
- Head of Service (Communications Team)
- Head Teachers
- Supervisors of children/young people
- Voluntary Organisation Staff looking after vulnerable people

Appendix 2 – Looking After Yourself and Others During Hot Weather

Most of us enjoy sunny weather, but extreme heat can seriously damage your health. During a heatwave, when temperatures stay really high day after day, it can sometimes be fatal.

What are the risks during a heatwave?

In a severe heatwave you may get dehydrated and your body may overheat, leading to heat exhaustion or heatstroke. Both need urgent treatment.

Heat Exhaustion – Symptoms of heat exhaustion include headaches, dizziness, nausea and vomiting, muscle weakness or cramps, pale skin, and a high temperature. You should move somewhere cool and drink plenty of water or fruit juice. If you can, take a lukewarm shower, or sponge yourself down with cold water.

Heatstroke – Heatstroke can develop if heat exhaustion is left untreated, but it can also occur suddenly and without warning. Symptoms include headaches, nausea, an intense thirst, sleepiness, hot, red and dry skin, a sudden rise in temperature, confusion, aggression, convulsions and loss of consciousness. Heatstroke can result in irreversible damage to your body, including the brain, or death.

Who is at risk?

The heat can affect anyone, but some people run a greater risk of serious harm. These include:

- Older people
- Babies and young children
- People with mental health problems
- People on certain medication
- People with a serious chronic condition, particularly breathing or heart problems
- People who already have a high temperature from an infection
- People who use alcohol or illicit drugs
- People with mobility problems
- People who are physically active, like manual workers and sportsmen and women.

What should you do?

Mostly it's a matter of common sense. Listen to your local weather forecasts so you know if a heatwave is on the way. Plan ahead to reduce the risk of getting heat exhaustion or heatstroke.

Keep out of the heat

- If a heatwave is forecast, try and plan your day in a way that allows you to stay out of the heat
- If you can, avoid going out in the hottest part of the day (11am – 3pm)
- If you can't avoid strenuous outdoor activity, like sport, DIY, or gardening, keep it for cooler parts of the day, like early morning
- If you must go out, stay in the shade. Wear a hat and light, loose-fitting clothes, preferably cotton. If you will be outside for some time, take plenty of water with you.

Stay cool

- Stay inside, in the coolest rooms in your home, as much as possible
- Close the curtains in rooms that get a lot of sun
- Keep windows closed while the room is cooler than it is outside. Open them when the temperature inside rises, and at night for ventilation. If you are worried about security, at least open windows on the first floor and above.
- Take cool showers or baths, and splash yourself several times a day with cold water, particularly your face and the back of your neck.

Drink regularly

- Drink regularly even if you do not feel thirsty – water or fruit juice are best
- Try to avoid alcohol, tea and coffee. They make dehydration worse.
- Eat as you normally would. Try to eat more cold food, particularly salads and fruit, which contain water.

Seek advice if you have any concerns

- Contact your doctor, a pharmacist or NHS Direct if you are worried about your health during a heatwave, especially if you are taking medication, or have any unusual symptoms.
- Watch for cramp in your arms, legs or stomach, feelings of mild confusion, weakness or problems sleeping.

- If you have these symptoms, rest for several hours, keep cool and drink water or fruit juice. Seek medical advice if they get worse or don't go away.

Helping others

- If anyone you know is likely to be at risk during a heatwave (see the list on page 11), help them get the advice and support they need. Older people living on their own should be visited daily to check they are ok.

Remember, heatstroke can kill. It can develop very suddenly, and rapidly lead to unconsciousness. If you suspect someone has heatstroke, call 999 immediately.

While waiting for the ambulance

- If possible, move the person somewhere cooler.
- Increase ventilation by opening windows or using a fan.
- Cool them down as quickly as possible by loosening their clothes, sprinkling them with cold water or wrapping them in a damp sheet.
- If they are conscious, give them water or fruit juice to drink.
- Do not give them aspirin or paracetamol.

Further Information

- Check the weather forecast and any high temperature health warnings at www.metoffice.gov.uk
- Contact NHS Direct on **0845 4647** or NHS Direct Online at www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk for advice about heat exhaustion and heatstroke.
- You can get advice on protecting your skin during hot weather from the Cancer Research UK SunSmart campaign website at www.cancerresearchuk.org/sunsmart/

Appendix 3 – Looking after cared for people during a heatwave

Extreme heat is dangerous to everyone, **especially older people, and especially those living in care homes**. During a heatwave, when temperatures remain abnormally high for longer than a couple of days, it can prove fatal and climate change means that heatwaves are likely to become more common in England. In one hot nine-day period in South-East England in August 2003, there were nearly 2000 extra deaths. The biggest increase in deaths was among those in care homes.

What are the risks during a heatwave?

Heat exhaustion is usually one of the first signs that someone is at risk of developing heatstroke. Symptoms include headaches, dizziness, nausea and vomiting, muscle weakness or cramps, pale skin, weak pulse and high temperature.

Heatstroke can develop if the symptoms of heat exhaustion are left untreated. It can also occur suddenly and without warning. Symptoms include confusion and disorientation, convulsions, unconsciousness, racing, thumping pulse, flushed, hot and dry skin, and very sudden rise in temperature. Heatstroke can result in organ failure, brain damage or death.

In addition to heat exhaustion and heatstroke, there may also be a risk of the following:

- **Cardiovascular and respiratory illnesses** – these cause the majority of excess mortality during a heatwave.
- **Heat cramps** – caused by dehydration and loss of electrolytes, often following exercise.
- **Heat rash** – small, red, itchy papules.
- **Heat oedema** – mainly in the ankles, due to vasodilation and retention of fluid.
- **Heat syncope** – dizziness and fainting due to dehydration, vasodilation, cardiovascular disease and certain medications.

Advance Preparations

The building

- Check that windows can be shaded, preferably by curtains with pale reflective linings rather than by metal Venetian blinds, which can make conditions worse. If these are fitted, check they can be raised.
- Check there are no problems opening windows, including security considerations.
- Increase outside shading, in the form of shutters, shades, trees or leafy plants. Reflective paint can also assist in keeping the building cool. Increase outside greenery, especially in concreted areas, as it increases moisture content and aids cooling as a natural air conditioner.
- Cavity wall and loft insulation help to keep the building warm in winter and cooler in the summer. Contact the Council's energy efficiency officer or your energy company to see what grants are available.
- Cool areas can be developed with appropriate indoor and outdoor shading, ventilation, the use of indoor and outdoor plants and, if necessary, air conditioning.
- Ensure staff know which rooms are most easy to keep cool, and which are the most difficult, and review the distribution of residents according to those most at risk.
- Create cool rooms or cool areas. High-risk groups that are vulnerable to the effects of heat are physiologically unable to cool themselves efficiently once temperatures rise above 26°C. Therefore every care, nursing and residential home should be able to provide a room or area that maintains a temperature at 26°C or below.
- If one exists, check the cooling or air conditioning system works properly. It should be able to keep the air temperature at or below 25°C in at least one large room. Otherwise consider installing or renting an air conditioning unit.
- Make sure you have enough thermometers to monitor accurately temperatures throughout the building. These should be placed in rooms inhabited for a substantial time by vulnerable people (bedrooms, living and eating areas) and should be monitored at least four times a day.
- If temperatures exceed 26°C, high risk individuals should be moved to a cool area below this temperature.

Facilities

- Check that you have an adequate supply of fans and water sprays
- Check that water and ice are widely available. Ensure that you have a supply of oral rehydration salts, orange juice and bananas to help maintain electrolyte balance for those on diuretics
- Arrange for cold drinks to be distributed regularly in the event of a heatwave
- Plan to adapt menus to cold meals (preferably with a high water content, such as fruit and salads) in consultation with residents

Working arrangements

Work out a protocol for changes to management arrangements in the event of a heatwave, to cover:

- Mobilisation of staff, including recalling those on holiday
- Changes to rotas
- Getting extra help from the relatives of residents
- Getting extra help from volunteers
- Providing an email address to local authority/NHS emergency planning officers, to facilitate the transfer of emergency information

Residents

- Make sure you know who is most at risk (for further details ask Primary Care staff):
 - Over 75
 - Female
 - Frail
 - Sever physical including heart conditions, diabetes, respiratory or renal insufficiency, Parkinson's disease or severe mental illness
 - Multiple medications
 - Babies and young children
- Ensure that you have protocols to monitor residents most at risk and to provide additional care and support (body temperature, pulse rate, blood pressure and dehydration will need to be monitored)
- Ask the GP's of at-risk residents about possible changes in treatment or medication in the event of a heatwave and review residents on multiple medications
- Check that residents have light, loose fitting, cotton clothing to wear

If a heatwave is forecast for your region

- Make sure you have taken the steps outlined in the previous sections
- Check local weather forecasts at www.metoffice.gov.uk
- Check that staff, and others such as volunteers, know what to do during a heatwave
- Suggest that all residents consult their GP about possible changes to their treatment and/or medication; consider prescribing oral rehydration salts for those on high doses of diuretics

During a heatwave

Try to keep the care home as cool as possible

- Increase outside shading. Spraying water on the ground outside helps to cool the air (avoid creating slip hazards)
- Keep curtains and windows closed while the temperature outside is higher than it is inside
- Once the temperature outside has dropped lower than the temperature inside, open the windows. This may not be until very late at night or the early hours of the morning
- Discourage residents from physical activity and from going out during the hottest part of the day (11am – 3pm)
- Monitor temperatures inside the building at least four times a day
- Make the most of cooler night-time temperatures to cool the building with ventilation. High night-time temperatures have been found to be especially associated with excess mortality

Monitor Residents

- Check body temperature, heart and breathing rates, blood pressure, hydration levels and weight regularly
- Watch for any changes in behaviour, especially excessive drowsiness
- Watch for signs of headache, unusual tiredness, weakness, giddiness, disorientation or sleeping problems

Reduce the health risks of heat

- Encourage residents to remain in the coolest parts of the building as much as possible
- Move residents so that each spends time in the cool room/area (below 26°C) – give priority and extra time to high-risk residents or any showing signs of distress (including increased body temperature)

- Monitor residents' fluid intake, providing regular cold drinks, particularly if they are not always able to drink unaided. Oral rehydration salts are suggested for those on high doses of diuretics. Bananas, orange juice and occasional salty snacks can also help replace salts lost due to sweating
- Advise residents to avoid caffeine (coffee, tea, cola's), very sweet drinks and alcohol
- Encourage residents to wear light, loose cotton clothes to absorb sweat and prevent skin irritation
- Regularly sprinkle or spray cool water on exposed parts of the body. A damp cloth on the back of the neck helps with temperature regulation
- Arrange cool showers or baths if possible

Emergency Treatment

If you suspect someone has heatstroke, call 999. While waiting for the ambulance:

- Take the persons temperature
- If possible, move them somewhere cooler
- Cool them down as quickly as possible by giving them a cool shower, sprinkling them with water or wrapping them in a damp sheet, and using a fan to make an air current
- Encourage them to drink fluids, if they are conscious
- Do **not** give them aspirin or paracetamol

Further Information

The Heatwave Plan

The full Heatwave Plan can be accessed on the Department of Health website at www.dh.gov.uk/publications. It outlines the responsibilities of health and social care organisations at different stages during a heatwave.

NHS Direct

NHS Direct Online at www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk can provide additional advice on heatstroke and other heat-related conditions.

Information on alert levels

The heatwave alert levels will be triggered by temperature thresholds (see Annex 1 in the Heatwave Plan) set according to regional variations. Therefore the Met Office website (www.metoffice.gov.uk) will be the first place where the alert level is available. The alert level will also subsequently be displayed on the Department of Health, Health Protection Agency and NHS Direct websites.

Information on air quality

Regular updates on levels of particulate matter (PM10), sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, ozone and carbon monoxide are available on Teletext (page 156), and at <http://uk-air.defra.gov.uk>, which also offers health advice to those who may be particularly sensitive to air pollution.

Additional information can be found from:

- The freephone Air Pollution Information Service, telephone number **0800 55 66 77**
- Sky News Air Pollution Bulletin (normally airs around 18:45)

Sun protection

You can get advice on skin protection during hot weather from the Cancer Research UK SunSmart campaign website at www.cancerresearchuk.org/sunsmart/