

Yellow Heat Health Alert

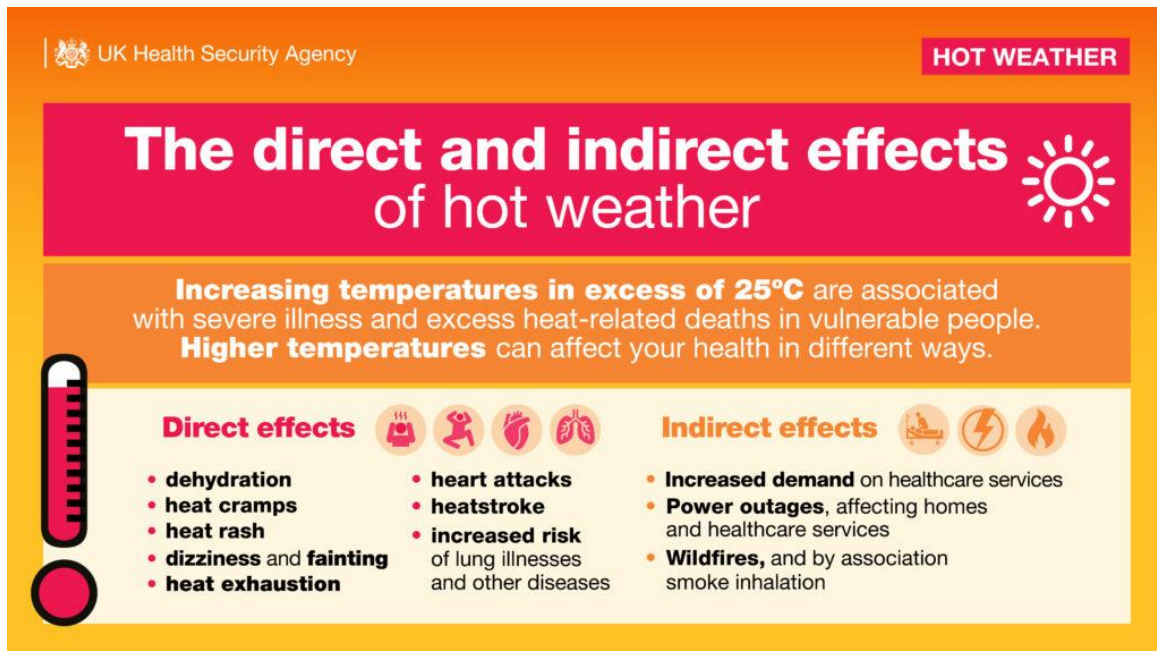
Targeted information for Frontline Workers, Volunteers and Carers supporting Vulnerable Adults

WHAT HAS BEEN ANNOUNCED?

A **Yellow Heat-Health Alert** has been announced. For most people the expected level of heat is unlikely to have health impacts, however adults with additional vulnerabilities (older people, those with pre-existing health conditions or disabilities, those less able to adjust their behaviour or environment, or a combination of these factors) may be negatively affected. Some staff members may also be more vulnerable to the impacts of hot weather. Action is required within the health and social care sector to help people at increased risk stay cool, comfortable, and safe.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Hot weather can cause dehydration, heat exhaustion and heat stroke. It also increases the risk of heart attacks, strokes and breathing problems. Hot weather can make mental health symptoms worse, and negatively influence behaviour. Some medications can make dehydration worse, or limit the body's ability to adapt to heat. Spending a too long in the sun can increase the risk of sunburn and skin cancers. In some cases, these problems can be fatal.



UK Health Security Agency **HOT WEATHER**

The direct and indirect effects of hot weather

Increasing temperatures in excess of 25°C are associated with severe illness and excess heat-related deaths in vulnerable people. Higher temperatures can affect your health in different ways.

Direct effects	Indirect effects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> dehydration heat cramps heat rash dizziness and fainting heat exhaustion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> heart attacks heatstroke increased risk of lung illnesses and other diseases Increased demand on healthcare services Power outages, affecting homes and healthcare services Wildfires, and by association smoke inhalation

HOW CAN WE STAY SAFE?

The following checklist has been designed specifically for those providing frontline care and support to vulnerable adults, in order to keep you, your colleagues, and those you care for safe during a **Yellow Alert**. We have broken information into actions designed for keeping **places** cool and actions designed for keeping **people** cool.



Cool Places:

- Maximum temperature = **26°C**
- Ensure **thermometers** are working, accessible and regularly monitored
- Ensure **heating system** is turned off
- Turn off **lights and electrical equipment** when not required
- Think about **passive cooling** methods first (things that don't require extra energy/power):
 - **During the day** - close windows, curtains, blinds or shutters in rooms that face the sun where this doesn't compromise air quality
 - **During the night/early morning** (where safe to do so) - open windows to increase natural ventilation
- Think about **active cooling** methods second (things that require extra energy/power to run):
 - Use **fans** if temperature is below 35°C (avoid aiming directly at the body which can lead to dehydration)
 - **Air conditioning** is a useful cooling aid but has its downsides - use sparingly, when other measures are insufficient
- Identify designated "**cool spaces**" (areas/rooms kept below 26°C) and prioritise these if the facility as a whole cannot be kept cool



Cool People:

- avoid sun exposure - particularly at the hottest time of the day (11am to 3pm)
- limit time in small enclosed spaces such as vehicles or glasshouses - ensure good ventilation and airflow if this cannot be avoided
- if travelling, plan journeys to avoid the hottest part of the day (11am-3pm), seek shade when able, and carry a refillable water bottle - find you nearest place to refill here <https://www.refill.org.uk/refill-bradford-district/>
- if outside, choose shady, greener, breezy locations when able
- if an area cannot be kept below 26°C, move to a designated "cool space"
- wear wide-brimmed hats, sunglasses, and sunscreen (SPF 30, 4/5stars UVA protection, reapplied regularly) if sun exposure cannot be avoided
- wear of long, loose, light-weight and light-coloured clothing
- stay hydrated - drinking cold water regularly throughout the day, or alternatives such as ice lollies or water-rich foods
- minimise alcohol and caffeine intake - this can worsen dehydration
- check temperature recommendations on medication packaging and ensure placed in a suitable location
- review, prioritise and monitor those who have additional vulnerabilities, checking individual risk assessments for specific needs e.g. those:
 - less able to adjust behaviour or daily routines without encouragement or assistance
 - with long-term health conditions - heart or breathing conditions, dementia, diabetes, kidney disease, Parkinson's, mental ill-health, mobility issues

- taking medications that may change the body's response to heat or fluid balance e.g. diuretic or antipsychotic medications
- who are acutely unwell e.g. experiencing an episode of diarrhoea and vomiting
- those with alcohol or drug dependence
- those living alone or who are socially isolated
- those who may be fasting



Recognising the signs that someone could be overheating:

- tiredness
- weakness
- dizziness
- headache
- feeling sick or being sick
- excessive sweating
- skin becoming pale, clammy or development of a heat rash - these changes can be less apparent on brown and black skin
- cramps in the arms, legs, and stomach
- fast breathing or heartbeat
- a high temperature
- being very thirsty
- confusion
- irritability



How to cool down:

- **move somewhere cooler** e.g. a room with fans, air conditioning or somewhere in the shade
- **remove unnecessary clothing** e.g. a jacket or socks
- **re-hydrate** e.g. drink cool water, a sports or rehydration drink, or eat cold and water rich foods like ice-lollies
- **apply cool water** by spray or sponge to exposed skin, or using cold packs wrapped in a cloth under the armpits or on the neck, or placing hands/feet in cool water can also help.

If symptoms don't improve after 30 minutes, or get worse at any time, seek medical advice or assistance promptly.



Staying in the Loop:

Be sure you're signed up for UKHSA Heat-Health Weather alerts:

<https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/warnings-and-advice/seasonal-advice/heat-health-alert-service>

You can find key information/resources on the impacts of hot weather and actions you should take to prepare and respond here:

[Adverse Weather and Health Plan - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/adverse-weather-and-health-plan)

[Heat exhaustion and heatstroke - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/heat-exhaustion-and-heatstroke)

[Beat the heat: hot weather advice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/beat-the-heat-hot-weather-advice) - includes easy read, British Sign Language and other translations

[Supporting vulnerable people before and during hot weather: social care managers, staff and carers - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/supporting-vulnerable-people-before-and-during-hot-weather-social-care-managers-staff-and-carers)

[Supporting vulnerable people before and during hot weather: healthcare professionals - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/supporting-vulnerable-people-before-and-during-hot-weather-healthcare-professionals)

[Sunscreen and sun safety - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/sunscreen-and-sun-safety)

[Temperature in the workplace \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/temperature-workplace)