

Yellow Heat Health Alert

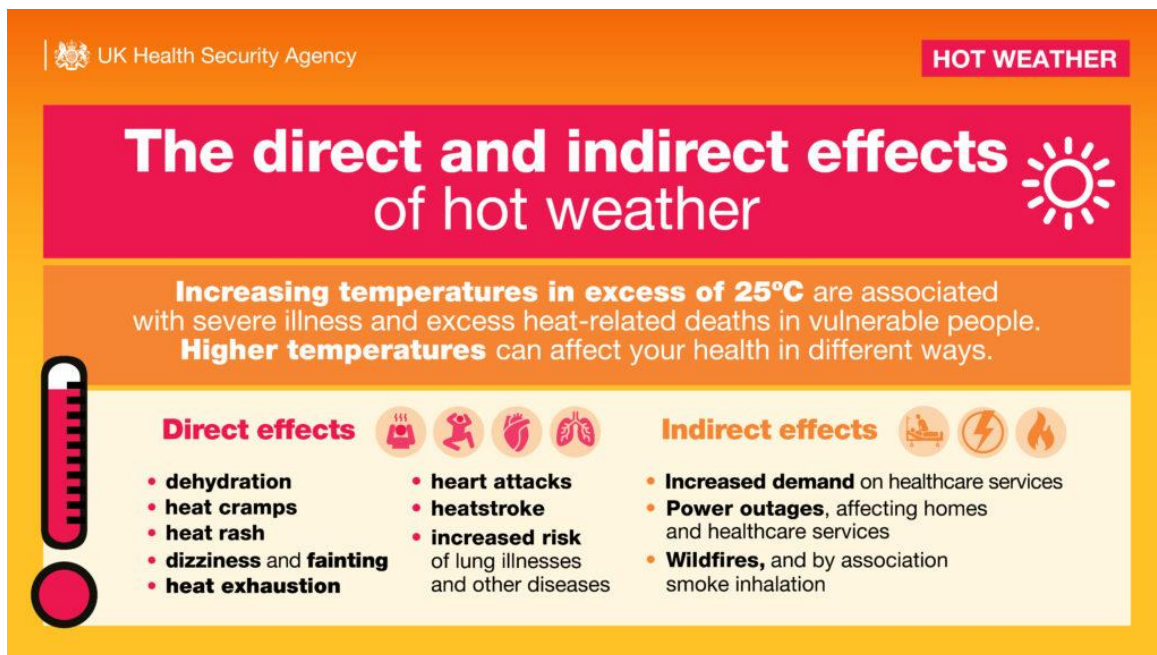
Targeted information for Frontline Workers and Volunteers supporting people in Insecure Housing or Experiencing Homelessness

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 people in insecure housing or experiencing homelessness are at risk of being negatively affected. This may be because of limited ability to adapt their behaviour and environment, higher likelihood of experiencing complex social circumstances and having physical or mental health challenges, or a combination of these factors. 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 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 frontline workers and volunteers, in order to keep you, your colleagues, and those you care for safe during a **Yellow Alert**. Please do what you can to champion these messages, and provide tools and support to help those around you follow

them too. 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 (you, your colleagues and those you support)

- avoid sun exposure - particularly at the hottest time of the day (11am to 3pm) – think about daily routines, opening hours, work and travel
- choose shady, greener, breezy locations when outside and carry a refillable water bottle - find you nearest place to refill here <https://www.refill.org.uk/refill-bradford-district/>
- limit time in small, enclosed spaces such as vehicles or glasshouses - ensure good ventilation and airflow if this cannot be avoided
- encourage uptake of facilities offering shade or shelter, particularly during the hottest hours
- move to a designated "cool space" if an area you're using cannot be kept below 26°C
- 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 - drink cold water regularly throughout the day, or alternatives such as ice lollies or water-rich foods
- minimise alcohol, caffeine and recreational drug use - this can worsen dehydration and affects ability to make other positive decisions around wellbeing, health, and safety
- avoid using open water sources to cool off - this can be dangerous
- check whether medication requires storage at a specific temperature - can you help facilitate this?

- check in with and assist those who have additional vulnerabilities, checking individual risk assessments for specific needs:
 - those with long-term health conditions - heart or breathing conditions, dementia, diabetes, kidney disease, Parkinson's, mental ill-health, mobility issues
 - those taking medications that may change the body's response to heat or fluid balance e.g. water tablets or mental health medications
 - those who are acutely unwell e.g. diarrhoea and vomiting
 - those with alcohol or drug dependence
 - 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/government/publications/adverse-weather-and-health-plan)

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

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

[Supporting vulnerable people before and during hot weather: people homeless and sleeping rough - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-vulnerable-people-before-and-during-hot-weather-people-homeless-and-sleeping-rough)

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

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

[Homeless Link - Heatwave Briefing](#)