

Yellow Heat Health Alert

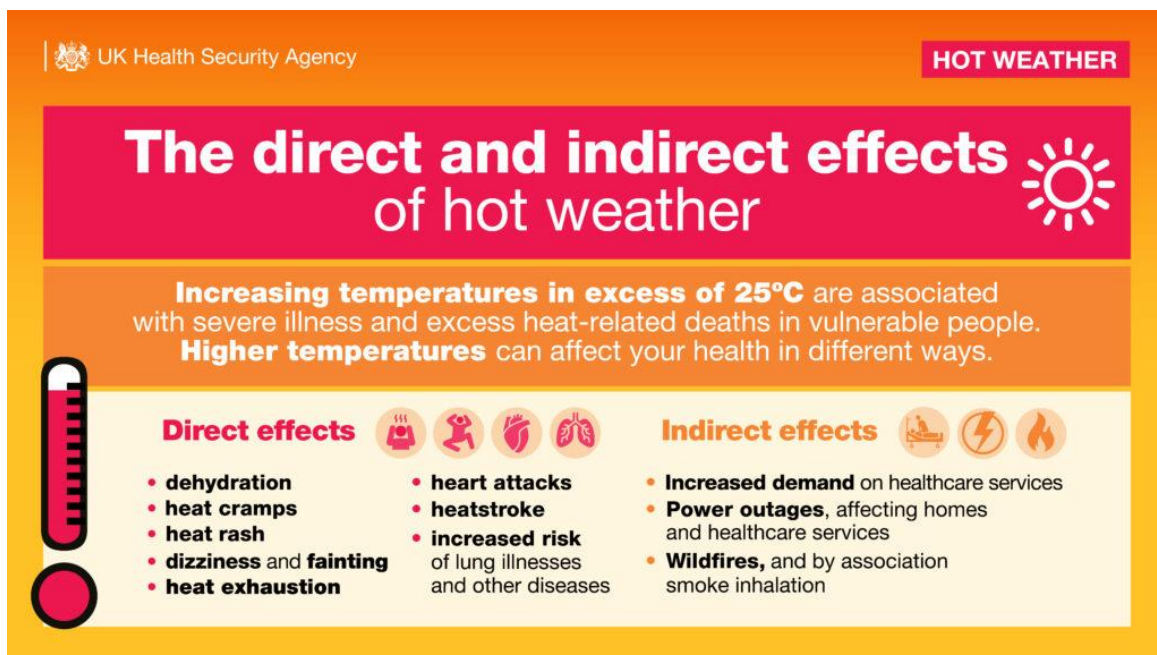
Targeted information for Leaders and Managers supporting Vulnerable Adults

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 in managerial and leadership roles to keep you, your colleagues, and your service users 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:

- **Cascade** - ensure frontline staff, volunteers and service users are aware of the Yellow Heat-Health Alert
- **Signpost** - Remind frontline staff, volunteers and service users of key Heat-Health messages, and where to locate relevant local policies/plans
- **Consider staffing levels** - are they sufficient for increasing needs of service users as temperatures rise
- **Incentivise, increase access to or organise:**
 - communicating health messages relating to high temperatures and available assistance to all frontline staff, volunteers, and service users
 - inclusion of additional vulnerability to high temperatures within individual risk assessments for service users
 - long, loose, light-weight, and light-coloured clothing
 - wide-brimmed sunhats, sunglasses, sunscreen (SPF 30, 4/5stars UVA protection, reapplied regularly)
 - regular hydration - cool drinks, ice, ice-lollies, water-rich food options
 - tools and adaptations - water misting sprays, sponges or cold packs
 - tools and adaptations - curtains, blinds, shutters, shading from plants and foliage, and where necessary, fans and air-conditioning
 - access to designated "cool spaces" - particularly at the hottest times of the day (11am to 3pm)
 - safe storage of medications which are unsafe or ineffective when kept at high temperatures

- regular breaks, cool rest areas and provision of hydration for all staff
- assessing and responding to needs of staff members at increased risk during higher temperatures
- **Disincentivise, decrease or limit access to:**
 - direct sun exposure - particularly at the hottest times of the day (11am to 3pm)
 - time spent in small, enclosed spaces that can easily overheat e.g. vehicles or glasshouses, and ensure good ventilation and airflow if this cannot be avoided
 - alcoholic or caffeinated drinks



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) - includes easy read, British Sign Language and other translations

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

[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)