

# Handbook 1 Heatwaves

**Emergency Preparedness, Resilience & Response**

Version 1.0 Nov 2023

## Document History

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0.1	Aug 2023	New Adverse Weather and Health Plan released by UKHSA bringing together previous Hot and Cold and Flooding Plans	Ruth Justice
0.2	Sept 2023	Cold Weather plan published by UKHSA	Ruth Justice
0.3	Oct 2023	Updated after consultation	Ruth Justice
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## Plan Ownership

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## Protective Marking

This Plan has been given the protective marking of **OFFICIAL**

This Plan will be made available to staff who require access to it as part of their role. Where possible stakeholders will be given access to the plan through ResilienceDirect, in other cases it will be sent electronically to those agencies in the distribution list. Upon receipt of the plan, individual agencies become fully responsible for document security and dissemination within their own organisation as per its classification.

## **Distribution List**

This document has been produced and is held by the Emergency Preparedness, Resilience & Response (EPRR) Team, for Portsmouth and Southampton City Councils. The plan is stored on the Portsmouth and Southampton City Council websites and relevant pages on ResilienceDirect (Secure website). Appropriate access will be given to responding agencies. This Plan will be made available to appropriate members of staff at Portsmouth and Southampton City Council (PCC and SCC) and external stakeholders.

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## Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
AWHP	Adverse Weather and Health Plan
JEPDO	Joint Emergency Planning Duty Officer
EH	Extreme Heat
EPRR Team	Emergency Preparedness, Resilience and Response Team
HHA	Heat Health Alert
IMT	Incident Management Team
NAP	National Adaptation Program
NSWWS	National Severe Weather Warning Service
PCC	Portsmouth City Council
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
SCC	Southampton City Council
SEPPRO	Senior Emergency Preparedness, Resilience and Response Officer
SWEP	Severe Weather Emergency Plan
UKHSA	UK Health Security Agency
WHO	World Health Organisation

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## Foreword

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) launched a new combined [Adverse Weather and Health Plan \(AWHP\)](#) in April 2023 as part of a commitment under the climate change [National Adaption Programme](#) (NAP) to bring together and improve existing guidance on weather and health.

This plan has been produced by the EPRR Team working jointly on behalf of both Portsmouth and Southampton City Council. Information in this document is relevant to both City Councils

### **Joint Adverse Weather and Health Plan**

Explains the procedure for the assessment of weather warnings, together with a corresponding escalation procedure and plan activation process.

### **Handbook 1 – Heatwaves**

Outlines the details of Heat Health Alerts (HHA), supporting documents that are available and the core responsibilities of Portsmouth and Southampton City Council's relevant services during a heatwave.

### **Handbook 2 – Cold weather**

Outlines the details of Cold Weather Alerts, supporting documents that are available and the core responsibilities of Portsmouth and Southampton City Council's relevant services during cold weather.

**Section 1.0: Introduction**

**Heatwave Planning Alerts Including declaration of a Heatwave**

The Heat-health alert service is provided by UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) in partnership with the Met Office from 1 June - 30 Sept. It has been in operation since 2004 and is designed to help health and social care professionals manage through periods of extreme temperature. Should conditions for an alert be reached outside of this period, an extraordinary heat-health alert will be issued, and stakeholders are advised to take the usual public health actions as recommended in the Adverse Weather and Health Plan.

In summer 2023, the Heat-Health Alerts (HHA) transitioned to impact based alerting, which will provide users with information over and above the fact that hot weather is likely to occur. It will give an indication of the impacts likely to be observed as a result of the temperatures. The Met Office regional daytime and night-time maximum temperature forecasts are monitored and when certain temperature thresholds are reached the Met Office and UKHSA undertake an assessment of the potential impacts and likelihood of those impacts occurring. A decision will be made on whether an alert is needed, and if so, what type of alert to issue (YELLOW, AMBER or RED).

Below is the Heat Health Alert risk matrix indicating likelihood/impact colour coding

**Heat Health Alerts**

<b>Likelihood</b>	High				
	Medium				
	Low				
	Very low				
		Very low/ Minimal	Low/ Minor	Medium/ Significant	High/ Severe

## Impact

<b>Green</b>	(summer preparedness) No alert issued. Considered BAU
<b>Yellow</b>	(response)-Issued where impacts may be expected for those who are particularly vulnerable or where the confidence in weather forecast for more severe period of heat is low
<b>Amber</b>	(enhanced response) Issued for situations where impacts are expected across the population. Where impacts expected across other sectors, an AMBER NSWWS EH may also be issued
<b>Red</b>	(emergency response) Significant risk to life for even the healthy population

### 1.1 Green Level (summer preparedness)

No alert will be issued as the conditions are likely to have minimal impact and health. However, during periods where the risk is minimal it is important that organisations ensure that they have plans in place and are prepared to respond should an alert (yellow, amber or red) be issued. The AWHP HHA action cards provide information on the strategic year-round actions to address health risks from heat and suggested summer preparedness actions.

### 1.2 Yellow Level (response)

These alerts cover a range of situations. Yellow alerts may be issued during periods of heat in which it would be unlikely to impact most people, however those who are particularly vulnerable (for example the elderly with multiple health conditions and on multiple medications) are likely to struggle to cope, and where action is required within the health and social care sector specifically. A yellow alert may also be issued if the confidence in the weather forecast is low, but there could be more significant impacts if the worst-case scenario is realised. In this situation the alert may be upgraded as the confidence in both the weather forecast and the likelihood of observing those impacts improves.

### 1.3 Amber Level (enhanced response)

An amber alert would represent a situation in which the expected impacts are likely to be felt across the whole health service, with potential for the whole population to be at risk and where other sectors apart from health may also start to observe impacts, indicating that a coordinated response is required. In addition, in some circumstances



a National Severe Weather Warning Service (NSWWS) Extreme Heat (EH) warning may be issued in conjunction with and aligned to the HHA. This situation would indicate that significant impacts are expected across multiple sectors.

#### **1.4 Red Level (emergency response)**

A red alert would indicate significant risk to life for even the healthy population. A red warning would be issued in conjunction with and aligned to a red NSWWS Extreme Heat warning. Severe impacts would be expected across all sectors with a coordinated response essential.

Once a Heat Health Alert (HHA) is issued, it will be cascaded to everyone [registered to receive the Met Office alerts](#) and is then shared via the councils Emergency Planning teams internal distribution list. HHAs will be issued with as much lead time to the weather event as possible to allow users time to make assessments and to initiate all appropriate actions to reduce harm to health. Users should review every HHA when issued to ensure they fully understand the potential impacts and how likely they are to occur.

## **Section 2.0: Actions to consider to support Heat Health preparedness.**

To support heat health preparedness in all settings consideration should be given to the following to ensure activation for assessment, and potentially response at the appropriate level:

### **2.1 Identify those at risk**

While everybody is at risk from the health consequences of heat, there are certain factors that increase an individual's risk during a heatwave. These include:

- older age: especially those over 75 years old, or those living on their own and who are socially isolated, or those living in a care home
- chronic and severe illness: including heart or lung conditions, diabetes, renal insufficiency, Parkinson's disease or severe mental illness
- pregnant women (in view of potential impact of heat on risk of preterm birth)
- inability to adapt behaviour to keep cool: babies and the very young, having a disability, being bed bound, having Alzheimer's disease
- environmental factors and overexposure: living in a top floor flat, being homeless, activities or jobs that are in hot places or outdoors and include high levels of physical exertion

Develop an understanding of the local population and groups who may be vulnerable to the impacts of adverse weather on health through Integrated Care Partnerships, Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs) and other interagency arrangements.

### **2.2 Work with partners**

Work with partner agencies, providers, businesses and voluntary and community sector organisations to coordinate business continuity plans (BCPs) and/or heatwave plans, ensuring vulnerable and marginalised groups are appropriately supported.

Commissioners/Directors should also work with partners on ways to reduce risk for staff, for example looking at when teams are working outside during the hottest part of the day.

### **2.3 Be prepared for hot weather**

To prepare, you can:

- listen to the news and check the local [weather forecast](#) so that you know when hot weather is expected
- look out for advice on what to do if services such as power, water supplies and transport are likely to be affected
- check [air pollution forecasts](#) and advice – air pollution can become worse during hot weather and can cause problems for people with asthma and other breathing problems

### **2.4 Internal roles and responsibilities**

When a HHA has been issued each service is responsible for assessing the impact of heatwave conditions on:

- vulnerable members,
- high-risk settings
- continued internal service delivery,

as well as implementation of service-based activities upon activation of this plan.

#### **Adult Social Care,**

- Provision of advice and guidance to high-risk settings such as care homes and day centres.
  - Coordination of mitigation measures that can be applied within council run high-risk settings.
    - Check that there are no problems opening windows while ackno  
weldging security considerations,
    - Keep curtains and windows closed while the temperature outside  
is higher than it is inside.
    - Create cool rooms or cool areas,
-

- Increase indoor/outdoor shading,
- Monitor temperatures inside the building
- Engagement with health professionals on wider impacts across the health system.
- Identification and maintenance of support to vulnerable members of the community, including safeguarding arrangements.

### **Children, Families and Education Services**

- Provision of advice and guidance to high-risk settings such as care homes, schools and early years settings,
- Coordination of mitigation measures that can be applied within council run high-risk settings,
  - Check that there are no problems opening windows while acknowledging security considerations,
  - Keep curtains and windows closed while the temperature outside is higher than it is inside.
  - Create cool rooms or cool areas,
  - Increase indoor/outdoor shading,
  - Monitor temperatures inside the building
- Identification and maintenance of support to vulnerable families, including safeguarding arrangements.

### **Public Health**

- Provision of advice and guidance to health and social care settings and wellbeing forums,
- Activation and management of localised Incident Management Teams (IMT) where relevant, providing escalation to wider corporate response where required.

### **Highways**

- Assist traffic management through provision of highways support - roads & signs, road clearance.

## Housing

- Provision of advice and guidance to high-risk settings and vulnerable cohorts such as homelessness, sheltered accommodation, kennels (*Portsmouth only*) and workforce,
- Activation of Severe Weather Emergency Plan (SWEP),
- Coordination of mitigation measures that can be applied within council run high-risk settings.
  - Check that there are no problems opening windows while acknowledging security considerations,
  - Keep curtains and windows closed while the temperature outside is higher than it is inside,
  - Create cool rooms or cool areas.

## Communications

- Provision of relevant advice and guidance to the public, staff and elected members,
  - Changes to scheduled services e.g. Bin collections,
  - Beach/water Safety,
  - Sun Safety.
- Support to multi-agency Warning and Informing emergency response structure if established.

## Events

- Undertake risk assessments for any significant events taking place in the city during a Heatwave,
- Engage with event organisers on mitigation and planning arrangements,
- Liaise with Communications team to publicise Sun Safety messaging,
- Consider mitigations such as provision of shade, drinking water,
- Consider staff roles and rotas to maintain staff safety.

## IT

- Assess impact of a heatwave on computer server rooms and ensure robust cooling systems are in place.

Employers must assess risks to the health and safety of their workers. While there is no legal maximum temperature for workplaces, heat is classed as a hazard and should be treated like other hazards.

Everyone— whether working indoors or outdoors – is at risk and employers should discuss with workers changes to manage the risk.

Consider simple measures such as:

- Making sure workplace windows can be opened or closed to prevent hot air from circulating or building up
- Using blinds or reflective film on workplace windows to shade workers from the sun
- Placing workstations away from direct sunlight and heat sources
- Offering flexible working patterns so workers can work at cooler times of the day
- Provide free access to drinking water
- Relaxing dress codes if possible (make sure personal protective equipment (PPE) is used if required).
- Providing weather-appropriate PPE e.g. sunscreen, protective eye wear, wide brimmed hats
- Encouraging workers to remove PPE when resting (ideally in shaded areas) to cool off
- Sharing information about the symptoms of heat stress and what to do if someone is affected
- Work environment: Temperature, humidity, and your employee's proximity to heat
- Type of work: How physically demanding the job is
- Clothing: Whether your employee's clothing can protect them from sun exposure and extreme temperatures

- Vulnerable staff: Elderly staff or employees with medical conditions might find working in hot temperatures more difficult.

The EPRR team will engage with services throughout heatwave conditions, services should provide details of any severe impacts to service delivery or concerns for vulnerable people. If appropriate, the EPRR Team will escalate the response as set out in the Joint Emergency Response Plan.

### 3.0 Further Supporting Documentation and Advice / Actions

This plan is written in conjunction with the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) Adverse Weather and Health Plan and therefore should be referred to for detailed guidance and actions. It is available at the following website:

[Adverse Weather and Health Plan - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612212/Adverse-Weather-and-Health-Plan-2020-2025.pdf)

There are several useful documents and websites that provides advice for organisations and the public. Note – some links may require copy and pasting.

#### 3.1 Advice for social care professionals and care home managers and staff

This guidance provides advice to people who are in the social care sector on how to reduce the risks of hot weather to health and wellbeing. Social care managers have an essential role in disseminating and implementing this guidance in advance of and during hot weather.

##### Who is at risk

Older people and those with underlying medical conditions are particularly vulnerable to the effects of hot weather. This means that people living in care homes, those who are unable to care for themselves or those who require support in their daily activities are at higher risk of becoming unwell from hot weather.

##### Main messages

Hot weather can cause people to become unwell through dehydration, heat exhaustion and heatstroke and can increase the risk of heart attack, stroke, lung problems and other diseases.

You can reduce the risks associated with hot weather for those you care for by:

- having a plan in place for individuals you are responsible for to keep them and the home cool
- ensuring all social care staff are familiar with this guidance and your local plans before 1 June each year



- knowing who is at higher risk of heat-related illnesses and how to reduce that risk
- considering environmental changes that could reduce exposure to heat
- ensuring those you care for drink plenty of fluids throughout the day and monitor for signs of dehydration
- planning activities for times of the day when it is cooler such as the morning or evening
- keeping those you care for out of the sun at the hottest time of the day between 11am and 3pm

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

### **3.2 Advice for health care professionals**

This guidance is for healthcare professionals working in community, care home or hospital environments.

This guidance offers advice for caring for people most at risk during a hot weather.

#### **Who is at risk**

In moderate hot weather, it is mainly individuals in the high-risk groups that are affected. But, during an extreme heatwave, when temperatures surpass 40°C, fit and healthy people can also be affected.

People adapt to heat via physiological responses (like sweating) and behavioural changes (changing clothes). Individuals become at risk to heat when one or more of these mechanisms is limited, for example by illness, frailty, or medication.

Consider what:

- the individual(s) risk factors are for being ill during hot weather
- can be changed to protect them
- an individual's risk is related to a combination of factors relating to their health, behaviours and environment.

High-risk factors include:

- older age, especially those over 65 years old (note change from previous guidance of 75 years of age and above)
- children under 5 years of age
- those living on their own, and who may be unable to care for themselves or socially isolated
- individuals that depend on others for routine activities
- medical conditions including: cardiovascular, kidney and respiratory conditions, diabetes, peripheral vascular disease, Parkinson's disease, obesity, or severe mental illness
- medications that potentially affect heart or kidney function or an individual's behaviour, cognition or ability to sweat
- behavioural limitations: for example cognitive impairment (such as dementia), restricted mobility, or the use of alcohol or other recreational drugs
- overexposure to heat: for example, living in a top floor flat, being homeless, or outdoor occupations and activities

**Main messages:**

You can reduce the risks associated with hot weather for those you care for by:

- adapting individual care plans to respond to hot weather
- having action plans in place for your organisation and/or place of work tailored to the local context
- knowing who is at risk
- knowing how to treat heat-related illnesses
- being alert to increased cardiovascular and respiratory complications
- considering medications that increase risk to heat
- promoting environmental and behavioural changes that could reduce the risk of hot weather

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

### **3.3 Looking after children and those in early years settings during heatwaves: guidance for teachers and professionals**

#### **Who is at risk**

Children's susceptibility to high temperatures varies; those under 4 years of age, who are overweight, or who are taking certain medication may be at increased risk of adverse effects. Some children with disabilities or complex health needs may be more susceptible to high temperatures. The school nurse, community health practitioner, family health visitor or the child's specialist health professional may be able to advise on the particular needs of the individual child. Support staff should be made aware of the risks and how to manage them.

#### **Main Messages:**

##### **Protecting children outdoors**

During periods of high temperature, the following steps should be taken:

- children should not take part in vigorous physical activity on very hot days, such as when temperatures are in excess of 30°C
- encourage children playing outdoors to stay in the shade as much as possible
- children should wear loose, light-coloured clothing to help keep cool and sunhats with wide brims to avoid sunburn
- apply sunblock, or broad-band sunscreens with high sun protection factors (at least SPF15) to protect skin if children are playing or taking lessons outdoors for more than 20 minutes – apply generously and reapply frequently, especially after activities that remove them, such as swimming or towelling
- provide children with plenty of water (such as water from a cold tap) and encourage them to drink more than usual when conditions are hot

##### **Protecting children indoors**

During periods of high temperature, the following steps should be taken:

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- open windows as early as possible in the morning before children arrive, or preferably overnight to allow stored heat to escape from 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 indoor blinds or curtains, but do not let them block window ventilation
- keep the use of electric lighting to a minimum
- switch off all electrical equipment, including computers, monitors and printers when not in use – equipment 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

[Looking after children and those in early years settings during heatwaves: for teachers and professionals - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

### **3.4 Beat the Heat: Staying safe in hot weather**

#### **Who is at risk**

This guidance provides advice for everyone on how to stay safe during hot weather.

Anyone can become unwell if they get too hot. However, some people are at higher risk of becoming seriously unwell.

It is important to follow this guidance so that you are prepared for hot weather and can take action to cool yourself and your home

**Main messages:**

- keep out of the sun at the hottest time of the day, between 11am and 3pm
- if you are going to do a physical activity (for example exercise or walking the dog), plan to do these during times of the day when it is cooler such as the morning or evening
- keep your home cool by closing windows and curtains in rooms that face the sun
- if you do go outside, cover up with suitable clothing such as an appropriate hat and sunglasses, seek shade and apply [sunscreen](#)
- drink plenty of [fluids](#) and limit your alcohol intake
- check on family, friends and neighbours who may be at [higher risk](#) of becoming unwell, and if you are at higher risk, ask them to do the same for you
- know the symptoms of [heat exhaustion and heatstroke](#) and what to do if you or someone else has them

[Beat the heat: staying safe in hot weather - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

**3.5 Beat the Heat: Keep cool at Home – checklist**

[Beat the heat: keep cool at home checklist - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

**3.6 Beat the Heat – poster**

[Beat the heat \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

## 4.0 Heat-Health Alert (HHA) action cards

The HHA action cards have been updated to reflect the [new impact-based HHA warning systems](#), which have been developed in tandem with the [Adverse Weather and Health Plan \(AWHP\)](#). The AWHP, HHA action cards and associated documents provide a broad framework for action, and local areas and organisations need to tailor these good practice suggestions to their local needs and ensure that these fit with wider local arrangements. HHAs should trigger a series of actions by different organisations and professionals as well as the public, building upon year-round planning activities to ensure hot weather preparedness.

The action cards cover the core elements of heat-health action plans recommended by the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#):

- longer-term development and planning
- preparation before the summer
- prevention during the summer
- specific responses to hot weather
- monitoring and evaluation

### Action Cards for:

#### 4.1 Commissioners

This Heat-Health Alert (HHA) action card summarises the suggested actions that commissioners of health or social care settings (for example commissioners of health and social care services, local authorities, directors of public health, Integrated Care Systems (ICSs)) should consider to prepare for and respond to each HHA alert type:

- actions to consider [all year round](#) to support summer preparedness
- actions to consider for [pre-summer readiness](#) and summer preparedness
- actions to consider for a [yellow alert](#)
- actions to consider for an [amber alert](#)
- actions to consider for a [red alert](#)

Summary Card for commissioners: [Heat-Health Alert summary action card for commissioners \(khub.net\)](#)

## 4.2 Providers

This Heat-Health Alert (HHA) action card summarises the suggested actions that providers of health or social care (for example GPs, primary and community healthcare, hospitals, adult social care, children's social care) should consider to prepare for and respond to each HHA alert type:

- actions to consider [all year round](#) to support summer preparedness
- actions to consider for [pre-summer readiness](#) and summer preparedness
- actions to consider for a [yellow alert](#)
- actions to consider for an [amber alert](#)
- actions to consider for a [red alert](#)

Summary card for Providers: [Heat-Health Alert summary action card for providers \(khub.net\)](#)

## 4.3 Volunteers and Community sector

This HHA action card summarises the suggested actions that the voluntary and community sector should consider to prepare for and respond to each HHA alert type:

- actions to consider [all year round](#) to support summer preparedness
- actions to consider for [pre-summer readiness and summer preparedness](#)
- actions to consider for a [yellow alert](#)
- actions to consider for an [amber alert](#)
- actions to consider for a [red alert](#)

Summary card for Volunteers and Community sector: [Heat-Health Alert summary action card for the voluntary and community sector \(khub.net\)](#)

