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To: Local Authority Chief Executives  
Local Authority Directors of Public Health  
Local Authority Directors of Adult Social Services  
Local Authority Directors of Children Social Services  
Chairs of Health and Wellbeing Boards  
NHS England Regional Directors  
NHS Trust:  
    Chief Executives  
    EPRR leads  
    Medical Directors  
    Directors of Nursing  
NHS Integrated Care Board:  
    Chief Executives  
    EPRR leads  
    Medical Directors  
    Directors of Nursing  
NHS Regional  
    Directors  
    EPRR Leads  
    Medical Directors  
    Nursing Directors  
    Communications Team  
    Primary care commissioning team – for onward cascade to all GPs

Cc: LA Emergency Planning Officers, LA Directors of Housing and Planning, DLUHC Resilience and Emergencies Division and Local Resilience Forums, UKHSA Region and Centre Directors, Cabinet Office COBRA Unit, Healthwatch England CE, Care Quality Commission CE, Professional Bodies (RCGP, RCP, RPSGB, RCN, CPHVA, FPH, HCPC, GMC), ADPH, Carers UK



8<sup>th</sup> June 2023

Dear Colleague,

## **Adverse Weather and Health Plan, and summer 2023 preparedness – protecting communities and public services from adverse weather**

Summer is approaching and some of us have already experienced some sunshine and warmer weather. Not everyone copes well in these conditions, and periods of hot weather can be linked to increased health risks, as well as increased pressure on our health and social care systems.

Summer 2022 saw the highest temperatures on record in England, and we also saw the highest number of heat-related deaths ever recorded. The heatwave last July saw the Met Office issue its first Red Warning for extreme heat, as well as the first UKHSA Level 4 Heat-Health Alert.

We also know that there is much that all our organisations can do to plan and prepare for such events so that we can respond effectively. Many heat-related deaths can be avoided with relatively simple steps such as cooling measures and adaptive interventions.

On the 27<sup>th</sup> April, the UKHSA published its first edition of the new [Adverse Weather and Health Plan](#) (AWHP) to protect the population from the health effects of adverse and severe weather events, such as extreme heat. The AWHP will support health and social care organisations; professionals; the voluntary sector and communities to prepare for, plan, and respond effectively to such adverse weather events.

The AWHP is underpinned by:

- A comprehensive review of the [Supporting Evidence](#), which has been published in parallel
- [Guidance and support materials](#) for health and social care professionals; commissioners; voluntary and community sectors and the public
- [Weather-Health alerts system](#) (heat and cold), developed in collaboration with the Met Office
- Since the AWHP was issued, the UKHSA has published further guidance material, particularly related to keeping safe during periods of severe and extreme heat.

We are writing today to underscore our joint commitment across the NHS and Local Government in England to the AWHP, and its aims to keep people safe during the coming and future summers. On 1<sup>st</sup> June, the new impact based Heat-Health alert system comes into operation, underpinned by [the guidance and action cards](#) which describe the types of activities that staff and the public can take at different alert levels to keep them, patients and the public safe during periods of extreme heat.

### Recommended next steps

1. We encourage NHS and Social Care organisations, including private nursing, care and residential homes providing support to vulnerable clients to sign up to receive the new Heat-Health alerts by registering at the following link:  
<https://forms.office.com/e/Bw6mjea6qa>
2. All local organisations should familiarise themselves with the [AWHP](#), as well as the associated guidance and action cards, and satisfy themselves that the suggested actions and heat-health alerts are understood across their systems, and that local plans are adapted as appropriate. Local health resilience partnerships (LHRPs) should use the AWHP to review their own summer preparedness plans.
3. All NHS providers in primary and secondary care, as well as Social Care and Care Homes managers, should read the [new guidance](#) and ensure that alerts are being effectively disseminated and actioned across their systems, and that staff know what actions to take to protect their patients and clients (and themselves) during heatwave periods.
4. NHS provider organisations, social care, and local authority commissioners, together with local resilience forums (LRFs) and LHRPs, should satisfy themselves that the distribution of heat-health alerts will reach those that need to take action.
5. NHS commissioners, social care and local authority commissioners should satisfy themselves that all commissioned service providers and community stakeholders take appropriate action according to the heat-health watch level in place and their professional judgements.
6. Opportunities should be taken for closer partnership working with the voluntary, community and private sectors to help protect at-risk and vulnerable populations and to support the planning and response to adverse weather. This should include community and voluntary organisations and leaders with remits that are not specifically related to health and social care, where their engagement with communities with differing engagement with health, social care or statutory services can help to communicate messages, provide additional resources, and identify and engage with vulnerable people.
7. Long-term planning and commissioning to reduce heat-related harm should be considered as core business by NHS and social care organisations with their partner organisations through LRFs, local joint health and wellbeing boards and through Integrated Care Systems. Risks and appropriate adaptation measures should be included in joint strategic needs assessments and joint health and wellbeing strategies



where appropriate. This should include a consideration of the risk to health from indoor overheating and urban heat islands.

We believe that these actions will make a significant difference to prepare health and social care services for the impacts of increasing adverse weather events due to climate change, prevent ill health or exacerbation of existing conditions from adverse weather, and support local systems to work together to respond to protect health in a co-ordinated way.

We are grateful for your continued support in our shared aim of protecting our patients, professionals and wider society from the impacts of adverse weather. The actions that you take are critical to protect the health of your local populations from exposure to severe heat.

Signed:

Professor Dame Jenny Harries  
Chief Executive, UKHSA

Dr Mike Prentice  
National Director for Emergency Planning and Incident Response, NHS England

Mark Lloyd  
Chief Executive, LGA

Dr Thomas Waite  
Deputy Chief Medical Officer, DHSC

Professor Penny Endersby  
Chief Executive, Met Office