

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

Heatwave Action Plan 2018

Date	June 2018
Author	Asif Akram/Richard Hart Emergency Planning Shared Service Rotherham & Sheffield / Public Health
Date of Review	May 2019

**Emergency Planning Shared Service
Riverside House,
Main Street,
Rotherham,
S60 1AE**

Tel: 01709 823878

Email: EPSharedService@rotherham.gov.uk

CONTENTS	PAGE
Aim of Plan	3
Trigger Levels	3
Alert Level Actions	4
Appendix One	
Tips for keeping cool in a heatwave	7
Appendix Two	
Heatwave Key Messages for PHTV	11
Appendix Three	
Ramadan Advice	12-13
Appendix Four	
Useful Links	14-16

Aim

The aim of this document is to outline the various responsibilities of RMBC departments during a heatwave.

This does not replace the national Heatwave Plan. **A copy of the national plan and its associated supporting documents are available on the PHE website <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heatwave-plan-for-england>**

Defining a Heatwave

The Met Offices 'Heat-Health watch' system comprises of five levels with four main levels of response (Level 0 is concerned with planning all year for hot weather). It is based on threshold day and night time temperatures. For the Rotherham area a Heatwave will be declared when the daytime temperature reaches **29°C for two consecutive days** and the night-time temperature does not fall below **15°C**.

A national 'Heat-Health watch system will operate in England between 1 June to 15 September each year.

The four response levels of the Heat-Health Watch system are:

- **Level 1 – Summer preparedness and long term planning**

During the summer months, social and healthcare services need to ensure that awareness and background preparedness are maintained by the measures set out in the Heatwave Plan. Long term planning includes year round joint working to reduce the impact of climate change and ensure maximum adaptation to reduce harm from Heatwaves. This involves influencing urban planning to keep housing, workplaces, transport systems and the built environment cool and energy efficient.

- **Level 2 – Alert and readiness**

This is triggered as soon as the Met Office forecasts that there is a 60 percent chance of temperatures being high enough on at least two consecutive days to have significant effects on health. This will normally occur 2-3 days before the event is expected.

As death levels rise soon after temperature increases, with many deaths occurring in the first two days, this is an important stage to ensure readiness and swift action to reduce harm from a potential Heatwave.

- **Level 3 – Heatwave action**

This is triggered as soon as the Met Office confirms that threshold temperatures have been reached in any one region or more. This stage requires specific actions targeted at high risk groups.

- **Level 4 – Major Incident – Emergency Response**

This is reached when a Heatwave is so severe and/or prolonged that its effects extend outside health and social care, such as power or water shortages, and/or where the integrity of health and social care systems is threatened. At this level, illness and death may occur among the fit and healthy, and not just in high risk groups and will require a multi agency response at national and regional levels.

The decision to go to a Level 4 is made at national level and will be taken in light of a cross government assessment of the weather conditions, co-ordinated by the Civil Contingencies Secretariat (Cabinet Office).

Alert Level 1

Department	Action Required
Emergency Planning	Distribute alert and forecast emails to key staff in Adult Care and Housing and CYPS.
CYPS	Dept of Health Heatwave Plan or adapted Dept of Education equivalent to be circulated to schools.
Adult Care and Housing	<p>Confirm databases containing social care information relating to known vulnerable people are up to date.</p> <p>Confirm accuracy of contact information for all care, residential homes, nursing homes, and commissioned care and support providers, to facilitate the transfer of emergency information.</p>
Public Health	<p>Seek assurances from Health and other partner agencies that heatwave plans are in place and vulnerable people can be quickly identified.</p> <p>In conjunction with the RMBC Communications Team issue preventative public health messages as per national guidance.</p>
Corporate Communications and Marketing	Communications Team to send messages out via Rotherham Public Health TV (RPHTV), PH website, Facebook and Twitter feeds.

Alert Level 2

Department	Action Required
Emergency Planning	Distribute alert email to key staff in Adult Care and Housing and CYPS
CYPS	Circulate Alert to schools, Early Years Settings and Social Care
Adult Care and Housing	<p>Single Point of Access receive calls from the public and trigger social care response to vulnerable people where appropriate.</p> <p>Once received from Department of Health national advice will be distributed to community health and social care workers who are in contact with those defined as at risk living at home. It will also be distributed to the managers of Care Homes, domiciliary care agencies, and other organisations providing services to vulnerable adults.</p> <p>Ensure community health and adult social care workers have identified those known to them in the community who are at particularly high risk from a Heatwave. They should endeavour to arrange, where appropriate, for a daily visit/phone call by a formal or informal carer (family, neighbour, friend, voluntary and community sector workers) during the Heatwave</p>

	period. Visits should be considered especially for those living on their own and without the contact of a daily carer.
Public Health	<i>Coordinate health messages with PH England.</i> Support/Advisory role based on PHE advice.
Corporate Communications and Marketing	Liaise with PHE comms team. Communications Team to send messages out via Rotherham Public Health TV (RPHTV), PH website, Facebook and Twitter feeds.

Alert Level 3

Department	Action Required
Emergency Planning	Distribute alert email to key staff in Adult Care and Housing and CYPS.
CYPS	Circulate Alert to schools, Early Years Settings and Social Care
Adult Care and Housing	<p>Single Point of Access receive calls from the public and trigger social care response to vulnerable people where appropriate.</p> <p>Continue to distribute advice to people at risk and managers and staff of residential and nursing care homes and providers working with vulnerable adults.</p> <p>Commissioners and contract compliance team to begin to assess adequacy of provider continuity plans and advise Adult Care and Housing and Public Health where there are potential demand/capacity issues.</p> <p>Advise social care support staff to contact the GP if there are concerns about an individual's health.</p> <p>Consider where appropriate daily visits/phone calls for high risk individuals living on their own who have no regular daily contacts.</p>
Public Health	<p>Gain assurance that providers are coping. The NHS would coordinate their response and Social Care their own internal response.</p> <p>Liaise with PHE re a co-ordinated response including any press releases.</p>
Corporate Communications and Marketing	Liaise with PHE comms team. Communications Team to send messages out via Rotherham Public Health TV (RPHTV), RMBC website, Facebook and Twitter feeds.

Alert Level 4 (Major Incident)

Department	Action Required
Emergency Planning	<p>Distribute alert email to key staff in Adult Care and CYPS.</p> <p>Liaise with NHS England who will monitor mortuary provision to ensure there is capacity.</p>
CYPS	<p>Circulate Alert to schools, Early Years Settings and Social Care</p>
Adult Care and Housing	<p>Single Point of Access receive calls from the public and trigger social care response to vulnerable people where appropriate.</p> <p>Commissioners and contract compliance team to oversee provider capacity and keep Adult Care and Housing and Public Health informed.</p>
Adult Care and Housing	<p>Send a strategic level representative to the South Yorkshire Strategic Coordinating Group if activated.</p> <p>Adult Care and Housing/ Commissioners/Public Health to consider whether there is any new unmet need generated by the Emergency, and intervene to redirect internal and commissioned services where indicated.</p>
Public Health	<p>Link into multi-agency response to provide support and advice</p> <p>Coordinate health messages with PH England, including any press releases.</p>
Corporate Communications and Marketing	<p>Link into National/Regional Communications Group Communications Team to send messages out via Rotherham Public Health TV (RPHTV), PH website, Facebook and Twitter feeds.</p>

APPENDIX ONE

Tips for Keeping Cool in a Heatwave

If a heatwave hits this summer, make sure the hot weather doesn't harm you or your loved ones.

Prolonged episodes of extremely hot weather pose serious health risks, particularly for the ill, elderly and very young.

Follow these tips to keep cool and safe in a heatwave:

Stay out of the heat:

- Keep out of the sun between 11am and 3pm
- If you have to go out in the heat, walk in the shade, apply sunscreen and wear a hat
- Avoid extreme physical exertion
- Wear light, loose-fitting cotton clothes

Cool yourself down:

- Have plenty of cold drinks, and avoid excess alcohol, caffeine and hot drinks
- Eat cold foods, particularly salads and fruit with a high water content
- Take a cool shower, bath or body wash
- Sprinkle water over the skin or clothing, or keep a damp cloth on the back of your neck

Keep your environment cool:

- Keeping your living space cool is especially important for infants, the elderly or those with chronic health conditions or who can't look after themselves
- Place a thermometer in your main living room and bedroom to keep a check on the temperature
- Keep windows that are exposed to the sun closed during the day, and open windows at night when the temperature has dropped
- Close curtains that receive morning or afternoon sun. However, care should be taken with metal blinds and dark curtains, as these can

absorb heat – consider replacing or putting reflective material in-between them and the window space

- Turn off non-essential lights and electrical equipment – they generate heat
- Keep indoor plants and bowls of water in the house as evaporation helps cool the air.
- If possible, move into a cooler room, especially for sleeping
- Electric fans may provide some relief, if temperatures are below 35°C.²

Longer term:

- Consider putting up external shading outside windows
- Use pale, reflective external paints
- Have your loft and cavity walls insulated – this keeps the heat in when it is cold and out when it is hot
- Grow trees and leafy plants near windows to act as natural air-conditioners (see 'Making the Case')

Look out for others:

- Keep an eye on isolated, elderly, ill or very young people and make sure they are able to keep cool
- Ensure that babies, children or elderly people are not left alone in stationary cars
- Check on elderly or sick neighbours, family or friends every day during a heatwave
- Be alert and call a doctor or social services if someone is unwell or further help is needed

If you have a health problem:

- Keep medicines below 25 °C or in the refrigerator (read the storage instructions on the packaging)
- Seek medical advice if you are suffering from a chronic medical condition or taking multiple medications

If you or others feel unwell:

- Try to get help if you feel dizzy, weak, anxious or have intense thirst and headache; move to a cool place as soon as possible and measure your body temperature
- Drink some water or fruit juice to rehydrate
- Rest immediately in a cool place if you have painful muscular spasms (particularly in the legs, arms or abdomen, in many cases after sustained exercise during very hot weather), and drink oral rehydration solutions containing electrolytes
- Medical attention is needed if heat cramps last more than one hour
- Consult your doctor if you feel unusual symptoms or if symptoms persist

If you are worried about what to do, either for yourself or somebody you know who you think might be at risk, for advice go to NHS Choices at

www.nhs.uk/summerhealth

Alternatively ring NHS 111.

Hot weather advice

As the hot weather looks likely to continue, residents are being urged to take care of themselves and their families.

The very young, the elderly and the seriously ill are the groups who are particularly at risk of health problems when the weather is very hot. In particular, very hot weather can make heart and breathing problems worse.

A heatwave can affect anyone, but the most vulnerable people in extreme heat are:

- Older people, especially those over 75 – ensure people have plenty of water
- Babies and young children – be sure not to ‘overwrap’ them in too many clothes
- People with a serious chronic condition, especially heart or breathing problems
- People with mobility problems – for example, people with Parkinson’s disease or who have had a stroke
- People with serious mental health problems
- People on certain medications, including those that affect sweating and temperature control
- People who misuse alcohol or drugs
- People who are physically active – for example, labourers or those doing sports

Tips for coping in hot weather:

The following advice applies to everybody when it comes to keeping cool and comfortable and reducing health risks:

- Shut windows and pull down the shades when it is hotter outside. If it's safe, open them for ventilation when it is cooler.
- Avoid the heat: stay out of the sun and don't go out between 11am and 3pm (the hottest part of the day) if you're vulnerable to the effects of heat.
- Keep rooms cool by using shades or reflective material outside the windows. If this isn't possible, use light-coloured curtains and keep them closed (metallic blinds and dark curtains can make the room hotter).
- Have cool baths or showers, and splash yourself with cool water.
- Drink cold drinks regularly, such as water and fruit juice. Avoid tea, coffee and alcohol.
- Stay tuned to the weather forecast on the radio or TV, or on the Met Office website.
- Plan ahead to make sure you have enough supplies, such as food, water and any medications you need.
- Identify the coolest room in the house so you know where to go to keep cool.
- Wear loose, cool clothing, and a hat if you go outdoors.

Check up on friends, relatives and neighbours who may be less able to look after themselves.

If someone feels unwell, get them somewhere cool to rest. Give them plenty of fluids to drink. Seek medical help if symptoms such as breathlessness, chest pain, confusion, weakness, dizziness or cramps get worse or don't go away.

Find out more about what to do during a heatwave at <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Summerhealth/Pages/Heatwave.aspx>

If you are worried about what to do in a heatwave, either for yourself or somebody you know who you think might be at risk, for advice go to NHS Choices at www.nhs.uk/summerhealth

Alternatively ring NHS 111.

APPENDIX TWO

Heatwave – Key messages for PHTV

Level 1

Message 1)

Heatwaves can be dangerous, especially for the very young or very old or those with chronic disease. Stay out of the sun. Keep your home as cool as possible – shading windows and shutting them during the day may help. Open them when it is cooler at night. Keep drinking fluids.

Top tips for keeping cool

- Stay out of the heat
- Cool yourself down
- Keep your environment cool
- Look out for others

For further information see NHS Choices

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Summerhealth/Pages/Heatwave.aspx>

Message 2)

If there is going to a spell of hot weather and you have a health problem:

- Keep medicines below 25°C or in the refrigerator (read the storage instructions on the packaging).
- Seek medical advice if you are suffering from a chronic medical condition or taking multiple medications.
- Try to get help if you feel dizzy, weak, anxious or have intense thirst and headache; move to a cool place as soon as possible and measure your body temperature.
- Drink some water or fruit juice to rehydrate.

APPENDIX THREE

ADVICE FOR RAMADAN

Local residents urged to stay safe this Ramadan

Local residents are being urged to stay well this Ramadan, whether at home or away.

As the holy month of Ramadan falls during May and June this year, Rotherham Borough Council's Public Health team is urging those taking part to take extra care whilst fasting during hot weather, either at home or if travelling away.

Ramadan is a time of reflection, and many people try to adopt a better balanced life at this time, so it is a great time to change lifestyles and stop risky behaviours such as smoking.

Teresa Roche, Rotherham Borough Council's Director of Public Health, said staying healthy and hydrated is particularly important during hot weather, adding: "If you are travelling away to countries such as Pakistan, India or Saudi Arabia during Ramadan, make sure you have the correct vaccinations.

"You can also check with your Pharmacist, GP or Practice Nurse about extra provisions you may need to take such as water purification tablets, malaria tablets or diarrhoea relief.

"The biggest problem during this Ramadan, however, is dehydration as the fasts last from dawn to sunset which, at this time of year, means nearly 19 hours."

People are being urged to follow the advice below:

- Drink plenty of water and avoid excessive amounts caffeine
- Signs of possible dehydration which you should look out for are:
 1. If you produce very little or no urine;
 2. If you begin to feel faint, disorientated or confused; or
 3. If you have a persistent and severe headache.

If this happens you must stop fasting and **sip** plenty of water. Do not take aspirin or paracetamol as this may aggravate symptoms of dehydration.

Teresa Roche added: "You should not harm yourself to fulfil the fast. If you need to break a fast due to health reasons, this can be compensated for by fasting once you are well again."

Diabetics often wonder whether they can fast or not. Diabetics controlled by diet alone can successfully fast, as long as they do not over-indulge at breakfast.

Those taking insulin need to take careful advice from their specialist adviser, as it may not be possible to fast without considerable changes to your dosage regime.

For those on tablets, the issue very much depends on which ones are being taken. The advice is always consult with your normal specialist adviser in order to take the safest course.

Jo also pointed out that staying cool and hydrated is good advice for anyone, whether or not they are fasting, during a heatwave.

“It is important for everyone to stay hydrated in hot weather in order to avoid becoming ill,” he said.

In the event of hot weather, there are things that can be done to avoid suffering adverse effects, these include:

- Reducing the amount of physical activity taken
- Staying out of the sun at peak hours (11am-3pm)
- Eating more cold foods such as salads and fruit which contain more water at breakfast
- Splashing your face regularly with cold water
- Putting a damp cloth on the back of the neck
- Swilling the mouth with water (allowed during Ramadan)

APPENDIX FOUR

USEFUL LINKS



[Heatwave Plan for England](#)



[Heatwave Plan for England: easy read version](#)



[Advice for health and social care professionals: supporting vulnerable people before and during a heatwave](#)



[Advice for care home managers and staff: supporting vulnerable people before and during a heatwave](#)



[Looking after children and those in early years settings during heatwaves: guidance for teachers and professionals](#)



[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/615548/Beat the heat leaflet 2017.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/615548/Beat_the_heat_leaflet_2017.pdf)



[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/615550/Beat the heat poster 2017.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/615550/Beat_the_heat_poster_2017.pdf)



https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/525361/Beattheheatkeepcoolathomechecklist.pdf



[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/61555/Beat the heat care home overheating 2017.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/61555/Beat_the_heat_care_home_overheating_2017.pdf)