

HEAT-WAVE ACTION CARD

Lambeth Borough Council

June 2017

1. INTRODUCTION

Minimising the risk associated with heat wave is everybody's business. This document highlights actions to be taken by agencies and service providers.

The Heat-wave Action Plan for England sets out what should happen before and during periods of severe heat. It spells out what preparations both individuals and organisations can make to reduce health risks and includes specific measures to protect at-risk groups.

A Heat-health watch system operates in England from 1 June to 15 September each year. During this period the Met Office may forecast heat-waves, as defined by forecasts of day and night-time temperatures and their duration.

The heat-health watch system comprises of five main levels, from 0 - 4. This heat-wave action plan will be triggered by these levels of alert with specific actions to be taken at the borough level. The table below lays out the alert levels:

Table 1: Heat-wave Alert Levels

Level 0	Long-term planning - All year
Level 1	Heat-wave and Summer preparedness programme - 1 June – 15 September
Level 2	Heat-wave is forecast – Alert and readiness - 60% risk of heat-wave in the next 2 to 3 days
Level 3	Heat-wave Action - temperature reached in one or more Met Office National Severe Weather Warning Service regions
Level 4	Major incident – Emergency response - central government will declare a Level 4 alert in the event of severe or prolonged heat-wave affecting sectors other than health

Local stakeholders should sign-up to the heat-health watch alerts system, through which they receive forewarnings directly from the Met Office.

1a. Why is heat-wave a problem?

The main risks posed by a heat-wave are:

- [Dehydration](#) (not having enough water)
- Overheating, which can make symptoms worse for people who already have problems with their heart or breathing
- [Heat exhaustion and heatstroke](#)

A heat-wave can affect anyone, but the most vulnerable groups of people are:

- Babies, young children and older people (especially those over 75)
- 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

2. AIM

The aim of this action card is to prevent extreme heat attributable illnesses and mortalities among Lambeth residents. It should be read in conjunction with the [National Heat-wave Plan](#).

3. ACTIVATING THE PLAN

The heat-wave action plan will be activated by alerts received from the Met Office by email.

It will be the responsibility of the relevant council departments and third party agencies, to assure the Director of Public Health that they are taking actions in partnership with other community providers, to deliver information and support to frontline staff and vulnerable people in the community, to minimise heat-health risks.

4. ACTIONS FOR LONDON BOROUGH OF LAMBETH (LBL) DEPARTMENTS AND KEY PARTNERS

The section below summarises the actions to be taken by Council departments and key partners. *Please refer to appendix 2 for more detailed information.*

Level 0: All year 'Long-term planning'

- **Actors:**
 - Education, Social, Environmental, Community and Supported Housing Services
- **Key actions:**
 - Update list of vulnerable people (clients, service users, pupils, etc.);
 - Ensure staff know what signs to look for and what to do;
 - Measures to reduce heat exposure of vulnerable people and mitigate health risks ;
 - Heat-wave cascade in place.

Level 1: Heat-wave and summer preparedness programme – 1 June to 15 September

- **Actors:**
 - Borough Resilience Forum Partner; Public Health; Education, Social, Environmental, Community and Supported Housing Services
- **Key actions:**
 - Continue actions as per level 0;
 - Check for resources and tools – see appendix 1;
 - Raise awareness of how to keep cool during heatwaves (schools, shelters, supported housing, care and nursing homes);
 - Identify or create rooms to keep people cool (able to be maintained below 26°C).

Level 2: Alert and readiness when Heat-wave is forecast

- **Actors:**
 - Education, Social, Environmental, Community and Supported Housing Services
- **Key actions:**
 - Ensure sufficient staffing levels;
 - Cascade alerts to staff and ensure they can take appropriate actions such as-
 - Communicate public health messages to clients – see box 1,
 - Check client room temperatures if visiting to ensure they have access to cool areas which are below 26°C,
 - Ensure clients have sufficient cold water and ice, and
 - Consider weighing clients regularly to identify dehydration and rescheduling Physiotherapy sessions to cooler hours.

Level 3: Actions in response to Heat-wave

- Public Health (LBL)
 - Activate cascade, and communicate risks and mitigating measures
- Occupational Health (LBL)
 - Ensure outdoor workers and other relevant staff protect themselves from excess heat (hats, sun cream, regular rehydration)
- Communications Team (LBL)
 - Communicate to the public about risks and mitigations – see box 1, and ‘Beat the Heat’ leaflet
- Education and Social Services (LBL)
 - Remind managers and service providers of Public Health England’s advice and key public health messages on keeping cool – see appendix 1 and box 1
 - Check providers have business continuity arrangements
- Supported and Sheltered Housing
 - Managers to ensure that sheltered housing staff proactively prompt their residents to keep cool and rehydrate regularly
 - Communicate Public Health England Heatwave guidance and key messages (see box 1) to service users
- Safer Neighbourhoods
 - Communicate Public Health messages (see box 1) to ‘neighbourhood watch’ coordinators and community groups networks
 - Assist vulnerable people to secure bottles of cold water when relevant
 - Check on vulnerable people
- NHS England EPRR
 - Communicate messages to GPs and Community Pharmacies

- Primary care providers
 - GPs and Community Nursing providers to conduct daily visits or phone calls to vulnerable people
- Foundation NHS Trusts EPRR
 - To ensure rooms and wards are maintained below temperature of 26C and review care plans for high risk patients
 - Raise awareness to staff, patients and visitors

Level 4: Emergency response in a major incident

- Continue actions as per level 3
- Central government to implement national emergency response arrangements

Box 1 key public health messages

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

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 and light scarf
- Avoid extreme physical exertion
- Wear light, loose-fitting cotton clothes

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

(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

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 heat-wave
- 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

Appendix 1 – Useful resources include:

- Beat the heat – keep cool at home [checklist](#)
- [Advice for health and social care professionals](#)
- [Advice for care home managers and staff](#)
- Checklist for care homes – [Beat the heat: keep residents safe and well](#)
- [Guidance for teachers](#)
- ‘Beat the Heat’ poster: an [infographic](#) for the public with key advice for staying safe in hot weather;
- ‘Beat the Heat’ supporting [leaflet](#): detailed information for the public about how to stay safe in hot weather; and

Appendix 2: Summary of actions to be taken by London Borough of Lambeth and key partners

Level 0	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<p>Year-round planning <i>All Year</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work within your organisation and with partner organisations to ensure that systems are developed to support the identification and sharing of information with people who may be vulnerable to heat-wave weather. Ensure frontline staff are aware of the health dangers of hot weather and know how to recognise signs and symptoms. Frontline staff should use every opportunity including clinic attendances and home visits to identify vulnerable people and discuss heat-wave preparedness. Work with partners to ensure that vulnerable clients are receiving the benefits that they are entitled to. 	<p>Heat-wave and Summer preparedness <i>1 June to 15 September</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be familiar with the Heat-wave action plan for England. Ensure that all frontline staff are made aware of the health dangers of the hot weather and know how to recognise signs and symptoms by encouraging them to read the Easy Read version of the Heat-wave Plan for England, and advice for health and social care professionals; Ensure institutional establishments such as schools are aware of the heat-wave action plan and guidance for teachers and professionals; Ensure organisers of large events take account of possible heat risks Identify high-risk individuals on your caseload and raise awareness of heat illnesses and their prevention among clients and carers. Ensure that care providers consider whether changes might be necessary to care plans in the event of a heat-wave (e.g. initiating daily visits by formal or informal care givers for those living alone). Ensure that sheltered housing, nursing homes and care providers have business continuity plans in place and implement as required. Ensure relevant organisations are aware of guidance documentation: advice for care home managers and staff and checklist; Ensure that sheltered housing, nursing and care homes are able to identify or create cool rooms/areas (able to be maintained below 26°C). Ensure business continuity plans are in place and ready for implementation as required. 	<p>Heat-wave is forecast – Alert and readiness (<i>60% risk of heat-wave in the next 2 to 3 days</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider business continuity provisions to ensure sufficient staffing. Communicate alert to staff and ensure appropriate actions are taken such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Reconfirm public health messages to clients – see box 1 ✓ Check client room temperatures if visiting to ensure they have access to cool areas which are below 26°C ✓ Ensure clients have access to cold water and ice ✓ Consider weighing clients regularly to identify dehydration and rescheduling Physiotherapy sessions to cooler hours 	<p>Heat-wave action <i>Temperatures reached in one or more Met Office National Severe Weather Warning Service regions</i></p> <p>Public Health (LBL)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share Public Health England Guidance, key messages and information on protecting vulnerable staff with key partners for dissemination. <p>Occupational Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue guidance and information to managers for outdoor workers e.g. wear hats and sun cream when working outdoors, regular rehydration. <p>Communications Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate public health messages to children centres, advising parents to maintain good practice during the hot weather (see box 1) To issue a press release on ‘Beat the Heat’ <p>Education and Social Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update managers with Public Health England guidance and key public health messages on keeping cool (see box 1) and ensure onward dissemination to frontline staff. Share Public Health England guidance and key public health messages with their third party contracts team for circulation to third party domiciliary care providers, nursing and care homes. Ensure provider organisations have robust business continuity arrangements in place. Invoke business continuity plans as required. <p>Sheltered and Supported Housing Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proactively prompt residents to keep cool and rehydrate regularly. Communicate alerts and share public health messages (see box 1) with service users. <p>Environmental and Community Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate public health messages (see box 1) to ‘neighbourhood watch’ coordinators and community groups. Ensure vulnerable people have access to bottles of water and ice, and ensure that they are keeping cool. <p>Safer Neighbourhoods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To communicate Public Health messages to Safer Neighbourhoods networks across the borough to help and support vulnerable people during the hot weather Community Support Officers should proactively check up on identified vulnerable people in the community, ensuring that they are safe and keeping cool <p>Primary care providers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency Preparedness, Response and Resilience (NHS England South London) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure and confirm that Public Health messages are prepared and ready to be cascaded to GPs and Pharmacists GPs and Community Nursing providers should arrange daily visits or phone calls to vulnerable people where appropriate <p>NHS Foundation Trusts (Emergency Planning leads)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the Trusts follow Public Health England guidance and issue information to frontline staff Ensure rooms and wards are maintained below temperature of 26°C and review care plans for high risk patients Raise awareness of staff, patients and visitors via communications campaign Invoke business continuity plans as required 	<p>Major incident – Emergency response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue actions as per level 3 unless advised to the contrary. There will be implementation of national emergency response arrangements by central government