

Summer Readiness Information for Wirral Care Home and Supported Living Managers

Wirral Public Health

Summer Readiness information for Wirral Managers

During the summer months the risk from extreme heat episodes increases. It is very important to ensure your homes are **prepared** to manage those risks effectively.

Older people, especially those over 65 and those with underlying medical conditions, are particularly vulnerable to the effects of hot weather and are at higher risk of becoming unwell through dehydration, heat exhaustion and heatstroke.

Managers have an essential role in disseminating and implementing this guidance in advance of and during periods of hot weather and have a **duty of care to keep residents and staff safe**.

5 Steps to keep vulnerable people safe this summer.

1

Identify who is at higher risk of heat-related illnesses and plan how to reduce that risk.

2

Have a response plan in place, ensuring all care staff are trained in its use.

3

Update your Business Continuity Plan to reflect adverse weather threats to your service.

4

Sign up for UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) adverse weather warnings to maintain alert readiness.

5

Regularly update your preparedness arrangements through continuous learning and improvement, in line with your risk assessment at least annually.





Be proactive. Take the following actions to protect residents and staff this summer:








1	Familiarise yourself with UKHSA guidance on supporting vulnerable people before and during hot weather .	✓
2	Sign up to the free Weather-Health Alerting System and check your local weather forecast so that you know when hot weather is expected.	✓
3	Respond to Heat-Health Alerts and follow the Heat-Health Alert Action Card for providers . This summarises suggested actions that providers of social care can take to prepare for and respond to different categories of Heat-Health Alerts (yellow, amber and red alerts).	✓
4	Encourage staff to check air pollution forecasts as heat is associated with increased levels of some air pollutants. Air pollution combined with hot weather can worsen symptoms for people with existing breathing problems or heart conditions. If pollution levels are high, advise people to avoid outdoor activity. Check for further health advice here .	✓
5	Regularly review your business continuity arrangements and look out for advice on what to do if services such as power, water supplies and transport are likely to be affected.	✓
6	When adverse hot weather is expected, initiate your business continuity plan as required and communicate with staff any changes to normal working procedures that have been identified.	✓
7	Ensure staff are aware of your response plan and understand the actions that are to be taken.	✓
8	Ensure relevant staff know how to check, record, and follow internal procedures if a cause for concern is identified.	✓
9	Consider whether additional staffing or support will be required during periods of hot weather, in line with your business continuity arrangements.	✓
10	During the hottest periods, ensure indoor temperatures are monitored and recorded regularly. Residential homes should have a cool room or area (able to be maintained below 26°C) that people can use to cool down. Cool areas can be developed with appropriate indoor and outdoor shading, ventilation, the use of indoor and outdoor plants and, if necessary, air conditioning.	✓
11	Encourage people to remain in the coolest parts of the home as much as possible. Go outside if it is cooler outside in the shade or consider moving people to a cooler part of the building. For those who can't be moved, take actions to cool them down (for example, liquids, cool wipes) and be vigilant for signs of dehydration or heat-related illnesses. This is especially important for those who are less mobile.	✓
12	Recommend that staff close any external shutters or shades, blinds and curtains on windows that are exposed to direct sunlight during the day. Do this early in the morning so that the heat does not build up.	✓
13	Remind staff to check that any heating is turned off and turn off lights and electrical equipment that is not in use to reduce indoor temperatures.	✓
14	Increase outside shading by making shaded areas using items such as gazebos and umbrellas. Stay indoors or in the shade between 11am and 3pm when the sun is strongest.	✓

15	Encourage visits to happen in the mornings and evenings to prevent extra heat during the afternoon from increased numbers of people being present.	✓
16	Ensure that insulation is appropriate. Well-designed insulation can help to keep a building warm in the winter and cooler in the summer. Further advice on keeping buildings cool can be found in Beat the Heat: keep cool at home checklist .	✓
17	Ensure where possible that staff are helping residents to wear lightweight, loose-fitting, light-coloured clothes. If going outdoors, consider clothes such as a long-sleeved shirts, trousers, or long skirts in close-weave fabrics. These will help to absorb sweat and prevent skin irritation, as well as offering some protection from the sun.	✓
18	Remind staff that plastic pads and mattresses can make residents warmer during hot weather. Be extra vigilant when they are in use.	✓
19	Advise staff to use electric fans if the air temperature is below 35°C. Fans shouldn't be used if it is hotter than 35°C, as they can raise body temperatures. Also, fans shouldn't aim directly at people's bodies as this can lead to dehydration. Check NHS Improvement Guidance for fan use here .	✓
20	Ensure that staff are aware of ways to keep residents cool such as a damp cloth on the back of the neck helps with temperature regulation. Encourage or help with cool showers or baths.	✓
21	Ensure staff are familiar with the symptoms of heatstroke and heat exhaustion and remind them to be vigilant for potential symptoms. For further information on how to recognise symptoms, check the NHS website here . If staff are concerned about symptoms, they should seek medical advice by contacting NHS 111. In an emergency, or if you think someone has heatstroke, dial 999.	✓
22	Ensure staff monitor residents closely for any early signs of heat-related illness and initiate appropriate treatment when needed. Monitor body temperature, pulse rate, blood pressure and hydration (consider regular body weight measurement to assess water loss).	✓
23	The sun is often strong enough in the UK to cause sunburn. Support staff and residents by taking these actions to protect them from the sun: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear a hat to protect the face, eyes, head, ears and neck. • Wear sunglasses. • Apply sunscreen generously and reapply frequently, especially after activities that remove it, such as swimming or towelling. The NHS recommends that this should be with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30. More information on sunscreen and sun safety, including how to apply sunscreen, is available on the NHS website. 	✓
24	Remind staff to avoid hot closed spaces: Small, closed spaces such as stationary cars can get dangerously hot very quickly. Make sure that those they care for are not left alone in stationary cars or other closed spaces.	✓
25	Make sure all staff know the importance of preventing dehydration. Encourage staff to keep residents hydrated and complete hydration assessment tool as required. Consider implementing protected drinks time throughout the day in your setting. Display the Wirral hydration poster in and around your setting and use hydration leaflets to inform staff, residents and relatives. Hydration training is also available for staff and relatives. Please contact the Public Health Delivery Team via healthprotectionservice@wirral.gov.uk . Adequate hydration can help protect against UTIs. For more information about UTI prevention, please check the Community Infection Prevention Control(CIPC)Team website .	✓

26	Warm weather and outdoor cooking can be the perfect conditions for bacteria to grow. Older people, and people with weakened immune systems have an increased risk of becoming ill due to Listeria. During summer, remind staff of important control measures such as temperature requirements and shelf life to reduce the risk. Further advice on Listeria can be found at Food Standards Agency website .	✓
27	If your setting is having a barbeque, make sure your kitchen staff follow the Food Standards Agency advice.	✓
28	If your setting has any pets or visiting animals, remind staff that disease can be acquired through contact with animals, especially if a person's immunity is reduced through age, illness, or therapy. Encourage staff and residents to wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water immediately after contact with animals or the areas they have been. Further information can be found at UKHSA Blog .	✓
29	Infectious diseases can occur during any season. If an outbreak of any infectious illness is suspected, follow relevant national and local guidance and step-up control measures such as increased cleaning and hand washing. When face masks or other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is required, encourage staff to take regular breaks and stay hydrated. Contact the CIPC team in hours (Monday to Friday 9-5pm) via 0151 604 7750 / ipc.wirralct@nhs.net or UKHSA Health Protection Team out of hours via 0344 225 0562.	✓
30	During the summer, consider starting a review of your winter preparedness arrangements.	✓

Links, Resources and Information

Supporting vulnerable people before and during hot weather: social care managers guidance	
Heat-Health Alert action card for providers	
Sign up to the free Weather-Health Alerting system	
Beat the heat: keep cool at home checklist - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)	
NHS Guidance – Heat exhaustion and heatstroke	

NHS Guidance - Sun Safety and Sunscreen	
Air Pollution forecasts in the UK or Health Advice for those who may be particularly sensitive to air pollution - Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)	
How to keep staff wearing PPE safe in adverse temperatures.	
Wirral Community Health and Care NHS Trust Community Infection Prevention Control Team - Training and support on improving hydration for residents (linked to preventing UTI)	
Wirral Hydration Poster and Information Leaflet	
UKHSA Blog – How to stay safe from infections carried by animals when visiting a farm	
Food Standards Agency – Listeria	

How to scan a QR Cod

Step 1: Open the camera app on your smartphone, ensuring the rear-facing camera is selected.

Step 2: Point your camera at the QR code. Centre the box over the code to scan it.

Step 3: Tap on the URL popup banner that appears, and you'll be connected directly to the intended destination.