

Provider section

Heatwave Alert

Level 2 and 3 - Take Action



These levels outline the need to take action in response to very hot weather in the West Midlands. Level 2 refers to a heatwave being forecast as very likely in the next 2-3 days. Level 3 alerts are sent when the heatwave has arrived



Level 2/3 Take Action



We ask that you please put in place the actions outlined below, ensure all staff are familiar with the key messages and actions, and continue them for the duration of the hot weather.

Please also keep an eye on the Met Office website for Heat-wave alert levels and the weather forecast:

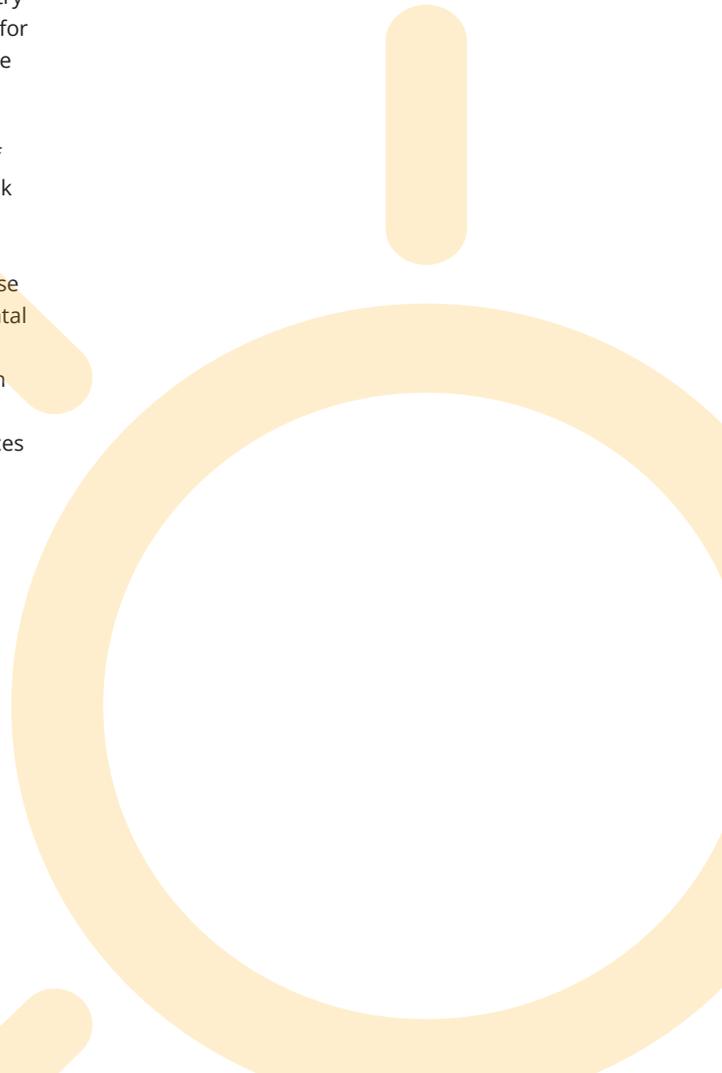
<https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/heat-health/#?tab=heatHealth>

<https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/>

If you are a Provider outside of the West Midlands region, who provides services for residents of Coventry and Warwickshire please check the Met Office alerts for your local area and take action as below if a heatwave is predicted.

Heatwaves can prove fatal, particularly at the start of periods of very hot weather and among certain at-risk groups, such as those with cardiac, respiratory and other chronic illnesses, frail and older people, young children, babies and vulnerable adults (including those with learning and/or physical disabilities, severe mental health problems, Alzheimer's dementia, alcohol and drug addictions and the homeless). People on certain types of medication can also be more at risk. The national heatwave plan and other useful resources can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heatwave-plan-for-england>



ACTIONS



All health and care providers

-  Check room temperatures if doing a home visit. Temperatures should not exceed 26°C.
-  Check that fridges and freezers are working properly, and fans/air conditioning where appropriate. Ensure heating systems are turned off.
-  Share key public health messages with patients (in blue box below)
-  Prepare for surges in demand of services and ensure business continuity plans are in place
-  Identify particularly vulnerable individuals (those with chronic/severe illness, on multiple medications, or who have mobility issues) and ensure they have visitor/phone call arrangements in place. Particularly vulnerable individuals will need to be phoned or visited during a heatwave.
-  Seek early medical help if an individual starts to become unwell, and ensure that individuals/carers know where they can access appropriate medical advice/support if required

ACTIONS



Hospitals and care, residential and nursing homes, and home care providers

- ☀️ Implement appropriate protective factors, including regular supply and assistance with cold drinks;
- ☀️ Ensure that cool rooms are consistently below 26°C as this is the temperature threshold at which many vulnerable patients find it difficult to cool themselves naturally if sweating is impaired due to old age, sickness or medication;
- ☀️ Check that indoor temperatures are recorded regularly during the hottest periods for all areas where patients reside;
- ☀️ Identify particularly vulnerable individuals (those with chronic/severe illness, on multiple medications, or who have mobility issues) for prioritisation in cool rooms;
- ☀️ Monitor and minimise temperatures in all patient areas and take action if the temperature is a significant risk to patient safety, as high risk patients may suffer undue health effects including worsening cardiovascular or respiratory symptoms at temperatures exceeding 26°C;
- ☀️ Reduce internal temperatures by turning off unnecessary lights and electrical equipment;
- ☀️ Consider moving visiting hours to mornings and evenings to reduce afternoon heat from increased numbers of people;
- ☀️ Make the most of cooling the building at night with cross ventilation. Additionally, high night-time temperatures in particular have been found to be associated with higher mortality rates. Due to the potential increased risk of cross infection that may be induced by cross ventilation, ensure increased vigilance of other routine infection control measures;
- ☀️ In the context of mental health trusts and community teams, ensure that visits or phone calls are made to check on high-risk individuals (those with severe mental illness, living on their own, or without regular contact with a carer);
- ☀️ Seek early medical help if an individual starts to become unwell; and ensure that discharge planning takes into account the temperature of accommodation and level of daily care during the heatwave period.

KEY PUBLIC HEALTH HEATWAVE MESSAGES

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

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°C²

KEY PUBLIC HEALTH HEATWAVE MESSAGES

(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 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