

Gateway reference: 17602

TO:

SHA CEs, PCT CEs, LA CEs

CC:

HPA CE, PCT and NHS Trust CEs, NHS Trust Medical Directors, CQC CE, PCT DPHs, GPs, PCT Medical Directors, PCT lead nurses, Directors of Housing and Planning, Directors of Adult Social Services, Directors of Children Social Services, Professional Bodies (RCGP, RCP, RPSGB, RCN, CPHVA, Community and District Nurses Association), Care Associations (National Care Association, ECCA, Registered Nursing Homes Association, UK Care Home Care Association and Carers UK), NHS Foundation Trusts CEs, Monitor, DCLG Resilience and Emergencies Division, Cabinet Office Civil Contingencies Secretariat

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18 May 2012

Dear Colleague

HEATWAVE PLAN

The Heatwave Plan for England, first published in 2004, is to be reissued on 18 May 2012 to raise both public and professional awareness. Following the launch, a copy of the Plan, the accompanying factsheets for staff, care home managers and a public information leaflet will be available on the DH website at:

<http://www.dh.gov.uk/health/category/policy-areas/public-health/>

The Plan's purpose is to enhance resilience in the event of a heatwave. It is an important component of overall emergency planning and will become increasingly relevant in adapting to the impact of climate change.

Summary of key changes to the National Heatwave Plan 2012

- reordered the Heatwave Plan to highlight public health messages and follow-up actions. The main body of the text is an Action Plan giving individuals, professionals and organisations advice on how to respond to a spell of severe heat to protect vulnerable people
- further clarity in the action diagram of responsibilities, especially emphasising the role of community and voluntary sector organisations might provide
- clarity in the operation of the four levels of the Heat Health Watch system and emergency response

- new sections on large scale public events, drought, heatwaves and Ramadan
- publishing a companion document 'Making the Case' which contains much of the information previously in the main Heatwave Plan and updates information about the likelihood of heatwaves in the future and long term planning in light of the recent [UK Climate Change Risk Assessment: Government Report]
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb13698-climate-risk-assessment.pdf>
- refocused the Plan to ensure that it reflects latest organisational structures and responsibilities during this transitional year to full implementation of the Health and Social Care Act (2012)
- updated two of the three supporting 'factsheets' for health and social care organisations, professionals and for care home managers. The factsheet and advice for the general public remains the same as for 2011
- for the first time we will also be publishing electronically an 'Easyread' version of the Plan.

The Plan sets out the arrangements that will apply, and the actions recommended in advance of, and during, a heatwave. A summary of key amendments and weblinks to materials will be advertised via emergency planning routes and professional bulletins. However, you and copy recipients of this letter are asked to discuss the Plan, and the factsheets that form part of it, with those organisations and teams that need to start taking action *now*.

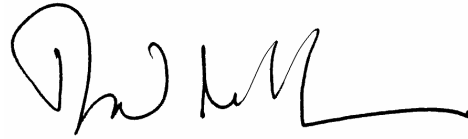
Strategic Health Authorities and Local Authorities need to ensure:

- PCTs and social services departments support primary and social care teams in:
 - familiarising themselves with the Plan, and their roles in implementing it; and
 - identifying individuals at particular risk, and taking steps as set out in the Plan to reduce it - this will involve collaboration with the voluntary sector and the Independent Care Home sector.
- Independent Care Homes and all Hospitals are made aware of the Plan, of the specific risks associated with residents of care homes, and of the specific advice directed at Care Home Managers and Staff.
- NHS Trusts, including Mental Health Trusts, have assessed their ability to maintain their temperatures below 26⁰C in order to reduce risk to vulnerable groups. In the French 2003 heatwave, 2,000 of the 15,000 deaths were among those already in hospital at its start.
- All local emergency plans and procedures incorporate this Plan where relevant, and those involved in their implementation, including Local Resilience Fora, are made familiar with it.
- Long Term Planning: recent Government assessments have suggested that summers are going to get hotter in the future. Coordinated long-term planning between agencies to protect people and infrastructure from the effects of severe hot weather and thus reduce excess summer illness and death is essential. In the future this could involve health and wellbeing boards and, could be considered within Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs) and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategies (JHWSs).

Yours sincerely,



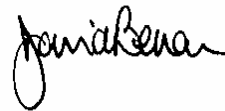
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Chief Medical Officer



Sir David Nicholson KCB
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Prof Viv Bennett
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DAVID BEHAN
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