



Public Health
England



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To: Local authority Chief Executives, Local authority Directors of Public Health,
NHS England Area Teams, Clinical Leads of Clinical Commissioning Groups

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Dear Colleague

Heatwave Plan for England 2013

This letter is to advise you about the publication of the Heatwave Plan for England 2013. From today the following documents will be available on the Public Health England website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heatwave-plan-for-england-2013>:

- the Heatwave Plan for England – 2013
- *Making the Case*, a companion document giving further information on a range of topics related to the Heatwave Plan
- three information pamphlets containing action cards based on the plan for easy use by organisations, staff and the public

The Heatwave Plan has been published every year since 2004. Its objective is to raise both public and professional awareness of the potential dangers to health of a severe heatwave and to describe the actions which can be taken to prevent and respond to such an event.

The Heatwave Plan is an important component of overall emergency planning and will become increasingly relevant in adapting to the impacts of climate change. The plan has been jointly agreed between the Department of Health, NHS England, Public Health England, and other stakeholders.

It sets out a series of clear actions to minimise the effects of severe heat on health, to be taken by:

- the NHS, social care and other public agencies
- professionals working with vulnerable people
- individuals and local communities

The Heatwave Plan is underpinned by the Heat-Health Watch service, which has been developed with the Met Office to alert key stakeholders to the likelihood of severe hot weather in different parts of the country, so they can take appropriate action.

Summary of key changes to the Heatwave Plan for England 2013

Most of the actions identified in the Heatwave Plan 2012 have been carried forward into the Heatwave Plan 2013. Key changes which have been made include:

- clarifying responsibilities and actions for healthcare organisations, local authorities and professionals in light of the changes made to health and social care as of 1 April 2013
- making the Heatwave Plan more consistent with the Cold Weather Plan for England in a number of respects relating to the heatwave alert levels and the structure of the overall document

Heat-Health Watch alerts

- To emphasise that long-term planning for heatwaves takes place throughout the year, we have added a Level 0 to the previous four Heat-Health Watch alert levels. Levels 1- 4 remain the same.
- On 1st June 2013, we will move to Level 1 (general heatwave and summer preparedness), which will be in effect until 15th September 2013, unless raised to a higher alert level because of a forecasted or actual heatwave event
- Clarifying the cascade of Heat-Health Watch alerts taking place across the new health and social care system
- Detailed changes to improve the appearance and relevance of the Heat-Health Watch alerts, making these more user friendly

Action tables (Section 3):

- Most of the detailed actions from 2012 remain as in previous years, however we have amended these to reflect where organisational responsibilities have now changed
- We have brought these tables more in line with those in the Cold Weather Plan

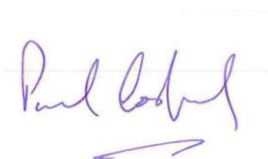
- We have separated out actions for commissioners and providers as well as for professional staff and for the wider community
- These changes have been reflected in the supporting information pamphlets containing the action cards for easy use by organisations and staff
- We have updated the information leaflet designed primarily for the public entitled *Looking after yourself and others during hot weather*, and are re-publishing this document with the other core components of this year's Heatwave Plan

Recommended next steps:

- We have added a new Section 6, 'Next Steps', to clarify that the Heatwave Plan is a good practice document and the actions denoted are illustrative. It is up to each locality to consider the actions in this plan and adapt them and incorporate them, as appropriate to the local situation, as a component of wider resilience planning arrangements
- We have recommended that all NHS and local authority commissioners together with their local resilience forums and local partners:
 - should consider the *Heatwave Plan for England 2013* and satisfy themselves that the suggested actions and the Heatwave Alert service are understood across the system. Local heatwave, extreme weather events and resilience plans should be reviewed in the light of this plan
 - should review or audit the distribution of the Heat-Health Watch alerts across the local health and social care systems to satisfy themselves that the alerts reach those colleagues and organisations that need to take appropriate actions immediately after being issued
 - seek assurance that organisations and key stakeholders are taking appropriate actions in light of the heatwave alert messages

I hope that you and copy recipients of this letter will discuss the plan, and the factsheets that form part of it, with those organisations and teams that need to start taking action now, so to avoid the devastating consequences of a severe heatwave.

Yours sincerely,



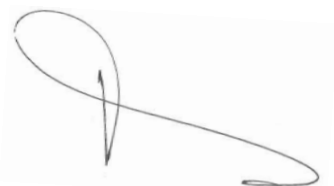
Paul Cosford, Director of Health Protection and Medical Director, Public Health England



Lyn Simpson – NHS England – Director NHS Operations and Delivery



Jon Rouse, Director General for Social Care, Local Government and Care Partnerships,
Department of Health



Felicity Harvey, Director General for Public Health, Department of Health

CC:

Accountable Officers of CCGs, LA Emergency Planning Officers, NHS Trust CEs, NHS Foundation Trust CEs, NHS Trust Medical Directors, Foundation Trust Medical Directors, GPs, Directors of Housing and Planning, Directors of Adult Social Services, Directors of Children Social Services, DCLG Resilience and Emergencies Division and Local Resilience Forums, PHE Region and Centre Directors, Cabinet Office Civil Contingencies Secretariat, Healthwatch England CE, Monitor CE, Care Quality Commission CE, Professional Bodies (RCGP, RCP, RPSGB, RCN, CPHVA, FPH), Carers UK