

How can VCS can help protect people from hot weather harms

Public Health



NEWS

UK May and spring temperature record provisionally broken for second day in a row

35.1°C has been recorded at Kew Gardens making it the second consecutive day the May and spring UK temperature record has provisionally been broken.

Read more >



The [Met Office reports](#) that UK temperature records for May and spring were broken for the second consecutive day, with 35.1°C recorded at Kew Gardens on 26 May 2026, exceeding both the previous day's record and the long-standing historic high.


The Met Office notes that such extreme heat is becoming more likely due to climate change, with conditions remaining unusually warm across much of England and Wales.

Health impacts of hot weather

The impacts of adverse weather events can affect everyone.

Though the extent to which individuals, communities, and nations experience these effects varies significantly. Beyond direct health consequences, such events are also associated with a rise in accidental injuries and accidental drowning.

Symptoms of Heat Exhaustion & Heatstroke



Heat Exhaustion

- tiredness
- weakness
- feeling faint
- headache
- muscle cramps
- feeling or being sick
- heavy sweating
- intense thirst

Heat Stroke


- confusion
- lack of co-ordination
- fast heartbeat
- fast breathing or shortness of breath
- hot skin that is not sweating
- seizures

Be Safe

- Look out for signs of heat related illness
- Cool down as soon as you can

Act Fast

Get help.
Call NHS 111
or in an emergency 999.



Summer water safety

Accidents are mostly preventable with the correct knowledge and judgment and here are our tips to staying safe in the water during the summer:

To enjoy the water safely and make the right call...

- Enter slowly and carefully
Think carefully about your ability to splash or swim in cold outdoor water. 49% of those who lost their life were classified as swimmers*. Are you really a good swimmer?
- Stay within reach
Don't go too far and stay within a standing depth.
- Always be supervised
Over 70% of fatal accidents occur in the absence of professional supervision. Seek life guarded areas and always make sure some one is available to raise the alarm.

Summer is an amazing time to enjoy our beautiful waterways but we must be mindful that warmer weather is directly linked to an increase in fatal drowning incidents.

Rivers and Lakes/Lochs pose the greatest statistical risk as there are often hazards that the average person is equipped to handle and there is a lack of professional supervision.

In an emergency...

- Call 999
If you are at the coast, call 999 and ask for the Coastguard. Don't enter the water to rescue.
- If you're in trouble FLOAT and call for help
Fall in or become tired – stay calm, float on your back and call for help. Throw something that floats to somebody that has fallen in.



STOP AND THINK



STAY TOGETHER



CALL 999



FLOAT



Summer Preparedness 1st June – 30th September – why is it important?



Why is Summer preparedness so important?

The impacts of adverse weather events can affect everyone and can influence many aspects, including health. However, the extent to which individuals, communities and populations experience the negative health impacts of adverse weather events will vary based on their ability to adapt to the stressors imposed by such events.

Effective action, taken early, can reduce the health impacts of exposure to excessive heat. Most of these are simple preventive measures that need to be planned in advance of a heatwave in order to be effective.






Summer preparedness is everybody's responsibility

Thinking ahead and preparing for what the weather may bring can make a real difference.

There are some simple steps that can help residents to stay safe and healthy at this time of year. These include helping them to prepare their homes and businesses and encouraging everyone to take care of families, friends and neighbours.

Definition: **Heatwave** (Met Office) – a period of a least three consecutive days with daily maximum temperatures meeting or exceeding a temperature threshold (thresholds vary based on region).

There are four actions you can do to help protect residents from hot weather harms:

- 1 Make sure you, colleagues and partners register for Heat-Health Alerts  When necessary, implement local action cards
- 2 Make sure you have up-to-date local plans and identify service users who may be at risk
- 3 Spread the word: promote Public Health messages around hot weather harms  Share and display the Public Health Heat Health Infographics
- 4 Register to be a cool space if you can  Complete the Shade the UK Training



PLEASE respond to assurance requests around preparedness and actions taken in response to hot weather events. Public Health or commissioners may request these up until 30th September 2026. Please note: this isn't an evaluation of your performance, but a way to support system-wide preparedness.

If you would like to receive electronic and/or printed versions of the infographics please contact:
healthprotection@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk

1

Register for the Heat-Health Alerts and note the action cards and guidance in accordance with the alertness

Heat-Health Alerts

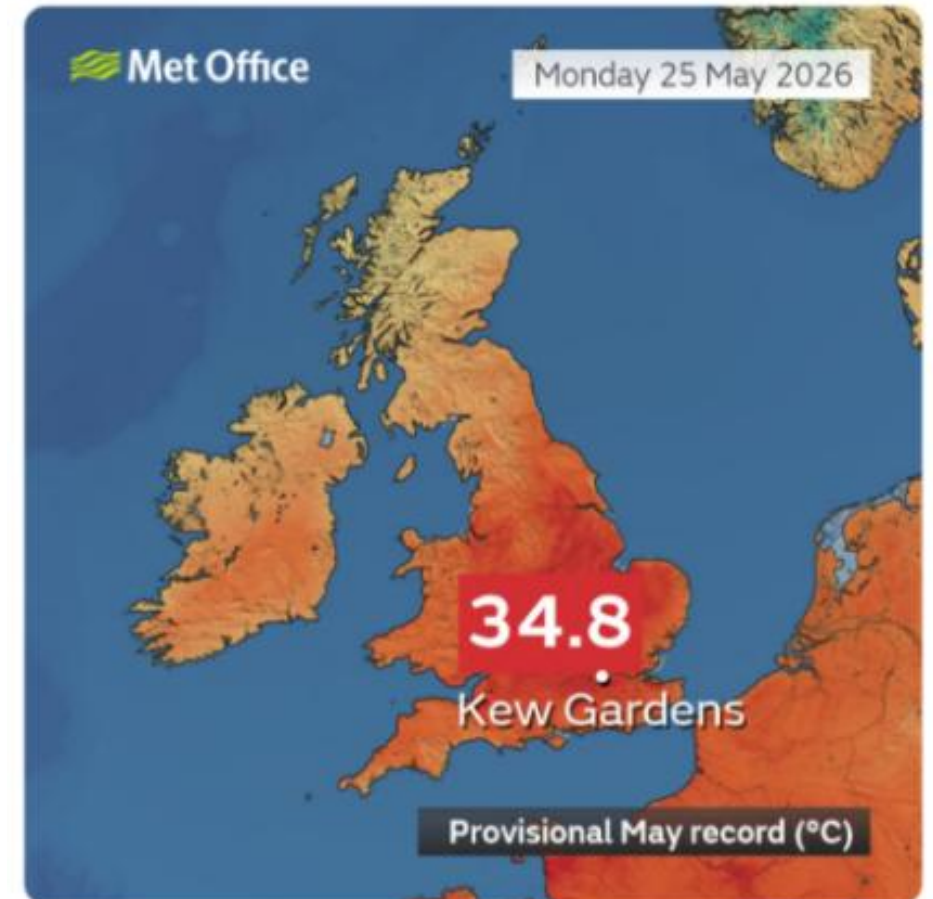
Green	We will not send any alerts. There is no risk to people's health because of the weather. This is a good time for organisations to plan for hot or cold weather.
Yellow	We expect hot or cold weather. It will not affect most people. It might affect people who are very old, young, disabled or unwell.
Amber	We are expecting very hot or very cold weather. It is likely to affect everyone. Some people are more at risk of being unwell or dying because of the weather.
Red	We are expecting extreme hot or cold weather. Even healthy people are more likely to be unwell or die because of the weather. Lots of things are very likely to be affected.

The alerts tell people about:

1. The weather forecast
2. The effects of the weather
3. Advice about what to do to stay safe

For more information about the alerts system please see the [Weather-Health Alerting System: user guide – easy read](#).

i [Register for the alert service here](#)



Heat-Health Action Cards

Heat-Health Alert (HHA) action cards summarise suggested actions to be taken by VCS in the event of extreme heat.

These resources are part of a wider [collection of documents](#) providing guidance on how to support the public during periods of extreme heat and to minimise the [health effects of adverse weather](#).

Sector specific guidance

- Beat the Heat – [general population guidance](#)
- [Action card for voluntary and community sector](#)
- [Summary action card for voluntary and community sector](#)



Hot Weather Preparedness VCS Guidance Available

New guidance from the Climate Change & Adaptation Team

- Helps voluntary organisations prepare for and respond to extreme heat
- Covers risks, vulnerable groups, and practical steps to protect staff, volunteers, and communities
- Includes a resource bank to support your response

Actions for VCS

Raise awareness of heat risks, symptoms, and prevention among staff, volunteers and communities
Share “Beat the Heat” advice, especially with vulnerable and underserved groups
Identify and prioritise people most at risk and keep them under review
Ensure access to water, cool environments, and practical support

During hot weather alerts

Yellow

- Check staff understand plans and alerts
- Assess local risks using heat alert guidance
- Communicate heat-health advice widely
- Monitor indoor temperatures and keep spaces cool
- Use rooms that are cooler
- Ensure hydration

Amber

- Continue all Yellow actions
- Activate business continuity / hot weather plans
- Increase monitoring and support for vulnerable people

Red

- Follow emergency response plans
- Monitor alerts and the situation closely
- Continue all previous actions at increased intensity

2

Make sure you have up-to-date local plans and ensure groups more at-risk are identified and appropriately supported

Anyone can become unwell if they get too hot. Some people are more at risk than others.

Everyone is at risk from the health consequences of hot weather, but there are certain factors that increase an individual's risk. Populations that are particularly at risk from the effects of hot weather include:

Groups more vulnerable to extreme heat:

- * Older adults (65+)
- * Young children (especially under 5)
- * Pregnant women
- * People on certain medications (affecting heart, kidneys, cognition, or sweating)
- * Those who are ill and dehydrated
- * People with alcohol or drug dependence
- * People living alone without support
- * Outdoor workers and those doing manual labour
- * Physically active individuals spending long periods outside
- * People experiencing homelessness

People with health conditions – vulnerable due to physical sensitivity or reduced ability to respond to heat:

- * Heart or respiratory conditions
- * Dementia
- * Diabetes
- * Kidney disease
- * Parkinson's disease
- * Mobility issues
- * Mental health conditions
- * Learning disabilities

A comprehensive overview of risk groups is available in the AWPB [supporting evidence document](#), page 48

3 Spread the word: Display and Share Heat-Health Resources Across Your Organisation

Public Health Heat Health Infographics

- The 2023–24 Heat Health Needs Assessment highlighted the need for clearer, more accessible messaging around extreme heat.
- VCS organisations also shared that the Adverse Weather & Health Plan (AWHP) can be difficult to use.

In response, the Public Health team worked closely with VCS partners to develop five easy-to-use infographics, based on UKHSA's *Beat the Heat* guidance. They're designed for both digital sharing and printing, so they're accessible to everyone—whether online or offline.

If you would like to receive electronic and/or printed versions of the infographics please contact: healthprotection@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk

How to stay cool

Wandsworth

- Drink plenty of fluids
- Cool your skin down with water and remove unnecessary clothing
- Wear sunscreen, a hat, and sunglasses when going outside
- Plan ahead to avoid the hottest part of the day

How to keep your home cool

LONDON BOROUGH OF RICHMOND UPON THAMES

- Close blinds and curtains during the day
- Open windows (if it is safe to) when the air feels cooler outside, such as at night
- Use electric fans if the air temperature is below 35°C (do not aim directly at yourself/others as can lead to dehydration)
- Ensure that the heating and electrical equipment is off

Looking after children in hot weather

LONDON BOROUGH OF RICHMOND UPON THAMES

- Check the news and weather forecast
- Wear sunscreen, hat & sunglasses when outside
- Schedule activities to cooler times of the day
- Ensure they drink plenty of fluids
- Look out for signs of heat related illness
- Be Safe - Cool the child down as soon as you can
- Act Fast - Get help. Call NHS 111 or in an emergency 999.

Summer Water Safety

Share summer safety messages by displaying [downloadable posters](#) and encourage conversations about water safety.

ALWAYS FOLLOW THE WATER SAFETY CODE

ROYAL LIFE SAVING SOCIETY UK

Whenever you are around water:

- **STOP AND THINK**
Take time to assess your surroundings. Look for the dangers and always research local signs and advice.
- **STAY TOGETHER**
When around water always go with friends or family. Swim at a lifeguarded venue.

In an emergency:

- **CALL 999**
If you are at the coast, call 999 and ask for the Coastguard. Don't enter the water to rescue.
- **FLOAT**
Fall in or become tired - stay calm, float on your back and call for help. Throw something that floats to somebody that has fallen in.

Enjoy Water Safety

Learn basic life-saving and CPR skills. Visit www.rls.org.uk

4

Help Your Community Stay Cool This Summer – Register as a Cool Space

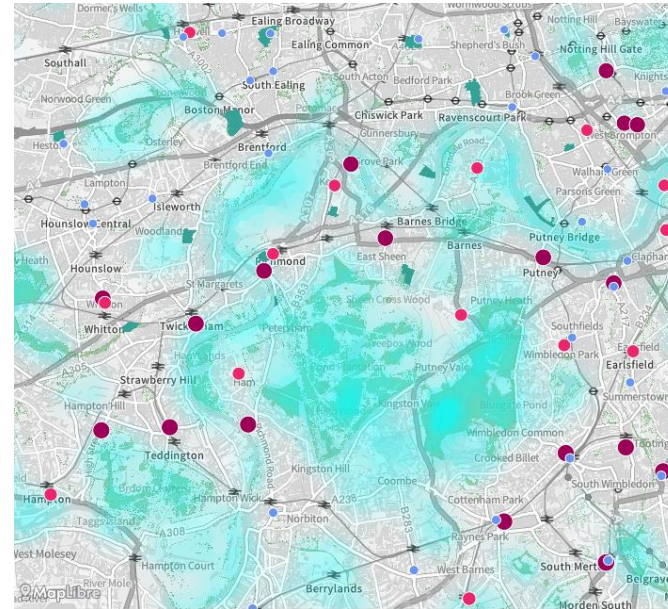
Cool spaces are indoor spaces where Londoners can find opportunities to shelter from the sun, cool down and rest to take respite on hot days.

Cool Spaces are accessible places where people can take refuge from extreme heat. As climate change increases the duration and frequency of heatwaves, these spaces are more important than ever —especially for vulnerable residents.

If your venue is:

- Open to all
- Free of charge
- Accessible (or stated if not)
- Staffed

Then you might be eligible to join the Cool Spaces initiative. The guidelines are set by the Greater London Authority and can be found at this link: [Criteria for cool spaces in London](#)



Cool Spaces VCS Guidance Available

Guidance from the Climate Change & Adaptation Team

- How to register to be a cool space
- Hot weather preparedness checklist for VCS
- Shade the UK Training

More information [here](#).



If this is something your organisation is able to support with, register to be a cool space [here](#).

Training videos: Staying healthy in hot weather

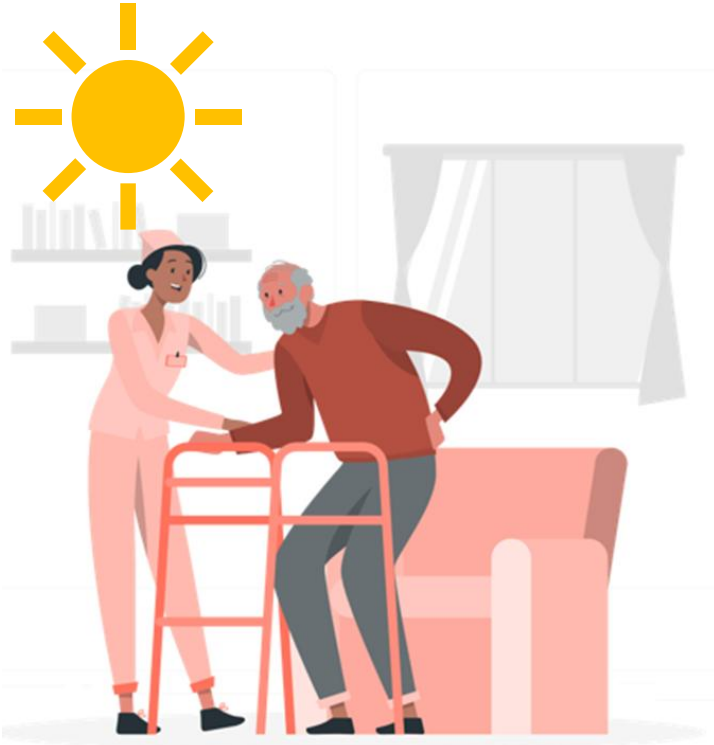


Image credit: Storyset

Could you organise a group training session where you watch the videos together and have a discussion afterwards?

We have partnered with Shade the UK to create a series of training videos to **support people who work or volunteer in community-facing organisations** to protect their own and others' health during hot weather.

Hot weather can affect people's health in different ways, particularly those who are more vulnerable. Being informed and prepared can make a real difference.

The training will help you to:

- Understand the main impacts of heat on our health
- Look after yourself during hot weather
- Identify and support vulnerable people during hot weather
- Prepare for and respond to hot weather to avoid negative health impacts
- Learn about Cool Spaces and create heat safe spaces



SCAN ME

Please contact climatechange@richmond.gov.uk if you have any questions or feedback



Appendices



The Hot Weather Health Protection Plan is developed using the guidance and supporting documents from UKHSA's Adverse weather and health plan:

There are three main pillars that underpin the AWHP. Public Health will utilise and spread awareness of this information

Guidance and Action Cards

Beat the Heat – [general population guidance](#)

Hot weather and health guidance for:

- * [Healthcare Professionals](#)
- * [Social care managers](#)
- * [Looking after children and early years settings](#)
- * [Supporting people homeless and sleeping rough](#)
- * [Organisers of Mass Gatherings](#)

Heat Health Alert [Action Cards](#)

[HHA system - voluntary and community sector \(action card\)](#)

[HHA system - commissioners \(action card\)](#)

[HHA system - health and social care providers \(action card\)](#)

[HHA system - national government \(action card\)](#)

- * [Heat summary action card - home care \(khub.net\)](#)
- * [Heat summary action card - healthcare \(khub.net\)](#)
- * [Heat summary action card - care homes \(khub.net\)](#)

Heat-Health Alerts service

The core alerting service operates in England from **1st June to 30th September**.

Heat-Health Alerts are operated by UKHSA in partnership with the Met Office.

The alerts tell people about:

1. The weather forecast
2. The effects of the weather
3. Advice about what to do to stay safe

For more information about the alerts system please see the [Weather-Health Alerting System: user guide – easy read](#).



[Register for alerts here](#)

Heat-Health Alert dashboard

The UKHSA Weather Alert Dashboard provides national situational awareness on current alerting status including

- * Expected impacts
- * National weather overview








Heat health alerts

The alerting system provides an early warning when adverse temperatures are likely to impact on the health and wellbeing of the population.

The Weather health alerting system is provided by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) in partnership with the Met Office. It's intended to provide early warning to the health and social care sector, the responder community, the voluntary and community sector and government departments when adverse temperatures are likely to impact on the health and wellbeing of the population. The Weather health alerting system is made up of the Heat-Health Alerts (HHA) and Cold-Health Alerts (CHA). The Weather health alerting system underpins the Adverse Weather and Health Plan.

The Heat-health alerting systems core alerting seasons runs from 1 June to 30 September each year. However should an episode of heat occur outside of this core period, an extraordinary alert will be issued. Make sure you are registered to [receive the alerts directly by email](#) by completing the registration form.

[View map of weather health alerts](#)

 North East Updated 09:00am on 2 September 2024	No Alert
 North West Updated 09:00am on 2 September 2024	No Alert
 Yorkshire and The Humber Updated 09:00am on 2 September 2024	No Alert
 East Midlands Updated 09:00am on 2 September 2024	No Alert
 West Midlands Updated 09:00am on 2 September 2024	No Alert
 East of England Updated 09:00am on 2 September 2024	No Alert
 London Updated 09:00am on 2 September 2024	No Alert

[UKHSA Dashboard here.](#)

Public Health supported RCVS' Extreme Heat Exercise for VCS organisations

Overview

- * Organised by Richmond CVS
- * Representatives from approximately ten organisations attended the exercise
- * The exercise simulated a heat episode that progressively worsened over several days. The scenario was divided into three parts, each focusing on a different theme: preparedness, actions during the emergency, and long-term recovery

The purpose of the exercise was to discuss the preparedness and actions that the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) would take during a heatwave. The exercise aimed to identify any gaps in resources and response capabilities

Key Discussion Highlights for Each Section of the Exercise: Impact on Partners, Members, and Service Users, Preparation Strategies, and Foreseen Barriers

Preparedness:

- * Educate people early and have information in place well in advance through newsletters and community leaders.
- * Communication can be challenging, especially for organisations with non-digital service users; infographics will be helpful to mitigate this.
- * Maintain lists of vulnerable people and their preferred contact methods.
- * Consider cultural differences, as some may not perceive 35°C as excessively hot.
- * Provide training for volunteers, especially older ones, and consider their welfare.
- * Establish policies with clear procedures for different emergencies.
- * Conduct regular welfare checks with vulnerable individuals and provide support even if activities are cancelled.

During the Emergency:

- * The most vulnerable individuals, such as older people, children, and pregnant women, should be prioritised. Communication may be difficult if power and internet services fail, so having hard copies of policies and contact details is crucial.
- * Refugees and asylum seekers may face additional challenges, including language barriers and the need for mental health support.
- * Coordination of individual initiatives and effective management of volunteer resources are necessary. Temporary accommodation may be required for some people, and the feasibility of relocating vulnerable individuals should be considered.

Long-term Recovery:

- * Proactive preparation and learning from past events are key. Volunteer numbers may be depleted, and economic challenges may arise. Emphasising the link to climate change and working on long-term solutions is important.
- * Regular updates and community meetings can help highlight available support. Adaptations to council buildings and providing clear information on climate impacts are also necessary.

Highlights from the discussion

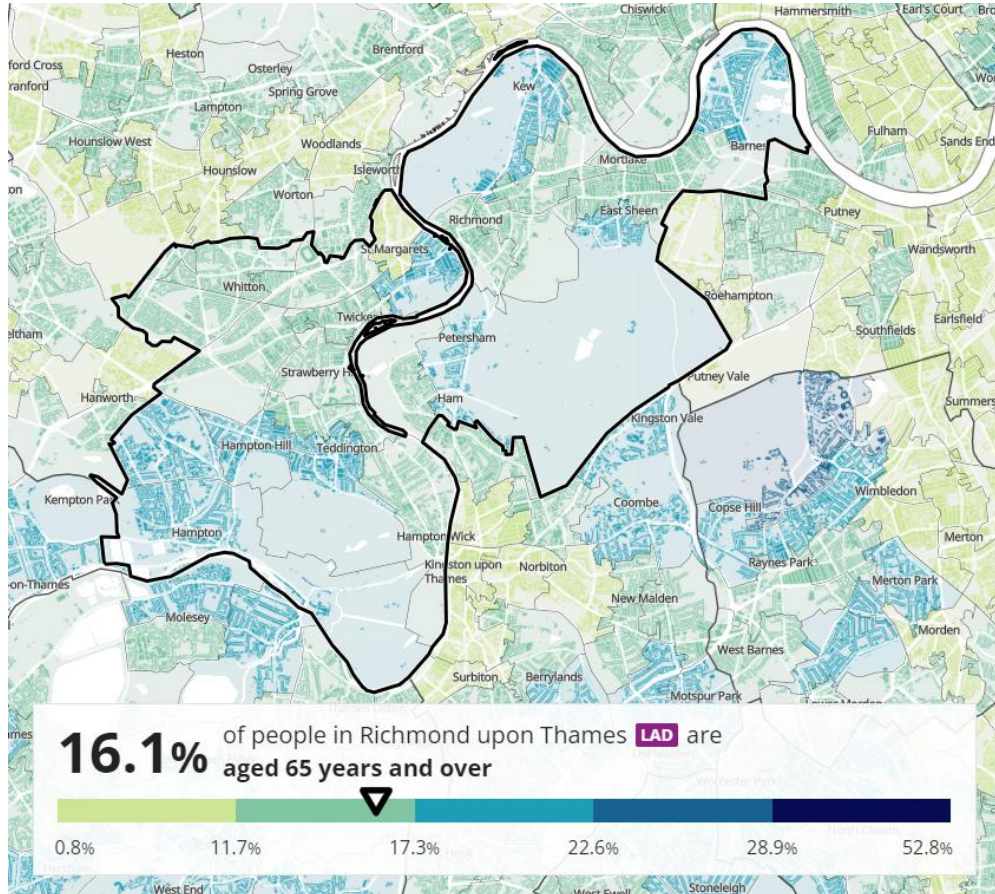
- * Communication strategies should cater to both digitally active and non-active service users.
- * The duty of care extends to both service users and volunteers.
- * Barriers such as cultural differences and infrastructure limitations need to be addressed.
- * Infographics will hopefully be a useful tool in preparing and educating people about hot weather
- * Volunteer training is important.
- * Coordination with national guidance and local resources is important.

Borough risk profiles

Aged 65+

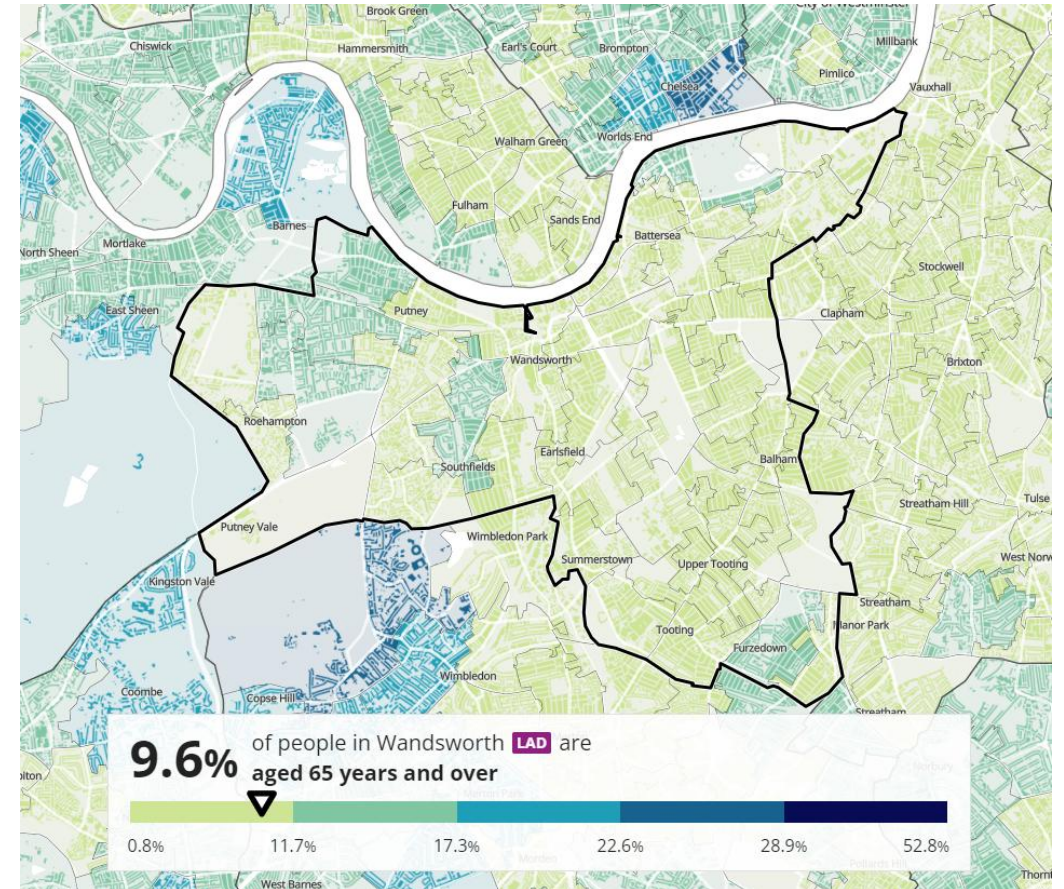
Note – The darker the blue the higher number of 65+ in the respective LSOA

Richmond:



The wards with the highest percentage of people aged 65 and over are Richmond Park Sheen Gate & Petersham (19.8%) and Hampton Village (19.6%).

Wandsworth:



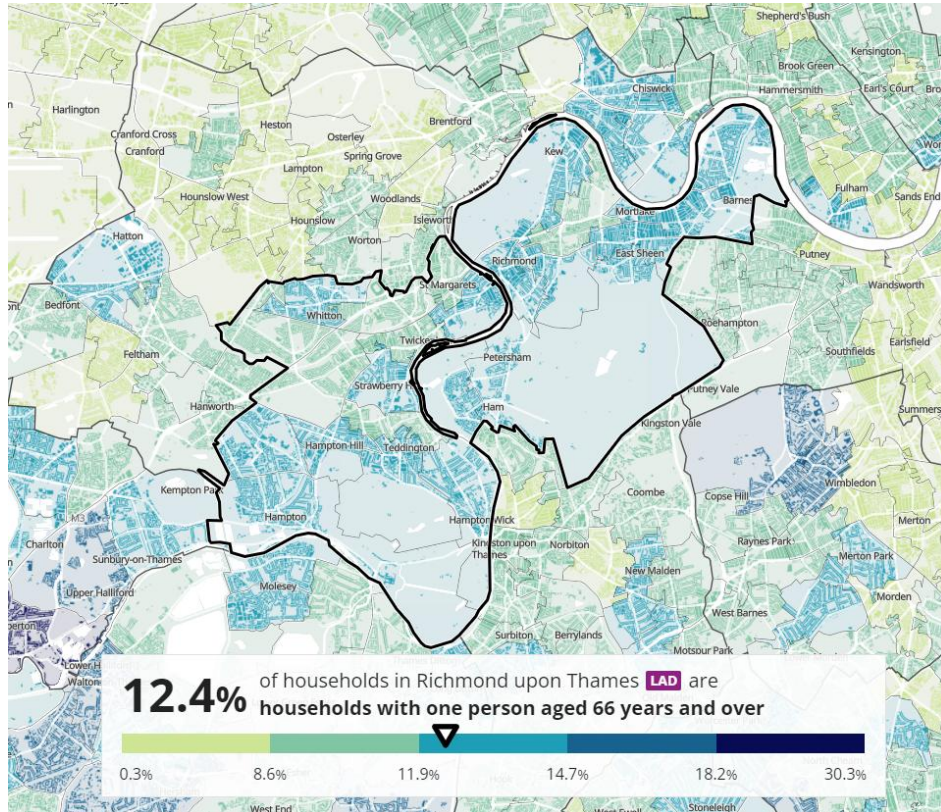
The wards with the highest percentage of people aged 65 and over are Battersea Park (16.4%) and West Putney (14.2%).

Borough risk profiles

Living alone aged 65+

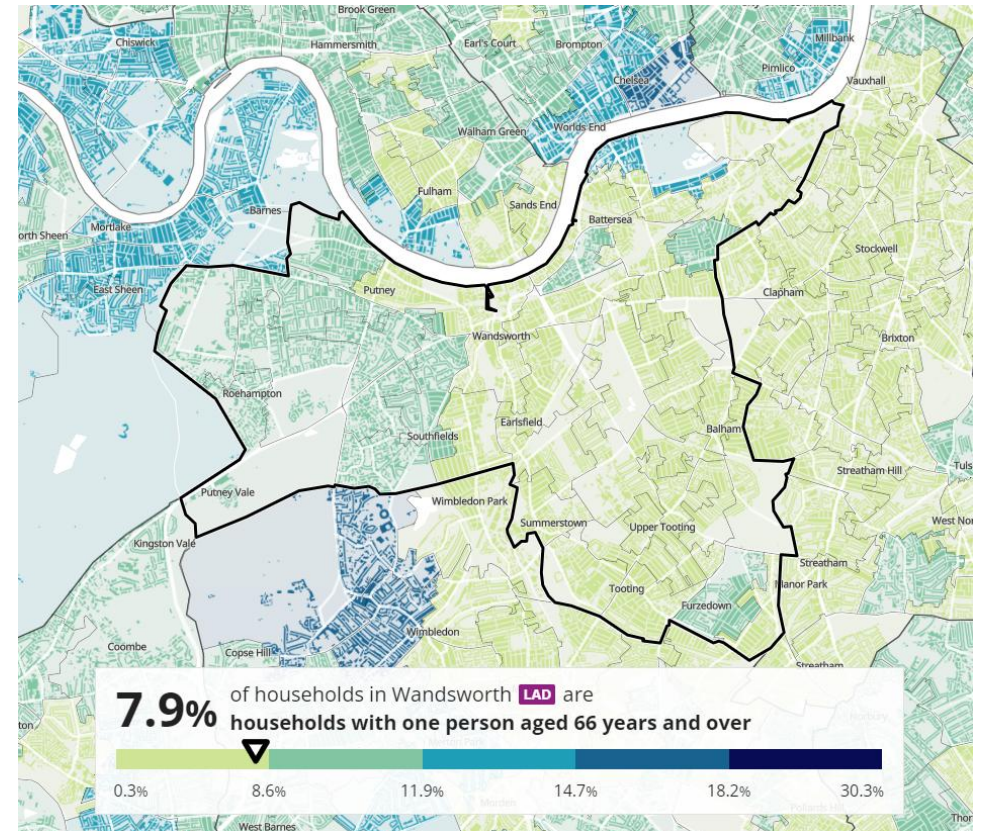
Note – The darker the blue the higher number of 65+ living alone in the respective LSOA

Richmond: Estimated number of those living alone aged 65+ (2018)



The wards with the highest percentage of people aged 65 and over living alone are Nurserylands and Hampton North (14.2%), Richmond Park Sheen Gate & Petersham (14.1%) and North Barnes (14.1%)

Wandsworth: Estimated number of those living alone aged 65+ (2018)



The wards with the highest percentage of people aged 65 and over living alone are Battersea Park (13.1%) and Roehampton Northwest (11.9%)

Adverse Weather and Health Plan Action Cards

Heat-Health Alert (HHA) action cards summarise suggested actions to be taken by different professional bodies and organisations in the event of extreme heat.

Documents



[Heat-Health Alert action card for the voluntary and community sector](#)

HTML



[Heat-Health Alert action card for commissioners](#)

HTML



[Heat-Health Alert action card for health and social care providers](#)

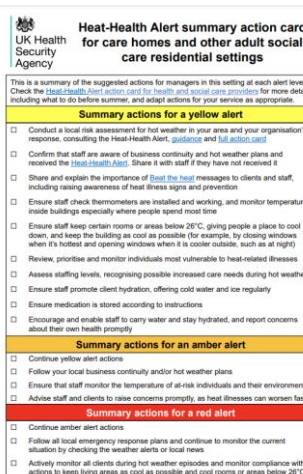
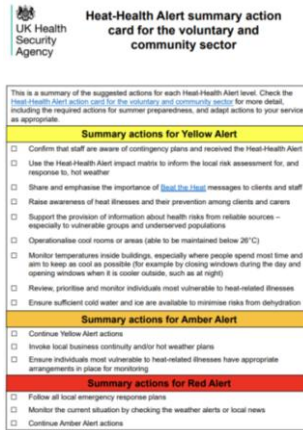
Ref: GOV-16192

HTML



[Heat-Health Alert action card for national government](#)

HTML



Guidance and Action Cards

Beat the Heat – [general population guidance](#)

Hot weather and health guidance for:

- [Healthcare Professionals](#)
- [Social care managers](#)
- [Looking after children and early years settings](#)
- [Supporting people homeless and sleeping rough](#)
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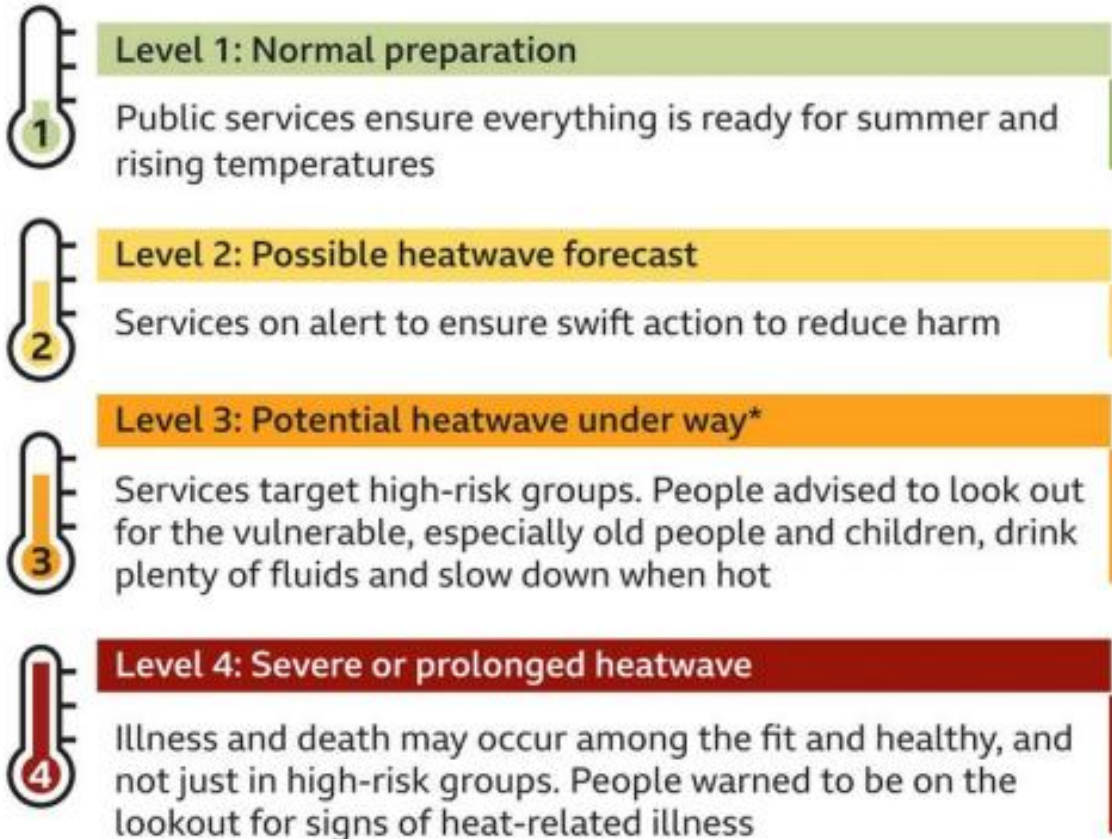
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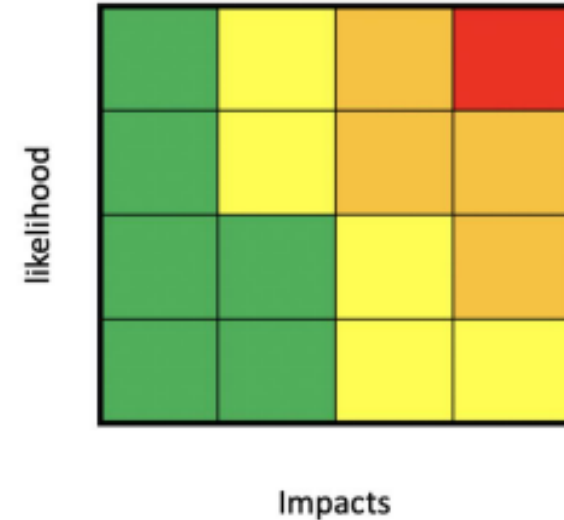
- [Heat summary action card - home care \(khub.net\)](#)
- [Heat summary action card - healthcare \(khub.net\)](#)
- [Heat summary action card - care homes \(khub.net\)](#)

Heat Health Alerts

i [Register for the alert service here](#)



* A UK heatwave is declared after temperatures meet or break a temperature threshold for three days. Thresholds vary by region, but the average is 30C by day and 15C at night for two days.



Heat Health Alerts are in action from the 1st June – 30th September

The alerts are Impact based.

The alerts are full aligned with the National Severe Weather Warning Service Extreme Heat Warnings

User guide: [here](#).

[Weather-Health Alerting system](#)

[Weather-Health Alerting system: user guide \(pdf\)](#)

Weather-Health Alerts Dashboard

Close X

London

Type Heat Health Alert

Alert **No Alert**

Start 31 August 2024 at 09:00pm

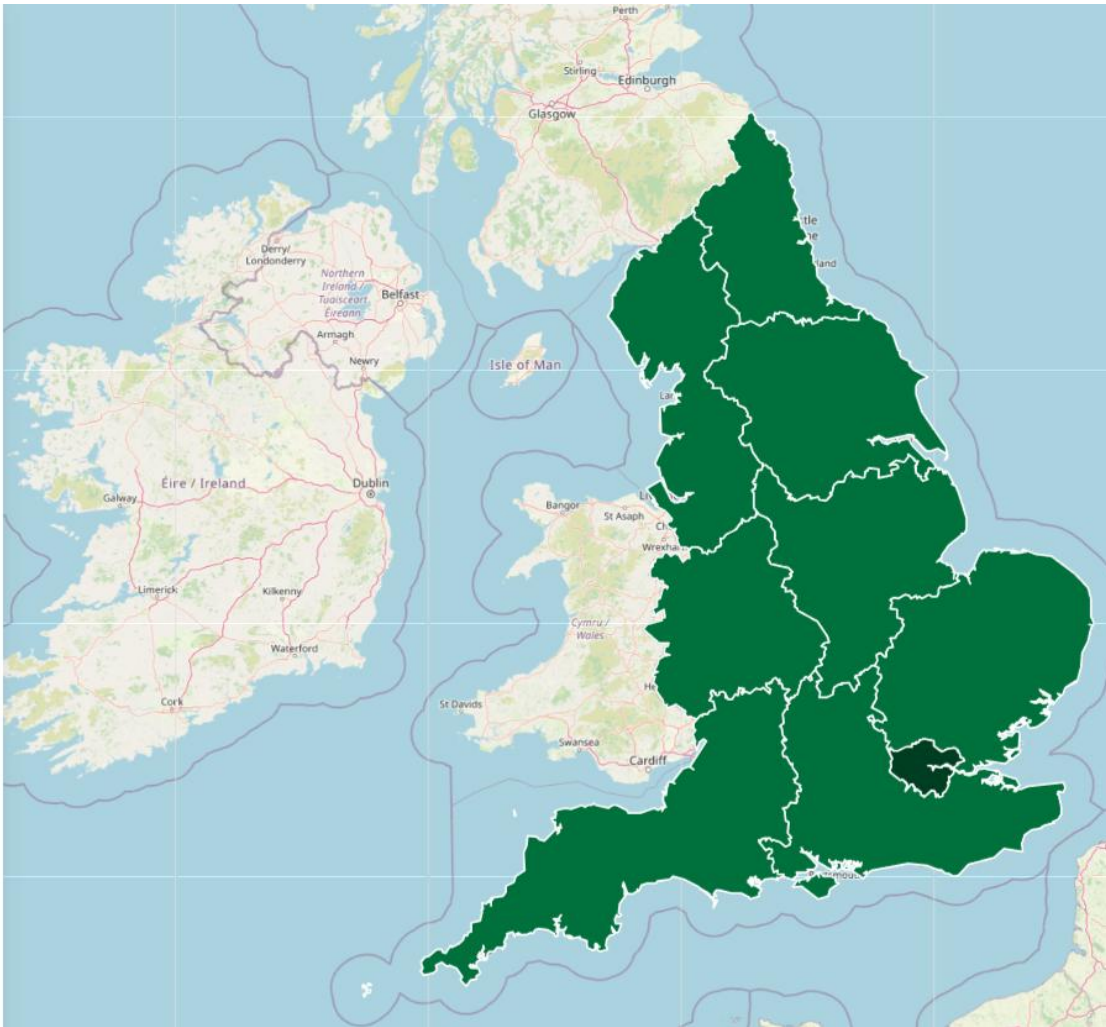
End 2 September 2024 at 09:00am

Description

Little impact observed on health, healthcare services and social care provision. Business as usual.

[Go to alert page](#)

Monday, 2 September 2024 at 09:00am



<https://ukhsa-dashboard.data.gov.uk/weather-health-alerts/heat>

What is a heatwave?

A heatwave in the UK is defined as at least **three consecutive days** where the maximum temperature meets or exceeds the heatwave threshold



Hot weather and health resources

[Adverse Weather and Health Plan](#) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) & [Supporting Evidence](#) & [AWHP Equity Review](#)

General guidance

Hot Weather and Health Guidance for the Public: [Beat the Heat](#) (Guidance – also in easy read & BSL, home checklist and poster)

Also available in: [العربية](#), [বাংলা](#), [Español](#), [જોજિયન](#), [Italiano](#), [ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਗੁਰਮੁਖੀ](#), [Polski](#), [Português](#), [Română](#), [Українська](#), [اردو](#)

Hot weather and health guidance for:

- [Healthcare Professionals](#)
- [Social care managers](#)
- [Looking after children and early years settings](#)
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What support / training / information do you need?

UKHSA

Fill the following form, to receive the links to the AWHP recordings, slides, and quiz: <https://forms.office.com/e/iHgscAjYpm>

Guidance and training resources for staff and the public - in AWHP appendices 2, 3 and 4.

Additional capacity building webinars on AWHP implementation and associated guidance and weather-health alert systems.

Capacity building

Making Every Contact Count (MECC), to signpost potentially vulnerable patients to appropriate services - developed in the Yorkshire and the Humber region

<http://www.makeeverycontactcount.co.uk/>

OHID

All Our Health Programme: <https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/all-our-health/>

DEFRA

[UV Index Graphs - Defra, UK](#): The DEFRA Daily Air Quality Information website www.uk-air.defra.gov.uk contains information on both air pollution and UKHSA's real-time UV measurement data

MET OFFICE

[Met Office National Severe Weather Warning Service](#)

[Met Office Severe Weather](#)

[Met Office Weather Ready \(Hot weather and its impacts - Met Office\)](#)