

Gateway reference: 16030

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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26 May 2011

Dear Colleague

HEATWAVE PLAN

The Heatwave Plan for England, first published in 2004, is to be reissued on 26 May 2011 to raise both public and professional awareness. Following the launch, a copy of the Plan, the accompanying factsheets for staff and care home managers and a public information leaflet will be available on the DH website at: www.dh.gov.uk/publications.

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 2011

There are only a few changes to this year's Heatwave Plan, to reflect changes to some structures and organisations since 2010.

- Information has been changed to reflect the closure of the Regional Government Offices as at 31st March 2011 and other changes to some structures and organisations since 2010.

- There are some detailed changes to Box 7 on page 30 of the Heatwave Plan as to the wider benefits of Green Spaces.
- As in previous years, information leaflets both for the public and professionals have been made available to be downloaded from the DH website. The information content and advice given in these leaflets remains the same as for 2010. Last year however, we printed copies of the public information leaflet, “Looking After Yourself and Others During Hot Weather” and sent these, without request, to a range of NHS and other institutions. Additional leaflets were available on request from either professionals or the public. For 2011, we believe that as the Plan is now mature, it is reasonable to offer electronic access as the norm and make access to the leaflets ‘on request’ for both professionals and the public. Our dissemination and communication strategy, including this letter, will seek to ensure that Heatwave Plan is widely communicated using a variety of channels to ensure maximum publicity to health and social care professionals as well as the general public, and to publicise the availability of the hardcopy leaflets for those who want them.

The Plan sets out the arrangements that will apply, and the actions required, 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 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.
- Local Authority Housing and Planning teams, and providers of social housing, take account of long-term measures to reduce the impact of heatwaves, especially in urban areas where temperatures become hotter. This includes increasing external and internal shading, the use of reflective paints, and using trees and green spaces to aide urban cooling.
- 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.

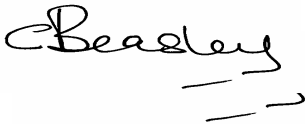
Yours sincerely,



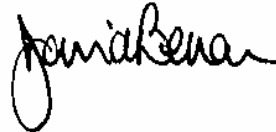
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Chief Medical Officer



DAVID NICHOLSON
NHS Chief Executive



CHRIS BEASLEY
Chief Nursing Officer



DAVID BEHAN
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Local Government and
Care Partnerships