Heatwave Policy

Scope:	Sheltered Housing, Supported Living (no care or support staff present)	**Author:**	Assistant Director of Housing and Resident Engagement)
Legislation:	• Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 • Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 • Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 • The Equality Act 2010 • UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 • Human Rights Act 1998 • Adverse Weather and Health Plan (UKHSA, 2023–2026) • 8. Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)	**Approved by:**	Executive Team
		Date of approval:	13th October 2025
		Date of next review:	13th October 2028
Regulatory/ Governance:	• Health and Safety Executive (HSE) • UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA)		
Related Policies:	1. Vulnerability Policy 2. Safeguarding Policy 3. Health and Safety Policy. 4. Resident Engagement Policy 5. Repairs and Maintenance Policy 6. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy		

1. Policy Statement

This policy is designed to help support residents particularly those living in sheltered and supported housing from the health risks associated with extreme heat. By promoting awareness and ensuring proactive planning across our Contact Centre, Housing Officers, and Direct Labour Organisation (DLO), we aim to provide timely and compassionate support. The policy is guided by national health and safety legislation and NHS recommendations to ensure our approach is both effective and inclusive.

2. Scope

2.1 Applies to all Housing Solutions employees involved in supporting vulnerable customers and maintaining homes. It may also be shared with statutory and voluntary partners.

2.2 Policy Objectives

- Support vulnerable customers from heat-related harm.
- Follow NHS, UKHSA, and HSE guidance.
- Use the Met Office's Heat-Health Alert System (Levels 0–4).
- Ensure frontline Contact Centre, Housing Officers & DLO are subscribed to Met Office alerts.

2.3 Heatwave Risks

- High temperatures can cause serious health issues, especially for older adults.
- Mortality can rise sharply within 1–2 days of a heatwave.
- Early action and planning are essential.

2.4 Met Office Heat-Health Alert System

- Level 0 – Long-term planning (year-round)
- Level 1 – Summer preparedness (1 June – 15 September)
- Level 2 – Alert: 60% chance of heatwave in 2–3 days
- Level 3 – Action: Threshold temperatures reached
- Level 4 – National emergency: Multi-sector response
- Updated UKHSA & Met Office Heat-Health Alert Levels:
- Yellow – Low impact – expected effects on vulnerable individuals
- Amber – Medium impact – likely health effects across vulnerable groups
- Red – High impact – significant risk to health across the population

2.5 Health and Safety Considerations

- Risk Assessments: Managers must assess heat-related risks in line with HSE guidance.

- Thermal Comfort: Ensure indoor temperatures are reasonable and provide access to cool areas.

Preventive Measures:

- Encourage hydration
- Adjust work schedules
- Monitor vulnerable individuals closely

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Detail roles and responsibilities in relation to the policy/procedure

Team	Responsibilities
Executive Team	• Approve the policy • Advocate for implementation of heatwave safety measures
Senior Managers	• Oversee operational delivery of heatwave response • Ensure cross-team coordination and resource allocation
Housing Officers	• Identify and escalate concerns about vulnerable residents • Ensure cooling measures are in place in homes • Liaise with DLO and Contact Centre
DLO (Direct Labour Org)	• Respond to urgent repairs affecting indoor temperatures • Support with setting up cooling equipment where needed
Contact Centre	• Track implementation of heatwave procedures • Share heatwave safety advice with residents • Triage and escalate heat-related concerns
Communications/PR	• Communicate heatwave alerts and guidance via calls, texts, emails, and social media • Support awareness campaigns
Resident Empowerment manager	• Promote resident understanding of heatwave safety through engagement activities • Gather feedback from residents on heatwave support needs • Support vulnerable residents through targeted outreach

4. Legislation and Guidance

- Adverse Weather and Health Plan 2025 to 2026 (UKHSA)
- Health and Safety Executive (HSE): Employers must assess and manage risks related to heat stress and thermal comfort under the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations.

5. Procedure

This section outlines the step-by-step actions for Contact Centre, Housing Officers & DLO to follow during each heatwave alert level (0–4), and general guidance on supporting vulnerable residents, maintaining safe indoor temperatures, hydration, and communication protocols.

Heatwave Alert Levels and Actions

5.1 Here is the **Heatwave Alert Levels and Actions** table in plain text with color-coded labels for clarity:

Heatwave Alert Levels and Actions

Alert Level	Actions
Level 0 – Long-term Planning	• Ensure all relevant front line staff are trained on heatwave procedures. • Maintain updated contact lists for vulnerable residents. • Conduct regular checks on ventilation and cooling systems.
Level 1 – Summer Preparedness (1 June – 15 September)	• Remind staff to monitor Met Office alerts. • Distribute heatwave awareness materials to residents. • Check that fans and cooling equipment are functional.
Level 2 – Alert and Readiness	• Inform all staff and residents of the alert. 6. Contact residents identified as vulnerable to extreme heat to give advice and guidance • Ensure communal areas are kept cool and ventilated.
Level 3 – Heatwave Action	• Increase frequency of welfare checks for high-risk individuals. • Monitor indoor temperatures and adjust ventilation as needed.
Level 4 – National Emergency	• Follow national emergency protocols and liaise with local authorities. • Prioritize support for residents with medical conditions. • Document all actions and communications for review. • Activate relevant business continuity plans to ensure uninterrupted support for vulnerable residents and maintain essential services.

7. General Guidance (e.g., text messages, website updates, phone calls)

- Encourage residents to stay hydrated and wear light clothing.
- Avoid scheduling strenuous activities during peak heat hours.
- Use blinds or curtains to block direct sunlight.
- [Maintain clear communication with residents and Contact Centre, Housing Officers & DLO throughout the heatwave period.
- Report any health concerns or incidents to the appropriate medical services immediately.

8. Consumer Standards

The Heatwave Policy aligns with the **Consumer Standards** set out by the Regulator of Social Housing, particularly the **Neighbourhood and Community Standard,** by:

- **Promoting Resident Safety**: The policy outlines proactive measures to reduce heat-related harm, especially for vulnerable residents, ensuring their homes remain safe and habitable during extreme weather.
- **Enhancing Communication**: It establishes clear channels—such as text messages, website updates, and phone calls—to keep residents informed and supported throughout heatwave periods.
- **Fostering Inclusive Services**: By identifying and supporting vulnerable housing and individuals, the policy ensures equitable access to safety measures and welfare checks, in line with the **Equality Act 2010**.
- **Encouraging Accountability**: Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined for Housing Officers, the Contact Centre, and DLO teams, ensuring a coordinated and responsive approach to resident needs.
- **Demonstrating Responsiveness**: The policy includes procedures for escalating concerns and adapting services during different heatwave alert levels, showing a commitment to responsive and resident-focused service delivery.

8 Vulnerable customers

- Housing Solutions follows best practices outlined in the NHS Heatwave Plan and UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) guidance to support residents living in vulnerable housing during periods of extreme heat. These practices include:

    - Identifying residents at higher risk, such as older adults, those with long-term health conditions, or those living in poorly insulated or high-rise buildings.
    - Providing clear and timely communication about heatwave risks, including practical advice on staying safe and cool.
    - Encouraging hydration, wearing light clothing, and accessing shaded or ventilated areas.
    - Coordinating welfare checks and support through Housing Officers and the Contact Centre to ensure residents are safe and well.
    - Prioritising repairs and maintenance that affect indoor temperatures, such as window coverings, ventilation, or cooling equipment.

9. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

9.1 Housing Solutions recognises the needs of a diverse population and always acts within the scope of its own Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy, and Equalities Act 2010. Housing Solutions works closely with its partners to ensure it has a clear understanding of its resident community with clear regularly updated service user profiles. Housing Solutions will record, analyse and monitor information on ethnicity, vulnerability and disability.

10. Confidentiality

10.1 Under the Data Protection Act 2018, UK General Data Protection Regulation (UKGDPR), all personal and sensitive organisational information, however received, is treated as confidential. This includes:

- anything of a personal nature that is not a matter of public record about a resident, client, applicant, Contact Centre, Housing Officers & DLO or board member
- sensitive organisational information.

10.2 Housing Solutions employees will ensure that they only involve other agencies and share information where there is a legal basis for processing the information.

11. Review

11.1 This policy will be reviewed on a 3-yearly basis or more frequently in response to changes in legislation, regulatory guidance, good practice or changes in other relevant Housing Solutions' policy.

11.2 Our performance in relation to the delivery of the services and activities set out in this policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis through our established reporting mechanisms to the Executive Team and associated committees.