To: Local Authority Chief Executives  
Local Authority Directors of Public Health  
NHS England Regional  
Clinical Leads of Clinical Commissioning Groups

CC: Accountable Officers of CCGs, LA Emergency Planning Officers, NHS Trust CEs, NHS Foundation Trust CEs, NHS Trust Medical Directors, NHS Trust Nursing 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

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20 May 2015

Re: Heatwave plan for England

As we approach summer, this letter is intended to draw your attention to the Heatwave plan for England (background Annexe 1).

No changes have been made to the plan this year, apart from removing the calendar year from the title, amending broken links, and reflecting new NHS England structures. This plan will remain in place until further notice.

The following documents are available online at:  
www.gov.uk/government/publications/heatwave-plan-for-england:

- the Heatwave plan for England
- Making the Case: why long-term strategic planning for heatwaves is essential for health and wellbeing
- three information pamphlets containing action cards for easy use by organisations, staff and the public
- existing advice on looking after children in school and early year’s settings now in a stand-alone leaflet
- easy read version
Recommended next steps

The plan is a good practice guide and the actions denoted within it are illustrative. There are five key messages we recommend to all local areas:

1. All local organisations should consider this document and satisfy themselves that the suggested actions and heat-health watch alerts are understood across the system, and that **local plans are adapted as appropriate** to the local context. Local health resilience partnerships (LHRPs) may wish to use the plan to review their own heatwave plans.

2. NHS, social care and local authority commissioners, together with local resilience forums and LHRPs, should satisfy themselves that the distribution of **heat-health watch alerts will reach those that need to take action**.

3. NHS, social care and local authority commissioners should satisfy themselves that **providers and stakeholders take appropriate action** according to the Heat-Health Watch level in place and their professional judgements, noting the **dates of Ramadan** Thursday 18 June to 18 July 2015 (approximately) when many Muslims will be fasting during daylight hours.

4. Opportunities should be taken for closer partnership working with the **voluntary and community sector** to help reduce vulnerability and to support the planning and response to heatwaves. This should include organisations with remits that are not specifically related to health and social care, since their engagement can help to communicate messages, provide additional resources, and identify and engage vulnerable people, who may not be already linked into statutory services.

5. Long-term planning and commissioning to reduce heat-related harm, in view of the evidence on climate change is considered **core business by health and wellbeing boards** and included in joint strategic needs assessments and joint health and wellbeing strategies where appropriate.

We hope that you and copy recipients of this letter will discuss the suite of documents that make up the Heatwave plan with those organisations and teams that need to take action, in order to protect the health of the population from exposure to severe heat.
Yours sincerely,

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Director of Health Protection and Medical Director, Public Health England

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

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

Sarah Pinto-Duschinsky,  
National Director of Operations and Delivery, NHS England

Councillor Izzi Seccombe  
Chair of Community Wellbeing Board, Local Government Association
Annexe 1 – Background to the Heatwave plan for England

The objective of the Heatwave plan for England is to protect the population from heat-related harm to health. It recommends a series of steps, to be taken throughout the year by:

- the NHS, local authorities, social care, and other public agencies
- professionals working with people at risk
- individuals, community and voluntary sector

The plan is an important component of long term and emergency planning, which will become increasingly relevant in adapting to the impacts of climate change.

Heat-health watch alerts

The Met Office will issue heatwave alerts from 1 June 2014 to 15 September 2015. There are five levels:

- Level 0 (long term planning, all year)
- Level 1 (heatwave and summer preparedness, 1 June to 15 September)
- Level 2 (heatwave is forecast – alert and readiness)
- Level 3 (heatwave action)
- Level 4 (major incident – emergency response, declared by central government)

New registrations and amendments to existing registrations need to contact the Met Office using Enquiries@metoffice.gov.uk providing name, organisation and email address (.nhs or .gov or provide organisation type).

Related guidance

Further heatwave advice for primary care is available from the Royal College of General Practitioners at www.rcgp.org.uk/clinical-and-research/clinical-resources/adverse-weather.aspx,