

Moonlight Homecare Ltd – Heatwave Protocol

Heat-Health Alert Action Plan for Services Delivering Care in People’s Homes

Purpose

This protocol outlines the actions required by all staff and management at Moonlight Homecare Ltd during periods of hot weather and Heat-Health Alerts. The aim is to protect clients, staff, and visitors from heat-related illness and ensure continuity of safe care services.

1. Objectives

- Protect vulnerable clients from heat-related harm
 - Ensure staff understand and follow heatwave procedures
 - Maintain safe home environments during extreme temperatures
 - Support hydration, wellbeing, and safe medication storage
 - Ensure prompt escalation of concerns relating to heat illness
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2. Individuals Most at Risk

The following clients are considered high risk during hot weather:

- Older adults
 - Bedbound or immobile clients
 - Clients with dementia or cognitive impairment
 - Individuals with heart, respiratory, or kidney conditions
 - Clients taking medications affected by heat or dehydration
 - Individuals living alone or without regular support
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3. Yellow Alert Actions – Hot Weather Preparedness

During a Yellow Heat-Health Alert, all staff and management must:

Management Responsibilities

- Continue standard hot weather monitoring actions
- Follow local business continuity and hot weather plans
- Conduct a local heat-risk assessment for all services
- Ensure all staff receive and understand Heat-Health Alert guidance
- Assess staffing levels and prepare for increased client needs
- Increase communication regarding “Beat the Heat” guidance
- Ensure thermometers are available to staff where required
- Ensure care systems include heat-related welfare checks

Staff Responsibilities

- Monitor room temperatures and client wellbeing during visits
 - Encourage clients to drink fluids regularly unless medically restricted
 - Check food and water supplies are sufficient
 - Ensure medication is stored safely and not exposed to excessive heat
 - Advise clients to:
 - Close curtains/blinds during the hottest part of the day
 - Keep windows closed when outdoor temperatures are hotter
 - Open windows during cooler periods, especially at night
 - Wear light clothing and remain in cooler rooms where possible
 - Observe and report signs of heat illness immediately, including:
 - Dizziness
 - Confusion
 - Headache
 - Excessive sweating
 - Fatigue
 - Shortness of breath
 - Reduced urine output
 - Escalate concerns promptly to management, family, GP, NHS 111, or emergency services where necessary
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4. Amber Alert Actions – Significant Heatwave Response

During an Amber Heat-Health Alert, the following enhanced measures apply:

Management Responsibilities

- Continue all Yellow Alert actions
- Follow local emergency response and business continuity plans
- Monitor weather updates and local authority guidance regularly
- Ensure increased welfare monitoring of vulnerable clients
- Review staffing arrangements and emergency cover availability

Staff Responsibilities

- Actively monitor all clients during visits and welfare calls
 - Ensure living areas remain as cool as possible
 - Aim to keep rooms or cool areas below 26°C where possible
 - Increase frequency of hydration prompts and welfare observations
 - Confirm high-risk clients have family contact or telephone support arrangements
 - Report any deterioration in client condition immediately
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5. Red Alert Actions – Severe Heat Emergency

During a Red Heat-Health Alert:

Immediate Actions

- Treat the situation as a major health risk emergency
 - Prioritise visits to high-risk and isolated clients
 - Increase welfare calls and monitoring frequency
 - Escalate all serious concerns immediately
 - Consider emergency services involvement where clients are at risk
 - Ensure staff take regular hydration and rest breaks
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6. Staff Wellbeing

Moonlight Homecare Ltd recognises that staff are also at risk during extreme temperatures.

All staff should:

- Carry drinking water during shifts
- Stay hydrated throughout the day
- Wear lightweight uniform where appropriate
- Take regular breaks where possible
- Report symptoms of heat exhaustion immediately

7. Recording and Documentation

All heat-related observations and actions must be documented in the care management system, including:

- Room temperature concerns
- Hydration monitoring
- Advice provided to clients
- Welfare concerns
- Escalations and actions taken

8. Escalation Procedure

Staff must escalate concerns immediately to:

1. Office/On-call Manager
2. Next of Kin or family representative
3. GP or District Nurse
4. NHS 111
5. Emergency Services (999) if urgent

9. Review

This protocol will be reviewed annually before summer periods or sooner following:

- Significant incidents
- Changes in national guidance
- Extreme weather events

Prepared for: Moonlight Homecare Ltd

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Review Frequency: Annual

Applies To: All care staff, office staff, and management teams