Cumberland Council

NEWSLETTER

June 2026

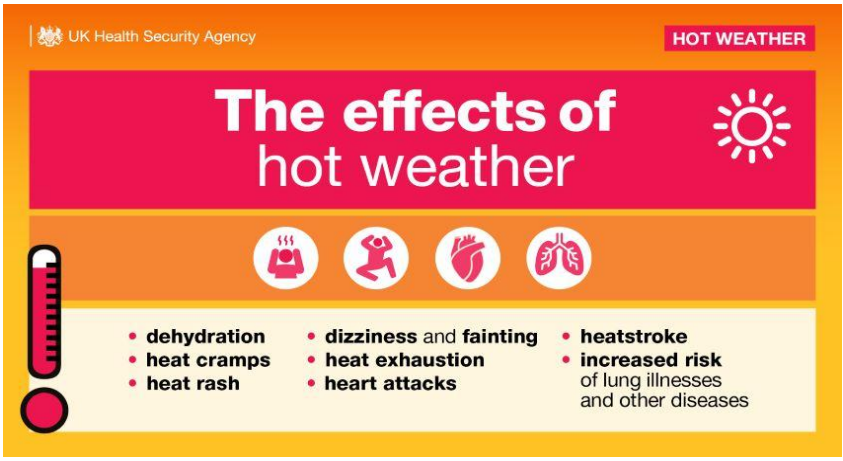
Infection Prevention and Control for care homes across Cumberland

Summer Preparedness

Keeping residents, visitors and staff safe during hot weather and seasonal risks

Summer increases the risk of **heat-related illness, dehydration, and gastrointestinal infections**, particularly in care home settings where residents are more vulnerable.
This bulletin summaries practical infection prevention and control (IPC) actions for care home teams, aligned to UKHSA guidance.

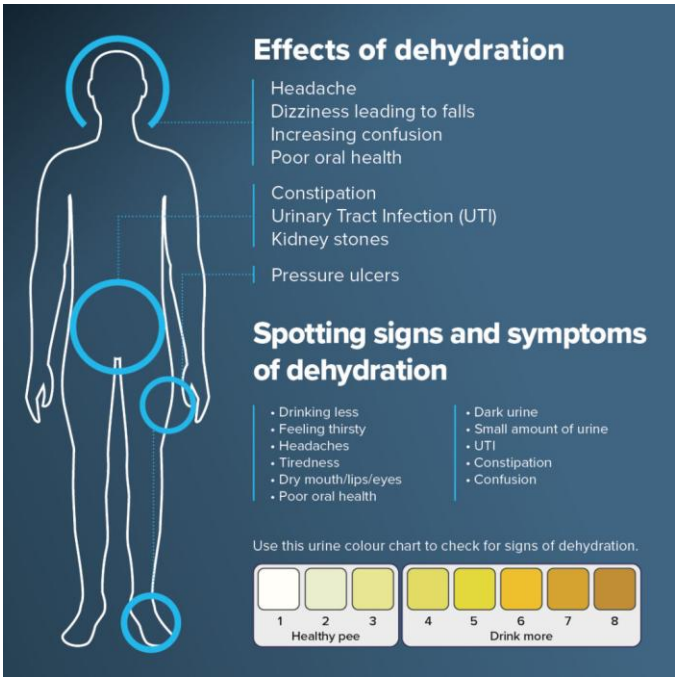
Heat and hot weather preparedness



Older adults are particularly vulnerable during periods of hot weather, especially those with chronic illness, reduced mobility, or taking certain medications that increase the risk of dehydration.

- **Offer fluids regularly** (little and often) – do not wait for residents to ask
- Encourage a **variety of drinks** and support residents who need assistance to drink
- Support residents to **wear lightweight clothing** and remain in cooler areas of the home
- **Reduce indoor heat** (close curtains or blinds on sun-facing windows and ventilate safely)
- **Plan care activities** outside the hottest part of the day where possible
- **Monitor for early signs of heat exhaustion** (e.g. confusion, dizziness, reduced urine output) and escalate concerns promptly

Preventing dehydration



Dehydration increases the risk of falls, confusion, constipation and UTIs.

- **Offer a range of drinks** regularly (little and often), including cold options
- **Monitor intake** for high-risk residents and escalate concerns early
- **Support those who need help to drink**, especially at busy times and medication rounds
- **Use hydration charts** for high-risk residents



Sign up to heat alerts at

Heat-health Alert service - Met Office

Keep the Care Environment Cool

- **Keep curtains or blinds closed** on sun-facing windows during the day to reduce heat gain
- **Open windows** at night or early morning when it is cooler outside (where safe to do so)
- Identify and use the **coolest rooms** for residents most at risk.
- **Monitor and record room temperatures,** especially bedrooms and lounges.

Gastrointestinal infections (including norovirus)

Norovirus can occur **all year round**, including during summer, and spreads rapidly in care settings.

- Report symptomatic staff and residents to the IPC team promptly.
  -Symptomatic staff **must not return to work for 48 hours after last episode** of vomiting and diarrhea.
  -Isolate symptomatic residents until **72 hours** after their symptoms have stopped.
- Symptomatic residents should have their own toilet or commode facilities
- Handwashing with soap and water is essential, especially after toileting and before food handling.
- Clean and disinfect vomit/diarrhoea spills promptly using a chlorine/bleach-based product (follow product instructions).

Medication risk awareness

- Residents taking certain medications may be at increased risk of **dehydration or heat-related illness**
- Refer to the **accompanying guidance** for examples of medicines to look out for
- Monitor these individuals more closely during hot weather and ensure adequate hydration
- Escalate any concerns promptly, particularly signs of reduced intake, confusion, or deterioration

Staff wellbeing during hot weather

- Ensure you have **regular access to drinking water** and stay well hydrated throughout your shift
- Encourage colleagues to take **regular breaks in cool or shaded areas**, especially during hotter parts of the day
- Plan tasks where possible to reduce time spent in high temperatures
- Wear lightweight, breathable clothing in line with uniform policy
- Report any symptoms of heat-related illness (e.g. dizziness, headache, or feeling unwell) promptly to a senior member of staff

Core IPC summer checklist

- Maintain **effective hand hygiene at the point of care** — use soap and water when hands are visibly soiled or during gastrointestinal outbreaks
- Use **appropriate PPE** when caring for symptomatic residents and when cleaning body fluid spills
- Increase cleaning of **high-touch surfaces** (e.g. door handles, handrails) during outbreaks and periods of increased footfall
- Report **cases or clusters of diarrhoea and vomiting** to the IPC team promptly and follow local outbreak procedures

Useful links

- Beat the heat: staying safe in hot weather - GOV.UK
- Hot weather and health: supporting vulnerable people
- Heat-health Alert service - Met Office
- Infection prevention and control: resource for adult social care (DHSC/UKHSA)
- Adverse Weather and Health Plan (heat advice and alerts)
- Norovirus information (UKHSA)