



1. Purpose

- 1.1** To ensure that staff understand the risks to Service Users during hot weather and are able to take steps to reduce those risks.
- 1.2** To prevent deaths, minimise admissions to hospital caused by extreme heat, reduce heat-related illness or distress and continue to provide quality care within Serendipity Healthcare Ltd.
- 1.3** To ensure that during times of emergency such as COVID-19 pandemic, the actions to take to keep people safe from high temperatures are known.
- 1.4** To support Serendipity Healthcare Ltd in meeting the following Key Lines of Enquiry:

Key Question	Key Lines of Enquiry
RESPONSIVE	R1: How do people receive personalised care that is responsive to their needs?
SAFE	S2: How are risks to people assessed and their safety monitored and managed so they are supported to stay safe and their freedom is respected?
WELL-LED	W2: Does the governance framework ensure that responsibilities are clear and that quality performance, risks and regulatory requirements are understood and managed?

- 1.5** To meet the legal requirements of the regulated activities that Serendipity Healthcare Ltd is registered to provide:
- The Care Act 2014
 - The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014
 - Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
 - The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992

2. Scope

- 2.1** The following roles may be affected by this policy:
- All staff
- 2.2** The following Service Users may be affected by this policy:
- Service users
- 2.3** The following stakeholders may be affected by this policy:
- Family
 - Advocates
 - Representatives
 - Commissioners
 - External health professionals
 - Local Authority
 - NHS
 - Visitors



- Contractors

3. Objectives

- 3.1** To identify the actions to be undertaken by Serendipity Healthcare Ltd before and during a heatwave to provide care for those Service Users at greater risk during a heatwave or hot weather.
- 3.2** To ensure that Serendipity Healthcare Ltd has a robust heatwave plan in place to manage the impact of a heatwave and the safety and wellbeing of staff at Serendipity Healthcare Ltd.
- 3.3** To be able to organise and adapt services to continue to provide care and treatment for people suffering from the impact of excess heat, whilst maintaining other essential care.

4. Policy

- 4.1** Although there is no official definition of a 'heatwave' in the UK, the term can be used to describe an extended period of hot weather relative to the expected conditions of the area at the time of year. Serendipity Healthcare Ltd understands the impact that heat and extremes of heat can have on its Service Users and the people who work for or on behalf of it. Its aim is to ensure that Service Users and staff stay safe and well during hot weather. Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will ensure that staff understand the risks associated with hot weather and will have mechanisms in place to identify at-risk Service Users and to monitor the [Heat-Health Watch Alerts](#) issued by the Met Office.
- 4.2 Staff and Hot Weather**
Serendipity Healthcare Ltd recognises the need to be aware of the potential impact on the workforce and the potential for business continuity to be compromised. As well as those employees who may be affected by the heat, there is an increased likelihood of children or elderly relatives requiring additional care during prolonged periods of excessive heat. Consideration will be given to working practices that may need to be adapted to minimise the impact of the heatwave. This may be a particular issue if schools close.
- 4.3 Service Users and Hot Weather**
We recognise that severe heat is dangerous to everyone, especially older and disabled people. During a heatwave, when temperatures remain abnormally high for longer than a couple of days, it can prove fatal. By following this policy and working in partnership with health and local authority colleagues, we will ensure that Serendipity Healthcare Ltd is able to minimise the risks to Service Users who may be at greater risk during hot weather.
- 4.4 Business Continuity**
Excessive heat has the potential to disrupt normal working practices. We recognise that IT equipment, electrical supplies, transport and health services may be placed under extra strain. We aim to ensure that we have robust contingency plans in place to minimise the



impact on the operating of our services and to ensure the welfare of staff and Service Users.

4.5 COVID-19

Serendipity Healthcare Ltd recognises that during unprecedented times such as the coronavirus (COVID- 19) pandemic, those at increased risk of harm from heat may also be at increased risk of severe illness due to COVID-19. Actions to keep people safe from high temperatures must be followed as per this policy, additional resources from Public Health England can be found [here](#).

5. Procedure

5.1 A heatwave is one of the emergencies where it is possible that regional arrangements will be put in place. Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will need to ensure that it understands the local heatwave plan, including who the local lead body is, and that Serendipity Healthcare Ltd is on the distribution list for Heatwave Notifications issued by the CCG. Additionally, managers must read the Heatwave Plan for Health and Social Care Professionals Supporting Vulnerable People before and during a heatwave.

5.2 Heat and Work Conditions

Although there is no maximum temperature for working unlike for cold temperatures, during a heatwave employers still have a duty to provide a safe place of work for their workers (Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 as amended), have safe working systems and implement protective measures based on local risk assessments. The risk assessment must consider whether premises are acceptable during extreme heat and whether an employee's work activity increases the risk of exposure to excessive heat and what proportionate protection measures may be available. Managers must consider reviewing break times to ensure that staff have sufficient opportunities to rehydrate and review uniform and workwear policies so that staff can work safely and comfortably. Staff travelling to and from a Service User's home must carry water. If travelling on foot they must wear a hat and sun cream and try to walk in the shade. Staff travelling in a car must ensure that they leave sufficient time for their journey, that the car is well ventilated and left securely when visiting Serendipity Healthcare Ltd. The car must be maintained to ensure that there is sufficient oil and water and that the tyres meet UK safety standards.

5.3 Assessing Service Users Who are at Greater Risk

- Establish who is most at risk; ask primary care staff if unsure and record it in the Service Users' individual Care Plans
- Ensure that there are procedures to monitor Service Users most at risk and to provide additional care and support (room temperature, body temperature, pulse rate, blood pressure and dehydration will need to be monitored)
- Ask the GPs of 'at-risk Service Users' about possible changes in treatment or medication in the event of a heatwave and review those Service Users on multiple medications



- Ensure that mechanisms are in place to monitor Heat-Health Watch Alerts issued by Public Health England and the Met Office and take into account local weather variations

5.4 Heat-Health Watch Alert System

- The alert system operates in England from 1st June to 5th September each year and comprises five main levels.
- Level 0 - Long-term (all year round) planning to reduce the risk from heat waves
- Level 1 - Heatwave and summer preparedness programme
- Level 2 - Heatwave is forecast Level 3 - Heatwave action Level 4 - Major incident
- Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will monitor the alert system throughout the year as part of its strategic heatwave planning process. For further information on each stage of the alert system, reference will be made to the Public Health: Heatwave Plan for England

5.5 Actions to Support Service Users to Stay Well in the Heat

Service Users will be encouraged and supported to follow these steps to protect themselves:

- Eat a balanced diet to help the body replace any salt lost by sweating, including eating cold foods such as salads and fruit, which have a high water content
- Keep hydrated. Service Users must aim to drink 6-8 glasses of water or fruit juice a day even if they
- are not thirsty and must keep a bottle of water when they are outdoors. Avoid, where possible, caffeine, hot drinks and alcohol. Staff will be made aware of the signs of dehydration and heat stroke and know the action to take
- Dress appropriately. Service Users will be encouraged to wear a hat and loose-fitting, light-coloured clothes. Footwear is important and opting for open-toed sandals and avoiding flip-flops which can be hard to walk in can help the Service User to remain cooler. Sandals that fasten with Velcro are a good idea if the Service User's feet swell up in the heat
- Service Users will be encouraged to avoid strenuous physical activity or housework when it is very hot
- Service Users must stay out of the sun during the hottest parts of the day (usually 11 am–3 pm) and apply sun cream at least 30 minutes before going outside
- The curtains and blinds must be closed in rooms that catch the sun. However, care must be taken with metal blinds and dark curtains as these can absorb the heat
- Where there are appliances that are generating heat, they will be turned off where possible
- The use of fans or air conditioning will assist with reducing the effects of the heat
- Be aware that plastic pads and mattresses can be particularly hot during a heatwave
- Bowls of cool water to place feet in can help reduce the effects of the heat
- Encourage Service Users to remain in the coolest parts of the building as much as possible
- Where Service Users have medication, review the storage instructions to ensure that they are being kept at the right temperature

Additional Actions by Staff:



- Encourage Service Users to move to the coolest room, ideally (below 26°C)
- Give priority and extra time to high-risk Service Users or any showing signs of distress (including increased body temperature)
- For Service Users who cannot be moved, or for whom a move might be too disorientating, take actions to cool them down (e.g. liquids, cool wipes) and enhance surveillance
- Monitor Service Users' fluid intake, providing regular cold drinks, particularly if they are not always able to drink unaided; remember the importance of increasing fluid intake during periods of high temperature to reduce the risk of bloodstream infections caused by Gram-negative bacteria
- Oral rehydration salts may be suggested for those on high doses of diuretics; bananas, orange juice and occasional salty snacks can also help replace salts lost due to sweating
- Advise Service Users to avoid caffeine (coffee, tea, colas), very sweet drinks and alcohol
- Encourage Service Users to wear light, loose cotton clothes to absorb sweat and prevent skin irritation
- Regularly sprinkle or spray cool water on exposed parts of the body – a damp cloth on the back of the neck helps with temperature regulation
- Arrange cool showers or baths if possible

5.6 Actions to Try to Keep Serendipity Healthcare Ltd as Cool as Possible:

- Keep blinds and windows closed while the temperature outside is higher than it is inside
- Once the temperature outside has dropped lower than the temperature inside, open the windows; this may not be until very late at night or the early hours of the morning
- Make the most of cooler night-time temperatures to cool the building with ventilation
- Reduce internal temperatures by turning off unnecessary lights and electrical equipment

5.7 Heat Exhaustion

The symptoms of heat exhaustion include headaches, dizziness, nausea or vomiting, intense thirst, heavy sweating and a fast pulse. If a Service User or member of staff has any of these symptoms staff must:

- Find a cool place and loosen tight clothes
- Encourage the Service User to drink plenty of water or fruit juice
- Sponge with cool (not cold) water

Symptoms should improve within 30 minutes. If there are any concerns, call the GP or NHS 111 for advice.

5.8 Heat Stroke

Heat stroke can develop if heat exhaustion is left untreated; it can also develop suddenly and without warning.



The symptoms of heat stroke include confusion, disorientation, seizures and loss of consciousness. Heat stroke is a life-threatening condition. If a Service User or member of staff shows symptoms:

- **Call 999 immediately**
- While waiting for the ambulance, follow the advice given for heat exhaustion but do not try to give fluids to anyone who is unconscious
- If possible, move them somewhere cooler
- Cool them down as quickly as possible by giving them a cool shower, sprinkling them with water or wrapping them in a damp sheet, and using a fan to create an air current
- Encourage them to drink fluids, if they are conscious
- Do not give them Aspirin or Paracetamol

5.9 Ramadan and Fasting

- Many members of the Muslim community may be fasting during the daylight hours in the month of Ramadan. Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will familiarise itself with the dates of Ramadan each year and build appropriate actions into its local plans if it falls during the summer months
- It is common to have one meal just before sunrise and an evening meal after sunset during Ramadan. During hot weather, dehydration is a common and serious risk. It is important to balance food and fluid intake between fasts and especially to drink enough water. If a Service User starts to feel unwell, disorientated or confused, or collapses or faints, advice is to stop fasting and have a drink of water or other fluid. This is especially important for older adults, those with poorly controlled medical conditions such as low/high blood pressure, diabetes and those who are receiving dialysis treatment
- The Muslim Council of Britain has confirmed that breaking fast in such conditions is allowed under Islamic law
- Guidance has been produced to help ensure that members of the Muslim community have a safe and healthy Ramadan – Ramadan Health Guide: A guide to healthy fasting produced in association with the NHS, with further information available on NHS Choices

5.10 COVID-19

- Those Service Users or staff at higher risk of severe illness due to coronavirus, also run a greater risk of ill health due to heat and must be supported to stay cool during a heatwave, whilst adhering to government guidelines including social distancing and PPE measures. For more information on the guidelines staff can refer to the COVID-19 Hub
- Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will ensure that a list of all high-risk staff and Service Users is maintained and the techniques to stay cool detailed in this policy are adopted
- Where possible, remote technology must also be used where it is not possible to provide direct care to someone



6. Definitions

6.1 Heatwave

- A period of time such as a few days or weeks when the weather is very hot

6.2 Heatwave Plan

- The Heatwave Plan has different steps or levels. These levels are linked to how hot the Met Office thinks the weather will be. It looks at how hot it is going to be during the day and night and how long this will last. Then it gives alerts or warnings about heatwaves

6.3 Met Office

- The Met Office is the UK's National Meteorological Service. It is part of the Government that says what the weather will be like

6.4 Coronavirus

- Novel coronavirus is a new strain of coronavirus first identified in Wuhan City, China. The virus was named severe acute respiratory coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The disease it causes is called COVID- 19

6.5 Pandemic

- A pandemic is the worldwide spread of a new disease. COVID-19 was characterised as a Pandemic on 11th March 2020

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