

Health and Welfare

Sectoral workshop comments summary

Health

- Increased heatwaves and night-time temps. Particular impacts upon older people. Both physical and mental health impacts. Real problem in urban areas and deprived wards. Heat-induced morbidity and mortality will rise;
- Additional burden placed on the care community. Many carers within BME groups – need to cross language and cultural barriers;
- Rising incidence of skin cancers;
- Rising temperatures – widespread detrimental impacts on health. People become less effective at their jobs due to fatigue, heat stress, lethargy;
- Fewer cold (frost and ice related) injuries;
- Floods – long term physical and mental welfare problems. Displacement of people into temporary accommodation due damage and loss of homes. Concerns over water becoming polluted and contaminated;
- Lack of education and awareness – possibility of panic buying or other impulsive actions in the face of a situation that was not expected or prepared for;
- Increase in food-borne and water-borne diseases;
- Existing infrastructure may be unable to cope with extreme temps (homes, offices, public buildings); Occupational heat stress;
- Growing incidences of respiratory illnesses;

Hospitals

- Future inability to keep interiors at a reasonable/comfortable temperature. Risk of additional stress, exacerbation of conditions in hot buildings – possibility that equipment will not be able to function properly;
- Emergency response times – placed under additional stress as severe weather events become more common and rural areas become home to an ever increasing proportion of elderly people. Also under pressure from an increasingly elderly population.

Care Homes

- Ability to keep interiors at a reasonable/comfortable temperature. Risk of additional stress, exacerbation of conditions in hot buildings – possibility that equipment will not be able to function properly;
- Vulnerability of the people providing care. Carers are disproportionately vulnerable to extreme weather events, flooding etc;

Vulnerable Communities

- At a much greater risk from climate change. As utilities become more expensive, it may become increasingly difficult for many homes to be lifted out of fuel poverty. Other deprivation issues exacerbated;
- Co-ordinated approach necessary to meet the challenges posed by climate change. Try to reduce the number of 'fragmented' services – work towards a joined up and cohesive approach;
- Grants provided to aid insulation and ventilation;
- Socially deprived areas –often those that are at greater risk from floods, etc (use the Index of Multiple Deprivation).