

Under the Weather in Cheshire East

Workshop 2014



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Introduction

Following the publication of figures for excess winter deaths for 2010/2011, where Cheshire East was identified as having the largest number of excess winter deaths nationally, Cheshire East Council formed a group of officers and partners to better understand and look to address the situation.

Excess winter deaths are related to cold weather and the health problems, particularly heart attacks, strokes and respiratory difficulties, which can be exacerbated by being cold. It has been shown that this leads to an increase in winter hospital admissions and GP consultations as well as the increase in deaths. A significantly linked issue is that of fuel poverty, where households are unable to afford the cost of adequately heating their home.

Due to changes to our climate, there are also issues regarding the effects on health caused by warmer weather and flooding and the working group has now recognised the need to consider these as well.

On Thursday 17th July 2014 the group, represented by a range of council services, housing associations, charitable organisations and multi-agency partners, held an event to address the impact of extreme weather on health.

The following document sets out the problems and solutions discussed. The document also covers action planning, future work together with results taken from the evaluation forms.



Members from the Under the Weather planning group

Paul Reeves, Flood Response Management Team

Guy Kilminster, Health Improvement

Dominic Anderson - AgeUK

Matt Tandy, Flood Response Management Team

Cathy Boyd, Snow Angels

Carole Weaver, Community Action

Jane Kavanagh, Partnerships and Communities

Ruth Stevens, Joint Cheshire Emergency Planning Team

Attendance and Event Feedback

Name	Organisation/Service
Alison Ainsworth	Cheshire East Council - Benefits
Zoe Ahearne	Community Matron – East Cheshire NHS Trust
Dominic Anderson	Age UK
Usman Ashiq	Health and Wellbeing Officer – Plus Dane Housing Group
Aimee Bentley	CEC Partnerships and Communities
Cathy Boyd	Snow Angels
Dave Caldwell	Cheshire East Council
Nicola Cooker	CVS CE
Lynne Cullens	Faith Sector
Sally Davies	CVS CE
Phillip Goodwin	NHS
Dr Guy Hayhurst	Cheshire East Council Public Health
Carol Hill	Cheshire East Council Partnerships and Communities
Margaret Hopley	Cheshire East Council Regulatory Services and Health
Katie Jones	Cheshire East Council Adults and Children
Jane Kavanagh	Cheshire East Council Partnerships and Communities
Guy Kilminster	Cheshire East Council Health Improvement
Margaret Leonard	Cheshire East Council
Dr Keith Malone	NHS
Catherine Mills	NHS
Mike Moore	North West Ambulance
Eleanor Morris	Carers Trust
Lorraine Page	Cheshire Fire and Rescue
Norman Powell	Joint Cheshire Emergency Planning Team
Paul Reeves	Flood Response Management Team
Liz Rimmer	Cheshire East Council Benefits
Elenor Rowlands	Age UK
Tania Sayer	Energy Plus
Carole Stynes	Wulvern Housing

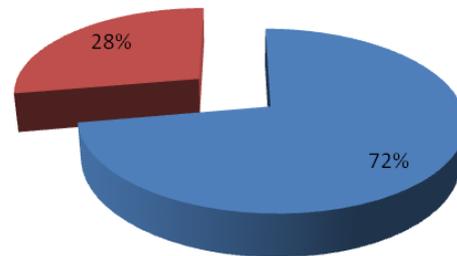
Joanne Shannon	Cheshire East Council
Peter Smith	Cheshire East Council
Ruth Stevens	Joint Cheshire Emergency Planning Team
Matt Tandy	Flood Response Management Team
Jenny Underwood	NHS
Carole Weaver	Cheshire Community Action
Karen Whitehead	Cheshire East Council Private Sector Housing
Donna Williamson	Cheshire East Council Health Improvement Team
Britta Wright	Cheshire East Council Health Improvement Team

The event generated positive feedback with facilitators briefing that they had received engagement from all participants throughout the workshop.

Overall all practitioners enjoyed the event and found the information useful and we fulfilled a high percentage of expectations.

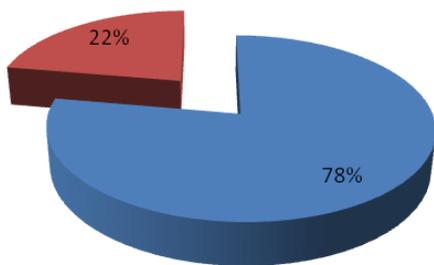
Did you enjoy the Event?

■ Very Good ■ Good ■ Satisfactory ■ Poor



Did you find the information useful?

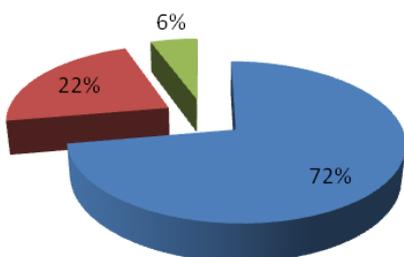
■ Very Good ■ Good ■ Satisfactory ■ Poor



All practitioners are now more aware of the impact of climate changes to health and feel better informed/prepared to start looking at these issues within their communities. The majority of those who came to the event said that they would be interested in attending future events.

Did the workshop meet your expectations?

■ Very Good ■ Good ■ Satisfactory ■ Poor



Exhibition Stands

The workshop had a number of exhibition stands displayed for the practitioners to gather further information on the following areas:-

- Be Steady Be Safe
- Care and Repair
- Cheshire Community Action
- Community Resilience, Joint Cheshire Emergency Planning Team
- CVS
- Dementia Friendly Communities
- Flood Preventions and Highways, Flood Response Management Team
- CVSCE
- AgeUK

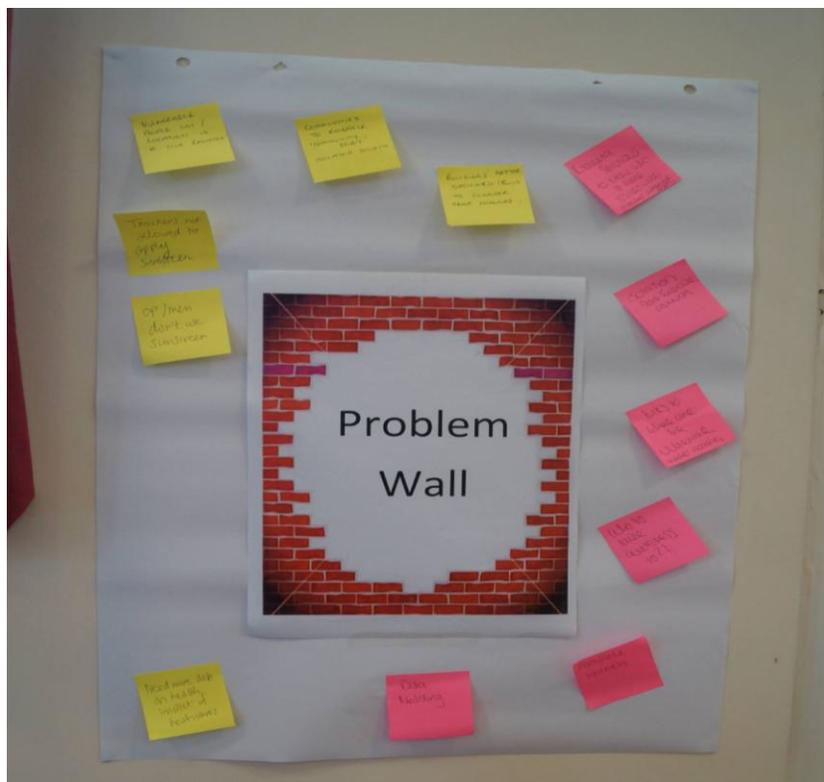


Information Gathering

A number of techniques used to gather key information including 'Problem Wall' and 'Solution Tree' posters that were displayed around the room. The posters provided the groups with the opportunity throughout the event to write their comments on post-it notes and place on the appropriate poster,

Examples from the 'Problem Wall'

- Data-matching hurdles
- Teachers not allowed to apply sunscreen to students
- Communities need to embrace community spirit
- Loneliness escalates during the long winter nights
- Need more data on health impacts during heat waves
- Short term funding means front line professional and customers are not always aware of what services are available from month to month
- Homeless people - what do we do for them when the temperature drops?
- Sun bed monitoring – Dangerous level of UV being used
- Isolation issues and people not exercising as much
- Identify where vulnerable people are
- Buildings to be better designed to deal with temperature changes
- Speed of devastation and raising awareness
- Who should raise awareness?



Examples from the 'Solution Tree'

- Match data to Council Tax records and get band of property A-H which Indicates size of property
- Check Emergency Assistance – claims from pensioners
- Flu Angels (volunteers) to promote VAC in areas with low take-up
- Commitment to provide emergency advice services, interdependent, trustworthy
- Shutters and black-out blinds
- Develop data sharing agreement in declaration so customers can agree to proactive support/sharing
- Cold weather or warm weather champions who spread the word on good practice
- Promote better Community Sprit through Workshops/Emergency plans
- Information sessions/ presentations to Ladies Guild/Bowling Clubs/Friendship Clubs etc
- Publicise the presentation slides showing impacts to health over period of days – people look to help on cold days – press coverage
- Raise awareness of risks in Cheshire East
- Engaging with Parish and Town Councils
- Sun screen in pump dispensers at parks, leisure centres etc - free of charge
- Extreme weather toolkits in Town/Parish hubs
- Tree planting schemes to create shade on popular walk ways – e.g. near village shop
- Raising Community Sprit
- Flu jabs in smaller venues, homes, drop-in centres
- One stop central coordination of services for people to refer to – navigate customers to the right services
- Handing out bottles of water during heat waves
- Heat safety messages in pharmacies
- Heat wave and cold weather booklet/thermometer
- Commissioners thinking longer-term about the problem (rather than short-term funding)
- Free ice packs
- Engaging with community groups and organisations
- Using key community contact and building awareness and information on schemes/events/funding



Information Gathering of Wish Lists and Evaluation Forms

As a result of attending the workshop we asked the practitioners “what might their organisation do differently?” and gave them the opportunity to feedback any additional comments. We provided the practitioners with a ‘Wish List’ to capture any further suggestions they may have in relation to future planning.

- Closer links for liaising with other agencies/groups
- Consider advice regarding warm weather
- Certainly be more aware of impacts of hot weather
- Look at how integrated data solution could help with ‘Under the Weather’ campaign
- Be more aware of need to spread news, warnings, information to the voluntary and community sectors of Cheshire East.
- Work with partners to continue to raise awareness
- Ask questions relating to effects of weather, provide information and support available
- Look at Summer Initiatives
- Identify relevant flood risk areas
- Hold cold weather themed coffee mornings in local area
- Seasonal team meetings for front staff
- Consider more factors around impacts of bad weather
- From the perspective of Environmental Health it’s more a case of knowing who to notify of any concerns that we may come across through involvement with individuals
- More joined up working, use libraries for promotion
- Plan more for summer heat and be aware of impacts of temperatures that may not be very extreme - being aware of the impacts they can have

Additional comments

- Learned a lot about the health impact of hot and cold weather which I didn’t really know before
- Would have been good to have Parish Councils and Food banks represented (*all Parish Councils were invited*)
- Learnt lots of information and very well organised
- Very useful would like to be part of this work going forward
- If winter warmth events are planned for 2014/15 they should be held out in the community for a good impact and engagement with the public

Wish List – I would like to make the following suggestion:-

- Look at making ‘Under the Weather’ being seen as ‘business as usual’ rather than an emergency response e.g. ask contractors how they incorporate warm/cold weather planning, or part of evaluation criteria or business case criteria
- Use of funds = issue free cool packs to school children for use in lunch boxes
- Information/Training regarding the effects of heat and sun
- Please use libraries and mobile libraries to promote this agenda

Syndicate Workshop 1 – Cold Weather

Question 1: What do you feel are the key risks facing your community in relation to cold weather? For example, isolation, poverty.

- Old housing structure, poor insulation
- Rural aspect, isolations
- Hard to find properties in rural areas
- People not known to services
- Older people independent and don't want to ask for help
- Universal Credit, lack of budgeting skills
- Older people not taking up benefit entitlement
- Can't share data
- Environmental Health – Opportunities to network with services to identify problems in homes during bad weather
- Community is the whole of the borough
- Raise awareness to the risks to target effective response
- Lack of resources (staffing) to deal with making contacts
- Quick repair service for young tenants
- People getting organised prior to cold snaps i.e. medications, food etc.
- Hearing aid batteries
- Government funding has slowed down
- Energy improvement measures for RSL's for older housing stock
- Lack of money to pay bills
- Community engagement
- Language barriers
- Fuel poverty
- Inform people of long term risks
- Identify fuel poverty, education to use of fuel energy effectively
- A role for front line workers as they are more likely to be in a position of trust
- Carers bringing coughs and colds into homes of patients

Question 2: In what ways do you think that your community may have already considered cold weather planning?

- Plus Dane – Gave put winter packs and hot water bottles
- Ensuring that carers are supported and any problems recognised
- Making sure communities are dementia aware
- Provided analysed data, MET office alerts distributed
- Grant funding availability
- Emergency assistance scheme – food parcels
- Cheshire Fire Service engage in events
- Winter wellbeing Events
- Community venues in bad weather doesn't work need to go out where older people are people who can't get out
- GPs being asked to identify vulnerable people but not around fuel poverty. Need to share data
- Need engagement, buy in
- How to communicate? People don't know neighbours
- Lack of community spirit

Question 3: What do you see as being the potential challenges/barriers to making a community more prepared for cold weather? What do you see as being the potential solutions to overcome those barriers?

- Schemes don't necessarily benefit e.g. emergency switching
- Rural, wide and diverse areas
- Need to get to other areas like Parish/Town Councils
- Need publicity
- Need vehicles
- Need something more substantial than information packs
- People with wider network, do better in cold weather than those with smaller network
- Get more information out to the public – potential risks to health during cold weather, it's not just about slipping on ice/hypothermia
- Who are the best people to get on board - parishes? not necessarily
- Lack of support from utility companies, charitable debts
- Money, correctly target
- Data protection, communication/information/adverts/communication between departments
- Overcomplicated schemes
- Public and private sector engagement, greater joined up working
- Why people are having repeat visits in hospitals? Does discharge work correctly? Are the right organisations involved?
- Advertising things such as flu jabs on milk bottles
- Trust
- Good neighbourhood schemes
- More trained front line staff to access properties and assess need
- Opening communication with neighbours and family members to assess and support change to attitudes

Question 4: What types of help and support do you think communities/organisations will need to progress this type of initiative?

- People buy their fuel in summer when cheaper
- Engage with people who aren't buying fuel
- Take 'bull by the horn' and get senior persons to make decisions
- Can nominate street safe areas
- Take kit out to people, blankets, thermometers
- Education
- Community hubs
- Health Centres, process of engagement
- Being kept informed of any schemers or initiatives
- Partnership working
- Use of flu clinic to deliver literature on winter wellbeing
- Use supermarkets to give fuel advice
- Training front line staff
- Use of timers on boilers

Syndicate Workshop 2 – Warm Weather

Question 1: What do you feel are the key risks facing your community in relation to warm weather? For example, isolation, poverty.

- Opening windows at night
- Risks on older people, very young and disabled
- Impacts of hay-fever and asthma
- Humidity effects and chest issues
- Suppressing appetite, buying salads, fruits etc
- Medications exposed to sunlight deteriorate
- Lack of awareness about importance of taking enough fluids
- Seeing more events during warm weather to raise awareness of hard ground and flood risks
- Monitoring air quality
- How does environmental health get air quality messages out to the public?
- Target certain areas know to have poor air quality
- Skin cancer awareness for people who work outside e.g. farmers
- Lack of knowledge and education e.g. shelf life of sun screens
- Water loss from perspiration vs. hydration knowledge of skin types
- Knowledge of factors in sunscreen
- Alcohol consumption vs. dehydration
- Teachers not allowed to apply sunscreen
- Poor air quality in town centres

Question 2: In what ways do you think that your community may have already considered warm weather planning?

- Care homes distributing water, sun cream etc.
- Have areas of shade
- Tree planting schemes to create shade on popular walks to local shops and water for pets
- GP's should make patients aware that their medication deteriorates during prolonged spells of hot weather
- Children's groups give advice regarding safety in the sun but parents don't always adhere to requests
- DEFRA – Strategic level plans are in place but this information is not getting through to lower levels
- Cost to families – sun cream

Question 3: What do you see as being potential challenges/barriers to making a community more prepared for warm weather? What do you see as being potential solutions to overcome those barriers?

- Barriers – money to afford sun creams
- People don't see warm weather as a risk
- Solution change perceptions of tanning 'pale is beautiful'
- Raising awareness of dehydration with alcohol consumption
- Provide easy access to water in public buildings
- Should schools be able to provide and apply sunscreen?
- Awareness raising
- Do water companies know where the vulnerable people are?

- Do vulnerable people have fans?, Cold Flannels
- Warm weather packs
- Gardening/allotment users - risk of skin cancer, important to wear hat etc
- Different attitudes to different ages
- Lack of knowledge and understanding of UV levels for example we prepare for holidays abroad but don't necessarily think it's a need in this country
- Security at night if leaving windows open
- Emergency fans
- Information to minimise risk
- Water fountains
- Build a better environment

Question 4: What types of help and support do you think communities/organisations will need to progress this type of initiative?

- Education about the affects of heat
- Dehydration leading to urine infections, constipation and falls
- Particular effects on heart patients on diuretic medication
- Cataracts and lights
- Sun glasses
- Stock cupboards with fruit and water
- Information and partnership working
- Access into organisations to deliver initiatives
- Financial restraints - resource bags for families in need
- Hydration awareness in pubs/clubs
- More information in retail outlets about skin types and effective factors
- Accessibility to get moles checked at pharmacies
- Have people ready to deliver/prepare for extreme weather
- Education replicates what happens for winter warmth
- Get into schools, educate teachers
- Build hats into school uniforms
- Community hubs and toolkits
- Free ice packs
- Heat wave and cold weather booklet
- Reduce temperature in care homes and circulation of air
- More shutters and curtains
- Need more data on impact of warm weather



Action Planning

What needs to happen?	Who would be involved
Cold – Education with regards to the importance of keeping warm and affects of cold weather on physical well being Good neighbours Boiler education Resources for most vulnerable (not necessary elderly)	Key Organisations Local Community Care and Repair British Gas Local Council Housing
The existing Winter Wellbeing group to continue working on both winter and summer planning to avoid inconsistency Use of wider ways to raise awareness	
Communication and incident planning	Local Authority Environmental health
Education of public – awareness raising	Local Authority Public Health NHS Third Sector
Community action planning	Parish Councils Village-organisations
Get packs of sunscreen that can be distributed at schools	Cheshire East
Get people to take advantage of free offers e.g. insulation campaign	
Disseminate information – GPS, Faith sector	
Plan environment	Planning Emergency Services Parish Councils Community Hubs
Have a wish list ready if funding opportunities arise	
Raise public awareness of heat waves – campaign	
Greater awareness of dehydration e.g. falls and infections etc	Home visiting services
Encourage store cupboards for warm weather	
Quick repair service	
Preparation for cold/warm whether via packs	
Target certain groups – gardeners, garden centres, carer agencies – passing on correct information	
Use Libraries as a community venue to promote this agenda	All libraries and mobile libraries

Work with Town and Parish councils to push this awareness	
Families to get assistance with insulation etc who don't access benefits and therefore should get financial help	
Warm weather packs – hand held fans, water beakers, flannels etc. sunglasses	
Try empower communities to show old fashioned community spirit, look in and check on neighbours and elderly for need of warmth, food, water etc	All agencies
Stop granting planning permission for green space, flood plans and vulnerable areas at risk of flooding	Cheshire East Council
Winter/Summer checklists for older people – check if one exists already- send out with prescriptions for relevant symptoms	Third sector? Funding from public health
Work with specialist groups e.g. mental health as clients are affected by hot and cold weather Share practical advice	CCGs/ Public Health
Continued dialog between Cheshire East Council and Wulvern Housing in relation to planning/preparation for cold, warm weather events and flooding	Relevant Staff
Joined-up thinking in terms of funding available to ensure best use of resources	Local Authority – HA/RSLs
Consider packs for those at risk	
Ensure discussions result in actions	All
Make flood risk information more relevant to the particular area – more specific and up to date with information on action being taken in terms of prevention	Flood Response Team

Conclusion

The Under the Weather workshop was a successful event. The information within this document has identified some of the problems, which practitioners face regarding raising awareness on health issues during severe weather conditions.

Sufficient information has been pulled together from this event to help steer future working for the planning group. It has helped to identify key priorities, such as raising awareness about the impact of cold weather and also the effects of warm weather and sunlight to health.

The focus for the immediate future will be the establishment of a number of task and finish groups. These will be working on:

- Communications and engagement, we need to raise awareness of the issues and provide advice and guidance;
- Identification of vulnerable people - we need to continue the work to better connect information from different organisations about those individuals who may be most vulnerable to extremes of weather;
- How we can facilitate moving people from fuel poverty into affordable warmth;
- Preparing the Winter Plan;
- Preparing the Warm Weather Plan.

The event raised awareness on the increase of local flooding incidents, due to climate changes. Also, it raised the importance of implementing flood prevention schemes in high risk areas.

The event highlighted the importance of the Flood Management Team and Joint Cheshire Emergency Planning Team to work with Parish and Town Councils, to implement Community Emergency Plans.