

**GREATER
MANCHESTER**
DOING AGEING DIFFERENTLY

Talking About Heat

A guide for organisations
supporting older people

Why This Matters

In summer 2022, over 2,800 more people aged 65+ died during five heatwaves in England than would normally be expected. As our climate changes, extreme heat is becoming more common, and we all have a role to play in keeping people safe

But these figures also show that current messaging isn't landing in the way it needs to—many older people don't see themselves as at risk, and aren't taking action to stay safe.

To understand how to do this better, we spoke to over 150 older people across Greater Manchester through surveys and focus groups. We also worked with the organisations that support them. What we heard was clear: **the way we talk about heat needs to change.**

What Older People Told Us

- They want advice that's practical and easy to follow.
- They don't want to be singled out or labelled as "vulnerable."
- They trust messages from people they know—like GPs, community workers, and local groups.
- They want to feel informed, not frightened.
- They prefer to receive information during a heat event, rather than too far in advance—so it feels timely and relevant.

What We've Done

We've created a set of communications that you can use straight away.

These include:

- A clear, catchy, and colourful article and infographic that you can share in bulletins, articles and in person.
- Suggested wording for text message alerts (see page 4)
- Linked with NHS and UKHSA campaigns and comms material.

We've used advice drawn from trusted sources like the NHS, Age UK, and the government's [Beat the heat: hot weather advice](#).

Creating your own comms?

The way you say something can be just as important as what you say.

If you choose not to use these materials, that's okay—but it's still important to think carefully about how you communicate. We encourage you to:

- Make sure your messages are clear, catchy, colourful and easy to understand
- Focus on health and wellbeing, not climate change
- Use language that includes everyone, not just older people
- Share messages through trusted voices—like local GPs, community workers, or faith leaders
- Keep things practical and relevant to daily life

What you can do as an organisation?



Share heat safety messages when it matters

Use our resources, or other trusted information, to help people stay safe. Older people told us they want this advice during a heat event, not weeks in advance. Start sharing messages from the point a yellow alert is issued (and continue through amber and red see Health Heat Alerts below).



Sign up for health heat alerts

Make sure your team is signed up to [heat health alerts service](#). These alerts tell you when action is needed.



Know the action cards

The Heat-Health Alerting system [includes action cards](#) that explain what to do at each alert level. Use them to guide your response.



Attend “Summer Ready” training

You can also attend training on how to be “summer ready.” To find out more, contact: gmr@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk



Share messages with frontline staff

Make sure staff and volunteers who are already supporting people—like carers, housing officers, and community connectors—know what to say and do. A quick briefing or printed handout can go a long way.



Use trusted channels to share messages

Make sure staff and volunteers who are already supporting people—like carers, housing officers, and community connectors—know what to say and do. A quick briefing or printed handout can go a long way.

- Local GPs and pharmacies
- Community centres and libraries
- Faith groups, community groups and local newsletters
- Text alerts or WhatsApp groups



Be proactive

Encourage staff and volunteers to check in with people who might be at risk—especially those living alone, with health conditions, or who don't speak English as a first language.



Promote cool spaces

Let people know where they can go to stay cool. Libraries, community centres, and even shopping centres can be lifelines during a heatwave.

Suggested text for message alerts

Short message:

Hot weather is coming. Stay safe!

Keep out of the sun, keep hydrated, keep you and your home cool.

For tips to beat the heat: search hot weather advice on GOV.UK

Longer message:

Take extra care:

- Drink water often
- Stay in the shade or indoors (11am–3pm)
- Keep your home cool—close curtains by day, open windows at night
- Wear light, loose clothes
- On medication? Ask your pharmacist if heat affects it
- Check in with others—and let someone check in on you

More tips: Search “Beat the Heat UKHSA” or visit [Beat the heat: hot weather advice](#).

Additional Resources

You can download our [“Stay Cool, Stay Well” infographic](#) which provides advice on how to stay safe during hot weather, especially after the record-breaking summer of 2022 in Greater Manchester when temperatures reached nearly 37°C.

Use our resources, or other trusted ready-to-use comms from:

- [NHS Campaigns | Greater Manchester Integrated Care Partnership](#)
- [UKHSA Beat the Heat](#)

Share messages with frontline staff

Make sure staff and volunteers, like carers, housing officers, and community connectors, know what to say and do. A quick briefing or printed handout can go a long way.

Use the “Stay Cool, Stay Well” handout, or share ready-made comms from the NHS or UKHSA to keep messaging clear and trusted.

Training Opportunities

You can also attend training on how to be “summer ready.” This is a one-hour online session designed to help organisations prepare for and respond to extreme heat. It covers practical steps, communication tips, and how to support those most at risk.

To find out more or to book a place, contact: gmru@greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk