



Department of Health & Social Care

Our ref: DE-1716400

*From the Ministerial Correspondence
and Public Enquiries Unit*

*39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H0EU*

30 July 2026

Dear Dr Lee,

Thank you for your correspondence of 3 July about healthcare workers in heatwaves. I have been asked to reply.

Thank you for sharing your survey of healthcare professionals' experiences during the recent period of extreme heat. I appreciate your concerns.

The Government recognises the challenges that periods of extreme heat can create for patients, staff and health services. It also recognises the efforts of NHS and social care staff who continued to provide high-quality care during recent high temperatures, often under difficult circumstances.

The Department of Health and Social Care works closely with NHS England, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), the Cabinet Office and other government departments to strengthen the health and care sector's resilience to and preparedness for extreme weather events. This includes implementation of the Adverse Weather and Health Plan, which sets out how national and local partners should prepare for and respond to adverse weather risks, including extreme heat.

UKHSA's Weather-Health Alert system and associated Heat-Health Alert action cards provide practical guidance to health and social care organisations to support preparedness and response. NHS organisations are required to maintain heatwave plans aligned to these alerts, while trusts are expected to monitor conditions locally and take appropriate action to protect patients and staff. UKHSA also provides targeted guidance and training for health, social care and emergency response partners and recently updated joint guidance with the Health and Safety Executive on heat stress and personal protective equipment.

You raise important concerns regarding the condition of parts of the NHS estate and the ability of some buildings to cope with higher temperatures. The Government recognises that the age and condition of parts of the estate present resilience challenges, and the impact this has on patients and staff. Trusts are therefore encouraged to take practical mitigation actions, like the introduction of passive cooling measures, as is set out in well-established technical guidance and standards. In addition, the recently published 10 Year Capital Plan renews the focus on climate resilience across the NHS estate. The Plan includes a £65 billion 10-year funding settlement for operational capital and maintenance funding confirmed through the 10 Year Infrastructure Strategy, with £6.75 billion for the Estates Safety Fund to address the most critical estate risks, including issues relating to ventilation and cooling systems.

The most effective way to address overheating through building design. That is why new hospitals and new build Neighbourhood Health Centres will be climate resilient by design. New Hospital 2.0-compliant schemes will incorporate climate adaptation plans and meet high-performance standards, including achieving at least BREEAM Excellent standards.

The Government is investing £10.5 million in research funding to develop scalable, practical and cost-effective cooling solutions that can be mobilised across the healthcare system.

You specifically recommend the introduction of a statutory maximum workplace temperature. NHS employers already have legal duties to assess workplace risks and ensure a reasonable temperature in indoor workplaces. The Health and Safety Executive, who is responsible for workplace temperature regulation, has also indicated that it plans to consult later this year on proposed changes to its Approved Code of Practice associated with the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, including provisions relating to workplace temperature.

The Government is committed to decarbonising the NHS in line with the aims of the Delivering a Net Zero Health Service report. To support this, the government is providing substantial investment to Trusts, including £155 million in solar projects, which is set to more than triple NHS solar generation, and £400 million in heat decarbonisation grants.

Looking forward, all NHS new builds and major upgrades will align with the NHS Net Zero Building Standard. This will ensure low carbon design is built-in to the future estate from the outset.

NHS staff deserve safe, well-functioning workplaces. The Department hopes the information provided above, including on the significant future investment in improving the NHS estate, demonstrates the Government's commitment to addressing the impact of climate risks across the health and care sector.

I hope this reply is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Correspondence Officer
Ministerial Correspondence and Public Enquiries
Department of Health and Social Care