

Parish and Community Briefing

Red Heat Health alert

DATE: 23 June 2026

Introduction

This briefing is to help parish and town councils understand the current heat health alert, what it means for Somerset, and how you can support your communities during this period.

It includes:

- An overview of the current situation
- Key impacts on local services
- Actions being taken by Somerset Council
- Practical information you can share locally

Please direct residents to our central information page, on the Somerset Council website, for the latest advice and updates:

[Heat health alert advice and information](#)

Current situation

The South West is moving from an Amber to a Red Heat Health Alert, the highest level in the national system.

- Amber alert in place until 23:59 Tuesday
- Red alert expected from just after 1am Wednesday to 11pm Thursday (may be extended)

A Red alert means:

- Widespread and severe impacts are expected, not just isolated issues
- Increased pressure on health, care and local services
- Greater risk to older people, young children and those with existing health conditions

Key risks

- Dehydration
- Overheating
- Heat exhaustion and heatstroke

Much of this harm is preventable, so clear and consistent local messaging is essential.

How parish and town councils can help

You play a vital role in supporting residents during periods of extreme heat. We would encourage you to:

- Share public health advice through your local channels (social media, noticeboards, newsletters)
- Signpost to appropriate support and information
- Encourage residents to look out for neighbours, friends and family
- Consider supporting the opening and promotion of cool places in your community, a village hall, local church or community centre that can be maintained below 26 degrees.
- More information about how to support your communities can be found here:

[Heat-Health Alert summary action card for the voluntary and community sector](#)

External impacts by service

Support for vulnerable residents with housing needs (Housing / Public Health)

- The Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) is active (22–25 June)
- Outreach teams are supporting people sleeping rough with:
 - Drinking water
 - Sunscreen and hats
 - Access to cooler spaces
 - Welfare and health support

If you are aware of anyone sleeping rough who may need support, please report this:

- Housing support (daytime): 0300 123 22 24
- Out of hours (until midnight): 0300 123 23 27

Please consider sharing this message locally. More information is here - [Severe Weather Emergency Provision \(SWEP\) ACTIVE in Somerset](#)

Waste and environmental services

To protect staff in extreme temperatures:

- Collections are starting earlier (from 6am)
- On Wednesday and Thursday:
 - Collections will run mornings only (before 12:00 noon)Some disruption expected and the full story is here - [Waste arrangements to change following heat health warning](#)
- Any recycling not collected on Wednesday or Thursday afternoon will not be returned for. Residents should take it back in and present it again on their next scheduled recycling collection day and we apologise for the inconvenience this may cause but the safety of our teams is paramount.
- Rubbish and garden waste collections that are not completed on Wednesday or Thursday afternoon will be collected on Saturday.
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What residents need to know:

- Put bins out the night before
- Leave missed collections out — crews will return when possible
- Some refuse and garden waste collections will move to Saturday
- Recycling centres will close at midday

Updates will be shared via:

[Somerset Waste Facebook page](#)

Parish and town councils can help by reinforcing this advice locally.

Education (schools and early years)

- Advice has been shared with all settings on managing hot weather
- Schools are being encouraged to:
 - Keep children hydrated
 - Reduce heat exposure
 - Protect vulnerable pupils

Some settings may decide to adjust opening arrangements or temporarily close, based on local conditions.

Highways and transport

- Work is being adjusted to avoid the hottest part of the day
- Measures in place to manage road conditions, including:

- Monitoring surfaces
- Use of gritters to apply stone dust to prevent softening of road surfaces

Residents may see some changes to planned works or operations.

Wider service impacts

There may be some disruption to services, particularly those involving outdoor work, including:

- Waste collection
- Grounds maintenance (e.g. watering, emptying bins)

These changes are to protect staff safety while maintaining essential services.

Public messages to reinforce locally

Please help share these key messages:

- Drink plenty of water
- Avoid the hottest part of the day (11am–3pm) and if you are out, wear a hat and sunscreen and stay in the shade where possible
- Keep indoor spaces cool where possible, by drawing curtains or blinds
- Check on older or vulnerable people
- Avoid unnecessary travel
- We would also remind people to take care around open water during hot weather, as swimming in open water can cause cold water shock and hidden hazards can pose serious risks even on very warm days.

Key messages:

- Somerset is moving into a Red heat health alert, with significant and widespread impacts expected
- The Council is taking coordinated action across services
- The priority is to:
 - Protect vulnerable residents
 - Maintain essential services
 - Support staff working in difficult conditions

Parish and town councils are a key part of the response.

Your support in sharing advice and looking out for your communities is vital.

For the latest updates and resources, please continue to use and share:

[Heat health alert advice and information](#)