

## Y Pwyllgor Newid Hinsawdd, yr Amgylchedd a Seilwaith / Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee

Gohebiaeth ynghylch adroddiad newydd y Groes Goch Brydeinig ar y risg o dywydd poeth yn y DU a dderbyniwyd drwy e-bost gan Gyfarwyddwr Cymru, y Groes Goch Brydeinig – 27 Gorffennaf 2021 /

Correspondence regarding the new British Red Cross report on the risk of UK heatwaves received via e-mail from the Director for Wales, the British Red Cross – 27 July 2021

**In times  
of crisis,  
we're here  
to help**



I am pleased to share a new British Red Cross report, [Feeling the Heat: Briefing on Heatwaves in the UK](#).

The UK is getting hotter. As a result of climate change heatwaves are becoming longer and more extreme, and many people's health and wellbeing are suffering as a result – older people, urban populations and those with underlying health conditions are particularly at risk. BM\_\_Hlk77947048Wales has some data publicly available on excess deaths, but this does not include detail on the amount of heat related deaths. \_Hlk77947048

Heatwaves can also place significant strain on the health and social care system and cause chaos to our infrastructure and businesses through cuts to water supplies, damaged rail networks and depleted workforces.

This report summarises the trends, consequences and solutions to extreme heat in the UK, drawing on existing literature, new polling and expert interviews.

### **Polling findings highlight perception gaps for the UK public on heatwave risks:**

The majority of the public have experienced adverse health effects from hot weather in the UK, and one in twelve have required medical attention as a result.

Yet over a third of UK adults believe heatwaves will be a problem in the UK in future, not now.

While the majority of adults see heatwaves in the UK as a potential risk to the health of others, some who are vulnerable underestimate the risk to themselves.

Over half of those aged 75+ say they do not consider themselves as vulnerable to the impact of heatwaves despite being a high-risk group.

Two in five UK adults say they have never seen information on how to protect themselves during a heatwave.

### **Summary of insights on UK heatwave and heat risk:**

The window of opportunity to take effective action on heat is small, meaning that advanced planning, preparation and early action are essential.

Given the small window for action during a heatwave, local communities, including voluntary and community sector organisations, have a critical role to play in responding.

Heatwave warnings and alerts are in place across the UK, but we could do more to target and reach the most at-risk groups early.

Cities and built-up urban areas are particularly susceptible to overheating, meaning that adapting buildings and outdoor spaces will be an important part of minimising the impacts of extreme heat.

#### **Recommendations for policy makers**

- -Welsh Government should develop a strategic plan to respond to heatwaves, to ensure effective coordination across government, agencies, communities and the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS).

The UK and Welsh Governments should recognise the human impact of heatwaves and prioritise the issue in key strategic and policy agendas.

- **-People most vulnerable to extreme heat should be able to access the targeted information and support they need to act quickly and stay safe during a heatwave.** This includes ensuring the following needs are met: immediate practical needs, mental health and emotional support, information and communication, and advice, support and advocacy.
- **-The VCS and local communities should be better utilised and equipped with the skills, resources and tools to promote early action in response to heat warnings.** Local resilience forums should embed the role of VCS organisations and local communities in heatwave outreach plans, working together to quickly identify and reach the highest risk groups with advice and support before and during periods of extreme heat.

**Simple early action keeps us safe and well, and saves lives during periods of extreme heat**, from checking in on neighbours and providing first aid right through to implementing early warning and action systems.

We hope these insights and recommendations helpfully inform your Committee's and the Senedd's next steps. To further collaborate in taking forward the report's recommendations and findings, or for any assistance or more information from the British Red Cross, please do not hesitate to contact me ([KateGriffiths@redcross.org.uk](mailto:KateGriffiths@redcross.org.uk)).

Yours sincerely,



Kate Griffiths, Director for Wales at the British Red Cross