



Extreme Weather Policy

For All Transport Services

1. Purpose

This policy sets out the arrangements to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of clients, volunteers and staff during periods of extreme weather. It applies to:

- Transport provided in cars to medical appointments
- Minibus transport services, including the lunch club, shopping trips and social outings.
- Volunteers, drivers and staff involved in delivering services

Extreme temperatures can present increased health risks, particularly for older people and those with existing health conditions. The charity will take reasonable steps to reduce risks while maintaining essential services wherever possible.

2. Monitoring Weather Conditions

The charity will monitor weather forecasts and official guidance, including information from the: **UK Government website:**

<https://www.gov.uk/> and relevant government health advice regarding extreme heat and cold.

The charity will consider:

- Temperature, wind speed and precipitation forecasts
- Met Office and local authority warnings
- Travel conditions
- Risks to vulnerable clients and volunteers
- Ability to safely operate services

Where extreme weather is forecast, the service coordinator/manager will review the situation and decide whether changes are required.

3. Keeping Clients and Volunteers Updated

During periods of extreme weather:

- Clients and volunteers will be kept informed of any changes to services, timings or cancellations.
 - Lunch bus clients will be contacted prior to the journey to confirm they are well enough and want to travel
 - Communication may be through telephone calls, text messages, emails or other agreed methods.
 - Staff and volunteers should ensure they provide accurate information and reassurance to clients.
 - All relevant communication and decisions should be recorded on **Optimise** (or the charity's agreed recording system), including:
 - Weather concerns identified
 - Contact made with clients/volunteers
 - Changes to transport arrangements
 - Cancellations or service adjustments
 - Any incidents or health concerns
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4. Extreme Heat Procedures

Extreme heat can increase the risk of dehydration, heat exhaustion and heatstroke, particularly among older people.

Transport Services

When temperatures are high:

- Volunteer drivers should check vehicles before journeys and report any concerns.
- Minibus **air conditioning will be checked periodically by the Transport Team and feedback sought from the Transport volunteers to confirm it is working correctly.**
- Drivers should:
 - Use air conditioning where available and leave engine on when stationary so air conditioning continues to run
 - Ensure vehicles are ventilated before clients enter
 - Avoid unnecessary waiting in hot vehicles
 - Encourage clients to stay hydrated
 - Monitor clients for signs of heat-related illness

Where possible:

- Journey times should be planned to avoid the hottest parts of the day.
 - **Shopping bus times should be brought forward** so that travel takes place during cooler periods.
 - The charity may **transport a reduced number of clients** on minibuses to reduce journey times, improve comfort and reduce the amount of time clients spend in hot conditions.
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Twyford House

During hot weather:

- Rooms should be kept as cool as possible through ventilation, shading and appropriate use of fans/air conditioning where available.
 - Clients should be encouraged to drink regularly.
 - Staff and volunteers should monitor clients who may be more vulnerable to heat.
 - Cool refreshments may be provided where appropriate.
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Water and Refreshments

During hot weather:

- Drinking water should be available for:
 - Clients
 - Volunteer drivers
 - Staff
 - Lunch club attendees

Additional measures may include:

- Providing access to refreshments
 - (sips of hot drinks are preferable to cold although cold water helps with hydration).
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5. Heatstroke and Heat Exhaustion Response

Possible symptoms include:

Heat exhaustion	Heatstroke
Tiredness	Very high temperature
Dizziness	Hot skin
Headache	Fast breathing
Nausea	Fast heart rate
Heavy sweating	Confusion
High temperature	Restlessness
Thirsty	Seizure
Irritable	Loss of consciousness

If a client or volunteer shows signs of heat-related illness:

1. Move the person to a cooler area if possible.
2. Encourage them to drink water if they are able.
3. Cool them down using:

- Cool drinks
 - Damp cloths
 - Fans
 - Other cooling items where appropriate
4. Seek medical advice if symptoms are severe or do not improve.
 5. In an emergency, call emergency services.
 6. Record the incident on Optimise.

6. Extreme Cold Procedures

Extreme cold weather can increase risks including:

- Hypothermia
- Falls and slips
- Difficulty travelling safely
- Vehicle problems

During cold weather:

- Weather and travel conditions will be monitored.
- Drivers should check vehicles before journeys, including:
 - Tyres
 - Windscreen visibility
 - Heating systems
 - Fuel levels
- Clients should be advised to dress appropriately for cold conditions.
- Allow additional time for journeys where needed.
- Staff should consider whether clients are able to safely leave their homes and travel.

At Twyford House:

- Ensure heating is working.
- Keep indoor areas warm and comfortable.
- Monitor clients who may be more vulnerable to cold temperatures.

7. Cancelling or Reducing Services

The safety of clients and volunteers is the priority.

Services may be reduced, changed or cancelled when:

- Temperatures become extreme
- There is a significant risk to health
- Vehicles cannot be operated safely
- Travel conditions become unsafe

- Volunteers or clients would be placed at unnecessary risk

Decisions may include:

- Cancelling non-essential transport
- Reducing the number of passengers on minibuses
- Rearranging appointments where appropriate
- Cancelling lunch club sessions if required

Clients and volunteers will be informed as soon as possible, and all decisions will be recorded on Optimise.

8. Volunteer Driver Responsibilities

Volunteer drivers should:

- Follow guidance provided by the charity
 - Check vehicles are suitable before journeys
 - Ensure passengers are comfortable and safe
 - One volunteer must remain on the bus with the clients
 - Report concerns immediately
 - Carry water during hot weather
 - Avoid continuing journeys if they believe conditions are unsafe
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9. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed regularly and updated following:

- Changes in government guidance
 - Feedback from clients and volunteers
 - Weather-related incidents
 - Changes to services or vehicles
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Policy Owner: Carol Drover-Taylor
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Approved By: Management Team