

Collective Agreement on Heatwave

Working Procedures

Between:

The University of Warwick And:

UNITE, UNISON and UCU, representing employees at **The University of Warwick**

Date: May 2026

Review Date: May 2029

1. Purpose

This agreement sets out the procedures and protections to be implemented during periods of extreme heat (heatwaves) to safeguard the health, safety, and welfare of all employees working indoors and outdoors. It reflects the joint commitment of the Employer and the Union to uphold legal obligations under health and safety legislation and to act on emerging risks.

2. Scope

This agreement applies to all workers employed in the UK at **The University of Warwick**, including permanent, temporary, and agency staff, who work indoors or outdoors and may be exposed to excessive heat.

3. Definition of a Heatwave

For the purposes of this agreement, a heatwave is defined as:

A period when the **Met Office issues a Heat Health Alert (Yellow or above)** for the local area.

‘Heatwave’ is defined by the Met Office as a period of at least three consecutive days where daily maximum temperatures meet or exceed a specific threshold, which varies by county from 25°C to 28°C.

4. Joint Responsibilities

The Employer and Union agree to:

- Recognise excessive heat as a foreseeable workplace hazard.
- Use the Health and Safety at Work Act and other relevant regulations as a baseline for action.
- Review and implement heatwave procedures in consultation with health and safety representatives.
- Keep risk assessments updated and specific to indoor and outdoor settings.

5. Measures for Indoor Workers

During heatwave conditions, the Employer will:

5.1 Temperature Monitoring

If excessive high temperatures are identified by staff, monitor and strive to resolve the issue e.g. work adjustments or ventilation/cooling.

5.2 Hydration

- Encourage workers to regularly hydrate.
- Inform staff where water stations are located

5.3 Ventilation and Cooling

- Strive to ensure mechanical or natural ventilation is effective.
- Desk and pedestal fans should be considered in spaces where there may be an identified need (excessive temperatures) e.g. offices, teaching and laboratories. These should be managed locally and PAT tested at agreed frequencies. In exceptional circumstances, portable air-cooling units may be used but this should go through an estates request.

5.4 Work Adjustments

- Permit the use of flexible working hours, earlier or later start/finish times where business needs allow.
- Supports the use of regular rest breaks
- Supports finding alternative areas to work (e.g. using cooler offices or buildings).
- Supports relaxed dress codes where safe and appropriate (e.g., removal of ties), while ensuring that all required PPE continues to be worn at all times.

6. Measures for Outdoor Workers

During heatwave conditions, the Employer will:

6.1 Shade and Shelter

Support the use of regular rest breaks to access shade and shelter

6.2 Hydration

- Encourage workers to regularly hydrate.
- Inform staff where water stations are located

6.3 PPE and Clothing

- Ensure ready access to sunscreen with UV and UVA protection for all staff working outdoors.
- Review requirements for high-heat PPE identified through the risk assessment process
- Provide sun-protective clothing (e.g. brimmed hats, UV-resistant clothing) for staff whose main work activity is outside

6.4 Task Management

- Reduce the need for physical tasks where possible to early morning or late afternoon.
- Minimise the use of machinery/heavy equipment which is likely to generate a hotter or particularly strenuous working environment.
- Avoid scheduling intensive work during peak heat hours (12–4pm) where possible □ Rotate duties to limit prolonged exposure.

7. Training and Awareness

- The Employer will provide heat stress awareness information to all staff and line managers.
- Union health and safety reps will be supported to raise awareness and report issues promptly.

8. Right to Stop Work

Any worker who feels unwell or unsafe due to heat exposure must stop work and report this to their line manager. They may also notify their trade union representative if they wish. Any resulting absence will be considered and managed in line with the relevant University policy.

9. Monitoring and Review

- A Heatwave Working Group, composed of union reps, managers, and health & safety leads, will meet annually before summer and after any significant heat event to review effectiveness.
- All incidents of heat-related illness or near-misses will be recorded, investigated and reported on at the Heatwave Working Group and local Safety Committees

10. Duration

This agreement is effective from **1st June 2026** and will remain in place for a period of **3 years** subject to earlier review by agreement.

Signed on behalf of the Employer:

Name: Nia Fortune

Role: Chief People Officer

Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nia Fortune', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Date: 16/07/2026

Signed on behalf of the Unions:

Name: Paul Allsopp

Role: Unite H&S Rep

Signature: Paul Allsopp

Date: 28/05/2026