

## Written evidence from Green House think tank

### To Environmental Audit Committee Inquiry: Heatwaves, adapting to climate change.

#### Summary

We need community-level responses to identify vulnerable people, communicate what they can do to stay cool and ensure that people check they are coping with the heat. The dangers of heat waves and the fact that they are times when we need to take more care to look after each other needs to be communicated.

#### About Green House

Green House is a UK think tank which is concerned with exploring ways of securing the full inclusion of ecological issues in political and economic debate and policy-making. See [www.greenhousethinktank.org](http://www.greenhousethinktank.org).

#### Submission

1. In October 2017 I organised a conference in Lancaster on *Dealing with Extreme Weather* (see <https://www.greenhousethinktank.org/dealing-with-extreme-weather.html>). One of the speakers was Alice Le Roy who had been a policy advisor to Paris City council at the time of the 2003 heat wave. What we learned is that, unlike a flood, a heat wave is in many ways an invisible event. The impacts it had only became visible as bodies accumulated in the mortuaries. Those who died were overwhelmingly the elderly who lived alone. It was the fact that people lived alone, rather than a person's frailty that seemed to be the key factor: the heat did not kill those in care homes who had people to look after them.
2. In 2004 France introduced a heat wave plan ([http://www.sante.gouv.fr/canicule/doc/plan\\_canicule\\_2006.pdf](http://www.sante.gouv.fr/canicule/doc/plan_canicule_2006.pdf)). This has four levels of alert: green, yellow, orange and red, to communicate the level of severity to the public and trigger actions such as contacting persons identified as at risk and creating cooled rooms.
3. As well as measures to adapt buildings so that they are cooler in the heat (without requiring significant energy use for air-conditioning), the committee should consider how such community-level responses could be organised in the UK. Heat wave action planning should be incorporated into the emergency planning of local authorities. It needs to include measures to identify and contact vulnerable people and to communicate to the public the need to contact such people at times of high temperatures, as well as the measures they should take to keep cool.

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