

Extreme Temperatures

Background

Outside of the Public Weather Service (PWS) the Met Office provides bespoke services to the health sector covering high and low temperatures in England only. This service was once provided to cover Wales however the funding was withdrawn. During the prolonged warmth of Summer 2013 interest was expressed by senior stakeholders in Wales and Northern Ireland regards coverage of the service and suggested that the PWS should consider providing a UK wide service.

Details

The current services, funded by the Department of Health in England, apply to single sectors and are not viewed as suitable for extending further across the UK as they are based on health specific thresholds and messaging which would not be relevant for a service to the public. Recognising that a number of other sectors and members of the UK public are impacted to different degrees by high and a low temperature, a broad consultation is proposed to identify whether a user requirement exists for a more generic PWS service.

In order to discover if there is a need for an extreme temperature service, if this should be part of the PWS and the options available for a service it is proposed that a period of discovery and consultation should be undertaken.

It is proposed that this becomes a joint project between the Met Office and PWSCG sec and the discovery and consultation phases are to include:

Discovery	Consultation
Investigate IT requirements and timescales.	Consultation with Department of Health (via Met Office). Discussions should include the probably differences in any new services.
Review of past research undertaken in the UK and abroad.	PWSCG member's consultation specifically Northern Ireland, Wales, Scotland and CCS.
Review of services provided in other countries.	Sector consultation – Health (health authority and social care), Transport (road, rail and air), Energy, Water & Farming.
Review of any previous Met Office / PWSCG consultation.	Public consultation including such places as care homes and vulnerable people.
Review of impact research undertaken by other sectors, such as utilities.	Consultation with Natural Hazard Partnership.

The objectives of the project are to:

- Identify whether a multi-sector requirement exists for a high and/or low temperature service.
- Identify key requirements for the service, including forecast lead time, thresholds, impacts and scale.
- Identify whether a requirement exists from sectors of the UK public; evaluate the 'strength' and breadth/scale of this requirement.

The outcomes will help inform a decision to be taken on whether a high and low temperature service for the UK is appropriate for delivery through the Public Weather Service.

Proposed timeline for the work to be undertaken:

January 2014	Request approval from the PWSCG to start discovery phase.
April 2014	Update to the PWSCG.
Jan – May 2014	Discovery and consultation phase.
July 2014	Report findings and recommendations for a decision by the PWSCG.
Post July 2014	Follow up work as recommended by the PWSCG.

Recommendation

It is recommended that a period of discovery and consultation be undertaken as detailed in this paper and reported to the PWSCG in July 2014.