

New report

Cool Heads Must Prevail in British Business

The UK must lead the way by instituting a maximum work temperature and provide cooling equipment for critical workers

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The site of English families losing their castles, much loved family homes, through fires caused by the unusually clement weather and the excessive heat, has recently dominated the headlines. Yet there is another issue and area of concern which the Government must take action to address. It is not just property that has been at risk, lives are also threatened.

Regrettably, England and Wales have around 800 heat related excess deaths each year. With more heat waves expected this summer, the number this year is likely to be significantly higher.

Much like Covid, some attention has focussed on groups at risk such as the elderly and those with pre-existing medical conditions, another group that has suffered harm, and remain at risk from heat stroke, are key workers many of which must work outdoors under the sun to make sure that our services and utilities are maintained. Many critical workers toil in high stress environments without the relative luxuries available in air-conditioned offices or homes with cool water and fridges.

Whilst companies need to be mindful of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and the Health and safety etc. Act 1974, many at work are still being placed at risk by unscrupulous employers that are engendering the lives of others. Putting workers at risk of excess heat will harm the country as more manhours will be lost to not only the unbearable heat but also health conditions caused by such temperatures.

The government must mandate that a maximum working temperature be instituted so people can escape the heat. Furthermore, technology should be made available to protect those that have no choice but to work. There is apparel available which the UK government should urgently invest in and demand that companies whose employees operate in hot and hellish conditions should use to protect staff. Those who are at risk of the heat and work in critical front-line industries should be given recently developed special clothing so that they can stay safe, and the country can keep moving. Investment must be made in StayQool suits developed by a British company and Qatar for use in that country. The provision of this technology will circumvent calls for climate lockdowns.

Urgent action is needed. Heat stress is not only a risk to health and life, deaths through excess temperature, also harm businesses. With an economy that is still recovering from the implications of Covid lockdowns and the ongoing cost of living crisis, UK plc must protect those essential workers from extreme heat. We cannot lose more days to heat induced illnesses. People and companies that rely on crucial infrastructure and essential services must be able to keep working.

The heat wave has not just affected the United Kingdom, indeed the largely unwelcome weather came from continental Europe. However, despite the regular extreme temperatures in parts of the European Union, even the EU has so failed to implement maximum working temperate regulations, this is despite many calls from trade unions to establish such protections. Britain should lead by example and enact laws that protect people from excessive heat stress.

Robert Oulds,

Executive Director of ImpACT International, states that,

“Britain’s National Health Service, an organisation in need of both reform and investment, will also fare much better if its doctors and nurses are not subject to having to treat workers forced into hospital by the requirement to work in extreme conditions. The Government must step up and either allow those who are at risk to protect themselves by having appropriate safety equipment or be freed from working when it is too hot.

“There is no excuse not to act. The recent heatwave was widely expected and coincided with a powerful solar storm reaching the Earth, similarly weathermen widely warned of the discomforting conditions well in advance. Similar warnings are again being made about soon to arrive heat waves.”

– Notes to Editors –

StayQool

As part of Qatar’s heat mitigation strategies, the desert country, a peninsula on the Arabian landmass jutting out into the Persian Gulf, collaborated with the UK’s TechNiche and the Qatari Hamad bin Khalifa University (HBKU) to develop a revolutionary bespoke cooling suit ‘StayQool’ designed to replace outdated construction coveralls. StayQool can reduce thermal skin temperature by a maximum of 8C, helping workers to stay cool and comfortable during the summer months.

If such a country as Qatar can protect its workers in their extreme conditions, then British businesses must also be able to keep people safe.



StayCool outfits

