

Reference Number: IMS-10-09-CAV (UHB 094) Version Number: 4	Date of Next Review: 27/03/2029 Previous Trust/LHB Reference Number: Trust Ref No 160
Thermal Comfort Procedure	
Induction and Aim This Procedure is issued to staff of Cardiff and Vale UHB as a control measure outlining the requirements to support managers and staff in maintaining comfortable working environments.	
Objectives This Procedure describes the arrangements in place to ensure compliance with thermal comfort requirements inline with the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 and associated guidance.	
Scope This Procedure is to be used by all Cardiff and Vale UHB employees including those with honorary contracts.	
Supporting Procedures and documents: IMS-01-01-CAV Health and Safety Policy (UHB021) IMS-07-02-CAV Health and Safety Risk Assessment Procedure (UHB467) Incident, Hazard and Near Miss Reporting Policy (UHB467) Risk Management Policy (UHB023) NHS Wales Menopause Policy	
<u>Equality & Health Impact Assessment (EHIA)</u>	
Part 1 - Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)	An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed and this found there to be no impact.
Policy Approved by	Board/Committee/Sub Committee
Approved By	UHB Health and Safety Operational Group
Accountable Executive	Executive Director of People and Culture
Author(s)	Assistant Director of Health, Safety and Fire, Health and Safety Adviser
<u>Disclaimer</u> If the review date of this document has passed, please ensure that the version you are using is the most up to date either by contacting the document author or the Governance Directorate .	

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Summary of reviews/amendments			
Version Number	Date Review Approved	Date Published	Summary of Amendments
1	01/12/2011	31/01/2012	Revised document Supersedes previous Trust document reference no 160
2	19/08/2015	05/10/2015	Minor amendments to reflect changes in organisation
3	27/03/2026		Flowchart added and minor amendments
4	27/03/2026	20/05/2026	Full Review, updated template. Removed guidance for managers as held in a separate document.

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1 Introduction

Thermal comfort can be difficult to define as it is dependent on a range of environmental and personal factors. The term '**thermal comfort**' is best described as a person's state of mind in terms of whether they feel too hot or too cold. Environmental factors (humidity and sources of heat in the workplace) combined with personal factors (sweat rate, metabolic rate and clothing) and work-related factors (how physically demanding your work is) influence the person's thermal comfort.

Thermal comfort cannot be measured with an ordinary thermometer as it is also affected by both humidity and temperature. However, for most people, an acceptable zone of thermal comfort lies between 13°C and 30°C.

Exposure to environments that are too hot or too cold can lead to a range of ill-health effects, from reduced performance to life-threatening medical emergencies. Cold environments increase the rate at which the body loses heat, whereas exposure to extreme hot environments can impair the body's ability to regulate its internal temperature.

Under the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992, workplaces are required to ensure that adequate ventilation is provided, temperatures during working hours to be reasonable and thermometers are provided in the workplace to measure temperatures. Although the regulations do not specify a minimum or maximum indoor workplace temperature, the accompanying ACoP does recommend a minimum temperature of at least 16°C (13°C if the work involves considerable physical effort).

**These temperatures do not apply to rooms where it would be unreasonable to maintain such temperatures, such as cold rooms or rooms open to the environment.*

This procedure relates to staff thermal comfort within the workplace. Consideration to the air temperature, radiant temperature, air movement and speed, humidity, clothing and PPE, insulation, work rate and metabolic heat will aid in assessing and achieving a comfortable working temperature.

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2 Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
Chief Executive	Holds overall responsibility for ensuring this procedure is effectively implemented.
Executive Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure systems, resources and oversight are in place to support compliance. • Coordinate effective implementation in their areas of control.
Directorate / Locality Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared responsibility in ensuring the procedure is implemented across Clinical/Service Boards. • Oversee first-aid provision, relevant risk assessments and staff training.
Ward / Departmental Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake Thermal Comfort Risk Assessment • Ensure arrangements are current, effective and based on risk assessments. • Inform and keep staff engaged throughout the process • Ensure provision of PPE is available where deemed a requirement. • Assess and ensure adequate breaks
Capital, Estates and Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and assess UHB assets. • Provide heaters / coolers where deemed necessary by appropriate risk assessments and monitoring.
Health and Safety Advisers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advice and guidance on risk assessments • Provide thermal comfort monitoring providing written results
Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comply with all arrangements set out within this procedure along with accompanying health and safety arrangements. • Familiarise themselves with local arrangements • Inform their Line/Department Manager of any thermal discomfort. • Ensure estates issues are reported and recorded via MiCad where appropriate.

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3 Assessing the Risk

A local health and safety risk assessment should consider and address the thermal comfort of staff. Staff should be consulted and given the opportunity to voice any concerns around thermal comfort, such as difficulty in concentrating or gripping/handling equipment or loads.

If the environment is affected by seasonal factors you may need to reassess the risk at different times of year. For example, consider scheduling maintenance work to a cooler time of the day.

**Where extreme environments have been identified a standard operating procedure should be completed by the manager. Further advice can be obtained from the Health and Safety team.*

3.1 Health Risks

Cold Environment Health Risks

Exposure to cold indoor or outdoor working conditions can lead to a range of ill-health effects, from reduced performance to life-threatening medical emergencies. Cold environments increase the rate at which the body loses heat, and when heat loss exceeds heat production, workers are at risk of **cold stress**, impaired functioning, and serious health consequences.

- Reduced Cognitive and Physical performance
- Hypothermia
- Frostbite
- Chilblains and Trench Foot
- Increased Risk of MSD's (Musculoskeletal Disorders)
- Cardiovascular Strain
- Unsafe Behaviours and increased accident risk

Hot Environment Health Risks

Exposure to excessive heat—whether due to high ambient temperature, radiant heat from processes, humidity, physical exertion, or restrictive clothing—can impair the body's ability to regulate its internal temperature. When this happens, workers may experience a range of heat-related illnesses, some of which can be life-threatening and display in the following forms;

- Cognitive and Physical Impairment resulting in increased accident risk
- Dehydration
- Heat Rash
- Heat Cramps
- Heat Exhaustion
- Heatstroke
- Fainting
- Exacerbation of Existing Health Conditions

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4 Controlling Thermal Comfort

To ensure effective management of thermal comfort within the workplace, the following control measures must be implemented as appropriate:

- **Control the Source**
The temperature at its point of origin must be adjusted wherever practicable. This includes reducing or increasing heat output and insulating or cladding equipment or surfaces that act as sources of excessive heat or cold.
- **Control the Environment**
Workplace air conditions must be managed by replacing hot air with cooler air, improving air movement through ventilation or air-conditioning systems, or introducing heated air where cold conditions prevail.
- **Separation from the Source**
Where feasible, workers must be physically separated from sources of heat or cold. This may include erecting barriers, installing shielding, or restricting access to specific areas to minimise exposure.
- **Control of Work Operations**
Operational controls must be applied to limit the duration and intensity of exposure. This may include adjusting work-rest schedules, rotating staff, and reducing physical workloads in environments with significant thermal challenges.
- **Protect the Worker**
Suitable personal protective equipment (PPE) must be provided and used where required to mitigate the effects of hot or cold environments. This includes protective clothing, gloves, and other specialist equipment.
- **Monitoring and Supervision**
Supervisors must ensure ongoing monitoring of workers operating in thermally challenging environments. This includes observing for signs of thermal stress and ensuring that all control measures are actively followed.

4.1 Control Measures for Cold Environments

- Provide adequate or local heating
- Separate cold products or cold areas from where people are working where possible.
- Reduce draughts.
- If workers have to stand for long periods on cold floors, provide insulated duckboards, other suitable flooring or special footwear.
- Provide suitable protective clothing.
- Introduce work systems to limit exposure to a cold environment.
- Allow adequate breaks to enable employees to get hot drinks or warm up in heated areas.

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4.2 Control Measures for Hot Environments

- Insulate hot plant/pipes
- Provide cooling aids e.g. fans
- Ensure windows can be accessed and opened where appropriate
- Shade windows with blinds / use reflective film to reduce the heating effect of the sun
- Place workstations away from direct sunlight and places/plant that radiate heat.
- Provide further facilities such as cold water and allow adequate breaks
- Limit direct exposure to high temperatures
- Introduce flexible working practices where able
- Review formal dress requirements e.g. PPE requirements, uniform etc
- All heat releasing equipment e.g. lighting, computers, printers, medical equipment etc should be switched off when not in use and at the end of the working day to minimise internal heat gains.
- Heat-producing non-essential equipment, e.g. fridges, microwaves, kettles etc, **must not be located** within the affected area. Such equipment must be removed and relocated to designated kitchen or beverage preparation rooms in accordance with organisational fire safety requirements.

5 Escalation

Any failure to comply with this procedure must be escalated through the management structure for investigation and appropriate remedial action

6 Monitoring of the procedure

Line management shall monitor the implementation of the management of procedures in their areas of responsibility to ensure that persons are following procedures and maintaining the required records.

Where deficiencies are found, line management shall take corrective actions which may include instruction, re-training etc. as necessary.

7 Audits

The use of this procedure shall be subject to internal and external audit.

8 Review

This Procedure shall be subject to review every 3 years or in light of significant change. Any party who feels that an amendment to this procedure would be beneficial to increasing its effectiveness should contact the procedure author to request change.

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9 Records

Record	Reference	Retained by	Retention
Workplace Inspection		iAuditor	
Thermal Comfort Risk Assessment		Local Manager / Team	
Temperature Monitoring Report		Health and Safety	

Appendices

Appendix 1

Definitions

Thermal Comfort – A state of mind in which an individual expresses satisfaction with the surrounding thermal environment.

Upper Limit – There is no legally defined maximum workplace temperature in the UK. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) states that a meaningful upper limit cannot be set because different workplaces generate heat in different ways, and high temperatures may be an unavoidable part of certain work processes

Lower Limit - Although there is no absolute legal minimum, the HSE's Approved Code of Practice states that workrooms should normally be kept at no less than 16°C, or 13°C where the work involves rigorous physical effort.

ACoP – Approved Code of Practice is official guidance issued by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), approved with the consent of the Secretary of State. It provides practical advice on how to comply with health and safety law

Radiant Temperature – heat that radiates from a warm object i.e. sun, computers, printers, photocopiers, fax machines, water coolers, fridges, research equipment etc, all releasing heat to the internal environment.

Humidity - amount of moisture (water vapour) present in the air.

Work rate - level of physical activity or effort a person exerts while performing a task

Metabolic heat - heat the human body produces as a result of this physical activity.

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Appendix 2

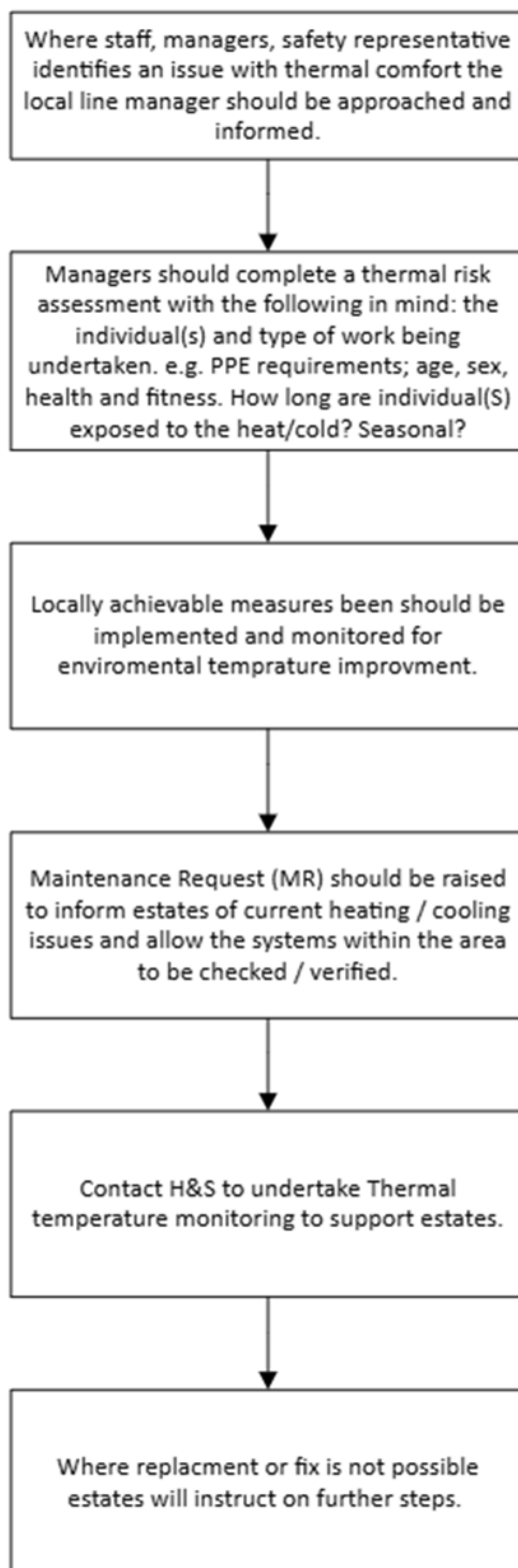
References

Document Name	Reference
Health and Safety at Work etc. Act (HSWA) 1974	Chapter 37
Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999	
Workplace health, safety and welfare. Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992	Approved Code of Practice and guidance
Managing Workplace Temperatures	HSE Guidance for Employers
Beat the heat: Staying safe in hot weather	HSE Thermal Comfort
Heatwave: how to cope in hot weather	NHS
Environmental Design	CIBSE Guide

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Appendix 3

Thermal Comfort Flow Chart



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Appendix 4

Assessment of Thermal Comfort Risk

Primary Location	
Exact Location (inc room number)	
Reported by	
Date	
Duration of problem	
Is the problem seasonal	

Previous actions/history <i>Monitoring/previous reports/estates contacted?</i>	Previous actions at department/directorate level

Risk Factors		Existing Control Methods	
Temperature	<24 °C	Work practice	
	24-28 °C	Flexi Working?	
	28-30 °C	Ability to leave area?	
	>30 °C	Relaxation of dress code?	
Humidity High/Low?		Frequency of breaks increased	
Confidentiality risk if vented?		Ability to move work area from direct sunlight	
Patient area?		Area aspects	
Young/Aged/Pregnant persons?		Windows can be opened?	
Number of persons affected?		Access to drinking water?	
Patient risk from air con?		Area to cool off?	
Type of area?		Solar film on windows?	
Mechanical air changes? Vents?		Blinds?	
Heat gain from windows?		Ventilation natural?	
Heat gain from mechanical?		Fans available?	
Heat gain from crowding?		Estates aspects	
Work type:		Shielding from heat source?	
Light e.g. sitting		Hot pipes/plant insulated?	
Medium e.g. patient care		Local control of air con/cooling	
Heavy e.g. Theatres, maintenance		Cooling system last serviced?	
Required to wear PPE?		Ventilation mechanical?	
		Air cooling?	
		Air conditioning?	

Comments / Initial assessment of risk (If heat gain from equipment state type and how many)	
Completed by:	Date:

Environmental Unit Assessment / Monitoring

HSEU Use	
Completed by:	Passed to:
Date:	Date:

**This form can be printed and completed manually. If you would prefer to complete electronically a word version can be found [here](#).*