



Heating, Cooling and Comfort Policy (Surrey and Sussex) (1230/2026)

Abstract

This policy sets out the principles and processes for heating, cooling, and comfort within buildings owned and managed by Surrey Police and Sussex Police Forces. It outlines a flexible, practical, and resource-conscious approach that balances staff comfort with operational resilience, energy efficiency, and sustainability goals. The policy establishes the framework for managing indoor temperatures across the estate during periods of both cold and warm weather, ensuring that environments remain safe, healthy, and comfortable for staff.

Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 The Surrey Police and Sussex Police (hereafter referred to as the Forces) are committed to maintaining comfortable and safe indoor environments while managing resources responsibly.

1.2 Heating and cooling are not managed by any individuals.

- Short-term temperature issues contact the Estates & Facilities Service Desk:

Surrey: (email address redacted)

Sussex: (email address redacted)

- Long-term or permanent requests submit a detailed business case to the Temperature Working Group:

Surrey and Sussex: (email address redacted)

1.3 Maintaining comfortable inside temperatures will always be difficult in our estate which consists of pre-1970s buildings with poor thermal performance. Heating is predominately provided by legacy gas boilers, with distribution quality varying across sites. Some areas rely on local electric heating; however, these are rare. Most Surrey sites have Building Management Systems (BMS) but functionality is basic. In Sussex only a few sites have Building Management Systems (BMS) and these are controlled locally. In many cases, heating is still manually switched on and off by staff.

Certain areas across our estate have mechanical cooling such as air conditioning, but most do not. Air condition coverage is mostly based on legacy equipment or demand for

staff or an operational need. Areas that require stable temperatures for operational need are exempt from this policy including custody suites, laboratories, and server rooms.

1.4 The Forces aim to maintain a comfortable working environment by heating spaces to appropriate indoor temperatures. The UK is experiencing more extreme summer heat, wetter winters, and increasingly unpredictable weather. In response, the Forces require a flexible approach that balances the varied work patterns, ageing estate, and budgetary pressures, across our organisation.

Given these limitations, the aim is to maintain office temperatures in the above 19°C, wherever possible, recognising that some variation may occur between buildings and conditions.

1.5 There are several regulations and guidelines in the UK that include indoor working conditions, including temperature, comfort, and health and safety. There is no legal minimum workplace temperature in the UK, however, the below documents recommend:

[Health and Safety at Work Act 1974:](#) This Act places a general duty on employers to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of their employees. While it does not specify temperature ranges, it requires that the working environment be safe and comfortable. It recommends:

- Temperature for sedentary (office) work should normally be at least 16°C and 13°C for physically active areas.
- Temperature during working hours must be reasonable*.
- The workplace must be adequately ventilated.

[The Workplace \(Health, Safety and Welfare\) Regulations 1992:](#) This states that during working hours, the temperature in indoor workplaces should be "reasonable." While this does not provide an exact temperature range, it implies that the working environment should be comfortable for employees.

[Health and Safety Executive \(HSE\) Guidelines:](#) The HSE provides guidelines that suggest a minimum temperature of 16 degrees for offices and a minimum of 13 degrees for workplaces where the work is physical in nature. These are just recommendations, and the actual comfort level can vary depending on individual preferences.

*In the context of this document, the word 'reasonable' indicates a minimum temperature of 16°C no maximum temperature is prescribed, however, supplementary guidance would suggest that employers should endeavour to do all that is reasonably practicable to maintain temperatures to a level not exceeding 30 degrees Celsius.

1.6 Pregnancy

Employers are legally required to undertake individual risk assessments for certain groups, including pregnant employees, ensuring adequate measures are in place to manage low and elevated temperatures.

Consideration should be given to the needs of those who are pregnant, as they may experience increased difficulty in regulating body temperature. The policy includes

measures such as providing adjustable local temperature controls where practicable, access to fans or additional heating, flexible uniform or dress code arrangements, and the option of temporary workstation adjustments or alternative working arrangements where required. See section 2.6.

1.7 Disability

Line managers have a duty of care to proactively check with any member of staff who has a Disability Passport in place to determine whether a risk assessment is required, as certain disabilities or health conditions may be exacerbated or more difficult to manage during periods of extreme heat or cold. Where risks are identified, appropriate reasonable adjustments must be considered and implemented to support the individual's health, safety, and wellbeing.

1.8 Menopause

The policy recognises that menopause can affect an individual's ability to regulate temperature. In developing this policy, consideration has been given to providing practical adjustments, including access to local cooling or heating devices, improved ventilation, flexible clothing options, and supportive management responses to requests for reasonable workplace adjustments.

1.9 Temperature

Thermal comfort is defined in British Standard Institution as "that condition of mind which expresses satisfaction with the thermal environment."

In buildings, thermal comfort cannot be described simply by air temperature. Temperature is a personal experience shaped by both environmental and personal factors, which means people in the same space may feel very differently.

Environmental factors:

- Air temperature – the temperature of the air around us directly affects how warm or cold we feel.
- Radiant temperature – heat radiating from surfaces (e.g. walls, windows, equipment) can make a space feel warmer or cooler, even if the air temperature is stable.
- Air speed – moving air (draughts, ventilation, fans) increases heat loss from the body and can make occupants feel cooler.
- Humidity – high humidity reduces the body's ability to cool through sweating, making warm environments feel hotter; low humidity can make cooler environments feel harsher.

Personal factors:

- Metabolic rate – how much energy a person is expending affects how warm they feel; someone moving or working physically will feel hotter than someone sitting still.

- Clothing – the type and amount of clothing worn changes how much heat is retained or lost. For example, a coat will keep heat in, while light clothing allows more heat to escape.

Environment	Personal
Air Temperature	Metabolic Rate
Mean Radiant Temperature	
Air Speed	Clothing Level
Humidity	

The policy acknowledges that people of all genders regulate temperature differently and may experience thermal comfort in different ways. Thermal comfort is not absolute, and individuals experience temperature differently. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) suggest that a workplace can be considered to have “reasonable comfort” when at least 80% of occupants are thermally comfortable. Therefore, actions will not be taken if at least at least 80% of occupants are thermally comfortable.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all Surrey and Sussex Police-owned or leased buildings, where we have control over heating and cooling. It applies to all police staff, officers, volunteers and visitors.

2.2 This policy sets out a short-term, reactive response and actions that staff should take if uncomfortable at work. It also establishes the Temperature Working Group which will consider long-term or permanent requests for both heating and cooling issues across our estate.

2.3 The Temperature Working Group will include stakeholders from across our organisation to continuously consider office temperatures, requests and staff needs. Requests to install, expand or upgrade cooling or heating shall be submitted to Temperature Working Group supported by a detailed business case.

2.4 All staff have a duty of care for their own comfort and how they dress within their office space. Line managers should assist staff by following the processes within this policy and appendices.

2.5 Line managers should allow staff to work where they are most comfortable, prioritising allowing staff work from home.

2.6 Managers must ensure any of their staff with a disability passport they discuss any changes that may assist. (Heat and cold can affect many different medical conditions)

2.7 There are areas which require stable temperatures for operational need such as custody suites, laboratories, and server rooms. These areas are exempt from this policy.

3. Policy Statement

3.1 The Forces will seek to maintain safe and healthy temperatures across the estate, taking into account building design, usage, and existing systems.

By applying this policy, the aim is to support a productive, sustainable, and healthy working environment while using resources responsibly and minimising the environmental impact of heating and cooling.

Procedure

1. Statement of Intent

1.1 The Forces is committed to managing our buildings in line with Health Safety and Welfare Regulations. As the employer we have legal duty to ensure the working environment has suitable ventilation and heating. We will seek to ensure that temperature shall be reasonable and comfortable for staff, whilst considering the environmental and budgetary impact.

Only after the individual and line manager has consider their actions should they escalate further.

1.2 All staff and line managers have a duty to responsible for their own comfort initially. If an individual is too warm or too cold, they should follow the Temperature Flow Charts (Appendix A: High Temperature Flow Chart and Appendix B: Low Temperature Flow Chart and Appendix C: Thermal Comfort Checklist).

1.3 Facilities can implement low energy solutions reactive methods quickly, to appease staff as quickly as possible.

1.4 If portable cooling or heating has been distributed, it is the line managers duty to fill in a temperature return form and ensure the equipment is returned to facilities.

1.5 The Temperature Working Group will review permanent requests for additional heating and cooling. It will also examine responses and temperature issues across our estate.

2. Cooling Management Plan

2.1 The Forces will prioritise flexible, practical, and passive cooling measures over blanket air conditioning, as air-conditioned buildings use around twice the energy of naturally ventilated ones.

2.2 If an area has air conditioning, it should be used efficiently and only when necessary to maintain a comfortable working environment. Line managers are responsible for ensuring systems are operated appropriately, avoiding overcooling, and keeping doors and windows closed while units are running. Temperatures should not be set below 22°C to save energy and reduce costs. Staff should also use blinds, fans, or other passive measures where possible. Regular monitoring of system use can help identify opportunities to reduce energy consumption and support sustainable operations. Systems should only be used if staff are present within the space.

2.3 If staff are too warm, they are responsible to try and make themselves more comfortable. They should follow Appendix A: High Temperature Flow Chart and Appendix C: Thermal Comfort Checklist if they or a member of staff are too warm at work.

2.4 The Temperature Working Group will proactively monitor weather forecasts. If a period of high heat is forecasted, The Temperature Working Group will send out early warnings and advice via email.

2.5 Line managers should allow staff to work where they are most comfortable, prioritising allowing staff work from home.

Line managers should try and make their area as comfortable as possible before a period of extreme heat. Please see Appendix C: Thermal Comfort Checklist, actions include:

- Encourage staff to move to a cooler place and away from windows
- Ensure cool water is available
- Permit lighter, weather-appropriate clothing during heatwaves. Relaxing dress code restrictions should be considered as long as it is appropriate for your office environment, in line with the Force's Uniform Policy (Surrey and Sussex) (1219).
- Open windows and create through drafts
- Close blinds to reduce thermal heating through glass

2.6 Managers are legally required to conduct individual risk assessments for any employee who has informed them of their pregnancy when hot weather is forecasted. Managers must review and update these risk assessments to reflect the increased risks associated with extreme heat. Examples of risk assessments can be found in Appendix D: Example Risk Assessment for Cold Weather and Appendix E: Example Risk Assessment for Hot Weather.

As pregnant and menopausal employees are more susceptible to heat, and this can occur at lower temperatures than for others. Therefore, managers should consider and implement additional measures to reduce risk, which may include:

- Conduct risk assessments to determine if elevated temperatures pose a hazard.
- Allowing the employee to work from home, where feasible
- Adjusting shift patterns, including start and finish times, to avoid travel during the hottest parts of the day
- Encouraging regular hydration and increased rest breaks
- Temporarily modifying duties to reduce physical or environmental strain

Managers should also encourage employees to seek medical advice if they have concerns. For non-urgent health questions, they should contact their midwife, GP, or NHS 111.

2.7 If staff are still uncomfortable and the line manager has followed the tasks highlighted in Appendix A: High Temperature Flow Chart and Appendix C: Thermal Comfort Checklist. Line managers should escalate to the relevant service desk and issues should be captured with a risk assessment. Details can be found here: Health and Safety guidance. This should be submitted to the relevant Health and Safety Service alongside the relevant E&F service desk.

2.8 When submitted alongside a risk assessment, the relevant service desk will raise a job will be added to the E&F Reporting tool for the relevant facilities team to investigate.

2.9 Facilities can act and give short term solutions, if they feel the area is uncomfortable and the line manager has considered their actions first.

2.10 Facilities can provide the following solutions:

- **Desk / handheld fans** for individual control.
- **Free standing fans** if desk and handheld fans are not sufficient.
- **Reflective window films:** To reduce solar heat gain without major alterations.
- **Thermal blinds or shades:** Which help block direct sunlight and regulate internal temperatures.

Any innovations taken need to be fed back into the Temperature Working Group via email

See Appendix C: Thermal Comfort Checklist for more details.

2.11 Staff should not use personal cooling units for to health and safety concerns, as these units are not PAT tested and raise health and safety concerns. If any personal cooling units are found, it is the line managers responsibility to ensure that staff take them home. Cooling innovations should be provided only by the Temperature Working Group or facilities.

2.12 Line managers are mandated to fill in a device return form if any cooling device has been given out. The device will have to be returned to facilities at the end of high heat. If the device is not returned the cost of the device will be charged to the budget code alongside a £30 admin fee.

If there are areas and teams that are regularly in discomfort and requiring additional cooling. Permanent solutions will be examined by the Temperature Working Group including re-locating staff and permanent cooling solutions.

2.13 No departments should self-fund air conditioning permanent or portable. Furthermore, staff cannot bring in devices in from home. Only devices have to be sanctioned through estates and facilities, as we need to consider the electrical load of buildings.

2.14 The Facilities team should store portable cooling devices and equipment at the end of cooling season.

3. Heating Management Plan

3.1 Heating will be applied across the estate from 1 November to 1 March, with a flexible approach outside these dates. The Temperature Working Group will review long-range weather forecasts and advise on the most appropriate times to switch heating on or off, aiming to use heating only, when necessary, given increasingly variable weather conditions.

3.2 Heating control of building temperatures will be managed centrally via the boiler system or Building Management System (BMS), if available, to ensure efficiency, consistency, and cost control. Estates and Facilities will run gas boilers as low as safely to do so depending on the system in place and building.

3.3 If staff are cold, they are initially responsible for their comfort. If they have access to local heating controls and thermostats, these should be used efficiently to maintain a safe and comfortable working environment. Line managers are responsible for ensuring heating is set appropriately, avoiding overheating, and turning off systems when rooms are unoccupied. Temperatures should not exceed 20°C to control energy use and costs. Staff should make use of clothing layers, blinds, or other passive measures where possible. Regular monitoring of heating use can help identify opportunities to reduce consumption and support sustainable operations.

3.4 If a cold spell is forecast, the Temperature Working Group will issue guidance and advice via email. Staff should work where they are most comfortable where possible. Line managers should take steps to make their areas as comfortable as possible ahead of the event and inform staff if alternative working locations are permitted.

3.5 Once a member of staff has notified their line manager that they are pregnant, the line manager must carry out an individual risk assessment which includes consideration of temperature and thermal comfort.

Pregnant employees may feel the effects of cold more acutely, and reasonable adjustments should be made where necessary, such as relocating to warmer areas, relaxing uniform requirements, providing additional breaks in warm spaces, or allowing temporary home working, to ensure their comfort and welfare during colder weather.

3.6 Staff should work where they are most comfortable. If possible, line managers should follow advice and let staff work from home where appropriate / feasible. If staff are cold, the individual and their line managers should follow the Appendix B: Low Temperature Flow Chart and Appendix C: Thermal Comfort Checklist

3.7 Staff should work where they are most comfortable. If possible, line managers should follow advice and let staff work from home. If not, they should try and make their area as comfortable as possible, before a period of extreme cold. Please see Appendix C: Thermal Comfort Checklist

Actions include:

- Relocate staff to warmer areas, away from windows or to other areas of the building such as designated heating hubs.
- Ensure windows and doors are closed to minimise heat loss.
- Encourage warmer clothing or adjustments to the uniform policy where safe and appropriate.
- Limit the use unheated or colder spaces for prolonged work.

3.8 If staff are still uncomfortable and staff have followed the Appendix A: High Temperature Flow Chart and Appendix C: Thermal Comfort Checklist, line managers should escalate to the relevant service desk and issues should be captured with a risk assessment. Details can be found here: [Health and Safety guidance](#). This should be submitted to the relevant Health and Safety Service alongside the relevant E&F service desk.

3.9 When submitted alongside a risk assessment, the relevant service desk will raise a job will be added to the E&F Reporting tool for the relevant facilities team to investigate.

3.10 Facilities can determine if the area is too cold and take immediate action to increase thermal comfort. These include:

- Check and balance heating systems, ensure radiators are bled, valves open, and heating is flowing to the area.
- Adjust local heating schedules or Building Management System (BMS) setpoints temporarily, if possible.
- Install temporary draught-proofing (door seals, brush strips) in problem areas.
- Install thermal blinds or heavy curtains to reduce heat loss through windows.
- Close off unused rooms or corridors to prevent heat escaping from occupied spaces.
- Check thermostatic radiator valves (TRVs) are set correctly and radiators are not blocked by furniture.
- Portable oil-filled radiators can only be deployed where absolutely necessary.

Innovations need to be feedback into the Temperature Working Group so they can be monitored.

3.11 Managers should relax dress code, allowing staff to dress warmly for colder weather. Relaxing dress code restrictions should be considered as long as it is appropriate for your office environment, in line with the Force's Uniform Policy (Surrey and Sussex) (1219).

3.12 Only portable heating provided by the Temperature Working Group or facilities are allowed to be deployed across our estate due to Health and Safety Concerns as these units would not be PAT tested.

It is the line managers responsibility to ask staff to remove heating devices bought from home. If not, these will be removed by facilities.

3.13 Line managers are mandated to fill in a device return form if any cooling device has been given out. The device will have to be returned to facilities at the end of the heating season. If the device is not returned the cost of the device will be charged to the budget code alongside a £30 admin fee.

If there are areas and teams that are regularly in discomfort and requiring additional cooling. Permanent solutions will be examined by the Temperature Working Group including re-locating staff and permanent cooling solutions.

No departments should self-fund heating devices permanent or portable. Furthermore, staff cannot bring in devices in from home. Only devices have to be sanctioned through estates and facilities, as we need to consider the electrical load of buildings.

3.14 The relevant facilities team should store portable heaters at the end of heating season.

4. Extreme Weather

4.1 Our estate is not suitable for extreme temperature, extreme heat or extreme cold.

The Surrey Police and Sussex Police recognises that parts of the estate are not designed to safely or comfortably accommodate extreme temperatures, whether due to extreme heat or extreme cold.

For the purpose of this policy:

- Extreme heat is defined as a forecast external temperature of 35°C or above, where building systems are unlikely to maintain a safe and comfortable internal working environment.
- Extreme cold is defined as a forecast external temperature of -5°C or below, where heating and building systems may be unable to maintain safe indoor temperatures.

Where these forecast external temperature thresholds are reached or exceeded, the following control measures must be considered and implemented:

- Communications will be sent out instructing all staff wherever possible to work from home.
- A risk assessment must be undertaken to assess the impact of the forecast conditions on staff, equipment, and service delivery.

- Managers must consider and, where practicable, implement home working / remote working for staff whose roles can be performed safely and effectively off-site.
- Working hours may be adjusted to avoid the hottest or coldest periods of the day, where operationally feasible.
- Additional controls such as the provision of local heating or cooling equipment, access to hydration, and suitable rest areas must be considered.
- Where home working is not possible, managers must consider temporary relocation to more suitable areas of the estate or alternative buildings.
- Staff must be kept informed of risks, control measures, and any changes to working arrangements.

These measures are intended to protect health, safety and wellbeing while maintaining operational continuity during periods of extreme weather.

5. Staff and Officer Duties

5.1 All personnel must:

- Follow issued guidance on passive cooling behaviours identified in the appendices and flowcharts.
- Refrain from using personal air conditioning or heating devices.
- Report discomfort or overheating promptly to their line manager.
- Prioritise working from home in periods of extreme weather, if possible.
- Dress appropriately.

5.2 Line managers should monitor team wellbeing, comfort and health in high temperature and follow the cooling flow chart and process.

This will include completing a risk assessment and raising any persistent issues with the relevant service desk and The Temperature Working Group.

All managers and staff have a responsibility to report building faults with cooling or ventilation systems to the relevant E&F helpdesk.

5.3 Line managers should be flexible during periods of extreme weather, allowing for staff to change location of work and alter uniform.

5.4 The line manager should follow the process and actions within the appendices.

5.5 Line managers are responsible to ask staff to remove their own portable heating or cooling devices.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) has ultimate responsibility for ensuring the health and safety of the police estate and those who could be affected by it within their respective Force.

6.2 The Temperature Working Group will monitor and manage long term the temperatures within our estate.

6.3 All managers have a responsibility to act immediately during extreme weather and staff discomfort. They should follow the flow charts and checklist in the appendices. Including submitting a risk assessment. (See Example Risk Assessment for Cold Weather and Example Risk Assessment for Hot Weather).

6.4 Managers have a responsibility to allow staff to dress according to the weather and where temperatures are excessive, in line with the Force's Uniform Policy (Surrey and Sussex) (1219)

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

7.1 This procedure will be monitored by Environmental and Sustainability Manager, in collaboration the Temperature Working Group to ensure compliance with current Health and Safety legislation.

8. Review

8.1 This procedure will be reviewed as and when legislation or Force requirements change or new or amended model risk assessments are produced.

8.2 This policy will be reviewed every 2 years, alongside Force guidance.

Team: Estates and Facilities. Environmental and Sustainability