



News Release

10th March 2009

AEA undertakes groundbreaking study into the impacts of climate change on UK health provision

A pioneering study by energy and climate change consultancy AEA, has revealed that the UK's health and adult care provision may be at risk from the impacts of climate change, unless early adaptation action is taken

In a study commissioned by the Hertfordshire Environment Forum, Hertfordshire County Council and the Hertfordshire NHS Environment Group, the report reviews scenarios as the health effects and wider impacts of climate change worsen, including temperature-related mortality and illness, food-borne diseases, and a range of other conditions of concern for certain vulnerable groups.

AEA's analysis anticipates the potential for an increase in demand for a variety of service provision, including general care such as GPs and NHS direct, some specialist care such as A&E and oncology, and adult care, particularly for older people. The impacts will be difficult to manage because these increases in demand are expected to come as spikes.

The study also revealed that non-medical aspects of health and adult care provision, such as the maintenance of buildings and infrastructure, and reliance on transport, will be exposed to greater risks from climate change, particularly in relation to extreme weather. These aspects could raise significant concern for the continuity of service provision.

The study emphasises the importance of building resilience and adapting health and adult care services to cope with the impact of climate change, and provides a range of options to Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire's NHS Primary Care Trusts.

These include increasing capacity to cope with demand spikes; improvements to the monitoring and surveillance of climate-sensitive conditions; development of early warning systems to alert service providers to climate 'events'; and improved contingency planning, with greater emphasis on agency co-ordination.

Commenting on the report, Gill Hall, Sales and Marketing Director at AEA said,

“To date, the focus of studies investigating climate change and health has been the potential impacts on human health. This study goes one step further, to look in more detail at the implications for service provision.

“Our analysis highlights the potential for greater demand on health and adult care services in the future. We need to continue to invest both in climate change mitigation and in strategies to adapt to the impacts of climate change on service provision across all sectors. Our study underlines our view that we need to take a holistic approach to understanding the impacts of, and solutions to, climate change.”

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NOTES TO EDITOR

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This study was commissioned by Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire NHS Environment Group, on behalf of the Hertfordshire Environment Forum. On this project, AEA was pleased to work with our partner, the Health Protection Agency (HPA), and our associate, Chris Wood, BEM.

About AEA

AEA is one of the world's leaders in the field of climate change and energy consultancy - operating in the UK, Europe, the US and China. It is the leading provider of advisory services to the UK Government and works extensively with the EU and major private sector organisations. With internationally renowned expertise in air quality and climate change, carbon management, resource efficiency and the environmental impacts of transport, AEA employs many world leading experts and provides a high-level of policy consultancy and a range of technical services to its public and private sector clients.

AEA manages for the UK government's Envirowise project, one of the world's largest resource efficiency programmes and provides carbon management expertise to many of the UK's largest private sector organisations.

AEA is voted Number One Consultancy for Climate Change and Renewables by industry consultants (Edie surveys 2006, 2007 and 2008).

For further information please visit www.aeat.co.uk.