# Clutter blamed for turning homes into ‘heat traps’ as UK endures fourth heatwave



As much of England endures the latest heatwave, public‑health bodies and local experts are pointing to an unexpected contributor to overheated homes: household clutter. According to the Oxford Mail, Miroslav Radov of Rainbow Rubbish Removals warns that piles of paper, fabrics and furniture blocking airflow can act as “heat traps”, making rooms stay hotter for longer just as the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) has placed wide areas under yellow heat‑health alerts. The warning comes as forecasters and news outlets describe this spell as the country’s fourth heatwave of the summer.

Radov likened accumulating clutter to “putting on a thick jumper indoors during a heatwave”, saying the effect is not only uncomfortable but increases risk: “Paper piles, fabric stacks, and blocked airflow around furniture all keep rooms hotter for longer, and that’s before you factor in fire risk,” he told the Oxford Mail. The problem, he added, is especially acute in older properties and homes without air conditioning where natural ventilation is already limited.

Public agencies are issuing parallel advice. The UKHSA’s heat‑health guidance for yellow alerts urges people to keep homes cool and to close curtains on sun‑facing rooms, while the Met Office has been clear that the current conditions are more extensive than earlier spells this summer and that temperatures in parts of England and Wales are expected to reach the low 30s Celsius. Those official advisories also highlight the need to recognise heat exhaustion and heatstroke and to follow practical measures such as ensuring good ventilation and staying hydrated.

Beyond comfort, household clutter creates a genuine safety hazard. Warwickshire County Council’s fire‑safety guidance notes that hoarding and excessive clutter supply fuel for fires, can block exits and windows, impede rescue and even obstruct smoke alarms — all factors that make homes harder and more dangerous to evacuate and for firefighters to enter. Radov pointed out that poor airflow can also increase strain on fans and electrical appliances, which in some cases may overheat and spark.

Radov acknowledged that letting go of possessions can be emotionally difficult and encouraged techniques to ease the process. He cites what he calls the “Lemon Theory” — a mental shift that recognises memory is not solely tied to the physical object — and suggests photographing items to preserve sentimental value before discarding them. That approach has research support: a study reported by CNN found that people prompted to photograph possessions were more likely to donate sentimental items, suggesting photography can make decluttering psychologically easier.

Practical steps shared by Radov echo both charity and council advice: break clear‑outs into manageable chunks, create labelled collection points for things to keep, donate, recycle or discard, and start with an area that feels achievable to build momentum. Official sources add complementary heat‑safety measures — close curtains in the daytime, open windows in cooler evenings to encourage cross‑ventilation, and check that smoke alarms are working — as small household changes that reduce both heat and risk.

The broader public‑safety picture underlines why reducing “heat traps” matters beyond mere comfort. The Met Office reported peak temperatures around 33–34°C in places during this spell, and regional reports recorded highs of about 33.4°C as the country entered the fourth heatwave. Local media and emergency services have also warned of increased wildfires, pressure on water supplies and added strain on health and social‑care services. For those most vulnerable — older people, infants and people with chronic illness — the combined risks of extreme heat and limited mobility in cluttered homes make simple neighbourly checks and targeted help especially important.

### 📌 Reference Map:

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25395267.experts-warns-common-issue-making-homes-unbearably-hot/?ref=rss), [[2]](https://ukhsa-newsroom.prgloo.com/news/first-yellow-heat-health-alert-of-2025-issued-for-four-regions), [[4]](https://news.sky.com/story/uk-bracing-for-fourth-heatwave-of-summer-as-temperatures-set-to-pass-30c-13409547)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25395267.experts-warns-common-issue-making-homes-unbearably-hot/?ref=rss)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://ukhsa-newsroom.prgloo.com/news/first-yellow-heat-health-alert-of-2025-issued-for-four-regions), [[3]](https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/about-us/news-and-media/media-centre/weather-and-climate-news/2025/heatwave-11-july)
* Paragraph 4 – [[6]](https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/fire-safety-home/household-fire-hazards/6), [[1]](https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25395267.experts-warns-common-issue-making-homes-unbearably-hot/?ref=rss)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25395267.experts-warns-common-issue-making-homes-unbearably-hot/?ref=rss), [[7]](https://edition.cnn.com/2017/07/17/health/photograph-clutter-partner/index.html)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25395267.experts-warns-common-issue-making-homes-unbearably-hot/?ref=rss), [[6]](https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/fire-safety-home/household-fire-hazards/6), [[2]](https://ukhsa-newsroom.prgloo.com/news/first-yellow-heat-health-alert-of-2025-issued-for-four-regions)
* Paragraph 7 – [[3]](https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/about-us/news-and-media/media-centre/weather-and-climate-news/2025/heatwave-11-july), [[5]](https://www.shropshirestar.com/uk-news/2025/08/12/temperatures-hit-334c-as-uk-enters-fourth-heatwave/), [[4]](https://news.sky.com/story/uk-bracing-for-fourth-heatwave-of-summer-as-temperatures-set-to-pass-30c-13409547), [[2]](https://ukhsa-newsroom.prgloo.com/news/first-yellow-heat-health-alert-of-2025-issued-for-four-regions)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25395267.experts-warns-common-issue-making-homes-unbearably-hot/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://ukhsa-newsroom.prgloo.com/news/first-yellow-heat-health-alert-of-2025-issued-for-four-regions> - The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) newsroom announcement details the first yellow Heat-Health Alert of 2025 issued on 11 June, covering the East of England, East Midlands, London and the South East. It explains the alert timeframe, the Met Office temperature forecasts and what a yellow alert means for vulnerable groups and health services. The page highlights practical advice — keeping homes cool, closing curtains on sun-facing rooms, staying hydrated and recognising heat exhaustion and heatstroke symptoms — and links to the UKHSA data dashboard and further guidance for health and social care professionals.
3. <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/about-us/news-and-media/media-centre/weather-and-climate-news/2025/heatwave-11-july> - This Met Office media release reports widespread heatwave conditions across much of the UK in July 2025, noting temperatures expected to peak around 33–34°C in parts of England and Wales. It explains the meteorological basis for the heat, how the current spell is more extensive than earlier ones that summer, and describes the heatwave criteria used in the UK. The statement signposts guidance on high pollen and UV levels, offers practical safety advice, and references that UKHSA have issued amber and yellow Heat-Health Alerts for England while encouraging the public to follow forecasts and heat-safety measures.
4. <https://news.sky.com/story/uk-bracing-for-fourth-heatwave-of-summer-as-temperatures-set-to-pass-30c-13409547> - Sky News coverage explains that the UK was bracing for a fourth heatwave of the summer, forecasting temperatures to pass 30°C across many areas. The item covers the UKHSA’s yellow heat-health alert for much of England, outlines which regions were likely to be affected and explains the risks to vulnerable people and pressure on health and social care services. The story summarises Met Office forecasts, highlights the potential for record or near-record temperatures in parts of Wales and describes official advice to keep homes cool, avoid the sun during the hottest hours and check on elderly or at-risk neighbours.
5. <https://www.shropshirestar.com/uk-news/2025/08/12/temperatures-hit-334c-as-uk-enters-fourth-heatwave/> - This Shropshire Star report (PA) documents readings of 33.4°C as the UK entered what was described as its fourth heatwave of the summer, noting amber warnings and accompanying yellow alerts across England. The article lists affected regions — including the East Midlands, West Midlands, East of England, London and the South East — and records local maximums at sites such as Benson (Oxfordshire) and Northolt (west London). It also describes resulting wildfires, pressures on water supplies and drought concerns, explains the Met Office’s heatwave definition, and relays official warnings about health impacts and strain on emergency services.
6. <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/fire-safety-home/household-fire-hazards/6> - Warwickshire County Council’s fire-safety guidance explains how hoarding and household clutter increase fire risk and endanger occupants. The page states that excessive clutter supplies fuel for fires, can block exits and windows, impede rescue and obstruct smoke alarms, and makes properties harder for firefighters to tackle. It offers clear practical advice: keep hallways, doorways and windows clear; limit flammable materials such as paper and fabrics; avoid overloading sockets; and regularly test and maintain smoke alarms. The guidance also recommends gradual decluttering, creating keep/donate/discard piles and seeking professional support for hoarding behaviour.
7. <https://edition.cnn.com/2017/07/17/health/photograph-clutter-partner/index.html> - This CNN article reports on research showing that photographing sentimental possessions can help people let go of them. The piece summarises a study in which students were encouraged to photograph items before donating; those prompted to take photos donated significantly more sentimental items than control groups. Researchers conclude that photographs preserve the memory or emotional value attached to objects, making it easier to discard the physical item while retaining the memory. The article discusses implications for decluttering strategies and suggests photography as a practical technique to overcome sentimental attachment when clearing unwanted possessions.