



Trade Unions and climate groups call national Heat Strike

Description

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A person looking hot while working, with a fan on the desk.

A coalition of [trade unions](#) and [climate](#) groups announced on 23 June that theyâ??re calling a national Heat Strike at the peak of the heatwave this week.

This is after the UK Health Security Agency [issued a rare red heat health alert](#) followed by the Met Officeâ??s Red Extreme Heat Warning for parts of England. Temperatures were [forecast](#) to reach as high as 39Â°C, smashing previous records for June.

Along with members of the public around the UK, the organisations taking part in the Heat Strike include:

- Trades Union Congress (TUC).
- Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union (BFAWU).
- Fire Brigades Union (FBU).
- Extinction Rebellion.

Together theyâ??re calling for a maximum workplace temperature. This is a policy the governmentâ??s own advisors now agree with, after [the Climate Change Committee warned in its report](#) last month that the UK is:

built for a climate that no longer exists.

In September 2024, the TUC unanimously passed a motion brought by BFAWU to support a national Heat Strike should temperatures in the UK rise above 36Â°C. [Speaking in support of the motion](#) were representatives from:

- National Education Union.
- Communication Workers Union.
- Society of Radiographers.
- FBU.
- University and Colleges Union.
- Unite.

Join the Heat Strike

Now, with [June temperature records tumbling](#) the Heat Strike coalition is inviting union members and the public alike to take part. Many are staying away from work, setting up "Cool Stations" to serve their local communities or staging lunchtime walkouts from workplaces. [Nearly 1,500 people have signed up](#) to take part in the Heat Strike from Cornwall to Aberdeen.

National president of BFAWU, Ian Hodgson, said:

Workers are struggling to cope with these worrying heatwaves. As president of the Bakers union I've seen conditions get worse each summer for our industry, with records smashed in May and now June too, and more people will get hurt.

Heatwaves are becoming more frequent and extreme, and still there are no plans in place to protect workers or vulnerable people, the UK is driving into a national health and safety crisis in a car with the brakes cut.

That's why employers and the government should set a maximum workplace temperature now or face a heat strike.

Monique Mosley, a factory worker based in East Yorkshire who supports Heat Strike, said:

Today on the factory floor temperatures will rise well above 40 degrees, we make hot filled food products and it's common that we see temperatures in the high 30s. Thanks to our union our employer is offering extra breaks but not every workplace is the same.

Everyone deserves to know when they leave for work in the morning, they will come home safe and well that evening. Now extreme weather means the people who deliver our letters, bake our bread, and teach our children are being forced to work in unsafe conditions.

Whether this week you are stuck in a flat in Peckham or an industrial bakery in Nottingham, the government has abandoned us to the heat. Without a plan we're toast, and heatwaves caused by the climate crisis will increasingly bring with them avoidable deaths. But people power works, we're cooler together. Join Heat Strike in sending a message to the government "it's not cool!"

Andy Warren is a firefighter at Bethnal Green in London who will be on shift during the heatwave. He said:

Firefighters know more than most that the escalating climate crisis is making conditions impossible for workers. Unsafe temperatures are tolerated by employers and governments alike, and the measures needed to adapt to these temperatures are nowhere to be seen.

The extreme weather is happening now, it's already impacting us all. I see the impacts every summer and it's scary. Without a plan, the government is just burying their heads in the sand. Vulnerable people and those working in extreme conditions will get hurt.

Working class people are far more exposed to the dangerous effects of climate change than the rich. Putting workers' safety first and refusing to work during extreme heat uses our most fundamental rights to fight for the climate action we desperately need.

Liam Geary Baulch, one of the organisers for Heat Strike who helped launch Extinction Rebellion in 2018, said:

This week we've seen some commentators say, it's not a crisis, it's just hot. And they are right in a way, since that records every month is now the new reality we are living in.

The UK is built for a climate that no longer exists and that's why the climate emergency can be felt in workplaces, homes and schools across the country today. So where the fuck is the government?

We've known for at least the last decade now that extreme weather is increasing in frequency and severity. In May we saw records smashed, now a month later we're about to feel the hottest June day for 50 years.

There are simple measures that can be put in place now to ensure lives are protected. Employers and the government need to get on with the job, not hang us out to dry.

The government must face the day, with a plan to protect everyone from the new climate that is already impacting lives here in Britain. Whether you are a bus driver or stuck in a badly ventilated flat, heatwaves are roasting us all. But we're cooler together, so join the Heat Strike.

Featured image via the Canary

By [The Canary](#)

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