

CONTROLLED DOCUMENT

Adverse Weather Procedure

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PURPOSE	Sets out the procedure to follow in the event of disruption to travel in the event of weather conditions which may affect attendance at work.
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2	Adverse Weather Procedure	28/02/2014
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1. Procedure Statement

- 1.1 The purpose of this procedure is to provide support, advice and guide staff and managers in dealing with problems arising from severe disruption due to adverse weather conditions.
- 1.2 It is recognised that during periods of severe weather, staff may face greater difficulties in not only being able to attend work but also when visiting patients in their homes and in returning home.
- 1.3 This procedure applies to all staff employed by the Trust. This includes contractors, volunteers, students, locum, bank and agency staff, as well as staff employed on honorary contracts.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 This procedure provides advice and guidance to managers and staff to be used in the event of adverse weather conditions which can cause major disruption to travel services e.g. rail, road or air, thus severely affecting getting to and from work. This can include:
 - Severe Ice or (Heavy) snow
 - Flooding
 - High winds
 - Heat waves
 - Major disruption to public services and private transport.
- 2.2 It is the duty of all staff who need to travel to a place of work, e.g. hospital site or a patient's home, to make every reasonable effort to attend in circumstances where adverse weather has struck and is affecting travel, and to ensure that they regularly assess the risks involved in travelling to and from work. Staff that can work from home when there are adverse weather conditions are expected to.
- 2.3 All staff must plan ahead and try, if possible, to identify alternative travel options for periods of adverse weather and to consider what arrangements could be made.

Staff have a responsibility to take account of their own health, safety and wellbeing in making decisions about travelling to and from work, and to consider the health, safety and wellbeing needs of colleagues and patients/service users who would be impacted by disrupted attendance.

Managers have a responsibility to consider the health, safety and wellbeing needs of their workforce, and to ensure that all decision making in applying this procedure and any discretion is guided by the principles of fairness and reasonableness, taking in to account relevant individual circumstances.

- 2.4 All staff must ensure that they make adequate arrangements to report to their place of work by their specified start time. This procedure sets out the arrangements if staff are unable to do this.
- 2.5 Staff working in community settings during adverse weather are still expected to make every effort to attend work on time and carry out all essential home visits scheduled. If the option is available to make contact using alternative methods such as by telephone or video call this is supported as long as patient care is not disrupted.

In the event of adverse weather staff should be aware of their team's continuity plan and keep their manager and colleagues updated if experiencing any difficulties in getting to/ from places of work. Local cover arrangements within community teams will identify support available.

3 Procedure

- 3.1 Staff are expected to make every effort to report for duty on time and to remain on duty for their rostered period in its entirety.
- 3.2 During periods of adverse weather, journeys to and from work may take longer than normal and therefore members of staff are expected to consider other modes of transport from their usual methods and routes, and allow themselves extra time to make their journeys. Where staff can fulfil the duties of their role from home, and have facilities already in place to work from home, they may do so in agreement with their line manager who will need to consider the amount of on-site cover needed either within their own team or to support disruption to other services. Staff should also ensure they make preparations in case weather conditions worsen e.g. in the event of snow, staff should take warm clothing and sensible footwear.
- 3.3 Where an individual knows they may be late for work or is not able to attend, they should notify their reporting manager as soon as they know this to be the case and not any later than 30 minutes before the start of their shift. Staff should call in only when safe and legal to do so.
- 3.4 Each member of staff is contractually required to report for their rostered shift; however where they have not, and it can be shown that all reasonable efforts have been made to attend for work, the manager can:
 - approve a request for emergency annual leave without the required notice;
 - approve lieu time to be used or time made up;
 - approve a request for unpaid leave when annual leave or TOIL has been exhausted;

- arrange for 'off duties' to be amended to allow a 'Day Off' to be given;
- permit working from home or an alternative venue, if the role permits;
- where the above are not possible, absence should be treated as unpaid leave (HR2a/ ESR2 must be completed).

3.5 Where the manager is satisfied that the member of staff has had genuine travel difficulties and made all reasonable efforts by comparison to others in similar circumstances, no deductions will be made where arrival is within 1 hour of the start time. Where time is to be deducted from salary it should be noted on a HR2a/ ESR2 form and sent to Payroll. If a member of staff does not feel that they have been treated fairly in having either time or salary deducted, they can appeal to the next level of management who will consider the circumstances and parity with other staff both within and across teams taking advice from HR.

3.6 In respect of the breakdown of normal caring arrangements, where weather warnings have been issued and are therefore not unforeseen, special leave procedures will not apply.

4 Early release of the workforce

4.1 Where the line manager is satisfied that the member of staff will have genuine travel difficulties, and having given due consideration to the need for maintenance of the service, they may permit members of staff to leave up to 60 minutes earlier than their normal finishing time without having pay or leave time deducted or being asked to make the time up, with the manager applying discretion based on travel arrangements and risks.

4.2 It should be ensured that staff arriving late or leaving early within the stated times (within 30 minutes for arrival, and within 60 minutes of shift ending) do not suffer any financial detriment as a result of their efforts to attend work in adverse weather conditions to ensure essential service provision.

4.3 Managers should give consideration to guidance from Birmingham City Council and Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council where advice is to 'stagger release' of members of staff to ensure that traffic flows freely, therefore managers should ensure that not all staff are permitted to leave at the same time. Priority should be given to those travelling further distances.

5 Members of staff who work additional hours

5.1 Managers should assess the situation and decide if it is possible to work with fewer members of staff before asking those members of staff present to remain on duty.

- 5.2 If a member of staff agrees to undertake extra hours, over and above the number of hours of their original shift, they can have the time as TOIL, which can be taken at an agreed date, or in agreement with the manager excess hours will be reimbursed at the rates dictated by the terms and conditions for the staff group.
- 5.3 Any additional hours should be recorded on Allocate or Health Roster.
- 5.4 Onsite food retail facilities will remain open as normal for staff to purchase refreshments.

6 Supporting staff

- 6.1 Where it would facilitate attendance at work and hence support the continuation of a safe clinical service, during a period of inclement weather the Trust will give consideration to the provision of special transport or overnight accommodation where this is available to the Trust as part of its own residential accommodation. This would be at no cost to the individual. All such arrangements will be coordinated by the appropriate manager.
- 6.2 For staff requesting accommodation at Queen Elizabeth Hospital, managers will need to contact the Site team who will be provided with the appropriate keys and information on what rooms are available including on call rooms and relatives accommodation. The Site team will then look to allocate rooms available and keep a record of who they are booked out to.

At Heartlands, Good Hope and Solihull hospitals managers can contact the Site teams or Security teams for availability of an on-call room. Information on how to contact the Security Office at each site and to collect keys is as follows:

Heartlands Hospital – Office is opposite Princess of Wales Maternity Unit, 0121 424 2999

Good Hope – Office is next to the Porters Lodge, 0121 424 7999

Solihull – Office is in the Main Entrance, 0121 424 5999.

- 6.3 Requests for Trust transport is also arranged through the appropriate Site team. The Trust has two 4X4 vehicles that can be utilised if necessary. Managers can contact the appropriate Site team through Switchboard.
- 6.4 Careful consideration should be given to staff who are pregnant or who have a condition that affects their mobility, as they are more likely to have difficulties attending for work during periods of bad weather, and should not be encouraged to take unnecessary risks. Any risk assessment should be led by the individual, who has more knowledge on their own condition;

advice can be sought from the Occupational Health Department. Any advice received should be considered by the line manager and discussed with the member of staff. The alternatives to attending work can be seen in Section 3.