

ADVERSE WEATHER AND TRAVEL DISRUPTION GUIDANCE

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1. INTRODUCTION

Adverse weather is a term which describes weather events which are particularly severe and challenge models of normal service delivery. Adverse weather can include heavy snowfall, flooding from heavy rain, very high winds, very cold temperatures and also exceptionally high temperatures (this list is not exhaustive). Adverse weather is associated with RED or AMBER weather warnings from the Met. Office. The net effect of adverse weather can be to disrupt public services such as nurseries, schools, colleges and public transport systems.

This guidance provides managers and staff with information on an approach to dealing with work related travel difficulties during exceptionally bad weather conditions and travel disruption such as bus or train strikes.

All staff are expected to come to work during their normal working hours and are responsible for making every effort to make suitable travel arrangements to ensure this, when it is safe to do so.

2. STAFF UNABLE TO GET TO WORK

If staff expect to be late in arriving at work or are unable to make the journey, they must notify their line manager as soon as reasonably possible. A full explanation of the local situation should be given as this may be different to the conditions at the work place.

Line managers should be satisfied in relation to the individual circumstances and should have regard to the following, as far as practicable:-

- home location of the employee and distance from their work location
- weather conditions in that particular area
- normal mode of travel and normal route to their work location
- availability of alternative travel options
- whether it would be feasible for the employee to come in to work later in the day

Staff can at this point request to take annual leave, which may be granted without the usual prior agreement. Alternatively, the manager may agree to the member of staff working from home or from an alternative base i.e NHS or partner site. It may also be possible to agree a flexible working approach of making up the time when circumstances revert to normal. Managers will strive to ensure a consistent and fair approach to managing absence and how time is made up.

In the case of disabled and pregnant individuals, their particular circumstances and potential mobility problems should be factored in when applying this guidance.

3. ALTERNATIVE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

Within each Directorate and Team business continuity plan's for that area of work should have previously been discussed and agreed with relevant staff. Often there is prior warning of adverse weather and managers and staff are encouraged to review their business continuity plan and prepare well for the likely impact of the adverse weather or travel disruption – some general principles follow:

- Where public and private transport has been seriously affected, staff living reasonably near to their base should attempt to make the journey by foot, or other transport means, provided this does not present any serious risk. Staff

should discuss the level of risk with their manager within the context of the business critical requirements of their role.

- Staff unable to attend their normal office base may be able to work from home. This arrangement should be agreed with their manager. This may require remote access to IT and it should be noted that this may not be practical or available to all staff who might require network access in addition to email (NHS mail can be accessed from any browser). There may also be other work which can be undertaken at home such as paperwork, research or e-learning.

4. LEAVING THE OFFICE EARLY

If weather conditions, public transport disruption, or other emergency show signs of worsening, staff may be allowed to leave early to facilitate their journey home. This decision will be taken by the Chief Executive or on site Director.

If a member of staff makes an independent decision to leave early as a result of inclement weather, they must take this as annual leave, time off in lieu (TOIL) or unpaid leave. Staff must ensure their line manager is aware that they are leaving. If staff are advised to leave due to inclement weather by their manager, this will be recorded as normal working hours.

5. SCHOOL OR NURSERY CLOSURES

Where schools or nurseries close due to adverse weather, the CCG recognises that staff may need to take time off to arrange alternative childcare arrangements or care for their children themselves should alternatives not be possible. Where the adverse weather extends beyond a day or two, staff may be asked to take annual leave or take unpaid leave.

6. COMMUNICATION OF OFFICE CLOSURE.

In the event of adverse weather over the weekend, at night, or the day following an office closure then a notification confirming whether the office is open or not will be posted on the CCGs website to advise of the current situation and when further information may be available.. In addition to this, there may be local arrangements within Directorates for the cascading of these types of messages via other means of communication.

In the event of office closure, staff will receive their normal pay and will be required where possible to work from home or an alternative NHS facility.

7. GENERAL

As circumstances of this kind can sometimes be unpredictable, it is important that managers and staff are well aware of this guidance and the options available, including taking leave, making arrangements for working from home. Managers should implement this guidance consistently and the principles of fairness must prevail.

Further helpful guidance on Travel Disruption can be found on the ACAS website - <http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=2797>