

Severe Weather Policy

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**1. Introduction**

1.1 The Trust recognises that staff may face difficulties attending their place of work and returning home during periods of severe weather conditions such as heavy snowfalls, flooding, or other severe weather conditions. However, whilst the Trust is committed to protecting the health and safety of all staff, it must ensure that the disruption caused to its services remains minimal.

**2. Purpose**

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to outline the responsibilities of all members of staff, Development Managers and Development Officers when considering attendance at work during severe weather conditions, and to outline the appropriate procedures.

**3. Equality Statement**

3.1The Trust aims to have in place policy documents that meet the diverse needs of our service, population and workforce, ensuring that none are placed at a disadvantage over others. It considers the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 and advances equal opportunities for all. This document has been assessed to ensure that no-one receives less favourable treatment on the protected characteristics.

**4.** **Eligibility**

4.1This policy applies to all staff and is designed to promote fairness and consistency in the treatment of staff throughout the Trust when considering attendance at work during severe weather conditions.

**5.** **Policy Statement**

5.1Staff should make every effort to attend work during severe weather conditions without putting their personal safety at risk. However if it is unavoidable for staff to be absent from the workplace, with agreement of the Development Officer and subject to operational needs and other relevant factors outlined in section 7.4, the Development Officer, in discussion with the Development Manager, should agree one of the options detailed in section 8.

5.2In extreme severe weather conditions, the Trust might be required to adopt emergency procedures and may require staff to undertake reasonable alternative duties which differ from those which they would normally carry out. Employees will suffer no financial loss as a result of undertaking such duties. Employees who do not wish to undertake alternative work will be able to take a days leave or unpaid leave.

**6.** **Responsibilities of Staff**

6.1It is the responsibility of the staff member to make every reasonable effort to attend for duty at their normal place of work, in accordance with their contract of employment. This includes adapting their means of travel if necessary, or using a combination of travel options, even if this results in arriving late for work.

6.2 In the event that staff can demonstrate that they have made every reasonable effort to attend their normal place of work but that severe weather conditions prevent this, they should report their inability to work to their Development Officer as soon as practicably possible. This should be in line with normal arrangements for reporting sickness absence or other unanticipated absence, and this will apply for each day that the member of staff is unable to attend work. Please note that failure to comply with reporting arrangements may amount to unauthorised absence and could therefore be unpaid.

6.3 In the event that a member of staff cannot attend work due to severe weather, by agreement with the Development Officer, any lost time will be treated in accordance with the options laid out in section 8. One, or a combination of these options may be applied on each day of severe weather conditions.

**7.** **Responsibility of Development Managers and Development Officers**

7.1The Development Manager and Development Officer should ensure that all staff are made aware of the Trust’s Severe Weather Policy, and that all staff are treated fairly and proportionate to their needs taking into account individual circumstances.

7.2 The Development Manager and Development Officer should ensure that reporting arrangements are clearly communicated to all staff. This should be consistent with information already provided to staff for reporting sickness absence or other unanticipated absences.

7.3 The Development Manager and Development Officer should implement the provisions within the Business Continuity Plan for the effective temporary deployment of staff, during periods of severe weather, to alternative locations/services accessible from their home in order to undertake reasonable responsibilities/duties as appropriate.

7.4 There are a range of factors which should be considered when deciding how time away from the workplace should be utilised and it is the responsibility of each Development Manager and Development Officer to use a consistent and fair approach.

7.5 The following factors should be taken into consideration by the Development Manager or Development Officer when agreeing the appropriate action to take:

* The operational requirements of the service
* Distance travelled to work
* Prevailing weather conditions and their expected duration
* Information and guidance from the Scottish Government, Ayrshire Roads Alliance, police and/or local radio, e.g. about safe travelling
* Modes of transport available to staff
* The degree of effort exercised by staff and whether they have made attempts to make alternative travel arrangements
* Working or training from home; this may be considered, dependant on the nature of employment and where circumstances permit. Any working from home arrangements should be closely monitored to ensure that it is productive
* The caring of childcare responsibilities of the staff member (see section 8.3)
* The health of the staff member; for example where it is known that they have a mobility or other health/medical condition, special care should be taken in reaching a decision relating to attendance and pay
* Other factors pertaining at the time (see section 8)

7.6 The Development Manager or Development Officer should decide on a case by case basis whether it is appropriate for staff to leave work early. In taking the decision, they should consider the factors outlined above.

**8.** **Policy Options**

8.1 If a member of staff has made all reasonable efforts to travel to their place of work but has failed due to severe weather conditions or disruptions to public transport, upon agreement with the Development Manager or Development Officer, and subject to operational needs, the manager may agree one of the following options to account for time lost:

1. Working from home (if practicable)
2. Work from a suitable alternative location
3. Undertake reasonable alternative duties
4. Making up the time/hours lost (usually within 8 weeks)
5. Taking a day’s/half day’s annual leave
6. Taking unpaid leave
7. Or apply a combination of the above options

8.2 Where severe weather is prolonged, staff may wish to request a combination of points 1 to 6 above.

8.3 The provisions of 8.1 will also apply in situations where schools/centres close during the school day, owing to severe weather, and staff have caring responsibilities for dependants.

8.4 If the staff member has made efforts to attend work on time and arrives late they will not be expected to make up the time.

**9.** **Home Working**

9.1Employees who are already working from home should continue to work from their home as normal, unless they are required by their Development Manager to support essential services or in the case of the Trust adopting emergency procedures (see 5.2). In this case they may be requested to attend a location close to their home or where safe travel can be exercised.

**10. Exceptional Circumstances**

10.1 In exceptional circumstances the Chief Officer may instruct closure of one or more of the Trust premises. On such occasions there will be no requirement to make up lost time. Staff who work in premises which remain open, will be expected to work as normal.

**11. Other Considerations**

11.1Special care should be taken when applying this policy where it is known that an employee has mobility problems or a medical/health condition which may be exacerbated by severe weather conditions.

11.2 Where Trust premises are closed to service users, staff will be required to attend work as normal unless otherwise instructed.

11.3 Staff who are already on leave (annual, maternity, sickness etc.), or who are already working from home, will not be entitled to a day off, or part thereof, in lieu in circumstances when the Chief Officer has authorised the closure of a service building.

11.4 Further advice is available from Human Resources.

**12.** **Review**

12.1 The Policy and Procedures will be subject to an annual desktop review to assess whether a more detailed review is required.

**Record of Change**

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| **Date Reviewed** |
| September 2021 |