



# Adverse Weather Conditions and Major Transport Disruption Policy

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## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 During periods of adverse weather or major transport disruption NHS 24 continues to provide a service, and while we recognise that some staff may experience difficulty in reporting for work and appreciate the efforts made by staff to do so, it is the duty of every staff member to make appropriate arrangements to get to work in the event of adverse weather conditions, or where a major disruption to transport has occurred. All staff are expected to make reasonable efforts to attend work during adverse weather conditions.
- 1.2 The aim of this policy is to ensure that where staff face exceptional difficulties or risk to themselves as a result of either adverse weather or a major disruption to transport, that the risks faced by them are minimised and that all staff are treated in a fair and consistent manner.

## **2.0 Scope**

- 2.1 The Adverse Weather and Major Transport Disruption policy is designed to give guidance, advice and support to managers and staff in the event of either adverse weather or other major disruption to transport (i.e. rail, road or air) which severely affects the ability of staff to attend work.
- 2.2 Adverse weather conditions usually arise from very heavy snowfalls and drifting snow but may also include exceptionally high winds or flooding.
- 2.3 Major transport disruption could arise from various factors and may involve the closure of key routes to and from work, or where significant restrictions are placed upon transport facilities.
- 2.4 A member of the Executive Team, usually the Director on-call or a senior operations manager, will discuss with local centres if it is appropriate for specific measures to be taken in order to assist staff to travel to and from work in circumstances noted in 2.2 and 2.3 above..
- 2.5 This Policy applies to all staff regardless of grade, hours or length of service and should be used as the basis for discussions with staff in determining how best to assist with any travel issues involved and to ensure our service to patients can continue to be delivered with minimal disruption.

## **3.0. Inability To Attend Work Procedure**

- 3.1 Staff should contact their line manager as soon as possible before the commencement of their shift to inform them of any expected travel difficulties which may delay their arrival at work, or result in non-attendance at work, due to either adverse weather conditions or any major transport disruption.

3.2 The line manager will discuss the circumstances with the staff member, advise of any measures that may be in place to assist staff with attending work, and explore the options available to the staff member (see paragraph 3.4)

3.3 In circumstances where normal carer arrangements are likely to be disrupted, reasonable alternatives should be explored wherever possible

### 3.4 **Adverse Weather Conditions**

Where, after exploring all possible options, the staff member concerned is unable to attend work due to adverse weather then, dependent upon the circumstances involved, the line manager should give consideration on a day by day basis to the use of the Special Leave /Carer's Leave policies. The Line Manager must be satisfied that every reasonable effort has been made by the staff member to attend work. Line managers should record any leave granted using the Approved Authorised Leave form (Appendix A), and submit this to the HR Business Support team for monitoring purposes.

A period of up to 3 days has been agreed as a guideline in any one financial year in relation to the granting of Special leave during adverse weather conditions, but may be increased in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the senior manager.

### 3.5 **Major Transport Disruption**

Where a major transport disruption event occurs, NHS 24 will endeavour to assist affected staff with attending work wherever possible and will seek to discuss appropriate measures with all affected staff.

It is not possible to list all potential options for consideration, but the following are provided as examples:

- adjustment to start / finish times to suit alternative transport schedules and / or any carer arrangements
- home working, where the member of staff could reasonably carry out their role from home on a short term basis.
- a temporary change of work location within NHS 24
- a temporary change of work location within another Health Board where practical to do so
- additional hours / shorter hours to assist both staff and the service

*(NB: an appropriate adjustment to salary would be made in relation to any changes to the hours worked).*

- allowance made for lateness due to traffic delays / any extended travel requirements (see section 4 below)
- the use of annual leave/ unpaid leave/ the possibility of deferring a shift

## **4.0 Delayed Arrival**

- 4.1 Where a staff member arrives late for work due to travel difficulties, or is required to make alternative care arrangements for dependents, the staff member will not be penalised. However, depending on the demands of the service and according to the line manager's assessment at the time, staff may be requested to complete their normal working time on that shift or at another agreed time. If however weather conditions worsen during the period at work, further increasing the risk to the staff member, then the use of Special / Carers Leave may be appropriate.
- 4.2 It would normally be expected that a late arrival at work would not exceed four hours beyond normal starting time. In exceptional circumstances this may be extended at the discretion of the line manager by utilising Special / Carers Leave as appropriate. The line manager will record detail of the circumstances involved along with the rationale for any extension. It is the staff member's responsibility to contact NHS 24 as early as possible to notify them of any delay.

## **5.0 Early Release of Staff**

- 5.1 In some cases it may be necessary to consider the early release of staff due to adverse weather conditions or major transport disruption. In such cases, local centres should contact their Associate Director of Nursing and Operations, or Deputy Director of Human Resources for Head Quarters, who will liaise with the Director on-call to determine which, if any, specific provisions should be applied. The Director on-call will notify local centres where they deem it necessary to release staff early from their work due to adverse weather conditions or major transport disruption. In doing so, the Director will give due consideration to the need for maintenance of the service.
- 5.2 Line managers will consider their staff member's individual circumstances in relation to the advice from the Director on-call. Where it is deemed necessary for certain staff to be released early from their work, line managers may regard the staff members as having completed their normal working hours for that period, and therefore not require the staff to work the time back or lose payment. If this occurs on more than 2 occasions in any 30 day period, then staff will be required to make up lost time by an agreed date

## 6.0 Additional Hours

- 6.1 Line managers should assess the requirements of the service, in line with advice from the Director on-call on the early release of staff and determine whether it is possible to work with less staff before asking those present to remain at work beyond the end of their shift. If a staff member agrees to undertake extra hours, over and above the number of hours of their original shift, they should have the option of the hours being taken back as paid time. Any hours in excess of 37.5 per week will be paid at overtime rates in line with the Agenda for Change Terms and Conditions Handbook. Staff may request to have the time as time off in lieu, which must be taken at an agreed date.

## 7.0 Accommodation

- 7.1 In exceptional circumstances, and following approval from the Director on-call, where staff find that they have become stranded and cannot travel home the line manager should support the staff member in arranging alternative accommodation.
- 7.2 NHS 24 will consider reimbursing reasonable expenses in line with the NHS 24 [Travel and Accommodation policy](#). As each staff member's individual circumstances may vary, the line manager may exercise discretion in the application of this arrangement.

## 8.0 Transport

- 8.1 Members of staff are to make every effort to attend their place of work during adverse weather or major transport disruption, providing travel can be undertaken safely. Where normal means of transport are adversely affected, attempts should be made by staff to identify alternative travel arrangements, and obtain advice and guidance from their line manager where appropriate.
- 8.2 Following approval from the Director on-call, local centres will establish a list of leased car drivers who are prepared to use their cars to collect staff resident in their local area. If additional mileage is undertaken by the leased car drivers then it will be regarded as Business Mileage, which can be claimed in accordance with the current [Travel and Accommodation policy](#). Leased car drivers should be aware that their insurance extends to the carrying of passengers, including colleagues.
- 8.3 If travel disruption is forecast to last for longer than 48 hours, the Director on-call may authorise the use of Private Hire organisations to provide a shuttle service for staff between their homes or local pick-up points and place of work.
- 8.4 Staff are expected to make use of any appropriate transport provision available to them in their endeavours to attend work. In exceptional

circumstances where staff are experiencing difficulty, resulting from excess travel costs, will consideration be given to assisting with reimbursement. Any such consideration will only be given after all other options for travel and working arrangements have been explored

## **9.0 Queries and Appeals**

- 9.1 If a staff member has any queries regarding this policy, they should contact their line manager in the first instance.
- 9.2 If a staff member believes that they have been unfairly treated under the terms of this policy, they have recourse through their line manager, staffside representative and HR Advisor. Ultimately, a staff member may invoke the NHS 24 Grievance procedure.

## **10.0. Monitoring & Review**

- 10.1 This policy will be reviewed in Partnership every 2 years.

**APPENDIX A****APPROVED AUTHORISED LEAVE PRO FORMA – ADVERSE WEATHER OR TRAVEL DISRUPTION LEAVE****Part A: To Be Completed By Staff Member  
(or Line Managers or Duty Team Leaders in staff member's absence)**

This form should be completed when you wish to request leave due to being unable to attend work due to adverse weather or travel disruption. Please note this form should **not** be used for any other leave application.

Once complete this form should be forwarded to your line manager or the duty team leader. If leave requested extends for more than 5 consecutive working days (pro rata for part-time staff), the relevant Director/Associate Director of Operations and Nursing/Head of Clinical Services will be required to authorise.

<b>Staff Member Name</b>		<b>Payroll Number</b>	
<b>Location</b>		<b>Job title</b>	

**Category Of Leave - Adverse Weather or Travel Disruption Leave**

Please give as much detail regarding the reason for the request to allow an informed decision to be made:

<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Days leave</b>	<b>Hours Leave</b>
		<b>Paid Leave</b>		
		<b>Unpaid Leave</b>		

I wish to apply for the above leave and confirm that any unpaid element can be recovered from my next available salary.

<b>Signed</b>		<b>Dated</b>	
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**Part B To Be Completed By Line Managers/Team Leader**

- I wish to confirm that the following Adverse Weather Leave has been approved. - I have updated the relevant electronic HR systems to reflect this information. - I have only authorised a maximum of one working week (37.5 hours for a full-time staff member, pro rata for part-time staff).				
Start Date	End Date	Status	Days leave	Hours Leave
		Paid Leave		
		Unpaid Leave		
<b>Signed</b>			<b>Dated</b>	
<b>Print Name</b>			<b>Job Title</b>	

**Part C To Be Completed By Appropriate Director/ADON/Head of Clinical Services**

Additional authorisation is only needed if the leave request exceeds one working week (37.5 hours for a full-time staff member, pro rata for part-time staff).

<b>I consider this request for more than one working week (37.5 hours for a full-time staff member, pro rata for part-time staff), necessary on this occasion and, therefore, authorise the additional care for dependents leave detailed below.</b>				
Start Date	End Date	Status	Days leave	Hours Leave
		Paid Leave		
		Unpaid Leave		
<b>Signed</b>			<b>Dated</b>	
<b>Print Name</b>			<b>Job Title</b>	

**The staff member should retain a copy for their records and forward the original form to HR Business Support**

## **APPENDIX B – REQUIREMENT FOR SPECIFIC PROVISIONS DURING ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS AND MAJOR TRANSPORT DISRUPTION**

Directors will be responsible for determining whether any provisions are required to support staff travelling to and from work during periods of adverse weather and any major transport disruption. Local centres should notify the relevant Associate Director of Nursing, or the Director of Human Resources for Head Quarters, of any perceived requirement for such provisions who will then liaise with the relevant Director or the Director on-call. The Director will then consider the request and advise on the outcome.

### Considerations in determining appropriate provisions for staff affected by adverse weather conditions or major transport disruption:

- The needs of the service, including anticipated call volumes and call volumes of comparable times;
- Current weather conditions or major transport disruption affecting local centres;
- Forecasted weather conditions affecting local centres;
- Any potential risks to staff in travelling to or from certain geographic areas;
- Public transport and road conditions updates.

### Potential Outcomes:

- No requirement for amendments to working hours, excluding those staff affected by exceptional circumstances (i.e. where a particular staff member has a significant commute or lives in an area severely affected by adverse weather conditions or major transport disruption). Exceptional circumstances to be assessed and determined by the line manager and local senior manager.
- Authorised early release of staff travelling to and from areas severely affected by adverse weather conditions or other major transport disruption. Individual requirements for early release of staff to be assessed and determined by the line manager and local senior manager.
- Authorised use of leased car drivers (where identified and with their agreement) to transport colleagues to and from work. Leased car drivers authorised to claim for additional mileage incurred.
- Authorised use of private hire companies to provide a shuttle service for staff to and from local centres. Arrangements with local private hire companies to be co-ordinated by local centres.
- Authorised reasonable expenses for staff who are unable to travel home to secure alternative accommodation.

The Director will communicate the outcome of their consideration to the relevant Associate Director of Operations and Nursing for action.