

PRT02

Inclement Weather Protocol

1.0 Protocol Statement (Purpose / Objectives of the procedure)

- 1.1 On the whole the climate within the United Kingdom causes few major problems. However, there are occasions when inclement conditions may necessitate managers considering some alterations to normal working patterns. This protocol will assist in determining the most appropriate way to handle such situations; the following guidelines are provided.
- 1.2 All staff will be expected to make every effort to get to work provided it is safe and practical to do so.

2.0 Definitions

Extremely hazardous	Those conditions in which police and/or appropriate motoring organisations advise people not to make unnecessary journeys or travel at all.
Inclement weather	Snow, ice, fog and, or floods which render extremely hazardous journeys by road. This can be by both public and private transport.

3.0 Accountabilities

- 3.1 The **Director Sponsor** will be responsible for the revision of this protocol which is necessary from time to time as a result of changes to nationally agreed terms and conditions of service, legislation or changes deemed necessary in the light of experience when applying the protocol.
- 3.2 **All managers** will be responsible for ensuring that this protocol is fairly and consistently applied within their areas of responsibility and for the communication of this protocols to their staff.
- 3.3 The **HR Advisory Department** will be responsible for providing advice and guidance to employees and managers in the use of the protocol.
- 3.4 The **Communications Department** will be responsible for issuing communication to staff during times of inclement weather reminding them of the protocol and the obligation for staff to make every effort to get to work on time.
- 3.5 **Employees** are responsible for:
- Ensuring compliance with this protocol;
 - Making every effort to report for duty during times of inclement weather;
 - Liaising with the appropriate manager when reporting for duty during times of inclement weather;
 - Keeping themselves up to date with the current and continuing weather situations;
 - Reading and engaging with the Trust's Cold Weather Plan, the [Trust Business Continuity Management Policy \(OP104\)](#), local business continuity plans and local standard operating procedures;

- Where required, endeavoring to make alternative arrangements as soon as practically possible, for example:
 - Alternative transport arrangements;
 - Alternative childcare arrangements;
 - Alternative working arrangements, etc.

4.0 Procedure / Guidelines Detail / Actions

General principles

- 4.1 It is expected that all staff will make every effort to attend work at their normal start time. It is essential that staff keep themselves updated with local weather forecasts and plan for inclement weather accordingly.
- 4.2 In the event of inclement weather staff are expected to make alternative plans to attend work as usual. This may include planning additional time for the journey into work, arranging alternative forms of transport or agreeing alternative working arrangements with their line manager in advance of their shift.
- 4.3 In the event that staff have made all reasonable attempts to attend work on time but are late for work due to inclement weather they will not be financially penalised for any reasonable lateness. This is provided the member of staff has contacted the appropriate manager via telephone to inform them of the problems arriving to work, prior to their normal start time. It is for each manager to consider what is reasonable, following discussion with the individual member of staff.
- 4.4 Line managers are responsible for deciding whether employees can leave early in the event of changing weather conditions; this would be in exceptional circumstances where it is felt that employees may experience unusual difficulty in undertaking their journey home due the cessation of public transport or worsening road conditions. Whilst it is acknowledged that staff frequently give up their own time and effort throughout the year, managers will need to consider whether or not the service can function effectively and safely with reduced levels of staffing and at all times the provision of patient care and support is paramount.
- 4.5 Staff will not be financially penalised for finishing early on the basis that the line manager is satisfied that the member of staff has worked the majority of their shift and have gained appropriate permission to leave.
- 4.6 No member of staff may leave their workplace before the stated finishing time without prior permission; should any member of staff do so, this would be marked as unauthorised absence and therefore be unpaid, and may result in disciplinary action being taken.
- 4.7 If staff fail to notify an appropriate manager that they are unable to attend work, this would be marked as unauthorised absence and therefore be unpaid, and may result in disciplinary action being taken.

Alternatives to attending work

- 4.8 If conditions are particularly hazardous, staff who are unable to attend work due to inclement weather may consider alternatives to attending work, such as:

- Considering a form of agile working, for example working from home or hot desking within an alternative Trust building or partner organisation. (Reference to the [Agile Working Policy HR02](#) may be useful);
- Use of Time off in Lieu (TOIL)/ flexi-time;
- Annual leave;
- Unpaid leave.

- 4.9 Managers will assess individual cases on their merit but are encouraged to adopt a sympathetic attitude and compassionate approach where there are real difficulties.
- 4.10 The nature of this protocol is to cater for initial, emergency situations, however, if the inclement weather continues it is recognised that other services may be affected and in such situations staff must discuss with their line manager any possible alternative arrangements.
- 4.11 In the instance where TOIL is agreed by the line manager, staff will be able to make time up within 3 months of the event (in accordance with the principles outlined in the [Time Off In Lieu \(TOIL\) Procedure, HR01 attachment 11](#)). Managers must ensure there is consistency at all times.

Carers Leave

- 4.12 The use of Carers Leave is for sudden and unforeseen domestic emergencies, as outlined in the [Leave for Carers, Emergencies and Bereavement Procedure, HR01 attachment 14](#).

School closures

- 4.13 Where it would be reasonable to expect that a school is likely to be closed due to inclement weather (e.g. by giving consideration to weather forecasts, information from the Met Office and by maintaining contact with the school etc.), such situations would not be considered sudden and unforeseen and therefore Carers Leave would not normally be given. It is expected that the foreseeable nature of the potential closure means that staff will have had opportunity to put other childcare arrangements in place, which may include consideration of alternative working arrangements such as:
- Considering a form of agile working, for example working from home. (Reference to the [Agile Working Policy HR02](#) may be useful);
 - Use of Time off in Lieu (TOIL)/ flexi-time;
 - Annual leave;
 - Unpaid leave.
- 4.14 In cases of worsening weather where staff may be contacted by a school to say that it is due to close early, or in cases of sudden inclement/extreme weather, then staff may request Carers Leave following a discussion with their line manager to explain the circumstances that there has been no opportunity for alternative provisions to have been put in place (i.e. the sudden and unforeseen emergency of the school closure).

5.0 Financial Risk

1	Does the implementation of this protocol require any additional Capital resources	No
2	Does the implementation of this protocol require additional revenue resources	No
3	Does the implementation of this protocol require additional manpower	No
4	Does the implementation of this protocol release any manpower costs through a change in practice	No
5	Are there additional staff training costs associated with implementing this document which cannot be delivered through current training programs or allocated training times for staff.	No

6.0 Equality Impact Assessment

An initial equality impact assessment has been carried out and it indicates that there is no impact in relation to Personal Protected Characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

7.0 Maintenance

This protocol will be reviewed every three years or earlier if warranted by a change in standards or if changes are deemed necessary from internal sources.

8.0 Communication and training

8.1 The HR Advisory Department will provide advice on the protocol to staff, and advise and support managers in the fair and equitable application of this protocol as appropriate.

8.2 All Group Managers, Matrons, Departmental/Directorate Managers are responsible for the communication of this protocol to their staff.

9.0 Audit Process

9.1 The Chief People Officer has overall responsibility for the update and maintenance of this protocol.

9.2 The Divisional Team, as well as the People and Organisational Development Committee will be responsible for monitoring its implementation and reviewing this protocol to ensure it reflects national standards and best practice.

Criterion	Lead	Monitoring method	Frequency	Committee
Fair and consistent application of this policy	Divisional HR Manager/ Divisional Management Team	Feedback from staff-side and managers	Every 3 years prior to policy review	POD Committee
Staff survey	HR Department/ Line Manager	Monitoring and action planning based on staff survey results	Annual	POD Committee

Document Control

Protocol number and version: Version 7.0	Title: Inclement Weather Protocol	Status: Final	Author responsible: HR Manager Director Sponsor: Chief People Officer	
Version / Amendment History	Version	Date	Author	Reason
	1	January 1997	Terms & Conditions Protocol Sub Group	Original Policy
	2	April 2008	Terms & Conditions Protocol Sub Group	Review Date
	3	March 2012	Terms & Conditions Protocol Sub Group	Review Date
	4	May 2015	Terms & Conditions Protocol Sub Group	Review Date
	5	October 2018	HR Manager	Review Date and de-escalation to protocol
	6	May 2021	HR Manager - Advisory	Review Date
	7	May 2024	HR Manager	Review date
Intended Recipients: All staff				
Consultation Group / Role Titles and Date: Divisional HR representatives and Staff Side – April 2024 Joint Negotiating Committee – June 2024				
Name and date of group where reviewed			Trust Policy Group – June 2024	
Name and date of final approval committee			Trust Management Committee – June 2024	
Date of Protocol issue			July 2024	
Review Date and Frequency (standard review frequency is 3 yearly unless otherwise indicated)			June 2027 (then every 3 years)	
Training and Dissemination: Information sharing and engagement at manager's meetings, launched via Divisional Management forums. Advice and guidance available from the HR Advisory Department as and when required by managers and staff.				
To be read in conjunction with: HR01 Work Life Balance/Family Friendly Policy HR02 Agile Working Policy Trust Business Continuity Management Policy (OP104)				
Initial Equality Impact Assessment (all policies):			Completed Yes	
Full Equality Impact assessment (as required):			Completed NA	
If you require this document in an alternative format e.g., larger print please contact Policy Administrator 85887.				
Contact for Review			HR Manager	

Monitoring arrangements	People and Organisational Development Committee (POD)
<p>Document summary/key issues covered: This protocol aims to ensure there is a systematic approach to the way in which managers consider and deal with the effect that inclement weather has on both employees and service delivery. The protocol provides guidance relating to staff around what action should be taken in the event of inclement weather.</p>	
Key words for intranet searching purposes	Bad weather Inclement weather Snow Travel Weather conditions