

Severe Weather Procedure

Date		Version
19 March 2013		3.2
Purpose		
<p>Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust (PHNT) recognises that during periods of severe weather, employees may face difficulties in attending their place of work and in returning home. The delivery of services is of paramount importance and is the basis for managers' decisions regarding attendance and continued attendance at work.</p>		
Who should read this document?		
All Trust staff.		
Accountabilities		
Production	Richard Maguire, HR Business Partner	
Review and approval	Director of HR and OD	
Ratification	Director of HR and OD	
Dissemination	Richard Maguire, HR Business Partner	
Compliance	HR and OD Committee	
Links to other policies and procedures		
<p>Leave Policy Performance and Conduct Policy Grievance Policy Additional Guidance for Community Midwives</p>		
Version History		
2	July 2009	Reformatted, EIA, dissemination plan and checklist included
3	March 2013	Review of Procedure (converted from policy)
3.1	November 2018	Extended to April 2019 by HR SMT
3.2	August 2019	Extended to February 2020 by Richard Maguire & Lisa White
Last Approval		Due for Review
April 2013		Extended to February 2020

PHNT is committed to creating a fully inclusive and accessible service.

Making equality and diversity an integral part of the business will enable us to enhance the services we deliver and better meet the needs of patients and staff.

We will treat people with dignity and respect, actively promote equality and diversity, and eliminate all forms of discrimination regardless of (but not limited to) age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage/civil partnership and pregnancy/ maternity.

An electronic version of this document is available on the Trust Documents Network Share Folder (G:\TrustDocuments). Larger text, Braille and Audio versions can be made available upon request.

Standard Operating Procedures are designed to promote consistency in delivery, to the required quality standards, across the Trust. They should be regarded as a key element of the training provision for staff to help them to deliver their roles and responsibilities.

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Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) Severe Weather

1 Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this procedure is to outline the responsibilities of employees and managers during severe weather conditions, and whilst ensuring essential patient services are maintained.

This policy applies to:

- All staff directly employed by PHNT.
- Staff working for PHNT but who are seconded from other organisations.
- Staff on student placements.
- Staff working for PHNT but employed by an employment agency*
- Voluntary workers.
- Staff employed in other NHS Trusts who are unable to attend their normal work base.

*Agency workers would receive payment for the hours they work.

2 Procedure to Follow

2.1 Severe weather may affect individual employees in different ways. The employee's manager will decide how weather conditions will affect essential services and individual members of staff. Consideration will be given to the provision of patient services and the employee's personal circumstances (e.g. where they live and how they travel to and from work). Managers will also consider advice/guidance from external agencies (e.g. police, Met Office and motoring agencies). Details of areas to be considered by an individual employee and managers are detailed in Appendix 1.

Further guidance may be sought via the HR department or the Emergency Planning and Liaison Officer.

Planning

2.2 Where there is sufficient advance warning of severe weather, managers should agree appropriate arrangements with their team.

Co-ordination of staff across the Trust will be given to a Control Centre, which will include the Operation Support Team, On Call Manager and Senior Nurse, and will facilitate the deployment of staff accordingly. The Control Centre will also facilitate decisions around prioritising essential work.

Attendance at work

2.3 All employees have a duty to make every reasonable effort to attend their place of work at the start of their shift. If an employee anticipates being late, they need to notify their manager and report to work as soon as reasonably possible.

Where an employee cannot attend their base of work, are unable to attend at their required start time, or are unable to attend for their normal shift, they must notify their manager of their absence in accordance with established practice. In the event that the manager is not available, the individual must try to contact the designated person to ensure that the message is relayed as soon as possible. This is to ensure that emergency arrangements can be made, where necessary, to cover the service and assure colleagues that an individual is safe.

Employees who are delayed in attending their work place due to severe weather conditions will have the opportunity to make up this time at a later date. However, the employee's manager will have the right to waive these requirements. For example, where it is considered that the period of lateness is negligible in relation to the severity of the conditions and the employee's personal circumstances (such as proximity of their home to work and the mode of transport used to attend work). If this period of absence extends to half of the employee's normal working day, then the same provision as outlined in recording non-attendance (see below) should apply.

Staff who undertake flexible working hours may not need to make up lost time due to lateness as a result of severe weather. Each case will be treated on its merits taking into account such issues as listed above. However, staff may be asked to make up lost time.

Working from home

2.4 Where an employee is unable to attend work at all, they may (with the permission of their manager) work from home where appropriate. The employee's manager would have the right to review the decision to allow the employee to work from home in the light of lessening weather conditions and would be able to request that the employee attends an appropriate/normal work-base as a result of this.

Journey home from work

2.5 Where worsening weather conditions affect an employee's journey home from work, then their manager may authorise them to leave work early. Consideration will be given to the full extent of the implications on both patient services and the individual before a decision is made.

Where possible, the manager may request that the employee takes with them a workload that could be performed at home. Any hours outside those stipulated that were not worked because of worsening weather conditions would normally be treated as paid, where it is the manager's decision to send someone home.

Recording non-attendance

2.6 Employees who cannot attend work due to severe weather conditions may request to take the 1st day of absence as **unpaid** Crisis Leave. Any subsequent days should be taken as a lieu day, annual leave, longer term unpaid leave or an individual may be able to work a different day to make the time up. If practicable (and again with the manager's agreement) an individual may work from home.

Where the severe weather causes childcare issues, for example where schools are closed, the non-attendance arrangements must be as described above. If none of these options are available, the absence will be recorded as unpaid leave. (Please also refer to the Trust's leave Policy, section 3.3, Crisis Leave).

Grievance

2.7 Decisions related to severe weather should be made at line manager level, to enable a full appreciation of all circumstances regarding the need to maintain service levels and understand different employee needs.

If, however, an employee feels they have not been treated equitably with the application of this policy they may follow the Trust's Dispute and Grievance Policy.

Weather information and further guidance

2.8 Weather information will be obtained for the Trust via the Emergency Planning and Liaison Officer, Duty Senior Nurse or On Call Manager. Outside of office hours, Managers requiring further information should seek clarification from the On Call Manager. Regular bulletins will be made available to all staff via the Communications Office.

3 Document Ratification Process

The design and process of review and revision of this procedural document will comply with The Development and Management of Trust Wide Documents.

The review period for this document is set as five years from the date it was last ratified, or earlier if developments within or external to the Trust indicate the need for a significant revision to the procedures described.

This document will be ratified by the Director of HR and OD.

Non-significant amendments to this document may be made, under delegated authority from the Director of HR and OD, by the nominated author. These must be ratified by the Director of HR & OD and should be reported, retrospectively, to the HR and Organisational Development Committee.

Significant reviews and revisions to this document will include a consultation with the Senior Management Team and JSNC representatives across the Trust. For non-significant amendments, informal consultation will be restricted to directors and managers who are directly affected by the proposed changes, together with JSNC representatives.

Dissemination and implementation

Following approval and ratification, this procedural document will be published in the Trust's formal documents library and all staff will be notified through the Trust's normal notification process, currently the 'Vital Signs' electronic newsletter.

Document control arrangements will be in accordance with The Development and Management of Trust Wide Documents.

The document author(s) will be responsible for agreeing the training requirements associated with the newly ratified document with the Director of HR & OD and for working with the Trust's training function, if required, to arrange for the required training to be delivered.

4 Reference material

ACAS – Winter weather and travel guidance

<http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=2797>

APPENDIX 1 - AREAS OF CONSIDERATION

In order to apply this policy effectively individuals and managers are required to consider the following:-

Employee's Responsibilities

Recognise that predicted severe weather will impact on ability to travel and travelling times.

Make every reasonable effort to report for duty at normal shift start times.

Provide the Line Manager with relevant information in relation to their personal circumstances which may impact on their ability attend or remain in work for the duration of their shift.

Follow the relevant reporting arrangements when difficulties are encountered.

Manager's Responsibilities

Whilst making decisions in relation to the Severe Weather Policy the manager must consider both operational needs and individual needs. Decisions must be made in light of current and anticipated weather conditions whilst balancing the needs of the service and the individual. Regular liaison with the Control Centre must be maintained to facilitate appropriate deployment of staff.

Areas for Consideration:-

Impact on Service Provision	Individual Needs
Essential patient services	Where they live
Admissions	Transport
Discharges	Carer Responsibilities
Outpatient Clinics	Duties undertaken i.e. specialist nurse
Transport	Health conditions i.e. pregnancy, disabilities giving consideration to the Equality Act 2010
Patient Dependency	
Staff Numbers	