

**NHS North Somerset  
Clinical Commissioning Group**

**Extreme Weather Policy**

**Approved by:      Quality and Assurance Group**

**Ratification date:    March 2013**

**Review date:        March 2016**

## Policy Statement

This policy aims to ensure that equal and fair\* treatment is applied as far as possible to staff who are unable to attend work, or who have to work a shorter day than normal, due to extreme weather conditions. While accepting that staff should not take unreasonable risks in attempting to get to work in difficult conditions, there should not be a disincentive to staff that do make a particular effort. Extreme weather conditions will generally fall into two areas “inclement weather” and weather described as a “heat wave”.

\* It is acknowledged that individual circumstances will vary greatly and therefore it is unlikely that this policy will cover all eventualities. Management discretion may be necessary if there are exceptional circumstances.

### 1. What is Inclement Weather?

‘Inclement weather’ covers conditions such as snow, ice, fog, floods which render extremely hazardous journeys by road, by both public and private transport.

‘Extremely hazardous’ is defined as those conditions in which the police and/or appropriate motoring organisations advise people not to make unnecessary journeys or indeed travel at all.

### 2. What is a Heat wave?

A heat wave is where there are exceptionally high temperatures which are likely to prevail for more than a few days. Staff are expected to attend work in these conditions but take necessary health precautions. For further information, refer to the Dept of Health Fact sheet which can be located at: [http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/AboutUs/MinistersAndDepartmentLeaders/ChiefMedicalOfficer/Features/DH\\_4135398](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/AboutUs/MinistersAndDepartmentLeaders/ChiefMedicalOfficer/Features/DH_4135398). In the event that a school is closed due to extreme high temperatures, staff should refer to the Work Life Balance Policy.

### 3. What if I can't get to work because of the weather?

If there are extreme weather conditions you are expected to make every reasonable effort to get to work, adapting your means of travel if necessary, even if this means you will arrive late. If you are community based, your line manager will make decisions on your work schedule and postponement of appointments, if necessary.

If you really are unable to attend work because of the weather conditions you must notify your manager within one hour of your usual start time. In this case you would normally be expected to take the time as either annual leave or flexi time, at your request, to cover the time lost.

Please note that failure to notify an appropriate manager that you are unable to attend work would count as unauthorised absence and therefore be unpaid.

You may be required to work from an alternative base or it may be possible for you to work from home in cases of inclement weather. These options should be discussed and agreed with your manager in advance. In exceptional cases, you

may be asked to attend a base of another NHS organisation. A senior member of staff will make contact with the organisation and advise them of your attendance. You should always take your staff identity card with you.

#### **4. What if the weather means I am late for work?**

If you do arrive late because of inclement weather you will not normally be expected to make up the time lost.

Likewise, if you wish to leave work early because of the weather you should consult with your manager. In the case of worsening, or particularly hazardous conditions you should be able to leave work earlier than usual without having to make up any time lost.

Normally all staff that attend work during such hazardous conditions, but work a shorter day than normal because of the weather, will be granted their standard day.

#### **5. What if the Office is closed due to bad weather?**

In exceptional circumstances, a decision may be made by the Chief Operating Officer, or other nominated individual, to close the buildings and either send all staff home or tell them not to arrive for work. In this instance you would not be required to make up lost hours.

#### **6. What if the bad weather continues?**

The nature of this policy is to cater for initial, emergency situations. However it is recognised that in some instances bad weather may continue and other services may be affected. In this situation other policies may need to be referred to – i.e. for example if schools are closed and you need to take time off to look after your children the Work Life Balance Policy may be applicable. You should discuss your individual situation with your manager.

#### **7. What if inclement weather prevents me returning to work from a holiday destination?**

You should make contact with your manager at the earliest opportunity to let him/her know that your return to work is delayed and when your likely return date will be. On your return to work your manager will discuss with you how this leave can be best managed – depending on the circumstances it may be that provisions contained in the Work Life Balance Policy may need to apply, i.e. short term unpaid leave.

#### **8. How should I record any absence that I have due to Inclement Weather?**

You should use the application for leave form within the Work Life Balance Policy and record your absence in the 'other' category, clearly stating by the side that your reasons for absence were because of the weather conditions. This form must be signed off and retained by your manager.

## 9. Review

This policy and procedure will be reviewed after 3 years or earlier on the request of either the Trade Union or management side of the recognised consultative forum.

---

Further information and advice is available from your Human Resources Department. You may also seek the advice of your Trade Union Representative at any stage of the procedure.

---