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Public Health
Wales

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ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS/ TRANSPORT DISRUPTION POLICY

Policy Statement

Public Health Wales is committed to creating an environment where people can thrive and meet their full potential.

Since the adoption of Work How It Works Best – Agile Working Policy, staff across many areas of our business can work effectively from many different locations, including working from home. It is recognised however that some roles, due to the nature of their work, need to be physically located in a workplace which requires individuals to travel.

This Policy sets out the arrangements which support staff to work safely when there are adverse weather warnings in place. It also aims to ensure that all staff are treated fairly and consistently during times of adverse weather/ travel disruption, and to ensure sufficient flexibility to address individual circumstances and take account of the health, safety and wellbeing of individuals, as well as endeavouring to provide adequate levels of service to our patients or service users.

This policy should be applied in a way that reflects our organisational values and People Strategy, ensuring fairness, respect, and wellbeing for all staff.

Policy Commitment

The main aim of the Policy is to provide clear guidance/ information to staff and guidance to managers during times of adverse weather/ travel disruption.

The objectives of the Policy are to reinforce staff's personal responsibility for travel to and from work, to minimise hardship for a member of staff, financially or otherwise, where conditions unavoidably prevent them from reporting to their normal place of work, or where a member of staff is prevented from returning home after a period of duty.

Supporting Procedures and Written Control Documents

[All corporate policies and procedures are available on the Public Health Wales website](#)

Other related documents are:

Annual Leave and Bank Holiday Policy,
Maternity, Adoption, Paternity / Maternity Support, Shared Parental & IVF Policy,
All Wales Disciplinary Policy & Procedures,
Special Leave Policy,
Flexible Working Policy,
Work How It Works Best – Agile Working Policy,
Guidance on Records Retention & Destruction
[Being Our Best](#)

Scope

This Policy applies, *without* exception, to all employees and workers of Public Health Wales, including those within hosted bodies, those with honorary contracts, agency workers, temporary and fixed term staff, secondees and students and will apply during times of adverse weather, for example, snow, floods, extreme heat and times of planned travel disruption.

The policy covers disruptions caused by emergencies and major incidents, severe weather, heat waves, public transport strikes and terrorist threats. Adverse weather conditions usually arise from heavy snowfalls and drifting snow but may also include extremely low temperature; exceptionally high (storm force) winds; coastal flooding; flooding of rivers, streams; or localised fluvial/pluvial flooding (flash flooding).

It is not feasible to give an exhaustive list for every situation and flexibility will need to be applied.

During a pandemic, e.g. COVID-19, separate NHS Wales guidance will be published in line with Government advice to provide information on changes to working arrangements and appropriate restrictions, i.e. remote working, travel restrictions and physical distancing. Such guidance will take precedence over this Policy.

It is acknowledged that Public Health Wales is an all-Wales service where different weather conditions could affect different regions of the country and be localised so each case should be considered on its own merits.

Note – the terms of this Policy are NOT invoked where roads are blocked due to road traffic accidents or staff are delayed in attending work due to traffic congestion.

In accordance with the Equality Act (2010) this Policy supports the principles of equality and diversity and no individual will be treated less favourably than others because of any of the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

Equality and Health Impact Assessment	An Equality, Welsh Language and Health Impact Assessment has been completed and can be viewed on the Policy webpages.
Approved by	People and Organisational Development Committee
Approval Date	6 September 2022
Review Date	6 September 2025
Date of Publication:	12 September 2025
Group with authority to approve supporting procedures	People and Organisational Development Committee
Accountable Executive Director/Director	Neil Lewis, Director of People and Organisational Development
Author	Rebecca Kindred-Watkins, People and OD Advisor

Disclaimer

If the review date of this document has passed please ensure that the version you are using is the most up to date either by contacting the document author or [Corporate Governance](#).

Summary of reviews/amendments				
Version number	Date of Review	Date of Approval	Date published	Summary of Amendments
V1	N/A	7 February 2017	20 February 2017	N/A
V2	November 2018 – July 2022	6 September 2022	12 September 2022	<p>Amendment to Policy statement to align more closely with the organisational culture we seek to develop.</p> <p>3.4 Deteriorating weather conditions – In terms of Geographical basis, only sending staff home locally at locations where conditions appear to be worsening, or adverse weather conditions occur. Staff working in unaffected areas should remain in work.</p> <p>3.7 Payment Staff ask to leave early for other reasons such as school closures, managers should refer to the Special Leave Policy.</p> <p>7.1.1 Emergency carers and dependant leave. Any situation which is pre-planned or where the individual has prior knowledge of the arrangements. In these instances, special leave will not apply, and the expectations will be for the individual to make prior alternative arrangements, such as requesting annual leave.</p>

				<p>Staff who are already on planned annual leave will not be entitled to have their annual leave cancelled and leave entitlement reimbursed due to adverse weather conditions or travel disruption, that impact their workplace.</p> <p>Appeal If an individual disagrees with a decision made by their manager, Public Health Wales encourages the matter to be resolved informally through 1:1 discussion with their manager, or through a process of mediation.</p>
V3	September 2025	TBC	TBC	<p>Inclusion of Work How it Works Best Policy and notes that impact of severe weather can be localised across Wales.</p> <p>Confirmation of when the Policy is enacted.</p> <p>Management may consider and apply reasonable adjustments to support staff at times of adverse weather.</p> <p>Managers may use their discretion if special leave is exhausted at times of adverse weather to support staff whose children's school has closed due to adverse weather.</p> <p>Some statements inserted to ensure appropriate behaviours in line with Leadership and Management Framework.</p>

1. Introduction

Public Health Wales is committed to creating an environment where people can thrive and meet their full potential.

Since the adoption of the Work How It Works Best – Agile Working Policy, staff across many areas of our business are able to work effectively from many different locations, including working from home. It is recognised however that some roles, due to the nature of their work, need to be physically located in a workplace which requires individuals to travel. This Policy sets out the arrangements which support staff to work safely when there are adverse weather warnings in place.

This Policy is designed to ensure that all staff are treated fairly and consistently during times of adverse weather/ travel disruption, and to ensure sufficient flexibility to address individual circumstances and take account of the health, safety and wellbeing of individuals, as well as endeavouring to provide adequate levels of service to our patients or service users.

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to enable a clear and shared understanding of the procedure to follow if staff cannot attend work, or will be late attending work due to adverse weather/ transport disruption. It also advises who should make decisions regarding sending staff home early or advising non-attendance for work.

The Policy can be enacted by individual managers responding to adverse weather/travel disruption or an organisational wide response should there be a major weather-related incident.

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Colleagues

Colleagues should not take unacceptable risks with their personal health and safety when taking actions under this Policy and should consider advice from the emergency services or the media and any available advice from Public Health Wales, e.g. recommended changes to working practices or daily routine in the event of extreme or adverse weather conditions.

Members of staff have a responsibility to make every reasonable effort possible to attend their place of work during adverse weather conditions or planned travel disruption. Reasonable effort to attend work includes lift sharing/ car sharing, using public transport, and walking (where appropriate). N.B if individuals decide to 'car share' for example, this is an

arrangement between individual employees and not an instruction from Public Health Wales.

Staff should re-assess the weather situation during their working period, i.e. if the weather conditions improve, they should go into work, even for part of a day.

2.2 People Managers

Colleagues will look to their managers for a lead in times of adverse weather conditions/ planned transport disruption and managers need to be clear on the procedure to be followed, considering what options are available to staff in line with their individual circumstances. Managers should create a psychologically safe environment where staff can openly discuss concerns about travel or working conditions. Managers should lead with empathy and clarity, ensuring decisions are communicated transparently and staff feel supported during periods of disruption.

Where possible, Managers should look to support home working. Managers may refer staff to electronic workplace systems to focus on training and CPD at times of adverse weather. However, it is recognised that not all staff can fulfil their duties, in full or part, by working from home. The policy statement above makes it clear that staff should be treated fairly and consistently whether or not they are able to work at home. Any home working must be approved by the manager and agreed with the individual. In such a case the individual will receive pay as if their normal working hours had been completed in the workplace.

Managers should proactively plan and communicate contingency arrangements, fostering collaboration and trust within team. It is the responsibility of the manager to treat all staff fairly and consistently and ensure adequate communication takes place with their staff where these circumstances arise taking into account the following:

- (i) The severity of the weather conditions.
- (ii) The distance and type of journey to be travelled by the individual.
- (iii) The mode of transport available to the member of staff.
- (iv) Whether a member of staff, or their dependants, belongs to any of the categories outlined above in Scope and below in Principles. No individual will be treated less favourably than others because of any protected characteristics.
- (v) Whether they have contacted their manager through the normal absence procedure.
- (vi) The attendance or otherwise of other staff living in the same geographical area.

Managers must have regard for the Health and Safety of staff, particularly where special conditions apply – see 3.1 below - and must ensure staff contact lists are maintained.

It is important that managers support staff who are working longer hours or out of hours to maintain round the clock services.

Senior managers within each Directorate need to ensure that their managers are aware of the range of options and subsequent decisions that may need to be made at different times.

3. Principles

3.1 Categories of staff with Special Consideration

Managers will be able to make their own decision whether to advise staff not to attend work or to send them home early, in relation to staff that belong to any of the categories of staff below and should discuss the situation with the staff member accordingly. They do not have to rely on the decision-making process as outlined in 3.5. Management may consider and apply reasonable adjustments to support staff at times of adverse weather.

Special consideration will be given to any member of staff who is:

- (i) Pregnant and has made the organisation aware of this.
- (ii) Disabled as defined under the Equality Act 2010 and that disability makes it unreasonable for them to attempt to attend work during adverse weather conditions.
- (iii) Has a health condition, which is known to the Trust, which makes it unreasonable for them to attempt to attend work during adverse weather conditions.

3.2 Health and safety of staff

No member of staff should take unacceptable risks with their personal health and safety when taking actions under this Policy.

In turn, managers will be sympathetic to individual needs and circumstances, and show due regard for the health, safety and wellbeing of individuals.

3.3 Procedure for reporting non/late attendance

Where staff are prevented from attending due to adverse weather conditions or travel disruption, they must notify their manager (or if unavailable, the nominated deputy) by either their designated start time in line with usual procedures or at the earliest opportunity. The following information should be provided:

- Why they are unable to attend work or will be late for work;
- The attempts made by the individual to attend, and likely period of absence;
- Any issues relevant to that day's work.

Staff who, despite their best efforts, are unable to attend for work, should be contactable. Staff are expected to regularly update their manager regarding their ongoing situation during their absence.

Staff will be expected to make every effort to make their own way to their place of work. However, at times of pre-planned situations such as road closures in relation to international, regional, major sporting or large music events this should be discussed in advance with the manager and staff should consider alternative routes or ways to travel into work.

3.4 Deteriorating weather conditions

If weather conditions appear to be worsening, or adverse weather conditions occur when members of staff are already in their workplace, any decisions taken to send staff home will be taken as set out below.

Managers should raise any concerns about weather conditions known to their Divisional Director as soon as possible. Decisions will be dependent on:

- Colleague's journey to their home (i.e. location, distance, mode of transport etc.).
- Staffing requirements.
- Reports obtained on road conditions, weather reports, flooding, etc.
- Geographical basis; sending staff home locally at locations where conditions appear to be worsening, or where adverse weather conditions occur Staff unaffected should remain in work.

Staff working at a location other than their usual place of work should discuss with their manager their intention to return home, or to their usual place of work, as soon as they feel their own health and safety may be at risk.

In exceptional circumstances, where colleagues are unable to return home due to worsening weather conditions, alternative solutions will be sought

which may be agreed in advance by their Divisional or Executive Director or hosted organisation or, if unavailable, their nominated deputy.

Where the decision is taken to send staff home early due to adverse weather conditions/travel disruption, they will be paid as if they had completed their contracted hours of work.

Where adverse weather or transport disruption has been forecast, managers and staff should have agreed contingency arrangements, prior to the event, of which site individuals should attend and/or which duties people should undertake if extreme weather or transport disruption prevents attendance in their usual site. This may include the provision of emergency accommodation where necessary.

3.5 Decision Making

It is recognised that the circumstances whereby this Policy will become operational may mean that normal reporting and communication arrangements are compromised. Public Health Wales allows senior managers/ department leads discretion in considering difficulties experienced by staff who, in extreme weather conditions or transport disruption, arrive late or are unable to attend their normal places of work.

3.6 Contingencies

Each Directorate should have their own Business Continuity Plan that takes into account adverse weather/ planned travel disruption.

Any member of staff who anticipates difficulty in attending their normal place of work or returning home in severe weather conditions/travel disruption should make this clear to their manager. Their manager will make known to staff what is expected should extreme weather conditions or transport disruption occur. This will consist of:

- Who or which office should be contacted in the event of extreme weather conditions or transport disruption.
- Whether it is practical or permissible to attend work at an alternative Trust base, NHS Wales site or home. Prior arrangements should be made in case of anticipated extreme weather conditions or transport disruption.
- Any member of staff unable to report for work because of bad weather or transport disruption should contact their manager in line with absence reporting procedure. For any staff who cannot contact the appropriate manager, a contact telephone number should be left for them to return the call, if necessary.

- Staff who fail to contact their manager without good reason (which may include telephone line/network being down), may be regarded as being on unauthorised absence, without payment.
- Where staff are unable to attend their normal place of work but are able to attend another appropriate workplace within Public Health Wales, and able to carry out their normal duties required, they can do so with the agreement of their manager or another senior manager/Director available.

If adverse weather conditions prevail, managers should refer to their Business Continuity Plan.

Staff who are able to attend work during adverse weather or transport disruption may be required to undertake roles other than their normal roles, as long as these are within their training and capabilities and safe for them to do so and in line with any professional registration requirements.

3.7 Payment

Where staff attend their normal place of work or another Public Health Wales site or can work from home they will receive a normal day's pay.

Staff who arrive late or agree with their manager that they should finish early because of deteriorating weather conditions will be paid a normal day's pay.

Colleagues who, due to adverse weather conditions or travel disruption, attend their workplace later than their contracted start time will be paid as if they attended at the designated time, as long as they have followed the reporting procedure at point 3.3 above.

Where staff ask to leave early for other reasons, for example school closures, managers should refer to the [Special Leave Policy](#) section **7.1.1 Emergency carers and dependant leave**. Managers may use their discretion if special leave is exhausted at times of adverse weather to support staff whose children's school has closed due to adverse weather. However, it should be noted that Special Leave does not include any situations which are *pre-planned* or where the individual has prior knowledge of the arrangements, such as school INSET closures. In these instances, special leave does not apply, and the expectation will be for the individual to make alternative arrangements, such as requesting annual leave.

Colleagues who are already on planned annual leave will not be entitled to have their annual leave cancelled and leave entitlement reimbursed due to

adverse weather conditions or travel disruption that impacted their workplace during their absence.

Managers who have concerns over a team member's attempts to reach work or the reason given for their absence may designate them as being 'absent without pay'. They are advised to speak to the People and OD team before reaching a decision.

If Public Health Wales makes a decision to close a site, affected staff will be paid as if they worked their full shift.

3.8 Non-payment

If a member of staff did not make reasonable efforts to attend the workplace, or failed to contact their place of work payment may be withheld and the member of staff will be informed in writing as soon as possible if this is the case. Before this is action is taken, the member of staff should be given the opportunity to make up this time within a reasonable period agreed by the manager and the individual.

Failing this, the individual will be given the opportunity to take the time off against flexitime, against time owing as "time off in lieu", or as annual leave from this year's entitlement. If the member of staff has no more annual leave for the current year, they may take the time off as unpaid leave.

Records of all the above actions will be taken and kept on the individual's personal file and staff may be required to make a statement of the circumstances that prevented them from attending work.

If a manager believes that a member of staff has repeatedly not made appropriate efforts to attend work during adverse weather conditions, and this is supported by records on their personal file this matter may be taken up through the Disciplinary Policy.

4. Appeal

If an individual disagrees with a decision made by their manager, Public Health Wales encourages issues to be resolved informally through 1:1 discussion, or through the Healthy Working Relationships Framework. However, where an issue cannot be resolved informally, the Respect and Resolution Policy should be followed to ensure any disagreement or complaint is dealt with promptly, fairly and consistently.

5. Implementation

All colleagues need to be made aware of the existence of this policy which can be obtained on the Public Health Wales Policies Intranet page, and will

be publicised via the staff intranet. People managers should bring the guidance to the attention of their teams.

Whilst training is not offered on this procedure, we encourage colleagues to seek guidance on this procedure from the People and OD team by contacting PeopleSupport.PHW@wales.nhs.uk

6. Information Governance

This Policy has been considered by the Information Governance manager who agreed that there were no special or additional implications for privacy beyond normal considerations of where records are retained and for how long.

7. Equality and Welsh Language

An Equality, Welsh Language and Health Impact Assessment has been completed and has not identified any potential negative impacts (unintended consequences) or gaps.

This policy will be made available in Welsh on our Policy webpages.

8. Review

This policy will be reviewed in 3 years' time or sooner if required.

The named lead will monitor this policy to ensure it is compliant with current legislation, to ensure it is effectively implemented, and ensure that it is reviewed in accordance with the timetable for review.

We are continually looking to improve our employment practices and welcome any feedback you may have in relation to this policy. Feedback can be provided by emailing PeopleSupport.PHW@wales.nhs.uk or you may wish to feedback via your Trade Union representative.