



**Adverse Weather / Staff Attendance During
Extreme Weather Conditions**

Policy and Procedure

Printed copies must not be considered the definitive version

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Policy Group:	Corporate		
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1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides a framework for managers and staff detailing service expectations, responsibilities, reporting arrangements and entitlements in the event of adverse weather within our region which potentially affects their ability to attend or undertake their role, to ensure that all staff are treated fairly and consistently, with due regard for their health, safety and wellbeing, whilst maintaining essential health and healthcare services for the patients and public of Dumfries and Galloway.

The scope of this Policy is Board wide.

2. POLICY AIMS AND KEY PRINCIPLES

This Policy should be followed in the event of adverse or deteriorating weather conditions. NHS D&G recognises its responsibilities to all staff, whether on shift either in a fixed location or in the community, and also those commencing or finishing shifts, who are assessing their travel options. These responsibilities must be balanced with the need to maintain essential services to our patients and the public, therefore NHS Dumfries and Galloway expects that all employees will make every reasonable effort to attend work when their normal transport arrangements have been disrupted due to extreme weather conditions and to remain at work unless it is not reasonably practicable for them to do so.

This policy further aims to ensure that staff who are unable to attend work, despite their best efforts, are treated fairly and consistently. Departmental managers are expected to have a reporting procedure within their department for these eventualities, in accordance with the details set out in this policy. These arrangements must involve the Duty General Manager as appropriate, to ensure that a system wide view of workforce distribution and service impact is maintained at all times.

Where staff are prevented from attending due to weather conditions, they must notify their normal place of work at the earliest opportunity and before their shift starts. Staff who do not contact their place of work will be registered as unauthorised absence and their line manager has the discretion to withhold payment as outlined in the Health Board Attendance Management policy.

Where attendance at the normal place of work is not possible, their line manager should consider whether the employee can be of assistance at another NHS Dumfries and Galloway premises which they are able to get to.

During periods of severe weather, media coverage may advise that the police have asked the public to refrain from travelling unnecessarily. It is understood that such advice may refer to genuinely dangerous routes and/or to what are considered to be non essential journeys, e.g. shopping trips to town. However the NHS is classed as an essential service and accordingly managers must ensure their staff understand that they are expected to attend work in such situations and ensure that they take all reasonable steps to protect their own health and safety. Staff should therefore contact their manager to discuss the situation and should assess and discuss the risks involved in travelling to work before setting off on their journey.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES AND ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

3.1 **Managers Responsibilities** – All managers will be expected to have a reporting procedure within their Department for these eventualities that:-

- Treats all staff fairly and consistently – recognising the circumstances of staff on shift / at work, those attending and / or leaving the workplace at changeovers, and those working peripatetically in community settings
- Ensures that adequate communication takes place with their staff and the Duty General Manager where these circumstances arise
- Has due regard for the Health and Safety of staff, particularly where special conditions apply such as pregnancy or disability
- Support staff who work long hours to maintain services
- Ensures that employees do not attend alternative premises unless instructed to do so by their Line Manager
- Ensures business continuity plans incorporate provision of safe staffing levels during periods of adverse weather
- Ensures they have a local system in place to provide safe staffing levels in times of emergency, e.g. a shared database of local staff who would be prepared to change shift at short notice, or come into work at short notice, to provide essential cover

3.2 **Organisational Arrangements**

If a staff member on duty, (either in a fixed location or peripatetic role) has concerns regarding their ability to continue working due to adverse weather they should notify their line manager in the first instance. Their line manager should risk assess the circumstances with the individual employee and direct them as appropriate on what actions should be taken to safeguard their immediate safety. They should discuss any essential care that they have been or are unable to deliver and the potential alternatives for delivery of care, e.g. local clinician or telephone advice.

The NHS is an essential service, and accordingly managers must ensure that their staff know that, in principle, they are expected to attend and remain at work and provide safe staffing levels to provide core essential services.

Should local circumstances deteriorate to the extent that Line Management consideration is being given to sending any staff members home before the end of their shift, approval to send staff home must be sought from the Duty General Manager. The Duty General Manager will consider the request within the wider context of whole system service provision and emergency and contingency planning, including the follow on impact for staff travelling into the workplace to take up later shifts.

If staff can work effectively from home, this should be agreed in advance, either with their Line Manager, or alternative manager responsible for the department

In the event that employees are not able to leave their workplace due to poor or deteriorating weather conditions and are expected to continue working, arrangements should be put in place by the line manager for these individuals to take extended breaks during the prolonged working period. If members of staff are stranded on site and unable to leave, the organisation will take all reasonable steps

to support them. All employees are expected to keep a diary log of their working times and rest breaks.

Principles of the Policy regarding payment and time off as a result of deteriorating conditions are the same as those of section 3.3.

In the event of severe weather closing schools, staff and managers should refer to the organisation's Special Leave Policy.

3.3 Employees responsibilities - Where a member of staff is unable to attend work (or an agreed alternative place of work) and they have made contact with their line manager in accordance with this policy, the manager will confirm with the employee that he/she can:-

- Reallocate days off
- Where staff are part of flexi-time system, flexi-leave may be used; alternatively staff may take lieu time owed for the day/s or shift/s lost
- Annual Leave may be used; In some circumstances when staff have exhausted annual leave for the current year, managers can agree for annual leave to be taken from the following year's entitlement;
- An agreement may be made between the manager and the individual for the time lost to be made up over a mutually agreeable period
- If none of the above are possible, unpaid leave will be granted
- Employees should not turn up at an alternative premises unless instructed to do so by their Line Manager
- Employees should not take unacceptable risks with their health and safety during adverse weather.

4. PAY

Staff who are unable to attend work may avoid loss of income by agreeing alternative arrangements with their line manager, in accordance with the options outlined in 3.3 above.

For staff attending / undertaking work in accordance with organisational requirements as per sections 2 and 3.2 above, payments will be based on normal pay i.e. based on what an individual would normally be paid if able to come to work. Staff will not be penalised for arriving to work late due to problems encountered whilst travelling to work during adverse conditions.

5. COMMUNICATION

All staff should ensure that they are familiar with this policy, "Adverse Weather / Staff Attendance during Extreme Weather Policy" and the procedures within this document. Staff should also keep a note at home of the direct dial number of their ward/department (where available). Staff must avoid telephoning the hospital switchboard unless it is absolutely essential.

For nursing staff, following an adverse weather warning a Senior Nurse Manager will be identified to co-ordinate nursing arrangements, nursing line managers should ensure they report to this senior manager.

6. MONITORING

Amendments or variations to the Adverse Weather / Staff Attendance Policy will only be made by agreement with the Area Partnership Forum.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

NHS Dumfries and Galloway is committed to the principles of equality and diversity and recognises the Protected Characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010 as follows: age; disability; gender; race; religion/belief; and sexual orientation; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; and pregnancy and maternity. Any requirements will be highlighted within the risk assessment process. This policy has been equality and diversity impact assessed

8. GRIEVANCES

Any member of staff who is aggrieved about the way they have been treated under this procedure may pursue their complaint through the Health Boards Grievance Procedure. It may be preferable in such circumstances, however, for the employee and/or manager to seek advice on resolving the matter from an appropriate member of the Workforce Directorate Team and a Trade Union/or Professional Organisation representative.

9. DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

1. Document Status

Title	Adverse Weather Policy (Review)
Author	Margot Martin
Approver	Caroline Sharp
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Version number	4.1

2. Document Amendment History

Version	Section(s)	Reason for update
1.0	Original Policy February 2009	Policy was approved by APF February 2009 with review due in 2011.
2.0	Reviewed October 2011	Policy reviewed as at agreed review date and using new Policy Development and Approval format
3.0	Reviewed June 2013	Policy reviewed earlier than agreed date of October 2013 in order to be fully implemented by winter 2013
4.0	Reviewed October 2015	Policy reviewed in order to be fully implemented by winter 2015
4.1	Reviewed August 2017	Minor amendment made to Organisational Arrangements:- 3.2 Risk assessments to be completed with the involvement of the individual employee.

3. Distribution

Name	Responsibility	Version number
Board Secretary	Place on policy register	4.1
Communications Team	Place on intranet and in 'latest news'	4.1
Board Management Group	Dissemination to all staff through line management	4.1

4. Associated documents

Not applicable

5. Action Plan for Implementation

Action	Lead Officer	Timeframe
Place on policy register	Board Secretary	Following APF approval
Place on intranet	Communications Team	Following APF approval
Dissemination to senior staff through line management	Board Management Group	Following APF approval
Raise awareness and inform staff	All line managers	Following APF approval and through Workforce Directorate Update Paper
Use policy	All staff	Following APF approval

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