

Adverse Weather & Travel Disruption Policy

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1. Introduction and definitions

- 1.1 This policy sets out the principles of attendance at work during adverse weather and/or significant travel disruption.
- 1.2 “Adverse weather” is defined as weather conditions that mean there is the possibility of travel delays, road and rail closures, power cuts and the potential risk to life and property. Such weather is likely to have been given an amber or red warning by the Met Office.
- 1.3 “Significant Travel disruption” is defined as disruption caused by adverse weather, other natural disasters, national transport strikes or other major incidents that cause a significant breakdown/cancellation of the service and is not a planned disruption.

2. Principles

- 2.1 The key principles of this policy are:
 - To ensure the health, safety and welfare of our staff;
 - To maintain the services of the PSOW as far as possible to our service users;
 - To allow staff flexibility to work at home where appropriate during adverse weather and travel disruption.
- 2.2 The Ombudsman or a Director will determine whether the office building remains open or closes because of the disruption.

3. Where the office remains open during adverse weather/travel disruption

- 3.1 Staff whose presence is required in the office are expected to attend work, using alternative means of transport (public transport, lift, bicycle, walking etc.) if necessary, feasible and safe.

- 3.2 Other staff should work at home, notifying their manager of this if they were due to work in the office.
- 3.3 If staff are unable to work at home **or** in the office, they should telephone their manager at the earliest opportunity to inform them that they are unable to work.
- 3.4 If a member of staff required in the office is not able to reach their place of work safely they should contact their Manager as soon as possible to discuss the circumstances, including:
- The reason for the disruption
 - The distance involved
 - The prevailing weather conditions
 - The time of day
 - The member of staff's individual circumstances.
- 3.5
- 3.6 If the disruption lasts for more than one day, members of staff are expected to speak to their Manager daily if they are unable to work.
- 3.7 Members of staff should record the hours they work at the office or at home as normal.
- 3.8 Where a member of staff cannot work, this time should be managed using flexi-time, flexi-leave or annual leave. This should be part of the conversation with the line manager when the member of staff informs them that they are unable to work due to adverse weather/travel disruption.
- 3.9 Where the member of staff is unable to work due to caring responsibilities including childcare issues arising from school closures, this time can be taken as flexi-leave, annual leave or unpaid leave (as per the dependent leave policy).

4. Where the office closes during adverse weather/travel disruption

- 4.1 During periods of adverse weather, staff should check MS Teams (PSOW All staff – General) before leaving home, to check for any messages about the office being closed.
- 4.2 Managers will be notified and will, where possible, contact staff in their teams who were planning to work in the office. Where a decision has been made to close the office, the website will also be updated to include an 'office closed' message.
- 4.3 Staff should work from home and should record hours worked as normal. Staff may work up to the maximum period permitted (10 hours).
- 4.4 Pre-planned annual leave or other absences will be unaffected.

5. Review and publication

- 5.1 This policy will be reviewed every 2 years and published internally and externally.
- 5.2 All queries about this document can be directed to policycontrol@ombudsman.wales