

Adverse Weather Guidance



ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

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This document is also available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg

Version Control

This document is intended for:

- Council staff only School-based staff only Council & School-based staff

Version	Key Changes	Approved By
Mar 2020	Reformatted only	DMT
June 2022	Updated to reflect the Council's new operating model and ways of working	DMT

This document may be reviewed and amended at any time and without consultation in response to legal requirements or in response to an organisational requirement and where the changes do not reflect a fundamental change or affect the spirit or intent of the document.

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1. Introduction

This guidance has been designed to provide information on working arrangements during periods of adverse weather. In normal circumstances when adverse weather occurs, managers will continue to operate services in accordance with the Corporate Business Continuity Management Plan and their own Service Area Business Continuity Plan. Whilst this is a general guide to enable a consistent approach, employees should always bear in mind that exceptions may occur depending on the circumstances at the time.

This guidance also reflects the Council's new operating model and Agile Working Policy.

2. Scope

This guidance applies to all Council employees except school based employees appointed through the Governing body. Governing Bodies will be required to either adopt this guidance and/or develop their own guidance for employees.

3. Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the employee to decide and arrange to travel to work based on the best information available to them e.g. the most recent weather forecast, local travel conditions and police advice on travelling. In the event of adverse weather conditions, as a result of which normal travel arrangements are severely disrupted, employees are required to notify their manager or relevant available officer of their situation and intentions at the earliest opportunity.

In line with the Council's operating model, home and agile workers are able to work from home and should do so during periods of adverse weather. It is the responsibility of service/community workers to discuss with their manager whether their role is suitable to work from home during periods of adverse weather.

Managers should ensure that their Service Area Business Continuity Plan is up to date and reflective of their service and employees needs in accordance with the different levels of weather warnings. It is also important that Managers are aware of employees that require reasonable adjustments during adverse weather conditions.

Managers should consider the following during periods of adverse weather:

- appropriate locations that are available for work
- home working (if the employee is not already designated a home or agile worker)
- whether any meetings or work scheduled for the day needs to be cancelled/re-arranged. Although in line with the Council's new operating model and developments in IT, this is less likely to be required as more employees are able to work effectively from home.
- What to do when the weather improves

Where it is difficult to travel due to poor road conditions, employees should consider alternatives i.e. walking or other means of transport such as public transport (if operating). Employees should check with their manager about their business continuity plan as there may also be a pool of off-road vehicles that have been identified to help transport employees to work.

Employees must maintain regular contact with their manager during periods of adverse weather; should weather and road conditions improve, employees will be reasonably expected to travel to their normal workplace.

Managers are responsible for ensuring services continue to run as effectively as possible for the public. Time recording arrangements will be as normal unless CLT communicates otherwise. Arrangements for snow clearance and gritting at Council buildings are detailed in the Health and Safety document "[Managing the Risk of Ice and Snow in Workplaces](#)" available on the Intranet.

4. Equal Opportunities and Reasonable Adjustments

During adverse weather conditions the Council recognises that there are employees who have specific physical or health conditions that will cause them difficulty in attending work or remaining in work in adverse weather.

The Council undertakes to comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 ensuring that employees are treated in a fair, equitable and consistent manner. The Council will identify appropriate reasonable adjustments and options for those employees who may require specific support during such conditions. This may range from enabling employees to leave work early, arranging homeworking opportunities (where service based), transportation to and from work or the option to take annual or flexi leave as required.

Employees should raise their specific concerns, in confidence, with their manager during one to one meetings and relevant risk assessments and action plans can be implemented in preparation for adverse weather. Where necessary occupational health advice and other medical information can be used to support any required reasonable adjustments.

Pregnant Workers

There is a legal requirement to assess the risks to pregnant workers whilst in work. Whilst this does not cover commuting to work, it is recognised that pregnant workers may be at further risk during periods of adverse weather, and should they have an accident, are at far greater risk of serious consequences occurring. In light of this a pregnant employee should remain in regular communication with their manager and a risk assessment must be undertaken to take account of adverse weather. Where appropriate, arrangements can be made for the employee to work from an alternative office or from home in the event of adverse weather. In exceptional cases where none of the options including taking annual or flexi leave are applicable due to the nature of an employee's role, they will be paid normal pay for the day.

5. Continuation of Services/Business Continuity Plans

Each service will have its own Business Continuity Plan. Managers should ensure prior to any adverse weather that employees are familiar with the plan in order to ensure that services continue to operate as smoothly as possible for the community.

Essential services are required to continue as normal, as far as reasonably practicable in line with business continuity plans.

If the service is not identified as critical (for example there is not an unacceptable risk to the community if the service is suspended for a few days) employees should check with their manager which other services, they could link with and support in these emergency situations. Managers should refer to the Corporate Business Continuity Management Plan for information on priority services.

During adverse weather employees who are operating in a frontline service or are assigned to support the adverse weather response because their normal service is suspended should be provided with suitable equipment, personal protective equipment, and available welfare facilities. Supervisors/managers will make the necessary arrangements.

Consideration must be given to the security and safety of buildings and employees, particularly in the situation where a number of employees leaving early due to adverse weather could result in a building being un-manned.

Commuting to meetings in adverse weather whilst at work is a health and safety at work issue. Managers and employees should use a simple local risk assessment approach on deciding whether or not to continue to drive to meetings, inspections, etc. Clearly the importance/nature/statutory requirement of the service will dictate this and just because there is a risk it doesn't mean the service should automatically be stopped, consider what other options are available e.g. consider holding a telephone conference.

With the above point in mind, managers and employees should also be aware that the Council has a statutory duty of care to its employees, and employees should not be put in a position of high risk that they do not feel comfortable in.

6. Corporate Buildings

As the primary aim of the Council is to serve the community, particularly during times of need such as adverse weather, all reasonable attempts will be made to ensure that Council buildings will remain open. Priority will be given to Anvil Court, Central Depot, General Offices and VITCC due to the nature of the services operating from those buildings.

Responsible officers of satellite buildings should liaise with CLT to ensure that all employees are given consistent messages and information about building closures

to avoid any confusion and to take into account the specific circumstances of each building, such as location.

7. Working from Home

In line with the Council's Agile Working Policy, home and agile workers should continue to work from home during periods of adverse weather.

Homeworking may be suitable in the short term for certain service based workers who can plan ahead, take work and any suitable equipment home i.e. their laptop. This option is advantageous to the Council, as day to day operations can continue and employees are not expected to take leave. **Employees must discuss the suitability of this option with their manager and agree what alternative work arrangements are appropriate.**

During prolonged periods of adverse weather, discussion should take place with their manager about the effectiveness of the homeworking arrangement and the viability of this continuing and what other options are available such as taking leave.

Employees will be expected to make every effort to attend the workplace as conditions improve.

Service based workers who work from home during periods of adverse weather, should complete the following forms (available on the [intranet](#)) with their Manager, in advance of any adverse weather:

- Working from Home Health & Safety Arrangements
- Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Workstation Checklist

Employees must note that during active work, time at home is not a substitute for childcare or similar carer responsibilities. It is the employee's responsibility to ensure adequate provision is in place although there are other policies, which offer options and support to employees in such circumstances.

8. Working from an Alternative Office/Location

Those employees who are designated as home or agile workers will work from home in periods of adverse weather.

Where service based, managers in conjunction with the employee may consider the appropriateness of working from another location in line with the priority level of their service, as set out in the Corporate Business Continuity Plan. Where it has been agreed that an employee can work from an alternative location, the Manager and employee are both responsible for ensuring that sufficient, meaningful work can be carried out, or, where alternative duties are allocated, they are suitable for the employee.

However, employees and Managers must be aware that **the Central Depot is not deemed to be a suitable alternative location from which to work from**, due to the frontline services operating from this location.

Employees should not unreasonably refuse to comply with temporary redeployment to an alternative base or undertake other duties required of them. However, consideration will be given to how appropriate it is for employees to travel to another location if their building is closed, depending on the travel conditions and where they live.

9. Work and Pay Arrangements

Home working as far as reasonably practicable is the desired option in periods of adverse weather to maintain service delivery. However, employees that are either unable to attend work or leave work prior to the end of the working day so that they can drive home safely should notify their manager or other responsible officer and ensure that any appointments in their diary are postponed or covered.

Where it is not possible to work from home, employees have the following options to cover their absence which can be agreed on their return to work. Consideration should be given to business continuity arrangements for designated urgent services, and ensuring that these are suitably covered.

Employees should notify their manager on their first day back in work which of the following options (or combination) they will be using to cover their absence:

- Annual leave
- Unpaid leave
- Flexi leave/time off in lieu (TOIL). Employees that do not have any flexi leave can take flexi and go into a negative balance, up to a **maximum of 3 days**. Employees should then agree with their manager when these should be worked back e.g. work back 1 day per accounting period. Employees should not take any more than 3 days negative flexi except in exceptional circumstances with agreement from their manager, due to the implications of having to work back excessive hours.
- Agreement with manager to make up the time lost in another way – for those employees not on flexi

In certain extreme weather conditions e.g. amber or red warnings, CLT or the Emergency Response Team (ERT) may decide that certain services are suspended/closed. This will be communicated by CLT and all managers must ensure anyone not on email is informed.

The table below details work and pay arrangements for a range of different circumstances that may occur during periods of adverse weather:

<p>CLT or ERT suspend/close services during the day.</p>	<p>All employees who have attended work (their normal workplace or alternative office/location agreed in advance) in non-essential services or where they cannot be deployed to the adverse weather response or to support a designated essential service will be credited up to the maximum number of hours of that shift/normal working day. Home and agile workers should work from home.</p>
<p>CLT or ERT suspend/close services in advance (i.e. the day before).</p>	<p>All employees in non-essential services, where they cannot be deployed to the adverse weather response or to support a designated essential service, or where there are no other alternative working arrangements identified by their manager, will be credited for their shift/normal working day. Home and agile workers should work from home.</p>
<p>Employees who are required to undertake work during periods of extreme weather i.e. frontline services, in instances when non-essential employees are not required to work.</p>	<p>Paid in line with normal terms and conditions which will not include any additional recompense.</p>
<p>Employees who are required to work additional hours outside of their normal working pattern e.g. required to cover additional hours to meet service demand.</p>	<p>Paid in line with normal terms and conditions for additional hours and overtime.</p> <p>Where managers ask employees to work additional hours in adverse weather, consideration should be given to the health, safety and wellbeing of employees to ensure excessive working hours are managed and regular breaks are taken.</p>
<p>Employees who form part of the Emergency Response Team or senior officers who are called upon to respond to the management of services in adverse weather. This covers employees responding to an “emergency situation” both via the telephone and attendance at sites.</p>	<p>Paid for in accordance with the “Emergency Response” payment structure as detailed in the Standby and Call Out Policy.</p>

10. School Closures

In the event of a school closure, teaching staff will usually be asked to deliver blended learning where possible.

Centrally employed employees who are based in a school e.g. catering and cleaning, that has been officially closed and would normally attend work on that day, in the first instance should ring their manager to see if they can be redeployed elsewhere to cover anyone that has not made it to work, e.g. cleaners may be able to help with cleaning other offices, etc.

If the manager confirms that this is not possible and the school is officially closed employees will receive their normal pay for that day.

11. Communication

Employees and managers should communicate consistently, clearly and frequently and always at the earliest possible opportunity so that the service can continue to run as smoothly as possible and employees are made aware of any corporate decisions.

Communication of the Business Continuity Plan should happen prior to any adverse weather so that employees are aware of what to do in emergency situations. Managers must ensure that they consider all employees including those that are not office based or don't work traditional office hours.

Managers must ensure that they have up-to-date contact information for their team members. Employees need to ensure that their personal information (personal telephone numbers and email addresses) is up to date within Employee Self-Serve in iTrent in order for the Council to communicate with employees at short notice.

If adverse weather is forecast employees should check their normal communication methods for advice.

12. Employees requiring Time Off due to Children/ Other Caring Responsibilities

If employees have unexpected caring arrangements that they need to deal with during adverse weather, they should speak to their manager at the earliest opportunity to discuss the options available to them as set out in section 9. In addition to this, employees can refer to the [Schedule of Leave of Absence](#) to identify whether they are entitled to any other type of leave.

13. Services Operating at Weekends or Outside Core Hours

Some services operate during the evening or on a weekend. The departmental business continuity plan will identify the responsible manager who will need to ensure that all the necessary arrangements are made for the safe running of the service where possible, and for notifying employees, the public and the contact centre of the situation.

14. Disclosure and Barring Service – DBS

If a role needs to be covered that normally requires a DBS check and there are no DBS approved employees available managers must give due consideration to risk and where possible, the employee should be from a similar role to the one requiring cover.

15. Abuse of the System

Anyone suspected of wilful abuse of the arrangements stipulated in this guidance will be subject to the Council's [Disciplinary Code](#).