

## Adverse Weather - Guidance



Issued by HR  
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### Introduction

The principles in this guidance apply in circumstances where people are prevented from attending their usual workplace due to adverse weather.

This guidance supplements the principles contained in the 'Working Arrangements during Disruptions or Emergencies' document, which can be found in Section G, Appendix 5 of the Blue Book.

Staff are required to make every reasonable effort to attend work in such circumstances. However, this needs to be balanced with the wellbeing and safety of staff. Should staff be unable to attend their usual workplace, staff are expected to consider alternative working arrangements to meet the needs of the business. For example this could include working from home, or a different KCC or partner organisation location that may be more easily accessible.

Managers will be expected to use their discretion based on local conditions, ensuring a consistent approach, taking into account the needs of the individual while maintaining the provision of normal services.

### What is adverse weather?

Adverse weather includes conditions such as snow, ice, fog and floods which render extremely hazardous journeys by road, public and private transport.

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

### As someone who manages staff, what can I do to keep difficulties to a minimum?

Be prepared by:

- Ensuring that staff contact details are current.
- Agreeing in advance how you would expect staff to inform you of any absence.
- Checking with staff responsibilities around children care or dependents and discussing a solution that works for both the service and the member of staff.
- Thinking about how staff can work from home or another KCC or partner organisation location, for example, using BT MeetMe (telephone conference facility), encouraging staff to use the Outlook Web Access (OWA) email facility or redirecting phones to dial through to a home or work mobile telephone number.

- Considering staffing levels and discussing with staff ability to cover extra hours, for example, part time staff that live within walking distance of the workplace.
- Providing an alternative contact point for staff if the workplace is closed. Consider using the Contact Centre if absolutely necessary.

### **As a manager, how should I respond to a member of staff who is absent?**

Staff not attending work who are genuinely unable to fulfil any suitable alternative working arrangements should use flexi-time or annual leave. Where this is not possible unpaid leave may be granted and, in exceptional circumstances, paid special leave with prior approval of the manager.

If a scenario arises where staff are abusing the situation (for example, suitable alternative working options have been explored but continued absence continues), the KCC Disciplinary Procedure would apply.

### **As a manager, how should I respond to a member of staff who is late for work?**

Managers should take into account the circumstances and be reasonable in their expectations. Managers will be expected to use their discretion in assessing the situation based on local conditions, the needs of the service and the member of staff. Managers can also seek advice from the HR Business Support team.

In the same way as above, where staff are abusing the situation (for example, suitable alternative working options have been explored but continued lateness continues), the KCC Disciplinary Procedure would apply.

### **What alternative working options are available?**

Alternative options include working from home, flexibility with start/finish times or working from another KCC or partner organisation location where possible.

### **What happens when adverse weather prevents a member of staff returning from their holiday destination?**

Staff unable to return to work should use flexi-time or annual leave. Where this is not possible unpaid leave may be granted with prior approval of the manager.

### **Where can I get up to date traffic and travel information?**

For up to date information, including traffic and travel, the following sources of information may be useful:

- Kent County Council: 08458 247247, [www.kent.gov.uk](http://www.kent.gov.uk)
- Kent Traffic and Travel: <http://kent.acisconnect.com>
- The Highways Agency: <http://www.trafficengland.co.uk/index.aspx>
- Southeastern Trains: <http://www.southeasternrailway.co.uk/>
- BBC Radio Kent: 96.7FM, 104.2 FM, DAB, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/kent/programmes>
- BBC Kent website: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/kent/hi/default.stm>
- BBC Travel News: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/travelnews/kent/>

- Heart Radio: 102.8FM, 103.1FM, <http://www.heart.co.uk/kent/>
- Met Office (weather): <http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/index.html>
- Safety in extreme weather – travel and transport:  
[http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Usingmotorwaysandroads/Roadsafetyadvice/DG\\_185021](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelAndTransport/Usingmotorwaysandroads/Roadsafetyadvice/DG_185021)

### **What if I am at work and my workplace is closed due to adverse weather?**

In exceptional circumstances, a decision may be made by the Director, Head Teacher or other senior manager to close a workplace. In this instance staff would not be required to make up lost time.

### **What if my member of staff has childcare commitments due to a school closure, or caring responsibilities for other dependents?**

Staff unable to attend work due to child care arrangements as a result of school closures, or who have caring responsibilities which prevent them attending work, will be expected to make alternative care arrangements or take leave in some form, for example, annual leave, flexi-time or carers leave, by agreement with their line manager. Where this is not possible unpaid leave may be granted.

**For further information or clarification, managers can contact the HR Business Support team or the Employment Policy Team (the latter by e-mailing [EmploymentPolicyQueries@kent.gov.uk](mailto:EmploymentPolicyQueries@kent.gov.uk)). Staff can contact Employee Services Connect on 01622 605666 or by email: [EmployeeServicesConnect@kent.gov.uk](mailto:EmployeeServicesConnect@kent.gov.uk). Staff and managers in schools should also refer to the Severe Weather Guidance for Kent Schools which can be found via the Emergency Planning page of Kent Trust Web at: [http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/Policy/school\\_emergency.cfm](http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/Policy/school_emergency.cfm)**