

# Adverse Conditions

HC

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The aim of this guidance is to set out some key principles when Partners are faced with an adverse situation affecting their ability to attend work e.g. severe weather, public service strikes. This does not include personal situations which are covered under other HR policies e.g. the Compassionate & Emergency Leave policy for situations such as a breakdown of childcare arrangements.

Please note that separate arrangements apply to COVID19 which can be reviewed [here](#).

TSB:

- Will endeavour to maintain a business as usual service for customers during adverse conditions.
- Makes a distinction between circumstances that are planned and those that are unforeseen.
- Takes the wellbeing of Partners and customers extremely seriously and recognises Partners may face difficulties attending their place of work and returning home or may not be able to travel for safety reasons.
- Believes Partners should make every reasonable effort to attend work in all circumstances.

## 1. Planned Incidents

A planned incident is where notice is given in advance e.g. Transportation strikes. Managers and impacted Partners should discuss how this planned incident impacts the Partner's ability to attend work and what arrangements the Partner is making to enable them to attend work.

For example, in the event of a transportation strike Partners should explore

all options available to them to enable them to attend work, such as alternative transport, working in another location, working from home. If there are no feasible options, managers should be reasonable, flexible and supportive in their approach to working back time.

## 2. Unplanned Incidents

Adverse weather conditions are perhaps the most common unplanned reasons for Partners experiencing problems in attending work.

Although events may be unplanned, Partners should make every effort to make appropriate arrangements. For example, following an adverse weather forecast, making alternative travel plans, making suitable arrangements to work from home where feasible and making contingency plans for any disruptions to childcare arrangements or school closures. Partners should follow the advice below to limit the disruption in our service to customers, whilst ensuring their own health and safety:

- Check news broadcasts and appropriate websites for an update on a situation. Met Office website - <http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/> - and local TV and radio - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>.
- Consider your journey to and from work and any business travel that you have planned. Inform your manager of any difficulties you might face.
- Consider holding any meetings using teleconference, rather than travelling.
- Check with transport operators before you travel and look for updates on services from your relevant travel company.
- Check your laptop remote access in advance to ensure that you can work offsite or at home.
- If you need to work from home and are logged in remotely, do not stay logged in for long periods at a time to ease the remote access service.

Alternatively, where the impact is immediate such as travel disruptions and a suspension of rail services for example, then Partners must notify their manager as soon as they are aware this will affect either their ability to attend work on time or attend at all. Managers should then discuss the most appropriate options in the circumstances as covered off in section 3 under manager responsibilities.

Managers should plan for possible disruptions to business operations and escalate any concerns over disruptions or impacts on business continuity to the appropriate senior manager.

### **3. Deterioration of Conditions / Health & Safety Concerns**

In the event that conditions deteriorate during the working day or a site needs to be closed for health and safety reasons, then the local business area will consider whether Partners should leave work early. This may include the staggering of leaving times, dependent upon individual circumstances.

#### **Partner Responsibilities**

If you are unable to get to your usual place of work you should:

- Endeavour to contact your manager 30 minutes before your normal start time to advise of the situation, with a view to agreeing appropriate action ensuring it is safe and legal to do so.
- Explore the viability of alternative modes of transport e.g. trains, buses, car.
- Consider advice from the emergency services / news broadcasts and take a view on how long the situation is anticipated to last.
- Make every reasonable effort to establish alternative childcare arrangements where appropriate.
- When you make contact with your manager, discuss relevant Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Plans to help determine how work could be managed.
- Explore the possibility of working from home if this can be done productively, or at the nearest branch/office location. If this is not

feasible, then you should offer to help in the local office or branch where it would be appropriate to do so.

- If the conditions improve during the course of the day you should make every effort to attend work later in the day. This should be in the context of whether it is reasonable to do so e.g. for 24-hour operations, weather conditions should be assessed in terms of any potential deterioration further into the evening.
- During any absence provide a reason for the absence and the likely duration, in addition to maintaining ongoing communications with your manager.

### **Manager Responsibilities**

If a Partner is unable to get to their usual place of work you should:

- Discuss the situation with the Partner when they make contact with you, with a view to agreeing appropriate action.
- When speaking with the Partner, consider the relevant Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Plans to help determine how work could be managed.
- You should consider the nature of the work being undertaken, where it could be undertaken and the Partner's circumstances and agree what is appropriate. For example, this could be one or a combination of the following:
  - Making suitable arrangements to work from home
  - Flexing an existing working pattern
  - Adjusting start and finish times
- Discuss and agree options for working from home with the Partner where this is feasible and can be done productively, or agree that they work from the nearest branch/office location where there is capacity/ hot desk provision.
- Consider whether it is appropriate to ask your Partner to remain at home if they are unable to reach the nearest branch/office location or the offer of help is inappropriate or not required e.g. you would need to consider whether the Partner has the correct skills to help in a particular office/branch.

- Consider any health or disability issues that might impact on a Partner's safety.
- Where a Partner is unable to attend work and cannot work productively from home or another location, consider whether you may need their support in working some hours back to cover operational impacts or workload backlogs. Where you think this may be the case you should consider the reasonableness of such a request given the Partner's existing working pattern and their individual circumstances.
- Discuss likely duration of absence and maintain regular communications with the Partner.
- Discuss workload and/or productivity impacts with the appropriate senior manager/s and escalate concerns as appropriate.
- Where it is determined that a Partner will need to be asked to work time back to support operational backlogs/increases in demand, you should refer to any relevant Business Area approvals in place.

Please note: As part of BAU contingency planning, managers must consider and include the impact of unplanned events upon resourcing and ensure this is captured appropriately for business continuity purposes.

#### Treatment of Absence

If all reasonable steps have been taken to attend work and Partners have discussed the situation with their manager, then Partners will continue to be paid i.e. their absence should not be recorded as unpaid and salary deducted.

Although a Partner's absence will not normally be treated as unpaid, Partners should be aware that they may be asked to work back time in order to support the business to deal with operational impacts and/or workload backlogs. i.e. the contracted hours where they have been absent, but paid for.

Where a manager can demonstrate that all reasonable steps have not been taken, they have the discretion to treat the absence as unpaid. Managers should also consider the following options, in conjunction with the Partner and their circumstances:

- Utilising any available 'Time off in Lieu'

- Taking available annual leave from the current year

Where Partners are already in work and then are required to leave early due to an incident or concern over safety e.g. building is closed for safety reasons, then Partners would continue to be paid. Only in exceptional circumstances would Partners be asked to work the time back where the business has made the decision to send them home early.

Where a Partner's ability to get to work is not personally affected by adverse conditions, but they experience related problems e.g. a school closure impacts on childcare arrangements, the same principles will apply in terms of whether the event was planned or unplanned. For example with a school closure:

<u>Situation</u>	Planned incident e.g. Teacher Strike	Unplanned incident e.g. adverse weather causes school to close
Initial approach	It would be expected that, in order to ensure full attendance at work, all available options for alternative childcare should be explored in the first instance.	Managers should manage the situation in line with the Compassionate & Emergency Leave or Special Leave policies.  Beyond the initial emergency, managers should consider options as described below.
Follow Up approach	If suitable childcare arrangements cannot be made then managers should be flexible and supportive in their approach, discussing possibilities such as taking available annual leave, utilising any 'Time Off In Lieu', working flexibly either by working back time, or flexing a working pattern.	

Please note, where there is evidence that a Partner has been abusing these guidelines disciplinary action may be taken, following an appropriate investigation.

For further guidance managers should [Contact HR](#).

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