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## Disruption

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# **1 Overview**

## **1.1 What is this about?**

1.1.1 This procedure sets out what we expect from all our staff when their ability to get to work is affected by some form of disruption. This disruption could be caused by severe weather, travel conditions, unsafe buildings, civil unrest or disruption to road networks or public transport.

## **1.2 Who is this for?**

1.2.1 This applies to all authority/police staff and managers.

## **1.3 Key information**

- All staff are required to do as much as they reasonably can to be at their work. This will help us to limit the impact on service delivery and focus on keeping people safe during periods of disruption.
- Staff should not put themselves at unnecessary risk by attending work – particularly those with a disability or health related issue(s).
- Our aim is to keep access to all of our buildings safe, where possible. This might include providing a physical security presence, clearing paths, applying grit etc.
- To help protect the health, safety and wellbeing of staff we will consider control measures on a case by case basis e.g. providing information, instructions, training, equipment and resources etc.
- Guidance can be requested from your manager and Head of Department. Depending on the circumstances advice may be issued by Emergency Planning.
- General information will be communicated to staff and service users about personal safety and any steps that have been put in place to deal with any disruption.

## **2 Officer/Staff**

### **2.1 What you need to do:**

- Take all reasonable steps so that you are able to attend work during periods of disruption.
- Be aware of the business continuity arrangements for your department.
- Keep your manager up to date with any changes that may affect your ability to attend work.
- Make arrangements for known or predicted periods of disruption.
- Contact your manager as soon as possible if you are unable to get to work or cannot get there for your scheduled start time.

### **2.2 Responsibilities**

- 2.2.1 You are expected to make every effort to attend work, even during periods of disruption. This will help us to maintain the continued delivery of essential services. However, you are not to put yourself or any other person at risk when trying to do so.
- 2.2.2 You have a duty to take reasonable care of your own health, safety and wellbeing. This includes considering any advice or guidance that is made available and taking extra care when travelling to and from work during known or predicted periods of disruption.
- 2.2.3 If you have any concerns about being able to attend work you should let your manager know as soon as possible. You should also let your manager know if there are any disability or health related issues or personal circumstances that need to be considered.
- 2.2.4 Your manager will be able to consider what options are available after listening to your concerns.
- 2.2.5 If the cause of the disruption continues you should keep in regular contact with your manager so that any necessary arrangements can be made. You may also need to think about making alternative arrangements if the disruption is expected to continue over an extended period of time.
- 2.2.6 If the situation changes, you should let your manager know whether you are able to attend work or not.

## **2.3 Periods of disruption**

- 2.3.1 You will be kept informed of any changes to working arrangements or building closures during periods of disruption. Decisions will be taken in the interest and health, safety and wellbeing of our people and service users.
- 2.3.2 If your normal travel to or from work is disrupted you cannot claim for any additional expenses that you incur for the journey.
- 2.3.3 In the unlikely event that you are prevented from returning home during exceptionally serious cases of disruption, you may be able to claim for subsistence or incidental expenses e.g. staying in a hotel. You would have to receive authorisation from your manager before making any alternative arrangements. Bookings should be made through the Travel and Accommodation Unit.
- 2.3.4 If you are asked to move to another location you will be entitled to claim for any additional travel expenses over and above your normal commute, where applicable.
- 2.3.5 Your management team will let you know, where possible, about any closures or conditions that they predict may make it unsafe for you to travel, either to or from, home or work.
- 2.3.6 The most appropriate form of communication will be used e.g. telephone, e-mail, intranet, social media, briefings and/or media broadcast.

## **2.4 Business continuity plans**

- 2.4.1 Business continuity plans will be put in place where a function, building or location has to be closed. You may be expected to take equipment or materials home so that you can attend another place of work, where this is practical.
- 2.4.2 Your manager can authorise for you to work from home where travel is unsafe or severely affected. Several factors will need to be considered including: your own assessment for personal safety, your role, the distance to the nearest work location from your home and any equipment or resources you would need to do your job.
- 2.4.3 Decisions will be made on an individual basis.

## **2.5 Accepted absence or lateness**

- 2.5.1 If you have made every attempt to get to work on time and arrive late because of the disruption or conditions, you will be paid as normal. The same applies if your manager agrees you can leave early for health, safety or wellbeing reasons.
- 2.5.2 If your manager advises you to leave early you will be credited with the balance for any lost time. If you make the decision on your own to leave early you will be required to use flexi-time or TOIL.
- 2.5.3 If you have attempted to get to work but were unable to do so you may be paid as normal, at the discretion of your manager. For example you:
- started the journey to work but were advised to return home;
  - attended a different work location but were sent home because the facilities were already at full capacity; or
  - undertook other public service duties in support of the service or on behalf of a partner organisation.

## **2.6 If you decide not to attend work**

- 2.6.1 If you choose to stay at home and are unable to work, you will be expected to cover the absence by:
- using TOIL or flexi-time;
  - taking annual leave;
  - making up the time at a later date; or
  - taking unpaid leave.
- 2.6.2 You need to let your manager know the option you want to use to cover the absence. You should only consider unpaid leave if none of the other options are available to you.

### **3 Manager**

#### **3.1 What you need to do.**

- Respect any genuine fears that members of staff may have during periods of disruption.
- Consider measures that will limit the impact of disruption.
- Take all reasonable steps to limit the impact on critical service delivery.
- Carry out a dynamic risk assessment of your team's attendance at work during known or predicted periods of disruption. Take steps to remove or reduce identified risks.
- Make your team aware of any alternative arrangements in line with Business Continuity Plans.
- Escalate any concerns during known or predicted periods of disruption with management, as necessary.
- Make sure any adjustments to pay, leave, flexi or toil are applied as appropriate.

#### **3.2 Responsibilities**

- 3.2.1 It is important for you to recognise that although staff are expected to do as much as they reasonably can to be at their work, there may be some difficulties, particularly during periods of disruption.
- 3.2.2 You are not expected to give advice on whether you believe it is safe for someone to attend work or not. It is the responsibility of each individual to make an assessment of any risks when considering their own personal safety and wellbeing.
- 3.2.3 You have to consider what measures are required to maintain the continued delivery of essential services.

#### **3.3 Business continuity plans**

- 3.3.1 You should refer to the Business Continuity Management (BCM) Procedure and any departmental plans for meeting resource needs if disruption is known or predicted.



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3.3.2 You must maintain the critical functions set out in the BCM procedure. Business continuity plans will help you put things in place to reduce risk and operational impact.

### 3.4 Periods of disruption

3.4.1 Keep members of your team informed of any changes to working arrangements or closures during periods of disruption which may impact on them. Any decisions you make must be in the interest and health, safety and wellbeing of your team and service users.

3.4.2 If a team member's normal travel to work is disrupted they cannot claim for any additional expenses that they incur for the journey.

3.4.3 In the unlikely event that a member of your team is prevented from returning home during exceptionally serious cases of disruption, they may be able to claim for subsistence or incidental expenses e.g. staying in a hotel. They would have to receive authorisation from you before making any alternative arrangements. Bookings should be made through the Travel and Accommodation Unit.

3.4.4 If a member of your team tells you they have concerns about being able to attend work you have to talk over what options are available to them.

3.4.5 Remind the team member that they are not to put themselves, or any other person, at risk to attend work.

3.4.6 If you are told by a team member that they believe it is unsafe to travel, or their travel will be severely affected, you can authorise them to work from home or at a different location closer to home, if practical. There are many factors for you to consider before making a decision including:

- the role and whether it is a critical function;
- the distance from their home to the nearest station and whether any equipment is needed for them to be able to do their duties;
- the team member's ability to return home in the event of a situation worsening;
- any disability or reasonable adjustments that might affect an individual's ability to attend or perform their work at a different location;
- the specific risk to an individual and/or business impact; and
- the maximum tolerable period of disruption.

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**3.5 Closure of buildings**

3.5.1 If any of your team are moved to another location they will be entitled to claim for any additional travel expenses over and above their normal commute, where applicable.

**3.6 Accepted absence or lateness**

3.6.1 If a member of your team has made every attempt to get to work on time and arrives late because of the disruption or conditions they will be paid as normal. The same applies if you agree they can leave early for health, safety or wellbeing reasons.

3.6.2 If you advise a team member that they should leave early you have to credit them with the balance for any lost time. If the team member makes the decision on their own to leave early they will be required to use flexi-time or TOIL.

3.6.3 If they have attempted to get to work but were unable to do so you have the discretion to decide whether they should be paid as normal. This would be for example if they:

- started the journey to work but were advised to return home;
- attended a different work location but were sent home because the facilities were already at full capacity; or
- undertook other public service duties in support of the service or on behalf of a partner organisation.

**3.7 Non attendance**

3.7.1 If the team member chooses to stay at home and is unable to work, they will be expected to cover the absence by:

- using TOIL or flexi-time;
- taking annual leave;
- making up the time at a later date; or
- taking unpaid leave.

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- 3.7.2 Talk over the options and let the team member decide how they want to cover the absence.
- 3.7.3 Where the team member does not have any annual leave or TOIL, you should be as flexible as possible and agree for the lost time to be made up within a reasonable period of time.
- 3.7.4 Staff may convert annual leave to flexi credit where they have no flexi balance available.
- 3.7.5 Unpaid leave should be the last option to consider but if selected you need to advise the team member to complete the Unpaid Special Leave Request Form (089-001). You need to record the period of unpaid special leave on the duty roster.

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## **4 Resources**

### **Forms**

- Health and Safety Risk Assessment Template (076-001)
- Unpaid Special Leave Request Form – Staff (089-001)

### **Related Procedures**

- Allowances and Expenses (Staff)
- Disability in Employment
- Pay
- Special Leave

### **Reference Documents**

- [Business Continuity Management](#)
- [Risk Assessment Guidance](#)