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**RESOURCES AND PEOPLE SERVICES**

**(EDUCATION)**

**Policy on Adverse Weather and Absences outwith the control of Employees**

 **LNCT 16/5**

1. **INTRODUCTION**

* 1. There has been a need to revise the Policy because of the extended periods of extreme weather conditions experienced in Scotland over recent years. The previous Policy was withdrawn and Managers’ Briefings were issued periodically to update managers on how to advise employees and deal with absences in the interim period.
	2. It is also necessary to confirm the Council’s Policy with regard to other unauthorised absences which are outwith employees’ control. The following list is not exhaustive but covers the following situations - absence resulting from climate and/or environmental reasons e.g. absences because of the effects of volcanic ash, flight delays, local emergencies and disruption to travel infrastructure.

**2. AIMS OF THE POLICY**

2.1 The purpose of this Policy is to confirm the arrangements for payment of employees for work undertaken, to maximise employees’ safe attendance at work and to minimise service disruption due to adverse weather and other climate and/or environmental employee absences which are not within the employee’s control.

**3. ABSENCES DUE TO ADVERSE WEATHER OR CLIMATE AND/OR ENVIRONMENTAL REASONS**

3.1 All employees of the Council have a duty to make every effort to report for work on time each working day. It is however recognized that there may be occasions when weather/climate/environmental conditions are so severe that some employees will be prevented from reporting to work or will report late and/or need to leave work early.

3.2 All employees absent or delayed must contact their Line Manager as early in the working day as possible. An employee who does not report for duty due to adverse weather/climate/environmental reasons and does not work will not be paid. This absence should be recorded on the normal Special Leave Form and approved as unpaid special leave. Alternatively, those employees may, with their Line Manager’s agreement, substitute accrued annual leave, TOIL and/or flexi leave (where available and applicable) for the period of absence.

3. 3 When an employee has made contact with their Line Manager and reports they have tried but cannot get to their place of work, then the line manager may where it is appropriate and subject to service needs authorise the employee to undertake agreed work for an agreed number of hours at their home (normally but not necessarily their contractual hours), this will be treated as ad hoc home working for an agreed period. The employee will be paid for the hours worked but with their Line

Manager’s agreement may use flexi, TOIL or annual leave where applicable/ appropriate to make up the full working day and pay. The employee should return to their normal work location as soon as their route to work and travel arrangements permit (this may be later the same day).

3.4 In certain exceptional circumstances an employee may work from another work location within the Council. However, the approval of the line manager must be sought before this may happen and this approval will be dependent on the availability of work and the suitability of the work location or as per agreed departmental plans.

3.5 Employees who work at nights will be expected to report for work during periods of adverse weather in the same way as other employees. However, for employees required to work in the outdoors appropriate risk assessments should be carried out prior to employees being asked to do so in extreme bad weather conditions.

3.6 In certain exceptional emergency situations or instances of particularly adverse weather the Executive Directors may seek volunteers and/or may need to redeploy employees temporarily, on a short- term basis, (i.e. up to 5 days in any one period of emergency) to other appropriate duties within the Council, commensurate with their normal role e.g. Non-emergency work may be placed on hold and resources allocated to assist with the clearing of roads and footpaths, or supporting and assisting vulnerable individuals within the community, subject to the requirements of PVG clearance and/ or appropriate risk assessments being undertaken.

3.7 If there is no alternative workplace available, when the Council takes the decision to close an establishment (workplace) or to instruct employees to leave early, the employee will be afforded normal flexi/contractual hour’s credit (i.e. to a maximum of their normal working day). This means that no employee may accrue more than their standard contractual hours for that day/period. Employees who do not have flexi time facilities will receive their normal contractual pay.

3.9 Where the employee’s absence cannot be covered by any of the alternative means detailed above, a Special Leave Form confirming the day’s absence is unpaid or that the employee only worked a portion of their normal contractual working day, should be completed in the normal way. If the period of unpaid leave amounts to a number of days, the employee may request a longer period of pay deduction from Payroll. This repayment would be for a maximum period of 3 months from the date of first absence.

3.10 The Council expects all its employees, including those with mobility issues to make reasonable attempts to reach their place of work. However where an employee has specific mobility or other impairment which means they cannot get to work, they should contact their manager and their individual circumstances will be taken into consideration. Managers’ should consider whether working from home or from another Council establishment might be approved and should consider the particular circumstances at the place of work at the time.

3.11 Where an employee has childcare arrangements that have broken down as a consequence of the adverse weather conditions e.g. their child’s school is closed, it is impossible to take the child/children to a carer etc and the employee remains at home to care for their child/children, their absence is unpaid special leave as per the provisions of the Special Leave Policy. Again the employee may, with their line manager’s agreement, substitute accrued annual leave, TOIL and/or flexi leave (where available and applicable) for the period of absence.

**4. ADVERSE WEATHER - HEALTH AND SAFETY**

4.1 When absence or lateness due to adverse weather/climate/ environmental conditions will mean unavoidable absence from work, employees must contact their Line Manager as soon as possible and ideally before the start of their normal working time for that day.

4.2 Employees should also give consideration to the following when travelling in severe weather and unusual climate or environmental conditions:

* Delaying the journey to a more suitable time, using public transport if possible or going by a potentially safer route.
* Listening to radio reports and adjusting the journey appropriately.
* Ensuring that a mobile phone is readily available to summon help and is fully charged.
* Friends, relatives and work colleagues (as appropriate) are aware of their intended route and likely arrival time so that they can summon help if needed.
* Carrying a flask of hot coffee/soup/drinks and other high energy foods.
* Having a spade, tow rope and other equipment to help release a stuck vehicle.
* Having a supply of warm blankets in case you are stuck in a location for an extended time.
* Ensuring your vehicle is fully fuelled so that you can maintain the vehicle’s heating in the case of an extended delay.
* Carrying a torch, to get help if needed.
* Carrying suitable footwear, warm clothing and overcoat for the conditions, if a breakdown occurs e.g. sturdy boots, scarf and gloves, waterproof jacket.

**5. STATUS OF POLICY**

This Policy has been the subject of consultation with the recognised Trade Unions as a Council Policy and is not a collective agreement. The Council reserves the right to review, suspend or amend this Policy.