

Deafblind Scotland vision – “A society in which deafblind people have the permanent support and recognition necessary to be equal citizens”



Deafblind Scotland Policy on Travel Disruption and Adverse Weather

The aim of this policy is to ensure that when employees do face exceptional difficulties as a result of adverse weather conditions that all employees are treated in a fair and consistent manner.

Policy Statement

During periods of adverse weather Deafblind Scotland (DbS) continues to provide a service. Whilst we recognise that some employees may experience difficulty in reporting for work and appreciate the efforts made by employees to do so, it is the responsibility of every employee to make their own arrangements to get to work in the event of adverse weather conditions. DbS expects that all employees will make every reasonable effort to attend work when their normal transport arrangements have been disrupted due to extreme weather conditions.

Responsibilities

Service-users and Guide/Communicators will be made aware of arrangements during periods of adverse weather.

Procedures

Where staff are prevented from attending due to adverse weather conditions, they must notify their line manager/supervisor at the earliest opportunity. Their line manager/ supervisor will confirm that the member of staff can:

- Reallocate days off
- Reach agreement to make up the lost time at a mutually agreeable time and date
- Use annual leave
- Use unpaid leave

Staff who do not make contact will be registered as absent without authorisation and their pay may be withheld.

If staff can work effectively from home this should be agreed in advance with their line manager.

In the event that employees are not able to leave due to poor weather conditions and are expected to continue working, arrangements will be put in place for these individuals to take extended breaks during the prolonged working period.

Staff who fail to follow the reporting procedure or who are considered not to have made every effort to attend work may be subject to disciplinary action in line with the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

Further guidance for managers and staff is given in Appendix 1.

Lateness

Where an employee arrives late for work due to travel difficulties caused by adverse weather conditions, or is required to make alternative care arrangements for dependents, the employee will not be penalised but, depending on the demands of the service and according to the manager's assessment at the time, may be expected to pay back lost time unless conditions worsen during the period at work further increasing the travel risk during the homeward journey.

Early Release of Employees

Where weather conditions show signs of worsening, line managers should, before reaching any decision about allowing staff to leave early, consider the wider organisational needs. Clarification should be sought from their line manager prior to taking any decision. They should obtain the best reports on road conditions etc. then reach a decision, taking into account the employee's journey to and from work and any other relevant circumstances. The employee will not be penalised but, depending on the demands of the service and according to the line manager's assessment at the time, may be requested to pay back the time at a later date.

Employees Who Work Additional Hours

Managers should assess the situation and decide if it is possible to operate with fewer employees before asking those employees present to remain at work. If an employee agrees to undertake extra hours these should normally be paid back as time to be taken at an agreed future date.

Managers Responsibilities

Treat all staff fairly and consistently

Ensure that adequate communication takes place with their staff where these circumstances arise.

Give consideration to the Health and Safety of staff, particularly where special conditions apply such as disability or pregnancy.

Support staff who work long hours to maintain services.

Appendix 1

Guidance for Managers and staff - Points to consider

Transport

1. Could the individual have walked to their place of work? (Take physical ability to do so into account)
2. When an alternative workplace is discussed, is it more readily accessible e.g. taking walking route into consideration? It may be closer, but is the route safe?
3. Could the individual have walked to a main bus route?
4. Were the normal bus routes operating?
5. If they weren't, when did they start up again?
6. Could the individual have come into work later?
7. Did the individual consider getting a taxi?
8. Did the rail company put on buses between stations?

School Closures

In the event that there are school closures as a result of the severe weather in order to allow staff to make alternative care arrangements, Carers Leave or Parental Leave may be granted. Likewise, in the event that Social Work Services are not being delivered leaving elderly relatives vulnerable, Carer's leave may be granted to allow alternative care arrangements to be put in place.

Parental Leave

If the closure of schools/nurseries is longer than one day and for this extended period, individuals cannot put alternative arrangements into place to care for nursery children and school children under the age of 14 or 18 in the case of a child with complex needs, annual leave should be considered in the first instance. However if the individual has already exhausted their entitlement to annual leave, as an alternative to authorised unpaid leave, managers may consider granting retrospectively Parental leave, if the individual's entitlement has not already been exhausted.