

## ADVERSE WEATHER / EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES WORKING PROCEDURES

### HUMAN RESOURCES PROCEDURE

Applies to:	All employees
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### CONTENTS

1. PURPOSE.....	2
2. SCOPE.....	2
3. PROCEDURE .....	2
3.2. TRAVELLING TO WORK.....	2
3.3. LOCALISED OR PERSONAL TRAVEL DIFFICULTIES .....	3
3.4. ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS .....	3
3.5. OFFICE CLOSURES .....	3
3.6. OPTIONS FOR COVERING TIME LOST .....	3
3.6.1 ANNUAL LEAVE. ....	3
3.6.2 FLEXI TIME.....	3
3.6.3 TIME OFF FOR DEPENDANTS. ....	4
3.6.4 UNPAID LEAVE.....	4
3.6.5 FLEXIBLE WORKING. ....	4
4. FURTHER INFORMATION.....	4

## 1. PURPOSE

This procedure sets out both councils' approach to dealing with situations where normal arrangements for travelling to or attending work are disrupted. It does not form part of employees' terms and conditions of employment and may be subject to change at the discretion of management. It has been discussed with UNISON who has provided comments.

## 2. SCOPE

This procedure applies to all employees of Havant Borough Council regardless of protected characteristics<sup>1</sup>, full or part time working, permanent, fixed term or temporary contract, membership of trade union or public interest disclosure status. The procedure will be reviewed from time to time and may be amended to ensure that it continues to meet legal and operating requirements.

## 3. PROCEDURE

3.1. The circumstances where normal arrangements for travelling to/from or attending and/or staying at work are disrupted or may occur are:

- Adverse weather
- Building access issues (e.g. flood, loss of power, emergency closure).

In these circumstances, the council will have due regard to the health and safety of its employees. In general, employees have an obligation to work when they are capable of doing so. The council has a duty to pay a normal day's pay when employees can work but they are prevented from working by the council. An employee's ability to undertake work will depend on their role and their ability to work from alternative locations in emergency situations.

**Employees are responsible for notifying their line manager in the normal way concerning their ability to attend work in line with the Council's Absence Policy.** It will be particularly important for Line Managers to keep in touch with all employees to monitor the situation and establish the specific reasons for non attendance. Line Managers must maintain an overview of their service area.

### 3.2. Travelling to Work

Line Managers should discuss an employee's delayed arrival or inability to attend their normal place of work with the employee at the earliest possible opportunity. The employee must decide on the most appropriate solution for themselves. They are not entitled to be paid for time they do not work but they should be given the options available to them – see 3.6.

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<sup>1</sup> The Protected Characteristics (as laid down in the Equality Act 2010) are: Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage/Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion/Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation.

### **3.3. Localised or personal travel difficulties**

In circumstances where road accidents, flooding etc cause traffic congestion or where an employee's normal mode of transport fails, delaying or preventing attendance at an employee's normal place of work, the council will be flexible and will make allowances for infrequent reasonable delays (eg. by employees making the time up). In these circumstances the council will make reasonable allowances but if employees are unable to work, they will be expected to agree one of the options at 3.6 with their line manager.

### **3.4. Adverse Weather Conditions**

The council does not expect employees to put themselves at unnecessary risk and further information is available at section 5 to assist. The council recognises that the weather is unpredictable and it will be flexible in accommodating employee difficulties. Where weather affects travel to work the council will accept reasonable delays. Where weather and road conditions worsen during the working day, employees may request permission to leave work early from their line manager. In these circumstances the council will make reasonable allowances (eg. by employees making the time up) but if employees are unable to work, they will be expected to agree one of the options at 3.6 with their line manager.

### **3.5. Office Closures**

By closing a workplace or by instructing employees not to work (only ELT in conjunction with relevant officers will decide this), the council is preventing the employee from working on that day and, as this is through no fault of their own, they should receive pay as normal for that day. This is regardless of whether the employee has attempted to attend their workplace or not. In the event that the employee could work from an alternative place of work, eg. from home or an alternative office, the employee will be expected to undertake their duties or those reasonably requested by their line manager, at that site.

If a decision to close offices is made, all reasonable attempts will be made by the council to communicate this information to employees. The council's websites and/or telephones will be the main method for communicating this. All employees are expected to be proactive in finding this information out and not assume a decision has been made to close the offices.

### **3.6. Options For Covering Time Lost**

The various options, which should be discussed and agreed with the employee, are as follows:

**3.6.1 Annual leave.** Employees can request to take a period of annual leave in accordance with their entitlement. Relevant leave records **must** be updated and completed on return to work.

**3.6.2 Flexi time.** Those entitled to flexi time can request to take time off in such emergencies to make up the deficit. Flexi sheets and leave records **must**

be completed upon return to work. Flexi leave may be temporarily increased with Line Manager approval in circumstances that relate to 3.1.

**3.6.3 Time off for dependants.** Time off for dependants is the right to take reasonable time off work to deal with an emergency involving a dependant (eg a school is closed). The leave is unpaid and **must** be notified to payroll in writing as soon as possible. The amount of leave permitted will normally be one or two days and if longer time off is required, employees will be expected to agree other options such as annual leave, flexi time or compassionate leave.

**3.6.4 Unpaid leave.** Up to ten days unpaid leave can also be requested and will be granted at the discretion of the Executive Head in circumstances that relate to 3.1. This **must** be notified in writing to the HR Team as soon as possible.

**3.6.5 Flexible working.** Requests for temporary flexible working during circumstances at 3.1 will be considered by line managers and provided that the Council's business and service needs are met and maintained, working from home may be permitted wherever possible and practical. It must be established by Line Managers that home working is an effective alternative and that employees have work that can be done in sufficient quantity to justify agreement to working at home.

#### **4. Further information**

Please contact the HR Team if further guidance is required.

For more information on winter driving, please visit [www.highways.gov.uk](http://www.highways.gov.uk)

For weather reports, please visit [www.metoffice.gov.uk](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk)