

Managing Staff During Disruptions at

JSCC Approved –

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Managing Staff During Disruptions At Work

The guidance is for use in situations where major incidents/emergency affect service delivery, provision and work arrangements and in addition where adverse weather affects employees' travel to and from work, this guidance should be used.

Therefore the document is in two main sections:

- What to do in the event of any service disruption/closure of service/incident affecting provision of normal services.
- What to do when adverse weather conditions affect employees' travel to and from work.

This document applies to all West Lindsey District Council staff affected by an emergency situation or adverse weather conditions.

Introduction

This guidance provides managers and employees with relevant information in the event of any service disruption/closure of service/incident affecting provision of normal services.

The objective is to ensure that there are lawful, fair and consistent arrangements in place to ensure that all employees and the provision of council services are protected accordingly.

Employees will be expected to attend their normal place of work during a major service disruption unless prevented or otherwise instructed.

When instructed to return to work employees will be expected to maintain a flexible approach to work and work patterns until council services are back to normal.

In addition, this document includes guidance where adverse weather conditions affect travel to and from work.

Service Disruption

The type of emergency situation that can result in a service disruption or closure of services includes (this list is not exhaustive):

- Declared civil or national emergency
- Acts of terrorism
- Loss of staff e.g. due to communicable, contagious or pandemic disease
- Loss of access to work premises e.g. due to fire, flooding etc
- Loss of utilities for any reason
- Loss of transport or closure of transport infrastructure
- Loss of IT systems/telecommunications for any reason where there is limited or no access to work or information technology

- Loss of key suppliers/contractors support
- Strike action, either by council employees or others in vital service functions that support the council
- Adverse weather conditions affecting employee ability to get to work

Guidance for Managers

If normal work facilities cannot be provided owing to a service disruption the manager's prime responsibility will be to maintain the critical and essential functions of their own service.

Corporate Response

If there is a need for a coordinated corporate response and steer to an incident affecting the council significantly, an Incident Management Group may be activated and chaired by one of WLDC's Management Team.

Instruction on staff working may be issued from this group but otherwise, managers should instruct staff as per this policy. The Incident Management Group will be utilising WLDC's Business Continuity and Emergency Response Plan which is produced by the WLDC Emergency Planning & Business Continuity Service.

Service Response

If normal work facilities cannot be provided owing to a service disruption, the manager's prime responsibility will be to maintain the critical and essential functions of their own service, by utilising their service's business continuity plans. These are designed to minimise the impact on services during a disruption and set out the specific amendments to normal working arrangements.

Communications to Staff

Managers are responsible for cascading down to their teams details of what actions will be expected in an emergency and what temporary arrangements have been put in place.

Options For Managers

Managers are encouraged to use their discretion to manage their areas and teams and to ensure that service delivery and provision continues as usual during the period of the incident. Options include:

Temporary Working Arrangements

- A number of temporary working arrangements might be identified and implemented which may apply to employee working hours, work locations, duties, working from home or remaining at home for a period of time.
- Any changes in working arrangements will be discussed with the employee in advance, where possible. All requests will be reasonable and will take into account individual skills and personal circumstances balanced against the needs of the organisation.

- Employees will be expected to demonstrate a high level of flexibility in an emergency situation and make all reasonable attempts to find solutions to personal circumstances in order to attend work during the period of the emergency.

Temporary Deployment Elsewhere

- The council reserves the right to temporarily deploy employees elsewhere as the need arises. This could be in a different department or location.
- Once adequate and safe operating cover is established in a service area staffing levels will be assessed by managers to see if support can be provided elsewhere.
- Any training or health and safety risk assessment necessitated by the redeployment will be organised by the 'host' manager.
- If lone working is required this will need to be assessed and appropriate control measures put in place.
- Special consideration will be given to employees covered by the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 who should not be deployed into inappropriate roles.

Temporary Alternative Duties

- Employees may possess easily transferable or generic skills e.g. manual, customer care, IT, admin and clerical that can be used in their normal place of work or elsewhere in an emergency situation.
- Employees may, therefore, be required to undertake reasonable alternative work outside of their normal job role. This is so support can be given to overstretched internal services. It is not expected that an employee would undertake a role for which they do not have the basic necessary skills or abilities nor undertake a professional role that they are not qualified in.

Contact During Disruptions

Where employees are advised to stay at home, they must remain contactable and available for work as they may be called into work at short notice (i.e. the same day).

Employees should ensure that regular contact is maintained with their manager to keep abreast of the latest situation regarding the emergency. When instructed to return to work employees will be expected to maintain a flexible approach to work and work patterns until council services are back to normal.

Where employees have booked annual leave during the period these stipulations will not apply.

Paid Leave During Period of Disruption

Where some functions or services are suspended for a period of time and there is no immediate deployment requirement and home working is not possible, employees may be sent home if already at work or asked to stay away from work. This will be regarded as paid leave and affected employees will receive normal contractual pay.

Sickness During Period of Disruption

Should an employee become unwell during the period of the emergency they should follow the normal sickness absence reporting procedures.

Adverse Weather

Adverse weather can include any kind of extreme weather, usually snow or ice, which might create hazardous driving or travelling conditions or significantly impair normal operations of the council.

Employee unable to attend usual place of work

Where attendance at the usual place of work is impossible because of weather conditions, employees must contact their manager to notify them that they are unable to attend.

If the manager is unavailable, the most senior officer available must be notified.

If an employee is unable to attend their workplace, the appropriate annual leave, flexi leave or unpaid leave must be taken.

Working from home may also be an option where a member of staff is unable to attend their usual place of work because of adverse weather conditions. However, staff are not permitted to make a unilateral decision to work from home. Such a decision can only be made following prior discussion with the manager and where home working arrangements have previously been authorised and necessary risk assessments undertaken. Please see the Home Working Policy for more details.

Employee unable to attend at normal starting time

An employee's hours will only be counted from the time they arrive into work.

If the weather conditions are poor in the morning but proceed to clear up later in the working day, employees should endeavour to attend work if possible and the principles above will apply.

Employees leave the workplace early

Where adverse weather occurs during the working day, no employee should leave the workplace without the prior approval of their manager.

No special leave will be granted where an employee decides to leave work early because of weather and/or travel conditions.

The employee will be paid until the end of their normal working day where the council decides to:

- Suspend the operation of a service and/or
- Close a building due to severe weather conditions, and
- The employee is instructed to go home by their manager because the workplace will close.

Employees who decide to leave will be required to use their own time either in the form of annual leave, flexi leave or unpaid leave where a decision is made that:

- Allows staff to leave the workplace if there are travel or care issues, but
- The workplace remains open.

Due regard will be taken for staff who are disabled or pregnant.

Any employee who abuses this guidance or fails to:

- Attend his/her usual place of work if buildings are open and accessible
 - Contact his/her manager to notify the reason for non attendance,
- may be dealt with under the council's disciplinary policy.

Policy Statement

West Lindsey District Council has a commitment to equal opportunities.

It seeks to ensure that no potential or current employee receives less favourable treatment than another on the grounds of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

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