

Wiltshire Council Human Resources

HR Business Continuity Plan Policy and Procedure

This policy can be made available in other languages and formats such as large print and audio on [request](#).

What is it?

This policy addresses human resource issues that could arise in maintaining Wiltshire Council's key services to the public and service users during an emergency situation. It is designed to inform staff and managers of the specific amendments to normal working arrangements which could apply in the event of the council responding to a major incident or emergency.

Go straight to the section:

- Who does it apply to
- When does it apply
- When does it not apply
- What are the main points
- Roles and Responsibilities

Who does it apply to?

All Wiltshire Council staff affected by an emergency situation which results in a service disruption or closure of service and where the Corporate Business Continuity Plan is invoked.

It does not apply to teaching and non-teaching staff employed in locally managed schools.

When does it apply?

This is a temporary policy which will only apply when the Wiltshire Council Corporate Business Continuity Plan is invoked by the Chief Executive or relevant Corporate Director in his absence.

As part of that declaration decisions will be made as to whether some or all of the arrangements in this policy will be activated.

The type of emergency situation that can result in a service disruption or closure of service includes:

- declared civil emergency.
- loss of staff e.g. due to a communicable, contagious, or pandemic disease.
- loss of access to work premises e.g. due to fire, asbestos, flooding.
- loss of utilities.
- loss of transport.
- loss of IT system/telecommunications.
- loss of key suppliers/contractors.
- strike action

When does it not apply?

It does not apply when the council's services are operating normally.

What are the main points?

1. In the first instance you will be expected to attend your normal place of work during a major service disruption unless prevented or otherwise instructed.
2. If your normal work facilities cannot be provided owing to a service disruption your manager's prime responsibility will be to maintain the critical and essential functions of their own service. These have been determined in the Corporate Business Continuity Plan with a 'coloured teams' system which prioritises job roles:
3. The identification of key roles for each service and allocation to the different coloured teams is the responsibility of heads of service. Post holders are identified in the individual services' 'Business Impact Analyses' and staffing lists are available in the service level business continuity plans.
4. In making these decisions heads of service and managers will need to take into account any DDA adjustments and care responsibilities you may have.
5. The four coloured teams and the likely time frame when post holders are expected to return to work are:
 - Red – roles required to deliver the most critical functions which need to be restored straight away after a service disruption.
 - Orange – roles required to deliver critical frontline or supporting functions which need to be restored within the first day after a service disruption.

- Blue – roles required to deliver important or supporting functions which need to be restored within the first week after a service disruption.
 - Green – roles required to deliver functions which can be suspended for a period of more than one week after a service disruption.
6. It is the responsibility of your head of service or line manager to cascade down to you and your colleagues details of what actions will be expected from you in an emergency and what coloured team you have been allocated to.

Temporary Working Arrangements

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

Temporary Deployment Elsewhere

10. Wiltshire Council reserves the right to temporarily deploy staff elsewhere as the need arises. This could be in a different department or location.
11. 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.
12. Any training or health and safety risk assessment necessitated by redeployment will be organised by the 'host' manager.
13. If lone working is required this will need to be assessed and appropriate control measures put in place as detailed in the lone working policy.
14. If you are to work unsupervised with vulnerable adults or children the

'host' manager is responsible for checking that you have CRB clearance at the appropriate level. If not a decision will need to be made if it is practical to proceed with getting CRB clearance for you or to find another member of staff who has the right clearance level. It may be possible for Human Resources to undertake an emergency CRB risk assessment which would provide a 'quick fix' until more satisfactory arrangements can be set up.

15. Special consideration will be given to young, pregnant, DDA covered employees and other staff with protected characteristics who should not be redeployed into inappropriate roles.

Temporary Alternative Duties

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

Working Additional Hours and Non-Standard Patterns of Work

18. You may be asked to work additional hours to help provide service cover and continuity. In the first instance managers will seek volunteers to work additional hours either within their own job roles or a redeployed one.
19. If you are required to work additional hours beyond your normal contracted hours and/or non standard patterns of work (e.g. evenings/weekends) you will be compensated through TOIL (time off in lieu) or overtime in accordance with your terms and conditions as detailed in the Pay and Reward – Overtime policy. In exceptional circumstances and depending on the type and duration of an emergency consideration will be given to all staff being paid for overtime.
20. As far as is practicable you are expected to find solutions to personal circumstances in order to attend work but consideration will be given to reimbursing additional costs that you may incur if you are requested to work outside of normal contracted hours such as childcare costs. This will be reviewed and decided on a case by case basis by the relevant Corporate Director.

21. You and your manager should maintain records of attendance and hours worked.

Working Time Regulations and Working Hours

22. Working arrangements are subject to the working time regulations. In an emergency the regulations for daily rest breaks, weekly rest breaks and the minimum 11 hours break between the end of work and the commencement of the next work period can be applied differently.
23. Breaks can be shorter but if you do not get your normal contracted breaks you will receive compensatory rest. This is a period of rest which is the same length as the period of rest or part of a period of rest that you have missed. It should be taken as soon as possible.
24. If you are a night worker the reference period to calculate the weekly working time limit can be extended from 17 to 26 weeks.
25. If your working hours are adjusted any health and safety risks need to be appropriately assessed by your manager.
26. Young workers aged under 18 but over school leaving age, are a protected category for whom managers must ensure appropriate working hours are adhered to. Breaks can only be reduced or cut short in exceptional circumstances. Compensatory rest must be given as soon as possible and definitely within three weeks.
27. Young workers are not allowed to work nights (10pm to 6am) other than in cases of 'maintaining continuity of service' provided there is no adult available to perform the duties, any training is not negatively affected and they are properly supervised.

Temporary Additional Responsibilities/Acting Up Honoraria

28. In order to provide service cover you may be asked to take on extra responsibilities at a higher pay scale in addition to your substantive post or to 'act-up' for a limited period of time. These payments can only be paid where the duties are undertaken for at least four weeks and authorised by the relevant Corporate Director.
29. To calculate the correct payment a retrospective significant differences form (SDF) needs to be submitted by the manager once the emergency is over.
29. If you are redeployed into a role at a lower grade you will continue to be paid at your substantive salary.

Working from Home

30. If you are not required at your usual place of work or in another location and if homeworking is feasible your manager may request that you work from home. You will receive normal contractual pay but no overtime pay.
31. If you usually do not work from home but wish to do so in an emergency situation then this will need to be discussed and cleared with your manager beforehand.
32. Your manager should be clear with you about the work you are given to complete at home.
33. Depending on the type of incident it is possible that if you usually work from home you may be asked to report to work for service delivery or refrain from working from home to allow critical staff to operate.
34. If you work from home using the Ways of Working (WOW) remote access facility and have a citrix remote desktop facility you will be able to access your applications and files through a virtual desktop.
36. Access to the corporate network via WOW is limited by licensing but in an emergency it is possible for ICT to make a request for extra licenses.
37. To maximise the number of employees able to work from home using WOW you should not remain logged in for long periods of time but log out between sessions so you are not preventing others from accessing the network. You should work offline as much as possible.
38. If you are supplied with the new broadband lines and as long as the network is working you should be able to continue working from home as normal

Special Incident Leave

39. Where some functions or services are suspended for a period of time and there is no immediate redeployment requirement and home working is not possible you may be sent home or asked to stay away from work. This will be regarded as special paid leave and affected employees will receive normal contractual pay but no overtime pay.
40. If you are advised to stay at home you must remain contactable and available for work as you may be called into work at short notice (i.e. the same day). You and your manager will be expected to keep in

regular contact with each other in order to keep abreast of the latest situation.

41. On your return from a period of special incident leave staff will be expected to maintain a flexible approach until council services are back to normal
42. If you are advised to stay at home and wish to take annual leave or you become unwell you should follow the normal reporting procedures.

Flexitime Arrangements

43. In order to maintain emergency service provision your manager may need to suspend flexitime arrangements. Flexitime is not an employee right and as outlined in the ways of working policy amendments to flexitime may be agreed by managers.

Travel Claims

44. If you are required to work at a different location to your normal place of work you may claim travel expenses in respect of any additional travel expenses you incur. Payments will be made in accordance with Wiltshire Council's agreed excess travel policy

Annual Leave

45. Annual leave arrangements still apply during an emergency. New requests for annual leave should be booked in accordance with normal procedures. It may be necessary, however, to limit annual leave in order to sustain services.
46. You may make an annual leave request due to caring responsibilities and your manager will need to take this into account when they consider your leave request.
47. All new annual leave requests will be decided on their merits and on a case-by case basis.
48. Pre-booked annual leave will be honoured but in exceptional circumstances where your services are deemed as critical the matter will be discussed with you. If you cancel a holiday at the request of the council then, if necessary, leave will be permitted to be carried over into your subsequent leave year even if this exceeds the normal 5 days carry over limit.
49. Pre- booked annual leave cannot be withdrawn where as the result of the emergency you would have been sent home.

50. Annual leave already booked will be considered as taken. However, in exceptional circumstances where holiday plans have been cancelled due to an external circumstance (e.g. the travel company has gone into administration, adverse weather conditions) your manager will have the discretion to reimburse some or all of the leave booked. You may be asked to provide evidence of the change in circumstances.
51. You will be expected to make every reasonable effort to attend work throughout the duration of an emergency.

Sickness Absence

52. The council's normal sickness absence policy and reporting procedures should be followed as set out in the Absence Management Policy.
53. Managers will handle sickness absence with care and sensitivity and any concerns dealt with on a case by case basis.
54. You will be expected to keep in regular contact with your manager.
55. Extra guidance has been prepared to take into account the difficulties you may encounter during a pandemic such as flu which is contained in the separate toolkit.

Caring Considerations

56. You are expected to attend work throughout an emergency unless your absence is authorised by your manager or you are sick and have complied with the absence management policy and/or HR business continuity policy.
57. You have a responsibility to find solutions to personal circumstances which enable you to fulfil your work commitments but there may be a number of reasons that mean you have difficulty in attending work such as family member sickness or disruption to nurseries and schools. It is acknowledged that the council's duty to sustain key functions and services need to be balanced with the pressures that will fall on members of staff who have caring responsibilities and work commitments.
58. Managers will support you by considering appropriate existing policies such as parental leave, annual leave, flexitime, unpaid leave, time off for family emergencies and compassionate leave.
59. In order to fulfil a caring role you may make a request for a temporary

change to your work location, working hours and working pattern.

60. Managers will handle all absence and temporary working arrangement requests with care and sensitivity and on a case by case basis.

Reserved Forces

61. If you are a member of the Reserved Forces you should have already informed the council about this commitment. The Reserved Forces are:

- the Royal Fleet Reserve
- the Army Reserve
- the Air Force Reserve
- Royal Naval Reserve
- the Royal Marines reserve
- the Territorial Army
- Royal Auxiliary Air Force

62. If the Government issues emergency powers members of the Reserve Forces services will be released from their contractual duties and responsibilities to assist in the protection of national security.

63. If you are not required for Reserve Forces duties you will be required to attend work as normal.

Other Volunteers

64. Other volunteers can be Retained Fire Fighters, Nurses, a member of a special disaster team etc. This is not an exhaustive list.

64. If you are a volunteer the council would expect you have already sought and obtained permission from your manager to work as one, particularly if you are required to be on call at work.

66. If you are called upon to 'volunteer' and have not obtained prior permission from the council then the request to be released from your duties can be reasonably refused.

Contact Arrangements

67. In order for you to be contacted in the event of an emergency and to be notified of any changes in your work arrangements etc. you are asked to make sure that relevant managers have your up-to date contact details. Managers will keep these contact details confidential.

68. It is possible that you may be contacted by a member of the emergency planning team during an emergency.
69. If contacted out of working hours you are expected to work cooperatively with your managers or members of emergency planning.

Unreasonable refusal to work/Unexplained absences

70. An unreasonable refusal to attend work could result in the disciplinary procedure being followed once working arrangements have returned to normal.
71. Whilst taking into account individual personal circumstances any unexplained absences may be dealt with under the council's disciplinary policy and procedure.

Roles and responsibilities

Employee responsibilities:

- in the event of an emergency be prepared for possible changes to your normal working arrangements which could affect your hours, location and duties.
- be aware of your role and responsibilities in an emergency – check this with your manager.
- demonstrate a high level of flexibility and make all reasonable attempts to find solutions to personal circumstances in order to attend work.
- work cooperatively with your manager(s) or members of the emergency planning team if you are contacted outside of normal working hours.
- inform your manager of any health issues, domestic circumstances that could affect your attendance or redeployment.
- record any extra hours that you work.
- keep in regular contact with your manager and make sure you are contactable.

- make sure your manager knows beforehand if you are a member of one of the Reserved Forces or you volunteer for an organisation whose services may be called upon in an emergency situation.
- follow any advice or precautions issued for specific circumstances such as a pandemic, communicable or contagious disease.

Line manager responsibilities:

- maintain your key services and functions.
- determine if support can be provided to other council services.
- brief staff beforehand what their roles are in an emergency situation and what actions will be expected of them.
- have contact numbers for essential staff and establish a contact system within your service.
- check if any of your staff are members of the reserved forces
- keep staff informed of any changes to working arrangements and keep in regular contact with them.
- arrange any training, health and safety risk assessments, lone working assessments and CRB clearances necessitated by the emergency.
- be mindful of the working time regulations and keep records of changes in hours and responsibilities of staff.
- take into account staff needs such as DDA adjustments, care responsibilities, pregnancy, young workers etc.
- be aware of policies to support staff, if applicable:
 - parental leave
 - annual leave
 - unpaid leave
 - time off for family emergencies and compassionate leave
 - absence management
 - flexitime
- handle staff requests about changes in temporary working arrangements, annual leave, sickness absence etc with sensitivity. Balance the caring responsibilities of staff against the needs of the service.

- arrange payments for overtime or TOIL and submit retrospective significant difference forms for staff who have taken on extra responsibilities.
- when the emergency is over or subsided deal with any unexplained absences or concerns.

Equal Opportunities

This policy has been Equality Impact Assessed ([link to EIA for policy](#)) to identify opportunities to promote equality and mitigate any negative or adverse impacts on particular groups.

Legislation

Working Time Regulations

This policy has been reviewed by an external legal organisation to ensure compliance with (the above legislation and) our statutory duties.

Further advice and information

There are a number of related policies and procedures that you should be aware of including:

For further information please speak to your supervisor, manager, service director or contact your HR advisor.

There is also a [toolkit](#) including manager guidance and supporting documents to use when following this policy and procedure.

Policy author	HR Policy and Reward Team – MR
Policy last updated/implemented	DD-MM-YYYY

Toolkit

Medical emergency such as pandemic flu

These special arrangements will only be activated if approved by the Corporate Leadership team (CLT)

Staff not displaying symptoms

1. If you are well you will be expected to attend work as far as is possible. You may need to take precautions to protect yourself from infection and to lessen the risk of spread to others. Where necessary health and safety risk assessments will be completed and personal protective equipment (PPE) provided.
2. If you have a pre-existing medical condition which carries a high risk of complications you will need to follow the latest government advice to minimise the risk of infection. Such conditions include those with respiratory disease, compromised immune systems, receiving chemotherapy treatment or are pregnant. If you fall into this category you must inform your manager immediately so they can obtain necessary advice.
3. A range of social distancing responses will be encouraged where this is practicable such as the use of teleconferencing, videoconferencing and electronic means of communication to avoid face-to-face contact.
4. If you have been in recent close contact with a probable or confirmed case of flu but do not have flu-like symptoms yourself you are not required to stay at home initially and should report to work as usual.
5. If you provide direct care through the course of your work you may come into contact with others who have symptoms of the pandemic. In these circumstances you will be kept informed of any additional health and safety measures that are implemented.

Staff displaying symptoms

6. If you feel ill during the pandemic the council will positively encourage you to stay at home until you are fully recovered. It is of paramount importance that staff displaying symptoms stay at home until these have disappeared, both for their wellbeing and to reduce the risk of spread to other members of staff.
7. Your manager will be responsible for ensuring that if you become ill at work with symptoms of the pandemic you do not remain at work. If you feel that you are developing the symptoms you are required to go home straight away and check your symptoms via the NHS. As in the recent

swine flu epidemic it is expected the government and NHS will set up information points such as helplines and websites for up-to-date information and advice. You will be expected to continue to seek NHS advice as appropriate and follow it.

Temporary working arrangements

- 8 While seeking to sustain the Council's key functions and services and in order to reduce the risk of spread of infection any of the temporary working arrangements already explained in the HR business continuity policy may be identified and implemented.

Special Sickness Certification Circumstances

9. To reduce the pressure on GP and medical services the CLT can approve the introduction of an extended 14 consecutive day self certification period. Until this is approved by the CLT the normal 8 day self certification period will apply.
10. When a doctor's certificate is required if you encounter difficulties in obtaining one you should refer the matter to your line manager who will decide if it will be possible for you to have up to 28 calendar days after the first day of sickness absence to submit a GP medical certificate.
11. Under normal circumstances if an end date is not specified on a medical certificate for an absence exceeding 14 consecutive days a certificate of fitness to resume work must be obtained from a GP. To avoid adding to the high demand for GP and other medical services during a pandemic this requirement may be suspended. However, if a manager has concerns about your fitness, you will be asked to provide a medical certificate of fitness for work. If you encounter difficulties in obtaining a doctor's certificate then you will remain at home on normal pay, not sick pay, until occupational health can review your case.
12. If you have more than one period of sickness absence during the pandemic you will be required to complete a self certificate form or obtain a doctor's certificate for each episode as detailed in the absence management policy.

Return to work

13. Once you are no longer showing symptoms and start to feel better you are no longer infectious and can return to work.
14. Return to work meetings should be held as set out in the absence management policy.

Monitoring levels of absence

15. In reviewing your sickness absence your manager will take into consideration the unusual circumstances of absences directly related to the pandemic.

Sick Pay

16. There will be no changes to the period that sick pay will be paid or the rate of sick pay during a pandemic. Although entitlement to sick pay may need to follow the guidance set out in this policy relating to certifying sickness absence rather than the procedures that would normally apply.

Unexplained Absences

17. Every effort will be made by managers to support you and take into account individual personal circumstances but should you fail to co-operate with a reasonable request made under this policy or are absent from work for no apparent reason then the council reserves the right to consider using the disciplinary policy.

Wellbeing

18. A pandemic is a public health matter but there are clear health and safety requirements to protect you and service users who come into contact with infectious micro-organisms. Throughout a pandemic occupational health will continue to provide normal services to all staff including access to professional counselling. All employees will be expected to follow any guidance provided by the government through its Directgov/NHS websites.

Toolkit

Business Continuity and DDA Adjustments

1. Your manager needs to be aware if you have a medical condition that is covered by the Equality Act and for which reasonable adjustments have been made. You will not be put at a substantial disadvantage by any employment arrangements or any physical feature of the workplace necessitated by changes owing to a business emergency.
2. Depending on the nature of your disability consideration may need to be given to:
 - the suitability of premises in a redeployment
 - travelling difficulties
 - the effects that changes in working patterns/hours/duties may have on you.
3. If you already have specific adjustments in place in your normal place of work such as special equipment, hours of work these would need to be honoured.
4. With a temporary redeployment or temporary role change further flexibility and adjustments may need to be discussed with you such as starting and finishing times.
5. Managers need to bear in mind all staff members who are covered by the DDA as this could have implications on the corporate business continuity plan and business impact analyses in the allocation of critical roles.
6. This does not mean temporary redeployment to a different location or role is inappropriate as so much will depend on the disability and individual circumstances.
7. Your manager may need to do an employee well being risk assessment, consult with an HR Advisor or contact Occupational Health for advice on your DDA implications.
8. If you are not able to continue working at your normal place of work and a suitable alternative location is not available other alternatives may have to be considered such as working from home or in extreme circumstances allowing special leave.