

Policies, Procedures, Guidelines and Protocols

<b>Document Details</b>		
<b>Title</b>	Annex 8.6 Severe Weather Plan	
Trust Ref No	1923-62501	
Local Ref (optional)		
Main points the document covers	Set out how the Trust shares and responds to severe weather which might impact on delivering care.	
Who is the document aimed at?	All managers and employees of Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust	
Owner		
<b>Approval process</b>		
Who has been consulted in the development of this policy?	Service delivery leads, Clinical Service Managers, Communications, Estates, Human Resources, Risk Manager	
Approved by (Committee/Director)	Quality and Safety Committee Steve Gregory, Emergency Accountable officer	
Approval Date	22/10/2020	
Initial Equality Impact Screening	Yes	
Full Equality Impact Assessment	No	
Lead Director	Steve Gregory. Executive Director of Nursing and Operations and Emergency Accountable Officer	
Category	Quality	
Sub Category	Business Continuity	
Review date	31 October 2021	
<b>Distribution</b>		
Who the policy will be distributed to	All staff, held electronically on the On Call Resources SharePoint and in paper form in the Executive Corridor meeting room	
Method	Datix safety Alert / Managers on call Sharepoint	
Keywords	emergency plan, emergency response plan, emergency response, continuity plan, Floods, High Winds, Snow, Extreme cold, Weather alerts	
<b>Document Links</b>		
Required by CQC	Yes	
Other	NHS National contract NHS E EPRR Core Standards, PHE guidance 2019.	
<b>Amendments History</b>		
No	Date	Amendment
1	July 2016	Circulated for comment/approval - Draft V0.2
2	August 2016	Post approval changes - Draft V0.4
3	October 2016	Insert Action Cards & Reformat - Draft V0.5
4	November 2018	Review of Snow plan and add additional actions for clarity
5	December 2019	Complete review, significant changes to allow emphasis and directives on resilience all year round for the coming winter. Addition of latest Public Health Guidance. Removal of non essential historical information into an appendix.

Emergency Response Arrangements Annex 8.6

## **Severe Weather Plan**

*Approved 22.10.2020*

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## **1.0 Introduction**

Severe weather can impact the Trust directly through physical damage (e.g. flooding of premises) or indirectly via disruption to the road network, school closures and other key services such as supply transport, all of which may have an effect on the Trust's staffing levels and / or its ability to provide both clinical and corporate services.

The impact of severe weather may mean damage to buildings or the disruption or cancellation of clinics or other community-based services. In other health providers (acute trusts/ambulance services) the impact is likely to be considerable due to an increase in casualties from injuries, exacerbation of long-term conditions and conditions such as hypothermia all of which may require hospital admission or may affect our community teams.

In addition there is often a delay in discharge as there is a reluctance to discharge vulnerable people into potentially hazardous conditions and potential isolation if health and social care services have been reduced or suspended on a temporary basis.

## **2.0 Purpose & Scope of Plan**

This plan provides guidance and information to enable Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust to provide a response to an episode of severe weather where an emergency response is required.

The plan assists with the decision of whether to invoke the Trust Emergency Response Arrangements (in particular Business Continuity Plans), and also can inform decisions taken once a critical or Major Incident has been declared.

This plan explains the Met Office Cold Weather Alert system and Severe Weather Warning system. It also covers the Environment Agency's Flood Warning system. The plan sets out the Trust response for each of the warnings received.

This plan will be reviewed after every severe weather event.

Date of last Review December 2019 as part of Level 1 actions.

## **3.0 Duties**

Ownership of management of staff and patients during adverse weather is required at every level of the organisation; however, the following have key responsibilities.

This Policy is owned by the Quality and Safety Committee.

The Accountable Emergency Officer (Executive Director of Nursing and Operations) is responsible to the Board for adverse weather business continuity issues.

Directors are responsible for the successful implementation of the adverse weather guidance within their areas of responsibility.

The Emergency Planning Lead is the professional lead for business continuity within the Trust and will:

- Review and develop the policy in line with best practice and needs of the Trust;
- Monitor the performance of the adverse weather guidance and compliance with the Policy;
- Provide support and guidance and training on business continuity issues.

Managers are responsible for the development and implementation of adverse weather plans and risk registers within their area of responsibility.

All staff must be aware of the plans that affect their department or service and their role following invocation of business continuity plans

#### **4.0 Risk Assessment**

A national of the risk and impacts of severe weather can be found by following the link below;

National Risk Register Link:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/61934/national\\_risk\\_register.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/61934/national_risk_register.pdf)

National and Local Community Risk Registers have risk assessed the likelihood and impact that severe weather incidents would have on the delivery of critical services that the Trust provides.

The following risks have been identified from the latest West Mercia Community risk register. When preparing Business Continuity Plans each team should take into account the risk of severe weather incidents impacting on their ability to deliver services.

#### **Flooding (Fluvial) –**

#### **Top Risk**

Fluvial (River Flood) Fluvial, or riverine flooding, occurs when excessive rainfall over an extended period of time causes a river to exceed its capacity. It can also be caused by heavy snow melt and ice jams. Over the coming years rising temperatures, rising sea levels, and an increase in the frequency and severity of extreme weather events are likely to raise the risk of flooding in the UK. The two main types of flooding risk in West Mercia are river and surface water flooding (caused by heavy rainfall).

**Severe Weather** (High wind, low temperatures, snow, heatwaves and drought) -

**Top Risk**

The UK does experience severe weather due to its temperate climate with occasional continental and arctic influences. These can bring with them heavy rain or snow, strong winds, tornadoes and extreme temperatures.

As experience has shown, severe weather can take a variety of forms and at times can cause significant problems and disruption to normal life. Over the coming years we are likely to see rising temperatures and rising sea levels, and an increase in the frequency and severity of extreme weather events in the UK.

Weather forecasting can now give warning of most events and offer general advice. There are many types of severe weather that can have a serious local impact in the UK. The main types of severe weather that we need to plan for include storms/gales, low temperatures, heavy snow, heatwaves and drought

There is significant evidence that extremes of heat and cold affect vulnerable members of our communities and cause additional deaths directly related to the temperature.

#### **4.1 Flood Risk – Delivering Community Health Services**

The main properties used by the Trust to deliver care to patients most at risk (i.e. Community Hospitals) have been assessed and none have a history of being prone to flooding and none sit in a Rapid Response Catchment area.

Bishops Castle Community Hospital is most at risk due to a stream that lies uphill to the hospital boundary which can overtop if the stream drainage becomes blocked.

A risk that presents to other services provided by the Trust is through flash flooding that blocks roads and impedes access to patients living at home. Apart from the physical risk from driving through flood water, a secondary risk is that essential care is delayed whilst community nursing staff find alternative routes and these delays resulting in the potential of some patients programmed to receive care not being seen during a normal working day.

In the unlikely event of a community being isolated by floodwater, Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust will work with other statutory bodies to ensure essential access to patients, or if this type of flooding is predicted the evacuation of vulnerable patients to a safer location where health care can be delivered.

#### **4.2. High Winds and Snow – Delivering Community Health Services**

Nursing teams in Shropshire have regular experience in dealing with access to patients resulting from delays or blockages to the road network. The

Business Continuity Lead and Communications Team both alert staff to incidents or when conditions on roads network are likely to deteriorate and nursing teams review their workload to ensure vulnerable patients are seen.

Snow and icy conditions present community nursing teams with challenges in reaching more isolated patients and patients in more urban locations who live on steep roads such as some of those in Telford. Shropshire Council has a scheme where local farmers keep more urban routes open to traffic and this in combination with nurse's local knowledge has enabled the most vulnerable patients' access to the care they need. However, if more than a couple of inches of snow fall and remain on the road network for a few days combined with sub-zero temperatures, or a significant snowfall has occurred in a short time period, then this would have a considerable impact on the delivery of care that takes place in the patient's own home and other services where staff have to travel considerable distances to reach their normal work place.

#### **4.3 Extreme Heat and Cold Events – Delivering Community Health Services**

Colder weather during winter has an effect on demand patterns associated with seasonal infections like influenza and common colds that impact on the elderly complex group of patients, and sickness and absence levels of staff.

Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust strongly supports its staff having influenza immunisations to protect themselves, their families and vulnerable patients to whom they deliver care.

Many of the deaths due to excessive heat exposure are preventable if a few very simple precautions are taken as described in national and the Trusts heatwave guidance.

#### **5.0 Activation of the Adverse Weather Plan**

Nationally two systems of alerting and specific advice to health care organisations operate: one during summer and the other during winter. Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust receives these alerts and uses its staff Zone intranet and communication briefing systems to alert and advise staff what actions are required to keep themselves and patients safe.

To get email alerts of severe weather warnings go to

<http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/warnings/#?tab=map&map=Warnings&zoom=5&lon=-3.50&lat=55.50&fcTime=1470783600>

...and enter the email address to which alerts will be sent to.

Often severe weather can be predicted and this allows the Trust to take suitable pre-emptive actions to mitigate the effects. This plan is activated when certain triggers are reached. These relate to the following alert systems through which severe weather is measured by the Met Office and Environment Agency.

- Cold Weather Alerts.
- Severe Weather Warnings and Flash Weather Warnings.
- Environment Agency Flood and Severe Flood Warnings.

In the sections below this plan sets out the response when the above alerts are received. Often one may receive a combination of the alerts above. Depending on the severity of the alert the response may be to invoke the Trust Major Incident Plan which may be used in conjunction with the Severe Weather & Winter Plan.

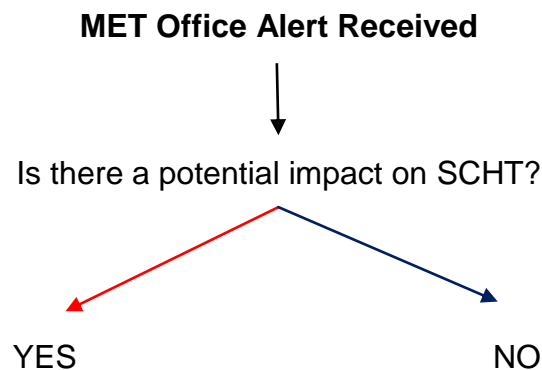
## 5.1 Weather Alerts

The Business Continuity Lead and Communications Team receive Weather Alerts direct from the Met Office via email. It provides brief information about upcoming winter weather in general detail and this allows us to set out clear levels of alert where actions are to be taken by Trust staff.

The Weather Alert service now includes five alert levels, as outlined below.

<b>Level 0</b>	<b>Long-term planning</b> <i>All year.</i>
<b>Level 1</b>	<b>Winter preparedness programme</b> <i>1 November to 31 March.</i>
<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Severe winter weather is forecast – Alert and readiness</b> <i>Mean temperature of 2°C and/or widespread ice and heavy snow are predicted within 48 hours, with 60% confidence.</i>
<b>Level 3</b>	<b>Response to severe winter weather – Severe weather action</b> <i>Severe winter weather is now occurring: mean temperature of 2°C or less and/or widespread ice and heavy snow.</i>
<b>Level 4</b>	<b>Major incident – Emergency response</b> <i>Central Government will declare a Level 4 alert in the event of severe or prolonged cold weather affecting sectors other than health.</i>

When a weather warning/alert is received it is reviewed by the Business Continuity Lead and Communications Team who may consult with appropriate members of staff. If the EPO is absent, the Communications Team (who also receives this information) will review the warning/alert as follows:



Inform the following:

No Action unless it is required to support partners



Director of Operations.  
Deputy Director of Operations  
Service delivery group managers  
All SCHAT Directors  
On call managers  
Communications team.  
Head of Estates.



Issue advice to staff based upon predicted impact.

Weather Warnings rated Amber or Red will be automatically passed by the EPO or deputy to the dissemination list above.

Receipt of a Red Warning would signify a potential Major Incident and the Accountable Emergency Officer (or Director on Call) will consider moving to “standby” as set out in the Trust Emergency Response Procedures.

An amber weather warning often triggers the Environment Agency to chair a telephone conference to inform emergency responders about likely impacts. The Trust receives invitations to such telephone conferences via email to the Business Continuity Lead. Formally NHS England North Midlands or CCG represents the NHS at these meetings. These emails contain the telephone number and passcode to join the conference.

## **5.2 Trust Actions in response to Cold Weather Alert levels**

**Detailed below are specific actions for Shropshire Community Trust to undertake at various levels of alert. These are aligned to Public Health Cold Weather Action Cards 2019**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/468146/CVS\\_action\\_card\\_providers\\_17\\_October\\_2014.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/468146/CVS_action_card_providers_17_October_2014.pdf)

### **5.2.1 Level 0: Winter preparedness – long-term planning.**

Level 0 denotes that there are actions that should be taken throughout the year, and certainly before Level 1 starts for winter preparedness at the start of winter. This emphasises that to build resilience for the coming winter requires long lead-in planning times

This is the usual alert level usually between April to September unless there is an unseasonal variance. At this level Service Managers and Team Leaders should be

- Maintaining patient records (particularly the long term patients on the caseload) to identify patients who may become vulnerable in severe

adverse hot or cold weather due to their condition or amenities and have an associated cold or hot weather care plan agreed by all agencies involved in that persons care

- Maintaining patient records (particularly the long term patients on the caseload) to identify patients who will become part of the critical priority caseload in the event of weather alert level 3 or 4.
- Ensuring patients on the caseload have recorded emergency contacts (which may or may not be next of kin)
- Ensure they and the team have access to an up to date list of broad staff locations for staff in there team to facilitate re deployment in the event of level 3 alert actions being required. This could be in the form of a locally held list, not highlighting specific addresses but general areas of habitat.
- Work with staff on risk reduction awareness, information and education.
- Encourage staff to be vaccinated against flu before winter starts
- Ensure that the business continuity plan includes severe winter weather. Plan for a winter surge in demand for services
- Consider carers' needs and support they can continue to give
- Liaise if necessary with the council and Environmental Health Officers on Housing Health and Safety

### **5.2.2 Level 1 Alert**

This signifies the start of the winter preparedness programme and is the automatic alert level between November 1<sup>st</sup> and March 31<sup>st</sup>. At this level:

- Preparations should be in place to protect health and ensure service continuity in the event of severe cold and winter weather.
- The Emergency Planning Officer to check that the Winter Plan and Major Incident Plans are up to date and arrange adverse weather policy refresher training as required for managers and team leaders.
- The Emergency Planning Officer to check that Operational Teams have their Business Continuity Plans available and up to date.
- Operational Managers and Team Leaders should be ensuring that the actions outlines at Level 0 are completed.
- Business Continuity Lead and Communications Team undertake internal reviews to ensure that cold weather alerts are going to the right

staff and that appropriate actions are agreed and able to be implemented when received, especially to protect vulnerable service users

- Make sure that staff members have identified all those vulnerable to cold weather and that arrangements are in place to support and protect them appropriately
- Encourage staff to be vaccinated against flu, if not already
- Ensure carers are receiving advice and support
- Operational Managers and Team Leaders should be ensuring that 'keep warm keep well' leaflets are given to vulnerable patients [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/840604/Keep\\_warm\\_keep\\_well\\_leaflet\\_update\\_2019.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/840604/Keep_warm_keep_well_leaflet_update_2019.pdf)

Alternatively top tips for keeping warm and well information is available:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/465111/Top\\_tips\\_to\\_keep\\_warm\\_keep\\_well.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/465111/Top_tips_to_keep_warm_keep_well.pdf). Ensure staff members are undertaking appropriate home checks when visiting clients, e.g. room temperature (which should be at least 18°C to minimise risk to health), medications and food supplies

- Hospitals, ensure that rooms, particularly day rooms and bedrooms are kept warm (at least 18°C to minimise risk to health) and that staff are taking appropriate action

### **5.2.3 Level 2 Alert: Severe Weather Warning**

This is declared when the Met Office forecasts a 60% risk of severe winter weather in one or more defined geographical areas in the days that follow.

This usually occurs two to three days ahead of the event. A Level 2 alert would be issued when a mean temperature of 2°C is predicted for at least 48 hours, with 60% confidence, and/or widespread ice and heavy snow are forecast, with the same confidence.

When this is received from the Met Office

- The Emergency Planning Officer (or Communications and Marketing Manager) will liaise with the Director of Operations and the Communications Team to consider appropriate actions and provide details of a message to be sent via all staff email and be placed on the Trust Intranet pages.

- Communicate alerts to staff and ensure that locally agreed Cold Weather Plan actions take place, especially those to protect vulnerable service users, ensuring staff are undertaking appropriate home checks when visiting clients, e.g. room temperature
- This will direct staff to make appropriate preparations such as reading their Business Continuity Plans. It is likely that this alert will be received alongside a severe weather warning
- The Director or Deputy Director of Operations, Emergency Planning Officer (or Communications and Marketing Manager) may declare a business continuity incident and assemble incident management team in advance of the snow.
- The Director / Deputy Director of Operations, Emergency Planning Officer (or Communications and Marketing Manager) will liaise with and the Communications Team to arrange a pre level 3 conference call prior to the weather event with relevant service leads and managers of critical function areas as outlined in the Trusts Business Impact Analysis to ensure continuity plans are enacted e.g., re deployment of staff, 4x4 arrangements etc. The conference call can be made using the Shropcom 24 / 7 conference call facility or via Microsoft teams.

**UK Landline: 0844 4 73 73 73**

**UK Mobile: 8 73 73**

**SHROPCOM PIN: 699194.**

- When the risk of snow is forecast contact owners of 4x4 vehicles employed by the Trust for their availability to support the delivery of critical functions. This list will be lodged on SharePoint and filed in the on call managers bags. (See form at the end of this annex as a template).
- If severe snow is forecast consider at the appropriate time closing/stopping non critical activity and re-deploying non-essential staff to critical activity. Reviewing rotas to ensure staff at community hospitals. Advising community hospitals to make ready accommodation for staff needing to stay overnight.
- Continue to ensure local actions for the vulnerable such as arranging daily contacts/visits

#### **5.2.4 Level 3 Alert: Severe Weather Action**

This is issued when the weather described in Level 2 actually happens. It indicates that severe winter weather is now occurring, and is expected to impact on people's health and on health services.

At this level

- Repeat / confirm actions outlined at level 2
- The Emergency Planning Officer will liaise regularly with the Director / Deputy Director of Operations, Service Delivery Leads and Communications team to ensure that information is disseminated to staff.
- It is likely that the Shropshire Multi-Agency Silver Group may meet either physically or via teleconference to risk assess the Level 3 alert and potential impact on Shropshire. NHSE North Midlands and/or CCG will normally represent the NHS at these meetings.
- Depending on the severity of the weather the Accountable Emergency Officer may decide to invoke a Major Incident “Standby” situation. This alert will usually be received alongside a severe weather warning.
- Implement local plans for contacting the vulnerable. Consider daily visits/phone calls for high-risk individuals living on their own who have no regular contacts
- Ensure carers are receiving appropriate advice and support
- Implement plans to deal with surge in demand
- Implement business continuity arrangements as required
- Redeployment of staff to critical function areas, and if there is severe snow, redeployment to bases near to the staff members home address as required and as agreed by the level 3 incident management team.

### **5.2.5 Level 4 Alert – National Emergency**

This is reached when a period of cold weather is so severe and/or prolonged that its effects extend outside health and social care, and may include, for example, transport or power or water shortages; and/or where the integrity of health and social care systems is threatened.

At this level, illness and death may occur among the fit and healthy, not just in high-risk groups, and will require a multi-sector response at national and regional levels.

The decision to go to a Level 4 is made at national level and will be taken in light of a cross-Government assessment of the weather conditions, coordinated by the Civil Contingencies Secretariat (Cabinet Office).

A Level 4 alert is a judgement made in light of this cross-Government assessment and, depending on the severity of the conditions and impact, could be declared over any time period.

Continue actions as per level 3 unless advised to the contrary

The Director of Operations or Deputy will consider declaring a Critical Incident and invoke the Emergency Response Procedures. It is likely that Situational Reporting structures will be implemented by NHSE North Midlands and/or CCG to capture impacts on NHS Service provision. It will be the Emergency Planning Officer or other nominated person's role to complete and submit these reports.

This alert is likely to be in conjunction with a "red" "risk to life" weather warning.

### **5.3 Heat Wave Alerts**

Further Advice for health professionals is in the Shropshire community Trusts Heatwave plan annex 8.4.

Actions to take are summarised below

#### **5.3 Actions for Teams and Services before the weather gets hot:**

If you are advising, visiting, supporting or caring for someone in their own home, and they may become vulnerable for the reasons above, these are the steps that should be taken. Where possible, involve their family and any informal carers in these arrangements.

- Check that extra care and support are available if needed
- Check that the person can contact the care team or knows who and how to contact someone in an emergency if one of their informal carers is unavailable e.g. 111
- Check that their care plan contains contact details for their GP, other care workers, emergency contacts and informal carers
- Check that there are adequate arrangements for food shopping to reduce having to go out in hot weather
- Ensure staff can adapt their uniforms to suit the weather whilst retaining a professional appearance, and that staff get regular breaks for drinks.

### 5.3.1 Facilities

- Check that fridges and freezers work properly
- Check that the person has light, loose-fitting cotton clothing to wear
- If you plan to move the person somewhere cooler in the event of a heatwave, consider what equipment or help you might need
- Where relevant in our own facilities, check that fans and air-conditioning work properly, and replace appliances with energy-efficient models

### 5.3.2 If a heatwave is forecast for your area

- make sure you have taken the steps outlined above
- monitor the current situation by checking the Heatwave alert level on the internet or checking e mails for information and of course, listening to local weather news
- make sure you know what advice to give people at risk – a public information leaflet with tips on what to do in a heatwave is available from the Public Health England website as part of the suite a materials published with the Heatwave plan for England

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/731044/2018\\_Beat\\_the\\_Heat\\_Leaflet.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/731044/2018_Beat_the_Heat_Leaflet.pdf)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/732582/Beat\\_the\\_Heat.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/732582/Beat_the_Heat.pdf)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/525361/Beattheheatkeepcoolathomechecklist.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/525361/Beattheheatkeepcoolathomechecklist.pdf)

and specifically for the young:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/428850/Looking\\_After\\_Children\\_Heat\\_PHE\\_AC\\_AB\\_Publications\\_MP\\_JRM\\_FINAL.PDF](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/428850/Looking_After_Children_Heat_PHE_AC_AB_Publications_MP_JRM_FINAL.PDF)

### 5.3.3. During a Heatwave

- advise the person to stay out of the sun, especially between the hours of 11am and 3pm
- advise them to stay in the shade and to wear hats, sunscreen, thin scarves and light clothing if going outside
- ensure that the person reduces their levels of physical exertion

- suggest they take regular cool showers or baths, or at least an overall body wash
- advise them to wear light, loose cotton clothes to absorb sweat and prevent skin irritation
- suggest that they sprinkle their clothes with water regularly, and splash cool water on their face and the back of their neck. A damp cloth on the back of the neck helps temperature regulation
- recommend cold food, particularly salads and fruit with high water content. Hydration advice leaflets are available

Top 10 Hydrating fruit and veg -

[https://staffzone.shropcom.nhs.uk/smii/doclib/13223\\_2.pdf](https://staffzone.shropcom.nhs.uk/smii/doclib/13223_2.pdf)

Hydration Leaflet - [https://staffzone.shropcom.nhs.uk/smii/doclib/13222\\_2.pdf](https://staffzone.shropcom.nhs.uk/smii/doclib/13222_2.pdf)

What Colour is Your Wee? -

[https://staffzone.shropcom.nhs.uk/smii/doclib/13221\\_2.pdf](https://staffzone.shropcom.nhs.uk/smii/doclib/13221_2.pdf)

- advise them to drink regularly, preferably water or fruit juice, but avoid alcohol and caffeine (tea, coffee, colas)
- monitor their daily fluid intake, particularly if they have several carers or are not always able to drink unaided
- keep in regular contact throughout the heatwave, and try to arrange for someone to visit at least once a day for the very high risk patients
- keep giving advice on what to do to help keep cool
- During extended periods of raised temperatures ensure that persons over the age of 65 are advised to increase their fluid intake to reduce the risk of blood-stream infections caused by Gram-negative bacteria

#### **5.3.4 being alert:**

As well as the specific symptoms of heat exhaustion and heatstroke, watch out for signs that could be attributed to other causes, such as:

- Difficulty sleeping, drowsiness, faintness and changes in behaviour
- Increased body temperature
- Difficulty breathing and increased heart rate
- Dehydration, nausea or vomiting
- worsening health problems, especially of heart or respiratory system



### 5.3.5. Emergency treatment

If you suspect someone has heatstroke, call 999. While waiting for the ambulance:

- take the person's temperature
- If possible, move them somewhere cooler
- cool them down as quickly as possible by giving them a cool shower, sprinkling them with water or wrapping them in a damp sheet, and using a fan to create an air current
- encourage them to drink fluids, if they are conscious
- do not give aspirin or paracetamol

### 5.4 Environment Agency Flood Warnings and Flood Guidance Statements


The Environment Agency works with the Met Office in the joint Flood Forecasting Centre. They provide a complete picture of national flood risk, from developing weather through to the actual flood event itself.



They provide a national forecasting and alert service to all emergency responders. The Centre operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, giving emergency responders longer lead times and targeted information to prepare for flooding.

The Emergency Planning Officer subscribes to these alerts. For further information see the Environment Agency website

<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/floods/31618.aspx>

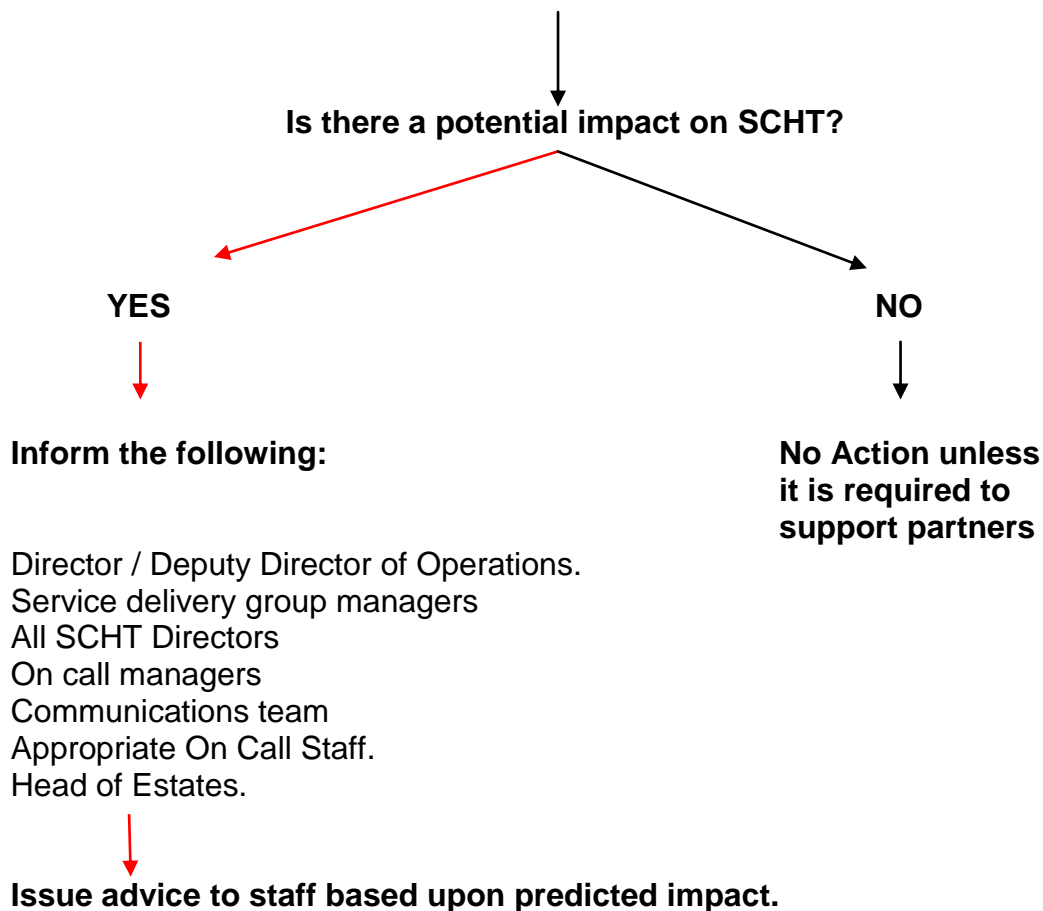
Flood warning alert levels are as below and all year round actions reflect the actions required in the management and prioritisation of vulnerable patients in cold weather alerts. In a patient or personal flood emergency dial 999.

	<p><b>FLOOD ALERT</b> Flooding is possible. Be prepared.</p> <p>Issued two hours to two days in advance of flooding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be prepared to act on your flood plan.</li><li>• Prepare a flood kit of essential items.</li><li>• Monitor local water levels and the flood forecast on our website.</li></ul>
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 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>FLOOD WARNING</b></p>	<p><b>FLOOD WARNING</b> Flooding is expected. Immediate action required. Issued half an hour to one day in advance of flooding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move family, pets and valuables to a safe place.</li> <li>• Turn off gas, electricity and water supplies if safe to do so.</li> <li>• Put flood protection equipment in place.</li> </ul>
 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>SEVERE FLOOD WARNING</b></p>	<p><b>SEVERE FLOOD WARNING</b> Danger to life. When flooding poses a significant threat to life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay in a safe place with a means of escape.</li> <li>• Be ready should you need to evacuate from your home.</li> <li>• Cooperate with the emergency services.</li> <li>• Call 999 if you are in immediate danger.</li> </ul>

#### 5.4.1 SCHT Actions on receipt of Flood Guidance Statements

**When a Flood Guidance Statement is received it is reviewed by the Emergency Planning Officer (EPO) who may consult with appropriate members of staff. If the EPO is absent the Communications and Marketing Manager (who also receives this information) will review the warning/alert as follows:**



Flood Guidance Statements rated **Yellow** will be considered by the Emergency Planning Officer and disseminated further if they represent a risk to the Trust.

Flood Guidance Statements rated **Amber or Red** will be automatically passed by the Emergency Planning Officer (or deputy) to the dissemination list above.

Receipt of a Red Warning would signify a potential Major Incident and the Director of Operations or Director On call will consider moving to “standby” or “implement” as set out in the Trust Emergency Response Procedures.

Receipt of an **Amber Warning** would signify warning of a disruptive incident. In this event suitable advice to staff to encourage them to make appropriate plans to mitigate the effects of the impending weather would be issued via the Communications Team. For example, staff may be instructed to familiarise themselves with their Business Continuity Plans. This may be through an all staff email or via the Trust Internet and Intranet sites. Generic guidance on actions to take can be found at Annexe B.

The procedure for communicating with staff during periods of winter weather and other potential emergency situations that may affect attendance at the workplace can be found on the Trust Intranet (Media Policy and Procedure).

If a Flood Warning or Severe Flood Warning is issued for an area in which the Trust has estate the Emergency Planning Officer or communications team:

- Inform the Director / Deputy Director of Operations/Director on call.
- The Director / Deputy Director of operations will liaise with the CCG and/or NHS England Area Team, and other appropriate external partners if required.
- Inform the Service Manager of the affected services and a senior contact at the location affected.
- Inform Head of Estates and provide a brief of the situation.
- Inform the Communications Team in order that appropriate messages to staff can be distributed
- Issue Guidance to follow procedures as set out in the affected team’s Business Continuity Plan and individual evacuation procedures if required.

## **6.0 Weather Alert Level 3 / 4 Business Continuity**

All teams in the Trust have Business Continuity Plans, which identify the actions required for the service to continue to maintain essential services during severe weather. This includes plans for disruption to staffing to ensure sufficient numbers of staff are available.

For Trust headquarters it may be necessary to maintain essential 24/7 telephone switchboard services and staff living close to this location may be asked to remain at work to ensure this building remains open.

Teams will be instructed to refer to their Business Continuity Plans whenever a severe weather event is likely to have an effect on their team. Business Continuity Plans are held electronically (Intranet: On Call Resources) and in hard copy by each team, and by the Emergency Planning Officer. Once the alert has been disseminated local decisions can be made about service prioritisation.

## **7.0 Managing Patients Safely**

A severe weather incident may impact directly on patient safety e.g. in the event of damage to premises or if staff levels are severely reduced or can't access an isolated patient. In such circumstances it is the responsibility of patient facing staff to ensure they are aware of the effects this has on patient safety and how to mitigate it.

Staff should refer to individual patient records, business continuity and evacuation plans.

Staff whilst making every attempt to mitigate the patient risk, should not place themselves at personal risk when attempting to reach a patient and should make alternative arrangements for that patient and escalate their concerns to their manager.

## **8.0 Debrief and Lessons Learned**

### **8.1 Major Weather Incident**

At the conclusion of a Major Weather Incident, the Accountable Emergency Officer will make arrangements for staff to be debriefed and may request other health organisations that have worked alongside the Trust in response to take part.

This process will take place within 3 months of the incident "stand down".

The debrief may take the form of a pro-forma or a debrief meeting as appropriate to the incident.

At the conclusion of the incident, the Accountable Emergency Officer will prepare a report on the Major Incident, to include issues identified by the debriefing process, together with an action plan to address the issues raised. The report and action plan will then be submitted to the Trust's Board of Directors, NHS England Area Team and other agencies as appropriate, subject to the agreement of the Trust Board.

### **8.2 Other Debriefs**

In the event of a period of severe weather affecting the Trust but not triggering a Major Incident the Emergency Planning Officer will make arrangements for staff to be debriefed and will seek feedback from other organisations that have worked alongside SCHAT during the response.

The debrief will take the form of a meeting attended by all affected services where feedback will be sought on the Trust's response. The Emergency Planning Officer will prepare a report containing a list of "lessons learned" with an action plan to address these issues. The report and action plan will be submitted to the Trust Emergency Accountable Officer.

## Appendix A : On Call Manager / Director / Deputy Director Action Card

(amended December 2019)

This guidance sets out a range of actions to consider in the event of Weather impacting the ability of the Trust to deliver its services. All Trust services have a business continuity plan containing actions to take if staff are unable to get to work and another for severe weather.

### **The Director of Operations/On Call Manager can consider the following;**

- Declare a business continuity incident and assemble incident management team in advance of the snow.
- When the risk of snow is forecast contact owners of 4x4 vehicles employed by the Trust for their availability to support the delivery of critical functions. This list will be lodged on SharePoint and filed in the on call managers bags. (See form at the end of this annex as a template).
- If severe snow is forecast consider at the appropriate time closing/stopping non critical activity and re-deploying non-essential staff to critical activity. Reviewing rotas to ensure staff at community hospitals. Advising community hospitals to make ready accommodation for staff needing to stay overnight.
- In the event that there is a risk that staff will have difficulty attending work or critical patients in the community due to the weather then contact the CCG to request a Shropshire Tactical Coordinating Group be convened and recommend a snow cell be formed to coordinate resources against demand.
- In the event that a Tactical Coordinating Group and snow cell isn't formed contact SaTH and RJAH to operate a joint coordination centre to coordinate staff volunteers with vehicles and tasks such as patient visits or getting staff to key places of work.
- Consider the need for a public appeal for 4X4 volunteers however, This should only be used in extremis and the trust will need to formally risk assess using volunteers with no background checks, understanding of their driving competence or state of the vehicle, their vehicle insurance against the risk to patients.
- Where the trust cannot maintain critical services then the On Call director should speak to NHS England about requesting military support.
- For access to patients cut off or isolated by snow;

- Contact: 01743 260290 and ask for the relevant Council's Emergency Planning Duty Officer. Discuss the location and options for the local authorities' highways department to support access.
- In recognition of the rurality of Shropshire and the impact of severe weather on delivering community based services, SCHAT provides small 4x4 vehicles as part of its pool car fleet (rolling program implemented in 2016) to help access community based patients
- West Midlands 4x4 Response

Organised and trained volunteers with DBS checks and vehicles equipped and insured to support the NHS and other public bodies. If able to support then an MOU will require signing and vehicle mileage costs covered.

NOTE: This organisation does not have 4x4 vehicles based in Shropshire so might not be able to offer assistance.

Contact Via email at: [secretary@westmidlands4x4response.org](mailto:secretary@westmidlands4x4response.org) or discuss with Local Authority Emergency Planning teams

- To hire four wheel drive vehicles Contact ;
  - Enterprise Rent-A-Car: 01743 444777. Note demand for 4x4 vehicles will be high.
  - Fourways Vehicle Solutions Ltd: 0344 8000 385
  - Sutton Maddock Vehicle Rental Limited: 01952 730 251/204

### **Community Hospital Access:**

The trust has a contract with the Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust (MPFT) to salt/grit and clear snow to ensure access to Whitchurch, Bridgnorth & Bishops Castle community hospitals. Ludlow community Hospital and Oswestry Health Centre are maintained by NHSPS.

Highways England and Local Authorities have responsibility for ensure major roads are clear from snow. In the event of a community hospital being isolated by snow the Local Authority can be approached to help the trust ensure access, this would include the car park areas which are not the direct responsibility of the Local Authority to maintain.

## Appendix B - Generic Actions to take at each Cold Weather Alert Level

Level 0	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Long-term planning <i>All year</i>	Winter preparedness programme <i>1 November to 31 March</i>	Severe winter weather is forecast – Alert and readiness <i>Mean temperature of 2°C and/or widespread ice and heavy snow is predicted within 48 hours, with 60% confidence</i>	Response to severe winter weather – Severe weather action <i>Mean temperature of 2°C or less and/or widespread ice and heavy snow</i>	Major incident – Emergency response <i>Central Government will declare a Level 4 alert in the event of severe or prolonged cold weather affecting sectors other than health</i>
<p>Work within your teams and with partner organisations to ensure that systems are developed to support the identification and sharing of information between agencies of people who may be vulnerable to cold weather and other seasonal variations.</p> <p>Systematically work to improve the resilience of vulnerable people to severe cold.</p> <p>Ensure that all staff have been made aware of the Winter Plan and the dangers of cold weather to health and know how to spot signs and symptoms.</p>	<p>Identify those at risk on your caseload and necessary changes to care plans for high-risk groups. For those with multiple agency inputs, ensure that the key worker is clearly identified. Work with individuals at risk, their families and carers to ensure that they are aware of the dangers of cold weather and cold housing and how to keep warm.</p> <p>Ensure that there are clear arrangements for 'signposting' those at risk clients and patients to other services (e.g. home insulation schemes, benefits entitlements) when identified in 'clinical' situations or consultations. Work with partners to ensure that vulnerable patients and clients have access to fuel supplies.</p> <p>Link to energy supplier priority service registers as required. Ensure that clients and colleagues are aware of, and take advantage of, flu and other vaccination programmes. Identify the resources available to you for raising awareness of health risks associated with winter weather and cold housing (for example, pharmacists have a key role in reminding people to have sufficient medicine and can help with preventive medicines management.</p>	<p>As appropriate, contact those most at risk and implement care plans.</p> <p>When making home visits, be aware of the room temperature in the household and be able to advise on recommended room temperatures.</p> <p>Know how to signpost clients onto other services, especially those at high risk.</p> <p>Remind clients of the actions they can take to protect themselves from the effects of severe cold.</p> <p>Consider how forecast weather conditions may impact on your work – and make appropriate arrangements.</p>	<p>Implement local plans for contacting the vulnerable.</p> <p>If appropriate, consider daily visits or phone calls for high-risk individuals living on their own who have no regular contacts.</p> <p>Ensure staff can help and advise clients. Other actions as per Level 2.</p> <p>Maintain business continuity</p>	<p>Continue actions as per Level 3 unless advised to the contrary</p>



## Appendix C - Met Office Severe Weather Warning Generic Actions.

### Know what to expect and what action to take

The table below provides examples of the kind of disruption that might be experienced for each impact level (high, medium, low) and for each weather type (rain, snow, fog, ice, wind). It also provides some general advice to try and mitigate the impacts. Note that weather assessed as having a "Very Low" impact may still have some minor impacts.

	Very Low	Low	Medium	High
<p><b>Impact and advice applying to;</b></p> <p><b>All severe weather</b></p>	<p>The weather is not expected to have any noticeable impacts but there may be some issues e.g. when travelling some extra care may be needed on occasions and there may be some disruption to outdoor events</p>	<p><b>Be Aware</b> and ensure you access the latest weather forecast for up to date weather information.</p> <p>Expect some minor delays due to slower traffic.</p> <p>Outdoor events may be disrupted or cancelled</p>	<p><b>Be Prepared</b> Take precautions where possible and ensure you access the latest weather forecast.</p> <p><b>Be Prepared</b> for some disruption to normal daily routines</p> <p>Travel only if well prepared and be prepared for longer journey times</p>	<p><b>Take</b> precautionary <b>Action</b> and remain extra vigilant. Follow orders and any advice given by authorities under all circumstances.</p> <p><b>Ensure</b> you access the latest weather forecast</p> <p><b>Expect</b> significant disruption to normal daily routines. Avoid all non-essential journeys. If you must journey carry emergency food/clothing/blanket/light etc.</p>
<p><b>Impact and advice associated with;</b></p> <p><b>Rain</b></p>	<p>Some flooding of low lying fields, recreation land and car parks but little or no disruption to travel.</p> <p>Wet road surfaces and possibility of ponding water lead to difficult driving conditions.</p> <p>Take care when driving in affected areas.</p>	<p>Localised flooding of low lying fields, recreation land and car parks.</p> <p>Flooding of a small number of homes and businesses.</p> <p>Wet road surfaces and possibility of ponding water especially in known trouble spots.</p> <p>Local disruption to travel – longer journey times.</p> <p>Water on roads – drive according to the conditions encountered.</p>	<p>Some flooding of homes, businesses and transport links possible.</p> <p>Disruption to travel likely.</p> <p>Disruption to gas, electricity, water supplies and telecoms possible.</p> <p>Some evacuations may be required.</p> <p>Be prepared to protect yourself and your property.</p>	<p>Widespread flooding of property.</p> <p>Severe Disruption to travel.</p> <p>Losses of gas, electricity, water supplies.</p> <p>Significant disruption to communities.</p> <p>Evacuations expected of affected communities.</p> <p>Significant risk to life.</p> <p>Take action and protect yourself and follow advice of the emergency services.</p>
<p><b>Impact and advice associated with;</b></p>	<p>Debris dislodged and some branches removed.</p>	<p>Some branches and trees brought down.</p>	<p>More widespread tree damage &amp; other debris, slates etc.</p>	<p>Widespread structural damage e.g. roofs blown off, mobile homes</p>

<p><b>Wind</b></p>	<p>Perhaps some very limited disruption.</p> <p>Difficulties on some prone routes e.g. cross winds on exposed or high level roads</p>	<p>Localised travel disruption</p> <p>Localised problems for high sided vehicles on prone routes.</p> <p>Drive with care especially on exposed routes.</p> <p><b>Be Aware</b> of debris being blown around.</p>	<p>dislodged from roofs.</p> <p>Some minor structural damage possible</p> <p>Risk of injury from flying debris.</p> <p><b>Be Prepared</b> for some travel disruption e.g. closed bridges.</p> <p>Potential for some disruptions to power.</p>	<p>overturned, power lines brought down.</p> <p>Risk to personal safety from flying debris.</p> <p>Potentially widespread and/or prolonged interruptions to power.</p> <p>Expect widespread transport disruption due to e.g. roads blocked by fallen trees.</p>
<p><b>Impact and advice associated with;</b></p> <p><b>Fog</b></p>	<p>Some localised no-persistent fog affecting limited geographic areas. Take care when driving in affected areas.</p> <p>There may be some very limited impact on road transport</p>	<p>More widespread locally dense fog affecting significant areas of the country but not persisting beyond 1-2 days.</p> <p>Some airports may close for short periods.</p> <p>Take extra care when driving in affected areas.</p> <p>Journeys through affected areas may take longer than usual.</p>	<p>Widespread and dense fog affecting large areas of the country including a number of major airports and ports.</p> <p>The fog is persistent and may last for several days in some areas.</p> <p><b>Be Prepared</b> for increased journey times.</p> <p><b>Be prepared</b> for delays at airports and/or ferry ports.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Impact and advice associated with;</b></p> <p><b>Snow</b></p>	<p>Small amounts of snow lying on roads and pavements so some slippery road surfaces possible especially if combined with very low temperatures.</p> <p>Traffic may move generally slower than normal.</p> <p>Take extra care when walking, cycling or driving in affected areas.</p>	<p>More widespread snow lying on roads and pavements but road networks generally open.</p> <p>Care needed with only localised travel disruption.</p> <p>Problems mostly confined to usual prone areas.</p> <p>Take care when walking cycling or driving in affected areas.</p> <p>Journeys through affected areas may take longer than usual.</p>	<p>Widespread snow with a number of road closures, others passable only with care.</p> <p><b>Be Prepared</b> for some disruption to road, rail and air transport with difficult driving conditions likely and longer journey times.</p>	<p>Widespread deep snow with many roads closed or impassable.</p> <p>Roads likely to become impassable with a risk of drivers becoming stranded.</p> <p>Significant disruption to road, rail and air travel.</p> <p>Risk to personal safety.</p> <p>Disruption to normal day to day life as a result of transport issues, school closures etc.</p> <p>Avoid making unnecessary journeys.</p>

<p><b>Impact and Advice associated with;</b></p> <p><b>Ice</b></p>	<p>Localised icy stretches on some untreated roads and pavement possible.</p> <p>Take extra care when walking, cycling or driving in affected areas.</p>	<p>More widespread icy stretches on untreated roads and pavements but road networks generally open.</p> <p>Take care when walking, cycling or driving in affected areas.</p> <p>Journeys through affected areas may take longer than usual.</p>	<p>Widespread black ice, some roads only passable with care.</p> <p>Possibility of road collisions and significant increase in slips and falls</p>	<p>N/A</p>
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## **Appendix D: Trust Policy Extract - Attendance at work during exceptional circumstances**

### **Policy and procedure for Special Leave:**

<http://www.shropscommunityhealth.nhs.uk/content/doclib/10620.pdf>

#### **4. Attendance at work during exceptional circumstances**

This relates to exceptional circumstances such as bad or inclement weather, local or national petrol shortages, and difficulties with public services or utilities that may prevent or hinder staff attending work as usual.

Staff should make every effort to attend work at their normal starting time. If due to the circumstances above, and despite their best efforts, a member of staff is delayed, they will not be financially penalised.

The employee should contact their Line Manager by telephone as soon as possible to discuss the situation and options.

If, after efforts have been made to reach their usual place of work, the employee is unable to do so, where appropriate, an employee can use other NHS premises.

The options available include:

1. Sharing transport with colleagues.
2. Accrued flexi-time may be used (where formal flexi time is in place).
3. Employee may take a day's annual leave.
4. Time owing is carried forward and worked within one working month.
5. Where appropriate, and with Line Managers agreement, employees may work from home.
6. Exceptionally, if none of the above are appropriate then by agreement with the Line Manager and employee may receive normal pay.

The assumption is made that the vast majority of staff will make every effort to attend, in which case it would not be reasonable for the manager to withhold payment arbitrarily. Discussion should take place between the parties when normal work has resumed.

Entirely at the manager's discretion, and subject to the needs of the Service, staff that have travel difficulties may be sent home early from work without detriment if the situation worsens.

## Appendix E: Management Action Cards

<b>E1</b>	<b>Management Actions – no specific weather alerts</b>
TICK	Develop and maintain business continuity plans for severe weather
IF	Ensure staff are familiar with business continuity arrangements
DONE	Know where staff are and maintain the ability to contact them at short notice to pass on urgent messages
	Develop service level urgent message cascade system
	Maintain an awareness of weather reports and assess impact on services provided
	Be aware of and be able initiate the actions related to seasonal impacts of weather such as heatwave and cold weather

<b>E2</b>	<b>Management Actions – national weather reports of predicted severe weather</b>
TICK	Review whether reports will directly impact locally
IF	Ensure staff are aware of predicted weather in particular if an impact of service provision or personal safety are implicated
DONE	Share and promote information published by the trust in respect to being prepared for winter or safe driving in poor road conditions

<b>E3</b>	<b>Management Actions – Severe weather alerts</b>
TICK	Review whether reports will directly impact locally
IF	Ensure staff are aware of the severe weather alert in particular if an impact of service provision or personal safety are implicated
DONE	<p><b>Flooding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify whether roads are affected that impact on service provision – use Shropshire Council and/or Telford Council web sites for latest information.</li> <li>Ensure staff are aware of road closures in affected areas and alternative routes are planned</li> <li>Consider reducing workloads on impacted routes to take account of greater distances being travelled</li> <li>Identify any patients vulnerable to being isolated or unreachable and review care plan – escalate to manager on call if visit is essential but patient can't be reached.</li> <li>Consider business continuity plans and inform manager on call if service delivery reduced or suspended</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Snow</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review whether snow will directly impact locally</li> <li>If snow predicted in local area review case load to identify any patients at risk or vulnerable if care is delayed or cancelled, if found develop an alternative care plan.</li> <li>Ensure contact is maintained with service to identify any actual or potential staff shortfalls</li> <li>Where staff may have difficulty attending work – reprioritise caseloads to ensure particularly vulnerable patients and those with critical interventions can be visited. Contact manager on call if at risk patients might not be reached and consider options (see Snow</li> </ul>

	<p>plan annex C)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During periods of snowfall, Identify whether roads are affected that impact on service provision – use Shropshire Council and/or Telford Council web sites for latest information.</li> <li>• Consider the service impact if schools close – Councils and BBC Radio Shropshire will report these</li> <li>• Review business continuity arrangements and dynamically plan delivery of services against the information known.</li> </ul>
	Prepare to submit regular situation reports to manager on call both in and out of hours.

<b>E4</b>	<b>Management Actions: Manager on call</b>
TICK	Review whether reports will directly impact in the trust area
IF	Ensure services are aware of the severe weather alert in particular if an impact of service provision or personal safety are implicated
DONE	Be aware through the emergency planning manager of any multiagency briefing or management arrangements being implemented and if so liaise with the CCG lead
	In the event of severe weather consider requesting situation reports contained in the Corporate Business Continuity Plan, Annex 3 – Business Impact Assessment – Initial Situation Report – to establish impact and seek assurance that mitigation measures are in place
	Establish open lines of communication with service managers so that timely support and advice can be sought and impacts on services and risks to patient care understood.
	If more than one service is, or threatened to be compromised consider formally declaring a business continuity incident and opening an incident control room.
	Keep the Director on call informed of any service impact and if services are suspended request the CCG is informed by the On call Director.

<b>E5</b>	<b>Management Actions: Director On Call</b>
TICK	Review whether reports will directly impact in the trust area
IF	Ensure services are aware of the severe weather alert in particular if an impact of service provision or personal safety are implicated
DONE	Establish open lines of communication with the Manager On Call so that timely support and advice can be sought and impacts on services and risks to patient care understood.
	Liaise with the Chief Executive and Board members so they are aware of the impact to the trust of the weather on key services and informed of any changes to, or risks resulting from, the implementation of business continuity plans.
	In liaison with the Manager on call consider the need to establish formal management arrangements set out in the Corporate Business Continuity Plan
	Be aware that in severe weather that wider civil contingency arrangements may be implemented locally which will require situation reports through the CCG

## **Flooding Risk - Shropshire Context**

As the events of summer 2007 and 2012 and winter of 2013/2014 showed, flooding at its most serious can affect many different aspects of our daily lives.

HISTORY- In the summer of 2007 the UK was seriously affected by flooding. West Mercia experienced significant flooding which led to damaged properties, evacuation of residents, and closure of roads. West Mercia has a number of areas that have similar topography that could result in similar events to those experienced by Boscastle. (In 2004 the village of Boscastle suffered extensive damage from flash floods caused by an exceptional amount of rain that fell over the course of an 8 hour period). These are designated Rapid Response Catchment areas by the Environment Agency.

Many statutory and voluntary agencies are involved in responding to floods. Different agencies are equipped and have specific responsibilities to deal with a specific type of flood, for example, the highways service of a Local Authority can manage flooding on a public highway, while the local water companies would deal with a burst water main.

The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 specifies the role of a lead local flood authority and also stipulates the national role of the Environment Agency.

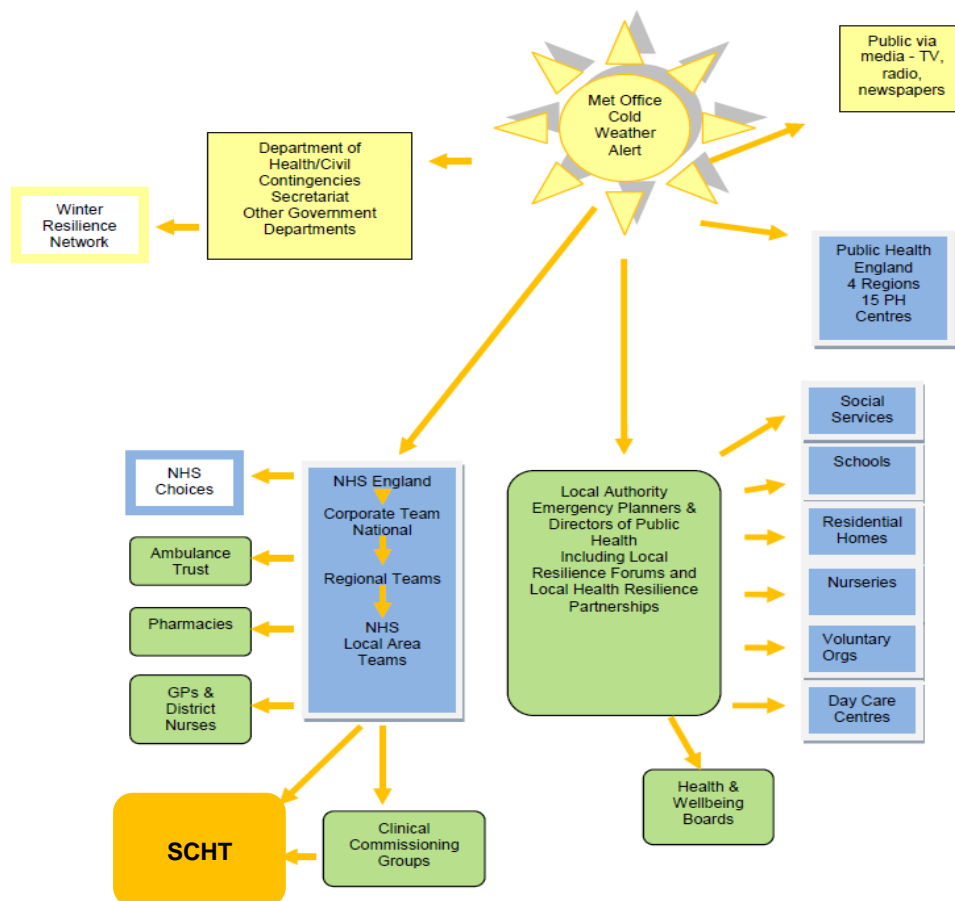
Lead Agencies - Police, Environment Agency and Local Authorities.

Strong winds can cause significant disruption to businesses due to structural damage and transport route blockages. In February 2014 gales across Shropshire resulted in damage to three buildings from which trust services were delivered rendering them not safe to use the next day. The high winds in 2014 also caused power outage to some five thousand properties for a number of days. In January 2010, snow caused disruption across most of the UK resulting in school closures, power outages and people being unable to get to work for a number of days depending on their location. November and December 2010 saw temperatures across West Mercia fall in parts to minus 15oc with significant snowfall, which resulted in treacherous road conditions and major disruption to transport and essential services.

The rural nature of Shropshire means that severe weather can have a large impact on the day to day activities of the population. Our reliance on the road network and the main routes around the area becomes very evident when it is disrupted by severe weather events. There is nothing we can do at a local level to reduce the likelihood of severe weather events; however we can be prepared for these events in order to stay safe and maintain essential services.

The lead agency will depend on the type of severe weather and its impact.

The diagram below depicts the responsibilities at national and local level for alerting and response once a cold weather alert has been issued.





### **Staff Advice for Dealing with Extreme Low Temperatures and Heavy Snow**

Staff need to ensure they wear appropriate warm clothing to work, check their route to work is clear before setting off on a journey and always carry additional warm clothing and blankets and food and drink in the car especially if the journey to work is long.

It is advisable to carry a spade in your car's boot especially when snowfall is heavy or is predicted to be heavy. It is also good practice to ensure that there is ample charge on your mobile phone or carry a car adaptor phone charger.

### **Staff Advice for Storms and Gales**

The main risk to the Trust in these incidents would be disruption to services caused by damage to premises. If a building is damaged as a result of severe storms/gales, the Business Continuity Plan for that site/service would be implemented. If damage was to occur out of hours, then the on call Senior Manager and Director should be informed.

Staff may also find it difficult to travel to work in these conditions and they should inform their manager so alternatives for work can be arranged.

If the severe weather commences during the day then Directors/Assistant Directors/Managers may need to consider the safety of their staff as driving conditions may be very difficult in severe gales and heavy storms.

Staff should make every effort to attend work at their normal starting time. If due to the circumstances above, and despite their best efforts, a member of staff is delayed, they will not be financially penalised.

The employee should contact their Line Manager by telephone as soon as possible to discuss the situation and options.

If, after efforts have been made to reach their usual place of work, the employee is unable to do so, where appropriate, an employee can use other NHS premises.

Where practicable, employees may work from home with the agreement of their manager or Director.

Employees not able to get to work must inform their line manager of their absence as close as possible to the beginning of their shift/day's work.

The trust's policy on attendance during severe can be found in section 4 of the Policy and procedure for Special Leave (2015). An extract of this policy can be seen at Appendix D.

## Staff Advice Driving in Heavy Rain / Floods



**Even moderate rain can reduce your ability to see and be seen. A good rule of thumb is 'if it's time for your wipers, it's time to slow down'.**



**If heavy downpours are expected, if you can avoid starting your journey until it clears.**



**If you can, choose main roads, where you are less likely to be exposed to fallen branches and debris and flooding.**



**Use dipped headlights if visibility is seriously reduced.**



**Gusts of wind can unsettle vehicles – grip your steering wheel firmly with both hands. This is particularly important when planning to overtake.**



**Keep an eye out for gaps between trees, buildings or bridges over a river or railway – these are some of the places you are more likely to be exposed to side winds. Ensure that you maintain enough room either side of your vehicle so you can account for it being blown sideways.**



**Roads will be more slippery than usual in wet weather – be sure to give yourself more time to react when approaching a hazard. Increase your following gap to at least four seconds from the moving traffic in front.**



**Keep your eyes peeled on the road at all times as spray from other vehicles can suddenly reduce your visibility. Remember it affects others too, so anticipate their actions and be prepared.**

### **What to do when the road is flooded**



**On flooded roads, think before driving through deep water; don't stop in standing water, and drive through the highest section of the road slowly. If there is any doubt don't enter it.**



**Once you have managed to drive through check your brakes and dry them out as quickly as possible – a light touch of the brakes whilst still moving should do the trick.**

### **Keep an eye out for cyclists, motorcyclists and pedestrians**



**Remember to give vulnerable road users including cyclists, motorcyclists and pedestrians more room than usual. They are more likely to be blown around by side winds – always keep a safe distance.**