



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru  
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

# **Major Disruption to Travel Policy**

**This policy is also available in Welsh.**

## Information sheet

Information box

For further advice contact: Human Resources

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### Version control

Document version	Author	Date of issue	Key changes made
1.0	Phil Sweeney	November 2012	Original
2.0	Phil Sweeney	January 2016	Q&A 12 (Annex 2): How to access the VIR and Estyn systems from home (personal) computer
3.0	Beth Rees	December 2018	Review – reference to Corporate Services homeworking
4.0	Beth Ackland	March 2021	Adapted using our tone of voice

### Impact Assessment

- A business rationale assessment has been carried out and this policy contributes to Estyn's strategic objectives and delivery principles.
- An equality impact assessment has been carried out and this policy is not deemed to impact adversely on any people on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

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## Introduction

### Policy Principles

- 1 Major disruption to travel is disruption which severely affects public transport or roads to the extent that it prevents or seriously affects a significant number of employees' efforts to come to and from work. This includes impact arising from events such as severe weather, other natural disasters, national travel strikes, or other major incidents.
- 2 The following principles underpin Estyn's Major Disruption to Travel policy:
  - You have a responsibility to attend work and should make every effort to do so but are not expected to take unnecessary risks.
  - If you are affected by major disruption you will be treated fairly and principles will be applied consistently wherever possible.
  - Managers should only consider awarding paid special leave where they are satisfied that it was impossible for the individual to attend work and all options to carry out alternative useful work have been considered and ruled out.

### Scope of policy

- 3 This policy applies when your ability to safely attend or remain at your usual place of work is affected by major disruption to travel or other circumstances enforcing an office closure. The principles of this policy will also apply to business travel. The policy covers all people who work for us, including temporary appointments, employees on loan between Civil Service departments and secondees from other organisations.

### Policy summary

- 4 The policy provides a framework for dealing with major disruption to travel. Key areas covered by this policy include:
  - Planned or unplanned disruptions
  - Your responsibilities
  - Manager responsibilities
  - Alternative working
  - Leave and pay arrangements
  - Managing absence
- 5 The Policy does **not** cover disruption to caring arrangements, e.g. impact arising from school or day care centre closures, please refer to our Special Leave policy.

## Procedures

### Planned or unplanned disruptions

- 6 Major disruption to travel can be planned or unplanned. It is important where potential major disruption to travel is known about in advance that managers and individuals pro-actively plan what alternative working and/or travelling arrangements may be possible.
- 7 If you are office-based you should consider taking work home with you in case you can't get into work the next day. If you are a member of Corporate Services you should agree the temporary home-working arrangement with your line manager and obtain authorisation from an SEO, Grade 7 or Grade 6 officer. Remember that you must comply with our policies on [ICT Usage](#) and [Information Assurance](#) – talk to your line manager if you are unsure of requirements.
- 8 Corporate Services staff should follow the Homeworking Policy for Corporate Services Staff and complete the home working application form and homeworking risk assessment. The HR team will then update the Homeworking Requests Log with details of approved homeworking requests to help ensure consistency.
- 9 It is important in the event of unplanned major disruption to travel that managers and individuals keep in touch and work together to reach an appropriate solution.

### Your responsibilities

- 10 You have a responsibility to attend work as far as practicably possible. Where major disruption affects your ability to attend or leave your usual place of work you must initially phone your manager or an agreed alternative manager. If you are unable to contact a manager you must keep trying until you succeed. It is your responsibility to familiarise yourself with our arrangements and know who to contact in such situations.
- 11 You are expected to perform your usual role or carry out appropriate alternative work. You are also expected to attend your usual place of work unless alternative arrangements are agreed with your manager.
- 12 You should continue to keep in touch with your manager throughout any period of disruption so that the situation can be kept under review and alternative options considered.

### Manager responsibilities

- 13 When the individual has made contact with you, you must discuss any potential obstacles preventing them travelling to and from their usual place of work. You should explore with the individual practical alternative ways of travelling to minimise loss of working time.
- 14 A number of factors should be considered when deciding on the most appropriate course of action. You must consider potential health and safety risks, the nature of the disruption and the individual's personal circumstances. This must include

individual needs such as a disability that may make alternative means of travel more difficult.

### **Alternative working arrangements**

- 15 You should discuss options for alternative working arrangements such as:
- Changing the timing of the journey to or from work. We will consider awarding flexi-credit for travel time in excess of normal travel time – subject to the standard day maximum.
  - Working from alternative premises subject to manager's approval, local security arrangements and business continuity arrangements.
  - Working from home (see Q12 in Annex 1 and further information in Annex 2).
  - Discussing longer term plans that may not have been possible at short notice where the disruption is expected to last for several days.
- 16 Whilst every effort should be made to reach a mutually acceptable agreement, it is ultimately the manager who should decide on the most appropriate course of action in any particular circumstances.

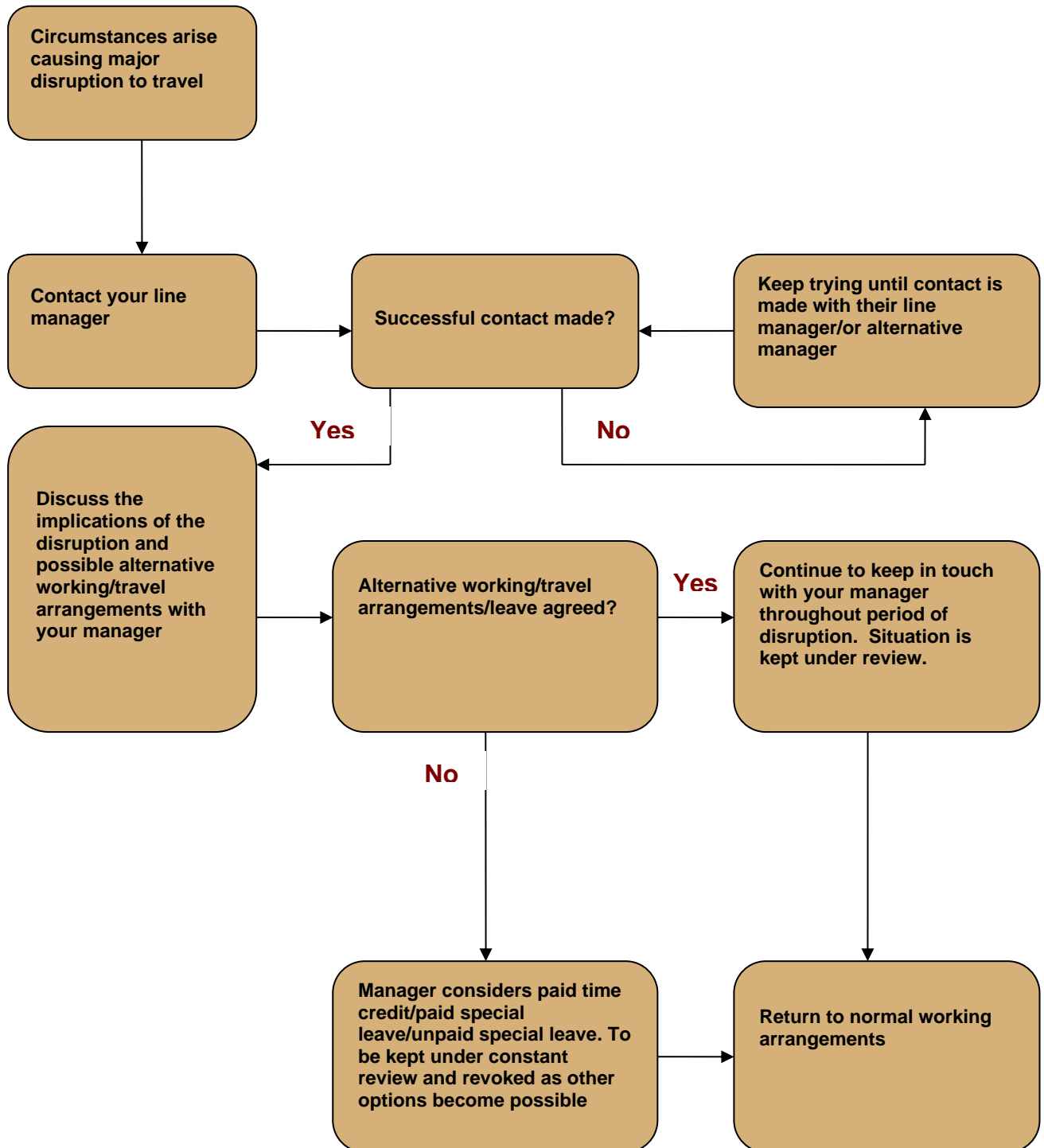
### **Leave and pay arrangements**

- 17 Where alternative working arrangements are not possible the manager should discuss:
- Whether you wish to take annual leave, flexi leave or unpaid leave. You may take annual leave or flexi leave rather than keep trying to get into work when it is difficult to do so. This should be done with the agreement of your manager who should consider business continuity when agreeing leave.
  - Whether any working time lost can be made up at a later date. Line managers will have discretion to agree a temporary adjustment to flexi carry forward limits. You should agree a plan to make up the hours as quickly as reasonably possible with your line manager.
- 18 In exceptional circumstances, where your manager is satisfied that you have made every reasonable effort to come into work but have been unable to do so, managers may consider awarding paid time credits/paid special leave. This should only be up to your normal working pattern for that day.

### **Managing absence**

If you do not attend work and/or no contact has been made your manager must follow the procedure for unauthorised absence, which can be found in our Attendance Management Policy and Procedures.

## Summary flow chart



## Annex1: Advice for employees and managers

### Questions and Answers

**1. You are unable to attend your normal place of work because of major disruption to travel on a particular day or over a longer period. What should you do?**

You have responsibility to notify your manager or, if they are not available, an agreed alternative manager of the situation and to keep them updated. You should keep an eye on the situation and if conditions improve later in the day, you should try to get to work as usual (where it is reasonable to do so).

**2. You are unable to contact your manager. What should you do?**

You need to make sure that you are aware of our business continuity arrangements and have phone numbers for your agreed key contacts. You should continue to try and contact your manager, HR or an agreed alternative manager until successful.

Managers will follow the procedure for unauthorised absence where you have not made contact, further details can be found in the Attendance Management Policy and Procedures.

**3. You have received notification of planned industrial strike action that will have an impact on your travel to and from work. What should you do?**

Where major disruption to travel is known about in advance e.g. industrial action on tube/bus/train etc, you must consider alternative ways to travel to your normal place of work. In the event that this is not possible you must discuss alternative arrangements with your manager. The key aim is to minimise the impact on your work.

**4. Your journey to work has taken longer due to a signal failure on the railway. Should you be given a paid time credit for working time lost?**

No. The impact of minor disruption to travel e.g. traffic jams, routine maintenance or delays and/or localised cancellations on public transport, whilst inconvenient, is not covered by this policy.

The policy should only be used when exceptional major disruption occurs which affects a significant number of people. Examples of major disruption to travel may include but are not restricted to: heavy snow, industrial strike action, severe flooding, acts of terrorism/war, volcanic ash cloud and restrictions due to pandemic illness.

**5. You are unable to attend work due to disruption in caring arrangements (e.g. school closure) caused by major disruption to travel. Will this be covered under the Major Disruption to Travel Policy?**

No, this is not covered. See our Special Leave Policy [instead](#).



**6. You are unable to return home when working away from your normal place of work due to major disruption to travel. Can you claim reasonable expenses?**

You must first seek permission from your manager about what can be claimed. Your manager has a duty of care to ensure that those stranded on official business are safe and will make a decision based on your individual circumstances. See [Travel and Subsistence Policy](#).

**7. Heavy snow has disrupted rail travel. Person A manages to get to work but Person B does not. They both live in the same area and both use rail travel to get to work. What should happen?**

The manager should explore the reasons why Person B could not attend work. The manager can determine whether reasonable efforts to attend work have been made by the individual by checking travel and weather reports and other relevant factors. The manager should also consider the individual's personal circumstances including whether a disability exists which may affect their ability to travel. People who have not made reasonable efforts to attend work should be managed under the unauthorised absence policy. Further details can be found in the Attendance Management Policy and Procedures.

**8. You have decided to leave work early due to major disruption to travel. Should you be given paid time credit/paid special leave?**

Where you decide to leave work early you should use annual leave and/or flexi. This will be treated like any normal request and subject to your manager's approval. Where you do not have any remaining leave/flexi entitlement you should discuss with your manager how to make up any working time lost.

Paid time credits/paid special leave should only be given when the office has been officially closed early and/or the manager has decided to send employees home due to major disruption to travel.

**9. I usually drive to work but the roads are severely disrupted – should I stay at home?**

You should come in to work by public transport if that is operating, or walk if you live within a reasonable distance of the office. If not, you should check when it is running and come in to work as soon as you are able or when the roads are sufficiently safe for you to cycle or drive.

**10. Heavy snow is forecast overnight – should I take work home on a memory stick or a laptop in anticipation of this?**

In the event of advanced warning of poor weather, Corporate Services staff may request a pool laptop to enable access via their own internet provider, in order to work from home. Corporate Services staff should follow the Homeworking Policy for Corporate Services Staff and complete the home working application form and homeworking risk assessment. However, in considering appropriate work to

undertake, you should familiarise yourself with our [ICT Usage](#) and [Information Assurance policies](#).

### **11. How will I know if the office has been/is being closed early?**

Decisions about early closure of the Anchor Court office (due to travel disruption or other events such as loss of power/heating/etc) will be made by on-site members of the Directors Group. Information on office closures will be communicated to you by email and text (note that if you have not been issued with a mobile phone will need to have registered your personal mobile phone number with Office Services in order to receive text alerts). Also, when possible, a message will be left on our extranet, accessible from our website home page or directly via the following link:

- <https://vir.estyn.gov.uk/default.aspx> (Click on Virtual Inspection Room); or

We suggest that you add this link to your home computer, smart phone, etc and/or maintain a copy of this policy document for future reference.

### **12. How do I access the VIR and Estyn systems from a home (personal) computer?**

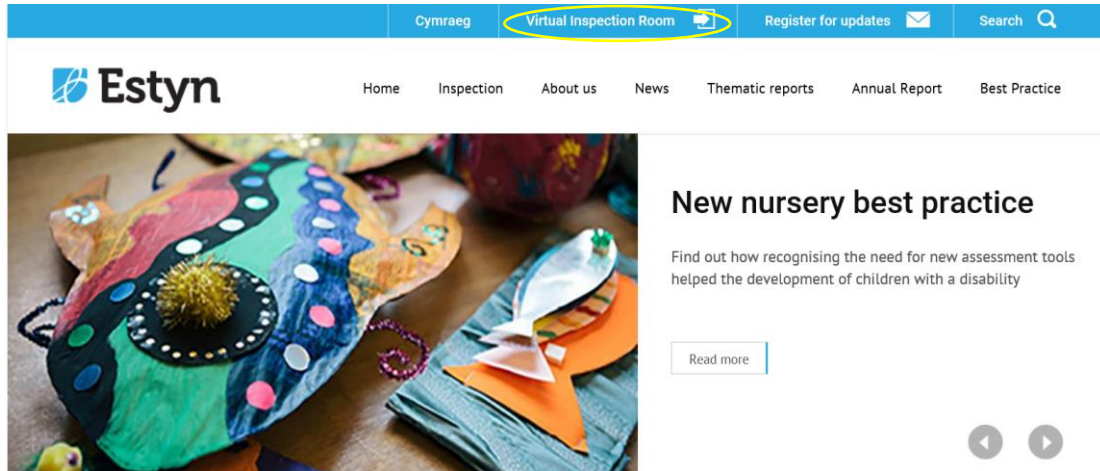
Appendix 2 provides instructions on how to access the VIR. Once you have logged on to the VIR you will be able to view guidance on how to access our systems (email, SharePoint, etc) via Terminal Services.

### **Further information**

Further enquiries should be sent to HR, [HumanResources@estyn.gov.uk](mailto:HumanResources@estyn.gov.uk)

## Annex 2: Accessing the VIR from a home computer

1. Go to the Estyn website and from the home page click on “Virtual Inspection Room”.



2. Your search will give you these two choices. Click on the first item that comes up. It should be as above <https://vir.estyn.gov.uk> This should take you to the page below, click on Virtual Inspection Room (the forth link down).



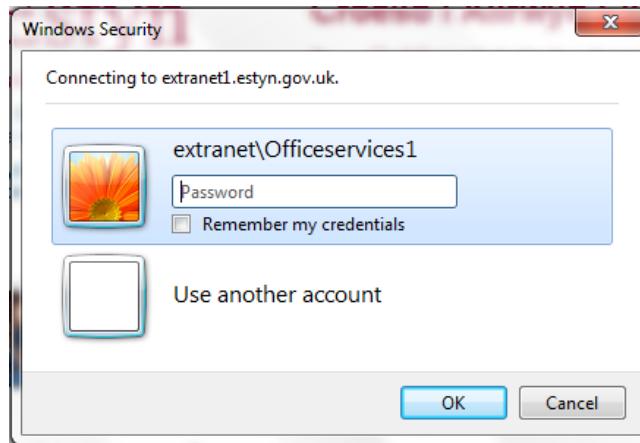
### Croeso i Allrwyd Estyn

- ▶ Cwblhewch holiadur dysgwr
- ▶ Cwblhewch holiadur rhiant
- ▶ Cwblhewch holiadur gwaith cylch gorchwyl
- ▶ Ystafell Arolygu Rhithwir
- ▶ Proffiliau Arolygwyr

### Welcome to the Estyn Extranet

- ▶ Complete a learner questionnaire
- ▶ Complete a parent questionnaire
- ▶ Complete a remit questionnaire
- ▶ Virtual Inspection Room
- ▶ Inspector Profiles

You will be asked for you login details in a pop up box like the one below.



3. Click on use another account and login using Estyn-local\your username and your normal password for your desktop. Also, check the 'remember my credentials' box. E.g estyn-local\ben.thomas.



4. You should see this page. Where it says Estyn's Office is operating normally. To view Estyn's Business Continuity site please click here. Click on it to take you to Estyn's Business Continuity site.

