



NCHA Adverse Weather Guideline

Scope:-

This Guideline sets out the standards expected of NCHA members in preparing for adverse weather conditions that will impact their normal delivery services. Each NCHA Member Company has a different logistics network with its own specific challenges and contingency plans which will shape its response to any specific Adverse Weather Event. Under all circumstances, the overall aims of any actions taken by NCHA members in response to Adverse Weather Events will be to ensure patient safety and the continuity of treatment for patients.

Context:-

Adverse weather conditions that impact all national or regional logistics networks are becoming part of the UK's normal weather patterns. Planning for such adverse weather should be considered as a normal part of any Clinical Homecare Service.

Definitions:-

Critical Adverse Weather Events are defined as disrupting the majority of national logistics networks lasting or forecast to last for more than 96 hours. These will normally be the subject of Met Office Severe Weather Warnings.

Minor Adverse Weather Events are defined as:-

- Occurring in restricted geographical areas prone to adverse weather or
- Of less than 48 hours duration with limited disruption to the service provision

1 General provisions for managing all Adverse Weather Events

- 1.1 Clinical Homecare Service Providers should regularly review weather forecasts for anticipated conditions that may be reasonably expected to result in an Adverse Weather event.
- 1.2 Adverse Weather Days may be Regional or National and should be declared by the Clinical Homecare Service Provider when there is a significant impact on their ability to meet normal service standards.
- 1.3 Adverse Weather Days should be announced by the Clinical Homecare Service Provider to affected Trusts by 12 noon on that Adverse Weather Day. Notice of Regional Adverse Weather Day(s) must include the geographical area covered by the notice.
- 1.4 If Adverse Weather Days are consecutive, a daily update should be provided to the affected Trust(s).
- 1.5 The Clinical Homecare Service Provider must keep patients informed of the impact of Adverse Weather Events on their service
- 1.6 The Service Agreement between commissioner and/or Trust and Clinical Homecare Service Provider should include Adverse Weather contingency provisions including communication channels.



General provisions for managing all Adverse Weather Events (continued)

- 1.7 Both parties will work together to mitigate the overall costs incurred in responding to Adverse Weather Events.
- 1.8 Where additional costs are incurred by the Clinical Homecare Service Provider in responding to Adverse Weather Events that were not foreseen in the Service Contract or Service Level Agreement, the Commissioner and/or Trust should approve reasonable ad-hoc Service Fees.
- 1.9 For patients with long term conditions requiring regular medication, normal repeat medication delivery service should allow for adverse weather disrupting deliveries for up to 5 working days without impacting patient treatment.
- 1.10 Where services are required to be provided to new or existing patients with less than 48 hours notice the service level agreement must detail the actions and responsibilities of both parties to ensure patient safety in case of service disruption.
- 1.11 If the weather forecast shows the potential for a Critical Adverse Weather Event or an extended period of Adverse Weather which may intermittently disrupt service delivery, consideration should be given to temporarily increasing patient contingency stocks by bringing forward patient deliveries
- 1.12 Clinical Homecare Service Providers must maintain Business Continuity Plans for Adverse Weather that:-
 - Include contact lists and a communication plan to be followed in case of Adverse Weather
 - Includes contingency plans agreed with Commissioners and/or Trusts to manage Adverse Weather Events
 - Include a risk assessment of the impact of adverse weather events lasting up to 96 hours on the Clinical Homecare Service
 - Identify Clinical Homecare Services where Adverse Weather Events could impact patient safety
 - Include a process to identify specific patients whose safety is at risk due to the Adverse Weather Event
 - Identify Contracts under which specific services that could be impacted by adverse weather conditions lasting for <48hrs, 48-96hrs
 - Identify potential mitigation strategy(s) to ensure continuity of treatment for all patients where critical adverse weather risks are identified
 - Identify minimum staff requirements to maintain the normal Clinical Homecare Service
 - Include decision criteria and decision process for declaring Adverse Weather Days
 - Assessment of the potential impact of adverse weather on availability of managers and call centre staff
 - Assessment of the potential impact on availability of remote workers, particularly nurses and other healthcare professionals
 - Include processes to identify patients at high risk of impact from disruption due to Adverse Weather Events and to take appropriate steps to maintain continuity of treatment for those individual patients
- 1.13 Failure to meet Key Performance Indicator targets on declared Adverse Weather Days should not be considered as failure to meet contractual requirements but should still be documented and recorded.



2 General provisions for managing Minor Adverse Weather Events

- 2.1 Minor adverse weather events should not normally lead to declaration of an Adverse Weather Day.
- 2.2 Mitigation for managing the risks associated with minor adverse weather events should be included in the standard contract provisions for example
 - Patient contingency stocks
 - Urgently needed initial supplies available locally from Trust pharmacy or clinic
 - Alternative delivery points

3 General provisions for managing Critical Adverse Weather Events

- 3.1 Critical Adverse Weather Events should be managed on a case-by-case basis
- 3.2 Steps must be taken to ensure the safety of the staff providing the Clinical Homecare Service including postponement of the services where this is unavoidable.
- 3.3 Where normal service cannot be maintained, Clinical Homecare Service Providers, Commissioners and Healthcare Professionals must work together to prioritise activities to ensure patient safety through the supply of critical medicines, ancillaries, equipment and associated services to ensure continuity of patient treatment wherever possible.

4 General provisions for Clinical Homecare Service Commissioners

- 4.1 The Commissioner and/or Trust must agree to reasonable activity requests from the Clinical Homecare Service Provider to implement actions arising from actual or forecast Adverse Weather Event planning
- 4.2 The Service Commissioner or Trust must ensure that they have contingency plans to ensure that the Clinical Homecare Service Provider has adequate support for clinical advice, prescription management and, where necessary, access to financial decision makers who can agree additional costs.
- 4.3 See also Sections 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 1.10 above.