

# POL51 – Supporting Service Users During Adverse Weather Policy Procedure

Serendipity Healthcare Ltd  
Unit 5, Millennium Way, Dunston, Chesterfield, Derbyshire  
S41 8ND



## 1. Purpose

**1.1** To ensure that during adverse winter weather, Serendipity Healthcare Ltd:

- Maintains a safe and healthy environment for all Service Users
- Minimises the disruption caused by adverse weather to the service
- Responds efficiently to any changes in the Service User's health

**1.2** This policy is for supporting Service Users only. Staff should refer to POL39 - Adverse Weather Policy and Procedure for specific arrangements applying to staff.

**1.3** To support Serendipity Healthcare Ltd in meeting the following Key Lines of Enquiry:

Key Question	Key Lines of Enquiry
SAFE	S2: How are risks to people assessed and their safety monitored and managed so they are supported to stay safe and their freedom is respected?
SAFE	S3: How does the service make sure that there are sufficient numbers of suitable staff to support people to stay safe and meet their needs?
WELL-LED	W4: How does the service continuously learn, improve, innovate and ensure sustainability?

**1.4** To meet the legal requirements of the regulated activities that Serendipity Healthcare Ltd is registered to provide:

- The Care Act 2014
- Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- Equality Act 2010
- The Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)

## 2. Scope

**2.1** The following roles may be affected by this policy:

- All staff

**2.2** The following Service Users may be affected by this policy:

- Service Users

**2.3** The following stakeholders may be affected by this policy:

- Family
- Advocates
- Representatives
- Commissioners

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- External health professionals
- NHS

## 3. Objectives

- 3.1** Serendipity Healthcare Ltd considers the impact of adverse weather on Service Users and responds effectively in the event of adverse weather.
- 3.2** Serendipity Healthcare Ltd prevents unnecessary admissions and delayed hospital discharges. Serendipity Healthcare Ltd supports the Service User to reduce the risk of injury (such as slips, trips and falls) and illness caused by adverse weather.

## 4. Policy

- 4.1** Serendipity Healthcare Ltd has clear continuity plans in place and will work closely with local partners including Derbyshire County Council, Sheffield City Council, Nottinghamshire County Council to ensure that continuity of care is maintained, and that both Service Users and staff remain safe. The Registered Manager will put mechanisms in place to identify Service Users who may be vulnerable and who need additional support during adverse weather.
- 4.2** Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will maintain an awareness of possible adverse weather conditions by using trusted information sources, such as the Meteorological Office (Met Office) and local media. On receiving information from any source that severe weather conditions may be imminent or forecast, the Met Office National Severe Weather Warning Service will be accessed to determine the threat level.

## 5. Procedure

- 5.1** The National Severe Weather Warning Service (NSWWS)
- The Registered Manager will keep up to date with weather alerts to ensure that robust business continuity plans are in place. This will be done by following updates from local radio and social media sources as well as from [www.metoffice.gov.uk](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk)
  - The Registered Manager will refer to the Gov.uk Cold Weather Plan (page 37) for guidelines around expectations, dependent on the level of severity of the weather warning
- 5.2 Supporting Service Users to Remain Safe and Well During Adverse Weather**  
Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will support Service Users to remain safe and well and will consider the following procedures when delivering services:
- Diet and Nutrition**

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Ensure that the Service User has access to regular hot drinks and eats at least one hot meal a day if possible

Food is a vital source of energy and helps to keep the body warm, so Serendipity Healthcare Ltd will ensure that nutrition and hydration are considered within the Care Plan and that they are reviewed, where appropriate, to ensure that the Service User has plenty of hot food and drinks in line with their agreed plan and dietary needs

Staff will refer to the suite of nutrition and hydration policies and procedures available

### **Activity and Excursions**

Where possible and safe to do so, support the Service User to keep as active as possible

If the Service User plans to go out, then this will be risk assessed and measures put in place to reduce the risk and raise the awareness of the Service User about the hazards of the adverse weather

### **Temperature Considerations**

Staff will support the Service User to choose appropriate clothes for the weather and encourage them to wear several light layers of warm clothes (rather than one chunky layer)

Staff will be aware that their view of the temperature may be different from the Service User, as staff are more active and working which may keep them warmer and thus, less aware of the temperature

In addition, frail or ill Service Users may require a higher ambient temperature than normal to maintain functions and, therefore, staff must consider each Service User and their needs separately

### **5.3 Recommended Indoor Temperatures for Homes in Winter**

Heating homes to at least 18°C (65F) in winter poses minimal risk to the health of a sedentary person, wearing suitable clothing.

### **5.4 Promotion of Health**

The Registered Manager will discuss and promote the uptake of the flu vaccine for Service Users, in conjunction with discussions with the Service User's GP.

All Care staff will be aware of monitoring for early signs of winter illnesses and respond in a timely manner.

### **5.5 Capacity and Consent**

- Where a Service User lacks capacity or anyone to advocate on their behalf, The Registered Manager will consider a best interest decision to ensure their safety and wellbeing in line with the Mental Capacity Act
- Service Users with dementia may not be aware of the change in temperature and will need support to ensure that they are dressed in appropriate clothes for the weather

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- Staff will refer to POL28 - Mental Capacity Act (MCA) 2005 Policy and Procedure for further information

## 5.6 Continuity Planning

**The Registered Manager will ensure that continuity plans:**

- Include how disruption to the service will be minimised in the event of adverse weather. This must include considering deliveries such as medicines, food and essential items
- Detail how large-scale communications to family members and other stakeholders will be delivered in the event of adverse weather
- Consider how coordination between partnerships and other agencies will work and support not only Serendipity Healthcare Ltd, but other local parties

## 6. Definitions

### 6.1 Adverse

- Adverse Weather is unfavourable or potentially harmful weather. In the context of this policy, it means snow, ice, winds, storms, floods or any other weather extreme

### 6.2 Frailty

- Frailty is related to the ageing process, that is, simply getting older. It describes how bodies gradually lose their in-built reserves, leaving people vulnerable to dramatic, sudden changes in health, triggered by seemingly small events such as a minor infection or a change in medication or environment. In medicine, frailty defines the group of older people who are at highest risk of adverse outcomes such as falls, disability, admission to hospital, or the need for long-term care

### 6.3 Meteorologist Office

- The Meteorological Office provides weather and climate services. It is part of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and recognised as one of the world's most accurate forecasters, using more than 10 million weather observations a day

### 6.4 Business Continuity

- Planning and preparation to ensure that an Organisation can continue to operate in the case of serious incidents or disasters and is able to recover to an operational state within a reasonably short period

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Lisa Ward – HR Manager