

## Going Snow Where.....?



### Introduction

Officially, winter is meant to start on 1st December; one look out the window earlier this week and we all know it's here with a vengeance! Many clients are now confronted with the dilemma of what to do about absent employees, the approach to payments for not coming to work in these conditions and what to do if you are not able to offer work?

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### The 'reasonable employer' principle

We advise that employers adopt a sensible and practical stance where this is possible. There are a number of scenarios that our First Line Response Team is advising on:

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- Situations where the organisation remains open and some individuals come into work and some don't. You should look at these on a case by case basis before taking any general decisions and where possible, provide employees with options.
- Employees unable to attend work because they have to care for their dependants (children or others) because normal arrangements aren't operating (schools, care providers, etc.). They have the right to take this time off although, it can be unpaid.
- Employers closing their place of work and not requiring employees to attend for work. The individuals who were due to work on the day still need to be paid.
- Employers who have a provision for lay-offs or for short-time working in their employment contracts and consider this to be an emergency situation. Guarantee payments then need to be made to employees.
- Treat the absence as 'authorised', particularly if the employee has made the effort to inform you that they will not be able to come in. You should however deal firmly with those who were able to make it in and chose not to, or failed to inform you.

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### Options

There may be reasonable solutions which suit both employer and employee. However, before deciding, do consider the impact on morale where employees are truly 'snowed in'. Options may include:

- The employee takes the time off as unpaid leave
- They take the time off as part of their paid annual holiday
- You offer to have them make up the time in the following weeks if possible
- Where appropriate, temporary home working could be considered
- Perhaps schedule a weekend shift if this suits your business.

### Can We Help?

If you have any concerns or questions about any specific instances of absence or any questions about a policy that you may want to adopt, please do call us on **01708 758958**.