

# @BRIEF

Bargaining and Campaigns

UNISON  
Scotland

## Severe Weather - Fair Work Charter

November 2018

A new [Fair Work Charter for Severe Weather](#) has been published by the Scottish Government. This has been developed jointly with the STUC as part of the [Fair Work Framework](#). The Charter isn't mandatory, but it does aim at encouraging employers to prioritise the health safety and wellbeing of their workforce during episodes of severe weather. It is explicit that workers should not be put at risk by attending or attempting to attend their place of work.

It states that employers should.

- Take care not to compromise the health, safety and wellbeing of workers by requiring them to fulfil contractual obligations during severe weather.
- Try out a risk assessment and/or equality impact assessment on their Severe Weather Policy, giving particular attention to the different circumstances workers may face that may increase risk, e.g. disability, medical condition or pregnancy.
- Make appropriate allowances for those workers with specific accessible travel needs or caring responsibilities
- Resist incentivising workers to work during periods where Met Office warnings have been issued.
- Consider their duty of care for essential workers, mitigating risks as much as possible.

**Planning** - The charter advocates that employers should have a Severe Weather Policy discussed and agreed with TU's. This should include clear guidelines about what workers should do in the event of the Met Office issuing [weather warnings](#) – and prompt employers to make those warnings known. Plans should consider workers ability to get to and from work as well as their ability to work safely, explore, where possible, alternative places to work and encourage flexible working practices enabling those who can to work from home.

Policies should be visible in the workplace and every worker made aware of how it affects them.

**Fairness** Contracts should be flexible enough to cover periods of severe weather. Employers are encouraged to consider how employment contracts for workers who are ready and able to work but are prevented from doing so can avoid penalising workers with unexpectedly reduced pay.

**Action for Branches:** check your employers severe weather policies are in line with the charter and alert members to their employers responsibilities.

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For more information please contact UNISON's Bargaining and Campaigns team on 0141 342 2811, or email [s.low2@unison.co.uk](mailto:s.low2@unison.co.uk)

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