The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Business Continuity: Staff Management Policy

Leantainneachd Gnothaich: Poilea-saidh Stiùireadh Luchd-obrach

17 January 2019

Purpose

This policy addresses the people issues which may arise in the event of a significant disruption to the normal business and working arrangements of the Parliament. This Policy was originally developed with support from the TUS in 2014.

It aims to ensure that Scottish Parliamentary Service (SPS) managers and staff are aware of their responsibilities in such circumstances and of the specific temporary amendments which could apply to normal working arrangements.

To ensure business needs can be met, temporary amendments may be required to your duties, place of work and/or working hours and pattern.

The SPCB's response will be flexible and determined by the circumstances faced and will aim to ensure that any changes are as reasonable as possible. You will be notified as early as is practical.

Application

This policy applies to all staff directly employed by the SPCB. Line managers of agency staff and contract managers should consider the impact on them.

The arrangements set out in this policy will only apply when business continuity arrangements need to be invoked by the Clerk/Chief Executive or by the Chair of the Incident Management Team acting with delegated authority.

Responsibilities

SPCB and Leadership Group

Are responsible for:

- Ensuring, as far as reasonably practical, the health, safety and welfare of building users including Members, Members' staff and SPS staff;
- continuing to facilitate Parliamentary business and ensuring other essential activities are adequately resourced and delivered, where necessary, within temporary alternative accommodation;
- communicating effectively with and supporting its key stakeholders; and
- recovering full and safe use of the Parliamentary campus as early as can reasonably be achieved.

Group and Office Heads

Are responsible for:

- overseeing the implementation of local business continuity plans to ensure essential activities are maintained and adequately resourced. These plans have been developed, tested and communicated to staff in advance. Plan development support can be obtained from the BC Manager;
- establishing and maintaining communications with staff using agreed contact arrangements such as local call trees, messaging app contact groups and/or the corporate Alert Message system;
- taking account of individual staff needs such as pregnancy, disability and caring commitments in planning and decision making, adopting a sensitive and flexible approach;
- seeking HR advice and guidance as necessary to ensure staff receive appropriate support; and
- using their awareness of the broad knowledge, skills and experience of individual members of staff to ensure support is provided to other areas of the business if required.

Members of Staff

Are responsible for:

- making every effort to attend work as and where required;
- co-operating with management advice and instructions;
- keeping in touch with your line manager via agreed contact methods. You must ensure that your contact details in the e-HR system are kept up-to-date;
- working flexibly in terms of your role and duties and providing support to others if necessary;
- advising your line manager promptly of any health or personal issues which might impact your attendance/duties and for which you may require support. This includes membership of Reserve forces, for example, as you may be mobilised to support the response to a declared national emergency;
- Planning and identifying alternative travel options if required, for example, during periods of severe weather; and
- Taking portable devices (laptops, etc.) home with you when, for example, adverse weather conditions are forecast.

Your Duties

The SPCB's priority will be to maintain and adequately resource tasks/activities that have been assessed as being essential to supporting business and to supporting Members in carrying out their parliamentary duties. The order in which essential services are restored may vary depending on the specific circumstances faced and the business of Parliament at the time. Should normal business be significantly disrupted over a prolonged period it is likely that there will be associated resource requirements.

The roles that are necessary to support essential services have been identified through the business continuity planning by Group and Office Heads. You will be informed if your role has been assessed as being necessary to support essential activities where normal business is significantly disrupted. You should expect to be flexible in the range of duties that you are asked to carry out. The focus of your existing role is likely to temporarily change and your work will be reprioritised as necessary. You may also be asked if you would be willing to be accommodated close to Holyrood to support business delivery.

Accommodation

If staff are unable to travel home from the Parliament during a period of significant disruption and are unable to make their own arrangements to stay in Edinburgh, then nearby hotels or other commercially available accommodation will be provided for those that are attending/supporting business. Wherever possible this will be within 15 minutes walking distance to the Parliament.

Temporary Redeployment

Once a Group/Office Head is confident that critical services in their business areas are adequately resourced, they will liaise with management colleagues to determine if support is required to maintain critical services elsewhere. You may be temporarily redeployed to another business area (normally to the same grade). Decisions on temporary redeployment will take account of transferable generic skills and your previous experience. In the unlikely event that you are temporarily redeployed at a lower grade, you will retain the salary applicable to your substantive post. Normal provisions will apply in relation to temporary promotion. You will not be expected to undertake duties which require extensive training or the attainment of a qualification. Training and support will be provided.

Paid Special Leave

If the above temporary redeployment options are not available or suitable, you will be put on Special Leave and paid in accordance with your normal contractual salary. In such circumstances, you must remain available for work and keep in regular contact with your line manager. You can expect to be recalled to work at short notice.

Alternative Location

In line with your terms and conditions of employment, you may be required to temporarily work at an alternative location. The Parliament has negotiated agreements with various external organisations which allow us to use their accommodation, where available, at short notice. These venues are focussed on the delivery of Chamber and Committee business rather than on providing office space. They have been risk assessed to ensure they are safe places of work, generally accessible and that statutory requirements can be met. However, the SPCB may not be able to support any additional needs as available at Holyrood . An alternative venue for office accommodation will not automatically be sought when disruption has taken place. Staff will be asked to utilise home working arrangements, where possible. If the need for shared office accommodation does arise it will not be possible for all SPS staff to be co-located in one such venue. Commuting times and caring responsibilities will be considered. If there is a need to temporarily relocate outside the city of Edinburgh, the SPCB and Leadership Group will consider and communicate arrangements for additional travel time and costs, relevant to the specific circumstances.

Home-working

If advance notice of disruption to business has been communicated, all staff with portable IT devices (laptops, etc.) will be required to take it home with them to facilitate home working. Not all staff roles can be carried out by working from home and portable IT equipment may not have been issued as a result. Existing homeworkers should be aware that you may be required to report for work at an identified alternative location to provide support if required.

Unable to Reach Work/Late Arrival at Work

If you experience/anticipate travel problems or are unable to attend work as normal then you should contact your line manager at the earliest opportunity. If you can take IT equipment home to facilitate home working, you should liaise with your line manager regarding what can be achieved. It may be that caring commitments, arising from the weather, for example, may rule out the possibility of working from home as expected.

If you are unable to reach work during a period of significant disruption to normal business, for example during a “high impact” Red weather warning, and your role doesn’t rely on the use of IT equipment at home, you will be considered to have worked your normal hours for that day. I

f you are unable to attend work/are late during a period of significant disruption where the business-critical plan has not been enacted, discretion will sit with line managers as to how time will be accounted for.

If you are asked to work from home for all or part of the period of significant disruption to normal business, your line manager will agree keeping in touch and supervision arrangements with you. You may be asked to attend regular meetings with your line manager and/or wider team at an identified alternative venue.

Hours and Pattern of Work

The SPCB and Leadership Group may determine that it is necessary to suspend flexible working arrangements in all or some business areas and may set core times of work. This may include informal working patterns, such as compressed working hours. If overtime is necessary, you will be invited to volunteer. If there are insufficient volunteers, you may be required to work overtime. In managing overtime, your personal commitments will be considered and accommodated as far as business needs allow. We will try to give you as much notice as is practical. Normal overtime pay provisions will apply and the requirements of the Working Time Regulations will be taken into account. Those that have worked additional hours in delivering business-critical tasks or in managing the overall response, will be allocated a flexi credit, overtime or TOIL as agreed with their Office/Group Head.

Annual Leave and Sickness Absence

Whilst annual leave may still be requested, you should be aware that restrictions may apply. Carry over limits will be reviewed if this is the case. The SPCB will aim to honour pre-agreed requests for leave. Normal sickness absence notification procedures will apply. Unexplained absences may result in disciplinary action.

Disability

If you have a disability, the SPCB will aim to replicate existing adaptations (or similar) at any alternative place of work and will prepare a new Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) for you. If you require additional support you should discuss this with your line manager. They will seek to ensure that reasonable adjustments can be made to accommodate your individual needs. If this cannot reasonably be achieved, you will be put on paid Special Leave.

Pregnancy

If you are pregnant or have given birth in the last six months, your line manager will arrange a new pregnancy risk assessment for you if your place of work and/or duties change. If a risk is identified, reasonable steps will be taken to remove that risk.

Caring Responsibilities

Should a temporary change to your place or hours of work cause you difficulties in managing your caring responsibilities, please discuss this with your line manager. They will seek to make adjustments to support you in balancing your work responsibilities with your personal commitments. Existing provisions on time off for dependents will continue to apply and requests for Flexible Working, Special Leave and Family Care Leave will be balanced sympathetically against the needs of the business.

Young People

If you are under 18 years of age, you will be subject to a limit of 8 hours working time a day and 40 hours a week. We will also ensure that you have a minimum of 12 hours' rest between each working day, 2 days' weekly rest and a 30 minute in-work rest break when working longer than 4.5 hours.

Confidential Counselling and Information Service

Notwithstanding your responsibility to fulfil your work commitments, the SPCB recognises that temporary changes to normal working arrangements can be difficult and reasonable support will be provided. You have access to a free and confidential Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) which can provide advice and support on a range of issues. The service is available 24/7 and can be contacted by calling 0800 587 5670 or online at www.sg.helpeap.com.

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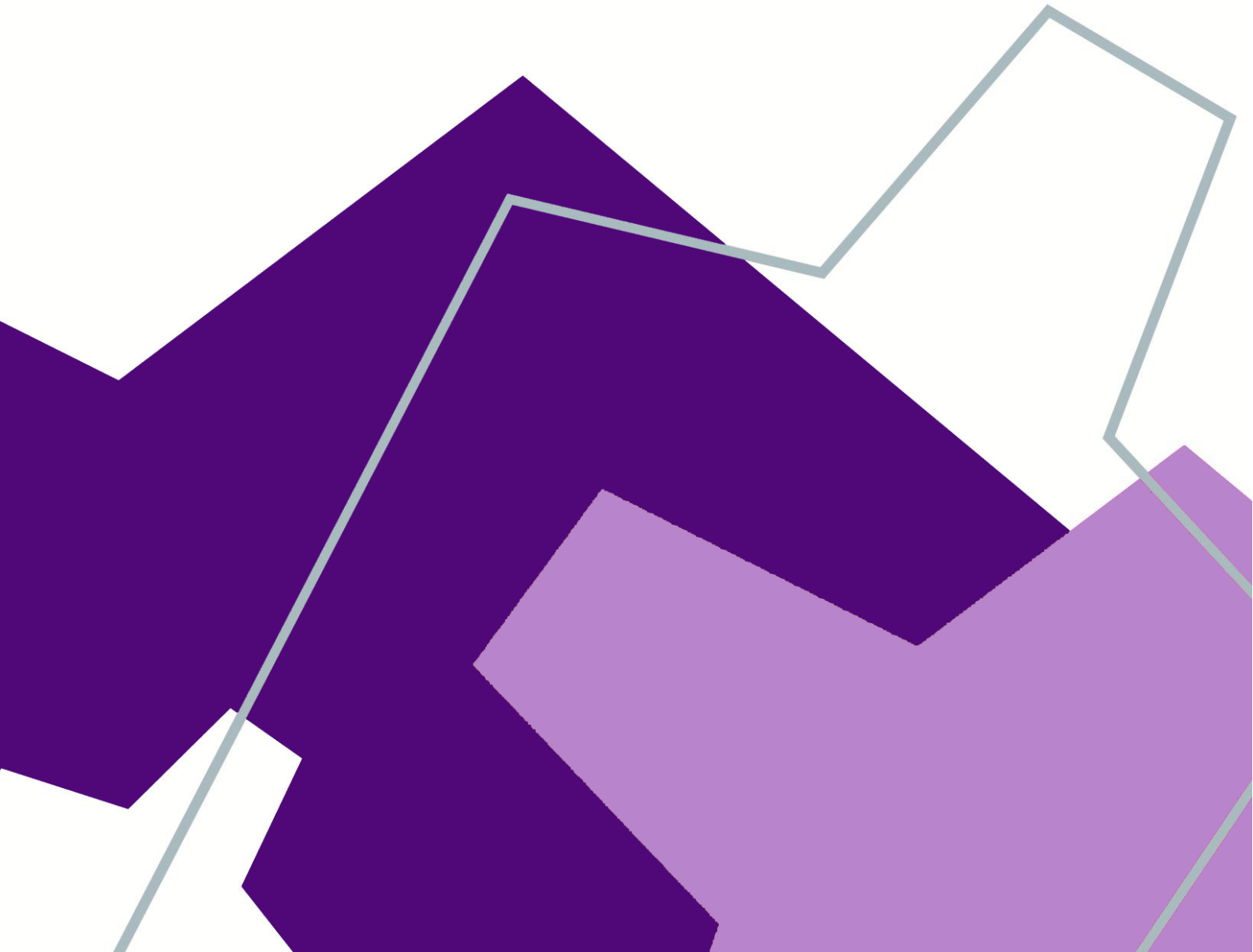
For further information contact:

HumanResources@parliament.scot

0131 348 6500



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