

Employees and days off

With more snow forecast in Edinburgh over the weekend and the immediate weather outlook offering little respite, employers across the country are increasingly having to cope with a reduced workforce as staff struggle to get to work. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development's (CIPD) employee relations adviser, Mike Emmott, advises employers to be flexible with employees during bouts of adverse weather:

“Employers are entitled not to pay employees if they fail to show up for work, but the CIPD would not recommend that employers take this line. It's important to show empathy with employees – particularly those that normally perform well – as research shows that this flexibility and trust will pay off in the long-term, with employees more motivated and going the extra mile when they are able to get to work.

“Our experience is that employers tend to deal with these issues pragmatically: few go to ‘law’ about whether or not employees make it in to work. Both sides need to be realistic about what's possible. There is nothing in it for the employer to require the employee to spend all day trying to get in.

“Employers should make clear in advance what employees are expected to do in the event they cannot make it to work. Employees need to keep in touch and demonstrate to their employer that they have made attempts to get in – they need to get the message across that they are not just ‘swinging the lead’, since this could upset colleagues as well as their bosses.

“Ultimately, for employers it's all about the relationship – they should be trying to manage and maintain a workforce that is motivated, meaning they will reap the rewards in the long term.

“Employers need to carefully consider opportunities and

options available if the weather conditions do stop employees making it in. Many companies that have put in place the technology and management practices to allow home working reap the benefits at a time like this.

“The crude estimates for the cost of millions-of-pounds to the UK economy due to bad weather often don’t take into account the millions of motivated workers who will be working remotely.”

Have you had to take time off – will you get paid? Do you know?