

February 2021

The averaging period used for the following assessment was 1981-2010.

The first five days of February were mild in the south, cold in the north, and unsettled, followed by a very cold easterly spell with heavy snowfalls in some areas, and extremely low temperatures on the early morning of the 11th. It turned much milder for the second half of the month, and wetter in most areas with frequent strong winds, before a quieter anticyclonic spell arrived for the last few days.

The provisional UK mean temperature was 4.1 °C, which is 0.4 °C above the 1981-2010 long-term average, with the milder second half more than making up for the earlier cold spell. Both mean maximum and minimum temperatures were slightly below average over parts of Scotland, but around 1.0 °C above in Northern Ireland and most of southern Britain. It was another rather wet month, with rainfall 116% of average overall, and some parts of eastern/south-east Scotland, north-east England, and south Wales had twice the normal amount, but it was again drier than average over northern Scotland. Sunshine was 103% of average, but rather below average in southern and western areas, with the far north of Scotland well above average.

The UK monthly extremes were as follows: A maximum temperature of 18.4 °C was recorded at Santon Downham (Suffolk) on the 24th. A minimum temperature of -23.0 °C was recorded at Braemar (Aberdeenshire) on the 11th. In the 24 hours ending at 0900 GMT on the 24th, 125.8 mm of rain fell at Honister Pass (Cumbria). A wind gust of 72 knots (83 mph) was recorded at South Uist (Western Isles) on the 14th. A snow depth of 38 cm was recorded at Aboyne (Aberdeenshire) on the 10th.

Weather impacts

Heavy rain brought some flood impacts to Devon and Cornwall on the 1st, and in Northern Ireland snow caused some travel disruption on the 2nd, followed by some road flooding. On the 3rd, snow caused some impassable roads and travel disruption across the north of England, with school closures in Derbyshire from the wintry weather. Snow caused some road and rail closures across eastern Scotland on 5th and 6th, with some vehicles were stranded. There were also reports of flooding on some roads in the Central Belt. Some road closures, train cancellations and property flooding also occurred across parts of Yorkshire and Humber.

The most significant weather impacts of the month came from the week of wintry weather from 7th February. On 7th and 8th eastern coastal counties of England were affected by snow, particularly across the south-east. Some covid vaccination centres were closed in Suffolk and Essex due to snow, with road traffic collisions, fallen trees and dangerous driving conditions. Some roads and rail lines became blocked due to snow drifts with power cuts and over 500 school closures. In London there were cancellations to both over ground and some underground services and hazardous icy conditions on pavements.

The wintry weather impacts also extended further north. Across the north of England on the 8th there were reports of road closures and stranded vehicles on the A66 across the north Pennines. More snow across Scotland and the north of England on the 9th brought further winter impacts with reports of road closures, collisions and accidents with some communities cut off due to the amount of snow on some roads. There was deep snow and drifting across upland areas – particularly the Scottish mountains - with avalanche risk reported in the Pentland hills south of Edinburgh. While most of the country was suffering from snow there were strong south-easterly

winds across the south-west disrupting rail services at Dawlish, Devon and to the freight ship Gry Maritha departing to the Isles of Scilly.

Strong winds, snow and heavy rain brought some disruption to Northern Ireland on the 13th and 14th. There were reports of fallen trees and disruption and fallen trees blocking roads. Drifting snow continued to cause problems across the north of England with some roads still impassable.

Heavy rain in the west on 19th and 20th caused some road and rail closures across Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales, the west Midlands and across the south-west. In Wales there was widespread flooding of roads, rail and some properties with the Rivers Towy, Cynin and Usk coming out of their banks. Parts of Hertfordshire were also affected with some property flooding.

There were fallen trees and flooding to roads in Devon and Cornwall from 19th to 21st, and the rail line between Par and Newquay was flooded. Persistent rain also caused problems in the north from 23rd to 24th, with flooding, fallen trees and debris causing disruption to trains across Scotland and some road closures. Cumbria was also affected by localised surface water flooding with some blocked roads.

England diary of highlights

February began quite mild in southern areas, but from the 6th it became steadily colder, with bitter easterly winds and low temperatures during the second week. It was also an unsettled period, and eastern counties had much snow in that second week. The latter half of the month was decidedly milder, and it also became more settled as time went on.

The mean temperature for February was provisionally 0.7 °C above the 1981-2010 long-term average. Rainfall was 121% of average, and it was a very wet month in parts of the north-east and Cumbria with a few places having double their average rainfall. Sunshine was 100% of average, with totals in southern areas rather below average despite plenty of sunshine here during the last few days.

1st to 5th

After early frost across the north on the 1st, it was a bright or sunny day, fog in parts of the south not clearing until midday, then patchy rain reached some western areas late in the day. Some southern parts were foggy early on the 2nd, which was otherwise cloudy with patchy rain or showers, with an area of rain, sleet and snow in the north moving slowly northwards, and further precipitation spreading east across most parts by evening. The 3rd started wet across the south-east, with rain and drizzle, heavy in places, mostly clearing by afternoon, while the far north was wet for most of the day; some western parts saw scattered showers and brighter intervals. Fog was slow to clear in some south-eastern areas on the 4th, with rain, sleet and snow persisting across the north, and rain spreading steadily eastwards across the southern half of England during the day, locally heavy at times. Some parts again saw fog early on the 5th, with rain further north, and bands of showers in the south-west, locally heavy at times, moving east across southern areas through the day.

6th to 12th

The 6th dawned with fog and frost for parts of the Midlands and south-east, with rain, sleet or snow for the north and over East Anglia persisting through the day, and showers developing in the south-west in the afternoon. It was generally cloudy on the 7th, feeling colder as an easterly wind set in, with wintry showers near north-eastern coasts, and a broad area of snow over East Anglia and the south-east, producing up to 10cm of lying snow in some places. Widespread frost on the 8th, with wintry showers or longer spells of snow spreading inland to all but some western areas. Frosty everywhere again on the 9th; generally cold and windy, with wintry showers for all eastern areas, but some western areas were mostly dry and bright: Okehampton (Devon) recorded a

maximum of only -2.6 °C, Culdrose (Cornwall) reporting gusts of up to 69mph, and Andrewsfield (Essex) having 26cm of lying snow. A very cold start again on the 10th, with some sunshine, but showers of snow or hail, mainly in eastern counties at first, some spreading further westwards. After another frost, the 11th saw early wintry showers on the north-east coast, Copley (Durham) recording 26cm of lying snow, then generally bright or sunny, but cloud increasing from the south-west, with rain, sleet and snow into the south-west later. Most areas began frosty on the 12th, with a minimum of -15.3 °C at Ravensworth (North Yorkshire), and showers for a time in the south-west, while wintry showers persisted along the east coast, but other areas were brighter.

13th to 22nd

Rain, already over the south-west by dawn on the 13th, reached all western counties by lunchtime, as frost lifted elsewhere, the rain becoming lighter and patchier through the afternoon, and reached eastern parts by dusk. Eastern parts started frosty on the 14th, the west milder, with patchy rain in East Anglia soon clearing but showers or longer spells of rain developing widely by midday, ahead of heavier and more persistent rain spreading from the west to all parts before dark. Many places saw mist or fog on the 15th, lasting all day in a few spots, as rain across the south-east moved away by lunchtime, and mainly light rain affected the Midlands and north-west during the afternoon. The 16th had an area of showery precipitation from the Isle of Wight to the Humber, locally heavy, moving away eastwards by early afternoon, then a band of showers moved in from the west, crossing most parts during the afternoon with isolated thunderstorms in the south-west, and strong winds in exposed places. The east started bright on the 17th, but rain across many western parts spread eastwards during the morning, persisting over the south, with further locally heavy rain arriving from the south-west to cover most regions by dark. A band of rain, heavy in places, swept eastwards on the 18th, clearing mid-afternoon to allow some sunshine, but showers developed, especially further north, with strong winds and gales in exposed places. The 19th brought rain to most areas, heavy at times, but tending to ease in the south-east, and it was another windy day. The 20th was generally wet and windy in most areas, the rain heavy at times, with any brightness restricted to the drier eastern and south-eastern counties. It was mainly cloudy on the 21st with a band of patchy rain from the south-west to The Wash edging north and east through the day, and further rainfall later, heavy in places, and breezy in northern areas. On the 22nd a band of rain stretched northwards from Dorset, heavy in places, clearing eastwards and mostly dying out by midday, with sunny spells developing in western and northern areas but another area of precipitation moving across south-eastern areas for a time.

23rd to 28th

Pulses of rain, locally very heavy at times, across the north during the 23rd, gave 125.8 mm at Honister Pass (Cumbria), while other areas were drier, with brightness over the south-east. A mild night followed, with Scilly St Mary's Airport not falling below 11.2°C, then the 24th was bright and very mild in the east and south-east, Santon Downham (Suffolk) recording a maximum of 18.4 °C, but cloudier and breezy elsewhere with rain in the north and west, heavy at times, and scattered showers in the south, spreading north-eastwards for a time, and further rain into the far south-west by dusk. Rain over the south-east on the 25th cleared late in the day, with sunshine and isolated showers elsewhere. The last three mornings of the month began frosty in many areas. On the 26th, localised fog in the south-west cleared during the morning, then it was mostly sunny. The 27th began with fog for parts of the West Midlands and south-west, but was otherwise bright or sunny. Mist and fog on the 28th persisted into the afternoon particularly over parts of the east and south-east, but otherwise generally sunny with many places seeing around 10 hours of bright sunshine.

Wales diary of highlights

The first few days of the month were rather mild and unsettled, but then it turned much colder and drier. Unsettled and mild weather returned at mid-month, but the last few days were dry and sunny.

Mean temperatures for the month were provisionally 0.6 °C above average. Rainfall for the month was 139% of average, and sunshine totals were 92% of average. The southern half of Wales was generally wetter and duller than average.

1st to 12th

Patchy fog over central Wales on the 1st cleared to leave a mainly cloudy day, with light patchy rain or drizzle across the far north during the afternoon. The 2nd saw patchy rain during the morning, then heavier rain spreading to all parts through the afternoon, with sleet or snow over higher ground. The 3rd was brighter, with isolated showers tracking westwards through the day. It was generally cloudy on the 4th with an area of locally heavy rain moving northwards towards midday, to reach most places in the afternoon, and turning showery later. The 5th started dull and murky, with rain or showers affecting most places during the day. Starting cold in the south on the 6th, with showers in some areas throughout the day. The 7th was generally dry but cloudy and cold, with isolated wintry showers over the far north-east. The 8th began with frost, and remained cloudy with scattered wintry showers. The 9th was similar, with the worst of the wintry showers during the afternoon. Another widespread frost on the 10th, then fine and dry apart from a few snow showers spreading into some northern counties. Frosty everywhere again on the 11th, St Harmon (Powys) being the coldest place in Wales with a minimum of -7.9 °C, then remaining cold and mostly cloudy, with rain by afternoon into the far south-west, and at Lake Vyrnwy (Powys) a maximum of only -2.3 °C. Frosty early on the 12th except on coasts, any showers in the south soon dying out, then fine and mostly sunny.

13th to 22nd

Widespread frost again on the 13th, but rain, sleet and snow spread east to all parts by noon, clearing away around nightfall. The 14th was cloudy and damp but milder, with outbreaks of rain across the country, persisting into the evening. There was localised fog on the morning of the 15th, then mostly light rain at times through the day. The 16th saw sunshine for Anglesey, but showers elsewhere, and a band of showery rain from the south-west in the afternoon, moving swiftly on the wind and clearing later. The 17th started mostly fine with scattered showers, but cloud increased from the south with rain, locally heavy, becoming widespread. The 18th began mainly fine and bright in the west, cloudier elsewhere, with showers soon developing and feeding eastwards, but tending to die away later. The 19th was wet and windy for all, the rain heavy at times, with 120.2mm of rain falling at Llyn-y-Fan Blaenau (Carmarthenshire) and wind gusts reaching 79mph at Capel Curig (Gwynedd). The 20th was very wet and windy again, with some heavy rain, easing somewhat during the afternoon. The 21st began mostly dry, brighter in the north-west, before rain moved in from the south-west to most parts, occasionally heavy. Early patches of rain moved away from the north and the Borders on the 22nd, then cloud cleared eastwards allowing sunshine.

23rd to 28th

Early scattered showers on the 23rd were followed by a dry spell, and it was mild, Rhyl (Clwyd) recording a maximum of 15.0 °C, before rain spread across all parts. After a mild cloudy night, Colwyn Bay and Rhyl (Clwyd) and Gogerddan (Dyfed) all recording minimums of 10.0 °C, on the 24th patchy rain soon moved in from the south-west, with more organised rain spreading north and eastwards during the afternoon, heavy at times, and it was windy in places. The 25th was often sunny with scattered showers. Frost was widespread on the 26th, with local fog slow to clear for some, but it became bright or sunny. The 27th followed a similar pattern with some fog and frost followed by sunshine. Frost, mist and fog for many places to start on the 28th, the fog

lingering in a few spots, then it was generally sunny, Aberdaron (Gwynedd) getting 10.2 hours of sunshine.

Scotland diary of highlights

It was a generally cold month, particularly during the second week, with heavy snowfalls in some areas. It was unsettled for the first few days and again after mid-month, but northern areas missed most of the rain. The second half was much milder.

The mean temperature for the month was 0.2 °C below the long-term average, and it was coldest relative to normal towards the north-east. Scotland had 105% of average rainfall and 116% of average sunshine. Some southern/eastern areas were very wet, while the far north was very dry and sunny relative to average.

1st to 12th

After a widespread frost on the 1st, severe in the north, wintry showers persisted along the east coast, and rain, with sleet or snow over higher ground, reached the south-west around lunchtime, edging slowly north-east to cover the southern half of the country by early evening. Frosty again for northern areas on the 2nd, while rain, sleet and snow continued to spread very slowly north, the north-west staying dry into the evening. The 3rd brought rain for most of the day, sleet and snow over higher ground, except in the far north where it was brighter with scattered sleet and snow showers in places. Generally a cold start in the north on the 4th, with widespread rain, sleet and snow throughout, giving 71.0mm at Tyndrum (Perthshire). The 5th was overcast and wet with rain, sleet and snow persisting all day, although drying up in the north-west later. Western areas were dry on the 6th but the east had persistent rain, sleet or snow. After a cold start on the 7th, wintry showers or longer spells of precipitation persisted across eastern counties, but the western side remained mainly dry and cloudy. There was widespread frost on the 8th, then a bright day, with frequent and locally heavy wintry showers mainly over central and eastern counties. On the 9th the bulk of the wintry showers were again over eastern coastal counties, and it was very cold with Altnaharra (Sutherland) recording a maximum temperature of only -5.5 °C. Another widespread hard frost on the 10th, then bright or sunny with frequent showers of snow or hail across mainly eastern counties, tending to die away later, but not before Aboyne (Aberdeenshire) accumulated 38cm of lying snow. The 11th started bitterly cold everywhere, with minimum temperatures below -15 °C in numerous places, and as low as -23.0 °C at Braemar (Aberdeenshire), the lowest temperature recorded in the UK since 1995, with a few isolated wintry showers for the north-east and some sunshine elsewhere. The 12th again saw a widespread severe frost in the east, where there were frequent wintry showers, with sunshine again further west, followed by another cold night.

13th to 18th

It became much milder. During the 13th cloud increased with rain, sleet and snow across the west spreading slowly east through the day, easing somewhat during the afternoon, with further rain skirting the west after dark. The 14th was cloudy and windy, with locally heavy rain across the north and east clearing around lunchtime, showers elsewhere, and a further band of rain reaching the west mid-afternoon, becoming locally heavy and spreading to all but the far north by dark, and gusts reaching 83mph at South Uist (Western Isles). On the 15th, the Borders saw patchy fog during the day, and an area of rain crossed the country. The 16th was fine and bright in eastern and north-eastern counties, but showers affected western, central and southern parts, heavy in the north-west for a time, with strong winds. Most places started the 17th wet, the rain clearing steadily north-eastwards during the morning, then showers and isolated thunderstorms across central and north-western areas for the rest of the day. A mainly cloudy start on the 18th, a breezy day, with rain in parts of the south and some central and western parts, rain also for the far north,

all moving away north-eastwards, replaced by showery conditions, with brief sunny intervals especially in the north-east.

19th to 28th

The 19th brought strong winds and heavy rain at times for most counties, though northern fringes missed the heaviest precipitation. Mainly cloudy on the 20th after early brightness in the far north, and windy, rain already into the south-west soon spreading north and east into most areas, heavy at times, but again northern fringes avoiding most of the rain. The 21st was brighter, especially to the north, with scattered showers affecting the Highlands, and breezy with strong gusts. The 22nd saw some sunshine and was mainly dry, though cloudier and breezy in the Western Isles, with isolated showers over the Highlands. It was wet and windy from the start on the 23rd, with areas of locally heavy rain crossing all parts throughout the day, and gales particularly in the west. Mild overnight into the 24th, Islay Port Ellen (Argyll) not falling below 8.5 °C, then southern and central areas had rain, some quite heavy, turning patchy and mostly clearing eastwards later, but lingering in parts of the south-west; other areas were brighter, with scattered showers over the Central Highlands, and over Shetland later, with strong winds at times. The 25th was breezy, with frequent showers for all but eastern parts. There was a quieter end to the month, which allowed some fog and frost in the south on the 26th, with patchy rain for the far north-west during the morning, but it became sunny in the east, Dunbar (East Lothian) having 9.3 hours of sunshine. The 27th was cloudy in the west and south with patchy rain and drizzle, but sunny in the north and east, and mild with Craibstone (Aberdeenshire) reaching 14.9 °C. The north-east started frosty on the 28th, locally with mist and fog, then it was mainly cloudy with patchy drizzle across the west.

Northern Ireland diary of highlights

The first half of February was predominantly cold; the first few days saw some rain, which returned in mid-month alongside much milder weather. The month ended with a more settled spell.

The mean temperature for February was 0.7 °C above the 1981-2010 average. Rainfall was 128% of average, with eastern areas being the wettest relative to normal, and sunshine was 92% of average.

1st to 11th

The 1st was wet, with widespread, occasionally heavy, rain throughout. Another very wet day on the 2nd with widespread persistent rain, turning wintry over higher ground, though more showery in the afternoon. The 3rd again saw rain and drizzle, heavy in places, with 57.2 mm falling at Ballypatrick Forest (Antrim). Rain persisted on the 4th too but was less heavy and more showery. The 5th began murky and drizzly, then showers or longer spells of rain affected many places but mainly the east. The next few days were drier, with the 6th generally cloudy with isolated showers across the south. Northern areas were dry and cloudy on the 7th, but there were wintry showers or longer spells of precipitation further south. It started frosty each day from 8th to 11th; the 8th was brighter but with some scattered wintry showers. The 9th was again bright or sunny with scattered wintry showers. Early on the 10th Castlederg (Tyrone) got down to -6.6 °C, and the day remained cold but sunny, Altnahinch Filters (Antrim) struggling to a maximum of only 0.3 °C, with just isolated wintry showers especially around the middle of the day. It was cold but bright on the 11th with scattered wintry showers in the morning, then dry but clouding over during the afternoon with rain into the far west after dark.

12th to 20th

Wintry showers died out by noon on the 12th, then it was fine through the afternoon, but cloud spread in late in the day. There was widespread rain, sleet, snow and strong winds from first thing

on the 13th, clearing eastwards in the afternoon, then fine for a time before more rain reached the west, becoming widespread again after dark, and Lough Navar Forest (Fermanagh) reporting 11 cm of lying snow. The 14th was very wet and windy with widespread and locally heavy rain crossing the country during the morning, clearing away eastwards and turning showery but mild for the afternoon, with Magilligan (Londonderry) recording gusts to 68 mph. Rain, locally heavy, moved across all parts on the morning of the 15th, swiftly clearing to leave just isolated showers. Bright and breezy on the 16th with scattered showers. Some sunshine on the 17th, with showers mainly across the north, and more general rain from the south-west after dark. The 18th began dry but an area of showery rain soon swept in from the west, heavy in places, clearing eastwards by mid-afternoon, then sunny spells and isolated showers, and windy at times. It was dull and breezy on the 19th with patchy rain in some areas at first, and widespread rain soon moving in from the south, heavy in places, clearing north-eastwards by mid-afternoon, with scattered showers following. After a dry start on the 20th, rain soon spread from the south, some heavy, but clearing around lunchtime, then showers moving in later, and windy again.

21st to 28th

The 21st was a much brighter day, but still breezy; starting dry, but isolated showers by the afternoon. A clear start on the 22nd, then sunny and dry, though cloud increasing from the south-west later on. Very wet and windy on the 23rd with widespread and locally heavy rain throughout, but mild with Katesbridge (Down) recording a maximum of 14.1 °C. It was mainly cloudy and mild overnight into the 24th, Armagh not falling below 9.9 °C, then bright intervals in the west, but showers moving in from the south-west, briefly more persistent and intense in the south-east late afternoon, and becoming breezy at times. The final four days of the month were much drier; some sunshine and scattered showers on the 25th, with Aldergrove (Antrim) recording 8.4 hours of bright sunshine. Often sunny on the 26th, after a chilly start with patchy mist and fog. Generally cloudier with patchy light rain and drizzle on the 27th. Some fog to start the 28th, not clearing until lunchtime in a few places, then generally cloudy with occasional light drizzle.