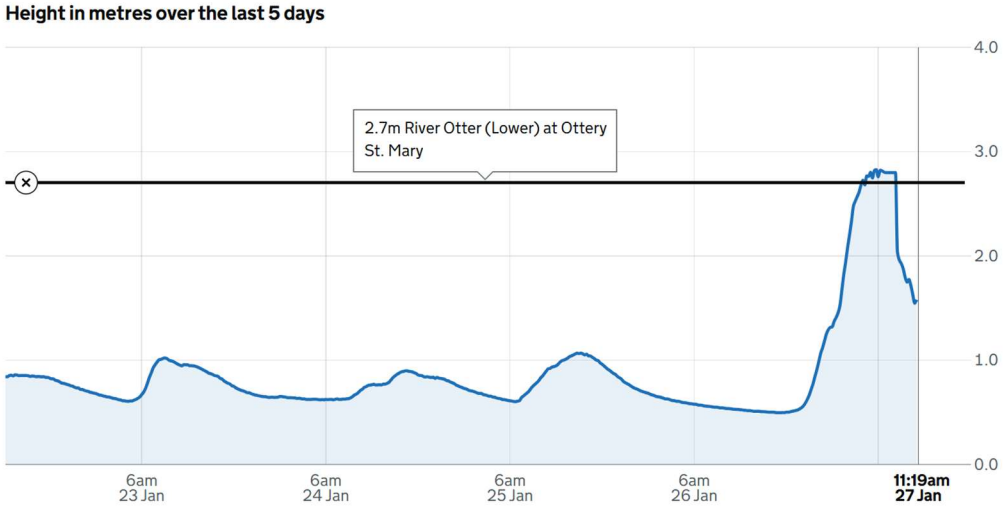
Storm Chandra 26 to 27 January 2026

Storm Chandra brought some exceptionally wet weather to south-west England, north-east Scotland and the east of Northern Ireland from 26 to 27 January 2026. Over 50mm of rain fell widely in the worst affected areas, with up to 100mm across high ground. Chandra formed part of a sequence of low pressure systems in late January, with the January whole-month average rainfall falling widely across south-west England, north-east Scotland and the east of Northern Ireland in an 8-day period from 20th to 27th. In addition to the rain, Chandra and earlier storm Ingrid on 23 to 24 January brought some very strong winds gusting at 50 to 60Kt (58 to 69mph). Large waves battered exposed coastlines, particularly parts of Devon and Cornwall.

Impacts

Storm Chandra brought widespread flooding across south-west England, particularly Devon, Cornwall and Dorset. In east Devon, a severe flood warning, indicating danger to life, was issued for a section of the River Otter. The figure below shows recorded water levels from the River Otter at Ottery St Mary, showing the flow peak, with the black line indicating the possibility of properties flooding (extract from the UK Gov Flood Service website). Flooding to properties occurred both here and to the east in the River Axe catchment with Devon County Council reporting over 80 properties flooded across over 30 locations. A severe flood warning was also issued for the Upper Frome, Dorchester. More widely across south-west England, there was widespread transport disruption due to flooded roads and railway lines. A section of the A30 was closed in east Devon near Exeter Airport, and Great Western Railway advised passengers not to travel unless critical. Over 50 schools across Devon were reported to have closed. A number of properties were also flooded in Dorset and Hampshire.



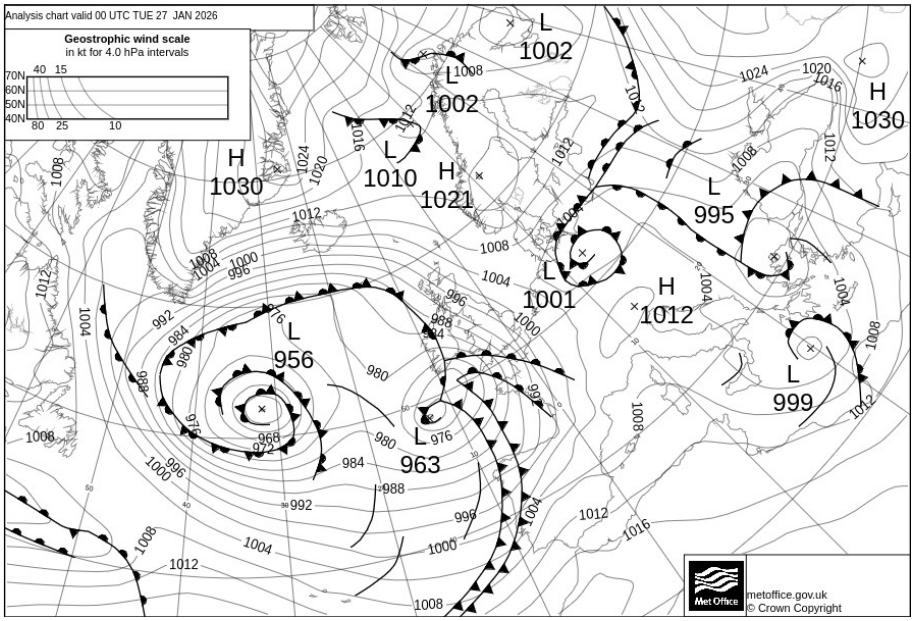
In addition to some extremely wet weather, the storm also brought unusually strong south-easterly winds to Northern Ireland. About 10,000 properties were reported to have lost power, with 350 schools closed. One person was injured in County Fermanagh due to a tree falling on a car, and flights at Belfast City Airport and ferry services were cancelled.

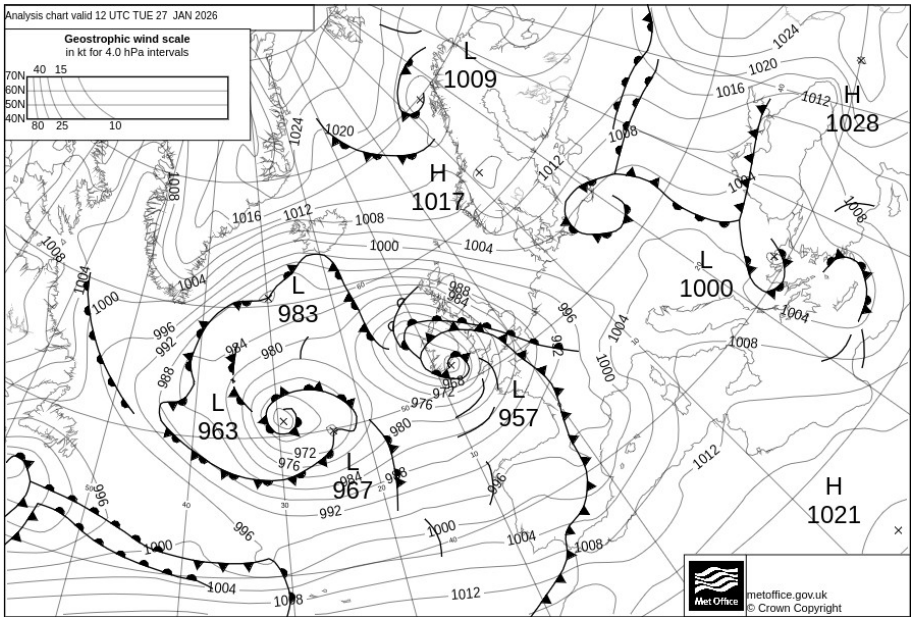
Only a few days earlier, part of the historic pier at Teignmouth was washed away during storm Ingrid, with the south Devon coast badly affected by large waves - for example the village of Torcross. At Teignmouth, a section of the south-west mainline railway was closed due to debris on

the track, with network rail issuing a ‘black alert’ – the highest warning level, for only the second time since a storm destroyed a section of track in February 2014. These impacts came with the south-west more generally still addressing damage from storm Goretti in early January.

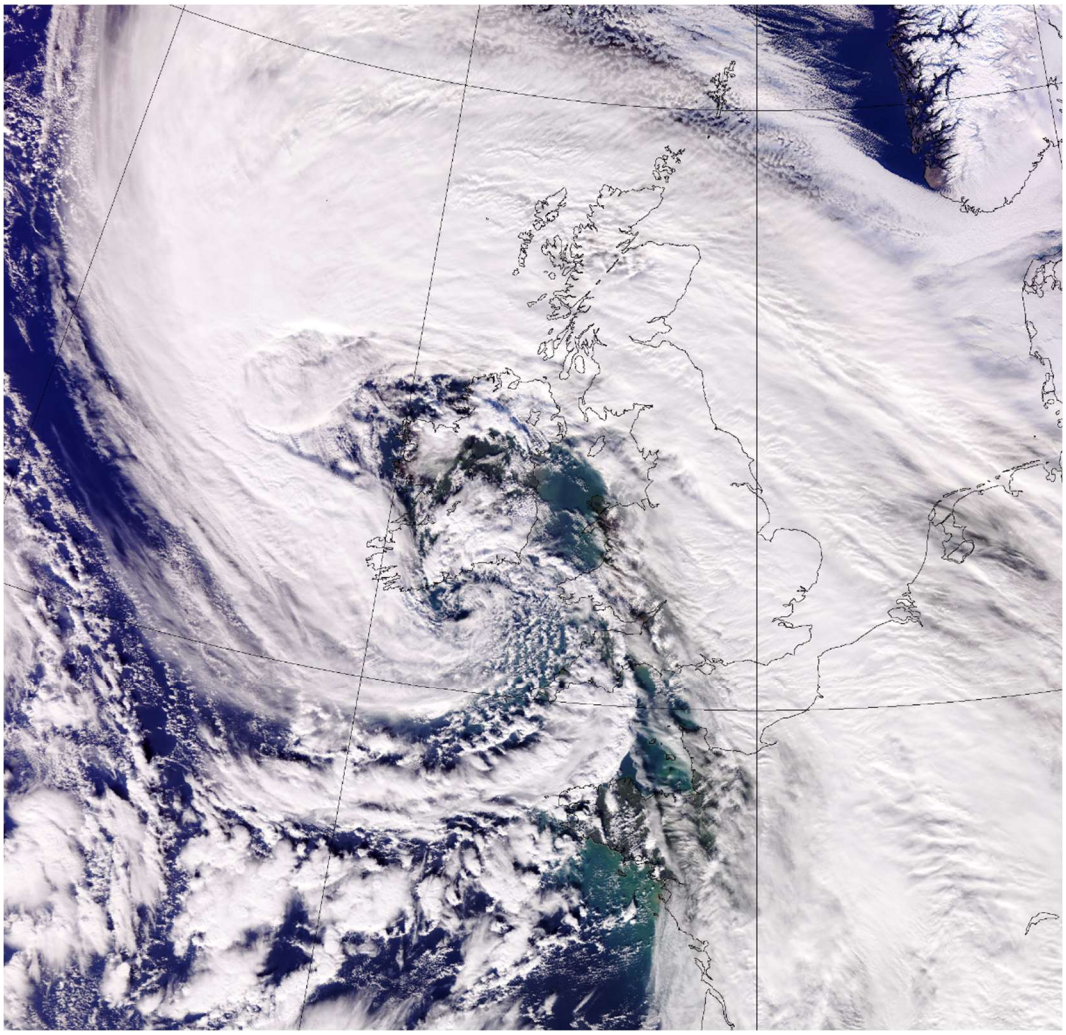
Weather data

The analysis charts at 0000 UTC and 1200 UTC 27 January 2026 show storm Chandra centred to the south-west of the UK, with weather fronts bringing persistent heavy rain to south-west England and the east side of Northern Ireland.

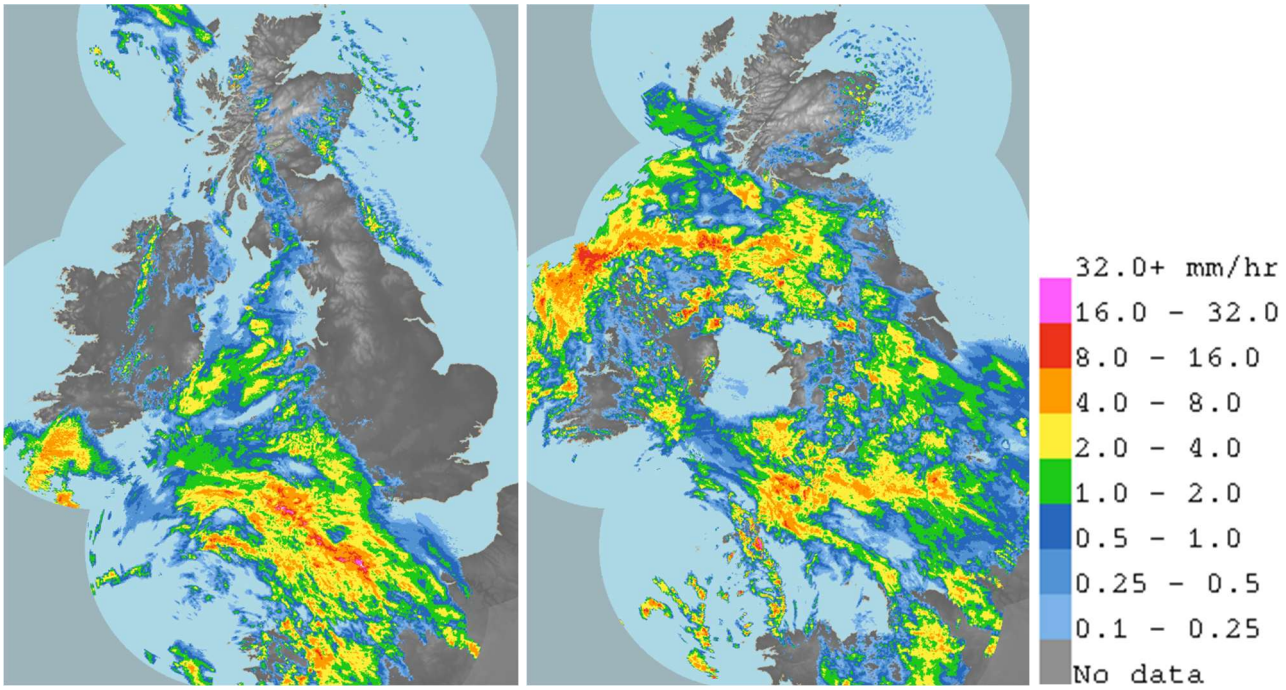




The visible satellite image on 27 January 2026 shows storm Chandra. The low pressure centre is located near the south coast of the Republic of Ireland, with associated weather fronts concealing much of the UK. By this stage the main rain-bearing fronts had cleared south-west England and South Wales, but with further showers behind, close to the low-pressure centre. Image copyright Met Office / NOAA / NASA.

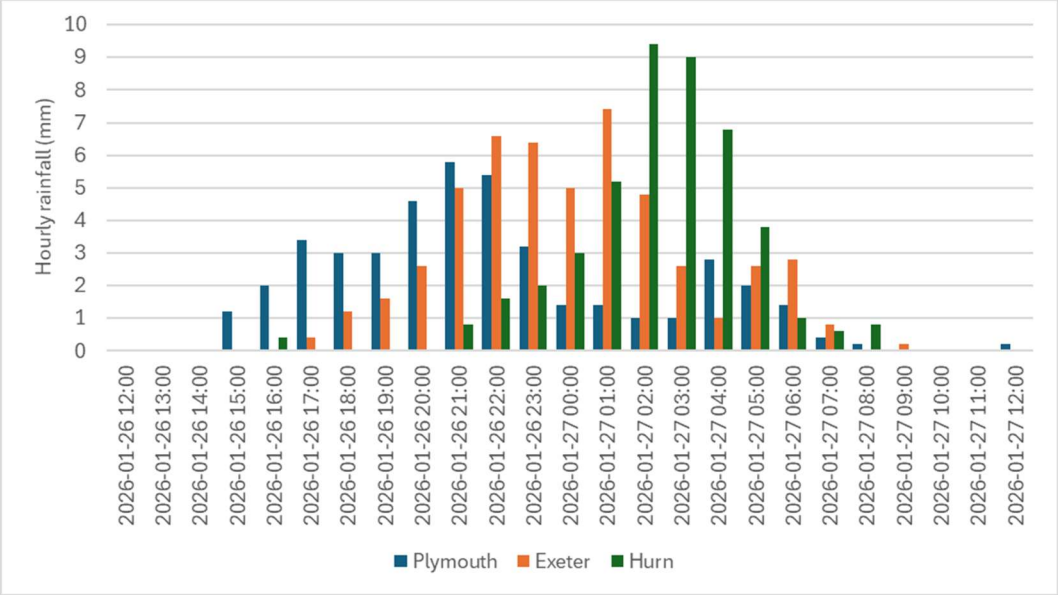


The rain-radar images at 2100 UTC 26 January and 0500 UTC 27 January 2026 show the heavy rain from storm Chandra pushing into south-west England, with the wet weather then extending overnight to cover much of England, Wales, southern Scotland and Northern Ireland.

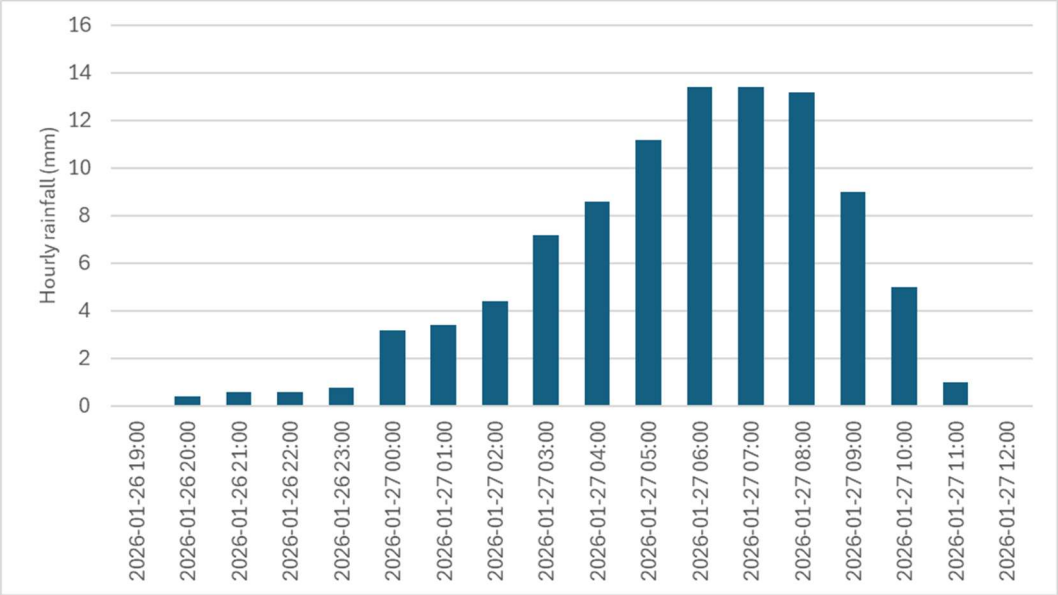


The chart below shows hourly rainfall totals from 1200 UTC 26 January to 1200 UTC 27 January 2026 at Plymouth Mountbatten, Exeter Airport and Hurn (Dorset). The rainfall from this event was not especially intense but what made it so impactful was its heavy, prolonged and widespread

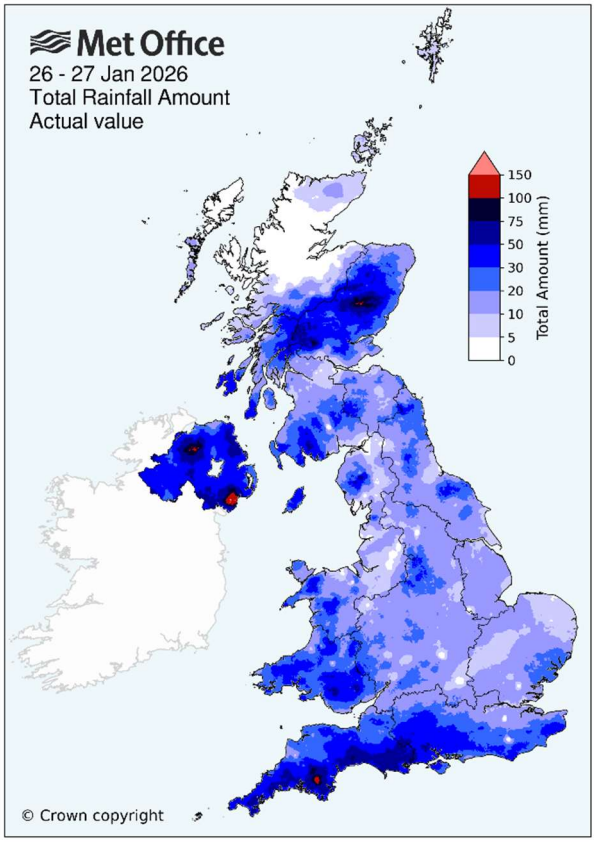
nature, falling on saturated ground prone to flooding. Each of these stations recorded around 40 to 50mm of rain over this period, with totals substantially more than this over high ground. Daily rainfall totals from 0900 UTC 26th to 0900 UTC 27th exceeded 50mm in parts of Cornwall, Dorset and Devon, with the wettest areas on Dartmoor having over 80mm - for example 85.1mm at Holne, Priddons Farm (280 masl) and 106.0mm at White Barrow (445 masl).



The chart below shows hourly rainfall totals at Katesbridge (County Down) from 1900 UTC 26 January to 12:00 UTC 27 January 2026. The daily rainfall total for this station from 0900 UTC 26th to 0900 UTC 27th was 100.8mm, nearby Trassey Slievenaman (also County Down) recorded 120.0mm.



The maps below shows rainfall totals from 26 to 27 January 2026 from storm Chandra – with 50mm falling widely along the south coast from Cornwall to Hampshire, across much of Northern Ireland and a swathe from central to north-east Scotland, with over 100mm in the wettest areas. Across south-west England and Northern Ireland, most of this fell on the rain-day of the 26th (0900 UTC 26th to 0900 UTC 27th), whereas in north-east Scotland, it mostly fell after 0900 UTC on 27th as the fronts cleared through.

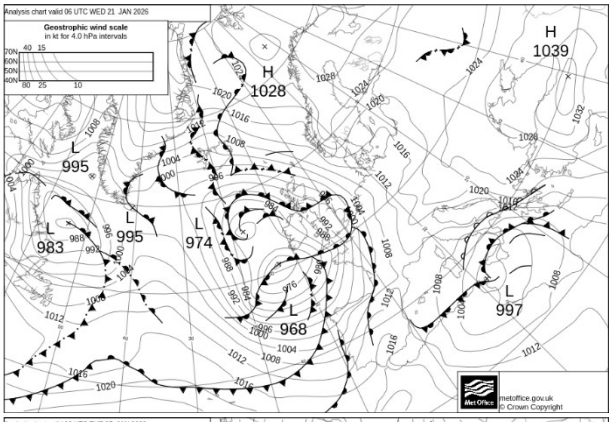


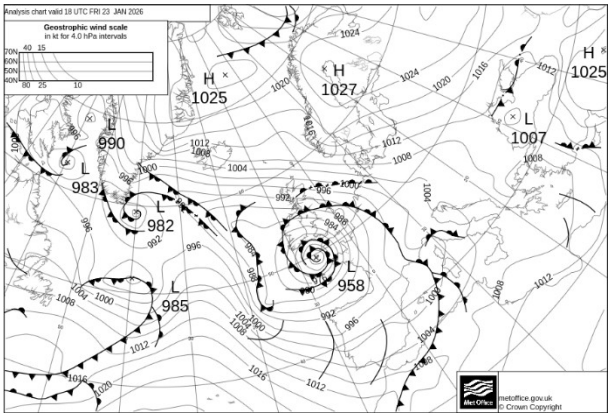
The table below lists selected January daily rainfall records at individual stations broken by storm Chandra on 26 January 2026, indicating the locally exceptional nature of this event.

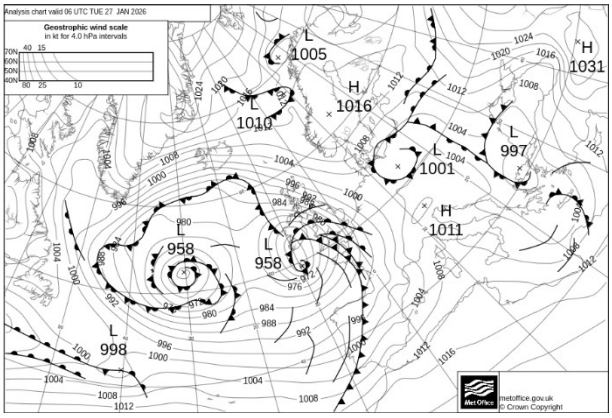
In Northern Ireland, the Katesbridge January record was more than doubled and this was the wettest day for any month at this station, easily exceeding the previous record, 70.7mm on 25 August 1986 (this was from ex-hurricane Charley). Trassey Slievenaman, with 120.0mm, recorded its second-wettest day on record, exceeded only by 153.6mm on 23 November 1990 in an observational record going back to 1985.

Station	26 January 2026 total (mm)	% of January 1991-2020 average	Previous January record (mm)	Previous date	Record length (years)
Katesbridge (County Down)	100.8	123	38.2	7 Jan 2005	42
Dunkeswell Aerodrome (Devon)	52.8	47	41.0	7 Jan 1986	57
Hurn (Dorset)	44.4	46	41.5	29 Jan 1970	74
Cardinham (Cornwall)	44.4	29	38.2	15 Jan 1999	45
Plymouth Mountbatten (Devon)	43.2	39	40.2	24 Jan 1965	104

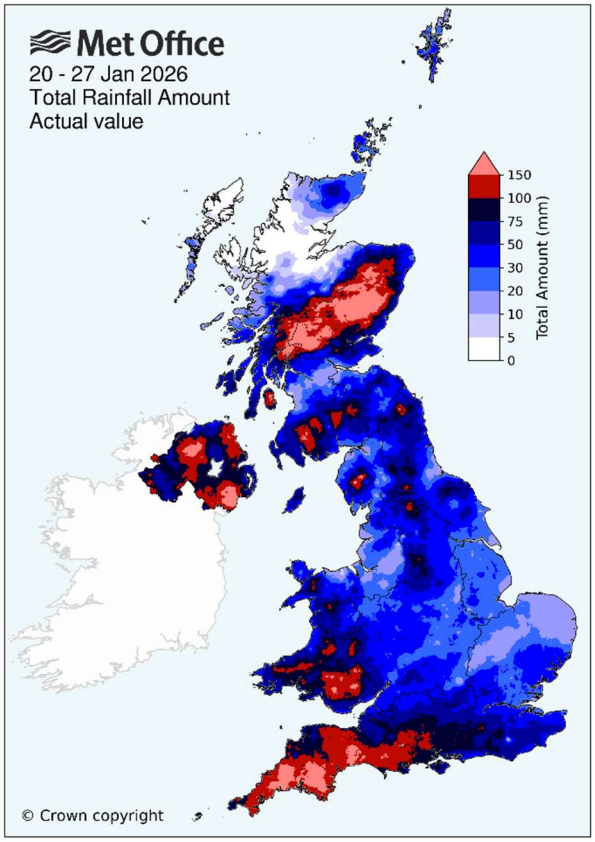
Storm Chandra should not be viewed in isolation but as part of a wider prolonged spell of unsettled and very wet weather in late January 2026. The charts below show three separate low pressure systems anchored to the south-west of the UK within the space of a week. The first chart shows a low pressure system on 21 January 2026, the second another on 23 January 2026 (storm Ingrid) and the third on 27 January 2026 (storm Chandra). The second system, storm Ingrid, was named by the Portuguese weather service and brought coastal damage from large waves along the Devon and Cornwall coastline, accompanied by heavy rain. The centre of this storm was particularly slow to fill and clear south-west England.

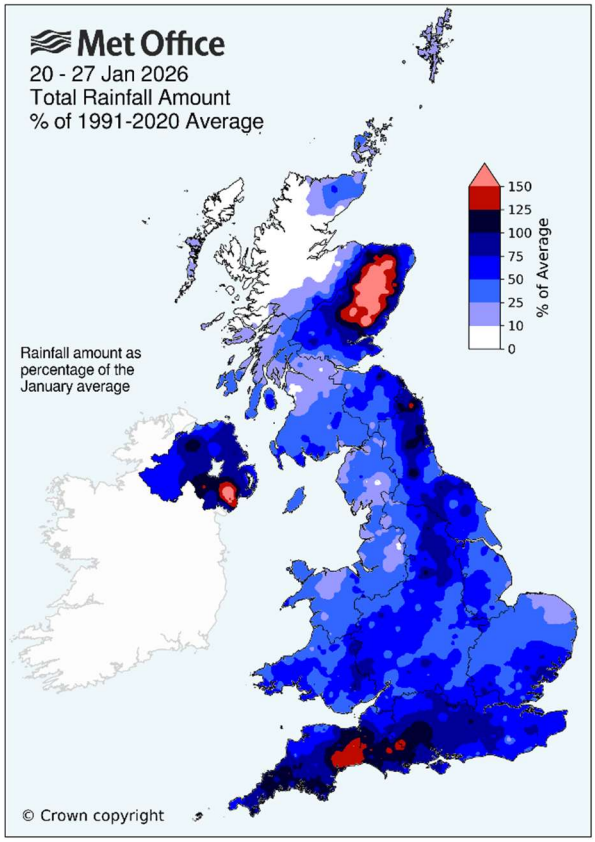






The maps below show rainfall totals and anomalies from 20th to 27th relative to the 1991-2020 whole-month January average – including all three of these low pressure systems. These show that the worst affected areas received well in excess of the January whole-month average rainfall in just over a week.

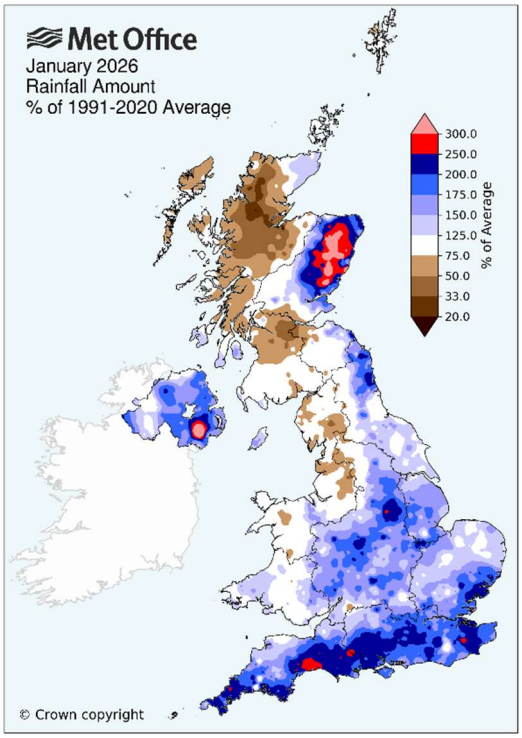


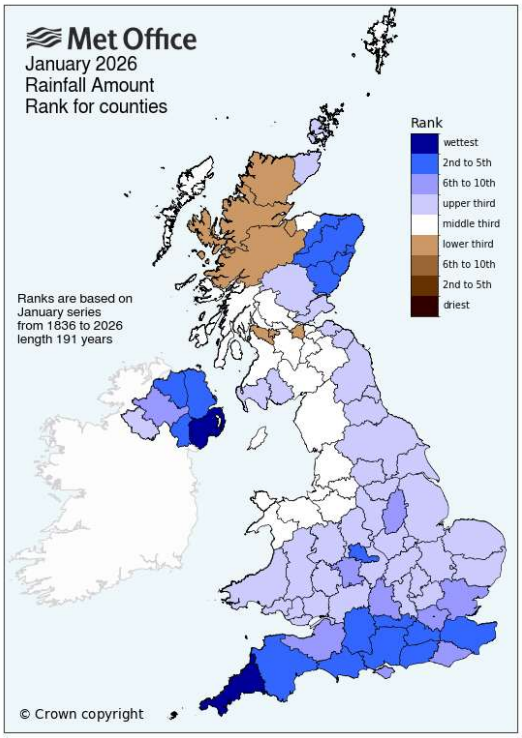


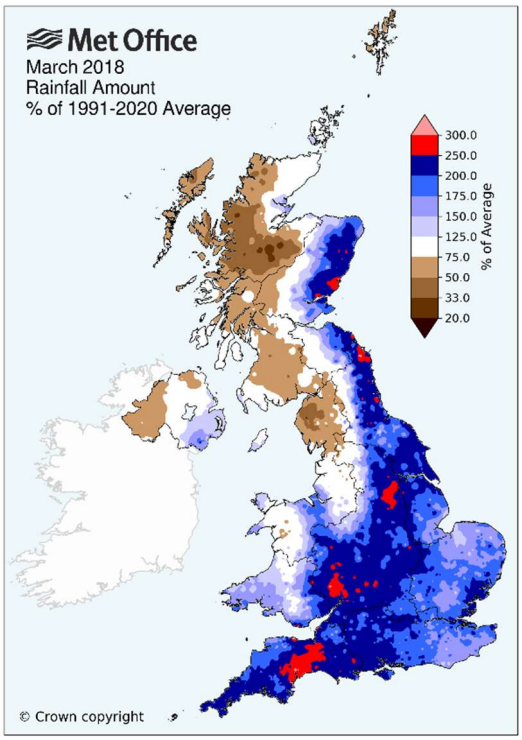
The top left hand map below shows January 2026 rainfall totals as a percentage of the January 1991-2020 average. The wettest areas during the month were north-east Scotland, County Down and the south coast of England – particularly Cornwall, Devon and Dorset, with over twice the

normal January rainfall widely and in some locations over three times the average. (This map is based on provisional data available at time of production). The top right-hand map shows the rank of January 2026 in county-level series for the UK from 1836 (station network coverage reduces in the 19th Century, with a corresponding increase in uncertainty of county-level statistics). The table below shows statistics for selected counties. January 2026 was provisionally the wettest January on record in both Cornwall and County Down, and in the top-5 wettest Januarys for the east of Northern Ireland, north-east Scotland and many southern coastal counties.

The spatial pattern of rainfall on the January 2026 map reflects the extremely unsettled weather patterns of the month, with low pressure often centred near to the south-west of England, and associated fronts bringing wet weather to south-west and southern England. In this situation, north-east England and north-east Scotland can also see persistent wet weather around the top of low pressure systems in a south-easterly flow, with orographic enhancement across high ground (falling as snow across the Grampian mountains). In this setup, western Scotland, sheltered by high ground to the east, can often be the driest part of the UK. This contrasting rainfall pattern is fairly commonly seen in the UK's climate records; the bottom left-hand map shows an example of similar patterns in March 2018, where much of the UK experienced a south-easterly airflow (this month began with the much publicized 'Beast from the East' event).







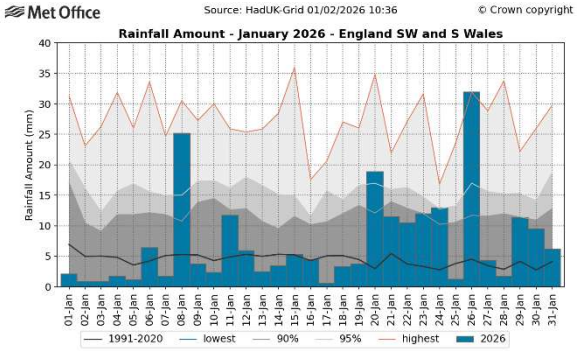
Provisional January 2026 rainfall for selected counties (statistics are provisional and subject to change)

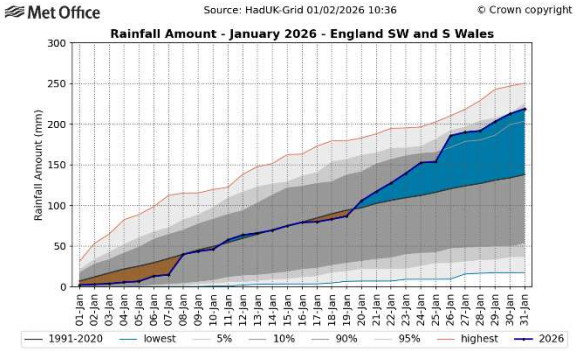
County	Total (mm)	% of January 1991-2020 average	Rank	Wettest or previous wettest January	Highest (or previous highest) January total (mm)
Cornwall	268	196	**1**	1851	258
Devon	243	177	2	1984	245
Dorset	231	219	2	2014	251
Hampshire	192	202	2	2014	244
Surrey	166	201	2	2014	221
County Down	230	220	**1**	1948	218
County Londonderry	195	163	2	1928	197
County Armagh	171	181	4	1849	188
County Antrim	186	174	4	1877	203

Angus	285	253	2	2016	332
Kincardineshire	232	257	2	2016	280
Aberdeenshire	219	239	3	2016	249

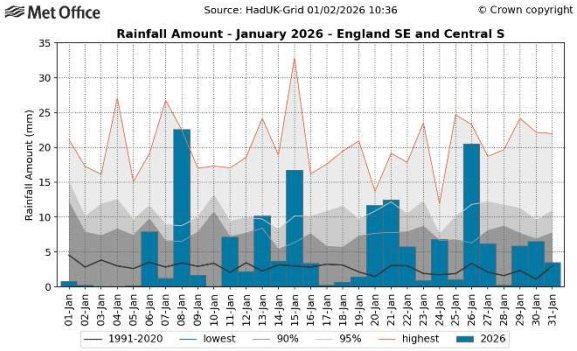
The charts below show daily rainfall totals (left) and accumulations (right) for three climate districts and Northern Ireland in January 2026. The grey and red lines show the percentiles and daily extremes for each calendar day of January based on daily data from 1891, with the black line the 1991-2020 average. These illustrate the effect of storm Chandra on top of the generally persistent wet weather in the latter part of January. The impact of this event was greatly exacerbated by the wet weather over the previous days – for example, south-west England and south Wales received an average of over 10mm per day for five consecutive days in the run-up to storm Chandra.

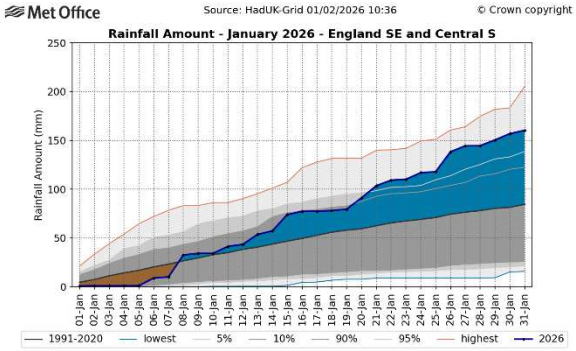
South-west England and south Wales



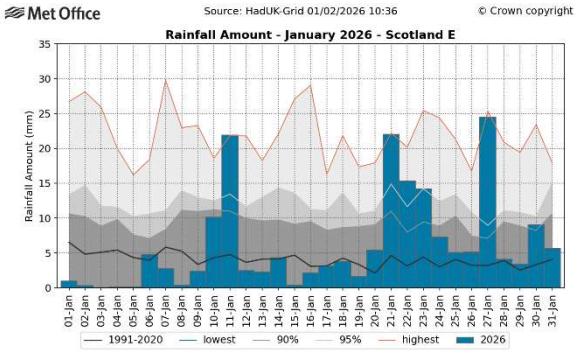


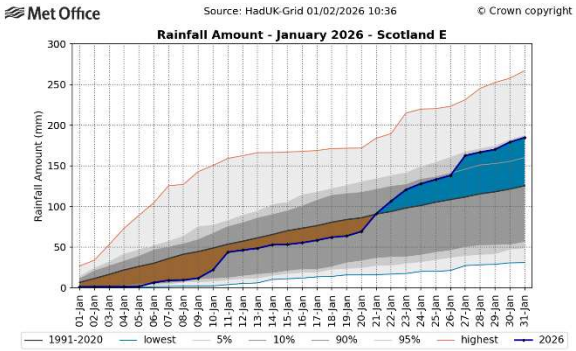
Central southern and south-east England



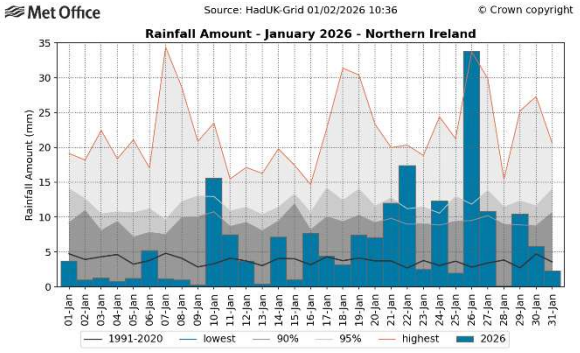


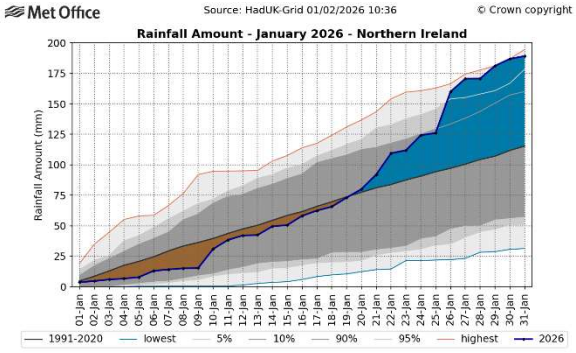
Eastern Scotland





Northern Ireland





Mike Kendon, Met Office National Climate Information Centre

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