

# May 2026 Monthly Weather Report

This document provides a summary of the UK's weather and climate statistics for May 2026.

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## UK overview

May overall was a month of two halves, with the first two weeks seeing unsettled weather with below average temperatures and the second half of the month seeing record-breaking heat. The month started with mild temperatures, particularly in the southeast, with outbreaks of rain and strong wind gusts. Temperatures then decreased and by the 5th the weather was unsettled with frosts in some northwestern regions and consistently below average temperatures across the UK. The following two weeks were more of the same: below average temperatures, occasionally heavy showers, frost in some northern areas, and generally unsettled weather. Temperatures started to increase around the 19th, with the weather turning more settled as high pressure dominated. By the 24th some stations were recording temperatures above 30°C, with station records tumbling. Heatwave thresholds were met across much of central and southern England and Wales as the heat continued. Occasional showers, some thundery, broke through the heat, but overall the final two weeks of the month saw settled weather across the UK.

The provisional mean temperature for the UK was 12.0°C, 1.3°C above average and the joint third warmest May on record. England provisionally recorded its second warmest May, while Wales saw its joint third warmest. Maximum temperatures were also well above average, with England provisionally recording its warmest May for maximum temperatures. Provisionally, Kew Gardens (London) recorded a new May maximum daily temperature on the 25th, which was broken again the very next day as temperatures continued to rise. The new record of 35.1°C beat the previous longstanding record of 32.8°C from May 1944. More than 20 other stations also saw temperatures above the 1944 record, with many seeing new station record May temperatures. Minimum temperatures were also exceptional, with a new highest daily minimum temperature for the UK recorded at Camborne (Cornwall) where temperatures did not drop below 21.4°C on the 27th.

Rainfall was below average across the country, with no nation recording above average rainfall although Northern Ireland came close with 96% of the average. The UK provisionally recorded just 78% of the average rainfall, although there was a north-south divide: Essex and Suffolk provisionally recorded less than a third of the average rainfall (both 31%), while Tyne and Wear recorded 140% of average and Shetland recorded 137%. Sunshine overall was roughly average (for the UK, 105% of average), but lower in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Reference climatology used for calculating anomalies is the period 1991-2020 unless otherwise stated.

## Weather impacts

- **Heatwave conditions in the second half of the month led to amber heat health alerts in central, southern and eastern England, and were associated with a spate of open water fatalities, domestic water shortages in Kent, and an increase in hospital admissions in east London**
- **Lightning strikes were reported to have damaged properties in Leicestershire, Lancashire, West Yorkshire and Carmarthenshire, while large hail reportedly damaged properties and vehicles in Dorset and Wiltshire**

May 2026 was a memorable month for the UK, with a cool and unsettled first half followed by exceptional heat conditions as high pressure dominated the second half. The month culminated in record-breaking temperatures on the 25th and 26th, when the UK daily maximum temperature record of 32.8°C was eclipsed on successive days by at least 2°C, with the final provisional new record being 35.1°C recorded at Kew Gardens, London on the 26th. Daily minimum temperatures were also exceptionally high, and Camborne (Cornwall) registered a new record high minimum temperature of 21.4°C on the 27th. A large number of weather stations broke individual records as well, with both daily maximum and daily minimum temperatures well above average. Only across northwest Scotland, where the warmth was often tempered by the proximity of weather fronts, saw temperatures closer to average. Whilst a significant proportion of the UK saw near average rainfall over the month as a whole, some areas, most notably southern and eastern England, were appreciably drier than normal having received less rainfall in the first 20 days than other parts of the country. Much of England ended the month sunnier than average, probably a reflection of the mean position of high pressure relative to the UK in the final third of the month.

The month up until the 21st was fairly unremarkable with a complete absence of severe weather warnings and just a few impacts logged. There were some heavy showers/downpours, but none that required warnings. On the 2nd, surface water flooding affected the Foyle Road in Derry City, Northern Ireland whilst a pub and car park in Perranporth, Cornwall reported flooding after heavy downpours on the 3rd. Within the generally cool prevailing airmass there were some notably chilly nights in the first half of the month with some areas experiencing frosts. Heavy rain and hail showers affected parts of Northern Ireland again on the 17th with a substantial but temporary covering of hail reported from Groomsport, County Down, Northern Ireland.

The hot spell started to take hold on the 21st and peaked during the 25th/26th. In total some 172 new highest daily maximum temperature records for stations were set between the 22nd and 28th with 30°C exceeded on seven out of eight days between the 23rd and 30th. Amber heat health alerts were issued for parts of central, southern and eastern England during this

period, although no extreme heat warnings were employed. Tragically, a spate of open water fatalities accompanied the high temperatures, the reported incidents mainly involving young people. Other heat-related impacts included reports of several days' worth of domestic water shortages in Kent due to high demand in the hot weather resulting in storage reservoirs running low. Meanwhile reports from east London suggested an increase in hospital admissions to a local hospital on the back of the sustained high temperatures.

The month's only severe weather warnings centred around thunderstorm outbreaks which developed between the 26th and 28th and which entailed a mixture of low and medium impact yellow warnings. The storms were very localised but did generate some short period intense rainfall, large hail and copious lightning. The latter was the major culprit with several reports from Yorkshire and Merseyside early on the 28th blaming overnight lightning strikes for damage to rail signalling equipment. Several properties were also impacted with separate reports from Melton (Leicestershire), Fleetwood (Lancashire), Huddersfield (West Yorkshire) and Glanaman (Carmarthenshire) of homes damaged by lightning strikes. Large hail was reported from the likes of Bournemouth (Dorset) and Melksham (Wiltshire) early on the 28th where damage to conservatory roofs and parked vehicles was confirmed.

## Monthly extremes

The table below lists UK monthly weather extremes recorded at individual weather stations during May 2026 from data available on 04/06/2026. The map shows the location of these stations.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Highest Maximum</b>                 | <b>35.1°C</b> on <b>26th</b> at Kew Gardens (Greater London, 6mAMSL)                     |
| <b>Lowest Maximum</b>                  | <b>6.2°C</b> on <b>10th</b> at Lerwick (Shetland, 82mAMSL)                               |
| <b>Highest Minimum</b>                 | <b>21.4°C</b> on <b>27th</b> at Camborne (Cornwall, 87mAMSL)                             |
| <b>Lowest Minimum</b>                  | <b>-6.8°C</b> on <b>6th</b> at Tomintoul No 6 (Banffshire, 320mAMSL)                     |
| <b>Lowest Grass Minimum</b>            | <b>-10.6°C</b> on <b>10th</b> at Dundreggan Rewilding Centre (Inverness-shire, 123mAMSL) |
| <b>Most Rainfall</b>                   | <b>53.2mm</b> on <b>26th</b> at Thorpe Satchville S Wks (Leicestershire, 109mAMSL)       |
| <b>Most Sunshine</b>                   | <b>16.0hr</b> on <b>27th</b> at Stornoway Airport (Western Isles, 15mAMSL)               |
| <b>Highest Gust</b>                    | <b>46Kt 53mph</b> on <b>19th</b> at Wight: Needles Old Battery (Isle Of Wight, 80mAMSL)  |
| <b>Highest Gust (mountain*)</b>        | <b>80Kt 92mph</b> on <b>29th</b> at Cairngorm Summit (Inverness-shire, 1237mAMSL)        |
| <b>Greatest Snow Depth at 0900 UTC</b> | No non-zero values.  |

mAMSL refers to station elevation in metres above mean sea level.

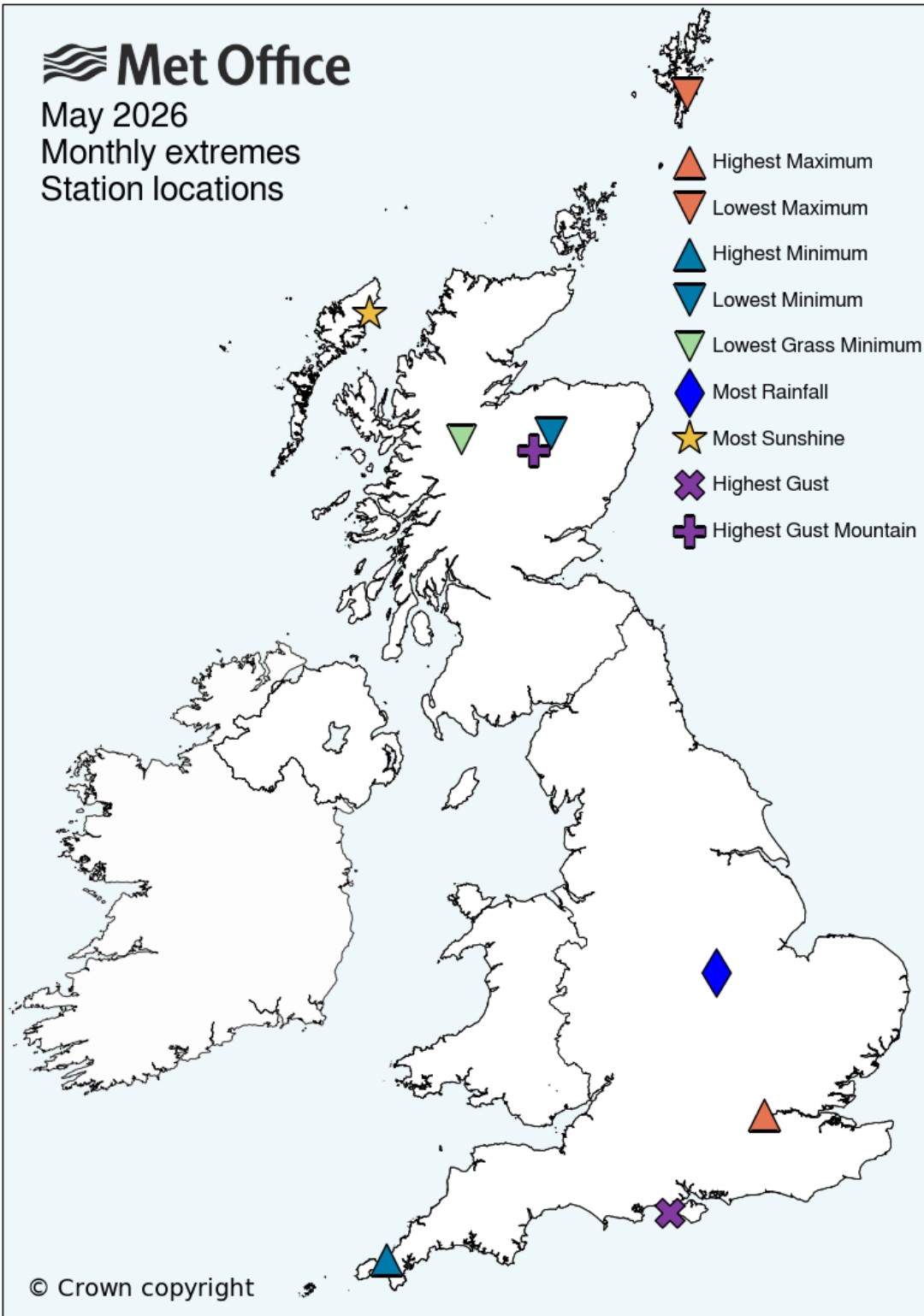
\*Mountain stations are above 500mAMSL.



May 2026

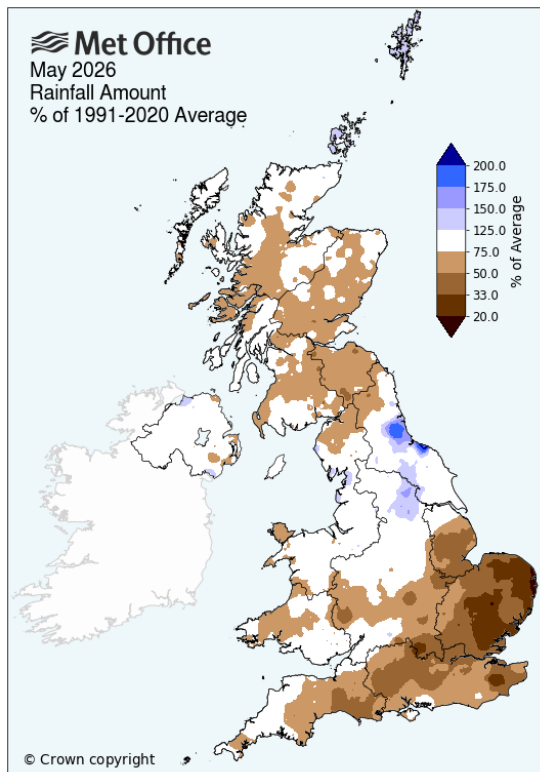
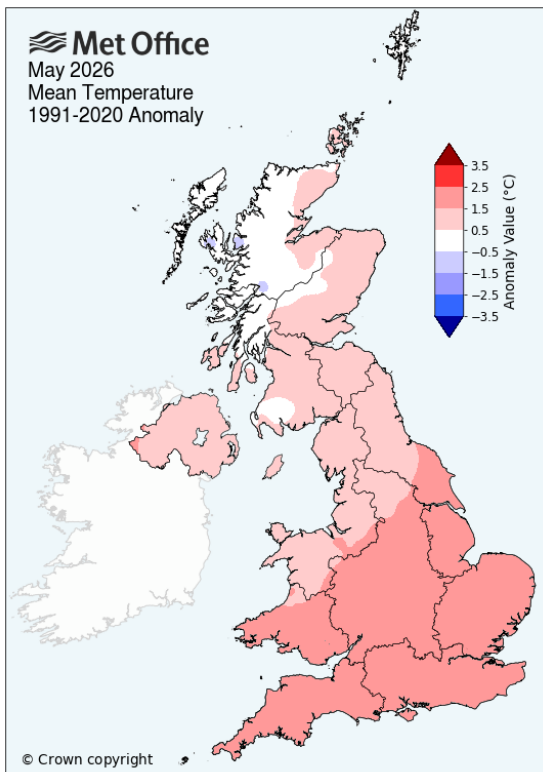
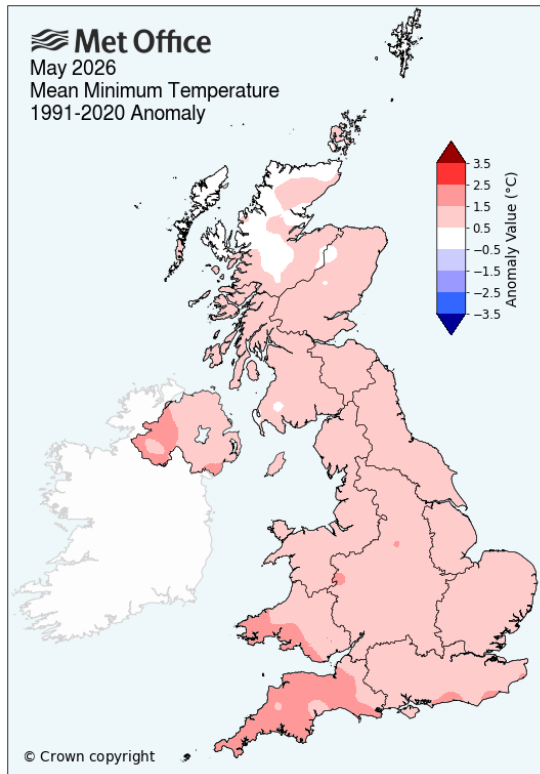
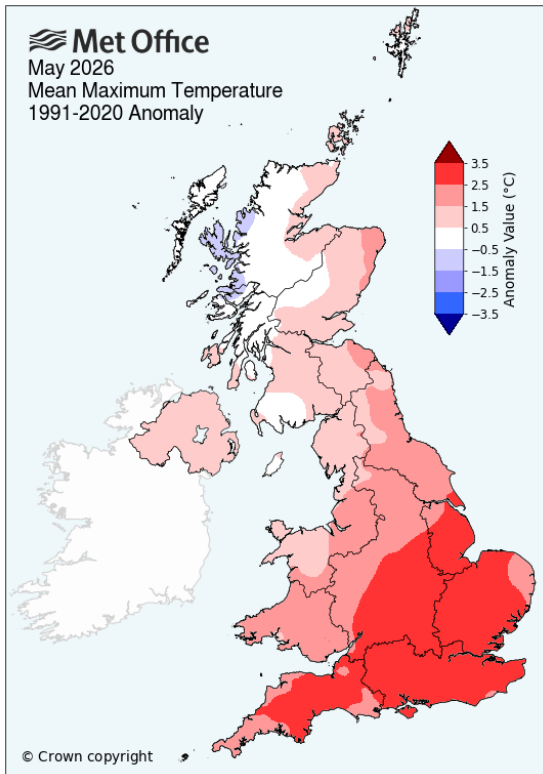
Monthly extremes

Station locations

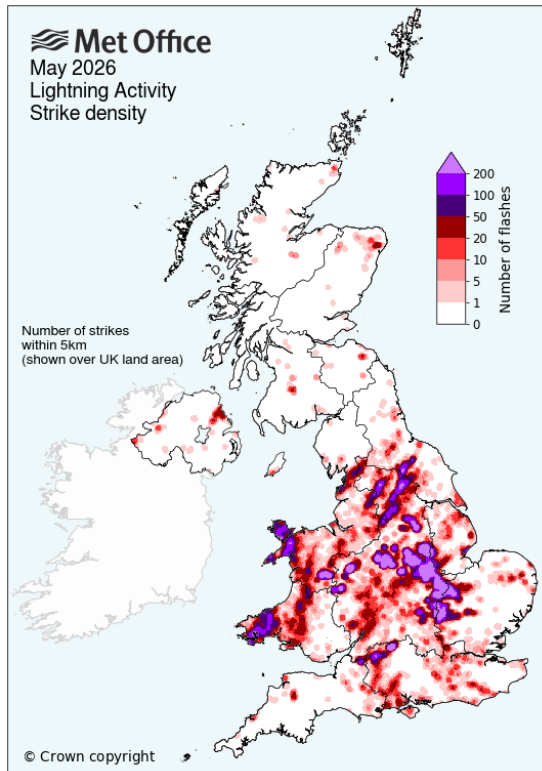
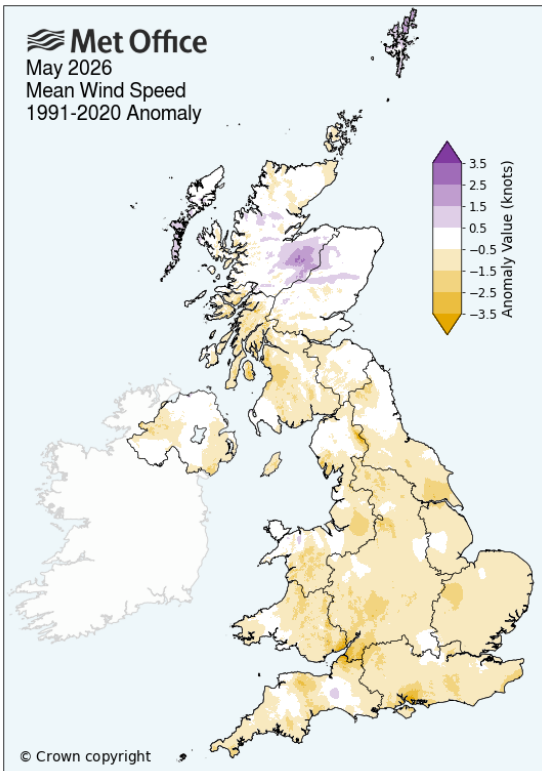
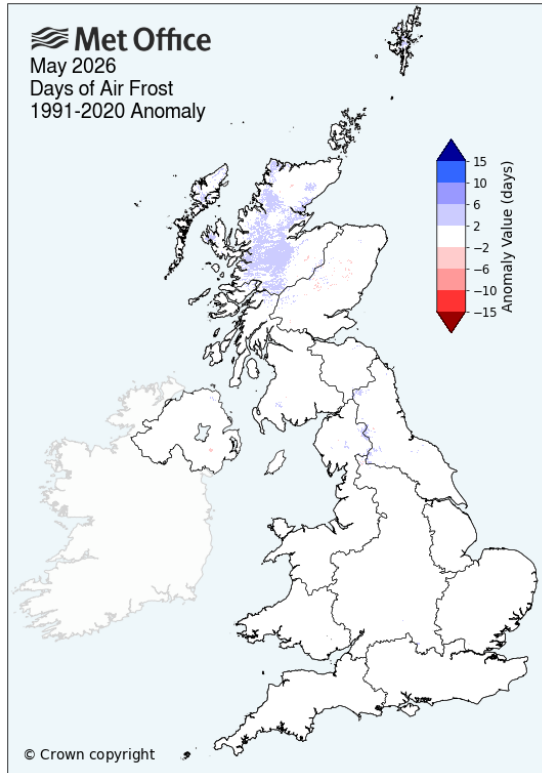
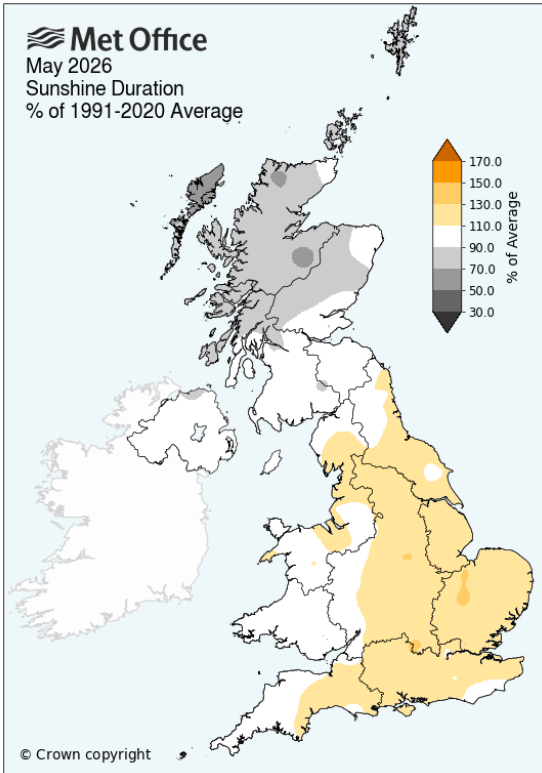


## Monthly maps

These maps show monthly average daily maximum, monthly average daily minimum and monthly mean temperature and monthly rainfall for May 2026 as anomalies relative to the May 1991-2020 long term average.



These maps show monthly sunshine, monthly air frost and monthly windspeed for May 2026 as anomalies relative to the May 1991-2020 long term average, plus a map showing lightning activity as the number of strikes within a 5km radius of any land location.



## Monthly climate statistics - actuals and anomalies

These tables show the UK and national climate statistics for May 2026 for max, min and mean temperature, rainfall, sunshine and windspeed as actual values and anomalies relative to the May 1991-2020 long term average. The position of the value within the full series (in both ascending and descending order) is shown in the two 'Rank' columns. Central England Temperature (CET) and England & Wales Precipitation (EWP) are also included.

### Mean maximum temperature

| Region           | Maxtemp (°C) | 1991-2020 Anomaly (°C) | Rank - warmest | Rank - coldest | Series length (yrs) |
|------------------|--------------|------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|
| UK               | 16.8         | 1.7                    | 6              | 138            | 143                 |
| England          | 18.7         | 2.5                    | 1              | 143            | 143                 |
| Wales            | 16.9         | 1.7                    | 10             | 134            | 143                 |
| Scotland         | 13.9         | 0.5                    | 30             | 114            | 143                 |
| Northern Ireland | 15.7         | 0.9                    | 18             | 126            | 143                 |
| Central England  | 18.9         | 2.5                    | 2              | 148            | 149                 |

### Mean minimum temperature

| Region           | Mintemp (°C) | 1991-2020 Anomaly (°C) | Rank - warmest | Rank - coldest | Series length (yrs) |
|------------------|--------------|------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|
| UK               | 7.3          | 1.0                    | 8              | 136            | 143                 |
| England          | 8.1          | 1.1                    | 6              | 138            | 143                 |
| Wales            | 8.0          | 1.3                    | 6              | 138            | 143                 |
| Scotland         | 5.6          | 0.7                    | 20             | 124            | 143                 |
| Northern Ireland | 7.5          | 1.3                    | 5              | 139            | 143                 |
| Central England  | 8.3          | 0.9                    | 15             | 135            | 149                 |

## Mean temperature

| Region           | Meantemp (°C) | 1991-2020 Anomaly (°C) | Rank - warmest | Rank - coldest | Series length (yrs) |
|------------------|---------------|------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|
| UK               | 12.0          | 1.3                    | 5              | 139            | 143                 |
| England          | 13.4          | 1.8                    | 2              | 142            | 143                 |
| Wales            | 12.4          | 1.5                    | 3              | 141            | 143                 |
| Scotland         | 9.6           | 0.5                    | 29             | 115            | 143                 |
| Northern Ireland | 11.7          | 1.2                    | 10             | 134            | 143                 |
| Central England  | 13.6          | 1.7                    | 8              | 361            | 368                 |

## Rainfall

| Region                  | Rainfall (mm) | % of 1991-2020 Average | Rank - wettest | Rank - driest | Series length (yrs) |
|-------------------------|---------------|------------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------------|
| UK                      | 55.1          | 78                     | 130            | 62            | 191                 |
| England                 | 42.3          | 74                     | 134            | 58            | 191                 |
| Wales                   | 69.9          | 80                     | 114            | 78            | 191                 |
| Scotland                | 69.6          | 78                     | 124            | 68            | 191                 |
| Northern Ireland        | 71.5          | 97                     | 80             | 112           | 191                 |
| EWP (England and Wales) | 43.3          | 69                     | 203            | 59            | 261                 |

## Sunshine

| Region           | Sunshine (hours) | % of 1991-2020 Average | Rank - sunniest | Rank - dullest | Series length (yrs) |
|------------------|------------------|------------------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------------|
| UK               | 200.9            | 105                    | 36              | 82             | 117                 |
| England          | 229.3            | 115                    | 13              | 105            | 117                 |
| Wales            | 201.0            | 105                    | 41              | 77             | 117                 |
| Scotland         | 157.7            | 87                     | 75              | 43             | 117                 |
| Northern Ireland | 174.9            | 95                     | 55              | 63             | 117                 |

## Windspeed

| Region           | Windspeed (knots) | 1991-2020 Anomaly (knots) | Rank - windiest | Rank - calmest | Series length (yrs) |
|------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------------|
| UK               | 8.0               | -0.7                      | 45              | 14             | 58                  |
| England          | 7.1               | -1.0                      | 48              | 11             | 58                  |
| Wales            | 8.1               | -0.9                      | 42              | 17             | 58                  |
| Scotland         | 9.7               | -0.2                      | 33              | 26             | 58                  |
| Northern Ireland | 7.7               | -0.4                      | 33              | 26             | 58                  |

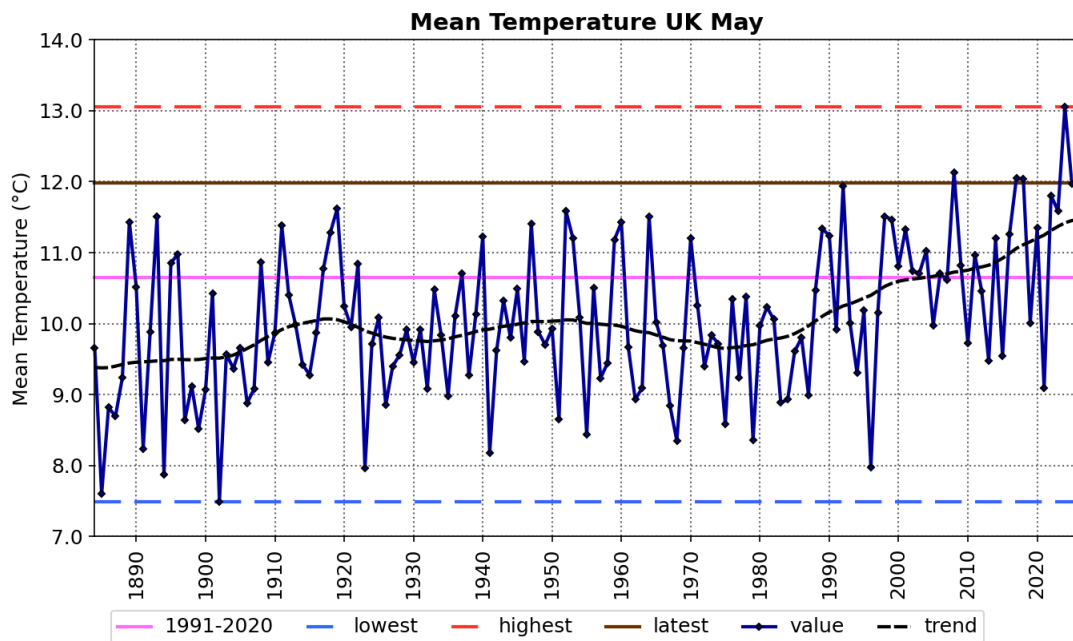
# Monthly time-series

These charts show time-series for the UK for May for monthly mean temperature (from 1884), monthly rainfall (from 1836) and monthly sunshine (from 1919). The brown line shows the latest (2026) value. The hatched black line is a smoothing filter which shows the long-term trend. The tables below show statistics for the latest year, latest 10 years 2017-2026, the most recent 30-year climate reference period 1991-2020 and the 30-year baseline climate reference period 1961-1990.

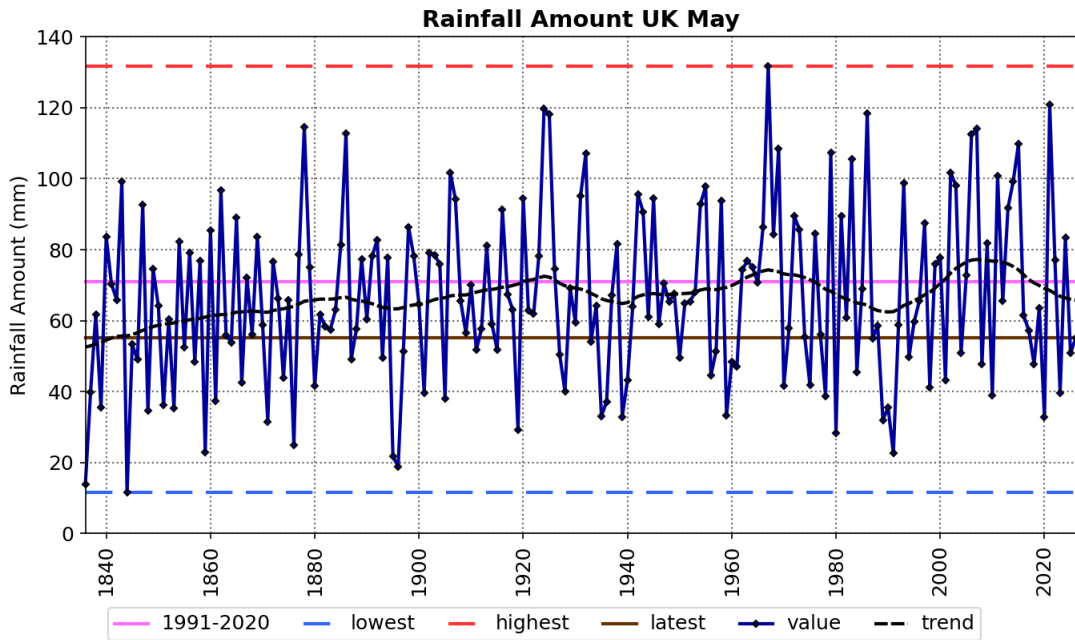


Source: HadUK-Grid 01/06/2026 11:34

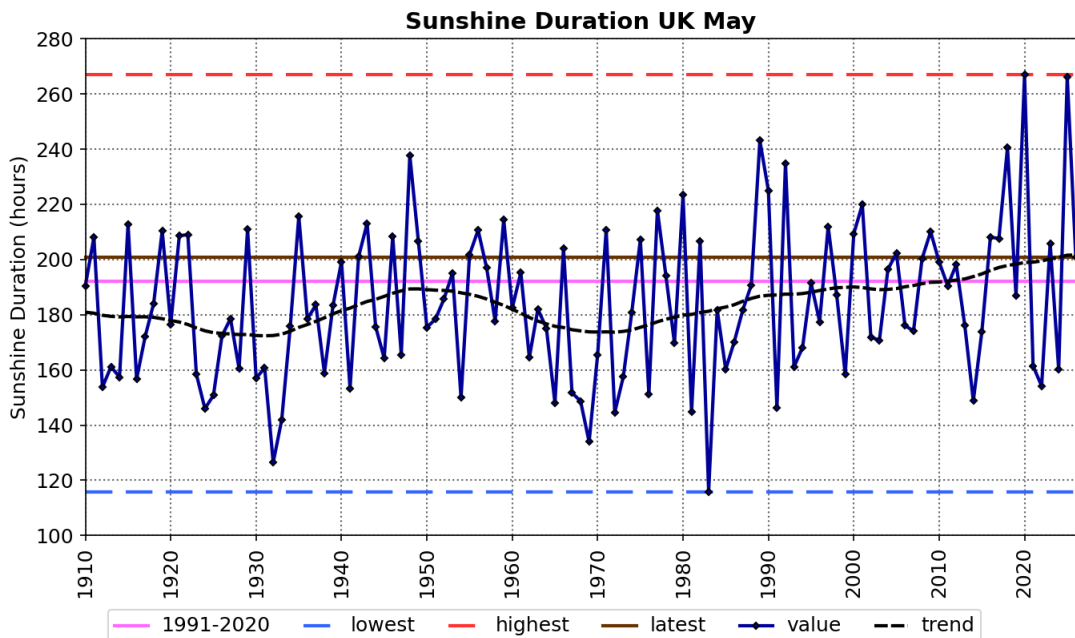
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| Period        | 1961-1990 | 1991-2020 | 2017-2026 | 2026 |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------|
| Meantemp (°C) | 9.8       | 10.7      | 11.5      | 12.0 |



| Period        | 1961-1990 | 1991-2020 | 2017-2026 | 2026 |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------|
| Rainfall (mm) | 70.4      | 71.0      | 62.8      | 55.1 |



| Period           | 1961-1990 | 1991-2020 | 2017-2026 | 2026  |
|------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------|
| Sunshine (hours) | 178.2     | 192.2     | 205.1     | 200.9 |

# Daily time-series

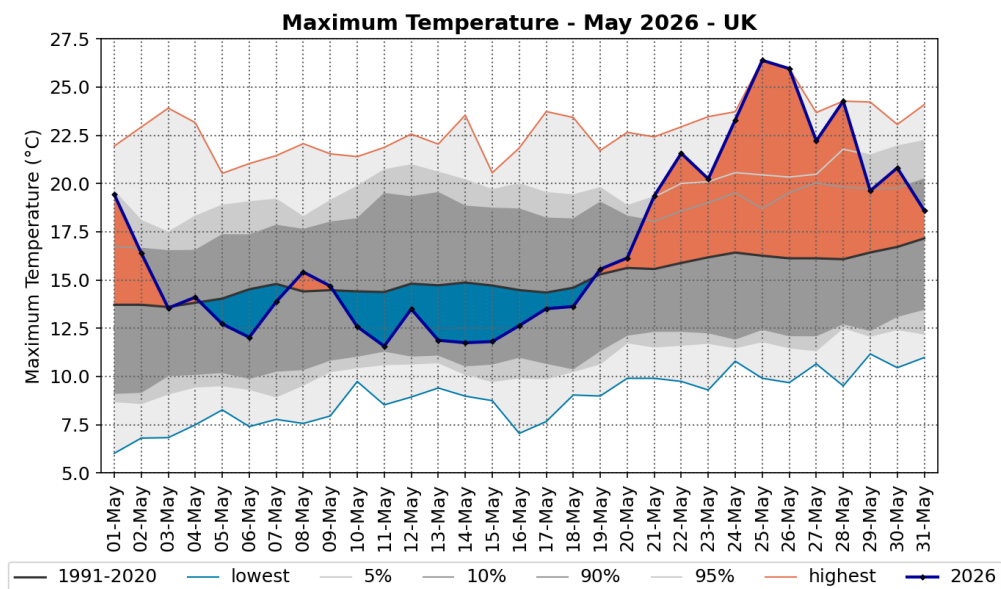
These charts show time-series of UK area-average daily maximum and daily minimum temperature and daily rainfall for each day of May 2026. The areas shaded in grey show the highest and lowest values in the daily temperature series (from 1960) and daily rainfall series (from 1891) together with percentiles and the 1991-2020 long term averages for each day. The rainfall accumulation chart shows the daily rainfall series as an accumulation through the month.

## Daily maximum and daily minimum temperature



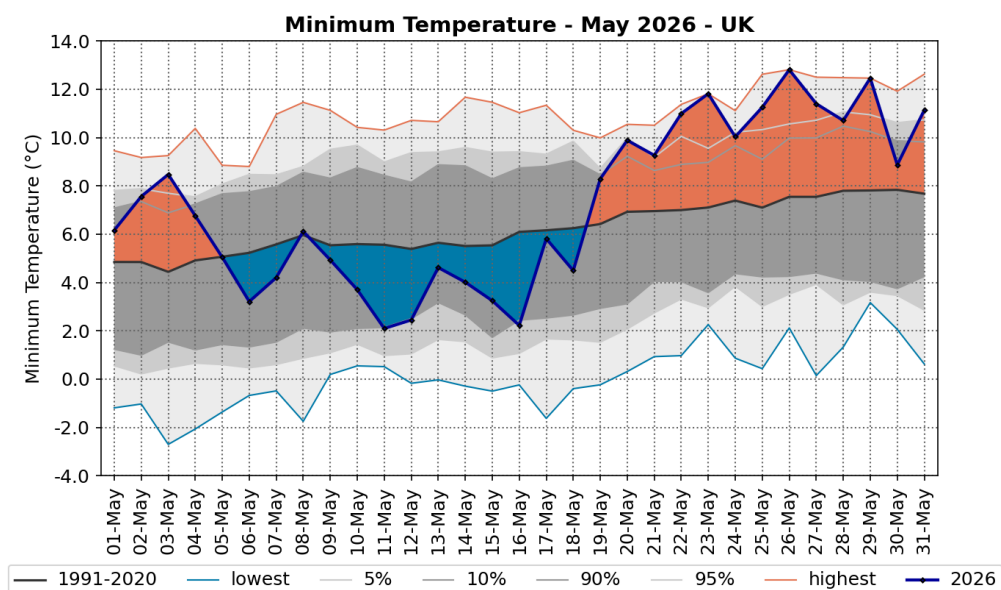
Source: HadUK-Grid 01/06/2026 11:39

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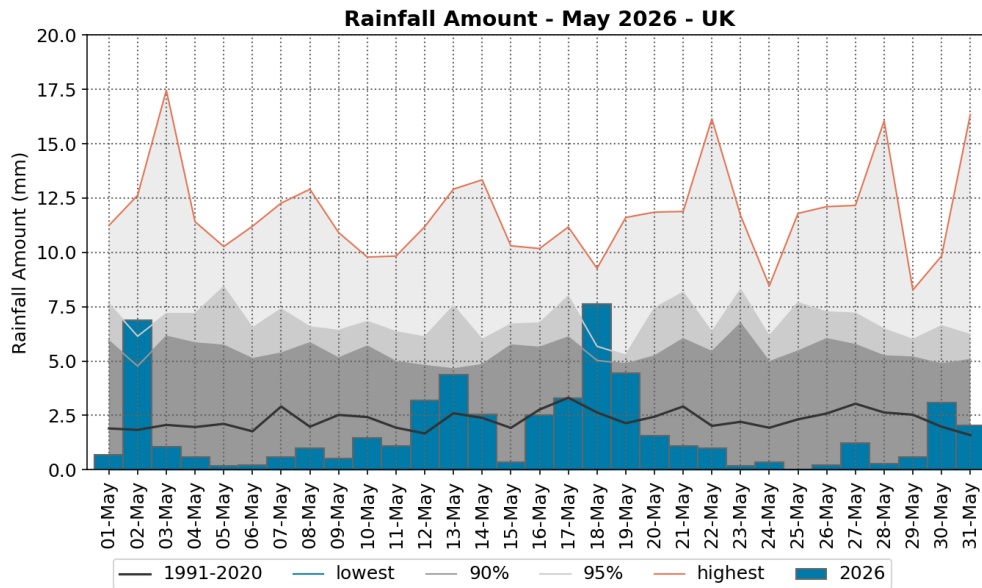


# Daily rainfall and rainfall accumulation

Met Office

Source: HadUK-Grid 01/06/2026 11:39

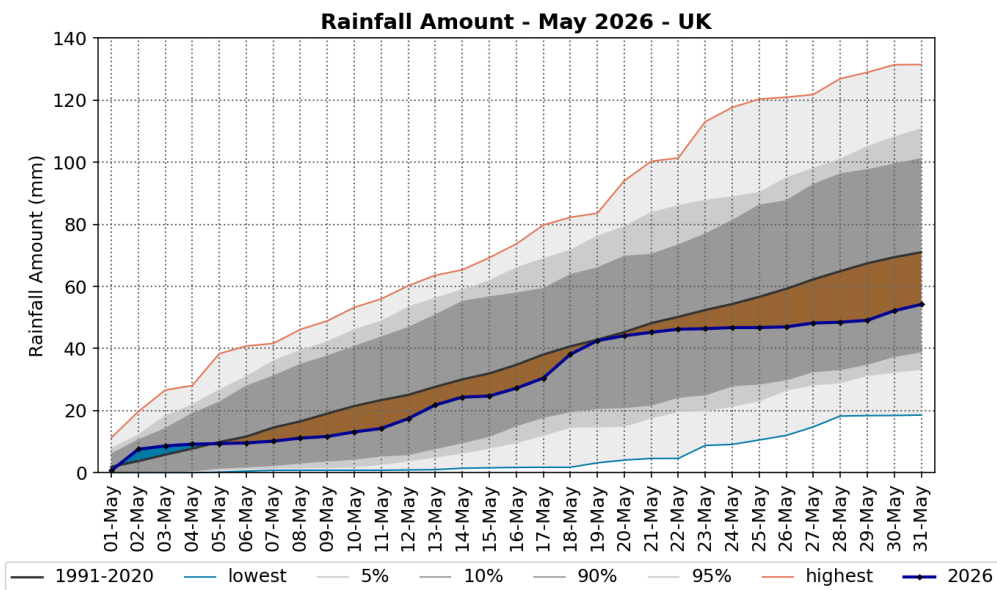
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Met Office

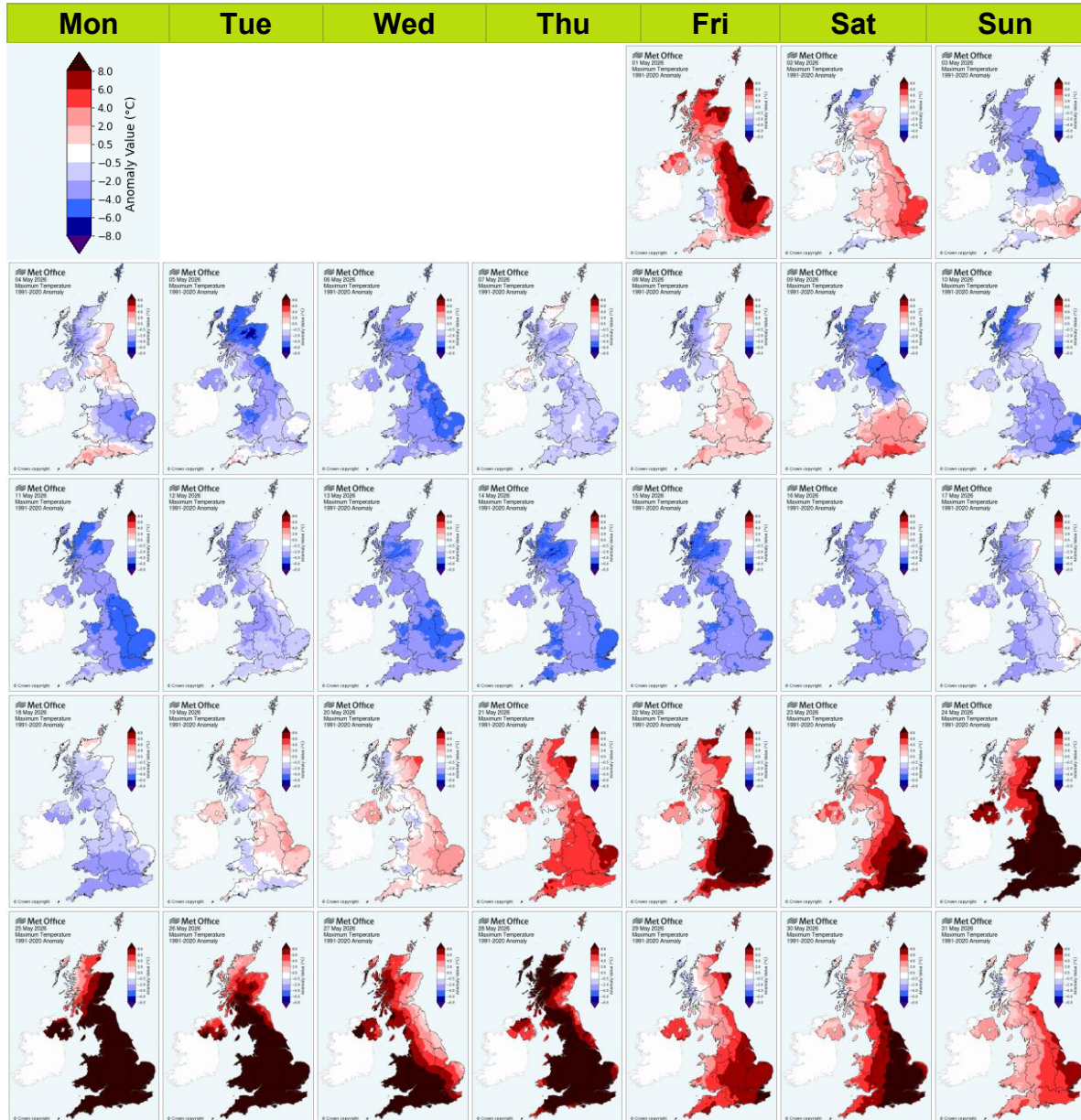
Source: HadUK-Grid 01/06/2026 11:42

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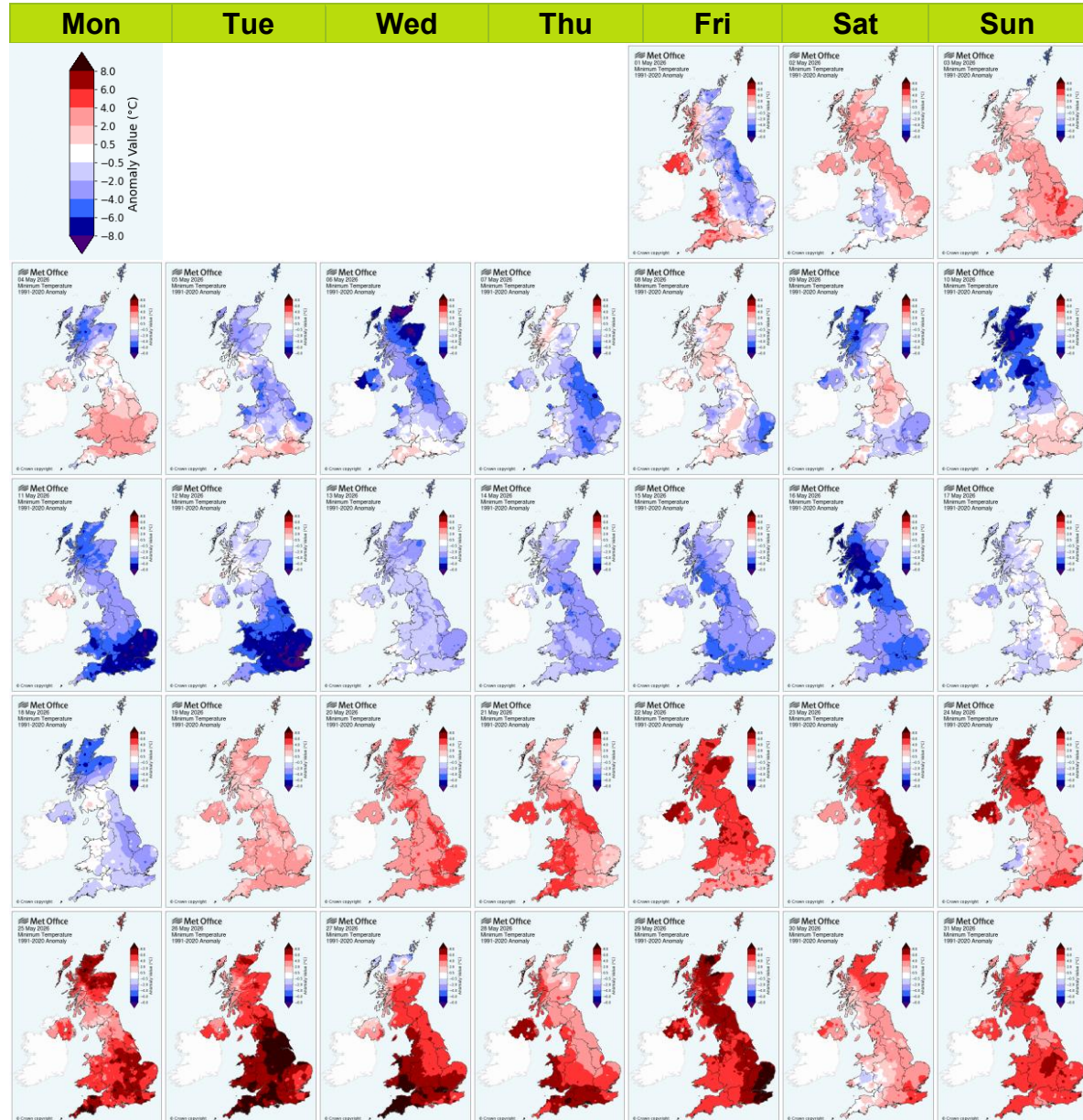
# Daily maximum temperature maps - calendar view

These maps show daily maximum temperatures for each day of May 2026 as anomalies relative to the May 1991-2020 long term average. The daily maximum temperature is the maximum from 0900UTC on the day in question to 0900UTC the following day. Normally, the maximum occurs in the early afternoon.



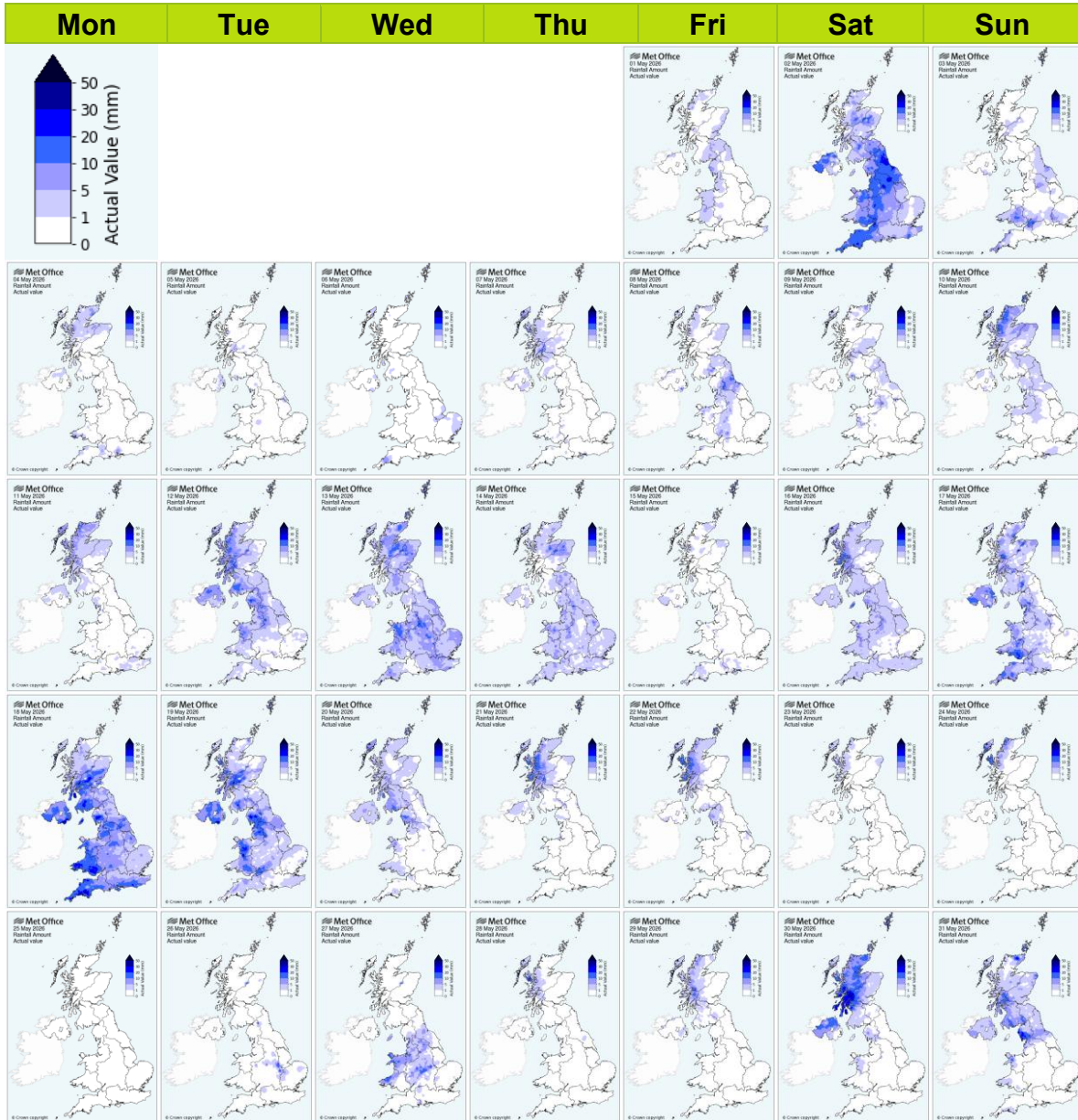
# Daily minimum temperature maps - calendar view

These maps show daily minimum temperatures for each day of May 2026 as anomalies relative to the May 1991-2020 long term average. The daily minimum temperature is the minimum from 0900UTC the previous day to 0900UTC on the day in question. Normally, the minimum occurs in the early morning.



# Daily rainfall maps - calendar view

These maps show daily rainfall for each day of May 2026 as daily totals. The daily rainfall is the total from 0900UTC on the day in question to 0900UTC the following day.

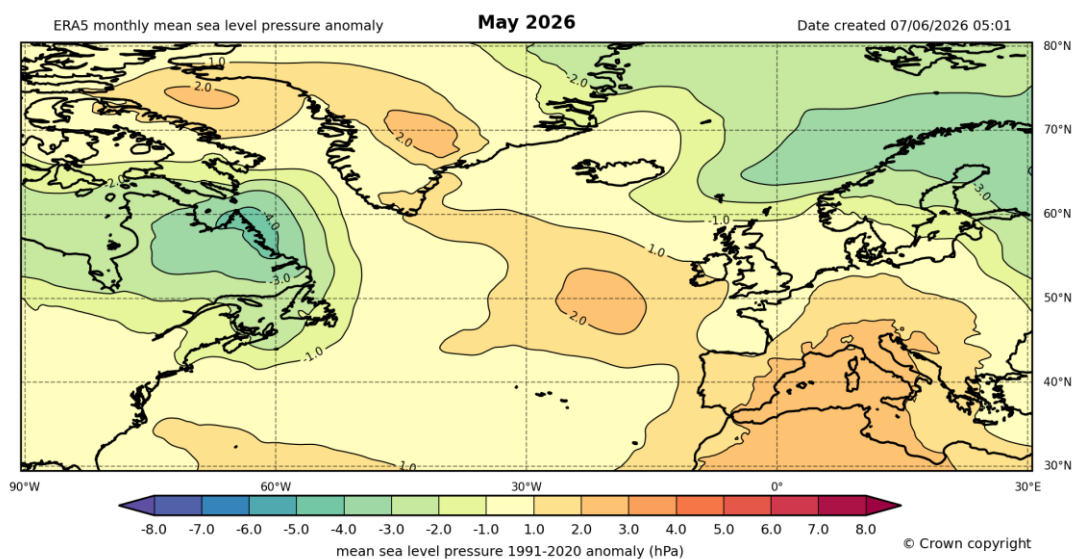
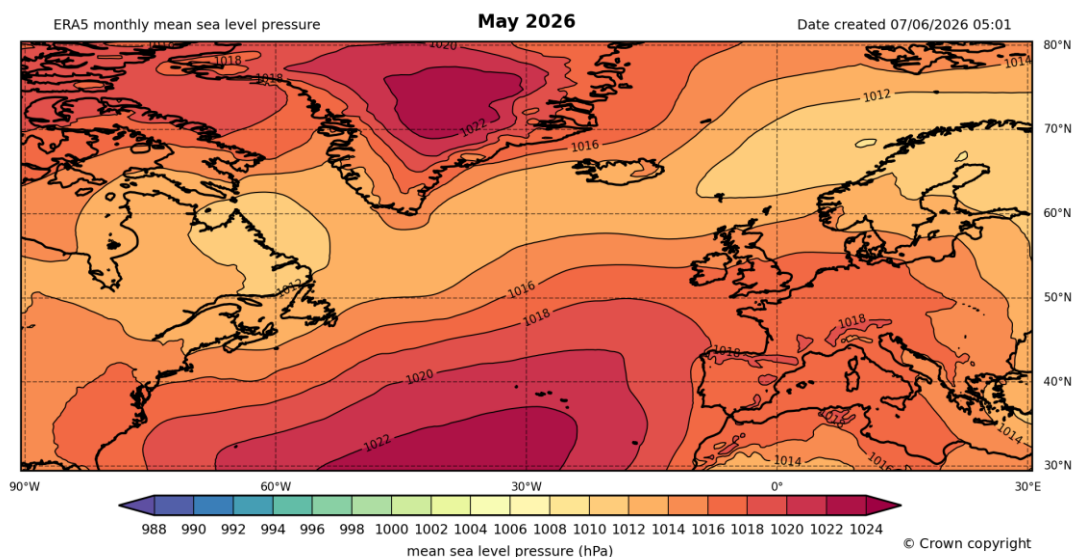


# Monthly atmospheric circulation

## Mean sea level pressure

These charts show the monthly mean sea level pressure for May 2026 for the UK and north Atlantic, based on the ERA5 reanalysis (Hersbach et al, 2019), both as actual values and as an anomaly relative to the May long term average. These charts provide an indication of the weather characteristics of the month overall i.e. whether the weather type has been generally settled (high pressure) or unsettled (low pressure) during the month.

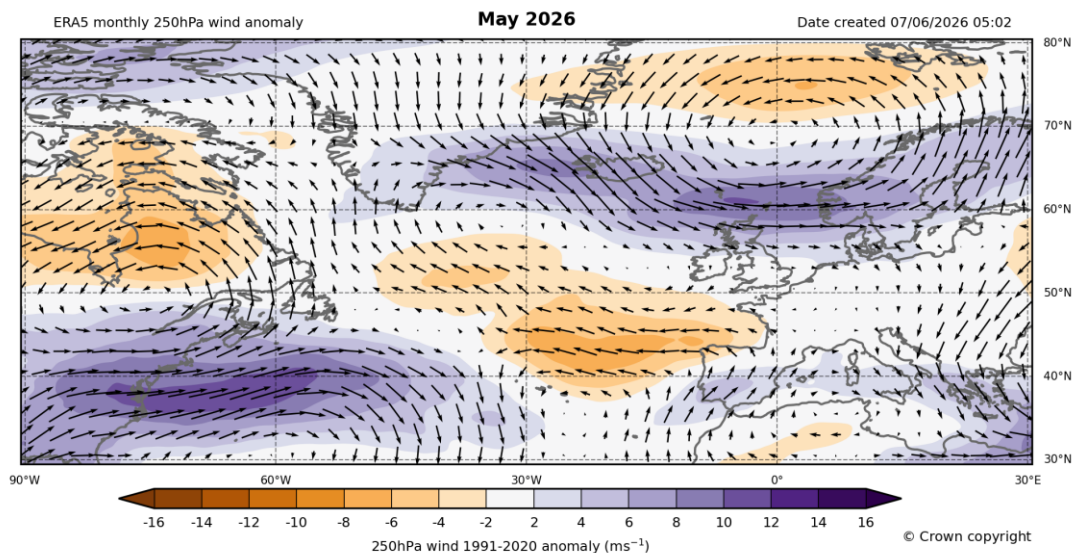
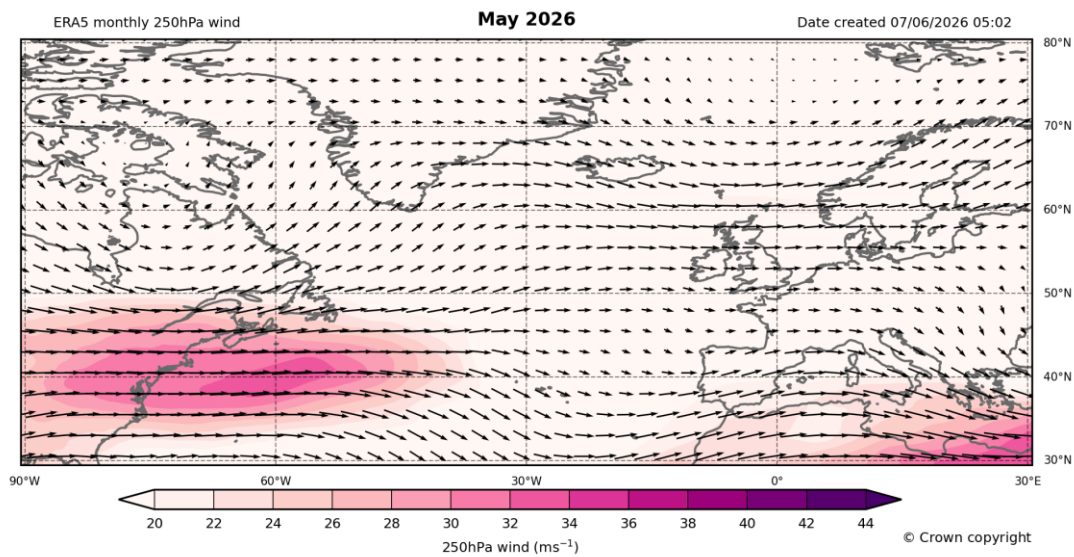
The overall MSLP for May was very close to the average, with slightly elevated MSLP across southern continental Europe, slightly below average MSLP across northern Scandinavia and average MSLP across the UK in between.



## 250hPa wind speed and direction

These charts show the monthly 250hPa wind speed and direction for May 2026 for the UK and north Atlantic, based on the ERA5 reanalysis (Hersbach et al, 2019), both as actual values and as an anomaly relative to the May long term average. This provides an indication of the mean strength and position of the jet stream compared to normal. The wind anomaly map shows shaded (scalar) wind speed anomalies with arrows as (vector) wind anomalies.

The jetstream had slightly weaker flow across the south of the UK than average, with slightly stronger flow across the very north of Scotland.



## Weather diary

- **Generally cool and unsettled up to mid-month, then record breaking heat**

An almost semi-permanent high pressure situated to the west of the UK for most of the month resulted in a persistent northerly or northwesterly airflow over the country, keeping temperatures at or below average for the first 3 weeks of May, certainly for central and northern regions. By the 21st, the Atlantic High had been replaced with one centred over the near continent. The change to southerly winds brought a dramatic and record-breaking rise in temperatures, and coupled with a lack of rainfall, led to water shortage issues in parts of southeast England.

The very start of the month gave no indication to the prolonged cool and unsettled weather the UK was going to experience. A southeasterly airflow led to temperatures hitting the mid-20s Celsius on the 1st. After that, the UK was plagued with a series of Atlantic lows, bringing cooler temperatures, wind and rain to all regions.

By the 9th, a ridge of high pressure had extended east introducing drier but colder conditions to Northern Ireland, Scotland and northern England, with overnight frosts, and maxima generally were restricted to the mid to high teens. As the high pressure receded back into the Atlantic by the 12th, once again, the cool unsettled theme resumed with depressions and their associated fronts swept southwards over the UK. The 17th and 18th saw Wales and Northern Ireland experience their highest rainfall for the month, with daily totals exceeding 30mm in places. A rather deep depression on the 19th also brought the windiest conditions across the country as a whole.

However, it was all change from the 20th. High pressure became established over the near continent and was to influence the weather over the UK for the rest of the month. Southerly or southwesterly winds brought very warm or hot, dry, sunny weather to all regions, but the biggest impact was felt over southeast England. On the 23rd the whole of the UK saw temperatures exceeding 20°C, and up to 30°C in southern England. The climb in temperatures continued and peaked on the 26th, with 30°C being reported widely across England and Wales, and 35.1°C recorded in London. Although there was a general decrease on maxima by the end of the month, southeast England was still experiencing temperatures hitting 30°C.

## Notes

The Met Office National Meteorological Library and Archive holds a near-continuous record of monthly weather reports from 1884, and this report forms a continuation of that series. The purpose of each report is to provide an overview of the weather conditions across the UK for that month. The emphasis is mainly based on observations from the surface network of weather stations. Climate series based on from data from these stations are used to provide long term context.

This summary was produced on 08/06/2026 12:41. The statistics are a provisional assessment of the observational data available at the time of production. Ongoing data receipt and quality assurance processes may result in subsequent updates to the statistics presented.

If you have any questions or feedback about this product, spot any data errors or omissions, or wish to obtain further data, please contact the Met Office.

For historical monthly weather reports please visit the Library and Archive.

- The land-surface observations presented in this report are from the Met Office official weather station network which includes both automatic weather stations and manual climate stations operated by volunteer observers. Rainfall data are from the official registered rain-gauge network which includes rain-gauges operated by a number of key partners including the Environment Agency, Scottish Environmental Protection Agency and Northern Ireland Water.
- The observations are carefully managed such that they conform to current best-practice observational standards as defined by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). The observations also pass through a range of quality assurance procedures at the Met Office before application for climate monitoring.
- Daily and monthly maps, monthly statistics and monthly time-series are primarily based on the HadUK-Grid dataset of 1km resolution UK gridded climate data (Hollis et al, 2019). Monthly statistics from the monthly Central England temperature series 1659 (Manley, 1974) and England and Wales precipitation series from 1766 (Wigley et al, 1984) provide long term context.
- The monthly lightning activity map is based on data from the Met Office LEELA (Lightning Electromagnetic Emission Location by Arrival time difference) system. This is an automatic lightning location network comprising around ten lightning outstation sensors located across Europe.
- The monthly maps of mean sea level pressure and 250hPa wind speed and direction are based on the ERA5 reanalysis (Hersbach et al, 2019). ERA5 is the fifth generation ECMWF reanalysis for the global climate and weather for the past 4 to 7 decades. Reanalysis combines model data with observations from across the world into a globally complete and consistent dataset using the laws of physics.

Hersbach, H., Bell, B., Berrisford, P., Biavati, G., Horányi, A., Muñoz Sabater, J., Nicolas, J., Peubey, C., Radu, R., Rozum, I., Schepers, D., Simmons, A., Soci, C., Dee, D., Thépaut, J-N. (2019): ERA5 monthly averaged data on single levels from 1959 to present. Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) Climate Data Store (CDS).  
<https://doi.org/10.24381/cds.f17050d7>

Hollis, D, McCarthy, MP, Kendon, M, Legg, T, Simpson, I. HadUK-Grid - A new UK dataset of gridded climate observations. *Geosci Data J.* 2019; 6: 151-159.  
<https://doi.org/10.1002/gdj3.78>

Manley, G. (1974), *Central England temperatures: Monthly means 1659 to 1973.* *Q.J.R. Meteorol. Soc.*, 100: 389-405. <https://doi.org/10.1002/qj.49710042511>

Wigley, T.M.L., Lough, J.M. and Jones, P.D. (1984), *Spatial patterns of precipitation in England and Wales and a revised, homogeneous England and Wales precipitation series.* *J. Climatol.*, 4: 1-25. <https://doi.org/10.1002/joc.3370040102>

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