

The Northwest Highlands

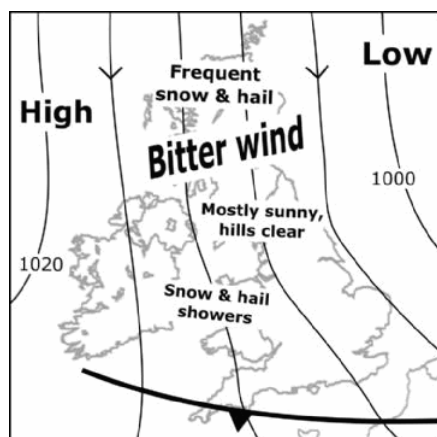
Areas north from Knoydart in the west, and the Great Glen towards the east (NB. Does not include Mull and areas west of Loch Linnhe, these are found in the West Highlands forecast.)



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General Summary for Friday, 2 January, 2026



British Mountain Summary:

Based on forecast chart for noon 2 January, 2026

Bitterly cold north-northwesterly winds, gale-force over many hills, typically strongest in morning, again late in day Scotland. Frequent snow and hail northern Scotland, blizzard conditions on mountains. Showers also affect Wales. Mostly dry, sunny and clear hills N England & S Scotland. Most terrain frozen.

Headline for The Northwest Highlands

Windy, squally, severe chill factor. Snow and hail to lower slopes.

Detailed Forecast for Friday, 2 January, 2026

How windy? (On the Munros)	Northerly 30 to 40mph, squally gusts in showers. Up to 50mph around dawn mainly Skye and Kintail areas. Increasing again into the evening toward 50mph.
Effect of wind on you?	Severe wind chill over the mountains. Frequent buffeting in exposure on higher terrain, gusts knocking you off balance. The most challenging conditions at first, but deteriorating again after sunset.
How wet? (Precipitation and its impact)	Near-constant snow and hail A succession of heavy showers coming in from the north, snow and hail falling and accumulating to sea level. Frequent whiteout over the mountains. Risk of isolated thunder.
Cloud on the hills?	Often shrouding tops Cloud base constantly changing, often capping hills above 800-900m, shafts of cloud to 600m in showers. Brief breaks to upper slopes mostly toward Great Glen.
Chance of cloud free Munros?	20%
Sunshine? Air clarity (below cloud)	Rare brief bursts of sun. Visibility often appalling due to snow falling or blowing and where also in cloud; but intermittently very good.
How Cold? (at 900m)	-5 or -6C. Wind chill feeling like -15 to -20C on tops.
Freezing Level	Most terrain frozen, sub-zero all day glens upward. Just above freezing up to 200-300m on slopes nearest to the coast.

The Northwest Highlands - Looking Ahead

	Saturday 3 January	Sunday 4 January
How windy? (On the Munros) Effect of wind on you?	Northerly 35 to 45mph, squally gusts in showers, over 50mph on some higher areas. Continued severe wind chill over the mountains. Frequent buffeting on exposed terrain, walking often challenging.	North to northwesterly 35 to 40mph, squally gusts in showers. Continued severe wind chill over the mountains. Arduous walking with frequent buffeting on exposed terrain.
How wet? (Precipitation and its impact)	Near-constant snow and hail An ongoing stream of heavy showers coming in from the north, snow and hail falling and accumulating to sea level. Frequent whiteout on the tops. Risk isolated thunder.	Near-constant snow and hail An ongoing stream of heavy snow showers coming in from the north, falling and accumulating to sea level. Some hail near coasts with risk isolated thunder. Frequent whiteout on the tops.
Cloud on the hills? Chance of cloud free Munros?	Often shrouding tops Cloud base constantly changing, often capping hills above 800-900m, shafts of cloud to 600m in showers. Brief breaks to upper slopes mostly toward Great Glen. 20%	Most tops shrouded, variably lowering Cloud base constantly changing, often capping hills above 800-900m, shafts of cloud to 600m in showers. Brief breaks to upper slopes mostly toward Great Glen/Ben Wyvis. 20%
Sunshine? Air clarity (below cloud)	Brief bursts of sun, more frequent Kintail. Visibility often appalling due to snow falling or blowing and where also in cloud; but intermittently very good.	Brief bursts of sun, more frequent Kintail. Visibility often appalling due to snow falling or blowing and where also in cloud; but intermittently very good.
How Cold? (at 900m) Freezing Level	-5 or -6C. Wind chill feeling like -20C in exposure on tops. Terrain widely frozen, staying sub-zero from glens upward. Nearest the coast, partial thawing in sunlight to 300-400m.	-5 or -6C (to -8C above 1200m); may be a degree higher Skye. Wind chill feeling like -20C in exposure on tops. Terrain widely frozen, staying sub-zero from glens upward. Nearest the coast, partial thawing in sunlight to 200-300m.

Planning Outlook

All mountain areas of Britain from Saturday, 3 January, 2026

Terrain extensively frozen this weekend and early next week; sub-zero temperatures from the glens upward in Scotland and some valleys inland in northern England. Substantial fresh snow accumulations in the North West Highlands and Cairngorms, heavy showers streaming in from the north also containing hail. Largely dry and sunny from central Scotland to northern England. Hail and snow showers will run into north and west Wales from the sea. Bitter northerly winds, up to gale force higher tops, lessening somewhat during Sunday. Some fluctuation of freezing level during next week, though most high terrain stays sub-zero, and as fronts come in from the west, upland snowfalls are possible more widely.

Forecast issued at 16:00 on Thursday, 1 January, 2026

The production of the Scottish forecasts is fully funded by the Scottish Government through Mountaineering Scotland with the support of sportscotland. Forecasts are issued daily by 16:30 and are kept under review and amended as necessary. However, expected conditions can still change after issue. © Copyright Mountain Weather Information Service, 2026.