

2024 Month by Month Impacts

	<u>Weather impacts</u>	<u>In the news</u>
<u>January</u>	<p>January started on a mild, wet and unsettled note, continuing the theme of much of the autumn and December. Strong winds and heavy rain from storms Henk, Isha and Jocelyn during the month caused fallen trees, flooding, travel disruption and power cuts across the UK. Mostly colder than average conditions during the first half of the month were compensated for by much milder conditions later in the month, resulting in close to average temperatures for the UK for the month as a whole.</p>	<p>The year began with widespread concern over the health of senior royals. King Charles III and the Princess of Wales were both hospitalized, prompting a wave of public sympathy and speculation about the monarchy's future. Meanwhile, the government reported a decline in migrant crossings over the English Channel, marking the first annual drop since records began. The sentencing of Valdo Caloocan — who killed three people in Nottingham — sparked national outrage after he was given a hospital order rather than a prison sentence, raising questions about mental health and justice.</p>
<u>February</u>	<p>February was a mild but wet month with generally unsettled weather. Heavy rain across the country throughout the month, particularly in southern England, caused widespread transport disruption due to flooding and landslips. Overall, temperatures for the month were warmer than average, especially across England. The UK overall was provisionally 2.2°C warmer than average, making this the second warmest February in the series from 1884 behind 1998. It was the warmest February on record for England and Wales.</p>	<p>Political tensions simmered as Prime Minister Rishi Sunak faced growing pressure from within the Conservative Party to call an early general election. Labour continued to lead in the polls, and speculation mounted about a possible summer vote. The royal family remained in the spotlight, with updates on the King's and Princess of Wales' recovery dominating headlines. Public services were strained, and junior doctors threatened further strike action over pay and working conditions.</p>
<u>March</u>	<p>March overall was unsettled, wet and dull. The month began colder than normal across the UK, with temperatures across the UK cooler than average and southern areas recording notably low daily minimum temperatures. Snow fell on the 2nd across parts of south west England, causing some travel disruption and persistent rain across the country throughout the month, particularly in southern England, caused groundwater and surface water flooding. However, the cool weather early in the month was replaced with milder weather for much of the rest of the month, with temperatures widely into the mid to high teens at times.</p>	<p>The cost-of-living crisis persisted, with inflation remaining stubbornly high. Energy bills and food prices continued to squeeze household budgets, and economic forecasts painted a grim picture. Strikes by junior doctors, teachers, and transport workers disrupted daily life across the country. The government struggled to respond effectively, and public confidence in leadership waned. Political commentators began openly discussing the likelihood of a Labour landslide if an election were held.</p>
<u>April</u>	<p>April continued the theme of the previous few months, being unsettled, wet and dull. The April showers were present from the beginning of the month, with frontal systems bringing persistent rain across the UK. Heavy rain and strong winds from storms Kathleen and Pierrick led to flooding and travel disruption. Significant coastal flooding affected the south coast as strong winds coincided with high spring tides. The cooler second half of the month balanced out the warmer first half of the month. It was a wet month, with all countries provisionally recording over 100% of the average monthly rainfall.</p>	<p>Health Secretary Wes Streeting declared the NHS "broken" and commissioned a major review led by Lord Darzi to overhaul the system. The announcement came amid mounting pressure on hospitals and GPs, with waiting times reaching record highs. In Southport, a violent attack triggered local unrest and protests, highlighting concerns about crime and policing. The government's handling of both health and public safety issues drew criticism from opposition parties and civil society groups.</p>

<u>May</u>	<u>Weather impacts</u>	<u>In the news</u>
	<p>May started with thunderstorms across southern England, and the weather continued to be unsettled for the first week. Low pressure systems brought scattered showers across the UK, some of them locally heavy. However, a high pressure system early in the month covered England and Wales and brought more settled weather. The clear weather coincided with a large solar flare that led to the aurora borealis being visible across the entire UK. However, low pressure systems returned towards the middle of the month, bringing further unsettled weather and more thunderstorms across the UK. Rainfall was at times heavy, but otherwise patchy and light, with some bright, sunny spells. This pattern of unsettled weather continued for the rest of the month. The UK experienced its warmest May on record, in a series going back to 1884.</p>	<p>Election fever intensified as rumours swirled about a summer vote. Labour's lead in the polls widened, and Reform UK gained traction among disaffected Conservative voters. Climate activists staged large-scale demonstrations in London and Manchester, demanding urgent action on fossil fuels and biodiversity. Pro-Palestinian protests also drew thousands, reflecting growing public engagement with international issues. The political atmosphere grew increasingly charged, with parties preparing for a possible snap election.</p>
<u>June</u>	<u>Weather impacts</u>	<u>In the news</u>
	<p>In contrast to the warmer than average May, June was cooler than average, with temperatures in the first two weeks roughly 2°C below average. The cool start to the month was due to northerly and north westerly winds bringing cold Arctic air across the UK. From the 24th to the 27th, a period of high pressure brought warm temperatures across the UK. However, the hot weather was short-lived, and temperatures returned to around or below average for the last few days of the month resulting in mean temperatures only 0.4°C below the average for the UK.</p>	<p>In a surprise move, Rishi Sunak announced a general election for July 4, catching many in Westminster off guard. The announcement triggered a flurry of campaign activity, with Labour, Conservatives, Liberal Democrats, and Reform UK launching aggressive platforms. Key issues included the NHS, housing, immigration, and economic recovery. The King resumed limited public duties, easing concerns about his health. The month was dominated by debates, rallies, and media coverage of the unfolding election drama.</p>
<u>July</u>	<u>Weather impacts</u>	<u>In the news</u>
	<p>The start of July continued June's theme of cooler than average weather, but with the addition of more wet weather. Temperatures were consistently and persistently below average across the UK for the first two weeks. Low pressure across the UK led to unsettled weather, and several frontal systems brought bands of rain. Areas of southwest, southeast and northeast England had already received more than the average July rainfall by mid month. Temperatures increased in the third week of July, with temperatures in the upper 20s. This was provisionally the coldest start to July since 2004. However, the warm end to the month led to an overall mean temperature of 14.8°C, with an anomaly of just -0.5°C.</p>	<p>Labour won a historic landslide victory, securing 412 seats and ending 14 years of Conservative rule. Keir Starmer became Prime Minister on July 5, promising "national renewal" and a return to stable governance. The Conservatives suffered their worst defeat in modern history, and Rishi Sunak resigned as party leader. Reform UK made significant gains, while the Liberal Democrats and Greens also improved their standing. The political landscape shifted dramatically, with Starmer's cabinet quickly moving to implement key reforms.</p>

<u>August</u>	<u>Weather impacts</u>	<u>In the news</u>
	<p>August began on a warm note, with temperatures above average across the country, but cooled in the second half of the month. The weather was changeable, with scattered showers as well as dry, fine spells. The winds were often from the west or southwest, bringing moist, sometimes warm air from the Atlantic. August began with widespread thunderstorms across central and southern parts of England, which brought heavy downpours and some flooding. Temperatures were above or around average for the first week, and then a warm spell moved in seeing the highest temperature of the year so far, 34.8°C, recorded in Cambridge. Following this the temperatures returned to around average for many and below average for northern areas. Storm Lilian brought strong winds and heavy rain to northern England and Wales and parts of Scotland causing power cuts and disruption to road and rail transport. Overall, temperatures across the UK for the month were slightly above average.</p>	<p>The new Labour government began rolling out its agenda, focusing on NHS investment, housing reform, and restoring public services. Chancellor Rachel Reeves announced plans for a “growth-first” economic strategy. King Charles III resumed full public duties, appearing at several official events. The summer also saw a rise in anti-immigration protests and counter-demonstrations, reflecting deep divisions in public opinion. Starmer’s honeymoon period was cautiously optimistic, though critics warned of challenges ahead.</p>
<u>September</u>	<u>Weather impacts</u>	<u>In the news</u>
	<p>September saw unsettled weather across the UK, with variable temperatures and persistent showers. The month began on a warm note, with above average temperatures across the UK persisting for the first week as successive plumes of warm, humid air were drawn northwards off continental Europe. However, by the second week of the month the temperatures dropped as Arctic air moved in. The third week saw temperatures again above average, before a return to much cooler conditions in the final week of the month. It was also a very wet month for many. Overall, September saw below average temperatures.</p>	<p>Education reforms took centre stage, with new policies aimed at reducing class sizes, increasing teacher pay, and improving school infrastructure. The government also launched consultations on reforming sentencing laws after several high-profile criminal cases sparked public debate. The Labour Party held its annual conference in Liverpool, where Starmer outlined his long-term vision for Britain. Meanwhile, the Conservative Party began a bitter leadership contest, with several MPs vying to rebuild the party’s shattered base.</p>
<u>October</u>	<u>Weather impacts</u>	<u>In the news</u>
	<p>October saw a mix of settled conditions due to high-pressure systems as well as wet and windy weather from a succession of low-pressure systems, including the first named storm of the 2024/25 season. The month started with wet weather across the Midlands and East Anglia, followed by a brief interlude of settled weather as high-pressure dominated. A major Atlantic low-pressure system arrived towards the end of the first week bringing rain. A return to clear and settled weather during the second week of the month provided good conditions for viewing the Aurora after another solar geomagnetic storm, before slow-moving weather fronts moved in and brought widespread rain to England and Wales. During the third week of the month, the first named storm of the season, Storm Ashley, arrived bringing heavy rain and strong winds before high pressure returned to close out the month. Overall, October saw above average temperatures, with the UK 0.7°C above the long-term average.</p>	<p>Labour unveiled its first budget, prioritizing public investment, green infrastructure, and tax reform. The budget received mixed reviews, with praise for its ambition but criticism over funding gaps. Protests over housing shortages and immigration policy continued, particularly in urban centres. The government faced its first major test in managing expectations and delivering rapid change. Internationally, the UK responded to escalating tensions in the Middle East with diplomatic outreach and humanitarian aid.</p>

<u>November</u>	<u>Weather impacts</u>	<u>In the news</u>
	<p>November was a month of two very contrasting halves. The first half of the month was dominated by high pressure, leading to dull, dry and mild conditions with very low sunshine levels. This ‘anticyclonic gloom’ persisted until mid-month, at which point there was a shift to lower pressure brought by an Arctic maritime airmass. This airmass resulted in colder temperatures and wintry precipitation. The second half of November saw continued cold conditions with frequent wintry showers. The second named storm of the season, Storm Bert, arrived on the 23rd and brought exceptionally wet and windy weather to the UK, particularly south Wales and south-west England. A few days later, the third named storm of the season, Storm Conall, brushed along the southern coast of England, bringing heavy rainfall. Although November started with mild temperatures, cold spells in the latter half of the month brought the overall mean temperature to near average.</p>	<p>Foreign policy dominated headlines as the UK joined calls for a ceasefire in Gaza and increased its humanitarian support to the region. Domestically, the government faced scrutiny over its handling of asylum applications and border security. In a lighter moment, Oasis announced a reunion tour, selling over a million tickets worldwide and sparking nostalgia across generations. The cultural moment provided a brief respite from political intensity and economic anxiety.</p>
<u>December</u>	<u>Weather impacts</u>	<u>In the news</u>
	<p>December was marked by a series of unsettled weather patterns across the UK. The month began with a mix of rain and wintry showers. Storm Darragh, the fourth named storm of the season, brought significant disruption from the 6th to the 8th, with heavy rain and severe gales, especially in coastal areas of Wales and southwest England. This multi-hazard event brought a prolonged spell of damaging winds, as well as significant rain, and saw the first red warning issued since Storm Isha in January 2024. Following the storm, high pressure briefly settled over the UK, bringing calmer and colder conditions. However, changeable weather returned with frontal systems bringing showers across various parts of the UK as well as fog and wind and some wintry showers on high ground in the north. Temperatures turned milder as a tropical maritime airmass from the southwest dominated, with fog and drizzle across the UK. The final few days of December saw wet and unsettled weather set in. December was milder than average.</p>	<p>As the year drew to a close, analysts described 2024 as a transformative year for British politics. Labour’s early performance was met with cautious optimism, though critics urged faster action on key pledges. Public sentiment was mixed, with some hopeful for long-term change and others sceptical of political promises. The King delivered his Christmas message, emphasizing unity and resilience. The country entered 2025 with a new government, new priorities, and a sense of renewed possibility.</p>

Sources: The Met Office/Sky News/BBC News/The Independent