

The Northwest Highlands

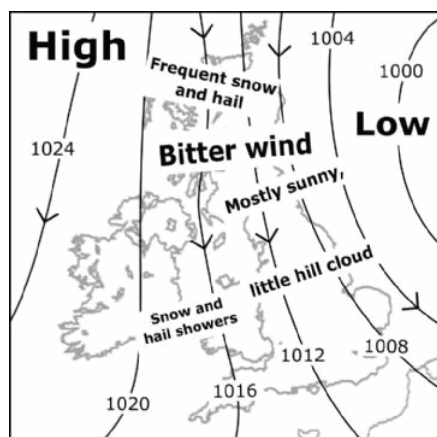
Areas north from Knoydart in the west, and the Great Glen towards the east (NB. Does not include Mull and areas west of Loch Linnhe, these are found in the West Highlands forecast.)



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General Summary for Saturday, 3 January, 2026



British Mountain Summary:

Based on forecast chart for noon 3 January, 2026

Widespread sub-zero temperatures and wind, gales in northern England and Scotland; wind chill approaching -20C or lower on high summits. Near-constant snow showers in northern Scotland with snowdrifts building; snow showers into central/west Scotland and west Wales too. Mostly sunny southern Scotland and England.

Headline for The Northwest Highlands

Near-constant snow and gales; snowdrifts with whiteouts

Detailed Forecast for Saturday, 3 January, 2026

How windy? (On the Munros)	Northerly 35 to 45mph, squally gusts in showers, reaching over 50mph on some higher areas for periods, mostly east/north of Ullapool.
Effect of wind on you?	Severe wind chill over the mountains. Walking arduous, often challenging on exposed high terrain with frequent buffeting.
How wet? (Precipitation and its impact)	Near-constant snow, some hail too An ongoing stream of heavy showers coming in from the north, snow and hail falling and accumulating to sea level; a risk of isolated thunder near the coast. Frequent whiteout on the tops.
Cloud on the hills?	Fairly extensive over high terrain Cloud base constantly changing, often capping hills above 800-900m, shafts of cloud to 600m in showers, the lowest and most persistent bases in northwest Sutherland. Brief breaks to upper slopes mostly toward Great Glen and western Skye.
Chance of cloud free Munros?	20%
Sunshine? Air clarity (below cloud)	Brief bursts of sun, best chance Kintail to Ben Wyvis. Visibility often appalling due to snow falling or blowing and where also in cloud; but very good during local breaks.
How Cold? (at 900m)	-5 or -6C, coldest inland. Wind chill feeling like -20C in exposure on tops.
Freezing Level	Terrain widely frozen, staying sub-zero from glens upward. Near the west coast, partial thawing in sunlight up to 300m.

The Northwest Highlands - Looking Ahead

	Sunday 4 January	Monday 5 January
How windy? (On the Munros)	North to northwesterly 30 to 40mph, squally gusts in showers.	Northerly 25-30mph, shifting northwesterly afternoon, risk a brief period of stronger wind too.
Effect of wind on you?	Continued severe wind chill over the mountains. Arduous walking on snow cover with frequent buffeting in exposure.	Significant wind chill, severe on high exposed tops where walking conditions will be strenuous with buffeting.
How wet? (Precipitation and its impact)	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.	Very frequent snow showers An ongoing stream of snow showers coming in from the north, snow to sea level; extensive snow cover on the ground with frequent whiteout conditions on high ground. Risk some hail into Sutherland.
Cloud on the hills?	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.	Most tops shrouded, variably lowering Variable cloud base, often capping hills above 800-900m, shafts of cloud to 600m in showers. Some brief breaks to upper slopes though these fleeting. Becoming more extensive from the north after nightfall.
Chance of cloud free Munros?	20%	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.	Often cloudy with frequently appalling visibility due to snow falling or blowing. Brief bursts of sun with very good visibility.
How Cold? (at 900m)	-5 or -6C (-8C in glens at dawn); may be a degree higher Skye. Wind chill feeling as cold as -22C in exposure on tops.	-5C (-8C at dawn in the glens and high tops). Wind chill feeling like -20C in exposure on tops.
Freezing Level	Terrain widely frozen, staying sub-zero from glens upward. Nearest the coast, partial thawing in sunlight, to 200m Skye.	Terrain widely frozen. Nearest the coast, partial thawing in sunlight to 200-300m, may rise a bit more here after dark.

Planning Outlook

All mountain areas of Britain from Sunday, 4 January, 2026

Terrain extensively frozen into early next week; sub-zero temperatures from the glens upward in Scotland and increasingly into valleys in England and Wales. Heavy showers streaming into northern and coastal Scotland, some containing hail, most terrain covered in snow with substantial snowdrifts in the Northwest Highlands and Cairngorms. Largely dry and sunny in southern Scotland and England. Hail and snow showers will run into north and west Wales from the sea. Bitter northerly winds, up to gale force higher tops at times.

More variable next week: 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 15:16 on Friday, 2 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.