

Information Sheet 4 – Weather bomb

'Weather bomb' hits power and travel in northern UK

BBC News 10th December 2014

High winds and huge waves have affected north-western parts of the UK as bad weather hit power supplies and travel.

The storm brought hundreds of lightning strikes, temporarily cutting power across the Western Isles. Energy firm SSE said it had managed to reconnect 28,000 homes that had their supply cut, but 2,800 are still without power.

A wind speed of 144mph was recorded on the remote St Kilda islands, with gusts in excess of 80mph elsewhere.

A Met Office amber warning to "be prepared" for parts of Scotland and Northern Ireland was downgraded to yellow - "be aware" - at 18:00.

BBC Scotland correspondent Laura Bicker said the Western Isles and Northern Isles had "borne the brunt" of the storm's force and travel restrictions remained in place.

Speaking from Barra in the Outer Hebrides, Donald MacLeod, captain of the island's lifeboat, said there was rain, hail and "plenty of wind". He said the storm had "grown through the night" on Tuesday, adding: "The waves are pretty bad to the west – with 14 metre (45ft) high waves."

Power supplier Scottish and Southern Energy said the problem affecting the Western Isles was caused by lightning, but electricity has been restored to most homes. North-west England was also hit by high waves, as seen here at Whitehaven in Cumbria.

Earlier, Western Isles Council said all schools and nurseries would be closed, along with many other facilities. Many schools in the Highlands were also closed. In Aberdeenshire, about 20 vehicles got stuck in icy conditions on the B974 Banchory to Fettercairn road. A gritter was sent and the vehicles were later freed. Ahead of the forecast storms, ferry operator Caledonian MacBrayne warned of severe disruption to its services.

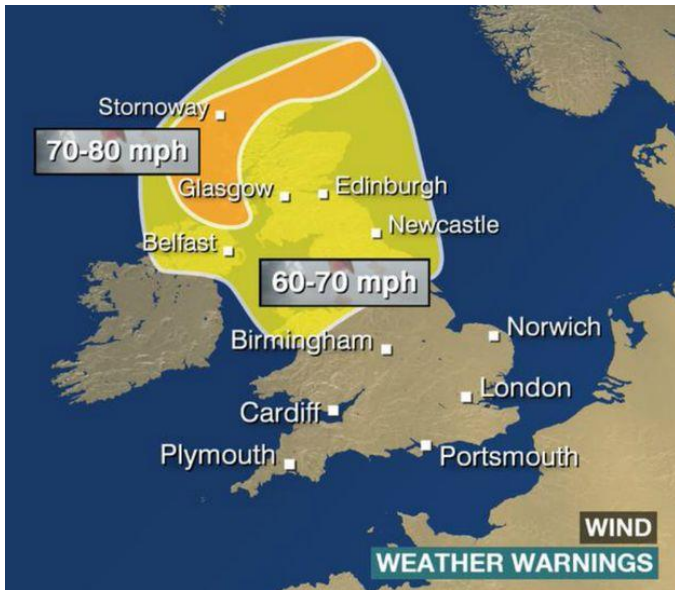
The Stromness lifeboat escorted a Spanish fishing boat to safety after it was hit by a large wave off Orkney. Stena Line services from Cairnryan to Belfast were cancelled after a ferry collided with part of the south-west Scotland terminal. Irish Ferries cancelled some services between Holyhead and Dublin. P&O's services between Larne and Cairnryan had delays of at least two hours. A Spanish trawler was escorted to safety by a lifeboat after being hit by a large wave off Orkney.

Numerous coastal flood warnings and alerts have also been issued, mostly in Scotland. Richard Brown, of the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, said Caithness, Sutherland, the Western Isles, Orkney and Shetland were at the greatest risk of coastal flooding. Argyll and Bute, the Firth of Clyde, Clyde estuary and Dumfries and Galloway could also be affected, he said.

The ferocity of the waves took some bystanders by surprise in Portstewart Water poured over the sea defences at Portstewart. Gusts of more than 60mph (95km/h) have been recorded in Northern Ireland, where the speed limit on the Foyle Bridge in Derry has been reduced to 30mph. Network Rail said some train services in Scotland were cancelled due to the weather.

Map analysis

Severe weather warnings map (Met Office)



No Severe Weather	Be Aware	Be Prepared	Take Action

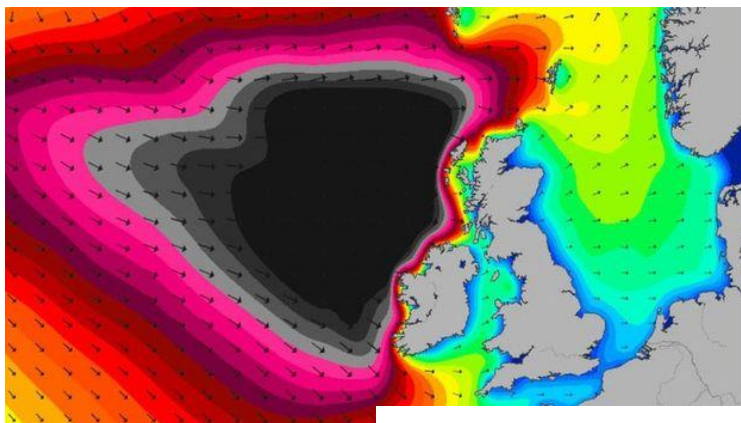
Severe weather warnings explained

Yellow: Be aware. Severe weather is possible. Plan ahead thinking about possible travel delays, or the disruption of activities.

Amber: Be prepared. There is an increased chance of bad weather affecting you, which could disrupt your plans and cause travel delays, road and rail closures, interruption to power and the risk to life and property. Be prepared to protect your family and community from the impacts of the severe weather.

Red: Take action. Extreme weather is expected. Take action now to keep yourself and others safe from the impact of the weather. Widespread damage, travel and power disruption and risk to life is likely. Avoid dangerous areas and follow the advice of the emergency services and local councils.

Wave height map in feet (MagicSeaweed.com)



Weather chart for 9th December 2014 (Met Office)

