

WEATHER OUTLOOK FOR WINTER 2005/06

Statement on winter weather – supporting information

The Met Office continue to predict a colder than average winter for the UK and central Europe. At long range it is difficult to be geographically precise, but for the UK, southern regions are more likely to be affected.

The balance of probability is for a winter colder than that experienced since 1995-96. The last eight winters have been mild and therefore have perhaps given much of the UK the impression that these are 'normal'.

They cannot at this stage be specific in time, (i.e. this forecast relates to the whole winter period December-February inclusive) and as such is useful to those organisations which need to consider contingency planning for the winter season. Using a 'traffic light' analogy these organisations should consider being on an 'Amber Alert'.

On two-thirds of occasions this type of forecast gives good advice, although it is important to realise therefore that on one-third of all occasions the advice is wrong.

There is also some indication that the UK could be drier than average over the winter period but this also should be treated with some caution.

A colder than average winter forecast could have impacts for, among others:

- **NHS resources as there is a strong correlation between extremes of weather and health, particularly in the elderly and vulnerable**
- **Transport providers and authorities who need to ensure our road and railways networks remain operational**
- **Energy providers who could expect greater demands on supplies**
- **Agriculture**
- **Retail**
- **Insurance**

More information is available at www.metoffice.gov.uk