



An Roinn Tithíochta, Pleanála
agus Rialtais Áitiúil
Department of Housing, Planning
and Local Government

Update from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government on the recent severe weather event

The Department has received the following updates in relation to the recent severe weather event.

Met Éireann National Weather Warnings

STATUS YELLOW

Low Temperature Warning for Ireland

Lowest temperatures are expected to fall to between zero and -3 degrees generally, but may fall locally to -4 degrees with a widespread sharp frost.

Issued:

Thursday 08 March 2018 11:00

Valid:

Friday 09 March 2018 00:01 to Friday 09 March 2018 08:00

Local Government Sector

Most Local Authority Crisis Management Teams have also now been stood down reflecting the improved conditions. However, difficult conditions remain in Wicklow, Wexford, and South Dublin and the advice to the public to be extremely careful when using the roads remains in place.

3,300 local authority outdoor staff were deployed to assist with response and recovery operations.

350 Civil Defence personnel were deployed countrywide since start of severe weather assisting LAs, HSE and utilities, including ESB Networks.

430 local authority controlled snowploughs and heavy plant machinery deployed. A further 550 private contractors/excavators engaged to assist local authority efforts.

24,000km of roads gritted daily by local authorities when necessary.

As of 7 March, approximately 80,000 tonnes of salt was available in the country. An order for an additional 30,000 tonnes of salt is expected to be issued by Transport Infrastructure Ireland today

and with delivery commencing over next few days. This is purely a precautionary measure. An estimated 35,000 tonnes of salt was used over the week of the snow. Gritting is still ongoing but now at routine levels as frosty conditions arise.

Homelessness

Local authorities in the main urban centres of Dublin, Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford kept all cold weather initiatives for rough sleepers in place and additional capacity has been put in place to ensure that there are additional bed spaces available for rough sleepers that would not normally avail of homeless services.

In Dublin, the Dublin Region Homeless Executive (DRHE), 104 additional beds and 'one night only' beds will remain open on a 24 hour basis.

To provide for additional contingency beds, the DRHE also established an emergency shelter in St Catherine's Leisure Centre in Dublin 8. This facility was managed by the Peter McVerry Trust and provided shelter for up to 116 individuals.

The facility in St. Catherine's needs to revert to its use as a sports centre for the local community this week. The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government has been working with the DRHE and the Peter McVerry Trust to source additional accommodation for the individuals in this shelter to ensure that they continue to receive the supports and medical attention they require. The DRHE has now confirmed that alternative arrangements have been secured for all 63 individuals present on the night of Wednesday 7 March.

Defence Forces

Currently there are 202 personnel and 36 vehicles deployed in counties Wexford, North Kildare and Wicklow. 2,500 Defence Forces personnel deployed and 770 vehicles during the severe weather.

Irish Water

As of Thursday morning, 8 March, Irish Water is reporting that some **4,000 people nationally** are currently without water (down significantly from 11,000 reported on Tuesday 6 March). A further **12,000** people are on a "Do Not Drink" notice in Fethard in County Tipperary where kerosene leaked into the water source. Some **37,000 people** outside of the Greater Dublin Area have restrictions in place. A further **12,600 people** are on storm-related Boil Water Notices (down from 14,500 reported on 6 March).

Health Sector

Health services were significantly disrupted due to the bad weather. However, there have been considerable efforts taken towards getting back to a state of normality.

All outpatient departments are now open for services including Wexford which was closed earlier in the week due to the snow. Most Day Care facilities are providing services. A small number have suspended services in order to allow an over-flow for extremely busy Emergency Department services, which is in line with agreed escalation processes. Only urgent inpatient elective (including cancer cases) are proceeding this week. All cases are selected based on clinical prioritisation. This situation is being reviewed on a daily basis.

The HSE had a backlog of approximately **40,000 home-help calls** to deal with at the start of the week. HSE Social Care has worked through these over the week and has managed to deal with most of them. There are a small number of areas outstanding due to access difficulty such as in Wicklow, Kildare and Wexford. It is hoped to deal with those once routes become clear.

The National Ambulance Service (NAS) dealt with approximately 800 to 1,000 calls per day during the emergency period; this number is now returning to normality. The NAS continues to provide a service transferring delayed discharge patients to alternative more appropriate settings