

Barnsley Council



Winter Service Policy

2025 - 2026

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1 Introduction

Winter Service Statutory Duty

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, as the local Highway Authority for Barnsley, has a statutory duty to maintain the public highway in the Barnsley borough. The legal position relating to the Highway Authority's responsibility in respect of the winter service is set out in an amendment to s41(1) of the Highways Act 1980 (c.66) (duty of highway authority to maintain the highway):

(1A) in particular details that a highway authority is under a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safe passage along a highway is not endangered by ice or snow.

Following the introduction of the Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003, Highway Authorities have to ensure that, so far as is reasonably practicable, safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow and ice. The arrangements Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council has in place are at least adequate to discharge this duty.

The Council recognises that the winter service is essential in aiding the safe movement of highway users, maintaining communications, reducing delays and enabling everyday life to continue. It is very important to both road safety and the local economy. The winter service that the Council provides is believed to be sufficient, so far as is reasonably practical, to discharge the duty imposed by the legislation. However, it is important to recognise that the Council has to prioritise its response to deal with winter weather due to logistics and available resources.

The Council provides the winter service through the Highway Delivery Group within the Highways and Engineering Service, who are referred to as Barnsley Highways.

Winter Service Standards

To respond as quickly and efficiently as possible to its responsibilities Barnsley Highways has adopted this policy for the winter service activities.

Barnsley Highways provides a winter service which, as far as reasonably practicable, will:

- Minimise the risk of loss of life and injury to highway users and preventing damage to vehicles and other property;
- Keep the highway free from obstruction and thereby avoiding unnecessary delay to passage.

Winter Service Period

The Winter Service period runs from 27th October 2025 to 12th April 2026.

Council Maintained Highways

Barnsley Highways has a responsibility to deliver the winter service on local Highway Authority maintained roads in the Barnsley borough only.

Reciprocal Arrangements with Neighbouring Authorities

To ensure continuity of service on routes crossing boundaries into adjacent local authority areas, the Council operates reciprocal gritting arrangements with neighbouring authorities. These authorities are:

- Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
- Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council
- Sheffield City Council
- Wakefield Metropolitan District Council

Trunk Roads

The Department for Transport is the highway authority for motorways and trunk roads within Barnsley. Responsibility for the operational maintenance of these trunk roads lies with National Highways as agents for the Department for Transport. The roads National Highways are responsible for in the Barnsley area include:

- M1 Motorway;
- A616(T) Trunk Road (J35A of the M1 to Flouch Roundabout, inclusive);
- A628(T) Trunk Road (Flouch Roundabout to the western borough boundary);
- A61(T) Trunk Road (J36 of the M1 to Westwood Roundabout).

Barnsley Highways has no responsibility for the winter service activities on these roads.

2 Winter Service Objectives

The Council's Winter Service Policy follows the recommendations issued by the UKRLG (UK Road Liaison Group) and takes into account the recommendations contained in *Well Managed Highways Infrastructure* and NWSRG guidance. These documents are reviewed annually, and any recommendations are included within the policy where practical.

Carriageway Salting (Gritting)

Precautionary salting, which is more generally referred to as 'gritting', will be carried out when ice formation on the highway can be reasonably anticipated using forecast information and data from 5 local, strategically placed roadside weather stations on the road network within the borough. For the purposes of this document, use of the word 'gritting' will mean precautionary salting.

Precautionary gritting operations will be concentrated in the first instance on the agreed network of Primary Routes that can be viewed [here](#) on the interactive maps. Primary Routes will be reviewed on an annual basis, taking into account changing climatic conditions, alterations to the road network, the location of major developments and advice from operational staff.

In times of extreme weather conditions, consideration will be made to precautionary gritting of Secondary Routes. It should be noted that in extreme weather conditions, access difficulties, for example parked vehicles, may influence precautionary gritting of Secondary Routes. Treatment of these Secondary Routes will only be carried out when the Primary Routes have been dealt with satisfactorily.

These routes will also be reviewed and updated on an annual basis, taking into account changing climatic conditions, alterations to the local road network, input from road users and operational staff and changing local needs.

Consideration will be given to gritting diversion routes where interruptions to the precautionary network have occurred.

Footways

It would be impractical and financially unviable to carry out precautionary gritting of footways, cycleways and pedestrian precincts (unless on a gritting route).

Consequently, no footway are treated on the network. However, there will be a certain amount of salt overspill onto footways and cycleways when precautionary gritting is being carried out on adjacent carriageway. Post-event gritting of footways and cycleways will be carried out on a priority basis during severe weather and then only when resources are available.

Snow Clearance

Snow clearance on carriageways will be undertaken on a priority basis. When operating in conditions of lying snow, ploughs will be fitted to vehicles and snow ploughing and gritting will be carried out focusing on Primary Route. At times, this approach may be changed to treat roads in order of traffic importance, i.e. principal road, bus routes, etc. In such conditions, vehicles, when ploughing, may be double manned.

Snow clearance on other minor routes will be carried out as resources permit and some routes and cul-de-sacs will be left to thaw naturally.

Snow clearance on footways and cycleways will only be carried out if resources are available.

3. Service general

Winter Service Operations

The winter service in Barnsley is operated by Barnsley Highways

Salt and Alternatives to Salt

Currently 6mm dry thorax rock salt is used across the borough for precautionary and secondary gritting. If necessary, where heavy snowfall has occurred, grit sand will be added to the salt or laid on its own to aid traffic movement.

There are a number of alternative materials and methods to salt and sand that can be used for the precautionary and post-event treatment of ice and snow. The cost benefit of using these is perceived to be low and there are associated environmental issues with using these. Therefore, 6mm dry thorax rock salt will continue to be used across Barnsley for the precautionary and post-event treatment of ice and snow.

The moisture content of salt can affect the spread rate of rock salt. Barnsley Highways operates from two depots, Smithies Depot and Penistone Depot. Both depots have Salt Domes housing stockpiles of rock salt to ensure that the moisture content remains both as low and as consistent as possible.

Calibration of spreaders

Spreaders will be calibrated before the start of each season, mid-season and following incidents or conditions that may require recalibration.

Preparations for Winter Period

Before the Winter Service Period commences, the following operations will be completed:

- Ensure salt stocks have been replenished (Part 1, Section 5);
- Salt bins filled (Part 1, Section 5);
- Jumbo bags are delivered to agreed locations;
- All operatives are trained, competent and are working towards or have achieved accreditation;
- Any training is arranged and undertaken for all staff involved in delivering the winter service;
- All gritters are serviced and calibrated;
- Liaise with neighbouring authorities to identify any issues.

4. Weather Forecast Information

Weather Information Systems

An effective and efficient winter service is only possible with reliable and accurate information about weather conditions. Without this information it is not possible to make

effective and appropriate decisions on the winter service operations. Barnsley Highways utilises road weather information provided by MetDesk Ltd., to ensure that decisions are based on the most accurate data available.

Weather Reports

For the purpose of weather reporting, the borough has been divided into two distinct topography types, the lowland east of the borough below 200m AOD and the upland west of the borough in the foothills of the Pennines above 200m AOD. During the winter service period, Barnsley Highways receives detailed weather forecasts and reports, split into these two weather domains within Barnsley.

Road Weather Stations and Bureau Support

Forecast Icelert weather stations are installed at two locations within the borough. They are equipped to measure road surface temperature, depth (sub-surface) temperature, dew point, wet/ dry/ ice/ salt detection, wind speed, wind direction and current weather conditions. They are located at:

- B6273 Moor Lane, Great Houghton;
- B6096 Hawshaw Lane, Hoyland;
- A629 Halifax Road, Scout Dike.
- A616, Victoria.

There is also a weather station which provides information on road surface conditions only that help give a more complete picture of road conditions across the borough. This are located at:

- Mitchelson Avenue, Dodworth;

Winter Roads Management Systems are provided via a bureau service which is managed by Findlay Irvine Ltd. This is an internet-based service and is used to interrogate all Icelert stations and observe conditions at other sensor points across the Borough. The data received from the Stations is used to confirm reports received from the forecast provider and to inform and record the decisions taken.

Winter Duty Coordinators

Experienced members of staff from Barnsley Highways will act as Duty Coordinators throughout the operational winter service period, on a rota basis. The Duty Coordinator is responsible for:

- Receiving forecast information from the forecast provider;
- Monitoring current weather conditions;
- Issuing gritting instructions for the network based on the 2 domain forecasts;
- Posting the forecast decision on the Icelert Bureau;
- Assisting and advising during snow events and severe weather events.

5 Gritting

Precautionary Gritting

The precautionary gritting network is developed from those lengths of highway that receive treatment whenever ice, frost or snowfall is forecast, called Primary Routes. Each Primary Route will have a vehicle assigned which is capable of having a snow plough fitted when required. Following a potential forecast of ice, frost or snow, the Primary Routes will receive a precautionary treatment of salt to help prevent the formation of ice, frost and the accumulation of snow on carriageway surfaces.

Post Event Gritting

Post event gritting will normally take place on the Primary Routes to treat ice, frost and snow that has already formed on carriageways. Post gritting may, in exceptional circumstances, be carried out on roads or sections of roads beyond the scheduled Primary Routes.

Spot Gritting

Spot gritting may take place on parts or sections of the Primary Routes either to help prevent formation of ice, frost and accumulations of snow or as a treatment to ice, frost and the accumulation of snow that has already formed on the carriageway. Spot gritting may, in exceptional circumstances also be required on roads beyond the Primary Routes.

Instructions for Gritting on the Network

Instructions for precautionary gritting of the network will be issued if road surface temperatures are expected to fall significantly enough to present a winter hazard unless:

- Road surfaces are expected to be dry and frost is not expected to form on the road surface;
- Residual salt on the road surface is expected to provide adequate protection against ice or frost forming;
- Instructions for gritting of the precautionary network will also be issued if snowfall is expected.

The Duty Coordinator will issue instructions for precautionary gritting of the network for each of the 2 weather domains. These decisions will be posted on the Winter Roads Management System, Icelert.

The Duty Coordinator may issue instructions for post-event and spot gritting and post those decisions on the Icelert Bureau.

Salt Stocks

Salt stocks will be replenished before the winter service period each year. Minimum stock levels are maintained for the core winter service period and are aggregated across both depot locations.

Depot	Capacity (tonnes)	Minimum Stock (tonnes)
Smithies	6000	1500
Penistone	6000	1500

The Purchasing and Supplies Group maintain a Stock Control Spreadsheet which is updated following each treatment of the network. Dependent on usage, salt stock levels will be replenished as required to ensure minimum stocks are held. This will be subject to the control of the Government's 'Salt Cell'.

Route Treatment Times

The Precautionary Network will be fully treated within 4 hours (20g per m² spread rate or less) of the instructed commencement time.

Emergency Treatment Times

When an urgent instruction to treat the precautionary network is issued by the Duty Coordinator then the treatment of the network will commence within 1 hour.

Level Crossings

Gritting will not take place across level crossings as this can affect the track side communications.

6. Severe Weather Conditions

Persistent Ice on Minor Roads

During longer periods of cold weather, the Duty Coordinator may instruct gritting to deal with persistent ice on minor roads which are not included within the precautionary routes.

Ice and Snow Emergencies

In the event that the extreme weather event continues beyond that as normally anticipated, the Council may activate its Major Incident protocols.

7. Snow Clearance

Instructions for Snow Clearance

Snow clearance will initially take place on the Primary Routes network when snowfall is light. During heavy and prolonged snowfall instructions may be issued to prioritise the clearance and treatment other parts of the network that provide strategic transport links to hospitals, large industrial estates, transport interchanges, emergency service stations and critical infrastructure. Once this network is clear resources will be directed to clear the rest of the Primary Routes network. As and when resources become available, instructions may be issued to treat and/or plough Secondary Routes.

Snow Clearing of Footways

The clearance of footways may take place as and when resources become available.

8. Roadside Grit Bins

Grit bins will be located at strategic points throughout the Borough to be used for self-help by road users. The provision of grit bins and their contents can be used by the public but are to aid the movement of vehicular traffic and the contents of the grit bin is only to be used on the carriageway; the contents are not to be used on footways or private land. The location of such grit bins will be determined by using a standard prioritisation procedure which involves a competent person visiting the site and carrying out an assessment.

The assessment and prioritisation process will take into account the following factors:

- If the street is on a primary or secondary gritting route;
- The gradient of the street;
- Unusual road profiles (e.g. adverse camber etc.);
- The location of sensitive facilities (e.g. hospice, clinic, aged persons complex etc.);
- Locations exposed to exceptionally adverse weather.

Grit bins will only be located where they can be positioned in such a way as to present no hazard to vehicular or pedestrian traffic using the highway.

In the event of severe weather, further refills may be carried out as resources allow.

The cost of filling and replenishing the grit bins required by the highway authority to discharge its responsibilities, will be borne by the Council.

Where grit bins (historic and new) have been requested via a community arrangement or privately funded, these will only be filled or replenished at the start of the winter service period subject to the appropriate payment being made.

9. Budgets

Winter Service Budget

The budget allocated to the winter service is reviewed annually and is managed by Barnsley Highways.

Severe Ice and Snow Events

There is no specific budget allocation to respond to severe ice and snow events. The cost of dealing with the events will be met from central funds.

10. Public & Media Communications

Neighbouring authorities and other Agencies

The Barnsley Highways Weather Forecast containing the winter service action for Barnsley will be transmitted daily to neighbouring highway authorities and other agencies so that activities can be co-ordinated regionally.

The Media

Communication with communities, businesses and emergency services during winter is essential to delivering an effective service. Social media is used to inform when winter service decisions are made.

Pre-season Publicity

It is important that the public are aware of and understand the Barnsley Highways approach to the winter service.

Follow us on [Facebook](#) for updates and insight into our team's hard work this winter. You can also search for [#SYgrit](#) to stay up to date on gritting across South Yorkshire and make planning journeys easier. More information about our gritting routes can be found at www.barnsley.gov.uk/gritting