

Highways winter service policy

August 2024

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Statutory responsibility

The statutory basis for highways winter service in England and Wales is Section 41 (1A) of the Highways Act 1980 which states "a highway authority is under a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice." Section 150 of the same Act puts a responsibility on the highway authority to clear snow from the highway, but only if it is causing an obstruction.

This duty is not absolute given its qualification of reasonableness and practicability as it is not considered reasonably practicable to carry out planned precautionary treatment of the entire network, or that the treated network is always kept free from snow and ice.

In addition, the Traffic Management Act 2004 places a network management duty on all local traffic authorities in England that requires authorities to do all that is reasonably practicable to manage the network effectively to keep traffic moving. In meeting the duty, authorities should establish contingency plans for dealing promptly and effectively with unplanned events, such as unforeseen weather conditions, as far as is reasonable and practicable.

Kirklees Council as Highway Authority is responsible for providing its winter service on adopted public highways within the district, with the exception of roads that are the responsibility of National Highways.

1.2 National Guidance

The council operates within the guidance provided by the UK Roads Leadership Group Well Managed Highway Infrastructure (WMHI) 2016 Code of Practice, and the National Winter Service Research Group (NWSRG) Practical Guide for Winter Service.

Although not statutory, these documents provide guidance to Highway Authorities on highways management. It promotes the adoption of an integrated asset management approach and establishment of local levels of service through risk-based assessment.

2.0 Aims

Subject to available resources, and as far as is reasonably practicable, the council aims to:

- Safeguard the travelling public from the hazardous effects of winter weather, including ice, snow, extreme winds, flooding, etc.
- Consider integrating its winter and adverse weather response with wider objectives such as transport provision, network resilience, including access to key public service locations, and emergency planning.
- Monitor, review, and deliver amended or additional services during periods of prolonged severe weather events as appropriate and practicable.

The Highways Winter Service Annual Operational Plan (HWSAOP) should integrate with wider objectives such as transport provision, network resilience and emergency planning.

3.0 Policy

The council will produce a HWSAOP, adopting the principles of a WMHI. The HWSAOP will include details of the systems, resilience, resources and processes that will be utilised in responding to individual weather events including winter service.

Proactive winter service and other emergency operations will normally be undertaken based upon available weather forecast information, knowledge of prevailing local weather conditions and resource availability.

The council will, where reasonably practicable, carry out gritting of carriageway surfaces prior to the formation of ice on routes defined in the winter service plan (pre-treatment). These routes will be identified in accordance with WMHI, adopting a risk-based approach using the network hierarchy and other local factors

The council may carry out treatments including gritting and ploughing, to address the formation of ice and/or fallen snow (post treatment).

The routine precautionary treatment of footways and footway cycleways will not be carried out.

During prolonged severe winter weather conditions, all available resources may be continuously employed in maintaining the predefined road network. Where possible, the council will work in partnership with citizens, Town and Parish councils, supply chain partners, and others to arrange for snow clearance work on local roads, and in town centre areas.

Consideration will be given to addressing winter conditions on areas of the public highway which are not included on the treated network. This may include the provision of grit bins to facilitate community self-help.

Details of all planned winter service actions will be communicated via the council's website and social media accounts. Information relating to actions planned in response to weather warnings and during snow and adverse weather events will also be provided.

Additional information

Useful links for information referenced within this document:

[Highways Act 1980 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

[Traffic Management Act 2004 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

[National Highways](#) – Looking after England's motorways and major roads

[UK Roads Leadership Group | UKRLG \(ciht.org.uk\)](https://www.ciht.org.uk)

Kirklees Council social media

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