

End to coal power brought forward to October 2024

- UK government brings forward the date to remove unabated coal from the UK's energy mix by a whole year to 2024
- key step in UK government's plans to decarbonise the power sector and eliminate the UK's contribution to climate change by 2050
- move means that within just 10 years Great Britain will have reduced its reliance on coal for electricity from around a third to zero, helping the country build back greener

From 1 October 2024 Great Britain will no longer use coal to generate electricity, a year earlier than planned, Energy and Climate Change Minister Anne-Marie Trevelyan announced today (Wednesday 30 June 2021).

The move is part of ambitious government commitments to transition away from fossil fuels and decarbonise the power sector in order to eliminate contributions to climate change by 2050. Today's announcement confirms the intention set out by the Prime Minister last year to bring forward the deadline to end unabated coal-fired electricity generation.

This brings forward the deadline to phase out coal from Great Britain's energy system by a whole year, highlighting the UK's leadership to go further and faster in driving down emissions and lead by example in tackling climate change ahead of hosting the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) summit in Glasgow this November. The UK is similarly calling on all nations to accelerate the phase out of coal power.

The UK government will introduce new legislation to do this at the earliest opportunity.

Coal is one of the most carbon intensive fossil fuels and responsible for harmful air pollution. By eliminating its use in electricity generation, the UK can make sure it plays a critical role in limiting global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees – a key aim of its COP26 presidency.

The UK has made huge progress in reducing the use of coal across the power sector, with coal accounting for only 1.8% of the UK's electricity mix in 2020, compared with 40% almost decade ago.

The announcement comes ahead of Energy and Climate Change Minister Anne-Marie Trevelyan speaking at the Powering Past Coal Alliance (PPCA) Europe Roundtable today on the importance of countries phasing out coal, and new members of the Alliance, as part of London Climate Action Week. The UK government has already ended its support for the fossil fuel energy sector overseas earlier this year.

Energy and Climate Change Minister Anne-Marie Trevelyan said:

Coal powered the industrial revolution 200 years ago, but now is the time for radical action to completely eliminate this dirty fuel from our energy system.

Today we're sending a clear signal around the world that the UK is leading the way in consigning coal power to the history books and that we're serious about decarbonising our power system so we can meet our ambitious, world-leading climate targets.

The UK's net zero future will be powered by renewables, and it is this technology that will drive the green industrial revolution and create new jobs across the country.

The UK went 5,000 hours without coal-fired electricity in 2020, and earlier this year broke a new wind power record, with just over a third of the country's energy coming from wind. The rise in the use of renewables thanks to competition, free enterprise and government incentives to kick start new technologies has in turn helped to drive down the cost of green energy, with coal power now more expensive in most countries.

As one of the first countries to commit to ending coal power combined with its significant success in driving up renewables, the UK is leading the world in moving away from fossil fuels and significantly decarbonising its energy system.

Through its COP26 presidency, the UK government is urging nations to follow its example and abandon coal power for good. In May, under the UK's leadership, G7 Climate and Environment Ministers agreed to end all new finance for coal power by the end of 2021 and to accelerate the transition away from unabated coal capacity and to an overwhelmingly decarbonised power system in the 2030s.

COP26 President-Designate, Alok Sharma, said:

The next decade will be make, or break, for our planet and the most powerful way we can make a difference is to end our reliance on coal.

Ahead of COP26, I hope the UK's decisive step towards a cleaner, greener future sends a clear signal to friends around the world that clean power is the way forward. The impact of this step will be far greater if we can bring the world with us, and so our desire to support a clean and just energy transition is central to my discussions on the road to COP26.

A top priority of the UK COP26 Presidency is to accelerate the global transition from coal to clean energy. The UK government is asking governments to set coal phase out dates and end overseas coal investments, and has set up the Energy Transition Council to bring together partners to ensure that clean power is the most attractive option for developing countries and to support

just transitions.

- [read the Impact Assessment published alongside the government's consultation on bringing forward the date to end coal generated electricity](#). The assessment examined potential indirect impacts on coal mines from the phasing out of coal for electricity generation. The analysis indicated that setting a closure date of either 2025 or 2024 is unlikely to have a significant impact on the UK coal mining sector. This is predominantly due to the fact that coal mining in the UK has already been in decline in recent years, reflecting a competitive global market and falling domestic demand
- on 18 September 2017, following a consultation in November 2016, the government confirmed that it would proceed with action to regulate the closure of unabated coal power generation units in Great Britain by 1 October 2025
- on 4 February 2020, the Prime Minister announced an intention to bring forward the deadline for phasing out unabated coal generation to 1 October 2024. The government ran a [consultation](#) from 14 December 2020 to 26 February 2021 seeking views on proposals to achieve this objective
- for the first time ever, in March this year coal-fired power plants did not participate in the four-year ahead Capacity Market auction, which secures the electricity capacity Great Britain needs to cope with peaks in demand in 2024 to 2025 at a low cost to consumers. Going forward, coal power plants will not be able participate in any future Capacity Market auctions due to the introduction of Emissions Limits to the Capacity Market
- this policy only applies to coal used to generate electricity. It does not apply to other coal consumers such as the steel industry, nor to domestic coal mines
- in 2020, the UK generated 43.1% of its electricity from renewable sources, including wind (24.2%), bioenergy (12.6%), solar (4.2%), and hydro (2.2%). Coal only consisted of 1.8 % of the year's electricity generation, and nuclear generation made up a further 16.1%
- in 2012, coal accounted for 40% of the UK's power generation, dropping dramatically to only 1.8% in 2020. Ending unabated coal generation in 2024 will mean that we will have reduced it from almost a third of our electricity supply to zero in the space of just 10 years.