

Further action needed on EV charging to meet Net Zero

- Access to chargepoints can be a 'postcode lottery' – the number of total public chargepoints per head in Yorkshire and the Humber is a quarter of those in London.
- CMA outlines measures to ensure the charging sector works well now and in the future.
- CMA launches competition enforcement action into long-term exclusive arrangements at motorway service stations.

The CMA has set out measures to ensure a national network of electric vehicle chargepoints is in place ahead of the 2030 ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel cars.

As part of its market study into electric vehicle (EV) charging, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) examined whether the industry can deliver a comprehensive UK charging network that works competitively and that people can trust.

While some parts of this new sector are developing relatively well – including charging at locations like shopping centres, workplaces and people's private parking (garages and driveways) – the CMA has found that other parts are facing problems which will hinder roll-out. This could impact the Government's plans to ban the sale of new petrol and diesel cars by 2030 and its wider commitment to make the UK net zero by 2050.

In particular, the CMA is concerned about the choice and availability of chargepoints at motorway service stations, where competition is limited; the roll-out of on-street charging by Local Authorities (which many drivers will rely on) is too slow; and rural areas risk being left behind with too few chargepoints due to lack of investment.

In addition, research shows that charging can sometimes be difficult and frustrating for drivers, which could stop people switching to EVs. Concerns about the reliability of chargepoints, difficulties in comparing prices and paying for charging, risk reducing people's confidence and trust. The CMA has set out four principles to ensure that using and paying for charging is as simple as filling up with petrol and diesel.

Charging should be as simple as filling up with petrol or diesel:

1. Working chargepoints must be easy to find – e.g. providing up-to-date availability and working status information.
2. Charging must be simple and quick to pay for – e.g. people don't need to sign up and contactless payments are widely available.
3. The cost of charging must be clear – e.g. standard way of pricing, such as per kilowatt of energy.
4. Charging must be accessible – e.g. all chargepoints can be used by any

type of EV.

The UK has around 25,000 chargepoints currently and, while there is still uncertainty, forecasts suggest more than ten times this amount will be needed by 2030.

Andrea Coscelli, Chief Executive of the CMA, said:

“Electric vehicles play a critical role in meeting Net Zero but the challenges with creating an entirely new charging network should not be underestimated. Some areas of the roll-out are going well and the UK’s network is growing – but it’s clear that other parts, like charging at motorway service stations and on-street, have much bigger hurdles to overcome.

“There needs to be action now to address the postcode lottery in electric vehicle charging as we approach the ban on sales of new petrol and diesel cars by 2030.

“Our recommendations will promote strong competition, encourage more investment, and build people’s trust, both now and in the future. The CMA has also opened a competition law investigation into EV charging along motorways and will continue to work with government and the industry to help ensure electric vehicle charging is a success.”

The CMA’s key recommendations are that:

- UK Government sets out an ambitious National Strategy for rolling out EV charging between now and 2030. This must sit alongside strategies from the Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland Governments, building on the work already being undertaken by all governments. Energy regulators should also ensure that it’s quicker and cheaper to connect new chargepoints.
- Governments support local authorities (LAs) to boost roll-out of on-street charging – including defining a clear role for LAs to manage the roll-out in their area and providing funding for the expertise needed for this to happen.
- UK Government attaches conditions to its £950m Rapid Charging Fund – which it is planning to use for grid upgrades at motorway service stations – to open up competition so that drivers have a choice of charging provider at each service station.
- UK Government creates an EV charging sector that people can trust and have confidence in, including tasking a public body with monitoring the sector as it develops to ensure charging is as simple as filling up at a petrol station.

The CMA has also launched a competition law investigation into long-term exclusive arrangements between the Electric Highway – a ChargePoint provider – and three motorway service operators – MOTO, Roadchef and Extra. Currently, the Electric Highway provides 80% of all chargepoints at motorway service stations (excluding Tesla chargepoints which can only be used by Tesla vehicles) and its long-term exclusive arrangements, which last between 10-15

years, cover around two-thirds of motorway service stations.

The CMA is concerned that these arrangements make it difficult for other operators to provide competing chargepoints at motorway service stations. This could result in drivers losing out on the benefits of competition such as greater provision, more choice, competitive prices and reliable, high-quality chargepoints.

[Net Zero Week](#) runs from the 17 – 23 July 2021. All updates on the CMA's work in this area can be found on the [Electric vehicle charging market study case page](#).

Public chargepoints per 100,000 of population by UK country and region

Source: [Electric vehicle charging device statistics: April 2021 – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

For number of chargepoints per 100,000 of the population, broken down by local authority, please refer to '[Electric vehicle charging device statistics: April 2021 tables](#)'.

Millions of families to benefit as government acts to drive down energy bills

- Government to tackle 'loyalty penalty' for 15 million households on default tariffs paying hundreds of pounds more a year for their energy
- ministers to consult on plans to help households find cheaper deals, including testing automatic switching
- new legislation will create option to extend the energy price cap, helping households on the most expensive tariffs save up to £100 a year

Business and Energy Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng today (23 July) published proposals to trial automatic switching for customers on expensive default energy tariffs to cheaper deals.

While around 5.8 million households switched energy supplier last year, taking advantage of savings worth on average £290, research by regulator Ofgem suggests that less than half of British households regularly shop around for a better energy deal. The government is determined to tackle the 'loyalty penalty', where energy companies place longstanding customers on the most expensive tariffs.

Under plans published today, trials of a new system will take place in 2024, in which some consumers on costly tariffs would be automatically switched to cheaper ones on the market unless they opt out.

The proposals also include creating a framework for 'opt-in switching' by 2024, where consumers on the most expensive tariffs would receive personalised switching advice to switch to a better value tariff following recent Ofgem trials that led to greater consumer engagement with the energy market.

The move is designed to protect customers from rip-off energy deals, saving consumers money on their energy bills, and increase competition by encouraging suppliers to introduce fairer but also greener tariffs. Ministers hope the plans will also mean that more consumers will switch to tariffs powered by renewable electricity, as part of efforts to tackle climate change.

The proposals were published as the Business and Energy Secretary announced that the Energy Price Cap, introduced in 2019 to protect the 15 million British households on default tariffs, could continue for longer – ensuring households on the highest tariffs save between £75 and £100 a year on dual fuel bills.

New legislation is planned to allow the cap to continue beyond 2023 if needed, so that consumers who do not shop around for the best deals on their energy – including those who opt out of any future automatic switching system – are protected from rip off tariffs.

Business and Energy Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng said:

We want to unleash a wave of competition within the energy market and keep energy bills low so households across the UK can keep more money in their back pockets.

Although more of us are now shopping around for the cheapest tariffs, the existence of better deals on the market is not sufficient in itself to drive consumer behaviour. That's why we will make the switching process even easier so we can tackle the 'loyalty penalty' and ensure everyone pays a fair price for powering their homes.

An automatic switching system would ensure households get a fair deal, while new Price Cap legislation will enable continued protection until we're confident the market is sufficiently competitive.

In another move to better protect the most vulnerable energy consumers, the government is also extending the Warm Home Discount Scheme, which will knock £150 off the electricity bills of many pensioners and low-income families, until 2026 – supporting an extra 750,000 consumers. A total of three million households will now benefit from the scheme.

Minister of State for Energy, Anne Marie Trevelyan, said:

Our efforts to eliminate this country's contribution to climate change can help us build back greener, but also can be of benefit to consumers.

Automatic switching trials, with the option to opt-out if people prefer, will reduce energy bills for thousands of households. But it could also lead to greater take-up of greener tariffs, making the most of the great strides we have made in renewable energy to put more pounds in people's pockets.

The opt-in switching plans will look to scale up the successes of Ofgem trials in 2018/2019, which showed that when customers are contacted and given options for switching through simple, well designed letters and emails, they are 5 to 10 times more likely to switch to a cheaper tariff than those who were not.

Director of Energy at energyhelpline, Tom Lyon, said:

Opt-in switching is a proven initiative that will drive positive outcomes for the most disengaged consumers. We welcome these proposals and believe they could generate levels of long-term competition into the energy market like we've never seen before.

Previous opt-in switching trials helped significant numbers of consumers switch energy suppliers than otherwise would have; a widespread rollout will empower customers to drive down the cost of their bills.

The plans come alongside a new [Energy Retail Strategy](#) published today, which builds on the Energy White Paper. This will help create a fairer retail energy market, with greater competition and innovation and encouraging a move towards greener energy tariffs. It aims to better protect consumers from excessive bills as the UK transitions to a smart energy system as the government takes steps to eliminate the UK's contribution to climate change by 2050.

Significant progress has been made in recent years in reforming the retail energy market, with 22.2 million smart meters being installed in homes, and the number of households switching rising from 4.4 million in 2016 to 5.8 million last year. Many energy suppliers have made their cost and pricing systems fairer, with more of a focus on winning new customers and less on relying on existing default customers. However, ministers believe there is still further to go.

Today's proposals come alongside other measures to encourage greater engagement from consumers, including:

- Ofgem's faster, hassle-free switching programme, which will significantly shorten the time it takes to switch
- continuing the smart meter rollout, helping suppliers collect electricity customers' usage as regularly as every half an hour to better manage supply and demand, saving consumers up to £4.5 billion a year
- smart data initiatives to allow consumers to more easily share their energy usage data with price comparison sites to help them get the best deal
- read the [Retail Energy Strategy](#) and the [switching consultation](#)
- [research by Ofgem in 2018](#) showed that consumers on default tariffs (currently 15 million households) had been overpaying the energy companies around £1.5 billion a year before the introduction of the Energy Price Cap. They also concluded that a typical household on a default tariff would save £75 to £100 following the introduction of the cap
- read further detail on the [Ofgem switching trials in 2018/19](#)
- the price cap was introduced in 2019 and is updated by energy regulator Ofgem every 6 months to reflect changes in the cost of supplying energy. Each year a review is conducted on whether the conditions for effective competition in the domestic energy market are met, if the Secretary of State decides they are not then the cap is extended for another year, until the end of 2023
- the proposed new legislation would enable extensions beyond this. Over coming months, the government will consider how new legislation should enable retention or removal of the price cap beyond 2023
- opt-in switching and testing opt-out switching were measures announced in [December 2020 Energy White Paper](#). These policies are still subject to Parliamentary time and approval, and planning and design development

[UK Carrier Strike Group in the Indo-Pacific](#)

On 24th July, HMS Richmond will enter Thailand's territorial waters to conduct a maritime military exercise with the Royal Thai Navy. This will be the first visit of a Royal Navy ship to Thailand since HMS Daring visited in 2014, and the first engagement of the UK Carrier Strike Group with an ASEAN nation.

HMS Richmond is part of the United Kingdom's Carrier Strike Group, the greatest concentration of maritime and air power to leave the UK in a generation. Led by HMS Queen Elizabeth, the largest and most powerful surface vessel in the Royal Navy's history on her first operational deployment, the Group consists of 9 ships, 32 aircraft, and 3700 personnel. Whilst strong on our own, we are stronger with allies. The Carrier Strike Group will lead

several NATO exercises and two of our oldest and closest partners in the US and the Netherlands will be fully integrated into the deployment.

The Carrier Strike Group is a demonstration of Prime Minister Boris Johnson's vision of a 'Global Britain'. As articulated in this year's Integrated Review of foreign policy, defence and development, the UK is a problem-solving and burden-sharing nation with a global perspective, playing a leading international role in collective security, multilateral governance, tackling climate change and health risks, conflict resolution and poverty reduction. However, to be open we must be secure. As a maritime trading nation championing the free flow of trade, capital, data, innovation and ideas, the Group's deployment demonstrates the UK's strategic flexibility and global reach. Benefitting from an impressive array of the UK's world-leading defence capabilities, the Group is capable of operating independently to counter state and non-state threats as well as contribute to humanitarian and disaster relief missions.

When the Carrier Strike Group left Portsmouth in May, it embarked on a truly global journey. Returning to the UK in December, it will have travelled over 26,000 nautical miles, from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea, from the Gulf of Aden to the Arabian Sea, and from the Indian Ocean to the Philippine Sea and back. It will have interacted with 40 nations during its tour and undertaken over 70 engagements, exercises and operations with allies and partners.

Between July and October, the Carrier Strike Group will deploy to the Indo-Pacific region, transiting through the Asia the Malacca Straits on its way to Japan. While the major stops in the region for HMS Queen Elizabeth are Singapore, the Republic of Korea, Japan, and India her escort ships, such as HMS Richmond, will engage with regional and ASEAN partners as part of the UK's commitment to be a persistent, credible and reliable presence in the Indo-Pacific. In the region, the Group will contribute with allies to the US-led 'Large Scale Global Exercise', to UN mandated sanctions enforcement and to a Five Powers Defence Arrangement exercise, the FPDA being Southeast Asia's only collective security arrangement. For Thailand, our maritime engagement will contribute to our strengthened defence relationship, which will deliver more shared professional military education activity, and increased co-operation on a range of areas of mutual concern from international peace operations and counter terrorism to military medicine and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

The Carrier Strike Group's visit to the region is also evidence of the UK's so-called 'Indo-Pacific Tilt'. This region matters to the UK: it is critical to our economy, our security and our commitment to support open societies. At least 1.7 million British citizens live across the region, with 50,000 in Thailand alone, and our trading relationships continue to grow. In the decades to come the region will be the crucible for many of the most pressing global challenges – from climate and biodiversity to maritime security and geopolitical competition linked to rules and norms. Therefore, over the next decade we will deepen our engagement with the Indo-Pacific region, establishing a greater and more persistent presence in the region than any other European country, as seen by our application to become an ASEAN

Dialogue Partner and also to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership or CPTPP.

Here in Thailand, our bilateral relationship has strong foundations, close connections between our citizens and a comprehensive agenda of practical collaboration on shared priorities such as health, economic recovery, climate change, security and defence. We welcome the proximity of the Carrier Strike Group to Thailand as a symbol of our mutual commitment to a free and open Asia Pacific with all the benefits that affords to shared regional and global security and prosperity.

[Household waste and sewage to be used in jet fuel production as government makes world-leading sustainable aviation fuel commitments](#)

- 8 companies have been shortlisted to share £15 million government funding to support the development of first-of-a-kind production plants turning waste into sustainable aviation fuel (SAF)
- SAF to be produced across the UK including Tees Valley, Ellesmere Port and Lincolnshire with the potential to create over 1,000 green jobs across the UK
- consultation also launched into world-leading SAF commitment, which could save up to 23 megatons CO₂ per year in 2050, equivalent to half a million return flights to Tenerife

Net zero aviation becomes one step closer today (23 July 2021) as 8 companies have been shortlisted to receive a share of £15 million to develop first-of-a-kind production plants across the UK that will turn waste into jet fuel.

Announced as part of the [Prime Minister's 10 point plan](#), the Green Fuels, Green Skies (GFGS) competition will support these 8 companies as they pioneer new technologies, converting materials such as household waste, alcohol, carbon from the atmosphere and sewage into jet fuel at commercial scales, offering emissions savings of more than 70% compared to the use of conventional fossil jet fuel.

The competition will help position the UK at the forefront of the emerging global SAF industry by producing millions of litres of SAF per year, putting flying onto a more sustainable path.

Shortlisted proposals include plants aiming to produce jet fuel from:

- carbon dioxide captured from the atmosphere with hydrogen from water
- alcohol derived from wastes, including flue gases from industry
- everyday household and commercial black bag rubbish
- sewage

Aviation is responsible for 2.5% of global carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions and this announcement comes as the government sets out its long-term ambition to lead the world in SAF uptake, with proposals for up to 10% SAF by 2030 and up to 75% SAF by 2050 – generating potential savings of up to 23 megatons of CO₂ per year in 2050, equivalent to half a million return flights to Tenerife.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

Aviation will be central to our future growth and plans to build back greener from the pandemic, which is why we have invested over £20 million in the past year to decarbonise the sector in line with our world-leading net zero targets.

With 100 days to go until [COP26](#), we're ramping up our efforts even further to help companies break ground on trailblazing waste to jet fuel plants and put the UK at the forefront of international SAF production.

SAF production in the UK could generate between £0.7 billion and £1.66 billion annually and create 11,000 green jobs by 2040 – with this funding alone kickstarting the creation of over 1,000 local jobs in plants built in Cheshire, Lincolnshire, Tees Valley and South Wales among other locations.

Launched today, the SAF mandate consultation sets out options for SAF adoption in the UK and signals to investors the vital role it will play in the UK aviation sector as we build back greener from the pandemic.

This consultation follows the ambitious [jet zero consultation](#) announced last week alongside the [Transport decarbonisation plan](#). The jet zero consultation commits the aviation sector to a net zero emissions target by 2050 and a domestic target of net zero emissions by 2040, consolidating the UK's position as leaders in reducing aviation emissions.

The government will aim to showcase the outcomes of both of these consultations and the work of the [Jet Zero Council](#) over the past year at COP26 in Glasgow in 100 days, consolidating the UK as leaders in decarbonising aviation.

Historic county flags raised in day of national celebration

The flags of 52 historic counties will fly proudly at the heart of government today as the nation celebrates our shared heritage to mark Historic County Flag Day.

All 52 registered historic county flags have been hoisted in Parliament Square in resplendent celebration as festivities take place in cities, towns and villages across England, Scotland and Wales.

These historic flags fluttering in unison serve as a reminder of our rich history and is part of the government's mission to celebrate the traditions that bind our communities together and instil pride in the places we live as we build back better from the pandemic.

Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick MP said:

Today is an opportunity to celebrate the rich tapestry of our shared national heritage.

These flags represent local traditions and stories from every corner of Great Britain which people rightly take pride in.

"I am proud to see such an explosion of colour in Parliament Square on Historic County Flags Day in celebration of all that binds us together.

Earlier this week, the Communities Secretary wrote to all councils across Great Britain, urging them to proudly raise their flag to celebrate Historic County Flag Day.

This year, there will also be two new additions to the line-up, with Leicestershire and Herefordshire including their new county flags for the first time.

The Leicestershire flag combines three of the county's symbols: the red and white dancetté background, taken from the arms of Simon de Montfort, 6th Earl of Leicester; the Cinquefoil of the de Beaumont Earls of Leicester; and the running fox from the county's crest, used on many of the county organisations.

The Herefordshire flag is also made up of three famous symbols linked to the county: the dark red field, Herefordshire bull, and River Wye.

Cllr David Hitchiner, Leader of Herefordshire Council, said:

This Historic County Flag Day will be an especially proud one for Herefordshire, with the county flag flown in Parliament Square for the first time. Our county is blessed with unique beauty, from stunning rivers to iconic orchards, and steeped in history, most notably the magnificent Hereford Cathedral which is home to the world famous Mappa Mundi and one of only four original copies of the 1217 Magna Carta.

While we are proud of our rich history, our vibrant city, thriving market towns and rural communities are looking towards a future filled with promise, and we will play our part in Historic County Flag Day by proudly flying the county flag in Hereford.

There are no registered or widely recognised county flags for Northern Ireland so we will fly the Union flag at the head of the display so that all parts of our United Kingdom are represented.

The full list of county flags that will be flown in Parliament Square can be found below: