

New figures show increase in energy efficient homes

Press release

The majority of new homes in England are in the most energy efficient bands, according to figures published on Thursday.



- Most new homes in the top bands for energy efficiency
- Number of domestic Energy Performance Certificates up 10% on last year.
- Government committed to a greener future as we build back better.

The majority of new homes in England are in the most energy efficient bands, according to latest figures.

In the last quarter 84% of new homes across the country were given an energy rating of A or B, compared to 79% in the previous quarter.

Statistics also show, 392,000 domestic Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) were lodged in England, an increase of 10% from the same quarter in 2019.

EPCs are mandatory for all domestic buildings and provide new home owners with an indicator on how energy efficient their property is and how they can save on costs.

Figures published on Thursday highlight the government's continued work during the pandemic to keep the housing market open and increase the number of energy efficient homes.

Housing Secretary RT Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

This government has gone to great lengths to support homebuilding over the past year by keeping the industry open and operating safely during the pandemic – alongside stimulating the market through the stamp duty holiday and a huge £12 billion investment in affordable homes. These latest statistics show the sector remains healthy.

Building back greener and delivering quality energy efficient homes is a priority for this government and these figures highlight our commitment to helping people keep household bills low for people, while looking towards a more sustainable future.

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[Tax cut for employers of veterans brought in](#)

A National Insurance contributions holiday for businesses who employ armed forces veterans comes into force today.

The policy, which delivers on the government's manifesto commitment, allows employers to claim National Insurance contributions relief for veterans they have hired during their first year of civilian employment after leaving the armed forces.

The move is part of the government's commitment to make the UK the best place in the world to be a veteran and will help further incentivise employers to take advantage of the wide range of skills and experience that ex-military personnel offer.

Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak said:

Today marks another milestone in this government delivering on its promises.

We will always support our veterans, who have risked their own lives to keep our country safe, and this tax cut will give them a crucial helping hand getting them into the workplace after leaving service.

Minister for Defence, People and Veterans Johnny Mercer said:

Veterans have an immense range of skills and unique experience to bring to civilian life.

This National Insurance contributions holiday will reward employers for backing our veterans, while also extending employment opportunities for many talented veterans in this country.

From today, employers will qualify for National Insurance contributions relief for up to 12 months when hiring veterans who are working in a civilian job, during their first 12 months of employment post-service.

FSB National Chairman Mike Cherry said:

This is a loud and clear declaration of support for veterans employment and it's fantastic to see this announcement from the OVA today.

Service leavers have a huge amount to offer civilian employers, and we'd urge every small employer to consider the value this relief can bring in helping them take on a new member of staff.

We've been pleased to work with Government and X-forces on this relief, giving a helping hand to firms supporting service leavers and boosting job opportunities at this admittedly difficult time for businesses.

While the vast majority of ex-military personnel transition successfully into civilian life, some veterans can struggle with the adjustment. This National Insurance contributions holiday will provide a great incentive for employers to take veterans on. It will support those who have already given so much to this country, and it will help to unleash the great skills and huge potential of our service leavers.

The relief is available to all employers of veterans regardless of when the veteran left the regular armed forces, providing that they have not been employed in a civilian capacity since leaving service. The relief will be available on all qualifying veterans each time they leave HM Armed Forces.

Employers will be able to claim National Insurance contributions relief on the earnings of qualifying veterans. A person qualifies as a veteran if they have served at least one day in the regular armed forces. This includes anyone who has completed at least one day of basic training.

Detailed guidance on how employers can claim back national insurance is available [here](#).

British Embassy Bangkok showcases British EV and smart city solutions ahead of COP26

Like many other nations internationally, Thailand is facing widespread air pollution and traffic congestion. As a consequence, conversations centred on climate change and urban development have continued to gain momentum in recent years, which reflect the growing significance of climate change issues being brought up at a global stage.

Every year, global leaders meet for the United Nations Climate Change Conference aka 'COP' to discuss and plan policies to help combat climate change.

This year, the UK has the privilege to host the 26th conference '[COP26](#)' in Glasgow, Scotland in November under five key themes – adaptation and resilience, nature-based solutions, energy transition, clean road and transport, and finance.

The UK has been rolling out policies and activities in support of smart city technologies, not only to better manage cities and improve quality of life, but also to lead the transition towards greener cities with clean energy and transport following its agenda and aspirations for COP26. In Thailand, the UK has launched several initiatives towards strengthening partnerships in smarter cities development. Together with the Digital Economy Promotion Agency (DEPA), the British Embassy Bangkok has launched the 'Smart City Handbook: Thailand' which sought to identify the scope of opportunities for collaboration and present relevant case studies in various areas for potential partnerships between the UK and Thailand. This close collaboration was further deepened through the 'Smart City Workshop Series' previously hosted in two key provinces in Thailand – Chiang Mai and Khon Kaen.

Richard Porter, Commercial Counsellor, British Embassy Bangkok said:

Global emissions from road transport are rising faster than in any other sector. Road transport accounts for over 10% of global greenhouse gas emissions, and this is only increasing. The UK is investing £2.5bn in carbon reduction, with grants available for plug in vehicles and funding to support charge point infrastructure. The UK government is taking an historic step towards net zero with, our commitment to end the sale of new petrol and diesel cars by 2030.

Asst. Prof. Dr. Uthan Supatti Vice President for Academics, Electric Vehicle Association of Thailand said:

With growing global concern about climate change, it is now widely recognised that there is a need for collaborative efforts in order to adopt climate-friendly measures for economic and social development. Thailand's new target for 100% Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) registration by 2035 will lead to positive impact on new job creations, healthier communities and significant reduction of air pollution.

In conjunction with the final Smart City Workshop series in Chonburi, the embassy views this as the perfect opportunity to introduce the UK's Zero Emissions Electric Vehicle campaign alongside the embassy's existing smart city campaign. Zero Emissions vehicles will directly lead to a significant reduction of greenhouse gas emissions which is the main cause of global warming. Moving towards this change, however, will require adequate infrastructure for charging stations, which is why Zero Emissions Vehicles roll-out and city planning must be developed hand in hand. This event marks the launch of the EV100 campaign in Thailand aimed at promoting Zero Emissions Vehicles in Thailand through cooperation with private sector to drive policies in support of both EVs and charging infrastructure.

EV100 is a campaign that brings together private companies committed to Electric Vehicle Transition by 2030 by building demand, driving policies with governments and supporting the network of entrepreneurs in the region in order to make EVs the new normal in the near future.

The event also included a panel discussion about 'Zero Emission Mobility in the City level' with representatives from the Thai government voicing their views including Pattaya City Deputy Mayor Mr. Ronnakit Ekkasing, Chonburi Deputy Governor Wiwat Mahapolsirikul, Vice President for Academics, Electric Vehicle Association of Thailand Asst. Prof. Dr. Uthan Supatti, UNDP Programme Specialist Ms. Amornwan Resanond, and moderated by the British Embassy Bangkok's Climate Change Attache Mr. Sittisak Sugsaisakorn.

Besides the panel discussion, the Embassy also partnered with leading companies to showcase British electric vehicle innovations, from the luxurious Jaguar I-PACE all electric SUV, the 100% electric-powered motorcycles from EVRiderz world's first triple play company. And ride hailing application, Asia Cabb's fully-electrified prototype of the iconic TX4 London Taxi licensed from the UK which is being produced for the Thai market, with plans to commercially roll-out full EV models next year. And last but not least, the TukTuk from the Electric Vehicle Association of Thailand powered by flexible solar panels from British company, Verditek Solar.

Despite the UK smart city workshop series coming to a closure, the UK's looks forward to continue partnering with Thailand to help grow its smart city ambitions. Through the 'Tech Export Academy' programme, Thailand has been chosen as the sole destination for a delegation of 30 British companies to embark on its first virtual trade mission, where the UK looks to forge even more great partnerships come May this year.

Download the [smart city handbook](#).

Analysts Assemble

The Analysis Function's Michelle Bowen is an integral part of the planning team for our very first [Analysis in Government](#) month this May and tells us why connecting analysts together is like assembling a group of superheroes! Over to you Michelle:

"We love a movie night in the Bowen household. Most recently we have been re-watching all the Marvel Avengers superhero movies (in chronological order!). What have Marvel movies got to do with analysts I hear you ask? Well...

Over the past few months, I have been working on Analysis in Government month. A campaign of events, activities and content to celebrate all things analysis. The month has the theme #AnalysisConnect and aims to bring together analysts from across government and professions to connect and collaborate. We want to encourage collaboration with others including our users, local government analysts, academics and others. We have a jam-packed month of really varied content – I'm so excited!

I like to think that analysts have superpowers!

You may be a whizz at R, a data-collection champ or a first-rate data-vizzer. The key thing about the Avengers is that each of the superheroes which are part of the group bring different skills, experiences and personalities. Each superhero exists and are successful on their own but sometimes the group need to pull together and work as a team to solve a problem. To me this sounds a bit like all the different professions in the Analysis Function. The Analysis Function is a wide and diverse community of people made up actuaries, economists, operational researchers, social researchers, statisticians and data scientists, analysts within the Digital, Data and Technology Profession and aspiring analysts. All these professions and areas have skilled analysts in different techniques and work types, but sometimes we all need to pool our resources to achieve our goal (hopefully not defeating an evil villain).

Now we're not saying that we are similar to Nick Fury and the Agents of Shield, but... the Analysis in Government month planning team have been busy pulling together an amazing schedule of events to attract all you analyst superheroes to join in the fun.

For example, all you Tony Stark types out there will enjoy the amazing webinars on innovation and methodological work including a session on the Integrated Data Programme and its importance for analysts across government or our panel session on 'the role of analysis in achieving net zero'.

Spiderpeople who are looking for ways to join the Analysis Function or climb up the ladder should look out for our event on success profiles and our blog post on '5 Things You Didn't Know About Fast Streams in the Analysis Function'.

Any Captain Americas who are looking to update their skills may find our training sessions on building accessible spreadsheets or an introduction to data visualisation useful.

To bring everyone together we will be running Analysis Function coffee connect sessions, sharing information on mentoring and hosting a hackathon to enable you to work with others on a small analytical project. We also have lots of content and events to help us understand more about the Analysis Function, the professions within the Analysis Function and the opportunities which are available to us as members of the Analysis Function.

Our month kicks off with a launch event on Tuesday 4 May with a keynote speech from Head of the Analysis Function and National Statistician, Professor Sir Ian Diamond and a panel session discussing the future of analysis in government. The month is then filled with a range of blog-posts, news articles, training sessions, webinars, videos, panel sessions, social media content and more.

Make sure you keep up to date with all the latest news and webinars throughout the month and get involved as much as possible.

You can do this by following [@gov_analysis](#) on Twitter, signing up to our monthly [Newsletter](#) and checking out the latest news and booking information on our [GOV.UK web pages](#).

Please do take the opportunity to get involved in the events and activities – there’s something for everyone! In the words of Nick Fury ‘There was an idea...to bring together a group of remarkable people. To make them work together when we needed them to’”.

Michelle

[Dstl bids farewell to its current chief executive](#)



Doug Umbers, Interim Chief Executive of Dstl

After three years leading the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl), its Chief Executive Gary Aitkenhead is taking on a new role with a global technology company.

During his time at Dstl, Gary has overseen the organisation's response to the Novichok incident, its support to combat COVID, and its wider work to deliver the v science inside defence and security.

Dstl's Chief Operating Officer Doug Umbers is stepping into the Chief Executive role while a successor is sought. Doug said:

"Gary has led and overseen a number of high-profile activities during his time at Dstl, and we wish him well in his next venture. I am looking forward to leading Dstl's world-class experts to deliver cutting-edge science and technology.

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