

# United Kingdom



**The majority (57%) of UK corporate executives want a shift from fossil fuels to a renewables-based power system within five years, revealing strong business support for the government's ambitious targets for wind and solar by 2030.**

Since the Paris Agreement, successive UK governments have been bullish on reducing the power sector's carbon footprint, echoing almost universal support (98%) among the British business leaders polled for a fast transition. In 2024, the United Kingdom decommissioned its final coal-fired power station, marking a significant moment of international leadership for a country so closely associated with the Industrial Revolution.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, renewables are experiencing a dramatic rise, increasing more than sixfold since 2010, to 44% of total electricity generation today.<sup>2</sup> This increase is in line with the country's ambitious projections for renewables; under the UK Clean Power 2030 Action Plan, the United Kingdom would source the vast majority of its electricity generation from renewable sources by the end of the decade.<sup>3</sup>

More than three-fifths of business executives (62%) see renewables as essential to energy security. Spiking household electricity bills have sensitised both the UK public and the

business community to the exposure that the country faces from volatile fossil gas imports. At present, the United Kingdom relies on fossil gas for 28% of its electricity production,<sup>4</sup> a reduction of 15 percentage points from the "dash for gas" phase in the 1990s.<sup>5</sup> Even so, the price of gas also continues to set the cost of electricity most of the time.

## Electricity policy

A range of support packages are now in place to help deliver on the objectives of the government's renewable electricity plans. The government-backed "contracts for difference" scheme, which seeks to provide price security to renewable project developers, promises to further stimulate the sector's expansion.<sup>6</sup> Other recent stimulus measures include removing the effective ban on onshore wind, addressing the grid connection queue, greenlighting new solar projects, and kickstarting a string of long-

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.e3g.org/news/last-uk-coal-power-station-closes/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://interactive.carbonbrief.org/coal-phaseout-UK/index.html#>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-power-2030-action-plan>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.carbonbrief.org/analysis-uks-electricity-was-cleanest-ever-in-2024/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1372142/electricity-production-mix-united-kingdom/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/contracts-for-difference>

duration storage projects, among others. The government has also ended the de facto ban on on-shore wind, green lighted new solar projects and is taking robust action to build out the electricity grid and make it easier for renewables to connect to it.<sup>7</sup>

More than half (55%) of business leaders believe that renewables will contribute to economic growth, underlying/supporting the government's transition plans. Existing evidence already supports this position. Recent research from the Confederation of British Industry reveals that the net-zero economy grew by 10% in 2024 and is now worth over £83 billion (US\$107 billion) in Gross Value Added.<sup>8</sup> The latest government data also suggests that the UK renewable energy sector currently supports 57,000 jobs, confirming the positive link that almost three-fifths (59%) of UK business executives see between renewables and job creation.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, this evidence strongly undermines efforts in some political quarters to characterise a fast transition as a drag on the government's growth agenda

## Business 'asks'

At present, over two-fifths of business leaders (42%) identify the high upfront costs

associated with shifting to renewable energy infrastructure as a barrier to the transition. Almost one third (32%) of respondents also feel that delays in obtaining permits for renewable energy, storage, and grid infrastructure projects act as a break on progress. In light of these findings, the UK government should look to take steps to facilitate project finance and permitting. Meanwhile, over half of company executives (59%) view the renewables industry as a net job creator, leading many (47%) to favour a comprehensive training and reskilling programme by the government to prepare workers for employment in the sector.

Finally, two in five executives (41%) want clarity on the government's plans and timelines for providing renewable energy, suggesting business leaders want greater clarity on how it is delivering its 2030 goals for renewables. This is especially relevant for the more-than-half (57%) of business leaders who want a transition away from fossil fuels to a renewables-generated power system within five years.<sup>10</sup> The government's current transition plan anticipates the use of carbon capture and storage, which, if enacted, would extend the life of fossil fuels in the national grid. The introduction of a clear gas exit strategy by the government would effectively address both these concerns.

### Top benefits to your country for transitioning away from fossil fuels (% who chose the following)



<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/contracts-for-difference>

<sup>8</sup> <https://eciu.net/media/press-releases/2025/uk-net-zero-economy-grows-10-in-a-year-finds-new-report>

<sup>9</sup> Estimates are for the year 2022, based on data from the Office of National Statistics. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/renewables-statistics>

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.