

# UK's National Strategy for Climate and Energy: Transition to a Low Carbon Society



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The UK has set out its transition plan for becoming a low carbon country: cutting emissions, maintaining secure energy supplies, maximising economic opportunities, and protecting the most vulnerable.

## The challenge

If the world continues emitting greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide at today's levels then average global temperatures could rise by up to 6°C by the end of this century. This is enough to make extreme weather events like floods and drought more frequent and increase global instability, conflict, public health-related deaths and migration of people to levels beyond any of our recent experience. Heat waves, droughts, and floods would affect the UK too.

To avoid the most dangerous impacts of climate change, average global temperatures must rise no more than 2°C, and that means global emissions must start falling before 2020 and then fall to at least 50% below 1990 levels by 2050.

The UK is calling for an ambitious global agreement at UN talks in Copenhagen in December 2009. The Government's approach to this deal is set out in The Road to Copenhagen published in June 2009 and available at [www.decc.gov.uk/copenhagen](http://www.decc.gov.uk/copenhagen).



## Driving the transition

We all need to play our part in making these changes. If we get it right, we will have a better quality of life, improved long-term economic health, new business opportunities in a fast-growing global sector, and, by reducing our reliance on fossil fuels, greater security of future energy supplies.

But the transition is not without its challenges. We will need to drive major changes to the way we use and supply our energy and in doing so it is critical that our supplies continue to be safe, secure and reliable. We need new investment in low carbon infrastructure and to manage the risks associated with our increasing dependence on energy imports at a time when competition for global energy supplies is intensifying. Over time, energy costs will rise, so the Government will be vigilant in ensuring affordable prices and helping the most vulnerable.

The UK has made good progress so far. Emissions have already fallen 21% below 1990 levels, nearly double what was promised at Kyoto; and in the UK alone, low carbon and environmental goods and services are already worth more than £100bn each year and the sector employs 880,000 people.

Dynamic, competitive markets, a strategic role for Government, and active communities will be needed to bring about the transition to low carbon.

**To drive this transition, the Government has put in place the world's first ever legally binding target to cut emissions at least 80% by 2050 and a set of five-year "carbon budgets" to 2022 to keep the UK on track.**

**The Low Carbon Transition Plan for the first time sets out how these budgets will be met** – so that by 2020 UK emissions will be 18% below 2008 levels and over one third below 1990 levels. This will mean emissions falling faster than before: emissions have fallen about 1% a year since 1990, and will now fall 1.4% a year. The UK will go even further if other countries sign up to an ambitious global agreement.

## At a glance

This Low Carbon Transition Plan sets out the UK's first ever comprehensive low carbon transition plan to 2020. This plan will deliver **emission cuts of 18% on 2008 levels by 2020** (and over a one third reduction on 1990 levels).

Key steps include:

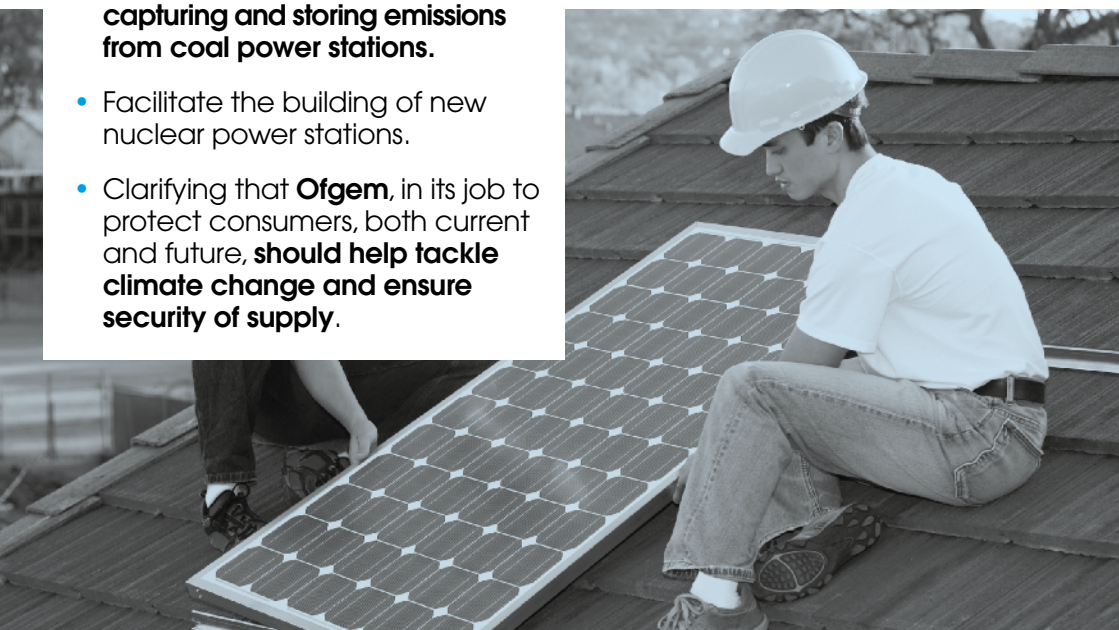
For the first time, all UK Government departments have been allocated their own carbon budget and must produce their own plan.

### Getting 40% of our electricity from low carbon sources by 2020 with policies to:

- **Produce around 30% of our electricity from renewables** by 2020 by substantially increasing the requirement for electricity suppliers to sell renewable electricity.
- **Fund up to four 'commercial scale' demonstrations of capturing and storing emissions from coal power stations.**
- Facilitate the building of new nuclear power stations.
- Clarifying that **Ofgem**, in its job to protect consumers, both current and future, **should help tackle climate change and ensure security of supply.**

### Making homes greener by:

- **Channelling about £3.2 billion to help households become more energy efficient** by increasing the current programme by 20% between 2008 and 2011 and then extending it to the end of 2012.
- **Rolling out smart meters in every home by the end of 2020.**
- **Piloting "pay as you save" ways to help people make their whole house greener** – the savings made on energy bills will be used to repay the upfront costs.
- **Introducing clean energy cash-back schemes** so that people and businesses will be paid if they use low carbon sources to generate heat or electricity.
- **Challenging 15 villages, towns or cities** to be testbeds for piloting future green initiatives.



### Helping the most vulnerable by:

- Creating **mandated social price support** at the earliest opportunity with increased resources compared to the current voluntary system. The Government is minded to focus new resources particularly on older pensioners on the lowest incomes.
- **Piloting a community-based approach to delivering green homes in low income areas**, helping around 90,000 homes.
- **Increasing the level of Warm Front grants** so most eligible applicants can receive their energy saving measures without having to contribute payment themselves.

**Helping make the UK a centre of green industry** by supporting the development and use of clean technologies, including up to **£120 million investment in offshore wind** and an additional **£60 million to cement the UK's position as a global leader in marine energy**.

**Transforming transport by cutting average carbon dioxide emissions from new cars across the EU by 40%** on 2007 levels, supporting the largest demonstration project in the world for new electric cars, and sourcing 10% of UK transport energy from sustainable renewable sources by 2020.

**The first ever formal framework for tackling emissions from farming.**

**Producing a longer term roadmap for the transition to a low carbon UK for the period 2020 to 2050 by next spring and a vision for a smart grid.**

**Setting out the Government's assessment of the outlook for energy security.**



To find out more about what the UK Government is doing to tackle climate change visit **[www.decc.gov.uk](http://www.decc.gov.uk)**

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