THE Planet Brief

INDEPENDENT CLIMATE INTELLIGENCE

# The State of UK Climate Progress 2026

Eleven indicators showing where the transition is moving, where delivery remains uneven and what to watch next.

**11 SOURCE-CHECKED INDICATORS**

**EVIDENCE RELEASE 1.0 | DATA FROZEN 1 AUGUST 2026**

For policy, research and business readers who need a source-backed national snapshot

# Executive summary

The UK's low-carbon transition is no longer confined to pilot projects. Renewable generation can lead the electricity mix in a strong quarter. Public electric vehicle charging has passed 121,000 devices. More than 41 million smart and advanced meters are now installed in homes and small businesses. Grid-scale batteries have become a material part of the power system.

The national picture is still mixed because connection offers are not connected projects, and heat-pump grant applications are not installations. A growing public charging network does not remove regional gaps or guarantee reliability. The 2026 share of zero-emission car registrations remains below the mandate level, while domestic transport emissions rose in 2025.

### Electricity has moved furthest

First, electricity has moved furthest. Renewables supplied 53.1% of UK generation in the first quarter of 2026, while coal recorded no generation in 2025 or the opening quarter of 2026. The next constraint is increasingly the wider system around generation: grid access, storage duration, dispatchable flexibility and the conversion of connection offers into operating projects.

### Infrastructure is expanding

Second, household and transport infrastructure is expanding faster than some of the outcomes it is meant to enable. Chargers and smart meters are widespread, but vehicle sales, low-carbon heating and active travel remain uneven. Physical equipment is only one part of adoption; cost, reliability, regional access and completed installation still decide how much changes in practice.

### The remaining cuts are harder

Third, the UK's long-run emissions record remains substantial but the remaining reductions are harder. Net territorial emissions were provisionally 54% below 1990 in 2025, yet transport moved in the wrong direction and several sectors have not repeated the power sector's pace of change.

## CURRENT READING

Three indicators are improving; grid connection offers are the lone watch signal; seven remain mixed.

| 3 | 7 | 1 | 11 |
|---|---|---|---|
| IMPROVING | MIXED | WATCH | TOTAL |

# The UK in 11 indicators

**Renewable electricity share**

## 53.1%

Q1 2026 provisional

**Faster grid connection offers**

## 37 gigawatts (GW)

National Energy System Operator (NESO) offer

**Grid-scale battery power capacity**

## 7.5GW grid-scale capacity

2025 official statistics

**Zero-emission car registration share**

## About 24.2%

January to June 2026

**Public electric vehicle chargers**

## 121,171

1 July 2026

**Short urban journeys walked or cycled**

## 42.8%

2024

**Boiler Upgrade Scheme applications**

## 135,500 applications

To end June 2026

**UK net territorial emissions**

## 367MtCO2e

2025 provisional figures

**Properties better protected from flooding**

## 61,898 properties

2024/25 to 2025/26

**Smart and advanced meters in use**

## 41.1m

End March 2026

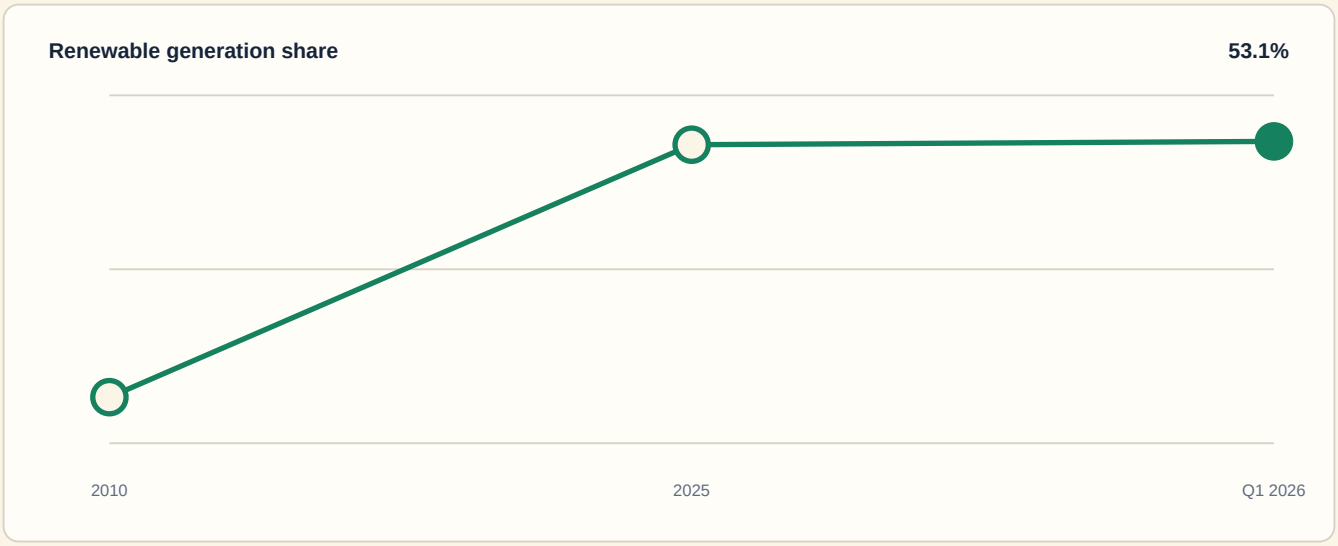
**Low-carbon economy turnover**

## £77bn

2024

The dates are part of the numbers: each cell shows the latest available period for that official series.

# Renewable electricity can lead the mix




### What changed

Renewables supplied 53.1% of UK electricity generation in the first quarter of 2026, compared with about 6.9% in 2010. Coal recorded no generation in 2025 and none in the first quarter of 2026.

### Why quarters vary

The quarterly figure is strong, but it is not a full-year guarantee. Weather, nuclear availability, electricity demand and outages can change the mix from one quarter to the next. Gas still supplied 32.3% of generation in Q1 2026 and remains central to balancing the system.

### Next official check

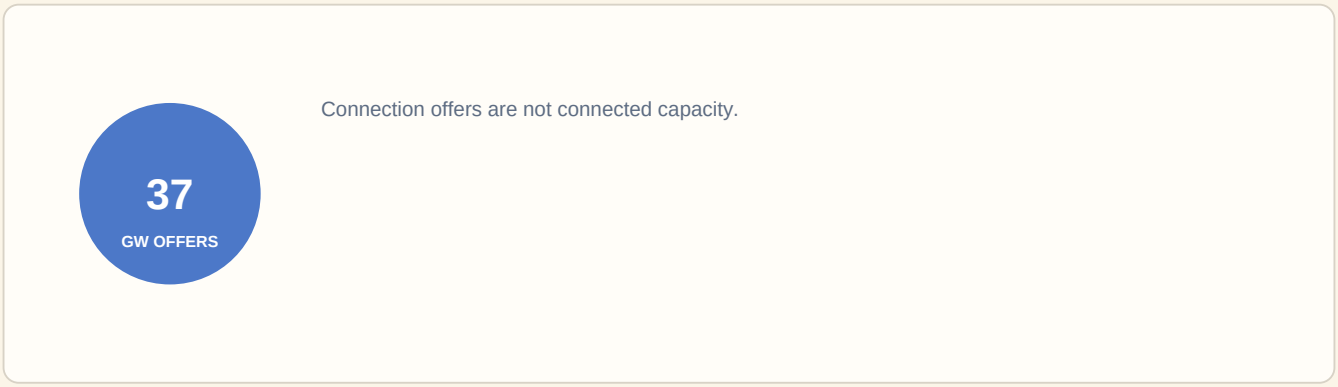
The next Energy Trends quarterly release will show whether renewable output remains above half of generation and whether gas falls in absolute terms without reliability problems. That is a tougher test than reaching a high share in a favourable quarter.

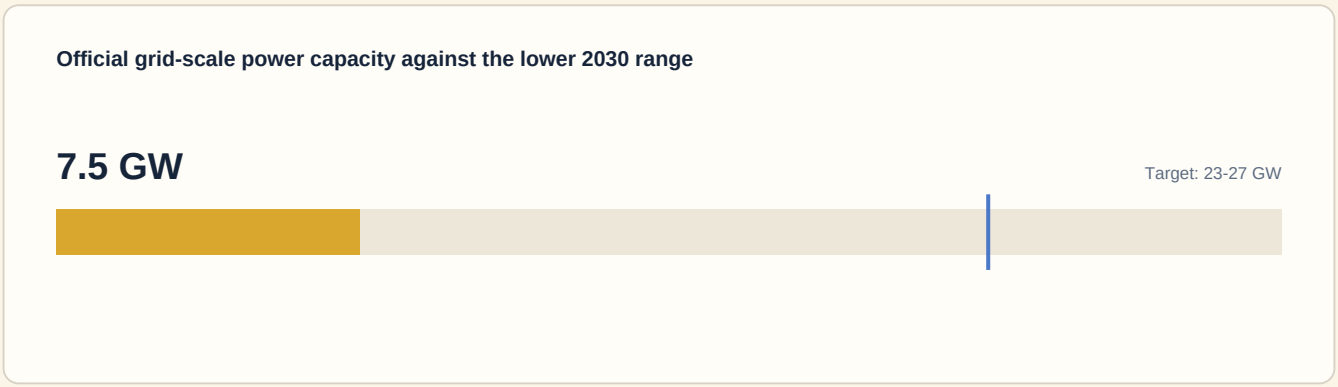
### Data boundary

**Data boundary:** 53.1% is the share of UK electricity generation in Q1 2026, not the share of total UK energy demand.

Source: GOV.UK Energy Trends electricity statistics. Data period: Q1 2026 provisional. Checked 2026-07-20.

# Grid reform and batteries are moving at different speeds



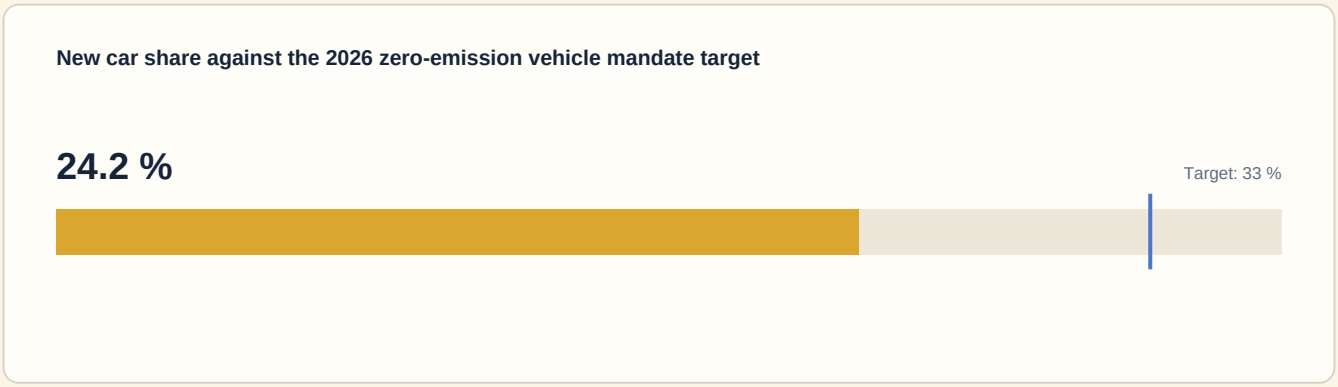

National Energy System Operator said that more than 700 projects representing 37GW had received connection offers by 10 June 2026. The offers covered 58% of the pre-2030 offer pipeline.

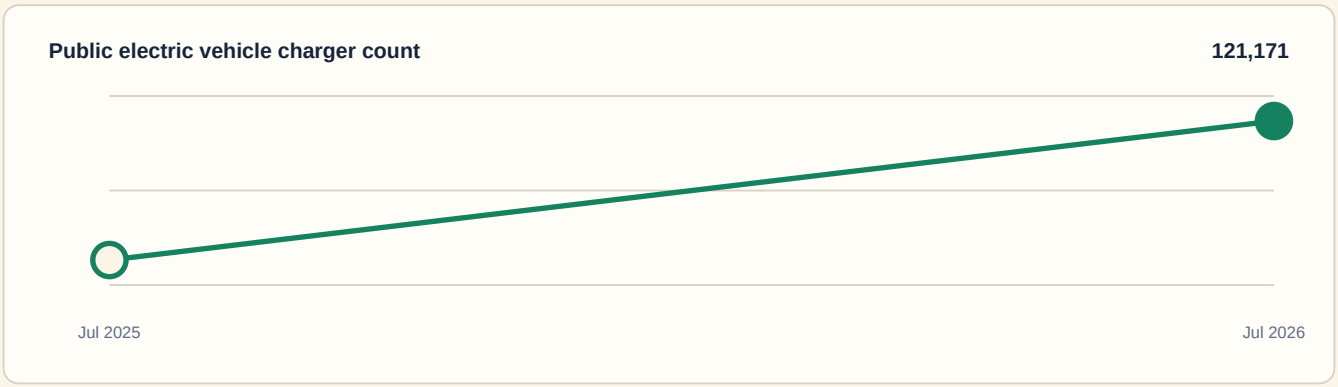
The queue reform is a genuine institutional change, but 37GW should not be described as connected capacity. Projects still need to accept offers, secure finance, complete planning and construction, and reach operation. The number records a clearer route through the queue, not electricity on the network.

Battery deployment is further along physically. Official statistics put UK grid-scale battery power capacity at 7.5GW in 2025, including a record 2.3GW energised during the year. Clean Power 2030 planning envisages a much larger fleet of 23GW to 27GW by 2030. From the 2025 base, reaching that range would imply adding roughly 3.1GW to 3.9GW a year on average through 2030, before allowing for retirements or revisions to the target.

Source: GOV.UK Energy Trends: grid-scale battery storage statistics. Data period: 2025 official statistics. Checked 2026-08-01.

# More chargers, but car sales remain below the mandate path




Zero-emission car registrations reached 284,812 in the first half of 2026, up from 225,037 in the same months of 2025. The market share rose from 21.1% to about 24.2%.

The increase is real, but the full-year share remains below the 33% mandate target for 2026. Vans are further behind their corresponding path. The year-end result will depend on the second half of the market rather than June alone.

Charging infrastructure is expanding alongside sales. The 121,171 public devices recorded on 1 July 2026 included 28,887 rated at 50kW or above. A small month-to-month fall in the headline total reflected the removal of about 1,270 private-access chargers from one operator's public feed, not a sudden contraction in physical infrastructure.

Source: Department for Transport monthly public electric vehicle charger data. Data period: 1 July 2026. Checked 2026-07-23.

# Short journeys remain a large, underused opportunity

**Short urban journeys walked or cycled against the 2030 aim**


### Current position

In 2024, 42.8% of short journeys in English towns and cities were walked or cycled. The figure is close to the 50% ambition for 2030, but progress since 2013 has been slow.

### What local conditions decide

The national percentage does not reveal whether a journey feels practical or safe. School routes, crossings, connected cycle networks and local street design decide whether walking and cycling become the easy choice for more households.

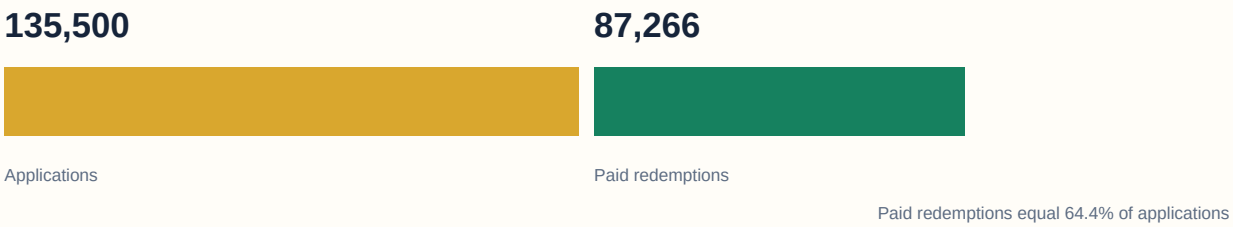
### Next official check

The next National Travel Survey and Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy update will show whether the share is moving decisively or remaining around its current level. A national target will be reached through thousands of local routes rather than one central programme total.

Source: GOV.UK Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy report to Parliament 2026. Data period: 2024. Checked 2026-07-01.

# Homes have more low-carbon equipment, but completion still matters

**Applications to paid redemptions**




Paid redemptions equal 64.4% of applications

**Smart-mode or advanced meters**


The Boiler Upgrade Scheme had received 135,500 applications by the end of June 2026. Of these, 87,266 had progressed to paid redemptions, with June adding 4,512 applications and 2,387 paid redemptions.

Applications show demand for support; redemptions sit closer to completed delivery. Neither figure is the same as the total number of heat pumps installed across the country, and the programme remains small beside the UK housing stock.

Smart and advanced meters are already operating at a much larger scale. Great Britain had 41.1 million in homes and small businesses at the end of March 2026. About 38 million were operating in smart mode or counted as advanced meters, while 3.061 million smart meters were still operating in traditional mode.

Source: GOV.UK Smart meters in Great Britain quarterly update March 2026. Data period: End March 2026. Checked 2026-06-29.

# Emissions are far below 1990, but the easier reductions are behind us

**Emissions compared with 1990**


### What changed

UK net territorial greenhouse gas emissions were provisionally estimated at 367MtCO2e in 2025. That was 2% lower than in 2024 and 54% below 1990.

### Where earlier cuts came from

The long-run decline is substantial. Much of the earlier progress came from changes in electricity generation, including the retirement of coal and growth of renewables. The remaining emissions are spread across transport, buildings, industry, agriculture, land use and aviation, where replacement cycles and infrastructure can move more slowly.

### What moved backwards

Domestic transport emissions rose in 2025. That result sits beside growing electric vehicle sales and charging infrastructure, showing the distance between early market change and a national emissions outcome.

### Next official check

The 2025 estimate is provisional. Final figures, expected in 2027, may revise the total. The direction is unlikely to change, but sector-level revisions matter when judging where the next reductions are coming from.

Source: GOV.UK provisional UK greenhouse gas emissions statistics 2025. Data period: 2025 provisional figures. Checked 2026-06-24.

# Flood protection is being delivered, but risk remains widespread

**Properties better protected against the two-year target**


### Delivery against target

The Environment Agency reported that 61,898 homes and businesses were better protected from flooding across 2024/25 and 2025/26. The two-year total exceeded the 52,000-property programme target by 9,898.

### What protection does not mean

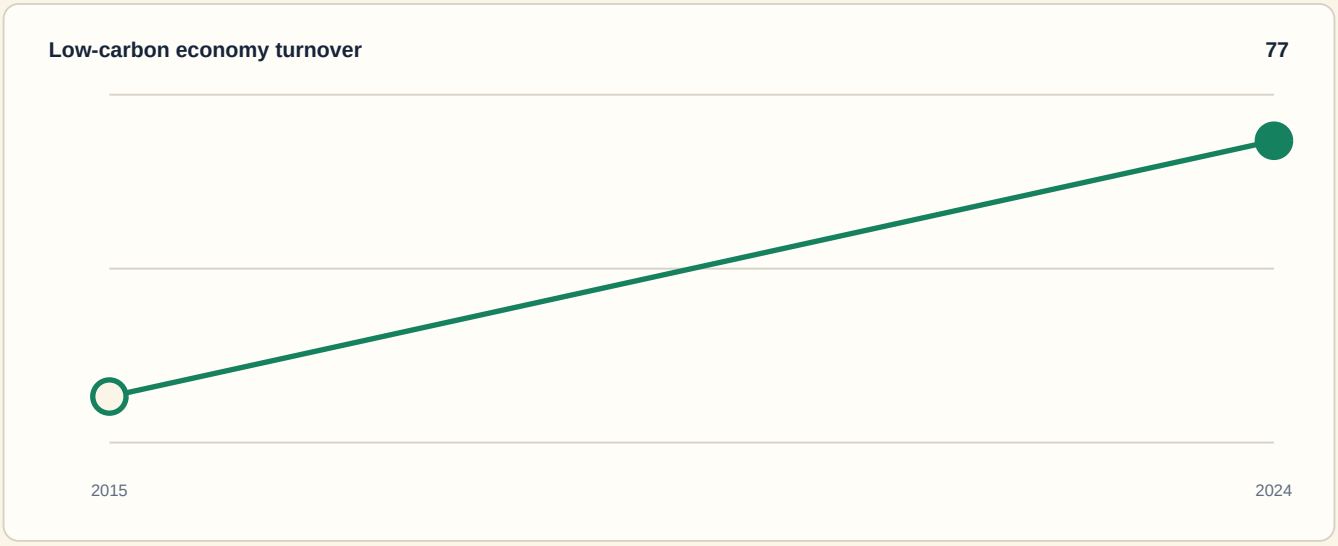
Completed defences, repairs and local protection work are tangible adaptation. Better protected does not mean flood-proof, however, and more than six million properties in England remain at risk. Maintenance and asset condition affect whether protection continues to perform as intended.

### Next official check

The next test is delivery across the more than 600 projects funded for 2026/27, together with evidence on the condition of existing assets. Adaptation depends on building new defences and keeping older ones effective.

Source: GOV.UK and Environment Agency flood protection updates. Data period: 2024/25 to 2025/26. Checked 2026-06-30.

# The low-carbon economy is large, but growth is not uniform




### Economic scale

The Office for National Statistics estimated turnover in the UK's low-carbon and renewable energy economy at £77bn in 2024. That was 91.3% higher than the 2015 estimate.

### What turnover does not prove

Turnover gives the sector real economic weight, but it should not be treated as a direct measure of emissions reductions or broad-based job growth. Employment was estimated at 304,000 full-time equivalents in 2024, down 13,000, or 4.1%, from 2023.

### Why employment matters

The combination is more informative than either number alone. Businesses can sell more while employment falls, and low-carbon economic activity can grow without every part of the national transition moving at the same pace.

### Next official check

The next release will show whether turnover growth is joined by stable or rising employment. Survey uncertainty should remain visible when comparing single years.

Source: ONS Low carbon and renewable energy economy, UK: 2024. Data period: 2024. Checked 2026-06-29.

# What the systems show together

### Infrastructure is no longer the whole question

The UK now has substantial renewable generation, batteries, chargers and smart meters. The next gains depend on how reliably that infrastructure works together and whether households and businesses can use it affordably.

### Conversion is the recurring delivery gap

Several of the largest numbers describe an intermediate stage: grid offers must become connected projects, heat-pump applications must become completed installations, and a growing charger count must become dependable local access. The physical outcome often sits one or two steps beyond the headline.

### National outcomes move more slowly than individual technologies

Electric vehicle registrations can rise while transport emissions increase. Low-carbon turnover can grow while employment falls. Renewable generation can reach a record share while gas remains central to balancing the system. The transition is visible, but its parts are not moving in lockstep.

### Data quality shapes the public picture

The removal of private chargers from a public total and the separation of battery power from storage duration are not technical footnotes. They change what the number means. Clear boundaries make progress more credible, even when they produce a less dramatic headline.

# The next official releases to watch

| WINDOW | RELEASE | WHAT IT COULD CHANGE |
|---|---|---|
| Monthly | Vehicles and chargers | Sales against the mandate and corrected charger growth |
| Monthly | Boiler Upgrade Scheme | Applications converting into paid redemptions |
| 27 Aug 2026 | Smart meters | More installed meters operating in smart mode |
| Sep 2026 | Energy Trends | Whether renewables remain above half of generation |
| Irregular | Grid connections | Offers progressing towards physical connection |
| Annual | Active travel | Short trips moving towards the 2030 aim |
| Annual | Flood resilience | Delivery and asset condition sustaining protection |
| 2027 | Final 2025 emissions | Whether provisional national figures are confirmed |
| Next ONS update | Low-carbon economy | Turnover growth joined by stronger employment |

# Method and source register

The snapshot uses eleven indicators from official statistics, system operators and scheme administrators. Metrics were selected to cover generation, grid delivery, storage, transport, buildings, emissions, resilience and economic capacity. They are not intended to represent every part of UK climate policy.

Values were frozen on 1 August 2026. Every source URL resolved successfully at the freeze. The JSON, CSV and source-verification files are protected by SHA-256 hashes in evidence manifest 1.0.

No composite index is calculated. Status labels summarise the latest evidence inside each metric's stated boundary.

| INDICATOR / PRIMARY SOURCE / DATA PERIOD |
| --- |
| **Renewable electricity share**<br>GOV.UK Energy Trends electricity statistics<br>Q1 2026 provisional |
| **Faster grid connection offers**<br>National Energy System Operator (NESO) June 2026 connections reform update<br>National Energy System Operator (NESO) offers issued by 10 June 2026 |
| **Grid-scale battery power capacity**<br>GOV.UK Energy Trends: grid-scale battery storage statistics<br>2025 official statistics |
| **Zero-emission car registration share**<br>Department for Transport faster indicators of transport activity<br>January to June 2026 |
| **Public electric vehicle chargers**<br>Department for Transport monthly public electric vehicle charger data<br>1 July 2026 |
| **Short urban journeys walked or cycled**<br>GOV.UK Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy report to Parliament 2026<br>2024 |
| **Boiler Upgrade Scheme applications**<br>Ofgem BUS monthly scheme update<br>To end June 2026 |
| **Smart and advanced meters in use**<br>GOV.UK Smart meters in Great Britain quarterly update March 2026<br>End March 2026 |
| **UK net territorial emissions**<br>GOV.UK provisional UK greenhouse gas emissions statistics 2025<br>2025 provisional figures |
| **Properties better protected from flooding**<br>GOV.UK and Environment Agency flood protection updates<br>2024/25 to 2025/26 |
| **Low-carbon economy turnover**<br>ONS Low carbon and renewable energy economy, UK: 2024<br>2024 |

# Keep the picture current

**The snapshot is dated. The tracker keeps moving.**

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Reusable JSON and CSV from the public tracker

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One clear morning email with the context attached

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