



Switching to Green Energy

Improving the carbon footprint of your business might sound like a daunting task. However, there are many simple switches you can make which will make a genuine difference to protecting the planet. We suggest a simple place to start, however small or large your business, is changing your energy supplier to a 100% renewable option. In this article, we provide a simple guide to:

- Green energy suppliers in the UK
- How to switch
- What Green energy really means
- The energy landscape in the UK

Green energy suppliers in the UK

The table below lists energy suppliers in the UK which based on our research, offer green business tariffs. We have provided detail as available on electricity and gas generation methods. We hope this list is a useful starting point in deciding which green energy supplier might be most appropriate for your business.

Table 1: Green Energy suppliers in the UK

SUPPLIER	WEBSITE	ELECTRICITY	GAS
Bristol Energy	www.bristol-energy.co.uk	100% renewable	50%-100% carbon offset, depending on tariff
Bulb	www.bulb.co.uk	100% renewable - Wind 73%, Solar 25%, Hydro 3%	100% carbon neutral. A mixture of green gas and Investment in offset programmes verified by Gold Standard, Verified Carbon Standard or Clean Development Mechanism
Ecotricity	www.ecotricity.co.uk	100% renewable - Wind and Solar	100% carbon neutral. Is investing to increase its supply from green gasmills. The remainder of gas supply is offset by investing in projects verified by Gold Standard, Verified Carbon Standard or Clean Development Mechanism

Good Energy	www.goodenergy.co.uk	100% renewable – Wind 54%, Biogeneration 28%, Solar 13%, Hydro 4%	100% carbon neutral. 10% carbon neutral biogas, 90% carbon offset
Green Energy UK	www.greenenergyuk.com	100% renewable, Hydro, Solar, Wind, Biomass	100% carbon neutral. 100% certified green gas
Gulf Gas & Power UK	https://gulfgasandpower.uk	100% renewable, Hydro, Solar, Wind,	100% carbon neutral by investing in carbon offset projects
Octopus Energy (includes Co-operative energy)	https://octopus.energy	100% renewable, Wind 59%, Solar 40%, Hydro 1%	For selected tariffs, 100% carbon neutral by investing in offset projects run by Renewable World
People's Energy	www.peoplesenergy.co.uk	100% renewable, 100% Biomass	Unclear
Symbio	www.symbioenergy.co.uk	100% renewable	Unclear
Yorkshire Energy	https://business.ye.co.uk	100% renewable	Unclear

Note: ESGmark is not affiliated to any of the energy suppliers featured in the table above

Source: <http://electricityinfo.org/>, Company websites

Other green energy suppliers which based on our research, supply domestic properties only, include Economy 7 Energy, Foxglove Energy, Outfox the Market, Pure Planet, So Energy and Tonik Energy.

How to switch

The right energy plan for any particular business will depend on type required (electricity, gas or both), energy usage and location, among other factors. Below we have suggested comparison websites which allow you to filter by Green energy options. We note that not all of the suppliers in the table above are featured on price comparison websites.

<https://www.uswitch.com>

<https://bigcleanswitch.org>

Suppliers not listed in Table 1 may offer alternative Green tariffs alongside non-renewable options. We would encourage you to investigate the fuel mix supporting these tariffs before switching to ensure it is either 100% renewable or carbon offset.

What Green energy in the UK really means

Green electricity

Choosing a Green electricity tariff means the following:

Your supplier must ensure that they feed the National Grid with enough electricity generated from renewable sources as their customers demand.

The supplier can ensure this by one or a mixture of the following three approaches:

- Generate their own renewable electricity
- Make bilateral contracts with renewable generators
- Purchase REGO (Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin) certificates from National Grid. These are sold by renewable generators supplying the grid. A REGO backs each unit of renewable energy the supplier buys for their customers

Suppliers must verify the source of the electricity they supply to their customers annually by submitting data to Ofgem, the UK's energy regulator.

It is not true to say that by choosing a Green tariff 100% of the electricity supplying your home or business is generated by a renewable source. This is because most commercial power stations (renewable and non-renewable) feed the National Grid. From this "mixed pool," electricity is supplied across the country.

However, it is true to say that by choosing a 100% renewable tariff, you are demanding that more Green electricity is produced to replace non-renewable options. This in turn puts pressure on the Government to support further future investment into renewable energy infrastructure and technology.

Green gas

Green gas can be produced from natural material (e.g. food waste, agricultural activities, landfill). However, the technology supporting renewable gas production is still developing and is not as advanced as for electricity generation.

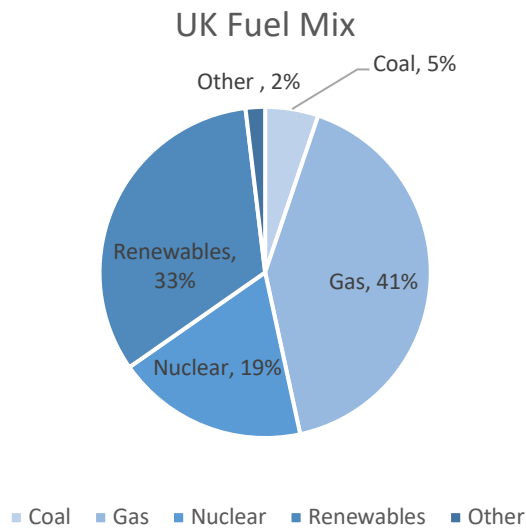
Until renewable gas production can support demand, most green suppliers purchase carbon offsets to net out the carbon footprint of what they supply.

Carbon offsetting usually involves investing in projects which seek to either remove carbon from the atmosphere or empower communities around the world to generate their own electricity renewably. Most energy suppliers provide details on their websites about the carbon offsetting programmes they are involved in.

The rise of Green energy in the UK

Green electricity is produced from renewable natural sources, which include wind, biomass, water/wave and solar in the UK. The environmental impact of these energy sources is much lower than non-renewable sources such as fossil fuels, which when combusted release carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.

In the UK, the latest data shows that 33% of the UK's fuel mix is supplied by renewable sources.



In 2015, the UK committed to the following legally binding targets, to be achieved by 2020:

- 30% renewable electricity
- 12% renewable heat
- 10% renewable transport

While the renewable electricity target looks set to be hit, but current data indicates that the renewable heat and renewable transport targets will be missed. What is clear, is that to achieve the UK's legislated target of net zero by 2050, these targets must be more ambitious.

Did you find this useful? Think we missed anything? Get in touch!

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