

Around the UK



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The governments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland each have targets, policies and measures that supplement the UK-wide ones stemming from legislation such as the 2008 Climate Change Act. In some cases, the devolved administrations are more ambitious than the UK:

- the Scottish Government plans to cut emissions by 42% by 2020, and to generate the equivalent of its total electricity consumption from renewables by the same date
- the Northern Ireland Executive is taking plans forward for a separate Climate Change Act
- Wales has outlined a target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 3% each year from 2011 in sectors of devolved responsibility.

Across the administrations

Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland account for 8.8%, 8% and 3.6% respectively of UK emissions.

Agriculture plays a larger part in the economies of the devolved administrations than in England's. There has been less progress in reducing emissions from agriculture than from other sectors of the economy.

Overall, levels of fuel poverty are higher than in England. The Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish administrations use revenue from general taxation to support energy efficiency schemes. According to the charity [National Energy Action](#), Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish citizens benefit from heating and insulation programmes developed by the devolved administrations in addition to those that are UK-wide.

Measures to combat climate change and restrict emissions across the UK are covered in [a separate ECIU Briefing](#). This Briefing summarises measures specific to the devolved administrations.

Scotland

The [Climate Change \(Scotland\) Act 2009](#) came into force a year after the Westminster equivalent. It sets a long-term target of reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 80% in 2050 relative to 1990 (identical to the UK-wide target), with an interim reduction target of 42% by 2020 (stronger

than the UK-wide equivalent of 34%). Unlike the UK as a whole, it also has annual targets.

So far, Scotland [is broadly on track](#). Emissions fell by 15% from 2007 to 2012, compared with a UK-wide fall of 12%.

[Two-fifths of its electricity came from renewables in 2012](#), significantly higher than the rest of the UK. The [Scottish government says](#) it is on course to meet its 2015 target of generating half of its electricity from renewable sources. The subsequent goal is

Two-fifths of Scotland's electricity came from renewables in 2012

to generate electricity equivalent to its entire annual demand (and 30% of total energy requirements) from renewables by 2020.

Scotland has [34% of the UK's renewables capacity](#), but consumes just 9% of UK electricity. The nuclear power stations at Torness and Hunterston provide a third of Scotland's electricity. Both are due to close in 2023. At present, Scotland is a net exporter of electricity.

More than two-thirds of UK forests are located in Scotland, representing a large part of the UK 'carbon sink' (the absorption of carbon dioxide from the air by photosynthesis). The area of forest has slightly shrunk in recent years, and the consequent reduction in CO₂ absorption has the same impact as a rise in CO₂ emissions. However, emissions from agriculture are falling, due to increased livestock productivity, reduced use of fertiliser and reduced conversion of land for farming.



Sloy is one of the largest hydro power stations in Scotland. Image: Andy Magee, Creative Commons licence

In its latest assessment, the Committee on Climate Change [says it will be 'challenging'](#) for Scotland to meet its future targets.

Wales

The Welsh [Climate Change Strategy](#), published in October 2010, outlines a target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 3% each year from 2011 in sectors that the Welsh Government controls under its devolved responsibilities. This includes most sectors other than power generation and energy-intensive industries.

Emissions fell in Wales by 18% from 1990 to 2012

The Welsh Government has also committed to a reduction of 40% from 1990 levels across all sectors by 2020 – more ambitious than the UK's target of 34%.

[Emissions fell in Wales by 18% from 1990 to 2012](#), compared with 26% across the UK as a whole. According to the [Climate Change Annual Report](#), Wales exceeded its 3% target for 2011.

In the power sector, Welsh emissions rose by about 30% from 2008 to 2012, largely due to the closure of one of the two nuclear reactors at Wylfa. The other reactor – the last remaining Magnox – may close in September 2014. Wales is under-represented in the UK's renewables industry, with [6% of UK capacity](#).

Northern Ireland

From 2007 to 2012, Northern Ireland's emissions fell by 7% - a smaller fall than the UK-wide figure of 12%. This is partly because Northern Ireland has a disproportionate share of UK agriculture, a sector where emissions have

fallen relatively slowly. Transport emissions have also risen by 23% since 1990.

Northern Ireland aims to generate 40% of its electricity consumption from renewables by 2020

Northern Ireland's target is to reduce [emissions by 35% on 1990 levels by 2025](#) – slightly less ambitious than the UK-wide target of 34% by 2020. It also [aims to generate 40% of its electricity](#) consumption from renewables by 2020. In 2012, the figure achieved was 13%.

Northern Ireland's Environment Minister [is taking forward proposals](#) for a Northern Irish Climate Change Act, arguing that this would help to 'improve the investment climate'.

At 42%, Northern Ireland has the highest proportion of homes in fuel poverty of any UK region. Consequently the Executive runs a number of taxpayer-funded schemes such as [Warm Homes](#) that aim to improve energy efficiency.

Given the importance of agriculture in Northern Ireland, the Executive runs a [Greenhouse Gas Implementation Partnership](#) aiming to reduce emissions mainly through optimising practice in areas such as beef, dairy and crop management.