

## Country briefing for the United Kingdom

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You are a rich industrialised country. As the host country and 'President' of COP26 you are expected to be neutral but ambitious and work closely with all countries to secure a strong COP outcome.

### TASK

Using the information on this briefing sheet, with links on page 2 for further research, we would like you to prepare a **1 minute High-Level statement** to outline your country's position by addressing these questions:

- Where in the world is your country and how does climate change affect you?
- What are your greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction targets, and what examples can you give of actions you are taking to achieve them (Mitigation)?
- What are you doing to support people, areas of your country, or key sectors, that are already feeling the negative effects of climate change (Adaptation)?

### Be prepared

You have announced a commitment to reach net-zero emissions by 2050 but may be criticised for not yet having adequate policies in place to meet your original 2030 targets.

You will also be asked if you want to collaborate on one or more of these major themes: **cities, energy, forests and food, and oceans**. Find out which is a priority for you (it may be more than one) and think about how you could share your experience or expertise.

### Background to your views and needs

- 1) UK is a rich country built on centuries of industrial growth. Carbon emissions helped you become one of the richest nations with a high standard of living for most people.
- 2) You agree that climate change is a very serious problem. UK summers will be hotter, winters wetter, and extreme weather more frequent. In 2018 the UK had the joint hottest summer on record and the driest since 1921. 2019 saw the highest ever UK temperature and 2020 has also seen temperature records broken.
- 3) You have ambitious national targets. You were the first country in the world to set legally binding targets through the landmark Climate Change Act 2008, with a target to cut emissions by 2050 by 80% relative to 1990 levels. In June 2019, the government significantly increased this ambition by adopting a 'net zero' emission target by 2050. Under your '5th Carbon Budget' your 2030 target is a 57% cut on 1990 levels. You are not yet on target to meet this.
- 4) Since 1990 you have cut emissions by an impressive 44%. Much of this has been in the electricity sector through shutting coal power stations and expanding renewable electricity, particularly offshore wind. Coal power declined from 40% in 2012 to just 3% in 2019. 33% of your electricity is now from renewable sources. However, you have been criticised for having insufficient policies in other sectors of the economy, eg transport, buildings, and farming.
- 5) Your cities are taking a lead in some of these other areas. London has set a target to be zero-carbon by 2050. All new cars in the city must be zero emission by 2030 and by 2050 it aims to be the world's first 'National Park City' with half of its area green space. Cities such as Bristol are using technology to connect everything from traffic flow to energy centres to make them more efficient.
- 6) The Government's 2017 'Clean Growth Strategy' provides the current road map for meeting your national 2030 targets. It includes targets, plans and proposals for the energy, buildings, transport, industry, and land-use sectors. Latest advice from the Climate Change Committee (the government's independent climate advisor) is that more ambitious policies are needed for achieving the 2030 goals. Among other things, the CCC has recommended increasing forest cover by planting 30,000ha / year of new woodland; stopping the sale of gas boilers in homes from 2025; and banning the sale of new diesel and petrol cars in 2030 (rather than 2040).

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7) Major changes are also underway in the agriculture and forestry sector with new laws being developed that will pay farmers and landowners for climate mitigation and adaptation activities and other so-called 'environmental services' (eg providing increased habitat for wildlife).


8) Your plans for climate adaptation more generally have been heavily criticised by the CCC. In their 2019 review of the National Adaptation Programme the CCC found a "substantial gap" between adaptation plans and actual requirements.

9) Internationally, you have always played a prominent role in climate action, including through financial support to developing countries. Climate finance is one of your priorities as COP President. In 2019, the government committed to doubling its international climate finance support for developing countries to £11.6 billion over the period 2021 to 2025.

### Useful research information

Whilst ICN strives to provide only links to useful and ethical websites, we have no control over their content and links do not imply a recommendation for all the content found on these sites. Entries marked with a star are the priorities to read if you are short of time.

#### Pledges and progress

Overview of all Countries  COP26 Overview (included in the pack) gives a summary of the 2015 Paris Agreement targets that you and other countries pledged.

Nationally Determined Contributions Find your country's targets and plans for reducing emissions that you submitted for the UNFCCC Paris Agreement 2015: <https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/NDCStaging/Pages/All.aspx>

Climate Action Tracker  <https://climateactiontracker.org/countries/>

#### Your actions to reduce emissions

UK hits coal-free record <https://www.carbonbrief.org/analysis-great-britain-hits-coal-free-electricity-record-amid-coronavirus-lockdown>

UK companies investing billions in electric cars <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/mar/08/companies-to-invest-12-billion-pounds-in-electric-vehicles>

#### How you are adapting to Climate Change

New government funding for flood protection <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/multi-billion-pound-investment-as-government-unveils-new-long-term-plan-to-tackle-flooding>

Government announces funding for home energy efficiency measures <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-britain-economy/sunak-to-spend-3-billion-pounds-on-green-projects-in-economy-plan-idUKKBN2472U4>

#### Cities, Energy, Forests and Oceans

Planned Northern Forest <https://thenorthernforest.org.uk/>

UK support for tropical forest protection <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-launches-support-package-to-protect-tropical-rainforests-in-colombia>

UK cities leading on climate action <https://www.edie.net/news/9/Which-UK-cities-are-climate--A-Listers---and-why-/>

UK-led global initiative to protect oceans <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-creates-global-alliance-to-help-protect-the-worlds-ocean>