

## DIGEST OF UK ENERGY STATISTICS: SOURCES OF LOW-CARBON ENERGY

The new edition of the *Digest of UK Energy Statistics (DUKES)* for 2019, published by the [Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy](#) (BEIS) on 25 July 2019 showed that in 2018, and despite outages, nuclear retained its place as the largest source of low-carbon electricity. This continued the trend from 2017, when it contributed 20.8% of all electricity generated, and low-carbon sources of electricity generated 50.1% of all power in the UK.

This is consistent with the findings reported in the [Energy Trends: March 2019 Special Feature Article](#), which stated that in 2018 nuclear accounted for 18.7% of total electricity supplied to the grid, with fossil fuels supplying 47.7% and renewables 33.6%. The authors of this special report noted that the UK's energy mix has changed completely since 1995, when nuclear contributed 25.3% and fossil fuels 72.5%.

The reports constitute recognition of the continuing need for, and contribution from, nuclear energy as a low-carbon 'always available' fuel and a vital part of the energy mix, essential to the UK's commitment to net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

However, they also note that seven of the eight existing nuclear plants are due to be retired by 2030, and that despite the plans for plants at Sizewell and Bradwell, only the new reactors at Hinkley Point C are presently under construction. More needs to be done to reduce the costs of both construction and decommissioning. It is therefore significant that BEIS [launched a new consultation](#) on 23 July 2019 on a Regulated Asset Base model for nuclear financing.

### About the Author

*William Wilson is a specialist environmental, regulatory and nuclear lawyer with over 25 years experience in government, private practice and consultancy. He worked as a senior lawyer at the UK Department of the Environment/DETR/Defra, and helped to build up the environmental and nuclear practices at another major law firm. William has experience of all aspects of environmental law, including water, waste, air quality and industrial emissions, REACH and chemicals regulation, environmental protection, environmental permitting, litigation, legislative drafting, managing primary legislation, negotiating EU Directives and drafting secondary legislation.*

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