We present an at-a-glance overview of the key issues in Britain today. This issue our focus is on energy and waste. All statistics are from the Department of Energy and Climate Change unless stated otherwise.

**Energy consumption**

Since 1970, the overall fuel consumption mix in the UK has changed from solid fuels and petroleum to significant growth in gas and some renewable energy.

*Final Energy Consumption by fuel: Great Britain 1970-2010*

- **1970**
  - Solid fuel: 54.5%
  - Petroleum: 28.5%
  - Gas: 13.5%
  - Renewables: 18.5%

- **2010**
  - Solid fuel: 28.5%
  - Petroleum: 28.5%
  - Gas: 38.5%
  - Renewables: 15.5%

**Percentage reduction in total energy output from 2010 to 2011 due to falls in oil and gas production**

- Low carbon electricity’s share of generation in 2011, up from 23 per cent in 2010 due to higher renewables and nuclear generation.

**Increase in wind energy generation from 2010 to 2011 due to higher wind speeds and increased capacity**

- Fall in domestic energy consumption from 2010 to 2011 due to the milder weather with temperatures 1.8 degrees warmer than 2010.

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**Low-carbon energy**

Using the methodology required by the 2009 EU Renewables Directive, 3.3 per cent of total energy consumption in the UK in 2010 came from renewable sources; up from 3.0 per cent in 2009.

*Percentage of UK energy consumed from low-carbon sources*

- Transport
- Heating and cooling
- Electricity

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*“The release of atomic energy has not created a new problem. It has merely made more urgent the necessity of solving an existing one”* Albert Einstein

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Gas demand was 17 per cent lower than in 2010 and was at its lowest level since 1995, while electricity consumption was 3.5 per cent lower in 2011 than in 2010. Average annual household standard electricity bills (fixed consumption of 3,300 kWh per annum) across all payment types in 2011 were £36 higher than in 2010 (up 8.5 per cent to £453), and average gas bills (fixed consumption of 18,000 kWh per annum) across all payment types were £61 higher (up 9.3 per cent to £719). UK domestic gas and electricity prices are the lowest and fourth lowest in the EU respectively.
Recycling and recovery

The amount of packaging was in the UK estimated to be around 10.8 million tonnes in 2009. The recycling rate has increased from 34 per cent in 1999 to 62 per cent in 2009, and total recovery rate (including recycling) has increased from 38 per cent in 1999 to 67 per cent in 2009.

Source: Defra

“...we call it recycling” Neil Labute

Landfill and recycling

The UK landfills around 15 per cent more municipal waste than the EU average (40 per cent). It also has lower recycling and composting rates (34 per cent) than the EU average (39 per cent). Denmark is the only country where incineration is the main method of waste disposal (53 per cent). The Netherlands, Germany, Austria and Belgium recycle and compost the majority of their waste. Source: Defra

Flytipping

Flytipping incidents and actions reported by local authorities in England have fallen by over 35 per cent from 2007/08 to 2010/11. Source: Defra