

What is 'Renewable' Energy?

From the media debate it may seem obvious what 'renewable' energy is. When the Government describe how they are meeting their targets, however, what they're talking about is a collection of very different sources and technologies.

We may think that the Government is encouraging wind or solar farm construction to 'green' our energy system. That is not, *and has never been* the case.

The graph and data to the right comes from the Government's annual energy publication, The Digest of UK Energy Statistics 2025. Each year this lays out all the data kept about Britain's energy economy – all energy production, imports, exports, and how it was used across the nation by different economic sectors.

The kinds of energy sources we might consider 'renewable' – wind, solar, tidal, etc. – we could call '**green**' sources. Together these make-up just over a third (35%) of what is classed as, 'renewable'.

Next there are '**brown**' sources – technologies primarily related to waste disposal and plant/woody materials: Some of these, such as landfill gas, are marginally better for the environment because they negate pollution; while others, such as anaerobic digestion, are far more debatable – and may actually harm the environment if operated poorly. These are the source of two-fifths (40%) of renewable energy.

Then there is '**waste incineration**', about one-sixth (15%) of the total. This destroys resources which could have been recycled, recovering only a small fraction on the energy invested in them – while producing electricity that emits more carbon dioxide per unit than the coal-fired power stations we recently closed.

Finally there is what we might call '**blue**' sources, mostly road or aviation fuels, making up just under a tenth (9.4%) of the total. The curious thing is: Some of these, like 'sustainable' aviation fuels, may take more energy to make than they contain; while others, such as bioethanol, may save or capture no meaningful amount of carbon dioxide when they are used.

Academic studies investigating the impact of using these energy sources and fuels demonstrate that while they may reduce some environmental impacts on paper, when we look at the entire life-cycle of how they are used they do not necessarily reduce carbon emissions, or other forms of ecological damage.

Finally, in terms of the energy or fuels used, across all 'renewable' sources a fifth (21%) of the annual energy value is imported. However, for some sources that figure rises to a half ('plant biomass', 56%) or even two-thirds ('liquid biofuels', 70%).

**Britain's entire 'renewable' energy system is a mess: It does not prevent environmental damage, it destroys resources, and it dresses-up a waste disposal agenda as 'green' when no objective assessment could possibly describe it as such.**



The Free Range Activism Network  
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