What is the UK annual consumer demand for electricity and gas?

by Sean Burke

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Demand for energy is increasing every year in the UK, even as businesses and households try to reduce their expenditure and invest in more energy efficient technologies and infrastructure to cut down the amount of electricity and gas wasted. If you're concerned about rising energy bills and want to know if there are ways to reduce your consumption, doing your research and obtaining a national perspective could make it clear whether you're paying too much for your gas and electricity.

Data concerning domestic and commercial energy consumption in the UK is readily available from various sources, as this information can be of use for economic and environmental reasons, such as helping the government plan initiatives aimed at lowering carbon emissions. As well as overviews, you can also view details of specific areas of the country, both geographical and economic, and how energy consumption differs depending on factors such as the size, occupancy and age of properties.

Britain accounts for around two per cent of total global energy use, which is above average considering the size of its population - one per cent of world total. This is to be expected of a developed nation, but the UK's increasing reliance on electricity as computers and other technologies become ever more widespread has been a cause of concern for some organisations. Conversely, increasing use of electricity as an alternative to more environmentally damaging fuels can have positive eco benefits - as in the case of electric and hybrid motor vehicles slowly replacing combustion engines. Total energy consumed in the UK in 2008 stood at 9.85 exajoules (EJ), with demand varying from 40 GW to 60 GW during peak times.

To cope with the increasing demand for energy, the British Government launched its Low Carbon Transition Plan in 2009, which pledged to generate 30 per cent renewable energy in the UK by 2020. Initiatives are already underway to help homes and businesses improve their energy efficiency through structural improvements and the installation of renewable energy systems, such as solar panels.

This year saw the first significant reductions in gas and electricity prices for UK consumers for many years, which has been credited to the discovery of new fossil fuel resources alleviating the supply deficit that had pushed up prices. Energy customers who are concerned about prices rising again can speak to their suppliers about fixed rate tariffs for electricity and gas, which offer financial protection from the changing of the energy markets.

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