



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

Rt Hon Sir George Howarth MP
House of Commons
London
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The Rt Hon Greg Hands MP
Minister of State for Energy, Clean Growth
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Dear George,

Thank you for your email dated 25 March to the Rt Hon Kwasi Kwarteng MP, enclosing an example of correspondence you have received from a number of your constituents, regarding their opposition to fracking. The Secretary of State has asked me to respond.

In response to Putin's barbaric acts in Ukraine and against the Ukrainian people, the UK clearly needs to keep all of its energy options open. The Government has always been clear that the development of shale gas in the UK must be safe and cause minimal disruption and damage to those living and working near to sites.

The pause on fracking, when the Government confirmed that it would take a presumption against issuing any further Hydraulic Fracturing Consent, was implemented in 2019, on the basis of the difficulty in predicting and managing seismic activity caused by fracking. It remains in place. Shale gas and new approaches could be part of the UK's future energy mix, although the Government will be led by the science, and these approaches need to have the support of local communities.

The Government's Net Zero Strategy reaffirmed our ambitious target to deliver 40GW of offshore wind capacity by 2030, including 1GW of floating offshore wind, alongside the expansion of other low-cost renewable technologies such as solar and onshore wind. This step change in renewable deployment will be achieved primarily by providing ongoing support through the UK's flagship renewable support scheme, the Contracts for Difference (CfD) scheme.

The UK is already making great progress in delivering renewable electricity generation necessary to meet our decarbonisation targets. In 2020, renewable electricity generation accounted for 43% of total electricity generation, up from 7% in 2010, setting a record and exceeding generation from fossil fuels for the first time. The fourth allocation round of the CfD scheme (AR4) opened on 13 December 2021. £285 million a year will be provided to businesses in AR4, which aims to secure more low-carbon electricity capacity than the previous three rounds combined. The additional offshore wind capacity resulting from the funding alone could power around 8 million homes.

In February we also announced that the next CfD allocation round will be brought forward to March 2023, and future rounds will run annually, rather than every two years, thereafter. This will support renewable electricity producers and further drive deployment of renewable power.

In regard to increasing insulation, there are a number of Government schemes specifically targeting low income and fuel poor households to enable them to improve their energy efficiency:

- The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) scheme is an obligation on larger energy suppliers to provide energy efficiency and heating measures for fuel poor households across Great Britain. We have recently consulted on the next iteration of ECO, ECO4, which will run from 2022 to 2026 at £1billion a year.
- Sustainable Warmth - a competition launched in June 2021 brings together two fuel poverty schemes - Local Authority Delivery Phase 3 and Home Upgrade Grant Phase 1, into a single funding opportunity for local authorities. We expect local authorities to take a fabric first approach and focus on measures that will help lower household energy bills. This includes energy efficiency measures and low carbon heating technologies.

Thank you again for writing. I hope you and your constituents will find this reply helpful.

Yours ever

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G Hands', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

THE RT HON GREG HANDS MP
Minister of State for Energy, Clean Growth and Climate Change