Key results show:

Provisional 2019
Overall coal production in 2019 was 2.2 million tonnes, the lowest on record, and down 16 per cent compared to 2018, mainly as a result of continued low demand from electricity generators. In May 2019 electricity was generated from coal on only 5 days with the longest coal free spell (18 days and 6 hours) since the 1880's. Deep-mined output was up but now only accounts for 4.6 per cent of total production. (Chart 2.1)

Coal imports at 6.8 million tonnes were 33 per cent lower compared to 2018. This is the lowest amount since before the 1984 miners’ strike. (Chart 2.1)

The demand for coal by electricity generators in 2019 was 2.9 million tonnes, a new record low and less than half of 2018’s demand. Demand for coal-fired electricity generation continued to decline as production favoured gas, nuclear and renewables over coal for a variety of economic reasons, not least of which being the high carbon price floor for coal. Additionally, generation capacity which had fallen in recent years continued to fall with Fiddlers Ferry Unit 1 (March 2019), Cottam Power Station (September 2019) and Aberthaw B (December 2019) all closing during the year. (Chart 2.3)

Total stocks at the end of 2019 were 5.3 million tonnes, which remains steady when compared with 2018. (Chart 2.4)

Quarter 4 2019
In the fourth quarter of 2019, overall production was down 12 per cent compared to the fourth quarter of 2018 due to the further contraction of surface mined coal. Deep mined coal remains only a small component of coal production as only a few small deep mines are still operational. (Chart 2.1)

Coal imports were down 58 per cent on the levels in quarter 4 2018. This is the lowest value in the published series (Chart 2.1)

The demand for coal by electricity generators in the fourth quarter of 2019 was 43 per cent lower than demand in the fourth quarter of 2018 as production favoured gas, nuclear and renewables over coal. (Chart 2.3)

Relevant tables

2.1: Supply and consumption of coal
2.2: Supply and consumption of coke oven coke, coke breeze and other manufactured solid fuels
2.3: Supply and consumption of coke oven gas, blast furnace gas, benzole and tars
2.4: Coal imports

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Provisional figures for 2019 show that coal production was 16 per cent down on 2018 at 2.2 million tonnes (a record low), mainly as a result of lower demand from electricity generators which continues to fall. Deep-mined output was up mainly due to Aberpergwm colliery increasing production and was 4.6 per cent of total production, a marked contrast to much of the time series (for instance, in 2015 deep mined production provided nearly a third of total coal production). Coal use has declined since the early seventies as new fuels have entered the market. In the last ten years UK coal production has fallen by 88 per cent.

Provisional figures for the fourth quarter of 2019 show that coal production fell to 0.5 million tonnes, down 12 per cent on the fourth quarter of 2018. This is as a result of mine closures and falling demand for coal for electricity generation.

Imports of coal in 2019 fell 33 per cent compared to 2018 and was down by 58 per cent in the final quarter of the year alone.

The decrease in demand reflects the fact that consumption by electricity generators was down by 56 per cent to 2.9 million tonnes (a new record) in 2019.
### Table 2A Coal imports by origin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Thousand Tonnes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Union</td>
<td>344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>4,695</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>635</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>3,573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Countries</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Imports</strong></td>
<td><strong>10,144</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Coal imports of 6.8 million tonnes in 2019 were down 33 per cent compared to 2018, to the lowest level since the 1984 Miners’ Strike. Steam coal imports fell by 40 per cent to 4.5 million tonnes, while coking coal imports fell 9.9 per cent to 2.2 million tonnes. Steam coal accounted for 67 per cent of total coal imports in 2019 and coking coal accounted for 32 per cent of coal imports.

In the fourth quarter of 2019, total coal imports fell by 58 per cent to 1.3 million tonnes. This was the lowest quarterly value in the published time series covering 18 years. Russia (35 per cent), the USA (28 per cent) and Colombia (14 per cent) accounted for 78 per cent of total coal imports. Steam coal imports in the fourth quarter of 2019 fell by 71 per cent to 765 thousand tonnes and accounted for 59 per cent of total coal imports. Coking coal imports in the fourth quarter of 2018 rose by 10 per cent to 496 thousand tonnes and accounted for 38 per cent of total coal imports.
In 2019, 4.5 million tonnes of the coal imported (67 per cent) was steam coal, largely to fuel coal-fired power stations. Russia (41 per cent), Colombia (25 per cent) and the USA (20 per cent) in 2019 represented 85 per cent of steam coal imports.

Steam coal imports from the USA were 68 per cent lower in 2019 than in 2018, falling to 0.9 million tonnes. The USA, one of the top three suppliers of steam coal imports for many of the last nine years, did not export coal to the UK in the second half of 2019. Cheaper steam coal from other producing countries made USA steam coal less competitive. There was also a drop in steam coal imports from Russia of 51 per cent to 1.8 million tonnes. Steam coal imports from Colombia rose by 79 per cent to 1.1 million tonnes.

In the fourth quarter of 2019 imports of steam coal fell 71 per cent compared to a year earlier. Russia (45 per cent) and Colombia (24 per cent) provided most of the UK’s steam coal imports. This was followed by Kazakhstan (9 per cent), South Africa (8 per cent) and Venezuela (7 per cent). Kazakhstan provided 64 thousand tonnes of steam coal imports and Venezuela provided 52 thousand tonnes of steam coal imports. These are shown in the Other countries group in the Main Table of Energy Trends table 2.4.
Total demand for coal in 2019 was 7.9 million tonnes, 33 per cent lower than in 2018, with consumption by electricity generators down by 56 per cent to a new record low of 2.9 million tonnes. Demand for coal-fired electricity generation continued to decline as production favoured gas, nuclear and renewables over coal for a variety of economic reasons, not least of which being the high carbon price floor for coal. Additionally, generation capacity which had fallen in recent years continued to fall with Fiddlers Ferry Unit 1 (March 2019), Cottam Power Station (September 2019) and Aberthaw B (December 2019) closing in 2019.

There are now only five major coal-fired power stations that remain open and in the last ten years coal consumption has fallen by 84 per cent. Electricity generators accounted for 37 per cent of total coal use in 2019 compared with 56 per cent in 2018, and 81 per cent 10 years ago.

Coal used for coke manufacture rose 2.4 per cent to 1.8 million tonnes, while coal used in blast furnaces fell 1.9 per cent to 1.1 million tonnes.

Total demand for coal in the fourth quarter of 2019, at 2.4 million tonnes, was 26 per cent lower than in the fourth quarter of 2018. Consumption by electricity generators fell by 43 per cent to 1.1 million tonnes. Coal fired electricity’s share of the MPP supply was down on the same period in 2018 (see Energy Trends table 5.4). The decline of coal is largely the result of the process becoming less economically favourable than gas-fired generation, attributed to low gas prices and higher carbon pricing. Coal generating capacity dropped significantly in 2019 following closures of Unit 1 at Fiddlers Ferry (March 2019), Cottam Power station (September 2019) and Aberthaw Power station (December 2019). This leaves only five major coal-fired power stations in the UK. Electricity generators accounted for 48 per cent of total coal use in the fourth quarter of 2019; compared to 62 per cent in 2018.

Sales to final consumers (as measured by disposals to final consumers) fell by 10 per cent in 2019. Sales to industrial users fell by 13 per cent to 1.4 million tonnes, with domestic sales remaining constant at 0.5 million tonnes. Sales to final consumers were down by 11 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2019 with decreases in most industrial sales, domestic users, and other final users.

Coal used in blast furnaces was 0.3 million tonnes in the fourth quarter of 2019, an increase of 12 per cent compared to the fourth quarter of 2018.
Total coal stocks were 5.3 million tonnes at the end of 2019, virtually identical to stocks at the end of 2018. Of these stocks, the bulk – 3.7 million tonnes - were held at power stations, down 12 per cent on the stocks held at the end of 2018.