



Methodology changes to Natural Gas Statistics: Digest of UK Energy Statistics 2026

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Introduction

This article explains the methodological changes we plan to introduce to natural gas statistics in the 2026 edition of the Digest of UK Energy Statistics (DUKES), which will be published on 30 July 2026. This updates sectoral gas consumption over the period 1998 to 2024, which will result in revisions to the full series.

These changes have been made to improve the quality, coherence and transparency of published data, and we hope they will benefit users, while recognising that revisions to long time series can create some short-term challenges. Feedback or requests for further information can be sent to gas.stats@energysecurity.gov.uk.

Background

The Department collects data on gas supply and demand through surveys and other sources (see [Natural gas statistics: data sources and methodologies](#) for more information). Data on gas used for final consumption are collected from energy suppliers. Final consumption refers to gas used directly by end users, rather than gas used to produce other fuels, such as electricity. The Department publishes estimates of final consumption by sector. Broad sector categories, domestic, industrial and services, are published monthly. These are further disaggregated quarterly, and again annually, to provide estimates for a wider range of subsectors. [Annex 1](#) sets out the full list of sectors and subsectors.

Energy suppliers can usually distinguish gas used by domestic and non-domestic customers relatively easily, as these customers are typically recorded separately for billing purposes and are subject to different rates and taxes. However, identifying different types of non-domestic customers presents challenges.

- **Limitations of classifications.** Suppliers are asked to classify customers using [Standard Industrial Classification \(SIC\) codes](#). SIC codes, developed and maintained by the Office for National Statistics, are the UK standard framework for classifying businesses by their economic activity. However, like classifications more broadly, SIC codes have limitations,

particularly where organisations operate across multiple sectors but must be allocated to a single category, or where billing arrangements do not reflect the activity using the gas. For example, an industrial site may be classified under its head office.

- **Practicalities of classifications.** Beyond the limitations of classifications themselves, further inconsistencies arise because data suppliers are not required to hold SIC codes and may use different approaches to assign customers to categories. As non-domestic customers can change supplier frequently, the classification applied to the same customer may not remain consistent over time.

In addition to classification issues, sectoral gas consumption is further complicated by gas used for electricity and heat generation. Many businesses generate electricity and/ or heat alongside their main activity, known as autogeneration. Under energy statistics conventions, gas used for generation is classified as transformation rather than final consumption and should therefore be excluded from these sectors. However, energy suppliers rarely know the end use of the gas they supply, which creates a further methodological challenge.

The Department has undertaken significant work in recent years to improve its understanding of gas consumption. This has included increasing the frequency and coverage of data collections, visiting energy suppliers to better understand their processes, and carrying out a substantial programme of work to collate and clean historic data and support methodological development. While the challenges outlined above remain, this work has improved the accuracy of sectoral gas consumption estimates. The revised estimates described in this article will be published in the July 2026 edition of DUKES on 30 July 2026.

Findings

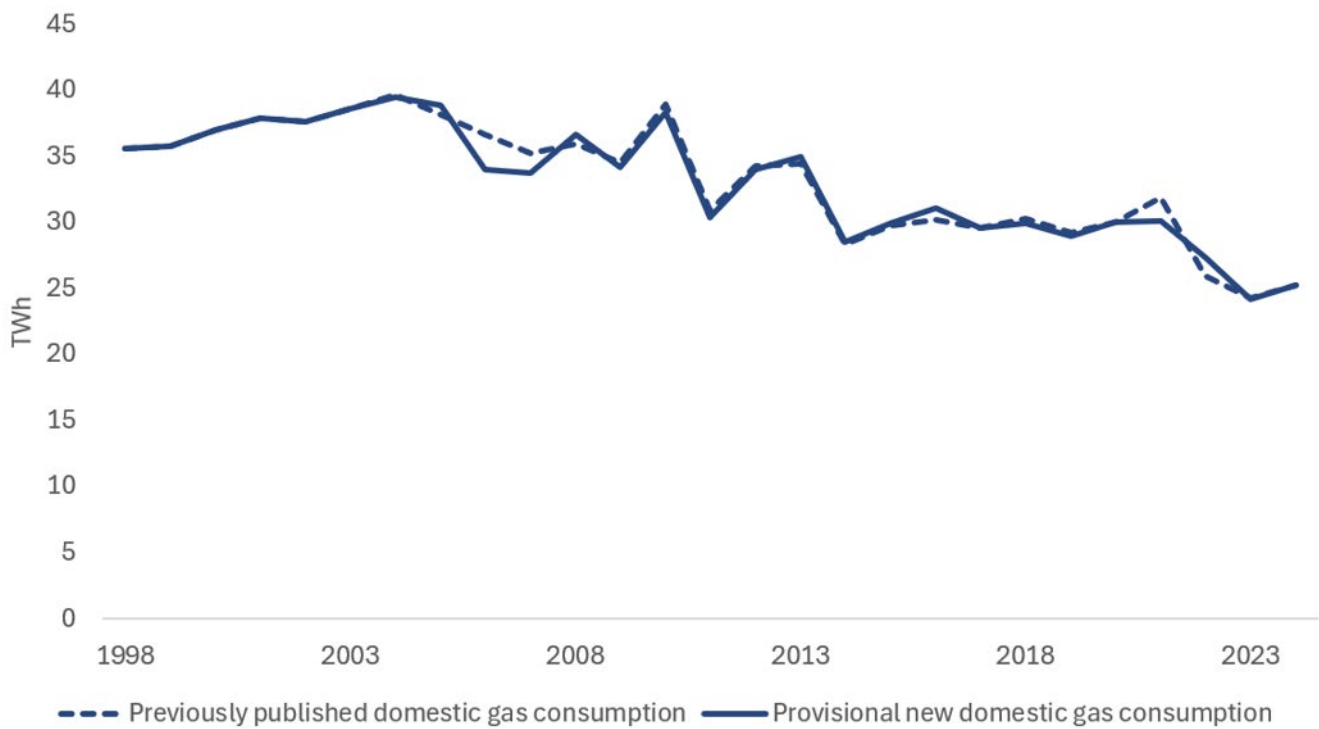
This work identified three main findings. First, the evidence confirms that estimates of overall gas demand as well as consumption by the domestic sector are robust. Second, it suggests some misclassification between the industrial and services sectors. Third, it indicates more significant classification issues within subsectors, where the current breakdown appears less reliable.

Total gas demand and the domestic sector

Revisions to total gas demand over the period 1998 to 2024 are minor, averaging 0 per cent and ranging from approximately -4 to 3 per cent.

For the domestic sector, revisions also average 0 per cent, although the range is slightly wider at approximately -7 to 5 per cent. Larger revisions are limited to a small number of years, notably following changes to condensing boiler regulations in 2005 and during 2021 and 2022, when consumer behaviour became more uncertain during the Covid-19 pandemic and high prices following the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The domestic sector's average share of total gas demand between 1998 and 2024 remains unchanged at 35 per cent.

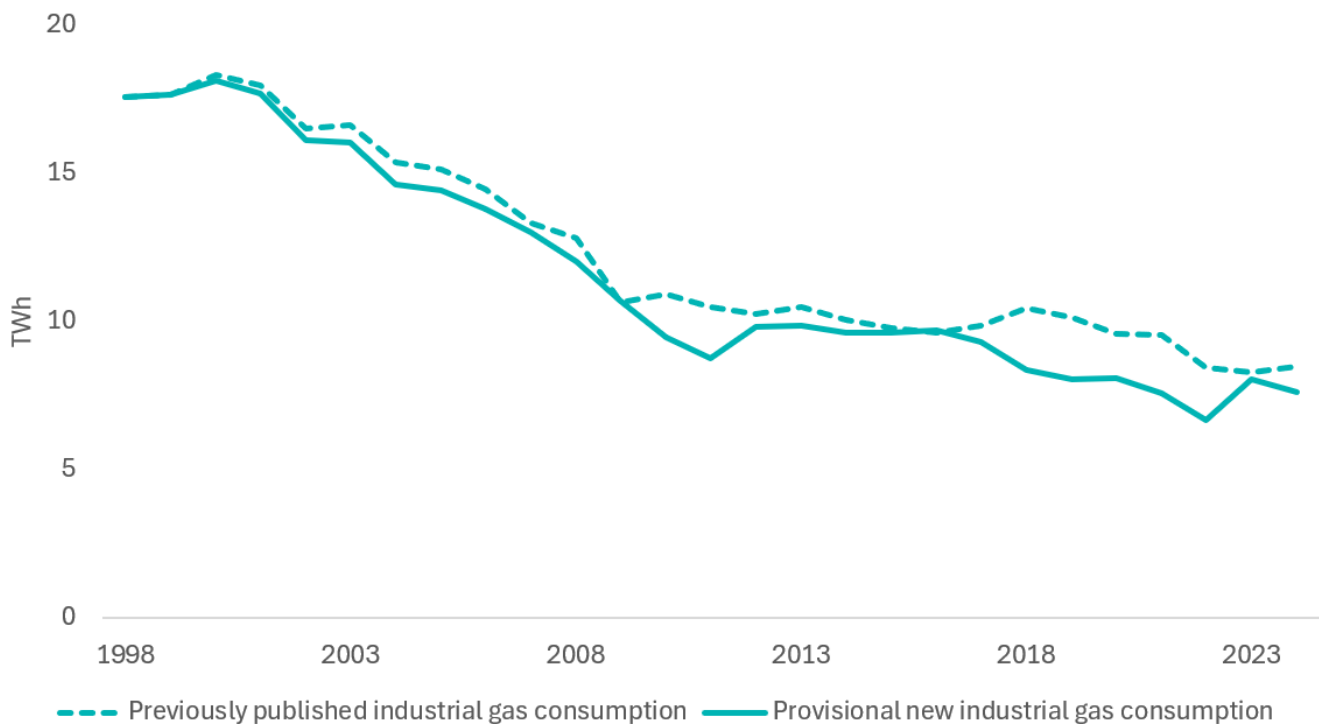
Chart 1, previously published and provisional new data for the domestic sector



Industrial and services sector classifications

Some misclassification was identified between the industrial and services sectors, resulting in revised allocations of gas consumption between the two over the period 1998 to 2024. On average, there is little change to total non-domestic consumption. However, the revised series show lower consumption in the industrial sector and higher consumption in the services sector than previously estimated, particularly from the mid-2010s onwards.

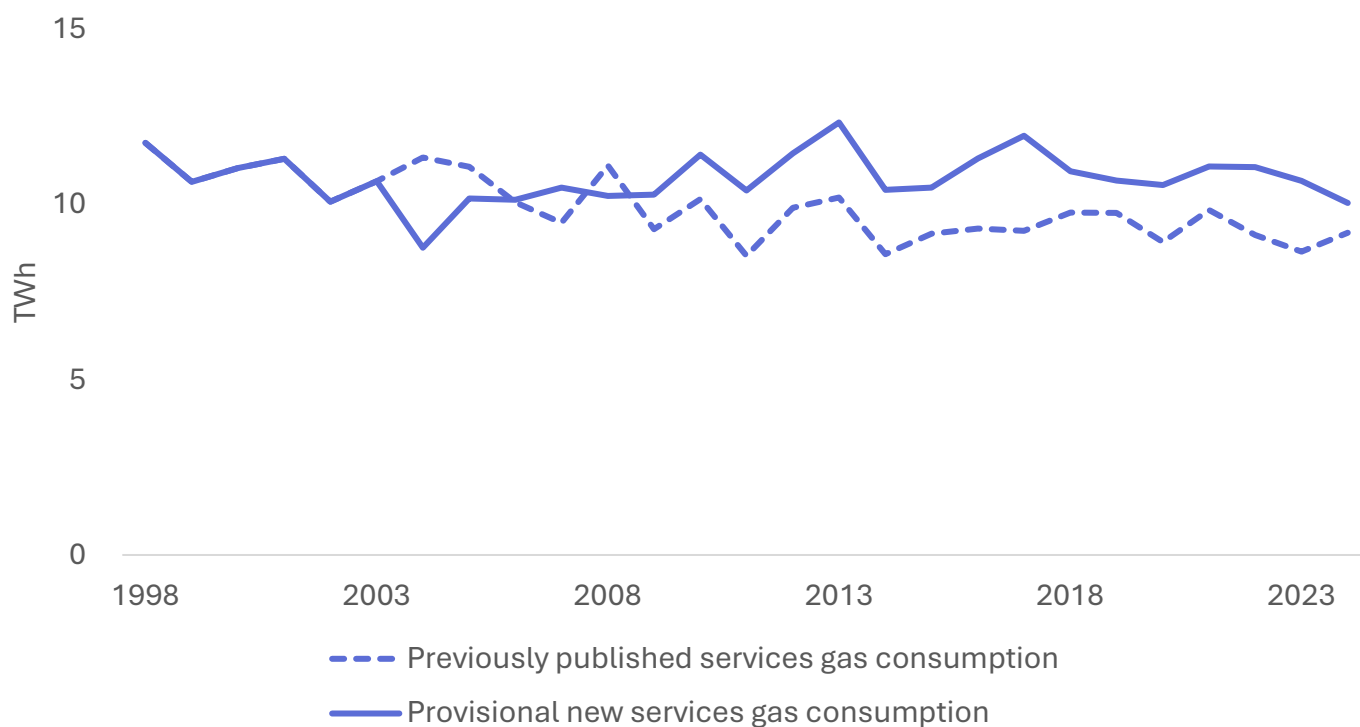
Chart 2, previously published and provisional new data for the industrial sector



Revisions to the industrial sector average -8 per cent, with a range of approximately -21 to 1 per cent. The sector's average share of total gas demand over the period 1998 to 2024 falls from 13 per cent to 12 per cent. Revisions in 2010 and 2011 reflect the effects of the financial crisis which lasted

longer than previously reflected in the data. Later revisions are consistent with structural changes in the industrial sector ahead of the period of high energy prices in 2022.

Chart 3, previously published and provisional new data for the services sector



Revisions to the services sector average 9 per cent, with a range of approximately -23 to 29 per cent. The sector’s average share of total gas demand over the period 1998 to 2024 rises from 10 per cent to 11 per cent following the revisions.

Changes to the industrial and services sectors are consistent with broader structural changes in the UK economy over this period, as economic activity has become increasingly concentrated in the services sector. Some methods and benchmarks developed when production sectors accounted for a larger share of the economy are less well aligned with current patterns of energy use and economic activity. The methodology has therefore been updated to better reflect the current structure of the UK economy.

Subsector classifications

The most substantial revisions are within subsector classifications. These changes affect the allocation of gas consumption across individual subsectors to a greater extent than the higher-level sector groupings discussed above. Given the scale and complexity of these revisions, this article does not set out changes for each subsector individually. Table 1 shows how the shares of sector demand accounted for by individual subsectors differ between the previously published and revised data. Although revisions for some subsectors are substantial in particular years, the table provides an early overall picture of how the revised subsector composition compares with the previous estimates.

More detailed information on the revised subsector breakdowns will be published in the July 2026 edition of DUKES, when users will be able to assess the changes on a sector-by-sector basis.

Table 1 proportions of sectors and subsectors as previously published and provisional new

	Published	New (provisional)
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Sectors' share of demand (average 1998-2024), %		
Domestic	35	35
Industry	13	12
Services	10	11
Subsectors' share of industrial demand (average 1998-2024), %		
Food, beverages etc.	18	22
Mineral products	11	12
Chemicals	23	25
Other manufacturing and wood	8	7
Paper, printing etc.	8	9
Iron and steel	6	6
Mechanical engineering etc.	7	5
Construction	3	3
Vehicles	6	4
Textiles, leather etc.	4	2
Electrical engineering etc.	3	2
Non-ferrous metals	3	2
Unclassified	0	0
Subsectors share of services demand (average 1998-2024), %		
Commercial	42	63
Public administration	42	36
Agriculture	1	2
Miscellaneous	15	0

Note 1, large changes to the commercial and miscellaneous sectors reflect changes to the definitions of these sectors, see [Methodology changes sector definitions: Digest of UK Energy Statistics 2026](#) for more information.

Note 2, New data are provisional and will be subject to change before publication in July.

Energy industry and other changes

This year the energy industry sector has also been reviewed. Most gas consumption in this sector is by oil and gas producers, where data quality is comparatively high. However, as with the industrial sector, there was scope to improve the quality of other subsector estimates. Revisions to the sector are minor overall, averaging -1 per cent over the period 1998 to 2024, with a range of approximately -4 to 3 per cent. The largest revisions will affect petroleum refineries, reflecting the complexity of refinery operations and their links with the chemicals sector and other energy infrastructure. More detailed information on these subsector revisions will be published alongside the other revised subsector estimates.

The long revision window has also provided an opportunity to roll back a number of methodological improvements introduced in recent years through the historic series. These include modelled transport data and improved data for stocks and losses. As the starting point differs by change, these will be clearly indicated in relevant tables.

Annex 1: Sectors supporting information

Sector (published monthly)	Subsector (published annually)
Industry	Unclassified
Industry	Iron and steel
Industry	Non-ferrous metals
Industry	Mineral products
Industry	Chemicals
Industry	Mechanical engineering etc
Industry	Electrical engineering etc
Industry	Vehicles
Industry	Food, beverages etc
Industry	Textiles, leather etc
Industry	Paper, printing etc
Industry	Other manufacturing and wood
Industry	Construction
Domestic	NA
Services	Public administration
Services	Commercial
Services	Agriculture



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