Chapter 2: Solid Fuels and Derived Gases

Teresa Weimer 0788 917 6270 coalstatistics@energysecurity.gov.uk

Key headlines

Demand for coal fell in 2025, by 56 per cent to 948 thousand tonnes compared to 2024. The fuel mix has shifted towards other sources of fuel, particularly for electricity generation.

Consumption of coal for electricity generation reached zero in 2025. The last UK coal-fired power plant, Ratcliffe-on-Soar, closed on 30 September 2024. Coal use has been phased out as electricity generation now favours gas, nuclear and renewables.

Production of coal remains at historically low levels, at 120 thousand tonnes in 2025. In the last ten years, UK coal production has fallen by 99 per cent. There is currently no large-scale surface mining in the UK and all coal produced was deep mined anthracite.

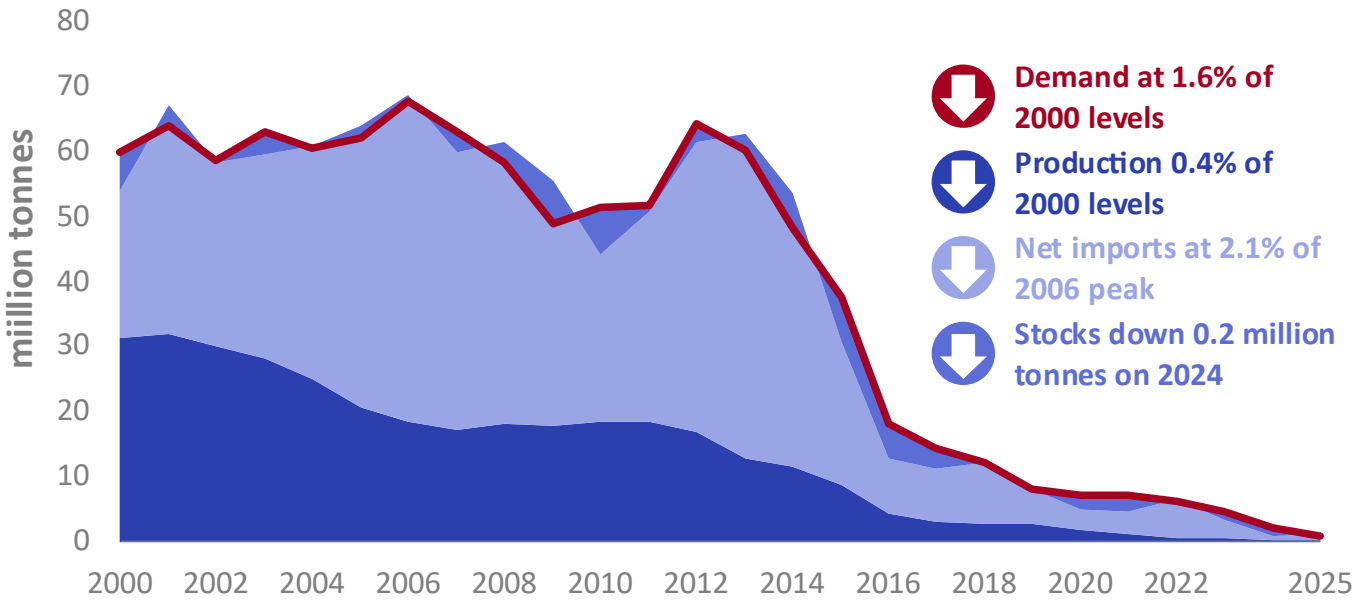
Coal imports fell 6.3 per cent in comparison with 2024 to 1,650 thousand tonnes. In 2025, Colombia was the largest exporter of coal to the UK with a share of 33 per cent of total UK coal imports. This was followed by the European Union with 24 per cent and South Africa with 15 per cent. Coal exports fell by 45 per cent compared to 2024.

In 2025, coal comprised 0.8 per cent of UK energy demand, down from 1.5 per cent in 2024 (DUKES table 1.1.C). Over a longer period, the trend reflects the transition away from coal in the UK's energy mix; coal demand has fallen from a 16 per cent share of UK energy demand in 2000.

The Sankey diagram at the end of this chapter shows flows of coal from production and imports through to consumption. It is a way of visualising the figures that can be found in the commodity balance for coal in DUKES tables 2.1 and 2.2. The diagram illustrates the flow of coal from the point of supply (on the left) to its final use (on the right).

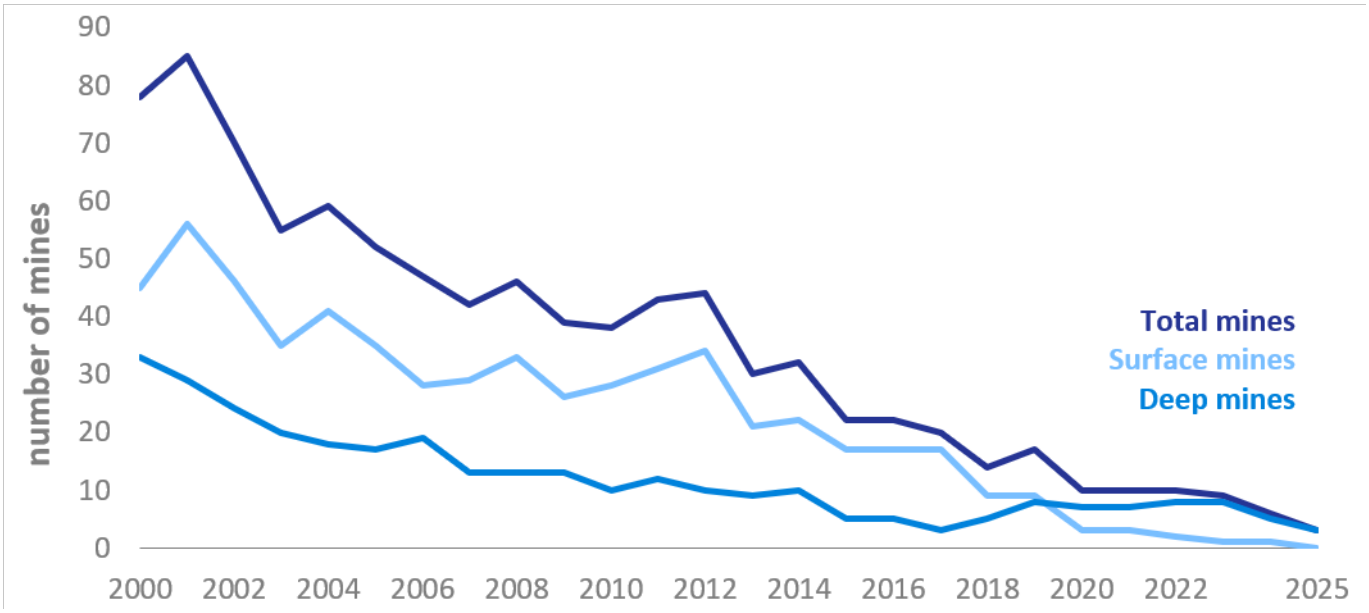
Reduced demand for coal drove a substantial contraction in supply, with UK coal production in 2025 at 0.4 per cent of production in 2000. In 2025, coal production was 120 thousand tonnes, up 12 per cent on 2024, however, remaining at historical low levels (chart 2.1).

Chart 2.1 UK coal supply and demand, 2000 – 2025 (DUKES Table 2.1)



All coal production in 2025 was deep mined and almost exclusively anthracite. This compares to 2015 when deep mined production provided around a third of total coal production, and when the last three large deep mines closed – Hatfield, Thoresby and Kellingley. Eight deep mines remained open (chart 2.2), and three mines reported coal production in 2025. The last large surface mine, Ffos-y-Fran, closed at the end of November 2023. There is currently no large-scale surface mining in the UK.

Chart 2.2 Number of coal mines producing in the UK, 2000 – 2025 (DUKES Table 2.5)



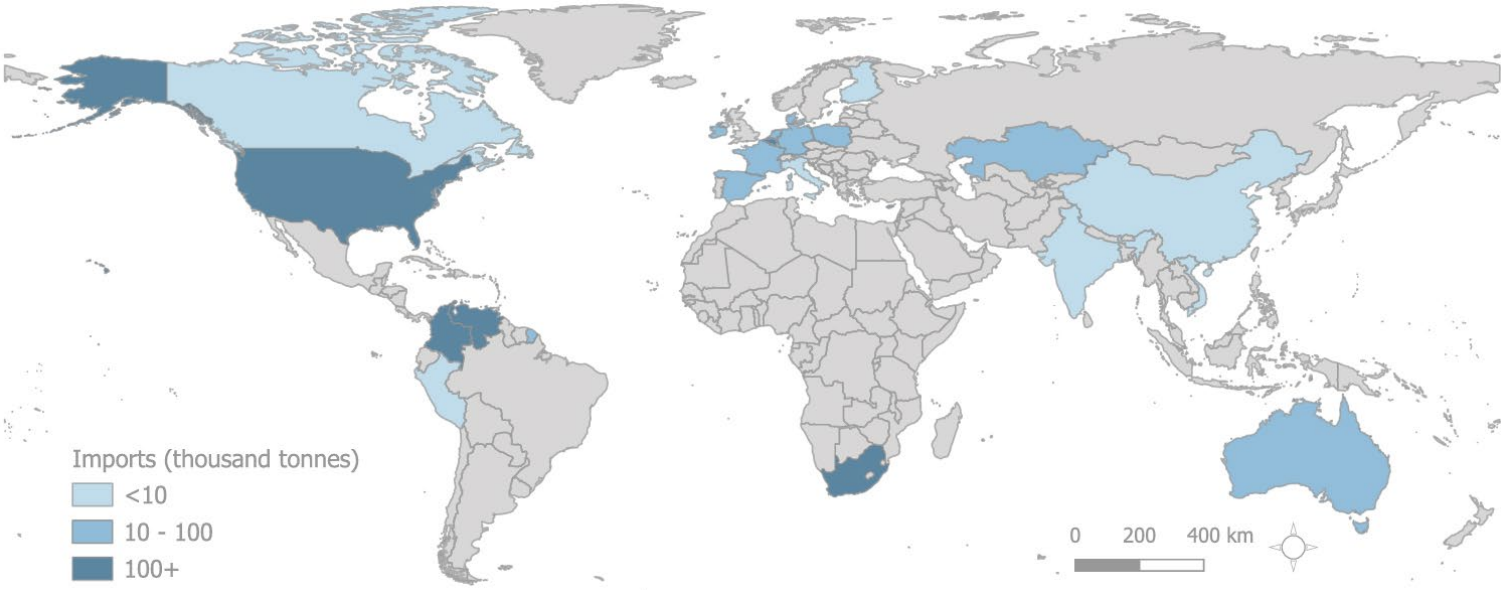
Net imports of coal in 2025 remained at about 2 per cent of net imports at the peak in 2006. This is again a result of the sharp fall in demand for coal. However, in 2025, net imports rose by 56 per cent from 2024 levels to 1,060 thousand tonnes. In 2025, the UK's coal supply was maintained mostly by imports.

Coal imports fell by 6.3 percent to 1,650 thousand tonnes compared to 2024. Steam coal accounted for 67 per cent of total coal imports, anthracite 17 per cent and coking coal 15 per cent. **Steam coal imports were 19 per cent lower at 1,112 thousand tonnes in 2025 compared to 2024.** Colombia was the largest provider of UK's steam coal (42 per cent). This was followed by the European Union (23 per cent) and South Africa (22 per cent). Anthracite imports were 54 per cent up on 2024 at 287 thousand tonnes, with the European Union the largest provider (39 per cent), followed by Colombia (27 percent) and Venezuela (22 per cent). Coking coal imports were up 29 per cent at 251 thousand tonnes compared to 2024. The USA was the largest provider of UK's coking coal imports (68 per cent), followed by Australia (22 per cent) and the European Union (10 per cent). The UK banned Russian coal imports in August 2022.

In 2025 the UK exported 590 thousand tonnes of coal, down 45 percent compared to 2024. Exports were primarily to European Union countries, Iceland and Norway. Exports comprised 490 thousand tonnes of steam coal (83 percent of coal exports), 90 thousand tonnes of anthracite (15 per cent) and 10 thousand tonnes of coking coal (2 per cent). The fall in exports was mainly driven by steam coal exports which were down 43% compared to 2024. The fall in coking coal exports, down by 93 percent compared to 2024, reflects the UK's decrease in demand and stocks of coking coal with the closure of the coke ovens at Port Talbot in 2024. Coking coal exports in 2025 were limited to the Republic of Ireland, compared to 2024 when remaining stocks after the coke oven closure were exported mainly to other European Union countries.

Coal stocks remain at historically low levels in 2025. There has been an overall downward trend since 2014 when demand, and therefore stocks, began to gradually decline as power plants, and in more recent years coke ovens and blast furnaces, shut.

Map 2A showing UK coal imports by country of origin in 2025 (thousand tonnes)



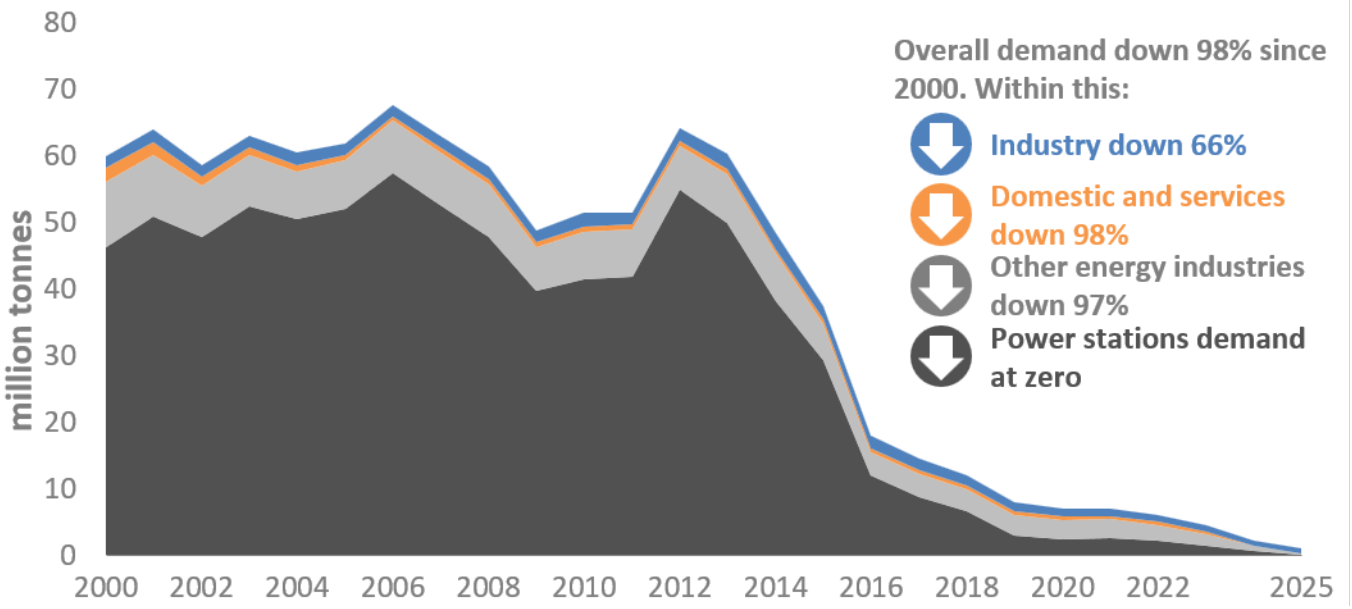
For more detail on coal imports and exports see DUKES Tables 2.7 and 2.8

As of July 2026, the Mining Remediation Authority (formerly the Coal Authority) estimated that in current mining operations there were 67 million tonnes of economically recoverable and minable coal resources (DUKES Table 2.6). All the economically recoverable and minable coal resource in current operations (including those in the planning process) are in underground mines. Overall, Wales had a 93 per cent share of Great Britain's current mines and licenced resources and England a 7 per cent share.

The most recent estimates available for total economically recoverable and minable coal resources in Great Britain were made in 2024, provided by the Mining Remediation Authority. At that point, the Mining Remediation Authority estimated a total of 2,991 million tonnes underground mining coal resource and 823 million tonnes of surface mining coal resource. DUKES Table 2.6 provides details of the resource assessment by England, Scotland and Wales.

Demand for coal fell by 56 per cent to 948 thousand tonnes in 2025, compared to 2024 (chart 2.3). Much of this was driven by coal-fired electricity generation and coke manufacture (for the iron and steel industry) demand reaching zero. The last coal-fired power plant, Ratcliffe-on-Soar, closed on 30 September 2024 and the last coke oven, at Port Talbot, closed on 20 March 2024. Electricity generation now favours gas, nuclear and renewables. Demand for coal in 2025 was therefore mainly comprised of industry, including the iron and steel industry, patent fuel manufacture, and domestic and other consumers. A review of sectoral demand is in progress.

Chart 2.3 Coal Demand, 2000 – 2025 (DUKES Table 2.2)

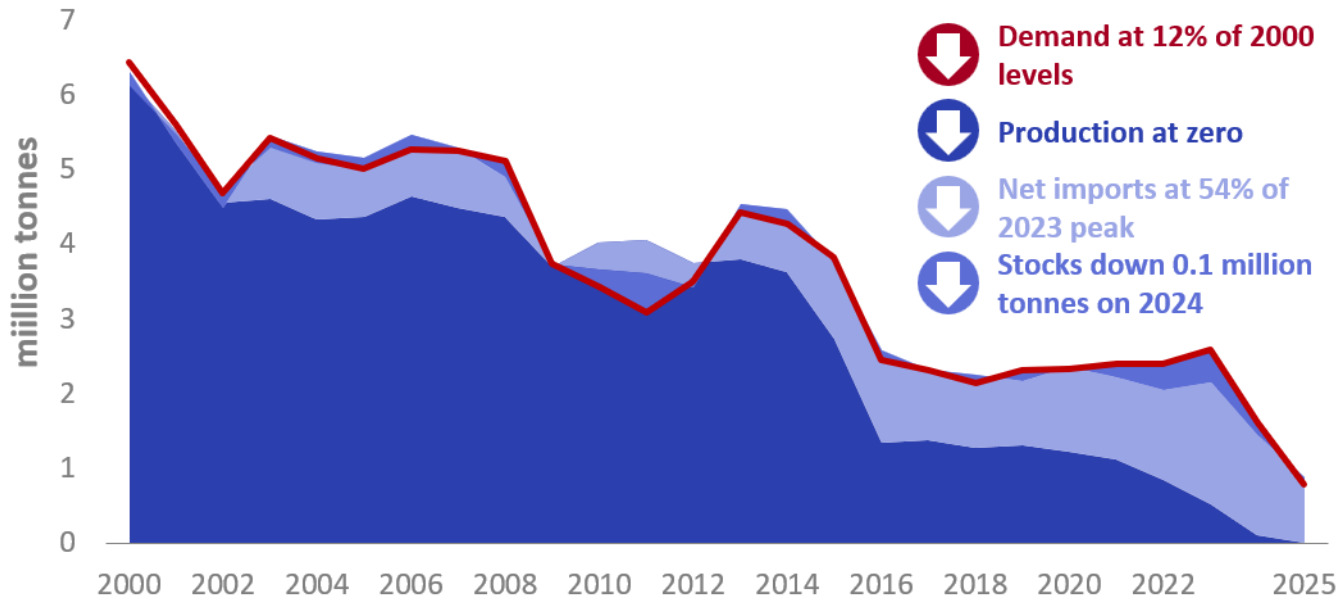


The iron and steel industry remains one of the main users of coal, for blast furnaces and direct consumption. In 2025 it used 207 thousand tonnes of coal, down 65 percent compared to 2024, and equal to 4 per cent of what it used in 2015 (5.3 million tonnes). This was mainly driven by a fall in demand for blast furnaces (down 54 per cent compared to 2024) and demand for coke manufacture reaching zero. In terms of total share, the iron and steel industry comprised 22 per cent of UK's coal demand in 2025.

In addition to coal production and consumption, the UK has significant (but decreasing) supply of and demand for a range of manufactured solid fuels that are used for domestic, industrial and transformation processes. These include coke oven coke, breeze and patent fuels. Production was 149 thousand tonnes, a decrease of 49 per cent compared to 2024 and in 2025 was entirely made up of other manufactured solid fuels (patent fuels).

The manufactured solid fuels coke oven coke and coke breeze are the solid products obtained from the carbonisation of (coking) coal at high temperatures in coke ovens. Both fuels are mainly used in the iron and steel industry – coke oven coke in blast furnaces and coke breeze predominantly in sintering plants. No coke oven coke or coke breeze was produced in the UK in 2025, as Port Talbot closed its coke ovens on 20 March 2024. Demand of coke oven coke and coke breeze by the iron and steel industry is assumed to decline further with the transition from coal-fired blast furnaces to electric arc furnaces. Supply of coke oven coke and breeze for the iron and steel industry was maintained by imports.

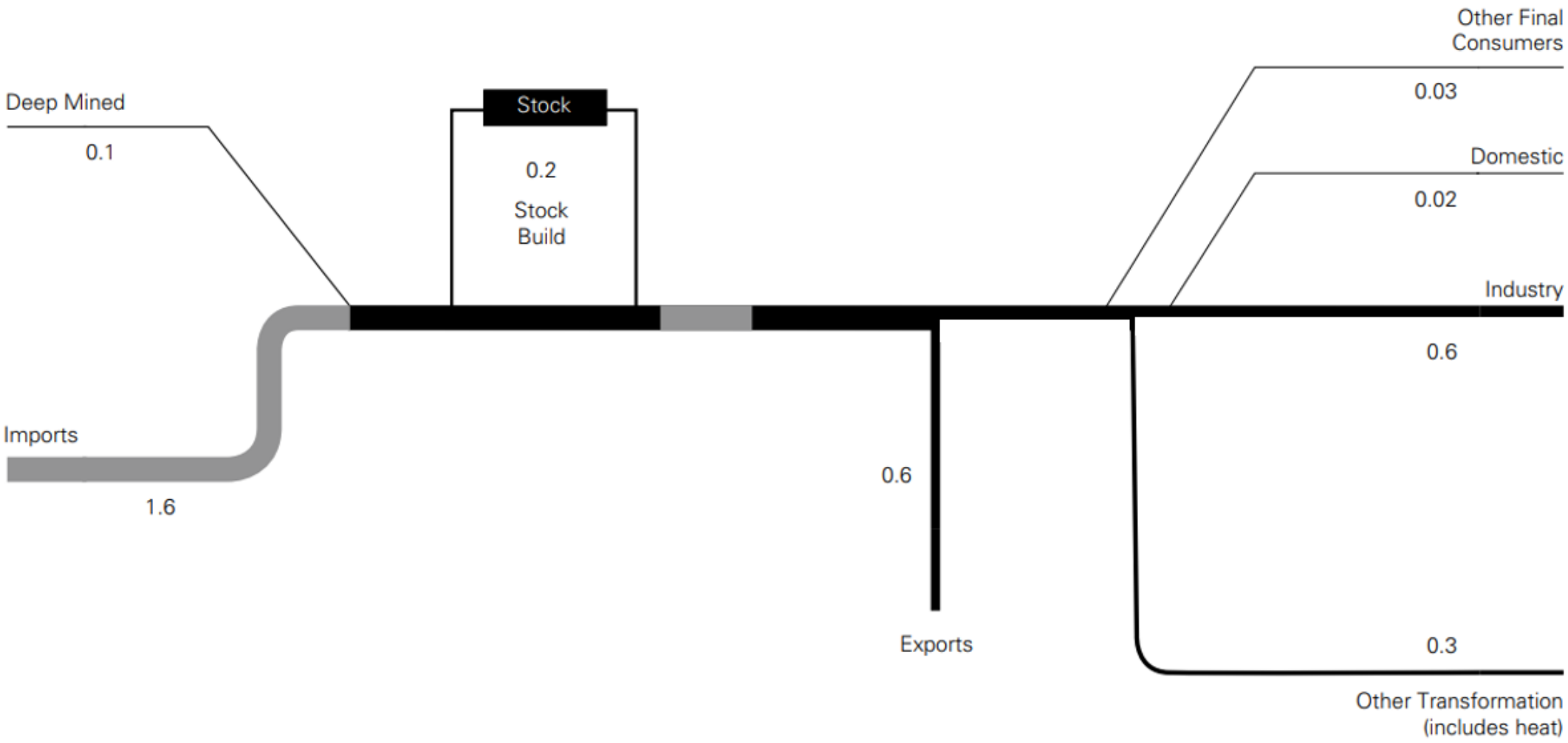
Chart 2.4 Total coke oven coke and coke breeze supply and demand, 2000 – 2025 (DUKES Table 2.3)



Map 2B Location of UK coal production sites and ports as at end 2025

Note: Only ports that imported more than 10 thousand tonnes are shown

Coal Flow Chart 2025 (million tonnes)



Note:

This flow chart is based on the data in Tables 2.1 and 2.2.
The numbers on either side of the flow chart will not match due to losses in transformation.

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