

Ofgem executive given role of keeping the lights on over winter

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[fgem](#) has appointed a new senior executive to ensure that the lights stay on this Christmas, amid fears that a gas shortage could cause problems in meeting demand.

Akshay Kaul will take on the job as interim director of infrastructure and security of supply over the winter period, the regulator said.

Mr Kaul was already one of the top executives at Ofgem, as director of networks.

A spokesperson for Ofgem said: “Akshay has taken on a new interim role with overall responsibility for infrastructure and security of supply, which covers the networks, energy systems management and security, and cybersecurity portfolios.

“The role has a very specific focus on winter preparedness, including on ensuring the markets and physical infrastructure operate normally through this winter despite the shocks we are seeing to the energy system.”

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The appointment comes amid worries that energy suppliers, generators and networks might struggle to keep enough gas and power flowing to homes and businesses this winter.

The [Government](#) has insisted that there will be no blackouts. Last week, a spokesperson for No 10 Downing Street said that people will still be able to access energy over coming months.

“[Households](#), businesses and industry can be confident they will get the electricity and gas that they need over the winter,” she said.

“That’s because we have one of the most reliable and diverse energy systems in the world.”

Few senior politicians have encouraged people to use less gas and electricity over the winter.

It is a contrast to [Ireland](#), where ministers have launched a campaign to encourage households to reduce their energy use.

The [UK Government](#) has been accused of “glossing over” the risk of Britain running out of electricity over the winter.

A large proportion of the country’s electricity comes from burning gas. At 42% of the power mix over the last year, it is by far the single largest source.

Speaking on the Sunday Show last week, energy expert David Cox said: “We’re going to be short of gas in Europe for this winter. That will drive prices potentially even higher.

“Not only that, we might be short of gas to the extent that we have blackouts, we don’t have enough gas to burn to make electricity, and that is a serious problem the Government are glossing over at the moment.”

Yet, according to reports, while ministers might be refusing to talk about it in public, behind closed doors, officials are planning for what to do if blackouts are necessary.

Under the reasonable worst-case scenario, there could be several days of blackouts in January, Bloomberg reported last month.