

UK aviation industry aiming to achieve net zero emissions by 2040

The UK's domestic aviation industry is aiming to achieve net zero emissions by 2040 under a green strategy unveiled by the government.

All airports in England will achieve net zero emissions by the same year under the plans detailed in the "Jet Zero Strategy".

New targets have been set to reduce aviation's carbon emissions and prevent them from increasing above pre-pandemic levels in future – with the government hoping 2019 will be remembered as the peak year for emissions in the industry.

The strategy builds on the UK's economy-wide plan for achieving net zero emissions by 2050, with the government saying the plans are designed to help future-proof the aviation sector and create thousands more green jobs around the country.

[UK currently hotter than 98.8% of the planet – heatwave latest](#)

Advertisement

A new mandate will ensure at least 10% of jet fuel is sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) by 2030 as part of the strategy.

The government's ambition is to have at least five commercial scale SAF plants under construction in the UK by 2025.

More from UK



UK heatwave: New UK record as temperature hits 40.2C – with 41C expected this afternoon



UK weather – live updates: Multiple deaths reported – as thunder warning issued for parts of country



Tory leadership live updates: Rishi Sunak unlikely to win against remaining candidates, poll shows – and support for Penny Mordaunt also falls

SAF is made from waste materials such as household waste, sewage, or used cooking oil.

The fuels offer greenhouse gas emissions savings of more than 70% on average compared to conventional fossil jet fuel when fully replacing kerosene, according to the government.

Aviation is currently responsible for around 2.5% of global carbon dioxide emissions.

The UK's aviation sector contributes £22bn to the country's economy and is set to grow as it recovers from the pandemic.

The government has said the Jet Zero Strategy's six priority areas are:

- Improving the efficiency of the existing aviation system – for example by improving fuel efficiency by 2% every year and providing a further £3.7m in 2022/23 to support airports to modernise their airspace.
- Increasing support for sustainable aviation fuels (SAF) – this will involve creating a mandate that will require at least 10% of jet fuel to be made from sustainable sources by 2030.
- Supporting the development of zero-emission aircraft, with the aspiration of having zero-emission routes connecting places across the UK by 2030.
- Developing carbon markets and greenhouse gas removal technologies to drive decarbonisation and offset any residual emissions.
- Providing consumers with better information so they can make sustainable aviation choices.
- Increasing its own understanding of the non-CO2 impacts of aviation, such as contrails and nitrogen oxides.

Subscribe to ClimateCast on [Spotify](#), [Apple Podcasts](#), or [Spreaker](#).

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said: “We want 2019 to be remembered as the peak year for aviation emissions.

“From now on, it should all be downhill for carbon emissions – and steadily uphill for green flights.

“The UK is setting an example of the ambition needed to tackle climate change, and the Jet Zero Strategy provides a clear path to building a greener aviation sector for generations to come.

“Rather than clipping the sector’s wings, our pathway recognises that decarbonisation offers huge economic benefits, creating the jobs and industries of the future making sure UK businesses are at the forefront of this green revolution.”

Read more:

[‘It’s no longer denial... it’s here’ – Why climate change will make this heatwave more dangerous](#)

[Melting roads, buckling tracks, productivity loss – Britain needs to adapt to more soaring temperatures](#)

[Is insulation making your house hotter in summer – and how can you cool it down?](#)

Alethea Warrington, campaigner at climate charity Possible, has said the strategy does not go far enough.

She said: “As the UK swelters under a climate crisis-induced heatwave, the government’s new aviation strategy fails to do enough to get emissions down.

“While the government acknowledges that emissions from flights should not pass their pre-pandemic peak, it still allows the aviation sector to continue emitting too much for too long.

“Heavily relying on undeveloped, extremely expensive or unworkable technologies, the strategy crucially fails by leaving out a policy to fairly reduce the demand for flights such as a frequent flyer levy.”