

Northern Ireland Annual Coal Inquiry





Geographical Area: Northern Ireland
Theme: Economy
Frequency: Annual

Key Points

- In 2019, 1.700 million tonnes of coal and other solid fuels were shipped into Northern Ireland through the four main ports, which was 2% more than the 1.661 million tonnes imported in 2018. Total coal and solid fuel imports in 2019 were very similar to those recorded at the beginning of the 32-year series in 1988.
- Almost three quarters (73%) were imported for domestic or industrial use in 2019, and just over a quarter (27%) was for the generation of electricity. Imports for domestic or industrial use were at their highest level since 1994, while those for electricity generation were only lower at the very beginning of the series.
- Although almost 40% below the high point in the series (2.798 million tonnes in 1995), the total amount of coal and solid fuels imported in 2019 was still more than 60% above the lowest recorded (1.055 million tonnes in 2009).
- From 1995 to 2007, the tonnages of coal imported for the generation of electricity were higher than for domestic or industrial use. This was followed by nine years in which the tonnages were broadly similar. However, for the last three years the amount of coal and solid fuels imported annually for domestic or industrial use has remained significantly higher than that imported for the generation of electricity.

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Notes

The Annual Coal Inquiry collects information on all coal and other solid fuels shipped into Northern Ireland each year, and the purpose for which it was imported: for domestic or industrial use, or for the generation of electricity. It covers all types of solid fuels including coal, anthracite, lignite, coke and manufactured smokeless fuels. Figures are inclusive of all sources of coal shipped (bulk cargo and containerised) to Northern Ireland, including cross channel and foreign imports.

The information is obtained by surveying all coal importing ports in Northern Ireland annually (in January to collect data for the previous year). This is a voluntary census and the response rate for 2019 was 100 per cent.

The latest publication presents statistics for the years 1988 to 2019. Splits for 'Domestic Use' and 'Industrial Use' are available up until 2014.

Figure 1: Imports of coal and other solid fuels into Northern Ireland ports, 1988 to 2019

