

# Northern Ireland Annual Coal Inquiry 2021





Geographical Area: Northern Ireland  
Theme: Economy  
Frequency: Annual

## Key Points

- In 2021, 1.818 million tonnes of coal and other solid fuels were shipped into Northern Ireland through the four main ports, which was 21% more than the 1.500 million tonnes imported in 2020.
- Approximately two thirds (64%) were imported for domestic or industrial use in 2021, and one third (36%) was for the generation of electricity. Imports for domestic or industrial use were 22% above the average for the 34-year series (1988-2021), while those for electricity generation were 34% below the average.
- The amount of coal and solid fuels imported in 2021 was 72% above the lowest recorded in the series (1.055 million tonnes in 2009), and was not too dissimilar to that imported at the start of the series in 1988 (1.746 million tonnes).
- Just as in the previous four years, the amount of coal and solid fuels imported for domestic or industrial use was significantly higher in 2021 than that imported for the generation of electricity. By contrast, between 1995 and 2006, coal imports for electricity generation were well above those for domestic or industrial use, while in the intervening 10-year period (2007-2016), tonnages for each were broadly similar.

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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 2021 was 100 per cent.

The latest publication presents statistics for the years 1988 to 2021. 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 2021**

