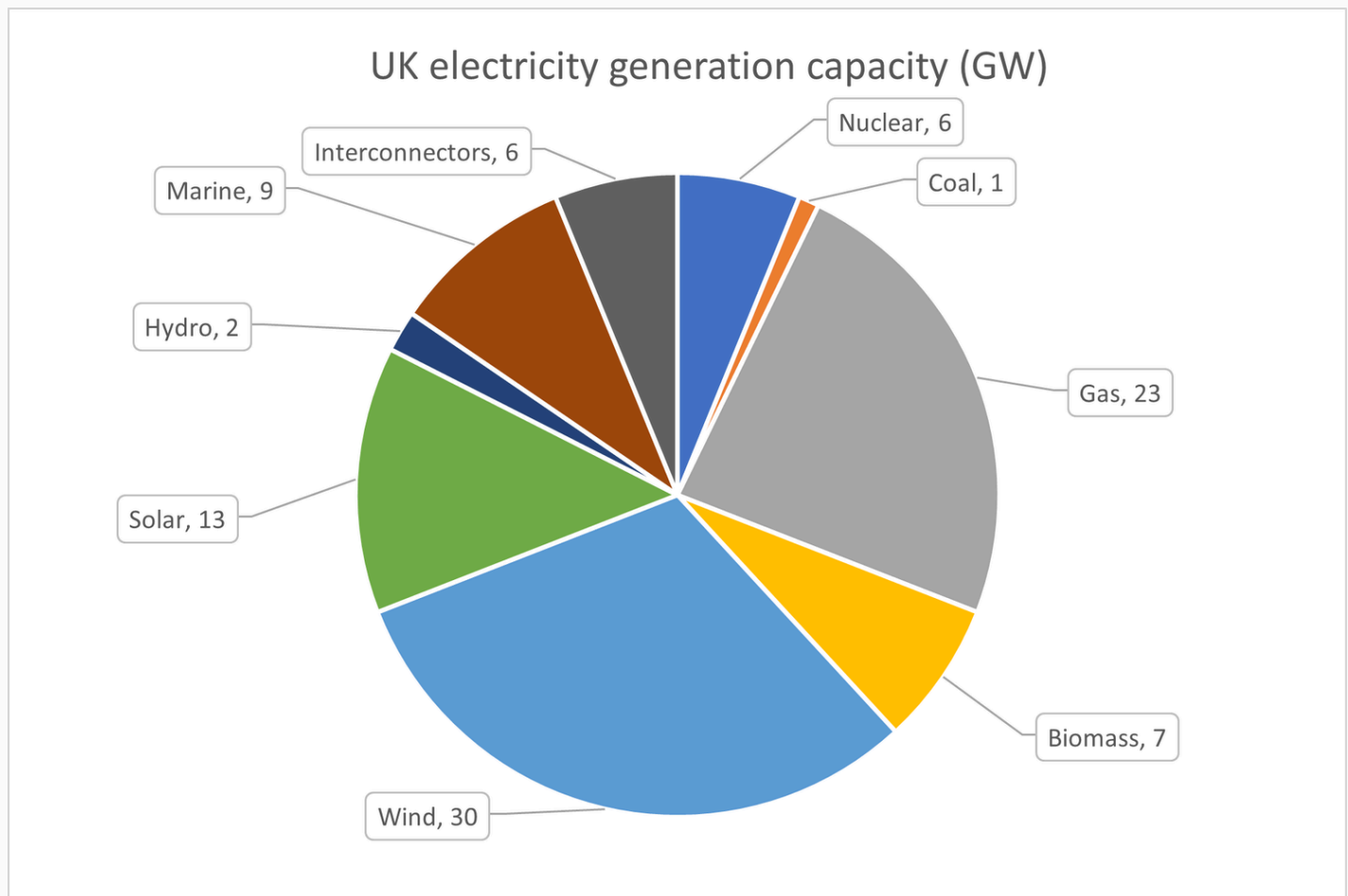


Guest articles 23 Jan 2024 ·

Are Labour sleepwalking to energy disaster?

It now looks likely that Labour will form the next government. However, it is also probable that Keir Starmer's administration will, during its term of office, face an unprecedented energy crisis. This article explains why.

On a typical working day in winter, UK demand for electricity varies between 35 and 45 GW, supplied from an array of power plants (Figure 1)



Building such a large amount of generation (the total capacity is 97 GW) to deliver a maximum of 45 GW goes a long way to explaining why our electricity bills have trebled since 2000.

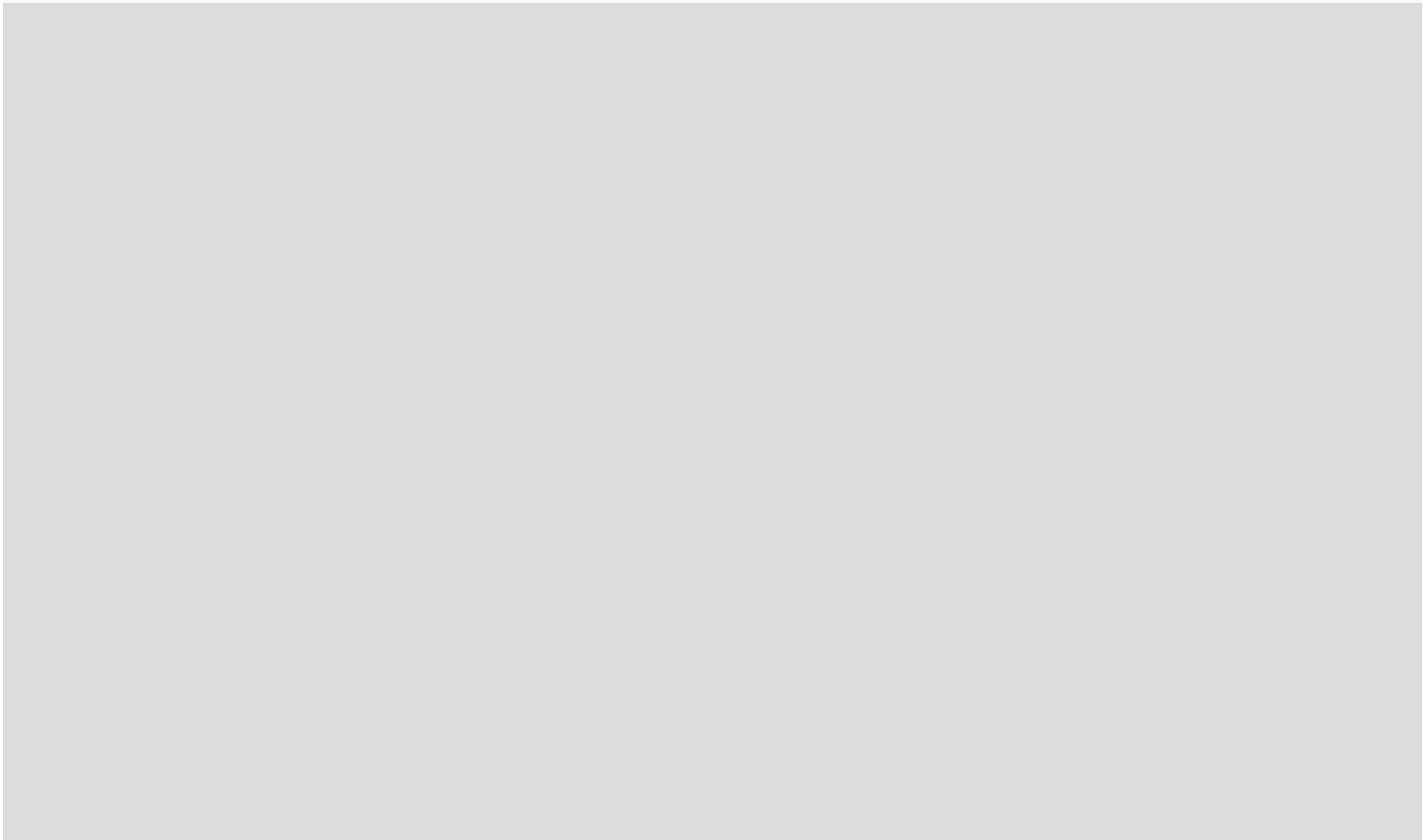
However, renewables are intermittent (see video below). *Dunkelflautes* – weeks in the depths of winter when there is no wind and no solar generation – hit the country most years. Worse, wind droughts – the last one in 2021 – can last for years. And of course solar generation is negligible between October and April, and zero every night. Interconnectors are supposed to serve as backup power when our renewable generation is scarce, but can we reliably draw down energy from another grid when it might also have a shortage? We frequently share high pressure systems with the whole of Europe, during which windspeeds are low. These can occur in winter, when demand is at its highest.





UK policy

By using this website, you agree to our use of cookies. We use cookies to provide you with a great experience and to help our website run effectively.



By using this website, you agree to our use of cookies. We use cookies to provide you with a great experience and to help our website run effectively.