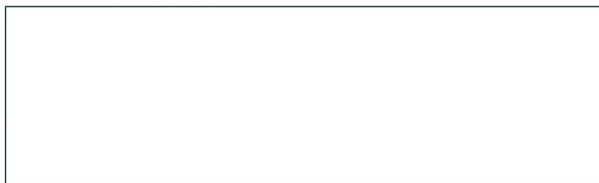


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## England's material footprint shrinks by 35% from 2004

Circular Economy, Environment and Energy, Sustainability

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**New statistics released by the UK government estimate England's material footprint was 783 million tonnes in 2020, accounting for 84% of the UK's material footprint, which is 35% lower than in 2004.**

England's material footprint was at its highest in 2004 and the proportion the country contributes to the UK's material footprint has been relatively consistent between 2001 and 2020. Per capita, the material footprint in England was 13.8 tonnes in 2020, down from 18.7 tonnes in 2001.

The statistics, released by Defra (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs), show household consumption made up 47% of England's material footprint, gross fixed capital formation made up 31% and expenditure on government services made up 20% in 2020.

Non-metallic minerals, such as sand and gravel, made up 55% of England's material footprint and biomass, such as crops and wood, made up around 24%. However, the levels of non-metallic minerals in the footprint had risen to 427 million tonnes in 2020 compared to 346 million tonnes in 2013, when they were at their lowest level in the series.

Fossil fuels made up 15% of England's material footprint, down from 22% in 2001.

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Using the United Nations Classification of Individual Consumption by Purpose (COICOP), which classifies household expenditure by function, food and non-alcoholic beverages (biomass) made up the largest share of materials extracted by households in England at 29%.

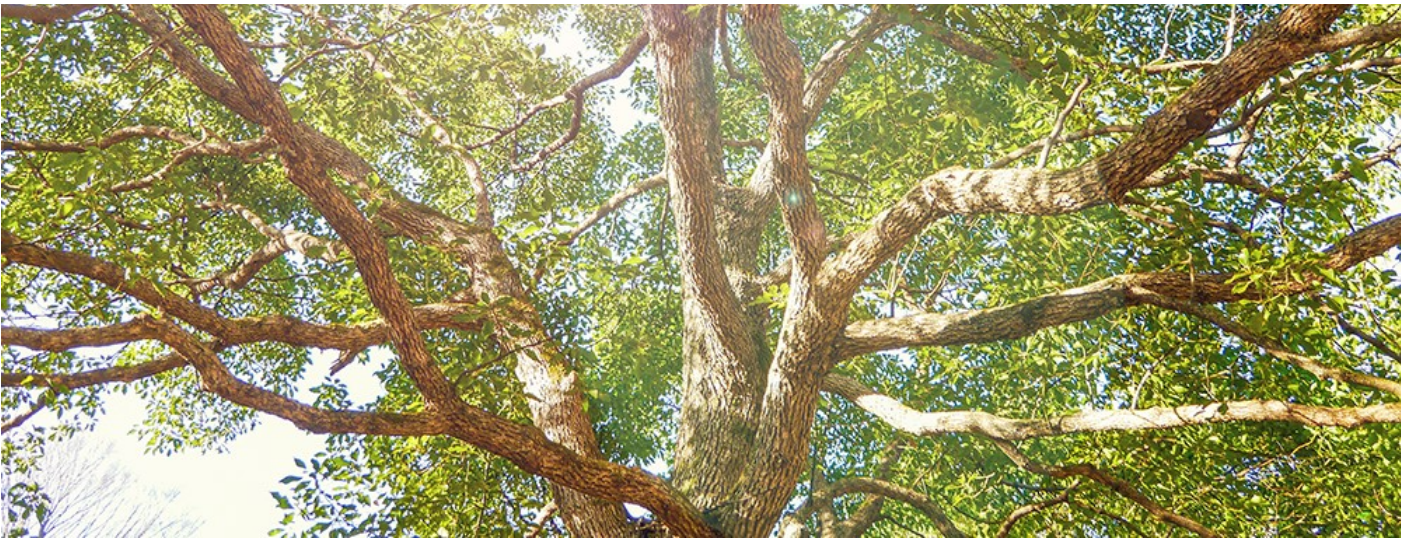
47% of England's material footprint, or 367 million tonnes, was associated with expenditure by resident households on goods and services to meet their everyday needs. The statistics show that 76% of biomass extraction and harvesting was due to households, whilst households comprised only 30% of the extraction of non-metallic minerals.

Transportation was the second most significant contributor to the household consumption category at 15%. Housing and power accounted for around 13% of household consumption with goods and services making up a similar proportion.

## Material footprint

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Material footprint is a measure of the global primary raw material extraction attributable to final domestic demand for goods and services by the residents of an institutional unit, typically a nation.

Defra says the figures presented here have been produced using a methodology developed by the University of Leeds on behalf of Defra that builds on a similar approach for estimating the carbon footprint of the UK and England.

Reacting to the statistics, Diane Crowe, Head of Group Sustainability at global circularity experts Reconomy, commented: "As a nation, demand and consumption for raw materials is huge. While we are making some progress on reducing this demand it is clear that there is only so far we can go to reduce consumption.

"The key to developing a more sustainable economy will rely on increasing circularity. By that, I mean improving how we recover, recycle and reuse the raw materials that we do use so that they remain within the economy and protect the finite resources that we have.

"The latest data suggests that the UK's economy is 7.5% circular, meaning over 90% of all economic activity requires the consumption of virgin materials. By increasing circularity, we can positively impact our ability to meaningfully reduce the amount of CO2 produced by economic activity and minimise our impact on climate change."