

UK Oil Crisis Preparedness Guide

A practical guide to building household resilience during the 2026 oil supply disruption

The situation

On 4 March 2026, the Strait of Hormuz was effectively closed following military conflict with Iran, removing approximately 20% of global oil supply from the market. This guide explains how this affects the UK and provides practical steps to build household resilience gradually.

How this affects the UK

Transport

80% of UK transport depends on petroleum products. Petrol and diesel prices have risen significantly and may continue to rise. Freight costs affect the price of everything from food to consumer goods.

Food

The UK imports 46% of its food, and the entire domestic supply chain depends on diesel. Expect food price inflation of 15-30% over coming months. Build a modest buffer of long-life essentials gradually.

Energy

UK electricity is 44% renewable — a strength. But gas prices (27% of electricity) are correlated with oil, so energy bills will rise. The Ofgem cap is expected to increase from July.

Heating

Around 4 million UK homes are off the gas grid, relying on oil or LPG. These households face the most direct impact on heating costs.

Building resilience – week by week

The most effective preparation is steady and sustainable. These steps are designed to be taken gradually.

Week 1-2

- Keep vehicles topped up as part of normal routine
- Add a few long-life items to each regular shop
- Turn the thermostat down one degree
- Keep some cash at home (£100-200)

Week 3-4

- Service your bicycle, map walking/cycling routes
- Explore rail or carpool options for commuting
- Negotiate additional working-from-home days
- Budget for 30-50% higher energy bills from July
- Stock prescription medications (ask GP for longer prescription)

Month 2-3

- Improve home insulation: loft, draughts, thermal curtains
- Start a small kitchen garden (even pots on a windowsill)
- Connect with local food sources: farm shops, markets, allotments
- Reduce household spending by 15-20% to build a buffer
- Learn efficient cooking: pressure cookers, batch cooking

Community resilience

Your community is your greatest asset during disruption. Know your neighbours, identify who might need support, share skills and tools. Community resilience is more effective than individual stockpiling.

Key resources

- GOV.UK emergency preparedness: [gov.uk/prepare-for-emergencies](https://www.gov.uk/prepare-for-emergencies)

- Flood warnings: check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk
- Energy advice: simpleenergyadvice.org.uk
- Food bank finder: trusselltrust.org/get-help

Remember: Steady preparation beats panic. Small, consistent steps taken over weeks build real resilience without disrupting supply for others.

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This is general guidance, not official government advice. Always follow guidance from your local authority during an emergency.