

Industry news

The government approves Hinkley Point

[BBC News, 15th September](#)

The government has approved the Hinkley Point project, after a delay in decision-making made earlier this summer caused concerns that the project was to be scrapped. The nuclear plant will cost £18 million to build and involves financing from both the French and Chinese governments (EDF is funding two-thirds of the project). The UK government has said they have decided to pursue the project having put in place "significant new safeguards" to protect national security.

Ofgem will impose a cap on warrant charges

[The Times, 14th September](#)

Ofgem is to impose a cap of £100 or £150 on 'warrant charges' made on households for the installation of prepayment meters. About 86,000 households every year have a prepayment meter installed under a court warrant. This tends to be a last resort for those who have failed or been unable to pay bills. The average charge is about £400, although some firms have billed customers for more than double that. Ofgem has deemed such charges as 'deeply unfair' as they are imposed on those in serious financial hardship.

Safety concerns at the Sellafield nuclear site

[Financial Times, 12th September](#)

An investigation by the BBC's Panorama programme discovered a number of safety concerns at the Sellafield nuclear site. Radioactive waste was found to have been stored in plastic bottles designed for temporary storage. The site reportedly regularly had too few staff to operate safely and, in areas, was "dangerously run down". However, the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) has since insisted that Sellafield was safe. The site has not produced power for more than a decade.

3.8 million switchers in 6 months

[BBC News, 6th September](#)

In the first 6 months of this year 3.8 million energy customers switched suppliers, according to Ofgem. This was the second six months in a row that the switching total broke three million, and was nearly one million higher than the first half of 2015. Ofgem and the CMA are committed to encouraging switching. However, critics maintain that proposals made so far do not go far enough to promote market competition.

Rising wholesale gas prices

[Guardian, 2nd September](#)

Gas prices have risen steadily over the past three months, but Britain is facing a double hit because gas imports from elsewhere in Europe are 10% higher still. This is due to the fall of sterling against the euro. The result is that energy bills for customers are expected to rise.