

UK government lifts ban on gas 'fracking'

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The British government on Thursday ended the suspension of the controversial shale gas extraction method known as fracking in Britain.

Energy Secretary Ed Davey announced the lifting of the ban put in place in June last year after fracking contributed to two small earthquakes near Blackpool, Lancashire.

British energy firm Cuadrilla Resources halted drilling trials on Lancashire's Fylde coast after saying they were the likely cause of a 2.3-magnitude tremor in April 2011 and a 1.5-magnitude tremor the following month.

Davey said that fracking could resume in Britain subject to new controls which aim to reduce the risk of seismic activity.

Fracking, or [hydraulic fracturing](#), involves blasting chemicals, water and sand into underground shale rock formations to release trapped natural gas.

Opponents say it causes [water pollution](#) but energy groups say it provides access to considerable new gas reserves and could drive down prices.

Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne announced the creation of a new Office for Unconventional Gas and Oil to simplify regulation of the sector and speed up production as part of his Autumn Statement on December 5.

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