

# Collection of articles offers policy solutions for a more resilient UK

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Credit: University of Manchester

The United Kingdom is vulnerable to global events and over reliant on other countries for essential resources—but there are policy choices which could significantly lessen this exposure, a new report makes clear.

On Resilience, a collection of articles drawing on research from University of Manchester academics, examines a range of solutions to

strengthen our national resilience.

Matthew Paterson, Professor of International Politics, writes that the war in Ukraine "has underscored how crucial geopolitical dynamics are to thinking about the future of energy."

He makes a series of policy recommendations to maintain the Government's transition to net zero "while focusing on those elements that minimize geopolitical risks."

These include a drive to reduce energy demand with an emphasis on weaning the UK economy off its dependence on natural gas, which the conflict in Ukraine has graphically highlighted.

Professor Paterson argues that decarbonizing housing through [heat pumps](#) and electric cooking can also strengthen national resilience and advocates new policies to shift the population away from private car use in favor of public transport, coupled with additional investment in road transport electrification "to minimize exposure to oil price volatility."

And he makes the case for domestic renewable electricity generation to be accelerated, commenting, "There is significant untapped potential both for onshore wind and solar, which have largely been hampered by regulatory blockages that need reversing."

Timothy Foster, Senior Lecturer in Water-Food Security, advises the UK to learn from countries with water scarcity pressures in order to address water risks faced by the domestic agricultural sector. He writes, "Our international research in places such as North America has shown that flexible abstraction rules and arrangements for sharing water, including trading systems, can significantly enhance farmers' ability to manage drought risks and adapt to changing climate conditions."

At the same time, Dr. Foster argues that there is an urgent need for "robust improvements in infrastructure and support for the [data collection](#) and monitoring of agricultural water use and productivity" which he describes as "chronically underfunded and poorly prioritized."

More broadly, Dr. Foster argues that greater investment in infrastructure for [water storage](#) should also be a key Government priority "both in the form of on-farm and larger-scale multi-use reservoirs, and the use of nature-based solutions, such as restoring natural wetlands."

Other policy challenges addressed in On Resilience include the positive roles AI and smart technology can play to mitigate risks to food production, the growing threat of antimicrobial resistance and how best to meet the UK's critical metal requirements while avoiding unnecessary damage to the environment.

The 40-page document—published by the University's policy engagement unit, Policy@Manchester—includes a foreword from Lord Howell of Guildford, the former Energy Secretary and only Minister to have served in the Heath, Thatcher and Cameron governments.

He describes On Resilience as a "thoughtful and balanced series of essays on a subject of such vast complexity, importance and contention as our future energy supplies and their tangled relationship with oncoming climate violence which threaten us all."

Lord Howell, also a past President of the British Institute of Energy Economists, writes, "Balance and realism are qualities very badly needed in tackling the many dilemmas and obstacles ahead, yet they seem in very short supply."

He adds, "None of these questions can be met with neat answers or solutions. But they can be addressed with shrewd analysis and fearless

posing of the issues. That is what these wise and expert essayists from The University of Manchester offer."

**More information:** On Resilience: [www.policy.manchester.ac.uk/pubs/publications/on-resilience/](http://www.policy.manchester.ac.uk/pubs/publications/on-resilience/)

Provided by University of Manchester

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