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## WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Publication of the UK wide Policy Framework for Radioactive Substances and Decommissioning</b>
<b>DATE</b>	<b>16 May 2024</b>
<b>BY</b>	<b>Huw Irranca-Davies, Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs</b>

The Welsh Government alongside the UK Government and the devolved Governments of Scotland and Northern Ireland are today publishing a new and updated Policy Framework for Radioactive Substances and Decommissioning following a public consultation exercise undertaken during spring 2023.

The UK Government is responsible for developing policy regarding nuclear energy and nuclear installations across the UK. However, environmental protection, including disposal of radioactive waste, is a devolved matter for Welsh Ministers.

Nuclear power, which uses radioactive nuclear fuel, continues to provide electricity to UK homes and businesses. The UK also uses radioactive substances in many different products and processes for example to treat and diagnose serious illnesses, to deliver research and development, also in industrial processes. Most uses of radioactive material create radioactive waste which needs to be managed and the facilities that use this type of material, including nuclear power stations, will eventually need to be deconstructed safely and efficiently after they stop operating.

The four UK Governments agree it is vital we have a Policy Framework for managing radioactive substances and decommissioning which is fit to deal with our legacy waste and fit for the future. The Policy Framework makes it clear that high standards of safety and environmental protection must be maintained when managing and disposing of radioactive substances.

The Policy Framework published today replaces the 1995 publication *Command Paper 2919, Review of Radioactive Waste Management Policy: Final Conclusions*. It updates, clarifies and consolidates several policies into a UK wide Policy Framework which will be pursued jointly by the UK Government and devolved governments. There is also a joint summary of the responses to the consultation being published.

Further to the consultation key updates include enabling additional disposal capability for less hazardous waste in England and Wales so enabling faster, more cost effective and proportionate decommissioning, also placing greater emphasis on including decommissioning by design into the development of nuclear projects. The updated Policy Framework provides sufficient flexibility to ensure the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) can develop near surface disposal facilities if and when required.

Overall, the revised Policy Framework creates clearer and more consistent policy objectives. This will help enable innovative and sustainable ways of working and maintain high standards of safety, security and environmental protection.

## **Links**

Consultation Website:

[Managing radioactive substances and nuclear decommissioning - GOV.UK  
\(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/managing-radioactive-substances-and-nuclear-decommissioning)

Welsh Government Consultation website:

[Managing radioactive substances and nuclear decommissioning | GOV.WALES](https://gov.wales/managing-radioactive-substances-and-decommissioning)

Welsh Government website for the Policy Framework:

<https://www.gov.wales/managing-radioactive-substances-and-decommissioning-policy-framework>