OFFSHORE ENERGIES UK
Working Together, Producing Cleaner Energies

2026 DECOMMISSIONING REPORT

Connected for delivery

2026 → The decade → Regions → Capacity → Actions

Offshore Decommissioning Conference
November 2026



2026 Decommissioning Report: key messages



£24.7 billion

A decade of delivery, 2026–2035

1,834 wells, 135 topsides and 126 substructures to be decommissioned. Spend peaks at £3.1bn in 2027 and stays at or above £2.7bn through 2031. Wells rise from 137 to 220 in 2026.

56%

The centre of gravity moves to the Central North Sea

Regional demand shifts through the decade, so specialist capability must be redeployed to follow the work.

Two pressure cycles

Shared capacity with offshore wind

Vessels, ports, heavy-lift capability, engineering teams and skilled labour are needed by both industries at the same time.

Three priority actions

Choices that decide how much value stays in the UK

Publish visible schedules, aggregate campaign scopes and secure specialist capacity early, so the UK supply chain has the confidence to invest.

2026 is the step-up year: 2025 actual to 2026 forecast

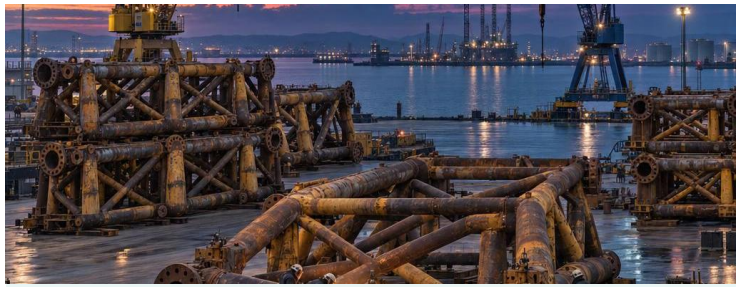


Wells decommissioned

220

Up from 137 in 2025 (+61%)

135 platform wells, 74 subsea wells and 11 suspended exploration and appraisal wells.



Steel removed (tonnes)

127,846

Up from 39,350: more than 3×

Forecast steel removal in 2026, against 2025 actuals.



Pipelines removed (km)

161.1

Up from 33.5: nearly 5×

Forecast pipeline removal in 2026, against 2025 actuals.

Connected for delivery starts now: wells, steel and pipelines all step up in 2026

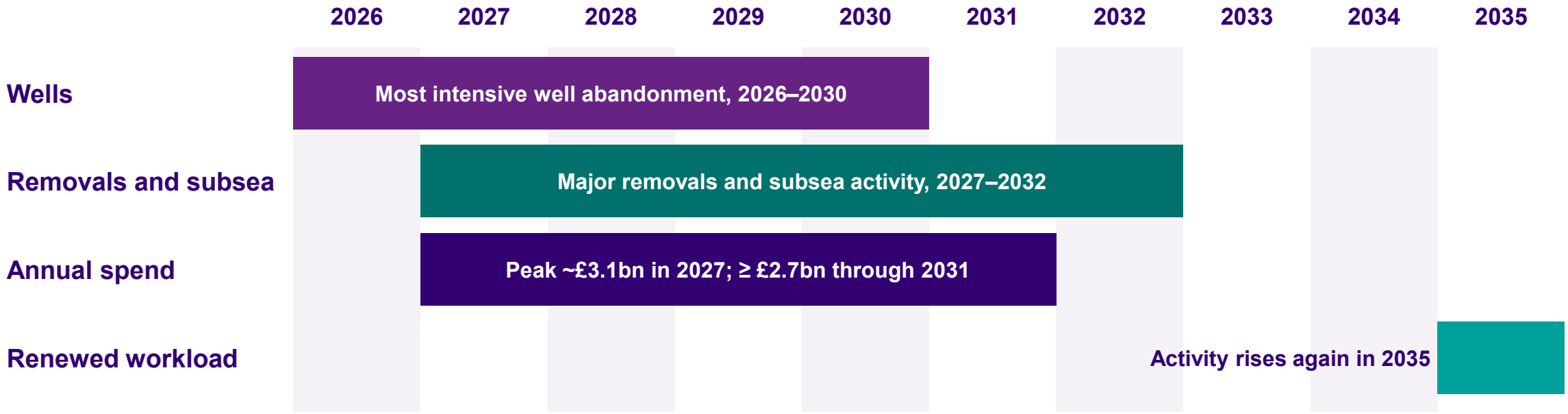
Also up in 2026: topsides 10 → 15 | substructures 8 → 18 | mattresses 329 → 676

The decade delivery profile: 2026 to 2035

£24.7bn
forecast expenditure, 2026–2035

1,834
wells to be decommissioned

135 | 126
topsides | substructures



Sustained multi-year demand, not a single short-term peak

Wells decommissioning at scale: 2026 to 2035



Total wells to be decommissioned, 2026–2035

1,834

wells

Platform wells

1,160

63% of all wells

Platform wells make up almost two-thirds of the total.

Subsea wells

613

33% of all wells

Work shifts towards subsea in 2030–2031.

Suspended E&A wells

61

3% of all wells

Suspended exploration and appraisal wells.

43%

of forecast UKCS decommissioning expenditure: approximately £10.7bn over 2026–2035

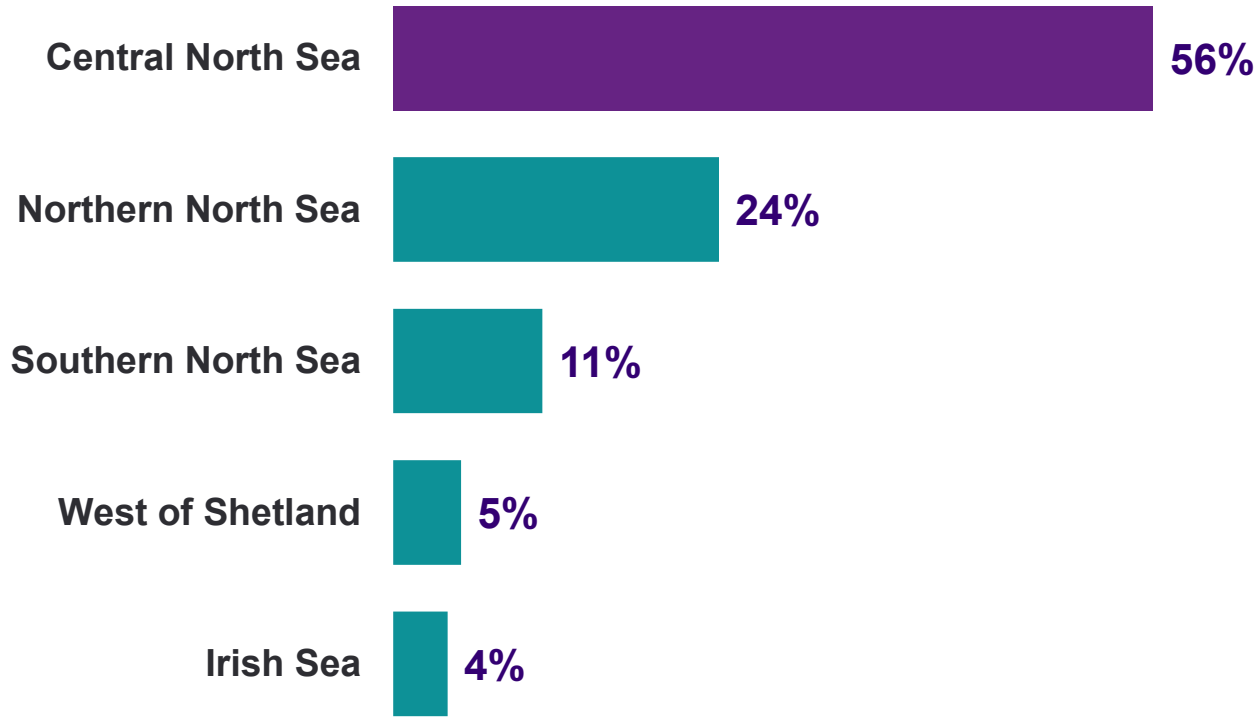
Historical context

Decommissioning has exceeded combined exploration, appraisal and development drilling since 2017; record 192 wells decommissioned in 2024.

1 Standardise scopes | 2 Form repeatable campaigns | 3 Secure specialist capacity early

Over half of the spend moves to the Central North Sea

Share of 2026–2035 UKCS forecast expenditure





56% **of forecast spend is in the Central North Sea**

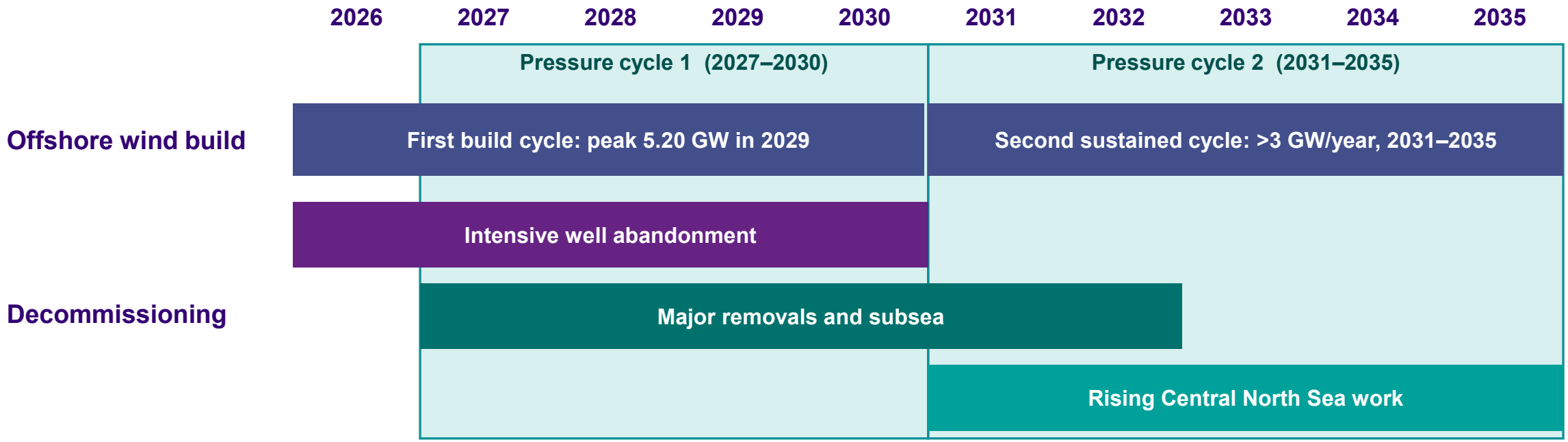
Sustained, later-cycle demand: wells, removals, subsea and onshore processing.

Northern North Sea and West of Shetland are early-cycle; Southern North Sea and Irish Sea suit campaign aggregation.

Plan regionally | Aggregate scopes | Move specialist capacity with the work

Share of 2026–2035 UKCS expenditure.

Shared capacity pressure: decommissioning and offshore wind



Five shared constraints: both industries compete for the same limited resources

- Specialist vessels
- Heavy-lift capability
- Ports and yards
- Engineering teams
- Skilled labour

Two industries. Shared resources. One coordinated plan.

UK suppliers can win this work, if schedules are visible



Forecast expenditure

£24.7bn

Decommissioning, 2026–2035

A major supply chain opportunity for the UK, in complex, engineering-led work.



Central North Sea

56%

Share of forecast expenditure

Sustained activity in the Central North Sea anchors the regional opportunity.



Priority actions for UK value

3

Start with these three

Publish visible schedules, aggregate campaign scopes and secure specialist capacity early.

If suppliers can't see the work, they can't invest to deliver it.

UK content: strong capability, but capacity is stretched



66%

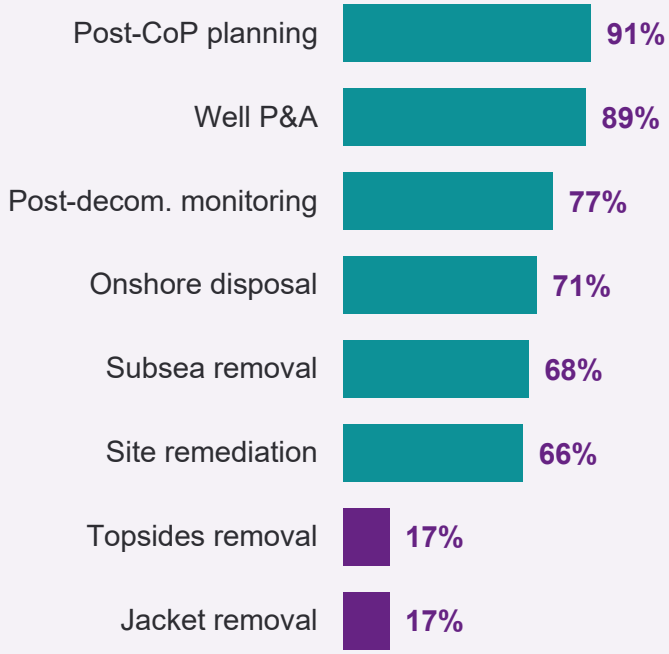
indicative UK content across decommissioning

71%

of 2025 contract value secured by UK-based organisations

UK supply chain capability

Strong in complex, engineering-led work



Supply chain challenges

Confidence and capacity are under pressure

35% of suppliers are confident about the next 12 months

53% report meaningful or significant capacity constraints

95% say capacity could increase if activity rises

8 in 10 expect more growth and investment opportunities

Visible schedules give UK suppliers the confidence to invest and win more of the £24.7bn

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Read the full report