

A PRACTICAL HOMEOWNER GUIDE

Avoid the solar trap.

10 questions to ask before you buy.

Do not just compare prices. Ask smarter questions.



This guide gives you the key questions most homeowners do not ask - but absolutely should - before signing a solar contract.

Get the facts. Then get it done properly.

BEFORE YOU COMPARE QUOTES

Get the questions right first.

Solar panels are one of the best upgrades you can make to your home.

They can cut your bills, reduce your carbon footprint and help you use more of your own energy.

With rising demand has come a flood of fast-talking sales people and quick-fix installers. If you are not asking the right questions, it is easy to end up with a system that underdelivers or costs more in the long run.

These are the 10 checks most people do not ask - but absolutely should. They will help you spot vague answers, inflated savings or poor workmanship before you sign anything.



A clear quote starts with a clear conversation.

Power up. Get informed. Ask better.

Let us go.

01

QUESTION 01

What energy price did you use to calculate my savings - and is it fixed or variable?

A better quote is not just about the kit. It is about the assumptions, checks and support behind it.

Keep this page next to every quote you review.



WHY IT MATTERS

Installers sometimes use inflated prices (30p+/kWh) to make savings seem bigger than they really are. You need a realistic, transparent model.

ASK FOR

- The exact tariff price they used (for example, 27p/kWh)
- What happens if energy prices fall
- A version based on your actual bill

RED FLAG

- “Energy prices always go up”
- No breakdown of prices
- Vague or generic savings claims

TAKEAWAY

Fake price = fake payback. Ask for real numbers.

02

QUESTION 02

Did you include inverter or battery replacements in my long-term ROI calculation?

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WHY IT MATTERS

Inverters often need replacing after 10-12 years. Batteries do not last forever either. Leaving these out makes ROI look too good to be true.

ASK FOR

- When replacements will be needed
- Typical inverter or battery costs for modelling
- Whether future maintenance is built into the estimate

RED FLAG

- “The system just runs forever”
- No lifecycle cost modelling
- No mention of future replacements

TAKEAWAY

ROI only works if you include the full lifecycle.

03

QUESTION 03

Will you check if I need planning permission or a grid application?

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WHY IT MATTERS

Most homes do not need planning permission - but some do. Your installer should confirm the planning position and the relevant DNO application or notification process.

ASK FOR

- Confirmation on DNO requirements (G98/G99)
- Planning advice if you are in a conservation area or AONB
- Whether they will handle the process for you

RED FLAG

- “You will be fine” without checking
- No mention of DNO notifications
- No written confirmation

TAKEAWAY

Do not get caught out by red tape.

04

QUESTION 04

Who will install it - and how experienced are they?

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WHY IT MATTERS

Your system is only as good as the person fitting it. Bad installs can cause leaks, poor output and fire risk.

ASK FOR

- Who will install it and who is responsible
- How many systems they have fitted
- Photos or references from past jobs

RED FLAG

- No clarity on who installs
- Shrugs or vague claims
- No evidence of references

TAKEAWAY

Good kit + bad install = bad system.

05

QUESTION 05

Are you fully insured - and what actually happens if something goes wrong?

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WHY IT MATTERS

Solar panels go on your roof and connect into your electrics. If something gets damaged during or after installation, you need to know where liability lies.

ASK FOR

- Public liability and professional indemnity certificates
- Whether roof or structural damage is covered
- What happens if issues arise months later

RED FLAG

- “We have never had a problem”
- No documentation
- Limited or short workmanship warranty

TAKEAWAY

If they are not insured, you are the one at risk.

06

QUESTION 06

Will my system work if there is a power cut?

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WHY IT MATTERS

Most solar shuts down in a blackout - unless it is designed for backup. Do not assume yours will keep the lights on.

ASK FOR

- A backup-capable inverter
- Battery with a suitable backup or emergency power arrangement
- A clear yes or no answer

RED FLAG

- “Yes, probably”
- No technical explanation
- Confused response

TAKEAWAY

Backup power needs the right system design.

07

QUESTION 07

How will I get paid for surplus electricity - and who helps me set it up?

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WHY IT MATTERS

When your system generates more than you use, the surplus can be exported to the grid. A suitable export tariff pays you for it. Rates vary, and it is your contract - not the installer's.

ASK FOR

- Which SEG (Smart Export Guarantee) providers they suggest
- Whether the system will be registered with the DNO promptly
- Confirmation that your meter is smart-export capable

RED FLAG

- No comparison of SEG rates
- No mention that you must apply
- No clear meter compatibility advice

TAKEAWAY

Exporting energy? Make sure you are getting paid properly.

08

QUESTION 08

Will the system be battery-ready - even if I do not want one now?

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WHY IT MATTERS

Retrofitting a battery later can be expensive if your system is not set up for it now. Future-proofing matters.

ASK FOR

- A hybrid inverter or battery-ready system
- Space reserved for a later install
- Wiring designed with a battery in mind

RED FLAG

- “You will need a full upgrade”
- No flexibility built into the design
- “You will not want one anyway”

TAKEAWAY

Plan for today, but build for tomorrow.

09

QUESTION 09

What is the wattage and release year of the panels - and why are they right for my roof?

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WHY IT MATTERS

Installers sometimes quote older or bulk-bought panels to cut costs. Newer is not always better, and higher power does not always mean more efficient. The best panel depends on your roof space, orientation and budget.

ASK FOR

- Panel brand, model, wattage and release year
- Why they chose that panel over others
- Efficiency rating, size per panel and warranty length

RED FLAG

- “They are all the same”
- No explanation of why those panels were chosen
- No clear link between panel specification and your roof

TAKEAWAY

You do not just want high power - you want smart power.

10

QUESTION 10

What is the discharge rate of the battery - and will it power my whole home or just a few circuits?

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WHY IT MATTERS

Not all batteries are created equal. A 5kWh battery sounds great - until you find out it can only discharge at 1.6kW. Capacity is not power.

ASK FOR

- Continuous and peak discharge rate in kW
- What appliances it can run at once
- Whether you can use it in a power cut

RED FLAG

- “It is 10kWh so it will do your whole home”
- No mention of maximum output or backup load limits
- Confused answers when you ask about loads

TAKEAWAY

It is not just how much it stores - it is how fast it can deliver.

YOU NOW KNOW WHAT TO ASK

Choose clarity over guesswork.

You do not need to be a solar expert - you just need to ask the right questions. And now, you have them.

Use these 10 checks to cut through sales talk, protect your investment and get a system that truly works for your home.

READY TO EXPLORE YOUR OPTIONS?

The EPC team can help you understand whether Solar Only or Solar + Battery is the stronger fit for your home.

[Book a free design assessment](#)



ONE MCS-CERTIFIED TEAM FROM ASSESSMENT TO HANDOVER

We consider your roof, bills, electricity use and future plans, then give you a clear recommendation and a properly coordinated installation.

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HOME SOLAR, CLEARLY EXPLAINED

Find the right energy route for your home.

EPC helps homeowners make informed choices about solar panels and battery storage. We compare Solar Only and Solar + Battery around your roof, electricity bills, daytime and evening use, tariff and future plans.

A joined-up recommendation, not a standard package.

From desktop design through installation, certification, commissioning and handover, one EPC team keeps the details moving.

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