



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.

Rising demand has brought a flood of fast-talking salespeople and quick-fix installers. If you're 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.



**Get informed.
Ask better Questions.**

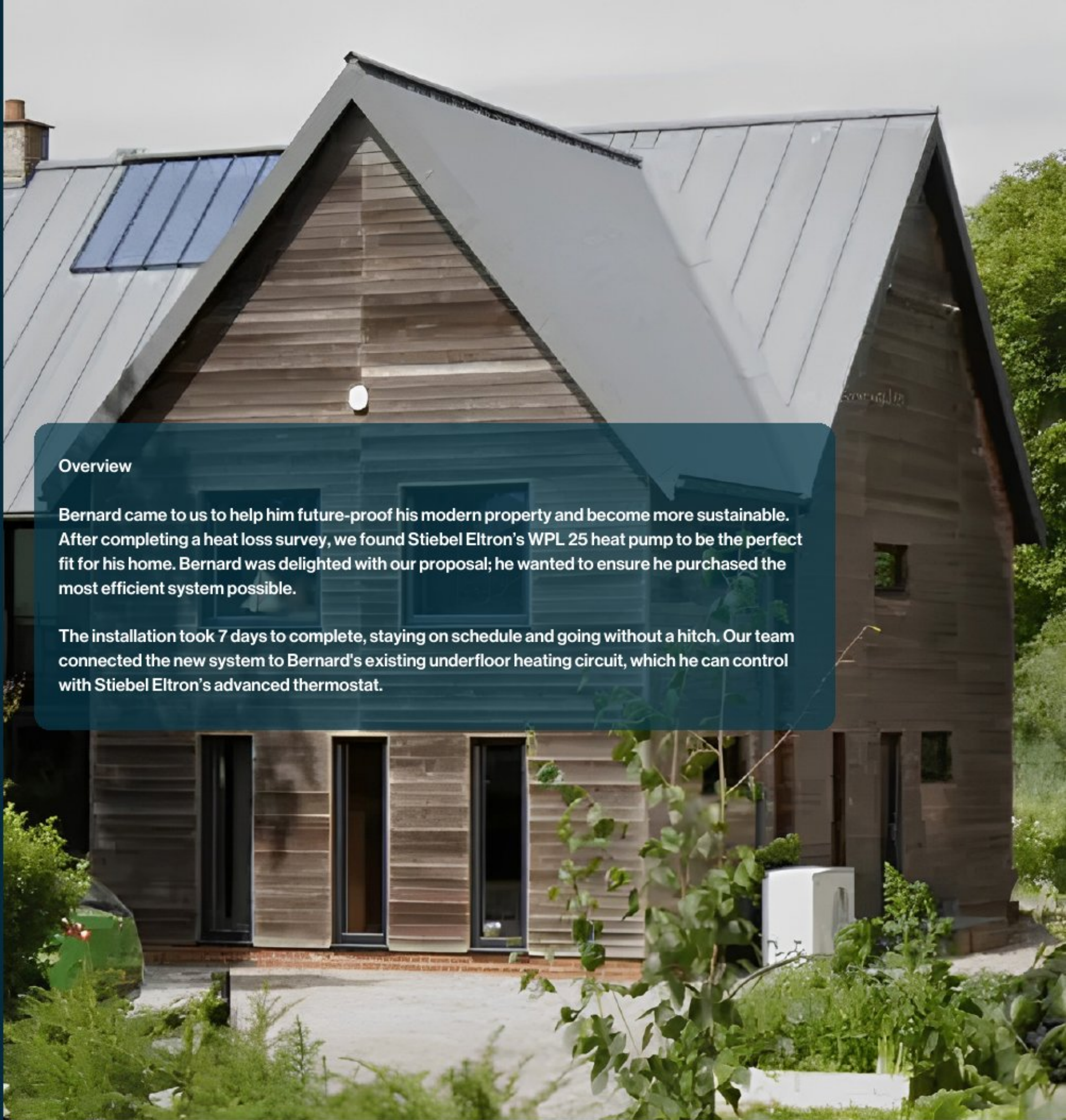
Let us go.

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.



Overview

Bernard came to us to help him future-proof his modern property and become more sustainable. After completing a heat loss survey, we found Stiebel Eltron's WPL 25 heat pump to be the perfect fit for his home. Bernard was delighted with our proposal; he wanted to ensure he purchased the most efficient system possible.

The installation took 7 days to complete, staying on schedule and going without a hitch. Our team connected the new system to Bernard's existing underfloor heating circuit, which he can control with Stiebel Eltron's advanced thermostat.

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.

Question 02

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

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Project Challenges

As with many high-end, bespoke builds, this project required careful coordination and adaptability. We were introduced at a later stage of the programme, which meant working within an already defined architectural and interior layout while still delivering a high-performance mechanical solution.

The main challenge centred around integrating the MVHR ductwork across three floors without compromising the client’s interior design vision or the building’s aesthetics. Achieving this required detailed planning, creative routing, and close collaboration.

By working closely with the main contractor, interior designer, and client, we were able to coordinate routes, adjust details, and refine solutions that respected both the technical requirements of the system and the overall design intent of the home. This collaborative approach ensured the MVHR system was seamlessly integrated, maintaining performance while preserving the clean, high-end finish expected of a luxury build.

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.

Question 03

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

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Overview:

An in-roof integrated system was the perfect choice for Daniel and Kate, as it allowed the solar panels to sit flush with the surrounding tiles. This installation method required meticulous planning, including removing and retiling sections of the roof. We selected Longi 430W all-black panels for their excellent performance, sleek look, and 25-year performance warranty.

To optimise energy production, we paired the panels with SolarEdge inverter and optimiser technology. This advanced setup enhances system performance by managing shading issues and improves safety compared to standard systems.

Challenges:

As an in-roof system, the installation was more involved, requiring additional time to remove and re-tile around the solar array. With safety a priority, our project manager, Neil, coordinated scaffolding with edge protection, ensuring a safe and efficient process.

Results:

The installation was completed in 2–3 days, and Daniel and Kate were thrilled with their new solar system.

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.



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.

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Question 05

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

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Overview

Derrick approached us as he was looking for a low-carbon solution to reduce his energy bills. He previously heated his static home with direct electric storage heaters and dreaded his monthly energy bills. We initially completed a desktop analysis of his home and swiftly provided Derrick with a quote that also included brand new radiators throughout.

Happy with the quote provided, he booked a heat loss calculation survey with one of our experienced engineers. Just two weeks later, Derrick's brand new, state-of-the-art Mitsubishi Ecodan heat pump was being installed at his Canvey Island home.

The new Air Source Heat Pump system provided his home with heating through newly installed radiators, and direct hot water via a space-saving slimline hot water cylinder.

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.

Question 06

Will my system work if there is a power cut?

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Overview
Roger was looking for ways in which he could become more sustainable whilst future-proofing his home. Upgrading his traditional boiler to an Air Source Heat Pump system seemed like a no-brainer. After completing a room by room heat loss survey, we found the Mitsubishi Ecodan 8.5kW heat pump would be a perfect fit for his home.

The installation took 5 days to complete and went exactly as planned. Our team upgraded the existing cylinder to a larger size and connected the heat pump to the system which included an upgraded set of 11 radiators and thermostatic radiator valves.

Challenges
Choosing the location of the heat pump was challenging due to the ground level of the whole perimeter being occupied, leaving the ground unsuitable to house Roger’s Air Source Heat Pump.

Our design team had to find a solution that didn’t include setting the heat pump on the ground. The design was adjusted to have the heat pump installed on wall brackets on the exterior of the first floor.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

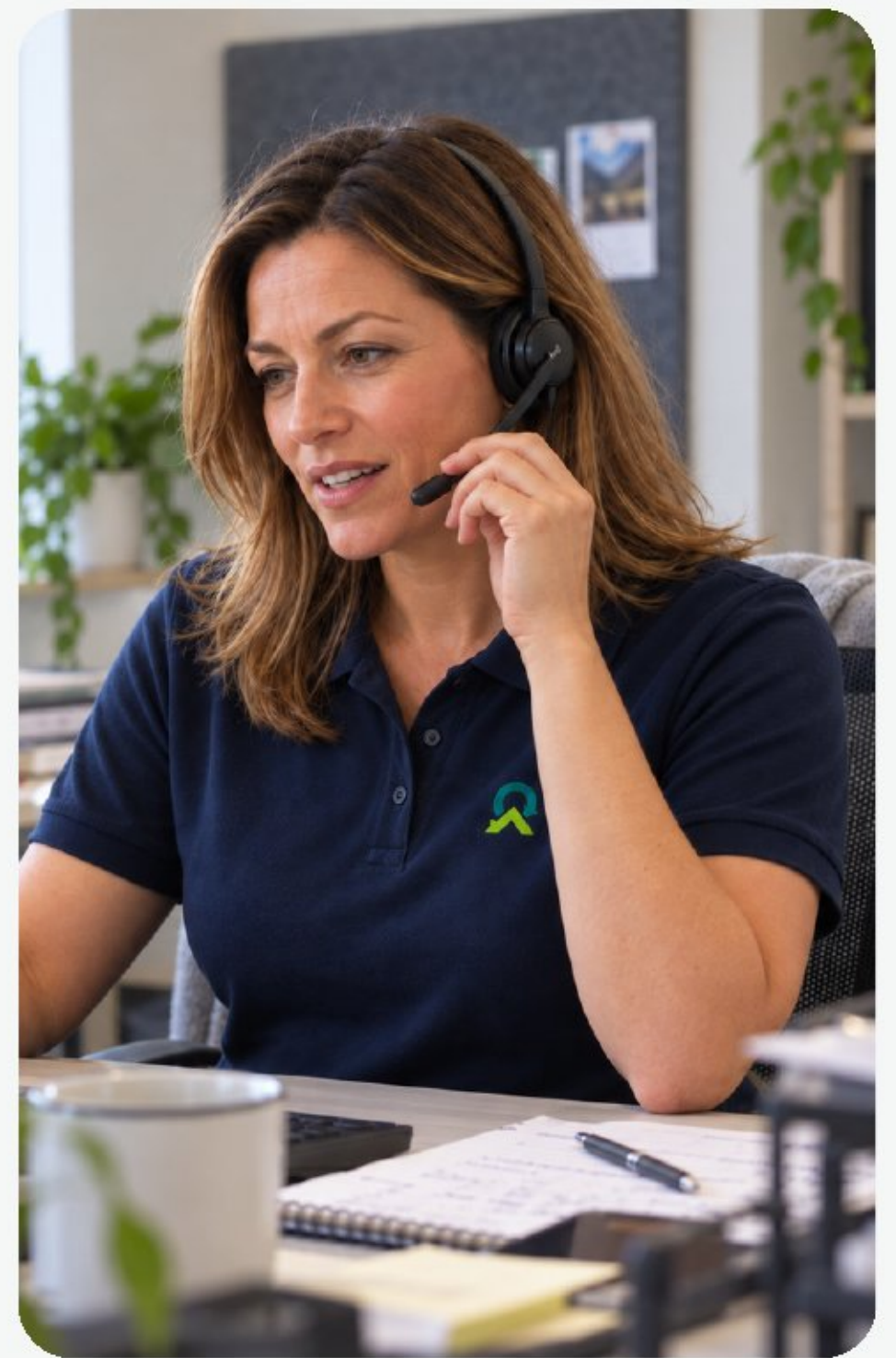
You do not need to be a solar expert - you just need to ask the right questions. And now, you have them.

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 plans, then provide a clear recommendation and a well-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 options for your roof, electricity bills, daytime and evening use, tariffs, and 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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