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Charity No. 1159816

Energy Advice Drop In
The Wellbeing Centre
Church Stretton
Thursday's 10.00 – 12.00



INFORMATION SHEET No. 42 DATE OF ISSUE August 2023

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Questions to ask a PV installer.

With interest in solar PV greatly increased since the steep rise in energy prices, finding a good installer and knowing what questions to ask is very important.

We would recommend the following questions be asked.

- 1 How long has the company been installing PV, how many installations have they done?
- 2 Do they use their own staff or is the work done by subcontractors? A national firm, with head office far away are more likely to use subcontractors. How is the quality of their subcontractors monitored?
- 3 Is there an insurance policy to cover deposits etc if the company ceases trading before installation?
- 4 What kind of panels will they install, their colour and output, how long is any guarantee on inverter and panels etc?
- 5 Depending on the installation location, will the panels possibly cause reflection problems for any neighbours?
- 6 Has roof angle, possible shading and orientation been considered when calculating power output? If there is any shading, how is this overcome – are bypass diodes fitted to individual panels?
- 7 Where is the equipment made?
- 8 Depending on your consumption what is the possible payback time?
- 9 Does the inverter make any noise? (If mounted indoors some inverters make a low humming noise or have a cooling fan which can be annoying).
- 10 How are the panels mounted. What if following mounting on a roof a leak appears? If so will the installers rectify?
- 11 Will a roof inspection be made to ensure its strength? Are the tiles in good condition?
- 12 If ground mounted, will anti-theft bolts be used?
- 13 Does the roof contain asbestos?
- 14 How will any wiring be concealed?
- 15 Does the cost include any necessary scaffolding?
- 16 Will the installer register the system with your local power supply network (District Network Operator)? Is there any additional cost?

- 17 Will the installer register the system with a supply company, so you receive REG (export) income?
- 18 How long before installation?
- 19 Will a generation meter be supplied. Will an export meter be provided? (If you have a Smart electricity meter export readings can be read from the meter).
- 20 Is there an app available to monitor performance?
- 21 Will planning permission be required?
- 22 Would the installer recommend having a PV power diverter installed? (See Information Sheet No. 36)
- 23 Does the installer offer a repair service?
- 24 Is the installer MCS accredited? *

* **MCS / Flexi Orb accreditation certificates.**

MCS is a standards organisation creating and maintaining standards for the certification of products, installers and their installations for low-carbon products and installations used to produce electricity and heat from renewable sources.

<https://mcscertified.com/about-us/>

Please note that certain micro generation installers are issuing a new accreditation certificate called “Flexi Orb” which to date only British Gas, E.ON Next, OVO Energy, Scottish Power and SSE will recognise when trying to register export. Other electricity suppliers are still recognising the MCS certificate.

An MCS certificate is Government recognised and proof that your installation has been designed, installed & commissioned to the highest standard using only MCS certified products by an MCS certified installer.

Flexi Orb is an oversight body for the renewable energy sector. It exists to ensure that the sale, installation and commissioning (and recycling) of energy generating, saving and storing systems are safe and effective.

By using an installer issuing only Flexi Orb certification you are effectively limiting which energy companies you can sell you export to. Stretton Climate Care strongly recommend you ask a potential installer which certificate they issue before signing any contract.

The Energy Saving Trust have produced an excellent guide on Solar Panels.

<https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Solar-guide-July-2023.pdf>

