

## Is my home suitable for solar?

UK Feed-in Tariffs (FITs) make solar photovoltaic (PV) panels an attractive investment for homeowners who have savings. The soon to be introduced Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) will also provide better returns for solar water heating (SWH). But there are some points to consider before chasing quotes:

- 1) Which way does my roof face?  
A south facing roof is best but panels can deliver very good results facing anywhere between east and west, through south.
- 2) Do I have the roof space?  
A minimum of about 10m<sup>2</sup> of panels are needed for solar PV and approximately 4m<sup>2</sup> for SWH (based on a household of 4 people). Sections of roof shaded by trees or buildings are to be avoided.
- 3) Will I get the most benefit?  
Daytime users of electricity and hot water have much to gain by directly replacing energy they'd otherwise have to pay for with free solar energy.
- 4) Can I afford it?  
An ideal budget would be in excess of £8,000 for PV and £3,500 for SWH. It's important to remember that in order to be eligible for FITs and RHI your system must be installed by an MCS certificated installing company.

To find out more, check out Cocoon's new on-line 'Solar Suitability Checker'. This tool allows you to find your roof on a satellite map, check its size and orientation, and see what returns an investment in solar might deliver. No personal details are required. The tool will go live in Summer 2011 at [www.cocoonyourhome.co.uk](http://www.cocoonyourhome.co.uk)



*FITs make solar PV an attractive investment*

Photo courtesy of [cocoonyourhome.co.uk](http://cocoonyourhome.co.uk)

**Notes for editors:**

1. In March 2011, the UK Government announced that the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) will be introduced in two phases for domestic customers. From July 2011 the *RHI Premium Payment* will provide a one-off grant (expected to be worth £300) for households who install a solar water heating system. From October 2012 new *RHI tariffs* will provide long term support to anybody who has installed an eligible technology since 15 July 2009.

<http://tiny.cc/b5c92>

2. Set up by the Department for Energy and Climate Change, the Microgeneration Certification Scheme is designed to ensure the quality of renewable technology installations and products.

<http://tiny.cc/b77ua>

3. For homeowners seeking further information on solar technologies, the Solar Trade Association website provides a helpful FAQs section, insight into the available solar technologies and a list of approved installers.

[www.solar-trade.org.uk](http://www.solar-trade.org.uk)

4. This article was produced by United Sustainable Energy Agency (USEA).  
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5. USEA (usea.org.uk) works in partnership with local authorities throughout Bucks, Berks, Beds, Herts, Oxon, Hants and the Isle of Wight. We operate an Energy Saving Trust advice centre and offer an insulation installer comparison service called Cocoon (cocoonyourhome.co.uk).
6. The information contained within this article is correct to the best of our knowledge, but is subject to change. USEA cannot in any way be held legally responsible for any advice given or any work carried out as a result of this information.