

Brought to you by 21 Degrees

AVOID THE SOLAR TRAP

10 Vital Questions to Ask Before You Buy

Don't just compare prices. Ask smarter questions.

This guide gives you the key questions most homeowners *don't* ask — but absolutely should — before signing a solar contract.

**Swipe down. | Get the facts.
Then get it done properly.**



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

They cut your bills, reduce your carbon footprint, and give you energy independence — all while adding value to your property.

But with rising demand has come a flood of fast-talking sales people and quick-fix installers. And if you're not asking the right questions, it's easy to end up with a system that underdelivers or costs more in the long run.

This guide isn't about the basics. You already know solar makes sense.

These are the 10 killer questions most people don't ask — but absolutely should. They'll help you spot vague answers, inflated savings, or poor workmanship before you sign anything.

Power up. Get informed. Ask better.

Let's go.



01

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

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 they used (e.g. 27p/kWh)
- What happens if prices fall
- A version based on your actual bill



RED FLAG

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



TAKEAWAY

Fake price = fake payback.
Ask for real numbers.



02

“Did you include inverter or battery replacements in your long-term ROI calculation?”

WHY IT MATTERS

Inverters often need replacing after 10–12 years. Batteries don’t last forever either.

Leaving these out makes ROI look too good to be true.



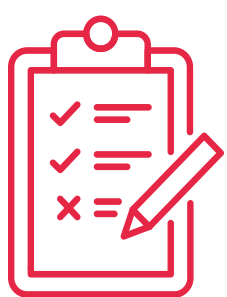
ASK FOR

- When replacements will be needed
- Typical costs for inverter or battery
- Whether these are built into their savings estimate



RED FLAG

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



TAKEAWAY

ROI only works if you include the full lifecycle.



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

WHY IT MATTERS

Most homes don't need planning — but some do.

Larger systems (especially greater than 3.68kW per phase) require grid sign-off.



ASK FOR

- Confirmation on DNO application (G98/G99)
- Planning advice if you're in a conservation area or AONB
- Whether they'll handle it all for you



RED FLAG

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



TAKEAWAY

Don't get caught out by red tape.



04 “Who will install it — and how experienced are they?”

WHY IT MATTERS

Your system is only as good as the person fitting it.

Bad installs = leaks, poor output, fire risk.



ASK FOR

- In-house installers
- How many systems they've fitted
- Photos or references from past jobs



RED FLAG

- “We use subcontractors”
- Shrugs or vague claims
- No evidence of past installs



TAKEAWAY

Good kit + bad install = bad system.



05 “Are you fully insured — and what actually happens if something goes wrong?”

WHY IT MATTERS

Solar panels go on your roof. They connect into your electrics. If something gets damaged — during or after installation — you need to know where the 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’ve never had a problem”
- No documentation
- Limited or short workmanship warranty



TAKEAWAY

If they’re not insured, you’re the one at risk.



06 “Will my system work if there’s a power cut?”

WHY IT MATTERS

Most solar shuts down in a blackout — unless it’s designed for backup.

Don’t assume yours will keep the lights on.



ASK FOR

- Backup-capable inverter
- Battery with emergency socket
- Clear “yes” or “no” answer



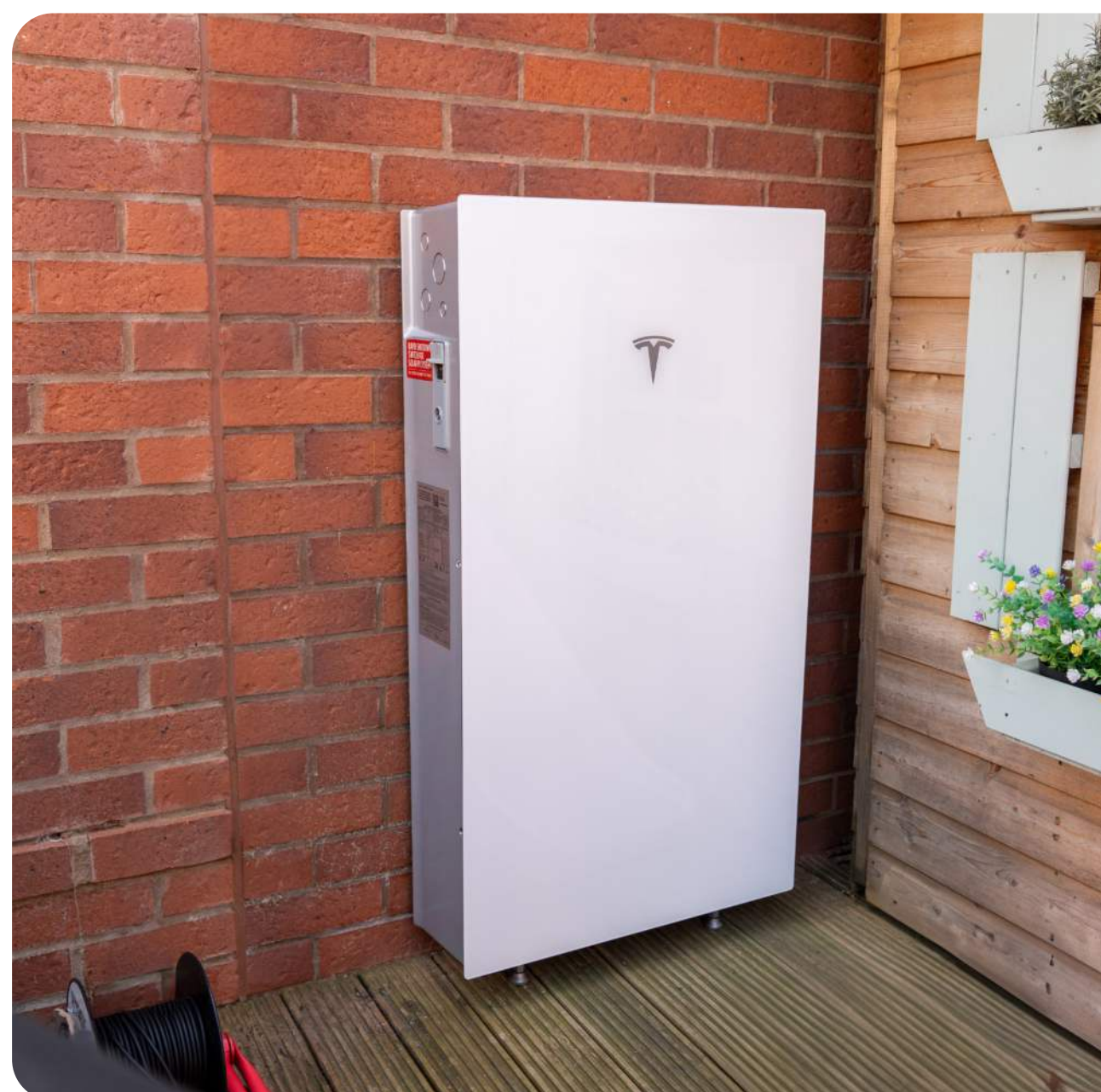
RED FLAG

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



TAKEAWAY

No battery = no power in a blackout.



07 “What energy price did you use to calculate my savings — and is it fixed or variable?”

WHY IT MATTERS

When your system generates more than you use, the surplus is exported back to the grid — and you get paid. But it’s your contract, not the installer’s.

Rates vary widely, and the right tariff can make a big difference over time.



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’re
getting paid properly.



08 “Will the system be battery-ready — even if I don’t want one now?”

WHY IT MATTERS

Retrofitting a battery later can be expensive if your system isn’t set up for it now.

Future-proofing matters.



ASK FOR

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



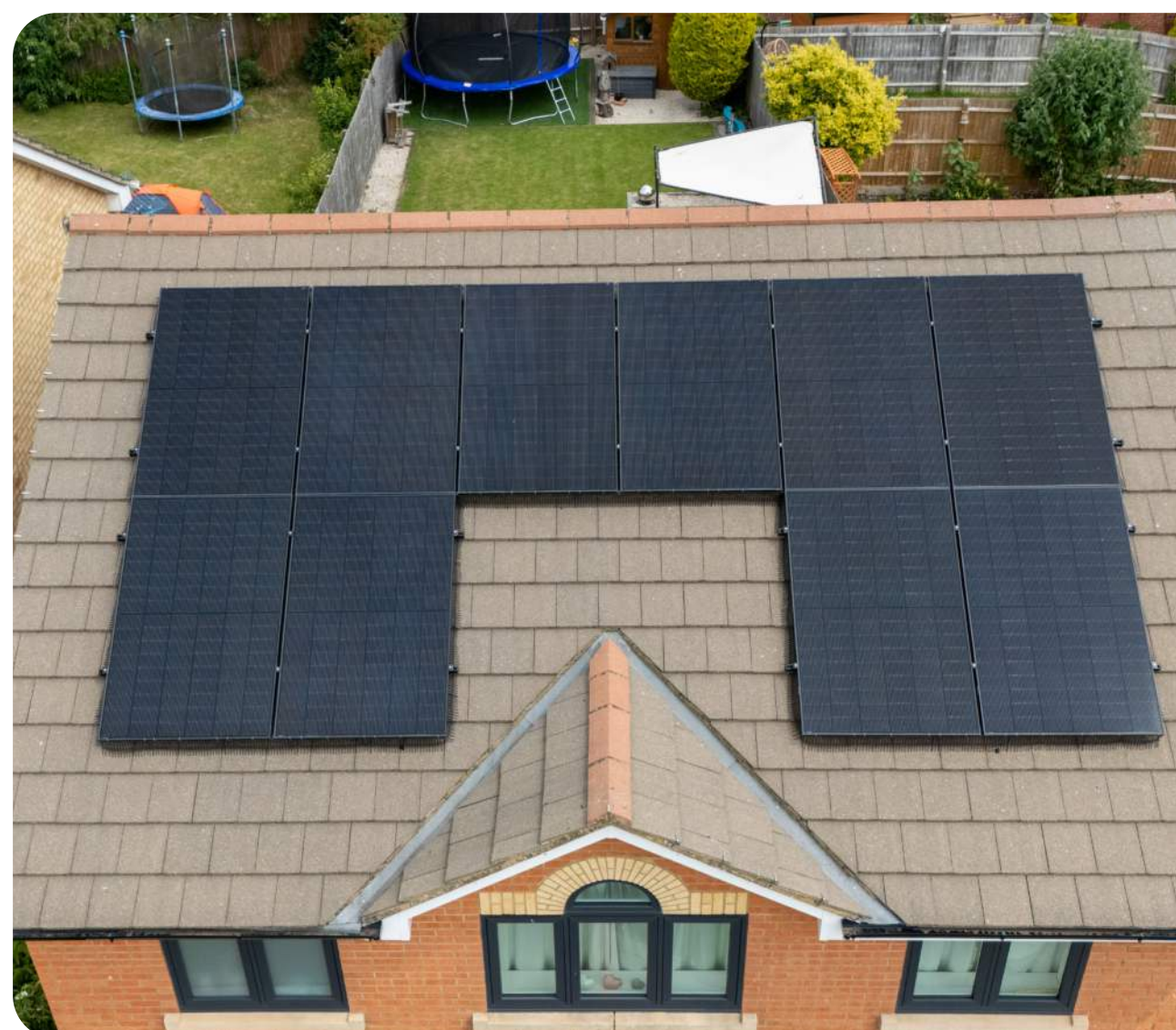
RED FLAG

- “You’ll need a full upgrade”
- No flexibility built into design
- “You won’t want one anyway”



TAKEAWAY

Plan for today, but build for tomorrow.



09 “What’s the wattage and release year of the panels — and why are they right for my roof?”

WHY IT MATTERS

The latest panel with the highest peak output will not necessarily generate the most energy over a year. Different technologies enable more power to be extracted, some of which have been around for a while. The best panel for your home is one that is optimised for your specific roof.



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’re all the same”
- No explanation of why those panels were chosen
- Panels under 400W with no strong reason



TAKEAWAY

You don’t just want high power — you want smart power.



10 “What’s the discharge rate of the battery — and will it power my whole home or just a few circuits?”

WHY IT MATTERS

Not all batteries are created equal. A 5kW battery sounds great — until you find out it can only discharge at 1.6kW, barely enough to boil a kettle and run a fridge. Capacity \neq power.



ASK FOR

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



RED FLAG

- “It’s 10kWh so it’ll do your whole house”
- No mention of max output or backup load limits
- Confused faces when you ask about loads



TAKEAWAY

It’s not just how much it stores — it’s how fast it can deliver.



Now you know what to ask.

You don't need to be a solar expert — you just need to ask the right questions. And now, you've got them.

These 10 checks will help you cut through sales talk, protect your investment, and get a solar system that truly works for your home.

- Want to double-check a quote you've already had?
- Have a few questions of your own?
- Ready to explore what solar could do for you?

The team at 21 Degrees is here to help — with straight answers, smart systems, and no-obligation advice or quotation. We're MCS certified, use top-tier products, and handle everything in-house. No hard sell. Just smart energy done properly.

Calls us today on:
0808 281 5021

Email us on:
info@21degrees.com

Visit us at:
21degrees.com

21°



Smarter Energy. Better Homes.

At 21 Degrees, we design, install, and optimise renewable energy systems with a focus on whole building performance. From solar panels and battery storage to insulation, MVHR, and heat pumps — we take a joined-up view of how your home generates, retains, and uses energy.

Our approach goes beyond ticking boxes. We tailor every system to your property's fabric, layout, and future needs — to deliver long-term savings, low carbon impact, and comfort all year round.

Whether you're just starting out or looking to go fully electric, our in-house team of experts is here to help — with no-pressure advice, proper technical insight, and beautifully integrated solutions.



Change the way you
think about energy

21°