


<p>Tel :07528 493181  Info@strettonclimatecare.org.uk  <a href="http://www.strettonclimatecare.org.uk">www.strettonclimatecare.org.uk</a>  Charity No. 1159816</p>	<p>Energy Advice Drop In  The Wellbeing Centre  Church Stretton  Thursday's 10.00 – 12.00</p>	
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INFORMATION SHEET No. 8 DATE OF ISSUE UPDATED MARCH 2023

Updated March 2024

## Sales and Cold Calling re Solar Hot Water and Photovoltaic Panel Installers

*See also Information sheets 18, 26 & 36.*

Solar energy systems can provide hot water and generate electricity and are strongly recommended as a way of reducing the carbon footprint of your home.

They are, however, a big investment, and it is important to evaluate the options carefully. A number of companies circulate advertisements for these products from time to time and invite people to request an appointment.

Before responding to such an invitation by contacting a particular company, we strongly recommend that you seek information about the range and price of products available from the internet and other local suppliers of which there are a number. We would also recommend you ask several firms to provide you with information or send their rep to see you **and make it clear** to them all you are having several quotes to compare and will not make an on-the-spot decision. Useful background information can be found from The Energy Saving Trust.

If you ask for an appointment before you have done this, you may find that you are put under pressure to decide before you have an opportunity to compare the product on offer with others. Some firms may offer you a “special price” if you sign a binding agreement immediately and may refuse to allow you to wait until the next day. If you question the legality of such sales methods, they may reply that you are not covered by the legislation on “cold calling” because you invited the firm’s representatives to visit you.

The product you are being offered may be very good, but you will be in a much stronger position to decide, and to negotiate terms, if you have researched the nature and cost of alternatives before you respond to the advertisement by requesting an appointment.

Also be aware that there are a number of different solar hot water systems, and some may not be compatible with your heating system in spite of what some reps may say. If you have a combination boiler, ask the rep how they overcome the problem of it possibly not liking preheated water. Also ask a) what type of pipe work they use (some use plastic pipe and push fit joints which does not always cope well with high temperatures, b) can they use your existing hot water tank if you have one? – In some circumstances a Willis Siphon can be installed where space is a problem with installing larger tanks, c) how large a tank do they recommend? d) will they

provide a display to tell you the temperature of the solar hot water, e) what is the maximum temperature the solar tank will rise to – can be limited, f) consider carefully if a solar powered pump in the collector is really such a good idea in winter when there is often sufficient solar gain to increase water temperatures but insufficient to run the pump!

Solar hot water systems, costing around £4000 can save you up to £50% on your annual hot water bill and some 325Kg of carbon footprint per year. 3 Kwh Photo voltaic (10 panel) systems currently cost below £7,000, can halve electricity bills and approx. save 1.2 tonnes of carbon. Surplus electricity can be used to heat water via the immersion heater if you have an existing hot water tank and any remaining surplus sold and exported into the national grid. (See information sheet No. 13, Smart Export Guarantee.)

Stand alone solar hot water systems can be a good idea where it is not possible to install photovoltaic panels. However where PV is possible, surplus electricity diverted to the immersion heater is more cost effective.

Renewable technology can be a good investment. Renewable technology may also increase the value of your property as it will become more energy efficient.

**Caution - Please Read this:**

*Our Advice Note has been carefully prepared and is, as far as we know, accurate at the date of publication. However, things change very fast in the world of technology and in government schemes. Sometimes parts of Advice Notes become outdated and may not offer best advice very soon after publication. We do our best to keep them up to date with the limited resources we have. Furthermore, our advice may not be appropriate for your particular circumstances. We advise that you get advice from a relevant expert before making changes. We may be able to offer further advice or make suggestions on who to contact if you get in touch with us. We are not technical experts but have many years of offering common sense advice and we recommend you should not rely on our Advice Note alone for making decisions. The national advice centre Energy Savings Trust is a good source of information.*

See <https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/>