

## Solar Photovoltaic (PV) – FAQs

As we enjoy this beautiful sunshine, why not consider using it to also generate an income and reduce your electricity bills and carbon emissions?

In April 2010 the Government launched the “Feed-in-tariff” (FIT), paying homeowners to generate electricity and feed excess back into the grid. 400,000 PV installations have been installed so far.

Here at LEAP, we’ve written this handy FAQ to answer any questions you may have about solar PV.



### **Why?**

Because you earn money for all the electricity you produce **and** reduce the amount of electricity you have to buy off your electricity provider.

### **Is this the right time to do it?**

We think so. The cost of an installation has settled at a fair price, the market has had sufficient time to learn how to install the systems well and reliably and the regulations are tighter than ever to ensure that the installation is to the highest quality.

### **What’s it worth?**

The payback is about 9 years, leaving the remaining 11 years of the scheme for you to earn income from **and** enjoy literally free electricity. Not only that, but payments are tax-free and index-linked.

### **What does it cost?**

Like any product or service, prices vary according to quality of solar modules and the company you use. Typical prices for a good full-sized system are currently around the £6000 mark. We always recommend getting three different quotes for an identical system and choosing the company with the best track record. Our renewables experts at LEAP can help you interpret the quotations.

### **What do I need to get it?**

All you need is an unshaded roof, aiming roughly South and you don’t live in a Conservation Area.

You need to achieve an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Band D or better, so we recommend you insulate your house as well as possible before getting your EPC. LEAP can advise you the best sources for loft insulation and how to get it as cheaply as possible. You might even get the EPC for free!

### **How does Solar PV affect the value of my house?**

As it’s only been a few years since the scheme has been running, and the people who install it are unlikely to move just after installing it, there is currently no data available on the impact to house value. LEAP believes that the value of your home will **increase**, as long as the installation has been performed to a high standard and by a reputable company. Having a track record illustrating the reduction in energy bills will be useful

## Solar Photovoltaic (PV) – FAQs

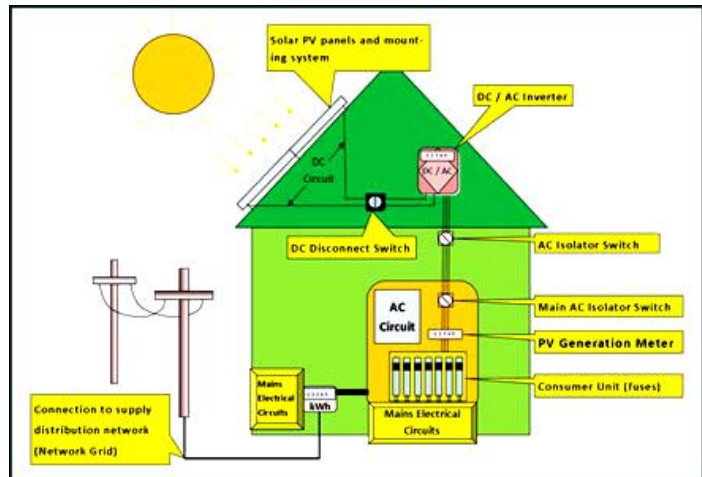
proof that the installation is worth having. Certificates and warranties will also increase the value of the installation.

### **How does it affect the integrity of the roof?**

As long as the installation is to a high standard then the roof penetrations will be fully weather-proof for the life of the system. Generally, the cheaper the installation the greater the likelihood that short-cuts have been taken with the roof penetrations. Ask prospective installers what they use to ensure weather-tightness.

### **Does solar PV need regular maintenance and how reliable is the system?**

The modules are self-cleaning on a typical pitched roof, and the inverter needs no servicing. Solar PV modules vary hugely in quality, despite having the same certification, but the most physically robust and the use of mechanical fixings in the construction of the module can be a useful indicator of quality. Although Chinese modules have improved over the years, there are still some very poorly made ones entering the UK.



### **What should I make sure installers do?**

- Provide you with an accurate energy yield and payback calculation.
- Provide a fully itemised quotation and design.
- Provide a cooling-off period and contact details for cancellation.
- Comply with all conditions of the Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) and Renewable Energy Consumer Code (RECC).
- Ensure that installation is neat, tidy and compliant with all relevant legislation.
- Issue you with your MCS installation certificate and reference, for use with your Feed-in-Tariff application.
- Confirm performance meets expectations.

### **What else do I need to know?**

You can get an interest-free loan from Home Energy Scotland – see <http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/scotland/Take-action/Find-a-grant/Home-renewables-loan-scheme>

You can get a free EPC by getting a Green Deal Assessment (which includes the EPC) **and** installing one or more measures that the Green Deal Cashback Scheme supports – see <http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/scotland/Take-action/Find-a-grant/Green-Homes-Cashback-Scheme>



Offices: 22 Church Street, Lochwinnoch, PA12 4AD  
The Old Library Centre, 9 High Barholm, Kilbarchan, PA10 2EF  
Advance Place, Main Street, Bridge-of-Weir, PA11 3PB  
Website: [www.myleaproject.org](http://www.myleaproject.org) Email: [info@myleaproject.org](mailto:info@myleaproject.org)

Tel: 01505 842 530  
Tel: 01505 706 070  
Tel: 01505 612 530  
Facebook & Twitter: myleaproject