

# UNDERSTANDING YOUR SOLAR QUOTE

A Homeowner's Guide To Understanding What You Are Actually Being Offered





# WELCOME

## A Message From Lisa

If you have received a quotation for solar panels or battery storage, you may have noticed it contains a lot of technical information.

Panel wattages, inverter sizes, battery capacities, annual generation figures, export tariffs and projected savings can quickly become overwhelming.

This guide has been designed to explain some of the most common terms you are likely to encounter when reviewing solar quotations.

My aim is not to turn you into a solar engineer.

Instead, I want to help you better understand the information in front of you so that you can make a more informed decision.

Lisa

***Lisa's Tip - "If a quotation contains terminology you do not understand, ask the installer to explain it in plain English. A good installer should be able to do exactly that."***



## UNDERSTANDING SOLAR PANELS

Solar panels are responsible for generating electricity from sunlight.

They are the most visible part of any solar installation and are often the first thing homeowners focus on when comparing quotations. However, whilst panel quality is important, the overall performance of a solar system depends on much more than the panels alone.

Most quotations will specify:

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### Number of panels

01

Whilst a larger array will usually generate more electricity, the most suitable number of panels will depend on your property's characteristics and your energy requirements. A well designed system should strike the right balance between maximising generation and delivering good value for money.

02

### Panel Wattage

The maximum power output of each panel under laboratory test conditions. Higher wattage panels can generate more electricity, but the overall system design is just as important to long term performance.

03

### Annual Generation Estimate

The predicted amount of electricity the system may generate over the course of a year. Remember that a higher wattage panel is not automatically better. Roof space, orientation and shading all influence overall performance.

**Lisa's Tip - "Do not focus solely on panel wattage. A well designed system will almost always outperform a poorly designed system using higher wattage panels."**



## UNDERSTANDING INVERTERS

The inverter is often described as the heart of a solar system. Its job is to convert the electricity generated by the solar panels into electricity that can be used within your home.

It also helps manage and monitor the overall performance of the system. For this reason, the inverter is one of the most important components within a solar installation.

Quotations may refer to:

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01

### String Inverters

Typically suitable where shading is minimal. A string inverter connects multiple solar panels together as a single group, or "string". They are often a cost effective and reliable solution for properties with simple roof layouts and consistent sunlight exposure.

02

### Hybrid Inverters

Designed to work with battery storage. Hybrid inverters can manage both solar generation and battery charging within a single unit. They are often chosen by homeowners who are installing battery storage immediately or may wish to add it in the future.

03

### Inverter Size

Usually expressed in kilowatts (kW). The inverter size should be carefully matched to the solar array and the property's energy requirements. An installer should be able to explain why a particular inverter size has been recommended and how it fits into the overall system design.

**Lisa's Tip - "If two installers recommend different inverter sizes, ask them why. The answer often reveals how much thought has gone into the system design."**



## UNDERSTANDING BATTERY STORAGE

Battery storage allows surplus electricity to be stored for later use.

This stored energy can then be used when the sun is not shining, helping to reduce reliance on the grid. Whilst battery storage can be a valuable addition to a solar system, the most suitable battery size will vary from one household to another.

Quotations will usually refer to:

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# 01

### Battery Capacity

Measured in kilowatt hours (kWh). This figure represents the total amount of energy the battery can store. Larger batteries can store more electricity, but the most suitable size will depend on your household's energy usage and future plans.

# 02

### Usable Capacity

The amount of stored energy that can actually be used. In many cases, the usable capacity is slightly lower than the total battery capacity. This helps protect the battery and can contribute to a longer operating life.

# 03

### Expandability

Whether additional battery capacity can be added in the future. Some battery systems allow extra modules to be added as your energy requirements change. This can provide greater flexibility if you later purchase an electric vehicle, add a heat pump or increase your electricity consumption.

**Lisa's Tip - "One of the most common mistakes I see is homeowners assuming the largest battery must be the best option. In reality, the right battery is the one that matches your needs."**



## UNDERSTANDING GENERATION & SAVINGS ESTIMATES

Generation and savings estimates are designed to help homeowners understand the potential performance and financial benefits of a solar installation. Whilst these projections can be useful, they should be viewed as estimates rather than guarantees.

Most solar quotations include estimates showing:

01

### Annual Generation

The estimated amount of electricity the solar system is expected to produce over the course of a year. This figure is influenced by factors such as roof orientation, shading, location and the size of the system.

02

### Self Consumption

The proportion of generated electricity that is expected to be used within the home rather than exported to the grid. Increasing self consumption can help maximise the financial benefits of a solar installation.

03

### Export

The amount of surplus electricity that is expected to be exported to the grid when it is not required within the home. Depending on your energy supplier and tariff, you may receive payments for some or all of this exported electricity.

**Lisa's Tip - "Savings figures can be useful, but they should never be the sole reason for choosing one quotation over another."**



## UNDERSTANDING DNO APPLICATIONS & EXPORT TARIFFS

Depending on the size of the system, approval may be required from your local Distribution Network Operator (DNO). The DNO is responsible for managing the electricity network in your area and ensuring it can safely accommodate new generation systems. In some cases, permission must be obtained before a solar installation can export electricity back to the grid.

Your quotation may reference:

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# 01

### G98

A G98 notification is typically used for smaller solar installations that fall within certain export limits. In most cases, the installation can proceed without prior approval, with the DNO being notified after the system has been commissioned.

# 02

### G99

A G99 application is generally required for larger systems or those capable of exporting more electricity to the grid. Approval must usually be obtained before installation can proceed, and processing times can vary depending on the DNO and the complexity of the application.

# 03

### Export Tariffs

An export tariff allows homeowners to receive payments for surplus electricity exported to the grid. The rates available and the way payments are calculated can vary between energy suppliers and tariff providers.

**Lisa's Tip - "If a quotation mentions G99 approval, ask whether any DNO fees have been included and whether export limitations could apply."**



## Need An Independent Opinion?

Understanding a quotation is one thing. Knowing whether it represents good value is something else entirely. Many homeowners contact the Energy Advice Team because they would like an independent opinion before making a final decision. We can help understand:

- Differences between quotations
- Equipment recommendations
- Potential strengths and weaknesses
- Questions worth asking before you proceed

*“Overwhelmed by conflicting advice? Send me your quotations and I will happily explain the differences in plain English.”*

*“No jargon. No pressure. No obligation.”*



Independent. Honest. On Your Side.



0800 001 6402

[info@energyadviceteam.co.uk](mailto:info@energyadviceteam.co.uk)

[www.energyadviceteam.co.uk](http://www.energyadviceteam.co.uk)

**Lisa's Tip - "You do not need to understand every technical detail. You simply need enough information to make a confident decision."**