

# Solar panels

How they can  
save you money



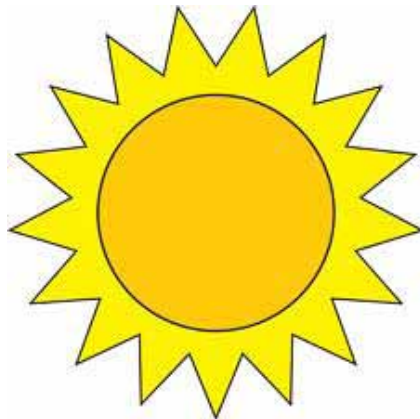
Great Places is installing photovoltaic (PV) solar panels on some homes. This booklet tells you what they are all about and how they can save you energy and money

# Everything you need to know about solar panels

## What they are, what they do and how they work

### What exactly are PVs?

Photovoltaic (PV) solar panels convert daylight into electricity. Usually mounted on the roof, they work best when they face south. They have a thin layer of semi-conducting material that generates an electrical charge when exposed to daylight.



We checked to see if your roof space and size was suitable. We also checked that nothing would cause shading to the panels once on the roof as this can affect the way they work.

### Do the PVs need sunshine?

No, they still work on cloudy and even rainy days. Clear, cold days are best. On very warm days the panels don't work quite as well. They are very popular in Germany where the weather is like Britain's.

generates more electricity than you use, the surplus is sent to the national grid. At night you use your mains electricity as normal.

### How big are the panels?

The size depends on how big the unshaded area on your roof is. The more panels we install the more electricity they will produce.

### How do they work?

Electricity generated by PV panels during daylight hours is combined with electricity from your supplier coming in from the mains to power the appliances in your home. If your panel

### Why have they been installed in my home?

We would like all of our residents to benefit from the electricity produced by solar panels. Regrettably, not all our homes are suitable for PVs. Research was done at development stage to see if your home faced the right direction to generate enough electricity to make the installation worthwhile.

### Do I have to let my electricity supplier know?

No, but we do suggest that if you pay by Direct Debit or pay monthly or quarterly, ensure that your bills are an accurate reading and not estimated. This way you are paying for the electricity you

**Continued on  
Pages 6 & 7**



Going green: Lisa Mcauley, Great Places' tenant liaison officer, with Julie Oakley and a member of the team fitting the solar panels

# Mum Julie helps us to do our bit for environment

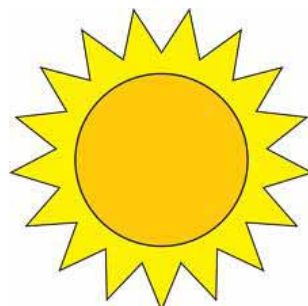
Mum-of-three Julie Oakley, who lives at Trail Street, Salford, is keen to be able to do her bit towards the environment.

Julie, 50, who cares for children with Asperger's syndrome, said: "I hope to be able to make some savings on my electricity bills but the main thing is that the panels are very environmentally-friendly.

"I am very much into green issues so saving energy like this is great. This is a good thing that Great Places are

doing and the men who installed the panels were friendly, efficient and very clean and tidy. They did a brilliant job."

A variety of house types and locations, including many in Salford



and Blackpool, are being included in Great Places' £1m pilot. Panels could save householders £150 to £200 on fuel each year.

Great Places will sell any surplus power that residents don't use to the grid, ploughing proceeds back into services.

Stephen Porter, chief executive of Great Places Housing Group, said: "Our aim is to make our properties as 'green' as possible and as affordable to run as possible."

Having electricity-generating solar panels installed is only the give you some great tips that will save you money every day..



# Your simple guide to



## In the kitchen

Boil only the water you need in the kettle.

Look for A or B energy-rating goods when you're replacing appliances.

Make sure your dishwasher is fully loaded before switching it on.

Use your pan lids when you cook - it's quicker and much cheaper.

Avoid putting the fridge next to something warm, otherwise it will use more power to cool.

Defrost your freezer regularly to keep it running.

Use a microwave instead of a conventional oven.

Use a toaster instead of a grill.



## Doing the washing

Make sure your washing machine is fully loaded before switching it on.

Wash most things at 30 degrees.

If you've worn an item of clothing only once, use the economy programme.

Use rubber dryer balls in your tumble dryer to cut drying times by 25 per cent.

Hang clothes on a washing line rather than using a dryer.



first step in making sure your home is energy-efficient. Here we whether you're boiling the kettle or doing the weekly wash

# saving energy at home



great  
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## Entertainment and gadgets

Don't leave appliances on stand-by when not in use, particularly the television.

Use power-down plugs on televisions, computers, hi-fis etc.

Turn off computer wi-fi routers when not in use.

Always unplug chargers when not in use.



## Around the home

Draw your curtains at dusk to avoid losing the solar heat gained during the day.

Seal gaps in draughty floors, windows and doors.

Turn the heating off first before opening the windows.

Use energy-saving lightbulbs and switch off the lights when they're not needed.

Set your immersion heater thermostat to no more than 60 deg centigrade.

## Water and heating

Turn down your room thermostat by one degree centigrade and take time to programme your heating correctly.

Install reflective or tin foil panels behind your radiators to reflect heat back into the room.

Don't cover radiators with curtains or furniture.

Have a shower instead of a bath.



# So, how can fitting PV

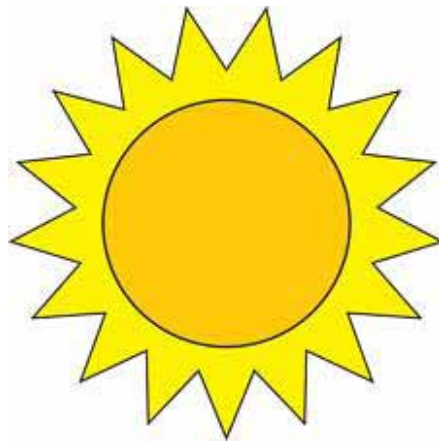
Well, for a start, you'll get some free electricity in daylight hours!

## Continued from Pages 2 & 3

are actually using and not what your energy supplier is estimating you are. If you are unsure how to do this or would like to undertake a tariff check to make sure you are on the cheapest tariff, please contact our financial inclusion team on 0161 752 7345 who would be happy to help.

## What do I get from this?

You will get some free electricity in daylight hours, saving you money and helping the environment. The panels make no noise, they don't move and they



will need hardly any maintenance from Great Places.

## What happens if there is a power cut?

Your panels are connected to the national grid. If there is a power cut they will go off automatically. If you turn your electricity off manually, or if your pre-payment meter runs out of credit, the panels will switch off too.

## What if I produce more energy than I need?

Whenever your panels produce extra electricity, it will flow back into the grid so no electricity is wasted.

## Can I sell the electricity I make?

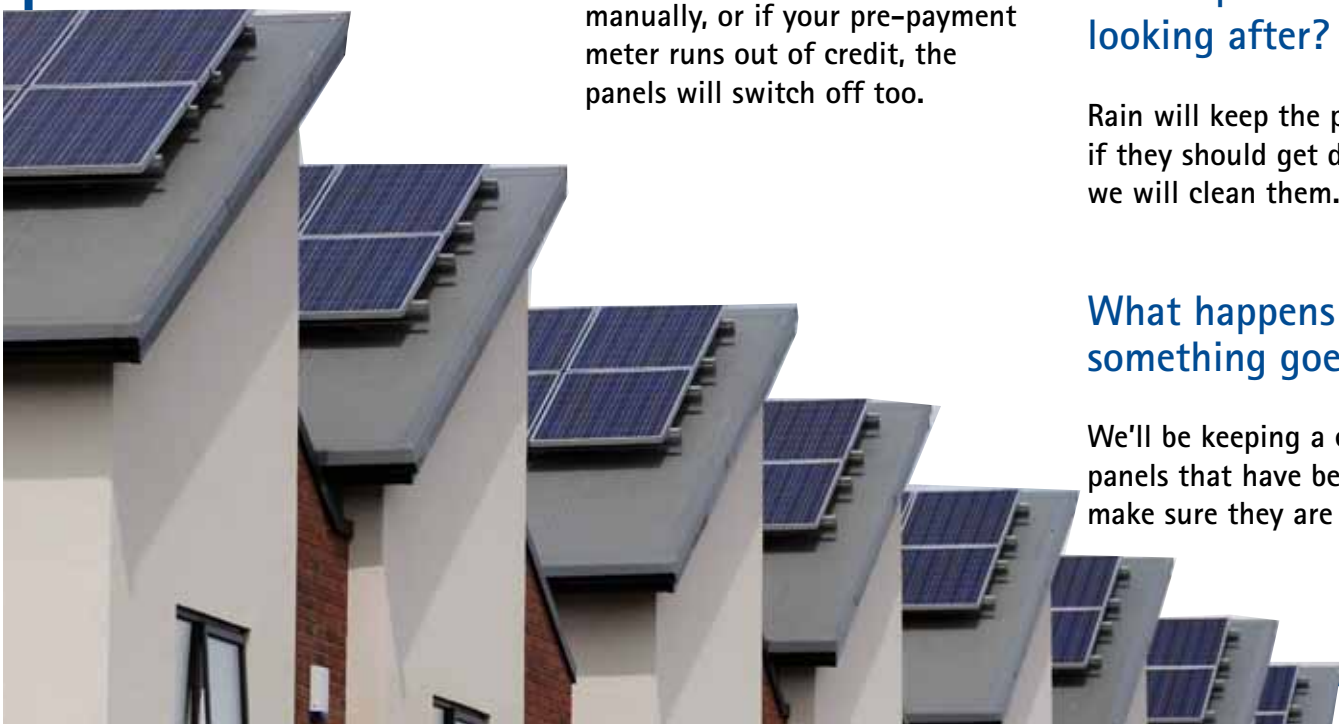
No. No. Where it is possible to sell the surplus electricity it will be sold by Great Places Any money made will be used to install more energy saving measures in Great Places' homes. We want to help our tenants to save money and do our bit for the environment.

## Do the panels need looking after?

Rain will keep the panels clean, but if they should get dirty or dusty, we will clean them.

## What happens if something goes wrong?

We'll be keeping a check on the panels that have been installed to make sure they are running



# panels benefit me?

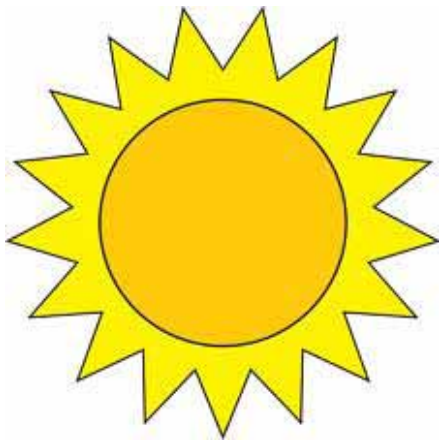


properly and let you know if anything goes wrong. The glass on the panels is toughened, so unlikely to break or get damaged.

**How long will the panels last?**

The panels last 25 years or more.





# How switching off throughout the day will save you money

Your solar panels will produce a low level of electricity during daylight hours.

It will not be enough to power every gadget in the home at the

same time so it is best to stagger electrical use where possible.

To benefit from the solar panels it is best to reduce your overall use of electricity.

The easiest way of doing so is to make sure everyone in the house "switches off".

Below is a simple checklist to help you save money.

- 8am** Make sure kettle, toaster etc used at breakfast are switched off at the plug
- 8.30am** Check that hair straighteners and hair drier are unplugged
- 10am** Put on washing machine (full load at 30deg)
- 11am** Hang washing outside to dry in the sunshine
- Noon** Charge up laptop for

use in the evening

- Noon** Charge up mobile phone
- 1pm** Switch on radio to listen to the news
- 1.30pm** Unplug phone charger and laptop
- 2pm** Switch off radio at the plug
- 2.30pm** Turn on computer

to do some internet surfing and read emails

- 3pm** Switch on kettle to make mid-afternoon cuppa
- 3.05pm** Switch off kettle at the plug
- 4.30pm** Turn off computer at mains
- 6.30pm** Make sure all appliances used at tea-time are unplugged or switched off

## QUICK guide to your annual energy use

Background TV	General daytime use	costs £37 a year
Washing machine	Used 5 times a week	£32 a year
LCD TV	Switched on 8 hours a day	£78 a year
X-Box/PS3	Switched on 8 hours a day	£102 a year
Desktop PC	Switched on 8 hours a day	£102 a year
Laptop	Switched on 8 hours a day	£18 a year
Dishwasher	Used 5 times a week	£32 a year

### Customer Access Team

Call: 0300 123 1966  
8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday.  
(It's usually quieter from  
8am to 9am and 5pm to 6pm)

Text: 07797 870 734 Email: [cat@greatplaces.org](mailto:cat@greatplaces.org) uk

