

# How to apply for the Smart Export Guarantee



The Smart Export Guarantee (SEG) is a way for some households that generate electricity to be paid for the electricity they export to the grid. If your home has solar PV panels, you might be eligible to receive SEG payments.

## Are SEG payments worth it?

The SEG is free to apply for. It's a good option for all households that have solar panels, and especially good if you don't have a battery to store your excess solar energy.

If you had eight solar panels and were home using energy all day, you could expect to be paid around £200 each year for your excess exported energy. For a more accurate estimate of what you might earn, explore our free online tool Solar Wizard at [www.solarwizard.org.uk](http://www.solarwizard.org.uk).

Although it might be tempting to maximise how much energy you export, it's best to first use as much of your solar energy as possible, by using energy during the

periods when your solar panels are generating (in the middle of the day). While you'll export less energy and receive less money via SEG payments, you'll save more money than this on your energy bills. See our advice sheet on [“Getting the best from your solar PV panels.”](#)

Similarly, if you have a battery you'll receive less via SEG payments because you'll be storing most of the solar energy for your own use, rather than exporting it. While you won't earn so much via SEG, you'll instead see more savings on your energy bills.

## Who pays the highest SEG rates?

Different suppliers offer different payment rates per kWh of electricity that you export. These are sometimes referred to as SEG export tariffs. Rates can vary from 1p to 25p per kWh, so it's worth comparing suppliers. You don't have to choose your current energy supplier to pay your SEG payments, but you might get a higher rate if you're already an existing customer.

You can use [Which?'s SEG comparison table](#) to compare the different SEG rates and find the supplier that offers the best SEG tariff for you.

## How do I know if I'm eligible for SEG payments?

To be eligible for the SEG, your solar PV panels need to have been installed by a company registered with either MCS or Flexi-Orb at the time of installation. MCS and Flexi-Orb are companies that verify the quality of the panels and the installation process.

In most cases, you'll also need a smart meter that can track how much electricity you export. If you don't have a smart meter, see our FAQs below for more details.

If your panels were not installed by an MCS or Flexi-Orb registered company, you won't be eligible for the SEG. See our FAQs below for more information.

If you're not sure whether your installer was registered, you should check with them directly.



## What you'll need before applying

Once you've chosen a supplier, you'll need to send them some paperwork. There are three separate documents that you'll likely need:

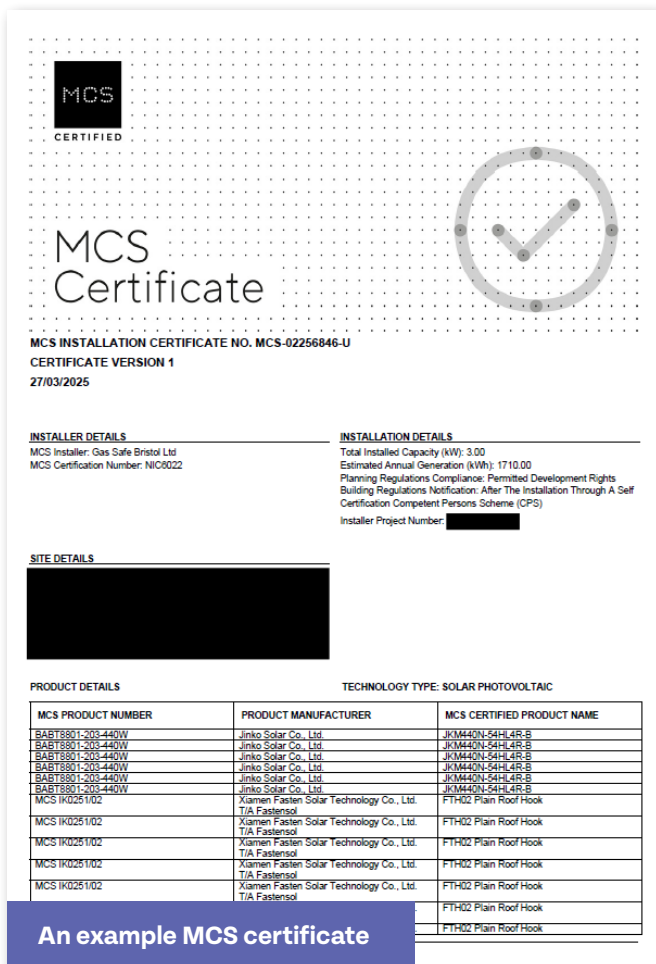
1. An MCS or Flexi-Orb certificate.
2. A proof of grid connection letter.
3. Proof that the panels belong to you or that you're authorised to receive payments.

You should make sure you have these before starting your application, as it will mean that your application process runs more quickly and smoothly.

### Step 1: Getting an MCS or Flexi-Orb certificate

The company that installed your solar PV panels should have provided you with either an MCS or Flexi-Orb certificate on completion of the installation.

See the image below for an example of an MCS certificate.



If they didn't provide you with a certificate, or if you've since lost your certificate, there are a couple of options for getting a copy:

- If the company is still registered with MCS or Flexi-Orb, contact them and explain that you need a copy of your MCS or Flexi-Orb certificate for the solar panel installation.
- If the company is no longer registered, you'll need to apply for a copy of your certificate directly from either MCS or Flexi-Orb.

Contact MCS at [www.mcscertified.com/contact-us](http://www.mcscertified.com/contact-us) to explain that you need a copy of your certificate. They'll send you an application form. There's an admin fee for this service (currently £36).

To contact Flexi-Orb, call their helpdesk on 0330 335 3382, email [info@flexi-orb.com](mailto:info@flexi-orb.com) or visit [www.flexi-orb.com/homeowners/flexi-orb-certificate-queries](http://www.flexi-orb.com/homeowners/flexi-orb-certificate-queries).

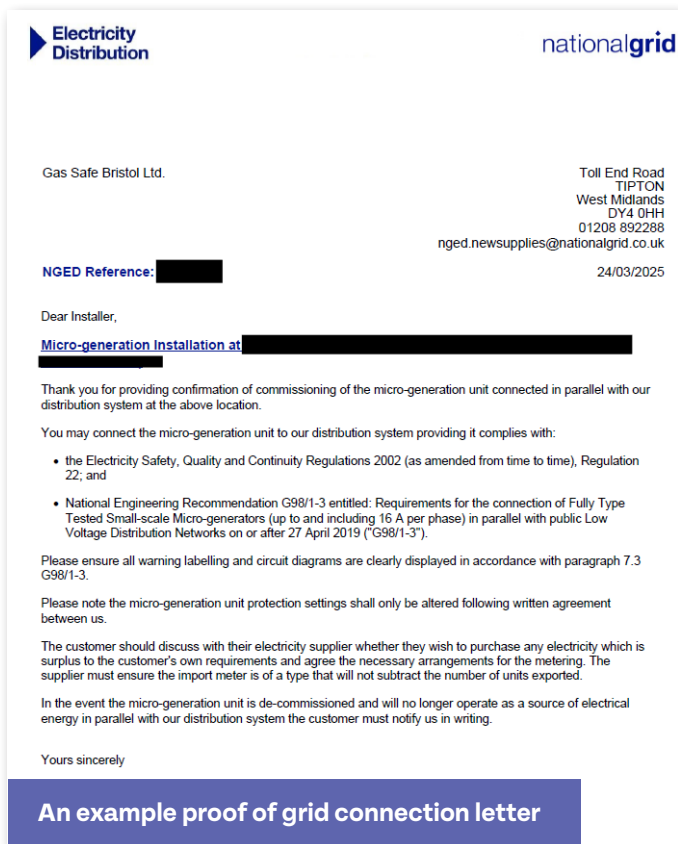
### Step 2: Getting a proof of grid connection letter

Your installer should supply you with a proof of grid connection letter, also called a "DNO G98" letter, as part of the handover process after they've installed your solar panels. If your installer is registered with MCS and they don't provide you with this letter, you can complain to MCS.

If you're not in touch with the installer, for example if you've moved into a house with solar panels already installed, you can request this letter yourself from your Distribution Network Operator (DNO). Your DNO helps connect your home to the grid and is different from your supplier. Find the DNO for your area at [www.energynetworks.org/customers/find-my-network-operator](http://www.energynetworks.org/customers/find-my-network-operator).

If your DNO is National Grid, you can make an online application at [www.connections.nationalgrid.co.uk/get-connected/solar-and-wind/micro-generation-single-g98](http://www.connections.nationalgrid.co.uk/get-connected/solar-and-wind/micro-generation-single-g98). If you need help with this, contact National Grid on 0800 0963080 for support.

See an example of the letter on the next page.



### Step 3: Getting proof that the panels belong to you or that you're authorised to receive payments

If you're a homeowner, you might need proof that your solar panels belong to you, such as your receipt for the installation. If the panels were already there when you bought the house, you might be asked for proof that the solar panels were included in the sale of the property.

If you're a tenant and your home is privately rented, council-owned or owned by a housing association, you'll need a letter from your landlord confirming that they're happy for you to receive the SEG payments.

This letter should confirm the property address, state that the tenant is authorised to receive SEG payments, and confirm the name and address of the authorising person or department. You might also need to supply your tenancy agreement.

### Applying for SEG with your chosen supplier

Send these three pieces of proof to your chosen supplier and follow any additional instructions they've given you.

The supplier will then register your export MPAN, a 'Meter Point Administration Number' that means you can get paid for what you export to the grid. Once they've done this, you'll need to provide your supplier with an initial export meter reading. For guidance on how to do this, search online for 'getting an export reading from a smart meter'.

This can take 5-12 weeks\* to set up, but once done your payments should be backdated to your application date.

### FAQs

#### I'm not eligible for SEG – what can I do?

If your solar panels were not installed by an MCS or Flexi-Orb registered company, you won't be able to receive SEG payments. Unfortunately, you can't get certification for work that's already been done.

You can still make the most of your solar PV through shifting your energy use or installing new technologies – see the next page for more info.

#### I don't have a smart meter. Can I still receive SEG payments?

This will depend on the supplier. If you don't have a smart meter, you should contact the supplier to discuss how your export meter readings will be taken. Otherwise, you could look into getting a smart meter. See our [advice sheet on smart meters](#) for more information about upgrading.

#### I'm on the Feed-in Tariff – should I switch to SEG?

If you had solar panels installed between 2010 and 31 March 2019, you may be on the Feed-in Tariff (FIT) instead, a scheme that pays you for both generated and exported electricity. SEG offers no payments for generated electricity, but SEG export tariffs usually pay more than FIT export tariffs, so it might be worth looking into switching to SEG for your exported electricity only. For more information, visit [www.moneysavingexpert.com/utilities/best-solar-rates-seg-tariffs](http://www.moneysavingexpert.com/utilities/best-solar-rates-seg-tariffs).

\*Figures from MoneySavingExpert.



## How to make the most of solar generated electricity

### To maximise usage of your generated electricity, consider the following:

Run high-usage appliances like washing machines and dishwashers during the day when the sun is shining, although it's best to stagger their use so they're not all running at once. Smart energy managers combined with smart plugs can be used to switch on appliances to maximise your consumption of solar electricity and save you more money.

Your solar inverter should have a display that shows how much energy is being generated currently, so you could use this to judge which appliances could be powered for free at that time. Alternatively, you could install a solar energy monitor which can display how much electricity you are generating and how much you are consuming.

Depending on the type, this information can be shown on a small stand alone device or sent directly to your smart phone.

The more energy efficient your appliances are, the more appliances you can run off your solar panels. Buying energy-efficient appliances which use less electricity reduces your overall household energy demand.

Solar PV systems can be combined with battery storage, allowing you to store surplus energy generated by the panels and use it when you need to, usually later in the evening. Although domestic battery storage is currently quite expensive, the technology is developing rapidly, and costs are falling. It still needs careful consideration as to whether they will be a worthwhile investment

for you. There is also a significant environmental cost to producing batteries and it is unclear if this will ever be recovered through savings.

You can also buy a solar diverter if you have a hot water cylinder. These devices send excess electricity to your immersion heater to provide free hot water. They cost around £250-500 to buy, or £600-800 with installation costs, and are simple to fit to an existing PV system.

If you have an electric vehicle, excess electricity could also be used to charge it.

If you have a heat pump, excess electricity could be used to provide hot water or space heating, though there will be little solar generation when you need the heating on.

**Check out our "Getting the best from your solar PV panels" factsheet for detailed information on how to use more of your solar generated electricity.**



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We're a charity (298740) supporting people and organisations across the UK to tackle the climate emergency and end the suffering caused by cold homes.

Our Home Energy Team offers free advice on domestic energy use to people in central southern and southwest England.

### Contact us:

PHONE 0800 082 2234

EMAIL [home.energy@cse.org.uk](mailto:home.energy@cse.org.uk)

See all our energy advice pages at [www.cse.org.uk/advice](http://www.cse.org.uk/advice)