

# Why my switch to solar was the bright thing to do



Picture: JENNY GOODALL

Watt are you waiting for? Bill Rippon and his solar panels

IT'S RIGHT to highlight the dangers of double-glazing sales techniques employed by some solar power companies (Mail), but it's also right to describe all the potential benefits of fitting solar panels to your home. It's suggested that any unused energy is sold back to the national grid through a feed-in tariff. This feed-in tariff is poorly named, as it's actually paid on all the electricity generated, whether you use it or feed it back into the grid. It's currently

paid at 43p per kilowatt hour generated. In addition, there's a further payment of 3p for each kWh fed back into the grid. Normally, a private household system would hold up to a 4kW capacity and would have only a single meter to measure the energy generated, so the amount fed back into the grid is a notional 50per cent of that generated. We had a 3.9kW capacity system installed in March for a total cost of around £13,000. In its first three months

of operation, it generated 1,602kWh. If you do the maths you'll see that the feed-in tariff alone will produce an income of more than £700 (for three months) without taking into account all the 'free' electricity we've enjoyed. In today's financial markets, where else can you get that sort of return on your investment? And feed-in tariffs are guaranteed for 25 years, index-linked to RPI, and tax-free.

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