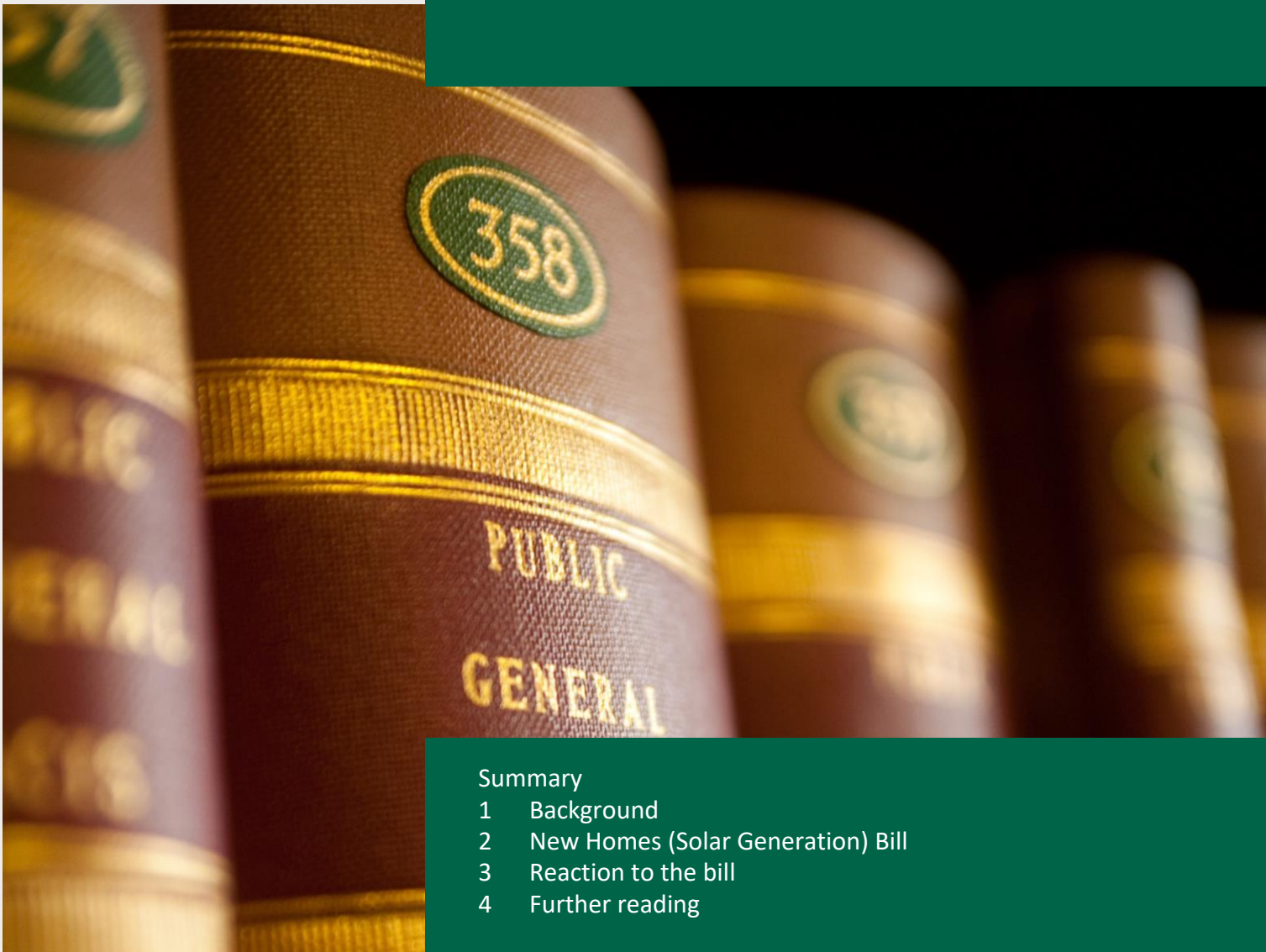


Research Briefing

15 January 2025

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New Homes (Solar Generation) Bill 2024-25



Summary

- 1 Background
- 2 New Homes (Solar Generation) Bill
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- 4 Further reading

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Summary

The [Private Members' Bill on New Homes \(Solar Generation\)](#), sponsored by Max Wilkinson (Lib Dem), will have its second reading on 17 January 2025.

Clean energy mission

The government has set a mission to make Britain a clean energy superpower. The clean energy mission is part of the UK's wider target to reach net zero emissions by 2050. Part of this mission is a target for clean energy to produce at least 95% of Great Britain's electricity by 2030. In December 2024, the government published its [Clean Power 2030 Action Plan](#), which set how it intends to meet the 2030 target. This included a target for the installation of 45-47 gigawatts (GW) of solar energy by 2030, up from a current level of 16.6 GW. The plan also noted that there is the potential for an additional 9-10 GW if rooftop solar could be deployed by 2030. The government's independent statutory body, the [Climate Change Committee \(CCC\)](#) has reported that meeting this target will require faster roll-out of renewable energy, including solar.

The government announced in July 2024 a '[rooftop revolution](#)' to encourage builders and homeowners to install solar energy on properties. As part of its efforts to stimulate growth in the solar sector, the government relaunched the [Solar Taskforce](#), that will publish a solar roadmap to accelerate deployment of solar energy and secure investment in the sector.

The government has several schemes to support the installation of solar panels. This includes the [Energy Company Obligation \(ECO\)](#), and the [Warm Homes: Local Grant](#) and the [Warm Homes: Social Funding](#). Owners of solar panels can also be paid for any surplus electricity they generate from solar panels through the [Smart Export Guarantee](#) and there is a [zero rate of VAT](#) on residential solar panels. Further assistance will be provided through the proposed [Warm Homes Plan](#), which will provide grants and low interest loans for energy efficiency measures, including solar panels.

Building regulations and the Future Homes Standard

Building regulations are devolved and this briefing primarily covers England. For further information on building regulations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, see the Library briefing on [Building regulations and safety](#) (July 2024). In England, building work is governed by building regulations set out in the [Building Act 1984](#) and the [Building Regulations 2010](#).

Building regulations do not currently mandate that solar panels must be installed on new homes. They set out some requirements that must be met when there is on-site generation of electricity.

The previous government [consulted on a Future Homes Standard](#) (FHS) in 2019 and 2020, and [consulted again on a detailed specification](#) from November 2023 to March 2024. The previous government [did not publish a response or consultation outcome](#) on the detailed specification before the 2024 General Election. The current government has said it will [publish a response in due course](#).

The [2023/24 consultation on the detailed specification for the FHS](#) sought views on whether to require solar photovoltaic (PV) panels for new homes. Solar PV generation turns the sun's energy into electricity. Option 1 would have required solar PV panels covering the equivalent of 40% of a new home's ground floor area. For flats, the dwelling floor area would be divided by the number of storeys in the block. The government suggested that solar PV panels would not be required for blocks of flats over 15 storeys, because of limited roof space and potentially disproportionate maintenance costs.

Section 4.3 of the Library briefing on [housing and net zero](#) summarises stakeholder views on the Future Homes Standard (FHS).

What would the bill do?

The bill would require the Secretary of State to make regulations requiring all new homes built from 1 October 2026 to have solar photovoltaic (PV) generation installed. These regulations would generally require that solar PV systems must cover an area equivalent to at least 40% of the new home's ground floor area. This reflects the previous government's proposals in the [2023 Future Homes and Buildings Standards consultation](#) which also suggested 40% equivalent of ground floor area as one option.

The regulations would provide exemptions, including for buildings exceeding 15 storeys (again reflecting the proposal in the government's 2023 consultation), buildings with other forms of renewable energy generation, and buildings where solar PV generation equipment is not cost effective to install.

Stakeholder views

Most of the available stakeholder commentary has focused on the government's FHS proposal on adding solar PV panels to new homes, but there has been some support specifically for this bill.

The [MCS Foundation](#), a charity that oversees the standards for home renewable energy systems in the UK, has supported the bill. It has reported on surveys carried out by YouGov that found a majority of both MPs and the public are in favour of solar panels on new homes. Some charities, including

the [Campaign to Protect Rural England \(CPRE\)](#), have urged constituents to ask their MP to support the bill at its second reading. The bill is also being referred to as the 'Sunshine Bill', as noted in a [letter from energy industry organisations supporting the bill](#) to the government (December 2024).

Housing developers have largely not yet commented publicly on the bill, but some views are available on the proposed FHS. The Home Builders Federation (HBF) [expressed concerns about option 1](#) in the FHS consultation, including that mandating solar panels would restrict housebuilding innovation, that estimates of running costs were unrealistic, and that no account had been taken of maintenance costs borne by homeowners. It considered the proposed 40% area coverage requirement to be very high. The house builder Vistry Group, [was generally supportive of option 1 for the FHS](#), which it felt would lower consumer bills compared to option 2.

The National House Building Council (NHBC), referring to solar panels in general, has said that [“providing the maintenance costs and pay-back periods are accurately predicted, this reliable technology \[solar panels\] has a role”](#).

The Guardian article [Solar panels for new homes may just be optional after pressure on Labour from housebuilders](#) (October 2024) reported that the new government was considering making solar panels on new homes optional following concerns raised by housebuilders. The article reported the HBF had lobbied for flexibility to “dispense with solar in favour of other low-carbon options, as not all house types or roof designs were suitable for solar panels”.

In response to such concerns, the government published a blog on the [Future Homes Standard and solar panels](#) (24 October 2024). It stated that the government wanted solar panels on as many new homes as possible, but that a fundamental principle of building regulations was not to constrain innovation.

1

Background to the bill

The [Private Members' Bill on New Homes \(Solar Generation\)](#), sponsored by Max Wilkinson (Lib Dem), will have its second reading in the Commons on 17 January 2025. The bill would require the installation of solar photovoltaic generation equipment on new homes and as well as allowing certain exemptions.

The bill is also being referred to as the 'Sunshine Bill', as noted in a [letter supporting the bill](#) from industry representatives to Angela Rayner, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, and Ed Miliband, the Secretary of State for Energy.¹

1 Definitions of solar energy

There are two main [types of solar energy generation](#) that can be installed on domestic properties:

- Solar photovoltaics (PV): panels that convert the sun's energy into electricity. There are different types of solar PV panels: monocrystalline, polycrystalline and thin-film solar cells, which vary in price and efficiency.
- Solar thermal: panels made up of tubes that contain a heat-conducting liquid (usually a mixture of water and glycol) that converts energy from the sun into heat.

The solar panels, either PV or thermal, are connected to either the property's electrical system or hot water system, respectively.

A solar thermal system will include pipes that transfer the liquid heated in the panels to the hot water system via a coil inside the home's hot water cylinder. A controller will also be required to manage the system.

A solar PV system will include a converter that switches the direct current generated by the panels into the alternating current required for the home's electrical system. It will also require additional components to allow the power generated to be measured and, potentially, exported to the national grid network.

¹ Liberal Democrats, [Max Wilkinson MP: "All I want for Christmas is the Government to support the Sunshine Bill"](#), 24 December 2024

1.1

Clean energy and net zero targets

Government clean power mission

Labour's 2024 general election manifesto included a commitment to [Make Britain a clean energy superpower](#) as one of the party's missions. This included general renewable energy ambitions. It stated that:

To deliver our clean power mission, Labour will work with the private sector to double onshore wind, triple solar power, and quadruple offshore wind by 2030.²

The manifesto did not make any specific statements about rooftop solar for new homes.

Following the election, the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero Ed Miliband, set out his priority to [make the UK a clean energy superpower](#), which included decarbonising the power system by 2030. The [government also appointed Chris Stark](#), the former chief executive of the Climate Change Committee (CCC, an independent statutory body) to lead a new clean energy Mission Control centre within the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ).

The government requested the [National Energy System Operator \(NESO\)](#) to provide advice on [achieving clean power by 2030](#). NESO published its analysis of possible pathways to meet this target in its report on [Clean Power 2030](#) (November 2024).

In line with NESO's advice, the government published its [Clean Power 2030 Action Plan](#) (December 2024), which set a target for clean energy sources to produce at least 95% of Great Britain's electricity generation by 2030.³

The [King's Speech 2024](#) announced two main bills to support the government's clean energy mission:

- [Great British Energy Bill](#): a bill to establish a publicly owned energy company that will invest in, own and manage low carbon energy infrastructure and be funded with £8.3 billion over the course of this Parliament. The [GB Energy founding statement](#) sets out the aims and objectives of GB Energy. Further details can be found in the Library briefing [Great British Energy Bill 2024-25](#) (October 2024).
- [National Wealth Fund](#): a fund to invest in clean energy and other growth industries. The fund will initially operate through the UK Infrastructure Bank and will be given £7.3 billion in initial funding over this Parliament.

² Labour Party, [Labour Party Manifesto 2024 – Make Britain a clean energy superpower](#), July 2024

³ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, [Clean Power 2030 Action Plan](#) (PDF), December 2024, p.25

UK net zero targets

The UK has a legally binding target to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, as set out in [The Climate Change Act 2008 \(2050 Target Amendment\) Order 2019](#). The UK also has intermediary targets to ensure it is on track to meet its 2050 target. Further details can be found in the Library briefing [The UK's plans and progress to reach net zero by 2050](#) (September 2024).

The CCC, provides yearly reports to Parliament on progress towards this target. Its [2024 Progress Report to Parliament](#) (July 2024) said that urgent action was needed to get on track for the 2030 target:

Our assessment is that only a third of the emissions reductions required to achieve the 2030 target are currently covered by credible plans. Action is needed across all sectors of the economy, with low-carbon technologies becoming the norm.⁴

In particular, the report said that:

Renewable energy capacity has been growing steadily. However, roll-out rates will need to increase, compared to those since the start of this decade, to deliver the capacity needed by the end of the decade. Annual installations of offshore wind will need to more than treble, onshore wind more than double and solar increase by a factor of five.⁵

Government 'rooftop revolution'

Following the general election, Ed Miliband announced a 'rooftop revolution', as reported in for example, the Guardian article [Labour's 'rooftop revolution' to deliver solar power to millions of UK homes](#) (13 July 2024) and the Independent article [Millions of UK homes to get solar power as Ed Miliband aims for 'rooftop revolution'](#) (15 July 2024).

The Secretary of State was reported as saying:

I want to unleash a UK solar rooftop revolution. We will encourage builders and homeowners in whatever way we can to deliver this win-win technology to millions of addresses in the UK so people can provide their own electricity, cut their bills and at the same time help fight climate change.⁶

As part of its efforts to stimulate growth in the solar sector, the government relaunched the [Solar Taskforce](#), originally set up by the previous government. The taskforce is a joint industry and government group, chaired by Ed Miliband and Chris Hewett, Chief Executive of the trade association [Solar Energy UK](#). It will run to the end of 2024 and its main objective is to produce a strategic roadmap to deliver the government's 2030 energy

⁴ Climate Change Committee, [2024 Progress Report to Parliament](#), 18 July 2024

⁵ Climate Change Committee, [2024 Progress Report to Parliament](#), 18 July 2024

⁶ The Guardian, [Labour's 'rooftop revolution' to deliver solar power to millions of UK homes](#), 13 July 2024

ambitions. The relaunched [Solar Taskforce held its first meeting](#) in October 2024.

The main objectives of the taskforce are to publish a strategic roadmap that will set out a trajectory to accelerate deployment of solar energy and secure investment in the sector.

Clean Power 2030 Action Plan

The government published its [Clean Power 2030 Action Plan](#) in December 2024, which set out its plan for clean energy sources to provide at least 95% of GB electricity generation by 2030 (see Section 1.1).

The Plan sets a target for the installation of 45-47 gigawatts (GW) of solar energy by 2030, up from a current installed level of 16.6 GW.

The target for solar energy does not specify what the proportion of rooftop solar energy should be, or how much should be on domestic properties although the government has said that it will aim to protect consumers by, among other things:

Increasing consumers' energy independence through the rollout of rooftop solar panels alongside domestic batteries, EV charging, heat pumps, and other green technologies to cut down on the cost of bills and to fatten the peak demand curve.⁷

The Plan also notes that there is scope to exceed the 47 GW target for solar energy through rooftop solar installation. The [Connections reform annex of the Clean Power 2030 Action Plan](#) (PDF, December 2024) suggests that an additional 9-10 GW of rooftop solar could be deployed by 2030.

Government support for solar energy

The government has various schemes to support the installation of solar panels on homes. Details can be found in the Library briefing on [Help with energy efficiency, heating and renewable energy in homes](#) (November 2024).

The main scheme is the [Energy Company Obligation \(ECO\)](#). This is a government energy efficiency scheme in England, Scotland and Wales designed to tackle fuel poverty and help reduce carbon emissions, focused on supporting low-income households. ECO is an obligation placed on energy suppliers to deliver energy efficiency measures. These can include solar panels.

The government has said it will introduce the [Warm Homes: Local Grant](#) in 2025. This will provide energy performance upgrades and low carbon heating (including solar panels) via local authorities for low income, low

⁷ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, [Clean Power 2030 Action Plan](#) (PDF), December 2024, p.20

energy performance households. The [Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund Wave 3](#) (updated November 2024) will also provide funding for energy efficiency measures, including for solar panels. This fund was awarded £1.29 billion over three years as part of the [Autumn Budget 2024](#) to upgrade the social housing stock that is currently below a certain energy performance standard.

The [Smart Export Guarantee \(SEG\)](#) also supports small scale renewable power (electricity) generation, including solar panels. It does not offer upfront payments but households installing renewable power technologies, such as solar panels, will be paid by their energy supplier for each unit of electricity they supply back to the grid (the excess from their domestic consumption). The Library briefing on [Help with energy efficiency, heating and renewable energy in homes](#) (November 2024) provides further details of the SEG scheme.

Warm Homes Plan

Also announced as part of the [Labour 2024 general election manifesto](#), the [Warm Homes Plan](#) will provide grants and low interest loans for energy efficiency measures, including solar panels.

Speaking at a debate in the Commons on the [Warm Homes Plan](#) (8 October 2024) the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, Miatta Fahnbulleh, said:

We are running to deliver our warm homes plan, which will upgrade homes across the country to make them warmer and cheaper to run. We will set out the full plan in the spring, but at the heart of it will be an offer of grants and low-interest loans to support families to invest in insulation, low-carbon heating and home improvements.⁸

The Minister noted that the government had committed an additional £6.6 billion for the warm homes plan over the course of this Parliament.

An initial £3.4 billion was committed in the [Budget 2024](#) for heat decarbonisation and household energy efficiency over the next three years as a first step towards the Warm Homes Plan.

VAT on solar panels

There is a [zero rate of VAT on the installation of solar panels](#) in residential accommodation in the UK. This is part of the government's [Energy-saving materials and heating equipment \(VAT Notice 708/6\)](#) (updated January 2024).

⁸ [HC Deb 8 October 2024](#), c148

The relief was introduced in April 2022 (May 2023 in Northern Ireland for certain eligible groups) and is set to last until March 2027 when it will return to the reduced rate of 5%.

Further details can be found in the Library briefing [VAT on solar panels and other energy-saving materials](#) (March 2024).

1.2 Statistics on solar panels on homes

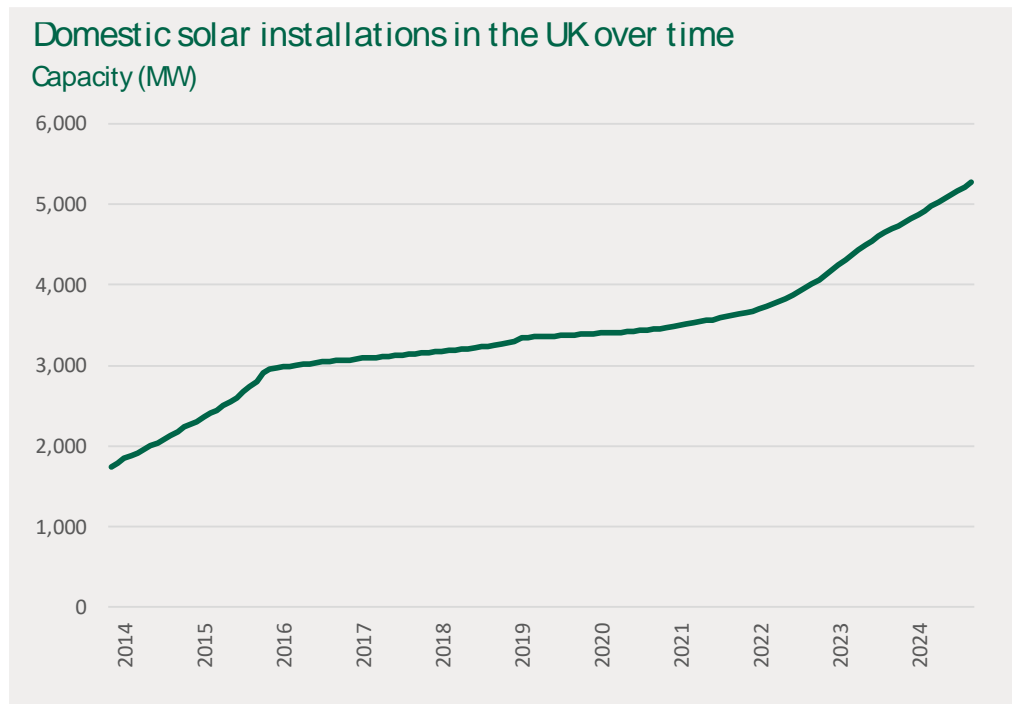
The government publishes [statistics on solar PV deployment](#) which are updated monthly and divided by region. The latest data (as of September 2024) for the devolved nations is set out in the table below.

Domestic solar installations per region		
	Installations	Capacity (MW)
England	1,186,614	4,280
Scotland	121,694	340
Wales	95,874	336
Northern Ireland	28,279	130
Total	1,438,504	5,160

Notes: Total includes 6,043 installations and 14MW of unallocated solar

Source: Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, [Solar photovoltaics deployment](#), Table 3, updated December 2024

The graph below shows total installations for the UK over the last decade. The latest data is to November 2024.



Source: Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, [Solar photovoltaics deployment](#), Table 1, updated December 2024

There is some correlation with changes in support schemes. For example, the rate of support available through the feed-in tariff scheme (which supported domestic solar PV installations with payments for each unit of power generated and exported to the grid) was reduced significantly in 2016, where the rate of installation on the graph slows. Additionally, after June 2022 the rate increases which correlates with the uplift to building regulations for solar PV on new homes (see details below).

1.3 Building regulations

Building regulations are devolved and this briefing primarily covers England. For further information on building regulations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, see the Library briefing on [Building regulations and safety](#) (July 2024).

Building regulations do not currently mandate that solar panels must be installed on new homes. They do set out some requirements that must be met when there is on-site generation of electricity including through solar PV.

In England, building work is governed by building regulations set out in the [Building Act 1984](#) and the [Building Regulations 2010](#).

Building regulations apply to the construction of new buildings and to certain building work to existing buildings, as defined by [regulation 3](#) of the [Building](#)

[Regulations 2010](#). Building regulations do not apply retrospectively, so existing buildings do not need to comply with updated regulations that came into force after they were built, unless certain building works are taking place.

Part L of [Schedule 1 to the Building Regulations 2010](#) contains the statutory requirements on conservation of fuel and power:

Reasonable provision shall be made for the conservation of fuel and power in buildings by—

(a) limiting heat gains and loses—

(i) through thermal elements and other parts of the building fabric; and

(ii) from pipes, ducts and vessels used for space heating, space cooling and hot water services;

(b) providing fixed building services which—

(i) are energy efficient [to a reasonable standard];

(ii) have effective controls; and

(iii) are commissioned by testing and adjusting as necessary to ensure they use no more fuel and power than is reasonable in the circumstances.⁹

Part L also sets requirements for on-site generation of electricity, which would include solar panels:

On-site generation of electricity

Where a system for on-site electricity generation is installed—

(a) reasonable provision must be made to ensure that—

(i) the system and its electrical output are appropriately sized for the site and available infrastructure;

(ii) the system has effective controls; and

(b) it must be commissioned by testing and adjusting as necessary to ensure that it produces the maximum electricity that is reasonable in the circumstances.¹⁰

The statutory requirements in the building regulations are supplemented by government guidance in [Approved Documents](#). These set out possible ways for builders and developers to meet the requirements, but there may be other ways to demonstrate compliance with building regulations. [Approved](#)

⁹ [Schedule 1 to the Building Regulations 2010](#), Part L

¹⁰ [Schedule 1 to the Building Regulations 2010](#), Part L

[Document L](#) provides guidance on Part L of the regulations, on conservation of fuel and power. Volume I of Part L covers dwellings (homes).¹¹

Generally, building regulations set standards that need to be met rather than mandating how they need to be achieved. For example, building regulations specify thermal efficiency standards but will not require the use of a particular type of insulation. This approach is intended to encourage innovation in housebuilding. A spokesperson for the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), [was quoted in a Guardian article on solar panels](#) (October 2024) saying that “It is [...] crucial we set standards for new homes in a way that allows for future innovation and flexibility in technology and design, which is why the building regulations do not mandate one particular option”.¹²

Future Homes Standard (FHS)

In its [Heat and Buildings Strategy](#) (October 2021), the government said that it would introduce a ‘Future Homes Standard’ (FHS) by 2025 to ensure that “new-build homes are future-proofed with low-carbon heating and high levels of energy efficiency”.¹³

The government also said that as a stepping-stone to FHS it planned to introduce an “interim uplift in standards for England, effective from June 2022, that would result in a 31% reduction in carbon emissions from new homes compared to current standards”.¹⁴ An uplift was [introduced in 2021](#) and came into effect from June 2022, which meant that carbon emissions from new build homes had to be around 30% lower than under previous standards.

In January 2021, the government said that it was confident that many developers would respond to the uplift by building new homes with low carbon heating, but that in some cases, they would install solar panels instead. The government said that “our approach remains technology-neutral and designers will retain the flexibility they need to use the materials and technologies that suit the circumstances of a site and their business”.¹⁵

The government [consulted on the FHS](#) in 2019 and 2020, and [consulted again on a detailed specification](#) from November 2023 to March 2024. The previous government [did not publish a response or consultation outcome](#) on the detailed specification before the 2024 General Election.

¹¹ Gov.uk, [Conservation of fuel and power: Approved Document L](#), 2 February 2023; these requirements for on-site generation commenced from June 2022 and were introduced by [The Building Regulations etc. \(Amendment\) \(England\) Regulations 2021](#)

¹² The Guardian, [Solar panels for new homes may just be optional after pressure on Labour from housebuilders](#), 23 October 2024

¹³ Gov.uk, [Heat and buildings strategy](#), 19 October 2021, page 162

¹⁴ Gov.uk, [Heat and buildings strategy](#), 19 October 2021, page 162

¹⁵ Gov.uk, [The Future Homes Standard: changes to Part L and Part F of the Building Regulations for new dwellings](#), 17 January 2021, para 3.15

The current government has not yet published a response, but stated on 16 December 2024 that a response will be published “in due course”:

Future standards next year will set our new homes on a path that moves away from relying on volatile fossil fuels and towards more clean, secure energy. These homes will be future proofed with low carbon heating and high levels of energy efficiency. No further energy efficiency retrofit work will be necessary to enable them to become zero-carbon over time as the electricity grid continues to decarbonise.

The Future Homes Standard consultation was published in December 2023 and closed in March 2024. It set out detailed technical proposals for what future standards could entail. All the options that were proposed would preclude the use of fossil-fuel heating in new homes. We are reviewing proposals and feedback from the consultation and will publish the Government response in due course.¹⁶

Adding solar panels to the ‘notional building’

As noted above, there have been three government consultations on the FHS. The [2023/24 consultation on the detailed specification for the FHS](#) sought views on whether to add solar panels to the ‘notional building’.

2 What is a notional building?

The government sets whole-building performance requirements for new buildings using a notional building approach. Notional buildings are [specifically used to assess compliance with Part L](#) of the Building Regulations 2010.

A [notional building is a theoretical building the same size, shape and orientation as the actual building being designed](#), but with reference values used for many characteristics of the building. The reference values will include, for example, U-values, which specify how much heat is transmitted by thermal elements in a building.

The reference values for domestic notional buildings are set out in appendix R of the [Standard Assessment Procedure, version 10](#) (SAP 10, PDF). They include reference values for photovoltaic (PV) systems, which produce electricity.

The government considers that [“these specifications describe a cost-effective way of meeting the performance requirements](#) for common building types

¹⁶ Written question [UIN HL3156](#), Buildings: Renewable Energy <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2024-12-03/HL3156>, answered 16 December 2024

but is not a prescriptive standard”. This is so developers have flexibility to decide their own approaches to meeting the performance requirements.

Recognising that the notional building approach was not supported for homes by all stakeholders, the previous government began [reviewing the use of notional buildings](#).

The government consultation proposed two options for the notional building.

Option 1 was for a notional building with:

- a high-efficiency air-source heat pump
- solar PV (photovoltaic) panels
- a wastewater heat recovery system
- increased airtightness
- a decentralised mechanical ventilation (dMEV) system
- high fabric standards to minimise heat loss from windows, walls, floors and roofs (the same as the standards set in the 2021 uplift to Part L) a significant increase in performance standards for domestic hot water storage.

For option 1, the government suggested “High efficiency solar PV panels covering equivalent of 40% of ground floor area” (see table 4.1 of the [2023/24 consultation](#)).

For flats, the dwelling floor area would be divided by the number of storeys in the block. The government suggested that solar PV panels would not be required for blocks of flats over 15 storeys, because:

[...] where buildings have limited roof space this may be needed for plant, such as communal heating system components. Installing a very small amount of solar may also have disproportionate maintenance costs compared to the generation benefit. We would welcome views on the height threshold of 15 storeys.¹⁷

Option 2 was for a notional building with:

- a high-efficiency air-source heat pump
- high fabric standards to minimise heat loss from windows, walls, floors and roofs (the same as the standards set in the 2021 uplift to Part L) a

¹⁷ Gov.uk, [The Future Homes and Buildings Standards: 2023 consultation](#), updated 4 March 2024

significant increase in performance standards for domestic hot water storage.

The government explained what it saw as the pros and cons of each option:

We are consulting on 2 options, one with and one without solar PV panels. Adding solar PV panels to the notional building decreases the target emission rate and delivers higher bill savings for households. Self-generation and consumption also offer households security from fluctuations in wholesale electricity prices and offsets some of the increased electricity demand on the grid from electrification of heat providing greater resilience.

However, while the efficiency of solar PV panels has improved substantially over the last decade, the pace of electricity grid decarbonisation means that solar PV panels make a relatively small contribution to the carbon savings of individual homes compared with the switch to low-carbon heating. Noting that electricity grid decarbonisation relies on significant increases in both large-scale and rooftop solar capacity. As with some other low-carbon technologies, the installation of solar PV panels represents a trade-off between upfront capital costs and longer-term benefit of reduced carbon emissions and bills to occupants.

The government also said that, whilst it did not consider either option would have “significant impacts on housing supply and affordability” it was keen to receive evidence about the possible impacts on “viability and deliverability of housing developments” as well as the “benefits for occupants and grid resilience”.¹⁸

The consultation’s [impact assessment](#) provides more detail on both options as well as a “do nothing” option.

The FHS consultation also proposed repealing [Regulations 25A and 25B of the Building Regulations 2010](#) (explained above), [because they would become “redundant”](#) once the FHS was introduced. Regulations 25A and 25B apply to certain non-domestic buildings and do not apply to homes.¹⁹

Chapter 4 of the Library briefing on [housing and net zero](#) provides more detail on recent efforts to decarbonise new homes and the FHS.

1.4

Other relevant issues

Warranties for new build properties

Non-legislative standards and requirements for building work can also be set out by the companies that provide warranties and insurance for new build homes.

¹⁸ Gov.uk, [The Future Homes and Buildings Standards: 2023 consultation](#), last updated 4 March 2024

¹⁹ [Part 6 of the Building Regulations 2010](#)

Most new-build properties are sold with a warranty lasting for around ten years, such as the National House-Building Council (NHBC) [Buildmark warranty](#). A warranty is, in practise, obligatory for new homes purchased with a mortgage as lenders will not provide finance without it. These insurance policies provide for the homeowner to claim against the policy for certain defects arising within various notification periods.²⁰

The NHBC produces technical standards that “define the technical requirements and performance standards for the design and construction of new homes registered with NHBC and provide guidance on how these can be achieved”. In 2023, the NHBC updated these technical standards to [improve guidance on heat pumps and solar photovoltaics](#). The updated standards apply to every new home registered with NHBC where the foundations began on or after 1 January 2024.

The [NHBC Standards for solar panels on pitched roofs](#) cover how securely they must be fixed, weathertightness, ventilation and vapour control and durability.

There are other warranty schemes that set their own technical standards, such as the Local Authority Building Council (LABC) Warranty. LABC Warranty [guidance on roof integrated PV solar panels](#) states that “All PV solar panel systems should comply with relevant standards e.g. BS EN 61215 and have a current independent product certification. Systems and installations assessed through the Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) will be acceptable”.²¹

Covenants

New build properties may be accompanied by restrictive covenants, introduced by developers, to limit roof alterations. [Restrictive covenants](#) “are binding conditions that are written into a property’s deeds or contract by a seller to determine what a homeowner can or cannot do with their house or land under particular circumstances”.²² They are used by housing developers and property management companies to uphold standards for residents, such as preventing owners from making alterations to a property, which could include the installation of solar panels.

Where a home has not been built with solar panels, the occupier would normally be able to install solar panels under [permitted development rights](#) (PDR). This allows for the installation of microgeneration solar PV or solar thermal equipment on a dwelling house, a block of flats or a building located in its curtilage subject to conditions and exclusions. However, PDRs for rooftop solar PV installation may be curtailed by a restrictive covenant. If this

²⁰ House of Commons Library, [New-build housing: construction defects - issues and solutions \(England\)](#), August 2022

²¹ LABC Warranty, [Roof integrated PV solar panels](#), 9 April 2024

²² Homeowners Alliance, [Restrictive Covenants - What They Mean \(2025\)](#), accessed 14 January 2025

is the case, any installation of solar panels under PDR by the occupier would result in breach of the restrictive covenant. This would require the occupier to restore the building to its previous condition; submit a legal application to remove or amend the restrictive covenant with associated legal costs; or purchase indemnity insurance (see [article by law firm, Tassells Solicitors](#)).

Solar panels which require planning permission are also subject to the restrictive covenant, as restrictive covenants are not 'material considerations'. The granting of planning permission by a local planning authority does not override restrictive covenants which need to be complied with alongside planning considerations. To overcome potential constraints from restrictive covenants, the housing developer would either need to incorporate solar panels into their new build scheme or word any restrictive covenant about roof alterations to allow for solar panels in the future.

2

New Homes (Solar Generation) Bill

The bill would require the installation of solar photovoltaic generation equipment on new homes.

2.1

Clauses

The [full text of the bill](#) (PDF) contains four clauses. No explanatory notes or other accompanying documents have been published.

Clause 1: Requirement to install solar photovoltaic generation equipment on new homes

Clause 1 says that the Secretary of State must introduce regulations requiring solar PV generation equipment to be installed on new homes built from 1 October 2026 onwards.

These regulations would require that solar PV systems must cover “at least 40% of the new home’s ground floor area”. This reflects the previous government’s proposals for option 1 in the [2023 Future Home Standards consultation](#) (see section 1.3 above). This proposed solar PV generation covering an area equivalent to 40% of a home’s ground floor area.

The regulations would also set minimum standards for compliance and allow for penalties for failure to comply.

Clause 2: Exemptions from requirements under section 1

Clause 2 sets out some exemptions from the requirement to install solar PV generation equipment on new homes. It says that the regulations required by section 1 (currently clause 1) must provide for partial or complete exemptions for:

- buildings which cannot physically accommodate solar photovoltaic systems covering at least 40% of the building’s ground floor area
- flats in buildings exceeding 15 storeys (this reflects the previous government’s proposals for option 1 in the [2023 Future Home Standards consultation](#) (see section 1.3 above)
- buildings on which it is not cost-effective to install solar photovoltaic generation equipment

- buildings on which other forms of renewable energy generation are installed.

The regulations required by section 1 could allow other exemptions.

Where any of the above exemptions apply, the regulations must instead require the installation of solar PV systems to “the maximum possible extent that the building can physically accommodate”.

Subsection 4 of clause 2 says that the regulations should allow for a person to apply to a local planning authority (LPA) for an exemption and that the LPA must determine such applications.

Development management (DM) teams in LPAs consider planning applications. The provisions in clause 2 would mean that a DM team would need to:

- review whether solar PV systems could be accommodated based on the building’s ground floor area or number of storeys
- analyse the viability assessment of proposals provided by the applicant where exemption was sought on the basis of it not being cost effective
- be satisfied that other forms of renewable energy generation would be provided where an exemption was sought on the basis that other forms of renewable energy generation would be installed.

If the regulations required by the bill were made, the existing process for DM teams to manage planning applications would need to be updated and guidance would be required to ensure a consistent approach across LPAs when dealing with exemptions for solar PV systems.

Clause 3: Regulations

Clause 3 stipulates that regulations under this legislation would be made by statutory instrument, following a government consultation with “such persons as the Secretary of State considers appropriate”.

The regulations could provide definitions of solar photovoltaic generation equipment, solar photovoltaic system, cost-effective, and any other term the Secretary of State considered necessary to define.

The regulations could also “make different provision for different purposes” and “make transitional or saving provision”.

Clause 4: Extent, commencement and short title

Clause 4 says that the act would extend to England and Wales, come into force on the day it was passed and be cited as the New Homes (Solar Generation) Act 2025.

3 Reaction to the bill

3.1 Stakeholder views

Most of the available stakeholder commentary has focused on the government's Future Homes Standard (FHS) proposal on adding solar PV panels to new homes, but there has been some support specifically for this bill.

Builders and developers

Section 4.3 of the Library briefing on [housing and net zero](#) summarises stakeholder views on the FHS.

The Home Builders Federation (HBF) set out its views on the FHS in its [response to the government consultation](#). Overall, the HBF supported neither option 1 nor 2. Concerns about option 1 (with solar panels) included that:

- it would “significantly restrict” the ability of house builders to innovate in design
- Some housing “would also be extremely difficult to deliver within such regulations, particularly types of housing that have traditionally been popular with homebuyers, including mid-terraced properties and three storey family homes”
- Estimates of running costs were “unrealistic”
- No account was taken of “additional maintenance costs that would be borne by homeowners in the long run in relation to photovoltaic panels”.

The HBF said that “many of the concerns regarding Option 1 relate to the requirement of 40% provision of photovoltaic (PV) to the floor area requirement for all dwellings”, which is considered to be “very high”. It expressed concerns that this would “limit innovation in the development of other ways of making new homes more energy efficient, would reduce the number of small and mid-terraced properties and impact building and ‘street scene’ design negatively.”²³

²³ Home Builders Federation, [FHS and Building Standards Consultation](#), 27 March 2023

The NHBC's December 2024 report on [Future homes: Avoiding unintended consequences](#) included discussion of energy from renewables. This mainly focused on the impacts on consumers. The report noted that "solar energy is often most plentiful at times when it is least needed in the home", but added that "the efficiency of panels has increased and their cost has decreased substantially over the last decade. So, providing the maintenance costs and pay-back periods are accurately predicted, this reliable technology has a role."²⁴

The specialist publication Inside Housing reported in June 2024, that [Jack Brayshaw, from house builder Vistry Group, was supportive of option 1](#). He considered that under option 2 "energy bills would potentially double" and that Vistry had urged the government to choose option 1 and mandate solar panels. However, he also said that the standards should be more flexible around the number of solar panels required to ensure they fitted on different roof types.

The [UK Green Building Council's response to the FHS consultation](#) said that it supported option 1, but considered both options to be weak. It stated that "As the cost of installing solar panels continues to plummet, mandating them should be seen as a no regrets choice".

The Guardian, in its article, [Solar panels for new homes may just be optional after pressure on Labour from housebuilders \(October 2024\)](#) reported that the government was considering making solar panels on new homes optional following concerns raised by housebuilders. The article reported that a representative of the Home Builders Federation had:

lobbied for "flexibility" to dispense with solar in favour of other low-carbon options, as not all house types or roof designs were suitable for solar panels.²⁵

The government published a blog on the [Future Homes Standard and solar panels](#) (24 October) in response to concerns that the rules on low-carbon standards for new homes would be weakened. It stated that the government wanted solar panels on as many new homes as possible, but that a fundamental principle of building regulations is not to constrain innovation:

We are clear we want solar panels on as many new homes as possible and the suggestion that there are plans to water down the rules on low-carbon standards is completely untrue.

[...]

A final decision on the amount of solar panels that new homes will typically be expected to include is yet to be made. Solar panels are not currently mandated and it is a fundamental principle of building regulations that we do not constrain innovation by prescribing any specific technology.

²⁴ NHBC, [Chapter 4 - Energy from renewables](#), December 2024

²⁵ The Guardian, [Solar panels for new homes may just be optional after pressure on Labour from housebuilders](#), 23 October 2024

The final standard has yet to be determined, but will be shaped to ensure that new homes can be designed in keeping with local architectural practices, whilst also balancing energy bills, emissions, energy demand and construction costs.²⁶

MPs

A group of cross-party MPs and other stakeholders wrote an open letter in October 2024 to housing Minister, Matthew Pennycook, asking for stronger environmental standards in new homes It called for:

the housing minister to mandate that all newly built homes in the UK be fitted with a “meaningful array” of solar panels, as well as the current promise of a mandate for heat pumps or low-carbon heat networks.²⁷

The Business Green article, [Future Homes Standard: MPs and campaigners urge government to deliver 'long-awaited' green building rules](#) (October 2024) quoted David Cowdrey, acting chief executive at the MCS Foundation the charity overseeing standards for home renewable systems, which coordinated the letter, as saying:

Mandating developers to put solar panels and heat pumps in all new build homes will not only save households thousands of pounds, it will also massively boost the domestic renewables workforce at no cost to the Treasury.²⁸

The MCS Foundation reported on a survey carried out by YouGov on solar panels in its article [MPs overwhelmingly back mandatory solar panels for new-builds](#). This stated that:

According to the YouGov poll, 79% of all MPs, and 83% of Labour MPs, agree that solar panels should be incorporated into all new-builds from 2025.²⁹

The MCS Foundation also reported on a YouGov survey it commissioned on public attitudes to renewable energy measures, carried out in December 2022. The results, reported in [Poll shows majority back key renewable measures on new builds](#), stated that:

80% of people across the UK would support Government regulations making solar panels the default on new-build houses, against just 9% who would oppose this.³⁰

²⁶ Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG), [Reporting on the Future Homes Standard and solar panels](#), 24 October 2024

²⁷ Current+, [MPs and charities call for bolstered Future Homes Standard](#), 17 October 2024

²⁸ Business Green, [Future Homes Standard: MPs and campaigners urge government to deliver 'long-awaited' green building rules](#), 16 October 2024

²⁹ MCS Foundation, [MPs overwhelmingly back mandatory solar panels for new-builds](#), (accessed 6 November 2024)

³⁰ MCS Foundation, [Poll shows majority back key renewable measures on new builds](#), (accessed 6 November 2024)

Energy and environmental organisations

Solar Energy UK, a trade association that represents the solar and energy storage sector, published a report on [The Value of Solar Property](#), which considered the financial benefits of rooftop solar energy installations. The report estimated that a solar energy system could add £1,800 to the values of an average home and save over £300 on energy bills. It concluded that:

Overall, the investment case for residential solar is robust, and Solar Energy UK calls on relevant sectors to help maximise the incorporation of solar systems into the UK's residential housing stock.³¹

The CPRE, the charity previously known as the 'The Campaign to Protect Rural England', published its report [Lighting the way: international policies for making the rooftop solar revolution a reality](#) (April 2024). The report was based on a [previous CPRE report](#) from May 2023 that estimated that "there is potential for up to 117 gigawatts (GW) of solar panel capacity on rooftops and other developed spaces across England."

The 'Lighting the way' report considered international case studies for policies to deploy rooftop solar. It concluded that:

Most major economies that are achieving rapid deployment of rooftop solar internationally are benefiting from regulations that require solar panels to be installed on the roofs of new buildings.³²

On 12 December 2024, the CPRE published an [article in support of the bill](#). Similar calls to support the bill were made by the Devon branch of the CPRE in an article [The Sunshine Bill – We urgently need your help!](#) (January 2025). This suggested that mandating solar panels on new builds would be a better way to achieve net zero than putting them on fields:

The government is on a mission to achieve Net Zero by 2035, and that means a huge investment is being made in solar energy sites, almost entirely situated on green fields, productive farmland and cherished landscapes. The targets could be reached by putting solar panels on 250,000 hectares of existing rooftops, mandating them on all newbuilds, and using brownfield public land such as car parks. But of course, the investors go for the cheap option – our precious green fields.³³

³¹ Solar Energy UK, [The Value of Solar Property](#) (PDF), (accessed 6 November 2024)

³² CPRE, [Lighting the way: international policies for making the rooftop solar revolution a reality](#) (PDF), April 2024

³³ CPRE Devon, [The Sunshine Bill – We urgently need your help!](#), January 2025

3.2

Recent parliamentary discussion

Debates

During a debate on [Large-scale Energy Projects and Food Security](#) on 22 October 2024, Michael Shanks, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, said that rooftop and ground mounted solar were both important:

We are not putting one technology forward as the answer to everything—this is about balance, as several hon. Members said today. Yes, ground-mounted solar plays a really important part, but so too does roof solar. We are not picking one or the other. Both are incredibly important, and there are huge opportunities for a rooftop solar revolution, which we will be seeing more about in the months ahead. But ground-mounted solar also has an important role to play. This is a question of balance.³⁴

During a debate on [New Housing: Environmental Standards](#) on 12 September 2024, Alex Norris MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government stated that the government was more focused on the goal of energy performance of homes, than the method:

The Government's judgment is that we should set targets with regard to performance—what is the energy performance of the new home? Solar panels may well be part of that, but for some buildings they will not be suitable. As a result, if the choice is primarily solar, we miss out on a whole array of innovations that can help those homes reduce their carbon footprint, and there is a risk to cost-effectiveness. As I say, we are goal-oriented, rather than method-oriented.³⁵

PQs

[Written question](#), UIN 23493

Asked by: Matt Vickers (Con)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, what steps she is taking to encourage developers establishing new buildings to have (a) solar panels, (b) batteries and (c) heat pumps fitted; and what support is available to those developers.

This PQ is due for answer on 15 January 2025.

[Solar power: housing](#), UIN 22659

Asked by: Gill Furniss (Lab)

³⁴ HC Deb 22 October 2024, [c.76WH](#)

³⁵ HC Deb 12 September 2024, [c.409WH](#)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what steps he is taking to help increase the uptake of home solar panel installations.

Answered by: Michael Shanks, Department for Energy Security & Net Zero,
13 January 2025

Future standards this year will set new homes and buildings on a path that moves away from relying on volatile fossil fuel markets and ensures they are fit for a net zero future.

As part of the Warm Homes Plan, the Government is considering the role that finance may play in supporting homeowners with the upfront costs of energy efficiency improvements, solar panels, and installing low carbon heating.

Further details about how the Government will increase the deployment of domestic solar panels will be set out in the forthcoming Solar Roadmap.

[Energy: Housing](#), UIN 10966

Asked by: Luke Charters (Lab)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, if his Department will make an assessment of the potential impact of the Future Home Standard on National Grid capacity.

Answered by Miatta Fahnbulleh, Department for Energy Security & Net Zero,
1 November 2024

The Government is committed to expanding the electricity network to support the Clean Energy Superpower mission and is working closely with Ofgem and industry to mobilise the required investment at the scale and pace required.

Price controls set by Ofgem ensure network companies are investing in infrastructure build, as well as smart management of network assets, to ensure the network has sufficient capacity. This includes accommodating increasing numbers of households adopting electric heating, solar generation and EV charging, both through future standards for new build properties and retrofit of the existing housing stock.

[Housing: Solar Power](#), UIN 10428

Asked by: Dame Caroline Dinenage (Con)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if she will amend the Future Homes and Buildings Standards to ensure that all newbuild homes include solar photovoltaic panels.

Answered by Alex Norris, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government,
30 October 2024

Future standards next year will set our new homes and buildings on a path that moves away from relying on volatile fossil fuels and ensures they are fit for a net zero future. This will support our ambition that the 1.5 million homes we will build over the course of this parliament will be high quality, well

designed and sustainable. That is why the Deputy Prime Minister and I are clear that rooftop solar should play an important role, where appropriate, as part of the future standards for homes and buildings. Responses to the recent Future Homes and Buildings standards consultation are being reviewed, and government will publish a response in due course.

[Renewable Energy: Housing](#), UIN 9333

Asked by: Alex Easton (Ind)

To ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, what additional steps he plans to take to support households to move toward using (a) solar power and (b) renewable energy.

Answered by Michael Shanks, Department: Department for Energy Security and Net Zero

The Government will work with the private sector to radically increase the deployment of onshore wind, solar and offshore wind by 2030. Changes to permitted development rights rules will mean more homeowners and businesses will be able to install solar panels on their roofs without going through the planning system. The Government is working to support household renewables through community benefits, energy efficiency schemes and the Smart Export Guarantee.

[Housing: Solar Power](#), UIN 8745

Asked by: Ben Coleman (Lab)

To ask the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, if she will amend the Future Homes and Buildings Standards to ensure that all newbuild homes include solar photovoltaic panels.

Answered by Rushanara Ali, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 21 October 2024

Future standards next year will set our new homes and buildings on a path that moves away from relying on volatile fossil fuels and ensures they are fit for a net zero future. This will support our ambition that the 1.5 million homes we will build over the course of this parliament will be high quality, well designed and sustainable. We are clear that rooftop solar should play an important role, where appropriate, as part of the future standards for homes and buildings.

Committees

The following Parliamentary committees have considered the topic of solar energy in the UK:

- The Public Accounts Committee published its final report of its inquiry on [Decarbonising the power sector](#) in June 2023. The report does not mention rooftop solar specifically but does raise concerns that plans to expand the deployment of low-carbon energy were not credible. The

government's ambition at the time of the report was for 70 gigawatts of solar by 2035.

- The House of Lords Land Use in England Committee published its report on [Making the most out of England's land](#) (PDF) in December 2022. In a section on 'Delivering solar energy', the committee noted that there had been strong support for solar panels to be integrated into building, including new domestic developments.
- The Environmental Audit Committee published its report on [Accelerating the transition from fossil fuels and securing energy supplies](#) in January 2023. The report concluded that:

If the classes of land available for ground-mounted solar are further restricted, it will make it all the more imperative to mandate the widespread deployment of rooftop solar in new developments where there are appropriate south facing aspects. We recommend that the Future Homes Standard requires developers to fit solar PV as standard where it is possible.³⁶

- The Environmental Audit Committee examined onshore solar power in its inquiry [Technological innovations and climate change: onshore solar energy](#), which concluded in January 2023. In a [letter to the Secretary of State](#) in May 2023, the committee highlighted issues relating to grid connection delays, access to finance and economic incentives that they considered were holding deployment of solar energy in the UK.
- The Environmental Audit Committee carried out an inquiry on [Enabling sustainable electrification of the UK economy](#). The final report on this inquiry recommended that:

The Government should further review the application of planning regulations to electricity infrastructure so as to bring the relevant provisions of the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects regime and the National Planning Policy Framework into full alignment. [...] It should further support measures prioritising rooftop solar installations, and mandate the delivery of appropriate solar generation capacity in all suitable new-build properties, both domestic and commercial, subject to suitable connections being available.³⁷

- In October 2021, the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee reported on its inquiry into [Local government and the path to net zero](#). This looked at carbon emissions from new homes and called for more certainty on details of the Future Homes Standard.

³⁶ Environmental Audit Committee, [Accelerating the transition from fossil fuels and securing energy supplies](#), 5 January 2023 para.119

³⁷ Environmental Audit Committee, [Enabling sustainable electrification of the economy](#), 24 May 2024 para.132

4

Further reading

- The Library briefing [The UK's plans and progress to reach net zero by 2050](#) (September 2024) provides a general summary of UK plans to meet its climate change commitments.
- The Library briefing [Housing and net zero](#) (July 2024) provides a recent summary of government plans to decarbonise homes and of the Future Homes Standard consultation.
- The Library briefing [Environmental standards for new housing](#) (September 2024) provides a summary of environmental building regulations.
- The Library briefing [Building regulations and safety](#) (July 2024) explains how building regulations work.
- The Library briefing [Planning for solar farms](#) (May 2024) provides useful background material. Although the focus of this briefing is on larger solar installations, there is also information on rooftop solar panels.

5 Annex: How bills go through Parliament

This bill has been introduced as a private member's bill in the House of Commons (meaning it has been introduced by an MP who is not a government minister). It can be amended but the entire text has to be agreed by both Houses before it can receive Royal Assent and become law.

In both Houses, the bill will go through the same stages although there are slight differences in the practices of the two Houses. A general overview of the legislative process is set out below.

Commons stages

A private member's bill that is introduced in the House of Commons will go through the following stages.

- First reading sees the formal introduction of a bill, when a clerk reads out the name of the bill in the Commons Chamber. First reading of this bill took place on 16 October 2024. There was no debate at this stage. Bills cannot be published before their introduction.
- Second reading takes place in the Commons Chamber and is the first time MPs debate a bill. They discuss the purpose of the bill but do not make any amendments to the bill itself at this stage. Debates for private members' bills can usually only take place on a sitting Friday between 9.30am and 2.30pm. This bill's second reading debate is scheduled for 17 January 2025. At the end of the debate, MPs decide whether it should pass to the next stage. Sometimes a 'reasoned amendment', which sets out the reasons to reject a bill, is tabled. If this is agreed to, or if the bill is simply voted down, the bill cannot make any further progress.
- Committee stage is usually conducted by a small number of MPs in a public bill committee. The committee debates and decides whether amendments should be made to the bill and whether each clause and schedule should be included. A private member's bill involving new public spending requires a 'money resolution' (which can only be moved by a government minister) before the committee can consider the substance of the bill. A committee considering a private member's bill is not empowered to call for oral or written evidence unless it is specifically authorised to do so by order of the House.
- Report stage takes place in the Commons Chamber and involves MPs considering the bill as agreed at committee stage. MPs can also propose further amendments which can be voted on.

- Time limits are not usually placed on speeches during private members' bill debates in the Commons Chamber. If the debate is still ongoing at the 'moment of interruption' at 2.30pm, it will be adjourned and ordered to resume on a future sitting Friday. In practice this means the bill is unlikely to be debated again. Supporters of the bill can avoid this by moving a 'closure motion', which brings the debate to an immediate stop and requires the House to make a decision on the issue it is considering. A closure motion requires both a simple majority and at least 100 MPs voting in favour of it to pass.
- Amendments at committee and report stage can leave out words, substitute words and add words, including whole clauses and schedules. They can be proposed by backbench and frontbench MPs. The Speaker or the chair of the committee selects and groups amendments to debate.
- Third reading, usually on the same day as report stage, is the final chance for MPs to debate the contents of a bill before it goes to the House of Lords. It's usually a short debate and changes cannot be made at this stage in the Commons. At the end of the debate, the House decides whether to approve the bill and therefore pass it onto the House of Lords.

Lords stages

Members of the House of Lords debate the bill, going through the same stages as in the Commons. Key differences between the two Houses are that in the Lords, committee stage usually takes place on the floor of the House and a bill can be amended at third reading.

Most bills are considered by a committee of the whole House in the House of Lords. Some are referred to the Lords Grand Committee – which all members can attend. However, divisions (votes) are not permitted in the Grand Committee and any amendments made have to be agreed to without a division.

The Lords can also make amendments to a bill. Major points of difference should have been resolved before third reading but amendments to 'tidy-up' a bill are permitted.

No party has a majority in the House of Lords and government defeats are not uncommon. For bills that have started in the House of Commons, the Lords is essentially asking MPs to think again about the subject of the amendment.

'Ping pong'

If the Lords amend a bill that was sent from the Commons, the amendments are returned to the Commons and MPs debate the amendments proposed by the Lords. This is potentially the start of 'ping-pong', a process whereby

amendments and messages about the amendments are sent backwards and forwards between the two Houses until agreement is reached.

Once agreement has been reached, the Bill receives Royal Assent, becoming law when both Houses have been notified that Royal Assent has been granted.

Amendments

MPs can submit amendments, via the Public Bill Office (PBO), at three different stages of a bill: committee stage, report stage, and when a bill is returned from the Lords. Once the PBO accepts the amendment, it has been 'tabled'. If an MP wants to amend a bill during committee stage but is not a member of the committee, they will need a committee member to 'move' it for debate on their behalf.

In order to be debated, the amendment must be selected by the chair. Similar amendments may be grouped for debate to avoid repetition. For committee stage, selection and grouping is carried out by MPs from the panel of chairs chosen to chair the committee. If there is a Committee of the Whole House, the chair is the Chairman of Ways and Means (the principal Deputy Speaker). For report stage, it is the Speaker.

Amendments might not be selected for debate if they are, for example, outside the scope of a bill, vague, or tabled to the wrong part of a bill. The PBO can advise on whether an amendment is likely to be selected.

Further information on bill procedure

The [MPs' Guide to Procedure](#) has a section on [bills](#).

MPs who have questions about the procedure for bills or want advice on how to amend them should contact the Public Bill Office.

The Library can provide information on the background and potential impact of a bill and of amendments but cannot help MPs with drafting amendments.

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