



Case Study – Solar Water Heating Rockingham Forest Housing Association

SML partner company, SolarTech Limited, were approached by Rushden-based Rockingham Forest Housing Association (RFHA) to design, supply and install solar water heating systems in a number of their existing properties as part of a wider ongoing commitment to improving energy efficiency in their housing stock.

Project Overview

RFHA's main objective in opting to install solar water heating solutions was to enable their tenants to reduce their rising heating bills. At the same time, solar water heating offered a flexible renewable energy solution which could be easily installed with minimal disruption to the existing infrastructure of the houses. The systems are easy for tenants to use whilst also providing a low maintenance solution for the Association.

“Our residents find the system very easy to use in a ‘set and forget’ kind of way. One of our first residents to have the solar water heating installed had her gas bill cut to a third of its previous levels, another did not have to top up his meter for 3 months after the installation.”

Kate Marshall, Property Manager,
Rockingham Forest HA

The systems installed by SolarTech incorporate 4m² of Filsol flat plate solar collectors mounted onto the existing



pitched roofs of the designated houses. The collectors were connected to 210 litre dual coil solar cylinders which were installed in the airing cupboards, replacing the old existing cylinders. With the houses occupied throughout the installation period, SolarTech worked closely with RFHA to minimise disruption to residents.

Project Costs and Benefits

The installed cost of the solar water heating systems was between £3,500 and £3,800 per house, with each system expected to reduce household energy consumption by 1,500 to 2,000kWh per year. Systems will provide as much as 70% of the total annual hot water requirement per household.

Each of the first twelve systems installed since summer 2007 benefitted from a 30% LCBP Phase 2 grant on the total purchase and installation costs. However, LCBP Phase 2 grant funding levels were increased to 50% in April 2008. As a result, funds allocated for the next series of solar water heating installations will benefit even more RFHA residents.

“The Association fits a minimum of six solar water heating systems per year, reinvesting any savings derived from grant funding to pay for further installations. For example this year the 50% grant will be used to fit an additional 3 systems.”

Kate Marshall, Property Manager,
Rockingham Forest HA

Installation Overview

Client: Rockingham Forest Housing Association

Project: Pitched roof installation on 12 existing homes with individual hot water storage

System: 2 x 2m² Filsol FS20 on-roof panels with 210 litres of hot water storage per house

Cost: Approx £3,500-£3,800 per house (excl VAT) before grants