Invest in your local schools

An opportunity to help a school near you gain solar power and make your money work to benefit your community and future generations.

By investing via the Solar for Schools Community Benefit Society (CBS), you will be enabling a school near you to go solar, cut its carbon footprint, save money and educate the next generation on energy and decarbonisation.

The Solar for School CBS Ltd is a society registered with the Financial Conduct Authority. Its members are the schools that receive CBS-funded solar panels.

Minimum investment:	£500
Annual Interest rate:	5.5%, paid gross every year.
Length of investment:	5 years

In association with Solar Options for Schools Ltd who provides management services to the CBS

solar for schools

We support the UN Sustainable Development Goals

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School Business Manager, Bridgitte Causer, with some pupils from Hollybush Primary in Leeds.

Introduction

Why invest in an installation of solar PV on schools?

Schools are ideal locations to install solar panels. They consume electricity mainly during the day and have lots of roof space. They are located near other electricity users, so any spare electricity can be easily redeployed without the need to upgrade the grid. Most importantly though, solar panels provide a tangible tool with which to inspire and educate students and their communities. By delivering renewable energy education, we are helping future citizens take steps to live more sustainably. This in turn helps to decarbonise faster to protect our planet for our children, and their children.

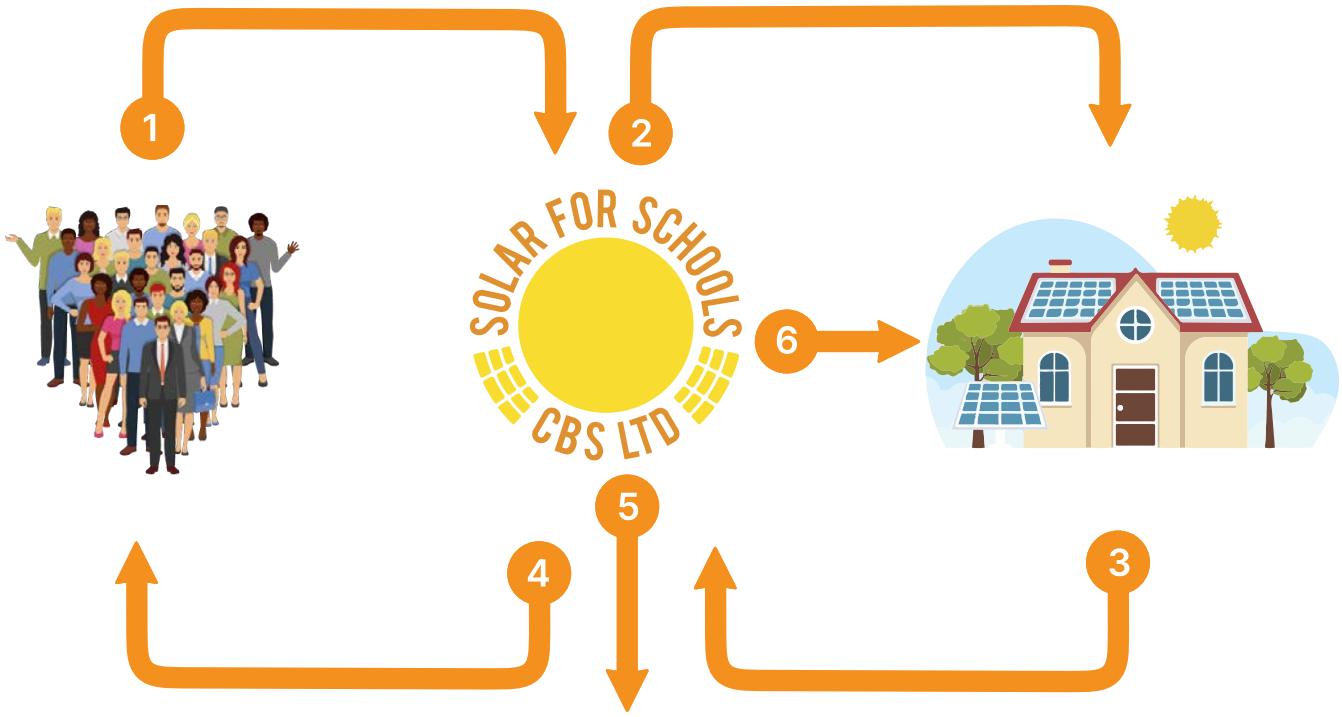
Why is funding needed?

Installing solar on every UK school will require nearly £2bn of investment. The government can only afford to fund a small fraction of this, so the Solar for Schools Community Benefit Society (CBS) was set up in 2016 to raise the funds from the public to help more schools go solar; saving carbon and reducing their electricity bills.

Why invest via the Solar for Schools CBS?

The CBS is a society whose beneficiaries and members are the schools. It is a profit for purpose organisation. 100% of any surpluses are returned to the schools. Each school that receives solar becomes a member of the society and gets a say in how it's governed. The CBS then contracts out the day-to-day management of the solar panels to Solar Options for Schools Ltd (SOFS).

How does it work?



1. The Solar for Schools Community Benefit Society (CBS) raises money from ethical investors and the community around each school by issuing investment bonds and shares.

2. Solar Options for Schools (SOFS) works with the school to develop and install the best sized system to meet the schools' ambitions. SOFS only gets paid by the CBS once the installation is complete.

3. The school pays the CBS for only the solar electricity it uses, at a previously agreed rate that is usually lower than current retail electricity prices and indexed to inflation; saving the school money on its electricity bills.

4. The income to the CBS from the sale of electricity to the school and the grid is used to cover interest payments, re-pay funders over time and cover operating costs.

5. The operating costs include all spares and repairs as well as SOFS management and education delivery costs, so there are no on-going risks or costs for the school.

6. Any surpluses or profits, go back to the schools once funders have been repaid.

50kW system installed at Spinfield School will generate more than the schools entire annual electricity needs.

Case Study

Spinfield is a small primary school, of 210 students from 5-11 years old in Marlow, Buckinghamshire. Their solar panels will generate more electricity every year than the school uses and will cut their CO2 emissions by up to 8 tonnes per year. The panels have already saved the school over £6,000 since they were installed in July, 2022.

The £50,000 funding for the panels came from CBS bond holders; large donations raised from institutional donors and through the students' fundraising efforts within the school community which raised over £3,000. The Solar for Spinfield project was led by their Chair of Governors and a parent, Sian Herschel, who worked tirelessly alongside the teachers, students, parents and Solar for Schools to raise funds and obtain the necessary permissions from their local Council. Sian is now a Director of the CBS in order to help other small schools "go solar."

"Thanks to the Solar for Schools model, the installation is affordable for the school, with potential savings as electricity prices rise, and the pupils benefit from the educational aspect offered."

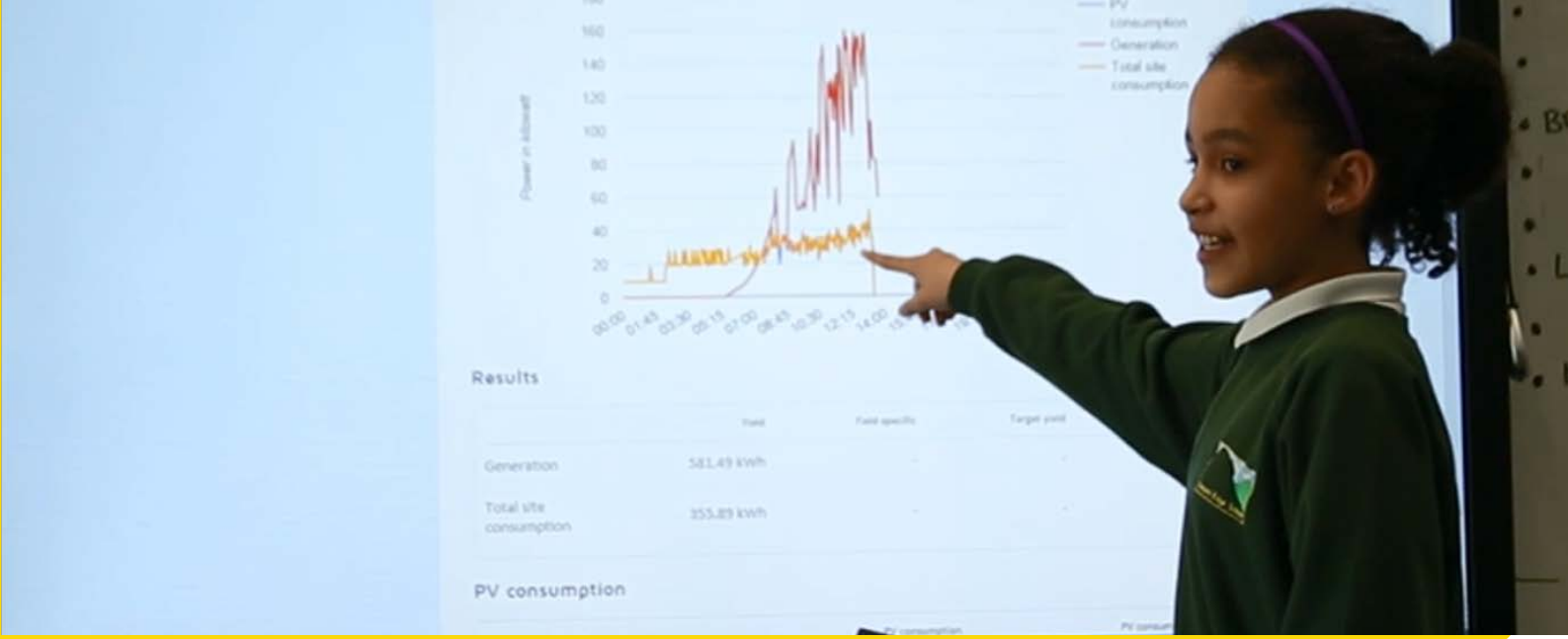
Keith Spence, Chair of Governors for Spinfield School

Henry, one of our education partners delivering on stage

Sian, school team and students with a large donation for the solar panels

"The solar panels will help the environment and save our school money. Spinfield is the first school in Marlow to have solar panels and we loved the school sponsored relay to raise money for them."

Tabby, aged 11, pupil at Spinfield School.



A student using our online graphs to explain energy generated and consumed by the school during a day

Impact of your investment

Investing in solar panels can replace 25-60% of a school's yearly electricity consumption with energy from the sun and has a number of benefits, such as:

1. **Cost savings:** The schools will pay less for solar electricity than for retail mains electricity, saving money that can be put to better use. As the solar price is linked to inflation and not mains electricity prices, the savings will increase over time. Finally, any surpluses once funders have been re-paid, go back to the schools.
2. **CO_2 savings**: Solar panels produce electricity with no CO_2 emissions, helping the UK to decarbonise and reduce the risk of catastrophic climate change.
3. **Energy education:** The long term impact on CO_2 reduction, through learning about energy, carbon and renewable energy technologies, is far greater than the direct CO_2 savings from the panels alone. See next section.
4. **Accelerating decarbonisation:** Schools are ideal buildings to lead by example, to encourage their wider community to consider solar or other decarbonisation technologies. Additionally, if your money is currently invested in a UK bank, then depending on which bank that is, moving your money means you'll stop funding a business responsible for nearly 2 tonnes of CO_2 emissions annually. Find out more here.

For every £1000 you invest for 5 years you will:

- **Save a school £2,000-£3,000 over the panel's lifetime**
- **Stop about 1 tonne of CO_2 emissions**
- **Educate 20-25 students on energy and decarbonisation**
- **Receive £55 of interest each year until you are re-paid**

Wendy Litherland, teacher and CBS Director also runs the North West Eco-Schools Conference

Why energy education is key

Energy and carbon education is key for tackling climate change:

- **Improve educational outcomes:** Young people care about climate change, so linking the solar panels on the roof with the curriculum in the classroom makes learning STEM subjects more relevant and can improve academic results.
- **Build capacity:** Providing hands-on learning opportunities linked to tackling climate change can encourage more students to take up science and engineering and work in the environmental sector; all essential if we are to rapidly decarbonise as a society.
- **Drive adoption:** When students are inspired, they're more likely to share their learnings with family, friends and the wider community, empowering more individuals to make positive changes or live more sustainably.
- **Improve policy:** Informed students, and those they influence around them, can then vote for, or even design, the right policy reforms needed to decarbonise our society.

Christina from SOFS, livestreaming to a class while doing an annual inspection of the solar panels

"The big thing about education for sustainable development is, it's motivational. Young people feel part of their future and they feel more self-esteem, more engaged and powerful"

Ann Finlayson
Sustainable & Environmental Education Chair

Danielle Parker, former teacher now at SOFS, delivers a workshop at Lanesend Primary School

Our education delivery

Energy is essential to modern society. Worldwide we consume about 26,000,000,000,000 kWh a year, yet most of us have very little idea what a kWh actually means. Our education starts by making a kWh tangible, through to understanding the challenges of generating and supplying enough clean electricity to decarbonise society completely.

Our programme is varied and interactive. Ranging from workshops and assemblies to playing with our 'paneliser'; a tool that students can use to design a solar panel system for their school whilst learning about the balance between investment, savings and carbon reduction.

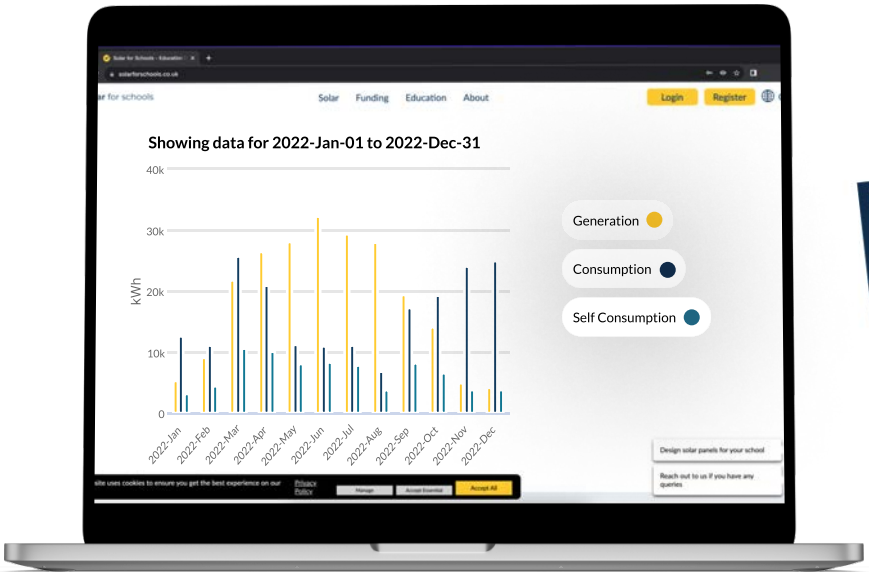
"You really brought alive the impact we have as a school on the environment. The whole Solar for Schools package has been so professional and today took it to another level - I do hope that more schools take up this amazing offer."

Graham Andre,
Assistant Head,
Lanesend Primary School

Students using the panelizer tool on their school

More education

We provide lesson plans that link the electricity graphs and data from the solar panels on each school to the curriculum to make learning a real experience.



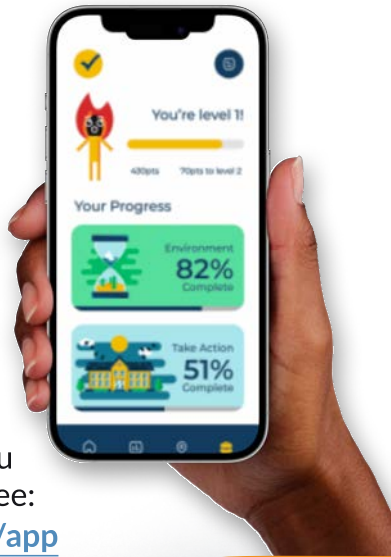
Students can track the schools electricity consumption and generation each day, compare summer and winter consumption and generation and gain an insight into the challenges of relying on the sun for electricity. They can also download the data for analysis in maths and physics lessons.

SOFS is also developing a number of solar experiments kits for all key stages. These are currently being tested in schools funded by the CBS. The experiments are linked to physics, maths and the geography curriculum.

Students with part of one of the solar kits


Dear Sarah,
Thank you so much for taking the time to prepare and present such fantastic information to our Year 4 children; they thought it was fantastic. Your information and links to our school made it so relatable and the children were so enthused and inspired. It gave the children fantastic context.
Signed _____ Date _____
We really look forward to working with you again.
from Lupa
CHURWELL PRIMARY SCHOOL
Churwell Primary School
Westwood Side • Churwell • Leeds • LS27 9HR
0113 252 7437
www.churwell.leeds.sch.uk

The SOFS mobile app developed with UK Innovate funding includes 4 gamified 'learning journeys' in efficiency, energy, electricity and environment.
It contains cross-curricular links to Key Stage 3 science, geography, maths and design technology. You can download it for free: solarforschools.co.uk/app

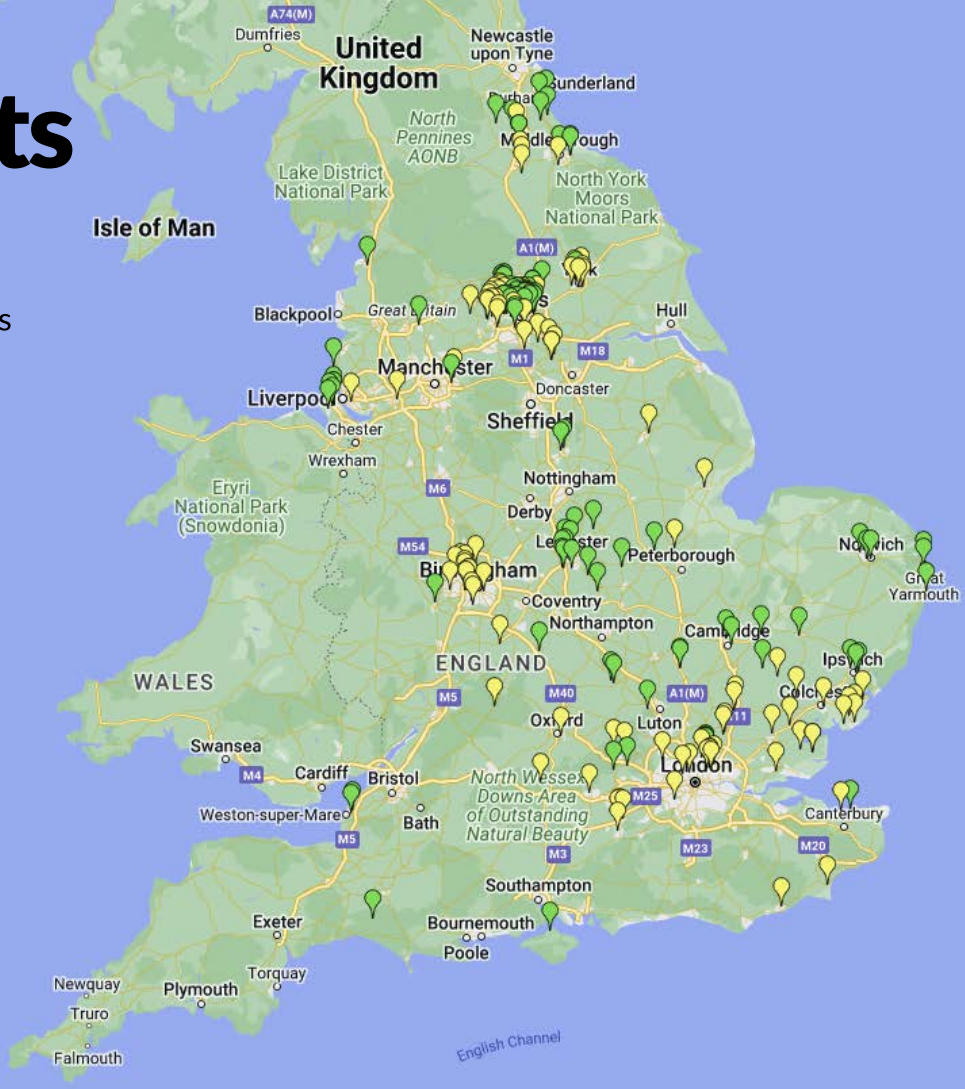


Our projects

105 completed school systems so far with a total capacity of nearly 8MW.

A further 90 school systems are in development, needing about £9m in funding.

Your investment could be crucial to enabling your local school to go solar and start making financial and carbon savings sooner



The CBS has raised nearly £6m to fund over 100 projects so far since 2016. But we have over 90 schools in our pipeline under development and we now need to raise funds faster to complete them.

Your funding will make a difference. Whilst it is invested in the CBS as a whole, it will mean that your local school can go solar sooner.

That's why we're working with each school to promote the funding we need as widely as possible. If you know anybody who can help, please share this offer with them.

"The Solar for Schools model allowed my children's small primary school an affordable and low-hassle route to generating our own solar electricity. Since our panels were installed last July the school has already significantly reduced its electricity costs and, most importantly, inspired the children about the difference they can make to the planet."

Sian Herschel, who became a CBS director in 2022 after her children's school went solar.

"After many years of trying unsuccessfully to have panels installed at our school, I am delighted that this partnership has finally made the project a reality. This makes our school much more energy-efficient, and we can educate our children on the impact sustainable energy can make."

Ian Thompson-Smith
Head Teacher at Otley All Saints CofE Primary School

Is investing safe?

Investing in solar panels on your local school with the Solar for Schools CBS is not as risk-free as leaving your money in a bank account. On the other hand, leaving your money in a bank account is not going to help solve climate change or enable your local school to 'go solar'. So we work hard to try to make investing in renewable solar energy on schools as low-risk as possible. We reduce the main risks through:

1. **Diversification:** The CBS already owns nearly 8MW of solar projects across over 100 schools and is adding more every month. So although your investment may support your local school, if that school closes or that project under-performs, your investment is in the CBS as a whole. This spreads your risk and provides protection against a single project, or even various projects from failing. The more schools we have the lower the risk.

2. **System monitoring and track record:** Each solar system is fitted with remote data monitoring equipment, that sends live generation data back to SOFS' servers. Underperformance and faults can be spotted and dealt with quickly. See next page.

3. **Regulatory oversight:** The CBS is registered with the Financial Conduct Authority, and although the FCA does not regulate the CBS's activities as it is not an investment driven by financial returns, we must submit an Annual Return (AR30) to them including independently audited accounts. These are reviewed by the independent directors, shared at the AGM each year and are available on the CBS website.

4. **Professional management:** Each system is developed and then monitored daily by SOFS. SOFS manages over 200 solar systems - carrying out inspections, education visits and repairs, as well as sorting insurance and electricity export contracts for the CBS and other schools in asset management. SOFS receives a fee for these services that is linked to its performance.

Download the full list of risks and how we work to minimise them at:Download the main risks document

WARNING: There is no guarantee that an investor will receive either the interest or even their initial investment back. The bond is an unsecured investment in the Solar for Schools CBS and there is no guarantee or financial recourse to any ombudsman or the school in the event of default. Do not invest more than you can afford to loose.

Our track record

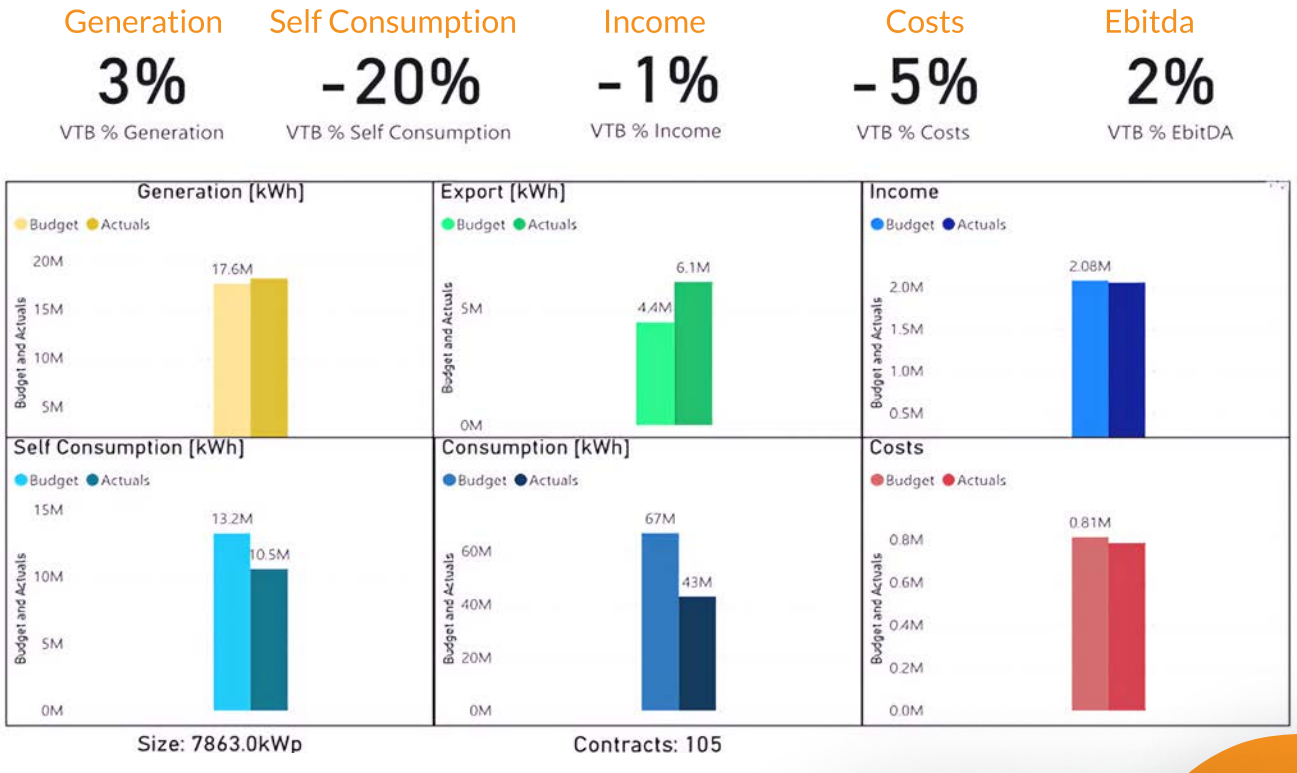
Funding and managing the installation of the solar panels is just the first step. To ensure that each system is working to its full potential, we install remote monitoring equipment which feeds data back to SOFS's servers for monitoring and analysis. SOFS checks each system each day to identify failures and underperformance and fixes them quickly.

Forecasting how much electricity a given system will generate is a relatively exact science, but variations of 5% in either direction are not uncommon, so applying conservative solar yield forecasts in each financial model and monitoring systems closely is key to ensuring the portfolio generates as much electricity as forecast. As such, and highlighted below, **our portfolio is 3% ahead of plan on electricity generation**, despite occasional re-roofing works, repairs and inverter failures.

Our revenues depend on how much of the solar electricity generated is used by the school rather than exported to the grid. So we also monitor each school's total electricity consumption against their pre-solar figures. **Schools that are part of the CBS have actually consumed about a third less electricity**, due to a combination of increased awareness, COVID closures and recent very high mains electricity prices.

This means the **schools have purchased about 20% less solar electricity** (self consumption) than planned. To offset this projected income shortfall, the CBS and SOFS has focused on securing better prices for the higher amounts of electricity exported to the grid. This has meant that the total electricity income to date is only 1% less than assumed in the financial forecasts.

Operating costs are 5% lower than planned. So overall cash flow (EbitDA) is actually 2% ahead of budget, despite the very significant reduction of electricity consumption by schools over the last few years. Careful management of operational and financial performance are key.



The CBS portfolio's financial performance KPIs to date.

Governance and directors

Each school that receives solar panels from the CBS, becomes a voting member of the CBS and can propose and elect directors at the AGM. The CBS Directors are volunteers, and oversee the governance of the CBS. They combine long-term experience in managing school assets, renewable energy funding, solar development, electricity supply and managing schools' sustainable development programmes.

Wendy Litherland

Assistant Headteacher and Director of Sustainability at St Cristopher Accrington

Local Eco Cluster Group co-ordinator. Co-facilitates the UKs largest children's environmental conference: NW Eco Schools.Winner of multiple sustainability education awards including the Climate Week Awards, the SSAT national sustainable schools award and the 2021 DoE Sustainability Award.

Read more

Marino Charalambous

CEO of North Star Community Trust, CBS chair of directors

Oversees five schools in North London at the North Star Community Trust, all of which have solar panels funded by the CBS. Introduced sustainability as part of the Trust curriculum in 2016 and has developed a Trust wide learning culture with the future in mind.

Read more

Sian Herschel

Parent and fundraising lead at a Solar for Schools CBS member school

15 years' experience in grant making and investing for organisations such as Fairtrade, Comic Relief, Power to Change and the Churchill Fellowship. MBA from the University of Cambridge and executive coaching accreditation from Henley Business School.

Read more

Julian Leslie

Head of Network Capability Electricity at the National Grid

Responsible for overseeing transmission connections, defining the future system capability needs, assessing economic cost benefit and ensuring that the current and future networks are both secure and operable. Joined the CBS as a school Governor. Motivated to see greater STEM subject uptake in UK schools.

Read more

For full profiles see: https://www.cbs.solarforschools.co.uk/governance

Governance and directors

Nathan Odom

Head of Estates and Admissions for the Discovery Schools Academy Trust (DSAT)

Strategic lead for Discovery Schools Academy Trust's capital strategy for school site improvements with a focus on improving the physical learning environment. Focused on delivering of high-quality education, while ensuring school sites are safe and compliant.

Read more

Peter Roberts

Company Director of Project Management Consultancy

25 years' experience in the education sector overseeing the design and contract management of new schools and capital programmes, and ensuring project delivery to specifications and budget for the DoE.

Read more

Robert Schrimpff

Co-Founder & CEO of Solar Options for Schools

10 years' experience in founding and building online businesses such as netXtra and hotels.com followed by nine years' experience investing in renewable energy technology companies at TVM Capital and Greencoat Capital.

Read more

Ann Flaherty

Business & Project Director for Solar Options for Schools

Over 10 years of solar on schools experience, bringing really unique expertise and knowledge of the school market and wider UK solar industry. Responsible for the development of solar on nearly 250 schools and is a founding director of Solar for Schools CBS Ltd.

Read more

In order to ensure no conflict of interests, Robert and Ann do not vote on issues that impact the commercial arrangements between the CBS and Solar Options for Schools and Nathan, Marino, Wendy and Sian abstain in relation to any issues that may arise relating to their schools with solar funded by the CBS. There are no other potential conflicts of interest.

For full profiles see: https://www.cbs.solarforschools.co.uk/governance

Professional management

The CBS has partnered with Solar Options for Schools Ltd (SOFS) to provide it with monitoring systems, education, software and day-to-day management of operations.

solar for schools

SOFS is an award-wining social impact company with nearly 9 years experience of working with schools. SOFS works with a growing number of funders, trusts, councils and community energy groups providing them with project development and solar management services. The SOFS vision is to provide innovative software and education solutions that will enable partners around the world to eventually help thousands of schools go solar every month, helping millions of young people to play their part in accelerating the pace towards a more sustainable and carbon neutral future.

SOFS manages 200+ school solar installations and nearly 12MW of solar projects across the UK, Germany and India. With partners in other countries, SOFS is also working on pilot projects at schools in Colombia, Ireland and Palestine.

"Organisations such as Solar Options for Schools are key in helping the UK achieve its carbon emission targets. They are an enormous help to schools wishing to reduce their carbon footprint, energy bill and to help the next generation to learn about sustainable energy."

James Griffiths
Programme & Fund Manager,
Low Carbon Innovation Fund

Awards and grants received

Rushlight Awards	2016 Rushlight Sustainability Initiative Award Winner
The Guardian Sustainable Business Awards	2016 Guardian Sustainability Awards finalist
UKRI Innovate UK	2021 UK Innovate £150k grant for mobile education app for students to learn about energy and develop a solar project on their school.
UKRI Innovate UK	2023 UK Innovate £50k inclusive design grant to add a teacher portal to the education app and make it available on computers.

Solar Options for Schools Ltd is partly funded or supported by:

Low Carbon Innovation Fund | Department for Communities and Local Government | LESSONS Low Energy Sustainable Schools | UEA University of East Anglia | SSA Sustainable Schools Alliance | SEED Sustainability and Environmental Education

https://www.solarforschools.co.uk/

Key terms and next steps

Whilst you will be investing to support a school local to you, your investment will be part of the whole portfolio of schools funded via the CBS. Your investment is not guaranteed by either the schools or the government, so do not invest more that you can afford to lose.

Interest payments
Interest will accrue from the date your funds are received by the CBS.
The interest rate paid will be 0.25% + Bank of England (BoE) interest rate at the date of Issue. It is currently 5.25%, so you would receive **5.5% per year pro rata for the period to 31st March**.
Interest for the period ending 31st March each year will be paid gross during May of each year to the bank account you provide to the CBS via the bond administration portal on the SOFS website.

Tax
Interest will be paid gross with no tax withheld. You are responsible for paying any tax on the interest you receive. In the UK Basic rate tax payers can receive up to £1,000 of interest per year tax free. Please seek your own tax advice as neither the Schools, CBS nor SOFS are qualified to provide any tax advice.

Investment repayment
Although the bonds have a 5-year initial term and the intention is to repay bondholders after that initial period by refinancing the portfolio, there is a risk that you will be not be re-paid on time. The CBS directors may also request to re-pay you early (which you don't have to accept). You may request early repayment which, subject to available funds, will be considered by the directors. The bonds are transferable, but there is no open market for them.

Further reading:
- **Download the Bond Instrument terms for this offer**
- **Download the main risks document**
- Download previous accounts, minutes and AGM presentations on the CBS website **https://cbs.solarforschools.co.uk/documentation**

Further information:
Please contact us with any question either by email or phone at
bonds@solarforschools.co.uk **01284 636377**.

To invest:
Register for bonds at **https://cbs.solarforschools.co.uk/registration**