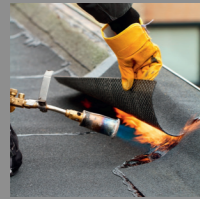




FLAT ROOFS OTHER OPTIONS

Felt

PROS: The cheapest option and, if well installed, some experts feel some felt products could even last 30 years. Most hot flame installations are better than legacy systems
CONS: Damaged easily and is the least attractive option
COST: £40-£50/m² (installed)



GRP

PROS: GRP (glass-reinforced plastic) can be expected to last around 25-30 years, looks better than felt and is durable
CONS: GRP is more expensive than both felt and single ply, and condensation can be an issue as it's not very breathable
COST: £90/m² (installed)

Metal

PROS: Looks great and is highly durable, with some installations lasting 100+ years
CONS: Expensive and highly variable pricing — lead, for example, is very expensive at present, requires a small pitch and can attract thieves
COST: Budget £100/m² (plus installation)



Green

PROS: Visually very attractive
CONS: Requires a special roof build-up
COST: £100/m² but varies hugely on specification



FLAT ROOFS

Flat is Back

The emergence of a new flat roofing solution offering a 40-year lifecycle has improved the options for homeowners, says Natasha Brinsmead

Flat roofing has suffered from a bad reputation for many years. Poor installation (and products) resulted in short lifespans and regular problems for many systems — not to mention generally dismal visual 'appeal'. The world of flat roofs has come on enormously with metal and sedum becoming viable (if not expensive) options, combining good lifespans and looks.

Yet it is TPO (thermoplastic polyolefin, essentially PVC) systems — better known as single-ply membranes — that are proving to be a real game changer for people building new flat roofs. Easy and quick to fit, and cheaper than metals such as zinc and lead, yet they're still pleasing on the eye.

A single-ply membrane is a strong, flexible PVC material that can be either mechanically fixed or adhered to the underlying surface. It comes in sheets or rolls, with the joints being welded together using a hot air heat welding process (including metal lookalike standing seams or batten rolls if you wish).

Most single-ply systems, such as that from Roof Assured by Sarnafil (roofassured.co.uk), are fitted by approved installers. Comprising a structural deck, a loose laid vapour control layer, insulation and finally either a mechanically fastened or adhered single-ply membrane, the highly durable systems have lifespans of 40 years or more in some cases — a real fit and forget solution for your roof. Expect to pay between £70-£90/m² for a single-ply membrane installed. **H**