What to look for to when choosing a tubular daylight system

As with all commercial markets, manufacturers and product suppliers with inferior products will try and bamboozle customers with jargon and misinformation to disguise the failings of their products. To help you see the wheat from the chaff, please see the check list below.

Peace of mind	Safety, quality & fitness for purpose	There are no building regulations written for sun pipes so you need to look for independent testing and feedback, like TrustPilot, before purchasing.	✔
	Is the supplier a well-established company with a proven track record?	Again look to sites like TrustPilot and ask if you can speak with existing customers or even go and visit one to see how the system actually performs – contact us for details.	✔
	Warranty	Solarspot tubular daylight systems have a fully 10-year warranty. Electrical warranties vary – details on application.	✔
	Energy Star rated	Energy Star is a 'paid for' certification that is used on energy saving products – it would be applicable to even the worst sun pipe products. It is no indication of performance.	✔
	ISO 9002	Does the product offer the internationally recognised assurance of product manufacture and service standards	✔
Efficiency	Performance	Does the product have independent testing that proves superior performance to competitor systems	✔
	Tube material	Does the system have the world's most reflective tube material – 99.7% reflective?	✔
	Double-glazed	Is the system double-glazed at the dome to prevent and condensation from entering the main tube system?	✔
Smart design	Angles	Are two angles supplied as standard, that can be used at any point in the system (not just at the top and bottom), for real ease of installation.	✔
	Ceiling fixings	Are there a wide range of ceiling fixings for domestic and commercial applications?	✔
	Accessories	Does the company offer a range of accessories including daylight dampers, light kits etc?	✔
Control	Reduce glare	Is the system protected against glare regardless of how bright it is outside?	✔
	Condensation	Is the system designed to deal with condensation?	✔

UK building regulations compliance

There are no regulations written specifically for tubular daylight systems. All products have to meet certain criteria; for example a flashing turret on a flat roof must be at least 150mm high and domes must meet impact safety testing but other than that, within reason you are free to fit whatever you want wherever you want. The only real proviso is local planning rules that affect conservation areas or listed buildings.

It is impossible to give an across the board answer on planning as rules seem to vary from region to region – again, due to the lack of any specific regulations for these systems. If you need to liaise with your local planning authority it's important to stress that this is a flue-style unit and not a skylight. Skylights have a completely different set of rules as they need to cover areas like privacy, changes to the building structure, roof surface area ratios, opening and closing – none of which relate to sun pipe systems.

What is a BBA certificate and do I need one?

In a word; no. Only one manufacture has even bothered to get one of these, that's Solatube, so they make a lot of it but as a house-holder it means, or offers, nothing. In fact, since realising that they have a major problem with yellowing, cloudy roof domes they have now switched to supplying acrylic for all residential customers. In fact their website switched from saying that there are 'severe restrictions' for acrylic to 'supplied as standard' to all residential customers… make your mind up Solatube!

So how do you know which system will give you the most light?

It's simple, independent testing that matches products of the same length and roughly the same diameter (all diameters vary slightly from manufacturer to manufacturer) that shows how much light one will give you compared to the others. What else would you need to know?
Read the independent test summary or request the full report.