

Minimum Requirements for Energy Assessors for existing dwellings

Introduction

1. This document sets out the Secretary of State's minimum requirements for Energy Assessors in respect of existing dwellings. The primary aim is to inform Energy Assessors about the professional approach and standards they need to adopt in order to become accredited and maintain their accreditation for the production of Energy Performance Certificates and accompanying Recommendation Reports.
2. The document will also be a useful basis for Accreditation Schemes Operators to inform their development of processes setting out how they expect the Energy Assessors within their schemes to meet these minimum requirements.
3. The Accreditation Scheme Operators shall ensure that at all times the Energy Assessors registered with them comply with these minimum performance requirements, and monitoring of the Energy Assessors' performance is an essential part of the Accreditation Scheme.
4. The purpose of accreditation schemes is to ensure that consumers and others who rely on Energy Performance Certificates can have confidence: in the certificates; in the accompanying recommendations for cost-effective improvement; and in the Energy Assessors responsible for producing them.
5. In England & Wales, the Government has decided that, for dwellings, the Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) and accompanying Recommendation Reports (RRs) must be produced by accredited Energy Assessors who will collect data and use approved software to produce them. For existing dwellings, the approved software will make use of the RdSAP approach.
6. The Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) reserves the right to expand Energy Assessor guidance requirements to include new build and non – domestic sectors at a later date.

Definition and Purpose of an Energy Assessor

7. An Energy Assessor is an individual who is a member of an approved accreditation scheme by virtue of his/her technical and other personal skills and can produce and issue EPCs and RRs for dwellings in an acceptably independent manner.

8. A range of individuals may choose to become accredited as an Energy Assessor for existing dwellings:
 - building surveyors, energy auditors, Home Inspectors, valuers/estate agents, letting agents, surveyors employed by utility companies, and those seeking a new career.
9. The accreditation requirements which will be put in place must be sufficient to ensure that in-house staff assessing buildings owned by their employers (or staff of contracted service providers) operate in an acceptably independent manner, and hence these individuals may be permitted to become Energy Assessors.
10. Assessors are required to be aware of and familiar with a range of key documents to enable them to fulfil their role. These include:
 - The Statutory Instrument S.I. 2007/991 (when approved);
 - The Circular and Circular Letter (when approved);
 - The RdSAP methodology, assumptions and conventions;
 - The National Occupational Standard (NOS) for (Domestic) Energy Assessors;

and other appropriate guidance developed for Energy Assessors producing EPCs for existing dwellings. An example of this is the guidance on energy efficiency in traditional buildings prepared for English Heritage – currently in draft.

11. Accredited assessors must :
 - be suitably qualified or competent to produce energy assessments;
 - identify and resolve any circumstance that might lead to an actual or perceived conflict of interest with the building owner or the person from whom instructions are received and, in parallel, with the Scheme Operator;
 - be suitably qualified for dealing with the public and explaining the purposes of EPCs and RRs and the information conveyed by these documents;
 - meet other non-technical requirements, such as being “fit and proper persons”, and demonstrate suitable arrangements for ensuring that members or their employers or the scheme itself has and maintains arrangements to protect customers;
 - comply with all the scheme’s operational procedures in respect of producing and submitting EPCs, including using the correct approved version of the software and remaining current in their knowledge through Continuous Professional Development (CPD);
 - comply with their accreditation scheme’s quality assurance procedures to ensure that the required quality standard is achieved;
 - adopt the scheme’s complaints procedure;

- because of their access to information regarding the client or occupier of the building that may be classified as ‘Personal Data’, ensure that the relevant provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 are understood and implemented;
 - know and comply with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Regulations in so far as they are applicable;
 - abide by the restrictions on disclosure described in the Regulations¹.
12. In this context, “suitably qualified” refers to an individual having either a qualification or approved prior experience and learning equivalent to the NOS requirements relevant to the specific occupation for which the individual seeks accreditation.
13. Energy Assessors must also have a basic Criminal Records Bureau check in accordance with the “Fit and Proper Persons” criteria of the Accreditation Standards.
14. More details about the role of the Accreditation Scheme Operator are provided at Annex A.

Operating Procedures

15. The process of a client obtaining an EPC for a dwelling to enable the person to provide it to a prospective buyer or tenant is described below.

Engagement with the Client

16. Energy Assessors must restrict their activities to those within their competence.
17. Energy Assessors wishing to produce EPCs for flats, terraced and semi-detached dwellings must be familiar with the procedures for representative data collection:
- The use of certificates for representative dwellings; and
 - The use of common values (these may also be applicable to detached dwellings).
18. Energy Assessors must carry out energy assessments with reasonable care and skill.

¹ 2007 No. #####

BUILDING AND BUILDINGS, ENGLAND AND WALES

The Energy Performance of Buildings (Certificates and Inspections) (England and Wales) Regulations 2007

19. Energy Assessors must identify and disclose any financial and/or personal relationship/s with others involved in the transaction, for example where their employer is also the person commissioning the EPC. A statement about relationships appears in the printed EPC.

Performing the Energy Assessment

20. Prior to producing an EPC, an Energy Assessor must obtain a Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN) assigned to the property address from the Register.
21. The Energy Assessor must make suitable access arrangements with the building owner, and if relevant, ensure the tenants have been notified about the energy assessment visit.
22. The Energy Assessor must identify themselves to the person at the property at the time of the inspection. If children or young people under the age of 16 are left in sole charge of the property, the Energy Assessor must postpone the inspection until a responsible adult can be present.
23. Energy Assessors must abide by the calculation software conventions and must complete every data field accurately.
24. Energy Assessors must make accurate and legible records of the data gathered at the premises. These records must be of sufficient detail to enable a third party to interpret the Energy Assessor's findings.
25. Energy Assessors should make and keep records of all queries, communications etc related to the particular assessment and reporting of a property.

Using Software

26. Software will be subject to an approval process. Energy Assessors must only use approved software for the production of EPCs and RRs.

Scheme conformity checks

27. Once an EPC and RR have been produced and checked by the Energy Assessor, the individual must submit the results electronically to the Scheme Operator.
28. For information: the Scheme Operator will undertake a conformity check on EPCs submitted by its Energy Assessors. If the check is passed, the Scheme Operator will allocate a Report Reference Number (RRN) and submit the EPC and RR electronically to the Register for lodgement. Only once they have been entered onto the Register, together with a registration date, are the EPC and RR valid. The Scheme Operator will then notify the Energy Assessor that the EPC and RR are valid and can be issued to the client.

Quality Assurance

29. Scheme Operators will ensure that EPCs and RRs are reasonably accurately produced and that Energy Assessors operate in a professional manner. This will require the development of procedures to ensure the work of members is monitored and audited. Furthermore Energy Assessors will be expected to implement their Scheme Operator's quality assurance procedures.
30. For information: Schemes Operators will be expecting that 90% of EPCs are within + or – 5 SAP points and that 95% of EPCs are within + or – 10 SAP points of the rating determined by the Scheme Operator's Energy Assessor undertaking quality monitoring.
31. For information: the Scheme Operators will be expected to monitor a proportion of EPCs. If a result falls outside the quality standard, the Energy Assessor must reproduce a revised EPC/RR and issue it to the client and make sure the revised edition is lodged on the Register.
32. Energy Assessors must co-operate with these monitoring procedures and make available EPCs, RRs and associated site notes to their Scheme Operators.
33. For information: All Schemes Operators will be provided with the same quality standards by CLG.

Providing the EPC to the Client**Issuing the EPC**

34. Energy Assessors must provide EPCs and RRs to clients :
 - a) in time;
 - b) in the correct format; and
 - c) in a way approved by the Scheme Operator and acceptable to the client.
35. For information: the Regulations¹ permit electronic delivery. The Regulations also set out the legal requirements limiting disclosure.
36. Energy Assessors must abide by their Scheme Operators procedures for rectifying defective EPCs and RRs.

EPC validity

37. For information: EPCs are valid for 10 years, apart from the specific situation as follows:

When a dwelling is first put on the market, the EPC must be no older than 3 months. However, if the dwelling is taken off the market and then put back on, the same EPC can be used as long as it is no longer than 12 months since the EPC was produced and the dwelling was put on the market the first time. If the dwelling is on the market for longer than 12 months continuously, the EPC remains valid.

Complaints and Claims Procedures

38. Energy Assessors and/or their employers must have a written statement setting out in unambiguous terms and with definable milestones the procedures that will be followed in the case of a complaint.
39. The Statement must include all the internal and independent processes available to the complainant and be available on request. Energy Assessors and/or their employers must abide by the terms of the Statement and use their best endeavours to resolve complaints.
40. For information: The Scheme Operators will provide an intermediary / arbitration service. Where a complainant is dissatisfied with the results of an internal investigation, the Energy Assessor must co-operate with any independent process adopted by the Scheme Operator.
41. Each Energy Assessor must report to the Scheme Operator to which they belong, in a format prescribed by the Scheme Operator :
 - the details of any complaint; and
 - the outcomes of complaint resolution activities.This will be recorded in the Complaints Register which each Scheme Operator is expected to set up and maintain.

Glossary of Terms

For the purposes of an EPC, a **building** means a roofed construction having walls, for which energy is used to condition the indoor climate, and a reference to a building includes a reference to a part of a building which has been designed or altered to be used separately.

From the perspective of the **Energy Assessor**, a client is a person who commissions an energy assessment.

An **Energy Assessor** is an accredited person undertaking an Energy Assessment.

An **Energy Assessment** means the preparation and issuing of an energy performance certificate (EPC) and the accompanying recommendation report (RR), and the carrying out of any inspections undertaken for the purposes of issuing the EPC or RR.

National Occupational Standards are standards for Energy Assessors that are approved by the United Kingdom Coordinating Group of National Occupational Standards Boards, as amended from time to time.

RdSAP is software intended for use by Energy Assessors in producing energy assessments for existing dwellings where plans and other constructional details are unavailable. Only approved versions of RdSAP software may be used. It comprises the SAP calculation engine with an input system that enters default data based on an energy assessor's observations from a visual inspection, although data from other sources may be acceptable.

The **register** is the central databank, created and maintained by the Secretary of State, to lodge the energy performance certificates and recommendation reports. Each document entered onto the register must be registered under a unique reference number, and shall not be altered once registered. Any document or data entered onto the register must be kept on the register for a period of at least 20 years beginning on the date on which the document is entered onto the register.

SAP is the national calculation methodology for determining energy use for heating, hot water and lighting for dwellings.

Annex A: For information***The Role of the Scheme Operator***

The Scheme Operator must demonstrate that the following requirements have been met:

1. Ensuring that members of the scheme are fit and proper persons to undertake energy assessments and that they operate within an appropriate code of conduct;
2. Ensuring that members of the scheme are qualified to undertake energy assessments;
3. Ensuring that members of the scheme have in force suitable indemnity cover;
4. Ensuring that members of the scheme use operational procedures that ensure consistency and accuracy of energy assessments;
5. Maintaining active quality assurance procedures;
6. Facilitating the resolution of complaints against members of the scheme;
7. Establishing and maintaining a register of members;
8. Ensuring financial probity, financial stability and operational resilience of the scheme;
9. Allowing the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) to monitor the scheme periodically to ensure that it continues to comply with the terms of its approval and delivers compliance with the legislation;
10. Suitable administrative and operational systems are applied in a consistent, fair and open way that is compliant with all relevant legislation.