

29 November 2011

INFORMATION UPDATE:

- **IMPROVED AND REDESIGNED ENERGY PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE;**
- **DEVELOPING THE SKILLS OF DOMESTIC ENERGY ASSESSORS**

This document describes the major changes that are being made to the content and format of the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) for domestic buildings. It also notes the additional training requirements that will be introduced shortly for Domestic Energy Assessors.

Improved and redesigned Energy Performance Certificate

The current EPC was developed some years ago and has been in use since 2007. While it has many positive features, consumer research suggests that it is not always readily understood by the public which in turn makes it less likely that they will decide to implement some or all of the energy efficiency recommendations. In addition, it is important to ensure that the EPC can effectively support the Green Deal when it is introduced in October 2012. To address these issues, DCLG commissioned a redesign of the content and format of the EPC earlier this year.

A revised version of the EPC has now been developed and will be introduced in April 2012. The new document is a significant improvement on the current version. The changes that have been made include:

- more graphics and white space;
- a single energy efficiency graph on the front page;
- significantly reduced text;
- clear signposting to the Green Deal;
- indicating which recommendations could be funded through the Green Deal;
- greater focus on potential financial savings;
- recommended improvements nearer the front of the document;
- text of less immediate interest moved to the back page.

Developing the skills of Domestic Energy Assessors

As a result of the changes that are being made to the EPC, Domestic Energy Assessors will need to obtain a top-up qualification so that they:

- understand and can explain the changes that have been made to the EPC and the underlying RdSAP methodology;
- have an appreciation of the role of EPCs in the context of wider Government policy on improving the energy performance of buildings.

A further reason for taking the top-up qualification is the need for Domestic Energy Assessors to improve their knowledge and understanding in areas where a skills gap has been identified. A workshop held on 30 June this year identified a number of gaps in the skill set of many Domestic Energy Assessors, of which the key ones were:

- need to review recommendations and ensure they are appropriate;
- better overall knowledge of principles of building structure, elements and fabric;
- greater familiarity with software used to produce EPCs;
- ensuring evidence is collected and retained;
- better understanding of the interaction between building fabric and services;
- greater emphasis on interaction with the consumer;
- better understanding of the operating requirements.

The National Occupational Standards for Domestic Energy Assessors have been reviewed in light of the above and an additional top-up unit has now been developed by Asset Skills. The unit is in the process of being converted into a stand alone qualification which will be available from mid January 2012. Training courses will be available shortly afterwards.

It is estimated that about 8 hours training will be needed to cover the additional requirements. The training can be delivered as part of a Domestic Energy Assessor's Continuing Professional Development. The Continuing Professional Development will form part of the Domestic Energy Assessors' mandatory obligation that they must undertake to keep their skills up to date. It is in addition to the recommended 10 hours of annual Continuing Professional Development required by accreditation schemes.

Upon completion of the training, Domestic Energy Assessors will be required to undergo a short assessment in order to demonstrate that they have acquired the necessary additional knowledge and understanding. This will be a supervised online multiple choice test consisting of 40 questions and lasting for 60 minutes.

Domestic Energy Assessors who wish to continue practising, and to maintain their accreditation after 6 April 2012 will need to undertake training in the new qualification and successfully pass the examination.

There will not be any limit on the number of resits that can be taken. However, the top-up qualification and associated knowledge assessment will no longer be available after October 2012, at which time it will be subsumed into the general Domestic Energy Assessor qualification. Any Domestic Energy Assessor who has not passed the examination within that time period will need to start again from scratch and undertake training in the revised Domestic Energy Assessor qualification.

A number of training providers are expected to offer this additional training. However, DCLG is not in a position to recommend any particular training provider. Domestic Energy Assessors are strongly advised to satisfy themselves that the level of training they undertake is sufficient for them to be able to successfully sit and pass the assessment. If they are in any doubt, Domestic Energy Assessors may wish to seek advice from their accreditation scheme(s).