

Technical Bulletin – 29/03/2018

Back to Basics for DEAs



For this technical bulletin, we will be reviewing some of the basics of being a domestic energy assessor. In recent months, we have noticed, from auditor feedback, answering your technical support queries, and reviewing the reasons given for appeal, that there are some things that people have seemingly forgotten.

During this technical bulletin, we'll be looking at the following:

- Being a DEA
- Using iQ-Energy and iQMobile
- FAQs

We would recommend that all DEAs, irrespective of experience, should review and take on board the topics mentioned in this bulletin. We can't remember everything all the time, so a quick reminder will always be useful.

Being a DEA

RdSAP Conventions

The RdSAP Conventions should be a DEA's Bible. These outline what data inputs should be used by Energy Assessors given particular circumstances and are in place to provide consistency for assessors and homeowners, not just for a singular assessment, but for assessors completing the next assessments on a dwelling.

The Conventions are discussed, amended and reviewed by the Accreditation Schemes, BRE (who produce the RdSAP Methodology), and have input from the relevant Government and Devolved departments who implement the EPB Regulations. If you would like us to request any amendments to the RdSAP Conventions which would help the consistency of data inputs, please contact us and we will do our best to make your changes.

What is an extension?

The mainstream definition of an extension is very different to what RdSAP considers them to be. Firstly, you should eliminate any considerations about the date of build for a moment. An extension can be any building part which has thermally distinct characteristics from the main dwelling. This can cover a number of scenarios.

For a start, the size of the storeys within a dwelling should match in order for the calculation to work properly. If the ground floor is greater than the first floor, this additional area must be included as an extension; why is this? The roof of the additional ground floor area is thermally distinct from the main dwelling, so must be assessed independently.

Building parts with different roof construction, floor construction, or other characteristics should always be considered as extensions. We should note that there is no 10% rule as there is with alternative walls; If a portion of the dwelling is above an alleyway, for example, this building extension shall have a floor type of 'to external air', irrespective of the area.

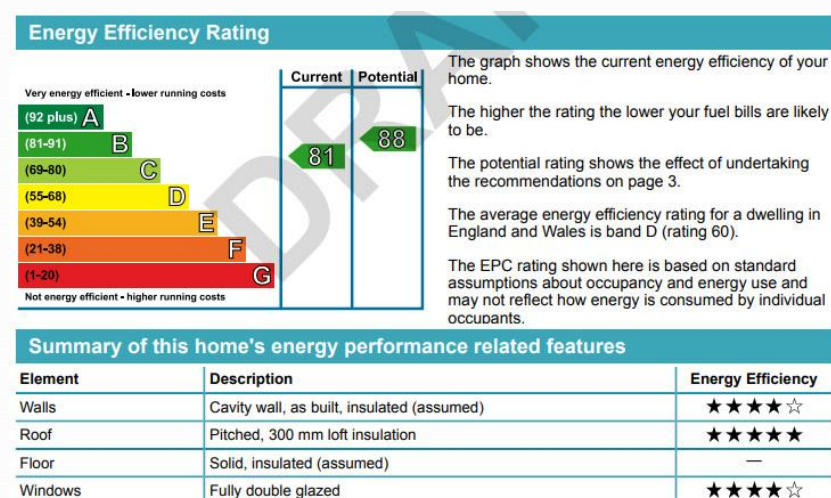
Weighted loft insulation averages

As per Convention 3.04, where there are areas of no loft insulation, these must be separated as extensions. A weighted average is not applicable in this scenario.

The weighted average of loft insulation should take into consider the whole loft area. If you are doing so, photographic evidence of the whole loft area would help to back up your assumptions, as well as clear notes about your reasoning.

5 SAP points is not the only reason for failure

DEAs seem to be fairly fixated on the 5 SAP point absolute variance as the *only* reason for an auditing failure. The [QA Standards for DEAs](#) is very clear about the reasons for failure, and we've even investigated how only focussing on the SAP variance can lead to highly inaccurate EPCs.



This example EPC shows a dwelling with a SAP rating of 81; the construction is marked as Cavity wall, with 300 mm of loft insulation and a solid floor.

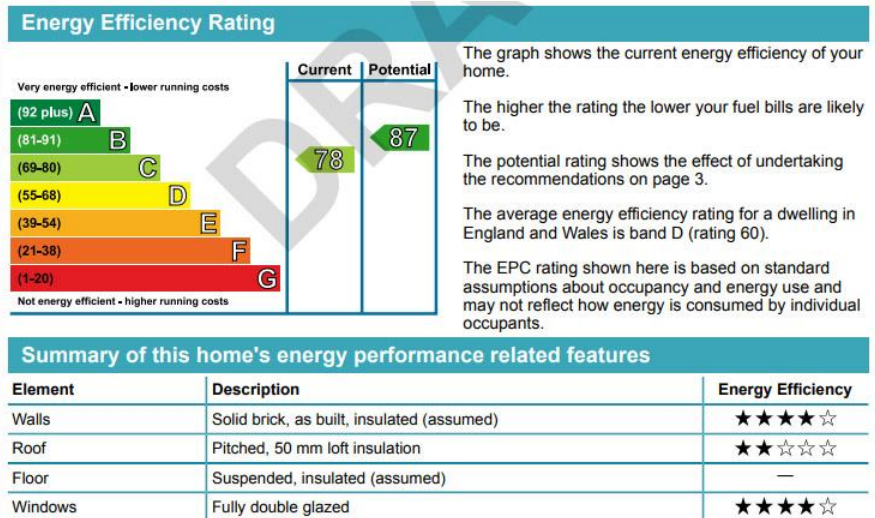
However, we can completely redefine the characteristics of the dwelling but still remain within the 5 SAP point variance.

The replacement EPC here is for the same dwelling, but with a solid brick construction, 250 mm less insulation than previously, and also a suspended timber floor.

On a purely mathematical level, if only the 5 SAP variance was considered, this EPC could be deemed as correct, as it is within the tolerances, but there is no way a DEA can say this EPC is a correct and accurate reflection of the dwelling.

In addition to the 5 SAP variance, we also examine the description of the EPC and the recommendations which are shown. If either of these change between the lodged EPC and the corrected version, the audit must be a failure.

Therefore, it is perfectly reasonable for a report with only a 1 point SAP variance to fail auditing if the description of the EPC has changed.



Continuous Professional Development

In any profession, there is always an element of learning new skills, reviewing and updated exiting knowledge, and being the best you can be for your customers; this is also true for Energy Assessors. No two scenarios are the same so developing your personal skill base is important to be able to prove a consistent service to homeowners, agents, and tenants.

As a DEA, you are required to complete a minimum of 10 hours of CPD during each year of accreditation. The basic tenant is whether the CPD undertaken is aimed to make you a better Energy Assessor.

We've put together a guide to CPD which all Energy Assessors should read; it outlines they types of CPD which can be undertaken and how to plan your CPD to meet your objectives for the year.

[CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD OUR CPD HANDBOOK](#)

iQ-Energy and iQMobile

iQMobile is for data collection

A number of DEAs joining from other Schemes have questioned why the iQMobile app doesn't lodge directly to the EPC Register. There is a very simple reason for this – we want DEAs to be producing quality and consistent EPCs, which would mean reviewing all of their data inputs before lodgement to ensure that they are correct.



The iQMobile app acts as your on-site data collection forms, enabling you to input your data, take images, calculate a rating, and upload to our servers for you to check and lodge from your iQ-Energy account.

Available for iOS and Android devices, the iQMobile app is FREE to use for all Quidos-accredited DEAs. Click below for the right version.



Re-lodgement and cancellation

If you have made a mistake on a lodged EPC, or failed an audit, you will need to complete a re-lodgement. iQ-Energy has a 'Copy Report' function which will make an un-lodged copy of a report, allowing you to make any necessary changes before lodging it.

Once each amendment is done to the new report, always remember to press 'SAVE' to lock in the changes.

Any re-lodgements made are at your own cost, so you should make sure your data inputs are correct when the original lodgement is made.

Finally, following the re-lodging you must also cancel the defective report. You should input the new RRN as well as a reason for failure. Further details can be found [HERE](#).

**EPCs CAN NEVER BE CANCELLED BECAUSE OF PAYMENT DISPUTES
BETWEEN YOU AND A CLIENT**

Scottish Address Changes

The Scottish EPC Register gets its addresses directly from the One Scotland Gazetteer, the definitive list of address details for the country. As such, Scottish address changes cannot be requested

through our web services; instead, DEAs must complete a form outlining the changes and email it directly to EST using the address: epcmissingaddress@est.org.uk

The form can be downloaded from [HERE](#).

iQ-Energy troubleshooting – *Object reference not set to an instance of an object.*

This error message usually means that you have input more low-energy lighting than there are fixed lighting. Most assessors usually end up putting these the wrong way around.

iQ-Energy troubleshooting – *Error messages*

Most of the error messages within iQ-Energy outline the areas where the issue is occurring. We have noted that the majority are related to incorrect insulation inputs, or issues with flat positioning. A sense-check of your data inputs can usually resolve the problem, but if not, send your query to the Support Log with the RRN in question.

iQ-Energy troubleshooting – *RRN is "0000-0000-0000-0000-0000"*

When uploading your data from the iQMobile, if the report has not been calculated within the app, the RRN will default to all zeros. Obviously, you will be unable to lodge a report with this invalid RRN.

The quickest way to resolve this is to change the date of assessment, Save and Calculate (which will produce a valid RRN), then correct the assessment date and repeat. Your report should now lodge successfully.

iQ-Energy troubleshooting – *Boilers not in PCDB*

The Technical Support team get a number of queries each week in relation to boilers which may or may not appear in the product database. In order to resolve this queries, our Support team make use of a state-of-the-art information and data retrieval tool which enables access to details about a range of products – yes, we Google it.

Searching the boiler manual and any additional features online will help to identify the specifics for SAP Table description input, or whether it is indeed hidden away in the PCDB. Boilers can be searched within the database outside of the iQ-Energy software from the PCDB website itself:

<https://www.ncm-pcdb.org.uk/sap/searchpod.jsp?id=17>

Frequently Asked Questions

Does a listed building need an EPC?

There are two answers to this question: in Scotland, yes, an EPC is required even if a building is listed; in England & Wales, if you are contracted to complete an EPC on a listed building, you can do so, but as to whether it is *required*, that's a different kettle of fish.

The decision, ultimately, for whether a listed property shall have an EPC, or is required to meet the MEES standards, should be made by the property owner.

[Guidance for the sale and rent of domestic dwellings](#)

[Guidance for the sale and rent of non-domestic properties](#)

The client has taken out their storage heaters and installed 'highly efficient' electric radiators; why is the rating so bad?

If homeowners took advice from DEAs prior to installing new systems, they would be able to see that 'highly efficient' radiators are electric panel heaters, and nothing more. All electric panel heaters are treated as 100% efficient by RdSAP, however electricity is significantly more expensive than mains gas, which is one of the cheapest forms of fuel.

For example, if a home has a mains gas boiler it will cost less to run than an electric boiler or electric storage heaters. An electric heating system may be 100% efficient at the point of use, turning all the electricity used into useful heat, it will still be more expensive for a home owner to run than a 65% efficient mains gas boiler. A gas boiler will have heat losses associated in converting the burning fuel into useful heat for the property, but these losses are outweighed by the lower cost of mains gas.

The client has upgraded the low-energy lighting and glazing but the rating has increased by much, why is this?

Reviewing the recommendations of the EPC, changing all the lighting to low-energy would only make around a 1 SAP change to a report. In terms of the glazing, the difference in area between walls and glazing can be substantial, so any benefits from highly-rated glazing would be lost due to poorly insulated walls.