

Technical Bulletin – July 2021

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:

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.

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.

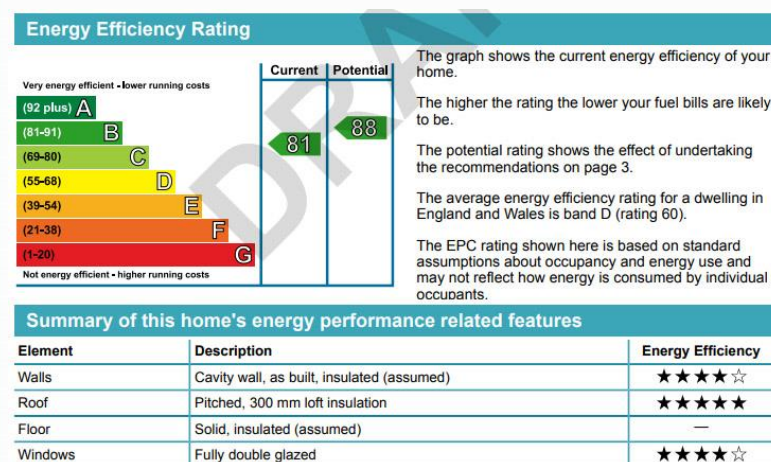
5 SAP points is not the only reason for failure

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.

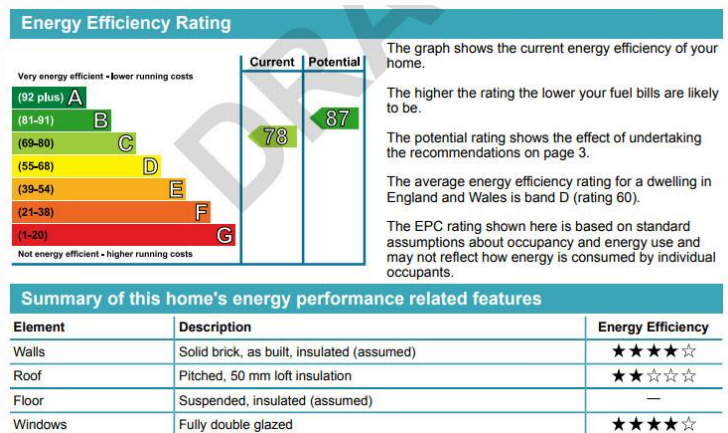


The replacement EPC here is for the same dwelling, but with a solid brick construction, 250 mm less insulation than previously, and also a suspended timber floor.

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.



Always return to the Dwelling

We have noted a number of occasions where improvements have been made to a dwelling, but the Energy Assessor has not returned to the dwelling, or only collecting evidence of the improvement.

Where improvements to a dwelling have been made, a full reassessment of the dwelling must be completed each and every time. All of your evidence must match the input date of your assessment, not have some from the original assessment, and some from your revisit.

Whilst there was a previous exemption to this for Green Deal Post-Install EPCs, for the vast majority of Energy Assessors, you should always be turning up to a dwelling with the expectation of completing a fresh assessment, irrespective of the number of times you had previously attended the dwelling.

Keeping your Data

As per the Code of Conduct, DEAs are required to keep all data from their assessments for 15 years following a site visit. As all DEAs are accredited as individuals, this means you must personally have a secure and safely stored copy of all photographic evidence, data collection sheets and documentary evidence. You cannot rely on an employer who holds the data in your behalf – this is your own personal responsibility. You should also consider keeping spare back ups of these data; if there is data corruption of your primary storage, you will then always have this data secure.

Sharing your Data

Energy Assessors are not permitted to disclose, or otherwise share, data associated with the preparation and production of Energy Performance Certificates (including XMLs)... with any other third party, or for any purpose, other than those expressly permitted by the Department (MHCLG) in writing.



As a DEA, you are – in effect – a data collector on behalf of the Government for the production of Energy Performance Certificates, therefore they own all of the data associated with the EPC. You cannot share this data with any third-party.

When to Cancel an EPC

Following a recent EASOB meeting, MCHLG wanted to re-emphasise the requirement for incorrect lodgements to be cancelled from the Central Register. When we process cancellation requests, we have noted that some assessors are still uncertain as to the circumstances when an EPC should be cancelled.

An EPC should only be cancelled if it is defective or incorrect. This might be following a surveillance auditing failure, the homeowner providing additional documentary evidence which would change the EPC, or another issue which might result in the certificate being incorrect, such as the wrong address.

The table below will outline the reasons under which an EPC should be cancelled from the Central Register.

<p>Auditing failure</p> <p>Additional documentary evidence</p> <p>Incorrect address</p> <p>Changes to EPC description</p> <p>Changes to EPC recommendations</p> <p>Bad calculations</p> 	<p>Financial dispute (non-payment)</p> <p>New EPC following improvements</p> <p>New boiler installed</p> <p>New extension added</p> <p>Roof room added</p> 
---	--

We have had a number of cancellation requests where the homeowner has improved the dwelling, such as with a new boiler, and the DEA attempting to cancel. The original EPC is not incorrect because of the improvement; indeed, the dwelling lodgement history will show the rating changes to the positive.

Additionally, Section 4.2.3 of the Quidos Code of Conduct for Energy Assessors outlined that certificates shall only be removed if defective and replaced. Failure to pay for an EPC is not a

sufficient reason to remove a legal document from the Register, and the assessor should look at other legal avenues to recoup outstanding fees (small claims court).

As part of our ongoing surveillance processes, we assess the lodgement of reports against the same UPRN. We then ask assessors to review their lodgements and make a cancellation, if required, or provided a reason for the lodgement to remain, such as an improvement.

It should be worth noting that MHCLG is looking to change the lodgement process for all England & Wales RdSAP EPCs so that DEAs must confirm that they have checked whether a valid EPC is on the Register, and if so, why another EPC is being commissioned.

Using the Address Look-up

The address look-up in iQ-Energy must ALWAYS be used to find the appropriate property address in iQ-Energy.

The 'Add Property' button should only be used where an address is not present within the address look up.

You should try to keep any manually input addresses consistent in terms of type, and double-check any spellings prior to lodgement.

Boilers and the PCDB

A boiler should only be selected from the PCDB where you are able to positively identify the exact make, model, and qualifier of the device within the property. Selecting similar devices is not appropriate, it must be exact.

For example, a recent audit came in where the photographic evidence showed an Ideal Logic Combi C30 was in the property. The device selected from the PCDB was the Ideal LOGIC+COMBI C30. In this case, the specific model was not selected from the database, so was inappropriate to use.

The Technical Support team also 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 these 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>

Confirm QA Upload button

DEAs will only need to press the *Confirm QA Upload* when you are uploading your evidence for a requested audit. You should not press this at any other time, as it fills us our audit logs with unnecessary audit information, and makes it harder to ascertain appropriate relodgements from erroneous uploads.



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.

Technical



CPD
15
Mins

Support

Don't forget, if you have any technical support queries, these should be emailed to our Support Log along with some photos so that we can provide the best advice as possible.

Your query can be logged directly with the Support Log at: <http://support.quidos.co.uk>.

Or email: support@quidos.co.uk

Don't forget, we have loads of support information on our Support Log knowledge base!

Quidos Technical Support Log

[Home](#)[Solutions](#)[Tickets](#)

How can we help you today?

[SEARCH](#)[+ New support ticket](#)[📄 Check ticket status](#)

Knowledge base

How do I access the Quidos Support Team?

support@quidos.co.uk (2)

[How do I access the Quidos Support Team?](#)[Have you checked the RdSAP Conventions?](#)

Technical Support Publications

Technical Bulletins (17)

[Quidos Technical Bulletin - 16/08/2018](#)[Quidos Technical Bulletin - 20/06/2018](#)[Quidos Technical Bulletin - 29/03/2018](#)[Quidos Technical Bulletin - 19/02/2018](#)[Quidos Technical Bulletin - 22/01/2018](#)[» See all 17 articles](#)

Listed Buildings (1)

[Quidos Guidance on Listed Buildings for Energy Assessors](#)

Helpsheets (7)

[The Appropriate Use of RdSAP](#)[QA Bulletin: Stock Images and Implications of Use](#)[TS003 - Addenda to EPCs](#)[TS001 - Energy Efficiency Regulations](#)[TS002 - Solar PV inputs to iQ-Energy](#)[» See all 7 articles](#)

MEES (1)

[Energy Efficiency \(Private Rented Property\) Regulations \(also known as MEE...](#)