



# Home buyers and sellers guide to Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs)



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The EPC is a compulsory document included in a Home Information Pack (HIP). Anyone putting up a home for sale will need to commission a HIP which must include and Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) based on the energy assessment of their home.

The Government is introducing Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) to give consumers information about the energy efficiency of a home they are considering buying.



## What is an Energy Performance Certificate?

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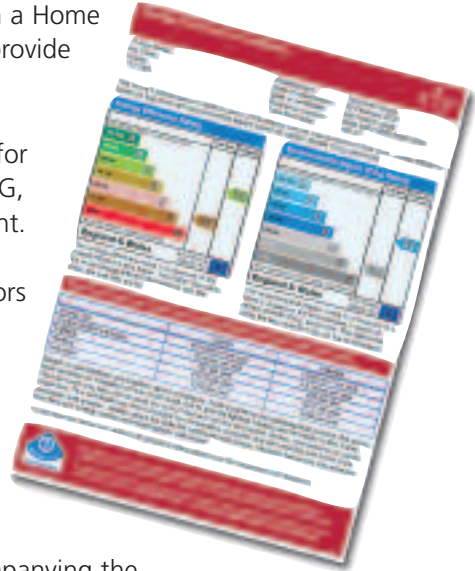
The EPC is a compulsory document included in a Home Information Pack which a seller must, by law provide when putting their property on the market.

The EPC will show an energy efficiency rating for the energy performance of a home from A to G, where A is very efficient and G is very inefficient. This is similar to the ratings now displayed on sale for domestic appliances such as refrigerators and washing machines.

The rating is based on factors such as age, property layout, construction, heating, lighting, and insulation. The ratings are standard so the energy efficiency of one home can easily be compared with another.

The average rating for a home is a D/E. Accompanying the energy efficiency rating is an environmental impact rating of the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions relating to the property.

A recommendation report forms part of the certificate and it provides a range of improvement measures which could improve the home's energy performance.



## When should it be made available to buyers?

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An EPC must be available to potential buyers when they view a property or receive any information regarding a property.

Buyers should expect to see the energy efficiency rating from the EPC on any particulars provided by an estate agent. The EPC itself will be available as part of the HIP when properties are viewed or any information is provided.

The EPC must be no more than 3 years old when the property is put on the market.

## Is the EPC only required in a HIP?

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From 1 October 2008, EPCs will be required for all new tenants of rental property and also for the non-marketed sales of homes.

## How do I get an Energy Performance Certificate?

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EPCs can only be produced by an accredited energy assessor. They may be employed (for example by an estate agent, an energy company or a HIP provider), or be independent traders. You should always confirm that your assessor belongs to an accreditation scheme, as this ensures your energy assessor is operating to professional standards and that your certificate meets legal requirements. Each EPC has a unique number and will be entered onto a national register by the energy assessor.

## What does an Energy Inspection involve?

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Once you have requested an EPC from an accredited energy assessor, the assessor will contact you to arrange a convenient time to visit your property. During the assessment the energy assessor will need to inspect your home and collect information. This will include external or internal measurements, details about the construction, and the type of heating/hot water used in your home.

The assessor will need to access all rooms, the boiler and the loft. The assessor may need to take photographs of items such as heaters and meters.

The assessment of a 3 bed property takes up to 60 minutes; larger or complex properties can take longer.





## Getting ready for the assessment

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Gathering supporting information before the assessor visits will ensure you get the most accurate rating for your property. Without supporting information or evidence, the assessor may not be able to take account of relevant features during the assessment e.g. insulation which is not visible.

The assessor will want to know:

- When the property was built (searches or deeds may provide evidence)
- Whether or not your property has been extended and when
- If it has been double glazed, any certificates that may be available
- Whether the walls have been insulated and if so whether this is cavity, internal or external insulation
- Boilers and hot water cylinders – when these were installed and any manuals you may have
- Location of room thermostats and heating timers
- Location of gas and electricity meters
- The type of heating fuel you use and the types of heating you use for your rooms.

After the visit, the assessor will feed the information gathered during the assessment into a Government approved software programme which will produce your EPC and a recommendation report.

Information about your home on the EPC is protected from unlawful disclosure.

## What sort of recommendations will be made and what do they mean?

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The recommendation report includes cost-effective recommendations split into low cost improvements (up to £500) and high cost improvements (over £500).

Cost-effective improvement recommendations for a home could include:

- Use of low energy light bulbs
- Loft insulation
- Installation of double glazing
- Installation of a condensing boiler

Alongside each improvement recommended in the report is an approximate cost, a typical cost saving per year and the performance rating after undertaking the improvement.

In certain circumstances, grants are available to implement cost-effective recommendations. Contact the Energy Saving Trust helpline on 0800 512012 or your local council for more information.

The recommendation report also includes more advanced energy improvements that could be applied to a home to achieve the highest possible energy efficiency standards. Many of these will have a much longer payback period.

## Do I have to act on the recommendations?

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The recommendations are for you (and your prospective buyer). You are under no obligation to act on the recommendations. However, taking action on the recommendations is likely to improve the energy efficiency of your property and reduce your fuel bills.

## What happens if I am dissatisfied with the energy assessment or EPC?

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If you are concerned about any aspect of the energy assessment or the quality or accuracy of the EPC you should initially contact the Energy Assessor. If you are still concerned you should then contact the accreditation body of your Energy Assessor. You can find contact details on your EPC.

If you have viewed a property or are commencing purchase of a property and an EPC has not been made available to you on request, contact Consumer Direct on 08454 04 05 06 or visit [www.consumerdirect.gov.uk](http://www.consumerdirect.gov.uk)

To locate an Accredited Energy Assessor in your area: [www.epcregister.com](http://www.epcregister.com)



## For further information:

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### **Energy Performance Certificates:**

Communities and Local Government  
[www.communities.gov.uk/epbd](http://www.communities.gov.uk/epbd)

### **Home Information Packs**

[www.homeinformationpacks.gov.uk](http://www.homeinformationpacks.gov.uk)

For further information about energy efficiency,  
practical advice and grants:

### **Energy Savings Trust**

[www.est.org.uk](http://www.est.org.uk)  
ACT ON CO<sub>2</sub> advice line: 0800 512012

A Welsh translation is available on request by calling 0870 1226 236.  
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