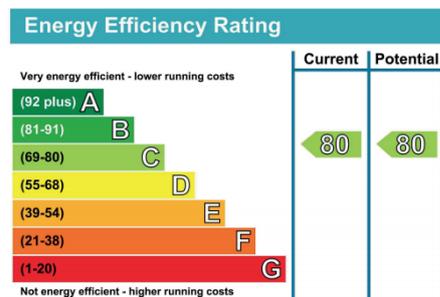


Domestic Energy Performance Certificates

What are they and what do they tell you about a property?

- An Energy Performance Certificate or EPC is a certificate which shows how energy efficient a property is. The certificate is rated from G, very poor to A, excellent. It is based on energy costs per m² assuming typical occupancy, i.e. what it should cost to power the dwelling rather than the current occupiers actual energy use.
- The certificate also includes a summary of those areas where efficiency can be improved, the estimated costs and the possible savings they will make.
- The certificate is produced by a qualified and accredited Domestic Energy Assessor..
- The survey takes approximately 60 minutes to conduct and will look at the size of the living space, construction of the property, what insulation is evident, lighting, the heating and it's controls.
- Access to all rooms is required.
- Every fixed light fitting is counted and the number of low energy bulbs in use. (Low energy bulbs are either LED type, Compact florescent (CFT) or normal florescent tubes.) Halogen bulbs are not classed as energy efficient.
- A head and shoulders inspection of all loft spaces if possible is required to assess the depth of loft insulation (current minimum recommendation is 270mm,) and whether it is laid across joists or affixed to the rafters. The assessor will also try to establish where appropriate what kind of wall divides the property from next door and also the construction of the outside walls; are they solid, cavity and if cavity what evidence there is that the cavity has been insulated? If solid walls is there evidence of internal or external insulation? The nature of the floors is also established. Are they solid or suspended? If solid the age of the property will help to establish if the floors contain any insulation and if suspended the question will be asked is there any under floor insulation?
- Next a visual inspection of the windows is made. Are they single, double, triple or secondary glazed. If installed after 2002 there should be a FENSA certificate which can be used as evidence. Any conservatory glazing will also be inspected.



- A major part of the survey is the heating system. The surveyor will look at any central heating boilers and assess their age (older boilers are less energy efficient) and look for heating system controls, e.g. time clocks, hot water tank thermostats and any tank insulation, radiator and room thermostats etc. They will also note any additional heating such as open or closed solid fuel stoves, log burners, coal effect gas fires etc. and if there are electric storage heaters.
- The height of ceilings is measured and the dimensions of the property taken to create a rough sketch plan, including any extensions and alterations.
- Questions may also be asked to gain information that is not obvious. When was the property built, has the loft been converted into a room and if so when, have the cavity walls been insulated (it's not always obvious) and has any heat recovery technology been installed? Evidence of work done is important and detailed receipts to show the work done, thickness of additional insulation etc. and even photographs are useful.
- Where evidence is lacking, the surveyor will say "assumed." E.G. assumed cavity walls of an older house are uninsulated.
- Surveys only look at the energy efficiency of the building and heating system, but as a gesture towards carbon emissions reduction they now say "You might be able to receive Renewable Heat Incentive payments. This will help to reduce carbon emissions by replacing your existing heating system with one that generates renewable heat."
- ◇ The average EPC rating of homes in the U.K. is D.
- ◇ It is a legal requirement for the seller of a property to have an up to date EPC, (they last for 10 years then have to be renewed.)
- ◇ Landlords must have an EPC rating of their property of E or above before it can be re-let or an existing tenancy can be renewed but they can however apply for exemptions if it is too expensive to bring a property up to an E or if there are planning constraints limiting some of the measures that can be taken (e.g. it's a listed building).

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- ◇ It is possible to search for the EPC of a property using its postcode at
- ◇ <https://find-energy-certificate.digital.communities.gov.uk>
- ◇ Estate Agents can arrange for an EPC but the above link will also provide details of local assessors.
- ◇ Surveys cost from approximately £50.00
- ◇ If the quality or accuracy of an EPC is questioned, contact the energy assessor in the first instance and if the matter is not resolved, contact the accreditation scheme of the energy assessor who produced the EPC. Contact details of both the assessor and accreditation scheme can be found on the EPC certificate.