

Display Energy Certificates and Advisory Reports Quality Assurance Requirements England, Wales & Northern Ireland Effective Date: 1st July 2012

Sampling Approach

Random Sampling

Overall, a minimum of 2% of lodged DEC and Advisory Reports must be audited by Schemes through a process of random sampling. The method of assessing these DEC and Advisory Reports will be a desk-based audit which complies with the requirements set out in this document.

All members will be subject to a minimum check of one DEC and Advisory Report within a six month period, unless there are no lodgements in that period. The periods are: January 1st to June 30th, July 1st to December 31st.

All new members will be assessed within their first 30 days of membership. If there are no lodgements during this period, the first available DEC and Advisory Report will be audited. Following this, the sampling rate for new members will be a minimum of 5% of lodged DEC during the first six months of their membership. 'New members' are those who are:

- a) New to the EPBD
- b) Or new to the Scheme, unless they are currently members of a Scheme or Schemes and that checks with all Schemes which they have Membership or have found that the individual is not subject to heightened QA by another Scheme
- c) Or have not lodged in the previous six months

Targeted Sampling

In the event that an assessor fails their initial audit, they will be subject to the targeted auditing of two further DEC and Advisory Reports, lodged within the 30 day period prior to the initial audit failure. If this is not possible, the Scheme will select two Reports for audit from the subsequent 30 days or the next two Reports to be lodged if this time period is exceeded. The replacement DEC and Advisory Reports associated with any failure should also be audited.

Additional Audits

In addition to random and targeted audits (detailed above), a Scheme is expected to request



additional audits under the following circumstances:

Consumer Complaints – These would normally result in an audit of the Report in question.

High Lodgement Rates – Where an assessor lodges a particularly high number of Reports in any three month period, the Scheme is expected to undertake checks to ensure that the assessor has visited the properties.

Other Risk Factors – The Scheme shall intervene if they come to believe that an assessor is at risk of lodging erroneous DEC's or Advisory Reports for any reason. An acceptable intervention in these cases as a minimum would be to call for an audit of the assessor's next DEC/Advisory report.

Failure of Audits

If an assessor passes both targeted audits triggered by the initial audit failure, they will revert to the audit schedule appropriate to their status as either a new or established member.

If an assessor fails one of the two targeted audits triggered by the initial audit failure, the Scheme will make a judgement as to the remedial action, based on the seriousness of the failure. This may result in a request for additional auditing, the need for CPD or an accompanied site visit with a representative of the Scheme.

If an assessor fails both of the two targeted audits triggered by the initial audit failure, the assessor is automatically suspended until the Scheme is satisfied that appropriate remedial action has been taken to correct the assessor's lack of knowledge.

Auditing Regime after Return from Suspension

If the Scheme is satisfied that the failure of both targeted audits is due to issues of a minor nature, the assessor will revert to the audit schedule appropriate to their status as either a new or established member.

In all other cases, the assessor will be subject to whichever is the greater of the following:

- A 10% clear auditing regime for a period of six months, subject to the audit of at least five DEC's
- An audit of five clear DEC's or Advisory Reports within the six month period following

return

- The next 5 DEC's or Advisory Reports

Provision of QA Evidence

Requests for QA audits will normally be sent out to assessors via e-mail.

Assessors must ensure that all necessary evidence is submitted to Elmhurst **within 15 working days** of the initial request.

Evidence may be submitted via post or e-mail. E-mail is subject to all evidence being contained in a single e-mail.

Where an assessor is on leave, off sick or some similar reason, and it is not possible to meet the fifteen working day submission limit, a time extension can be allowed, at the Scheme's discretion, which will allow the assessor an additional 5 days to provide the requested evidence after their return to work. In order for this to be considered, the assessor must contact the Scheme prior to the expiry of the initial fifteen working day period.

Failure to provide the requested evidence within fifteen working days of the original request, or a reasonable case for its non-availability will result in the immediate suspension of the assessor.

Where a suspended assessor subsequently provides the requested evidence, they will also be subject to one additional audit which will either be selected from all EPC's lodged within the previous two months or one of the next five lodged by the assessor.

Audit Feedback

In all instances of a DEC & Advisory Report audit, the Scheme will provide feedback to the assessor via e-mail.

Accuracy Requirements

The rating error (sum of absolute errors) shall be judged to be correct if the absolute rating is within either 5% of the rating calculated by the QAA or within 5 absolute points. In all other instances, the DEC shall be judged to be defective.

The 'truth' will be assessed by the Scheme's QA auditors, be supported by appropriate evidence

and be based on the software conventions provided at the time the DEC was produced.

Additionally 90% of randomly sampled Advisory Reports must meet the required standard.

The DEC will be deemed to be 'defective' and the audit failed when any of the following issues are noted:

- The sum of the absolute errors between the assessor's and QA auditor's OR rating is more than 5% or 5 absolute points
- An incorrect benchmark, measurement or assessment period has been selected (without adequate justification)
- Lack of evidence of energy consumption
- Lack of suitable evidence for extended occupancy
- The Separable Energy use cannot be justified or has been inaccurately assessed
- The Total Usable Floor area is incorrectly validated
- The appropriate CIP file has not been used
- If errors in the building's description/survey for the Advisory Report would result in a change in the recommendations made
- The building's description is demonstrably incorrect, subject to the software's ability to account for the correct description, as seen by the Assessor
- An acceptable standard of English has not been used in the Advisory Report
- The evidence provided is deemed insufficient (i.e. the DEC or Advisory Report could not be recreated)
- For an Asset Rating DEC, the period of occupation is greater than 15 months from the first day of occupation, to the nominated date
- Year Two DEC – If the assessor has not visited the site or cannot provide evidence that they created the 1st year DEC and that nothing has changed in the period since this was created. This also applies to subsequent years
- The Carbon Impacts within the Advisory Report should be reviewed and any inappropriate selections advised to the assessor. The failure of the Advisory Report will be at Elmhurst's discretion.

Mandatory Re-lodgement of Defective DEC's

If an audited DEC or Advisory Report is deemed to be 'defective', the assessor will be informed and a mandatory re-lodgement will be required. The assessor must notify Elmhurst of the RRN of the replacement DEC or Advisory Report and instruct the cancellation of the original in order that it can be removed from the register.

The assessor must ensure that the mandatory re-lodgement is completed **within 15 working days** of notification by the Scheme. Failure to comply within this timescale will result in the suspension of the assessor and continued refusal to replace the defective certificate may lead to expulsion from the Scheme.

Appeals Process

Should an assessor wish to challenge the result of a QA audit, appeals should be forwarded to our QA Administrator at NDEA-QA@elmhurstenergy.co.uk stating the reasons why the assessor believes that the audit result is incorrect.

Please note that failure due to the non-provision of mandatory survey evidence, or provision of insufficient evidence, does not constitute grounds for appeal.

Expulsion from the Scheme

Where an assessor does not respond appropriately to the suspension process, or where there are repeated incidents of suspension which demonstrate a lack of competence or failure of corrective actions, the assessor may face expulsion from the Scheme.