



Understanding the Energy Performance Certificate

What the certificate tells you about a property

Whether you wish to buy or to rent: the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) is one of the first documents you will receive for a property. At first glance it looks technical, yet it gives you a good sense of the energy costs you can expect. We will take our time to show you what really matters when you read it.

— BASICS

Requirement and validity

When a property is sold or let, the Energy Performance Certificate is required by law and must be available to prospective buyers and tenants at the viewing at the latest. As a rule it remains valid for ten years. A current certificate is a good sign that the documents for the property are well kept and complete.

— KEY FIGURE

The value in kilowatt hours

The central figure is the final energy demand or consumption in kilowatt hours per square metre per year. As a rule of thumb: the lower the value, the more economical the building. This figure helps you to compare different properties in broad terms before you go into detail.

— LIMITS

Guidance, not an expert report

As helpful as the certificate is: it remains a guide and does not replace an energy survey. Your later consumption also depends on your own heating behaviour and on how the property is used. See the figures, therefore, as a point of reference, not as an exact forecast of your future running costs.

— TWO TYPES

Demand or consumption

There are two versions, and they differ considerably. The demand-based certificate calculates the energy requirement from the building fabric and the technical installations, that is, independently of who lives in the house. The consumption-based certificate, by contrast, relies on the actual consumption of previous occupants and therefore depends on their heating habits. For this reason, first check which type you have in front of you.

— SCALE

Classes from A+ to H

On the coloured scale, the efficiency classes run from A+ for very economical houses to H for buildings with a high energy demand. Green stands for efficient, red for less efficient. The certificate also states the year of construction and the main energy source, for example natural gas, district heating or electricity for a heat pump. This helps you to put the values in context.

— WHAT TO NOTE

Asking the right questions

Take a look at the modernisation recommendations that many certificates contain. With older buildings it is worth asking about refurbishments already carried out or planned, for example to the roof, the windows or the heating. We are glad to review the details with you and to relate them to the particular property.

The Energy Performance Certificate is a good signpost, yet the full picture of a property only emerges on site.

LET'S TALK

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