



Home Reports Explained

A Guide for Buyers and Sellers



Going Green

Scotland's homes account for a third of its greenhouse gas emissions. One of the biggest barriers to reducing our carbon footprint is that home owners and tenants often don't know how energy efficient their home is or what they can do to improve matters.

Home Reports will help bridge this information gap and are a significant step forward on the road to low-carbon footprint homes in Scotland. You can start making energy savings right now by making a few simple changes:

Switch to energy saving light bulbs. They last 10 times longer than standard bulbs.

Insulate your hot water tank with a jacket. It pays for itself within months.

Switch to a high efficiency boiler and save on your heating bills.

Insulate wall cavities and you won't lose around a third of the heat from your home.

Always look for the Energy Saving Recommended logo on new appliances.

Why wait. Start making a difference now!

Calculate your carbon

To find out your home's contribution to climate change, use the Carbon Calculator found at

<http://actonco2.direct.gov.uk>
to calculate your own carbon footprint.

All change in the property market

In an effort to encourage a fairer and greener housing market, the Government has introduced legislation which means that from 1 December 2008, properties for sale in Scotland will have to be marketed with a Home Report.

Why do we need Home Reports?

Commissioned by the seller, a Home Report will provide detailed information about the condition and value of a property before offers are made and expenses incurred.

Prospective buyers, especially those buying for the first time, are not always aware of the true cost of owning and maintaining a home. A lack of understanding about long term maintenance or repairs can mean real problems for those on a tight budget.

The Home Report will also provide comprehensive energy efficiency information which will help save money on energy bills and provide a better appreciation of the environmental impact of individual homes.

Access to more information about the condition of a property from the outset is essential to ensure purchasers know exactly what they are buying into.

“Buying a house is, for most people, the largest investment they make in their lives and we believe that the buyer should have good, professional information about its condition and value before making an offer.”

Stewart Maxwell
Communities Minister

The home report



The Home Report will include three important documents:

The Property Questionnaire is completed by the seller of the home, probably with the assistance of their selling agent. It contains information about the home that will be useful for buyers and surveyors.



The Single Survey contains an assessment by a surveyor of the condition of the home, a valuation and an accessibility audit for people with particular needs.



The Energy Report contains an assessment by a surveyor of the energy efficiency of the home and its environmental impact. It also recommends ways to improve its energy efficiency.

Each of these documents is explained in more detail over the next few pages.

"The Home Report will be an immediate benefit to first-time buyers who often have to spend several hundred pounds in order to find out whether they can, or indeed should, buy a home."

Julia Clarke
Which?

Some questions answered

Q Do I need a Home Report if I sell my property before 1 December 2008?

A No. Home Reports apply only to properties placed on the market from the commencement date of 1 December 2008.

Q Who pays for the Home Report?

A The seller is responsible for the cost of the Home Report.

Q How "old" can Home Report documents be when a property is put on the market?

A Documents should be no more than 12 weeks old when a property is put on the market.

Q How quickly must a seller or their agent comply with a request for a Home Report from a prospective buyer?

A The person responsible for marketing a property must provide a copy of any or all of the documents within 9 calendar days of the initial request.

Q What can buyers do if a Home Report is not provided?

A If a buyer believes that they are being denied a copy of the Home Report unlawfully, local authority trading standards officers are responsible for enforcement of the legislation. Failure to comply could lead to a £500 fine.

Q What happens if the survey identifies a problem with my property?

A Sellers can:

a) Do nothing b) Fix the problem c) Obtain information on the cost or process for fixing the problem and make it available to the buyer

To learn more about Home Reports and the relevant legislation visit the Scottish Government's website at: www.homereportscotland.gov.uk

Exceptions

Any home which meets one of the following criteria does NOT require to have a Home Report prepared:

New housing

Homes sold “off-plan” to first purchaser or to first occupier.

Newly converted premises

New conversions not previously used in their converted state.

Sales involving no external marketing

Would include private sales, properties without vacant possession and “Right to Buy” properties.

Seasonal and holiday accommodation

Refers only to properties with permission for use during less than 11 months of the year.

Portfolio of residential properties

A home which is to be sold along with one or more other homes.

“Mixed sales”

Applies to homes sold with one or more non-residential properties.

Dual use of a dwelling house

Applies where a property is used for both residential and commercial purposes.

Unsafe properties

Properties marketed as unsuitable for occupation in their present condition.

Properties to be demolished

Properties marketed with the necessary consents for demolition and re-development.

The Property Questionnaire

The Property Questionnaire contains information for home buyers, solicitors and surveyors. It will include, for example, information about:

- A home's council tax band
- Parking facilities
- Factoring arrangements,
- Any local authority notices that affect it
- Details of alterations that have been made to the property

This type of information will not only help buyers to decide whether to submit an offer to purchase a property but will also reduce the risk of delay and difficulties in the conveyancing process.

The image shows two overlapping versions of the 'Property Questionnaire' form. The top form is the cover page, featuring a blue header with a circular logo containing a 'Q' and the text 'property questionnaire'. Below the header are several input fields for 'Address', 'Date', and 'Selling agent's name and contact details'. The bottom form is the 'Notes for sellers' page, which includes a list of questions with checkboxes for 'Yes' and 'No'. The questions cover topics such as council tax band, parking facilities, factoring arrangements, local authority notices, and property alterations. A small Scottish flag logo is visible in the bottom right corner of the bottom form.

"We are convinced that in a few years time the new system will seem unremarkable, and we will wonder why it took us so long to finally adopt a more commonsense approach."

Sarah O'Neill
Scottish Consumer Council

The Single Survey

The Single Survey gives sellers detailed information about the condition and value of a home before it is marketed for sale.

By highlighting any major problems to sellers at an initial stage, it provides an opportunity to address them early in the process.

It also gives buyers better information about the condition and value of a home before they make an offer to purchase.

By including an accessibility audit within the Single Survey, Scotland becomes the first country to require that the accessibility features of every home for sale are highlighted to potential buyers.



“Ownership Options welcomes the introduction of the Home Report which will include an access audit within the Single Survey. This information will benefit parents with young children and older people, as well as disabled people”

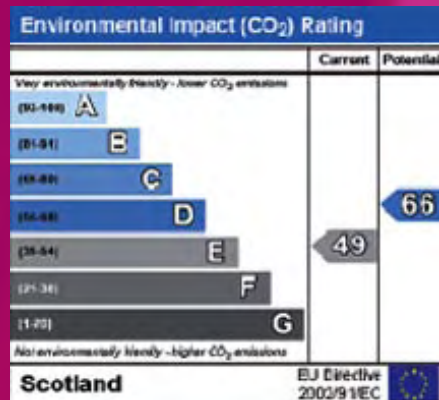
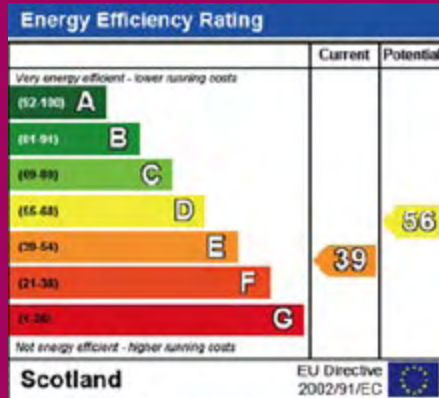
Richard Hamer
Ownership Options in Scotland

The Energy Report

The Energy Report provides a home with an energy efficiency rating along with its environmental impact in terms of carbon emissions.

It recommends ways to improve the property's energy rating and gives contact details for further general advice on how to make the home more energy efficient and save on fuel costs.

By being able to compare energy costs between homes and having practical advice on reducing carbon emissions and saving on energy bills, home buyers are better placed to make informed "green" choices.



"We warmly welcome the introduction of the Energy Report as a vital step on the road to low-carbon homes for all in Scotland."

Stuart Hay
Friends of the Earth Scotland



Countrywide, Principal Office, 71 Candleriggs, Glasgow G1 1NP.

Tel: 0141 552 8125

Fax: 0141 552 6546

Email: headoffice@countrywidenorth.co.uk

