



THIS MONTH
SBEM 6.1 goes live soon and there will be issues for clients
We talk about the (rectifiable) problems with Retrofit

The national organisation supporting and representing energy assessors and associated professionals



Support

Here when you need us with our peer support

Highly regarded industry forum

Extensive knowledge and experience you can draw upon

Help, advice and guidance

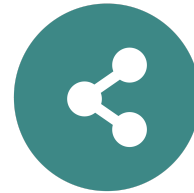


Representation

The national voice of energy assessors

Engaging with accreditation schemes and government departments on your behalf

Representing the interests of assessors on the conventions and other similar groups



Other Benefits

Industry leading Find A Member directory to generate enquiries for members

Access to free and reduced cost training or CPD

Discounts on software, training, CPD and registration fees with a number of organisations

There will be some big rating changes for non-domestic

buildings when SBEM 6.1 goes live

(Are you ready for the fallout?)

With an expected go-live date of 15th June 2022 this is not far away and not enough is being said about the impact. The biggest thing to note is that the carbon intensities are finally being updated to reflect the decarbonisation of grid supplied electricity which is undoubtedly good.

Unfortunately, because it has been left unchanged for so long, 10 years or more of decarbonisation will be corrected for in a single update. It appears that electricity changes from being (in the region of) twice as bad as gas to slightly better than gas.

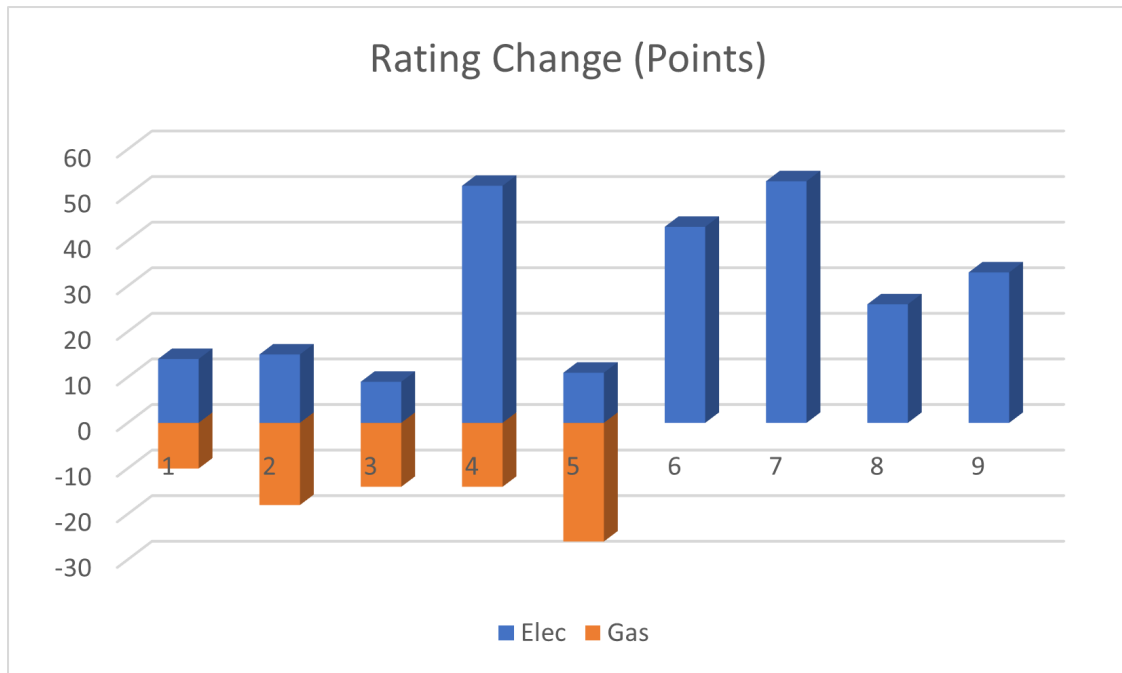
Going forward, we will no longer be penalising electricity and promoting gas while government strategy is exactly the opposite. SBEM 6.1 is a major step forwards in bringing the EPC rating into line with reality as grid supplied electricity has been significantly decarbonised. This is something Proficiency (and previously DCHI) has long been arguing for. However, there is a downside to the way this has been implemented in a single hit.

For some buildings there will be a step change in EPC rating as we move to SBEM 6.1. Certain types of building that are not meeting the minimum energy efficiency standard (MEES) using current software (typically electrically heated buildings) could easily exceed it, simply by re-running the EPC in the new software. Conversely, other types of buildings (most significantly gas heated) will fall below the minimum standard if re-assessed, having previously exceeded it.

How big an issue this will be is dependent on two main factors.

- 1) The characteristics of the building. This change this will only make a significant difference to some types of building.
- 2) How long before the changeover an EPC has been produced. It will be much harder to justify having 'failed' a building and exposed a client to additional costs in the months, weeks or even days before it would 'pass' as it stands.

To illustrate how significant this could be, the chart below shows the rating improvement for electrically heated buildings and the rating deterioration for gas heated buildings (across a sample of 9 electrically heated and 5 gas heated).



Elmhurst in particular have been responsive to our concerns and we are appreciative of their efforts to help clarify the significance of the issue as above. We are expecting Elmhurst to be issuing a detailed analysis shortly and would encourage anyone with access to this to study it carefully.

We have also been asking schemes to consider how they are going to approach the lodgement of MEES compliant EPCs in the first few weeks of SBEM 6.1 on buildings that had non-compliant EPCs lodged shortly before the changeover date.

Starting with the question we raised at the PEPA Conference (which was not satisfactorily answered) we have been asking schemes to consider how they are going to approach the transition. In particular, the lodgement of MEES compliant EPCs in the first few weeks of SBEM 6.1 on buildings that had non-MEES compliant EPCs lodged shortly before the changeover date.

Some schemes appear to understand the issues but not all of them, so we expect some disparity in approach. However, discussions are ongoing in an effort to provide consistency between schemes.

[Read the original article here](#)

We are focussing on two big challenges for Retrofit, both of which appear to be easily resolvable (if there is the will)

The two issues we are currently working to address are:

- 1) Inconsistency between schemes and moving targets for Retrofit Assessors.
- 2) Lack of access to suppliers and funding streams for individual assessors and clients.

Inconsistency between schemes and moving targets for Retrofit Assessors.

In the EPC marketplace, the conventions documents serve two primary functions. Firstly, they give guidance to assessors on what to do in situations which may be open to interpretation. Secondly, and in many ways even more importantly, they set the principles against which all schemes must audit the work of their assessors.

The equivalent to the EPC conventions does not yet exist for Retrofit and we believe it is badly needed. Assessors need clarity on the many grey areas in PAS 2035, and schemes need to be held accountable for their auditing decisions by having clarity on what is expected.

Proficiency is working to get ahead of the game on this. By identifying where grey areas exist in PAS 2035 and where schemes are interpreting it differently, we can draft proposed conventions and seek to get them adopted. That way we can ensure the process starts from a position of what is practical for assessors in the real world.

In addition, Retrofit assessment is evolving. We have also picked up issues with assessors being failed at audit for not doing things that were not a requirement at the time the assessment was done. Where this has happened to members, we have been able to work with them to get audit failures overturned, but that is not good enough. This should not be happening in the first place.

Schemes need to be keeping proper records of how their requirements are changing and the dates they take effect. That must be taken into account at audit, so assessors are always measured against what was current at the date of assessment. There are enough hurdles in the way of Retrofit assessors without having to deal with defective audit processes.

It is necessary for us to understand what needs clarification, and what is being applied differently by different schemes. We can pick that up from members via our forum, but to ensure we also get the views of non-members we are encouraging the use of the [LinkedIn "Retrofit Professionals" group](#).

Lack of access to suppliers and funding streams for individual assessors and clients.

A barrier to the success of Retrofit is the over-reliance on a top-down delivery method. This is a failure of government to learn the lessons from the previous programmes, which either failed or under-delivered.

Large companies are given access to large amounts of funding to find groups of properties where they can install qualifying measures. They are only interested in projects of sufficient size to be highly profitable and where they can make what they provide fit the property.

We are not suggesting there is no place for this approach, however we believe that it needs to be counterbalanced. It excludes individual properties or those where there are not big margins to be made from the relevant measures. It also skews the market towards what is deliverable in volume rather than what is best suited to individual need. The Retrofit assessment becomes a sales tool and there is no getting away from the obvious pressure an assessor will be under to make it support what the provider offers.

Proficiency is seeking to engage with other stakeholders to create a bottom-up option that will level the playing field for individual assessors and their clients. It should be

possible to take a Retrofit assessment and use it to find the most appropriately matched provider and/or coordinator. This should also open the door to available funding streams for smaller projects.

Again, this is something that we would welcome input on and the best way to do so is to join the debates in the [LinkedIn "Retrofit Professionals" group](#).

[Join the debate here](#)

An hour of CPD every month included in your membership

As part of Proficiency membership, we provide at least an hour of relevant online CPD every month, at no additional cost. 12 hours or more of CPD every year is included for our members.

In addition to this, there are regularly additional topic specific CPD sessions organised in conjunction with industry partners that are either free or at significantly reduced cost to our members. Virtually all of your mandatory annual CPD requirement can be met at zero or minimal cost through your Proficiency membership.

Recent sessions covered developments for Residential Property Surveyors, an update on Retrofit from Trustmark themselves, an industry wide update session and Part L and SAP 10 changes.

Coming soon we have...

7th June 2022 - One hour CPD from Glen Dimplex, a global leader dedicated to the design and manufacture of sustainable, efficient and desirable heating and ventilation solutions.

Topics will include:

Product developments for the energy efficiency market and a more detailed look at the latest in hot water heat pump technology; when and where they are appropriate.

(The cost is £20 for non members. Included for members).

Attend just a few of these sessions and you will save much more than the annual cost of your membership.

[For more details or to book](#)

As we grow, our members are growing too.

Win business with your directory listing and profile page

The searchable directory of Proficiency members is designed to win you business of the type you want, and in your local area.

Unlike most online directories (many of which cost as much as Proficiency membership or even more), we always show visitors their closest match. Someone further away cannot jump up the list by paying more, and there is no promotion of national panels ahead of local assessors. The Proficiency directory is all about connecting local clients with local members.

In addition, users can filter for the service they are looking for so you are promoted if you do what they need.

Members also have a unique profile page to give you a web presence to promote yourself and your business, even if you do not have your own website.

Why pay for other directory listings when you can have a full feature listing and a profile page as part of your Proficiency membership? Check out the directory using the link below, then join us and get access to set up your own marketing on it.

[The Proficiency Directory](#)

Discounts with our industry partners

Not that you need any more reasons to join Proficiency, but we also have discounts for members set up with a number of key organisations. These include...

DesignBuilder - Discounts on software and training (plus a dedicated DesignBuilder support section on our forum).

Metropix - Discounts on the full range of one off or subscription packages on their floor plan software.

Stroma - Discounts on training, CPD and annual Retrofit scheme membership fees.

Elmhurst - Discounts on training and CPD plus trial periods on enhanced software options. Discount on new Retrofit scheme memberships.

There are plenty of opportunities for you to save far more than the cost of your membership. The sooner you join Proficiency, the sooner you will start to benefit.

(Even more membership benefits will be coming soon).

[Proficiency Membership Benefits](#)

Support and representation

The Proficiency forum is a powerful resource at your fingertips

- Ask a question and get knowledgeable advice from your peers - often including evenings and weekends.
- Keep up to date with what is happening in our industry
- Find out about work opportunities
- Hear about other free or low cost CPD you can access
- Be notified about funding sources and/or funded opportunities
- Communicate directly with the assessor representatives on the conventions groups
- Challenge advice you have received from accreditation schemes or other sources
- Request peer review of audit feedback if you think it is wrong
- And much more.....

Proficiency members are not alone. There is always somebody to turn to for advice.

[Join now and start to feel supported](#)

Keep up the pressure to change the validity rules for EPCs

It is time for our industry to address this, but with a more grown up approach than it has in the past.

Obviously, energy assessors would benefit from EPCs having to be renewed more frequently, but that is a major part of the problem. There is no reason for government to legislate a shorter validity to create more work opportunities for energy assessors. Asking them to do so is just going to be seen as self-serving and at Proficiency we believe this has already proven to be counterproductive.

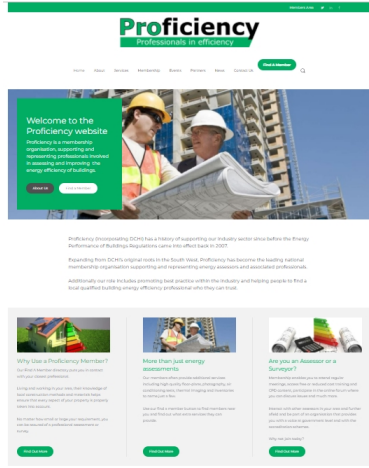
EPCs (or at least the figures on them) become less accurate over time but picking any age as the age at which they cease to be relevant is essentially arbitrary. If not 10 years, then how long and why?

A different approach is needed to addressing the fact that EPCs are being used that are no longer representative of the building. Just asking for the validity period to be reduced is not the answer.

If we want government to stop out of date EPCs being used, we need to change the message we are giving them.

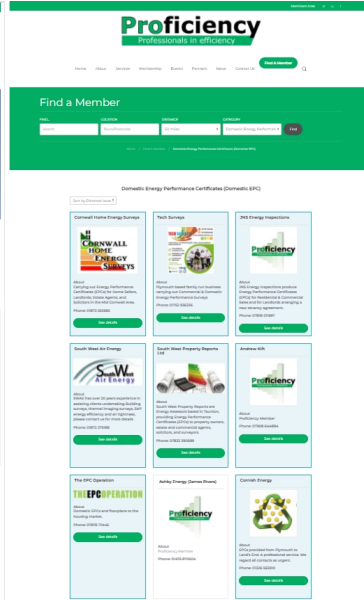
[Read the full article here](#)

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