

# JTEC Services

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## Response to the consultation on the extension of CERT from Linn Rafferty, DEA and independent consultant

Linn Rafferty is an accredited, independent Domestic Energy Assessor who has 12 years experience in the area of energy performance in buildings and provision of home energy advice. She was a member of DIAG (the Directive Implementation Advisory Group, set up to advise government on the implementation of the Energy Performance Directive) and helped to develop the Code of Practice for Domestic Energy Advice. Her response to this consultation is informed by her experience in the development of training, assessment and accreditation in this area, and covers questions 5, 6, 7, 13 & 14, relating to the provision of Home Energy Advice

### Summary

Provision of advice by well qualified individuals is central to achieving the Government's targets for carbon reduction. I worked with others to develop the Code of Practice for Domestic Energy Advice, intended to promote good practice, and built on extensive research that showed what methods achieved results. However, good practice is expensive, and as a result, the standards in the Code have not yet been mandated, nor has the Code itself been supported by any policing.

We are now at a stage of development where Government has the opportunity to mandate good quality energy efficiency advice provided by well qualified advisers, and this opportunity should be taken. The National Occupational Standards for Housing Energy Advisers have been created specifically to underpin a new qualification for such advisers, taking note of the requirements of the Code of Practice and other applicable standards and qualifications. This new qualification is now in development and will be available shortly. In my view, it is this qualification that should form the basis for energy advice under CERT.

In order to promote confidence in the energy advice given, qualified advisers should be required to join an Accreditation or Certification Scheme. The accrediting body should be tasked with maintaining high standards, consistent with those contained in the Code of Practice. In this respect, the suggestion that DEAs may provide a suitable cohort for the delivery of energy advice is appropriate, because they are already accredited with accreditation schemes. Such schemes should be able to quickly extend their operations into this related area, avoiding delays whilst providing appropriate reassurances to those receiving advice.

**Question 5.** Do you agree with the proposal to give home energy advice a fixed score under CERT, and do you agree with the score proposed?

**Answer YES**

I understand that to allow energy advice to be included in CERT, it must carry a fixed score in respect of its carbon savings. As a longstanding member of the Energy Efficiency Partnership for Homes Energy Advice Providers Group, I am aware of research that we commissioned to estimate the savings from behavioural changes as a result of receiving energy advice. This research, completed in 2004, showed that average savings were 0.494 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> per year amongst those who acted on any advice received<sup>1</sup>. That average yearly savings of this size were found, should give some confidence that the suggested figure (of 0.675 lifetime tonnes of carbon dioxide over seven years) is a supportable, conservative estimate. In my view it is better to proceed on this basis than to delay the provision of advice for want of a more robust estimate.

<sup>1</sup> Energy Efficiency Partnership for Homes: "energy conscious behaviour saves money", ref EP24 published March 2005. This may be downloaded from <http://www.goodenergyadvice.org.uk/index.aspx>

**Question 6.** Do you agree with the proposal that the Domestic Energy Assessor qualification should form the basis for provision of CERT advice? If not, please state your reasons and suggest alternatives.

**Answer NO/YES depending on the exact meaning of the question**

Is the consultation proposing that the current DEA qualification is the only qualification needed by an energy adviser? If so, then the answer is NO, because the role and competencies of a DEA do not normally include provision of energy advice to householders. Alternatively, if by "basis for" the consultation proposes that the DEA qualification is the starting point and extra training and assessment will qualify a DEA as a Home Energy Adviser, then my response would be YES.

DEAs are not qualified to give energy advice by virtue of their DEA qualification. The current National Occupational Standards (NOS) for DEAs contain only one minor reference to the provision of advice, and as a result, advice giving is not assessed as part of the current DEA qualifications. This is why Communities and Local Government has been working with Asset Skills, DEAs and others to develop the basis for a new qualification for Home Energy Advisers<sup>2</sup>.

This new qualification is founded on National Occupational Standards which have been specifically created for this role and are now ready for early approval. A Qualification is being created now based on these standards and is expected to be available to trainees by early June.

As both a DEA and an expert on the provision of energy advice, I can confirm that the ability to assess the energy performance of a home provides the essential underpinning evidence that allows for good energy advice to be provided. This requirement, for a valid energy inspection of the property prior to giving advice, is a critical part of the section of the Code of Practice dealing with the provision of energy advice in the home. The Code requires this, for the very good reason that energy advice provided without this underpinning information is likely to be regarded as imprecise, not appropriate to the householder's specific circumstances, not valued, and not acted on.

There is no reason to accept any lower standard of qualification for the delivery of home energy advice within CERT than that now being developed against bespoke standards that specifically relate to this area.

**Question 7.** Government is keen to explore methods of encouraging persistence of behavioural changes beyond a one-off visit, e.g. through additional contact by telephone, the provision of a real-time display, or signing a customer onto an energy saving tariff. We would welcome stakeholders' views and will explore this further as part of the consultation process.

**Answer follows:**

The Code of Practice for Domestic Energy Advice<sup>3</sup> advocates, but cannot mandate, the provision of follow up services to those who have been advised. This is because such follow up has been shown to be effective in increasing take up of measures (as part of the research cited earlier in this response). The proposed qualification for Home Energy Advisers includes a full module on the competencies, knowledge and understanding needed to effectively support and monitor clients who have received energy advice.

I believe that two components are required in CERT, to ensure effective follow up: firstly, energy advice within CERT should only be provided by qualified Home Energy Advisers; secondly, follow up services should be provided as a mandatory requirement of claiming the carbon savings within CERT.

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<sup>2</sup> For clarity: the NOS use the term Housing Energy Adviser to refer to a Home Energy Adviser. For more information see <http://www.assetskills.org/QualificationsAndStandards/Consultations/EnergyAdvisorConsultation.asp>

<sup>3</sup> For more information on the Code refer to <http://www.goodenergyadvice.org.uk/>

**Question 13.** Do you agree with the Government's proposal to seek additional information on the delivery of measures under CERT?

**Answer YES**

Because this extension to CERT introduces a measure, home energy advice, with less well documented carbon savings, a sensible, notional carbon saving has been allocated to it for the purpose of the CERT credit. It would be sensible to report actual carbon savings achieved, in order to improve the accuracy of this initial carbon saving score.

**Question 14.** Do you have views on how best to achieve this objective?

**Answer YES**

Fully qualified Home Energy Advisers are competent to monitor these savings, having been assessed for this as part of their qualification, and they will use prescribed software for this purpose. Software assists with the collection of data and its safe lodgement, allowing it to be accessed for future use. It should be mandatory that only fully qualified Home Energy Advisers may deliver home energy advice within CERT, and follow up and monitoring should also be required, in order for the carbon savings to be claimed.

**Linn Rafferty, DEA and independent consultant**

**14 April 2009**