



Welcome to the first issue of the HBR *Factsheet*

The final deadline for the current version of the HSV is fast approaching. From the 1st of April this year, the new HomeBuyer Report will be the only RICS product Chartered Surveyors will be able to use. To help you prepare for the new format, BlueBox partners will regularly publish this HBR Factsheet. Each one will cover a different topic currently creating the most debate at our HBR workshops. This issue looks at developing consistent condition rating.

The BlueBox Condition Rating Protocol

To help you develop a consistent approach to condition rating, we have produced a 'Condition Rating Protocol'. This is not an official procedure but a method we find useful. When you are assessing a particular element, apply the following two stage process:

Stage One - is the element in a satisfactory condition?

If the answer is yes, and there are no indications of present or suspected defects that require the undertaking of a specific repair, it is a condition rating one. If the building element needs to be repaired, replaced or investigated, then you should move on to the questions in Stage Two.

Stage Two - deciding between CR2 and CR3

The purpose of this stage is to decide between a condition rating two or three. Six questions will help you identify the critical features of the problem:

- Does the problem spoil the intended function of the building element?
- Has the defect caused structural failure or serious defects in other building elements?
- Has the defect compromised the structural integrity of the element?
- Are urgent repairs or replacements needed now?
- Does the defect seriously and directly threaten the health and safety of the building users?
- Does the problem require further investigation?

If you answer 'no' to most of these questions, then condition rating two is likely to be appropriate.

Alternatively, if your response is 'Yes' to one or more statements, condition rating three may be applicable.

This is not a precise science and it does not give the 'right answer'. Instead, it gives you a decision making tool that gets you in the right 'ball-park'. Although it encourages an objective approach,

there is enough flexibility for you to apply your own professional judgment in marginal cases. If you make a record of this process, it provides you with a permanent 'audit trail' on your file to confirm why you arrived at any particular condition rating – handy in the event of your report being challenged.

Rating sub-elements

Occasionally there will be more than one 'element' in a property. For example, a house may have a main roof, a back addition roof, and a flat roof to the rear extension. In this case, each roof should be rated in the normal way but only that with the worst rating should be taken forward to the Summary in section C.

To make sure this does not give an unnecessarily negative impression, the other 'sub-elements' should be identified in the 'E2 Roof covering' text box with their own a sub heading and appropriate condition rating. As there are three condition ratings, there should never be more than three sub elements. This is because where sub elements are in the same condition, they should be amalgamated under the same heading.

In the new HBR, condition rating is similar to the old F1, F2 and F3 paragraphs. It is simply another way of highlighting condition.

Other HBR products from BlueBox partners

We have a range of other training and development products designed to help you get ready for the new format. These include:

- One-day HBR workshops on the 16th, 23rd and 30th March 2010
- A four module package of distance learning materials written to suit the new HBR;
- The *HBR assessment Service* where you convert a recent HSV into a HBR, and we assess it and give you a full feedback report.

If you want more information of any of these, please contact the BlueBox partners office at 3 High Street, Chipping Sodbury, Bristol BS37 6BA. Tel. 0845 260 3500 or email info@blueboxpartners.com. Alternatively, you can visit our website at www.blueboxpartners.com and book on-line.