



## Writing the report - how to structure the text

Earlier HBR Factsheets concentrated on condition rating issues; this one looks at how you can structure your reports.

Research carried out by the RICS and other anecdotal feedback indicate clients often see surveyors' reports as confusing, lacking clear advice, and are full of technical jargon. The new HBR provides an opportunity to review the style and content of our reports so we can be sure we are meeting our customers' needs.

### New report structure

The new report follows an elemental structure and includes condition ratings and so the first task is to find out what goes where. Fortunately, the Practice Note includes a full elemental listing that will help. There are no mandatory phrases or paragraphs but you should structure your text in a certain way so a level of consistency is achieved between different practitioners; this is a national product after all.

### The descriptive section

This first section reports on the problem and states the condition rating. It should be descriptive and objective and include:

- *The location and construction of the element, and;*
- *The problem in broad terms including the actual part that has something wrong with it, what is wrong with it, and the condition rating category you have chosen.*

This section should be brief and to the point. It should only focus on condition related issues.

### The advisory section

This is the 'added value' of the HBR where you can provide your client with broader advice. What and how much you include will depend on your style and approach but remember, like the HSV, the HBR is designed to be an 'economic product' so you should be as concise as possible.

At our training workshops, 'creative' and 'energetic' debates always occur when delegates suggest what should go into a report. After training over 300 practitioners from all parts of the country, it is our view that you should build on what you do now and adjust your reporting style to suit the new structure. Adopting a completely new approach is not only unnecessary but could throw the 'baby out with the bathwater'. How-

### The HBR Factsheet

There is not much time left. The final deadline for the current version of the HSV is fast approaching.

The fourth issue of the BlueBox partners Factsheet helps you get to grips with reporting on the condition ratings and offering advice to your client. It assumes you have some awareness of the structure and content of the new format.

ever, it is an opportunity to reflect so here are a few of our suggestions.

The advice could include:

- A broad outline of the extent of the work that needs to be undertaken but **must** stop well short of a specification;
- Other factors that will help the client understand the full extent of the problem. For example, the implications of owning a listed building; the complicating factor of asbestos based materials, and the problems of getting replacement parts for an older bathroom suite;
- The possible effect on marketability and /or saleability of the condition.

Unlike the Home Condition Report, the new HBR is not prescriptive and as long you conform to the essential characteristics of the format, it can accommodate a variety of styles. We use this strategy during our workshops so delegates can confidently adjust their established approach and take full commercial advantage of what is becoming a popular survey product.

### 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:

- 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, we assess it and give you a full feedback report.

### New London Date

Due to popular demand, we have organised a HBR Workshop at Mabledon Place in London on March 30th. Please contact our office for more information

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