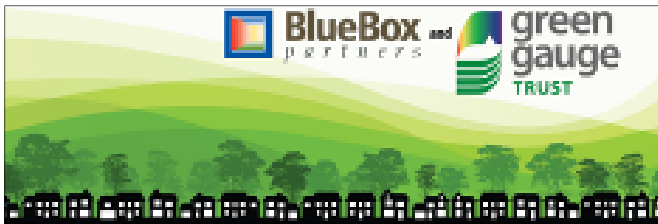


# BlueBox Newsletter

Technical briefing for property professionals

Issue 20 November 2011



What's in this issue:

- Changing EPCs
- Technical publications for free
- Septic tank registration update
- Concealed flues
- Historic building and part L of the building regulations

## Valuing and surveying 'green homes' - where do we start?

15th November, Swindon, 2011

### Last chance to book your place!

**Although our conference is fast approaching, you still have chance to book your place. So far, over 60 people have registered on the event.**

As energy prices continue to rise and the Government's 'Green Deal' initiative has now entered the statute books, energy related issues will move up our client's priority list. Our conference will cover the following issues:

- *What is driving the low carbon agenda?*
- *Green standards; what do they really mean?*
- *The 'green' technologies*
- *RICS and sustainability*
- *Charlie Luxton: 'Doing and talking'*
- *The 'green measures' on the ground*
- *How do we value 'greenness'?*
- *The impact of environmental measures on new homes.*

The unique feature of this conference is that we do not just talk about these 'green' technologies, you can see real examples (and touch and feel a number of them). This is because the conference will be held at the **National Self Build and Renovation Centre** which houses permanent exhibits of new technologies and methods of construction. The conference includes two 30 minute guided tours given by trained facilitators as well as time to look around the exhibitions yourself.

The keynote speaker is Charlie Luxton who is passionate about sustainability and architecture. He regularly appears on the BBC1 DIY SOS programme where he advises on sustainability amongst other matters.

For more information, visit our website at [www.blueboxpartners.com](http://www.blueboxpartners.com) and follow the link to the conference page.

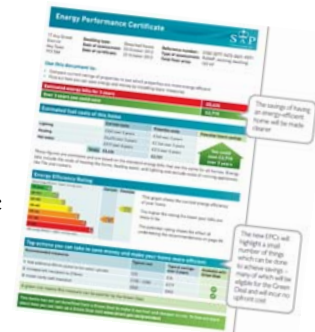
## EPCs are changing: DEAs will need 'top-up' training and assessment

**Although the image below will be too small to see any detail, it shows the new Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) that will be used from April 2012.**

Although parts will be familiar, it will focus the one particular aspect that most members of the public can understand; how much money could be saved by improving the energy efficiency of their home.

In 2012, the EPC is likely to achieve a higher profile as it will disclose any 'Green Deal' payments associated with the property. Although this is likely to increase the overall numbers of EPCs issued, existing DEAs will have to undertake additional training and assessment.

For more information, contact your accreditation scheme for details of their own schemes.



## Archived sales data from 'Rightmove' for SMEs - unique offer

BlueBox partners has obtained a unique agreement with the country's leading property portal, 'Rightmove'. We are able to offer access to archived property sales data at a price that is unbeatable anywhere else. We can offer **Rightmove Plus** (which includes the **Best Price Guide** and access to the **Rightmove AVM**) and at £50 plus VAT a month; a fraction of the normal price. This offer is only available through BlueBox partners to small/medium sized firms and sole practitioners, and we think this a "must have" for any valuer undertaking residential valuations. Please contact Chris Rispin on 0845 260 3500, option 2 for more information.



## FREE STUFF! New publications for residential practitioners

We have been busy with a number of projects over the summer and so this newsletter is later than we had planned. Since our July issue, a large number of important publications have been released and the good news is that they are all free to members of the RICS members. These include:

### Flat roof coverings, Information Paper (2nd edition), IP 24/2011, RICS Practice standards.

This information paper was produced by the RICS Building Surveying Professional Group and gives recommendations for the diagnosis, remedy and prevention of failures in a variety of existing flat roof weathering materials, both continuously supported roof coverings and rigid sheets.

This very thorough paper will be of interest to those who are enhancing their technical knowledge and those old salts who think flat roofs are all covered with ‘...three layer felt and white spar chippings’. Although very comprehensive, there is not one picture or diagram. Considering we are such a visual profession, this is such a pity. Could it be something to do with budgets?

### Asbestos and its implications for surveyors and their clients, 3rd edition, Guidance Note, GN 38/2011, RICS Practice Standards.

Asbestos can affect surveyors and their clients in a variety of ways – as employers, employees, advisers, owners, investors or occupiers of buildings. This guidance note is intended to give readers a balanced and pragmatic appreciation of the various issues surrounding asbestos, with particular regard to its use in buildings and structures.

The first edition was published at a time when ‘...the whole subject of asbestos was seemingly shrouded in the mystique of the black arts...’. Because this is a guidance note, all RICS members must be familiar with it; ignorance will not be a defence.

In its 101 pages, guess how many photographs? I think you may be seeing a theme emerging in these reviews.



### Surveyors acting as expert witnesses. RICS practice statement and guidance note 2nd Addendum to the third edition, November 2011

This addendum (with no photos) has been produced to reflect the implications of the case of *Jones v Kaney* (2011). It replaces GN 22 *Immunity of the expert witness* in the third edition of the practice statement and guidance note and should be read in conjunction with the 1st addendum issued in 2009.

### Subsidence in relation to insurance claims. RICS Practice Standards, UK 1st edition, Guidance Note

This guidance is for RICS members and other professionals involved with subsidence claims and looks at the following areas:

- the causes of subsidence, heave and landslip
- the causes of other building fractures
- policy cover details
- handling a subsidence claim
- recoveries and contribution
- relevant voluntary agreements.

This reviews the diagnostic process and possible causes competently and in placed in context by the section on subsidence claims process. Number of photographs? You know the answer.



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## Septic tanks and waste-water registration suspended depending review

In BlueBox Newsletter no 17, we reported on the planned registration process for septic tanks. Under the new system, the Environment Agency wanted all property owners to register their septic tanks and wastewater systems on-line by January 1st 2012.

However, in August 2011, the Environment Agency (EA) announced that the government was reviewing the registration process in England. While this is going on, owners do not have to register.

We have been unable to find out when this review will be completed but one person on the EA helpdesk said that this might not be until December 2012.

In Wales, the Assembly has decided to go ahead with the registration process.

For more information, click on the link below:  
<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/118753.aspx>



## Concealed flues - inspection hatches required

Following a number of faults with flues in concealed ducts, the Gas Safe Register and just about every other competent person scheme involved with the installation of heating appliances have been changing their procedures.

Engineers used to certify that concealed flues were 'not to current standards'. Now they are likely to categorise the system 'at risk'.

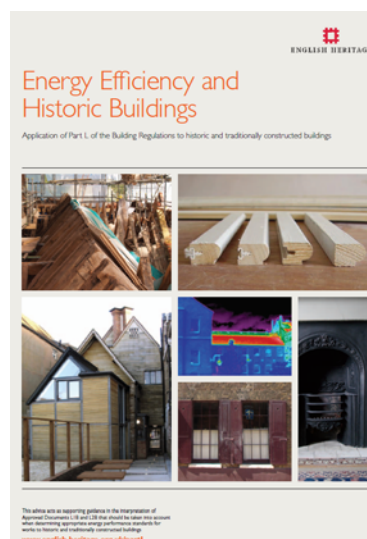
Although the solution can be straight forward (for example, installing inspection hatches on the ducts), clients will need to know about these changes. For more information, click on the link below:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/gas/domestic/alert021008.htm>

## Historic buildings and Part L of the building regulations

Although most residential practitioners support the tightening of Part L of the building regulations, those who manage, repair and alter historic or traditionally constructed building often find the regulations frustrating. Double glazing, thick layers of insulation and making building air tight can have disastrous consequences for older buildings.

English Heritage have recently published guidance to help prevent conflicts between energy efficiency requirements in Part L of the Building Regulations and the conservation of historic and traditionally constructed buildings. Much of the advice will also be relevant where thermal upgrading is planned without the specific need to comply with these regulations.



Photographs? Yes, its full of them!

For more information and to download your free copy, follow the link below

[www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/energy-efficiency-historic-buildings-ptl/](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/energy-efficiency-historic-buildings-ptl/)

The '**Home Surveys Factsheet**' will be back in the next issue of the newsletter.

## Contact

This newsletter is published by BlueBox *partners*. For more information you can contact us at Westgate Chambers, 3 High Street, Chipping Sodbury, Bristol, BS37 6BA.

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