

The Appropriate Use of RdSAP

1. Basic Principles

RdSAP is for assessment of existing dwellings only. Where an EPC is required for a new dwelling under Building Regulations, it must be a SAP EPC. Any new dwelling, including dwellings created by change of use, must be assessed using SAP. Typical changes of use are detailed in Section 3.

There are three key dates in place from which the SAP methodology applies for newly built dwellings. These dates vary for each devolved administration:

- England and Wales – 6th April 2008
- Scotland – 1st May 2007
- Northern Ireland – 30th September 2008

Dwellings built prior to these dates should be assessed via the RdSAP methodology and an EPC produced.

Dwellings completed after these dates shall always initially be assessed via SAP methodology and an 'On-construction' EPC is required. Any dwelling signed off as completed prior to these dates, will require an RdSAP EPC.

For a new dwelling, where no on-construction EPC has been lodged a SAP EPC is still required, **irrespective of whether the dwelling has been occupied.**

However, if either;

- *the SAP data set (i.e. the full set of data used for building regulation compliance) is not available and the evidence for its lack of availability has been provided, or*
- *the SAP data set is available but the dwelling has been altered in such a way that the data is no longer applicable and the details of the alteration are unknown (evidence that the dwelling has been altered and evidence for lack of building regulation approval providing details of the alterations to be provided);*

the dwelling should be assessed using RdSAP.

N.B. In Scotland, a new dwelling for which the building warrant application was submitted before 1st May 2007 or a dwelling created by change of use (a defined conversion) does not require a SAP EPC under building regulations but will, under EPB regulations, require an RdSAP EPC when offered for sale or rental.

2. Existence of SAP dataset

It is important that the Energy Assessor checks the construction age of the dwelling and considers if there is an existing EPC on the register if the property was signed off as completed by building control after the dates listed above.

If a SAP EPC is present and is within the validity period (10 years), and no changes have been made to the dwelling, the data is current, and the EPC shouldn't be replaced with an RdSAP EPC. ***N.B. For certain government policies, e.g. RHI or Green Deal, an RdSAP EPC is required. If this is the case, then it is permissible to supersede the original SAP, within the validity period of the original certificate with an RdSAP EPC.***

If no EPC exists, and the dwelling was completed after the dates in Section 1, a SAP EPC shall be produced where possible.

Where it isn't possible for the reasons listed above, the assessor shall evidence why an RdSAP assessment has been produced.

Suitable Evidence

- Specific and compelling evidence to show why the full data set is no longer available. Acceptable examples could include a letter from an authority such as building control, confirming that they attempted to get a SAP assessment produced, but that the builder went out of business before completion of dwelling.
- Evidence to show that the dwelling changed since construction. Examples of building control sign off of an extension, or receipts of a new heating system installation would be acceptable.

The length of time that a dwelling has been occupied is not a consideration in this process, as occupancy has no effect on the dwelling itself.

3. Material Change of Use (MCU)

A SAP EPC is required if there is a material change of use at the proposed dwelling(s).

For this, we need to consider another document; Building Regulations Part L1b.

Part L1b of the building regulations covers energy performance requirements for:

- Extensions
- Refurbishments
- Material Changes of Use

Taken from Part L1b, material changes of use are where:

- a) The building is used as a dwelling, where previously it was;
- b) The building contains a flat where previously it did not; or
- c) The building, which contains at least one dwelling, contains a greater or lesser number of dwellings than it did previously.

Common Scenarios Covered by a Change of Use

- A commercial unit converted into a block of flats;
- A commercial unit converted into a single dwelling;
- A house converted into a number of flats;
- Several dwellings converted into a reduced number of dwellings.

For a change of use development, a SAP assessment is required by Building Control. This supports the guidance from DCLG regarding EPCs where it states *“The types of property where the SAP method might give a more accurate rating include buildings constructed to current Building Regulations standards”*. In this case the “Building Regulations” are Part L1b.

Conversions, Refurbishment, Renovations and Extensions

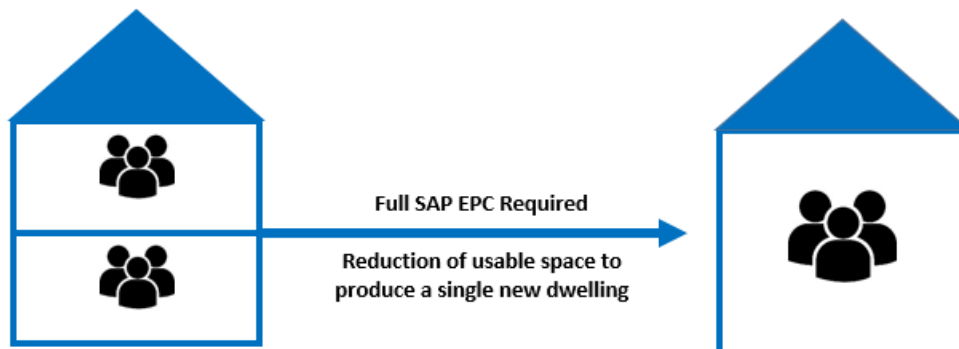
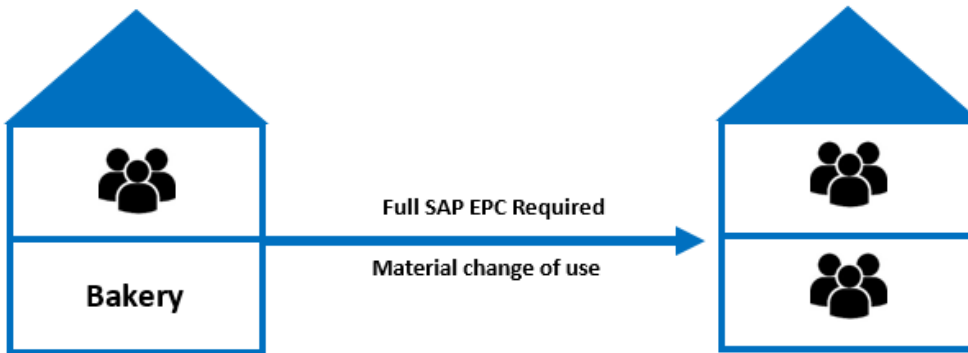
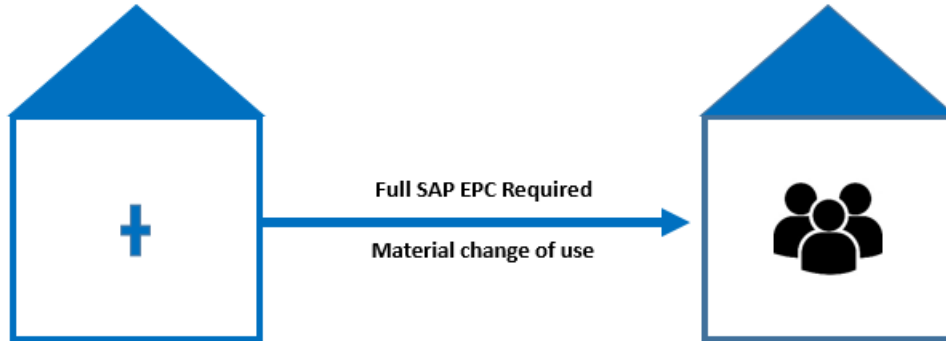
The terms ‘Conversion’, ‘Refurbishment’, and ‘Renovation’ are often misleading. They sometimes mean the same thing, but often mean different things.

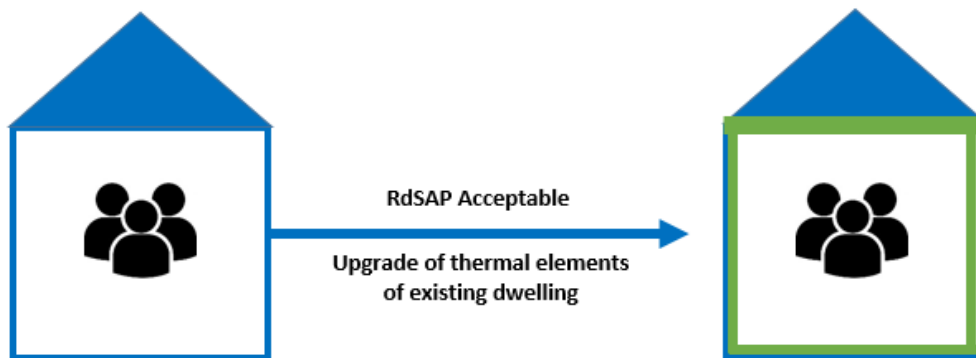
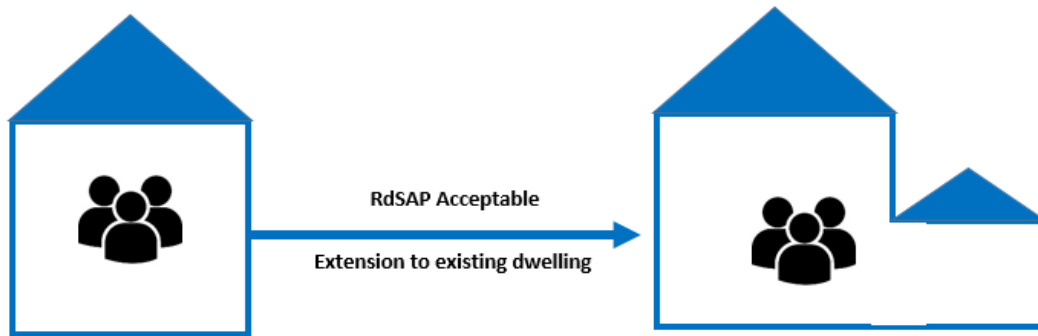
For the purposes of this document, the above terms are all treated the same; they will be defined as a ‘change’.

‘Extensions’ are classed as the addition to the area and /or perimeter of an existing dwelling.

Dwellings where the change took place after the dates in Section 1

The below are examples of buildings that have been changed, and guidance is given against each one. This isn’t an exhaustive list however;





Dwellings where the 'change' was completed prior to dates in Section 1 (using RdSAP)

For a conversion which was a change of use (e.g. barn converted to a dwelling) or where a dwelling has been sub-divided (e.g. house to flats), RdSAP methodology should be used.

Assessors should use the original construction date, unless there is documentary evidence that all thermal elements have been upgraded to the building regulation standards applicable at the conversion date. Enter insulation levels only for those elements for which evidence is available.

Where documentary evidence exists which confirms the date of conversion, the known conversion date can be used.

Should you have any further queries or questions about the correct use of RdSAP, contact the Quidos Technical Support team.