

Home Information Packs

From 10 December 2007, all homes in England and Wales will need a Home Information Pack (HIP) which includes a home energy rating. The Pack includes an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) containing advice on reducing carbon emissions and fuel bills, as well as documents such as a sale statement, searches and evidence of title.

There are certain circumstances when a Home Information Pack is not needed:-

- properties that are not marketed (e.g. sale to family member)
- non-residential properties
- seasonal and holiday accommodation
- mixed property (e.g. shop with flat)
- right-to-buy and similar sales
- property portfolio sales
- properties sold without completely vacant possession
- unsafe properties, or properties to be demolished

Home Information Packs are intended to improve the home buying/selling experience, and to reduce carbon emissions from homes by providing essential information on energy efficiency. The HIP Programme has been developed by the Department for Communities & Local Government (DCLG) in partnership with industry stakeholders such as the National Association of Estate Agents, The Law Society, the Council of Mortgage Lenders and others, all of whom have a role to play in the successful delivery of HIPs to consumers.

The benefits to the consumer

HIPs ensure that important information about a property is available to buyers and sellers early in the buying/selling process, drawing attention to any problems before these can cause delay or failure of the purchase/sale. HIPs provide a more transparent buying/selling process, ensuring consumers of a clear picture of the property being bought/sold.

A more efficient transaction process, with reduced timescale and costs.

Legal requirements

Non-compliance with the HIP regulations could mean a penalty notice of £200. The duties imposed by the regulations will be enforced by local authority Trading Standards Officers, who must also notify the Office of Fair Trading when a penalty notice is issued to an estate agent, and this could result in a banning order for the agent in question.