DEC Conventions for England, Wales and Northern Ireland Issue 1

5th March 2012

The conventions in the following pages have been agreed, and approved, by the ORCalc Conventions Group. Membership of the group is open to all approved DEC accreditation schemes as part of the on-going work to standardise the assessment process, and to ensure a uniformity of approach, that will assist accreditation schemes and DEC energy assessors. The Group has been set up with the approval of DCLG.

These conventions (issue 1.0) have been sent to you by your accreditation scheme and must be applied by all accredited energy assessors. This also applies to those assessors currently in training. To enable accreditation schemes, training providers and assessors to manage the implementation process successfully please note that for audit and management purposes, the conventions must be applied on the date shown in the 'Implementation Date' column on the right-hand side of the table. These conventions will be included as part of future quality assurance checks of the assessments you have undertaken, and of the Display Energy Certificates (DECs) you have produced, thereafter.

The conventions are designed to improve the quality and accuracy of DECs. The conventions will, therefore, supersede any previous assessment process and any previously issued guidance. With this in mind, further conventions are being discussed and developed by the Conventions Group and these will be released to you in stages.

If you have any questions about the conventions, you must feed them back to your accreditation scheme so the issue you have raised, where appropriate, can be discussed at a future meeting of the Conventions Group. The conventions must be applied as issued, even if you believe there may be a convention that requires further clarification, until such time as the Conventions Group have had the opportunity to discuss the issue you have raised in more detail. Any subsequent changes to the conventions will then be circulated to all DEC energy assessors.

Ref.	Issue	Version	Convention	Implementation Date
2. General Information				
CL 2.03	Acceptability of Non-Utility Meters	1.0	Issue Summary: Clarification on the use of non-utility meters Convention: This convention applies to both primary meters and sub meters. Only permanent meters (as referred to within DCLG guidance) may be used to collect energy consumption data	2nd April 2012

			for the production of a DEC. Data gathered from temporary meters is not suitable for the production of a DEC. The use of data from meters not provided by a utility company is acceptable provided that suitable evidence is submitted to the Energy Assessor (EA) to confirm the validity of the data. Suitable evidence consists of: (a) A consistent and dated schedule of the meter readings, AND (b) A signed declaration from the building occupier confirming that the data provided is a true and accurate reflection of the energy used in the building	
CL 2.06	Resolution of Disputed Previous Year DEC		Issue Summary: Where the current year EA believes the previous year DEC was inaccurate. Speed up the resolution of such situations, or what an EA/Accreditation Scheme (Scheme) does during the resolution period. Convention: If the current year EA believes the previous year DEC was inaccurate, then the EA should notify their Scheme (for escalation to the previous year EAs Scheme), and wait for a period of 25 working days (see Note 1) for the previous year DEC to be verified. Unless the previous year DEC is confirmed to be defective within the verification period, the current year EA will simply lodge with the available data. If the previous year DEC is confirmed as defective within the period, the previous year EAs Scheme must take the appropriate steps outlined by the Scheme Operating Requirements (SOR) for defective certificates before the renewal certificate is lodged (see Note 2). If it is confirmed that the previous year DEC was defective, subsequent to the verification period, then the previous year DEC needs to be replaced. There will be no requirement for the current year EA to update and re-lodge the current year's DEC with the revised data from the previous year's DEC; however they are encouraged to do so. This way, the error would in most cases be corrected in the following year's assessments. Note 1: Period selected in accordance with SOR guidelines, which allows 15 working days for an EA to respond to an audit request. The additional 10 days allows a reasonable period for the various contact that is required between parties and the actual Quality Assurance (QA) process. Note 2: Section included to prevent a contravention with current SOR guidelines in reference to defective certificates. This is the only situation where an EA is not able to lodge with the	2nd April 2012

			previous year data, as it has already been confirmed as incorrect.	
CL 2.08	Validation of Floor Areas		Issue Summary: Accuracy of floor area is critical to the accuracy of a DEC. There are a variety of possible sources of floor area information available to EAs; however, the EA has a duty to ensure that the floor area used is reliable. This will involve verifying both reliability of the information and the relevance to the 'Total Area for DEC Assessment' (TADA). Sources such as asset register schedules can be appropriate. These however, may exclude areas such as circulation spaces or include external areas. They may not be based on 'Gross Internal Area' (GIA) and there may have been changes to the building since they were drawn up. The EA must prove that the floor area used is correct and this will generally require validation against more than one source. Convention: EAs are permitted to use floor areas obtained following the alternative procedures listed below together with the associated validation. They should also ensure there is sufficient evidence for audit. The requirement for validation of floor areas applies equally to a first DEC and a renewal DEC produced by an EA who did not produce the previous DEC. It is also necessary for an EA renewing a DEC on a building where they have previously validated the floor area to ensure that there have been no alterations that affect the floor area, or that any changes are correctly adjusted for. Procedure A • Method - Physical survey of the building • Validation - Not applicable • Evidence - Site notes and drawings showing how the area has been obtained Procedure B • Method - Scaled from plans (which are themselves to scale) • Validation - Site check sample measurements to confirm scale of plans as printed. Site visit used to check plans are accurate and match current building configuration • Evidence - Plans and record of sample measurements plus calculation details Procedure C • Method - From asset register schedule or similar • Validation - Confirmation that areas are gross internal (or appropriate conversion if use type is one that permits net internal to be used). Site check sample measurements to confirm accuracy of areas recorded in the asset register. Site visit used to check register is accurate and matches current building configuration	2nd April 2012

			• Evidence - Asset Register and record of sample measurements. Record of checks to ensure the area used includes all internal areas and excludes any external areas and site buildings that may also be shown on the asset register Procedure D • Method - From third party e.g. an architect or surveyor • Validation - Confirmation that the source has good reason to know the actual current floor area e.g. has undertaken a measured survey or drawn the plans for the building as it currently stands and there have been no alterations since. Site check sample measurements to confirm accuracy of floor area provided • Evidence - The source document(s) containing the floor area information and the method by which it was obtained, together with the reason for believing it is accurate. Record of sample measurements The following are recognised potential sources of floor areas. They may be used provided they are validated against another suitable sources or they may be used to validate a floor area obtained by one of the above methods. None are sufficient to be relied on without validation. • A lease document • Valuation office data • Planning application documents • A recent EPC • The floor area used on the previous DEC In cases where the EA is producing a repeat DEC for a building that they have previously inspected, and where a site visit is not normally required, written confirmation must be obtained from the building owner or manager that there have been no changes to the configuration of the building. It is critical in the production of a DEC that the EA carries out sufficient checks to ensure the floor area used is accurate. EAs will be required to re-lodge at their own cost any DECs that are subsequently found to be significantly incorrect due to inaccurate floor areas and may find themselves subject to audit related action from their Scheme.	