

# National Occupational Standards for Home Inspectors

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Developed in conjunction with PIR (formerly SAVVA) Ltd on  
behalf of the ODPM Home Inspector Certification Board  
Steering Committee

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*A Sector Skills Council in development*

# NATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS FOR HOME INSPECTORS

Approved by the National Standards Board 26 September 2003

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# NATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL STANDARDS FOR HOME INSPECTORS

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## **BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION**

These National Occupational Standards (NOS) have been developed as a key component of the scheme to support the production of Home Condition Reports (HCRs) by competent Home Inspectors. The HCR is an essential part of the Home Information Pack (HIP), which will be mandatory when legislation to reform the home buying and selling process in England and Wales is enacted and implemented.

### **1. What are NOS?**

NOS describe the skills and knowledge required to undertake a particular job to the level determined by the sector for which they are intended. In other words, they describe best practice and competence.

NOS are NOT training courses (although they provide a basis for training), nor are they qualifications. They usually form the basis of either a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) or a Vocationally Related Qualification (VRQ).

Only qualifications based on NOS are eligible for inclusion within the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in England and Wales. Qualifications in the NQF have status and validity. They are eligible for public funding through the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in England and Education and Learning Wales (ELWa) in Wales.

NOS are developed to criteria laid down by the National Standards Board. To obtain approval, NOS must represent the needs of employment in the sector and the job function for which they are designed.

Standards Setting Bodies such as the Property Services National Training Organisation (PSNTO), now Property Housing Cleaning and Facilities Management Skills (PHCFMS), are guardians of NOS. They have a responsibility to oversee development, maintenance and review of NOS.

NOS are produced with public funding so are in the public domain. They may be downloaded free of charge from the PHCFMS website. A small charge is made for the supply of NOS on CD and/or in hard copy to cover production and distribution costs.

### **2. Do the NOS apply across the UK?**

NOS are developed to cover the four countries of the United Kingdom, but also reflect differences between England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

NOS for Home Inspectors are no different. Although the need for their development was driven by legislation proposals covering England and Wales only, to satisfy regulatory body criteria consultation did take place in Edinburgh and Belfast. This may provide for future use, if and when similar legislation is introduced in either, or both, Scotland and Northern Ireland respectively.

### **3. How were the NOS developed?**

The Home Inspector Certification Board Steering Committee (HICBSC) established a Working Group to oversee the development of the NOS and subsequently the qualification (see page 4, section 7). This Working Group was carefully chosen and included representatives of a wide cross-section of employers and professional bodies such as the Association of Building Engineers (ABE), the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB), the Institute of Building Maintenance and Management (IMBM), the National Association of Estate Agents (NAEA) and the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS).

The Standards were developed under the guidance of PHCFMS in its role as Standards Setting Body for the sector, working in conjunction with Surveyors and Valuers Accreditation (SAVA) Ltd,

now Property Industry Research (PIR) Ltd. SAVA/PIR was in turn grant funded by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM).

Standards consultants, Christie Associates, were selected by competitive tender. They led workshops of people with current experience of inspecting property, who identified the job functions and standards of best practice of a Home Inspector. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) provided advice as regulatory bodies.

#### 4. Defining the Home Inspector's functions

As the role of Home Inspector was to be a completely new one, it was important initially to define the likely job functions involved:

- the Home Inspector will have a duty of care both to the seller and the buyer
- the Home Inspector's client will be the seller or their representative (possibly an estate agent, lawyer or specialist provider of HIPs)
- HCRs will be produced to a predetermined format. They will require all key elements of each home to be rated against clear criteria
- HCRs will be made available electronically and data banked with a unique reference number
- energy ratings will be included in line with a European directive which comes into force in 2006
- valuations will not be included, although mortgage lenders may, where appropriate, use HCRs as the basis for lending decisions
- there will be clear requirements in reporting the condition of services
- certain parts of a property which are not regarded as key will be excluded from the HCR (for example, swimming pools and garden sheds)
- Home Inspectors may not have the specialist technical construction knowledge to be competent to report on every type of property construction. The NOS require Home Inspectors to recognise the limits of their own competence and refer work outside their area of construction technology expertise to appropriate Home Inspectors.

#### 5. How are the NOS made up?

In common with all NOS, those for Home Inspectors break the job down into its component parts which are called **Units**.

Units are sub-divided into two or more **Elements**. An Element relates to an activity a Home Inspector is competent to do.

Each Element includes:

- performance criteria which describe what competent performance requires
- related knowledge and understanding which the Home Inspector must have
- scope or range definitions of the situations the Home Inspector must be competent to deal with.

In order to demonstrate competence in a particular Element and/or across a whole Unit, candidates must show they can meet all performance criteria across the scope or range of situations and have all the required knowledge and understanding.

There is no reference to specific acts of parliament or regulations in the NOS as these change from time to time.

Different Units, and Elements in them, do not have the same weight. For example, for Unit 4, Element 4.1 'Inspect property for condition', trainee Home Inspectors will need to develop considerable knowledge and experience of property structure, construction and materials performance, whilst Unit 2, Element 2.3 'Contribute to the security of property' is vitally important, but will not require the same amount of learning.

## **6. At what level is a qualification based on the NOS for Home Inspectors likely to be?**

Qualifications based on the NOS for Home Inspectors are likely to be at Level 4 in the NQF, alongside a pass degree, HND or NVQ for managers, in accordance with the following level descriptors:

### **Level 1**

Competence which involves the application of knowledge and skills in the performance of a range of carried work activities, most of which may be routine or predictable.

### **Level 2**

Competence which involves the application of knowledge and skills in a significant range of varied work activities, performed in a variety of contexts. At this level there must be activities that are complex or non-routine and some individual responsibility and autonomy. Collaboration with others, perhaps through membership of a work group or team, may often be required.

### **Level 3**

Competence which involves the application of knowledge and skills in a broad range of varied work activities performed in a wide variety of contexts, most of which are complex and non-routine. There is considerable responsibility and autonomy and control or guidance of others is often required.

### **Level 4**

Competence which involves the application of knowledge and skills in a broad range of complex technical or professional work activities performed in a wide variety of contexts and with a substantial degree of personal responsibility and autonomy. Responsibility for the work of others and the allocation of resources is often present.

### **Level 5**

Competence which involves the application of skills and a significant range of fundamental principles across a wide and often unpredictable variety of contexts. Very substantial personal autonomy and often significant responsibility for the work of others and for the allocation of substantial resources feature strongly, as do personal accountabilities for analysis and diagnosis, design, planning, execution and evaluation.

## **7. Uses of NOS**

The NOS for Home Inspectors were developed primarily in order to form the basis of a qualification at Level 4, initially a VRQ with the expectation that this would later become an NVQ. In this connection the Awarding Body for the Built Environment (ABBE) are currently researching and trialling the proposed VRQ.

In addition however, the NOS may also be used for:

- planning personal development, including continuing professional development (CPD)

- developing job descriptions or person specifications
- recruiting people with the right qualities and qualifications
- as a basis for staff performance appraisals
- to demonstrate to insurers that a consistent and measurable service is being delivered
- as a benchmark for delivering high quality service
- to ensure that Home Inspectors are operating to a consistent and high standard.

Education and Training providers may find the NOS useful for:

- designing courses, programmes or training materials, including those for CPD
- developing qualifications which may be academic and/or vocational
- benchmarking existing and future courses and programmes
- assessing the competence of individuals.

## **UNIT 1**

## **Work in an effective and professional manner**

Element 1.1	Develop and maintain effective working relationships
Element 1.2	Manage your own time and resources
Element 1.3	Develop yourself to improve your performance
Element 1.4	Conduct work in a professional and ethical manner

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### **About this Unit**

This Unit covers the essential, general competence expected of all professionals regardless of their working environment. You are expected to work effectively in the ways described throughout your work, whether you are in an office or at a property.

Element 1.1 covers the development and maintenance of effective working relationships with all those people with whom you come into contact during your work. You are expected to communicate with others in a polite, clear and respectful manner, respond to enquiries and work towards avoiding any disputes that may arise. You are also expected to handle formal complaints procedures if and when complaints are received. The main groups of people with whom you will need to develop good working relationships are sellers or their representatives, those present at the property at the time of inspection (e.g. sellers or their family), and other colleagues and professionals.

Element 1.2 describes the competence involved in managing your own time and resources. You must set your objectives, plan your time, take decisions and review and reschedule your activities as appropriate.

Element 1.3 describes the activities involved in developing and enhancing your own practice and performance. You must evaluate your performance and encourage feedback from others. You must also identify and meet your own development needs, through formal or informal means, to ensure that you keep up-to-date with the latest legislation, codes of practice, regulations and standards.

Element 1.4 covers the conduct of work in a professional and ethical manner. You are expected to present a positive and professional image at all times, work in accordance with prescribed codes of conduct and standards of good practice, and take steps to avoid any potential conflicts of interest during your work. Importantly, you must recognise and work within the limits of your own competence and expertise; this will entail, for example, refusing to take on work such as the inspection of properties that fall outside your expertise and experience e.g. Grade I listed buildings.

**Element 1.1      Develop and maintain effective working relationships**

**Performance Criteria**

**You must be able to:**

- 1 develop and maintain productive working relationships with **others** which promote **goodwill and trust**
- 2 **request** information from **others** in a polite, clear and professional manner
- 3 **respond** promptly to enquiries from **others** and ask questions to clarify their information needs
- 4 take **action** in cases where you are unable to respond to enquiries from **others**
- 5 handle disputes and differences of opinion in ways which minimise offence and maintain respect
- 6 comply with the formal complaints procedure

**Knowledge and Understanding**

**You must know and understand:**

- (a) why it is important to promote goodwill and trust when working with others, and ways in which this can be achieved
- (b) how to identify the information you require and the potential sources of such information
- (c) how to respond to enquiries from others and how to clarify their information needs
- (d) how to respond to enquiries which are outside your authority, beyond your area of knowledge/expertise or where the information requested is confidential
- (e) ways in which disputes or differences of opinion should be handled to minimise offence and maintain respect
- (f) how to identify and handle formal complaints
- (g) the details of the formal complaints procedure that covers your work, and any specific organisational requirements with regard to complaints

**Element 1.1      Develop and maintain effective working relationships**

**Scope**

**This Element requires that you:**

- A. maintain and develop productive working relationships with **others**:
- (i) the sellers or their representatives e.g. estate agent or lawyer
  - (ii) those present at the property at the time of inspection e.g. the sellers, their friends/family or tenants
  - (iii) other colleagues and professionals such as solicitors, conveyancers, work colleagues and other Home Inspectors
- B. promote **goodwill and trust** by:
- (i) demonstrating a duty of care
  - (ii) honouring promises or undertakings
  - (iii) developing honest relationships
  - (iv) developing constructive relationships
- C. **request** information and **respond** to enquiries in the following ways:
- (i) face to face
  - (ii) in writing
  - (iii) by telephone
  - (iv) by email
- D. take the following **action** when unable to respond to enquiries:
- (i) inform the enquirer
  - (ii) pass the enquiry onto the relevant person or organisation

**Element 1.2      Manage your own time and resources**

Performance Criteria	Knowledge and Understanding
<b>You must be able to:</b>	<b>You must know and understand:</b>
1 set objectives that are specific, measurable and achievable	(a) how to set objectives for yourself that are specific, measurable and achievable
2 plan your work activities so that they are consistent with your objectives and your personal resources	(b) how to plan activities so that they are consistent with your objectives and personal resources
3 undertake regular checks of your equipment to ensure that it is in full working order	(c) how to estimate the amount of time required to carry out planned activities
4 make estimates of the time you need for activities that are realistic and allow for unforeseen circumstances	(d) the kind of contingencies which might occur and how to assess and plan for these
5 make decisions as soon as you have sufficient information	(e) how to assess how much information is required before effective decisions can be made
6 take prompt and efficient action when you need to obtain further information to make decisions	(f) how to collect and check the validity of the information required for decision making
7 minimise unhelpful interruptions to, and digressions from, planned work	(g) the importance of effective time management
8 regularly review progress and reschedule activities to help achieve your planned objectives	(h) how to identify and minimise unhelpful interruptions
	(i) the importance of regular reviews of activity and rescheduling of work to achieve planned objectives

**Note: there is no Scope for this Element**

**Element 1.3      Develop yourself to improve your performance**

<b>Performance Criteria</b>	<b>Knowledge and Understanding</b>
<b>You must be able to:</b>	<b>You must know and understand:</b>
1    assess your performance and identify your <b>development needs</b> at appropriate intervals	(a)    how to assess your own current level of competence
2    base your assessment on your current objectives and likely future requirements	(b)    the current and likely future requirements and standards within your job role and how they correspond to your level of competence
3    develop <b>plans</b> for personal development that are consistent with the needs you have identified and the resources available	(c)    the principal skills required for effective performance
4    develop plans for personal development that contain specific, measurable, realistic and challenging objectives	(d)    the importance of continuing self-development
5    obtain support from relevant people to help you create learning opportunities	(e)    how to develop a personal action plan for learning and self-development with realistic but challenging objectives
6    undertake development activities that are consistent with your plans for personal development	(f)    the types of support that may be available from others
7    obtain <b>feedback</b> from <b>others</b> and use it to enhance your performance in the future	(g)    how to identify the need for support, select an appropriate source and obtain required help
8    update your plans for personal development at regular intervals	(h)    the types of development activities and their relative advantages and disadvantages to your own situation
9    comply with the auditing and monitoring requirements of the regulatory body	(i)    the importance of getting feedback from others on your performance and how to encourage, enable and use such feedback in a constructive manner
	(j)    the appropriate people from whom to get feedback on your performance
	(k)    how to assess your personal progress and update your plans accordingly
	(l)    the specific auditing and monitoring requirements that relate to your continuing professional development and your responsibilities in complying with these

**Element 1.3      Develop yourself to improve your performance**

**Scope**

**This Element requires that:**

- A. your **development needs** include being up-to-date with:
- (i) the latest legislation, codes of practice and regulations
  - (ii) technical issues in regard to domestic building construction and defects
- B. your **plans** for personal development will be met by:
- (i) informal on the job learning
  - (ii) formal training courses
  - (iii) open learning
- C. feedback will be obtained from **others**:
- (i) colleagues
  - (ii) other professionals
  - (iii) sellers, buyers and others concerned with the buying and selling process
- D. **feedback** can be:
- (i) positive
  - (ii) confirmatory
  - (iii) negative

**Element 1.4****Conduct work in a professional and ethical manner****Performance Criteria****You must be able to:**

- 1 present a positive personal and professional image at all times when dealing with **people**
- 2 carry out your work in accordance with prescribed codes of conduct, ethical standards and **recognised good practice**
- 3 deal with **people** in a tactful, courteous and equitable manner at all times
- 4 work within the limits of your own competence and expertise
- 5 recognise and respond appropriately to pressure from any person which might influence the objectivity of your judgement
- 6 recognise and manage any potential conflicts of interest that may arise during your work
- 7 comply with the auditing and monitoring requirements of the regulatory body
- 8 comply with all legislation relevant to your work
- 9 comply with all officially published guidance in undertaking Home Inspections

**Knowledge and Understanding****You must know and understand:**

- (a) why it is important to present a positive personal and professional image when dealing with people, and how this can be achieved
- (b) your specific responsibilities under prescribed codes of conduct and ethical standards
- (c) the importance of complying with recognised good practice
- (d) the extent and limits of your own competence and expertise and the importance of not working beyond these
- (e) the range of potential conflicts of interest that you may encounter and the action required to manage these
- (f) the specific auditing or monitoring requirements that relate to your work and your responsibilities in complying with these
- (g) the main points of the legislation relevant to your work
- (h) all officially published guidance relating to the undertaking of Home Inspections

**Element 1.4**

**Conduct work in a professional and ethical manner**

**Scope**

**This Element requires that you:**

A. present a positive personal and professional image to the following **people**:

- (i) the sellers or their representatives
- (ii) those present at the property at the time of inspection
- (iii) other colleagues and professionals
- (iv) others with whom you may be in contact during the course of your work as a Home Inspector

B. carry out your work in accordance with **recognised good practice**:

- (i) duty of care
- (ii) statute law
- (iii) mandatory ethical codes of practice

## UNIT 2

## Contribute to the safety and security of people and property

Element 2.1	Contribute to the maintenance of health and safety at work
Element 2.2	Contribute to the security of self, colleagues and others
Element 2.3	Contribute to the security of property
Element 2.4	Contribute to the security of information

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### About this Unit

This Unit covers the important competence required to maintain the health, safety and security of self, other people and property. You are expected to adhere to the standards set out in this Unit at all times during your work, whether you are in an office or at a property.

Element 2.1 describes the activities involved in contributing to the maintenance of health and safety at work. You must identify the risks associated with your work, and ensure that your conduct does not endanger yourself or others. You are expected to know, and work in accordance with, the provisions of relevant legislation (e.g. Health and Safety at Work Act) and any relevant workplace policies.

Element 2.2 requires that you take steps to maintain the security of self and other people. You must identify the potential security risks posed by work in various locations, and comply with the security procedures and guidelines aimed at protecting yourself and others. You are expected to react immediately to any unexpected circumstances, and take emergency action when required.

Element 2.3 covers the security of property, and applies both to your offices and to property inspected by you. You must identify the risks to property, and comply with the relevant procedures and guidelines for protecting property. In addition, you must keep personal belongings, valuables, monies and keys secured in appropriate locations.

Element 2.4 requires that you contribute to the security of information. This entails identifying the potential risks to information, maintaining the confidentiality of seller and organisation information, and recording and disposing of information correctly. This always applies to information about sellers and also, where relevant, to any organisation for whom you may work, either directly as an employee or as a sub-contractor.

Element 2.1 <b>Contribute to the maintenance of health and safety at work</b>	
<p><b>Performance Criteria</b></p> <p><b>You must be able to:</b></p> <p>1      carry out working practices in accordance with legal requirements</p> <p>2      identify any <b>health and safety risks</b> in different <b>locations</b></p> <p>3      ensure your own personal conduct in the <b>workplace</b> does not endanger the health and safety of self and other people</p> <p>4      follow the <b>workplace</b> policies and suppliers' or manufacturers' instructions for the safe use of equipment, materials and products</p> <p>5      implement emergency procedures effectively to protect the health and safety of self and other people</p> <p>6      pass on any suggestions for improving health and safety within the workplace to the responsible persons</p>	<p><b>Knowledge and Understanding</b></p> <p><b>You must know and understand:</b></p> <p>(a)    the legal duties for health and safety in the workplace as required by legislation</p> <p>(b)    what health and safety risks could exist in different locations</p> <p>(c)    why it is important to remain alert to the presence of risks in the entire workplace</p> <p>(d)    the importance of personal conduct in maintaining the health and safety of self and others</p> <p>(e)    suppliers' and manufacturers' instructions for the safe use of equipment, materials and products</p> <p>(f)    who should be informed of any conflicts between different health and safety requirements</p> <p>(g)    the procedures for different types of emergency</p> <p>(h)    who the appointed first aiders are</p> <p>(i)    what types of suggestions for improving health and safety at work could be made and who should be given them</p>

## Element 2.1

## Contribute to the maintenance of health and safety at work

### Scope

#### This Element requires that you:

A. are aware of **health and safety risks**, which may include:

- (i) the presence of equipment and its use
- (ii) power supplies
- (iii) fixtures
- (iv) interactions with other people
- (v) accidents
- (vi) effects of VDUs

B. identify health and safety risks in different **locations**:

- (i) office
- (ii) development site including new houses or converted buildings with some adjacent properties in a state of partial completion
- (iii) vacant property
- (iv) occupied property

C. contribute to health and safety in the **workplace**, which may be:

- (i) the office
- (ii) the home being inspected
- (iii) any other location you visit in the course of your work

**Element 2.2****Contribute to the security of self, colleagues and others****Performance Criteria****You must be able to:**

- 1 identify **security risks** to self, occupiers and other people in different **locations**
- 2 obtain information on national legislation, guidelines and organisation procedures for the security of self and others
- 3 apply correctly and consistently the relevant security procedures and guidelines for protecting self and others
- 4 ensure self and colleagues provide clear schedules of movements
- 5 check and respond immediately to any unexpected circumstances, absences or departures from colleagues' agreed schedules
- 6 take appropriate and effective emergency action when required
- 7 pass on any suggestions for improving security to the responsible persons

**Knowledge and Understanding****You must know and understand:**

- (a) potential security risks to self, colleagues, occupiers and others
- (b) current legislation and national guidelines relating to the security of people
- (c) the procedures of the organisation for whom you work relating to the security of people
- (d) which procedures and guidelines apply in different circumstances
- (e) the systems for recording people's movements and checking their security
- (f) what constitutes unexpected circumstances, absences or departures from agreed schedules and who should be informed of them
- (g) what types of emergency could occur
- (h) what the emergency procedures are
- (i) what types of suggestions for improving the security could be made and who should be given them

**Element 2.2**

**Contribute to the security of self, colleagues and others**

**Scope**

**This Element requires that you:**

**A. identify the following security risks:**

- (i) intimidation
- (ii) verbal abuse
- (iii) physical abuse
- (iv) violence
- (v) kidnapping

**B. identify security risks in different locations:**

- (i) office
- (ii) development site including new houses or converted buildings with some adjacent properties in a state of partial completion
- (iii) vacant property
- (iv) occupied property

**Element 2.3      Contribute to the security of property**

**Performance Criteria**

**You must be able to:**

- 1 identify the **risks to property** that could occur in different **locations**
- 2 obtain information on national legislation, guidelines and organisation procedures for the security of property
- 3 apply correctly and consistently the relevant security procedures and guidelines for protecting property
- 4 ensure security equipment is functioning properly
- 5 ensure personal belongings, valuables and monies are secured in appropriate locations
- 6 ensure keys and access codes for properties are secured in appropriate locations
- 7 take appropriate and effective emergency action when required
- 8 pass on any suggestions for improving security to the responsible persons

**Knowledge and Understanding**

**You must know and understand:**

- (a) the risks to offices, personal property and properties for sale
- (b) current legislation and national guidelines relating to the security of property
- (c) the procedures of the organisation for whom you work relating to the security of property
- (d) which procedures and guidelines apply in different circumstances
- (e) what type of equipment could be used
- (f) how equipment should be operated
- (g) where to keep personal belongings, valuables and monies
- (h) the systems for securing and logging keys and access codes
- (i) what types of emergency could occur
- (j) what the emergency procedures are
- (k) what types of suggestions for improving security could be made and who should be given them

**Element 2.3**

**Contribute to the security of property**

**Scope**

**This Element requires that you:**

**A. identify the following risks to property:**

- (i) theft
- (ii) damage
- (iii) vandalism
- (iv) arson
- (v) unwanted occupancy

**B. identify risks to property in different locations:**

- (i) office
- (ii) development site including new houses or converted buildings with some adjacent properties in a state of partial completion
- (iii) vacant property
- (iv) occupied property

<b>Element 2.4      Contribute to the security of information</b>	
<p><b>Performance Criteria</b></p> <p><b>You must be able to:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 identify the <b>risks to information</b> that could occur</li> <li>2 obtain information on national legislation, guidelines and organisation procedures for the security of information</li> <li>3 apply correctly and consistently the relevant security procedures and guidelines for protecting information</li> <li>4 maintain the confidentiality of seller and organisation information at all times</li> <li>5 ensure information is disclosed only to people who are entitled to receive it</li> <li>6 ensure information is recorded correctly and stored in a suitable manner</li> <li>7 dispose of information in a way that maintains its security</li> <li>8 pass on any suggestions for improving security to the responsible persons</li> <li>9 demonstrate full compliance with relevant legislation</li> </ol>	<p><b>Knowledge and Understanding</b></p> <p><b>You must know and understand:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) the risks to different types of information</li> <li>(b) current legislation and national guidelines relating to the security of information</li> <li>(c) the procedures of the organisation for whom you work relating to the security of information</li> <li>(d) which procedures and guidelines apply in different circumstances</li> <li>(e) what type of information could be sensitive</li> <li>(f) how the disclosure of information could be damaging to others</li> <li>(g) who is entitled to different types of information</li> <li>(h) the systems for recording and storing information</li> <li>(i) how to dispose of paper-based or electronic information</li> <li>(j) what types of suggestions for improving security could be made and who should be given them</li> <li>(k) legislation relating to security of information</li> </ol>

**Element 2.4****Contribute to the security of information****Scope****This Element requires that you:**

- A. identify the following **risks to information**:
- (i) loss
  - (ii) misplacement
  - (iii) unauthorised access

## **UNIT 3 Prepare for Home Inspections**

Element 3.1	Agree and confirm instructions to carry out a Home Inspection
Element 3.2	Investigate relevant matters relating to the property

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### **About this Unit**

This Unit covers those activities that are carried out prior to the inspection of a property i.e. taking instructions, clarifying requirements and making initial enquiries on matters relating to the property in question.

Element 3.1 requires that you respond to requests for inspections from sellers or their representatives, clarify their needs and expectations and check that the property is appropriate for inspection. You must clearly explain the terms and conditions, any limitations/constraints that apply to Home Inspections and confirm your fee and payment arrangements. You are expected to confirm that the sellers or their representatives fully understand the procedures for inspection and to acknowledge any special circumstances that apply to your visit e.g. access to the property (or parts of the property) or who will be present at the time of the inspection.

Element 3.2 covers the investigation of matters which are important to ensure that you provide a complete and accurate Home Condition Report within the terms of your engagement. You should identify and research information that can reasonably be obtained, for example, that on the property type and construction, tenure, services to the property, modifications/extensions and special risks such as flooding or subsidence. You must also identify any significant factors that may influence the conduct of the inspection e.g. health and safety issues or additional information that should be gathered during the inspection. In some cases, your investigations may reveal problems that prevent you from inspecting the property; you are expected to inform the sellers or their representatives and explain the reasons to them.

<b>Element 3.1</b>	<b>Agree and confirm instructions to carry out a Home Inspection</b>
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## Performance Criteria

### You must be able to:

- 1 **respond** promptly to requests from potential sellers or their representatives to undertake Home Inspections
- 2 clarify and confirm the requirements and expectations of the sellers or their representatives
- 3 identify any **circumstances** that prevent you from undertaking a Home Inspection and explain the reasons to the sellers or their representatives politely and clearly
- 4 explain to the sellers or their representatives the terms and conditions under which you will undertake a Home Inspection
- 5 explain to the sellers or their representatives the limitations and constraints of the planned Home Inspection
- 6 write to the sellers or their representatives to confirm the instruction and the terms, conditions and arrangements that have been agreed
- 7 confirm with the sellers or other occupiers the date and time of the inspection
- 8 confirm with the sellers or other occupiers any **specific arrangements** that apply to the inspection

## Knowledge and Understanding

### You must know and understand:

- (a) the legislation giving rise to Home Condition Reports
- (b) regulations under that legislation relating to the job of Home Inspector and the undertaking of Home Condition Reports
- (c) the types of property that do not by law require a Home Condition Report
- (d) how to clarify and confirm the requirements and expectations of sellers or their representatives
- (e) when a potential **conflict of interest** will require disclosure to the sellers or their representatives, or will require the need to decline the instructions altogether
- (f) the limitations and constraints that apply to the conducting of Home Condition Inspections
- (g) the importance of confirming in writing the arrangements agreed between you and the sellers or their representatives
- (h) fee structures and payment arrangements for Home Condition Inspections
- (i) how to confirm inspection arrangements with the sellers or other occupiers
- (j) the importance of confirming whether any specific arrangements apply to the inspection

## Element 3.1 Agree and confirm instructions to carry out a Home Inspection

## Scope

### This Element requires that you:

- A. **respond** to requests from potential sellers or their representatives in the following ways:
- (i) face to face
  - (ii) in writing
  - (iii) by telephone
  - (iv) by email
- B. acknowledge any **specific arrangements** that relate to the following:
- (i) access to the property
  - (ii) those present at the property at the time of inspection
  - (iii) health and safety issues
- C. are aware of **circumstances** that may prevent your carrying out a Home Inspection, which may include:
- (i) properties beyond your current level of competence
  - (ii) your own diary pressures

## Element 3.2 Investigate relevant matters relating to the property

Performance Criteria	Knowledge and Understanding
<p><b>You must be able to:</b></p>	<p><b>You must know and understand:</b></p>
<p>1 investigate and record such information as is necessary to ensure a complete and comprehensive Home Condition Report</p>	<p>(a) the types of property to which Home Condition Report legislation does not apply</p>
<p>2 evaluate information in order to identify any <b>significant factors</b> that may influence the conducting of the inspection</p>	<p>(b) the different types of information that it is important to obtain to ensure a complete and accurate Home Condition Report</p>
<p>3 assess, in cases of doubt, that the property falls within the scope of Home Information Pack legislation</p>	<p>(c) the different sources of information relating to the property that can be investigated</p>
<p>4 inform the sellers or their representatives promptly in cases where your investigations reveal problems that prevent you from inspecting the property</p>	<p>(d) how to obtain information on relevant matters relating to the property</p>
	<p>(e) prevailing geographical/environmental features that may affect the property and the health and safety of occupants</p>
	<p>(f) how to evaluate relevant information in order to identify any significant factors that may influence the inspection</p>
	<p>(g) how to identify circumstances that prevent you from inspecting the property</p>

**Element 3.2 Investigate relevant matters relating to the property**

## Scope

### This Element requires that you:

- A. identify the following **significant factors**:
  - (i) gaps in information
  - (ii) health and safety considerations
  - (iii) susceptibility to damage or deterioration

## **UNIT 4 Undertake Home Inspections**

Element 4.1	Inspect property for condition
Element 4.2	Make complete and comprehensive records of findings
Element 4.3	Determine condition ratings
Element 4.4	Collate information for the assessment of energy efficiency

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### **About this Unit**

This Unit covers the competence required to conduct Home Inspections and, as such, is closely related to the structure and content of the Home Condition Report. The aim of the inspection is to provide an impartial report that can be used and relied upon by a prospective buyer, mortgage lender and by a seller. The report will detail the construction and condition of the property on the date inspected, defects which are considered to be significant or in need of urgent attention and defects which require further investigation to prevent damage to the fabric of the building or which are a threat to personal safety.

Element 4.1 covers the extensive competence required to inspect property. It covers the inspection of all parts of the property that fall within the remit of the Home Condition Report. You are expected to conduct a thorough visual inspection of the property, taking measurements and notes as appropriate, and examine potential causes and effects of failure and deterioration. Although the testing of services is not a requirement of Home Inspections, you are expected to report on your visual inspection where it is safe to do so. You must draw on your knowledge and experience of property structure, construction and materials performance and understand the detailed requirements of the Home Condition Report.

Element 4.2 requires that you make complete and accurate records of your inspection findings. You must record information using appropriate methods (e.g. written, photographic) and ensure that records are legible and complete.

Element 4.3 covers the evaluation and analysis of inspection information in order to determine condition ratings for relevant parts of the property. Again, the Home Condition Report defines those aspects of the property for which condition ratings are required. You must draw on the information available and your expertise to make impartial judgements about the condition of the property.

Element 4.4 covers the identification and recording of information necessary to assess the energy efficiency of property. You must gather information relating to, for example, thermal insulation, heating systems and ventilation. If your organisation is licensed to process this information in-house, you can use the approved software to calculate energy efficiency ratings. If your organisation is not licensed to process this information, you must pass it on to a government authorised ratings company.

<b>Element 4.1</b>	<b>Inspect property for condition</b>
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Performance Criteria	Knowledge and Understanding
<b>You must be able to:</b>	<b>You must know and understand:</b>
1 ensure that you have the equipment and resources needed for the inspection	(a) the principles of building structure, elements and fabric
2 use equipment correctly and interpret data accurately	(b) what equipment and resources are needed for the inspection
3 identify yourself to those present at the property before commencing the inspection	(c) the detailed inspection requirements that apply to the property as defined by the Home Condition Report
4 identify and record the method of construction of the property and the main materials used	(d) how to recognise the various types of building construction and materials
5 identify <b>circumstances</b> when at the property that prevent you continuing with the inspection and explain the reasons to the sellers or their representatives	(e) how to conduct the inspection in a thorough, methodical and consistent manner
6 undertake a methodical visual <b>inspection</b> of all relevant aspects of the property	(f) how to make accurate observations and take accurate measurements
7 make accurate observations and <b>measurements</b> which are necessary for the <b>inspection</b>	(g) how to make further investigations where observations are inconsistent with existing evidence and expected findings, and how to identify the causes of these inconsistencies
8 obtain all additional information that is needed about the property and its use	(h) how to distinguish between the structural and non-structural elements of a building, and determine the performance of the structural elements against the property as originally built and as affected by external influences
9 make further investigations where observations are inconsistent with existing evidence and expected findings	(i) the performance and durability of materials over time
10 analyse the likely causes of failure and deterioration for the assessment of condition ratings	(j) the functioning of services (electricity, gas, water, heating, drainage)
10	(k) the possible effects of influences on the condition of the property and the health and safety of occupants
	(l) the requirements and application of building regulations and other technical standards
	(m) the range of likely causes and effects of failure or deterioration relating to the property
	(n) how defects in buildings are manifested
	(o) methods of repair and how to recognise them
	(p) how to determine the likely extent and urgency of repairs required

<b>Element 4.1</b>	<b>Inspect property for condition</b>
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## Scope

### This Element requires that you:

- A. **inspect** a broad range of properties that vary in terms of:
  - (i) age
  - (ii) type
  - (iii) construction
  - (iv) size
  
- B. identify **circumstances** which may prevent you continuing with your inspection of the property, which may include:
  - (i) the discovery of unexpected or hazardous conditions or materials
  - (ii) other potential threats to health and safety
  
- C. make accurate observations and **measurements**, required for:
  - (i) the calculation of reinstatement costs for insurance purposes
  - (ii) calculating the floor area for the Home Condition Report
  - (iii) providing data for the calculation of energy efficiency

## Element 4.2

### Make complete and comprehensive records of findings

### **Performance Criteria**

#### **You must be able to:**

- 1 make complete and comprehensive site notes
- 2 record your findings accurately
- 3 store your records securely
- 4 catalogue your records methodically
- 5 ensure that records can be accessed readily for future use

### **Knowledge and Understanding**

#### **You must know and understand:**

- (a) the range of methods, formats and conventions for recording **information and evidence** on the property and its condition
- (b) the required range of information and evidence relating to the property and its condition as defined by the Home Condition Report
- (c) the level of detail within your site notes and records required to produce a complete and comprehensive Home Condition Report
- (d) the importance of making and maintaining notes and records that are legible and complete
- (e) the importance for storing records securely to allow for future access
- (f) the purposes for which your notes and records may be used

### **Element 4.2**

### **Make complete and comprehensive records of findings**

## **Scope**

### **This Element requires that you:**

- A. record **information and evidence** on the following:
  - (i) general information about the property
  - (ii) environmental matters and safety issues
  - (iii) special risks associated with the property
  - (iv) condition
  - (v) services
  - (vi) likely causes and effects of defects or deterioration

### **Element 4.3 Determine condition ratings**

## Performance Criteria

### You must be able to:

- 1 draw on all relevant data and your expertise to make judgements about the current condition of the property
- 2 evaluate the information and evidence obtained to determine a condition rating for each relevant aspect of the **property**
- 3 assess how the condition of the property may change in the foreseeable future in determining individual condition ratings
- 4 justify your decisions and recommendations based on the information and evidence available to you

## Knowledge and Understanding

### You must know and understand:

- (a) the detailed inspection requirements that apply to the property as defined by the Home Condition Report
- (b) the range of likely causes and effects of failure or deterioration relating to the property
- (c) how defects in buildings are manifested
- (d) methods of repair and how to recognise them
- (e) how to determine the likely extent and urgency of repairs required
- (f) the definitions of the three condition ratings that could apply to aspects of the property and how to determine the rating that applies in each case
- (g) those parts of the property that are exempt from condition ratings
- (h) how to evaluate all available information and evidence to determine condition ratings for each relevant aspect of the property
- (i) the importance of being able to justify your decisions based on the information and evidence available to you

## Element 4.3

## Determine condition ratings

## **Scope**

### **This Element requires that you:**

- A. determine condition ratings for a broad range of **properties** that vary in terms of:
- (i) age
  - (ii) type
  - (iii) construction
  - (iv) size

## **Element 4.4**

### **Collate information for the assessment of energy efficiency**

## Performance Criteria

### You must be able to:

- 1 collate **information** for assessment of the energy efficiency of the **property**
- 2 keep your notes and records legible, complete and accurate
- 3 follow the correct procedures for collecting information to enable the energy efficiency of the property to be determined
- 4 provide practical advice based on the ratings and recommendations provided by the energy efficiency report

## Knowledge and Understanding

### You must know and understand:

- (a) the purpose behind government approved procedures for assessing the energy efficiency of a property
- (b) the factors which are relevant to the determination of the energy efficiency rating of a property
- (c) the assumptions that are made in determining energy efficiency ratings
- (d) the factors that are not deemed to affect energy efficiency ratings
- (e) how to collate information required to assess the energy efficiency of a property
- (f) the importance of keeping your records legible, complete and accurate
- (g) the range of government authorised energy rating organisations
- (h) procedures for processing information relating to the energy efficiency of the property
- (i) how the energy efficiency ratings are affected by changes in the physical properties of the fabric of the building
- (j) how to evaluate the ratings and recommendations to provide practical advice

## Element 4.4

### Collate information for the assessment of energy efficiency

## Scope

### This Element requires that you:

- A. identify and gather the following **information** necessary for calculating the energy efficiency of the property:
  - (i) levels of thermal insulation
  - (ii) types and efficiency of the heating system
  - (iii) ventilation
  
- B. collate information for a broad range of **properties** that vary in terms of:
  - (i) age
  - (ii) type
  - (iii) construction
  - (iv) size

## UNIT 5

## Prepare and disseminate Home Condition Reports

Element 5.1	Produce complete and comprehensive Home Condition Reports
Element 5.2	Make completed Home Condition Reports available and maintain own records

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### **About this Unit**

This Unit covers the activities undertaken once the inspection is completed i.e. the production and distribution of a complete and comprehensive Home Condition Report in accordance with the prescribed format. The report will detail the construction and condition of the property on the date inspected, defects which are considered to be significant or in need of urgent attention and defects which require further investigation to prevent damage to the fabric of the building or which are a threat to personal safety.

Element 5.1 requires that you analyse all the information you have obtained on the property. You must make realistic and impartial assessments of condition, identify causes and effects of failure or deterioration, and produce a report that conforms to appropriate conventions and standards. You must also specify where further investigation is necessary and explain any limitations that apply to your report. Importantly, you must adopt clear language throughout, using appropriate technical terms only where necessary.

Element 5.2 requires that you use the relevant information technology to produce and file your completed report, inform the sellers or their representatives that the report is finished, and respond to any requests for clarification on aspects of the report. You must also maintain your own internal records in accordance with good practice and statutory requirements.

<b>Element 5.1</b>	<b>Produce complete and comprehensive Home Condition Reports</b>
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Performance Criteria	Knowledge and Understanding
<p><b>You must be able to:</b></p>	<p><b>You must know and understand:</b></p>
<p>1 assemble and collate information from the outcomes of your inspection and from other relevant and reliable sources</p>	<p>(a) the prescribed format and content of a Home Condition Report</p>
<p>2 identify causes and effects of failure and deterioration</p>	<p>(b) the types and sources of information required to produce a Home Condition Report</p>
<p>3 prepare a Home Condition Report that is complete, objective and meets relevant codes of practice and standards</p>	<p>(c) defects where it is necessary to recommend further investigation</p>
<p>4 specify condition ratings correctly giving clear reasons and appropriate comments</p>	<p>(d) how to calculate reinstatement costs for insurance purposes</p>
<p>5 provide all other information required by the Home Condition Report</p>	<p>(e) the differences between reinstatement costs and market value</p>
<p>6 recommend any <b>necessary further investigations</b></p>	<p>(f) the reasons why it is necessary and important to indicate if, where and why accurate inspection and measurement has not been possible</p>
<p>7 calculate and state estimated minimum reinstatement costs for insurance purposes</p>	<p>(g) the importance of using plain language, and appropriate terms, where free text is allowed, throughout the report</p>
<p>8 state clearly if, where and why accurate inspection and measurement has not been possible</p>	<p>(h) the importance of checking the report to ensure it is clear and complete</p>

<b>Element 5.1</b>	<b>Produce complete and comprehensive Home Condition Reports</b>
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## Scope

### This Element requires that you:

- A. recommend **necessary further investigations** due to:
- (i) susceptibility to damage
  - (ii) suspected concealed defects
  - (iii) environmental and safety requirements
  - (iv) need to inhibit deterioration

## Element 5.2

**Make completed Home Condition Reports available and maintain own records**

## Performance Criteria

### You must be able to:

- 1 use prescribed technology to produce complete and comprehensive Home Condition Reports
- 2 file Home Condition Reports on the prescribed national database on completion
- 3 inform the sellers or their representatives that the Home Condition Report has been completed and is available to them
- 4 answer questions about the Home Condition Report and provide clarification when required
- 5 maintain internal **records** which are clear, complete and conform to accepted professional and statutory requirements

## Knowledge and Understanding

### You must know and understand:

- (a) the relevant technology applications for the production and filing of completed Home Condition Reports
- (b) the importance of informing sellers or their representatives when the Home Condition Report is completed
- (c) how to respond to questions and requests for clarification from the sellers or their representatives
- (d) the limitations on answers to questions which it is permitted to provide to the sellers or their representatives and prospective buyers or their representatives
- (e) the reasons for, and methods for, maintaining your own internal records in a clear, complete and acceptable manner
- (f) the minimum period of time for which you must retain inspection records

**Element 5.2      Make completed Home Condition Reports available and maintain own records**

## Scope

### This Element requires that you:

- A. maintain **records** that are either:
  - (i) paper-based
  - (ii) electronic

## FURTHER INFORMATION

### Organisations

Awarding Body for the Built Environment  
(ABBE)  
Room E417, Edge Building  
Faculty of the Built Environment,  
University of Central England  
Perry Barr  
Birmingham B42 2SU

Tel: 0121 331 5174  
Fax: 0121 331 6883  
Email: [james.westley@uce.ac.uk](mailto:james.westley@uce.ac.uk)  
Web: [www.uce.ac.uk/abbe/](http://www.uce.ac.uk/abbe/)

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister  
(ODPM)  
Zone 3/H10, Eland House  
Bressenden Place  
London SW1E 5DU

Tel: 020 7944 3406  
Fax: 020 7944 3408  
Email: [homebuy@odpm.gov.uk](mailto:homebuy@odpm.gov.uk)  
Web: [www.odpm.gov.uk](http://www.odpm.gov.uk)

Asset Skills  
2 The Courtyard  
48 New North Road  
Exeter EX4 4EP

Tel: 01392 423 399  
Fax: 01392 423 373  
Email: [enquiries@assetskills.org](mailto:enquiries@assetskills.org)  
Web: [www.assetskills.org](http://www.assetskills.org)

Property Industry Research (PIR) Ltd  
PO Box 3546  
Ferndown  
Dorset BH22 0XP

Tel: 01202 890 988  
Fax: 01202 890 988  
Email: [info@pirltd.org.uk](mailto:info@pirltd.org.uk)  
Web: [www.thehicb.org.uk](http://www.thehicb.org.uk)

Plus any professional body with an interest in government reforms of the home buying and selling process.

### Documents

The HCR is available from <http://www.hicb.co.uk/pages/documents.asp>

The Housing Bill is available from  
[www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmbills/011/2004011.htm](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmbills/011/2004011.htm)

Guidance for Home Inspectors – this is still in development. Further information may be obtained from PIR Ltd or Asset Skills (see above).