Your guide to home energy rating

An explanation of SAP and NHER
Home Energy Ratings

A Home Energy Rating is an independent assessment of the energy efficiency of a home, showing potential homebuyers how energy efficient the new home is. The rating is expressed as an index value thus allowing comparisons between properties.

NHBC provides two types of energy-rating:

- The Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP rating), and
- The National Home Energy Rating (NHER).

What are SAP ratings?

A SAP rating results from an estimate of the annual heating and hot water costs per square metre of the home. The SAP value is produced from a calculation that estimates how much energy will be used by the home; the more efficient the heating and hot water system and the better the insulation, the higher the SAP value will be.

The SAP scale runs from 1 to 120, with most new homes achieving a rating of between 75 and 100, though the national average for all homes is only 43.

What is NHER?

The National Home Energy Rating (NHER) is a more detailed estimate of the home’s annual fuel bills. Expressed on a scale of 0 to 10, 10 being greatest, this rating takes into account all the energy costs associated with the home. Unlike SAP ratings, the NHER includes electrical costs of lights and appliances, (such as fridges, washing machines and televisions), and the location of the property, acknowledging that different areas of the country have varying weather exposure and different average outside temperatures.

SAP and NHER ratings are calculated in similar ways, though the NHER takes account of a greater number of factors. The resulting figure is a cost per square metre, which is converted into an index value quoted for each home.

Which factors are taken into account when calculating energy ratings?

- The efficiency of the heating and hot water system.
- The areas of walls, floors, roofs and windows and their insulation standards.
- Unavoidable heat losses through doors, windows, chimneys and ventilation.
- Fuel prices.
- Average outside temperatures; these affect the rate at which heat is lost.

Home energy ratings assume standard occupancy rates and water usage for the size of each property.

How to save energy in your new home

New homes are very well insulated, however there are plenty of practical energy saving measures you can take:

- Try turning your central heating room thermostat down by 1°C, it could cut your heating bills by up to 10%.
- Adjust the temperatures of individual rooms using the thermostatic valves on the radiators.
- Adjust your central heating programmer carefully.
- Hot water doesn’t need to be scalding. Setting the hot water thermostat at 60°C is usually sufficient for bathing and washing.
- Turn electrical appliances off, don’t leave them on standby for long periods.
- Switch off lights in areas that are not being used.
- Invest in low energy light bulbs, these use a quarter of the energy of ordinary bulbs.
- When replacing white goods, buy energy efficient models as indicated by the EU Energy Label, which shows the rating on an A to G scale.

For more energy saving tips check out the Energy Savings Trust website at www.saveenergy.co.uk