



Sterling Accreditation
setting the standard



ANNUAL REPORT

2013



Sterling Accreditation Limited
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Glossary

The abbreviations used in this report are explained below:

AC	Air Conditioning
ACIR	Air Conditioning Inspection Reporting
Air Con	Air Conditioning Inspection Reporting
APEL	Approved Professional Experiential Learning
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
DEA	Domestic Energy Assessor
DEC	Display Energy Certificate
EA	Energy Assessor
EPC	Energy Performance Certificate
NDEA	Non Domestic Energy Assessor
SOR	Scheme Operating Requirements
QA	Quality Audit
QAA	Quality Audit Assessor



Introduction

This is the fourth annual report for Sterling Accreditation Limited and covers the period 1st October 2012 to 30th September 2013.

The Department for Communities and Local Government require Accreditation Schemes to report on an annual basis following a set pattern. This report provides a variety of information on the Scheme, its membership and lodgement of energy assessments.

Sterling is registered at Companies House (No. 68664378) as a limited liability company.

Sterling Accreditation was granted approval on 30th October 2009 to be an accreditation scheme for energy assessors in both domestic and non-domestic EPCs, DEC's and ACIRs at all levels. We activated the non-domestic EPC strand in the currency of this report so this strand is reported on for the first time.

We now have a UK all round capability to accredit EAs in England & Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

Sterling is independently owned and operated. Our sole business objective is to provide a high level of service and support to our members which facilitates the registration of accurate Energy Certificates on the Landmark Register.

Sterling has no other business stream; we do not supply, allocate or provide work to any other organisation in the energy sector. This is an important position for us as it avoids any conflict of interest.

For the third year running we have seen an increase in membership and lodgements. Our ACIR reporting software tool, E-volve, continues to capture a large share of the market. We have licensed CIBSE so that they can provide this software to their members.

I confirm that this report, as far as possible, gives an accurate representation of this year's activities and end position.

Simon Barnes

Managing Director
October 2013



Review of the period

In this reporting period, Sterling have developed and launched a number of services to our members in a drive to ensure that we continue to deliver a high quality service. During 2012/2013 we have again achieved a significant increase in membership and associated increase in lodgement numbers. More detail is given below.

Sterling's bespoke business CRM system was launched in June 2013, allowing us to obtain a far better insight into our business and improve management of lodgements and QA. We will continue with a programme of improvements over the coming year. Whilst a number of our systems will be automated by the CRM, all of the final decisions in relation to a member's accreditation status will always require manual input. We believe this will allow us to maintain a good working relationship with our members.

Following the launch of our CRM in June we switched to a new, bespoke to Sterling, lodgement service in July 2013. This new system delivers a faster more efficient lodgement process for our membership but principally provides a direct link to our CRM software.

We have now had protocol arrangements with the Scottish Government for over a year and this market continues to develop.

We were pleased to form an agreement with Property Tectonics last year. This has allowed us to widen our software capability and, in particular, they are managing the domestic EPC part of the Scheme on our behalf which we brought into play in November 2012.

In November last year the RICS (Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors) Scheme decide to withdraw from the lodgement market place and we were very fortunate to welcome on board a large number of ex RICS Scheme Members.

DCLG requires all Schemes to take part in and manage Cross Scheme Moderation. The object of this is to improve and develop a level playing field regarding the quality assurance of Accreditation Schemes. Sterling continues to play a full part in Cross Scheme Moderation, TSG and Conventions group meetings to ensure that both our and the voice of our members is aired to the correct audience.

Sterling's Air Conditioning Software (e-volve) continued to grow in usage, becoming the preferred choice of software for our members. As part of the software's ongoing review and development we have, through CPD sessions, gained a wealth of experience from users and plan to make some minor adjustments to ease workflow in the future.

Mike Gordon

Operations Manager



Membership

We accept new members to our scheme through either the APEL or qualification route.

At the end of this reporting period, 30th September 2013, we had 299 active Members accredited to undertake energy assessments. Over the last four years membership at 30th September each year has been:

TABLE 1

Year	Non Domestic Members	Domestic EPC Members
2010	8	0
2011	68	0
2012	169	0
2013	299	86

It is usual for an EA to be active in more than one strand of membership. However the figure of 299 active members given above only includes each member once.

Guidance and Information

All EAs who become members of the Sterling Accreditation Scheme have access to a members' website which provides a wealth of information and news and documentation including information from DCLG. This is to ensure that they have all the basic information needed to undertake their assessments and keep them up to date. There is also a members' forum which encourages a transfer of information.

Continuous Professional Development

We arrange CPD essentially to provide training where we have identified an area in our EAs knowledge and expertise that requires support or when we are aware of new requirements, be it legal or technical that requires EA up skilling.

During this reporting period we have developed an agreement with INTEB Ltd to provide CPD and training as and when required. Their greater resources have enabled us to provide a much wider scope of CPD and training.

We maintain a professional profile for each member which is kept up to date and checks are made to ensure that the requisite CPD is undertaken.

Applications

359 applications were received by 248 individuals in this reporting period, 219 of which were through the APEL or APEL transferring route and 140 through the qualification route.



Table 2A below gives breakdown of the routes used by our non domestic members to gain membership over the last four years. Table 2B below gives breakdown of the routes used by our domestic members to gain membership over the last years:

TABLE 2A NDEAs

Year	Qualification	APEL
2010	7	1
2011	45	15
2012	60	75
2013	140	219

TABLE 2B DEAs

Year	Qualification	APEL
2013	86	n/a

The figures in Tables 2A & 2B may not add up to number quoted as joining us this year as some members join more than one strand and may join one strand by APEL and another by qualification. Neither will the figures of those joining this year added to last year's membership equal this year's due to members leaving the industry or moving to another scheme.

Table 3 below provides a breakdown of applications per strand for each application route.

TABLE 3

Energy Assessor Strand	Non-Dom Level 3	Non-Dom Level 4	Non-Dom Level 5	DEC	Air Con Level 3	Air Con Level 4
APEL	76	74	1	34	17	17
Qualification	22	15	0	6	9	2

Regardless of which route followed each EA has to provide certain information to verify identity, their qualifications and experience etc. They also have to sign up to our Code of Conduct which requires them to comply with the SOR requirements.

Table 4 below provides an analysis of our new members (individuals) by strand by year

TABLE 4

Year	Non-Dom Level 3	Non-Dom Level 4	Non-Dom Level 5	DEC	Air Con Level 3	Air Con Level 4	Domestic
2010	6	5	0	3	0	0	0
2011	54	42	0	22	24	15	0
2012	13	49	1	33	37	112	0
2013	8	88	1	40	7	19	86



Lodgements

During this reporting period 27,924 Energy Certificates have been lodged in the Landmark register, an increase of 207% on the previous reporting period. Split as follows:

England & Wales:	24,640
Northern Ireland:	450
Scotland:	2,834

Display Energy Certificates: 1,395

(87% increase on the previous reporting period)

England & Wales:	1,319
Northern Ireland:	76

Domestic – Energy Performance Certificates: 11,228

Domestic Lodgement Service started 30th November 2012

England & Wales:	11,052
Northern Ireland:	147
Scotland:	29

Non Domestic - Energy Performance Certificates: 6,676

(146% increase on the previous reporting period)

England & Wales:	4,456
Northern Ireland:	107
Scotland:	2,113

Air Conditioning Inspection Reports: 8,625

(53% increase on the previous reporting period)

England & Wales:	7,813
Northern Ireland:	120
Scotland:	692



Quality Assurance

Sterling undertakes a certain level of QA on all lodgements to ensure a basic level of compliance. A heightened level of QA is undertaken on lodgements in accordance with the relevant DCLG SOR strand.

A feedback report is provided to all EAs who have had work quality checked regardless of whether it is a pass or fail. Feed back is used to help improve the work of individual EAs as well as informing our own needs to provide technical advice notes and CPD.

A report on QA undertaken is provided to DCLG on a monthly basis.

All EPCs, DECAs and ACIRs that fall outside the error rates specified in the SORs are corrected and re-lodged.

In this reporting period we have undertaken quality checks on the lodgements in the various strands as follows:

Display Energy Certificates:

3.9% of DECAs were audited

92.3% of Audits achieved the Pass Standard

Non Domestic Energy Performance Certificates:

3.1% of EPCs were audited

79.7% of Audits achieved the Pass Standard, up dramatically from the previous reporting period where 58% of Audits achieved the Pass Standard

Domestic Energy Performance Certificates:

2.4% of EPCs were audited between period 30th November 2012 and 30th September 2013

89.3% of Audits achieved the Pass Standard; however

97.8% of Audits were within +/-5 SAP points

Air Conditioning Inspection Reports:

2.4% of ACRs were audited

95.3% of Audits achieved the Pass Standard

Where the QA results are below DCLG Scheme operating Requirements appropriate measures have been taken to address the various issues in order to redress the situation.

All quality audits are undertaken by our team of QA Auditors and each EA is provided with a comprehensive feedback report regardless of whether the audit was a pass or failure.

The work of our QAAs is moderated on a regular basis by our senior auditors.



Customer Satisfaction

In this period we have received four complaints, three of which were passed to DCLG for resolution. The fourth was dealt with to the complainant's satisfaction.

Finance

Financial information will be provided on request to info@sterlingaccreditation.com



The Future

Whilst the future cannot always be clearly mapped out there has to be some crystal ball gazing to ensure that as an organisation we move forward. Our prediction for 2014 is that compliance will remain static if not reduce due to lack of enforcement for all the strands applicable to EPBD. That does not deter us from moving forward in the air-conditioning compliance sector and developing our products and services to ensure we remain a market leader. We will work with organisations to raise industry awareness and improve compliance to support our members and their businesses.

When we started Sterling Accreditation we made a commitment to our members that we would only concentrate on those activities that apply to an accreditation scheme. We believe we have kept this promise and hope that these assurances that we will not compete with them in their commercial market retains their loyalty and respect as members.

We have invested heavily in new technology to support Energy Assessors with easier ways for you to lodge and for us to manage your data. We aim to continue developing these systems to ensure you remain compliant at all times with the minimum of fuss. Over the coming twelve months we expect to deliver new software via a number of partnerships, including, online CPD and an auditing upload system to allow secure and easy transfer of data to Sterling's auditing team. In quarter 1 of 2014 we hope to provide you with new software tools that can help target carbon reduction activities in commercial buildings and provide you with a unique selling point for your customers.

Sterling Accreditation will continue to play its full part in Scheme Moderation, TSG meetings and convention groups and will report back to members with up to date information on the forthcoming changes.

Overall we believe 2014 will be a year of change, hopefully for the better. As ever, a forward looking statement is only as good as the team behind it. Over the last four years we believe we have maintained the right balance of people to ensure we deliver on our promise, to provide the added value benefits to our members they need to remain competitive in what is a tough market.

Alex Matthias

Business Development Manager



Sterling Accreditation

Setting the Standard

Who's Who

Simon Barnes – Scheme Manager (Managing Director)

Alex Matthias – Business Development Manager

Mike Gordon – Operations Manager

Ruth Osborne – Membership Compliance Manager

Peter Rowley – Technical support

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