

Appendix A: Definition of levels

As described in section 2.5, RICS members **must** ensure their service is clearly ‘benchmarked’ against one of the defined levels in this appendix.

Note: These levels are not prescriptive or detailed. Instead they provide enough detail to enable the nature of the service to be identified while maintaining sufficient flexibility for RICS members to innovate and respond to changes in the market.

Please note Home Report Scotland variations apply. Refer to the current edition of *The Home Report, Scotland*, RICS guidance note.

A1 Survey level one

This service is designed for clients (buyers, sellers and owners) seeking a professional and objective report on the condition of the property at an economic price. As a result, it is less comprehensive than survey level two and survey level three.

This level of service includes a visual inspection that is less extensive than for the other survey levels. No tests of the building fabric or services are undertaken. The report objectively describes the condition of the building, its services and the grounds. It highlights relevant legal issues and any obvious risks to the building, people or grounds. The report is succinct and provides an assessment of the relative importance of the defects and problems. Where the surveyor is unable to reach a conclusion with reasonable confidence, a recommendation for further investigation should be made.

A survey level one report does not include advice on repairs or ongoing maintenance and this, combined with the less extensive inspection, usually means it is better suited to conventionally built, modern dwellings in satisfactory condition. It will not suit older or complex properties, or those in a neglected condition.

A2 Survey level two

This level of service is for clients who are seeking a professional opinion at an economic price. It is, therefore, less comprehensive than a level three service. The focus is on assessing the general condition of the main elements of a property.

This intermediate level of service includes a more extensive visual inspection of the building, its services and grounds, but still without tests. Concealed areas normally opened or used by the occupiers are inspected if it is safe to do so (typical examples include roof spaces, basements and cellars). The report objectively describes the condition of the different elements and provides an assessment of the relative importance of the defects/problems. At this level, although it is concise, the report does include advice about repairs and any ongoing maintenance issues. Where the surveyor is unable to reach a conclusion with reasonable confidence, a recommendation for further investigations should be made.

This level of service suits a broader range of conventionally built properties, although the age and type will depend on the knowledge and experience of the RICS member. This level of service is unlikely to suit:

- complex buildings, for example those that have been extensively extended and altered
- unique or older historic properties – although survey level two services may be appropriate for some older buildings, the decision will depend on the RICS member's proven competence and knowledge and the nature of the building itself. For example, a survey level two report on homes with traditional timber frames or those built much before 1850 is likely to be inconclusive and be of little use to the client or
- properties in neglected condition.

In such cases, a survey level two service will often result in numerous referrals for further investigations, an outcome that many clients find disappointing.

Where the client is planning to carry out extensive repair and refurbishment work in the future, the RICS member should give advice on suitable additional services.

A3 Survey level three

This level of service is for clients who are seeking a professional opinion based on a detailed assessment of the property.

The service consists of a detailed visual inspection of the building, its services and the grounds and is more extensive than a survey level two. Concealed areas normally opened or used by the occupiers are inspected if it is safe to do so (typical examples include roof spaces, basements and cellars). Although the services are not tested, they are observed in normal operation – in other words, they are switched on or off and/or operated where the occupier has given permission and it is safe to do so.

The report objectively describes the form of construction and materials used for different parts of the property. It describes the condition and provides an assessment of the relative importance of the defects/problems. Additionally, it should:

- describe the identifiable risk of potential or hidden defects in areas not inspected
- propose the most probable cause(s) of the defects based on the inspection
- outline the likely scope of any appropriate remedial work and explain the likely consequences of non-repair
- make general recommendations in respect of the priority and likely timescale for necessary work and
- give an indication of likely costs (this aspect would not normally form part of the level three service, but some RICS members may choose to include it). Where costings are included, this **must** be reflected in the terms and conditions.

Where an RICS member feels unable to reach the necessary conclusions with reasonable confidence, they should refer the matter for further investigations. However, at survey level three such referrals should be the exception rather than the rule. A survey level three report should aim to provide the client with all the information they need to make a decision.

This level of service will suit any domestic residential property in any condition depending on the competence and experience of the RICS member.