

Surveys of Residential Property

Guidance Note



Surveys of Residential Property

Guidance Note

No responsibility for loss or damage caused to any person acting or refraining from actions as a result of the material included in this publication can be accepted by the authors or SCSi & RICS.

Published February 2014

© Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland (SCSi) and the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) February 2014. Copyright in all or part of this publication rests with the SCSi and RICS save by prior consent of SCSi or RICS, no part or parts shall be reproduced by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying or otherwise, now known or to be advised.

Contents

SCSI / RICS Guidance Note	5
Foreword and Acknowledgements	6
Surveys of Residential Property	7
1. Introduction	7
2. The Scope	8
3. The different types of residential surveys	9
3.1 Type one	9
3.2 Type two	9
3.3 Type three	10
3.4 Format of the Report	10
3.5 Additional services for property owners and vendors	11
4. Competence	12
5. Components of the service	13
5.1 Pre inspection	13
5.1.1 Client enquiry	13
5.1.2 Understanding the nature of the building	13
5.1.3 Terms and conditions of engagement	14
5.1.4 Leaseholds	14
5.1.5 Fees	15
5.1.6 Transparency	15
5.1.7 Pre-inspection research	15
5.2 Other inspection matters	16
5.2.1 Asbestos	16
5.2.2 Pyrite	16
5.2.3 Radon	17
5.2.4 Septic tanks	17
5.2.5 Building Energy Rating	17
5.3 Health & Safety at Work (Construction) Regulations	18
5.4 Inspection	18
5.4.1 Equipment	18
5.4.2 Equipment for recording information	18
5.4.3 Measuring equipment	19
5.4.4 Equipment for providing access to concealed areas	19
5.4.5 Health and Safety equipment	19
5.4.6 Owner/Occupier enquiry	19
5.4.7 Inspection methodology	20
5.4.8 The inspection	20
5.4.9 Safety during the inspection	25

6. The report	26
6.1 Type specific reporting requirements	26
6.1.1 Type one	26
6.1.2 Type two	27
6.1.3 Type three	27
6.2 Surveyors overall opinion	28
6.3 Risks to occupants	29
6.4 Legal matters	29
6.4.1 Regulation	30
6.4.2 Guarantees	30
6.4.3 Other matters	30
6.5 Providing cost advice	31
6.6 Remedial Measures for Protected Structures	31
7. Post report delivery and managing client expectations	32
8. Additional services	33
9. Project closure	34
Appendices	35
Appendix A - Relevant SCSi / RICS guidance sources	36
Appendix B - Example T&Cs of engagement for the core service	37
Appendix C – References and Bibliography on Radon	46
Appendix D – References and Bibliography on Septic tanks	47

SCSI / RICS guidance note

This is a guidance note. Where recommendations are made for specific professional tasks, these are intended to represent 'best practice', i.e. recommendations that in the opinion of SCSI meet a high standard of professional competence. Although members are not required to follow the recommendations contained in the note, they should take into account the following points.

When an allegation of professional negligence is made against a surveyor, a court or tribunal may take account of the contents of any relevant guidance notes published by SCSI in deciding whether or not the member had acted with reasonable competence.

In the opinion of SCSI, a member conforming to the practices recommended in this note should have at least a partial defence to an allegation of negligence if they have followed those practices. However, members have the responsibility of deciding when it is inappropriate to follow the guidance.

It is for each surveyor to decide on the appropriate procedure to follow in any professional task. However, where members do not comply with the practice recommended in this note, they should do so only for a good reason. In the event of a legal dispute, a court or tribunal may require them to explain why they decided not to adopt the recommended practice. Also, if members have not followed this guidance, and their actions are questioned in an SCSI disciplinary case, they will be asked to explain the actions they did take. This may be taken into account by the panel.

In addition, guidance notes are relevant to professional competence in that each member should be up to date and have knowledge of guidance notes within a reasonable time of their coming into effect.

Foreword and Acknowledgements

It is with great pleasure that I introduce to you the *Surveys of Residential Property Guidance Note*. Produced by the SCSi Building Surveying Professional Group Committee, this guidance has been developed to provide a defined structure to building inspections and reporting of information to clients. Given the complexities of different property categories requiring different types of reporting, this guidance note offers surveyors useful information to provide appropriate recommendations to their clients.

This guidance note has been adapted from the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) *Surveys of Residential Property Guidance Note* for use in Ireland. This Irish edition will clarify reporting types which should be applied, whilst offering clients the flexibility of a bespoke survey suitable for their needs.

The SCSi would like to acknowledge the efforts of the following SCSi members for their assistance in producing this Guidance;

- Val O'Brien MSCSI, Val O'Brien and Associates, Dublin 1.
- Pat Mc Govern FSCSI, McGovern Surveyors, Dublin 2
- Kevin Hollingsworth MSCSI, Omega Surveying Services, Dublin 2.
- Frank Keohane MSCSI, Independent Consultant, Dublin 3
- Kevin Sheridan FSCSI, Independent Consultant, Dublin 14.

Kevin Hollingsworth
Chairperson of the Building Surveying Professional Group Committee

Surveys of Residential Property

1 Introduction

The freedom for Chartered Surveyors to offer flexible, bespoke and responsive services is important but it does present increasing challenges for the SCSI. For example, a cursory review of the services offered by surveyors in any part of the country reveals a wide range of products in terms of names, scope and contractual obligations. For the public, this is confusing. When commissioning a survey, a home purchaser can face a baffling range of poorly defined choices. It is important this guidance note provides a clear but flexible framework within which surveyors can develop their own services the public can recognise and trust.

This guidance note has two principle aims:

- To support those members who want to continue to deliver their own product of all types, and;
- To establish a clear framework that will protect and maintain consistent quality standards for such residential property survey products that SCSI members provide.

2. The Scope

This guidance note covers condition-based residential surveys of all types. It does not include any aspect of valuation or property marketing issues: its primary purpose is to consider the property as a physical asset.

The guidance note aims to describe the:

- Different types of service to which this document applies;
- Nature of the pre inspection preparation, activities and research required;
- Inspection process associated with each type of service;
- Report writing methodology;
- Post report client liaison; and
- Project closure activities.

The document concisely considers each objective in turn. It provides sufficient information to establish the nature and extent of each type of service and avoids unnecessary detail.

3. The different types of residential surveys

To avoid confusion in the market place, it is important the public and their advisor's understand the difference between the types of service offered by Chartered Building Surveyors. Consequently, there are three types of service:

- Type 1
- Type 2
- Type 3

This guidance note aims to provide a flexible framework allowing members to name their own services. To provide clarity for the public and help to maintain standards, SCSl members should clearly state the '**SCSl type**' on which their service is most closely based. For example, a typical phrase might be:

3.1 Type One

This type of service includes a visual inspection (no tests are undertaken) and a report on condition of the building, its services, and the grounds. It highlights relevant legal issues and any obvious risks to the building, people or to the grounds. The report is succinct and objectively describes the condition of the different parts of the building and provides an assessment of the relative importance of the defects/problems. Type one reports do not generally include advice on repairs or ongoing maintenance and so are better suited to conventionally built, modern dwellings that are in a satisfactory condition.

3.2 Type Two

This intermediate type of service includes a more extensive visual inspection of the building, its services, and the grounds (but still without tests). Accessible concealed areas are inspected if it is safe to do so (typical examples include roof spaces and underfloor areas). The report objectively describes the condition of the different elements and provides an assessment of the relative importance of the defects/problems. Although the report is concise it does include advice about the repairs and any on-going maintenance issues. Where the surveyor feels unable to reach the necessary conclusions with reasonable confidence, they should refer the matter for further investigations.

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

- Complex and/or unique, older properties,
- Those in a poor condition, or;
- Where the client is planning to carry out extensive repair and/or refurbishment work.

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

3.3 Type Three

This type of service consists of an extensive visual inspection of the building, its services and the grounds. Some concealed areas may be opened and accessed where it safe and appropriate to do so and although the services are not tested, where possible, they are observed in normal operation (in other words, they are switched on and/or operated).

The report objectively describes the form of construction and materials used for the different parts of the property. It objectively describes the condition and provides an assessment of the relative importance of the defects/problems. This type of report is more extensive than types one and two and it should:

- Describe the identifiable risk of potential or hidden defects in the areas not inspected;
- Proposes the most probable cause(s) of the defects based on the inspection;
- Outlines the likely scope of any remedial work and explains the likely consequences of non-repair;
- Makes general recommendations in respect of the priority and likely timescale for necessary work;
- If it is an agreed part of the service, provides the approximate cost of the repair work.

Where a surveyor feels unable to reach the necessary conclusions with reasonable confidence, they should refer the matter for further investigations. However, for type three, such referrals should be the exception rather than the rule.

This type of service will suit any domestic residential property in any condition depending on the knowledge and experience of the surveyor.

3.4 Format of the Report

Report Summary;

The main body of the report should follow a consistent approach throughout, such as using a top down format starting from the ceilings to walls and floors.

The report should conclude with a summary of the issues identified, separating them into at least two categories;

- Essential repairs that materially affect the value of the property and
- Desirable less urgent repairs/upgrades that can be dealt with as regular maintenance works while the property is occupied (where applicable).

An example of an essential repair would be a rotten timber window frame that needs to be replaced. A desirable repair would be a single glazed aluminium window that is not broken and it still functional but the surveyor may wish to bring it to their client's attention that it may be advisable to upgrade the window in terms of thermal efficiency.

A separate budget estimate of the cost of the essential repairs and desirable upgrades should be provided if this service is provided by the surveyor.

3.5 Additional services for property owners and vendors

Although buyers will usually request additional services, existing property owners may also find them useful in a number of ways. This is because an assessment of the condition of a property can help long-term owners plan for future maintenance and development of their home. Additionally, a type one inspection and report can help vendors prepare their property for market by identifying those matters that could make it difficult to sell the dwelling. Some of these are as follows;

- Boundary check
- Planning search
- Valuation
- Guidance on upgrading the thermal performance of a house

However, where surveyors make use of these services in this way, the client must be clear about the nature and extent of the arrangement. This must also be reflected in the T&Cs.

4. Competence

To provide a satisfactory service at all types, the surveyor must be competent and have:

- Sufficient knowledge of the tasks to be undertaken and the risks involved;
- The experience and ability to carry out their duties in relation to the appropriate type of service; and
- The ability to recognise their limitations and take appropriate action where this is found to be inadequate.

This will develop over time as individuals enhance their competence through a mix of initial training, on-the-job learning, instruction, assessment and formal qualification.

Assessing competence is beyond the scope of this guidance note. However, the surveyor needs to be familiar with the nature and complexity of the property type and the region in which it is situated.

This is likely to include most of the following knowledge:

- General environmental issues where information about them is freely available to the public, including flooding, radon, pyrite, mining, aircraft noise, typical soil conditions, important landfill sites; etc.
- Local and regional government organisations and structures;
- An awareness of the socio-historical/industrial development in the area;
- The location of protected structures, architectural conservation areas and zones of archaeological potential.
- Common and uncommon vernacular housing styles, materials and construction techniques. This is particularly important for older and historic buildings where the surveyor must understand the interaction of different building materials and techniques.

If any of this information is not known, the surveyor must fill in the gaps by researching the property. They should do this by carrying out a desk-top study, making enquiries and using other means prior to, during and after the inspection. If this cannot be achieved within an appropriate timescale, the surveyor should not accept the instruction.

Although a surveyor with this knowledge may be able to provide all types of services, surveyors who provide type three services on complex properties, historic buildings and those in a poorer condition will require a broader and deeper technical knowledge. A structured, relevant and recent lifelong learning strategy can achieve this. This knowledge can be enhanced by other professional activities such as:

- Project managing further investigative work on behalf of clients;
- Defect analysis and advising on appropriate repair methods;
- Organising building/repair work; and
- Dealing with consent applications such as building regulations, planning permission, section 5 and section 57 declarations, boundary disputes and other neighbourly matters

5. Components of the service

This section consists of a number of distinct stages that define the service. Where appropriate, 'type specific' requirements will be identified in each section.

5.1 Pre inspection

5.1.1 Client enquiry

From the outset, it is important to work closely with potential clients so they:

- Understand the differences between the different types of service;
- Are aware of the range of options the surveyor can offer together with the key features and benefits; and
- The fee charged for the service.

Clients may not be familiar with this choice and will require advice on what type will best suit their particular needs and it is better the surveyor speaks directly with the client. However, because type one and two services are usually better defined and more easily explained, knowledgeable and satisfactorily trained support staff may be able to provide this information and help the client choose. At type three, direct communication between the surveyor and the client will always be the most appropriate approach.

It is particularly important to make sure the client is aware of what any type of service can deliver. For example:

- A property that is fully carpeted and furnished and has its roof space deeply insulated will restrict the completeness of the inspection, and;
- Where the seller or their agents are unable to show the service installations have been appropriately inspected, tested, and/or serviced, a call for further inspection will be very likely.

Discussions at this early stage can make sure clients have realistic expectations of what the report can deliver.

5.1.2 Understanding the nature of the building

To advise the client, the surveyor must first establish the nature of the building for three reasons:

- To help the client choose which type of service best suits the property;
- To assess whether the surveyor is competent to provide that type of service; and
- To decide on an appropriate fee.

Although some of this information may not be available, the surveyor should endeavour to obtain the following information from the client, selling agent and sales particulars (especially any photographs):

- The size, nature and basic construction of the building;
- Whether the building has been extensively altered or extended;
- If the building is in generally satisfactory condition or in need of work (to the untrained eye of the client);

- If the building is a protected structure or recorded monument, in an architectural conservation area or a zone of archaeological potential or has any other restrictions (for example, if it's in a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) or a Natural Heritage Area (NHA)); and
- Whether the client has any intentions to alter or extend the building. This is of particular significance if the property is subject to protection in any form.

This does not constitute a pre-inspection desktop study, but initial fact finding that will help the surveyor advise the client.

5.1.3 Terms and conditions of engagement

The client should receive an up-to-date document that describes the terms and conditions suited to the specific instruction. At type one and two, these are likely to be standard documents amended to take account of any specific requirements and the property type. At type three, although the T&Cs may be similar to types one and two, there are likely to be unique and bespoke parts depending on the range of services offered by the surveyor and the pre-inspection discussions with the client.

The precise content of the T&Cs will vary between surveyors but it should include the following:

- The client's name, address, phone number, and email address;
- The surveyor's name, business address, phone number, and email address;
- The property address and post code as appropriate;
- The nature and type of report;
- The details of any special instructions, additional, and/or extra services;
- The likely inspection date and when the report will be delivered;
- The delivery format of the report; printed copies by An Post, secure pdf by email, and so on;
- The agreed fee and the fees for any additional work including vat;
- The payment arrangements and payment period;
- The signatures of the client that confirm acceptance of the T&Cs.

The terms and conditions must be sent to, and returned by the clients before the instruction is confirmed and the inspection carried out. Where this is not possible, the T&Cs must be confirmed as soon as possible and certainly before the report is delivered.

Many surveyors send their T&Cs to their clients by email and receive confirmation of their client's acceptance through an emailed reply. Forming a contract by this method is now considered legally valid and can better match the restricted timescales of a typical property transaction.

5.1.4 Leaseholds

Any survey of a leasehold residential property raises separate and additional factors arising from shared responsibilities and the wide variety of repairing covenants that are in common use. Particularly onerous repairing liabilities may exist independently from the property, for example, where the lease imposes a liability upon the property owner/occupier to pay a proportion of the total estate repair costs.

If the lease is not available before the inspection, the surveyor should set out the limitations of any advice given including making clear the surveyor is not responsible for advising on the true legal effect of the lease as this is the exclusive responsibility of the client's legal advisers. It is also important to make clear the report will not consider the possible rights and implications of lease renewal or enfranchisement. The surveyor should also:

- Give advice on relevant matters affecting the client's responsibility for effecting repairs, and liability to pay towards their cost (whether potential or in respect of existing wants of repair);
- Recommend that the client obtains independent legal advice on the interpretation of the lease.

The surveyor should make the seller and their agents aware of the importance of leasehold information in the way it can help a clear and confident assessment of the property to be made. If the information is not available or is not made available, requests for the inevitable further investigations will affect the speed and successfulness of the transaction. The surveyor should discuss this matter with the client at the earliest stage so any calls for further information will not cause disappointment.

Typical examples include a lack of evidence of annual servicing of carbon based heating systems, the recent inspection of the electrical system and certification relating to some repair and improvement work.

5.1.5 Fees

Any fees quoted should reflect types of service and account for the time and skill required for each component of the service described in this Guidance Note. It should take account of travelling time, pre inspection research and client liaison, inspection time, preparation and packaging of the report, report dispatch, post inspection client discussions, and supporting administrative processes.

Economic downturns can result in a drop in fees to unsustainable levels. This can result in a reduction in standard of service as practitioners attempt to reduce their costs to meet unrealistically low fees. This reduced performance poorly serves the public and tarnishes the reputation of the profession and so should be avoided.

5.1.6 Transparency

Like many other organisations, the SCSi has constructed rules and accountability procedures designed to establish trust in the Society and its members, to protect the public, and uphold the reputation of the profession. These are available on www.scsi.ie. The rules and procedures adopt six principles of better regulation, with transparency being one of these key principles. Members must act in a transparent manner at all times with their clients in order to maintain and promote their professional integrity.

5.1.7 Pre inspection research

All surveyors should be familiar with their area of operation and the type of property. Additionally, pre-inspection research should be carried out for every instruction (preferably before the inspection) to ensure the surveyor has all the necessary information to make professional judgements about the property.

The depth and breadth of the research will depend on a range of factors including the surveyor's knowledge and experience, the locality and the client's specific requirements.

The research will depend on circumstances and may vary over time as additional information becomes publicly available. Currently, a typical list of information might include:

- Information from the selling agents;
- The BER certificate;
- Information about flooding risk, radon levels, nature of the subsoil's, reports of pyrites in the area;
- Protected structure status and whether the building is set in an architectural conservation area or any other designated heritage area;
- Other general information about the site including exposure to wind and rain, frost attack and so on.

In addition, the owner, and/or seller or their agent should be asked to provide appropriate information including details of previous repair and improvement work, details of planning permissions, building regulations, evidence of service agreements and lease details. It will also be appropriate to ask if any building insurance claims have been made, whether the property has been flooded, and if Pyrites or Knotweed has affected the property or any of its neighbours. The SCSi has published an Information Paper on the Knotweed problem in Ireland and this can be downloaded on <http://www.scsi.ie/membersguidancenotes>.

Other matters also include ownership of boundaries, existence of any neighbour disputes and rights of way. The SCSi has published a guidance note for members on boundary identification and dispute resolution in Ireland which can also be downloaded on the above website link.

5.2 Other pre-inspection matters

5.2.1 Asbestos

None of the levels of service include an asbestos inspection. However, the report should properly emphasise the suspected presence of asbestos-containing materials if the inspection identifies the possible presence of such materials.

For personal safety reasons and for informing clients, SCSi members should be familiar with the current edition of the RICS guidance note '*Asbestos and its implications for surveyors and their clients*'. They should also be aware of common asbestos-containing materials and where these might frequently be found in residential buildings.

5.2.2 Pyrite

None of the levels of service include for testing for pyrite. However, the surveyor should be aware of the areas affected by pyrite and the symptoms of pyrite. The report should properly emphasise the suspected presence of pyrite if the inspection identifies the possible presence of such material and make appropriate recommendations for further investigation.

SCSi members should be familiar with the Department of the Environment Community and Local Government report¹ on pyrite and where pyrite might frequently be found in residential buildings.

¹Department of the Environment Community and Local Government – Report of the Pyrite Panel, published June 2012.

5.2.3 Radon

The surveyor should be aware of the significance of radon in buildings and the health risks and consequences associated with high radon levels. It is important to draw the client's attention to the advisability of carrying out a measurement of the radon levels using a passive kit of alpha track detectors (typically supplied by the RPII) placed over a three month period after occupation to determine the radon levels. Radon risk maps are available. This is advisable whether you are in a notional high radon area or adjacent to it, as radon "hot spots" can occur in any area. While clients may consider that they may not have the luxury of waiting three months for definitive readings, the information will assist them in relation to the advisability or otherwise of carrying out remediation works in the interest of their family's safety. If the surveyor is not competent in this area he/she should advise the client of the need for a survey to be undertaken by a competent certified radon specialist in this area. Please see appendix C for reference and bibliography material on radon.

5.2.4 Septic tanks

The surveyor should be aware of the environmental pollution and health and safety hazard consequences of malfunctioning on-site wastewater treatment systems including the efficiency or otherwise of poorly located or constructed percolation areas. You need to be aware of possible pollution to water supply sources such as adjacent groundwater and surface water sources for wells and other areas feeding local and regional aquifers. If the system fails an inspection under the Water Services (Amendment) Act 2012 then steps will have to be taken to repair or remediate the domestic wastewater treatment system so that it does not cause a risk to human health or the environment. A preliminary site survey is likely to provide clues as to the likelihood of problem installations such as water ponding or the growth of tell-tale vegetation (reeds, rushes etc.) in the vicinity of the septic tank or percolation area.

If the surveyor is not competent in this area he/she should advise the client of the need for a survey to be undertaken by a competent certified site suitability assessor in this area. Please see appendix D for reference and bibliography material on septic tanks.

5.2.5 Building Energy Rating

A Building Energy Rating (BER) Certificate is an indication of the energy performance of a home. A BER certificate is accompanied by an Advisory Report which identifies how you might improve the energy performance of the subject property. BER is the calculated energy use for space and hot water heating, ventilation and lighting based on standard occupancy. The label has a scale of A-G. A-rated homes are the most energy efficient and will tend to have the lowest energy bills. A BER is compulsory for all homes offered for sale or rent.

The surveyor must be aware of how the age of the property (and the prescribed U-Values of the building elements of that age of property) affect the BER. For example an A3 rating is the lowest to achieve compliance under the 2011 TGD L of the Building Regulations. Therefore any property built after 2011 will have a minimum A3 rating. The average rating for a 1960's house with uninsulated walls and floors would be nearer a D or E rating. This does not mean that the 1960's is defective as there is no pass or fail. The BER and the accompanying Advisory Note provides guidance to the prospective purchaser about how they can improve energy efficiency.

The surveyor may wish to review the "what is a BER" page on the SEAI website:
http://www.seai.ie/Your_Building/BER/Your_Guide_to_Building_Energy_Rating.pdf

5.3 Health and Safety at Work (Constriction) Regulations 2013

The Safety, Health and Welfare at work (Construction) Regulations 2013 came into effect on the 1st of August 2013. The Regulations now cover paid occupational work to domestic properties but does not apply to DIY. The introduction of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2013 places responsibilities on homeowners, who are having construction work carried out on their home. The Health and Safety Authority has produced two short and useful guidance documents to assist duty holders in understanding and complying with the new regulations.

For Homeowners:

http://www.hsa.ie/eng/Publications_and_Forms/Publications/Construction/homeowners_guidance.pdf

Guide for Contractors and Project Supervisors:

http://www.hsa.ie/eng/Publications_and_Forms/Publications/Construction/contractors_guide.pdf

Although it is not envisaged that a building surveyor undertaking a pre purchase survey would be required to advise on these regulations the surveyor should be aware of the requirements if their instruction progressing to the next stage of overseeing works to any domestic property.

5.4 Inspection

The extent of the inspection will vary with the type of service (although there are a number of requirements common to all), the specific T&Cs agreed with the client and to some extent, surveyor preference. Although this will allow some variation, any adjustments should not change the essential nature of the type of service.

5.4.1 Equipment

For all types of service, surveyors should have a core set of equipment available for use during the inspection:

5.4.2 Equipment for recording information

As technology and professional practice develops, the method of recording information will vary. Currently this includes;

- Pen and paper;
- Handwriting recognition and drawing programmes on handheld 'tablet' computers;
- Voice recording devices that create digital files;
- A range of digital and digital video cameras with appropriate storage memory;
- and
- Other testing equipment (used where appropriate) capable of storing data including some moisture meters, temperature and humidity data loggers, measuring devices, and so on.

The main requirement is to provide an accurate and comprehensive record of the property at the time of inspection as this will allow reflection during the report writing stage. It is essential for the surveyor to keep a permanent record of the inspection in case of, for example, a customer complaint.

The information gathered should help the surveyor:

- Record the construction, condition and circumstances of inspection (including any limitations);
- Provide a record of the checks made to the fabric and structure and what was found; and
- Record appropriate dimensions and diagrams, sketch plans, photographs, videos and so on.

As type three services will include more detailed and technical assessments of the building, the amount of recorded information will be greater.

5.4.3 Measuring equipment

The surveyor should collect appropriate dimensions and other property characteristics to an appropriate level of accuracy and the usual variety of tapes, rods and laser-measuring devices, moisture meters, standard spirit levels will achieve this. In some circumstances, (especially at type 3) more accurate measurement may be required and typical examples include crack width and building distortion. In such cases, more specialised items such as an engineers rule, plumb bobs, larger spirit levels, quick-set levels and measuring staffs, and so on may also be required. Binoculars will be required to assess parts of the property at high levels.

5.4.4 Equipment for providing access to concealed areas

This will typically include large screwdrivers, hammers, small crowbars, bolsters and standard lifting equipment for inspection chamber covers, meter cupboard keys, and a ladder that gives access to spaces 3 metres above floor level. Depending on the level of service agreed with the client, more specialist equipment can help inspect these concealed spaces such as mirrors on extendable poles, boroscopes and metal detectors.

5.4.5 Health and safety equipment

Surveyors should carry out all parts of the service safely including the work done in office, travelling to and from the property, and especially during the inspection. Surveyors should have appropriate health and safety procedures and policies in place that match sector standards. Health and safety related equipment would typically include a mobile phone, personal alarm, protective headgear and shoes, appropriate face mask, torch, first aid kit, means of personal identification and protective overalls and gloves.

All equipment must be kept in safe working order in accordance with manufacturer's requirements.

5.4.6 Owner/occupier enquiry

Although information provided by the owner and/or occupier may not always be accurate, it can help the surveyor establish priorities for the inspection. In addition to those matters identified in 'pre-inspection research', the following enquiries may be useful:

- The age of the property;
- How long they have lived there;
- The location of gas and electric meters, water stopcocks, storage tanks, gas and oil storage, septic tanks and waste water treatment facilities;

- The location of any concealed traps and hatches;
- Tenure;
- Who else is in the property including animals and pets, which spaces cannot be inspected.

5.4.7 Inspection methodology

It is important to develop a methodical approach to the property inspection. This will vary depending on the circumstances.

The people living in the property can provide a lot of useful information and developing a positive relationship can be helpful. To encourage this, surveyors should arrive on time with proof of identity, clearly explain the purpose of the inspection, how long it will take and which rooms and spaces are to be inspected. A 'guided tour' of the dwelling can help build this relationship, introduce the surveyor to the property and allow them to ask gentle but probing questions.

5.4.8 The inspection

The surveyor is responsible for carefully inspecting the property. The extent of this will depend on the type of service, the T&Cs and, to some degree, surveyor preference.

This guidance note is not prescriptive – but the following section firstly describes some of the general characteristics of each type of service and then goes on to identify specific details.

Type one

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

The focus is on making an objective assessment of the general condition of the main elements of a property. The inspection is not exhaustive, and no tests are undertaken. There is, therefore, a risk that certain defects may not be found that would otherwise have been uncovered if testing and/or a more substantial inspection had been undertaken. The client must accept this risk. Consequently, this service best suits conventional houses, bungalows and apartments in a better condition. A type one inspection of an unusual property or one in a poor condition is likely to result in an unhelpful level of recommendations for further inspections that many clients would find disappointing. An 'unusual property' can be defined as an older type period property or protected structure, for example. Generally, a type one inspection is not suitable for these types of properties.

However, where there is 'a trail of suspicion', the surveyor must take reasonable steps to follow the 'trail'. These 'reasonable steps' may include extending the extent of the inspection and/or recommending further investigation.

Type two

This type of service is for clients who are seeking a professional opinion at an economic price. It is, therefore, necessarily less comprehensive than a type three service. The focus is on assessing the general condition of the main elements of a property. The inspection is not exhaustive, and no tests are undertaken. Concealed areas normally opened, with owner permission or agent consent, or used by the occupiers are inspected if it is safe to do so (typical examples include roof spaces and under-floor areas). There is, therefore, a risk that certain defects may not be found that would have been uncovered if testing and/or a more substantial inspection had been undertaken. The surveyor must highlight this risk to the client at the outset (see also section 5.1.1), and the client must accept this risk before the surveyor starts work.

The inspection should follow a logical sequence with all relevant parts closely inspected. For example, the surveyor should assess the interdependence of the different parts of the structure, especially the way in which the roof, walls (internal and external) and floors interact, and not consider each part in isolation.

Where there is 'a trail of suspicion' the surveyor must take reasonable steps to follow the 'trail'. These 'reasonable steps' may include extending the extent of the inspection and/or recommending further investigation.

Type three

This type of service is for clients who are seeking a professional opinion based on a detailed assessment of the property. Therefore, the inspection is more extensive than for types one and two and the surveyor will spend a considerably longer time at the property.

The inspection should follow a logical sequence with all relevant parts closely inspected. For example, the surveyor should assess the interdependence of the different parts of the structure, especially the way in which the roof, walls (internal and external) and floors interact, and not consider each part in isolation.

Where there is 'a trail of suspicion', the surveyor must take reasonable steps to follow this. As type three services include a more extensive inspection, 'reasonable steps' will go further than those for type one and two.

Specific inspection details

The extent of an inspection will depend on a range of circumstances (including health and safety considerations). The following critical aspects may help distinguish the different types of inspection from one another.

Windows

At the different types of service, the surveyor will do the following;

Type one	Open only a limited sample of the windows – this might typically include one on each elevation.
Type two	Open a representative sample of the windows. For example, this might include one on each elevation and one of each different type of window where there is a variety.
Type three	Open all windows.

In all cases, the surveyor should only open windows where:

- Permission has been given; and
- Any keys/locks are available and are easy to operate without force or damage.

The presence of owner/occupier possessions and heavy curtains will often restrict level one and two inspections. For level three, a small amount of possessions/curtains will be repositioned. Where inspections are restricted, the surveyor must inform the client.

Roof space

The surveyor will carry out an inspection of roof space that is not more than three metres above floor level using a ladder if it is safe and reasonable to do so. Type-specific details include the following.

Type one	The surveyor will not remove secured access panels and/or lift insulation material, stored goods or other contents. The surveyor will visually inspect the parts of the roof structure and other features which can be seen from the access hatch. i.e. head and shoulders inspection.
Type two	In addition to that described for type one, the surveyor will enter the roof space and visually inspect the roof structure with particular attention paid to those parts vulnerable to deterioration and damage. In these places, a moisture meter will be particularly useful.
Type three	<p>In addition to type one and two inspections, the surveyor may remove lightly secured access panels to roof spaces where the owner/occupier gives permission, if it does not take too much time and it does not cause damage to the property and its finishes.</p> <p>The surveyor will enter the roof space and visually inspect the roof structure with particular attention paid to those parts vulnerable to deterioration and damage. In these places, a moisture meter, pocket probe and magnifying glass will be particularly useful.</p> <p>Although thermal insulation is not moved, small corners may be lifted so its thickness, type and the nature of the underlying ceiling can be identified (if the surveyor considers it safe to do so).</p> <p>Where permission has been granted and it is safe, a small number of lightweight possessions may be repositioned so a more thorough inspection can take place.</p>

Important note: Energy efficiency initiatives have resulted in thick layers of thermal insulation in many roof spaces. Usually it is not safe to move across this material as it conceals joist positions, water and drainage pipes, wiring and other fittings. This may restrict the extent of the inspection and the scope of the report. Consequently, this matter should be discussed with the client at the earliest stage (see section 5.1.1 of this document).

Floors

Type one	The surveyor will closely inspect the surfaces of exposed floors but will not lift carpets, floor coverings or floorboards or move furniture. The surveyor will not lift hatches or carry out an 'inverted head and shoulders' inspection. The surveyor will assess floors for excessive deflection by a 'heel-drop' test.
Type two	In addition to that described for type one, where floors have unfixed access hatches/panels or floorboards, the surveyor will inspect sub-floor areas by an inverted 'head and shoulder' inspection only. Surveyors will not enter the sub-floor area. The surveyor will assess floors for excessive deflection by a 'heel-drop' test, and using an appropriately sized spirit level.
Type three	<p>The surveyor will closely inspect the surfaces of exposed floors and will lift the corners of any loose and unfitted carpets or other floor coverings where practicable. The surveyor will assess all floors for excessive deflection by a 'heel-drop' test, and using an appropriately sized spirit level. For a more complete assessment, it may be helpful to measure the magnitude of any identified deflection/slope.</p> <p>The surveyor will remove lightly fixed floorboards where the owner/occupier gives permission, if it does not take too much time, and if it does not cause damage to the property and its finishes.</p> <p>In addition to type one and two inspections, the surveyor may remove lightly secured access panels to floor voids where the owner/occupier gives permission, if it does not take too much time and if it does not cause damage to the property and its finishes.</p> <p>Where the boards are lifted, the sub-floor is inspected by way of an inverted 'head and shoulder' inspection at the access point. If it is safe to do so, the surveyor will enter the under-floor area to carry out a more thorough inspection. In this respect, 'safe to do so' can be defined as: an adequately sized access panel a minimum of one metre between the floor void surface and the underside of the joists; and a lack of obvious hazards in the floor void (for example, sharp and uneven oversite, hazardous and obstructive electric or gas pipes, and so on).</p>

Services (Mechanical and Electrical)

The surveyor does not perform or comment on design calculations, or test the service installations or appliances in any way. Additionally:

Type one	The surveyor will not lift inspection chamber covers.
Type two	The surveyor will lift accessible inspection chamber covers (where it is safe to do so) and visually inspect the chamber(s).
Type three	<p>The surveyor will move lightweight, easily moveable, non-fitted items where practicable and safe, and where the owner/occupier gives permission. The surveyor will lift accessible inspection chamber covers (where it is safe to do so) and observe the normal operation of the services in everyday use. Assuming all services are connected, fully and safely functioning, 'normal operation' usually includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • operating lights and extract fans; • turning on water taps, filling and emptying sinks, baths, bidets and basins and flushing toilets to observe the performance of visible pipework; • lifting accessible inspection chamber covers (where it is safe to do so), identifying the nature of the connections and observing water flow where a water supply is available. On dry days, this may involve pouring water into open gullies so drainage layouts can be identified; and • check power supply to sockets

In all cases, the surveyor will advise the client that further tests and inspections will be required if the owner/occupier does not provide evidence of appropriate installation and/or maintenance, or the client requires assurance as to their condition, capability and safety.

The grounds

Type one	<p>Surveyors will carry out a visual inspection of the grounds during a general walk around, and where necessary and appropriate, from adjoining public property. The assessment should include such external features as retaining walls, gardens, drives, paths, terraces, patios, steps, hard-standings, dropped kerbs, gates, trees, boundary walls, fences, non-permanent outbuildings, rights of way, and so on.</p> <p>The inspection should also include the inside and outside of all permanent outbuildings not attached to the main dwelling. This includes garages, summer houses, substantial greenhouses, follies and leisure buildings, but not the leisure facilities inside, for example, swimming pools, saunas, fitness gyms, and so on.</p>
----------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

The grounds (continued)

Type two	<p>In addition to that described for type one, because specific defective features and other matters associated with the grounds can be costly to resolve and may affect the client's purchase decision, the surveyor will account for these during a type two service. They will be prepared to 'follow the trail' of suspected problems more thoroughly than at type one. Examples include retaining walls in danger of collapsing, deeply sunken paths or driveways, dilapidated boundary walls or fences and so on.</p> <p>Other issues will typically include protected structure/architectural conservation area matters, unauthorised development, sustainable drainage, safety issues, invasive species, automatic gates, and so on.</p>
Type three	<p>Surveyors should perform a thorough visual inspection of the grounds, and, where necessary and appropriate, from adjoining public property. The assessment should include such external features as retaining walls, gardens, drives, paths, terraces, patios, steps, hard-standings, dropped kerbs, gates, trees, boundary walls, fences, non-permanent outbuildings, rights of way, and so on.</p> <p>This inspection should also include the inside and outside of all permanent outbuildings not attached to the main dwelling. This includes garages, summer houses, substantial greenhouses, follies and leisure buildings, but not the leisure facilities inside, for example, swimming pools, saunas, fitness gyms, and so on.</p> <p>Specific defective features and other matters associated with the grounds can be costly to resolve and may affect the client's purchase decision. Consequently, the surveyor should fully account for these during a type three service and be prepared to 'follow the trail' of suspected problems to a greater extent than at types one and two. Examples include assessing retaining walls in danger of collapsing, deeply sunken paths or driveways, dilapidated boundary walls or fences, and the legal and insurance implications.</p> <p>Other issues will typically include protected structure/architectural conservation area matters, unauthorised development, sustainable drainage, safety issues, invasive species, automatic gates, and so on.</p>

5.4.8 The inspection

The surveyor must be able to undertake the tasks involved, or manage others undertaking those same tasks, particularly in relation to gaining access to voids that may be present within the property. The surveyor should also consider health and safety aspects such as:

- Keeping a record of their appointment either at the office or at home;
- Letting someone know their expected return time;
- Carrying a mobile phone or pager; and
- Using ladders and other equipment safely.

For personal safety reasons, the surveyor should be familiar with the current edition of the RICS guidance note *Surveying Safely*.

6. The report

Before the surveyor writes the report, it is essential that sufficient time for reflective thought be allowed. The surveyor must prepare the report using the recorded information during the reflective process after visiting the property.

Generally, the report should conform to the following principles:

- Be clearly presented and follow a logical structure so clients can quickly find the required information;
- Be factual and unambiguous and clearly separate fact and the surveyor's opinion;
- Use non-technical terms throughout. If technical words are occasionally used, the client will find a laypersons' explanation helpful (this should be in the body of the report rather than included in a standard glossary at the back); and
- Provide a balanced view of the property.

The presentation of the report will be a matter of surveyor choice but should generally conform to good practice in report writing. The surveyor should also be mindful that most clients for this type of report will be consumers who are in the process of a property sales transaction – one of the most significant financial transactions they are ever likely to make.

The structure of the report will vary but will usually follow the same general pattern:

- A title/front page;
- A contents page;
- An explanatory page clearly stating the type of service, what the client can expect to see in the report and encouraging the client to ask questions of the surveyor;
- A summary or overall opinion;
- The main body of the report separated into distinct parts or elements;
- Appendices for useful but detailed information;
- The report should have sufficient headings and subheadings and a paragraph reference system that allows readers to locate the required information easily;
- The use of contemporary software packages allow surveyors to include a range of features that will be helpful to clients including plans, diagrams, photographs and hyperlinks to useful websites; and
- Although some clients continue to prefer paper copies of the report, many surveyors deliver electronic reports to clients by email. In such cases, secured documents such as PDFs should be used.

6.1 Type-specific reporting requirements

6.1.1 Type one

Type one surveys are best suited to conventional properties in better than average condition. Consequently, the form and content of the report should reflect this. For each element of the building, the surveyor should:

- Describe the part or element in sufficient detail so it can be properly identified by the client;
- Describe the condition of the part or element that justifies the surveyor's judgment; and

- Provide a clear and concise expression of the surveyor's professional assessment of each part or element. This assessment should help the client gain an objective view of the condition of the property, help them make a purchase decision and, once in ownership, establish appropriate repair/improvement priorities. A condition rating system is one way of achieving this, although surveyors may also use their own prioritisation methodology. Whatever the choice, any system must be clearly defined in the information given to the client.

6.1.2 Type two

Type two reports may follow a similar structure and format to type one. Although they will provide more information, they should still be short and to the point, avoiding irrelevant or unhelpful details. They will have the following additional characteristics:

- They should include comments where the design or materials used in the construction of a building element may result in more frequent and/or more costly maintenance and repairs than would normally be expected;
- They should broadly outline the scope of the likely remedial work and what needs to be done by whom and by when;
- They should concisely explain the implications of not addressing the identified problems; and
- They should cross-refer to the surveyor's overall assessment.

Type two reports should also make it clear that the client should obtain any further advice and quotations recommended by the surveyor before they enter into a legal commitment to buy the property.

6.1.3 Type three

A type three report should reflect the thoroughness and detail of the investigation. It should address the following matters:

- The form of construction and materials used for each part of the building should be described in detail, outlining their performance characteristics. This is especially important for older and historic buildings;
- Obvious defects should be described and the identifiable risk of those that may be hidden should be stated;
- Remedial options should be outlined along with, if considered to be serious, the likely consequences if the repairs are not done;
- A timescale for the necessary work should be proposed, including (where appropriate and necessary) recommendations for further investigation prior to commitment to purchase;
- Future maintenance of the property should be discussed, identifying those elements that may result in more frequent and/or more costly maintenance and repairs than would normally be expected; and
- The nature of risks of the parts that have not been inspected should be identified.

6.2 Surveyor's overall opinion

This part is important and should be at the front of all reports, whatever the type. This section should:

- Provide a brief, simple and clear signpost that will help orientate the client before they read the whole report;
- Help the client make the most important decision of all – whether or not to proceed; and
- Provide the client with a summary of the information needed in order to take the next crucial steps.

Where condition ratings or other prioritisation methods are used, this section can help place such assessments in context and give a balanced view of the property.

The overall opinion should be the last part the surveyor writes and the first part the client reads. It should be as concise as possible and not repeat descriptive detail or rely on standard phrases. It should express the surveyor's view of the main positive and negative features of the property and highlight areas of concern.

In addition to these general requirements, the scope of the overall opinion section will vary between the different types of service. For example:

Type one	At this level of service, the focus of the report is the succinct and objective description of the condition of the property. It will include little or no advice but have an assessment of the relative importance of the defects/problems. Consequently, this section is likely to be restricted to a concise listing of the different parts of the building, an indication of their relative condition (for example, condition ratings or other prioritisation method) and little else.
Type two	A type two report should describe the condition of the different elements, provide an assessment of the relative importance of the defects/problems and give brief advice about the repairs and any ongoing maintenance issues. Therefore, the overall opinion should include that described for type one reports, as well as a concise summary of the likely level of repair required.
Type three	At this level there will be a greater focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The adequacy of services, • A comparison of the condition of the property with others of a similar age and style, • Conformity with modern requirements where appropriate and applicable, • The likely scale of maintenance required; and • Where agreed, a clear reference to cost advice contained within the report, and any other special client requirements.

6.3 Risks to occupants

Many clients are aware of the risks posed by the built environment and many seek to reduce these. A survey report can help this process by identifying those elements and features that fall so far below current standards they will pose a risk to those using the building. This is not a formal health and safety risk assessment but a helpful listing of those matters that present a particular safety risk to people.

These matters can be described in the main body of the report. However, surveyors may want to consider concisely listing the risks in a separate section with appropriate cross-referencing to where they appear in the main body of the report.

As these matters will reflect current research and regulation, they may change over time. However, the following list may identify a typical range of matters:

- Asbestos, pyrite and other deleterious materials;
- Animals and vermin (bird & rodent droppings, dog waste, and so on);
- Lack of emergency escape and inadequate fire precautions;
- Inadequate permanent ventilation;
- Absence of safety glass to openings and outbuildings;
- Falls from height, lack of safety rails, steep stairs, serious and significant tripping hazards;
- Unstable parts of the building, especially at high level;
- Lead water pipes and lead paint;
- Gas leaks and carbon monoxide poisoning;
- Dangerous electrics;
- Absence of test certificates for services/appliances/water supply;
- Inappropriate use of accommodation (for example, non-conforming roof space conversion and bedrooms in damp basements);
- Overhead power lines (EMFs);
- High radon levels;
- Automatic gates; and
- Unprotected garden ponds.

The range of identified matters will be the same for each type of service; what will vary is the explanation. A type one report will identify and list the risks and give no further explanation. Type two reports will identify and list the risks and explain the nature of these problems. Type three reports will do all this and also explain how the client may resolve or reduce the risk.

6.4 Legal matters

Legal advisers are responsible for checking the relevant documents but will not be familiar with the property. Therefore, it is important for the surveyor to identify apparent and specific items and features that have possible legal implications. The report must clearly highlight these and remind the client they should bring these matters to the attention of their legal adviser before committing to the purchase.

The range of identified matters will be the same for each type of service; what will vary is the explanation. A type one report will list these matters. At type three, the report will briefly identify the matters, and explain the nature of the legal issues and how they may affect ownership of the property. Type two reports will sit somewhere between.

6.4.1 Regulation

Typical legal matters include:

- Architectural conservation areas and protected structure status and sites located within zones of archaeological potential;
- Planning permission and building regulation compliance for alterations and repairs;
- Trees and any tree preservation orders;
- Environmental matters, such as remediation certificates for previously contaminated sites;
- The use of adjacent, significant public or private developments;
- Whether a mining report is required; and
- Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) or a Natural Heritage Area (NHA);

6.4.2 Guarantees

The surveyor should ask the owner/occupier if they have any guarantees/warranties for any repair and alteration work carried out. The surveyor should inspect these documents and record the most relevant details (a digital photo is an effective method of doing this). It is not the role of the surveyor to confirm the validity or transferability of these documents. Instead, the surveyor should tell the client to ask their legal adviser to do this. Examples will typically include:

- Structural work such as underpinning, removal of structural elements, lateral restraint and chimney stabilisation works;
- Timber and damp treatment works;
- Wall ties and cavity wall tie replacement works;
- New windows and doors;
- Cavity wall insulation;
- Installation and repair of service installations.

The surveyor may report the certification of a new-build or converted property in this section. It should establish the type of warranty offered and verify the age of the property/conversion. The surveyor should identify the limitations of these schemes and advise that the legal adviser should closely inspect the terms and conditions.

6.4.3 Other matters

The surveyor should include other features and issues that may have an impact on the property and require further investigation in this section. This will include a broad range of issues. The following list (which is not exhaustive) illustrates this variety:

- Flying freeholds or submerged freeholds;
- Evidence of multiple occupation tenancies;
- Holiday lettings;
- Signs of possible trespass and rights of way;
- Arrangements for private services, septic tank registration and so on;
- Rights of way and maintenance/repairing liabilities for private access roads and/or footways, ownership of verges, villages greens and so on;
- Other property rights including rights of light, restrictions to occupation, tenancies/vacant possession, easements, servitudes and/or wayleaves;
- Boundary problems including poorly defined site boundaries, repairs of party walls, party wall agreements, works in progress on adjacent land, and so on;
- Details of any buildings insurance claims;
- Parking permits; and
- Presence of protected species, for example bats and badgers.

6.5 Providing cost advice

With type three reports, it is undoubtedly of value to a client to receive a cost estimate of recommended remedial works. However, the surveyor should clearly state all appropriate reservations and limitations associated with this function in the T&Cs. For example, the surveyor should tell the client the figures are for guidance only and that they should get formal, written quotations or estimates from appropriate professionals such as a quantity surveyor or contractors prior to a legal commitment to purchase the property.

The surveyor should be confident they have the appropriate knowledge and experience to offer this service as the information provided may heavily influence the client's purchase decision.

6.6 Remedial Measures for Protected Structures

When inspecting a Protected Structure, Recorded Monument or a property in an Architectural Conservation Area, the surveyor should note that certain proposed remedial measures may require planning permission, consent and/or ministerial notification and should advise the client of this.

In making recommendations for remedial measures, the surveyor should note prevailing conservation practice and principles. The surveyor should have due regard to the *Architectural Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2011* published by the Department of the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. Consideration should be given to key issues such as the principle of minimal intervention, repairing rather than replacing, use of like-for-like repairs, issues of reversibility and re-treatability in repairs and interventions, as well as the 'do-nothing' option and to conserve as found.

The surveyor should fully consider the architectural, archaeological, historical and cultural significance of a structure or site when making recommendations with regard to repairs, remedial works and other interventions and where appropriate should recommend the need for further analysis and inspection before undertaking repairs and remedial works.

7. Post report delivery and managing client expectations

Although survey reports should be self-explanatory, many clients will want to discuss what could be the largest purchase of their lives. Consequently, surveyors should set aside adequate time to do this. Where appropriate, the fee should reflect this element of the service.

The nature of the discussion will depend on the type and condition of the property, the client and, to some extent, surveyor preference. The amount of time and the breadth and depth of the discussions will vary according to the type of service. For example, after delivering an economically priced type one report, it will be inappropriate to spend too much time expanding on matters.

Surveyors will find it useful to make the client aware of this at the outset of the service, before the T&Cs are agreed (see also section 5.1.1).

The surveyor should accept that these discussions are part of the service to the client and take care to make sure the exchange meets the same professional standards. For example, surveyors can extend their liability and/or confuse the client by qualifying and expanding on the written report. In this respect, it is a matter of getting the right balance. The surveyor may consider the following:

- Clearly explaining the status of the discussion to the client at the beginning of the conversation;
- Not going beyond the scope already described in the written T&Cs; and
- Keeping a written dated note of the discussion for record purposes or confirming any issues arising in a discussion by email.

8. Additional services

During an initial client enquiry, the surveyor with appropriate skills has an opportunity to offer a range of additional services that can be included with the pre-purchase report. These additional services will enhance the value of a 'standard' report. The following list is not exhaustive and will change and develop over time, but outlines the range of opportunities available:

- More extensive inspection of concealed areas (for example, lifting floorboards of what would otherwise be a concealed floor space);
- Use of a cherry-picker or similar to allow close inspection of roof surfaces, parapets and chimney-stacks;
- Engaging the service of a conservation-accredited surveyor, architect or historic buildings consultant to discuss particular conservation issues. This may be particularly relevant where the client is intending to carry out extensive renovations, alterations or make additions to a protected structure;
- Where protected species such as bats or badgers are noted during the inspection, the employment of a specialist wildlife consultant to advise on potential impact on renovation and development works;
- Further investigation of known or discovered problems (for example, where the client is aware that the property is suffering from structural movement or dampness);
- Valuation services;
- Rebuild costs for insurance purposes and more detailed insurance assessments in respect of non-standard properties, specialist properties, historic listed buildings, special or unusual forms of construction, finishes or installations;
- Testing of services – arranging and co-ordinating the work of appropriate specialists
- Advice on possible future alterations and extensions;
- Security matters that go beyond general security aspects of a standard report;
- Guidance on upgrading the thermal performance of a house;
- Boundary check; and
- Planning search.

The surveyor should clearly state where these services are subcontracted to others, together with arrangements for payment of any fees and other costs.

With many of these services, surveyors should check with their professional indemnity insurers to make sure suitable cover is in place. If commissioning a test or report, the surveyor should ensure the client directly employs any subcontractors.

9. Project closure

Once the service is complete, post report delivery discussions with the client concluded and the fee settled, the surveyor should make sure the project file is properly closed. Although this will depend on the surveyor's own quality assurance procedures, it will usually involve assembling and updating all the relevant information and communications (whether hard copy and/or digital) and archiving in accordance with current best practice. These should be securely stored and be available for future inspection if required.

The surveyor may also want to consider assessing client satisfaction by asking a proportion of clients their views on the service they received. This will help the surveyor reflect on performance and improve their service.

Appendices

Appendix A

Relevant SCSi / RICS guidance sources:

- SCSi Measuring Practice Guidance Note
- SCSi Boundaries: Procedures for Boundary Identification, Demarcation and Dispute Resolution in Ireland, (2nd Edition)
- SCSi Knotweed and Residential Property, SCSi/RICS Information Paper
- Asbestos and its implications for surveyors and their clients (3rd edition), RICS guidance note
- Flat roof coverings (3rd edition), RICS guidance note
- Surveying safely (1st edition), RICS guidance note
- Historic building conservation (1st edition), RICS guidance note, RICS Books, Coventry, 2009 (ISBN 978 1 84 219548 2)

Appendix B

Example T&Cs of engagement for the core service (common to all types of service)

General details of the contract:

The client:	(Name) (Address)
The surveyor:	(Name) (Address)
The property to be inspected:	(Brief description of the property) (Address)
Nature of the service:	(Name and description of the service)
Purpose of the report:	(Describe)
Details of any special instructions from the client:	(Describe)
Details of any additional services:	(Describe)
Likely inspection date:	(Date)
Likely report delivery date and delivery format:	(Date) (Format)
Agreed fee (inclusive of VAT):	€
Fees for additional services (inclusive of VAT):	€
Payment arrangements and date:	(Describe) (Date)
Client's signature:	I confirm that I have read, understood and accept the terms and conditions of engagement.
Print name:	Date:

Specific details of the contract for all types of service

The terms on which I will undertake this service are set out below.

Based on the inspection as defined below, I am a Chartered Surveyor and I will provide you with a written report that describes my opinion of the visible condition and state of repair of the identified property. I will carry out my duties with the skill and care that can be reasonably expected from an experienced Chartered Surveyor.

Assumptions

Unless otherwise expressly agreed with me, while preparing the report I will assume that:

- the property (if for sale) is offered with vacant possession;
- the property is connected to mains services with appropriate rights on a basis that is both known and acceptable to you; and
- access to the property is as of right based on terms both known and acceptable to you.

Dangerous materials, contamination and environmental issues

I make no enquiries about contamination or other environmental dangers. If I suspect a problem, I will recommend further investigations.

I will assume that no harmful or dangerous materials have been used in the construction, and I do not have a duty to justify making this assumption. However, if the inspection shows that these materials have been used, I must report this and ask you for further instructions.

I do not carry out an asbestos inspection or act as an asbestos inspector when inspecting properties. With apartments, I assume there is a 'dutyholder' (as defined in the regulations), an asbestos register and an effective management plan all in place and none of these presents a significant risk to health. I do not consult the dutyholder.

I will note the presence of lead water supply pipes and give general advice if these materials can be seen. However, you must appreciate that materials are often concealed within the construction of the building. If I am concerned about lead pipes I can see, I may recommend a specialist inspection and report.

I will advise if the property is in an area where there is a risk of radon. In such cases, I will advise further tests to establish the precise radon level.

I will advise if there are transformer stations or overhead power lines that I can see during the normal course of the inspection. If present, I cannot assess any possible effect on health. For obvious reasons, I cannot report on any underground cables.

In relation to consents, approvals and searches I will assume that the property is not subject to any unusual or especially onerous restrictions or covenants, which apply to the structure or affect the reasonable enjoyment of the property.

I will assume that all building regulations, planning permissions and other consents required have been obtained. In the case of new buildings, alterations and extensions which require statutory consents or approvals, I will not verify whether these have been obtained but I will identify where these consents may have been required. You should ask your legal adviser to follow up on these matters. I will not inspect drawings and specifications unless you specifically ask.

I will assume that the property is unaffected by any matters which would be revealed by a local search and replies to the usual enquiries, or by a statutory notice, and that neither the property, nor its condition, its use or its intended use, is or will be unlawful.

Restriction on disclosure

The report is for your private and confidential use. You must not reproduce it completely or in part. Third parties (with the exception of your professional advisers) cannot use it without my express written authority. Any other persons rely on the report at their own risk.

As a SCSi member I may be required to disclose the report to SCSi Regulation as part of its work to ensure that SCSi professional standards are being maintained.

Complaints

I shall do my very best to provide you with an excellent service. However, if you believe that you have cause for complaint, my company has a complaints procedure, a copy of which can be given to you on request.

Type one specific terms and conditions

General description of type one service

This service is designed for people (who may be buyers, sellers and owners) who want an objective report on the condition of the property at an economic price. As a result, it is less comprehensive than a type two or three service.

The focus is on making an objective assessment of the general condition of the main elements of a property. The inspection is not exhaustive, and no tests are undertaken. There is, therefore, a risk that certain defects may not be found that would otherwise have been uncovered if testing and/or a more substantial inspection had been undertaken. You must accept this risk. Consequently, this service best suits conventional houses, bungalows and apartments in a better condition. A type one inspection of an unusual property or one in a poor condition is likely to result in a high number of recommendations for further inspections that many people would find disappointing.

However, where I am concerned about a hidden problem or defect, I will identify these and what action you should take. This may often be further investigations.

The type one inspection

The extent of an inspection will depend on a range of specific circumstances (including health and safety considerations). The following points may help you distinguish this from inspections at other types of service.

Windows

I will open only a sample of the windows. This might typically include one on each side of the property.

Roof space

I will carry out an inspection of roof space that is not more than three metres above floor level using a ladder if it is safe and reasonable to do so. I will not remove secured access panels and/or lift insulation material, stored goods or other contents. I will visually inspect the parts of the roof structure and other features I can see from the access hatch.

In recent years, the lofts of many homes have been insulated with thick layers of thermal insulation. Usually, it is not safe to move across this material and this may restrict what I can look at in the roof space.

Floors

I will closely inspect the surfaces of exposed floors but I will not lift carpets, floor coverings or floorboards. I will not lift hatches or look below the floor.

Furniture and occupiers' possessions

I will not move furniture or possessions.

Services (for example, heating and hot and cold water)

I will not test the service installations or appliances in any way and I will not lift inspection chamber covers over the drains.

I will advise you when further tests and inspections are required if the owner does not provide me with evidence the services have been installed and/or maintained properly.

The grounds

I will visually inspect the garden/grounds during a general walk around and, where necessary and appropriate, from adjoining public property. I will include such external features as retaining walls, gardens, drives, paths, terraces, patios, steps, hard-standings, dropped kerbs, gates, trees, boundary walls, fences, non-permanent outbuildings, rights of way, and so on.

I will inspect the inside and outside of all permanent outbuildings not attached to the main dwelling. This includes garages, summer houses, substantial greenhouses, follies and leisure buildings, but not the leisure facilities inside, for example swimming pools, saunas, fitness gyms, and so on.

The type one report

For each part of the building, my report will:

- describe it in sufficient detail so it can be properly identified,
- describe its condition and explain my judgment,
- provide a clear and concise expression of my professional assessment of each part.

This assessment should help you get an objective view of the condition of the property, make a purchase decision and, once in ownership, establish appropriate repair/improvement priorities. To achieve this, I will use a condition rating system (or explain the alternative methodology). This will be explained in the report.

I will also make it clear that you should obtain any further advice and quotations I recommend before you enter into a legal commitment to buy the property.

Type two specific terms and conditions

General description of type two service

This type of service is designed for people (who may be buyers, sellers and owners) who want a professional opinion of the property at an economic price. The focus is on assessing the general condition of the main parts of a property. The inspection is not exhaustive, and no tests are undertaken. There is, therefore, a risk that certain defects may not be found that would have been uncovered if testing and/or a more substantial inspection had been undertaken. You must accept this risk.

This type of service suits a broad range of conventionally built properties although it is unlikely to suit:

- complex buildings, for example, those that have been extensively extended and altered;
- some unique and older historic properties;
- those in a poor condition; or
- properties where you plan to carry out extensive repair and refurbishment work.

Where I am concerned about a hidden problem or defect, I will identify these and what action you should take. This may often be further investigations. I will closely inspect all parts of the dwelling and I will assess the interdependence of the different parts of the structure, especially the way in which the roof, walls and floors act together.

The type two inspection

The extent of an inspection will depend on a range of specific circumstances (including health and safety considerations). The following critical aspects may help distinguish this from inspections at other types of service.

Windows

I will open a sample of the windows. For example, this might include one on each side of the dwelling and one of each different type of window where there is a variety.

Roof space

I will carry out an inspection of roof space that is not more than three metres above floor level using a ladder if it is safe and reasonable to do so. I will not remove secured access panels and/or lift insulation material, stored goods or other contents. I will enter the roof space and visually inspect the roof structure if it is safe and reasonable to do so, with particular attention paid to those parts vulnerable to deterioration and damage. In these places, I will use a moisture meter.

In recent years, the lofts of many homes have been insulated with thick layers of thermal insulation. Usually, it is not safe to move across this material and this may restrict what I can look at in the roof space.

Floors

I will closely inspect the surfaces of exposed floors but I will not lift carpets, floor coverings or floorboards, or move furniture. Where floors have unfixed access hatches or floorboards, I will look in any spaces below the floor by an inverted 'head and shoulder' inspection only. I will not enter the sub-floor area.

Furniture and occupiers' possessions

I will not move furniture or possessions.

Services (for example, heating and hot and cold water)

I will not test the service installations or appliances in any way but I will lift the inspection chamber covers over the drains where it is safe and possible to do so.

I will advise you when further tests and inspections are required if the owner/occupier does not provide me with evidence the services have been installed and/or maintained properly.

The grounds

I will visually inspect the garden/grounds during a general walk around, and, where necessary and appropriate, from adjoining public property. I will include such external features as retaining walls, gardens, drives, paths, terraces, patios, steps, hard-standings, dropped kerbs, gates, trees, boundary walls, fences, non-permanent outbuildings, rights of way, and so on. Where I think the condition of these features may affect your purchase decision, I will describe these problems thoroughly. Examples include retaining walls in danger of collapsing, deeply sunken paths or driveways, dilapidated boundary walls or fences, and so on.

I will inspect the inside and outside of all permanent outbuildings not attached to the main dwelling. This includes garages, summer houses, substantial greenhouses, follies and leisure buildings, but not the leisure facilities inside, for example swimming pools, saunas, fitness gyms, and so on.

Other issues will typically include listed building/conservation areas matters and unauthorised development (including sustainable drainage, safety issues, invasive species, automatic gates, and so on).

The type two report

For each part of the building, my report will:

- describe it in sufficient detail so it can be properly identified;
- describe its condition and explain my judgment;
- provide a clear and concise expression of my professional assessment of each part. To achieve this, I will use a condition rating system (or explain the alternative methodology). This will be explained in the report;
- include comments where I think the building will need more frequent and/or more costly maintenance and repairs than would normally be expected; and
- broadly outline the scope of the likely remedial work and what needs to be done by whom and by when, and concisely explain the implications of not addressing the identified problems.

The report will also make it clear that you should obtain any further advice and quotations I recommend before you enter into a legal commitment to buy the property.

Type three specific terms and conditions

General description of type three service

This type of service is for people who are seeking a professional opinion about the condition of a property and is based on a detailed assessment. Therefore, my inspection is more extensive than for other types of service and I will spend a considerable time at the property.

I will closely inspect all parts of the dwelling and I will assess the interdependence of the different parts of the structure, especially the way in which the roof, walls and floors act together.

Where I am concerned about a hidden problem or defect, I will try to identify these and explain the risk they pose and what action you should take. Recommendations for further investigations will usually be the exception.

This type of service will suit any domestic residential property in any condition, depending on the competence and experience of the practitioner.

The type three inspection

The extent of an inspection will depend on a range of specific circumstances (including health and safety considerations). The following critical aspects may help you distinguish this from inspections at other types of service.

Windows

I will attempt to open all the windows.

Roof spaces

I will carry out an inspection of roof spaces that are not more than three metres above floor level using a ladder if it is safe and reasonable to do so. I may remove lightly secured access panels to roof spaces as long as the owner agrees, and it does not take too much time, and it does not cause damage to the property and its finishes. I will enter the roof space and visually inspect the roof structure with particular attention paid to those parts vulnerable to deterioration and damage.

Although I will not move thermal insulation, I will lift small corners if I consider it safe so its thickness, type and the nature of the underlying ceiling can be identified and assessed.

Where I have the permission of the owner, I will move a small number of lightweight possessions so a more thorough inspection can take place.

In recent years, the lofts of many homes have been insulated with thick layers of thermal insulation. Usually, it is not safe to move across this material and this may restrict what I can look at in the roof space.

Floors

I will closely inspect the surfaces of exposed floors and I will lift the corners of any loose and unfitted carpets and other floor coverings where practicable. I will assess all floors for excessive deflection and I will remove lightly fixed floorboards and access panels as long as the owner agrees, and it does not take too much time, and it does not cause damage to the property and its finishes.

Where the boards are lifted, I will look in the space beneath by way of an inverted 'head and shoulder' inspection. If it is safe to do so, I will enter the under-floor area to carry out a more thorough inspection as long as the access panel is big enough, and the space beneath the floor is deep enough.

Furniture and occupiers' possessions

I will move lightweight, easily moveable, non-fitted items where practicable, safe and where the owner/occupier gives permission.

Services (for example, heating and hot and cold water)

I will not perform or comment on design calculations, or test the service installations or appliances but I will observe their normal operation in everyday use. This usually means:

- operating lights and extract fans;
- turning on water taps, filling and emptying sinks, checking shower fittings either mechanical and / or electrical, baths, bidets and basins, and flushing toilets to observe the performance of visible pipework; and
- lifting accessible inspection chamber covers (where it is safe to do so), identifying the nature of the connections and observing water flow where a water supply is available. On dry days, this may involve pouring water into open gullies so drainage layouts can be identified.

I will advise you that further tests and inspections will be required if the owner/occupier does not provide evidence of appropriate installation and/or maintenance, or the client requires assurance as to their condition, capability and safety.

The grounds

I will carry out a thorough visual inspection of the grounds, and, where necessary and appropriate, from adjoining public property. My assessment will include such external features as retaining walls, gardens, drives, paths, terraces, patios, steps, hard-standings, dropped kerbs, gates, trees, boundary walls, fences, non-permanent outbuildings, rights of way, and so on.

My inspection will also include the inside and outside of all permanent outbuildings not attached to the main dwelling. This includes garages, summer houses, substantial greenhouses, follies and leisure buildings, but not the leisure facilities inside, for example swimming pools, saunas, fitness gyms, and so on.

Specific defective features and other matters associated with the grounds can be costly to resolve and may affect your purchase decision. Consequently, I will fully account for these. Examples include assessing retaining walls in danger of collapsing, deeply sunken paths or driveways, dilapidated boundary walls or fences and the legal and insurance implications.

The type three report

My report will reflect the thoroughness and detail of the investigation and I will:

- describe the form of construction and materials used for each part of the building in detail and outline their performance characteristics. This is especially important for older and historic buildings;
- describe obvious defects and state the identifiable risk of those that may be hidden;
- outline remedial options and, if I consider it to be significant, explain the likely consequences if the repairs are not done;
- propose a timescale for the necessary work including recommendations for further investigation prior to commitment to purchase (only where appropriate and necessary);
- discuss future maintenance of the property and identify those elements that may result in more frequent and/or more costly maintenance and repairs than would normally be expected;
- identify the nature of risks of the parts that have not been inspected; and
- Provide budget costs for the various remedial works identified.

I will also make it clear that you should obtain any further advice and quotations I recommend before you enter into a legal commitment to buy the property.

Appendix C

Radon References/Bibliography

- Radon Prediction Maps of Ireland, RPII
- Building Regulations Technical Guidance Documents Parts C & D
- RPII Survey - Radon in Dwellings
- Radiological Protection Act, 1991 (Ionising Radiation) Order 2000 S.I. 125 of 2000
- Technical Guidance Doc. 'C' Section 2 - Dangerous Substances
- S.I. No. 225 of 2013 EUROPEAN UNION (CONSTRUCTION PRODUCTS) REGULATIONS 2013
- Construction Products Regulations
- Building Regulations 1997 —2009 Part D Materials and workmanship D1
- Section [17] (2) of the 2005 Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act
- Understanding Radon Remediation –A Householder's Guide- RPII
- Radon in Workplaces-RP
- Radon –Radiation in Workplaces
- Radon in Drinking Water in Co Wicklow-Pilot Study-RPII
- Radon in Existing Buildings-Corrective options-Department of the Environment and Local Government
- Various BRE Reports and Guidelines

Appendix D

On site wastewater treatment References/Bibliography

- EPA Code of Practice: Wastewater Treatment Systems for Single Houses
- Building Regulations Technical Guidance Doc Parts H & D
- S.I. No. 225 of 2013 EUROPEAN UNION (CONSTRUCTION PRODUCTS) REGULATIONS 2013
- Construction Products Regulations
- Irish Agrément Certificates for various On-site wastewater treatment systems
- EPA -Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) Wastewater treatment systems for single houses
- Water Services (Amendment) Act 2012 -Wastewater legislation for single houses- Regulation of domestic wastewater treatment systems

Dating back to 1895, the Society of Chartered Surveyors www.scsi.ie Ireland is the independent professional body for Chartered Surveyors working and practicing in Ireland.

Working in partnership with RICS, the pre-eminent Chartered professional body for the construction, land and property sectors around the world, the Society and RICS act in the public interest: setting and maintaining the highest standards of competence and integrity among the profession; and providing impartial, authoritative advice on key issues for business, society and governments worldwide.

Advancing standards in construction, land and property, the Chartered Surveyor professional qualification is the world's leading qualification when it comes to professional standards. In a world where more and more people, governments, banks and commercial organisations demand greater certainty of professional standards and ethics, attaining the Chartered Surveyor qualification is the recognised mark of property professionalism.

Members of the profession are typically employed in the construction, land and property markets through private practice, in central and local government, in state agencies, in academic institutions, in business organisations and in non-governmental organisations.

Members' services are diverse and can include offering strategic advice on the economics, valuation, law, technology, finance and management in all aspects of the construction, land and property industry.

All aspects of the profession, from education through to qualification and the continuing maintenance of the highest professional standards are regulated and overseen through the partnership of the Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland and RICS, in the public interest.

This valuable partnership with RICS enables access to a worldwide network of research, experience and advice.

www.scsi.ie

Society of Chartered
Surveyors Ireland
38 Merrion Square,
Dublin 2, Ireland
Tel: + 353 (0)1 644 5500
Email: info@scsi.ie



RICS

the mark of
property
professionalism
worldwide