

# Herts and Essex Observer

## Selling your house? Be aware of 'HIP replacement'

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**O**NE of the first acts of the incoming coalition Government has been to abolish the much-maligned Home Information Pack (HIP). HIPs were first introduced on August 1, 2007, with the intention of speeding up the home-buying process, increasing transparency and reducing the number of sales that fell through.

The initial cost to the seller was anything up to £500 which had to be paid out before a property could be put on the market.

There was undoubtedly a reluctance on the part of some people to pay this money and put their house on the market without knowing if it would sell.

The packs themselves quickly went out of date and often

contained incomplete local search results provided by private search companies rather than the local authority.

Interestingly, the number of properties coming on to the market increased substantially during the weeks immediately following the abolition of HIPs.

However, one element of the HIP, the Energy Performance Certificate, has been retained. Every property that is sold must have an EPC providing current and potential energy proficiency ratings with recommendations as to how the energy proficiency can be improved. Fortunately, these EPCs do not have to be in place before a property has been marketed so long as they have been ordered, but surely it would be sensible to only insist on an

EPC being obtained once a property has actually been sold.

### HIP

**Cost:** £500

**Timing:** Needed to be in place before the property could be put on the market.

**Contents:** Document with a series of sub-sections concerning local searches, copy of title and property information questionnaire.

### EPS

**Cost:** £50

**Timing:** Needs to be ordered when the property is on the market.

**Contents:** Document with energy efficiency rating and recommendations.