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French energy certificates: at the “thermal sieve” line, 7 in 10 fall on the favourable side

At the line that puts a home into band F, the French “thermal sieve” category, 7 energy performance certificates (DPE) in 10 fall on the favourable side, against 1 in 2 elsewhere on the scale. Across 9.8 million certificates issued between 2022 and 2025, OneDpe estimates the excess at 33,449 certificates, or +35%. England shows the same pattern, only in the stock where the rule applies, and its national certificate database makes it measurable. In France, according to the Court of Audit, fewer than one certificate in a thousand was checked in 2023.

7 certificates in 10 fall on the favourable side of the line

A home enters band F at 70 kg of CO_2 per m² per year. Among homes over 40 m², 43,882 show 69 kg, the last value of band E, and only 17,299 show 70: 72% on the favourable side. Elsewhere on the scale the split is even: none of the 131 values tested far from any line exceeds 56%. Two explanations remain possible: input data adjusted near the line, or unfavourable certificates more often removed from the published database. The study cannot decide between them, and it points the finger at no professional.

When the line moves, the bunching follows

On 1 July 2024, the line changed for homes of 40 m² or less only. The share on the favourable side of their new line rose from 50% to 74%, and nothing changed among larger homes.

In England, the anomaly exists only where the rule applies

In the private rented sector of England and Wales, a home rated F or G has been barred from new tenancies since 2018, and from all tenancies since 2020; social housing is not covered. In the same national database, the excess reaches +39.8% in private rentals and is nil in social housing (−1.1%). The British database records whether a home is rented; the French one does not.

> “The problem is not the assessor, it is the system. We have made the energy certificate the key to the rental market without giving ourselves the means to check that it is right. The British have given themselves the means to measure their own reliability. In France, none of these indicators exists.” — Steven Annonziata, co-founder of OneDpe (RIANN SAS) and author of the study

Fewer than one certificate in a thousand checked in 2023

According to the French Court of Audit, 0.08% of certificates were checked in 2023; no official figure is published for 2024 and 2025. In England and Wales, at least 2% of certificates must be audited each year,

and an audit fails beyond a set margin. The two systems do not check the same object, the assessor in France, the certificate across the Channel; reaching that volume would nonetheless take 21 times more inspection operations, about 80,000 a year. France does have two rules England lacks: half of the checks on an assessor take place on site, and ADEME has automatically flagged anomalies since October 2025.

Four measures to find out what a French energy certificate is worth

The EU directive 2024/1275, due to be transposed by 29 May 2026, requires checks ensuring that at least 90% of certificates are valid; to our knowledge these provisions have not been transposed. OneDpe proposes four measures, the first of which follows from the directive:

1. publish every year the inspection rate and the failure rate; 2. publish a numerical tolerance beyond which a check fails; 3. record in the ADEME database whether a home is rented; 4. keep a public register of any cost-based exemptions.

> “What we are proposing costs almost nothing: publish an inspection rate, set a tolerance, record whether a home is rented. England has had the last two for years.” — Steven Annonziata

For homeowners. If your home is rated right at the edge of a class that matters to you (sale, letting, rent), check on the certificate the floor area, heating and hot water, and the insulation of walls, loft and windows: a single wrong input can change the class.

What these figures do not say

- +35% does not mean that 35% of certificates are wrong: it is an estimated excess of 33,449 certificates just short of band F, out of 9.8 million; “7 in 10” only concerns certificates one unit from the line.
- The study does not say which class these homes should have.
- The study does not say English certificates are more reliable: neither country publishes the failure rate of its checks.

Method and sources. Certificates for existing homes based on a site visit, mainland France, 2022-2025 (ADEME, extract of 11 June 2026, Licence Ouverte 2.0). England and Wales national certificate database, 20.7 million certificates excluding new homes, 2012-2026 (Open Government Licence v3.0). French Court of Audit, report of 3 June 2025. Full method note, tables and graphics free to reuse with the credit “Source: OneDpe.fr”: **onedpe.fr/en/presse/controle-fiabilite-dpe-france-royaume-uni**

About OneDpe. OneDpe (RIANN SAS) publishes free tools for analysing French energy performance certificates, including a certificate consistency checker (onedpe.fr/en/dpe-verification). The commercial interest is declared.

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