



Your guide to buying a new build home



Introduction

Buying a new home is an exciting milestone, and for many of us it will be one of the most expensive purchases we will ever make.

Some elements of buying a new home can be complex, leaving some people feeling overwhelmed.

It is important to remember that the journey of buying a new build home can be different to purchasing an older home.

For instance, reservation fees, optional extras/ upgrades, snagging and access to the New Homes Ombudsman are important things to consider when buying a new build home.

This guide includes details of everything you will need to know.

CONTENTS

03	Why buy new?
04	Searching for a new home
06	Getting ready to buy
16	The buying process
25	Legal completion & moving in
28	Glossary

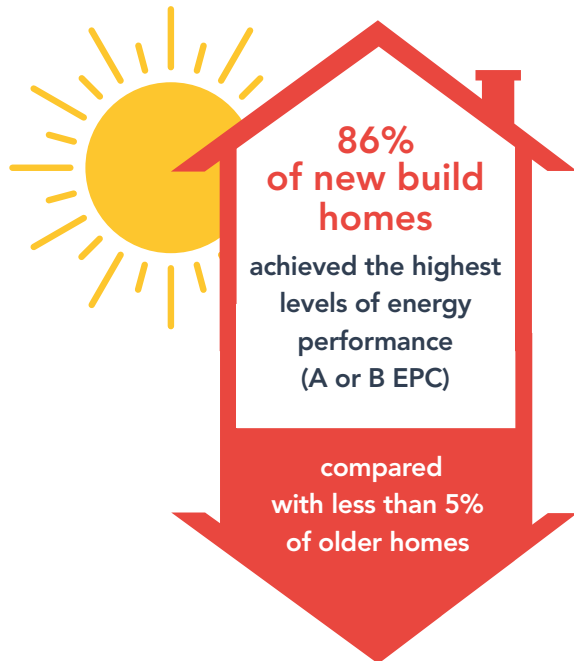


Why buy new?

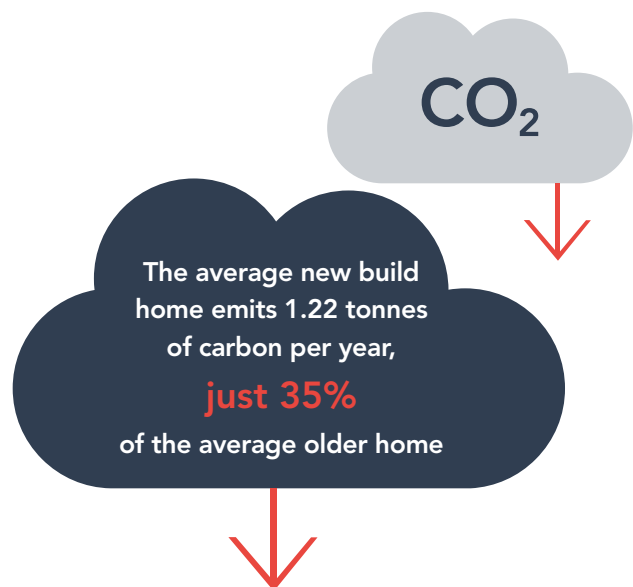
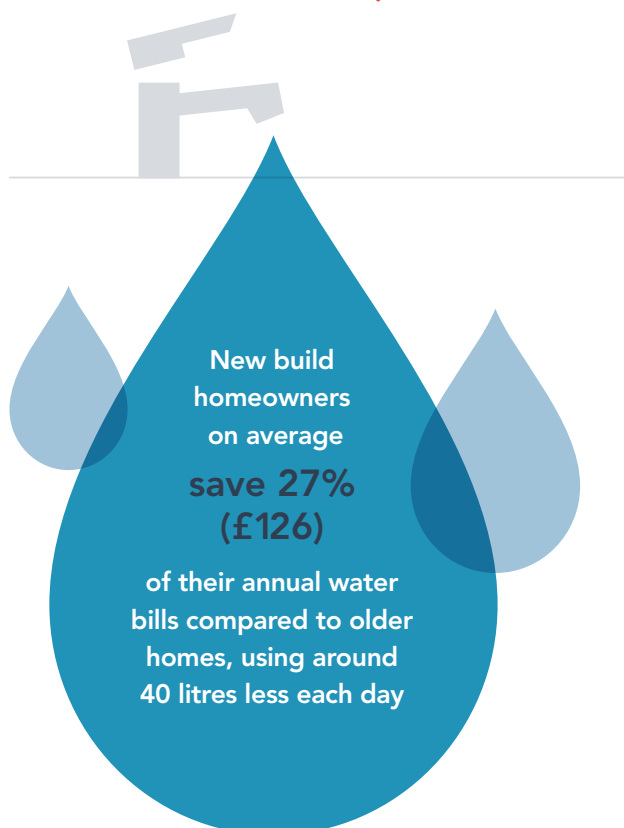
There are many reasons to choose a new build home. For some it is an opportunity to personalise a blank slate, while others appreciate the lower maintenance and DIY costs.

For those seeking a fresh start, the chance to settle into a brand-new community can be especially appealing. Choosing a new build home is also likely to be a more energy efficient and sustainable option.

Source: HBF 'Watt A Save' Report, 2022



On average, new build homeowners could save more than **£130 a month** on their energy bills, amounting to **£1,574 a year**, compared with owners of older properties



Searching for a new home

Your budget will be a key factor when deciding where to purchase your new home. Cities tend to be more expensive than the countryside, the South tends to be more expensive than the North, and London properties are usually the most expensive.

But there is much more to consider when choosing a location for your new home. For instance, your lifestyle, age, family circumstances and interests will shape your decision.

Some other important considerations include:

Proximity to family and work



Urban, suburban, rural settings



Public transport links



Flooding risk



Visit local estate agents (online or in-person), use online home searching websites such as Rightmove or Zoopla, or look around new developments. Many websites will allow you to filter criteria so you can easily find the types of properties that you are interested in.

You can also opt to receive an email alert when a home that meets your requirements comes on to the market.

TOP TIP

While research is essential, it will not capture a location's subtleties and nuances. Visit the area, speak to residents and get an opinion from a trusted person.



Neighbourhood safety



Motorway proximity



Council tax



Proximity to local amenities such as schools, shops, GP surgeries & hospitals



Noise & light pollution

Getting ready to buy

CHOOSING A HOUSE BUILDER

If you decide to buy a new build home, the house builder will play a substantial role in the quality of the home, the buying experience, and even the long-term value of your home.

You will also need to check which house builder developments are situated in your desired location and consider the best option for you. It is vital to do your research to make sure that a house builder is the right fit.



Reviews

Check reviews on house builder websites, consumer websites, such as **Trustpilot**, **Homeviews** and the **National New Homes Customer Satisfaction Survey**. Look at the quality and tone of responses from the house builders. Does this information meet your expectations?



Ask around

Do you know anyone who has recently purchased a new build home? Ask them about their experience and if they would recommend their house builder. Alternatively, you could knock on your potential neighbours' doors and ask them for their thoughts.



Visit the sales office

Talking to a sales adviser can help you understand company culture and gauge the standard of service a house builder provides. Are staff welcoming, helpful and professional? Does the development look tidy and well maintained?



Check the house builder's registration with a code of practice

If the house builder is registered with the New Homes Quality Board, they will offer additional protection to consumers through the New Homes Ombudsman.



Deals and schemes

Some house builders offer deals and schemes that can help you to cut costs. Ask house builders if you would be eligible.

TYPES OF PURCHASE



First-time buyer scheme

If you are a first-time buyer, you may be able to buy a home for 30% – 50% less than its market value. The home must be your only or main residence.

Note that government schemes are subject to change.

The latest guidance can be found at www.gov.uk/first-homes-scheme



Shared ownership schemes

You can buy a home through the shared ownership scheme if you cannot afford all the deposit and mortgage payments for a home that meets your needs.

When you buy a home through shared ownership, you:

- Buy a share between 10% – 75% of the full market value
- Pay rent to a landlord for the remaining share they own.

Note that rules on shared ownership vary in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

The latest information can be found at www.gov.uk/shared-ownership-scheme



TOP TIP

Remember that the costs associated with buying a new home extend beyond the purchase price. Additional costs such as stamp duty land tax, conveyancing and document fees, insurance, and ongoing bills should be factored into your budget.



MORTGAGE – SECURING AN AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE (AIP)

Securing a mortgage in principle or an agreement in principle (AIP) is an important first step towards buying your home. It gives you an idea of how much money you could realistically borrow. It also proves that you are a credible buyer to estate agents and house builders.

To obtain an AIP, you must provide your mortgage broker or potential lender with information about your finances.

You can usually get an AIP online through a lender's website or alternatively by visiting a local branch. You will often be able to find out how much you can borrow within 24 hours.

TOP TIP

You should get financial advice from an independent person. Your house builder may be able to recommend someone experienced in new homes finance. They will be able to advise on the best scheme and mortgage for you.

If the house builder is registered with the New Homes Quality Board, they can recommend an independent financial adviser, but they cannot force you to use the adviser they recommend.





OTHER POTENTIAL COSTS

Buying a new home could cost more than you expect. Beyond the cost of your new home, there will be other fees that you will need to factor into your budget.

Stamp Duty Land Tax	Budget for 5% – 15% of the price of the home (see page 25)
Deposit on the home	Usually at least 5% of the total cost of the home
Conveyancing or solicitor fees	Budget for around £1,800 (see page 18)
Management/service fees (applicable to select homes)	Usually between £500 – £2,000 a year (see page 14)
Reservation fees	Usually between £250 – £1,000 (see page 16)
Pre-completion inspection	Starting from £320 (see page 22)
Mortgage valuation fee (applicable to select lenders)	Usually up to £300
Independent financial adviser (applicable to select lenders)	Budget ranges from £0 – £1,000s
Removal costs	Usually range from £450 – £1,400
Life insurance (required by some lenders)	Cost varies but often £100s per year
Home or buildings and contents insurance	Costs range from £100s – £1,000s each year (see page 24)
Council tax	Your local council website should display cost bands
Household bills	Energy costs and water rates will vary depending on your usage

MARKETING OF NEW BUILD HOMES

Before buying your new home, house builders should provide you with all the following information:



The price of the home



The warranty that applies to the new home



Size of home
(room and plot dimensions)



Service charges



Tenure (whether it is freehold, leasehold or shared ownership)



Future phases of the development (where known)



Specification of the home



Any restrictions that may affect you if you want to sell the home in the future



Indicative energy performance ratings



Details of any additional insurances, warranties & guarantees



Mobility adaptations



The expected council tax band for the new home
(‘Rates’ in Northern Ireland)



Estimated completion date



TOP TIP

If your house builder is registered with NHQB, they are required to provide you with an **affordability schedule** which will help you to understand some of the costs associated with living in your home.



TOP TIP


Early bird arrangements are only made available by some house builders and on selected homes. Speak to your house builder for more information.

EARLY BIRD ARRANGEMENTS

Some house builders offer an 'early bird' scheme which allows you to reserve a home before it has been released for general sale. Typically, you will need to pay a small (usually non-refundable) fee to confirm your interest in the home. The house builder will contact you again when the house is ready for general sale to determine if you want to proceed with the purchase.

An early bird arrangement could be a good option for you, if you have your heart set on a particular home.

This could be based on:



Proximity to family & friends



South-facing garden



The view from the home



Preference for a corner plot



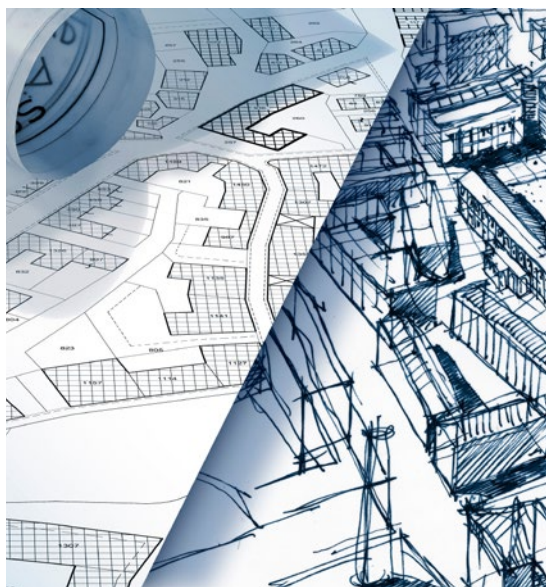
Spacious garden

UNDERSTANDING YOUR HOUSE PLANS

To make a confident decision about buying a new home, you must fully understand the layout of the development and how your chosen home fits within that layout.

There are lots of symbols on a plan to show things such as play areas, phone cable cabinets, streetlights, gradients, etc. If you do not understand your site plans, it is important to ask your house builder.

Ideally you should be able to keep a copy of the plan but if that is not possible, take a photo of the area surrounding the potential new home so you are clear on proximity.



TYPES OR TENURE OF SALE ON A DEVELOPMENT

As a development evolves, a developer may offer a variety of types (tenures) of new build homes for sale. The mix of tenures on a development may evolve according to the market and local needs.

Homes sold on the open market are sometimes described as private sales, where 100% of the property is purchased by the buyer. These homes may be sold to private individuals or families. They may also be sold to another type of buyer, for example, a portfolio sale of a number of homes to local authorities, registered providers of housing or other commercial landlords. These private landlords own the properties and lease them to tenants at below market rents or for purchase via a rent to buy or shared ownership scheme (see below).

Part of the planning consent for your development is likely to contain a condition (known as a Section 106 Agreement) requiring the house builder to build some affordable housing (such as homes for social or affordable rent, rent to buy, shared ownership/equity and/or permanent discount to market sale homes). These properties are known as affordable housing tenure and any site plans should indicate these, so you understand they are not available for open market/private sale as above.

In the same way you are protected by data regulations preventing a house builder from disclosing information about your purchase, it is not appropriate for house builders to disclose the details of specific sales/ownership beyond the general information above (whether those sales are to private individuals, housing associations, investors or any other buyer).

What are..?

Homes sold for affordable or social rent	These form part of the planning consent (Section 106 Agreement). Usually sold to a Housing Association, Local Authority or other registered provider who owns the homes and rents them to tenants.
Homes sold for shared ownership schemes	<p>Ownership of the property is shared between the buyer and a specialist partner.</p> <p>The shared owners buy a share of the home and pay rent on the remaining portion. They can also increase the share they own over time to eventually own 100%. They are usually sold to a registered provider of housing and Local Authority. Shared ownership can often form part of the planning consent (Section 106 Agreement) but can also be delivered outside of planning requirements where there is evidential need. A house builder may also have their own shared ownership scheme to support home ownership.</p> <p>The house builder may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• own the homes; and• manage the agreement with the shared owners who move into those homes.
Homes sold at a discount to market value	Eligibility for these types of homes is usually determined on local incomes and house prices. If delivered as part of planning consent (Section 106 Agreement) there may be a restriction on future disposal to retain the home as affordable.
Rent to Buy tenure	This is an alternative option for home ownership, where the property can be rented for a fixed period with an option to acquire a share of the home.

TOP TIP

Remember: the mix of tenures on a development may change, as required by market need.



MANAGEMENT/SERVICE FEES

When buying an older home, the roads and infrastructure are usually managed by the Local Authority (LA). On new build developments, roads and open space may also be managed by the LA, but sometimes this will be done by a management company. The residents will have to pay for this via a maintenance fee, also known as estate charges or service charges. These charges usually cover the upkeep of the estate's communal spaces and roads.


These fees are typically shared among the homeowners on the development and cover the cost of:



Street lighting




Car parks



Communal spaces, lifts, concierge services (for apartments)



Maintenance
of play areas,
communal
gardens or
landscaping



Upkeep of
private roads
& pavements



BUYING 'OFF PLAN'

You may decide to purchase your home off plan. This is when the purchase is made before the home is physically built.

Opting to buy off plan allows you to personalise the home. You will have the option to choose your preference for elements in the home such as: kitchen fittings, paint colours, tiles and floor coverings.

Early in the build process, the house builder will usually be able to provide a season (Spring, Summer, Autumn or Winter) as an estimate of when the home will be ready and as the build progresses, they should provide a more specific timescale. The precise date for legal completion will not usually be confirmed until two weeks beforehand.

If you are buying your home in these circumstances, you need to ensure that your arrangements, such as home removals, are flexible to accommodate this.

The buying process

RESERVATION FEE

A reservation fee is a payment made to a house builder to secure a home and is usually in the range of £250 – £1,000 depending on the house builder and the cost of the new home. The fee reserves the home for a set period of time, which is usually 6 weeks. This includes a 14-day cooling-off period after which you will usually need to exchange contracts.

This is a key difference between buying a new build home compared to an older home. In older homes, exchange of contracts often comes towards the end of the process, whereas it is much earlier in the process for new build homes. Exchange of contracts, (known as conclusion of missives in Scotland), is when the deposit is paid, and it is crucial that you have your finances ready for this.



After paying the reservation fee, you will receive the Reservation Agreement – a written agreement including details about the home, price, and additional costs. Take your time reading this to verify everything is clear and correct.

Your reservation agreement is very detailed and includes lots of information about the home, the costs you must pay, your right to cancel, your obligations, and the date when exchange of contracts must take place.

TOP TIP



Sometimes this information is included in a “pre-reservation checklist” or in terms and conditions attached to the reservation agreement. You should read these carefully before signing. If you are completing the reservation agreement online, do not just tick the box confirming you have understood the documents in the pre-reservation checklist and/or agree to the terms and conditions without reading them carefully beforehand.

SECURING A MORTGAGE

Organising a meeting with a mortgage lender or broker is usually the first step to applying for a mortgage, although sometimes this can be carried out online. Lenders will only offer you a mortgage if they are confident that you can afford the repayments.

To begin the application process, your lender may request the following documents:

- ✓ Utility bills
- ✓ Proof of benefits received
- ✓ P60 form from your employer
- ✓ Your last three months of payslips
- ✓ Passport or driving licence (to prove your identity)
- ✓ Bank statements of your current account for the last three to six months
- ✓ Statement of two to three years of accounts if you are self-employed
- ✓ Tax return if you have earnings from more than one source or are self-employed
- ✓ Proof of deposit, such as a savings statements or evidence of a financial gift
- ✓ Self-employed people may also need to provide additional information

These documents allow lenders to determine your household income and assess your affordability. Lenders will account for potential changes in circumstances, such as maternity leave or a raise in interest rates, to determine whether you would still be able to afford the mortgage repayments. Lenders will also undertake a full credit check with a credit reference agency to examine your financial history and assess how much of a risk lending to you might be. Once a formal mortgage offer has been made, it is usually valid for six months. To use the offer, you must complete your purchase within that period.

TOP TIP

A mortgage is a significant financial commitment; you will want to find the best deal possible.

It is advisable to get independent financial advice to help you get the best purchase scheme and mortgage for you.



CONVEYANCING

In the UK you cannot buy a home without going through the legal process known as conveyancing. This is the legal and administrative process of transferring a home from the seller to the buyer.

Unless you are a legal professional, you are likely to require a legal representative to complete the conveyancing. A solicitor, licensed conveyancer, or an online conveyancer can all do the job.

You can expect a conveyancer to:



Conduct thorough searches

to identify potential issues such as planning permissions, sewers, flood risks, or outstanding financial liabilities



Confirm likely costs

including Stamp Duty Land Tax and review the seller's contracts, clarifying the sale price and property boundaries



Work closely with your mortgage lender

ensuring all the necessary information is provided



Handle the payment of all related fees on your behalf

and ensure you are registered as the new homeowner with the Land Registry



Complete the purchase process

TOP TIP

If you are working with a mortgage lender, they may have a preferred list of conveyancers, and going outside this list could incur extra fees.



CHOOSING A LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

Buying any kind of home is a complex process and you are advised to use a legal representative – often known as a conveyancer or solicitor.

When selecting a legal representative, read reviews regarding the service they provide. This can give you a good insight into the standard of service you may receive. You should also consider your ideal budget, as fees can vary widely.

TOP TIP

You have the right to choose your own conveyancer or solicitor, but your house builder may be able to recommend a legal representative who is experienced in new homes conveyancing. If your house builder is registered with NHQB, they cannot force you to use their recommended conveyancer or solicitor.



EXCHANGING CONTRACTS (MISSIVES IN SCOTLAND)

When you exchange contracts/missives, you pay the deposit which is usually 5% – 10% of the purchase price. If you withdraw from the process after contracts are exchanged, you are likely to forfeit the deposit paid.

What happens before exchanging contracts?

Your conveyancer will have answered all enquiries and completed searches. A mortgage offer must also be in place.

When to exchange?

Usually for new build homes, buyers have a fixed time period from reserving the home to exchange contracts. Failure to exchange within this time period may mean the reservation is cancelled.

What happens during the exchange?

The conveyancers for the buyer and the house builder will discuss the contents of the contracts over the phone. The buyer will pay their conveyancer who will transfer the payment to the house builder's conveyancer.

What happens after the exchange?

When you exchange contracts dependent on the stage of the build, the buyer will either exchange 'on notice' with a completion date to be confirmed nearer to the completion of the home, or with a fixed completion date. The contract will give the expected date by which notice to complete will be served, in addition to the anticipated date for legal completion.

Note: in the time between exchange and completion, there are several things you should do to make the move smoother, and the first few days less stressful:

- Insure your new home from completion.
- Contact your banks and utility companies to inform them of your purchase.



POTENTIAL DELAYS

There are several reasons why the buying of your home could be delayed. Some include:

Chain

A disruption in your property chain may delay the completion of your home.

Banks

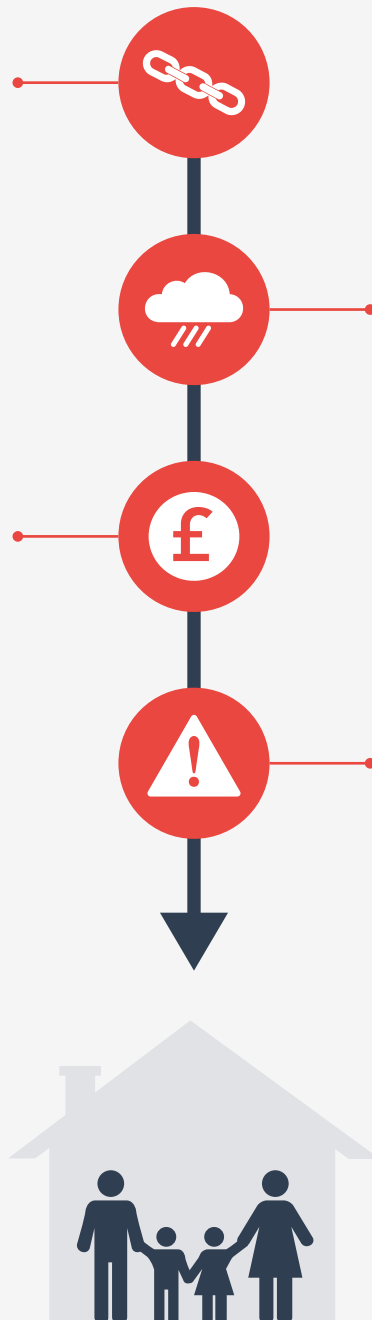
Large payments take longer than usual to process. Sometimes banks require you to verify the funds transfer before authorising it.

Build programme

Adverse weather or supply chain issues may mean your house builder could fall behind schedule.

Mortgage valuations

Valuations can flag issues such as if the value of the home is determined to be lower than the offer price.




PRE-COMPLETION INSPECTION

House builders registered with the NHQB must offer buyers the opportunity to undertake a pre-completion inspection or appoint a suitably qualified professional to undertake this on their behalf.

The pre-completion inspection checks the finishing quality of the home with a standard checklist provided by the NHQB to ensure there are no snagging issues that should be resolved prior to legal completion.

What is included in a pre-completion inspection?




External walls, vents, drains, structural integrity, surface finish, waterproofing & drainage features



Scratches, bubbles or blistering on windows, glazing & doors



Services, e.g. sockets (level & flush with wall & tested with plug tester), wiring (neat & secure where visible)



Appliances fitted correctly & working



Tiles & sanitaryware to be securely fixed with neat silicone sealant in place, free from movement & unusual noises

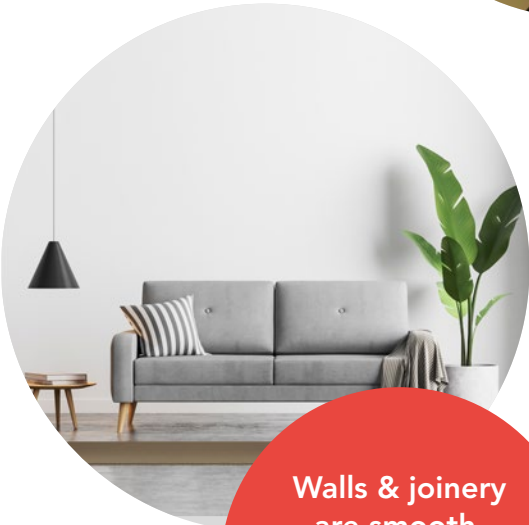
Integrity of garage, balcony & porch



Chimney, roof & gutters are securely fitted & free from kinks, dips, gaps and leaks



Health & safety, no open excavations, potholes, discarded materials or trip hazards on plot, scaffolding removed from home



Walls & joinery are smooth, reasonably uniform & free from obvious imperfections

HOME INSURANCE

Finding an insurance policy for your new build home is just the same as buying insurance for a pre-existing home. You can get quotes online and you will need to supply a few details about your new home.

As a condition of your mortgage, you will need to have home insurance in place ahead of legal completion.

As the completion of the build and the wider development may be some time after exchange of contracts, the postcode may not be recognised. If this is the case, you can contact the insurer and let them know the details of the development.

TOP TIP



Mortgage providers will usually only settle the funds for a new home purchase if your home insurance policy is active, so make sure you are organised and have this set up ahead of legal completion to avoid any delays moving into your new home.



Legal completion & moving in

STAMP DUTY & MAINTENANCE FEES

Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT)

Please note that this guidance is accurate as of April 2025. Stamp Duty fees are subject to change. The latest guidance can be found at: www.gov.uk/stamp-duty-land-tax/residential-property-rates

SDLT applies to house purchases in England and Northern Ireland, while Wales has the **Land Transaction Tax (LTT)**, and Scotland has the **Land and Buildings Transaction Tax (LBTT)**.

The amount you pay depends on:



When you bought your home



How much you paid for it



Whether you are eligible for relief or an exemption

NEW HOME WARRANTY

The new home warranty is an insurance policy (which is separate to home and contents insurance policies) that the house builder must put in place for all new homes. The house builder will pay for the policy and then pass the policy to the home buyer as a form of protection against possible defects in the home. The policy usually lasts for a total of 10 years.

In the first two years of the warranty, the house builder is responsible for fixing any defects or snags that breach the warranty standards and arise due to workmanship or the materials used. This initial two years is often known as the Builder's Warranty Period or the Defects Liability Period.

Homeowners can report problems to their house builder within this timeframe, and if the issues are found to be below standards, the house builder is obligated to resolve them.

What happens when your builder's warranty period ends?

After the first two years following legal completion, the warranty moves to a structural defects period (usually years 3 – 10) which is provided by the new home warranty provider. This only includes major issues with structural elements of the home such as foundations, walls, roofs, and other load-bearing parts. The coverage for non-structural defects ends after the initial two years, so it is important to resolve any minor issues you have during this time.

SNAGGING, DEFECTS, AND MAJOR DEFECTS

What is snagging?

Snagging is the process of spotting any minor (usually decorative) issues in new-build homes and putting them right. Your home has been built outdoors, in all types of weather, by a number of different tradespeople. Although every care has been taken to ensure the home is handed over with no problems, there can occasionally be some minor issues that only become apparent once the home is occupied. These are known as snags, and where they are a breach of the standards or specification, they are covered by the builder's warranty and your house builder is required to resolve them.

What is a defect?

Defects are more significant problems that can affect the functionality of the home. Defects usually require more extensive repairs and can sometimes take longer to resolve due to the complexity of the issues.

Major defects and emergencies

If you find any major issues, such as structural defects or anything that puts your health and safety under concern, you should contact the house builder immediately.

Familiarise yourself with the house builder's emergency reporting procedures as soon as you move in and keep contact numbers handy.

AFTER-SALES COMPLAINTS

House builders are required to provide buyers with an after-sales service to resolve any issues after they move in, as well as an accessible complaints process.

If you have a complaint about the home or service, then you should contact the house builder with the details. Should you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, and the house builder is registered with the **New Homes Quality Board**, then you have two years from the date of your reservation or legal completion (whichever is later) to refer the complaint to the New Homes Ombudsman. If the house builder arranges for a third-party to provide their after-sales service, they are still responsible for providing the complaints procedure and ensuring that their third-party meets the requirements.

NEW HOMES QUALITY CODE & THE NEW HOMES OMBUDSMAN SERVICE

What is the New Homes Quality Code?

The New Homes Quality Code (the Code) is a set of requirements and principles that house builders registered with the New Homes Quality Board must follow when building and selling new homes in the UK. The Code protects buyers by helping them understand their rights, what to expect from the house builder, and how to resolve issues if they arise. It was introduced in 2022 to improve the quality of new homes and to protect homebuyers during the sales process and after-sales care.

TOP TIP

For more information on snagging, view the New Homes Quality Board comprehensive guide: **A Homeowner Guide to Snagging**



What is the New Homes Ombudsman Service?

If your house builder is registered with the NHQB, you will benefit from independent, impartial and free of charge investigations conducted by the New Homes Ombudsman Service (NHOS) should you need to file a complaint.

Established in 2022, the NHOS exists to help buyers resolve issues that arise with their new home during the buying process or within 2 years of completing the purchase. This service can be used if an NHQB Registered Developer has been unable or unwilling to fix an issue with your new home.

Please note that you should initially make any complaints directly to the house builder in accordance with their complaints procedure and give them the opportunity to resolve them. If the complaint has not been resolved within 56 days, or you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, then you can escalate your complaint to the Ombudsman. The easiest way to do this is on their website www.nhos.org.uk

The Ombudsman covers the whole period from before the reservation and legal completion of a home through to after-sales and complaints management for issues during the first two years following legal completion.

Where appropriate and necessary, the Ombudsman commits house builders to address complaints filed by eligible buyers. This may include issuing an apology, providing an explanation, resolving the matter, or providing a payment of compensation.

TOP TIP

You can download a copy of the New Homes Quality Code here www.developers.nhqb.org.uk/downloads



RESOURCES

New Homes Quality Board
www.nhqb.org.uk

New Homes Ombudsman Service
www.nhos.org.uk

Homeowners Alliance
www.hoa.org.uk

Money Saving Expert
www.moneysavingexpert.com

Glossary

Agreement in Principle (AIP)	A written estimate from a lender outlining how much money you can borrow regarding a specific home.
Affordable housing	Homes provided on the site which are not sold to private individuals, but usually Local Authorities or Housing Associations, for a range of affordable tenures including rent, shared ownership and discount to market.
Builder's warranty period/ Defects liability period	A specified period, typically 2 years after completing the purchase, during which a builder is responsible for repairing any defects in a completed construction project. The duration may vary based on the building contract terms.
Chain	When a group of property buyers and sellers are linked together because their purchase or sale depends on others.
Completion date	The final step in a property transaction for both buyer and seller. It is the day the money is transferred, and the buyer receives the keys for their new home.
Conveyancer	A legal representative who is usually a licensed conveyancer or solicitor. Handles the legal side of buying a home and transferring home ownership.
Conveyancing	The legal purchase and sale of a home, completed by a conveyancer, a licensed conveyancer or solicitor.
Cooling-off period	A period of at least 14 days following the signing of the reservation agreement, where a buyer can cancel and receive a full refund. Note that this only applies if a house builder is registered with certain codes.
Deed	Legal documents concerning the ownership or tenure of a home.
Defect	Incomplete work, or faults in completed work that do not meet the expected quality or finish as set out in the contract of sale.

Early bird arrangements	The option to be told when a home is available to buy, before it goes on general sale.
Estate charge	A charge made for maintenance and repair of communal areas on the wider development (e.g. public open space), held in a Management Company.
Exchange of contracts	The term used in England, Wales and Northern Ireland to describe the formal stage when the contract of sale is exchanged between the house builder and the buyer. In Scotland, this is known as conclusion of missives.
Fixed completion	A legal document fixing the Legal Completion for a specific date.
Freehold	This is permanent and absolute type of tenure of land or property. The home is owned, including the land it is built on, with no fixed time limit.
Ground rent	The fee that a leaseholder pays to the freeholder of a property for the right to occupy the land that their property is built on.
Independent financial adviser	A person or company who is experienced in advising homebuyers on purchase schemes and mortgages.
Insurance	A policy that can cover the cost of repairing or rebuilding your home if it is damaged by things like fire, storm or flood. It can cover the cost of replacing the things in your home if they are stolen or repairing or replacing them if they are damaged.
Land Registry	A government department that holds legal records of information about ownership of and interests affecting land and property.
Leasehold	This is a temporary type of tenure where the owner of the new home does not own the land the home sits on. It is leased from the landowner for a fixed period.

Legal completion	The day the seller receives payment for the home, transferring ownership to the buyer.
Local authority	An organisation that is officially responsible for all the public services and facilities in a particular area.
Maintenance fees	Fees paid by residents for the upkeep of property, usually as part of a Management Company Agreement.
Major defect	A fault or failure (usually a structural fault) that could lead to an insurance claim through the new home warranty.
Management company	An entity set up to manage facilities on the development (including, shared areas, lifts in apartments, public open space, landscaping) which is funded by residents.
Missive	Like a contract, this is the legal agreement that presents the terms of sale. This only applies in Scotland.
Mortgage	A loan financing the buying of a home. The buyer agrees to pay back the loan over some time, generally in a series of regular instalments divided into principal and interest.
Net zero	A state in which the greenhouse gases going into the atmosphere are balanced by removal out of the atmosphere.
New Homes Ombudsman Service	Provides a free and independent service to buyers who have bought a new home from a house builder registered with the New Homes Quality Board and the buyer believes that the house builder has failed to meet the requirements of the Code within the first two years from reserving the home or completing the purchase.

<p>New home warranty</p>	<p>Insurance policies that cover major defects in a new build home. It also covers minor defects and snags in the first two years.</p>
<p>New Homes Quality Code (the Code)</p>	<p>The New Homes Quality Code, which all New Homes Quality Board Registered Developers must keep to. The Code includes the statement of principles and practical steps, which set the requirements that govern the marketing, sales and after-sales service relating to a new build home for two years after legal completion.</p>
<p>New Homes Quality Board Registered Developer</p>	<p>A person or organisation who is registered with the NHQB and who:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) meets the description of developer specified in regulations made by the Secretary of State; b) registered the original building plot with the new home warranty provider; and c) carries out or commissions someone else to carry out: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the construction of a new building that will be or include a new home; • the conversion of an existing building so that it is or includes a new home; or • the conversion of an existing building to alter the number of new homes it contains.
<p>Notice to complete</p>	<p>A document stipulating a formal date for completion.</p>
<p>Pre-completion inspection</p>	<p>Visual inspection of a home's fixtures and fittings by the buyer or a suitably qualified professional appointed by the buyer to ensure they are of high quality before final handover to the buyer, using a standard pre-completion inspection checklist provided by the New Homes Quality Board.</p>
<p>Reservation agreement</p>	<p>When a buyer reserves the right to buy a home for a period and pays a fee.</p>

Reservation fee	The fee a buyer must pay when entering into a reservation agreement with a house builder.
Sanitaryware	The fixtures and fittings installed in bathrooms including products like toilets, basins, showers, bathtubs and other plumbing accessories.
Service charges	A charge made for maintenance, services or repairs on a property, usually communal areas in and around apartments, held in a Management Company.
Shrinkage	The loss of moisture from building materials as it dries. Materials shrink, causing cracks in walls.
Snagging	The process of checking a new building for minor imperfections or faults that need to be rectified.
Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT)	A government tax paid by the buyer of a home when buying land or a home over a certain price bracket. Often called 'stamp duty'.
Tenure	Refers to the various types of ownerships of a home.
Valuation	The process of getting an estimate of the worth of a home from an estate agent or independent valuer.



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