



### Summer 2023 Newsletter

A message from Rob Brighouse, Chair of New Homes Quality Board...

As part of the New Homes Quality Board's (NHQB) ongoing developer visits, I recently met one of our signed-up developers in Glasgow. Not only was it remarkable to witness first-hand how developers are fully embracing the principles of the Code, but I also had the privilege of meeting two of their highly satisfied buyers.



Their sincere joy with every aspect, from the sales journey through to the move-in process, serves as a clear testament to the positive impact our principles can and will have on customer experiences, realising our ambitions for the sector.

From these valuable discussions with our developers, we have also decided it is time to review our fee structure to ensure fairness and equity for all. As a result, we have published a new fee structure from 1st July 2023. This considers both turnover from private sales, and also the number of homes built by individual builders.

I am also thrilled to provide you with an update on our remarkable progress and the encouraging results we have achieved in the past few months. For starters, the NHQB now has nearly 200 developers, including an impressive 50% of all large and medium housebuilders, along with over 100 smaller organisations.

Over 90% of new registrations in England, Scotland and Wales are already benefiting from the enhanced protections provided by the NHQB. Once all developers have accepted their registration, coverage will increase to reach 95% next year. Furthermore, I am delighted to confirm that we will be extending our reach and impact by rolling out the scheme in Northern Ireland later this year.

I sincerely thank each of you for your continued support and dedication to our mission. Together, we are making significant strides toward raising the bar for quality standards in the housebuilding industry.

*Rob Brighouse*

Rob Brighouse  
Chair, New Homes Quality Board

### BUSINESS NEWS

NHQB and the New Homes Ombudsman meet Rachel Maclean MP, the Housing Minister

In June, Rob Brighouse and Alison MacDougall met with Rachel Maclean at her office in Westminster. They discussed the impact of the new Code and Rachel said:

**"The government is committed to improving the experience of new home buyers and I welcome the steps taken by the sector to develop The New Homes Quality Code and the New Homes Ombudsman Service to encourage and enable developers to take more responsibility and take ownership when things go wrong with the framework in place. Homebuyers will be able to more confident, informed decisions when choosing a new home."**



### Developer fees – you said, we listened

When we opened for applications in 2022, the fee model was based on the turnover from private sales for each developer. Our income from registration fees covers our running costs and those of the New Homes Ombudsman. As a not-for-profit organisation, with largely fixed costs, this means that as more developers register, the fees for everyone will reduce.



Since the launch, almost 200 developers have voluntarily signed up to the Code, and we have also received some feedback about the fee structure. As developers often calculate costs based on a per plot basis, our turnover-based fee structure didn't take this into account.

As we prepared for the first renewals, we have reviewed the fee structure and made fee arrangements in line with the feedback we received. The new structure is based on both turnover from private sales, and also the number of plot sales expected in the current financial year.

This increases the number of fees and makes a much faster for all sizes of businesses. As a result, the very largest developers will pay slightly more than in 2022 but for the vast majority of other businesses, the fees have been reduced by around 20% year on year.

Three months before renewals we will be in touch with each developer to confirm their new fee. The updated fee model is published on our website [here](#).

[If you have any questions, please contact us by clicking here.](#)

### Did you know that Housing Associations can register with NHQB?

The NHQB has nearly 200 developers signed up to the Code, and 14 of these are Housing Associations. As the UK seeks to solve its affordable housing problems, more Housing Associations are working with developers or setting up their own development capabilities. While many of these homes are shared ownership or build to rent, Housing Associations that build homes for private sale are eligible to join the NHQB.

Ardine and Alex from the team took part in the recent Housing 2023 event and got to meet many people in this sector to discuss the benefits of joining NHQB.

Ais Allin, Director of Design, Technical & Innovation at Lintred/Claxon, said: "As part of our commitment to achieve the highest levels of product and service quality to all our customers and residents, Lintred/Claxon is delighted to sign up to the NHQB's Consumer Code. Lintred/Claxon sees a huge benefit in an industry-wide framework that protects new home buyers and supports the integrity of customer service standards across our industry."



[If you haven't yet signed up with NHQB and would like more information, please click here.](#)

### New Homes Ombudsman Service receives first Complaint

Since the first developer activated in October 2022, the NHQB has received the first consumer complaints through its online platform. These complaints have provided us with key insight into the early problems being faced by customers.



This week we are providing all registered developers with a case study outlining the first complaint with all the warnings and recommendations.

[Need help on how to submit a complaint?](#)

### NHQB Developer Visits

We have recently kicked off a new series of developer visits to meet the teams that are working to embed the New Homes Quality Code.



From South Wales to Glasgow, via York, Bristol and London, these visits have provided us with a deeper understanding of the housebuilding market in each nation, and in particular, the important role that the New Homes Quality Code can play for smaller regional developers.

### LEARNING/DEVELOPMENT

How does the NHQB work with developers and builders to ensure homebuyers can expect the highest quality service standards?

The New Homes Quality Code introduced several important positive changes for homebuyers to improve consumer protection. The Code contains 10 fundamental principles that benefit both consumers and developers. The overriding principle is fairness, ensuring each customer is not looked after throughout the process.



The Code also introduces the following standards that raise the standards for purchasing a new home:

- The principle of transparency ensures customers receive clear and accurate information about their home and any additional costs, at the time of reservation.
- 14 days cooling-off period after reservation.
- Customers have the option to have a pre-completion inspection to check the finish of their new home.
- Any snag or defects to be resolved within 30 days except where there is a good reason for a delay.
- A detailed internal complaints procedure with clear timelines for providing information.
- The introduction of an independent ombudsman if a customer is not satisfied with how a complaint has been handled.
- Documentation that confirms any outstanding work on the development or future phases.

To help builders achieve these standards, we offer practical help and support in several ways:

- On-Demand/Distance guidance provided above on how to implement the Code.
- An online training course plus advice and support from our dedicated Industry Engagement Manager throughout the transition.
- A suite of resources, including template forms and emails which can be adapted for each business.
- An Accredited Supplier scheme with organisations that can support developers to become Code compliant.
- Newsletters, case studies, and other content to share best practices.

To find out more about how the Code can benefit developers and customers alike, our Industry Engagement Manager, Ardine Prentis, is happy to help.

[Book a virtual call with Ardine by clicking here.](#)

### INFORMATION

Guidance on Consumer Payment Protection under the New Homes Quality Code

In a recent NHQB Developer Alert, further guidance has been provided regarding the requirements for protecting consumer payments. The Code mandates that developers safeguard deposits and other monies paid by consumers in the event of cancellation or insolvency.

Developers had raised questions about the specific requirements outlined in sections 3.12 and 4 of the Code. To address these concerns, we sought legal advice and conducted a review of the current implementation of the Code. As a result, the Developer Alert was issued to offer additional clarity on meeting the Code's requirements and appropriate actions for developers to take.

[Need more information?](#)

### NHQB Newsletter Survey

The NHQB quarterly newsletter aims to offer relevant and insightful information to all our stakeholders. In our continued efforts for quality, we are looking to see if our newsletter can better serve the needs of its readers. The help us understand the highlights and issues that readers have and assist us in improving the quality and content of the newsletter.



[Please click here to complete the survey.](#)

### CONTACT US

General email: [info@nhqb.org.uk](mailto:info@nhqb.org.uk)  
Media enquiries: [media@nhqb.org.uk](mailto:media@nhqb.org.uk)  
Developers: [developers@nhqb.org.uk](mailto:developers@nhqb.org.uk)

New Homes Quality Board, 85-89 Paul Street, London, United Kingdom EC2A 4NE, United Kingdom  
[www.nhqb.org.uk](http://www.nhqb.org.uk)