



# Winter 2024 Newsletter



## A message from Rob Brighthouse, Chair of the New Homes Quality Board...

Welcome to our Winter newsletter. As we approach the end of 2024, I would like to take the opportunity to wish everyone, on behalf of the New Homes Quality Board, a Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

In this issue, we will update you on recent developments and our plans for next year.

2024 has been a year of great progress for the NHQB. Your continued support and efforts in our mission to improve the consumer experience of buying and moving into a new home, is having a significant impact. Over half (54%) of all new homes being built across England, Scotland and Wales are now covered by the New Homes Quality Code, including most of the large developers and over 100 SMEs. Around two-thirds of all new homes will be covered, once all developers who have applied complete their registration.

In the lead-up to July's election and in the months since, NHQB prioritised cultivating collaborative relationships with the new ministerial team. This has established a solid footing for the remainder of this Parliament.

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## CHAIR'S MESSAGE

The Government's recent decision to back a single mandatory consumer code and activate the New Homes Ombudsman is a positive development, particularly with their proposal for 1.5 million new homes to be built within this parliament. This news comes as part of their response to the Competition and Market Authority's (CMA) Housebuilding Market Study recommendations, published in February 2024. This move will help create the much-needed level playing field for all new homebuyers, by offering a set of protections and a single route for redress through the New Homes Ombudsman.

The independent Code Council are in the process of reviewing the New Homes Quality Code, following a public consultation in the Autumn and we look forward to confirming updates in the New Year.

Our support provided to developers and consumers continues to expand, as we have recently launched two new guides: 'Complaints Management for Developers' and 'A Homeowner Guide to Snagging'.

More details about this progress along with other developments are outlined in this newsletter. We hope you enjoying reading it, and if you have any feedback, please email our Communications team at [communications@nhqb.org.uk](mailto:communications@nhqb.org.uk).



**Rob Brighthouse, Chair of the New Homes Quality Board**

## LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

### Review of the New Homes Quality Code

The Code is the ‘backbone’ for how we support developers in improving their standards in quality and customer service for consumers. It’s essential for everyone that we have a Code which is fit for purpose, addresses key consumer issues appropriately and is futureproof. To this end, the independent Code Council has been reviewing proposed changes and drafting updates to ensure the Code works well for all stakeholders.

Thank you to everyone who participated and contributed to the recent Code Consultation. We received over 200 individual pieces of feedback from a range of consumers, developers, the wider industry and policymakers.

We’re currently finalising the updates to the Code and will announcing them in first half of next year.



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### National New Home Customer Satisfaction Survey results

Customer Satisfaction results are gathered from the existing survey undertaken by the Home Builders Federation in association with NHBC and Premier Guarantee.

We are seeking consent from Developers to publish these results on our website, following the recommendation from the CMA Housebuilding Study released by the Government in October.

Thank you to all Developers who have already responded to our request. If you haven’t already you can give consent by emailing [developers@nhqb.org.uk](mailto:developers@nhqb.org.uk) by 20 December 2024.

Survey results will be published during January 2025, and we will notify you when results are live on our website.

### Need for Code and Ombudsman echoed at Labour Party conference

In September, we hosted 'A Fair Deal for New Home Buyers' fringe event at the Labour Party Conference in Liverpool. Chaired by Baroness Ayesha Hazarika MBE, the event explored how the New Homes Quality Code and New Homes Ombudsman can support customers in the proposed additional 1.5 million new homes.

Thanks to each speaker who provided valuable experience and insights, which helped to underline to government the important progress many developers registered with NHQB are making and how consumers are being positively impacted.

Key highlights included:

- **A customer's experience:** Andy Vernal shared how the Ombudsman helped resolve an issue with his new home, demonstrating the importance of having this channel for redress.
- **Ombudsman insights:** Lead Ombudsman Sarah Hesp explained the Ombudsman's value to consumers like Andy.
- **A developer's perspective:** Matt Grayson, Group Customer & Marketing Director at Redrow, emphasised the Code's importance for builders and buyers alike.
- **Policy Focus:** Luke Myer MP highlighted the need for quality as well as quantity in new home construction.



'A Fair Deal for New Buyers' event at Labour Party Conference 2024.

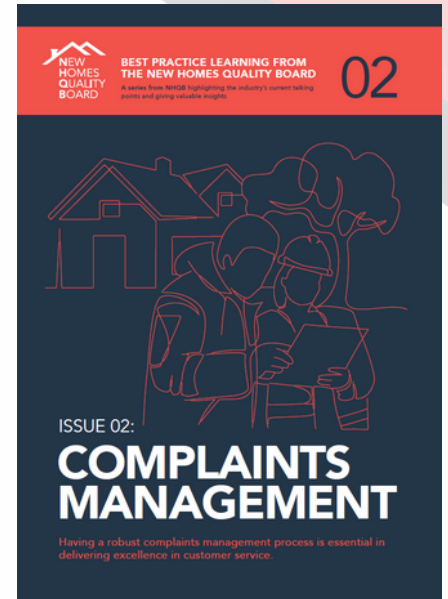
[Left to Right] Matt Grayson, Redrow Group Customer & Marketing Director; Sara Hesp, Lead Ombudsman NHOS; Luke Myer MP; Baroness Ayesha Hazarika MBE, broadcaster, journalist and political commentator; Emma Toms, Chief Executive New Homes Quality Board; Andy Vernal, Consumer who went through the Ombudsman process.

## Cutting costly complaints

In October, we introduced the Complaints Management Best Practice Guide, the second guide in a series designed to support developers. This guide was developed after the NHQB consulted with developers of various sizes to understand how complaints are currently handled, the associated costs, and the challenges faced.

The findings revealed that handling and resolving complaints costs developers between £214 to £1,174 per case, depending on complexity and the developer's size. Based on 50 complaints, this equates to an annual total cost of between £10,700 and £58,700, so the guide provides recommendations to reduce complaints, which in turn will help to increase customer satisfaction and reduce unnecessary costs.

Download the Complaints Management guide [here](#).



## Snagging guide to help new homeowners published

As well as providing support for developers, in November, we published A Homeowner Guide to Snagging, the first in a series of Consumer Guides. This guide was created to help homeowners better understand snagging, including what qualifies as a snag and set clear expectations on how developers should address snags and defects.

Buying and moving into a new home can be a complex process, and research conducted by the Home Builders Federation (HBF) revealed that 95% of respondents reported encountering snags with nearly half (47%) having more than 10 snagging issues.

Download A Homeowner Guide to Snagging [here](#). If you'd like to receive a print-ready electronic version, please email [communications@nhqb.org.uk](mailto:communications@nhqb.org.uk).



## New Complaints Case Studies now available

[Visit the NHQB's Complaint Case Studies page here](#)



## Latest from the New Home Ombudsman

Following Alison MacDougall's retirement in the summer, the new Chief Ombudsman is Nigel Cates. Nigel has considerable experience at senior level in financial services, including complaint handling both at HSBC bank, the Financial Ombudsman Service, and prior to that on consumer and competition matters at the Office of Fair Trading.

The latest data shows that more consumers are aware of the Ombudsman and engaging with the service. Since they received the first complaint in June 2023, the New Homes Ombudsman has:

- handled c600 enquiries a month
- issued a final decision on 53 cases
  - 13% upheld in full
  - 57% upheld in part
  - 30% not upheld
- resolved 54 cases informally, through negotiation or mediation
- 112 cases currently under open investigation

To help developers learn from Ombudsman decisions, we produce case studies including learnings and recommendations. These are available on our website [here](#) and the latest case studies cover topics including delays, misinformation and snagging.

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## Duncan Jackson and Ian Burns appointed as new NHQB Board members

It's important to have developers on our Board to ensure the Code is challenging but practical for the industry. Our constitutional lock guarantees that industry representatives will never comprise more than one-third of our Board or committees.

Duncan and Ian have joined our Board to represent mid-size and SME developers respectively to ensure that the Code reflects the diversity of housebuilders in the UK.

[Click here to read about all our Board members.](#)

## NHQB TEAM UPDATE

### **Dave Farley appointed as Business Support Director**

Dave has 32 years working in housebuilding, including Managing Director roles at Vistry. With an accounting background and experience in construction, Dave ensures that the support functions of the NHQB provide the Operational team with a quality service, whilst managing the risk and governance of the business.

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### **Lizzie Cattle joins as Team Administrator**

Lizzie Cattle joined the NHQB as a Team Administrator during the summer. Lizzie has over 20 years of administrative experience and 10+ years as an Executive Assistant. In her role Lizzie provides support, manages schedules, diaries, and events for the NHQB team and Board.

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### **Manisha Kataria joins as Communications Assistant**

Manisha Kataria joined the NHQB as a Communications Assistant during the summer. She joins with first-class BA and MA degrees and has gained valuable communications experience at Sky, Lloyds Banking Group and British Airways.

In her role, Manisha supports with the co-ordination of campaigns, manages designs, writes copy, and assists the wider NHQB team.

## SEASONS GREETINGS

**As 2024 comes to a close, we would like to thank you for your commitment to the Code.**

**We wish you and your loved ones a wonderful Christmas and A Happy New Year.**



# CONTACT INFORMATION

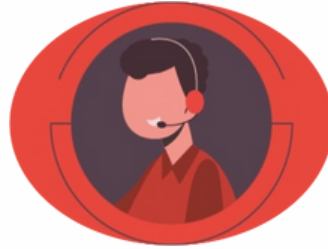
## Who to talk to when you need help?



### **Compliance and audits:**

[compliance@nhqb.org.uk](mailto:compliance@nhqb.org.uk)

If you need assistance with compliance and audits.



### **Technical support:**

[developers@nhqb.org.uk](mailto:developers@nhqb.org.uk)

For questions about registration, clarification on the New Homes Quality Code, or assistance with IT related matters.



### **Finance questions:**

[finance@nhqb.org.uk](mailto:finance@nhqb.org.uk)

Such as fees, payments or invoices, our finance department can provide clarity on any financial aspect of your involvement with NHQB.



### **Communications:**

[communications@nhqb.org.uk](mailto:communications@nhqb.org.uk)

When it comes to communication materials or press releases, our communication team is here to assist you.



### **General queries:**

[info@nhqb.org.uk](mailto:info@nhqb.org.uk)

For general queries about the NHQB.



### **New Homes Ombudsman Service:**

[customer.services@nhos.org.uk](mailto:customer.services@nhos.org.uk)

The NHOS is available to address any queries regarding the complaints process or the outcomes of previous complaints.