

# New Homes Ombudsman Case Study: Front Door Repair Timeline



## Issue

The customer complained that the time taken by the developer to repair their front door was frustrating and they consider the delays unnecessary. Consequently, they believe that the developer has not complied with the Code.

## Relevant sections of the New Homes Quality Code

**Part 3:** After-sales, complaints and the NHOS



## Circumstances

- About six weeks after they moved in, the customer complained that they experienced water ingress into their hallway under their front door. This continued even though the developer carried out work and further investigations to try and resolve the problem.
- The developer explained that it can take some time to establish the root cause of problems with water ingress. They replaced the door and the doorframe and explained that their next step is to seek advice from a specialist contractor.
- When the customer complained to the Ombudsman, the issue had not been rectified. Occasionally, the customer had to place towels at the base of the front door to absorb water ingress.
- The customer complained that the developer's communication had been poor, and they failed to treat the problem as a priority. Furthermore, when they complained to the developer, they said their complaint was not escalated in accordance with the developer's stated policy.

## Ombudsman's decision

The Ombudsman reviewed the evidence available and found that there were significant periods where progress was not being made (during the Christmas period when the business was closed), however this was out of the developer's control. Ultimately, the developer accepted the fault and committed to resolving the defect with the door.

The developer replaced the door and doorframe and sought advice from a specialist contractor. The repair process was lengthy because it involved eliminating likely causes and obtaining the cooperation of third-party suppliers.

The developer provided regular updates to the customer, including several apologies.

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## Outcome

Complaint not upheld



## Learnings

- Keep the customer updated throughout the resolution process and make sure that they are aware of any potential delays, or business closures in advance.
- A timely response to customer complaints helps provide a good customer service standard.

## Recommendations for developers

It is important to respond in a timely manner and within the timescales laid out in the Code.

Stay in contact with customers and provide updates on the planned resolution journey. A consistent line of communication fosters trust and reassures customers that you are dealing with their issue, even if progress has not yet been made.

Inform the customer about potential limitations in resolving issues, such as dependencies on third-party contractors.

