

Consumer Code for Home Builders calls on builders to prepare for revised Code implementation

Submitted by: Consumer Code for Home Builders

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The Consumer Code for Home Builders (CCHB) has published the Fifth Edition of the Consumer Code Scheme ('the Code') which has been updated following a comprehensive independent review. The revised Code and accompanying good practice guidance for builders, build on over a decade of effective consumer protection, with new and enhanced requirements to strengthen support for home buyers.

Builders covered by the Code will need to comply with the Fifth Edition from 1 January 2024. The CCHB has produced a Transition Pack (<https://consumercode.co.uk/resources/revised-code-transition-pack/>) to help builders and their selling agents and solicitors/licensed conveyancers prepare for the changes, including a revised suite of documents and links to updated online training, available free of charge to support compliance.

New requirements have been introduced to address gaps identified as part of the independent review (https://consumercode.co.uk/resources/independent_code_review_2022-23/). Some existing requirements have also been enhanced to strengthen protection and align with other codes and existing legislation in the marketplace. The revised Code has been developed in collaboration with the industry and consumer groups to ensure changes are workable in practice and deliver meaningful benefits for consumers. Key updates include:

- A new 14 day cooling-off period from date of reservation
- A new pre-inspection requirement to enable home buyers to seek professional help to identify snags and get them resolved before completion
- Clear and practical guidance and timeframes for managing customer complaints
- An increase in the amount home buyers can claim through the Code's Independent Dispute Resolution Scheme

The revised Code

(<https://consumercode.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Consumer-Code-Requirements-and-Good-Practice-Guidance-for-B>) will be effective from 1 January 2024, giving builders and their agents three months to prepare for the changes and make sure they are 'Code 2024 ready'.

Code Chair, Noel Hunter, said: "Our revised Code formalises existing good practice as well as strengthening protection for home buyers where it is most needed. Complying with the Consumer Code for Home Builders enables builders to demonstrate they treat customers fairly by making the buying process transparent, as well as providing an after-sales service and access to independent redress should that be needed. These commitments can help home buyers feel more confident in the decisions they're making, knowing they have access to the information they need to make an informed decision."

Commenting on the value of the Code, Paul Drysdale, Safety Health Environment & Quality (SHEQ) Director at Story Homes, said: "Being a member of the Consumer Code for Home Builders supports Story Homes' commitment to providing excellent customer care. The comprehensive requirements included in the Code, together with the training, auditing process and disciplinary regime have helped us continuously improve and publicly demonstrate the value we place on customer service."

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Notes to editors

The Consumer Code for Home Builders is approved by the Chartered Trading Standards Institute and applies to thousands of home builders that build homes covered by the four main warranty bodies, NHBC, LABC Warranty, Premier Guarantee and Checkmate. The Code sets out requirements builders must meet to protect home buyers, from the point of reservation through to two years after legal completion. The Code provides free access for home buyers to a fully independent dispute resolution scheme run by the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution (CEDR Ltd).