



# A Homeowner Guide to Snagging



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# Introduction

Buying a new home is an important milestone.



In the 2024 National Customer Satisfaction Survey conducted by the Home Builders Federation, over 80% of customers confirmed that they were happy with the quality of their new home.

However, occasionally inconsistencies can and do occur. In the latest figures published by the Home Builders Federation:

**This guide outlines some of the most common issues surrounding:**

- The standards that you should expect.
- What to do if something goes wrong.



**95%**  
of homebuyers  
found snags in their  
new homes.



**47%**  
reported more than  
ten snags.







New Homes Quality Board  
**Code of Practice**



# Who are the New Homes Quality Board?

**The New Homes Quality Board (NHQB) is a not-for-profit organisation, dedicated to improving the quality of new homes and customer service provided by developers.**

Through our Code of Practice (the New Homes Quality Code), we protect buyers of new build homes so that when you reserve a new home from a Registered Developer (after their date of registration), you're protected by the Code until the end of the first two years after moving in.

The Code is based on a number of core principles, such as **fairness, independence, transparency** etc. It includes a broad range of requirements that developers must provide to their customers.

These protections include access to the independent New Homes Ombudsman. This service ensures that any complaints are addressed fairly and impartially.



**If you have any questions, or you're unsure if your developer is registered, visit our website at [www.nhqb.org.uk](http://www.nhqb.org.uk) or contact us at [info@nhqb.org.uk](mailto:info@nhqb.org.uk)**

# What is snagging?

Snagging, is the process of spotting any minor issues in new-build homes and putting them right.



## Tip:

Keep a detailed log of any potential snags you notice, including the date you reported the snag and descriptions of it. This can help track progress so that issues are addressed within the warranty period.

Your home has been built outdoors, in all types of weather, by a large 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. Where snags are in breach of the warranty standards or specification, they are covered by the builder's warranty, and your developer is required to resolve them.



# What is the difference between a snag and a defect?

While both snags and defects refer to issues in a new home, there is a distinction between the two.

## Snags

Snags are minor issues or cosmetic imperfections that do not affect the functionality or safety of the home. Examples include paint inconsistencies, small scratches on surfaces, or minor scuffs on woodwork. Snags are typically easy to fix and are often resolved very quickly.



## Defects

Defects are more significant problems that can affect the functionality of the home. Defects might include issues with plumbing, electrical systems, or other faults. Defects usually require more extensive repairs and can sometimes take longer to resolve, due to the complexity of the issues. If you find any major issues, such as structural defects or anything that puts your health and safety under concern, you should contact the developer immediately.

# What is the builder's warranty?

**The builder's warranty period, also known as a new home warranty, usually lasts for a total of 10 years. The first two years are covered by the developer.**

This is a common standard for newly built homes during this period. The developer is responsible for fixing any snags and defects that breach the warranty standards and arise due to workmanship or the materials they used. Homeowners can report problems within this timeframe, and if the issues are found to be below standard, the developer is obligated to resolve them.

## What is covered in the builder's warranty?

The builder's warranty not only includes defects, but also minor, cosmetic issues like snags. It's important for both you and the developer to spot these and have them addressed so you can get on with enjoying your new home.

Most developers offer a process for identifying any snagging issues either at an inspection before you move in, or during follow-up visits/calls after handover.

### When your warranty ends

After the first two years following handover, the warranty moves to a structural defects period (usually years 3 to 10) which is provided by the warranty

**Timeframes for reporting snagging may differ by developer. It's important to confirm with your developer how long you have to report any snagging issues.**

**Tip:**

provider. This usually only includes major issues with the foundations, walls, roofs, and other load-bearing parts of the home.

The coverage for non-structural defects ends after the initial two years.







# Can I inspect the property before legal completion?

As one of the requirements set out in the New Homes Quality Code, developers must allow you or a qualified inspector the opportunity to visit the new home to complete a Pre-Completion Inspection. This inspection will check the standard of finish and operation of the new home.

The inspection will check for snags and elements such as plumbing, heating, brickwork and joinery, ensuring any issues are communicated to the developer for resolution before you move in. If the developer is unable to resolve any valid issues before you move in, they must give you an estimated timescale for when the repairs can take place.



## What if I spot snags?

If you identify any snags, please contact your developer to discuss. They will log the details and either arrange for a repair, or in the event it is a more complex issue, they may arrange for somebody to come and inspect the problem to confirm the appropriate next steps.

The Code requires snags/defects to be resolved within 30 days, wherever possible (excluding emergencies which should be resolved within hours).

**The developer should keep you regularly updated and confirm an anticipated date for the repair.**

# Common snagging issues

When you receive the keys to your new home, it will already have been examined and everyone will have worked hard to avoid any snags before the home is handed over. Unfortunately, some things just aren't spotted until you have spent some time in each room.

If something is wrong and an issue is found that breaches the warranty standards, the developer is obligated to fix these snags. This is part of their after-sales service and they should inform you when they will fix it.

## Paint Inconsistencies

Imperfections in the paintwork, such as cracked paint around sockets, drips or paint runs can be common in new homes.

If you notice any minor paint defects in your new home, you should notify your developer. They should be able to rectify the problem quickly as part of their after-sales service.

**Take photos of issues as soon as you notice them. This visual evidence can be crucial for ensuring the developer addresses these problems.**

**Tip:**

**Tip:**

**Keep your home well ventilated to help with the drying-out process and reduce the occurrence of shrinkage cracks.**

## Shrinkage

As the structure of the building is drying out, you may notice minor cracks in the interior walls. Shrinkage happens when materials, such as timbers and plaster, contract as they dry.

As a rule of thumb, if you experience shrinkage cracks wider than a £1 coin, contact your developer's customer service team, who can investigate the issue. Most developers will not classify cracks under the width of a £1 coin as a snag, as this is a natural result of the drying-out process.



## Tip:

The time to report scratches, cracks or superficial marks on surfaces after moving in varies by developer but is usually only a few days. Check your developer's policy and report any damage promptly to ensure it is addressed.

### Doors and/or cupboard doors not hanging straight

This can be caused by movement as the home settles. Contact your customer service team if you are concerned about significant movement or a faulty hinge.

### Waterlogged gardens

Any grass and/or plants will have been recently laid and will take time to settle.

However, if you find that after rainfall, the lawn regularly remains waterlogged for more than a day, then there may be a drainage issue and you should contact your developer to get it checked.

### Scratched or marked glass

There may be some scratches or more noticeable marks that affect the appearance of the glass surfaces in your home.

If the scratches are superficial, they may be buffed out using specialised glass polishing compounds. This process can require some skill, so it's best to consult with your developer to ensure the best results.

For deeper scratches, a replacement may be necessary depending on where the scratches are on the pane. Contact your developer to assess the damage and arrange for the affected glass panels to be replaced.

There is usually a tolerance level for marks on glass which means they must be visible in natural daylight and from a distance of two metres.

# Other possible snags and defects



**This list is not exhaustive, so if you encounter any other issues and you are unsure whether they constitute a snag, please contact your developer for clarification.**

Heating problems, or radiators that do not heat properly or have trapped air

Frequent drips or leaks from taps, showerheads and toilets

Uneven surfaces on floors or walls

Broken tiles or grouting issues

Faulty white goods, or issues with appliances provided and installed by the developer

Electrical outlets or switches that do not work

Draughts or cold air entering through closed windows or doors

Uneven or poorly laid turf or paving stones





# What doesn't constitute a snag



It's best to discuss any potential snags with your developer first. However, here are some common examples of what typically does not qualify as a snag.

**Consumable items** like light bulbs, batteries, and tap washers that need replacement by the homeowner.

**Weather damage** or issues caused by natural disasters after completion.

**Wear & tear** issues, such as scratches on walls from moving furniture or damage caused by children or pets after moving in.

**Small 'shrinkage' cracks** that appear as the house settles. Cracks are only considered a snag if they are extensive, indicative of a wider problem, or wider than the width of a £1 coin.

**Problems caused by inadequate ventilation** like mould and condensation which can develop if windows and vents are kept closed.

**Minor surface imperfections**, such as small blemishes or scratches only visible under specific lighting conditions or from certain angles, not affecting the overall appearance or functionality.

**Issues arising from DIY work**, or modifications made by the homeowner after legal completion.

# Emergencies that require immediate attention



Urgent problems, such as **faulty external door locks, uncontrollable water leaks, complete failure of the heating & hot water system or total loss of power** are emergencies rather than snags and the developer should resolve these as soon as possible.

Familiarise yourself with the emergency reporting procedures as soon as you move in. Keep contact numbers handy.

**Tip:**

**Developers may have a separate procedure for reporting emergencies out of normal office hours, and details of this should be provided when you move in.**

# What to do if snagging issues are not resolved

The New Homes Quality Code requires developers to resolve snags within 30 days, wherever possible. If there is a good reason for a delay, they must update you with the expected delivery and resolution timelines.

If they fail to resolve the issue or fail to provide adequate communication, you can make a complaint using the developer's formal complaint process. Details of this should have been provided when you moved in, or they are often on the developer's website.

On receipt of your complaint, the developer should send you:

- An acknowledgment within 5 days.
- A confirmation of steps towards a resolution and expected timescales within 10 working days.

**Document all interactions with the developer, including dates, times, and summaries of conversations, in case you need to escalate the complaint. Remember, you must give the developer the opportunity to resolve the complaint before escalating your concerns to the Ombudsman.**

**Tip:**



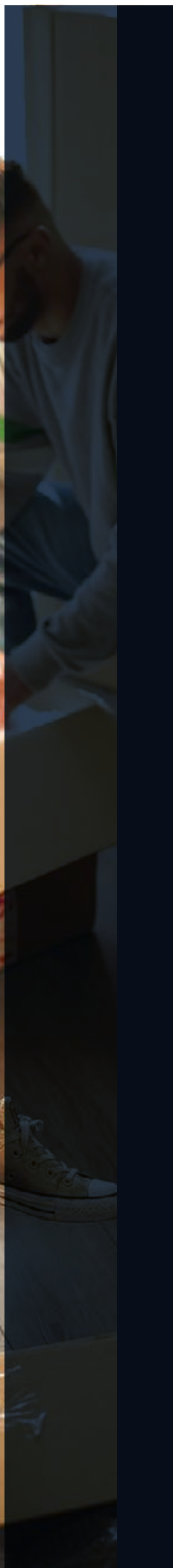
**NEW HOMES  
OMBUDSMAN SERVICE**

When the complaint is resolved (which should be within 56 days), they should send you a closure email/letter.

If the developer does not follow these steps or takes longer than 56 days to resolve your complaint, you can escalate your complaint to the New Homes Ombudsman Service. You can do this on their website: [www.nhos.org.uk](http://www.nhos.org.uk)









# What can you do to avoid issues?

- 1 Conduct a thorough inspection**

Consider arranging a Pre-Completion Inspection. This will identify any visible defects, damage, or unfinished work and provide a report so these items can be resolved before you move in.
- 2 Follow the advice from developers**

Follow the advice in the documentation provided by your developer on how to maintain and run in the new home. This helps to minimise issues.
- 3 Report issues as soon as you see them**

If you identify any issues, communicate them to the developer as soon as possible. Report these issues in writing and where possible include photographs as evidence.
- 4 Keep all documentation**

Keep all documents related to your new home purchase and any agreements with the developer. These documents will help you establish the expected quality and finish of your home. Keep records of all communications with the developer, including dates, photos, emails, and responses. This documentation may be important if you need to escalate an issue.
- 5 Service appliances regularly**

Regular maintenance of appliances, in accordance with their warranty requirements can help identify issues early on and prolong the lifespan of your appliances.
- 6 File a complaint if you remain dissatisfied with the outcome**

If you remain dissatisfied with the after-sales service and your issues are not resolved to your satisfaction, you can make a formal complaint under the developer's complaints procedure. The developer then has up to 56 days to resolve the complaint.

If the developer cannot resolve the complaint, customers may wish to contact their new home warranty provider. In the event that you remain dissatisfied, you can escalate your complaint to the New Homes Ombudsman Service ([www.nhos.org.uk](http://www.nhos.org.uk)) for an impartial review and decision.





[www.nhqb.org.uk](http://www.nhqb.org.uk)

If you have any questions about the work of the New Homes Quality Board then please contact us at [info@nhqb.org.uk](mailto:info@nhqb.org.uk) and we will be pleased to assist.

If you are concerned that the developer is not following the requirements of the **New Homes Quality Code** or is taking longer than 56 days to resolve your complaint, then you can escalate your concerns to the **New Homes Ombudsman Service** via [www.nhos.org.uk](http://www.nhos.org.uk)



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