

HOME BUYERS GUIDE TO CARING FOR YOUR NEW HOME

Like most new things, you want to take great care of them. Your new home is no exception. Whilst we have taken utmost care when building your new home, it is important that you understand a new home needs time to 'settle in' just as you will.

From experience, we know that there are some common issues that arise due to the nature of a new build home. We have put together some helpful tips which our clients have found useful. Of course, many of these are likely not going to be applicable to your new home, but just in case there are, have a read of the information that follows.

If you are thinking of making any alterations to your new home over the first few years, please seek advice from an appropriately qualified builder, engineer and architect. It is important to note that any alterations are likely not to be covered by and may affect your warranty so please make sure to speak with your warranty provider.

DRYING OUT

As your new home is 'brand new – just out of the wrapper', there is a certain amount of time that it will need to 'dry out'. Drying out basically means giving the materials a chance to settle in to place, return to their natural state and dry out after being exposed to the elements during the build.

Small cracks in the walls and gaps in the joinery are very common in new builds. This happens due to the materials shrinking and 'settling' in to place. It is very unlikely that these cracks are structurally significant and can easily be put right by routine maintenance.

Cracks can happen by shrinkage and shrinking is accelerated with heat. To keep cracks and gaps to a minimum, it is very important that you let your new home 'dry out'. It is most important to try your best to keep your new home at an even temperature – avoid the temptation to turn your home in to a sauna in the first few months.

Keeping your windows open for regular periods of time will allow proper ventilation and will let moisture escape more naturally.

Generally speaking, it can take up to a year for a new home to fully dry out.

CONDENSATION

This is the most common issue with new build homes as people rarely understand the cause.

Condensation is caused by steam or hot water vapour coming in to contact with cold surfaces such as walls, windows and doors. Through the daily routine of showers, baths, boiling kettles, cooking and just breathing, a family of 4 will can amount approximately 100pints of water vapour a week.

Before the days of double glazing, wall insulation, and air-tight windows and doors, this stale air would escape through windows, doors and walls however with today's innovative technology and energy efficient homes, there is no natural escape route for this air, which is where you have to give it a little helping hand.

If you do not allow this water vapour to escape, you may start to see little appearances of mould on interior surfaces – but don't panic – this is extremely common. Condensation will start to reduce as the building dries out and the walls start to heat and adjust to the new living situation.

Whilst the home is drying out, there are some things you can do to help your new home breathe happily;

- Open windows or window vents to allow ventilation and give trapped moisture a chance to escape
- Try to keep the temperature of your home reasonably constant, avoiding blasts of sauna heat
- Avoid drying clothes indoors and do not dry clothes over radiators
- Ensure tumble driers are properly ventilated
- Keep furniture away from walls, avoid pushing sofas and chairs against walls and radiators
- Do not disable extractor fans and use regularly when cooking
- Stop moist air spreading around your home by keeping doors closed when cooking or bathing

MAINTENANCE IS KEY

To look after your new home, it is good practice to do routine maintenance to keep your home in tip top order, we advise that you look after your new home by;

- Regularly washing your doors and windows to avoid build-up of grime and dirt, and giving your external paintwork or render a wash to keep it fresh
- When leaving your home for period of non-occupancy, we suggest that prepare your home for this. Things like keeping your heating system on a timer will help your home settle in, and help with the drying out process while you're not there.
- Regularly testing your systems including your fire alarms and carbon monoxide alarms.
- Cleaning your gutters once a year and removing leaves and debris.
- Try not to walk on your newly laid lawn until the turf is established. Once it is, remember to mow your lawn and water when needed.

PROBLEMS AND/OR DEFECTS

While we hope that buying your new home is trouble free, the table on the pages below provides some examples of the problems you may come across and who to refer to in order to get them put right

THE FIRST TWELVE WEEKS

We want to make sure you are more than happy in your property so therefore, any minor snagging issues such as paintwork issues and general homeowner and settling in issues and defects are covered for a period of 12 weeks from handover.

THE FIRST TWO YEARS

This is usually referred to as the builder warranty period or defects insurance period. Major snagging issues and defects are covered from a period of 24 months from your handover.

THREE TO TEN YEARS












This is usually referred to as the structural insurance period and usually continues to protect the home by insurance cover until 10 years after completion. This means your home warranty provider, Global Home Warranties will cover any issues covered by your policy and will usually include items such as foundations, walls and cladding, roofs, flues and chimneys, ceilings and load bearing parts of the floor and glazing in outside windows and doors.

SOME EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE DEFECTS WITH YOUR NEW HOME & HOW TO GET THEM RESOLVED

Description	Possible Cause	Refer to Developer	Refer to Structural Insurance	Refer to household insurance	General Maintenance Issue
ROOF					
Roof leaking	Storm damage			●	
	Defective roof covering	●			
Roof / ridge tiles loosing or missing	Accidental damage or storm damage			●	●
	Tiles not fitted correctly	●			
WALLS					
Moisture or wall staining	Condensation				●
	Water ingress	●			
	Leaking plumbing	●			●
Cracks in plasterwork	Normal shrinkage				
	Movement	●	●		
WINDOWS & DOORS					
Excessive draughts	No draught strips fitted	●			
	Door / window is warped	●		●	
	Door / window is not closing securely	●			●
	Accidental damage / storm damage			●	●

Ingress of rain underneath door / through windows	Weathering not properly fitted	●			
	Door / window is warped	●		●	
	Door / window not closing securely	●		●	
	Accidental / storm damage			●	●
HEATING					
Radiator not producing correct heat output	Airlock in radiator				●
	Radiator valve has seized				●
	Boiler not working correctly	●			
	Blocked pipes	●			●
	Thermostat set to an inadequate temperature				●
Boiler not working	Gas supply is off				●
	Thermostat / valves or programmer not working	●			
	Boiler not wired to the circuit or is faulty	●			

ELECTRIC					
No power to an outlet	Circuit breaker has tripped				●
	Lights / sockets not wired correctly to circuit	●			
Electrical fittings not working	A fuse has blown				●
	A circuit breaker has tripped				●
	Appliance has come loose from fixing				●
	Accidental damage				●
	Appliance not wired to the circuit	●			
PLUMBING					
Appliances	Washing machine / tumble driers not draining immediately 1+ month of usage				●
	Washing machine / tumble driers not draining immediately after initial usage	●			
	Showers / baths / sinks not draining immediately after initial usage	●			

	Showers / baths / sinks not draining after 1+ month of use					
	Sinks / baths / shower trays are leaking after usage					
Taps are dripping	Washer is worn					
	Tap is defective or damaged					
DRAINAGE						
Wastepipe is leaking	Punctured pipe due to accidental damage					
	Pipe has been damaged on installation					
	Joint is not established / holding up					
	Pipework not adequately secured					
No water supply / low pressure	Water main connection has been turned off					
	Low pressure in the mains					
Gutter or downpipe leaking	Downpipe / gutter blocked immediately after initial handover					

	Downpipe / gutter blocked after 1+ months of usage				●
	Downpipe / gutter is defective with visible damage from installation	●			
	Downpipe / gutter blocked or damage from storm or accidental damage			●	●
Wastepipes emits an odour	Wastepipe, gulley or drain is blocked				●
	Water trap has been removed				●
FINISHES					
External Render is cracking significantly	Render has been poorly applied	●	●		
	Incorrect render mix was used	●	●		
	Inappropriate product was used	●	●		
Brickwork coming loose	Brickwork has not been secured with correct products	●			
	Accidental damage caused by alternations to property				●

Internal render is cracking significantly, and large flaking is occurring	Render has been poorly applied	●	●		
	Incorrect render mix was used	●	●		
	Inappropriate product was used	●	●		
Paintwork	Damp penetration causing stains to paintwork	●			
	Normal shrinkage cracks causing hairline cracks in paintwork				●
	Severe movement in building causing cracks wider than a £1 in paintwork	●	●		
Woodwork	Paintwork to woodwork needs additional coat of paint				●
	Wood work at stairs is warping and moving away from wall enough to cause significant gaps and instability	●	●		
EXTERNAL WORKS					

Driveways / paths not draining	Surface has not been paid in the correct fall and water is pooling	●			
	Initial settling / ground movement	●			
	Alterations made to driveway by homeowner / changing the layout				●
Cracking in concrete and drives	Initial settling / ground movement	●			
	Alterations made to driveway by homeowner / changing the layout				●

If you are still unsure how to address your issue, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us and we will direct you to the correct course of action.