



UNDERSTANDING AFTERCARE

A guide to New Homes Aftercare.

There's more to taking care of your customer than housebuilders often imagine. But you don't have to do it on your own. After Build have 20 years expertise in this sector and our team of warranty trained specialists are on hand to help you every step of the way.



AFTER BUILD

fixed-price after care



UNDERSTANDING AFTERCARE

After Care has been one of the least covered topics in new housebuilding, until now. In December 2021. The New Homes Quality Board published their industry code of practice, The New Homes Quality Code, and it is your responsibility to make sure you comply.

That all sounds quite intimidating, yet it shouldn't be – and it doesn't need to be. After Build specialise in providing many of the elements required by the Quality Code and, as our client we will; make sure you are made aware of how the code affects your business, what you must do, and where we can help you to do it.

Background

Four years ago, the UK government announced that the new house purchaser needed greater powers of redress when something goes wrong. Furthermore, general standards and quality must improve. The industry needed a code of practice and an ombudsman, to stand up for the consumer when all else has failed. In 2020 the New Homes Quality Board was formed, with responsibility for introducing an industry code and appointing an ombudsman. By December 2021, both objectives were achieved and throughout 2022, the process of registration of every new housebuilder in the UK begins. The scheme is mandatory, and the Ombudsman has powers to intervene, impose remedial works, agree compensation and in the worst of circumstances de-register a builder. So, its worth taking the time and making the necessary arrangements to get this right, from the beginning.

Our approach

After Build provide a range of services to our clients, starting with site-based services just prior to legal completion and concluding with 2 years after care. It is our objective to ensure that all those businesses we represent in this manner, understand, follow, and satisfy the industry code. It is important for these two reasons: Your customers deserve it and it's a legislative requirement.

We have taken considerable time and effort to understand how the code should be interpreted and applied and organised our services accordingly. Our team are trained and familiar with the two standards by which you are obligated to treat your customer:

- The applicable 10-year warranty you opt to purchase
- The New Homes Quality Code

We will constantly guide, support, and advise our customers accordingly.

New clients

If you have or are about to become a new client, then you will have received several things from us:

1. UNDERSTANDING AFTER CARE (This document)
2. THE NEW HOMES QUALITY CODE
3. MANAGING YOUR CUSTOMERS
4. MANAGING YOUR CONTRACTORS
5. SNAGS OR DEFECTS OR NEITHER?
6. NEW CLIENT SET-UP
7. PORTALS
8. COMPLAINTS POLICY



Good aftercare isn't a secret, it relies on mostly common sense and fair play. In essence, that's what the Quality Code is saying. And most homeowners expect no more than exactly that, so our team are trained to meet these standards on your behalf.

Occasionally, an occupant may ask for more than is reasonable and we will explain why that's not possible – but nicely, referring to the relevant piece of warranty of code. But our ability to deliver consistently good aftercare also has a dependency on other things, not least your support and that of the original contractor. After Build have built a reliable environment to facilitate the convenient reporting of problems.

We make it easy for the homeowner to tell us when something is wrong – our job is to make sure that what they're reporting is a legitimate build issue (snag or defect) and then make appropriate arrangements with the relevant original contractor to put it right, and within a reasonable time frame (no more than 30 days).

Most of the time, this works perfectly well. But from time-to-time we'll face resistance from some contractors to fulfil their responsibilities (to you under their build agreement). When this happens, all that we ask is you enable us to instruct an alternative contractor and get the work done.

We will never do this without your prior agreement, but it is important that we get that agreement quickly, so that we (you) can stay within the timeframe expected. We will ensure that you are provided all the supporting information you might need to cross charge this to the original contractor's retention.

Environment

We continue to invest in technology, to help our team to help your customers. We make reporting problems quick and easy. We make receiving a job instruction easy for the contractor too.

And ultimately, we make providing regular reports easy for our client base. After Build can remove so much pressure from the housebuilder and make sure that your customer is receiving the aftercare service that they are entitled to receive, and all at a fixed price, regardless of call volumes and job count.

Workflow

This is, in outline, how the process works: A homeowner reports a problem via the Occupant Portal (at anytime of any day – to suit their busy schedule). Our system translates the reported item into a 'work record' and a flag alerts our team of Property Coordinators that a new job requires attention.

We will contact the homeowner to check that we have fully understood the issue. This part is important because we want to make certain that whoever we instruct to attend, knows what to expect so they can make good the problem. Equally it's important that we ensure the problem is a legitimate build defects as no contractor would welcome us sending them on a general maintenance or some other basis.

Once clarified our system will send the relevant contractor an email with a link to the job instruction. Clicking the link takes the contractor to the job and, all other jobs for which they are responsible. This enables them to plan work and use their resource efficiently. As to both parties. Again, the system will automatically



email the homeowner with the appointment details. When the job has been completed and the homeowner is satisfied, the system will close it down.

Throughout, as client you can see everything that happens via the Client Portal.

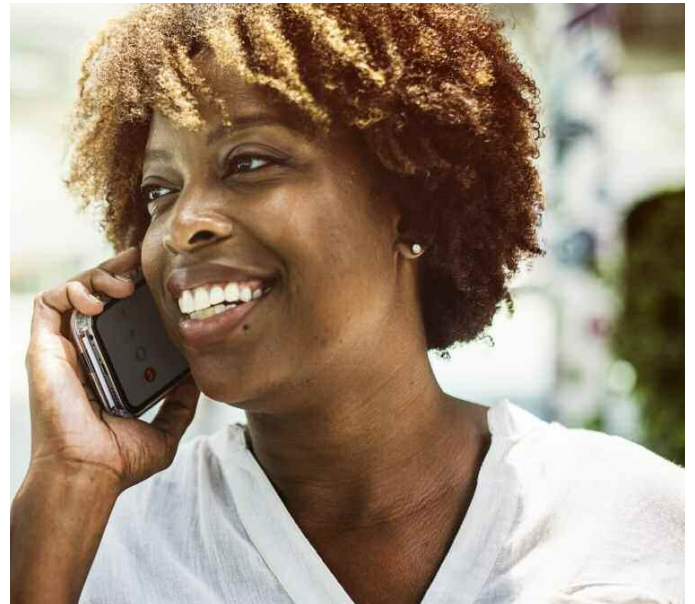
TECHNOLOGY VERSUS PEOPLE

We place a high value on technology, but we equally place a high value on our people. Technology is the enabler, but our team possess the knowledge and the expertise to handle homeowners.

Our training has to encompass several aspects:

1. Customer care skills - understanding why people complain, what their concerns are, why they need to receive clear and regular information and the importance of feeling valued and important.
2. What the warranty expects in terms of problem diagnosis and the process necessary to determine the legitimacy of the defects.
3. How the Quality Code sees the role of the developer (or After Build as the nominated agent) in providing an after sales resource, and the standards of performance.

Occasionally we are referred to as a call centre - we are not. Accepting the reported problem is an important part of what we do, clearly, but being able to understand and diagnose the problem is far more important. This means that in the vast majority of cases, our Property Coordinators will call the homeowner and ask relevant, intelligent questions to be certain that we fully understand the problem.



Knowing how to handle and work with contractors is also a big part of what our team do - every day. No contractor wants to be sent on a fool's errand - their time is limited and they need to understand what the problem is and how much time they can plan to spend, correcting it.

So, a detailed, intelligent job description is our start point, providing as much useful information as possible. We work hard to establish positive working relationships with contractors because we need their commitment and support in order to deliver our service.

Finally, all of this information provides the most detailed picture possible to our clients, helping them to understand how each development is performing, post sales.