

Customer Care, simplified

How to become compliant with the NHQC?



Use clixifix® to comply

In this guide we will give you an insight into the New Homes Quality Code (NHQC), how clixifix® can support you to comply with the Code and any tips and tricks we can offer.

As a business that provides defect and repair resolution software to house builders, principal contractors, subcontractors and housing associations, we are not only a valuable, but a trustworthy source when it comes to offering guidance on the New Homes Quality Board (NHQB) Code of Practice for housebuilders and developers.

Our software will help builders become and remain compliant with the NHQC. As the first accredited supply partner of the NHQB, we will be working closely with them to bring our experience within defect software and construction to developers who are registered with the not-for-profit

body. We are working closely with the NHQB's industry engagement team to ensure that clixifix® provides the tools needed for effective defect and complaints management in compliance with the new Code.

The platform will offer the functionality to facilitate digital inspections, robust defect management, resident communication, digital handovers and complaints procedures.



We will take a look at the NHQB, find out what the NHQC is, how clixifix® can support businesses and what is needed to become compliant.



Table of Contents

- 4. Overview of the NHQB
- 4. What is the NHQC?
- 5. Term
- 5. 4 sections to the code
 - Section 1
 - Section 2
 - Section 3
 - Section 4
- 14. 3 simple steps to a better relationship with your new homeowners
- 16. How to deliver an exemplary customer journey?
- 19. Dealing with a 'Customer Care Crisis'
- 22. How empowering your subcontractors will lead to excellent customer service
- 25. Appendix A, B and C
- 29. About us



We will also provide further tips on how to improve aftercare communications with residents and the overall customer journey.





NHQB

The NHQB is an independent, not-for-profit body which was established to develop a new framework to oversee reforms in the build quality of new homes and customer service provided by developers. Its objectives are to deliver a consistently high standard of new home quality and service, and to strengthen complaints handling and redress for purchasers of new build homes where these high standards are not achieved.

An interim board was established in May 2020 to oversee preliminary plans, with representatives from across the sector including; consumer bodies, developers, providers of new home warranties, the lending industry, Homes England and independent members to tackle these issues. In January 2021, the NHQB was formed and the board members were appointed.

Since then, significant progress has been made on proposals to put in place a New Homes Ombudsman Service and develop a new industry code of practice - the New Homes Quality Code.

What is the New Homes Quality Code?

Registered developers agree to follow the New Homes Quality Code (the “Code”) and to be subject to a New Homes Ombudsman Scheme (once established), including complying with the decisions of a New Homes Ombudsman in relation to dealings with a customer.

Failure to meet the required standards, or to comply with a New Homes Ombudsman, can result in a range of sanctions, including removal from the register of registered developers.

The Code establishes mandatory requirements which must be adopted and complied with by registered developers. The Code may be updated from time to time, to reflect emerging industry best practice as well as decisions of a New Homes Ombudsman. Each amended or updated Code will come into force in such manner and at such time as set out by resolution of the NHQB.

If you would like to learn more about the Code of Practice, please visit nhqb.org.uk

Term

The Code's remit covers the whole period from the marketing and sale of a property through to after sales and complaints management for issues during the first **2 years** of a new home purchase.

Its primary purpose is to provide an independent service to consumers, free for them to access and use, which can impartially assess and adjudicate on issues that have arisen that fall within the Ombudsman's scope.

All developers registered with the NHQB must comply with the Code and agree to adhere to the decisions of the New Homes Ombudsman service. The Code will apply to each new home from the marketing for sale of the new home and for a period of 2 calendar years after the date of legal completion of the new home. The Code has been designed for a consumer purchaser who is buying a newly built home for their own occupation, including their household or, for after sales only, a subsequent purchaser for that home.



Four sections to the code

Section 1

This section deals with the sales and marketing of a new home.

Section 2

This section deals with legal documents, information, inspection and completion.

- Complete new home
- Legal completion
- Incomplete works

Section 3

This section deals with after sales, complaints management and the New Homes

- Ombudsman.
- After sales service
- After sales issues and complaint management
- Snagging period and resolution of snagging issues
- Complaints process
- Referrals to the New Homes Ombudsman Service

Section 4

This section deals with solvency, legal and jurisdiction.

Support from clixifix®

clixifix® has a track record and proven expertise in the management of the complex process of construction aftercare with its many stakeholders since 2011 as a software service provider.

This includes providing a platform to manage the aftercare of over 238,000 properties, 1.3 million defects logged and 87,000 resident users.



As a result, clixifix® is in a unique position to offer constructive practical advice to improve the defect management process in an efficient cost-effective way for both seasoned developers and anyone new to the housing industry.

Use mobile software to streamline data collection

clixifix® mobile forms software enables businesses to simplify industry compliance by streamlining data collection between the mobile app and back-office.

Compliance within the building service and maintenance industry creates mountains of paperwork for contractors. Whether it's risk assessment data, safety certificates or signed job sheets, the burden on the contractor to demonstrate proof of work and procedural compliance is huge. clixifix® mobile forms software can easily automate this process and eliminate all unnecessary paperwork. With our unique mobile form builder and extensive pre-built forms library, managers can not only boast better industry compliance and data collection but also enhanced levels of efficiency.



Dealing with defects

Badly managed defects in new build properties cost many hundreds of thousands of pounds in both materials and time. This money is in effect lost, and in an era of extreme cost consciousness and value for money, it is absolutely key that this process is managed efficiently. Further to this, the handover and warranty period is critical to customer satisfaction and the reputation of your company.

clifix® ensures that during the quality inspections, handover and defect liability period, the contractor, registered providers and customers have a positive and predictive consistent experience.

clifix® can help your team remain compliant with Sections 1, 2, 3 & 4.

How will clifix® help with the transition to compliance?

As a best of breed aftercare CRM, clifix® has live integrations with some of the market leading sales and marketing CRM platforms.



Section 1

clifix® is also proud to facilitate integrations with other software products, to make working within construction even more seamless.

We are continuing to connect sales and aftercare teams with integrations to CRMs like YourKeys, Salesforce, D365, CSV gateways and other bespoke integrations so that there is no break in the journey for residents or clients investing in a new home or project.

The bespoke in-house development team at clifix® can handle bespoke development work, including distributing web-based data across the appropriate format.

Industry knowledge and support

A strong, well-resourced aftercare department is essential for today's housebuilder.

Understanding your warranty obligations and being capable of following the standards set out in the NHQC is crucial.

The clifix® team is 'warranty build standard trained' and can help your team via our customer success workshops to ensure that your team understands their obligations for the resident from the first day of legal completion, through to the end of the defect liability period.

Section 2

The Code

Complete New Homes

Legal completion can only take place on a Complete New Home. It is a breach of this Code for legal completion to take place on a new home that is not a Complete New Home.



A Complete New Home is one that:

- (i) has a new home warranty cover note issued in relation to it, and
- (ii) Either in relation to a house, may be considered complete if all rooms, spaces and facilities are in a finished condition for the purpose for which they are designed and intended and the property is safely accessible; with any further work to the home is to be solely decorative/corrective, or related to shared common areas, or related to transitioning from temporary to permanent utilities and services, and do not affect the owner's ability to live safely in the property and will not cause disruption or significant inconvenience to rectify.

Or, in relation to an apartment/flat may be considered complete if all rooms, spaces and facilities within the specific apartment/flat are in a finished condition for the purpose for which they are designed and intended and the unit is safely accessible;

with any further work being solely decorative/corrective, related to shared common areas and facilities, or related to transitioning from temporary to permanent utilities and services which do not affect the owners' ability to live safely in the apartment/flat and will not cause disruption or significant inconvenience to rectify.

The developer must not offer customer incentives (financial or otherwise) to move into, or complete the purchase of, a new home that is not a Complete New Home.



Home demos / digital forms

Users can create custom and pre-configured quality forms to capture and transmit data from field-to-office in real time. As well as digitising on-site forms, clixifix® also replaces pen and paper in the field when it comes to snagging.

clixifix® allows users to take photos and record snags in real-time and send directly to contractors / trades and/or the back office, improving the management and monitoring of tasks and stakeholder collaboration. clixifix® allows customers to have one central view of the status of all tasks within a project, instantly improving project management and efficiency of closing out tasks.

Digital sign-off

Digital signature capture technology streamlines approvals and eliminates the need to chase residents and clients when confirming works are completed to an acceptable standard.

This feature saves significant time and money allowing operatives to ensure that all work carried out has been delivered to an acceptable standard and that all relevant stakeholders have 'signed off' on the work. Instant authorisation frees up resources so that the next task can be assigned, completed and authorised in the most efficient way possible.

By centralising your systems in a cloud-based environment, you're minimising the risk of error whilst maintaining a clear audit trail should you need to revisit any particular issues. This also allows for much simpler management of your subcontractors whilst allowing your operatives more time to take care of your residents.

The 'sign off' process (end of defect liability period) is improved by providing a portal for residents/RPs to upload photographic evidence of a defect/repair. This will enable you, the homeowner, and your RP client to approve any repairs carried out and allow for better quality control when a homeowner reports a defect as an expert can view the photo and ensure correct terminology and categorisation is used.

Section 3

After Sales Service and Complaint Management

The developer must provide a customer of the new home with a comprehensive and accessible after sales service for a minimum of two years following the date of legal completion.



Understanding the service

To make sure a customer understands how to access the after sales service, the developer must provide a customer with suitable information about the service which must include:

- A clear written statement of their after-sales service procedures.
- An explanation of their responsibility for remedying any issues or problems (including snags and/or defects) arising in the property during the first 2 years, and that the customer should identify any issues or problems (including snags and/or defects) and report them to the developer promptly in order for the developer to meet their responsibilities.
- an explanation of how issues or problems and service calls will be managed, including timescales; how they should be reported and the names and contact information of the developers' staff to whom such issues should be reported and notified to.

- Allowing the customer the option to categorise any issue or problem (including snags and/or defects) as a formal complaint if they are unhappy with the developers' proposed approach.

clixifix® allows residents to engage digitally, it encourages a self-service ethos and allows the homeowner to interact at their own leisure.

Beyond the sale, developers are required to provide support and address snagging issues. Whilst the hard work of selling has been done, the reputation and brand image of a developer can be diminished by poor after sales experience.

Aside from issue management, forward looking developers understand the power and importance of customer advocacy both at an individual customer level and at a site/development level. Hence, many of the larger developers set themselves broader goals for creating communities, not just homes.

clixifix® works closely with developers to provide support and a platform to ensure communication between all parties is always constant and available.



Technicians App

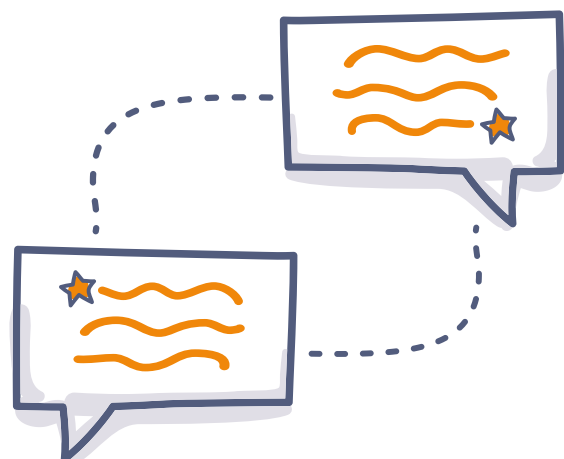
With contactless services and working from the field becoming the new norm, clixifix® has seen a surge in demand for its services since the start

of the pandemic. We are at a critical time in the sector, with skyrocketing fuel prices on their way, it is more important than ever to support our customers in order to reduce the impact of no-access appointments.

The App improves the process of residents communicating with an operative and delivering useful feedback. These days, residents have high expectations and want to be regularly informed about each step of their customer experience, so similar to the delivery updates provided by Amazon or notifications from Uber, we wanted to deliver the same experience to our customers.

The clixifix® app will revolutionise the last mile customer engagement, geo location mapping and messaging technology, real-time tracking of the service technician, accurate ETAs, and two-way communication.

The clixifix® Technicians App provides a secure and intuitive platform for operatives in the field to capture defect resolution data via text field with photos or video supporting files.



Benefits of the App

Residents will be able to live track, communicate and feedback to the service providers such as a plumber or electrician. Using an app will allow residents to respond on the move and never miss an update with prompt notifications and SMS.

Not only does this app benefit residents, it improves efficiency and communication from the operative, for example reducing the number of abortive visits. The App will allow them to regularly update the resident with their location, time of arrival and provide feedback opportunities.

Results from our BETA include a 20% reduction in the 'no access' rate, a 30% reduction in inbound ETA query calls, 15-point increase in Net Promoter Score (NPS) and 94% positive feedback.



Section 4

Complete new home and legal completion

Legal Completion

At the point of legal completion, the developer must have:

a) Completed the construction of the new home to the standards agreed.

b) Carried out their final quality assurance inspection of the new home and provide a customer with a schedule of any incomplete or defective items, and a statement of timescales for completing/remediating such items along with the need for access at suitable times to enable remediation.

c) Provided an opportunity for the customer to inspect the new home and/or

appoint a suitably qualified inspector to complete a pre-completion inspection.

d) Agreed or provided an appointment for a home demonstration.

During the Pre-handover Home Demonstration, there should be basic training to your customers on home maintenance. Customers (especially 1st home buyers) expect that the only thing they will have to do to their new home is decorate and arrange furniture. Explaining common issues such as shrinkage, shifting and drying out etc. will eliminate unnecessary issues being reported as defects.

Residents should be educated on all components of their new home, for example they need to understand how the central heating boiler works. All elements of the move are recorded digitally, this provides a record of fact that all procedures have been followed.



Emergencies

An explanation of the process for reporting and handling emergency issues including clarity on what qualifies as an emergency issue and how the developer will deal with them. This must include issues relating to health and safety that could materially impact health and wellbeing or cause injury or loss of life.

clixifix® provides simple and clear guidance in the event of an emergency. The main priority is the safety of the resident and everyone involved. The resident portal provides a platform where emergencies can be recorded and actioned appropriately.



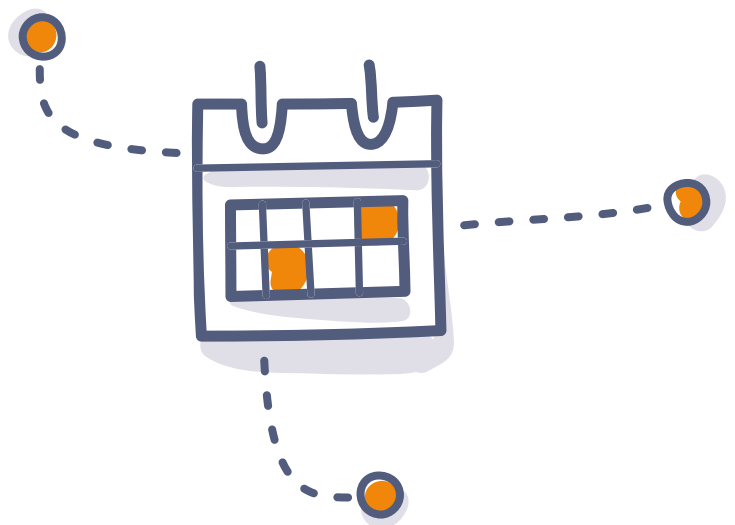
Snagging period and resolution of snagging issues

It is widely acknowledged that there are some finishing or other issues which need addressing on moving into a new home and these are commonly known as “snags” and “snagging”. Developers and customers

are expected to work collaboratively around identification, access and resolution of snagging following legal completion.

The developer must ensure that snags are covered by the after sales service and that, once agreed, they are resolved promptly. Any snags, issues or problems raised throughout the after-sales service process must be acknowledged promptly. It is expected that in most situations a developer should be able to resolve an after-sales issue or problem within 30 calendar days, other than where there is a substantial reason for delay.

Where there is such a delay, the reasons for that should be communicated clearly to the customer, with no less than weekly updates provided until the matter is resolved. If a customer is dissatisfied with the after sales service a complaint may be made under the formal complaints process of that developer.



After sales issues and complaints management

The developer must have a system and procedures for receiving, handling and resolving issues or problems raised by the customer for its after-sales service, as well as complaints in line with the requirements, including time periods, set out in the Code.

clifix® can provide a platform that houses complaints, issues, and all communication between each party to eliminate miscommunication and confusion.

Part One: selling a new home

Part Two: legal documents, information, inspection and completion

Part Three: after sales a complaint may be made in accordance with the developer's complaints process

It is a requirement that the developer's complaints procedures must include the following mandated minimum steps from the date of the first complaint:

- a) Written acknowledgment
- b) Path to resolution letter
- c) Complaint assessment and response letter
- d) 8-week (56 day) letter
- e) Closure letter

How will clifix® help you remain compliant?

Our complaints feature will include pre-configured complaint workflows in compliance with the NHQB:

- A centralised area to log complaints
- Complaints linking to defects
- Editable letters per stage
- Exportable PDF letters
- Notes & calls linking to the complaint
- Complaints stored against the plot
- Complaints dashboard and management reporting



3 simple steps to a better relationship with your new homeowners

For any house builder, it's fundamental to the success of your business to keep your new residents happy. In very simplistic terms, your customers are the only reason that your construction business exists.

In today's world of digital connectivity, an unhappy resident can do more damage to your brand than ever before. But at the same time, a happy resident can help your company grow faster, by spreading the word and referring many more customers to you. Word of mouth marketing is an extremely powerful influence on prospective home buyers.

Too often, customer complaints are something no one in your business wants to deal with. If customers are not happy, internally, we blame the construction team, the technical team for changing the specification or the subcontractor's poor workmanship. If customers are happy, we credit the amazing sales team. The point being, every department should take full responsibility for unhappy customers, share the pain and the success stories as a team.

Customer satisfaction needs to be at the top of everyone's priority list, no matter which department you're in. It's up to senior management to build a culture based around your resident's happiness in their new home. Contrary to popular belief, the construction industry is not all about

the bricks and mortar; it's all about the customer service.

It's a fact, and the sooner you come to terms with this, the better off your team and your construction business will be.

Here are 3 steps any house builder can introduce to their business today to create a better relationship with their new residents:



1. Answer their questions

- When they call, answer the phone.
- When they email, respond.
- When they walk in, greet them and see what they're looking for.
- When calls and emails go unanswered, when questions fall through the cracks, people get irritated very quickly.
- When a customer completes the biggest single purchase of their lifetime, they expect you to be there if they need your help and advice.



2. Ask them what they want

It is the buyer's journey. We shouldn't care about the sellers...

When an escalation occurs with unresolved defects and snagging items, discuss a reasonable action plan and timescale with the purchaser. Avoid saying 'we will get it done when we can', that's not acceptable.

Better customer care starts with better communication. Even if it's bad news, maybe a specific required part has a long lead-time or you have limited availability of resources to respond, let your residents know at the earliest possible opportunity. Maintaining radio silence with a dissatisfied purchaser should never be your default position.

Include your past purchasers in future decisions. You can do this with exit surveys about changes to your house types, specification and the sales experience. Talk to your customers and ask them for suggestions. Many will welcome the chance to be involved.

3. Ask them what they thought

Don't let handover day be the last interaction your residents have with your business.

Follow up with them to make sure they got what they expected from the pre-purchase experience. See if there is anything else that they need from you. Find out if they have any questions which you can answer proactively. This gives you a chance to establish your brand as a caring and customer focused house builder, and you can solve any potential problems before they arise.

These are 3 simple things any company can implement to achieve better customer satisfaction.



How to deliver an exemplary customer journey?

Here are our top tips on what a customer journey should look like within construction:

- Cement your company milestones. Choose the perfect time within your customer journey to contact your purchasers and reach out to them. This is going to make them feel like they're well looked after and not forgotten about.
- Raise deadlines against your milestones and make sure you have a perfectly mapped-out journey for your customer success team to follow.
- Document your customer engagement. Every communication from your customers, from photos to emails, telephone calls to screen shots, should be saved. Why? Because your knowledge of historic events is going to show the customer that you're always listening, and always on the ball.
- Nominate a participant. Let the customer know who they can turn to at every point in their journey. This personable approach will delight the customer.
- Make notes of potential delays. Show the customer that you and your team know your stuff. This is going to reassure them that you've heavily invested time into their case when in reality, it's just about straightforward communication.
- Make your team experts and not know-it-alls. You're the best advocates for your product and business so by taking a consultative approach with your customers they're going to feel educated rather than just informed.
- Clearly define and agree what is and what isn't a defect (see Appendix A for an example of an agreed list)



Adopt these guidelines in the construction industry and all of a sudden, you'll find you've moved on from being just an average housebuilder to one that's exceptional, reactive, proactive and among the best.



All with just a little sprinkle of customer service.

How do I manage homeowner expectations with regards to reporting defects and response times?

It's a tough question, with a few moving parts that we'll investigate later in this article but first it's important to note that your homeowners don't want to complain or get angry and that the reason they do get upset is purely because their expectations haven't been met. Managing their expectations allows you to set the parameters around what is acceptable and what isn't.

For any house builder, it's fundamental to the success of your business to keep your new homeowners happy. In very simplistic terms, your customers are the only reason that your construction business exists. In today's world of digital connectivity, an unhappy purchaser can do more damage to your brand than ever before.

So how do we effectively manage expectations?

Start the conversation early

Often, this will be the first new build home that your homeowners will have purchased. This means that they have little experience navigating the home buying process and may not know what is acceptable and what isn't. Upon reservation, we recommend starting the discussion around defects and repairs. This is an incredibly important step that

will save your customer care team a lot of time in the future. Explain to your new homeowners that within the warranty period, your company is responsible for fixing or repairing any reported defects. Take time to ensure you've clearly defined what constitutes a defect and most importantly, what doesn't. For example, a blown light bulb should not be reported as a defect, whilst a leaking roof absolutely should.

We also recommend providing your new homeowners with a defects and repairs classification schedule with agreed upon response times. In an ideal world, the aim would be to deliver a zero defect development, however the reality is defects will occur. From your homeowner's perspective, any defect is an emergency however as principal contractors, you know that's not the case. Take the time to explain to your homeowners the logistics of repairs and what a reasonable response time should be. To aid you in this process, we've created this helpful template that can be found here.



Communication is key

During the home demonstration, remind your homeowners of the defect and repair process. Ensure that your homeowners understand how they should contact you in the event of a defect. Whether this is over the phone via a customer care hotline, email, or your online customer portal, it's critical that your homeowners understand the most effective way to have their issue resolved.

Effective communication is two-way. Allowing your homeowners to ask questions is critical to setting their expectations and should happen in a face-to-face environment so as to facilitate discussion. A discussion (as opposed to emails etc.) allows each participant to respond immediately with questions or clarification. This will go a long way to reducing the number of reported defects by removing any misinterpretation or misunderstanding that is often created by simply handing your homeowners a 'Defect Guide' or a large file of documentation and expecting them to read and digest it all.



Own your own bad news

It's inevitable that at some point, something will not go to plan when resolving a reported defect. Worse still, an agreed upon timeframe for a repair will have to be pushed back for some reason. Don't shy away from communicating with your

homeowner, notify them as soon as possible. By being proactive with your own bad news you will have far greater control of the situation and be able to shape it more effectively. Breaking your own bad news and accepting responsibility creates an impression of transparency, openness and trustworthiness - all important values.

In order to successfully emerge from a customer care complaint, owning your bad news and accepting responsibility shows your customers that you genuinely care about what's happened to them. By taking action to resolve the situation or prevent it from recurring you build a sense of trust with your homeowners that engenders loyalty and understanding allowing you to manage expectations effectively. Staying quiet and letting social media users break the story does not help to convey these sentiments and actively hurts your reputation in the marketplace.

Providing an exceptional customer experience is everyone's responsibility and requires your whole organisation working towards one goal. By starting the conversation about defects, repairs, and response times earlier in the process (reservation) your sales team takes some of the pressure off the customer care team by ensuring that homeowners' expectations match your own.

How to deal with a customer care crisis

Here, we share some simple tips to apply today to help manage a customer care crisis should an issue arise. Unfortunately, as the volume of new home buyers increases, then so too does the relative percentage of potentially disgruntled customers. It's highly unlikely you will sell thousands of homes every year and achieve 100% customer satisfaction.

The National New Homes Survey, carried out by NHBC asks a question specifically regarding issues (defects/snags). Of those 32,137 new homeowners surveyed, 92% of those had reported problems (snags/defects) to their house builder since moving in. It is the accepted norm that there will be issues, it's the poor communication with their homeowners on these reported issues that is a major headache for a lot of companies. We've provided a guide which takes a look at how to handle a customer care crisis and provide some suggestions on how to tackle complaints in a way that reflects well on your house building business.

Even mildly unhappy homeowners can very quickly become extremely vocal and take to the web to create campaigns to highlight poor service. However, ignoring social media altogether is not a good idea.

A simple search will return numerous discussions and threads regarding poor customer service from house

builders. These opinions are published, and the public are entitled to air their views whether you join in the debate or not, so it's far better to be aware of them and be in a position to respond. Having an action plan in place is critical, agree who is going to respond to the negative criticism, have a plan in place to deal with escalated issues, resolve the issue and ensure that you protect your company's reputation in doing so.

At clixifix®, we have advised many of our house-building clients on the value of providing the online resources to empower their new homeowners to find the answers they need in real time. If the homeowner can't find the information, they can create a discussion for their house builder via their portal and await a response.

This approach is much more effective than providing the traditional customer care email via your website, because many of these can fall through the cracks.



Of those **32,137** new homeowners surveyed, **92%** of those had reported problems (snags/defects) to their house builder since moving in.

Dealing with a customer care crisis



1. Anticipate

This is something we discuss with many of our clients. As a customer care team, be proactive and prepare in advance for a crisis. A difficult client situation could arise at any time, it's a good exercise to gather the team for a brainstorming session on what should be done if a customer care situation starts to spiral out of control involving social media and press.

There are three immediate benefits to this session:

- You may realise that some of the issues are preventable by simply modifying existing approaches to your customer care communication.
- You can begin to think about possible responses, about best-case/worst-case scenarios, etc. Better now than when under the pressure of an actual crisis.
- Develop holding statements. These are extremely important. Agree the message and tone in advance, these holding statements allow your company some breathing space to formulate a specific response to the aggrieved homeowner.

2. Identify your customer care crisis communications team

Who should be involved? A small team of senior management should be identified as your company's crisis communications team. If your in-house PR executive does not have sufficient crisis communications expertise, you may need to retain an agency or independent consultant with that specialty.



3. Establish notification and monitoring systems

Intelligence gathering is an essential component of both crisis prevention and crisis response. Knowing what's being said about you on social media, in traditional media, by your employees, customers, and other stakeholders often allows you to catch a negative trend that, if unchecked, turns into a crisis. There are a variety of paid monitoring services that provide not only monitoring, but also the ability to report results in a number of formats. (Brandwatch, Trackur, Viralheat)



4. Remain engaged

Many smaller house builders have set up social media profiles and then do not monitor them on a regular basis. This approach can cause some real problems, how will you know what's

happening or what people are saying? Your company's social channels can be found very easily on search engines. This means that people visit, comment and if not monitored then get no response. Make sure you continue to monitor platforms or close them down and re-direct people to more current ones.



5. Take prickly conversations offline

Embarking on a war of words online with an unhappy customer is not a good idea. We recently observed a disgruntled homeowner hijack a thread on LinkedIn to air their disgust at their house builder and the poor service they were experiencing. As the owner of the post, the house builder should have responded to the client online and taken the conversation offline and removed the thread. Make a friendly apology and a promise to try to resolve the issue, give them a contact number and a person's name for them to call and encourage them to ring you to discuss it in person.



6. Be proactive

In the example above, if you've resolved an issue adequately why not proactively follow it up and let followers/connections know that the problem has now been fixed. It's not always possible or appropriate in all cases but for example if there's been a common theme in people being unhappy about the quality of a fixture or fitting and you have changed supplier or fixed the problem why not say so.



7. Post-crisis analysis

Once the dust has settled, ask your team the question "What did we learn from this?" A formal analysis of what was done right, what was done wrong, what could be done better next time and how to improve is another must-do activity for any customer care team.

How empowering your subcontractors will lead to excellent customer service

Nomination of incorrect trades or subcontractors by team members can cause confusion, delays, and ultimately frustration for homeowners and clients. In the article we are taking a look at subcontractor management and effectively managing the process of defect and repair handling. A common issue we've experienced as both homeowners and principal contractors is incorrect nomination of subcontractors.

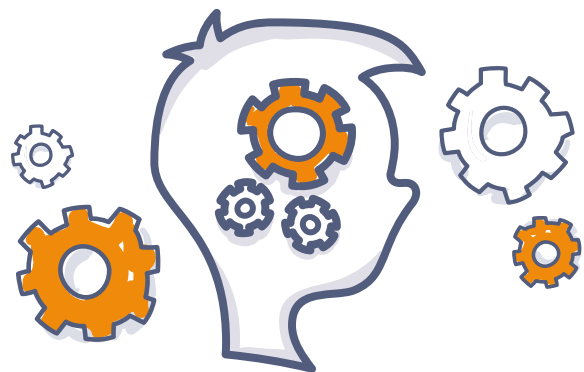
Without a clear and regimented process in place, it can be easy to nominate the wrong person. Imagine the frustration from a homeowner when a plumber arrives at a property to respond to a repair but is then told that it has nothing to do with him as he didn't fit that particular appliance and that it was actually an electrician that was responsible.

In the past, a list of pre-registered subcontractors would be collated by a QS, printed out, laminated and held somewhere for the aftercare team to refer to. But what happens when that list is lost or if the keeper of the register is sick? Mistakes happen. Mistakes are costly on any development so reducing their frequency is a sure-fire way to reduce costs. When clixifix® developed our subcontractor nomination functionality, it was with this critical issue in mind.

So what can you do to minimise mistakes and streamline your processes?

At the core of this issue is the fact that very few aftercare teams have a centralised system. Or if it is a centralised system, it's a giant lever-arch file or collation of offline spreadsheets that can only be updated by one team member at any one time. This is problematic for many reasons; principally if a team member is away on leave or sick, who has access to the file? What happens when a subcontractor emails a team member with an issue but that team member is away?

The rise of technology has enabled levels of collaboration previously unseen in construction. Cloud based systems are now available that facilitate more efficient management aftercare processes. In the next few paragraphs, we'll outline some of the functions you should look for when considering a centralised system for your team.



Database of appropriate contractors

The first thing you should be looking for is that the system facilitates an active database of eligible contractors. This is essentially the list of approved subcontractors/trades that was previously created by your QS. This functionality significantly reduces the chances of an incorrect nomination as subcontractors can only be selected if they're pre-approved. This is usually populated via a drop down menu.



Emails and notes all in one place

It can be immensely frustrating for an aftercare team member to try and find out what has actually happened when an appointment is missed by a subcontractor, especially when there are multiple members on a team. When communication is taking place either via phone or email, it's difficult to maintain accurate records of what has been said or done as not everyone has access to each other's inbox or phone.

By using a system that automatically adds emails to relevant plots or keeps

a record of phone conversations, any team member can check in and see the history of communication allowing them to take control and address the issue at hand.

Digital sign-off

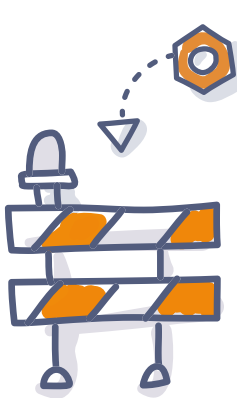
Digital signature capture technology streamlines approvals and eliminates the need to chase residents and clients when confirming works are completed to an acceptable standard.

This feature saves significant time and money allowing operatives to ensure that all work carried out has been delivered to an acceptable standard and that all relevant stakeholders have signed off on the work. Instant authorisation frees up resources so that the next task can be assigned, completed and authorised in the most efficient way possible.



By centralising your systems in a cloud-based environment, you're minimising the risk of error whilst maintaining a clear audit trail should you need to revisit any particular issues. This also allows for much simpler management of your subcontractors whilst also allowing your operatives more time to spend taking care of your homeowners.

For example:



Priority 1

- Emergency response required within four hours, repaired within 24/48 hours where the health and/or security of the resident is compromised
- Severe leaks (that cannot be contained). Water sources should always be isolated
- Power loss (not due to service providers)
- No heating (between October and April)
- No hot water (any time of the year)
- Insecure property – faulty locks or windows where the health and safety of the resident is at risk
- Toilet not flushing (where the property only has one toilet)
- Roof leaks where leak is penetrating electrics

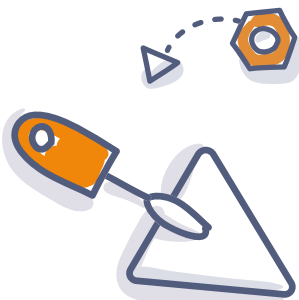
Priority 2

- Response within 3 – 7 days
- Dripping taps
- Minor water leak through windows or roof
- Toilet not flushing if there is another toilet in the property
- Adjustment and easing of fire doors



Priority 3

- Responded to within 28 days
- Minor defects
- Faulty extractor fan

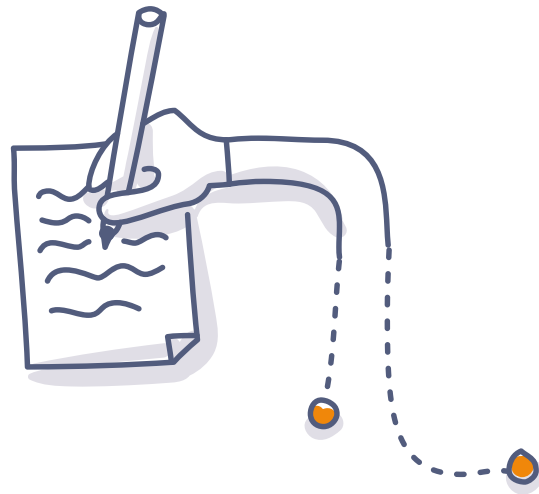


Appendix A

An agreed list of defects and instructions to call centre staff on how to deal with calls.

1. Items which generally do not fall in the category as a defect repair are:

- Loss of water, electricity or gas supply – check with the supplier that there has been no interruption to the service.
- Gas smell – report to Transco.
- Blocked toilet or drains. At time of handover, a CCTV survey of the drains is completed; therefore the blockage usually is due to ‘foreign objects’ e.g., disposable nappies getting into the system. Unless there are exceptional circumstances this will be classed as a repair that will be referred to the associations’ own workforce or contractor.
- Third party damage, for example wear and tear or vandalism.
- Alarm/fire/smoke alarms not working – only report this if the manual has been checked to reset the alarm and fault still remains.
- Faulty light fittings – always change the bulb first.
- Settlement works – up to 2mm (see NHBC Guidelines Chapter 1.2 “A consistent approach to finishes”).



2. Reporting defects:

It is important to take as much detail as possible from the resident. Detailed information then assists the contractor to establish the correct priority for the item and enable the correct operative to be sent to the job. For example, ‘the window won’t close properly’.

This needs to include why it won’t close, is it a damaged frame or handle, location of window etc., and is it a health and safety issue? Getting the resident/homeowner to provide photographic evidence of the defect will eliminate any ambiguity and allow for accurate defect recording for builders and subcontractors. Be clear on priorities in order to advise the resident when a contractor is likely to attend.

Appendix B

Providing your residents with all the resources they need will ensure a smoother handover process and increase customer satisfaction. Here at clixifix® we've compiled a list of the types of document you may want to share with them at this stage.



- Customer journey forms
- Client user guide
- New build information – O&M, suppliers of windows/doors/taps etc.
- Appliance guides/guarantees
- New home demonstration form
- Handover form
- Metre readings
- Warranty info
- Guide to defects – what is a defect vs what is client maintenance
- Local information – doctors, dentists, schools, bin collection days etc.

Appendix C

Project Lifecycle

1. Land & Planning
2. Technical (Design & Engineering)
3. Commercial (QS & Purchasing)
4. Construction
5. Sales & Marketing
6. Customer Care

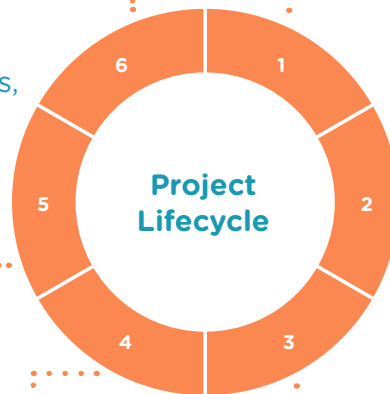


6. Customer Care

- Customer Journey Forms
- Client User Guide
- New Build Information – O&M, Suppliers of windows/doors/taps etc
- Appliance Guides / Guarantees
- New Home Demonstration Form
- Handover Form
- Meter Readings
- Warranty info
- Guide to Defects – What is a Defect vs What is client Maintenance
- Local Information – Doctors, Dentists, Schools, Bin Collection Days etc.

5. Sales and Marketing

- High Quality CGI & Photography Images
- Marketing Literature
- Service Charge Information
- Home User Guide
- Customer Charter
- Consumer Code



1. Land & Planning

- Planning Permissions
- Surveys

2. Technical

- Designs
- Site Appraisals
- Engineer Prepared Layouts
- Technical Report
- Technical Approvals
- TPOs etc.
- Legal Plans (Site & Plot)
- Plot & Postal Address
- Utility Info

3. Commercial

- Designs
- Site Appraisals
- Engineer Prepared Layouts
- Technical Report
- Technical Approvals
- TPOs etc.
- Legal Plans (Site & Plot)
- Plot & Postal Address
- Utility Info

4. Commercial

- List of Materials
- List of Suppliers
- List of Sub-Contractors



Timeline

12 Months prior to Handover

- Planning Permissions Land & Planning
- Surveys Land & Planning
- Designs Technical (Design & Engineering)
- Site Appraisals Technical (Design & Engineering)
- Engineer prepared layouts (drainage / roads / levels / foundations)
- Technical Report (to be used for pricing)
- Technical (Design & Engineering)
- TPOs (Design & Engineering)
- Legal Plans (Site and Plot) Technical (Design & Engineering)
- List of Materials Commercial (Quantity Surveying & Purchasing)
- List of Suppliers Commercial (Quantity Surveying & Purchasing)
- List of Sub Contractors Commercial (Quantity Surveying & Purchasing)
- Service Charge Information Sales & Marketing

6 Months prior to Handover

- Plot and Postal Addresses Technical (Design & Engineering)
- Utility Information Technical (Design & Engineering)
- High Quality CGI and Photography Images (to be used for advertising) - Sales & Marketing
- Marketing Literature (Brochure, specification etc) Sales & Marketing

1 Month prior to Handover

- Warranty Information Covernote) Construction
- Guarantees Construction
- Certificates (Gas, electric etc.) Construction
- EPC Construction
- Home User Guide Sales & Marketing
- Customer Charter Sales & Marketing
- Consumer Code Sales & Marketing

About us

By Customer Care Construction Professionals, for Customer Care experts.

We've been in your shoes. Stuck doing too many manual and repetitive tasks. So, we built a cloud-based platform to assist with enhanced build quality, manage robust defect processes and streamline the customer engagement channels.

After many years working in the house building and construction industries, nothing frustrated us more than the customer care systems we used. We tried every tool out in the market, and when they all came up short, we built our own.

But, our vision extends beyond a defect management platform. We are building a platform for construction business to connect, collaborate and improve defect and build quality together.

A simple easy to use interface powered by community feedback.

Our Mission;

Our mission is to simplify customer care software in the construction sector.

Our expert construction, software and design team deliver modern technologies to the construction sector in a fuss-free, simple and easy-to-use way.

Our Values;

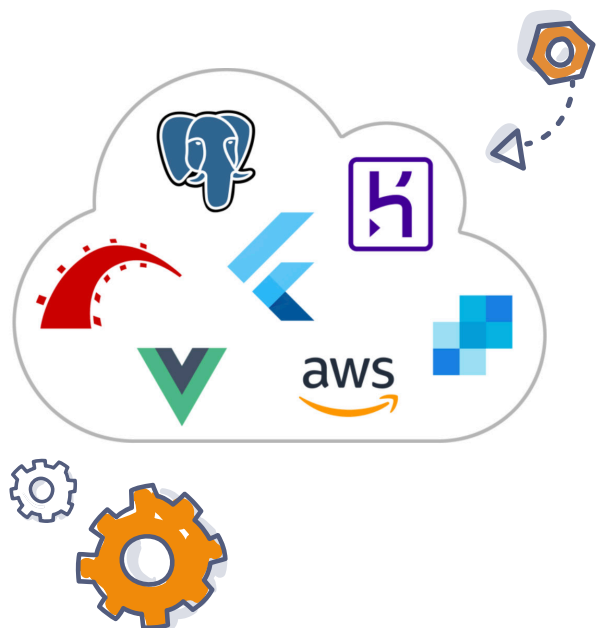
We value each other, our customers, and our mission. We are building a culture here at clixifix® that's proud to put people first.

SaaS on PaaS

The clixifix® platform uses cutting edge technology with world class security which offers our users reliable, scalable cloud computing services.

Our agile approach to software development enables the in-house clixifix® development team to spend their time building and deploying features and applications that immediately start producing value for the clixifix® community.

At clixifix we encourage our developers to learn and innovate in a way which benefits not just our users, but the company as a whole.





Arrange a demo at
clixifix.com

