

Welcome to your new home at Meadow View



Through our **passion** for housing, more **people** have a **safe** place to call **home**

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Section One

Welcome to your new home

Through our **passion** for housing, more **people** have a **safe** place to call **home**

Welcome to your new home!

We want you to get the very best from your home and this guide will give you all the essential information you will need about your property. We recommend that you read the manual and keep it in a safe place for future use. This document contains lots of useful information that will guide you to ensure you get the best out of your home.

Defect Repairs

Please do not approach the developer's site team to log any issues directly. We will be unable to assist with any issues unless they have been logged in the correct manner via Your Housing Group.

Your home is under warranty with the builders for 12 months from the date of the build. The developer will not attend to any items of damage unless it has been recorded at handover.

Please be advised that Your Housing Group or the Developer are not responsible for items such as normal shrinkage or normal condensation due to the property 'drying out', general wear and tear or damage arising from failure to maintain the property. Please be aware if damage (including accidental) is caused by you or your visitors, this will be your responsibility.

Gas/Electric/Water Account Information

In order to ensure you have gas and electricity in time for moving into your new home, your supply has been set up with British Gas. It is your responsibility to set up your utility accounts with the supplier as you are responsible for paying any gas and electricity from your handover day. We recommend you call the supplier the day you receive the keys to avoid losing service.

The suppliers should be able to recognise your address, however if not they can locate your meter by using the MPAN number for electricity and the MPRN number for gas which are both listed on the handover sheet in the property.

Please note you will need to register your supply with your local water company.

Site Safety during construction

Construction work may still be underway on your development when you move into your new home and a certain amount of dust and noise may be inevitable. MCI Developments will endeavour to keep any disturbance to a minimum whilst they complete your development. Here are some key pointers to remember for your own safety as well as your family or visitors to your home, especially young children:

- Please **DO NOT** enter the construction or work areas at any time or allow children in your care to do so.
- Children are naturally curious and will want to explore. Please alert your children to the very real dangers on site and, if they're playing outside your home, be sure of their whereabouts.
- Construction traffic may be moving about during the day. Please take care when walking or driving. Before passing any site vehicles, ensure that the driver has seen you.
- Construction vehicles are not easy to manoeuvre and cannot stop quickly. Young children are especially difficult for the drivers to see easily.
- During construction, it may be necessary to alter the site traffic management system. Please take notice of, and abide by, any signs showing safe routes for pedestrians and vehicles.
- Do not attempt to enter the live construction site at any time.
- If you have pets, please be always aware of their whereabouts; they may become trapped in the construction areas or cause an accident.
- Please always observe and follow safety signs and procedures.
- Footpaths and designated walkways must be always kept clear of obstructions. Please do not park in these areas.
- Please do not remove or alter any signs, barriers or safety equipment on site at any time.
- All persons entering the site and construction areas must comply with all the regulations under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974.

Whilst the site construction is underway the highways and footpaths will not have their **final surfacing** completed. As such please take extra care when walking and driving across the site for raised iron works and high kerbs. Please be aware of trip hazards and keep vehicle speeds to a minimum. We cannot be held liable for damage to vehicles as a result of travelling across the scheme.

If you experience any settling-in issues or repairs over the course of the 12 month defect period, please avoid approaching members of the construction team directly for assistance. To ensure that any problem is dealt with in the most efficient manner and recorded correctly, please follow the instructions provided below.

Reporting a defect & End of defects

Please note that all defects must be reported directly to Your Housing Group not MCI Developments. **If defects are reported directly to the developer, they will not be actioned.**

You can report defects by either;

- **Phoning us on 0345 345 0272 to speak to a customer service advisor**
- **By email repair@yourhousinggroup.co.uk and please use “New Build Defect” in the title of your email**

If the defect is an emergency, it is important that you call immediately. Please do not email if the matter is urgent.

We recommend any routine and not urgent items are reported via email as the queue times for our customer contact centre can get long.

Please provide a full description of the defect you are reporting including images if you are reporting via email. Please include information on the location of the repair to help assist the developer in understanding who might need to fix this.

Your new home is under warranty by the builder for a period of 12 months from the date the property was handed over to YHG. If you report a defect that we consider the responsibility of the builder, then we will instruct them to carry out the repair.

Where there are white goods provided in your property these are covered by the manufacture's warranties. Should a problem occur please contact their customer services department to report. MCI will not attend to appliance related repairs. **You must register your appliances once you have moved in.**

It is impossible to predict the type of defects which may occur in your property, each property is different. Only genuine defects will be actioned during the defects period. It is your responsibility to maintain and care for the property.

Example of Defects and the Resolution timescales:

	Description	Resolution Time	Comments
A	Emergency Attendance	24 hours	Immediate health and safety risk, no heating, no hot water, uncontrollable leak, or serious water penetration. Loss of utility services, fully blocked drain
B	Urgent	3-7 working days	Minor electrical faults, minor plumbing/heating defects, roof leak, controllable leaks
C	Routine	10-28 working days	Minor repairs following a leak, internal doors not closing, loose fittings

Accidental or deliberate damage will not be accepted- Any cosmetic damage in the property should be identified immediately after occupation or ownership whichever falls first. If there are items you have identified as damaged these must be reported at handover. This will include items like scratches to worktops and glazing, cracks to sanitaryware, damage to flooring or kitchen cupboards. **If you fail to report these immediately then the items will not be accepted as defects thereafter.**

Shrinkage and nail pops (unless concerning) will be picked up at the end of defect inspection, you do not need to report this during the defect period.

End of Defects

Towards the end of your 12 month defect liability period YHG will contact you to arrange a property inspection. You will be offered a date for an inspection which will be approximately 2-3 weeks before the end of defects date. The inspection will take place during working hours, Monday-Friday 9am until 4pm. It is mandatory that access is given to undertake this inspection.

The inspection will be carried out by an independent Clerk of Works and a representative from the developer, they will complete a record of the defects during the inspection and ask you to sign this at the end, it is important that you **MUST** report any items you have noticed and ensure these are logged. The list will be used as an agreed record of defects and no further items can be accepted after the date of the inspection.

During the 12-month period we strongly recommend you do not decorate or make any amendments to the property until the 12-month inspection as any changes may invalidate the warranty.

Once the 12 month defect period has ended and if you have purchased your property you will be solely responsible for the maintenance and repairs going forwards.

How to Videos

Your Housing Group have a series of videos to help customers with various topics covered in this Home User Guide.

We recommend that you take the time to watch the videos using the details below.

If you have a defect please refer to these videos which can often guide you to resolve the problem, they include topics on shrinkage, room thermostat, boiler, garden, ventilation and much more!

You can watch the videos on our dedicated YouTube Channel:



OR

By visiting the Your Housing Website and following the below steps:

Home > I'm a YHG customer > I'm a YHG home owner > Maintenance of your new home

FAQ's

QUESTIONS	ANSWERS
Q: How do I report a problem with my Home?	To report a repair, please contact Your Housing Group on 0345 345 0272 or alternatively email repair@yourhousinggroup.co.uk and please use "New Build" in the title of your email
Q: Can I make alterations to my property?	For minor decorative works such as putting up pictures, consent is not necessary. However, you must be careful to avoid damage or putting yourself in danger by damaging the electrical or heating wiring located in the walls. You are advised to take professional advice and refer to any detailed guidance contained in this Home User Guide.
	Please be advised that if you wish to make any changes to your home, please contact Your Housing Group as you may require written permission in accordance with your Lease or Tenancy Agreement.
Q: Who is responsible for repairing my property?	The property has a 12-month defect period within which genuine repairs will be picked up by the developer. After which Your Housing Group will rectify repairs relevant within the tenancy.
	Shared ownership properties (only) have a 12-month Defect Liability Period, after which repairs, and maintenance are the homeowner's responsibility.
Q: How do I reduce condensation in my property?	New buildings take time to dry out once occupied- this is a natural process, as building materials would have absorbed moisture during the building process.

	To help with the drying out process here are few suggestions to reduce condensation: • Cover pans when cooking and do not leave kettles boiling • Put washing outside to dry where possible • Keep furniture a small distance from walls and skirting boards • Keep the bathroom door closed when you take a shower or bath to stop moisture spreading to other rooms – and always use the extractor
Q: What do I do if I have other queries?	Your Housing Group has a handy website where you can find lots of help and advice. If you need to contact us regarding rent accounts, payments, complaints, anti-social behaviour, or any other query please follow the guidance on the website or call the main office number 0345 345 0272 or use the home Hub app. <u>PLEASE NOTE – if you are reporting a repair during the first 12 months DO NOT use the Home Hub app. Please follow the guidance above.</u>
Q: What paint is used in the property?	Please refer to the Specification section of this guide
Q: What do I do if my appliances stop working?	Remember to register the warranty for the appliances in the property (where applicable). If you encounter problems with any appliance please contact the manufacturer direct. The developer cannot rectify repairs with the appliances.

Specification

Front Door	IG upvc door
Central Heating Boiler	Worcester Greenstar
Kitchen	Symphony Kitchen, choices from: Cabinets <i>Urban Fern Green</i> <i>Urban Pebble</i> <i>Woodbury Gloss Cashmere</i> <i>Woodbury Gloss Platinum</i> <i>Woodbury Gloss White</i> Worktops <i>Farmhouse oak</i> <i>Alaska</i>
Paint – emulsion	Dulux Timeless White <i>*Please note contractors will use trade paint and so some variation may be noticed</i> <i>Trade paint – Crown Covermatt Avant</i>
Paint – gloss (woodwork)	Crown Brilliant White
Flooring	Vinyl Polyflor Forest FX, choices from: <i>Oiled Oak</i> <i>Newport Oak</i> <i>Blanched Oak</i> <i>Parish Oak Parquet</i> <i>Rural Deckwood</i>
Tiles	Porcelanosa <i>Ona Blanco</i> <i>Coral Caliza</i> <i>Image White</i> <i>Cubica Blanco</i> <i>Butan Bone</i> <i>Madagascar Blanco</i>

Register as a new customer

Remember when you move into your new home, you must register with the various service providers such as gas and electricity companies.

You will also need to register with a telecom service provider to access your phone line. To find out which service providers are in your area you can visit broadbandproviders.co.uk

Call the utility providers below to register as the customer for your home. You will need to give the meter readings from when you moved in.

Electricity	Main Number	Emergencies	Website
British Gas	0800 048 0505	0800 111 999	www.britishgas.co.uk
Gas	Main Number	Emergencies	Website
British Gas	0800 048 0505	0800 111 999	www.britishgas.co.uk
Water	Main Number	Emergencies	Website
Severn Trent	02477 71658	0800 783 4444	www.stwater.co.uk
Telephone	Main Number		Website
BT	0800 800 150		www.bt.com
Council Tax	Main Number		Website
Newcastle-under-Lyme District Council	01782 717717		www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk

MPAN & MPRN Numbers

When setting up your new accounts the postal address may not be recognised by the energy supplier. This is common due to the property being newly registered. If you struggle to register your energy provide your MPAN (Electric) and MPRN (Gas) numbers to your energy provider so they can identify your property. These numbers can be found on your handover sheet provided in your property.

Gas Turn on & Test

If your property is rented, you must organise for your gas to be turned back on. Please contact Your Housing Group on 0345 345 0272 for your turn on and test. You may be required to set up your utility accounts before you can have your gas reinstated. Please be advised this is not the developers responsibility.

Section Two

Emergency information & how to operate

Through our **passion** for housing, more **people** have a **safe** place to call **home**

Emergency information & how to operate

It is important to familiarise yourself with the location of various items of equipment in your home.

SERVICE ISOLATIONS	LOCATION
Electricity	The consumer unit (fuse box) is in the hallway store cupboard under the stairs
Water	Stopcocks for hot and cold water are under the kitchen sink
Gas	The isolator is in the meter box
METERS	LOCATION
Electricity	The meter box is located on the external wall at either the front or side of the property
Water	The water meter is in the footpath outside of your property
Gas	The meter box is located on the external wall at either the front or side of your property
EQUIPMENT	LOCATION
Programmable time switch	The programmer and thermostat for your central heating system are on the wall in your Hallway
Heat and smoke detectors	Located in the kitchen, Lounge, Landing, Loft and Hallway

Heating System

Boiler Model – All properties on this development have been fitted with a Worcester Greenstar combination boiler. Your boiler comes with a standard manufacturing warranty of 7 years.

Radiators – Each of the properties on the development have radiators fitted with thermostatic radiator valves (TRV's) and lock shield valves (LSV's) to enable individual temperature control of the radiators within the dwelling. See image for an example of a TRV. The higher the number on the dial the more output the radiator will give.



Please note that the radiator/radiators in the same room as the room thermostat will not be fitted with TRV's. Instead, the temperature of this room is controlled by the thermostat itself. This is not a defect.

Thermostatic Controls – The heating system in the property is controlled by a room thermostat that allows overall temperature control of the central heating within the property. Please refer to the manual section for the user guide. The thermostat is located in the hallway of the property.

Maintenance – To ensure the operational efficiency of the heating system and to ensure that the boiler warranty is not breached, it is important to ensure that the heating system is serviced by a suitably qualified heating engineer on an annual basis. If you do not get the boiler serviced, the warranty period will be void.

When cleaning the outer case of the boiler, the painted panels should be wiped with a damp cloth and then dried completely. Do not use abrasive cleaning agents.

For additional advice on the operational settings of the boiler, fault diagnosis and warranty details, please refer to the boilers User Manual contained in this pack.

To ensure the radiators are working efficiently, it may be necessary to remove air from the system from time to time by 'bleeding' each radiator. If you notice that a particular radiator

isn't getting as hot as the others, or has cold spots, then you should first check that the TRV is set correctly. If the problem isn't associated with the TRV, then you can 'bleed' the system by following these instructions:

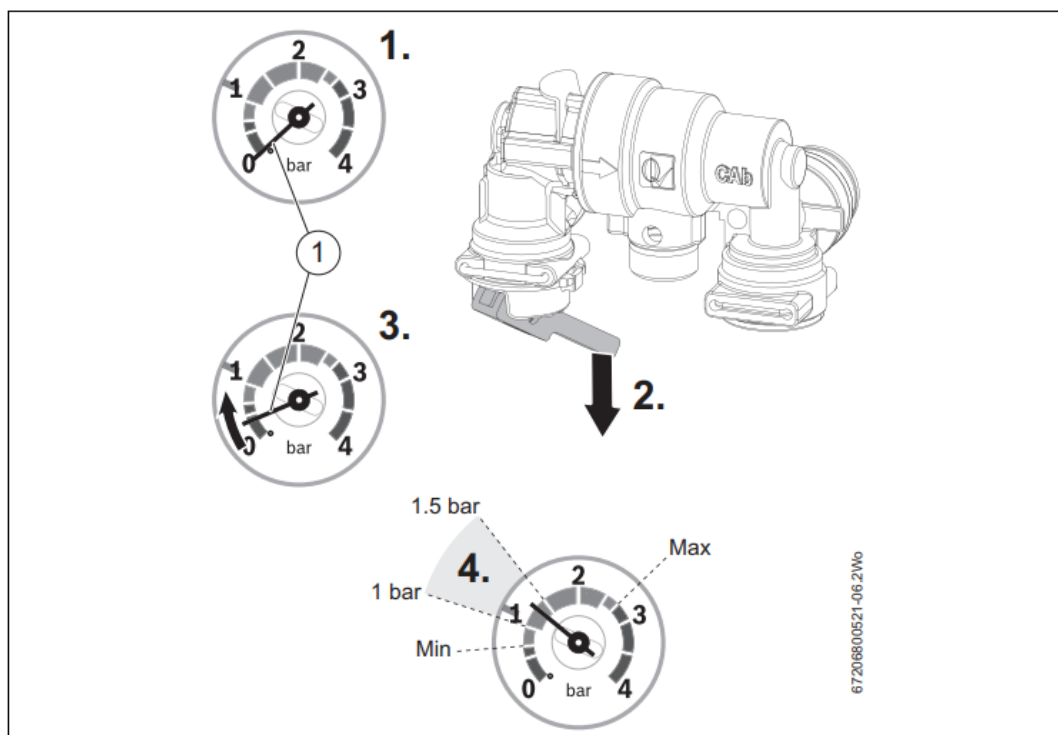
- Ensure that the central heating is switched off before 'bleeding' or this can introduce more air into the system.



- Ensure both valves (TRV & LSV) at the bottom of the radiator are open.
- Using a radiator bleed key, insert it onto the brass bleed screw at the top of the radiator (see image).
- Have some kitchen towel or a cloth ready to catch any drips and slowly turn the key anti-clockwise, about half a turn.
- You should hear hissing, which is air escaping from the system.
- As soon as water starts to squirt through the bleed screw, re-tighten it and make sure it is not leaking before moving onto the next radiator.
- Repeat this on all radiators.
- Once all radiators have been bled, you may need to top up/refill the system with water. (See below)

Re-pressuring the boiler

1. If the needle on the appliance pressure gauge reads less than 1 bar (or it is in the red zone), you need to re-charge the system.
2. Pull the blue lever down to start the filling process. This is located on the underside of the boiler.
3. Monitor the pressure gauge on the appliance facia until the arrow sits between 1 and 1.5 and then stop filling.



There is several useful videos located on the Worcester website to be viewed if further help is required. Please follow the link below.

Fault Diagnosis – If a fault occurs on the boiler, an error code may be shown on the display – for fault code identification please refer to the boiler User Manual contained in your pack.

If a problem persists or assistance is required with the system and controls, please visit the below website:

<https://www.worcester-bosch.co.uk/support/troubleshooting/videos/gas-boilers>

If a gas or water leak is suspected, the boiler can be isolated at the inlet valves as indicated at the back of the boiler User Manual contained in your pack.

Hazards – If you smell gas, turn off the gas supply at the meter (generally located outside at the front of your property) and call your gas supplier immediately.

Ensure that the flue terminal outside the house does not become damaged or obstructed – particularly by foliage – as this will affect the operation of the boiler and may cause a fire risk.

Do not interfere with any sealed components on the boiler.

If the boiler is positioned within a compartment, such as a cupboard, ensure that no purpose made ventilation openings are obstructed. Do not store items in the boiler cupboard.

Take note of any warning labels provided on the equipment.

Do not store flammable materials in proximity to the boiler.

Electric Supply

Your electric meter is located outside on the front/side of your home. This means that the electricity supplier does not have to come into your home to read the meter.



The **fuse board / electricity consumer unit** can be found in your store cupboard under the stairs or WC. In the interests of your safety, the unit has miniature circuit breakers (MCB's) which act like fuses but will not need re-wiring should they fail.

If there is a fault in your homes wiring or a fault with an appliance you've plugged in, the MCB will switch off the electricity supply (this can also happen if a light bulb 'blows'). By looking at the consumer unit, you will be able to see which MCB has switched off.



Please leave the system for 1 minute before re-setting.

Further protection from electrocution is given by a residual current device (RCD). This automatically switches off the power if any electrical device or appliance plugged into your home is faulty, if you accidentally contact live electrical equipment or if a bulb ‘blows’. This is known as a ‘trip’. The circuit breakers are labelled to assist in identifying the correct circuit.

Should your electric system ‘trip’, you can locate the faulty appliance by unplugging all appliances on the affected circuit, reset the consumer unit and then plug all your appliances back in – one by one - and checking that the system hasn’t ‘tripped’ after each appliance is plugged back in. Once the faulty appliance has been identified, you will need to stop using it and have it serviced by a suitably qualified engineer or have it replaced.

If you are unable to identify a faulty appliance and are still having problems after re-setting the consumer unit, please report this to Your Housing Group or a suitable electrical engineer if the property is purchased.

Cold Water Supply

Your water meter is located in the footpath and stopcock is located under the kitchen sink. This means that the water supplier will not need to enter your home to read the meter. Please identify these so you know where they are and make sure you can turn it off in case of an emergency i.e., a leak.

The water meter will be identifiable by a small circular black plastic cover labelled WATER or BB. **Please ensure you have identified the meter that belongs to your property and not a neighbouring plot.** The meter or cover should have a plot or address number written or you can cross check the meter number with the information on your handover form.



Isolating valves have been installed on both hot and cold-water pipes to taps and appliances. Isolating valves can be operated to shut off the water supply to a faulty appliance without needing to turn off the water at the stopcock/entire property.

If there are any problems associated with leaking water within your home, turn off the water supply at the stopcock / isolating valve and contact Your Housing Group immediately or a suitable plumber if the property is purchased.



If your property has been fitted with an **outside tap** it is very important to isolate this when not in use for long periods of time and especially over winter. The isolating valve is located under the kitchen sink. When it begins to go colder make sure this is isolated and drain the remaining water out of the pipe to prevent freezing. If there is a burst because of a frozen outside tap that has not been properly isolated, then this will not be considered as a defect.

If you have a water leak or burst pipe in your home, please shut off your water supply at the stopcock and contact Your Housing Group or a suitable plumber if the property is purchased.

Gas Supply

Your gas meter and gas supply stop lever can be found outside on the front/side of your home. This means that the gas supplier does not have to come into your home to read the meter.

Please make sure access to the gas meter is always maintained and make yourself familiar with this in case of an emergency.

If you smell or suspect a gas leak, you must:

- **Turn the gas supply off at the mains immediately.**
- **Open all doors and windows for maximum ventilation.**
- **Do not use any switches or sockets.**
- **Call the emergency telephone number below.**



GAS SUPPLY COMPANY EMERGENCY SERVICE: TRANSCO 0800 111 99

Please ensure any gas appliances in the property are suitably serviced.

Smoke, Carbon Monoxide & Heat Detectors

Your home has been fitted with multiple smoke detectors. All alarms are connected to the mains electricity supply and have a battery back-up. This means once 1 alarm sounds they will all go off.



Do not remove the back-up battery from the smoke detectors.

If the battery needs to be changed, the detector will intermittently make a beeping sound.

Detector Testing – A test button is located on the outer cover of the detector, once pressed and held for approximately 3-5 seconds, the alarm will sound for a short duration and will also sound the second detector should your home be installed with one. User manuals are contained in this pack for your information.

We recommend that you carry out this test once a week to ensure your smoke alarm / alarms are working correctly.

Once the test is finished, the alarms will 'beep' twice to indicate that they have been reset.

In order to test the smoke detector located in the loft space, please use the box provided on the upstairs landing. You can press this to test the detector without needing to access the detector in the loft. The detector in the loft is a requirement to ensure safety with the solar panel invertors.



A heat detector will be fitted in the kitchen area. These are fitted in place of a smoke detector because they sense a rapid rise in temperature or a specific high temperature making it ideal for kitchens where smoke from cooking or dust would set off the standard smoke alarms found elsewhere in the house. It is recommended regular testing is also carried out in the same way by simply pressing the button on the face of the detector.

Your property is also fitted with a Carbon Monoxide detector usually located in the kitchen or close to the boiler. This detector will sound if it detects the escape of carbon monoxide. It is recommended regular testing is also carried out in the same way by simply pressing the button on the face of the detector.

It is also advised that you periodically carry out a visual inspection of the alarms to ensure that dust hasn't built up on the outside as this can cause false alarms.

Detectors have been installed in order to alert you of a potential fire or escape of gases. For your safety, do not switch off or remove the battery from (apart from replacing) the detector at any time. Do not remove any detectors.

Ventilation

Ventilating a new build property is very important. New build properties will need time to dry out and without adequate ventilation this will lead to mould and condensation.

Ventilation fans are provided to the kitchen, WC, bathroom and often bedrooms to comply with the new building regulations. Isolated by use of the fan isolator located above the door frame. Do not be tempted to isolate the fan unless this is faulty. The fans must run to enable the property to remove moisture.



There is a switch for the boost function next to the light switch but only in a room which has a window. If the room has no windows, then the fan will boost when the light is turned on.

The fans do have a timer and a humidistat.

The fan will continuously run at low speed and boost when humidity is sensed, or the fan is boosted by the light switch.

Extractor fans need to be regularly checked and cleaned by vacuuming the grills and if applicable, washing the filters with soapy water. To function properly, all extractor fans need to be free of obstacles, dust and dirt.

Please note the chimney hood fitted in the property is not designed to ventilate the property, they are designed to remove grease out of the air not moisture. **The kitchen extractor fan must be used to extract moisture when cooking.**

Most windows and patio doors in the property will also have trickle vents, as shown below. We recommend that trickle vents are always left in the open position for added ventilation. Closing these vents will often lead to condensation build up on the glass and around the window frames.



Doors

Your property is fitted with a UPVC front door compliant with PAS 24. When exiting your property please ensure you are lifting the front door handle all the way up to engage the locking mechanism and ensure it is sitting properly in the frame. When closing the front door after entering or leaving ensure the handle is always lifted so that the door sits in its frame properly. **The door should sit flush with the seal at all times.** Failure to do so overtime can cause the door to move and require adjustment more frequently.

The front door has been fitted with a solid spindle to the door handles; this reduces the possibility of becoming inadvertently locked out. It does however mean that should you choose to leave your front door unlocked it can be opened from the outside. Please note that YHG do not hold spare or master keys for properties, in the event of becoming locked out you will have to make arrangements with a locksmith.

When there is a large temperature difference or direct sunlight, the exposed surface of the door (both front and patio) can swell/expand on the heated side, causing the door to bow or swell. When the temperature has reduced and is no longer at an extreme difference, the bowed door will return to its normal form. This may temporarily prevent you from locking the door or prevent the door from sitting in its frame properly.

If this happens, we recommend wiping the surface with a cold damp cloth to cool the surface which should enable you to lock this.

Please be mindful that if the weather is sunny and the patio doors are in direct sunlight to keep them closed to reduce the swelling.

Windows

Your home has double glazed windows as a minimum, some plots will be fitted with triple glazing for acoustic and building regulation purposes.

Keys will be provided to allow you to lock the windows. Please note this is only the case on the ground floor windows.

Most windows to the upper floors in the property will have a green push button located on the handle. These are escape windows and should not be locked.

Upper floor windows will also be provided with a restrictor to prevent falls. It is important you do not remove the restrictor however you can temporarily disable.



Shower & Bath

The shower fitted to the property is a thermostatic bar, operated from the boiler. The controls for the shower are located at the end of the bar fitting.

Rotate the left hand side to operate ON and OFF. Rotate the right hand side for temperature. Once a certain temperature is reached you will be required to push the button to override.



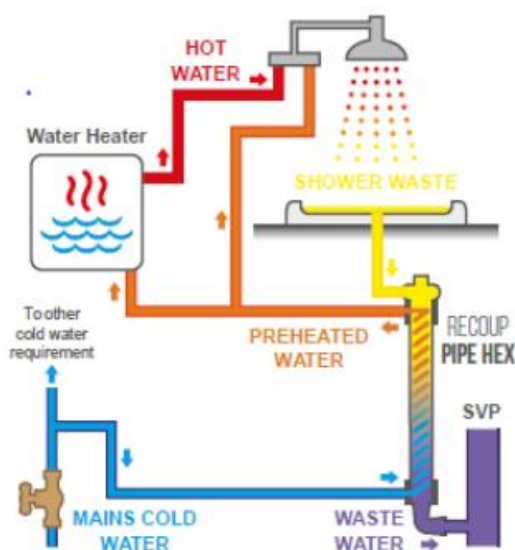
Do not direct the shower head towards the screen when in use.

The bath is fitted with a restrictor/blending valve, limited to **48 degrees** in line with building regulations. This prevents you from adjusting the bath water temperature above 48 degrees. This cannot be changed by the developer because the restrictor forms part of building regulations to prevent scalds/burns.

The bath/shower screen fitted is a **splash back water deflector only**. It acts as a protective barrier between the shower and the bathroom. Note: the bath screens **are not** watertight and there will be an element of water which escapes when water hits or is sprayed directly at the screen. We recommend the use of bath mats or towels adjacent to the bath to ensure water does not damage the floor. Please note if water does escape from the bath/shower causing the vinyl to lift or bubble this would not be accepted as a defect unless caused by a leak.

Waste Water Heat Recovery

Your property is fitted with a waste water heat recovery unit (WWHR). This system is a energy-efficient technology that captures heat from used shower/bath water to preheat incoming cold mains water, reducing boiler energy demand, lowering bills, and cutting carbon emission. This system is concealed in the property and cannot be adjusted by the homeowner.



Lighting

Internal Lighting

Your property has been fitted with low energy lighting. Overtime you may be required to change the bulbs in the property if these 'blow'. This will often trip your electrics, please refer to the guidance above if this happens.

If you are unsure about the type of bulb to replace these can be found in most DIY stores, take a bulb with you and ask for assistance to find a suitable replacement.

If you choose to install light fittings into the property, please be sure to use a suitably qualified electrician and check the weight of the light. Be cautious when drilling into the ceiling areas.

External Lighting

The lights at the front and rear of the property operate from a switch adjacent to the door. If the switch is in the ON position, then the light will operate on a sensor. The sensors are most often set to 'dusk to dawn' to capture the times when it is dark. The light sensor may require adjustment if this is not coming on at the desired time, these can be done from the settings on the light itself.

Data Installation

Telephone

Your property has been prepared for connection to the BT network with the master connection at the front of the property. You may require an engineer to connect your property to the network.

The BT Optical Network Terminal 'ONT' box is located in the under stairs cupboard.

The ONT box converts the optical fibre signal into an Ethernet signal your router/modem can use, acting as the crucial link between your home and the fibre network.

If any of the lights on the ONT box are red, this suggests there is a problem with the main connection. You would be required to contact BT.



Telephone sockets are provided in the lounge and master bedroom via an extension point.

You must remember to inform your telephone/broadband provider of your occupation so they can determine if a site visit will be required to complete any further set up. You should receive a modem from your supplier which will require set up to enable any WIFI to work in the property.

Television Aerial

The TV aerial for your property will be located in the loft space. There are sockets and aerial points located in the lounge and master bedroom ready for use. A TV aerial will be required for insertion into the socket, shown below.



Modern TV's will incorporate digital receivers however if the TV being used does not then you would need to have or purchase an individual digital box.

Should you choose to install Virgin or Sky then you would be required to arrange any installation requirements with them directly. Please ensure you have checked your lease or tenancy agreement if permission is required

Guarding

Your property has been fitted with window guards to the upper floor windows. These are installed to comply with building regulations to prevent a fall from height whilst at the same time allowing large enough windows to be classed as fire escape and/or for overheating. **These cannot be removed by the developer or Your Housing Group.** For the safety of the occupants please do not remove these guards from the windows.



Section Three

Aftercare, looking after your home

Through our **passion** for housing, more **people** have a **safe** place to call **home**

Aftercare, looking after your home

Shrinkage

Please do not re-decorate your home until after the 12-month builder liability period and when an inspection of your home has taken place. We do not recommend installing wallpaper and/or panelling.

Homes built today benefit from many improvements in construction, but all new homes still need special treatment for the few years at least. This is because concrete, bricks, timber, plaster, and other materials all absorb water during construction and need time to dry out.

We advise not to put furniture or large objects directly against walls, please allow the walls to 'breathe'. Large items positioned against the walls can lead to damp and mould forming on the furniture or walls.

You may not be able to feel this excess moisture but it does need to evaporate slowly and ventilate away.

A brand new home needs to dry out gradually. As the home is lived in and heated, timber and plaster will shrink, causing small cracks, this is called Shrinkage. Shrinkage cracks are not structurally important and can be permanently cured with normal redecoration.

Shrinkage can be kept to a minimum by:

- Maintaining a reasonably even temperature – try to use the central heating sparingly at first so that the building structure warms up and dries out gradually. This will help with energy bills too.
- Ventilating the evaporated moisture away – leave windows, or at least the trickle vents (the slotted vents in the window frame), open for as long as possible each day.
- Leave internal doors and doors of built-in cupboards open a few inches to encourage air circulation. These should be left open at all times if practical.

Any large cracks (wider than 3mm) will be filled and repainted by the building contractor when the 12month builder liability has been completed.

If you do notice some minor shrinkage during the 12 months period please do not report this as a repair. Shrinkage will only be attended too at the end of the 12 months

period and if it is more than 3mm (edge of a £1 coin). Any minor shrinkage and/or hairline cracks will be the customer responsibility to resolve as part of normal decoration.

Typical examples:



Efflorescence

Another consequence of drying out may be the appearance of a white, chalky deposit on the inside or outside of walls – this is called ‘efflorescence’.

Efflorescence is caused by natural salts coming out of the wall materials and is quite normal. Salts on external walls will eventually disappear; those on internal walls can be brushed or wiped away.

If efflorescence persists internally, it may indicate a water leak. In this case, you should report this to Your Housing Group.

Ventilation

Ventilation is the supply of ‘fresh’ outdoor air into a building and the removal of stale air from a building. It is required:

- To remove bad odours and pollutants
- To prevent condensation from becoming a problem
- For comfort in the summer months

Ventilating a new build property is more important than a standard dwelling.

Background ventilation is always required to remove moisture that is produced all of the time, for example by people's breath. Extra ventilation is also needed when cooking, washing up, bathing and drying clothes. Use the ventilation system boost switch in the kitchen/bathroom and open a window. Ensure trickle vents are open.

Extract grilles should be kept clean to avoid the build-up of dust and to ensure that the ventilation system, is able to run freely. These need to be regularly checked and cleaned by washing the filters with soapy water.

Please note that the extract ventilation system in your home is set to run continuously and will activate when the condensation has reached a certain level and will carry on working until it has reduced.

Please do not be tempted to switch off the extractor fans at the isolator.

Please refer to the additional guide on Moisture in the Home provided alongside this pack.

Condensation

Condensation is steam or vapour that has turned back to water on contact with cold surfaces. Mould can form on walls or ceilings because of excess steam or vapour.

Condensation and mould can damage clothes, bedding, floor coverings, decorations, and the home itself if allowed to persist.

Condensation in the Loft

Condensation in the loft will appear as water droplets sitting on the surface of the felt or underlay. You may hear water droplets dripping from the roof onto the ceiling.

Check to make sure insulation in your loft is kept dry. Watch for areas of moisture on the upper floor ceiling. Proper depths of loft insulation have been provided in your home, and it is very important that the venting system functions as designed.

The loft space should have adequate ventilation to prevent the build-up of moisture to an unacceptable level. These vents are usually located at the eaves (the lowest part of the roof). Unfortunately, placing boxes and possessions in the loft can disrupt the airflow and render the vents useless.

Proper ventilation helps cool the loft in summer and reduces condensation in the winter. Vents should never be covered. Due to possible damage being caused to the roof structure and damp or cold related damage to personal possessions, **the storage of items in the roof space is not permitted.**

Having excessive damp and humid air is common in households due to warm air rising from below and condensing into cold areas of the loft space. An excessive amount of moisture being created by the house occupants and a general lack of ventilation in the house is the most common causes of loft condensation.

Please refer to the additional guide on Condensation in the Roof Space provided alongside this pack.

To help reduce condensation and mould:

Produce less moisture:

Cover pans when cooking and do not leave kettles boiling.

Put washing outside to dry when possible. DO NOT dry clothes over radiators.

If you have a non-condensing tumble dryer, add a flexible duct to ventilate the moist air to the outside. DIY kits are available for this.

When showering, keep the bathroom door closed and close it behind you when you leave the room, this will allow the extractor to remove the moist air. It also prevents it from spreading to other parts of your home.

Ventilate moisture away

Keep the wall ventilators open when rooms are occupied and open windows and use the ventilation system boost switch when cooking, bathing, washing up and drying clothes.

Stop moisture spreading

Keep kitchen and bathroom doors closed when cooking, washing up, bathing and drying clothes. You can also open windows or use the ventilation system boost switch.

Heating

Homes where the heating is switched off all day are more likely to suffer from condensation problems than those which are continually occupied with the heating on.

This is because normal activities such as washing, or cooking are carried out in the evening when the home has not been heated for a long period.

Set the time clock on the central heating so that the home is warm by the time you return home in the evening or try to keep the property at a steady consistent temperature.

Windows

Double/ triple glazed windows are less likely to suffer from surface condensation, except perhaps temporarily in kitchens and bathrooms. Condensation is more likely to occur on single glazed windows. If you follow the advice provided about ventilation, condensation is less likely, but if it does occur on window glass, it is best to wipe it up. Condensation that repeatedly settles where the glass meets the UPVC seal will cause mould over time.

All new homes should be “run in gently” and your new home is no exception. There will be a great deal of moisture held within the fabric of the building. The drying out process will take time and will depend on the local weather conditions and occupancy levels.

Kitchen, Appliances & Worktops

Your property is fitted with a Symphony kitchen. In the base unit, usually under the sink, you will find a QR code which will allow you to follow a link to the website with additional information on the kitchen fitted.



Do not use abrasive cleaners on the kitchen cupboard as this may discolour the units or stain them. Soapy water is best for removing grease and dirt build up. It is important to recognise that wall and base units located adjacent to ovens, hobs and frequently used appliances (such as kettles and boiling pans) can suffer from excessive condensation, and

in such cases great care must be taken to ensure that units subjected to such conditions are wiped clean and dried thoroughly to avoid delaminating.

Minor adjustments to the cupboard hinges may be required overtime as the kitchen is used. This is easily rectified using a standard screwdriver.

Appliance manufacturers provide operating instructions and information on troubleshooting appliance problems. These instructions will provide you with valuable information on the safe operation and maintenance of your appliances. You must remember to register your appliances to benefit from the guarantee.

Please note the chimney hood fitted in the property will not be designed to ventilate the property, they are designed to remove grease out of the air not moisture. **The kitchen extractor fan must be used to extract moisture when cooking.**

The grills from the chimney hood should be removed regularly and cleaned with soapy water.

Worktop tips:

Worktops are sensitive to gouging, scratches, staining and cuts – be careful not to let water accumulate on or near joints. Remove any spillages on the surfaces from food or drink, these can easily stain the worktop.

Do not cut directly onto the worktop, chopping boards are recommended.

Laminate worktops are not heat proof. Do not put hot pans on them.

There are several companies available offering a touch-up service for minor issues. Please note damage to the worktop or cupboards is not classed as a defect.

Appliances:

The electric supply to the appliance outlets in the property will be controlled by the grid switches located above the worktop. There will be a grid switch to operate washing machine/dishwasher spaces, fridge and chimney hood. Once an appliance is installed you must remember to turn the appliance on at the grid switch.

The oven and hob will also have a switch to operate located above the worktop.

Please use suitably qualified persons to install appliances in the property. Your Housing Group cannot take responsibility for damage as a result of a poorly installed appliance. Please check to ensure waste hoses from washing machines and dishwashers are long enough to reach the outlets under the kitchen sink. Take care when pushing appliances into the gaps left in the kitchen spaces, use a small amount of fairy liquid and water to help ease the appliance feet into position taking care not to snag the waste pipe or electric cable.

When connecting the waste pipes to the outlets under the sink check to ensure there is no blank plates fitted, these would need to be removed to allow the waste water to drain away.

If your property is provided with appliances installed remember to register these to benefit from the guarantee.

Sink & Taps

To maintain the appearance of sink and taps, clean only using a damp, soft cloth. A solution of warm water and a mild liquid detergent may also be used where necessary, and then rinse thoroughly. Abrasive cleaners or acidic cleaners **MUST NOT BE USED** under any circumstances as this can lead to rust forming in the sink. Avoid contact with all solvents.

Roof

High winds, driving rain and snow may cause damage to the roof. After heavy storms it is advisable to check for leaks in the roof space. Any damage resulting from severe weather conditions is not classed as a defect, please refer this to Your Housing Group.

Avoid walking on the roof – if access is required, roof ladders must be used. Damage caused by window cleaners, aerial installers etc is not covered under your defect period.

Gutters and downpipes require regular cleaning. To avoid water damage caused by a clogged system, leaves and debris should be removed. If you notice damp patches near to where gutters are located, then we recommend getting them cleared. Do not lean ladders against gutters, as this will cause distortion and permanent damage to the system.

Suitable access equipment is required to access the roof and gutters, we recommend you employ a reputable contractor to carry out this maintenance. Working at height can be dangerous.

Plumbing & Drains

Washers fitted to taps will fail after time and usage, therefore, tap washer replacement is one of the most common household tasks.

The best preventative maintenance for avoiding plumbing pipe failures is to avoid discarding and clogging materials into sinks and toilet bowls (such as 'bathroom' wipes).

To prevent the build-up of residual grease and soap, we recommend a simple monthly maintenance routine:

- Run hot water through the drain or sink.
- Add 3 tablespoons of baking soda and add a little more hot water.
- Let it stand for 15 minutes.
- Flush with running water.

Do not use bleach (or its derivative) with plastic piping. This can corrode the fixtures and fittings and cause leaks.

Plumbing top tips:

- Be sure that you know how to turn off the mains water supply tap.
- Have central heating and hot water systems serviced annually.
- Always read and follow manufacturers' instructions carefully.
- Tap aerators should be cleaned when clogged
- Waste traps should be cleaned regularly, in particular those in a bath or shower tray
- Adjust the toilet float and valve if toilet runs constantly.

Drains & Sewage

Large solid items passing through drains and sewers cause major problems for water companies. Care must also be taken with some smaller items – **just because something is described as disposable does not mean it is safe to dispose of down a toilet or drain.**

To help the environment and prevent blockages for you and your neighbours, it is important that the following are disposed of in your household rubbish: Dental Floss; Bathroom Wipes; Plasters; Disposable Nappies; Female Hygiene Products; Bandages; Packaging; Cotton Buds.

Cooking fat/grease – this is easy to pour down the drain when it is hot, but it quickly cools down and solidifies leading to blockages. Instead of pouring down the sink, pour it into a plastic container and dispose of it with your household waste.

Please note, if drains become blocked with materials that should not be flushed into the system, then this would be a chargeable visit.

Please note do not flush anything down the toilet other than toilet paper.



Outside taps

An outside tap is fitted to your property. This is usually located back to back with your kitchen. These are not frost proof. The most common cause of burst water pipes is a frozen outside tap which has not been drained and isolated properly. Before winter, isolate the tap under the kitchen sink and drain the water in the pipe.

Bath

The bath is fitted with a restrictor/blending valve, limited to 48 degrees as per building regulations.

If gapping occurs between the sealant or shower screen and the bath, then please report this urgently or replace the silicone seal. Do not allow water to enter these gaps as this will cause further damage. Do not continue to use your shower as it will leak between the sealant and travel behind the bath, which may then leak downstairs.

Gapping and some minor movement of the bath can occur and is due to the timber under your bath settling overtime.

The bath screen is a splash back water deflector only. Note: the bath screens are not watertight and there will be an element of water which escapes when water hits or is sprayed directly at the screen. We recommend the use of bath mats or towels adjacent to

the bath to ensure water does not damage the floor. Please note if water does escape from the bath/shower causing the vinyl to lift or bubble this would not be accepted as a defect unless caused by a leak.

Boiler condensation pipe

If your boiler has stopped working and appears with an error code in freezing temperatures, then there is a good chance your condensation pipe has frozen. There is no need to worry and you can usually thaw it safely yourself. This is not a defect with the property. You will need to identify the pipe, it will be outside, usually connected to an external drain and back to back with the boiler. If it is safe to do so, pour warm (not boiling) water along the pipe. Once the pipe has defrosted, reset the boiler and all should be working normally. If it is still not working, please contact Your Housing Group or a suitable plumber.

Driveway / Parking Space

Your driveway or parking spaces for your property are block paved to comply with the planning permission for the development. Provided this is properly maintained it will remain in a good condition for many years.

- Do not turn your steering wheel over the surface whilst stationary as this will likely damage the surface
- It is common for weeds and moss to appear between the paving stones, this will require regular brushing and cleaning
- Avoid jet washing as this will remove the sand from the base of the paving causing unevenness to occur
- Do not place a load on the driveway on any single point – for example a car jack, ladders or motorbike stands without using a flat surface beneath.
- Do not place skips on the drive or anything heavy like bags of soil or building material
- Do not service your vehicle on the driveway as oil or other products could stain
- Your driveway is designed for light vehicles only.

Overtime and particularly if the same vehicle is parked in the same location you may notice small depressions appearing in the paving. This is due to the weight of the vehicle in the same location which overtime can start to destabilise the sub base. Re sanding of the driveway is recommended every few years to ensure this is kept even and maintained well. If paving stones become loose these will require resetting to prevent a trip hazard.

Flooring

The floor finish to the property will depend on the room location. Wet areas will be finished in vinyl, the ground floor with a concrete screed and upper floors with timber floorboards.

Concrete Screed

Prior to installing any floor finish to the concrete subfloor, the substrate must be treated in line with the relevant manufacturer recommendations. Underlay should be used when installing laminate or LVT. It is common to have some lumps, depressions, cracks in the concrete sub surface due to the length of time this has been laid. Self leveller may be required initially to ensure the surface is suitable.

Carpet grippers should not be screwed into the concrete surface, this will require adhesive or glue to secure to the floor.

Timber Floorboards

Underlay should be used when installing carpet. Laminates, vinyl's and LVT are not recommended for upper floors due to the noise transference. When installing carpets please take care with the carpet grippers, if these are nailed into the floorboards please ensure the fitter has checked the area for concealed pipework. Do not use nail grippers on the staircase, these grippers should be fixed using adhesive or glue.

Overtime as the property dries out and weight is applied to floorboards you may notice some creaking. This is common and often occurs where the boards are joined together. If the creaking is excessive then most developers will return to re-fix these at the end of the defect period, however it is your responsibility to **lift the flooring** to provide access to the floorboards. The developers will not lift flooring fitted by a customer.

Vinyl

Vinyl is installed to the kitchen, WC and bathroom. **Vinyl is not to be treated as a wet room.** Over wetting vinyl floor will cause this too bubble and lift. Ensure spillages are dried and not left on the surface over time.

Please take care with vinyl floor as the surface marks and dents easily. Place furniture on pads and do not wear sharp heels as this will cause indentations which cannot be accepted as a defect.

Please ensure you ask floor fitters to check the internal doors to the property. **Tolerances** are left under the doors for floor finishes however if your chosen floor and underlay are thick this may cause the doors to scuff the floor. We cannot take responsibility for this; it would be for the customer to organise for the doors to be suitably planed by a professional. If the floor fitters remove the doors in the property then it is your responsibility to organise for these to be suitably re-fitted.

The frequency of cleaning will depend on the floor finish you have chosen and the occupancy of the property. Regular sweeping and vacuuming are recommended along with mopping (where applicable). Spray mops are recommended for vinyl to prevent over wetting.

Fencing & Gates

Your property is provided with feather edge timber fencing and gate. Overtime timber can swell and contract with changing weather conditions, as such you may notice that gates no longer latch or bolt. This would usually require minor adjustment to rectify.

Timber fencing is a natural product as such it is not uncommon to see variations in colour or appearance, knots in the wood. To best maintain your fencing apply a suitable wood preserver or stain.

It is important that should your fencing or gate require repair, any parts are replaced on a like for like basis.

If you are unsure about the ownership of your boundaries please consult your legal plans which will identify which belong to your plot. If your property is rented please contact Your Housing Group.

Landscaping & Gardening Care

It is of the utmost importance that you start to care for your new lawn immediately upon taking ownership as this is the most critical step in maintaining a new lawn. A new lawn will require constant **maintenance** and hard work on your part, but the value it adds to your new home is well worth the effort.

Gradients

Your garden is graded to the **natural contours** of the land. This may mean that your garden is not level. As the ground settles, new natural drainage channels will form. This settlement

and formation of channels may take up to 2 years. Until complete, wet areas in your garden may be present.

As the ground settles **small divots and dips may occur**, this is not uncommon. It is recommended to infill these with a little topsoil and seed. Alternatively, the turf can be carefully rolled to help level out any dips. These would not be classed as a defect.

Sub Soils and Depth

New build gardens are often constructed onto top of **impermeable material** such as clay, this is unavoidable. The clay sub surface would not be removed unless specifically part of the site wide remediation. The sub soils of the garden are often compacted over time due to the weight of the machinery travelling over them. The **garden soil depths** are provided to strict requirements and will include rotivation. The garden depths are tested before completion of the property and verified by an independent company. Although the soils have been rotavated the sub soils often remain compacted. Overtime this will improve but whilst the garden is in its infancy it may hold water and you may experience some waterlogging.

Although attempts are made to remove rubble and debris, there may be small amounts of this located within in your garden. Overtime rubble will make its way to the surface where it can be more easily removed.

Aeration

To help improve the natural drainage of the garden we recommend completing **aeration**. This will improve drainage, help to relieve compaction, allow air, water, and nutrients to penetrate the soil and encourage healthy green growth.

Aeration is a process of creating small but long holes in the ground. By regularly aerating your turf you will also allow water to enter it more easily. This is of great importance in the hotter seasons as when the weather is dry, the grassroots will require a bigger intake of water as a lot of it will evaporate or transpire through their leaves. If your grass is letting out more water than it's intaking it will begin to turn brown and may even eventually die.

However, by thoroughly aerating an area where browning has occurred, you can restore to roots' ability to intake moisture again. And if done right your grass' colour will return to its regular green in just around a week.

Newer lawns need to be aerated a bit more often as their root system is not as mature and this will help them develop and grow. Before starting the aeration process make sure your soil is moist enough. So, try to aerate the lawn a day after it has rained or a day after watering it.

Water Logging-

Waterlogging is usually caused by heavy rains and sodden ground and can be contributed to by compacted soil. It can cause fine turf grasses to die out, and moss and algae to flourish.

Waterlogging of gardens is not considered to be defective unless within 3 meters of the dwelling.

Prolonged or repeated waterlogging can cause several issues.

Bare patches – finer grass species won't grow well in waterlogged soil and may eventually die. Coarser, more robust species or weeds may then take over.

To improve drainage on compacted lawns, spike or aerate the soil so that rainwater can flow down into the ground more easily, rather than puddling on the surface. Wait until the standing water has drained away, or in small areas just sweep it off the lawn into the borders before aerating.

To incorporate air into something. Compacted soil in lawns can be aerated by spiking it with a garden fork or using a hollow-tined cultivator, to improve drainage and grass growth. Worms also do a good job of aerating soil. Aerating the contents of a compost bin can aid decomposition – occasionally stir up the ingredients with a garden fork or turn/move them into a new bin.

If your lawn is prone to waterlogging, spike it every few weeks in autumn. This will prevent the need for emergency action after wet winters.

Help your grass to recover from winter waterlogging and grow a more extensive and resilient root system by applying lawn feed in Spring. Wet soil and dead patches allow moss to thrive in lawns over winter. Rake this out in spring to allow your grass to re-establish without competition.

Plants

The layout and selection of plants have been designed in accordance with the planning permission. Success in maintaining any recent planting depends on your personal care and treatment, as we do not provide a guarantee.

Lawn care and planting tips:

Please don't walk on your new lawn if it has just been laid.

It is imperative that the lawn be heavily watered, especially in the summer months. You should avoid walking on the turf for at least three to four weeks and allow the turf to bed in for a few weeks before mowing.

Between March and September, it can take between three and five weeks for your new lawn to be fully rooted and established. From October to February, the new law will not be able to start the rooting process and should not be walked upon during this period of the lawns first season.

Mow your lawn the first time on a high setting. Do not cut this too low as it can create bald patches.

If your lawn is rooted and becoming established, it is ready for its first cut. You can tell when the time is right because the lines between the turf will have mostly disappeared, and the turf will be 'stuck' to the ground when you try and pull at it. Set your lawn mower to its highest cut setting for the first two cuts. Mow to the normal summer cutting height once a week, if possible, but don't leave it any longer than two weeks.

Autumn – Decrease the frequency of mowing to fortnightly and gradually increase the height of the cut. For the last cut of the year, simply 'top' the grass. Feed the lawn with an application of autumn lawn feed. Re-seeding or re-turfing is best done early in the autumn – the ground is still warm from the summer but is also moist.

Winter – These are the lazy months in your lawn care calendar! Avoid walking on it if it waterlogged or frozen. Keep the area clear of leaves. Rolling the lawn after winter is the best way to sort out any unevenness that can occur due to ground lifting after heavy frost.

Watering – it is recommended with most new plants that they be soaked with water once a week from early spring until the ground freezes in the winter. Do not water more often than this.

Exceptions – in very hot weather, all plants may need to be watered more frequently. Grass and seeded areas require more water than plants. When watering your lawn, it is important not to water the planting bed, as this will over water and possibly kill the plants. Plants which ‘yellow’ are most likely receiving too much water. Do not water these in an attempt to save them as you will run the risk of killing them.

Pruning – we recommend that you do not prune in the first year.

Section Four

Finishes, safety & home improvements

Through our **passion** for housing, more **people** have a **safe** place to call **home**

Finishes, safety & home improvements

You should not attempt any redecoration in the first 12 months.

Walls and Ceilings

The builder will have painted the walls of your home with a light paint which lets moisture work itself out during the drying period. Further coats of emulsion and oil-based paints or wallpaper can be used for later redecoration, after the 12-month builder liability and after walls have dried out. When you redecorate, use a filler to make good any minor gaps and plaster cracks which have arisen from normal drying out and shrinkage.

All surfaces should be reasonably smooth as practicably possible when viewed in daylight from a 2-metre distance and not by shining any artificial light onto the surface. Some imperfections are expected in the paint finish as these are a man-made product.

When you redecorate apply one or two coats of emulsion. Never apply water to the ceilings until after they have been painted - the texture may be spoilt if you do. If, later on, you want to remove wallpaper from a wall with a plasterboard finish, avoid scraping too rigorously, otherwise the surface may be damaged.

If you choose the panel your property please be aware that removal of the panelling will most likely damage the surface of the wall and this may require patch plastering.

Woodwork

New woodwork absorbs a lot of paint or stain so the first painting of a home may not give as good a finish as later repainting. You may notice over time gloss applied to woodwork will start to yellow, this is a normal process especially when the area has limited sunlight. This is easily rectified by applying a fresh coat of gloss.

Ironmongery

Use an aerosol release spray to ease stiff hinges. This will also stop squeaks. Ironmongery marks easily when scratched or cleaned with abrasive cleaners.

Internal Walls

Your property is referred to in construction as 'Timber Frame'. This means that the entire house is constructed out of timber and the outer face of brickwork is constructed after the frame is in place.

Internal walls between rooms in your home are therefore built from timber. Timber framed walls are finished in plasterboard, a plaster skim and paint. Walls to the properties are heavily insulated for energy efficiency.

Wall fixings

Before attempting to fix heavy items to walls, it is important to find out how they are built and what services might be behind them.

If in doubt, use a **timber stud detector**. Some models can also detect electric cables and pipe work. These are available to buy at DIY stores.

Be careful to avoid contact with any pipes or electric cables that may lie beneath the surface when nailing or drilling into walls and ceilings.

To make a fixing in a plastered wall, drill a hole through the plaster into the frame; insert a proprietary wall plug suitable for a timber frame house, screw through the article to be fixed into the plug. The plug, screw and the drill should all be compatible. In most cases special plugs will be needed for the walls.

For timber framed external walls, choose a cavity fixing which seals the hole drilled in the plasterboard.

Separating walls/ Party Walls

Walls used to separate semi-detached or terraced homes are designed to provide an effective sound and fire barrier.

Some internal walls will be load bearing, so you are not able to remove them or make substantial alterations to them without. Any changes of this nature will require prior approval.

Fixing on these walls is the same as for plastered or dry lined masonry walls. Be aware of the noise your neighbours will hear when you fix to these walls.

Electrics

Be careful when nailing or drilling into walls or ceilings to avoid cables and pipe work.

Battery operated detectors can be purchased from DIY stores. Also be careful when digging in the garden in case there are cables or pipes buried near the surface.

Remember that any improvements to your home need to be approved by Your Housing Group – please call to obtain permission.

You should ensure any works are carried out by qualified and approved contractors.

Do not run telephone or data cables too close to main wiring circuits and avoid contact between wiring and certain materials, in particular polystyrene insulation. Do not lay insulation over cables where cables have been selected without this possibility in mind.

Sockets should not be overloaded using multiple adaptors.

You should check with Your Housing Group before replacing existing switches with dimmer switches, as this may not be appropriate for some switches or extra accessories may be required.

Light fittings should be checked to ensure they are not too heavy for the ceiling or luminaire support couplers if fitted.

Combustible material should be kept away from concentrated sources of heat, such as spotlights fitted into cabinets.

Floors

Ground floors are made of insulated precast concrete built as a suspended floor with airspace beneath.

The space below a suspended ground floor is ventilated through air bricks built into the outer walls. These air bricks should be kept clear and not blocked.

Laying carpets will help to insulate the room from sounds from below and will also help to retain warmth. When laying carpet, perimeter grippers are easily fixed to timber flooring but are not appropriate with concrete floors where adhesive or glue should be used.

Threshold strips may be needed to hold the edge of a carpet or cover the junction between different floor finishes. They can be screw-fixed directly into timber flooring but need to be screwed into a fixing plug when there is a concrete floor.

Always check for buried pipes and cables with a detector before drilling or fixing into floors.

Ceilings

Ceilings are constructed from Joists. Heavy weights should not be suspended from the ceiling.

Doors

Many doors are made with a thin facing of compressed board or plywood on a skeletal honeycomb core within a timber frame. Items such as coat hooks can be fixed to these doors with the same sort of cavity devices that are used for fixing to plasterboard. However, make sure that the door thickness will accommodate the plug or toggle fitting when inserted and fully tightened.

Do not overload hooks as this could damage the door.

Windows

Your property will have double or triple glazed windows. Replacement of a glazing should be done by a specialist. All glazing should be sealed to the frame with special glazing compounds - **not** linseed oil putty. Putty should also not be used for bedding glazing into timber windows that are treated with a preservative stain. Do not drill or nail into window frames.

Glass should always be replaced with glass of the same type and thickness, and in certain locations, such as low-level glazing, safety glass should be used.

Acceptable faults to the glass include:

- Bubbles or blisters.
- Hairlines or blobs.
- Fine scratches

Any large expanses of glass, and usually those with a sill at floor level, should be marked to prevent people accidentally walking into them. Replace these markings if they become worn or faded, or if glass is broken and replaced.

Permanent screen protection

Permanent screen protection in front of glazing should not be removed.

Guarding in front of glass in critical locations is designed to prevent collision with the glass and sometimes to prevent falls from a height. The guarding should not be permanently

removed unless the glazing is replaced with safety glazing strong enough to withstand collisions and falls.

Any replacement guarding must be at the same height as the original and able to withstand the same forces. All guarding must not have gaps greater than 75mm or have horizontal elements that may encourage occupants, and especially young children, to climb over.

Stairs

Guarding and handrails may be removed or replaced during the lifetime of the staircase. However, removing the guarding on one side of the stairs could double the risk on an injury in the event of a fall.

No gap in the guarding or stairs should exceed 100mm, as a young child could fall through a gap and be held fast by only their head. Replacement guarding should not include horizontal elements that may encourage a child to climb over.

Landings should be kept clear of permanent obstructions. Alterations to doors, or the addition of permanent features to landings, should not obstruct the clear passage at the top and bottom of stairs. A gap of 400mm should be maintained, even with temporary obstructions and the swing of open doors, to prevent collisions and increased injury of falling.

Other guarding

Guarding should not be permanently removed from ramps, floors, balconies, windows, walls and/or roofs. Any replacement guarding should be at the same height and able to withstand the same force as the original. There should be no gaps greater than 100mm, as a young child may fall and be held fast by only their head. There should be no horizontal elements that might encourage a child to climb over the guarding.

Section Five

Fire safety & legionella

Fire safety & legionella

Alarms

- Smoke alarms are fitted to meet the requirements of building regulations, consider whether you require additional alarms in any room where a fire could start
- Remember to test all your alarms weekly.

Smoking

- Smoke outside and make sure cigarettes are put out
- Never smoke in bed, or anywhere else if you think you might fall asleep
- Do not leave a lit cigarette or pipe unattended. Use proper ashtrays and never throw hot ash into the bin
- Keep matches and lighters well out of the reach of children.

Candles

- Candles, tea lights and incense burners should only be placed in stable, heat-resistant holder
- Persistent use of candles/burners in a new build can lead to black appearing on ceilings and around door frames
- Keep candles away from curtains, furniture and clothes
- Remember to blow these out and do not leave a property with a candle still lit.

Heating & Electrics

- Avoid use of stand alone heaters
- Don't overload electrical sockets.

Take Extra Care in the Kitchen

- Never leave pans unattended when cooking.

If the pan does catch fire:

- Don't tackle the fire yourself or try to move the pan
- Never throw water onto the pan as this can create a fireball and don't try to move it
- If you can do so safely -turn off the heat
- Leave the room and close the door. Shout to warn others to get out and call 999.

Stay Safe when you go to bed:

- Don't tackle the fire yourself or try to move the pan
- Close all doors as this helps to prevent fire spreading
- Switch off and unplug electrical items such as TVs and avoid charging devices like mobile phones when you sleep
- Only leave essential appliances switched on such as the fridge or freezer turn all others off
- Make sure candles are out before you go to bed
- Check your cooker and heats are turned off.

Plan your escape

- Make an escape plan and practise it regularly to make sure everyone knows how to get out safely
- The best route is the normal way in and out of your home
- Plan a second route in case the first one is blocked
- Always keep door and window keys where everyone you live with can find them
- Smoke can kill; get down as low as possible where the air will be clearer
- Check closed doors with the back of your hand. Do not open door if it feels warm – the fire may be on the other side
- If your smoke alarm goes off when you are asleep, follow your escape plan, get out and call 999.

Carbon Monoxide

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a poisonous gas that has no smell or taste and can kill quickly. If you have a solid fuel burner, open fire or a gas boiler, get them serviced regularly and test the CO alarm.

Product Recalls

Faulty electrical goods can cause fires. If you are concerned about the safety of a product; stop using it and let the retailer, manufacturer or your local Trading Standards office know. Take extra care with second – hand appliances and ensure they have been safety checked.

Legionella

Legionnaires' disease is caused by bacteria called Legionella and is an uncommon form of pneumonia, that may have serious consequences, particularly for older people.

The bacteria exist naturally in the environment including rivers, lakes, and reservoirs, usually in low numbers. They can also live in purpose-built water systems such as hot and cold-water systems, taps, showers, spa pools and hot tubs. Infection occurs if you inhale tiny water droplets containing the bacteria. The bacteria must be inhaled into the lungs to cause the disease.

Legionella can survive in low temperatures but thrive at 20°C (68F) to 50°C (122F). Temperatures of 60°C (140F) and over will kill Legionella. If conditions are favourable, the bacteria may multiply, creating conditions in which the risk from Legionnaires' disease increases. It is therefore important to control the risks.

How can I reduce the risk of Legionella in my home?

The risk of Legionella is very low, but you can take the following precautions. These are particularly important when you move into a new home or are returning after a long break.

Hot water systems

Hot water systems have the potential to harbour Legionella where there may be stagnant or warm water. Examples include shower heads, hot water taps, garden hoses and hot water storage vessels.

It is important to run your shower or bath continuously for a few minutes when you move in/return after a long absence in order to flush through any bacteria.

Hot water systems and filter devices attached to shower and tap outlets should be maintained regularly according to the manufacturers' instructions included in your moving in pack.

All hot and mixed sanitary outlets (shower, hand basin, bath taps) that are not used on a daily basis should be flushed weekly by turning on the hot water at full flow rate for at least 5 minutes. Flushing will help eliminate stagnant water and minimise the multiplication of bacteria that may be present.

All shower heads, taps, and filter devices should be thoroughly cleaned and de-scaled (as per the manufactures' instructions) on a regular basis to prevent the build-up of lime scale, mould and algae growth.

Section Six

Getting to know your area

Through our **passion** for housing, more **people** have a **safe** place to call **home**

Getting to know your area

Waste & Recycling Bins

Your local authority is responsible for collection and recycling. Your bin collection day is **FRIDAY**.

You MUST register with Newcastle Under Lyme council to obtain recycling bins. The council will require you to register for council tax to enable an order to be processed for bins. Recycling bins are not provided unless you have registered with the local authority and placed an order. There is no charge for standard recycling bins however please note there is a small delivery fee. YHG cannot organise your bin delivery, you must contact the council.

For details on general refuse collection, you must visit the Newcastle Under Lyme website. Please ensure that all your general household waste is placed in the correct bin and that your bins are taken to the kerbside or bin collection point by 6am on collection day so that the bin truck can empty them.

Any problems with refuse collection or missed collection you should contact the local authority in the first instance.

Arranging a Collection of a Bulky Item

Bulky Items If you want to dispose of large or heavy items which won't go into your household waste bin, you can arrange for them to be collected separately. A wide range of bulky items, including furniture, kitchen appliances and items from your garden can be collected. Arranging a Collection, you can request a bulky collection by visiting – <https://www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/business/bulky-excess-waste/4>

Refuse & Recycling Centres

Your nearest Recycling Centre is Newcastle Recycling Centre , Leycett Lane, Newcastle, ST5 6AD.

Local GP/Dentist or Hospital

To find your local GP/Dentist or Hospital services you can visit the NHS website: www.nhs.uk/service-search/

Emergency: Police/Fire/Ambulance - Call 999

GP: Loomer Medical Partnership.

Located: Loomer Road, Chesterton, Newcastle Under Lyme, Newcastle, Staffordshire, ST5 7JS.

Dentist: Elm Villa Dental Practice.

Located: 193 London Road, Chesterton, Newcastle-under-Lyme,, Staffordshire, ST5 7HZ.

A&E Department: Royal Stoke University Hospital

Located: Newcastle Road, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 6QG.

Local Nursery

Finding a local Nursery: www.gov.uk/find-nursery-school-place

Local School's

Finding a local School: www.gov.uk/school-performance-tables

Primary School: Chesterton Primary School, Newcastle.

Located: Brittain Avenue, Newcastle Under Lyme, ST5 7NT.

High School: Sir Thomas Boughy High School.

Located: Station Road, Halmerend, Newcastle Under Lyme, ST7 8AP.

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Section Seven

Saving energy & reducing bills

Through our **passion** for housing, more **people** have a **safe** place to call **home**

Saving energy & reducing bills

The great thing about moving into a new build is that your home is already very energy efficient. However, there are still many things you can do to save energy and keep your bills down. This section highlights some of our top tips.

Heating and Hot Water

- Can you use cold water instead? Hot water can cost five times more
- Make the most of your timers and thermostatic radiator valves (TRVs)
- Set your thermostat between 18 and 21 degrees. You do not need to turn your thermostat up when it is colder outside; the house will heat up to the set temperature regardless.
- Use your thermostat programmer to control the timing of your heating.

Appliances

- When buying white goods, such as washing machines or dishwashers, consider choosing those with an 'energy saving recommended' sticker or A, A+ and A++ rated appliances. These are the most energy efficient products.

Electronics

- Leaving electronics on standby is like a constantly dripping tap and this can cost. Switch all electronics off at the wall when they are not in use.
- Put the TV and DVD on a multi-plug to make it easier to turn both off.

Fridge

- Wait until hot food and drink has cooled before putting it in your fridge
- Defrost regularly

Kettle

- Boil the amount of water you need, just make sure the element is fully covered

Oven

- See if there are other ways to cook first. Using a slow cooker, air fryer, grill or microwave are all more efficient than an oven
- Keep the oven door shut as every time you open it you waste heat.

Laundry

- Always run a full load in the washing machine
- Most detergents work well at 30°C

Lights

- Switch lights off and always remember to do so when you leave a room
- Know your lights – halogen spotlights and outside spotlights use a lot of energy
- Be efficient and use energy-saving light bulbs, as they use 4 times less energy.

Switching energy suppliers

Your energy bill depends on two things:

1. How much energy you use in your home
2. How much you are charged per unit of energy by your Supplier

Often people do not challenge this, but it can be another great saving opportunity.

Why not see if you can get a better deal?

Here's how to save:

- **Check what you pay**
- Look at your bill and see what you pay per unit of energy. This will usually be in terms of pence per kWh (kilowatt hour) for electricity
- **Compare your price to other deals out there**
- There are several good websites that compile all the different rates available and present them online. Look to see what deals there are
- There are several websites which scan the current rates to find the best deal; the most well-known is **www.uswitch.com**, which lists a lot of the major suppliers.

Saving Water

The following can help to save water in the home:

- Wash vegetables and fruit in a bowl rather than under a running tap
- Don't leave the tap running while you brush your teeth, shave or wash your hands, as this can waste up to five litres of water per minute.
- Watering plant and the garden in the cool of the early morning or evening helps to reduce evaporation losses.

Section Eight

NHBC Buildmark

cover

NHBC Buildmark cover

Your property has been built with the benefit of a NHBC Buildmark policy. Buildmark is the warranty period for your property.

With your handover form will be the **NHBC Buildmark Certificate**. This document contains the information about your cover and policy. It advises you on the policy number, length of the policy, start and end dates of each relevant section and the minimum claim value. It is very important that you retain this certificate, duplicate copies are chargeable from NHBC.

Please retain a copy of your NHBC Buildmark Certificate.

Top Tip: Take a photo of your certificate in case you misplace the hard copy.

You will require your certificate should you need to make a claim against your policy in the future and should you come to sell the property. Please do not rely on Your Housing Group retaining copies of your certificate if you have purchased your property it is your responsibility to keep this safe.

NHBC inspectors have visited your property at key build stages to ensure it meets their requirements and standards. The provision of the certificate demonstrates that the property has met the NHBC build standards.

Please follow the QR code provided on your handover form to find additional guides provided by NHBC to support customers living in new build houses. There is lots of support and guidance also provided on the NHBC website.

In the unfortunate event that you need to make a claim against your policy you can contact NHBC below:

General enquiries:

Phone: 0344 633 1000 (*Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm*)

Email: ccsupport@nhbc.co.uk

Website: nhbc.co.uk

Address: NHBC, NHBC House, Davy Avenue, Knowlhill, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, MK5 8FP

Who to contact and when:

During the builder warranty period (*shown on the policy schedule*):

Contact the **builder**, if you can't find their details, or you need to use our **resolution service**, please contact us.

After the builder warranty period:

For claims:

Phone: 0800 035 6422 (*Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm*)

Website: nhbc.co.uk/claims

Section Nine

Electric vehicle charging

Electric vehicle charging

Your home has been fitted with a Brim electric vehicle charging point. 7.4kw and compatible with all electric vehicles. A datasheet is provided as part of the QR link and you can also follow the QR code on the unit itself for more information or visit the website – www.fulltothebrim.co.uk

The website contains lots of useful information, guides, trouble shooting and 24/7 customer support.



To isolate the charging point you would need to turn off at the consumer unit.

We recommend you download the MyBrim App. Using the app you can set up your new charging point and remotely control it's use.

 Start and Stop charging sessions remotely	 Smart scheduling for cheaper charging	 Track charging usage and manage spend
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On handover you will be given a **PIN** and **PASSWORD** for your unit, please keep these safe. If you cannot find these in the future you can visit the website and review the troubleshooting section which gives instructions on how to retrieve these from Brim.

Your charging point comes with a 7 year warranty from point of sale to the builder.

Section Ten

Solar Panels

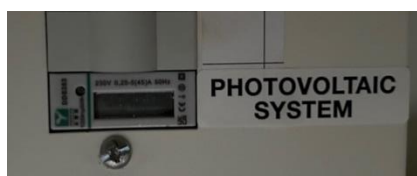
Solar panels

Your property has the benefit of being fitted with **ONROOF** Solar Panels. The solar panels use cells to convert sunlight into DC electricity. The electricity collected is fed to an **inverter** which is located in the loft space. This piece of equipment converts the DC electricity into AC for use in the property. On bright sunny days the panels may collect more electricity than what is being used in the property, the excess will be '**exported**' to the grid. The panels do not have the capacity to store electricity. If the electricity generated by the panels is not used at the time of collection it will be exported. Netting has been installed around the edges of the solar panels to protect them from birds or a buildup of debris.

The PV inverter fitted in the loft is a **Fox G2 Single Phase inverter**. Please do not tamper with the inverter and keep free from obstructions. This will be installed in an accessible location and accompanied by a smoke detector. The smoke detector is installed to alert you to a potential fire, please do not to tamper with the detector or remove the battery backup. To test the detector there is a box located on the upstairs landing. You can press this to test the detector without needing to access the loft space.

Remember to test the smoke detector regularly.

Inside the property you will also be provided with a **Generation Meter**. You can use this meter to monitor how much energy the panels are producing. The meter measures the amount of kw/h collected. This meter is part of your consumer unit, if you lift the panel you will see the meter reading.



In the under stairs cupboard there is a large red switch, this is the isolator for the solar panels. Turning this switch will shutdown the solar panel system which may be required in the event of a system failure. Only qualified persons should work on the system.



Commissioning & Certification

The solar panel system is commissioned by the installers. You will be provided with a copy of the MCS Certificate which certifies that the install meets the industry standards. It is important you keep this certificate safe.

Following the install of the system the contractor will complete a G98 form and submit this to the Distribution Network Operator (DNO). This confirms that the DNO is aware of the install and allows the export to the grid.

Smart Export Guarantee (SEG)

The Smart Export Guarantee (SEG) is a government scheme that rewards you for any unused electricity your panels send back to the grid. You can sign up for this scheme and your electricity supplier will pay back money on a per unit basis. In order to apply for the scheme you will require copies of the MCS Certificate and a G98 form, so please keep these safe. You will also require a export MPAN number, this is different to the MPAN provided on your handover form. The export MPAN will be produced by the DNO, Energy Asset Network is the DNO for this development. Please be advised that neither the developer or Your Housing Group can provide a export MPAN.

Maintenance Regime

Solar panels require minimal amounts of maintenance. Visual inspections should be carried out on the panels and inverter for any obvious signs of concern. The panels may require cleaning if heavily soiled with bird droppings, leaves and other debris. For the safety of yourselves please only use suitable professionals to carry out maintenance. Do not use abrasive cleaning products on the panels, warm soapy water is sufficient.

The inverters are pieces of electro-technical equipment. Functionality test should be carried out by a qualified tradesperson every year. This will assist in supporting the operation and longevity of the inverter.

If your property is rented, then Your Housing Group will organise the necessary tests on the solar panels. If you are a homeowner, then this will be the responsibility of yourselves to maintain.

Please follow the QR code provided with your handover sheet to find additional information and guides for the solar panel system.

Frequently Asked Questions

How is the energy used, is this drawn down by the property before use of conventional electric supply?

Any energy generated by the solar panel system will primarily go to the property to meet any usage at that instant. Where the amount of solar is exceeding the required usage demand, this then is exported to the grid. Any solar that is insufficient to meet the load will be topped up by energy from the grid (normal electricity usage).

What happens to energy if it is not used?

It is automatically exported to the grid. There is no battery storage option. The systems/house types are not designed to be retrofitted with battery storage.

Do they require maintenance?

A visual check should be carried out for the panels & equipment. The panels should be checked for excessive soiling / obstructions and appropriate actions should be taken if identified. Ensure to check the void space between the roof and the underside of the panel where the netting is present to ensure nothing has got through and the netting is still intact. Inverters are pieces of electro-technical equipment and so should fall within the same maintenance regime as any other item. Basic functionality test carried out by a qualified tradesperson are required.

Is there some kind of display unit that will be fitted in the property?

As standard, a generation meter will be provided which increases in the same manner as a standard billing meter. This measures the total amount of kWh generated by the solar panels before it is used in the property. This is located in the consumer unit.

Is there any other equipment that will be fitted in the property & will this need to be maintained?

No, the most important piece of equipment is the inverter.

Do they provide User Guides?

A full handover manual with certificates is provided separately. Please ensure you read this information and keep safe for future use. Please follow the QR code provided.

Does having the panels restrict the customer on energy suppliers that can be used?

No, there is no restrictions on the occupier with regards to selecting an energy supplier. Some energy suppliers offer specific tariffs for properties fitted with solar panels so make sure to shop around.

Do the panels have a warranty period?

Yes, there is a product warranty of 12 years. Please see the information provided on exclusions. There is a installation warranty of 2 years provided by Principle Renewables.

Do the panels only work in the sun?

No, the panels will collect energy in any daylight hours however the brighter and sunnier the conditions the better the generation will be. The generation overnight and in the dark will be low to none so consider when it might be best to use energy in the property. For example using the washing machine at midday instead of overnight.

Will the panels save money?

Yes, the panels provide electricity to support your normal usage from the grid. Overtime this should save you money on your bills. The amount of saving depends on the PV system size and how effectively you use the energy being produced. It is highly unlikely that the amount of energy generated is sufficient to power a household throughout a day.