

NEW BUILD HOME USER GUIDE

THIS USER GUIDE WILL PROVIDE YOU WITH USEFUL INFORMATION ON TAKING CARE OF YOUR HOME.

THIS GUIDE IS FOR ALL CUSTOMERS MOVING INTO A PLATFORM NEW BUILD PROPERTY.



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home
OWNERSHIP

THIS PAGE IS INTERACTIVE,
MAKING IT EASY TO NAVIGATE TO
THE SECTION YOU NEED.

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WELCOME TO YOUR NEW HOME

Congratulations on your new home! We understand how overwhelming moving house can be. Now that you have the keys, the exciting times can begin.

At Platform, we want to make sure that you have all the support you need during these all-important early days of moving into a new home, which is why we've created this resource.

In this guide, you'll find all the information you need to properly take care of your new home, as well as a range of contact details you might need.

From time to time, we may send out surveys and would greatly value your feedback to help us improve our services.



USEFUL CONTACTS

Having access to the right contact information can make the world of difference when managing your home. You will have peace of mind that whenever you need support, you can find it as quickly as possible.

CONTACT PLATFORM

The Platform website is packed with helpful information and important updates, you can also find the full range of contact details on our website



platformhg.com



0333 200 7304

If you have any issues or defects with your home, or you require advice or support, you can email us at:



info@platformhg.com

OTHER CONTACTS - EXAMPLE BUILDING WARRANTY PROVIDERS

NHBC

NATIONAL HOUSE BUILDING COUNCIL



[NHBC.CO.UK](https://nhbc.co.uk)



0800 035 6422

LABC

LOCAL AUTHORITY BUILDING CONTROL



[LABC.CO.UK](https://labc.co.uk)



0800 183 1755

Please note: If you are a Shared Owner please refer to your handover pack for details of your warranty provider

IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY, PLEASE CONTACT THE BELOW

Gas emergency number



0800 111 999

Platform emergency number



0333 200 7304

HOW TO REPORT A DEFECT DURING THE DEFECT LIABILITY PERIOD

Your home has been built, inspected and signed off to a high quality standard by industry professionals. However, after living in your property you may notice some issues referred to as defects.

During the next 12 months your new home will benefit from a defects liability period* with the developer and it is their responsibility to attend to repairs that are considered genuine defects in your home.

Eligible Defect Repairs

These are generally issues in the property that result from poor workmanship; an issue with design; or a fault with the component or materials used.

This excludes damage caused by fair wear and tear, customer negligence or customer abuse.

These defect repairs will need to be reported directly through to Platform Hub.

REPORTING A DEFECT

Call 0333 200 7304

Email info@platformhg.com

Reporting a repair online platformhg.com

Webchat platformhg.com

If you have an emergency repair please ensure that this is called through on 0333 200 7304 to avoid any delays in this being reported to the developer.

An emergency repair consists of:

- Complete electrical failure/ or safety of an electrical source affected
- Blockage of the only toilet at the home
- No hot water and heating (during winter months)
- A water leak that cannot be contained
- Loss of security of windows and external doors by not locking

Any non-emergency defects that you report will also be passed over to the developer, who will then contact you to make an appointment and agree next steps.

Read our full defects policy for more information >

*The 12 months defects liability period begins on the date the property is handed over by the developer/contractor to Platform Housing Group. Depending on when you move into the property, will determine how long is left of the defects liability period. The end date will be provided in your information pack please make a note of it.

MORE INFORMATION ON THE DEFECTS LIABILITY PERIOD

The developer will only attend to a defect providing it is a genuine defect repair with the fitting or workmanship.

Near the end of the 12 months defects liability period* you will be contacted by Platform to check if there are any outstanding defect repairs in your home. They will arrange a date for a final End of Defect (EOD) inspection with representatives from Platform and the Developer. Any agreed genuine defect repairs noted as part of the EOD inspection visit will be listed and confirmed to you in writing. The Developer will have a cut off date to complete the agreed list ONLY and we will require your confirmation / signature that those items are subsequently complete.

Building Warranties

Our new homes also benefit from an extended building warranty, typically for 10 years from date of build.

This warranty may be supplied by different insurers for example NHBC (National House Building Council), LABC (Local Authority Building Control), Premier Guarantee to name a few. While similar, these insurers may have slight differences in their warranty provisions.

Please check your handover pack for more information on the specific warranty provider and the level of cover that is offered for your home.

*The 12 months defects liability period begins on the date the property is handed over by the developer/contractor to Platform Housing Group. Depending on when you move into the property, will determine how long is left of the defects liability period. The end date will be provided in your information pack please make a note of it.

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR DEFECTS LIABILITY PERIOD

To get the best out of your Defect Liability Period, please note:

It is your responsibility to ensure you report defect repairs directly to **Platform ONLY (and not to the Developer)** Feel free to send any supporting photographic and or video evidence relating to your defect repair.

It is Platform's responsibility to log your reported defect repair on our internal systems and pass them to the Developer on your behalf. Platform will also proactively progress outstanding defect repairs with the Developer on a regular basis.

It is Platform's responsibility to let you know if you have logged a repair that is not considered a genuine defect, which may be cancelled from our system and the Developer will not attend.

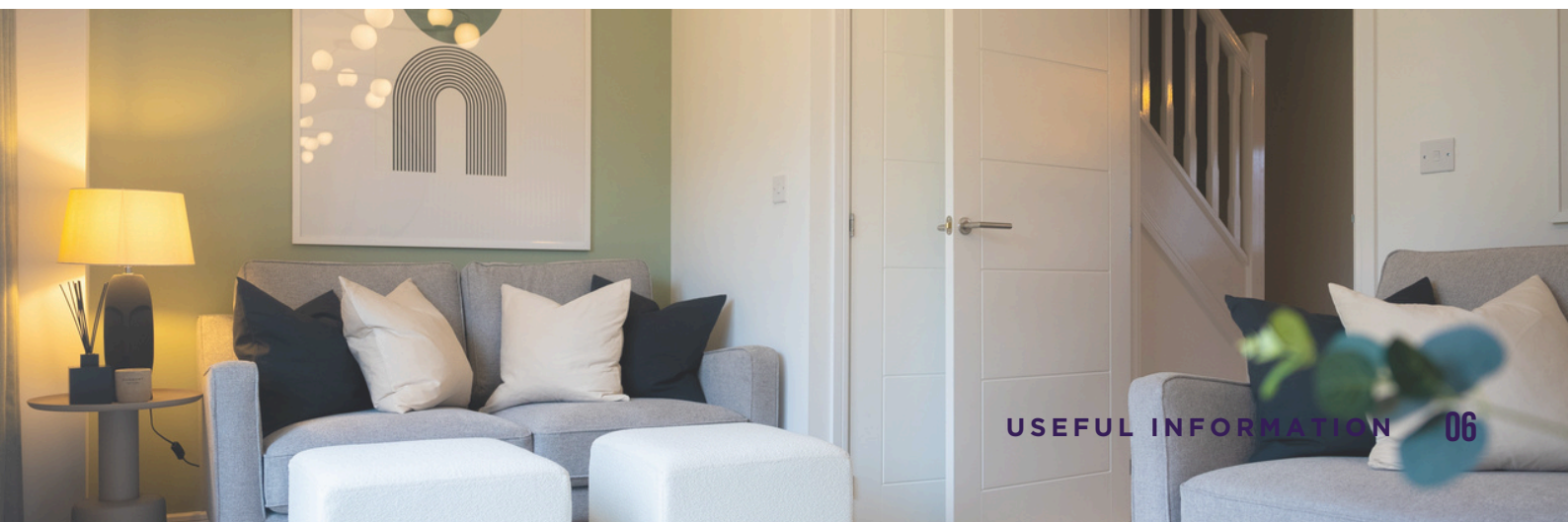
It is the Developer's responsibility to contact you to arrange attendance to complete any genuine defect repairs It is your responsibility to grant access for genuine defect repairs to be completed.

It is your responsibility to ensure defect repairs are reported by the end date of your Defect Liability Period. Platform and the Developer will only consider defects up to that end date (unless they have been agreed as part of the End of Defect Inspection).

It is Platform's responsibility to arrange a final End of Defect Inspection date with you and ensure any agreed items from the visit are completed by the Developer and agreed as complete with you.

For the full Defects and Initial Repairs Period Policy, visit our website here >

Reminder: After the defects liability period has ended you are responsible for ongoing repairs and maintenance of your home. Please check your lease for further information on your responsibilities as well as ours



YOUR GUIDE TO:

INSIDE YOUR NEW HOME



THE DRYING-OUT PROCESS AND SHRINKAGE

New-build properties hold a lot of moisture when they're first built due to the amount of painting and plastering the property goes through. This means that new-build properties can benefit from experiencing an initial drying-out process.

The drying out time varies and is typically between 9-12 months. We recommend allowing at least 12 months before any redecoration.

While this moisture will dry out naturally over time, you can help the process by having the heating on a low level while making use of trickle vents and windows to air the property out.

This process should even be applied to rooms that aren't regularly used. Generally, this will avoid any long-term issues, allowing building materials to naturally shift into their settled state.

After your home dries out, you are responsible for addressing any minor cracks and "nail pops", it is easy to do and any DIY shops can advise of suitable products.

TIPS



Take care when hanging anything on your walls in a new build home



Leave a gap between your furniture and walls and keep your home at an even temperature



As moisture evaporates and your home is heated, cracks may appear. These aren't defects unless they're larger than the width of a £1 coin.



These are small areas of raised plaster in locations where screws hold the plasterboard in place e.g. ceilings and walls. 'nail pops' are common and normal in the drying out process, they are not classed as defects.

DAMP AND CONDENSATION MOULD

Every room in every property is susceptible to mould if not properly prevented.

STEPS TO AVOID MOULD

1

Keep the heat on at a low level throughout the entire property. Utilise the trickle vents on your windows to ensure constant ventilation. The trickle vents ensure the air around the window is cooled, preventing condensation on the window.

2

Utilise the extractor fans you have throughout the property, such as in the kitchen or bathroom, to avoid a buildup of moisture.

3

Make use of warm weather to dry your washing, as radiators or airers can lead to moisture build-up. If you have a vented dryer, ensure the appropriate filter is leading outside of the property.

If you find mould in your property due to a large concentration of condensation, it's critical to try and treat it as quickly as possible.

TREATING MOULD IN YOUR HOME

STEP 1. Wipe the area with a cloth and hot water first. Then use a mould remover and treatment (use a recognised brand and follow the manufacturer's instructions).

STEP 2. Wash any clothes that have damp on them. Shampoo any carpets that have mould on them. Use anti-fungal paint on affected walls

STEP 3. Use moisture traps, they're cheap to buy and ideal for wardrobes and cupboards.

For a range of guidance, support and contacting us about damp and condensation mould, please visit our website here >

LOFT INSULATION

Lofts are naturally prone to condensation. It is not advised to use the space for storage.

Ventilation is vital for preventing mould. Packing the space with heavy or bulky items can affect the benefits of ventilation. This means anything in the space is open to mould damage.

MAINTAINING YOUR KITCHEN APPLIANCES

If you receive any kitchen appliances with your home - typically a cooker, hob and extractor - this is covered under a 2-year warranty with the manufacturer. You will have received these guarantees for your safe keeping.

If your appliances breakdown, you should contact the manufacturer directly as per your warranty. They will advise of any next steps and may arrange a home visit if necessary

Before you make the call, check that it isn't an issue within the home such as the water or gas supply being off, as you may experience a call-out charge for a relatively easy fix.

To make things easier, have the model number and the serial number of the appliance to hand.

Remember that it is best to refrain from disposing of oils or fats down your kitchen sink, as this avoids blockages that you'd need to clear yourself.

REMINDER: IF YOU ARE A SHARED OWNER, IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU REGISTER YOUR APPLIANCES DIRECTLY WITH THE RELEVANT MANUFACTURER ONCE YOU MOVE INTO YOUR NEW HOME.



YOUR GUIDE TO:

STAYING SAFE IN YOUR HOME



ELECTRICAL SAFETY

Any electrical work should always be carried out by a qualified electrician, mainly for safety reasons. If you're carrying out any DIY, be wary of electrical wires around the house. They can be hidden in walls and ceilings, which is why we recommend using a detector as damage to wires is not covered under our warranty.

WHAT ARE TRIP SWITCHES?

Modern electrical circuits include circuit breakers sometimes referred to as trip switches. If a fault develops in the circuit, the switch trips and breaks the circuit, ensuring no further issues develop. If a trip switch is triggered you'll notice the electricity for that circuit is switched off, such as your downstairs lights or upstairs sockets. Anything can cause a fault including broken appliances such as hair straighteners, faulty sockets, overloaded circuits or blown light bulbs.

Once you're happy the issue has been resolved - such as an appliance being removed or a light bulb replaced - you can flick the tripped switch back on and the electricity should resume as normal.



DEALING WITH SUSPECTED GAS LEAKS

If you become aware of a suspected gas leak, you need to take **immediate action**.

1. Turn the gas off at the meter (you can do this by locating the gas safety shut off valve/lever. Pull this lever down until it stops, usually a 90 degree turn)
2. Leave the house immediately
3. Phone the national gas emergency number on **0800 111 9999** or text **0800 371 787**





MAINTAINING YOUR SMOKE ALARMS

Smoke alarms play a key role in saving hundreds of lives a year and new homes come with them fitted as standard. Most alarms are mains fitted with a battery backup and it's best practice to test your alarms once a week by pressing the test button.

If you notice periodic beeping coming from a smoke alarm, this means the battery is running out and needs replacing. This is not covered by Platform and would need to be performed by yourself.

YOUR GUIDE TO:

CARING FOR YOUR HOME



CARING FOR YOUR HOT WATER AND HEATING SYSTEMS

Your boiler manufacturer will provide a 2-year warranty from when your home is build complete. You can check the dates of this warranty within your warranty documentation. A certified, gas-safe maintenance engineer should carry out any maintenance that your central heating boiler requires. This service is vital for ensuring you qualify for the second year of warranty.

Please note if you are a shared owner it is your responsibility to register your boiler with the manufacturer in order to benefit from the two year warranty.

You are also responsible for arranging regular yearly servicing of your boiler.

In terms of the entire heating system in your home, you may need to 'bleed' the air from your radiators from time to time. An easy way to check if this needs to be done is if your radiators are cold at the top. Once they've been bled, you may need to re-pressurise the system as a loss of pressure can lead to the system shutting down.

HOW TO REPRESSURISE YOUR BOILER

To repressurise the system, you have to connect the filling loop between the valves on the water and heating supply. Open the valves and wait until the pressure gauge resets between the minimum and maximum levels. Once this is done, turn the valves off.

Watch our tutorial videos below:

[How to bleed your radiators video tutorial >](#)

[How to repressurise your boiler video tutorial >](#)

PLUMBING

If you're performing DIY around the home, consider pipework that may be hidden in the walls. It's always recommended to use a detector to avoid causing any damage to the plumbing. Damaged pipework due to DIY or negligence is not covered by the warranty and could result in your belongings experiencing water damage.

A great tip is to check all of the waste connections on your appliances, as these can become loose and leak. Likewise, identify your water mains stop tap as if you need this in future it's likely to be in an urgent situation.

DEALING WITH OVERFLOWS

If you notice water leaking from the overflow on your toilet, this could indicate that there is a fault either in the cistern or the water storage system.

Toilets have an internal overflow and if there is a fault with this, you'll notice water continues to run even when it's not in use. This can obviously result in water wastage, which can lead to costly utility bills.

In this instance, you may try to fix it yourself, but we recommend calling a professional.



CARING FOR YOUR BATHROOM

A common reason for blockages in the bathroom is soap residue and hair. Ensure you regularly clean your basin, sink and bath plugholes using domestic cleaning products. This mitigates slow drainage and the potential for blockages.

In terms of toilets, many new toilets are designed to meet environmental standards in an effort to reduce water wastage. In many cases, this means the strength of the flush is also reduced.

There are several types of items that should not be flushed down the toilet and should be disposed of in an appropriate, alternative manner.

These include:

- Nappies
- Cleaning wipes
- Sanitary products
- Cooking oil
- Bulky items

Please note: If these items are found to be the result of blockages you may be responsible or charged for putting this right.

OUR TIPS



Regular cleaning and the use of drain unblocker can solve slow drainage or a potential blockage.



Refrain from disposing anything inappropriate down your toilet to avoid blockages.



INTERNAL DOORS AND FIRE DOORS

If you decorate your new home with carpets or flooring, make sure that you trim around the bottom of any internal doors.

If you have fire doors, you shouldn't trim around the bottom. Also remember that they're heavier than standard internal doors and for your safety, they should not be propped open.



YOUR GUIDE TO:

OUTSIDE MAINTENANCE



MAINTAINING YOUR DRIVEWAY

If your home has a new driveway, it can take several months for it to reach 'full strength' as the tarmac settles. Remember that tarmac is soft when it is laid and can become soft again during hot weather, which can impact how long it takes to harden fully.

It's advisable to avoid placing any extremely heavy objects - such as skips or building materials - on the driveway until a few months have passed.

While smaller cracks are not uncommon with a new drive, not giving it plenty of time to settle may result in larger structural damage.

Other damage can occur if your car has power steering and the wheels are turned when the vehicle isn't moving. This can cause scuffs or dents to the surface. During heavy rainfall, you may experience 'ponding', which usually disperses in a few hours and is not classed as a defect.

HOW TO MANAGE OUTDOOR TAPS

If you have an outdoor tap, it's important that you isolate or switch off the water supply before winter, as this removes the potential of it freezing and either bursting or causing serious leaks.

DRAINAGE ACCESS

All properties tend to have inspection chambers and rodding points (sometimes referred to as rodding eyes) that allow access to drainage systems below ground.

These allow professionals to clear blockages and it's extremely important these access points are not blocked or covered.



NATURAL DRAINAGE IN GARDENS

When your home is being constructed, the existing ground level is typically reduced as the topsoil is removed. This allows the foundations to be built and once they're complete, the ground level of the garden is brought up to a suitable level using subsoil and topsoil.

This 'loose fill' may hold rainwater that slowly drains away and over two or three years the soil will naturally settle. This allows for natural drainage and over time, the turf will become more established while the moisture content of the soil will be reduced.

You will need to ensure that people don't walk on the turf until the underlying soil has settled and becomes firm. This process usually takes around a month but can vary depending on the weather or soil conditions. Any dents or hollows that are caused by walking on new turf will not disappear and can be difficult to repair.

The ground your property is built on will contain stones, which may be brought to the surface with natural movement of the soil beneath the turf.

If your garden gets waterlogged following heavy rain, do not walk on the grass until the water has completely drained. Use boards to walk on and spike the grass with deep holes at regular intervals with a garden fork to assist with drainage.

REMINDER

You are responsible for looking after and maintaining your garden. Whilst issues in gardens are not generally classed as defects; if you have followed the advice in our garden maintenance guide and still have a waterlogged garden that:

- Does not drain away naturally, and is
- Within 3 metres of your home

Please contact us.

You can find useful information on managing your garden within our New Home Garden Maintenance Guide below:

[Download New Home Garden Maintenance Guide >](#)

MAINTAINING YOUR LAWN OR TURF

Aside from the property itself, your new home will also likely have a new lawn that requires extra care and attention initially.

During extremely hot weather, it's critical that a new lawn or new turf is hydrated daily. Signs that your garden isn't receiving enough care are discolouration of the grass or gaps appearing between the turf.

Depending on when you move, you may want to keep the turf unused to avoid issues further down the line, 2 weeks over summer or 4 weeks over autumn/winter is usually recommended.

Since your new lawn is probably put together using topsoil or subsoil, it may need help to establish itself properly. You can use a fork to create more drainage and help speed the process up.

TOP TIPS

- 1.** Feed the grass regularly with specialist products

- 2.** Don't let the grass grow too long and don't cut it too short

- 3.** The best way to keep your grass at the right height is to set your mower at the highest setting for the first few cuts



MAINTAINING GUTTERING

Keeping your gutter clean and free of debris is an easy way of avoiding blockages that cause further damage to the property.

Guttering should be cleaned once a year. Keep an eye out for wet patches on the wall below the guttering or pipes, as this may be a sign that they need cleaning.

WHAT IS EFFLORESCENCE?

With your new home, you may notice white marks that periodically appear on your external walls. This is known as efflorescence and is due to the natural seepage of salts from the bricks and mortar.

You can remove this with a stiff brush although we wouldn't advise you to attempt this as it can sometimes result in making the issue worse. Over time, natural elements such as rain will generally reduce the frequency and appearance of efflorescence.



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