

OFFICE OF FAIR TRADING



Please provide answers for your business and not the group that it belongs to.

Please also note that where the term 'last year' is used, you should understand this to be *your business's most recent financial year*.

Where this questionnaire refers to 'home-buyers' it should be understood to mean private individuals buying a new home.

Section 1: General information

Q1.1 Business name:

Q1.2 Please could you confirm your address details:

Building number and name (if applicable)

Street number and name

Town/City

Postcode

Q1.3 Contact name:

Q1.4 Contact telephone number:

Q1.5 Contact email address:

Q1.6 If your company is part of a larger group, please provide the name of this group:

Q1.7 What was your business's home building turnover for last year?

£

Q1.8 Which of the following regions does your business build new homes in?

- North East (Tees Valley, Durham, Northumberland and Tyne & Wear)*
- North West (Cumbria, Cheshire, Greater Manchester, Lancashire & Merseyside)*
- Yorkshire and the Humber (East Riding & N. Lincolnshire, North/South/West Yorks)*
- East Midlands (Derbyshire, Notts, Leicestershire, Rutland, N. hamptonshire & Lincs)*
- West Midlands (Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Warks, Salop & Staffs West. Mids)*
- East (E. Anglia, Beds, Herts, Essex)*
- London*
- South East (Berks, Bucks and Oxon, Surrey, Sussex, Hamps, Isle of Wight, Kent)*
- South West (Gloucs, Wilts, Dorset, Somerset, Cornwall, Isles of Scilly, Devon)*
- Wales*
- Scotland*
- Northern Ireland*

Q1.9 Please indicate which trade associations your business is a member of:

- The House Builders Association (HBA)*
- The Home Builders Federation (HBF)* Please answer Q 1.10-1.11
- Homes for Scotland* Please answer Q 1.12-1.13
- The Federation of Master Builders (FMB)*
- The National Federation of Builders*
- The Constructors Confederation*
- The British Property Federation*
- The Confederation of British Industry*

Other (please specify):

If you are a member of the Home Builders Federation please answer Questions 1.10-1.11
If you are a member of Homes for Scotland please answer Questions 1.12-1.13
Otherwise, please go to Section 2

Q1.10 Do you follow the HBF Customer Service Code of Conduct?

Yes

Go to Q2.1

No

Please answer the next question

Q1.11 Why do you not follow the HBF Customer Service Code of Conduct?

Not heard of it

It's not flexible enough

It's too confusing

Use own code of conduct

Other (please specify):

Go to Q2.1

Q1.12 Do you follow the Homes for Scotland code of conduct?

Yes

Go to Q2.1

No

Please answer the next question

Q1.13 Why do you not follow Homes for Scotland code of conduct?

Not heard of it

It's not flexible enough

It's too confusing

Use own code of conduct

Other (please specify):

Section 2: Warranties

Q2.1 Please indicate which of the following providers you have obtained building warranties from in the last year:

The National House Building Council (NHBC)

Zurich Municipal

LABC

Premier Guarantee

BLP

Other (please specify):

Q2.2 If you use more than one provider, please also indicate what percentage of warranties you obtained from each supplier

The National House Building Council (NHBC) .	<input type="text"/>	%
Zurich Municipal.....	<input type="text"/>	%
LABC.....	<input type="text"/>	%
Premier Guarantee	<input type="text"/>	%
BLP	<input type="text"/>	%
Total	100%	

Q2.3 What are the main reason you use this/these warranty providers?

	<i>NHBC</i>	<i>Zurich</i>	<i>LABC</i>	<i>Premier Guar.</i>	<i>BLP</i>	<i>Other</i>
Previous experience of the service provided	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This provider is cheapest	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Home-buyers request this provider	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The provider's market share	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The provider's reputation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
This provider provides the best protection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify):

Q2.4 How many claims deemed valid by the warranty provider, did your business receive under warranty last year?

Section 3: Building control

If you do not build homes in England, please go to Section 4

Q3.1 Please indicate which of the following providers you have obtained Building Control from in the last year:

The National House Building Council (NHBC) .	<input type="text"/>
Zurich Municipal.....	<input type="text"/>
Other approved inspectors.....	<input type="text"/>
LABC.....	<input type="text"/>
Total	<input type="text"/>

Q3.2 If you use more than one provider, please also indicate what percentage of warranties you obtained from each supplier:

The National House Building Council (NHBC) .	<input type="text"/>	%
Zurich Municipal	<input type="text"/>	%
Other approved inspectors	<input type="text"/>	%
LABC	<input type="text"/>	%
Total	100%	

If you use the same provider for warranties and Approved Inspector building control, please answer Q3.3, otherwise, please go to Q4.1

Q3.3 What advantages are there in using the same supplier for warranties and Approved Inspector building control?

Section 4: Consumer Issues

Q4.1 Thinking about individual residential units built last year, approximately what proportion of your new build homes are 'off-plan'(2)? %

(2) Property sold to a buyer before work has started or before building work has been completed

Q4.2 Does your business ever recommend particular solicitors, conveyancers or other legal advisors to home-buyers?

Yes
 No

Q4.3 With the exception of price and any other variable financial figure, do you ever negotiate on your contract terms/conditions/missives?

Yes
 No

Q4.4 Thinking about the individual residential units which your business completed building last year: for what proportion of these were your contract conditions/terms/missives varied or amended?

1% or less
 More than 1%, but less than 5%
 More than 5%, but less than 10%
 More than 10%

Q4.5 Please indicate which of the two following options best explains your prices:

Fixed

Open to negotiation

Q4.6 Please indicate what monies the home-buyer must pay before paying the final balance:

None

Reservation fees

A contractual deposit

Other (please specify):

Q4.7 How much is the typical reservation fee you charge home-buyers?

No reservation fee

Less than £250

£250 - £499

£500 - £999

£1,000 - £1,999

£2,000 or more

Other (please specify):

Q4.8 How much is the typical contractual deposit you charge home-buyers as a percentage of the total sale value?

No deposit

Less than 5%

5-9%

10-14%

15% or more

Other (please specify):

Q4.9 How do you calculate the moving-in dates you provide when contracts are exchanged?

Q4.10 When you supply home-buyers with moving-in dates at the time of the exchange of contracts, what format do these tend to take?

- A specified year (e.g. 2008)*
- A specified year and season (e.g. Spring 2008)*
- A specified year and month (e.g. March 2008)*
- An exact date (e.g. 20th March 2008)*

Q4.11 Thinking again about individual residential units built in the last year and considering moving-in dates supplied to home-buyers at the time of the exchange of contracts; approximately what proportion of moving-in dates has your business met?

 %

Q4.12a Which of the following would your company typically do for a new home-buyer if the build of their property wasn't completed within six weeks of the moving-in date given to them at the time of the exchange of contracts?

- Nothing*
- Reimburse some of the money paid*
- Pay for temporary accomodation*
- Pay for storage fees*
- Provide free upgrades of fixtures and fittings*
- Refund reservation fee*
- Refund deposit*
- Allow contract to be cancelled without penalty*

Other (please specify):

Q4.12b Which of the following would your company typically do for a new home-buyer if the build of their property wasn't completed within three months of the moving-in date given to them at the time of the exchange of contracts?

- Nothing*
- Reimburse some of the money paid*
- Pay for temporary accomodation*
- Pay for storage fees*
- Provide free upgrades of fixtures and fittings*
- Refund reservation fee*
- Refund deposit*
- Allow contract to be cancelled without penalty*

Other (please specify):

Q4.13 What quality assurances systems does your business have in place?

- Clerk of works*
- Snagging Company*
- Specific site manager*
- Handover process to sales department*
- Hand over process to home-buyer*
- In-house inspection system*
- Senior manager review*

Other (please specify):

Q4.14 What after-sales customer service do you have in place?

- 24 hour response*
- On site caretaker/estate manager*
- Regular visits*
- None*

Other (please specify):

Q4.15 How many complaints from home-buyers did your business receive last year?

Q4.16 Please estimate what proportion of these complaints were resolved within ...

one month of the complaint being received ...	<input type="text"/>	%
two months of the complaint being received .	<input type="text"/>	%
three months of the complaint being received	<input type="text"/>	%
more than three months of the complaint being received.....	<input type="text"/>	%
Total		100%

Q4.17 Would you be willing to be contacted by the Office of Fair Trading again, if we have any further questions, or queries about the answers you have provided in this questionnaire?

Yes

No

The remaining questions are about planning and competition in England. If you build new houses in England, please complete these questions, providing answers only based on those subsidiaries of your group which operate in England.

If your business does not build new homes in England, then we do not need you to answer the remaining questions. Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Please return the questionnaire by post to our administrator AMS using the pre-paid envelope provided.

**Advanced Mailing Solutions
Eon House, Earn Avenue, Bellshill, ML4 3LP**

Q5.3 In your experience, how significant are the following factors in causing unnecessary delay to the planning application process?

	<i>Very significant</i>	<i>Some what significant</i>	<i>Some what in-significant</i>	<i>Very in-significant</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Local Planning Authority administrative efficiency	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intentional delay by the applicant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intentional delay by the Local Planning Authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The Local Planning Office's staff capacity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Involvement of statutory consultees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Involvement of councillors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
overly burdensome information requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unclear planning policies (nationally or locally)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unrealistic negotiating positions for the conditions to attach to the permission (including s106)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of adequate local physical infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Involvement of the Planning Inspectorate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other issues which cause unnecessary delay to the planning process (please specify):

Section 6: Competition and planning issues

Q6.1 Please indicate which of the following you consider to be the main barrier(s) to expanding your business: (please mark a maximum of three options under each column)

	<i>Increasing output in areas where you currently operate</i>	<i>Expanding output into new areas</i>
Difficulties/uncertainty in obtaining planning permission	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Difficulties gaining access to /acquiring land	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Difficulties accessing capital/financial resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Difficulties accessing/acquiring suppliers and /or raw materials	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shortage of skilled labour	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of planning experts/experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Delays created by the planning process	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of relationships with land owners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of relationships with local planning authorities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of relationships with local building contractors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of construction expertise/experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Delays in provision of infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fulfilling Section 106(4) requirements is too costly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No barriers to expansion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other (please specify):

(4) Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 allows a local planning authority (LPA) to enter into a legally-binding agreement or planning obligation, with a land developer over a related issue. The obligation is sometimes termed as a 'Section 106 agreement'. Such agreements can cover almost any relevant issue and can include sums of money. Possible examples of S106 agreements could be:

** The developer will transfer ownership of an area of woodland to a LPA with a suitable fee to cover its future maintenance;*

** The local authority will restrict the development of an area of land, or permit only specified operations to be carried out on it in the future e.g. amenity use.*

Q6.2 How many plots(5) does your business hold within its landbank on sites where construction has not yet started that have...

outline planning permission?

detailed planning permission?

(5) a plot being the land on which a housing unit is to be built

Q6.3 How many plots(5) awaiting construction does your business hold within its landbank on sites where the site itself is under construction?

Q6.4 What is the total area of land that does not have planning permission that your business holds within its landbank (not including land held under option or conditional contract)...

that is allocated for housing development? *hectares/acres (please circle which used)*

that is unallocated?..... *hectares/acres (please circle which used)*

Q6.5 What is the total area of land that your business has an option to purchase provided certain conditions are met?

hectares/acres (please circle which used)

Q6.6 What is the total area of land which your business has under conditional contract(6)?

hectares/acres (please circle which used)

Q6.7 What is the largest site you would consider developing?

- Smaller than 0.1 hectares*
- 0.1 - 1 hectares*
- 1-2 hectares*
- 3-5 hectares*
- 6-10 hectares*
- Larger than 10 hectares*

Q6.8 How many residential units have you completed building in the last year?

Q6.9a How many residential units have you completed building in the last ten years?

Q6.10 Has your business been involved in drawing up the Local Development Framework (7)...

- in none of the local authorities in which you operate?*
- in some of the local authorities in which you operate?*
- in all of the local authorities in which you operate?*
- Don't know*

(7) A 'Local Development Framework' is a portfolio of documents put together by a Local Planning Authority, setting out the spatial planning strategy for the local authority area.

Q6.11 Has your business ever had involvement with Local Development Frameworks in Local Authorities in England at a time when your business did not own land or options on land in those local authorities?

- Yes
 No
 Don't know

Q6.12 Has your business been involved in drawing up the Regional Spatial Strategy (8)...

- in none of the Regions in which you operate?
 in some of the Regions in which you operate?
 in all of the Regions in which you operate?
 Don't know

(8) A Regional Spatial Strategy is a plan, drawn up by a Regional Planning Body, that provides a spatial framework for the region for a fifteen to twenty year period. It is intended to inform the preparation of local development documents.

Q6.13 Have you had housing developments delayed by delays in obtaining infrastructure?

- Yes
 No

Q6.14 Which infrastructure elements cause you most delays?
(Please mark a maximum of three options)

- Water/Sewage
 Gas and electric
 Roads/Highways
 Public transport
 Telecommunications
 Health care
 Local education facilities (schools, nurseries, etc.)
 Public spaces (including parks)

Other (please specify):

Q6.15 What do you consider to be the optimum number of residential units to be sold on a typical site in one year?

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