

# National new home customer satisfaction survey



## Homeowner satisfaction with new build homes at all time high

This year's industry Customer Satisfaction Survey results show that an overwhelming 91% of new home buyers would 'recommend their builder to a friend' - the highest since the survey began in 2006 and this comes despite the impact of the pandemic. This is the fourth successive year that satisfaction levels have improved reflecting the intense industry focus on build quality and customer service of recent years.

Of those who responded, 92% said they would buy a new build home again.

With the impending introduction of a new industry code of practice and a New Homes Ombudsman Service - moves supported wholeheartedly by the industry - the purchasers of new build homes can be increasingly confident in their builder and the product they are delivering.

The improvements in satisfaction levels come despite the challenges presented by the coronavirus pandemic that saw sites close, construction work and sales processes delayed and builders unable to carry out some aftercare work once customers had moved in.

After unacceptable falls in satisfaction levels as volumes increased up to 2017, driving improvements in customer service levels became an absolute priority for the industry. Whilst volumes have continued to increase the industry has been through a massive recruitment and training drive to ensure it has the capacity to deliver high quality homes of the standard customers quite rightly expect.

Every new home is a bespoke product, in the main built on location by numerous trades. The use of new, modern methods of construction and technologies, including increasing instances of parts of the home being constructed off-site, is helping deliver higher and more consistent levels of quality and finish. Despite this, there will inevitably be some aftercare required. Builders have worked hard

to improve these services and work closely with customers to identify any 'snags' and then address them in a timely manner. Delivering homes and levels of service that ensure consistent levels of customer satisfaction requires commitment from boardroom to site. Individually, companies have reviewed their internal processes to focus on providing a high-quality product and a seamless customer journey.

Whilst customer service levels for new build buyers now compare favourably with all other sectors and products, the industry is committed to going further.

A new industry code of practice, to be introduced from the second half of 2021, will place additional requirements on builders including strict timelines for addressing any issues that arise. Once introduced, an independent New Homes Ombudsman Service will provide strengthened redress for buyers not happy with their home or the service their builder provides.

This year's survey covers the 12 months from October 2019 to September 2020. In total 76,300 questionnaires were sent out during the survey year. This is a drop on last year, a reflection of the impact coronavirus had on the number of homes completed and sold. 62% (47,470) of the forms were returned, an extremely strong response rate for a mixed methodology survey. The scale of the survey, believed to be one of the most comprehensive continuous industry research exercises in the country, ensures that its results provide a robust and accurate representation of industry and builder performance.



## Key benefits of new homes

### Why buy new?

A new home is fresh, bright, clean and untouched by previous owners' choice of décor. It is a blank canvas on which the homeowner and their family can stamp their own style and personality. New homes are also much more energy efficient than older homes. This means they are better for the environment but can also save their owners hundreds of pounds a year in energy bills. And with a new home there is no need to factor in the costs of restoration or DIY. Research shows that the average spend on home improvements in a second hand property is almost £13.5k.

### Lots of ways to buy!

Sometimes, buying a house can seem like an impossible dream, but with new build there are different options. Many house builders now offer part exchange schemes whereby they purchase a buyer's existing home; whilst the Government's Help to Buy scheme has enabled around 300,000 people to buy a new build home with a 5% deposit, over 80% of whom have been first time buyers. Options like this help make homeownership more affordable and achievable. Plus, new build first time buyers aren't at the mercy of a long chain and the threat of it collapsing!

### High build quality

New homes are built to a higher standard than ever before and our customer satisfaction survey results reflect this. From state-of-the-art kitchens to modern double and triple glazing, the quality of a new home compared to old is evident in many ways.

### Designed for modern living

New homes are designed for modern living and incorporate a range of modern designs and technologies to provide for the needs of today's home owner. To upgrade an older house to the standards of a new build home could cost up to £45,000.

### Cheaper to run

New homes built in the UK are roughly 50% cheaper to run per year than the equivalent Victorian house. That could mean an annual saving of £440 for a 1-bed ground floor flat, and £1,410 for a 4-bed detached house.

### Environmentally friendly

Energy efficiency standards in new homes are some of the best in the world and are continuing to improve further with challenging Government targets in place for new homes moving forward. On average, new build homes are already roughly 65% more energy efficient than an equivalent Victorian house.

### Peace of mind

Peace of mind is more than just knowing you're buying quality and getting great value for money. It's also about being confident in the product you're buying and knowing that you're protected should anything happen. New home buyers are protected by their builder's guarantee for the first two years as well as an independent 10-year structural warranty. The coming year will see a new industry code of practice and a New Homes Ombudsman service introduced. These will place considerably more responsibilities on builders in terms of their customer service requirements and stronger redress for any buyers that do have an issue with their new home.



## Customer Satisfaction: Background

The annual survey is one of the most comprehensive, large-scale surveys of its type carried out in the UK. It began in response to recommendations in the Barker Review of Housing Supply in 2004 and is a self-completion census of new home purchasers. Since its launch, well over half a million survey returns have been received making it one of the most comprehensive continuous industry research exercises in the country.

Scores in all question areas are now significantly higher than when the survey launched. The period between 2013 and 2017, where housing supply levels increased rapidly saw falls in satisfaction levels, but in the years since, scores have improved consistently. The survey has provided a barometer for the industry and for individual builders to gauge performance and drive improvements and is seen more widely as a measure of company performance generally.

The statistical methodology used in the analysis of this survey has been approved by the Statistical Services Centre, Reading. The methodology is the same as in the first survey, published in 2006, for which

Ipsos MORI acted as a consultant. Industry results are weighted by builder to take account of the number of eligible homes they have built in the year. Individual company results are not weighted.

In 2017, Ipsos MORI conducted a full review of the survey. They concluded that the survey approach and processes are consistent with best practice and that it is 'fit for purpose'. Recommended changes were incorporated into the survey process. A further review of the survey is being carried out by Ipsos MORI in 2021.

Company star rating results for the 'Would you recommend your builder to a friend?' question are presented in bands as follows:

90%+	5 star
80% – 90%	4 star
70% – 80%	3 star
60% – 70%	2 star
50% – 60%	1 star

Stars were allocated according to the proportion responding 'Yes' (i.e. they would recommend their builder to a friend).

"As a family firm based in Perth for over 80 years, our reputation is everything but what's important to us is the evidence which backs up that reputation. We listen closely to feedback from those who matter the most – the customers who have chosen to invest in a Stephen home. Having their five-star endorsement is the ultimate recognition for what each and every one of us focus on day in, day out – getting both the product and our customer service right. Their feedback also shapes where we go from here, helping us shape and improve future design and development of our product and retaining that focus on customer satisfaction."

**John Stephen, Managing Director,  
A & J Stephen**

"As a family-owned house-builder that has built a reputation for quality since 1925, customer satisfaction is hugely important for us. "The fact that we have received a 'five-star' rating for eight consecutive years is a measure of how seriously we take the survey results. "Our teams are passionate about delivering the best service for our customers. We take huge pride in the rating and are thankful for the trust our customers place in us to support them at such an important time in their lives."

**Ed Monaghan, Chief Executive,  
Mactaggart & Mickel's Group**

"The whole team at Lioncourt is immensely proud to have received the five-star quality rating for the seventh successive year. Quality is a fundamental element of our business, an integral part of our culture and the driver behind everything that we do. This accolade demonstrates our dedication and commitment to achieving excellent standards year on year and delivering an exceptional service to our customers. All new recruits are indoctrinated into our quality first approach and we leave no stone unturned in our desire to develop quality homes, pleasing designs and attractive and thoughtful environments. Customers are at the forefront of our business and as a consequence the HBF Customer Satisfaction Index is a key measure of our success."

**Colin Cole, Chief Executive,  
Lioncourt Homes**

"We pride ourselves on being responsive to our customers' needs and our teams are trusted and empowered to go the extra mile to ensure the customer experience is first class from start to end. These will remain testing times, yet as we emerge from the pandemic, I am proud of our collective effort in the last 12 months to get hundreds of families moved into a Lovell home".

**Steve Coleby, Managing Director,  
Lovell Homes**

## HBF Results for the 2019/20 survey year

Home builder	Sample size	HBF Star Rating
A&J Stephen	29	★★★★★
Avant Homes	841	★★★★★
Barratt Developments	6637	★★★★★
Beal Developments	61	★★★★★
Bellway Homes	3954	★★★★★
Bloor Homes	1659	★★★★★
Burrington Estates	36	★★★★
CALA Homes	822	★★★★★
Cameron Homes	92	★★★★★
Castle Green Homes	47	★★★★★
Cavanna Homes	76	★★★★★
Churchill Retirement Living	158	★★★★★
Countryside Properties	872	★★★★★
Crest Nicholson	769	★★★★★
Croudace Homes	140	★★★★★
Cruden Homes	61	★★★★
Dandara Homes	94	★★★★★
Davidsons Developments	335	★★★★★
Duchy Homes	58	★★★★★
Eccleston Homes	21	★★★★
Galliers Homes	40	★★★★★
Gentoo	114	★★★★★
Greensquare Construction	29	★★★★★
Hayfield Homes	32	★★★★★
Hill	201	★★★★★
Jones Homes	162	★★★★★
Kebbell Development	25	★★★★★
Keepmoat	1082	★★★★★
Kier Living	384	★★★★
Lagan Homes	112	★★★★★
Lioncourt Homes	119	★★★★★
Lovell	476	★★★★★
Mactaggart & Mickel Homes	64	★★★★★
McCarthy & Stone	541	★★★★★
Miller Homes	1396	★★★★★
Morris Homes	361	★★★★★
Persimmon Homes	7151	★★★★
Redrow Homes	2062	★★★★★
Riverdale Developments	30	★★★★★
Russell Armer	21	★★★★★
St Modwen Homes	396	★★★★★
Stewart Milne	297	★★★★
Story Homes	380	★★★★★
Strata Group	151	★★★★★
Taylor Wimpey	4848	★★★★★
Thakeham Group	34	★★★★★
Vistry Homes	2039	★★★★★
William Davis	113	★★★★★

Large over 1000 surveys sent

Medium between 300 - 999 surveys sent

Small less than 300 surveys sent

# Key Findings

For the key question on which the company star ratings are based, 91% of respondents said that they would recommend their builder to a friend, up 2% on the previous year and 7% in the past four years. The industry achieved a Net Promoter Score of 42 from the survey, up 3 points on last year.

Other notable scores include; 80% of people said that they were satisfied with their builder in relation to their home being completed on time – this is despite there being inevitable delays to the construction and sales processes as a result of coronavirus; 84% satisfied with the service during the sales process; 83% satisfied with the condition of their home when they moved.

Over 81% of those polled said they were satisfied or very satisfied

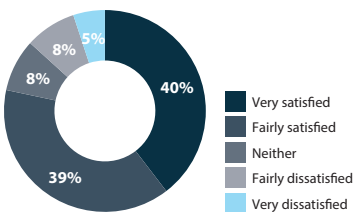
with the service provided by the builder after they had moved in- which again will have been impacted by coronavirus and the fact builders could not access customers homes for a period.

The design of new builds scores highly with 94% satisfied with the internal design of their new home and 89% with the external design.

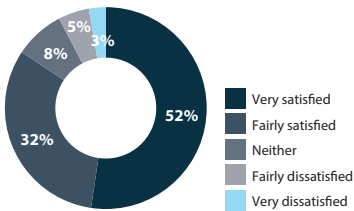
New homes are complex, bespoke products and 94% of people reported a 'snag' to their builder. This is in line with expectations as builders encourage buyers to do so upon moving in and are then required to fix them. Most are very minor such as paint drips, cupboard doors out of line etc. Over 70% of people said the number of snags they reported was less than or about what they expected.

Overall, 92% of buyers said they would buy a new build home again.

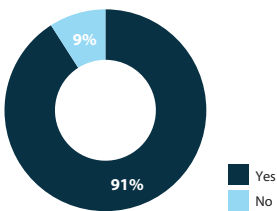
Taking everything into account, overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the standard of finish of your new home?



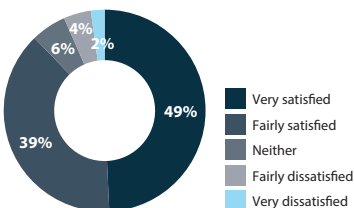
Taking everything into account, overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the external layout of your new home?



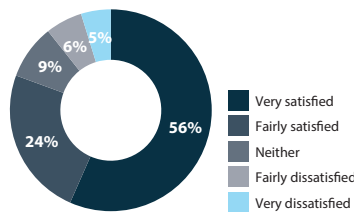
Would you recommend your builder to a friend?



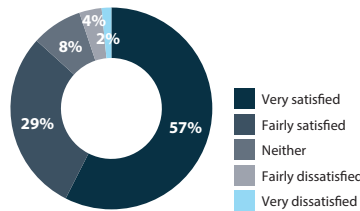
Taking everything into account, overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the quality of your home?



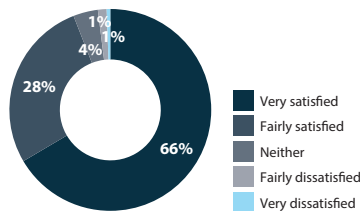
Taking everything into account, overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your builder in relation to completing the construction of your home on time?



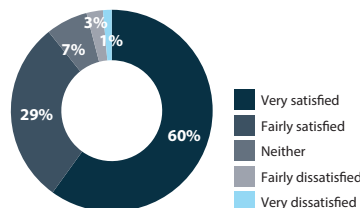
Taking everything into account, overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the information provided on the day you moved in?



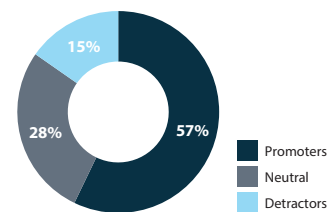
Taking everything into account, overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the internal design and layout of your new home?



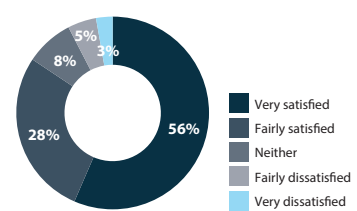
Taking everything into account, overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the external design of your new home?



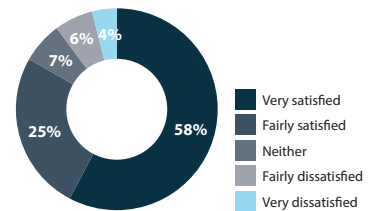
On a scale of 0-10 how likely would you be to recommend your builder to a friend? (Net Promoter Score)



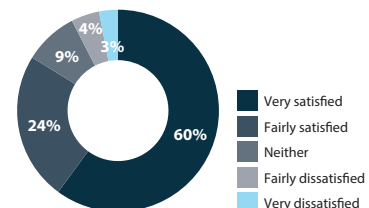
Taking everything into account, overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service provided by your builder during the buying process?



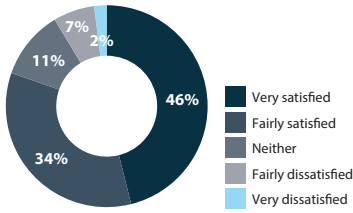
Taking everything into account, overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the cleanliness of your new home on the day you moved in?



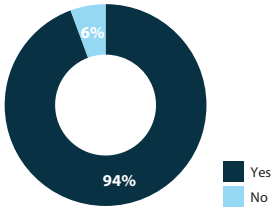
Taking everything into account, overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the handover process on the day you moved in?



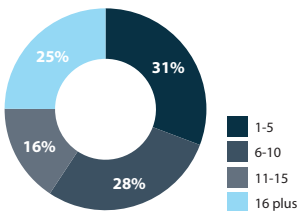
Taking everything into account, overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the provision of storage in your new home?



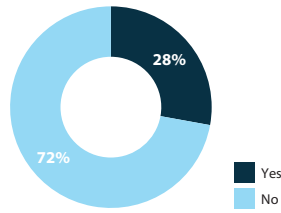
Have you reported any problems with your home (i.e. snags, defects) to your builder since you moved in?



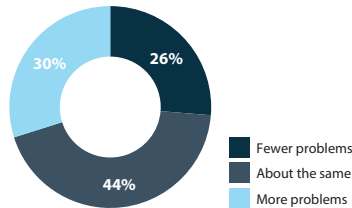
Approximately, how many problems have you reported to your builder?



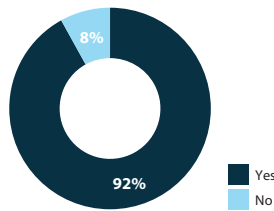
Have you ever bought a newly-built or newly-converted home before?



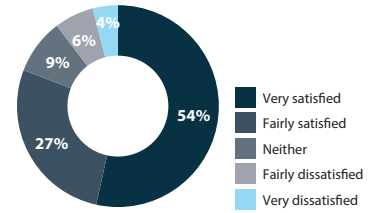
Was the number of problems in line with your expectations?



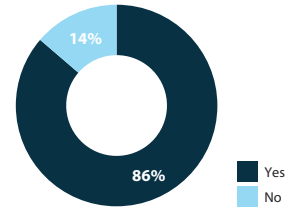
If you were to buy another property, would you buy a newly-built or newly-converted home again?



Taking everything into account, overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service provided by your builder after you moved in?



If you were to buy another property, would you buy a newly-built or newly-converted home again from the same builder?



## The benefits of new homes – homeowners have their say

"I would very much like to give a special mention to the Site Manager who I have to say has been exceptional throughout this process. His professionalism and speed to respond to the issues we have had has been excellent."

**Mr R, Wokingham**

"Very pleased with our new house, service and customer care has been excellent. A lovely place to live."

**Mr & Mrs B, Royston**

"Brilliant team, great communication and the very few minor issues which we reported were immediately resolved."

**Mr C & Mr P, Huddersfield**

"I would like to add all the builders, sales and staff we have dealt with have been really understanding and helpful."

**Mr S, Southam**

"Overall service was excellent including aftercare. Sales Advisors were very helpful."

**Mr W, Huntingdon**

"Communication is very good, always very responsive. The quality of work carried out so far is good."

**Mr C, Harlow**

"The after care has been great. Have been in touch constantly and always been very easy to get hold of. Any problems (very small ones) have been rectified very quickly with no fuss."

**Miss M, London**

"Move in day was the best part of the experience, house was ready for 1pm and the site manager was in the house waiting for us when we got there and gave us our demo/handover. He was excellent."

**Mr D, East Kilbride**

"Builder has been fantastic, any issues have been promptly resolved. Issues to be expected in new builds, the example of a great builder is represented by their ability to resolve those issues."

**Mr B, Horsham**

"Condition fantastic and impressed with welcome box. Home smelt lovely and welcoming. Pack with all documents was also very useful."

**Mr C, Warwick**

"Sales team and general building manager have been great. Solving any problems we had very quickly and efficiently!"

**Ms K & Mr M, West Thurrock**

"Excellent there was nothing that we were not informed about prior to moving in and all costs were correct and accurate."

**Miss E, Hook**