

Code For Sustainable Homes

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What is the Code for Sustainable Homes?

The code works by awarding new homes a star rating from 1 to 6, based on their performance against sustainability criteria which are combined to assess the overall environmental impact. One star is entry level indicating the development is above the minimum standards contained in the Building Regulations, and six stars is the highest, reflecting exemplary developments in terms of sustainability.

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What are the Sustainability Criteria?

The sustainability criteria by which new homes are measured are:

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Energy and CO2 Emissions – Operational Energy and resulting emissions of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere (both of which have minimum standards that must be met at each level of the code) The SAP calculation is used for this criteria.

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Water H2O & Surface Water Run-off – The change in surface water run-off patterns as a result of the development– The consumption of potable water from the public supply systems or other ground water resources (each of which have minimum standards to be met at entry level)

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Materials – The environmental impact of construction materials for key construction elements(no mandatory minimum standards).

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Waste – Waste generated as a result of the construction process and facilities encouraging recycling of domestic waste in the home (no mandatory minimum standards).

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Pollution – Pollution resulting from the operation of the dwelling (no mandatory minimum standards).

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Health and Well-Being – The effects that the dwelling’s design and indoor environment has on its occupants (no mandatory minimum standards).

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Management – Steps that have been taken to allow good management of the environmental impacts of the construction and operation of the home (no mandatory minimum standards).

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Ecology – The impact of the dwelling on the local ecosystem, bio-diversity and land use (no mandatory minimum standards).

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Is it compulsory to comply with the Code?

Yes. From 1 May 2008 it has been mandatory for all new homes to have a rating against the Code for Sustainable Homes. A house builder has two choices:

Either they can chose to build a Code home, have that home assessed against the Code and provide the home buyer with a Code certificate stating the star rating the home has achieved

Or

They can chose to build to current Building Regulations standards, not to pay for an assessment and instead download a free nil-rated certificate of non-assessment (also referred to as a nil-rating) to provide to the home buyer.

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How is the assessment carried out?

Like the SAP calculation the formal assessment is split into two stages, Design and Post Construction. However, we strongly recommend a pre-design meeting to ensure that you’re fully aware of the additional costs, specifications and reporting processes that will be required to achieve specific code levels.

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Why have a pre-Design meeting?

The Code for Sustainable Homes is complex, and many developers and architects are currently unsure how to best incorporate the demands of the scheme into their forthcoming plans. At a pre-design meeting we can talk you through the options available to you and you can select which criteria you wish to concentrate on to achieve your credits. This enables the design to be progressed with the chosen criteria at the forefront.

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What is the purpose of the Design Assessment?

The Design Assessment will gather together all the relevant information and provide you with a Code Rating that you will achieve if the construction follows the proposed course. If the assessment achieves a lower rating than you desire you

can make changes to improve the rating. As part of your Planning Application you may be asked to demonstrate that your proposal will meet a certain rating, some Planning Authorities will insist upon a Code 3 rating.

The Design Assessment is generally a paper exercise and will not always require a site visit.

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What is the purpose of the Post Construction Assessment?

The Post Construction Assessment will provide the final Code Rating for your new dwellings. It will be necessary to provide evidence that all the proposals made in the Design Assessment have been followed. This will include checking receipts for materials, waste collection etc and will also include a site inspection(s) for the development. The Code Rating may be adjusted upwards or downwards depending any changes made since the Design Assessment

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How much will it cost?

Each project is priced according to its complexity and location and we will therefore require some details of the scheme prior to providing a detailed quote. Pre-design meetings can be held at a location to suit you from £500 + VAT.

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