



2024 Impact Report





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Introduction

We are delighted to present our 2024 Impact Report, which shows the significant progress made during 2024 towards achieving our mission to improve the experience of buying and moving into a new home.

In just three years since the New Homes Quality Board was formed, and 18 months since the New Homes Ombudsman Service started to receive customer complaints, we have made a tremendous impact. This success has enabled us to increase our reach and do even more to help consumers.

Our highlights from 2024 include:

- *Over half of all new homes built in England, Scotland and Wales being protected by the Code.*
- *A positive government response to the Competition and Markets Authority Housebuilding Study, for a single mandatory code and New Homes Ombudsman.*
- *Delivering on our commitment to drive up standards by publishing best practice guidance on snagging and complaints handling.*
- *A diverse range of registered developers - from the largest through to micro businesses building one new home - recognising the benefits that we bring to both their customers and to their organisation.*
- *Launch of our programme of self-assessment and onsite audits to measure compliance with the New Homes Quality Code and support developers to make improvements.*
- *Our increasing profile in the national press, including the BBC, Daily Mail, Money Saving Expert and The Times - helping to raise consumer awareness.*

But doesn't stop there; our focus is to ensure that all new homebuyers receive the levels of protection and assurance offered through the NHQB framework - and this is our priority for 2025. Achieving a level playing field for all new homebuyers comes at, arguably, one of the most important times in housebuilding history, given the government's ambition for 1.5 million new homes to be built during this parliament.

Quality new homes and excellent customer service where customers are treated with respect, transparency and as a priority if and when things go wrong, must happen to avoid some of the issues previously experienced when housebuilding programmes are kick-started by government.

Our engagement with policymakers is ongoing, and we are looking forward to supporting government to put in place a single, mandatory consumer code and the New Homes Ombudsman Service on to a statutory footing.

None of this would have been possible without the developers recognising the value that the NHQB and the Code brings to their customers and their businesses, and without the Ombudsman providing a valued service to consumers - thank you all.

Our success is also directly linked to the hard work of our team. We have made extraordinary progress in 2024. We would like to personally thank every team member and our Board for their energy, commitment and consistency in driving our organisation forward.

Rob Brighouse
Chair

Emma Toms
Chief Executive

2024
HIGHLIGHTS

54%
NEW HOMES
PROTECTED

POSITIVE
GOVERNMENT
RESPONSE

PUBLISHING
BEST
PRACTICE
GUIDANCE

LAUNCHING
ONSITE
AUDITS

INCREASED
CUSTOMER
AWARENESS

SUPPORTING
DEVELOPERS
TO MAKE
IMPROVEMENTS



NHQB improving the experience of buying and moving into a new home

Our Purpose

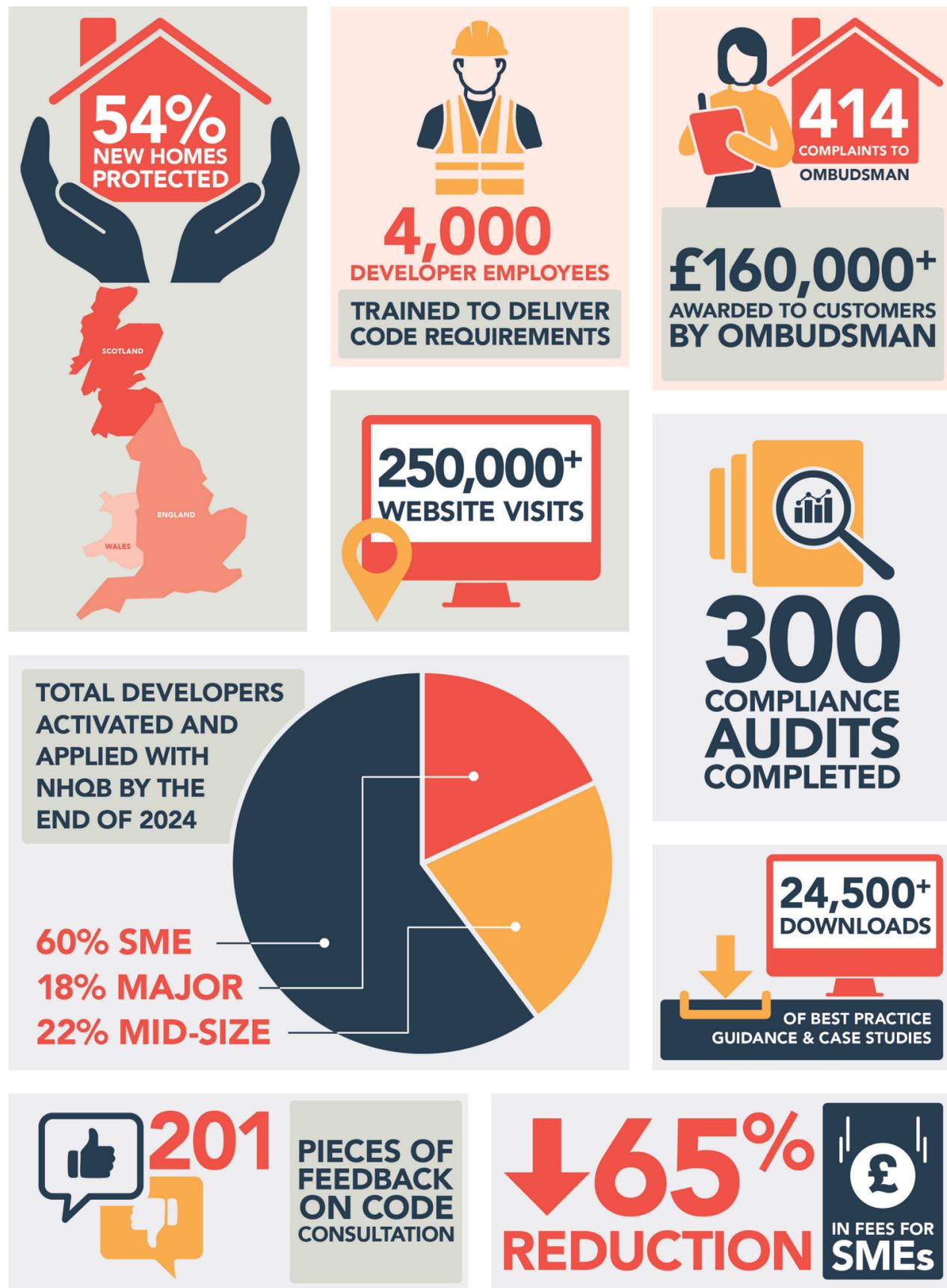
Every year, in excess of one hundred thousand new homes are purchased across the UK and the government has ambitions to increase this significantly. That is a lot of people going through the experience of buying and moving into a new home. For most, it is the biggest financial purchase they will ever make.

Occasionally there can be issues with new homes and customers may feel that they are not being treated fairly during the buying and settling in process. Understandably, this can leave them feeling frustrated and dissatisfied.

The New Homes Quality Board (NHQB) exists to improve the experience of buying and moving into a new home.

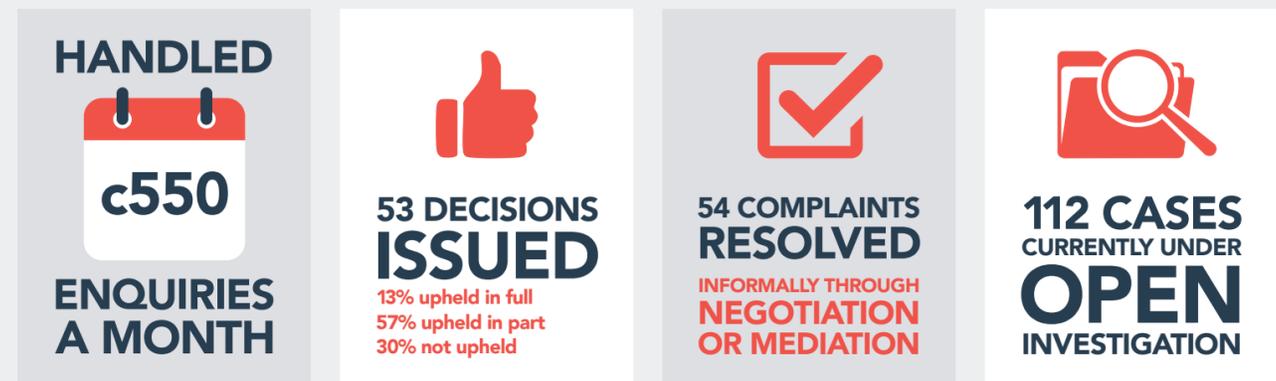
We have put in place a framework to protect buyers of new homes. This is made up of two core elements: a code of practice (the New Homes Quality Code) which sets standards for developers in terms of quality and service; and an independent New Homes Ombudsman who can review customer complaints and provide appropriate redress, when those standards aren't met. With over 54% of all new homes being built across England, Scotland and Wales now covered by the New Homes Quality Code, we are taking a significant step towards improving the homebuying experience. The scheme is currently voluntary, but we encourage all developers to operate under this framework, so that every new homebuyer receives the same level of protection.

Summary of NHQB Impact in 2024



Consumer Impact

During 2024, the Ombudsman has:



“I simply would not have had my issue resolved with my new home if it hadn't been for the Code and Ombudsman. It is vital for all buyers of new homes to be covered by the New Homes Quality Code. From a consumer perspective, I call on government to make this happen as soon as possible.”

Andy Vernal - Consumer who went through the New Homes Ombudsman Service.

Support for customers - snagging guide

The National New Homes Customer Satisfaction Survey found that 95% of homeowners identified snags in their new homes, with nearly half of these (47%) experiencing over 10 snagging issues.

We understand that snagging is a common occurrence for homeowners and in November we released the first in a series of guides created especially for consumers: A Homeowner Guide to Snagging. The guide was designed to help homeowners understand what snags are (and aren't) and what they should expect from their developer when resolving snagging issues.

Consumer awareness

Awareness of the New Homes Quality Code rose this year, thanks to several mentions in prominent media outlets such as BBC News, BBC Radio 4, ITV News and The Guardian. Other mentions include:

- Which? Produced a guide to understanding consumer rights for new homes, referencing the Code.
- BBC Radio 5 Live highlighted the importance of requiring all developers to join the Ombudsman service, especially considering the government's ambitious plans to build more new homes.
- Financial Times Adviser reported on the New Homes Ombudsman appeal to the government for a mandatory Ombudsman service.
- Money Saving Expert included the NHQB 'A Homeowner Guide to Snagging' on its website for consumers.

Paula Higgins - Founder of HomeOwners Alliance said:

“We are pleased to see the progress that the New Homes Quality Board is making, both in holding developers to account and supporting consumers through the New Homes Ombudsman Service.

There is still much more to be done to ensure that consumers are front and centre when it comes to the customer service they receive and the quality of the new home they purchase. We're making good headway and I look forward to the NHQB advancing its progress even further and faster over the years to come.’

NHQB online resources accessed over 1,600 times by developers



Developer Impact

Key achievements in 2024 include:

- 194 onsite (plus 106 self-assessment audits) undertaken by trained auditors on behalf of NHQB.
- Engaged with thousands of developer employees from customer service, sales, marketing, through to operational, finance and c-suite teams to provide Code training.
- NHQB templates downloaded over 1,600 times by developers, enabling them to deliver a consistent service.
- Undertaken research that revealed that developers spend between £214 - £1,174 handling each complaint.
- Average fee reduction of 65% for SMEs, following the annual fee review in July 2024.
- Increased the proportion of developers (51%) who have taken part in the Ombudsman early resolution process.

'We value the framework that the New Homes Quality Code provides. It goes beyond delivering excellence in customer service and quality by positively impacting our operational efficiency and bottom line. During the particularly tough environment for SMEs operating in the UK housebuilding industry currently, we believe our commitment to the Code makes a real difference and distinguishes us as a housebuilder committed to excellence in all areas of our business.'

Philip Fry
CG Fry & Son
Managing Director

'The New Homes Quality Code helps us to improve customer service and the quality of the new home they receive. We believe that all developers no matter their size should sign-up to the Code. The learnings and value we get from the Code's framework including the compliance audits, resources, and guidance help our organisation perform better for our customers and all our stakeholders.'

Stewart Lynes
Miller Homes
Chief Executive Officer

'Our purpose as a responsible developer is to work in partnership to deliver sustainable homes, communities, and social value, leaving a legacy of places people love. The New Homes Quality Code reflects our commitment to our purpose.'

It is essential for Vistry to embrace and be challenged independently in the quality of the homes we build and the customer service we provide.

We are thankful that the New Homes Quality Board established the Code and set-up the independent New Homes Ombudsman Service to provide the much-needed independent rigour and accountability that ultimately supports customers and helps us to continuously improve.'

Greg Fitzgerald
Vistry
Chief Executive Officer

2024 KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

CODE TRAINING DELIVERED TO **4,000** HOUSEBUILDER EMPLOYEES

194 ONSITE AUDITS UNDERTAKEN

TEMPLATES DOWNLOADED OVER **1,600** TIMES

65% AVERAGE FEE SAVINGS

100% INCREASE IN LINKEDIN FOLLOWERS

The New Homes Quality Code

In 2024 we commenced a public consultation listening to feedback from all stakeholders and have strengthened our Code in areas where improvements were identified.



When the New Homes Quality Code was launched it was agreed that it would be reviewed every three years to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and evolves over time with the changing needs of customers.

The New Homes Quality Code (the Code) takes a principles-based approach to protecting buyers of new homes. When reviewing customer complaints, the New Homes Ombudsman will consider whether specific requirements have been breached, but also whether the principles have been complied with. Chief amongst these principles - as with all Ombudsman schemes - is **fairness**.

To lead the review process, the NHQB set up an independent Code Council as an advisory group to the NHQB Board. The Council membership comprises:

- **Independent Chair** - Lewis Shand-Smith, who is a dispute resolution expert and experienced Chair.
- **Consumer champion** - Paula Higgins, Founder and Chief Executive of consumer representative organisation, HomeOwners Alliance.
- **Industry representatives**
 - o Moira Kinniburgh - Group Legal Director, Miller Homes Ltd.
 - o Claire Trevett - Customer Care Manager, Cube Homes Ltd.
- **Warranty provider representative** - Clare Thomas, Managing Director, Q Assure Build Ltd.
- **New Homes Ombudsman** - Nigel Cates, who has considerable experience at senior level, including complaint handling at HSBC bank, the Financial Ombudsman Service, and the Office of Fair Trading.
- **Legal representatives** experienced in the conveyancing process for new build homes.
 - o Yanthé Richardson - Principal Director, Foot Anstey LLP.
 - o Bethany Rudolf - Director of Delivery, Conveyancing Association.

The review started in April 2024 and began by looking at data from several sources including but not limited to; the volume and types of complaints referred to the New Homes Ombudsman (NHOS), feedback from other stakeholders including the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB), and the NHQB Industry Panel.

An initial set of recommendations was developed, and a public consultation took place between September and November which received 201 pieces of feedback.

The final drafting of the updated Code is underway and will be published in 2025.

Registered developers will have six months to comply with the minor changes and 12 months for those classed as major. This ensures that developers will have time to amend their processes, update marketing materials, and train employees where required.



Future Priorities

We have set out our priorities for 2025, as we continue our growth to ensure all new home buyers are covered by the Code.

1. A single mandatory consumer code in the UK to protect all customers

We continue to work with policymakers so that there is a single mandatory Code and New Homes Ombudsman which covers all customers in the UK by:

- **Engaging with developers** who have yet to apply or who have applied but have yet to 'activate' their registration.
- **Delivering a compelling value proposition to SMEs.** Following our significant reduction in fees for SME developers in July 2024, we will offer more resources and support to businesses of all sizes.
- **Showcasing registered developers** who, since registering with the NHQB, have made significant improvements to their customers' experience in buying and moving in to a new home.

2. More visibility for consumers about how developers perform

The National New Homes Customer Satisfaction Survey is run by the Home Builders Federation (HBF) and is the longest running measure of customer satisfaction with new build homes.

The survey is sent to buyers of new build homes at 8 weeks and again at 9 months after legal completion of their new home.

Starting in early 2025, customer satisfaction results for eligible registered developers will be on our website, helping buyers make informed choices.

3. Raising consumer awareness of the Ombudsman service

We will engage with media to raise awareness of the Code and the New Homes Ombudsman so that more consumers can use their service if they have an issue with their new home.

4. Increasing engagement and guidance

We will undertake consumer research and add to our existing suite of resources for both customers and developers to provide more support and guidance. Our latest consumer guide about buying a new build home launches in Spring 2025.

Governance

The NHQB is a private company limited by guarantee without share capital. It is an independent, not-for-profit organisation which was setup for the purpose of improving the customer experience when buying and moving into a new build home.

The Board's principal role is to agree and oversee the implementation of the NHQB strategy, to ensure that the necessary resources are in place to enable it to meet its objectives and that the financial performance, controls and risk management procedures are suitably robust.

NHQB currently has 14 members on the Board (including 2 non-voting members) and several committees and advisory panels.

- **7 independent directors.**
- **1 director** from the NHQB executive team.
- **4 industry directors** who represent the housebuilding industry, including large, medium and small developers, and one warranty provider.
- **2 representative (non-voting) directors;** one from Homes England and one from the Home Builders Federation (HBF).

NHQB Board	
Governance Committees	Strategic Advisory Panels
Remuneration & Nomination Committee	Consumer Panel
Audit & Risk Committee	Government Engagement Panel
Performance Assurance Committee	Industry Panel
Discipline & Sanctions Committee	Code Council

As the Code is voluntary, it is important to have developers represented on the Board to ensure that the Code, whilst stretching, is deliverable for developers of all sizes. To ensure the Board remains independent, there is a 'constitutional lock' so that industry members can never be more than one third of the total Board or any of the sub-committees.

How we are funded

The organisation is funded by annual fees from UK new home developers who voluntarily register with NHQB. Fees are based on turnover and home sales. As a not-for-profit organisation with relatively fixed costs, more developer registrations allow fees to be reduced for all.

The fee structure is reviewed annually for opportunities to make scheme participation more cost-effective. In 2024 NHQB annual fees were reduced for the second consecutive year, with specific focus on affordability for SMEs.



We are proud that 50% of our Senior Leadership team and Board are female.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity

We support and empower all employees, fostering a culture of inclusivity.

We provide our people with the resources, training and support they need to succeed in their careers and to make a lasting difference beyond our organisation. This includes support for professional qualifications, leadership development as well as mandatory training in areas such as Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity.

We recognise the value a diverse and inclusive workforce brings, and we are proud that 50% of our Senior Leadership team and Board are female.

We take pride in fostering a flexible work environment, with one-third of our workforce in part-time roles.

Environmental and Social Impact

We believe that creating social value and sustainable practices are essential for building a better future. We commit by donating our time, talents, and resources to improve the lives of others.

Environmental Impact

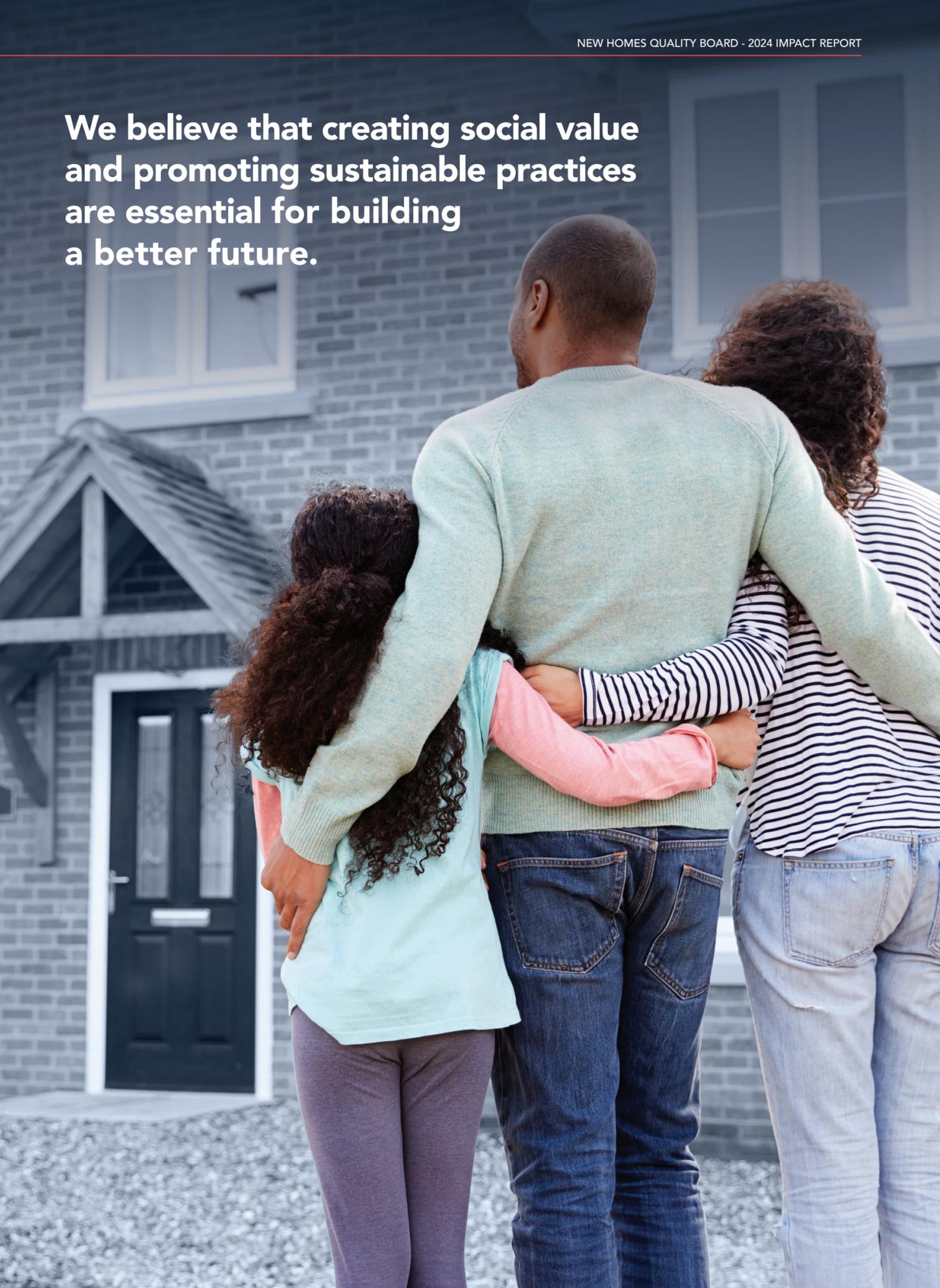
We are a digitally led organisation which helps us minimise our impact on the environment. We achieve this by:

- Having remote working for all employees; eliminating carbon costs and other energy usage arising from a permanent office base.
- Having a public transport first policy for face-to-face meetings, wherever possible.
- Having a digital-first communications and resources approach with virtually no printing and associated waste disposal.

Social Impact

In 2024, we have assisted those in need with activities including:

- Providing support to those without a home through charity-based events.
- Constructing artificial hands for individuals with limb loss.



We believe that creating social value and promoting sustainable practices are essential for building a better future.



2024 Impact Report

www.nhqb.org.uk

