



NEW HOMES
OMBUDSMAN SERVICE

Quality Assurance Framework



1. Introduction

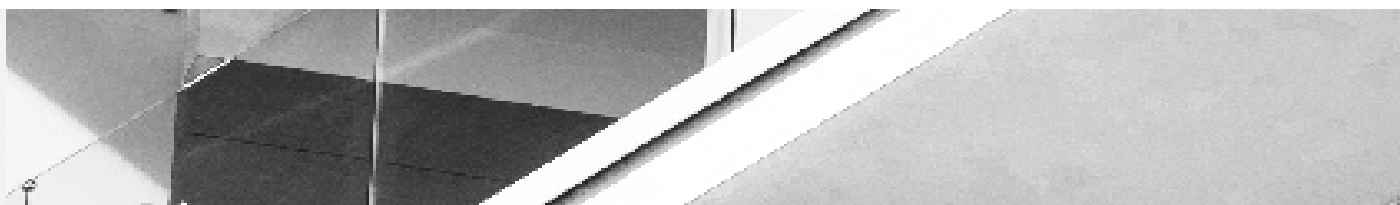
- 1.1 This document sets out the Quality Assurance framework in place at the New Homes Ombudsman Service. The New Homes Ombudsman Service will deal with hundreds of complaints each year from customers complaining about their Registered Developer. It is essential that every complaint receives the same care and attention from the new Homes Ombudsman Service and that the quality of the decision making in cases is consistent.
- 1.2 The Framework has several elements and is kept under regular review.

2. Scheme of delegation

- 2.1 The Head of the Ombudsman Office at the new Homes Ombudsman Service has the title of the **New Homes Ombudsman**. The **New Homes Ombudsman** undertakes many investigations and Decisions personally, but she has a team of caseworkers, a Lead Ombudsman and a team of Assistant Ombudsman [collectively known as the Ombudsman's Office] who manage complaints and take Decisions in cases under delegated authority. There is a separate leaflet "Scheme of Delegation "available on the NHOS website, which explains how this works.

3. Ombudsman Checklist

- 3.1 The **New Homes Ombudsman** has an Ombudsman Checklist which is used by the **New Homes Ombudsman** to assess the quality of the Ombudsman Service reports and the Decisions reached. The Checklist covers matters such as:
 - the way the report is presented [to ensure it is easily accessible and covers the complaint fully].
 - the structure of the report [to ensure that the customer can fully understand the way in which a Decision has been reached].
 - the tone and language used in the report [to ensure that it is understand by all readers].
 - the way in which evidence has been used to inform the decision [to ensure that the Decision is based on evidence considered by the Ombudsman].
 - the fairness of the decision reached based on the evidence reviewed [to ensure that the Ombudsman's Decisions are fair and evidence based].
- 3.2 The Checklist is used by the New Homes Ombudsman Service to check the quality of all reports produced by new members of the Ombudsman's Office team to ensure that they meet the stringent standards set by the New Homes Ombudsman. For other staff the Checklist is used as part of regular sampling of work produced by other members of the Ombudsman Office.



4. Sampling of cases

- 4.1 At the start of the service all Decisions will be made or reviewed by the New Homes Ombudsman prior to publication.
- 4.2 All new staff employed in the Ombudsman Office will have all cases sampled by the New Homes Ombudsman until such time as they are able to move to a sampling testing regime.
- 4.3 All staff in the Ombudsman Office will have a proportion of their Decisions assessed by the New Homes Ombudsman Service each month before they are issued.
- 4.4 Each month the New Homes Ombudsman will also review a sample of Decisions which have already been published.
- 4.5 The outcome of the sampling exercises will determine whether any member of the Ombudsman's Office needs to have the frequency of sampling increased or reduced, or requires additional training in any aspect of the work.
- 4.6 Full feedback will be given regularly to the staff in the Ombudsman Office on the outcome of the sampling exercises.

5. Team review and learning

- 5.1 The Ombudsman Office team will regularly review Decisions taken by the team and discuss complaints and cases of interest. These meetings will also be an opportunity to raise issues of concern.
- 5.2 There will be a regular daily "scrum" call on Teams to enable all Ombudsman Office staff to highlight any issues they faced in the previous day's work and to provide an opportunity to call upon each colleague's expertise.
- 5.3 The Ombudsman's Office staff will conduct peer review exercises where all Ombudsmen complete the same case and compare output to develop consistency and best practice.

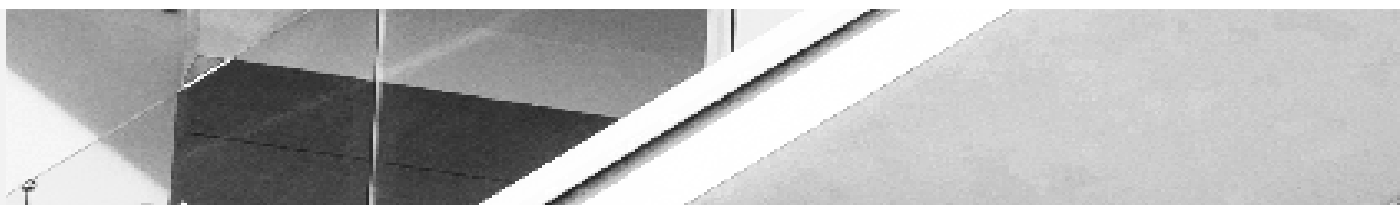
6. Knowledge Base

- 6.1 The New Homes Ombudsman will maintain a Knowledge Base available in the form of the New Homes Ombudsman Guide which includes guidance, case studies and other useful information.
- 6.2 There is a regular professional development programme of legal and industry updates and training on a variety of practical skills including speed reading.

7. External review

Independent Complaints Reviewer [ICR]

- 7.1 All findings from any ICR review will be shared with the Ombudsman Office and discussed in a team meeting to ensure that all staff are aware of any implications arising from the review.



- 7.2 The ICR will also conduct periodic reviews of casework files and Decisions to assist in the Quality Assurance process.

Customer Service Excellence Award

- 7.3 The work of NHOS will be included in the annual assessment of the Customer Service Excellence award.

BSI Customer Satisfaction [complaint handling]

- 7.4 NHOS will be included in the annual accreditation against the British Standard for Complaint Handling.

Peer reviews

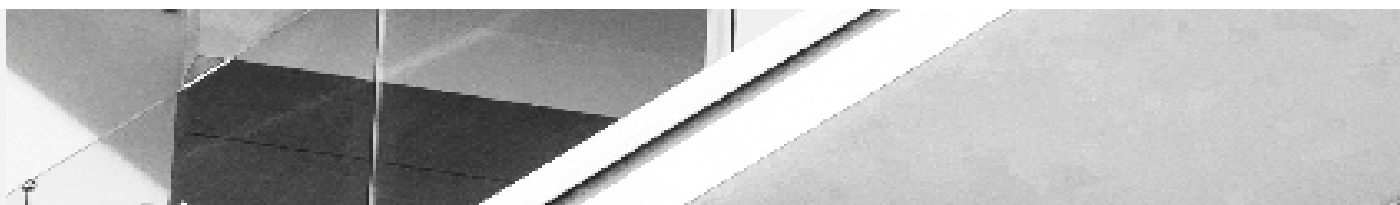
- 7.5 NHOS will be open to peer reviews from other Ombudsman schemes.

CTSI Accredited ADR provider

- 7.6 NHOS will be part of the ADR Provider certification through the Chartered Trading Standards Institute.

8. Customer Satisfaction

- 8.1 NHOS will conduct regular customer surveys on the quality of our Ombudsman service and implement any necessary changes as a result of that feedback.





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