



NEW HOMES  
OMBUDSMAN SERVICE

# Governance Arrangements Summary



## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This document sets out a summary of the governance arrangements in relation to the New Homes Ombudsman Service.

## **2. New Homes Ombudsman Service [NHOS]**

- 2.1 The New Homes Ombudsman Service is an Ombudsman scheme, validated by the Ombudsman Association, which provides customers, who have reserved or purchased a new home, with the ability to raise a complaint against the service provided by their Registered Developer.
- 2.2 A Registered Developer is a housebuilder/develop which has registered with the New Homes Quality Board, adopted the New Homes Quality Code and has therefore come under the jurisdiction of the New Homes Ombudsman Service. All Registered Developers are required to advise their customers of the existence of the New Homes Quality Code and that their customers can complain to the New Homes Ombudsman if they are dissatisfied with the service provided by the Registered Developer.
- 2.3 The New Homes Ombudsman Service has been commissioned following a competitive procurement process by the New Homes Quality Board. The contract to operate the New Homes Ombudsman Service has been awarded to The Dispute Service Ltd, a specialist provider of dispute resolution services.
- 2.4 The Service is free to customers to use and is funded by the New Homes Quality Board via a levy on Registered Developers.

## **3. The New Homes Quality Board Ltd [NHQB]**

- 3.1 The NHQB is a company limited by guarantee with a majority of directors who are independent of Registered Developers. Its main aim is to raise standards in the new homes industry, and it has published the New Homes Quality Code which sets out the standards of service which purchasers of new homes should expect for the first two years after Reservation or Legal completion, whichever is later.
- 3.2 Where customers remain dissatisfied with the service provided by the Registered Developer, they can complain to the New Homes Ombudsman Service. Registered Developers have agreed to be bound by the decisions of the New Homes Ombudsman Service.



## **4. The Dispute Service Ltd and the NHO Service Ltd**

- 4.1 The New Homes Ombudsman Service is operated by The Dispute Service Ltd with a contract with the New Homes Quality Board. The Dispute Service is a not-for-profit company.
- 4.2 The Dispute Service Ltd is a specialist dispute resolution provider and none of its Board directors have links with those subject to jurisdiction of NHOS.
- 4.3 The day-to-day oversight of the operation of the New Homes Ombudsman Service is delegated to a not-for-profit subsidiary, the NHO Service Ltd. This subsidiary is responsible for ensuring the independence of the Ombudsman Service and that the contract with the NHQB is complied with [including the agreed set of key performance indicators].

## **5. Funding**

- 5. The NHOS is funded by the NHQB via a levy on Registered Developers. The service is free to customers to use.

## **6. Independence of the Ombudsman**

- 6.1 The New Homes Ombudsman Service is completely independent of those subject to its jurisdiction. In addition, the Boards of NHQB, The Dispute Service Ltd and NHO Service Ltd have no involvement in the investigation of individual complaints, nor the decisions reached by the New Homes Ombudsman.

## **7. Who takes decisions about complaints?**

- 7.1 The New Homes Ombudsman is responsible for the investigation of complaints and the decisions reached in individual cases. She heads up the Ombudsman's Office and is employed through The Dispute Service Ltd. The Ombudsman's Office includes a number of roles to include Lead Ombudsman, Assistant Ombudsman, and Caseworkers and some decisions are delegated to these staff by the Ombudsman.
- 7.2 The New Homes Ombudsman reports to the Board of NHO Ltd and The Dispute Service Ltd.

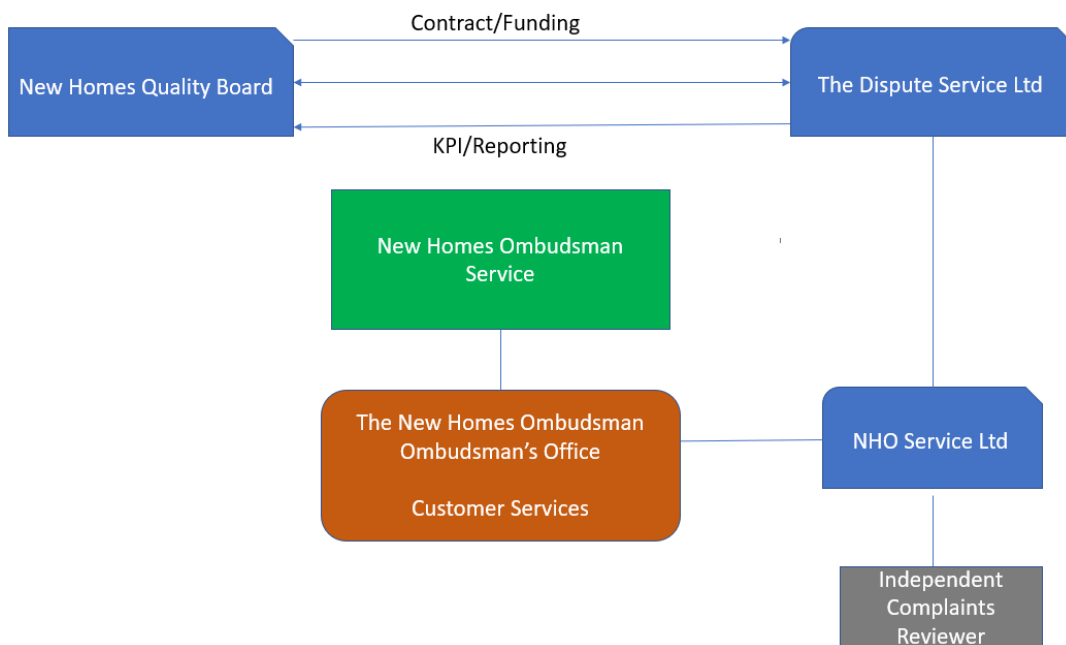
## **8. Independent Complaints Reviewer**

- 8.1 The decisions of the New Homes Ombudsman are binding on Registered Developers, although customers can decide not to accept the decision. It is not possible to complain about nor appeal a decision of the Ombudsman.



8.2 However it is possible to complain about other aspects of the service provided by NHOS [such as customer service matters, rudeness etc.]. These complaints will be handled by the Chief Executive of NHOS and if the complainant remains dissatisfied, they can complain to the Independent Complaints Reviewer. She is fully independent of NHOS, and she will make the final decision on such complaints. She will report to the Board of NHO Service Ltd annually and the report together with the Board's response and any action plan will be published on the NHOS website.

## 9. Summary governance diagram





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