

Defects in your new home

Information and advice





Defects at a glance

- Defects can occur in new build homes
- The defect period lasts 12 months; this is known as the defect liability period and starts from the date Grand Union took handover of the home from the builder, not a year from the date you move
- Decorative defects must be reported within seven working days of getting the keys for your new home and ideally before any items are moved into the property
- If you find a defect during the defect liability period, you should contact us to report it on **0300 123 5544** or email us at **help@guhg.co.uk**
- We will report the defect to the builder who built your home and they are liable for carrying out the repair
- The inspection at the end of the defect liability period is your final chance to ask the builder to rectify any issues
- If the defect is not on the final inspection sheet the builder will not remedy it and you will be liable for rectifying it.

Introduction

We strive to create new homes that meet our Quality Standard. All of our new homes are inspected at completion however unforeseen defects can occur in any property.

New homes are covered by a 12 month defects period by the builder who built the property. This commences from the day the property was handed over to Grand Union and not from the date you moved in. The builder is responsible for rectifying defects to your home during this time.

Each and every home is different, having been individually built and handcrafted by tradespeople. This means there may be some variation in the finished appearance to some elements of the construction. This is due to the differing ground each property is built on, the nature and availability of the different materials, and the ways in which they are applied. Slight variations are normal and to be expected, and are not considered to be defects.

However, there are certain standards of finish that are to be expected and our Quality Standard provides more information on this.

This can be found on our website at: **www.guhg.co.uk**



What is a defect?

The construction of a new home is essentially a hand-made product involving a large number of differing materials and tradespeople, built under varying weather conditions.

A defect is a significant fault in the workmanship, installation and manufacture of equipment used in the construction of a new home.

Typical defects with new build properties are things such as:

- Leaks from taps, waste pipes or shower screens
- Windows or doors catching / sticking on their frames
- Window or door locks being difficult to turn
- Electrical switches not working
- Loose or uneven paving slabs.

What isn't a defect?

- Minor decorative items (light scuffs, sporadic minor paint defects, thin cracks etc.)
- Resident damage, normal wear and tear, natural shrinkage, cracking or condensation and mould during the drying out period
- Householder maintenance, such as low pressure in a boiler (see the boiler manual for guidance on how to re-pressurise), bleeding radiators, replacement light bulbs, maintenance of newly planted landscaping/turf
- Problems with any workmanship, materials or appliances that you have brought or added to the property
- Damage caused by storms or, accidentally, by negligence, abuse or poor maintenance of the property or appliances. This includes blockages caused by inappropriate disposal of waste, such as disposal of non degradable items; for example baby wipes or sanitary towels.

More serious decorative defects MUST be reported within seven working days of getting the keys for your new home, otherwise they will not be considered defects and will not be attended to. Decorative defects are considered to be things such as scratches or dents to worktops, kitchen units, fitted appliances, sinks, baths, tiling, glass, doors, walls, paving or flooring. Outside of this timeframe, it is not possible to prove how the damage was caused.

Condensation

Condensation is common in new homes while construction materials dry out. If the property is not continuously ventilated it can sometimes cause mould on walls and ceilings; this is not classed as a defect.

In cold weather you may notice some moisture on the felt under the roof tiles of your home. This is due to warm moist air from inside your home passing through the ceiling and condensing on the cold timber or felt and should gradually disperse. Your loft space is to be accessed only for maintenance and must not be used as a storage area. We accept no responsibility for damage caused to any items stored in the loft.

The following advice should help reduce condensation:

- Produce less moisture (keep lids on pans when cooking and don't dry washing inside)
- Ventilate your home (ensure trickle vents are kept open)
- Do not turn extractor fans off at the isolator switch as they are designed and set up to run continuously
- Provide even heating (keep the heating at a low even temperature for longer periods rather than higher temperature for short bursts).

Homes where the heating is off all day because the occupants are out are more likely to suffer condensation problems than those heated more continuously. This is because, when normal activities such as washing and cooking are carried out in the evening, the home has been unheated for long periods and so surfaces are cold. If you find mould growth on walls the area can be washed down with a mild bleach solution.

Decorating in the first year

We recommend that you do not decorate your home in the first year because your home needs to dry out.

During this process small cracks can appear. These are common and do not affect the structural integrity of your home. As and when you come to decorate your new home after the first 12 months, any cracks can be filled and painted over. Please be aware that unless cracking is significant and wide enough to fit a pound coin in (gap over 3mm), the builder will not rectify it. Smaller cracks are your responsibility to fill and re-decorate as part of normal home maintenance.

If you do wish to decorate during the defects period please be aware that any defect repairs required to the property will not include works to repair any decoration and will only include returning the property back to its original standard.



Process for repair

You can report a defect to us online or over the phone. Once you have reported your defect to us, we will log it and report the works to the builder who built your home. The builder will then contact you to arrange an appointment for the works to take place. These works will usually be undertaken by the original subcontractor, for example the plumbing firm who fitted a leaking tap.

The nature of the defect will depend on the timescales for the repair. There is a period of up to 30 days for the repair of minor items. Some defects may not be fixed until the end of the defects liability period when it is more appropriate or practical and this depends on the nature of the defect.

How to contact us

You can report a defect online or ring us on the number below:

Email: help@guhg.co.uk

Telephone: 0300 123 5544

Web: www.guhg.co.uk

Please do not use the reporting form for emergencies. If you have an urgent defect that cannot wait until the next working day, then you should contact us on: **0300 123 5544**.

Defects should not be reported to the site team. Grand Union cannot be held responsible for rectifying defects that have not been reported directly to us and which we do not have a record of.

12 month defects inspection

When a new build home is 12 months old, an inspection will be carried out with you, representatives from Grand Union and the builder. At this visit you will have the chance to tell us about any defects that you would like to be completed by the builders. Our representative will need to agree that the items you raise are defects (we suggest in the run up to this inspection you compile a list of issues to discuss). You will be asked to sign the list of reported defects at the inspection to confirm you agree this is a full and final list.

Any faults that occur in your home after the defect liability period that were not recorded at the end of the defects inspection will not be attended to. If you are a tenant, any repairs will need to be reported to 0300 123 5544.

After the 12 months

Most new build properties are covered by a guarantee provided by an insurance provider such as NHBC or Premier. This generally provides cover for large items that may fail or major latent defects in the property such as subsidence and is typically in place for 10 years. You should receive a copy of your certificate from your solicitor upon completion. Please retain this in a safe place as you will need it when you sell your property. At the end of the defects liability period, you become responsible for all repairs in your home. If you are a tenant any repairs need to be reported to Grand Union. If you feel that the problem in your home is a latent defect you may be able to make a claim under your warranty.

You will need to contact the insurance provider and submit a claim. This will then be investigated and if it is found to be a defect, they will ask the builder to fix it. However if it is not found to be a defect, it will be down to you as the homeowner to undertake any repairs.

Please note that there is an excess payable for any claims made under the warranty.

Other insurance details

- **Buildings Insurance:** Your buildings insurance is provided through Grand Union Housing Group and, where appropriate, the cost of this insurance will have been detailed to you and collected via the service charge. You may be able to make a claim on your insurance for certain damage to your home. More information can be found on our website: www.guhg.co.uk. Please note that there is an excess payable for any claims for leaseholders and shared owners.
- **Contents Insurance:** You are advised to take out your own contents insurance, as the Association does not cover your contents. This will cover you for any damage caused to personal property included in the terms of your policy. It may be worth taking out contents insurance that covers your glazing to protect against damage to your windows.
- **Boiler:** To ensure that your boiler is covered by any warranty such as NHBC for a second year you must have this serviced by a certified Gas Safe engineer. You should aim to do this before your defect liability period expires and should retain the safety certificate for future reference. All boilers should be serviced annually and this is the homeowner's responsibility in shared ownership homes. If you are a tenant, we will contact you about the servicing to your boiler.

Do you need this in a different format?

Do you need the information in this leaflet in a different format?

Please contact us on **0300 123 5544** to discuss your specific requirements.

Equality and Diversity

Grand Union Housing Group has a responsibility to ensure that equal opportunity and effective management of diversity are at the core of its business. We set targets to deliver services that are responsive to the needs of communities and individuals, and promote social inclusion.



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