

Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH)

In April 2007 the Code for Sustainable Homes effectively replaced *Ecohomes* for the environmental assessment of newly constructed domestic dwellings in England.

The Code is based on the *Ecohomes* method of assessment, established by the Building Research Establishment (BRE), and contains mandatory performance levels in particular areas. Each individual dwelling within a larger scheme now has to be assessed – groups of dwellings can no longer be assessed as one.

The UK Low Carbon Transition Plan 2009 confirms the requirement for all new homes to be built to increasingly high environmental and energy standards reaching ‘zero carbon homes from 2016.

The Code for Sustainable Homes aims to protect the environment by providing guidance on the construction of high performance homes built with sustainability in mind, that ultimately enhance living standards for the occupier.

The Government’s ambition for the Code is for it to become the single national standard for the design and construction of sustainable homes, driving improvements in house building practice. Local authorities are increasingly demanding evidence of CSH assessment to guaranteed Code Levels (commonly Code 3 and higher at present) as a pre-condition of granting planning consent.

In February 2008 the Government confirmed that from 1 May 2008 it would be mandatory for all new homes to have a rating against the Code for Sustainable Homes.

BRE and Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) have worked closely to ensure that the Code meets the latest regulatory requirements and addresses issues that emerged from an earlier industry wide consultation.



Key Benefits

- Provides intending occupiers clear information as to the ‘sustainability’ of the property making it an effective and value-driving part of the decision making process
- Code for Sustainable Homes is now mandatory for all new housing schemes except in Scotland. A minimum of Code Level 3 is required for all new social housing in the UK and Northern Ireland and for all new housing provided or supported by the Welsh Assembly
- Once assessed under the current Code version, each Design Stage assessment rating remains valid for 5 years until the final Post-Construction assessment is certified, regardless of later updated (higher) standards

Relevant Legislation:

- Code for Sustainable Homes: A Step Change in Sustainable Building Practices DCLG December 2006
- Code for Sustainable Homes Technical Guide October 2008 edition (updated and superseded 6-monthly)
- BREEAM Green Guide to Environmental Weighting Systems BRE Global
- Standard Assessment Procedure for energy rating of dwellings (SAP 2005 version 9.80) BRE on behalf of DEFRA
- Approved document L1A Conservation of Fuel & Power (new dwellings) 2006 edition DCLG

The Scope of the Code:

There are new mandatory minimum levels of performance that have been introduced across seven key aspects:

- Energy efficiency/dwelling emission rate (DER) & CO2 emissions
- Indoor water use
- Surface water management
- Site waste management
- Household waste management
- Environmental impact of building materials
- Lifetime homes (applies to Code Level 6 only)

The Code also considers external water use, internal & external lighting, drying space, energy labeled white goods, cycle storage, home offices, composting, pollution, day lighting, sound insulation, private space, property management, security and ecological impact.

The Code Scoring System:

The Code has a scoring system of six 'star' levels, made up by achieving the appropriate mandatory minimum standards together with a proportion of the 'flexible' standards. For energy efficiency and indoor water use, in particular, progressively higher mandatory standards are required to achieve higher Code levels.



Compliance with the Code:

HSR Ltd undertakes Code Assessments on your behalf which are carried out in two phases:

- An initial assessment and interim certification is carried out at the design stage
- Final assessment and certification is carried out after construction as follows:

Design Stage Review:

- based on design drawings, specifications and commitments
- results in interim certificate of compliance

Post Construction Review:

- based on the design stage review
- confirmation of compliance including site Records and visual inspection

HSR Ltd also provides:

- Pre-assessment consultations
- Advice on how to maximize credit scores in the most cost effective way
- Provide indicative Code levels for proposed developments, along with estimated costs
- Support clients in understanding the full complexities of the Code
- Managing the Code assessment process, assuring all members of the team have the necessary evidence in place ready for assessment
- Keep clients and design teams up to date on changes in the Code Technical Guide, as well as any changes in UK and EU legislation concerning sustainability and environment, which may impact on a client's operations

Who We Are

HSR Ltd are leading independent providers of energy and environmental auditing and consulting services. We operate throughout the UK and offer specialist environmental services, energy assessments and certification, including Energy Audits, Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) and Display Energy Performance Certificates (DECs).