



# Greener homes for the future



Our homes account for around 27% of the UK's carbon emissions, a major cause of climate change. The Department for Communities and Local Government laid the foundations for greener housing when it launched the Code for Sustainable Homes in 2007. Since May 2008 all new homes are required to have a Code rating against the Code and for a Code certificate to be included within the Home Information Pack (HIP).\*



\* Subject to transitional arrangements. These provisions only apply to those new homes where a local authority has *received* a building notice, initial notice or full plans application after 1st May 2008

## What is a Code Home?

Code homes are built to the standards set in the Code for Sustainable Homes (the Code). They are more energy and water-efficient, produce fewer carbon emissions and are better for the environment.

Code homes also encourage their owners to live a more sustainable lifestyle and are built in a more efficient way, using materials from sustainable sources. This creates less waste and also means Code homes have lower running costs.

There are nine categories in the Code covering energy, water, the materials used in the home through to health and wellbeing and pollution with points assigned to each category.

When a builder chooses to incorporate a specific feature they are awarded points, which when added together, form the basis of a hotel-style star rating system.

The Code sets minimum standards for energy and water use at each level. The rating a home receives depends on how it measures up in nine categories:

- Energy and CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions
- Water
- Materials
- Surface Water Run-off
- Waste
- Pollution
- Health and Wellbeing
- Management
- Ecology

## How the Code works

The Code uses a 1 to 6 star rating system to communicate the overall sustainability performance of a new home. A home assessed as 6 stars will have achieved the highest sustainability rating. The results of the Code assessment are then recorded on a certificate assigned to the dwelling which can then be used as part of the Home Information Pack (HIP).

A Code assessment can only be carried out by a licensed and accredited Code assessor. This ensures the rating is independent and trustworthy. In order to build to the Code, a builder needs to hire the services of a Code assessor. They can advise what features need to be installed to achieve different levels of the Code.

The rating ranges from 1 to 6 stars:

- 1 ★ homes will be 10% more energy efficient and 20% more water efficient than most new homes.

It may also have some of the other features in the Code such as providing office work space with communication links within the home, secure cycle storage or greater security features.

- 3 ★ homes would be 25% more energy efficient and have many more sustainable features than a 1 ★ home.
- 6 ★ homes would be highly sustainable and over the course of the year their net carbon emissions would be zero.

Needing over 90% of the points available, a 6 ★ home would include most of the sustainability features in the Code.

## Why we need the Code

We are committed to protecting and enhancing the environment and tackling climate change. We know that buildings contribute almost half of the UK's carbon emissions. Our long-term goal is to reduce carbon emissions by 60 per cent by 2050, and to achieve this we need to make sure new housing is much more sustainable.

This is all the more important because at the same time we are on the brink of an ambitious building programme to tackle the national housing shortage.




The Code minimises the environmental damage from the construction process and offers an opportunity to revolutionise the design of new homes so that the housing market encourages people to live more sustainable lifestyles.

For housing industry members, adopting the Code is an important step towards our target that all new homes built from 2016 must be zero carbon rated.



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In 2006 the Government announced a 10-year timetable towards a target that all new homes from 2016 must be built to zero carbon standards, to be achieved through a step by step tightening of the Building Regulations.

Date	2010	2013	2016
Energy efficiency improvement of the dwelling compared to 2006 (Part L Building Regulations)	25%	44%	Zero carbon
Equivalent standard within the Code	Code level 3 	Code level 4 	Code level 6 



## Mandatory ratings

From April 2008, all new social housing must be built to a minimum of Code level 3. The Code is voluntary for privately built housing. However, also since May 2008 all new homes are required to have a Code rating in the Home Information Pack (HIP). This means that homes built to, and assessed against the Code, must include the Code certificate within the HIP.

Homes not assessed against the Code must include a nil-rated certificate of non-assessment in the HIP. These nil-rated certificates are available for free from the HIPs website

[www.homeinformationpacks.gov.uk](http://www.homeinformationpacks.gov.uk)

Building a home to the Code means that sustainability is designed in. By building to Code standards, we can make Britain's homes more environmentally friendly for the future.

For more information on the Code, including how to get hold of a licensed Code assessor and the Code technical guidance, please visit

[www.communities.gov.uk/thecode](http://www.communities.gov.uk/thecode)



## Picture credits

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