

ELGC COV 03

Ymchwiliad i COVID-19 a'i effaith

Inquiry into COVID-19 and its impact

Ymateb gan: Cyngor Cenedlaethol Adeiladu Tai

Response from: National House-Building Council

Following the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee's call for evidence on COVID-19 and its impact, please find below a short submission from NHBC. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

#### About NHBC

- NHBC is the leading warranty and insurance provider for new homes in the UK.
- NHBC's ten-year Buildmark warranty covers around 80 per cent of new homes built in the UK (including Wales), having covered nearly eight million homes since it began and currently protecting around 1.5 million homes.
- NHBC operates in all 22 local authority areas across Wales.
- We give homeowners confidence in the construction quality of new homes. We do this by:
  - o Assessing, inspecting and directly insuring new homes registered with us.
  - o Using our unrivalled expertise, data, and training to drive improvements in construction quality.
  - o Maintaining our financial strength, scale, and independence.
- NHBC cares passionately about new build quality and reinvests profit into the sector to support builders to deliver high quality homes. This is delivered through approximately 1,300 staff, including building inspectors, surveyors, engineers and claims teams.
- NHBC does not build or sell homes; it is not a regulator and does not represent any part of the industry. Individual builders are ultimately responsible for the quality of the homes they build and sell to consumers.
- Onsite Services: NHBC's onsite services are broad, and include:
  - o Key stage inspection service, including consultative inspections
  - o Building Control Services
  - o Land Quality Endorsement
  - o Testing & Assessment
  - o Construction Quality Services
- Training: NHBC provide up to 13,500 delegate days of training per year.

#### NHBC and COVID-19

- Although virtually the whole of NHBC is working from home, we continue to maintain service levels across Technical Operations, Customer Services and Claims (with some adjustment to

working practices – e.g. desktop and technology assisted claims assessments where we are able to do that).

- We remain operational and able to support any residual on-site demand. Any on-site inspections will only happen where we are satisfied that we can work to Public Health England guidelines on hygiene and social distancing.
- We are ready to support customers when they remobilise, with local and technical engagement between our teams being central to effective forward planning.
- In order to continue supporting builders during this time, NHBC has also introduced virtual training, including our new series of daily webinars, providing information on a wide range of topics such as NHBC Standards, Building Regulations, on-site good practice and health and safety.

#### Wider Welsh impact of COVID-19

- As you will be aware, COVID-19 has heavily impacted housebuilders in Wales who, although were not formally told to stop, felt it was the best thing to do.
- Furthermore, issues concerning the continuation of adequate supplies have made it difficult to continue activity on site.
- It is positive that housebuilders are looking to restart, and NHBC remain operational and able to support any residual on-site demand.
- During this time, it would be helpful for builders to have clarity on the future of some of the Welsh Government's housing support programmes, especially Help to Buy, to understand how the industry could be supported in the future and to instil confidence.