



SUBMISSION

ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP FOR EXCELLENCE IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT INQUIRY INTO THE QUALITY OF NEW BUILD HOUSING IN ENGLAND

CALL FOR EVIDENCE

1.0 BACKGROUND

The Considerate Constructors Scheme is a national organisation founded in 1997 by the construction industry to improve its image.

It was created following Sir Michael Latham's 'Constructing the Team' review in 1994 which was jointly commissioned by the Government and construction leaders to improve the reputation and performance of the industry.

The Considerate Constructors Scheme enables thousands of construction sites, companies and suppliers to voluntarily register their building projects and make a commitment to the Code of Considerate Practice – its best practice blueprint.

Registered projects are monitored against the five-point Code which is designed to encourage performance beyond legal requirements in relation to the community, the environment and the workforce.

2.0 ENHANCING THE NEW HOME OWNER EXPERIENCE

Fully recognising the scale of the Government's plans to build over one million homes in England by 2020, the Scheme believes it can play a pivotal role in improving the new homeowner's relocation experience, and overall customer service they receive.

Living on a live construction site will be the inevitable reality for new residents who are allocated homes incrementally, as the housing development progresses.

2.1 BENEFITS

Contractors can take a proactive approach even before construction work starts, and then throughout the whole project, minimising the impact and inconvenience caused.

- Home builders reap the rewards of gaining professional advice from the Scheme's team of expert Monitors who visit the sites. During their visits, Monitors assess all facets of the project according to the Code of Considerate Practice, providing guidance on how to minimise impact. Drawn from all areas of the construction industry, the Scheme's experienced Monitors offer



invaluable advice to ensure every housing project brings lasting community value and wellbeing to new neighbourhoods.

- Homeowners benefit from the Scheme's dedicated helpline which is publicly displayed on every registered construction site, enabling residents and the wider community to immediately flag up any issues which may arise. Acting as impartial arbitrators, the Scheme's experienced team of customer liaison officers are dedicated to resolving differences or disputes arising at any time during registration, to improve new homeowner experience and customer service.
- Homebuilders can access the Scheme's Best Practice Hub to find out the latest examples of best practice or innovation and help to foster amicable and trouble-free community relations. The Best Practice Hub outlines initiatives either already in place, or currently being developed, and can be used by anyone in the industry including site managers, contractors, suppliers and clients. A host of community initiatives can be shared or accessed by housebuilders to bring extra value to their neighbourhoods.

By registering with the Scheme, the contractor is making a commitment to minimising the impact and inconvenience caused to new residents living on a housing development.

Care about Appearance

Where access arrangements are shared with construction traffic, regular road and footpath cleaning will take place. The appearance of operatives and the construction activities will be monitored to ensure a consistently tidy and presentable site.

Respect the Community

Before any work starts, companies are encouraged to make contact with neighbours, schools and community groups to ensure they are aware of the changes that are taking place. This will help to ensure that new residents receive a warm welcome into the community.

These communication links will continue throughout the duration of the project and are extended to all residents within the local neighbourhood. Scheme registered sites agree to minimise nuisance and intrusion, which could be a particularly relevant issue for new homeowners purchasing a house on a development which is still underway.

Protect the Environment

The environmental impact of any construction activity could have a detrimental effect on local wildlife or plant life. To address this, impact assessments are carried out in



advance. Where possible, existing trees and significant landscape features could be retained and protected during the construction phase, with enhancement and management to ensure their long-term survival. This helps from an environmental perspective and also as a way to create an environment which fosters wellbeing amongst new homeowners.

Secure everyone's Safety

Safety for everyone in close proximity to the construction site is always given high priority. This is particularly relevant for families living close to construction activities. The housebuilder will give residents a safety overview prior to moving in and barriers will be erected to safeguard residents and visitors from construction activities. Construction traffic will be speed-restricted, while on-site roads and additional operatives will be used when vehicles are reversing.

Value their Workforce

The support provided by contractors for their workforce covers many aspects such as continuous skills training and support with personal health matters. The on-site welfare facilities will ensure that all operatives have somewhere clean, warm and dry to take their meal breaks. The site managers' inclusion and involvement with the full site team is encouraged to promote a positive working environment. Through this professional approach it is expected that good quality craftsmen will be attracted to work on newly built homes.

3.0 EVIDENCE

Below are just two examples which demonstrate how contractors who commit to the Scheme's Code of Considerate Practice have a positive impact on the new home owner experience and enhance customer relations every step of the way.

BERKELEY HOMES (SOUTH EAST LONDON) LTD

Encompassing innovation and exceptionally high levels of consideration, Berkeley Homes' Roman House project, to refurbish a former office block into modern apartments, raised the industry bar in terms of considerate construction.

Its outstanding credentials were honoured at the Considerate Constructors Scheme's National Site Awards 2015, receiving the Most Considerate Site Award 2015. The company first became part of the Scheme in 1999 and has since registered over 340 sites. Associate Members are companies who have proved their commitment to the Code through a high number of consistently high performing registrations.



Proving to be an excellent industry ambassador, the Roman House project is located next to the Barbican in the City of London, giving a highly professional image of modern construction.

Rob Perrins, Managing Director of the Berkeley Group, said: “The team at Roman House ran the site with exceptional cleanliness and presentation and showed real imagination in their approach.

“Site workers received visits from an occupational nurse every two months and they trialled hi-vis jackets with built-in back support. **Over 20 tonnes of wood was donated to a community recycling project. They helped disadvantaged local teenagers learn about construction and worked in partnership with Shelter and Street Elite. This was a fantastic effort from everyone in Berkeley Homes (South East London).**”

Commenting on his site’s success story, Senior Project Manager Simon Twibell said: “As a team we are very proud to have received this award which is in recognition of the hard work put into ensuring the construction/refurbishment works had the least impact on the surrounding neighbours and environment.

“Involvement of the local stakeholders was key throughout the build process, with open and honest dialogue through all phases of the project.”

WATES LIVING SPACE

Wates Living Space has spoken of the community and customer benefits gained from its long-held association with the Scheme.

Dedicated to developing and maintaining affordable housing throughout the UK, Wates Living Space is an Associate Member and has registered over 350 sites since it first registered with the Scheme in 1997.

Commenting on Wates’ highly praised project to construct six two-storey homes on two plots in Barnett Avenue and Barlow Hall Road, Manchester, in partnership with Southway Housing Trust, Project Manager Michael Cunningham said: **“A major benefit of being in this Scheme means our customers and more importantly the communities in which we work have confidence in us delivering on promises we make at tender stage.**

“The Scheme creates a culture of transparency and allows us to benchmark our CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) activities against the industry, of which we regularly outperform.”

Asked how the Scheme is helping to improve the image of construction, Michael said: “It’s creating a competitive appetite amongst our internal teams which means there is a constant striving for improvement.



“The Scheme has helped us engage better with the public and wider community, such as schools, which has helped improve the image of us as a business.

“We feel the support offered is sufficient and my experience of audits is positive; the Monitor will offer a fair reflection of our achievements and also offer suggestions and advice for improvement.”

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The All Party Parliamentary Group for Excellence in the Built Environment Inquiry into the Quality of New Build Housing in England should ensure that all housing developments of over six weeks in duration are registered with the Considerate Constructors Scheme. As demonstrated in section 3.0, this will help to make a marked improvement in the home owner’s experience and improved customer service.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The Government’s recently-published National Productivity Plan outlines the pressing need to build over one million new homes in England by 2020, demonstrating that there has never been a better time for housebuilders to register with the Considerate Constructors Scheme.

With vast swathes of homeowners moving into ongoing construction sites, the Scheme’s Code of Considerate Practice helps to provide construction companies with essential monitoring, advice and guidance which improves the new homeowners’ experience and helps to enhance customer service.

The Considerate Constructors Scheme has built a highly successful reputation and track record for improving the image of the industry over the past 18 years, particularly in relation to improving the new homeowner and customer service experience. The Scheme’s important role within the construction industry has been acknowledged and promoted across a range of national and local government organisations, including the Cabinet Office’s policy paper: ‘Government Construction: Common Minimum Standards for the Procurement of Built Environments in the Public Sector’.

The Scheme considers its unique position and experience within the industry to be an invaluable asset to the future improvement of the quality of new build housing, and would very much welcome the opportunity to provide further evidence to the Commission directly.