

The advantages of the new homes

A new home built to the latest building regulations can cost half as much to heat as a Victorian house of the same size, according to a new report by the NHBC Foundation.

The advantages of new homes is based on a survey of 2,000 people who had recently moved into a new home and were asked what they considered the advantages of new homes to be.

Many pointed to the energy efficiency benefits of new homes – the better standards of insulation enhanced draught-proofing and improved ‘air-tightness’ that help to lower household annual energy bills, and improve levels of comfort.

The report shows that energy bills are expected to be around £440 lower in a modern one-bedroom ground floor flat, compared to its Victorian equivalent. And for a new build four-bedroom detached house, bills are estimated at £1,050 – saving £1,400 compared to those of a 19th century house.

Homeowners of newer properties were also drawn to the idea of buying a ‘blank-canvas’ ready to be personalised, free from the nasty surprises of previous owners’ DIY. They also commented positively on the contemporary, flexible layouts and modern facilities of new homes such as new kitchens, bathrooms and appliances, covered by manufacturers’ warranties.

The report outlines the safety advantages of new homes raised by some respondents – such as mains-powered smoke alarms, interlinked throughout the home, which are standard, and the benefits



of safety glazing, safer stairs and the additional security features. But the advantages of new homes extend beyond the front door and many of the new homeowners surveyed considered that moving to a new development of like-minded people was also an attraction, allowing the opportunity to make new friends and neighbours in a new community.

Neil Smith, Head of Research & Innovation at NHBC, said: "It is pleasing that homeowners are able to identify the many benefits of new homes, ranging from the obvious advantages of a 'blank canvas' with everything being new, through to the much-improved energy efficiency standards, which lead to greatly-reduced fuel bills, compared with those of older homes.

"Maybe less obvious are the more solid foundations on which new homes are built, which are designed to suit local ground conditions, as well as the safety advantages of modern wiring and

mains-powered smoke alarms, interlinked throughout the home.

"This report is a useful reminder of the benefits of buying a new home, designed and built in accordance with up-to-date standards. What's more, an important advantage frequently raised in the survey is the peace of mind provided by NHBC's warranty and insurance protection under Buildmark, from exchange of contracts through to a maximum of 10 years after completion."

Note: In this comparison, the Victorian home is the same size and has the same window area as the new home, but has uninsulated solid-brick walls, some single glazing and a gas central heating system.

Building Regulations vary throughout the UK and so the costs will be slightly different in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.



(Source: NHBC Foundation 'The advantages of the new homes' (NH73))

THE NHBC GUIDE

The advantages of the new homes (NH73)

consists of the following chapters:

- **Ready to move in** – new homes are ready to enjoy without any concern about what has been glossed over by previous owners.
- **Everything is new** – appliances and systems all new and will work well for years to come.
- **Modern layout** – efficient use of space and the right balance of living and storage space.
- **Modern facilities** – well laid-out bathrooms and downstairs WC, and often an en suite.
- **Energy efficiency** – cost – energy bills should be about half those of Victorian homes.
- **Energy efficiency** – comfort – cosy homes that heat up quickly, are well ventilated and are not prone to condensation and mould.
- **Safety** – smoke alarms and wiring – Mains-powered smoke alarms and protection from electric shocks.
- **Safety** – glazing and stairs – safe steps and balustrades, and inclusion of safety glass where needed.
- **Solid foundations** – robust and resilient foundations.
- **A quiet home** – mandatory measures to ensure good sound insulation between homes.
- **Security** – robust doors and windows with additional locks and security devices to keep intruders out.
- **A new community** – opportunity to meet new neighbours with similar interests and aspirations.

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