

NORTHSTONE

# Helping you out to *move you in.*

The Home User Guide.



## NORTHSTONE

# Hi, and welcome to your new *Northstone* home.

This booklet will serve as a guide and a helpful reminder of the important features of your home and provide you with all you need to know in terms of reporting repairs and what you can expect from our Customer Care team.

We will share as many hints and tips as we can to make sure you're getting the best out of your new home.

If there is anything else we can do to help when you move in, please do not hesitate to contact your Sales Executive on site or if repair related, our Customer Care team.

Best wishes,

**The Northstone Team.**



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# NORTHSTONE

## Your assurances (just in case!).



When you purchase your new home, you receive a two- year Northstone builder warranty and a ten- year NHBC Buildmark warranty, to give you peace of mind. The first two years of your NHBC Buildmark warranty run alongside the two-year Northstone builder warranty.

It is important to be aware of what Northstone will take care of in the event of an unforeseen defect in your new home. But it is as equally important that we provide clarity on the things we do not cover, and naturally would expect you as the homeowner to take personal ownership of.

You can be assured that all defects caused by faulty products or workmanship are covered in our two- year warranty. However, Northstone cannot be responsible for defects which are ultimately caused by natural wear and tear, homeowner neglect, intentional or accidental damage.

Please always remember, that no home anywhere within our neighbourly world is exactly the same as another. Every single part of your new home has been put together by hand, and there may be slight variances in the hand applied finishes in your home compared to your neighbour, for example.

We have registered with the New Homes Quality Board (NHQB) and signed up to the New Homes Quality Code which is now applicable to reservations made with Northstone from the 1st April 2023. All homes built and completed going forwards will be covered by the Code, to ensure that every aspect of a new home purchased with Northstone is covered, from when you initially walk into our Huddles, through to two years after the occupation of the home.

If you are ever in doubt or have a question, please contact a member of the team to discuss further. For more information on the NHQB, visit the URL below:

[www.nhqb.org.uk/homebuyers.html](http://www.nhqb.org.uk/homebuyers.html)



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# Pre-completion checks.

Once your new Northstone home is nearing completion, our Sales Team will invite you to visit the development and have the opportunity to see your new home before legal completion.

You can either book an appointment to visit the home yourself or you can choose a suitably qualified inspector to undertake the visit on your behalf using the standard Pre-completion Inspection Checklist.

Please note that any suitably qualified inspector must comply with the following:

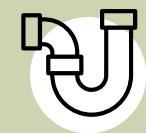
- Be a member of a recognized professional association (e.g. RICS, RPSA, etc).
- Hold relevant Professional Indemnity Insurance.
- Only work within their competency.
- Use the Standard Pre-completion Inspection Checklist for the inspection.

As it is a live building site, any visitors will be expected to comply with the safety regulation set out by our site manager. The site manager has the right to ask individuals to leave should they breach site safety rules.

We have been working hard to complete your home and we hope you will be very happy. In the event that any minor 'snagging' issues are identified, we will endeavour to resolve these before legal completion. Where this isn't possible for reasons out of our control, we will provide you with a Statement of Incomplete Work which confirms exactly what work is required and when we expect to have it complete.



## The things we cover (the detail).



**Your plumbing, boiler and heating installation will be covered by your warranty for two years**, providing that you ensure the boiler is serviced within the first year of legal completion. If you do not arrange for your boiler to be serviced, then this may void your warranty and all further management of boiler and heating installation.



Provided that you or your own electrician does not alter or change our installed electric circuits, **we will cover the electrical installation for two years.**



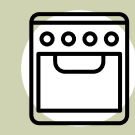
Our top priority is ensuring everything, and everyone is safe within your new home, and this also means protecting our sub-contractors who have carefully installed their specific trade in your home. **Our own electrician for example, cannot attend your home if we know or believe that the original installation has been altered or changed.**



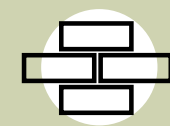
Our rooms come with a view, and some of them with bigger views than others! **Any window defects that occur as a result of the initial installation** must be recorded on your 10-Day Homeowner Feedback Form. We are also obliged to ensure that the doors that provide access to and from your home are easy to open, close and lock



**All guttering from your home should remain intact and run freely** unless the cause is due to inclement weather or through lack of maintenance. It is the homeowners responsibility to ensure gutters are kept clear from leaves.



**Your kitchen appliance warranties** need to be registered and activated upon contacting the manufacturer by you as the homeowner. If the manufacturer asks you for your 'purchase date' of an appliance, this will be your legal completion date.



**If you raise a concern in relation to the structure of the build**, we will arrange an inspection with an appropriate member of the team if deemed necessary. Structural issues can be, but are not limited to, those relating to brickwork, the roof structure, boundary walls or driveways.

## The things which we cannot cover.

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**Northstone are not liable to repair or replace any damaged items within the home following completion of your 10-Day Homeowner Feedback Form which we will carry out with you on legal completion.**



**Northstone are not responsible for repairing any naturally occurring shrinkage and settlement cracks** within your new home unless they exceed 4mm in width. 4mm is just over the width of a £1 coin! Repairing any shrinkage cracks less than 4mm in width are the responsibility of the homeowner, and we recommend only attending to these repairs after living in the property for 12 months to ensure your home has fully dried out.

To minimize any cracking or possible mould growth within your new home, we advise maintaining a consistent ambient temperature (19-22°C) coupled with good ventilation throughout the property. Visual mould or damp in a new build home is generally a sign of poor ventilation. This does not constitute a build defect. To avoid this issue, furniture should not be pushed directly up to walls and radiators should not be completely covered with damp clothing/items.



**Northstone are not responsible for general wear and tear** of your new home, nor responsible to provide replacement consumable items, e.g., bulbs and batteries.



**Mastic sealant is not a permanent fixture** as it can loosen and pull away over time. It will therefore require replacing as your home matures. This does not constitute a defect but is more likely to require replacing within the first twelve months of occupation. Northstone cannot be responsible for when your mastic sealant will need replacing nor the re-sealing of any mastic in your home.



**Northstone accept no ongoing liability for the condition or ongoing maintenance of any landscaping or garden finishes** following legal completion. Your NHBC warranty covers a distance of 3m from the rear of your house and so lawn maintenance is the homeowners responsibility. We recommend not placing any large garden furniture or play equipment e.g, trampolines on your lawn until after 12 months to allow time for your new turf to settle. Any concerns over quality of front garden landscaping should be highlighted to a member of the Northstone team on legal completion.



**Northstone are not liable for any changes or alterations to any installed system or component in your home**, excluding works undertaken by Northstone in the effort of any necessary remedial repair. Works undertaken of this nature may void this aspect of your builder warranty provided by Northstone.



**Blocked drains as a result of homeowners misuse are not covered.** It's important that you do not dispose of any products into any drainage network which shouldn't be there, such as baby nappies, sanitary products etc. If we attend and a blockage is found to be a result of misuse, the homeowner will be recharged.

## After-sales procedures.

### **Congratulations on buying your new home! We hope that you'll love living here.**

Now that the sale is complete, our After-Sales team are available to support you for two years. If you have any questions or concerns as you settle into your new home, please approach the After-Sales team for advice and support.

### **How to contact us**

If you have a question or need to make us aware of a new issue, please contact us via the email – [customercare@northstone.co.uk](mailto:customercare@northstone.co.uk)

### **If you have an emergency**

If your enquiry relates to an emergency during office hours (between 9am and 5pm weekdays), please contact the After-Sales team using the information provided in the left column.

### **Emergency out of hours contact details**

The phone number for emergencies is situated on the inside of the door ofn your comms box in your hallway. Please note, the following situations constitute an emergency:

- Complete failure of the heating systems and/or hot water system\*
- A water leak or flooding that cannot be contained
- A complete failure of the electrics\*
- Flooding caused by blocked drains that threatens to enter the home
- Security - a fault to a window or external door causing a loss of security
- Any other situation that causes a risk to life

\*Before reporting an emergency, please ensure that the problem is not caused by a general failure in the area.



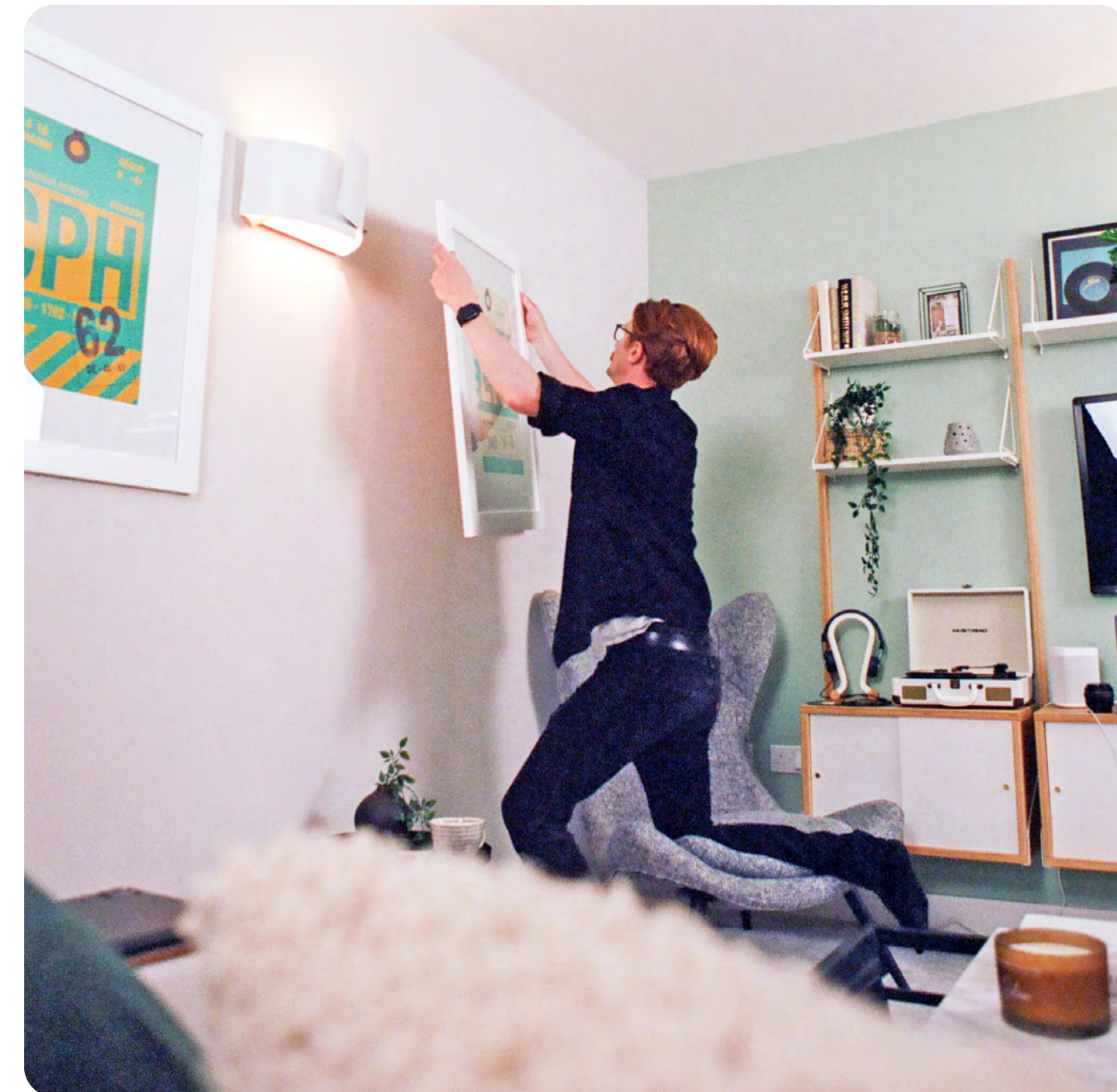
## Allowing your home to settle.

During the first few months, your home will need to 'settle'. This includes allowing it to dry out gently. During construction, a new home is subject to the weather and many thousands of litres of rainwater can be absorbed by the structure before it is made watertight.

As the structure is drying out, you may notice minor cracks in interior walls (shrinkage) or white deposits on any brickwork (efflorescence). Shrinkage happens when timbers and plaster contract as they dry out. Efflorescence deposits are natural salts that come out of the wall materials and are quite normal. These salts are not harmful and usually disappear over time.

Shrinkage and efflorescence may occur regardless of what you do, but there are steps you can follow to try and minimise them:

- To keep cracks and gaps to a minimum, you need to allow your home to dry out gradually.
- Leave windows or trickle vents open and use extractor fans in kitchens and bathrooms to help to ventilate your home and allow moisture to evaporate more naturally. This will also avoid condensation forming which can damage timber and paintwork.
- The length of time your house takes to dry out depends on how it was built and in what sort of weather conditions. Generally speaking, it will take around nine months to a year.
- After this time, shrinkage can normally be put right very easily with ordinary filler and a simple lick of paint during routine redecoration.
- Shrinkage is accelerated by heat, so try to keep an even temperature throughout your home.
- If you move in during winter, it may be tempting to turn on the heating to its highest setting. This is not recommended as the high heat may accelerate shrinkage.



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# Caring for your new lawn.

If your home has been provided with grass, follow these guidelines to help your garden establish.

- Typically, it is best to avoid walking on newly laid grass for around 4-6 weeks, although weather and the time of year can also extend this period. Your grass will still need an additional 3-4 months to become fully established and it is best to avoid heavy use until then.
- During the summer months, it is critical that your turf is watered to ensure it establishes well.
- Once your lawn is established it is recommended that you cut your grass regularly, with a recommended length of about 15-20mm.
- If you do own pets and allow them to use your lawn, it is common to see patches of green or brown grass. It is important that you treat these areas regularly otherwise the lawn will deteriorate.
- After constructing your garden, soil settlement can occur, this is a natural occurrence that happens during and after the construction of your home. It's normal to expect variations in the levels of your garden and topdressing can address this problem. Topdressing is applying a thin layer of soil to the affected areas, which will then work its way to the roots and smooth out the affected areas.



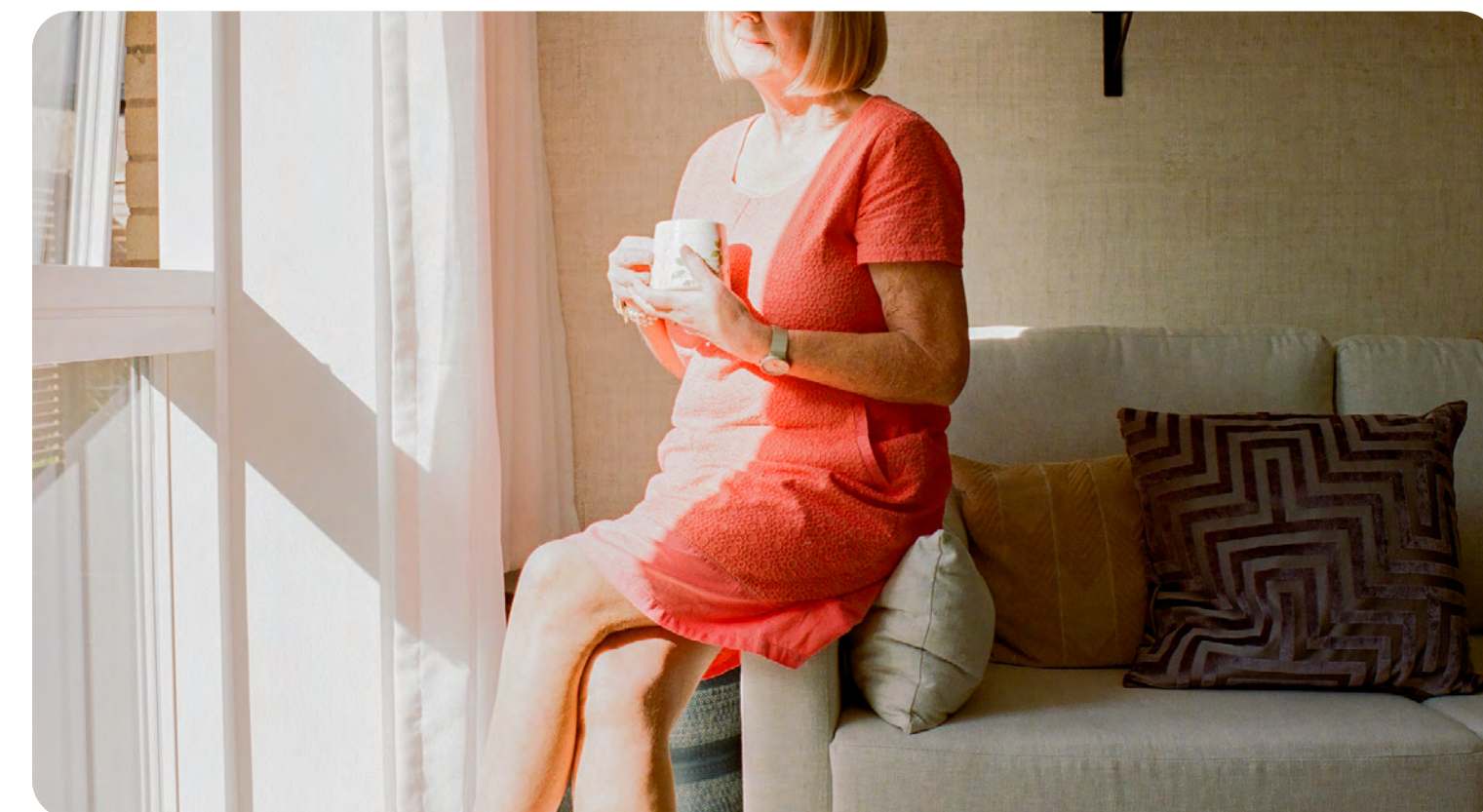
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# Snagging.

Your home has been constructed by a number of different trades in accordance with relevant Building Control requirements. Although every care has been taken to ensure it is handed over with no problems, there can occasionally be some minor issues that only become apparent once the home is occupied. These are known as snags or snagging issues and they are covered by the two-year Builders' Warranty.

If you identify any snags, or believe something could be a snagging issue, please contact the After-Sales team using the details above. They will log the details and either arrange for a repair, or in the event it is a more complex issue, they may arrange for somebody to come and inspect the problem in order to confirm the appropriate next steps.

Under normal circumstances, we expect to resolve most snags within 30 days from submission of the snag list. Where this is not possible, for example due to having to order materials which have a longer lead time, we will keep you regularly updated and confirm an anticipated date for the repair as soon as we can.



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# Homeowner Maintenance.

Some elements of your new home will require regular maintenance. These are not snags and are part of routine homeowner maintenance. These could include areas such as annual servicing of your central heating boiler, protecting any garden fencing, or painting external timber or render.

Please review the warranty and service information we have provided and contact the After-Sales team if you have any other questions.



## Our complaints procedure.

Some elements of your new home will require regular maintenance. These are not snags and are part of routine homeowner maintenance. These could include areas such as annual servicing of your central heating boiler, protecting any garden fencing, or painting external timber or render.

Please review the warranty and service information we have provided and contact the After-Sales team if you have any other questions.

### Reporting an issue

Although we hope you will not have any problems after you move into your new home, our commitment continues after your sale has been completed.

If you have a complaint that we have:

- Failed to do something we should have done
- Done something badly
- Treated you unfairly or discourteously

Then please do contact us and allow us the opportunity to put it right.

### Informal complaints

If you are able to resolve any issue informally with our office and are happy with the outcome, then you need not use our formal complaints procedures. If, however, you are not satisfied that the problem has been resolved or handled to your satisfaction, you may wish to make a formal complaint. You can do this by using our formal complaints procedure set out below.

## Our complaints procedure.

### Formal complaints process

We have a robust process to ensure that your complaint is properly investigated and followed up:

Please raise your complaint with [customercare@northstone.co.uk](mailto:customercare@northstone.co.uk)

- We will acknowledge all complaints within 5 calendar days of the complaint initiation date\*.
- We will investigate your concerns and send a response which details our proposed pathway to resolution within 10 calendar days of the complaint initiation date\*. This should explain how we plan to resolve the issue, along with the steps and anticipated timescales.
- We will send a full complaint assessment response by no later than 30 calendar days. If the complaint has been resolved, this will confirm what steps were taken. In the event that the resolution is still underway, the response will detail what has caused the delay, and the anticipated date for resolution.

- Once the complaint has been resolved, we will send a closure response which confirms what action has been taken.
- In the very unlikely event that the complaint remains unresolved after 56 calendar days of the complaint initiation date\*, we will send a further response to provide information on what has caused the delay, what are the next steps and the anticipated date for resolution. We will also keep you updated no less than every 30 days until the matter is resolved.
- We hope we can resolve most matters without the need for further escalation. However, if your complaint is not resolved in accordance with this procedure, or you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, then you may be able to refer your complaint to any dispute resolution service offered by your warranty provider, or the New Homes Ombudsman Service.
- It is within the New Homes Ombudsman Service' discretion to decide when or if to accept a complaint, in accordance with the scheme rules. The New Homes Ombudsman Service can accept complaints that have arisen within two years of legal completion. After this, disputes within the structural warranty period may be referred to the New Home Warranty Provider if relevant.

\*The complaints initiation date (CID) is the first working day after a complaint is received. Thus, if a complaint is received on a Monday, the CID is the following Tuesday. If a complaint is received on a Saturday, the CID will be the following Monday (excluding public holidays).

## How to report a repair with our Customer Care Team.

If you have a defect in your property that you think needs our attention, an email should be issued to our Customer Care Team at: **customercare@northstone.co.uk**

Within your email, please include:

1. Your name, address and contact number
2. A description of the defect and which room/area of your home
3. A photograph of the issue (this will assist our team with qualifying the defect)
4. An indication of general availability for access.

If the defect is something we do cover, we will raise a job with the relevant contractor and provide you with a ticket number via email. You will be able to view progress of your defect/repair using this ticket number on your Clixifix portal.

Access to your home should always be discussed with you prior to any works being carried out. Apart from any member of the Northstone team, no sub-contractors should attend your home unless pre-arranged with Northstone, or directly with you as the homeowner.

Remedial works carried out by any of our nominated contractors will take place during business hours Monday to Friday. Please be aware that there is no standard weekend working.

In some cases, we may need to inspect an issue a little more in person before committing to any potential works. Please remember that within the first two years of occupation, we are obliged to inspect and either reject or action remedial works to correct a defect in your home. Should you choose to undertake a repair yourself or assign your own alternative contractor, you may void your warranty and Northstone will not be liable to reimburse any costs to you that you might incur.

### Response Times for Repair.

When you report a problem, we will advise you on the timescale for your repair based on the severity of the issue and where the issue is a not a result of client misuse.

1. Emergency - within 24 hours. For example, burst pipes, fires, flooding, blocked drains, lack of security or complete power failure.
2. Urgent - within 5 working days. For example, faulty plumbing, water leaks or faulty heating.
3. Essential - within 20 working days. For example, door easing, loose door handle etc.

For urgent orders, our aim is five working days, but this will be dependent on the severity of the problem, availability of parts and access. If your repair is delayed due to these reasons, we will aim to have the repair complete within 20 working days.

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## Out of Hours – Emergency.

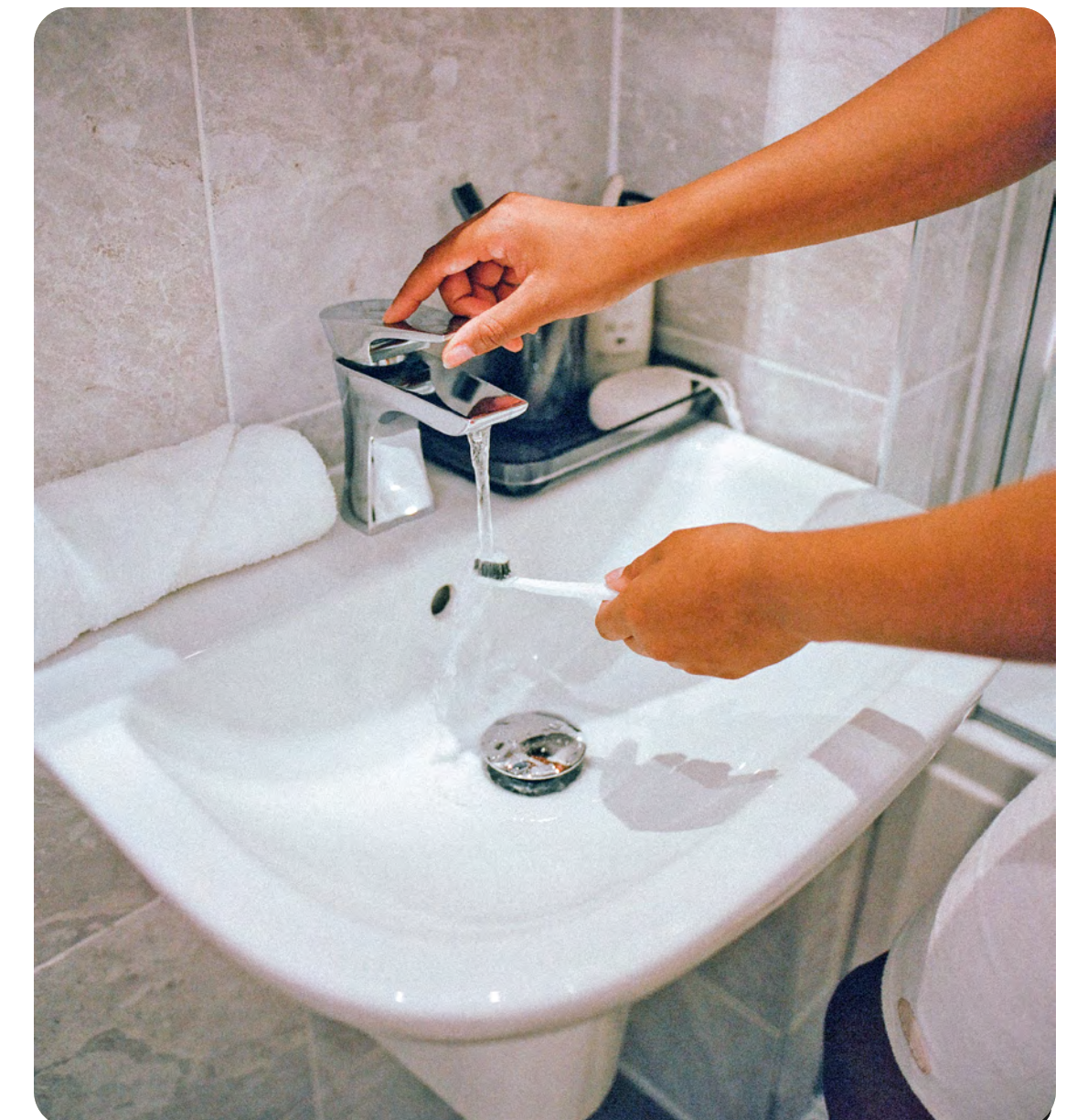
For any Emergency defects that need to be reported during non-working hours (5pm – 8am and Sat/Sun/Bank Holidays), please contact our response team at:

**Nationwide Property Assistance**

PHONE  
**0345 009 9754**

EMAIL  
**crmadmin@npa247.com**

In the case of an emergency, it may not always be possible to carry out the repair when making safe the emergency. There may need to be a second appointment to carry out the repair which we will aim to complete within five working days.





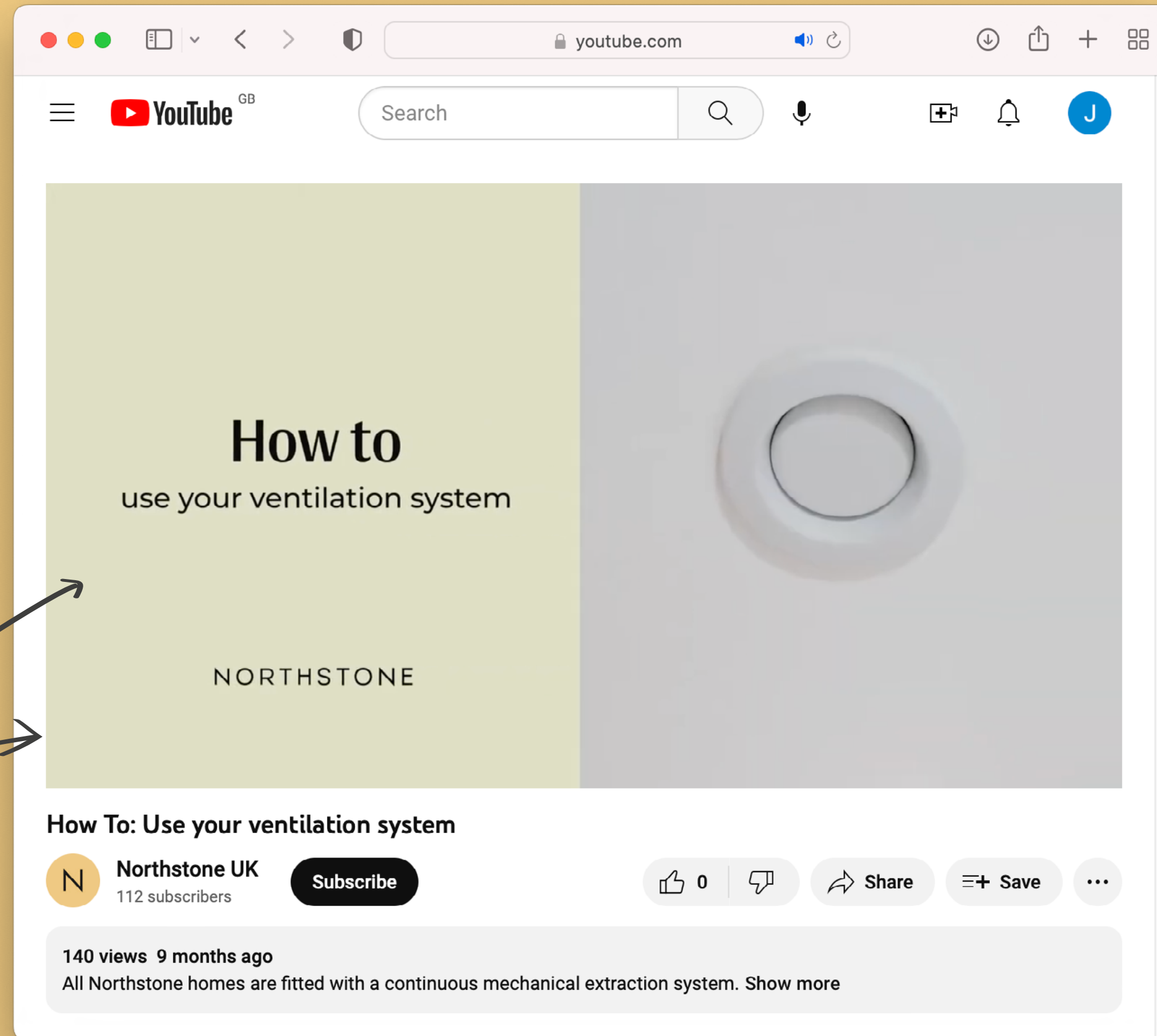
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# Know the ins and outs of your Northstone home.

We've put together some handy 'how-to' videos to help you get to know your home, and its features, and tips on maintaining it too.

Scan the QR code below on your phone and watch our videos online. We have everything from 'how to launch your broadband trial', to 'how to avoid blocked drains'.

*HOW-TO VIDEOS  
FOR USING & MAINTAINING  
YOUR NEW HOME*



## It's time to say hello to your new home.

### On move in day, please remember to:

- Record your meter readings on our handover form and inform your energy and water supplier that you have moved to a new home and provide your move-in meter readings.
- Contact the relevant local authority to order your wheelie bins if required.
- If you own a pet which is micro-chipped, contact your Vet to check what the procedures are for changing the home address of your pet on their chip.
- Register your new address with the Royal Mail.



### Who do I need to notify once I've changed address?

- Your employer
- Your local council for council tax purposes (and for wheelie bins)
- The DVLA
- TV Licencing
- Your GP and Dentist
- Your bank
- And anyone else who knows me!