

# Frequently asked questions

## Q1. What is NHBC Accepts?

**A:** NHBC Accepts is a comprehensive review service for innovative construction systems. From the UK's leading new homes warranty and insurance provider, NHBC Accepts is the route to acceptance for building systems used in homes covered by our Buildmark warranty product.

NHBC Accepts provides acceptance, in writing, that a construction system can meet the NHBC Standards. It also demonstrates that, subject to appropriate design and installation, the system can be used in homes covered by Buildmark.

NHBC's Innovation Team carries out a review of the system and, if deemed satisfactory, will provide a certificate to the system owner, allowing use of the NHBC Accepts logo and inclusion in the NHBC searchable database of Accepted Systems.

## Q2. Who is eligible for NHBC Accepts?

**A:** NHBC Accepts is for system owners - typically manufacturers of innovative building systems. Please note that system owners must possess the Intellectual Property rights to the system.

## Q3. What criteria must system owners/manufacturers meet to receive NHBC Accepts certification?

**A:** Systems reviewed under NHBC Accepts must demonstrate that they meet NHBC Standards. The requirements are set out in the NHBC Accepts Technical Document, available at [www.nhbc.co.uk/Accepts](http://www.nhbc.co.uk/Accepts).

## Q4. How much does it cost to receive NHBC Accepts certification?

**A:** A bespoke fee is charged for each assessment to address the variety or form of innovative construction we review. After initial certification, an annual periodic review is required. The bespoke fees charged reflects the complexity of the system, the number of factory and site inspections required, as well as the extent of any changes to the system.

## Q5. How long does the NHBC Accepts process take?

**A:** We try to respond to information received within three weeks of receipt. The system owner should then respond to information requested and this time is outside of our control.

Assessment takes significantly longer where the test evidence (including fire tests), third party certification and the system manual are not completed in advance of engagement.

## Q6. Is the warranty cost additional?

**A:** The cost of Buildmark warranty must be paid for separately by registered NHBC developers for the purposes of providing Buildmark cover to a new home.

## Q7. Will a company that doesn't use this service still be able to obtain an NHBC warranty?

**A:** A review under NHBC Accepts is not mandatory. There are many ways that a construction system can be shown to meet NHBC Standards. In general, most construction products are certified by a notified body or assessed by an independent technical approvals authority **see technical guidance 2.1/01**

## Q8. What is the benefit of the NHBC Accepts service to the manufacturer?

**A:** The benefit of the NHBC Accepts service is that it provides confidence to a developer that the system has been thoroughly reviewed by NHBC in advance. This is particularly valuable for innovative systems that are not frequently seen on site.

Without certification, the system can only be checked on an individual project basis with the risk that it does not meet NHBC Standards.

NHBC Accepts is an integral part of our overall technical risk management to deliver Buildmark warranty for innovative systems.

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**Q9. Will NHBC Accepts help obtain warranties from other providers?**

**A:** NHBC Accepts is a review against NHBC Standards only. It is not intended for use for any purposes other than than satisfying the requirements to achieve Buildmark warranty.

**Q10. If I want to use the NHBC Accepts service how do I get in touch?**

**A:** Please visit [www.nhbc.co.uk/Accepts](http://www.nhbc.co.uk/Accepts) to complete an enquiry form.

**Q11. I have a letter from NHBC stating that my system meets Standards. Can I use this instead of NHBC Accepts?**

**A:** NHBC surveyors, inspectors and engineers will review and accept systems used on individual projects. However, NHBC Accepts is the only way to demonstrate that a system has been thoroughly reviewed and is the only formal way that we will confirm acceptability to meet the NHBC Standards. Any historic letters from NHBC that provided written acceptance of a system are no longer valid, as this has now been replaced by NHBC Accepts.

**Q12. How do you carry out inspection in the factory?**

**A:** Our Innovation Specialists usually visit the place of manufacture to understand how the system is assembled and the associated quality management process. Ongoing visits to the factory and to sites will be arranged where required.

**Q13. Can an NHBC site use a system which is not listed under NHBC Accepts?**

**A:** Yes, but systems must meet NHBC technical requirements as set out in the NHBC Standards and TGN 2.1/20, covering independent technical assessment bodies. However, NHBC provides a bespoke review of innovative systems so that they can be assessed before getting onto site, giving confidence in their quality as well as assisting with assessment on site by the NHBC inspectors and project managers.

**Q14. Why do I need a warranty since I have NHBC Accepts?**

**A:** Buildmark warranty is provided on a completed home, including external works, substructure, superstructure and finishes and is for the benefit of the home owner. The NHBC Accepts service reviews the quality and conformity of the system elements that form part of the overall home.

**Q15. Can I specify or register plots using any category System which is currently under review by Accepts or another technical assessment body, i.e. it has no current third party certification?**

**A:** This would potentially not meet NHBC Technical Requirements, and could result in rejection of offer of cover under Buildmark warranty. Contact your NHBC project manager for details.

**Q16. What other charges may be incurred as a part of the delivery of the Accepts service?**

**A:** If a system is proven to be non-compliant in use, then NHBC may charge additional fees for any significant issues that affect our ability to deliver a compliant project.

**Q17. What are the most important documents I need to provide?**

**A:** The Technical Document describes in detail the primary evidence required prior to engagement with NHBC Accepts. These include the full System Manual, system owners' Quality Management/ISO 9001 certification, testing evidence including any required fire tests to recognized standards, and specific factory production controls for the manufacture of the system.

**Q18. What if I am not sure if my system will meet NHBC requirements, or be able to be certified by Accepts?**

**A:** NHBC Accepts is able to provide a pre-appraisal service, which can include assessment of innovative prototypes and pre-construction concepts.

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## Q19. What happens when I submit project-specific designs using a system that has Accepts certification?

**A:** A bespoke technical risk management plan will be produced, and project-specific technical conditions will be applied that are relevant to the details submitted. If there are features of the design that are not covered by the existing certification and that are not possible to risk manage by NHBC Operations, it is possible that offer of cover for Buildmark warranty is withdrawn.

## Q20. What happens if I don't have full fire test or fire performance evidence available?

**A:** Evidence to UK-recognised standards of performance is always required in order to assess a system. It will not be possible to progress an assessment if required fire tests are not available in their full and original form, not applicable to the makeup of the system, or not provided by a body which is certified by UKAS. In some cases an interpretative report by a suitably accredited and competent fire consultant may also be required. Assessments in Lieu of Testing (AILOTs) are not able to be recognised on their own, in the absence of any comparable fire test data. Refer to Appendix B in Approved Document B volume 1 for further details.

## Q21. What happens when NHBC Standards, Building Regulations or other applicable guidance changes during or after a review has commenced, or after a System has been certified?

**A:** NHBC reserves the right to raise technical conditions related to the System, which may require significant changes to the design or specification of the System. Please refer to earlier FAQs, which describe how a chargeable annual (or periodic) review will be carried out by NHBC Accepts to ensure conformity with recognised standards is maintained over time.

**Disclaimer:** NHBC Accepts is not an independent accreditation scheme or any form of performance guarantee and third parties should engage with the relevant manufacturer on performance of their product. No documentation, information and advice relating to NHBC Accepts may be adapted or disclosed to any third party. NHBC Services Ltd accepts no duty of care and assumes no responsibility to any third party. Any third party who chooses to rely upon an NHBC Accepts certificate (or any documentation, information and advice relating to the NHBC Accepts service) shall do so entirely at their own risk and NHBC accepts no liability for any damage or loss, however caused, in connection with the use of or reliance on any documentation, information and advice relating to NHBC Accepts.

