The Home Quality Mark aims to make new homes better. Better for peoples health and wellbeing, for their wallets and for the environment. At its heart are drivers acting upon consumer empowerment, market differentiation, greater assurance for specifiers and the delivery of quality homes nationwide.

- The Home Quality Mark (HQM) uses a rating system which has two elements; a 1-5 star overall rating plus three performance indicators representing health and wellbeing, environmental impact and running costs also rated 1-5. These help better communicate a homes unique performance to all stakeholders including consumers.

- Level 4 of the HQM Environmental Footprint indicator can be aligned to what is considered by the Climate Change PPG (2019) as equivalent to the Code for Sustainable Homes level 4 energy requirement, whilst also ensuring that other environmental standards and quality issues have been addressed.

- The HQM is a holistic scheme, driving best practice across a range of sustainability aspects including that of health and wellbeing, smart technologies and sustainable transport options. It has a strong emphasise on consumer care and the provision of information, as well as on quality assurance, helping to ensure that homes perform as intended when occupied.

- Over 17,000 homes have been registered to the HQM across an eclectic range of tenures and procurement types since its initial launch in England. It became operational in Scotland and Wales in Summer 2018.

- The HQM offers a range of bespoke and holistic methodologies including the temperature tool which helps mitigate the risks of overheating and the energy engine for calculating energy and carbon performance; drawing upon a triple metric approach (energy demand reduction, primary energy efficiency and carbon reduction). These offer a more robust perspective of the likely in-use performance and consumption.
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*Guidance within this document is based upon the ‘Home Quality Mark ONE, SD239 Issue 0.0’ technical manual which is currently available at www.homequalitymark.com
The building sector’s environmental debates may have evolved from the oil crisis of the 1970s to today’s focus on low carbon construction and climate resilience, wellbeing, data and fourth industry transformation. However back in the 1980s ‘low energy’ buildings and the gap in credible measurements and standards was an emerging topic. It was during this time that the BRE was approached by a Canadian developer consortium operating in London who wanted a robust differentiator that could showcase the performance of their buildings. By the end of the decade BRE, in partnership with architects ECD and developers Stanhope Plc, launched the first BREEAM scheme for offices type buildings.

Today BREEAM is a family of schemes which drive standards across the entire built environment sector life cycle, and empowers those who deliver it.

The BREEAM Family includes:
- **BREEAM Communities**: for the master-planning of a new communities
- **CEEQUAL**: for newbuild infrastructure projects
- **BREEAM New Construction**: for newbuild multi-residential and non-domestic buildings
- **Home Quality Mark**: for new homes
- **BREEAM Domestic Refurbishment**: for home refurbishments
- **BREEAM Refurbishment and Fit Out**: for multi residential and non-domestic building fit-outs and refurbishments
- **BREEAM In-Use**: for existing buildings
All schemes are tailored to the individual build, use and life cycle stage of the projects that they assess, and the local context. They are operational in over 70 countries, including the US and China, and represent over 70% of the certification market across Europe.

**Acting globally, whilst influencing locally.**

The family of schemes operate through third party certification. BRE Global; the scheme operators, do not assess a project’s performance against our schemes criteria but instead train and license sustainability professionals, Assessors, to act in this capacity. Assessors (and other associated professionals) work with the project team to embed sustainability from the onset, collate evidence and establish the project’s rating. They submit assessments for verification and certification. The whole process is accredited by national accreditation bodies which, in the UK, are UKAS; the United Kingdom Accreditation Service.

**Ensuring rigor and impartiality, and increasing confidence.**

Schemes are underpinned by a core science base which drives good practices across the whole sustainability spectrum and provide measures of performance against a scaled rating system. Through a series of update cycles, each scheme evolves to reflect advances in science, technology, policy and business. Each update is driven and supported by stakeholder feedback and engagement, and through evaluations of the schemes’ impact on industry. Furthermore, proceeds from certification activities are gifted to the BRE Trust, the BRE’s parent organization, who reinvest in research and advancement projects, which in turn inform the standards/assessment criteria.

**BRE is one of very few organisations where new science and thinking can be directly channeled into market transformation.**
And so, over the past 28 years, the BREEAM Family has supported and driven progress and innovation; providing confidence to stakeholders along the way. To date, over 530,000 certificates have been issued and approximately 3,000 assessors licensed. As the longest standing schemes, they have influenced the development of many other standards and assessment methodologies (within BRE and beyond) and has driven regulations at both national and international levels.

They are used to create value and capacity by a range of stakeholders including: end clients, building users, consumers, supply chains, financiers, developers, project teams and researchers. As well as local, national and international governments, and NGO’s.

Now operational in over 80 countries they are the world’s leading sustainability certification schemes for the built environment.
Introducing the BREEAM Family cont.

Driving performance across non-domestic use types; education, commercial, retail, healthcare, multi-residential, leisure, defence and security etc.

Engaging people with their built environment and empowering communities to thrive

Maximising efficiencies and opportunities during refurbishment and operation; reducing the performance gap and optimising the existing stock

Supporting better, higher quality homes for industry and consumers

Improving public realm and infrastructure by reducing negative impacts and disruption whilst recognising good practice.
Looking for a way to show just how good your homes are? Look for the Home Quality Mark.
The Case

The UK is amid a housing crisis and the government has committed to delivering 300,000 homes a year by the mid-2020s. Our homes are important to us. In the UK we typically spend over 50% of our time in and around them, and they represent the biggest single financial commitment in terms of purchase or rental, and running costs. They have a major effect on our health and wellbeing and can communicate our priorities and our interests. However public confidence in the quality, and therefore desirability, of new homes is difficult to gauge.

The national media and third sectors often highlight the falling quality of new homes. Recent examples include the skeptical response to a New Homes Ombudsman (i.e. it’s ‘after the horse has bolted’ position and lack of impartiality) and the 2017 Shelter survey accompanying their New Civic Housebuilding report which suggests that 51% of new home occupiers experience problems. Conversely, the 2018 Home Builders Federation’s survey suggests high levels of customer satisfaction and that new homes are savings consumers money on their energy bills.

These narratives complicate the picture however the NPPF (2019) makes clear that the delivery of high-quality homes is a priority. How can policy makers, the public, financiers and the industry be confident that the housing markets are delivering on point?

The Purpose

The Home Quality Mark was developed in consultation with housebuilders, home occupiers/owners, local government, financiers and the wider industry to recognise new homes where performance exceeds the regulatory minimums. It is a consumer-focused standard, designed to be publicly accessible and allow a smarter choice to be made based on the specific priorities of the stakeholder group.
Choosing the right scheme is the starting point to ensuring successful outcomes and value, in terms of quality and sustainability, for building owners and occupants. As such, it is advised that readers refer to the Knowledge Base entry: KBCN1225 - Scheme classification for residential projects (UK) (05/12/2018) when considering HQM classifications. However, the below provides an initial guide...

HQM assesses homes individually, but can also account for common areas associated with blocks of self-contained homes. An HQM project will meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Be designed to meet the function of a long-term self-contained home even though there may be some provision of communal facilities which can be used on a voluntary basis.
- Be classified under Building regulations Part L1a (i.e. required to complete SAP assessments, although there may be some linked SBEM assessed spaces associated with the project).

As such, HQM projects could be homes for sale, social housing or homes for rent (PRS and Built to Rent). They may also include some student and retirement/sheltered accommodation where the units are comparable to a normal self-contained flat/home.

HQM is not currently appropriate for the refurbishment of existing homes or for multiple residency projects such as student halls of residence. The BREEAM: Domestic Refurbishment and BREEAM: New Construction schemes can be used to assess these types of projects.

The HQM ONE assessment criteria addresses issues which fall under the following overarching categories:

- Transport and movement
- Outdoors
- Safety and resilience
- Comfort
- Energy
- Materials
- Space
- Water
- Quality assurance
- Construction impacts
- Customer experience
Overarching Ratings

Unlike other BREEAM schemes, the HQM has a rating system which uses two elements:

An overall star rating from 1-5, going up in 0.5 increments which can be made up from the 500 total number of ‘tradable’ credits achieved from across the whole range of categories…

PLUS

Three performance ‘Indicators’ relating to the homes running costs (My Cost), health and wellbeing (My Wellbeing) and environmental footprint (My Footprint). These indicator scores, which also range from 1-5, are generated in parallel with the HQM star ratings. They are drawn from the number of credits achieved in corresponding issues which will impact more directly on the aspects of that theme. For example, the My Wellbeing indicator draws upon issues such as good daylighting, air quality, access to amenity and levels of thermal comfort.

The star rating gives an overall picture of the home’s quality whilst the indicators reflect key areas of concern to the householder, policy maker and/or other stakeholders which give greater confidence that specific aspects of sustainability have been addressed.
Minimum Standards

To ensure that all HQM certified homes consistently on some important issues, the scheme sets out nine minimum performance levels across several key areas.

These requirements establish a standard that consumers can expect from all homes which have achieved a HQM certificate.

The minimum requirements have been set in a way that can be achieved on all types of homes, but still require performance which is better than building regulations.

A home must meet all minimum requirements to gain a certificate regardless of the overall star rating.

Indicator back stops

In addition to the minimum standards, the HQM also sets minimum performance level for the indicators, the 'indicator backstops'.

These apply to an indicator score of three or more and ensure that key issues (specific to that indicator) are not overlooked when targeting a higher indicator score. They require a home to achieve a set number of credits within key issues. For example, to achieve a score of three in the My Wellbeing indicator, a home must achieve three credits within the daylight issue. Different levels (from 3 and above) require a different mix of backstop credits to be achieved which increase in performance as the levels increase.

The full list of backstop criteria and credits can be found within the appendix of the HQM Technical Manual.
An overall star rating is only achieved if all minimum requirements are met whilst the number of stars is determined by the amount of credits that are achieved, which are all tradable.

Half star ratings were introduced to HQM ONE, following feedback from stakeholders looking for greater distinction in performance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 star</th>
<th>1.5 stars</th>
<th>2 stars</th>
<th>2.5 stars</th>
<th>3 stars</th>
<th>3.5 stars</th>
<th>4 stars</th>
<th>4.5 stars</th>
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<tr>
<td>Min. credits</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>150</td>
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<tr>
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<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>≥80</td>
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My Cost
Provides an indication of the likely overall costs of running the home.
Considers:
- Flood risk
- Security
- Temperature
- Energy and Cost
- Water efficiency

My Wellbeing
Reflects how the home is likely to impact the occupants health and wellbeing. Considers:
- Quality of living space (daylighting, temperature, air quality, sources of noise and sound insulation)
- Recreational space
- Security
- Access and Space

My Footprint
Demonstrates the environmental impact of both constructing and running the home. Considers:
- Reductions in carbon emissions, water and energy use including from embodied impacts and site works
- Environmental protection, management and enhancement
- Responsible sourcing

This indicator is useful for lenders and insurers.
This indicator is useful for recognising active, accessible and healthy homes.
This indicator is useful for fulfilling climate change objectives. The energy engine within HQM calculates performance in a holistic manner, using a triple metric approach and consequently direct comparison with building regulatory improvements (Part L) can not be made. Further information regarding the HQM energy engine can be found here. However level 4 of this indicator aligns to the level 4 energy requirement of the Code for Sustainable Homes as described in the Climate Change PPG 2019, whilst also ensuring that a range of other environmental safe guards have been addressed.
Assessment Routes

Each home is assessed individually to ensure that final ratings reflect the performance of the actual home that will be occupied.

The scheme can also be used to assess phased developments or those with multiple homes. Although some issues may not have been actioned during the final certificate stage assessment, for example issues relating to ecology credits or community-based facilities, it is possible to certify early stage homes based on other evidence. The details of these exceptions are highlighted in Appendix D of the Home Quality Mark technical manual.
Consumers - to compare new homes in terms of their likely running costs and environmental footprint (effect), as well as a measure of a healthier home.

Home-builders - to evaluate their operations and set their new homes apart from others by supporting performance claims and explaining the benefits of new homes to their customers and others.

Public and private sector landlords - to set priorities and monitor performance against these priorities in new build properties throughout the design and construction phases, making sure that the properties they take on, meet their expectations and their tenants needs.

Financial service providers and funding bodies - to more accurately reflect in their lending or affordability criteria, the effect the cost of running a new home has on a home owner’s financial outgoings and guide industry lending rates, investment decisions thus helping to manage risk.

Planners and community group - to ensure that objectives relating to sustainability and quality of developments are being achieved and robustly monitored.
Lancaster Grange, Hertfordshire. A Crest Nicholson 100 home development certified to design stage with final submission expected soon.

“We are proud that Lancaster Grange has been the first development to achieve this significant recognition of its excellent quality across several areas. We look forward to delivering more high-quality homes that demonstrate our commitment to our customers and the Home Quality Mark’s key areas.”

David Hnyda, Sales and Marketing Director at Crest Nicholson’s Chiltern
This resource is the output of a number of BREEAM engagement initiatives and has been produced through a combination of workshops, meetings, written consultation and individual feedback. It has been led and developed by Charlene Clear, Jonathan Gilbert and Charlotte Hardy of the BRE Group. We are grateful to all those who have contributed including those from the BREEAM assessor and developer networks, and specifically to the individuals and organisations below…

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<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
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**With many thanks.**