

SETTING THE STANDARDS IN RESIDENTIAL SURVEYING

New-build Inspection & Reporting Standards

New-build Inspection & Reporting Standards v1.4 Nov 2021



Introduction

This guidance is intended to inform a suitably qualified RPSA member in the execution of a Pre-Completion Check of a Complete New Home for the purpose of providing the home buyer with a Finishing Checklist. This process is commonly referred to as 'snagging'.

The Finishing Checklist should be provided in a format which the builder/developer can use for the remediation of matters generally referred to as 'snags'.

It has been informed by an industrywide technical working group in collaboration with the New Homes Quality Board (NHQB) and is referenced in the New Homes Quality Code.

The Pre-Completion Check should only be carried out on a Complete New Home.

This guidance does not, nor is it intended to, refer to the inspection or reporting of defects that are beyond the scope of a Pre-Completion Check as defined by the New Homes Quality Board.

Definitions

Complete New Home

A house may be considered complete if all rooms, spaces and facilities are in a finished condition for the purpose for which they are designed and intended and the property is safely accessible. Any further work to the home is to be solely decorative/corrective or related to shared common areas, or related to transitioning from temporary to permanent utilities and services. Such works should not affect the owner's abilities to live safely in the property and will not cause disruption or significant inconvenience to rectify.

An apartment/flat may be considered complete if all rooms, spaces and facilities within the specific apartment/flat are in a finished condition for the purpose for which they are designed and intended and the unit is safely accessible; any further work being solely decorative/corrective, related to shared common areas and facilities, or related to transitioning from temporary to permanent utilities and services which do not affect the owner's ability to live safely in the apartment/flat and will not cause disruption or significant inconvenience to rectify.

Snag/Snagging/Defect

The term 'snag' or 'snagging' in the context of this guidance refers to matters associated with the general finish of the property.

The definition of a snag adopted by the New Homes Quality Board is:-

A minor imperfection or malfunction in the Complete New Home that does not meet recognised industry standards, finishings and tolerances. Snags are typically something which is damaged, broken, not fitted properly or looks unfinished and can be categorised as:

- (a) Omitted or incomplete work
- (b) Faulty or defective work

Snags are usually identified when works have been completed during an inspection prior to Completion by the homebuyer and/or their representative. They may also be identified post Completion.



The definition of a defect adopted by the New Homes Quality Board is:-
Failure to meet the New Home Warranty provider's specified technical standard

Inspections

1. External elements, including, but not limited to, walls, roofs, gutters, fascias and soffits, should be inspected from a distance of 10m in natural daylight and with no artificial light shining on the surface.
2. Internal ceiling, wall, paintwork finishes, mastic and sealing should be inspected in daylight from a minimum distance of 2m and with no artificial light on the surface. Where no natural daylight is available, inspection should be carried out with a single light source.
3. Cupboards, wardrobes, surfaces and fitted furniture (including kitchens and bathrooms) should be inspected in daylight from a distance of 0.5m and with no artificial light on the surface. Where no natural daylight is available, inspection should be carried out with a single light source.
4. Glazing should be inspected in daylight from a minimum distance of 2m (laminated or toughened glass from 3m) and with no artificial light on the surface, with fine scratches less than 25mm and bubbles or blisters if they are neither obtrusive or bunched, being acceptable.
5. All checks on the property unless otherwise stated will be visual from the ground [in the case of exterior] or from internal floors [in the case of the interior].
6. Loft spaces and eaves should only be checked where safely accessible to do so.

It is accepted that new homes are constructed in environments subject to changeable atmospheric and weather conditions, and with materials that may be inconsistent in their finish.

As such, any inspection of a new home must consider that there will be tolerances in all finishing standards and that perfection is unlikely to be achievable in most normal circumstances. However, specific definition of tolerances is unachievable due to the bespoke nature of new homes and the physical restrictions of conducting precise measurement within a normal surveying environment.

The principle of “if it doesn’t look right it probably isn’t right” should override specific measurements and RPSA members must use their skill, knowledge and experience to form a subjective assessment that is fair to both buyer and builder.

On occasions when conditions are extremely bright or dull due to seasonal or weather factors, the surveyor should consider termination or postponement of the inspection where natural lighting conditions prevent standard assessment of the building element.

RPSA Survey Inspection Standard

This standard defines the inspection level required of RPSA members.

RPSA members should carry out as full and thorough a visual and non-invasive inspection as is reasonably possible to do, in accordance with this guidance, noting any limitations.

RPSA Survey Inspection Standard Guidance

The following is intended to assist a Surveyor in meeting the above standard. It has advisory status only. Whilst following this guidance ensures compliance with the standard it is also possible to meet the required standard in other ways. Should an RPSA member choose to operate other than in accordance with this guidance, the obligation will be on them to explain how their practices and inspection process meet the standard. Others within the profession may also find this guidance of use.

The guidance will apply to all levels of snagging inspection.

General

The following should apply where a Surveyor is operating under their standard Terms & Conditions. Where necessary or appropriate the Surveyor may agree a different level of inspection with the client and that agreed level should take precedence. However, altering the level of inspection to something other than as described within these standards would, in many cases, result in an inspection and report that failed to meet these standards.

This may take the form of an addition to the Surveyor's Terms & Conditions, for example:

The main roof space of the subject property is to be excluded from the scope of the inspection. For all other elements the Surveyor will be following the inspection level detailed within the RPSA New build Survey Inspection & Reporting Standards, Edition X, dated XXXXXX.

The purpose of this guidance is not to limit or replace the Surveyor's own experience and knowledge. It is offered to ensure consistency of inspections and reports of new build Pre-Completion Inspections.

It is an overriding principle to the guidance that the Surveyor will not place themselves or others at unreasonable risk of harm and will endeavour to prevent or reduce damage to the property.

This guidance is based around inspections of newly constructed residential properties as part of a purchase.

The inspection is not intended to make reference to any Building Regulations or specific finishing standards other than those indicated by the New Homes Quality Code.

Equipment

Surveyors should use a range of portable equipment that allows them to carry out an inspection of the property consistent with the Survey Inspection Standards.

This should include, but is not limited to:-

Binoculars

Torch

Camera

Measuring devices, including tape measures and laser measures

Moisture meter

Ladder with a minimum extended height of 3.8 metres

A selection of minor tools which may include screwdrivers, pliers, crowbar and generic drain cover lifting tools, meter cabinet key and/or other items

Suitable Personal Protection Equipment relevant to the type of property being inspected and any other known factors

Additional equipment may be employed to assist in completing as full and thorough an inspection as is reasonably possible to do, for example:

Extended camera pole

Drones or other Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, subject to appropriate statutory permissions

Additional camera devices such as borescopes

Thermal imaging devices

Prior to using any equipment the Surveyor should carry out a risk assessment to consider likely damage to the property or surrounding properties, data protection or privacy of occupants or neighbours, and the risk of harm to the Surveyor, occupants or other members of the public.

Equipment should only be used where it can be done so with due regard to the health and safety of any individuals and protection of the property being inspected.

Pre-inspection

The Surveyor should carry out a reasonable degree of desk-based research prior to an inspection. Although proprietary and subscription services may be helpful, the expectation is that the Surveyor will primarily use publicly available and free-to-access online information. This information may include, but is not limited to:

- Flood risk maps
- Mining records
- Oil and gas (including fracking) records and maps
- Planning records
- Information about the property made available by the Local Authority
- Radon risk maps
- Historic mapping
- Energy Performance Certificates
- Geological information
- Land Registry information
- Broadband speed availability
- Historic England records
- Estate agency and/or online property portal information

External inspection

Surfaces should be viewed from a distance of 10 metres in natural daylight and with no artificial light shining on the surface.

It is accepted that practical and health and safety issues prevent precise measurement of parameters such as vertical and horizontal alignment of elements, for example brick courses, reveals and joinery, especially at levels above ground floor. Therefore, the overriding principle of “if it doesn’t look right, it probably isn’t right” for elements when viewed from 10 metres should be adopted.

External common parts (where relevant)

The Surveyor should assume that the common parts include all areas beyond the confines of the subject property where there is no evidence to suggest the area is demised to a different property, and which are commonly included within a maintenance/repair agreement associated with properties of a similar type.

The inspection should be limited to those common parts that would normally be used by the occupier of the subject dwelling i.e. the individual paths, parking areas, gardens, bin stores, storage, garages etc. that would normally be used by an occupier of that individual dwelling.

It should include only those parts of the external structure, including walls, roofs, windows, doors, joinery etc. that are immediately and directly associated with the subject dwelling.

It should exclude locked, or restricted access areas including electrical/lift/riser/services cupboards, lockers or buildings, restricted storage and maintenance facilities.

All included areas should be visually inspected in a similar manner as described elsewhere within relevant sections of this guidance. Where common parts are not accessible, perhaps because they are incomplete or within an area of ongoing construction activity that is deemed unsafe to enter, either by the Surveyor or by the site developer, a limitation should be noted within the report.

The Surveyor is not expected to familiarise themselves with the details of the common parts contained with any lease to the property.

The Surveyor is not expected to inspect any Management Company/Freeholder documentation found within the common parts.

Internal inspection

Surfaces should be viewed from a distance of 2 m in natural daylight and with no artificial light shining on the surface.

All fixed lighting should be switched off other than when checking their operation.

Where no natural daylight is available, for example in a room with no windows, inspection should be carried out with a single light source.

Internal common parts

The Surveyor should assume that the common parts include all areas beyond the confines of the subject property where there is no evidence to suggest the area is demised to a different property, and which are commonly included within a maintenance/repair agreement associated with properties of a similar type.

The inspection should be limited to those common parts that would normally be used by the occupier of the subject dwelling i.e. the individual corridors, staircases, halls, landings etc. that would normally be used to access that individual dwelling.

It should include only those parts that can normally and freely be accessed by an occupier of the subject dwelling without special permissions.

It should exclude locked or restricted access areas including electrical/lift/riser/services cupboards, lockers or housings, roof spaces accessed from common areas, restricted storage and maintenance facilities.

All included areas should be visually inspected in a similar manner as described elsewhere in relevant sections of this guidance although the use of an electronic moisture meter should be more limited with readings only taken where necessary to follow a trail of suspicion.

Where common parts are not accessible, perhaps because they are incomplete or within an area of ongoing construction activity that is deemed unsafe to enter, either by the Surveyor or by the site developer, a limitation should be noted within the report.

EXTERIOR

General

Health & Safety	No open excavations, potholes, discarded materials or trip hazards on plot.
Scaffolding	Removed from plot.
Roads & Footpaths	Base layer installed (minimum). Lit. No trip hazards.
Tidiness	Review of general environment.

Walls

Bricks & Mortar	Consistent in texture, finish, colour and excessive colour banding. Free from chips and marks greater than 15mm in diameter except by design. Plumb, and straight on plan and in section. Bed joints straight horizontally and vertically, except by design.
Render	Consistent texture, finish and colour, flat and free from crazing Maximum 0.2 mm width cracking permitted
Cladding	Consistent in finish and colour.
Tile Hanging	Consistent in finish and colour.
Expansion Joints	Filled, tidy and clean, full height.
Weeps	Consistently installed, clean
Air Bricks	Correctly installed, clean and undamaged.
DPC	Level. Min 150mm above finished ground level where visible and applicable.
Flashings	Properly sealed and tidy finish

Chimneys

Bricks & Mortar	Consistent in texture, finish, colour and free from excessive colour banding. Free from chips and marks greater than 15mm in diameter except by design. Plumb, and straight on plan and in section. Bed joints straight horizontally and vertically, except by design. Free from mortar splashes and spread. Free from cracks.
Render	Consistent texture, finish and colour, flat and free from crazing

Post / Terminals Straight and secure

Flashings Properly sealed and tidy finish

Roof

Tiles / Ridges Uniform in texture, finish, colour and free from excessive colour banding, except by design. Free from cracked or slipped tiles/slates.

Flat Smooth and uniform in colour, texture and finish. Joints sealed. A ladder may be used to view surfaces less than 3 metres above ground level.

Leadwork Properly sealed and tidy finish

Joinery

Facias, soffits, bargeboards Uniform in texture, finish, colour and free from excessive colour banding, except by design, and securely fixed.

Gutters

Gutters Securely fixed and free from kinks, dips, gaps, and leaks. [Note: Leaks cannot be checked in dry weather]

Downpipes Securely fixed and free from damage, kinks, dips, gaps, and leaks. [Note: Leaks cannot be checked in dry weather]

Butts Securely fixed and free from kinks, dips, gaps, and leaks. [Note: Leaks cannot be checked in dry weather]

Balconies

Clean. Railings securely fitted and with consistent finish.

Porches

Correctly tied/sealed to main walls. Doors and windows operating, lockable & scratch free with ironmongery intact.
Assess as for other internal and external elements.

Conservatories

Correctly tied/sealed to main walls. Doors and windows operating, lockable & scratch free with ironmongery intact.
Assess as for other internal and external elements.

Garages

Walls Consistent in texture, finish, colour and excessive colour banding. Free from chips and marks greater than 15mm in diameter except by design. Plumb, and straight on plan and in section. Bed joints straight horizontally and vertically, except by design.

Floors Reasonably level except by design.

Roofs Uniform in texture, finish, colour, except by design.

Doors Operating, lockable, dent & scratch free with ironmongery / security chain intact. Frame secure and undamaged. Prevents water ingress at base & not fouling floor. Threshold seal on personnel doors.

Windows Undamaged and with consistent, even finish. Reveals square with even heads and sills. Frames undistorted and plumb. Suitable seal around perimeter. Sill end caps present. Stone sills free from chips, abrasions, and stains

Services

Where applicable, light fittings, switches and sockets should be clean, level and in working order. Any conduit should be level and clean. Exposed cables are to be clipped and level, giving a tidy finish

Surfaces

Paths & Driveways

Reasonably level and stable except by design. Complete, even surface finish for texture and colour except by design, appropriate drainage (away from property).

Edgings & Kerbs

Free from trip hazards. Securely fixed and level according to design.

Lawns

Free from dead areas and visible flooding. Free from rubbish and debris.

Steps

Rises even and as design.

Drains

Inspection Chambers

Level, fixings in place, free from mortar or other surface coating debris. Lift and inspect internally for spoil, damage, flush water through.

Vents

Extractors

Securely fixed, tidy and sealed.

Flues

Securely fixed, tidy and sealed.

Windows

Undamaged and with consistent, even finish. Reveals square with even heads and sills. Frames undistorted and plumb. Suitable seal around perimeter. Sill end caps present. Stone sills free from chips, abrasions, and stains. Keys present and operable where applicable.

Doors

Door furniture operating and fitted square. Opens/closes without fouling. Undamaged and with consistent, even finish. Reveals square with even heads and sills. Frames undistorted and plumb. Suitable seal around perimeter. Keys present and operable where applicable..

Services

Taps

Securely fixed and operating and with acceptable flow.

Lights

Bulbs present and working. Lamps and flush switches securely fixed, clean and level unless by design.

Meter Boxes

Securely fixed, level, clean, pipework sealed at entry points

Pipes

Securely fixed

Doorbell

Operating.

Sheds & Outbuildings

Sheds	Consistent and even finish. Doors and windows open/close without fouling. Roof coverings complete and with a consistent finish free from holes and leaks.
Greenhouses	Consistent and even finish. Doors and windows open/close without fouling. Roof coverings complete and with a consistent finish free from holes and leaks.
Bin Stores	Consistent and even finish. Doors and windows open/close without fouling. Roof coverings complete and with a consistent finish free from holes and leaks.
Bike Stores	Consistent and even finish. Doors and windows open/close without fouling. Roof coverings complete and with a consistent finish free from holes and leaks.

Boundaries

Fences	Consistent and even finish, free from damage, with timbers treated where applicable. Gates square and aligned, open and close freely. Hinges, catches and locks operate smoothly.
Walls	Consistent and even finish, free from damage, with timbers treated where applicable. Gates square and aligned, open and close freely. Hinges, catches and locks operate smoothly.
Gates	Consistent and even finish, free from damage, with timbers treated where applicable. Gates square and aligned, open and close freely. Hinges, catches and locks operate smoothly.

Other

Air Source Heat Pumps	Where included within the sale check that have been installed
PV Panels	Where included within the sale check that have been installed

INTERIOR – applicable to all rooms

Walls

Plastering	<p>Joints not visible, reasonably uniform, visibly flat and plumb and free from, shrinkage, popped screws, imperfections.</p> <p>Jointing tape fully covered.</p>
Dry Lining	<p>Minor imperfections and textural differences may be present, especially around lights and other fittings.</p> <p>Associated fittings, casings, access covers should be square, neat, and tidy.</p>
Finishes	<p>Evenly applied and free from runs or prominent brush marks.</p> <p>Paint splashes not visible on switches, sockets etc.</p>

Ceilings

Plastering	<p>Joints not visible, reasonably uniform, visibly flat and plumb and free from, shrinkage, popped screws, imperfections.</p> <p>Jointing tape fully covered.</p>
Dry Lining	<p>Minor imperfections and textural differences may be present, especially around lights and other fittings.</p>
Finishes	<p>Evenly applied and free from runs or prominent brush marks.</p>

Floors

	<p>Reasonably level and free from excessive noise / creaks when traversed.</p> <p>Patterns and joints reasonably square with the walls.</p> <p>Tiled/timber/laminate finishes square to walls, except by design, with consistent spacing.</p> <p>Carpets free from defects, fault lines, ripples, lumps and bumps, and neatly fitted with door threshold bars installed where required.</p>
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Loft

Hatch	Operating freely, undamaged, securely fixed
Ladder	If fitted, stable and properly fixed
Felt	Even and free from damage. Overlapped and fixed around junctions and valleys
Ducting	Complete runs fixed at both ends. Free from excessive loops and folds.
Insulation	Evenly laid.
Cable & Wires	Properly secured.

Timbers	Evenly spaced and securely fixed. Undamaged and free from cracks, twisting or distortion with visible bracing and strapping in place.
Windows	<p>Handles, stays and catches operating and fitted square.</p> <p>Opens/closes without fouling.</p> <p>Undamaged and with consistent, even finish.</p> <p>Free from bubbles, particles, blisters, and other optical defects.</p> <p>Reveals square with even heads and sills.</p> <p>Frames undistorted and plumb.</p> <p>Suitable seal around perimeter.</p> <p>Keys present.</p>
Joinery	
Skirting	Uniform finish with consistent gap to floors, max 5mm. Joints to present a continuous surface allowing for normal shrinkage.
Stairs Strings	Consistent fit and finish, free from protrusions. Quadrant (if fitted) secure and consistent.
Stairs Treads and Risers	Even, securely fixed with no movement or excessive noise / creaks, free from nails.
Stairs Newels & Handrails	Min 25mm between handrail and wall, secure and plumb, smooth finish without unusual projections.
Doors	Locks, handles, door furniture and catches operating, undamaged and fitted square. Opens/closes without fouling. Undamaged and with consistent, even finish. Reveals square with even heads and sills. Frames undistorted and plumb. Suitable seal around perimeter. Draft excluders fitted as required and keys present.
Fitted Joinery	
Cupboards	
Wardrobes	Visually aligned and level with uniform gaps which allow for floor covering, but not too great to allow draughts. Operating as intended.
Doors	Securely fixed.
Drawers	Free from conspicuous abrasions and scratches [when viewed from 0.5 meters].
Plinths	Shelves fitted (where applicable) and secure.
Kitchen Fittings	
Glazing	Free from obtrusive bubbles, blisters, hairlines, blobs, fine scratches, particles. Safety glazing mark if in critical location e.g. low level, next to doors, large size.
Tiles	Complete and free from cracks and scratches. Joints consistent, straight and in alignment unless by design. Joints and patterns square to walls, floors, and ceilings, unless by design. Grout lines well filled with no voids and mastic seals to wet areas neat, tidy and consistent".

Sanitary Wear

Baths

Except by design, all fittings securely fixed, free from obvious damage, and with pipes hidden.

Shower Trays

All checked for normal operation, adequate water flow, availability of hot/cold water.

Cubicles

Note any pipe noise.

Basins

Visibly aligned and level / plumb.

Wet junctions with complete seals, having a consistent, compact, neat and tidy finish.

Taps & Controls

Shower screens to be clean, and securely fixed with neat silicone sealant in place.

Pedestals

Baths and basins filled to overflow, free from movement and unusual noises.

Toilets & Seats

Drainage from basins, baths, showers, and toilets effective and free from gurgling or back-up.

Shaving Points

All wet joints visibly free from leaks.

Fittings free from conspicuous abrasions, scratches, and chips.

Towel Rail

Plugs and chains operating correctly.

Services

Lights

Bulbs present and working. Lamps and flush switches securely fixed, clean and level unless by design.

Sockets

Level and flush with wall and all sockets tested with plug tester.

Wiring

Neat and secure, where visible.

Consumer Unit

Level, clean and labelled, with blanks in place and no obvious gaps.

Extractors

Operating when light switched on and ensure switched on at spur. Grilles flush and secure. Timed overrun after light extinguished.

Taps

Operating, free from leaks, correctly installed, secure and hot & cold operation the right way round.

Heating

Operating and free from undue noise.

Boiler

Working, casing undamaged, pipework tidy and concealed, free from unusual noise, flue sealed and labelled with signature confirmation of correct installation.

Radiators

Operational, undamaged, level, finished decorations behind, free from leaks.

Hot Water Tank

Free from leaks, Installer signed label, working.

Cold Water Tank	Free from leaks, lid present, insulation present.
Smoke / Heat Detectors	Present, power light on, check operation
CO Detectors	Present, power light on, check operation
Entryphone	Present, power light on, check operation where possible
Doorbell	Present, power light on, check operation

Appliances

Hob / Cooker	Check operation. Isolation switches correctly labelled where applicable.
Fridge / Freezer	Check operation. Isolation switches correctly labelled where applicable.
Dishwasher	Check operation and correct drainage. Isolation switches correctly labelled where applicable.
Washing Machine	Check operation, travel bar removed and correct drainage. Isolation switches correctly labelled where applicable.

RPSA Survey Reporting Standard

This standard is intended to define the reporting required of RPSA members.

Provide a report, available to the client in electronic or hardcopy formats, and, subject to permission from the client, available to the builder/developer.

Survey Reporting Standard Guidance

The following is intended to assist a Surveyor in meeting the above standard. It has advisory status only. Whilst following this guidance ensures compliance with the standard it is also possible to meet the required standard in other ways. Should an RPSA member choose to operate other than in accordance with this guidance the obligation will be on them to explain how their practices and reporting process meet the required standard. The guidance will apply to all levels of survey as the standard required for all levels is the same.

General

The purpose of the report is to provide the client with useful and relevant information, so they can make an informed decision about the purchase of a property, and any repairs that may be required. A secondary purpose is to highlight to the builder/developer the nature of any repair works that should be carried out prior to occupation of the property, or shortly after. The Surveyor should have this in mind when writing the report and consider how information may be used by the client.

The Surveyor may want to consider questions such as:

Will this be understandable to the client?

Is the information relevant to the property and the nature of the report being provided?

How will the client use the information provided?

Is the information open to misinterpretation?

Is the language used unbiased and impartial?

As far as possible the Surveyor should ensure that the report is written in plain, non-technical language without unnecessary jargon. There are occasions when the use of technical terms is necessary, and these should be clearly explained. Where possible such explanations should be accompanied with diagrams or annotated images.

Other than when describing specific limitations, the Surveyor should not include, by default, passages of text intended to caveat responsibility over and above that described in their Terms & Conditions.

The Surveyor's attention is drawn to the following which are all intended to help the client obtain the greatest benefit from the report. Where applicable, the Surveyor should:-

Ensure that the reader can readily identify the location, content and specific detail of photographs.

Include text to describe defects, features or issues identified in photographs.

Use simple drawings or diagrams to augment descriptions where necessary.

Carry out careful proof reading to reduce the inclusion of typographical and grammatical errors. The use of online support tools is recommended, for example, Grammarly.

Ensure that names or references given to features or parts of the property are used consistently throughout the report.

Images

The purpose of images within the report is to highlight the location and nature of any issues identified that fall within the definition of snagging.

The surveyor should aim to provide at least one image of each snag, though sometimes additional images will be necessary to fully describe the issue.

Images should be clear and provide both context and scale.

Where necessary, images should be annotated, using circles and arrows, to help the reader identify the matter being described.

In a report of this type it is not expected that images are included where they are not describing a specific matter, other than for a limited number of general elevation and site images.

Pre agreed limitations

Where the Surveyor has been instructed by the client to exclude areas or elements of a property from the survey, these should be clearly detailed within the report, preferably towards the beginning. If possible, plans should indicate the excluded areas. It should be possible to understand the full nature of any pre-agreed limitation without reference to any documentation not contained within the report.

Caveats and limitations

Whilst the Surveyor should try to provide the client with as much information as possible, there are situations where a Surveyor is unable to report on the condition of an element, or where they are only able to report on part of an element. This may be due to a lack of access, or for health and safety reasons. In these cases the Surveyor should clearly detail the limitation.

The Surveyor will avoid the use of standard caveats purely to attempt to reduce liability. Only where a reasonable level of inspection is not possible and there is good reason to suspect a specific issue requires inspection should the Surveyor recommend further investigations.

Conflict of interest

The Surveyor should detail any potential or actual conflicts of interest. These may include any connection with other parties to the transaction. The Surveyor should also detail any referral fee paid or received in relation to the instruction.

Content of the report

The report must include the following:-

1. Contact details of the surveyor carrying out the inspection.
2. A description of the service.
3. An indication of the condition/state of construction of the property at the time inspected.
4. A description of the weather and lighting conditions at the time of the time inspected.
5. A description of the property being inspected, including a means for the identification of the location of individual rooms.
6. A general description of the type of construction and the nature of the materials used in its construction.
7. A review of publicly available environmental information.
8. A description of the Energy Performance Certificate rating and any renewable energy sources installed.
9. A description of any shared access, parking, refuse and leisure arrangements
10. Recording of any limitations to the inspection.
11. Images of each accessible elevation labelled with terms used consistently throughout the report, for example front/rear or north/south.
12. A limited number of images of the immediate environs of the property showing the proximity of neighbouring properties (where applicable), the extent of the grounds, and access arrangements to the front, sides and rear (where applicable).
13. Photographs and explanatory notes of all matters (snags) identified.
14. An indication of the nature of any remedial works required.
15. An indication of the trade normally considered responsible for specific individual remedial works e.g. Electrician for wiring/lighting, Plasterer for uneven internal wall finishes, Plumber for inoperative taps.

Environmental

Environmental factors that may affect the subject property should be listed within the report along with an indication of risk and likely harm where applicable.

Due to the nature of new build property, some information may be unavailable through normal publicly available channels.

These factors may include, but are not be limited to:

- Flooding
- Geology
- Contamination
- Radon
- Fracking/oil and gas exploration/mining issues
- Invasive species
- Landfill

Conveyancers

Although the Surveyor is not expected to be a property law specialist, they should have sufficient knowledge to act as the conveyancer's "eyes and ears" at the property, and identify a range of legal issues that may have a bearing on the transaction. These may include, but not be limited to:

- Rights of way
- Easements/wayleaves
- Unclear boundaries
- Flying freeholds
- Non-conformity to planning approvals
- Evidence of letting/subletting
- Tenure

Health and Safety

Matters associated with general health and safety concerns should be included within the list of issues identified.

Valuation

These standards do not relate to valuations for secured lending or otherwise. Current industrywide standards such as RICS Valuation – Global Standards, should be used where applicable

Nature of inspection and limitations

The Surveyor should specify the nature of the inspection carried out under each element, even where this may be a repeat of earlier statements and information contained within any terms of engagement. Where specific limitations affected the inspection then these should also be detailed.

Residential Property Surveyors Association

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www.rpsa.org.uk

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The Residential Property Surveyors Association is a not-for-profit organisation representing the professional interests of independent residential property surveyors.