

National Housing Maintenance Forum Case Study: Bonfield Review

EACH HOME COUNTS

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Each Home Counts (also known as The Bonfield Review) is an independent review of consumer advice, protection, standards and enforcement for energy efficiency and renewable energy, conducted by Dr Peter Bonfield for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). The review was commissioned in July 2015, but publication of the report was delayed until December 2016 by the change of government, departmental reorganisation and new ministerial appointments following the EU referendum.

The review proposes a strong, collaborative partnership between the public and private sectors and consumers, to improve energy efficiency in the domestic sector. The approaches recommended by the review have received strong support from housing associations, who are represented on the Implementation Board.

The key output of the review is the establishment of a **Quality Mark** for all energy efficiency and renewable energy measures, and for all companies operating in the sector. The Quality Mark will be supported by three types of documents:

- A **Consumer Charter** to ensure that all consumers receive excellent levels of service and have access to a redress process and guarantee protection.
- A **Code of Conduct** that regulates how companies behave, operate and report, and which must be complied with by all organisations operating in the sector.
- **Codes of Practice** relevant to the installation of each energy efficiency measure so that the risk of poor quality installation is minimised.

The Codes of Practice will take the form of a framework of retrofit standards developed by BSI and embracing both existing and new standards.

The vision of the review is that:

- Consumers will have confidence in a single recognisable quality mark, safe in the knowledge that it will provide trusted advice, ensure quality installations by skilled installers, provide confidence in the suitability of recommended measures and provide reassurance that if things go wrong there is a redress process.
- Industry participants will have certainty from a stable framework that generates confidence to invest in new and existing products, services and processes; they will have access to standards, best practice guidance, reliable data and enhanced training, and will benefit from increased consumer trust and demand.
- The supply chain will embody a better balance between public and private sectors, with significant new investment and lending arising from greater confidence and accountability in the sector.

The review had ten work-streams, each with an industry leader:

- 1 Consumer protection
- 2 Advice and guidance
- 3 Quality and standards
- 4 Skills and training
- 5 Compliance and enforcement
- 6 Holistic property consideration
- 7 Building fabric and insulation
- 8 Smart meters
- 9 Home energy technologies
- 10 Applying the review to the social housing sector

The relationship between the work-streams is illustrated in Figure 1.

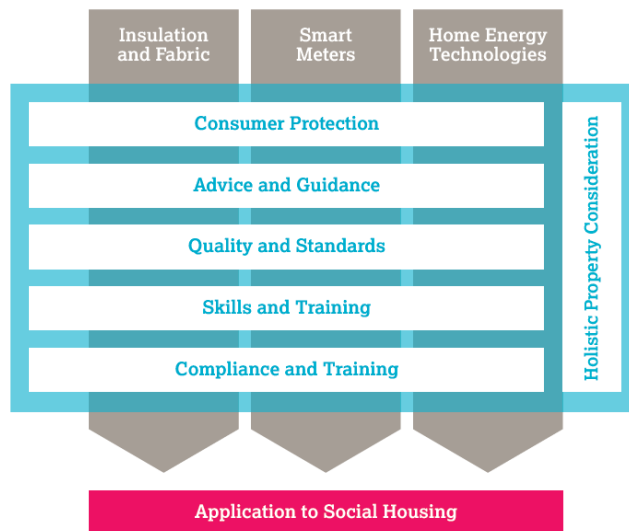


Figure 1

The quality assurance framework proposed by the review is illustrated in Figure 2.

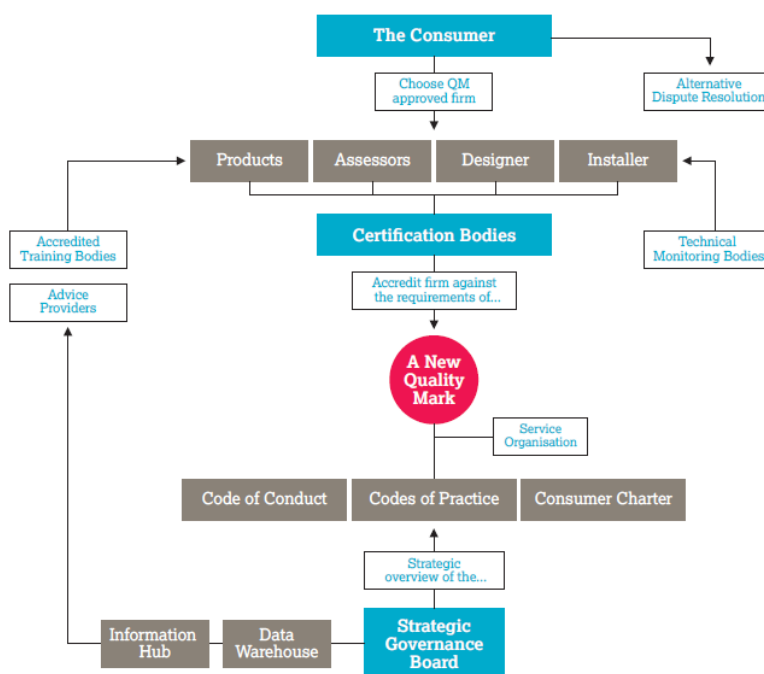


Figure 2

The Strategic Governance Board will take over from the current *Each Home Counts* Implementation Board to oversee the implementation of the twenty-seven recommendations of the review (see below) over the next three years.

Abridged list of *Each Home Counts* recommendations

- 1 Develop a Code of Conduct for all organisations that use the Quality Mark.
- 2 Develop a Consumer Charter defining what households can expect from the retrofit industry.
- 3 Ensure that the Quality Mark is easily recognised by consumers.
- 4 Establish a consistent and fair redress process with a single point of contact.
- 5 Develop new approaches to engaging consumers.
- 6 Establish an Information Hub to provide impartial guidance, and a Data Warehouse to store property-level data and information.
- 7 Develop a range of services and tools linked to the Information Hub and Data Warehouse, to support engagement with consumers.
- 8 Develop an over-arching framework of freely-available standards for retrofit.
- 9 Establish a Retrofit Standards Task Group to guide standards development.
- 10 Commission research to map existing standards and identify gaps.
- 11 Embed core retrofit knowledge into vocational and professional training and apprenticeships.
- 12 Improve the way in which retrofit competence is assessed and include APEL.
- 13 Establish close collaboration within the training sector to promote consistent integration of retrofit knowledge and skills.
- 14 Develop and maintain a strong consumer-facing brand in the form of the new Quality Mark, associated with reputable retrofit products and services
- 15 Establish an organisation to oversee the Quality Mark and support it with enforcement, sanctions, technical, operational and consumer protection activities.
- 16 Establish an industry-wide, nationally coordinated compliance and enforcement regime covering assessors, designers and installers, supported by risk-based audits and technical monitoring.
- 17 Include in all retrofit processes a design stage that takes a holistic approach and considers the home, its local environment, heritage, occupancy and householders' objectives.
- 18 Establish a process for gathering information and preparing a design prior to the installation of measures; store all information about the home, the design, the installation and after-care arrangements in the Data Warehouse.
- 19 Coordinate the implementation of the building fabric work-stream with the development of appropriate standards, skills and quality assurance, to reflect best practice.
- 20 Provide tailored home energy efficiency advice alongside the installation of smart meters.
- 21 Ensure that smart meters are installed in as many homes as possible, regardless of property type.
- 22 Undertake a review of home energy technologies and develop an action plan for each technology.
- 23 Develop a set of independent impartial advice documents or web-based tools covering each home energy technology, for dissemination via the Information Hub.
- 24 Develop a route map for the assimilation of new home energy technologies into the quality assurance framework.
- 25 Ensure that the quality assurance framework is sufficiently flexible to cover existing and new home energy technologies.
- 26 Develop standards and guidance about the integration and inter-operability of home energy technologies, and include them in the standards mapping exercise (recommendation 10).
- 27 Ensure that housing associations collaborate with industry and Government to ensure that the quality assurance framework is applied at scale in the social housing sector.