

Independent Technical Approval Authorities acceptable to NHBC

(January 2024) (issue 2 supersedes issue 1 April 2022)



Question

Which independent Technical Approval Authorities are acceptable to NHBC?

Considerations

NHBC Standards, Technical Requirement R3 requires all materials, products and building systems to be suitable for their intended purpose and provides acceptable ways to comply.

For materials, products, or systems that are not covered by a relevant British standard or harmonised European technical product specification, certification by an independent Technical Approvals Authority acceptable to NHBC is one way of meeting the Technical Requirement.

Other ways of complying include, but are not limited to, demonstration of performance in accordance with standards set by NHBC.

Regulation 7 of the Approved Document in England, or its equivalent in other parts of the UK, outlines the accreditation requirements of certification bodies. This highlights the need to check the scope of the accreditation of a certification body, as the scope might cover only part of the certification body's testing or certification business. It is also essential to check that the intended application of a product is fully in accordance with that outlined in the certificate.

The structure of a home, including all elements performing critical functions are expected to have a design life of at least 60 years, unless specifically agreed in writing with NHBC.

Secondary components and assemblies used for non-critical functions may have a lesser durability and need planned maintenance, repair, or replacement during that period. BS 7543 provides further guidance on durability.

Modern Methods of Construction (MMC), particularly in offsite-assembled building systems that include walls, floors and roofs should demonstrate they have been assessed to provide a suitable level of performance and durability that meets with NHBC's Technical Requirements.

Products that have been assessed under an independent product certification scheme will not automatically comply with NHBC Standards and the NHBC-registered builder must ensure that the home is designed and built in accordance with the applicable NHBC performance standards and Technical Requirements.

Answer

Independent Technical Approvals Authorities acceptable to NHBC are typically assessment bodies experienced in the business of conformity assessments and may be a member of the European Organisation for Technical Assessment (EOTA).

Technical Approvals Authorities/Bodies would be expected to:

- Be currently accredited for their certification schemes by a National Accreditation Body belonging to the European co-operation for Accreditation (EA), typically by UKAS in the UK
- Provide independent information to demonstrate safety and fitness for purpose of the certified product or system. The scope of assessment and certification should include but not be limited to:
 - A clear description of the product or systems specification and its intended use
 - Applicable performance characteristics such as watertightness, structural, fire, thermal, acoustic, durability
 - Compliance with national building regulations and any relevant non-regulatory information
 - Site evaluation covering site preparation, delivery, handling, workmanship, and installation guidance

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- Initial surveillance of factory production control and continued surveillance process
- Conditions and limitations of use
- Evaluation of durability, considering intended use, exposure environment, effect of ageing and service life
- Compatibility with other elements of the construction
- Compliance with relevant NHBC Performance Standards
- Design considerations

It is essential to check that the scope of certification for materials, products and building systems is suitable for the intended use.

NHBC has worked with numerous organisations, trade bodies, manufacturers and building industry bodies to help establish, assess and or recognise different certification schemes for different elements of the building structure, with critical and non-critical functions. Certification by these bodies can be used to demonstrate performance. The following are examples of the schemes that NHBC currently accepts:

- Agrément certifications by BBA and Kiwa
- BRE Global certification
- BSI Kitemark schemes
- For ready mix concrete product - Kitemark or QSRMC scheme
- For wood products & systems - BM Trada - Q Mark certification
- For Glassfibre Reinforced Plastic (GRP) products - Agrément certification
- For Insulated Glass Units - See list of accepted certifications on our Technical Guidance Note 6.7/16
- For curtain walling and cladding systems - Agrément or UL Enhanced Mark 'Performance of Curtain Walling and Rainscreen Cladding Support Systems'