

Snagging Survey Results '06

Introduction to the Research Study

Inspector Home and academics at the School of the Built and Natural Environment at Glasgow Caledonian University have been working together for the past year to produce the most comprehensive information concerning snagging defects in the UK. The research data was taken from snagging inspections carried out by Inspector Home over the past 4 years, which was then analysed at length by the University. All properties were checked after they had been signed off by the appropriate warranty provider.

Glasgow Caledonian University

The School of the Built and Natural Environment at Glasgow Caledonian University is the largest academic built environment department in Scotland. Professor James Sommerville who is leading the 'snagging' research is a Chartered Surveyor and Chartered Builder with a PhD from Heriott-Watt University and has substantial industrial experience both in the UK and Middle East. James sits on the Council for RICS in Scotland, is Chair of the Grievance and Appeals Board of the CIOB, sits on Council for the CIOB, sits on the Policy and Finance Committee of the CIOB, is an observer on the Construction Licensing Executive and sits on the Technical Standards Committee of the NHBC.

Inspector Home

Inspector Home is the UK's leading new home snagging company founded in 2001 by Stephen Nancarrow and Vanessa Ambler. Stephen Nancarrow is renowned as a leading authority on new home defects and is a regular and passionate advisor on the subject leading to many appearances within the media, industry speaker and as a judge for new homes awards. Stephen has met with the NHBC and the ODPM to discuss quality issues within the new homes industry and is always willing to impart positive advice to bring about quality improvements.

Contact Details

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Background to Research

Inspector Home Ltd provides a 'snagging' or defect reporting system for buyers of new homes (under the instructions of the home buyer) through 43 inspectors based around the UK. Detailed inspection reports for 2202 homes have been formatted and analysed with the resultant dataset containing detailed information on circa 130,000 snagging items found within the 2202 properties built by circa 320 house builders.

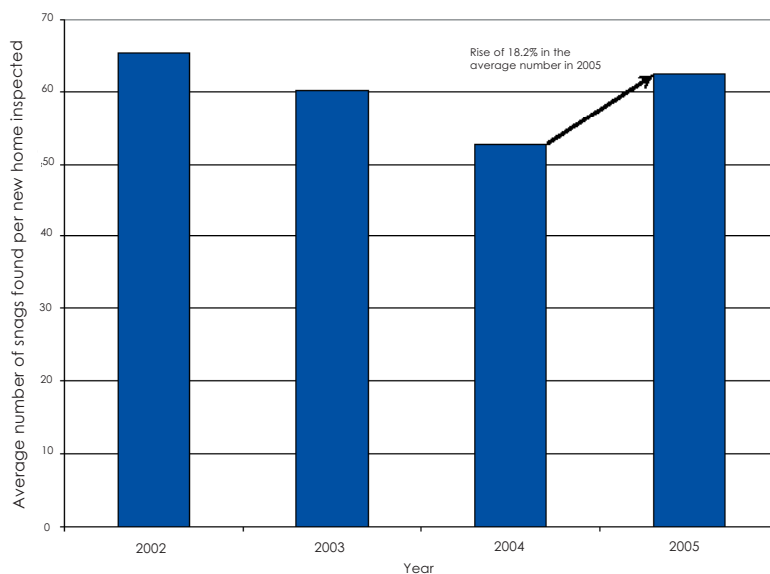


Average number of defects per year

The first factor considered during the analysis of circa 130,000 snagging items was the average number of snags across the 2202 properties over a 4 year period 2002 – 2005. The figure below shows the average results obtained from the data: despite a decrease in the average number from year on year for 2002 – 2004, the average number for 2005 has increased by 18.2%. All of the new homes inspected on behalf of homeowners, property investors and developers were inspected after the properties had been passed by the developer and the appropriate warranty provider. Over 90% of properties were checked in the week prior to completion. This is important as the figures demonstrate a true reflection of the industry standard, rather than just a reflection of all the worst properties in the UK.

There is a considerable range between the highest and lowest number of snags found within a new home, the lowest being one and the highest being 389 found within a five bedroom house situated in the North of England. Of these 389 snagging items, 380 were associated with a specific industry trade and related to “extremely poor workmanship”.

Average number of snagging items found in new homes 2002 - 2005



2002	65.5
2003	60.1
2004	52.7
2005	62.4

Regional Defect Levels

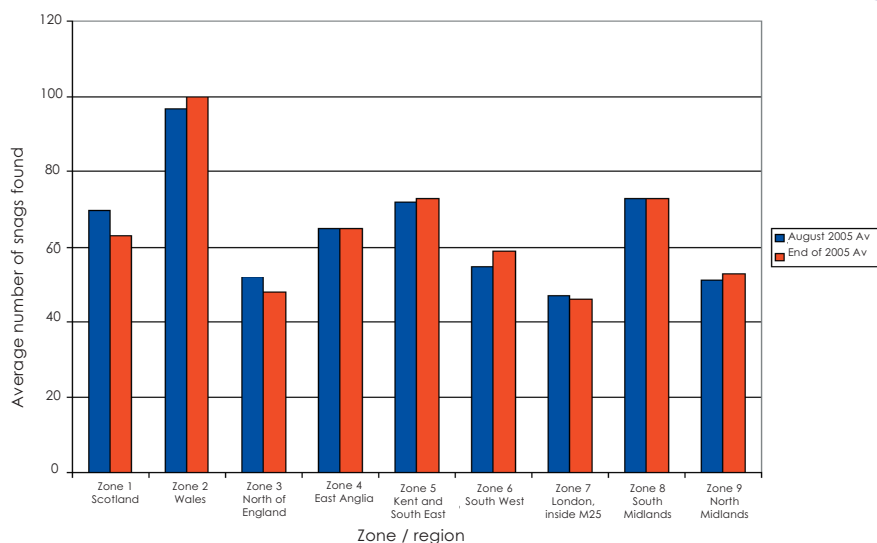
Regional variations

To investigate whether there was any differences in the number of snagging items found in properties within different geographical sectors of the UK, the data set was split into 9 UK regions. The results of the geographical analysis can be seen in the figure overleaf.

Kent, the South East and the South Midlands and Wales have higher defect levels than homes in the rest of the UK. London had the fewest defects per home with an average of 46, however these figures could reflect the smaller size of properties (majority 2 bedroom flats) built in the Capital. Scottish defects reduced by 10% for the second half of 2005 but still remain high compared to the rest of the UK.



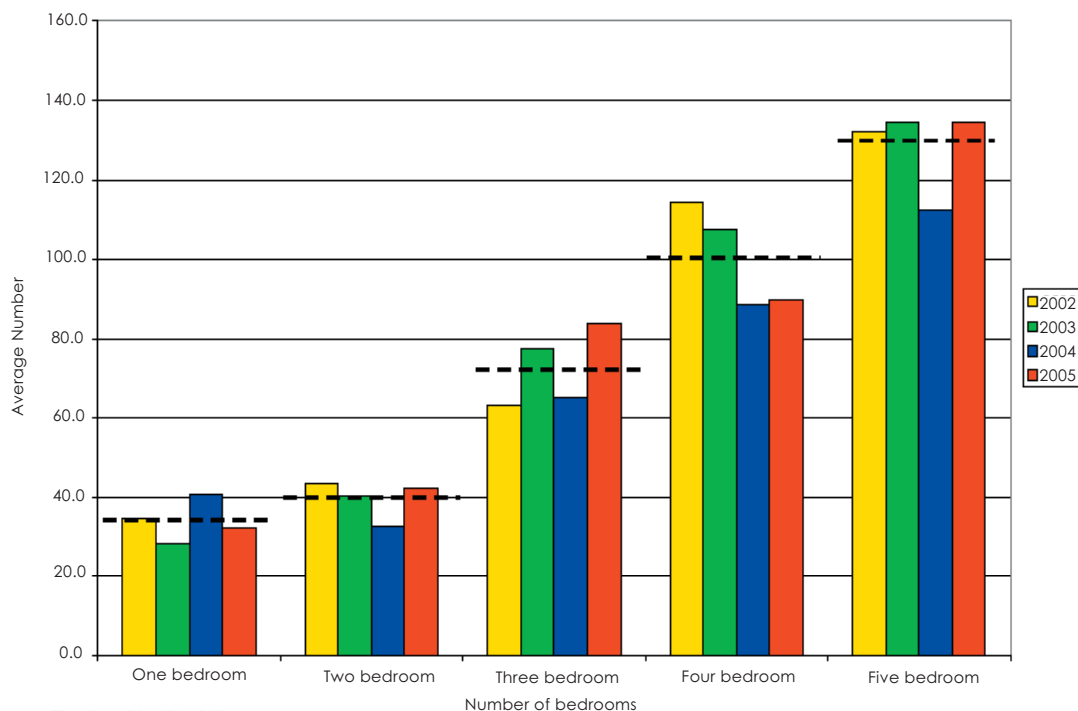
Average number of snags per region in the UK



Average number of defects per property size

Through observation of the different house sizes (by number of bedrooms) it has been discerned that the average number of snagging items found in each property type during the period 2002-2005 is as displayed in the figure below. It can be concluded that as the number of bedrooms within a property increases then so does the average number and range of snags found within each property. The rise in the average number for the majority of properties within the 2005 period follows the general trend set within the average figure. These figures show that with the exception of 1 bed units, the number of defects in all properties has increased in 2005. This figure is disappointing as in 2004 all properties had improved significantly with the exception of 1 bed units.

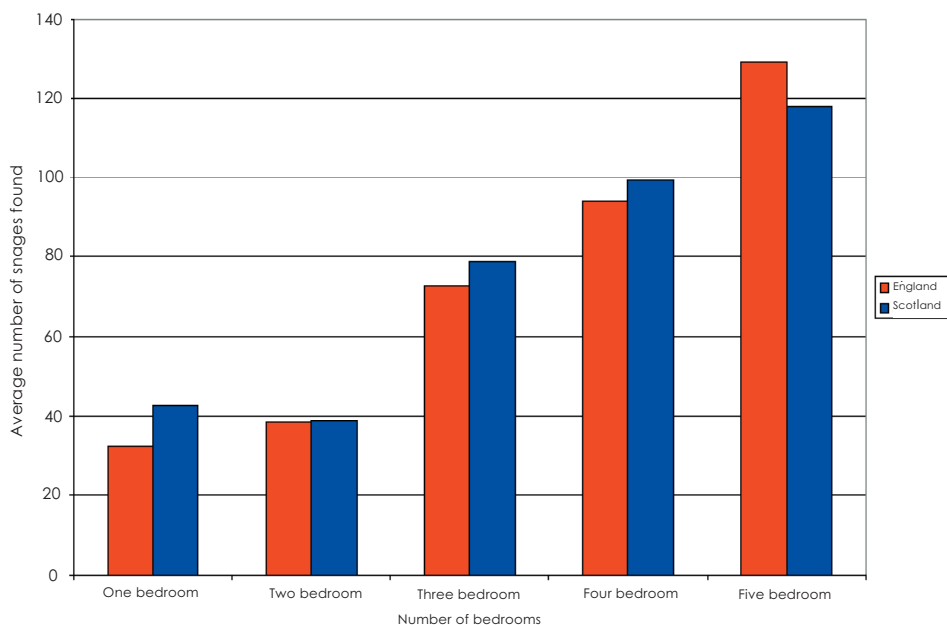
Average number of snagging items per property type 2002 - 2005



Scotland compared to the rest of the UK

Historically, Scotland has always been seen as a separate part of the UK due to its unique and distinct laws. This has been further highlighted through the process of devolution. Therefore, a UK regional analysis invariably seeks to compare Scotland with the rest of the UK. The figure below highlights the average number of snags per property type between Scotland and England/Wales. It can be seen that Scotland has a higher number of snagging items per property type in all of the categories except five bedroom properties, although this is a vast improvement on the figures 2002 - 2004. Further analysis of the data is required to ascertain the reasons why Scotland has a higher number of snagging items than England. This analysis will look into construction types of new homes in Scotland compared to England, such as timber-frame construction.

England/Wales v Scotland Average per house type 2002 - 2005



The end-product within the house building supply chain "the new home" still has a number of snags which causes the customer to be repeatedly dissatisfied. Whilst the research in this paper has been to some extent exploratory, it has demonstrated that snagging levels in new homes in the UK are at a level which is damaging to the house building sector's image and they detract from customer satisfaction.

The analysis provided, although basic and descriptive, has given an insight into the potential range of research which can be conducted from inspection reports undertaken on newly built homes. The research has provided evidence that a large number of snagging items can be found in newly built homes within the UK which are assumed to be "complete". Analysis on the number of snags found by house size was also undertaken and although an average was given the method should prove reliable for predicting the number of snags a home buyer could expect to find within a particular property type.

The investigations have provided some strong results as to the extent of the snagging problem within the industry. The results can be used by practitioners and built upon to investigate a problem which affects the most important member of the house building supply chain "the customer". Future research will mine the roots of the 'snags' problem and identify the types of activities and the types of tradesman that are responsible for the creation of snags within new homes. Future work will also examine in detail the snagging data collected from contractors and comparisons will be made against data collected by the independent inspectors to give an overall view of snags within the house building industry.