

## Frequently asked questions (January 2025) - self-build and custom housebuilding

### What is self-build and custom house building?

In considering whether a home is a self-build or custom build home the [National Planning Guidance](#) refers to people (or groups of individuals) that "build or complete houses to be occupied as homes by those individuals". In considering whether a home is a self-build or custom-built home, the initial owner of the property will have had a primary/significant input into the final layout and design. A CIL exemption is considered evidence of a self-build or custom build home.

The Right to Build Taskforce have prepared a range of useful [guidance notes](#) to aid local authorities in carrying out self-build and custom housebuilding duties, and to advise interested parties. Currently, there is no specific planning policy or guidance on how to count planning permissions to meet demand however, PG3.2 is a useful aid and can be used when publishing information on self-build and custom housebuilding. A supporting data set is published on the Council's website that identifies planning permissions and relevant information in relation to self-build and custom housebuilding, for example CIL self-build exemptions and planning status.

### Is there planning guidance, regulations, and legislation relating to self-build?

Yes. Self-build and custom housebuilding is covered by the following:

- The [Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015](#) (as amended by The Housing and Planning Act 2016);
- The [Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Regulations 2016](#);
- and the [Self-build and custom housebuilding planning practice guidance](#) (last updated 8 February 2021).

In addition, The Right to Build Taskforce, now part-funded by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, supports and provides advice and guidance to local authorities, community groups and other organisations. The taskforce has published a range of [custom and self-build planning good practice guidance and advice notes](#) that focus on ensuring that the statutory duties for self-build and custom housebuilding are carried out.

### What is a serviced plot of land?

A plot of land is a serviced plot of land if, in the opinion of the Council:

- it has access to a public highway (roads) and has connections for electricity, water and wastewater, OR
- it can be provided with access to public highway (roads), connections for electricity, water and wastewater, in specified circumstances or within a specified time period.

### Who is eligible to be entered on the register?

To be entered on to a self and custom housebuilding register you must meet the following criteria:

- you are aged 18 or older;
- you are a British citizen, a national of a EEA State other than the United Kingdom, or a national of Switzerland;
- you satisfy any local connection criteria (if set by the Local Authority); and
- you are seeking (either alone or with others) to acquire a serviced plot of land in the Cheshire West and Chester area for your own self-build or custom housebuilding project

### What is the difference between Part 1 and Part 2 of the register?

If a Local Authority register includes local connection criteria, a register will be divided into two parts.

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**Part 1:** Everyone that meets ALL of the eligibility criteria AND the local connection criteria will be entered on to Part 1 of the self-build and custom housebuilding register.

**Part 2:** People that satisfy all of the eligibility criteria but not the local connection criteria are entered on to Part 2 of the self-build and custom housebuilding register.

For information about the local connection test, please see questions below. Using a two part register shows the level of demand as a whole, from all sources and may include people that have registered with multiple Local Authorities or have a desire to live in certain areas (Part 2); and the level of local demand i.e. people that live in or have specific connections with the borough (Part 1). The Council has a duty to meet the demand on Part 1 of the register, however the overall demand from Part 1 and Part 2 should be considered when preparing plans and policies.

### What is a local connection?

A local connection shows how a person is linked to the borough (Cheshire West and Chester) either through work, family or living. The Council's self-build and custom housebuilding local connection test was introduced in 2018 through a review of the register and the data that was being collected. In 2019 the outcomes of the register were reported based on a two-part register. The local connection criteria applied to the self-build and custom housebuilding register align with the Council's local connection criteria used in local planning and housing allocations policies related to affordable housing.

### Why use local connection criteria?

Cheshire West and Chester is a self-contained housing market area and an objective of the Local Plan is to meet the identified need for housing within the borough. By using local connection criteria we aim to meet local identified needs in line with the strategy of the Local Plan.

### How much will it cost to register?

There is a charge of £35 + VAT for each registration. The charge covers costs for administering the register and providing our statutory reporting. This will be re-considered on a regular basis as part of a review process.

### Can a group of people be entered on to a register?

Yes. When applying as a group you must appoint a member or officer to act as the lead contact for the purposes of correspondence between the group and the Council.

**How will I know if I am on the Council's register?** Once you have completed the Council's registration process and answered all of the relevant questions your application will be reviewed to make sure that all of the required information has been provided. We will then let you know, based on the eligibility and the local connection criteria whether you are on Part 1 or Part 2 of the register.

### Where can I get information / help about setting up a community self-build or community-led housing group?

The [Cheshire Community Homes](#) website is a local source of information for self-build or other types of community-led homes. It is a local hub to help community groups come together to build and renovate new housing that meets their needs.

### Where can I build a self-build house?

Building a self-build home is subject to the usual relevant Local Plan policies for developing new housing. For example, new housing should be sustainably located in line with the spatial strategy of the adopted Local Plan i.e. policies STRAT 3 to STRAT 9 of the Local Plan (Part One) and policy R 1 of the Local Plan (Part Two).

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### Will the Council find me my self-build plot?

No. The Council does not have a duty to match individuals/groups to specific plots or planning permissions. But we will help you to access information that could help you to find a plot that meets your needs (where possible).

### How can I search for available plots of land?

There are a number of ways that you can find information about land available for sale in the borough, as well as plots of land that benefit from a current planning permission for a new house. For example, property search websites such as My Plot, Rightmove and Zoopla are useful tools to help you research the cost and availability of land for sale in the borough. There are also dedicated resources that can help you to search for self-build plots, for example websites such as Plot Finder, and Plot Browser.

### Where can I find information about suitable planning permissions?

Information can be downloaded from the "Supporting Files" section that lists the applications approved for one dwelling (and where relevant, larger proposals where self-build is specified) in each base period (31 October - 30 October). The planning application reference can be used to find further details about individual permissions using the [planning search tool](#) on the Council's website.

### Who can I contact to ask questions about self-build?

If you have any questions about completing the self-build and custom house building register, would like assistance with any part of the registration process, or have a general enquiry please contact the Planning Policy team at [planningpolicy@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)

If you would support or information about setting up a self-build or community-led housing group with like minded people please contact [Cheshire Community Homes](#).

### How should a Local Authority meet the demand set out in each base period?

A Local Authority has a three year period, from the end of the base period, in which to meet the demand on the register for that specified base period. For example, if the demand on a register (number of new people registered on Part 1 between 30 October 2020 and 31 October 2021) is 100 people wishing to self-build, the Local Authority should, between 31 October 2021 and 30 October 2024, grant planning permission for at least 100 homes that could be delivered as a self-build project. The supporting excel dataset on the Cheshire West and Chester self-build and custom housebuilding webpage sets out the range of planning permissions granted for one or more dwellings, on an annual basis, and sets out which of these permissions are capable of delivering self-build homes.

### What is a CIL self-build exemption?

An exemption from CIL (the Community Infrastructure Levy - a development charge) can be approved for development proposals for a self-build dwelling. Self-build exemptions can apply to anybody who is building, or commissioning, their own home, residential extension or residential annex. Individuals claiming self-build exemption for a whole house or residential annex must own the property and live in it as owner-occupier for a minimum of three years following completion. If the house is sold or let within three years of the completion, the CIL will become due for payment.

The self-build exemption is claimed through Form 7 which is made up of two parts. Form 7 (Part One) must be completed before a development is started to confirm that the self-build criteria (in relation to CIL) have been met. Form 7 (Part 2) should be submitted to the Council within six months of the development being completed, providing the relevant evidence to confirm that the project is self-build.