



## ***The UK Rainwater Harvesting Association***

### ***Industry Information Sheet***

#### ***“Code for Sustainable Homes”***

##### ***What is it?***

The Code for Sustainable Homes has been introduced by Government to drive a step-change in sustainable home building practice. It is a standard for key elements of design and construction which affect the sustainability of a new home. It will become the single national standard for sustainable homes, used by home designers and builders as a guide to development, and by home-buyers to assist their choice of home

The Code provides 6-levels of sustainable performance, and is aimed principally at reducing carbon footprint; however, pressures on national water supplies are also recognised by the inclusion of mandatory reductions in the use of mains water to be achieved before a particular Code rating can be awarded.

##### ***Achieving the Code***

Information on the requirements of the Code may be found at [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk); the results of a review of the costs of achieving the Code's requirements may be found at <http://www.cyrilsweett.com/pdfs/Code%20for%20sustainable%20homes%20cost%20analysis.pdf>

The guidance below provides the additional views of the UK-RHA on achieving the mandatory requirements of the “Code for Sustainable Homes”, in relation to mains-water consumption.

##### ***Code Levels 1&2***

Although it varies widely from region-to-region, the generally accepted average per-capita mains-water consumption throughout the UK is around 150-litres per day.

As the per-capita rainfall in the south of England, for example, is less than can be found around the Mediterranean, this level of consumption is not sustainable, particularly as the population grows.

For this reason, The Code for Sustainable Homes sets a mandatory reduction in mains-water consumption down to 120-litres per person per day; it is generally accepted that this can be achieved by installing water

economising technologies such as aerated taps and shower-heads, and modern dual-flush toilet cisterns

##### ***Code Levels 3&4***

Code levels 3&4 are already the standards being set for new-build public housing, such as the developments being commissioned by Housing Associations; by 2010, it will be mandatory for all private-sector developments to achieve Code level-3.

It is a mandatory requirement of working to Code levels 3&4 that mains-water consumption be reduced to 105-litres per person per day.

The cost review noted earlier suggests that this saving, compared to Levels 1&2, can be achieved simply by installing smaller baths; however, for many potential home-buyers this might be a significant disincentive to purchase.

To meet customer preferences, therefore, fitment of a rainwater harvesting system, even on smaller properties, would provide a highly cost-effective alternative to unpopular small baths.

##### ***Code Levels 5&6***

Code levels 5&6 will become mandatory for Housing Associations by 2013, and for the private sector by 2016; at this level of the Code, the required mains-water consumption is reduced to 80-litres per person per day.

The only realistic way of achieving such a reduction in mains-water consumption is by using re-claimed water, such as that provided cost-effectively by rainwater harvesting, with a bespoke approach being taken to each development.

##### ***Want to know more?***

Members of the UK-RHA would be happy to provide you with assistance on meeting the water-related requirements of the Code for Sustainable Homes.