How to choose a structural warranty provider

The latent defects market has increased significantly in recent years, with there now being more companies in the market than ever before. As such, it can be difficult to know where to look and what to look for.

In the following article Premier Guarantee explores the varying aspects of a quality builders warranty provider and some questions you can ask during your decision process.

The Cover

Different [structural and building warranty](https://www.premierguarantee.com/our-services/structural-warranties/) policies do not necessarily carry the same level of cover. Whilst some differences in cover may be subtle, others may be quite drastic, possibly leaving your buyers unprotected should something go wrong. There is also no consistency on the level of excess or financial limits.

Although the best way to thoroughly understand any insurance policy is to read it in full, that can often be very time consuming. Therefore, we’ve thought of a few questions that could be useful to ask:

* What is the policy excess?
* Does the policy include a defects period?
* What is the financial limit for each property?
* Is there an overall policy limit?
* Is water ingress excluded from cover?

The Insurer

More often than not, structural warranty companies will provide insurances policies that have been underwritten by insurance companies, rather than underwriting the policy themselves. This means that any claims on the policy will be paid by the insurer. Compared to the most common insurance policies, structural warranties last for 10 or 12 years, meaning it’s even more important to check the quality of the insurer and to ensure that they will be around for the entire duration of the policy. One way of doing this is to check who is insuring the policy and then to check their financial rating. The following link is a useful tool for checking this.

<http://www.insure.com/interactive-tools/sandp/define.jsp>

**Risk management and Technical Support**

Although you are purchasing insurance cover, it is worth bearing in mind that it is the warranty provider that you will be working with for the duration of the build. As such, it is good practice to understand how they operate in order to determine whether they’re the best fit for how you work on site. Some question you could ask is…

* Do they have clear technical standards?
* Do they employ their own surveyors?
* What technical support can they provide?

Customer Service

Another important aspect of your structural warranty provider is the quality of customer service they provide; after all, you will be dealing with the customer service department of your chosen provider a lot over the duration of your build, as well as them issuing all your relevant certificates. So, what do you need to know?

* Will you have a dedicated account manager?
* How will you track and measure site performance?
* How quickly can you expect to get a response to your queries?
* Will you be provided with any homeowner feedback?

**Level of Experience**

The level of a company’s experience is an important factor across all sectors and all industries, so why would the structural warranty industry be any different? To get a measure of how experienced a company is, you could consider asking the following questions:

* How long have they been providing structural warranties?
* Are they a member of the Consumer Code for Home Builders?
* Are they accepted by all major mortgage lenders?

**Value**

Rather than focusing just on monetary values, it is worth looking at value of your provider on the whole. Of course it’s vital to look after those all-important purse strings, but it’s also a must to consider the overall value from your chosen provider. By asking the above questions, and making sure you are satisfied with the answers, you should be able to better understand the value that your chosen building warranty provider will be able to contribute to your build.