



BoKlok Q&A



*Live Smart @ Home and
IKEA together*

What is BoKlok?

BoKlok, pronounced 'Boo Clook', is a groundbreaking new concept to housing that involves providing space-saving, functional and good quality housing at a price that enables as many people as possible to afford a comfortable home.

Literal translations of the word BoKlok into English are 'Live Smart' or 'Smart Living', which we believe is an excellent definition of what we are offering people who buy a BoKlok home.

Why was BoKlok created and who is behind the BoKlok concept?

In the mid-1990s there was considerable need for new, affordable housing in Sweden, but none was being built. IKEA and Skanska joined forces and decided to provide something unique – high quality housing at low prices.

They created a joint venture company, BoKlok AB, which holds the intellectual property rights to the BoKlok concept. BoKlok AB does not develop itself but enters into licence agreements for the development of properties in various countries.

Who is Live Smart @ Home?

Live Smart @ Home, www.livesmarthome.com, is the property company that has been awarded the exclusive licence to develop BoKlok properties in the UK. The company is renowned for providing stylish and affordable properties to a range of people, from single working mothers to young professional couples. Properties are ideally situated close to city centres and commercial districts. A recent survey by IPD ranked Live Smart @ Home as one of the most successful companies of its type in the UK. Live Smart @ Home is the commercial subsidiary of leading social housing provider, Home.

What are the properties made from?

The BoKlok homes have been very cleverly designed around factory processes that enable them to be far more efficiently constructed in quality-controlled conditions than would be possible through traditional site-based construction. They are constructed from timber and steel and come with a host of standard features, including extra high ceilings and large windows for a light and airy feeling, laminated wood flooring, IKEA kitchens and huge balconies to upper floor flats.

So are you saying they are just a modern version of prefab housing?

No. Historically, prefab housing in the UK was developed to produce a large number of units with a short lifespan to meet, for example, post-war housing demands. By contrast, and in line with mainland European construction, BoKlok housing utilises factory-based construction in order to achieve far higher quality standards, as well as being designed for a long life and fully mortgageable.

Are these houses energy efficient and 'green'?

The construction materials and design enable us to build very energy efficient and sustainable housing. Indeed, on our first scheme in St James Village, Gateshead, we are seeking to achieve an eco-homes 'excellent' rating.

What will the BoKlok homes look like?

They have been designed by both British and Scandinavian architects working together and have a contemporary Scandinavian feel using all the benefits of modern construction methods. IKEA and Live Smart @ Home have become successful by listening to their customers. The homes, both internally and externally, are built around providing people with a great environment, which they can adapt to their current and future lifestyles. Our website, www.boklok.co.uk, shows further illustrations of what the BoKlok homes will look like in the UK.



The properties must be very expensive then?

No. BoKlok works on the same principles as IKEA to provide a quality product at a low cost to their customers. Buying building materials in volume and building a limited but exciting range can maintain high quality and low costs.

So, how much will they cost in the UK?

BoKlok homes in the UK will cost less than similar homes for sale or rent in the private market. People will be able to choose to rent or buy their homes. They will be offered at a price that is affordable and are primarily directed at those with average household incomes of £15,000 to £35,000 per annum. Prices may vary from scheme to scheme as land costs fluctuate but through the use of innovative home purchase options, such as shared ownership, we will seek to offer homes at lower monthly costs than if they were bought or rented on the open market.

What type of BoKlok properties are available?

Our current UK range includes both flats and houses, which are of low density with lots of space. The two-bedroom flats are provided in a two-storey block set in spacious surroundings. They will feel large, light and airy with high ceilings, large windows and a huge balcony. We also offer two and three-bedroom houses. We have a compact two-bedroom house, called 'Mölna', which is suitable as a starter home and a larger two-bedroom house, known as 'Ålsten'. Our larger three-bedroom family house is called a 'Järnbro'. Through 2007/8, we will be developing further products to add to the range.

When will BoKlok homes be available in the UK?

Construction of the first BoKlok development in Gateshead will get underway in June 2007. The first block of flats will be completed around Christmas 2007 and the first houses in spring 2008. Units will be released for purchase in phases from autumn 2007.

Will BoKlok homes be available to buy as flat packs from IKEA stores?

No. You will not be able to buy a flat pack house from IKEA. The BoKlok UK homes are not suitable for self-build. They will be built by specialist contractors and then offered for sale or rent at sites acquired and managed by Live Smart @ Home.

How long do the homes take to build?

To ensure higher quality control standards, much of the work is done in the factory beforehand, but from coming on site the homes take about four weeks to construct.

What experience does BoKlok have of building homes?

In Sweden approximately 800 BoKlok units are now being built each year. The concept was introduced in Finland in 2002, Norway in 2003 and Denmark in 2004. This has increased the annual development programme to exceed 1000 units and growing.

How successful is BoKlok in other countries?

It is very successful and popular. Demand for this kind of housing is very high and they are normally sold rapidly. Customer satisfaction is tracked and the experience is that renters/buyers are very satisfied.

How will people be able to get a BoKlok home?

Homes will be directly marketed through BoKlok UK. As we develop the homes we will promote them through the BoKlok UK website, www.boklok.co.uk, advertising and at the local IKEA store. We also maintain mailing lists, via the website, so applicants can pre-register their interest, telling us the geographical areas they want to live in and we will then contact them when we have available units.

Will homes be allocated on a first come, first served basis?

No. Experience from Scandinavia tells us that the BoKlok developments will be oversubscribed. Everyone who registers an interest in a BoKlok home will be assessed against a number of different criteria, i.e. first time buyers or those on modest incomes may be given priority. As it is expected that demand will far outstrip supply we envisage potentially having to stage a lottery involving all those who are short-listed. This method has worked successfully in Scandinavia.

So, getting a BoKlok home is just a lottery?

Unfortunately, this may be the fairest way at the moment of allocating homes that will be in such large demand. We would like nothing better than to provide a BoKlok home to everyone who wants one but with development sites at such a premium, this is just not possible at this stage.

Do the properties come fully furnished?

BoKlok homes come with fitted kitchens, bathrooms and a wooden floor throughout as standard, but people will be expected to furnish their own homes. Those who are successful in obtaining a BoKlok house will receive a £250 IKEA voucher to begin this process, as well as having time with one of IKEA's interior designers.

How will BoKlok UK stop investors buying whole blocks of houses to rent out or sell on at inflated prices?

The homes are for owner occupation and will be available primarily to people who do not already own their home. There will be exceptions, for instance if someone applies for a home following a relationship breakdown and their home is being sold.

Housing associations have been operating systems to prevent profiteering from affordable housing successfully for many years and we will utilise similar systems.

Can owners sell the homes on to anyone they want to?

We will operate a resale service. When people want to move we will sell their home for them at open market value to another person within the intended client group.

Why has this idea taken so long to progress in the UK?

BoKlok AB has until now focused on the Nordic countries, feeling that it was important to gain enough knowledge and experience before looking into markets outside Scandinavia. It also needed time to explore the UK market and find a suitable partner, which it now has with Live Smart @ Home.

Why has Gateshead been chosen as the site for the first BoKlok homes?

This was the first site that became available following the awarding of the exclusive BoKlok UK licence to Live Smart @ Home. Gateshead Council has been very proactive in working with us to progress this scheme.

When will BoKlok homes be available in the rest of the UK?

We want to provide BoKlok homes wherever there is demand across the UK and we are already looking to roll out the BoKlok concept throughout the rest of the UK over the next couple of years. Several projects are under negotiation and will be announced later this year once contracts have been completed.