



# SUBSIDENCE

While over recent years the UK has seen two of the wettest summers on record, with flooding hitting many parts, this year is expected to be considerably warmer and dryer. This is great news for sun-lovers but it poses a serious threat of structural damage to property. Homeowners are being warned of the danger of subsidence/heave resulting from prolonged dry weather.



## ***Subsidence can cause serious structural damage***

Subsidence mainly effects older structures, due to shallower foundations than modern properties but if current NHBC standards are not followed, new build properties are susceptible to the effects of subsidence. Major structural damage can be prevented through early intervention.

If you are considering purchasing a property this summer, look out for signs of subsidence. The most common sign that a property is suffering from subsidence is cracking (usually around the doors or window frames) or you may find that the doors and windows are becoming difficult to open or close. Even if there are no visible signs of subsidence, there are a few causes of subsidence to look out for:-

## ***Are there any trees in close proximity to the property?***

Buildings near trees are particularly at risk in clay subsoils because of the moisture demand of tree roots which cause the clay to shrink.

## ***What condition is the drainage system in?***

Damaged or leaking drains can increase the risk of subsidence in gravel subsoils, as these weaken the ground beneath the foundations.

***Check the soil type surrounding the property***, this will give you an indication of the risk of future subsidence. Clay soils and those with high sand/gravel content or chalk are most at risk of causing a property to subside.

## ***We are able to provide advice on this for you***

In the areas of Essex, Suffolk, and Norfolk there are many differing types of subsoils from clays which are susceptible to moisture content etc to areas of sands and gravels which prove more prone to leakage of drains/mains water supply etc. We suggest having a subsidence survey undertaken to enable you to make an informed decision whether to purchase the property and to also advise on what maintenance/remedial action you can undertake to prevent the risk of subsidence even in high risk areas.

Existing homeowners can minimise the risk of future subsidence by ensuring the drainage systems are working properly and not leaking, trees and shrubs are not grown too near the property and are maintained by regular pruning. Make regular checks of your external walls, if you notice any cracking we will be happy to advise you of a suitable course of action.

***Our subsidence experts can advise you on any issues you may have with regard to subsidence.***