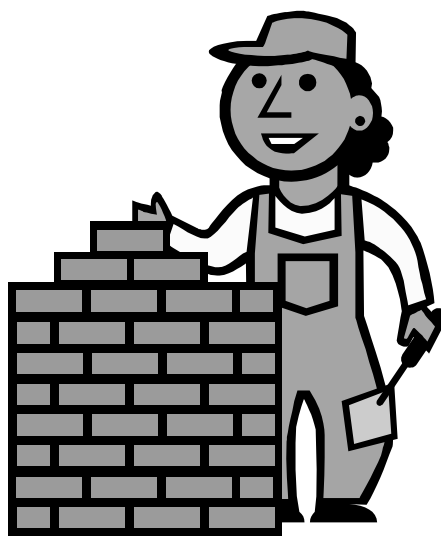


I want to know more about...

.....having work done on my home

The prospect of having any building work done is daunting for most of us. Making sure that you get the right builder, getting proper quotes and then arranging for the work to be done can be difficult.



This leaflet is intended to help you ask the right questions and get the right answers before you go ahead with any work. It will help both you and your contractor to understand what you expect of each other and will lessen the chance of things going wrong later on.

Don't be afraid of asking questions. Good builders will understand why you're asking them and it will help them with their estimates and ultimately to carry out the work properly and get paid.

Remember do not be pressured into signing anything or paying a deposit until you are absolutely sure that you want to use that particular builder or firm.



Choosing a Builder

Even when you may have been recommended or personally know a builder you should still ask certain questions to make sure that they are the right people to invite in to your home to do any work.

- What is the full name of the firm?
- What is their business address - a reputable firm will always have a permanent business address. Check out the address and visit if you can to confirm the details.
- Get their phone number – a landline number is essential and preferably also a mobile.
- Are they a member of a trade organisation e.g. Federation of Master Builders, Council of Registered Gas Installers (CORGI), National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contractors (NICEIC) or competent person scheme? For some types of work this is essential.
- Do they do all the work themselves or do they sub contract some of it out? If so, who are their subcontractors and what trade backgrounds or memberships do they have?
- Do they have Public Liability insurance and accidental damage insurance?
- How long have they been in business?
- Are they VAT registered?
- Ask if you can see some work that they have done recently which is close by.
- How soon could they start the work if you decided to use them? (Timescales given may not always be realistic. Find out how many and what type of jobs will be done before yours).
- What guarantees do they give on completion?
- Is there an emergency call out facility whilst work is ongoing
- Do you require Planning Approval or Building Regulations approval? It is your responsibility to find out and make the application if required, not the builders. (There may also be restrictions on what works you can do if your property is located within a conservation area. It is advisable to check this with the Planning Service.)

Getting a Quote

It is always advisable to get at least two quotes to ensure that the costs given are reasonable and in a similar range.

When asking for a quote both you and your builder must be absolutely clear about what work you are asking them to do. It's best to produce a written list of **all** the work you will need as this is the most cost effective. This list can then be used as a reference throughout the job. Once you've got a quote, check whether it includes VAT.



Changes in the bathroom

- You will need to choose your bathroom suite, shower, taps and tiles etc.
- Do you want to rearrange the bathroom layout?
- How much tiling do you want?
- How will the builder seal the joint between the bath and the wall e.g. silicone sealant or flexible trim?
- Does any of the drainage/wastepipes need altering?
- Will waste pipes be boxed in?
- If there is any exposed pipework, to say a shower, will it be in chrome?
- Are they members of the Competent Persons Scheme for plumbing works?

New Kitchen Fittings

- You will need to choose your sink unit, taps, worktop, units, door fronts, trim, handles etc.
- Choose your hob and oven if they are to be fitted in to the units.
- Get a plan of the proposed kitchen layout that shows you where units and appliances will be fitted/located.
- Do you want a cooker hood and can it be vented out to the external air?
- Will any sockets need re-siting to suit the new layout?
- Do you want any extra sockets?
- How much tiling do you want?
- If any electrical or gas works are to be done you will need a NICEIC or similar/CORGI certificate on completion along with evidence of Part P compliance.

Central Heating

- What boiler is being installed? Is it a high efficiency [condensing] Sedbuk Rating A or B boiler? If not, has the exemption procedure been adhered to?
- Where will the boiler be sited?
- How many radiators do you want? All radiators except one, which is usually the one in the bathroom, should have a thermostatic radiator valve.
- How big are the radiators and where in the rooms are they to be fitted i.e. under windows?
- Where will the room stat and the timer be fitted?
- If your house is very full of furniture the plumber may have difficulty in lifting floorboards etc to install the pipework. You should discuss this with him.
- Discuss who will refit fitted carpets etc. Remember old vinyl may well crack when it is moved so allow for this.
- You will need a NICEIC or similar and CORGI certificates on completion and evidence that the installation has been notified to CORGI.

Rewiring

- Agree how many sockets you want for each room and where they are to be sited?
- Agree how many light switches you need and where are they to be sited? Remember that in rooms that you walk through to get to another and in particular stairwells you will need two way light switches.
- Do you want an external light fitted?
- Will they rewire up to any boiler, alarm system, garage etc?
- We would recommend that whilst you are getting your home rewired, you get your electrician to install mains wired smoke detectors in the ground floor hallway and first floor landing.
- Your existing “fuse box” may be sited in the cellar or above the stairs. The new trip switches that will replace this are very sensitive and will trip out even when a bulb blows. Make sure that the new consumer unit is positioned somewhere that you can easily get to. Speak to your electrician and ask if you want it to be sited somewhere else. Remember if you want to have it somewhere better, make sure it is out of children’s reach or in a lockable cupboard that children cannot get to.
- Will the plasterwork be made good where the wires have been sunk in to the wall?
- If you have wood panelling, tiling etc., you need to discuss whether it can be put back after the rewire.
- Make sure they are aware of Part P compliance with the Building Regulations and will provide a NICEIC certificate or similar on completion

Re-roofing

- What tiles/slates do you want?
- How will they make the joint with next door's roof?
- What detailing do you want to the ridge tiles, verge?
- Will they replace all the lead flashings to the joint between the new roof and your chimney stack?
- Is there any work needed to your chimney stack whilst you have a builder on the roof?
- How will ventilation be provided to the roof space - will they use vent tiles or breathable felt?
- Will my roof space need more loft insulation to comply with Building Regulations? A depth of 270mm is acceptable.
- If the tiles or slates you use are different (heavier) from what is already on, you will need structural calculations by a qualified structural engineer to see whether any strengthening works are required.
- Does the work need Building Regulation approval?
- Does the work need Party Wall Act Approval?



Windows

- When choosing the window design, locks, handles etc. find out about what security measures they offer.
- Make sure that with the design of window you choose you will be able to open and close them without over reaching or need a step ladder. This can sometimes be a problem with top opening windows particularly in front of sink units and kitchen worktops.
- We recommend that one window in each habitable room on the first floor should be designed as an "escape" window in case of a fire e.g. a side hung casement or a tilt and turn.
- Can they replace the windows with minimum disturbance to the plasterwork?
- Are the window sills to be replaced?
- Is the installer FENSA registered?
- On completion you will want either a FENSA registration certificate or Building Control approval.

Damp Proofing Work

- Is the firm a member of the British Wood Preserving and Damp Proofing Association?
- Does a full damp proof course need to be installed or can you just treat the damp affected walls?
- They should drill and inject below the joists to protect the joist ends from dampness. How will they do this?
- Do you want the skirting boards to be refixed or renewed? If they are to be renewed make sure you know what profile and size of skirting they will fit.
- How will they inject and replaster behind radiators, kitchen units etc?
- On completion do you get a fully bonded 25 or 30 year guarantee?
- How long will it be before you can redecorate?
- Will you have to move out temporarily?



Timber Treatment

- Are the firm members of the British Wood Preserving and Damp Proofing Association?
- Get a full report on the condition of any timber that needs treatment which specifies what the extent of the work will be.
- What guarantees will they give you on completion?
- Will you have to move out temporarily?

Getting the Work Started

When you are ready to start the work (for **Disabled Facilities Grants** this is when you have received the approval letter), contact the builder and make sure he can still do the work at the agreed/estimated cost.

- Agree start and completion dates.
- Make sure that you have a phone number that they can always be contacted on. This is particularly useful if for example you notice something wrong that can't wait until they come back the following day.
- Agree how they can have access in to your home and that they will turn up each day and see the job through without breaking off for other work
- Agree how the works will be done as you may be without a full bathroom or kitchen for some days. Make sure they know that they have to leave you with the basics until they have finished.
- Agree that they can use your electricity for their power tools, your kettle and your toilet.
- Agree how they should lock up if you are out when they want to finish work at the end of the day.
- Make sure they will leave everything safe at the end of each day.
- Will they put down dustsheets?
- Make sure that you or your family do not mess with the work or their tools when they are away.
- It is usually beneficial to discuss the works with your neighbours if you will disturb or affect their home in any way e.g. if you need access on to their land or there will be some noise which may affect them. You can get a leaflet on the Party Wall Act from our office.

Jargon Buster

CORGI - Council of Registered Gas Installers

NICEIC - National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contractors

FENSA - Fenestration Self-Assessment Scheme for companies that install windows and doors in dwellings (set up by the Glass and Glazing Federation).

Non - Disabled Facilities Grants only

Paying for the Work



Don't pay in advance and try to avoid paying deposits as it may be difficult to get the builders back to rectify any problems or complete the works once they have been paid. On larger projects the builder may want stage payments. These should be pre-arranged and documented in detail on the quote.

Extra Work

Additional works may be necessary once the works have started. These would be works that neither you nor your contractor could have reasonably anticipated when you were asking for quotes. These may include, for instance, finding out that you need to provide a lintel over a window when the old window has been removed.

If additional works are necessary then you must agree exactly what works are needed, agree the additional costs and get a written quote for them.

On Completion

You should check that they have done all the work that they said they would on the quote. If not, are they going to reduce the final cost or do they have to do the outstanding work?

They should leave your home clean and tidy and remove all rubbish and unused materials.

Make sure you are happy with the quality of the work and that they have given you all the relevant certificates, guarantees, operating instructions etc.

Get a full written final invoice for the work with tax date and VAT number if applicable.

If you need help or information about the services we provide, please contact us:



**Housing (Private Sector) enquiries
Adaptations Team (for DFGs)**

**01274 433531
01274 434520**

**Department of Regeneration,
Housing Service, 1st Floor South Wing,
Jacobs Well, Bradford,
BD1 5RW.**

www.bradford.gov.uk/housing