



THE SASH
WINDOW
WORKSHOP

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Traditional Doors
& Windows

Assessing your needs



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Ask yourself the right questions

Think about the following before asking companies to quote. One sign of a good company is that they will take the time to talk through your issues on the phone, ask you the right questions and help you to work out your options.

1. Why are you considering replacement windows or doors, what are the problems?
2. What particular benefits are you expecting?
3. How long do you intend to stay in the property?
4. Are you looking for a short-term or long-term solution?
5. Have you set a budget?
6. Have you assessed the condition of your windows and doors? If not see the section later in this guide.



Replacing windows and doors in your home is a big decision. This guide will help you ask the right questions and make well-considered choices.

Choose the right company

Only get quotes from companies that carry the FENSA logo. FENSA is an official body that offers customer protection and sets standards

Select a maximum of three companies to quote. Too many quotes can cause confusion and make comparison difficult.

Ask if sales staff are employed, rather than commission based.

Ask about the products and services offered. This will help establish your options.

If possible, visit the company you are thinking of buying from, see how the windows are made and how they work. It will be time well spent.

The best windows in the world don't count for anything unless the installation is good. Look for companies that employ time served fitters rather than using subcontractors.

Check out the warranties. Are they sensible? Overly long warranties can mean nothing. Ask about after sales service.



There are many companies that are hungry for your business. Put them through their paces to establish the quality, value and service you are likely to receive. Reputable companies won't mind.

The Salesman's visit – what to expect, what to demand

Don't accept a hard sell, it's unnecessary and unprofessional. Good companies help and advise by explaining all the options.

Listen carefully. Does the Salesman know what he's talking about? Can he answer all your questions? Is he thorough in his survey? Does he explain your options and make things clear?

Defective windows don't always need to be replaced. There are many other options. Always explore these options before deciding on replacement.

Make sure any quotation is in writing, comprehensive, professional and well presented. If anything appears ambiguous, question it. Costs should be transparent with no hidden extras.

Be cautious of companies that offer big discounts, was the price over inflated in the first place?



Salesmen who tell you what you need, without listening to your particular issues, are concerned with sales, not service.

You've chosen the company and the products. What next?

Make sure that you receive a proper briefing on how to prepare for installation and what to expect during the work.

Be aware that replacing old windows can be dirty and disruptive and could affect window surrounds, cornices, plumbing and cables. If you have any doubts ask.

Your work may require scaffolding. Consider if there are any other works that you could co-ordinate with your window work to save cost later.

Traditional windows are an investment, but they need to be maintained. Regular and careful painting will prolong a windows life by many years. Your supplier should be able to offer advice.

Ask for a receipt for any deposit you pay and wherever possible a deposit protection insurance.



Before work starts, ask all the questions you need. Experienced companies don't see this as an imposition, but part of giving you good service. It's your home and you have the right to the answers.

Assessing the condition of your doors and windows

- Generally speaking, windows on the South and West elevations deteriorate more quickly than those on the North and East elevations. They need more careful inspection.
- Windows may look immaculate, be well painted and work well but possibly hide rot and be in need of full replacement. There may be flaking paint which can make a sound window look as if it needs replacement when just overhauling and draught sealing would be sufficient. A stitch in time can save nine. If in doubt, request a visit.
- Do the windows work properly? Windows that are painted shut are more prone to rot than windows that work well and are regularly used. Check carefully.
- Rot is often found low down in the corners. Pierce the underside of the bottom rail to check for soft wet areas, particularly in places where cables or wires run through the sills.
- Do the mid-rails of the windows line up or do the hanging casement or doors sit snugly in the frame? Large gaps let in large draughts.
- Look at the sliding/opening parts of the window. If they are substantial and thick and in good condition it may be that the originals could be double glazed. Perhaps the frame is in good condition but the opening parts are poor? It's possible that new sashes can be put into the existing frames.

- Are there any watermarks on the wall below the window on the inside? If there are this will tell you that water has penetrated around the outside of the box frame. This may well mean that plaster around the window has blown. It may need re-plastering.
- Is there any cracked brickwork around the window? If there is a builder may be needed to repair brickwork.
- Broken sash cords or panes of glass are no real cause for alarm, these can be replaced easily.
- Does black dust settle around the inside edges of the sashes? Do the windows rattle? If so, they they leak and need draught sealing.
- Draught sealing is excellent for stopping draughts, rattles, dust and dirt coming in around the windows, but cold comes in through the glass. If you have a large area of single glazing and you are looking to reduce heat loss, the only way to improve the windows performance is by fitting double glazing.
- If noise reduction is important to you, then be careful. Acoustic laminate glass helps a great deal and won't spoil the aesthetic appearance of your windows, but it won't eliminate noise altogether. Other factors within your home, such as unseen leaks in the structure, contribute to noise.

Hopefully, these tips will prove useful. If you still have unanswered questions or are unsure of your own assessment, good companies will always offer you a free survey, without any obligation.