



# FINDING A BUILDER

## Checklist

If you're preparing to get building work, renovations or repairs done on your home, use this checklist to help you find a genuine and trustworthy builder.

[www.tssw.org.uk/consumers/building-fraud](http://www.tssw.org.uk/consumers/building-fraud)

# FINDING A **BUILDER** Checklist

## **Be patient**



Good tradespeople and builders typically have waiting lists of at least six months and often up to two years.

Be wary of any builder or tradesperson who tells you they can start quickly or has just had a cancellation. This promise is often a lure to get you to make a quick decision without doing your homework.

## **Get genuine recommendations**



Ask people you know and trust for recommendations of established, local, reputable businesses they've used over the years.

Don't post on Facebook or other social media asking for a builder or tradesperson. Rogue tradespeople are known to post ads on Facebook and Marketplace.

## **Obtain quotes**



Get at least three detailed quotes.

Make sure the quotes give firm prices, not estimates, and detail the exact works and materials.

Agree on start and end dates or the expected duration of the job.

## **Do your research before you agree to have work done**

Do some digging on the business - search online and ask around.

If the builder is a limited company, view the information about them on the Companies House website. Have they been trading long? Are they submitting their accounts? Is there anything unusual, such as multiple changes in Directors in a short period of time?

Check that the business address is genuine.

Ask for proof of valid Employers and Public Liability insurance and their waste carriers licence. These are legal requirements.

Check that any trade association memberships are genuine and current and what the membership means.

If the builder offers a guarantee, find out if it's insurance-backed. It will not be valid without secure backing or if the trader disappears.

## **Don't rely on approved trader schemes alone**



Not all approved trader schemes thoroughly vet their members, so they might not be as reliable as they seem.



**The Trading Standards approved Buy with Confidence scheme carries out extensive vetting, so it's a trustworthy source.**

## **Understand planning and building regulations**



As the householder, it's your responsibility to ensure you have any necessary planning permission before work starts and that the work complies with building regulations.

Be wary of builders who try to bully you into using their preferred building inspector.

## **Check reviews and references**



Be wary of online reviews and photos of work carried out. These can be faked. Use Google's reverse image search to see if an image has been taken from another website.

Ask to visit and speak to a previous customer to see the quality of work and get genuine feedback.

## **NEVER pay upfront**



Reputable builders won't ask for upfront payments or large deposits.

For larger jobs, the builder may ask for payment in stages but never pay for work that hasn't been done or materials that haven't been delivered to you.

Agree on a payment schedule, and don't be pressured to make advance payments.

If payment starts to concern you, STOP and seek guidance from the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline.

## **Make sure everything is in writing**



Once you've carried out your checks and are happy to proceed, make sure everything is in writing.

Before you sign, be sure that you're happy to commit. A cooling off or 14-day cancellation period may not apply.

Having work done on your home is a significant investment, so it pays to find the right builder.

Take your time and complete the necessary checks. And trust your gut! If anything doesn't seem right, find someone else.

Report any concerns through the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline.

## Your find a builder checklist

Tick off each step as you complete it.

- ☐ Get recommendations
- ☐ Obtain three quotes
- ☐ Do background research
- ☐ Investigate memberships
- ☐ Check planning & building regs
- ☐ Verify reviews & references
- ☐ Get everything in writing

For more information and advice, including helpful website links, visit

**[www.tssw.org.uk/  
consumers/building-fraud](http://www.tssw.org.uk/consumers/building-fraud)**

## USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS

You may find the following links helpful:

To find a Trading Standards approved trader  
Buy With Confidence  
01392 383430  
**[www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk](http://www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk)**

To check if a builder has a waste carriers licence  
**[www.environment.data.gov.uk/public-register/view/search-waste-carriers-brokers](http://www.environment.data.gov.uk/public-register/view/search-waste-carriers-brokers)**

To find information about a limited company  
**<https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk>**

For advice about your rights and how to resolve your issue, contact the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline  
0808 223 1133  
**[www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk)**

Trading Standards South West  
**[www.tssw.org.uk/consumers/building-fraud](http://www.tssw.org.uk/consumers/building-fraud)**



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