

## Top tips to hire and work with a builder?

There are a number of things that you can do to find a Builder in London. You can start by doing a Google search for **Builders in London**. You can search **Builders in local area** to get a better result and find contractors closer to home. There are a number of platforms where you can find 3 or more builders with a single post, [Vetted Trades](#) is one of them.

The second thing you should do is talk to your family, friends and neighbours. Ask if any of them have had experience working with a contractor and what the builder was like. Would they recommend the builder?

Once you have made a short list of three to four builders then there are a few things you should find out from each of them listed below:

- A) How long have they been in business?
- B) Have they had experience being a subcontractors and do they have an actual managerial experience.
- C) Ask them for at least four references and they should be the most current. Visit the site to see their work and talk to their customers.
- D) Get a copy of their liability insurance and check if it's current.
- E) Ask if the builder is VAT registered.
- F) Ask if they are members of any approved federations?

Once you have picked three contractors that you are willing to work with, send them your plans and get a price for the work that you want to carry out. Confirm if the price that you have been given includes VAT or if you have to add VAT to the price quoted.

Make sure the quote that you are provided with is detailed and lists all of the work that is to be undertaken. It should not be a single line saying "work to be carried out" and then giving a price for all of the work. The more the quote is detailed the easier it will be to see what work will be carried out. Make sure you ask the builder to agree and write in the quote the period of time it would take for the project to be completed.

After you have received three quotes I would always suggest that you compare them to see if they have all priced for the same amount of work. Some builders give you a low cost but then add on work as they go along, others will write out each part of the work in detail they are going to undertake and price accordingly. It is very easy to under cost a project and going with the cheapest one is never a good option.

After you have picked a builder that you are ready to hire, get the next few things suggested in writing:

- a) Detailed Quote.
- b) A schedule of work.
- c) A schedule of payment.
- d) Agreement of a snag list to be worked on at the end of the project.
- e) A JCT contract for the project.
- f) A start date and completion date.
- g) All the work mentioned in quote should be done within the fixed price agreed.

Before you agree dates with the builder make sure you have all of your paper work ready. Any delay in the project due to you not having your paper work in order with the local council could cause problems with the contractor and long delays.

For all medium to large projects make sure you have the following:

- a. Plans approved with your local council.
- b. Building control application for the work to be carried out.
- c. Structural plans agreed and approved with building control.
- d. Thames water agreement for a build over application if required.
- e. Party wall agreement with your neighbour if required.

When the work starts make regular visits to the project and look for problems that might have been overseen.

At every stage oversee the work completed when the schedule of work is signed off.

Agree with the builder any delivery date for any products and materials that you may need to provide them. This will be for any and all finished items like tiles, sanitary ware, kitchen units and appliances.

Agree with the builder times and dates for any sub-contractors that you have appointed and may have arranged.

Once the project has been completed by the builder make sure you run through a snag list so that they can complete any problems that need to be addressed. They may have just been missed out or happened after the work was completed.

Final payment to the builder should only be made once the final building control inspection has been undertaken and snag list has been completed.

There should be some guarantee on the work done. For all types of remodels like kitchen refurbishment, bathroom fitting, painting and decorating, loft conversion London and more, you should get some time to report any problems or defects with the construction job. Most professional builders will provide a six month to a year guarantee with small to medium sized projects. Try to negotiate with the builder for the period covered.

Try to use an architect, they have spent a lifetime building relationships with builders, they will not recommend just anyone most do not like to recommend builders but you might be able to find an architect that will.

Do not take the cheapest price and do not use anyone that wants large amounts up front, stage payments are best. If you're trying to get it done for cheap then be willing to take a risk.

The biggest problem is that the client does not have the money ready to meet the bills, even when they knew what the costs would be and the builder has finished that stage to standard and early, people still try to delay payment, this in turn will delay more work being done so try to have the money ready well in advance.

You will have an easier time finding contractors who can work within your area by visiting the website **Vetted Trades Online**. The process is quick and easy: just **Post your job request** and minimum of three builders who are reviewed and vetted will contact you and provide you with an estimate.