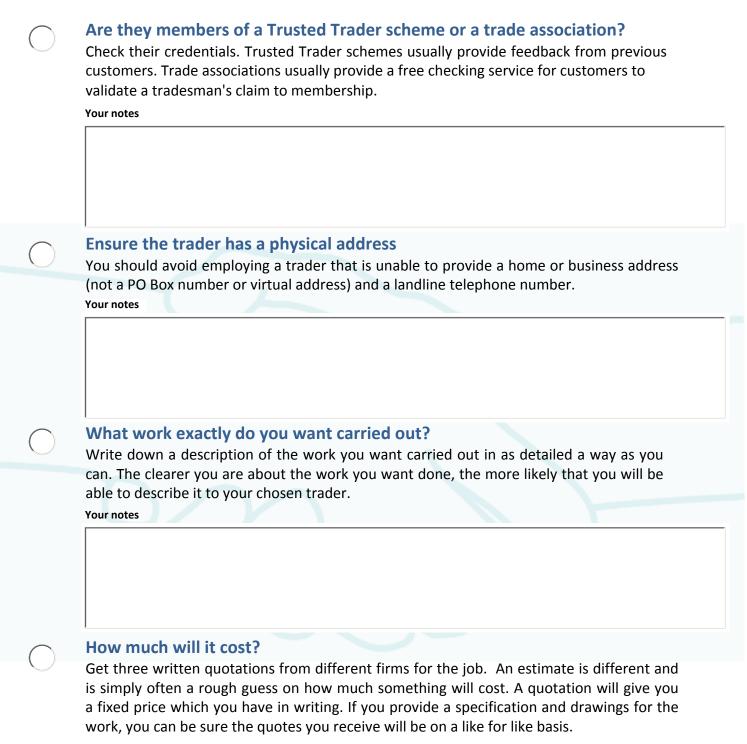
Checklist for choosing a trader

Please follow this checklist to help you choose a reliable trader





Your notes

Is VAT included?

Ask whether VAT has been included or not? This can often be a nasty shock if not planned for. Traders have an obligation to include VAT in their prices when dealing with consumers.

Your notes



Changes

Make sure any changes in the job specification are in writing and a new quotation is provided and approved before work starts.

Your notes

Are Local Authority approvals required?

Find out if you require any planning permission or building regulation approval before any works begin. Your local authority planning department should be able to advise you. Your notes



Neighbours

Does the work you are planning affect neighbouring properties? If so it can save an awful lot of problems if you speak to them about what you are doing before any work starts, especially if a boundary wall is an issue with the planned works. Your notes

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Is your chosen company qualified and capable of carrying out the work?

Make sure you check the company's qualifications and experience of carrying out similar work. If they are not already members of a Trusted Trader scheme, ask to see references from other customers. Check online for any customer feedback they may have.

Your notes

How long should the work take and when can they start?

If it is a big job, make sure you get start and completion dates in writing. Your notes

Do they give any guarantees?

Ask if the work is covered by a guarantee, how long the guarantee lasts and whether it is backed by insurance so that, should the company cease trading, any defects will still be remedied. An insurance-backed warranty is desirable, especially if the job is big.

Your notes

Do they give you confidence?

Think about how a company responds to your enquiry; did they turn up on time, how well did they listen to find out what you need to have done, how carefully did they survey and measure? Ask when you can expect the quotation and check whether it arrives on time. Your notes

Is the price acceptable?

If the quotation from your preferred company seems high it is worth talking to them to see if there is any way the price could be reduced. Ask for any revised price and specification in writing. Your notes

Your notes

Never pay the whole amount up front

Always keep a percentage of the cost back until the job is finished and you are satisfied with the works.

Your notes

Be careful about who you are paying

Always pay the company doing the work and never the individual person UNLESS the company is owned and run by a single individual.

Your notes

Get an invoice that includes the VAT

Make sure your invoices are accurate and itemises the VAT separately.

Your notes

Get a receipt

Check that the trader will give you a receipt for every payment made - getting a receipt is fundamental, because without a receipt you have no proof of payment. Your notes

WHEN YOU ACCEPT THE QUOTATION.....

For large jobs, you should form a contract with the trader. The more detailed the contract is, the better. Verbal agreements can lead to misunderstanding.

If your contract is for goods, as well as service, it helps if these are individually priced.

Check again how long it will take, what time they will arrive and leave and if they will come every day until the job is complete.

If the work is inside your home, check whether you need to remove any furniture or carpets and curtains. Ask what safeguards will the company make to protect your home? Do they have Public Liability insurance cover and for how much?

Check whether a deposit is required and when final payment is due, it is always preferable to leave money outstanding until the job has been completed. Be sure to obtain written receipts for all payments.

If any changes are required to the original specification, discuss it with the tradesman and give written instructions. Request a revised quotation/contract.



