Queen’s Park Trust

version v1.0, dated 10th June 2026

Hiring a Tradesperson

Hiring a tradesperson is one of the most important decisions a homeowner can make. The right choice protects your home, your money, and your safety. The wrong choice can lead to unfinished work, spiralling costs, or unsafe conditions.

This guide provides a clear, government-endorsed framework for making the right decision, so you can start your project with confidence.

Employing tradespeople requires a clear distinction between **hiring a contractor** to do a job on your property and **taking on staff** as an employer. For property renovations, you should source accredited professionals, request at least 3 itemized, like-for-like quotes, and confirm their insurance and guarantees.

Whether hiring for a home project or expanding your own business team, follow this tailored guidance to ensure success:

For Homeowners (Hiring a Contractor)

- **Verify Credentials:** Prioritize tradespeople registered with bodies like TrustMark or those operating under a Competent Person Scheme.
- **Get It In Writing:** Ensure all quotes detail labour, materials, and a defined timeline. Avoid open-ended daily rates; always establish a fixed-cost agreement for the full scope of work.
- **Check Insurance:** Request proof of Public Liability Insurance and ask about **insurance-backed warranties** before handing over a deposit.
- **Follow Best Practices:** Use resources like the Chartered Institute of Plumbing and Heating Engineering for a comprehensive list of dos and don'ts when managing workers on your property.

For Employers (Hiring Staff for Your Business)

- **Registration:** Register as an employer with HMRC and set up PAYE to handle tax and National Insurance.
- **Contract & Compliance:** Provide a written statement of employment terms. Familiarize yourself with workplace pension responsibilities and ensure you have Employers’ Liability insurance.
- **Construction Industry Scheme (CIS):** If you are operating in the construction sector and hiring subcontractors, you must follow specific GOV.UK CIS rules.
- **Safety & Training:** Ensure your staff is properly trained, provided with adequate PPE, and that you have conducted thorough risk assessments in compliance with UK Health & Safety guidelines.

Give the Tradesperson a Clear Brief

- A successful project begins with clarity. Write down exactly what you need, from the scope of work, to the finish you expect. Share photos, sketches, or examples. Clear instructions mean accurate quotes and fewer disputes later.
- The clearer the brief, the fewer surprises down the line.

Check with Your Local Council

- Local councils often list approved contractors for regulated work such as gas and electrics. These lists are especially useful when permits or compliance with regulations are involved.
- Use council-approved lists to strengthen your confidence in compliance and safety.

Check Schemes that Recommend Traders

- Not all schemes are equal. Some are simply paid directories. Others, like TrustMark, are government-endorsed and require businesses to pass independent vetting, background checks, and insurance verification.
- Government endorsement offers a higher level of protection and peace of mind.

Ask Other Traders You Trust

- Experienced builders often recommend electricians, plumbers, or roofers they've worked with. Word-of-mouth within the trade is often more reliable than advertising.
- Pair it with TrustMark checks for full assurance.

Find a Trade Association

- Professional associations (e.g. Gas Safe Register, Chartered Institute of Plumbing and Heating Engineering) enforce codes of conduct and quality standards. Membership demonstrates ongoing commitment to competence and accountability.

Ask Friends, Family, and Neighbours

First-hand experience remains invaluable. Ask about reliability, tidiness, and cost. Local recommendations are especially useful for recurring jobs like gardening, decorating, or small repairs.

Verify Qualifications

Never take claims at face value. Check Gas Safe ID cards, Part P registration, or NVQ certificates, depending on the trade. Always ensure qualifications are current.

A qualified tradesperson isn't just skilled, they're accountable to safety standards.

Ask for References and Contact Them

Speak directly to past clients. Ask how issues were resolved, not just whether the job was completed. A reputable tradesperson welcomes this scrutiny.

Check They're Insured

Look for:

- **Public liability insurance**
- **Employer's liability** (if they employ a team)
- **Professional indemnity for design or structural work**

Insurance safeguards you against financial and safety risks.

Check How Long They've Been Trading

Established businesses with repeat clients signal reliability. Look for trading history, Companies House registration, and consistent online presence across multiple platforms.

Get at Least Three Quotes

Compare like-for-like. Be wary of unusually low quotes; they often hide cut corners or future costs. Refusal to provide a written quote is a red flag.

Assess Communication Style

Professional tradespeople respond promptly, communicate clearly, and put agreements in writing. Early interactions reveal their professionalism.

Understand Guarantees and Aftercare

Ask if the work is guaranteed and for how long. Check whether manufacturer warranties remain valid for appliances or specialist installations. Guarantees protect you long after the job is done.

Ensure They Respect Your Home

Tidiness, dust sheets, waste disposal, and respect for working hours matter. Address these expectations upfront to avoid conflict.

Check Financial Stability

Financially sound businesses are less likely to disappear mid-project. Check for registered status on Companies House and review credit history if possible. Avoid paying large sums up front. However, if the business must pay some upfront costs for materials, it's ok for them to ask you for some money up front to cover some of these costs.

When making payments, use a payment service that protects your money. For example, the TrustMark Payment Protection service releases funds to the business at various stages of the work.

A Registered Business's trading record and financial position are checked when they first join TrustMark, however, such checks cannot guarantee a business will not have financial difficulties. For this reason, we insist all Registered Businesses provide a warranty that provides increased protection if the firm goes out of business.

Red Flags to Watch Out For

- **Suspicious quoting or payments:** Cash-only demands, refusal to provide written quotes, or unusually low prices.
- **Lack of details:** No address, no online presence, or brand-new profiles without history.
- **Reluctance to share documents:** Avoid anyone unwilling to show insurance, ID, or references.
- **High-pressure tactics:** Limited time offers or alarmist claims about urgent safety risks.
- **Unprofessional behaviour:** Missed appointments, unclear communication, or aggression when asked questions.

Spot the warning signs early to protect yourself and your home.