



# Questions to ask a builder

Once you've found a prospective builder, you want to feel confident knowing they can do a great job.

The best thing to do is to make a list of questions to ask them prior to contracting them. It may feel like you're wasting their time, especially if you don't have much experience in the sector but don't be afraid to ask even the simplest of questions. After all, it is your money and your home so it's beneficial to compile a list and include the following:

## 1. Have you done similar jobs?

If so, ask how it went. What problems did they experience? Was it within budget?

## 2. What is your honest estimated timeline for this job?

Invite them to be candid and try to work to a schedule you're both happy with.

## 3. How do you keep costs down?

Unforeseen problems can push costs up. But what measures does the builder have in place to avoid costly mistakes?

## 4. What is your payment structure?

So you can agree on a mutually acceptable schedule of payments.

## 5. How experienced and qualified are your staff?

The more years they have been in construction, the better.

## 6. What other work are you undertaking?

Some small builders and subcontractors struggle to make a living with one job at a time. Get reassurance that other contracts won't affect your build.

## 7. Do you have the relevant health and safety measures and insurances?

Don't just assume everything is above board.

## 8. What trade contacts do you have?

Maybe they can help you find trusted subcontractors.

## 9. Do you communicate well with clients?

You are going to be working with this firm for months or longer. A good back-and-forth will make both your lives easier.

## 10. How do you react to changes in specification and circumstances?

Sometimes unexpected changes are necessary. Can the builder adapt?

## 11. How do you take neighbours and other environmental factors into consideration?

Building sites can be noisy and busy places, but good site management can minimise disruption.

## 12. What references do you have?

It's not unheard of for dishonest builders to pass off another firm's work as their own – make sure you do plenty of research into the firm.