

Keeping your home in good repair



To make sure your home stays in good condition, it's important to inspect it at least once a year, to check for any damage. If you repair this damage early on, it could save you a lot of time, trouble and expense in the future. Here are some things you should look out for.

Roof and chimneys

Check for:

- ☐ loose or missing slates or tiles
- ☐ holes or slits in flat roofs
- ☐ damp patches in the attic or roof spaces
- ☐ cracked or loose chimney pots.

Maintenance:

- ☐ Always call in a roofing professional to carry out any repairs.
- ☐ If you have an open fire, get your chimney swept regularly.

Safety first:

- ☐ Don't climb up onto the roof yourself – look from outside, using binoculars if possible.

Drainage

Check for:

- ☐ blocked gutters and downpipes
- ☐ leaking gutters and pipes
- ☐ plants growing in gutters
- ☐ damp patches on the wall
- ☐ rubbish leaves or plants in the drains.

Maintenance:

- ☐ Clear out gutters out least once a year.
- ☐ Clear out drains regularly.

Safety first:

- ☐ If you need to use a ladder to clear out the gutters, make sure you do this safely.

Walls

Check for:

- ☐ large cracks or crumbling in harling or other rendered surfaces
- ☐ eroding mortar between bricks or stones
- ☐ damp patches
- ☐ wide cracks that have recently appeared.

Maintenance:

- ☐ Hire a builder to repoint the mortar between stones and bricks.
- ☐ Touch up painted or limewashed masonry when necessary.

External paintwork

Check for:

- ☐ cracked or splitting paintwork
- ☐ rotting wood.

Maintenance:

- ☐ Repaint every five to seven years.

Damp

Check for:

- ☐ condensation
- ☐ mould and fungi
- ☐ damp patches on walls and ceilings
- ☐ leaking plumbing
- ☐ breaks in the damp proof course.

Maintenance:

- ☐ Make sure kitchens and bathrooms have adequate ventilation – install an extractor fan or window vents or simply open windows regularly.
- ☐ Only dry laundry in well ventilated areas.
- ☐ Line windowsills with absorbent strips.
- ☐ Put silica containers in areas susceptible to condensation, such as windowsills and kitchen cupboards.
- ☐ Install a dehumidifier.
- ☐ Clean mould and fungi from walls with an anti-bacterial wash.
- ☐ Install or replace your damp proof course.

Ladder safety

- ☐ Always use a ladder that's long enough so you don't have to reach too far.
- ☐ Make sure the ladder is standing on a firm, level base.
- ☐ Ask someone to hold the ladder steady for you at all times.
- ☐ Always keep one hand on the ladder.
- ☐ Never reach too far or lean backwards.
- ☐ Don't rely on the strength of a gutter to support the ladder – or you!
- ☐ Don't go up a ladder in windy weather.

Hiring a contractor

DO ask around for recommendations. DON'T hire anyone you don't trust. DO make sure the contractor is a member of a reputable trade association. DON'T let sales people pressure you. DO get at least three estimates. DON'T pay cash in hand. DO ask for a warranty. DON'T pay up until you're satisfied.