

If you've lived with double glazed windows for more than a few winters, you'll know their quirks. They keep rooms warmer, mute the rumble of traffic, and hold off condensation on cold mornings. Then one day a pane fogs inside the cavity, or a sash starts catching, or the handle slacks off in your hand. The question surfaces quickly: do you call someone for double glazing repairs, or cut to the chase and replace the whole unit?

I've spent years inspecting frames, swapping hardware, resealing glass, and, when it made sense, advising clients to invest in new units. The right answer is rarely one-size-fits-all. It depends on the fault, the age of the window, and what you expect from your home over the next decade. Here is a practical guide, with detail you can use to decide what to do and when to do it.

## What double glazing actually does

A double glazed unit is two panes of glass separated by a sealed spacer bar, usually filled with argon gas. That gas layer ***Misted Window Repairs*** and the low conductivity spacer reduce heat transfer, so your heated air stays inside longer. The sealed cavity also blocks some sound, and the lack of moist indoor air reaching the cold outer pane limits condensation.

A typical uPVC or alu-clad window includes the insulated glass unit (often called an IGU), the sash that holds it, the frame mounted in the wall, plus hardware: hinges, handles, multipoint locks, trickle vents, gaskets and seals. Problems can arise in any of those parts, and the fix changes accordingly.

## The big fork in the road: repair the component or replace the unit?

Before we dive into symptoms, split the possibilities into two broad buckets.

First, problems outside the glass itself. Handles, hinges, locks, perimeter gaskets, draught seals, packed shims, even frame alignment. These are typically repair jobs. They cost less, create almost no disruption, and can extend the life of a window by years. A competent technician can swap a hinge in under an hour, adjust a sash that's dropped, or replace brittle gaskets and stop a winter draught.



Phone: +44 7973 682562

Second, failure inside the glass. When the perimeter seal around the IGU fails, the argon gas leaks and moisture sneaks in. You see misting between the panes or a fine debris haze that you cannot wipe away on either surface. At that point, no amount of surface cleaning or silicone around the edges will restore the thermal performance inside the unit. The remedy is a new sealed glass unit, not necessarily a whole new window.

Understanding where your issue sits on that spectrum saves money and frustration. The knack lies in spotting the symptoms and mapping them to the right intervention.

## **Can you fix blown double glazing?**

This is the question I hear most often, sometimes worded as Can you fix blown double glazing or framed as Misted Double Glazing Repairs. People use blown to mean the perimeter seal inside the IGU has let go. The short answer is yes, in the sense that you can restore the window by replacing the sealed glass unit within the existing frame. You do not usually need to replace the frame and sash unless they are damaged, rotten, or outdated beyond sense.

A few services promise to drill the glass, vent the moisture, inject a drying agent, then reseal the holes. I have tested this on older rental properties where budget was tight. It can clear the view for a while, and it is better than living with fogged glass if you need a stopgap. The downsides are significant. The argon gas is gone, the thermal performance is reduced, and the new micro-vent path may invite fresh moisture under certain weather conditions. Expect the fog to return in months to a few years, not decades. If you care about insulation, go with a new sealed unit.

## **When a repair is the smart move**

There is a cluster of faults where double glazing repairs shine. Think of these as the low hanging fruit that deliver high impact for modest cost.

Sash dropped or misaligned. If the window rubs when closing or needs a shove to latch, the hinges may have worn or the packers around the glass may need adjustment. On uPVC side-hung casements, fitting new friction hinges and re-packing the glass often restores smooth closing and an even seal. I carry hinges in standard sizes because this problem is that common.

Cold draughts with no visible glass fault. Perimeter gaskets can harden over time. I have pulled out seals on 15-year-old windows that have gone flat and shiny. Fresh gaskets plus a small hinge adjustment can transform a room. On doors, the compression of the multipoint lock needs periodic tweaking. A 2 mm tweak on a keep plate can stop a winter draught.

Handle feels loose or the key sticks. Window handles and locking spindles wear. Replacements are inexpensive, and re-arming the lock to bite cleanly against the keeps restores security as well as usability. If the internal gearbox of the espagnolette strip has failed, swapping the strip is still a repair, not a replacement of the whole window.

Condensation on the room-side glass. This is ventilation and humidity management, not a failed IGU. Kitchens, bathrooms, and bedrooms with laundry racks are notorious. Trickle vents, consistent extractor fan use, and keeping internal doors ajar in the evening usually beat this, especially in colder months.

Minor water ingress around the frame. If you see water tracking in during driving rain, it may be failed mastic between the frame and the wall or a blocked drainage channel in the frame. Clearing weep holes and renewing the external sealant solves most of these.

With these issues, a repair yields the same outcome as replacement for a fraction of the cost. I have service records where a £120 hinge and gasket job stopped a client's annual winter heat spike, saving more than the repair cost in under two seasons.

## When replacement makes more sense

Replacement isn't a defeat. Sometimes it is the most economical and comfortable route.



Persistent misting between panes in multiple units. If two or more IGUs in the same elevation have blown and the windows are 15 to 20 years old, replacing the sealed units is sensible. If the frames themselves are bowed, brittle, or rotting, a full window replacement pays off, especially if you upgrade to modern warm-edge spacers, argon or krypton fills, and low-e coatings that can shave 10 to 20 percent off heat loss compared to early 2000s units.

Rotting timber or warped frames. Timber windows can be repaired, but there is a line. I once rebuilt a bay with spliced sills and epoxy consolidant, which worked beautifully, but the labor hours were high. If decay extends through the sash rails or into the frame jambs, and moisture readings sit in the 20 to 25 percent range, full joinery replacement becomes the safer long-term choice. For uPVC, look for chalking, brittleness, and cracked welds. When frames lose integrity, the glass alone won't save them.

Major hardware incompatibility. On older imported systems, replacements for locks and hinges might be unavailable now. I sometimes custom-fit alternative gear, but if it compromises security or function, it is better to replace the sash or window with a current, serviceable system.

Thermal upgrade goals. If you are renovating and targeting a measurable drop in energy use, jumping from older double glazing to modern high-performance double or triple glazing can be the lever you need. Pay attention to whole-window U-values, not just center-of-glass figures, and ask for documentation. A-frame conductivity and spacer type matter as much as the glass.

Compliance and safety. In some homes, especially rentals, replacing glass with laminated inner panes can meet safety or security standards. If current frames can't accept the required unit thickness, replacement frames solve that in one go.

## How to diagnose common issues at home

You can do a surprisingly thorough first pass without tools, then call a professional with sharper questions.

Look straight on, then at angles. If the fogging or streaking is inside the cavity, you can't wipe it off. Tilt your head and watch the reflected light. If the haze sits between the reflections from the two panes, the unit is blown.

Run a hand around the perimeter on a breezy day. Feel for cold air around gaskets and the meeting rail. A thin strip of tissue can flag a draught if it flutters. If air sneaks in at the hinge side on a casement, hinge wear is the usual suspect.

Check the weep holes. At the bottom of most frames you will see small slots. Pour a little water into the inside track and watch for it to drain outside. If it pools, clear the holes with a plastic strip or a cable tie. Do not enlarge the holes with a drill unless the manufacturer specifies it.

Operate the handle slowly. It should travel smoothly, and the sash should pull snug toward the frame as the multipoint cams engage. If it rattles closed or stops short, the cams and keeps may need adjustment or the gearbox may be failing.

Measure the glass area roughly. For misted double glazing repairs, knowing the approximate width and height of the visible glass helps a technician quote a sealed unit replacement. Add the frame thickness only if asked. Most glaziers will confirm exact sizes later, often measuring the unit thickness with a caliper or a spacing gauge.

## What a proper repair or unit replacement looks like

A clean repair follows a few predictable steps. The difference between a good job and a headache later often lies in the small details.

For hinge and hardware fixes, a tech will remove the sash, support it safely, and mark the hinge positions. The best practice is to replace both hinges on a side-hung casement so the geometry matches. They will re-pack the IGU so the weight sits correctly on the hinges and the sash does not creep over time. Finally they will adjust the cams to set compression, then check for even gaps around the frame. If your installer does not open and shut the window a half dozen times to check smooth operation, push them to do it.

For a blown IGU, the sash is usually removed, the glazing beads popped off in order, and the old unit lifted out. I have seen beads cracked and forced back in with a mallet. That is bad practice. Correctly installed beads will snap back with firm hand pressure if the packers are in the right place and the unit is sized properly. The fitter should check for drainage, apply glazing tape or setting blocks as specified, and clean the sightlines so the new rubber sits flush. With timber, a bead of appropriate glazing sealant, not generic silicone, keeps things tidy and long-lasting.

Turnaround times vary. Off-the-shelf sizes can be same-week. Custom sizes with laminated glass or specialized coatings often take 7 to 14 days from survey to install. Ask for a written note on the glass spec to match or improve performance: thickness pairing, low-e coating location, gas fill, warm-edge spacer color.

## **The money question: costs, savings, and what affects both**

Numbers depend on region, access, and spec, but a rough pattern holds.

Hardware and adjustment. Expect modest costs for simple jobs. Replacing a pair of friction hinges on a standard casement commonly falls in a lower three-figure sum, including labor. A handle or lock strip swap is similar. If multiple windows need attention, ask for a day rate, which is usually better value.

Sealed unit replacement. A straightforward IGU swap often lands in the mid to upper three-figure range per unit depending on size, glass spec, and whether the window is easy to access. Large patio doors or shaped glass cost more. You rarely need scaffolding for ground-floor windows, but upper floors with tricky access can add setup costs.

Full window replacement. This is the big leap, usually in the four-figure range per opening. It includes making good the internal reveals and external trims, haul-away of waste, and certification if required locally. Going from uPVC-to-uPVC is the least expensive. Quality timber and alu-clad systems sit higher, but offer longer service life with the right maintenance.

On savings, two factors dominate: air tightness and glazing performance. Stopping draughts is often the fastest payback. I have measured 1 to 2 degree Celsius improvements in cold corners simply by restoring compression on tired seals, which changes how often the boiler fires. Upgrading old double glazing to modern spec can shave noticeable amounts off heating bills over a few seasons, but the exact figure depends on insulation elsewhere, room usage, and your tariff. Treat claims of instant 30 percent reductions with skepticism unless your current windows are in very poor condition.

## **Energy performance, comfort, and the felt difference**

Numbers are helpful, but comfort is what you feel at 10 pm in January. A good window reduces radiant chill, the sensation when your body radiates heat toward a cold surface. Low-e coatings on modern double glazing, especially with argon fill, lift the inner glass temperature closer to the room temperature. That alone can make a chair by the window usable again.

Acoustic performance matters too. Double glazing is not a magic bullet for noise, but a well-sealed unit with dissimilar glass thicknesses can reduce certain frequencies better than two identical panes. If traffic roar or flight paths bother you, ask for an acoustic laminate inner pane during a unit replacement rather than default glass. It costs more but can take the edge off without changing the frame.

## **Materials age differently: uPVC, timber, and aluminum**

Each frame material has a pattern of wear.

uPVC resists rot but can warp under heat, especially in darker colors facing strong sun. I have seen south-facing sashes that closed perfectly in spring but rubbed in August. That is a hinge and alignment story, not a reason to replace the lot. Over decades, uPVC can chalk and become brittle. If you can press your fingernail into it and it flakes, that frame is near retirement.

Timber can last generations with repainting and attentive maintenance. Look for soft spots at sills and lower rails, fine cracks at glazing putty lines, and discolored drip edges. Moisture meters are your friend here. If decay is localized, resin repairs and fresh paint can save the sash. Just be honest about the effort required every 5 to 7 years.

Aluminum and alu-clad timber boast excellent longevity, but their gaskets still age and the same IGU failures can occur. Pay attention to thermal breaks in older aluminum frames. If you see condensation on the frame itself, that break may be modest by modern standards, and replacement could significantly improve comfort.

## What to ask a tradesperson before saying yes

You'll get better results when you ask specific questions.

- For misted units: Will you match or improve the glass spec, including low-e coating, gas fill, and spacer type? Can you note the cavity width and U-value on the quote?
- For hinge and lock repairs: Are you replacing in pairs and re-packing the glass? Will you adjust compression and check draughts around the entire perimeter?
- For sealant work: What product are you using externally, and is it compatible with the frame and brick or render? How will you maintain drainage paths and weep holes?
- For full replacements: What is the whole-window U-value, not just center-of-glass? How will you make good internal reveals, and is certification or registration included?
- For warranties: What are the terms on the IGU, hardware, and workmanship? If an IGU fails within the warranty, do you cover labor as well as the glass?

This is one of only two lists in this article. Keep it handy. Good installers will welcome these questions.

## A few real-world edge cases

Bay windows with movement. Bays shift subtly over time. If the head of the bay drops a few millimeters, the sashes bind. I have lifted a bay by re-shimming and correcting hinge geometry, which restored function without major carpentry. In one case, however, the movement had cracked the plaster above the bay and the frame was carrying load it shouldn't. A builder added a steel over the opening and we replaced the frames. The moral: treat structural movement with respect and involve a builder when signs point that way.

Heritage glass looks. Some clients love the slightly wavy look of old single glazing. You can fit slimline double glazing into timber sashes to maintain sightlines. The sealed cavity is narrower, so thermal performance is less than standard double glazing, but still better than single panes. Repairing original timber and fitting slimline units is a satisfying middle path in conservation areas, if permitted locally.

Doors vs windows. Patio and French doors bear more daily stress. A misaligned keep on a door can masquerade as a failed lock when the real culprit is frame settlement. Adjusting the keeps usually brings the door latch back into line. If the door panel has bowed significantly, consider replacing the slab while keeping the frame, provided the frame is plumb and true.

## Safety, security, and small upgrades that pay off

Security hinges with anti-lift features, laminated inner panes on ground-floor windows, and properly adjusted multipoint locks do more for peace of mind than most gadgets. If you are replacing blown IGUs anyway, it is a good moment to upgrade inner glass to laminated for security and safety near floors or stairs. You can also choose warm-edge spacers in a color that matches the frame, which sounds cosmetic until you notice how it reduces cold bridging at the sightline and the small beads of condensation that used to form there.

For ventilation, trickle vents are a small but helpful feature in airtight rooms, especially bedrooms. If your existing frames have them, make sure they are clear. If they do not and you are replacing frames, consider adding them. Mechanical ventilation with heat recovery is better still, but that is a whole-house conversation.

## Caring for windows so you repair less often

A little care goes a long way. Wash frames and gaskets a couple of times a year with soapy water. Avoid abrasive cleaners. A drop of light oil on moving hardware in spring and autumn keeps things smooth. For timber, inspect paint films annually and touch up any breaks before water creeps in. Keep weep holes clear, particularly after storms and in pollen season. None of this is glamorous, but it postpones the day you face a larger bill.

## Pulling the threads together

Double glazing repairs cover a wide range, from a 20-minute handle swap to a careful swap of a misted sealed unit. The guiding principle is simple: fix components when the frame is sound and the issue is specific, replace sealed units when the glass has failed, and reserve full window replacement for tired frames, structural issues, or when you are aiming for a step-change in performance.

If your view has turned cloudy and you are wondering about misted double glazing repairs, you can almost always keep the frame and replace the IGU. If your window is draughty but clear, gaskets and hinges will likely solve it. And if you keep asking yourself can you fix blown double glazing, the answer is yes, just not with a tube of silicone. Order a properly [Double Glazing Repairs](#) specified sealed unit, fit it well, and you will get your clear view and thermal comfort back for many years.

When in doubt, invite a reputable local firm to survey. A good technician will talk you through the options, show you the wear points, and quote for both repair and replacement if either could fit. The best outcome is the one that makes your room quieter, warmer, and easier to live with for the longest span, at a price that makes sense for your home and plans.