A double glazed window is a quiet partner in the background of a comfortable home. When it is working, you barely notice it. When something goes wrong, the house tells you quickly: drafts by the sofa, the boiler working harder, condensation creeping in like a fog. I have spent plenty of cold mornings with a moisture meter and a torch, tracing problems that began as small annoyances and turned into swollen frames and stained plaster. Not every fault needs a same-day visit, but some do. Knowing the difference saves money, limits heat loss, and in a few cases prevents real safety risks.

This guide walks through the most common issues with uPVC, aluminium, and timber double glazed units. We will look at symptoms, urgency, practical fixes, and the judgment calls that separate a quick repair from a deeper intervention. I will address common questions such as Can you fix blown double glazing and how Misted Double Glazing Repairs actually work in practice, rather than in glossy brochures.

## What double glazing is protecting you from

It helps to remember the job your windows do. Each sealed unit has two panes of glass separated by a spacer bar, usually filled with argon and sealed at the perimeter. That gap reduces conductive heat loss. Low-E coatings bounce radiant heat back into the room. The frame controls air leakage, holds hardware, and drains away rain that gets past the external seals. When the system is sound, you get stable indoor temperatures, fewer drafts, and clear views without condensation between panes.

When parts fail, the failure shows up as one of five things: loss of thermal performance, moisture ingress, air leakage, mechanical issues with opening and locking, or outright glass damage. The urgency depends on which of those five you are facing, and how fast the damage can compound.

## Urgent versus can-wait: a practical way to triage

Homeowners regularly ask me to rank issues by how quickly they need attention. I use a simple rule of thumb. Anything that compromises safety or allows water into the building fabric goes to the top of the list. Next comes anything that wastes energy at a noticeable rate or leaves the home unsecure. Cosmetic or minor performance issues come last, though if you rent your property or plan to sell, the order can change because of compliance and buyer confidence.

Here is a compact field checklist I use when taking the first call:

- Urgent within 24 to 72 hours: failed locks or hinges that prevent secure closing, shattered glass, water leaks at the frame or head, detached glazing beads, large drafts in cold weather.
- Prompt but not immediate, within two to four weeks: misted units that affect visibility or U-values, perished gaskets with minor drafts, stiff or misaligned sashes, failed trickle vents.
- Monitor and plan, within one to three months: cosmetic scuffs, aged sealant with no water ingress, marginal handle play, minor desiccant failure with light fogging that clears.

That short list covers most situations. The sections below explain why each item sits where it does and how to approach it.

## Broken or cracked glass: act fast for safety and weather tightness

A cracked outer pane looks dramatic but can still hold for a while if the crack is stable. A cracked inner pane is more dangerous because it can shed shards into the room. In either case, temperature shifts and door slams make

cracks run. Tape over the damaged area as a temporary measure, keep kids and pets away, and book a replacement sealed unit. If the glass has shattered, especially toughened safety glass near doors, board up or temporarily glaze with acrylic until the new unit arrives. Lead times for made-to-measure units range from 3 to 10 working days, sometimes longer for shaped panes or specialty coatings.

One tip from the field: if you can, photograph the spacer bar's data strip. It often lists dimensions and glass spec, which helps a fabricator match the unit without a second visit.

## Water leaks around the frame: symptoms and fast fixes

Water is relentless, and it follows gravity, surface tension, and wind pressure. If you see damp staining below the sill, beads of water on the frame interior after rain, or swollen timber in a bay, treat it as an urgent repair. The usual culprits are blocked drainage holes, perished external seals, failed mastic between frame and wall, or misfitted trims.

Before you call someone out, check for weep holes on the bottom edge of the frame exterior. They clog with dirt, cobwebs, and insect debris. A cocktail stick or a spritz from a handheld air blower can free them. If the leak persists, you may need new gaskets, fresh perimeter sealant, or in rare cases a sill end cap replacement. Aluminium systems with pressure-equalized chambers need a clean pathway for water. uPVC relies on gravity drains. Timber frames demand sound paint or stain and properly bedded glazing.

The cost curve gets steep if water reaches insulation or plasterboard. I have seen a neglected weep hole in a southwest-facing window lead to a £700 plaster repair and repaint. Addressing the route of water within a week usually keeps that figure under £150 to £300 in materials and labor.

## Failed locks and hinges: urgency depends on security and access

A window you cannot close is more than an inconvenience. It can void home insurance if a break-in occurs. Espagnolette locks can strip teeth, keeps can loosen, and friction hinges can bend after years of wind load. If the sash sits proud at the top corner or you can slip a card between the seal and frame, alignment is off.

Simple hinge adjustments often solve drafts and misalignment. On uPVC, a competent technician can typically realign a sash within an hour, replacing worn hinges or cams if needed. Older timber sashes sometimes need new stays and a small amount of planing. If a lock fails in an open position, a temporary sash jammer or screw-in restrictor can secure the room overnight.

One safety note: top-hung windows that double as fire escape routes must open fully. If yours sticks or catches, fix it soon. The hinge can be replaced with an egress type in most systems, but do not wait until you need it.

## Misted units and the question everyone asks: can you fix blown double glazing?

When people say a window has "blown," they usually mean the sealed unit has failed. You know it's blown when condensation forms between the panes that you cannot wipe away. Sometimes it is a faint haze, sometimes full-on droplets that run down the inner cavity. It often looks worse in the morning, then fades as the sun warms the glass and drives moisture into the desiccant.

Can you fix blown double glazing? The honest answer is yes, but with context. There are three approaches I have seen:

- Replace the sealed unit. This is the most reliable method. You keep the existing frame, remove the glazing beads, swap the failed unit for a new one with fresh spacer, gas fill, and low-E coating. Expect a lifespan similar to new windows, typically 15 to 25 years depending on climate and quality.
- Vent and reseal services. Some companies drill small holes, flush the cavity, and install vents to reduce fogging. It can clear the view and costs less upfront, but long-term thermal performance is compromised because the gas fill and original seal are gone. In exposed locations, the mist can return. I rarely recommend this unless a replacement unit is impractical or you need a temporary fix before a sale.
- Live with it. If the window is in a garage or a spare room and the mist is light, you can delay. You will lose some thermal performance, usually a few degrees worth of surface temperature, and you may see higher energy bills if several units are affected.

Misted Double Glazing Repairs, done properly through replacement, are straightforward for a trained fitter. The challenge lies in measuring precisely, identifying the glass spec, and handling large units without racking the sash. If the window has Georgian bars or obscure patterns, order times stretch a bit. Costs vary widely, but as a range, a small casement replacement unit might run £90 to £150 supplied and fitted, while a large patio door panel can be £250 to £450 per leaf.

One last pointer: if one unit in a set has failed and the others are the same age and exposure, inspect them closely. I often find a second unit within six months is on the way out, and batching the replacements reduces call-out fees.

## Drafts, cold spots, and higher heating bills: where to look first

A cold edge by the window does not always mean a blown unit. More often it is air leakage around the sash or frame. Start simple. Run the back of your hand around the perimeter on a windy day. If you feel a stream of cold air, the compression seal is not doing its job. uPVC windows have two or three gaskets. Over time they flatten. Replacing them is inexpensive, and it restores pressure when the sash closes. On adjustable mushroom cams, a quarter turn can increase compression without a part swap.

Frame-to-wall junctions are another common failure. The original mastic shrinks, or the plaster line cracks behind the trim. Fresh high-quality exterior sealant, applied to a clean, dry surface, makes a world of difference. If the draft is under the sill, check for missing end caps or gaps into the cavity. I have pulled out clumps of expanding foam where a proper closure trim should have been. Foam is not a weatherproof finish by itself.

Do not forget trickle vents. They are designed to bring controlled ventilation while reducing condensation risk, but if one stays stuck open, you will feel it. Clean and close it, then see if the draft subsides. If you have persistent internal condensation on glass in winter, a closed trickle vent can worsen it. Balance comfort with healthy air exchange, especially in kitchens and bathrooms.

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## Condensation you can wipe off: a different diagnosis

Water on the room-side surface in the morning usually points to indoor humidity, not failed glass. I cannot count how many times I have been called to “repair” a window that only needed better ventilation and a realistic expectation of physics. Several showers, a boiling pot, and a drying rack will push indoor relative humidity above 60 percent, sometimes 70 percent in small flats. Against a cold window, the dew point gets crossed, and water forms.

Practical steps help quickly: open a window a crack during showering, use extraction fans that actually exhaust outdoors, and keep blinds slightly off the glass so air circulates. If you have new windows that are more airtight than your old ones, interior condensation can increase, not because they are faulty, but because the previously leaky windows were doing your ventilation without you noticing.

If condensation appears between panes, that is a sealed unit failure. If it appears on the outside of the outer pane on cold, clear mornings, that is a sign of excellent thermal performance. The outer glass stays cold enough to condense ambient moisture because the inner pane is not bleeding heat into it. It looks odd but is not a defect.

## When frames, beads, and seals matter more than the glass

Most people focus on the glass, but the frame and its components are equally important. I see three recurring frame issues that deserve attention:

- Shrunken or perished gaskets. You will spot a small gap at the corners or a shiny flattened profile that no longer springs back. Replace like for like if possible, especially on older systems where the groove profile matters. A box of universally claimed “fits all uPVC” gaskets does not fit all.
- Loose glazing beads. If you can move a bead with your fingers, the unit might not be properly packed. Incorrect packing can twist a sash, stress the seals, and cause locks to misalign. A skilled fitter will re-pack, ensuring the load is transferred to the hinge side and bottom edge, then re-bed the beads snugly.
- Faded or chalking uPVC. This is cosmetic, but it hints at age. Old frames can still take new sealed units, but be realistic about the lifespan. If the sun-side is chalking and the gaskets are brittle, treat glass replacement as a medium-term plan and budget for full window replacement a few years down the line.

Aluminium frames are sturdy, but pay attention to thermal breaks. Modern systems have polyamide breaks and proper drainage; older ones can feel cold and sweat on the frame in winter. Timber frames reward maintenance. A simple bead of quality paint seal where the glass meets the wood, redone every few years, prevents many problems.

## Patio doors and large units: special considerations

Big spans magnify small errors. A heavy double glazed slider or bifold has more inertia, so misalignment and frame settlement show up earlier. I carry plastic packers in several thicknesses and a long level for these. If your sliding door drags, first check the track for grit and the rollers for wear. Many rollers are height adjustable. A quarter turn can lift the panel enough to glide smoothly. If the interlock gap widens at the top, the head may be bowed or the panel racked. This is not a DIY project unless you are comfortable handling weight and glass.

On tilt-and-slide doors, seals often compress unevenly. You feel a winter draft at the handle corner. New compression gaskets and a lock adjustment usually fix it. For French doors, look closely at the meeting stile. Worn keeps and door sag combine to create hairline gaps that whistle on windy nights. A competent repairer can reset hinges, replace keeps, and restore pressure without replacing the whole set.

## Warranty, insurance, and when to choose replacement

Before you spend, check paperwork. Many installers offered 5, 10, or even 20-year warranties on sealed units. The fine print matters. A manufacturer might warrant the unit against internal condensation but not glass breakage from impact. If the original company is no longer trading, an insurance-backed guarantee may still cover you. Keep serial numbers and invoices in a safe place.

There comes a time when repair no longer makes sense. If a house has 20-year-old uPVC windows with several failed units, brittle gaskets, and stiff hardware, replacing one pane at a time can be false economy. You improve one piece but keep living with overall weak air sealing and dated energy performance. Conversely, if the frames are sound and only two or three units misted, replacements are the smart move. They preserve the sunk cost of the frame and keep disruption low.

If you plan to sell, buyers react strongly to visible condensation between panes. I have seen surveyors flag two misted units as a negotiation point worth several hundred pounds. Repairing those ahead of listing can pay for itself.

## A realistic view of costs and timelines

Pricing varies by region, access, and specification. In my notebooks from recent jobs:

- Call-out and diagnose, with minor hinge adjustments and lubrication: often £60 to £120, more in city centers.
- New sealed unit in a standard casement, clear low-E, argon fill, toughened only where required by code: £90 to £180 supplied and fitted.
- Larger units such as full-height door leaves or shaped gables: £250 to £600 each, depending on glass type.
- Hardware replacements, per window: handles £20 to £40, friction hinges £25 to £60, espagnolette locks £40 to £90, plus labor.
- Full re-gasket on a window: £30 to £80 in materials, more for unusual profiles.

Lead times range from a few days to a couple of weeks for made-to-measure sealed units. Urgent boarding or temporary security can be done the same day in most towns.

## DIY or call a pro: how to decide

Swapping a handle or clearing a blocked weep hole is well within reach for most homeowners. Measuring and ordering sealed units requires accuracy within a millimeter, and removing beads without damaging them takes the

right technique. If you have never deglazed a window, consider calling someone. One slip can crack the new unit or bend the bead, and then the cheap repair is no longer cheap.

Electrical and structural concerns sit outside normal window repairs, but be aware of them. Do not drill near embedded cables when working on reveals. Do not remove lintels or load-bearing trims. If your window sits under a brick arch or supports a bay, do not attempt frame removal without proper props.

## Preventive care that actually works

Simple care extends the life of your windows. Twice a year, run warm soapy water over the frames and seals, then rinse. Dirt holds moisture against gaskets, speeding degradation. A light silicone-free lubricant on moving parts keeps handles and hinges from grinding. Check perimeter sealant annually, especially on southern and western exposures that take the brunt of sun and rain. Clear weep holes while you are there. For timber, keep paint or stain intact at beads and end grains. For aluminium, a gentle wash prevents corrosion at fasteners and keeps drainage clear.

I recommend a quick winter check after the first hard frost. Cold makes gaskets contract and reveals where compression is marginal. If you feel a new draft, a small adjustment now prevents a CST Double Glazing Repairs Double Glazing Repairs winter of discomfort.

## Edge cases and lessons learned

A few oddities crop up often enough to mention:

- Salt air near coasts accelerates hardware corrosion. Spend the extra on marine-grade fittings when replacing handles and hinges. I have replaced coastal hinges twice within five years when cheaper versions were used.
- South-facing elevations run hotter in summer. Sealed units here may fail earlier due to UV and thermal cycling. Keep an eye on spacer bar desiccant spots or light haze that comes and goes. That is the first hint a unit is on its way out.
- Internal blinds between panes complicate replacement. They look neat, but they live in the cavity. When the seal fails, you are replacing a more complex unit. Factor this into budgeting.
- Heritage or conservation areas may require like-for-like sightlines. Replacing a unit is still usually allowed if frames remain, but always check. I have had orders delayed because a patterned obscured glass was mandated to match neighboring houses.
- Dogs and toddlers are harsh testers of patio glass. Toughened safety glass is required in critical zones, but consider laminated for added security. Laminated glass holds together when cracked and resists forced entry better than ordinary toughened.

## Putting it all together: your repair priorities

You do not have to become a glazing expert to make good decisions. Start with safety and water management. Fix broken panes, failed locks, and leaks quickly. Treat persistent drafts and misalignments within weeks, before the heating bill rises and the hardware wears out. Tackle blown units with a clear view of what matters most to you, clarity or efficiency, and be honest about whether a stopgap is worth it. Keep an eye on the whole system, not just the glass, and remember that small maintenance acts, done at the right time, keep larger bills at bay.

If you are scanning your own home right now, this brief priority plan helps:

- Check for leaks after heavy rain by running your finger along the frame-to-wall line and under the internal sill. Dampness means act now.
- Close each window and see if you can slip a sheet of paper past the seals. If yes, adjust or replace gaskets soon.
- Look through the glass at an angle. If you see a persistent haze or beads between panes, schedule a sealed unit replacement.
- Operate every handle and hinge. Any that grind, stick, or feel loose deserve lubrication and, if still rough, new parts.
- Review perimeter sealant outdoors. If it is cracked or pulled away, reseal on a dry day.

Double Glazing Repairs do not have to be overwhelming. With a bit of triage and timely action, you preserve comfort, protect your home, and keep costs under control. And if you are still wondering Can you fix blown double glazing, you can, and most of the time it is as simple as replacing the sealed unit with a correctly specified new one. The key is to match the response to the urgency, and that comes down to what the fault threatens: safety, water tightness, security, or just the view.