



PLUMBERS ROLLING IN IT AS COST OF REPAIR WORK GOES THROUGH THE ROOF

-Tradesmen Index reveals major differences in trade costs across Britain -

UK households pay well over the odds on call-out charges and costs of tradesmen, spending a staggering £32 billion on basic household maintenance and repair work in the past year alone, new research out today by classifieds site, Gumtree.com reveals.

A worrying one in ten homeowners (11%) admit to not knowing how much is too much to pay for basic repair jobs like fixing a leaky tap or repairing a broken window. More than a quarter (27%) of people who've called out a tradesman to carry out work complain that they've been overcharged, with 28% of those who've called out a tradesman admitting that they weren't happy with the quality of work done.

While a nationwide shortage of skilled workers in key trades is driving up the prices paid to plumbers, electricians, handymen and builders, Gumtree's Tradesman Index shows gross discrepancies in costs.

The Tradesman Index research was carried out among 2,024 British homeowners and a mystery-shopping style investigation into quotes across the most in-demand trades.

The research reveals that Londoners pay the most for trade work, paying above the national average for plumbers, electricians, builders and decorators. On the other end of the scale, Bristol is the cheapest city to hire a tradesman, with Bristolians paying less than the national average on almost all key tradesman services.

Plumbers, electricians and builders are the most popular tradesmen, with plumbers raking in the most amount of money as they are the most in-demand service and charge more than any other tradesman in Britain including emergency locksmiths.

The Tradesman Index research also uncovered that some handymen are much more reliable than others. According to the research, the most honest tradesmen come from Bristol, where nearly two thirds of people (59%) are happy with the amount they pay. The most dishonest tradesman can be found in London where one in nine Brits (11%) have encountered a rogue tradesman.

How much is too much?

With one in four Brits (24%) claiming to having been ripped off and one in six (15%) complaining that they had to wait for a long time for a tradesman to even call out to do the job, Gumtree road-tested the research with a series of mystery shopping calls to companies in six major cities in the UK.

The undercover study revealed that companies quoted a lot higher than the average hourly cost for a service uncovered in the research.

The leading rip-off region is London, where some companies charge as much as £85 per hour to fix a leaky tap, compared to plumbers in Bristol who can carry out the same job for £20.

COMPARISON TRADESMAN TABLE

	Most popular trade	Average charge	Most expensive	Cheapest quote
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				

Spokesperson for Gumtree.com Sophy Silver comments:

“The old adage that it pays to shop around is certainly true of tradesmen, with cost varying wildly across the UK for the same job. Bottom line is that while most Brits know the average to leave as a tip in a restaurant, most of us don’t have a clue how much we should be paying for basic repair jobs like a leaking tap, broken window and a handyman.

“Compare, contrast and haggle are the key words when hiring a tradesman. Long gone are the days when people had to trawl through the yellow pages to choose between a handful of random names. The internet has made trade work a far more professional operation – there is more choice, and more room for tradesmen to describe their fees, services and include customer references.”

Commenting on the research, TV presenter and D.I.Y expert Tommy Walsh says:

“Tradesmen will always be necessary to carry out both basic and extensive repairs to houses, but it’s important that people have an idea of how much they should be paying for simple tasks to avoid being ripped off.

“Brits are notoriously poor at haggling, but as prices for tradesmen increases year on year in line with increased demand it’s important that Brits start haggling and getting value for money. People should feel free to shop around, ask questions about costs including labour and cost of tools and equipment. And don’t forget quality, looking for accreditation and references from previous customers to help reassure you that you’re paying the right amount in return for the best service.”

Tommy Walsh’s Top Tips when hiring a tradesman:

- Shop around by calling at least three companies and asking for a quote
- Try to avoid weekend call-outs if possible
- Ask friends for recommendations for servicemen
- Learn the basics – take a quick course in the most common household problems
- Be confident when phoning servicemen – don’t be afraid to negotiate a price

- Be demanding – ensure the job has been carried out properly before handing over any money
- Always ask for a receipt
- If possible, ask if you can invoice the company once you know the problem has been repaired

- Ends -

For more information or case studies please contact the Gumtree press office at Lexis Public Relations on 020 7908 6589 or email

gumtree@lexispr.com

Notes to Editor

- Research carried out among 2024 adults by ICM, October 2007
- *cost calculated by taking the average price households have spent on each handyman in the past year times the frequency of visits times the population of 60,776,238 (population source: www.worldstatesmen.org/United_Kingdom.html)

About Gumtree.com

- Gumtree.com was created in London in March 2000 and now covers 60 cities across 6 countries - the UK, and US Ireland, Poland, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa
- It is the UK's biggest website for local community classifieds including flat share, flat rentals and jobs
- Some Fast Facts
 - 20,000 new ads in a day
 - 100,000 new ads in a week
 - Half a million new ads in a month
 - Three quarters of a million ads live on the site at any one time
 - 150 million page impressions every month
 - Around 3 million visitors a month
 - Gumtree.com users spend 5,360,000 minutes on the website each month
- Gumtree is your local community online. Home to all the things you'd expect from your local community; a place to find and advertise rooms,

flats and houses, a notice board for selling and buying stuff, somewhere to find job or a date even just to chat with friends