

Additional Guidance for obtaining quotation for capital works

Step 1:

To begin with, draw up an outline schedule of works/scope of works for vetted builders to give you an estimate. You should try and specify the works as clearly as possible, including, if possible, the materials you would like them to provide an estimate for (such as the floor finish you would like, the type of sanitary ware, the paint finish etc), although specifying the finish required would be acceptable for a contractor to assess and estimate on. Materials and finishes need to be fit for early years use.

Step 2:

Be clear in your own mind what you can afford (include an allowance for unforeseen expenses). Go through the project carefully in your own mind so you can be clear about what you want and why you are making these changes.

Step 3:

Once you have the number of estimates you require, and before you give a contractor the go ahead, ensure that their final quotation has been calculated on the basis of your detailed specification rather than a basic scope of works. This is simply because, unless you are specific about what you want, contractors may price differently based on the quality and cost of material that they decide and in effect, the quotations received may not be like for like as one contractor quotes for a high quality fitting or fixture, whilst another contractor prices for the cheapest trade materials they can source.

This hardly represents like for like quotations and if you were to accept the cheapest quotation, you could be left with inferior work and materials that will not last the test of time in your early years environment. You should try to agree materials and then ensure all the other contractors price for the same material. There are huge differences in the quality of building materials used by contractors. For example, the number and type of sockets, radiators, skirting boards and windows you choose, and the quality of equipment such as bi-fold doors all need to be agreed in writing before a contract is signed by you and a contractor before work commences.

Step 4:

Please remember that if you are not aware of the differences in the quality of the materials a contractor has priced for, and also not aware of the legislation covering Building regulations, Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and Health and Safety, then it is quite natural that you may want to go for the cheapest quote without realising that at some time in the future, any contractors failure to abide by current legislation could prove to be very expensive indeed and the materials chosen by a contractor may not be suitable for nursery use and fail earlier than expected.

Step 5:

Also note that if you need planning permission for your project, outline planning drawings may be drawn up quite simply by an architect. However, these will not show enough structural detail for the builder to be able to quote or work from. Neither will they be useful for

the Building Control officer who inspects work during construction and on completion. Think about who will draw up those plans.

Step 6:

Make sure you receive a written quotation from your selected builders and check –

- whether VAT is included
- what other expenses may be necessary
- how long the project will take and when work will commence
- there is a payment plan that you find acceptable

The type and depth of a specification will depend on the size and complexity of the works, but it is important that whatever is agreed is in writing.