

INSPIRED GLAZING | FREE GUIDE | 2026 EDITION

The Homeowner's Guide to Windows & Doors

Why aluminium is worth a closer look as UK summers get hotter, and the questions to ask before you sign.

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Selected Reynaers at Home partner | Rated 4.9 on Google

Introduction

Choosing new windows and doors is one of the biggest decisions you will make for your home, and the frame material matters more than most people expect. This guide explains the differences in plain English, focusing on how frames cope with hotter summers, and ends with a checklist you can use when comparing quotes.

Hotter summers put frames under more strain

UK summers have been getting hotter, with record temperatures in recent years. A window frame in direct sun can reach a much higher surface temperature than the air around it, and darker colours absorb more of the sun's energy than lighter ones.

That matters because materials expand as they heat up. uPVC expands more than aluminium, and dark uPVC absorbs more heat than white. In strong sun, particularly on south and west-facing walls, dark uPVC frames can warp or move, which shows up as sashes and doors that stick or do not close properly. Trade reports describe exactly this on dark grey uPVC where the frames were not properly reinforced. How likely it is depends on the profile, the steel reinforcement, the colour finish, how much sun the wall gets, and the quality of manufacture and installation. White uPVC is far less affected.

Aluminium is stiffer and expands less than uPVC, so it holds its shape in strong sun. That is one reason it is popular for dark colours such as anthracite grey, for large sliding doors and bifolds, and for sun-facing extensions.

Our view in one line: for white frames and smaller windows out of direct sun, good uPVC is perfectly sound. For dark colours, big openings and sun-baked walls, aluminium is the safer long-term choice.

What aluminium also gives you

- **More glass, less frame.** Aluminium is strong enough to keep frames slim, so you get more daylight and a cleaner look.
- **A long life.** Aluminium frames typically last 40 to 50 years or more, compared with 20 to 30 for uPVC.
- **Colour freedom.** Powder-coated finishes come in a wide range, including a different colour inside and out.

Aluminium and uPVC side by side

	Aluminium	uPVC
Heat and dark colours	Stiff, expands less, holds its shape in strong sun	Expands more. Dark colours absorb more heat and can warp if not properly reinforced. White is least affected
Frame slimness	Narrow sightlines, more glass and light	Wider frames, needed for strength
Large openings	Strong enough for big sliding doors and bifolds	Better suited to standard-size windows and doors
Colours	Powder-coated in a wide range, including dual colour	Wide range, but dark colours need the right specification
Typical lifespan	40 to 50 years or more	20 to 30 years
Upkeep	Low: an occasional wash	Low: an occasional wash
Security	PAS 24 options with multi-point locking	PAS 24 options with multi-point locking
Typical cost, supplied and fitted	From about £950 per window	From about £500 per window

Both materials can be made to a high standard and both can be poor if cheaply made. The specification matters more than the label.

When uPVC is still the right choice

- A tight budget where the extra cost of aluminium is hard to justify.
- White frames, which stay coolest and are the least affected by sun.
- Standard-size windows, and rear walls that do not get strong direct sun.
- Like-for-like replacements where you simply want a reliable, low-maintenance window. We fit uPVC too, including the Selecta Advance 70 system.

Do not forget the glass

A frame's job in summer is to stay stable. The glass does most of the work of controlling the heat that comes into a room. If a room overheats, the answer is mostly in the glazing and the shading, not the frame.

- **Solar control glass** uses a coating to reduce how much of the sun's heat comes through. Ask about it for south and west-facing rooms and for large glazed extensions.
- **Triple glazing** improves winter insulation and can help comfort. It typically adds around 15 to 25 percent to the price of the equivalent double-glazed window, it is not automatically quieter, and it is not always the best value. Many people choose it for bedrooms and the coldest or noisiest rooms only.
- **Ventilation** matters too. Windows that open securely on the tilt, and trickle vents, help you air a room without opening it wide.

Choosing a colour

Anthracite grey (RAL 7016) has been the UK's favourite window colour for nearly a decade, and dark finishes look sharp on modern and period homes alike. That is exactly why frame stability in the sun matters.

On aluminium, powder-coated finishes are available in a wide range of colours, including a different colour inside and out. If you want a dark colour in uPVC, ask whether the profile is specified for dark colours and reinforced for the amount of sun your wall gets.

Tip: look at your house at 3pm on a sunny day. The walls that get the most direct afternoon sun are where frame choice and glazing choice matter most.

The systems we fit

We are a Reynaers specialist and a selected Reynaers at Home partner. We also fit Smart Systems and Cortizo aluminium, and Selecta uPVC, so we can recommend what suits your home rather than push one product. Every installation is made to measure and fitted by our own directly employed team.

System	What it is
Reynaers SlimLine 68	Slimline aluminium windows with slim sightlines, strong thermal performance and PAS 24 security.
Reynaers CP 130	Aluminium sliding doors with large glass panels, slim interlocks and low thresholds.
Smart Systems Visofold	Aluminium bifold doors. The Visofold 1000 is PAS 24 certified with multi-point locking and internally beaded glazing. The Visofold 6000 is ultra-slim with steel-look frames.
Smart Systems Alitherm	Aluminium windows in casement and tilt-and-turn styles.
Cortizo	Aluminium windows, sliding doors and bifolds. The bifolds come in two to seven panels and stack to one or both sides.
Selecta Advance 70	A 70mm, five-chambered uPVC window system with more than 17 colours and PAS 24 security.

Not sure which suits your home? That is what the free survey is for. We measure, talk through the options and quote the systems that make sense for your house and budget.

What it costs

These are guide prices for supplied and fitted windows, based on our own starting prices of about £500 per uPVC window and £950 per aluminium window.

Property	Typical windows	uPVC	Aluminium
2-bed flat or house	5 to 7	from about £2,500	from about £4,750
3-bed semi or terrace	8 to 10	£5,500 to £12,000	£11,000 to £20,000
4-bed detached	11 to 14	from about £5,500	from about £10,500

Bay windows, sash windows, doors, colours, triple glazing and large openings all add to the total. Every quote we give is fixed and itemised after a free survey.

Five ways to keep the cost down

- **1. Replace in phases.** Start with the windows in the worst condition and do the rest later.
- **2. Use each material where it earns its place.** Aluminium for dark colours, big openings and sunny walls. uPVC elsewhere.
- **3. Keep standard opening styles.** Simple casements are usually the most cost-effective.
- **4. Do it all at once if you can.** One visit is more efficient than several.
- **5. Spread the cost.** Ask us about finance options on qualifying installations.

Ten questions to ask every installer

Use these to compare quotes like for like. A very low price that leaves answers out can cost more in the end.

1. Which exact system is this, with brand and model, rather than just "aluminium" or "uPVC"?
2. What is the U-value of the whole window, not just the glass?
3. Is it PAS 24 certified, and can I see the certificate?
4. If I want a dark colour, is this frame designed and reinforced for dark colours and for how much sun my walls get?
5. How wide are the visible frames (the sightlines)?
6. Who will fit it: your own employed team, or subcontractors?
7. What guarantees come with the frames, the glass and the installation, and will I get them in writing?
8. Does the price include removing and disposing of the old windows, and making good inside and out?
9. How will the installation be certified for Building Regulations?
10. Is the quote fixed and itemised, and what are the payment terms?

On survey day

- Check that every opening is measured, and that floor levels are checked for doors.
- Agree the colour, handles, glass and opening styles before you order.
- Confirm the lead time and a fitting date.
- Get everything in writing before you pay a deposit.

Ready for a fixed price?

Get a free, no-obligation survey and a fixed, itemised quote for your windows and doors. The online form takes about 30 seconds.

Get your free quote: inspiredglazing.co.uk/free-quote/

Call: 01753 965 005 **WhatsApp:** 07934 152 343

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We cover Windsor, Maidenhead, Slough, Ascot, Bracknell, Reading, Gerrards Cross, Beaconsfield and the wider Thames Valley.

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This guide is general information. Prices are guides based on typical projects and may change, and it is not a specification for your home. Frame and glazing performance depends on the specific product, the installation and your property.