



The
United
Reformed
Church

Help and Advice Group

Northern Synod Office, 4 College Lane, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 8JJ (0191-232 1168)

Bulletin 26: USE OF CONTRACTORS

The Help & Advice Group was set up by Synod in 2009, to support local churches in being informed and effective in their life and mission. The Group is made up of four members of local churches, together with administrative support from the Trust Officer. We are willing to try to provide specific advice or organise training days on particular topics. Please get in touch if you have questions or wish to suggest a training or discussion event.

This article is part of a series giving an overview of particular subjects on interest for local churches. We also circulate general updates from time to time. Bulletins will also be posted on the members' area of the website with direct links to other websites.

Where readers are directed to web-based resources, the Synod Office is willing to respond to reasonable requests for printed out information for readers without web access, although they may find it more satisfactory to follow up their interest through their local library's web access.

Use of Contractors

Churches are warned to beware when dealing with contractors for building works, etc. It is always advisable to agree beforehand in writing what work is to be done and how much it will cost. Two churches have recently faced larger bills than they were expecting because they had not taken these precautions.

Never respond to unsolicited approaches from passing workmen who call to say that they have spotted a defect in the building or grounds and offering to put it right. It is always better to invite one or more reputable contractors to assess what is needed and provide a written quotation. The church should ensure that it is clear what work is required, and that the quotation meets those requirements. It is a good idea also to agree a start date, and an estimate of how long the work will take.

If you are using a contractor you have never used before, you could ask for references, or to see an example of their work. You could also check that they are appropriately qualified and experienced (particularly with historic buildings), and find out whether they are members of professional or trade associations. You could also ask to see proof of the builder's public liability insurance.

The level of precautions you take should of course be proportional to the size and complexity of the job. If you are concerned about a job, you can contact the Synod Office.

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