Homes lose heat in quiet, expensive ways. A draught that creeps under a sash, a bead of condensation that never dries, a window that looks intact but feels cold to the touch by late afternoon. Double glazing was invented to solve exactly these problems, and when it is working properly, it does. The trouble is that double glazing can slip out of peak condition without fanfare. Seals fatigue, trickle vents clog, drainage holes fill with grit, and suddenly your heating bill inches up or you notice a damp patch on the reveal. Repairing before replacing often restores the original performance at a fraction of the cost, and it is surprisingly achievable.

I've been in and out of properties for two decades, from Victorian terraces to 1990s new-builds, and I've learned to read windows the way gas engineers read boiler flues. What follows isn't theory. It's the sort of practical guidance I give to clients who want warmer rooms, quieter nights, and fewer surprises on their energy statement.

What double glazing is supposed to do

Good double glazing acts like a thermos flask around your home. Two panes of glass are spaced apart by a warm-edge spacer, then sealed around the perimeter. The cavity is filled with dry air or an inert gas, usually argon, sometimes krypton in high-end units. This sealed unit, called an IGU, limits heat transfer in three ways. The cavity reduces conduction, the gas slows convection, and a low-emissivity coating on the glass reflects long-wave heat back into the room.

A well-built unit paired with a tight, thermally broken frame can cut window heat loss by more than half compared with single glazing. In practice, if a draughty lounge window accounts for 10 percent of a home's overall heat loss, switching to healthy double glazing can lower that chunk to roughly 4 to 6 percent. On a typical three-bed semi with annual heating costs of 1,200 to 2,000 pounds, you can feel that change in your wallet, not just on your cheeks.

When double glazing falls short of this promise, it is almost always due to one of three things. The sealed unit has failed and allowed moisture in, the frame or sashes are leaking air where they shouldn't, or the hardware that keeps the sash pressing firmly against the seals is worn or misaligned. Each issue has a repair path. You rarely need to rip out the entire window.

The quiet signs of lost efficiency

Homeowners tend to notice the obvious first, like fog between the panes. That is a classic sign that the sealed unit has blown. The molecular sieve in the spacer bar is exhausted, moisture has entered the cavity, and now you have misted double glazing day after day. Other signs are subtler.

Touch the inner pane on a cold morning. If it feels nearly as cold as the outer pane, the low-e coating may be missing or damaged, or the window is leaking air so badly that the cavity's advantage can't compensate. Look at the room's skirting below the window. Any persistent damp spots, black edging on the paint, or flaking plaster suggest condensation and a local cold bridge. Slide a thin tissue along the sash perimeter when the wind is up. If it flutters, the compression seal isn't being compressed, usually because the hinges, called friction stays, are worn and the sash is no longer square to the frame.

Finally, listen. A healthy double-glazed unit knocks down outside noise by 25 to 40 decibels depending on thickness and spacing. If traffic sounds suddenly sharper, either a trickle vent is stuck wide open or a gap has developed where the eye doesn't naturally travel.

Can you fix blown double glazing?

People ask this all the time, and they usually mean, can you restore the original sealed unit without replacement? The honest answer is no, not in the way they hope. Once the perimeter seal fails and lets moisture in, you cannot reliably dry the cavity and reseal it to factory standards on-site. There are outfits that drill the glass and attempt to vent and dehumidify the unit, then plug the hole. In my experience, the clarity is inconsistent and the thermal performance remains compromised. The risk of haze and re-misting is high, especially in damp climates.

What you can do, effectively and affordably, is replace just the sealed unit within the existing frame. If the uPVC, timber, or aluminium frame is sound and the hardware is serviceable, this is the sweet spot. A new IGU, properly specified with low-e glass, argon fill, and a warm-edge spacer, snaps your window back to life. In many cases, upgrading the glass specification during a repair yields better performance than what you had originally. I've replaced mid-2000s units with modern soft-coat low-e and hit noticeably warmer inner pane temperatures. That translates to fewer cold downdraughts and less radiant chill on your skin, which is the comfort metric most people care about.

So, can you fix blown double glazing? You fix it by replacing the failed sealed unit, not by trying to reseal the old one. The frame stays, the mess is minimal, and the result is dependable.

Misted double glazing repairs, done right

These repairs look straightforward, and they can be, but a few details separate a quick fix from a durable solution. Measure the existing unit carefully, including overall thickness, exact sightlines, and any safety glass markings required by building regulations near doors, wet areas, or low-level glazing. A 4-16-4 unit is common, meaning 4 mm glass, 16 mm cavity, 4 mm glass. However, different spacers and coatings matter as much as dimensions. Ask for soft-coat low-e (often marketed as Planitherm, Pilkington K, or similar), argon fill, and a warm-edge spacer bar. A reputable glazier will match or improve the U-value of the original unit. If you're going for real performance, consider 4-20-4 with argon if the rebate allows Misted Window Repairs it, or even 6.4 mm laminated inner glass for both sound reduction and security.

During installation, the fitter should inspect the glazing rebates, clean any water drainage channels, and replace glazing packers to ensure the unit sits square without stress points. I see too many units shimmed poorly, which leads to corner cracks down the line. The perimeter glazing tape or silicone should be continuous, and the exterior beads must clip firmly with no movement. After refitting, test the window for racking by opening and closing the sash. A window that binds or clicks needs hinge adjustment before you call the job finished.

CST Double Glazing Repairs
4 Mill Ln
Cottesmore
Oakham
LE15 7DL

Phone: +44 7973 682562

Once repaired, expect the misting to disappear immediately because the new unit is crystal clear. Thermal gains are just as tangible. Inner pane temperatures on a frosty morning can sit 4 to 7 degrees Celsius warmer than before, and the room's relative humidity will drop as condensation stops forming on the cold surface.

When a draught isn't a glass problem

Not every cold window is a failed sealed unit. Frames and seals play a huge role, and they are often the fastest, cheapest wins for energy efficiency. On uPVC windows, the compression seals can shrink or lose memory. If your handle closes without resistance or you can slide a thin card under the seal with the sash shut, the lock keeps aren't pulling the sash tight enough, or the gasket has had its day.

I carry a small box of wedge gaskets and bubble seals in common profiles. Swapping a perished gasket takes minutes and can restore the airtight barrier that the glass never provided on its own. Hinges are next. Side-hung sashes rely on friction stays that wear at the pivot. Replace those, and the sash sits correctly once again, pressing evenly into the frame. If you can see daylight at the hinge corner when the window is closed, hinge replacement is overdue.

For timber frames, look closely at joints and paint lines. Tiny gaps open at mitres and along sills, especially where the sun hits hardest. A high-quality, paintable frame sealant that remains flexible, applied thinly and neatly, can transform the window's air tightness. Do not fill weep holes, though. Those little slots let water that gets behind the bead escape. Blocking them will only push moisture into the frame, which is a fine way to rot a sill or corrode steel reinforcement in uPVC frames.

With aluminium, the focus is on thermal breaks and gasket condition. Older non-thermally broken aluminium frames are inherently colder, but you can still improve comfort by ensuring gaskets are intact and trickle vents close properly. I have added secondary seals on the internal side with slim brush strips in period commercial-to-residential conversions where frame replacement wasn't feasible. It's not pretty on paper, but it works.

Energy efficiency in the numbers that matter

The metrics that matter are U-value for heat loss, g-value for solar gain, and air leakage for infiltration. A typical double-glazed unit from two decades ago often had a centre-pane U-value around 2.6 W/m²K. Modern low-e double glazing can bring this down to around 1.2 to 1.5 W/m²K, sometimes lower with argon and warm-edge spacers. Triple glazing can go under 1.0, but the frame and install quality must match or you won't see the benefit.

If your heating bill is 1,600 pounds annually and windows account for roughly 15 to 25 percent of heat loss, improving U-values and cutting draughts can reasonably save 10 to 20 percent of that window-related portion. That lands in the 25 to 80 pounds per year range for an average home just from a targeted repair program on the worst offenders. In drafty houses, I've seen savings north of 150 pounds per year when multiple failed units and gaskets were sorted in one go, plus a very real boost to comfort that never shows up on a spreadsheet.

These are ballpark figures. What you'll feel immediately is the radiant comfort of a warmer inner pane and the quiet calm when the air stops slipping around your ankles.

Condensation and how to live with the right kind

Double glazing changes where condensation forms, but it doesn't make moisture vanish. If you wake to droplets on the outer pane on cool mornings, that's usually a good sign. It means the outer surface is cold enough and the glass is doing its job isolating indoor warmth. Condensation on the inner pane, however, signals either high indoor humidity or a poor-performing window. Kitchens, baths, and bedrooms generate moisture. If extractor fans are weak, trickle vents are painted shut, or you dry laundry indoors without ventilation, even perfect windows will fog up.

I check three things before blaming the glass. First, is the inner pane colder than it should be due to failed low-e coating or a blown unit? Second, are the seals and hinges making a tight closure to prevent micro-draughts that cool the inner pane? Third, is the room ventilated properly? Improving extraction and leaving trickle vents cracked

in wet rooms can lower relative humidity by 5 to 10 percent. Combined with repairs, that’s often enough to push the dew point below the inner pane temperature.

If you do need Misted Double Glazing Repairs because the haze sits between panes, no amount of dehumidifying the room will clear it. That’s the distinction. Interior or exterior surface condensation responds to lifestyle and ventilation. Cavity condensation demands a new sealed unit.

Repair or replace: where the line sits

I am firmly in the repair-first camp, but only if the substrate is worth saving. Here’s the short version I give clients when we walk a property:

- Replace just the sealed units when frames are structurally sound, sashes close square, and hardware can be adjusted or changed. This is the typical case for uPVC and aluminium frames under 25 years old.
- Repair gaskets, hinges, and handles when you feel draughts at the perimeter, see daylight at the corners, or the handle closes with no compression. A few parts and a careful fit often transform performance.
- Consider full frame replacement if timber sills are rotten through, aluminium lacks a thermal break in a cold climate, or uPVC reinforcement is corroded and screws no longer bite. In these cases, patchwork wastes money.
- Upgrade glass spec during any repair if the rebate allows. Shifting from 4-12-4 air-filled to 4-16-4 argon low-e with a warm-edge spacer is a meaningful jump.
- Pair window fixes with small ventilation improvements so you don’t trade heat loss for damp. Quiet, efficient extractor fans matter more than people expect.

That last point is where I see the best overall results. A window repair lowers heat loss, and a better fan lowers humidity. Together, they make a room feel warmer at the same thermostat setting.

A day in the life of a sensible repair

Let me describe a common job from last winter. A 1970s semi with original aluminium frames had replacement uPVC sashes fitted in the early 2000s. The homeowner complained of constant condensation between panes in the lounge and a cold patch near the armchair. On inspection, three sealed units were blown. The friction stays were loose, so the sashes didn’t pull tight. The trickle vents were stuck open with fluff and paint dust.

We ordered three 4-16-4 low-e argon units with grey warm-edge spacers to match the aesthetics, replaced the friction stays with stainless variants rated for the sash size, and swapped the perimeter gaskets. We cleaned the rebates, checked the weep holes, and adjusted the keeps so the handle engaged with a firm, even pressure. The vents were freed so they could be set to a narrow slot in cold weather.

Cost was under a third of full window replacement. The lounge felt notably warmer straight away because the inner pane temperature rose. More importantly, the cold downdraught disappeared. That client now runs the thermostat a degree lower without noticing. That’s energy efficiency you enjoy rather than endure.

Common mistakes that sabotage performance

Most problems I revisit after someone else has “fixed” a window come down to rushed work. Units are measured incorrectly, then forced into rebates with too much packer on one side and none on the other. Beads rattle because they were bent during removal. External silicone is smeared over drainage paths. Frames are over-screwed into crumbly brick reveals, which twists the sash out of square.

Another frequent misstep is mixing safety glass types. By code, certain locations require toughened or laminated glass. If a glazier replaces a failed unit with standard float glass in a low-level pane near a door, it looks fine until someone leans on it and it breaks into dangerous shards. Good firms mark and photo-document all safety-critical swaps.

Lastly, over-sealing is a silent villain. People see a little water inside a bead and think it’s a leak. They caulk every gap they can see, including the crucial external drainage points. The result is water trapped against the unit’s edge seal, accelerating failure. A window is a controlled water management system. Let it breathe and drain.

The role of small upgrades

While you’re repairing, consider add-ons that push efficiency further. Upgrading to a low-e coating with a slightly lower emissivity can raise inner pane temperatures without darkening the room. Swapping to a warm-edge spacer reduces the cold bridge around the perimeter. If street noise is an issue, replacing at least one pane with laminated glass adds damping. On busy roads, changing a two-pane unit to an asymmetrical thickness combo, say 4 mm outer and 6.4 mm laminated inner, breaks up resonant frequencies.

Trickle vents deserve a fair hearing. Many people seal them and complain of stale air. Modern, controllable vents allow a background exchange without gales. The trick is balancing ventilation and tightness. Good double glazing repairs reduce uncontrolled air leaks. Good vents introduce controlled, small flows that protect the building fabric. Together, they land you in a comfortable middle where energy savings stick because you’re not fighting damp or mould.

Costs, timelines, and what to expect

Prices vary by region and glass spec, but as a rough guide, replacing a standard-size sealed unit in a uPVC frame runs from 80 to 160 pounds for supply and fit. Larger patio door units are more. Hardware like friction stays and

handles add 20 to 60 pounds per window. A full day of a skilled fitter and a mate commonly covers six to ten units plus hardware checks. Most residential jobs I see, focused on the worst rooms, take a morning and cause little disruption. You can usually keep furniture in place with a drop sheet nearby.

Beware of upsells for full replacement when frames are clearly sound. Ask for a breakdown: sealed unit cost, hardware, labour, and waste. A straightforward company will show you the old units and the gaskets they pulled out, and they'll demonstrate the window closing tightly with an even seal all round. They should also explain the glass spec in plain terms and leave you with any safety glass markings documented.

How to choose a repair firm

Experience matters more than marketing. Look for glaziers who ask questions about your home's use rather than pushing a one-size-fits-all glass spec. If they mention warm-edge spacers, hinge adjustment, packers, and weep holes without prompting, they understand the details that keep repairs performing. If they push drilling misted panes as a first step, be cautious. That approach can buy time in mild cases, but it is not a true fix.

A small but telling sign is how they treat your existing beads. Removing and re-clipping beads without cracking them is a basic skill. If they arrive with a paint scraper and a prayer, you may end up with rattles or cosmetic damage. Ask whether they pressure-test the seals or at least do a smoke pen check for draughts around the frame after adjustments. Tiny habits like these correlate with good results.

Self-maintenance that extends performance

You don't need to become your own glazier, but a yearly routine helps. Wash frames and gaskets with mild soapy water, not solvent cleaners that dry rubber. Clear debris from exterior sills and check that the weep holes drip after a light pour from a cup of water. Operate every hinge fully open and closed a couple of times to keep the friction slides moving. If a handle stops biting tightly, don't force it. Often the keeps need a quarter turn of adjustment screws to bring the sash in closer.

Pay attention to sudden changes. If a window that never whistled starts singing in a storm, the gasket likely popped or the hinge bent. Address small issues early. They cost less when they haven't distorted the sash or soaked the reveal.

The bigger picture: windows as part of a system

A home is a system. Insulation, airtightness, ventilation, and heating controls all interact. Double Glazing Repairs sit in the airtightness and surface temperature corner of that system. Fixing them shrinks the load on your heating, stabilizes room temperatures, and reduces the cold surfaces where moisture condenses. If your loft insulation is thin or your front door leaks like a sieve, do those too, but don’t neglect windows simply because they look clear. Performance declines gradually, and energy bills reward attention to detail.

On jobs where we pair window repairs with a boiler service and a quick audit of extractor fans, complaints about condensation and cold spots drop sharply. Residents report fewer colds and better sleep because the bedrooms sit at a steady temperature without draughts. Those qualitative outcomes matter just as much as the kilowatt hours saved.

Final thoughts from the scaffold

Windows deserve the same respect you give your roof. They keep weather out, heat in, and noise down. When they falter, they do so in ways you can measure and repair. If you’re staring at fogged panes and wondering where to start, remember this: Misted Double Glazing Repairs are usually about replacing the failed sealed unit, not starting from scratch. If you are asking, Can you Fix Blown Double Glazing, the practical path is a new unit in the old frame, paired with fresh gaskets and tuned hardware. That path is tidy, economical, and effective.

Do the small things well. Specify the right glass. Keep drainage clear. Adjust hinges so the sash presses evenly. Ventilate just enough. Repairs done with care will return your windows to the quiet, invisible service they’re meant to provide, and your energy bill will thank you for the attention.