

Choose your tree surgeon carefully

Anyone can call themselves a tree surgeon.

Increasingly, we are becoming aware of residents employing tree surgeons who carry out work to a poor standard - this can harm the tree, create maintenance issues in the future and put your property at risk if they are not insured. A professional tree surgeon will work to good arboricultural practices which should not harm the tree and should not endanger themselves or others whilst working.

Importantly, a professional tree surgeon will be familiar with the law relating to trees and know when approval from the Council is required, i.e. if the tree is subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or when formal Notice is required to be given to the Council, i.e. when the tree is in a Conservation Area.

If your tree surgeon does not ask you whether a TPO or Conservation Area status applies or does not check before pruning a tree, both you and the contractor could both be liable to prosecution for any unauthorised work carried out. Accepting advice from your tree surgeon as to whether Council approval may be required is not always reliable. The Natural Environment Team is always happy to confirm this for you. A quick phone call could save you from potential prosecution.

It is not advisable to employ a company/person who you will be unable to trace following the work.

If a 'contractor' knocks at your door to convince you that your tree needs pruning, you can say no or seek further advice before agreeing to work, particularly if they require cash in advance or pressure you into making a decision on the spot. Some contractors may tell you that they carry out work for the Council but this may not be the case.

Think before you employ a tree surgeon.

Further advice on choosing a tree surgeon is available from the Arboricultural Association in their leaflet 'Tree Work - Choosing your arborist', available from the Council or via their website under 'Find a Professional' (see useful links).