

Bay and bow windows earn their keep. They bring a room to life, pull in daylight from multiple angles, and open up a view that flat windows simply can't match. When the sealed units in those frames start to mist or look milky, though, that lovely panorama turns foggy. The most common question I hear from homeowners is simple: can you fix blown double glazing, especially in the curved or faceted shapes of bay and bow windows? The short answer is yes, often without replacing the entire window. The longer answer depends on what has blown, how the units were made, and how the frames are holding up.

This guide walks through what "blown" actually means, why bay and bow windows are a special case, what kind of Double Glazing Repairs make sense, and how to avoid repeat failures. It is written from the standpoint of someone who has spent years diagnosing misted units, refitting sealed glass in tricky frames, and dealing with the less obvious culprits like blocked trickle vents, warped beads, and tired gaskets.

What "blown" really means

When people talk about "blown" double glazing, they are usually describing condensation or misting between the panes of glass. A modern double glazed unit, sometimes called an IGU (insulated glass unit), is two panes separated by a spacer bar. The edges are sealed to keep a dry, often argon-filled, cavity inside. A fresh unit is crystal clear because the cavity stays dry. Over time, ultraviolet light, thermal expansion, and frame movement can fatigue the seal. Once the seal fails, moist air creeps in, the desiccant in the spacer saturates, and you start seeing fog that cannot be wiped away. That is a blown unit.

Misted Double Glazing Repairs focus on the sealed unit itself. If the frame, hinges, cills, and mullions are sound, you can replace the glass package without pulling out the entire window. In most homes, that is the sensible route. What confuses the matter is that bay and bow windows are not just flat rectangles. Their angles and loads make them a bit finickier, and they punish sloppy work.

Bay and bow windows are different

A bay window projects from the wall and is made of flat sections meeting at angles. A bow window projects too, but uses several narrower units that create a gentle curve. Both types add structural complexity. Instead of one flat opening, you have a series of frames connected at couplers, with a head and seat that carry additional loads. Many bays and bows also sit under a small roof or canopy, which can leak or trap moisture.

These details matter because a blown seal rarely happens in isolation. I often find the cause linked to one or more of the following:

- The frame alignment is slightly off, so the unit is under racking stress. Over time, that constant twist shortens the life of the edge seal.
- The beads or glazing gaskets have hardened and shrunk, allowing water to sit against the edge of the glass, then freeze and thaw at the cold bridge.
- The bay has inadequate support beneath the cill or has settled. That subtle drop transfers to the glass units, which are not designed to bear loads at the edges.
- The roof over the bay lets water track down the mullions. Moisture finds its way to the spacer, and the unit fails early.

If you treat a bay or bow as if it were just another casement, you may fix the symptom without addressing the cause. The fog will be back.

How to tell if a unit is blown

People often mistake surface condensation for a blown unit. Surface condensation wipes off, at least from one side. Condensation between panes does not. Before calling for Double Glazing Repairs, do a quick check. On a cold morning, you may get moisture on the interior pane because the room is humid and the glass is cold. That can be improved with ventilation, heating, and trickle vents. If you see droplets or a cloudy bloom that never clears and you can't touch it from either side, the unit itself is likely blown.

Look also at the edges. If the spacer bar beads are rusty, if you see streaks or a crystalline bloom near the perimeter, the seal has probably failed. In a bow, the middle units often go first because they catch more sun and run warmer. Repeated heating and cooling cycles expand and contract the [Misted Window Repairs](#) cavity, working on the edge seal like a tiny bellows.

Can you repair the seal without replacing the glass?

You will come across services that drill holes in the glass, vent the cavity, inject drying agents, and plug the hole. These techniques can clear the mist temporarily and reduce the appearance of fog. They do not restore the original hermetic seal or insulation performance. The unit will not regain its argon fill or maintain a low U-value. In my experience, these "repairs" make sense only when you need a short-term improvement, perhaps ahead of a sale or while waiting for a full unit replacement. If energy efficiency and long-term clarity matter, proper Misted Double Glazing Repairs mean replacing the sealed unit.



Replacing sealed units in bay and bow windows

If the frames are sound, you can often replace only the glass units. This is cost-effective and far less disruptive than ripping out the entire bay or bow. Measurements are critical. On faceted bays, each facet is slightly different, and older frames are rarely square. I have seen units made 3 millimeters too large that required force to install, which then created edge stress that cracked a corner six months later. Measure the tight openings, then take 6 to 8 millimeters off total height and width to allow packers and thermal movement. If the beads have warped, measure at more than one point.



Low E glass and argon are worth specifying for most replacements. A bay or bow window presents a lot of glass area, so the energy savings and comfort are noticeable. Go with warm edge spacers if possible. They reduce the risk of cold bridging at the perimeter, which is where failures tend to begin.

On timber bays, the rebate may be deeper than typical, and the glazing compound can be historic putty. Timber needs breathing room and protective priming beneath the glazing tape. With uPVC or aluminium, you will deal with clip-in beads and rubber gaskets. Old gaskets that have gone hard should be replaced. New units pressed against brittle gaskets don't seal well, and the corners leak.

A competent installer will deglaze carefully, inspect the drainage paths, and check the sill end caps and couplers. Any blocked weep holes should be cleared. In a bow, look at the flexible couplers that bridge between frames. If they have shrunk back or cracked, water will find a way to the glazing edges.

The question of structural support

I have replaced enough units in dropped bays to be wary of replacing glass without addressing the cause of the drop. In traditional masonry bays, the window frames are often load-bearing. In newer builds, a steel or timber head carries the weight of the roof and upper wall. Either way, if the support has moved, your glass has been wearing that stress for years.

Signs of movement include cracked plaster around the head, daylight between upper beads and glass, and a cill that has pulled away from the interior trim. A quick check is to open a casement and see whether it binds at the hinge side. If you see these signs, call a specialist who understands bay posts, jacking, and support systems. It may be as simple as packing beneath the cill or adding a concealed pole. Replacing units without relief of the structural stress is a short-lived solution.

Common mistakes that shorten the life of new units

A bay or bow magnifies small errors. The most frequent mistakes I see:

- Under-packing and over-packing. Too few packers allow the unit to slump onto the frame, while too many create point loads. Use packers in a pattern that supports the unit at quarter points along the bottom, with side packers to keep square. For openers, follow hinge-side load protocols.
- Reusing perished gaskets. Old rubber that has flattened won't rebound to seal. Fresh gaskets cost little and keep water out of the edge.
- Ignoring drainage. If water cannot escape the glazing channel, it sits at the cold perimeter. In winter, that is a freeze-thaw cycle that works like a chisel on seals.
- Mixing glass thicknesses haphazardly. In bows, changing to a thicker outer pane on only one facet can produce uneven thermal stress. If you upgrade one unit, consider matching the adjacent units for balance.
- Leaving film or protective tape in place too long. Sun bakes it on, and removal tools scratch the new glass.

None of these errors are dramatic on their own, but together they shave years off a unit's life.

Costs and what to expect from a quote

For a typical bay with five facets, sealed unit replacements vary by glass specification, size, and access. In most UK towns, a standard clear double glazed unit might run 80 to 140 pounds per square meter for the glass only, plus installation. Low E warm edge argon-filled units usually add 15 to 30 percent. Small panes in bows tend to be costlier per square meter because you pay for handling and site time, not just glass area. Labour for a five-facet bay commonly sits in the 250 to 500 pound range, more if scaffolding or roof repairs are involved. Prices shift with location and supplier, so treat those numbers as ballpark.

A good quote should list the glass spec by pane thickness, low E coating type, spacer width and material, gas fill percentage, and any safety glass where required. In many bays, the lower panes must be toughened by code because of their height above the floor. Ask whether gaskets and beads are being replaced or reused, whether drainage channels will be cleared, and if the installer is checking head and sill support.

Can you do it yourself?

Some homeowners with solid DIY skills replace flat window units without drama. Bays and bows raise the stakes. You are working with multiple angles and tight tolerances, holding heavy glass while fitting packers, and making sure each facet sits at its correct rake. One pane slightly skewed can telegraph across the curve and show up as a mismatch in light reflection that will bother you for years. There is also the question of warranty. Many glass suppliers will not guarantee a unit if it was not installed by a recognized fitter, especially if the unit failed from edge damage.

If you do decide to tackle it, work safely. Glass that size demands suction cups, proper gloves, and a helper who understands how to keep weight off the corners. Take full measurements, then template if the bow is irregular.

Keep the packers organized by size, clear all drain paths, and do a dry run of bead placement without the glass to check alignment. It is doable, but be realistic.

Energy efficiency and comfort gains

A blown unit is not just an eyesore. It loses insulating value. Air and moisture in the cavity raise the U-value and make the interior pane colder, which increases the chance of interior condensation on cold mornings. In a bay, where you sit with a book or put a dining table, that colder glass also sends a downdraft that you feel as a chill even if the thermostat reads 20 degrees.

Replacing misted units with modern low E argon-filled glass often shows up instantly in comfort. The interior pane runs warmer, so you feel less radiant heat loss from your body. Curtains suffer less from condensation. The room sounds quieter too, particularly if you choose laminated glass on the outer pane, which dampens traffic noise without changing the look.

When the frame needs attention too

Sometimes the blow is a symptom of a frame past its prime. Timber that has rotted at the cill, uPVC that has bowed in the sun, aluminium with thermal breaks from the 1980s that sweat at the junctions, these can all kill new units early. If a penny coin sinks into soft timber when pressed near the glazing line, or if the frame twists when you open a sash, think beyond the glass.

On older timber bays, a skilled joiner can splice in new cill sections, prime and capillary-break the glazing rebates, and give the window another twenty years. On uPVC, tired reinforcement and stripped screw ports are harder to rehabilitate. Aluminium frames last a long time, but the seals and pressure plates do not. Look for chalky powder on old aluminium paint, which suggests UV degradation. Sometimes the smart money is on a full frame replacement, especially if you want to upgrade to modern energy ratings and multipoint locking that older bays never had.

What about curved glass in true bows?

Most domestic bows are segmented, not made of curved glass. If yours truly curves, the replacement cost rises. Curved toughened glass is custom, lead time is longer, and handling is specialized. The edge seals on curved units need precise support, and the bending process itself slightly alters optical clarity. If a curved unit has blown, you will likely replace the entire curved unit rather than repair. Expect higher costs and make sure the supplier has experience with the radius you need. In some cases, homeowners choose to convert a true curved bow to a segmented bow to simplify maintenance and reduce future costs. That is a trade-off between aesthetics and practicality.

Dealing with trickle vents and ventilation

Many bays act as moisture traps if the room's ventilation is poor. Cooking and showering add liters of water to indoor air every day. If trickle vents are painted shut or missing, the bay glass runs colder than interior walls and becomes the dew point. That adds moisture load to glazing rebates and shortens unit life. When I handle Misted Double Glazing Repairs, I always check for working trickle vents and advise on basic ventilation. A simple habit of opening windows on latch for ten minutes twice a day makes a difference, especially in winter.

Warranty considerations

A reputable company should offer at least a five-year guarantee on new sealed units, and many offer ten. Clarify whether the warranty covers both the glass and the installation, and whether it is transferable if you sell the house. Keep the paperwork. If the bay or bow is under a canopy that leaks, the warranty on the glass may exclude water ingress from above. It pays to repair that little roof or flashing at the same time you replace the glass.

How to decide: repair vs full replacement

When budgeting, consider these thresholds:

- Replace sealed units only if the frames are sound, drainage is fixable, and there is no obvious structural movement. This keeps costs modest and results are usually excellent.
- Plan for partial frame refurbishment if timbers are locally soft or if gaskets and beads are perished. Small joinery or gasket work saves the new units from early failure.
- Choose full replacement if the bay has structural issues, pervasive rot, or uPVC frames that have bowed and lost reinforcement. Combining new frames and glass resolves the root problems and improves energy performance.

The right choice depends on your timeline and the home's long-term plan. If you intend to stay for a decade, spending a bit more now to stabilize supports and upgrade glass pays you back in comfort and lower bills.

A real-world example

A client in a 1930s semi had a five-facet bay with cloudy middle panes and draughts around the beads. The frames were original timber, painted many times, and the small bay roof had a split in the lead flashing. The client wanted clarity back and better insulation but hoped to keep the period look.

We inspected the sill and found early-stage rot along the outer edge, solid enough for a splice. The head showed no sag. We replaced three sealed units with 24 millimeter low E argon units using warm edge spacers, spliced and primed the sill, installed new glazing tape and modern gaskets sized to the timber rebates, cleared the drainage, and resealed the bay roof flashing. Total cost landed around what a full uPVC bay would have cost at the budget end, but the house kept its character, and the room felt warmer that winter. Three years on, the units remain clear because the root causes, especially the roof leak, were handled along with the glass.

Simple steps to extend the life of your new units

A few habits help your new sealed units stay clear and efficient longer.

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- Keep drainage holes clear and the exterior cill clean so water doesn't pool against the glazing edges.
- Maintain paint or seals on timber beads and cills, renewing before the finish fails rather than after.
- Use trickle vents or periodic purge ventilation to manage indoor humidity, especially in winter.

- Avoid sticking film or stickers to the glass near the edges where the seal sits, and remove any transport tapes promptly.
- Check the small bay roof or canopy once a year for splits, loose tiles, or failing flashings.

These are minor tasks that prevent moisture from lingering at the most vulnerable point of any sealed unit, the perimeter.

Final thoughts

Yes, you can fix blown double glazing in bay and bow windows. In many cases, you only need to replace the sealed units. The key is to approach the job with the particularities of a bay or bow in mind, not just the glass. Confirm that frames are square and supported, that drainage is open, that gaskets still do their job, and that any over-bay roof sheds water properly. Specify good glass, measure carefully, and pack correctly. If you need help, find a fitter who understands bay geometry and will address the cause as well as the symptom.

Clear glass, warm edges, and dry rebates bring a bay window back to what it should be, a bright corner that invites you to sit down and enjoy the view. And that is the whole point of the window in the first place.