



CIGA & PCA

Cavity Wall Insulation

Consumer Information

Insulation has now been successfully installed in the cavity walls of your property to make your home more energy efficient, reduce your bills and keep you warmer. You should now be in receipt of your CIGA 25 year guarantee. This is an important document that covers work to rectify defects in materials or workmanship subject to terms and conditions.

Before the installation teams arrived to install insulation, your property was inspected to ensure it was suitable for cavity filling.

This included checks on the build type and its location. These checks were to ensure the walls can accept insulation appropriately as well as ensuring that the condition of your home and its level of exposure to the wind driven rain make it suitable for cavity wall insulation.

The type of cavity wall insulation has been selected based on its characteristics and suitability to your property. It is important to understand however that the insulation will always work most effectively when it remains dry.

Filling cavity walls with insulation is a very effective method of improving the thermal performance of your home. Now as well as offering protection from the weather and forming part of the buildings structure it also helps retain greater amounts of warmth in your home.



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Make cavity wall insulation work for your home

Cavity wall insulation is designed to last the lifetime of your home. It's a 'fit and forget' solution, meaning that once installed it should perform without any need for further servicing or maintenance.

In wet weather rain can be forced through the external leaf of the cavity wall, but the insulation that has been installed will have been selected based on its suitability for your property and its likely level of exposure to wind driven rain. Repeated and prolonged exposure to water could reduce the effectiveness of your insulation and in some circumstances, could promote dampness within the building.

Regular planned maintenance together with prompt action where damage exists, is always important and will significantly reduce the impact and cost of any defects. Elements of the building that should be inspected at least once a year or after any severe weather must include the following.

External rendering, paint and weather coatings

External rendering provides a decorative surface but more importantly protects your home from inclement weather. During periods of heavy rain, even seemingly minor problems with rendering paint and roughcast can allow significant amounts of water to enter the walls. This can be made worse if otherwise waterproof surface coatings prevent the walls from drying during dry periods. Loose, cracked or damaged render, roughcast or paint coats must be identified as soon as they become apparent and should be repaired or replaced without delay.

Pointing

The mortar joints between brickwork, blockwork or stone that form most walls is very important. Not only does the mortar bond the wall together but they act as a key element in weather protection. The outer layer of the mortar joints is known as the pointing and it plays a key role in helping to keep walls dry. It also acts as an important medium that lets the wall dry out after rain.

Over time the effects of rain, wind and frost cause the joints to weather and erode. This is a normal process and is remedied by periodically replacing the pointing.

Weathered, cracked, missing or defective pointing can lead to water penetration. A combination of planned maintenance and reactive repairs should prevent this but poor pointing must always be attended to without delay.

Roofs

The roof is quite simply there to keep the building dry, however, roof tiles, slates, flat roofs and flashings can be displaced or dislodged during periods of stormy weather and high wind. Damage here can result in severe water penetration.

A leaking roof can result in significant amounts of water penetration and should always be attended to without delay.

Rainwater goods

Gutters, valleys and downpipes all form part of the rain water management system. They are there to remove rainwater from your house as quickly as possible to prevent it causing problems. Gutters, downpipes, gullies and hoppers should never become blocked or damaged. In the event of a blockage, leak or damage then repairs and maintenance must not be delayed.

The rainwater system around your house should be checked and cleared of debris twice a year ideally at the start of autumn and in the spring.

Overflow pipes

A persistently dripping overflow pipe means that there is a fault with the internal plumbing that must be repaired, this can also lead to the saturation of walls and floors. If you see water coming from any overflow pipe then the appropriate trades must be employed to undertake repairs to stop the leak.

Structural cracking or cavity wall tie corrosion

The two leaves of your cavity wall are held together by wall ties that are usually made of steel. In some situations, they can become corroded and cause horizontal cracks. Other cracks that appear in the internal or external walls may be evidence of other forms of structural defect.

If any cracking is noticed in the walls of your home then a specialist structural engineer should be

asked to investigate and report of this.

Sub floor vents / air bricks

In buildings with suspended timber ground floors, it is vital to ensure that there is adequate underfloor ventilation. This is provided via low level air bricks which should be visible from outside. These vents are vital to the condition of any timber floors. As part of a regular inspection process they should be checked to ensure that airflow is not being restricted by high ground levels, plants, weeds or ornaments. A screwdriver, or something similar can be used to ensure nothing is blocking the airbrick.

Ventilation - Air brick, grates, gas vents, trickle ventilators and powered fans

All dwellings require a fresh supply of air to maintain good air quality. Your new insulation will reduce the amount of draughts, it is therefore important to make sure that there is provision for adequate air exchange. This is usually achieved via air brick, grates, gas vents, trickle ventilators, powered fans and other ventilation systems.

It is therefore imperative to ensure that ventilation is adequate and working correctly. The lack of adequate and controlled ventilation can result in mould growth and condensation.

Whilst cavity wall insulation itself does not require any maintenance, as with any building, failure to properly maintain the fabric of your house, inadequate ventilation or a lack of heating may result in problems with dampness. To ensure you get the most from your insulation and protect your home there is a need for regular maintenance checks and repairs.

In the event, dampness becomes apparent in your property then action should be taken immediately. Hesitation to address the issue quickly may result in greater and more costly damage.

Advice about dampness in building can be found in CIGA's 'Condensation in your property' created in conjunction with the Property Care Association (PCA), who specialise in moisture in buildings.

For more information contact the CIGA team on 01525 853300 or email info@ciga.co.uk

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