

**Brighton & Hove City Council  
Arboricultural Information Note No. 4**



## **Tree work operations Choosing your arborist**

Ill-advised and badly executed tree work could lead to injury to people, damage to property and irrevocable damage to your tree. Tree work operations (arboriculture) require a high degree of technical competence, supported by training and experience. For these reasons such works should only be undertaken by well trained, competent arborists.

### **Is the contractor genuine?**

Unfortunately, anyone can call themselves a tree surgeon (arborist), place advertisements in Yellow Pages and locally available periodicals and offer a service.

However, an advert alone does not guarantee quality of work, that it will be carried out safely or with the best long-term interests of your tree at heart.

Competent arborists will have recognised and accepted certificates, especially the NPTC\* certificate for chainsaw use which is compulsory. Such certification indicates that arborists have been trained and have been assessed as meeting a required standard of competency. Arborists may also hold other specific academic qualifications in arboriculture.

Reputable tree care companies will use a range of general and personal safety equipment to protect you, your own and neighbouring properties, and themselves. Such companies will be pleased to furnish details of their insurance, qualifications and any professional membership, and will work to nationally recognised standards.

### **Questions you should ask your arborist**

**Stage 1: Asking for a Quote** (a reputable arborist will always give a positive response)

#### **Are you insured?**

If yes, ask to see evidence of both employer's liability and public liability cover to a recommended minimum of £5,000,000.

#### **Do you work to a British Standard?**

If yes, which one? BS 3998:2010, Recommendations for Tree Work should be stated.

### **What qualifications do you and your staff hold?**

As already mentioned, an NPTC\* certificate for chainsaw use is compulsory and certificates in other skills indicates a degree of commitment and knowledge.

### **Will you provide a written quotation?**

If no, reject this contractor.

### **Are you a member of any professional organisation?**

Membership does not guarantee work standards, but again shows a degree of commitment.

### **Can you provide a contact number for a referee who can endorse or show me your work?**

Follow up the lead.

### **Do you have a telephone number (landline) other than just a mobile?**

If only a mobile number is available, satisfy yourself that the arborist is operating from a fixed address that can be accessed. Mobile 'phones are fine as an additional means of contact.

## **Stage 2: Choosing the quote that suits you**

When you receive your written quotations, check that they include the following before deciding which one to accept:

1. Reference to BS 3998:2010, Recommendations for Tree Work
2. Clear and full details of the work to be undertaken
3. What will happen to the resultant debris
4. Whether VAT is included
5. Who will be responsible for obtaining permission for work if trees are within a conservation area or covered by a tree preservation order
6. Any steps necessary to protect you, your property, and neighbouring property

While there will be many competent and qualified arborists who are not members of professional bodies, it may be helpful to note that the Arboricultural Association maintains a directory of quality assured arborists. The contractors contained in the directory are regularly assessed for health and safety procedures, office and business practices, as well as the quality of work. Such contractors will display the AA Approved Contractor logo, and proof of current membership can be further checked through the AA website [www.trees.org.uk/contractors.htm](http://www.trees.org.uk/contractors.htm) or by telephoning 01794 368717.



Individual arborists may be certified by the International Society of Arboriculture which assesses individuals for their knowledge and ability. Competent arborists will display the ISA Certified Arborist logo.



\* NPTC is a national organisation that assesses competence of people using chainsaws and other arboricultural equipment. Competent arborists will be able to show either their A4 sized certificate or plastic ID type card.