

If your once-clear double glazed window has turned milky or beaded with moisture, you're staring at a classic case of a blown unit. It's annoying, it spoils the view, and if left for months, it can nudge your energy bills upward. The good news is that you often have options, including a few temporary measures that can buy time until you're ready for proper double glazing repairs. The less-good news is that truly permanent results usually require either replacing the sealed glass unit or addressing the cause of the failure, not just the symptom.

I've worked with homeowners who tried every trick in the book: hairdryers, silica packs, drain holes, even drilling into the spacer bar. Some hacks help for a few weeks, a small number last a season, and others make things worse. Let's walk through what a blown unit actually is, the temporary solutions that can genuinely help, and when to stop patching and book a proper repair.

What "blown" really means

Double glazing relies on a sealed cavity between two panes of glass. That cavity is filled with dry air or a gas like argon, along with a desiccant in the spacer bar to mop up trace moisture. The perimeter seal keeps outside air out and internal moisture in check. When the seal fails, the unit breathes. Moist air gets in, the desiccant gets saturated, and condensation appears inside the cavity. Sometimes you see a little misting at dawn that clears by noon. Other times it looks [Conservatory Repairs](#) like a permanent fog or streaking that never leaves.

A couple of points matter here:

- Condensation on the room-side surface of the glass is a ventilation or humidity issue, not a blown unit.
- Condensation between the panes is a failed seal almost every time, especially if you can see water droplets or mineral trails you can't wipe off.

The energy penalty varies. A modern A-rated double glazed unit relies on a dry cavity with low-conductivity gas. If that gas has leaked, you could lose around 10 to 30 percent of the unit's insulating performance compared with a healthy one, depending on the product. If the window is older and already mediocre, the difference can feel smaller. You'll notice it first near the window on cold days: more draughtiness and a slight chill.

Why temporary fixes are limited by design

A sealed unit is manufactured under controlled conditions, then crimped and sealed. Once that perimeter fails, you can't truly restore the factory conditions on site. You can dry the cavity, sometimes you can vent it, **Double Glazing Repairs** and in rare cases you can reseal so it holds for a while. But you won't easily replace the lost gas fill or renew the molecular sieve in the spacer bar without swapping the glass unit. That's why most temporary fixes focus on two goals:

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- Clear the view for a while by moving or removing moisture inside the cavity.
- Reduce further water ingress so misting is less frequent.

Framing materials also matter. uPVC frames usually accept glazing bead removal and reinstallation without a fuss if you're careful. Timber frames can be forgiving but require re-puttying or re-beading, plus proper paint or sealant. Aluminium frames vary widely and may need specific gaskets or pressure plates. A temporary fix that involves drilling or venting the glass is more feasible on some frames than others and has varying success depending on how wet the cavity already is.

First, rule out the obvious non-failures

I've been called out to "blown" windows that were simply sweating on the room side because someone ran a dehumidifier in the wrong room or the cooker hood was recirculating steam back into the kitchen. If you wipe the moisture and it disappears, then returns later on the inside surface, the sealed unit may be fine. You're dealing with household humidity, not a failed perimeter seal.

Simple checks help: run an extractor fan longer after showers, crack a trickle vent, keep blinds slightly off the glass for air movement, and try a small-capacity dehumidifier near the problem room for a week. If the misting persists inside the cavity regardless of the room's humidity, you can move on knowing you have a unit issue.

The stopgaps that actually do something

Several temporary approaches can give you clearer glass, less misting, or a bit more thermal comfort while you plan proper double glazing repairs. They vary in invasiveness and risk.

Minimal-risk visual hacks If you only need clarity here and there, a localised heat source can dry the mist inside the cavity by warming the outer pane. A hairdryer on a gentle setting aimed at a cool pane sometimes shifts condensation for a few hours. It won't solve anything fundamental, but it might buy a morning with a view. Don't overheat the glass. Keep the air moving and stay at a safe distance. If you have laminated or low-e coated glass, take extra care to avoid hotspots.

I've also seen homeowners park a small portable heater a couple of meters from the window to nudge the room-side temperature up and keep condensation at bay during breakfast. It works best in shoulder seasons when the temperature differential is modest.

Vent-and-drain methods If your unit collects visible water at the bottom of the cavity and the mist never fully clears, adding discreet vent holes can help. The principle is simple: give the cavity a way to breathe so moisture can escape, then introduce desiccant to soak up the remainder. Because the perimeter seal has already failed, you're not breaking a good unit, you're just formalising the failure and controlling it.

Here's a cautious way I've used when a client wanted a few months of clarity before ordering replacements:

- Drill two tiny holes, typically 3 to 4 mm, one near the top corner and one near the bottom corner of the outside pane. You want the outer pane because it keeps the inner pane's integrity for security and safety. Drill slowly with a glass bit, lightly misting with water for cooling. Keep the drill square, reduce pressure as you break through, and wear eye and hand protection.
- Tape a short length of clear tube to the bottom hole and gently warm the pane with a hairdryer near the top hole. The warm air encourages moisture to move and vapour to vent. Do not heat the glass aggressively or unevenly.
- Once the cavity stops fogging visibly, inject a small amount of silica gel beads through the top hole. Some pros use specially designed micro desiccant capsules intended for double glazing venting. The beads should sit in the spacer area or at the bottom edge where they can absorb residual moisture.

- Fit breathable micro-vents or clear weatherproof grommets into the holes. The aim is to allow ongoing pressure equalisation without driving rain ingress.

This method can clear a unit for months, occasionally a year or two, especially in drier climates and on sheltered elevations. In damp, windy locations, results are shorter lived. If the spacer bar is saturated and you can't remove enough moisture, you'll see the haze creep back in humid weather.

Cavity drying with inserts Some technicians use very fine desiccant strips or capillary inserts slid into the cavity via a small drilled hole. These can pull moisture down over a week or two. They work best when the cavity is only mildly wet and largely foggy rather than visibly dripping. I've seen success on side windows that get morning sun, because gentle daily warming aids the drying process. Again, this is a temporary improvement, not a permanent fix.

Resealing edge gaps Occasionally the perimeter failure is visible, such as a split in the outer sealant bead or a missing section of glazing gasket. Resealing the beads and replacing a perished gasket can slow further wetting. You won't push the unit back to factory spec, but you can reduce how quickly moist air gets in, which supports any venting approach inside the glass.

Work gently with bead removal tools, mark bead positions so they return where they came from, and clean the channel. For timber frames, scrape away failing putty or silicone, allow the rabbet to dry, then re-bed the unit with a butyl or compatible glazing compound before reinstalling beads. If the spacer sightline is visibly compromised, don't over-squeeze; you're trying to cushion and seal, not distort the unit.

Secondary glazing as a comfort patch If the main grievance is cold rather than the view, adding a clear, removable secondary pane on the room side can help a lot for a season. Think magnetic or clip-in acrylic sheet cut to size. You regain a warmer interior surface, reduce draughts, and sidestep the blown cavity. You still see the blemishes in the original unit, but the room feels better, often by a noticeable margin. Expect a meaningful drop in convective chill and a small bump in energy efficiency. When you're ready for proper misted double glazing repairs, the secondary panel comes off without drama.

The fixes that look good on YouTube but disappoint in practice

I've repaired the aftermath of well-meant attempts that caused cracked glass or trapped water. A few are worth calling out so you can avoid them.

Spraying sealant into the cavity Silicone fogging inside the glass doesn't cure the underlying leak and often leaves a greasy, permanent smear. It can also off-gas and bond dust to the glass. Once you've misted sealant into that space, no one will get it out cleanly.

Large holes with aggressive heat Big holes create local stress and invite dirt and rain into the cavity. Pair that with a heat gun and you risk a thermal shock crack. If you do drill for venting, stay small, stay slow, keep edges clean, and don't overheat.

Vacuuming the cavity A handheld vacuum at the drilled hole might draw a little air, but it creates a pressure differential that can flex the panes in ways they weren't designed to tolerate. The reward is rarely worth the risk. Gentle airflow, mild warmth, and time deliver more predictable results.

Pour-in chemicals Anything liquid inside the cavity tends to leave tide marks, mineral trails, or residues that etch into soft coatings. It's very hard to recover a clean view after that.

How long can a temporary fix last?

I've seen vented units remain clear for a year, sometimes two, especially on south-facing walls that get regular solar drying and are shielded from driving rain. On a north-facing coastal elevation, the same method might buy a few months. The spread is big because local climate, frame condition, and the size of the original breach all matter.

As a rough rule:

- Early-stage failures where the desiccant isn't fully saturated are the best candidates. Occasional fog on cold mornings, otherwise clear days. A vent-and-dry approach might give a year or more of acceptable clarity.
- Mid-stage failures with regular misting and some mineral streaks respond for a season, then relapse when humidity spikes.
- Late-stage failures with standing water or etched stains inside the cavity are poor candidates. You can improve them briefly, but clarity will be patchy and short lived.

If you're trying to time a full replacement around a project schedule or budget cycle, temporary fixes can bridge the gap. Just set expectations accordingly.

Safety notes and practical limits

Glass is unforgiving if mishandled. Drilling must be steady, and any pressure point can propagate a crack across the pane. Laminated panes have an interlayer that complicates drilling entirely. Toughened glass will often shatter if you try to drill it after manufacture. If you're not certain which glass you have, stop and ask a professional. You can often identify toughened glass by a small etched kite mark in the corner, and laminated by the thick edge profile and a faint interlayer line. When in doubt, avoid drilling and focus on external measures like gentle warming, gasket attention, or secondary glazing.

Remember the frame, too. Old timber can be damp enough that you trap moisture against the glass, feeding the problem from the outside. Aluminium systems with pressure plates rely on gaskets and drainage paths that must stay clear. If you block a weep hole with sealant during a DIY repair, you can cause more internal condensation and even leaks into the frame.

When a repair becomes the sensible choice

Temporary measures cost you time and a little money. At a certain point, proper misted double glazing repairs give better value. You don't always need a brand-new window. In many cases, you can keep the existing frame and just replace the sealed glass unit, known in the trade as a unit-only replacement. For uPVC and aluminium frames in decent condition, this is straightforward. For timber, it's a chance to clean up the rebate, treat any rot, prime the wood, and upgrade to a warm-edge spacer with low-e glass while you're at it.

Here's a simple rule of thumb I use with clients: if the window is important to your view or daylight, and you care about comfort, replace the sealed unit. If it's a secondary window you barely notice and you're moving in a year, a temporary vent-and-dry might be enough. For bay windows or large picture units, the energy and comfort gains from a new A-rated glass unit are tangible, especially in a living room you use daily.

Costs vary by size and spec. For a standard casement-sized unit, the replacement glass often lands in a few hundred pounds, installed, in many UK regions, with small variations by glazing type, spacer, and supplier. Oversized panes, special coatings, or shaped units cost more. If you're bundling multiple units at once, per-window pricing tends to improve.

What a professional repair looks like

Reputable glazing companies start with a survey, measure the visible glass and the required sightline, and check frame condition. They'll ask about condensation patterns, noise concerns, and your priorities. If you're seeing a lot of street noise, they may suggest asymmetric glazing or laminated acoustic glass. If energy bills are the pain point, they'll propose a low-e, argon-filled unit with a warm-edge spacer and a centre-pane U-value that meets current standards.

On installation day, they'll pop the beads, remove packers, lift out the old unit, clean the frame, verify drainage holes, and set new packers before installing the fresh unit. Beads go back in the correct order, new gaskets if needed, and the glass is checked for rattle and squareness. The whole process can be under an hour per window, depending on access.

The jump in clarity is instant. The comfort improvement shows up on the next cold evening. If you choose a higher-spec unit, you'll often see less summer heat gain as well because modern low-e coatings reflect infrared heat more effectively.

What about resealing without replacing the glass?

Some companies advertise in-situ resealing of blown units. They typically drill, dry, add desiccant, and fit vents, sometimes with proprietary plugs. The sales pitch is appealing: cheaper than new glass, less disruption, greener. In practice, results vary because you're still working with a spent desiccant and a broken seal. If the price is low and you only need an interim fix, it can be fine. Go in knowing it's a managed decline, not a restoration to as-new performance.

The exception is when the failure is primarily at the frame interface rather than within the unit's edge seal. If the unit itself remained intact but the bedding failed, re-bedding can be effective. It takes a careful diagnosis to know the difference.



Living with a blown unit until you're ready

Sometimes life outranks glazing on the priority list. If you plan to delay full repair for a while, a little housekeeping helps.

- Keep the window area dry. Clear any blocked weep holes with a cotton bud or a short piece of flexible wire. These tiny slots at the bottom of many frames let water escape.

- Manage indoor humidity. Target 40 to 55 percent relative humidity in winter. Too low, and you'll feel it in your skin and woodwork. Too high, and every cold surface will mist. A small dehumidifier near the problem room, good extractor fans, and modest heating consistency make a difference.
- Protect timber. If you have wooden frames, sand and repaint any bare or failing sections. That outer coat protects the glazing system more than you think.
- Avoid heavy blinds pressed tight to the glass in winter. A tight fabric against cold glass can trap moist air and worsen condensation.

Small habits won't heal the seal, but they do reduce secondary issues like black mould, peeling paint, or swollen sills.

Choosing who to call and what to ask

When you reach out for double glazing repairs, ask for a unit-only quote if the frames are sound. Confirm the glazing spec in writing: glass type, spacer brand or type, gas fill, overall thickness, and any coatings. For most homes, a 24 to 28 mm unit with soft-coat low-e and warm-edge spacers strikes a good balance. If noise is an issue, ask about different pane thicknesses on each side of the cavity to break up sound frequencies. If security matters, laminated inner panes add resistance without a huge visual change.

Lead times for units are often one to three weeks, longer for shaped or toughened glass. If a room is near-unusable due to mist, ask for a temporary panel or a short-term secondary glazing sheet in the interim. Many installers are happy to help if they know you're committed to the work.

When temporary makes sense, and when it doesn't

I'll finish with a few realistic scenarios drawn from past jobs.

A terrace kitchen with a single fogged casement South-facing, sheltered by a fence. We drilled discreet vents, dried the cavity, popped in micro desiccant and plugs. The window stayed clear for a year and a half. The homeowner replaced the unit when they renovated the kitchen anyway. Temporary fix made total sense and saved them from cooking in a cave.

A bay window on a windy corner plot Two of five panes were badly misted with mineral tracks. We tried a vent-and-dry on one as a test. It cleared briefly, then fog returned on damp days. The clients opted to replace all five sealed units with warm-edge, low-e glass. Heating comfort improved noticeably, and the living room stopped feeling drafty.

A loft conversion skylight Condensation between panes on winter mornings. It looked like a blown unit, but humidity in the loft was sky-high due to a weak bathroom extractor and wet laundry. Once they improved ventilation and used a small dehumidifier, the "blown" look vanished. No repair needed.

These examples underline the point: some windows respond nicely to temporary measures, others shrug them off. The more advanced the failure, the less payoff you get from stopgaps.

The short answer to the big question

Can you fix blown double glazing with a temporary solution? Yes, often you can reduce misting and improve clarity for weeks to months, sometimes longer, using controlled venting, gentle cavity drying, gasket attention, or secondary glazing. Those approaches can be practical bridge strategies while you plan proper misted double glazing repairs. If you want lasting performance, restored insulation, and a consistently clear view, replacing the

sealed glass unit is the reliable route. Choose your tactic based on how much the view matters, how the room feels, the stage of failure, and your timeline.

Handled with care, temporary fixes are not a waste of time, they just need honest expectations. Handle the glass gently, respect the limits of what a failed seal can do, and when the opportunity comes, upgrade the unit so the problem doesn't return for the next decade.