

A WORKS CO. MANUAL · NO. 02

The Gutter Cleaning Works

*How to build a recurring exterior-cleaning round, one
autumn at a time.*

The Gutter Cleaning Works

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WHAT THIS MANUAL IS — AND IS NOT

This manual is a detailed account of how a gutter cleaning business works, written with care and published in good faith. It is information, not professional advice. Three things to hold onto:

- **The numbers are honest examples, not promises.** Prices, costs and incomes reflect the UK market in 2026 and the worked examples we built. Your results will depend on your patch, your effort and your decisions. Nobody can guarantee you an income, and we do not.
- **Tax, legal and insurance specifics change.** Verify any figure that matters — thresholds, rates, regulations — with HMRC, your insurer or a qualified professional before relying on it. The templates in your bundle are working documents, not legal advice.
- **The work is physical and carries real risk — above all, the risk of working at height.** Working at height is dangerous, and this manual is guidance, not training. Ladders, water, roofline debris and cleaning chemicals all demand care. Follow the safety guidance in this manual, the Health and Safety Executive's published guidance, your equipment manufacturers' instructions, and your own risk assessments. You are responsible for working safely.

Suppliers and products are named because working operators use and rate them, not as paid endorsements. Where The Works Co. may earn a commission on a recommendation, it costs you nothing and never decides what we recommend.

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Contents.

First	Read this first — your first weekend	4
PART ONE · FOUNDATIONS		
Ch. 01	The Gutter Cleaning Opportunity	6
Ch. 02	Is This For You?	13
Ch. 03	Setting Up the Business	18
PART TWO · THE CRAFT		
Ch. 04	Equipment: The Gutter-Vacuum System	25
Ch. 05	Equipment: Ladders, Inspection Cameras & Add-on Tools	31
PART THREE · THE CUSTOMERS		
Ch. 06	Getting Your First 20 Customers	38
Ch. 07	Own Your Customers	47
Ch. 08	The Trust Kit	55
Ch. 09	Speed to Lead	62
Ch. 10	Pricing, Quoting & Getting Paid	68
Ch. 11	Pricing That Wins	75
Ch. 12	Get Paid, Every Time	81
Ch. 13	Doing the Work	88
PART FOUR · COMMERCIAL		
Ch. 14	Commercial & Block Gutter Work	95
Ch. 15	Winning Commercial Contracts	101
PART FIVE · GROWING		
Ch. 16	Scaling the Business	109
Ch. 17	The Add-On Stack	115
PART SIX · THE MODERN OPERATOR		
Ch. 18	The 2026 Tech Stack	123
Ch. 19	Your AI Co-Pilot	128
Ch. 20	The First 90 Days	134
PART SEVEN · THE MOAT		
Ch. 21	Robotics, Drones & the Decade Ahead	141
APPENDICES		
App. A	Toolkit Index	147
App. B	Prompt Library	149
App. C	Supplier Directory	153
App. D	Glossary	155
App. E	Sources & Further Reading	157

BEFORE CHAPTER ONE

Your first weekend.

You do not need to read the whole manual before you earn a pound. This page is the shortest honest path from here to your first yes — the chapters fill in everything else as you need them.

1 Saturday morning

Make the kit decision and place the order: the £200-£400 ladder-and-scoop starter, or commit to the gutter vacuum (entry setup ~£1,200). Chapter 4 makes the case; Chapter 5 covers the rest. Either way, add the inspection camera.

3 Saturday evening

List 30 houses with visible gutter problems: grass growing in the gutter line, staining down the render, overflow marks under the runs. That list is your first week's work.

5 Sunday afternoon

Knock or leaflet those 30 houses. Price off the £55 3-bed-semi base with the modifiers in Chapter 10. Quote plainly and do not apologise for the number.

2 Saturday afternoon

Walk your patch. Tree-lined roads, older houses, anywhere the leaves come down. You are looking at rooflines, not front doors.

4 Sunday morning

Learn the one-line intro from Chapter 6: 'I clear gutters locally — when did you last have yours cleared?' Most people cannot answer it, and that is the job.

6 Sunday evening

Reply to everything the same day and book your first Saturday of work. A named day closes better than a polished quote.

IF YOU ONLY READ FOUR CHAPTERS

Chapter 2 (is this for you) · Chapter 6 (first customers) · Chapter 10 (pricing) · Chapter 20 (the 90-day plan). Everything else will be waiting when you need it.

THE ONE-WEEK TARGET

Your first three paid jobs. A kit on order, thirty houses listed, the first conversations had — that is a business starting, not an idea. Registering with HMRC comes once the money starts (Chapter 3).



PART ONE

Foundations

The trade, the season, the setup.

01

CHAPTER 1 · PART ONE

The Gutter Cleaning Opportunity

Why this trade. Why now. What is possible.

It is a grey Tuesday in late October, just gone half seven. A man we will call Dan loads an estate car in the dark: an industrial wet/dry vacuum in the boot, a bundle of carbon-fibre poles strapped along the roof bars, a small wireless camera in a padded case on the passenger seat. His first job is a three-bed semi he quoted last week. He clears it from the ground in forty minutes, never once leaving the pavement. The vac coughs up a winter's worth of wet leaf and grit; the camera shows the homeowner a clean run of guttering on her own phone before he has packed up. She pays by bank transfer while he is still in the drive. Sixty pounds.

By half twelve he has done four jobs: the semi at £60, a detached at £85, a bungalow at £45, and a larger detached where the first clean was so blocked he charged the premium and walked away with £110. Three hundred pounds, banked, before lunch. He is home for a sandwich. Every one of those customers has been booked back in for next autumn.

That is the trade. Not glamorous, not complicated, but real money for honest work, done safely, with your feet on the ground. This chapter is about why gutter cleaning is worth your time in 2026, what it can actually pay, and how to read the rest of this manual.

Why gutter cleaning, and why now

Gutter cleaning sits in a useful spot. Every house with a pitched roof has gutters. Every gutter fills with leaf, moss and grit. Left alone, it overflows, soaks the brickwork, rots the fascia and eventually leaks into the house. Homeowners know this. What stops them sorting it themselves is simple: it means going up a ladder to the roofline, and most people will pay rather than do that.

So there is steady, non-negotiable demand sitting behind a job most people are unwilling to do. That is a good place for a small business to stand.

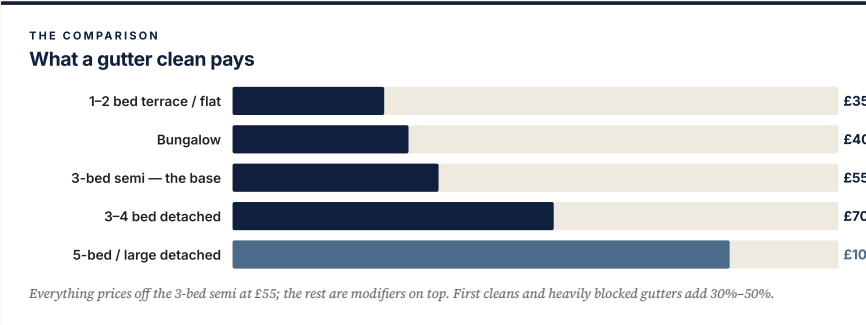
What makes it better now is the kit. For most of the trade's history, gutter cleaning meant a ladder and a hand-scoop. That is slow, it is risky, and it caps how many houses you can safely do in a day. The modern method is a **gutter vacuum system**: an industrial wet/dry vacuum connected to lightweight carbon-fibre poles that reach to around forty feet. You stand on the ground and reach the gutter from below. No ladder, no working at height, far less risk, and far more houses cleared per day. The leading UK kit comes from makers such as Spinaclean — whose SkyVac range is the trade's best-known — and Gutter Vac, and the equipment has matured to the point where a one-person operation can clear a two-storey house cleanly from the pavement.

The third piece is the **inspection camera** — a small wireless or pole-mounted camera that lets the customer see the inside of their own gutter on a phone or screen, before and after. In 2026 this is not optional. It is how you prove the work, win the trust, and open the door to the higher-margin add-ons. We treat it as core kit, not a gadget.

Put those three together — ground-based vacuum, no ladder, camera proof — and you have a trade that is safer, faster and more credible than it has ever been.

The shape of the money: higher ticket, lower frequency

If you know anything about window cleaning, set it aside for a moment, because gutters work the other way round.



A window round is built on low ticket and high frequency. You clean the same house every four weeks for a modest fee, and the money comes from doing it again and again. Gutters are the opposite: **higher ticket per job, much lower frequency**. A gutter clean is an annual or twice-yearly job, not a four-weekly one. You earn more per visit but you visit each house far less often.

That changes how you build a business. Your revenue comes from three streams stacked together:

- 1. **One-off jobs** — the customer who calls because the gutter is overflowing.
- 2. **Annual recurring plans** — the customer you book back in every autumn, sometimes twice a year, on a set price.
- 3. **High-margin add-ons** — fascia and soffit cleaning, downpipe clearing, gutter guards, roof moss, conservatory roofs. This is where the real margin lives, and it is the whole of Chapter 17.

The base prices, which every chapter in this manual uses, look like this:

Property type	Typical price
1-2 bed terrace / flat (accessible)	£35-£45
3-bed semi (the base)	£55
3-4 bed detached	£70-£100
5-bed / large detached	£100-£160
Bungalow	£40-£55
First clean / heavily blocked	add 30%-50%
Conservatory, awkward access, three-storey	add £20-£60

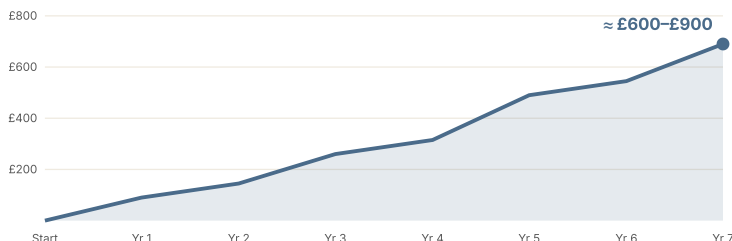
We price everything off the 3-bed semi at £55 — the annual-plan rate, with £60-£65 for a one-off, ad hoc booking. Learn that one number and the rest are modifiers on top of it. Chapter 10 walks through the full method, and the Gutter Pricing Calculator in your toolkit does the arithmetic for you.

The autumn surge, and how to flatten it

Gutters have a season, and you must understand it before you understand the income.

THE COMPOUNDING CUSTOMER

One household, kept for seven years



A £55 annual clear plus a realistic add-on attach — a downpipe one year, the fascias another, guard on the run under the tree — compounds to roughly £600-£900 over seven years. Win the household once and the value returns every autumn.

Most domestic gutters need clearing **once or twice a year**. The single biggest cause of blockage in this country is leaf fall, which means **October to December is the demand peak**. Spring is a smaller, secondary peak. Through autumn, demand outstrips supply so badly that customers ringing round in late October are routinely told to wait two or three weeks for a slot. That is the wave you want to be standing on.

The trap is the rest of the year. If you only ever do one-off autumn jobs, you will be drowning in November and idle in July. The smart operator solves this two ways. First, you sell an **annual plan**: the customer pays a set price to be booked in every year automatically, often with both an autumn and a spring clean, usually with a small discount for committing. This locks in recurring revenue and spreads the work. Second, you fill the quiet months with **add-ons** — fascia cleaning, roof moss treatment, conservatory roofs — and with commercial work, which runs on planned schedules rather than panic calls.

COACH MOMENT

Do not wait for autumn to start. The operators who clean up in October are the ones who got legal, bought their kit and knocked their first doors in July and August. Demand will come to you in the peak whether you are ready or not. Being ready is the entire game. If you are reading this in spring, you have the best possible run-up — use it.

What it actually earns

Here are the honest brackets. These are the figures every chapter in this manual works to, and they assume the ground-based method plus a sensible add-on stack.

Part-time round: £8,000-£18,000 a year. A few evenings and weekends, a couple of dozen regulars, the autumn peak worked hard. This is realistic alongside another job and is how a great many operators start.

Full-time solo: £40,000-£70,000 a year, with a margin of 65-75% once you are running gutters plus add-ons properly. One person, one vac kit, an estate car or small van, a round built over a year or two. The add-ons are what lift you up this range — a £60 gutter clean that finishes as a £150 job because you also did the fascias is the difference between the bottom and the top of this bracket.

Small operator, 2–4 staff or vans: £150,000–£400,000 of revenue, with the owner taking home £60,000–£140,000. This is a managed business, not a job. You are pricing for wages, running a schedule, and eventually stepping off the pole yourself. Chapter 16 covers how and when.

A worked picture of the solo bracket: say you average £75 a job across gutters and the odd add-on, and you do six jobs a day. That is £450 a day. Four days a week, allowing for weather and admin, across a working year weighted to the autumn peak, lands you comfortably inside the £40,000–£70,000 range — and you keep most of it, because your costs after the kit is bought are fuel, insurance, consumables and your own time.

MENTOR MOMENT

Notice we did not lead with the £400,000 number. Most people who start this trade will land in the part-time or solo brackets, and there is nothing second-best about that. A solo operator clearing £55,000 on a 70% margin, home most days by mid-afternoon, with a round that comes back to them every autumn, is running a genuinely good business. Be honest with yourself about which bracket you actually want. The big-revenue path costs you your afternoons, your headspace and your weekends in ways the brochures never mention.

The natural second service for a window round

If you already clean windows, or you know someone who does, pay close attention, because this is the easiest start in the whole trade.

A window cleaner already has the thing that is hardest to build: a round of warm customers who know your face, trust your work and let you onto their property every month. Gutters are the most natural upsell you will ever make. You are at the house anyway. You have already noticed the overflowing gutter on the back elevation. You simply ask: *"When did you last have your gutters cleared?"* Most have no idea, which means it is overdue.

The economics are striking. A window clean might be £18 every four weeks. A gutter clean on the same house is £55–£85 in a single visit, once or twice a year, on top. You are not finding a new customer; you are selling a second, higher-ticket service to one you already have. For a window cleaner, adding gutters is the single best return on a few thousand pounds of kit available in the trade. Chapter 6 covers cross-selling an existing round in detail.

It works the other way too. A gutter customer who likes your work is a warm lead for window cleaning, pressure washing and the rest of the exterior offer. The trade compounds.

Safety as a moat, not a cost

Here is the part that protects you from the race to the bottom.

Gutter work is, by its nature, work at height. That makes insurance the most important line in your business, and it makes the ground-based method your competitive weapon. You need **public liability cover of £2m–£5m, plus specific working-at-height cover** — Chapter 3 explains the detail and the rough premiums. This is not box-ticking. It is the thing that lets you stand in front of a customer, a letting agent or a managing agent and say, truthfully, that you are insured for the work.

Most of the cheap competition cannot say that. The man with a ladder and a hand-scoop, charging twenty pounds cash, is usually uninsured and is taking a genuine risk every time he climbs. Customers increasingly understand this, and the better ones will not let an uninsured operator up a ladder against their house. When you arrive with a ground-based vacuum, a camera and a certificate of insurance, you are not competing on price with the ladder operator at all. You are offering a different, safer, provable service — and that justifies a fair price.

That is the moat. The ground-based method plus proper insurance plus camera proof is a wall the cash-in-hand cowboy cannot climb. Build on the right side of it.

Who this suits, and who it does not

We would rather you knew now than three months and a kit purchase from now.

It suits you if: you are comfortable working methodically and to a standard; you can organise around a seasonal peak rather than needing the same income every single month; you are willing to either master the ground-based vacuum method or, where unavoidable, work safely at height; and you can hold a straightforward conversation with a customer in their drive. You do not need to be a salesperson. You need to be reliable and honest.

It does not suit you if: you need a flat, identical wage every month and cannot handle income that swings with the seasons; you are unwilling to invest the £1,200 and up that the vacuum kit costs; or you want a business with no customer contact at all. Those are not character flaws. They are just poor fits for this particular trade, and forcing it will make you miserable.

If, reading those lists, you find yourself making excuses for the red flags rather than nodding at the green ones, do us both a favour. Ask for your money back — same day, no friction, keep all the materials — by emailing refunds@theworksco.co.uk. We would rather you spent the £47 on a coffee with someone you love than on a manual for a trade that was never going to be yours. Chapter 2 is a proper self-assessment if you want to test the fit honestly.

How to use this manual, the Toolkit and the Prompt Library

What you have bought is three things, not one. The **manual** is the thinking and the method. The **15-file Excel Toolkit** is the doing — pricing calculator, P&L tracker, job database, proposal template, the 90-day checklist and more, so you are not building spreadsheets from a blank page. The **95-prompt AI Library** is the modern operator's shortcut, drafting your quotes, customer messages, Facebook posts and Google Business listing in minutes rather than evenings.

Read the manual in order the first time through. After that, treat it as a reference. When a chapter points you to a toolkit file or a prompt, go and open it — the value is in actually using them, not admiring them. The chapters build: foundations first (this part), then the craft and the kit, then customers and the systems that keep them, then pricing and getting paid, then the work itself and the commercial contracts, then growing and the add-on stack, and finally the modern tools, your first ninety days and the road ahead. Updates are free for life, so the version you are holding will keep pace with the trade.

What success looks like in one year

Picture the same operator, Dan, twelve months on from that first cold Tuesday.

He started in the summer, got legal and insured in a fortnight, bought an entry vacuum setup and a camera for under £1,500, and spent August and September knocking doors and dropping leaflets on tree-lined streets. By his first autumn he had thirty-odd domestic customers, most of whom he has now booked onto an annual plan. He has added fascia cleaning and downpipe clearing to his offer, so his average job has crept from £60 toward £90. He has picked up one letting agent who hands him a steady trickle of properties between residential jobs, which keeps the quiet months ticking over.

He is not rich. He is on course for something in the low-to-mid forties this year, climbing, with a round that will come back to him every single autumn from here on. He works outdoors, he is home for his kids, and he answers to no one but his customers. The kit is paid off. The business is his.

That is a realistic year one, built on the method in the pages that follow. Before any of it, though, you owe yourself one honest conversation about whether this trade is genuinely for you. That is the next chapter.

That was Chapter 1.

The other twenty chapters, the Excel toolkit and the AI prompt library are in the full bundle.

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