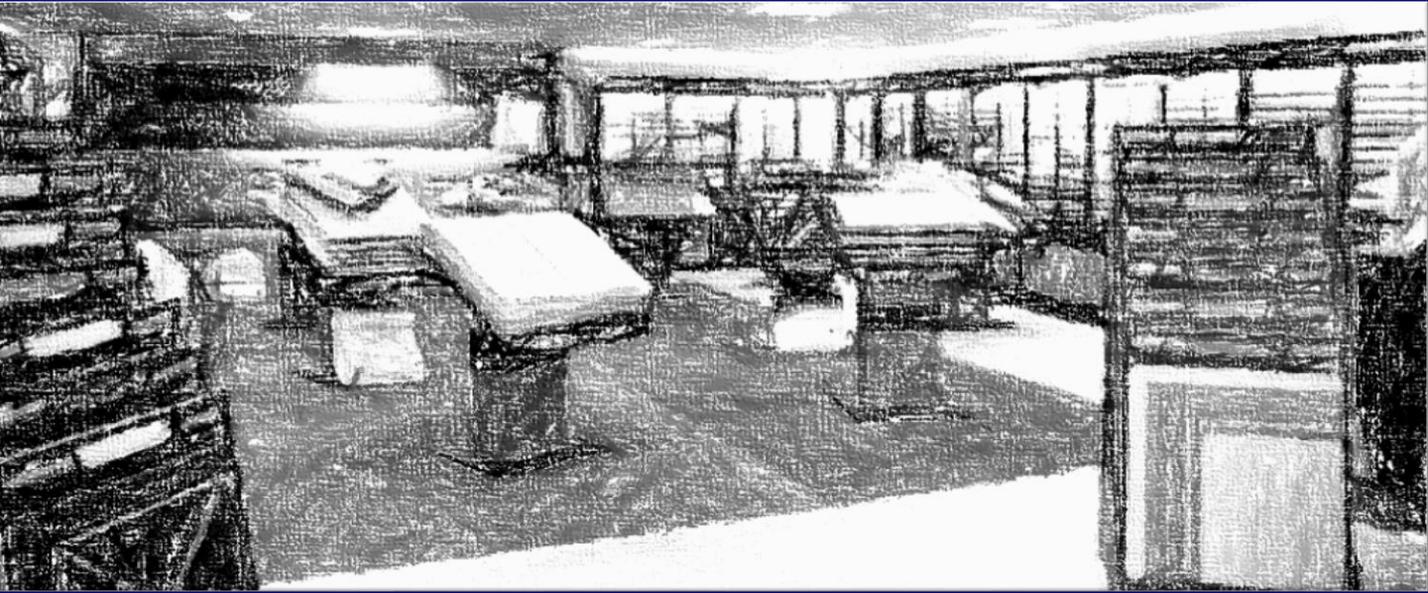


The FLOORING Guide

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The FLOORING Company

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Which floor for
which room?

1. Which floor for which room?

The key things to watch for, when considering which type of flooring or carpet to get for a particular room, are your personal taste and practical use.

Personal taste obviously includes things like pattern, colour, shade, texture etc..., taking into account the size of the room (light colours help open up small rooms), wall colour, along with any decoration, furniture and adjacent rooms which the flooring or carpet needs to work with.

Our expert salespeople and fitters can advise you on colours, patterns and hues, based on their vast experience over the years.

Insofar as practical concerns, there are a few key considerations;

- How much wear and tear does the room need to withstand? If it's a busy room in the house, a more durable flooring type will last you longer (if that's important to you). If it's likely to receive a bit of punishment, such as spills or pets' claws, then durable and easily cleaned flooring is almost certainly the best option.
- Is the room upstairs? If noise is a concern, then you might want to consider flooring that will provide some degree of sound-insulation; if not carpet, then perhaps cushionflor....and definitely a good quality underlay.
- Does the room get a lot of sunlight? Sunlight can fade certain types of flooring, so check its UV resistant/proof



What type of floor is
best for me?

2. What type of floor is best for me (carpet, wood, laminate, cushion, safety)?

To a large extent, your answers to Question 1 will determine which of the types of flooring will best fulfil your requirements. That said, here's a bit more detail on the different options...

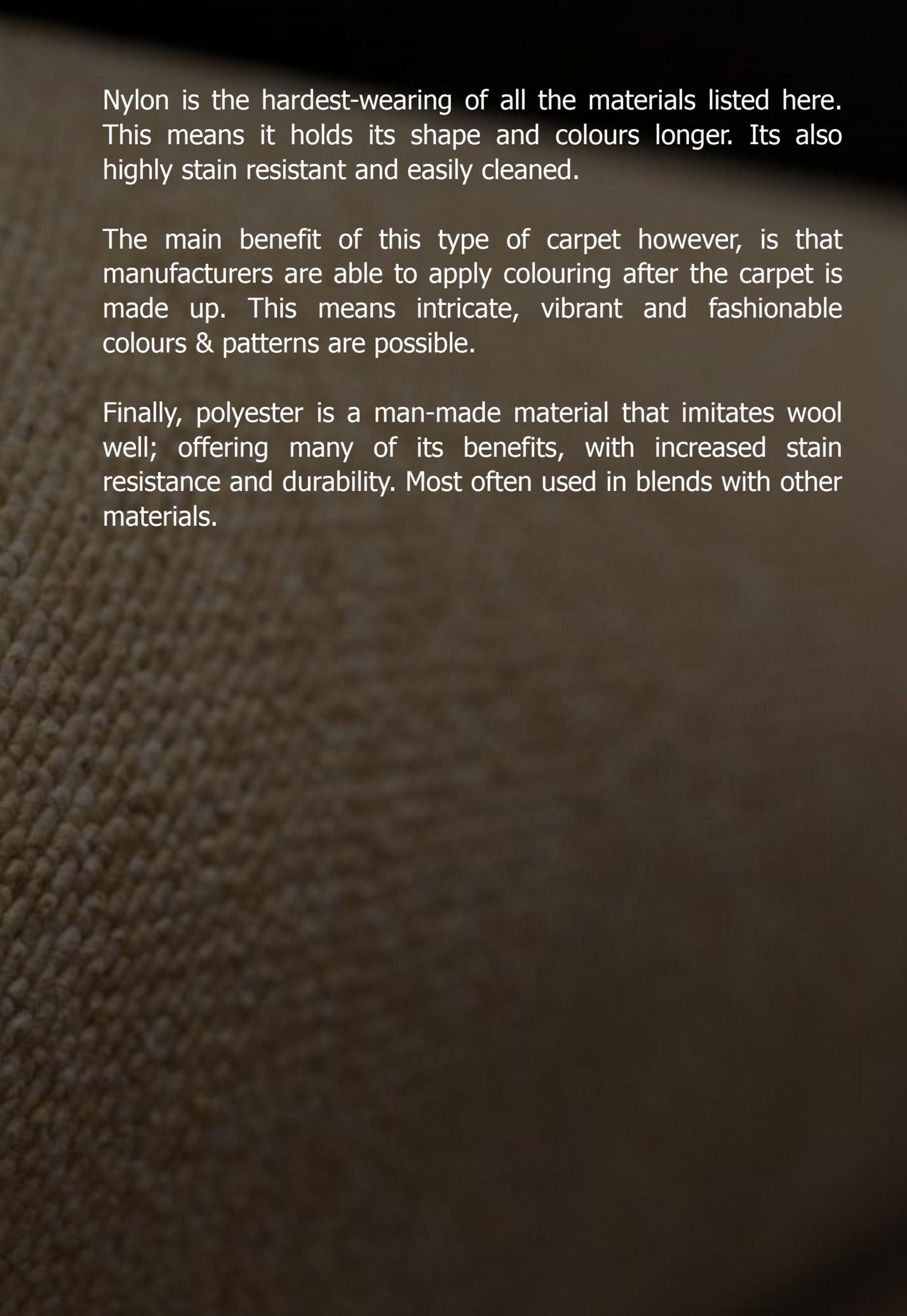
Carpet:

Carpets come in a few different types of materials; wool, Polypropylene, Polyamide (Nylon) and Polyester.

Wool is a great material and the traditional material for carpets. Carpets made of wool are fairly resistant to most staining, easy to clean, and are of low flammability. Also, a major draw is the look of wool carpets, with wool holding rich and deep colouring.

To offer to optimum balance of look and practicality, we offer many carpets that are a majority blend of wool, with a small amount of man-made fibres woven into them, which help to enhance its easy cleaning and stain resistance, whilst also extending the lifespan of the material.

Polypropylene is one of the most popular man-made materials used in carpet making. The main draw of these carpets is that they are extremely hard-wearing, stain resistant and easy to clean. In fact, because the colour is locked into the fibres in the manufacturing process, it's possible to use cleaning substances containing some bleach on these carpets (please take advice before cleaning your carpet).



Nylon is the hardest-wearing of all the materials listed here. This means it holds its shape and colours longer. Its also highly stain resistant and easily cleaned.

The main benefit of this type of carpet however, is that manufacturers are able to apply colouring after the carpet is made up. This means intricate, vibrant and fashionable colours & patterns are possible.

Finally, polyester is a man-made material that imitates wool well; offering many of its benefits, with increased stain resistance and durability. Most often used in blends with other materials.

Vinyl:

One of the most practical flooring types, vinyl gives you low cost, durable flooring, with good heat insulation.

Its easy to maintain and resistant to bumps, scrapes and spills.

What's more, is that in recent years, the feel and look of these floors has improves massively, giving a great balance of style and practicality.

Laminate:

Great durability; all the benefits of wood, plus it comes in other realistic natural looks, such as stone or tile.

Offering a substantial price benefits vs. solid wood floor, laminate offers a great 'clean' look to a room and is robust underfoot. Its easily cleaned and resistant to scrapes and spills.

One thing to remember is that laminate will require some skill to fit to a good standard. The fit really makes or breaks the overall impact that floor has on a room. Our fitters will be happy to assist, of course.

Cushionflor:

Cushionflor is cushioned vinyl floorcovering. It's a step-up from the ordinary hard wearing vinyl we all know; offering all of the hardwearing benefits and ease of maintenance, but with added 'wow' factor in the designs available and the feel underfoot.

Cushionflor is firm underfoot, yet feels soft to the touch. It comes in a wide range of highly realistic natural floor covering styles, such as wood and stone.

What's more, is that the cushioning allows you to have the 'clean' style of a wood, stone or tiled floor, but vitally, cut right down on noise. Stylish practicality.

Safety Flooring:

Great for businesses and/or floors that get wet.

This is slip-resistant vinyl flooring, guaranteed for the lifetime of the product. Serious stuff.

Offering a grout-free, impervious surface, it covers up to wall-joints for rounded corners and contains substances which fight bacterial growth and promote ease of cleaning.

Wood:

Real wood. The real deal.

Each board is composed of a single piece of wood, usually between 18-20mm thick. That not only looks incredible down on the floor but, can be very hardwearing once treated properly and maintained to a good standard.

To see just how hardwearing the flooring is likely to be, check the wood type hardness score; some soft woods are going to scratch, whereas the hardest wood types will stand the test of time.

Suitable in most rooms, it fits in a tongue-and-groove mechanism but, requires expert fitting to ensure minimum wastage and expert cutting into the room.

Fitted correctly, wood flooring can really make a room 'sing' and can be matched to both traditional and modern styles, with a variety of colours, textures and detailing available.



What's the best way to match the floor colour to the rest of the decoration in the room?

3. What's the best way to match the floor colour to the rest of the decoration in the room?

This is a big question; one which our sales and fitter teams are often considering and advising on.

The first thing to start with, is what you want the end result to feel like – certain types of colours 'feel' different!

For example, 'light neutrals', such as white, browns, tans and greys give a relaxed, cosy feel to room. They can work particularly well where there are other very strong colours in the room, such as the decoration or furniture items.

Dark colours are a bold choice...but that's just what some people want to convey; boldness! Although its probably best to steer clear of these in small rooms, as they'll only accentuate a claustrophobic feel, they can however work perfectly well where there is contrast, such as light coloured furniture or decoration in the room. Done well, dark colours will give a room that 'cosy' feeling; especially a dark carpet.

Cool colours or warm colours...? Bluey-greeny colours are going to give you a cooler feel in a room. This can be good; bright and airey...but can also take away that 'cosiness' from a room. If you're a fan of 'cosy' you might stay away from these. On the other hand, warm colours like yellows and reds can make a room bright and give off a vibrant 'feel'. They need to be used sparingly though for obvious reasons (and never both walls and floor matching). They are most often used in combination with neutral colours, or a faded version of reds/yellows to take the brightness down a notch.

Some rooms needs special consideration...namely the centre of the house for most people; the kitchen.

You've got three canvases you need to coordinate in the kitchen; cabinets, worktop, and floor. With this in mind, the main thing is to keep things simple for the most part, and then accent the colour scheme with the other canvases. The great thing is that, as well as ensuring you keep your look tasteful, you can switch it up easily and often to keep it up to date at minimal cost. You need to choose two colours to compliment each other and one colour to contrast with them. The floor needs to coordinate with the countertop.

Finally, people often find matching wall colours to wood difficult, especially as the colours can look different as the light changes throughout the day. The key thing however, is to actually know what colour wood you're dealing with; yellows, reeds or browns? Once you've done this, you'll find it much easier to start matching colours to your wood floor.



What separates a good quality carpet from a bad quality carpet?

4. What separates a good quality carpet from a bad quality carpet?

A lot of the things which determine the quality of a carpet aren't easy to spot for the untrained eye. However, our salespeople are always happy to advise on the density, twist, pile height and material type of carpets you are considering.

The main thing to look for as a customer when browsing, is the material type and pile height. As mentioned earlier in Question 1, different materials feel different to the touch and offer differing levels of durability and ease of cleaning. Pile height is easier to see when browsing and, usually, the higher the better (unless being bought for stairs, for example). Also, the tighter the twist of the carpet, usually, the better. Five twists per inch or more, is the standard for a high-end carpet and means it will wear better.

You can check the density of a carpet by trying to look at the back of the carpet – how easy is it to move the carpet tufts out of the way? The closer they are, the harder it will be and the more hard wearing the carpet.

Finally, there are different types of pile; 'cut pile', 'loop pile' and 'cut and loop pile'...

Cut pile is most common and is soft to the touch. Loop pile consists of yarns that are looped and uncut on the carpet surface; offering good strength and stain resistance. Loop & cut pile has a noticeably different texture from the other two, and is a little less durable than loop pile.



What separates good quality laminate flooring from bad quality laminate flooring?

5. What separates good quality laminate flooring from bad quality laminate flooring?

The first thing to note is that thickness doesn't equal quality when it comes to laminate. A thick piece of laminate may just have more fibreboard in it. What really matters is the materials used in manufacture and how it has been manufactured.

Look for an ISO rating of 9001, which is a certification of quality management and product quality, and ISO 14001, which certifies environmental commitments. You may also want a UV coated surface, to protect against sunlight bleaching your natural look design.

Finally, a little common-sense goes a long way when choosing laminate; you'll want a strong backing layer to the board and to look for a densely packed core layer of fibreboard. Top quality boards will also fit together easily and tightly; sitting level when connected.



What separates good quality wood flooring from bad quality wood flooring?

6. What separates good quality wood flooring from bad quality wood flooring?

First of all, you need to decide if you're looking for solid or engineered wood – they're not the same thing.

Solid wood does what it says on the tin; each board is a single piece of wood, from a tree, which fits with others like a puzzle, using tongue and groove. Engineered wood is composed of two or more layers of wood, made into a plank. As well as this, some engineered wood floors with use a veneer piece of wood on top of a lesser composite beneath it, and others will inject the top layer with acrylic and harden it, to give the desire surface look to the engineered plank.

When choosing engineered flooring, many of the principles of choosing laminate apply, insofar as one needs to consider the strength of the materials that have been used, and the quality of manufacture, as opposed to merely superficial thickness of the planks. The most important thing to look for is the thickness and hardness of the wear layer – that is, the top layer of wood on the plank that you will be making contact with underfoot.

This differs from solid wood flooring, where the thickness of the wood is very important. Good quality solid wood flooring will be around 5/8 of an inch thick upwards. Most solid wood floors are around 3/4 of an inch thick though.



What separates good quality
vinyl flooring from bad quality
vinyl floor?

7. What separates good quality vinyl flooring from bad quality vinyl floor?

Things to look for in vinyl include: the gloss and texture of the surface, the hardness and elasticity of the surface, UV protection, comfort to touch, and the thickness of the wear layer.

No-wax surfaces improve the ease of cleaning the flooring; it shines 'naturally' without the need to buff it. There are two types of 'no wax' surface; clear urethane or vinyl. The former gives a higher gloss look to the floor and is harder wearing.

The degree of gloss you want on your vinyl, apart from the stylistic implications, can also impact on the durability of the product. Smooth high-gloss finishes can be susceptible to dents and scratches, as well as offering no hiding space for uneven floors. The reverse can be said of low-gloss textured vinyl.

Insofar as the hardness and elasticity of the vinyl, you can check for durability purposes by simply pushing on it slightly with a hard object and noting how long it takes to spring back into shape. This will be a good indication as to how it will hold up to objects you place on your floor at home.

Strong sunlight can, after an extended period, cause fading, blistering, and brittleness. You can check whether the vinyl has UV protection. Another option is to pick more natural colours, which generally will hold up longer against the light.

Comfort underfoot is a simple one to check – stand on it! You're welcome to do so. If comfort is a concern, then you might want to check our Cushionflor range, as this offers a great padded surface to walk on.

And finally, the most important thing to a hard wearing vinyl floor, is the thickness of the top layer. This impacts on how easily it dents, scratches or scuffs. As a rule, you should look for a minimum of 10mm for top quality vinyl (the thickest is around 30mm and it is said that 1mm = 1 year of wear for an average family).



Why is underlay
important?

8. Why is underlay important?

A firm support for the carpet is required, so that it can do its job properly and look the part.

Underlay helps to;

- reduce sound transmitted through the floor
- reduce heat loss through floors
- reduce dust movement throughout a property
- improve the comfort of the floor to walk on
- increase the life of the carpet and protect against furniture indentations
- gives the carpet a better fit when it is laid

For these reasons, good quality underlay is essential for all types of carpet and wood, except 'foam backed' carpets.



Why are accessories
important?

9. Why are accessories important?

Accessories finish the look of the carpet and improve the durability; making it look better for longer.

Without the use of top quality tools and accessories, you will not be getting a professional standard floor fitting and the final look will reflect this.

There are many wood flooring accessories alone, which assist in the installation and final look of a wooden floor. These include; underlay, glues, nails, tools & installation kits, profiles, skirting, scotia, radiator rosettes and nosings. There are also more aftercare and maintenance accessories which further help us give a professional finish to all of our products.



What should I look for when
choosing floor fitters?

10. What should I look for when choosing floor fitters?

Less fitting time, less wastage (so you need to buy less flooring!) and the right look, from years of experience (e.g., the pile will run in the right direction and look 'right' because of it).

Our fitters are great working out sums for floor areas and covering to achieve the most efficient fit. We also only employ those who work quickly, accurately and have good manners!

Carpet fitters should measure up your floor space for you and give you good estimates for the amount of flooring you need – as well as offering you their pearls of wisdom from many, many fittings, concerning flooring types and styles you might want to consider (if you haven't already chosen).

They should move anything that needs to be, such as taking off doors etc.. and will offer to remove your old flooring for you too.

If needed, they'll clean, level and seal bare floor before laying new flooring. When fitting, they will use the correct range of tools and accessories to ensure gapless, smooth, even surfaces on your floors.

When finished, they will leave the place clean and tidy.

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Need more help?

Please get in touch...