

Small Business Website Cost Checklist (UK)

Use this before requesting, comparing, or accepting any website quote.

This checklist is for business owners who want to avoid vague proposals, hidden costs, poor handovers, and websites that look good but do not support enquiries or sales.

1) Business Goals and Commercial Fit

- The proposal explains the main business goal of the website
- The proposal defines the primary conversion goal (enquiry, booking, call, quote request, purchase)
- The target audience is clearly described
- The business offer or service focus is reflected in the structure
- The quote matches the current business stage rather than overselling unnecessary features

2) Scope and Deliverables

- Total page count is listed clearly
- Required page types are listed (home, about, services, contact, legal, FAQs, landing pages)
- The proposal confirms whether blog, case study, portfolio, or location pages are included
- The quote says whether forms, thank-you pages, and conversion paths are included
- Copywriting responsibility is defined clearly
- Image sourcing, graphics, icons, or illustration work are defined clearly
- Revision rounds are listed clearly
- The final list of deliverables is easy to understand

3) Content and Brand Assets

- The quote says who writes the website copy
- The quote says who edits or uploads the copy
- Brand assets required from the client are listed
- Missing assets are identified early (logo files, team photos, testimonials, policies, service details)
- The proposal confirms whether the provider will optimise images for web use
- The quote confirms whether tone of voice and messaging support are included

4) Design and User Experience

- The proposal explains the design direction, not just “custom design”
- Mobile design is explicitly included, not assumed
- The quote confirms responsive design across key screen sizes
- Navigation structure is defined
- Call-to-action placement is considered in the layout
- Accessibility basics are included (readability, contrast, usable forms, clear buttons)
- The design work is tied to usability and conversion, not visuals alone

5) Platform, CMS, and Technical Build

- The CMS or platform is named clearly
- The quote confirms whether the client can edit pages without developer help
- Hosting responsibility is defined
- Domain responsibility is defined
- SSL is included
- Backups are included
- Security updates or patching responsibility is defined
- Form delivery and anti-spam setup are included
- Staging or preview environment is included

6) SEO and Measurement

- Basic on-page SEO is included
- Page titles and meta descriptions are included
- Heading structure is part of the build
- Indexing basics are covered
- XML sitemap and robots handling are included
- Redirect planning is included if this is a redesign
- GA4 setup is included
- Google Search Console setup is included
- Conversion tracking is included
- The proposal explains what SEO work is not included

7) Performance, Compliance, and Trust

- Page speed or performance expectations are defined
- Cookie consent requirements are addressed if relevant
- Privacy policy, terms, and legal page placeholders are included if needed
- Basic GDPR considerations are addressed
- Trust signals are planned into the site (reviews, testimonials, case studies, credentials)
- Contact details and business legitimacy are easy to find

8) Integrations and Extra Functionality

- Booking system requirements are listed if needed
- CRM or email platform integrations are listed if needed
- Payment requirements are listed if needed
- Newsletter or lead capture tooling is listed if needed
- Third-party subscriptions or licence costs are identified
- Ongoing app or plugin fees are identified
- The quote explains any custom development work separately

9) Migration and Redesign Risk

- Existing content migration is included or excluded clearly
- Existing SEO pages and URLs are reviewed if this is a redesign
- Redirects are planned if page URLs will change
- Existing forms, tracking, and integrations are accounted for
- Downtime risk at launch is addressed
- The proposal explains how old content, media, or blog posts will be handled

10) Launch, Support, and Post-Launch Responsibilities

- The proposal includes a realistic timeline by phase
- The launch process is explained clearly
- Testing before launch is included
- Post-launch bug support window is defined
- Ongoing maintenance is included or excluded clearly
- Update turnaround expectations are explained
- Training or handover support is included if needed

11) Commercial Clarity and Hidden Costs

- The total project cost is stated clearly
- Payment milestones are clear
- VAT treatment is clear if applicable
- The quote clearly states what is excluded
- Additional page costs are explained
- Extra revision costs are explained
- Content upload costs are explained
- Hosting, domain, maintenance, plugin, or software fees are separated clearly
- There is no ambiguity around “from” pricing versus actual scope

12) Ownership and Handover

- The client owns the domain
- The client owns the hosting account or has direct access
- The client will receive full CMS/admin access
- The client will receive analytics and Search Console access
- All paid third-party tools are registered in a way the client can retain control
- The handover includes login details and ownership clarity
- The provider confirms what happens if the relationship ends

13) Red Flags Before You Accept

- The proposal is specific instead of generic
- Important deliverables are not hidden behind vague phrases
- SEO is not used as a buzzword without stating what is included
- The proposal does not rely on the client “figuring out” content, tracking, or legal pages later

- Ownership is not retained by the provider without a good reason
- Support is not undefined after launch
- The quote does not look cheap only because major work has been left out

Quick Buyer Test

If a provider cannot answer the points above clearly, you are not comparing a complete quote. You are comparing assumptions.

Source: VorinVista (<https://vorinvista.com>)