Unavoidable Marketing

Free guide for UK plumbing and heating firms

2026 EDITION

The Plumber's Playbook

How to get more booked jobs from Google, your website and social media in 2026

01 Google Local Services Ads
02 Google Ads
03 Business Profile and reviews
04 SEO and AI search
05 Websites that convert
06 Social media
07 Speed to lead

By
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Founder, Unavoidable Marketing

INSIDE THIS PLAYBOOK

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Seven short chapters, each one written for plumbers, and a 30-day checklist to put it all into action. Read it in one sitting, or keep it in the van and do one chapter a week.

Who this is for

- One-van plumbers who want a fuller diary without chasing price-shoppers
- Plumbing and heating firms with a team to keep busy all year
- Anyone paying for leads and not sure what they actually get back

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A WORD BEFORE YOU START

Most plumbers do not need more marketing. They need the right marketing, set up properly.

I have worked with trades since 2012, and the story is nearly always the same. Good plumbers, busy on the tools, losing work to firms that are simply easier to find, easier to trust and quicker to call back.

The fix is rarely one big thing. It is a handful of small things done properly: a Google Verified listing set up around the jobs you want, a Business Profile full of real reviews, a website that makes ringing you the obvious next step, and a phone that gets answered.

This playbook sets out exactly what we do for plumbers across the UK, from Bristol to Glasgow, Cardiff to Belfast. Use it yourself, hand it to whoever does your marketing, or ring me and we will talk it through. Either way, I hope it fills a few more slots in your diary.

> **Judge every channel on booked jobs, not clicks, likes or leads.**

UK-wide, Leeds-based

Working with trades across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

AH

Andrew Heppinstall
Founder, Unavoidable Marketing

HOW TO USE THIS PLAYBOOK

One chapter a week
Each chapter stands on its own. Start with the one that costs you most jobs.

Use the checklist
The 30-day checklist turns the whole book into small weekly jobs.

Track booked jobs
Note where every enquiry came from and whether it booked.

2012	390+	92%	40+
working with trades since	projects delivered	of clients come back	UK trade businesses we work with

CHAPTER 1

01 Google Local Services Ads and Google Verified

Local Services Ads sit at the very top of many Google searches, with a Google Verified badge. You pay per lead, a call or message, not per click. You can apply to Google yourself for free, or use an agency. When someone searches "emergency plumber near me", being the verified name at the top is hard to beat.

What Google checks before you can show

- A verified Google Business Profile
- Your VAT number or Companies House registration number
- Public liability insurance
- Any licence the law requires for the work you advertise. For gas work, that means Gas Safe registration

Checks usually take about 3 to 4 weeks after your documents go in.

How the cost works

1. **You pay per lead**
   A lead is a call or message from a customer, not a click.
2. **You set a weekly budget**
   Google spends within it, so you stay in control.
3. **The budget is separate**
   Your lead budget is paid straight to Google.

Set it up around the work you want

Job types

Switch on only what you do and want: emergency leaks, burst pipes, blocked drains, bathroom installs, and boiler work if you are Gas Safe.

Service area

The postcodes your vans can reach quickly, not a huge radius that sends you to jobs you will turn down.

Opening hours

Only the hours someone will answer. If you do not cover nights, do not show at 11pm.

BAD LEADS

Google no longer lets you dispute bad leads by hand, so the real protection is the set-up: tight service areas, only the job types you actually do, opening hours that match when you can answer, and rating every lead in your dashboard.

What helps you show more often

- Answering calls quickly
- Plenty of genuine, recent reviews
- A complete profile with real photos
- Being close to the customer
- Enough weekly budget

COMING IN 2027

Google is moving UK Local Services Ads accounts into Google Ads. Export your lead history now so you keep a record of which jobs and areas paid off.

02 CHAPTER 2 Google Ads

> Search ads show for exactly what people type, so you can be there for "boiler replacement Leicester" as well as "burst pipe". Unlike Local Services Ads you pay per click, which means the set-up decides whether those clicks turn into booked jobs or just cost money.

Split campaigns by job type

Emergency
Burst pipes, leaks, no water. Calls only, during hours you answer.

Boilers and heating
Replacements, repairs, servicing. Gas Safe firms only.

Bathrooms
Refits, showers, wet rooms. Higher value, longer to decide.

General plumbing
Taps, toilets, cylinders, outside taps, landlord work.

Negative keywords plumbers need

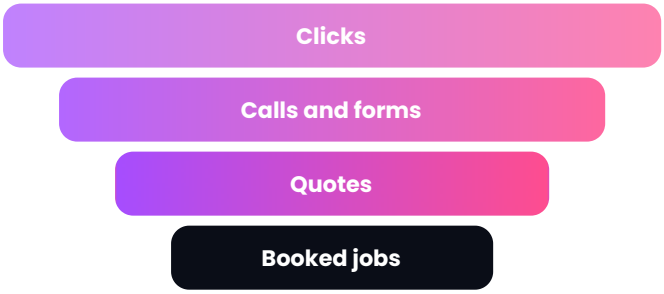
- jobs
- apprenticeship
- salary
- course
- training
- how to
- DIY
- YouTube
- parts
- supplies
- wholesale
- free

Add these so you stop paying for people who were never going to book.

Get the basics right

- Target people in or regularly in your area, not people merely interested in it
- Call tracking on every ad and website number
- Conversion tracking on quote forms
- A landing page for each job type, not just your homepage

Measure cost per booked job



Divide what you spend by the number of booked jobs, not clicks or leads. That is the number that tells you if a campaign pays.

CASE STUDY

Mr Reactive, a Leeds boiler installer

£1,200 ad spend

Over £22,000 revenue

Over £22,000 of revenue in the first month from £1,200 of ad spend, and £10,000 or more a month from Google Ads since.

SEASONALITY
Push boiler replacements before winter and bathroom refits in spring. Keep emergency campaigns running all year, and turn budgets down when the diary is full.

03 CHAPTER 3 Google Business Profile and reviews

When a pipe bursts at ten at night, the customer types "plumber near me" and looks at the map. Your Business Profile is that listing: closest, well reviewed, open now, call. It also feeds your Local Services Ads and the answers Google AI Overviews give.

Set the profile up properly

1. **Primary category: Plumber**
   Add secondary categories only for work you genuinely do.
2. **Service area, not home address**
   List the towns you really cover and keep your home private.
3. **Every service listed**
   Leak repairs, boilers, cylinders, bathrooms, landlord work.
4. **Hours you can answer**
   "Open now" that rings out loses jobs and earns bad reviews.
5. **Real job photos**
   Tidy pipework, finished bathrooms, your van. No stock images.

Posts through the plumbing year

Autumn
Book a boiler service before the cold

Winter
Finding the stopcock, frozen pipes

Spring
Bathroom refits and new showers

Summer
Boiler swaps booked ahead of winter

Avoid getting suspended

- Adding keywords or towns to your business name
- More than one profile for the same business
- Showing a home address customers never visit
- Different phone numbers on different sites

Ask for reviews that name the job and the town

HELPS A LITTLE

"Great service, would recommend."

HELPS A LOT MORE

"Fixed a leaking cylinder in Norwich the same day, tidy and explained everything."

REPLYING TO A BAD REVIEW

Stay calm and keep it short. Thank them, set out the facts without arguing, and offer to sort it out by phone. For example: "Sorry to hear this, John. We fitted the new cistern on Tuesday and tested it before we left. Please ring me on the office number and I will come back and look at it." Future customers read your reply as much as the review.

A review routine that works

- Ask on the day, while the hot water is back on
- Text your direct review link with a short personal note
- Ask every customer, not only the happy ones
- Reply to every review by name, calmly, even the bad ones

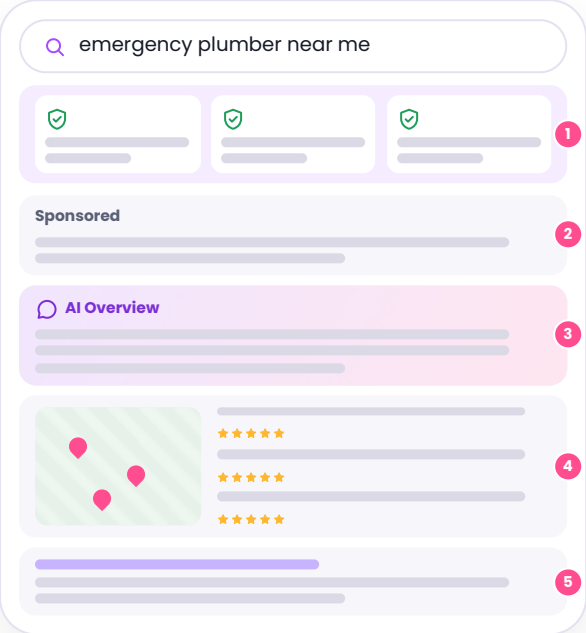
KNOW THE RULES

Fake reviews have been unlawful in the UK since April 2025 under the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act. Google also bans incentives, like a discount for a review, and asking only happy customers.

04 CHAPTER 4 SEO and AI search

> SEO is how you show in the normal results and the map without paying per click. More and more people now also ask ChatGPT, Gemini or Google AI Overviews "who is a good plumber in Leicester?". The good news is that the same groundwork helps with both.

Where you can show on one Google search



1. **Local Services Ads** — Google Verified badge, pay per lead — Ch 1
2. **Search ads** — Marked Sponsored, pay per click — Ch 2
3. **AI Overview** — An AI summary that can name businesses — Ch 4
4. **Map pack** — Your Business Profile and reviews — Ch 3
5. **Organic results** — Your website pages, earned with SEO — Ch 4

The layout changes with the search, the device and where the customer is. The aim is to be in as many of these places as you can.

The pages your site needs

Homepage
Says who you are, what you do and where, in the first two lines.

A page per service
Boiler replacement, bathrooms, leaks, drains, each on its own page.

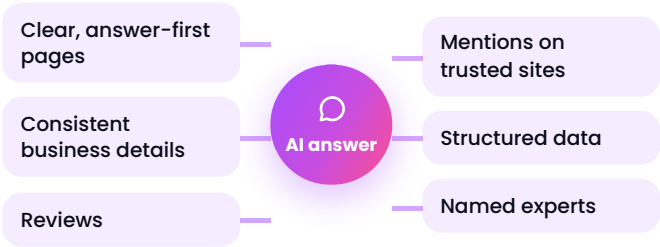
Real local pages
Jobs, photos and reviews from each town. Never copy and paste.

FAQs
Call-out fees, hours, Gas Safe, areas covered. Answer first.

Local SEO foundations

- The same name, address and phone number everywhere
- Listings on the main UK directories and trade sites
- Schema markup so search engines read your details
- Reviews that mention jobs and towns
- Pages that load fast on a phone signal

What AI assistants look for

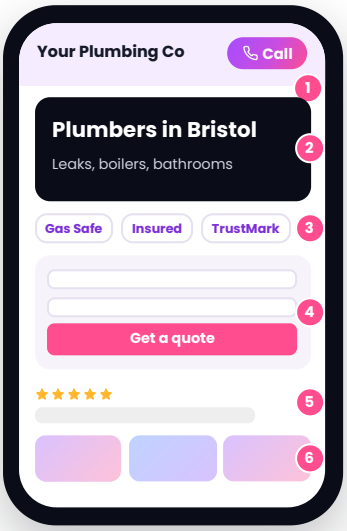


Nobody can guarantee being named. Try asking ChatGPT "who fits combi boilers in Plymouth?" and see who comes up, and why.

05 CHAPTER 5 A website that converts

> Most people find you on a phone, often in a hurry. Your website has one job: make ringing you, or sending a quote request, the obvious next step. Pretty is nice. Fast, clear and trustworthy books jobs.

What a plumber's homepage needs



1. Tap-to-call button at the top
2. Headline that says what and where
3. Gas Safe and trust badges
4. Short quote form
5. Real reviews
6. Real job photos

Must-haves

- Tap-to-call on every page, at the top
- A quote form that asks the right questions: job type, postcode, boiler type, timescale, photos
- Fast on a phone signal
- Your Gas Safe number if you do gas work, insurance, and memberships like TrustMark
- Real job photos, service pages and area pages
- Reviews from Google on the page

A quote form that asks the right questions

Get a free quote

What do you need?
Boiler, bathroom, leak

Postcode
e.g. LS1

Current boiler type
Combi, system, regular

How soon?
Emergency, this week, later

Photos of the job
Upload from your phone

Send my quote request

Avoid

- Template sites full of stock photos
- A site or domain you do not own
- A contact form hidden on one page
- Slow sliders and pop-ups on mobile

OWN IT

Make sure the website and the domain are in your name. If you part ways with whoever built it, the site, the reviews and the rankings should stay with you.

What every service page should include

1. **Answer first** — What you do and where, in two lines
2. **What you get** — Plain steps, no jargon
3. **Proof** — Photos, reviews, Gas Safe
4. **Areas covered** — The towns you really serve
5. **FAQs and a call to action** — Call button and quote form

Answer-first pages and schema markup help Google and AI assistants understand exactly what you do and where. Build them in from day one.

06 CHAPTER 6 Social media, organic and paid

> Nobody scrolls Instagram with water pouring through the kitchen ceiling, so emergency work mostly comes from search. Social is strongest for planned, higher value jobs: bathroom refits, boiler replacements, heating upgrades and landlord work.

Organic: build trust

Free posts on your own pages that show real work and real people, so your name is the one locals remember.

- Before and afters, naming the town
- Short job videos from site
- Team faces, with Gas Safe cards
- Seasonal tips

Paid: bring enquiries

Facebook and Instagram ads you aim at the postcodes you cover, one job type at a time.

- Lead ads with qualifying questions
- Local targeting around your base
- Retargeting website visitors
- Seasonal pushes, off when full

A simple weekly rhythm

Mon
A before and after from last week

Wed
A short clip or tip from the van

Fri
A team post or a shared review

Daily
Reply to comments and messages

What not to do

- Buying followers
- Posting nothing but adverts
- Engagement bait like "share to win"
- Spamming groups that ban business posts

Lead ad questions that filter out time-wasters

Bathroom campaign

- Q1 Full refit or shower swap?
- Q2 Is tiling included?
- Q3 Rough timescale?
- Q4 Your postcode

Boiler campaign

- Q1 Current boiler type?
- Q2 Like-for-like swap or a move?
- Q3 Is there a hot water cylinder?
- Q4 Your postcode

Good questions mean fewer enquiries from browsers and more from people ready to book.

LOCAL GROUPS AND NEXTDOOR

People ask "can anyone recommend a decent plumber?" in community groups every week. Read each group's rules, keep your page complete, and ask happy customers for Facebook recommendations the same way you ask for Google reviews.

07 CHAPTER 7 Follow-up and speed to lead

> Someone with a leak rings round until a plumber answers. If you call back an hour later, they have often booked someone else. Every pound you spend on marketing is wasted if the enquiry goes cold, so this chapter is the cheapest win in the book.

What should happen after every enquiry

STRAIGHT AWAY	WITHIN MINUTES	SAME DAY	2 TO 3 DAYS	AFTER THE JOB
1	2	3	4	5
Auto-reply	**Call back**	**Quote or visit**	**Follow up**	**Ask for a review**
A text confirming you have it and when you will call.	Speak to them while they are still looking.	Send the price or book the survey slot.	A friendly nudge on any open quote.	By text, with your direct link.

Never miss a call

- Divert to a mobile, a team member or a call-answering service when you are on a job
- Set up a missed-call text back
- Keep one shared list of every enquiry
- Get alerts for new form and ad leads on your phone

Keep a simple lead log

Date	Source	Job	Booked?
Mon	Google Verified	Burst pipe	**Yes**
Tue	Website form	Bathroom refit	**Quote sent**
Wed	Facebook ad	Boiler swap	**Survey booked**

Note where every enquiry came from and whether it booked. After a couple of months you will know which sources are worth paying for.

Three texts worth setting up today

AUTO-REPLY

Thanks for getting in touch with Your Plumbing Co. We have your message and will call you within the hour. If water is leaking now, turn off your stopcock.

QUOTE FOLLOW-UP

Hi Sarah, just checking you got our quote for the boiler swap. Happy to answer any questions or pop round. We have slots next week.

REVIEW REQUEST

Thanks for having us today. If you are happy with the new shower, a quick Google review mentioning the job and your town would really help. Here is the link.

WHO ANSWERS WHEN YOU ARE UNDER A SINK?

Decide now who picks up when you cannot: a partner in the office, a team member or a call-answering service. On Local Services Ads, answering quickly also helps you show more often.

PUT IT INTO ACTION

Your 30-day action checklist

Tick these off over the next month. Each one is small. Together they make you easier to find, easier to trust and quicker to book.

30 days

Week 1 — FOUNDATIONS

- [ ] Claim and verify your Google Business Profile
- [ ] Set Plumber as your primary category
- [ ] Switch to a service area, hide your home address
- [ ] List every service you offer
- [ ] Gather VAT or Companies House number, insurance and Gas Safe details

Week 2 — GET VERIFIED AND FOUND

- [ ] Apply for Local Services Ads and Google Verified
- [ ] Choose only the job types you want
- [ ] Set opening hours you can answer
- [ ] Upload your best real job photos
- [ ] Check your name, address and phone match everywhere

Week 3 — CONVERT MORE

- [ ] Put tap-to-call at the top of every page
- [ ] Add the right questions to your quote form
- [ ] Show Gas Safe and memberships on the site
- [ ] Start asking every customer for a review
- [ ] Reply to every review you have

Week 4 — FOLLOW UP AND MEASURE

- [ ] Set up missed-call text back
- [ ] Start a lead log with source and outcome
- [ ] Add negative keywords to any Google Ads
- [ ] Post three times on Facebook and Instagram
- [ ] Work out your cost per booked job

Your numbers this month

ENQUIRIES	BOOKED JOBS	SPEND	COST PER BOOKED JOB

Stuck on any of these? Book a free 30-minute call and we will go through your list with you.

Book a free 30-minute call

DONE FOR YOU

How Unavoidable Marketing can help

If you would rather spend your time on the tools, we can do all of this for you. We are a UK-wide, Leeds-based agency working with trades across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and founder Andrew Heppinstall is on every strategy call.

Local Services Ads
Set-up, Google Verified checks and weekly running

Google Ads
Search and Performance Max, split by job type

Business Profile
Set-up, posts, photos and a review routine

SEO and AI search
Being found on Google, ChatGPT and Gemini

Websites
WordPress, you own it, typically built in 3 to 4 weeks

Social media
Organic management and Facebook, Instagram and TikTok ads

How we work

1. **Flat monthly fee**
   Quoted after a free call, based on what you need.
2. **Your ad spend, your card**
   Paid straight to Google or Meta, never marked up.
3. **No contract**
   Rolling 30-day terms. We keep you by results.
4. **Measured on booked jobs**
   Not clicks or likes. Clear monthly reports.

2012	390+	92%	40+
working with trades since	projects delivered	of clients come back	UK trade businesses we work with

Talk to Andrew, not a sales team.
Free 30-minute call. No obligation, no hard sell.

Book a free 30-minute call →

Unavoidable Marketing

READY WHEN YOU ARE

Let's fill your diary with the jobs you want.

Book a free 30-minute call with Andrew. We will look at how plumbers in your area are winning work, where your enquiries come from now, and what to fix first.

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unavoidablem.com

UK-wide, Leeds-based

Scan to book your free call

Book a free 30-minute call →

unavoidablecrm.com/book?co=2&service=1

ON THE CALL

1

Your area

Who shows up when local customers search for a plumber, and why.

2

Your set-up

A look at your Google profile, any ads and your website.

3

Your plan

What to fix first, and a flat monthly fee if you want us to do it.

Working with trades since 2012

Flat monthly fee, quoted after a free call

No contract