Unavoidable Marketing

Free guide for UK tree surgeons and arborists

2026 EDITION

The Tree Surgeon'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 tree surgeons, and a 30-day checklist to put it all into action. Read it in one sitting, or keep it in the truck and do one chapter a week.

Who this is for

- ✓ Climbers and small teams who want a fuller diary of good jobs
- ✓ Arboricultural firms with crews and chippers 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 tree surgeons do not need more marketing. They need the right marketing, set up properly.

I have worked with trades since 2012, and tree work has a problem most trades do not: anyone with a chainsaw can call themselves a tree surgeon. So customers look hard for proof that you are qualified, insured and safe.

The fix is rarely one big thing. It is a handful of small things done properly: a Business Profile full of reviews and photos of tidy sites, a website that shows your tickets and insurance, and a phone that gets answered after a storm.

This playbook sets out exactly what we do for tree surgeons across the UK, from Cornwall to Fife. Use it yourself, hand it to whoever does your marketing, or ring me and we will talk it through. Either way, I hope it brings in better jobs all year round.

> **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 a storm drops a branch on the fence and someone searches "tree surgeon 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, such as waste carrier registration for taking green waste away

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: felling, reductions, stump grinding, hedges, storm damage. Leave off small hedge trims if they do not pay.

Service area

The postcodes your truck and chipper can reach easily, not a radius that sends you to jobs you will turn down.

Opening hours

Only the hours someone will answer. If you do not do emergency call-outs, do not show at night.

BAD LEADS

Google no longer lets you dispute bad leads by hand, so the real protection is the set-up: a tight service area, only the job types you want, hours 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 job 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, areas and months paid off.

02 CHAPTER 2 Google Ads

Search ads show for exactly what people type, so you can be there for "crown reduction Shrewsbury" as well as "stump grinding". 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

Felling and removal
Highest value. Needs a visit, access and permission checks.

Pruning
Crown reductions, lifts and thinning. Steady all year.

Stump grinding
Quick jobs, often an add-on to a felling.

Storm damage
Fallen and split trees. Calls only, when you can attend.

Negative keywords tree surgeons need

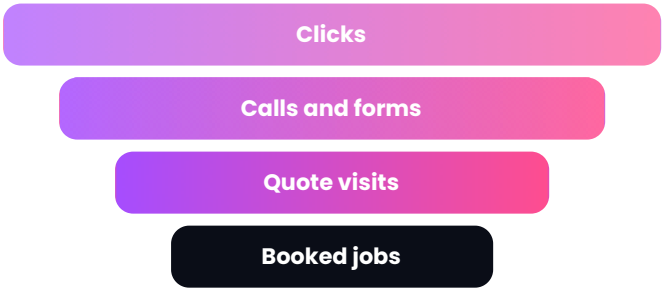
- jobs
- course
- salary
- apprenticeship
- chainsaw
- hire
- saplings
- nursery
- how to
- DIY
- firewood
- free

Add these so you stop paying for trainees, tool buyers and people planting trees, not cutting them.

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, with your own photos

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.

KEYWORD COSTS

What a click costs tree surgeons

£3.09 median cost per click, UK

£5.58 for "tree removal", the priciest keyword

A click is not a lead, so watch your cost per booked job. Source: Unavoidable Marketing analysis of Google data, 22 October 2026.

SEASONALITY

Push felling and reductions in autumn and winter, have storm campaigns ready to switch on after high winds, and promote hedges once nesting season has passed. Turn budgets down when the diary is full.

03 CHAPTER 3 Google Business Profile and reviews

When a tree is leaning over the house, the customer types "tree surgeon near me" and looks at the map. Your Business Profile is that listing: close by, well reviewed, with photos of safe work and tidy sites. It also feeds your Local Services Ads and AI answers.

Set the profile up properly

1. **Primary category: Tree service**
   Add other categories only for work you do.
2. **Service area, not home address**
   List the towns you really cover and keep your home private.
3. **Every service listed**
   Felling, reductions, stumps, hedges, storm work.
4. **Hours you can answer**
   "Open now" that rings out loses jobs and earns bad reviews.
5. **Real job photos**
   Climbers in full kit, clean sites after. No stock images.

Posts through the tree year

Autumn
Storm checks and leaf clearance

Winter
Dormant season felling and pruning

Spring
Why we check for nesting birds

Summer
Crown lifts, hedges and stumps

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 job, would recommend."

HELPS A LOT MORE

"Reduced two big oaks in our garden in Stockport. Tidy site, and they sorted the council paperwork."

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, Paul. We reduced the sycamore on Wednesday to the plan we agreed. Please ring me and I will come and walk round it with you." Future customers read your reply as much as the review.

A review routine that works

- Ask on the day, once the site is clear
- Text your review link with a personal note
- Ask every customer, not only the happy ones
- Reply to every review by name, calmly, even the bad ones

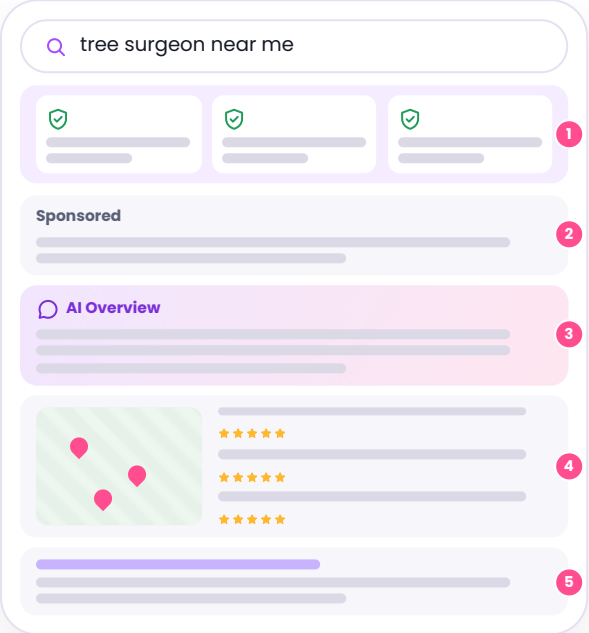
KNOW THE RULES

Fake reviews have been unlawful in the UK since April 2025 under the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act. Google also bans incentives, like free stump grinding 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 tree surgeon in Exeter?". 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
Felling, reductions, stump grinding, hedges, each on its own page.

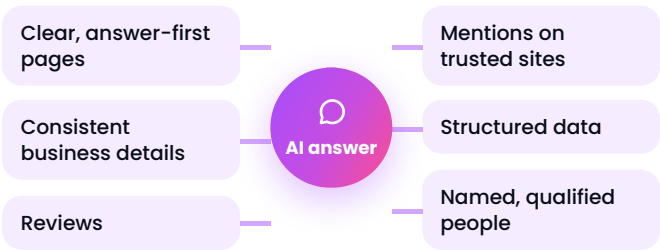
Real local pages
Jobs, photos and reviews from each town. Never copy and paste.

FAQs
Tree Preservation Orders, nesting birds, waste. 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

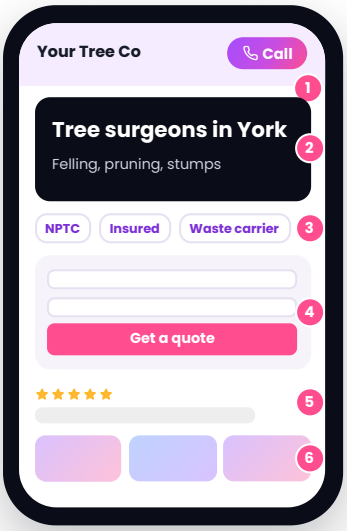


Nobody can guarantee being named. Try asking ChatGPT "who grinds tree stumps in Lincoln?" and see who comes up, and why.

05 CHAPTER 5 A website that converts

> Most people find you on a phone, often while looking up at the tree in question. Your website has one job: show that you are qualified and safe, then make a quote request the obvious next step.

What a tree surgeon's homepage needs



1. Tap-to-call button at the top
2. Headline that says what and where
3. Qualifications and insurance
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, tree size, access, postcode, photos
- Fast on a phone signal
- Qualifications such as NPTC, and any Arboricultural Association membership
- Insurance and waste carrier registration
- Reviews from Google on the page

A quote form that asks the right questions

Get a free quote

What do you need?
Felling, pruning, stump

Postcode
e.g. YO24

Rough tree height
Or compared to the house

Access for the chipper?
Side gate, front only

Photos of the tree
Upload from your phone

Send my quote request

Avoid

- Photos showing unsafe working
- 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
2. **How it works**
   Visit, checks, quote, clear-up
3. **Proof**
   Photos, reviews, NPTC
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

> Tree work makes great video: climbers at height, big sections lowered under control, and a tidy garden at the end. Use social for planned work like reductions, felling and stump grinding, and to be the name people remember after a storm.

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 climbing and rigging clips
- The crew in full kit
- Seasonal tree 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
- Homeowners near your yard
- Retargeting website visitors
- Autumn and winter pushes

A simple weekly rhythm

Mon
A before and after from last week

Wed
A short climbing or rigging clip

Fri
A crew post or a shared review

Daily
Reply to comments and messages

What not to do

- Buying followers
- Posting clips of unsafe working
- Engagement bait like "share to win"
- Spamming groups that ban business posts

Lead ad questions that filter out time-wasters

Felling campaign

- Q1 How tall is the tree?
- Q2 How close to buildings?
- Q3 Any TPO you know of?
- Q4 Your postcode

Pruning campaign

- Q1 What type of tree?
- Q2 Reduce, lift or thin?
- Q3 Is there side access?
- 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 tree surgeon?" in community groups, especially after a storm. 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

> After a storm, someone with a tree on their fence rings round until a tree surgeon answers. For planned work they usually get a few quotes, and the first to visit has a head start. Every pound you spend on marketing is wasted if the enquiry goes cold.

What should happen after every enquiry

	STRAIGHT AWAY	SAME DAY	WITHIN THE WEEK	2 TO 3 DAYS LATER	AFTER THE JOB
	1	2	3	4	5
	Auto-reply	**Call back**	**Quote visit**	**Quote and 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.	Look at the tree, access and any TPO.	Send the quote, then a friendly nudge.	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 up a tree
- 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	Storm damage	**Yes**
Tue	Website form	Oak reduction	**Quote sent**
Wed	Facebook ad	Stump grinding	**Visit 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 contacting Your Tree Co. We are out on a job but have your message and will call you back today. If a tree is unsafe, keep everyone clear.

QUOTE FOLLOW-UP

Hi Helen, just checking you got our quote for the sycamore. Happy to answer any questions, and we can check with the council if a TPO applies.

REVIEW REQUEST

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

WHO ANSWERS WHEN YOU ARE UP A TREE?

Decide now who picks up when you cannot: a partner in the office, a ground worker 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 Tree service as your primary category
- [ ] Switch to a service area, hide your home address
- [ ] List every service you offer
- [ ] Gather VAT or company number, insurance and waste carrier 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 tree size and access to your form
- [ ] Show NPTC and insurance 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 up a tree, 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 tree surgeons in your area are winning work, where your enquiries come from now, and what to fix first.

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andrew@unavoidablem.com

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 tree surgeon, 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