Reyse

Free course for estate and letting agents

The free SEO course

Every fix that gets an estate or letting agency found on Google, in the order that matters. 40 lessons in 10 modules.

reyse.co.uk/resources/seo. November 2026 edition. General education, not legal advice.

Contents

Work through the modules in order: each builds on the last. Every lesson starts with three cards (why it matters, why Google cares with a badge for how strong the evidence is, and the one thing to do first), then shows you how to test your own site and fix what you find. The website version at reyse.co.uk/resources/seo adds live demos, a progress tracker, the SEO audit (which turns your answers into a 90-day plan) and a printable maintenance schedule.

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01

Start here

What SEO is, who you're doing it for, and the free tools you'll use throughout.

1.1 What SEO is, and how Google picks results

1.2 Your four audiences: buyers, tenants, sellers and landlords

1.3 Your free toolkit (set this up first)

What SEO is, and how Google picks results

SEO (search engine optimisation) is making your website easy for search engines to find, read, understand and trust, so it shows up when someone near you searches for what you do.

Online: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/how-search-works

In plain English

Picture a library with billions of books and one librarian who has to hand over the best book for every question. SEO is making sure your book is on the shelf, has a clear title, actually answers the question, and that other people say it's a good book.



Morgan King
Founder, Reyse

I'm Morgan King, founder of Reyse. Before Reyse I worked in an estate agency, and I was promoted to branch manager of an underperforming branch with no management experience behind me. When I looked, the branch was missing from Google and from AI search results. People in our own area couldn't find us.

I taught myself SEO and fixed it, one problem at a time. The branch went on to become one of the busiest agencies in the area.

That's why this course is written the way it is. I've done this from the inside, as an agent with a branch to fill, not as an outsider reading about it. Everything is explained in full, with no jargon standing in for an answer and no hype standing in for proof. Where something is uncertain, I'll say so.

It’s not one search, it’s hundreds

For an agency, SEO isn’t just ranking for “estate agents [town]”. Every month people near you search for valuations, rentals, areas, landlord questions, tenant questions, market prices and individual properties. Property searches are local, competitive, time-sensitive, high-value and built on trust, and this course is built around exactly that.

How a search engine works, in eight steps

Step	What happens
1. Discovery	It finds your page, through links or your sitemap
2. Crawling	It visits the page and reads it
3. Processing	It works out the content, links and technical details
4. Indexing	It decides whether to store the page in its index (its giant catalogue)
5. Retrieval	Someone searches, and it pulls out the pages that might match
6. Ranking	It decides which of those are best, and in what order
7. Presentation	It shows them: ordinary links, the map, images, AI summaries
8. Interaction	The person clicks, reads, comes back, or searches again

SEO happens at every step, not just step six. A page that fails at step 2 can’t rank, however good it is.

Google and Bing: same job, slightly different systems

Most of what helps on Google helps on Bing too: a site they can crawl, useful pages, relevance, authority, a good experience and no tricks. Bing also feeds Microsoft’s Copilot. So don’t build two strategies. Build one genuinely good website, and make sure both can read it.

The four kinds of effect

- Direct (technical): decides whether a page can be crawled, indexed or understood at all.
- Indirect: works through people, such as links, reviews, your brand and enquiries.
- Competitive: no fixed score, but decides how hard it is to beat whoever already ranks.
- Business: the effect on enquiries, valuations and instructions, which is the point of all of it.

How to read the percentages

Most lessons show a priority weight, such as Google Business Profile 7.25% or Page speed 4.5%. These are our estimate of where your time pays off most. They are not Google's or Bing's numbers: neither publishes a formula, and anyone who says they know the exact weights is guessing.

- Use them to decide what to do first when time is short.
- A small number doesn't mean safe to ignore. A noindex tag on the wrong page carries a small weight and can still switch off your whole site.
- Reviews and AI search have their own Reyse courses, so they're not weighted here. The weights share out 100% of your effort across what this course covers.

The words you'll see

Term	In plain English
SERP	The search engine results page: what you see after you search
Organic	The unpaid results, not the ads
Crawl	A search engine visiting and reading a page
Index	The search engine's catalogue of pages it can show

Term	In plain English
Backlink	A link to your site from someone else's
Anchor text	The clickable words of a link
Canonical URL	The "official" address when one page can be reached at several
Schema	Hidden labels that tell machines what information means
E-E-A-T	Experience, Expertise, Authoritativeness, Trustworthiness: how Google describes content it can trust
GBP	Google Business Profile, your listing on Google Maps and Search
NAP	Name, Address, Phone number
CTR	Click-through rate: how often people who see your result click it
Core Web Vitals	Google's measures of loading, responsiveness and stability
Entity	A clearly identifiable thing: your business, a person, a place
Search intent	The real reason behind a search

How every lesson works

Each lesson covers one thing. It opens with three cards: why it matters, why Google cares, and the one thing to do first. Then: what it is in plain English, a live demo where one helps, why it matters to your buyers, tenants, sellers and landlords and to Google, an agency example, how to test your own site, how to fix it, and how often to check. Mark each lesson done as you finish it and your progress is saved on your device. Most of the fixes you can do yourself; where you'll need a developer, the lesson tells you exactly what to ask for.

Sources

1. In-depth guide to how Google Search works, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/how-search-works
2. SEO Starter Guide, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/seo-starter-guide
3. Bing Webmaster Guidelines, Microsoft Bing. bing.com/webmasters/help/webmaster-guidelines-30fba23a
4. Creating helpful, reliable, people-first content, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/creating-helpful-content

Your four audiences: buyers, tenants, sellers and landlords

Four different kinds of people search for an agency, and each one searches differently, wants different pages and trusts different things.

Online: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/four-audiences

In plain English

A shop with four kinds of customer can't have one window display. Each needs to see their own thing as they walk past, or they keep walking.

Most agency websites are written for sellers and landlords, because they bring the fees. But buyers and tenants are your volume. They make most of the searches, most of the enquiries and most of the viewings, and a buyer today is a seller in five years. A tenant today may be a buyer next year and a landlord after that. So this course treats all four equally, and every lesson has a box showing how it affects each one.

	Buyers	Tenants	Sellers	Landlords
Typical searches	"3 bed house for sale [town]", "house prices [area]", "how much can I borrow", "stamp duty calculator"	"2 bed flat to rent [town]", "pet friendly rentals [area]", "holding deposit rules", "how does referencing work"	"how much is my house worth", "best estate agents [town]", "cost of selling a house", "how long does it take to sell"	"how much rent can I charge", "letting agent fees [town]", "landlord responsibilities", "full management vs let only"
What they need from your site	Fresh listings, alerts, filters, photos, floorplans, area information, buying guidance	Live availability, rent, move-in date, fees, pets and bills information, quick viewing booking	A valuation route, proof you sell well, fees, process, local expertise	Rental valuation, management options, fees, compliance help, proof you protect landlords
How fast they decide	Weeks to months, coming back again and again	Days. The best rentals go within hours	Weeks of research, then a sudden valuation request	Weeks of research, often triggered by a problem or a tenancy ending
Device	Mostly mobile, evenings and weekends	The most mobile of all, often on the move	Mixed, often desktop for research	Mixed, desktop for research

	Buyers	Tenants	Sellers	Landlords
Best pages	Area pages, property-type pages, listings, buying guide, alerts sign-up	Area rental pages, listings, tenant guide, fees page, FAQs	Valuation page, selling guide, fees, case studies	Rental valuation, management pages, landlord guide, fees
Trust signals that matter most	Accurate listings, local knowledge, reviews	Fees clearly stated, fast responses, tenant reviews	Seller reviews, sold results, named agents	Landlord reviews, redress scheme and client money protection, a named lettings team

Why buyers and tenants are easy to neglect

They mostly start on Rightmove, Zoopla and OnTheMarket. So your website's job with them is different:

- Win the direct searches: "houses for sale in [your town]", "[your agency] lettings".
- Catch them with property alerts so they come back without going through the portal.
- Show local knowledge the portals can't: streets, schools, commutes, rents by street.
- Give them a reason to remember you when they eventually sell or let.

Quick test

Write down one page on your website for each of the four audiences. If you can't name a page for tenants or buyers that isn't just "search results", that's your first gap.

Sources

1. SEO Starter Guide, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/seo-starter-guide
2. Creating helpful, reliable, people-first content, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/creating-helpful-content

Lesson 1.3, Module 1: Start here

Your free toolkit (set this up first)

Almost every test in this course uses the same handful of free tools. Setting them up once, now, takes about 90 minutes and makes every later lesson much quicker.

Online: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/free-toolkit

In plain English

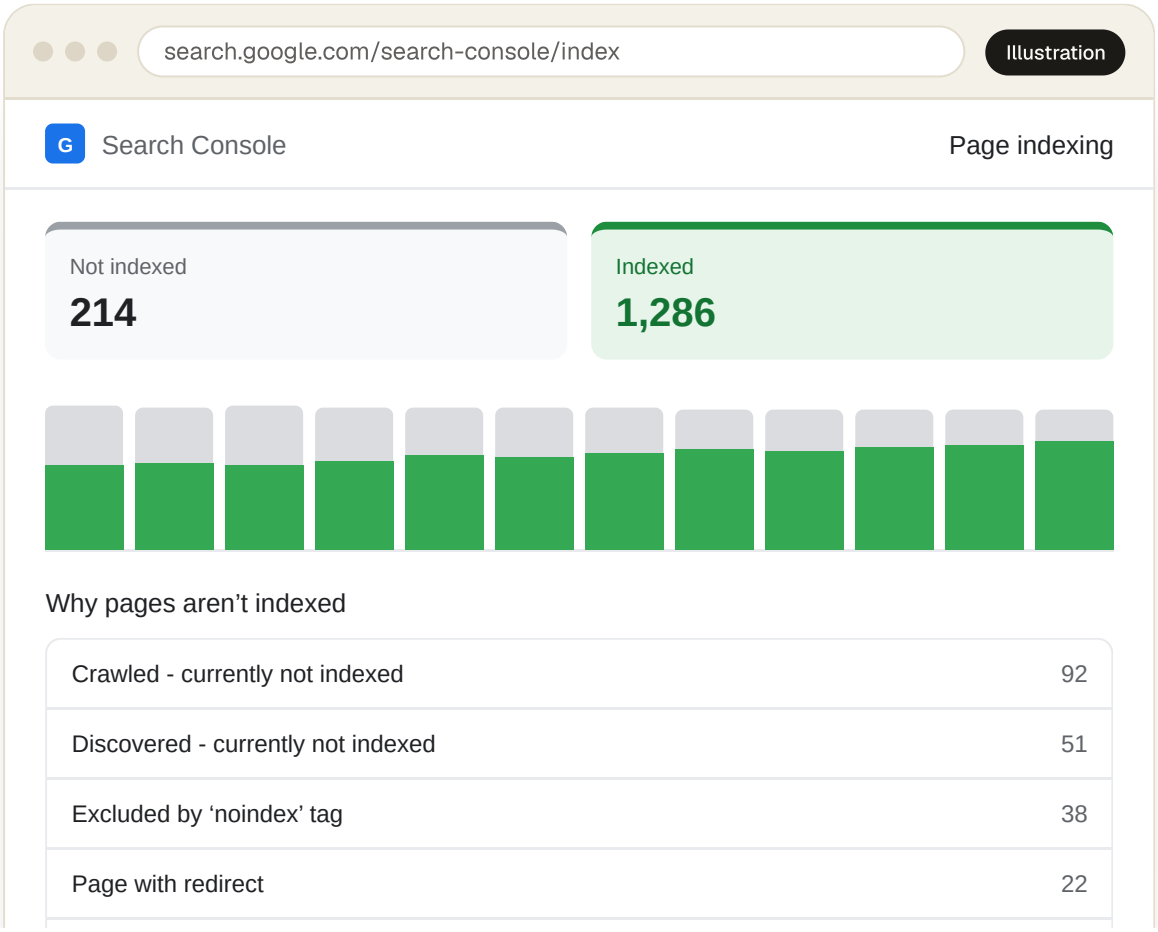
Before a mechanic can tell you what's wrong with a car, they plug in the diagnostic kit. These tools are your website's diagnostic kit.

The essentials (do these in order)

1 Google Search Console

Free

Which of your pages Google has indexed, which searches show you, problems it found, links to your site, and security warnings. The single most useful free tool in this course.



Not found (404)	11

Search Console, Indexing, Pages. Green is indexed; grey isn't. The table underneath says why. Example numbers.

How to set it up +

Open Google Search Console ↗

2 Bing Webmaster Tools

Free

The same kind of information for Bing, which also feeds Microsoft Copilot. Five minutes if you've done Search Console.

How to set it up +

Open Bing Webmaster Tools ↗

3 Google Analytics 4

Free

How many people visit, where they come from, and which ones enquire, call or request a valuation.

How to set it up +

Open Google Analytics 4 ↗

4 PageSpeed Insights

Free

How fast your pages load on a phone, and what's slowing them down.

How to set it up +

Open PageSpeed Insights ↗

5 Screaming Frog SEO Spider

Free up to 500 pages

Crawls your site the way a search engine does and lists every page, status code, title, heading, canonical tag and image. The best tool for finding technical problems.

How to set it up +

Open Screaming Frog SEO Spider ↗

6 Your business profiles

Free

Google Business Profile, Bing Places and Apple Business. Claim and verify all three; lesson 3.1 covers them in full.

Open Your business profiles ↗

7 Ahrefs Webmaster Tools

Free for your own site

A free site audit and backlink report for your own verified site. Quickest to verify by importing from Search Console.

Open Ahrefs Webmaster Tools ↗

8 Chrome DevTools

Free

Already in your browser. Right-click any page and choose Inspect (or press F12). The phone icon previews mobile layouts; View page source lets you check titles,

canonical tags and noindex tags.

Open Chrome DevTools ↗

When you outgrow the free tools

Tool	Best for
Semrush or Ahrefs	Competitor research, keywords, backlinks, rank tracking
SE Ranking	Lower-cost rank tracking and audits
BrightLocal or Local Falcon	Your Google Maps ranking at points around your office
Whitespark or Moz Local	Finding and fixing business listings across directories
Screaming Frog (paid) or Sitebulb	Crawling sites over 500 pages, scheduled audits

Examples to research, not recommendations. Compare prices, UK support and contract terms before you buy.

Using AI as your helper

Most lessons include a ready-to-copy prompt for ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini or Copilot. A few rules make them far more useful:

- Give it the data, don't describe it. Paste the exported list, the error message or the page text.
- Tell it your platform: "My site is on WordPress with Yoast" or "My site is built by [your property software provider]".
- Ask for steps, then ask it to explain anything you don't understand.
- Check its answer. AI can be confidently wrong, especially about legal rules, tool menus and anything recent. For anything risky (robots.txt, redirects, canonical tags, legal pages) check the official help page or ask a professional.
- Never paste passwords, client data or personal information.

Keep a testing log

Make one spreadsheet with these columns and fill it in as you work through the course. By the last module it’s a ready-made audit of your site.

Lesson	What I tested	Tool	Date	Result	Evidence	Fix chosen	Who	Done?	Re-test date
2.1	Valuation page indexed?	Search Console	12 Oct	Issue: noindex	Screenshot	Remove noindex	Web provider	Yes	19 Oct

Sources

1. SEO Starter Guide, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/seo-starter-guide
2. Performance report (Search results), Search Console Help. support.google.com/webmasters/answer/7576553
3. Bing Webmaster Guidelines, Microsoft Bing. bing.com/webmasters/help/webmaster-guidelines-30fba23a
4. Bing Places for Business, Microsoft Bing. bingplaces.com
5. Apple Business, Apple. business.apple.com



02

Technical foundations

If Google can’t find and read your pages, nothing else in this course matters.

2.1 Can Google find and read your pages?
2.2 Site structure, menus and internal links
2.3 Sitemaps, and getting your photos found
2.4 Duplicate addresses and canonical tags
2.5 Redirects, broken pages, and sold or let properties
2.6 Schema markup: labels for machines

Can Google find and read your pages?

Crawling is Google visiting your page. Indexing is Google deciding to keep it in its catalogue. If either one fails, the page can't appear in search at all, however good it is.

Priority 5.75%, How often: about 10 minutes a month, and after any site change, Online: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/crawling-indexing

Why it matters

If Google can't visit a page and keep it, that page can't appear in search at all, however good it is.

Why Google cares

Official guidance ●●●●●

A page that isn't indexed can't rank at all

Do this first

Run your valuation, sales and lettings pages through Search Console's URL Inspection tool.

In plain English

A librarian can't recommend a book they can't find on the shelf, or one whose pages are glued shut.

A shop that's open for business, with the lights on and the stock out, but the front door is locked from the street. Nobody gets in, and nobody knows why the tills are quiet.

There's a live demo of this on the website: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/crawling-indexing

Why it matters

If your valuation page isn't indexed, a seller searching "house valuation [town]" simply never sees it, and you never find out what you lost. Rentals go within days, so a new listing Google takes a week to find has often let before anyone could search for it.

Buyers: Listings and area pages that aren't indexed can't be found directly, only through the portals.

Tenants: A rental that's slow to be indexed is often let before anyone finds it on your site.

Sellers: A valuation page missing from Google means valuations going to whoever is there instead.

Landlords: Rental valuation and management pages must be indexed to catch landlords while they research.

To Google and Bing, Official guidance

Google has to discover and access a page before it can judge it. The usual reasons it can't: a robots.txt rule blocking it, a noindex tag left on by mistake, server errors, password protection, no links pointing to it, or content that only appears after JavaScript runs and doesn't load properly for Google. Crawling and indexing are different steps: Google can visit a page and still decide not to keep it. Bing works the same way.

The evidence: Google's and Bing's own documentation: a page that isn't crawled and indexed can't appear.

An agent example

An agency relaunches its website. The new valuation page looks perfect, but the developer left a noindex tag on it from the test site. For four months Search Console lists it under "Excluded by 'noindex' tag", and valuation enquiries quietly dry up. Removing one line fixes it.

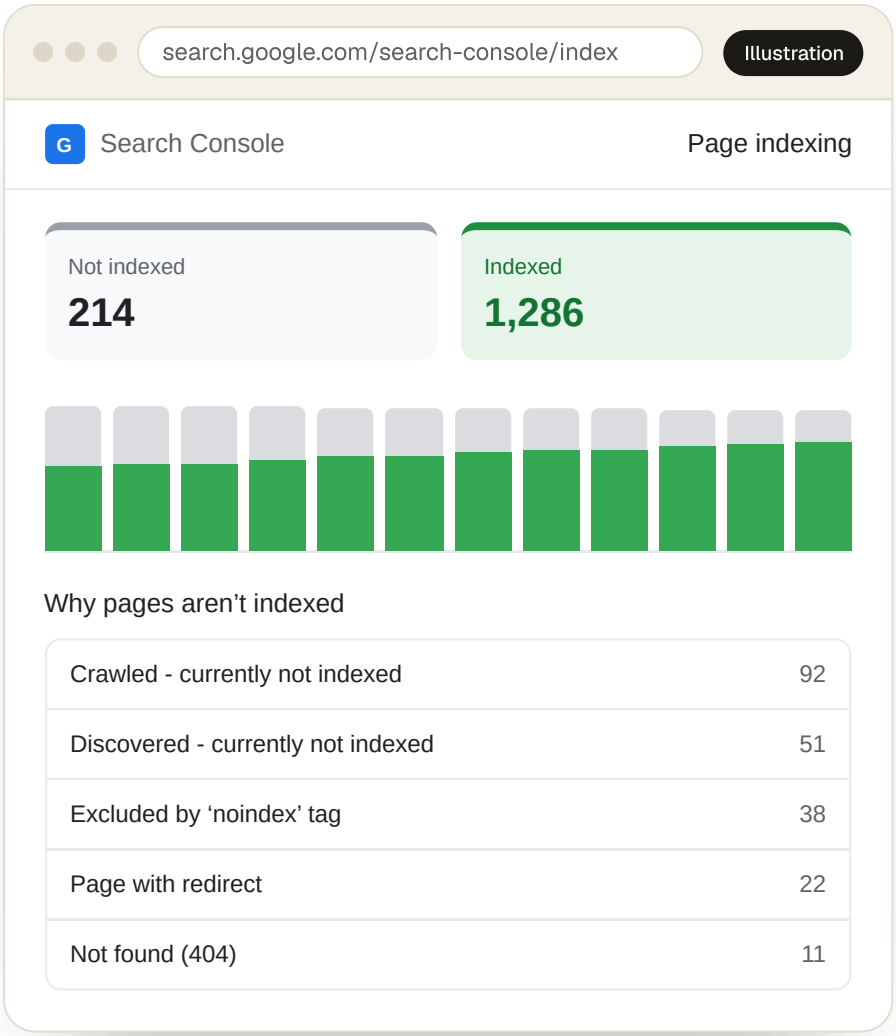
Test it

1 Search Console's Pages report

Google telling you, in its own words, which pages it isn't indexing and why.

1. Open Search Console and choose your site.
2. In the left menu, open Indexing, then Pages.
3. Note how many pages are Indexed and Not indexed.
4. Scroll to "Why pages aren't indexed" and click each reason to see example pages.
5. Red flags: "Excluded by 'noindex' tag" or "Blocked by robots.txt" on pages you want found, "Server error (5xx)", "Not found (404)" on important pages, or lots of "Crawled, currently not indexed".

Google Search Console (search.google.com/search-console)



Search Console, Indexing, Pages. Green is indexed; grey isn’t. The table underneath says why. Example numbers.

2 URL Inspection, for your key pages

Checks one page at a time, including what Google actually sees when it loads it.

1. Paste a page’s address into the “Inspect any URL” bar at the top of Search Console.
2. “URL is on Google” is good. “URL is not on Google” tells you why.
3. Click Test live URL, then View tested page, to see the screenshot and code Google gets. Is your content there?
4. Do this for your homepage, valuation page, rentals page, sales page, one listing, one area page and one guide.
5. For an important new page, click Request indexing. It’s a request, not a guarantee.

Google Search Console (search.google.com/search-console)

3 Read your robots.txt

It's always public, so it takes ten seconds.

1. Type yourdomain.co.uk/robots.txt into your browser.
2. "User-agent: *" followed by "Disallow: /" blocks your whole site. Any other Disallow line should be something you meant to hide, like an admin area.
3. In Search Console, Settings, robots.txt shows the file Google last read and any errors.

4 Look for noindex yourself

1. On a key page, right-click and choose View page source.
2. Press Ctrl+F (Cmd+F on a Mac) and search for noindex.
3. If it's there, check whether it's meant to be.
4. For the whole site at once, crawl it with Screaming Frog and open the Directives tab.

Screaming Frog SEO Spider (www.screamingfrog.co.uk/seo-spider)

5 Ask AI to read it for you

AI prompt

Here is my robots.txt and the <head> section of my page's source code. Is anything here stopping Google from crawling or indexing my important pages (homepage, valuation page, listings)? Explain in plain English and tell me exactly what to change.

ChatGPT (chatgpt.com), Claude (claude.ai)

Fix it

1 Remove an accidental noindex

1. WordPress: Settings, Reading, and untick "Discourage search engines from indexing this site".
2. Then check the page itself: in Yoast or Rank Math, the setting that allows search engines to show this page.
3. Other platforms: ask your web provider to remove the noindex tag, and send them the Search Console screenshot.

2 Correct robots.txt, carefully

One wrong line can hide your whole site, so keep a copy of the old file first.

1. Remove any Disallow line blocking pages you want found.
2. Test the result with URL Inspection before you relax.
3. If you're at all unsure, ask a developer: this file carries real risk.

3 Lift "Crawled, currently not indexed" pages

Google visited and decided the page wasn't worth keeping.

1. Add genuinely useful, original content (lessons 5.2 and 5.4).
2. Link to it from relevant pages on your site (lesson 2.2).
3. Merge thin pages that say the same thing (lesson 5.5).

4 Ask your property website provider

Many agency sites run on platforms like Reapit, Alto, Street, Expert Agent, Homeflow or Property Hive.

1. Open a support ticket with screenshots from Search Console.
2. Ask them to confirm that listings and key pages are indexable, and that listing content is in the page's HTML rather than loaded later by scripts.

Then: After any fix, use URL Inspection and Request indexing on the affected pages, then check the Pages report again in a week or two.

Keep it up

Glance at the Pages report monthly, and always after a relaunch, a new provider or a developer touching the site. A single stray line here can undo everything else in this course. **(about 10 minutes a month, and after any site change)**

Go deeper: robots.txt in more detail

robots.txt tells search engines which parts of your site to stay out of. A clean file is usually short, and the less it blocks, the better.

It stops crawling, not indexing. A blocked page can still appear in Google (just without a description) if other sites link to it. To keep a page out of Google, use a noindex tag instead, and don't block that page in robots.txt, or Google never sees the noindex.

It's a public file and a polite request, not a lock. Never use it to hide anything private.

Whether to allow AI tools like ChatGPT to read your site is covered in our free GEO course.

GEO 3.1: Letting the right AI crawlers in (/geocourse/ai-crawler-access)

Go deeper: JavaScript and rendering

Many property sites build listings and search results with JavaScript after the page loads. Google can run JavaScript, but it's an extra step that can be delayed or fail, and Bing is less forgiving.

Test it: on a listing, View page source and search for the price or a line of the description. If it isn't in the source but shows on screen, the content depends on scripts. URL Inspection's View tested page shows whether Google gets it.

Fix it: ask your provider to put key content and links in the HTML from the start (server-side rendering), and to use real links (<a href>) for any filter or page you want found.

Sources

1. In-depth guide to how Google Search works, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/how-search-works
2. Introduction to robots.txt, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/crawling-indexing/robots/intro
3. Block search indexing with noindex, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/crawling-indexing/block-indexing
4. Understand JavaScript SEO basics, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/crawling-indexing/javascript/javascript-seo-basics
5. Bing Webmaster Guidelines, Microsoft Bing. bing.com/webmasters/help/webmaster-guidelines-30fba23a

Site structure, menus and internal links

How your pages are organised and linked together: whether a visitor (and Google) can get from your homepage to any page in a few clicks, and always knows where they are.

Priority 6.25%, How often: about 15 minutes, per batch of new pages, Online: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/site-architecture

Why it matters

If people can't reach a page in a few clicks, they give up, and Google may never find it either.

Why Google cares

Official guidance ●●●●●

Pages Google can't reach can't rank

Do this first

Make sure Buy, Rent, Sell, Let and Valuation are all in your top menu.

In plain English

A school with clear departments and signs on every corridor. A new pupil can find the hall, the library and the office without asking anyone.

The hallway layout connecting every room in a shop. If a customer can't easily find their way to what they're looking for, they give up and leave.

There's a live demo of this on the website: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/site-architecture

Why it matters

Someone who wants to rent lands on your homepage, can't see an obvious way to your lettings listings, and simply goes back to the portal. You didn't lose them to a better agent, you lost them to a menu.

Buyers: Need to get from an area page to listings to the viewing form in a few taps.

Tenants: Need the same quick path: "Rent in [area]", then available homes, then book.

Sellers: Must be able to reach the valuation page from anywhere on the site.

Landlords: Must find rental valuation, management and fees quickly.

To Google and Bing, Official guidance

Internal links are how Google discovers your pages, works out how they relate, and judges which ones matter most. A page nothing links to (an orphan page) may never be found, and a page five clicks deep looks unimportant. Good structure also spreads the strength of your best-linked pages to the rest of the site. Bing uses links the same way.

The evidence: Google documents internal links as how it finds and understands your pages. How much structure moves rankings is practitioner experience.

An agent example

A Manchester area page links to houses for sale, flats to rent, the valuation page and the landlord guide in Manchester. Every listing links back to its area and property type. Google can see how it all fits together, and so can a buyer who arrived on one listing and wants to see more.

Test it

1 Sketch it and count the clicks

Fifteen minutes, no tools, and it forces you to walk the path a visitor takes.

1. Sketch your site as a tree: Home, then Buy, Rent, Sell, Let, Areas, Guides, then the pages under each.
2. From the homepage, count the clicks to reach a typical listing, the valuation form, a tenant guide, a landlord guide and an area page.
3. Anything more than three clicks deep needs a shortcut.

Screaming Frog SEO Spider

Illustration

https://brindlecote.example/ Start Crawl 100%

Internal | External | Response Codes | Page Titles | Canonicals | Images

Address	Status Code	Status	Indexability
brindlecote.example/	200	OK	Indexable
brindlecote.example/valuation	200	OK	Non-Indexable
brindlecote.example/lettings/2-be…	301	Moved Permane…	Non-Indexable
brindlecote.example/area/marlbr…	404	Not Found	Non-Indexable
brindlecote.example/landlords/fees	200	OK	Indexable

Success (2xx): 1,204 Redirection (3xx): 86 Client Error (4xx): 23

Screaming Frog after a crawl. Sort by Status Code to find broken (4xx) and redirected (3xx) pages, and by Indexability to spot a key page that's been switched off. Example numbers.

2 Screaming Frog crawl depth

Measures every page at once instead of guessing.

1. Crawl your site, open the Internal tab and sort by Crawl Depth. Anything at 4 or more is worth a look.
2. Check the Inlinks column: pages with 0 or 1 internal links pointing to them are badly connected.
3. Visualisations, Crawl Tree Graph draws the whole structure.

Screaming Frog SEO Spider (www.screamingfrog.co.uk/seo-spider)

3 Search Console internal links

1. Open Links in the left menu, then Top linked pages under Internal links.
2. Your valuation, rentals and sales pages should be near the top. If they're not, they're underlinked.

Google Search Console (search.google.com/search-console)

4 The five-person task test

Shows you menus through a stranger's eyes.

1. Ask five people who don't work for you to do one task each on your site while you watch silently: find a 2 bed to rent, book a valuation, find your fees.
2. Don't help. Note every pause, wrong click and "where would it be?"

5 Ask AI

AI prompt

Here is a list of my website's pages with how many internal links point to each. Which important pages (valuation, rentals, sales, landlord and tenant guides, area pages) are underlinked? Suggest where to add links and what the link text should say.

ChatGPT (chatgpt.com), Claude (claude.ai)

Fix it

1 Add hub pages

One page that gathers everything about a topic or place.

1. "Rent in [area]" linking to every rental there and the tenant guide.
2. "Buy in [area]" linking to every listing and the buyer guide.

2 Link inside your content

1. In guides, link to the service they lead to: "get a free valuation", "see homes to rent in Didsbury".
2. Link related pages to each other: an area guide to its listings, a listing to its area.

3 Fix the menus and footer

1. Top menu: Buy, Rent, Sell, Let (Landlords), Valuation, Areas, About, Contact. Not “Services”.
2. Footer: fees, complaints, privacy, your redress scheme, contact.
3. Breadcrumbs (Home > Rent > Didsbury > 2 bed flat) on deeper pages. Yoast and Rank Math can add them.
4. One clear next step on each page, and a site search that works.

4 Let a plugin suggest links

On WordPress, Link Whisper or Yoast Premium suggest internal links as you write.

Link Whisper (linkwhisper.com)

Keep it up

Every new page needs linking in properly. This isn’t a job that finishes once: review it whenever you add a batch of new pages. **(about 15 minutes, per batch of new pages)**

Go deeper: Web addresses (URLs)

Good addresses are short, readable and stable: /letting-agents/manchester/ makes sense to a person and to Google; /index.php?id=237 doesn’t. They’re a small signal, not a magic lever.

Pick one simple pattern and use it for new pages. Only change existing addresses if you can permanently redirect (301) every old one and update your internal links. Changing them carelessly loses rankings.

Go deeper: Serving other countries or languages

Most UK agencies can skip this. It matters if you genuinely market to overseas buyers or landlords, or publish pages in other languages.

If you’re UK-only, check nothing is set up wrongly: View page source and search for hreflang. If you find hreflang tags but only have one version of your site, ask your developer to remove them. Wrong hreflang is worse than none.

If you do serve other languages, have a fluent speaker who knows property check every translated page (machine translation gets legal terms wrong), use separate addresses for each language, and have a developer set up hreflang so each version points to the others.

Sources

1. Link best practices for Google, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/crawling-indexing/links-crawlable
2. SEO Starter Guide, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/seo-starter-guide

Sitemaps, and getting your photos found

A sitemap is a file listing the pages you want search engines to know about. It matters most on property sites, where listings appear and disappear every day. This lesson also covers making sure your photos and videos can be found.

Priority 1.25%, How often: about 10 minutes a month, Online: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/xml-sitemap

Why it matters

A new listing Google hasn't found yet won't show up, even for a search it matches perfectly.

Why Google cares

Official guidance ●●●●●

Faster discovery, not guaranteed indexing

Do this first

Submit your sitemap in Search Console, under Indexing, then Sitemaps.

In plain English

A contents page at the front of a book. It helps the reader find every chapter, but it doesn't mean every chapter gets read.

There's a live demo of this on the website: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/xml-sitemap

Why it matters

Nobody sees the file itself, but they feel it: a brand-new listing Google hasn't picked up yet simply doesn't show when someone searches for it, even if it's the perfect match.

Buyers: New listings are found sooner when the sitemap updates as soon as they go live.

Tenants: Rentals move fast, so a listing found a week late may already be let.

Sellers: Your service pages are included, so they're found reliably.

Landlords: Same: management and rental valuation pages are always on the list.

To Google and Bing, Official guidance

A sitemap helps Google and Bing discover pages faster and more reliably, especially new ones. It doesn't guarantee they're indexed or ranked. Keep it clean: only live pages you want found, with no redirects, noindex pages or sold listings left in it. Google uses the last-modified date if it's accurate and ignores the old priority and change-frequency settings.

The evidence: Google and Bing document sitemaps as a discovery aid that doesn't guarantee indexing.

An agent example

A lettings branch finds its sitemap still lists 300 let properties that now redirect. It asks its provider to include only live, indexable pages and to put available listings in their own sitemap, so it can see in Search Console exactly how many current listings Google has indexed.

Test it

1 Open the file

1. Visit yourdomain.co.uk/sitemap.xml (or /sitemap_index.xml) in your browser.
2. Does it load? Are your listings in it? Paste it into an AI tool (prompt below) to spot anything that shouldn't be there.

2 Search Console's Sitemaps report

The file existing isn't the same as Google using it.

1. In Search Console, open Indexing, then Sitemaps.
2. Check the status says Success, and compare the discovered pages with how many pages you actually have.
3. Do the same in Bing Webmaster Tools under Sitemaps.

Google Search Console (search.google.com/search-console), Bing Webmaster Tools (www.bing.com/webmasters)

3 Check your photos can be found

1. In Google Images, search site:yourdomain.co.uk and see whether your property photos appear.
2. Check your robots.txt isn't blocking your image folders.

4 Ask AI

AI prompt

Here is my XML sitemap. Which addresses in it look like they shouldn't be there: redirects, noindexed pages, addresses with ? parameters, or sold and let properties? Which important page types seem to be missing?

ChatGPT (chatgpt.com), Claude (claude.ai)

Fix it

1 No sitemap? Get one generated

1. WordPress: Yoast SEO or Rank Math create one automatically, free.
2. Squarespace, Wix and Shopify make one automatically; check their help pages for the address.
3. Property platforms usually have a sitemap setting: ask your provider.

Yoast SEO (yoast.com), Rank Math (rankmath.com)

2 Submit it

1. Search Console: Indexing, Sitemaps, enter the full address, Submit.
2. Bing Webmaster Tools: Sitemaps, Submit sitemap.
3. Add a line to robots.txt: Sitemap: https://www.your-agency.example/sitemap.xml (with your own web address).

Google Search Console (search.google.com/search-console), Bing Webmaster Tools (www.bing.com/webmasters)

3 Keep it clean

1. Only live, indexable pages that are the official version of themselves.
2. Sold and let listings come out when their page redirects or is removed.
3. A separate sitemap for available listings makes indexing easy to monitor.

4 Make photos and video findable

1. Property photos should be ordinary images on the page, not backgrounds or loaded by a script.
2. Name files sensibly: kitchen-extension-terraced-house-manchester.jpg, not IMG_4021.jpg.
3. Yoast and Rank Math include images in the sitemap.

Keep it up

Set it up once, then glance at the Sitemaps report monthly. Check it again whenever your provider changes how listings are published. **(about 10 minutes a month)**

Sources

1. Learn about sitemaps, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/crawling-indexing/sitemaps/overview

2. Introduction to robots.txt, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/crawling-indexing/robots/intro

3. Block search indexing with noindex, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/crawling-indexing/block-indexing

Duplicate addresses and canonical tags

The same page can often be reached at several addresses: with and without “www”, with tracking codes, or with sort and filter settings added. A canonical tag tells search engines which one is the official version.

Priority 2.5%, How often: about 10 minutes, every few months, Online: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/canonicalization

Why it matters

When one page lives at several addresses, Google may show the wrong one.

Why Google cares

Official guidance ●●●●●

Not a penalty, but Google may pick the wrong page

Do this first

Check every important page has a canonical tag pointing to itself.

In plain English

A library book accidentally has three shelf numbers. The librarian needs to know which one is the real one, or it ends up in three places at once.

A friend with three phone numbers. You need to know which one to save, so you always reach them.

There’s a live demo of this on the website: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/canonicalization

Why it matters

Mostly invisible, until someone lands on a messy address full of tracking codes, shares it, or gets shown an older copy of a page than the one you’d want them to see.

Buyers: May land on sorted, filtered or tracking versions of the same listing.

Tenants: Same, and shared links full of codes look untrustworthy.

Sellers: Your valuation page can be split across www and non-www versions.

Landlords: Same with management pages.

To Google and Bing, Official guidance

Duplicate content isn't a penalty. Google says some duplication is normal and simply picks one version to show. The risk is that it picks the wrong one, and that links and other signals get split across copies instead of adding up on one page. A canonical tag is a strong hint, not a command, so your redirects, internal links and sitemap should all agree on the same version. Property sites create thousands of duplicates through filters and sorting, which also wastes the time Google spends crawling you.

The evidence: Google documents canonical tags as a strong hint, and says duplicate content isn't a penalty.

> **An agent example**
> One property can be reached at /property/123, /property/123?source=facebook, /property/123?sort=price and /property/123?utm_campaign=spring. Each version carries a canonical tag pointing to /property/123, so Google treats them as one page.

Test it

1 Check a few pages by hand

1. Open your homepage, right-click and choose View page source. Search for canonical.
2. The address inside should be the page you're on.
3. Repeat on your valuation page, a listing and an area page.
4. Add ?utm_source=test to the end of a listing's address and check again: the canonical should still be the clean address.

2 The four-versions test

1. Visit http://yourdomain, https://yourdomain, http://www.yourdomain and https://www.yourdomain.
2. Three of them should redirect to the fourth. If more than one loads on its own, that's a problem.

3 Screaming Frog and Search Console

Catches problems on every page at once.

1. Screaming Frog: open the Canonicals tab and filter for Missing and Non-indexable canonical.
2. Search Console: in Indexing, Pages, look for “Duplicate without user-selected canonical” and “Duplicate, Google chose different canonical than user”.
3. In Google, search site:yourdomain.co.uk inurl:? to see filter and tracking addresses that have been indexed.

Screaming Frog SEO Spider (www.screamingfrog.co.uk/seo-spider), Google Search Console (search.google.com/search-console)

4 Ask AI

AI prompt

Here are 20 page addresses from my site and the canonical tag on each. Which canonicals are missing, wrong or inconsistent? Explain in plain English what my developer should change.

ChatGPT (chatgpt.com), Claude (claude.ai)

Fix it

1 Self-referencing canonicals everywhere

Every page pointing to itself by default prevents most problems before they start.

1. WordPress: Yoast and Rank Math do this automatically.
2. Other platforms: ask your provider to switch it on, including for listings.

2 Redirect the other versions

1. Ask your host or developer for a permanent (301) redirect from http and non-preferred www versions to your one official version. It’s usually a single setting.

3 Tame filter and tracking addresses

1. Decide which filter combinations deserve their own page (“2 bed flats to rent in Didsbury”) and make those proper pages with their own content.
2. Every other combination gets a canonical to the main page, or a noindex tag.
3. Remove links to useless variations from your own pages.
4. Don’t block them in robots.txt without a developer: blocked pages can’t pass on their canonical.

4 A canonical pointing to the wrong page

Not a DIY job: getting it wrong can hurt more.

1. Hand your findings to a developer, or ask AI to write the brief for them.
2. Never point a canonical at a page that redirects or is noindexed.

Keep it up

This tends to quietly reappear after site updates. Check every few months, and after any template change. **(about 10 minutes, every few months)**

Sources

1. What is URL canonicalization, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/crawling-indexing/canonicalization
2. Site moves with URL changes, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/crawling-indexing/site-move-with-url-changes
3. Link best practices for Google, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/crawling-indexing/links-crawlable

Redirects, broken pages, and sold or let properties

What happens when someone, or Google, visits a page that has moved, been deleted, or belongs to a property that has sold or let.

Priority 1.5%, How often: about 20 minutes a month, Online: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/redirects-and-broken-pages

Why it matters

Old links that end on an error page feel careless, and waste the visit.

Why Google cares

Official guidance ●●●●●

Property sites need a rule for every status

Do this first

Write a rule for what happens to a listing's page at each status: under offer, sold, let, withdrawn.

In plain English

A sign saying "We've moved next door" sends people to the right place. A sign saying "Closed" just sends them home.

A forwarding address at the post office. Letters for the old address should reach the right new one, not a stranger's house.

Why it matters

Someone clicks an old "for sale" link and lands on a plain error page, or on a random house in another town. It feels broken and careless, and they don't dig further.

Buyers: Click old links to sold homes and hit dead ends or unrelated pages.

Tenants: Same with let properties, and they won't search your site to find the alternatives.

Sellers: Dead links to service pages feel neglectful.

Landlords: Same: a broken fees page is a reason to call someone else.

To Google and Bing, Official guidance

Every address returns a status code: 200 (fine), 301 (moved permanently), 302 (moved temporarily), 404 (not found), 410 (gone for good) or 5xx (server error). A correct 301 sends visitors and the old page's ranking signals to the new one. Broken links, long chains of redirects and "soft 404s" (an empty page that says 200) waste Google's crawling and frustrate visitors. Property sites create and remove addresses constantly, so this needs a plan, not luck.

The evidence: Google documents 301s, 404s, 410s and soft 404s. The sold-and-let policy is practitioner advice.

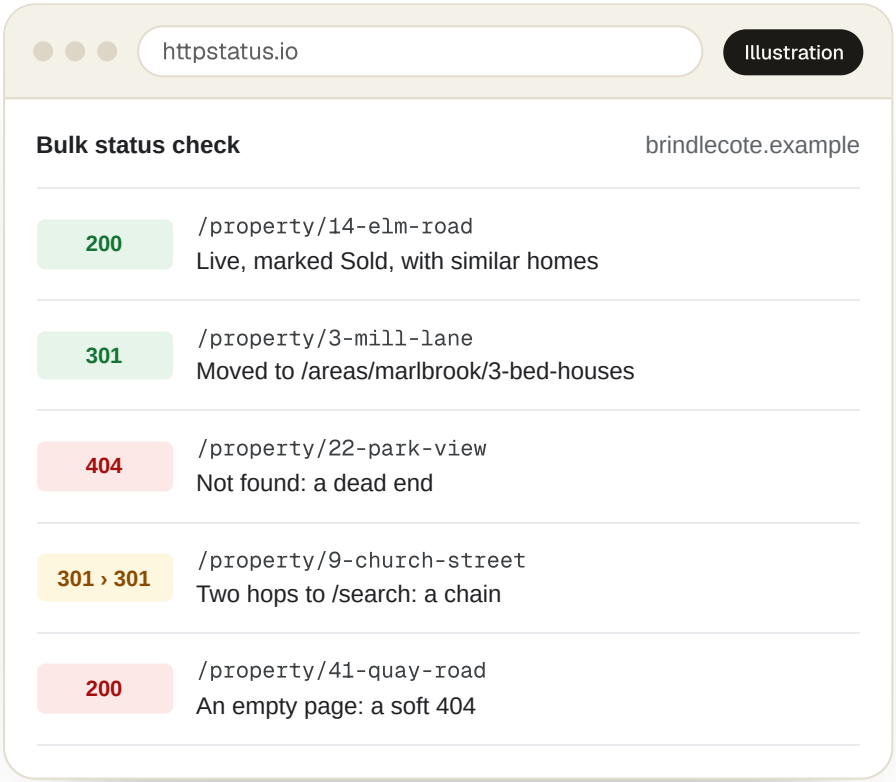
> **An agent example**
> A property sold six months ago used to redirect to a random listing. The agency now keeps sold pages live for three months, clearly marked Sold, with similar homes nearby and a valuation link. After that they redirect to the area page for that property type.

Test it

1 Search Console

1. In Indexing, Pages, check Not found (404), Page with redirect, Soft 404 and Server error (5xx). Click each for examples.

Google Search Console (search.google.com/search-console)



Five sold and let addresses checked in one go. The first two follow a policy; the dead end, the chain and the empty page all need fixing. Made-up addresses.

2 Screaming Frog

1. Crawl the site and open Response Codes. Filter for Client Error (4xx), Redirection (3xx) and Server Error (5xx).
2. Bulk Export, Response Codes, Client Error (4xx) Inlinks shows which of your pages link to the dead ones.
3. Reports, Redirect Chains shows redirects that hop more than once.

Screaming Frog SEO Spider (www.screamingfrog.co.uk/seo-spider)

3 The sold and let test

1. Pick five sold or let properties and visit their old addresses.
2. Write down what happens: still live and marked sold? Redirected? Where to? An error page?
3. To check a batch of addresses at once, paste them into httpstatus.io.

httpstatus.io (httpstatus.io)

4 Ask AI

AI prompt

Here is a list of broken addresses on my estate agency website and a list of my live pages. Suggest the best redirect destination for each broken address. If nothing relevant exists, mark it 410.

ChatGPT (chatgpt.com), Claude (claude.ai)

Fix it

1 Write a status policy

Agree it once with your team and your provider, so every property is handled the same way.

1. Under offer, Sold STC, Let agreed: keep the page live with a clear label.
2. Sold or let: keep it live for a while, marked clearly, with similar properties and a valuation link. Then redirect it to the closest area or property-type page.
3. Withdrawn: redirect to the closest relevant search page.
4. Truly gone with nothing relevant to send people to: a 410 (gone).
5. Before removing any page, check whether it has links from other sites (lesson 7.1). Those are worth keeping with a redirect.

2 Fix the links and redirects

1. Update your own links that point to dead pages.
2. Set up 301 redirects: on WordPress, the free Redirection plugin, Yoast Premium or Rank Math; elsewhere, your provider's redirect manager.
3. Collapse chains, so each old address redirects straight to its final page in one hop.

Redirection plugin (wordpress.org/plugins/redirection)

3 Make your 404 page useful

1. Add a search box, links to Buy, Rent, Sell and Let, and your phone number, so a dead end becomes a way back in.

Keep it up

Every week brings new listings and new sales, so new chances for this to break. Check the reports monthly, and spot-check sold and let pages. **(about 20 minutes a month)**

Sources

1. Site moves with URL changes, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/crawling-indexing/site-move-with-url-changes
2. What is URL canonicalization, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/crawling-indexing/canonicalization

Schema markup: labels for machines

Hidden code that labels your information for search engines: your business name, address, phone, opening hours and profiles, and on guides and listings, what each page is.

Priority 1.5%, How often: about 15 minutes a month, Online: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/schema-markup

Why it matters

Without labels, Google has to guess your business details from the page itself.

Why Google cares

Official guidance ●●●●●

Helps Google understand you; not a ranking shortcut

Do this first

Add your business details as schema with a plugin or the AI prompt in this lesson, then test it.

In plain English

Instead of just writing “ABC Property” on the page, you also hand the machine a label that says “ABC Property is an estate agency, at this address, with this phone number”.

The labels on food packaging. They’re only useful if the label matches what’s actually in the box.

There’s a live demo of this on the website: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/schema-markup

Why it matters

Done well, Google understands exactly who you are, which helps your business details, logo and breadcrumbs show correctly in results and in the panel about your business. It also helps tell you apart from a similarly named firm elsewhere.

Buyers: May see clearer results: breadcrumbs and your agency details.

Tenants: Same.

Sellers: See your business name, logo and details shown consistently.

Landlords: Same, and less chance of confusing you with another firm.

To Google and Bing, Official guidance

Google says structured data helps it understand a page and can make it eligible for enhanced results, but it doesn't guarantee them and isn't a ranking boost on its own. Marking up anything that isn't actually on the page breaks Google's guidelines. Useful types for agencies: RealEstateAgent (a kind of local business) for your business, BreadcrumbList for navigation, and Article for guides. Google stopped showing FAQ rich results altogether on 7 May 2026, so FAQ markup no longer wins anything in Search. Never mark up review stars or ratings for your own business on your own site: Google doesn't allow it.

The evidence: Google's structured data guidelines. It helps Google understand a page; it isn't a ranking boost on its own.

An agent example

A lettings agency shares its name with a firm in another county. Its homepage markup gives its exact name, address, phone and opening hours, plus links to its official Google, LinkedIn and Facebook profiles (the sameAs field). Search engines stop mixing the two up.

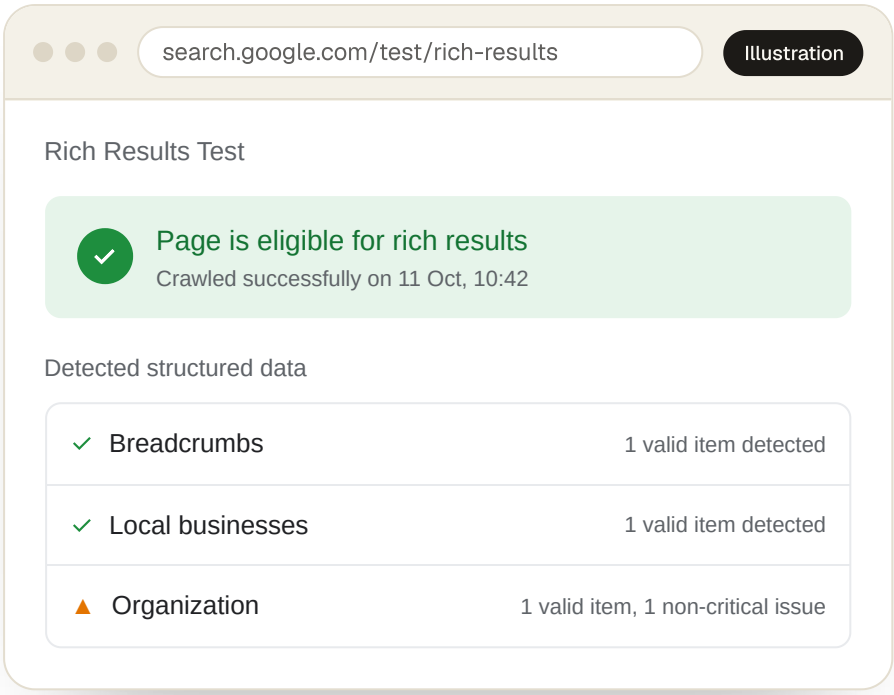
Test it

1 Google's Rich Results Test

Shows what Google can read, and any errors.

1. Open the Rich Results Test and enter your homepage address.
2. It lists any markup it finds, or says no items were detected.
3. Repeat for a listing and a guide.

Rich Results Test (search.google.com/test/rich-results)



Google's Rich Results Test. Green means Google can read your schema; a non-critical issue is a missing optional detail, not an error. Example numbers.

2 Schema Markup Validator

Checks all markup for mistakes, not just the types Google uses.

1. Open validator.schema.org, enter the address and look for anything flagged.

Schema Markup Validator (validator.schema.org)

3 Compare it with the page

1. View page source and search for application/ld+json.
2. Do the name, address, phone, price and status in the markup match what's visible on the page? A listing marked available at the old price when the page says under offer is a problem.

4 Ask AI

AI prompt

Here is the JSON-LD markup from my page and the visible text of the page. Is the markup valid schema.org, and does every value match what's visible? List anything wrong or missing.

ChatGPT (chatgpt.com), Claude (claude.ai)

Fix it

1 Use a plugin

On WordPress, Yoast SEO and Rank Math add Organization, website, breadcrumb and article markup automatically.

Yoast SEO (yoast.com), Rank Math (rankmath.com)

2 Generate it with AI

1. Fill in your real details and run the prompt.
2. Check the result in the Rich Results Test before adding it.
3. Add it to your site's header (a "custom code" area in most site builders), through Google Tag Manager, or ask your developer. It's a quick, low-risk job.

AI prompt

Create JSON-LD schema markup for a RealEstateAgent with these details: name [ ], address [ ], phone [ ], website [ ], logo URL [ ], opening hours [ ], and sameAs links to these official profiles [ ]. Only use the details I've given.

ChatGPT (chatgpt.com), Claude (claude.ai)

3 Fix errors, not everything

1. If errors are flagged, paste the error and your existing markup into an AI tool and ask it to correct only those issues.
2. On listings, ask your provider to keep the markup in sync with the live price and status.

Keep it up

Site updates can quietly break markup without anything visibly changing. Re-check monthly, and whenever your details change. **(about 15 minutes a month)**

Sources

1. Introduction to structured data markup, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/appearance/structured-data/intro-structured-data



03

Local

Showing up on the map and in local searches, in the places you genuinely work. For most agencies, the quickest win in the course.

3.1 Google Business Profile (and Bing and Apple too)
3.2 Area pages that show real local knowledge
3.3 Distance, and why you show up in some places and not others
3.4 One business, the same details everywhere

Google Business Profile (and Bing and Apple too)

Your free listing on Google Maps and Search: name, address, phone, opening hours, categories, photos and posts, seen before anyone reaches your website. Bing and Apple Maps have their own versions, and they matter too.

Priority 7.25%, How often: about 15 minutes a month, plus a weekly post, Online: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/google-business-profile

Why it matters

Your Business Profile is often the first thing people see. A thin one loses the call.

Why Google cares

Official guidance ●●●●●

The cornerstone of local search

Do this first

Complete every field honestly, with your business name exactly as it is on your signs.

In plain English

A noticeboard at the town shop that says who you are, where you are and when you're open. If it's right and up to date, people find you and trust it.

The sign and window display of a high street shop. If they're tidy and accurate, passers-by know straight away what you do and whether you're open.

Why it matters

For a lot of people, this is the first thing they ever see about you. Missing photos, no hours or a thin description make a good agency look closed or careless, and the agency next to you on the map gets the call.

Buyers: Find you on Maps, and check your photos, hours, directions and call button.

Tenants: Same, often on the move, and call straight from the profile.

Sellers: Compare your profile with the agency next to you before ringing either.

Landlords: Same, and look for signs you're established and active.

To Google and Bing, Official guidance

Google says local results are based mainly on relevance, distance and prominence. In Whitespark's 2026 survey of local search experts, your primary Business Profile category was rated the single most important factor for the map results. A complete, accurate profile feeds relevance; reviews, links and how well known you are feed prominence. You can't pay for a better local ranking. Google has also removed the Questions and answers section from profiles (phased out from late 2025): its AI now answers questions about businesses using their website, profile and reviews, so all three need to say clearly what you do, where, for whom and on what terms.

The evidence: Google names relevance, distance and prominence. Whitespark's 2026 expert survey rates your primary category the top map factor.

An agent example

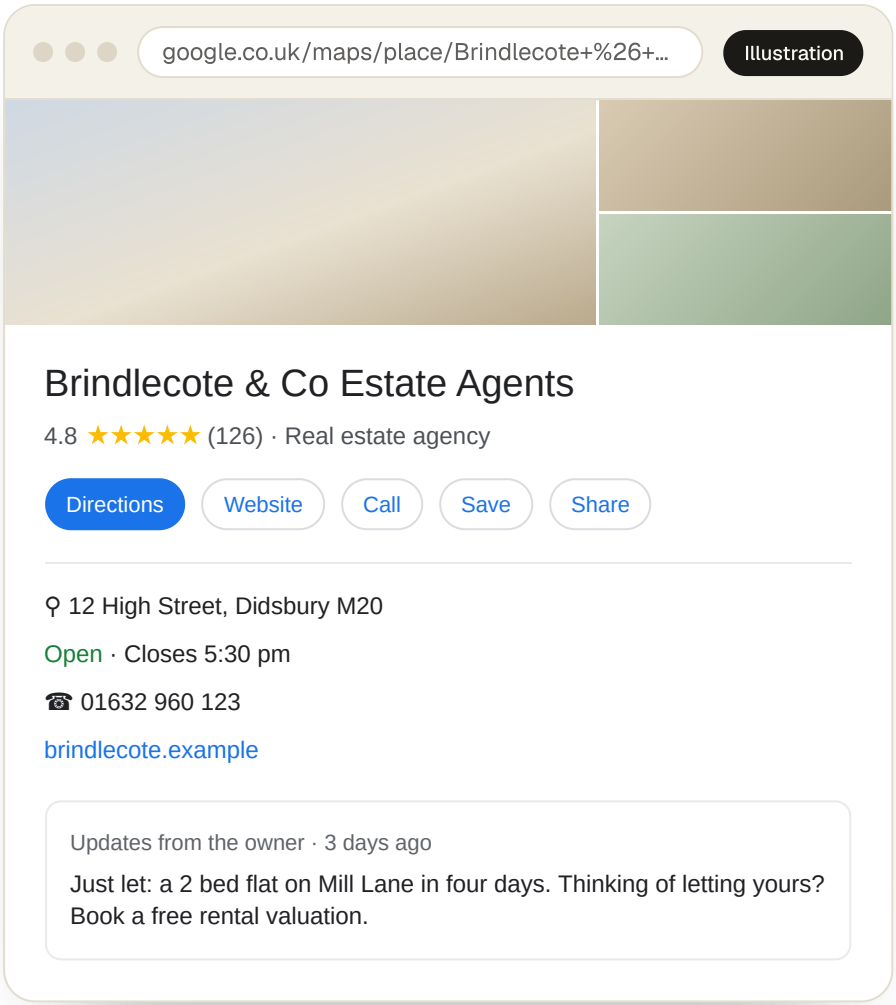
An agency's profile is claimed, but its main category is just "Business", it has four photos from 2021, and its website link goes to the homepage. It changes the category to estate agent, adds letting agent as a second category, uploads 20 real photos, links to its valuation page, and starts a weekly post.

Test it

1 The completeness audit

1. Log in at business.google.com.
2. Go through every section: business name, main and extra categories, address, phone, website link, opening hours (and holiday hours), description, services, photos and attributes.
3. Note anything blank, vague or out of date.

Google Business Profile (business.google.com), Whitespark: Local Search Ranking Factors (whitespark.ca/local-search-ranking-factors)



A complete Business Profile: the real business name, the right category, hours, photos and recent posts, before anyone visits your website. Example numbers.

2 Compare with the top three

Shows what “complete” actually looks like in your area.

1. Search “estate agents [town]” on Google Maps and open the top three profiles.
2. Compare their photo count, categories, services and how recently they posted.

3 Your Performance report

1. In your profile dashboard, open Performance.
2. Check views, calls, direction requests and website clicks over the last three to six months. Falling numbers are an early warning.

4 Check Bing and Apple

1. Search your business name on Bing, and on Apple Maps (on an iPhone or maps.apple.com).
2. Then check bingplaces.com and business.apple.com to see whether you've claimed them.

Bing Places (www.bingplaces.com), Apple Business (business.apple.com)

5 Ask AI

AI prompt
Here are the details from my Google Business Profile. Is it complete and in line with Google's guidelines for estate and letting agents? What's missing or vague?

ChatGPT (chatgpt.com), Claude (claude.ai)

Fix it

1 Complete every field, honestly

1. Use your real business name, exactly as on your signs. Adding keywords ("ABC Estate Agents Best in Manchester") breaks Google's guidelines and can get the profile suspended.
2. Choose the most accurate main category (estate agent, or real estate agency) and add relevant extras (letting agent, property management company). Check the current names in the dashboard.
3. Add services and descriptions for sales, lettings, management and valuations.
4. Point the website link at the most useful page, and add a tracking tag (UTM) so you can see profile visits in Google Analytics.

Campaign URL builder (ga-dev-tools.google/campaign-url-builder)

2 Photos and posts

1. At least 10 real photos to start: the office outside and in, the team, the local area, recent sold and let boards. Then keep adding a few at a time.
2. Post weekly: a new instruction, a market note, a tenant tip. Set a calendar reminder; the reason this lapses is forgetting, not effort.
3. Stuck for ideas? Ask AI to draft a post from one line, then personalise it before posting.
4. Google doesn't say posts boost rankings directly, but an abandoned-looking profile puts people off.

3 Claim Bing and Apple

1. Bing Places can import your details straight from Google, which takes minutes.
2. Apple Business (it replaced Apple Business Connect in April 2026) is separate and needs its own verification. Worth it: about half of UK smartphones are iPhones, and Apple Maps, Siri and Spotlight take their business details from it.

Bing Places (www.bingplaces.com), Apple Business (business.apple.com)

4 Verification problems

1. Use the support options in the dashboard. Never create a second profile for the same office.

Keep it up

Hours change, services get added, photos age. Review the whole profile monthly, and post weekly. **(about 15 minutes a month, plus a weekly post)**

Go deeper: Being early on new platforms

Many agencies still haven't claimed Bing Places or Apple Business. On a platform where you're the only local agent, you're the obvious choice with no comparison at all.

That advantage fades as others catch up, so the habit worth building is watching for what's next. Once a quarter, ask an AI tool with web search whether any new local search or maps platforms have launched.

Sources

1. Guidelines for representing your business on Google, Google Business Profile Help. support.google.com/business/answer/3038177
2. Tips to improve your local ranking on Google, Google Business Profile Help. support.google.com/business/answer/7091
3. Local Search Ranking Factors 2026, Whitespark, 2026. whitespark.ca/local-search-ranking-factors
4. Bing Places for Business, Microsoft Bing. bingplaces.com
5. Apple Business, Apple. business.apple.com

Area pages that show real local knowledge

Pages about the places you cover that show genuine local knowledge (streets, schools, transport, prices, rents, who lives there), rather than the same template with a different town name dropped in.

Priority 2.75%, How often: Every 6 months; figures quarterly, Online: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/area-pages

Why it matters

Template area pages with the town name swapped show you don't really know the patch.

Why Google cares

Official guidance ●●●●●

Real local knowledge beats swapped place names

Do this first

Rewrite your most important area page from what your team actually knows.

In plain English

Writing 500 school reports and only changing the pupil's name isn't useful: everyone can tell you didn't think about any of them. A page about a place needs real facts about that place.

Asking directions from a local who knows the streets, versus someone reading the place name off a piece of paper.

Why it matters

Buyers and tenants use area pages to work out where they want to live. Sellers and landlords read them to judge whether you really know their patch.

Buyers: Explore neighbourhoods, schools and commutes before they look at listings.

Tenants: Want typical rents, transport and what an area is really like.

Sellers: Judge your local expertise from what you say about their area.

Landlords: Look for rent levels and demand in their area.

To Google and Bing, Official guidance

Local relevance comes from genuine coverage: local properties, market information and real area knowledge. Pages that only swap the place name are thin content (lesson 5.5), and pages made purely to rank for a list of town names are what Google's spam policies call doorway pages.

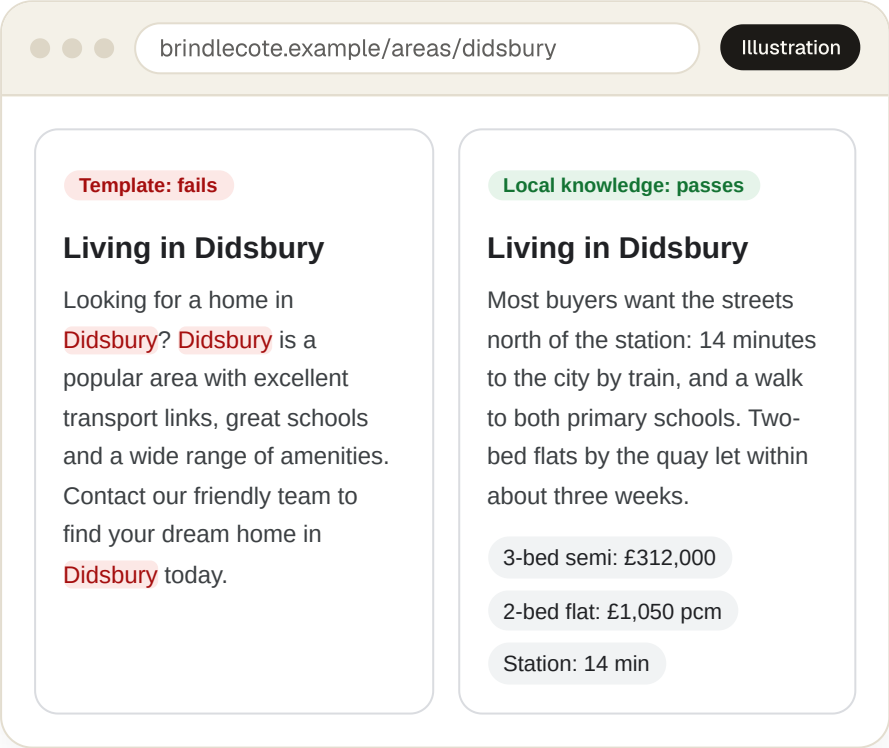
The evidence: Google's spam policies name doorway pages and scaled content. The value of real local detail is practitioner view.

> **An agent example**
> An agency in a county town has 30 area pages where only the place name changes. It rewrites the five areas it genuinely works in, adding transport, typical prices and rents, schools, and what buyers and tenants ask there, and merges the rest into those five.

Test it

1 The swap test

1. Open three of your area pages and mentally swap the place names.
2. If they still read the same, they're templates.



The swap test. Change the town's name on the left and it still reads true, so it's a template. The one on the right could only be about one place. Example numbers.

2 Search Console

1. Filter searches containing your area names and see which pages Google shows for them, and whether they get clicks.

Google Search Console (search.google.com/search-console)

3 Compare with the best local page

1. Search “living in [area]” or “[area] property” and compare the top local result with yours.

4 Ask AI

AI prompt
Rate this area page for how unique and useful it is. Which parts could have been written by someone who has never visited? What local detail is missing?

ChatGPT (chatgpt.com), Claude (claude.ai)

Fix it

1 Write from what your team knows

1. Streets and micro-areas, schools, stations and commute times, typical prices and rents, who lives there, local quirks.
2. Separate sections for what it’s like to buy there and to rent there.
3. Area FAQs from real client questions, and testimonials from clients in that area.

2 Add data and listings

1. Sold prices from HM Land Registry, and your own sold and let figures.
2. Current listings and recent sold or let examples, plus a map showing which branch covers the area.

HM Land Registry Price Paid data (landregistry.data.gov.uk/app/ppd)

3 Fewer, better pages

1. Only create a page where you have real knowledge and real service.
2. Merge or remove thin ones, redirecting them to the page that replaces them.

Keep it up

Refresh each area page every six months, and update the figures quarterly. **(Every 6 months; figures quarterly)**

Sources

1. Creating helpful, reliable, people-first content, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/creating-helpful-content
2. Spam policies for Google web search, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/essentials/spam-policies
3. UK House Price Index, HM Land Registry. gov.uk/government/collections/uk-house-price-index-reports

Distance, and why you show up in some places and not others

How close you are to the person searching, and why your visibility changes from one street to the next. The one local factor you can't fake.

Priority 3%, How often: Quarterly, Online: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/proximity-and-location

Why it matters

Distance is one of Google's three local factors, so your visibility changes street by street.

Why Google cares

Official guidance ●●●●●

One of Google's three named local factors

Do this first

Check where you appear from your customers' streets, not from your office.

In plain English

Ask for the nearest swimming pool and the answer depends on where you're standing. Two people in different towns get different answers to the same question.

People use the bus stop nearest to them. A better poster at a stop further away doesn't change that.

Why it matters

Someone searching "estate agents near me" sees the closest agencies first, and sellers usually search from home. So your visibility near each customer's address is what matters, not what you see on your office computer.

Buyers: Often search "near me" or by neighbourhood; results change street by street.

Tenants: Same, often searching while out and about.

Sellers: Search from home, so your visibility near their address is what counts.

Landlords: Same, and may own property across several areas.

To Google and Bing, Official guidance

Google names distance as one of the three main things behind local results, and estimates where the searcher is when they don't say. That's why an agency can be first around its office and invisible ten miles away. You can't win on distance where you aren't, so further out you compete on relevance and prominence instead.

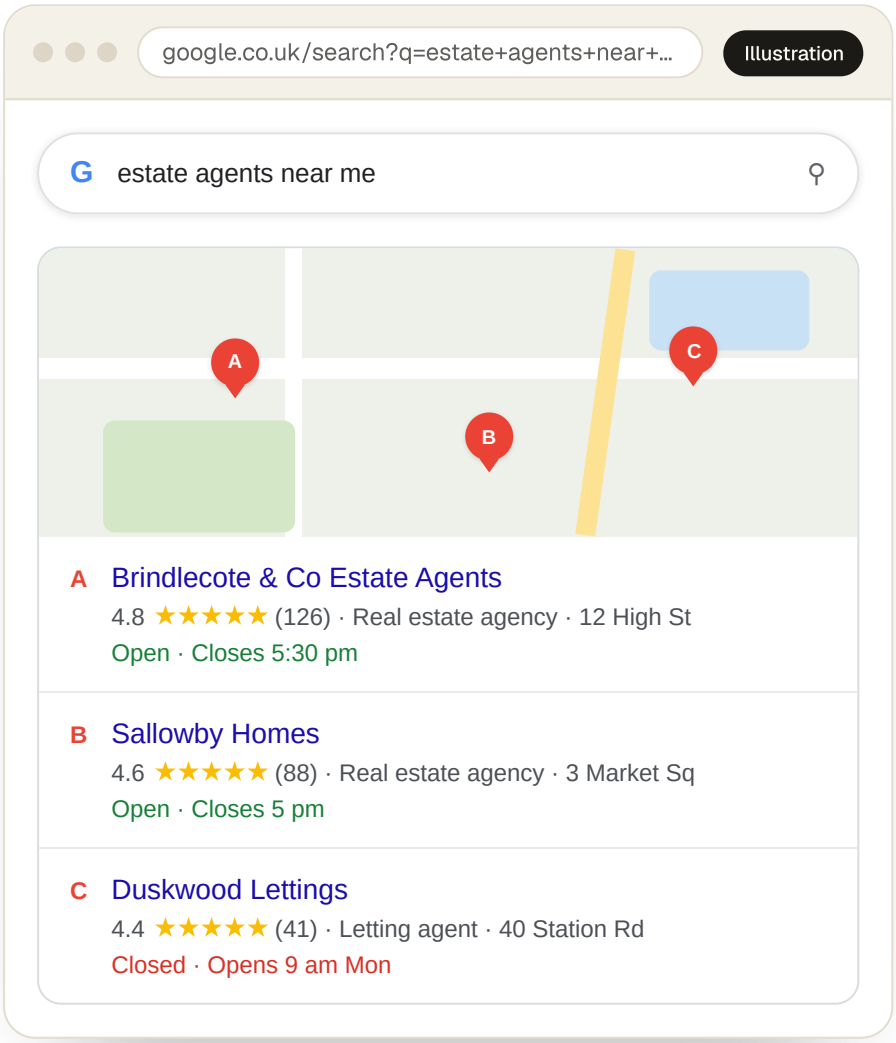
The evidence: Google names distance as one of its three local ranking factors.

> **An agent example**
> A lettings branch in a market town builds pages for a city 30 miles away where it has no office and no staff. A staffed branch in that city is still far more likely to show. The branch puts its effort into the places it genuinely covers, and wins there.

Test it

1 Check from where your customers are

1. On a phone with location on, search “estate agents near me” and “letting agents near me” in different parts of your patch.
2. Ask friends in different postcodes to search and send screenshots.



The map results for “estate agents near me”. Which three appear changes with where the searcher is standing, which is why you check from your customers’ streets. Example numbers.

2 Local rank grids

Shows your Google Maps position at dozens of points around your office at once.

1. Local Falcon and BrightLocal both do this (paid, with trials).

Local Falcon (www.localfalcon.com), BrightLocal (www.brightlocal.com)

3 Map your rivals

1. On Google Maps, mark where your competitors' offices are. Where are you closest, and where are they?

4 Ask AI

AI prompt

Here are my local ranking results at different points around my office, and where my competitors' offices are. Where am I weak, and what could realistically improve it?

ChatGPT (chatgpt.com), Claude (claude.ai)

Fix it

1 Never fake a location

1. Virtual offices and addresses where you don't have staff break Google's guidelines and risk your profile being suspended.
2. Only add a branch or service area that's real and staffed.

2 Build proof where you genuinely work

1. Reviews that mention the area, local links and mentions (lesson 7.1), and area pages written from real knowledge (lesson 3.2).
2. Keep your profile's categories and details accurate (lesson 3.1).

Keep it up

Check your visibility across your patch every quarter. **(Quarterly)**

Sources

1. Tips to improve your local ranking on Google, Google Business Profile Help. support.google.com/business/answer/7091
2. Guidelines for representing your business on Google, Google Business Profile Help. support.google.com/business/answer/3038177

One business, the same details everywhere

Making sure your business name, address and phone number (NAP), and your exact trading name, are identical everywhere they appear online, so every mention clearly points to one real business.

Priority 2.25%, How often: about 30 minutes a quarter, Online: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/nap-consistency

Why it matters

An old number on a directory that doesn't connect makes people think you've closed.

Why Google cares

Practitioner view

Helps search engines know it's all you

Do this first

Choose one exact format for your name, address and phone, then fix the biggest listings.

In plain English

If a school lists you as Sam on one register, Samuel on another, and has an old phone number on a third, the teacher might think you're three different people.

Writing your address on parcels. If every label spells it differently the post gets muddled; one clear format gets everything to the right door.

There's a live demo of this on the website: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/nap-consistency

Why it matters

If someone finds an old phone number on a directory and it doesn't connect, they don't hunt for the right one. They assume you've closed, and move on.

Buyers: Waste a call on a wrong number and lose trust.

Tenants: Same, and may assume you've closed.

Sellers: Check your details across sites before they trust you.

Landlords: Read inconsistency as sloppiness.

To Google and Bing, Practitioner view

Consistent details help search engines connect every mention of you to one business (what they call an entity), and tell you apart from similarly named firms. Mismatches create doubt about which details are right. It's a supporting signal rather than a big lever, but it's cheap to get right and costly to get wrong.

The evidence: Widely recommended, and Google and Microsoft both ask for accurate, current details. Its ranking weight isn't published.

An agent example

A lettings agency appears as "Quillmoor Lettings" on its website, "Quillmoor Lettings Ltd" on a directory, and with an old phone number on a social page. A tenant rings the old number and gets nobody. The agency picks one format, fixes every listing, and keeps a master sheet for staff.

Test it

1 Search for yourself

1. Google your business name, then your phone number, then your address.
2. Check the top 20 results: does every listing match exactly?

2 The name audit

1. List your name as it appears on: your website header and footer, Terms page, Companies House, Google, Bing, Apple, Rightmove, Zoopla, OnTheMarket, social profiles and your redress scheme's register.

Companies House (find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk)

3 A free listings check

1. Moz Local's free check scans major directories for your details.

Moz Local listing check (moz.com/products/local/check-listing)

4 Ask AI

AI prompt

Here are all the variations of my business name, address and phone number I've found online. Which are inconsistent, and which single format should I standardise on?

ChatGPT (chatgpt.com), Claude (claude.ai)

Fix it

1 Choose one format, then fix the big ones

1. Decide your exact trading name, address format and main phone number.
2. Update Google, Bing, Apple, Facebook, LinkedIn, Yell and the portals yourself.

Yell (www.yell.com)

2 Directories you don't control

1. Use their "claim this listing" or "suggest an edit" options, or contact them.
2. Ask for duplicates to be removed.
3. If there are dozens of old listings, a paid service (Moz Local, BrightLocal, Whitespark) can push the correct details out for you.

3 Make it stick

1. Keep a master NAP sheet and give it to staff.
2. An About page with your registered company details, office addresses and team.
3. Your schema markup can link all your official profiles together (lesson 2.6).

Keep it up

Details drift out of sync on their own over time. Do a full check every quarter. **(about 30 minutes a quarter)**

Go deeper: If you have more than one branch

Everything in this module applies to every branch, not just head office. The trick is to set each thing up once, properly, then repeat it, so branch five gets the same care as branch one.

• One website, a page per branch (your-agency.example/branches/didsbury), not a separate site for each. Every branch page then benefits from the links and reputation your main site has already earned, while a new site starts with none.

• One Google profile per staffed office. Google allows one profile per location, and only where staff meet customers during opening hours. Use the same business name at every branch. With 10 or more profiles for the same business you can verify them in bulk.

• One written format for names, addresses and phone numbers, which every new branch copies. Check a few branches each month in rotation rather than all of them once a year.

• One schema template with the branch details swapped in, on each branch page (lesson 2.6).

• Genuinely different branch pages: the areas, prices, team and local knowledge of that office. A template with only the town name changed fails the swap test (lesson 3.2).

• A launch checklist for each new office: branch page and schema live, Google, Bing and Apple claimed the same week, and its own review link ready (Reviews 2.2). “Eventually” tends to become never.

• Report by branch as well as in total. Each Google profile has its own Performance report, and Search Console can filter to one branch’s pages, so each office sees its own numbers.

Google: one profile per location (support.google.com/business/answer/3038177), Google: verify profiles in bulk (support.google.com/business/answer/4490296), Reviews 2.2: One link, one reminder (/reviewscourse/one-click-link-one-reminder)

Sources

1. Guidelines for representing your business on Google, Google Business Profile Help. support.google.com/business/answer/3038177
2. Verify Business Profiles in bulk, Google Business Profile Help. support.google.com/business/answer/4490296
3. Find and update company information, Companies House. find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk
4. Introduction to structured data markup, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/appearance/structured-data/intro-structured-data



04

Speed, mobile and safety

A site that’s fast, works on a phone and is safe to use.

4.1 Page speed: hosting, images and Core Web Vitals
4.2 Mobile: built for phones, with nothing missing
4.3 Security: the padlock, hacking and malware
4.4 Pop-ups, clutter and accessibility

Page speed: hosting, images and Core Web Vitals

How fast your pages load, how quickly they respond when someone taps, and whether things jump around while they load. Behind all three: how quickly your server answers, and whether your site stays online.

Priority 4.5%, How often: about 30 minutes a month, Online: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/core-web-vitals

Why it matters

Property pages are heavy. Slow ones send people back to the portal in seconds.

Why Google cares

Official guidance ●●●●●

Used by Google's ranking systems since 2021

Do this first

Shrink your listing photos. It's usually the biggest single win.

In plain English

A magazine where every page takes ten seconds to appear and the pictures keep jumping about. You'd put it down, however good the articles were.

Door speed: A shop with a door that takes ten seconds to creak open loses customers before they even step inside. A slow-loading page does exactly the same.

Staff response: A shop where staff take ages to notice you've asked for help feels broken, even if they get there eventually. That's a page that's slow to respond to a tap.

Stability: Shelves that shift while you're browsing make you grab the wrong thing. A page whose buttons jump about while it loads causes the same mis-taps.

There's a live demo of this on the website: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/core-web-vitals

Why it matters

Someone looking for a home on their commute, on patchy signal, gives your site a few seconds before going back to the portal. Property pages are heavy (big photos, maps, galleries, chat widgets), so they're slow far more often than agents realise.

Buyers: Browse photo-heavy listings on phones. Slow galleries send them back to the portal.

Tenants: Compare lots of rentals fast. A slow site is simply skipped.

Sellers: Judge your marketing by how polished your own site feels.

Landlords: Same, often reading long pages on desktop.

To Google and Bing, Official guidance

Google says Core Web Vitals are used by its ranking systems, and has since 2021. There are three, measured from real Chrome users over the last 28 days: loading (Largest Contentful Paint, good is 2.5 seconds or less), responsiveness (Interaction to Next Paint, good is 200 milliseconds or less) and stability (Cumulative Layout Shift, good is 0.1 or less). It's one signal among many, and relevance matters more, but a slow site also loses the people who do click. A slow server slows everything, and can limit how much of your site Google crawls.

The evidence: Google says Core Web Vitals are used by its ranking systems, and that relevance matters more.

2.5s
Loading (LCP): good is 2.5 seconds or less

200ms
Responding (INP): good is 200 milliseconds or less

0.1
Staying still (CLS): good is 0.1 or less

An agent example

A lettings branch's listing pages load 25 full-size photos straight from the CRM, around 6MB each, plus a chat widget, a heatmap tool and two analytics tags. Resizing the photos before they reach the site and delaying the chat widget takes the main photo from six seconds to under two on a mid-range phone.

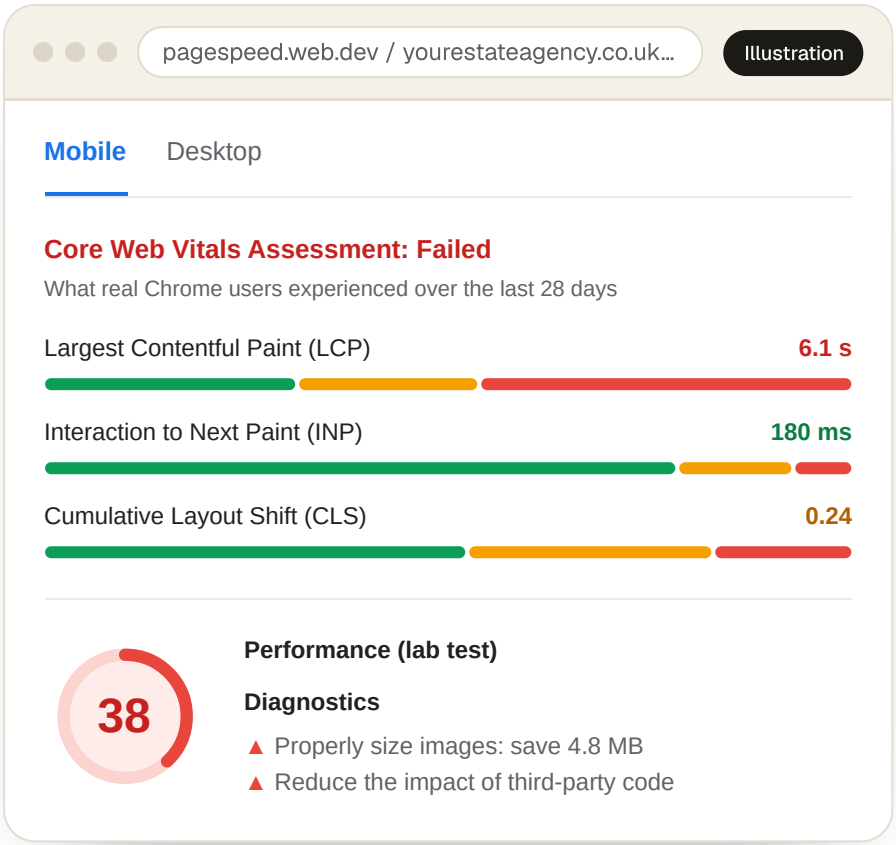
Test it

1 PageSpeed Insights

Google's own tool, and the closest read on how Google sees your speed.

1. Go to pagespeed.web.dev, paste a page's address and press Analyze.
2. Read the Mobile tab first. The top block is real-user data (if your site has enough visitors); below it is a lab test.
3. Check the three Core Web Vitals against the good thresholds, then read Diagnostics: it lists exactly what's slowing you down.
4. Test five page types: homepage, search results, a listing, the valuation page and a guide.

PageSpeed Insights (pagespeed.web.dev)



PageSpeed Insights. Read the Mobile tab first: the top block is real visitors over 28 days, and Diagnostics lists exactly what's slowing you down. Example numbers.

2 Search Console's Core Web Vitals report

Groups your whole site into Good, Needs improvement and Poor.

1. Open Experience, then Core Web Vitals, and click into any Poor group for example pages.

Google Search Console (search.google.com/search-console)

3 GTmetrix, for a second opinion

Its waterfall chart shows the single heaviest thing on the page.

1. Enter your address at gtmetrix.com and open the Waterfall tab once it finishes.
2. Look for the longest bars. It's almost always one image or script worth fixing first.

GTmetrix (gtmetrix.com)

4 A real phone, on mobile data

1. Use a mid-range Android phone on 4G, not your office Wi-Fi, and time how long a listing takes to show its main photo and price.

5 Ask AI to rank the fixes

AI prompt

Here are the PageSpeed Insights diagnostics for a page on my estate agency website, which has large photo galleries. Rank these issues by likely impact and give me step-by-step fixes for [WordPress / my platform]. Explain anything technical in plain English.

ChatGPT (chatgpt.com), Claude (claude.ai)

Fix it

1 Images first (usually the biggest win)

1. Resize photos to the size they're actually shown at, and compress them. A 6MB photo shown 800 pixels wide is wasted weight.
2. Use modern formats (WebP or AVIF) where your platform allows.
3. Lazy-load images further down the page, but never the main photo at the top.
4. Better still, resize in the CRM or feed so full-size photos never reach the site.

Squoosh (squoosh.app), TinyPNG (tinypng.com), ShortPixel (shortpixel.com)

2 Remove or delay scripts

1. Chat widgets, heatmaps, social feeds and extra analytics tags all slow pages. Remove what you don't use.
2. Delay the rest until after the page loads. Test the effect of each by removing one at a time.

3 Stop things jumping

1. Give images and embeds fixed dimensions, and reserve space for banners, so nothing shifts as they load.

4 Caching and a CDN

1. WordPress: a caching plugin such as WP Rocket or LiteSpeed Cache.
2. Any site: Cloudflare's free plan adds a speed layer whoever your host is.

Cloudflare (free plan) (www.cloudflare.com/plans/free)

5 If the server itself is slow

1. Ask your host about caching and capacity. Cheap shared hosting struggles with big property sites.
2. Compare hosts with UK data centres, such as SiteGround, Kinsta, WP Engine, Krystal or 34SP.
3. If you're on a property platform, ask them for their server response times and a written plan to improve them.

6 The quickest route

1. Paste your PageSpeed results into an AI tool and ask what to fix first and how (prompt above).

Then: Re-test after each change and log the numbers. The real-user data in PageSpeed and Search Console catches up over about 28 days.

Keep it up

New photos, plugins and widgets quietly slow sites down without anyone noticing. Check monthly. **(about 30 minutes a month)**

Go deeper: Server response time (TTFB)

Time to First Byte is how long your server takes to start answering, before anything else can happen. Under about 0.8 seconds is a reasonable target.

Test it at webpagetest.org with a UK location, at different times of day and during a feed import. Search Console's Crawl stats (under Settings) shows your average response time to Google over 90 days.

Big property sites slow down when every search runs a heavy database query, or when feeds import at peak times. Ask your developer to review slow queries and move imports to quiet hours.

WebPageTest (www.webpagetest.org)

Go deeper: Staying online

A site that’s down loses the visitor in the moment, and if it happens often, Google visits less and can drop pages.

Set up free monitoring with UptimeRobot so you hear about outages that happen while nobody’s looking. Rare, brief blips aren’t worth acting on; frequent downtime means your host isn’t reliable enough.

UptimeRobot (uptimerobot.com)

Sources

1. Understanding Core Web Vitals and Google search results, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/appearance/core-web-vitals
2. Understanding page experience, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/appearance/page-experience

Mobile: built for phones, with nothing missing

Whether your site genuinely works on a phone: text you can read without zooming, buttons you can tap, filters that work, and nothing important missing compared with the desktop version.

Priority 2%, How often: about 15 minutes, after site changes, Online: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/mobile-usability

Why it matters

Most people search for property on a phone. If your site is a fight, they leave.

Why Google cares

Official guidance ●●●●●

Judged on mobile, ranked everywhere

Do this first

Try to book a viewing on your own phone, and note every awkward tap.

In plain English

A desk built for grown-ups is no good to a child. A website built for a big screen is just as awkward on a phone: tiny buttons, tiny writing, and a struggle to do anything.

A shop built for someone six inches taller than everyone else. Technically usable, genuinely annoying, and most people just leave.

There's a live demo of this on the website: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/mobile-usability

Why it matters

Most people search for property on their phone, often in a spare five minutes. If they have to fight the site (zooming to read a listing, missing a tiny button) they give up before they ever request that valuation or book that viewing.

Buyers: Browse and re-browse on phones, evenings and weekends.

Tenants: The most phone-dependent of all. Filters, photos, call and book buttons must be effortless.

Sellers: Often book a valuation from a phone after first researching on a computer.

Landlords: Same, and still need fees, reviews and forms that work on a small screen.

To Google and Bing, Official guidance

Google uses the mobile version of every site to decide its rankings, for desktop searches too (mobile-first indexing, finished for all sites in 2024). If your mobile version hides details or features, Google has less to judge you on. Google retired its Mobile-Friendly Test and Search Console's Mobile Usability report at the end of 2023, so test with Lighthouse and real phones instead.

The evidence: Google documents mobile-first indexing, finished for every site in 2024.

An agent example

On desktop, an agency's listings show 30 details, the floorplan and a map. On mobile, a cut-down template shows 10 details and no floorplan. Google only sees the mobile version, and so do most buyers. Switching to accordions that hide nothing fixes both.

Test it

1 The real phone task test

An automated score misses things a real thumb finds instantly.

1. On your own phone, try to: find a 2 bed flat to rent under a budget, open the photos, call the office, and book a viewing.
2. Time each task and note every awkward tap, zoom and frustration.
3. Then hand the phone to a friend who hasn't seen your site, and watch.

2 Desktop versus mobile, side by side

1. Open the same listing on a computer and a phone. Check photos, floorplan, description, key details, map, links and enquiry form are all there on both.
2. On a computer, Chrome's Inspect, then the phone icon, previews different screen sizes.

3 Lighthouse

1. In Chrome, right-click, Inspect, open the Lighthouse tab, choose Mobile and analyse.
2. Read the Accessibility, Best Practices and SEO sections, which include tap-size and text-size checks.

4 Watch real visitors

Microsoft Clarity is free and shows where mobile visitors tap and “rage-click”.

Microsoft Clarity (clarity.microsoft.com)

Fix it

1 Specific broken bits

1. Buttons and links at least 44 to 48 pixels tall, with space between them.
2. Body text at least 16px.
3. A sticky call or enquire button on listing pages.
4. Filters cut down to what matters on a phone: price, beds, type, area.
5. Most of these are quick fixes in your site builder, or ask AI to write the code (“Write CSS to make my buttons at least 48px tall on mobile”).

ChatGPT (chatgpt.com), Claude (claude.ai)

2 Mobile is missing things

1. Use accordions or tabs to tidy content on small screens, rather than removing it.
2. Keep the same links and navigation on both.
3. Re-test after every template change.

3 The whole site isn’t responsive

1. That’s a bigger job: you may need a rebuild with professional help. Ask whether rebuilding costs less than patching an old theme.

Keep it up

Check again after any significant site update. One careless change can break something that was working fine. **(about 15 minutes, after site changes)**

Sources

1. Mobile site and mobile-first indexing best practices, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/crawling-indexing/mobile/mobile-sites-mobile-first-indexing

2. Understanding page experience, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/appearance/page-experience

Security: the padlock, hacking and malware

The padlock in the address bar (HTTPS), which keeps a visitor's connection private, plus keeping your site safe from being hacked.

Priority 0.5%, How often: about 10 minutes a month, Online: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/https-security

Why it matters

"Not secure" next to your enquiry form puts people off, and a hacked site can vanish from search.

Why Google cares

Official guidance ●●●●●

A ranking signal since 2014; a hack can wipe you out

Do this first

Check the padlock shows on every page, then update your plugins and website software.

In plain English

A house needs locks on the doors, someone checking the windows, and a spare key kept somewhere safe. A website needs the same: a padlock, updates, and a backup.

There's a live demo of this on the website: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/https-security

Why it matters

Without the padlock, browsers show "Not secure" next to your address, right where someone is about to type their name and number. A hacked site is worse: browsers can warn people away entirely, and enquiry forms can leak personal data.

Buyers: Hesitate to enquire on a page marked "Not secure".

Tenants: Share references and personal details through your forms.

Sellers: Share their address and circumstances.

Landlords: Share property, bank and personal details, and expect them to be safe.

To Google and Bing, Official guidance

HTTPS has been a small Google ranking signal since 2014. The bigger risk is being hacked: Google can label a site as hacked in its results, warn visitors away, and drop pages that have been filled with spam. Out-of-date plugins are the usual way in.

The evidence: Google confirmed HTTPS as a light ranking signal in 2014, and documents how it handles hacked sites.

An agent example

A lettings branch hasn't updated its website plugins for a year. One day browsers start warning visitors away, and a search shows hundreds of spam pages on its domain. It restores a clean backup, updates everything, changes every password, turns on two-step login and asks Google to review the site.

Test it

1 Look at the address bar

1. Your site should start with https:// and show a padlock, on every page, not just the homepage.

2 Qualys SSL Labs

Catches a certificate that's about to expire, or set up weakly, before a visitor ever sees a warning.

1. Go to ssllabs.com/ssltest and enter your address. The scan takes a minute or two.
2. Check the letter grade and the expiry date near the top.

SSL Labs (www.ssllabs.com/ssltest)

3 Check for hacking

1. Search Console: Security & Manual actions, then Security issues. You want "No issues detected".
2. Sucuri SiteCheck scans for malware and blocklisting.
3. In Google, search site:yourdomain.co.uk casino OR viagra OR "payday loan". Anything that comes back is a hack.
4. List your website software, theme and plugin versions and check each has its latest update.

Google Search Console (search.google.com/search-console), Sucuri SiteCheck (sitecheck.sucuri.net)

Fix it

1 No padlock

1. Log in to your hosting control panel and search for SSL. Most hosts offer it free through Let's Encrypt, often as one switch.
2. Then make sure every http address redirects to https.
3. If your host doesn't offer free SSL, that's a sign of a poor host. Put Cloudflare's free plan in front of your site, or move host.

Cloudflare (free plan) (www.cloudflare.com/plans/free)

2 Lock it down

1. Keep your website software, theme and plugins updated, and delete ones you don't use.
2. Strong passwords and two-step login for every admin account. Remove old users and leavers.
3. Backups stored off-site, and tested: a backup you've never restored isn't a backup. On WordPress, UpdraftPlus does this.
4. A security plugin or firewall: Wordfence, Sucuri or Cloudflare.

Wordfence (www.wordfence.com), UpdraftPlus (teamupdraft.com/updraftplus)

3 If you've been hacked

1. Put the site into maintenance mode and restore a clean backup.
2. Change every password, and fix the way they got in (usually an old plugin).
3. Request a review in Search Console once it's clean.
4. If personal data may have been exposed, take advice on your data protection duties, including whether to tell the ICO.

Keep it up

Certificates renew, plugins need updating, and nobody notices until a visitor sees a warning. A quick check every month. **(about 10 minutes a month)**

Sources

1. Understanding page experience, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/appearance/page-experience

Pop-ups, clutter and accessibility

Anything that gets between a visitor and the page they came for: pop-ups covering the screen, stacked banners, partner adverts crowding a listing, or a site that only works if you can see well and use a mouse.

Priority 1.5%, How often: about 5 minutes, per new tool, Online: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/no-intrusive-interstitials

Why it matters

Pop-ups and clutter between someone and the listing look desperate, and people leave.

Why Google cares

Official guidance ●●●●●

A page-experience issue, and a conversion killer

Do this first

Stop pop-ups appearing the moment someone arrives. Show them after a scroll instead.

In plain English

Imagine trying to read a comic while a classmate keeps putting their hand over the page. One quick interruption is fine. Five, and you never see the story.

A shop assistant who steps in front of you at every aisle with a leaflet. One friendly hello is fine. Five of them and you leave without buying anything.

There's a live demo of this on the website: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/no-intrusive-interstitials

Why it matters

Arriving on a listing only to have it blocked by a cookie banner, a newsletter pop-up, a chat window and a valuation offer looks desperate, and some people simply leave. Exactly the wrong first impression for a business about to be trusted with someone's home.

Buyers: Pop-ups on phones block the photos and price, and cause instant exits.

Tenants: Same, and they're comparing many rentals fast.

Sellers: Stacked pop-ups look like marketing spam, not a professional agency.

Landlords: Older landlords especially rely on readable text and simple forms.

To Google and Bing, Official guidance

Google's guidance is to avoid intrusive pop-ups that cover the main content, and it counts them as part of page experience, especially on mobile. It's one signal among many; the bigger cost is people leaving. Reasonably sized cookie banners and legal notices are fine as long as they're easy to dismiss. Accessibility isn't a ranking trick, but clear headings, labelled forms and image descriptions also help Google read the page.

The evidence: Google's guidance on intrusive pop-ups. Accessibility helps Google read a page, not rank it directly.

An agent example

Someone taps a listing and gets a cookie banner, a newsletter pop-up, a chat window and a valuation pop-up before seeing the property. The agency moves newsletter sign-up into the page, sets chat to appear after 30 seconds and never on listings, and keeps the cookie banner small. Enquiries from listings go up.

Test it

1 The fresh-visitor test

1. Open a private window (Ctrl+Shift+N in Chrome) so you're a new visitor.
2. Load a listing, then your homepage. Count every overlay in the first 10 seconds.
3. Do it again on your phone, where it matters most.

2 The first-screen test

1. On a listing, does the first screen show mostly the property, or mostly offers, banners and partner adverts?

3 Accessibility checks

1. Run WAVE (wave.webaim.org) or Lighthouse's Accessibility check on your homepage and enquiry form.
2. Try your enquiry form using only Tab, Shift+Tab, Enter and Space. Can you see where you are? Can you send it?

WAVE (wave.webaim.org)

4 Ask AI

AI prompt

These are the tools on my estate agency website: [cookie banner, chat widget, newsletter pop-up, valuation pop-up, etc.]. Which of these commonly create overlays, and how should I set them up so a visitor never sees more than one, and never on a listing page?

ChatGPT (chatgpt.com), Claude (claude.ai)

Fix it

1 Pop-ups

1. Show offers after someone has scrolled or spent time on the page, never on arrival, and only one at a time.
2. Replace full-screen boxes with sign-up boxes inside the page.
3. Most tools have “show after X seconds” and “don’t show on these pages” settings: exclude listings.
4. Cookie banner: compact, easy to dismiss in one tap, and not covering the content.

2 Clutter

1. Move mortgage, insurance and removals promotions below the main property details.
2. Label sponsored content clearly, and make sure referral arrangements are disclosed as the rules require (ask your compliance adviser).

3 Accessibility

1. Fix the contrast, missing labels and focus problems the tools flag.
2. Label every form field, and use real buttons and headings in the code.
3. Be wary of “one-click accessibility” overlay plugins: they rarely fix the underlying problems.
4. For a proper check, a specialist can audit against WCAG 2.2 AA.

Keep it up

Marketing tools add pop-ups without anyone thinking about the cost. Check whenever a new tool or offer goes live, and run the accessibility checks twice a year. **(about 5 minutes, per new tool)**

Sources

1. Avoid intrusive interstitials and dialogs, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/appearance/avoid-intrusive-interstitials
2. Cookies and similar technologies, Information Commissioner's Office. ico.org.uk/for-organisations/direct-marketing-and-privacy-and-electronic-communications/guide-to-pecr/cookies-and-similar-technologies
3. Understanding page experience, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/appearance/page-experience



05

Your pages and content

The right page for every search, and pages genuinely worth finding.

5.1 Search intent and keyword research
5.2 Useful, in-depth pages
5.3 Covering your whole subject: topic clusters
5.4 Original and accurate: what only you can say
5.5 Thin, copied and mass-produced pages
5.6 Clear structure, headings and the first screen
5.7 Titles and descriptions that get the click
5.8 Writing naturally: places, topics and property terms

Search intent and keyword research

Working out the exact words real buyers, tenants, sellers and landlords type, and the real reason behind each search, so every page answers the question someone actually asked.

Priority 8.5%, How often: about 45 minutes a quarter, Online: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/keyword-research

Why it matters

If your page doesn't use the words people search, it doesn't feel like the answer.

Why Google cares

Practitioner view ●●●○○

The right page for the reason behind the search

Do this first

Give every key page one job: "This page solves [problem] for [audience]."

In plain English

If you ask "where can I buy football boots?" and someone hands you a 20-page history of football, they haven't answered you. It might all be true, but it isn't what you wanted.

Someone asks a restaurant for vegetarian food and gets handed a 50-page menu of meat dishes. Plenty of food, none of it what they asked for.

There's a live demo of this on the website: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/keyword-research

Why it matters

A landlord searches "letting agent fees". Your site calls it "our pricing structure". Even if your page technically answers the question, it doesn't feel like it does, because it doesn't speak their language.

Buyers: Searching "houses for sale in [area]" want listings or an area page, not an essay about the town.

Tenants: Want live rentals with rent, available date, pets and bills. A "how renting works" guide only suits people still researching.

Sellers: "How much is my house worth" needs a valuation route; "best estate agents" needs proof, reviews and process.

Landlords: "How much rent can I charge" needs a rental valuation page; "letting agent fees" needs a fees page.

To Google and Bing, Practitioner view

Google and Bing match searches to pages that satisfy the reason behind them, not just the words. The same words can want different things, and a seller might search three ways in three weeks: “how much is my house worth”, then “best estate agents Manchester”, then “Manchester valuation”. If Google consistently shows listings for a search, a long article won’t win it, and if it shows guides, a page of listings won’t either. And a page built for a search nobody makes gets no visitors, however good it is.

The evidence: Grounded in how Google describes matching results to the reason behind a search. The research method is practitioner advice.

An agent example

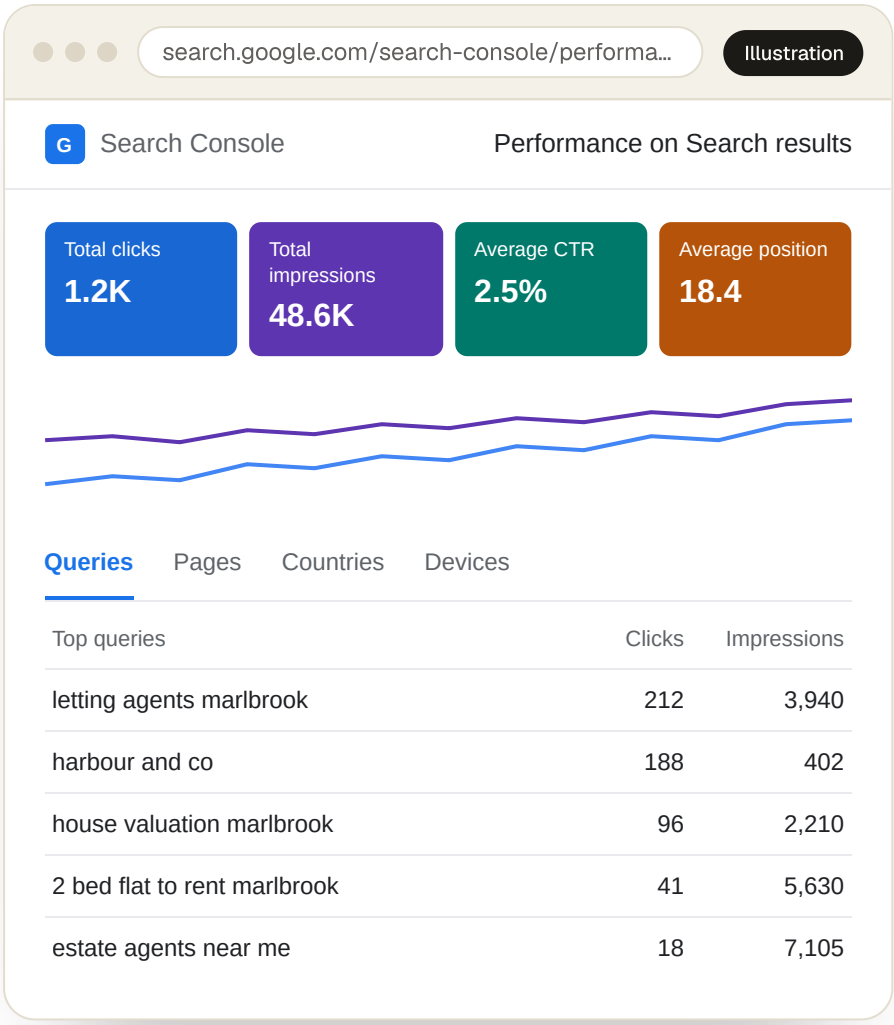
“Manchester Letting Agents” explains your lettings service, management options, coverage and process. A separate page, “How Much Rent Can I Charge in Manchester?”, handles rental valuation. Squeezing the second onto the first page would miss what those landlords were actually asking.

Test it

1 Ask Google itself

Free, and the results page tells you what Google thinks the search wants.

1. Open a private window and search your service plus your town, for sales and lettings separately.
2. Note the “People also ask” questions and the related searches at the bottom.
3. For 10 searches that matter (two or three per audience), note what kind of page ranks in the top five: listings, service page, guide, portal, directory or map. Then note your page and whether it’s the same kind.



Search Console, Performance. The Queries table shows the exact words people searched before they saw you. Example numbers.

2 Search Console: which page shows for which search

1. Open Performance, then Search results, and the Queries tab.
2. Click a search that matters so it becomes a filter, then switch to the Pages tab. That's the page Google shows for it.
3. Is it the page that person wants? If "flats to rent [town]" shows a blog post instead of your rentals page, the intent is off.
4. If two of your pages appear for the same search, they may be competing with each other.

Google Search Console (search.google.com/search-console)

3 Check how many people search

1. Google Keyword Planner shows rough monthly search ranges. It needs a Google Ads account, but you don't have to spend anything.
2. AnswerThePublic and AlsoAsked show the questions people ask (a few free searches a day).
3. Google Trends compares phrases and shows seasonal patterns.

Keyword Planner (business.google.com/en-all/ad-tools/keyword-planner), AnswerThePublic (answerthepublic.com), AlsoAsked (alsoasked.com), Google Trends (trends.google.com/trends)

4 Ask AI to classify the intent

AI prompt

Here are the top 5 Google results for the search "[phrase]" and the headings of my page. Classify the search intent (informational, comparing options, ready to act, looking for a specific business, local). Does my page match it, and what's missing? My audience is [buyers / tenants / sellers / landlords] in [town].

ChatGPT (chatgpt.com), Claude (claude.ai)

Fix it

1 One reason, one page

1. Before you create or rewrite a page, finish this sentence: "This page solves [exact problem] for [exact person]." If you can't, rethink the page.
2. Create the pages you're missing (a dedicated "Flats to rent in [area]" page) rather than stretching one page across everything.
3. Rewrite the title, main heading and first 100 words so they say exactly who it's for and what they get (lessons 5.6 and 5.7).

2 Merge pages that compete

1. If two pages chase the same search, merge the weaker into the stronger and redirect it (lesson 2.5).

3 Keep a search list

1. A simple sheet: Search, Audience, Rough volume, Competition, Our page, Priority.
2. Build pages for searches you can genuinely satisfy, not every phrase on the list.
3. Use the real phrases naturally in your titles, headings and text.
4. Each quarter, compare Search Console's last three months with the three before (Date, then Compare) and add searches that are climbing. It's the earliest sign of what people are starting to ask.

4 Let AI draft the outline, not the page

1. Then fill it with your team's real local knowledge.

AI prompt

Write an outline for a page that satisfies the search "[phrase]" for [audience] in [town]. Include the questions they'll have, and where listings or an enquiry form should go. No marketing fluff.

ChatGPT (chatgpt.com), Claude (claude.ai)

Keep it up

What people search for shifts with the market and the seasons, so a list built once goes stale. Revisit it quarterly. **(about 45 minutes a quarter)**

Go deeper: What people mean when they search

The four broad types are informational (wants to know), navigational (wants a specific site), commercial (comparing options) and transactional (ready to act). Real searches often mix them.

- "estate agents Manchester": wants to find an agency
- "houses for sale Manchester": wants available properties
- "how much is my house worth": wants a valuation, or to understand value
- "how to sell my house": researching the process
- "Manchester rental yield": investment research
- "landlord responsibilities England": wants information

Go deeper: After the click: does the page deliver?

A good result runs: search, result, page, job done. A bad one runs: search, result, wrong page, back to Google. Make sure the page behind each result delivers what its title promised, with the answer near the top and a clear next step (book a viewing, request a valuation, set an alert).

Ignore the myth that “someone went back to Google, so you get penalised”. People compare results all the time. What matters is whether they found what they needed.

Give people reasons to come back: property alerts, saved searches and genuinely useful guides. Return visits mostly help through familiarity with your name, which is valuable in itself.

Test it: take your top 20 searches from Search Console, click through yourself, and score each landing page yes, partly or no. In Google Analytics, look at engaged sessions and key events by landing page, not bounce rate.

Sources

1. SEO Starter Guide, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/seo-starter-guide
2. Performance report (Search results), Search Console Help. support.google.com/webmasters/answer/7576553
3. Creating helpful, reliable, people-first content, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/creating-helpful-content

Useful, in-depth pages

Whether a page genuinely helps: accurate, specific and complete enough to answer the whole question someone came with, without padding.

Priority 6.25%, How often: Quarterly comparison check, Online: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/comprehensive-topic-depth

Why it matters

A page that half answers the question sends people elsewhere for the rest.

Why Google cares

Official guidance ●●●●●

Useful beats long

Do this first

Compare one key page with the top three results and fill the gaps from real knowledge.

In plain English

A good answer doesn't just say "yes". It explains why, gives the important details, and tells you what to do next.

A toolbox is useful because it holds the tools you need, not because it's the biggest box in the shop.

There's a live demo of this on the website: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/comprehensive-topic-depth

Why it matters

If a page only half answers their question, they leave to find the rest somewhere else. You did the work of attracting them, then lost them because the answer wasn't there. Property decisions are big and emotional, and a page that removes doubt is a page that gets the enquiry.

Buyers: Need price, tenure, size, council tax band, EPC, floorplan, schools and commute. A thin listing sends them back to the portal.

Tenants: Need rent, deposit, holding deposit, available date, furnishing, pets, bills and fees. Missing details cost you enquiries from people who won't ask.

Sellers: Need to see how your process, fees and timeline work, and why your marketing is better.

Landlords: Need clear service levels, what's included, costs, compliance support and what happens when something breaks.

To Google and Bing, Official guidance

Google's guidance is to create helpful, reliable, people-first content, and it judges how well a page satisfies everything a searcher is likely to want. Quality isn't word count: a 1,000-word page can beat a 5,000-word one. A listing needs the right facts; a landlord guide needs far more, because the question is more complicated. Genuinely useful pages also earn the things that help indirectly: links, mentions, repeat visits and enquiries.

The evidence: Google's helpful content guidance. "Useful beats long" is Google's own position.

An agent example

A weak rental valuation page says: "Rental prices vary. Contact us for a valuation." A useful one explains what affects rent (size, condition, furnishing, location, transport, demand), how you value a rental, why online estimates differ, and what happens next.

Test it

1 Build a competitor gap checklist

The thorough way. Slower, but it gives you a specific list of what's missing, not a vague "make it longer".

1. Pick one page, such as your "houses for sale in [town]" page.
2. Search that phrase in a private window and open the top three to five pages, not just the first.
3. List every subtopic each one covers: schools, transport, price trends, local amenities, process, an FAQ.
4. Make a checklist with every subtopic down one side and tick which ones your page covers.
5. Every gap is a specific thing to fix.

2 The quick AI version

1. Paste the visible text of your page and two competitors' pages along with the prompt.

AI prompt

Compare my page with these two competitor pages for the search "[phrase]". List the questions a [buyer / tenant / seller / landlord] would have that my page doesn't answer, ranked by importance. Don't invent facts.

ChatGPT (chatgpt.com), Claude (claude.ai)

3 Search Console's hint

1. In Performance, filter to the page and look at its searches.
2. Searches with lots of impressions, an average position between 8 and 20, and few clicks usually mean the page is relevant but not good enough yet.

Google Search Console (search.google.com/search-console)

4 The 60-second test

1. Ask three people (one renting, one buying, one landlord) to find a specific answer on your page in under a minute.
2. Watch silently, and note where they stall.

Fix it

1 Fill the gaps from real knowledge

1. Add a section for each gap your checklist found (schools, price trends, financing for buyers, yields and compliance for landlords), written from your team's real knowledge.

2 Add data nobody else has

1. Use free sold-price history for the street or area from HM Land Registry.
2. Add your own figures: how quickly homes in the area sell, asking versus achieved price, typical rents.

HM Land Registry Price Paid data (landregistry.data.gov.uk/app/ppd)

3 Interview your own team

1. Record a 10-minute voice note from your best negotiator on "what buyers in [area] always ask".
2. Transcribe it (your phone can, or Otter), then edit it into the page.
3. A short area walkthrough video, transcribed and added as text, does the same and gives you a video to reuse.

Otter (otter.ai)

4 Bring in a local expert

1. A mortgage broker, solicitor or surveyor you already work with writes a short section: “what a local mortgage broker wants you to know about buying in [town]”. Real expertise most competitors won’t have.

5 Use AI for the first draft only

1. Then fact-check it, add local detail, and have a named agent approve it before it goes live.

AI prompt
Draft a 300-word section on [topic] for [audience] in [town]. Plain English. Mark any statistic or legal claim with [VERIFY].

ChatGPT (chatgpt.com), Claude (claude.ai)

Keep it up

Competitors keep adding content too, so “thorough” today can look thin within a year. Re-run the comparison quarterly. **(Quarterly comparison check)**

Sources

1. Creating helpful, reliable, people-first content, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/creating-helpful-content
2. SEO Starter Guide, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/seo-starter-guide

Covering your whole subject: topic clusters

How thoroughly your site as a whole covers what your customers need to know: a connected set of pages for each subject, rather than one service page and a handful of random blog posts.

Priority 3.25%, How often: 1 to 2 guides a month, Online: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/topic-clusters

Why it matters

If you only answer someone's first question, another site answers the next five.

Why Google cares

Practitioner view

Shows Google what you're the authority on

Do this first

Pick one audience and plan a main page plus five to eight supporting guides.

In plain English

If someone says they're a football expert but only knows one team's name, you wouldn't believe them.

Knowing how to start a car isn't understanding cars. You'd need engines, tyres, servicing, fuel and safety too.

Why it matters

People want to research the whole journey (valuations, fees, the legal steps, moving) without leaving a site they trust. If you only answer the first question, someone else answers the next five, and they're the ones remembered.

Buyers: Want mortgages, surveys, offers and conveyancing explained in one trusted place.

Tenants: Want deposits, referencing, rights, moving in and area guides.

Sellers: Want preparing to sell, valuation, fees, timeline and the legal steps.

Landlords: Want yields, compliance, management, tenant finding and void periods.

To Google and Bing, Practitioner view

Broad, connected coverage gives Google more evidence of what your site is about, how the subjects relate, and which page is the authority for each part. Internal links tie it together. Depth doesn't mean hundreds of pages for the sake of it: it means a meaningful network of pages that link to each other.

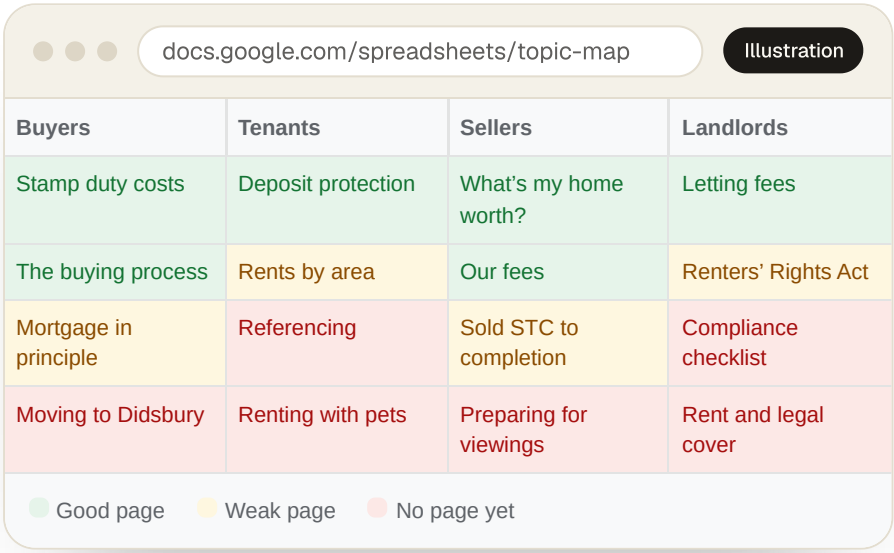
The evidence: Widely used practice. Google doesn't publish "topical authority" as a factor.

> **An agent example**
> A strong lettings section: the letting service page, a landlord guide, rental valuation, property management, tenant referencing, rent collection, maintenance, end of tenancy, local rental market information, and available rentals, all linking to each other.

Test it

1 Draw your topic map

1. Make a table with four columns: Buyers, Tenants, Sellers, Landlords.
2. Under each, list every question clients ask you (check your inbox, call notes and viewing feedback).
3. Next to each question, note: page exists? good or weak? linked from the main page?
4. Every blank is a gap.



A topic map: one column per audience, one row per question clients ask. Every red cell is a page you haven't written yet. Made-up example.

2 Count pages by section

1. Crawl your site with Screaming Frog, export the Internal list, and sort by folder (/buying/, /renting/, /selling/, /landlords/, /areas/).
2. Folders with only one or two pages are thin clusters.

Screaming Frog SEO Spider (www.screamingfrog.co.uk/seo-spider)

3 Ask AI for the questions

AI prompt

I run an estate and lettings agency in [town]. List the 40 questions buyers, tenants, sellers and landlords most often ask, grouped by audience and stage of their journey, so I can check which ones my website answers.

ChatGPT (chatgpt.com), Claude (claude.ai)

Fix it

1 Build a cluster for each audience

1. One main page per audience (for example “Letting your property”), plus five to eight supporting guides.
2. Each guide links to the main page, and the main page links to each guide.
3. Publish the highest-value topics first.

2 Plan it simply

1. A Google Sheet is enough: Topic, Audience, Search, Page address, Status, Who, Date.
2. Let AI help plan the list; write the pages from your own experience.

Keep it up

Add one or two genuinely useful guides a month, working down your list. **(1 to 2 guides a month)**

Sources

1. Link best practices for Google, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/crawling-indexing/links-crawlable
2. Creating helpful, reliable, people-first content, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/creating-helpful-content

Original and accurate: what only you can say

Content that adds something a generic property website can't (your own data, local knowledge and first-hand experience), and that's correct, dated and backed up by proper sources.

Priority 4.5%, How often: Ongoing; legal pages quarterly, Online: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/original-content

Why it matters

Generic content could be anyone's, and a wrong fact in property costs people time and money.

Why Google cares

Official guidance ●●●●●

Original, first-hand and checkable

Do this first

Add a named author and a "reviewed" date to every guide.

In plain English

If everyone in class copies the same answer from the textbook, nobody has added anything. And "I know this house, I've been inside it" beats "I guess it looks like this".

Original: If everyone has the same map, the person who adds notes about the difficult roads is the one worth asking.

Accurate: A driving instructor who has driven thousands of miles knows things someone who only read the book doesn't.

Why it matters

Generic, could-be-anyone's content doesn't build any sense that you know the area. And in property, mistakes have real consequences: a wrong price, a wrong bedroom count or out-of-date legal guidance wastes viewings, causes complaints and damages trust.

Buyers: Trust real local numbers (asking versus sold, time to sell) over generic claims.

Tenants: Value real rents by area and an honest "what to expect".

Sellers: Are persuaded by evidence: sold versus asking, days on market.

Landlords: Act on your legal guidance, so out-of-date compliance advice is a real risk.

To Google and Bing, Official guidance

Google's guidance rewards original information and first-hand experience, and its systems demote thin, generic and mass-produced content. Google calls the qualities it looks for E-E-A-T (Experience, Expertise, Authoritativeness, Trustworthiness). It isn't one score you can measure, but showing who wrote something, how they know, and where the facts come from is exactly what it describes. Linking to official sources for legal and statistical claims shows where your information comes from.

The evidence: Google's guidance rewards original, first-hand content, which is what it calls E-E-A-T.

An agent example

Instead of "the property market changes over time", an agency publishes a quarterly report on what it has actually seen in local rents and asking prices, explains how it worked the figures out, and names the lettings director who reviewed it.

Test it

1 The swap test

1. Pick a key page and swap your agency's name for a competitor's.
2. Does it still read true? If it does, it isn't original.
3. Copy a distinctive sentence into Google in quotation marks. If it appears on other sites, it isn't unique.



A quarterly market note. Nobody else has these figures, which is what makes it worth reading, linking to and quoting. Example numbers.

2 Audit what you know that nobody else does

1. List your data: sold prices you've handled, days to offer, viewing-to-offer rates, rents achieved per area, enquiries by street.
2. Anything on that list and not on your website is a gap.

3 The accuracy sweep

1. List your top 20 pages by visits (Search Console, Performance, Pages).
2. For each, note: author, last reviewed date, sources cited, and any statistic or legal claim.
3. Highlight anything older than 12 months or without a source.
4. Check legal pages against gov.uk and your professional body.

Google Search Console (search.google.com/search-console), gov.uk (www.gov.uk)

4 Ask AI to flag risky claims

AI prompt
List every factual, legal or statistical claim in this text. Mark the ones that need an official source, and suggest where to find each. Also list every claim that could appear on any agency's website, and every claim only we could make. Don't guess.

ChatGPT (chatgpt.com), Claude (claude.ai)

Fix it

1 Publish a quarterly local market report

1. Combine free HM Land Registry data with your own anonymised figures.
2. Chart it with Google Sheets, Flourish or Datawrapper, and explain your method.
3. It also earns links and press (lesson 7.1).
4. Between reports, when something local changes (a big new development, a stamp duty or interest rate change, a new rule for landlords), publish a short, dated note on what it means for your area while people are searching for it.

HM Land Registry Price Paid data (landregistry.data.gov.uk/app/ppd), UK House Price Index (landregistry.data.gov.uk/app/ukhpi)

2 Add first-hand detail

1. Original photos, street-level tips, quotes from your negotiators, and case studies (with permission).
2. A five-question survey of recent tenants or buyers (Google Forms), with the results published.

3 Show who wrote it, and when

1. "Written by [name], Lettings Director. Reviewed [month, year]" on every guide.
2. Link to the official source at the point of the claim: gov.uk, HMRC, HM Land Registry, your redress scheme. Use descriptive link text ("gov.uk guidance on tenancy deposits"), never "click here".
3. Set a review calendar: legal and fee pages every quarter, guides every six months.

4 Use AI as an assistant, not an author

1. Fine for a first draft, an outline or proofreading. Never as the source of facts.
2. If it writes it, a person who knows the subject checks every fact and adds the local detail before it goes live.

Keep it up

Original content is ongoing, not a single push. Legal and fee pages need checking every quarter, because the rules change. **(Ongoing; legal pages quarterly)**

Sources

1. Creating helpful, reliable, people-first content, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/creating-helpful-content
2. UK House Price Index, HM Land Registry. gov.uk/government/collections/uk-house-price-index-reports

Thin, copied and mass-produced pages

Pages with little useful information, pages that say the same thing as others, and pages churned out in bulk (by templates or AI) with nothing real behind them.

Priority 1.75%, How often: about 1 hour, twice a year, Online: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/thin-and-duplicate-content

Why it matters

Near-identical template pages look automated, and mass-produced pages are named in Google's spam policies.

Why Google cares

Official guidance ●●●●●

Named in Google's spam policies

Do this first

List your weakest pages and decide for each one: improve it, merge it or remove it.

In plain English

A library with 1,000 books where 800 are the same book isn't more useful for having more books.

Printing the same leaflet 500 times doesn't give you 500 ideas. It gives you a recycling problem.

Why it matters

Near-identical "[Town] estate agents" pages read as automated, and empty search pages feel broken. Both make an agency look like it isn't really paying attention.

Buyers: Hit duplicate or empty search pages and expired listings, which feels like a broken site.

Tenants: Same, and copied listing descriptions tell them nothing new.

Sellers: See a dozen near-identical town pages and doubt you really know any of them.

Landlords: Same: generic, error-prone pages damage credibility.

To Google and Bing, Official guidance

Google's spam policies specifically name "scaled content abuse": lots of pages made mainly to rank rather than to help, whether written by people, templates or AI. AI itself isn't the problem; pages with no real value are. Low-value pages also waste the time Google spends crawling you and give it no reason to prefer you. Property sites are especially at risk, because search filters and feeds create pages automatically.

The evidence: Named in Google's spam policies as scaled content abuse.

> **An agent example**
> A branch has a page for every nearby village, with the same text and only the village name changed, and copies the same listing wording other agents use. It rewrites the pages for the villages it genuinely covers, with real local knowledge checked by a named person, and removes the rest.

Test it

1 Search Console

1. In Indexing, Pages, look at “Why pages aren’t indexed”. “Duplicate without user-selected canonical”, “Crawled, currently not indexed” and “Soft 404” are warning signs.

Google Search Console (search.google.com/search-console)

2 Look at what Google has

1. Search site:yourdomain.co.uk and scan the titles. Dozens that look the same are a red flag.

3 Screaming Frog duplicates

1. Turn on near-duplicate checking (Config, Content, Duplicates), then crawl.
2. Check Page Titles: Duplicate, Content: Near Duplicates and Content: Low Content Pages.

Screaming Frog SEO Spider (www.screamingfrog.co.uk/seo-spider)

4 Ask AI to group them

> **AI prompt**
> Here is a list of my website’s page addresses and titles. Group the ones that look like duplicates or thin pages, and recommend for each: improve, merge, redirect or noindex.

ChatGPT (chatgpt.com), Claude (claude.ai)

Fix it

1 Decide what each weak page needs

1. Improve: it has a real purpose, so add original information.
2. Merge and redirect: near-duplicates go into the strongest page (lesson 2.5).
3. Canonical: where duplicates have to exist (lesson 2.4).
4. Noindex: internal search results and filter pages that don’t deserve to rank (with your developer, and test before and after).
5. Delete: truly worthless pages get a 404 or 410.

2 Set a rule for AI and templates

1. AI for outlines and proofreading; people for facts and local insight.
2. A named person checks every page before it goes live.
3. Write original listing descriptions instead of copying portal or developer text.

Keep it up

Filters and feeds keep creating pages behind your back. Review the duplicate reports twice a year. **(about 1 hour, twice a year)**

Sources

1. Spam policies for Google web search, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/essentials/spam-policies
2. What is URL canonicalization, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/crawling-indexing/canonicalization
3. Google Search’s guidance on using generative AI content, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/using-gen-ai-content

Clear structure, headings and the first screen

Whether a page is easy to take in: an opening that says straight away what it is and who it's for, headings that tell the story, short paragraphs, and tables where they help.

Priority 2.5%, How often: Every new page, Online: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/clear-structure

Why it matters

On a phone, people decide in seconds whether a page is for them.

Why Google cares

Common sense

Helps people and Google find the point

Do this first

Rewrite the opening of each key page: who it's for, what they get, and one clear button.

In plain English

A bedroom with toys all over the floor is harder to use than one where everything has a place. And the first lines of a story should tell you what it's about.

Structure: A supermarket is easy because similar things sit in clearly signed aisles.

The first screen: The first seconds of a film trailer tell you what the film is, not the studio's life story.

There's a live demo of this on the website: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/clear-structure

Why it matters

A wall of text looks hard work, so most people skim, miss the useful part, or leave. On a phone they decide in seconds whether the page is for them, so the first screen has to tell them.

Buyers: Scan on phones, jumping to price, schools and transport by heading.

Tenants: Same: fees, pets and availability need to be findable at a glance.

Sellers: Read more deeply but still need headings and tables to compare fees and services.

Landlords: Same, and want to see from the opening whether the page is for them.

To Google and Bing, Common sense

Clear headings help Google work out the main subject of a page and its subtopics, and a clear opening confirms to the visitor that they're in the right place. Structure mostly helps indirectly, through people staying and reading, but it costs nothing and helps everyone.

The evidence: Helps readers first. Google says headings help it understand a page, with no ranking promise.

An agent example

A valuation page opens: “Our Manchester property valuation tells you what your home could sell for, and explains how we reach it.” Then a button. Then headings: What affects your value, How we value, What happens next, Fees, FAQs. The company history moves to the About page.

Test it

1 Read it out loud

If you stumble or lose your place, a reader will too.

1. Read the page out loud, start to finish.

2 Read only the headings

1. Use the free HeadingsMap Chrome extension, or Screaming Frog’s H1 and H2 tabs.
2. Do the headings alone tell the story of the page? Is there exactly one main heading (H1)?

Screaming Frog SEO Spider (www.screamingfrog.co.uk/seo-spider)

3 The five-second test

1. Show someone the page on a phone for five seconds, then hide it.
2. Ask what it offered and what they’d do next. If they can’t say, the opening isn’t clear enough.

4 Hemingway Editor

Highlights sentences that are too long or complex.

1. Paste your text into hemingwayapp.com and look at anything in yellow or red.

Hemingway Editor (hemingwayapp.com)

Fix it

1 Lead with the answer

1. One sentence on who it's for, one on what they get, and one clear button.
2. On valuation and enquiry pages, keep the form or phone number on the first screen.
3. Move company history lower, or to the About page.

2 Fix the headings

1. One H1 per page that describes the page.
2. H2s for the main sections and H3s inside them, in order.
3. Make them descriptive ("How rent is collected and when you're paid"), not vague ("More info").
4. On listings, ask your provider for a consistent heading template.

3 Break it up

1. Paragraphs of two to four lines, and a subheading every few paragraphs.
2. Tables for fees, tenancy steps and area comparisons.
3. A short "In short" summary at the top of long guides, and an FAQ built from real client questions.

Keep it up

Apply it to every new page, and fix the busiest existing pages first. **(Every new page)**

Sources

1. SEO Starter Guide, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/seo-starter-guide
2. Creating helpful, reliable, people-first content, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/creating-helpful-content

Titles and descriptions that get the click

The blue headline (the title) and the grey summary under it (the meta description) that Google shows for your page, before anyone has clicked anything.

Priority 3.5%, How often: Every new batch; quarterly review, Online: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/titles-headers-meta-descriptions

Why it matters

People choose which result to click from the title alone.

Why Google cares

Official guidance ●●●●●

Titles help you rank; descriptions help you get clicked

Do this first

Rewrite the titles on your highest-impression pages: term + place + detail + brand.

In plain English

The name on the front of an exercise book. If it says “Maths”, the teacher knows what’s inside before opening it.

On a menu, “Slow-cooked beef stew with dumplings” gets ordered far more than “Dish 4”, even if it’s the same stew.

There’s a live demo of this on the website: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/titles-headers-meta-descriptions

Why it matters

Scanning a page of results, a vague title like “Home” tells them nothing, while “3 Bed Houses for Sale in Manchester” tells them they’ve found it. They click the second, from the title alone.

Buyers: Look for “3 Bed Houses for Sale in [Town]” style titles; vague ones get skipped.

Tenants: Look for “[Beds] to Rent in [Area]”, ideally with a price.

Sellers: Respond to “Free Property Valuation in [Town]”.

Landlords: Respond to “Letting and Management in [Town]” and clear fees.

To Google and Bing, Official guidance

The title is one of the clearest signals of what a page is about, and helps decide which searches it shows for. The meta description isn’t a ranking factor at all: it affects whether people click. Google often rewrites titles and descriptions when they don’t match the page well. A higher click rate isn’t a simple ranking lever, but a clearer result earns more of the right clicks, which is the point.

The evidence: Google documents how it builds title links and when it rewrites them. Meta descriptions don’t affect ranking.

> **An agent example**
> “Home” becomes “Flats to Rent in Manchester | 1 to 3 Beds | [Agency]”. The description becomes “Browse flats to rent across Manchester, updated daily. Book a viewing online or call 0161 496 0000.”

Test it

1 Crawl your titles and descriptions

1. Crawl your site with Screaming Frog and open Page Titles and Meta Description.
2. Filter for Missing, Duplicate and Over 60 characters.
3. Check each important page says what it is, and where.

Screaming Frog SEO Spider (www.screamingfrog.co.uk/seo-spider)

2 Find titles that aren’t earning clicks

1. In Search Console, open Performance and switch on Average CTR and Average position.
2. Sort pages by impressions. Pages with lots of impressions but few clicks for their position have weak titles or descriptions.

Google Search Console (search.google.com/search-console)

3 See what Google actually shows

1. Search site:yourdomain.co.uk and your business name.
2. Compare what’s displayed with what you wrote. If Google has rewritten it, your title probably doesn’t match the page’s heading and content.

4 Ask AI for better versions

AI prompt
Here are my page titles and descriptions, with the searches each page gets. Rate each for clarity, match to the search and location. Suggest improved titles under 60 characters and descriptions under 155 characters for [audience] in [town]. Stay accurate.

ChatGPT (chatgpt.com), Claude (claude.ai)

Fix it

1 Use the formula

1. Main term + place + detail + brand: “Flats to Rent in Manchester | 1 to 3 Beds | [Agency]”.
2. Keep titles under about 60 characters, and make every one unique.
3. Make the title match the page’s main heading and content, so Google doesn’t rewrite it.

2 Write descriptions that sell the click

1. Be specific: area, property type, price range, what they can do next.
2. On local service pages, include your phone number so people can call from the results page. Google may not always show it, but accurate, specific descriptions are used more often.

3 Where to change them

1. WordPress: the SEO title and description boxes in Yoast or Rank Math (with a Google-style preview).
2. Other builders: look for “SEO settings” on each page.
3. Listings: ask your provider for a template that builds titles from beds, type, street and area automatically.

4 Change, then wait

1. Start with the pages with the most impressions.
2. Change one thing at a time, wait two to four weeks, and note the result in your testing log.

Keep it up

Easy to get right on the first fifty pages and forget on the next fifty. Check every batch of new pages, and review low-click pages quarterly. **(Every new batch; quarterly review)**

Sources

1. Control your snippets in search results, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/appearance/snippet
2. Influencing your title links, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/appearance/title-link

Writing naturally: places, topics and property terms

Using the words a real local expert would naturally use: your town and neighbourhood names, property terms like tenure, EPC and holding deposit, and the related ideas that tell Google what a page is about, without stuffing keywords.

Priority 1.5%, How often: Every new page, Online: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/near-me-local-wording

Why it matters

If your town isn't on the page, it feels generic, even when you genuinely cover the area.

Why Google cares

Official guidance ●●●●●

Meaning and places, not repetition

Do this first

Put your area name in each page's title and opening paragraph.

In plain English

If I say "goal, goalkeeper, pitch, referee", you know I'm talking about football, even if I never say "football" fifty times.

A good shop assistant understands "something warm for the rain" means a coat, without you having to say the word "coat".

There's a live demo of this on the website: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/near-me-local-wording

Why it matters

Someone searching "estate agent Manchester" relaxes the moment they see "Manchester" on the page. If it's missing, the page feels generic, even if you genuinely cover the area.

Buyers: Search by feature ("garden", "off-street parking", "near station"), so those words need to be there.

Tenants: Search "pet friendly", "furnished", "bills included": the words and the details must be present.

Sellers: Expect "valuation", "marketing", "sold" and their own neighbourhood.

Landlords: Expect "tenancy", "inventory", "deposit", "management" and their area.

To Google and Bing, Official guidance

Google understands topics and how places, property types and services relate, not just exact phrases. Place names feed local relevance directly, and the related terms an expert would naturally use help a page show for related searches. Repeating a phrase over and over does nothing except risk looking like spam.

The evidence: Google documents keyword stuffing as spam, and that it understands related words and places.

An agent example

A Manchester lettings page naturally mentions landlords, tenants, deposits, referencing, management, Didsbury, Chorlton and the tram stops, because that's what someone who knows the area talks about. Nobody has to write "Manchester letting agent" twelve times.

Test it

1 Check the title and opening

The places both a reader and Google look first.

1. Is your area name in the title and the first paragraph?

2 Search the whole page

1. Press Ctrl+F (Cmd+F) and search for your town or area name.
2. Does it appear naturally in headings, listings and image descriptions too, not just once at the top?

3 Compare with the top three

1. Search your target phrase, open the top three pages, and list the topics and terms they all mention that yours doesn't.
2. In Search Console, check whether the page shows for the related searches you'd expect (property types, features, neighbourhoods).

Google Search Console (search.google.com/search-console)

4 Ask AI for a checklist

AI prompt
List the places, concepts and property terms an expert would naturally mention on a page about [topic] in [town]. Then check this page's text and tell me which are missing. Don't rewrite the page.

ChatGPT (chatgpt.com), Claude (claude.ai)

Fix it

1 Place names first

1. Put your area name in the title and opening paragraph.
2. Then reinforce it naturally further down: headings, listings and image descriptions.
3. Use real local names: streets, stations, schools, parks and neighbourhoods.

2 Use the language of the job

1. Tenure, council tax band, EPC, deposit, holding deposit, referencing, inventory: the words customers search with.
2. Ask AI for a checklist of terms, then write in your own words. Never paste in a keyword list.

Keep it up

Easy to remember on the pages you build today, easy to forget on the ones added later. Check every new page. **(Every new page)**

Sources

1. Tips to improve your local ranking on Google, Google Business Profile Help. support.google.com/business/answer/7091
2. Creating helpful, reliable, people-first content, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/creating-helpful-content



06

Property listings

Listings that are accurate, current and better than the portal's copy.

6.1 Accurate, complete listings
6.2 Availability, prices, feeds and the portals
6.3 Process and fees pages
6.4 Photos, floorplans and video

Accurate, complete listings

Whether each listing is accurate, complete, and clearly identifies one specific property: price or rent, bedrooms, bathrooms, type, tenure, council tax band, EPC, floorplan, photos, and everything a buyer or tenant needs to decide whether to view.

Priority 1.5%, How often: about 30 minutes a month, Online: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/accurate-listings

Why it matters

A wrong bedroom count wastes a viewing, and missing details lose enquiries.

Why Google cares

Official guidance ●●●●●

Accuracy is the heart of listing SEO

Do this first

Fix listing errors in your CRM, not just on the website, so they don’t come back.

In plain English

If a toy shop says a toy comes with four wheels and the box has three, you feel cheated. A listing has to say what the house really has.

Accuracy: A hotel photo showing a sea view when the room faces the car park. Everyone who booked because of it is disappointed.

A clear identity: A parcel with a tracking number can be found at any moment. One with just “box” written on it gets lost.

Why it matters

A wrong bedroom count wastes a viewing and a weekend. Missing details lose enquiries from people who won’t bother to ask. And every listing is how sellers and landlords judge how you’d present their home.

Buyers: Need accurate price, tenure, size, council tax band, EPC, floorplan and the material facts.

Tenants: Need accurate rent, deposit, holding deposit, availability, furnishing, pets, bills and fees.

Sellers: Judge you by how well you present homes like theirs.

Landlords: Judge you by how well you present rentals.

To Google and Bing, Official guidance

An accurate, specific page satisfies the search and stands apart from the copies on the portals. Clear identifiers (type, beds, street, a stable web address and a visible reference) help people and search engines tell one property from another. It's also the law: since April 2025, the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act bans leaving out material information. National Trading Standards withdrew its Part A, B and C guidance in May 2025, after the law changed, but those three parts are still the industry's working checklist: price, council tax and tenure first, then construction, utilities, broadband and parking, then risks like flooding where they apply.

The evidence: Consumer law (the DMCC Act) on material information. The search benefit is practitioner view.

An agent example

A listing says four bedrooms; the fourth is a box room with no window. Two couples view, both are annoyed, one leaves a bad review. The agency makes bedroom count, tenure and council tax band compulsory fields in its CRM, and a manager checks every new listing before it goes live.

Test it

1 The five-listing audit

1. Pick five live listings.
2. Check each against your CRM, your website, Rightmove, Zoopla and OnTheMarket: price, beds, baths, type, tenure, EPC, availability and photos.
3. Note every difference and every gap.

2 The material information check

Parts A, B and C are still the working checklist, even though the guidance itself was withdrawn in May 2025.

1. Part A, always: price or rent, council tax band, deposit (lettings), tenure and costs like service charge and ground rent (sales).
2. Part B, every property: type, construction, rooms and sizes, utilities, heating, broadband, mobile coverage, parking.
3. Part C, where it applies: building safety, restrictions, rights and easements, flood risk, planning, accessibility.
4. Confirm the current requirements with your professional body.

GEO 8.1: material information in full (/geocourse/listing-accuracy)

3 One property, one address

1. Does every listing have its own stable web address that doesn't change when its status changes, and a visible reference?
2. Crawl with Screaming Frog and check Page Titles for duplicates across listings.

Screaming Frog SEO Spider (www.screamingfrog.co.uk/seo-spider)

4 Ask AI what's missing

AI prompt

Here is one of my property listings. What information would a [buyer / tenant] expect that is missing? Check it against the Part A, B and C material information checklist. Don't guess any values.

ChatGPT (chatgpt.com), Claude (claude.ai)

Fix it

1 Fix it at the source

1. Treat your CRM as the single source of truth. Fix errors there, not just on the website, or the next feed overwrites your fix.
2. Make the key fields compulsory for negotiators.
3. Use a listing template so every listing has the same details in the same order.

2 Give every property a clear identity

1. Titles with type, bedrooms, street or area and reference: "3 bed semi-detached house, Mill Road, Manchester (ref 4521)".
2. Web addresses that stay the same from available to sold.
3. Write original descriptions rather than copying the developer's or the previous agent's text.

3 Ask your provider

1. Property software (Reapit, Alto, Expert Agent, Street, Jupix) and website platforms (Homeflow, Property Hive and others) can usually add fields and checks. Ask what's possible.

Keep it up

Audit five listings every month and log what you fix. **(about 30 minutes a month)**

Go deeper: What a strong property page answers

- What is it, and where?
- What does it cost, and on what terms?
- How many bedrooms and bathrooms, and how big?
- What does it look like, inside and out, and how do the rooms fit together (floorplan)?
- What's nearby: schools, transport, shops?
- Is it still available?
- Who is it suitable for?
- What's the next step, and how do I book a viewing?

Sources

1. Material information guidance, Propertymark. propertymark.co.uk/resource/full-material-information-guidance-published.html
2. Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act 2024, Schedule 20, legislation.gov.uk. legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2024/13/schedule/20
3. Fees you can charge as part of a tenancy, GOV.UK. gov.uk/guidance/fees-you-can-charge-as-part-of-a-tenancy

Availability, prices, feeds and the portals

Keeping every listing's status and price right everywhere it appears (your website, Rightmove, Zoopla, OnTheMarket), and making sure your own page, not the portal's copy, is the one worth visiting.

Priority 1.25%, How often: Daily glance; about 20 minutes a month, Online: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/syndicated-listing-duplication

Why it matters

A wrong status or price anywhere makes people doubt everything, and portals often outrank your own listing.

Why Google cares

Practitioner view ●●●○○

Portals often outrank your own listing

Do this first

Compare the status and price of 20 listings across your CRM, your website and every portal.

In plain English

If you tell one friend the match has moved to Saturday, they have to tell everyone else, or some people turn up on the wrong day. One list that everything copies from keeps everyone right.

A departure board still showing a train that left an hour ago sends people to the platform for nothing.

There's a live demo of this on the website: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/syndicated-listing-duplication

Why it matters

A rental still marked "available" three weeks after it let, or a different price on your site and on the portal, makes people distrust everything else you say. And when they find your listing on a portal instead of your site, they never see your brand, your reviews or your other properties.

Buyers: Hate "available" homes that sold weeks ago, and notice when prices don't match.

Tenants: Waste time chasing let properties, and blame you.

Sellers: Want their home shown correctly and updated quickly.

Landlords: Same, and judge you by how consistently their property is shown.

To Google and Bing, Practitioner view

Current, consistent information satisfies the search; contradictions damage trust. Your listing on a portal is a near-copy of your own page, and the portals usually have far more authority, so they often outrank you for your own property. A canonical tag on your page (lesson 2.4) keeps your own versions consistent, but the real fix is making your page more useful than the portal's.

The evidence: Portals outranking agents for their own listings is common experience. We found no published study.

An agent example

A lettings agency drops a rent from £1,500 to £1,450 pcm in its CRM. Its website updates in minutes, but one portal takes two days, so tenants see two prices. It asks for a faster feed, and a named person now checks statuses every morning.

Test it

1 The status and price audit

1. For 20 listings, compare status and price across your CRM, your website and every portal.

2 The timing test

1. Change a status in your CRM, then time how long your website and each portal take to show it.

3 Who wins your own listing?

Shows the real outcome: whose page gets the click right now.

1. Copy a distinctive phrase from one of your listing descriptions.
2. Search it in Google, in quotation marks.
3. See which ranks higher: your site, or a portal.

4 Check your page's canonical

1. Open your own listing, right-click, View page source, and search for canonical.
2. It should exist, and point to the same page.

Fix it

1 One source of truth

1. Everything flows from your CRM through automated feeds. Ask your provider how often each feed updates.
2. Use clear status labels: Under offer, Sold STC, Let agreed.
3. Give one named person a daily status check.
4. Handle sold and let pages with your status policy (lesson 2.5).

2 Make your page better than the portal's

1. Add what the portal doesn't have: local detail and an area guide, mortgage and viewing information, the agent's name and contact, original photos, video and 360 tours.
2. Write your own description rather than reusing portal text.
3. Add a self-referencing canonical tag to your listing pages (ask your developer).
4. Ask your portals whether they link back to your own site, where that's available.

Keep it up

Every new listing and every price change is a fresh chance for this to go wrong. A quick daily status glance, and a monthly spot-check. **(Daily glance; about 20 minutes a month)**

Sources

1. What is URL canonicalization, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/crawling-indexing/canonicalization
2. Creating helpful, reliable, people-first content, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/creating-helpful-content

Process and fees pages

Pages that explain how things work with you: how viewings, offers, applications and valuations work, what the fees are, and what happens at each step, for each of your four audiences.

Priority 0.5%, How often: Quarterly, and when rules change, Online: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/process-and-fees-pages

Why it matters

"Contact us for details" feels like hiding something. Open processes and fees build trust.

Why Google cares

Official guidance ●●●●●

Answers the questions people search before they choose

Do this first

Publish one clear page per journey: the steps, a rough timeline and the fees.

In plain English

Joining a club is easier when someone tells you what to do first, what it costs, and what happens next.

A recipe lists the steps and the time, so you know what you're getting into before you turn the oven on.

Why it matters

People like knowing the steps before they start. An agency that publishes its process and fees openly feels trustworthy; one that says "contact us for details" feels like it's hiding something.

Buyers: Want the steps, the costs and the timeline from offer to keys.

Tenants: Want the application steps, referencing, deposit rules and every fee.

Sellers: Want a clear path from valuation to completion, and your fees.

Landlords: Want to see exactly what each service level includes, and what it costs.

To Google and Bing, Official guidance

Process pages answer hundreds of specific searches ("how does referencing work", "holding deposit rules", "how long does it take to sell a house") and lead people naturally into your services. Letting agents in England are also required by law to publish their fees on their website (lesson 8.3).

The evidence: Letting agents must publish their fees by law. The search benefit is practitioner view.

An agent example

A lettings branch publishes "How renting with us works": viewings, applications, referencing, deposits and fees, with a link from every listing. Tenants know what to expect, the page ranks for "how to apply for a rental in [town]", and the phones get fewer "what happens next?" calls.

Test it

1 The process page audit

1. Do you have a page for buying, renting, selling and letting, each with the steps and the fees?

2 What people are already asking

1. In Search Console, look for searches like “how long does it take to rent”, “holding deposit” and “agent fees”.

Google Search Console (search.google.com/search-console)

3 Ask AI

AI prompt
What questions do [tenants / landlords / buyers / sellers] ask during the renting or selling process in England? Group them by stage. I’ll compare them with the pages on my website.

ChatGPT (chatgpt.com), Claude (claude.ai)

Fix it

1 Publish the process

1. One clear page per journey, with the steps, a rough timeline and the fees.
2. Link to it from every relevant listing and service page.

2 Keep it legally accurate

1. The Renters’ Rights Act 2025 changed lettings in England from 1 May 2026 (no more section 21, periodic tenancies, one advertised rent), so check every renting and landlord page against current guidance.
2. Verify fees and legal details with your professional body, and date the page when you review it.

Propertymark (www.propertymark.co.uk), GEO 8.2: the Renters’ Rights Act (/geocourse/renters-rights-act)

Keep it up

Review every quarter, and whenever the rules or your fees change. **(Quarterly, and when rules change)**

Go deeper: The four journeys

Your site should have a useful page at every step of all four.

• Seller: “how much is my house worth?”, then a valuation, then researching agents, then instructing one.

• Buyer: “3 bed houses [town]”, then property search, then a listing, then a viewing, then an offer.

• Landlord: “how much rent can I charge?”, then a rental valuation, then researching management, then instructing.

• Tenant: “2 bed flats [town]”, then listings, then a property page, then a viewing, then an application.

Sources

1. Fees you can charge as part of a tenancy, GOV.UK. gov.uk/guidance/fees-you-can-charge-as-part-of-a-tenancy
2. Letting agents: display of fees, Business Companion (Trading Standards). businesscompanion.info/en/quick-guides/services/letting-agents-display-of-fees
3. Guide to the Renters’ Rights Act, GOV.UK. gov.uk/government/publications/guide-to-the-renters-rights-act/guide-to-the-renters-rights-act

Photos, floorplans and video

Original photos, floorplans and video that genuinely show the property and the area, described properly so people and search engines know what each one shows.

Priority 1.75%, How often: Every instruction; quarterly check, Online: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/photos-floorplans-video

Why it matters

Photos, floorplans and video are how people decide whether a viewing is worth their time.

Why Google cares

Official guidance ●●●●●

Extra ways to be found, and to be chosen

Do this first

Give every listing photo a short description of what it actually shows.

In plain English

If you're choosing a bike, a real photo of that exact bike helps far more than a picture of any old bike.

Floorplans: The map at a visitor centre shows how everything fits together far better than any amount of description.

Image descriptions: The label beside a painting in a museum tells you what you're looking at, which matters most to anyone who can't see it.

Why it matters

Photos, floorplans and video are how people decide whether a viewing is worth their time. Tenants moving from further away often decide from a video alone.

Buyers: Want photos, floorplans, 3D tours and video before booking a viewing.

Tenants: Want to see every room and its condition before travelling.

Sellers: Judge your marketing by the quality of your photos.

Landlords: Judge how you'd present their property.

To Google and Bing, Official guidance

Original, relevant images and video create extra chances to be found in image search, video results and YouTube, and make pages more useful. Stock photos add nothing. A short text description (alt text) explains each image to people using screen readers and helps Google understand it. Large image files are the most common reason property pages are slow (lesson 4.1).

The evidence: Google's image best practices cover alt text and original images.

An agent example

A lettings branch films short phone videos (a walkthrough, a neighbourhood tour and landlord FAQs), puts them on YouTube with clear titles and descriptions, and embeds them on the right pages with a transcript. Tenants relocating from other cities book viewings straight from the video.

Test it

1 The listing quality audit

1. For ten listings, count the photos and check for a floorplan, video or virtual tour.
2. Compare with the best local agent's listings.

2 Spot stock and reused photos

1. Run a few of your photos through Google Lens (reverse image search) to see whether they're stock or used elsewhere.
2. Check each listing's photos are actually of that property, and area pages show the real area.

Google Lens (lens.google.com)

3 Check your image descriptions

1. Screaming Frog's Images tab, filtered by Missing Alt Text, or WAVE on a single page.

Screaming Frog SEO Spider (www.screamingfrog.co.uk/seo-spider), WAVE (wave.webaim.org)

4 Ask AI to write them

AI prompt

Write short, useful alt text for these property photos, describing what each shows (no keyword stuffing): [list or describe the photos].

ChatGPT (chatgpt.com), Claude (claude.ai)

Fix it

1 Shoot it properly

1. Professional photography for every instruction, at the right time of day, every room plus the outside.
2. A floorplan for every property.
3. Video and 3D tours where they help (Matterport, or a phone and YouTube).
4. Real photos of the area for neighbourhood pages, and label any illustration as an “artist’s impression”.

Matterport (matterport.com)

2 Describe every image

1. Alt text describes what’s shown: “Open-plan kitchen with island and garden doors”, not “Manchester estate agents Manchester house”.
2. On WordPress: Media, select the image, Alt Text. Purely decorative images can have empty alt text.
3. Ask your property software provider whether photo captions can be sent through as alt text.

3 Make video work twice

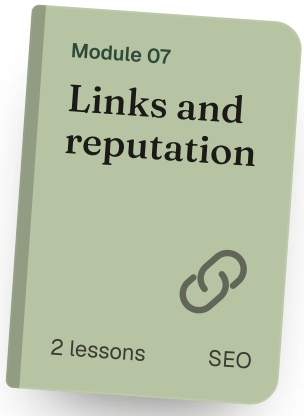
1. Host on YouTube with a clear title and description, then embed it on the relevant page with a transcript underneath.

Keep it up

Every new instruction, plus a quarterly check of a sample of listings. **(Every instruction; quarterly check)**

Sources

1. Google image SEO best practices, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/appearance/google-images
2. Video SEO best practices, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/appearance/video



07

Links and reputation

What the rest of the web says about you, and how to earn it.

7.1 Backlinks: which links count, and how agents earn them

7.2 Your reputation and brand beyond your website

Backlinks: which links count, and how agents earn them

Other websites linking to yours. Search engines treat a genuine link from a respected, relevant site as a recommendation, and the quality, relevance and variety of those links matter far more than how many you have.

Priority 7.25%, How often: One approach a week, ongoing, Online: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/backlinks

Why it matters

A link from a respected local site is a recommendation. Without them, you look less established.

Why Google cares

Official guidance ●●●●●

One of the oldest signals there is

Do this first

Email one local journalist a useful comment on a current property story.

In plain English

One recommendation from a teacher who knows you well means more than a thousand from strangers who've never met you.

Quality: A respected expert recommending you is different from paying 500 strangers to say you're good.

Variety: Five different doctors agreeing is stronger evidence than one doctor writing the same diagnosis five times.

Why it matters

People rarely notice links directly, but they feel the effect. An agency that's quoted in the local paper and thanked on the football club's website feels established. And some people find you through those sites in the first place.

Buyers: Benefit when local press and community sites point to you: you rank for local searches and look established.

Tenants: Same, and often find agents through local community and student sites.

Sellers: Trust agencies quoted in the local media.

Landlords: Trust agencies referenced by industry bodies and property publications.

To Google and Bing, Official guidance

Links remain one of the ways Google discovers pages and judges how important and trustworthy a site is, and Google says local prominence includes links and articles about you. Four questions decide whether a link is worth anything: is the linking site credible, is it relevant, was it earned naturally, and does your whole set of links look like genuine recognition rather than a campaign? Links from many different independent sites beat many links from one. Natural link wording beats the same commercial phrase repeated. A link inside a relevant article beats one in a footer or a directory. Buying links breaks Google's spam policies (lesson 9.1). Bing uses links in a similar way.

The evidence: Google says links help it find pages and judge prominence, and that buying them breaks its spam policies.

An agent example

An agency publishes a quarterly rental report for its town. The local paper quotes it in a story about rising rents and links to it, a community site shares it, and the student union links to the tenant guide. Three genuine links from three relevant local sites, earned because the agency made something worth referencing.

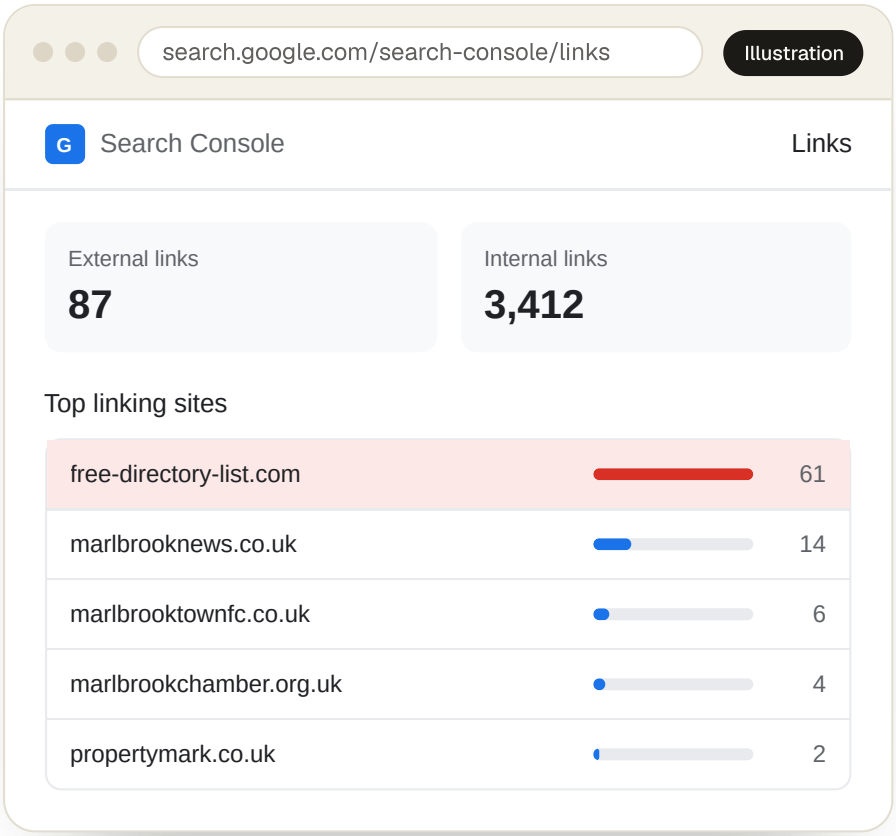
Test it

1 Search Console's Links report

Free, and shows the links Google knows about.

1. Open Links in the left menu.
2. Review Top linking sites and Top linked pages, and export the full list.

Google Search Console (search.google.com/search-console)



Search Console, Links. Top linking sites shows who links to you. When one site provides most of your links (top row, usually a directory), that's a variety problem, not a strength. Example numbers.

2 Ahrefs Webmaster Tools

Free for your own verified site, with more detail: referring sites, new and lost links, and the wording used.

1. Verify your site (importing from Search Console is quickest).
2. Check how many different sites link to you, and whether one site provides most of your links (often a directory). That's a variety problem.
3. Look at the link wording (anchors): naturally, most should be your brand name or web address.

Ahrefs Webmaster Tools (ahrefs.com/webmaster-tools)

3 See who links to your competitors

1. Put three competitors into Ahrefs' free backlink checker (it shows a sample).
2. Note local sites that link to them and not to you. Those are your targets.

Ahrefs backlink checker (ahrefs.com/backlink-checker)

4 Judge each link

1. For your top links, open the linking page. Is it a real site? Relevant? Local? Is the link inside an article, or in a footer or directory list?
2. Would you be happy for a customer to see it?

5 Ask AI to sort them

AI prompt

Here is a list of the websites that link to my estate agency. Group them into local press, property industry, directories, community, and low-quality or suspicious. Flag any that look paid or spammy.

ChatGPT (chatgpt.com), Claude (claude.ai)

Fix it

1 Local press

1. Find the journalists who cover property or business on your local news site.
2. Email a short, useful comment on a current local story, backed by numbers you can stand behind.
3. Ask to be credited with a link to your site, not just your name.
4. Press request services (ResponseSource, Qwoted, Featured) send journalists' requests your way; check the current cost.

2 Publish something worth linking to

1. A quarterly sold-price or rent report for your town, a rent-by-area guide, a first-time buyer guide, a tenant checklist.
2. Use free HM Land Registry data plus your own figures, and share it with local news sites and community groups.

HM Land Registry Price Paid data (landregistry.data.gov.uk/app/ppd)

3 Your community and your partners

1. Sponsoring a local team, school event or charity usually earns a link from their sponsors page.
2. Solicitors, mortgage brokers and removal firms you already refer to will often link back if you ask. A genuine relationship, not a link swap scheme.
3. Join and list yourself properly with Propertymark, your redress scheme and your local Chamber of Commerce.

Propertymark (www.propertymark.co.uk)

4 Claim the links you're owed

1. Search Google for "[your agency name]" -site:yourdomain.co.uk to find mentions of you.
2. Where a site mentions you without linking, politely ask them to add the link.

5 Make it a habit

1. List 30 organisations to approach: local press, community groups, charities, schools, business associations, partners.
2. One approach a week, tracked in a sheet: Target, Type, Contact, Pitch, Sent, Reply, Link live?
3. Don't dictate the link wording. Let people describe you naturally.

Then: Found spammy links you didn't create? Google usually ignores them. Its disavow tool exists for genuine problems, but get advice before using it.

Keep it up

Earning one link is the easy part. Doing it steadily, month after month, is the actual work. **(One approach a week, ongoing)**

Sources

1. Spam policies for Google web search, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/essentials/spam-policies
2. Link best practices for Google, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/crawling-indexing/links-crawlable

Your reputation and brand beyond your website

What the rest of the web says and knows about you: press coverage, awards, memberships, community involvement, conversations on Reddit and local forums, and how many people search for your name.

Priority 1.75%, How often: about 20 minutes a week, Online: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/reputation-and-brand

Why it matters

People shortlist the names they already know and trust.

Why Google cares

Practitioner view ●●●○○

Evidence your own website can't provide

Do this first

Search your agency's name in a private window and note everything on the first page.

In plain English

Saying "I'm the best footballer" is your opinion. Lots of other people recognising what you've done is evidence.

A restaurant's own sign says it's the best in town. The queue out of the door says it for them.

Why it matters

A genuinely helpful, non-salesy answer from a local agent in a real community discussion builds trust before someone has even visited your site. And people shortlist the names they already know.

Buyers: Look for signs you're real and active, and often ask local forums for recommendations.

Tenants: Ask on student and community forums which agents to trust, or avoid.

Sellers: Look for press, awards and memberships before they call.

Landlords: Look for redress scheme and client money protection logos, and a name they recognise.

To Google and Bing, Practitioner view

Independent evidence of your reputation supports trust and local prominence, and tends to earn links and mentions. Forum and Reddit discussions increasingly appear in Google's results, and AI tools often read them too. A well-known brand gets more people searching for its name directly, which makes clicks, links and reviews easier to earn. That's why branded searches aren't a vanity number: they're one of the best signs your marketing is working.

The evidence: Brand and reputation effects are widely observed. Google doesn't publish a brand signal.

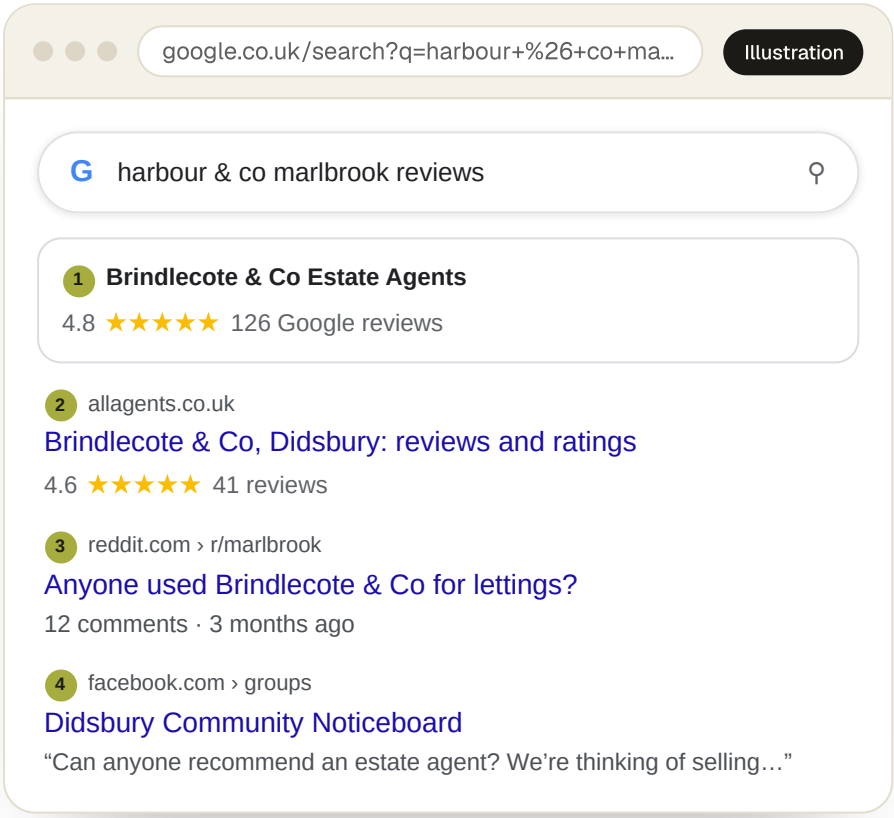
An agent example

A sales branch keeps its boards consistent across the area, sponsors the local youth football team, answers questions on the town's Facebook and Reddit groups under the manager's real name, and gets steady reviews. Within a year more people are typing its name straight into Google, and sellers put it on their shortlist before asking anyone else.

Test it

1 Google yourself

1. In a private window, search "[agency]", "[agency] reviews" and "[agency] complaints".
2. Write down everything on the first page.



Google your own name the way a seller would. Most of page one isn't your website: it's (1) your reviews, (2) review sites and (3, 4) local conversations you can only shape by taking part. Example numbers.

2 Find the conversations

1. Search Reddit, Facebook groups and local forums for your town plus "estate agent" or "letting agent". Note which communities come up repeatedly.
2. Search for your own name too. These conversations happen whether you're part of them or not.

3 Measure your brand

1. In Search Console, filter Performance to searches containing your agency's name. Track the clicks and impressions monthly.
2. Compare your name with two competitors in Google Trends.
3. Add "How did you hear about us?" to every enquiry form and call.

Google Search Console (search.google.com/search-console), Google Trends (trends.google.com/trends)

4 Check your memberships are shown properly

1. Is your redress scheme, client money protection and Propertymark membership on your site, linking to the official verification page?

Fix it

1 Join the conversations, honestly

1. Answer real questions in full, using your local knowledge. Most of the value is being visibly the local expert, not the click.
2. Use your real name and say you're an agent. Communities respond far better to that than to a disguised sales pitch.
3. Only include a link when it directly answers the question. Most communities remove anything that reads like an advert.

2 Build recognition locally

1. Consistent branding on boards, listings, social profiles and your website.
2. Local sponsorship, community events and press (lesson 7.1).
3. Enter local business and property awards honestly, and show memberships with logos that link to the official page.

3 Reviews

1. Reviews are the biggest single part of your reputation, and have their own course.

The Reviews course (/resources/reviews)

Keep it up

Forums and communities reward steady, genuine participation: 20 minutes a week reading, and one honest answer a week where the rules allow it. Check your branded searches monthly. **(about 20 minutes a week)**

Sources

1. Creating helpful, reliable, people-first content, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/creating-helpful-content
2. Search Quality Rater Guidelines, Google. guidelines.raterhub.com/searchqualityevaluatorguidelines.pdf
3. Tips to improve your local ranking on Google, Google Business Profile Help. support.google.com/business/answer/7091



08

Trust

Proving you’re real, qualified and above board.

8.1 E-E-A-T: proving you’re real and you know your stuff
8.2 Agent bios and named authors
8.3 Transparency and compliance

E-E-A-T: proving you're real and you know your stuff

Showing visitors and Google that you're a real, established agency that knows what it's talking about: real people, real credentials, real results and clear sources.

Priority 2%, How often: Twice a year, Online: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/eeat-and-trust

Why it matters

People hand you their home and their money. They look for proof before they do.

Why Google cares

Official guidance ●●●●●

Matters most for decisions about money, like property

Do this first

Add named authors, real photos and links to your registrations on your key pages.

In plain English

Would you take a swimming tip from someone who has actually swum in races, or from someone who has only read about it? People trust those who've really done it and can show proof.

A doctor with a certificate on the wall, a name badge and good patient feedback feels safer than a stranger handing out advice from a van.

Why it matters

People hand agencies their homes, their money and their personal details. Before they do, they look for proof: who you are, who they'd deal with, whether you're registered, and what other people say.

Buyers: Trust honest, specific information and agents who respond.

Tenants: Look for proof that their deposit and details are safe.

Sellers: Make one of the biggest financial decisions of their lives, and look for evidence of expertise.

Landlords: Look for proof you protect landlords: registrations, insurance, a named team.

To Google and Bing, Official guidance

E-E-A-T (Experience, Expertise, Authoritativeness, Trustworthiness) comes from Google's guidelines for the people who assess the quality of its results. It isn't a single ranking score, but it describes what Google's systems aim to reward, and Google says it matters most on topics that affect people's money and lives, which includes property. The evidence: identifiable experts, accurate information, real experience, clear business details, an independent reputation and proper sources. An anonymous site that collects leads under a borrowed local name is exactly what it's designed to filter out.

The evidence: From Google's quality rater guidelines. It describes what Google aims to reward; it isn't a single score.

An agent example

A landlord guide names the lettings director who wrote it, says how long they've managed property in the area, links to the gov.uk guidance it relies on, and shows the date it was last reviewed. A competitor's equivalent page has no author, no date and no sources.

Test it

1 The trust checklist

1. On each key page, check for: a named author, a real photo, relevant credentials, a review date, sources for any facts, contact details, reviews and policies.

2 The first-impression test

1. Ask three people who don't know you: "Would you trust this agency with your home, or your deposit? Why, or why not?"

3 Check you're verifiable

1. Confirm your entries on Companies House, your redress scheme's register, your client money protection scheme and the ICO register.
2. Search "[agency] scam" and "[agency] complaints" and see what comes up.

Companies House (find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk), ICO register (ico.org.uk/ESDWebPages/Search)

4 Ask AI for a review

AI prompt

Review this page against Google's E-E-A-T guidance for a UK estate and letting agent. What evidence of experience, expertise, authority and trust is present, and what's missing?

ChatGPT (chatgpt.com), Claude (claude.ai)

Fix it

1 Show the people and the proof

1. Bylines, bios and review dates on guides (lesson 8.2).
2. Real work: case studies and sold examples, with the client's permission.
3. Memberships and registrations, with logos that link to the official verification page.
4. Your reviews and your complaints procedure, both easy to find.

2 Remove what you can't prove

1. Claims like "the best" or "number one in [town]" undermine trust unless you can back them up.
2. Fix any gaps in registrations or insurance before you advertise them.

Keep it up

Review your key pages against the checklist twice a year. **(Twice a year)**

Sources

1. Creating helpful, reliable, people-first content, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/creating-helpful-content
2. Search Quality Rater Guidelines, Google. guidelines.raterhub.com/searchqualityevaluatorguidelines.pdf
3. Find and update company information, Companies House. find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk
4. Letting agents, Business Companion (Trading Standards). businesscompanion.info/en/quick-guides/services/letting-agents
5. Register: the data protection fee, Information Commissioner's Office. ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-fee/register
6. Types of claims: "best", Advertising Standards Authority. asa.org.uk/advice-online/types-of-claims-best.html

Agent bios and named authors

A real paragraph about each person on your team (their experience, their specialism, their patch), not just a name and job title, and a named author on every guide you publish.

Priority 0.75%, How often: Whenever your team changes, Online: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/agent-bios

Why it matters

People choose people, not companies. A faceless team page makes that harder.

Why Google cares

Practitioner view ●●●○○

Real people, traceable expertise

Do this first

Rewrite each bio: years in property, specialism, areas covered and one human detail.

In plain English

If a note on the school noticeboard says who wrote it, people know who to ask about it. A note with no name makes you wonder whether anyone really knows the answer.

A recipe is easier to trust when you can see the chef's name and what they cook for a living.

Why it matters

Deciding who to trust with selling their home, people want to know the actual person they'll deal with. A faceless team page, or none at all, makes that decision harder than it needs to be.

Buyers: Like knowing who will show them round.

Tenants: Same, and who to contact when something goes wrong.

Sellers: Choose people, not companies.

Landlords: Want to know who will manage their property day to day.

To Google and Bing, Practitioner view

Clear authorship shows expertise and accountability, which is a big part of what E-E-A-T describes. It carries more weight when it's backed up elsewhere: a LinkedIn profile, Propertymark membership, or local press.

The evidence: Google's guidance asks "who created the content?". The ranking effect of bios hasn't been measured.

> **An agent example**
> “Sarah has managed lettings in Manchester for 11 years and looks after 200 homes across the town. She’s an ARLA Propertymark member, and still does every inventory check herself.” That beats “Sarah Jones, Lettings Manager” in every way.

Test it

1 Read your own team page

1. Does each bio say more than a name and job title? Is there a real photo? Experience, specialism, areas?

2 Check it’s backed up

1. Search each person’s name with your agency’s name.
2. Is there a LinkedIn profile, professional membership or press mention that supports what the bio says?

3 Check your guides

1. Does every guide say who wrote or reviewed it, and when?

Fix it

1 Write real bios

1. Years in property, what they specialise in, the areas they cover, and one human detail.
2. Link to their LinkedIn or professional profile.
3. Book a headshot session so every photo is real and consistent.

2 Let AI tidy them, from facts only

AI prompt
Turn these facts into a warm, genuine 80-word bio for an estate agency team page. Use only the facts I give you: [name, role, years, specialism, areas, qualifications, one personal detail].

ChatGPT (chatgpt.com), Claude (claude.ai)

3 Credit and keep current

1. Add “Written by” or “Reviewed by” to every guide.
2. Remove bios of people who’ve left. A bio for someone who left two years ago does more harm than none.

Keep it up

Update whenever your team changes. **(Whenever your team changes)**

Sources

1. Creating helpful, reliable, people-first content, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/creating-helpful-content
2. Search Quality Rater Guidelines, Google. guidelines.raterhub.com/searchqualityevaluatorguidelines.pdf

Transparency and compliance

Making it easy to see who runs your website and how to reach them, and publishing what the law and your professional bodies require: fees, redress scheme, client money protection, complaints procedure, privacy notice and cookie choices.

Priority 1.5%, How often: Quarterly, Online: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/transparency-and-compliance

Why it matters

Hidden fees or no complaints route make people wary, and for letting agents some of it is the law.

Why Google cares

Official guidance ●●●●●

Required for letting agents, and good for trust

Do this first

Make your fees, redress scheme and client money protection easy to find from every page.

In plain English

A shop with a clear sign, an address and a phone number feels safe to walk into. Shops also have rules, like showing prices, and a website for a business does too.

The food hygiene rating on a restaurant's door. Following the rules properly is part of why customers trust the place.

Why it matters

Tenants check fees and how to complain; landlords look for your redress scheme and client money protection; buyers and sellers check you're regulated and contactable. A site with only an enquiry form leaves them wondering who they're dealing with.

Buyers: Check you're regulated, and want accurate property information.

Tenants: Need fees, deposit rules and the complaints route to be clear.

Sellers: Check your fees and any claims you make about results.

Landlords: Look for redress scheme membership and client money protection.

To Google and Bing, Official guidance

Transparency supports trust and legitimacy. Compliance isn't a ranking trick, but it protects your reputation and your business, and a site that hides who's behind it looks like exactly the kind of site Google is wary of. Some of it is also the law: letting agents in England must publish their fees on their website, along with their redress scheme and client money protection scheme, and Trading Standards can fine up to £5,000 for each breach.

The evidence: Legal requirements for fees, redress and client money protection. The ranking effect is indirect.

£5,000

The most Trading Standards can fine for each breach of the fee publication rules

An agent example

A lettings branch asks its compliance adviser to review the website. The fees are three clicks deep, the privacy notice isn't linked from the enquiry form, and analytics and advertising cookies load before anyone agrees. It fixes all three, dates the pages and starts a compliance log.

Test it

1 The footer test

1. From any page, can you reach Contact, About, Privacy, Terms, your complaints procedure, your redress scheme and (for lettings) client money protection within two clicks?
2. Are your fees clearly published?

2 The contact test

1. Call, email and use the form. Do they all work, and how quickly does someone reply?

3 The cookie test

1. In a private window, decline cookies, then check whether tracking cookies still load (Chrome: Inspect, Application, Cookies), or use a scanner such as Cookiebot's.
2. Check every form says what happens to the person's data, with a link to your privacy notice.

Cookiebot scan (www.cookiebot.com)

4 Ask AI for a checklist

AI prompt
What legal and regulatory information do UK estate and letting agents normally need to publish on their website? Give me a checklist I can verify with my compliance adviser.

ChatGPT (chatgpt.com), Claude (claude.ai)

Fix it

1 Publish the essentials

1. Contact, About (with your registered company details and VAT number if you have one), Privacy, Terms and a complaints procedure, all linked from every page.
2. Fees shown clearly, with your redress scheme and client money protection scheme named.
3. Verify the current rules with your professional body or redress scheme.

The Property Ombudsman (www.tpos.co.uk), Property Redress (www.propertyredress.co.uk), Propertymark (www.propertymark.co.uk)

2 Cookies and data

1. Use a consent tool (Cookiebot, CookieYes, Termly) so non-essential cookies wait for agreement.
2. UK rules changed on 5 February 2026: some simple analytics no longer need consent, but advertising and tracking cookies still do, and fines can now reach £17.5m. Check the ICO's current guidance.
3. Make sure you're registered with the ICO.

ICO (ico.org.uk)

3 Keep a record

1. Date-stamp compliance pages when you review them, and keep a simple compliance log.

Then: This lesson is general education, not legal advice. Check legal and compliance matters with a qualified professional.

Keep it up

Review quarterly, and whenever the rules change. **(Quarterly)**

Sources

1. Letting agents, Business Companion (Trading Standards). businesscompanion.info/en/quick-guides/services/letting-agents
2. Cookies and similar technologies, Information Commissioner's Office. ico.org.uk/for-organisations/direct-marketing-and-privacy-and-electronic-communications/guide-to-pecr/cookies-and-similar-technologies
3. Letting agents: display of fees, Business Companion (Trading Standards). businesscompanion.info/en/quick-guides/services/letting-agents-display-of-fees
4. Codes of practice, The Property Ombudsman. tpos.co.uk
5. Register: the data protection fee, Information Commissioner's Office. ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-fee/register



09

Playing it smart

Avoiding the traps, beating real competitors, and handling change.

9.1 Shortcuts that get you penalised, and how to choose an SEO provider
9.2 Your competitors, and the searches you can win
9.3 What the results page looks like now
9.4 Seasons, freshness, Google updates, and what's outside your control

Shortcuts that get you penalised, and how to choose an SEO provider

Tactics designed to trick search engines rather than help people (bought links, keyword stuffing, hidden text, fake pages, fake reviews), what happens if you use them, and how to spot an SEO provider who does.

Priority 3%, How often: about 2 minutes a month, Online: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/penalties-and-seo-providers

Why it matters

Shortcuts like bought links and fake pages can wipe out years of work.

Why Google cares

Official guidance ●●●●●

Shortcuts can erase years of work

Do this first

Check Manual actions in Search Console, and ask any SEO provider exactly how they get links.

In plain English

Taking a shortcut in a race when nobody's looking is cheating, and you can be disqualified. Search engines look for sneaky tricks, and can hide a website that uses them.

A shop that puts up fake "closing down" signs to draw a crowd. It works for a week, then the regulars stop believing anything it says.

Why it matters

Fake area pages waste people's time, fake reviews mislead them, and a penalised site simply vanishes from search for buyers, tenants, sellers and landlords alike.

Buyers: Fake or doorway pages waste their time and make you look untrustworthy.

Tenants: Same, and a hacked or spammy site can put their details at risk.

Sellers: A penalised site can vanish from search and look disreputable.

Landlords: Same, and they'll find the warning signs if they look.

To Google and Bing, Official guidance

Google's spam policies list the tactics it acts against, including: buying or swapping links to manipulate rankings, keyword stuffing, hidden text and links, cloaking (showing Google different content from visitors), sneaky redirects, doorway pages, mass-produced content made mainly to rank, hosting unrelated third-party content to borrow your site's reputation, buying old domains to borrow theirs, and misleading structured data or fake reviews. The result can be an automatic demotion, or a manual action that Search Console tells you about. Bing works the same way. A tactic that worked five years ago may now be the thing that sinks you.

The evidence: Google's spam policies and manual actions, in Google's own words.

An agent example

A lettings branch paid a cheap provider for hundreds of links. A backlink check later shows a sudden spike from unrelated foreign sites, all using the same phrase. The branch stops, asks for the worst to be removed, and starts sharing local rental research that local sites choose to link to.

Test it

1 Search Console's Manual actions

1. Open Security & Manual actions, then Manual actions. You want "No issues detected".

Google Search Console (search.google.com/search-console)

2 Look for the warning signs

1. Your backlinks: sudden spikes, foreign-language spam, casino or pharmacy sites, lots of identical link wording (lesson 7.1).
2. Your pages: pages made only for keywords, keyword-stuffed footers, hidden text (press Ctrl+A on a page to reveal white-on-white text).
3. Your reviews and markup: anything you can't trace to a real customer, or ratings in your markup that aren't on the page.
4. Your domain's history: check the Wayback Machine for what it was before.

Wayback Machine (web.archive.org)

3 Review past SEO work

1. Go through any provider's reports and invoices for the tactics above.

4 Ask AI to check it

AI prompt
Here is what my SEO provider has done for my estate agency: [paste their report]. Do any of these tactics break Google's spam policies? Explain the risk of each in plain English.

ChatGPT (chatgpt.com), Claude (claude.ai), Google's spam policies (developers.google.com/search/docs/essentials/spam-policies)

Fix it

1 Clean up

1. Remove or rewrite keyword-stuffed, hidden or doorway content.
2. Stop buying links, and ask for paid links to be removed. Use Google's disavow tool only as a last resort, with advice.
3. Remove fake or incentivised reviews, correct misleading markup, and close any duplicate listings a past provider created.
4. Remove or noindex unrelated third-party content hosted on your site.
5. Keep a record of everything you cleaned up.

2 If you have a manual action

1. Fix every issue it lists, then submit a reconsideration request in Search Console explaining what you changed.

3 Replace a provider who used these tactics

1. Use the checklist below before you sign with anyone new.

Keep it up

Glance at Manual actions monthly, and use the checklist before hiring anyone. **(about 2 minutes a month)**

Go deeper: Choosing an SEO provider: ask before you sign

• What exactly will you do each month? Ask for a written list.

• Who will do the work, and who will I speak to?

• Whose name will the accounts be in? You should own your domain, website, Search Console, Analytics and Business Profile. The provider should be added as a user, never given sole ownership.

• How will you report? Monthly, in plain English, and tied to enquiries, valuations and instructions, not just rankings or traffic.

• How do you get links and write content? Judge the answer against lessons 7.1 and 5.5.

• Have you worked with UK estate or letting agents? Can I speak to a current client?

• What's the contract length and notice period, and what happens to the content, links and accounts if I leave?

Go deeper: Red flags

Nobody can guarantee rankings, and a good provider will tell you so.

• Guaranteed rankings, "number one on Google", or secret tricks.

• "Guaranteed links", or links from networks they won't name.

• Won't explain their methods, or says it's all confidential.

• Wants sole ownership of your accounts, or won't give you access.

• Reports that only ever show rankings or traffic, never enquiries.

• Pressure to sign quickly, or claims of a special relationship with Google.

Sources

1. Spam policies for Google web search, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/essentials/spam-policies
2. Bing Webmaster Guidelines, Microsoft Bing. bing.com/webmasters/help/webmaster-guidelines-30fba23a
3. Review snippet structured data, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/appearance/structured-data/review-snippet
4. Fake reviews: guidance for businesses (CMA208), Competition and Markets Authority. gov.uk/government/publications/fake-reviews-cma208

Your competitors, and the searches you can win

Who you're actually up against for each search (portals, national chains, local rivals, directories), where they're weak, and which searches a local agency can realistically win.

Priority 2%, How often: Quarterly, Online: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/competitor-gaps

Why it matters

People choose between you and the specific rival they also found.

Why Google cares

Common sense ●●○○○

Rankings are relative to the competition

Do this first

Pick three rivals and ten searches, and note where each rival is weak.

In plain English

How fast you need to run at sports day depends on who else is in the race.

Opening a corner shop next to a huge supermarket is harder than opening one on a quiet street, even if both shops are just as good.

Why it matters

People aren't choosing "a good agent" in the abstract. They're choosing between you and the specific rival they also found, so being better than that one business is what wins.

Buyers: Mostly see portals for broad searches; you win them on specific local searches the portals handle badly.

Tenants: Same: "2 bed flat to rent near [station]" is more winnable than "flats to rent [city]".

Sellers: Compare you with local rivals, national chains and online agents.

Landlords: Same, and compare fees and management promises side by side.

To Google and Bing, Common sense

A page never ranks in isolation: your position depends on how strong the alternatives are. Improving your site always helps, but for some searches the smart move is a narrower one you can actually win. "Letting agents Didsbury" is often within reach when "estate agents Manchester" is owned by portals and chains.

The evidence: Rankings are relative to the competition, so choosing winnable searches is practical strategy.

> **An agent example**
> An independent agency can't beat the portals for "houses for sale Manchester", but finds that "houses for sale Chorlton" shows weak, generic pages from two chains. It builds a genuinely useful Chorlton page with local data and its own listings, and wins it within a few months.

Test it

1 Review the results yourself

1. In a private window, search 10 target phrases across your four audiences.
2. For each, record who's in the top 10 (portal, chain, local agency, directory) and what kind of page ranks.

2 Audit three real rivals

1. Pick competitors you genuinely lose business to.
2. Use this course as a checklist on their site: pages for each audience, reviews, Business Profile, content depth, speed.
3. Check their link strength with Ahrefs' free tools.
4. Check what they've set up underneath: put their homepage into Google's Rich Results Test to see their schema (lesson 2.6), and add /robots.txt to the end of their web address to see whether they let AI tools in (GEO 3.1).
5. Note where they're clearly stronger, and where they're weaker.

Ahrefs free website authority checker (ahrefs.com/website-authority-checker), Rich Results Test (search.google.com/test/rich-results)

3 Look beyond Google

1. Run your five most important searches on Bing and in Apple Maps too, and note who appears. Apple Maps is the iPhone's built-in map app, and Edge on Windows searches with Bing unless someone changes it.
2. Ask ChatGPT, Perplexity and Google's AI Mode who they'd recommend in your area, and note who's named.

GEO 2.3: Testing what AI says (/geocourse/testing-and-baseline)

4 Ask AI to compare

AI prompt

Here is the text of my homepage and a key page, and the same from my competitor's site. What are they covering that I'm not, and where am I already ahead? Which of these searches look winnable for a small local agency: [list]?

ChatGPT (chatgpt.com), Claude (claude.ai)

Fix it

1 Pick battles you can win

1. Target specific areas, property types and questions before the biggest city-wide searches.
2. Fix the gap that's easiest for you and hardest for them to copy: real local data, named expertise, a relationship they don't have.

2 Keep watching, without overreacting

1. Re-run the comparison every quarter. Competitors don't stand still either.
2. Keep it on one sheet: a row for each check (your 10 searches, Bing and Apple, the AI answers, and the review numbers from Reviews 5.3) and a column for each quarter.
3. Set a free Google Alert for each rival's name, so a new office, press story or award reaches you without searching.
4. Act when something moves the same way in two checks running. A single change is usually noise: rankings and AI answers wobble on their own.

Google Alerts (www.google.com/alerts), Reviews 5.3: Checking a rival's reviews (/reviewscourse/competitor-review-check)

Keep it up

This goes stale the moment it's filed away. Revisit it quarterly. **(Quarterly)**

Sources

1. SEO Starter Guide, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/seo-starter-guide
2. Creating helpful, reliable, people-first content, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/creating-helpful-content

What the results page looks like now

A results page is no longer ten blue links. It can include the map, portal listings, “People also ask”, images, videos and AI-written summaries, and there are ways to be visible in more of them.

Priority 1%, How often: about 20 minutes a month, Online: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/search-results-features

Why it matters

Results now include the map, portals and AI summaries, so “am I number one?” misses where people look.

Why Google cares

Official guidance ●●●●●

Visibility now comes in many shapes

Do this first

Screenshot the first page for your ten main searches and note every feature, not just the links.

In plain English

A search page used to be a list of ten links. Now it can show maps, pictures and short written answers, and sometimes people get what they need without clicking anything.

A newspaper front page with headlines, photos and boxes of facts. Plenty of readers take in the box without opening the article.

Why it matters

Someone searching “best letting agents in [town]” may read an AI summary or the map before any ordinary link. If you only ask “am I number one?”, you miss where they’re actually looking.

Buyers: Often see the map, portal listings and AI answers before your site.

Tenants: Same, and use image and map results heavily.

Sellers: Increasingly get AI answers listing “the best agents”, drawn from reviews and mentions across the web.

Landlords: Same, for letting agents and management fees.

To Google and Bing, Official guidance

These features change how much traffic a ranking brings: a page can rank well and still get fewer clicks if the results page answers the question itself. Google says its AI Overviews and AI Mode use normal Search: a page needs to be indexed and eligible to show a snippet, with no special files or markup required. Bing feeds Microsoft Copilot, and Bing Webmaster Tools now has an AI Performance report (in public preview since February 2026) showing when your pages are cited. Google also stopped showing FAQ rich results altogether in May 2026, so write FAQs for readers, not for a special result.

The evidence: Google's documentation on its AI features, and Bing's AI Performance report.

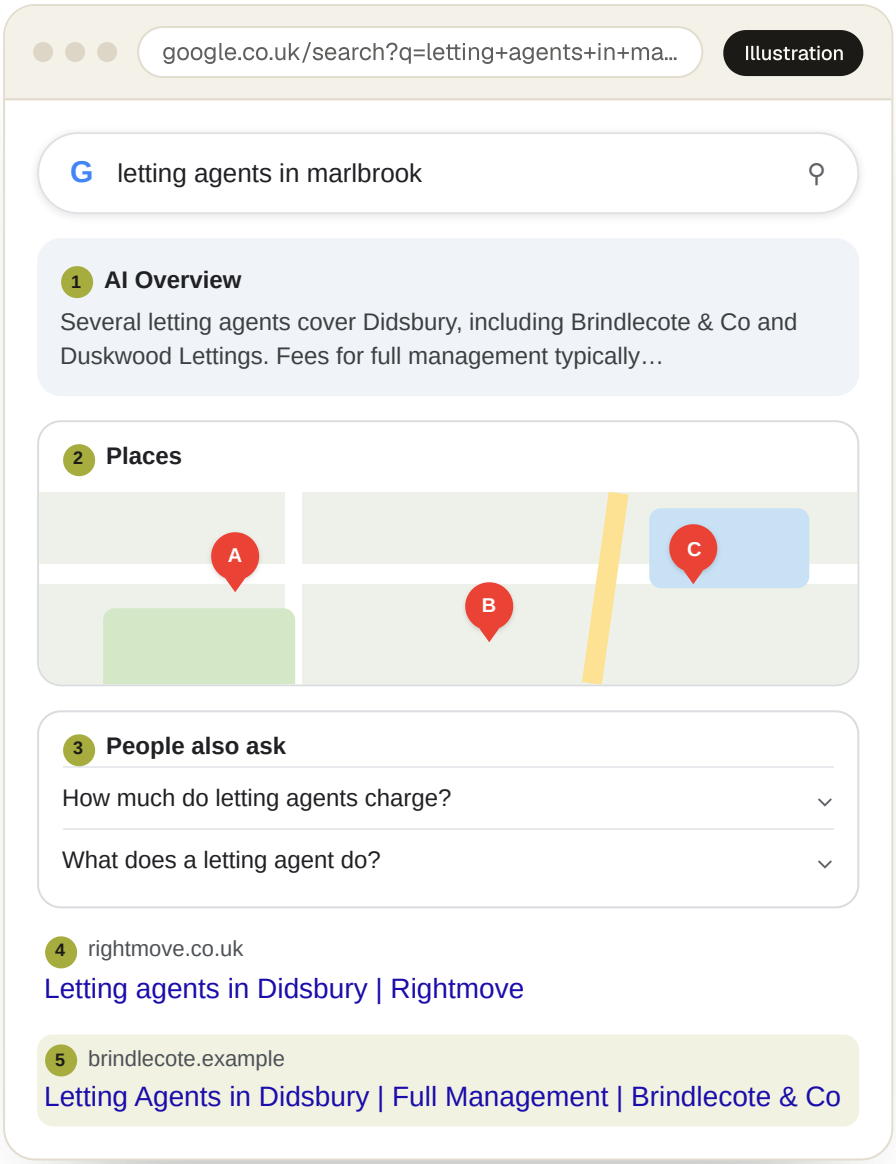
An agent example

An agency's rent guide ranks fifth for "average rent [town]" but gets few clicks, because an AI summary answers the question. It adds a clear, quotable table of rents by area, with the source and date, which gives the summary something of its own to quote. There's no guarantee it will, but now it can.

Test it

1 Take a results snapshot

1. For 10 key searches, screenshot the whole first page in a private window.
2. Note what appears: map, ads, portals, AI summary, People also ask, videos, images. Keep the screenshots to compare next time.



One search, five places to be seen: (1) an AI summary, (2) the map, (3) People also ask, (4) the portals and (5) ordinary links. Being number one in the links is only part of it. Example numbers.

2 Ask the AI assistants

1. Ask ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot and Perplexity: “Best estate agents in [town]”, “Best letting agents in [town]” and “How much does it cost to rent a 2 bed flat in [area]?”
2. Run each one three times, in a private window, because answers change from run to run. Note how often you’re mentioned, and which sources they use.

3 Search Console's clue

1. For your top pages, compare impressions with clicks over time. Stable impressions with falling clicks often means the results page is answering for you.
2. If Bing Webmaster Tools shows an AI Performance report for your site, check which pages are cited.

Google Search Console (search.google.com/search-console), Bing Webmaster Tools (www.bing.com/webmasters)

Fix it

1 Make your answers easy to quote

1. Short, factual sections: definitions, steps, tables and FAQs, with a named source and date.
2. Original data others want to cite (lesson 5.4).
3. A strong, consistent business identity and reputation, since AI answers draw heavily on what others say about you (lessons 3.4 and 7.2).

2 Cover every surface

1. Your Business Profile for the map (lesson 3.1), real photos for image results, and video for video results (lesson 6.4).

3 Go further on AI search

1. How AI assistants choose who to recommend, and how to be one of them, is covered in full in our GEO course.

GEO 1.2: How AI answers are built (/geocourse/how-ai-answers-work), GEO 2.3: Testing AI fairly (/geocourse/testing-and-baseline)

Keep it up

Repeat the same snapshot and prompts every month, so you can see what's changing. **(about 20 minutes a month)**

Sources

1. AI features and your website, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/appearance/ai-features
2. Introduction to structured data markup, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/appearance/structured-data/intro-structured-data
3. Introducing AI Performance in Bing Webmaster Tools, Microsoft Bing, February 2026. blogs.bing.com/webmaster/February-2026/Introducing-AI-Performance-in-Bing-Webmaster-Tools-Public-Preview

Seasons, freshness, Google updates, and what's outside your control

How search changes over time: seasonal demand, searches that need fresh information, Google's updates to how it ranks, and the factors that only time builds or that nobody controls.

Priority 1.5%, How often: Monthly glance; plan quarterly, Online: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/time-and-outside-your-control

Why it matters

Demand rises and falls with the seasons, and some factors take time or are out of your hands.

Why Google cares

Official guidance ●●●●●

Real factors; some you plan for, some you can't control

Do this first

Publish content four to eight weeks before each busy season.

In plain English

People want ice lollies in summer and hot chocolate in winter. And yesterday's football score is old news, but the rules of football stay the same for years.

Seasons: A fireworks seller gets ready well before bonfire night, not once the crowds arrive.

Freshness: A weather forecast is useless after a week. A recipe for boiled eggs is as good as ever.

Updates: Roads get new speed limits and layouts from time to time, but a careful driver who follows sensible rules rarely gets caught out.

Why it matters

Tenants surge in summer (students) and January (job moves); sellers in spring and after rate changes. Be ready before they arrive. And everyone expects your fees, market figures and legal information to be current.

Buyers: Busiest in spring and autumn, and after interest rate changes.

Tenants: Peak in summer for students and in January for job moves.

Sellers: "New year, new home" valuations, then the spring market.

Landlords: Triggered by tenancy end dates and changes in the law.

To Google and Bing, Official guidance

Demand and competition move with the seasons, interest rates and the market. Some searches need fresh information (market reports, fees, legislation, listings) and some don't ("what is a tenancy?"), so update where it changes how useful a page is, and only show a new date when you've genuinely updated it. Google changes its ranking systems constantly, with several big core updates a year, and tactics that worked years ago can stop working. Some things only build with time (your site's history, links and reviews), and some aren't yours to control at all (Google's updates, competitors, demand and distance). That's true for every agency you compete with, including whoever is ahead of you now.

The evidence: Google documents core updates, and freshness for searches that need recent information.

An agent example

The day after a Google update, a sales branch sees traffic dip. Instead of rewriting every page in a panic, it waits for the update to finish rolling out, checks which kinds of page fell, compares them with its change log, and makes one considered fix.

Test it

1 Find your seasons

1. Compare "flats to rent [town]" and "house valuation [town]" over five years in Google Trends.
2. Look at your own visits (Search Console or Analytics) and enquiries (your CRM) by month for the last two years.

Google Trends (trends.google.com/trends)

2 The freshness audit

1. List your pages that show dates, oldest first.
2. Highlight market reports, fees and legal pages older than six to twelve months.

3 Line updates up with your traffic

1. Google's Search Status Dashboard lists confirmed updates and when they rolled out.
2. In Search Console, use Performance, Date, Compare to look at before and after.

Google Search Status Dashboard (status.search.google.com), Google Search Console (search.google.com/search-console)

Fix it

1 Plan ahead

1. Keep a content calendar and publish four to eight weeks before each peak (student lettings guides well before the academic year, valuation pages ready for spring).
2. Refresh your evergreen pages before each peak.

2 Keep the right things fresh

1. Update market reports and fee and legal pages on a schedule, and show the updated date only when you genuinely updated them.
2. Remove stale pages, or redirect them to the current version.

3 Don’t panic at updates

1. Never react to one day’s data. Wait for the rollout to finish.
2. Work out which kinds of page changed, and keep a log of what you change and when.
3. Keep up with official news: the Google Search Central blog, Search Engine Land and Search Engine Journal.

Google Search Central blog (developers.google.com/search/blog), Search Engine Land (searchengineland.com)

Keep it up

Glance at the update dashboard monthly, and plan the next season’s content each quarter. The things only time builds have just one fix: start now. **(Monthly glance; plan quarterly)**

Go deeper: My traffic or enquiries dropped. What do I check?

Still unclear? Give a technical SEO consultant read access to Search Console and your change log.

• Is the drop real? Compare like for like in Search Console, ideally with the same period last year. If Analytics dropped but Search Console didn't, suspect a tracking problem, such as a removed tag or a new cookie banner.

• Which pages, searches and devices dropped? One page type points to a template or listing problem; a drop in searches for your name points to brand or reputation.

• Check Security & Manual actions in Search Console (lessons 4.3 and 9.1).

• Did anything change on the site? A redesign, new provider, plugin update or URL change can switch pages off. Check for noindex tags, robots.txt blocks, canonicals and redirects (lessons 2.1, 2.4 and 2.5).

• Check Indexing, Pages for a sudden rise in pages not indexed, or server errors.

• Was there a Google update? Check the Search Status Dashboard, and wait for it to finish rolling out.

• Did the results page change? Compare with your earlier snapshots (lesson 9.3).

• Check your Business Profile for suspension, edits you didn't make, or lost reviews (lesson 3.1).

• Has a competitor improved (lesson 9.2)?

• Are listings stale or statuses wrong (lesson 6.2)?

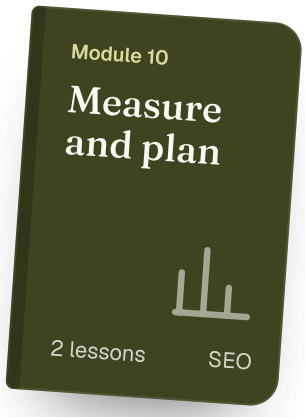
• Re-test speed and mobile (lessons 4.1 and 4.2).

• Review anything an SEO provider changed recently (lesson 9.1).

Sources

1. Google Search Status Dashboard, Google. status.search.google.com

2. Creating helpful, reliable, people-first content, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/creating-helpful-content



10

Measure and plan

Knowing what’s working, and turning the course into a plan.

10.1 Measuring what matters: enquiries, not just visits

10.2 Your audit, your priorities and your 90-day plan

Measuring what matters: enquiries, not just visits

Knowing whether everything in this course is working: which pages bring visitors, which visitors enquire, and which enquiries become valuations, instructions and tenancies.

How often: about 30 minutes a month, Online: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/analytics-enquiry-tracking

Why it matters

Without tracking, you can't tell which of these lessons is actually bringing in business.

Why Google cares

No ranking effect, but nothing else is measurable without it

Do this first

Ask "How did you hear about us?" on every form and every call, and log the answers.

In plain English

A shop that counts people walking through the door but never checks the till doesn't know whether it's doing well.

Why it matters

Customers never see it. This is about you seeing your own results, so you put your time where it pays.

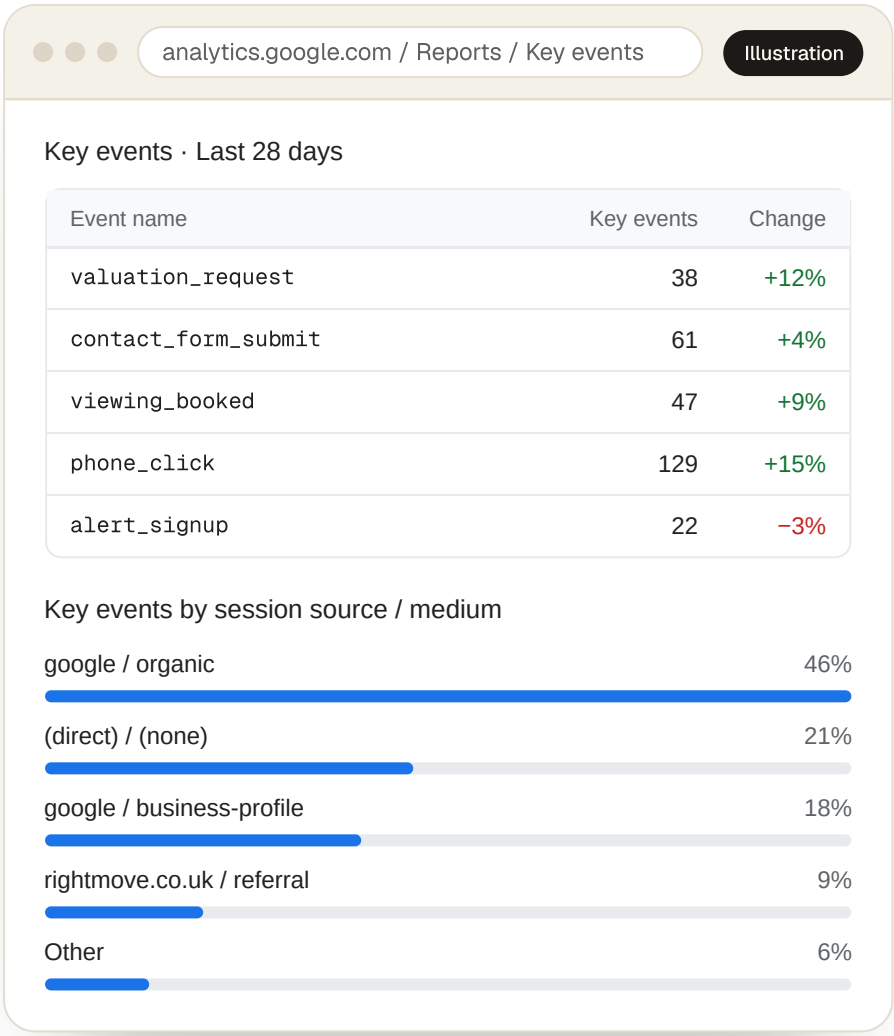
To Google and Bing, No ranking effect, but nothing else is measurable without it

Measurement has no effect on rankings at all. But without it you can't tell which of the other lessons is working, and a single month of data tells you almost nothing on its own. The goal isn't "we got more traffic". It's "SEO brought us more valuable business".

Test it

1 Ask yourself honestly

1. Could you say right now which page or source produced your last five enquiries?



Google Analytics with key events set up. You can see which actions happen, and roughly where the people taking them came from. Example numbers.

2 Then actually try

It's easy to answer the question above optimistically. Trying settles it.

1. Open whatever analytics you have.
2. Try to trace your last five genuine enquiries back to a page or a source.
3. Note exactly where you get stuck. That's what's missing.

Fix it

1 Track the actions that matter

1. Set up Google Analytics (lesson 1.3) and mark your key events: valuation form sent, contact form sent, viewing booked, alert sign-up, phone number tapped.
2. Link Analytics with Search Console.
3. Add a tracking tag to your Business Profile's website link so you can see visits from Maps (lesson 3.1).

Google Analytics (analytics.google.com), Google Search Console (search.google.com/search-console)

2 Trace enquiries to their source

1. Ask "How did you hear about us?" on every form and every call, and log the answers, even in a simple spreadsheet.
2. Record which enquiries become valuations, instructions and tenancies, so you can see value, not just volume.

Your monthly dashboard

Area	What to track	Where
Enquiries	Valuation requests, landlord enquiries, viewing requests, calls, by source	Analytics key events, your CRM
Search	Clicks, impressions, top searches and pages, searches for your name	Search Console, Performance
Local	Profile views, calls, directions, website clicks	Business Profile, Performance
Content	Pages created, improved or removed; visits by type of page	Your testing log, Analytics
Listings	Listings indexed, listing visits and enquiries, sold and let pages handled	Search Console, Analytics
Authority	New linking sites, press mentions	Search Console, Links; Ahrefs Webmaster Tools
Technical	Indexing problems, Core Web Vitals, broken links	Search Console

Commercial results (instructions won, tenancies started) are what matter. Everything else is a clue.

Keep it up

Monthly, not daily. Consistency matters more than frequency, and it’s usually the first thing dropped when things get busy, which is exactly the wrong instinct. **(about 30 minutes a month)**

Sources

1. Performance report (Search results), Search Console Help. support.google.com/webmasters/answer/7576553
2. Understanding Core Web Vitals and Google search results, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/appearance/core-web-vitals

Your audit, your priorities and your 90-day plan

Putting the whole course together: auditing your own site, deciding what to fix first, and turning it into a plan for the next three months.

Online: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/audit-and-90-day-plan

In plain English

You've learnt every part of the car. Now it's the full service: check everything, fix the dangerous things first, then the rest in order.

Everything comes down to six questions

1. Can search engines find me? (Module 2)
2. Can they understand me? (Modules 2 and 5)
3. Do I answer the searcher's need? (Module 5)
4. Do they have reason to trust me? (Modules 7 and 8)
5. Am I relevant to this search and this place? (Modules 3, 5 and 6)
6. Am I better than the alternatives? (Module 9)

How it all connects

Problems cascade: poor property data leads to poor relevance, a poor experience, fewer enquiries and a weaker reputation. Strengths compound: genuine local research leads to useful content, visibility, journalist interest, links, a better-known brand, more people searching for your name, and more enquiries. Every good result feeds the next one, which is why consistency beats any single fix.

Step 1: run the audit

Check	What to look at	Lessons
Technical	Indexing, sitemap, robots.txt, redirects, canonicals, broken links	2.1 to 2.6
Local	Business Profile, area pages, visibility across your patch, NAP	3.1 to 3.4
Experience	Speed, mobile, security, pop-ups	4.1 to 4.4
Content	Every key page has a clear purpose; gaps, thin and duplicate pages	5.1 to 5.8
Listings	Five listings: accuracy, photos, floorplan, status, sold and let handling	6.1 to 6.4
Authority	Links, mentions, reputation, branded searches	7.1 and 7.2
Trust	Bios, authors, sources, fees, redress, privacy	8.1 to 8.3
Competition	Three rivals, ten searches	9.2 and 9.3

The four-audience check

For buyers, tenants, sellers and landlords in turn: search five things they'd search, on a phone, in a private window. Do you appear? Click your page and time how long it takes to reach the next step (view a property, book a viewing, request a valuation). Count the obstacles. Most agencies find their buyer and tenant journeys are the weakest.

Step 2: put every problem in one of four boxes

Priority	What it means	Examples
1. Critical	Stops you being found at all	Pages not indexed, site blocked, serious security problems, wrong canonicals on key pages
2. High impact	Costs you major opportunities	Weak service pages, template area pages, missing listing details, big local gaps, poor internal links
3. Growth	Makes you more competitive	New guides, market reports, links and press, video
4. Polish	Small improvements	Minor title tweaks, image descriptions, formatting

Always clear Critical before anything else. Within each box, weigh impact against effort: Priority = impact x confidence x commercial value, divided by effort. A business decision tool, not a Google formula.

A worked example (fictional)

Brindlecote & Co is a made-up sales and lettings agency in Didsbury, a made-up market town. Enquiries have stalled. The audit finds: the valuation page has carried a noindex tag since the website relaunched; sold and let properties show error pages; the Business Profile's category is just "Business" and nobody has replied to a review in eight months; the rentals page takes over six seconds to load on a phone; there's no rental valuation page or fees page; and the area pages are one template with the town name swapped.

- Critical: remove the noindex tag and request indexing.
- High impact: fix the profile category and start a review routine, agree a sold and let policy, compress the rentals page images.
- Growth: build a rental valuation page and a landlord guide, rewrite the area pages from real knowledge.
- Polish: titles and image descriptions.

The biggest problem, a stray noindex tag, took minutes to fix and had been costing the agency its most valuable page. That's why Critical comes first.

Step 3: build your 90-day plan

The SEO audit does steps 1 and 2 for you: 71 checks, one for every fix in this course. Answer Yes, Partly or No, and it scores each module and turns everything you haven't done into a 90-day plan in this order, which you can print or save as a PDF. It saves your answers on your device, so you can come back and re-run it every quarter.

Open the SEO audit

Before you call your website “SEO ready”

Area	Ask
Content	Does every important page have a clear purpose, match the search, and show real experience?
Technical	Can Google and Bing crawl and index the important pages? Are canonicals and redirects right? Are important pages linked?
Local	Is your Business Profile complete? Are your details the same everywhere? Are your area pages genuinely useful?
Authority	Do respected, relevant local sites link to you or mention you? Is your link profile natural?
Listings	Are details accurate, prices current, statuses right, and sold and let pages handled properly?
Experience	Is the site fast and easy on a phone? Can people find properties and contact you quickly?
Trust	Are your business, people, fees and registrations easy to verify? Is the site secure?

Sources

1. SEO Starter Guide, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/seo-starter-guide
2. Spam policies for Google web search, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/essentials/spam-policies
3. Creating helpful, reliable, people-first content, Google Search Central. developers.google.com/search/docs/fundamentals/creating-helpful-content

You've reached the end of the course

Every fix in this course is within reach. It doesn't take special skill, just knowing what to look for, and actually doing it.

Online: reyse.co.uk/seocourse/course-complete

I can't guarantee you'll reach number one. Nobody honestly can. But you have a genuinely strong chance, especially once you've done the research and seen for yourself that most agents in your area aren't doing this properly, if at all.

What separates the agents who win from the ones who don't isn't knowing more than everyone else. It's doing this correctly, and doing it consistently. Little and often, kept up over time. Let one key thing slip, and it can undo everything else you've built.

The longer you keep this up, the better it works, and the sooner you start, the bigger your head start. If Google has been recommending you for five years and you've kept doing the work, adapting as the market and the platforms shift, you don't just get to number one. You stay there.

The biggest lesson

The biggest mistake in estate agent SEO is asking "what keyword do I need to rank for?" The better question is: "what does a potential customer need, and how can my agency give them the best answer?" Be the best answer, make sure search engines can understand it, make people trust it, and make the whole property journey easy.

Your routine

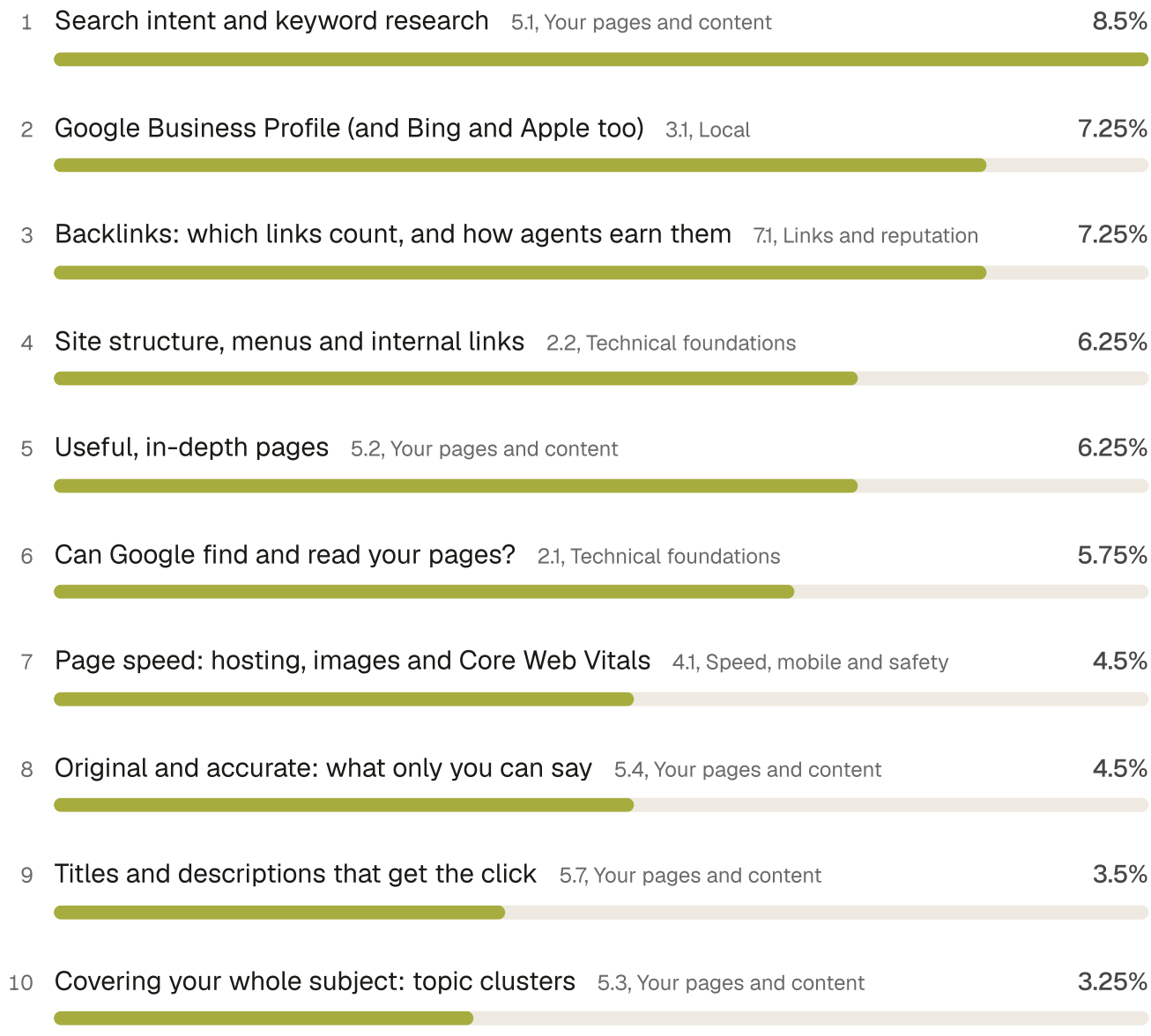
Add up the checks in this course and they come to a few hours a month, plus a handful of weekly habits like posting on your profile and approaching one local site

for a link. That can feel like a lot to hold in your head, so I've put it into one printable schedule.

Get the schedule

Where to spend your time

Not everything in this course carries the same weight. If you're short on time, start at the top of this list. Remember these are our priority weights, not Google's, and that something small, like a noindex tag on the wrong page, can still switch everything off.



11	Distance, and why you show up in some places and not others	3.3, Local	3%
12	Shortcuts that get you penalised, and how to choose an SEO provid…	9.1, Playing it smart	3%
13	Area pages that show real local knowledge	3.2, Local	2.75%
14	Duplicate addresses and canonical tags	2.4, Technical foundations	2.5%
15	Clear structure, headings and the first screen	5.6, Your pages and content	2.5%
16	One business, the same details everywhere	3.4, Local	2.25%
17	Mobile: built for phones, with nothing missing	4.2, Speed, mobile and safety	2%
18	E-E-A-T: proving you're real and you know your stuff	8.1, Trust	2%
19	Your competitors, and the searches you can win	9.2, Playing it smart	2%
20	Thin, copied and mass-produced pages	5.5, Your pages and content	1.75%
21	Photos, floorplans and video	6.4, Property listings	1.75%
22	Your reputation and brand beyond your website	7.2, Links and reputation	1.75%
23	Redirects, broken pages, and sold or let properties	2.5, Technical foundations	1.5%
24	Schema markup: labels for machines	2.6, Technical foundations	1.5%
25	Pop-ups, clutter and accessibility	4.4, Speed, mobile and safety	1.5%
26	Writing naturally: places, topics and property terms	5.8, Your pages and content	1.5%

27	Accurate, complete listings	6.1, Property listings	1.5%
28	Transparency and compliance	8.3, Trust	1.5%
29	Seasons, freshness, Google updates, and what's outside your con…	9.4, Playing it smart	1.5%
30	Sitemaps, and getting your photos found	2.3, Technical foundations	1.25%
31	Availability, prices, feeds and the portals	6.2, Property listings	1.25%
32	What the results page looks like now	9.3, Playing it smart	1%
33	Agent bios and named authors	8.2, Trust	0.75%
34	Security: the padlock, hacking and malware	4.3, Speed, mobile and safety	0.5%
35	Process and fees pages	6.3, Property listings	0.5%

Then re-run the audit every quarter. It keeps your answers on your device, so you can see what you've fixed and what's left.

Open the SEO audit

Being honest about the limits

- Search engines change. Check Google Search Central and Bing's guidance from time to time.
- This course is general education, not legal, financial or regulatory advice. Check legal and compliance matters with a qualified professional.
- Results are never guaranteed, and anyone who guarantees rankings should be treated with caution.

Want us to do it for you?

None of this is hard on its own. Most of it, a 15-year-old could do. What's hard is knowing how much to do, doing all of it every month without fail, and keeping up as Google and AI keep changing. If you'd rather hand that over, Found First does exactly this for agencies like yours, with a guarantee: three extra instructions in 90 days on Complete (one on Core), or we keep working free.

reyse.co.uk/products/seo

Thank you for the most valuable thing you gave today: your attention.

See our other free courses