

In Hand.

LOCAL SEARCH AUDIT

Hairdresser · 18 October 2026



Health score

out of 100, on what we could see

! Needs work

Where you stand

5★

Your rating

Strong

26

Your reviews

24 of 36

Checks passed

58%

Local ranking

Needs work

74%

Trust and conversion

Fair

55 of 95 points, scored on what can be seen from outside. 5 checks need access to your profile — listed at the end, and not counted against you. The bands are our own scale, not a Google measure.

Two scores, because they answer different questions. Local ranking is where you place when someone searches — everything in it has published evidence behind it. Trust and conversion is whether someone chooses you once they can see you, plus anything that puts the listing at risk. Nothing in the second score claims to affect where you rank, which is exactly why it is counted separately rather than quietly folded into the first.

The business

Business

Location

Website

Category on the listing

Hairdresser

Business type

Storefront — customers come to the premises

Years trading

2 years

Audit date

18 October 2026

What we found, and what it means

Each section opens to show every check we ran, what we found and why it matters.

Your Google listing

11 of 15 passed

Already working: the listing is showing as open, opening hours are set, the filters customers use are set, there's a phone number on the listing.

	Verified, with owner access Not applicable	Can't be seen from outside the business — we'd check this with you.
	Not marked closed or suspended Good	Google shows the business as open and trading. A listing marked temporarily or permanently closed is held back in results. It's often left over from a past closure, a change of premises or a period when you paused, and nobody switched it back.
	No duplicate or suspended listings Not applicable	Can't be seen from outside the business — we'd check this with you.
	Primary category is the most specific correct one Missing	The main category doesn't match the main part of what you do Google says the categories you choose affect your local ranking. The primary one matters most: it tells Google which searches you're a candidate for at all.
	Categories cover everything you actually offer Not applicable	Can't be seen from outside the business — we'd check this with you.
	Opening hours set Good	Opening hours are set across 6 periods. Google filters results by opening hours. With none set you can be left out of "open now" searches — the ones where someone has already decided to buy and is choosing who from.
	Business description written Partial	Weak — there, but vague or a line or two The description is where you explain the business in your own words. It helps customers decide whether you're right for them. Google hasn't said it affects ranking.
	Attributes that apply to you are set Good	Good — the ones that matter for this trade are set Attributes are how Google answers filtered searches — step-free access, card payments, appointment required, open late. An attribute you haven't set is a filter that removes you, however well you'd otherwise rank.
	Phone number present Good	The listing shows  — a UK landline. A missing number means someone who found you can't contact you. It's also one of the three details every other listing of your business gets checked against.
	Services listed, each with a description Missing	Missing — none showing Google says complete, detailed business information helps it match a profile to what people search for, and services are part of that information. It hasn't published how much they count. A price list on your website doesn't do the same job inside the listing.
	Map pin sits on the right place Good	The map pin is in the right place Google measures how near you are to the person searching from where your pin sits, not from your postcode. A pin dropped at a postcode centre or in the wrong street makes you look further away than you are, in exactly the searches where distance decides who shows up.

✓ Social media links on the profile Good	Good — links to the platforms they are active on Google lets a listing link to one account on each of Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, TikTok, X and YouTube. It hasn't said these affect ranking. They let someone checking you out see recent work, and that you're still active, without leaving Google to search for you.
✗ Chat or WhatsApp set up Missing	There's no way to message you from the listing, only to call Google lets some businesses add a chat option, by text message or WhatsApp, where it's available. It hasn't said it affects ranking. It gives someone who'd rather not phone a way to get in touch.
✓ Separate hours set where they apply Good	Hours for specific services are shown Google lets you add hours for specific things alongside your main hours. If you take emergency call-outs at night but the listing only shows daytime hours, someone searching at 11pm has nothing telling them you're available.
— Holiday hours set Not applicable	Can't be seen from outside the business — we'd check this with you.
✓ Logo and cover photo both set Good	Both set The logo and cover image are the first thing anyone sees of you in the map results. A listing without them looks unmaintained next to the two either side of it, which costs you the click even where it doesn't cost you the position.
✓ Business name matches the real-world name Good	The listing name is compliant Google requires the name on your listing to be the name you actually trade under. Adding services or towns to it — "Plumbing Lewes 24hr" — is against the guidelines and can get the listing suspended. It's worth knowing that competitors doing it often rank well in the meantime, which is why it's tempting.
✓ Business type configured correctly Good	Set up as a business customers come to, with the address shown. Google needs to know whether customers come to you or you go to them, because it decides where your listing can appear. Set the wrong way round, it either publishes an address you wanted kept private or ties a mobile business to one point on the map.
✓ Website link on the profile Good	There is a website address on the listing. Your website is where Google and the AI assistants go to understand you beyond what the listing says. With no link on the profile, the listing stands on its own, and anyone who wants to check you out before calling has nowhere to go.
— Coverage reflects where you genuinely work Not applicable	Customers come to this business, so there is no service area to judge. Where the pin sits is checked separately.
✓ Booking, menu or product links set where Google offers them Good	Your booking or ordering section is set up For some categories Google offers a booking, ordering, menu or products section on the listing. Where it does, it lets someone act without leaving the search results, which is as close to the decision as you can get.

What this means. Google says businesses with complete and accurate information are more likely to show up in local results. Your listing is what it reads to match you to a search, so the more of it that's filled in and correct, the more it has to work with.

Your reviews, and how active the listing looks

5 of 7 passed

Already working: your rating holds up against the businesses above you, reviews are still coming in, there's a good set of photos, the listing is being posted to.

 Review count against the businesses ranking above you Missing	26 reviews, against an average of 143 across the 3 businesses ranking above you [redacted], recorded 18 October 2026. Google says that more reviews and positive ratings can help a business's local ranking. It hasn't published how much weight they carry, so we compare your numbers with the businesses you're competing with locally rather than against a fixed target.
 Star rating against the businesses ranking above you Good	Rated 5.0, against an average of 4.9 across the businesses ranking above you, recorded 18 October 2026. Google names ratings alongside review count as something that can affect local ranking, and it's the number someone reads before anything else on your listing.
 New reviews are still arriving Good	Two or more in the last 30 days Recency matters alongside volume. A listing with two hundred reviews and nothing for a year reads, to the person looking at it, like a business that may have stopped trading.
 Photo count Good	30 or more Photos are what customers compare when they're choosing between two listings. Google suggests adding them to show what you offer, but hasn't said the number of photos affects ranking.
 Share of reviews replied to Missing	Most of your reviews haven't had a reply Google recommends replying to reviews, and it's visible to anyone comparing you with someone else. It hasn't been confirmed as affecting ranking, but it's free, it takes seconds, and a run of unanswered reviews reads badly.
 Posted to recently Good	Within the last month Posts appear on your listing and show customers what you've been doing recently. Google hasn't said they affect ranking, so treat them as a way to look active rather than as a ranking tool.
 Reviews are being collected within the rules Not applicable	Can't be seen from outside the business — we'd check this with you.
 Photos are current Good	The photos are current A newest photo that's a year old suggests a listing nobody is looking after — to the customer reading it, if not to Google.

What this means. Google says more reviews and positive ratings can help your local ranking. Everything else here — photos, replies, updates — is about the impression someone forms in the few seconds before they decide to call you or the business below you.

Your website

6 of 9 passed

Already working: the website is live, Google is able to read your website, your homepage is open to search results, your homepage says what you do and where.

	Website loads Good	The site loaded normally (HTTP 200). Nothing else on your website can help you if it doesn't load, and the link from your listing is the main route between the two.
	Google is allowed to crawl the site Good	The site's robots.txt file allows Google to read the site. A small file on your website called robots.txt tells automated visitors which pages they may read. If it's telling Google not to read your site, nothing on that site can support your listing.
	Site is not set to noindex Good	No noindex instruction on the homepage. A noindex instruction asks Google to keep the page out of search results altogether. It's the single most effective way to be invisible, and it's usually switched on during a site build and never switched off.
	Homepage title and main heading say what you do and where Good	The title and heading carry both the service and the town. Title: [REDACTED] Studio Hair & Beauty Salon [REDACTED]. Heading: "Building". The page title is the line someone reads in the search results, and the main heading is the first thing they read on the page. If neither says what you do or where you are, both the reader and the search engine have to work it out.
	Contact details on the website match the listing Good	Your business name, address and phone number all appear on the site and match the listing, though not together in the footer — the footer is the usual place because it repeats on every page. Your business name, address and phone number should appear on your website — the footer is the usual place, so they're on every page — and match your Google listing. It helps customers and search engines confirm they've found the same business.
	Each main service has a page of its own Missing	There's no page covering what you do and where, so searches that pair the two go elsewhere People search for a service and a place together. A page matching that exact combination competes for it directly, rather than hoping to be matched by association from a general services page.
	Site is secure Good	The site loads over a secure connection. Browsers show a security warning on sites without a certificate, and from October 2026 Chrome treats insecure connections as the exception rather than the norm. A warning standing between a customer and your site ends the visit before the page loads.
	Loads well on a phone Good	The site works well on a phone Many local searches happen on a phone. A slow or awkward mobile page loses people who had already chosen to look at you.

 Phone number can be tapped to call Good	The phone number on the homepage is a tappable link. Many local searches happen on a phone. A number that can't be tapped loses the call at the last step.
 Structured data describes the business Missing	No structured data was found on the homepage. Structured data is code on your website that states your name, address, hours and type of business in a format search engines read directly. Google uses it for how business details can appear in results; it hasn't said it affects ranking. It's a quick job for whoever manages your site.
 Assistants' search crawlers are not blocked Good	No search or retrieval crawler is blocked. Websites can tell automated visitors which pages they may read. Some AI companies use one crawler to collect training material and another to find pages to cite in answers. Blocking the second kind can stop an assistant citing your site; blocking the first doesn't. The block is often accidental — added by a plugin or a hosting setting.
 Common questions answered on the site Missing	There's no questions-and-answers section on the site Google removed FAQ rich results from search in May 2026, so there's no longer a search-results box to win. The value now is answering what customers ask before they call — and giving AI assistants clear material to draw on, though none of them publishes exactly what it reads.
 Company name, number and registered office shown on the site Not applicable	We don't know yet whether this is a limited company. Sole traders aren't required to publish these details, so this can't be judged until that is settled.

What this means. Your website is the one channel you own outright. It's where customers check you out before they call, and it gives search engines and AI assistants more to understand what you do.

Other places online that list you

2 of 5 passed

Already working: you're listed correctly on Apple Business, you're listed correctly on Facebook.

 Bing Places Partial	Listed — details differ from your Google listing. Primary category is hair salon, unmatched hairdresser on google Bing is the second search engine most people use and it powers Microsoft Copilot. Listing is free and takes minutes.
 Apple Business Good	Listed, and the details match your Google listing. Apple Maps is the default map on iPhone and is what Siri uses for places. An unclaimed listing there means details nobody has checked.
 Facebook Good	Listed, and the details match your Google listing. Facebook is a widely-referenced source of business details and where a lot of people look for recent activity. An unclaimed or auto-generated page shows customers details nobody has checked.
 Your sector's directory or register Missing	Not listed. For a regulated profession, the regulator's register is often the first thing a careful customer checks — more trusted than any general directory,

because it cannot be bought. For a trade, the sector body does the same job. Not scored. Which directories matter varies so much between trades that a single weight would be wrong for most businesses. Reported, and worth more than the general directories in some sectors.

✖ A second sector directory

Missing

Not listed.

A second sector listing is worth having where one genuinely matters to your customers. Beyond that, adding directories for their own sake achieves little.

Not scored. As above — reported rather than scored, because the right directories differ by trade.

What this means. Directories and listing sites are where customers double-check a business before calling. Keeping your name, address and phone number the same everywhere avoids confusing them — and the search engines that read those sites.

When someone asks an assistant about you

0 of 0 passed

? Ask Maps

Not assessed

Not assessed during this audit.

Google removed questions and answers from business listings in November 2025. Since March 2026, Google Maps has had an assistant, Ask Maps, that answers questions about places on the spot. Google says it draws on its information about places and on reviews; it hasn't said exactly which other sources it uses.

? ChatGPT

Not assessed

Not assessed during this audit.

ChatGPT is one of the most widely used AI assistants, so being named in its answers reaches people who never see a search results page. How it finds information has been changing, so treat any result here as a snapshot rather than a position you hold.

? Gemini

Not assessed

Not assessed during this audit.

Gemini draws on Google's understanding of your business, so a result here is a reasonable proxy for how well Google has understood your listing and your site — bearing in mind none of these assistants publishes how it chooses what to name.

? Perplexity

Not assessed

Not assessed during this audit.

Perplexity cites its sources openly, so when it names a business you can see where it got that from. It hasn't published how it decides what to cite.

? Google AI Mode

Not assessed

Not assessed during this audit.

AI Mode sits inside Google Search, where your customers already are, and draws on the same understanding of your business as the map results. Of the assistants we test, it's the closest to how local customers already search.

What this means. Some people now ask an AI assistant for a recommendation instead of scrolling a map. Each assistant draws on different sources and none publishes exactly how it chooses, so these results are a snapshot on the date we checked, not a fixed position. Nothing in this section is scored.

How this compares

Measured against [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] — the businesses appearing above you when we searched "Hairdresser [redacted]" on 18 October 2026.

Metric	This business	[redacted]	[redacted]	[redacted]	Gap
Average rating	5.0	4.9	4.9	4.8	+0.1 vs average
Total reviews	26	27	197	204	-117 vs average

Priority findings

6 findings · 3 high · 3 medium · ranked by priority. There are 12 things to fix in total; these are the ones worth doing first.

F-01 High

Wrong primary category

What we found. Currently set to "Hairdresser". We would move it to "Change to Beauty Salon".

Why it matters. Google says the categories you choose affect your local ranking. The primary one matters most: it tells Google which searches you're a candidate for at all.

What the work involves. We recommend changing the primary category to Change to Beauty Salon, because Business offers beauty services which are promoted across channels. Edit profile → Business category.

How much it matters. The primary category ranked first of 187 factors for local pack results in the 2026 survey, and Google's own guidance names the categories you choose as affecting local ranking. It is the single heaviest lever in this audit. Source: [Whitespark's 2026 Local Search Ranking Factors](#).

Time to do it: a few minutes in the profile. Worth doing before anything else on this list.

F-02 **High**

Services missing or incomplete on the listing

What we found. Missing — none showing

Why it matters. Google says complete, detailed business information helps it match a profile to what people search for, and services are part of that information. It hasn't published how much they count. A price list on your website doesn't do the same job inside the listing.

What the work involves. Edit profile → Services. Add each service individually with a short description. If your work is quoted individually rather than sold at a fixed price, say so in the description — that's still something Google can read.

How much it matters. Industry testing has repeatedly found that adding services to a profile improves how a business ranks for those services. Google has not confirmed it, so this is practitioner evidence rather than documented fact. Source: [Sterling Sky, on services and ranking](#).

Time to do it: a few minutes in the profile.

F-03 **Medium**

Description missing or too thin

What we found. Weak — there, but vague or a line or two

Why it matters. The description is where you explain the business in your own words. It helps customers decide whether you're right for them. Google hasn't said it affects ranking.

What the work involves. Edit profile → Description (up to 750 characters). Say plainly what you do, for whom and where, in the words your customers use rather than the words your trade uses.

Time to do it: a few minutes in the profile.

F-04 **High**

No website page per service

Why it matters. People search for a service and a place together. A page matching that exact combination competes for it directly, rather than hoping to be matched by association from a general services page.

What the work involves. Where you offer several distinct services, give each one its own page with real detail — what's involved, typical cost, examples. Only create a page for a town if you genuinely have something different to say about working there. Google treats near-identical town pages as spam, which it calls doorway pages. If you offer one service in one town, a clear homepage does this job.

Time to do it: a few days of writing, and worth doing properly.

F-05

Medium

Reviews going unanswered

Why it matters. Google recommends replying to reviews, and it's visible to anyone comparing you with someone else. It hasn't been confirmed as affecting ranking, but it's free, it takes seconds, and a run of unanswered reviews reads badly.

What the work involves. Reply to every review, positive and negative. A sentence is enough. Negative ones matter most — a calm reply reassures the next reader more than the complaint worries them. If you work in a regulated profession (legal, health, veterinary, financial), don't confirm that the reviewer is a client or refer to their case.

Time to do it: an hour to catch up, then a few minutes a week.

F-06

Medium

No questions and answers on the website

Why it matters. Google removed FAQ rich results from search in May 2026, so there's no longer a search-results box to win. The value now is answering what customers ask before they call — and giving AI assistants clear material to draw on, though none of them publishes exactly what it reads.

What the work involves. Add a page answering the questions you actually get asked — cost, timing, process, area covered, what happens first. Write them as real questions with direct answers.

Time to do it: an hour or two.

Where this report says how a factor ranks, that is from Whitespark's 2026 Local Search Ranking Factors — a survey of 47 local search practitioners scoring 187 factors — informed opinion, not measured data, and none of them has access to Google's algorithm. Nobody publishes how much a given fix will lift a given business, because it depends on your market, your competitors and where you start. Any audit quoting you a percentage lift or a number of days has invented it.

What we would do, and in what order

Sequenced so anything blocking the rest goes first, then the quick changes, then the work that takes longer to take effect. The timings are how long the work takes, not a promise about results — local search moves at its own pace. The last phase has no end date on purpose.

Eligibility — Whether you can appear in a search at all · **Ranking** — Where you place once you are eligible · **Conversion** — Whether they choose you once they see you · **Consistency** — Whether Google and customers trust the details

Phase 1 · Quick wins

Days 1–14

The fundamentals Google reads first. These move fastest, and everything after them depends on them being right — there's no value in building on a profile that's telling Google the wrong thing about the business.

- **Ranking** Change the primary category. Google says categories affect local ranking, and the primary one tells it which searches you're a candidate for.
- **Ranking** Add each service inside Google with its own description. Google says complete, detailed business information helps it match a profile to the searches people make.
- **Conversion** Rewrite the description around how customers describe what they need, so someone reading it knows straight away whether you're right for them.
- **Conversion** Turn on chat by text or WhatsApp where Google offers it, so anyone who'd rather not ring has a way to get in touch. Only if someone will answer it.
- **Consistency** Correct the Bing Places details that disagree with your Google listing, so anyone checking finds the same business twice.
- **Consistency** Get listed on your sector's directory or register, with the details matching your Google listing.
- **Consistency** Get listed on a second sector directory, with the details matching your Google listing.

Phase 2 · Foundations

Days 15–45

The evidence that backs up the listing: your own website, and the independent sources that confirm you exist and your details are right. Slower to take effect.

- **Conversion** Add a page answering what customers ask before they buy — cost, timing, process, area covered. It helps customers decide and gives AI assistants clear material to draw on.
- **Consistency** Add structured data stating your name, address, hours and business type, so search engines are told those details directly rather than working them out from the page.

Phase 3 · Compounding

Days 46–90

Turning one-off corrections into operating habits. This is where the difference between a tidy profile and one that consistently produces enquiries gets made.

- **Ranking** Give each main service a page of its own with real detail, so you can match searches for that service directly. Town pages only where there's something genuinely different to say.
- **Conversion** Reply to every review, negatives first. The reply isn't written for the person who left it — it's read by everyone deciding whether to risk you.
- **Ranking** Build asking for reviews into the routine, so every customer is asked the same way at the same point. Google says more reviews and positive ratings can help local ranking.

Local search isn't a one-off job. Google changes what it shows, the businesses around you keep working at theirs, and a listing that stops being maintained tends to slip. This phase keeps yours current.

- **Conversion** Regular updates to the listing when there's something new to show.
- **Ranking** Steady review requests to every customer, and a reply to every review.
- **Conversion** Fresh photos as the work, team or premises change.
- **Ranking** Quarterly check of the searches customers use, and updating the services and description to match.
- **Ranking** Quarterly comparison with the businesses ranking above you.
- **Eligibility** Re-checking whether AI assistants name you, and looking into what changed if they stop.
- **Eligibility** Keeping track of Google's changes to listings and adjusting when they affect you.

What we couldn't check from outside

This audit was done from the outside, without access to your Google Business Profile, so these are the things we had no way of seeing. They are not counted for or against you. They are worth going through on a call — whether the listing is verified decides what you are able to change at all, and the rest are among the fields that do the most work.

- **Verified, with owner access**
- **No duplicate or suspended listings**
- **Categories cover everything you actually offer**
- **Holiday hours set**
- **Reviews are being collected within the rules**

Checked, but not scored

These matter, but there is no evidence that they affect where you rank, so they carry no points. They are worth doing anyway, and we have said why in each case.

- **There's no way to message you from the listing, only to call**
- **Your website doesn't state your name, address, hours and business type in the format search engines read directly** — Google uses structured data for how details can appear in results but has not said it affects ranking. Worth doing, quick to do, not worth points.
- **There's no questions-and-answers section on the site** — Google removed FAQ rich results from search in May 2026, so there is no longer a result to win. Still worth doing for customers and for assistants, but nothing left to score.
- **You're not listed on your sector's directory or register** — Which directories matter varies so much between trades that a single weight would be wrong for most businesses. Reported, and worth more than the general directories in some sectors.
- **You're not listed on a second sector directory** — As above — reported rather than scored, because the right directories differ by trade.

What we did not score

These checks do not apply to a business like yours, so they were taken out of the total rather than counted against you. Your score is out of what was left.

- **Coverage reflects where you genuinely work** — Customers come to this business, so there is no service area to judge. Where the pin sits is checked separately.
- **Company name, number and registered office shown on the site** — We don't know yet whether this is a limited company. Sole traders aren't required to publish these details, so this can't be judged until that is settled.

Talk it through.

Whether you take this on yourself or would rather leave it with us, we will walk you through what we found.

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