A local search optimisation checklist for Derby small businesses

Getting found by nearby customers is one of the most practical goals a small business can have. When someone searches for "cafe near me" or "plumber in Derby", you want your business to appear, and to appear credible. This kind of visibility relies on **local search optimisation**, a set of strategies that help your website and online profiles rank for searches with a geographic intent. For a Derby-based business, the work is not complicated, but it does require attention to a handful of key areas. Below is a checklist of what to check and why each point matters.

Your Google Business Profile is the foundation

Your Google Business Profile (GBP) is often the first thing a potential customer sees. It is the panel that shows your address, phone number, opening hours, and reviews in the search results and on Google Maps. If this profile is incomplete or inaccurate, you are almost invisible to local searchers. Start by claiming or verifying your profile. Then fill in every field that Google offers: business name, address, phone number, website URL, category, description, and attributes such as "free Wi-Fi" or "wheelchair accessible". Keep the information consistent with what appears on your website and other directories. A mismatched phone number or a slightly different street name can confuse Google and hurt your rankings in the local pack.

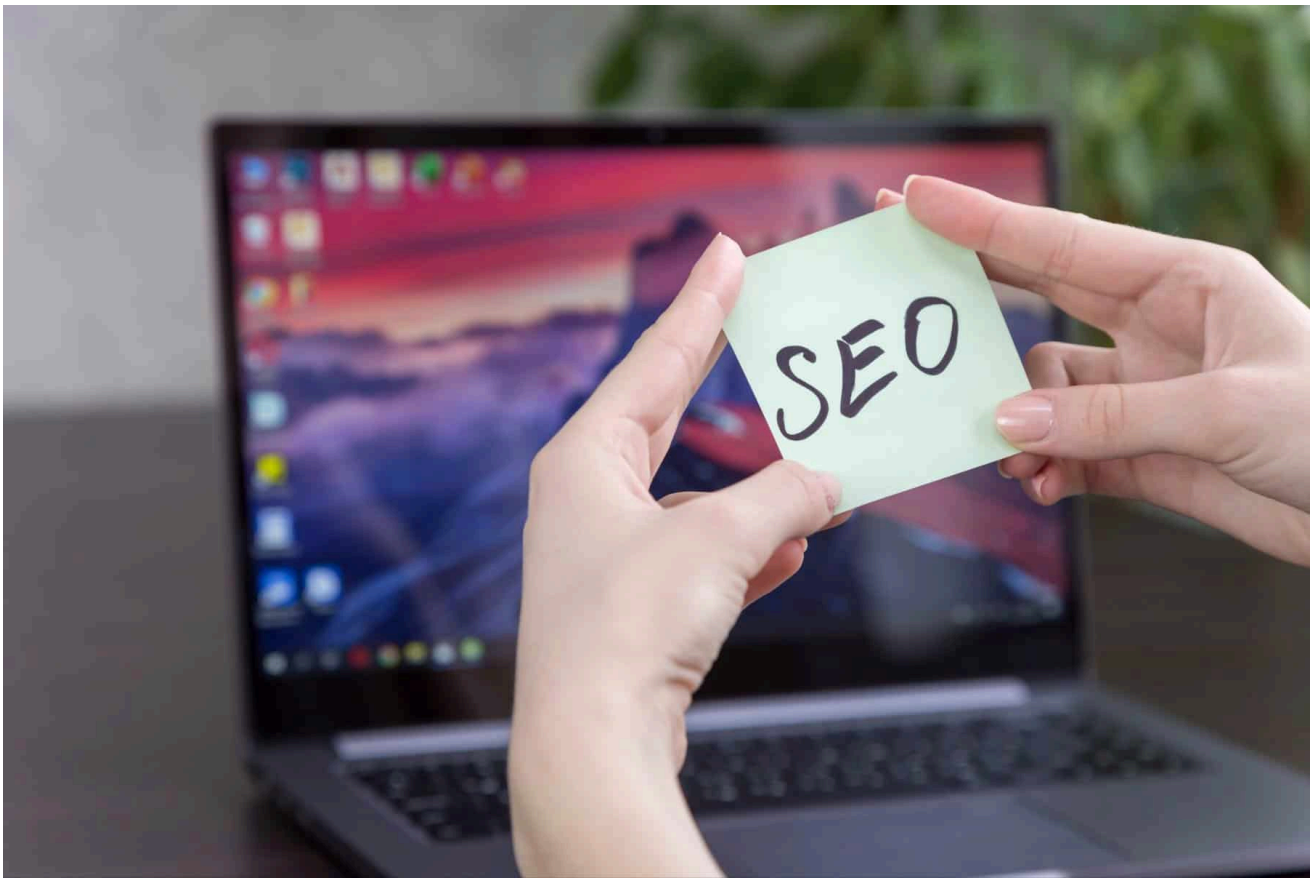
Check your NAP consistency across the web

NAP stands for name, address, phone number. Search engines look for these three pieces of information to confirm that your business is real and located where you say it is. If your NAP appears differently on Yell, on Facebook, and on your own site, Google sees a signal of uncertainty. The fix is straightforward: audit every online directory, social media profile, and review site where your business is listed. Standardise the formatting. Use the same abbreviation for street (St or Street?), the same form of your business name (include or omit "Ltd"?), and the same local phone number. Consistency builds trust with both search engines and customers.

Local citations: quality over quantity

A local citation is any online mention of your business's name and contact details. Citations on reputable local sites such as the Derby Telegraph, local business directories, or chambers of commerce carry more weight than dozens of low-quality directory listings. Focus on getting listed on the major data aggregators (like Yell, 192.com, and Thomson Local) and on local

organisations relevant to your industry. For a Derby-based trade, being listed on the Derbyshire Chamber of Commerce or a local construction association can be more valuable than a generic national directory. Check that each citation includes your correct NAP and a link back to your website where possible.



Optimise your website for location

Your website should make it obvious where you serve. Include your Derby address on the contact page and in the footer of every page. Create a dedicated location page if you serve multiple areas (for example, "Plumber in Derby" or "Hairdresser in Belper"). On that page, mention your service area, but also include a natural description of what you do, with local references: "serving homes and businesses in Derby and the surrounding Peak District villages". Avoid stuffing the page with city names; instead, write a paragraph that sounds like it is written for a human reader. Also, add a Google Map embed on your contact page. This is a small signal that confirms your location to Google.

Build a review routine that works

Customer reviews influence both your local pack ranking and your click-through rate. A business with a handful of recent, positive reviews will often outrank a competitor with more reviews but none from the last year. The key is consistency. Ask satisfied customers to leave a

review on Google. Keep the process simple: send a direct link to your Google review page in a follow-up email or text. Respond to every review, positive or negative. A thoughtful reply to a negative review shows that you care about customer service. Avoid asking for reviews in bulk or offering incentives; Google's guidelines prohibit that, and it can lead to penalties.

Use local keywords naturally

Beyond your Google Business Profile, your website content should include the city and region you serve. For a Derby business, that means using phrases like "roofing services in Derby" or "best coffee in Derby city centre" within your page copy, headings, and meta descriptions. Think about the questions people type: "where to get a bike repair in Derby" or "emergency electrician near me". If you can answer those questions on your site, you stand a better chance of appearing in the search results. This is where local SEO Derby becomes a practical daily habit. When you write a new blog post or update a service page, check that the local angle is present without forcing it. A general article about boiler maintenance can mention that you work across Derby and the Peak District, and that you understand the specific needs of older stone houses in the area.

Check your mobile performance

Most local searches happen on mobile phones. People are standing on the street, searching for a takeaway, a dentist, or a locksmith. If your website loads slowly on mobile, or if the text is too small to read, you will lose visitors. Use Google's Mobile-Friendly Test tool to see how your site performs. Pay attention to page speed, button sizes, and the order of information. Your phone number should be tappable (a click-to-call link) on every page. A mobile-friendly site is not just a ranking factor; it is a conversion factor.

Track your local pack performance

You cannot improve what you do not measure. Use Google Search Console and Google Business Profile insights to see how often your profile appears in local searches, how many people click through to your website, and what searches trigger your listing. Look at the queries that bring traffic. If you see a search term like "Derby dog groomer" and you do not offer dog grooming, that is fine. But if you do, and the data shows low impressions, you may need to adjust your profile categories or add more content around that service. Similarly, keep an eye on your map rankings. Tools like BrightLocal or Whitespark can help, but even a manual check once a month is better than ignoring the data.

Service areas and location pages

If your business travels to customers (a painter, a mobile dog groomer, a tree surgeon), you have the option to set a service area in your Google Business Profile rather than a fixed address. This can be useful for businesses that operate across Derby and the surrounding villages. However, be precise. Setting a service area that is too large (like "the whole of the UK") will not help your local rankings. Instead, list the specific areas you cover: Derby, Belper, Ashbourne, Matlock, Bakewell, and so on. On your website, create individual pages for each service area, but keep them unique. Do not copy and paste the same text with a different town name; that looks like spam to Google. Write a short paragraph about what you do in each location, and include a local landmark or a mention of a local event to make it feel genuine.



Keep your information fresh

Local search optimisation is not a one-time project. Your business details change, seasons affect your opening hours, and new competitors appear. Set a reminder every three months to review your Google Business Profile, your citations, and your website's location pages. Update your opening hours for bank holidays. Add new photos of your work or your team. Post a Google Business Profile update about a seasonal offer or a new service. Google favours active profiles. A profile that has not been touched in two years signals that the business may be dormant.

Pulling all this together can feel like a lot, but you do not need to do everything at once. Start with the profile and the NAP audit. Once those are solid, move on to reviews and local content. Each small improvement builds on the last. If you are based in or around Derby and want to improve your visibility in local search, working through these points systematically will give you a strong foundation. And if you ever feel stuck, remember that **local SEO Derby** is a skill that improves with practice. The businesses that stay consistent with the basics are the ones that appear in the local pack when it matters most.