

UK Small Business Setup Essentials Checklist

Use this checklist to make sure you've covered all the key steps when setting up your small or home-based business in the UK. Tick off each item as you go to stay organised and compliant.

Business Basics

- Decide on your business model
- Choose a business name (check availability)
- Decide on business structure: Sole trader / Limited company / Partnership
- Register your business with HMRC or Companies House
- Useful links:
 - Register as a sole trader: <https://www.gov.uk/set-up-sole-trader>
 - Set up a limited company: <https://www.gov.uk/set-up-limited-company>

Legal & Financial Setup

- Register for Self Assessment with HMRC
- Open a dedicated business bank account
- Set up a simple bookkeeping system
- Understand your tax deadlines
- Consider business insurance:
 - Public liability
 - Professional indemnity
 - Product liability
- Check if you need any licences, permits, or DBS checks
- Use the GOV.UK licence finder: <https://www.gov.uk/licence-finder>

Online Presence & Branding

- Secure your domain name
- Set up a basic website or landing page
- Create a business email address
- Create your logo or brand look (try Canva)
- Set up social media profiles (LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram)

Payment & Sales Setup

- Decide how you'll take payments: PayPal / Stripe / Bank transfer
- Set up invoicing templates or a tool (e.g., QuickFile, Wave, Zettle)
- Decide on pricing and create a basic product/service list
- Write a short business description or elevator pitch

Marketing & Growth

- Join a small business community (Facebook group, local networking)
- Tell friends, family, and your network
- Collect early testimonials or feedback
- Plan how to attract your first 5-10 customers
- Track all income and expenses from day one

Helpful Links

- GOV.UK Start a Business Guide: <https://www.gov.uk/browse/business/setting-up>
- Start Up Loans UK: <https://www.startuploans.co.uk/>
- Companies House: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/companies-house>
- Free bookkeeping tools: <https://www.money.co.uk/business/accounting-software>