



BUYER'S CHECKLIST

Nine questions to ask before you sign an IT contract.

Switching IT providers in Manchester? Here's the no-nonsense list we'd want a potential supplier to answer — including ours. Tick what they get right. The gaps are the conversation you should be having before any contract goes near a signature.

24 yrs

Manchester since 2002

45+

businesses, 350+ users

6

regulated sectors

WHO IT'S FOR

Owner-managed firms in Greater Manchester running 10–60 staff on Microsoft 365 — Healthcare, Legal, Accountancy, Manufacturing, Distribution, Not-for-Profit.

HOW TO USE IT

Send the checklist to two or three providers. Compare answers side-by-side. If a question makes them dodge, that's a yellow flag.

SECTION 1 · RESPONSE & ACCESS

Can you actually reach a human?

Sounds basic. It's the thing that breaks first. Most providers quote a four-hour SLA — fine on paper, painful when the till's down on a Saturday.

01 What's your guaranteed response time during business hours?
 'Best efforts' isn't an answer. Get it in writing — minutes, not hours.

02 Will the same engineer pick up most of our calls?
 Continuity beats a faceless ticket queue. If they can't say yes, the engineer reads your account fresh every time.

03 Where are your engineers based, and can someone be on-site today if it matters?
 Remote-only works for a lot — until it doesn't. Greater Manchester or offshore changes the answer.

INOLOGY'S ANSWER

15-minute response guarantee, 8am–6pm. Same Manchester engineer two or three times a week. Office in Denton — on-site in Greater Manchester within the day. OOH cover £250/mo + £500 per 5-hour block, no surprises.

SECTION 2 · SECURITY, M365 & COMPLIANCE

Will they pass the questions your insurer is asking?

M365 ships secure-ish out of the box. The gap between 'ish' and 'actually secure' is configuration. Cyber insurance renewals now ask the same questions — and your provider should be able to answer them for you.

04 Is MFA enforced on every account, with Conditional Access set up beyond defaults?
 Most M365 breaches we clean up started with a tenant that was never tightened. Defaults aren't enough.

05 Are you Cyber Essentials — certified, aligned, or neither?
 Aligned means the same controls without the audit. Certified means an external assessor signed it off. 'Covered' means nothing.

06 Who backs up our M365 data, and when did you last test a restore?
 Microsoft doesn't keep a backup for you. Ask for the restore log, not the brochure.

INOLOGY'S ANSWER

Cyber Essentials-aligned at our Plus tier, certified at Complete. MFA and Conditional Access on every tenant. Defender for Business + 24/7 SOC at Complete. Six regulated sectors live: Healthcare, Legal, Accountancy, Manufacturing, Distribution, Not-for-Profit.

SECTION 3 · COMMERCIALS & EXIT

How does the contract end – not just begin?

Most providers don't lose clients on day one. They lose them on month thirteen, when the renewal arrives 18% higher. Read the exit clauses before you sign the entry ones.

07 **Is your pricing per-user per-month, or a bundle of hours and 'fair use'?**

Per-user-per-month means you can budget. Hour bundles mean you'll be on the phone arguing about timesheets.

08 **What's the notice period to leave, and what handover comes with it?**

30 days with a clean tenant transfer is fair. 12 months with no documentation is a moat.

09 **How do annual price rises work – capped, or open-ended?**

Honest providers tell you the mechanism upfront: CPI cap, reviewed yearly, with notice. The rest find out at renewal.

INOLOGY'S ANSWER

Per-user-per-month, itemised. 30 days' notice. Tenant ownership and documentation transfer included on exit. Annual review tied to CPI — no surprises at month thirteen.

READY FOR A STRAIGHT ANSWER?

Run a business. We'll run the IT.

15-minute call, no sales pitch, just an honest read of where you are. If we're not the right fit, we'll tell you who is.



Scan to book →

Book a 15-min call →

Or call us: 0161 503 3535

Or use the contact form: inology.co.uk/contact

Or email: hello@inology.co.uk

ABOUT INOLOGY

Manchester IT support since 2002. We look after 45+ businesses across Healthcare, Legal, Accountancy, Manufacturing, Distribution and Not-for-Profit — 350+ users, mostly within an hour's drive of our Denton office. Outcome-led service, transparent pricing, no vendor-jargon. If we say 15 minutes, we mean 15 minutes.

<p>OFFICE Office 11, The Forum 2 Tameside Business Park Windmill Lane Denton, M34 3QS</p>	<p>CONTACT 0161 503 3535 hello@inology.co.uk inology.co.uk</p> <p>COVERAGE Greater Manchester</p>	<p>SECTORS Healthcare Legal Accountancy Manufacturing Distribution Not-for-Profit</p>
--	--	--