Local SEO

Getting Traffic · https://sitecrafter.uk/docs/local-seo/

When someone nearby searches for what you do — whether that's "accountant in Harrogate" or "best pizza near me" — local SEO is what determines whether your business shows up or gets buried. This guide walks you through the key steps to improve your local search visibility using Rank Math, the SEO plugin installed on your site.

What is local SEO, and why does it matter?

Local SEO is the process of making your website more visible to people searching for businesses in your area. Unlike general SEO (which targets anyone, anywhere), local SEO focuses on geographic relevance — so the right people in your town or region can find you.

Google gives priority to local results for searches that have a "near me" intent, even when the person doesn't type those words. A search for "plumber" from someone in Leeds will show plumbers in Leeds — not ones in London. Your job is to make sure Google knows exactly where you are and what you do, so it puts you in front of those local searchers.

Step 1: Set up your business details in Rank Math

Rank Math has a dedicated section for local SEO information that feeds structured data (called schema markup) to search engines. This is machine-readable information that tells Google your business name, address, phone number, opening hours, and more — in a format it can trust.

To set this up, go to **Rank Math → Titles & Meta → Local SEO** in your WordPress dashboard. Fill in every field you can:

- **Business name** — use the exact name you trade under, consistently
- **Business type** — choose the closest match from the dropdown (e.g. LocalBusiness, Restaurant, MedicalBusiness)
- **Address** — your full business address, formatted correctly
- **Phone number** — include your area code
- **Opening hours** — keep these up to date

- **Geo coordinates** — Rank Math can look these up for you; they help pinpoint your location on maps

This information is embedded invisibly in your website's code and used by Google, Bing, and Apple Maps to build a confident picture of your business.

Step 2: Claim and optimise your Google Business Profile

Your Google Business Profile (formerly Google My Business) is separate from your website, but it works hand-in-hand with your on-site SEO. It's the listing that appears in Google Maps and the panel of results you see when searching for a local business.

If you haven't already, go to business.google.com and claim your listing. Once verified, make sure your profile includes:

- Your business name, address, and phone number — matching *exactly* what's on your website
- Your website URL
- Opening hours (and special hours for bank holidays)
- Your business category and a thorough description
- Photos — businesses with photos get significantly more clicks

The consistency between your website and your Google Business Profile really matters. If your address appears in slightly different formats across different places online, it can confuse search engines and weaken your rankings.

Step 3: Write location-aware page content

Search engines rank pages, not just websites. That means the content on each page needs to clearly signal what you do and where you do it.

For your homepage and key service pages, naturally include your location in the content — not in a spammy, repetitive way, but in the same way you'd describe your business to a customer. Phrases like "serving businesses across North Yorkshire" or "based in the centre of Harrogate" give Google the geographic context it needs.

If you serve multiple towns or areas, consider creating a separate page for each — for example, a dedicated page for each town you cover. These work best when they contain genuinely useful, specific content rather than the same text with just the town name swapped out.

Step 4: Use Rank Math to optimise each page

When you're editing a page in WordPress, you'll see the Rank Math panel below the editor. This is where you set the focus keyword, meta description, and other on-page SEO settings for that specific page.

For local SEO, the focus keyword on your key pages should reflect how people actually search for your services. Think about what someone in your area would type into Google — for example, "web designer Harrogate" or "accountant North Yorkshire". Set this as your focus keyword in Rank Math, and it will guide you on where to include it naturally throughout the page.

Pay attention to:

- **Page title** — include your main keyword and your location if it fits naturally
- **Meta description** — this is the short snippet that appears under your link in search results; write it for humans, not just search engines, and mention your location
- **Headings** — use your H1 heading to clearly state what the page is about, including your location where relevant
- **Image alt text** — describe what's in each image; if a photo shows your premises or team, mention the location

Rank Math's traffic-light scoring system will flag areas for improvement as you work. Aim for green, but don't force it — natural-sounding content will always perform better than content that's been awkwardly stuffed with keywords.

Step 5: Get listed in local directories

Citations are online mentions of your business name, address, and phone number — even without a link back to your site, they help build trust with search engines. Make sure your details are consistent across key directories:

- Bing Places for Business
- Apple Maps (via Apple Business Connect)
- Yell.com
- Thomson Local
- Yelp
- Industry-specific directories relevant to your sector

Again, consistency is key. Use the exact same business name, address format, and phone number everywhere.

Step 6: Encourage and respond to reviews

Online reviews are one of the strongest local ranking signals — and they're also what convinces real customers to choose you over a competitor. Google reviews carry the most weight, but reviews on other platforms (Trustpilot, Yell, Facebook) contribute to your overall credibility.

The simplest way to get more reviews is to ask satisfied customers directly. You can share a direct link to your Google review form (your web designer can help you find this) via email, text, or even a card at the point of sale.

When you receive a review — positive or negative — respond to it. Thanking customers for positive reviews shows you're engaged, and a calm, professional response to a negative review can actually build trust rather than damage it.

Step 7: Make sure your contact page is doing its job

Your contact page is one of the most important pages for local SEO. It should include your full address (not just a form), your phone number, your opening hours, and ideally an embedded Google Map showing your location. This gives both visitors and search engines clear, consistent signals about where you are.

If you have a physical premises, add a photo of the exterior — it helps customers recognise the building and reinforces your local presence.

A note on patience

Local SEO is not a one-time task — it's an ongoing process. Changes you make today can take several weeks to show up in search results, so don't be discouraged if you don't see an immediate jump in traffic. Focus on doing the basics well and consistently, keep your information up to date, and the results will follow.

If you're on a website care plan with us, we keep an eye on your site's technical health — but the content, reviews, and Google Business Profile need your regular attention too. Think of it as a partnership: we handle the technical foundations, and you keep the information current and accurate.

Need help with any of the above? Get in touch and we'll point you in the right direction.