

# The Print Buyer's Guide

How to compare devices, contracts, support and running costs, and choose a managed print partner with confidence.

A practical guide for UK businesses · [futureofficeit.co.uk](https://futureofficeit.co.uk)



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Buying print is rarely about the printer. The hardware is often the cheapest part of the decision, the real cost sits in consumables, service, finance terms and the hours your team loses to downtime. This guide walks you through everything a UK business should weigh up before signing, so you can compare quotes properly and avoid the traps that quietly inflate spend.

## Start with your actual usage, not the brochure

Almost every over-spend on print starts with buying the wrong device for the wrong volume. A machine rated for 10,000 pages a month will be expensive and unreliable if you push 40,000 through it, and a high-volume device is wasted money if you only print 3,000.

Before you look at a single model, pull your last 12 months of meter readings (your current supplier can provide these). Note your mono and colour split, your monthly peaks, and how many devices you really need across your sites.

- Monthly mono volume and colour volume (kept separate, they cost very differently)
- Peak months, not just the average, holiday cover and year-end can spike volume
- Number of users per device and walking distance to it
- Finishing needs: stapling, hole-punch, booklet, A3, scanning to email/folder

## Understand the true cost of print (CPP)

The single most useful number in any print quote is cost per page (CPP), the all-in cost of toner, parts, labour and service for each page you print. Hardware price is a one-off; CPP is what you pay every single day for years.

As a rough UK benchmark, managed mono pages typically land around £0.008-£0.015 and colour around £0.04-£0.07, depending on volume and device. Always ask for CPP in writing, and check exactly what it includes.

### Ask this before you sign

Does the cost per page include all toner, all parts, all labour, and call-outs? Or are drums, fusers and maintenance kits billed separately? Excluded consumables are the most common hidden cost in print contracts.

## Compare contracts line by line

Two quotes can look identical on the headline price and differ by thousands over the term. The contract, not the device, is where you win or lose. Lay the proposals side by side and compare the same fields.

What to compare	Why it matters
Term length	3-5 years is normal. Longer locks you in; shorter can mean higher monthly cost.
Minimum volume / billing	Beware committing to volumes you won't hit, you pay for unused pages.
CPP escalation	Some contracts raise cost per page annually. Cap or fix it.
Service response time	A guaranteed engineer response (e.g. next business day) protects uptime.
End-of-term terms	Check auto-renewal, return logistics and any settlement clauses.

## Service and support: the part that actually affects your day

A printer that's down is worse than no printer, it stops invoices, contracts and post. When comparing suppliers, weigh the support model as heavily as the price.

Look for proactive supplies (toner shipped automatically before you run out), automated meter readings, remote diagnostics, and a guaranteed response time backed by UK-based engineers.

## Finance and leasing options

Most businesses lease print hardware rather than buy outright, spreading cost and keeping equipment current. Operating leases keep devices off the balance sheet and bundle service into one predictable monthly figure.

Whichever route you choose, make sure the finance agreement and the service agreement are clearly separated in the paperwork so you understand exactly what you're paying for.

## A simple buyer's checklist

- ✓ 12 months of meter readings gathered and analysed
- ✓ Mono and colour CPP confirmed in writing, with inclusions listed
- ✓ Device specced to your real volume (with headroom for peaks)
- ✓ Service response time and supplies model documented
- ✓ Contract term, escalation and end-of-term clauses understood

- ✓ Finance and service costs itemised separately
- ✓ References or case examples for businesses like yours

### **Ready to take the next step?**

future® Office provides fully managed print across the UK, transparent cost per page, proactive supplies, automated meter reads and guaranteed engineer response. If you'd like us to review your current setup, our Print Fleet Assessment and Print Cost Check take just a few minutes.

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