IT Support & Security

IT Support and Security Ltd | Cranleigh, Surrey

IT that works. People who care.

A FREE GUIDE

Switching IT provider without the drama

A checklist for Surrey and Sussex businesses

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BEFORE YOU START

Why people switch, and what they worry about

Most businesses stay with an IT provider they're unhappy with because switching feels risky and complicated. In our experience a well-managed switch takes around four weeks, about half a day of your time, and causes very little disruption. This guide walks you through it.

Why people start looking

- Slow responses, or nobody taking ownership until the problem is fixed.
- The same faults coming back again and again.
- Costs that are hard to understand, and being sold kit rather than advised.
- No plan: nobody telling you what you've got, what it costs, and what's worth doing next.
- "Our current provider is fine, just slow." A short conversation usually tells you whether moving is worth it.

The real reason people don't

It's not money. It's not time. It's inertia: the feeling that your setup is complicated, your old provider will be difficult, and it will all go wrong at the worst moment.

The switches that go badly are almost always the ones nobody planned. With a structured process, a committed handover window and a clear list of what to gather (page 4), the risk is low.

The six worries we hear most, and what actually happens

THE WORRY	WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENS
Our current provider will be difficult	Occasionally they are. IT providers are professionally obliged to cooperate with a handover, and your data and documentation belong to you, not them. A good new provider will tell you what to request and how to escalate if there's resistance.
There'll be downtime	In almost all cases, no. Monitoring and management tools go on without taking anything offline. Any out-of-hours work should be agreed with you in advance.
What happens to our data?	Your files, email and systems stay where they are; the new provider takes over managing and protecting them. Nothing is migrated unless you decide to change platforms. One of the first jobs is checking your backups actually work.
We're still in a contract	Worth reviewing carefully. Many IT contracts have break clauses or are less binding than they look. If not, time the switch for when the contract ends.
Our team will be left without support	They shouldn't be. Support should start the moment the new agreement begins, so there's no gap in cover, and your team should know who to call from day one.
We've had a bad experience before	Bad transitions almost always come down to one thing: the new provider started without understanding the existing setup. Insist on a review before onboarding. An extra week to get it right is cheap.

> "My company switched to IT Support & Security over 10 years ago and have not regretted doing so. They have never let us down and always tried to find the best solutions without the usual 'oh you need this new kit or software'."
>
> John, GOK, ISS client

THE PROCESS

The four step switching process

A typical switch takes around four weeks from first conversation to go-live. Whoever you choose, this is the shape a well-run switch should take.

1 WEEKS 1 TO 2

Conversation and review

A relaxed call about your business, your setup and what's not working. Then a review of what you've actually got, remotely or on site, so the new provider arrives on day one with proper context, not a blank page. If you want an independent, documented picture before talking to anyone, a paid one-day review (such as our IT Clarity and Planning Review) does this job.

2 WEEK 2

A clear written proposal

A written proposal with fixed pricing, a clear scope and a recommended package. No hidden extras, no vague promises. You know exactly what you're getting and paying before you sign anything. Ask how long the agreement runs and how you'd leave if you needed to.

3 WEEK 3

Notice and handover

Once you've decided, give formal notice to your current provider (template on page 5). Ask for full documentation, all administrator credentials, and any data or licences held in their name on your behalf. Your data is always yours. A professional handover is standard practice, and your new provider should handle any friction.

4 WEEKS 3 TO 4, THEN THE FIRST 90 DAYS

Onboarding and go live

Monitoring and management tools go on, systems are brought up to standard, and your team is shown how to get help. From go-live the helpdesk is fully open. Within the first 90 days you should get an initial technology review: what was found, what's been fixed, and what's worth tackling next.

What you'll be asked for

A good provider does the heavy lifting. Your side should take no more than half a day of your time, spread across the four weeks.

A point of contact

Someone who can make decisions and introduce the new provider to your team. They don't need to be technical.

Access to your systems

Admin credentials to key systems, so the review and monitoring can be set up. Agreed in advance.

Notice to your old provider

Formal notice from you. Your new provider should advise on wording and what to request in the handover.

A brief team introduction

A short call or meeting so your team knows who the new provider is and how to reach them.

CHECKLIST

What to gather before you talk to a new provider

You don't need all of this to have a first conversation. But the more of it you can find, the faster and more accurate any proposal will be, and the smoother the handover. Tick each item as you track it down. Anything you can't find is worth asking your current provider for now.

Licences and subscriptions

Who pays for what, and who is the account holder.

- [ ] Microsoft 365 licences: how many, which plan, and who bills you for them
- [ ] Other software subscriptions (antivirus, backup, accounting, line of business apps)
- [ ] Which licences are registered in your provider's name rather than yours
- [ ] Renewal dates for each

Domains, email and web

These are easy to lose track of and painful to recover.

- [ ] Your domain name(s) and where they are registered
- [ ] Who controls the DNS settings (the records that make email and your website work)
- [ ] Where your email is hosted
- [ ] Where your website is hosted, and who maintains it

Backups

A backup nobody has tested is a hope, not a plan.

- [ ] What is backed up: files, email, servers, Microsoft 365 data
- [ ] Where the backups are kept and how often they run
- [ ] When a restore was last tested, and the result
- [ ] Who holds the login to the backup service

Contracts and notice period

Know what you've signed before anyone else tells you.

- [ ] A copy of your current support agreement
- [ ] End date, notice period and how notice must be given
- [ ] Any break clause or automatic renewal
- [ ] What's included, what's charged extra, and any hardware leases or finance

Admin passwords held by your current provider

You are entitled to these. Ask for them as part of the handover.

- [ ] Microsoft 365 global administrator account
- [ ] Domain registrar and DNS logins
- [ ] Firewall, router and Wi-Fi admin logins
- [ ] Server and local administrator passwords
- [ ] Backup, antivirus and other management portals
- [ ] Where multi-factor authentication for admin accounts is registered (whose phone?)

Your setup, in plain terms

Rough numbers are fine. It helps a provider quote properly.

- [ ] Number of staff, and how many only need email
- [ ] Laptops, desktops, servers and printers, roughly how many and how old
- [ ] Office locations, internet connection and phone system
- [ ] Anything unusual or business-critical (a specialist application, a shared drive everyone relies on)
- [ ] Any compliance you need to meet: Cyber Essentials, GDPR, tender requirements

Notes

TEMPLATE

Notice letter to your outgoing provider

Keep it short, polite and factual. Check your agreement first for the notice period and how notice must be given (some require post, not just email). Keep a copy. Replace the text in [square brackets].

[Your company name and address] | [Date]
[Provider name and address]

Dear [Contact name],

Notice to end our IT support agreement (reference [agreement or account reference])

I am writing to give formal notice that [Your company name] will end its IT support agreement with [Provider name], in line with the [notice period, e.g. 90 day] notice period in our agreement. Our final day of service will be [end date].

Thank you for your support over the past [period]. To help the handover run smoothly, please provide the following by [date, ideally two weeks before the end date]:

1. Current documentation of our IT systems, including network diagrams, device lists and configurations.
2. All administrator usernames and passwords for systems you manage on our behalf, including Microsoft 365, domain and DNS, firewall and network equipment, servers, backup and security portals.
3. Confirmation of any licences, domains or subscriptions registered in your name on our behalf, and their transfer to our control.
4. Access to, or copies of, all backups and any other data belonging to [Your company name] held on your systems, and confirmation of how long you will retain copies after the end date.
5. A final invoice, and confirmation that no further charges will apply after the end date.

Our new provider, [New provider name], is authorised to contact you to arrange the handover, and we would be grateful if you would work with them directly on the technical details. Please keep our current services and access in place until the end date, and confirm receipt of this notice in writing.

Yours sincerely,

[Your name]
[Your job title]
[Your company name] | [Phone] | [Email]

Three things worth knowing

- Give notice only once you've signed with your new provider, so there's no gap in cover.
- Stay neutral. You don't need to give reasons, and a list of complaints rarely speeds anything up.
- Don't let anyone remove access or tools before the end date. Your new provider takes these over in an agreed order.

CHOOSING WELL

Questions to ask any new provider

Ask these of everyone you talk to, including us. Clear, specific answers are a good sign. Vague ones, or answers that head straight to a sales pitch, tell you something too.

Support and people

- When my team calls, who answers? A person, or an automated system or AI agent?
- What is your response time, and is it written into the agreement?
- Does one person take ownership of a problem until it's fixed, or does it get passed around?
- Can you come on site when it's needed, and how far away are you?
- How experienced are the people on the helpdesk?

Costs and contract

- What is the price per user per month, and is it published?
- What's included, and what would we be charged extra for?
- How long is the agreement, and what is the notice period if we want to leave?
- How and when do prices change?
- Do you make money on hardware you sell us, or advise independently?

The switch itself

- How does onboarding work, week by week?
- Will you review our setup before you start supporting it?
- What do you need from us, and how much of our time?
- How do you handle a reluctant outgoing provider?
- Will there be any gap in support, or any downtime?

Security and compliance

- Are you Cyber Essentials certified yourselves, and can you get us certified?
- How do you check our backups actually work?
- How do you handle staff joining and leaving, and admin access?
- Can you help us answer security questions in tenders and from clients?

Planning and reporting

- Will you tell us what we've got, what it costs, and what we're wasting or missing?
- Do we get a roadmap and a budget for the year ahead, or just tickets?
- How often do we review things together, and what do we see in writing?
- Who is our senior contact when we need strategic advice?

Fit

- What size of business do you typically look after?
- Can we speak to a client who has been with you for several years?
- Will you tell us honestly if we're not a good fit for you?
- Can we visit your office and meet the people we'd be dealing with?

If you need to take it to the board

Three things a finance director or board will usually want to see in writing: a fixed monthly price with what's included, a short notice period so you can leave if it doesn't work out, and a documented handover so nothing depends on one person's memory.

ABOUT US

If you'd like to talk to us

ISS is IT Support and Security Ltd, an IT support company based in Cranleigh, Surrey, looking after office-based businesses across Surrey and Sussex with 5 to 50 staff and no in-house IT. We've been doing this for over 30 years. Here is what you'd get, in the same plain terms we've asked you to demand of anyone.

from £53

per user per month, with prices published on our website so you can see what you'd pay before you talk to us

1 hour

response time, from experienced technical people who take ownership until it's fixed

90 days

rolling agreement. No long-term contract, so we have to earn your business every quarter

You'll always talk to a human

Experienced technical people on the helpdesk, not an AI agent. We use AI behind the scenes to work faster, never in place of the person you speak to.

We tell you what you've got

Early on, we work out what you have, what it costs, and what you're wasting or missing. You get that in writing, whether or not it means buying anything from us.

We help you plan ahead

Regular Clarity and Planning Reviews give you a roadmap and a budget for the year, so IT stops being a series of surprises. Think of it as having your own IT Director, without the salary.

We manage the whole switch

Everything in this guide, done with you: the review, the proposal, the notice letter, the handover and the onboarding. Your team stays supported throughout.

Get an honest view of your IT

Free 20 minute call. We'll ask about your setup and what's frustrating you, and tell you whether a switch is worth it. We'll tell you if we're not the right fit.

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Mon to Fri, 9am to 5pm

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