

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE · WW-005

Research and map keywords for a service page

Find the search terms real customers use for one service, check the intent behind them, and assign a primary and supporting keywords to a single page.

SEO

VERSION 1.0	EFFECTIVE 5 October 2026
NEXT REVIEW 5 April 2027	TIME 90 minutes
DIFFICULTY Intermediate	RELATED WW-006 · WW-007
AUDIENCE Marketers and copywriters planning or improving a service page	
TOOLS Google Search · Google Keyword Planner · Google Search Console · Google Sheets	

Purpose

A service page ranks and converts when it targets the words customers actually search, with the intent they actually have. This procedure builds a short, evidence-based keyword map for one service: one primary keyword, a handful of supporting terms and the questions the page must answer. It is finished when the map is agreed and no other page on the site targets the same primary keyword.

Scope

In scope

- Gathering keyword ideas from free Google tools and existing Search Console data
- Checking search intent by reviewing the live results
- Choosing one primary keyword and supporting terms for one page
- Checking for cannibalisation with existing pages

Out of scope

- Writing or optimising the page (see WW-006)
- Blog and informational content planning
- Paid keyword tools and competitor backlink research

Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
SEO specialist	Gathers data, checks intent and drafts the keyword map.
Client or service owner	Confirms the service wording, locations served and priorities.
Copywriter	Uses the map to brief or update the page.

Prerequisites

- A one-paragraph description of the service, who buys it and the area it is offered in.
- Access to the site's Google Search Console property (WW-004).
- A Google Ads account for Keyword Planner access (no live campaign is needed).
- A copy of the keyword map sheet with the columns `Keyword`, `Source`, `Monthly searches`, `Intent`, `Notes`.

Procedure

Gather seed terms

Start from the customer's language, not the business's jargon.

1. Ask the service owner how customers describe the problem on the phone, and list five to ten phrases in the sheet with the source `Client`.
2. Search each phrase on Google in a private window. Add relevant autocomplete suggestions, **People also ask** questions and **related searches** to the sheet.
3. In Search Console, open **Performance**, set the date range to the last 12 months, filter **Page** to the existing service page (if there is one), and add queries with meaningful impressions to the sheet with the source `GSC`.

Add search volumes

Use volume to prioritise, not to decide on its own.

1. In Google Ads, open **Tools**, then **Keyword Planner**, and choose **Get search volume and forecasts**.
2. Paste the list, set the location to the area served and the language to English, and record the average monthly searches against each keyword.

[!NOTE] Keyword Planner shows ranges for accounts without spend. Ranges are fine for comparing terms; don't treat them as exact.

3. Remove terms that are off-topic, for services not offered, or for areas not served.

Check search intent

Make sure Google rewards the kind of page you plan to create.

1. Search the five highest-volume remaining terms in a private window, set to the target location if possible.
2. For each, note in the **Intent** column what dominates the first page: service pages from local providers (commercial), guides and articles (informational), or directories and marketplaces.
3. Keep terms where service pages rank. Move informational terms to a separate tab as future content ideas.

Build the keyword map

Assign each term to one job on one page.

1. Choose the **primary keyword**: the commercially relevant term with the best balance of volume and fit for the service. It will lead the page title and H1.
2. Choose three to six **supporting keywords**: close variants and sub-services that belong on the same page.
3. Choose three to five **questions** from People also ask that the page should answer.
4. Search `site:yourdomain.co.uk "primary keyword"` and check whether another page already targets it. If one does, agree with the SEO lead which page owns the term.

[!WARNING] Two pages targeting the same primary keyword compete with each other. Merge or re-target before writing, never after.

Quality checks

- ☐ Every keyword in the map is relevant to the service and the area served.
- ☐ The primary keyword's results are dominated by service pages, not articles.
- ☐ No other page on the site targets the same primary keyword.
- ☐ The map lists one primary keyword, three to six supporting keywords and three to five questions.
- ☐ The service owner has approved the map.

Troubleshooting

Symptom	Likely cause	Fix
Keyword Planner shows no data	Terms are too niche or too local	Use broader variants for volume, and keep the specific phrase as supporting.
Results are all directories	Google sees the term as comparison intent	Target a more specific variant, or support the page with directory listings.
GSC shows no queries	Page is new or not indexed	Rely on Google suggestions and Keyword Planner; revisit in three months.

Records

- Save the keyword map in the client's SEO folder named `WW-005 · <service> · <date>`.
- Note the agreed primary keyword in the client's page inventory to prevent future cannibalisation.

References

- [Use Keyword Planner \(Google Ads Help\)](#)
- [Performance report \(Search Console Help\)](#)
- [Creating helpful, reliable, people-first content \(Google Search Central\)](#)

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