



# HOW TO CHOOSE REPUTABLE WEDDING SUPPLIERS

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*ukawp*

UK ALLIANCE OF WEDDING PLANNERS



Planning a wedding can feel so pressuring, are you selecting the right suppliers? Can you trust them? Will they create what they have promised?

If you haven't started sourcing suppliers for your wedding here are some of our top tips.

## WHERE TO START

Our advice is not to just stick to one method when researching for suppliers. The days of being able to attend one wedding fair, and confirm all your suppliers in one hit, are long gone. Here are our top 7 places to find a supplier for your wedding.

1. Recommended list via your venue. Do check it is a recommended list though and not one that suppliers needed to pay to be included on as purely a marketing exercise.
2. Visit the [UKAWP website](#) for suppliers that have been vetted before being approved. Our directory is for paying members; however our alliance is all about promoting professionalism in our industry, so the suppliers you'll find on our directory are all excellent wedding professionals who abide to a strict code of business conduct. Every member goes through a strict validation process before being accepted.
3. National and local wedding fairs. Visit both, the national fairs are great for inspiration and especially niche suppliers. Whereas your local fairs can be great to meet more locally based suppliers. And with suppliers like cake makers you get to taste the cake as well!
4. Wedding blogs with real wedding features or their directories.
5. Recommendations from friends, family or other suppliers that can vouch for a particular person.
6. Social media; although please check the work being shown is their own. So many accounts on instagram are reposting so in essence they aren't showing you what they are capable of, only what they find inspirational.
7. Hire a [wedding planner](#) as they will have vetted all suppliers before working with them. In essence they've done the legwork already. Members of the UKAWP have been vetted and none of them will take commission ensuring their honesty can be trusted.



## QUESTIONS TO ASK SUPPLIERS

Too many couples assume a gorgeous website means experience whereas that often isn't the case. There are certain questions you should be asking suppliers:

- How long have you been in business
- Are the images on your website and social media your own work
- Can you provide references for me to check
- Are you insured
- Do you belong to any industry body (not a deal breaker but can show they are serious about their business)
- What are your terms (do they have a contract for you to sign)
- Have you worked at x venue before OR have you worked in marquees before

## CONFIRMING A SUPPLIER

When you are ready to confirm a supplier do not hand money over until everything is confirmed in writing. You need written confirmation of the following:

- Exactly what they are providing for you (vague 7 x table arrangements isn't enough, should detail what flowers and ideally an inspiration photo its based on, otherwise it's your word vs theirs)
- Cost of the service and payment breakdown
- Time of arrival & collection if applicable

Depending on the type of supplier you should have a contract to sign and once that has been done you can pay the deposit. Pay special attention to detail on cancellation policies and complaint procedure.





## EXPECTATION VS REALITY

We wouldn't be doing you any justice without touching on unrealistic expectations. The world of Pinterest and Instagram, has bought with it an array of stunning images, that couples wish to recreate at their weddings. Couples can be shocked when they realise to recreate certain looks it far exceeds their budget. We therefore felt it would help to explain how some wedding suppliers work out their fee, and what it is you are paying them for.

We have seen many situations where couples do not understand how the service industry price their services.

**Wedding Planners** – you are not paying for the time to “plan” a wedding but more their experience, knowledge and logistical know how. See this blog [post](#) for further understanding.

**Photographers** – you are not paying for them to snap some photos throughout the day. You're paying for the editing, retouching, equipment, insurance, training and development as well as their experience at capturing fabulous photos regardless of the venue or lighting. Please read our guide on choosing your photographer to understand more.

**Cake Makers** – you are not paying for them to bake a cake, but more the time it has taken them to hone their skill, the hours and hours it takes them to create sugar craft flowers. And deliver and set up with it in one piece.

**Stationery** – you are not paying for them to print some words on the invites but more to create a beautiful design to suit your personality. And I don't know about you, that isn't something I could do.

**Musicians** – you are paying for them to sound fabulous but that fee is being split amongst the band members, roadie, sound engineer and agent. Then there is the cost of the instruments. All of a sudden what seemed expensive now seems reasonable.

**Caterers** – it's not the cost of the ingredients, it's can they cook! How many staff, what equipment is needed, table settings and linen and how many hours to set up and clear down.

Of course there are lots of categories within the wedding industry and we can't cover them all but next time you receive quotes think about:

1. The years experience, not the hours working for you
2. The insurance they need to pay for
3. Actual cost of the product and time making it
4. Number of people involved in the service and how that money is split
5. Cost of any equipment, whether instruments, cameras, tripods, etc.
6. 25% of all bookings has to be set aside for the running costs of a business, national insurance, taxes. Yes, we can't spend every penny of what we receive, as otherwise we have no business left!

When receiving quotes it should become clear what the industry average is. If you receive a quote that is considerably cheaper, instead of thinking, what a great deal! Think why? Are they going to fully deliver? Or will they over promise and under deliver?

If something seems too good to be true – it normally is.



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