FSBS FIRE SAFETY BUSINESS SALES



Buying a fire safety business

The checks before you agree a price

2027 edition 10-minute read

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A practical guide with a buyer's fire safety evidence scorecard

Images are illustrative.

The whole guide on one page

Start with the work the business promises to do. Then follow the documents, people and costs that support that promise. Use these checks before settling your offer assumptions.

The check	What good looks like	Ask for
1. Separate the services	Each income line has a defined scope	Service list, job records and invoices
2. Read the certificate properly	Holder and modules match the work	Current certificate, register entry and issuer answer
3. Find who can do the work	Each role has evidenced competence and cover	Role matrix and external-assessor terms
4. Test the maintenance income	Signed, current terms are identified separately	Agreements, renewal dates and customer change clauses
5. Price the owner's replacement	Adjusted profit includes the work still needed	Owner duties, pay records and replacement assumptions
6. Follow the unfinished work	Outstanding obligations have evidence and an owner	Commissioning files, defect log and completion schedule

The fillable scorecard brings these checks together. Red means evidence is missing; amber means a question remains; green means the evidence has been checked for your proposed deal.

Bring your completed scorecard

Register as a buyer for a free first conversation about the question you cannot yet answer.

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Register as a buyer

1. Separate the services

An alarm maintenance book, an installation pipeline and assessment work need different checks. Give each a line before you put a value against the whole business.

What good looks like

BAFE has separate schemes for alarm systems, emergency lighting, extinguisher servicing and fire risk assessment. Its alarm scheme covers selected modules [1]. Match the evidence to the service being bought.

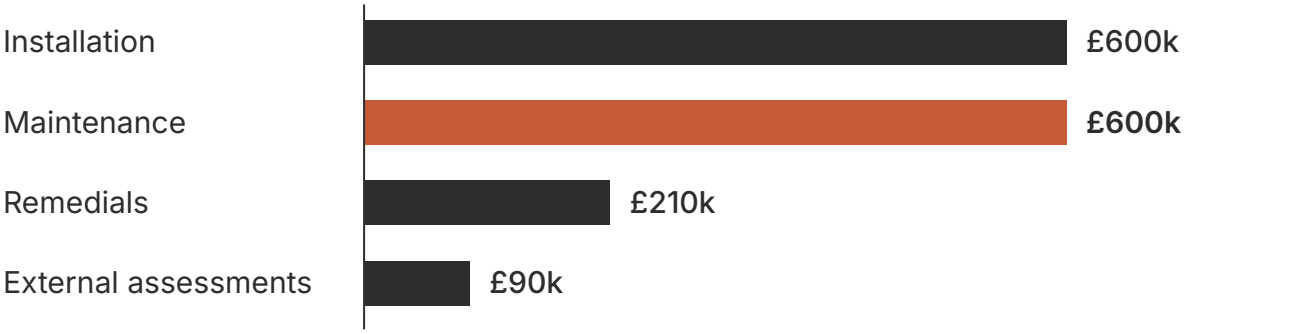
Meet Fenmere Fire Protection

Illustrative example, not a real deal

Fenmere is a fictional business with illustrative figures. The assessment work below is delivered through external assessors.

Fenmere's £1.5m annual revenue

Illustrative



Four separate income lines. Assessment work is delivered through external assessors.

Ask for	Follow it through
Service list and job descriptions	What did the customer actually buy?
Invoices and job records	Which service earned each amount?
Subcontractor arrangements	Which work depends on someone outside the firm?

The seller's side

Keep the service descriptions consistent across the brochure, accounts explanation and job files. Show where a broad label hides several activities.

What to check

Trace an alarm job from the quoted scope to its invoice. Ask the seller to explain any gap before treating that income as a repeatable service.

2. Read the certificate properly

A logo does not tell you which entity or activity is covered. Read the certificate and current register entry alongside the proposed sale structure.

What good looks like

BAFE's alarm registration process requires certification for the selected modules. Continued registration depends on valid certification and scheme compliance [1]. Record the holder, scope and status separately.

Fenmere's installation income

Illustrative example, not a real deal

The £600,000 installation line is a starting point for questions. It does not establish that Fenmere holds any particular certification or that every stage is delivered in house.

Ask for	Question to settle
Certificate and register entry	Does the named entity match the business being bought?
Listed modules	Who covers design, installation and commissioning/handover?
Written issuer response	What does this ownership or personnel change require?
Customer terms	Does the customer require this particular certification?

The seller's side

Give the buyer the current documents and explain the work behind each module. Ask the certification body about the actual proposed change, rather than guessing its response.

What to check

Put the issuer's answer next to the deal timetable. Do not treat the sale itself as proof that certification continues unchanged.

3. Find who can do the work

Start with tasks, then names. Who designs, installs, commissions, maintains and reviews the work? Who supplies the assessment service?

What good looks like

BAFE's published alarm scheme changes identify module Lead Individuals and individual competence [2]. For building-regulations design and building work in England, the regulator also distinguishes individual competence from organisational capability [3].

Fenmere's external assessments

Illustrative example, not a real deal

The £90,000 assessment line depends on external assessors. Ask for their terms, evidence of competence, availability and responsibility for the files. Do not count that income as proof of employed assessment capability.

Work	Evidence to request
Alarm module lead	Named role, competence record and issuer confirmation
Installation or maintenance delivery	Job allocation and competence for that task
External assessment	Assessor terms and arrangements for records
Cover when someone leaves	Named competent cover and any issuer requirements

The seller's side

Show what people actually do, including the owner. Separate personal qualifications, organisation certification and external support in the handover file.

What to check

Ask a technical checker to review the role matrix against the contracted work. Apply building-regulations requirements to the work within their scope, not every maintenance visit.

4. Test the maintenance income

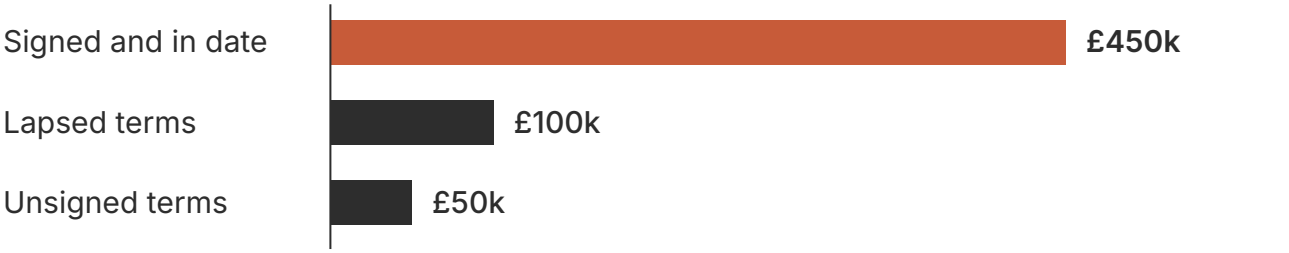
Read the terms behind the service book. A history of invoices and a signed agreement still in date answer different questions.

What good looks like

For England, Home Office guidance links required fire precautions with suitable maintenance and competent testing and maintenance contractors [4]. Use the actual customer agreement to establish the visits, scope and obligations being sold.

Fenmere's £600,000 maintenance income

Illustrative



£450,000 plus £100,000 plus £50,000 equals £600,000.

Ask for	Question to settle
Agreement and renewal record	Are the terms signed and still in date?
Schedule of promised work	What remains to be delivered?
Change and termination clauses	What does this proposed transaction trigger?
Invoices matched to the agreement	Does the income relate to the stated service?

The seller's side

Present lapsed and unsigned terms separately. Explain each customer's position and provide the records needed to test it.

What to check

Ask the solicitor about the actual customer clauses. The £450,000 in Fenmere's signed, current category is not a promise that customers stay or that every clause is enforceable.

5. Price the owner's replacement

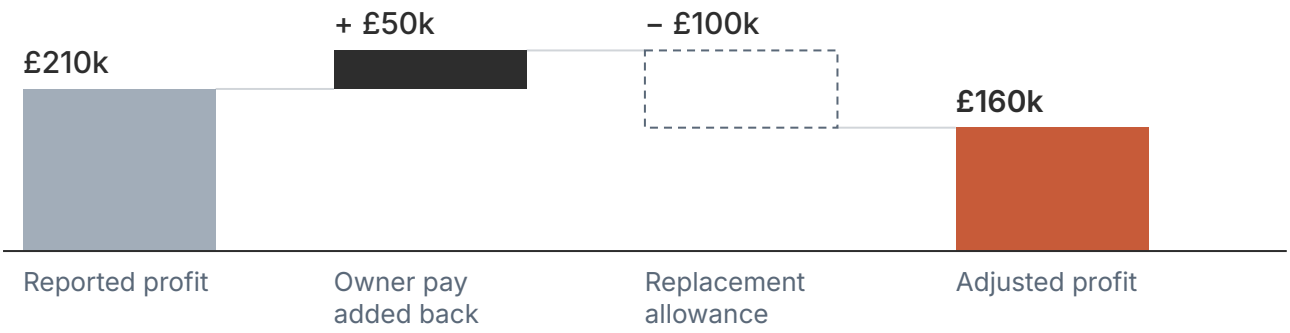
Write down the owner's technical, commercial and management work. Test the cost of covering it after completion. Count each replacement cost once.

What good looks like

Company accounting records include money received and spent, assets, debts and supporting documents [5]. Match the profit adjustments to those records and the alarm-role matrix before asking your accountant to review them.

Fenmere's replacement-cost bridge

Illustrative



Illustrative: £210,000 plus £50,000 less the assumed £100,000 replacement cost equals £160,000.

Ask for	What it tests
Pay record and owner duties	What was charged, and which work continues?
Technical role cover	What must the replacement be able to do?
Replacement cost assumptions	What is included, and who has checked it?

Keep profit and value separate

Illustrative example, not a real deal

Fenmere's adjusted profit is £160,000. An illustrative three times that amount gives £480,000. This is an arithmetic assumption, not a market multiple, agreed price or seller cash receipt.

The seller's side

Show the work as well as the pay. If your successor needs outside technical support, put that question into the cost review.

6. Follow the unfinished work

Trace open installations, commissioning, remedials and prepaid service visits. Agree who will finish each item, what it needs and where it appears in the deal documents.

What good looks like

BAFE's published alarm scheme updates distinguish commissioning/handover and refer to management records [2]. Ask for the file for each stage, then reconcile the outstanding work with the financial schedule.

Ask for	Question to settle
Commissioning and handover files	What is complete, and what still needs evidence?
Open defect and remedial log	Who owns the next action and its cost review?
Customer receipts and service schedule	Which promised work has been paid for already?
Debtor and retention schedule	When is each amount due, and what conditions remain?

Fenmere's service obligation

Illustrative example, not a real deal

A £2,000 advance receipt covers four equally priced planned visits in the example. One is complete. The £1,500 for the other three is already within the £15,000 advance-service balance. Do not add it again.

The seller's side

Show unfinished work openly, with the supporting records. Keep the customer obligation separate from the estimate of what it costs to deliver.

What to check

In England, a premises' Responsible Person has specific fire-safety record and handover duties [6]. Ask who holds that role; a sale of the contractor alone does not establish a change of Responsible Person.

What public transactions can tell you

A fire and security installation and maintenance business was acquired in April 2023. The acquirer's 2024 annual report records £2.0 million revenue after completion in the year ended March 2024 [9]. That provides a smaller-business transaction example.

The £2.0 million is post-completion revenue, not standalone annual turnover, a price or a multiple.

Public example	What the announcement supports	What to ask about your deal
Trade acquisition, announced March 2025 [7]	The buyer reported a completed fire/security acquisition and described regional service capability	Which services and locations can this firm support?
Employee ownership, announced December 2024 [8]	A fire engineering consultancy described succession through an Employee Ownership Trust	Which ownership route fits the work and people involved?

Bring the evidence back to your deal

Identify the services being bought. Ask who will perform and supervise them after completion. Put any missing certificate, contract or job file beside the offer assumption it needs to support.

Keep the scope of your offer separate from the terms needed to fund it. Reads Commercial Finance is an introduction route; partner brokers assess, advise on and arrange finance.

Buyer's fire safety evidence scorecard

Use R for missing evidence, A for an unresolved question, or G for evidence checked against your proposed deal. Record the document and the next action, owner and date together in the final column.

Business and proposed transaction

Evidence question	R/A/G	Document, next action, owner and date
Service scope and income split		
Certificate holder and covered modules		
Competent people and role cover		
External-assessor arrangements		
Signed, current maintenance income		
Customer terms on the proposed change		
Open defects and remedials		
Owner replacement cost		
Debts and completion schedule		
Commissioning and handover records		

First unresolved question to raise before offering

Type your answers in and save a copy, or print the page and fill it in by hand. Nothing you enter is sent to us.

Sources and validity

1. BAFE: Scheme areas and SP203-1 registration process, undated. Scheme and module scope, not a universal statutory licence.
2. BAFE: SP203-1 v8.0 summary, August 2023, and v8.0.1 update, October 2023. Published changes support the named role and record checks, not a prediction about transfer after sale.
3. Building Safety Regulator: Design and building work, updated Mar 2024. England, work within building regulations; additional requirements apply to higher-risk building work.
4. Home Office: Guide for persons with fire-safety duties, September 2023, sections 13 and 18. England; duties depend on control and role. No universal visit interval is claimed.
5. GOV.UK: Company and accounting records, undated. UK limited companies. Records support the questions, not an accounting-policy or valuation conclusion.
6. Home Office: Section 156 responsibilities, updated Oct 2023. England examples: premises and roles covered by the Fire Safety Order. No reform timetable is asserted.
7. Ranger Fire and Security: McGoff & Vickers acquisition announcement, March 2025. Completed by the announcement, not independently proved to have completed on that day. Mixed fire/security services in North-West England; stated intentions are not later outcome findings.
8. Design Fire Consultants: Employee ownership announcement, December 2024. UK fire engineering consultancy; transition reported in December 2024, exact completion day not stated.
9. Marlowe plc: Annual Report and Financial Statements 2024, note 12, printed page 93. Accounts authorised August 2024; separate publication day not established. Records acquisition of all Victory Fire Limited equity in April 2023 and £2.0 million post-completion revenue in the year ended March 2024. Smaller-business scale is an inference from that measure, not an exact business-model match, price comparison or certification-continuity finding.

Checked Oct 2026. We review every guide after the Autumn Budget in October 2026. The 2027 date is the edition, not a new legal deadline. Take legal, accounting and technical advice on your transaction.

The example. Fenmere Fire Protection is invented, not a Reads client or a real sale. All its figures are teaching assumptions, including the replacement cost and three-times value calculation. The example's visit count is a contract assumption, not a required frequency. The images are illustrative.

Bring the question you cannot answer



Use your scorecard to show what is clear and what still needs evidence. Register as a buyer for a free first conversation, with no obligation to go further.

Register as a buyer

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