

FREE GUIDE · 2026 · 5 PAGES · 2 MIN READ

The 24 Questions Every UK Accountancy Practice Should Ask Their Cloud Provider

A practical checklist for practice owners, partners and practice managers evaluating cloud desktop providers.

Print it. Take it to every demo. Compare answers.

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Why this checklist exists

It is 9pm on 31st January. Your last clients' returns need to be filed by midnight. Your hosted desktop has just slowed to a crawl because too many practices on your provider's shared server are trying to file at the same time. You cannot call your IT provider — they closed at 5pm.

This is the worst time to discover the difference between a good cloud desktop provider and a poor one.

Every provider you contact will sound broadly similar in their sales pitch. **"Secure. Reliable. Trusted. Specialist for accountants."** Most are not lying — but most are not telling you the whole truth either. The real differences only become visible at the moments that matter most: filing season, ransomware incidents, software updates, support calls at 8pm.

This guide gives you 24 specific questions to ask any cloud desktop provider before you sign with them. **How they answer — confidently and specifically, or vaguely and defensively — will tell you more than any sales presentation.**

How to use this guide

Print pages 3 and 4. Take them to every cloud desktop demo you book.

Ask each question directly. Watch for specific answers — versus vague, deflecting ones.

Compare across providers. The differences will be striking.

If a provider hesitates on more than three questions, walk away.

"Working with iKore has transformed the way our practice operates. Their team is responsive, knowledgeable, and understands the pressures of deadlines and compliance."

— Kamp Accountants

This guide was written by iKore — a UK specialist hosted desktop provider focused on accountancy practices. On page 5 you will find our own answers to the most important questions, so you can compare us against any other provider you are considering.

Infrastructure and security

Architecture and performance

1. Is my practice on its own dedicated server, or sharing one with other businesses?
2. If shared, how exactly are other businesses kept separate from mine?
3. Where in the UK are your data centres located?
4. How do you make sure my system stays fast during filing season?
5. What internet speed do you recommend for my office?
6. Will my staff notice any performance difference compared to a local PC?

Security and access

7. Is my practice on its own private network, separated from all other clients?
8. How many layers of security sit between the internet and my data?
9. Is multi-factor authentication (MFA) turned on for everyone by default?
10. Are you Cyber Essentials Plus certified? Can I see your current certificate?

Backup and recovery

11. How often are backups taken, and how long are they kept?
12. Are backups stored separately from my live data, so ransomware cannot reach them?
13. When did you last actually test restoring a backup? What was the result?

Service and commercial

Data control and ownership

- 14. My practice is the data controller under GDPR. Will you sign a written Data Processing Agreement with me?
- 15. If I decide to leave you for another provider, what happens to my data and how is it returned?

Software support

- 16. Can you confirm my practice software (IRIS, TaxCalc, Sage, etc.) will run smoothly on your platform?
- 17. Who will install and update my accountancy software when new versions are released?
- 18. Are software updates done outside working hours, or do they disrupt my staff during the day?

Migration and transition

- 19. How will you migrate my existing data and software without disrupting my practice?
- 20. What happens if something goes wrong during migration — what is the fallback plan?
- 21. How long does a typical migration take from start to finish?

Commercial and operational

- 22. What are your support hours, and who actually answers when I call?
- 23. Can I speak to two of your existing accountancy clients for references?
- 24. What is the minimum contract term, and what happens if I want to leave early?

What a good answer sound like

Specific. "Our data centres are in London and Slough" — not "in the UK somewhere."

Confident. The person should know the answer without checking.

Documented. They should be willing to put it in writing — including in your contract.

Honest. A good provider will tell you what they do not do, not just what they do.

OUR ANSWERS

How iKore answers the most important questions

So you can compare us against any other provider — here is how we answer the questions that matter most to UK accountancy practices.

→ **Your own dedicated server. Never shared.**

Every accountancy practice on iKore Cloud operates on its own dedicated server. You are not sharing computing power, memory or disk space with another business. When January comes, no other practice is competing with you for resources.

→ **Your own private network.**

Your practice operates within its own isolated network. Your traffic, your data, your services — completely separated from every other client at the network level. Real separation, not just a promise.

→ **Multiple layers of security.**

Layered protection between the internet and your data. Even if one layer is compromised, others stand between an attacker and your client information. The same defence-in-depth principle banks use.

→ **Built for accountancy software.**

Our existing clients run IRIS, TaxCalc and Sage on iKore Cloud every day. We know what these applications need to run smoothly, and we configure your environment around them.

→ **Partner-led support. Real humans answer.**

Our support hours run 8am to 9pm Monday to Friday. When you call, you reach the partners who designed the platform — not a tier-one helpdesk reading from a script.

See iKore Cloud in 20 minutes

Bring this checklist. We will answer every question.

ikore.co.uk/hosted-desktop-for-accountants

Or call 0203 393 1780 — a partner will answer

iKore Limited

124 Middleton Road, Morden, Surrey, SM4 6RW

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