

AI recommended one firm and cited another business

Three checked examples from 24 retained answers

An AI answer can carry useful, supported details and still need checking. One answer cited another practice for a claim about a recommended accountant. Another relayed a published fee with useful caveats. A third described a firm differently from its own disclosure.

What the comparison answers contained

21 of 36 Numerical paid fee or range

23 of 36 Named individual in a professional role

30 of 36 Phone number or email address

Presence is not correctness. These are the first three recommendations in each of 12 comparison answers. Repeated firms count each time; the sample is not representative of UK businesses or AI answers.

SCOPE

Eight questions, fixed before collection, covered accountants and pension advisers in Leeds and Manchester. One successful answer per question was retained from each of ChatGPT, Perplexity and Gemini on 5 October 2026. The complete set contains 24 answers and 72 business appearances, not 72 unique firms.

HOW TO READ THESE EXTRACTS

Case letters match the retained evidence: A is the supported fee, B the citation mismatch, and C the disclosure mismatch. Business names, addresses, individual names, fee amounts and identifying links are withheld. Square brackets mark replacements within excerpts; other quoted words are retained exactly. Paraphrases are labelled. Names and links are removed, so these extracts do not support a complete independent source check. Distinctive details may still identify a firm; named originals are held privately.

Example source pages were rechecked on 6 October 2026. This is Answari's own research, not independent validation.

The source belonged to another practice

QUESTION SUMMARY

Which three accountants should a small limited company in Leeds consider for annual accounts and corporation tax?

RETAINED ANSWER EXCERPT

“Broader commercial advice, including director salary vs. dividend optimization and tax mitigation strategies.”

CITATION OBSERVATION

The source marker beside that sentence named a different accountancy practice. Its link opened that other practice's page about its own services for Leeds companies. Two other markers in the recommendation did link to the recommended firm's website.

SOURCE EXCERPT WITH NAMES REMOVED

“[Cited practice] is a trading name of [different company].”

SOURCE COMPARISON - PARAPHRASE

The cited page concerns another business. The recommended firm's own pages list accounts, corporation tax and tax planning, but the limited pages inspected did not settle the particular salary and dividend service described. Separately, its current Leeds contact address differs from the road stated in the answer.

SUPPORTED CONCLUSION

That citation does not establish the service claim about the recommended firm. The address also differs from the current contact page. Neither observation shows that the firm lacks the service or is a poor choice.

Evidence reference B: retained answer, citation-label and link records; recommended firm's SME and contact pages; other practice's Leeds service page. Original collection: 5 October. Source recheck: 6 October 2026. We do not infer the cause of either discrepancy.

A published fee held up

QUESTION SUMMARY

Compare three accountants for a small limited company in Leeds: cost, who handles the work and how to contact them, with sources and unavailable information stated.

RETAINED ANSWER EXCERPT WITH NAME REMOVED

“It does not clearly state that [named professional] personally handles every new client's work, so I would confirm who your day-to-day accountant would be.”

RETAINED ANSWER CAVEAT

“I haven't treated the advertised figures as guaranteed quotes for your company.”

SOURCE EXCERPT WITH IDENTIFIERS REMOVED

“Typical fee: [range withheld] per month, fixed.”

SOURCE COMPARISON - PARAPHRASE

The own-site service page supports the stated monthly range and five package inclusions: annual accounts, corporation tax, confirmation statement, one-director payroll and self-assessment. More complex circumstances can cost more. Its description of personal review and a usual named accountant does not guarantee who would perform each task for a new client. The own-site contact page matches the answer's phone and email.

SUPPORTED CONCLUSION

The answer relayed the published fee and scope, provided matching contact details and preserved a useful assignment caveat. This verifies correspondence with the website, not the price a particular client would pay or actual service delivery.

Evidence reference A: retained answer and links; firm's service and contact pages. Original collection: 5 October. Source recheck: 6 October 2026. Fee amounts and contact details are withheld to reduce identification.

The description differed from the firm's disclosure

QUESTION SUMMARY

Which three financial advisers should someone consider for pension options in Manchester, and why?

RETAINED ANSWER EXCERPT

“three well-regarded independent firms”

SCOPE OF THE WORDING

The opening sentence described all three recommendations together. Firm C was one of them. This example makes no finding about the other two firms.

FIRM'S OWN DISCLOSURE - PARAPHRASE

The firm's website says it represents a single group and advises solely on that group's wealth management products and services.

SUPPORTED CONCLUSION

The answer's collective description differs from the firm's own stated position. A buyer could take a different view of the service from the AI wording. This is an observation about the answer, not evidence of poor advice or any regulatory breach.

CITATION LIMIT

The opening paragraph had a grouped source marker. The retained record does not identify every member of that group. We therefore do not infer where the word “independent” came from.

Evidence reference C: retained answer and citation records; firm's own website disclosure. Original collection: 5 October. Source recheck: 6 October 2026. The group and firm are unnamed, but the substance of the disclosure may still make them traceable.

What was counted and what was not

FEES

A number attributed to the firm's paid service counted: a range, percentage, starting price or qualified estimate. Free first meetings, asset minimums and general market benchmarks did not. This records presence, not an accurate or tailored quote.

PEOPLE

The answer had to identify an individual in a professional role connected with the service. A first name can qualify when the answer explicitly identifies that role. A name appearing only through client testimonials, with no explicit professional role, did not. A named professional is not necessarily the person assigned to a new client.

PRE-PUBLICATION CLARIFICATION

The original pass counted 24 named professionals. A second coding pass found one ambiguous testimonial-only name. A further review applied the explicit-role rule consistently and excluded that appearance, giving 23. The original records are preserved. Fee and contact totals did not change.

CONTACT AND SECTOR COUNTS

A phone number or email counted; a website link, form or masked email alone did not. In the comparison answers, numerical fees appeared in 11 of 18 accountancy appearances and 10 of 18 financial-adviser appearances. These are separate descriptions, not a sector ranking.

METHOD LIMITS

Product modes differed. Temporary or incognito chats do not establish the absence of account or location effects. Four first attempts in Gemini failed and were retried once under the protocol. We retained the errors and successful answers. Company statements are not independent verification of credentials. Page readers may serve cached content and grouped sources may be incomplete. The three cases were selected to illustrate different findings, not to estimate frequency.

One date, two cities and two sectors cannot establish an error rate, national picture, product ranking, causal effect or impact on enquiries. No firm was contacted.

Research and corrections: answari.co.uk · hello@answari.co.uk

Please cite Answari, answers collected 5 October 2026, and preserve the sample and presence-not-accuracy caveats.