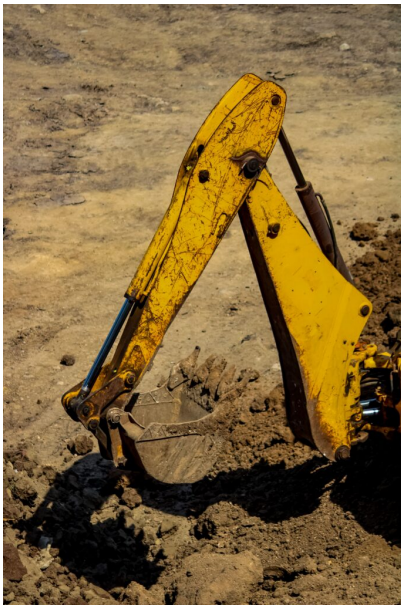


Reliability Trumps Price: 86% of UK Contractors Would Pay a Premium for Reliable Equipment Hire, and 6 in 10 are Ready to Switch to Get it

3 hours ago



UK construction firms would be willing to pay 13% more, on average, for an access equipment hire supplier they can rely on, as reliability overtakes price as the deciding factor in winning their business.

Asked how much more they would pay for a supplier that delivered a consistent, reliable service and was easy to deal with, 86% of construction professionals said they would pay a premium, with the average contractor willing to pay 13% more on hire rates. Just one in seven (13%) would pay nothing extra.

At the same time, nearly six in ten (58%) said they are likely to switch their primary or sole access hire supplier in the next 12 months because of service issues. Reliability, in short, has become the thing that wins and loses customers.

That is the headline finding from new Censuswide research commissioned by Horizon Platforms, the powered access hire specialist, which surveyed 300 UK construction planning and management professionals in May 2026 on the true cost of equipment hire failures [1].

Kelly Burgess, Head of Hire at [Horizon Platforms](#), said: "For years this industry has competed almost entirely on price, on the assumption that contractors will always take the cheapest quote. This research says this is changing. Contractors have been burned too many times and just want to know they will get kit on time and in good working order. They are telling us, clearly, that they will pay a bit more to guarantee a

reliable supplier that delivers and focuses on their needs.”

Why reliability has become a dealbreaker

The appetite for a supplier that simply turns up and works is being driven by how much unreliable hire now costs. According to the research:

- The average access equipment hire failure costs a contractor £6,343 once idle labour, re-hire, overtime, rebooked subcontractors and penalties are added up
- 95% of construction managers had at least one project knocked off schedule by a hire failure in the last 12 months, with an average of 2.3 projects each
- Over the last three years, 72% of firms have been hit with contractual penalties because of a hire failure, 71% have faced cost-recovery claims and 57% have paid liquidated damages

With one in six MEWP hires failing on a typical site, the cost of getting it wrong is exactly what contractors are now willing to pay to avoid.

Buying on reliability, not just price

To help contractors weigh suppliers on more than headline rate, Horizon Platforms has launched a free Cost of Poor Hire Calculator, letting construction managers compare two access equipment suppliers side by side on hire rates, breakdowns, downtime and rehires, at calculator.horizonplatforms.co.uk.

Kelly added: “The lesson from this data is to look at the total cost of hire, not the day rate. The cheapest hire is almost never the cheapest job. Unfortunately for contractors, cheap rates tend to come with poor service. Contractors clearly already know that. That’s why they are ready to pay for reliability and certainty. The question is which suppliers are ready to deliver it. We certainly are!”