

UK Testing, Inspection and Certification

Market and M&A Report

Q2 2026



ASCENT
TARGET

A highly investable sector

The Testing, Inspection and Certification sector has the characteristics of a highly attractive market: non-discretionary demand, fragmented supply, technical barriers to entry, long term contracts (recurring revenue), and multiple routes to scale through acquisition, cross-sell and technology.

This combination has driven sustained interest from private equity investors, who are increasingly targeting specialist niches within the sector where these characteristics are most pronounced. In the UK, this has led to a wave of platform investments across areas such as built environment compliance, environmental testing, certification and risk management, typically followed by active buy-and-build strategies.

Investors are not only attracted to the resilience and visibility of earnings, but also the opportunity to professionalise operations, expand service lines, and leverage technology to enhance efficiency and customer retention. As a result, the sector continues to consolidate, with well-positioned businesses commanding premium valuations where they demonstrate strong accreditation, recurring revenue and defensible market positions.

The UK TIC market was valued at c.

£19bn

Growing at a CAGR of 4.2% between 2025 and 2030

Key themes underpinning M&A



Mission-critical, non-discretionary demand

Demand is underpinned by regulation, safety requirements and mandatory standards, making services essential rather than optional. This creates highly resilient revenue streams, with activity driven by compliance cycles, audits and regulatory change rather than economic sentiment.



Fragmented with consolidation opportunities

The sector remains highly fragmented, particularly at the SME level, with many niche providers operating in regional or specialist markets. This creates a clear opportunity to build scaled platforms through acquisition, geographic expansion and service-line integration.



Technology increasingly embedded in service

The sector is evolving from traditional, labour intensive services towards more technology-enabled delivery models. Digital reporting, data capture, workflow tools and compliance platforms are improving efficiency, strengthening customer relationships and creating additional differentiation. However, the sector remains defensible to AI due to in-person technical delivery.



Technical capability and accreditations

Barriers to entry are driven by specialist expertise, accreditation requirements and proven track records. Businesses with certifications, strong quality systems and deep technical capability are difficult to replicate and therefore command higher strategic value.

M&A Activity and Investor Momentum

M&A activity in the UK Testing, Inspection and Certification and (TIC) sector has been strong and sustained, driven by its attractive fundamentals and clear consolidation opportunity. Investment has largely focused on backing platform businesses in specialist niches, including built environment compliance, environmental services, certification, and scientific testing.

Recent transactions illustrate this trend, with investments in businesses such as Helix, HSL Compliance, Survey Solutions, Phenna Group and CTS Group, alongside larger platform deals including Amtivo and Alcumus. These transactions highlight a consistent strategy of acquiring high-quality, technically defensible businesses with strong recurring revenue and using them as a base for buy-and-build growth.

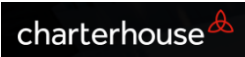
Activity spans both the mid-market and larger end of the spectrum, with continued evidence of platforms scaling rapidly through multiple acquisitions. The acquisition of Element Materials Technology, a global TIC leader, demonstrates the ability for businesses in the sector to reach significant scale and attract substantial capital at exit.

"M&A criteria from our parent company, Langcliffe, shows that mainland European and North American companies are interested to acquire in the UK TIC market. For example, this includes a Swedish PE-backed firm with strong interest in testing and inspection services for the wastewater sector."

(more details on page 6)

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Since 2022, there have been numerous notable transactions, including both trade and financial sponsor-led investments in small and mid-sized practices. Below is a selection of deals in the TIC sector involving private equity.

Date	Investor	Target	Target headline
Mar-26	 LDC	 FRANKHAM GROUP	Provides services spanning fire and building compliance, surveying and project management, engineering and design.
Dec 25	 QUEEN'S PARK EQUITY	 Helix International Group	A multi-faceted group providing a range of risk, safety and compliance services for the built environment sector.
Oct-25	 WARREN EQUITY PARTNERS	 obsequio group	Provider of fire safety, water hygiene, security, asbestos, energy, and environmental compliance services. (Exit for Beech Tree Private Equity).
Mar 25	 cbpe	 Tetra	Provides advice and training to managing agents and property owners across health & safety, fire, building safety, water and asbestos.
Feb 25	 IK Partners	 HSL Compliance	Provides a range of services across water hygiene, water treatment and other compliance activities.
May 24	 LDC	 Integrated Doorsets	Provides testing and inspection services for fire doors.
Jan 24	 averroes capital	 Glacier Energy	Provider of products, testing services and engineered solutions for energy and industrial markets.
Dec 23	 Bridgepoint Group	 Fera	Provider of laboratory, assurance, research, proficiency testing and data services across agriculture, food and environment.
Aug 22	 Oakley Capital	 CTS A PHENNA GROUP COMPANY	Provider of testing and inspection services, focused on the infrastructure market.
Jul 22	 H2 Equity Partners	 motive	Rents, certifies, inspects and sells winches and other back-deck equipment used in offshore energy infrastructure.
Jul 22	 TEMASEK	 element	Providers of testing, inspection, and certification services for in advanced industrial supply chains.
Jul 22	 charterhouse	 AMTIVO	Provider of accredited certification and technology-driven business support services.
Feb 22	 Apax	 Alcumus Safer, Healthier, Stronger	Provides risk management, EHS, ESG and supply-chain compliance software and services to enterprises and contractors.

What are acquirers looking for?

Buyer and Investor Intelligence from our parent company, Langcliffe, indicates that most active acquirers are targeting profitable, lower mid-market businesses (£250k–£1m+ EBITDA) that operate in highly regulated, technically specialised niches such as fire safety, inspection, environmental monitoring, and infrastructure services.

The strongest demand is for service-led businesses with recurring maintenance, testing, or compliance revenues, particularly those with regional density, established management teams, and exposure to critical infrastructure or regulated end markets.

Financial Profile for targets

- EBITDA: £250k–£500k → bolt-ons / early consolidation. £1m+ → platform-quality or scaled regional players
- Margin expectations emerging: 5%+ minimum (services-heavy models), 20%+ preferred (fire / compliance / higher-value niches)
- Strong preference for established management teams for platform investments (or not purely owner-reliant if a bolt-on)
- Repeat / contracted revenue

Contact us directly for more intelligence about acquirers and acquisition opportunities in the sector.

Find out more

If you are an operator, advisor, acquirer or investor and want to learn more about the UK TIC sector in terms of what the market looks like today for attainable assets, valuations and M&A activity, we would welcome a discussion.

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About Us

Ascent Target is an M&A deal origination firm within the Langcliffe Group, Europe's leading buy-side deal origination specialist. Established in 2015 and acquired by Langcliffe in 2024, Ascent has a unique service supporting private equity firms, M&A advisors and acquisitive corporates in buy-side and sell-side deal origination.

