

5. Business names

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bira legal in-house team

We can help with all your commercial and general legal enquiries, as well as product sourcing and industry-specific advice.

What you need to know

The Secretary of State currently has control over the name you choose for your business and regulates disclosure of business ownership. This means they dictate what and how you must tell others about the ownership of the business.

The Companies Act 2006 is the main piece of legislation affecting companies directly.

You have to display on the premises and on certain documents associated with the business details of the names and addresses of the owners of that business. The law applies to all individuals, partnerships and companies that trade in a name differing from the true name of the owners of the company. In most cases it will be clear that the trade name and the name of the owner(s) are different. However, not all instances will be so apparent, as for example, in the following:

Name of Owner(s)

William Jones

William Jones &
Peter Brown

ABC Foods (Gloucester) Ltd.

Might Trade As

William Jones Bakery
The Cake Shop
The Village Stores

Jones Bakery
Browns Bakery
Jones & Brown
Quality Bakers

ABC Foods
ABC Foods Limited
The Lion and Fiddle Hotel

In each of these examples the owner would have to comply with the requirements of the Act.

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What Information must be displayed?

- The name of the owner or each owner
- An address within Great Britain at which documents could be served, if necessary.
- The address of each business is required and may be, for example, a business address, a private address, a registered office, etc.

Where must the Information be displayed?

- Business letters
 - Written orders for the supply of goods or services
 - Invoices and receipts issued in the course of business
 - Written demands for payment of debts arising in the course of business
- On any premises where the business is carried out and to which customers have access. The information must be displayed prominently so that it can be read easily. (In large premises, it may be necessary to display this information at more than one place.)

Additional Requirements

The information relating the name and address of the owners must be given immediately in writing to anyone who requests the information and with whom anything is done or discussed in the course of the business.

Further Information

Further information and advice can be obtained from the Local Trading Standards Department
www.tradingstandards.gov.uk

Companies House can also provide information
www.companieshouse.gov.uk