



New Companies House powers come into force

New powers for Companies House based on the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023 (ECCT Act) came into force on 4 March 2024.

The new measures allow Companies House to combat the criminal acts and money laundering being carried by criminals abusing the company registration system. These abuses have been well documented in the news, with many examples of individuals and businesses receiving correspondence and demands addressed to companies that they have no knowledge of.

Annual confirmation statements affected

One of the new measures requires those setting up new companies to confirm the lawful purpose of forming a company during the incorporation process.

However, the annual confirmation statement will also now require confirmation each year that the company's intended future activities will be lawful. Where you complete your own confirmation statement, you will see this option included now.

Where we complete the confirmation statement on your behalf, then this will be something that the directors will first need to confirm to us before we complete the return.

All companies will now need to provide a Registered Email Address when incorporating or as part of their next confirmation statement, whichever comes first.

Greater information powers

The new powers include being able to query information and request supporting evidence. Companies House will be able to make stronger checks on company names and will have greater ability to tackle and remove factually inaccurate information.

No more use of PO Boxes

Under the new measures, it will no longer be possible for a company to use a PO Box as their registered office address.

It should be noted that Companies House will be actively checking Registered Offices on an ongoing basis and failure to respond quickly to their enquiries could result in fines or suspension from the register. If you are concerned at all about communication you receive from Companies House, please contact us as soon as possible to advise you.

Sharing of data

The ECCT Act now allows Companies House the ability to share data with other government departments and law enforcement agencies, which will help them in combating criminal activity.

As a result of the additional work that the new measures involve, Companies House are increasing their fees with effect from 1 May 2024.

The new measures are accompanied by new criminal offences and civil penalties to help with their enforcement. The ECCT Act also introduces other measures, including identity verification and accounts reform, but these will not be introduced until a later date.

If you need help with a company incorporation or any company secretarial tasks, please do not hesitate to contact us.