

## **WARNING: Officer details at Companies House**

Identity theft is a growing concern to all and recently it has been confirmed by a leading credit reference agency that officer information published by Companies House can be used by criminals for this purpose.

Company law requires the registrar to receive, store and publish information provided to him by limited companies. One aspect of this is the disclosure of officer information via the public register.

Officer information is not only held whilst in office but throughout the life of the Company and for a period of 20 years following its dissolution. This information is easily accessible to anybody via the internet and includes:

- The officers name
- The officers occupation
- The officers nationality
- The officers service address
- The officers date of birth \*

*\* Since 10 October 2015 Companies House have removed the 'day' of birth from the public register, only showing the month and year of birth, e.g. May 1980. However, any document registered prior to 10 October 2015 will still show the full date of birth. This is because Parliament decided it would not be practical for the law to be applied retrospectively, given Companies House hold over 170 million records on UK companies.*

This is more than enough information for those intent on causing harm to begin creating a false identity.

The Government has no current plans to bring forward proposals to reduce the period that Companies House retains records of dissolved companies. Furthermore, following dissolution of a Company it is not possible to change any of the records held by Companies House.

Considering this information, there are two easy steps officers can take to protect their identity:

1. Company officers are required to provide a service address for display on the public record. Where possible, officers should use an address that is not their residential address (e.g. Registered Office). If an officer chooses to use their usual residential address as their service address, they are entitled to do so but this means their usual residential address will be publicly available.
2. Where the Companies House records were filed before 10 October 2015, Officers should consider 'updating' their details as this should result in their 'day' of birth being removed from the public register.

Please note that should your clients require any confidential advice regarding any insolvency matter they are welcome to contact one of our Partners. Initial advice is provided free of charge and without obligation. Also, if you or any of your colleagues require any clarification regarding insolvency law or procedure, please do not hesitate to contact us.