

From the Chief Executive and Registrar of Companies

Mr Martin Newland
The Editor
Daily Telegraph
1 Canada Square
Canary Wharf
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4 October 2005

Dear Sir,

While welcoming Roland Gribben's piece, drawing attention to the problem of corporate identity fraud, I must point out that it is wrong to say the Metropolitan Police have met resistance at Companies House over any aspect of anti-fraud operations. We have successfully developed a joint approach to combating company identity fraud, and as a result of this, we jointly launched Operation Sterling in May of this year.

Companies House has developed a three-point plan of preventative measures which help companies to protect themselves against potential fraud, while keeping the advantages of the current registration system. The Metropolitan Police endorse this plan:

- Step 1: Electronic filing of documents. All electronic filings are security protected
- Step 2: PROOF. Companies can elect to file certain information (Change of Registered Office, Appointment or termination of company officer) electronically and Companies House will send any paper documents received to the company and not place them on the public record.
- Step 3: Monitor. This service is attached to the on-line search service, Companies House Direct, and alerts companies to any changes to their public record and can also provide an electronic copy of any document filed on their record.

Companies House has also provided on site facilities for Metropolitan Police officers to investigate fraudulent filing. As part of this collaborative monitoring and investigation of changes to the company record, the Metropolitan Police alert credit reference agencies to any potentially fraudulent changes which they think anyone extending lines of credit needs to be aware of. These are the 114 cases referred to in your article.

We are now jointly reviewing progress made since Operation Sterling was launched and will be considering the way forward in tackling this type of crime. Companies House is considering whether to introduce new measures, such as accepting the secure electronic versions only of forms that can be used to commit fraud.

We need to keep the potential for fraudsters to use the companies register to a minimum. To do this we need companies to co-operate by protecting themselves through the three-point plan.

Given the importance of this message we ask that you draw your readers attention to this.

Yours faithfully
Claire Clancy



Companies House
— for the record —

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