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Companies House identity checks: first directors fined as the transition year ends

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Three directors were fined in September 2026 for identity verification offences. The 12-month transition for existing directors, which began on 18 November 2025, is almost over.

Country reference

- Country: United Kingdom (Wave 1 expansion country)
- Authorities: Companies House; Insolvency Service
- Topic: Identity verification for directors and people with significant control (PSCs)
- Key date: Requirement in force 18 November 2025; first prosecutions 16 September 2026
- Law: Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023; Companies Act 2006

The rule

- Since 18 November 2025, new directors must verify their identity before they act, and new companies must give each director's personal code on incorporation.
- Existing directors give their Companies House personal code with the company's next confirmation statement, during a 12-month transition. A director of several companies does this for each one.
- People with significant control have a 14-day window. If they are also a director, it starts the day after the confirmation statement date. If not, it is the first 14 days of their birth month.
- Overseas companies with a UK establishment must confirm that all directors are verified by the anniversary of the establishment's registration.
- Companies House says the transition covers more than 7 million people.

What happened in september

On 16 September 2026 three directors were fined at City of London Magistrates' Court in the first court action by the Insolvency Service for these offences. Two had acted as directors while unverified. The third had verified, but failed to prevent a fellow director from acting while unverified. Fines ranged from £80 to £307, plus costs and a surcharge.

What comes next

- No earlier than the end of 2026: the transition completes and Companies House begins compliance action against unverified directors and PSCs.
- No earlier than November 2027: anyone filing documents must be verified, and agents filing for companies must be registered Authorised Corporate Service Providers.
- April 2028: all accounts must be filed through commercial software. Small and micro companies must file a profit and loss account, and abridged accounts end.
- Companies House says these dates depend on parliamentary time.

How to verify

- Online through Companies House, free of charge.
- Or through an Authorised Corporate Service Provider, such as a registered accountant or law firm.

What to do now

- List every director and PSC of each UK company, including those who live abroad, and record whether each has a personal code.
- Check the next confirmation statement date for each company. The code is needed with that filing.
- Remember that verified directors can also be liable if they let an unverified colleague act.

Our take

The fines were small, but the point was made: the offence is being prosecuted, and co-directors share the exposure. Groups in the Gulf with UK subsidiaries often have non-resident directors who have not engaged with the process. Those are the cases to close before year end.

Sources

- Insolvency Service and Companies House: Directors warned after first prosecutions (17 September 2026)
- Companies House: When you need to verify your identity
- Companies House: Outline transition plan (updated 5 August 2026)

Important. This summary is for general information and is not legal, tax or financial advice. It is based on public UK government publications and may be incomplete or out of date. The official publications prevail; check the official source before acting.

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