

Can my bankruptcy be cancelled?

Information on annulment of a
bankruptcy order



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This leaflet covers the questions you are most likely to want answered on how the court may annul (cancel) your bankruptcy order:

What is the annulment of a bankruptcy order?

When can I apply for an annulment?

How do I apply for an annulment?

If I apply for an annulment, do I have to keep my appointment to see the Official Receiver?

Can I stop the bankruptcy order being advertised?

What is the effect of the annulment of a bankruptcy order?

What is “discharge from bankruptcy”?

How do I get more information?

What is the annulment of a bankruptcy order?

It is a procedure that cancels your bankruptcy order. An order of annulment can only be made by the court.

When can I apply for an annulment?

You can apply for an annulment at any time if:

- the bankruptcy order **should not have been made**, for example because the proper steps were not taken when obtaining the order; or

- all your bankruptcy debts and the fees and expenses of the bankruptcy proceedings have been either **paid in full or guaranteed** to the satisfaction of the court; or
- you have reached an agreement called an **“individual voluntary arrangement”** with your creditors to repay all or part of your debts. There is more information about voluntary arrangements in our “Guide to Bankruptcy” (see page 9 of this leaflet).

How do I apply for an annulment?

If the bankruptcy order should not have been made (application under section 282(1)(a) of the Insolvency Act 1986), these are the steps:

- Get an application form from the court dealing with your bankruptcy.
- Make an affidavit (a written statement of the relevant facts that is sworn on oath or affirmed, usually before a solicitor) or a witness statement verified by a statement of truth saying why the bankruptcy order should not have been made.
- Send or take to the court the completed form and affidavit or the witness statement verified by a statement of truth. The court will then set a date to hear your application, and you should attend the hearing.

- **Before the hearing:** you must notify the Official Receiver, the person who petitioned for your bankruptcy and the trustee (if an insolvency practitioner has been appointed as trustee in place of the Official Receiver) of the date, time and place of the hearing. You should do this in enough time for them to attend the hearing. At the same time, you should send each of them copies of your application form and affidavit or a witness statement verified by a statement of truth.
- **Soon after the hearing:** the fees and expenses of bankruptcy will have to be paid. The court will decide who should pay them when it considers your application.

If all the bankruptcy debts and fees and expenses have been paid, or security has been given (application under section 282(1)(b) of the Insolvency Act 1986), these are the steps:

- Get an application form from the court dealing with your bankruptcy.
- Make an affidavit or a witness statement verified by a statement of truth setting out details of your assets and debts at the date of the bankruptcy order and details of your payments made or secured.
- Send or take the form and affidavit or the witness statement verified by a statement of truth to the court. The court will then set a date to hear your application, which you should attend.

- You must notify the Official Receiver and the trustee of the date, time and place of the hearing. You should do this at least 28 days before the hearing. You should also send copies of your application form and affidavit or the witness statement verified by a statement of truth to the Official Receiver and the trustee.
- The Official Receiver or the trustee will send a report to the court to confirm that your debts have been paid or adequate security has been given to creditors. The report will also comment on your conduct in the bankruptcy.

If your creditors have agreed to an individual voluntary arrangement (application under section 261 of the Insolvency Act 1986), these are the steps:

- The insolvency practitioner nominated to deal with your case will call a meeting of your creditors.
- If your creditors agree to your offer to pay them, you can apply to the court for an annulment. This application can be made 28 days after the chairman of the meeting of creditors has reported the results of the meeting to the court.
- The application should be made using the same procedure as applications where the bankruptcy order should not have been made. The only difference is that your affidavit or the witness statement verified by a statement of truth accompanying the application form should state that your creditors have approved a

voluntary arrangement as the grounds on which you are making your application.

If your creditors have agreed to a fast-track voluntary arrangement (application under section 263D of the Insolvency Act 1986), these are the steps:

- When you nominate the Official Receiver to deal with your proposal for a voluntary arrangement, if he (or she) believes that your proposal has a reasonable prospect of being approved and implemented, he will invite creditors to consider it.
- If your creditors agree to your proposal, the Official Receiver will report that decision to court and, 5-7 weeks later, will apply for the bankruptcy order to be annulled.

If I apply for an annulment, do I have to keep my appointment to see the Official Receiver?

Yes. You should go to the Official Receiver's office and provide any information you are asked for. The court might not annul the bankruptcy order until the Official Receiver confirms that you have done so.

Can I stop the bankruptcy order being advertised?

Yes, but you must act immediately. If you have applied, or you think you will be able to apply, for an annulment, you may be able to apply to the court for a "stay of advertisement". But this should be done at

once. You should telephone the court and state that you wish to apply for a stay. You should also inform the Official Receiver that you are making this application.

The Official Receiver must advertise the bankruptcy order in a newspaper and in "The London Gazette" (an official publication which contains legal notices). These actions can only be **stopped by a court order**. Please see the information on pages 5-8 about public records and notifications of your bankruptcy.

What is the effect of the annulment of a bankruptcy order?

You will revert to your pre-bankruptcy status. Disposals of your property by the Official Receiver and the trustee will remain valid and will not be reversed. Any other assets will be returned. You will be liable for any of your debts that have not been paid in the bankruptcy.

The following paragraphs explain what will happen to public records of your bankruptcy:

- **The Insolvency Service's Individual Insolvency Register** - The register can be searched on-line at www.insolvency.gov.uk or in person at your local Official Receiver's office, records all bankruptcies in England and Wales.

If a bankruptcy order is cancelled the record of the order will be removed from the register immediately.

You can get more information on the register from the leaflet “Individual Insolvency Register”.

- **HM Land Registry** - bankruptcy petitions and orders are registered at the Land Charges Department of HM Land Registry. The order of annulment can say that any registration of the petition or order at the Land Charges Department should be cancelled - you should ask the court to include this in the order. The order will also say who should contact the Land Charges Department to ask for cancellation - this will usually be for you to do.

The contact point is:

The Superintendent
Land Charges Department
Plumer House
Tailyour Road
Crownhill
Plymouth PL6 5HY
DX No: 8249 Plymouth (3)

Tel: 01752 636666

If you own property registered in your sole name, a bankruptcy notice (to protect the rights of creditors) and a bankruptcy restriction notice (to prevent dealings with the property) may also have been registered against the title to the property. If the property is registered in joint names, a Form J Restriction (against dealings) may have been registered against the title.

You can apply in writing to the Land Registry office that serves your area to have these entries removed - in the case of a Form J restriction, the Land Registry will have to serve notice on the Official Receiver or the trustee. Please enclose a copy of the order of annulment and, if possible, give the registered title number of the property.

If you do not know the address of the Land Registry serving your area, try your local phone book or contact HM Land Registry Headquarters, 32 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2A 3PH, telephone 020 7917 8888.

- **Credit reference agencies** - the Official Receiver does not send any form of notice to credit reference agencies. The agencies pick up information from other sources such as advertisements of bankruptcies in newspapers, "The London Gazette" and the Register of County Court Judgments.

If no advertisement of your discharge from bankruptcy or the annulment of the bankruptcy order is made, you will need to provide separate information to credit reference agencies to amend their records.

If a stay of advertisement has been granted after the bankruptcy order has been advertised, you will need to provide separate information to credit reference agencies to amend their records.

For further information, a leaflet called “No Credit?” is produced by the Information Commissioner’s Office - telephone 01625 545745 or visit the website at www.dataprotection.gov.uk

- **Notifications** - even if you have obtained a stay of advertisement, the Official Receiver will need to notify the bankruptcy to your creditors, bank, building society and others you have had dealings with. He or she will also notify them if the bankruptcy is annulled

What is “discharge from bankruptcy”?

It is a process that frees you from the restrictions of bankruptcy and releases you from most of the debts you owed at the date the bankruptcy order was made against you. (There is a separate leaflet about discharge from bankruptcy.)

How do I get more information?

This leaflet is for general guidance only. If you have further questions about the procedures involved in obtaining an annulment, you should ask your professional adviser or the trustee handling your bankruptcy.

Please note that The Insolvency Service and Official Receivers cannot provide legal or financial advice. You should seek this from a citizen’s advice bureau, a solicitor, a qualified accountant, an authorised insolvency practitioner or a reputable financial adviser or advice centre.

You can get more information about bankruptcy in the following Insolvency Service publications:

- **Guide To Bankruptcy**
- **When will my bankruptcy end?**
Information on discharge from bankruptcy

This leaflet provides general information only.

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information is accurate, but it is not a full and authoritative statement of the law and you should not rely on it as such. The Insolvency Service cannot accept responsibility for any errors or omissions as a result of negligence or otherwise.

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May 05

URN05-1208