

Why street naming and numbering is important

Local authorities have statutory functions to name roads and allocate house numbers to new dwellings and commercial properties (in some rural areas property names are required). No organisations, for example VOA, Royal Mail or Land Registry nor any council departments other than Street Naming and Numbering (SNN) have the legislative powers to do this.

If a property is not “registered” through the SNN process, the address will not appear on the national address database (NAG), or Royal Mail’s Postcode Address Finder (PAF).

Individuals and developers must not allocate their own house numbers, building or street names independent of the local authority. Not registering a property through the SNN process may lead to difficulty obtaining services such as:

- the emergency and care services
- the ordering of goods and services over the internet
- delivery of mail and goods to the property site, and visitors finding where to go
- refuse collection and recycling
- bank and insurance services
- electoral services - Electoral Registration
- selling of the property

New properties cannot obtain a service connection from a utility company until there has been notification of the registered address from the street naming and numbering department.

The display of property names and numbers helps identify and locate a property. They should be clearly visible, without obstruction from the roadside. This will assist the emergency services (and delivery people) to find the property, especially at night. Vital response time may be saved if the number or name is visible. Make sure that fences or trees aren’t blocking the view of the sign. Signs should be noticeable even when cars and vans park outside. Where you have a property number and use a name, you must display both, the number being prominent.

Local authorities also have powers to re-name roads and re-number properties.

Who should apply?

- Individuals or developers building new dwellings, or commercial, and industrial premises
- Individuals or developers undertaking conversions of residential, commercial, or industrial premises, which will result in the creation of new properties or premises
- Any person who wishes to change the name of their property

When should you apply?

Address allocation (the registering of a unique and logical address), can be obtained once a new build, or conversion of property has received planning approval, before you intend to commence work. The council can contact Royal Mail who will allocate the postcode to the approved address.

If your request involves the naming of new streets, please allow plenty of time to process your application as there is a consultation process to be undertaken with the local Parish, or Town Council.

Once a property is ready to be lived in it will need to be activated, the new address is moved from the Royal Mail's Not Yet Built file to the Postcode Address Finder (PAF®) via <https://www.royalmail.com/find-a-postcode>

Local Authority statutory responsibilities

These enable conformance with SNN legislation, which includes Sections 64 and 65 of the Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847 (for numbering of properties and street naming), Section 21 of the Public Health Act Amendment Act 1907 (for alteration of names of streets), and Sections 17, 18 and 19 of the Public Health Act of 1925. These acts are still in force even though they're over 150 years and 75 years old, respectively.

Local Authorities who deal with SNN have a rigorous set of guidelines to follow, requests to name a street are considered in line with National standard BS7666 and the accompanying Data Entry Conventions, to help prevent streets or houses with similar names being used in the same postal town.

Check if your chosen name appears acceptable

The emergency services in particular need a rapid means of locating a property and therefore a unique street / property name is essential. Names should be easy to spell and easy to pronounce; “made up” names, or names in another language, should not be used. This avoids confusion and, possible variations of spelling when used in external stand-alone databases.

Examples of names not suitable:

- Dunroamin
- Twazabarn
- Upyonda

Nowadays no new property name can start with the word “The”.

Local or informal names that have been used to identify barns or redundant buildings on deeds or any legal documents are not proof of address allocation, they may just be a method used to identify a property within a curtilage of land and are unlikely to be suitable for use in the national address database.

Names must not be similar to, or contain part of, existing property or street names in the geographical area, locality, village or post town. A variation in the suffix (end word) eg “Court / House / Lodge” will not be acceptable. If for example a property named Oak House exists, then Oaktree Cottage would not be accepted as “oak” is already in use. Please check: <https://www.findmyaddress.co.uk/search>

Names that could be construed as rude, obscene or racist, or that would contravene any aspect of a Council’s equal opportunities policy will not be acceptable.

Names must not include a number either in numerical or written format.

Names that could be seen as advertising are not acceptable, eg naming a street, or property after a company or business. If the company does not occupy the property as it is no longer trading, and if there is a positive local association with that company the name may then be suitable.

Where a property is converted from commercial to residential, eg a church or a public house, the property must now be clearly identified as no longer being commercial so that the Dunn Horse Inn could become Old Dunn Horse. Former agricultural buildings eg a piggery or cow byre could become Old Piggery Barn, or Old Cow Byre thus referring to the current use of the building.

Property names may include an appropriate suffix to identify the type of the property, eg

- Barn
- Bungalow
- Bunkhouse
- Chalet
- Cottage
- Croft - house or bungalow
- Hall - a larger than usual property
- House
- Lodge - house or cottage
- Loft - first floor accommodation above a garage or barn

- Mansion - much larger than usual property
- Villa - house or larger bungalow

Names should not replicate the name of a street, a locality, a village, or a post town within the local authority area as these may prove mis-leading, and if the post town or post code were not used when the address was given over the phone to the emergency services, there could be a delay in their response time.

If a chosen street / property name has a Royal connotation (name with any reference to the Royal family, or with the word "Royal"), the consent of the Lord Chamberlain's office must be obtained.

All properties will be addressed to the road which the postal delivery point (mail box) or front door is accessed from.

Data Entry Convention guidance for SNN states: "If a property is already named and numbered and a request is made to remove the number from the official address this must be refused. The SNN Authority (South Lakeland District Council) should use its statutory powers to enforce the display and use of a property number".