

What you need to know about changing your shop signage

Guidance for Businesses: Changing or Erecting Shop Signs, Fascia's, and Advertisements

If you're planning to install or modify signage for your business premises in the UK, it's essential to understand the legal and planning requirements to ensure compliance and avoid penalties.

1. Advertisement Consent and Planning Permission

Most external signs require advertisement consent from your local planning authority. This applies especially to:

- Signs larger than 0.3 square metres
- Illuminated signs of any size
- Signs in conservation areas or on listed buildings

Consent is governed by the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007, which categorise signs into classes that either:

- Require express consent
- Have deemed consent ([subject to conditions](#))
- Are exempt from consent

Even if planning permission isn't needed, all signs must meet five standard conditions:

- Be kept clean and tidy
- Be maintained in a safe condition
- Have the site owner's permission
- Not obscure official signs or create hazards
- Be removed if required by the planning authority

2. Types of Signage and Specific Rules

Different signage types have distinct rules:

- **Fascia signs** (above entrances): Must comply with size and lighting rules
- **Projecting signs**: Need approval to avoid obstructing public pathways
- **Digital or illuminated signs**: Heavily regulated due to safety concerns
- **Window graphics**: May be exempt if small and non-illuminated

3. Health, Safety, and Environmental Considerations

- Signs must not block walkways, fire exits, or traffic signals
- Secure installation is essential—professional fitting is recommended
- Illuminated signs must meet brightness standards to avoid distraction
- Use eco-friendly materials and energy-efficient lighting to align with sustainability goals and local preferences

4. Applying for Consent

To apply for advertisement consent:

- Contact your local planning authority - [Planning Portal](#)
- Submit detailed specifications (size, materials, lighting, location)
- Expect stricter rules in conservation areas or near heritage sites

You can find your local authority via the [Planning Portal](#).

Your local authority will have information on the steps you need to take and the information you will be required to submit including:

- Info to get/collate before applying on the planning portal
- Site map – how to create?
- What you must include on photos e.g a scale bar
- What else to include
- Where to find costs

5. Enforcement and Penalties

Displaying signage without proper consent is a criminal offence. Authorities may:

- Issue enforcement notices
- Require removal
- Impose fines for non-compliance

We would always recommend you consult your Local Authority before installing new or alternative signage.

Detailed Government guidance is available here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/11499/326679.pdf

Better Business for All works to boost business productivity and growth by making it easier for businesses to access the regulatory support they need from Local Authorities such as Trading Standards, Environmental Health, Licensing, and others. BBfA also works with regulators to help them better understand the challenges faced by businesses.

I hope this guidance has been useful, further business support information can be found here: [Better Business For All | Hertfordshire Futures](#)