



Insolvency Act 1986

1986 CHAPTER 45

PART IX

BANKRUPTCY

CHAPTER VI

BANKRUPTCY OFFENCES

Preliminary

350 Scheme of this Chapter.

- (1) Subject to section 360(3) below, this Chapter applies [^{F1}—
 - (a) where an adjudicator has made a bankruptcy order as a result of a bankruptcy application, or
 - (b)] where the court has made a bankruptcy order on a bankruptcy petition.
 - (2) This Chapter applies whether or not the bankruptcy order is annulled, but proceedings for an offence under this Chapter shall not be instituted after the annulment.
 - (3) Without prejudice to his liability in respect of a subsequent bankruptcy, the bankrupt is not guilty of an offence under this Chapter in respect of anything done after his discharge; but nothing in this Group of Parts prevents the institution of proceedings against a discharged bankrupt for an offence committed before his discharge.
- [^{F2}(3A) Subsection (3) is without prejudice to any provision of this Chapter which applies to a person in respect of whom a bankruptcy restrictions order is in force.]
- (4) It is not a defence in proceedings for an offence under this Chapter that anything relied on, in whole or in part, as constituting that offence was done outside England and Wales.

Changes to legislation: Insolvency Act 1986, Chapter VI is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 01 June 2024. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details) View outstanding changes

- (5) Proceedings for an offence under this Chapter or under the rules shall not be instituted except by the Secretary of State or by or with the consent of the Director of Public Prosecutions.
- (6) A person guilty of any offence under this Chapter is liable to imprisonment or a fine, or both.

Textual Amendments

- F1** Words in s. 350(1) inserted (6.4.2016) by Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 (c. 24), s. 103(3), **Sch. 19 para. 42**; S.I. 2016/191, art. 2 (with art. 3)
- F2** S. 350(3A) inserted (1.4.2004) by 2002 c. 40, ss. 257(3), 279, Sch. 21 para. 2 (with s. 249(6)); S.I. 2003/2093, **art. 2(2)**, Sch. 2 (subject to arts. 3-8 (as amended by S.I. 2003/2332, art. 2))

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C1** Ss. 349, 350(1)(2)(4)-(6) applied (with modifications) by S.I. 1986/1999, art. 3, **Sch. 1 Pt. II**

351 Definitions.

In the following provisions of this Chapter—

- (a) references to property comprised in the bankrupt's estate or to property possession of which is required to be delivered up to the official receiver or the trustee of the bankrupt's estate include any property which would be such property if a notice in respect of it were given under section 307 (after-acquired property) [^{F3}, section 308] (personal property and effects of bankrupt having more than replacement value) [^{F4} or section 308A (vesting in trustee of certain tenancies)];
- (b) “the initial period” means the period between the [^{F5}making of the bankruptcy application or (as the case may be) the] presentation of the bankruptcy petition and the commencement of the bankruptcy; ^{F6}...
- ^{F6}(c)

Textual Amendments

- F3** Words substituted by Housing Act 1988 (c. 50, SIF 61, 75:1), s. 140(1), **Sch. 17 Pt. I para. 75**
- F4** Words inserted by Housing Act 1988 (c. 50, SIF 61, 75:1), s. 140(1), **Sch. 17 Pt. I para. 75**
- F5** Words in s. 351(b) inserted (6.4.2016) by Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 (c. 24), s. 103(3), **Sch. 19 para. 43(2)**; S.I. 2016/191, art. 2 (with art. 3)
- F6** S. 351(c) and word omitted (6.4.2016) by virtue of Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 (c. 24), s. 103(3), **Sch. 19 para. 43(3)**; S.I. 2016/191, art. 2 (with art. 3)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C2** S. 351 applied with modifications by S.I. 1986/1999, art. 3, **Sch. 1 Pt. II**

352 Defence of innocent intention.

Where in the case of an offence under any provision of this Chapter it is stated that this section applies, a person is not guilty of the offence if he proves that, at the time of the conduct constituting the offence, he had no intent to defraud or to conceal the state of his affairs.

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Wrongdoing by the bankrupt before and after bankruptcy

353 Non-disclosure.

- (1) The bankrupt is guilty of an offence if—
 - (a) he does not to the best of his knowledge and belief disclose all the property comprised in his estate to the official receiver or the trustee, or
 - (b) he does not inform the official receiver or the trustee of any disposal of any property which but for the disposal would be so comprised, stating how, when, to whom and for what consideration the property was disposed of.
- (2) Subsection (1)(b) does not apply to any disposal in the ordinary course of a business carried on by the bankrupt or to any payment of the ordinary expenses of the bankrupt or his family.
- (3) Section 352 applies to this offence.

354 Concealment of property.

- (1) The bankrupt is guilty of an offence if—
 - (a) he does not deliver up possession to the official receiver or trustee, or as the official receiver or trustee may direct, of such part of the property comprised in his estate as is in his possession or under his control and possession of which he is required by law so to deliver up,
 - (b) he conceals any debt due to or from him or conceals any property the value of which is not less than the prescribed amount and possession of which he is required to deliver up to the official receiver or trustee, or
 - (c) in the 12 months before [^{F7}the making of the bankruptcy application or (as the case may be) the presentation of the bankruptcy] petition, or in the initial period, he did anything which would have been an offence under paragraph (b) above if the bankruptcy order had been made immediately before he did it.

Section 352 applies to this offence.

- (2) The bankrupt is guilty of an offence if he removes, or in the initial period removed, any property the value of which was not less than the prescribed amount and possession of which he has or would have been required to deliver up to the official receiver or the trustee.

Section 352 applies to this offence.

- (3) The bankrupt is guilty of an offence if he without reasonable excuse fails, on being required to do so by the official receiver [^{F8}, the trustee] or the court—
 - (a) to account for the loss of any substantial part of his property incurred in the 12 months before [^{F9}the making of the bankruptcy application or (as the case may be) the presentation of the bankruptcy] petition or in the initial period, or
 - (b) to give a satisfactory explanation of the manner in which such a loss was incurred.

Textual Amendments

- F7** Words in s. 354(1)(c) inserted (6.4.2016) by [Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 \(c. 24\)](#), s. 103(3), [Sch. 19 para. 44\(2\)](#); S.I. 2016/191, art. 2 (with art. 3)

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- F8** Words in s. 354(3) inserted (1.4.2004) by 2002 c. 40, ss. 269, 279, Sch. 23 para. 12 (with s. 249(6)); S.I. 2003/2093, art. 2(2), Sch. 2 (subject to arts. 3-8 (as amended by S.I. 2003/2332, art. 2))
- F9** Words in s. 354(3)(a) inserted (6.4.2016) by Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 (c. 24), s. 103(3), Sch. 19 para. 44(3); S.I. 2016/191, art. 2 (with art. 3)

355 Concealment of books and papers; falsification.

- (1) The bankrupt is guilty of an offence if he does not deliver up possession to the official receiver or the trustee, or as the official receiver or trustee may direct, of all books, papers and other records of which he has possession or control and which relate to his estate or his affairs.

Section 352 applies to this offence.

- (2) The bankrupt is guilty of an offence if—
- (a) he prevents, or in the initial period prevented, the production of any books, papers or records relating to his estate or affairs;
 - (b) he conceals destroys, mutilates or falsifies, or causes or permits the concealment, destruction, mutilation or falsification of, any books, papers or other records relating to his estate or affairs;
 - (c) he makes, or causes or permits the making of, any false entries in any book, document or record relating to his estate or affairs; or
 - (d) in the 12 months before [^{F10}the making of the bankruptcy application or (as the case may be) the presentation of the bankruptcy] petition, or in the initial period, he did anything which would have been an offence under paragraph (b) or (c) above if the bankruptcy order had been made before he did it.

Section 352 applies to this offence.

- (3) The bankrupt is guilty of an offence if—
- (a) he disposes of, or alters or makes any omission in, or causes or permits the disposal, altering or making of any omission in, any book, document or record relating to his estate or affairs, or
 - (b) in the 12 months before [^{F11}the making of the bankruptcy application or (as the case may be) the presentation of the bankruptcy] petition, or in the initial period, he did anything which would have been an offence under paragraph (a) if the bankruptcy order had been made before he did it.

Section 352 applies to this offence.

[^{F12}(4) In their application to a trading record subsections (2)(d) and (3)(b) shall have effect as if the reference to 12 months were a reference to two years.

- (5) In subsection (4) “trading record” means a book, document or record which shows or explains the transactions or financial position of a person’s business, including—
- (a) a periodic record of cash paid and received,
 - (b) a statement of periodic stock-taking, and
 - (c) except in the case of goods sold by way of retail trade, a record of goods sold and purchased which identifies the buyer and seller or enables them to be identified.]

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Textual Amendments

- F10** Words in s. 355(2)(d) inserted (6.4.2016) by [Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 \(c. 24\)](#), s. 103(3), [Sch. 19 para. 45\(2\)](#); S.I. 2016/191, art. 2 (with art. 3)
- F11** Words in s. 355(3)(b) inserted (6.4.2016) by [Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 \(c. 24\)](#), s. 103(3), [Sch. 19 para. 45\(3\)](#); S.I. 2016/191, art. 2 (with art. 3)
- F12** S. 355(4)(5) added (1.4.2004) by [2002 c. 40](#), ss. 269, 279, [Sch. 23 para. 13](#) (with s. 249(6)); S.I. 2003/2093, [art. 2\(2\)](#), [Sch. 2](#) (subject to [arts. 3-8](#) (as amended by S.I. 2003/2332, art. 2))

356 False statements.

- (1) The bankrupt is guilty of an offence if he makes or has made any material omission in any statement made under any provision in this Group of Parts and relating to his affairs.

Section 352 applies to this offence.

- (2) The bankrupt is guilty of an offence if—
- (a) knowing or believing that a false debt has been proved by any person under the bankruptcy, he fails to inform the trustee as soon as practicable; or
 - (b) he attempts to account for any part of his property by fictitious losses or expenses; or
 - (c) [^{F13}in connection with any creditors' decision procedure or deemed consent procedure] in the 12 months before [^{F14}the making of the bankruptcy application or (as the case may be) the presentation of the bankruptcy] petition or (whether or not [^{F15}in connection with such a procedure]) at any time in the initial period, he did anything which would have been an offence under paragraph (b) if the bankruptcy order had been made before he did it; or
 - (d) he is, or at any time has been, guilty of any false representation or other fraud for the purpose of obtaining the consent of his creditors, or any of them, to an agreement with reference to his affairs or to his bankruptcy.

Textual Amendments

- F13** Words in s. 356(2)(c) substituted (26.5.2015 for specified purposes, 6.4.2017 for E.W. in so far as not already in force) by [Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015 \(c. 26\)](#), s. 164(1), [Sch. 9 para. 85\(a\)](#); S.I. 2015/1329, reg. 3(d); S.I. 2016/1020, reg. 4(e) (with reg. 5) (as amended by S.I. 2017/363, reg. 3)
- F14** Words in s. 356(2)(c) inserted (6.4.2016) by [Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 \(c. 24\)](#), s. 103(3), [Sch. 19 para. 46](#); S.I. 2016/191, art. 2 (with art. 3)
- F15** Words in s. 356(2)(c) substituted (26.5.2015 for specified purposes, 6.4.2017 for E.W. in so far as not already in force) by virtue of [Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015 \(c. 26\)](#), s. 164(1), [Sch. 9 para. 85\(b\)](#); S.I. 2015/1329, reg. 3(d); S.I. 2016/1020, reg. 4(e) (with reg. 5) (as amended by S.I. 2017/363, reg. 3)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C3** S. 356(2)(d) applied (with modifications) (1.12.1994) by S.I. 1994/2421, arts. 8(3)(9), 10(6), [Sch. 4 Pt. II para. 25](#)

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357 Fraudulent disposal of property.

- (1) The bankrupt is guilty of an offence if he makes or causes to be made, or has in the period of 5 years ending with the commencement of the bankruptcy made or caused to be made, any gift or transfer of, or any charge on, his property.

Section 352 applies to this offence.

- (2) The reference to making a transfer of or charge on any property includes causing or conniving at the levying of any execution against that property.
- (3) The bankrupt is guilty of an offence if he conceals or removes, or has at any time before the commencement of the bankruptcy concealed or removed, any part of his property after, or within 2 months before, the date on which a judgment or order for the payment of money has been obtained against him, being a judgment or order which was not satisfied before the commencement of the bankruptcy.

Section 352 applies to this offence.

358 Absconding.

The bankrupt is guilty of an offence if—

- (a) he leaves, or attempts or makes preparations to leave, England and Wales with any property the value of which is not less than the prescribed amount and possession of which he is required to deliver up to the official receiver or the trustee, or
- (b) in the 6 months before [^{F16}the making of the bankruptcy application or (as the case may be) the presentation of the bankruptcy] petition, or in the initial period, he did anything which would have been an offence under paragraph (a) if the bankruptcy order had been made immediately before he did it.

Section 352 applies to this offence.

Textual Amendments

- F16** Words in s. 358(b) inserted (6.4.2016) by [Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 \(c. 24\)](#), s. 103(3), [Sch. 19 para. 47](#); S.I. 2016/191, art. 2 (with art. 3)

359 Fraudulent dealing with property obtained on credit.

- (1) The bankrupt is guilty of an offence if, in the 12 months before [^{F17}the making of the bankruptcy application or (as the case may be) the presentation of the bankruptcy] petition, or in the initial period, he disposed of any property which he had obtained on credit and, at the time he disposed of it, had not paid for.

Section 352 applies to this offence.

- (2) A person is guilty of an offence if, in the 12 months before [^{F18}the making of the bankruptcy application or (as the case may be) the presentation of the bankruptcy] petition or in the initial period, he acquired or received property from the bankrupt knowing or believing—
- (a) that the bankrupt owed money in respect of the property, and
- (b) that the bankrupt did not intend, or was unlikely to be able, to pay the money he so owed.

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- (3) A person is not guilty of an offence under subsection (1) or (2) if the disposal, acquisition or receipt of the property was in the ordinary course of a business carried on by the bankrupt at the time of the disposal, acquisition or receipt.
- (4) In determining for the purposes of this section whether any property is disposed of, acquired or received in the ordinary course of a business carried on by the bankrupt, regard may be had, in particular, to the price paid for the property.
- (5) In this section references to disposing of property include pawning or pledging it; and references to acquiring or receiving property shall be read accordingly.

Textual Amendments

- F17** Words in s. 359(1) inserted (6.4.2016) by [Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 \(c. 24\)](#), s. 103(3), [Sch. 19 para. 48\(2\)](#); S.I. 2016/191, art. 2 (with art. 3)
- F18** Words in s. 359(2) inserted (6.4.2016) by [Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 \(c. 24\)](#), s. 103(3), [Sch. 19 para. 48\(3\)](#); S.I. 2016/191, art. 2 (with art. 3)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C4** S. 359(1)(2) applied (with modifications) by S.I. 1986/1999, art. 3, [Sch. 1 Pt. II](#) (as amended (6.4.2016) by [The Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 \(Consequential Amendments\) \(Bankruptcy\)](#) and the [Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015 \(Consequential Amendments\) Regulations 2016 \(S.I. 2016/481\)](#), reg. 1, [Sch. 2 para. 2\(7\)\(e\)](#))

360 Obtaining credit; engaging in business.

- (1) The bankrupt is guilty of an offence if—
 - (a) either alone or jointly with any other person, he obtains credit to the extent of the prescribed amount or more without giving the person from whom he obtains it the relevant information about his status; or
 - (b) he engages (whether directly or indirectly) in any business under a name other than that in which he was [^{F19}made] bankrupt without disclosing to all persons with whom he enters into any business transaction the name in which he was so adjudged.
- (2) The reference to the bankrupt obtaining credit includes the following cases—
 - (a) where goods are bailed to him under a hire-purchase agreement, or agreed to be sold to him under a conditional sale agreement, and
 - (b) where he is paid in advance (whether in money or otherwise) for the supply of goods or services.
- (3) A person whose estate has been sequestrated in Scotland, or who has been adjudged bankrupt in Northern Ireland, is guilty of an offence if, before his discharge, he does anything in England and Wales which would be an offence under subsection (1) if he were an undischarged bankrupt and the sequestration of his estate or the adjudication in Northern Ireland were an adjudication under this Part.
- (4) For the purposes of subsection (1)(a), the relevant information about the status of the person in question is the information that he is an undischarged bankrupt or, as the case may be, that his estate has been sequestrated in Scotland and that he has not been discharged.

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[^{F20}(5) This section applies to the bankrupt after discharge while a bankruptcy restrictions order is in force in respect of him.

(6) For the purposes of subsection (1)(a) as it applies by virtue of subsection (5), the relevant information about the status of the person in question is the information that a bankruptcy restrictions order is in force in respect of him.]

Textual Amendments

- F19** Word in s. 360(1)(b) substituted (6.4.2016) by Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 (c. 24), s. 103(3), **Sch. 19 para. 49**; S.I. 2016/191, art. 2 (with art. 3)
- F20** S. 360(5)(6) inserted (1.4.2004) by 2002 c. 40, ss. 257(3), 279, Sch. 21 para. 3 (with s. 249(6)); S.I. 2003/2093, **art. 2(2)**, Sch. 2 (subject to arts. 3-8 (as amended by S.I. 2003/2332, art. 2))

361 Failure to keep proper accounts of business.

^{F21}

Textual Amendments

- F21** S. 361 repealed (1.4.2004) by 2002 c. 40, ss. 263(a), 278, 279, Sch. 26 (with s. 249(6)); S.I. 2003/2093, **art. 2(2)**, Sch. 2 (subject to arts. 3-8 (as amended by S.I. 2003/2332, art. 2))

362 Gambling.

^{F22}

Textual Amendments

- F22** S. 362 repealed (1.4.2004) by 2002 c. 40, ss. 263(b), 278, 279, Sch. 26 (with s. 249(6)); S.I. 2003/2093, **art. 2(2)**, Sch. 2 (subject to arts. 3-8 (as amended by S.I. 2003/2332, art. 2))

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Changes and effects yet to be applied to the whole Act associated Parts and Chapters:

- Act amendment to earlier affecting provision S.I. 1986/1999, art. 3, Sch. 1 Pt. 2 by [S.I. 2017/1119 Sch. 3 para. 1](#)
- Act savings and transitional provisions for amendments by S.I. 2022/1166 by [S.I. 2022/1172 Regulations](#)

Whole provisions yet to be inserted into this Act (including any effects on those provisions):

- s. 41HB(2) words substituted by [2018 c. 14 s. 1\(3\)\(b\)](#)