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Business premises – what to look for

Many small businesses can be run from home, e.g. a sole trading plumber or electrician, but others will require business premises in order to function efficiently.

If you do need to look for business premises, what should you consider?

The basics

- what do you need the premises for? Do you need an office or a retail outlet or a factory? In most cases this will be obvious but some may require fairly specialist accommodation.
- location, location, location. Do you need to be seen? Do you need to be near your customers, your suppliers or transport links? Do you need parking facilities?
- what can I afford?

A good starting point is to look at similar businesses and see what sort of premises they have. Then see what improvements could be made and how their model could be moulded to your own business's working structure.

When you have a good idea of what you are looking for you need to locate suitable premises. You can do this in several ways:

- approach a commercial property agent
- approach your local council authority
- contact Business Link
- search on the internet
- check advertisements in local newspapers and advertising signs at your targeted locations

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Located, located, located – what next?

Once you've found the premises that best match your needs (nearly all premises are a compromise in some regard) you should call in the property experts before making any agreements with the landlord. Whilst you will have to pay for expert advice it could save you considerably in the long run: mistakes with property can be extremely costly and have led to business failure.

You should consult:

- a solicitor to advise on the legal issues arising from a lease or business tenancy agreement.
- a chartered surveyor to advise on the suitability of the premises for your intended business use and on the proposed financial terms of occupation.

What are leases and tenancy agreements?

A tenancy agreement is the agreement between you (the tenant) and the landlord. This can be in writing or, if for a period of less than three years, verbal. We would always recommend a written lease because, if things go wrong, it is difficult and costly trying to prove agreed terms without one. Technically, a lease is the written document setting out the tenancy agreement but the terms are commonly interchanged. The important thing so far as you are concerned is not so much what it is called but what it contains.

Find out more in our article: [What should I look for in my lease?](#)

If you would like further information or advice please contact Steven, Tom or Philip who will be happy to assist you or visit www.gardandco.com.

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