


A Guide to Identity Checking for AccessNI applications




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1 Introduction

- 1.1 If you are reading this document it is likely because you or an organisation you are involved with has identified a potential need to undertake criminal history disclosure checks as part of a recruitment process.
- 1.2 A series of hyperlinks (pre-fixed with a ) have been inserted throughout this document which, if selected, will take the (online) reader to web pages with further information on the specific subject matter. Please note: We have no affiliation with these websites and are not responsible for their content.
- 1.3 This document provides guidance for those reviewing identification documents provided by applicants for AccessNI checks. Identity checking is a key part of the application process and without thorough checking AccessNI may not be able to match an applicant to their criminal record. This means an employer or voluntary provider may not receive important information about the applicant and potentially introduces risk to the recruitment processes for the organisation that could undermine safeguarding arrangements.
- 1.4 Applicants are required to provide a range of ID documents as part of the AccessNI application process.

ID Checkers must:-

- Check the correct identity documents as set out in the  [List of Acceptable Documents](#) or ensure that these have been checked by a trusted person;

2 What must I do when reviewing identification documents?

2.1 You must:-

- Only accept valid, current and original documentation.
- Not accept photocopies unless you are totally confident they are genuine facsimiles of original documents (for example the original has been checked by someone you trust and they have advised which documents they have checked and they have provided photocopies to).
- Not accept documentation printed from the internet – e.g., an applicant's bank statement.
- Where possible obtain documents that have the applicant's photograph and compare this against the applicant's appearance in person;
- Cross match the addresses provided by the applicant with the documentation and any other information you might have. For example, the applicant's CV may suggest they have recently lived in another part of the UK, or the Republic of Ireland, but they have not provided addresses about this on the application form.
- Ensure that at least one document provides the applicant's current address as on the application.

- Ensure that at least one document has the applicant's date of birth (a passport, driving licence or birth certificate).
- Ensure there is documentary proof of an applicant's change of name - if an applicant is unable to provide proof to support a change of name, you should hold a probing discussion with the applicant about the reason(s) why, before validating their identity.
- A document from the groups should be included only once in the document count. As one example, don't accept two bank statements as two of the required documents, if they are from the same bank.

3 How important is name checking?

- 3.1 It is essential that all names of the applicant are included in an AccessNI application form together with names they may previously have used but no longer do so. Criminal records are not updated when a person changes their name for whatever reason and therefore it is vital to capture this information.
- 3.2 All forenames must be captured, even if the person only uses one. So if an applicant simply uses the name Bill, Liam or William, but his full set of forenames are William David John, all of these must be included in the application form. Similarly, if a person shortens their forename, for example James to Jim, the name James must be included in the relevant section of the form. Jim can be inserted into the 'known by' name box. This increases the potential for AccessNI to match the applicant against a criminal record.
- 3.3 The most common reason for a change of surname is marriage where a new wife may take her husband's surname or both parties take each other's name into a new surname (e.g, Smith-Simpson). All surnames used during a person's lifetime must be captured on the application except in those circumstances where someone (for example, through adoption) takes a new surname before 10 years of age. This includes those who may now use an Irish variation of their surname at the time of application, having used a different name at birth, or have changed their name due to conversion to a particular faith, or by deed poll.
- 3.4 If you consider an applicant has not divulged a previous name you should require them to produce or obtain a long form of their birth certificate. This may cause some delay as they make an application to the General Register Office (NI) for this document.
- 3.5 Where the applicant is from **Spain** or **Portugal** and a barred list check is required in relation to working or volunteering with children, ID Checkers must note that Spanish/Portuguese names often have two personal and two family names. These can be written separately or in the case of Spain joined with a Y, or in Portugal with an E. To avoid delays in processing applications, all these names must be included on the application form, for example:-

Spain	Jesus Maria GONZALEZ LOPEZ
	Jesus Maria GONZALEZ Y LOPEZ
Portugal	Joana Filipa SANTOS CUHNA
	Joana Filipa SANTOS E CUHNA

4 How important is address checking?

- 4.1 Address checking is another vital part of the identification procedure. All addresses the applicant has lived during the past five years must be included. This can assist AccessNI in checking whether a criminal record may belong to the applicant. ID Checkers should therefore check that the address supplied through the identification documents matches the applicants' current address. Where there is a discrepancy, the applicant should be asked to provide an explanation – for example, that they have just moved home and have documents relating to that address.
- 4.2 It is also important that AccessNI has the correct address for the issue of the certificate by post otherwise the applicant may find that his or her certificate has been opened by another person.
- 4.3 Where the applicant is a **French national** and is seeking to work or volunteer with children in Northern Ireland, and requires a check of the barred lists, some additional address information may be required. If the applicant's place of birth is Paris, Lyon or Marseilles then the appropriate district or *arrondissement* code should also be included in the *town of birth* box in the application or delays may occur in processing the application.

5 What documents must the applicant provide?

- 5.1 A list of the documents that an applicant is required to produce can be found here:

 [List of Acceptable Documents](#)

- 5.2 You should not accept the foreign equivalent of an identity document if that document is listed as '(UK)' on the list of valid documents.

6 What if the applicant does not have the relevant documents?

- 6.1 We cannot process an AccessNI check for you. We recommend that you ask the applicant to obtain the ID documents listed on the [List of Acceptable ID](#) so you can complete the ID validation check in accordance with the [List of Acceptable ID](#).

7 Applicant is a young person and does not have the required documents?

- 7.1 We cannot process an AccessNI check for you. We recommend that you ask the applicant to obtain the ID documents listed on the [List of Acceptable ID](#) so you can complete the ID validation check in accordance with the [List of Acceptable ID](#).

8 Applicant is from Ireland, what documents should I be looking for?

8.1 If your applicant is from Ireland, you can examine a range of documents issued by the Irish government as set out in Groups 1 and 2a and 2b of the [list of acceptable documents](#).

9 Applicant is from overseas, what documents should I be looking for?

9.1 If your applicant comes from one of the European Economic Area [EEA] group of countries (Annex B) you should, as with a UK applicant, look for and review documents set out in the [list of acceptable documents](#) from Groups 1 and 2. From Group 1 this can include a passport or driving licence and from Group 2b various living and social documents such as mortgage, bank or credit card statements. These documents may well relate to the applicants address in their own country although, if they are currently or have been within the UK over the past 5 years, they should be asked to provide documentation in relation to this.

9.2 If your applicant comes from outside the EEA, there are a limited number of documents that are acceptable in terms of identity checking, as follows:-

Group 1	- a current and valid passport;
Group 2a	- a current driving licence photocard or - an immigration document, visa or work permit
Group 2b	- bank or building society statement; or - a letter of sponsorship from a future employment or voluntary organisation.

9.3 If the applicant does not have these documents, and the post is for employment purposes, an ID Checker can substitute a document that shows that the applicant has a right to work in the UK for documentation in the list of acceptable documents. **ANNEX D** shows the current list of acceptable documents for non-EEA nationals.

9.4 Clearly it is not always practical to ask overseas nationals who will require an AccessNI check on coming to Northern Ireland to provide original documentation, where the applicant will be in a volunteering role. In such circumstances, good quality photocopies, e-mails or smart phone pictures are acceptable. However, once the applicant arrives in Northern Ireland they should be asked to produce the originals of the documents used to verify identity. These should be checked against the copies held by the registered organisation.

9.5 Where the applicant is coming to take up employment, original documentation must be checked.

10 Right to Work declaration

10.1 ID Checkers should note that AccessNI requires you to confirm (where the applicant is taking up a paid position) that the employing organisation has carried out a check to ensure the applicant has a right to work in the UK.

10.2 In these circumstances, an AccessNI application should not be submitted if the applicant has no 'right to work' in the UK.

11 Checking UK driving licences

11.1 **Annex A** provides some helpful information in terms of checking UK driving licences.

12 Checking for use of fraudulent documents

12.1 Always check for signs of tampering when checking identity documents. Documents should be queried if they display any signs of damage, especially in the areas of personal details such as the name and the photograph. The information and the link to an important Home Office document set out in **ANNEX C** should help you look out for any suspicious signs when authenticating documents.

13 Keeping records of identification documents checked

13.1 Recruiting Organisations and ID Checkers must comply with the [AccessNI Code of Practice](#). All organisations must keep copies of the identification documents checked for a period of 90 days after the disclosure certificate is issued. Documents may be destroyed 90 days after the certificate is issued.

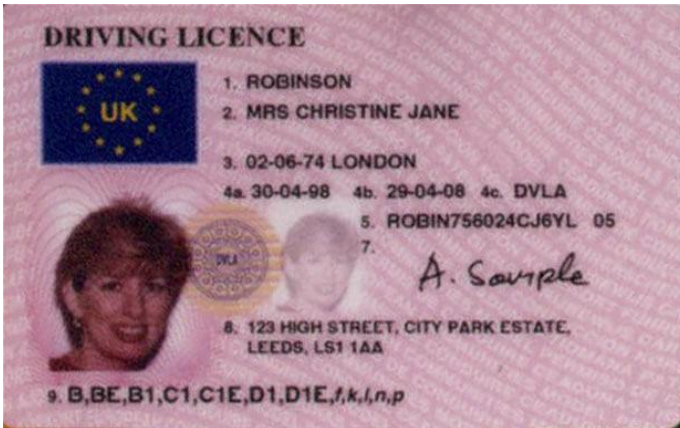
ANNEX A - Driving licences

Do not accept licences other than those listed in the [list of Acceptable documents](#).

English, Welsh and Scottish driving licence numbers contain information about the applicant's name, sex and date of birth. This information is written in a special format but can be gleaned and matched against the information provided by the applicant. For example, the format of the number for Christine Jane Robinson, born 2 June 1974 (see image):-

R O B I N 7 0 6 0 2 4 C J [9 9 9 0 1]
 N N N N N Y M M D D Y I I C C C C C C C

N	=	1st five letters of the surname (if the surname begins MAC or MC it is treated as MC for all).
Y	=	YEAR of birth – the decade digit is the first Y and the specific year the second Y
M	=	MONTH of birth. In the case of a female, the number is incremented by 5. That means instead of 01-12, her month of birth will be 51-62
D	=	DAY of month of birth
I	=	Initial letter of the first two forenames - if the driver has only one forename, the number 9 will replace the second letter. If the licence indicates that the applicant has a middle name, ensure that one has been provided on the application.
C	=	Computer generated

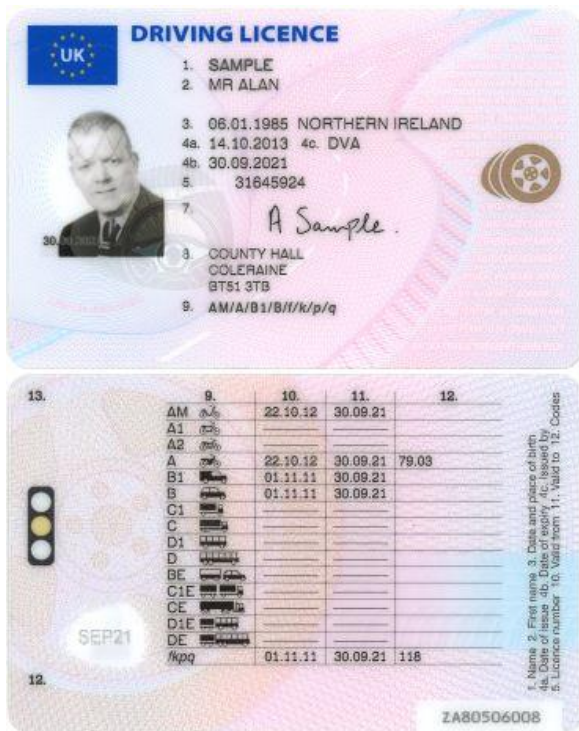


More recent licences in GB look like this:-



NI Driving licences

Northern Ireland driving licences have a different format in that the unique number does not contain details of the individual. Northern Ireland licences look like this:-



Checking an old style driving licence (no photograph)

Remove the document from the plastic wallet and check it is printed on both sides. It should have a watermark visible by holding the licence up to the light and there should be no punctuation marks in the name or address.

The 'Valid To' date should be the day before the bearer's 70th birthday (unless the bearer is already over 70). The 'Valid To' date can therefore be cross-referenced with the applicant's date of birth detailed in Section A.

ANNEX B - List of EEA countries

Austria	Latvia
Belgium	Liechtenstein
Bulgaria	Lithuania
Croatia	Luxembourg
Cyprus	Malta
Czech Republic	Netherlands
Denmark	Norway
Estonia	Poland
France	Portugal
Finland	Romania
Germany	Slovakia
Greece	Slovenia
Hungary	Spain
Iceland	Sweden
Ireland	Switzerland
Italy	United Kingdom

ANNEX C - Guidelines for checking for fraudulent documentation

In 2016, the Home Office produced guidance on examining identity documents. This can be found at the following link:-

- [Guidance on examining Identity Documents - June 2016](#)

The guidance provides useful information on every aspect of identity documentation including undertaking “right to work” papers. It sets out the security features built into documents and how these can be detected and what to look out for in counterfeit documents, particularly EU documents. Particular care should be used when checking such documentation. There is also information on how to detect forged documents, including the use of substitute photographs and documents that can be provided by applicants but have no official standing.

There is also a useful checklist that you can use in the consideration of documents and who and where to report if you believe you have been given a false document.

Checking a passport

Check the general quality and condition of the passport. Treat it with suspicion if it is excessively damaged; accidental damage is often used to conceal tampering.

Photographs should be examined closely for signs of damage to the laminate or for excessive glue or slitting of the laminate; these signs would indicate photo substitution. If the photograph appears excessively large, this might indicate an attempt to hide another photograph underneath. There should also be an embossed strip embedded into the laminate, which will catch a portion of the photograph.

Check there is no damage to this area. If the passport is from a foreign national, you can still follow the same procedures as above.

Her Majesty's Passport Office has produced a guide to be used when [Checking passports for identification](#).

Checking a photo driving licence/EU photo identity card/HM Forces ID card

Examine the licence for evidence of photo tampering or any amendment of the printed details.

Checking a birth certificate

Birth certificates are not evidence of identity, and are easily obtained. Although certificates issued at the time of birth may give more confidence that it belongs to the individual, unlike a recently issued certificate, they will not show if any information has been corrected or superseded by a new registration.

Check the quality of paper used; genuine certificates use a high grade. There should be a watermark visible when the document is held up to the light. Any signs of smoothness on the surface would indicate that original text might have been washed or rubbed away. There should be no signs of tampering, changes using liquid paper, overwriting or spelling mistakes.

The following list provides some general information about certificate completion which may help establish whether the certificate and/or the details have been falsified. This is provided solely as a guide and is not exhaustive:-

- The certificate format used should be appropriate for the year of registration.
- Only the surname should be entered in upper case, not the forename(s).
- Dates of birth should be shown with the day and month in words and the year in digits.

The following information might indicate that the certificate has been altered:-

- Spacing between falsely added particulars might be irregular compared to original information. 'Thick' or 'thin' spacing might infer particulars have been added.
- False particulars might not have been aligned with other words.
- Characters may not be of the same size or shape with the rest of the particulars.
- Movement of handwriting may look mechanical and does not flow with the rest of the particulars.
- Changes might not be consistent e.g. parents' surnames might be altered, but not the signatures.
- The area around falsely added or removed particulars may react differently under an ultra violet light i.e. show signs of staining. In addition, such areas of paper may appear thinner where the paper fibres have been disturbed by abrasion.

If unsure about the authenticity of a Northern Ireland birth certificate you can contact the General Register Office for Northern Ireland at 0300 200 7890.

In relation to birth certificates issued in GB or the Republic of Ireland the following contact numbers may be helpful:-

England and Wales	0300 123 1837
Scotland	0131 314 4411
Republic of Ireland	00353 90 663 2900

Checking a firearms licence (Northern Ireland)

Check the certificate is printed on green and pink security paper with a very faint pattern stating the words 'Police Service of Northern Ireland'.

Examine the certificate for evidence of photo tampering or any amendment of the printed details, which should include home address and date of birth.

The certificate should be signed by the holder and bear the authorising signature of the Chief Constable.

Checking a firearms licence (England and Wales)

In England and Wales, the licence is printed on blue security paper with a Royal crest watermark and a faint pattern stating the words 'Home Office'.

In all instances, the licence should be signed by the holder and bear the authorising signature of the chief of police for the area in which they live, or normally a person to whom his authority has been delegated.

Examine the licence for evidence of photo tampering or any amendment of the printed details, which should include home address and date of birth (to be cross referenced with other ID documentation presented).

Checking an EEA photo identity card

Examine the card for evidence of photo tampering or any amendment of the printed details.

Checking an HM Forces ID card

Examine the card for evidence of photo tampering or any amendment of the printed details.

Checking a biometric residence permit

View the features of a permit and  [how to check a job applicant's biometric residence permit](#) to see if they have a right to work in the UK.



Checking other types of ID

Ensure all letters and statements are recent, i.e. within a three month period. Do not accept documentation printed from the internet.

Check letter headed paper is used, the font of the type print is consistent across the document, bank headers are correct and all documentation looks genuine. The address on the letter/statement should be cross-referenced with that used in the application.

What should you do if you suspect false identity or documents?

If you suspect that you have been presented with a false identity or documents at the time of application, do not proceed with the application process.


- report suspected identity fraud through the  [Action Fraud website](#)
- further information on identity fraud can be found on the  [Metropolitan police website](#)

You are also advised that under Section 8 of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 all employers in the United Kingdom are required to make basic document checks to help prevent anyone from working illegally.

By carrying out checks employers will be able to establish a defence for themselves if any of their employees are found to be working illegally at a later date.

Further details are available on the  [UK visas and immigration website](#) or by calling the employer helpline on 0845 010 6677.

Where to go for help to check non-UK issued identity and travel documents?

You can go to the  [public register of authentic identity and travel documents online](#) on the PRADO website to identify the basic safeguards contained in European documents and a few more other nationality documents.

The PRADO website is provided by the Council of European Union.

ANNEX D - Documents for non-EEA nationals doing paid work

Document	Notes
A current Biometric Immigration Document (Biometric Residence Permit) issued by the Home Office to the holder indicating that the person named is allowed to stay indefinitely in the UK, or has no time limit on their stay in the UK.	UK
A current Biometric Immigration Document (Biometric Residence Permit) issued by the Home Office to the holder which indicates that the named person can currently stay in the UK and is allowed to do the work in question.	UK
A current passport endorsed to show that the holder is exempt from immigration control, is allowed to stay indefinitely in the UK, has the right of abode in the UK, or has no time limit on their stay in the UK.	Any current and valid passport
A current passport endorsed to show that the holder is allowed to stay in the UK and is currently allowed to do the type of work in question.	Any current and valid passport
A Certificate of Application issued by the Home Office under regulation 17(3) or 18A (2) of the Immigration (European Economic Area) Regulations 2006, to a family member of a national of a European Economic Area country or Switzerland stating that the holder is permitted to take employment which is less than 6 months old together with a Positive Verification Notice from the Home Office Employer Checking Service	UK
An Application Registration Card issued by the Home Office stating that the holder is permitted to take the employment in question, together with a Positive Verification Notice from the Home Office Employer Checking Service.	UK

Applicants providing one of the following documents must also provide a current valid Passport:

Document	Notes
A current Residence Card (including an Accession Residence Card or a Derivative Residence Card) issued by the Home Office to a non-European Economic Area national who is a family member of a national of a European Economic Area country or Switzerland or who has a derivative right of residence.	UK
A current Immigration Status Document containing a photograph issued by the Home Office to the holder with a valid endorsement indicating that the named person may stay in the UK, and is allowed to do the type of work in question, together with an official document giving the person's permanent National Insurance number and their name issued by a Government agency or a previous employer.	UK
A current Immigration Status Document issued by the Home Office to the holder with an endorsement indicating that the named person is allowed to stay indefinitely in the UK or has no time limit on their stay in the UK, together with an official document giving the person's permanent National Insurance number and their name issued by a Government agency or a previous employer.	UK