



Introducing the National Identity Service

How the Service will work and how it will benefit you

Home Office

**Identity &
Passport Service**

Please note, identity cards shown are illustrative only.
The final card design may change.

The National Identity Service

The National Identity Service (NIS) is arriving over the next few years, and eventually everyone will have the opportunity to have an identity card if they choose. This leaflet describes what the National Identity Scheme may look like in the future and how it will benefit you.

The National Identity Service (encompassing both identity cards and more secure passports) will bring real and recognisable benefits for each of us, individually and collectively. In time it will:

- **make life easier** by providing you with an easy and convenient means of proving your identity;
- **help protect you from identity theft** and fraud by providing a simple, universal means of proving your identity;
- **reassure us all** that workers in positions of trust, such as people working airside at airports, are who they say they are;
- **help protect the country** from illegal immigration and reduce illegal employment; and,
- **make it harder for criminals** to use false or multiple identities and thus protect us all from crime and terrorism.

It is a long-term programme and some of the major benefits for the country as a whole will come when significant numbers of people are enrolled.

Why have an identity card?

Today people have to use a variety of documents to prove their identity: passports, driving licences, birth certificates, utility bills, etc. However, none of these are officially identity documents and, furthermore, you will often need to use more than one of these documents to prove that you are who you say you are. Sometimes, using these documents requires you to give away more personal information than is necessary or desirable – details on your bank statement for example.

An identity card will offer a useful and more convenient way for an individual to prove their identity in a wide variety of circumstances. Depending on the level of identity assurance required for a particular transaction, an individual's identity will either be checked visually, through entry of a PIN number or by checking fingerprints via a chip on the card, or for the highest level of assurance, a check against the National Identity Register (NIR).

In common with cards in other European countries, the identity card will also allow you to travel within Europe without the need for a passport.

When can I get a card?

If you want to travel abroad, you will need either an identity card or a passport. Starting in 2012, applications for either document will involve enrolling in the Service and you will be asked to provide your fingerprints and a photograph. However, you will not be required to carry or produce an identity card. And if you do not want an identity card you will continue to travel using your passport.

In 2010 the Service will be made available to young people on a voluntary basis. They will see immediate benefits from having a simple and secure form of identity to prove who they are as they enter adult life.

In 2009, some categories of employees working in specific sensitive roles or locations will be required to enrol in the Service starting with airside workers at airports. This will be part of improved pre-employment identity checks bringing better levels of security.

In 2009 and 2010 the initial fee for an identity card will be £30.

From November 2008, foreign national identity cards will start to replace the old-style paper residents' permit for foreign nationals that is already compulsory. These will help ensure only those with a right to be here can access employment and the other benefits of being in the UK.

How will I use my card?

There are many situations where you need to prove that you are who you say you are. The identity card will allow you to do this in a number of ways, some of which are illustrated below.

Proving age

Sita's gone out with a group of friends after college. They're all celebrating and Sita offers to buy a round. When she gets to the bar the barman asks for proof that she's over 18. Sita laughs and says she's 19, but the barman is new and demands proof of age. Sita digs in her bag and pulls out her identity card. She hands it over which confirms that she is in fact 19. As she puts the card back in her purse she is relieved that she no longer has to hand over documents with her address on them to prove her age.



European travel

Clare is a British national who works for a multinational retailer and has to travel a lot for work. She used to carry her passport around with her all the time but it used to get dog-eared and messy. Now she keeps her identity card in her purse and only uses her passport when she is going outside Europe.

When she arrives back at the airport she walks straight up to an automated gate which looks a bit like a cross between a glass lift and a gate at the entrance to many railway stations. Clare enters the gate, puts her identity card in a slot, and once her identity has been verified, the other side of the gate opens allowing her through.



How will I use my card? (continued)

On a day-to-day basis, the sorts of occasions that you might be asked for proof of identity would not involve a check against the National Identity Register. However, when a situation requires the highest level of assurance, such as taking out a mortgage or going for a job in a sensitive role or location, a check against the Register may be needed. When this happens your details will not leave the Register. A confirmation that the details on your card match those on the Register will be sent by way of a Yes/No answer to the requesting organisation.



How will I use my card? (continued)

Getting a mortgage

David is looking for a mortgage. He has found a deal he is interested in with a new lender.

When he gets there he is pleasantly surprised to be told that, as he has his identity card with him, they can verify his details now and start processing his application immediately. The company has been accredited by the Identity and Passport Service and is able to make checks against the National Identity Register.

The advisor asks for permission to initiate a check against David's entry on the register.

Whilst they are talking about the sort of mortgage he wants the response comes back from the National Identity Register confirming that David is who he says he is.

The advisor confirms that the lender has to finalise the decision to lend and that he will be in touch with David in a few days.

The following day, David checks his record on the National Identity Register, and can see that it has logged the mortgage company's check against his details.



How will I use my card? (continued)

There may be some circumstances in which you would want us to provide information to an organisation on your behalf. Here are two examples, the first of which already happens today using the passport system.

Applying for a driving licence

Gemma has just turned 17 and is eager to learn to drive. Before she can book her first lesson she needs to apply for her provisional licence which she does online from college in a free lesson.

Gemma logs on to the DVLA website and starts to complete the form. In the section about confirming her identity it asks her for her passport or identity card number. Gemma has an identity card, enters the number, and ticks the box to say she is happy for DVLA to get her photo and signature electronically from the Identity and Passport Service. That means she won't have to print the form and send it through the post with a new certified photo.

If you are changing job, it is standard practice for your new employer to ask for proof of your identity and of your right to work in the UK, both of which can take time to confirm. In the future, you could simply provide your identity card and, if you wish and your employer is suitably accredited by the Identity and Passport Service, request that we provide your National Insurance Number to your employer.

Confirming right to work

Bill is the owner of a coffee shop and has just made a job offer to Sally to start work next week. Before she can start, it is standard practice to check her identity and right to work so Bill asks Sally for evidence of both. Sally chooses to show Bill her identity card which confirms both her identity and her right to work in the UK and gives her consent for him to get her National Insurance Number from the Identity and Passport Service. Bill is pleased by this as it means he can get her payment and deductions set up quickly and right first time.

How will I get one?

If you're 16 or over and decide you would like a passport or an identity card you will need to apply. The process will be the same whether you apply for a passport or an identity card, or both. Foreign nationals will get the card as part of the normal immigration process.

You will be able to apply online, and the information requested will be similar to the current passport application form. However, if you choose, or you want some assistance in completing your application, you will be able to visit one of our partners, for example a retailer, who will be providing official enrolment services on your local high street.

The major new safeguard included when you enrol for either a passport or an identity card will be an image of your fingerprints. Therefore, you will need to visit one of our partner businesses to have your photograph taken and to record your fingerprints.

Recording fingerprints

Anna is busy and worried it will take her a long time to go and record her fingerprints to complete her application for her identity card. She filled in the application form online a few days ago and received an email with her appointment details.

During her lunch break Anna goes to one of our private-sector partners on the high street expecting to have to wait for ages and unsure about what the process might involve.

She is greeted by a member of staff who talks her through the enrolment process. She enters her reference number from her online application, has her photograph taken, places her fingers on the sensor, and then provides her signature using the electronic pad provided. The whole process takes about ten minutes.

In some cases applicants will be asked to come for an interview in the same way as we currently invite adults applying for their first passport to attend interviews. This is not a test. It allows us to check that you are the person whose details we have on the application form and that the photograph is of you.

Video interview service

Iain lives in the Hebrides. He is excited about his holiday. He's never been abroad before and has just paid for a holiday with his friends, once their exams are over. Now he just has to get his passport. He sent the form off in good time, recorded his fingerprints and his interview is this morning.

Because he lives some distance from a main office his interview will take place using a secure video link at his local authority. When he arrives at their office he is directed to the enrolment area where a member of staff checks the video equipment is working. Within a couple of minutes he's talking to an Identity and Passport Service interviewer in Glasgow. She confirms his name, date of birth and address and then asks him a few questions based on the application form and a few based on other information sources. It's all straightforward and doesn't take more than 10 minutes.

Why do I have to record my fingerprints?

The identity card will lock together your basic identifying details with a combination of your unique personal features – electronic records of your face and fingerprints – because these are very hard to forge, steal, forget or lose.

The UK is also committed to following new EU standards which are designed to make EU passports the most secure in the world and require all passports to include fingerprints on their electronic chip from 2012. So even if you don't want or need an identity card, you will still need to record your fingerprints as part of your passport application.



What will the identity card look like?

Many of the design features on your identity card will comply with international standards so that it can be used as a European travel document, and it will look similar to the example shown below. The number on the card will be the card issue number, and not your National Identity Register number.



The chip (visible on the reverse side) will contain the same personal information as on the face of the card, excluding your signature but including images of your fingerprints. You will also be provided with a PIN number, much like that used for a cashpoint machine. The PIN (which you will be able to change to something more memorable) provides you with a simple way to ensure that nobody else can use your card.

How will my personal information be stored?

Your identity information will be stored on the National Identity Register in a way which keeps it both safe and secure. You will be able to use it whenever you wish to prove your identity.

The biographical information that we will store here is similar to that stored on the passport database with the important addition of your National Insurance Number. Your information will be under your control – you will be able to check your core identity information at any time by logging on to a checking service via the internet. If you find any irregularities on your record you can contact us for help.

On the checking service you will also be able to see a log of any activity against your personal information record (the ‘audit log’). When you give your permission for a check to be made against your record it will be automatically recorded at the time that the check is made. No details of the reason for the check will be recorded, only the fact that a check was made and by whom. If you ever saw any activity that you didn’t recognise you would be able to query that with the Identity and Passport Service and we would investigate.

If you need to make a change to your record, for example because you have moved, you will be able to get in touch with the Identity and Passport Service and, once we have confirmed that you are the rightful owner of that identity record, making the change will be a straightforward process. And, if you would like us to, we will use the new information to keep other public sector records up-to-date to save you time and to help ensure you get the right services in the most efficient way.

Your information will not be passed to a private sector organisation without your consent.

What happens if I lose my card?

If you lose your identity card (or passport) you will be able to inform us so that we can cancel it on our system. Then nobody else will be able to use it in any situation where an organisation checks its validity with us. It will already be unusable anywhere a PIN or fingerprint is required as long as you have kept your PIN secret.

You will then be able to choose whether or not you wish to apply for a replacement card.

If you want to get a replacement you will need to apply to the Identity and Passport Service either directly or through one of the high street facilities provided by our partners, in the same way as when you first applied. Clearly you may want a replacement card quickly, so this will usually be a much faster process than the first time your card was issued. This is because we can verify your identity against your existing record.

Who is looking after my interests?

A newly created post of National Identity Scheme Commissioner will be independent of the Identity and Passport Service and will report at least annually to the Home Secretary, who has to share the report with Parliament and answer MPs' questions.

The Commissioner's role will include examining how the Identity and Passport Service keeps information correct, up to date and secure, reviewing the uses to which the cards are being put, and having oversight of the complaints procedure.

Any government department using the National Identity Service will be required to provide information to the Scheme Commissioner on how they keep identity information safe and how they are using identity cards. Any business that uses the Scheme will also be compelled to comply with requests for information from the Scheme Commissioner.

Above all, the Scheme Commissioner will be there to look after your interests.

We have also accepted and support the proposal for an Identity Charter, which will set out the rights and responsibilities both of the Government and individuals in relation to the Service. The charter will be informed by the work of a new Public Panel, comprising members of the public (supported by experts) who will be able to bring further reassurance that the Service is working for the benefit of the public, for business and for Government.

Helping you to use the Service

Advice and support will to be available from the Identity and Passport Service. We are committed to working with a range of organisations to ensure information and support is available to meet specific needs and is geared to the different circumstances of people across the UK.

Finding out more

To find out more about the National Identity Service or identity cards visit our website at www.ips.gov.uk/identity

To find out more about cards for foreign nationals, visit www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/managingborders/idcardsforforeignnationals/

For advice on protecting yourself from identity fraud visit www.identity-theft.org.uk/



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