

Basic DBS Check ID Guidance

1. Introduction

Identity verification is an important part of the DBS process. The identity information provided is used to search for any relevant police records. Without accurate identity information DBS may not be able to provide full and accurate information. Including as much detail as possible on the application form and as part of the identity verification process makes it easier and quicker for DBS to accurately process applications.

This guidance explains what Responsible Organisations, or third parties they have contracts with to validate identity, need to do in order to verify the identity of individuals using their service to apply for DBS basic checks. Different guidance exists for checking the identity of applicants for standard and enhanced checks.

2. Right to Work

Employers must complete a Right to Work check on all new recruits. Guidance on how to do this can be found on the Gov.uk website.

3. Identity Check Rules

The identity checker cannot verify the identity of a relative or partner, people who live in the same house as them, or a personal friend.

The ID checker **must**:

- Make sure that any details of current passport, driving license and National Insurance Number are included on the application form.
- Follow the two route ID checking guidance set out below.
- Consider using digital ID verification if the applicant can present a passport or driving license.
- Seek photographic identity documents (passport, driving license, e-Visa or PASS card) in the first instance. This can be used to compare the applicants likeness.
- Check and validate the information provided on the electronic application form by the client.
- Check that the application form is completed in full and the information it contains is accurate. For example, that all addresses lived at in the last 5 years and all names known by have been declared accurately. Failure to do this can result in delays caused by conflicted applications that may be withdrawn.

- Make sure the applicant fills in the address part of the form correctly if they have an unusual address, for example if they lived abroad, in student accommodation or a hostel.
- Use a document type only once in the document count. For example, don't accept two bank statements as two of the required documents if they are from the same bank.
- Not alter or amend the application form without the knowledge or agreement of the applicant.
- Keep a record of the documents used to validate each identity for a minimum of 2 years. This is in line with compliance activity carried out by DBS. DBS will ask for records of documents checked as part of ID verification as part of this process. Documents can be recorded as copies of physical documents or PDF evidence of eVisa. If it is not possible to keep copies you should record;
 - Document type
 - Country of issue
 - Any expiry date
 - Any reference numbers, and
 - Notes if there were any discrepancies discussed as part of the ID verification process.

4. How to view ID documents

There are three ways in which ID documents can be viewed and validated. You must use option one unless it is impossible to have a face to face appointment with the applicant. If you are unable to use option one the reasons need to be recorded and option two can be considered. If option two is impossible the reasons must be recorded and option three can be used.

All documents must be physical documents, unless you are viewing an applicants eVisa on the Home Office view and prove site or a digital PASS card with a QR card that has been checked. You cannot accept photocopies or scanned documents. Documents printed from the internet, for example bank statements, are not acceptable for ID purposes. The applicant can ask their bank to print off a bank statement for them and endorse it with a stamp and signature if they do not have hard copy bank statements.

4.1. Option One

The ID check should be done in person, allowing the ID checker to view the physical documents, eVisa, or digital PASS card in the presence of the individual.

If you cannot use option one, please consider using digital identity verification before considering option two.

4.2. Option Two

The ID checker can conduct the ID check via video link – for example, Google Meet or FaceTime. In these circumstances the ID checker must be in possession of the physical documents. These can be posted to the ID checker in advance of the virtual call. Any risks identified when using live video must be assessed and mitigated by you. You must not rely on the inspection of the documents via a live video link, or by checking a faxed or scanned copy of the document.

If option two is used, you must keep a record of why option one was impossible, along with a record of the documents used to validate the identity, for a minimum of two years. The rationale must be specific to the individual ID verification, it is not acceptable to default to the use of options two or three. You should also consider using digital identity verification.

Example:

Susan has applied for a job in Sussex, but she currently lives in Aberdeen. She is unable to attend for a physical interview because she has childcare responsibilities. She will therefore not be able to present her documents in a face to face ID check. Susan posts her documents via a special delivery in plenty of time for her interview. The recruiter conducts the interview and ID check over live video link, looking at the physical documents while talking to Susan via Google Meet. The documents are then posted back to Susan via special delivery. It is the responsibility of the recruiter to make sure the documents are safely handled, stored and returned to Susan promptly in the same condition they arrived. When the recruiter makes a record of the document details they will note that the physical documents were checked but that the applicant was seen over video link.

4.3. Option Three

The ID check can be completed via video link – for example Google Meet or FaceTime – without the ID checker being in physical possession of the ID documents. The details of documents, as set out above, must be recorded and stored at the time of the video link ID check. The documents must be presented to the ID checker on the first day of employment. The ID checker must record the date the ID check was completed in person and cross reference with the details recorded from the video link ID check. If there are any discrepancies the DBS check may be invalid.

If option three is used you must keep a record of why option one and option two were impossible, along with a record of the documents used to validate the identity, for a minimum of two years. The rationale must be specific to the individual ID verification, it is not acceptable to default to the use of options two or three as part of your process.

Example:

Susan has applied for a job in Sussex, but she currently lives in California USA. She is unable to attend for a physical interview and will therefore not be able to present her documents for a face to face ID check. She is in the process of applying for a visa and needs her documents for travel so cannot post them to the recruiter. The recruiter conducts the interview and ID check over live video link. Susan shows the recruiter her documents over video link and the recruiter records the details as well as notes confirming that the physical documents have not yet been seen. On Susans first day at work, she brings the documents which are checked against the details recorded at the interview. A note is added confirming that the physical documents have been seen.

4.4. What if there are discrepancies?

If there are any discrepancies in the information provided by the applicant and/or the identity documents supplied, and fraud is not suspected, you must ask the applicant to clarify. You must be satisfied that the discrepancies are legitimate and all name and address information is captured on the form in the current or previous name/address sections. If you do not do this, it may compromise the integrity of the DBS service and introduce risk to your recruitment or licensing arrangements and may cause delays in processing certificates. Discrepancies in information can include:

- Discrepancies between address history and references or employment history. For example, if the applicant was employed in Scotland 2 years ago but no Scottish addresses have been declared, a conversation should be had. It may have been a remote working position, but this should be checked.
- Applicant is not currently living at their primary address – students for example. These applicants may have a driving license or letter in an address in a different part of the country. For example students who live on campus during term time but still reside at their parents address as their permanent address. Both their permanent address and their term time address must be included on the application form. The current address should be the address to which the applicant wishes to have their DBS certificate issued.

Example:

Alice is a student living on campus during term time. She has applied for a basic check using a driving license with her parents address on it and a birth certificate. She can validate her identity using route one. Her driving license is still valid as her parents address is her permanent address. She must include both addresses on the application form.

- Long names and/or initials on passports – UK Passports have an ‘Observations’ section that should contain the full name. ID checkers should check examples of documents presented on the [public register of authentic identity and travel documents online](#) (PRADO) to establish if Non UK issued documents presented have a similar section
- Different spelling of a name, for example an umlaut over the letter ‘U’, a common alternative spelling of a name (Katherine instead of Katharine) or a hyphenated name. In these circumstances, the correct spelling as identified by the applicant should be used as the current name and any other spellings entered in the previous names section on the application form.
- Missing or additional names on identity documents, for example a driving license with a missing middle name. This should only be the case where an individual has changed their paper driving license to a photocard driving license. To apply for a photocard license for the first time a passport, EEA identity card or birth certificate need to be presented to the DVLA so any middle names would be recorded. If a document with a missing or additional name is accepted the current name on the application form should match the identity document, and all other variations of the name should be included as previous names.

Example:

Derek has presented his driving license, marriage certificate and mortgage statement. His driving license shows his first name and surname, and his marriage certificate shows his first name, middle name and surname. He has never changed his name. Derek correctly completed his application form by entering all three names in the current name field and leaving the previous name section blank. All names have been entered on to the form so all combinations of those names can be searched.

- Recent change of name for legitimate reasons, that can be evidenced. For example, by presenting a marriage certificate or deed poll. The change needs to be recent enough.

Example:

Alex has recently married and changed his surname to that of his wife. He has not yet updated his passport, but his bank accounts are all in his married name. Alex presents a marriage certificate alongside his passport showing the connection between the names and confirming his right to use both. The ID checker has assessed the passport and marriage certificate and spoken to Alex. Alex has also included his previous name on his application form. The ID checker is satisfied that the documents are genuine and that Alex's responses to questions do not cause concern. Even though there is a name discrepancy between the current name on the application form and the ID documents the ID checker is satisfied there are no concerns that the ID is fraudulent and both names have been captured on the form.

5. Transgender Applicants

All applicants should be made aware of the [transgender application route](#). Where an applicant has a Gender Recognition Certificate their previous sex is protected by law, and they do not need to declare it. However, for DBS purposes, all previous identities must be declared. The transgender application route allows those with a Gender Recognition Certificate to declare previous names and sexes without including them on the application form.

Example:

Janice has applied for a basic DBS check as part of a job application. The recruiter sends Janice a link to the electronic application form and some guidance on how to complete the application form. This includes a link to the transgender applications route. Janice legally changed her sex and does not want to disclose this information to her employer, the HR team or colleagues. All Janice's ID documents are in her current identity. The guidance tells her how to contact DBS to provide the additional name information and explains that she does not have to include it on the application form. The recruiter will not be informed, and her DBS certificate will contain only the identity information on the application form.

6. Applicants who have been adopted

If they were adopted before the age of 10, they do not need to provide their surname at birth in section A of the DBS application form, they should give their adoptive name in this section.

This is because the age of criminal responsibility is deemed to be 10 years, under the Children and Young Persons Act 1933, Chapter 12, Section 50. This means that there is no

possibility that an individual could have a criminal record in a name that was used until the age of 10.

7. The Route 2 ID Checking Process

You must use Route 1 where possible. You can only move on to Route 2 if the applicant is unable to present the documents needed in Route 1.

7.1. Route 1

The applicant must be able to show the following:

- 1 document from Group 1, below; and
- 1 further document from either Group 1, or Group 2a or 2b, below

The combination of documents presented must confirm the applicants name and date of birth. If this cant be achieved within 2 documents a third can be selected.

The applicant should have their identity validated using Route 1. If an applicant cant provide Route 1. If an applicant cant provide Route 1 documents, Route 2 may be used once the ID checker is satisfied theres a valid reason following a discussion with the applicant.

8. Route 2

If the applicant doesn't have any of the documents in Group 1, they must be able to show:

- 1 document from Group 2a
- 2 further documents from either Group 2a or 2b

The combination of documents presented must confirm the applicants name and date of birth.

If an applicant is unable to provide this documentation they cant submit an application for a DBS basic check.

9. Document Lists

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

Group 1: Primary Identity Documents

Document	Notes	Issue Date & Validity
Passport	Any current and valid passport. A UK passport can be expired up to 6 months.	Current or expired up to 6 months (UK only)
e-Visa	Accessed via 'View and Prove'. Share code must be 'general'. If no UKVI account, one can be created online.	Must still be valid
Biometric Residence Permit (BRP)	BRP showing Indefinite Leave to Remain/Enter or No Time Limit can be used up to 18 months past expiry. BRP holders should be encouraged to access their eVisa.	Expired up to 18 months (if ILR/ILE/NTL)
Application Registration Card (ARC)	Issued by Home Office. Must be checked against Employer Checking Service.	Must still be valid
Driving Licence Photocard (UK, IoM, Channel Islands)	Current and valid (full or provisional). Paper counterpart no longer valid since June 2015.	Must still be valid
Birth Certificate (within 12 months of birth)	UK, IoM, Channel Islands (including those issued overseas). Long form only.	Issued within 12 months of birth
Adoption Certificate	UK and Channel Islands	No restriction

Group 2a: Trusted Government Documents

Document	Notes	Issue Date & Validity
Driving Licence Photocard (outside UK, excl. IoM & Channel Islands)	Current and valid (full or provisional).	Must still be valid
Driving Licence (UK paper version pre-March 2000)	UK, IoM, Channel Islands.	Must still be valid
Birth Certificate – certified copy	UK, IoM, Channel Islands.	No restriction
Marriage/Civil Partnership Certificate	UK and Channel Islands.	No restriction
Immigration Document / Visa / Work Permit	Issued outside UK. Valid only where applicant lives/works outside UK. Visa/permit must match country of role.	Must still be valid
HM Forces ID Card	UK.	Must still be valid

Document	Notes	Issue Date & Validity
Firearms Licence	UK, IoM, Channel Islands.	Must still be valid

Group 2b: Financial & Social History Documents

Document	Notes	Issue Date & Validity
Mortgage Statement	UK	Issued in last 12 months
Bank/Building Society Statement	UK & Channel Islands (hard copy or stamped print-off)	Issued in last 3 months
Bank/Building Society Statement	Countries outside UK (branch must be where applicant lives/works)	Issued in last 3 months
Bank/Building Society Account Opening Confirmation Letter	UK	Issued in last 3 months
Credit Card Statement	UK	Issued in last 3 months
Financial Statement (e.g., pension, endowment)	UK	Issued in last 12 months
P45 or P60	UK & Channel Islands	Issued in last 12 months
Council Tax Statement	UK & Channel Islands	Issued in last 12 months
Letter of Sponsorship (future employer)	Non-UK only. Valid only for applicants residing outside UK.	Must still be valid
Utility Bill	UK only (not mobile phone, not online printouts)	Issued in last 3 months
Benefit Statement (e.g., Child Benefit, Pension)	UK	Issued in last 12 months
Central/Local Government Document (e.g., PIP, UC, asylum support)	UK & Channel Islands	Issued in last 3 months
HMRC Self-assessment or Tax Demand	UK	Issued in last 12 months
EHIC or GHIC	UK	Must still be valid
EEA National ID Card	—	Must still be valid

Document	Notes	Issue Date & Validity
Irish Passport Card	Cannot be used with Irish passport	Must still be valid
PASS Accredited Cards	UK, IoM, Channel Islands (digital PASS accepted with QR code validation)	Must still be valid
Letter from Head Teacher / College Principal / Apprenticeship Provider	UK. For 16–19 year olds in full-time education or apprenticeship. Only in exceptional cases.	Issued in last month

10. Guidance on Checking Documents

10.1. How do I check for indicators of fraud

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 following guidelines are not intended to cover all possible scenarios of potential fraud, but may help you look out for any suspicious signs when authenticating documents. The National Document Fraud Unit (NDFU) in the Home Office has also published guidance on examining identity documents to detect basic forgeries.

10.2 Checking a passport

HM Passport Office has produced a guide to be used when checking passports for identification.

If the passport is from a foreign national, 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.

10.3 Checking driving licences

Do not accept licences, other than those stated in the list of valid identity 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 decoded as explained below and matched against the information provided by the applicant.

Please note that the date of birth on English, Welsh, and Scottish driving licences issued before 1977 is not recorded as a separate entry on the licence. The date of birth can be deciphered from the driving licence number and checked against the date of birth field on the application form.

Example – Christine Josephine Robinson, born 2 July 1975:

ROBIN757025CJ99901
NNNNNYMMDDYIICCC

- **N** = First five letters of the surname (if the surname begins MAC or MC it is treated as MC for all)
- **Y** = Year of birth
- **M** = Month of birth (for females, 5 is added to the first digit; e.g. November (11) would display '61', February (02) would display '52')
- **D** = Day of month of birth
- **I** = Initial letter of the first two forenames (if only one, then 9 replaces the second letter; if the licence indicates a middle name, ensure it has been provided in section A)
- **C** = Computer generated

For Northern Ireland, Isle of Man, and Jersey driving licences the number is in a different format. The licence number is unique to the driver and the 'name' or 'date of birth' verification, as shown above, cannot be used.

10.4 Checking a photo driving licence

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

10.5 Checking an old style driving licence (no photograph)

- Remove the document from the plastic wallet and check that it is printed on both sides.
- It should have a watermark visible when held up to the light.
- 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 already over 70). This date can be cross-referenced with the applicant's date of birth in section A.

10.6 Checking an eVisa using view and prove

Ensure that evidence is always taken from a **.gov.uk** web address.

The share code requested by the applicant should be a *general* share code. If you do not have a UKVI account to access an eVisa, you can create one online (Get access to your online immigration status (eVisa) – GOV.UK).

Checking a biometric residence permit

View the features of a permit and how to check a job applicant's biometric residence permit.

Please note: A BRP can no longer be used to prove right to work but it is currently still acceptable for ID purposes.

10.7 Checking a birth certificate

Birth certificates are **not evidence of identity** and are easily obtained. Certificates issued at the time of birth may give more confidence that they belong to the individual, unlike a recently issued certificate, which will not show if any information has been corrected or superseded.

Check the quality of paper used; genuine certificates use high-grade paper. A watermark should be visible when the document is held up to the light. Signs of smoothness on the surface could indicate text has been erased. There should be no evidence of tampering, liquid paper, overwriting, or spelling errors.

General guidance:

- Certificate format should match the year of registration
- Only the surname should be in upper case
- Date of birth should show the **day and month in words** and the **year in figures**

Possible signs of alteration:

- Irregular spacing compared with original details
- Misaligned additions
- Different size/shape of characters
- Handwriting that looks mechanical rather than natural
- Inconsistent changes (e.g. parents' names altered, signatures unchanged)

- Under UV light, altered areas may show staining or thinner paper fibres

For more detail, see HM Passport Office's **General Register Office Guide to Birth Certificates**.

10.8 Checking an EEA photo identity card

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

10.9 Checking an HM Forces ID card

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

10.10 Checking a firearms licence

- Licence should be printed on **blue security paper** with a Royal crest watermark and faint pattern stating '*Home Office*'.
- Details should include home address and date of birth.
- Licence should be signed by the holder and authorised by the chief of police (or delegated officer).
- Check for evidence of photo tampering or altered details.

10.11 Other types of ID

- Letters/statements must be recent (within 3 months).
- Do not accept documentation printed from the internet.
- Check for correct letterheaded paper, genuine bank headers, and overall authenticity.
- Cross-reference the address with that given by the applicant.

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

If you suspect false identity or documents at the time of application, do not proceed.

- Report suspected identity fraud through the **Action Fraud** website.
- Further information can be found on the **Metropolitan Police** website.
- If you suspect fraud after a DBS check has been submitted, call **03000 200 190**.

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

You can use the **PRADO website** (Council of the European Union) to review authentic identity and travel documents and their basic safeguards for European and some other nationalities.