

PBNI Disclosure Log – Response to Request

Category: CORPORATE SERVICES

Request Reference: 023.17.20

Date of Request: 25 August 2020

Date of Response: 7 September 2020

Request and Response

Under the Freedom of Information Act, please could I request the following information:

1) Please list the services that require users to verify their identity by sending in physical forms of documentation (e.g. a passport)?

1a) For each of these services, how many identities were verified in this way in your 2019/20 financial year, and what did it cost to process?

1b) Are these verifications performed by a third party or conducted by an in-house team?

2) Please list the services that allow users to use a digital method for proving their identity; and name the methods used (e.g. Gov.UK Verify or other equivalent digital biometric identity method)?

2a) For each of these services, how many identities were verified in this way in your 2019/20 financial year, and what did it cost to process?

By 'identity verification' I mean the same definition used by Government which is 'a digital identity is information used by computer systems to represent a unique person, organisation, application or device. So for a citizen or consumer, a "digital identity" is a trusted way of proving one or more attributes about themselves online or offline and the linkage of those attributes to that same person as a uniquely identifiable individual.'

PBNI currently seeks verification of identity through physical forms of ID, in respect of

- a) Subject access requests (SARs) under the Data Protection Act, and some third party requests where relevant and
- b) Recruitment purposes.

The latter includes:

1. ID verification for right to work in the UK at interview
2. ID verifications for basic AccessNI checks (support grade) - appointees
3. ID verification for enhanced AccessNI checks (operational grade) - appointees

Photographic ID accepted by PBNI in respect of requests currently include: Driver's licence, Passport, Smartpass (NI Translink concessionary fares scheme, Blue badge (parking for disabled persons), NI electoral identity card.

These are normally received by email unless the data subject, not known to the member of staff, chooses to collect their information, although this currently is not a widely used option given the Covid 19 pandemic restrictions.

In respect of recruitment, a list of acceptable documents applicable to the basic and enhanced checks are as advised by [Access NI](#).

Candidates are asked to bring their original documentation with them to interview. A member of staff in the PBNI HR department will verify the original document and scan to file. These are then sent with the relevant forms to Vetting NI (a third party organisation recognised as a 'Registered Body' with Access NI) electronically for vetting purposes. Again due to the current Covid 19 restrictions, recent appointees were permitted to send in good quality scans/photographs of their documents by email.

PBNI does not currently use any other method of verification (your Q2 and Q2a) refers).

With regards to

- a) SARs - most requests received to date are from individuals already known to PBNI. In 2019/20 in respect of requests processed by PBNI Headquarters, there was only one occasion when photographic ID was required.
- b) Recruitment - there were 269 applicants ID checks and 77 appointment ID checks in 2019.

The verifications above are done by PBNI staff working in the relevant departments so there is no additional cost for processing.

If you have any queries about this response, please come back to me. Please quote the above amended reference number in any future correspondence.

If you **are unhappy** with the way PBNI has handled your request, you may ask for an internal review using our complaints procedure. A copy of our [complaints procedure](#) is available on our website www.pbni.org.uk. If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office,
Wycliffe House,
Water Lane,
Wilmslow,
Cheshire,
SK9 5AF.

Please note that PBNI publishes responses to requests for information on its website where we believe there may be a wider public interest. If requests are published they are anonymised i.e. details of the requester are not published.