



# AccessNI Newsletter

Issue 42: Winter 23/24



## Welcome to the Winter 2023/24 edition of the AccessNI Newsletter.

### Introduction

Welcome to this latest edition of the AccessNI Newsletter in which we include a number of short articles providing further information about key aspects of our disclosure service – I hope you find these useful in growing your understanding of the various aspects of what we do and help you get the best out of the service. I would draw your attention to the Niacro article regarding the launch of their disclosure advice and support service – this is a useful resource available to both individuals and employers.

It's fair to say that we have seen an increase in demand for AccessNI over the past couple of weeks – this is normal, and we expect it to continue over the coming

weeks as organisations start to implement their recruitment strategies in preparation for summer activities, etc. As ever, we'll endeavour to maintain a high level of service and quick turnaround times. If you are aware of any particular peaks in demand from your organisation (say 100+ checks being required in a short period) please do drop us an email to [ani@accessni.gov.uk](mailto:ani@accessni.gov.uk) just to alert us to this.

Finally, I just wanted to advise that the review of Business Model is complete and we hope to confirm details of fee changes as soon as we can – we'll do so by issuing a circular to all Signatories, hopefully in the next week or so.

**Brian Thomson**  
General Manager, AccessNI

# AccessNI Registered Bodies - Signatories

**IMPORTANT  
INFORMATION!**

Only approved signatories are authorised to manage a Registered Body's disclosure process. It is the signatory's responsibility to ensure that they cross check the details on applicants' identity documentation against the personal details keyed on to the AccessNI application before it is submitted to AccessNI.

There is the potential that criminal history information may not be disclosed, and safeguarding issues could arise if an applicant's identity is not properly verified. AccessNI will consider the continued position of a signatory who repeatedly fails to ensure applicants' full details are included within the Disclosure application and accurately match the ID documentation.

The AccessNI Code of Practice, in accordance with Part V Police Act 1997, requires that AccessNI maintains a register of all persons and organisations who wish to ask the exempted question under the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exceptions) Order (Northern Ireland) 1979 and countersign applications for disclosure certificates.

To reiterate, any person who has not been approved by AccessNI should not be performing the duties of a signatory and AccessNI will treat any non-compliance with our Code of Practice with the utmost seriousness.

## List of Specified Offences

### Review of List of Specified Offences

The public consultation on the Review of the List of Specified Offences closed on 25 September 2023. Department of Justice has published the Consultation Summary Report - this is available on the DoJ Website at

[List of specified offences consultation report | Department of Justice \(justice-ni.gov.uk\)](#).

The Department would like to thank all those who responded to the consultation – the feedback will help to inform the direction of this Review.

# Church Pastors / Church Ministers



The activities of a church pastor/minister can vary so eligibility for an AccessNI disclosure will depend on the activities/role in the various positions.

To be eligible for an AccessNI enhanced disclosure with the children's barred list check, the pastor/minister will be required to provide regulated activity such as unsupervised teaching, training and/or supervising children on a frequent basis or providing healthcare, personal care or conveying children.

To be eligible for an AccessNI enhanced disclosure with the adult's barred list check, the pastor/minister will be required to provide regulated activity such as healthcare, personal care, social work activities, assisting with household duties to include the handling of cash, doing shopping, paying bills, power of attorney duties or conveying adult groups to/from medical appointments.

If the church pastor/minister role does not include any of the activities above but they are required to:-

- Provide advice/guidance/support to children on their physical, emotional or educational wellbeing on a frequent basis or
- Provide any form of assistance, advice or guidance specifically to vulnerable adult groups on a frequent basis,

there is eligibility for an AccessNI enhanced only disclosure certificate.

## Domestic Abuse Offence

The Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act 2021 came into effect on 21st February 2022.

The Act creates a new domestic abuse offence along with three associated aggravators:

- Child Victim (applicable to the new Domestic Abuse Offence only)
- Child Involved (applicable to the new Domestic Abuse Offence only)
- General Domestic Abuse Aggravator (applicable to all other NI Offences except the new Domestic Abuse Offence)

The domestic abuse offence and any other offence aggravated by one of the aggravators listed above are specified offences and will be disclosed on a standard and enhanced certificate indefinitely.

Where any of the above are included on a disclosure certificate and additional information is required you will need to contact the Disclosure Unit Manager, PSNI.





## Disclosure Advice Service

Niacro is a long established voluntary organisation, working for over 52 years to reduce crime and its impact on people and communities. Niacro's vision is of a society in which the needs and rights of all citizens, including victims of crime, adults and children who offend and those who are at risk of offending, are equally respected. Further information about our services at Niacro can be accessed here: <https://www.niacro.co.uk/>

Niacro's Disclosure Service has been supporting people across Northern Ireland, or those returning to Northern Ireland for 20 years, offering advice and guidance on disclosure of convictions and the implications of having a conviction for employment, education, travel and insurance purposes, among others. The service is delivered in several ways;

### The Disclosure Helpline

Contactable on 02890320157 this service operates from 9am to 5pm Monday to Thursday and 9am to 4pm on Fridays. Free and confidential advice is offered to people who contact the helpline with advice ranging from how to disclose a criminal record appropriately, how to travel with a criminal record, how to write a disclosure statement, applying for insurance, applying for and disputing an Access NI certificate, applying for work or further education with a criminal record, youth conviction advice, and clarification of rehabilitation periods.

Newly launched Disclosure Website [www.disclosureni.com](http://www.disclosureni.com)

Niacro's Disclosure NI website contains useful guides for people with convictions on how to disclose correctly. The website also provides resources for employers as well as statutory and voluntary agencies around recruitment of people with convictions. It contains a useful calculator tool which assists users in determining if/when their conviction will become spent.

The Disclosure Calculator has been developed in accordance with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Order (1978) and can be accessed by anyone who visits the website. Users of the calculator will need to know their conviction and sentence received, along with the date they received it. This information can then be entered into the calculator which will then determine when the conviction will become spent. The website can be accessed using the following link <https://www.disclosureni.com/>

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[www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni)