

AccessNI Newsletter Issue 37: Spring 2022

Welcome

1

Application
Numbers
Barred List

Information 1

Checks on EU
Citizens

2

Homes for
Ukraine

2

E-Application Dec-
larations

2

Corrupt Account
InformationChief Officer
Guidance

3

Welcome to the Spring 2022 edition of the AccessNI Newsletter. I'd like to first introduce myself. My name is Brian Thomson - some of you will know me of old as I used to work in the Finance and Compliance team in AccessNI and have recently returned, having been appointed to the role of General Manager. I look forward to working with you all and continuing the good work of my predecessors in developing the disclosure services in AccessNI. I'd especially like to thank Pauline Somerville for all the work she took forward whilst temporarily in this role. Pauline has now returned to her role as Head of Business Support and Transformation and I know she has an extensive work programme to progress with our new IT Supplier, Version 1.

Since returning to the Branch I have been struck by how incredibly busy it has been. The volume of disclosure applications remains very high; 2021/22 as been the busiest year on record with over 160,000 applications - the increase in demand for Basic checks is most notable, up some 40% on the pre-lockdown volumes. I am delighted that AccessNI has been able to maintain a strong level of performance, despite this uplift in demand. Our operational assumption here is that demand has spiked whilst organisations re-orientate resources as they come out of lockdown. I am also conscious though that we are now entering a traditionally busy period for AccessNI checks as organisations 'gear-up' for activities over the summer months - as ever, you can help us in planning for particular spikes in demand by letting us know if you are planning a significant recruitment campaign beyond that which would normally be undertaken by your organisation at this time of year.

I commend this Newsletter to you – as ever, it includes useful information and helpful tips and I would encourage you to take some time to read through it.

Changes in Application Numbers

This is a reminder that if your organisation is going to have a significant increase in applications, you should please make AccessNI aware. This could be due to several reasons, such as a new contract, new recruitment drive, planned event or where an organisation plans to recheck all employees after a period of time has lapsed since their previous check.

AccessNI can then ensure that we have sufficient staff and if need be take on temporary staff to deal with this increase. This will keep delays in application processing to a minimum and it also helps AccessNI with its financial predictions which helps keep our application costs low.

Barred List Information

AccessNI has recently noted an increase in the number of enhanced disclosure certificate applications for positions of regulated activity where applicants are barred from working in regulated activity with children and/or adults. As you may be aware it is a criminal offence for someone to apply to work in regulated activity when knowingly barred from doing so.

Furthermore, it is also a criminal offence to knowingly employ an individual to work in regulated activity when they are barred from doing so. In light of this, it is imperative that Registered Bodies have sight of an applicant's disclosure certificate (when it is appropriate to do so) **prior** to commencing someone in employment in a position regarded as regulated activity.



Checks on EU Citizens

Registered Bodies will be aware that if an applicant;

- has nationality from one of 15 EU Member States; and
- is seeking to work with children; and
- requires a Barred List check as part of an Enhanced Disclosure,

that AccessNI will pass details of that applicant to the Member State to determine if they have any relevant criminal conviction information in that State.

AccessNI is regularly contacting Countersignatories in respect of additional information which is required in respect of Spanish, Portuguese, French, Greek and Bulgarian nationals. Please note the following:-

Spanish nationals - their name should comprise of two family (surname) names and may have two forenames.

Portuguese nationals - their full name should comprise of two family (surname) names and may have two forenames.

French nationals - if their place of birth is Paris, Lyon or Marseille then a district code is also required and should be added to the town of birth field on the application. The district is displayed on a passport or identity document in the following format "Paris 1er", "Lyon 2eme" – this reads as either "Paris 1st", "Lyon 2nd". It is only the number that requires to be recorded on the application. In addition both parents forename and surname are required.

Greek nationals – both parents forename and surname are required.

Bulgarian nationals – both parents forename and surname are required.

We recommend that the application is processed as normal, but that the additional information, using the case reference number and name of applicant is separately emailed to AccessNI (ani@accessni.gov.uk) at the same time the application is submitted to AccessNI.

Providing this information will prevent any unnecessary delay with the issue of the Enhanced Disclosure Certificate.

15 member states are:-

Germany, Lithuania, Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Czech Republic, Greece and Netherlands



Homes For Ukraine

AccessNI has been liaising with various government agencies over the past weeks as part of the wider planning to implement the Homes for Ukraine scheme in NI. To date, and whilst there remains some uncertainty about the number of hosting arrangements that will be taken forward in NI, we are anticipating an uplift in the number of disclosure applications specifically in relation to this scheme. As you would expect, and in order to respond quickly to this emergency situation, we are prioritising these applications and have made arrangements for some additional resource to be added to our Operations Team.

The additional resources are helpful and our aim is to ensure no adverse impact on our normal turnaround of disclosures. You'll find details of our current [turnaround times](#) on the nidirect website.

AccessNI E-Application Declaration

Registered Bodies who process enhanced disclosure applications with the barred list check for applicants must ensure they read and action the declaration statement at the end of the disclosure e-application as detailed below:-

"I have explained to the applicant the significance of making a "Barred list check application" should the applicant be on one of the barred lists."

This is important as it could provide an essential part of the evidence trail for PSNI should there be a need to consider a criminal investigation if someone who is barred seeks work or a volunteering role in Regulated Activity.

Useful Information**Corrupt Accounts:**

AccessNI has been getting a lot of queries where existing signatories are getting an error when trying to log into their account. This happens when a signatory completes an application on behalf of someone else in their organisation rather than allowing them to create their own account.

You should **NOT** complete any applications on behalf of an applicant or another signatory. If you do, you will corrupt your account and a new email address and NIDA Account will need to be set up. The corrupt application form will also need to be re-entered and submitted.

Correct process

- An Individual must create their own NIDirect account and complete the signatory application form themselves then submit it to organisation they work for.
- The Organisation will countersign and submit the completed application to AccessNI.
- AccessNI will process the application and issue an email advising of a 10 digit countersignatory number (to be used when logging into their account) and a 6 digit PIN Number (to be given to applicants).
- **The NIDirect Account used to complete the application is now a signatory account.**

Other Known Issues:

Citizens should **ONLY** use their own NIDirect account and associated email address to apply for an AccessNI disclosure certificate. When their certificate is ready, an email will be sent to this email address asking the citizen to log in to their account to view and share the certificate.

Citizens should **NOT** enter a different email address into the contact information field on the application.

As part of an internal review of the customer portal AccessNI plan to make this clearer for the citizen in the future.

**Statutory Guidance for Chief Officers**

Please be aware that updated Statutory Guidance for Chief Officers has been added to our website as detailed below –

[Statutory disclosure guidance for chief officers of police](#)

**Code Of Practice**

In line with the revised AccessNI Code of Practice, Registered Bodies should note that they must comply with all instructions and legislative provisions issued in AccessNI circulars and guidance literature. Failure to do so may constitute a breach of this Code of Practice and could impact on an organisations registered status with AccessNI.

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