

AccessNI Newsletter

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Welcome

Welcome, I hope that you find this Newsletter helpful and informative.

First of all let me start by introducing myself; my name is Pauline Somerville and I work in AccessNI as Head of Business Support and Transformation. I have temporarily replaced Tom Clarke who was our General Manager in AccessNI from 2008. Tom retired in July this year and I would like to take this opportunity to formally wish him well for a long and happy retirement. Tom was central to many of the innovations that AccessNI has developed and implemented over the past 13 years and he will be greatly missed. I have already met some of you at the stakeholder forum and I look forward to meeting or speaking to others in the future.

As we move towards the end of 2021 AccessNI continues to have a blended approach to working with a mixture of staff working in the office and also at home at this difficult time. This approach continues to work well and I am pleased to say the Covid Pandemic has had little or no impact on the service we provide to our customers. We continue to offer Helpline assistance as well as e-mail support across all areas of AccessNI.

AccessNI continues to seek criminal record information from European countries and has increased this list of countries to 15 EU states (now includes Czech Republic, Holland and Greece) where the applicant is seeking to work in Regulated Activity with children in Northern Ireland and is originally from one of

those states.

The newsletter this time re-iterates a number of important messages and I know you will feed these through to your staff and future applicants. As always we are here to help and advise you. I will take this opportunity to wish you all a healthy, happy and peaceful Christmas and New Year.

Recruitment Agencies

A Recruitment Agency registered with AccessNI who provides employees to various sectors, should not, as part of their registration process request all clients to complete an AccessNI check as a precautionary measure in case they are posted to a position of Regulated Activity. It is unlawful to approve an AccessNI application when there is no legitimate reason to do so. An AccessNI disclosure certificate should only be requested when it is clear that the individual will be working in a position of Regulated Activity.

A Domiciliary Care or Healthcare recruitment agency specifically providing care workers and doctors/nursing staff to vacant positions can request an AccessNI application to be completed as part of their registration process as they will be allocated to a position of Regulated Activity which requires an AccessNI check to be completed.



AccessNI Identity Checking—Updated Guidance

A circular providing updated guidance on Identity Checking was issued by AccessNI in July 2021. The updated guidance reflects changes in acceptable ID documents in light of Brexit. To view AccessNI circular 1/2021 click [HERE](#)

CHECKING ID DOCUMENTATION

Signatories should conduct accurate checking of ID documentation to ensure that full and correct information is transcribed on to the e-application. Signatories should check with applicants that all forenames and surnames used by the applicant and all address details (for the previous 5 years) have been included on the e-application. This is an extremely important aspect of the role as shortcomings in this regard might lead to AccessNI missing key criminal history information that would otherwise have been included in the disclosure certificate had the applicant's full details been provided. It is also a criminal offence not to provide all information. Recently, AccessNI had a case where all surnames used by an applicant were not provided on the e-application. This case was referred to a third party, under current legislation, who identified that the applicant had criminal history information under a different name which was not included on the e-application. A file was prepared and forwarded to PPS and the applicant was convicted of 'Making False Statement To Obtain a Certificate'. Signatories are reminded of the need therefore to be thorough in their approach not only in checking the ID of the applicant but also in ensuring that all the details have been accurately included in the e-application.

ID Checking—Expired Documentation

A notification was previously issued to all Signatories in relation to the acceptance of expired ID documentation, please see the updated position as detailed below:-

UK Driving Licences

A UK driving licence which expired between 1 February and 31 December 2020 was automatically extended for 11 months. The 11 month extension period commenced from the date the licence was due to expire. This means that no further expired driving licences can be accepted after 30 November 2021.

UK Passports

AccessNI will continue to accept passports that are within 6 months of the expiry date.

ROI Driving Licences

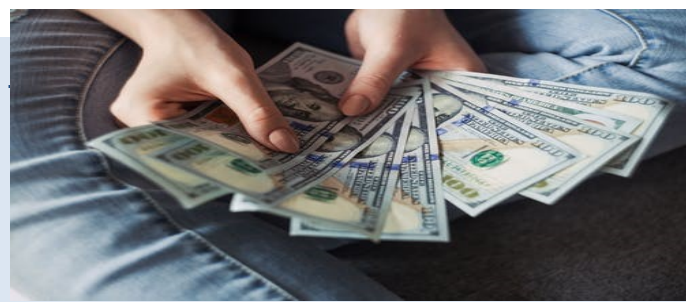
Some extensions for Irish driving licences have come to an end, to check if an applicant's driving licence has expired the applicant/registered body should click [HERE](#)

Irish Passports

No extensions approved for expired passports

Payment for AccessNI Checks

There has been a high volume of calls to the AccessNI Helpline from individuals attempting to pay for their enhanced disclosure application. AccessNI does not take payment for enhanced disclosure applications as invoices are issued. Registered Bodies should ensure that their application/recruitment material or documentation is updated to inform ALL applicants how they make payment for their disclosure.



NI Direct Accounts

Registered and Responsible Bodies should NOT use their Signatory Account to apply for an AccessNI disclosure for an applicant or complete an add countersignatory application, as this will corrupt the Registered/Responsible Body account.

There is no way to fix a corrupt account therefore a new NI Direct account needs to be created using a different email address along with a new application to become a Signatory. This will result in the creation of a new Signatory and PIN number which will have to be passed out to applicants.

You will also be charged the fee to become a Signatory again. If a countersignatory uses their Signatory account to apply for an enhanced disclosure on behalf of an applicant the digital certificate will issue to the Registered Body which is a Data Protection issue. Applicants should create their own NI Direct account.

Guidance for Transgender Applicants

AccessNI has a special application process for transgender people who don't want to reveal their previous gender and names to the organisation requiring the disclosure. If a transgender applicant requires more information about applying for an AccessNI check, they should contact the Head of Operations on 02890 522868 or the Operations Manager on 02890 526111.



Cancelling of Audits

AccessNI has been receiving quite a few last minute cancellations for audits. This leads to a waste of AccessNI resources, as our officers have already prepared and set aside time to conduct the audit. Audits are also a chance for organisations to find out more about AccessNI and we will always work with our organisations should an issue arise. If you do need to cancel, please let AccessNI know as soon as possible and please aim to have a range of suitable alternative dates so this can be rescheduled quickly.

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