

Newsletter

Issue 22: Autumn 2016

AccessNI, PO Box 1085, Belfast BT5 9BD
☎: 0300 200 7888 | www.nidirect.gov.uk/accessni

Contents:

- Circulars
- Update Service
- Independent Reviewer
- Exporting information to Excel
- Customer Survey 2017
- Umbrella Body database
- Invoices
- New postal contract
- Staff changes in AccessNI
- RB Training



Welcome to the autumn 2016 edition of the AccessNI Newsletter.

Generally AccessNI has continued to perform at a very high standard over the past few months. Applications have been processed quickly and certificates issued within days of applications being received. New and more stringent targets for the return of certificates were introduced in July 2016.

AccessNI now receives 97% of applications on an on-line basis and the complex paper disputes form has been moved to a much simpler on-line process. We have updated and renewed our project to seek information on some EU citizens applying to work with children in Northern Ireland and we will shortly introduce a tool to allow applicants to provide simple feedback on the on-line applications experience.

PSNI continue to perform well with very few cases ever taking more than 60 days to complete. The Metropolitan police have also improved their service, but it is likely to be several months yet before this is working at a completely satisfactory level.

Visits to Registered and Responsible bodies continue and the monthly RB training event is well supported with those attending giving positive feedback. A new countersignatory information pack is available and AccessNI will shortly take advantage of the new NICS postal contract, resulting in annual savings of postage costs

Lately, it has taken a little longer for AccessNI to process applications. September and October is our peak period with approximately 3,300 applications

being received each week. For information on the status of applications, please refer to both the NI Direct website for details of our average turnaround times, which are updated weekly, and the case tracking facility, rather than contacting AccessNI.

Tom Clarke
General Manager

Circulars

All AccessNI Circulars are available at the following link:-

<http://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/-accessni-circulars.htm>

The following circulars have been published since the last Newsletter.

3/2016 Revised AccessNI targets

4/2016 EU citizen criminal records.

Update Service

AccessNI regrets to advise organisations there has been a further delay in the implementation of the Update Service (portable disclosures). Unfortunately we are dependent on the Disclosure and Barring Service to assist us to deliver this product and they are currently modernising their IT services. Until that work is complete, AccessNI is unable to take advantage of the Update Service. At this time we are unable to

advise you when DBS will complete their work, but we will keep you informed.

I know that many of you will be disappointed in this; it is not the first time AccessNI understood that the Update Service would be commenced, yet a delay has been experienced.

I can assure you however that once DBS complete their work then AccessNI will provide the service together with full guidance on its operation.

Independent Reviewer

The Independent Reviewer (IR), appointed in March 2016, considers whether criminal record information should be disclosed on standard and enhanced certificates. He can do this in one of two ways;

Before a certificate is issued;

The IR will consider the criminal record information to be disclosed on a certificate where **all** of this relates to a time when a person was aged under 18. The IR will determine whether

- the information should stay as originally found on the criminal record
- only some of it should be disclosed; or
- none of it should be disclosed.

The certificate will only be issued once the IR has considered this. In some circumstances the IR will seek further information from the police and other organisations or from the applicant.

Since 1 March 2016, the IR has

- reviewed 211 certificates
- removed information in 164 certificates
- retained all information in 47 cases.

After a certificate is issued:

The IR will consider the information disclosed where an applicant requests a review of their certificate. After review the IR will determine whether;

- the information should stay as originally found on the criminal record
- only some of it should be disclosed; or
- none of it should be disclosed

If the information is to be amended in any way, a new certificate will be issued to the applicant.

In considering whether to retain or remove information, the IR will examine

- If the information is relevant to the role for which the disclosure certificate is sought;

- If it is relevant, whether it should be included in the disclosure; and

-Is the disclosure proportionate striking a fair balance between the rights of the individual and the need to protect vulnerable groups.

Since March 2016, the IR has

- received 31 requests for review
- removed information in 27 certificates
- retained all information in 4 cases.

There are a number of restrictions imposed on the IR. For example, the IR may only consider convictions and other information that is spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Order (NI) 1978. In addition, he has a statutory duty to ensure that he does not remove information unless he is satisfied that the removal of that information would not undermine the safeguarding or protection of children and vulnerable adults or pose harm to the public.

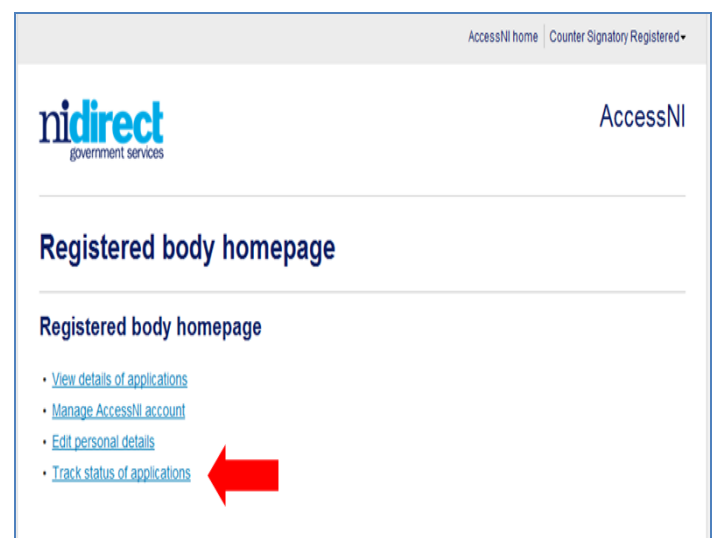
If you have any questions about the IR role, please e-mail us at ani@accessni.gsi.gov.uk

How to export information from your AccessNI NI Direct account to Excel

Once a certificate is issued, details of that certificate only **remain on your NI Direct accounts for a period of 90 days**. After that time the details are removed and cannot be replaced on your account.

If you want to keep a permanent record of the certificates issued or indeed other information, your NIDirect account provides you with a facility to export the information on your account, at any time, to an Excel Spreadsheet.

To look at this facility, select **Track Status of applications** from your AccessNI home page:



The screenshot shows the AccessNI home page. At the top right, there are links for "AccessNI home" and "Counter Signatory Registered". The "nidirect" logo is on the left, and "AccessNI" is on the right. Below the logo, the text "Registered body homepage" is displayed. Underneath, there is a list of links: "View details of applications", "Manage AccessNI account", "Edit personal details", and "Track status of applications". A red arrow points to the "Track status of applications" link.

You will then see details of your account as below. Click the green **“export to CSV”** button, as below

Name	Date submitted	Application type	Case reference	Status	
Thomson, Brian David	13-Jan-2015 11:43	Enhanced	100000204	Application with AccessNI	View status
Thomson, Brian Paul	13-Jan-2015 14:37	Enhanced	100000206	Application with AccessNI	View status
Thomson, Brian James	19-Jan-2015 10:56	Enhanced	100000236	Application with AccessNI	View status
Thomson, Brian Henry	19-Jan-2015 14:46	Enhanced	100000240	Application with AccessNI	View status
Thomson, Brian	21-Jan-2015 09:13	Enhanced	100000263	Application with AccessNI	View status
Thomson, Brian Fred	21-Jan-2015 19:12	Enhanced	100000267	Application with AccessNI	View status
Thomson, Brian James	23-Jan-2015 08:31	Enhanced	100000276	Application with AccessNI	View status
Thomson, Brian Henry	23-Jan-2015 10:31	Enhanced	100000277	Application with AccessNI	View status
Thomson, Brian	30-Jan-2015 15:46	Enhanced	100000341	Application with AccessNI	View status

Export to CSV

An excel spreadsheet will be produced with headings and layout shown -

Name	Date Submitted To Body	Application Type	Case Reference	Status	Position Applied For	Date Approved	Date Submitted To AccessNI	Start Date Of Processing By AccessNI	Date Case Referred To Third Party	Date Last Reply From Third Party	Date Certificate Issued
Thomson, Brian David	13/01/2015 11:43	Enhanced	100000204	ApplicationwithAccessNI	Student Nurse		13/01/2015 12:04				
Thomson, Brian Paul	13/01/2015 14:37	Enhanced	100000206	ApplicationwithAccessNI	Driving Instruction		13/01/2015 14:53				
Thomson, Brian James	19/01/2015 10:56	Enhanced	100000236	ApplicationwithAccessNI	Volunteer		19/01/2015 10:58				
Thomson, Brian Henry	19/01/2015 14:46	Enhanced	100000240	ApplicationwithAccessNI	Teacher		19/01/2015 14:56				
Thomson, Brian Fred	21/01/2015 19:12	Enhanced	100000267	ApplicationwithAccessNI	Coach		21/01/2015 11:11				
Thomson, Brian James	23/01/2015 08:31	Enhanced	100000276	ApplicationwithAccessNI	Coach		23/01/2015 19:27				
Thomson, Brian Henry	23/01/2015 10:31	Enhanced	100000277	ApplicationwithAccessNI	Doctor		23/01/2015 08:33				
Thomson, Brian	30/01/2015 15:46	Enhanced	100000341	ApplicationwithAccessNI	Nurse		23/01/2015 10:48				
Thomson, Brian					Teacher		02/02/2015 16:53				

The spreadsheet CSV file contains details of cases displayed on the Signatories Case Tracking screen. (Countersignatory will see cases they have approved. Lead signatory will see all current cases.)

Filters for the following areas can be displayed or hidden depending on the individual needs of each organisation:-

- Name of Applicant
- Date submitted to Body
- Application type
- Case reference
- Status
- Position applied for
- Date approved
- Date submitted to AccessNI
- Start date of Processing by AccessNI
- Date case referred to Third Party
- Date last reply from Third Party
- Date certificate issued.

This allows you to remove information from the spreadsheet that you don't need. For example, if you only need name, case reference, case status (for example just those where a certificate has been issued) and date certificate issued, then you can filter out the other information. You can then print this out as a permanent record, or your own IT teams might be able to upload this spreadsheet into your internal IT systems.

You can also sort cases by ascending and/or descending order.

Cases will remain on Case Tracking queue for **90 days after the date the certificate was issued**. After this they will not be available.

The AccessNI Helpline is not available to track cases.

Customer survey 2017

AccessNI plans to hold a customer survey with Responsible and Registered bodies early in 2017. We have not undertaken a survey since 2014 and consider that the time is right for a new survey, especially as since then, we have seen the digital transformation that has taken place in AccessNI.

We would encourage all our bodies to respond to this survey. This is one of the key ways in which we can improve our service to you. Watch out for further details in due course.

Umbrella body database

AccessNI recently issued a questionnaire to all our existing Umbrella Bodies. The aim of this exercise is to update our Umbrella Body database so that only those bodies that are 'Open' to administering applications from all sectors and geographical areas will remain listed, together with contact details and any fees charged shown.

A number of organisations and members of the public had complained that organisations listed in the current

database had refused to process applications on their behalf as they did not meet fairly narrow criteria laid down by the Umbrella Body.

'Closed' Umbrella Bodies, those restricted to particular sectors, organisations or geographical areas, will retain their Umbrella Body status but will no longer be shown on the AccessNI website. Please note that 'Closed' Umbrella Bodies are able to advertise their services using other methods.

We expect these changes to be published on the NI Direct website in mid-November.

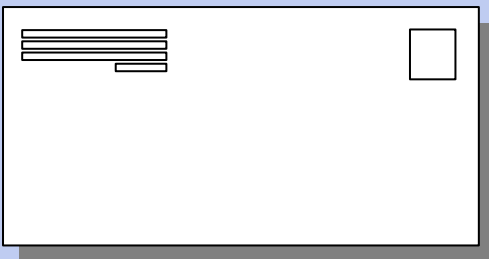
If there are any queries regarding this exercise, please email the Compliance Team at accessni-compliance@accessni.gov.uk

Invoices

AccessNI would like to ensure that, where possible, monthly invoices are issued electronically to organisations. We have found that many invoices are issued to Lead Signatories but do not always reach finance staff promptly which has a knock-on effect on payment times. If you feel your organisation would benefit from adding or changing an email address to receive invoices, the Lead Signatory should send an email to accessni-finance@accessni.gov.uk with the details.

New Postal Contract

AccessNI will from 24 October, take advantage of a central Northern Ireland Civil Service postal to deliver certificates to applicants and for other correspondence. As the charges associated with this contract are lower than at present, some savings will be generated, helping us to maintain fees at the current levels



Staffing changes

AccessNI welcomes Tara McBride as the new Head of Finance and Customer relations (including our compliance work), replacing Brian Thomson. We wish Tara well in her new role and I'm sure that some of you will get to meet her in due course.

RB Training

Demand for RB Training sessions has been very high and the upcoming sessions in Dundonald Ice Bowl (8th November) and Magherafelt (8th December) are already fully booked.

An additional session at Dundonald Ice Bowl is now available for bookings, this has been arranged for Thursday 19th January (10.00am – 12.30pm). Anyone interested in attending this session should contact accessni-compliance@accessni.gov.uk

There are 40 places available on a first come first served basis. Please note that RB training is mainly aimed at new countersignatories or for those signatories that want to refresh their knowledge of AccessNI processes and procedures.



We hope to release some new dates in Venues across Northern Ireland in the coming weeks.

New dates will be published on our website and an email will be issued to all registered signatories.

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/accessni-training-registered-bodies>

