



# AccessNI Newsletter

Issue 45: Spring 2025



## Welcome to the Spring 2025 edition of the AccessNI Newsletter.

### Introduction

Welcome to the Spring 2025 edition of the AccessNI Newsletter. The coming months are an exciting time for AccessNI as we bring forward some updates to our online IT solution which will significantly enhance key aspects of the application process. The first step in this process requires all Signatories to uplift their NIDirect accounts – you will already have received emails about this and should, by now, have taken the necessary actions. If you haven't done so, then please make this a priority to avoid any issues with processing checks going forward.

The next step is an upgrade in the NIDirect account process which will result in the digital identity verification of each applicant – this is why, with the exception of under 16s, they must create their own NIDirect account. This new process will also automatically transfer the applicant's details (name, address and date of birth) from their NIDirect account on to their disclosure application, and these details will be

'locked' down - in effect, the NIDirect account will become the 'one source of truth' for each applicant's current identity. We will provide more information and guidance, including updated Identity Checking Guidance, over the coming weeks, so please do look out for this and follow instructions contained therein.

There's important information in this Newsletter for those currently using generic accounts or processing 3rd party applications. These options will no longer be possible as a result of the above changes and, if you fall into this group, you should pay particular attention to the relevant articles.

If you are in doubt about what is being required of you, or if you have queries, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us at [ani@accessni.gov.uk](mailto:ani@accessni.gov.uk)

**Brian Thomson**  
General Manager, AccessNI

# 3rd Party Accounts

“There could be trouble ahead...”

Nat King Cole sang it and Fred Astaire danced to it but if you're an organisation that still uses a 3rd party account to complete an application for someone else, more of the words of that famous song might well apply to you... **“There may be tear drops to shed”**.

We have written to Signatories a number of times and back in the Summer of 2024 we ran an article in our Newsletter Issue 42 about 3rd party accounts and yet these are still being used by some of you.

Example: an organisation requires their employee to have a Basic disclosure in place for their role. The employee does not complete this application (they may have no email address/ they may have no laptop/ they may not be comfortable using computers) so the organisation or AccessNI Signatory uses the organisation email address eg info@ourbusiness.com to create the NIDirect account and complete the disclosure application.

Our plans are to roll-out system improvements in Spring 2025 that require applicants to create their own NIDirect account and have their own identity verified; therefore the use of a 3rd party account by an organisation or AccessNI Signatory to complete the disclosure application for the applicant will no longer be suitable.

All applicants will need to either:

- have their own email address to create their own NIDirect account in order to complete the disclosure application; or
- have their own email address and the organisation or AccessNI Signatory will assist the employee to create their NIDirect account and disclosure application; or
- request a family relative to assist with the creation of a NIDirect account and the completion of the disclosure application.

**RBs must act now and desist** from using 3rd party accounts – this may require a modification to processes to cater for the changes in the bullet points above. Failure to do so could result in the in-flight applications becoming corrupted at the point of change-over to the new approach, meaning AccessNI may not be able to complete them.

# NIDirect Level of Assurance (LOA2) Accounts

You will have been sent emails regarding AccessNI moving to LOA2 NIDirect accounts.

It is important that all signatories read these emails and act as required or you may find there is a delay in you accessing your accounts in March 2025.



## Biometric Residents Permit

**CANCELLED**

The Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) is no longer an acceptable identity document for AccessNI disclosure applications.

**APPROVED**

The BRP has been replaced by an eVisa. The eVisa can be accepted as an identity document for AccessNI disclosure applications on condition that the applicant provides the weblink and share code to allow the Signatory to view the eVisa document.

# Recruitment Scams



Requesting job seekers to pay for a non-existent AccessNI check is a tactic that can be used by fraudsters to extract cash from their victims, with January and February a peak period for scammers to pounce.

Typically referenced as 'advanced fee scams', victims are encouraged to pay upfront for 'recruitment administration' - including a supposed AccessNI check to progress with the recruitment offer. Text and WhatsApp messages can be cleverly designed to get jobseekers to part with their details.

Top tips for job seekers to stay safe from fake AccessNI check scams in any recruitment search:

- Eligibility criteria - not all positions require a Standard or Enhanced AccessNI check. These checks are typically necessary for roles like education, health and social care, and security. If your job does not fall into these categories, and you are asked for an AccessNI check, it might be a fraudulent request. Check the eligibility criteria or consult with AccessNI. Information is provided online.
- Outdated requests – be aware of outdated requests using dated terminology. Previously a CRB check (Criminal Records Bureau check) was requested but it is now a Basic, Standard or Enhanced AccessNI check. If someone is still asking for money for a 'CRB check', it is time to investigate further.
- AccessNI Logo – organisations that are registered with AccessNI are only permitted to use the AccessNI logo on their websites if they have first sought AccessNI approval to do so. If a website contains the AccessNI logo it does not mean the organisation is genuine and you should check with AccessNI before engaging any further with that organisation.
- Verification process - always enquire about who is processing the AccessNI check. If it's the employer, you can contact AccessNI to confirm their legitimacy. If an Umbrella Body is carrying out the checks on behalf of the employer, verify their authenticity and ensure the employer is registered to use their service. A list of Umbrella Bodies is available online, so you can check and see if the organisation appears and is legitimate.
- Security Industry - for those in the security industry, usually only the Security Industry Authority (SIA) is permitted to run checks for this line of work. If you're asked for upfront payment for a check, verify its authenticity. Stay vigilant, especially when it comes to industry-specific regulations.
- Cost Consideration - the cost for a Basic check is £16 and is available for any position. A Standard check also costs £16, is available for certain roles and shows convictions and cautions held on the Police National Computer (PNC), subject to filtering. An Enhanced check costs £32 and is sent to police forces so they can carry out searches on their local intelligence systems and decide if any relevant information should be released. An Enhanced check with Barred Lists is also £32 for those involved in regulated activity.

Umbrella Body organisations that are registered with AccessNI may charge an administration fee for the service they are providing. This is separate from the AccessNI fee. However, be cautious if you are asked to pay exorbitant amounts. Most legitimate organisations are looking to get you to the onboarding process and won't demand upfront payment. If in doubt, refrain from parting with any money during the recruitment process.

# Appointment of New Independent Monitor



Mick Creedon took up the role of Independent Monitor on 20 January 2025, following on from Julia Wortley who stepped down on 20 December. Mick is a former Chief Constable with Derbyshire Police, retiring in 2017 after 37 years policing service.

Brian Thomson, AccessNI's General Manager, said

"We in AccessNI thank Julia for her hard work over the years and have great admiration for the diligence and clear attention to detail she displayed when considering what we put before her. Mick has a tough act to follow and I look forward to working with him."

The Independent Monitor plays an important role across the UK in making sure that the police information (sometimes known as 'soft intelligence') disclosed from criminal records checks is appropriate and proportionate, striking the right balance between public protection and the rights of individual applicants. Mr Creedon will examine police information on Enhanced criminal record certificates where an individual applicant considers that the information disclosed was not relevant for the role they are applying for and ought not to have been disclosed in the certificate. The role extends to Northern Ireland by virtue of the Justice (NI) Act 2015 and the number of cases have been extremely low.

The Independent Monitor is not to be confused with the Northern Ireland-only Independent Reviewer who looks at criminal record information to be disclosed on certificates.

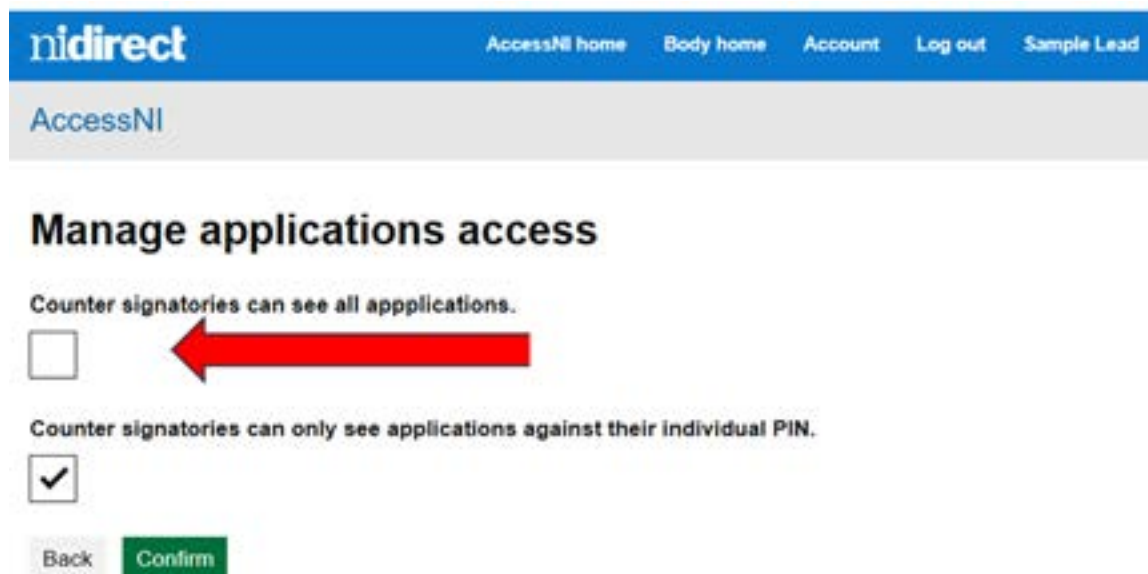
This is a Home Office appointment that was made following a robust open competition, in accordance with the Governance Code on Public Appointments.



# ‘View All’ Facility For AccessNI Signatories

As a result of recent enhancements to the AccessNI System, it is now possible for the Lead Signatory to log into their account and at the section entitled -

‘Manage applications access’ they can select the option ‘Counter-signatories can see all applications.’



**Manage applications access**

Counter signatories can see all applications.

☐

Counter signatories can only see applications against their individual PIN.

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[Back](#) [Confirm](#)

By selecting this option, this means that all registered signatories for the Body (ie your organisation) can view and process all AccessNI disclosure applications when they next log in. As part of this update, the System will maintain a log which will confirm which Signatory processes each particular application. This facility will permit greater continuity in the processing of applications if the Lead Signatory or a Countersignatory is not available.

If it is not appropriate for all your registered signatories to view and/or process all disclosure applications, lead signatories **SHOULD NOT** take any action in which case the system will continue to operate as it currently does.

## Generic Accounts

If all registered Signatories in your organisation log into the same Signatory account to process disclosure applications, this new facility means that practice can cease. The Lead Signatory should select ‘**Countersignatories can see all applications**’ which will mean that Signatories can view all applications and process them by logging into their own account. Your organisation can continue to provide details of the Lead Signatory PIN number on recruitment material. No records will need to be retained to record which Signatory processed which application as this information will be available for the AccessNI System and in Signatory tracking.

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