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Guidance for Signatories

Approving AccessNI Applications

Department of Justice

An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt

Männystrie O tha Laa

INTRODUCTION

In March 2025 AccessNI enhanced its systems so that **NIDA LOA2** (Northern Ireland Identity Assurance - Level of Assurance 2) **accounts** are required to apply for AccessNI disclosure certificates. This document sets out revised requirements for signatories in Registered, Responsible and Umbrella Bodies subsequently processing applications.

NIDA LOA2 ACCOUNTS

Online government services in Northern Ireland are delivered through the nidirect platform and to apply for an AccessNI check the applicant must first have a NIDA LOA2 account. To have this account the citizen is required to upload relevant identity documents and a digital identity check is performed by nidirect to verify these documents ahead of the NIDA LOA2 account being opened. Many citizens in NI already have NIDA LOA2 accounts (for example if they have recently renewed a driving licence or for COVID certification) and should use these existing accounts rather than creating new NIDA LOA2 accounts.

THE IMPORTANCE OF NAME CHECKING

It should be noted that although sufficient information may be supplied by the citizen to nidirect to verify their current identity and permit the opening of a NIDA LOA2 account – ***AccessNI also requires documentation to be viewed by Signatories in completing the application.*** *(*It remains a legal requirement within the disclosure process for Signatories to be satisfied as to the applicant's identity.)

From 3 April 2025 all applicants will be required to upload two identity documents when completing their disclosure application form. This will assist Signatories who are required to review these documents and verify the content against the information provided on the disclosure application form.

Criminal records (convictions, non-Court disposals, police information etc) are stored centrally under the name(s) of the subject at that time. It may be that these records do not include all previous, current, known-by or maiden names of the subject and it is essential that they are now included in the application to AccessNI. This allows for thorough searching of criminal records to take place to produce a disclosure certificate that is as accurate as possible. ***What appears to be a duplicate step – asking a***

second time for ID documents – is an attempt to discover and then ensure all names are recorded on the application that may not have been included when the citizen set up their NIDA LOA2 account.

All forenames must be captured, even if the person only uses one. So, if an applicant simply uses the name Bill, Liam or William, but his full set of forenames are William David John, all of these must be included in the application form. Similarly, if a person shortens their forename, for example James to Jim, the name James must be included in the relevant section of the form. Jim can be inserted into the 'known by' name box. This increases the potential for AccessNI to match the applicant against a criminal record.

The most common reason for a change of surname is marriage where a new wife may take her husband's surname or both parties take each other's name into a new surname (e.g, Smith-Simpson). All surnames used during a person's lifetime must be captured on the application except in those circumstances where someone (for example, through adoption) takes a new surname before 10 years of age. This includes those who may now use an Irish variation of their surname at the time of application, having used a different name at birth, or have changed their name due to conversion to a particular faith, or by deed poll.

Where possible an applicant should upload their birth certificate or another document which confirms their name at birth and date of birth. This may cause some delay, in the event that, an applicant has to make an application to the General Register Office (NI) for their birth certificate.

Signatories should pay particular attention to an applicant's email addresses as this can provide proof of other names. An applicant's name on the application form is recorded as Ann Brown but the email address for the applicant is AnnJBrown@gmail.com. This could indicate that the applicant has a middle name beginning with the letter J. Or the email address is Ann.Smith@hotmail.com which could indicate that the applicant has, at some stage, used the surname Smith.

When an applicant provides the title Ms or Mrs on an application form but only provides details of one surname, further clarification should be sought by the Signatory to ensure no surnames have been omitted from the application form.

There are special arrangements for transgender applicants. Please refer to the link below before asking an applicant to complete an application form:

About Criminal Record Checks

Where the applicant is from **Spain** or **Portugal** and a barred list check is required in relation to working or volunteering with children, Signatories must note that Spanish/Portuguese names often have two personal and two family names. Details of all forenames and surnames MUST be provided in the relevant section of the AccessNI application form.

Where an applicant is from **Cyprus** the applicant's passport number should be provided on the AccessNI application form **or** their ID number (non-UK/destination country) should be provided to the AccessNI mailbox – ani@accessni.gov.uk.

Where an applicant is from **Malta** the applicant's ID number (non-UK/destination country) **or** father's name **or** mother's name should be provided to the AccessNI mailbox – ani@accessni.gov.uk.

Where an applicant is from **Bulgaria**, **Greece** or **France** and a barred list check is required in relation to working or volunteering with children, Signatories must note that both parents' names should be provided to AccessNI. Applicants from **France** should also provide a district code if the town of birth is Paris, Lyon or Marseille. This information should be provided to the following mailbox – ani@accessni.gov.uk.

ENHANCED DISCLOSURE APPLICATIONS FOR APPLICANTS UNDER THE AGE OF 16

Enhanced disclosure applications for children under the age of 16 are processed where the role of Fostering, Adoption or Childminding takes place in the family home. Unfortunately, it is not possible for U16s to create a NIDA LOA2 account. The parent or guardian who lives at the same address as the child, can use their NIDA Account to complete the AccessNI disclosure application on behalf of the child.

At step three of the application form the parent/guardian should select the box confirming:

I am a Parent/Guardian completing an application for a person under 16 who lives at my address.

By selecting this box, the sections of the application form which populate the parent/guardian's information will be blank to permit the parent or guardian to insert the child's details.

As the AccessNI application has been created using the parent's NIDA LOA2 account the identity of the child under the age of 16 has not been verified. Signatories must ensure relevant identity documents are checked to verify the applicant's identity.

INFORMATIVE

During the application process, Applicants are informed:

> *"You are now required to upload two identity documents from the following list so that information provided on your application can be verified. To help avoid delays, where possible you should upload your birth certificate issued at the time of your birth (or another suitable document that confirms your name(s) at birth and date of birth) and a second document that contains both your current name and a photographic image of yourself."*

Signatories are required to review the two identity documents supplied by Applicants to ensure that they exactly match the application ahead of being countersigned and submitted to AccessNI.

The Applicant chooses two documents from the **List of Acceptable Documents** provided at the link below and uploads them as part of their application.

AccessNI list of acceptable identity documents

The application arrives with the Signatory with some fields pre-populated from the Applicant's nidirect account and these cannot be amended. There is an edit facility available to the Signatory to add names that are missing from the application that may appear on the uploaded documents. The Signatory can either send the application back to the Applicant to complete or alternatively, complete it themselves. The Applicant should be advised that their application has been amended accordingly and that the Applicant should update their nidirect NIDA LOA2 account with the additional

information - this will avoid a repetition of the mistake in future applications. The Signatory should retain a note that they have amended the application form until they have informed the Applicant.

Responsibility for the accurate provision of all Applicant details on the AccessNI application rests with the registered Signatory.