

**Subject:** Request for information on user identification.

**FOI reference:** 202000080079

**Date received:** 20 August 2020

**Date responded:** 22 September 2020

**Information requested:**

“1) Please list the services that require users to verify their identity by sending in physical forms of documentation (e.g. a passport)?

1a) For each of these services, how many identities were verified in this way in your 2019/20 financial year, and what did it cost to process?

1b) Are these verifications performed by a third party or conducted by an in-house team?

2) Please list the services that allow users to use a digital method for proving their identity; and name the methods used (e.g. Gov.UK Verify or other equivalent digital biometric identity method)?

2a) For each of these services, how many identities were verified in this way in your 2019/20 financial year, and what did it cost to process?

By ‘identity verification’ is meant the same definition used by Government which is ‘a digital identity is information used by computer systems to represent a unique person, organisation, application or device. So for a citizen or consumer, a “digital identity” is a trusted way of proving one or more attributes about themselves online or offline and the linkage of those attributes to that same person as a uniquely identifiable individual.’”

**NRS Response:**

1) Please list the services that require users to verify their identity by sending in physical forms of documentation (e.g. a passport)?

- Historical Search Room: Historical Search Room staff do not ask for any identification information unless an enquirer is physically present, so nothing is sent in advance of a visit. Someone who wishes to make use of the facilities of the Historical Search Room is asked to provide evidence of identity, and proof of address. These must be original records, e.g. passport, driving licence, bank statement, council tax demand, not scans or digital-only records. Staff view these as part of the process of issuing a reader’s ticket, which allows free access for historical purposes to records made available through the Historical Search Room. Anyone wishing to renew a reader’s ticket (valid for three years) does not need to provide proof of ID again, but is asked for proof of address.

- Adoptions: We require ID from adoptees wishing to access original birth information and when they come in for appointments to see their court papers. We require 2 forms of ID when they send in their RAC9 form. See what is on the form below. ID is retained until process is completed. Examples of acceptable evidence of identity are: Photo ID including driving licence, passport, PLUS a current Utility Bill e.g. Council Tax, electricity, telephone. Married individuals who have taken their spouse's surname should also provide their marriage certificate. Photocopies of documents must be "certified a true copy of the original" by someone qualified to do so (e.g. a Registrar, a solicitor, bank manager, Notary Public, The Post Office etc.). People coming in for appointments need only 1 form of original photo ID.
- Subject Access Requests (SARs): The [General Data Protection Regulation](#) (GDPR) give data subjects a legal right to access the personal information NRS holds about them. These requests are known as subject access requests and before we can disclose any information we must verify the identity of the person making the request. We will usually require photocopies or scanned images of one of both of the following: 1) Proof of Identity such as passport, photo driving licence, national identity card, birth certificate. 2) Proof of Address: Utility bill, bank statement, credit card statement (no more than 3 months old); current driving licence; current TV licence; local authority tax bill, HMRC tax document (no more than 1 year old).

1a) For each of these services, how many identities were verified in this way in your 2019/20 financial year, and what did it cost to process?

- Historical Search Room: A total of 1,362 readers' tickets were issued in 2019/2020. NRS staff perform these checks.
- Adoptions: For the period 2019-2020, we had 152 people sending in forms of ID either originals or certified copies and 195 brought a form of photo ID into the office. NRS staff perform these checks.
- Subject Access Requests (SARs): For the period of 2019-2020, 16 people provided forms of ID when submitting a SAR either by post or via email. NRS staff perform these checks.

We do not keep records as to how long it takes staff to view these proofs of identity so it is not possible to calculate the cost of staff time involved. There is no additional cost to the organisation.

1b) Are these verifications performed by a third party or conducted by an in-house team?

- Historical Search Room: In-house team
- Adoptions: In-house team
- Subject Access Request (SAR): In-house team

2) Please list the services that allow users to use a digital method for proving their identity; and name the methods used (e.g. Gov.UK Verify or other equivalent digital biometric identity method)?

NRS does not use any digital method for proving users' identities.

2a) For each of these services, how many identities were verified in this way in your 2019/20 financial year, and what did it cost to process?

Not applicable.