

# Identity checks

June 2015

# About the NHS Employment Check Standards

This document outlines the identity checks that NHS organisations (across England) are required to undertake in the appointment and ongoing employment of individuals in the NHS. It is one of a set of six documents that make up the NHS Employment Check Standards.

The NHS Employers organisation has developed these standards with the Department of Health and employers in the NHS. The standards, last updated July 2013, include those that are required by law, those that are determined by Department of Health (DH) policy in relation to compliance with the Government's core standards outlined within the Standards for Better Health, and those required for access to the NHS Summary Care Record (NHS SCR).

All NHS providers (including NHS organisations and private providers) are required to be registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and, as part of this registration, are required to comply with the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2010 and the Care Quality Commission (Registration) Regulations 2009. The CQC's Essential Standards of Quality and Safety outline 16 core standards which must be met, including having robust recruitment practices in place (Outcome 12: *Requirements relating to workers*, specifically refers). NHS providers should therefore provide evidence of compliance with the NHS Employment Check Standards as part of the CQC's annual regulatory framework.

Failure to comply with these standards could potentially put the safety and even the lives of patients, staff and the public at risk.

**The NHS Employment Check standards apply to all applications for NHS positions (prospective employees) and staff in ongoing NHS employment. This includes permanent staff, staff on fixed-term contracts, volunteers, students, trainees, contractors NHS, highly mobile staff, temporary workers (including locum doctors), those working on a trust bank, and other workers supplied by an agency. Trusts using agency, contractor or other external bodies to provide services must ensure, through regular audit and monitoring, that their providers comply with these standards.**

## **Avoiding discrimination**

Under the Equality Act 2010, employers must not unlawfully discriminate in their recruitment processes on the grounds of ethnicity, disability, age, gender or gender re-assignment, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, marriage or civil partnership. To avoid discrimination, employers must treat all job applicants in the same way at each stage of their recruitment process.

## **Recording and protecting data**

NHS employers must carry out all checks in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Information should only be obtained where it is absolutely essential to the recruitment decision and kept in accordance with the Act. Employers must record the outcome of all checks undertaken, using the Electronic Staff Record (ESR), where available, or an alternative HR management system. These checks form part of the information governance and assurance standards linked to the use of the NHS Summary Care Record (NHS SCR). For more details, visit the Health and Social Care Information Centre: <http://systems.hscic.gov.uk>

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## Introduction

The purpose of undertaking identity checks is to minimise the risk of employing or engaging a person in any activity within the NHS who is an illegal worker, or a person that is impersonating another.

Verifying someone's identity is the most fundamental of all employment checks. It should be the first check performed, as any other checks will be invalid if the person's identity cannot be proven.

Identity fraud is on the increase and it is important to consider how to keep ahead of the latest techniques and methods used. For instance, employers need to consider when and how to re-check existing employees as operational standards are strengthened.

Identity checks are designed to:

- determine that the identity is genuine and relates to a real person
- establish that the individual owns and is rightfully using that identity.

## Overview

In order to complete an identity check, employers must endeavour to verify that the person is who they say they are by seeing and reviewing original identity documents and validating the authenticity of the documentation obtained.

The Centre for the Protection of the National Infrastructure (CPNI) is a highly credible source of knowledge and best practice – see further guidance at: **[www.cpni.gov.uk](http://www.cpni.gov.uk)**

The process involves checking two elements of a person's identity:

1. Attributable – the evidence of a person's identity that they are given at birth (including their name, date and place of birth) and any subsequent change(s) of name.
2. Biographical – a person's personal history including education and qualifications, addresses, electoral register information and employment history.

Biometric identity, such as fingerprints, voice and DNA, is not a required part of the NHS identity checks and therefore not covered within this document.

The NHS uses three methods for verifying identity:

- receiving original documents
- checking document authenticity
- validating an individual's personal details against external reliable sources, including information held by previous employers (subject to the individual providing relevant consent that such information can be accessed).

It is important that employers use a combination of these methods and ensure that staff are suitably trained to undertake appropriate checks in order to satisfy themselves that the identity of all staff, whether permanent, agency workers, volunteers, and any other individual involved in activities on behalf of the employer, has been verified.

Information obtained from reliable sources should be cross-referenced against information provided by the individual to identify any mismatches. Employers should investigate any mismatches so that they can be assured of both the attributable identity and the biographical identity of the person.

Original documents allow you to check an employee's:

- full name – forenames and last name
- signature
- date and place of birth
- current address and provide biographical information that can be verified and cross-referenced.

Individuals must provide acceptable documents containing their photograph (where available), such as a passport or UK photo driving licence, and original documents providing their current address, such as a utility or bank statement.

A full list of acceptable documents is provided in Appendix 1.

Conducting a face-to-face meeting plays an important and integral part of the identity checking process. This provides an opportunity to compare the photograph with the individual present and it also provides an opportunity to question the individual regarding any documentary evidence presented. It is not sufficient to accept the documents without undertaking reasonable checks to validate that they are bona fide and that the person is the person referred to in those documents.

This document does not cover the requirements to check an individual's legal right to work in the UK. Once employers can satisfy themselves that an individual is the person they say they are, a right to work check must be carried out. Please refer to the Right to Work checks document:

**[www.nhsemployers.org/RecruitmentandRetention/Employment-checks/RightToWorkChecks](http://www.nhsemployers.org/RecruitmentandRetention/Employment-checks/RightToWorkChecks)**

## Minimum requirements

For the purpose of identity checking, this guidance follows compliance measures outlined in LEVEL 2 of the *HMG's Minimum Standards for the Verification of Identity of Individuals (Version 2.0/January 2003)* at:

**[www.eurim.org.uk/VerificationIdentityIndividuals.pdf](http://www.eurim.org.uk/VerificationIdentityIndividuals.pdf)**

A full list of the documents that must be seen, reviewed and validated as part of an identity check is provided in Appendix 1. Some documents are more reliable than others and only certain documents, in certain combinations, are acceptable for the purpose of verifying identity.

Prospective employees will need to provide either of these two combinations:

- two forms of photographic personal identification and one document confirming their address
- one form of photographic personal identification and two documents confirming their address.

All documents identified in the lists below must be:

- original
- from a trustworthy and reliable source
- valid, dated and current
- ideally one which would be difficult to forge.

Producing original documentation to evidence address and social history has become increasingly difficult with the shift to online banking and payment of utility bills. While these documents support an individual's identity and proof of address, they are not identity documents in themselves as they do not contain any security features that can easily be checked. Given modern IT these documents are easily obtainable and can be forged.

Where individual's genuinely cannot provide original documentation, employers must make a risk-based judgement against the job role and what documentary evidence they require to seek appropriate assurances. It is perfectly acceptable to require applicants to obtain official statements from banks or utility providers and these are easily obtainable on request.

For certain positions, where the element of risk is lower, employers may accept bank and utility documents which have been downloaded from the internet, where the applicant is able to access their internet account at a meeting with that employer.

Documents downloaded from the internet must not be accepted in isolation and the information provided will need to be cross-referenced with other documentary evidence gathered as part of the recruitment process.

At least one document must show the individual's signature. Where a signature has not previously been provided, for example because of an e-application, the individual should be asked to provide this at the earliest opportunity so that the employer can check this against relevant documentation.

Where identity documents have been provided in a foreign language, an independently verified translation must be obtained. Unless otherwise specified, employers should not

accept a foreign equivalent of those documents which are specifically listed as needing to be issued within the 'UK' on the approved lists.

In all cases, employers must take a photocopy (or scanned copy) of each of the documents presented to them by the applicant and retain these on file. All photocopies (or scanned copies) should be signed, dated and certified by the person taking the copy.

Where available, identity documents should be scanned using an electronic ID document scanner. These are now widely available and are a valuable aid in detecting fraudulent documents.

Employers must record the outcome of checks using the Electronic Staff Record (ESR), where available, or an alternative HR management system, confirming that identity has been verified in accordance with these standards.

## Who should have their identity checked and when?

Employers should undertake identity checks prior to allowing any individual to commence any form of work, whether paid or unpaid (volunteering) activities within their organisation.

### Existing employees

Over time, standards and practices used to check and validate identity change. Although not a legal requirement, employers will need to consider the standards that have historically been applied to their existing staff and, where any new standards are significantly different, assess whether checks should be applied retrospectively. Any retrospective identity checks must be proportionate to risk and it is recommended that checks only be repeated when suitable opportunities arise. For example, when an existing member of staff or volunteer changes jobs/roles within the same organisation, or when a periodic Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check is undertaken.

When recording identity checks on ESR or other HR management systems, employers should note the operational standard used at that time, so that they may easily identify when retrospective identity checks may be relevant.

When retaining a record of the checks, it is highly recommended that the individual's full legal name (as written on their passport or birth certificate) is accurately recorded alongside any other names by which the individual may be known. It is the individual's legal name that is best used as the unique identifier when undertaking any other employment checks and as more employers record the same, the risk of mismatching records or creating unnecessary duplicates will be reduced.

### Contractors and temporary staff, including locum doctors

For the purpose of these standards, contractors and temporary staff are defined as individuals who are not employees of an NHS organisation but who have a direct or indirect contractual relationship to provide NHS services to that organisation. Contractors

or temporary staff therefore may be engaged to work within an NHS organisation through a third party organisation or agency.

The verification of identity is as much a priority for contractors and temporary workers supplied through an agency, as with permanent members of staff.

Ultimately, the responsibility for assuring that all pre-employment checks are undertaken lies with the employing organisation. Therefore, where appointing staff from an agency or other external body to provide NHS services, employers will need to seek appropriate assurances that these providers have undertaken identity checks in compliance with this standard and that they too are keeping their operational practices up to date. Periodic auditing and monitoring of the systems and processes in place should form part of any scheduled auditing and monitoring of contractual arrangements with these suppliers.

Any contractual agreement with an agency or third party provider should clearly outline:

- details of the level and type of checks required for different posts
- a statement to the effect that the agency/third party provider will not receive payment for their services unless it provides staff who have been adequately screened
- the agency/third party provider will be liable for any financial penalties if it is discovered that the staff they supply have not been adequately screened
- a statement that the contracting organisation (being the NHS body) retains the right to audit the employment checking process at any time to ensure that they are in line with requirements
- the agency/third party provider must inform the contracting organisation immediately when a contractor that has been placed for any period at the NHS body is undergoing any disciplinary procedures, has been dismissed, has been arrested or any other similar occurrence
- make clear that these arrangements be cascaded to sub-contractors.

## What to do if an individual cannot provide identity documents in their current name

There are many legitimate reasons as to why someone might change their name. In fact, an individual may chose to change their name at any time and be known by this name without going through any official legal process.

It is important that employers only accept identity documents in the applicants' previous name, where the individual is able to provide supporting documentary evidence of their name change because of:

- marriage or civil partnership
- divorce or civil partnership dissolution
- deed poll.



Where the applicant cannot provide sufficient proof of their change of name, employers will need to undertake a risk assessment as to whether to continue to consider that individual for employment or not. It is highly recommended that such a risk assessment is completed by a suitably senior representative of the employer, for example, HR director or their deputy. Any assessment or decision should be undertaken in liaison with the security department.

## Checking documentation for authenticity

Checking document authenticity is an integral part of the verification of identity check process. No single form of identification can be fully guaranteed as genuine and therefore the verification process must be cumulative. Employers must make clear, in writing, to all applicants that any relevant documents will be checked for authenticity.

See Appendix 2 of this document for some useful guidance on how to check document authenticity.

You may also find it useful to refer to guidance on the Centre for the Protection of the National Infrastructure (CPNI) at: **[www.cpni.gov.uk](http://www.cpni.gov.uk)**

Further information about checking the authenticity of European travel and identity documents can be found on the Public Register of Authentic Identity and Travel Documents Online (PRADO) website at: **[www.prado.consilium.europa.eu](http://www.prado.consilium.europa.eu)**. Other sources should also be considered.

It is the employer's responsibility to set the standards and the procedures to which it will operate when validating identity documents. It is also the employer's responsibility to ensure that these standards and procedures improve over time to keep pace with best practices and technological advances in the field of document validation. NHS employers should look to other regulated industries to benchmark their standards.

## Advice for employers

- Don't take documents at face value – ensure that they are checked thoroughly. Fake documentation is increasingly available online.
- Don't check documents in isolation – cross-reference with other data supplied as part of the recruitment process. If the data doesn't match, ask for further evidence until fully satisfied.
- Where possible, use electronic ID document scanning devices to support any manual document validation (see section below).
- Make it clear that ID documentation, such as passports and driving licences, will be verified using a number of different methods, including electronic ID document scanners, where available, and that any individual found with fraudulent documentation will be immediately referred to the relevant authorities. This may help deter those considering fraudulent activity.

- Consider specialist training for staff who will meet individuals and check identity documents and consider the use of document experts to support your document validation processes.
- If in doubt that the documentation being presented is genuine, ask the individual to come back for a second meeting to give you time to follow up with the relevant sources.
- Take care where checks highlight a concern about the validity of any documentation, seek expert advice and take suitable precautions if raising concerns with the individual themselves. If they are illegal, or impersonating another, then they may react in an unpredictable manner (see further advice below).

## **Use of electronic ID scanning devices**

Increasingly, NHS organisations are investing in electronic identity scanning equipment to support their manual processes. There are many products on the market today, offering a range of different features to check passports, ID cards, driving licences and other documents, such as checking text font, text spacing, security watermarks, and other such features which can be detected under ultraviolet light. Scanning units can be office based or portable and prices may vary considerably, so it's worth doing some research before making a commitment.

A number of the systems on offer provide functions that are over and above what would be considered proportionate for the purposes of employment checking. It is therefore essential that you seek legal advice to ensure that your system is fit for purpose and you are operating within the scope of the law.

It is also important to emphasise that ID document scanning systems, although a valuable aid to detecting fraudulent documents, are not able to identify where an individual has obtained a legitimate document fraudulently in order to take on another identity and obtain further legal documentation in that name, therefore these must be used in conjunction with the manual checks outlined within this document. Where systems are invested in, it is essential that a suitable training programme is provided for all staff that will operate the system.

## **Doubts on authenticity of information**

Employers should be aware that countries do occasionally change their passports, so they will need to handle any discrepancies sensitively. Where there is any doubt as to whether the passport presented by the applicant is legitimate, employers should contact the Home Office to make sure the passport for that country hasn't changed – see further guidance at: [www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/business-sponsors/preventing-illegal-working](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/business-sponsors/preventing-illegal-working) or call the Employers and Education providers helpline on: 0300 123 4699. Alternatively, employers can use their local counter-fraud service to do this on their behalf.

Where checks return information that contradicts the details provided by the applicant and raises concerns, employers should:

- proceed in a sensitive manner – there is often a reasonable explanation for apparent inconsistencies
- attempt to address any concerns directly with the applicant – employers may wish to call them back for a second interview so that they have the opportunity to follow up with the relevant sources.

In exceptional circumstances, where checks reveal substantial misdirection, employers may feel it would be appropriate to report these concerns to NHS Protect or the local police. The remit of NHS Protect is to lead on work to protect NHS staff, patients and resources from crime. It does this by providing support, guidance and direction to the NHS, enabling effective prevention, disruption and enforcement action to be taken against criminals and criminal activity. It also manages improved criminal intelligence and information flows across the health service.

Further information can be found on the NHS Protect website at:

**[www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/Protect.aspx](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/Protect.aspx)** or by telephoning the fraud and corruption reporting line on 0800 028 40 60.

## Appendix 1: Acceptable documentary evidence for proof of identity

### List 1: Acceptable photographic personal identification

Employers should, in the first instance, always try to obtain photographic documents to verify a person's identity and this should be compared with the applicant's likeness by conducting a face-to-face meeting. Acceptable documents of photographic personal identification include:

- UK (Channel Islands, Isle of Man or Irish) passport or EU/other nationalities passport
- passports of non-EU nationals and other valid evidence relating to their immigration status and permission to work\*
- UK full or provisional photo-card driving licence – where relevant to the position being recruited to, additional information may be sought about any penalties or restrictions through the DVLA's on-line 'Share Driving Licence Service'.
- ##### EU/other nationalities photo-card driving licence (valid up to 12 months up to the date of when the individual entered the UK and providing that the person checking is confident that non-UK photo-card driving licences are bona fide)
- ##### Biometric Residence Permit (formerly known as identity cards for foreign nationals) (UK)\*
  - HM Armed Forces Identity card
  - ID cards carrying the PASS accreditation logo (UK and Channel Islands), for example a UK Citizen ID card. This card can be applied for by residents of the UK and is verifiable with similar security marks to UK passports and driving licences.

Any other document that is not listed above, for example organisational ID cards, must not be accepted.

\*For further information about immigration, please refer to the Right to Work check document of the NHS Employment Check Standards.

### What to do if no acceptable photographic identification documents are available

If an individual genuinely cannot provide any form of acceptable photographic personal identification as outlined within List 1 above, then the following combination of documentary evidence should be requested:

- two documents confirming their current address from List 2
- two forms of non-photographic personal identity from List 3; and
- a passport sized photograph of themselves.

Each of the documents provided should be from a different source and photographs must be endorsed on the back with the signature of a person of some standing in their

community. A person of some standing in their community may be a magistrate, medical practitioner, officer of the armed forces, teacher, lawyer, bank manager or civil servant who has known them for at least three years.

The photograph should be accompanied with a signed statement from that person, stating the period of time they have known the applicant. Always check that signature provided in the statement matches the one on the back of the photograph, and that it contains a legible name, address and telephone number so that information can be verified.

## **List 2: Acceptable confirmation of address documents**

Acceptable documents for confirmation of address include:

- utility bill (gas, water, electricity or land-line telephone), or a certificate from a utility supplier confirming the arrangement to pay for the services on pre-payment terms at a fixed address. More than one utility bill may be accepted if these are from two different suppliers. Utility bills in joint names are also permissible (UK)\*
- local authority tax statement – for example, a council tax statement (UK and Channel Islands)\*\*
- UK full or provisional driving licence – if not already presented as a personal photographic identity
- UK full driving licence (old-style paper version), old-style provisional driving licences are not acceptable
- most recent HM Revenue & Customs tax notification (i.e. tax assessment, statement of account, notice of coding but not a P45 or P60)\*\*
- financial statement such as bank, building society, or credit card statement\* (UK and EEA. Non EEA statements must not be accepted)
- credit union statement (UK)\*
- mortgage statement from a recognised lender\*\* (UK and EEA – non EEA statements must not be accepted)
- local council rent card or tenancy agreement\*
- benefit statement, book or card; or original notification letter from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) confirming the rights to benefit – for example, child allowance, pension (UK)\*\*
- confirmation from an electoral register search that a person of that name lives at the claimed address.\*\*

Providing documentary evidence for previous addresses may be difficult if your check covers a long period of time, therefore you may wish to carry out an electronic identity database search, for example a check against the electoral register.

Any gaps in residence details should be handled sensitively and probed at the interview stage. There may be many reasons as to why this cannot be accounted for, such as foreign residence or travel.

Consider the time period – if less than three months you may decide that it is unnecessary or disproportionate to confirm activities during that period.

If a gap in residency is more than a period of three consecutive months or a period of six cumulative months, you should ask the individual to provide relevant documentation to cover the period in question, for example checking the individual's passport or other documentation to prove their stay in those countries. If the individual has been living abroad, ask them to provide confirmation of address such as a tenancy agreement or a bank statement.

### **List 3: Acceptable non-photographic proof of personal identification documents**

Acceptable non-photographic documents include:

- full birth certificate (UK and Channel Islands) issued after the date of birth by the General Register Office or other relevant authority, for example registrars
- full birth certificate issued by UK authorities overseas, such as embassies, high commissions and HM Forces
- UK full old-style paper driving licence – old-style provisional driving licences are not acceptable
- work permit/residency permit (UK) valid up to the expiry date
- adoption certificate (UK and Channel Islands)
- marriage or civil partnership certificate (UK and Channel Islands)
- divorce, dissolution or annulment papers (UK and Channel Islands)
- gender recognition certificate
- deed poll certificate
- firearms certificate/licence (UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man)
- police registration document
- certificate of employment in the HM Forces (UK)
- benefit statement, book or card or original notification letter from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) confirming the legal right to benefit for example, child allowance, pension\*\*
- a document from a local/central government authority or local authority giving entitlement such as Employment Services, Job Centre, Social Security Services (UK and Channel Islands)\*
- most recent tax notification from HM Revenue and Customs (i.e. tax assessment, statement of account, notice of coding, P45 or P60 (UK and Channel Islands)).\*\*

\*All documents must be dated within the last three months, unless there is good reason for it not to be, for example where there is clear evidence that the individual was not living in the UK for three months or more. These documents must contain the name and address of the applicant.

\*\* All documents must be dated within the last 12 months.

Not denoted means that the document can be more than 12 months old.

### **Acceptable documents for those who have recently left full time education (16 to 19 year-olds)**

When appointing someone who has recently left full-time education you should ask for one piece of personal photographic evidence; or where this is genuinely not possible, a passport sized photograph which is endorsed by a person of some standing in their community as indicated in the section above; and a combination of two of the documents listed below:

- a grant or student loan agreement from a local education authority (UK)
- full birth certificate (UK and Channel Islands) issued after the date of birth by the General Register Office or other relevant authority, for example registrars
- full birth certificate issued after the date of birth by UK authorities overseas, such as embassies, high commissions and HM Forces
- National Insurance (NI) number or proof of issue of an NI number – the majority of individuals will be automatically issued with a NI number at the age of 16 and this will be a HR requirement for employment
- a letter from their headteacher or college principal can be requested, verifying their name and other relevant information for example, address or date of birth (UK)
- a document from a local/central government authority or local authority giving entitlement such as Employment Services, Job Centre, Social Security Services (UK and Channel Islands)\*
- a qualification certificate.

### **Acceptable documents for refugees and asylum seekers**

Refugees are people who have had a positive decision on their claim for asylum under the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (the Refugee Convention). Individuals who do not meet the Refugee Convention's criteria for refugee status may qualify either for humanitarian protection (granted for a period of five years), or discretionary leave to remain (granted up to a period of three years). It is important for employers to refer to the Right to Work Check document of the NHS Employment Check Standards in relation to a refugee's right to work and reside freely in the UK.

Refugees will not normally have a passport and are unlikely to have copies of other official documents, such as birth certificates or photo identity cards. When granted leave to remain in the UK, a refugee will be issued with an Immigration Status Document (ISD) by the Home Office, which will indicate their refugee status. This document can be used to verify both their identity and their right to work in the UK. They may also have a travel document which can be accepted to verify their identity.

Further information on employing refugees can be found on the NHS Employers website: [www.nhsemployers.org/RecruitmentAndRetention/RefugeeHealthcareProfessionals](http://www.nhsemployers.org/RecruitmentAndRetention/RefugeeHealthcareProfessionals)

## **Schemes which support the homeless to obtain relevant identity documents**

Providing appropriate documentation when an individual is officially recognised as homeless is a challenge as they don't have any fixed abode and therefore are unable to receive benefits or other accepted documents which verify their identity and social history. If you operate schemes which support the homeless in getting back into the workforce, we would recommend that you refer individuals to the charity body, Crisis, who can help them to obtain a copy of their birth certificate or apply for a passport so that they can have some form of identity.

Further details can be found on the Crisis website at: **[www.crisis.org.uk](http://www.crisis.org.uk)**



## Appendix 2: Checking documentation for authenticity

Checking document authenticity is an integral and important part of the verification of identity check process. No single form of identification can be fully guaranteed as genuine and therefore the verification process must be cumulative. Employers must make clear, in writing, to all applicants that any relevant documents will be checked for authenticity either manually, through an appropriate body, and/or by the use of an electronic scanning device.

### Passports (UK and overseas)

- Check the general quality and condition of the passport. Look out for page substitution, incorrect numbering of pages, damage to the cover or spine of the document, poor paper and print quality.
- Check that print is clear and even – print processes are deliberately complex on genuine documents.
- Check wording, issue and expiry dates – spelling mistakes are common in forged or counterfeit documents, especially on stamps and visas. Forgers often only alter the expiry date, so ensure this corresponds with the issue date.
- Check for damage – accidental damage is often used to conceal tampering, so treat any excessive damage with caution.
- Check photographs for signs of damage or for excessive glue – this could indicate photo substitution. An excessively large photograph may be hiding another photograph underneath. There should be an embossed strip embedded into the laminate which will catch a portion of the photograph.
- Check watermarks can be clearly seen when holding the document up to the light.
- Check the name of the country of origin. Unofficial travel documents in the name of non-existent countries or countries no longer known by their original name are in circulation.

### Visas

- Check for signs of alteration to the passport number or personal and issue details. Make sure details correspond with information in the individual's passport.
- Check security features, such as watermarks, are intact.
- Check the image on the visa for signs of substitution.
- Check the wording for evidence of alteration or spelling mistakes.

### Biometric residence permits

Employers may wish to refer to UK Borders Agency guidance at:  
[www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/brp-information-leaflet.pdf](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/brp-information-leaflet.pdf)

## **Photo-card driving licences**

New driving licences now contain similar security features to those present in passports.

- Examine the licence carefully, looking for any damage or adjustments.
- Ensure the printed details have not been changed.
- Check watermarks and security features are intact.
- Photographs will always be in greyscale, check this matches the applicant.
- Check the biographical details (i.e. name, date of birth) match the details of the applicant.
- Ensure the valid to date is the day before the owner's 70th birthday (if the owner is over 70 this does not apply). Cross reference the valid to date with the applicant's date of birth which appears in Section A of the counterpart document.

## **Old-style paper driving licences**

- Remove the document from the plastic wallet and check it is printed on both sides. It should have a watermark visible by holding the licence up to the light and there should be no punctuation marks in the name or address.
- Ensure the valid to date should be the day before the bearer's 70th birthday (unless the bearer is already over 70). The valid to date can therefore be cross-referenced with the applicant's date of birth, which appears on other verification ID.

## **UK firearms licences**

Check the licence is printed on blue security paper with a Royal crest watermark and a faint pattern stating the words 'Home Office'. Examine the licence for evidence of photo tampering or any amendment of the printed details, which should include home address and date of birth. The licence should be signed by the holder and bear the authorising signature of the chief of police for the area in which they live, or normally a person to whom his authority has been delegated.

## **HM Armed Forces identity cards**

- Check the card for any tampering or alteration of the printed details.
- You should note that such cards must be surrendered upon leaving the Armed Forces, therefore only those individuals who are currently serving in the Armed Forces will hold such a card.

## **UK Citizen photo-card**

- Check the card has the PASS (Proof of Age Standards Scheme) hologram. This signifies the card is genuine and is recognised as valid ID under the law.
- The colour photo confirms the person presenting the card is the lawful card holder.

- Every Citizen Card displays UV (ultra-violet) markings in the form of two '100% proof' logos.

## **Birth certificates**

Birth certificates are not wholly reliable for the purpose of verifying a person's identity as copies may be easily obtained. Certificates that are issued shortly after the time of birth are more reliable than recently issued duplicates as these will not show if any information has been corrected or superseded by a new registration.

Duplicate copies issued by the General Register Office will state 'certified copy' on the birth certificate.

- Check the quality of the paper used – genuine certificates use a high grade.
- When the document is held up to the light there should be a visible watermark.
- Check the certificate format used is in the format for the year of registration.
- Check the surname only is entered in upper case and not the forename(s).
- Any signs of smoothness on the surface may indicate that original text has been washed or rubbed away.
- There should be no signs of tampering changes using liquid paper, overwriting or spelling mistakes.
- Ensure the date of birth and registration/issue dates are provided. The date of birth should be shown with the day and the month in words and the year in figures.
- Check the name and date of birth given in the application for match those given in the birth certificate.

Further guidance on checking birth certificates is available on the Identity and Passport Service website: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/identity-and-passport-service](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/identity-and-passport-service).

## **Supporting documentation**

Documents such as utility bills and bank statements support an individual's identity and proof of address but they are not identity documents in themselves. Modern IT and the internet mean that supporting documents can be easily obtained or forged and, unlike identity document, do not have many security features that you can easily check. The following checks will help to identify any inconsistencies or anomalies.

- Check documents have not been printed off from online bills or statements – most companies will provide hard copies to customers on request.
- Check the document is on original quality headed letterhead paper. Pay particular attention to the company logo, as logos lose their quality when photocopied or scanned.
- Check for even folds on original documents – the vast majority of bills are machine folded before being sent to customers.

## Further information

Every effort is made to ensure that the requirements within these standards are updated in line with new legislation and Department of Health policy as it comes into force. Where employers choose to download hard copies of the standards, it is essential that they regularly refer to the NHS Employers website to ensure that they are fully compliant with any updated legal and mandated requirements.

Alerts to any changes to these standards are published in the NHS Workforce Bulletin, which you can download or subscribe to at:

**[www.nhsemployers.org/Aboutus/Publications/workforce-bulletin](http://www.nhsemployers.org/Aboutus/Publications/workforce-bulletin)**

Employers may also access updates by downloading the free NHS Employers app which can be downloaded from iTunes and Google Play Store by typing 'NHS Employers' in the search bar.

Visit: **[www.nhsemployers.org/RecruitmentAndRetention/Employment-checks](http://www.nhsemployers.org/RecruitmentAndRetention/Employment-checks)**

Email: **[employmentchecks@nhsemployers.org](mailto:employmentchecks@nhsemployers.org)**

This document uses information from the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI). Visit the CPNI website at **[www.cpni.gov.uk](http://www.cpni.gov.uk)** for further information.

## NHS Employers

The NHS Employers organisation is the voice of employers in the NHS, supporting them to put patients first. Our vision is to be the authoritative voice of workforce leaders, experts in HR, negotiating fairly to get the best deal for patients.

We work with employers in the NHS to reflect their views and act on their behalf in four priority areas:

- pay and negotiations
- recruitment and planning the workforce
- healthy and productive workplaces
- employment policy and practice.

NHS Employers is part of the NHS Confederation

## Contact us

For more information on how to become involved in our work, email [getinvolved@nhsemployers.org](mailto:getinvolved@nhsemployers.org)

[www.nhsemployers.org](http://www.nhsemployers.org)

[enquiries@nhsemployers.org](mailto:enquiries@nhsemployers.org)

NHS Employers

50 Broadway

London

SW1H 0DB

2 Brewery Wharf

Kendell Street

Leeds LS10 1JR

Follow the NHS Confederation on Twitter: [@nhsconfed](https://twitter.com/nhsconfed)

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