

Government sets out new plans to help build trust in use of digital identities

- Public invited to contribute to draft rules around data protection, security and inclusivity
- Part of work to help people prove who they are without the need for physical documents
- Aim is to make people's lives easier and boost the country's £149 billion digital economy

The government has today published its draft rules of the road for governing the future use of digital identities. It is part of plans to make it quicker and easier for people to verify themselves using modern technology and create a process as trusted as using passports or bank statements.

Digital identity products allow people to prove who they are, where they live or how old they are. They are set to revolutionise transactions such as buying a house, when people are often required to prove their identity multiple times to a bank, conveyancer or estate agent, and buying age-restricted goods online or in person.

The new '[trust framework](#)' lays out the draft rules of the road organisations should follow. It includes the principles, policies, procedures and standards governing the use of digital identity to allow for the sharing of information to check people's identities or personal details, such as a user's address or age, in a trusted and consistent way. This will enable interoperability and increase public confidence.

The framework, once finalised, is expected to be brought into law. It has specific standards and requirements for organisations which provide or use digital identity services including:

- Having a data management policy which explains how they create, obtain, disclose, protect, and delete data;
- Following industry standards and best practice for information security and encryption;
- Telling the user if any changes, for example an update to their address, have been made to their digital identity;
- Where appropriate, having a detailed account recovery process and notifying users if organisations suspect someone has fraudulently accessed their account or used their digital identity;
- Following guidance on how to choose secure authenticators for their service.

Organisations will be required to publish a yearly report explaining which demographics have been, or are likely to have been, excluded from their service and why. The move will help make firms aware if there are inclusivity

problems in their products while also boosting transparency.

The framework will also help promote the use of 'vouching', where [trusted people](#) within the community such as doctors or teachers 'vouch for' or confirm a person's identity, as a useful alternative for those without traditional documents, such as passports and driving licences.

Digital Infrastructure Minister Matt Warman said:

Establishing trust online is absolutely essential if we are to unleash the future potential of our digital economy.

Today we are publishing draft rules of the road to guide organisations using new digital identity technology and we want industry, civil society groups and the public to make their voices heard.

Our aim is to help people confidently verify themselves while safeguarding their privacy so we can build back better and fairer from the pandemic.

[Economists](#) have estimated the cost of manual offline identity proofing could be as high as £3.3 billion per year. The new plans will not only make people's lives easier but also give a boost to the country's £149 billion digital economy by creating new opportunities for innovation, enabling smoother, cheaper and more secure online transactions, and saving businesses time and money.

The move has been welcomed by industry and civil society groups which have praised the government's open and collaborative approach, as it works to develop a final trust framework that meets the needs of all users.

Stuart Young, Managing Director at Etime Technologies, said:

"This framework is key to developing a trusted digital identity market that will make people's lives easier and save businesses time and money.

We look forward to contributing further to these plans to help make sure the final framework works for everyone in the home buying and selling sector.

Emma Lindley, Co-founder of Women In Identity, said:

We believe that digital identity systems should be inclusive and accessible for anyone that chooses to use them.

This collaborative approach by the government in designing the trust framework is a step in the right direction towards

accountability across all stakeholders who are involved, and ensures no one is left behind.

The 'trust framework' forms part of the government's commitment to taking a leading role in developing the digital identity market without the need for national identity cards. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) will work with the digital identity community to develop the framework and aims to publish the next iteration in the summer. DCMS continues its work on proposals on laws that will underpin the digital identity market and will consult on these later this year.

Cabinet Office Minister Julia Lopez said:

Products that help digitally to verify a person's identity are becoming increasingly important as more areas of our work and home lives move online. Creating a common trust framework will give greater clarity and certainty to organisations who want to work in this field about what is expected of them. More importantly, however, it will help to deepen users' trust and confidence in digital identities and the standards we expect in the safeguarding of their personal data and privacy.

GDS is working closely with DCMS and across Government to develop guidance and products in support of the trust framework. We believe building users' confidence will be fundamental to delivering our overall ambition to make it much easier and simpler for citizens to access government services online.

Notes to editors

- The full [UK Digital Identity and Attributes Trust Framework](#) is available online, along with details of how to provide comments and feedback.
- The new proposals, drawn up by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), will help restrict opportunities for criminals and allow organisations who choose to sign up know they are meeting the necessary requirements. This will help give people confidence that particular service protects their data and privacy.
- Digital Infrastructure Minister Matt Warman chaired a series of roundtable sessions with industry and civil society groups in the autumn to hear first hand their perspectives on the opportunities and challenges involved in the government's trust framework ambitions.