

New legislation set to make digital identities more trustworthy and secure

- Organisations will need to gain a new trustmark to show they can handle people's identity data in a safe and consistent way.
- New Office for Digital Identities and Attributes established to oversee strong security and privacy standards for digital IDs

People will be able to easily and quickly prove their identity using digital methods instead of having to rely on traditional physical documents, under new plans unveiled by the government today.

Following a public consultation, the government has announced it will introduce legislation to make digital identities as trusted and secure as official documents such as passports and driving licences.

Digital identities, which are a virtual form of ID, reduce the time, effort and expense that sharing physical documents can take when people need to provide legal proof of who they are, for example when buying a home or starting a new job.

A new Office for Digital Identities and Attributes (ODIA) will be set up in the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport as an interim governing body for digital identities.

Digital identity solutions can be accessed in a number of ways such as via a phone app or website and can be used in-person or online to verify a person's identity. It will be for people and businesses to decide what digital identity technology works for them to prove their identity, should they choose to create a digital identity at all.

For example, if a person wants to prove they are over 18 to buy age-restricted products, they could create a digital identity with a trusted organisation by sharing personal information such as their name and date of birth. This digital identity could then be used to prove to a retailer they are over-18, without the need to reveal the personal information used to create the digital identity, boosting users' privacy, unlike physical documents which may disclose date of birth, name and address.

The ODIA will have the power to issue an easily recognised trustmark to certified digital identity organisations, to prove they meet the security and privacy standards needed to handle people's data in a safe and consistent way.

The ODIA will ensure trust-marked organisations adhere to the highest standards of security and privacy.

Digital identities can also help tackle fraud, which hit record highs with an estimated [5 million cases in the year ending September 2021](#), by reducing the amount of personal data shared online and making it harder for fraudsters to obtain and use stolen identities.

The government intends to bring forward the necessary legislation when parliamentary time allows to:

- Establish a robust and secure accreditation and certification process and trustmark so organisations can clearly prove they are meeting the highest security and privacy standards needed to use digital identities.
- Create a legal gateway to allow trusted organisations to carry out verification checks against official data held by public bodies to help validate a person's identity.
- Confirm the legal validity of digital forms of identification are equal to physical forms of identification, such as physical passports

It is committed to ensuring digital identities are not compulsory and people will still be able to use available paper documentation.

Data Minister Julia Lopez said:

This government is committed to unlocking the power of data to benefit people across the UK.

The legislation we're proposing will ensure that there are trusted and secure ways for people and organisations to use digital identities, should they choose to.

Heather Wheeler MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Cabinet Office, said;

The government is delivering a number of ambitious and interlinked policy initiatives to prepare the UK for the digital world, and to improve the lives of businesses and citizens.

These initiatives, alongside enabling legislation, will help ensure the UK is able to take full advantage of the opportunities that digital identities and the wider digital economy have to offer.

I would like to thank everyone who participated in the consultation exercise. By working together, and sharing knowledge, experience and expertise, we will continue to deliver transformative digital policies.

In advance of the proposed legislation, landlords, letting agents and employers will be able to use certified new technology to carry out the right to work and the right to rent checks online from the 6th April, 2022 and prove their eligibility to work or rent more easily.

Sue Daley, Director for Technology and Innovation, techUK said:

Today's announcements are a positive step forward in the UK's implementation of digital identity. techUK has welcomed DCMS's efforts in working with industry to get us to where we are today.

Given the next steps now being taken, continued cooperation between industry and government remains the best chance for a successful implementation of a digital identity ecosystem in the UK. However, we must also ensure we bring citizens on this journey with us: building public trust and confidence in Digital ID must be a key priority as we move forward.

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

Please find a link to the digital identities and consultation response [here](#)