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AccessNI

Frequently Asked Questions – FAQs

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Department of
Justice

An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt

Máinnystrie O tha Laa

Frequently Asked Questions

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1. How do I apply to become a Registered, Responsible or Umbrella Body?

If you are an organisation/charity/employer who requires AccessNI disclosure checks to be completed for your staff/volunteers you need to establish the level of disclosure checks required.

Where basic disclosure checks are required for your staff/employees/volunteers, there is no criteria to be met for this level of disclosure check. As an organisation/employer/charity you need to be processing 20 or more checks on an annual basis to be eligible to apply to become a Responsible Body. There is no fee to become registered with AccessNI as a Responsible Body, you will have to pay the relevant fee for processing the AccessNI Basic disclosure checks. The link to apply to become a Responsible Body to process Basic checks has been provided below –

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/accessni-responsible-bodies>

Where standard or enhanced disclosure checks are required for your staff/employees/volunteers, you must ensure there is eligibility for the level of disclosure check required. As an organisation/employer/charity you will need to be processing 20 or more standard/enhanced disclosure checks in total on an annual basis to be eligible to apply to become a Registered Body. There is a one-off registration fee of £195 to become a Registered Body, you will also have to pay the relevant fee for processing each Standard and Enhanced disclosure check. The link to apply to become a Registered Body to process Standard and Enhanced checks has been provided below –

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/accessni-registered-bodies>

If you wish to become registered with AccessNI as an Umbrella Body to process disclosure applications for other organisations in addition to disclosure applications for your own staff/employees/volunteers you need to complete the relevant application as detailed above, on each application there will be an option to select Umbrella Body status. There is no additional fee to select Umbrella Body status.

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2. How do I apply to become a Countersignatory for a Registered Body or Responsible Body

If your organisation/charity requires an additional Signatory to be added to the **Registered Body account**, please provide the individual with the link below along with the Lead Signatory PIN number –

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/services/apply-online-become-counter-signatory>

The individual should create a nidirect account, complete the application above and once completed submit the application. The Lead Signatory should log in to their nidirect account, check the details provided on the application, verify the applicants information against ID documents and then submit to AccessNI for processing.

Once processed by AccessNI the new Signatory will be provided details of the organisation reference number, their Signatory number and their PIN number.

If your organisation/charity requires an additional Signatory to be added to the **Responsible Body account**, please provide the individual with the link below along with the Lead Signatory PIN number –

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/accessni-responsible-bodies>

The individual should create a nidirect account, complete the application above and once completed submit the application. The Lead Signatory should log in to their nidirect account, check the details provided on the application, verify the applicant's information against ID documents and then submit to AccessNI for processing.

Once processed by AccessNI the new Signatory will be provided details of the organisation reference number, their Signatory number and their PIN number.

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3. How do I create a nidirect (nida) account

When making any application to AccessNI whether it is in relation to registration, signatory status or to complete an AccessNI disclosure at any level, the user will be

prompted to create or log into a nidirect account. Many citizens in Northern Ireland will already have a nidirect account as they are used for a number of other government services. If you already have a nidirect account use it, do not create a new one. When creating the account, you must ensure you provide your own email address which you have access to, which will allow you to -

- activate your account
- reset your password (if required)
- track status of your application (if applying for a disclosure check)
- view your digital disclosure certificate (if applying for a disclosure check)

See the guidance document below:

[Guidance document to Create a NIDirect account](#)

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4. Are nidirect and AccessNI contact email addresses identical?

The nidirect log in email address and AccessNI contact email addresses are not connected so are not required to be the same.

- Nidirect log in email – This is the email address you used to create your nidirect account. This will be used to log into your nidirect account – you can only create **one** nidirect account with any individual email address.
- AccessNI contact email – This is used by AccessNI to notify you that an application has been submitted or for any other communication from AccessNI – the same contact email address can be used frequently.

To change your nidirect account email address – go to the log in page for your nidirect account and select the option 'Manage my account details'. Log into the account with your username and password then select email address from text on right hand side of screen. Enter your new email address and confirm it then submit.

An email will be sent to the new email address providing instructions to activate your new email address. You will receive confirmation that your email address has been changed. You can log into your nidirect account with the new email address, your password will remain the same. Please note that you cannot have two nidirect accounts using the same email address.

To change your AccessNI contact email address – log into your nidirect account and at the option ‘Edit Personal Details’ you can change the contact email address.

Registered body homepage

Registered body homepage

- [View details of applications](#)
- [Manage AccessNI account](#)
- [Edit personal details](#)
- [Track status of applications](#)
- [Manage countersignatories](#)



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5. How do I change the Lead Signatory in my organisation

The current Lead Signatory can log into their nidirect account, at the section entitled ‘Manage countersignatories’ they can promote another registered Signatory to the Lead Signatory position. The current Lead Signatory will default to a Countersignatory for the organisation.

If the Lead Signatory is not available to promote an existing Countersignatory to the Lead Signatory position, an email providing all the details should be sent to AccessNI at accessni-compliance@accessni.gov.uk. The AccessNI Compliance Team will arrange for this to be completed.

If the proposed new Lead Signatory is not registered as a Signatory, they will need to apply to become a Countersignatory (see Question 2). Once the Countersignatory

application has been processed, the current Lead Signatory can promote the new Countersignatory to the Lead Signatory position.

If the Lead Signatory is no longer available or has left the organisation, please email the AccessNI Compliance Team at accessni-compliance@accessni.gov.uk who can arrange for an application to add a Countersignatory to be processed and the individual to be promoted to the Lead Signatory position.

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6. How do I change organisation details on the nidirect account

The Lead Signatory is responsible for keeping details of the organisation updated on the nidirect portal. To change details of the organisation eg address or contact number log into the nidirect account and select the option 'Manage AccessNI Account' then make the relevant changes/updates.

Registered body homepage

Registered body homepage

- [View details of applications](#)
- [Manage AccessNI account](#)
- [Edit personal details](#)
- [Track status of applications](#)
- [Manage countersignatories](#)



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7. How do I change personal details on the nidirect account

The Signatory is responsible for keeping personal details on the nidirect account up to date. To change name, contact number or email address log into your nidirect

account and at the section entitled 'Edit personal details' update the relevant information.

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8. What do I do when I get an Error Message

When completing or processing an application, if you receive an error message, please confirm what stage of the process you have reached and provide a screenshot of the error to enable AccessNI to investigate. Please send details of the error, the error message screenshot and the nidirect email address of your account to AccessNI to investigate.

accessni-compliance@accessni.gov.uk

Please note - Your countersignatory account is to be used for solely countersigning applications on behalf of the organisation. No personal applications can be completed using this account.

If you require a personal application, you need to create another nidirect account using your personal or a different email address to complete the application.

Unfortunately, regarding password re-sets for nidirect, AccessNI cannot assist here, these are sent from nidirect.

Nidirect accounts (NIDA) are owned by nidirect if you have any queries, you can contact them on the number/email below for advice.

Contact details the nidirect service Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm 0300 200 7868

Email nida@nidirect.gov.uk

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9. My Account is locked – what do I do

Please use the link below to log into your account.

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/services/log-nidirect-account>

If you are still getting account locked, please reset your password by selecting 'I've forgotten my password'.

After resetting your password, if you are still locked out please email nidirect at nida@nidirect.gov.uk requesting them to unlock your account.

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10. I am a Signatory – where can I get the Information Pack

Please find a link to the AccessNI Countersignatory Information Pack which provides a helpful guide on the AccessNI registration and application process. Please select the correct guide for your registered status:-

[AccessNI Countersignatory Information Pack](#)

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11. What do I do if I am a Registered Body and wish to become an Umbrella Body

If you are currently registered with AccessNI as a Registered Body and wish to become an Umbrella Body you need to complete the AccessNI Umbrella Body questionnaire as detailed in the link below:-

[AccessNI Umbrella Body documentation](#) (see first document)

Please confirm if you wish to become an open or closed Umbrella Body in the questionnaire.

Before you complete this questionnaire please become familiar with the additional responsibilities of an Umbrella Body by reading the AccessNI circular provided below:-

12. Why is the AccessNI PIN notification form so useful?

The AccessNI PIN notification form is a helpful document and an organisation may wish to consider utilising this document into their processes. The PIN form is a multi-purpose document which –

- provides the applicant with instructions on how to complete the disclosure application
- allows an organisation to inform applicants of their PIN number
- provides a free text section for organisations to use to facilitate their own individual needs.

The PIN notification form is available on our website at the link below and the ‘Word’ version can be amended to meet the specific needs of an organisation.

[PIN notification/ID validation form - Registered Body](#)

[PIN notification/ID validation form - Responsible Body](#)

13. Can I request details from AccessNI on processed applications?

It is not AccessNI policy or within our remit to provide information on disclosure applications processed by a Registered/Responsible Body. It is the Lead Signatory’s responsibility to export this information from their NIDirect account, on a monthly basis, using the CSV export facility or by keeping internal spreadsheets.

Please find instructions on how to export information from the AccessNI NIDirect account to excel on page two of the AccessNI Newsletter at the link below:

14. How do I share my digital AccessNI certificate with an employer or voluntary organisation?

You should log into your nidirect account to view your disclosure certificate. You will have the screen option to share your digital disclosure certificate by entering the relevant email address of the employer or voluntary organisation. If you need to share the disclosure certificate with multiple email addresses, you must enter each email address individually.

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15. How does the recipient view the AccessNI digital disclosure certificate?

When an applicant shares their digital AccessNI disclosure certificate with the recipient (eg employer/voluntary organisation/Registered Body), the recipient will receive an email. The email will contain a link entitled “View the certificate” which the recipient should select to view details of the disclosure certificate. The recipient only has a 5-day time-frame to view the AccessNI digital disclosure certificate and they can only view it once.

If the recipient did not view the certificate within the 5-day time-frame or if they need to view the certificate again they need to ask the Applicant to share their certificate again.

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16. How do I get a Basic check?

If you require a Basic disclosure check, there are two options to consider:

- through a Responsible Body using the link below, a PIN number will be required from the Responsible Body organisation to allow you to complete this application.

[Apply online for a basic check through a Responsible Body](#)

- as an individual using the link below, a PIN number will not be required to complete this application but payment details will be required from the applicant.

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/services/apply-online-basic-check>

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17. What documents are acceptable as identity documents

If you or an employee are applying for any level of an AccessNI disclosure, you will firstly need to create a nidirect account and provide the relevant identity documents (see question no 3). Once the nidirect account has been activated you can proceed to complete the relevant AccessNI disclosure application. As part of the application, identity documentation will have to be uploaded to the application before it can be submitted to AccessNI for processing.

Details of acceptable identity documents is available at Annex A on the link below:

[AccessNI identity check guidance for Signatories](#)

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18. Are online bank statements acceptable

Yes, with effect from 18 March 2025, nidirect conduct a digital identity check on each applicant when they create their nidirect account. Nidirect will verify the applicant's name, date of birth and current address. An on-line bank statement can be provided as an identity document from this date.

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19. What is Regulated activity with children/adults?

To be eligible for the AccessNI enhanced disclosure with a barred list check an applicant must be working/volunteering in a position of Regulated Activity.

Regulated Activity can be categorised into two areas:-

1. Regulated activity with children which includes:-

Teaching, training, supervising, coaching children on a frequent* basis (*once per week on a weekly basis or four times per month); overnight supervision (this only needs to occur on one occasion); providing healthcare; providing personal care; driving a vehicle for children.

2. Regulated activity with adults which includes:-

Providing healthcare; providing personal care; social work; assistance with general household duties (which requires the role holder to have access to an individual's money to do their shopping or pay their bills); power of attorney responsibilities; conveying to/from medical or social care appointments due to age or disability issues.

For further information on regulated activity please see the links provided below:-

[Regulated Activity in relation to Children | Department of Health \(health-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/regulated-activity-children)

[Regulated Activity in relation to Adults | Department of Health \(health-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/regulated-activity-adults)

The definition of Regulated Activity changed in September 2012. Where a position/role met the previous definition of Regulated Activity there is eligibility for an AccessNI enhanced only disclosure with **no** barred list check. Further details of the previous definition are provided in the link below:-

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/vetting-and-barring-scheme>

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20. What countries is an Access Certificate for?

The disclosure certificate required for a position will be determined by the location in which the role takes place. For example, if the teaching role is in Northern Ireland an AccessNI disclosure is required or if the nursing position is in England, a DBS disclosure is required.

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21. Can AccessNI include checks on someone from another country?

When recruiting an individual from another country to work or volunteer in a position of Regulated Activity in NI an AccessNI disclosure check can be processed.

The AccessNI disclosure application should be completed in the normal way and the relevant ID documentation check completed in line with the Guidance document for AccessNI Signatories provided at the link below:-

[AccessNI identity check guidance for signatories](#)

Arrangements are currently in place for AccessNI Basic, Standard and Enhanced disclosures to be processed for individuals working with **children and adult groups** with a Republic of Ireland (ROI) address within the last five years.

Arrangements are also in place for AccessNI Enhanced disclosures to be processed for individuals working with **children** from any of the EU countries.

If the individual has not lived in the UK or ROI and was not born in one of the EU countries there is unlikely to be any information held by the Law Enforcement Data Service. If this is the case, the organisation would need to consider if it would be helpful to process an AccessNI disclosure application. Please check your organisation's safeguarding policy and consider asking the applicant to provide a Certificate of Good Conduct. One further action you may wish to undertake for foreign nationals is a check of the website of the police force in the country of origin, particularly if 'most wanted' details, etc are published there.

See information provided at the link below:-

22. What do I do if a message says my PIN number is incorrect?

When applying for an AccessNI disclosure application, if the applicant receives an error message advising that an incorrect PIN number has been provided, please check:-

- has the applicant been provided with the correct PIN number. If an organisation is registered with AccessNI as a Registered Body (to process standard and enhanced disclosures) and as a Responsible Body (to process basic disclosures) they will have two PIN numbers. Make sure the correct PIN number has been provided to the applicant for the level of disclosure they require.
- is the applicant completing the correct application for the level of disclosure check required.

If the above issues have been checked, and the problem continues, please request the applicant to provide a screen shot of the page and email it to AccessNI at

BusinessSupport@accessni.gov.uk

23. I don't have a National Insurance number – what do I do?

When completing the disclosure application form, if an applicant does not have a national insurance number they should leave this section blank. The applicant will be offered two options to explain why they have no national insurance number -

- under 16 years of age or
- a non-UK citizen.

If an applicant has lost their national insurance number and do not know it, they should enter XXXXXXXXXX at this section of the form.

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24. When I log into my nidirect account, I am requested to upload documentation to my account. Why?

Anyone who logs into their nidirect account from 18 March 2025 will be asked to upgrade their nidirect account to LOA2 level, if not already upgraded. You will need to upload the required identity documentation and a selfie for your nidirect account to be upgraded. NOTE: You will also be required to upload two identity documents to the AccessNI online application before submitting to the Registered Body/Employer.

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25. Insufficient documents uploaded to uplift nidirect account to LOA2 level – what do I do?

You should check that the information on your account is up-to-date. If you have recently married or changed your name, your identity document may not match the name details on your account.

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26. How do I update the information on my nidirect account?

When you go to the log in page for your nidirect account there is an option at the bottom to “Manage my account details” select this option and update your personal details. A guidance document is also available on the DoJ website.

[Guidance document to update your nidirect account](#)

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27. My name/address is not correct on the AccessNI application form. How can I correct/update this information?

You need to update the details on your nidirect account. When you go to the log in page for your nidirect account there is an option at the bottom to “Manage my account details” select this option and update your personal details. A guidance document is also available on the DoJ website.

[Guidance document to update your nidirect account](#)

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28. I am a parent/guardian completing the application for a child under 16 – my details appear on the AccessNI application. How do I provide details for my child?

On the AccessNI enhanced application at step 3 please tick the box to indicate “I am a Parent/Guardian completing an application for a person under 16 who lives at my address.” The populated fields will clear to allow you to add details for the child under 16. The address cannot be changed i.e. the application should be completed by someone at the same address.

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29. I live outside Northern Ireland, can I create a nidirect account?

Yes, you do not need to have a Northern Ireland address to create a nidirect account. Do not use the postcode look up facility to provide your address, you must insert it manually.

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30. As an AccessNI Signatory, do I no longer need to view the applicant's identity documents in the presence of the applicant to approve an AccessNI disclosure application?

It is no longer the responsibility of the AccessNI Signatory to verify the identity of the applicant by checking identity documents in the presence of the applicant. If an applicant creates their nidirect account on or after 18 March 2025, it will be at LOA2 level and nidirect will verify the identity of the applicant. As a Signatory, it is your responsibility to ensure:-

- the correct identity documents have been uploaded to the AccessNI online application.
- all details on the identity documents have been accurately recorded on the AccessNI online application.
- you query the absence of any previously used surnames ie if the applicant's title is Mrs but no previous surname was provided, you should ask if they previously used any other surname or request sight of a birth certificate.

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31. Can I provide an eVisa document as a form of identity for my AccessNI online application?

Yes, you need to provide your share code on the AccessNI online application. The AccessNI Signatory can view your eVisa document by accessing the government site weblink and your share code. A link to the government site weblink will be provided on the online application for AccessNI Signatories to view the document.

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32. Can I use the same two identity documents to create the nidirect account and to complete the AccessNI application?

Yes, if your identity documents meet the nidirect and AccessNI requirements they can be used for both.

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33. As an AccessNI signatory what do I do if the applicant submits incorrect documents or their details need amending?

As an AccessNI Signatory, you can reject the identity document(s) provided by the applicant, the applicant will provide alternative identity documents but will not be able to edit any other section of the application. If the details of an applicant need to be amended, the Signatory should return the application to the applicant and request them to update their nidirect account.

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34. As an AccessNI signatory do I no longer need to retain copies of identity documents?

No you do not need to retain copies of identity documents for AccessNI purposes, these documents will be available on the AccessNI application which will be retained for 90 days from the date the disclosure certificate is issued. If you need to retain the identity documents for another purpose this is a decision for your organisation to take.

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35. Can a self-employed individual get an AccessNI enhanced disclosure check?

With effect from 17 February 2026, a self-employed individual who works for themselves or a personal employee who is employed directly by a private individual or a member of their family can apply for their own AccessNI enhanced disclosure check if they are providing regulated activity. The self-employed worker or personal employee must apply for their own AccessNI check through an AccessNI approved Umbrella Body - [List of AccessNI Umbrella Bodies](#). The AccessNI Umbrella Body will confirm if there is eligibility for the AccessNI enhanced disclosure and provide the self-employed worker or personal employee with a link to the AccessNI application form and the PIN number to use when completing their disclosure application.

A self-employed individual or personal employee can apply for their own AccessNI Basic disclosure without using the Services of an Umbrella Body using the link provided below -

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/services/apply-online-basic-check>

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36. What should a self-employed worker or personal employee do with their enhanced disclosure check when they receive it?

The self-employed worker or personal employee will receive a digital disclosure certificate from AccessNI, this digital certificate should be shared with the individual(s) who is considering employing their services. The AccessNI enhanced certificate will assist individuals to make a recruitment decision regarding the employment of the self-employed worker or personal employee.

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37. What should the reviewer be checking for when they view an AccessNI enhanced disclosure certificate for a self-employed worker or personal employee?

When anyone is reviewing an AccessNI enhanced disclosure certificate for a self-employed worker or personal employee, they should consider the information in the guidance document provided by AccessNI before making a recruitment decision. A 'Guide for individuals viewing self-employed workers or personal employees AccessNI enhanced checks' is available on the nidirect website at the following link: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/guides-forms-and-templates-accessni-employers>.

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38. Can I raise a dispute or appeal against information disclosed on my AccessNI disclosure certificate?

Yes, you can raise a dispute or appeal against information disclosed on your AccessNI disclosure certificate.

You must raise a dispute or appeal within 90 days of the disclosure certificate being issued to you.

You can **raise a dispute** with AccessNI if you think any information on your certificate is wrong or shouldn't be there.

Further details on how to raise a dispute are available on the nidirect website as detailed on the link below:

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/disputing-accessni-certificate>

You can **raise an appeal** if you feel the criminal record information disclosed on a standard or enhanced certificate shouldn't be there or isn't relevant to the position you're applying for, you can ask for the certificate to be reviewed by the Independent

Reviewer. Further details on how to raise an appeal are available on the nidirect website as detailed on the link below:

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/appeal-accessni-certificate>

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39. How do I raise a dispute or appeal information disclosed on my AccessNI disclosure certificate?

If you wish to raise a dispute or appeal information disclosed on your disclosure certificate you need to log into your account. You will have an option to view, share or dispute/appeal your disclosure certificate. Select the option to 'dispute or 'appeal' and provide all the relevant information requested on the screen before submitting to AccessNI.

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40. How long does the appeal/dispute process take?

AccessNI aims to respond to 90 per cent of disputes and appeals within 21 calendar days.

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41. How does a countersignatory or applicant change the email address they used to create their account and MFA code?

The AccessNI countersignatory or applicant should go to the nidirect log in page and select 'Manage my account details' as detailed in the screenshot below:

Username

Password

Sign in

Create account

[I've forgotten my password](#)

[Manage my account details](#)

The AccessNI countersignatory or applicant should enter their current email address and password as detailed below:

Manage your nidirect account

Username

Password

Sign in

[I've forgotten my password](#)

The countersignatory or applicant should select the link to 'Email address' on right-hand side of screen as detailed below:

Manage your nidirect account

It is important to keep your account details up to date.

This saves time when using nidirect services and ensures we hold the correct information about you.

Some changes may need email activation or require you to reconfirm your identity.

Links

[Personal details](#)

[Email address](#)

The Applicant or countersignatory should enter their new email address and enter again to confirm then select the submit button. See below:

Manage your nidirect account

It is important to keep your account details up to date.

This saves time when using nidirect services and ensures we hold the correct information about you.

Some changes may need email activation or require you to reconfirm your identity.

Links

[Personal details](#)

[Email address](#)

The applicant or countersignatory will now see the screen below and will be required to activate the change. They will receive an email to their new email address.

Activation required

In order to complete your email change you need to activate your email address before you can log on with it. We have sent a confirmation email to **harrypotter.accessni@gmail.com**

Follow the instructions in the email to activate this email address.

This request for change of email will only be valid for 24 hours. If you do not activate your email within 24 hours you won't be able to login with the new email address.

[Return to nidirect](#)

You have received this email because you have requested that your email address be changed for a nidirect account. Click the link below to activate this email address.

This change of email address will only be valid for 24 hours. If you do not activate your account within 24 hours you won't be able to login with the new email address.

<https://identity.nidirect.gov.uk/Customer/Account/ValidateNewEmailAddress/13a5bee6-6477-4cab-9934-079e14545ed8>

If this email is unexpected, and you haven't requested an email change, please ignore it.

Once the applicant or countersignatory clicks the activation link they will see the confirmation below:



Email address changed

Your nidirect email address is now active. Continue to nidirect to use the service you require.

[Continue to nidirect](#)

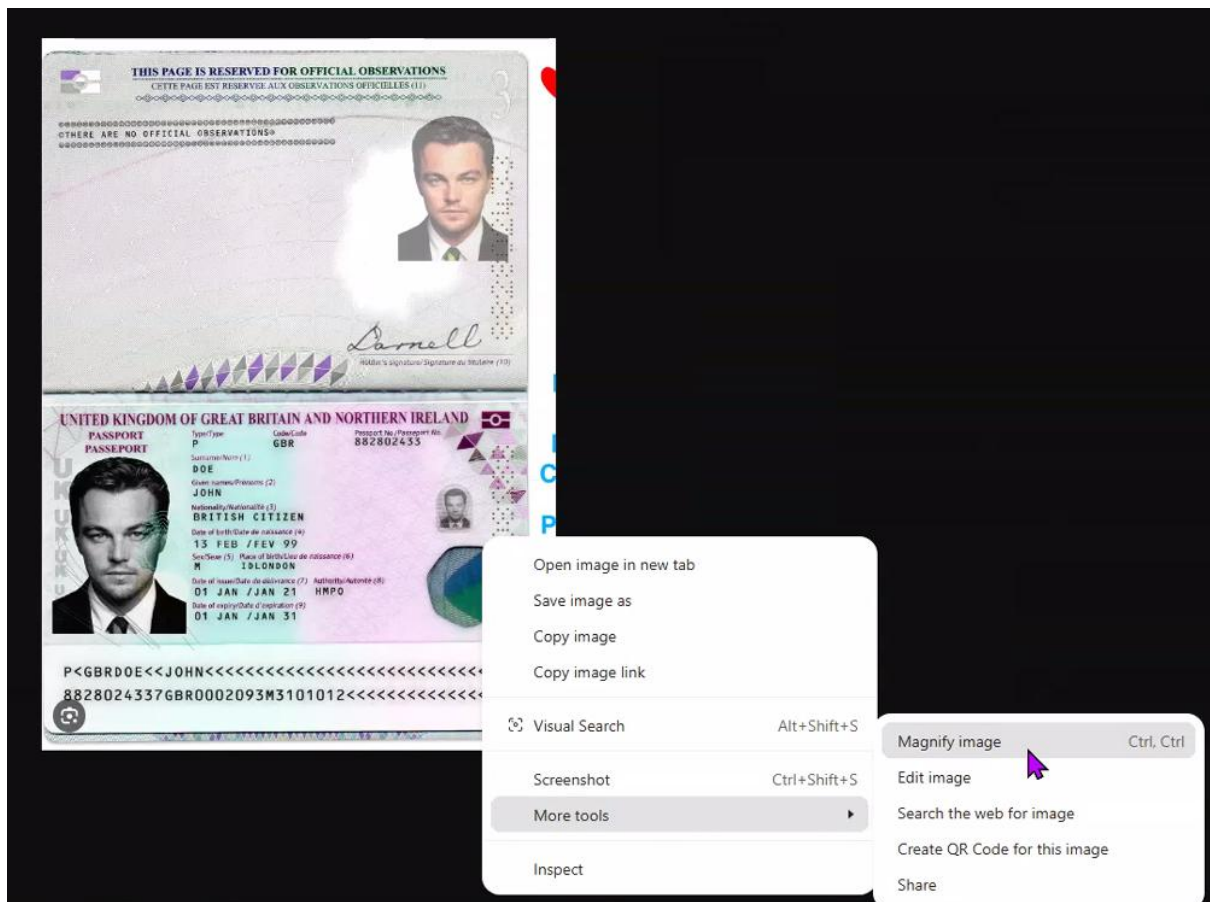
The applicant or countersignatory can now log into their nidirect account using the new email address and their password will remain the same.

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/services/log-accessni>

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42. How do you rotate and zoom into the uploaded ID documents attached to the AccessNI application?

Right click the image then > More Tools > Magnify Image



You then get options to magnify and rotate as pictured below.

This small menu will appear at the bottom left corner of the image.



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43. What is a Body PIN?

A Body PIN is a six-digit number allocated to an organisation registered with AccessNI and it works in the same way as a Signatory PIN. An organisation can chose to circulate the Body PIN to applicants/clients to permit them to complete an AccessNI application. An organisation does not have to use the Body PIN they can chose to circulate a Signatory PIN.

The benefit of circulating a Body PIN means it will never become inactive unlike a Signatory PIN which becomes inactive when the Signatory leaves an organisation or moves on. Further information on the AccessNI Body PIN is available on circular 3/2026 at the link below:

<https://www.justice-ni.gov.uk/publications/accessni-circulars-2026>

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