

GOV.UK Verify Q&A

This document contains the lines to take in response to enquiries across a range of subjects relating to GOV.UK Verify and the Identity Assurance Programme.

The purpose of this document is to standardise the responses to common questions, whether the queries come to us from users via zendesk, social media or Cabinet Office press office.

The standard answers should be used as appropriate to the user query. They may need to be framed differently based on the user need and the specific question being asked but the answers below provide the latest information about GOV.UK Verify so should be used to inform all answers.

This document is correct as of 24/09/15. It will updated when lines change and expanded as new common questions arise. See change list at end of document.

Occasionally you will see suggested lines in this document. These are awaiting agreement at the weekly comms/user support meeting and should not be used without first speaking to the author of the suggestion.

This document is owned and may only be amended by the GOV.UK Verify team - please contact Janet Hughes or Rebecca Hales if you want to propose changes.

Contents

[How GOV.UK Verify works and why it's needed](#)

[GOV.UK Verify top lines](#)

[What is GOV.UK Verify for?](#)

[Why is GOV.UK Verify needed?](#)

[How does GOV.UK Verify work \(simplified\)?](#)

[What's the benefit for users \(short answer\)?](#)

[What's the benefit for users \(long answer\)?](#)

[How does GOV.UK Verify work \(overview of main elements\)?](#)

[Using certified companies rather than doing it all inside government or having just one supplier](#)

[A standards-based approach](#)

[How does GOV.UK Verify work \(for users\)?](#)

[Can I re-use my GOV.UK Verify account?](#)

[What is LOA1 / basic identity account?](#)

[Why did the GOV.UK Verify basic identity accounts trial end?](#)

[What user support does GOV.UK provide?](#)

[Aren't there ways other than GOV.UK Verify to be able to prove that a person using a service is who they say they are?](#)

[Helpful information](#)

[List of links to service start pages](#)

[Help! GOV.UK Verify can't verify me...](#)

[No reason specified \(general line\)](#)

[And I'm worried it's my fault](#)

[There are issues with my credit card](#)

[I am under the age of 19](#)

[My bank account was opened before 2007](#)

[I have no credit history](#)

[I only have a paper driving licence](#)

[I don't have a passport or driving licence](#)

[I don't have a mobile phone](#)

[I live in a rural area with no mobile signal](#)

[I have additional needs \(HMRC textphone\)](#)

[I have a foreign passport](#)

[I have a foreign address](#)

[My mobile phone is registered abroad](#)

[I'm a citizen of Northern Ireland with an RoI passport](#)

[I'm a citizen of Northern Ireland with an NI driving licence](#)

[The certified company said I needed a passport or driving licence but it failed my verification before I even entered those details](#)

[The certified company couldn't recognise my address](#)

[The certified company couldn't recognise my driving licence details](#)

[The certified company couldn't recognise my UK passport details](#)

[Even though I was told Experian could verify me with one document](#)

[I gave all the correct data but it still didn't work](#)

[What happens if GOV.UK Verify can't verify my identity?](#)

[Does GOV.UK Verify work for...](#)

[Does GOV.UK Verify work for people with mobile devices?](#)

[Does GOV.UK Verify work for people wishing to access Scottish government services?](#)

[Does GOV.UK Verify work for businesses or organisations?](#)

[Does GOV.UK Verify work for people with a need for assisted digital?](#)

[Does GOV.UK Verify work for people with disabilities?](#)

[Does GOV.UK Verify work for people without driving licences?](#)

[Service-specific issues](#)

[Why don't all digital services need to use GOV.UK Verify?](#)

[What can I use 'Help your family and friends with their tax' for?](#)

[Why is DVLA adopting GOV.UK Verify if the current process works fine?](#)

[What is a unique tax reference and why do I need it for GOV.UK Verify?](#)

[Why is online.hmrc.gov.uk listed as not being hosted in the UK?](#)

[I have received an email from HMRC about a tax refund](#)

[How can I now access tax credits online?](#)

[Certified company-specific issues](#)

[Why don't the certified companies' services look like GOV.UK?](#)

[Why is government paying commercial companies when it could do this work itself -](#)

[and probably cheaper?](#)

[Why is government paying commercial companies when it already knows who I am?](#)

[Why are there so many certified companies to choose from?](#)

[How does a certified company become a certified company?](#)

[Of the 8 certified companies on Framework 1, why did only 5 sign contracts?](#)

[How do certified companies make money?](#)

[What are the certified companies' service hours?](#)

[What if I forget my sign-in details?](#)

[Can I change the certified company I have registered with, or use more than one?](#)

[I no longer want to use the certified company I selected, how can I get them to delete my details from their system?](#)

[I have verified but cannot log in \(incomplete verification\)](#)

[I am concerned about using a foreign-owned company to verify me](#)

[The contract with Digidentity is subject to Dutch law and the data is held under Dutch data protection laws. Why has this been allowed to happen?](#)

[Do the certified companies have to meet the Digital by Default service standard?](#)

[What is Digidentity's Worldpay method and how does it work?](#)

[Can Digidentity verify me using other card types?](#)

[Credit history](#)

[Will using GOV.UK Verify impact my credit score?](#)

[Will using GOV.UK Verify leave a mark on my credit file and affect my record?](#)

[Are the certified companies performing a credit check on me?](#)

[What relevance do my financial agreements have to do with using government services?](#)

[The certified company is asking me about an account I don't recognise](#)

[Government Gateway](#)

[What about Gateway?](#)

[Why can't I use Government Gateway?](#)

[How is GOV.UK Verify different to Government Gateway?](#)

[Security, data and privacy](#)

[Does GOV.UK Verify protect my identity, data and privacy?](#)

[I'm worried about the security of giving a private company my details](#)

[How secure is the service?](#)

[Does GOV.UK Verify allow for mass surveillance?](#)

[Is government data safe and protected?](#)

[Will the certified company know what government service I'm trying to use?](#)

[What information about me do certified companies share with the government service?](#)

[Do certified companies have access to government data?](#)

[Can certified companies use my data for anything else?](#)

[How do we plan to regulate GOV.UK Verify and handle complaints?](#)

[Do certified companies have to meet privacy standards and abide by data protection laws?](#)

[How are certified companies certified / regulated / controlled?](#)

[The Cabinet Office is working closely with a standards certification organisation \(tScheme\), who are one of the certification bodies providing the necessary independent assessment of the framework suppliers for compliance with the good practice guides.](#)

[How is GOV.UK Verify protected from cyber attack?](#)

[Prevention:](#)

[Detection:](#)

[Mitigation:](#)

[What GOV.UK Verify does for security and fraud \(high level summary\)](#)

[GOV.UK Verify is the new way to prove who you are online so you can use government services safely, like viewing your driving licence or assessing your tax.](#)

[What is the Privacy and Consumer Advisory Group?](#)

[What are the Identity Assurance Principles?](#)

[The federated approach to identity assurance](#)

[Why is the government using certified companies \(short answer\)?](#)

[Why is the government using certified companies \(long answer\)?](#)

[What role is the government playing, then?](#)

[Why are you forcing me into a contract with a private company?](#)

[How are the commercial relationships / contracts with certified companies managed?](#)

[Cabinet Office contracts with certified companies](#)

[What is the Document Checking Service?](#)

[The status of the Identity Assurance programme and the future development of GOV.UK Verify](#)

[Moving from private to public beta](#)

[When will GOV.UK Verify be live?](#)

[Has GOV.UK Verify been assessed against the Digital by Default Service Standard?](#)

[Which government services will use GOV.UK Verify?](#)

[Expanding GOV.UK Verify beyond central government services \(general line\)](#)

[About Procurement 2](#)

[Will a Welsh language version of the service be available to users? When?](#)

[Will local government services use GOV.UK Verify?](#)

[Who will and won't be able to use GOV.UK Verify \(success rate\)?](#)

[Why did the success rate drop after the self-assessment trial?](#)

[Will GOV.UK Verify be used for age verification in future?](#)

[Identity Assurance Programme information](#)

[What is the programme's mandate?](#)

[How is the programme funded?](#)

[How is the programme working with European partners on identity assurance?](#)

[What are eIDs?](#)

[List of published references](#)

[Published references for further information](#)

[The private sector](#)

[How the Identity Assurance Programme works with industry \(through OIX\)](#)

[How does OIX run its projects?](#)

[Information about the OIX Alpha Projects](#)

[Why do private sector organisations participate in OIX projects?](#)

[The sharing economy: how GOV.UK Verify will be re-used across the private sector](#)

[Guidance for social media channels](#)

[Rules for engaging with individual users through our social media channels](#)

[Rules for referring to certified companies on our social media channels / in response to media enquiries](#)

[Change list](#)

[Update to ‘Do certified companies have access to government data?’ to correct a typo in reference to improvements on the blog “what we are doing about this” to “what we are doing to improve the service”](#)

[“there are other posts on the blog” to there are posts on our blog”](#)

[The system does not recognise my driving licence - additional wording to check UK DVLA issued photocard licence.](#)

[I don’t have a mobile - now updated to include improvement to service](#)

[Added response to question ‘Does GOV.UK Verify allow for mass surveillance following blog post and questions from The Register?’](#)

[Added high level overview of what GOV.UK Verify does for security and fraud following MCO briefing](#)

[Added lines Digi/Worldpay](#)

How GOV.UK Verify works and why it’s needed

GOV.UK Verify top lines

- GOV.UK Verify is the new way to prove who you are online so you can access digital services securely and safely and at your convenience and without having to use postal or face-to-face services.
- GOV.UK Verify is a new service, being delivered in a new way for the first time anywhere in the world. We’re building a new market of identity services that will continue to grow and improve over time, whilst designing user privacy and control into the system from the start.
- GOV.UK Verify provides one consistent, safe service that all of government can use, rather than each department inventing and paying separately for its own separate approach which would be wasteful for government and more complex and difficult for users
- We’re doing this in a new way, setting clear consistent standards and then freeing the private sector to innovate and compete. We’ve procured a service, rather than a

detailed technical specification, and we've contracted in a new way with a range of competing suppliers. This means we can see continuous innovation and investment, rather than languishing in outdated specifications and costly change mechanisms - this is particularly important when we're investing in dynamic markets like technology and digital

- We're gradually scaling and developing the service - right now the service is in beta - people can use GOV.UK Verify to access 7 services including doing their self-assessment tax return, claiming a tax refund, and claiming redundancy payments. This year we'll be adding more as the service grows from being used by thousands to tens of thousands of people every day.

- Rather than government seeking to verify individuals' identity online and manage their login credentials, we are using a range of certified companies which users can choose from. The certified companies operate according to published government standards. The nine contracted companies under Framework 2 are:
 - Experian (joined GOV.UK Verify public beta October 2014)
 - Digidentity (joined GOV.UK Verify public beta December 2014)
 - The Post Office (joined GOV.UK Verify public beta March 2015)
 - Verizon (joined GOV.UK Verify public beta May 2015)
 - Barclays
 - GB Group
 - Morpho
 - PayPal
 - Royal Mail

- Privacy and consumer control are designed into the service - the programme has been working with a [Privacy and Consumer Advisory Group](#) for about 3 years. There is no central database or persistent identifier. Because no single organisation has all your information, your data is more secure.

What is GOV.UK Verify for?

GOV.UK Verify allows you to prove it's really you when you use a digital service - it protects you from other people accessing your details by pretending to be you. GOV.UK Verify allows you to prove your identity without having to phone, sending things in the post or attend a counter service. This means you can access services at your own convenience and in one sitting.

Over time you'll be able to securely access more services using the same GOV.UK Verify sign-in details.

Why is GOV.UK Verify needed?

GOV.UK Verify is an essential part of the digital transformation of government, because it will enable government services to give people access to their data and services digitally by default, rather than having to attend counter services, make phone calls or send things through the post.

As we make more services digital by default, we're making it possible for people to see and amend sensitive data about themselves and giving people the ability to complete financial

transactions with government entirely online. As we do this, we need to make sure people only have access to their own records and services. Otherwise we would be leaving digital services open to identity fraud.

GOV.UK Verify replaces face to face and postal methods of identity proofing and verification. Before GOV.UK Verify, it was not possible for anyone to prove their identity entirely online to the level of confidence that's needed for many of the more complex or sensitive digital services, without having to send or receive things through the post or attend a counter service in person.

How does GOV.UK Verify work (simplified)?

GOV.UK Verify is a new service which will enable you to complete digital transactions in a secure, fast and convenient manner. The service uses certified companies to verify your identity. GOV.UK Verify will replace Government Gateway for individuals by April 2016.

When you access the service you will be asked a series of pre-qualifying questions to help to direct you towards the certified companies that may be able to verify your identity.

After this point you will be able to choose a certified company. To help you make this decision you will see links with more information about each company.

After you have chosen the company you wish to verify your identity with, you will be asked a series of questions so the certified company can be sure that no one is pretending to be you. They will ask you a selection of questions that only you know the answer to. All the information that the certified companies ask is information that is available from your credit file. The certified companies are not carrying out a credit check.

After the company has verified your identity you will see a link to the government service that you wish to access. If you click the link you will be sent back to the government service that you wish to access and you will be able to complete your transaction.

What's the benefit for users (short answer)?

GOV.UK Verify is fast and secure, and once you've registered for a verified identity account you can access an increasing number of government services using the same account.

What's the benefit for users (long answer)?

GOV.UK Verify enables citizens to verify themselves once and then use the login created during the process to access any digital government service safely, securely and entirely online at their convenience. Currently it is necessary to have different login details from different departments sent through the post, thus increasing the time between wanting to transact with a department holding some of your personal data and actually being able to do it, as well as the user having to remember lots of different logins. With GOV.UK Verify, you create one login with a certified company of your choice and then use that to interact with any department at any time. There are currently 7 services available via GOV.UK Verify but many more will move over in the next year whilst the service is in public beta. In the meantime, we are working to improve GOV.UK Verify and the service of the certified companies, so your feedback is valuable to us and will help make us better.

How does GOV.UK Verify work (overview of main elements)?

The programme has worked with industry, privacy and consumer groups and other experts to develop an efficient and effective approach to identity assurance, based on user choice and user control over their own data, but without creating an identity database or single identifier used across government.

The main elements of the way the service works are as follows.

Using certified companies rather than doing it all inside government or having just one supplier

People will be able to choose from a range of certified companies. Users can choose to register with one or more of these companies.

Certified companies have to be certified as meeting Government and industry-agreed protocols and standards. They have to demonstrate that they have appropriate information security arrangements in place (according to international standards) and be accredited by tScheme for the quality of their service. They also have to pass through a number of contractual 'gates' where they must demonstrate to the Cabinet Office that their solutions are in line with contractual requirements.

See this blogpost about what it means to be a 'certified company' for further detail:
<https://identityassurance.blog.gov.uk/2014/12/11/what-it-means-to-be-a-certified-company/>

A standards-based approach

Our hub and supplier services are being developed based on openly published standards and Good Practice Guides (GPG's) that have been developed in close collaboration with government departments, CESG (The National Technical Authority for Information Assurance) and industry partners.

We have published guidance that explains the standards a certified company has to meet, and how they can meet them, rather than specifying technologies or processes.

The Government has set standards for different levels of assurance for different levels of risk in transactions. The requirements which will need to be met in order to achieve a particular level of assurance are set out in the standards. Each department will decide what level of assurance is required in order to access each of its digital services.

GOV.UK Verify currently provides identity assurance at level of assurance 2, which means that on the balance of probability the user is who they say they are. This provides users with a verified identity account that is sufficient for most digital by default transactions. See this blogpost for an explanation of what's involved when a certified company verifies someone's identity for the first time:

[\(https://identityassurance.blog.gov.uk/2014/11/21/how-does-a-certified-company-establish-that-its-really-you/\)](https://identityassurance.blog.gov.uk/2014/11/21/how-does-a-certified-company-establish-that-its-really-you/)

Before GOV.UK Verify, it was not possible for anyone to prove their identity entirely online to the level of confidence (LOA2) that's needed for many of the more complex or sensitive digital services (without having to send or receive things through the post or attend a counter service in person).

These standards could be applied to services outside central government, such as local authorities, and private sector services like those in the banking, mobile phone and international travel sectors. For example, LOA2 identity assurance can be used towards meeting banks' obligations under Know Your Customer requirements.

The standards are about managing risk - there is no solution (offline or digital) that provides a 100% guarantee that a user is who they say they are.

Identity assurance is not the only protection against fraud for any given service - they will also have in place protective monitoring, transaction monitoring and other measures to prevent and detect fraud and attack.

How does GOV.UK Verify work (for users)?

If a person wants to use a service that includes GOV.UK Verify, they will be asked to select the start link for GOV.UK Verify and asked to verify their identity using a certified company.

The certified company will verify the person's name, address, and date of birth, and send that data along with the asserted data about gender (which the person may also provide but are not required to and it is not verified) back through the hub to the government service.

To verify that the person is who they say they are, the certified company may ask them some questions or other checks using photo identification to make sure their identity is real and not fraudulent, and that the user is the real owner of the identity. To achieve the required level of assurance, the certified company has to validate evidence across a range of categories, check that the identity has been active over time, and check counter-fraud records. See this post which explains what certified companies have to do (November 2014):

<https://identityassurance.blog.gov.uk/2014/11/21/how-does-a-certified-company-establish-that-it-s-really-you/>

The certified company will send the validated data about the user (name, address, date of birth and gender) back to the hub, and the hub will send it on to the government service the user wants to access.

The government service will match that data to the correct record for the user within the service, and give the user access to their record or account within that service.

Once a user has a verified identity account with a certified company, they can use it to sign in to an increasing range of services.

Can I re-use my GOV.UK Verify account?

Yes. When you create a GOV.UK Verify verified identity account with a certified company, you can use that account to access an increasing range of government services. Once your account

is set up, it takes less than a minute to verify your identity each time you need to use a GOV.UK service.

What is LOA1 / basic identity account?

We are investigating whether GOV.UK Verify will also provide level of assurance 1 (LOA1) for authentication. At Level 1 there is no requirement for the identity of the user to be proven - they self-assert who they are.

LOA1 offers a lower level of assurance that the user is who they say they are than LOA2. The journey is designed to maximise the number of users who are able to be verified to LOA2 while providing the alternative of an LOA1 basic account to users who are either unsuccessful or unlikely to be successful in reaching LOA2. This will allow more users to proceed through the digital channel for the government service they wish to access.

Users can return to their basic identity account at a time when they have a more diverse set of supporting data to hand - i.e their passport or bank statements - and use these to 'upgrade' their level of authentication to allow them to access other services on GOV.UK that require LOA2.

A trial of the basic identity account began in June 2015 and ended in July 2015. You can read about it on our blog:

<https://identityassurance.blog.gov.uk/2015/06/11/basic-identity-accounts-trial/>

<https://identityassurance.blog.gov.uk/2015/07/13/basic-identity-accounts-trial-an-update/>

[No connected services are currently using basic identity accounts.](#)

We are analysing the statistics and user feedback from the trial and will use our findings to continue to work with departments and certified companies to develop and expand GOV.UK Verify before it goes [live in April 2016.](#)

This document contains further questions and answers about the trial:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1veouAjk_7OGTXmJYa5BBQgslaK5QhyvkKqLe_3mQPIU/edit

Why did the GOV.UK Verify basic identity accounts trial end?

Basic identity accounts were introduced as a trial forming part of our public [beta.](#) The aim was to investigate whether basic identity accounts could help people whose identity we could verify using GOV.UK Verify access relatively low-risk services on GOV.UK. The trial was intended to run for a short period to allow us to test basic identity accounts with a limited number of users, gathering sufficient feedback to inform if, and how, those accounts may be used in future.

What user support does GOV.UK provide?

GOV.UK will provide 2nd/3rd line user support and technical support for GOV.UK Verify from 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday via email, and tech support on an on-call basis outside those hours. Support will be scaled up to meet user needs as more certified companies join the service in 2015.

Aren't there ways other than GOV.UK Verify to be able to prove that a person using a service is who they say they are?

When people use digital services, it's important to be able to trust that it's really them and not someone fraudulently using their identity to access services. The risks for digital services are different to those for paper services, so there are specific published standards for digital services and how risks should be assessed and mitigated - see Good Practice Guide 43 - Requirements for Secure Delivery of Online Public Services -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/requirements-for-secure-delivery-of-online-public-services>). GPG 43 sets out levels of identity assurance, and [GOV.UK Verify](#) is a way to achieve level of assurance 2 entirely digitally. The [GOV.UK Verify](#) certified companies have to continue to verify that it's really you, at the same level of confidence as when they initially verified your identity. The standards for doing this are set out in Good Practice Guide 45 - Identity Proofing and Verification of an Individual - see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/identity-proofing-and-verification-of-an-individual>.

However, [GOV.UK Verify](#) has been designed to meet a number of other objectives as well as this overall objective of enabling trusted digital transactions. First, we have built [GOV.UK Verify](#) to meet the identity assurance principles developed for us by our [Privacy and Consumer Advisory Group](#). These principles are designed to protect people's privacy and put them in control of their data. Secondly, we are aiming to create a new market of identity assurance services that can meet identity assurance needs in the wider public and private sectors, rather than building a solution that meets the need for identity assurance only for central government services. Thirdly, we're building a way for people to access all central government services, rather than each department or service separately building and managing its own way to establish trust in digital transactions. This cross-government approach is designed to be better value, more secure and more convenient for users - people will only have to prove their identity once, and then they can use their log-in credentials to access an increasing range of services.

Helpful information

List of links to service start pages

Car tax: <https://www.gov.uk/update-company-car-details>

Rural payments: <https://www.gov.uk/rural-payments>

Self-assessment: <https://www.gov.uk/log-in-file-self-assessment-tax-return>

Claim redundancy: <https://www.gov.uk/claim-redundancy>

Tax refunds: <https://www.gov.uk/claim-tax-refund>

View/share driving licence: <https://www.gov.uk/view-driving-licence>

Help friends or family with their tax: <https://www.gov.uk/help-friends-family-tax>

Help! GOV.UK Verify can't verify me...

No reason specified (general line)

I'm sorry your chosen certified company could not verify you. There are lots of reasons why a certified company may not be able to verify you. We do appreciate how frustrating that can be for those we are unable to verify at this stage.

[GOV.UK](#) Verify is in beta (trial), which means it is constantly being developed and improved based on feedback from people who use it. We're not able to verify everyone yet using [GOV.UK](#) Verify but we're working to constantly expand and improve the service. Verifying someone's identity without talking to them or sending things in the post is a complex process and it will take us some time to make it work for everyone. Whilst we are in the trial period and still developing [GOV.UK](#) Verify, there are always other ways to access services so if [GOV.UK](#) Verify doesn't work for you, please return to the service you were trying to access and use one of the other available ways to access it.

[I'm sorry for the inconvenience you've suffered in trying to use the service. We will pass your feedback on to the certified company so they can also use it to improve their service, and we will carry on working to improve the service overall so that it becomes more straightforward and works easily, first time for more people.]

There are posts on the Identity Assurance blog that explain what we're doing to improve the service, if you're interested to read more see:

<https://identityassurance.blog.gov.uk/tag/improvement/>.

And I'm worried it's my fault

Use the line above plus the following:

Certified companies have to work to published government standards when they verify your identity. To do this, they have to look at a range of evidence and checks to establish that you are who you say you are – no single piece of evidence is sufficient. There are five elements involved, and the company has to achieve specific thresholds in each one before they can verify someone's identity. It is absolutely no reflection on you that the certified company were unable to verify you at this stage and it does not suggest that anything is wrong, it only means that with the data available at this time to the certified company, they did not reach the set thresholds on all five elements. During the course of the trial we will increase the range of data available for the companies to check against, but before we can do that we have to make sure that we do so in line with security standards and data sharing regulations, which all takes time.

Thank you for taking the time to provide feedback. We are working to improve our service and that of our certified companies, so all feedback is valuable to us.

There are issues with my credit card

I'm sorry your chosen certified company could not verify you, we do understand that this can be frustrating. We are aware that there are issues with some types of credits cards and/or bank accounts. We are working with certified companies to resolve this issue and will pass on your feedback.

GOV.UK Verify is a new service that will allow people to verify their identity entirely digitally and use that to access an increasing range of services. GOV.UK Verify is in beta (trial), which means it is constantly being developed and improved based on feedback from people who use it. We're not able to verify everyone yet using GOV.UK Verify - we're working to make it possible for people to use other evidence. There are posts on our blog that explain what we're doing to

improve the service, if you're interested to read more see:
<https://identityassurance.blog.gov.uk/tag/improvement/>

I am under the age of 19

Thank you for taking the time to provide us with your feedback. Currently we can only verify people over the age of 19, but we are working with new certified companies and investigating alternative sources of data to alleviate this problem. However, we do understand how frustrating it is for those who cannot take part in the trial.

There are posts on our blog that explain what we're doing to make GOV.UK Verify better, if you're interested to read more see: <https://identityassurance.blog.gov.uk/tag/improvement/>

Thank you for taking the time to contact us.

My bank account was opened before 2007

Thank you for taking the time to provide feedback. There are lots of reasons why a certified company may not be able to verify you. If an account was opened before 2007, the data is not available to the credit reference agencies for them to match you to it. We are aware that this is causing an issue for some users and appreciate how frustrating this can be. We are working to address this issue and have recently signed 5 new certified companies that can access and use different data sources to help alleviate this situation. They will join GOV.UK Verify before it goes live in April 2016.

GOV.UK Verify is currently in beta (trial) and we are constantly updating and improving it, as well as investigating other sources of data, so all feedback is valued.

I have no credit history

I'm sorry that you've had difficulty using GOV.UK Verify. We are aware that lack of credit data can be an obstacle to verifying and as a result we are developing new ways of verifying identities to alleviate this issue. We have recently signed five new certified companies to deliver these new methods, and are investigating alternative sources of data. These companies will join GOV.UK Verify before it goes live in April 2016.

Please accept our apologies that we were unable to verify you at this time. The service is currently in beta (trial) and we are constantly updating and improving it, so all feedback is valued. You can keep up to date with improvements to the service via our blog:
<https://identityassurance.blog.gov.uk/>

Thank you for taking the time to provide your feedback.

I only have a paper driving licence

I'm sorry that we cannot currently accept paper licences, this is due to the fact that they are held on an older separate database at the moment. We are working on providing alternatives for this issue. GOV.UK Verify is a new service that will allow people to verify their identity entirely digitally and use that to access an increasing range of services. GOV.UK Verify is in beta (trial), which means it is constantly being developed and improved based on feedback from people who use it. We're not able to verify everyone yet using GOV.UK Verify - we're working to make it possible for people to use other evidence instead of UK passports and British photo card driving

licences. There are posts on our blog that explain what we're doing to improve the service, if you're interested to read more see: <https://identityassurance.blog.gov.uk/tag/improvement/>

I don't have a passport or driving licence

I'm sorry that we can't verify you at this time. GOV.UK Verify is a new service, currently in beta (trial) and is being constantly developed and improved based on user feedback. We do recognise that the lack of a passport or photocard driving licence is an issue for some users and we are currently working with new certified companies and investigating alternative sources of data to overcome this problem.

Please accept our apologies that we were unable to help you on this occasion.

I don't have a mobile phone

I'm sorry you were unable to proceed with the GOV.UK Verify trial at this time. All current certified companies use two-step verification via a mobile phone registered in the UK to the requesting user. We recognise that for some people this is an issue and are working towards a solution to get around this. We hope to have that in place later in 2015.

For some services we have very recently introduced alternatives. If you return to the service, go back through the [GOV.UK](#) Verify path and on the page where you choose a certified company, you should see a link for users who do not have a mobile phone.

I live in a rural area with no mobile signal

We do recognise that mobile signals are an issue and we are addressing this with new providers.

Digidentity have now developed an application which will allow you to receive the second step verification code via a WiFi signal. Please go to <https://helpdesk.digidentity.com/hc/en-gb/articles/202211832-I-do-not-receive-Digidentity-s-SMS-messages> and this will provide the instructions for you.

I have additional needs (HMRC textphone)

HMRC, like many government services, does provide alternative channels for people with additional needs. I have included their textphone number below and more can be found about such services here: <https://www.gov.uk/dealing-hmrc-additional-needs>

I have a foreign passport

Thank you for trying [GOV.UK](#) Verify. It is a new service, currently in beta (trial) and is being constantly developed and improved. [GOV.UK](#) Verify may still be able to verify you. If you return to [GOV.UK](#) Verify, you will be asked what identification documents you have and will be offered the option of certified companies that may be able to verify you with a non-UK passport.

We're looking at further ways of extending [GOV.UK](#) Verify to accept international passports and you can visit the [Identity Assurance blog](#) to see how we are progressing.

We are working to improve our service and that of our certified companies, so your feedback is valuable to us.

I have a foreign address

GOV.UK Verify is in beta, which means it is being constantly improved and developed - at this stage, we are unable to verify people with overseas addresses as the database is not available to us for the certified companies to check against.

There will continue to be other ways for people to access services if we're not able to verify their identity through GOV.UK Verify. If you haven't already, then please do return to the service you wanted to use and follow the guidance on the other ways that exist for you to access the service.

My mobile phone is registered abroad

I'm sorry you were unable to proceed with the GOV.UK Verify trial at this time. All current certified companies use two-step verification via a mobile phone registered in the UK to the requesting user. We recognise that for some people this is an issue and are working towards a solution to get around this. We hope to have that in place later in the year. We are also unable to accept people with overseas addresses, for the same reason, i.e. the database is not available to us for the certified companies to check against.

I'm a citizen of Northern Ireland with an RoI passport

I am sorry that your chosen company were unable to verify you at this stage.

People in Northern Ireland can choose between a UK and and Eire (RoI) passport. Currently those with a UK passport can use GOV.UK Verify to prove who they are online so they can use UK government services safely. We are unable to check Eire passports against records held by the Irish Passport Office and so, at the moment, they cannot be used to verify your identity through GOV.UK Verify.

However, GOV.UK Verify is currently in public beta and is being improved and expanded based on user feedback. As part of this continuing development, we are looking at ways to ensure that as many people as possible across the whole of the UK are able to use GOV.UK Verify. This includes: working with the Driver and Vehicle Agency to make it possible to use NI driving licences as a form of evidence; working with certified companies to think about how they can check Eire passports; and talking to the Northern Ireland Government and the certified companies about other possible sources of evidence for people wishing to access services through GOV.UK Verify.

You can read more about what we're doing to add more data sources so users have more ways to verify their identity here: <https://identityassurance.blog.gov.uk/2014/12/01/data-sources/>

I'm a citizen of Northern Ireland with an NI driving licence

I am sorry that your chosen company was unable to verify you at this stage. We are currently unable to accept Northern Ireland Driving Licences because we do not have access to the NI DVA database.

GOV.UK Verify is a new service that will allow people to verify their identity entirely digitally and use that to access an increasing range of services. GOV.UK Verify is in beta (trial), which means it is constantly being developed and improved based on feedback from people who use

it. We're not able to verify everyone yet using GOV.UK Verify - we're working to make it possible for people to use other evidence instead of UK passports and driving licences from Great Britain. This includes working with the Driver and Vehicle Agency to make it possible to use NI driving licences as a form of evidence. Work in this area will begin in November 2015 and complete prior to GOV.UK Verify going live in April 2016. We're also working with certified companies to think about how they can check Eire passports; and talking to the Northern Ireland Executive and the certified companies about other possible sources of evidence for people wishing to access services through [GOV.UK Verify](#).

You can read more about what we're doing to add more data sources so users have more ways to verify their identity here: <https://identityassurance.blog.gov.uk/2014/12/01/data-sources/>

The certified company said I needed a passport or driving licence but it failed my verification before I even entered those details

To meet the required standards, the company has not only to ask you for details of your document(s), but also establish that it's really you entering those details (and not someone who has stolen your documents and using them to pretend to be you online). They do that by asking you some questions that only you would know the answer to, based on your credit history. If they cannot generate enough questions from your credit file to complete the process to the required level of assurance, then they will not be able to verify your identity. In those cases they don't ask you for your documents because that would be a waste of your time.

The certified company couldn't recognise my address

I am sorry that you have experienced difficulties with GOV.UK Verify. If the incorrect address comes up, I recommend that you put in the first two letters of the postcode only, the service should then allow you to input your address manually.

The certified company couldn't recognise my driving licence details

Currently the service only accepts DVLA issued UK photocard driving licences. We are currently unable to accept Northern Ireland Driving Licences because we do not have access to the NI DVA database. The service also cannot yet accept paper licences, this is due to the fact that they are held on an older separate database at the moment. We are working on providing resolution or alternatives for both of these issues.

Please contact DVLA directly and explain that your driving licence returned a failed response on the GOV.UK Verify system. When you enter your driving licence details, it is checked against DVLA's own database, so only they can provide insight as to why this is. We are unable to check with them on your behalf due to data protection issues.

Their website has all the details for contacting them:
<https://www.gov.uk/contact-the-dvla/y/driver-licensing>

The certified company couldn't recognise my UK passport details

Currently the service only accepts UK passports. If yours is a UK passport, please contact the passport office, and speak to them regarding your passport details and explain that the GOV.UK Verify system was unable to match it. They may be able to provide insight as to why this is. We are unable to check with them on your behalf due to data protection issues.

Their telephone number is 0300 222 0000, or you can contact them online via https://eforms.homeoffice.gov.uk/outreach/Passport_Enquiries.ofml

Even though I was told Experian could verify me with one document

I am sorry that you've had a frustrating experience. There are times when users can be verified on one document, however the certified company will not know if they need to ask for another until all the details have been entered. GOV.UK Verify is a new service that is in beta, which means it is constantly being developed and improved based on feedback from people who use it. We're not able to verify everyone yet but we are working to make it possible for people to use other evidence instead of passports and driving licences. There are posts on our blog that explain what we're doing to improve the service, if you're interested to read more see: <https://identityassurance.blog.gov.uk/tag/improvement/>

Anyone who can't be verified online using GOV.UK Verify at this stage, can contact the relevant department (for example, HMRC) directly.

I gave all the correct data but it still didn't work

GOV.UK Verify is a beta system (trial). The certified companies request a range of information to make it harder for someone to pretend to be you and therefore access your personal data. The checks undertaken are rigorous, because once you have been verified you can use the identity created across several government services. Although you provided entirely valid details, the certified companies may not have access to all your data when they were doing their checks. This is an area that we and they are working to improve. We are not able to verify everyone yet using GOV.UK Verify - but we are working to make it possible for people to use other evidence instead of passports and driving licences. There are posts on our blog that explain what we're doing to improve the service, if you're interested to read more see: <https://identityassurance.blog.gov.uk/tag/improvement/>

Thank you for taking the time to contact us, we value all feedback. Although GOV.UK Verify has not worked for you, your feedback will be used to improve the process.

I share an e-mail address with my partner/spouse who has already verified

Every person verifying their identity has to have an e-mail address which is unique to them. We do appreciate that some couples share e-mail addresses, but for the purposes of verification and to protect your security, each user must have their own e-mail.

What happens if GOV.UK Verify can't verify my identity?

Nobody is excluded from a service if they can't be verified by GOV.UK Verify. Other channels will be available for people who are not able to use digital services, including if they are not able to verify their identity entirely digitally.

If you haven't already, then please do return to the service you wanted to use and follow the guidance on the other ways that exist for you to access the service.

User support is available for people who are unable to complete the GOV.UK Verify process. They have access to live support from their chosen certified company 8am-8pm weekdays (and shorter hours at weekends).

Does GOV.UK Verify work for...

Does GOV.UK Verify work for people with mobile devices?

Yes. GOV.UK Verify works with a range of browsers and devices, in line with the digital by default service standard.

Does GOV.UK Verify work for Scottish citizens?

Yes. [GOV.UK](#) Verify is the new way to prove who you are online so you can access UK-wide digital services securely and safely and at your convenience and without having to use postal or face-to-face services. Users in Scotland who need to access services on [GOV.UK](#) are able to use [GOV.UK](#) Verify for an increasing range of online services, including checking your driving licence information with the DVLA and filing your tax return.

Does GOV.UK Verify work for people wishing to access devolved Scottish government services?

No. It's for the Scottish government to decide on their own approach to identity assurance for the devolved services they provide. The Scottish government is working on its own approach to identity assurance for the devolved public services it provides, called 'myaccount'. This is being developed separately from [GOV.UK](#) Verify and in order to find out more you'll need to contact The Scottish government direct (see <http://www.gov.scot/Contacts> or <https://signin.mygovscot.org/home/>).

Does GOV.UK Verify work for businesses or organisations?

GOV.UK is for individual citizens to verify their identity to allow them to access government services for personal transactions. For any transactions involving businesses you will have to contact the relevant government department directly via GOV.UK

Does GOV.UK Verify work for people with a need for assisted digital?

Our latest lines on assisted digital support for services using GOV.UK Verify can be found [here](#).

From the point of view of a user, identity assurance is not a service in its own right, it is part of the journey to use other services. Users should not have to seek assisted digital support from two separate sources in order to use a single transaction.

There will therefore not be a separate, specific provision for assisted digital users of the identity assurance process - users should be able to get the assisted digital support they require from the assisted digital provider for the service they are trying to access and use. This is consistent with government policy on assisted digital, which proposes that each service should design its assisted digital approach to meet the needs of its demographic of users.

When services using identity assurance design assisted digital support for their users, they should include support for people to register or sign in with their certified company.

The identity assurance programme is working with each service to understand their approach to assisted digital and see if there is anything the identity assurance programme needs to provide, which could include for example:

- general guidance about the identity assurance user journey including what types of information users will need to have available to complete the registration process, and what to do when a user is unable to get through the process
- information for their assisted digital suppliers to use when providing assisted digital support
- guidance on what technical user support is available from certified companies for all users (NB they are not required to provide specific assisted digital support)

The identity assurance programme will develop its service to facilitate the provision of assisted digital support where appropriate, for example investigating the need for support through the telephony channel (this is at an early stage of discovery so no work plans or timescales have been agreed yet).

It is important that each service is aware of the legal requirements in relation to privacy and protecting users' data. It is for each service to make their own judgement about how to ensure that these principles are met in the operation of their assisted digital service.

The identity assurance programme carries out a risk assessment to identify threats and risks to the identity verification and authentication processes as part of the accreditation for identity assurance. Where assisted digital is applied to the identity verification or authentication process, the relying party has a responsibility to ensure that this user journey is subject to their own risk assessment.

Does GOV.UK Verify work for people with disabilities?

[GOV.UK](#) Verify is being developed to ensure that it is accessible to people with disabilities.

The team of developers working on GOV.UK Verify are experts in accessibility and have conducted user research with users with a range of disabilities (including visual impairments).

GOV.UK Verify is being constantly improved and expanded based on user feedback and we continue to review our code as a result of ongoing research with users with disabilities.

The contract with certified companies requires the user journey to be accessible to [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 AA](#) and each certified company must prove their compliance to this before they are approved to connect to GOV.UK Verify.

Does GOV.UK Verify work for people without driving licences?

Yes. Our service is constantly evolving and will continue to be based on feedback from our users. Not all the certified companies require a driving licence; two of the companies are now able to verify identities without reference to a driving licence. However, our work to develop GOV.UK Verify to make sure it works for everyone is not yet complete and will continue throughout this year and into next year.

We have posted some information about our plans on our blog, which you might be interested to see: <https://identityassurance.blog.gov.uk/>

Service-specific issues

Why don't all digital services need to use GOV.UK Verify?

Each service decides the level of assurance that's required for its service. If a service is not exposing data or transactions to users, it won't need to use GOV.UK Verify at LOA2.

Also services that need to allow businesses to access them may not use GOV.UK Verify as the service is designed for individuals.

What can I use 'Help your family and friends with their tax' for?

The 'Help your family and friends with their tax' arrangement is not yet available for all HMRC transactions. You can currently only update someone's company car details or view their Income Tax estimate with the trusted helpers service. More services will be available in the future. However, there are a number of online services you can each use your verified profile for including income tax refunds and self assessment.

Why is DVLA adopting GOV.UK Verify if the current process works fine?

Whilst the current process seems fine, it will not verify your identity to the required level of assurance for other services such as applying for a driving licence. We'll also be adding more functions that require higher levels of assurance such as the ability to edit your details.

What is a unique tax reference and why do I need it for GOV.UK Verify?

If you are referring to the UTR (unique tax reference), HMRC will use that to match you to your verified identity the first time you log-in to them. This is only available from HMRC. You will need to complete form SA1 and HMRC will send you the UTR.

<https://online.hmrc.gov.uk/shortforms/form/SA1>. If you have

If you are attempting to find out whether you are eligible for a tax refund, you can also call or write to HMRC. Contact them by telephone on 0300 200 3300, the lines are open from 8 a.m. until 8 p.m. We have been advised that call volumes are high at the moment so it may be better to call early or late in the day; or you can write to HMRC:

Pay As You Earn
HM Revenue and Customs
BX9 1AS
United Kingdom

Why is online.hmrc.gov.uk listed as not being hosted in the UK?

The domain online.hmrc.gov.uk uses Akamai as a content delivery network which has multiple nodes across Europe. These multiple nodes allow us to improve the service to our customers and to protect HMRC online services against distributed denial of service attacks. The actual services presented on the online.hmrc.gov.uk domain are hosted within the UK and all persisted data is stored within UK based data centres.

Thank you for taking the time to contact us. I hope the reply from HMRC fully answers your question and reassures you about how all persisted data is stored.

I have received an email from HMRC about a tax refund

You have come through to the GOV.UK Verify support service, not to HMRC.

HMRC do not email people to advise of tax refunds, so I suspect it is fraudulent.

The following guide will provide more information and provides advice of how to report this to HMRC

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/415297/Phishing_emails_and_bogus_contact.pdf

How can I now access tax credits online?

To access the tax credits service you will need to return to the service start page and answer some security questions with HMRC:

<https://www.tax.service.gov.uk/tax-credits-service/start-identity>

Certified company-specific issues

Why don't the certified companies' services look like GOV.UK?

The certified companies are each responsible for the quality of their services. They are contractually required to provide things like user support and helpdesk, and to meet contractual requirements about the quality of their solution, but they are free to design their services how they think best to meet the required standards.

Why is government paying commercial companies when it could do this work itself - and probably cheaper?

Rather than each department having to set up their own systems, or having one centralised database for all citizens, this process decentralises the checks by using certified companies that have the means to look at a wide range of information to establish it's really you. Having more than one certified company, rather than a single supplier, means that the service gives you a choice about which certified companies you want to register with and avoids centralising your information.

Why is government paying commercial companies when it already knows who I am?

Different parts of government hold the minimum information they need to deliver the services you need to use. This is much safer than storing everyone's information in one place.

Working with certified companies means you can choose who has access to your information, and who you'd like to verify you online. This makes your transactions safer: it's harder for someone to pretend they're you. And it makes your information safer: it's stored in different places so it's harder for other people to access. It's important to government that your information is as safe as possible. Working with certified companies is much safer than government controlling the whole process.

Why are there so many certified companies to choose from?

Having more than one certified company, rather than a single supplier, means that GOV.UK Verify overall is more resilient to attack and users are given a choice about which certified company they want to register with.

How does a certified company become a certified company?

By joining a framework, signing a call-off contract, meeting the requirements for certification and completing the contractual gating process.

Of the 8 certified companies on Framework 1, why did only 5 sign contracts?

Being on the framework does not guarantee a supply contract. Contracts are let through 'call-offs' - all the providers on the framework are invited to bid for call off contracts, but they are not obliged to do so.

These are the suppliers that chose to be involved at the early stage in the development of the service.

How do certified companies make money?

Certified companies are paid per each successful registration that is then asserted, through the hub, to a government service. They are then paid annually to maintain the account at the required level of assurance, so long as the user continues to use the account.

What are the certified companies' service hours?

Certified companies are required to provide user support from 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday and 8am to 4pm on Saturday via telephone and email.

What if I forget my sign-in details?

Your certified company will be able to help you recover them. They will each have different ways of doing this.

Can I change the certified company I have registered with, or use more than one?

Yes. You can change certified companies at any time, but you'll have to go through the registration process again. If you wish, you can register with different certified companies for different purposes.

I no longer want to use the certified company I selected, how can I get them to delete my details from their system?

You can request that the certified company removes your account and any data associated with it. You can do that by contacting their support services.

[Provide all certified company contact details].

I have verified but cannot log in (incomplete verification)

If you are unable to proceed, you may not have fully completed your verification. If you contact the certified company you attempted to verify with, they may be able to advise you on the status of your verified account.

[Provide all certified company contact details].

I am concerned about using a foreign-owned company to verify me

Government sets the standard for certified companies to verify your identity and authenticate your sign in to use Government services. All of them are contractually obliged to comply with the data protection legislation and they all publish terms and conditions including their privacy policies which explain how they will protect your data and your privacy. In future there will be a wider range of companies from which to choose.

The contract with Digidentity is subject to Dutch law and the data is held under Dutch data protection laws. Why has this been allowed to happen?

All of our Certified Companies are contracted to conform to the UK Data Protection Act, which is compliant with EU Law, as is Dutch law. This contract is similar to any contract you would enter into with a digital service provider such as a retail organisation online, in that it sets out the terms and conditions of using their service. It is not intended to be onerous or restrictive, but to set out expectations and responsibilities on each side.

One of the reasons we provide more than one Certified company with which to verify is so that you can choose between certified companies, dependent on your preferences. As a beta service, we do currently only have three choose from, but by May 2015 we will have added another one, and going forward five more companies will be available.

Do the certified companies have to meet the Digital by Default service standard?

No, because the standard didn't exist when the first round of contracts was let under Framework 1. However, we inserted the following elements of the standard into the round of contracts under Framework 2:

Understand user needs

Put in place a sustainable multidisciplinary team
Establish performance benchmarks against KPIs
Translate user feedback into features and tasks for the next phase of development
Put appropriate user support in place that's aimed towards those who genuinely need it
Build a service that can be iterated on a frequent basis and make sure resources are in place to do so

What is Digidentity's Worldpay method and how does it work?

In July 2015 Digidentity introduced an identity verification method that allows users to prove who they are using their credit or debit card. This method of verification is currently implemented using the payment processing company Worldpay.

Users can choose to give their card details (including name, card number, expiry date and billing address) and authorise a non-value (£0.00) transaction from their account in real time. This transaction is used to prove ownership of the card and the identity.

When people use digital services, it's important to be able to trust that it's really them and not someone fraudulently using their identity to access services. As the issuing of credit and debit cards is subject to anti-money laundering checks, Digidentity can use this evidence to confirm a user's identity.

Can Digidentity verify me using other card types?

This method requires users to have a credit or debit card. Other cards - such as prepaid cards, gift cards and virtual cards - cannot be used as, unlike credit and debit cards, they are not subject to anti-money laundering checks.

What is Experian's Bank Wizard method and how does it work?

In August 2015 Experian introduced an identity validation method that allows users to prove who they are using their credit or debit card. This method of validation is currently implemented using the Experian Bank Wizard product, which uses information from banks to determine whether data provided is valid.

Users can choose to give their card details (including name, card number, expiry date, security number, and billing address) to prove ownership of the card and the identity associated with it.

When people use digital services, it's important to be able to trust that it's really them and not someone fraudulently using their identity to access services. As the issuing of credit and debit cards is subject to anti-money laundering checks, Experian can use this evidence to confirm a user's identity.

I already have an account with the certified company, so why can't they recognise me?

Any existing account you may hold with the certified company is separate from the GOV.UK Verify process.

After you have chosen the company you wish to verify your identity with, you are asked a series of questions so the certified company can be sure that no one is pretending to be you. They ask you a selection of questions that only you know the answer to based on the information that is available from your credit file. The answers you give are checked against the information held by credit reference agencies, rather than any existing account you may hold with the certified company.

Credit history

Will using GOV.UK Verify impact my credit score?

It will have no impact on your credit score, regardless of whether the certified company can or cannot verify you.

Will using GOV.UK Verify leave a mark on my credit file and affect my record?

No. There will be what's called a 'soft marker' left on your credit file, showing that the certified company referred to it for the purposes of verifying your identity. The marker will only be visible to you, not to those checking your file, and won't affect your credit rating.

Are the certified companies performing a credit check on me?

Certified companies do not do a credit check on you. They do use information from your credit file to create the questions that help prove you are really you.

What relevance do my financial agreements have to do with using government services?

The financial information itself is not of interest or passed on to the government service, nor is it stored by the certified company. The certified companies are not doing credit checks on you. Answering questions sourced from data on your credit record is one way that certified companies can verify your identity to a level of assurance needed online within minutes (compared with posting information to your address).

The certified company is asking me about an account I don't recognise

Certified companies ask you questions based on the information contained in your credit file. If this information is incorrect, you may wish obtain a copy of your credit file to check for any errors. You can do this by contacting an online credit reference agency.

Government Gateway

What about Gateway?

GOV.UK Verify is for individuals and by April 2016 will be the default way for them to access digital government services. Government Gateway remains for business and agents.

Government Gateway does not verify an individual to the required level of assurance for modern digital by default services, and users can't register entirely online - it relies on codes and other documents being sent through the post.

GOV.UK Verify offers a service that is faster and more secure for users, suitable for new digital by default services and is re-usable across a range of services.

Why can't I use Government Gateway?

Government Gateway for individuals is gradually being replaced across all online government services. When accessing one of these services for the first time through GOV.UK Verify, you'll be asked to use a certified company to verify your identity. Once you've completed this process, it's fast and simple to use the same certified company to verify your identity across HRMC, DVLA and other services.

How is GOV.UK Verify different to Government Gateway?

Government Gateway fulfils a range of functions in addition to managing access to services through its enrolment and authentication services. GOV.UK Verify provides identity proofing, verification and authentication services to enable individuals to access digital government services.

GOV.UK Verify provides identity assurance for individuals entirely digitally, without having to rely on sending items in the post, calling a call centre or attending a counter service. People will be able to complete the process of verifying their identity for the first time entirely online, without having to send or receive anything in the post.

A verified identity account with a certified company through GOV.UK Verify provides identity assurance to a higher level of assurance than is available through the Government Gateway^[1]. This higher level of assurance will be required for many transformed digital services which allow people for the first time the ability to amend records and make claims entirely digitally.

GOV.UK Verify will allow people to use a single set of log-in credentials (e.g. username and password, supported by a second step for additional security) to access an increasing range of digital services.

GOV.UK Verify is a federated model - the government sets the standards and the Cabinet Office manages the pipeline of government demand and the commercial relationships with certified companies. Certified companies are responsible for developing and delivering services that meet those standards. This approach:

- provides people with more choice and control and protects their privacy (there is no single database or persistent identifier across the system)
- is more resilient, because there is no single database of people's data and users

- can register and / or log in with multiple certified companies
- involves the government setting standards and managing commercial relationships, rather than managing identity proofing, verification and authentication services which the market is better placed to provide
- is leading to the creation of an innovative market of identity assurance services that will have wider economic benefits (see for example research by Ctrl-Shift^[2]).

Security, data and privacy

Does GOV.UK Verify protect my identity, data and privacy?

GOV.UK Verify will help protect you from identity theft or fraudulent activity in your name. It will keep your information private and secure.

Data supplied by you can only be used with your specific, informed consent for purposes you have agreed.

Each certified company publishes terms and conditions, including their privacy policies which explain how they will protect your data and your privacy. They are obliged by law and under their contracts to protect your data fully.

We have also established privacy principles with experts in the field.

Building a model that respects privacy is essential if users are to place and maintain their trust in identity assurance.

The approach is being, and will continue to be, designed around privacy and data protection standards, in close consultation with privacy groups, consumer groups and subject experts.

A set of draft identity assurance privacy principles produced by the Group was published for public consultation on 17 June, and closed on 12th September 2013.

Their draft principles can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/draft-identity-assurance-principles>.

I'm worried about the security of giving a private company my details

We take the security and privacy of our users very seriously. GOV.UK Verify was designed in close conjunction with CESG (The National Technical Authority for Information Assurance) and the [Privacy and Consumer Advisory Group](#). The whole process, starting from the government department the user wishes to transact with, through choosing a certified company to verify with and then being passed back to the government department is conducted over a secure channel, as identified by the green lock you will see in your browser.

Certified companies have to work to published government standards when they verify your identity. To do this, they have to look at a range of evidence and checks to establish that you are who you say you are – no single piece of evidence is sufficient. There are five elements involved, and the company has to achieve specific thresholds in each one before they can verify someone's identity.

The user asserted information of name, date of birth, address and gender is used to find the relevant credit reference file which is then used by the certified company the user has chosen, to create questions the answer to which only that user is likely to know. The user is thus not providing information, rather they are confirming the information the certified company has is or is not correct.

You will find further information on how we enable secure delivery on government digital services at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/identity-assurance-enabling-trusted-transactions>.

You can also read more about how we protect your privacy on our blog at <https://identityassurance.blog.gov.uk/2014/11/05/tech-arch-privacy/>. This shows the data you enter, where we process it, what data is stored, and by whom.

How secure is the service?

The identity proofing process has been certified by government and also complies with the international security standards set out in ISO 27001.

Does GOV.UK Verify allow for mass surveillance?

No. Our position is recorded in [this blog post](#).

Is government data safe and protected?

All data must be kept secure under the contracts with certified companies.

Will you have the right to audit? Where does such audit logs go and who has access? Are the external audits conducted by a UKAS approved organisations?

We (the Government Digital Service) have the right to audit the certified companies. They are also independently audited. The certified companies can keep their own logs as long as they are relevant to the service they are offering. We would never see these logs but they may be referred to if a fraud is detected. Equally the auditor should have examined log usage during the audit. The certified companies must also observe the law, for example The Data Protection Act 1998.

Please be assured that all our auditors both ISO 27001 and tScheme are UKAS certified. We are working with UKAS to monitor and where necessary improve the quality of the certification scheme.

Will the certified company know what government service I'm trying to use?

The certified company you use won't know which government department has requested this information. Likewise, the government department will not know which certified company you have chosen.

What information about me do certified companies share with the government service?

Once they have established it's really you, the certified company confirms this by sending a simple confirmation of your name, address, date of birth and gender (if you decide to tell them), privately and securely to the government departments requiring proof.

Do certified companies have access to government data?

No. Certified companies do not have access to government data under the contract which is designed to protect privacy and minimise data transfer.

The certified company can only ask the government to validate the data you give them with a yes/no answer.

Can certified companies use my data for anything else?

No. They can only use or send your data with your consent.

The contract with the certified companies prohibits a certified company from processing a user's data for purposes other than providing the contracted identity assurance services, or where processing is required by law or regulatory bodies, unless the certified company receives specific and informed consent from the user to process their data for the purposes in question.

How do we plan to regulate GOV.UK Verify and handle complaints?

Certified companies are required to be certified against information assurance and identity assurance standards. They are required to have user support and complaints management arrangements in place. There is the question of what happens if someone feels that they have a complaint or concern that has not been resolved by a certified company.

Our Privacy and Consumer Advisory Group recommended that we look into this issue, and we've agreed that we will keep it under review as we gather evidence about people's experience of using GOV.UK Verify during our public beta.

There are some existing escalation points for people for many issues relevant to GOV.UK Verify, but given that identity assurance is a relatively new service it's possible that there may be gaps in the existing landscape of services. We will monitor this during our public beta so that we can understand what additional needs there might be, if any. So far, there have not been any gaps suggested by the public beta evidence, but we will keep this important matter under review as we progress through the beta and report on progress.

Do certified companies have to meet privacy standards and abide by data protection laws?

GOV.UK Verify involves choosing a certified company. The companies have to meet industry and government standards, and they have to be certified as providing a quality, secure service by an independent certification body. They also have to abide by data protection laws, and contractual requirements set out by the Cabinet Office.

How are certified companies certified / regulated / controlled?

The Cabinet Office is working closely with a standards certification organisation (tScheme), who

are one of the certification bodies providing the necessary independent assessment of the framework suppliers for compliance with the good practice guides.

We are also working with other organisations to develop a market for accreditation bodies.

How is GOV.UK Verify protected from cyber attack?

Prevention:

We have built the the GOV.UK Verify hub to be secure by design. It's using a well known industry standard protocol SAML 2.0, and data is encrypted in transit and at rest.

During the private beta and earlier stages, and in the run up to public beta, the service has been tested by penetration testers and specialist SAML testers, to assure the security of the system, and assessed by the pan-government accreditor. We are continuing to penetration test on a regular basis. The GOV.UK Verify service has been designed to minimise storage of personal data. Personal data is not stored in the hub.

The certified companies have all been certified as ISO 27001 by independent auditors, which ensures they have the correct policies, procedures and technical implementations to protect the confidentiality, integrity and availability of information. They have been independently audited to check they are correctly verifying identities and issuing credentials to government standards.

Detection:

There are a range of ways for us to detect a potential attack. These include having in place effective protective monitoring so we can detect attempts to hack the system and unusual patterns of usage.

Mitigation:

The system is built so that there's no single point of weakness or failure that would enable an attacker to control the whole system and if a breach should take place we'd be able to isolate it.

We use encryption other protective measures so that even if an attacker did gain access to some data they would not be able to understand it.

What GOV.UK Verify does for security and fraud (high level summary)

[GOV.UK](#) Verify is the new way to prove who you are online so you can use government services, like viewing your driving licence or filing your tax return.

When users interact with government, we need to know that they are who they say they are and users need to know that they are protected from fraud and identity theft. Existing ways of proving an individual is who they say they are online (for example, Government Gateway) do not verify an individual to the level of assurance that modern digital services need, and often involve postal forms and paper documentation.

[GOV.UK](#) Verify offers a service that is faster and more secure for users, suitable for new digital by default services and is re-usable across a range of services. It helps protect users from identity theft or fraudulent activity in their name, and keeps users' information private and secure.

[GOV.UK Verify](#) was designed in close conjunction with CESG and the [Privacy and Consumer Advisory Group](#), and is secure by design. The whole process is conducted over a secure channel, and certified companies have to work to published government standards when they verify an identity.

What is the Privacy and Consumer Advisory Group?

Cabinet Office set up a [Privacy & Consumer Advisory Group](#) in 2011 specifically to advise on identity assurance.

The group includes representatives from No2ID and Big Brother Watch, consumer champions like Which? and leading academics from LSE, UCL and the Oxford Internet Institute.

What are the Identity Assurance Principles?

The (9) current draft Principles are set out below.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. User Control | Identity assurance activities can only take place if I consent or approve them |
| 2. Transparency | Identity assurance can only take place in ways I understand and when I am fully informed |
| 3. Multiplicity | I can use and choose as many different identifiers or certified companies as I want to |
| 4. Data Minimisation | My request or transaction only uses the minimum data that is necessary to meet my needs |
| 5. Data Quality | I choose when to update my records |
| 6. Service-User Access and Portability | I have to be provided with copies of all of my data on request; I can move/remove my data whenever I want |
| 7. Governance/ Certification | I can have confidence in any Identity Assurance System because all the participants have to be accredited |
| 8. Problem Resolution | If there is a problem I know there is an independent arbiter who can find a solution |
| 9. Exceptional Circumstances | Any exception has to be approved by Parliament and is subject to independent scrutiny |

The federated approach to identity assurance

Why is the government using certified companies (short answer)?

Although different parts of government may hold information about you, they do not hold the range of information necessary to establish that you are who you say you are on the balance of probabilities. Certified companies have the means to look at a wider range of information to establish this. Working with certified companies means government does not need to store everyone's information in one place. This means your information is safer.

Why is the government using certified companies (long answer)?

Using certified companies gives people choice and control over who has their data and how it's used. Once someone has verified their identity with their chosen certified company, they will be able to re-use their credentials across an increasing range of government services without having to prove their identity again from the beginning each time.

We are using a range of certified companies that users can choose from so we can take advantage of value and innovation in the market, and so we can avoid creating a central database of personal data within a single supplier or within government.

This approach will have wider economic benefits as well as making the service more resilient (there's no single point of failure), better for users (competition between certified companies will result in improvements over time) and less expensive for government.

What role is the government playing, then?

The government is setting the standards for private sector companies to verify your identity and authenticate you each time you sign in. We also provide a secure link between the certified company and the government service so that your details are encrypted and kept private.

Why are you forcing me into a contract with a private company?

The reason we ask people to choose a certified company, rather than interacting directly with government or a single supplier on behalf of government, are:

- a. it protects people's privacy because it means there is no single identity database, the certified company doesn't know which service you are accessing, and government services don't have access to the data you provide to prove your identity.
- b. it allows people to choose a certified company to verify their identity, rather than having to use a single supplier chosen by government.
- c. we are trying to create a market of identity services so that different suppliers will innovate and compete to provide better services for people - we think this approach will give users a better and constantly improving service than contracting directly as government with these companies to build services to a specification.

This contract is similar to any contract you would enter into with a digital service provider such as a bank or retail organisation online, in that it sets out the terms and conditions of using their

service. It is not intended to be onerous or restrictive, but to set out expectations and responsibilities on each side.

How are the commercial relationships / contracts with certified companies managed?

The Cabinet Office manages the commercial relationships with the certified companies and with wider industry. This is so that we can aggregate demand and establish contracts on behalf of the whole of government, which is more efficient and less expensive, and so that government can speak with one clear voice so as to inspire confidence in this new market.

Cabinet Office contracts with certified companies

Cabinet Office has a framework in place for certified companies. There were originally eight organisations on Framework 1, five of whom were contracted to deliver services. The number and range of IDPs will increase over time as the market develops.

In January 2015, the providers contracted to deliver services and the dates on which they were due to join the public beta, were:

- Experian (October 2014)
- Digidentity (December 2014)
- The Post Office (March 2015)
- Verizon (May 2015)
- Mydex (date tbc)

Cassidian, Ingeus and PayPal were also on the framework but did not sign the first round of call-off contracts.

The framework was initially established by DWP. In late 2012, the identity assurance programme began the novation of the framework agreement of eight suppliers across to the Cabinet Office Government Procurement Service so that government identity assurance needs would be aggregated through the identity assurance programme, allowing us to communicate clearly and effectively with the market.

The framework novation was in line with government procurement best practice and has been recognised widely by industry partners as a helpful step.

A procurement exercise was launched in December 2014 to establish a new framework for certified companies. The exercise was completed in March 2015 and the following nine companies signed contracts under Framework 2:

- Experian (October 2014)
- Digidentity (December 2014)
- The Post Office (March 2015)
- Verizon (April 2015)
- Barclays (date tbc)
- GB Group (date tbc)
- Morpho (date tbc)

PayPal (date tbc)
Royal Mail (date tbc)

Incumbent certified company Mydex was not selected as a supplier under Framework 2.

What is the Document Checking Service?

GDS has worked with HMPO and DVLA to build a document checking service which allows the certified companies to validate passport and driver licence details provided by users.

Users may be asked to enter details from their driver licence and / or passport as part of the identity verification process with their chosen certified company. The certified company can pass those details through the document checking service to ask whether they match a valid record on the DVLA / HMPO. They receive a yes / no response. They don't have access to DVLA / HMPO records other than to receive these yes / no answers in relation to data supplied by users for that purpose.

See this blogpost for an introduction to the Document Checking Service (October 2014):
<https://identityassurance.blog.gov.uk/2014/10/10/introducing-the-document-checking-service/>

As at May 2015, we are currently researching some modifications to the DCS Passport checking service, for instance the ability to support 180 day expired passports and raising the threshold (the number of passports we can check in an hour).

The status of the Identity Assurance programme and the future development of GOV.UK Verify

Moving from private to public beta

GOV.UK Verify was in private beta from February 2014 with HMRC PAYE, DVLA View Driving Record and rural payments each starting to test the service with a small number of users (less than 1,000) during that time.

During private beta, we started testing the certified companies' interim (ie not yet fully ready for public use at level of assurance 2) solutions with a small number of services and users. This enabled us to test and learn about each element of the federation and how they interact with each other.

Because we were using interim solutions, not yet ready to open to the public, users testing the service during private beta had to be invited.

GOV.UK Verify went into public beta on 14 October 2014. This means that services connected to the GOV.UK Verify hub will be able to allow users to access their service without requiring an individual invitation.

GOV.UK Verify was ready for public access from 14 October 2014, but we are carrying on the work to improve and scale the service over the coming months and years. We will be gradually adding more services and increasing the numbers of users during this period of further development.

When will GOV.UK Verify be live?

'Live' is not a dramatic change, it's a point in time in an ongoing gradual process of developing and scaling up the service, when the service can be said to meet certain criteria.

Usually 'live' means that all alternatives have been switched off. 'Live' is difficult to define in the case of GOV.UK Verify, since the alternatives include some services with an element of online interaction (such as Government Gateway) that do some similar things, but also offline channels.

We are defining 'live' as having the financial, commercial, technical and operational arrangements in place to be able to manage any volumes and peaks that may be required for any combination of government services.

We expect to be 'live' by April 2016. Here's a post setting out our roadmap and explaining what live will look like:

<https://identityassurance.blog.gov.uk/2015/03/26/gov-uk-verify-objectives-for-live/>

Has GOV.UK Verify been assessed against the Digital by Default Service Standard?

GOV.UK Verify has been assessed against the digital by default service standard for public beta digital services. The report is published on GOV.UK:

<https://gdsdata.blog.gov.uk/gov-uk-verify-service-assessment/>

GOV.UK Verify will be assessed again before going live.

Which government services will use GOV.UK Verify?

We can provide information about which services we are working with and a list of those with agreed dates to start using identity assurance. Any further questions about individual services will be referred to the relevant department.

There is a development pipeline of HMG services that will use identity assurance. See posts tagged 'government services' for the latest published information about the pipeline:

<https://identityassurance.blog.gov.uk/tag/government-services/>

Expanding GOV.UK Verify beyond central government services (general line)

At this stage we're prioritising building a scaling a service that works for users of central government services.

However, we've built GOV.UK Verify so that it is capable of being used for private sector services in future. GOV.UK Verify operates according to published standards - the standards are designed so that they are relevant and applicable to services in the private sector as well as government services. Our approach of using several certified companies is intended to stimulate investment to build a competitive market of services that can meet those standards and that could meet the need for identity assurance in the wider public and private sectors.

We work with industry through the Open Identity Exchange (oixuk.org) to explore potential applications of the service in the private sector. For example, we participate in pilot projects that

are run through OIX and include private sector organisations like banks and mobile network operators.

At this point we have not yet fully considered and developed the commercial, policy, legal or operational basis for expanding GOV.UK Verify to provide identity assurance in the private sector.

Now we've achieved the milestone of taking the service into public beta, we will be working on this in the coming months so we can fully understand all the issues and develop our thinking about how this should work. We know there is a great deal of interest from the private sector in this work, and will work with interested bodies through OIX to understand their needs and issues.

See this post:

<https://identityassurance.blog.gov.uk/2014/10/23/identity-assurance-for-local-authority-and-private-sector-services/>

About Procurement 2

The Identity Assurance Programme notified the market in April 2014 of its intention to procure further identity assurance services. The OJEU notice was published in October 2014. See this post: <https://identityassurance.blog.gov.uk/2014/12/17/procurement-update-3/>

An estimated total value for all orders under this procurement is £150 million over the term of the contracts. Contracts were to be awarded to a number of suppliers within this value.

We initially announced we expected to use the procurement identities by the end of 2014 but the process concluded in March 2015. This is because there were lower volumes of users of the services that were connected to our private beta than were anticipated.

We reported the outcome of Procurement 2 here:

<https://identityassurance.blog.gov.uk/2015/03/25/procurement-2-new-identity-suppliers-to-join-gov-uk-verify/>

Will a Welsh language version of the service be available to users? When?

Welsh language will be available for users of GOV.UK Verify and the associated certified companies.

Before GOV.UK Verify moves from public beta to live in April 2016 the GOV.UK Verify hub - currently available in English - will also be made available in Welsh.

As at September 2015, Welsh speakers verifying their identity and signing in with Digidentity, Experian and Post Office, can already do so in their native language. We expect that all certified companies will offer this option by the end of 2015.

For user support (e.g. telephone help or live chat help) the current plan is for Welsh language to be available by mid-January 2016 across all certified companies. However, should services demonstrate a need to offer user support in Welsh sooner with the current certified companies, we will discuss this possibility with those identity providers.

Will local government services use GOV.UK Verify?

GOV.UK Verify isn't available for local authorities yet, but we do want GOV.UK Verify to be available for local authorities to use in the future. We've built the service to make that possible and we've supported alpha projects with local government services through the Open Identity Exchange – see http://oixuk.org/?page_id=10 for information about them.

However, we haven't yet developed the model for how GOV.UK Verify would be used by local authorities; we're prioritising central government services in the first instance and will start working on this for local authorities after April 2016.

See this post:

<https://identityassurance.blog.gov.uk/2014/10/23/identity-assurance-for-local-authority-and-private-sector-services/>

Who will and won't be able to use GOV.UK Verify (success rate)?

The success rate shows the proportion of people who are able to verify their identity online to the level of assurance required by the service. We calculate the success rate of GOV.UK by measuring the total number of successful outcomes, against the population of overall attempts to authenticate (success/success+failure). This figure is publicly available on the Performance Platform.

As at September 2015, about 69% of people who try to verify their identity using GOV.UK Verify are successful. We consider around 70% to be a 'good' success rate but work is still ongoing. In the longer term, to move significantly beyond 70%, we need more data to be brought into the system to give people a wider range of ways to prove their identity.

By the time we go live in April 2016 we expect 90% of those who try to verify using GOV.UK Verify to succeed.

Why did the success rate drop after the self-assessment trial?

At the start of the public beta in October 2014, the success rate was 42%. Improvements to the GOV.UK Verify hub and certified companies services, resulted in the rate growing to be around 60% through the self-assessment trial in January 2015. When the trial ended, the verification success rate dropped slightly.

We expect some variability in the success rate from week to week in this early stage of public beta, whilst the numbers of users are relatively low so that just a few fails/successes can have an impact on percentages.

We expect the rate to improve as the certified companies continuously improve their services and add further methods of verification opening the service to more people, and we add further certified companies with diverse data sources.

Before the GOV.UK Verify public beta, nobody was able to verify their identity entirely digitally at this level of assurance.

We don't expect everyone to be able to verify on day 1, this is a complicated thing and we and IDPs will need to refine how we do it. We're rolling the service out gradually so we can carry on developing and refining it.

As we go into public beta, to verify your identity with a certified company, you will generally need a combination of:

- a credit history in the UK with sufficient duration and breadth to allow the certified companies to establish that your identity is real and active, and that you are the owner of the identity
- a passport and / or driver licence

You will also need to be able to answer questions based on your credit reference agency file, to prove that you are the owner of the identity you're asserting (because you know a range of things that someone who has stolen your wallet or fraudulently obtained your passport would not be likely to know).

The overall % of people who can register will vary depending on the service - some services will have a higher population of people who are likely to have either a passport or driver licence and likely to have a financial history in the UK.

Public beta is just one moment in an ongoing process of development and scaling up - we are rolling out a service that will work for most people from the start but which we'll carry on developing so it can work for more people over time.

Since May 2015 there have been 4 certified companies, with different ways to verify, so there's a higher chance of you getting through the process. 5 more companies will join before April 2016.

Certified companies are planning to introduce alternative ways to prove your identity - some are expected before the end of the year. Certified companies are developing alternative ways to establish that the person is the owner of the identity, so users won't have to answer questions based on their credit reference agency file.

We will be increasing the range of records that certified companies can validate users' data against, so that those without a driver licence or passport will still be able to verify their identity.

See this blogpost which explains how we are going to expand the range of data sources that's used by certified companies: <https://identityassurance.blog.gov.uk/2014/12/01/data-sources/>

Will GOV.UK Verify be used for age verification in future?

As described in our recent blogpost about our roadmap to April 2016, we are working to taking [GOV.UK Verify](#) from beta to live for central government services by April 2016. We don't have any plans to extend [GOV.UK Verify](#) outside central government, or to use it for the purposes of age verification.

Whilst not covered in the scope of GOV.UK Verify's plans for live, work on age verification is

important and is therefore being led by the policy team in the Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) who are currently analysing the needs for age attributes within the UK. We are speaking to DCMS about their work and are advising on matters of risk and assurance, based on lessons learnt from the development of GOV.UK Verify. fl

Could the Scottish government use GOV.UK Verify in future?

That would be a policy decision for the UK government and the matter has not yet been considered and no decision has been made.

Identity Assurance Programme information

What is the programme's mandate?

In March 2011, the Ministerial Committee on Public Expenditure Sub-Committee on Efficiency and Reform (PEX (ER)) charged the Cabinet Office with facilitating the development and agreement of an identity assurance reference design to provide users with a convenient, trusted and secure way of accessing online public services.

In particular, the Government Digital Service (GDS) was also given responsibility for setting cross-government standards for identity assurance, with the authority to approve, commission and accredit the identity component of any central government public service.

2012 saw the identity assurance programme transform the initial reference identity assurance architecture into a bona fide testing environment that provided the suppliers on the identity assurance framework with an integration testing platform (also known as the "hub").

In 2013 PEX(ER) agreed that the identity assurance programme should proceed to build a cross-government identity assurance service based on the work done so far.

How is the programme funded?

To date the programme has been developing and proving the service. It has therefore been funded annually by contributions from the National Cyber Security Programme, with additional contributions from DWP (2013/14 and 2014/15) and MOJ (2014/15).

The Identity Assurance Programme has cost c. £36.4m to develop to date (£5.5m in 2012/13, £13.4m in 2013/14 and £17.5m in 2014/15). Our budget for 2015/16 is still being finalised (under new administration).

The Identity Assurance Programme cost savings were listed as: £33.3 million (NAO audited) in FY 2012/13; £41.6 million in FY 2013/14.(by cancelling DWP plans to develop their own identity assurance solution); and £36.54m in FY 2014/15. That's £111.44m saved so far.

The Identity Assurance Programme handles commercial arrangements with IDPs. The programme aggregates the demand for assured identities across government. Costs associated with the programme - including future spending - are discussed at departmental level with HMT.

From 2015/16 onwards, the costs of the programme will be funded centrally. The full details of this approach will be finalised after the spending review in 2015, the results of which are

expected in November.

GOV.UK Verify will be better value than if departments and services each developed their own solutions. This is because by aggregating demand and stimulating a new market of identity services, and eventually by allowing the service to be used outside central government, we will drive down the costs to government more quickly and effectively.

How is the programme working with European partners on identity assurance?

[This blog post](#) provides a summary of our work in the European Union.

The Identity Assurance Programme is working with the EU Commission and other European countries to explore the role of secure, trustworthy digital identities as the use of digital services across the EU grows.

As the single market becomes a digital single market, we need to be able to prove who we are online, not just in the country where we live, but in other countries as well. Users need a secure way to prove who they are that works beyond national borders. Online services need a secure way to know who users are regardless of where in the EU they come from.

In order to do that, the EU has agreed to make it possible to use an online identity issued in one European country to prove who you are when you're doing things online elsewhere in Europe - that's set out in the eIDAS Regulation, [agreed in 2014](#).

The Cabinet Office is also looking at how the eIDAS Regulation relates to the use of electronic identity for users of public sector services via its involvement with the Open Identity Exchange (OIX). OIX is working with Barclays and BankID, Norway on an ongoing project to explore the user journey for a Norwegian citizen opening a bank account in the UK using their Norwegian eID. OIX will publish the findings of this project on its website <http://oixuk.org/>.

What are eIDs?

Electronic identity (eID) is one of several European 'building blocks' that, together, will help to ensure more effective public service provision across the EU. Using eID to authenticate transactions can provide a strong foundation for secure, trustworthy transactions that can take place online.

The eIDAS regulation sets out the legal framework and requirements that all Member States must meet in order to create mutual recognition between different national eID systems. Therefore, under the Regulation, national electronic identification systems will become interoperable by 2018. Each country then gets a choice about whether and when to notify its own scheme so that it can be used in other countries.

What is the UK position on eIDs?

The UK has worked hard to ensure that the eIDAS Regulation on identity fits with our way of thinking about identity. The eIDAS Regulation is based on a federation of national hubs, and supports the growth of the EU market for identity providers. It relies on outcome-based

assurance levels, and it's based on interoperability and mutual recognition of different national systems rather than harmonisation.

Under eIDAS, the UK must recognise eIDs from other EU member states by September 2018. We hope to start implementation before the 2018 deadline to enable the Identity Assurance Programme to play a central role in EU decisions about how digital identity is used across borders.

Does this mean that GOV.UK Verify will have to recognise eIDs from other EU member states?

Yes, but further technical development of GOV.UK Verify is required before eIDs can be recognised. The Identity Assurance Programme team has scoped the work that needs to take place. In December 2015 it will run a Discovery project to develop a clear understanding of what that work will look like.

Does this mean people will be able to use their GOV.UK Verify verified identity accounts outside of the UK?

No decisions have been made on this yet. Whether or not GOV.UK Verify available outside of the UK is a decision that can be made after the eIDAS Regulation comes into force.

Why doesn't the eIDAS Regulation come into force until 2018? What's happening until then?

2018 is the date by which European countries are required to be able to recognise electronic identities under the European rules.

The eIDAS Regulation sets out the high level agreement that we will make it possible to use electronic identities in other countries. Further details are still to be agreed, including the requirements that must be met to ensure national electronic identities can be trusted around Europe. How this works at a technical level - for example, how the different national systems will talk to each other - also needs to be agreed. The deadline for agreement to be reached is September 2015.

If some European countries are ready in advance of the 2018 deadline, they can then start to recognise electronic identities on a voluntary basis.

List of published references

Published references for further information

Link to the identity assurance blog pages:

New: <https://identityassurance.blog.gov.uk/>

Old: <http://digital.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/category/id-assurance/>

What is identity assurance blog post from Janet Hughes (gives a general introduction to the service): <https://gds.blog.gov.uk/2014/01/23/what-is-identity-assurance/>

Gov.uk/Verify - an introduction to the service

A film demoing the beta service: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_4tGc9Rp_Vs

Links to published standards and guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/identity-assurance-enabling-trusted-transactions>

Digital by default service standard: <https://www.gov.uk/service-manual/digital-by-default>

Government policy on transforming public services:

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-digital-strategy>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/transforming-government-services-to-make-the-m-more-efficient-and-effective-for-users>

Cyber security programme and policies:

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/office-of-cyber-security-and-information-assurance>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/keeping-the-uk-safe-in-cyberspace>

NAO briefing paper on identity assurance / GOV.UK Verify (November 2014):
<http://www.nao.org.uk/report/identity-assurance-programme/>

The private sector

How the Identity Assurance Programme works with industry (through OIX)

We joined the Open Identity Exchange (OIX) in June 2012 to help us communicate with the nascent marketplace for identity assurance supply and to support experimental “Alpha projects” that explore business, design and technical challenges.

The identity assurance programme in the Cabinet Office is supporting global industry engagement via Cabinet Office executive membership of the Open Identity Exchange - an international non-profit trade organisation of market leaders.

OIX UK is the UK arm of a global organisation whose goal is to enable the expansion of online identity services and adoption of new online identity products.

OIX works as a broker between industries designing, testing and developing pilot projects to test real use cases.

OIX is international. Established in the US and responding to the White House strategy (National Strategy for Trusted Identities in Cyberspace), it encourages collaborative working across geographical, political and organisational boundaries, in order to respond to a fast moving and complex set of problems.

The identity assurance programme are using OIX in two ways, firstly to develop a UK Steering Group through which organisations are participating in the development of the initiative. Secondly, it is engaging with partners about ongoing small-scale alpha projects that are

experimenting with solutions to real world problems. These projects are allowing us to 'learn from the journey' and helping us to focus discussion around tangible problems.

How does OIX run its projects?

OIX is an open organisation. Whilst membership is encouraged, it is not required for attendance at meetings or participation in projects. All organisations with an interest in digital identity are encouraged to attend.

To participate in projects organisations must sign the OIX Contributor Agreement. This allows organisations to work together without concerns over Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) as the projects deliverables will be open.

Barclays announced it had joined OIX in September 2014.

Information about the OIX Alpha Projects

The identity assurance team are collaborating with the Open Identity Exchange (OIX) on a number of 'alpha' projects (small and medium scale experiments) to test various aspects of the identity assurance approach and help us understand how to overcome barriers to the adoption of digital services. Participation in these experiments is not limited to the identity assurance framework suppliers. Many other organisations have an interest here and we all benefit from sharing our learnings.

Why do private sector organisations participate in OIX projects?

Federated identity assurance is a new concept for many organisations. It requires organisations to inter-operate with one another to widely understood standards.

OIX projects provide a mechanism for organisations to work together to design and test such interoperable services and standards. These projects help organisations understand the benefits of the approach.

By collaborating through OIX, an organisation's costs and risks from participating in an early stage market are reduced.

The sharing economy: how GOV.UK Verify will be re-used across the private sector

The Government is committed to maximum possible re-use of GOV.UK Verify across the public sector. In the year ahead, millions of people will use GOV.UK Verify across a range of central government services. This will introduce large numbers of people in the UK to the concept of identity assurance and allow HMG to demonstrate the viability of GOV.UK Verify at scale to other public bodies (e.g. NHS, local authorities) and key industry sectors.

The GOV.UK Verify offer to industry is the re-use of a government-backed identity assurance capability, working at scale, that respects privacy and is developed to published standards.

The Cabinet Office is already working closely with representative bodies from the banking/ payments sector, retailers and mobile network operators to consider the practicalities of private sector re-use. These organisations are all keen to provide more innovative digital services, enable their own channel shift plans and meet their regulatory responsibilities at lowest possible

cost. There is also a widespread desire to eliminate costly fraud vectors that depend on poor identity authentication.

These industry objectives are closely aligned with our own HMG goals for [GOV.UK Verify](#).

Any controlled expansion of [GOV.UK Verify](#) beyond the public sector will be designed around people's needs and it will be developed in consultation with the [GOV.UK Verify privacy and consumer advisory group](#).

Guidance for social media channels

Rules for engaging with individual users through our social media channels

GOV.UK Verify's social media channels should provide a credible source of information, showing empathy when our users are having difficulties and competence when they want answers.

All contact with users, regardless of the channel, should be directed at resolving any issues they are having using the service quickly, efficiently and in full compliance with the identity assurance principles.

We will not ask for or encourage users to share any personal data through social media channels, including which service they are trying to access or which certified company they are trying to use. Where there is a need to exchange personal data we will move to private channels (eg DM / email).

We will not publish individual support requests that appear in the form of blog comments. Where a user is having a specific problem, we will direct them to the service desk for resolution. When we have done this, we will record the zendesk ticket number and remove the comment from the blog.

We will not respond to feedback or questions about specific certified companies, but suggest that the user should contact the certified company support desk directly.

We will not respond to feedback or questions on behalf of services that use GOV.UK Verify. Rather, we will suggest that the user should contact the relevant support channel in line with any agreements we may have with departments, or generically if we don't know which service the user is trying to use.

We will respond to user support requests through social channels according to our overall response time targets (4 hours, during working hours). We will not reply outside office hours unless there is a business continuity scenario that has been activated in accordance with our business continuity plans.

We will apply the GDS house rules to our interactions with people on social media channels. The house rules set out how we will respond to various types of generic situation and our working hours.

We will not retweet comments about the service - positive or negative - unless they add value to the community.

We will make sure that users receive consistent answers and responses regardless of the channel they use to contact us.

We will favourite news coverage and other commentary about the service and about identity assurance in general - this is a useful piece of curation for our community. Similarly, we will follow accounts that are relevant to identity assurance / technical issues that we think our community might find useful.

When someone asks us to verify their twitter account, we say: 'GOV.UK Verify is for accessing government services. We're not able to verify your Twitter account - try @Twitter?'

We will respond to questions from media seeking explanation or factual information. Requests for comment will be referred to Cabinet Office Press Office. We can DM the number 020 7276 0400 or send them here:<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/cabinet-office/about/media-enquiries>

Rules for referring to certified companies on our social media channels / in response to media enquiries

We will not comment on or speak on behalf of any certified company. We will not retweet certified companies talking about our service.

We will not @mention any certified company in response to a user enquiry or comment.

However, we will respond to questions about the requirements certified companies have to meet, or how the federated approach works at an overall / generic level.

Change list

DATE	WHAT	WHO?
15/6/15	- Update to 'I have a foreign passport' to reflect a new solution from one of identity providers	- RH

18/6/15	- in reference to improvements on the blog “what we are doing about this” to “what we are doing to improve the service”	- VH, RH
18/6/15	- The system does not recognise my driving licence - additional wording to check UK DVLA issued photocard licence.	- VH, RH
18/6/15	- I don't have a mobile - now updated to include improvement to service	- VH, RH
22/6/15	- Added response to question ‘Does GOV.UK Verify allow for mass surveillance following blog post	- RH
29/6/15	- Added high level overview of what GOV.UK Verify does for security and fraud following MCO briefing	- RH
09/7/15	- Added lines Worldpay solution	- RH
30/7/15	- Lines on how we work with Europe added	- RH
08/9/15	- Various changes to reflect latest figures and dates	- VH, RH, HQ
10/9/15	- Added lines on shared e-mail address	- VH, RH, HQ

17/09/15	- Updated lines on the use of GOV.UK Verify in Scotland	- RH
----------	---	------