

Department of Finance (NI)
NI Direct Identity Assurance Privacy Notice

Data Controller

Department of Finance
Digital Shared Services
Enterprise Digital Development
Craigantlet Buildings
Stoney Road
Belfast
BT4 3SX

Data Protection Officer

2nd Floor
Stoney Road
Belfast
BT4 3SX

This privacy notice explains how the NI Direct Identity Assurance (NIDA) service uses information about you and the ways in which we will safeguard your data.

Why do we collect your personal information?

NIDA exists to enable DoF to verify someone's identity so that they can log into NI Direct to use certain online services and DoF can be sure that the person is who they say they are.

What Information do we process?

In order to create an account/verify identity, we need personal details including your email address, name, address, contact telephone number and date of birth. If your account needs to be verified, we will also need to collect information that supports your identity, e.g. a photograph of your passport or driving licence and other documents such as utility bills or birth certificate

NIDA uses software to capture images of your photo-ID (passport or driving licence) and a self-portrait photograph ("selfie").

NIDA uses AI software and biometric algorithms to make facial comparison between the image of your photo-ID (passport or driving licence) and your selfie. The personal information recorded on your NIDA account is then used to perform background checks to establish your real-world existence. This process is fast and, for most people, will not need any other documentation.

Where it is not possible to use this method to get verified, you will be able to upload copies of your documents to our online manual checking service, e.g. passport, driving licence, bank statement as well as a "selfie" photograph. Alternatively, you will be able to take your documents to a participating public sector office and get your details verified.

Use of cookies

Website usage information is collected using cookies. You can read more on our [Cookies page](#).

How is my Personal Information Stored?

Your personal information is collected during the NI Direct Account creation and verification process. It is encrypted and stored in a protected database which is not accessible by other bodies and there are strict controls in place to ensure only authorised individuals can manage/administer the technical infrastructure supporting it.

Do you share my personal data with anyone?

NIDA collects personal information from the user and shares this with other parts of government for the purpose of (i) matching to the services they want to use and, for services which require a higher level of assurance, (ii) verifying their identity.

We share the minimum amount of personal detail with other parts of government, solely for the purpose of verifying your identity and connecting your login account to those services you wish to use online. Data Sharing Agreements are in place specifying responsibilities of all parties who can view or process your information.

We use a third party processor called Civica, who have been contracted to provide the NIDA service to enable you to log into NI Direct to use certain facilities. The data is processed securely and they will not process the data for any other purpose.

We use a third party processor called SureCert, who have been contracted to carry out the identity checking on our behalf. SureCert use Experian to help them provide us with this service. This is a “soft search” and only checks you name, address and date of birth - no other data is shared and Experian returns a success or fail only.

These checks may appear on your credit record but have no impact on your credit history. The data is processed securely, is retained for 30 days to provide support, and SureCert will not process the data for any other purpose.

We share the images of your documents with SureCert for the purpose of checking the validity of the document and carrying out facial comparison between a photo ID and the selfie; and to extend the numbers and types of documents we can accept.

What is the lawful basis for processing your data?

You will create a NI Direct account in order to access some government services online. Your account enables you to transact with various business areas across NI departments and agencies. Your personal data is processed for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest or the exercise of official authority vested in the data controller, in line with Article 6(1)(e) of the UK GDPR . We process biometric data to fulfil our duties in the public interest in our function as a government department under Article 9(2)(g) of the UK GDPR.

Access to your information

When you have created an account through NI Direct, you have the ability to manage your personal information and make changes, if needed. You may also, at

any time, ask for a report on the information that we hold by contacting NI Direct or calling 0300 200 7868 during working hours, 9:00am to 5:00pm.

How long do you keep my personal data?

We will only retain your data for as long as required for you to access services. Since the information supports your online account, we will only remove data if your account has not been used in 7 years, and in line with [DoF Retention and Disposal Schedule](#), after which time it will be destroyed securely.

Documentary evidence uploaded as part of the online checking service, verification process is held for 30 days after an account has been verified, and then permanently deleted.

Your rights

Under data protection legislation, you have rights as an individual which you can exercise in relation to the information we process.

To make a request for any personal information we may hold, or to raise an objection about the processing we carry out, you should put the request in writing and email it to:

Data Protection Officer
Craigantlet Buildings
Stoney Road
Belfast
BT4 3SX

E-mail: dataprotectionofficer@finance-ni.gov.uk

If, at any point, you believe the information we process on you is incorrect, you can ask to have this information corrected.

If you decide you would like to have your account deleted from the NI Direct service, you can request its removal either by phone call to our 0300 200 7868 during working hours, 9:00am to 5:00pm or by email to account@nidirect.gov.uk.

If you wish to raise a complaint about how we have handled your data, you can contact our Data Protection Officer who will investigate the matter.

If you are not satisfied with our response or believe we are not processing your personal data in accordance with the law, you can complain to the Information Commissioner at: casework@ico.org.uk or:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water
Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Changes to this Privacy Notice

We keep our privacy notice under regular review. This privacy notice was last updated in April 2026.