



Department for
Science, Innovation
& Technology

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The Rt Hon Lord Foster of Bath
Chair of the Justice and Home Affairs Committee
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0AA

26th September 2025

CC: Rt Hon Shabana Mahmood MP, Home Secretary

Dear Lord Foster of Bath,

Re: Announcement of a National Digital Identity Programme

I am writing to you as Chair of the Lords Justice and Home Affairs Committee about the Prime Minister's announcement today of a National Digital Identity Programme for the UK.

Digital ID will be a significant cross-government programme aiming to transform public services, bring fairness for all citizens and put more power and control in the hands of people. Strong security and inclusion will be at the heart of the programme from the start.

We will launch a public consultation in the coming weeks and work closely with employers, trade unions, civil society groups and other stakeholders, to co-design the programme and ensure it is as secure and inclusive as possible. Thereafter, we will seek to bring forward primary legislation to underpin this system.

As part of the consultation, we will consider how the digital ID could be used for cases from applying for benefits online to proving your age, or opening bank accounts. Many of us already use different forms of ID when interacting with services and companies – whether it's a driving licence, a passport or even a library card. For clarity, people will not be penalised for not holding a digital ID and it will never be used for stop and search. The new digital identity credential will be available for free to all UK citizens and legal residents aged 16 and over (although we will consider through consultation if this should be age 13 and over). This will result in a service that takes the best aspects of the digital identification systems that are already up and running around the world, such as in Australia, Estonia and Denmark.

By the end of this parliament, it will be mandatory for all employers to conduct digital right to work checks using the new digital ID. While there's no silver bullet to solving illegal migration, it is clear that unscrupulous criminals are claiming the UK labour market is easy to cheat when seeking to profit from dangerous and illegal journeys. The new digital ID will create a single system to prove a right to work for UK citizens and legal foreign nationals, which will make the process simpler, fairer and more robust. Most employers are already complying with the rules, but where they do a remote check of a UK citizen it can cost them over £10 per check.



Privacy and security will be key to the digital ID programme, and central to our design. We will follow best practice in creating a system which people can rightly put their trust in. A digital ID offers individuals a secure, convenient and inclusive way to prove who they are online and offline. By giving individuals more control over their personal data, digital ID systems will allow them to share only the information necessary for a given transaction. Digital credentials are much more secure than physical documents which can be lost, copied or forged. It will be designed in accordance with the highest security standards, protecting against a comprehensive range of threats, including cyber.

Tackling exclusion will be at the heart of our programme and we will work closely with stakeholders to deal with this serious issue. A comprehensive inclusion programme will be essential to the success of the programme. We will prioritise ensuring that everyone who is eligible for the new digital identity is able to get and benefit from one – importantly, providing an opportunity for those who are digitally excluded or otherwise struggle to prove who they are to better engage with public services.

I look forward to working with you as we progress this ambitious programme.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon Liz Kendall MP
Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology