

Identity verification

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Introduction

Claimants must verify their identity to claim Universal Credit. This is to confirm that we link the right person to the right claim and helps to reduce identity fraud. Claimants can verify their identity by one or more of the following:

online verification
documentary evidence
biographical test
biographical check
gather and confirm
know and recognise

It is the claimant's responsibility to prove who they are.

Afghan citizens' resettlement scheme

The Afghan citizens' resettlement scheme (ACRS) provides protection for people at risk identified as in need.

Anyone who is resettled through the ACRS will receive indefinite leave to enter or remain in the UK and will be able to apply for British citizenship after 5 years in the UK under existing rules.

Afghan citizens supported by ACRS who are not currently residing in a hotel

Claimants being supported by the ACRS who make a claim to Universal Credit and are **not** residing in a hotel must have their identity verified using the guidance detailed below.

When claimant identity cannot be verified, agents should raise a JIRA Question ticket under the following heading:

Claimant Arriving from Afghanistan – ID Process Not Supported by Bridging Hotel
Agents will receive instructions on what actions to take through the JIRA ticket.

Online verification

Claimants can verify their identity(ID) online using the Government Gateway service or GOV.UK. Claimants who have successfully verified their ID online may not be required to undertake a full initial evidence interview.

Documentary evidence

Claimants who do not confirm their identity online must provide one piece of primary evidence and two pieces of secondary evidence when they attend their Initial Evidence Interview:

- Primary evidence is where the issuing source of the evidence confirmed the applicant's identity through an identity checking process
- Secondary evidence is where the issuing source of the evidence performed little or no identity checking.

Verifying documents

Documents provided by the claimant are checked using the ultraviolet light box, high quality magnifier, natural light and other resources to validate they are genuine.

Any doubts on the validity of the documents must be raised with the identity fraud team following the instructions in the Document High Risk List that is available in local shared folders. They will advise of the action to take.

Document high risk list

Where identity documents have been identified as having a high risk of not being genuine by serious fraud teams, a Document High Risk List (DHRL) and ad-hoc alerts are produced and sent to offices listing the current high risk documents. The list is held in shared folders within offices. These documents must be checked in all cases with the Document Examination Team whilst the claimant is in the office.

Biographical Test

Biographical questions are generated using information held on the Customer Information System (Searchlight).

For more information, see Spotlight on: Checking claimant identity

Biographical check

A biographical check involves the validation of information provided by the claimant to be checked with third parties.

For guidance on suitable third parties see Acceptable Third Party Biographical Checks

A 'Data sharing consent form: UCD431' and 'Third party consent form: UCD430' must be completed for each third party organisation.

The relevant 'Data sharing consent form: UCD431' must be posted with each Third party consent form: UCD430'.

The consent forms can be found in: Resources

Identity or security concerns on previous claims

On a new claim for Universal Credit, the 'Verify claimant ID (security concern)' to-do will be generated on completion of the Initial Evidence Interview in cases where the previous claim was made using fraudulent or stolen identity. This to-do is generated by a pre-set marker for claims that have been identified as having been made using stolen or compromised identity details on a previous claim.

The 'Verify claimant ID (security concern)' to-do will block payment and Advances until it has been completed by an agent.

When this to-do is generated, the agent is required to conduct further identity checks to ensure the claimant is who they claim to be. This will be a more robust form of identity verification. If identity verification is conducted online, a notification is sent to the claimant letting them know that we will contact them to ask for more information. It is important that the agent should be extra vigilant and recognise the increased security risk on these types of claims.

All uploaded primary documentary evidence is referred to the Document Examination Team for a decision as part of the to-do. This will be relayed back to the agent before identity can be verified.

On completion of the to-do, if the claimant does not pass the verification checks - the claim will be automatically closed with the reason 'Has been flagged for identity or security reasons'.

See also Claim closure and Spotlight on: Considering claim closure.

Gathering and confirming

A combination of documentary evidence, questioning and comparison to DWP records can be used to verify ID if there is enough evidence to confirm it with confidence.

Knowing and recognising

If the claimant is known to two members of the Jobcentre as part of their work, and these persons are willing, they can verify the claimants ID.

Ongoing contact

After the initial verification of a claimant's identity, it is important to continue to protect sensitive information in every future contact - in person or by telephone. The claimant's identity must be confirmed each time there is contact in person or by telephone.

In person

When a claimant has been seen over a period of time and a relationship has been built-up, there is no need to continue to see identity documents or ask security questions at each visit.

If the claimant is seen for the first time and/or cannot be recognised, the usual identity verification process must be followed by asking for identity documents or asking security questions.

Claimants must continue to be told to always bring identity documents to each appointment, as they cannot guarantee to see a staff member who will recognise them.

This does not apply to the Initial Evidence Interview.

By telephone or their account

Claimants contacting the Department by telephone or by using their account will prove their identity:

- using security questions to log into the service, or
- using the allocated PSN number to log into the service