[Next steps outlined for UK's use of digital identity](#)

- Consumer rights around digital identity to be strengthened to enable wider use across the country
- Reports show the digital identity market could add 3 per cent to UK GDP by 2030.

Leaders in the tech, business and civil society sectors have welcomed the government's plans to enable the use of digital identity across the UK, with plans to update existing laws and a new set of guiding principles for policy development.

The proposals come after it was revealed 2.6 million people made a claim for the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme online since its launch on 13 May 2020, with 1.4 million having no prior digital identity credentials and needing to pass through HMRC's identity verification service.

Increasingly people are required to prove their identity to access services, whether it is to buy age-restricted items on and offline or make it easier to register at a new GP surgery.

Now, following a call for evidence published by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport alongside the Cabinet Office, the government plans to update existing laws on identity checking to enable digital identity to be used as widely as possible.

It will consult on developing legislation for consumer protection relating to digital identity, specific rights for individuals, an ability to seek redress if something goes wrong, and set out where the responsibility for oversight should lie. It will also consult on the appropriate privacy and technical standards for administering and processing secure digital identities.

[Figures](#) from 2019 show a 32 per cent rise in identity fraud over five years, with 223,163 cases recorded in that year alone – up 18 per cent on the previous year.

A new government Digital Identity Strategy Board has also developed six principles to strengthen digital identity delivery and policy in the UK.

Digital Infrastructure Minister Matt Warman said:

> Digital technology is helping us through the pandemic and continues to improve the way we live, work and access vital services.
>
> We want to make it easier for people to prove their identity securely online so transactions can become even quicker – it has the potential to add billions to our economy.

Today I've set out further detail on our proposals and I look forward to working with partners in the private sector to unlock the UK's digital identity economy.

Cabinet Office Minister, Julia Lopez, said:

It is clear that there is a need and an expectation for the government to make it easier for people to use digital identities quickly, safely and securely and we are committed to enabling this.

We want to ensure there is transparency for people when they create and use digital identities so that they are always in control of who has access to their data and for what purpose.

We have already started to explore how we can work across government to achieve our ambitions and through the Document Checking Service pilot, how we can also work with the private sector to harness the value to our users across the UK's digital economy, and I am committed to continuing this drive going forward.

Hannah Gurga, Managing Director of Digital Technology & Cyber at UK Finance, said:

Removing the barriers to creating secure digital identities, combined with the necessary safeguards, will make it easier for people to use online services while at the same time helping to prevent criminal activity such as money laundering and terrorism. Developing a legal framework for digital identity is therefore an important next step and we look forward to working with the Government as it develops its proposals.

Felicity Burch, Director of Innovation, CBI, said:

This publication is an important step towards creating a robust digital identity system in the UK. A framework based on privacy, transparency and interoperability will bring many benefits to individuals and firms, providing greater access to online services and increasing productivity.

The CBI supports the government's ambitions to create a digital ID framework that can help protect consumers and unlock economic growth, and looks forward to collaborating with DCMS and the Cabinet Office to make this a reality.

The six principles are:

1) Privacy – When personal data is accessed people will have confidence that there are measures in place to ensure their confidentiality and privacy; for instance, a supermarket checking a shopper's age, a lawyer overseeing the sale of a house or someone applying to take out a loan.

2) Transparency – When an individual's identity data is accessed when using digital identity products they must be able to understand by who, why and when; for example, being able to see how your bank uses your data through digital identity solutions.

3) Inclusivity – People who want or need a digital identity should be able to obtain one; for example, not having documentation such as a passport or driving licence should not be a barrier to not having a digital identity.

4) Interoperability – Setting technical and operating standards for use across the UK's economy to enable international and domestic interoperability.

5) Proportionality – User needs and other considerations such as privacy and security will be balanced so digital identity can be used with confidence across the economy.

6) Good governance – Digital identity standards will be linked to government policy and law. Any future regulation will be clear, coherent and align with the government's wider strategic approach to digital regulation. For example, firms verifying your identity will need to comply with laws around how they access and store data.

The government is also exploring how secure checks could be made against government data. This month the Document Checking Service Pilot scheme launched by the Government to give people easier and safer access to digital services which require identity checks, such as online mortgage applications, financial services and recruitment onboarding.

The new service will also help organisations tackle fraud and test if there is a market for this type of digital identity checking service.

The pilot, which will run for approximately a year, will deliver significant time savings for people who previously went through in-person processes to verify their identities. It will also provide financial savings for organisations who can move their identity proofing processes online.

Notes to editors

The Government response can be found [here](#)

Document Checking Service Pilot

- The Government Digital Service built the Document Checking Service to allow Identity Providers for GOV.UK Verify to check that passport and driving licence records are valid when verifying a user's identity.

- In this pilot, up to eleven private sector organisations will be allowed to verify the validity of passport data only.

- No organisation will be given access to government-held data — participating organisations will simply receive a yes, no or error message as to whether the document was validly issued, and no personal data not already provided by the individual would be used or shared.

- The Government Digital Service are in discussion with the selected organisations and finalising agreements before the onboarding process can commence.

- Sedicii Innovations and Agenda Resource Management are confirmed pilot participants who will use the checks as part of financial services onboarding .

- The full list of pilot participants will be available in due course.