

Calling all company secretaries whose firms are considering registering as an Authorised Corporate Service Provider.

From Autumn 2025 it will be mandatory for all directors (new and existing), persons exercising significant control, members of LLP's and anyone acting on behalf of the entity to verify their identity with Companies House.

There are several different methods a person's identity can be verified:

- via the GOV.UK app
- via the GOV.UK web service
- at a post office (provided a face-to-face verification appointment has been booked)
- via an Authorised Corporate Service Provider ("ACSP")

As the company secretary is the primary person filing documents at Companies House, it is logical that many company secretarial providers will register to become an ACSP. However, the requirements involved entail more than just obtaining a copy of a valid passport or driving licence and proof of address dated within the prior three months.

Companies House has issued guidance on the identity verification standards ACSPs will have to meet. Some of the finer details include:

- When verifying a person's identity ACSPs will need to obtain an address history for the last 12 months and an email address, along with the more standard items of full name and date of birth.
- The identity documents provided have to be checked using identification document validation technology or by a person trained in detecting false documents by a specialist training provider.
- When checking the identity belongs to the person claiming it, alongside checking their address history and if they have changed their name, it is required to check if they have interacted with other organisations or people. This could be verified via a bank or credit card statement, council tax bills sent to the person's home address or if their passport has been used.
- Copies of documents will have to be kept for seven years from the date the identity checks have been completed. To note this is longer than the five years required under The Money Laundering, Terrorist Financing and Transfer of Funds (Information on the Payer) Regulations 2017, therefore it is important to ensure that internal document retention procedures are updated.
- Records are also required to be kept of the identity checks to be completed and any failed verification attempts.

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