

NO2ID's reading of DSIT's response to the “[Do not introduce Digital ID Cards](#)” Petition



Government (indented throughout) said:

We will introduce a digital ID within this Parliament to help tackle illegal migration, make accessing government services easier, and enable wider efficiencies. We will consult on details soon.

[NO2ID.UK](#) responds:

And they said Jeremy Corbyn was an obsessed ideologue...

“To help tackle illegal migration” in this case means ‘papers’ being checked for everyone, treating British citizens in the same way we treat every other resident of the UK – lawful or unlawful – while limiting ways to access the public services that lawful residents pay for.

Making access to the services we pay for more difficult may be a design decision, but it’s not an excuse to introduce even more burdens onto (selected) citizens. That database-driven public services allow some to pass through with ease while imposing [burdens](#) of [bureaucracy](#) on others has been [documented in detail](#).

Who will benefit from these claimed “wider efficiencies”, and how exactly? People already live their digital lives in a host of ways that suit them – only Government demands we must all be “efficient”.

A proper public consultation would be very welcome. Unfortunately, quotes from Labour’s Blairites [confirm their belief](#) that ideologues never listen. We shall see.

The Government has announced plans to introduce a digital ID system which is fit for the needs of modern Britain. We are committed to making people’s everyday lives easier and more secure, to putting more control in their hands (including over their own data), and to driving growth through harnessing digital technology. We also want to learn from countries which have digitised government services for the benefit of their citizens, in line with our manifesto commitment to modernise government.

How on Earth is being required to hand over your unlocked phone to unknown ‘officials’ – a device containing large amounts of your most private and intimate data – “more secure”?

Maybe someone in Government (or Tony Blair's Institute) should read up on basic [Security Engineering](#)? Or at the very least attend to Principle 7 of the National Audit Office's latest guidance on [Cyber security and resilience](#)...

Also, how will citizens have "more control" over their own data, if the 'official copy' of their personal information is held in a giant government database?

This Labour Government can try to dress this scheme up as much as they like, but it's just a 2026 rebranding of 2004's National Identity Register – a "commitment to modernise government" by returning to WWII. Labour and the Home Office tried this last time Tony Blair was in power. That [worked out badly](#), so why are Blair acolytes in this Government acting as if he's PM again?

Currently, when UK citizens and residents use public services, start a new job, or, for example, buy alcohol, they often need to present an assortment of physical documents to prove who they are or things about themselves. This is both bureaucratic for the individual and creates space for abuse and fraud. This includes known issues with illegal working and modern slavery, while the fragmented approach and multiple systems across Government make it difficult for people to access vital services. Further, there are too many people who are excluded, like the 1 in 10 UK adults who don't have a physical photo ID, so can struggle to prove who they are and access the products and services they are entitled to.

We look forward to the consultation describing how digital ID will resolve "known issues with illegal working and modern slavery". Is the ID scheme going to link to HMRC tax payments? What about checking income paid into connected bank accounts? As with the previous attempt in the 2000s, many claims are being made for 'digital ID cards' – thus far, specific details and coherent explanations are notably lacking.

The instinct of technocrats like Tony Blair and Whitehall bureaucrats is to shift the blame for the "fragmented approach and multiple systems" onto their predecessors and the public. The former may at least partly be true, but why must the public pay the price for the mistakes of Government?

The "1 in 10 UK adults who don't have a physical photo ID" did not matter to the previous (Conservative) Governments, who used it to disenfranchise electors they didn't care about. Perhaps this Government will consult on whether requiring your unlocked smartphone to be presented at a polling station is in any way better?

To tackle these interlinked issues, we will introduce a new national digital ID. This is not a card but a new digital identity that 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). Over time, people will be able to use it to seamlessly access a range of public and private sector services, with the aim of making our everyday lives easier and more secure. It will not be compulsory to obtain a digital ID but it will be mandatory for some applications.

“Not a card” means that whenever your “new digital identity” is used you'll have to unlock your phone for whichever authority figure wants to check it. That might be a policeman, a ticket inspector, a Jobcentre work coach or potential employer... or perhaps a street thug with menaces who thinks you're ‘talking foreign’.

As with all shiny new apps and tech projects, when something is “available for free” it is invariably the users who find out they're the ones on the menu. And of course, to pay for government-mandated ID, taxpayers' money will flow regardless.

For “[age 13 and over](#)” suggests government ID will obliterate the market for online age verification, and that to access any digital service you'll have to use your new digital ID – be that for Discord, X-Twitter, or to access porn – as you “seamlessly access a range of public and private sector services”. All of course being ‘safely’ recorded by government in the name of making “lives easier and more secure” – not necessarily *yours*, though, as it may be tracking your private transactions too...

“It will not be compulsory to obtain a digital ID but it will be mandatory for some applications” exemplifies the doublespeak of both Blairs (Tony and Eric). Digital ID will be compulsory for every person who wants to get a job, or rent a room – and elsewhere, [the Government has suggested](#) digital ID could be mandatory if you want to buy a house.

For example, the new digital ID will build on GOV.UK One Login and the GOV.UK Wallet to drive the transformation of public services. Over time, this system will allow people to access government services - such as benefits or tax records - without needing to remember multiple logins or provide physical documents. It will significantly streamline interactions with the state, saving time and reducing frustrating paperwork, while also helping to create opportunities for more joined up government services. International examples show how beneficial this can be. For instance, Estonia's system reportedly

saves each citizen hours every month by streamlining unnecessary bureaucracy, and the move to becoming a digital society has saved taxpayer money.

To be clear, "[GOV.UK One Login](#) and the [GOV.UK Wallet](#)" are, or soon will be, one and the same thing – what medConfidential has long called '[The Black App](#)'.

The upcoming consultation will hopefully clarify whether "One Login" means you can have different accounts as are useful for you, e.g. Home and Work, or whether it will be mandatory that you have *only* one.

Of course, it is entirely lawful to have two mobile phones connecting to different e-mail addresses at home and work, just as it is entirely lawful to be known by multiple names. ([Cherie Booth](#) is an eminent KC who retained her maiden name professionally after getting married, and she may well retain any diplomatic passport she received as a result of her husband's job.) In such cases – and there are many others – it is entirely reasonable to have one set or combination of name / e-mail / phone number that is entirely disconnected from a second set, despite belonging to the same person.

Will your "new digital identity" force individuals to change their names, or will it make using multiple names illegal? The consultation will have to be absolutely clear on this point to the public, in a way the government has never been about GOV.UK Accounts and One Login since the [Privacy and Consumer Advisory Group](#) was abolished.

If Government is not clear with the public, it cannot be clear with its *Departments*. And if Government makes lazy assumptions such as "one login" meaning at most one login per person, then it should realise its scheme threatens to accuse of fraud around half of the people in the country who are married, who have been legally known by multiple names.

"...allow people to access government services – such as benefits or tax records – without needing to remember multiple logins or provide physical documents"? Hmm. Blair's current set of lackeys should take care not to re-use the same wording that was used in the late 90s. *Especially for things the public can already do.*

Similar goes for "joined up". Although this time, when someone makes you hand over your phone, the entire range of government services you access could be visible to the official or unknown other who just demanded you hand over your unlocked device.

While "International examples show how beneficial this can be", plenty of counterexamples illustrate how badly things can go wrong too – as many people in various cities around the US are witnessing on their street this week. Each nation has its own different relationship between its citizens and the state.

“Estonia’s system reportedly saves each citizen hours every month by streamlining unnecessary bureaucracy” – but Estonia also has one member of its Cabinet permanently out of the country in case of an invasion from the tyrant next door, and an awareness [they’ve had for years](#) that were their database to ever be compromised by that hostile actor, they’d basically have built fascism-in-a-box.

A system built from a ‘clean slate’, for just 1.3 million people, and with the consent of the population after decades of Soviet occupation is nothing like the same thing as one built on top of the mess that a generation of politicians, Sir Humphreys and tech opportunists have made in a country of 70 million people.

Estonia was barely an appropriate comparison when Blair and his Ministers used it 20 years ago; current circumstances show how much less so it is now. (Our friends at Privacy International keep watch over other [examples of ID around the globe](#).)

As for, “saved taxpayer money”... if wishes were horses!

Blair’s “[Transformational Government](#)” and ID scheme promised this in 2005, and more. Billions of taxpayer pounds and two decades later, the current Labour Government trots out the same “unnecessary bureaucracy”, “fragmented approach and multiple systems” and “abuse and fraud” as its predecessor did, to justify having another go.

By the end of this Parliament, employers will have to check the new digital ID when conducting a 'right to work' check. This will help combat criminal gangs who promise access to the UK labour market in order to profit from dangerous and illegal channel crossings. It will create a fairer system between UK citizens and legal residents, crack down on forged documents, and streamline the process for employers, driving up compliance. Further, it will create business information showing where employers are conducting checks, so driving more targeted action against non-compliant employers.

Yet today, the [Home Office guide for employers](#) already states, “you must check that a job applicant is allowed to work for you in the UK before you employ them.”

Mr Starmer’s initial announcement was limited to giving British citizens the ability to access the “share code” system already used by lawful migrants. There’s no need to have a digital ID cards database to give those who want one access to a share code from their Universal Credit account, their Passport, or from Driving License systems. Nothing about this system is required to “streamline the process for employers, driving up compliance” – it is simply about political will, and Mr Blair has decided what he wants from the current Government.

He and his devotees do appear to have missed the “Hostile Environment” imposed after he left power, and still seem to believe that Government announcements can somehow “combat criminal gangs who promise access to the UK labour market”. Criminals don’t care about breaking promises to their victims – that’s one of the things that makes them criminals. Instead, the former PM wants to treat UK citizens who voted him out of power the same way as the Home Office and subsequent Governments have treated migrants.

“...it will create business information showing where employers are conducting checks, so driving more targeted action against non-compliant employers” is Whitehall-speak for government immediately knowing who is applying for work or renting a place to live and where, then using that and any other information it thinks it knows about that person to ‘intervene’ in whatever way it chooses.

For clarity, it will not be a criminal offence to not hold a digital ID and police will not be able to demand to see a digital ID as part of a “stop and search.”

...yet?

One should note “stop and search” is just one of the ways in which police officers interact with members of the public. Will police be able to demand digital ID from people they’ve arrested – thereby forcing them to hand over their unlocked phone – when people have, for example, been exercising their lawful right to protest or in other circumstances?

Will these issues be addressed in the consultation? Will the Prime Minister (Starmer, not Blair) give a written commitment that such a ban will be in primary legislation? What about [enforced access](#) by commercial actors? And what will happen when a racist gang stops someone on the street and demands they unlock their phone to show their ID App?

Privacy and security will also be central to the digital ID programme. We will follow data protection law and best practice in creating a system which people can rightly put their trust in. People in the UK already know and trust digital credentials held in their phone wallets to use in their everyday lives, from paying for things to storing boarding passes. The new system will be built on similar technology and be your boarding pass to government. Digitally checkable digital credentials are more secure than physical documents which can be lost, copied or forged, and often mean sharing more information than just what is necessary for a given transaction.

Privacy is a fundamental human right, not just “data protection” and “best practice” – and

genuine trust isn't just about building “secure” IT systems, and legal compliance. If you want to be seen as trustworthy, you must demonstrate that you are [competent, honest, and reliable](#). It is unclear whether Mr Blair’s reputation covers any of these three things; perhaps someone should test that with a poll?

While many in the UK do “already know and trust digital credentials held in their phone wallets”, that is their choice. And many do not – or they hold only some credentials, and not others. And those credentials aren't trying to interpose themselves into every aspect of your (civil) life, telling you what you can and cannot do, while building a dossier on what you are doing, and everyone you interact with...

Right now the use of digital credentials is a free choice by every individual, depending on what you are comfortable with and the utility you receive from your choices. The Blair ID fanatics would rather make that *their* choice, i.e. the government's.

When Government argues that “[d]igitally checkable digital credentials are more secure”, they mean that the government will have more control over them, not that they are more secure in the real world for you.

Think of Chip and PIN, where one of the key effects was to migrate risk from the banks to their customers so that when your money was lost because of their mistake, they could blame you. Or in similar fashion the Home Office, which – having destroyed its records of the Windrush migrants’ arrival – then blamed the migrants for not keeping a copy, and punished them for it.

In another unfortunate analogy, a “boarding pass for government” also means that access can be denied at the whim of an official.

The new system will be designed in accordance with the highest security standards to protect against a comprehensive range of threats, including cyber-attacks.

How's that going for various other government systems?

The “new system” may be “designed” that way, but it is a *Government* system – not the device living in the pocket of everyone in the country.

Criminals exploit any weakness in devices, whether that's [emptying bank accounts while people are in the gym](#), or [snatching 40,000 mobile phones](#) from people, who would then have their entire civil lives exposed and available through those devices. And when your

pension gets wiped out, or your Universal Credit bank payments are moved elsewhere, Government will (in the first instance) blame you for the effects of their “efficiency”.

A “comprehensive range of threats” in a 2025 world must include the perceived threat of Government power itself. A state ID control system *could* do things for people, sure – but equally valid is the concern that it will be used to do things *to* people.

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 scheme and ensure it is as secure and inclusive as possible.

We look forward to a genuine consultation without preconceived outcomes. And, given the scope of the ID scheme, the consultation really must include the devolved administrations. Those in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales may have something to say about its initial “BritCard” branding, so beloved of Mr Blair.

What people desire from ID can be fundamental and contradictory. There are those who will want digital ID cards to be mandatory for reasons other than Messrs Blair and Starmer; some may lobby for even more data fields to be included. Some may have very particular reasons for insisting that ID should be shown to anyone who wishes to see it, including for entry to a toilet. Because, despite the benefits claimed, ID is also used to bully and coerce.

The authors of this briefing have direct experience of “co-design” with “civil society groups and other stakeholders”, as members of the Privacy and Consumer Advisory Group set up after the abolition of Blair’s last ID scheme. Having issued [Identity Assurance Principles](#) that for years set sensible limits to what government might do around ID, under the new Labour Government – when responsibility for identity moved from the Cabinet Office to DSIT – the Group received a “termination letter”.

Following consultation, we will seek to bring forward legislation to underpin this system.

Department for Science, Innovation and Technology

Primary legislation has to be written down, then debated, then passed, and only then implemented. We sincerely hope the Civil Service Code is being enforced, and that nothing *ultra vires* is being done in advance. (It’s possible Mr Blair admires multiple things about Mr Trump.)

The Database State never learns, though sometimes new people think it’ll be different if they’re the ones running the databases. In order to function, databases have to persist beyond any single administration. Databases degrade over time, and must be maintained

to survive. Political winds can also change, of course – and hard drives can always be tossed into a grinder...



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