

Residential Property

Identity procedures – government regulations mean you must prove who you are

The UK is a major international financial and legal centre with a high reputation for honesty and integrity. Unfortunately that is why professional and financial businesses like banks and solicitors firms are attractive to money launders – criminals who sometimes try and hide stolen money by turning it into legitimate income.

The Government has introduced measures:

- to make it more difficult for criminals to make and keep money from their crimes
- to confiscate proceeds of crime

For this reason there are compulsory checks that solicitors have to make of their clients. Being asked for identification does not mean you are under suspicion. The identification requirements apply to all clients when they are asking solicitors to conduct certain types of cases.

How this affects you

Banks and building societies have had to check the identity of customers for sometime and now solicitors have to. They are required by law to implement certain procedures. This means that you will have to show us (if possible) or another firm of solicitors, some personal documentation that will formally verify your identity.

You will need to produce:

- your driving license which incorporates a photograph and your address, or
- your current passport **plus** one of the following:
 - your driving license
 - a bank or building society statement in your name
 - a credit card statement in your name
 - a recent bill from a public utility company addressed to you
 - property title documentation in your name and confirming your address

It may be possible for you to call into our offices in the following locations: Portsmouth, Fareham, Southampton, Winchester, Oxford and London.

If it is not possible for you to call into any of our offices, we shall need to ask you to make arrangements to produce certain identification papers to a local firm of solicitors and this would have to be either your current passport or your driving licence which incorporates a photograph. If the identification is being dealt with by

way of a passport, we will be able to deal directly with you with the other papers that will need to be sent to us.

If you need to make an appointment with a local solicitor we would suggest that you **provide them with a copy of this information leaflet as it explains exactly what needs to be arranged.**

The solicitor who deals with the procedure will need to adhere carefully to the following procedure:

1. Take a copy of the original identification document and mark it as a "certified copy".
2. Add a note to confirm that the photograph is a good likeness of the holder of the document.
3. They should then sign the copy, add the date of signature, and also print clearly their name and contact details.
4. They then need to send the copy documents to us with a covering letter on headed note paper, with the letter being signed personally by the solicitor (rather than in the name of the firm).

The regulations we have to comply with are strict and it is essential that the above procedure is carefully followed so as to avoid the possibility of a supplemental procedure proving necessary.

When making the appointment you do need to establish what fee they will charge you for dealing with the matter.

Contact

For further information or advice, please contact: respropertyinfo@bllaw.co.uk

Southampton office T: 023 8090 8090

Oxford office T: 01865 248607

Portsmouth office T: 023 9222 1122

This publication is not a substitute for detailed advice on specific transactions and problems and should not be taken as providing legal advice on any of the topics discussed.

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