Applying for a National Insurance (NI) number

A basic guide to Applying for a National Insurance (NI) number
What is a National Insurance (NI) number?

An NI number is a personal number used:
• to record a person’s National Insurance (NI) contributions and credited contributions
• as a reference number for the whole social security system.

An NI number should only be given to one person and must only be used by that person.

You do not have a legal right to an NI number, but there are circumstances when you are legally obliged to apply for an NI number and register for NI purposes.

When you may apply for a National Insurance (NI) number

If one of the following applies to you, you may apply for an NI number:
• you will be making a claim to benefit
• you have started or are about to start work
• you are self-employed
• you are actively looking for work and have evidence to prove this
• your partner is claiming benefit for you
• you want to pay voluntary NI contributions and would benefit from paying them

When anyone applies for an NI number we have to:
• check their identity
• make sure they need an NI number.

We do this to make sure you are who you say you are, to make sure any information we have about you is right, and to protect your NI and social security accounts.

We will check to see if we already have an NI number for you. If we do not find one, we will write and ask you to come to an Evidence of identity interview.

Evidence of identity interview

At the interview we will ask you questions about your background to help us build up a picture of your circumstances. This information and any official documents you bring with you will help to prove your identity. You may also have to complete a form to apply for an NI number.

When we give you the date of the interview, we will tell you what information or evidence to bring with you. The information or evidence you need to bring depends on why you need the NI number. The interview will usually be one-to-one unless for example, you need an interpreter.

There is a list in this leaflet to give you an idea of the documents you can bring to help prove your identity.
Sometimes we may ask for your consent to let us keep your documents for a short time. We will give you a receipt for any documents you let us keep.

### Types of evidence and information

Here are some examples of the types of evidence and information we need. We cannot accept photocopies.

General documents such as your:
- Passport
- National Identity card
- Birth certificate
- Marriage certificate
- Full driving licence
- Home Office documents
- Two or more passports if of dual/multi nationality
- Student loan documentation
- Student ID card
- Letter from college including course details
- Mortgage/rental agreement.

Documents to do with employment, such as:
- Payslips
- A work permit
- A letter from your employer
- Your contract of employment
- Details of any employment agencies you are registered with
- Evidence of actively seeking work
- Certificate of Incorporation
- Memorandum of Association
- Articles of Association
- Services contract.

Documents to do with self-employment, such as:
- Invoices
- Letters from your accountant
- Letters from your clients
- Your Schedule D tax form
- Stock transfer form.

You must bring any travel documents you have. These are documents that give information about your travel between countries. Travel documents include things like your passport, National Identity card or form NASS 35 that is issued to people seeking asylum in the UK.

If you have any other documents that you think may help prove your identity, please bring them with you.

**If you do not have any documents you must still go to the interview.**

You may be able to prove your identity with the information you give at the interview.

If your application is successful, we will give you your NI number in writing as soon as possible after the interview. We will send you an NI number card later. If your application is unsuccessful we will write and tell you.

**Remember – a National Insurance number is not proof of identity.**
Where to get help and advice

The information in this leaflet will also be available in large print, Braille, on audio cassette and in the following languages:

- Arabic
- Bengali
- Chinese
- Gujarati
- Punjabi
- Somali
- Urdu
- Vietnamese.

You can get these from your social security office.

To get more information or other leaflets get in touch with your social security office. For your nearest social security office, look for the Jobcentre Plus, social security or Jobcentre display advert in the business numbers section of the phone book.

You can get more information from the DWP website. The address is: www.dwp.gov.uk

To contact us by email see the Contact Us section of the website.

Remember that this leaflet is a general guide to benefits and is not a full and authoritative statement of the law. We have made every effort to ensure that the information in this leaflet is correct at the date shown on the cover. However, changes in the law may make the leaflet become gradually less accurate.