

Toe-prints to enhance ID Card biometric security and ease airport security queues.

Regulations have been tabled today, to be enacted before the dissolution of Parliament, to allow toe-prints to be added to the list of biometrics collected from individuals when they enrol for an ID Card.

The move will allow for shorter queuing time at airport security as anyone who is requested to take their shoes off when passing through airport security scanner (or a whole body scanner) will be able to have their toes checked and their identity confirmed when they stand in the scanning system. Biometric toe-print readers have already been successfully trialled with security scanners at Doncaster's Robin Hood International Airport near Barnsley.

For security purpose, toe-prints will be kept separate from National Identity Register and only made available to law enforcement agencies in cases of emergency. Given the recent misuse of UK passports by Israelis, the Government also intends to use biometric toe-prints in order to enhance the security of the UK passport in general.

Statement from the Identity Minister

Meg Hillier said, "This is an exciting development in biometric security and is another of our many final steps towards securing acceptance of identity cards in general. I think that most individuals will welcome the enhanced biometric security that ten toe-prints will bring, especially as ACPO and the head of MI5 have confirmed that collection of toe-prints will deter future shoe bombers like Richard Reid".

Meg Hillier continued "The additional cost of this improved security is marginal. People when providing all ten fingerprints at ID Card enrolment centres will merely be asked to take their socks off". She explained: "we have checked with the Chief Medical Officer and he has confirmed that foot-dipping with disinfectant will only be needed if an ID Card enrolment centre is in an area designated under "The Export and Movement Restrictions (Foot-and-Mouth Disease) Regulations 2010".

Meg Hillier added: "The collection of toe-prints helps end discrimination. Sadly, those individuals who have no hands cannot enjoy the full benefits of enrolling for an ID Card. Toe-prints will allow them to participate fully in society just by putting their feet up on a scanner. To be fully biometrically inclusive with respect to those who have no hands or feet, we intend to hold talks with the Arm & Legless Society of Great Britain to see whether a DNA sample collection would be acceptable to them".

Meg Hillier concluded "Identity cards will prove themselves extremely useful in daily life, from opening a bank account, hiring a car, entering a nightclub, and for travel to Europe. Now you can get all these benefits by literally playing footsie with your ID Card".

Notes to editors

Identity Minister Meg Hillier today (1st April 2010) laid before Parliament a draft order to allowing the Identity and Passport Service to begin collecting toe-prints. The draft “Identity Cards Act 2006 (Toes Biometrics) Regulations 2010” modify “The Identity Cards Act 2006 (Prescribed Information) Regulations 2009”. The Regulations can be obtained from the OPSI website http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2009/draft/plain/ukdsi_9780111480434_en

The National Identity Service will deliver recognisable benefits to residents, businesses and local authorities. These benefits to individuals include:

- a universal and simple proof of identity that brings convenience for organisations and individuals and means an end to the use of photocopied bank statements, phone bills and birth certificates
- tracking all uses of the ID Card as described above on the audit trail and providing third party access to that audit trail in specific circumstances.
- keeping indefinitely a collection of all ten fingerprints for identity and for law enforcement purposes.
- keeping all details on a National Identity Register beyond the death of the individual to protect the dead from ID theft.
- requiring individuals to keep their registered address up to date which can be then accessed by any number of public authorities; failure to keep registered details such as an address up to date can result in a £1000 penalty.
- ensuring that foreign nationals living, working and studying here legally are able to easily prove their identity and prevent those here illegally from benefiting from the privileges of Britain
- travel in Europe, using the identity card which fits in a wallet or purse

Individuals can get more information or make an appointment for an identity card by calling 0300 330 0000.

