

Digital Proof of Age for Alcohol: What Retailers Need to Know

What is Changing?

The Government is changing the alcohol licensing rules to allow retailers to accept digital proof of age when selling alcohol. Customers will be able to use their smartphone to prove they are 18 or over, with their age checked electronically through a registered Digital Verification Service (DVS).

The change is expected to come into effect early/mid September. Digital proof of age will be an additional option meaning retailers do not have to accept digital proof of age and can continue to use physical ID.

How will it work?

Retailers can choose whether to use digital proof of age. There are two ways it could work:

Mobile validator: The customer shows their digital proof of age on their smartphone. A member of staff uses a separate smartphone or tablet to verify it.

Self-checkout: The customer uses their smartphone to complete the digital age check as part of the self-checkout process.

What does this mean for my wider responsibilities?

Digital proof of age does not replace existing licensing responsibilities. Self-checkouts, for example, can use digital age verification but cannot be completely unsupervised.

Staff must continue to prevent underage and proxy sales and refuse sales to customers who are intoxicated. Retailers remain responsible for ensuring every alcohol sale is lawful.

Do I need to do anything now?

Digital proof of age is optional and retailers can continue to accept physical ID. Most retailers are not expected to have digital age verification technology in their stores when the new rules come into effect.

ACS is engaging with Government officials on the policy's implementation and will keep members updated.

What technology providers can I work with?

Retailers will need to use a Digital Verification Service (DVS) that is on the [Government's official DVS register](#). The register contains providers that have been certified against the Government's UK Digital Verification Services Trust Framework.

Retailers should check the Government's DVS register before choosing a provider.

Is age estimation included?

No. The Government has confirmed that age estimation services cannot be certified against the relevant DVS framework and cannot be used to support alcohol sales under the new licensing conditions.

Is this the same as the Government's digital ID scheme?

No. The digital proof of age changes for alcohol are separate from the Government's proposed national digital ID scheme, which has since been scrapped.

Further Information & Resources

- [Government Blogs](#) explaining the change and how retailers can implement the technology.
- [Statutory Instrument](#) amending the Mandatory Licensing Conditions