

Money laundering procedures (formerly 'Using a solicitor?')



The Law Society

New government regulations mean you must prove who you are if you are a new client or if your solicitor has not taken instructions from you for some time.

Why?

The UK is a major international financial and legal centre, with a strong reputation for honesty and integrity.

Unfortunately that is why financial and professional businesses, like banks and solicitors' firms, are attractive to money launderers - criminals who sometimes try to 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 the proceeds of crime

For this reason there are compulsory checks which solicitors have to make of their clients.

Being asked for identification does not mean you are under suspicion. The new identification requirements apply to all clients when they are asking their solicitors to conduct certain types of cases.

How this affects you

This means you will have to show your solicitor, or somebody acting on their behalf, some personal documents that can include:

- Current signed passport
- Photo-card driving licence
- Benefit book
- And a recent gas, electricity or other household bill

If you don't have these documents, you will have to ask your solicitor to advise you on how best to prove who you are.