**Call for evidence on the use of age assurance**

The Information Commissioner is calling for evidence on specific areas related to the use of age assurance. This is to support our work on the Children’s code (formally known as the Age-appropriate design code).

Age-appropriate application is one of the 15 standards that make up the code. The standard requires information society services (ISS) to take a risk-based approach to recognising the age of their users. This is to ensure they can effectively apply the code’s standards to child users. We have published an Opinion setting out the Commissioner’s expectations for how ISS providers should use age assurance to conform with this standard, and wider data protection law.

We recognise that age assurance is a rapidly developing area and new approaches are continuing to emerge. We are launching this call for evidence to further develop and maintain our knowledge in this area.

This will strengthen our ability to effectively and fairly regulate the UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the code. It also helps us deliver on the Commissioner’s commitment to develop industry standards in age assurance. These aim to assist children, parents and online services in identifying data protection-compliant services.

Please note that we are seeking evidence on specific areas related to age assurance in the context of the Children’s code. We are not seeking evidence on uses of age assurance that are beyond this scope or that could not be adapted to support the aims of the code. If you wish to get in touch with us regarding age assurance beyond the scope of this call for evidence, please contact childrenscode@ico.org.uk.

The call for evidence will run for a period of eight weeks, from 14 October 2021 to 4 January 2022.

Please return your completed call for evidence to ageassurance@ico.org.uk. Alternatively you can complete the call for evidence through our [Snap Survey, available through this link.](https://wh.snapsurveys.com/s.asp?k=163344831079)

**Privacy statement**

For this call for evidence we may publish the responses received from organisations or a summary of the responses. We will not publish responses from individuals. If we do publish any responses, we will remove email addresses and telephone numbers from these responses, but apart from this we will publish them in full. Please be mindful not to share any information in your response which you would not be happy for us to make publicly available.

Should we receive an FOI request for your response we will always seek to consult with you for your views on the disclosure of this information before any decision is made.

For more information about what we do with personal data please see our [privacy policy](https://ico.org.uk/global/privacy-notice/).

Please note that we are using the platform Snap Surveys to gather this information. Any data collected by Snap Surveys for ICO is stored on UK servers. You can read their Privacy Policy at [www.snapsurveys.com/survey-software/privacy-policy-uk/.](http://www.snapsurveys.com/survey-software/privacy-policy-uk/)

**Age Estimation**

1. Please submit any evidence related to the technical feasibility of existing or proposed age estimation approaches.

We are particularly interested in differences across sectors, service types and technologies.

1. Please submit any evidence of the effectiveness of existing age estimation approaches, including the precision, accuracy and confidence levels.

We are particularly interested in any differences across sectors, service types and technologies.

1. Please submit any evidence of approaches to age estimation that can ensure fairness, without discrimination or algorithmic bias.
2. What do you consider to be the most appropriate and accurate measures, including real-world measures to assess the effectiveness of age estimation approaches?

More info: Real-world metrics measure in-situ effectiveness when used on a live service – for example how many user accounts were identified as underage compared to how many of these were incorrectly identified as underage.

1. Please submit any evidence of specific data minimisation practices being applied to age estimation techniques.

**Emerging approaches to age assurance**

1. Please submit evidence of any novel and emerging approaches to age assurance.
2. Please list details of any opportunities to develop systemic age assurance approaches. For example, device level or cross-application approaches.
3. Please detail any research you are aware of related to attitudes to age assurance amongst children and their parents or carers.
4. How can the ICO support emerging approaches to age assurance that are built using data protection by design and default?
5. Please submit any evidence of how the feasibility and efficacy of age estimation approaches may improve over the next five years.

**Economic considerations**

1. The ICO has a regulatory duty to consider economic impacts.

Please submit any evidence relating to the costs, benefits and availability of age assurance approaches.

We are interested in the economic impacts both for the organisations developing age assurance approaches and those implementing them.

Please give details including the cost per user estimate of employing age assurance systems, organisational context, nature of online service and sector to which the impacts apply.

1. Please submit any evidence of how the economic impacts of age assurance approaches may change over the next five years.

**Data protection risks**

1. Please submit any evidence of any data protection risks associated with the development and application of age assurance approaches.

This can include issues around bias rates, access and inclusion.

1. Please submit any evidence of ways to minimise any data protection risks associated with age assurance.

For example, this could include the use of privacy-enhancing technologies.

1. Please list any particular areas where the application of data protection law (the UK GDPR and the DPA 2018) to age assurance needs clarifying.

**Areas for further ICO engagement**

1. Please list any additional ICO support that you feel would be beneficial in ensuring organisations conform with the Children’s code age-appropriate application standard.
2. Please list any initiatives to develop age assurance industry standards and innovation that the ICO could beneficially support.

**Other**

1. As outlined in our privacy statement, we may publish the responses received from organisations or a summary of the responses. We will not publish responses from individuals.

Bearing this in mind, are you answering this call for evidence:

On behalf of an organisation

As a professional

As an individual

Other

The ICO is planning to hold further engagements, such as roundtables, as part of this call for evidence.

1. Would you like to participate in future roundtables?