

Department of

Home Affairs

Rheynn Cooishyn Sthie

Consultation - Summary of Responses: Proposal to require passengers to carry ID and introduce proportionate ID verification on Isle of Man Steam Packet Company Journeys

Part of the **Securing our Island** Strategy

05 August 2026



Isle of Man
Government

Reiltys Ellan Vannin

This document is published by the Department of Home Affairs of the Isle of Man Government (“the Department”). The Department is established under the Government Departments Act 1987 (of Tynwald). The core purpose of the Department is keeping people safe. We aim to improve the quality of life for Island residents and businesses by providing effective services for their safety, protection and security. The Divisions of the Department support every aspect of community in the Isle of Man, working twenty-four hours every day to do so.

As a whole-nation UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, our shared vision and aim is to work across the economy, environment and society for a sustainable future.



© Crown Copyright 2026

The information in this document is licensed under the Open Government Licence (“OGL”). To find out more information about the OGL, visit www.gov.im/about-this-site/open-government-licence/.

This publication is available at www.consult.gov.im.



Isle of Man
Government

Reiltys Ellan Vannin

1. Introduction

This document summarises the consultation undertaken by the Department of Home Affairs (“**the Department**”) on proposals to require passengers travelling with the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company (“**IOMSPC**”) to carry identification (“**ID**”) whilst travelling on its services, and to introduce proportionate ID verification during the check-in process. The consultation ran from Monday 20 April 2026 to Monday 08 June 2026 and sought views from residents, businesses, community groups and other stakeholders on the proposals, in particular, how measures should be taken forward.

The consultation was undertaken because law enforcement and partner agencies had identified ongoing vulnerabilities in current ferry travel arrangements, particularly the ability for some passengers to book or travel using assumed identities. Against that backdrop, the Department considered that there was a clear public interest in proposing that additional, proportionate safeguards should be introduced to strengthen security on sea routes, support the detection and disruption of organised crime, improve the accuracy of passenger information, and do so in a way that remained consistent with Common Travel Area (“**CTA**”) arrangements and human-rights obligations.

The consultation focused on two linked proposals: first, that all passengers travelling on IOMSPC services should be required to carry ID; and second, that IOMSPC should introduce a proportionate approach to ID verification at check-in, rather than full routine verification for every passenger in the first instance. It also explained that the Department was considering what forms of ID might be appropriate, whether exemptions or special arrangements might be needed for particular groups, and how any change could be implemented in a practical and proportionate way.

Respondents were invited to comment on the justification for the proposals and on a range of detailed questions, including: whether certain groups should be exempt or subject to special arrangements; what forms of identification should be accepted; what challenges the proposals might create for residents, businesses and visitors; how Government and the IOMSPC could support smooth implementation; and whether respondents believed the measures would contribute to reducing organised crime on the Island. The consultation was therefore intended both to test support in principle and to gather practical evidence to inform the Department’s final policy approach.

The proposals formed part of the wider **Securing Our Island Strategy**, updated in September 2025, which aims to protect the Island from evolving threats and ensure the safety and wellbeing of the community. In that context, the consultation sought to ensure

that any decision on passenger ID requirements was informed by public and stakeholder views, operational considerations, and the need to balance security, fairness and proportionality.

2. Analysis of Responses by Question

The Department received **1,419** responses to the consultation.

About You.

Respondents to the consultation were predominantly **Island residents (89.1%)**, with smaller proportions of **visitors (4.7%)** and **other categories (1.8%)**.

In terms of respondents' usage of IOMSPC services, responses indicated that –

- 18.5% were Rare users (1-2 trips/year)
- 51.1% were Occasional users (2-5 trips/year)
- 22.1% were Regular users (6-10 trips/year); and
- 8.3% were Frequent users (>10 trips/year).

The consultation responses are therefore broadly reflective of the views of **active, resident users of ferry services**, with lower levels of engagement from visitors.

Exemptions from ID carriage requirements

The Department asked:

Considering the proposed introduction of a mandatory requirement for all passengers to carry ID whilst travelling on IOMSPC services as a 'Condition of Carriage' - are there specific groups that may require exemptions or special arrangements?

1,408 (99.22%) respondents answered this question. Figure 1 (below) shows the level of support for introducing exemptions.

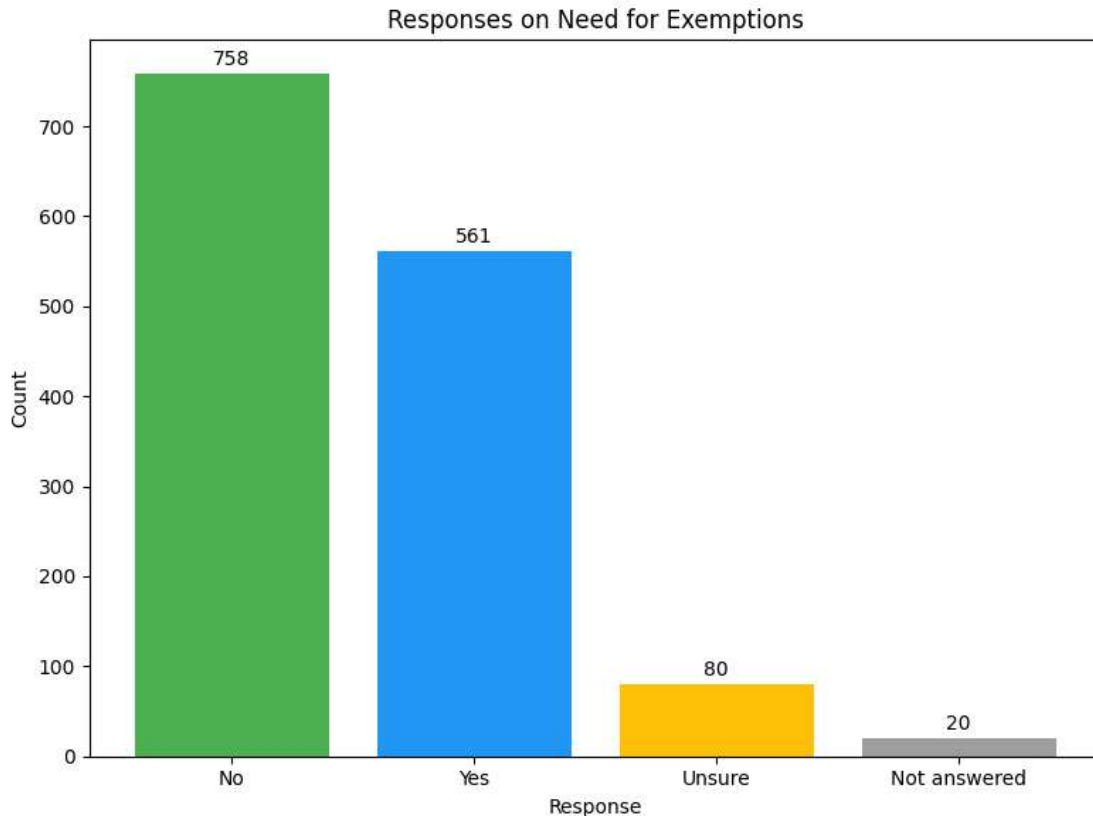


Figure 1. Graph showing the responses on the Need for Exemptions.

The responses showed that -

- A **slight majority (53.4%)** believe no exemptions are required.
- A **substantial minority (39.5%)** believe exemptions *are* needed.
- A small proportion are unsure.

Of those who believed that exemptions **are** required, 555 responses provided qualitative feedback on the types of people/groups that should be considered for exemptions.

The strongest themes included:

- Children and minors (the most dominant theme)
- Medical and emergency travel
- People without access to standard ID (e.g. vulnerable groups)
- Disabled passengers and those needing assistance
- Group travel (schools, youth organisations).
- Others emphasised fairness and proportionality, particularly for vulnerable adults.

There is a notable difference between Island residents and visitors. While a majority of residents (55%) opposed exemptions, visitors were more likely to support them (52%), although the visitor sample size is relatively small (n = 66).

Acceptable forms of ID

The Department asked:

What forms of ID should be accepted?

Almost all respondents answered this question (1,403 (98.87%)). Figure 2 shows the level of support for different forms of ID.

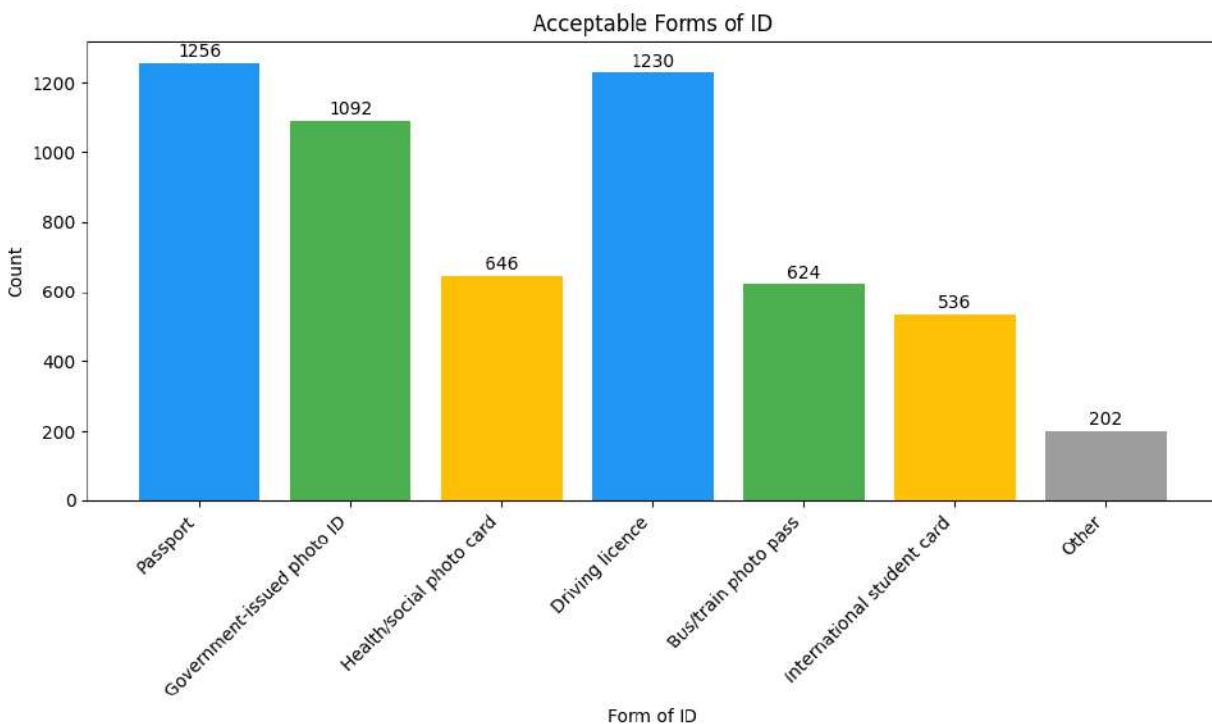


Figure 22. Graph showing responses on the Forms of acceptable ID.

The responses demonstrate –

- Strong support for Passports (88.5%), Driving Licences (86.7%), and other forms of Government-issued photo ID (77.0%)
- Mixed views were presented on the use of Student Cards (45.5%), Bus/Train passes (44.0%), and Health/Social photo cards (37.8%);

Other suggested forms of ID included –

- Proof-of-age cards (e.g. CitizenCard)
- Employer or professional IDs
- Digital IDs (mobile-based)

Some qualitative responses highlighted opposition to the proposed measures, whilst others raised concerns about the reliability of some forms of ID and the need to define “recently expired” in respect of accepting *recently expired passports*.

Responses from Island residents and visitors were broadly aligned in relation to acceptable forms of ID, with strong support in both groups for passports, driving licences and government-issued photo identification. However, residents were consistently more likely to support these core forms of ID, while visitors showed greater acceptance of alternative forms, particularly photographic bus or train passes. This suggests a slightly greater emphasis among visitors on flexibility and accessibility, compared to a stronger preference among residents for more formal identification.

Practical challenges of ID checks

The Department asked:

Considering the proposed introduction of proportionate ID verification during check-in on IOMSPC sailings – what challenges do you foresee for residents, businesses, and/or visitors?

1,035 (72.9%) respondents answered this question. The qualitative responses are summarised by theme below:

- **Delays and queuing** was the most frequently raised issue, with concerns about boarding times and peak congestion.
- **Access to ID** was also raised, with some respondents citing challenges for people without passports, lost/forgotten ID and cost barriers.
- **Children and families** was also mentioned by some respondents, with some people citing complex family/travel situations and lack of ID for minors.
- **Vulnerable groups** such as the elderly, disabled, and cognitively impaired individuals were highlighted as meriting consideration in new arrangements.
- **Operational concerns** were also raised, including staff training, identifying valid documents and the risk of inconsistency.
- **Medical/emergency travel** and the risk of delays affecting urgent care journeys.

Responses from Island residents and visitors were broadly similar in terms of the types of practical challenges identified. The most prominent issue for both groups was potential delays at check-in; however, this was raised more frequently by visitors (25%) than residents (15%). Other issues, such as forgotten identification, impacts on families, and considerations for vulnerable groups, were mentioned at similar levels across both groups.

Ensuring smooth implementation

The Department asked:

Do you have any views on how Government and the IOMSPC can ensure smooth implementation?

891 (62.8%) respondents answered this question. The qualitative responses are summarised by theme below:

- **Clear and early communication** via booking confirmations, Emails/SMS reminders, and website and media campaigns.
- **Phased introduction** and grace periods or a trial phase, and advance notice of 6–12 months before conditions of carriage being introduced/enforced.
- **Staff training and resourcing** to ensure consistent ID checking procedures.
- **Local access to ID** to ensure easier ways to obtain acceptable ID locally
- **Clear signage at ports** reminding passengers to have their ID and booking details ready for potential verification.

Responses from Island residents and visitors were broadly aligned in relation to ensuring smooth implementation. Both groups placed strong emphasis on clear communication and advance notice. Visitors were slightly more likely to highlight the importance of a phased rollout and sufficient time to prepare, while residents were somewhat more likely to express opposition to implementation or focus on operational considerations. Overall, the findings indicate a high degree of consistency between groups, with differences primarily in emphasis rather than direction.

Impact on Organised Crime

The Department asked:

Do you believe this measure will contribute to reducing organised crime on the Island?

1,416 (99.8%) respondents answered this question. Figure 3 (below) shows the extent to which respondents agreed the proposed measures would impact on organised crime.

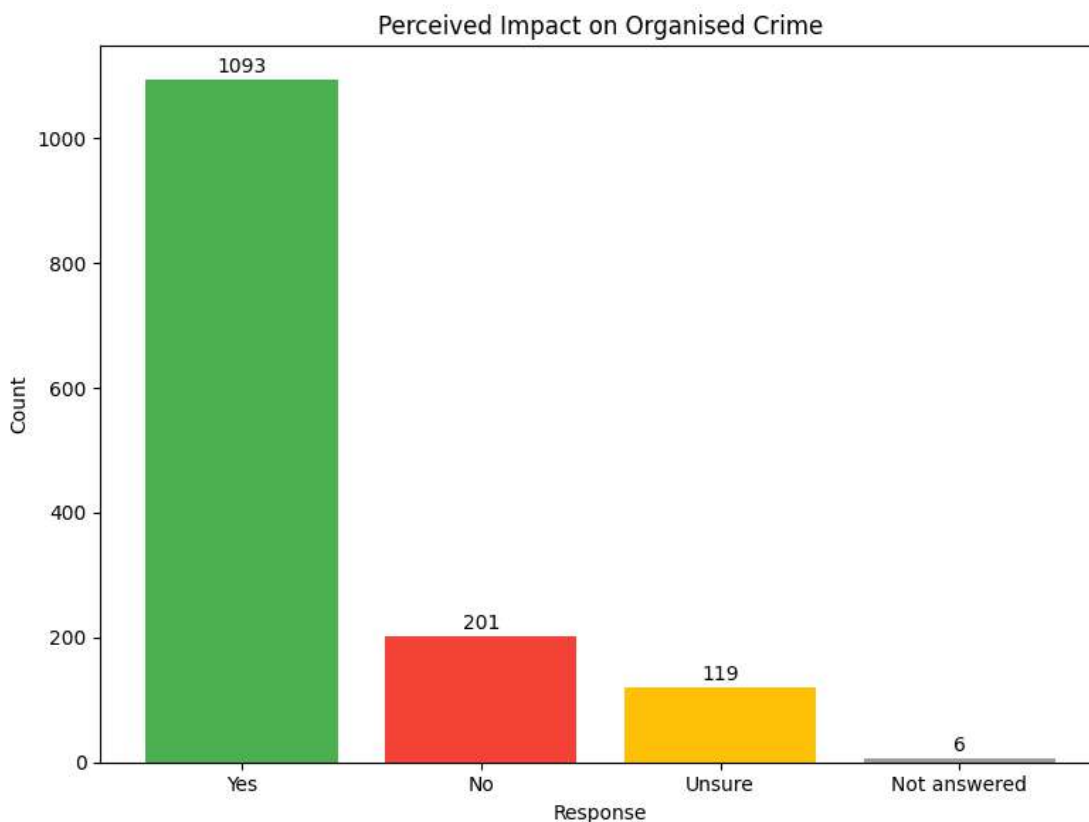


Figure 3. Graph showing the responses on whether the proposals will impact on organised crime.

The responses show that -

- **77%** believe the measure will reduce organised crime.
- A clear but much smaller group (**14%**) do not.
- Some degree of uncertainty (8.4%).

804 respondents also provided qualitative feedback. The dominant themes in these responses are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Qualitative views on whether the proposed measures will impact on organised crime.

Arguments in favour	Arguments against
Increased deterrence	Criminals will use fake ID
Reduced anonymous travel	Displacement to private boats or other routes
Better intelligence and tracking	Limited value without intelligence-led policing
Helps disrupt drug trafficking and organised crime routes	Seen by some as “security theatre”

Responses from Island residents and visitors were broadly aligned, with a clear majority in both groups believing that ID requirements would help reduce organised crime. However, residents were slightly more likely to express confidence in the effectiveness of the measure, while visitors were somewhat more likely to highlight its limitations, including the potential for criminal adaptation and displacement. Overall, differences between the groups were modest and primarily related to emphasis rather than direction.

3. Summary of Responses

The responses to the consultation highlight overall support for introducing ID requirements, particularly linked to security and crime prevention. However, support was conditional dependent on appropriate exemptions, practical implementation planning, and avoiding disproportionate impacts on vulnerable groups.

Key Conclusions:

- More than three-quarters of respondents believe ID checks would contribute to crime reduction, though many recognise it would be partial rather than complete.
- While a slight majority oppose exemptions, there is substantial support for targeted, practical exceptions, especially for children, medical cases, and vulnerable groups.
- There is strong consensus around core photographic ID (passport/driving licence), with more mixed views on lower-security or non-standard IDs.
- The main concern is practical implementation, especially processing time, inclusion of vulnerable users and operational readiness.

- There is strong agreement that, if implemented, success depends on communication, preparation time and operational clarity.
- Resident and visitor responses were largely aligned across all questions, with only modest differences in emphasis; visitors tending to favour flexibility and practicality, and residents placing slightly greater weight on security and consistency.

The Information Commissioner also responded to the survey. They urged the Steam Packet to ensure that there was an appropriate legislative basis for any checks and that the processing of any data was undertaken in a proportionate way. The Commissioner also urged that processor and controller roles were explicitly defined. The Commissioner further noted that a Data Protection Impact Assessment should be undertaken. These points are well noted by the Department and it will work closely with the SPCo to ensure these and the other points within the letter are addressed.

4. Department Response

The Department would like to thank all those who took the time to respond to the consultation. The high level of engagement, with over 1,400 responses received, has provided a valuable evidence-base and a broad range of perspectives to inform the next stages of policy development.

The consultation responses demonstrate clear support in principle for measures intended to strengthen security and reduce opportunities for anonymous travel. Support is tempered by a strong expectation that implementation must be proportionate, practical and fair. Across the responses, people consistently emphasised the need to avoid undue impacts on children, vulnerable individuals, those travelling for medical or emergency reasons, and others who may face barriers in accessing or presenting standard forms of identification.

The Department will now carefully consider these findings as it progresses discussions with the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company on the practical next steps for implementation. This will include:

- Consideration of a timeline for introduction, supported by clear and well-communicated information to allow passengers sufficient time to prepare, noting preferences expressed for advance notice and a smooth transition;
- Clear guidance on how ID verification will work in practice, including what passengers can expect at check-in, to help avoid delays and ensure the process is applied consistently;

- Further work to define acceptable forms of identification, ensuring these are both secure and accessible, having regard to the broad support for government-issued photographic ID alongside more mixed views on alternative forms;
- Consider proposed exemptions or alternative arrangements, particularly for children, medical travel, vulnerable groups and other identified circumstances where respondents considered flexibility could be justified.

The views expressed through this consultation will play an important role in shaping a proportionate and effective approach. Taken together, the responses suggest that the public is broadly supportive of measures that enhance security and help address organised crime risks but would like those measures to be introduced in a way that is workable in practice, clearly communicated, and sensitive to the needs of different users. The Department remains committed to working collaboratively with delivery partners to ensure that any measures introduced are practical, fair, and aligned with the Island's wider security objectives.



Isle of Man Government

Reiltys Ellan Vannin