THE DECODER RING 2: A GLOSSARY FOR THE STATUTES OF SURVEILLANCE

Overview: this glossary pulls together the legal and technical words that matter in the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill and the Data (Use and Access) Act. Treat it as an index you can carry when you read those texts: each entry gives the official meaning and, crucially, a plain-English translation of what the term does in practice and who gains the power. Read the official phrase then the plain translation so you can spot policy hooks and regulatory routes to central control.

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1. Accredited conformity assessment body

Official definition: a conformity assessment body that is accredited by the UK national accreditation body as competent to assess whether digital verification services are provided in accordance with the DVS trust framework. What it really means: the independent auditor that gives vendors the certificate they need to operate. Accreditation becomes the commercial gate: if you can pay for accreditation and pass its audits you win market access, while smaller challengers are squeezed out.

2. API / Interface standards

Official definition: the technical rules and programmatic interfaces systems use to communicate and interoperate; often set out in regulations and interface arrangements under the Act. What it really means: the technical law. Once an API is mandated, everyone must build to it. Whoever authors the standard and supplies the reference implementations effectively sets the default provider and the enforcement points.

3. Attribute issuer

Official definition: an organisation that vouches for a fact about an individual (for example, a passport office issuing citizenship or a university issuing a degree). What it really means: the bodies that stamp your rights and entitlements. Control who can issue attributes and you control who can prove what they are allowed to do.

4. Biometrics

Official definition: unique biological or behavioural identifiers such as fingerprints, facial templates or iris scans used for matching and verification. What it really means: an unchangeable key tied to your body. When biometrics are part of identity infrastructure they turn identity into permanent, always-traceable markers that cannot be revoked like a password.

5. Certificate

Official definition: a document from an accredited conformity assessment body certifying that a provider's digital verification services comply with the DVS trust framework. What it really means: the ticket to operate. Hold the certificate and you are a legitimate service provider; lose it and you can be barred. Certificates are how trust is formalised and can be weaponised to exclude.

6. Conformity assessment body (CAB) / Certification

Official definition: an organisation that audits services and issues certificates that a provider complies with the DVS trust framework. What it really means: third parties that vendors pay to rubber stamp them. Certification becomes a commercial advantage that entrenches incumbents and creates barriers to entry.

7. Consistent identifier

Official definition: (used in the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill) a stable identifier used to match records for a child across services and datasets. What it really means: the single reference that ties scattered records together. A "consistent identifier" makes it trivial to aggregate a child's education, health and benefit records into one profile, enabling broad administrative control and continuous monitoring.

8. Data holder

Official definition: the person or organisation that holds customer or business data and may be required to provide access under regulations. What it really means: banks, platforms and service providers who are forced to open their systems to others. Turning private datasets into regulated supply routes hands governments and certified providers fast access to commercial data.

9. Data protection legislation

Official definition: the body of law governing personal data including the Data Protection Act 2018 and related instruments. What it really means: the legal wrapper that can be cited to reassure critics. Note that the DVS/Information gateway provisions explicitly say disclosures authorised under the Act do not breach obligations of confidence; that is how legal cover is built in.

10. DVS (Digital Verification Services) trust framework

Official definition: the document the Secretary of State must prepare and publish setting out the rules for digital verification services. What it really means: the playbook that determines who is "trusted" to run identity checks, what checks they must perform, how they are audited and how others must treat their outputs. The framework is the central lever for market capture and standardised control.

11. DVS register

Official definition: the publicly available register of persons providing digital verification services maintained under the Act. What it really means: the official whitelist. Being on the register is a commercial and civic passport. Omission from it can be practical exclusion from contracts, jobs and services.

12. Enforcer

Official definition: the authority empowered by regulations to investigate, inspect, enter premises and enforce compliance with the Act. What it really means: the inspection and enforcement arm with powers that can include entry, search and seizure. This is how compliance is turned from guidance into compelled behaviour.

13. Event logging / audit trail

Official definition: records of individual verification events (who checked whom, when and where) maintained for security and accountability. What it really means: a searchable life log. Event logs enable profiling, retrospective enforcement and the slow accretion of control through metadata even if payload data is minimised.

14. Holder service / Holder service provider

Official definition: the service or app that stores an individual's credentials (the wallet). What it really means: the packaged, managed account people carry. Wallet providers control onboarding, recovery and account rules, which makes the wallet both the convenience and the leash.

15. Holder recovery

Official definition: procedures to recover wallets or accounts when users lose access, often involving identity proofs and support by providers. What it really means: the conditional lifeline that routes users back through authorised channels and gives providers leverage over re-entry into the system.

16. Information gateway / information disclosure

Official definition: powers allowing public authorities to disclose information to DVS-registered persons for the purpose of providing digital verification services. What it really means: the legal corridor that authorises data sharing between state records and certified private providers. This is how government data is routed into commercial stacks without breaching confidentiality obligations.

17. Information sharing

Official definition: the lawful exchange of personal or service data between authorities, providers and registered persons under statutory codes, gateways and the DVS framework. What it really means: the mechanism that turns siloed records into interoperable flows. Once sharing is routine, separate systems behave as one and central oversight becomes straightforward.

18. Local authority

Official definition: the council or local government body with statutory duties under children and education law and responsibilities for registers and welfare functions. What it really means: the front line that implements national templates. Local authorities are where national standards meet everyday administration; they become the points that enforce compliance on citizens.

19. Processing

Official definition: any operation performed on personal data including collection, storage,

use, disclosure and deletion. What it really means: a catch-all that lets regulation authorise many acts. When regulations permit processing that would otherwise be restricted, the scope for surveillance and reuse of data expands markedly.

20. Public authority

Official definition: a person or body whose functions are of a public nature or include such functions; often referenced in codes and duties to disclose. What it really means: government bodies and those doing public functions; they can be required to feed certified providers under the information gateway and related rules.

21. Register / school register

Official definition: an official list kept for a legal purpose, for example a school attendance or DVS register. What it really means: the authoritative list used to admit, exclude or monitor. Registers convert administrative facts into enforceable status markers.

22. Revocation / revocation list

Official definition: a live list stating which credentials are invalid or revoked. What it really means: the kill switch. Revocation enables instant denial of access across all relying services when a credential is flagged.

23. Root of trust

Official definition: the authoritative issuer or key whose signatures are trusted to validate credentials. What it really means: the ultimate switch. Whoever holds the root controls what counts as genuine, and changing that root can immediately alter everyone's status.

24. Soulbound token / tokenisation

Official definition: converting an attribute into a digital token, with soulbound tokens being non-transferable tokens tied to a person. What it really means: machine readable, non-transferable badges that can be used by contracts to automatically permit or deny actions. Soulbound tokens make exclusion programmable and hard to reverse.

25. Supplementary code

Official definition: sector specific rules published under the DVS trust framework to govern particular use cases. What it really means: the mechanism to expand scope. Add a supplementary code and an entire sector is folded under the certified regime without needing fresh primary legislation.

26. Trust mark

Official definition: a mark the Secretary of State may designate for use only by registered persons to indicate compliance. What it really means: the government stamp of approval that steers market trust and consumer choice toward registered providers and away from others.

27. Verifiable credential (VC) / verifier app

Official definition: cryptographically signed attestations about a person used to prove facts; verifier apps are tools used by employers, landlords or services to check credentials. What it

really means: digital badges plus the apps that read them. Verifiers are the everyday gatekeepers that normalise automatic checks and log every interaction.

28. Verified identity / consistent verification

Official definition: assurance, under the DVS or related frameworks, that a particular attribute or identity claim is reliable. What it really means: the status that unlocks or closes doors. Verified identity becomes a prerequisite for work, housing and services when regulators or supplementary codes require it.

29. Sensitive personal data

Official definition: categories of personal data that attract special protections (health, criminal convictions, biometric templates, etc.) under data protection legislation. What it really means: the most intrusive kinds of data. While labelled sensitive, the Act provides explicit routes to disclose such data to registered providers under specified conditions, weakening the practical protection.

30. Third party recipient / reliance by others

Official definition: a person who receives customer or business data from a data holder for the purpose of providing services, including DVS-registered persons. What it really means: other firms and agencies that consume your data. Once routed to third parties via the gateway or APIs, your data leaves the original holder's control and becomes part of the wider verification economy.

End note:

Use the index at the top to jump straight to a word in the alphabetical list, and when you see a phrase in a Bill or guidance, cross-check that term here to spot the operational lever underneath the friendly language. For the DVS trust framework and the information gateway see the Data (Use and Access) Act text (Part 2).