



Ink is Out, Identity is In: The QES Advantage for Law Firms



Foreword

The regulatory environment surrounding legal and financial institutions is constantly changing, making it more important than ever to adopt solutions that not only ensure compliance, but also improve efficiency and security.

Most law firms are still either using wet or weak signatures. Usually for no better reason than 'that's just how we've always done it'.

A change is occurring. In response to AI-related attacks, rocketing fraud rates and the advancement of the EUDI Wallet, many organisations are embracing digital to protect themselves and empower their customers.

QES is the veritable gold standard in ensuring secure and compliant digital transactions. It is the basis for firms to meet their KYC & AML obligations. To be more efficient. Get an edge!

This is a sector specific look at the benefits of QES in the legal market. It shines a light on the value of technology over the traditional method of document execution and references a few of those organisations that have already made the change.

It's time to put down the pen.

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Introduction

The legal profession is built on precedent, caution, and risk. Lawyers are inherently resistant to change, which may be why document execution hasn't changed for hundreds of years.

This is all about to be disrupted though. In part driven by a rise in AI-fraud. In part by regulation. And a whole lot because it makes business sense. Ultimately, technology offers a better solution.

There are already plenty of use cases where QES can be used ranging from legal & professional services to real estate & property transactions; FS & banking to public sector & government.

Some have already embraced the new world and are seeing results. In fact, some of the biggest law firms are championing QES. Hugh James completed the first UK property deal using a QES.

“The digital signature securely associates a signer with a document in a recorded transaction, using a standard accepted format called Public Key Infrastructure.”

Those that fail to embrace the new world will at best fail to grasp the efficiencies of the opportunity. At worst make themselves irrelevant.

Here's a look at a rough side-by-side comparison of the associated costs with the two processes.

Comparing the manual signing process with QES


The cost of the manual signing process per customer for law firms in the UK varies based on document complexity, postage costs, administrative time and compliance requirements. However, here's a breakdown of the typical costs associated with manual signing.

Total estimated cost:

- £100 - £500 per customer for straightforward documents (e.g., contracts, NDAs).
- £500 - £1,500 per customer for complex legal agreements (e.g., property transactions, wills, corporate deals).

Breakdown of manual signing costs

Cost component	Estimated cost per customer
Printing & Paper	£2 - £5 per document set
Postage & Couriers	£5 - £50 (higher for urgent or international delivery)
Administrative Time	£20 - £100 (based on hourly rate of legal staff)
Client Meetings	£50 - £200 (solicitor time for signing/witnessing)
Compliance (AML, KYC)	£30 - £100
Storage & Filing	£5 - £20 (physical storage and document retrieval)





Key cost drivers

- 1. Solicitor & paralegal time – Manual document signing often requires in-person meetings, witness verification, and compliance checks, which add significant costs.
- 2. Courier & postage fees – Urgent document delivery (e.g., for contracts or litigation) can drive up costs.
- 3. Storage & retrieval – Physical document storage adds ongoing expenses for law firms.
- 4. Error correction & re-signing – Any mistakes in manual signing require reprinting, redelivery, and additional lawyer time.

Manual vs. electronic signing: Rol comparison for law firms in the UK

Law firms in the UK can significantly reduce costs and improve efficiency by adopting Qualified Electronic Signatures (QES) instead of manual signing. Here’s a cost-benefit analysis comparing both methods.

Cost comparison: Manual vs. QES signing			
Cost component	Manual signing (£ per customer)	Electronic signing (QES) (£ per customer)	Savings (%)
Printing & Paper	£2 - £5	£0	100%
Postage & Couriers	£5 - £50	£0	100%
Administrative Time	£20 - £100	£5 - £20	80%
Client Meetings	£50 - £200	£0 - £50	75%
Compliance Checks	£30 - £100	£10 - £50	50%
Storage & Filing	£5 - £20	£0 - £5	75%
Error Correction & Re-signing	£10 - £50	£0 - £10	80%
Total cost per customer:			
1. Manual signing: £100 - £500.			
2. Electronic (QES) signing: £10 - £100.			
3. Savings: Up to 90% per customer.			



Time savings

Process step	Manual process time	Electronic signing time	Efficiency gain
Document Preparation	30-60 min	5-15 min	75% faster
Signing Process	1-5 days (meetings/postage)	1-3 min	90% faster
Compliance Checks	1-3 days (manual ID checks)	Instant (eIDAS/KYC integration)	80% faster

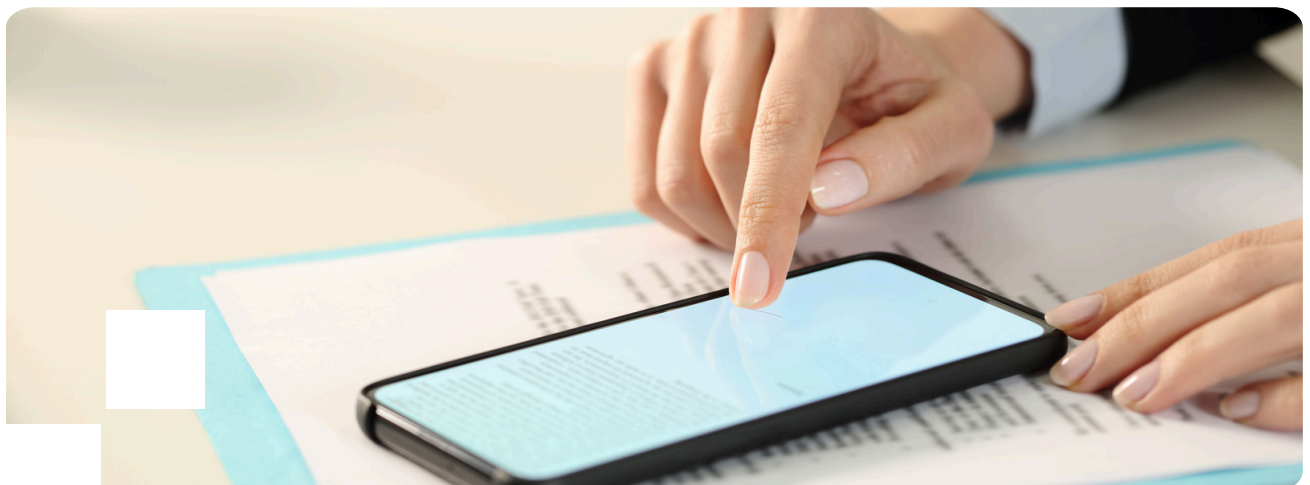
Total process time reduction: From days to minutes.

Return on Investment (RoI) for law firms

1. Cost reduction: A firm handling 1,000 clients annually could save £85,000 to £400,000 in signing costs.
2. Increased revenue: Faster turnaround times lead to higher client satisfaction, enabling firms to take on more cases.
3. Risk reduction: QES reduces the risk of lost documents, fraud, and manual errors, improving compliance.

QES adoption is a game-changer. Firms that are making the change are seeing:

- 80% cost savings per customer.
- 90% faster transaction processing.
- An elimination of paper, postage, and storage expenses.
- Enhanced security and compliance (eIDAS, UK law).
- Improvements to customer experience with remote signing.



Where this is working today

Digidentity is solving these issues for legal firms today. Many take advantage of our FREE signing platform to send, manage and archive electronically signed documents. We're fully integrated into Adobe and DocuSign too, so firms with existing licences can simply select a Digidentity QES in the drop-down when issuing a document to be signed. It's easy.

Some companies are going beyond eSignatures. They are bundling KYC & AML or right to work (RtW) checks with a QES or company eSeals. All make use of our service support wrapper, which comes as standard.

Ultimately, we take away your compliance anxieties, so you can focus on the bits you're good at.

And we're so confident in our platform that we underwrite the liability.

About Digidentity

Digidentity is a pioneer in the digital identity space. The platform has successfully verified over 25 million high-assurance identities, offering the convenience of reuse across multiple services. The platform is designed to make it easy for our customers to verify identities across multiple platforms and services, making it a one-stop shop for all verified identity needs. The platform's focus on security, regulatory compliance and interoperability ensures identities are accepted across multiple services, sectors and even borders; providing value for the end user whilst meeting the compliance requirements of the service provider.

We proudly serve as a trusted partner to governments, healthcare providers, and 175,000 corporate businesses, with verified identities from over 180 nationalities. Our commitment to security is evident in our inclusion on prestigious trust lists, including the EU Trusted List, the UK's Digital Identity and Attributes Trust Framework (DIATF) and the Adobe Approved Trust list (AATL).

Contact us today to hear what we can do for you
www.digidentity.com

