

Research report

Active at 60: Local evaluation research: Final report

by Alice Mowlam, Sally Bridges, Valdeep Gill,
Andy MacGregor, Jude Ranasinghe and
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Department for Work and Pensions

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Elizabeth Tideswell

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LG Futures on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions

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Abbreviations

CATI	Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing
COPD	Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease
CRB	Criminal Records Bureau
DfT	Department for Transport
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
GP	General Practitioner
GPRS	General Packet Radio Service
GSRU	Government Social Research Unit
ITSO	Integrated Transport Smartcard Organisation
LA	Local Authority
NatCen	National Centre for Social Research
REC	Research Ethics Committee
SLA	Service Level Agreement
TCA	Travel Concession Authorities

Summary

Background

Active at 60 Local was a pilot initiative commissioned by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to identify the scope for utilising smart technology to:

- deliver services more effectively to older people, and
- leverage increased levels of activity among older people.

The project formed part of the government's response to address the challenges and opportunities of an ageing population as highlighted in the publication *Building a Society for All Ages*,¹ a strategy aimed at enabling people to make the most of their later years and ensuring access to the right support at the right time.

The pilot initially involved two sites with the following core activities:

Area 1

- Set up of an online registration system for application and renewal of the smart card.
- Outreach registration in libraries and sheltered housing.
- Increasing social and community involvement and levels of physical activity among older people, including a General Practitioner (GP) referral scheme for prescribed exercise and partnership working with library and leisure.

Area 2

- Demonstration of an integrated smart card model:
 - loyalty points awarded for use of smart card on local transport which could then be redeemed in local retailers;
 - use of General Packet Radio Service (GPRS) technology in mobile phones allowing roaming reading of the smart cards across mobile 'black spots'.
- A project helpline run by volunteers working from home via a diverted telephone number.

The evaluation consisted of five key elements.

1. In-depth interviews with Local Authority (LA) project teams and partners.
2. In-depth interviews with older people.
3. Telephone survey of older people.
4. Monitoring and analysis of management data.
5. Business case.

The project in Area 1 was completed, but in Area 2 a range of factors limited the potential to test the smart card model and the decision was made to close the trial early. Although the evaluation focuses on Area 1, there were important findings from Area 2 which draw on the first element of research activity with the LA teams and partners.

¹ <http://www.hmg.gov.uk/media/33830/fullreport.pdf>

Project set up – key learning

- **Stakeholder buy-in:** the importance of a strong project team was evident. This included support from senior management and decision makers at the LA as well as stakeholders and key partners. Commitment was considered to be particularly important given the economic context the pilots were operating in resulting in significant LA budget cuts. Problems were faced in Area 2 due to the fact that the pilot was being implemented in a local district authority and part of the core smart card services (leisure centres) were run by the county council who did not get involved in the pilot.
- **Benefits of partnership working:** in addition, there were significant benefits reported in Area 1 from steering group members in terms of improved communication and understanding of each other's roles and remits. Positive knock-on impacts were reported in terms of opportunities to work together and help each other with communications and marketing.
- **Technical learning:** the online registration system was successfully introduced in Area 1. Although upfront investment was required, there were potential cost savings to be gained by LAs through the greater efficiency of an online application system, particularly at a time of mass card renewals. In Area 2, the capacity for a mobile phone to operate as a smart card scanner was demonstrated. Likewise, using a smart card as a vehicle for a loyalty points scheme was also reported as being technically feasible.
- **Communications:** the database of e-mail addresses was a significant bonus to be gained from the online application system. In a climate of increasing financial austerity, the benefits of using e-mail to communicate with customers were seen to be considerable.
- **Volunteer helpline operated by homeworkers:** Area 2 successfully tested the concept of volunteers operating a helpline from their own homes. The mechanism of switching the helpline number worked well and positive feedback was given about this as a model of working from both the volunteers and the charitable organisation supporting them.

Awareness and views of the smart card

- **Online application:** although there were limited data about the experience of applying online for the smart card, it was described as straightforward and accessible.
- **Viewed by older people as a bus pass:** despite communication efforts by the LA to raise awareness of the multi application nature of the smart card, it was still overwhelmingly seen as a bus pass. The free bus pass was valued by people, and cited as a significant money saver.
- **Communication:** the importance of having a range of types and modes of information was highlighted as a way of maximising reach. Repeating messages at different points in time would also help as evidence showed that a change of circumstances could prompt a change of activities.
- **Age related stigma:** although often referred to in humorous terms, there were associations between eligibility for the bus pass and entering a new phase of old age.

Impact of Active at 60 Local on older people's activities

- **The importance of being active in older age:** this was a strong message from the older people who took part in the evaluation and referred to mental as well as physical activities. Particularly for those with limited social support networks, the associated social benefits of group activities were emphasised.

- **Diversity of the over 60s:** the individuals included in this age group were extremely wide ranging in terms of 'life stage'. Having a project called 'Active at 60' could act as a barrier, either because older people saw themselves as being too young to be involved in a project targeting 'older people' or too old to be seen as an active 60 year old.
- **Limited evidence of increased activities:** given the small scale of the project, it was not unexpected that the evaluation did not identify significant changes to levels of older people's activities. There was anecdotal evidence of the potential for targeted e-mail shots following up on areas highlighted as of interest to online applicants.

The business case

Project budget: a budget of £198,925 was allocated to the project, with all elements of the project being delivered within this budget. The three biggest areas of spending related to:

- **Developing the online registration portal** was the largest area of spending at £78,000, which included the project management related to the website (£30,000), as well as the website development costs, registration; hosting and support; licences (£30,000); working with the online identity check company to set up that element of the portal (£15,000); and database development (£3,000);
- **Staff resources and overheads** costing £35,000, which included backfilling costs for the Operations Managers to enable sufficient time to be devoted to the pilot; and
- **Consultation and communications** costing £20,000, which covered the stakeholder consultation events, focus groups and essential communications relating to participation.

Achievements

- **Online registrations:** although unable to achieve its overall target for online applications of 30 per cent over the first year, online applications rose in the second six months of the pilot year and the target was achieved for this period. The online portal will also be able to be used for renewals from 2012.
- **Real-time authentication:** the authentication process was included to ensure applicants met the eligibility criteria for the smart card, i.e. resident of the authority and valid date of birth. The authority exceeded its target of 80 per cent on a month by month basis for the proportion of online registrations which could be completed in real-time using online identity checking. The council identified that the cost of each check for a new application was £1.50, reducing to £0.30 for renewals.
- **Hard to reach groups:** the authority wanted to encourage applicants using the online portal to be supported through the application process by family members; friends; carers; and LA staff. The authority received these assisted registrations throughout the pilot period and also undertook a successful outreach programme in two libraries.
- **Overall participation:** the authority was not able to demonstrate increases in participation or uptake of the smart card over the pilot. Several reasons outside the direct control of the council were identified, including the rising age of eligibility for free travel; the cancellation of the free swimming project and a reduction of the communications budget. The authority also encountered difficulties in trying to track individual card usage to support their evaluation of participation levels.

- **GP referral scheme:** this element was suspended one month before the end of the pilot, as the team delivering the programme was put on notice of redundancy. Nevertheless, ‘162 citizens were referred by GPs onto the programme’ at a cost of £20,000 or approximately £125 per referral.²
- **Replication in other authorities:** two other LAs have set up a web portal and begun to achieve online registrations. A number of other authorities are also working with the providers of the online portal to look at other implementation options.

Benefits to Local Authorities in using online registration

The data show that there can be important benefits for LAs in taking forward some/all of the learning from the Active at 60 project in relation to using online portals for issuing smart cards:

- **More efficient processing of applications:** using an online portal can be a more efficient way of handling applications for LA services, such as concessionary travel cards, as much of the time required to complete the process is transferred from the authority to the individual service users. The online process can also be quicker for service users, with the improvements in efficiency also benefiting service users.
- **Database of information:** the online application process required all applicants to provide an email address to which confirmations relating to the application could be sent. This email address could also be used to send information to service users about other LA services, specific activities taking place, renewal information for the smart card, etc. Online applicants can also easily identify areas where they would like to receive more information about services, and this could be sent to them efficiently via email or weblinks. For example, approximately 40 per cent of online applicants in Area 1 ‘ticked the box’ to access more information about organ donation.³
- **Identifying gaps in service:** online portals can enable LAs to gather information from applicants about service needs and identify areas of unmet need; and
- **Cost savings:** Area 1 has identified that the online portal could result in significant cost savings, particularly in relation to renewals of existing smart cards, if the number of people using the online process can be increased beyond the levels achieved in the pilot year. For savings in the long-term, Area 1 has ‘estimated savings of over £30,000 if 10,000 cardholders renew online rather than visiting council offices’⁴. However, these potential savings may need to also be offset by increases in service delivery costs if, for example, take-up increases or additional service needs are identified through the smart card application process.

² Area 1 Smart card Project Closure Report, August 2011.

³ *ibid.*

⁴ *ibid.*

1 Introduction and methodology

This report presents the findings of a study commissioned by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). In this chapter, we set out the research and policy context of the study, describe the study aims and research design and provide a brief overview of the report's coverage.

1.1 Research and policy context

The Active at 60 Local project forms part of the government's response to address the challenges and opportunities of an ageing population. In July 2009, the Government published *Building a Society for All Ages*⁵, a strategy aimed at enabling people to make the most of their later years and ensure they are able to access the right support at the time they need it. In support of this strategy, DWP set up a programme of work aiming to ensure awareness, access and take up of services, entitlements and concessions available to them.

Active at 60 Local formed one of the strands of this programme of work and focused on the potential use of smart technology by Local Authorities (LAs) in the form of an all-in-one smart card. Since 2007, the Department for Transport (DfT) has required concessionary travelcards to have the technical specification set by the Integrated Transport Smart card Organisation (ITSO). This enables interoperable travel, so that passengers can use an all-in-one smart card to travel regardless of the form of transport being used or the provider. In addition to the travelcard element, being 'smart' means that additional services can be added to the card, including access to council services such as leisure centres or libraries. Importantly for LAs the data gathered from smart cards can be used to plan and deliver services more effectively.

Active at 60 Local aimed to bring together access to various services and entitlements using the existing ITSO compliant 60+ travel concession card, thereby using the smart card as a mechanism to leverage increased activities and community involvement. Two pilot projects were commissioned by DWP to trial the smart card technology for this purpose: one in a rural and one in an urban area.

1.2 Study aims and objectives

The Active at 60 Local project had a number of objectives. In essence, these related to exploring the potential for an all-in-one smart card to:

- facilitate access to services, activities and entitlements;
- encourage take up of additional services, activities and entitlements;
- increase levels of physical activity and community engagement;
- operate in both urban and rural areas;
- facilitate engagement via outreach for older people currently unable to access information and/or services; and
- support the testing of smart card technology to ease the application process.

⁵ <http://www.hmg.gov.uk/media/33830/fullreport.pdf>

An important component of the evaluation was to look at the financial aspects of the Active at 60 projects and produce a business case. This would enable other LAs considering the potential of all-in-one smart cards to submit better evidence-based, cost effective business cases for future provision in this and other areas.

By addressing these research questions, this evaluation aims to enable DWP to make a meaningful appraisal of the potential social and financial impacts to be gained by LAs who take up smart card technology, thereby informing future strategic options for both local Government and the DWP.

1.3 Outline of pilot projects

Two pilot projects were funded as Active at 60 Local pilots: one in an urban area (Area 1) and one in a rural area (Area 2). Both pilot areas already had some form of smart card system already in place. The aims of the pilot projects in both areas are outlined below.

1.3.1 Area 1: Urban

Area 1 is a large city with a population of over 200,000. The council is a unitary authority, which had important repercussions for the pilot project, discussed fully in Section 2.1. Smart cards have been operational in this area since 2001 and link to local library and leisure centres.

The biggest part of the Active at 60 Local project in this area was the setting up of an online registration system. Instead of having to take a completed paper application form; photographs and proof of identity to a LA outlet, applying online meant that older people were able to complete the whole process via the internet. Photographs could be uploaded. An identity check was carried out by a credit rating company which carries out online identity authentication and verification to a high specification.

When applying for the concessionary travelcard, older people also have the option to sign up for the following services to be added to their smart cards:

- library;
- leisure centres;
- concessions for leisure facilities for those on benefit;
- organ donation; and
- PASS proof of age.

Other project activities consisted of:

- general awareness raising of activities for the over 60s;
- purchasing 200 referrals to an existing scheme whereby people are prescribed an exercise programme by their General Practitioners (GPs) consisting of a one-to-one assessment with a trained sports professional and up to 16 sessions at a leisure centre with ongoing support from the programme leaders;
- conducting outreach work in sheltered housing by taking mobile registration to older people, signing them up for the smart card if they did not have it and providing information about the services and activities associated with the card;
- libraries purchasing webcams for the library computers and staff received training about the Active at 60 Local project and the online registration system for the all-in-one smart cards so that staff would be able to assist older people with the online application if required.

- a series of six focus groups being conducted with older people to review the website after the launch; explore views of the activities people would be interested in and how the smart cards could facilitate uptake;
- the replication of the online registration system at another authority.

1.3.2 Area 2: Rural

The pilot project in Area 2 was located in a rural county, with a relatively small population of just over 90,000 spread over a large geographical area, with only one town of over 15,000 people. This area was run by a local district council, so it had responsibility for library services whereas leisure service responsibility lay at the county council level.

As with the urban area, Area 2 already had a smart card infrastructure in place and with the Active at 60 project was aiming to set up an integrated smart card network with local transport and traders whereby the smart card would attract loyalty points and discounts, thereby incentivising older people to use the buses (swiping their smart cards and gathering points) to take them to towns or villages where they could redeem their points. It was hoped that the project would also be able to involve credit unions in trialling the smart cards being used as an e-purse, but due to state aid regulations⁶, this did not end up being possible.

Central to the project in this rural area was the testing of an innovative way of operationalising smart cards: namely by using mobile phones configured with General Packet Radio Service (GPRS) technology to allow for smart card transactions to be carried out anywhere via the mobile phone. In addition, to counter the numerous 'black spots' in the countryside where networks have no coverage, the phones were adapted to roam between networks to pick up the best signal available. This was intended to enable a much better service allowing smart cards to be read across the district.

Another innovation, albeit not directly related to smart technology, was a helpline run by volunteers from a major older people's charity to answer calls and field inquiries about the Active at 60 Local project. However, instead of volunteers having to travel to a call centre, they were able to operate the helpline from their own homes by diverting the helpline telephone number to volunteers' landlines.

Unfortunately, the scope of the pilot in Area 2 was reduced considerably for a range of reasons (see Section 2.3) which resulted in a decision to close the trial early. The intended model of smart card operation was not completed. Therefore, the evaluation focuses on lessons learned from the set up and does not include the views and experiences of older people in this area.

1.3.3 Social and economic context

It is important to remember that the Active at 60 Local project teams were running these pilots against a backdrop of political change and in a challenging economic environment. Coupled with a stagnating economy and rising unemployment, the pilot projects were trying to set up and run new activities in a difficult environment. For example, both projects had planned to focus on free swimming for the over 60s as a subsidised but under-used activity that could be accessed with the all-in-one smart card. The withdrawal of free swimming was therefore a significant loss for both pilot areas.

⁶ <http://www.bis.gov.uk/policies/europe/state-aid/advice-on-state-aid>

1.4 Methodology

In order to address the research objectives, a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods were used. The evaluation consisted of five key elements, outlined in the following section.

1.4.1 Stage 1: In-depth interviews with Local Authority project teams and partners (Areas 1 and 2)

The evaluation explored the set up, implementation and delivery of the Active at 60 Local pilots with the project teams in the two LAs as well as with the key stakeholders and partners. In-depth interviews formed the first stage of the evaluation and enabled the research team to gain a detailed understanding of the projects in both pilot areas.

Eight interviews were conducted in the urban pilot area. Interviewees included key project staff and the LA policy lead for smart cards as well as stakeholders and partners in the core project themes and activities: libraries, leisure centres, the GP exercise referral scheme, the Later Years Partnership and the company supplying the technical expertise for the smart card operating system. Seven interviews in Area 2 were achieved, and these included the project manager, key partners involved in some aspects of the project activities and the company supplying the technical know how for the smart card. Interviews were conducted between January and June 2011, with most interviews carried out in March.

There was a range of key areas discussed in these interviews – the content of which varied depending on the role of the participant being interviewed. Broadly, the topics were:

- origins of project: how the ideas for the pilot were developed; key aims and objectives;
- set up: involvement of project partners; commissioning process; technical requirements;
- detail of project costs and efficiency savings;
- views of practical benefits as well as impact on activity and engagement;
- key learning and suggestions for the future.

The topic guide for the interviews with partners and stakeholders can be found in Appendix A. The data gathered from these interviews were then used to inform the topic guide developed for the next stage of the project: in-depth interviews with older people.

1.4.2 Stage 2: In-depth interviews with older people (Area 1)

Finding out directly from older people their views of the Active at 60 pilots was a core research objective and was addressed using two research methods. Stage Two involved in depth interviews with older people to explore their involvement and experiences of the projects.

Twenty interviews with older people were carried out between March and July 2011. The sample was purposively selected by the Local Authority according to criteria set out by the research team. Primary sampling criteria for the older people were:

- age and gender;
- method of application for the smart card (whether they were assisted or not was also monitored);
- involvement with Active at 60 Local project activities.

As the owner of the data, the LA had to send the initial approach letters to the older people. Outlining the aims of the evaluation and what taking part in a research interview involved, the older

people were given the opportunity to opt out of the research by contacting the LA by a certain date, after which they were informed that their contact details would be passed to the researchers who may then make contact to discuss whether or not they would be interested in taking part. The approach letter is reproduced in Appendix B.

Although the recruitment process itself was straightforward, the researchers faced some challenges in meeting all the sampling criteria. In order to ensure inclusion of participants who had taken part in a wide range of project activities, including the online registration, it was not possible to achieve as balanced an age range as was initially hoped for.

The final sample matrix for the study can be seen below in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Final sample matrix for the study

Age	Male	Female
60-65	5	5
66-75	3	3
76-85	1	1
86 and over	1	1
Project activity		
Leisure	3	1
Library	2	1
GP exercise referral	2	2
No project activity	3	6
Other (e.g. discounts)	3	1
Type of registration		
Online with assistance	1	2
Online no assistance	1	2
Paper registration	9	5

Interviews were conducted by the research team using a topic guide which outlined the key themes to be discussed in the interviews (see Appendix C). These included:

- Background information: living circumstances and social networks; day to day activities and main forms of travel.
- Awareness and understanding of the smart card: what it can be used for; views of the card.
- Mode of application: views and experiences of process.
- Use of smart card: map all activities including views and experiences of these.
- Impact of smart card: extent to which it has facilitated uptake of activities – why/why not; benefits.
- Social activity and engagement: explore all other activities undertaken; views and experiences; perceived benefits.
- Suggestions for enhancing use of smart card.

Most interviews were carried out in people's homes but some did take up the offer of conducting the interview elsewhere, for example, in a local community centre. Responsive questioning and probing by the researchers ensured that all relevant issues were fully explored.

1.4.3 Stage 3: Telephone survey of older people (Area 1)

A computer assisted telephone interview (CATI) with 500 older people was carried out in Area 1. A telephone survey was considered the most effective way of obtaining the required data for the purposes of this evaluation. With this relatively small sample size, the type of sample drawn and the lack of baseline comparison data it was not possible to draw statistically valid conclusions about the impact of the smart card and whether the Active at 60 Local pilot had led to an increase in older people's activities and community engagement. Rather, the findings support the evaluation by highlighting trends of smart card use, providing data about the online application system and the nature and extent of activities being undertaken by the older people.

Development of the questionnaire was informed by early findings from the qualitative interviews with older people, LA stakeholders and partners. The research team also worked closely with both the commissioners and the project team to ensure that the scope and content of the survey would provide the most relevant and pertinent data for the evaluation. The key areas of the questionnaire (a full version of which can be found in Appendix D) consisted of:

- background information: living circumstances; work/retirement; housing tenure; general health and social support networks;
- smart card application process: awareness of smart card; reason for applying and mode of application; ease of process;
- use of smart card: detail about bus, library and leisure – type and frequency of use; data on other activities accessed with the smart card; project activities and suggestions for other uses for the smart card;
- other activities undertaken in day to day life.

As with the qualitative sample, because the data were owned by the LA in Area 1, the sample selection and opt out process had to be conducted by them and was administrated in the same way as for the qualitative sample. The basis for the telephone survey sample selection revolved around the older people's relationship with the Active at 60 Local pilot project. The key group of interest was those that had applied for the smart card during the course of the project given that the online registration system was such a large component of the pilot. However, this did not provide enough people to achieve 500 interviews. Therefore, those that had previously applied were also included.

In order to achieve 500 interviews, an initial sample of 2,000 was selected but with a reserve of 500 to be issued should the response rate fall below the 50 per cent assumed for this population. The first tranche of the sample included all the online and paper-based participants who had applied for the smart card during the lifetime of the Active at 60 Local pilot project and was supplemented with those who had applied previously. Other than date of application, the sample was then selected on a random basis according to age and gender. The second tranche consisted only of those who had applied previously to the start of the project but was to include any older people who had made an application between the drawing of the first and second tranches of sample. In the event, the 500 interviews were achieved from the first tranche of sample alone. In total, 525 interviews were conducted from a total eligible sample of 807 individuals. This represents a response rate of 65 per cent.

It was recognised that this meant that the sample would not be evenly weighted by age group. The 60-64 year olds would be over represented on account of becoming eligible and applying for the smart card (notwithstanding delayed applications). Due to the relatively low numbers of online applicants, it was also recognised that any findings relating to the online group would be difficult to generalise to the wider population.

1.4.4 Stage 4: Monitoring and analysis of management data (Area 1)

In order to be able to look at the relationship between Active at 60 Local project activity in contrast to overall smart card activity, it was important to have some overall measures of the smart card take-up and usage. These data were obtained only from Area 1 due to project closure in Area 2 and enabled the evaluation to place the research findings in a wider context of trends related to travel, library and leisure usage.

1.4.5 Stage 5: Business case (Area 1)

A specific aspect of the remit of the evaluation was to consider the Business Case for the Active at 60 Local pilots, in order for other LAs to consider whether they could potentially take forward some or all of the learning from the Active at 60 Local projects, particularly in relation to the use of online approaches to smart card application procedures. This aspect of the work is covered in Chapter 5 and focuses on the following areas: the expected outcomes for the pilots; the financial inputs required to deliver these outcomes; the actual outcomes for the pilots; the benefits experienced by the various stakeholders involved in the pilots; lessons learned by the pilots in delivering these outcomes; and how other LAs could potentially take forward the lessons learned.

The Business Case does not contain a full economic appraisal or cost-benefit analysis on the use of smart cards. These would require all costs and all benefits to be fully quantified, which was not possible due to the significant limitations of the data available from the pilots, specifically, the unavailability of activity and financial baseline data and gaps in the monitoring data relating to participation. There were also changes in the eligibility criteria during the pilot period which have impacted on the reliability of the available data. However, it provides LAs with information on the potential benefits of smart cards, primarily in qualitative terms, and also quantitatively, where data are available; the financial inputs required to deliver these benefits; and the key issues which are likely to be of relevance to other LAs, considering the introduction of smart cards.

1.4.6 Data management and analysis

The qualitative data in this study were analysed with the aid of Framework (Ritchie *et al.*, 2003), a systematic matrix approach to qualitative data management developed by NatCen and now widely used in social policy research (Pope *et al.*, 2006). Framework involves a number of stages. Familiarisation with the transcripts results in identification the key sub-themes or topics, which are then set out in an analytical matrix with columns representing themes and rows representing individual participants. Data from verbatim transcripts of each interview are summarised into the appropriate cell. In this way, the data are ordered in a systematic way that is grounded in participants' own accounts, yet aligned with the research objectives. The final stage of analysis involved working through the charted data in detail, drawing out the range of experiences and views, identifying similarities and differences, developing and testing hypotheses, and interrogating the data to seek to explain emergent patterns and findings.

As described in Section 1.4 above, the older people were sampled for the qualitative interviews on the basis of their age, gender, mode of application for the smart card and type of activity undertaken with the smart card. As is the case with all qualitative research, the numbers of participants expressing particular views or exhibiting particular behaviours are not reported as this has no statistical significance and no conclusions about the wider population can be drawn.

The CATI data were entered into SPSS, and basic frequencies were calculated. Cross tabulations by sex and age were also conducted, but due to the skewed nature of the sample, as well as the low sample numbers that resulted when results were further broken down, statistical significance testing was not carried out. However, frequencies (by sex and age) are presented in Chapters 3 and 4 of this report.

1.4.7 Ethical issues

National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) operates to extremely high standards in respect of confidentiality and anonymity. Members of the public are given an assurance that no information which could be used to identify them will be made available without their agreement to anyone outside NatCen and each respondent is provided with information about the centre and the expectations and entitlements of those taking part in NatCen's research. Data are stored and handled in line with data protection requirements. We are registered (now termed 'notification') under the Data Protection Act 1998, and comply with all of its obligations as well as ISO27001.

NatCen has an ethics governance procedure that meets the requirements of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and Government Social Research Unit (GSRU) Research Ethics Frameworks⁷. Research projects are scrutinised by the NatCen Research Ethics Committee (REC). The committee consists of senior NatCen staff, external research experts, and external professional experts ('lay people'). Depending on the nature of the research and the perceived level of risk, projects undergo either an expedited review (scrutiny by the REC Chair) or a full review by the sitting REC. In this case, given that the research involved fieldwork with potentially vulnerable older people, a full review was undertaken. The REC procedure is designed to provide ethical advice and guidance, and to ensure that all research undertaken by NatCen is ethically sound and meets the ethical standards of government and other funders. The process provides reassurance to potential research participants and, where relevant, to gatekeepers through whom they are approached.

1.4.8 Structure of this report

Chapter 2 draws on the qualitative interviews with LA stakeholders and partners to explore the lessons learned from the set up, implementation and delivery of the Active at 60 Local projects in both pilot areas. Chapters 3 and 4 draw on data collected from older people and management information, and therefore focuses on Area 1. Chapter 3 explores views and awareness of the smart card and how this could inform future work. Chapter 4 looks at smart card use, exploring firstly the types of activities undertaken by older people before analysing whether and to what extent the smart card has impacted on the uptake of those activities. Chapter 5 sets out the business case. Finally, Chapter 6 sets out the key findings and looks at potential implications for smart card use by LAs in the future.

⁷ The Economic & Social Research Council (2005). Research Ethics Framework. Government Social Research Unit (2005) GSR Professional Guidance: Ethical Assurance for Social Research in Government. Cabinet Office.

2 Set up and implementation: lessons learned

This chapter explores key learning from a delivery perspective.

2.1 Project set up

It is important to remember that both pilot areas already had all-in-one smart cards in operation. Therefore, (some) of the relevant technical infrastructure was in place. This included, in the urban area: card printers, readers and systems for data management across the buses, libraries and leisure centres. In the rural area, there was less technical capability for using the smart card. While the systems were in place for the cards to operate in a 'smart' way, they were in fact used as 'show and go' cards on the buses – smart readers were not in place. Similarly, the libraries and leisure centres were not linked to the smart cards.

Evaluating the cost of actually buying the relevant technology to enable 'smart' use and application of the all-in-one smart cards was not part of the remit of this evaluation. Initial purchase of equipment and system set up would clearly need to be considered by any Local Authority (LA) wishing to make use of the smart card capacity that did not already have the relevant infrastructure.

The pre-existence of the smart cards also meant that there were already personnel in situ, providing a natural fit for the roles of project managers for the trials, both of whom were dedicated, enthusiastic and committed to the idea and potential of smart cards. However, while Area 1 was a unitary authority, Area 2 was a local district authority. This affected the projects because while in Area 1, management of the core smart card services fell under the remit of the LA running the pilot, in Area 2 libraries and leisure centres were run by the district council and county council respectively. The smart card scheme was only operational within this one local district and support at county level for the Active at 60 project had still to be secured.

The commissioning process straddled the outgoing Labour administration and the incoming Coalition Government. This was described as problematic by both project teams for two reasons. Firstly, there was a delay in finalising the contracts which meant project activity was delayed. Secondly, the budget for communications on the projects was greatly reduced. Project staff felt that the potential impact of the Active at 60 Local activities was compromised as a result of them being unable to raise awareness among the older populations through promotions, advertising and information, as this quote illustrates:

'How can you tell people what you're trying to do if you can't communicate with them?'

(Project stakeholder)

Project teams felt as though they were left struggling to maximize the potential reach of their activities.

2.2 Area 1: Project activities – key learning

The Active at 60 Local trial started here in August 2010 and finished a year later.

2.2.1 Steering group

A steering group was set up to bring together key individuals involved with the smart card. This included representatives from the libraries, leisure centres, the LA transport team, the team running the General Practitioner (GP) exercise referral programme and the Later Years Partnership. The intention of the group was to share ideas about maximising the impact and use of the smart card.

The positive impacts of bringing this group of people together round a table proved to be – perhaps unexpectedly – one of the significant successes of the project. Although known to each other, individuals had not all met or worked together. Finding out more about each other's roles and sharing ideas and information were described as being very helpful, not just with reference to the smart card, but extending to other areas of their work. Indeed, the group were planning to continue face to face meetings after the end of the Active at 60 Local pilot, so beneficial had they been found to be.

The leisure centres in particular acknowledged the learning they had gained from involvement in the pilot project. Discussion groups held about Active at 60 identified that participants did not feel that leisure centres and gyms were necessarily places for older people. As a result, the leisure centres were keen to explore ways to make their service more accessible to the older age groups.

One of the reasons the steering group worked so well was that all members had a strong commitment to the principle underpinning the pilot project: that of improving the quality of older people's lives by increasing their levels of engagement and activity. At the same time, there were also other important reasons for the different sectors and organisations to be investing in the older population. The leisure centre representative recognised that the older population represented a potential market for them and were keen to improve their marketing materials and the range of activities on offer to reflect this. Libraries were keen to consolidate their position as community hubs providing multiple services to all sectors of the population. These positions in no way conflicted with the Active at 60 Local project's aims and objectives. Indeed, having an additional interest in the project attaining a successful outcome can be seen as an important component of successful partnership working.

2.2.2 Online registration system

This area had a longstanding relationship with a smart card company. Involved since the introduction of smart cards into the area in 2001, they formed part of the project management team, were integral in delivering the necessary management information required for the project and designed the online registration site. Positive, established working relationships and an in depth understanding of the area and the smart card system meant that the operational aspect of this part of the project was relatively straightforward.

Designing the actual content of the website was not described as being problematic. The smart card team had a clear idea of the requirements, having been operating a paper based application system for many years. One issue that did need to be addressed was moving the data from the open web access required for people to be able to access the on-line application to the closed area behind the LA's firewall. This was achieved through a secure system of downloading the data from the website and updating these onto the LA server.

A key feature of applying online was the real time identity check that was carried out by a well respected security company. Initially, people were being rejected who should not have been. This was because the security assessment was set at too high a level, and so one piece of learning was to set the assessment at the lowest possible levels for the purposes of this kind of identity check.

Replication of the online registration system at other LAs was one of the requirements of the Service Level Agreement (SLA). The company that designed the website committed to supporting the replication process at minimal cost and were not claiming intellectual property rights. Two other authorities successfully carried out the replication in each of these areas at a cost of circa £5,000 chargeable to the smart card company.

At first glance, the causal relationship between older people applying online for their smart card and increasing levels of community activity and engagement is not obvious. However, the website promoted the aims of the Active at 60 project in several ways.

Firstly, applicants gave their e-mail addresses and were asked to indicate what information they would like to receive in the future. This was of key importance to the smart card team, giving them a cost-effective way of targeting communications with smart card holders about upcoming activities or events. Also, anecdotal evidence suggested that people are more likely to complete forms when applying online as having to scroll through each page makes people more likely to complete each section.

Secondly, by providing older people with a reason to use the internet, it was hoped that family members or friends would assist those not familiar with going online. This would create opportunities for social engagement as well as learning. Further exploration of the internet may result in social engagement either in the form of computer classes or activities of interest discovered online. As outlined, part of the project was to train library staff to help older people through this application process at libraries. Highly trained and experienced library staff would be able to use this point of engagement as a way of exploring activities the older person might be interested in and signposting them as appropriate.

At the same time, a key driver for setting up the online registration system was the cost benefits to the LA of online applications as opposed to a paper system. This was particularly important given that smart card renewals were imminent, with cards issued at the beginning of the smart card scheme approaching their expiry date.

2.3 Area 2: Project activities – key learning

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the model put forward by Area 2 represented an interconnected vision of how a smart card could facilitate community involvement and physical activity. However, due to the limitations in the potential to test the smart card, the decision was made to close the trial early.

2.3.1 Community loyalty schemes

As the project was unable to fund the loyalty points system, the savings that were negotiated with local retailers were not seen as being a sufficient amount to drive a change in consumer behaviour. Importantly, there was also little motivation for retailers or smart card holders to swipe the smart cards. While the mobile phone technology was there in terms of the ability to read the smart card throughout the rural area, the motivation to do so was not in the absence of any meaningful rewards or incentives.

Another important component of this model was to link in the community transport to the loyalty scheme by awarding points for using the bus which could be spent at local retailers. This would create a joined up system whereby the smart card promoted older people's activities by motivating and rewarding them for getting out and about at the same time as supporting local retailers. However, without a meaningful loyalty scheme in place, there was little motivation for older people to use the smart card on community transport.

2.3.2 Technical learning

From a technical point of view, the aims of the project were deemed to be achievable. Turning the mobile phone (a Nokia 6212 NFC) into a smart card scanner involved some modification and was successfully carried out. However, due to the fact that Nokia have since changed the software for their mobile phones, the learning is in terms of the demonstration of concept rather than the specific technical processes undertaken for the Active at 60 project.

‘Well... to be able to... read a card and have an online access through, let’s call it a cheap device like a mobile phone, is definitely something that can be reused elsewhere.’

(Stakeholder interview)

Likewise, configuring the smart card for the purposes of operating as a loyalty card and collecting points to be redeemed was also viewed as being technically feasible.

2.3.3 Volunteer helpline operated from home

One of the successes of the project in Area 2 was in establishing a new model of working for volunteers. The project manager set up a partnership with a local branch of a large national charity for older people whereby volunteers were trained to run a telephone helpline dealing with queries about the Active at 60 pilot project. However, instead of operating the helpline from a call centre, the calls were diverted to the volunteers’ landline numbers, enabling them to work from home.

From the charity’s perspective, they were keen to be involved not only to support a project aiming to increase activity and engagement of older people, but also to test a new way of working that could be useful to them for other areas of their work. This mirrors the successful partnership model of the steering group in Area 1: of organisations having both a common and an individual reason for engaging in joint working.

Interest in this volunteer role was high. The number of inquiries about the role from the first advert in the local paper was high enough to warrant cancelling the second advert planned. Potential volunteers then had to go through the charity’s standard application process which included an interview and checks from the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB). At the end of this process 12 volunteers had been successfully recruited. They then underwent a training programme about the project and the specific task of running the Active at 60 helpline before it went live towards the end of 2010.

From the technical point of view, the system operated well. The process of switching the helpline number between volunteers’ landlines was straightforward. Clearly, there was an element of management in terms of ensuring that this took place in a timely, efficient way. Volunteers were in regular contact with the project team and the charity’s volunteer manager both about the practical aspects of upcoming rotas as well as reporting numbers of calls and any concerns they might have.

Unfortunately, the role and purpose of the helpline were also significantly compromised by the lack of project activities. Numbers of calls to the helpline were extremely low, with one volunteer reporting receiving on average two or three calls or less during a three hour shift. The calls that were made were not about project activity, but about other aspects of the smart card scheme such as informing the LA about a change of address.

2.4 Lessons learned

The Active at 60 Local pilot projects revealed some important areas of learning in terms of set up and implementation.

Technical learning: the online registration system was successfully introduced in Area 1. Although upfront investment was required, there were potential cost savings to be gained by LAs through the greater efficiency of an online application system, particularly at a time of mass card renewals. Importantly, the database of e-mail addresses was a significant bonus to be gained from the online application system. In a climate of increasing financial austerity, the benefits of being able to use e-mail to communicate with customers were seen to be considerable.

In Area 2, the capacity for a mobile phone to operate as a smart card scanner was demonstrated. Likewise, using a smart card as a vehicle for a loyalty points scheme was also reported as being technically feasible.

Stakeholder buy-in: not surprisingly, in order for a pilot project to be successfully implemented, it requires the support of those involved both from a senior management as well as from a stakeholder and key partner point of view. This support was in place in Area 1, a unitary authority, and resulted in successful completion of the project. In addition, there were significant benefits reported by the stakeholders involved in the steering group in terms of improved communication and understanding of each other's roles and remits. Positive knock-on benefits were reported in terms of opportunities to work together and help each other with communications and marketing.

However, significant problems were faced in Area 2. In part this was due to the fact that the pilot was being implemented in a local district authority and part of the core smart card services (leisure centres) were run by the county council whose support for being involved in the pilot had not been secured.

Volunteer helpline operated by homeworkers: Area 2 successfully tested the concept of volunteers operating a helpline from their own homes. The practical aspects of switching the helpline number worked well and positive feedback was given about this as a model of working from both the volunteers and the charitable organisation supporting them.

3 Learning from views and awareness of the smart card

This chapter explores the views and awareness of the smart card and the Active at 60 Local pilot project in Area 1. The application process is also examined. The data presented in this chapter are drawn from the qualitative depth interviews and telephone survey with older people.

3.1 Overview of sample of older people

Twenty depth interviews and 525 telephone interviews were carried out with older people in the urban pilot area, all of whom had a smart card. Table 3.1 provides an overview of the key sample demographics.

Table 3.1 Key demographics and other information

Demographics and other issues	Depth interviews N	Telephone Survey N ¹ (%)
Gender		
Male	10	259 (49)
Female	10	266 (51)
Age		
60-64	10	328 (65)
65-69	2	98 (19)
70-74	3	34 (7)
75-79	2	22 (4)
80+	3	24 (5)
Household composition		
Lives alone	10	114
Lives with others	10 ²	410 ³
Employment status		
Full-time	1	82 (16)
Part-time	2	73 (14)
Casual work	3	14 (3)
Voluntary	1	2 (0)
Retired	14	348 (66)
Other economically inactive	0	5 (1)
Health status		
Number reporting a health condition/mobility difficulty	8	222 (42) ⁴
When applied for smart card:		
In last year	7	176 (21) ¹
Total number	20	525

¹ Bases for each breakdown vary according to the number of valid answers given at the question. Bases vary between 506 and 525.

² Nine with partners, one with other family member.

³ Of whom 373 live with spouse/partner.

⁴ Of whom 144 (65 per cent) reported that the illness limits their activities.

3.2 Understanding and awareness of smart card

Older people principally thought of their smart card as a bus pass. Knowledge of other smart card applications was widespread, whether other applications were used or not. However, rather than a card with multiple uses including the bus, library and leisure centres, older people perceived the smart card to be a bus pass with additional features. The survey data support this finding, with the largest percentage (40 per cent) of respondents reporting that they applied for the smart card as they wanted a bus pass (see Section 3.5).

Participant: 'The last time I went [to the library] ...my card I think was expired or something and she said you can use your bus pass you know...I said, 'Oh can you?'

Interviewer: 'Were you surprised by that?'

Participant: 'I was, yeah, using a bus pass for a library, you know.'

(Male; 65-74, online applicant, library user)

All older people knew that the smart card could be used as a bus pass but fewer knew of its use in the libraries and leisure centres. This was also reflected in actual usage of the different elements, with most people using the smart card for the bus, fewer using the card for the library and fewer still using the card for the leisure centre. In addition, people were unclear about who and how the card could be used in the leisure centre, as this quote highlights:

'I know there's leisure facilities there but reading into it on the website I think you have to be in receipt of benefits, so it doesn't apply to me.'

(Female, 60-64, online applicant, bus user)

Older people reported a wide range of ways in which they gained information about the smart card, including through word of mouth; online; information leaflets and council newsletters.

3.3 Views of the smart card

Participants' views of the smart card were explored in the depth interviews and this section draws on these data.

3.3.1 Convenience

The most common positive comment about the smart card was that having all services on one card was very convenient as it meant that fewer cards needed to be carried. However, it was not seen as being of fundamental importance. One respondent commented that while it was 'convenient' to have the multifunction card, it was not 'essential' and he would still continue to use separate cards for different activities and services if the smart card was not available.

3.3.2 Motivational aspects

Women were more likely than men to report the smart card as being a motivating factor to carry out activities. This was noted in both younger and older women. It was seen as a motivator in terms of getting out of the house and/or being able to get involved in different activities.

'Yeah it was a good idea [to be able to use the card for multiple things]. It is handy, like even with the leisure centres....Erm, well I think it gives you a boost to do, go and do more'

(Female, 60-64, online applicant, bus and leisure centre user)

The smart card was also viewed as being important for maintaining independence. This was more likely to be reported among the older age groups. One participant described the smart card as a 'lifeline'. Interestingly, one respondent in the under 65 age group also mentioned the importance of the smart card in giving older people independence, but was clearly not including himself in this group. The diversity of the over 60 age group was a recurrent theme throughout the evaluation and is returned to in the concluding chapter.

3.3.3 Financial savings

Another positive aspect of the smart card raised by older people was that it helped them to save money in relation to travel. This was more commonly reported in people who had recently applied for their card. However, while there was recognition that it was saving people money, there was also a feeling that the card did not necessarily offer free services as these were being paid for via taxation in any case.

'It's not...so much the free travel because at the end of the day... you are paying for that... card in another shape and form yeah? Whether it be on your taxes... or what have you. You are paying for that card anyway.'

(Male, 60-64, paper applicant, bus, library and leisure centre user)

3.3.4 Stigma

One less positive view related to the card being seen as something for 'old people'. This is perhaps not surprising considering that most people thought of their smart card as a bus pass in the first place. Negative views about being considered old were expressed by both men and women, but often in a light-hearted way, as this quote illustrates:

'I mean...we originally got into it [applying for the smart card] more or less as a joke as I got to be 60 and everybody said 'Oh, it's time for your bus pass'...so I thought 'well yeah...why the hell not?'

(Male, 60-64, paper applicant, bus and leisure centre user)

3.3.5 Cost to taxpayer

Another negative point raised was about the cost of the smart card in terms of technology and infrastructure, were it to be extended. One respondent felt that in the current economic climate it was unlikely to expand due to cost but that if it did, he would not see it as a good use of council money. His preference would have been to receive a reduction in council tax.

A related view about cost was expressed in the form of uncertainty as to how long the concessionary travel card would be available for older people.

'Well, it [smart card] is... a very good thing to have but...we'll have to wait and see how long we've got it for.'

(Male, 75 and over, paper applicant, bus user)

Interestingly, feelings of guilt were expressed by some men and women about receiving services for free. They felt that they could afford to pay for the services or at least pay something towards them.

'I mean the youngsters or the people that have to pay fares, they're paying more because we go for free you know. And I think...most old age pensioners could afford to pay...a bit I think.'

(Female, 65-74, paper applicant, bus and library user)

3.3.6 Limitations of smart card

Another view expressed was about the perceived limitations of the smart card. For example, respondents said that they would be more likely to use their smart card if it had some form of financial incentive associated with it, such as discounts in shops. One possible explanation for this is that people now associate cards with discounts rather than membership, because of the rise of loyalty cards in supermarkets and shops.

'I wish I could use it for more things. If it meant I got ten per cent off in Marks and Spencer's or Debenhams I'd use it more!'

(Female, 60-64, paper applicant, bus user)

3.4 Awareness and views of the Active at 60 project

Survey data showed that 49 per cent of the telephone survey respondents had heard of Active at 60. Interestingly, in the qualitative interviews, participants also tended to say that they had heard of Active at 60 but were generally unable to provide any detail about what the project was about. It should be remembered that all older people who took part in the evaluation received a letter stating that the research was looking specifically at the Active at 60 Local pilot. This may partly explain the levels of awareness being relatively high compared with the level of detailed knowledge of the project.

Table 3.2 Awareness of Active at 60 by age and sex

Those who have heard of Active at 60 in the age groups	60 - <65 years N (%)	65- <75 years N (%)	75 years and over N (%)
Men	82 (54)	32 (43)	4 (17)
Women	92 (52)	27 (47)	8 (36)
Total	174 (53)	59 (45)	12 (22)

Among those who had heard of it, there were some interesting thoughts about the project. One younger respondent recalled reading about the project locally but felt that it wasn't relevant to him as the photographs used were of people much older than himself.

'Well the...sort of thing you get in the council news letter says...the council is promoting this Active at 60, and with your [smart card] you can go swimming and this, that and the other. Erm, [short pause] the trouble is every time you see something like that, you see a photograph of people who look a great deal older than I do...It's, it is discouraging for me to sort of join in these activities.'

(Male, 60-64, paper applicant, bus and library user)

However, the converse of this is that one older person felt that the project wasn't relevant to him as the title of the project mentioned the age of 60, and he was much older than this. There were also those who had heard of the project but did not feel it applied to them as they were already active. One respondent stated that he did not need to get involved as he still felt young and active.

This demonstrates the importance of project names as well as the promotional material being used, in terms of engaging with the target population. The over 60s population is a very large sector of society with a great diversity of age, abilities, interests and characteristics. This makes it challenging to tailor promotional activities effectively to be relevant to all in this group.

Some participants had difficulty understanding how the smart card could be used to increase physical activity and engagement with the local community.

‘Well, I think you’d say what other use has it got [than to gain monetary concessions]? Um, I mean it’s an identity card...so that might ...provide some sort of security in some situations, but how else could you use a piece of plastic to knit a community together?’

(Male, 60-64, paper applicant, bus and leisure centre user)

It was evident that people did not understand how the card in itself would increase activity and engagement without meaningful financial incentives.

3.5 Applying for the smart card

3.5.1 Reasons for applying

The three most common reasons identified in the survey for applying for the smart card related to bus pass ownership (see Table 3.3). Forty per cent said that they applied because they wanted a bus pass, with 31 per cent also stating that they were influenced by the related reason of saving money. About 37 per cent reported applying for the smart card because they were entitled to it.

Table 3.3 Why respondents applied for smart card

Reasons for application	Men N (%)	Women N (%)
Wanted a bus pass	99 (40)	103 (40)
Entitled to/‘might as well’ get card	92 (37)	92 (36)
Financial reasons	74 (30)	81 (32)
Total	249 (100)	255 (100)

In the in-depth interviews, the most common reason people gave for applying for the smart card was also to obtain free bus travel.

For people in the older age groups who had applied for the smart card more recently, there was likely to have been a significant change in circumstances around the time of application, such as moving to a new area or the illness of a partner.

3.5.2 Online application

The in-depth interviews showed that the under 65s were more likely to have applied online than the older age groups. Within this sample the online applicants were also all married and their partner had been important in their application in some way. This ranged from the partner already having a smart card and passing information on about the card to them, through to their partner helping them apply online or even completing the application on their behalf. This was particularly evident among those who were not confident computer users.

‘No, I don’t know, I can’t use the computer. I wouldn’t, I probably would go into town and apply for it [rather than applying online].’

(Male, 65-74, online applicant, library user)

People who applied online said that they did so because it was more convenient and did not involve having to go and queue up at a shop, library or office. For one participant who had picked up the paper application forms, it was the online application that had actually prompted her husband to apply.

'I think he did it a lot because he suddenly found he could do it online, and when he finds he can do something on the computer...he tends to do it. I think that possibly is the truth of it. Isn't it? 'Cause the forms were laid up there for ages, weren't they?'

(Female, 65-74, online applicant, non-service user)

The telephone survey data show that only 19 people applied online (12 per cent; only 164 answered the question); with the vast majority completing the paper form before submitting it at a shop, library or council office.

Under 65s were also more likely to have found out about the application process online than by any other method, whether they ended up applying online or not. These group members were all confident computer users and were comfortable completing tasks online. They were very positive about being able to renew their smart card online in the future and saw the benefits of being able to renew online both for themselves in terms of the convenience but also for the local council in terms of processing renewals.

'...the fact that you don't have to fill out something with a pen, the fact that you don't have to post it or take it somewhere...seems to me to be, there must be benefits for the organisation because they're not having to deal with...paperwork, and not having to deal with somebody who's standing in front of them.'

(Male, 60-64, paper applicant, bus and library user)

3.5.3 Application process

Regardless of mode of application, the process was described as straightforward and this finding was mirrored in both the qualitative and quantitative data. Table 3.4 demonstrates that over 95 per cent of men and women who answered the question in the telephone survey thought that the application process was at least 'quite easy'. Only three male respondents described the process as being 'quite difficult'.

Table 3.4 Ease of application process

How easy was application process:	Men N (%)	Women N (%)
Very easy	142 (58)	165 (65)
Quite easy	91 (37)	81 (32)
Neither easy nor difficult	9 (4)	9 (4)
Quite difficult	3 (1)	-
Total	245 (100)	252 (100)

In terms of those who applied online, only one participant reported a problem related to a difficulty uploading a photograph. Although this problem was overcome, it was suggested that more detailed information would have been useful in relation to the size and type of photograph to be used. There were no concerns reported by online applicants about the information required for the identity check. The information requested was seen to be routine and necessary for the process.

'I was quite happy that it was a safe site, so I was quite happy to give the information that was needed.'

(Female, 60-64, online applicant, bus, library and leisure user)

However, it should be borne in mind that all of those who applied online were experienced computer users and used to providing information online. This arguably might not be the case for more recent users, for example, if they are not as aware of website security issues.

There were no problems reported regarding the receipt of the card. The smart card arrived promptly in a matter of days following the application. There were also no problems reported about the use of the card, despite some anxieties about using the card for the first time. Some people described learning from others about how to use the card by waiting behind them and observing them using the card.

3.5.4 Renewal of smart card

It can be seen in Table 3.5 that over one-third of the telephone survey respondents thought that they would renew their smart cards at the main council office. About 22 per cent reported that they would renew the card at the library, with the next most popular response being online renewal (13 per cent).

Table 3.5 How respondents expect to renew smart card

Renewal of smart card:	Men N (%)	Women N (%)
At the council 'one stop shop'	76 (33)	91 (39)
At the library	53 (23)	50 (21)
Renew online	29 (13)	30 (13)
Total	229 (100)	235 (100)

3.6 Lessons learned

This chapter has highlighted some key areas of learning around the awareness and views of older people in Area 1 in relation to the smart card.

3.6.1 Low levels of awareness

Levels of understanding and awareness of the smart nature of the cards remained limited among older people. Widely viewed as a bus pass, awareness of the capacity of the card to operate in libraries and leisure centres was low. This was despite the best efforts of the LA team to provide information about the different ways the cards could be used. It seemed that people needed reminders of what the smart card could be used for as well as updates about any new activities.

In terms of the general views (bearing in mind that awareness levels were low) the smart card was seen as being convenient, but not essential.

3.6.2 Providing information

There was a strong case for providing information in a variety of ways, in terms of mode of communication, and at different points in time. While some participants reported preferring one particular way of receiving information, this was not the case for others. Therefore, a range of communication methods would arguably be most effective. In addition, it was clear from the research that there were particular points in time when older people may be more receptive to taking up new activities. Participants talked about a change in circumstances acting as a prompt to changing daily activities, for example, retirement; stopping driving; a change of health condition, or loss of a spouse. Providing information about the benefits to older people of using the smart card at different times could therefore be a way of reaching people when they are more amenable to receiving such messages.

3.6.3 Perceptions of age

A key overall finding, the evaluation identified views of age as having an important role in terms of whether older people regarded a particular service or activity as being relevant to them. Taking the name of the evaluation as an example, there were some participants who did not feel as though 'Active at 60' applied to them either because they were much older than 60 or because they were already active.

3.6.4 Application process

The application process was overwhelmingly viewed as being straightforward. Those who applied online also reported the same experience.

4 Impact of Active at 60 Local on older people's activities

A core objective of the Active at 60 Local pilots was to utilise the smart card to increase levels of activity and community engagement among older people. To evaluate this, the types of activities older people engaged in were explored. As well as setting out the range of activities undertaken, this chapter explores older peoples' views of activities; their perceived impact and the role of the smart card in facilitating uptake.

This chapter comprises three main sections:

- types of activities;
- use of the smart card;
- facilitators and barriers to involvement.

The data for this chapter are drawn principally from the qualitative depth interviews and telephone survey with older people in the urban pilot area, supplemented with management information and data from the stakeholder and partner interviews where relevant.

4.1 Activities of older people

Older people were asked about the range of activities they undertook in both the qualitative interviews and the telephone survey. This section explores the range of activities reported, starting with findings from the qualitative data.

4.1.1 Independent activities: sedentary

These were carried out within the home, and included: computer use, watching TV and films, reading, puzzles, arts and crafts. Older people mainly used computers for the purposes of accessing the internet for finding information, price comparison sites, staying in touch with family and friends using Skype, for e-mails and social networking sites.

Reading was another common activity undertaken across all ages and both sexes. Puzzles, arts and crafts included crosswords, word searches, card making, playing cards and painting-by-numbers. Participants associated these activities with keeping busy and maintaining an active mind or brain.

4.1.2 Independent activities: non-sedentary

This included household tasks such as cooking, cleaning, shopping, DIY and gardening. Physical activities such as walking, cycling, and swimming were also described. Independent walking (as opposed to walking in a group) was predominately associated with daily dog walking and viewed as a source of exercise but also an opportunity to stop and talk to other people along the way. One participant used the Wii-fit as an exercise tool – described as a convenient way of keeping fit at home.

Gambling activities were also reported by participants. These included playing the national lottery and going to betting shops. As with the dog walking, though going to a betting shop was an independent activity, it was described as an opportunity to have social contact with other people.

Going for drives in the car was an activity reported by people with health, and in particular, mobility problems. Some older people described specifically driving to areas with flat ground to then be able to go walking. Others talked about going for bus rides when they had nothing else to do, in order to get out of the house.

4.1.3 Interactive activities

Interactive activities involved a social element and were carried out with other people, including family, friends or within organised groups. For the purposes of this analysis, voluntary work and care-giving were included within interactive activities.

4.1.4 Activities with family and care-giving

Within the qualitative sample, married people aged between 60 and 64 widely reported being involved in family related activities, especially looking after grandchildren. It was noticeable that being involved in childcare had a secondary impact as it encouraged take up of further activities for older people. Grandparents reported carrying out a range of activities with their grandchildren, including swimming, going to the library, park and cinema, having days out, and travelling on the bus.

People aged 65 and over were less likely to report involvement in family activities and care-giving, but for those who did, a different type of family engagement was found compared to the under 65s. With increasing age, family activities appear to involve grown children and grandchildren caring for participants, through phone calls, carrying out errands such as taking them shopping, and helping to keep them busy by providing information or encouragement to take part in activities. As might be expected, the direction of care appeared to shift with increasing age from the parent to the child.

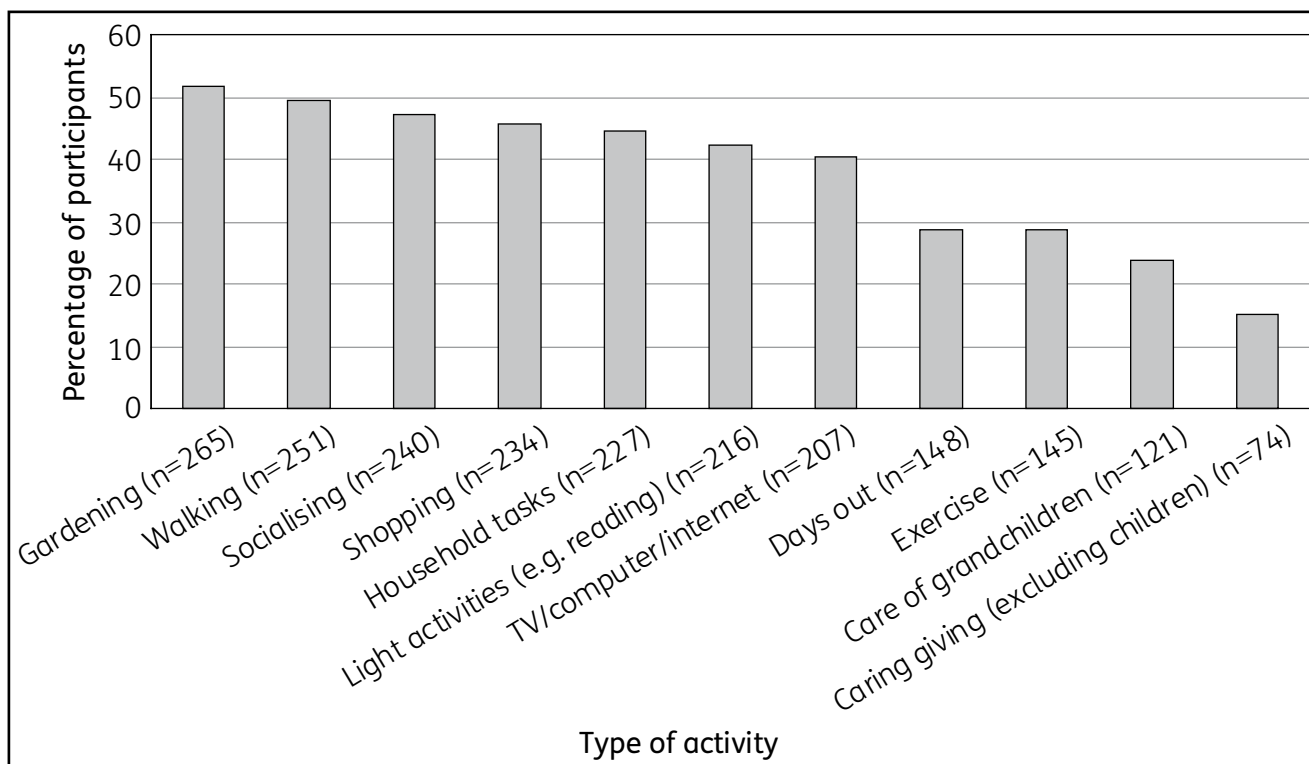
4.1.5 Activities with friends

Both men and women socialised with their friends; women were more likely to report talking and going for meals with friends, whereas men described activities such as walking, golfing, pub quizzes and meeting at social clubs.

4.1.6 Organised activities

The organised activities reported by older people were wide ranging and included: fitness groups, dance groups (including ballroom and tea dances), work-related retirement clubs, retirement home activities and attending social groups. Church clubs hosted a range of activities from afternoon tea; arts and crafts and guest visitors providing the elderly with entertainment or information about services and benefits. They were open to all, not just church goers, and with the same people attending each week provided a valued sense of community.

Figure 4.1 shows the following activity levels among older people reported in the telephone survey.

Figure 4.1 Typical weekly activities

The most commonly reported activity was gardening (52 per cent). This was followed by walking (including dog walking) (50 per cent), socialising with others (47 per cent) and shopping (45 per cent). Fewer than a third of participants (29 per cent) cited exercise as one of their typical weekly activities.

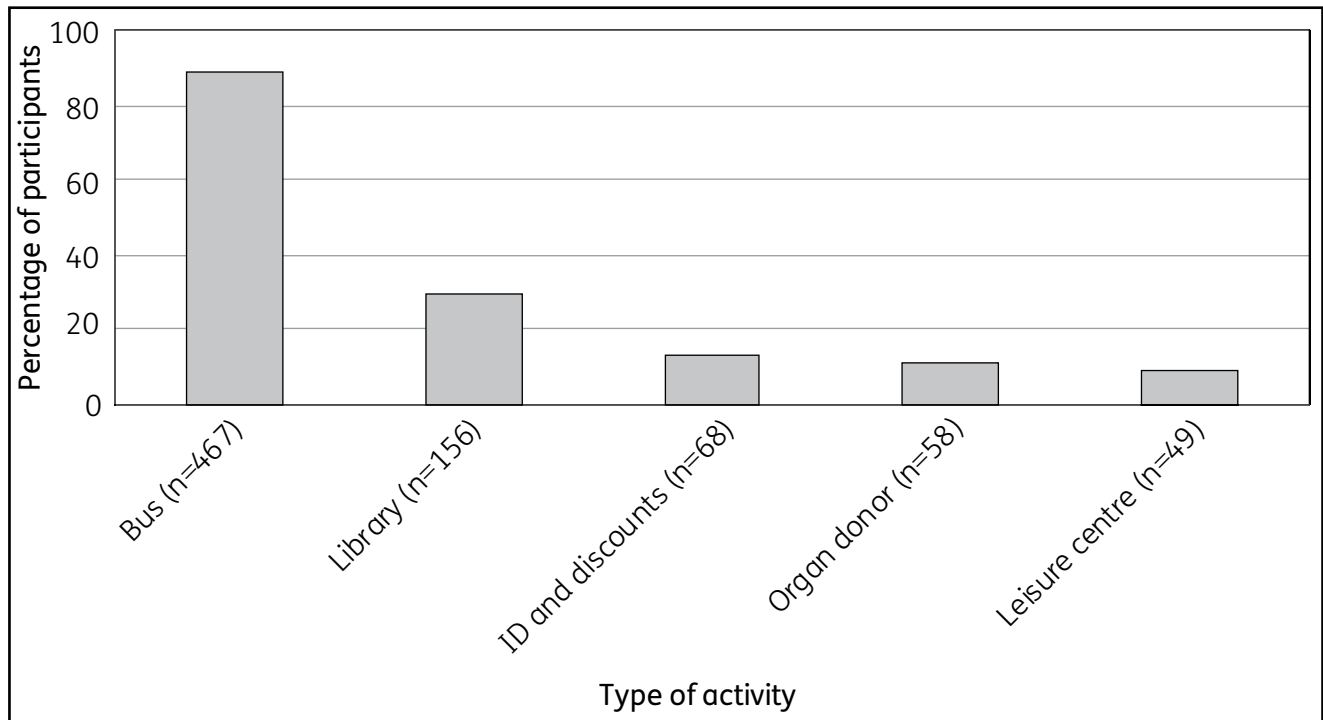
Weekly activities were predominantly carried out independently (63 per cent) rather than as a part of a group (37 per cent) with no major differences reported between men and women. There was only a slight difference found by age, a marginally higher proportion of participants aged 65 and over (41 per cent) reported doing activities as a part of a group than under 65s (35 per cent). Of those reporting doing activities as a part of a group, 13 per cent reported that the group was run by the council.

4.2 Use of smart card

This section focuses on data from the telephone survey about the ways in which the smart card was used by older people and explores any impact on use as a result of the Active at 60 Local project.

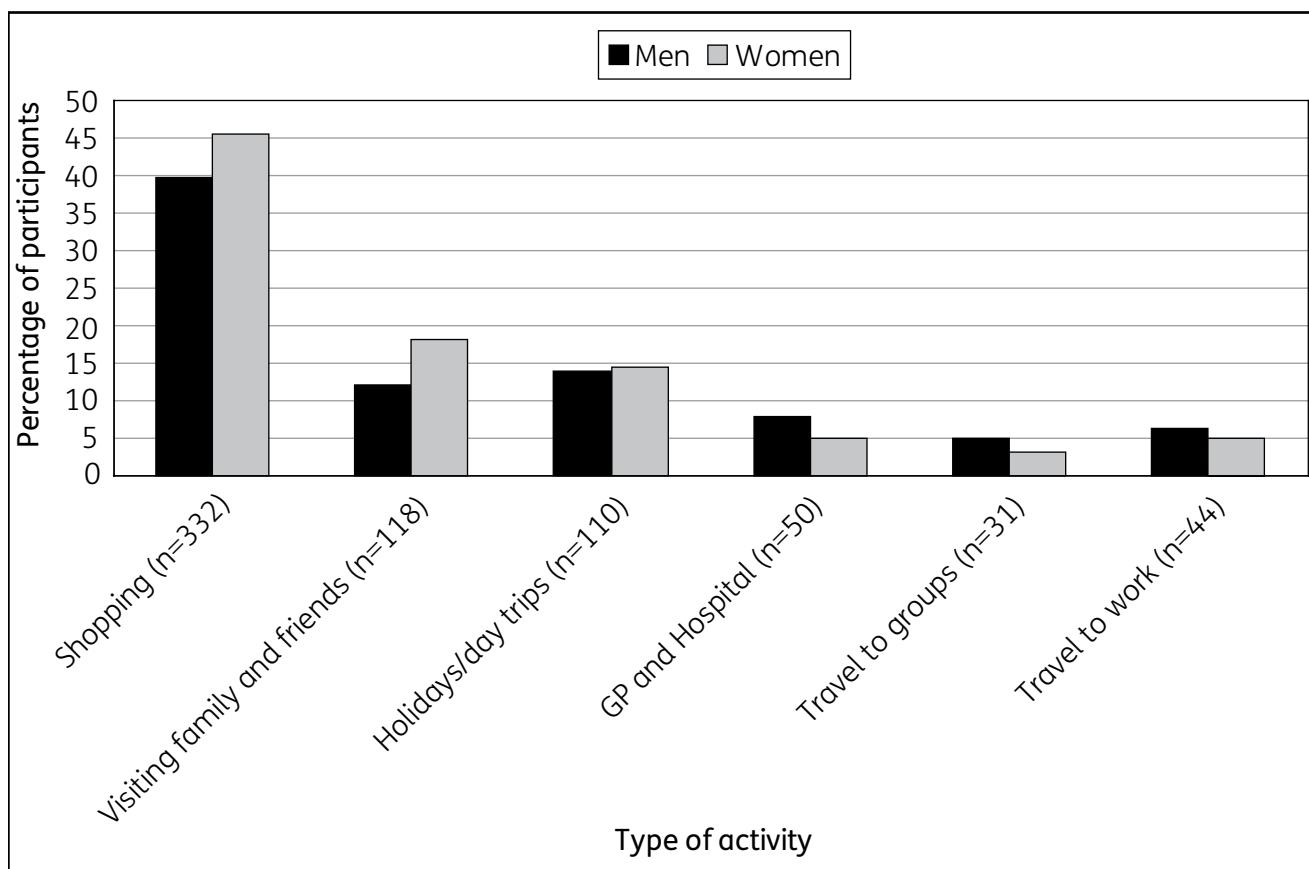
4.3 Bus use

Chapter 2 highlighted the fact that the smart card was viewed first and foremost as a bus pass. Not surprisingly, this was reflected in the way the smart card was used by older people, as shown in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2 Smart card activity take up

Eighty nine per cent of participants had taken the bus using their smart card. There was little difference in regular bus usage between men and women, 61 per cent of women compared with 57 per cent of men. Furthermore, regular bus use was reported across all age groups, with over half reporting using the bus at least once a week.

The purpose of bus travel was similar for men and women. The main purposes of bus travel were: shopping (40 per cent men and 46 per cent women), visiting family and friends (12 per cent men and 18 per cent women) and day trips (14 per cent for both men and women) see Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3 Purpose of bus journey

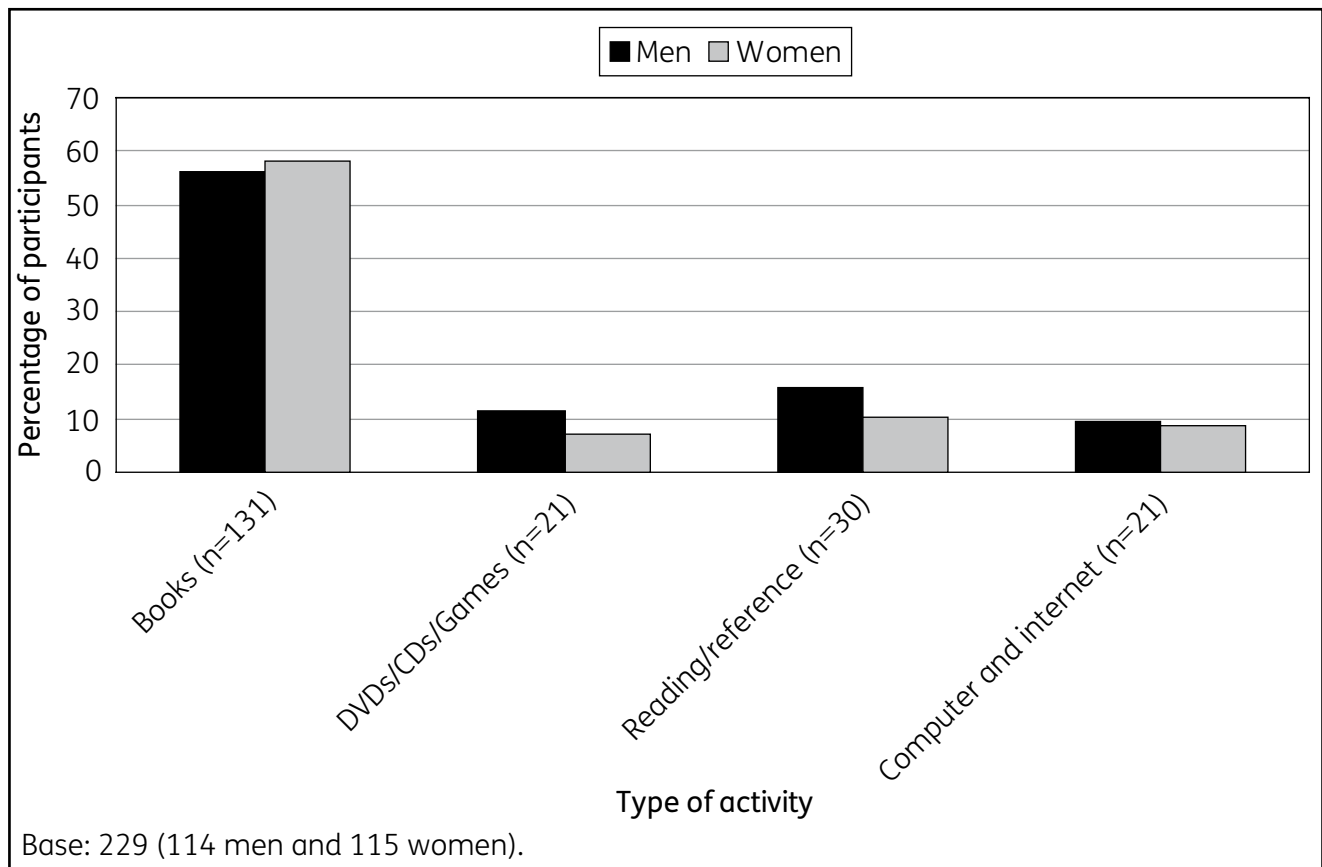
4.3.1 Role of smart card in promoting bus use

It should be noted that half of all participants aged 65-74 did not use the bus before receiving their smart card. This suggests that there is a tangible leverage opportunity at the point of the receipt of the smart card for providing information about possible ways the bus could be used to promote activity. Overall, 38 per cent of participants had not used the bus before obtaining the smart card (47 per cent of men compared with 31 per cent of women). For those who had used the bus before receiving the smart card, an equal proportion reported using the bus more (45 per cent) or about the same (45 per cent) since receiving the card. Few reported the smart card as a reason in itself for using the bus, of those who did women were more likely to report this than men (six per cent men and nine per cent women). Only ten per cent reported using the bus less since having the smart card, and this was mainly to be seen in the oldest age group. The main reasons for using the bus were: financial benefit (36 per cent of both men and women), convenience (32 per cent men and 23 per cent women) and not having access to a car anymore (ten per cent for both men and women).

4.4 Library

The depth interviews indicated that participants who used the library did not do so any more frequently due to the smart card. Changes such as retirement and having more time, or taking grandchildren, were more common reasons cited for increased library use. The survey data showed that accessing the library was the second most common activity participants used their smart card for, reported by 30 per cent of participants (see Figure 4.2). The purpose of library visits was similar for men and women.

The main purpose of library use was the loan of books (56 per cent men and 58 per cent women) as shown in Figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4 Library activities by gender

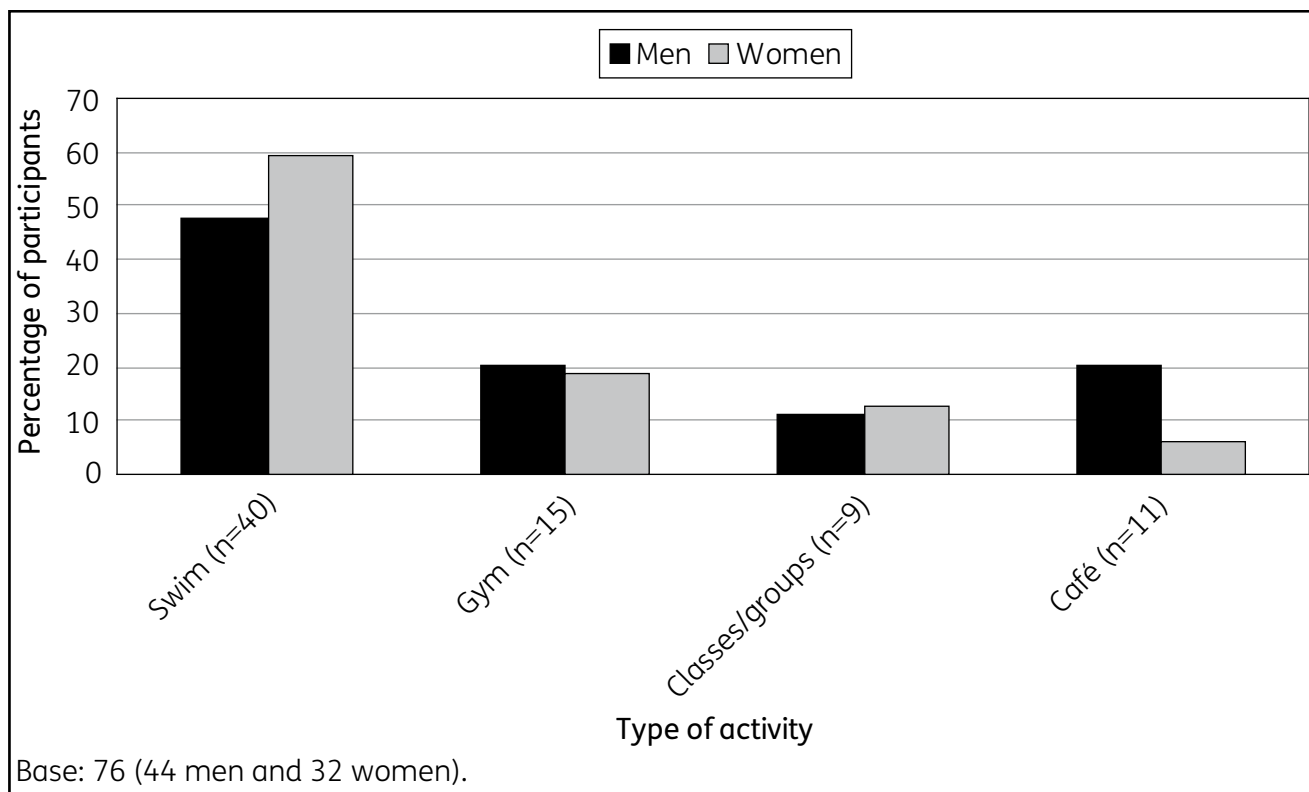
4.4.1 Role of smart card in promoting library use

From the 525 survey respondents, only 21 appeared to have started using the library after getting their smart card. It is not surprising that there was not a major increase in library use over the course of the pilot project. As can be seen from Figure 4.4, while the library was an important and active member of the steering group, the scope of the activities being undertaken as a part of Active at 60 Local was on a small scale. In essence, this was the purchasing of the webcams and training of staff to assist older people with smart card application online using the library computers. The management information⁸ indicates that this outreach work in the libraries was a success (even allowing for the relatively small numbers). This supports the view put forward in the stakeholder interviews that libraries have an important role as a community hub and can effectively engage all sectors of the population – including older people.

4.5 Leisure centre

The telephone survey data revealed that only nine per cent of participants had used their smart card at the leisure centre (see Figure 4.2) and of these, nearly two thirds were under 65. There were slight differences in the purpose of leisure centre visits for men and women as shown in Figure 4.5 below, but the numbers are so low that the results have to be treated with caution.

⁸ Area 1 Smart card Project Closure Report, August 2011.

Figure 4.5 Leisure activities by gender

It should of course be remembered that this is not an indication of the total number of older people using the swimming pools and leisure centres, only those who did so using the smart card. Older people could also access these facilities using a separate leisure card.

Older people were asked if their attendance of leisure centres had increased after receiving their smart cards, but the numbers were too low to allow for meaningful analysis and reporting.

As with the libraries, the actual project activity linked to the leisure centres was not extensive enough to expect to see a rise in attendance numbers. Although discounts were available to all older people in receipt of benefits, awareness of this was low (see Section 3.4). As a result of the communications budget for the pilot projects being reduced significantly, this meant that the pilot project teams were not able to do as much promotion of the potential benefits of the smart card as they had hoped.

Nevertheless, one of the important results for the pilot project in Area 1 was the identification of the potential for leisure centres to work more closely and effectively with the older population. Feedback from the discussion groups carried out by the project team (and supported by the findings in this report) highlighted the fact that some participants did not see gyms or leisure centres as places for older people. The leaflet that was produced with the pilot communications budget did take this into account and aimed to address it. Therefore, it can be argued that although the data from the telephone survey did not demonstrate a rise in attendance at leisure centres over the course of the pilot project, what was achieved was a highly important recognition of the potential for older people to become more involved in leisure centres.

4.6 Other uses

Older people reported using the smart card as a form of identification, particularly those who did not hold a driving licence. The card was used to prove eligibility for senior citizen discounts at a range of amenities.

4.7 Management information

Interestingly, the management information collected by the LA in Area 1 showed that there was a decrease in numbers applying for the smart card as well as using the bus, library and leisure services across all areas covered by the Active at 60 Local pilot project. Possible reasons for this decrease are outlined below.

4.7.1 Numbers of smart card applicants.

Overall, there was a reduction in applicants from 232 in August 2009 to 114 in July of 2011 as can be seen in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Smart card applications

Month	2009/10	2010/11
August	232	171
September	236	129
October	209	126
November	169	117
December	128	89
January	162	133
February	189	125
March	213	144
April	193	93
May	142	145
June	157	136
July	171	114

This general downward trend can be seen to be as a result of the new dates of eligibility for the concessionary bus pass. As the age at which older people are able to apply for the smart card increases, there is subsequently a lower number of applicants.

4.7.2 Leisure centre use

Numbers of older people aged 60 and over using the leisure centres also showed a reduction over the period for the pilot project as shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Leisure centre usage

2010	Total	2011	Total
Jan	2,902	Jan	2,769
Feb	3,826	Feb	3,071
Mar	4,358	Mar	3,184
Apr	4,529	Apr	2,468
May	4,378	May	2,672
Jun	4,988	Jun	2,762
Jul	5,154	Jul	2,656
Aug	3,753		
Sep	3,027		
Oct	3,211		
Nov	3,013		
Dec	1,804		

In terms of swimming, the number fell from 2,920 in July 2010 to 2,040 in July 2011. Given that the free swimming scheme for the over 60s was stopped during this period, this undoubtedly accounts for part of the reason for the lower recorded numbers. However, the LA also cite the change in leisure centre management as being a possible additional explanation, as a result of the way figures were being recorded⁹.

4.7.3 Library smart card usage

Overall figures for library usage were down for the year of the Active at 60 Local pilot, and this was reflected in lower numbers of older people accessing the library using their smart card. While it was not part of the remit of the evaluation to identify reasons for this reduction, what it does show is that the reduction among the over 60s appeared to be part of a wider population trend, and suggests that wider contextual issues make it very difficult to assess the impact of the project.

4.8 Explanations for participation in activities

As well as finding out what types of activities participants were involved in, their views of physical activity generally were explored. The nature of exercise older people engaged in was dependent to a large extent on their ability and health. For those who were active, exercise was closely linked to vigorous activities that made them feel as though they had had a 'good work out'. However, for people with health problems, impaired mobility and those who did little exercise, walking to the local shop might be considered as exercise.

The importance of staying active was widely emphasised. For people aged 65 and over, this could be minimal but was seen as a vital way of keeping joints active and mobile as well as supporting recovery from injury.

'Oh well, when you get to be retired you've got to keep moving, you can't stop you know [laughs]. The more you move the easier life is. You know, if you sit down you tend to um, cease up and then, then moving gets difficult.'

(Female, 65-74, paper applicant, bus and library user)

⁹ Area 1 Smart card Project Closure Report, August 2011.

As a key aim of the Active at 60 Local pilot was to increase levels of activity among older people, an important part of the evaluation was to identify the facilitators and barriers affecting older people's choices.

4.8.1 Socialising

Socialising was a key motivator for older people to take part in activities. Having social contact with others was recognised as important in terms of maintaining individual wellbeing and warding off feelings of isolation. In particular, talking to others was viewed as important to an individual's happiness, as this quote illustrates:

'I get talking to the lady at the back and that, and you talk about things in general, something that's struck you as funny, you know...did you hear about so and so. And you... come in and you feel quite uplifted because you've spoken to somebody...'

(Female, 75+, paper applicant, bus user)

Participants who did not have close friends expressed a desire to have friends or more social contact. While activities with family and friends were seen as an important component of social contact and a way of maintaining existing relationships, organised activities were highlighted by participants as being a valuable way to meet new people. Interestingly, even people in partnerships cited meeting others (outside their family and partner) as being important to them. The social benefits of taking part in organised activities were striking, as the following quote shows:

'We keep in touch with each other and if, if somebody doesn't turn up you say "Ooh, I wonder what's happened to them? I'll give them a ring when I get home and make sure they're all right".'

(Female, 65-74, paper applicant, bus and library user)

Even some of the independent activities were driven by a desire to engage with others. For example, participants who went for walks, bus rides or to betting shops talked about the opportunity to talk to others as being part of the reason for doing so.

4.8.2 Getting out of the house

Having the opportunity to get out of the house was essential to older people. This was closely linked to meeting other people but was also about getting fresh air and having a change of scenery. Older people found that having organised activities to go to were strong motivators to leave the house.

'I think it keeps your mind strong. It keeps you going. I mean for older people you need to be out there and be active and be part of the world because as I said otherwise you end up that you, you're locked away in your own little world and the, the other world passes you by.'

(Female, 60-64, paper applicant, bus user)

4.8.3 Views of ageing

Self perception and views of age and ageing more generally could be seen to influence choice around take up of activities. As part of the discussion about types of activities, participants' views about council led activities were sought. It was clear that organised activities for elderly groups put some people off, in particular the younger age groups (under 65s) and those who viewed themselves as active already (all age groups). This was usually due to a perception that they were active and independent and did not 'need' help in this regard. Negative associations of groups for the elderly were expressed, with one view put forward that activities would involve sitting down and passing a ball to one another. There was also evidence that some older people actively wanted to

be with people their own age or younger as it helped them to stay and feel young, rather than being with a group in which the majority were older.

'It's normally at half past seven in the morning when a lot of the elderly people go there [swimming]. That's why I stopped doing it. A lot of elderly people were doing it. I thought to myself all these other people, these wrinklies, I'm not wrinkly [laughs] and I stopped doing it.'

(Male, 60-64, paper applicant, bus, leisure centre and library user)

4.8.4 Attitudes towards leisure facilities

As a part of understanding take-up of physical activities we explored perceptions of leisure centres. Among the qualitative sample of those who had used the gym recently, they did see other people their age. Gym staff were reported as being helpful and encouraging. For those who had never used the gym, there was a perception that it was for 'young people' and the 'super fit' and concerns were expressed that they would not be able to keep up or fit in. Participants who had used the gym in the past and now did not, cited the cost of gym membership as a reason for discontinuing membership. There were also those who had found working out in the gym alone as being 'boring', and therefore were not motivated to continue using the gym.

4.8.5 Encouragement

People reported taking up new activities through encouragement of friends and family. Starting a new activity can be daunting, therefore the encouragement and companionship of a family or friend may be a supportive factor in facilitating a new activity. Few people reported doing physical activity alone; most reported doing exercise with other people, whether this was with friends, family or in organised groups. This highlights the importance that other people or groups can have in helping to keep one another motivated, and the wider social aspects of exercise.

4.8.6 Change in personal circumstances

Life events such as retirement, death of a spouse or parent, ill health, and loss of car/ability to drive had an impact on people's activities. Such changes in personal circumstances could affect participants' access, motivation or ability to take part in different activities. For example, people in their early 60s discussed how they planned for their retirement, and what they would do with the extra time they had to fill. For participants who had experienced the death of a spouse or parent, this could have a huge impact on how they spent their time and typically led to a re-evaluation and change to their day to day lives.

4.8.7 Health

People who had experienced illness talked about how this had changed their activity patterns. For example, one participant stopped physical activities such as gardening after having a stroke but had increased the number of sedentary activities including paint-by-numbers and word searches. However, illness was not necessarily associated with a decline in activity levels. One participant with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) was introduced to an NHS-run exercise group. This activity had benefited the participant not only by helping his breathing but also by increasing his social contacts. This then had secondary impacts because it introduced him to other groups (e.g. computer classes).

Mobility difficulties were commonly reported; many older people found walking, and particularly walking up hills a difficulty. This meant that they had to plan their journeys on foot carefully, for example, avoiding bus stops that are on an incline.

A further point to consider for those in relationships is the health of their partners. In circumstances where a partner was unwell, older people reported holding off taking up new activity until they received confirmation of their partner's health status.

4.8.8 Financial

The cost of activities was a barrier for some people taking up or continuing activities. One participant cited stopping swimming when free swimming for over 60s was cut. Others, who still swam, reported seeing a decline in the number of elderly swimmers since free swimming was stopped. In addition, a participant who used to be a member of the gym at the local leisure centre described his decision to stop his membership after price rises. Both participants had mobility difficulties and experienced benefits of swimming/gym use, however the increase in cost was a barrier to them both in continuing to exercise in this way. Some activities, such as walking, were preferred by some older people as there are no financial costs.

Grandparents looking after their grandchildren mentioned that doing activities with them could be expensive, particularly during school holiday periods when their caring roles typically increased.

4.8.9 Weather

There was strong evidence in the qualitative interviews that older people varied their activities depending on the weather. Good weather encouraged outdoor activities, or activities outside of the home, whereas people were more inclined to stay indoors in poor weather. For example, gardening, walking and cycling were commonly summer time (or good weather) activities, whereas DIY and computer use were more likely to be taken up in winter time (or during poor weather). Winter months were associated with restricted activity and therefore restricted opportunities to meet with other people. Older people reported feelings of isolation during the winter months which could result in a negative impact on their wellbeing.

'When you are on your own some days it does get a bit lonely...'cause sometimes when it's actually tipping down with rain and some of the cold days you know I've found that I didn't go out and uh, or couldn't go out, you wouldn't speak to a soul. Well, you get a bit stir crazy you know, you feel, oh I must get out and just go and talk to somebody or phone my daughter and have a chat.'

(Female, 65-74, paper applicant, bus and library user)

Adverse weather conditions affected uptake of the open days organised as part of the pilot project activities. Unfortunately, the first of these fell during a cold wintry snap and this was widely seen to be a significant reason for low turnout.

4.9 Discussion and key findings

As has already been identified, the scope of the Active at 60 Local project to impact significantly on older people's activity levels in Area 1 were limited due to the relatively small scale nature of activities undertaken. For example, the data for the evaluation had already been collected by the time the outreach work in the libraries was up and running, and therefore this report is unable to include any of these experiences. However, a range of important findings were identified.

Older people were clear about the importance of keeping active and getting out of the house. This was discussed both in terms of having an active mind and an active body. The value of organised activities was a strong message from participants, particularly in relation to the associated social benefits. This seemed particularly to be the case among those with fewer existing social contacts

or those in the older age brackets (70 and above). Participants talked about the sense of belonging that came with regular activities. Expecting to see the same people each week was described as an important motivator for some to attend such activities and absences were noticed. However, for some over 60s, it was clear that activities targeted at older age groups specifically could act as a barrier, either because they saw themselves as being too young or too old.

Potential ways of encouraging older people to be active using the smart card were identified. Firstly, grandparents involved in care for their grandchildren described keeping busy looking after them. Participants talked about taking their grandchildren swimming or to local activities on the bus. Secondly, older people talked about using the bus as a way of getting out of the house and providing an opportunity to talk to others. It could be worth exploring ways of using the smart card to link taking the bus to accessing grandparent and grandchild activities or organised walks. In addition, there could be an important role to be played by family and friends in encouraging older people to take part in activities. Participants talked about the fact that those around them did tell them about local activities and it is possible that they could act as powerful agents of change if they had the right information about what was available.

In terms of the impact of the Active at 60 Local pilot, there was evidence to support the importance placed by the LA on having a database of e-mails and specific knowledge of areas of interest. One participant discussed how her husband had received a targeted e-mail for discounted golf sessions. She thought the e-mail was a good idea and should be sent to people about all types of activities, to provide information about what is available. She found the level of detail provided to be useful. There was information about the type of course; the time; cost; level of discount provided; equipment needed; contact number; how to get there on public transport and photos of both the activity and the location. The participant noted that she would forward such e-mails onto friends.

5 Active at 60 business case

This chapter provides an overview of the business case for the use of online registration and smart card technology by Local Authorities (LAs) in supporting access to services, particularly for older people, based on the experiences of the Active at 60 Local Project in Area 1.

5.1 Objectives of the business case

The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to set out the business case in order that other LAs can consider whether they could potentially take forward some/all of the learning from the Active at 60 Local Project, particularly in relation to the use of online approaches to smart card application procedures. In particular, this chapter examines:

- What were the expected outcomes for the pilot?
- What financial inputs were required to deliver these outcomes?
- What were the actual outcomes for the pilot?
- What benefits were experienced by the various stakeholders involved in the pilot?
- What lessons were learned by the pilot in delivering these outcomes?
- How could other LAs potentially take forward the lessons learned?

This chapter does not contain a full economic appraisal or cost-benefit analysis on the use of smart cards. These would require all costs and all benefits to be fully quantified, which was not possible due to the significant limitations of the data available from the pilots, specifically, the unavailability of activity and financial baseline data and gaps in the monitoring data relating to participation. There were also changes in the eligibility criteria during the pilot period which have impacted on the reliability of the available data.

However, it does provide LAs with information on the potential benefits of smart cards, primarily in qualitative terms, and also quantitatively, where data are available; the financial inputs required to deliver these benefits; and the key issues which are likely to be of relevance to other LAs, considering the introduction of smart cards.

5.2 Understanding the expected outcomes

This section focuses on understanding the expected outcomes from participation in the Active at 60 Local Project for Area 1, i.e. what the pilot initially expected to achieve through the investment they made. In summary terms, the local pilot was developed to ‘test how smart cards can improve the lives of older people.’¹⁰

Detail of the pilot project can be found in Section 1.3. To recap: an existing smart card scheme was already in operation, which formed the basis for the Active at 60 project activities. The overall aims of the pilot in Area 1 were to build on their existing infrastructure for smart cards by providing new routes for accessing smart cards and access to new entitlements and initiatives¹¹. The primary routes through which this would be achieved were¹²:

¹⁰ Area 1 Smart card Project Closure Report, August 2011.

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² Area 1 Smart card Project Closure Report, August 2011 and Area 1 Service Level Agreement for Active at 60.

- **Online enrolment website**, with real time authentication. Area 1 set a target of 30 per cent of total registrations in the 12-month testing period to be online and a target of an 80 per cent success rate for the real-time authentication using an online identity check. They also set a target of a two per cent increase in the overall number of applications.
- **Assisted registration**, including specific support for hard to reach groups and working with those who had been eligible for the card for over six months, but had not previously applied. Area 1 set a target of 25 per cent of online registrations in the 12-month testing period to be through assisted registration and outreach and a target of ten per cent for online referrals through the helpdesk.
- **Increased take-up of services by older people**, including free swimming (subsequently cut); use of leisure centres, library cards, internet services and 200 referrals to a scheme operated by GPs, which encouraged older people to participate in a range of leisure options. A target of 65 per cent of referrals to complete the 16 session programme was set.
- **Replication**, i.e. translating the approaches to other authorities, particularly in relation to the online portal.

As can be seen from the expected outcomes, Area 1 intended to make use of online technology to improve the application process from the perspective of both users and the LAs themselves. There was also an expectation that through developments connected with smart card technology, the project intended to increase participation by older people in a range of leisure and other activities.

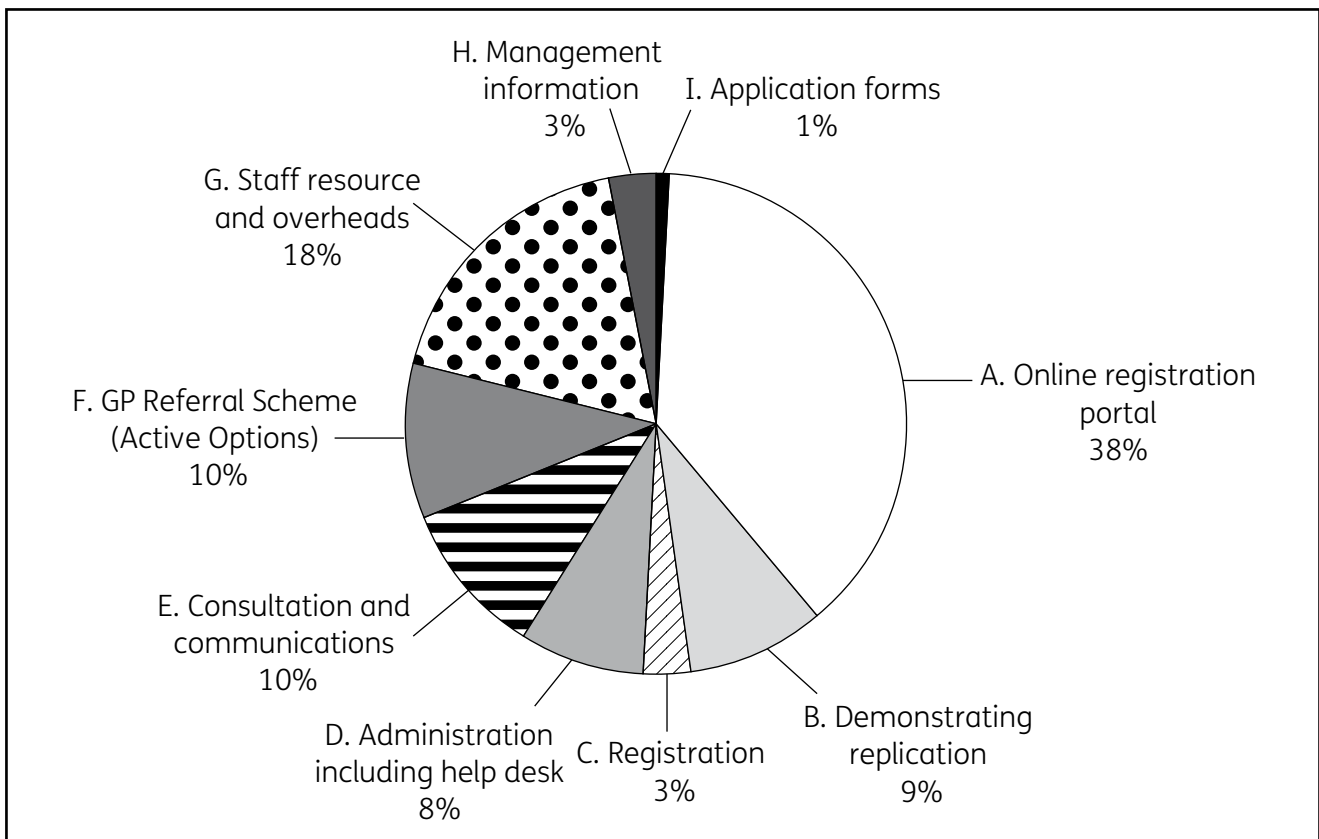
5.3 Understanding the financial inputs (cost analysis)

This section focuses on the financial inputs originally put in place to deliver the expected outcomes identified in the previous section. As has already been stated, the data available do not allow a full cost-benefit analysis to be undertaken, primarily because there are insufficient data available to enable identification of the additionality of outputs achieved and the quantification of these benefits. However, this section focuses on identifying the main areas of spending by the pilot sites; the budgetary challenges that were experienced during the pilot period; and a discussion relating to the ‘in-kind’ contributions that were evident.

5.3.1 Cost profiles for Area 1

For Area 1, a budget of £198,925 was allocated to the project, with all elements of the project being delivered within this budget. Figure 5.1 below shows the breakdown of the budget by the major cost elements. As shown, the three biggest areas of spending related to:

- Developing the online registration portal was the largest area of spending at £78,000, which included the project management related to the website (£30,000), as well as the website development costs, registration; hosting and support; licences (£30,000); working with the online identity check company to set up that element of the portal (£15,000); and database development (£3,000).
- Staff resources and overheads costing £35,000, which included backfilling costs for the Operations Managers to enable sufficient time to be devoted to the pilot.
- Consultation and communications costing £20,000, which covered the stakeholder consultation events, focus groups and wider communication relating to participation.

Figure 5.1 Breakdown of costs for implementation for Area 1

Other areas of spend included:

- £20,000 for the GP exercise referral scheme.
- £20,000 for demonstrating replication, of which this included project management (£8,000), developing the hosted website for two other LAs (£5,000/authority).
- £15,000 allocated to administration, including the help desk.
- £6,000 for the collection and analysis of management information.
- £6,000 for registration fees with the company performing the online identity checks, which included the license fees for the age and address checks.
- £1,000 for reprinting costs for the application forms associated with the scheme.

The key area in which a significant cost pressure was identified by Area 1 related to communication, as communication budgets within the pilot were limited. The authority had to overcome this issue by making use of alternative communication routes in order to raise the profile of the pilot. This included, for example, using email, rather than hard copy letters for sending out information. Although a direct cost was not identified, other pressures related to management time and time spent on internal consultation with other departments within the authority.

5.4 Understanding the achievements

This section focuses on understanding what was actually achieved and what difficulties were encountered as the pilot worked to deliver the targets they had initially set. The outcomes presented include a combination of quantitative and qualitative data. The evaluation of achievements is made more difficult by limitations to the data: there are gaps in the data relating to participation, e.g. the authority was unable to track individual card usage.

In overall terms, the online registration system was developed to time and budget, including the integration of an online authentication check system and successful replication in two further LAs. However, some difficulties were experienced with the collection of monitoring data to support the evaluation of specific targets, specifically in relation to identifying a suitable baseline for comparison. However, in relation to the expected outcomes for Area 1:

- **Online registrations:** although the authority was not able to achieve its overall target for online applications of 30 per cent over the first year, there has been an increasing rate of online applications in the second six months of the pilot year and the target was achieved for the second six months of the pilot period. The online portal will also be able to be used for renewals from 2012.
- **Real-time authentication:** the authentication element of the process was included to ensure applicants met the eligibility criteria for the smart card, i.e. resident of the authority and valid date of birth. Compared to the requirements for other identity checks, these criteria are relatively straightforward. However, early on in the pilot, applicants were being refused unnecessarily as the levels set were more restrictive than necessary (see Section 2.2). Once these issues were addressed, the authority exceeded its target of 80 per cent on a month by month basis, for the proportion of online registrations which could be completed in real-time, using online identity checking. The council identified that the cost of each check for a new application was £1.50, reducing to £0.30 for renewals.
- **Hard to reach groups:** the authority wanted to encourage applicants using the online portal to be supported through the application process by family members; friends; carers; and Local Authority staff. The authority received these assisted registrations throughout the pilot period and also undertook a successful outreach programme in two libraries. It also achieved its target in relation to applications from individuals who had been eligible for smart cards for more than six months but who had not previously taken up their smart card.
- **Overall participation:** the authority was not able to demonstrate increases in participation or uptake of the smart card over the pilot, although it identified several factors which had affected participation outside the direct control of the council. These included changes to eligibility criteria connected with changes to the pensionable age; the cancellation of the free swimming project as part of the budget savings introduced by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport¹³; and challenges to budgets for communications, in particular. The authority also encountered difficulties in trying to track individual card usage to support their evaluation of participation levels.
- **GP referral scheme:** this element was suspended one month before the end of the pilot, as the management team responsible for delivering the programme was put on notice of redundancy, although '162 citizens were referred by GPs onto the programme' at a cost of approximately £125 per referral.¹⁴
- **Replication in other authorities:** two other LAs are now working with the same technology for a web portal and have begun to achieve online registrations. A number of other authorities are also working with the providers of the online portal to look at other implementation options.

¹³ http://www.culture.gov.uk/news/media_releases/7191.aspx

¹⁴ Area 1 Smart card Project Closure Report, August 2011.

5.5 Benefits to participating stakeholders

Previous work by Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)¹⁵ on all-in-one smart cards already being used by LAs identified that numerous motivating factors for LAs and service users to extend the use of this type of technology to support projects like Active at 60, beyond the existing use of smart cards for transportation services alone, for example:

- LAs can experience benefits from efficiency gains, in particular, as ‘delivering a number of services through one card may produce economies of scale, and multi-functional smart card schemes can make efficiencies by avoiding duplication of effort’¹⁶. Smart cards can also provide LAs with more accurate information on take-up of specific services;
- Service users can benefit from easier access to services; more targeted and personalised services; increased social inclusivity; increased purchasing power; financial benefits particularly where cards offer discounts to service users, and improvement to quality of life. Smart cards can save time for service users as ‘it is only necessary to register once to access all the services available via the card’¹⁷. Smart card users may also ‘be able to live fuller lives by making more use of the services available to them’¹⁸, and
- LAs and service users can both take advantage of joined-up services, flexibility in the services being offered and the positive implications of all the data being collected through the smart cards, i.e. collecting information which helps LAs to more directly target services towards the needs of service users.

In relation to the evidence from the Active at 60 pilots, specific benefits to LAs, service users and other organisations are considered in the following sections. A combination of qualitative and quantitative evidence is included, although, as identified previously, some benefits have been difficult to quantify, due to the limitations of the available data. This section also includes some indications of the wider economic benefits of increased participation for older people, one of the aims of the Active at 60 project.

5.5.1 Benefits to Local Authorities in using online registration

The data show that there can be important benefits for LAs in taking forward some/all of the learning from the Active at 60 project in relation to using online portals for issuing smart cards:

- **More efficient processing of applications:** using an online portal can be a more efficient way of handling applications for Local Authority services, such as concessionary travel cards, as much of the time required to complete the process is transferred from the authority to the individual service users. The online process can also be quicker for service users, with the improvements in efficiency also benefiting service users.

¹⁵ Research Report No. 738: Evidence review of smart card schemes in Local Authorities, Wood, A., Dawner, K. and Toberman, A. DWP 2011, <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2011-2012/rrep738.pdf>

¹⁶ See Chapter 7 in Research Report No. 738: Evidence review of smart card schemes in Local Authorities, Wood, A. Dawner, K. and Toberman, A. DWP 2011, <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2011-2012/rrep738.pdf>

¹⁷ See Chapter 6 in Research Report No. 738: Evidence review of smart card schemes in Local Authorities, Wood, A. Dawner, K. and Toberman, A. DWP 2011, <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2011-2012/rrep738.pdf>

¹⁸ See Chapter 7 in Research Report No. 738: Evidence review of smart card schemes in Local Authorities, Wood, A. Dawner, K. and Toberman, A. DWP 2011, <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2011-2012/rrep738.pdf>

- **Quality of information:** LA feedback suggests that online applications tend to be more complete than paper applications, as applicants are required to complete all sections of the online form and applications cannot be completed until all information is provided.
- **Database of information:** the online application process required all applicants to provide an email address to which confirmations relating to the application could be sent. This email address could also be used to send information to service users about other LA services, specific activities taking place, renewal information for the smart card, etc. Online applicants can also easily identify areas where they would like to receive more information about services, and this could be sent to them efficiently via email or weblinks.
- **Identifying gaps in service:** online portals can enable LAs to gather information from applicants about service needs and identify areas of unmet need; and
- **Cost savings:** Area 1 has identified that the online portal could result in significant cost savings, particularly in relation to renewals of existing smart cards, if the number of people using the online process can be increased beyond the levels achieved in the pilot year. For savings in the long-term, Area 1 has '*estimated savings of over £30,000 if 10,000 cardholders renew online rather than visiting council offices*'.¹⁹ A significant part of the saving is based on an assessment by Area 1 that renewals require a 'lighter' authentication process, in terms of the interaction with the one-stop shop, as individuals have already proved their identity and eligibility in completing the original application process. However, these potential savings may need to also be offset by increases in service delivery costs if, for example, take-up increases or additional service needs are identified through the smart card application process.

5.5.2 Benefits through links between Local Authorities and key stakeholders

The process of developing the online portal can also lead to a much broader range of benefits being achieved by LAs, particularly in relation to their links with key stakeholders:

- **Improved communication between LA departments:** the project in Area 1 has fostered links between individuals in a range of different departments within the authority, including housing; transport; leisure; and library services, which have extended beyond the life of the pilot. The project has also encouraged links between health and LA services.
- **Better engagement with local community groups and voluntary sector:** although there were implementation difficulties within Area 2, the project enabled valuable relationships to be developed with a number of relevant groups/individuals that the LA intends to maintain, e.g. Age UK, over 60s' clubs and community event co-ordinators. The project also provided a new way for volunteers to engage with the LA, e.g. volunteers operating the helpline for card applicants.
- **Increased understanding of needs of service users:** through the focus group established to support the development of the online portal as part of the pilot in Area 1, the Local Authority developed a much better understanding of the needs of service users, particularly in relation to the types of activities they want to access and the barriers to access, e.g. opening times and access to transport.

¹⁹ Area 1 Smart card Project Closure Report, August 2011.

5.5.3 Benefits to service users

The data from Area 1 show that there were a number of important benefits to service users:

- **Faster access:** online applicants ‘receive their cards (on average) two days earlier than applications made in person’²⁰;
- **Easy access:** feedback from service users was ‘very positive’²¹;
- **Renewal process should be straightforward:** having completed online applications, it should be a relatively simple process to renew smart cards using the online portal and this would be the preferred route for the majority of those users who applied online;
- **New sources of support:** the targeted support provided in libraries has proved very popular. Libraries have been more convenient locations for applications than the usual in-person service at the council’s offices. Service users have also been able to obtain information from housing managers and bus information centres; and
- **More information about activities:** the online portal has also provided an opportunity for information about leisure activities, in particular, to be provided to users through routes such as e-newsletters.

5.5.4 Wider economic benefits of increased participation

The local pilots both set objectives in relation to increasing participation in leisure and other activities for older people. Although neither pilot was able to demonstrate a significant impact on participation through the 12-month life of the pilot, evidence from other sources shows that increasing participation, particularly among the 60+ plus population, can have important economic benefits, for example:

- People who are physically active reduce their risk of developing major chronic diseases by up to 50 per cent and the risk of premature death by between 20 and 30 per cent²². However, ‘only 17 per cent of men and 13 per cent of women between the ages of 65 and 74 meet the Chief Medical Officer’s recommendations for physical activity of 30 minutes on five or more days a week...this drops to eight per cent and three per cent of men and women respectively over the age of 75’²³.
- Falls can be a significant risk of physical inactivity in older people, particularly associated with chronic diseases and physical frailty. Data from Scotland suggest that the average cost following a fall-related hip fracture is £10,000, covering hospital care and subsequent community or institutional support²⁴.

²⁰ Area 1 Smart card Project Closure Report, August 2011.

²¹ *ibid.*

²² Be Active Be Healthy: A plan for getting the nation moving, HM Government (2009) reported in *Building a Society for All Ages*, HM Government (2009) (<http://www.hmg.gov.uk/media/33830/fullreport.pdf>)

²³ Data from the Health Survey for England reported in Be Active Be Healthy: A plan for getting the nation moving, HM Government (2009) (http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/documents/digitalasset/dh_094359.pdf)

²⁴ Active for Later Life, Health Scotland (2007) (<http://www.healthscotland.com/uploads/documents/4448-ActiveForLaterLife.pdf>)

- Falls are responsible for ‘over 2 million hospital bed days and 40 per cent of admissions to nursing homes, costing £1.7 billion a year’²⁵.
- UK and international evidence from 2006 estimated that ‘physical inactivity costs between €220 and €440 per person per year’ (roughly equivalent to £150 to £300 per year in 2006)²⁶.
- Data from 2006 from the Department of Health estimated that the annual cost to the NHS of physical inactivity was more than £700 million across five main disease groups, which is equivalent to £1.5 million per 100,000 people²⁷.

5.6 Lessons learned and recommendations

This section summarises the key lessons learned from Active at 60 and other research relating to smart cards, in relation to costs and investment, which LAs are likely to find most useful in taking forward projects involving smart cards and online application and renewal processes.

5.6.1 Investment

Introducing online registration requires upfront investment for: project management; hardware and software; user engagement; developing the web portal; acquiring necessary licences; and establishing processes for identity checks. The most significant costs are likely to relate to project management, hardware and software investment and user engagement.

Ongoing costs for the online registration process are primarily related to licences and support elements, i.e. staffing costs for helpdesks. Area 1 identified that the cost of each identity check for a new application was £1.50, reducing to £0.30 for renewals.

Authorities need to carefully consider their investment in smart card readers and associated technology. If smart cards are to be used for a range of services, activities and opportunities for older people, they may require a large number of readers/terminals and this will be one of the largest elements of upfront investment.

5.6.2 Balancing cost savings versus increased uptake of services

There can be cost savings relative to application processes for LAs if they are able to maximise the number of service users making use of the online registration processes, particularly in relation to renewals procedures for existing card holders, and also extending to other services, e.g. transport concessions for young people. However, there may be an impact on activity levels with an associated cost for LAs, if smart cards are being used to encourage increased participation or access to entitlements.

²⁵ Population-based interventions for the prevention of fall-related injuries in older people in Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, Issue 1, McClure, R. *et al.* (2005) reported in *Be Active Be Healthy: A plan for getting the nation moving*, HM Government (2009) (http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/documents/digitalasset/dh_094359.pdf)

²⁶ Promoting Physical Activity and Active Living in Urban Environments, World Health Organization Europe 2006 (http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/98424/E89498.pdf)

²⁷ Detailed local area costs of physical inactivity by disease category, Department of Health 2006, (http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/documents/digitalasset/dh_105888.pdf)

5.6.3 Project management

Engaging with services users, community groups and the voluntary sector for all aspects of design and implementation requires significant time input from the LA to be fully effective – this needs to be factored into projected budgets and project planning.

5.6.4 Communications

Authorities may need to consider the many low cost communication routes which can be accessed to raise the profile of online registration processes and other activities as part of the smart card development (particularly using email addresses collected via smart card applications), rather than relying on traditional more expensive communication options, such as conventional mail shots, brochures and radio advertising. Authorities also need to consider the target audience for the smart card scheme, e.g. for transport cards for young people, social media may be more appropriate communication channels²⁸.

Valuable lessons have been learned from the implementation processes and outcomes. Other LAs are also already adopting some of the ideas as part of the replication aims of the pilots, e.g. the ideas behind the online portal developed by Area 1 are already being used by two other authorities in implementing their own online application schemes.

²⁸ Useful guidance can be found from a number of sources, e.g. Listen, Participate, Transform: A social media framework for local government (June 2010) (<http://www.youngfoundation.org/listen-participate-transform-june-2010>) and Connected councillors: a guide to using social media to support local leadership, A report by the Improvement and Development Agency (http://socialmedia.21st.cc/wp-content/uploads/connected_councillors.pdf)

6 Key findings and recommendations

The key findings from the evaluation of the Local at 60 Active pilot projects are set out in two main sections, and explore the policy issues relating to the smart card and engaging older people.

6.1 Older people's activities

The evidence about the value of social engagement and physical activity is powerful. The primary data gathered in this evaluation support this evidence base. Older people talked about the importance of keeping active both in mind and body.

However, there were some interesting issues highlighted which could be useful for policy and decision makers. The notion of 'being old' was not always comfortable for people to accept. This was illustrated firstly in terms of participants' responses to becoming eligible for the concessionary travel card. Although a source of humour for some, with jokes about being 'old enough for the bus pass' mentioned, these attitudes were founded on an underlying negative view about ageing. These negative views could also be seen in the way people talked about different types of activities. There was an element of stigma for some people associated with 'organised' activities specifically aimed at 'older people' as they did not feel old and did not see themselves as requiring the help of others to organise their social lives.

The way in which older people were represented in information materials was also important in terms of affecting subsequent take up of activities. Photographs of 'older' people could be helpful in engaging those individuals who associated themselves with the image in the photograph, but of course, for those who saw themselves either as younger or older; fitter or less fit and so on, the photographs could act as a disincentive to participation. This was evident in the responses of some participants to the pilots being named 'Active at 60'. For one participant, he did not think the pilot applied to him as he was 80 years old. Another participant spoke of already being active at 60; therefore he too did not feel that the pilot was relevant for him.

This highlights the fact that the over 60 age bracket is diverse and covers a wide spectrum of the population, from people working; fully independent with wide social and family support on the one hand, to isolated and vulnerable groups on the other. There was a danger that by targeting activities specifically by age, and by encompassing such a large potential age range, it could result in alienating those who saw themselves in some way as not a part of the target group. However, it is also the case that there are a range of life events that this age group are likely to encounter through the ageing process, therefore providing information at different points in time could be very important to catch people at a time of transition when they may be open to new activities or opportunities.

6.2 Smart cards

The Active at 60 Local pilots raised a number of important questions about the role and future of the smart card. An opportunity for the introduction of smart cards into Local Authorities (LAs) was provided by the Department for Transport's (DfT) requirement that concessionary travel cards must comply with the technical specification set by the Integrated Transport Smart card Organisation

(ITSO). However, only a handful of authorities have invested in the technical infrastructure required to operate a fully smart system (i.e. card readers and appropriate links to card management systems). Given the current economic climate, it is unlikely that authorities without the smart card capability will be in a position to change this, particularly as the business case for the smart card model per se is weak²⁹. Therefore, the learning from the Active at 60 Local pilots about the use of smart cards specifically is likely to be relevant only to those authorities who already have smart cards in operation.

However, what the pilot project in Area 1 demonstrated successfully was the feasibility and value of introducing an online portal for registration (in this case for a smart card). Service users, either independently or with support from families, carers, or LA support mechanisms, were able to navigate both the application and the online identity checking processes. As well as the cost savings associated with a more efficient application system, estimated at being 'over £30,000 if 10,000 card holders renew online rather than visiting council offices'³⁰, other benefits were identified.

Firstly, it meant that the LA obtained e-mail addresses for the online applicants. This was viewed as being extremely important for the purposes of communication and marketing, particularly given the current financial austerity. Secondly, applicants indicated areas of interest they would like to receive more information about, therefore providing the opportunity for targeted communications. Although it was too early in the lifetime of the online portal to be able to comment on whether this would have an impact on increasing activity levels among the older population, the potential is certainly there.

While some very innovative and creative smart card applications have been created in a range of LAs³¹, this project identified significant barriers to increasing smart card usage. Awareness levels about the 'smart' nature of the cards were low. Within the urban area, older people saw the smart card primarily as a bus pass, particularly given that the library and leisure centre could be accessed without the smart card with a separate card.

A recurrent question during the evaluation was exactly how the smart card would increase levels of activity. Without meaningful incentives for older people, the smart card was widely seen as unable to leverage and motivate engagement. Financial incentives were explicitly mentioned in this regard.

There were discounts associated with the smart cards in both pilot areas. However, in the urban area, they were not exclusive to the smart card and could be accessed by an older person in the leisure centre if they had a separate leisure card. In the rural area, the discounts available (for example, five per cent) in the local shops were not viewed as being valuable enough to warrant a specific journey to collect them.

This highlights a fundamental tension with the smart card system being operated by LAs. By virtue of the fact that they are focused on small regions, this limits the scope of their potential scope and value. The international evidence review of smart cards³² highlights a number of smart card schemes from around the world which predominantly operate on a national level, for example, the National Belgium digital IC Card (Belpic); the Octopus card in Hong Kong or the ID card in China. For individual LAs to set up and manage smart card systems with sufficient incentive to impact on older people's motivations to participate in physical activity and community engagement would be highly challenging and expensive.

²⁹ National Smart card Project, April 2004, Business Models, Southampton City Council.

³⁰ Area 1 Smart card Project Closure Report, August 2011.

³¹ Research Report No. 738: Evidence review of smart card schemes in Local Authorities, A. Wood, K. Dawner and A. Toberman, DWP 2011, <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/reports2011-2012/rrep738.pdf>

³² Internal DWP paper, *International evidence – use of smart cards*.

The DfT has demonstrated that, with the support of legislation, the introduction of national smart cards is feasible, but their use remains relatively limited. There is undoubtedly the potential for LAs to make use of the burgeoning technological advances being made, as the online registration portal in this pilot has demonstrated. The online application portal could be extended to include other services, such as transport concessions for young people; 'Blue Badge' schemes for disabled residents; LA leisure services and library services; and payment schemes for LA services.

While this pilot has highlighted the challenges of using a smart card to increase levels of community engagement and physical activity without significant incentives, there is no doubting the value and importance ascribed by older people themselves to staying fit and active both in mind and body.

Appendix A

Partner and stakeholder topic guide

P3054 Active at 60

Topic Guide – Local Authority and partners

FINAL 12.01.11

Research aims are to:

- evaluate the Active at 60 Local projects - aim to leverage interest and uptake in a range of community and leisure activities in xxx City Council among over 60s through the use of a smart card and technological and partnership learning from xxx District Council;
- explore the implementation process (political, technical and financial) through data analysis and qualitative interviews with Local Authorities and partners;
- explore the views and experiences of Active at 60 service users in xxx through qualitative interviews with service users and a telephone questionnaire;
- drawing on findings from the above activities, to develop and explore the business case for such schemes and technological developments.

Guidance for interpretation and use of the topic guide: The following guide does not contain pre-set questions but rather lists the key themes and sub-themes to be explored with each participant. It does not include follow-up questions like ‘why’, ‘when’, ‘how’, etc. as respondents’ contributions will be fully explored throughout in order to understand how and why views and experiences have arisen. The order in which issues are addressed and the amount of time spent on different themes will vary between interviews.

Due to the different roles of participants this topic guide is aimed to function in such a way as to cover the range of roles that could be involved in the interviews.

1. Introduction and background

Introduction

- Introduce self and NatCen.
- Introduce evaluation and reiterate independence of NatCen from DWP.
- Clarify purpose of research.
- Discuss confidentiality and anonymity, proposed handling of any ‘sensitive’ comments and scope for ‘off the record’ comments.
- Voluntary nature of interview/specific questions.
- Use of audio-recorder & data storage.

- Length of interview.
- Any questions.

Background

- Role of participant.
- Nature of involvement with Active at 60 project (e.g. part of core project team; provides support; partner etc.).
- Overview of project aims and remit.

2. Set up

- Development of project concept:
 - how bid was developed;
 - decision making process around project components;
 - process of gaining LA backing for pilot.

Technical process

- Explanation of technical infrastructure:
 - core components such as card management system and card readers;
 - online registration product and replication in other authorities;
 - licences versus ownership of products;
 - data handling and reporting including security.
- Discuss process of procurement/development and key drivers including good practice and barriers.
- Establish relationship of operating company with LA.
- Integration with corporate IT systems and those of other departments within the authority.
- Fit of technical infrastructure within the ‘corporate’ IT strategy and any complexities this causes.
- Timescales and any timing issues.
- Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) issues.

Development and partnerships

- Explore the process for developing ‘buy-in’ from services/partners and timing of this.
- Facilitators and barriers to buy-in, with a focus on the services’/partners’ perspectives (discuss each service/element separately).
- Implications where unable to get buy-in in each case and what could be done to facilitate this in the future.
- Use of volunteers to deliver service.

Communications with older people

- Overview of how the scheme was marketed/communicated to older people

- Views on effectiveness of different forms of communication.
- Implications of awareness levels for realising potential benefits.

Evaluation

- How internal evaluation was used including additional benefits for the LA for other business areas.

3. Costs and savings

Costs

- Details of project funding: DWP and other sources current and previous, including any costs for older people.
- Details of project costs and breakdown by individual components.
- Split of costs between revenue and capital expenditure.
- Extent to which costs have remained within budget/overspent and reasons for variation.
- Any unexpected costs that have arisen.
- What are the financial implications of continuing the project year on year and views of the project's financial sustainability.
- Can unit costs for the scheme be derived, e.g. based upon demand levels and to what extent can these be directly attributed to the scheme's existence?
- Views of project's financial sustainability.

Efficiency savings

- Explore participant's views of key efficiency benefits of project.

Prompt for:

Application process

- Integration of different services/elements within one application (detailing different types of service that can be applied for).
- Capacity and mechanism for additional services to be added.
- Changes to processes for ID authentication, change of address (xxx only).
- Estimation of the transaction costs that are/could be, saved:
 - If not ask the respondent to make a rough estimate of some sort, e.g. a per cent saving/level of employee/number of days work saved; saving physical space.
- Where single application process hasn't been possible, explore what the barriers have been

Reducing fraud/increasing security

- Explore how project provides protection against fraud and/or additional security (xx only).
- Explore what level of fraud is, or might be, avoided as a result of the card (xx only).
- Additional scope for the card be used for this function – and barriers, if any, to this.

More efficient service transactions

- Understanding of whether the project allows for more efficient transactions (e.g. swiping in; e-payment)
- Where efficiencies are identified, clarify:
 - process before;
 - in what way/to what degree the smart-card increases efficiency.
- Any evidence of saved staff time – if so, what is it being spent on and is this cashable or just being used to undertake other activities?
- If smart card is not being used to for more efficient transactions, explore reasons why not

Cost elimination

- Establish whether the card has led to removal of any processes (and associated costs).
- If so, explore savings made and relative costs of achieving the same aims using smart-card processes.

Increased business

- Explore any ways in which the project has resulted in extra cash income (in fees or charges) or increased 'business'.
- Explore any other areas of prospective cash savings.
- Explore participant's view of project's financial sustainability.

4. Benefits

- Explore participant's views of key benefits for older people of project.

Prompt for:

Practical benefits

Which of the following benefits might the respondent expect the user to experience (full explanation of why/how).

2. being able to use card for ID.
 3. being able to apply on line (xx only).
 4. able to simply 'swipe in' to services (xx only).
 5. use of the website for information.
 6. ease of signing up for services.
 7. sense of belonging to a community.
 8. discounts in commercial outlets (and trader loyalty xx only).
 9. any other possible efficiency or convenience benefits.
- If these have not been realised what needs to change for these to be achieved?

Activity and engagement benefits

The success criteria relating to the extent of activity and engagement are:

- increasing the number of older people involved in the scheme (reach);
- increased take up in specific service offerings (take up);
- increasing frequency of older people using services (activity);
- ease of accessibility (customer satisfaction).

NB. the other success criterion is efficiency gains for the authority which has been explored in the above section

- Clarify whether respondent sees these as a part of the project's aims. If not, why not

As they are the stated project success criteria, if these are not immediate aims, explore how the achievements of the project could contribute towards these aims in the longer term.

10. Reach

- Explore who has been reached as result of project and how.
- Explore use of outreach, activities in remote areas, online registration (xxx only).

11. Take-up

- Explore additional service take-up as result of project and how this has happened.
- If not, why not and views of what would be needed to achieve greater take-up.

12. Frequency

- Evidence of older people using services more often and details of who these people are and how this has been achieved.
- If not, why not and views of what would be needed to achieve greater take-up.

13. Accessibility

- Identify ways in which services have become more accessible.
- Explore views of the limitations (technical etc) on achieving greater ease of access for older people.
- Views of the value this has for people over 60.

Other benefits

- Explore any potential benefits of the project which have not yet been discussed, for:
 - the LA;
 - each of the participating services/partners;
 - older people.

5. Conclusion

Reflections and key messages (if time):

- Views on project: strengths/weaknesses and ways of addressing these.

- Facilitators and barriers to achieving impact: how could these be addressed in future work.
- Areas for improvement (detail).
- Views of the role of the smart-card in future delivery of services (generally).
- Views of potential for smart-card as way of increasing levels of activity among over 60s.
- Key lessons learned; advice to another LA exploring set up of smart-card system.

Next steps

- Any questions.
- Reassure confidentiality, arrangements for handling any ‘sensitive’ comments.
- Thank them for their time.
- Outputs and feedback.

Appendix B

Approach letter

May 2011

Dear Sir/Madam

[Local Authority] currently carry out the Active at 60 project on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

As part of the project the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) will be contacting [Local Authority] residents who hold a smart card/concessionary bus pass to ask some questions about the Active at 60 project on behalf of DWP.

The Active at 60 initiative uses the smart card/concessionary bus pass. The project is aimed at encouraging people over 60 to get more involved in their local community and to take part in local social, community and physical activities.

It doesn't matter how much or how little you use your smart card/concessionary bus pass, NatCen are still interested in finding out about your views and experiences. They also want to talk to you about the kinds of physical, social and community activities you participate in.

NatCen is the UK's leading independent social policy research institute and they carry out high quality research and analysis to inform government policy.

In order to carry out this research, NatCen will be talking to people in [Local Authority]. This letter has been issued to you by [Local Authority] as NatCen will be processing data on our behalf and we are writing to you in the hope that you would be interested in taking part in the study. If you did take part, one of the NatCen research team would carry out a face to face interview with you at a time and place convenient to you (for example, in your home). The interview would take about an hour and all participants will receive a £20 gift voucher as a thank you for taking part.

It is important to emphasise that taking part is voluntary – you do not have to do this. If you do not want to take part, please contact us providing your name and telling us that you do not want to be contacted about the Active at 60 research on [telephone number]. You can also e-mail on [e-mail address] or write to [Local Authority address]. Please do this before 31st May 2011. If you tell us you don't want to be contacted, [Local Authority] will not give NatCen your telephone number or address and you will not be contacted about the research again.

If you do not opt out, a researcher may call you to tell you more about the study and to see if you would be interested in taking part. You do not have to agree and, even if you say you would like to take part, you are free to opt out of the research at any time.

If you do take part, everything discussed in the interview will be treated in the strictest confidence in accordance with the Data Protection Act and your participation will remain anonymous. Taking part in this research will not affect any dealings you may have with [Local Authority] or DWP now or in the future.

NatCen will ask your permission to digitally record the interview so that they have a detailed and accurate record of what you said. However, the sound recording will be stored securely at NatCen and only the research team will have access to it. The recording will be destroyed immediately after the publication of the research findings. The identity of those taking part will be known only to the research team and will not be shared with the DWP or [Local Authority].

Yours sincerely,

[Active at 60 team]

[Local Authority]

Appendix C

Older people topic guide

P3054 Active at 60

Topic Guide – older people

Final W2 150611

Research aims:

Research aims are to:

- evaluate the Active at 60 Local projects – aim to leverage interest and uptake in a range of community and leisure activities in xxx City Council among over 60s through the use of a smart card and technological and partnership learning from xxx District Council.
- explore the implementation process (political, technical and financial) through data analysis and qualitative interviews with Local Authorities and partners.
- explore the views and experiences of Active at 60 service users in xx through qualitative interviews with service users and a telephone questionnaire.
- drawing on findings from the above activities, to develop and explore the business case for such schemes and technological developments.

Guidance for interpretation and use of the topic guide: The following guide does not contain pre-set questions but rather lists the key themes and sub-themes to be explored with each participant. It does not include follow-up questions like ‘why’, ‘when’, ‘how’, etc. as respondents’ contributions will be fully explored throughout in order to understand how and why views and experiences have arisen. The order in which issues are addressed and the amount of time spent on different themes will vary between interviews.

Introduction

- Introduce self and NatCen.
- Introduce evaluation and purpose of research.
- Reiterate independence of NatCen from DWP.
- Discuss confidentiality and anonymity, as well as voluntary nature of interview/ specific questions.
- Use of audio-recorder and data security/storage.
- Length of interview.
- Any questions.

Background information

Explain that it is useful context for researcher to understand a bit about where participant lives and day to day activities (implications for travel needs and levels of physical activity):

- Living circumstances: household composition; any family locally.
- Day to day activities including work; hobbies/leisure activities; social and community activities; use of public services (e.g. libraries/health/social services); use of e-mail/internet.
- Overview of financial situation: weekly/monthly/annual income (participant preference); main sources of income; type of housing (home owner; renting etc).
- Main forms of travel (car owner; public transport user; mobility scooter; walking).

Awareness and understanding of smart card

Tell them that they were selected because they have a smart card.

- Explore participant's awareness of the smart card's uses (start openly then prompt):
 - services that can be accessed with the card (i.e. bus, library, leisure and other);
 - how participant found out about multifunctionality, i.e. did they know before getting it/find out on application/at a later date etc and explore for details.
- Establish the way participant heard about the card (start openly then prompt):
 - word of mouth;
 - seeking free bus pass (i.e. knowing about free travel for over 60s);
 - website;
 - leaflet;
 - magazine;
 - information at library/leisure centre etc.
- Views of information about the card – clarity, comprehensiveness, reach, accessibility, e.g. format
- Explore participant's views of card – level of interest/participation, usefulness, benefits, advantages/disadvantages.
- Establish whether participants have heard of Active at 60 project.

Signing up for the smart card

- Explore fully participant's reasons for applying for the card. Start openly then probe if necessary for:
 - participant wanting/needing bus pass (explore financial implications for participants);
 - ease of use;
 - specific benefits associated with Active at 60 project (promotional activities/open days at leisure centres);
 - word of mouth;
 - other;

- Explore participant’s decision making process:
 - easy/quick decision;
 - considerations weighed up.
- Application and receipt: walk through how this happened:
 - online or in person;
 - location (home, library, friend/family);
 - aspects which worked well/less well and why;
 - any problems encountered;
 - whether participant was assisted, if so full details;
 - preferred application process (including any not on offer).
- Explore participant’s views of application process – barriers/ facilitators; any surprises/suggestions for improvement.
- Receipt of card:
 - timeliness of process and receipt of card;
 - suitability of information received with the card especially for use of additional services.

Using the smart card

- Map fully participant’s use of card. Start openly then prompt if necessary:
 - travel (including community transport);
 - leisure centres: specific activities/any discounts; travel to and from;
 - active options;
 - libraries: purpose of visit; travel to and from;
 - community groups/activities (e.g. walking);
 - other.
- Starting to use the smart card:
 - any misunderstandings about how to use card;
 - any issues with card being read; if so, how resolved; role of staff;
 - initial views of practical aspect of using smart card (positive/negative);
 - information gaps about card usage.

Impact of smart card

- Explore fully participant’s involvement with each activity they use their smart card for:
 - length of time they’ve been involved in this activity;
 - if new activity: process of finding out/getting involved;
 - views of activity: likes/dislikes;

- Whether use of smart card has:
 - facilitated engagement: if so, how;
 - presented any barriers: if so, how.
- Explore whether smart card has facilitated participant starting an activity. If so, establish exactly how/in what way, e.g.:
 - ease of using the smart card per se;
 - due to associated publicity;
 - offer of free activity;
 - opportunity to socialise;
 - other.
- Explore whether the smart card has encouraged participant to do more of a particular activity. If so explore fully reasons why.
- Ask about perceived benefits and impacts of involvement with activities: ask openly then prompt:
 - physical activity;
 - socialising; confidence; sense of belonging/involvement in local community;
 - information and awareness of local community activity/involvement (detail in what way);
 - digital inclusion;
 - other.
- Factors affecting participant's ongoing involvement with activity: barriers/facilitators.

Social activity and engagement

Section 2 will have mapped participant's social activities and engagement. While Sections 5 and 6 explore those activities facilitated by the smart card, this section will complete the picture of participant's physical activity and engagement identifying facilitators, barriers and perceived benefits.

- Revisit activities listed at beginning of interview which participant does not use card for and explore fully participant's involvement with each activity:
 - length of time involved in this activity;
 - if new activity: process of finding out/ getting involved and reasons why;
 - views of activity: likes/dislikes.
- Ask about perceived benefits and impacts of these activities: ask openly then prompt:
 - increasing physical activity;
 - socialising; confidence;
 - sense of belonging/involvement in local community;
 - other.
- Factors affecting participant's ongoing involvement with activity: barriers/facilitators.

Suggestions for enhancing use of smart card

- Other social activities participant would like to get involved with; reasons why and potential for smart card to facilitate this.
- Participant's views of the smart card strengths and weaknesses.
- Explore potential for other uses of smart card and reasons why.
- Suggestions for ways existing project could be enhanced.
- Recommendations to other Local Authorities looking at starting a smart card scheme.

Next steps

- Any questions.
- Reassure confidentiality.
- Thank them for their time.
- Give voucher.
- Outputs and feedback.

Appendix D

Computer assisted telephone interview

Active at 60

P3054

Program Documentation

Telephone Interviewer Schedule

This 'paper version of the program' has been created to indicate the wording and content of the telephone interviewer questionnaire.

Interviewer schedule

- Instructions for the interviewer are given in capital letters, and questions the interviewer is to ask the respondent are given as normal text.
- Items which appear in the actual program but which have been excluded here for clarity include: Checks on the accuracy of answer codes in relation to each other; Prompts for back-coding during the edit process.

Participant background

HaveCd

Before we start the interview I'd just like to check, do you have a xx Card. Some people know this better as their free bus pass?

1. Yes.
2. No.

IF (HaveCd = No) THEN

AInElig

This research project is about xxx Cards or free bus pass. As you do not have a xxx Card/free bus pass, the interview ends here.Thank you very much for your time.

INTERVIEWER: END INTERVIEW.

IF (HaveCd = Yes) THEN

IntroA

I'd first like to start with a couple of background questions.

Age60

Can I just check, are you aged 60 or over?

3. Yes
4. No

IF (Age60 = yes) OR (Age60 = nonresponse) THEN

DOB

What is your date of birth?

INTERVIEWER: ENTER DATE IN FORMAT DD/MM/YYYY

IF (Age60 = No) OR (DOB = <60yrs) THEN

Inelig

The survey is aimed at people aged 60 or over and so unfortunately you're not eligible to take part. Thank you for taking the time to talk to me.

INTERVIEWER: END INTERVIEW.

Sex

INTERVIEWER: Code sex of the respondent.

1. Male
2. Female

Live0

And now I'd like to ask you a few questions about where you live. Can I just check, do you live with any other people?

5. Yes
6. No

If (Live0 = yes), then

WhoLiv

Who do you live with?

INTERVIEWER: DO NOT READ OUT

CODE ALL THAT APPLY

1. Spouse 'Husband/wife/partner'
2. Child 'Son/daughter including in laws and step children'
3. OthFam 'Other family member'
4. Friend 'Friend'
5. Other 'Other (include group setting such as retirement home or nursing home)'

ASK ALL

Tenure

Thinking about the place you live, do you ...

...RUNNING PROMPT....

CODE FIRST TO APPLY

1. Own 'Own it outright'
2. Mortgage 'Own it with a mortgage or loan'
3. Shared 'part own and part rent it (shared ownership)'
4. Rent 'rent it (with or without housing benefit)'
5. Rentfree 'live there rent free'

IF (Tenure = Rent), THEN

LL

Who is your landlord? Is it...

CODE FIRST TO APPLY

1. HousAss 'Housing association, housing cooperative, charitable trust, registered social landlord (including sheltered accommodation)'
2. Council 'Council (Local Authority)'
3. PrivLL 'Private landlord or letting agency'
4. EmpHH 'Employer of a household member'
5. FamFri 'Relative or friend of a household member'
6. Other 'Other'

ASK ALL

Car

Do you have use of a car or van when you need one (either as a passenger or driver)?

1. YAll 'Yes, all of the time'
2. YSome 'Yes, some of the time'
3. No 'No, not at all'

IWork

Can I just check, are you currently

...READ OUT....

1. Empl 'In paid employment, including self employed, or'
2. Retire 'Retired from work'

3. Vol 'SPONTANEOUS ONLY - In voluntary employment'
4. Benf 'Not working or retired, in receipt of benefit, e.g. incapacity benefit'

If (IWork = Empl OR Vol) THEN

WrkHrs

And is that...READ OUT

1. FTime 'Full-time (30 hours or more per week)'
2. PTime 'Part-time (up to 29 hours per week)'
3. CTime 'Casual hours (no fixed work pattern)'

IF (Tenure = Own OR Rent free) AND (LivO = No) THEN

HHincSO

There is lots of interest about how health and income may be related. We would like to get some idea of your household's income. Thinking about money from all sources including any benefits you may receive, could you tell me whether your household income is more or less than £124 per week?

INTERVIEWER IF NECESSARY: That's £537 per month or £6,448 per year?

1. More
2. Less
3. Don't know
4. Refused

IF (Tenure = Own OR Rent free) AND (WhoLiv = Spouse) THEN

HHincCO

There is lots of interest about how health and income may be related. We would like to get some idea of your household's income. Thinking about money from all sources including any benefits you may receive, could you tell me whether your household income is more or less than £214 per week?

INTERVIEWER IF NECESSARY: That's £927 per month or £11,128 per year?

1. More
2. Less
3. Don't know
4. Refused

IF (Tenure = Own OR Shared OR Rent OR Rent free) AND (LivO = no) THEN

HHincSR

There is lots of interest about how health and income may be related. We would like to get some idea of your household's income. Thinking about money from all sources including any benefits you may receive, after you've paid for your rent or mortgage, could you tell me whether your household income is more or less than £124 per week?

INTERVIEWER IF NECESSARY: That's £537 per month or £6,448 per year?

1. More
2. Less
3. Don't know
4. Refused

IF (Tenure = Own OR Shared OR Rent OR Rent free) AND (WhoLiv = Spouse) THEN

HHincCR

There is lots of interest about how health and income may be related. We would like to get some idea of your household's income. Thinking about money from all sources including any benefits you may receive, after you've paid for your rent or mortgage, could you tell me whether your household income is more or less than £214 per week.

INTERVIEWER IF NECESSARY: That's £927 per month or £11,128 per year?

1. More
2. Less
3. Don't know
4. Refused

ASK ALL

GenHlth

How is your health in general? Would you say it was...READ OUT

1. VGood 'Very good'
2. Good 'Good'
3. Fair 'Fair'
4. Bad 'Bad, or'
5. VBad 'very bad?'

Lstill

Do you have any long-standing illness, disability or infirmity? By long-standing I mean anything that has troubled you over a period of time or that is likely to affect you over a period of time?

1. Yes
2. No

IF (Lstill = yes) then

Limit

Does the illness or disability limit your activities in any way?

1. Yes
2. No

ASK ALL

TeleFri

And thinking about the last month, how often did you speak to family, relatives or friends over the telephone? Would you say it was...READ OUT

1. Most 'Most days'
2. FewW 'A few days a week'
3. FewM 'A few days a month'
4. NoneM 'or not at all in the last month'
5. Never 'SPONTANEOUS ONLY - Never speak to them on the telephone'

SeeFri

And still thinking about the last month, how often did you see family, relatives or friends? Would you say it was...READ OUT

1. Most 'Most days'
2. FewW 'A few days a week'
3. FewM 'A few days a month'
4. NoneM 'or not at all in the last month'
5. Never 'SPONTANEOUS ONLY - Never speak to them on the telephone'

WriFri

And still thinking about the last month, how often did you send a letter or email to, or receive one from, family, relatives or friends? Would you say it was...READ OUT

1. Most 'Most days'
2. FewW 'A few days a week'
3. FewM 'A few days a month'
4. NoneM 'or not at all in the last month'
5. Never 'SPONTANEOUS ONLY - Never speak to them on the telephone'

Application process

ASK ALL

HRSCC

The following questions are about applying for your xxx Card.

How did you hear about the xxx Card?

INTERVIEWER: DO NOT READ OUT LOUD

INTERVIEWER: CODE ALL APPLY

PROMPT: Any other ways?

1. WrdMth 'Word of mouth, including friends and family'
2. CouMag 'Council magazine/City View magazine'
3. CouWeb 'Council website'
4. CouPub 'Other Council publicity, e.g. poster on bus or leaflet'
5. Library 'At library'
6. Paper 'Newspaper'
7. GP 'GP or GP exercise referral system'
8. GKnow 'General knowledge/Just know about it – spontaneous only'
9. CR 'Can't remember – spontaneous only'
10. Other 'Other'

IF (HRSCC = Other) THEN

HRSCCOT

Please specify how you heard about the xxx Card?

String [100]

ASK ALL

WhenApp

When did you apply for your xxx Card? Was it ...

....RUNNING PROMPT...

1. Les2yrs '...within the last year...'
2. Ovr2yrs '...before the last year (before 2010)...?'
3. Renewal 'SPONTANEOUS ONLY...didn't apply, received automatically in post as renewal.'

IF (WhenApp = Les2yrs OR Ovr2yrs) THEN

Elig

You can apply for a xxx card at the age of 60. Can I just check, did you apply for your card as soon as you were eligible?

1. Yes
2. No

IF (Elig = No) THEN

YDelay

What were the reasons for you not applying as soon as you were eligible?

INTERVIEWER: DO NOT READ OUT LOUD

CODE ALL THAT APPLY

1. Hadcar 'I had a car or my husband/wife/partner had a car'
2. Money 'Didn't want to claim free services when I didn't need them'
3. Stigma 'Didn't want to have a bus pass – age related negative feelings'
4. NoNeed 'Didn't need one (for other reason than had a car)'
5. Know 'Didn't know about the card/scheme'
6. Serv 'Didn't live near a bus route'
7. CR 'Can't remember'
8. Other 'Other reason'

IF (YDelay = Other) THEN

YDelayX

Please specify the other reason for not applying as soon as you were eligible?

String [255]

IF (WhenApp = Les2yrs OR Ovr2yrs) THEN

YApp

Why did you choose to apply for the xxx Card when you did?

INTERVIEWER: DO NOT READ OUT LOUD

CODE ALL THAT APPLY

1. Eligible 'Eligible/Entitled to it/Might as well'
2. Car 'Didn't have access to a car anymore'
3. Financial 'Financial reason, free travel/discounted services'
4. Lib 'Applied for library card'
5. Leisure 'Applied for council leisure card'
6. Bus 'Wanted a bus pass'
7. Other 'Other'

IF (Yapp = Other) THEN

YAppOth

Please specify reason for applying?

String [255]

IF (WhenApp = Les2yrs OR Ovr2yrs) THEN

HowApp

How did you apply for your xxx Card?

1. Online 'Downloaded form online and submitted online'
2. DLGate 'Downloaded form online and went to xxx'
3. DLlib 'Downloaded form online and went to library'
4. DLHO 'Downloaded form online and went to local housing office'
5. PerGate 'At the xxx/One stop shop'
6. PerHO 'At the local housing office'
7. PerLib 'At the library'
8. CR 'Can't remember'
9. DidntApp 'SPONTANEOUS ONLY – didn't apply, received automatically in post (renewal)'
10. Other 'Other'

IF (HowApp = Other) THEN

AppOth

Please specify

STRING [100]

IF (HowApp = Online OR DLGate OR DLib OR DLHO) THEN

OnlKno

How did you find out that you can apply online?

INTERVIEWER: DO NOT READ OUT LOUD

1. FamFri 'Family and Friends'
2. CouMag 'Council magazine/City View magazine'
3. CouWeb 'Council website'
4. CouPub 'Other Council publicity, e.g. poster on bus/leaflet'
5. Library 'At library'
6. Web 'Online search, e.g. google'
7. SSC 'Social services or Carer'
8. CR 'Can't remember – spontaneous only'
9. Other 'Other'

IF (OnlKno = Other) THEN

OnlKnOTH

Please specify....

STRING [100]

IF (HowApp = Online) THEN

OnlWhr

Where did you apply?

1. Home 'Home'
2. Library 'Library'
3. Café 'Internet café'
4. FamFri 'Family or friends house'
5. Not Present 'Someone else completed form for me – I was not present – spontaneous only'
6. Other 'Other'

IF (OnlWhr = Other) THEN

OnWhrOtH

Please specify

STRING [100]

IF (HowApp = Online) THEN

OnlConc

CODE ALL THAT APPLY

Did you have any concerns about applying online?

1. PersDa 'Yes, concerns about sharing Personal Data online'
2. Exper 'Yes, concerns about the online identity check'
3. Skills 'Yes, due to lack of IT skills/Not good with computers or internet'
4. Form 'Yes, concerned form not submitted properly'
5. None 'No concerns'
6. Other 'Other'

IF (OnlConc = Other) THEN

OnlConcO

What were these concerns?

STRING [255]

IF (WhenApp = Les2yrs OR Ovr2yrs) THEN

HlpApp

Did anyone help you when making the application?

1. Y 'Yes'
2. N 'No'

IF (HlpApp = Yes) THEN

WhoHlp

Who helped you?

1. FamFri 'Partner/Spouse/Family/Friend'
2. CouSt 'Council Staff member (not at the library)'
3. LibSt 'Library staff member'
4. SocWrk 'Social worker'
5. Carer 'Carer'
6. Other 'Other'

IF (WhoHlp = Other) THEN

WhoHlpO

Please specify who helped you.

String [100]

IF (WhenApp = Les2yrs OR Ovr2yrs) THEN

Easapp

How did you find the application process overall? Was it...

INTERVIEWER: CODE 'DON'T KNOW' IF RESPONDENT CANNOT SAY.

1. VEas 'Very Easy'
2. QEas 'Quite Easy'
3. Neither 'Neither easy nor difficult'
4. QDiff 'Quite difficult'
5. VDiff 'Very difficult'
6. DK 'Don't know/can't say – spontaneous only'

IF (Easapp = QDiff OR VDiff) THEN

EasappY

Please specify what was difficult about the application process.

INTERVIEWER: please probe for detailed answers.

String [255]

ASK ALL

Renew

How would you expect to renew your card when it comes up for expiry?

INTERVIEWER: DO NOT READ OUT LOUD.

INTERVIEWER: CODE 'DON'T KNOW' IF RESPONDENT UNSURE.

1. Online 'Download form online and submit online'
2. DLGate 'Download form online and take to Gateway'
3. DLLib 'Download form online and take to library'
4. DLHO 'Download form online and take to local housing office'
5. PerGate 'At the xxx/One stop shop'
6. PerHO 'At the local housing office'
7. PerLib 'At the library'
8. NIntend 'Don't intend to renew'
9. DKExp 'Spontaneous – Didn't know would have to renew'
10. DK 'Spontaneous – Don't know/ unsure'
11. Other 'Other'

IF (Renew = Other) THEN

RenewO

Please specify how else you intend to renew your card.

String [255]

Using the xxx Card

ASK ALL

IntroC

The next set of questions are about how you use your xxx Card.

HrdA60

Can I just check, have you heard of Active at 60?

1. Yes
- 2 No

IF (HrdA60 = Yes) THEN

HwHrdA60

How did you hear about Active at 60?

DO NOT READ OUT LOUD

CODE ALL THAT APPLY

1. FamFri 'Family and friends'
2. CouMag 'Council magazine/City magazine'
3. Paper 'Newspaper'
4. CouWeb 'Council website'
5. CouPub 'Other Council publicity, including poster on bus/leaflet'
6. Lib 'At the library'
7. Leisure 'At the Leisure centre'
8. GPSSC 'GP or [GP exercise referral scheme]'
9. Surv 'Letter about this survey'
10. DKCR 'Don't know /Can't remember'
11. Mail 'Letter or email from the council'
12. Other 'Other'

IF (HwHrdA60 = Other) THEN

HRSCCOT

Please specify how you heard about Active at 60?

String [100]

ASK ALL

WhiAct

Now thinking again just about your xxx Card. What do you use your card for? I'll read out some options and I'd like you to tell me whether you have used your card for this.

Please include all services or activities you have used your xxx Card for, whether you use them regularly or just as a one-off.

INTERVIEWER: READ ALL OPTIONS OUT LOUD

INTERVIEWER: CODE ALL THAT APPLY

INTERVIEWER: PLEASE CHECK RESPONDENT HAS PARTICIPATED IN ACTIVITY USING THE SMARTCITIES CARD.

1. Bus 'Bus'
2. Library 'Library'
3. LeiSwim 'Council leisure centre (including the gym) or for Swimming'
4. ActO 'GP exercise referral scheme'
5. Golf 'Golf course at sports club'
6. Organ 'Organ Donor Registration'
7. ID 'Obtain senior citizen discounts'
8. Boat 'Access to Boat Show'
9. Other 'Other'
10. None 'SPONTANEOUS - None'

IF (WhiAct = Other) THEN

WhiOth

Please specify which other activities you have used your xxx Card for?

String [100]

Detailed Bus questions

IF (WhiAct = Bus) THEN

WhtDoBus

I'm going to ask you some questions about your bus use now...

Firstly, what types of things do you use the bus for?

INTERVIEWER: CODE ALL THAT APPLY

Probe: What else?

1. Shop 'Shopping'
2. FamFri 'Visiting family/friends'
3. GP 'GP and Hospital visits'
4. Grp 'Going to groups or organised activities (e.g. luncheon club, church, Active Options exercise referral, the gym)'
5. Work 'Travel to work, including voluntary work'
6. Lib 'Going to the library'
7. DayT 'Holidays and day trips'
8. All 'SPONTANEOUS – All of these'
9. Other 'Other'

IF (WhtDoBus = Other) THEN

WhdoBuOT

Please specify which other activities you have used the bus for?

String [100]

IF (WhiAct = Bus) THEN

HowOftB

On average, how often do you use the bus (with your xxx Card)?

1. Daily 'Every day/most days'
2. Weekly 'Once or twice a week'
3. Monthly 'Once or twice a month'
4. Rarely 'Every couple of months'
5. VRare 'Once or twice in the last year'.

IF (WhiAct = Bus) THEN

ActBefB

Did you use the bus before you had your xxx Card?

1. Yes
2. No

IF (ActBefB = Yes) THEN

FreqActB

Since having your xxx Card do you use the bus...

...RUNNING PROMPT...

1. More 'More...'
2. Less 'Less...'
3. Same '...Or about the same as you did before?'

IF (WhiAct = Bus) THEN

YActNwB

What are the main reasons you use the bus?

INTERVIEWER: PLEASE NOTE THIS QUESTION IS ASKING WHY THEY CHOOSE TO USE THE BUS AND IS NOT ASKING ABOUT WHAT THEY USE THE BUS FOR.

INTERVIEWER: DO NOT READ OUT LOUD

CODE ALL APPLY

1. SCC 'because of xxx Card'
2. Time 'More time now/linked to retirement'
3. Cheap 'Financial – cheaper/no parking costs/free travel'
4. Health 'Improve health/relaxation'
5. Car 'No car access anymore'
6. Envir 'Better for the environment/"greener"'
7. Soc 'Improve Social contacts'
8. CRout 'Convenience/there is a bus route near me now'
9. Comm 'Supporting my community/local services – keep bus routes going'
10. Other 'Other'

IF (YActNwB = Other) THEN

YActNwBO

Please specify....

String [255]

Detailed questions for Leisure Centre

IF (WhiActLS = LeiSwim) THEN

WhatDoLS

I'm going to ask you some questions about using the leisure centre (swimming baths)...

What types of things do you do at the leisure centre (swimming baths)? Do you...

READ OUT LOUD...

CODE ALL THAT APPLY

1. Swim 'Swim'
2. Gym 'Use the gym'
3. Class 'Attend classes or groups'
4. Cafe 'Use the café'
5. Other 'Other'

IF (WhatDoLS = Other) THEN

WhtDoLSO

Please specify which other activities you do at the leisure centre (swimming baths)?

String [100]

IF (WhatDoLS = gym) THEN

WhtDoGym

What types of things do you use the gym for?

Interviewer: DO NOT READ OUT LOUD

Probe: What else?

1. Workout 'Individual workout'
2. PTrain 'Personal Trainer'
3. Classes 'Attend classes or groups'
4. AO 'GP referral exercise'
5. Other 'Other'

IF (WhtDoGym = Other) THEN

WhtDGymO

Please specify which other activities you do at the gym?

String [100]

IF (WhiAct = LeiSwim) THEN

HowOftLS

On average, how often do you go to the leisure centre (swimming baths) (with your xxx Card)?

1. Daily 'Every day/most days'
2. Weekly 'Once or twice a week'
3. Monthly 'Once or twice a month'
4. Rarely 'Just tried once or twice'

IF (WhiAct = LeiSwim) THEN

ActBefLS

Did you use the leisure centre (swimming baths) before you had your xxx Card?

1. Yes
2. No

IF (ActBefLS = Yes) THEN

FreqLS

Since having your xxx Card do you use the leisure centre (swimming baths)..

...RUNNING PROMPT...

1. More 'More...'
2. Less 'Less...'
3. Same '....Or about the same as you did before?'

IF (WhiAct = LeiSwim) THEN

YActNwLS

What are the main reasons you use the leisure centre (swimming baths) ?

Interviewer: Do not read out loud

CODE ALL APPLY

1. SCC 'because of xxx Card'
2. Time 'More time now/linked to retirement'
3. Cheap 'Financial - cheaper'
4. Health 'Improve health/feel happier/more relaxed/enjoy it'
5. Soc 'Improve Social contacts/meet other people'
6. AO 'Was referred by my GP'
7. Comm 'Supporting my community – making use of local services'
8. Learn 'Learn something new / keep mind active'
9. Other 'Other'

IF (YActNwLS = Other) THEN

YActNwLSO

Please specify....

String [255]

Detailed Library questions

IF (WhiAct = Library) THEN

WhtDoLib

I would now like to ask you some questions about the library.

What types of things do you use the library for?

Interviewer: probe all options

1. Book 'Loan of books and audio books'
2. DVD 'Loan of DVDs/CDs/games'
3. ReadRef 'Reading and reference'
4. Res 'Research – e.g. local history, family tree'
5. News 'Reading Newspapers'
6. Comp 'Computer and Internet use'
7. Club 'Attend clubs or groups'
8. Other 'Other'

IF (WhtDoLib = Other) THEN

WhdoLiOT

Please specify which other activities you have used the library for?

String [100]

IF (WhiAct = Library) THEN

HowOftLi

On average, how often do you go to the library (with your xxx Card)?

1. Daily 'Every day/most days'
2. Weekly 'Once or twice a week'
3. Monthly 'Once or twice a month'
4. Rarely 'Just tried once or twice'

IF (WhiAct = Library) THEN

ActBefLi

Did you use the library before you had your xxx Card?

1. Y 'Yes'
2. N 'No'

IF (ActBefLi = Yes) THEN

FreqLi

Since having your xxx Card do you use the library...

...RUNNING PROMPT...

1. More 'More...'
2. Less 'Less...'
3. Same '...Or about the same as you did before?'

ASK ALL

YActNwLi

What were the main reasons you use the library?

Interviewer: Do not read out loud

CODE ALL APPLY

1. SCC 'because of xxx Card'
2. Time 'More time now/linked to retirement'
3. Cheap 'Financial – cheaper than purchasing items'
4. Active 'Keep mind active – learn new things'
5. Online 'Computer or internet use – include classes'
6. Support 'Use the MacMillan support group/counselling service'
7. Social 'Meeting people, spend time with others, get out of house'
8. Quiet 'Enjoy the peace and quiet'
9. Local 'Support local services – keep libraries busy/open'
10. Conven 'Convenience – everything in one place'
11. WellB 'Mental health/well being/feeling happier/more relaxed'
12. Other 'Other'

IF (YActNwLi = Other) THEN

YActNwLiO

Please specify....

String [255]

ASK ALL

OutSout

Have you ever used your xxx Card outside xxx?

1. Yes
2. No

OthActs

Are there any other services or activities that you would like to have your xxx Card linked to?

3. Yes
4. No

IF (OthActs=Yes) THEN

Please specify other activities?

String [255]

ASK ALL

CrdInf

Where do you go to get information about your xxx Card?

INTERVIEWER: DO NOT READ OUT LOUD

CODE ALL APPLY

1. CoWeb 'Council website'
2. CoMag 'Council Magazine/City magazine'
3. Paper 'Newspaper'
4. CoPub 'Other council publicity, e.g. Posters/leaflets'
5. Lib 'Library'
6. Leisure 'Leisure centre'
7. GPSS 'GP or Social Services'
8. CardInf 'Information received with the card'
9. FamFri 'Family and friends'
10. None 'None of these, I don't access any information'
11. Other 'Other'

IF (CrdInf = Other) THEN

CrdInfOt

Please specify where you access information?

String [500]

ASK ALL

MorInf

How would you like to receive information about your xxx Card, in the future?

DO NOT READ OUT

CODE ALL APPLY

1. CoWeb 'More info on Council website'
2. CoMag 'Council Magazine/City magazine'
3. Paper 'Newspaper'
4. CoPub 'Other council publicity, e.g. Posters/leaflets'

5. Library 'At the library'
6. Leisure 'At the leisure centre'
7. GP 'GP surgery'
8. Post 'Information about the card in post'
9. Email 'Information by email'
10. Text 'Information by text message'
11. Other 'Other'

IF (Morinf = Other) THEN

MorinfOt

Please specify

String [100]

ASK ALL

OverExp

Overall, what has been your experience of using the card?

1. VG 'Very good'
2. FG 'Fairly good'
3. Neith 'Neither good nor poor'
4. FP 'Fairly poor'
5. VP 'Very poor'

IF (OverExp = FP OR VP) THEN

YOvExp

Why is that?

String [255]

ASK ALL

ExpDif

Overall, have you experienced any difficulties when using the card?

1. Yes
2. No

IF (ExpDif = Yes) THEN

ExpDif2

Please specify difficulties?

String [500]

ASK ALL

ExpBen

Overall, what benefits, if any, have you experienced through using the card?

Interviewer: Do not read out loud

CODE ALL APPLY

1. OneC 'One card instead of multiple cards'
2. Active 'Now more active'
3. Bus 'Free transport'
4. Social 'Met friends through activities'
5. WellB 'Mental health/Wellbeing/feel happier/quality of life'
6. Conf 'Confidence using new services'
7. ID 'Used as a form of ID'
8. Finan 'Saved money'
9. None 'No benefits experienced'
10. Other 'Other'

IF (ExpBen = Other) THEN

ExpBenOT

Please specify other benefits?

String [255]

Typical weekly activities

ASK ALL

IntroD

And now I'd like to ask you a few questions about other things you usually do, other than the activities you use your xxx Card for.

TypWeek

Thinking about things other than any paid work you do, what activities do you usually do in a typical week?

INTERVIEWER: PLEASE RECORD ALL ACTIVITIES.

1. Light 'Activities including reading, writing, crosswords, embroidery, knitting'
2. Gard 'Gardening'
3. Walk 'Walking, including dog walking'
4. House 'Housework (household duties, including DIY'

5. Shop 'Shopping'
6. Grand 'Grandchildren (caring or spending time with)'
7. Care 'Caring for family and friends (do not include grandchildren)'
8. Soc 'Socialising with family/friends (not caring)'
9. TV 'TV / computer/internet'
10. DaysO 'Days out (include national trust visits, theatre, galleries, cinema)'
11. Exer 'Exercise like swimming, gym, running'
12. Other 'Other'
13. None 'None'

IF (TypWeek = Other) Then

TypWeekO

Please specify typical activities.

String [255]

IF (TypWeek <>None) THEN

GrpAct

Do you do any of these activities as part of a group?

1. Yes
2. No

IF (GrpAct = Yes) THEN

Whoruns

And are any of these groups run by the local council?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know

Changes in activity level

ASK ALL

IntroE

Thank you for all the information you've given me so far. We're almost at the end of the survey now. To finish, I'd just like to ask you a couple of questions about your levels of physical activity overall.

LActB4

Thinking about the time before you got your xxx card, how much time did you spend doing light physical activity such as walking, cycling or light gardening? Was it...

1. Less 'Less than 2 hours per week'
2. Med '2-4 hours per week'
3. More 'More than 4 hours per week'

VActB4

And before you got your xxx card, how much time did you spend doing vigorous activity such as brisk walking, heavy gardening or exercise where you get sweaty or exhausted? Was it...

1. Atlea 'At least 2 hours per week'
2. Less 'Less than this or none at all'

LActAft

And thinking about nowadays, how much time do you spend doing light physical activity such as walking, cycling or light gardening? Is it...

1. Less 'Less than 2 hours per week'
2. Med '2-4 hours per week'
3. More 'More than 4 hours per week'

VActAft

And nowadays, how much time do you spend doing vigorous activity such as brisk walking, heavy gardening or exercise where you get sweaty or exhausted? Is it...

1. Atlea 'At least 2 hours per week'
2. Less 'Less than this or none at all'

End of survey

IntroF

Thank you for all the answers you've given to me. All of the information you have given to me is treated as strictly confidential and your answers will not be linked to your name or address. We have now reached the end of the interview.

Thank

Thank you very much for taking part in the survey.

[END]

Appendix E

Learning from the Area 1 smart card online registration project

Benefits and savings from online renewals

Background

The Area 1 project was primarily focussed on the registration of older people who had not previously had a smart card. It successfully demonstrated that a high percentage of citizens could be authenticated online without having to visit a Local Authority (LA) registration point with proofs of identification and address. It also demonstrated a good take up of around 30 per cent.

The project identified a range benefits for online registration:

- Making more services available online, enabling citizens and their families to access the council from their own home.
- Providing a '24/7' service to citizens.
- Using electronic authentication to prevent fraudulent applications.
- Providing a quicker service.
- Capturing high quality, validated data (including an email address).
- Engaging the customer to consider other services and activities.
- Building an electronic database with customer 'opt-in' to future marketing.

However, the 'bottom-line' is the cost and potential savings. Full online authentication gives the LA the highest degree of assurance that the applicant is entitled to the card, but comes at a cost (£1.50) and that is perceived to be high.

For some councils, including Area 1, analysis on the cost of a 'face-to-face' transaction shows that this is not the case. In fact, £1.50 represents a significant saving against the £4.00 dealing with the customer in person. However, for other authorities, the overhead of providing the customer services outlet (e.g. library or one-stop shop) is considered a 'sunk cost' and therefore any new channel is seen only as an additional charge.

Given the difficulty in accessing the circumstances for each local authority, it is impossible to present a 'one size fits all' business case for online registration for new applicants. However, the argument for card renewals is a simpler proposition.

Online renewal of concessionary smart cards

The English National Concessionary Transport Scheme (ENCTS) was introduced on a smart card platform in 2008. Typically cards were issued with an expiry date four or five years into the future and will soon come up for renewal.

The Area 1 project used the logic that someone renewing a card had already ‘proved’ their credentials and, given that the older persons entitlement is age and residency based, that renewal should entail a ‘lighter’ authentication process. Therefore, the check is on specific databases (moved away/deceased) to ensure against fraudulent applications. The cost of this service is £0.30 – £0.50, depending on volume.

For Area 1, the financial benefit of customer renewing online is a saving of £3.70. Together with the wider benefits listed above and the reduction of pressure at customer service outlets at a time when many cardholders are renewing, it makes for a compelling case.

Furthermore, working with other councils, it is apparent that the online renewals process can be ‘customised’ to suit different circumstances and procedures. For instance, where a council is confident that the database is of good quality, they may choose to write to all citizens asking them to renew. The receipt of the letter itself being a check of address, if the citizen is able to:

1. Go to the online registration renewals site.
2. Input their existing card number.
3. Confirm that personal details have not changed.

Then the council may opt not to carry out any additional authentication and a smaller transaction would be levied simply for processing online.

Where the cardholder’s details have changed, a check would be appropriate and they would be guided to providing further information. The process can be further enhanced by giving the citizen the option to update their photograph online.

Summary

An online renewals process presents a range of benefits to the council including greater accessibility for the customer, better quality data, anti-fraud measures and an opportunity for greater engagement in the future. However, with the prospect of over thirty per cent of citizens renewing online, it is the cost savings that make it a compelling proposition.

Appendix F

Early dissemination of learning from the Area 1 smart card online registration project

Background

Area 1 is working with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) on a project to get older citizens more active. Key to achieving this aim is the introduction of a new enrolment website to enable senior citizens to apply for and renew their bus passes online.

This new facility is the first in the country and enables applicants to apply for their card quickly and easily as they do not need to supply any documents or visit council venues. It also has an option for friends/family/carers to assist elderly citizens to apply for the card and can be used in outreach programmes to encourage ‘hard to reach’ citizens to sign up for entitlements.

Furthermore, the enrolment process seeks to promote local services and asks citizens to register interest in new activities. In Area 1 this covers sign-up for use of the pass as library membership, registration for organ donation and to access leisure venues and different leisure subscriptions, but also asks applicants which other services they might like in the future.

The Area 1 online registration product is also being replicated in one rural area and another urban area to ensure that it is suitable for general use.

The online portal is provided by a leading provider of smart card solutions, with the data checks being undertaken by a leading global information services company that is used widely by central and local government.

In addition to providing the applicant with a ‘no-hassle’ registration experience, there is considerable potential for cost savings from the removal of paper forms and visual checks. This is predicted to be most valuable when councils come into the cycle of renewing passes, which many will need to do in 2011 and 2012; and where economies of scale come into force as counties take over Travel Concession Authorities (TCA) responsibilities from district councils.

Fully authenticated online registration

The online registration is part of the Area 1 services website. It allows residents to apply online, either by themselves or with help from family, friends or carers. They complete a fully online application form and supply a suitable passport quality photograph electronically. Once received the form is submitted, electronically, for identity authentication. If the search (which is a light footprint search that does not affect credit scoring) provides a strong enough match, the application is approved and sent to Area 1. The photograph is checked, the file is transferred to the card management database and a card is produced and posted by staff.

Benefits and savings

Benefits to the citizen

- No requirement to attend in person.
- No requirement to produce personal documentation.
- No requirement to provide a physical photograph, with associated cost.
- No need for family members/friends/carers to attend a council office with the applicant in person.
- Area 1 customers who have applied for their bus pass online will receive their pass in average two days earlier than customers who have used a paper application. This saving is due to cutting out the internal postal way from the local housing offices and libraries to the back office.

Benefits to the Local Authority/TCA

There are well rehearsed financial benefits of reducing customer contact time. To illustrate the potential tangible benefits of introducing a fully authenticated online solution, a scenario for card renewal is shown at the end of this document.

Added value

The Area 1 scheme already includes other services accessible with the transport concession card, but for other schemes online registration could provide a channel for them to offer citizens, or at least ask for their interest in having, additional activities on cards, therefore:

- Promoting additional services.
- Ensuring a future means of contacting people electronically.
- Securing opt-in to future communication (marketing DB for participating services).

The project also encompasses an 'outreach' idea, where officers can take a mobile workstation (laptop with mobile coms and camera) to engage and enrol those people who are identified as 'harder to reach'.

Online authentication also offers higher protection against fraudulent applications.

Emerging lessons learned from project

The project in Area 1 has already identified important learning points, some which have resulted in system redesign.

1. Fully authenticated online registration is increasingly appropriate for those approaching pensionable age. These are people for whom computers and the internet are part of daily life.
2. Online authentication requires a level of confidence in the applicant's credentials that should be proportionate to the entitlement claimed. The initial levels were too high, leading to the number of rejections being greater than expected. This was rectified by reducing the level of check required while staying within the guidelines set out by HMG.

3. Some older people do not register highly for those data sources that will prove their age and residency. There is, therefore, a need for a secondary way to complete registration when an application is deferred, without requiring the completion of a full paper form and submission of a photograph. This is achieved by ensuring that the system stores the record and allows the applicant to print off their details on a pro-forma, which they take to the card issuer together with their proof of age and address. The card issuer validates the form and goes to the system administration console to 'Approve' the application manually.
4. 'Before you Apply' rules – the website needs to be clear what the expectation is, e.g. that applicants need to meet the criteria for entitlement and have an email address for confirmation mails/further communication online.
5. The system should perform a boundary check at the earliest opportunity in the process to ensure that the applicant is not applying to the wrong authority and therefore wasting their own time.
6. Applicants do not always manage their photos well, but often the photo is usable. Therefore, the system has been modified to include an administrator function to crop and perform quick minor 'fixes' (e.g. contrast, brightness/darkness) to the photograph.

Table F.1 Scenario based upon renewal of 30,000 transport concession cards for people of pensionable age

Activity	Existing arrangements	With online renewals	Potential savings	Quantifiable?	Estimated saving
Publicity	Affordable channels	Affordable channels, with promotion of online registration	Reduction in calls to contact centre	Yes, but difficult	Minimal
First citizen communication to contact centre (how do I renew my card?)	Operator response offering different methods of re-application including sending forms	Operator response offering different methods of re-application including sending forms Promotion of online registration	Postage – less paper forms sent out	Yes, more so if paper forms are no longer sent out (not dependent on online registration being available)	Minimal, unless combined with other policy changes
Application in person	One stop shop: - checks proof of ID - checks proof of address - checks photo, if applicable - takes photo, if required Back Office: - checks completed form - inputs data including photo (where applicable) - requests card	No interaction with One stop shop Back office: - checks photo quality and authorises card request	One stop shop interaction (less authentication check) Data check and correction	Yes – average One stop shop interaction estimated at £4 per interaction (absorbed cost) Yes – estimated (absorbed cost) per application is £1.50 (card printing not included)	30% of citizen renew online: 9,000 x £0.30 = £2,700 Saving: 9,000 x £3.70 = £33,300* Saving: 9,000 x £1.50 = £13,500**
Application by post	Not accepted in Area 1	No processing	Significant – the project will work with other authorities to try to establish an absorbed cost	Yes	TBC
Card production	No change	No change	-	-	-
Future renewal notices to those who have registered on line	No personal interaction	E-mail notification at minimal cost	Ensure citizens renew online	Yes, but difficult	Minimal, but identified benefit to citizen and card issuer

Notes:

*£3.70 is based on £4.00 less £0.30 for an online check.

**£1.50 is a general estimate of cost of the back office task (not generated by Area 1). Indicative information from other TCAs suggests that the combined front and back office tasks for the generation of new cards is in the cost range £5.00 to £8.50. However, renewal processes will vary and additional research is required to ensure that these figures are based on comparable tasks (i.e. that they are for the full cost of processing renewals, not including card production).

It is known that some TCAs are considering reducing overheads by automatic re-issuing Senior Citizen cards at the date of expiry. In this scenario, a data cleansing exercise will be required first, to identify those cardholders who have died or moved away. This would, therefore, be the comparable cost with a re-application process involving on-line registration.

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Active at 60 Local was a pilot initiative commissioned by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to identify the scope for utilising smart card technology to:

- deliver services more effectively to older people; and
- leverage increased levels of activity among older people.

The projects form part of the Government's response to address the challenges and opportunities of an ageing population.

The DWP commissioned the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) and LG Futures to carry out an evaluation of two Local Authority pilot areas during 2011. The evaluation used qualitative and quantitative methods to explore the implementation process and looked at best practice in smart card technology, using evidence to establish the business case for such schemes. The research also looked at the wider social benefits including increased access to services, information, activities and entitlements and increased levels of physical activity and community engagement.

If you would like to know more about DWP research, please contact:
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