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**Public perceptions of
identity cards**

Qualitative Research Report

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A. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

1. **Background**

The Home Office is planning to introduce a national identity cards scheme to help combat crime, immigration abuse and illegal working, identity fraud, organised crime and terrorism, and to enable easier access to public services. Initial research on the idea was conducted in 2002-2003, and consultation on draft legislation from April to July 2004.

This study was intended to explore the idea further and gauge response to more specific proposals for identity cards. The intention is that the cards would include basic personal information, some visible on the card and some stored on a chip on the card and/or on a national identity register. Biometric information (eg finger print or iris image) will also be stored on a chip in the card and on the identity register. Information on the identity register may be disclosed to the police and other organisations within certain controls.

For most UK citizens, the card could take the form of a biometric passport which would be upgraded as and when it comes up for renewal. The card could also take the form of a biometric driving licence or plain ID card for those without a passport or driving licence. Applications for ID cards will involve a personal visit to a dedicated office or mobile unit.

In the short to medium term ID cards will be voluntary, though anyone renewing a passport or driving licence will automatically receive an ID card, and foreign visitors will have to obtain a biometric residence permit; in the longer term they will become compulsory.

2. Research objectives

Qualitative research was commissioned to examine current public perceptions of ID cards, and specifically:

- anticipated benefits and drawbacks, for the individual on a day-to-day basis and for the country as a whole
- views on what information respondents would expect/wish to be held on the card, chip and database; and how frequently this information is expected to change
- reactions to the idea of biometric information being stored on the cards and the accompanying database
- any concerns about fingerprints or iris scans being used; and the prospect of biometric checks in ordinary use of the cards
- response to the requirement to make a personal visit and background checks when applying for an ID card, and reactions to an outline of the procedure involved
- preferences in terms of the application process (in person, online, through the post, over the telephone) and reactions to having biometric information recorded at various locations
- reactions to the proposals for passport/ID cards, driving licence/ID cards and plain ID cards for those who have neither a passport nor driving licence
- concerns about privacy and data sharing by organisations which would use information stored on the cards (e.g. the police, DVLA, Benefits Agency and others)
- the issue of whether it should be compulsory to own and produce cards if requested (but not to carry them)

- response to the proposed two stage process of making cards compulsory on renewal of existing documents, then eventually compulsory for all
- expectations around ordinary use of ID cards, and scenarios in which they would be most useful; comparison with current requirements to prove identity and documents used at the moment
- expectations around who might have difficulty registering for and using an identity card
- views on whether the government can deliver an effective and efficient ID card system
- expectations of the cost of the cards and responses to these
- expectations around who might run an ID card system – the Home Office, a dedicated arms length department and/or an ID cards ‘supremo’
- overall support for the idea, and motivations and barriers to acceptance

B. RESEARCH APPROACH

1. **Sample**

18 group discussions were conducted with members of the public in the UK, including people from minority ethnic communities. The sample included a range in terms of age, social class, region, locality and men and women, as follows.

G1: C2DE 31-45 London/SE
 G2: ABC1 46-60 London/SE
 G3: C2DE 61-75 Midlands
 G4: ABC1 16-20 Midlands rural
 G5: ABC1 31-45 South West rural
 G6: C2DE 61-75 South West rural
 G7: C2DE 21-30 South Wales
 G8: ABC1 31-45 South Wales
 G9: C2DE 21-30 North rural
 G10: ABC1 46-60 North
 G11: C2DE 21-30 Scotland
 G12: ABC1 61-75 Scotland
 G13: ABC1 46-60 Northern Ireland
 G14: C2DE 16-20 Northern Ireland

G15: Pakistani Muslim (male) 16-20 North
 G16: Hindu or Sikh (female) 31-45 London/SE
 G17: African-Caribbean (mixed sex) 21-30 London/SE
 G18: African-Caribbean (mixed sex) 46-60 Midlands

The following were excluded from the sample, on the basis that representatives from these groups might be more familiar with some of ideas than the general public, and might influence the discussion disproportionately: anyone working in, or with close family or friends working in advertising, marketing, market research, public relations, journalism, the

Police, the Home Office, Customs and Excise, DWP, Citizens Advice Bureaux or organisations involved in civil liberties or welfare rights.

2. **Interviewing procedure**

The groups followed a discussion guide and used written material to describe the proposals for ID cards; copies of both are included in the appendix to this report. Discussions began with a general discussion of current news items, then moved on to knowledge and perceptions of ID cards. The Home Office proposals for ID cards were introduced one by one, using the written statements. A video was shown to illustrate the proposed application process. For each broad aspect of the proposals, respondents were asked for their unprompted views and expectations, then asked for their opinions on the proposals.

C. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Context

1. News headlines at the time of the research were dominated by political and sporting events, and the situation in Iraq. Issues such as terrorism and immigration were less top of mind than in previous research, but they soon emerged on discussion of 'problems facing the UK'. ID cards were rarely mentioned spontaneously but, on prompting, were quickly taken up as a relevant topic, and were strongly associated with the issues above.

Existing awareness of ID cards proposals

2. There was widespread awareness that the government is considering the introduction of ID cards, primarily from media coverage, and the majority believed that their introduction is almost inevitable. But there was a large degree of misunderstanding about the details of the scheme, with most respondents expecting the cards to constitute either a very basic proof of identity or a system for holding vast amounts of personal information. Some had also picked up patchy details about the proposal, such as the use of biometrics, the 2008 start date and the issue of payment; this did not seem to affect their basic attitudes to the scheme.

Existing attitudes towards ID cards

3. The majority approved of the principle of ID cards, or were at least accepting of it. ID cards were seen as a sensible system which worked well abroad, and which could plausibly have an impact on a number of the 'social ills' currently facing the UK. The benefits of a

system were generally expected to be felt by the government, rather than individual citizens, although indirect benefits to individuals were acknowledged.

4. Those who opposed the scheme in principle tended to occupy one of two positions. Some were suspicious of the government's motives and feared for civil liberties and anonymity. Others were sceptical about the system's efficacy. They felt that the very people whom the system was intended to 'control' would be able to avoid holding a genuine card, and that the system would only impinge on honest citizens. More generally, these respondents tended to believe that the government was too soft on the causes of social problems, and that ID cards would not achieve anything unless this attitude were changed.

5. Demographic variations in these attitudes were not clear-cut among this sample, and few patterns emerged. Younger respondents tended to be less cynical than those in older groups, and BC1 respondents tended to be a little more informed about the issues and more likely to bring considered opinions to the discussions. But there were many contradictions and exceptions to these rules. Among minority ethnic groups Asian respondents were typically the most accepting; the African-Caribbean groups were more divided.

Responses to the basic concept of the proposal

6. Most accepted 16 as a sensible age at which to start the scheme. Some felt cards should be issued earlier, as the types of crime they expected the scheme to address were not seen as exclusively the work of over-16s. But others thought that children could not be trusted to look after an ID card. A few, including some

respondents aged 16-17, felt the cards should not be issued until 18, to correspond with full adulthood.

7. In principle, the combination of a card, chip and register also met with approval from the majority, who could see that a modern system would need some kind of electronic support. Feelings about how the three elements would function in practice, however, varied widely. Respondents who had initially expected the cards to consist of little more than a photograph and basic information were less accepting of this 'hi-tech' proposal.

8. Anxieties about how the system would work in practice tended to focus on the register because of its unknown capacity and potential for future expansion, and the fact that individuals would lose control of any personal information stored on it. The combination of these concerns led to concerns that large (and possibly limitless) amounts of potentially damaging information could fall into the wrong hands, either to hackers accessing the register, unscrupulous employees passing information on, or inappropriate staff who gain access through joined up computer systems. These concerns were rarely specific, and seemed to be at least partly the result of feelings about computer security in general, but they were strongly felt by many respondents.

9. The use of a chip was less controversial, largely because it was familiar from bank and credit cards, and because it was seen as more knowable and controllable than a remote register. There was some confusion over the relationship between the two elements, which could increase the concerns mentioned above. Both the chip and register became more acceptable to many when they realised that the

cards would not need to be scanned every time they were used.

10. Most respondents had expected ID cards to be entirely new documents, and were surprised to discover that the intention was to incorporate them into existing documents. Some felt that a family of cards would be confusing to the public, and might undermine the system's universality; a single card with various 'options' stored electronically was often thought a practical and convenient solution to this. Others imagined that a combined card would be a greater security liability than a 'plain' ID card, as its value to fraudsters would be higher. Practical objections to combined cards were also raised, mostly derived from the fact that ID cards, driving licences and passports have different functions.

11. Preferences between an ID card incorporating a passport or a driving licence were varied, with a small majority favouring the latter. This choice seemed to be based on associations of passports with foreign travel and important documents which are not to be carried every day, and familiarity with photocard driving licences, which many used as a form of ID anyway. Some respondents would prefer to have a plain ID card, even if they owned a passport or driving licence, as they wanted to keep the documents separate.

The issue of compulsion

12. It was widely agreed that ID cards would need to be made compulsory for everyone, as the scheme's ability to impinge on criminal elements depended on the creation of a 'herd immunity' in which people were penalised for non-participation. If made voluntary, the scheme would not work as only law-abiding citizens

would apply. But the enforcement and policing of this system were expected to be very difficult by a number of respondents, especially when they learned that the cards would not be compulsory to carry. This was an important factor in their scepticism about the proposal as a whole.

13. Reactions to the issues of compulsion to own and compulsion to carry revealed a fundamental dichotomy in many respondents' attitudes to ID cards. Although prepared to participate in a scheme to create the necessary universal ownership, they concluded that the drawbacks to themselves as individuals, particularly the inconvenience they thought might result from having cards, might not justify the indirect benefits they would enjoy.

The timing of the ID card scheme

14. Many respondents initially felt that ID cards should be introduced as soon as possible, as the problems they were expected to address were current. As many had expected the cards to be less 'hi-tech' than those proposed, 2008 was often thought surprisingly far in the future. This could raise questions about the government's commitment to the scheme and heighten scepticism about its efficacy, as the problems would only get worse over that time. When they realised what the scheme would involve, many respondents lengthened their expectations of practical timescales.

15. The intention to stagger the introduction of cards after 2008 was a little more controversial. Some took a positive view, and realised that it would be impossible to issue everyone with a card at the same time. Others grumbled that the system would be unfair as some would have to have one before others. Where the

staggered process was accepted, there was strong support for stating the date by which cards would become compulsory for everyone. Only a handful of people said they would apply for an ID card before they had to; this did not seem to indicate any strong resistance to the scheme, but it did suggest a lack of excitement and failure to appreciate any individual benefits.

The information on the cards and register

16. The amount and type of information that the cards might hold was a vital determinant of respondents' views about the scheme as a whole; and the lack of understanding about what would be stored on the register often fostered suspicion about the scheme and could reduce support for it. In general, those in favour were happy to have more data recorded, and those opposed were reluctant for it to store more than a bare minimum.

17. The information to be displayed on the face of the card was expected to be basic, and the proposed details were largely accepted. The question of whether the holder's address should be shown on the face was more contentious, and some were concerned about security if they lost the card. Comparisons with driving licences could be reassuring, but not for all. Practical issues surrounding the need to renew a card every time one moved house were also raised.

18. Opinions about how much information should be held on the register varied widely. Those least supportive of the scheme felt it should be no more than a back-up of what was displayed on the card, to be accessed if the card were lost. The majority thought that some medical details would be acceptable and

useful. More supportive respondents wanted information which might help control the activities of certain groups of people, such as criminal records and DNA, financial details, employment records and other information which would maximise the usefulness of the card.

19. Views on what would be an acceptable level of information depended greatly on who would have access to it. Many would not accept providing more than basic details if they could not be convinced that inappropriate people would be barred; those who were reassured on this point were often happy to disclose more. Most assumed that the police would be able to scan any card and read almost all details, and were surprised to be told that this might not be the case. Beyond this, there was little consensus on who should be able to access to the register, but all were sure that such access should be strictly regulated.

20. The lack of an overt statement during the discussions about the range and use of information to be provided was a stumbling block for many respondents. Together with reassurance about security and measures taken to prevent 'function creep', such a statement is likely to be vital to many people's acceptance of an ID card scheme.

Biometric information

21. Initial responses to the use of biometrics depended largely on familiarity with the concept. Those who had heard that they might be required on ID cards and/or passports, or that they were already used in the US, were generally comfortable with the idea and accepted the need for them. A minority was alarmed by the proposal, associating such technology with science

fiction and feeling that this was going too far beyond what they had initially imagine ID cards would involve. But the concept became more acceptable for many of these respondents as it became more familiar and better understood.

22. The benefits of using biometrics were largely undisputed – almost all knew that fingerprints and iris patterns are unique, and accepted that their use would probably make ID cards more difficult to forge or misuse. Some found the novelty appealing in itself; others felt that such a hi-tech approach was proof that the government was taking the issue seriously. Few, however, believed that biometrics would be impossible to forge in the long term, and some felt reliance on them would decrease the scheme's efficacy if they could be forged.

The application process

23. Respondents' initial expectations about the application process were fairly consistent, and involved the completion of a long form which would be sent off by post accompanied by an official document such as a passport. When informed of the use of biometrics, respondents also expected they would have to make a visit in person to record this information.

24. When fully aware of what the proposed cards would involve, most respondents imagined that applying for one would be a major undertaking. Concerns about security informed their preferences between the three application methods suggested – post, phone and online – more than convenience. Of the three, post was the most acceptable, although some worried about forms being lost or stolen for use in forgery. Online application was also considered, but

concerns about security were greater here. Application by telephone was widely rejected because of concerns about lack of confidentiality and the feeling that this was too casual a method for such an important application.

25. The Home Office video demonstrating the application and biometric procedure met with widespread approval and fitted with the expectations of most respondents. The process of recording biometrics did not look arduous or dangerous, but satisfyingly hi-tech. Some wondered whether the procedure would really be as straightforward as the video suggested, and there were concerns that some people would find it difficult to make a visit in the way shown.

26. Respondents' suggestions for suitable locations for providing biometrics included police stations, town halls, schools and mobile units. Estimates of how far they would be prepared to travel to do so varied from the equivalent of the nearest polling station to within the same/nearest city or town. Opening hours were predictably expected to be flexible enough to allow working people easy access.

Using ID cards

27. Many respondents' expectations of when cards would be used were informed by the belief that the scheme was for the benefit of the government rather than the individual. Checks by the police to establish eligibility to be in the country, or identity in the event of a crime or during stop and search operations, were commonly mentioned. Medical personnel were also expected to use them, particularly in an emergency.

28. Those who advocated the storage of a greater amount of information could imagine more uses for the

cards, such as bank transactions, proof of age in licensed premises and allowing entry to workplaces. Those most suspicious of the scheme imagined that the cards would need to be used frequently in the public and commercial sectors, and that this would allow the government to build up a detailed picture of people's activities.

29. The examples shown to respondents were largely accepted without comment, but few seemed to represent changes from the current situation. Driving licences and other forms of ID were already being required and used in many of the activities; the introduction of ID cards was not expected to change this significantly. The examples (with the exception of proving age) were also not expected to encourage regular carrying of ID cards, as they were regarded as infrequent, pre-planned occasions when a card could be taken along specially.

Provenance of ID cards

30. Almost all respondents expected an ID cards scheme to be introduced and run by a visibly defined part of the government. They felt that no other organisation had, or should have, access to the type of information necessary, or could guarantee the scheme's existence in the long term. Within the government, the Home Office was seen as the most obvious body. The idea of having an ID cards 'supremo' was largely rejected as the scheme was felt to be too broad and long-term to be entrusted to one person.

Costs

31. Perceptions of possible costs were greatly coloured by opinions about the principle of the individual paying, and considered views were hard to elicit. Most assumed that the scheme would be government-funded, and strongly opposed paying for the cards themselves. Details about the changes to passport costs caused much surprise, as few were aware of the move to biometrics, and the rise to £73 was thought very significant. In this context, the £4 supplement for a combined passport and ID card was generally overlooked.

32. On first sight, the cost of the combined passport and ID card caused the most indignation: the absolute cost was seen as very high, as was the increase over the current cost of a passport. The lower cost of a plain card also met with objection because the card would be obligatory, unlike a passport. Rather than pay directly, most respondents said they would prefer the scheme to be funded through general taxation, which was seen as less regressive and noticeable, as well as an incentive for the government to maximise the scheme's efficiency.

Considered views of ID cards

33. After the discussions, respondents who had initially been in favour of ID cards were generally a little less enthusiastic in the support, although they still believed that the scheme should go ahead. The scheme as proposed was more complex than many had expected because it involved a family of cards, more information than anticipated, and a different type of information (ie biometrics). The cost of the cards was also significantly higher than they were expecting. Those who had started the discussions with concerns about civil liberties retained these, although some were

reassured by what they had learned, such as the fact that they would not be compulsory to carry. The views of those who were initially sceptical remained largely unchanged: the proposals did little to allay their cynicism about the scheme's efficacy and the government's attitude to crime in general.

D. CONCLUSIONS

Overall conclusions

1. Discussion of ID cards encourages an emotional rather than rational response. Even when detailed information about the proposals is made available, the instinctive reaction is to take a superficial view of the subject as a whole and overlook the practical issues.
2. The majority begin from a position of fairly strong but uninformed support for the introduction of ID cards in the UK, and see it as a potentially effective means of addressing some of the big current concerns, including illegal immigration, asylum and crime in general terms. The key requirement with this group is to maintain their support by explaining how the card scheme will help in these areas; the support they express could be put at risk if they believe that the scheme is not what they expected or wanted it to be.
3. A minority start from a position of strong opposition to ID cards either for ideological reasons (invasion of privacy, infringement of civil liberties) or scepticism about the scheme's ability to achieve its objectives. The need among this group is to counter these concerns and to maximise the credibility of the scheme. On the evidence of this research it will be extremely difficult to convince those most strongly opposed to ID cards to support their introduction.
4. In these terms there appear to be two separate communication tasks: to convince people of the principle behind ID cards; and to communicate the practicalities – how the scheme will work, that it is achievable and worth paying for. If these objectives are to be achieved, communication of the idea needs to be as concrete as it can be in explaining why ID cards are being introduced and how they will work.
5. It is clear that speculation and scare mongering around the scheme are already rife: inaccurate stories are circulating, and if there are any gaps in the ID card proposals, people will fill these with their worst concerns. It is

essential that the government can respond robustly to any speculation or misinformation of this kind.

6. In relation to the purpose and intent of ID cards, issues to consider are that...
 - the benefits to society of ID cards are seen as much more plausible than individual benefits and have a far better fit with existing perceptions of what ID cards are for
 - benefits to the individual are worth communicating, but informing people of the benefits to society is likely to be seen as more frank and honest, and may be more fruitful in generating acceptance
 - many people strongly believe that ID cards are essentially for 'wrongdoers', not themselves – and that the only reason for issuing them to 'law abiding citizens' is that the system cannot work unless universal
 - this belief needs to be challenged, to avoid giving tacit support to racist and discriminatory views, and entrenching the position of the unfavourable minority; addressing this issue would tie in with the objective of focusing on the benefits of ID cards to society as a whole

Specific issues

7. On this evidence, the overall concept of ID cards is likely to be accepted: that is, a card for people 16+ incorporating information on a combination of card, chip and register.
8. Bearing in mind minor concerns and objections, the proposals for the basic information to be displayed on the card will be unlikely to attract strong objections: this is seen as the minimum needed to make the card effective; and the inclusion of the cardholder's address is likely to be acceptable, in spite of initial concerns.

9. It will be important to clarify what type of additional information will be held on the register. Many people would welcome the inclusion of emergency health information; this could help enhance the perceived individual benefits. Inclusion of financial information (not a Government proposal) will be strongly resisted by many.
10. The test of acceptability is likely to be whether people can see why the information is required, what it will be used for and who will be able to see it. With this in mind, reassurance about the security of data on the register will also be important – people will need to believe it is protected from hackers and criminals.
11. On this evidence, the proposal to use biometrics will be welcomed. The advantages are largely incontrovertible, and the technology, though new and strange to many people now, should become familiar quickly.
12. The proposed application process is also largely acceptable. Postal applications are likely to be preferred, though some younger people will make applications online; the option of call centres may well attract criticism, but will probably attract more usage than is admitted.
13. On this evidence, the need to make a personal visit is unlikely to cause problems as long as the process is convenient and quick, with fixed appointments if desired.
14. The proposed usage occasions are largely uncontroversial, but on this evidence seem unlikely to encourage people to carry their ID cards as a matter of course.
15. The issue of paying for the scheme is more complex and unpredictable. At this stage, the cost of the combined passport/ID card raises the most objections, but our feeling is that this may well change: the introduction of biometric passports before the introduction of ID cards will reduce the perceived 'price hike' associated with the introduction of ID cards. If this is the case, the charge for a plain ID card if the scheme is compulsory is

likely to be more controversial, because of strong resistance to the principle of requiring people to pay for something that they do not want.

D. DETAILED FINDINGS

1. **The context**

1.1 Current issues and concerns

The fieldwork for this research was carried out in June 2004, at a time when a number of high profile political and sporting topics and events were in the news – European elections, the rise of UKIP, Euro 2004, Wimbledon. Perhaps unsurprisingly, it was largely these stories, rather than any longer-term issues, which dominated the news headlines for most of the sample. The exception was the ongoing situation in Iraq, which prompted discussion in many of the groups. Terrorism and immigration, which were main preoccupations in the last piece of research conducted on this subject, were less salient.

Both of these issues, however, were quickly raised in most groups when discussion moved on to the ‘problems currently facing the UK’, and were apparently not far from respondents’ minds despite their perceived lack of news coverage. The subject of ID cards, once mentioned (generally prompted, but occasionally spontaneously by individual respondents), was often quickly taken up as a current and relevant issue, and was strongly associated with (illegal) immigration, asylum-seeking and terrorism.

1.2 Existing awareness of ID cards proposals

Discussion of ID cards revealed widespread awareness that the government is considering the introduction of such a scheme. Awareness seemed to come primarily from press coverage, and included references to

biometrics, the claimed cost, compulsion and trials of ID cards. Among those who had heard about ID cards in the news, understanding varied widely.

"Identity cards, doing the iris scan and fingerprinting all on this little card. You have to carry it round. I was reading it the other week. They tested it in a big city and it's going to cost lots and lots of money... You won't need a passport to travel in Europe, just your identity card."

G4: ABC1 16-20 Midlands rural

"I think it's like a little credit card sized card and then it'll have your iris print, your photo, your fingerprints and signature. But they were on about, as well, putting the passports up to £70, and more information put on the passport."

G4: ABC1 16-20 Midlands rural

"I thought it was a driving licence and an ID card."

"I thought it had everything on it."

"Yeah, even fingerprints."

G5: ABC1 31-45 South West rural

"I heard they were going to replace driving licences and passports. I think they were piloting it somewhere. That is about it."

G17: African-Caribbean (mixed sex) 21-30 London/SE

As in previous research, some respondents saw ID cards as a recurrent issue which had been raised inconclusively by previous governments, and felt that the current reawakening of interest will prove no more productive. But in this case they were in the minority; the majority believed that the government is determined to bring in ID cards, and that their introduction is almost inevitable.

"It is going to happen."

G5: ABC1 31-45 South West rural

"It has its good and bad points; the good point is that it keeps tabs on criminals, but it is bad like big brother in keeping an eye on you all the time. But it looks like it is coming in though."

G11: C2DE 21-30 Scotland

The reasons for this shift in confidence were unclear, but it seemed likely to be due to an increase in government announcements about ID cards, news

coverage of associated issues (see above) and ambient coverage of the topic over the past year or so.

Despite this increasing confidence, however, detailed understanding of the government's current proposals was patchy, with respondents' perceptions based largely on prior and personal assumptions about what ID cards are and do. In some cases, it appeared that the very media coverage which had raised awareness of the principle behind the proposals had supported or even created these assumptions by reporting speculation and rumour rather than fact. It was clear that some people had picked up seriously misleading or inaccurate information.

"I have heard that they are trying to make it mandatory for everyone to have a card, within a certain time and it is going to cost them £20 billion."

"It is going to have your eyes and your fingerprints on them and an electronic chip that will follow you wherever you go!"

G11: C2DE 21-30 Scotland

"Is this the one card that will have all of your records combined so that anyone in government services can have access to your whole life?"

G17: African-Caribbean (mixed sex) 21-30 London/SE

Most subscribed to one of two extreme beliefs about ID cards. Some felt that they would constitute a very basic proof of identity (perhaps just the holder's name and photo) and would be issued exclusively for use by the police. Others expected them to hold a vast amount of information (criminal records, health details, tax records, even bank details) and effectively to represent the individual's 'whole life'.

Few respondents seemed to occupy the middle ground, perhaps as a reflection of the points made above. On the one hand, many prior assumptions about the scheme were informed by photo-card driving licences (one of the most commonly used identification cards),

both in terms of purpose and design; on the other, assumptions informed by media speculation were more likely to veer towards the emotional and ill-informed.

Some had picked up sketchy details about the government's proposals, but these did not seem to affect their fundamental beliefs about the scheme. A few had heard that biometrics may be involved, that individuals will pay for cards and that 2008 is the suggested date for the scheme's introduction. One or two had also heard that trials are taking place in selected locations.

1.3 Existing attitudes towards ID cards

1.3.1 *Overall attitudes*

Based on their assumptions about the form and function ID cards will have, most respondents approved of the planned introduction of a scheme in the UK – although approval ranged from wary to enthusiastic. The assumed benefits, and hence the reasons for support, were fairly consistent across this section of the sample.

ID cards were generally regarded as a sensible system that works well in other countries, especially in Europe and the US, and that those countries benefit from having taken an effective measure against many social problems. The fact that they were used apparently without difficulties in other countries made their introduction here seem more acceptable to some. As before, many older people remembered having ID cards in the past and said they had no reservations about the idea now.

"I used to live in Brussels where everyone has an ID card. It works really well. If something happens to you. They have access to your insurance details and can help you immediately. I think it is quite big in Europe."

G17: African-Caribbean (mixed sex) 21-30 London/SE

"During the war we had identity cards, I remember mine. We had them then so what's the difference if we have them now?"

G3: C2DE 61-75 Midlands

"It obviously works in America so why can't we just follow what they have done."

G9: C2DE 21-30 North rural

Many respondents felt that the UK currently faces a number of social problems which need to be addressed as a matter of urgency. These included illegal immigration, asylum seeking, illegal working, crime in general (and, in this context, crime involving identity, such as fraud), and the threat of terrorism. Respondents believed that issues such as these could (only) be resolved by the removal of certain individuals or groups of people from the country, or at least by controlling them effectively. Many also felt that there are already systems which allow people to be identified in certain contexts, and ID cards would not be a significant imposition on them over and above what was in place now.

"Everyone seems to be highly identifiable anyway. You seem to be getting drawn into it a lot more with the new credit cards with your eye retina and all this sort of thing is going to go on it. It seems to have reached a very high stage anyway. Even if you go to the doctors or anything now. I mean your national insurance number identifies you right across the board now."

G13: ABC1 46-60 Northern Ireland

"Would that not stop all these people who make all these social security claims? That would be a good thing."

"That would be a brilliant thing."

G13: ABC1 46-60 Northern Ireland

"It'll curb crime. Someone who is caught committing a crime won't be able to lie and say they're Joe Bloggs."

G4: ABC1 16-20 Midlands rural

"It could cut down on how many people actually come in, because to get into Britain now you have to have your passport and they are very easy to counterfeit, steal it and put your picture on it. If this card has got your retina scan, your fingerprints, how many teeth you've got in your head, your picture, signature, everything, it's going to be a lot more difficult and take a lot longer to actually figure out a way to falsify them."

G4: ABC1 16-20 Midlands rural

"That would stop illegal immigrants. There's a lot of people working on other people's national insurance numbers. And then it would cut down the people who haven't got jobs so the unemployment rate would go down."

G4: ABC1 16-20 Midlands rural

"If you want to get credit or anything they want your driving licence or your passport or something. So if you had an identification card with everything on it there wouldn't be a problem. My grand daughter wanted to open a bank account. She hadn't got a driving licence or a passport so she couldn't open it. If she had an ID card she'd have got it open straight away."

G3: C2DE 61-75 Midlands

"I'd like to know more about it but in terms of security issues and things like that it would make a lot of difference. Like for teachers, or anyone working with children they do a security check and things, but if you had it all done on an ID card then it would make procedures like that easier and simpler."

G16: Hindu or Sikh (female) 31-45 London/SE

"It's brilliant. It's exactly what we need in this country to give a feeling of security and safety."

G18: African-Caribbean (mixed sex) 46-60 Midlands

At this stage, it was notable that ID cards were expected to benefit the government and/or society as a whole rather than the individual. Respondents' comments and the nature of the advantages they described indicated that almost all believed the government would bring in ID cards for its own benefit, not for the benefit of citizens as individuals (though they may benefit indirectly as a result). This attitude was often unchanged by discussion of the details of the proposals, and attempts to argue that there might be personal benefits as well were often resisted strongly.

"It's more for the government. Their work will be less because the information will be central. It's for them to know that so and so works there, whether they are on benefits or not, where do they live, how many kids, and so on. They will have everything, all the information about us."

G16: Hindu or Sikh (female) 31-45 London/SE

"I'm not sure what's in it for us. It seems as though it's more for them to keep immigration and crime down, not something to help us day to day."

G10: ABC1 46-60 North

Where individual benefits were identified, these tended to be in the areas of proving identity for the purposes of financial transactions, or among young people proving age to be allowed access to licensed premises. These benefits were typically expressed by those with the most favourable attitudes to the idea as a whole.

"People know who you are and so if you go into the bank that is all you would need to show who you are an ID card. I think they are a good idea myself."

G9: C2DE 21-30 North rural

"If it's going to benefit you in, as like I said before, like if you forgot your bank card or you need to get money out of the bank or in an emergency if you'd lost it, you could have that and you could just give that to the bank and you're not going to be stuck. Like nobody would have to take utility bills, you have this card -- it would just be something that would be less stress for you and everything."

G7: C2DE 21-30 South Wales

"I wouldn't have any problems at all carrying an ID card. To me it would just be like a driving licence and if I have to prove my identity in a bank or whatever and I have to have my passport, birth certificate and a letter from the Gas Board and a letter from the social, or whatever, to prove my identity. It would be so much easier for me to hand over a little plastic card. If it carries my fingerprint, fine, it doesn't bother me. I'm not a criminal."

G1: C2DE 31-45 London/SE

The vocal minority who were initially opposed to the idea of ID cards tended to adopt one of two positions. The first was suspicion about a hidden and/or sinister motive behind ID cards, and concerns for individuals' liberty and anonymity. These respondents seemed to believe that the government's real objective was to gain

control over its citizens, and that ID cards would provide an unprecedented volume of information about individuals and allow the government to ‘track’ them through their daily lives. They felt that even if ID cards were used successfully in other countries, there were differences about the UK that meant the idea would not easily be transferred here. This belief was reinforced by a perception that there is already a wealth of information on individuals’ circumstances held by a variety of organisations, and that there is no justifiable need for more.

“But we’re going down the road of this thing for security means and identity, and it’s the police that were at fault, so what good is an identity card going to do? We’re so tied up anyway with our national insurance numbers, credit card identities, and all the other things we’re tagged with. We already have so much, do we need any more?”

G13: ABC1 46-60 Northern Ireland

“I like my privacy. I think there is something else they want it for. There is all these human errors in data protection. I don’t see it as a good idea at all.”

G17: African-Caribbean (mixed sex) 21-30 London/SE

“It’s just them wanting to keep tabs on us. With this they’ll be able to know where we’re going, what we’re doing.”

G9: C2DE 21-30 North rural

The second position was scepticism about the efficacy of ID cards, and the belief that the scheme would not achieve its objectives and would be a waste of money and effort. These respondents tended to share others’ concerns about social ills but regarded the introduction of ID cards as a case of ‘shutting the stable door after the horse has bolted’. They agreed that certain types of people ‘needed to be controlled’, but felt that these were the very individuals who would be most likely to avoid having a genuine ID card.

"I wouldn't like it put upon me but at the same time I think it wouldn't be a bad idea to start at a certain level, like with immigrants, people who've committed crimes. I think a certain element of the population needs to have these things but I don't think it should be thrust upon us all."

G13: ABC1 46-60 Northern Ireland

"I think they'll use them to keep an eye on us. Big Brother. They can tell what you buy, where you go. It won't stop asylum seekers because they'll just forge them. So it's just a way of keeping people in check."

G1: C2DE 31-45 London/SE

"It's not foolproof. Even if they do make it compulsory how are they going to check? How are they going to catch up with people who have disappeared? People do, they keep themselves hidden for whatever reason. There's always going to be people who will slip through the net, who will evade anything like that."

G1: C2DE 31-45 London/SE

Given this belief that some individuals would avoid having an ID card, these respondents argued that the system would only affect honest, law-abiding citizens, and that the social benefits, which depended on a 'herd immunity' created by universal ownership, would not accrue. This in turn would mean that the effects of ID cards would be more inconvenient than advantageous.

"Well you know you're not doing anything wrong, so why do you need a card to prove it?"

"I pay my taxes, I'm not an asylum seeker, so why would I want one?"

"Give it to the people that should have one."

G1: C2DE 31-45 London/SE

"I think what people object to is the people that are punished are the people that give all this information. It's the people who pay taxes and pay this and pay that. It's the honest people who get penalised but it's not them who try and fiddle."

G13: ABC1 46-60 Northern Ireland

Methods by which people might avoid having a genuine card were readily imagined. Some respondents argued that anything can be forged, no matter how secure, and that fake cards would soon become widespread and undermine the system. Others felt that people

operating in the shadow economy would be able to hide from the system, especially if carrying a card was not made compulsory. Recent criminal and terrorism cases tended to compound the view that vetting and identification procedures could not help prevent those who were determined to foil the system.

“At the same time do you think it would help? I mean at the end of the day, whenever you look at what’s in the headlines, like the Huntley guy. They had every single piece of information on that guy that they knew he was convicted of, yet they allowed him to become a caretaker in a school. Would it have mattered if he had an identity card? No, because he had several other identities everywhere. At the end of the day I don’t think it’s going to make a lot of difference.”

G13: ABC1 46-60 Northern Ireland

“Three or four of those guys that were going into those planes on 9/11 were British citizens with passports and driving licences. So it wouldn’t have helped there.”

G13: ABC1 46-60 Northern Ireland

“There’s no way you can stop people who are really determined from forging the cards. If they want to, they’ll be able to.”

G3: C2DE 61-75 Midlands

“Someone will always find a way to make false cards. I just don’t believe they’ll be able to make the system foolproof.”

G4: ABC1 16-20 Midlands rural

A successful system would of course depend on obtaining accurate information from the beginning, and some believed that in some cases it might be difficult to establish identity in the first place. More generally, a number of respondents felt that the government was too soft on the causes of social problems, and that ID cards could only work if stricter policies were also put in place.

“It’s not just your cards. They won’t work until the government put tougher laws in, to stop these people coming in.”

G6: C2DE 61-75 South West rural

These two negative positions seemed to correlate with the two extreme assumptions and expectations about

ID cards mentioned above – the first belief being that the system would go too far, the second that it would not go far enough. Both sceptical stances often appeared to coincide with a negative view of the current government in more general terms.

1.3.2 *Attitudinal variations*

On the evidence of this sample, demographic variation in attitudes to ID cards was not clear-cut, and did not lend itself to any firm, constructive conclusions. Some observations could be made, however: the youngest respondents (aged 16-30) tended to be a little less cynical about the scheme than those in older groups; and BC1 respondents were a little better informed about politics generally and more likely to come to the discussions with well-considered opinions about ID cards. But these were not strong patterns; the sample contained plenty of exceptions and contradictions.

Those in C2D social classes often focused initially on criminal activities as an aspect of ID cards. This cut both ways: they perceived a benefit of ID cards in helping prevent certain types of crime, particularly violence and sexual crime; but some were also concerned that if, as expected, the cards contained information on criminal records, this could count unfairly against some individuals.

“I think ID cards are an excellent idea but I think they could be increased by containing information of your DNA and fingerprint. I think that would locate the person correctly, if it was a serious crime. And for people who aren't supposed to be here. The identity could prove if it isn't them, through the DNA or fingerprint, as much information as you could get on it, is useful.”
“It's a deterrent as well. They'd think twice before they committed a crime, because they'd know if they were found out their identity would be there for the police.”

G3: C2DE 61-75 Midlands

"If everyone has an identity card and you've got someone who... has molested a child, then it's good if that shows up because then if they go for a job in a school or a youth club people are going to know straight away they can't have this person working there. But for minor convictions, burglary, points on your licence, no I don't think it's fair because it would stop people getting a job."

G1: C2DE 31-45 London/SE

"If you're going to have an ID card that's going to tell everything on one card, that is obviously going to include if you've been in prison, if you've ever been done for anything like fraud or anything. If you've got some sort of record. Nobody is going to want that because I'm sure not one of us are not guilty of doing something wrong in the past. I don't mean going to prison."

G1: C2DE 31-45 London/SE

Respondents from minority ethnic communities did not differ substantially from the mainstream sample in many respects. As a group their evidence was too varied to generalise: the two Asian groups were among the most positive in the sample, the younger African-Caribbean group was one of the most strongly opposed, and the older African-Caribbean group was fairly accepting.

One issue that came up in earlier research emerged again here – the effects of ID cards on police attitudes to minority ethnic communities. Views were mixed, but on balance the feeling was that ID cards could be of benefit to people from minority ethnic communities if they were regarded by the authorities as a more plausible and foolproof means of proving identity.

"We all know that young black men get picked on by the police. You could see it that if they had an ID card they'd be free to go on their way quicker because they would have definite proof of who they were."

"But this is going to give the police another reason to stop black males – so they can ask to see their cards."

G18: African-Caribbean (mixed sex) 46-60 Midlands

"I'd like to know a bit more about it because I'm not sure whether they would replace a driver's licence or whatever. Then there's the issue of freedom. But generally speaking, as an Asian person, considering we do get picked on, it would be good if you've got an official document and were just accepted as being a British citizen. It makes your life easier and it helps to catch the people who are actually committing crimes."

G16: Hindu or Sikh (female) 31-45 London/SE

2. Response to the proposals for ID cards

2.1 The basic concept

2.1.1 *Age at which the cards are issued*

The majority accepted 16 as a sensible age for first issuing ID cards, given that many rights and responsibilities accrue at this time. Some, however, questioned the wisdom of not issuing cards earlier. One of the problems which ID cards were expected to address was anti-social behaviour, and these respondents argued that such behaviour was by no means limited to the over-16s. Crime committed by young people (such as mugging, graffiti and petty theft) was often seen as a serious and increasing problem, and some believed that giving the police powers to stop young people on the street and demand ID would help to address it.

In light of this, a number of respondents suggested issuing cards at a younger age, either at birth or at around 10-12 years, or considered the possibility of younger people being represented on their parents' cards, as was the case with passports.

"Why sixteen? Why not try and stop all these young hooligans getting up to mischief? If they had the cards maybe they would be easier to catch."

G3: C2DE 61-75 Midlands

“People are potentially going to need cards from any age. I think they’ve got to make them start at younger than that – ten or twelve.”

G6: C2DE 61-75 South West rural

Others saw problems with these suggestions, feeling that children could not be trusted to keep such a significant document as an ID card safe, or that the compulsion to be represented on a card might increase instances of what they saw as police discrimination against young people from minority ethnic backgrounds.

A few members of the public believed that cards should not be issued until age 18, to correspond with full adult status. This group included some young people (16-17) themselves, who questioned the necessity of having an ID card at their age because they already owned a variety of identity documents (ISIC, proof of age etc). Other respondents aged 16 or 17 were happy with the proposal to introduce cards at 16 – indeed, they could often imagine individual benefits (such as proof of age and qualifications) more easily than older respondents could.

2.1.2 *Relationship between card, chip and register*

Most respondents accepted or approved of the proposed combination of card, chip and National Identity Register. It was clear to them that a 21st century ID card would need some kind of electronic support, either for extra data capacity or greater security. Although feelings about the way this system would work varied, in principle a chip and database was understood to provide a good way of storing potentially useful information that would not fit on the face of the card or was too personal to be displayed there.

"It's going to have to be some sort of electronic system, with a database. You couldn't expect to get all the information on a card."

"They'll have some way of scanning cards to get the information."

G4: ABC1 16-20 Midlands rural

Those who had expected the cards to consist of little more than a photograph and basic information, however, were often less accepting of the chip and register. In many cases, their support for the scheme seemed to have been based on the belief that the cards would have a limited use; the concept of a chip and register was for them the first sign that the cards might not be what they had been expecting, and that they had the potential for being used for more than simply proving one's identity to the police.

"I thought you just meant a card that you put in your purse, with your picture on it and your name. I didn't know it was going to be high tech. Is it going to be chips?"

G1: C2DE 31-45 London/SE

"This sounds a lot more complicated than I was expecting. I didn't realise we were all going to be on computer as well."

G3: C2DE 61-75 Midlands

The concerns raised by the introduction of the chip and register tended to be expressed most strongly by this second group, but a number of those who were accepting of it in principle also worried about aspects of it in practice. The focus of most of these concerns tended to be the register, which was seen as an essentially unknown and uncontrollable quantity.

Anxieties about the register tended to centre around two inter-relating issues: its capacity and potential for future enlargement; and its vulnerability to unauthorised or inappropriate use. Unlike a card or single chip, a computer database was seen as infinitely expandable and capable of holding a potentially limitless amount of information, much of which the individual might not be

aware. Some were reassured a little on this point by the suggestion that they would be able to look at their own records, but the concerns of many remained.

The amount and type of information which might be held on the register often increased more general concerns about the security of computers and databases. Submitting details for storage on the register entailed relinquishing control over them in a way which storing them on the chip did not, and many respondents wanted a high degree of assurance that personal information would be kept safe. The danger here was thought to come from hackers who might break into the system, but also from unscrupulous employees who might have legitimate access to information and use it for malicious ends or sell it on to others.

"I worry generally about things on computers. They're too vulnerable. There always seems to be somebody who is smarter than the somebody who has invented these things. There always seems to be somebody able to get into these things and abuse them, use them to their own means."

G13: ABC1 46-60 Northern Ireland

"It would take a lot of convincing to prove to me that it could not be abused. I don't mind the whole general thought of having the card but it just scares me that you could be watched 24 hours a day, you could be identified from any points, anywhere. Other people could use that."

G5: ABC1 31-45 South West rural

Further concerns regarding the loss of control over information included the possibility that an electronic register could be linked up with other computer systems without an individual's knowledge, and that access to such comprehensive, joined-up information could potentially be used against people. Some respondents worried about the infringement of civil liberties and wondered whether this capability would give the government more power over individuals.

"They're watching every move you make."

"Let's say the police asked you for your fingerprint and you were found not guilty of anything and the police said "Right, we're putting your fingerprint on the national register." You'd just think, why? It would worry me. I think it's a wee step too far."

G13: ABC1 46-60 Northern Ireland

It is worth noting here that worries of this kind were rarely specific, and that respondents tended not to be thinking of particular ways in which the register might be abused. Their concerns were prompted by an unfocused sense of unease, which seemed to be the result of these two issues of potential for expansion and lack of controllability, as well as more general concerns about computer security.

The use of a chip in the card raised fewer concerns than the register, largely because it was familiar (from credit and debit cards) and more knowable and controllable. Respondents assumed that the information capacity of a single chip would be finite, and that this information could not be accessed without using the card. But in many cases the relationship between the chip and register was not understood, and there was often confusion over whether the chip would duplicate the register, hold different information, or simply act as a 'key' to access the register.

This confusion led to a number of debates about the best place to store information. Some preferred the chip alone, for the reasons noted above. Others were concerned about what might happen if the card was lost, and imagined that the information would then be less secure than if only on the register. They also assumed that such a card would be more difficult to replace if lost.

"As little as possible on the card and more on the computer."

G5: ABC1 31-45 South West rural

“How about just giving in the ID number then they can check you up on the computer that way.”

G11: C2DE 21-30 Scotland

Some misconceptions about the chip and register were resolved during discussion of biometrics, as respondents realised that the chip would probably be used largely to store this information. But, given the strength of feeling surrounding the use of a chip and register, it is likely to be important that people understand the relationship between the two and know what is to be stored on which device.

It is worth noting here that both chip and register seemed to become more acceptable when respondents realised that the card would not have to be scanned every time it is used, and that occasions on which it would need to be used would be limited.

2.1.3 *The family of ID cards*

Most respondents had initially expected ID cards to be entirely new documents, and were surprised to hear that the intention was to base them on existing forms of identification. Some had thought that they might eventually *replace* driving licences and passports, but not that they would be integrated in the manner proposed. Although few respondents had strong, ideological objections to the idea of a family of ID cards, the concept was unexpected and consequently a number of concerns and queries were quickly raised.

Some questioned the thinking behind basing the scheme on different types of cards. They imagined that being given the choice between three or more cards would be confusing for the public and, more seriously, that it would undermine what they saw as one of the keys to the scheme's success: it is universal and the

same for everyone. For this, and practical reasons, some felt that the card should be one broad model with simple variations depending on which version it was.

Later, when shown the mock-ups of the proposed cards, a few respondents recognised a consistent ID card branding in the logo, design and biometrics which could reduce concerns about a lack of universality. The majority, however, did not notice these elements, and considered the three cards as separate entities.

A few also wondered why, if ID cards were to be based on existing documents, a plain version needed to be offered at all (they were typically surprised to hear that some people have neither a passport nor driving licence). Conversely, a greater number argued that if two of the three documents (ID card, passport and driving licence) were to be integrated, it would be more logical to combine all three into one ‘supercard’. The thinking here seemed to be that the cards would be combined for the holder’s convenience; no other argument for integration was put forward.

“Surely the one identity card is your passport, is your driving licence, is your identity card?”

G1: C2DE 31-45 London/SE

“You could have one card that could be upgraded by just putting A, B, C, on it. A for driving, B for passport, C for identity or something.”

G13: ABC1 46-60 Northern Ireland

“I think it would be better if they were all just plain and it was all electronic, then they can make different cards. Like your card says you can drive and it’s all electronic on the database. Rather than having separate cards because that means you have to send off for every card and it makes more bureaucracy.”

G4: ABC1 16-20 Midlands rural

"I'd pay for the all in one but if it was just like the one, say you had a passport and identity card, so if then you did pass your driving test you'd have to get a driving licence and have to pay again to get the whole thing renewed, whereas if you had the option if you choose to have a driving licence, it could just be updated, just put it on the database."

G4: ABC1 16-20 Midlands rural

"I think it would be better if it said it all on one card instead of having all these different cards, so you have one card that says you can drive and you can travel."

G11: C2DE 21-30 Scotland

Security was a second issue. A combined ID card which comprised two of the three documents was thought by some to be a greater liability than a plain ID card. Its value to fraudsters was imagined to be greater because of its additional information and capabilities, and the consequences of losing it seemed likely to be worse (if nothing else, in terms of the hassle involved in getting a replacement). Naturally, one argument made against a three-in-one 'supercard' was that these security considerations would be even more serious.

"The thing is, the more that's on there the more they're going to want to nick your card."

G7: C2DE 21-30 South Wales

"You lose it and you've let someone have access to all your details."

G6: C2DE 61-75 South West rural

A number of practical issues were also raised, most of which resulted from the thought that ID cards, driving licences and passports have different functions and are used in different situations. A combination including a driving licence might have to be sent away to have penalty points added, or even be revoked. A card incorporating a passport might have to be left at a hotel reception as security. In all these cases, respondents argued, the holder would not have his or her ID card to hand if needed. There were also queries about the consequences of cards being lost or stolen. Overlaying

these issues, questions about renewal procedures were raised – would a passport card need to be renewed more often (and presumably therefore be more expensive in the long term) than a driving licence card?

“How long are these cards going to last? How often do we have to renew? And what happens when you send it off to be renewed?”

G5: ABC1 31-45 South West rural

“If you got mugged then you’ve got to get a replacement card, how many weeks or months have you got to wait for that? You might rely on it because you want to go on holiday with it.”

G1: C2DE 31-45 London/SE

As noted, these concerns did not seem to be fundamental objections to the idea of a family of cards; rather they resulted from ‘gut reactions’ to an unexpected development. But their number and the speed with which they were brought up did indicate the strength of respondents’ preconceptions and the effects of contradicting them without a clear explanation.

When asked to choose between the different types of card, members of the public varied in their preferences and reached no clear consensus. Those who felt most positive about the scheme as a whole tended to opt for a single ‘supercard’ that would allow them to drive, travel and prove their identity. Their motive seemed to be convenience, and they tended to assume that measures would be taken to minimise the security and hassle factors mentioned above.

“It should be the one thing. Why would you want to have a driving licence and a passport? You want an identity card that does everything...It shows you everything you want. You don’t need separate ones.”

G3: C2DE 61-75 Midlands

Otherwise, the driving licence option seemed a little more popular than the other two options, but no clear patterns emerged. Preferences for the driving licence

card were largely the result of specific concerns (as in previous research) regarding a combined passport and ID card. Passports were associated with being abroad, and to have limited everyday utility at home, whereas ID cards were assumed to be for use within the UK. They were also often thought to have a 'special' status, and certainly to be 'superior' to driving licences in any imagined hierarchy of personal documents. Many respondents seemed reluctant to carry one around as a matter of course because of the thought that this might 'devalue' their status.

"I would rather have one with my driving licence as I carry that around with me anyway."

G9: C2DE 21-30 North rural

The idea that passport/ID cards might have greater value than any other type of card also raised concerns that they might be particularly targeted by criminals. This tended to make respondents even less willing to consider carrying one around with them.

"Well I don't like carrying my passport around; I would want to put it somewhere safe."

G11: C2DE 21-30 Scotland

"I'm a bit concerned, you know with the passport ID, if I decided I just wanted to pay for that one I'd be a bit concerned about walking around with that and anyone being able to pick it up, if they did try and do some fraud, take the picture...I'm not very good with carrying my passport anyway because I think "What if I lose it?" Whereas just a standard ID card I'd think it was OK, if I lose it I lose it and I can get another one."

G16: Hindu or Sikh (female) 31-45 London/SE

In the light of these concerns, a combined driving licence and ID card was often thought more acceptable. The current licence was widely recognised, and the card version had made the format familiar. Moreover, many members of the public carried their licences with them as a matter of course, whether they were driving or not, and many used them as ID already. In Northern

Ireland, where driving licences have included photographs for many years, there was some feeling that this made the idea of ID cards less relevant and less necessary.

"If you have the driving licence one you've got it at the minute anyway so I don't think it'll make any difference if it had an ID card on it as well."

G14: C2DE 16-20 Northern Ireland

Others thought they would prefer a plain ID card. This group tended to have reservations about the overall scheme, and to want to keep an ID card separate from their existing documents. They also included respondents who did not have driving licences or passports, and did not wish to have to apply for them.

When shown the mock-ups of the proposed cards, most respondents commented on the similarity between their appearance and that of current driving licences. This had a polarising effect on opinions about the scheme: some were reassured by the familiarity and innocence of the cards' appearance; others questioned the need for a new ID card which looked just like what was already in place (and which, on an individual level, might be no more useful or convenient for proving identification).

3. **The issue of compulsion**

It was widely agreed that ID cards would only be worth introducing if owning one were to be made compulsory. Even some respondents who did not want to see the scheme introduced agreed with this. Since those people who 'needed to be controlled' were expected to be the least likely to apply for a card, the only way to impinge on them was thought to be to apply the scheme universally and penalise those who did not

participate. If application were voluntary, only law-abiding citizens were expected to get a card, with the result that the scheme would achieve nothing.

"I think it really has to be compulsory, it has to, why spend all this money if they are not going to make it compulsory."

G10: ABC1 46-60 North

"The people who won't want to have them are the ones that have something to hide but for the good citizens they wouldn't have an issue as there is no problem."

G9: C2DE 21-30 North rural

That said, the enforcement of a compulsory scheme was expected to be very difficult. This remained one of the primary concerns among the most sceptical, who could not imagine how universal participation would be achieved in the face of determined efforts to avoid having a card.

Policing the scheme was also a cause for scepticism. The initial expectation was often that ID cards would be compulsory to carry as well as to own; when respondents learned that this is not the intention, many questioned further the scheme's ability to achieve its objectives. The expectation was that people who were doing something wrong, or who should not be in the country, would only be caught once, and that if given a number of days to produce their card, they would simply 'disappear'.

"It is like if you get stopped by the police and you don't have any documents you have to produce them within seven days time and you go back to the police station, then that person who had got stopped could be a terrorist and they could be fleeing the country the next day."

G18: African-Caribbean (mixed sex) 46-60 Midlands

"What is the point of that then, if you have to have one but you don't have to carry it round with you? If they stop someone on the street and want to know why he or she is there, it is silly not to have to carry it round with you..Give them a few days to produce it and they'll be gone."

G9: C2DE 21-30 North rural

However, feelings about compulsion to carry on a society-wide level were often at odds with the expected implications of this for the individual. There were concerns about how in practice, and how strictly, the system would be enforced. Respondents wondered what penalties there might be for failing to produce them if asked by the police. If there were fines or other penalties for simply forgetting to carry a card, this made the idea less appealing. There were many concerns about the possible penalties for failing to carry or produce an ID card.

"I don't mind the thought of it as a means for getting about but I wouldn't like it to be imposed on me that if you didn't have it with you you could be arrested. I mean in countries like Turkey if you don't have your identity card on you you can be taken away. I would like it to be like if you don't have your driving licence with you you have seven days to produce it."

G13: ABC1 46-60 Northern Ireland

"What happens if you forget to take it with you? Are they going to fine you? Or lock you up?"

G5: ABC1 31-45 South West rural

"Would it be like the police could come up to you and ask to see the identity card? What penalties would they be if you did not have one?"

G11: C2DE 21-30 Scotland

"I wouldn't like it to be imposed on me that if you didn't have it with you, you could be arrested...I would like it to be like if you don't have your driving licence with you, you have seven days to produce it."

G13: ABC1 46-60 Northern Ireland

"What if you were asked for it and it were in the house?"

G15: Pakistani Muslim (male) 16-20 North

"It depends as well because most people go out in the weekend and if you are drunk then you don't want to be carrying your ID card around with you in case you lose it. But then that is the time when you are more likely to be asked for it maybe."

G9: C2DE 21-30 North rural

On reflection, many said they would be unhappy if there were proposals for being fined or found guilty of an offence if they simply forgot their card when they went

out (though this is not the government's intention). A sizeable minority was also concerned that compulsion to carry would lead to an increase in the government's ability to control and 'track' its citizens.

This contradiction highlighted, and was a symptom of, a fundamental dichotomy in many respondents' attitudes to ID cards. They could see that society as a whole and the government (and therefore, indirectly, they themselves) might reap some benefit from a successful scheme. Although many regarded ID cards as being essentially targeted at other (types of) people, they recognised the necessity of universal ownership and were prepared to apply for a card in order to achieve this.

But when they considered the effects that their participation might have on themselves as individuals, they concluded that the drawbacks would outweigh the benefits. Concerns about data security, inconvenience and civil liberties often overwhelmed any tangible improvements they thought ID cards might make to their day-to-day lives. In short, they were caught between wanting everyone to apply for a card in order to allow a universal scheme to address pressing social problems, and wanting to avoid applying themselves because of the negative consequences they imagined.

"I wouldn't like it put on me but at the same time I think it wouldn't be a bad idea to start at a certain level, with immigrants, people who've committed crimes. I think a certain element of the population needs to have these things, but I don't think it should be thrust upon us all."

G13: ABC1 46-60 Northern Ireland

4. **The timing of the ID card scheme**

The initial expectation was that ID cards would be introduced as soon as possible. Those who were in

favour of a scheme tended to approve of this, as the social problems ID cards were meant to address were thought to be current and (in some cases) increasing. Their ideas of when the first cards might be introduced varied from about a year to four years in the future.

It should be noted that at this point in the discussions the majority of respondents expected ID cards to be significantly less 'hi-tech' than those proposed. Their assessments of possible and optimum timescales for introduction tended to lengthen as they discovered what the proposed scheme involved.

The proposed introduction date of 2008 initially raised little significant controversy, but it was later than most had supposed and seemed to many to be quite a long time in the future. This thought could have a number of consequences. A few spontaneously suggested that the time-frame would allow the government to iron out any problems and get it right first time; a minority was then reassured by this, and felt that it indicated that the task was being taken seriously.

"It's a huge thing to take on board and organize. It's going to take years to go through everyone and get all their details down.

G5: ABC1 31-45 South West rural

"I think with the sheer logistics of it, with so many people, it would have to be that length of time."

G13: ABC1 46-60 Northern Ireland

A greater number of respondents became a little cynical when told about the proposed introduction date, and felt that this was another instance of government procrastination on the subject. They felt sure that the government could achieve an earlier start date if it really wanted to. That said, these respondents had no solid objections to 2008, and their positions often

shifted a little when they realised how much preparation would be needed, and how complicated this would be.

For the more generally sceptical, however, the proposed start date could heighten cynicism about the scheme's efficacy. They thought that the ID cards scheme was needed now, and that the situation would deteriorate if unchecked for a further four years. If they believed that introducing cards now would be a case of 'shutting the stable door after the horse has bolted', the proposal to do so only in four years' time could be greeted with some derision. Such a long delay was also thought by some to give criminals time to perfect methods of forgery.

"If it's to do with people coming in and everything, there's an awful lot of people who can come in in the next four years."

G13: ABC1 46-60 Northern Ireland

"Too late. In say 2012 we'll be flooded with...(immigrants) So many people are coming over the fence now in five or six years time it'll be too late."

G1: C2DE 31-45 London/SE

"It's three or four years before they bring them in. That's like closing the door after the horse has bolted."

G3: C2DE 61-75 Midlands

"That is too long I think, if they are going to do it then they need to do it within the next two or three years."

G9: C2DE 21-30 North rural

If anything, the proposal to stagger the introduction of ID cards was more controversial than the 2008 start date. Again, some took a positive, practical view and realised that it would be impossible to issue everyone with a card on the same day. But many instinctively felt that a staggered system based initially on renewal of existing documents would be unfair. They argued that it would be a lottery as to who would have an ID card first, and some grumbled that it would be law-abiding

citizens ('as usual') who would get a card early; others would wait until forced to do so.

Questions about the practicalities of a staggered introduction were also raised. Some wondered whether people would *have* to get an ID card when renewing their documents, or whether they would be able to wait until the eventual compulsory date to apply. Others were again unsure how the government would ensure that everyone had a card by the compulsory date, and what the penalties for refusal might be. There were also questions about the implications for the scheme of a possible change of government.

"If it's introduced by a Labour government and there wasn't a Labour government in 2008, could this be put on the back burner?"

G13: ABC1 46-60 Northern Ireland

"What happens if the Lib Dems get in next time or the time after that, are they going to scrap it or change it?"

G18: African-Caribbean (mixed sex) 46-60 Midlands

Where the staggered introduction process was accepted, there was strong support for stating at the outset the date from which cards would be made compulsory. Not only would this provide a clear timeframe, it would also be seen as reassuring evidence that the government was committed to seeing the scheme through, and had planned ahead to do so.

Estimates of the time lapse between 2008 and the compulsory date ranged from six months to several years, but most felt that a year or two would be acceptable. Any shorter than this was not expected to be practical; a much longer delay would feel as though the introduction were dragging on, and that eventual compulsion was not guaranteed.

When asked, only a handful thought that they would apply for an ID card *before* their documents were due for renewal. This did not seem to indicate strong resistance to the scheme, given that a process had been suggested whereby everyone would get one in the end. But it did suggest little enthusiasm at the prospect of becoming an ID card holder, and a failure to appreciate any benefits that individuals might enjoy for themselves.

5. The information on the cards

5.1 General views

The amount and type of information to be held on the cards was crucial in shaping opinions of the scheme as a whole. In the absence of a clear statement of purpose (as opposed to the more general objectives of reducing various types of crime and fraud), the level of detail was seen as a good indicator of the government's intentions. This could be viewed positively, in terms of how effective ID cards might be in tackling social problems, or negatively, in terms of the power and control the government might gain over individuals. Those who were most favourable towards the idea tended to want more information to be included; those with objections wanted less. Clearly the amount and type of data was central to concerns about civil liberties and invasion of privacy.

"If you are talking about putting DNA samples and criminal records on it then it is fine but if it is purely for identity so that you have your address on it then I really don't see what the advantage would be as you have your driving licence and your passport and it is just another thing for people to counterfeit isn't it."

G9: C2DE 21-30 North rural

It is worth noting here that for the purposes of the discussions the absence of an explicit statement about what data would be held on the register often fostered suspicion about these negative points and could reduce support for ID cards. Some members of the public had the impression that the government was being deliberately opaque about its intentions. Such perceptions could also suggest that the information capacity of the register would not be finite, and could potentially be increased in the future or linked up with other records.

Respondents' individual views about how much information *should* be on the cards and register revealed another example of the dichotomy between collective good and individual disadvantage mentioned above. There was often internal tension between wanting people to disclose enough information to make the scheme effective, and not wishing to give out so much information that the cards constitute an invasion of privacy for law-abiding citizens (such as themselves). In many cases, it seemed that both desires rubbed up against each other, or even overlapped, making it hard for respondents to come to a conclusion about the optimum level of information to disclose.

As in the previous study there were many concerns about the security of information stored either on the card or the register.

"I would be worried about the national identity register. How vulnerable information would be."

"I don't mind that, but the thought of anybody being able to see your identity for something else would frighten me. Especially if they have a fingerprint of you, an iris identity."

G13: ABC1 46-60 Northern Ireland

"I mean if I had an ID card, I would want some sort of system, that would only give me access in certain areas. You want to be - you wouldn't want details printed on the front, would you? You'd want it in some sort of code. And it can only be accessed by a certain machine on certain data. Like if you lost it... You wouldn't want somebody to pick it up and just access all the information."

G8: ABC1 31-45 South Wales

5.2 Information displayed on the card

Most guessed that the information displayed on the card itself would be fairly basic – common suggestions were the holder's name, photo and date of birth. When shown, the proposal for the information on the card was largely accepted, with some minor reservations.

'Nationality (in most cases)' initially prompted questions about when nationality will *not* be shown, and some suspected (and criticised) a move to make exceptions for immigrants and asylum seekers. An explanation of the situation with regard to Northern Ireland largely allayed these concerns, but a small minority of Asian respondents still had concerns about discrimination towards people with non-British nationality or who were born outside the UK.

Some of those in Northern Ireland were keen to know before this was explained whether they would have the option of an ID card that indicated they were Irish. It was important to them to know that this was available.

"OK we're living within the UK but a lot of people here class themselves as Irish citizens so is this going to be put upon them?"

"Or are they going to have the choice whether they do it or not?"

G13: ABC1 46-60 Northern Ireland

The proposed identity number was generally accepted without problem, but there were concerns that this would enable someone who stole a card to obtain goods or services, especially remotely. Emotional resistance to the concept of an ID number also arose – Big Brother and *The Prisoner* came to some respondents' minds. And some wondered whether the ID number would be an equivalent to, or replacement for, National Insurance or National Health numbers.

As in the last piece of research, the question of whether the holder's address would be shown on their card was somewhat controversial. It was not clear to respondents what the government's intentions were – it did not feature on the list of 'basic information', but appeared on all three card mock-ups. Most were happy for their address to appear on the card, but a significant minority raised concerns about security if the card were lost or stolen (especially if carried in a bag along with house keys). Comparisons with driving licences could be reassuring, since many respondents carried one most of the time, realised that the licence displayed their address and did not find this a cause for concern. But a minority remained perturbed at the prospect, particularly if the card needed to be carried frequently.

"Soon as anyone finds it, if you lost it or got your pocket picked, they've got the address."

G3: C2DE 61-75 Midlands

"Say you get mugged and you have to go to hospital...that person's got your address, they know you're not going to be there."

G9: C2DE 21-30 North rural

This discussion also raised practical questions about renewing ID cards when the holder's details changed. Addresses were thought likely to change more frequently than any other piece of information; if printed

on the card, moving house would entail sending off for a new card, which was expected to be an inconvenient and possibly expensive process. Most imagined that such details could be changed more easily and quickly on the electronic register.

5.3 Information held on the register

Across the sample, a broad spectrum of opinion emerged about what type of information would be acceptable or desirable to hold on the register. Respondents' views largely (but not entirely) correlated with their overall support for ID cards and perceptions of the purpose and security of the scheme; they were also often affected by the internal tensions discussed above. Feelings about the most appropriate relationship between the chip and the register (in terms of what information was to be held on which device, and the purpose of each) were also varied and confused.

Those least supportive of the scheme tended to believe that the register should only have an administrative role. They felt that it would be useful as a back-up of information displayed on the card, to be accessed if a card was lost, but that no additional information should be stored there.

Many, perhaps the majority, thought that some health and medical information would also be acceptable, especially if provided on a voluntary basis. This might be uncontroversial information that would be useful to paramedics in the case of an accident, such as blood group, details about diabetes, epilepsy and severe allergies, and intentions with regard to organ donation.

Those who were more supportive tended to feel that the register should also carry information with which the activities of certain groups of people could be controlled or restricted. These details included criminal records, DNA information and other unspecified facts which would help to 'keep tabs on' recent immigrants and asylum seekers. It was here, however, that the dichotomy emerged most strongly, as discussions made it clear that a number of respondents regarded ID cards primarily as something for others, not for themselves. They were keen that certain groups of people should have to provide this sort of information, but simultaneously indignant at the prospect of providing it themselves. As noted, this tension was often very difficult to resolve.

"You need that sort of information to keep these people under control, but it's not the sort of thing I'd want to give about myself."

G6: C2DE 61-75 South West rural

An enthusiastic minority said they would like the register to go further even than this, and contain a whole range of details which would maximise the personal convenience of owning a card. These included banking and financial details, qualifications and employment records.

"As much as possible. Anything they can think of that would help."

G3: C2DE 61-75 Midlands

Any suggestion that this type of information might be held on the register met with strong resistance from those who were less positive about the scheme, and who appeared less trusting of the government. They saw this as an unwarranted invasion of privacy, which would give the government far too much power over individuals. In many cases, they said that this was what they had feared all along.

Clarification from the government on the information to be held on the register, and whether the register would be linked to other databases, seemed likely to reassure many respondents. Some, however, professed themselves unlikely to be reassured by such clarification; they felt that the electronic nature of databases meant that such 'information creep' was almost inevitable, and that there was nothing to stop future governments expanding the remit of the system if they chose.

5.4 Disclosure of information

Perhaps inevitably, respondents' views on what information should be held on the register depended to some extent on their understanding of who would be able (legitimately) to access it. When first shown the proposal for a system using a chip and register, many expected that the card would need to be scanned each time it was used, thus allowing a wide range of people to see what was on the register. Making it clear that in many situations the card would simply have to be shown (and therefore that only information printed on the face of the card would be seen) went some way towards allaying these concerns.

In terms of accessing information on the register, almost all respondents insisted that effective measures to ensure that only certain people could see certain records were essential. Many would not countenance supplying more than the most basic information if they could not be convinced of this point, and those who accepted that such security would be possible often said they would be willing to go into greater detail. There was, of course, a hard core of respondents who

refused to believe that the government could guarantee this partial disclosure.

Most assumed that the police would have the right to scan the card and look at all the information held on the register (except perhaps health records); most also accepted that medical personnel could see all or most of the information (except criminal records). Indeed, respondents were surprised at the suggestion that the police may not have unlimited access to the register – this was seen as a fundamental purpose of the scheme.

Beyond this, respondents were uncertain as to whom they thought should have access to the register, but they were sure that the privileges of anyone who did would have to be tightly controlled. Employers were suggested, to enable them to check an applicant's right to work in the UK (and qualifications, if the register were to go that far), but there were concerns about access to personal and potentially prejudicial information. Banks and other financial institutions were also mooted, as institutions which needed to be careful about identity and security, but similar concerns arose again.

"Well if you go into an off licence is it going to happen? I mean once they scan it can the information be recorded or reproduced by whoever is scanning it?"

G13: ABC1 46-60 Northern Ireland

I think only the police should be able to find out all your information (from the card) Not people on the counters and things.

G3: C2DE 61-75 Midlands

"They should have their restrictions as to what information they have access to. If it's the unemployment office they can have your employment history."

G16: Hindu or Sikh (female) 31-45 London/SE

"There has to be a point where it says " you can't access this.""

G4: ABC1 16-20 Midlands rural

"It should be set up so that the police could only know your criminal record. Only doctors can find out your medical records."

G15: Pakistani Muslim (male) 16-20 North

Ultimately, the issues of depth of information and confidence in the control exercised over access to the register went hand in hand. Within the limits alluded to above, the greater the security of sensitive information, and the greater the number of 'segments' that the information could be carved into for partial access, the happier most respondents were to disclose information about themselves. Some were easily reassured (in the hypothetical research situation) that such control would be possible; others found it much harder to accept this.

6. Biometric information

Initial response to the proposed inclusion of biometric information varied, partly depending on familiarity with the term and the concept.

Some members of the public had already heard that biometrics might be included on ID cards and/or passports (though term 'biometrics' is rarely known), or knew that biometric information was used in other contexts. Some had already suggested that fingerprints or DNA would be useful information to include in the scheme. Others knew that certain biometric information was now required for entry into the US. These people seemed broadly accepting of the need for and use of biometrics.

"They are doing it in America now, taking your fingerprints. I go to America a lot and probably the next time I go I'll have to have it done. I think it's a good idea."

G3: C2DE 61-75 Midlands

"It's good. An iris is hard to duplicate. Someone can't lie basically."

G4: ABC1 16-20 Midlands rural

Less positively a minority were surprised and alarmed by the prospect of using biometrics. They were unfamiliar with the idea of using information of this type to identify people via cards and/or databases, and associated it with futuristic films and science fiction. Initially they felt that using biometrics was going too far – this was beyond what they had expected from an ID card and it made them feel uneasy about how the card might be used.

"It's a bit creepy."

"Yea it's a bit X Files."

G1: C2DE 31-45 London/SE

However it was clear that the concept of biometrics gained currency and acceptance as it became more familiar: some of those with initial reservations about it were less concerned by the end of the discussions.

The benefits of biometric information were largely uncontested once everyone was clear what it meant. Most seemed to know that fingerprints and iris patterns are unique and understood that they could be used to generate a unique record of identity for each card holder. They accepted that as a result biometrics would probably make ID cards more secure. Some people regarded this as the first evidence of a *personal* benefit of ID cards, because it would give individuals a safer way of proving their identity.

"I think it will be very hard to forge. I think if it was used with finger printing then it would be much more effective."

G9: C2DE 21-30 North rural

There was also some appeal in the novelty of biometrics – though familiar to many, this component of the cards made them seem modern and almost cutting edge in their technology. It was also apparent that the use of biometrics demonstrated to some that the

government is taking ID cards seriously – it suggested that the scheme would be significantly more advanced and high-tech than the documentation (existing passports and driving licences) currently already available.

In spite of a widespread belief in the efficacy of biometrics in making the cards secure, few believed that they would be impossible to forge, if not now, then at some point in the future. Most agreed that they would be very difficult to falsify, but said with some resignation that nothing was beyond the will and ability of the most determined criminals, and that criminals are ‘always one step ahead’.

“Whatever the system they have, there’s bound to be someone who finds a way round it.”

G5: ABC1 31-45 South West rural

A minority believed that the use of biometrics could make the cards less rather than more safe. It might make them more of a target for fraudsters because if the authorities regarded biometrics as foolproof it would be highly valuable to have a fake biometric ID. In addition they worried about the consequences of having their identity forged: biometrics could make it particularly difficult to prove their original identity.

In relation to perceptions of fingerprint and iris biometrics there were few specific concerns. Fingerprints had an association with crime and policing but this was often seen as a positive, since there might be practical benefits to having fingerprints on cards in terms of solving crimes. Iris biometrics prompted some worries about the safety of the procedure, in light of its comparative novelty. Respondents also wondered whether the procedure would work with people affected

by cataracts or other form of deteriorating eye-sight, or who wore contact lenses.

7. The application process

7.1 Expectations

Expectations of the application process were broadly consistent across the sample. The general assumption was that there would be a lengthy form to complete and then send off by post with documentation establishing identity such as a passport. Once it had been made clear that the proposal is to use biometric information, this changed: people expected the need to make a personal visit to record this information, but were often uncertain how this would link in with an application form.

7.2 Response to proposed application methods

It was clear once people had learned about the major features and components of ID cards that the process of applying for one would be regarded as a major undertaking: there was much concern that the application method should be safe and secure.

"It's got to be somewhere that is secure. It's going to have to be somewhere like a police station. You are going to have to produce forms of identity to prove that you are that person with the fingerprint or the iris. So it's going to have to be somewhere like a police station."

G13: ABC1 46-60 Northern Ireland

Of the three methods proposed (post, online and phone), all prompted some issues and concerns. Post was the most acceptable method, but generated worries about security: there was a perceived danger that the application form, accompanying documentation or card itself could easily be lost, or stolen and used to

create a false identity. This reservation seemed to have been heightened by recent media coverage of delivery failure rates and theft from the postal system.

"A little card with everything that's ever happened to me and it's going to be posted through the public post so anyone can get their hands on it. I don't fancy that."

G4: ABC1 16-20 Midlands rural

A few respondents suggested that the application procedure could include some kind of mechanism for activating cards once they are received, to make the process a little more secure, as with some credit cards.

The option of online application attracted some support, but again generated worries about security, given the claimed risks of hackers, viruses and computer breakdown. There were also some logistical problems with this, particularly the question how applicants could provide proof of their identity online.

The possibility of making telephone applications via a call centre was widely rejected. It prompted concerns about lack of confidentiality because call centre staff would have access to large quantities of personal information, and it would not be possible to vet staff to the extent that security could be guaranteed.

"I didn't like the idea of the call centres. I just don't like call centres. You don't know who you're giving your information to."

G3: C2DE 61-75 Midlands

"It would be more difficult on the phone, it would be easy to go in and do it yourself, and I would rather do the whole thing in person."

G11: C2DE 21-30 Scotland

In addition to this it came across as too casual a means of making such an important application: there would be no written record in front of the applicant, and only recall of a conversation. Some also felt that it could be

too time-consuming and unwieldy to provide a large volume of information over the 'phone.

As an alternative to all three options, many respondents suggested that the whole process should be carried out face to face – given that a personal visit would be necessary anyway to record biometrics. They imagined individuals could take their completed forms along with their documentation when they went for their biometric appointment, and complete the application in one go.

7.3 Response to Home Office video

Response to the video was largely favourable: for the most part the depiction of the application process fitted with expectations and came across as at least acceptable. Although there was clearly quite a lot involved, most felt that if the ID cards system is going to be secure then a thorough application process is necessary; and there was some reassurance in the idea that each person would only have to go through this once. The process of recording biometrics seemed not too taxing: it looked satisfyingly high-tech and efficient but not likely to cause alarm.

A minority felt daunted by what seemed to them like a time-consuming and inconvenient process, involving a long form, the need to make a personal visit and the procedure of giving fingerprints or having irises photographed.

"The whole application procedure seems to be quite lengthy and I think that would put a lot of people off."

G9: C2DE 21-30 North rural

"From what we've just seen it looks really hectic to me. My God, it's going to take two or three hours of my time to go there and register. And there's going to be some mistakes."

G16: Hindu or Sikh (female) 31-45 London/SE

Some wondered whether the application process would really be as straightforward as shown in the video. Their feeling was that in reality there would probably be long queues and fewer and less helpful staff. There were also concerns that certain groups of people would have difficulty in making personal visits – elderly or disabled people – or in completing the procedure – those with limited English.

Respondents were asked for their suggestions for suitable locations for recording biometrics. These included police stations, town halls, schools, churches, job centres and post offices. Some also said spontaneously that there would be a need for a mobile unit to work in the same way as a blood donation facility, to allow those in work and the less mobile to have easy access.

“Can they not come round to your place of work or where you live, can they not just bring a van round and you go to the van at a certain time.”

G9: C2DE 21-30 North rural

They were also asked how far they would be prepared to travel to record biometric information.

Unsurprisingly, estimates varied, but all wanted the facility to be as local as possible. Some said they would be satisfied if their nearest location were in the same city; others wanted to travel no further than they would to a polling station. Distances ranged from less than a mile to a maximum of ten miles. Those in rural areas with their own transport were generally prepared to travel further – at least ten miles; those without transport expected not to have to travel more than two or three miles.

“If the government are saying you got to have it done let them come close to home and do it. Why should we go out of our way?”

G1: C2DE 31-45 London/SE

Preferences in relation to opening hours were largely predictable. The demand was for fixed appointments to avoid queues; and for late evening and weekend opening for those who work full time. A few wanted time off work paid for by the government to cover their visit.

8. Using ID cards

Initial expectations of when the cards would be used were broadly in line with perceptions that ID cards are primarily for the benefit of the government, not for the individual. They also depended on perceptions of the government's motive for introducing the scheme and expectations of the information to be held on the register. The general belief was that ID cards would have two broad functions – to check or to prove an individual's identity, and to provide the authorities with access to information on the register.

The most obvious expected use of the cards was checks by the police to establish eligibility to be in the country or identity in the event of a crime. ID cards were expected to form part of police stop and search activity and also to be used once people have been arrested. The assumption was that ID cards could prove that people are who they say they are and would be an easy way to check an individual's criminal record if this information were included on the register.

"If you stopped someone who is committing a crime you'd know where they lived. If they're not prepared to give their address, if they have an identity card then you've got their address."

G13: ABC1 46-60 Northern Ireland

“The police would be able to do spot checks in the street to find out who they are and where they are from so it would save time for the police. Illegal immigrants would be able to be tracked down easier so as soon as they come in the country you could do blood testing and DNA testing and find out exactly who they are and what their background is and if they have a criminal record and so we really do need it.”

G9: C2DE 21-30 North rural

Though this was not prompted in the discussions, ID cards were also expected to be used by health services, particularly in the event of emergency admissions where the patient was unable to give information himself/herself. Respondents imagined cards being used to check ID and access health records, including information about blood groups, allergies or other conditions that might affect choice of treatment. The issue of checking eligibility to receive NHS treatment free did not come up spontaneously, but was acknowledged as a valuable attribute of the cards once it was raised.

“I think it would be good if it held medical information, because say you had some sort of intolerance or something, and you had an accident and had to go to hospital. Even something like you’re allergic to Paracetamol or something.”
Or if you were a rare blood group.”

G1: C2DE 31-45 London/SE

“If your blood group was on that card and you were in an accident someone in the hospital could read what group you were, and a life could be saved by having that.”

G3: C2DE 61-75 Midlands

“A friend of mine was recently in a motor bike accident and he was unconscious and my cousin went to see how they were and he was getting quizzed, “Who is he? What’s his name? We can’t do anything until we find out his name.” They didn’t get to treat him for about two hours. But if he had this card he wouldn’t have had to sit there for however many hours.”

G4: ABC1 16-20 Midlands rural

“You’d be able to get in touch with relatives, next of kin, whereas people aren’t able to tell you these things. That would be very helpful.”

G13: ABC1 46-60 Northern Ireland

“A lot of people come into our country who need medical treatment that they can’t get in their own country. And they come here, and they get access to our health service, and then they go back. So it’s probably to do with that as well.”

G8: ABC1 31-45 South Wales

Some also imagined that ID cards could be used to check the validity of benefit claims, and welcomed this.

“Would that not stop all these people who make all these social security claims? That would be a good thing.”

G13: ABC1 46-60 Northern Ireland

The greater the amount and range of information people expected to be held on the register, the wider the anticipated range of uses. Those who believed it would contain a lot of data anticipated a broad range of uses, such as verifying or even replacing credit and debit card transactions; allowing entry to workplaces and places of education, checking eligibility for entry to places with age restrictions (bars, nightclubs); and checking eligibility to vote, either in person or online.

“Even when you are paying things in stores as it would be a way of checking who you are, to stop fraud.”

G9: C2DE 21-30 North rural

“I imagine that it would be good when applying for a job as they can get background information on you. They can tell if you are a paedophile trying to work in a school. That would be good because they have to have so many checks before they can get a job and the employment process takes ages. You can’t sit around and wait for paper work.”

G5: ABC1 31-45 South West rural

Parents of young people saw tangible and valuable benefits in ID cards for their children, particularly if they meant reduced access to licensed premises. Younger people themselves could see significant personal benefits in having a card, particularly its role as a means of proving their age – to gain entry to bars and clubs. However they were also more likely than others to own other forms of identity already, because they were accustomed to having to establish their age.

"I think it's good for 16 plus. Say one of my children went out clubbing, with all the trouble now, and they haven't got anything on them and they end up in hospital or whatever and no one knows who they are, and I'm sitting indoors and 2 days later I get a phone call. In that respect I would willingly pay for my children to have an i/d card."

G1: C2DE 31-45 London/SE

Those who were most suspicious of the scheme assumed that ID cards would be used frequently in transactions with government and the commercial world, and that this would generate information of value to government and possible threat to individuals. They believed that use of the cards would help government build up a picture of people's movements and 'track' individuals. This belief was often linked to store loyalty cards, which they believed were used by retailers to establish shopping behaviour: ID cards would use similar technology, but for more sinister purposes.

The usage occasions given as examples were largely accepted – and none was considered particularly controversial – but respondents tended to see little difference from the current system. These were seen as situations where people would already expect to have to produce their driving licence or passport to establish their identity. For the doubters this was reassuring: it implied that – having an ID card would not significantly change their current behaviour or give the government new powers. For those who were most supportive the examples and the implications of this sort of usage of ID cards sometimes disappointed. They wondered what the case for ID cards was, if little was really going to change.

It is also worth noting that these examples of usage were thought unlikely to encourage people to carry their ID cards as a matter of course. All were regarded as relatively infrequent and pre-planned situations (except

proof of age for teenagers); in this case they would probably keep their ID card at home and only take it out when needed (as many currently did with passports).

9. **Provenance of ID cards**

Feelings on the most appropriate provenance of ID cards were clear and largely consistent. The general belief was that this should be a government-run initiative, visibly labelled as such, though with no need for a named individual at its head.

In spite of some concerns about the government's motives for introducing the scheme and competence to run it, there was little support for any other organisation to be involved. Most people felt quite strongly that only the government has (and should have) access to certain types of personal information and to an aggregation of information on any one individual. In addition to this they saw ID cards as a long term proposal, and regarded government as the only body which could give them confidence in its long term future existence.

Assuming the scheme were run by a part of the government, the Home Office tended to be seen as the obvious home for it and the most suitable government body to introduce and manage the scheme. The Home Office was not top of mind for many, but typically one or two respondents in a group would suggest it and most of the others would agree. If it was not the Home Office, the view was that it should be an 'ID cards department' within the Home Office. The reasons for this were that the Home Office was perceived as broadly responsible for major domestic issues related to security, residence and immigration; and that it was seen to have longevity – other departments may

change under different administrations, but every government has a Home Office.

"The Home Office is the relevant department to look after the national identity register."

G13: ABC1 46-60 Northern Ireland

"I think this is a much bigger thing than we're sort of taking on board, so it's got to be done by something like the Home Office, which is quite frightening."

G1: C2DE 31-45 London/SE

"I think they should have a department within the Home Office who deal solely with ID cards."

G9: C2DE 21-30 North rural

A few people with a more negative view of government generally felt that it could not be trusted to set up and run such a large scale scheme, and that only an efficient commercial enterprise would be able to achieve this.

"I think in order for it not to fail an independent company has to run it, not the government."

G4: ABC1 16-20 Midlands rural

"The Home Office can't get your visas out in time, can't get your passports out in time."

G16: Hindu or Sikh (female) 31-45 London/SE

However the idea of an independent or semi-independent body to run the initiative was generally rejected, for several reasons. The assumption was that it would still be controlled by government funding – so there would be no real benefits to a separate body behind it. Many people felt that independence and a commercial background was no guarantee of competence, particularly taking into account recent fiascos such as Railtrack (though there was much confusion evident between quangos, private companies and watchdogs). A commercial body was also expected to lack the gravitas and the guaranteed longevity of a government department.

The possibility of there being an ID cards ‘supremo’ was also generally rejected, for similar reasons. Many people felt that an ID card scheme would be too big and too long-term an undertaking for one person to have primary responsibility for it. There would be a need for continuity, and setting up the scheme would take too long to guarantee that the same person would remain in the job. There was a belief that the whole system might be discredited if the individual made a mistake.

In its favour, a small number said that an ID cards supremo would have the benefit of being more clearly and visibly accountable than a government department if anything went wrong. They felt that it might be easier to apportion blame and put things right in the event of mistakes.

10. **Costs**

As in previous research, perceptions of possible costs were coloured by strongly-held views about the principle of paying and about the likely sums involved. Considered views about the cost of the scheme were difficult to elicit. Opinions tended to be emotional and instinctive and in some cases significantly affected views of the scheme as a whole.

A significant minority were already aware that individuals will be asked to pay for cards directly, but most assumed the system will be government-funded, and reacted strongly against paying for cards themselves.

“No way should you have to pay for it. If the government are going to bring it in they’ve got to give it to us. We haven’t asked for it.”

G1: C2DE 31-45 London/SE

"If they are going to impose them on us I thought you wouldn't have to pay for them."

G13: ABC1 46-60 Northern Ireland

Information on changes to passports was introduced before reference to paying for ID cards, and this in itself caused surprise and consternation. Very few were aware that passports are becoming biometric. Almost all saw the cost increase (to £73) as very significant, to the extent that the extra £4 for an ID card was almost overlooked.

When the possible costs for ID cards were discussed, the passport/ID option prompted the most indignation at first sight. The absolute cost was considered very high, particularly when people considered the implications for a large family. The increase in cost over existing passports seemed so dramatic that some suspected that the government must be making a profit on ID cards.

After consideration, perceptions of the cost of a plain ID card were at least as rejecting, for one primary reason: people can choose not to have a passport, but will be unable to choose not to have an ID card if it becomes compulsory. On this basis it seemed entirely unfair to make the individual pay for it.

Some respondents broadly accepted the cost of the passport/ID card if they believed that the introduction of biometric information would have a real benefit for them and their security. Others regarded the introduction of biometrics, like the ID card itself, as something for the benefit of the government, not the individual.

The extra £4 to cover concessions went largely unnoticed but was generally accepted when mentioned. It seemed only a small percentage of the overall cost;

and the principle of concessions was approved (though some were suspicious of how 'low income' will be defined and proved).

Rather than paying for ID cards themselves, most said they would prefer the government to fund the scheme out of general taxation. They saw this as very different from a direct payment because the cost would be less noticeable for the individual, it would not be a regressive tax, and they thought it might encourage the government to off-set savings it made from reduced crime and fraud.

"I think it should all be combined into one card and that we should pay for it through our taxes."

G9: C2DE 21-30 North rural

It is also worth noting that responses to cost were affected by perceptions of how often the cards would need to be renewed. People immediately wondered whether cards would last for life/until old age (like a paper driving licence) or for 10 years (like a passport), and had queries about what would happen when changes needed to be made to the information, such as addresses. They tended to find it difficult to grasp that biometrics would only need to be provided once.

11. Considered views of ID cards

After the discussions respondents who had initially been in favour of ID cards were generally a little less enthusiastic in their support, though they still believed the scheme should go ahead. This was largely because they now felt that the scheme was *not what they thought it was*, in a variety of ways: it will not be compulsory to carry the cards; it was not clear that the cards would be significantly different from current documentation (and proposed biometric passports);

and the scheme seemed likely to have as much effect on them personally as on other groups in society. The principle of paying for ID cards and the likely costs were the most important factors which reduced the level of support.

In spite of these concerns, most respondents were still in favour of the scheme going ahead – albeit with more reservations than before, and with greater need for reassurance about certain aspects of the scheme.

Those who began the groups with concerns about civil liberties tended to persist in these concerns some felt a little reassured because the cards will not be compulsory to carry, there may be less information on the register than they had expected, and usage occasions may be more limited than they had thought.

People who had been initially sceptical as to whether the scheme would work generally felt the same as at the start of the groups. A minority felt encouraged that the use of biometrics would make the cards more secure and harder to forge than they had thought. Most persisted in the view that those whom they would like to see ‘controlled’ by the system would either avoid having cards or would obtain fakes, and that an ID card scheme would not improve society unless there was a change in government policy on crime and immigration.

Appendix

CONTACT QUESTIONNAIRE

Name:

Address:

.....

Tel:

Sex: Male () Female ()

Occupation (HoH):

SeS: A () B () C1 () C2 () D () E ()

Age: 16-20 () 21-30 () 31-45 () 46-60 () 61-75 ()

Living with partner: Yes () No ()

Children living at home: No () Yes (write in ages).....

.....

GOOD MORNING/AFTERNOON, I WORK FOR AN INDEPENDENT MARKET RESEARCH COMPANY CALLED CRAGG ROSS DAWSON. WE ARE CARRYING OUT A RESEARCH STUDY ABOUT CURRENT AFFAIRS. I WOULD BE GRATEFUL IF I COULD ASK YOU A FEW QUESTIONS.

QA Do you, or any of your close family or friends work in any of the following occupations now, or have you or they ever done so in the past?

- Advertising () CLOSE
Marketing () CLOSE
Market research () CLOSE
Public relations () CLOSE
Journalism/broadcasting () CLOSE
Police Force () CLOSE
Armed Forces () CLOSE
Civil Service () CLOSE
Customs and Excise () CLOSE
Department of Work and Pensions () CLOSE

IF ELIGIBLE GO TO QB. OTHERWISE CLOSE.

QB Have you ever attended a market research group discussion or interview?

- Yes () QC
No () Q1

QC And have you attended such a discussion or interview in the last 6 months?

- Yes () CLOSE
No () QD

QD What was/were the subject(s) of the discussion(s)/interview(s) you attended? WRITE IN BELOW.

.....
CLOSE IF RELATED TO THIS RESEARCH TOPIC. OTHERWISE GO TO Q1.

Q1 Thinking about your income, which of the following applies to you?

- I am in full time paid employment ()
- I am in part time paid employment ()
- I am in full time education ()
- I am unemployed and receiving JSA and/or income support ()
- I am not in paid work and I am supported by my partner ()
- I am retired and receiving a state pension only ()
- I am retired and receiving a private pension/income ()

TWO RESPONDENTS IN EACH OF THE WORKING AGE C2DE GROUPS (GROUPS 1, 7, 9, 11 AND 14) SHOULD BE UNEMPLOYED AND RECEIVING JOB SEEKERS' ALLOWANCE AND/OR INCOME SUPPORT.

ALL OTHER RESPONDENTS SHOULD BE IN PAID EMPLOYMENT, OR SUPPORTED BY THEIR PARTNER, OR RETIRED AND RECEIVING A PENSION, OR STUDENTS (GROUPS 4, 14, 15 ONLY). HALF OF THOSE IN THE C2DE PENSIONER GROUPS (GROUPS 3 AND 6) SHOULD BE RECEIVING THE STATE PENSION ONLY. TO Q2.

Q2 Would you mind telling me if you are a member of, or work for, any of these organisations?

- Labour Party ()
- Conservative Party ()
- Liberal Democratic Party ()
- Green Party ()
- British National Party () CLOSE
- Citizens Advice Bureau () CLOSE
- Liberty () CLOSE
- Welfare rights organisation () CLOSE

Q3 Would you mind telling me whether you currently own a passport or driving licence?

- Passport only ()
- Driving licence only ()
- Both ()
- Neither ()

PLEASE ENSURE A GOOD MIX OF PASSPORT AND/OR DRIVING LICENCE HOLDERS IN ALL GROUPS AGED OVER 21.

PLEASE TRY TO RECRUIT 1 OR 2 PEOPLE IN EACH OF THE C2DE GROUPS (GROUPS 1, 3, 6, 7, 9, 11, 14) WHO HAVE **NEITHER** PASSPORT **NOR** DRIVING LICENCE, AND DO NOT EXCLUDE PEOPLE WITH NEITHER DOCUMENT FROM THE OTHER GROUPS.

RECRUIT AS APPROPRIATE

571 TOPIC GUIDE – IDENTITY CARDS

Background

Age, make-up of household, employment status (if relevant).

Current events and issues

What current events are in people's minds?
Moderator to listen (but not probe) for issues such as asylum, immigration and terrorism.

Awareness of current proposals for ID cards

(BRIEFLY) Have respondents heard about any current plans to introduce an ID card scheme? If so, what is their understanding of the idea? Prompt: How and when did they hear about it? Who has suggested it? Why? Do they know any specific details of how it will work? If not heard of any plans, what are their first thoughts on the idea?

ID cards overall

Using introductory description of ID card proposal and timescale

(BRIEFLY) What are people's initial reactions to this system? What do they imagine would be its uses? What might be its benefits – to themselves and to society? Do they imagine there might be any disadvantages to it? Why do they think the idea is being considered? What do they think it would mean to be the holder of an ID card?

What are their responses to the timetable suggested? Note spontaneous responses, then prompt: does this seem faster or slower than they would have expected? What are the pros and cons of introducing the scheme over this timescale? Note any reassurance value in the government 'taking time to get it right'.

Show description of upcoming changes to passports

What do they think of the ID cards proposal in the context of the upcoming changes to passports? How does this affect their views?

Information on the card

Using statements covering: types of information that might be held on the card; interplay of card, chip and National Identity Register

What information would people expect to be held on the card? What would be the minimum information required to make the card useful? What is the maximum amount of information they would accept?

Supposing some of the information could be stored on a chip and/or on the National Identity Register, what do they think about this? Would they have any concerns about any of these three elements? If so, which and why? Which pieces of information should be visible on the card, and which should only be available on the chip/Register? Why? Probe particularly on whether respondents would be happy to have their address visible on the card. Why/why not?

Responses to the proposed information to be held on the card. How does this fit with their expectations? Are there any pieces of information here that they would be unwilling to provide? Why? Are there any other pieces of information that it would be useful to include?

Biometric information

Using statement describing the different forms of biometric information under consideration, and how these would be provided and stored

Have they heard the term 'biometric information' before? What do they understand by this? What do they think about having biometric information as part of the ID card scheme? What would be the benefits and drawbacks?

What are their views on the various possibilities (i.e. fingerprint, iris image, facial recognition)? How secure do they think each one would be? How would they feel about providing these different biometrics? Would they feel more comfortable providing some than others? Why?

How would they think the biometric information would be used? How would they feel about having biometric checks as part of the ordinary usage of their identity cards? Would they have any concerns about this – what and why? Are there any situations where they would feel uncomfortable about having a biometric checks?

Card type

Showing description of the types of document that might be included in the family of ID cards. Show print-outs and mocked-up examples of cards.

What do they feel about each of these options? What are the benefits and disadvantages of each? Which would they prefer and why? In particular, explore responses to a passport/ID card. How would respondents feel about having this type of card? How would they feel about carrying it? Do they have any concerns about this? If so, what and why?

What do they think of the appearance of the card? How would they feel about owning and using a card like this?

Application process

Using a video of the application process and visit to provide biometric information

What do they imagine would be involved in applying for an identity card? How do they imagine the process would work? Explore unprompted responses fully, then prompt on in person, by phone, online, by post. What would be the benefits and drawbacks of each of these methods? How would they feel about applying for an identity card using these processes? Which would they prefer?

If an initial in-person visit had to be made to provide biometric information, what would they feel about this? Where would they prefer to go to provide their biometric information? Explore, then show list of prompts. How would they feel about each of these locations, and why? Which would they prefer? What's the furthest they would be prepared to travel? How long would they expect the session to take? What would they like the opening times to be? Would they have any concerns about the process?

Do they think there would be certain people who would have difficulty registering for and using an identity card? If so, who and why?

Overall, how do they feel about the application process? Would it be any different from applying for a new passport? Why/why not? How can the application process be best designed to ensure it is as convenient, reassuring and user-friendly as possible?

Introducing identity cards

Using a statement describing the two-stage process: initially issuing cards on renewal of documents, then making them compulsory for all.

What do they think about this proposal? What are the advantages and disadvantages of staggering the introduction of the cards? Would they have any concerns about the scheme being introduced in this way? Do they think they would wait until their documents need to be renewed before getting an identity card, or would they get one early? Rationale.

Ordinary use of the cards

Using examples of when cards might be used.

How often do they have to provide proof of identity at the moment? List specific occasions. Which documents do they currently use? How do they think having an identity card would affect their current habits, if at all? Would an identity card make their life easier or harder, and why? When would having an identity card be most useful for them?

How exactly would they expect to use their card? Would they expect just to show their card, or do they think it would have to be scanned in some way? What about having a biometric check of their iris, fingerprint etc? How often would they expect this to happen, and in what circumstances? In general, where do they think the balance should lie between ensuring security and avoiding personal intrusion?

Privacy and data-sharing

Moderator to listen out for any concerns about privacy and data-sharing, prompting if necessary. Would they have any worries about these issues? If so, what is the nature of their concerns? Are they more concerned about the card, the chip or the Register, and why? Which pieces of information do they consider the most sensitive? What would reassure them about the security of the scheme?

Who do they think information should be disclosed to? Should there be different levels of disclosure? In

what circumstances should information on the cards or Register be disclosed to the police or other organisations?

Provenance

Who would they expect to be in charge of introducing and running an identity card scheme? What would their preferences be? Explore spontaneous responses, then prompt. Should the scheme be run by the government or by a separate, independent body? If the government, do they have any views on which department would be most appropriate? If an independent body, who should it be accountable to? Would an identity card scheme need an individual figurehead? Who would they like to see in charge?

Do they trust the government to introduce and run an effective identity card system? Why / why not?

Cost

Using statements detailing: current cost of passports and driving licences; estimated cost of biometric passports and driving licences; estimated cost of family of ID cards (including concessions)

How would they expect an identity card scheme to be paid for? How would they feel about individuals being asked to pay for cards (as happens currently with passports and driving licences)? What would be a reasonable price to pay for each of the family of cards?

What do they feel about the costs proposed? (Moderator to explain if necessary that renewal costs and charges for updating information would be much lower, and that holders of both documents would only pay the full cost of the first one renewed.) What do they think about these costs in the context of charges for passports and driving licences? Do they think the

cards would provide value for money, given the benefits to society and to the individual?

What do they think about the concessions for 16 year olds and those on low incomes?

Would these costs affect which type of card they would choose (i.e. plain ID, combined with passport/driving licence)? Rationale.

Summing up

What do they feel about ID cards now? How do they imagine they would feel if they were asked to apply for one? Can they think of any other uses/applications for ID cards? What could be said to encourage the belief that they are a good idea? What would be their one main piece of advice to the government about the introduction of ID cards?

STIMULUS MATERIAL

IDENTITY CARDS

IT IS PROPOSED TO INTRODUCE IDENTITY CARDS IN THE UK FOR PEOPLE OF 16+

THEY WILL BE BASED ON EXISTING DOCUMENTS SUCH AS PASSPORTS OR DRIVING LICENCES

THERE MAY ALSO BE A 'PLAIN' IDENTITY CARD

THEY WILL PROVIDE A RELIABLE RECORD OF IDENTITY

THEY WILL VALIDATE AN INDIVIDUAL'S RESIDENCE AND ELIGIBILITY TO WORK

TYPES OF CARD

A FAMILY OF IDENTITY CARDS TO SUIT
DIFFERENT NEEDS

THIS MIGHT INCLUDE, FOR UK CITIZENS:

PASSPORT IDENTITY CARD

DRIVING LICENCE PHOTOCARD

'PLAIN' IDENTITY CARD

FOREIGN NATIONALS WILL HAVE RESIDENCE
PERMIT CARDS

WHEN WILL THEY BE INTRODUCED?

THE INTENTION IS THAT THE FIRST CARDS WILL BE INTRODUCED IN 2008

MOST PEOPLE WILL GET AN IDENTITY CARD WHEN THEY RENEW OR APPLY FOR A PASSPORT OR DRIVING LICENCE

IN THE FUTURE, IT IS PLANNED THAT THEY WILL BECOME COMPULSORY FOR EVERYONE - UK CITIZENS AND FOREIGN RESIDENTS

HOW WOULD THEY WORK?

THE CARD WILL CONTAIN A PHOTOGRAPH AND BASIC INFORMATION; OTHER INFORMATION WILL BE HELD ON A SEPARATE NATIONAL IDENTITY REGISTER

A CHIP ON THE CARD WILL CONTAIN BIOMETRIC INFORMATION – A DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPH AND POTENTIALLY IRIS OR FINGERPRINT IMAGES

HOW WOULD THEY WORK (II)?

THE CHIP WILL PROVIDE A LINK TO A NATIONAL IDENTITY REGISTER WHEN THE CARD IS SCANNED AT POINT OF USE

THE INFORMATION ON THE CARD WILL ALSO BE HELD ON THE NATIONAL IDENTITY REGISTER

BASIC INFORMATION DISPLAYED ON CARD

NAME

PHOTOGRAPH

DATE OF BIRTH

SIGNATURE

NATIONALITY (IN MOST CASES)

IDENTITY NUMBER

BIOMETRIC INFORMATION

STORED IN A CHIP ON THE CARD

PHOTOGRAPH, PLUS POTENTIALLY EITHER IRIS
OR FINGERPRINT IMAGES

BIOMETRICS WILL BE RECORDED IN PURPOSE-
BUILT BOOTHS, THEN CONFIRMED AS BEING
UNIQUE

THE PROCESS WILL BE QUICK, EASY AND SAFE

BIOMETRIC INFORMATION COULD BE CHECKED
WHEN THE CARD IS SCANNED AT POINT OF
USE

WHEN MIGHT IDENTITY CARDS BE USED?

FIRST REGISTER WITH A GP

APPLY FOR BENEFITS

PASS THROUGH IMMIGRATION CONTROL

TRAVEL WITHIN EUROPE

ATTENDING UNIVERSITY, E.G. APPLYING FOR A
STUDENT LOAN

OPEN A BANK ACCOUNT

PICK UP A PARCEL FROM THE POST OFFICE

PROVE YOUR AGE WHEN PURCHASING GOODS
E.G. PURCHASING LOTTERY TICKETS

CHANGES TO PASSPORTS

BY 2005, ALL NEW PASSPORTS WILL CONTAIN BIOMETRIC INFORMATION

AS WELL AS A FACIAL IMAGE, THEY MAY CONTAIN A FINGERPRINT OR IRIS PHOTOGRAPH

THIS WILL MEAN THEY ARE MORE DIFFICULT TO FORGE AND USE DISHONESTLY

COSTS OF THE CARDS

CURRENTLY PASSPORTS COST £42

BIOMETRIC (FINGERPRINT OR IRIS) PASSPORTS
WILL COST £73

COMBINED PASSPORT/IDENTITY CARDS WILL
COST £77

EXTRA CHARGE COVERS LOWER CHARGES TO
YOUNG PEOPLE, THOSE ON LOW INCOMES AND
THE ELDERLY

'PLAIN' IDENTITY CARD WILL COST £35