



HM Revenue
& Customs

Research report

Exploration of the Juvenile Registration process for a National Insurance Number

Exploring a proposed online NINO registration
process for young people

April 2014

Behavioural Evidence & Insight Team

Juvenile Registration Process for NINo Exploration

© Crown Copyright 2014 - Published by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs.
Disclaimer: The views in this report are the authors' own and do not necessarily reflect those of HM Revenue & Customs.

Juvenile Registration Process for NINo Exploration

About Personal Tax Change (PT Change)

PT Change is a Directorate within HM Revenue and Customs' (HMRC) Personal Tax (PT) line of business and is principally concerned with overseeing and bringing together for PT a Portfolio of Programmes which will help transform HMRC business, led by customer understanding.

The PT Change Portfolio will deliver all the changes to processes, structure and systems needed to deliver better services to our customers and enable savings from within Personal Tax.

Contents

Research requirement (background to the project)	4
When the research took place	5
Who did the work (research agency)	5
Method, Data and Tools used, Sample	5
Main Findings	5

Juvenile Registration Process for NINo Exploration

Research requirement (background to the project)

Background

- In order to support the government's 'digital by default' strategy, National Insurance Number (NINO) registration has been identified as a way of achieving early 'digital engagement' and if this process is smooth and trouble-free, it is hoped that this will further encourage engagement with other government digital services.
- HMRC explored the reaction to a National Insurance Number registration proposal, whereby parents would be asked to log into their HMRC Digital Account using Identity Assurance provided by the Cabinet Office to:
 - Confirm if the young person will continue further education to the age of 18
 - Confirm the identity details we hold for the young person or change the identity details if appropriate
 - Enter the mobile telephone number and/or e-mail address for the young person
- The next stage for customers is that the young person would be sent a link to the HMRC Digital Account where they would be able to receive their NINo. They would be given the opportunity to generate a NINo Confirmation letter that can be printed locally or sent electronically to a 3rd party e-mail address such as an employer or Student Loan Company.
- This would replace a paper-based system and once email and mobile phone numbers are captured, all future communication can be "digital by default".

Objectives

- The overarching objectives for this project were:
 1. To explore the reaction to a proposed National Insurance Number (NINo) registration process (online) and to optimise the overall design
 2. To assess overall success criteria of the proposed new system
 3. To help maximise the take-up of the service in an easy and simple a way as possible for customers
 4. To understand where the role of the parent fits into this process
 5. To understand how to keep continued engagement with the digital account for both parent and child.

Juvenile Registration Process for NINo Exploration

When the research took place

The research took place between November and February 2014.

Who did the work (research agency)

The research was undertaken by 2CV research.

Method, Data and Tools used, Sample

The research comprised of a programme of six focus groups with young people, four focus groups with parents, four family sessions and two paired depths with PHSE teachers in three locations across the UK.

Across the young people and parents we recruited a mix of socio-economic group, ages and access to the internet. Across the parents only we recruited a mix of HMRC's attitudinal segmentation.

Main Findings

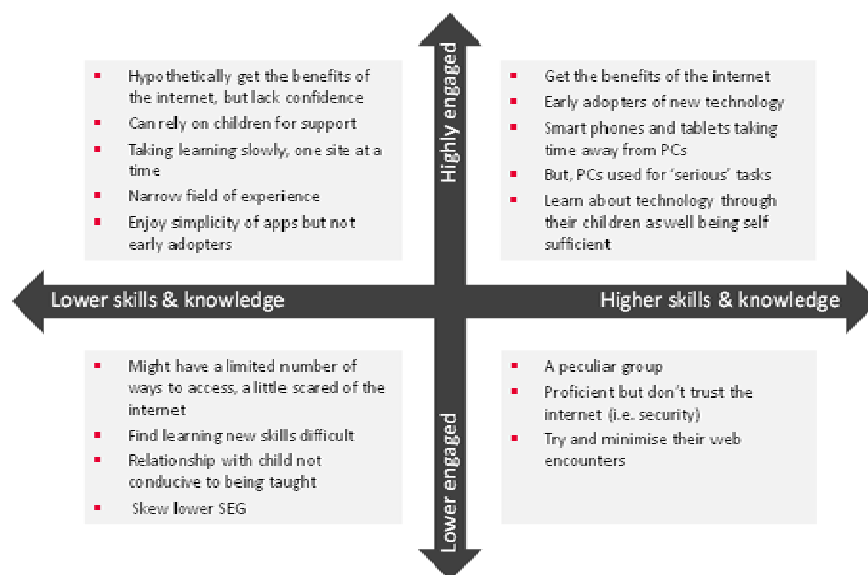
Audience context and use of technology

For many 15 year olds turning 16 is still considered a significant milestone, the first step on the path to adulthood – a considerable part of this is the ability to work full time in a 'proper job'. However, young people aren't always aware of how their NINo fits into this. They are similarly unaware of who or what HMRC is, meaning there is currently zero engagement to build from.

Young people are digital natives and are incredibly tech savvy, often providing in house tech support' for their parents. The internet is all pervasive in their life and they have few moments when they are not connected to the internet, primarily via phone, at home, social media, in school even "Googling" things in class. Many of the homes of our audience have a range of web enabled technology i.e. tablets, PC, laptops and nearly always the child had a smartphone and many of the parents did so also.

The technology comfort of parents runs a much broader spectrum; four groups were identified based on higher / lower internet skills and higher / lower engagement with the internet:

Juvenile Registration Process for NINo Exploration



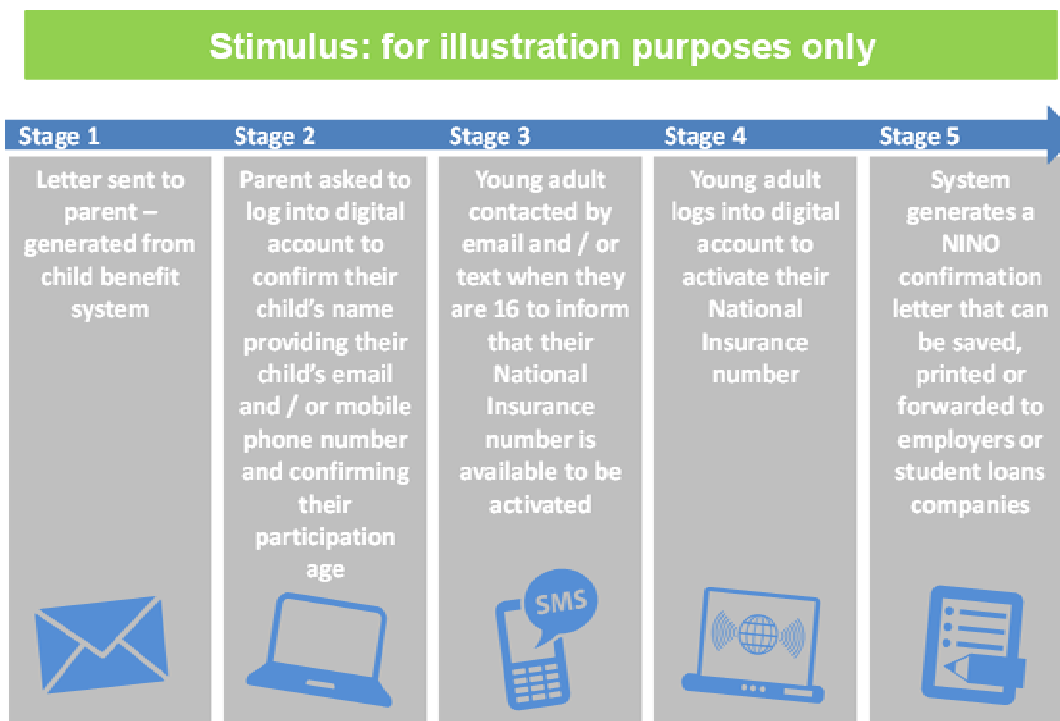
Teachers' perspective

- There is a mixture of provision of IT equipment across different schools, from those that still have dedicated classrooms or IT suites to those with laptops that can be used in lessons, but young people usually would have some access to the internet at break and lunchtimes and if necessary after school
 - School networks usually block a range of sites such as Facebook and in some schools access to email programmes is also restricted: only the official school email address can be used. Potentially, this could leave a number of young people without access to their notification – though if they have an email address they are likely to have access to it elsewhere.
- Overall, teachers noted that the usual communications channels with parents have shifted from letters home, to email and text message. Increasingly students are also emailing homework directly to teachers.

Juvenile Registration Process for NINo Exploration

Response to the proposed NINo process: overview

Registration process stimulus: as shown in the research



Headlines

On paper it can seem like a long process

- Which could be quite demanding on time – not sure how long it will take to get the email / text message.
- However, a system where you do nothing is always going to seem easier than one where you have to do something – and for the over 16s and parents, this is an inertia and resistance to change.
- This issue is heightened in relation to Identity Assurance (IDA) as the references to third parties can make it seem even longer.

It is likely many will already have an IDA

- The process shown assumes no IDA. As time moves on it is likely that many of the most engaged will, by the time the new NINo process is launched, already have one e.g. by completing their car tax online.

3/E03, 100 Parliament St. London, SW1A 2BQ

Juvenile Registration Process for NINo Exploration

- This clearly would speed up the whole process, but there will also be the benefit of the single government log in.

As digital natives, young people intuitively 'get it'

- Most take it on face value (esp. 15 year olds) as they aren't aware of the current process, many assume that it is already digital.
- When aware many see it as more practical than what currently exists – very similar to other registration processes they have been through and allows them to access their information 'in the cloud' rather than paper copies.

Parents' response entirely dependent on their web comfort

- Some find it daunting but manageable others find it very uncomfortable.
- For the more traditional, there is a preference for a paper-based system and cannot naturally intuit the benefits of online – they need these to be made more explicit for them.

This difference clearly indicates a partnership between parent and child

- While the young people often don't grasp the importance of NINo such an involved process might be de-prioritised, there is also a fear that they might get something wrong
 - They will therefore need parental support firstly to register for their NINo but also the reassurance they have done everything right
- In turn parents with lower tech comfort will be supported by their children

Engagement with the HMRC digital account

While most of the adults saw there being a benefit to the idea of an HMRC digital account it wasn't something that they were hugely engaged with:

- Had the potential to be very practical in certain situations but these are few and far between – when you want to check your tax code, check on pension info, calculate how much tax should be paid on a new job or after a pay rise.
- Seen as a virtual and live P60 – but many people don't refer to these.

Juvenile Registration Process for NINo Exploration

The participants identified the opportunity with a digital account to have a one stop shop for info on tax and NI.

- This could provide a powerful reference for people interested in seeing where their money goes and for parents to impart knowledge on young people.
- Potential to direct people to further and relevant information as they need it e.g. student loans / repayments, tax thresholds, how to claim tax credits etc.

For young people new to the world of work and the concept of taxation, there is very little that engaged them about the digital account:

- The most that could happen is if they find themselves being taxed more than they expected by having multiple jobs, or if they need a rebate based upon being on emergency tax.