

BIGMOTIVE

User Research Summary

J586-R001 - COVIDCert NI (16+)

December 2021



Part 1 of 3

Research overview

12 participants were involved in
1:1 interviews regarding the
COVIDCert NI app.

Group 1 - Live Usage Sessions

Group 2 - Retrospective Sessions

5 participants completed a **live usage** interview, using the app for the first time while following a “think aloud” protocol.

Male, 25-34

Technology researcher
High technology confidence

Female, 55-64

Nurse
Low technology confidence

Male, 35-44

Web application security consultant
High technology confidence

Female, 35-44

Senior Social Worker
Moderate technology confidence

Female, 65+

Retail, retired for 6 years
Very low technology confidence

7 participants completed a **retrospective** interview, reflecting on their experience with the app.

Male, 65+

Manager, retired for 5 years
High technology confidence

Male, 25-34

Research Communications
High technology confidence

Male, 35-44

Transport industry
High technology confidence

Female, 25-34

Customer fulfilment manager
High technology confidence

Female, 55-64

Senior auditor
High technology confidence

Female, 55-64

Broker, NHS
High technology confidence

Female, 35-44

Technical support specialist
High technology confidence

Part 2 of 3

Insights

Attitudes towards domestic certificates

Participants mostly supported the use of domestic certificates

Personal safety was a key motivator for support

Some users had reservations regarding the use of domestic certificates, such as privacy concerns, potential for discrimination, or restricting access to basic services

Overall experience with the app

Many users found the sign-up process long and confusing, and believed others would also struggle

Two users could not complete the sign-up process themselves

Many users disliked the use of web pages within the app

There was a significant divide in experience: Several users had no difficulty with the process

Differences from expectations

Some users were surprised at the amount of documentation required

The need for an NI Direct account surprised some users

Verification time was longer than expected for some users

Some users were frustrated and confused that manual verification was required

**Most users disliked using a
web page within an app**

“I have downloaded an app - so I would have expected everything to be done in an app.”

“The most infuriating part is that you are fighting with a web page within an app.”

“I expected it all to be self-contained within the app”

"Because you are being pushed between services, there is a lot of repetition of information that it's giving me."

Some users disliked the inconsistent styling between the web pages and the app.

“'Apply for a certificate' - previously all other buttons have been green [NI Direct], yet this one is white [In the app].”

“When you use the app, it has a particular type of styling, and then you go to the website and there is a different type of styling - could be confusing.”

What 3 words would you use to summarise the experience?

Plain, in a nice way.	Simple	Straightforward.	Non-technical	Fine	Confusing	Time-consuming
Enough: gives enough information.	Fast	Easy	Relief		Slow	Tricky
Quick	Straightforward	Streamlined	Freedom		Complicated (registration process)	



Finding and Downloading the App



The majority of users had no difficulty finding the app

However, a significant portion of users were confused by the various similar app names and icons

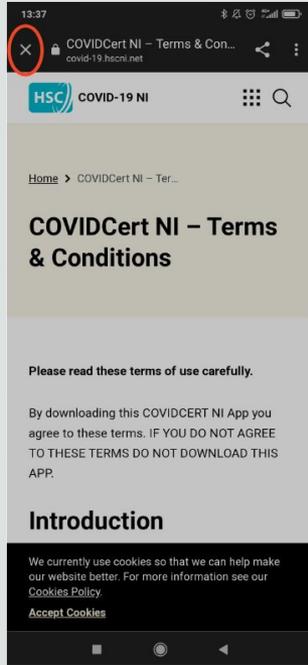
3 / 12 participants could not find the app

The app was not listed in the Play Store search results if the exact name was not used

Users often added spaces to the name when searching, e.g. 'Covid Cert NI'

The Terms & Conditions Screen (pt. 1)

T&Cs start point



T&Cs end point



Most users just skim through the T&Cs without reading them.

There is uncertainty about how to progress after the T&Cs web page is opened

One user did not know what to do after reaching the bottom of T&Cs.

One user expected an "accept" button at end of the T&Cs - though knew to close with the X.

One user disliked the fact that the 'X' button disappears when scrolling.

Are you happy to start using this app?

After reading the Terms and Conditions you can tap 'yes' to proceed.

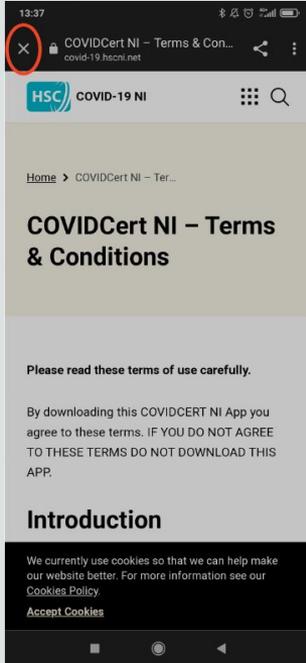
Read Terms and Conditions >

Yes

No

The Terms & Conditions Screen (pt. 2)

T&Cs start point



T&Cs end point



Are you happy to start using this app?

After reading the Terms and Conditions you can tap 'yes' to proceed.

Read Terms and Conditions >

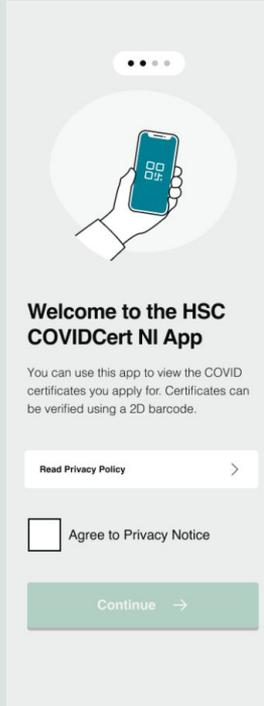
Yes

No

Many users did not like the use of a web page within the app

“I wasn't expecting it to open a web page, that's a bit weird. [The T&Cs] could change at any time without notifying or updating the app”

The Privacy Policy Screen (pt. 1)



Users are more likely to read the Privacy Policy than the T&Cs

There is confusion over the term "2D Barcode"

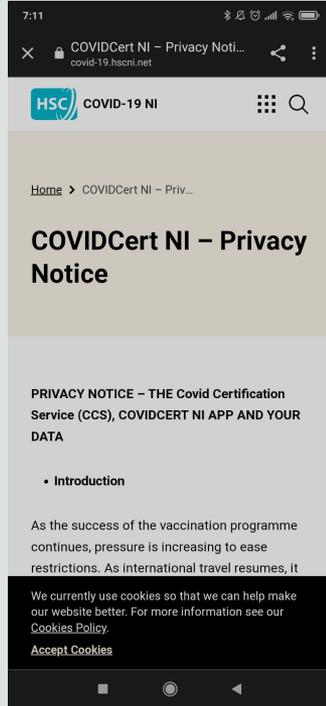
"I have never heard the term 2D barcode before.. is that a QR code?"

"I don't know what a 2D barcode is"

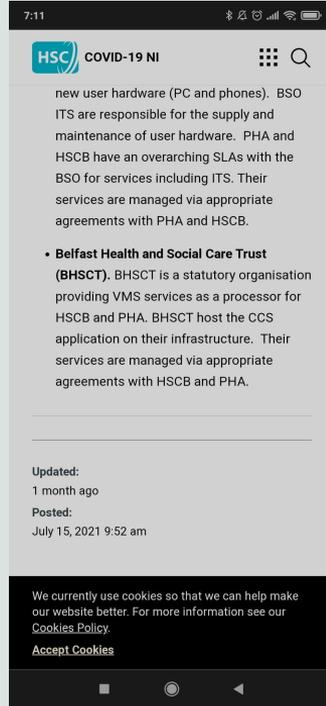
"I did not know 2D barcode was a QR code. Would have thought it was a standard barcode."

The Privacy Policy Screen (pt. 2)

Privacy Policy
start point



Privacy Policy
end point



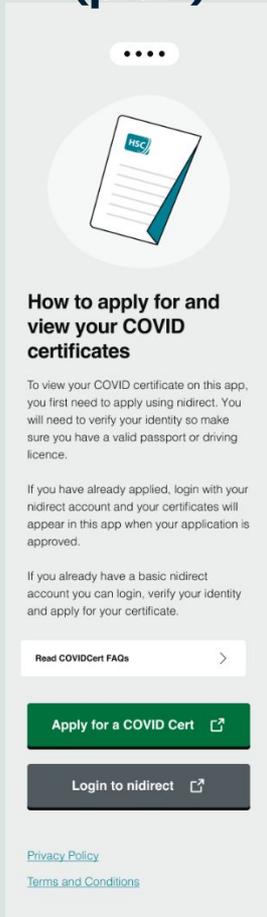
There is uncertainty about how to progress after the Privacy Policy web page is opened

“Most people associate the X with close the app / cancel”

“I would expect to see a button at the end to accept and continue”

“The app should force users to go to the bottom of the T&C's and privacy policy, with a button at the bottom”

The “How to apply...” screen (pt. 1)



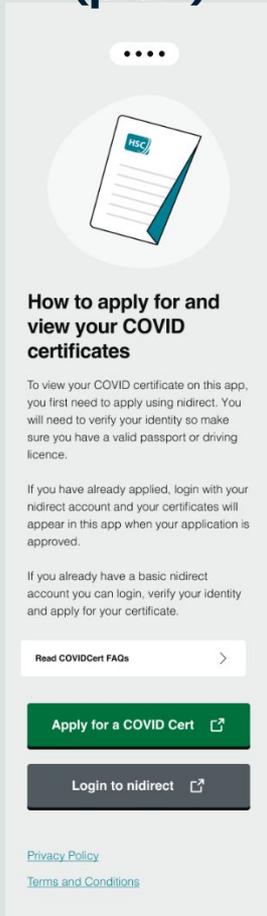
Users liked the design and styling

“I thought it would be more NIDirect-ish, but this was a lot simpler! Really straightforward.”

“Balance of info and personality - It's an app about a serious topic, the design makes that clear”

“I thought these screens were great”

The “How to apply...” screen (pt. 2)



For the majority of users, the choice between the 'NI Direct' and 'COVID Cert' buttons was not clear.

The majority of users selected "Apply for a COVID Cert" first, but many had low confidence and struggled to decide on the correct option.

"I wasn't that confident
- I wasn't sure which
process to do first"

"It's not really clear, but it does say
in the text. Maybe it would be better
to have them in reverse? I am going
to click the first one, and then I will
have to login and apply. The process
isn't clear enough."

"I don't know which to
go for.. COVID Cert or
login through NI Direct
- there is no guidance"

"I didn't know if I already
had an NI Direct account
- it was a little confusing
which to choose"

"Will I go for apply for a COVID Cert or
Login via NI Direct.. I don't know which I
can do here. At this point I am confused -
it's saying I first need to apply using NI
Direct. It doesn't guide me as to which
one I need to do first. It's a 50/50 at this
point. I'm literally flipping a coin."

"Do I apply for a COVID Cert? Or do I
log in?... I'll hit apply and just see
what it says...to apply for a COVID
cert you must.. oh.. maybe I should
have selected the other option? I
don't have an NI Direct account"

"There could be more
narrative around when
someone doesn't already
have an NI Direct account"

The “How to apply...” screen (Revised Design)

Previous Design

••••



How to apply for and view your COVID certificates

To view your COVID certificate on this app, you first need to apply using nidirect. You will need to verify your identity so make sure you have a valid passport or driving licence.

If you have already applied, login with your nidirect account and your certificates will appear in this app when your application is approved.

If you already have a basic nidirect account you can login, verify your identity and apply for your certificate.

[Read COVIDCert FAQs](#)

[Apply for a COVID Cert](#)

[Login to nidirect](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)
[Terms and Conditions](#)

Revised Design

•••••



Apply for a certificate

You will need to use nidirect to verify your identity when applying for a certificate. If you need to set up an nidirect account, make sure you have a valid passport or driving licence.

[Read COVIDCert FAQs](#)

[Apply for a certificate](#)

View your certificate

If you have already applied, log in with your nidirect account and your certificates will appear in this app when your application is approved.

[Log in](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)
[Terms and Conditions](#)

The “How to apply...” screen (pt. 3)



The FAQs instruct users to download the app

This causes confusion and reinforces the disconnect between app screens and browser screens.

“The FAQ is telling me to download the app when I’m already in it [Laugh]”

“I opened the FAQs and saw a reference to download the app, I thought I had already done that?”

NI Direct Account Registration (pt. 1)

The key source of difficulty for many users

A minority of users completed the sign-up process with no difficulty

The majority of users found the sign-up process to be confusing and long-winded.

Two users were unable to complete the sign-up process without intervention

"There were no places along here where I tripped and fell"

Very clear

"Not sure what my username is - is it my email address?"

"Should my NI Direct username be my own name or just something I recognise?"

"Another privacy policy!"

"What is this NI Direct account? Is this related to the certificate? Why do I need it?"

"It's not a very straightforward process"

"Quite fast and straightforward"

"Providing documents was quite straightforward"

"Could there be a checklist of what documentation is needed at this stage?"

"Could the app highlight what documentation is mandatory, and what isn't?"

"I'm really confused now"

"I know my mum would really struggle with this"

"I would call my daughters at this point"

Very easy

"It seemed to verify me straight away"

"For me.. jumping between apps is straightforward, my parents would struggle"

"I have a sore head"

"I can see people giving up and not wanting to do it, unfortunately."

"My service users, especially those who are physically limited, would struggle even with the back and forth of getting different documentation. "

"Multi-factor again!"

"I like getting things done with. I wasn't able to even start, let alone finish!"

"The queue was 49 minutes. I was watching Netflix, and then my phone went blank, had to re-join the queue"

NI Direct Account Registration (pt. 2)

Less technical users struggle with switching between apps for MFA

Many users felt that they were repeating the MFA process too many times

Upon returning to the app after switching to text / email, some users were brought back to an earlier screen (“How to apply...”)

Users would like the app to automatically detect and insert MFA codes - they have seen this in other apps



NI Direct Account Registration (pt. 3)

The majority of users did not know if they already had an NI Direct account - and could not easily check this.

Users who Google search "NI Direct Account" are taken to Access NI, leading to confusion

Users wanted an interactive go / no-go checklist of all required documentation at the start of the process

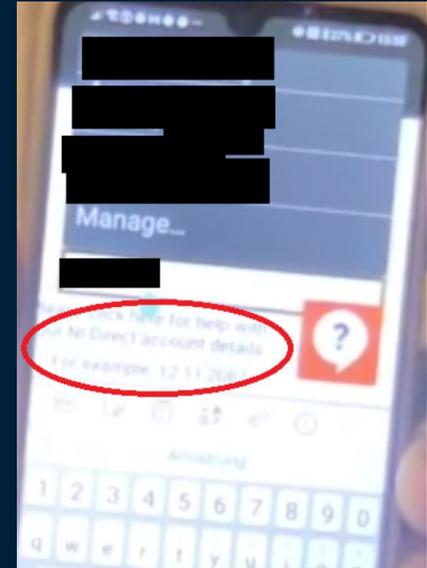
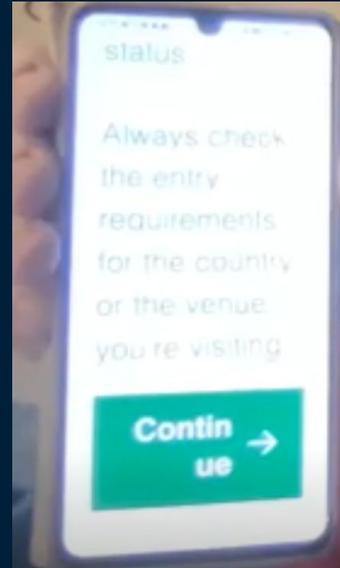
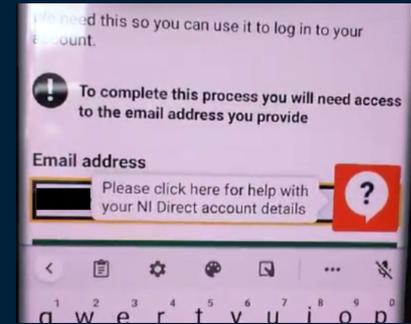
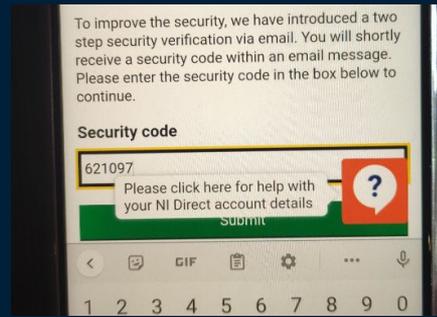


NI Direct Account Registration (pt. 4)

Accessibility could be improved.

The 'help' tooltip obscures UI elements

Users with large font sizes enabled struggled to navigate due to reduced screen space, and saw some display issues



NI Direct Account Registration (pt. 5)

When logging in, the username field was auto populated with the user's D.O.B, causing confusion.

Users were not confident that their username should be their email address

"I assume e-mail address is my username... DOB was the pre-populated option"

"I didn't know username was my email address until an error message appeared."

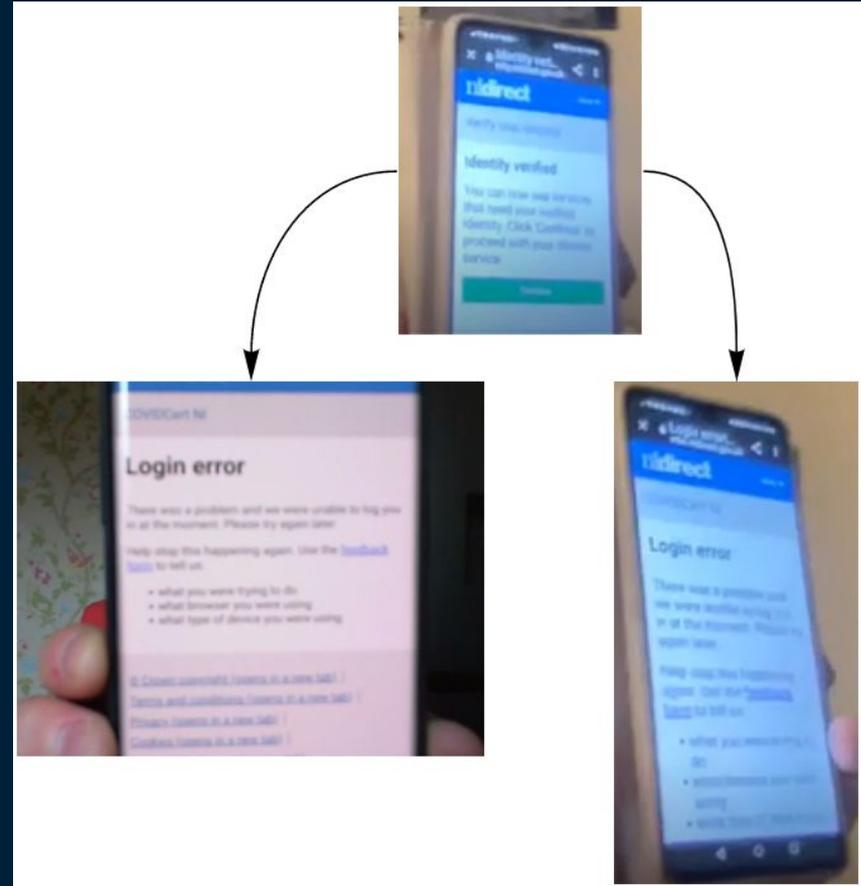
"I didn't put that in - I don't know why it has put in my DOB as opposed to my email"



NI Direct Account Registration (pt. 6)

Several users received a 'Login Error' after identity verification was completed.

This caused frustration and uncertainty about next steps



NI Direct Account Registration (pt. 6)

Several users received a 'Login Error' after identity verification was completed.

This caused frustration and uncertainty about next steps

"I've done this whole thing and now I can't go any further. Is that me out of it now? Do I need to start all over again? This is long winded, not straightforward at all, I haven't even put my vaccine info in yet."

"What am I supposed to do now? There is no try again or continue"

"I now have a bloody headache"



Digital COVID Cert Application Process (pt. 1)

nidirect

Home

COVIDCert NI

Applying for a digital COVIDCert

You can now apply for your COVID certificate.

The NI COVID certificate is valid for three months from the date of application. Digital certificates will automatically renew a week before they are due to expire.

To apply for a COVIDCert you must:

- Be fully vaccinated in Northern Ireland
- **Have had your second vaccine dose more than 7 days ago** (some countries require you to have been vaccinated more than 14 days ago - check [travel advice](#) for the country you are visiting)
- Ensure your personal information matches your identity documentation (e.g. driving licence or passport)

[Start now >](#)

Single dose letter

If you have received one of your vaccinations in a different country you may need a letter to prove a single dose was received in Northern Ireland.

You can apply for a letter to show you have received a single COVID vaccination in Northern Ireland, as part of an application, with a different country, for a certificate.

[Apply for a single dose letter](#)

Previous applications

If you have applied for a COVID certificate, you can log in to nidirect to view your application status and, if successful, download your certificate.

[Login](#)

Most users found applying for a COVID Cert easier than signing up for NI Direct

Users were confident about the correct option to select on the 'Applying for a digital COVIDCert' page

Most users liked how quickly the certificate was received

Digital COVID Cert Application Process (pt. 2)

Several users were uncertain about the next steps once reaching the cert status webpage at the end of the application process

“It says to download the COVIDCertNI app on Android.. is that for me?”

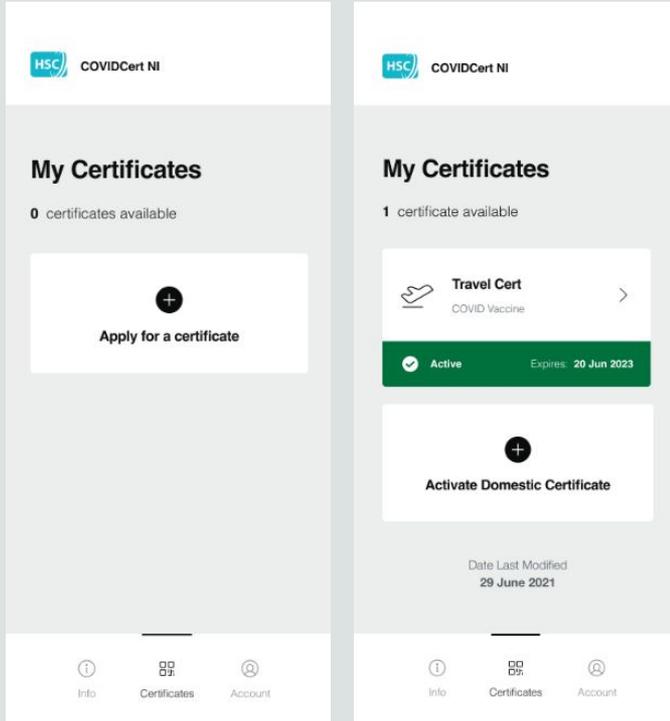
“It's not clear what to do next.. do I do it on the computer or the phone?”

“I'm now on the COVID Certificates screen. I guess you just close it and wait for an e-mail? Or go back to the app? I actually don't know.”

"It says 'renew COVID cert...' but I haven't got it yet?"



The Certificate List Screen (pt. 1)



Most users found the design to be clear and simple

While waiting for their travel cert, some users were confused by the "Apply for a certificate" button, as they had already completed the process

Some users were unclear about the meaning of "Date Last Modified"

The Certificate List Screen (pt. 2)

Most participants understood the difference between Travel and Domestic certs

Users thought that domestic certs should be the first cert applied for, and the travel cert an additional step.

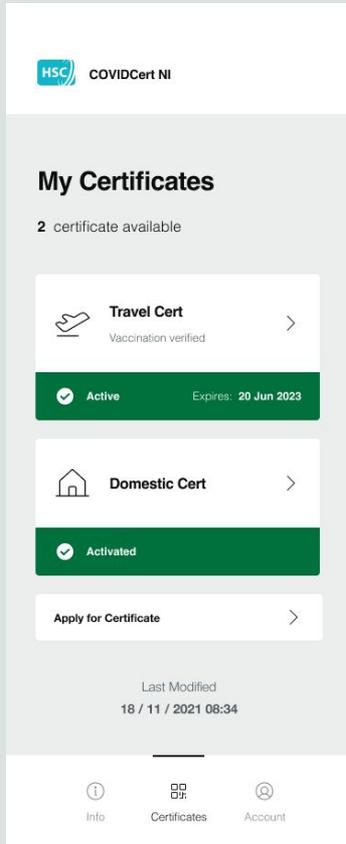
“Most people will load this up saying they want to go to the pub, in Belfast, not in Spain.”

"It was unexpected that the domestic cert wasn't first."

"I didn't realise the domestic cert would be an additional step"



The Certificate List Screen (pt. 3)



Some users were confused about the expiry date and automatic refreshing

“The expiry date on the travel cert suggests it doesn’t auto renew and that I need to remember to do something”

Users did not know if the domestic cert expired.

The majority of users did not think the 'drag to refresh' function was available here.

The Travel Cert



Users liked the layout of the travel cert, and were pleased with the amount of information

Some users were surprised to see a barcode for each vaccination, and were unsure about when this would be needed

Users expected to see booster information within the app

The Domestic Cert (pt. 1)



Guidance for activating your Domestic certificate

A Domestic certificate allows you to prove your COVID status in circumstances other than travel. It is designed with your privacy in mind so the person scanning the code does not see any of your personal information - only your COVID status.

You will need to take a 'selfie' which is stored on your phone and locked into the app. This allows the person checking your COVID status to confirm it is yours.

The app will need camera access in order to take the 'selfie'.

Continue →



About the Domestic certificate

What's the difference between a Domestic and Travel certificate?

The Domestic certificate doesn't show your private details. Anyone scanning the 2D barcode only sees a tick or a cross to verify your status. Travel certificates show your name, date of birth and the details of your vaccination or PCR test.

Does a Travel certificate work for Domestic use?

Yes, but you will also need to show photo ID to prove your identity.

Can I change my selfie photo?

No. This is to stop others trying to use your certificate. Make sure you are happy with your selfie before you activate your certificate.

Can I have it on more than one device?

No. You can only show a Domestic certificate using the device on which it was activated.

Continue →



Take a selfie

Please read the requirements below before you take your selfie to ensure it can be used with your Domestic certificate.



Your eyes must be open and clearly visible with no hair across them



All of your face must be visible



Hats or head coverings are not permitted except when worn for religious reasons



The background should be plain and white or light grey

Capture my Selfie →

Users found the domestic cert activation process straightforward

Users were fatigued by the process by this point.

All participants were positive about the selfie instructions screen, some likened it to taking a passport photo

The Domestic Cert (pt. 2)

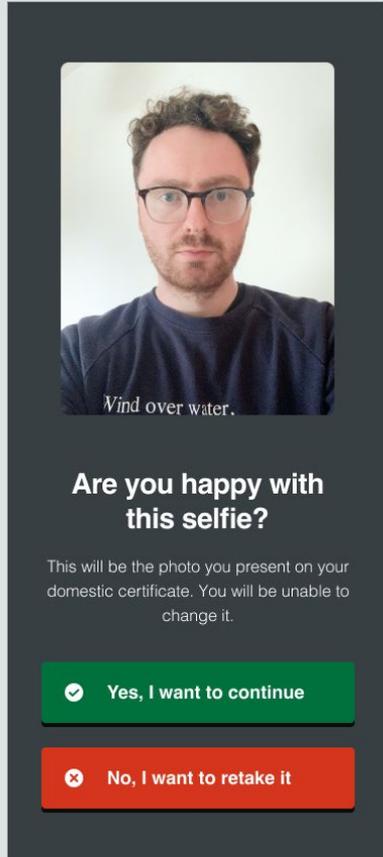


Users found the process of taking a selfie to be straightforward

Users were surprised that the domestic cert photo taking process was inconsistent with the NI Direct process.

One user claimed to have been able to use a previously taken image rather than capturing a live photograph

The Domestic Cert (pt. 3)



Due to fatigue, one user had not realised that their selfie would be shown publicly, and was embarrassed to show it

One user reported that the image shown here was entirely black.

The Domestic Cert (pt. 4)

Are you sure?

This photo should meet the selfie requirements. You will not be able to change your photo.

If your cert is already active on another device, adding this selfie will deactivate it on that other device.

Add selfie

Some users were not confident about the meaning of this text.

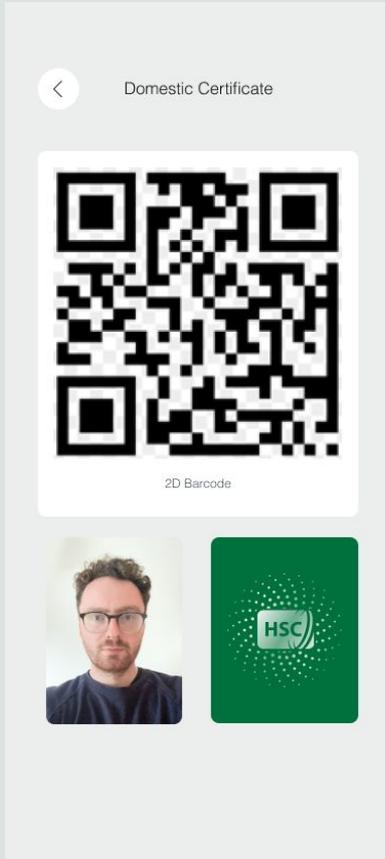
“What happens if it doesn't meet the requirements - do I get locked out?”

“I didn't quite understand but clicked agree anyways.”

“By the time I get to this stage, I just want to get it done.”

“I lost patience, I needed to go to bed!”

The Domestic Cert (pt. 5)

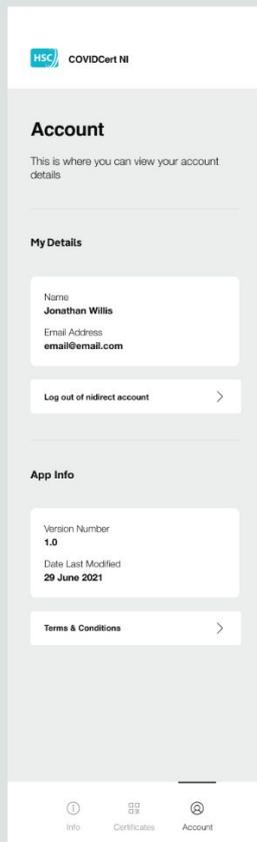
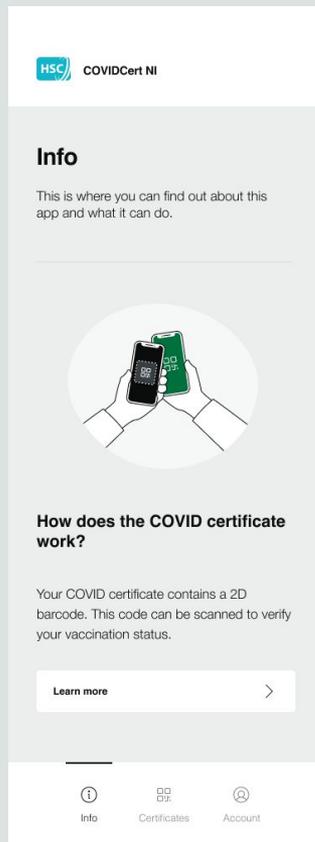


All users liked the layout and contents of the domestic cert.

"I Like the hologram... very clever, genius!"

"I'm glad there aren't personal details - beyond the photo"

The Info and Account Screens

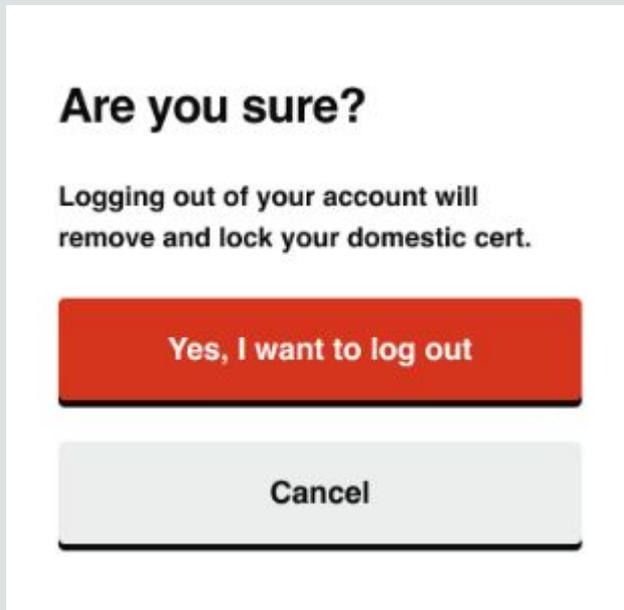


Most users did not use these screens.

All users found these screens to be clear

No users had used the “logout” functionality

Logging out confirmation message



The majority of users did not find this messaging clear. In particular, the meaning of the word "Lock", and whether this would require the entire process to be repeated.

"This would imply that domestic cert is deleted. Do I have to go through the same process again?"

Doesn't make sense. I assume it deletes it... what does it mean by locking your domestic cert?"

Would expect it remove certificate. And have to go through whole process again. Wouldn't select this button

"I wouldn't be confident [in pressing this button]."

"It is not clear what will actually happen"

"It is not clear what remove and lock means. Do I have to re-apply again?"

"I am confused with definition of 'locking'"

"This would have taken me aback"

"It is not clear if I'd lose things - I would be nervous to log out"

Login Expiry Notice

The screenshot shows the COVIDCert NI user interface. At the top, the HSC logo and 'COVIDCert NI' are displayed. Below this is the 'My Certificates' section, which indicates '2 certificate available'. Two certificates are listed: 'Travel Cert' (COVID Vaccine) with an 'Active' status and an expiration date of '20 Jun 2023', and 'Domestic Cert' with an 'Activated' status. A 'Date Last Modified' section shows '29 June 2021'. At the bottom, a yellow banner contains the message 'Your login has expired.' followed by explanatory text and a 'Log in to nidirect' button with an external link icon.

HSC COVIDCert NI

My Certificates

2 certificate available

 **Travel Cert** 
COVID Vaccine

 **Active** Expires: 20 Jun 2023

 **Domestic Cert** 

 **Activated**

Date Last Modified
29 June 2021

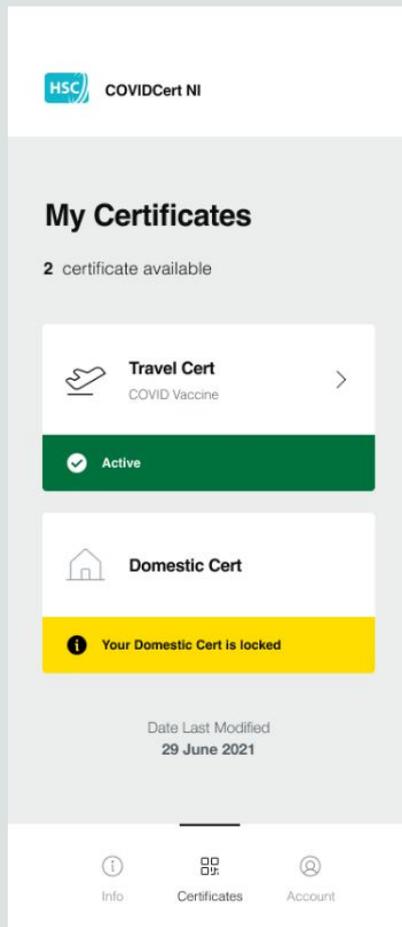
Your login has expired.

You can still use your existing certificates but new certificates won't be added until you log in to your nidirect account.

Log in to nidirect 

Users found this messaging clear, but were concerned about why it might occur

Locked Domestic Cert Notice



Many users did not know the Domestic Cert was clickable due to the “>” symbol not being present

Many users were unclear about the meaning until viewing the information screen

Locked Domestic Cert Further Information

Your Domestic Cert is locked

You can only have an active domestic certificate on one device. Your domestic certificate is currently locked because you have reinstalled the app or already have an active certificate on another device.

Please activate your certificate by retaking a selfie. This will be checked against the previous selfie you have taken to prevent fraud.

Your domestic cert will be locked on this device and any other device until we can verify your identity.

Retake your selfie

This screen clarified the term 'locked' for all users.

One participant stated that they would be concerned if they saw this.

"It would raise alarm bells if this appeared and I hadn't installed it elsewhere"

Part 3 of 3

Recommended Priority Areas

How might we...

Reduce process fatigue?

Ease the burden of Multi-Factor Authentication for non-technical users?

Reduce the disconnect between the app and browser pages?

Provide better guidance to users when an error occurs?

Increase accessibility?

Aid users in differentiating between the various COVID apps?

Make choices clearer on the “How to apply...” screen?

Help users identify if they already have an NI Direct account?

Help users have all required documentation before beginning the process?

Clarify messaging re: locking of certs and expiry dates?



Actions

#	Area	Action	Assigned To
1	Reduction of the disconnect between app and browser pages, and reduction of process fatigue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider bringing COVID certification application process into the app - Embedding of T&Cs and Privacy Policy web pages into the app - Follow-up call between Civica and Big Motive to discuss 	Civica
2	Ease MFA Burden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Investigate reduction of cost associated with MFA SMS - Amend NIDA account registration messaging to encourage MFA SMS usage 	Department of Finance Digital Transformation Service
3	Increasing clarity of error messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Arrange meeting between Big Motive and Civica to discuss 	Big Motive
4	Increasing accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chat bot to no longer be pinned during NIDA registration - Accessibility audit is currently being performed by Expleo. 	Civica
5	Increasing clarity between the various COVID apps in the app store	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Big Motive to review existing app store app logos 	Big Motive
6	Make choices clearer on the “How to apply...” screen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Amend “How to apply...” screen design with clearer messaging [COMPLETE] 	Big Motive
7	Help users identify if they already have an NI Direct account	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Addition of account checking / notification functionality within the NI direct account registration pathway 	Civica



Actions

#	Area	Action	Assigned To
8	Increased clarity around required documentation prior to beginning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Amend wording on NI Direct account registration page- User testing of the current manual documentation uploading process	Department of Finance Digital Transformation Service, Big Motive
9	Increased clarity regarding locking of certs and expiry dates	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Big Motive to meet to discuss quick wins. Consider UI amendments and potential for only locking if a different device is detected	Big Motive



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