



Accord Newsletter

Welcome to the first 'Accord' newsletter - a quarterly update on new developments for Aberdeen's very own smart citizen's card. As one of the most advanced Smartcard projects in the country, the Accord Scheme is leading the field in adding new functionality and value for cardholders. This is your opportunity to keep up-to-date with what the Accord Scheme can do - and what it can offer you.

THE ACCORD SCHEME – COMMONLY REFERRED TO AS THE ACCORD CARD – IS FULFILLING THE AMBITIONS SET FOR IT WHEN IT WAS FIRST APPROVED BY COUNCIL.

Fronted by a chip-type card, Accord is designed to provide a cohesive and concise way by which cardholders can:

- ▶ Prove their entitlement to a service, for example concessionary travel;
- ▶ Prove their age when necessary;
- ▶ Gain access to specific products from the Council, such as sports passes, or another provider that is part of the Scheme;
- ▶ Securely and confidentially accumulate and hold points, for instance the Goodapple Tenant Reward Scheme, a retail loyalty scheme or healthy eating points;
- ▶ Securely gain access to buildings or to information;
- ▶ Be a way to pay for certain services without the fuss of looking for small change, e.g. car parking fees.

All of these services, offered by the Accord Scheme, are available to any organisation in Aberdeen that wishes to be part of the scheme - so, clearly, this is not only a Council card for free school meals!

The card itself is only the physical aspect that activates the system for users, just like a bank card.

Once a card is brought into use, the system will then create and store a record of the transactions made, be that loading value onto the card, spending that value, adding to the points total for a loyalty scheme, using up a visit on a countdown sports pass or seeking access to a building or information.

In the case of access requests, the system checks if the cardholder is actually entitled to that access - if they are not, then access would not be granted. Likewise, if you try to spend value you do not have on the card, it cannot be done. Each card can do all of the examples noted above, giving rise to a situation where one card has very many uses.

Furthermore, as each individual card can work for any other organisation in Aberdeen, we have the creation of a citizen's card – something that will provide value to the cardholder as they live, work or visit Aberdeen.



Having proven the technology and the system, we are now gearing up to start spreading the use of the Accord Scheme across the council, within other public bodies and into the private sector.



The potential that a scheme such as Accord offers its users is immense and is limited only by a lack of innovative thinking as to how to utilise its functionality and ability.



Over time, we have seen people click on to what Accord can do for them and then their enthusiasm for it is boundless. The Accord Scheme was not the only smartcard based project under the Modernising Government Initiative. It is, however, recognised as the one scheme that has delivered what it set out to. It is now beginning to realise its potential to be a sophisticated and extensive facility that will provide the answers to many questions from a huge variety of sources.





New look could make Accord even quicker

The Accord card is now well into its second year of operation at all 12 secondary schools within Aberdeen city, delivering the service of cashless catering.

In order to provide this service, the Accord team works closely with a number of suppliers and other stakeholders to develop and enhance the existing functionality of operations.

One example of this collaborative working is taking shape at Harlaw Academy, where a new layout on the catering tills is on trial.

The new system allows quick and easy access to the most popular products on the till layout for the operator, cutting the time it takes to deal with each customer and, therefore, increasing the number of people that can be dealt with and improving service to the customer.

If successful, the new layout will be offered to all other secondary schools.

Free cards ease growing pains

Students are now entitled to a free replacement Accord Card when they outgrow their ID picture.

We realise that the physical appearance of a student is likely to change significantly between the ages of 11 and, potentially, 18 - and it is important that a cardholder can continue to make use of the many benefits of the card after they leave secondary education.

Therefore, students are now entitled to have their Accord card replaced once at any point during their secondary school life, free of charge, due to a change in their physical appearance.

QUESTIONNAIRE HELPS SHAPE FUTURE OF ACCORD

Students at schools in Aberdeen are taking part in a major customer survey to help shape the future of the Accord smartcard scheme.

All pupils are being asked to complete a questionnaire, which will record how they use their Accord cards, what they think of the scheme and new features they would be interested in.

The results will help the Accord team gauge user response to the card and the many benefits available through it – and also plan new services. They will also allow schools an insight into how pupils feel about using Accord to purchase school meals and collect Healthy Eating Points.

As an added incentive, there will be a 'lucky dip' of completed questionnaires, winning several pupils prizes of between £5 and £50, to be credited to their Accord Card. Future development, marketing and other strategic decisions will then be balanced against various factors including the results of the questionnaire, rather than opinions from non-cardholders.

The exercise is expected to be complete before the end of the school year and results from the 16,000 questionnaires will be evaluated over the summer holidays ready for the new school year.

Accord rolled out to non-local authority schools

The Accord Scheme has reached another milestone – with pupils in non-local authority schools being issued with cards for the first time.

Students at five schools took delivery of their cards - which allow them to access Young Scot features and discounts, as well as library and leisure services – in the Spring.

Pupils at Albyn School, St Margaret's, Robert Gordon's College, the International School and Aberdeen Waldorf School took part in Accord Roadshows during April.



As well as delivering cards to the Accord Scheme's newest users, the roadshows gave students the opportunity to learn more about the benefits of being a cardholder.

Access to Arts

In the past, Aberdeen Performing Arts has asked clients to bring some form of ID to prove their entitlement to the many excellent benefits offered at HMT and the Music Hall.

Now, instead, you can take along your Accord Card, which will be inserted into a Proof of Age Reader at Aberdeen Box Office, proving your entitlement without any fuss.



Asda gets involved!

Retail giant Asda has signed up to the Accord Scheme, purchasing 120 Proof of Age Readers for stores in the Aberdeen area. The handy readers – which take just seconds to verify whether the cardholder is over 12, 15, 16 or 18 – are now in place at checkouts in Asda's new Beach store, Dyce, Garthdee, Bridge of Don and Portlethen.



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