The *AirTEXT* Project

Stephen Potter
Specialist Pollution Team Manager
London Borough of Croydon, UK
AirTEXT objective

- send air pollution alerts to vulnerable individuals via SMS text message

Information about air quality widely available throughout the EU but never been targeted in timely and proactive way at vulnerable individuals
Selection of Participants

• 1000 participants

• asthma
• chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
• other respiratory diseases
• heart disease (often overlooked)

• pre-selection by Primary Care Trust
• chest clinics
• GP (family doctor) surgeries etc.
How AirTEXT works:

1. YourAir Pollution forecast for Croydon
2. Preparation of generic area forecast
3. Dissemination of alert message
   - Preparation of text message alert
   - Pollution levels

AirTEXT

CROYDON COUNCIL
Frequency and Timing of Alerts

• alerts will be sent prior to 08:00 hours on days of moderate or worse air quality

• annual frequency of messages in range 28–69

• most likely number of alerts = 46
Evaluation

- **Attitudes and Responses:**
  - Do patients modify behaviour and better manage symptoms?
  - Do they visit hospital/doctor less?
  - What is perception of air pollution on symptoms? (feel worse on ‘alert days’?)
  - Are there barriers to the technology (young and old people?)

- **Systems/costs:**
  - Is text messaging cost effective intervention?
  - Functioning of messaging system?
  - Timely/concise?

- **The future:**
  - What else would people like?
  - How could it be improved?
  - Recommendations for continuation/extension of service to other users
Expected benefits

• enable patients to self-manage their symptoms
• reduce acute impacts of air pollution (accident and emergency treatment – visit to doctor)
• improve patient quality of life and address health inequalities
• reduce resource implications on National Health Service
• raise awareness of air pollution and impacts among participants
• demonstrate that it’s a highly cost-effective intervention: €14 per participant per year
• generation of publicity as a ‘first’ – benefits to PROMOTE