

Pens to increase retention in trials

Design of pen

- Depending on participant group consider the ergonomic design of the pen (the width, how easy it is to grip etc)
- Recommended to order a sample pen to ensure it is suitable for the target population
- Ensure pen is in working order before mailing to participants

Logo

- The institution logo/text can be included only on the pen. This reduces the cost but also increases the amount of trials the pen can be used with and potentially decreases waste as the pen can be used elsewhere
- The institution and/or the specific trial logo can be included on the pen but is trial specific and additional pens cannot be used elsewhere
- Consider whether participants would be happy to have a pen that displays the name of the study – would it breach confidentiality?

Resource and cost considerations

There are many factors that will influence the cost of the pen

- The model of the pen selected
- The amount of pens ordered (usually discounts given for larger quantities)
- The amount of writing, logos and different colours printed
- Including a pen will increase the postage and packing costs
- Staff time is increased slightly when preparing participant materials to be posted

Standard 'curvy' pen prices (April 2020: <https://www.4imprint.co.uk/>)

Number of pens ordered	Price
250	£0.24
500	£0.19
750	£0.18
>1000	£0.16

Standard pen example



Populations to receive pen

- Pens can be sent to any suitable participant population
- Pens can be sent to personnel who are responsible for recruiting participants into a trial

Acceptability of pens

- Trials conducted so far have not reported receiving a negative response from participants who received a pen

Cost effectiveness

The average cost of a participant within an NIHR trial is approximately £2200 (based on an average £1.1 million trial and a sample size of 500). The **cost of retaining one additional participant** due to the inclusion of a pen with a trial questionnaire is **£25**

Evidence suggests that 2 participants are retained per 100 if pens are included with questionnaires sent.

Worked example

Pen cost: 20 pence

Additional postage and time cost 30 pence

Total cost per pen sent 50 pence

Cost of sending pens to 100 participants: £50

Therefore cost of retaining two additional participants: £50

Cost of retaining one additional participant: £25

Additional cost saving: reduction in questionnaire reminders sent due to retained participants.