



THIRD SECTOR
Dumfries and Galloway

DIGITAL EXCLUSION IN DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY: SUMMARY REPORT

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REPORT BY THIRD SECTOR DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY

“Scotland’s future will be forged in a digital world. It’s a world in which data and digital technologies are transforming every element of our nation and our lives – people, place, economy and government”

Scottish Government: “A changing nation: how Scotland will thrive in a digital world”

“Digitally excluded people have limited or no access to digital tech and the internet, leading to lower skills and confidence. Being digitally excluded can lead to social exclusion and impact on social and economic problems”

Charity Digital – Topics – What does digital exclusion mean for the charity sector?

Foreword

In 2020 Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway (TSDG) commissioned desk-based research to assess the extent of digital exclusion in the region. The research identified that there were potentially high levels of digital exclusion. However, that data was largely based on national research. We discussed this with the Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services (IRISS) and we agreed we needed to know more. As a result of the 2020 research outcomes, TSDG commissioned primary research for Dumfries and Galloway.

This research report could not have been achieved without the support of our partners, including South of Scotland Enterprise and Dumfries and Galloway Council.

TSDG would also like to thank the Project Research Team for their work in delivering this project: Natalie Anderson, Emma Bowden, Stuart Harrison and Dr David Vickers.

Special mention needs to be made of our Project Reference Group (see appendix 1) in the design and piloting of the questionnaire. This group, along with other Third Sector Organisations (TSOs) and Public Sector Organisations (PSOs), (see appendix 2), was responsible for administering the questionnaire. TSOs were remunerated for their contribution to the project. There is no doubt this research would not have achieved such a significant number of responses to the questionnaire without their help.

The report begins with an executive summary that provides an overview of the research data. The findings section provides a detailed analysis of specific groups and underpins the headlines. The discussion section pulls all this data back together into a series of considerations.

We hope the research report will help to inform wider strategic discussions with key partners and stakeholders across Dumfries and Galloway.

Norma Austin Hart

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Chief Executive Officer

Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway



Executive Summary

In 2020 Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway carried out desk-based research into digital exclusion (TSDG, 2020). That research identified there was only a partial picture on digital exclusion in Dumfries and Galloway and relied on extrapolation of data from national research. The 2020 research also gave us a working definition of the issues surrounding digital inclusion/exclusion of **Access**, **Motivation** and **Skills** which we employ in this report.

This report aims:

- To develop a more in-depth understanding of digital exclusion in Dumfries and Galloway, particularly focused on third sector service users.
- To test the data from the original 2020 report.

The report is based on 898 responses to a survey of service users of Third Sector Organisations (TSOs) and/or Public Sector Organisations (PSOs). Respondents undertook an in-depth questionnaire (average completion time 24 minutes). TSOs were involved in the project from the outset in designing the questionnaire, promoting the research, facilitating survey completion and the administrative process.

The key findings from the report have wider implications for TSOs and PSOs, partnerships, public service organisations and policy makers at the local and national level. The findings include:

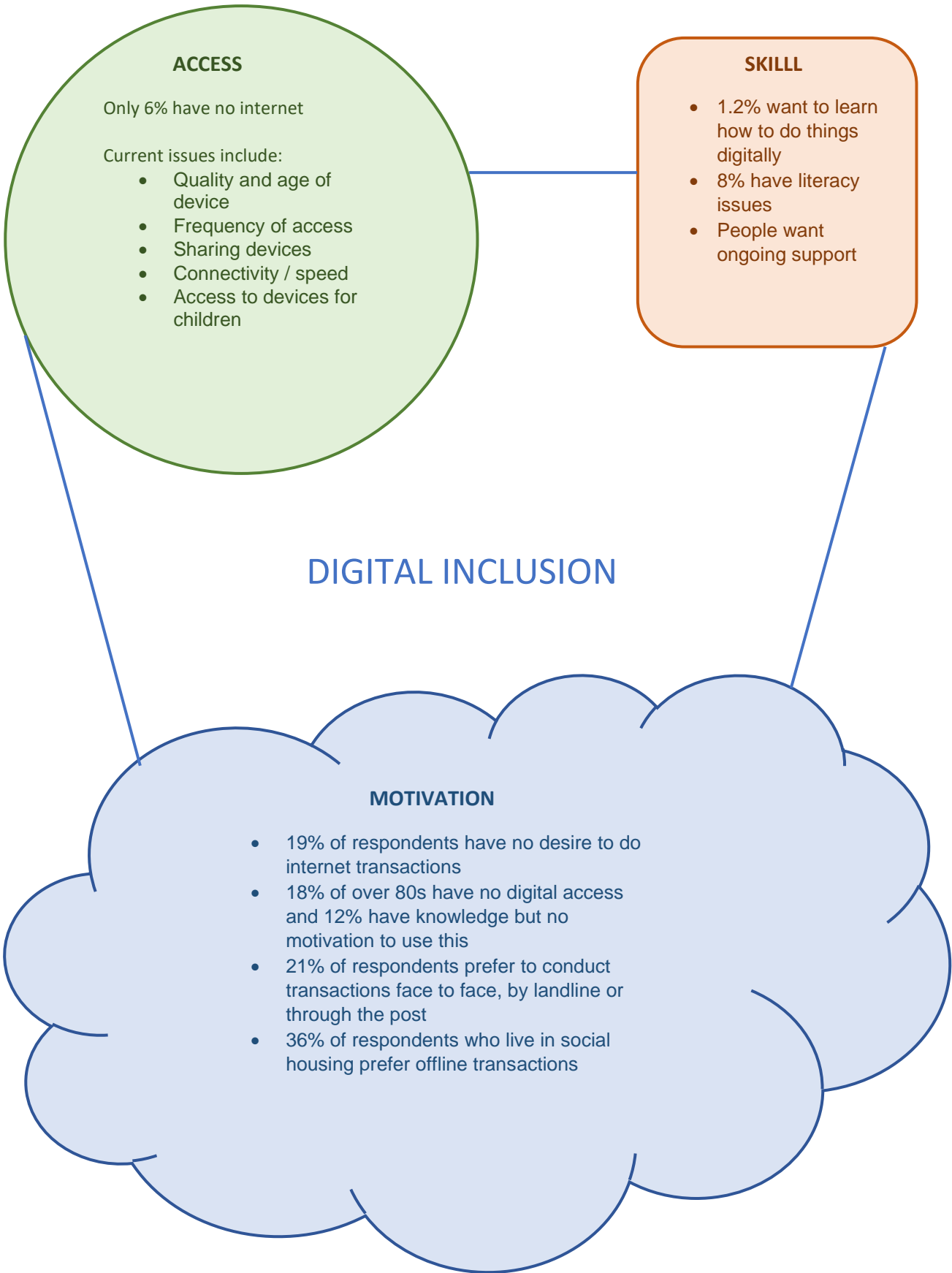
Access - The goal posts have moved as there are now few respondents with no digital access. Instead, the concern is quality of access. Issues include connectivity (speed and reliability), quality of device (type and age) and the move towards online access (reduced face-to-face transactions, design of web services).

Motivation – This is now the main barrier. There are many people who know how to but don't want to use online services and many who have no intention of learning to use them. There are still strong preferences for face-to-face services and getting friends and family to undertake transactions. Changing these will be challenging as they are highly valued.

Skills – The issues around skills are not about providing training courses as very few people are willing to learn to use services and facilities (circa 1% i.e., 9-10 people). There are respondents who lack confidence or those who are asking for support when they 'get stuck'. They are not asking for courses but to be helped on a one-to-one basis. Due to motivational issues, there is also a challenge in convincing people that there are benefits to them in learning to use the internet. These benefits may be unique to an individual's interests e.g., talking to family on Zoom/Teams, watching You Tube clips on their hobbies, reading aloud to them, finding things they cannot remember etc.

There is a substantial literacy barrier and a smaller English language issue which affect more than just digital inclusivity.

These new primary findings for the region have significant implications and opportunities for those developing service strategies, digital strategies and designing and developing online services for the vulnerable in our region.



Those on the lowest incomes are 40% less likely than those on the highest incomes to have a device other than a mobile phone in the household

Those on the lowest incomes are more likely to access the internet by mobile phone, this reduces access quality, they are also less likely to use email and internet

Connectivity – 42% think that speed and reliability are average or poor

I can only use it when I have support from a carer due to physical disability

Those with disabilities access the internet and email less frequently

11% of people who had digital access mentioned affordability as an issue

In the LGBTQ+ group there is a higher level of skill than the general population survey

Carers have a slightly higher level of skill than the general survey population

Those in social housing:

- are much less likely to have or use email
- have a strong preference for face-to-face interactions for conducting transactions
- are less likely to use or learn internet skills

Summary of Findings

ACCESS	
5.1	AGE
A5.1.1	Access is lower for the 80+ group
A5.1.2	Device ownership is low for the 80+ group
5.2	HOUSEHOLD INCOME
A5.2.1	Fewer devices in lower income groups.
A5.2.2	Lower income groups are more likely to access the internet by mobile phone thus reducing access quality
A5.2.3	Lower income groups less likely to use e-mail and internet
5.3	REGISTERED DISABLED
A5.3.1	Reduced quality of access due to fewer computers and tablets per head of household
A5.3.2	Less frequent access of internet and e-mail
5.4	LITERACY
A5.4.1	Lower access to devices and e-mail
A5.4.2	Some reduction in quality of access due to fewer computers and laptops per head of household
5.5	LANGUAGE
A5.5.1	Fewer devices than survey population
A5.5.2	Reduced quality of access due to fewer computers and tablets per head of household
5.6	ACCOMMODATION TYPE – SOCIAL HOUSING
A5.6.1	Many fewer devices than general survey population
A5.6.2	Reduced quality of access due to fewer computers and tablets per head of household
A5.6.3	Children have reduced device access if they have siblings
5.7	CARERS
A5.7.1	Access is higher for carers than the general population on all measures
A5.7.2	Device ownership is at similar levels to the general survey population of access
5.8	SEX
A5.8.1	Access to higher quality devices may be worse for females
A5.8.2	Device ownership is at similar levels to the general survey population
5.9	SEXUAL ORIENTATION
A5.9.1	Access is higher for LGBTQ+ than the general population
A5.9.2	Device quality is likely to be higher
A5.9.3	E-mail access is much higher than general survey population
5.11	BENEFITS / WORKING STATUS
A5.11.1	Fewer devices than survey population
A5.11.2	Similar levels of access

5.12	EDUCATIONAL LEVEL
A5.12.1	Access decreases as education level gets lower
A5.12.2	Device ownership decreases as education level gets lower
A5.12.3	Quality of access may be lower due to availability of devices in lower education levels
5.13	ETHNICITY
A5.13.1	Mobile and internet usage is more frequent for BAME+ group
A5.13.2	Voice calls are higher in the BAME+ group
A5.13.3	Access to devices is similar between groups
5.14	RELIGION
A5.14.1	Access to a mobile phone and frequency of its use is much higher amongst Muslim respondents
A5.14.2	Devices such as laptops and tablets are much less likely in Muslim households
5.16	DIGITALLY EXCLUDED
A5.16.1	Small number of 16–17-year-old respondents “not allowed” a phone

MOTIVATION	
5.1	AGE
M5.1.1	Frequency of mobile and internet usage declines with age
M5.1.2	More preference for face-to-face transactions for those aged 80+
M5.1.3	Issues with motivation to use digital across most age ranges
5.2	HOUSEHOLD INCOME
M5.2.1	Lower income groups are less likely to have e-mail
M5.2.2	More preference for face-to-face transactions in lower income groups
M5.2.3	Less desire to use internet skills or to want to in lower income groups
5.3	REGISTERED DISABLED
M5.3.1	Some preference for face-to-face and family and friends conducting transactions than survey population
M5.3.2	No desire to learn how to do things online for those who do not use digital
5.4	LITERACY
M5.4.1	Much less likely to have or use e-mail
M5.4.2	Strong preference for face-to-face and family and friends conducting transactions than survey population
M5.4.3	Strong level of lack of engaging with services and transactions
5.5	LANGUAGE
M5.5.1	Much less likely to have or use e-mail
M5.5.2	Strong preference for face-to-face and family and friends conducting transactions than survey population
M5.5.3	Strong level of lack of engaging with services and transactions
5.6	ACCOMMODATION TYPE (SOCIAL HOUSING)
M5.6.1	Much less likely to have or use e-mail
M5.6.2	Strong preference for face-to-face in conducting transactions than survey population
M5.6.3	Low motivation to use internet skills or to learn them.
5.7	CARERS
M5.7.1	More likely to use their e-mail
M5.7.2	More preference for face-to-face transactions than general survey population and self-reliant.
M5.7.3	Otherwise, similar levels of motivation to use.
5.8	SEX
M5.8.1	Preference for face-to-face transactions is around 20% for both sexes
M5.8.2	Slightly more males are unwilling to use/learn to use the internet
5.9	SEXUAL ORIENTATION
M5.9.1	LGBTQ+ group more likely to use their mobile phone than others
M5.9.2	More preference for online transactions than general survey population and self-reliant.

5.11	BENEFITS / WORKING STATUS
M5.11.1	Slightly less likely to use their e-mail
M5.11.2	More preference for face-to-face transactions than survey population
M5.11.3	Otherwise, similar levels of motivation to use.
5.12	EDUCATIONAL LEVEL
M5.12.1	The higher educated are more frequent users of devices and the internet
M5.12.2	More preference for face-to-face transactions in the lowest education group
M5.12.3	Lowest education group less likely to want to learn and use internet
5.13	ETHNICITY
M5.13.1	BAME+ group much more preference for face-to-face transactions and self-reliant.
	BAME+ show much less desire to use their internet skills
5.14	RELIGION
M5.14.1	Muslim respondents less likely to use their e-mail account
M5.14.2	Muslim respondents much higher preference for face-to-face transactions
M5.14.3	Motivation to use the internet is an issue for all groups.
5.16	DIGITALLY EXCLUDED
M5.16.1	Majority don't want or need it or use landline.
M5.16.2	Circa 17% of respondents do not have an email account

SKILLS	
5.1	AGE
S5.1.1	Slightly higher level of wanting to learn how to use internet for tasks in younger groups (age 16-24)
5.2	HOUSEHOLD INCOME
S5.2.1	Lower income groups may have less skills than other groups
S5.2.2	Similar low levels of wanting to learn across all income groups
5.3	REGISTERED DISABLED
S5.3.1	Skills level in online services is similar to the general population but there is a much higher number not prepared to use those skills.
5.4	LITERACY
S5.4.1	Lack of willingness to learn and use the Internet is higher than the general survey population
5.5	LANGUAGE
S5.5.1	Lack of willingness to learn and use the Internet is higher than the general survey population
5.6	ACCOMMODATION TYPE (SOCIAL HOUSING)
S5.6.1	Lack of willingness to learn and use the Internet is higher than the general survey population
5.7	CARERS
S5.7.1	Slightly higher level of skills than the general survey population
5.8	SEX
S5.8.1	Neither females or males show a need for learning how to use the internet for activities (only 1.2%)
5.9	SEXUAL ORIENTATION
S5.9.1	Higher level of skills than the general survey population
5.11	BENEFITS / WORKING STATUS
S5.11.1	Similar levels of skills to general survey population
5.12	EDUCATIONAL LEVEL
S5.12.1	Internet usage skills rise in line with education level.
5.13	ETHNICITY
S5.13.1	BAME+ group has a slightly higher level of skills.
5.14	RELIGION
S5.14.1	Perceived skills levels high and little interest in learning how to use the internet for activities.
5.16	DIGITALLY EXCLUDED
S5.16.1	Skills do not appear to be the issue.

Conclusions

This report and research process aimed to address two themes:

- To develop a more in-depth understanding of digital exclusion in Dumfries and Galloway, particularly focused on third sector service users.
- To test the data from the original 2020 report.

The original report in 2020 identified the definition of access – motivation – skills and we have adopted this in our report. However, we have highlighted a shift in digital inclusion/exclusion since the 2020 data.

Access - The large majority of those surveyed have some form of online access and they are now concerned with issues such as the speed and reliability of their connections, the age and quality of the devices they use, the cost of broadband and their right to choose whether they consume services and transactions online or otherwise.

Motivation – is the biggest barrier to an online world. There are many with the skills who prefer not to use them, and nearly as many people who do not want to learn how to conduct transactions and services or use them. Changing these views will be difficult due to the fact they are strongly held and valued.

Skills – is now about a much more person centred approach to educating users. People want one-to-one support and advice. They also need convincing as to how online access may help them with something that matters to them such as family, hobbies, music etc. There are also issues of literacy and English language understanding that need to be addressed.

By developing a more in-depth understanding of the issues we do not seek to extrapolate to the wider population but instead, to inform the debates on digital services and transactions. In turn this hopefully will inform policy makers, those designing online services and lead to a more inclusive relationship with service users much earlier in the decision making and design processes.