

# Digital Exclusion in Dumfries and Galloway

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27 September 2022

# Project Team

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## Emma Bowden

Project Research Officer (August 21 – April 2022)

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TSDG Associate



# Purposes of Session

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- To present the TSDG primary research key findings
- To stimulate engagement with and buy-in to this research
- To create the opportunity for key policy makers to think about the implications of this research
- To think about the possibilities of joint working with other organisations



# Agenda

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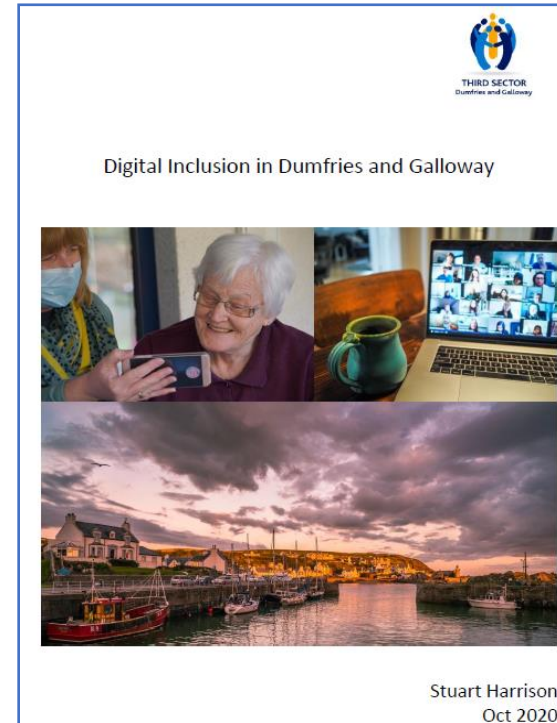
- Why we did this research
- How we did it
- Results
- Big learning
  
- Discussion
  
- Next steps



# Why we did this research

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- During Covid TSDG identified key gaps in understanding
- In October 2020 TSDG commissioned desk research into digital exclusion in Dumfries and Galloway
- This previous research investigated digital exclusion in D&G using national / Scottish evidence, as no region specific research was available



# Desk Research Report December 2020

## - key findings

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- Up to 30% of the population in D&G could be digitally excluded by lack of access, skills, or motivation
- Those most likely to be digitally excluded were also likely to be disadvantaged in other ways such as age, disability, or poverty
- No one agency is identified as the 'lead agency' for digital exclusion in D&G
- There was no overall strategic approach to digital exclusion in D&G
- **No primary research** about digital exclusion for D&G; the data in the 2020 report required to be tested in a primary context



# Definition of Digital Exclusion

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TSDG 2020 report gave us a working definition

Digital exclusion is lack of:

- **Access** (to kit, broadband, the means to pay for them, or design limits access)
- **Motivation**
- **Skills**



# Primary Research

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This led TSDG to commission primary research with the following aims:

- To develop a more in-depth understanding of digital exclusion in Dumfries and Galloway
- To test the data from the original 2020 report





# How we did it (Aug 2021 – Sept 2022)

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- Project Reference Group
- Questionnaire design
- Training for those administering the questionnaire
- Questionnaires administered
- Questionnaires analysed
- Report launch



# Project Reference Group

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The Project Reference Group, established October 2021, included 13 Third Sector Organisations (TSOs)

- Involved in questionnaire design
- Helped with piloting
- Helped with questionnaire administration design
- Many involved in administering questionnaire and data gathering



# Questionnaire

58 questions maximum

1. Survey demographics/Data protection
2. Mobile phone
3. Internet (and devices)
4. E-mail

24 minutes average completion time

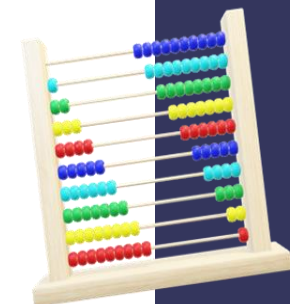


Third Sector  
Dumfries and Galloway

# Training and participating organisations

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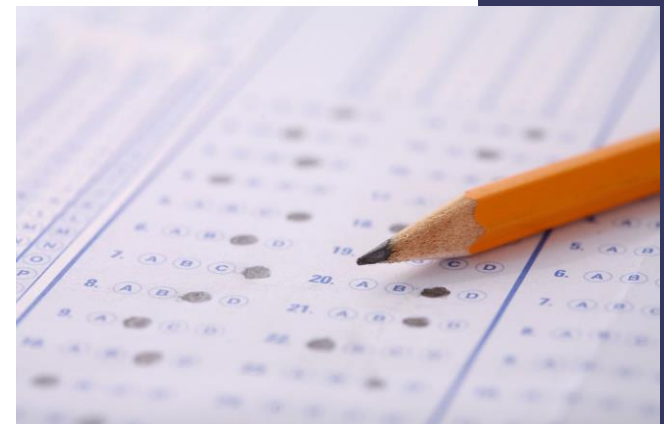
No. of initial expressions of interest	68
No. of Organisations that attended training	41
No. of Organisations that returned signed research agreement	38
No. of organisations that completed data gathering	38
Final number of questionnaire responses	898



# Questionnaire Administered

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- **898** Responses from third and public sector service users
- Generated **145,632** individual response items of raw data
- Across all age ranges from 16-80+
- Across all income groups under £12.5K to over £40K
- Standard demographic definitions taken from national protocols



# Analysis

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- Mixed methods approach – the *numbers* and the *words* behind them
- Quantitative analysis of each category (e.g. age, sex, ethnicity etc.)
- Qualitative analysis holistically using software tools
- Qualitative analysis for specific primary categories
- Analysis time circa 350 hours, equates to 30 minutes per survey completed.



# Analysis – 15 single categories

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## Categories

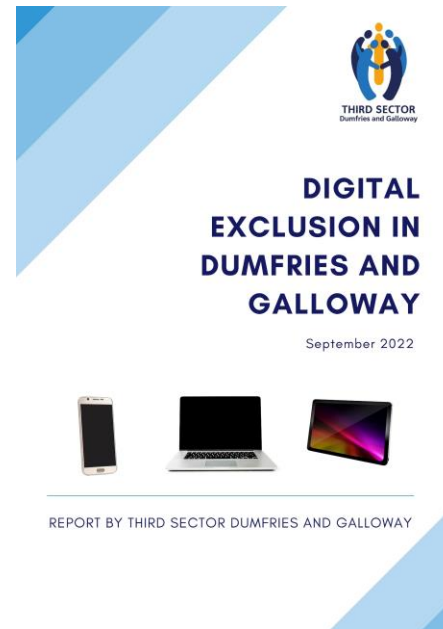
- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Age</li><li>• Income</li><li>• Disability</li><li>• Caring for others</li><li>• Those with no mobile/no internet access</li><li>• LGBTQ+</li><li>• Language barriers</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Literacy barriers</li><li>• Benefits</li><li>• Ethnicity</li><li>• Sex</li><li>• Accommodation Type</li><li>• Postcode</li><li>• Religion</li><li>• Relationship Status</li></ul> |
|--|---|



# Results

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- The report
- Access – Motivation – Skills
- Category headlines
  - Age
  - Household Income
  - Registered Disabled
  - Literacy Barrier
  - Accommodation Type (Social Housing)
  - Digitally Excluded

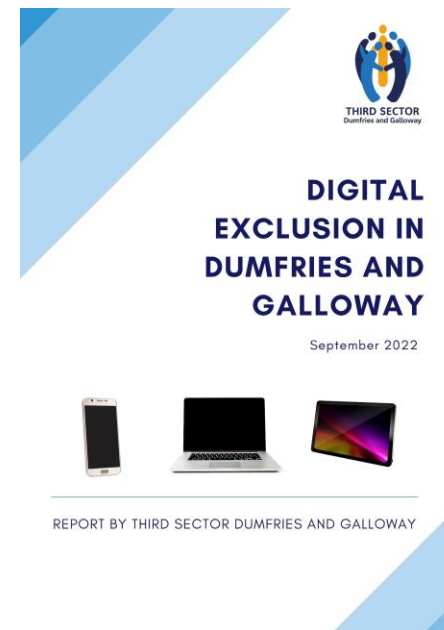




# The report

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- 200+ pages of information
- 17 sections of detailed analysis
- Discussions and implications
- Appendices, including participating organisations, a copy of the research questionnaire, additional data by category



# Access

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- Access to the internet is no longer the main issue
- Only 5.5% have no mobile phone, 6.3% have no access to the internet
- It is now about:
  - cost, connectivity and speed
  - frequency of access
  - age/quality of device used to access
  - income affecting the type of device and functionality
  - availability of a device within the household due to sharing



# Motivation

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- **Motivation** to use the internet remains a significant issue
- 41% of people across all groups prefer **not** to use online transactions and highly value other approaches:
  - 20.4% of all transactions are conducted face to face
  - 8.4% engage family/friends to do things
  - 6% use landline or post
  - 6.4% no access to internet
- 18.4% of respondents across all age groups have the know-how but no desire to use internet for transactions
- 26% of the over 80's claim to know how to use the internet but prefer not to



A hand holding a blue marker is shown in the bottom right corner, having just finished writing the word "MOTIVATION" in large, blue, capital letters on a whiteboard. A horizontal blue line is drawn underneath the word.

# Skills

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- **Skills** - not perceived by the respondents to be an issue
- Only 1.2% (10 people) requested additional skills...
- ... remember this is a self-perception
- Low use of the internet across the broader survey group for more sophisticated purposes - website management, vlogs, blogs, political engagement, IT and security issues

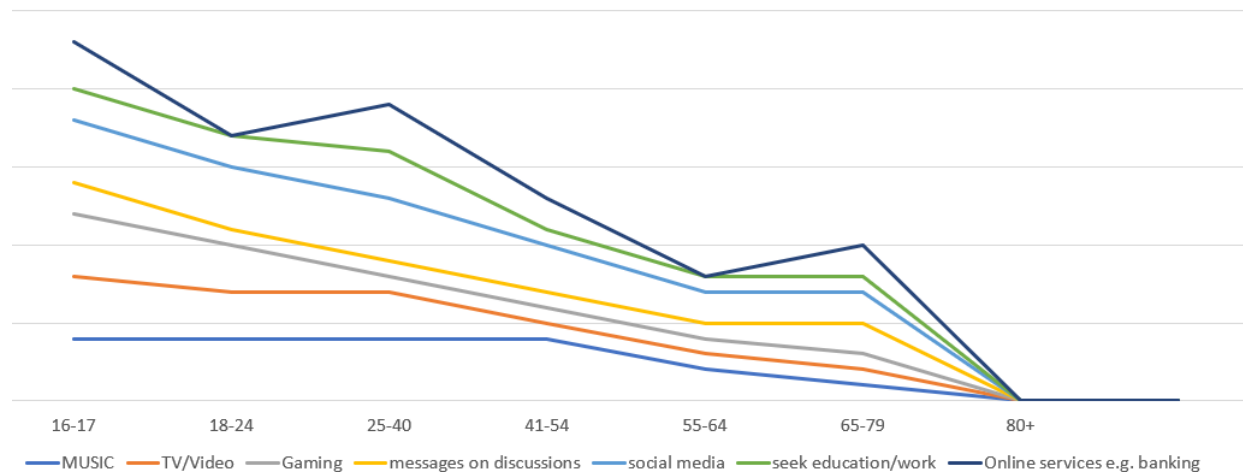


# Category Specific Headlines

## Age

- 80+ age range 26% currently don't want access or don't see a benefit, a further 28% have it but don't use
- Preference is both high and strong for offline transactions (44%)
- Frequency of mobile and internet use declines with age

Usage of mobile phone for internet purposes by age band



# Category Specific Headlines

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## Household income:

- The poorer the household, the more digitally restricted
- More children in a household mean fewer devices per person per household (i.e., devices are shared)
- Lowest income group 40% less likely than highest income group to have another device other than a mobile phone in the household
- 15% less internet access between lowest and highest income groups
- Lower income households are much less likely to have an e-mail address, even those that have an e-mail tend to use it less frequently



# Category Specific Headlines

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## Disability:

- Internet access and usage much higher than previously thought **but** technological accessibility (poor design) is still a significant barrier
- In 2020, 56% were projected to have no access
- 2022 data recorded 94% having internet access, similar to the general population
- There are numerous examples of accessibility issues

*“Can’t use mobile as finger problems need an iPad”*

*“A bigger screen”*



# Category Specific Headlines

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## Literacy:

- 8% have a literacy barrier (1 in 12) and this also affects offline consumption of services
- Across the 17 services tested, 48% with literacy and the internet don't engage at all with any of the 17 services
- Literacy appears to be an issue much bigger than digital exclusion
- In total approximately 102 people said they have a literacy or language difficulty
- Scottish government data suggests 26.7% of the population are constrained by literacy issues equating to 30,000 in the region





# Category Specific Headlines

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## Accommodation Type (Social Housing):

- Lack of willingness to learn and use the internet is much higher than in the general population
- 33% of those in social housing won't use or have no intentions of learning to use the internet
- Frequency of internet use is lower: daily (-19%) and weekly (-4%)

*"My housing provider installed Wi-Fi in my flat... but I don't use it"*

*"Mi-Fi device provided ...via Connecting Scotland. I don't use it, but my family do when they visit"*



# Category Specific Headlines

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## Digitally Excluded:

- 19 (2%) people totally without any access or device
- The majority don't want or need a phone or internet
- Most are happy with just a landline/telephone and others don't see a need for a device or online access
- 57 (6.3%) of the respondents have no access to the internet
- The largest digital exclusion group in our general survey population is those without an e-mail account – 151 (17% )
- Those who choose to be excluded ask their family and friends to conduct online activity for them i.e., a lifestyle choice



# Summary

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- The analysis to date is focused on individual demographic categories
- Findings are more nuanced, precise and useful to the region than in previous studies.
- Final report contains a significant and valuable series of findings.
- There is significant potential to interrogate the data with more complex multivariate scenarios
- Future analysis requires guidance as well as time and money.



# Big Learning

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- For the first time we have detailed and comprehensive regional data
- **Access** – the goal posts have moved as there are few respondents with no access. Instead, the concern is quality of access, including the design of web services
- **Motivation** – is now the main barrier
- **Skills** – only 1.2% have requested help (not training) to use online services and transactions
- There is a substantial literacy barrier which affects more than just digital inclusivity



# Lessons Learned

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- The importance of working with third sector organisations
- The role of people with lived experience is invaluable
- Make no assumptions
- The issue is complex and evolving
- The research raised even more questions



# Recommendations for short-life working group

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- Consider a single strategic approach
- Scope additional analysis of this research
- Identify workstreams
- Define governance and the role of the Community Planning Partnership Board
- Create mechanisms for input of people with lived experience



# Discussion

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- What three pieces of advice would you give the short-life working group?
- What will you do with this report in your own organisation in the next month?

If you are willing to participate in the future development of this work, please give your name to the facilitator



# Conclusion and Thanks

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- Digital Poverty Alliance – principles for ending digital poverty:
  1. Digital is a basic right.
  2. Accessing key public services online must be simple, safe and meet all people's needs
  3. Digital should fit into people's lives, not be an additional burden
  4. Digital skills should be fundamental to education and training throughout life
  5. There must be cross-sector efforts to provide free and open evidence on digital exclusion

