

Digital Inclusion for an Ageing Population

Reaching the Furthest Behind First

AgeAction
Age Equality

60-74 year old internet users were **the least likely** to undertake any of the personal data management actions measured by CSO such as checking that a website where they provided **personal data was secure**.

43%

People aged 55-74 have below basic digital literacy skills

Reference: Eurostat defines basic digital skills through a competence framework that can be simplified as: being able to find information about goods and services, send an email, buy something online and use word processing software.
https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/metadata/en/tepsr_sp410_esmsip2.htm

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Older people are **less likely** to be digitally connected which can **limit access to rights, services and quality of life, and that this 'digital divide' grows larger with age.**

50%
People aged 75+

21%
People aged 60-74



0%
People aged 16-44

Reference:CSO (2020). Information Society Statistics - Households. Available at:
<https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-iss hh/information society statistics-households2020/frequencyofinternetusage/>

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The UN has noted that barriers that older persons face related to literacy and language may have been magnified during the COVID-19 pandemic.

5%

people aged 60-74 were doing an online course

27%

people aged 30-44 were doing an online course

Source: CSO (2020). Information Society Statistics – Households. Available at: <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-iss hh/informationstatistics-households2020/onlinelearning/>

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Lived Experience

People who experience digital exclusion face barriers to accessing public services such as social protection, healthcare and National Driving Licence Centre.

People are put in vulnerable situations and their equality of outcome is undermined.

‘I can’t use the online banking so I used to collect my pension at the Post Office every week. With the COVID I signed for my nephew to collect it for me. I didn’t mind him getting a bit for diesel for the car but it is going on a long time now and I’m missing that money. What will I say to him now?’

Caller to Age Action Information Service

Lived Experience

Independence is affected such as when the system for **driver license renewal has an online-only** appointment booking system.

Even something like marriage becomes more difficult to access, as the story of John Bermingham (86) and Mary Long (83), who were married in 2020, shows.

‘It was the pair's wish for a long time to get married, but they had difficulty with the paperwork...

Nowadays everything is online and on the internet and they just couldn't manage it.’

RTÉ (24 October 2020). ‘Elderly Offaly couple marry 40 years after they first met’. Available at: <https://www.rte.ie/news/ireland/2020/1023/1173586-covid-19-wedding/>

Lived Experience

Participation for all of us in public life and policy consultation **is limited by a system of online notification** of consultations in many cases, with short response timeframes and minimal public meetings that are held only in rare cases.

‘My tutor was a very good teacher, patient and helpful in so many ways. They showed me where to find the list of Candidates for the Election which was very helpful at the time and I was able to help others too in finding the Candidates for their area.’

Age Action Getting Started Participant

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Policy Response

Many older people do not wish to use the internet, and this choice should not affect access to services and rights such as health and independence. For those who wish to learn digital skills, the internet can offer many opportunities to support personal rights, needs and interests, which should be promoted.

To enable true digital inclusion for those who are offline and online, supports need to be across three key areas:

1. skills acquisition
2. ensuring equal access for those offline
3. income supports to enable people to be digitally included.

Policy Response

Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty - All public services should adopt a rights-based approach to plan, deliver and evaluate policy and services to ensure that those offline are not disadvantaged

Digital Inclusion Strategy - A Rights Based Approach

- Co-created and implemented by people who are impacted
- A whole-of-Government approach and coordination is needed to deliver effective action to enable digital inclusion
- To meet the needs of learners to navigate a digital society, Government funding for digital skills training should be focused on meaningful changes and long-term outcomes.