



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

STATISTICS

Internet skills and online public sector services (National Survey for Wales): April 2019 to March 2020

This report looks at personal use of the internet, engagement with digital skills; and public service websites from April 2019 to March 2020.

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The 2019-20 National Survey included questions on internet use, internet skills, and which public sector websites they had visited in the last year. These questions were also asked in 2020, during the coronavirus pandemic. Some key findings on these topics are reported on here. Further results are available in our [results viewers](#).

Main findings

In 2019-20, 90% of people used the internet, a similar percentage to 2018-19. 93% of people were using the internet during May to September 2020.

76% of people used the internet several times or more a day in 2019-20 compared with 88% between May and September 2020.

73% of internet users demonstrated [5 digital skills](#) in the previous three

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months. The following factors are independently linked with using this number of skills:

- being aged 16 to 49
- being educated to degree level or above
- being highly satisfied with life
- using the internet at least several times a day

77% of internet users had visited at least one public service website in the past 12 months. The following factors are independently linked with having visited at least one public service website:

- being aged 16 to 49
- being educated to degree level or above
- using the internet at least several times a day
- being female
- being employed
- being white (Welsh, English, British etc.)

Internet skills

People were asked if they had completed any of nine activities on the internet in the past three months. The **digital inclusion framework** associates each activity with one of five digital skills. The survey results for each of the five skills are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Digital skill categories and associated activities

Activities associated with this category	Digital skill category	% of internet users who did at least one of the activities in the past 3 months
Used a search engine	Handling information and content	98

Activities associated with this category	Digital skill category	% of internet users who did at least one of the activities in the past 3 months
Sent a message via email or instant messaging Posted on social media	Communicating	94
Bought good or services online Set up an online account	Transacting	87
Found information online Used online help services	Problem solving	91
Managed privacy settings Updated software to keep it secure	Being safe and legal online	80

Source: Digital inclusion framework

In 2019-20, 90% of people used the internet (a similar percentage to 2018-19). Of these: 73% used all five digital skills in the previous 3 months, 15% four digital skills, and 12% had used three or fewer digital skills.

More in-depth analysis was carried out to investigate the links between the number of digital skills internet users demonstrated and a variety of demographic, social and health factors. The method used is explained in our [Regression technical report](#). While controlling for the influence of other factors, the following were independently associated with having used all five skills.

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Education

81% of those with qualifications at degree level or above demonstrated all five digital skills compared with 49% of those with no qualifications.

Satisfaction with life

72% of those who reported a very high satisfaction with life had used all five digital skills compared with 56% of those with a low level of satisfaction with life.

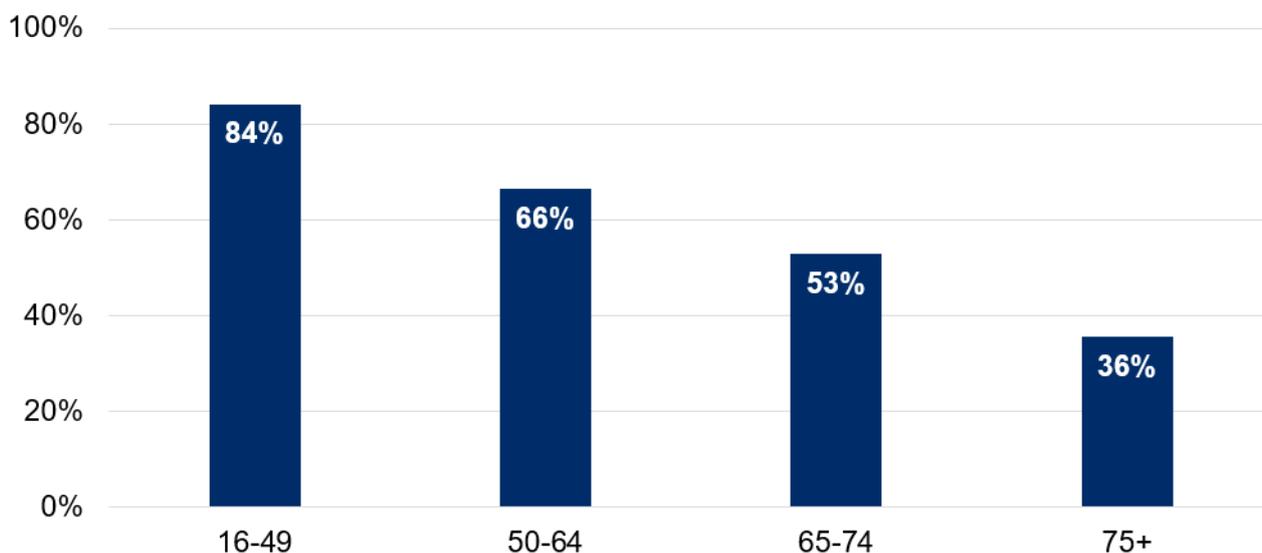
Frequency of internet access

82% of those who accessed the internet several times a day demonstrated all five digital skills compared with 53% of those who used the internet daily and 19% of those who accessed weekly. There is a two-way relationship between these factors. Those who use the internet more frequently are more likely to have performed more activities in the past 3 months and those with more skills are more likely to use the internet as part of their daily life.

Age

The likelihood of demonstrating all five digital skills decreased with age.

Chart 1: Having five digital skills by age April 2019 to March 2020



Source: National Survey for Wales, 2019-20

An association was also seen between the number of digital skills demonstrated and sex. Overall, 74% of men had used all five digital skills compared with 71% of women. There is no real difference between men and women for those aged 16 to 64, but there is a difference for older age groups. For those aged 64 to 75; 57% of men had all five skills compared with 49% of women. Similarly 42% of men aged 75 and older demonstrated all five skills compared with 30% of women.

Websites visited

In 2019-20 the survey asked if respondents had visited any of five types of public sector websites. 52% of those who personally used the internet reported they had visited a local authority website, 37% had visited NHS Direct Wales, 32% had visited a school and college website, 29% had visited a GP surgery's website, and 27% had visited the Welsh Government website. These results were similar to those in 2017-18.

77% of those who personally used the internet had visited at least one public

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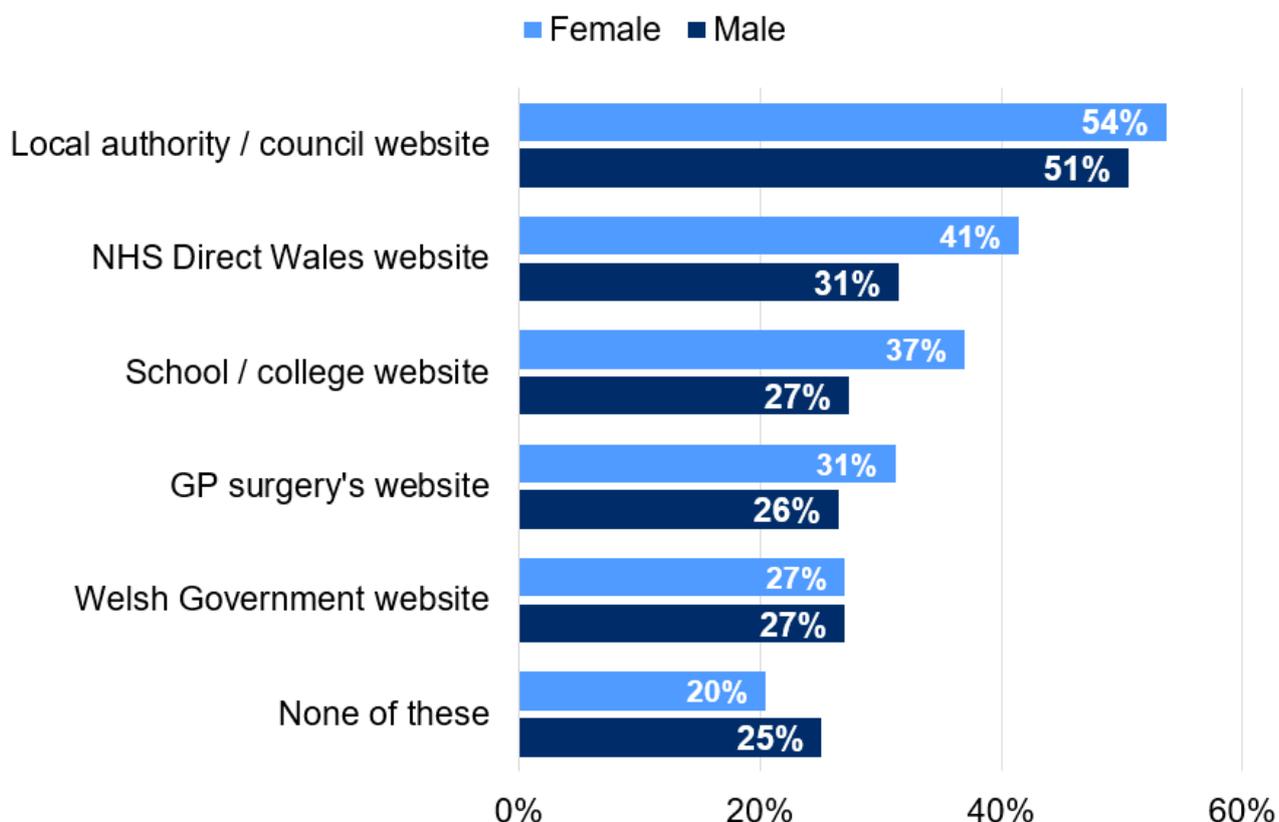
sector website and 23% had visited none.

When we looked at links between different factors and whether internet users had visited any public service websites we found the following were associated factors.

Sex

While more males than females demonstrated the most digital skills in this case it females were more likely than males to visit public service websites (80% compared with 75%). A similar result to 2017-18. Chart 2 shows the types of site visited and the proportions of males and females visiting them.

Chart 2: Public service websites visited, by sex, April 2019 to March 2020



Source: National Survey for Wales, 2019-20

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Economic status

Those who were economically inactive were less likely to visit a website (71%) than those in employment (82%).

Ethnicity

78% of people who identified as white (Welsh, English, British etc.) had visited a public service website, 74% of those with a non-white background and 74% of people with a white but non-British ethnicity.

Age

People aged under 65 were more likely to visit public service websites. 82% of internet users under the age of 65 had visited a website compared with 59% of those aged 65 and over.

Tenure

People living in private rented or owner-occupied homes are more likely to visit public service websites than those living in social housing.

Internet use during the pandemic

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Survey switched to telephone mode in May 2020, with monthly results available for each of May to September 2020. Due to the change in survey mode, direct comparisons between the full year results and the monthly results should be treated with caution.

A higher proportion of people reported that they use the internet several times a day in the May to September 2020 survey (88%, compared with 76% during 2019-20). There was no significant change in the number of people accessing weekly or less than weekly. A similar pattern was observed for all age groups,

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sex and tenure types.

Policy context

Digital Communities Wales: Digital Confidence, Health and Well-being (DCW) is the Welsh Government's digital inclusion and health programme. The programme is designed to provide training and support to front line staff, volunteers and organisations (face to face) to engage with and develop the digital skills of citizens to access services.

In December 2020 Welsh Government published '**Digital Inclusion Forward Look: towards a digitally confident Wales**' which outlined areas of focus, such as priority groups; older people, disabled people, unemployed & economically inactive and social housing residents.

The National Survey findings are used alongside evidence gathered by other organisations (For example, Ofcom, DWP, local authorities, private sector) to identify and develop interventions for those digitally excluded and/or lacking digital confidence.

Quality and methodology information

The 2019-20 **National Survey** was a face-to-face survey of over 12,000 randomly selected adults across Wales running from April 2019 to March 2020.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic we changed to a shorter, monthly telephone survey. From May 2020 onwards telephone interviews were carried out with a random sample of people who had previously taken part in a full-year, face-to-face **National Survey**.

Detailed charts and tables of results are available in our interactive **results viewer**. For information on data collection and methodology please see our **Quality report** and **Regression technical report**.

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National Statistics status

The **United Kingdom Statistics Authority** has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the **Code of Practice for Statistics**.

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the UK Statistics Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate.

It is Welsh Government's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained, and reinstated when standards are restored.

The continued designation of these statistics as National Statistics was confirmed in June 2020 following a compliance check by the Office for

Statistics Regulation (**letter of confirmation**). These statistics last underwent a full assessment (**full report**) against the Code of Practice in 2013.

Since the latest review by the Office for Statistics Regulation, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics, and have made the following improvements:

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- provided more detailed breakdowns in the **results viewer** and made it easier

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- for users to compare results across years
- updated the survey topics annually to ensure we continue to meet changing policy need
 - made regression analysis a standard part of our outputs to help users understand the contribution of particular factors to outcomes of interest

Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. The Act puts in place seven wellbeing goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators (“national indicators”) that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the Well-being goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before Senedd Cymru. The 46 national indicators were laid in March 2016. The National Survey collects information for **15 of the 46 indicators**.

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local wellbeing assessments and local wellbeing plans.

Contact details

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