



# Enhancing digital skills and digital literacy among older persons

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[ageing-better.org.uk](https://ageing-better.org.uk)

# Centre for Ageing Better

- Our vision is a society where everyone enjoys later life
- We create change in policy and practice informed by evidence, and work with partners across England to improve employment, housing, health and communities
- [www.ageing-better.org.uk](http://www.ageing-better.org.uk)

# State of the digital nation

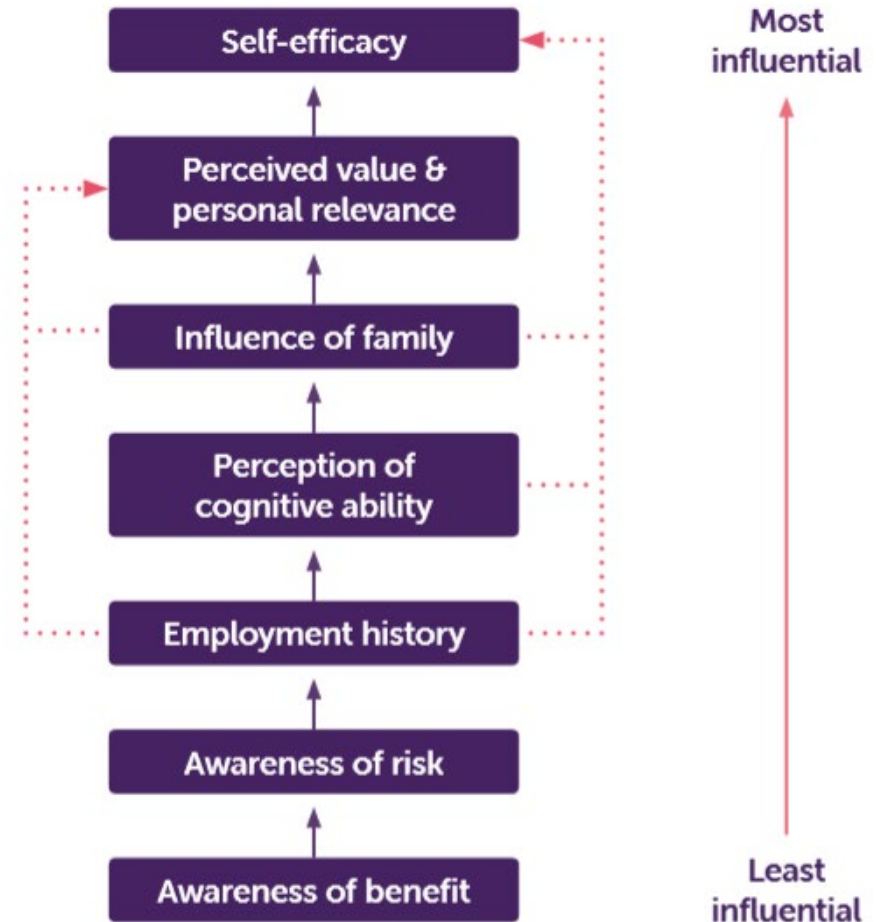
- 95% are online
  - 1.5 m people have started to use the internet in the last year
- We are at 2025 levels of high digital capability because of the pandemic
- However **2.6m are still offline**, and it may be harder to really lower this figure now
  - Age is not the only factor, there are broader factors as well
  - 11% of those aged 60+ increased their digital engagement score by more than twenty points
  - People on incomes of less than £35,000 are more prone to larger decreases in digital engagement.

# What enables and what prevents people in later life from getting online?

Our report, [Digital Age](#), aimed to answer these questions. This hierarchy of factors came through from the research

Most influential factors relate to the perceived value of a task and to self- efficacy

Figure 1: Factors influencing internet usage in later life



# Key insights from our recent research

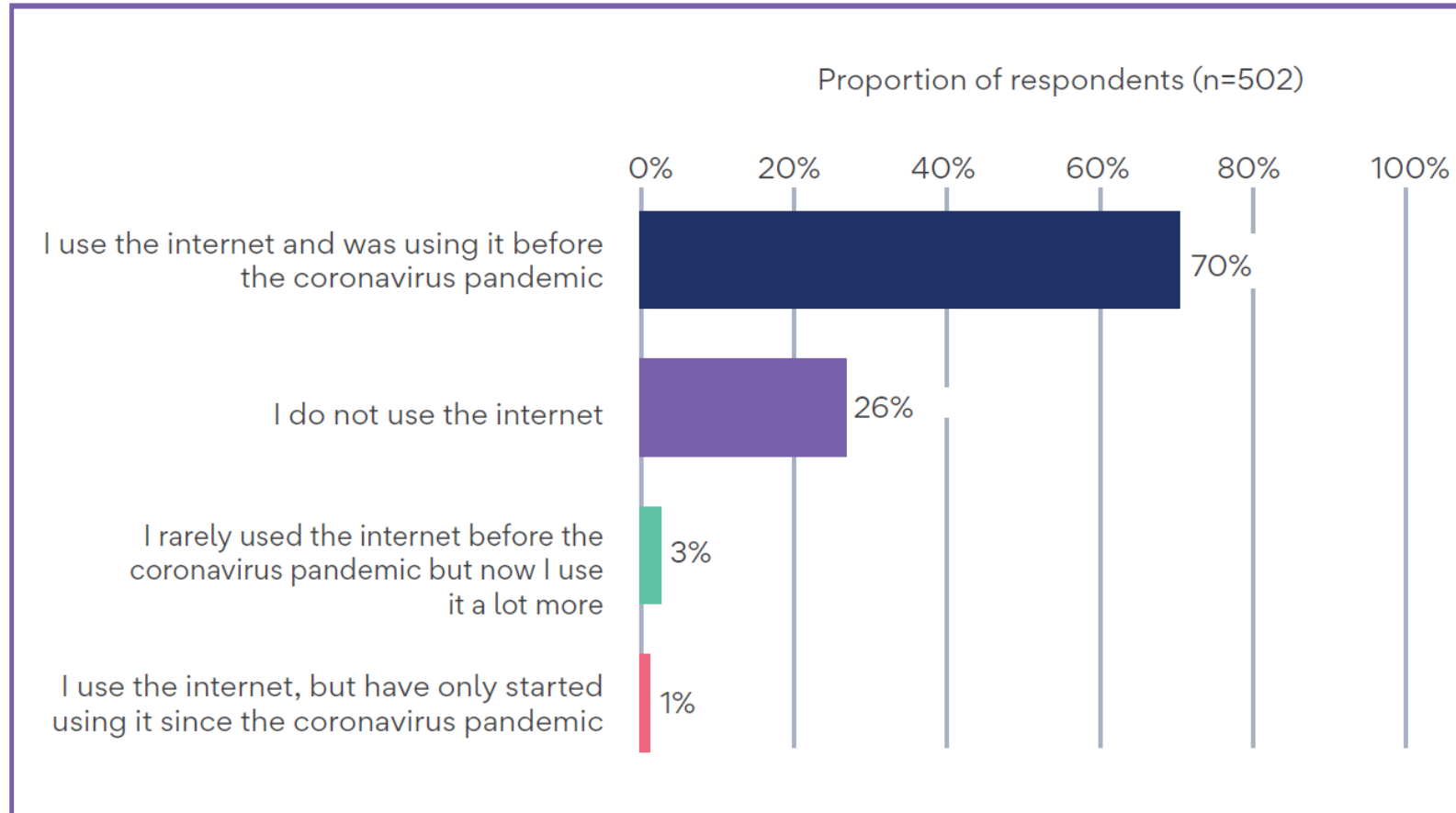


# Digital Skills to connect

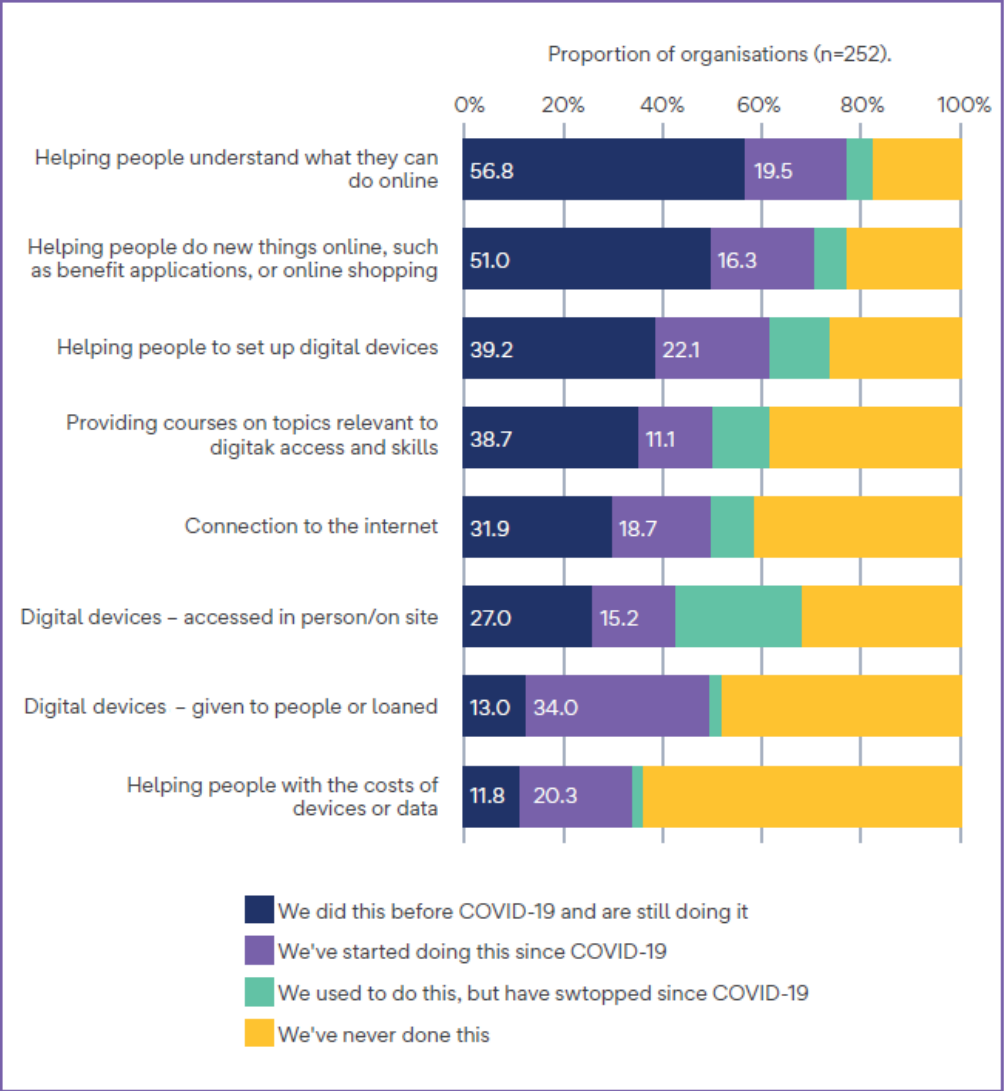
- Aims of research:
- Exploring the digital experiences of people aged 50-70, and the organisations who supported them during Covid-19
- Methodology
  - Phone poll of 500 in 50-70 age range in households where income is less than £25,000 p.a.
  - Online survey of organisations – 252 responses
  - Online survey of individuals – 327 responses
  - Follow-up in depth interviews with both
- Timeline
  - Nov 20 to end of Jan 21

Source: Digital skills to connect research

# 26% of 50-70s living on lower incomes were not using the internet before the pandemic



# More support for devices and data





# Digital skills to connect

## 7 key messages

- There is a significant digital divide among 50-70 year olds exacerbated by the pandemic
- Digital inclusion is not just about being online, its also about building skills and confidence
- Local and national organisations have had to adapt to continue to support users
- There is a lack of awareness among older adults of the support that is available
- Organisations need more financial and peer support in building digital inclusion
- Remote support has benefits beyond the role played in the pandemic
- Non-digital channels still need to be available

# Sharing good practice

Digital skills research project – insights from interviews with organisations and individuals



# 8 principles of good practice

- 1. Flexibility and relevance:** structured, skills-focused courses won't work. Concentrate on helping people to do the things they need and want to do online.
- 2. The right pace:** older learners will pick up information and will progress their learning at different paces – responsive approach is key
- 3. Repetition and reflection:** creating space for repetition and reflection on success is vital to success
- 4. The right language:** avoid jargon and focus on the task, not the tech
- 5. One-to-one support:** a strong tutor-pupil relationship is key to building confidence.
- 6. Time to build relationships:** time to build communication and trust helps to maintain learners' interest in digital and increase their self efficacy.
- 7. Ongoing support:** support needs to be open-ended, allowing learners to return with questions and problems.
- 8. Co-design:** involve a wide range of users in the shaping and design of all services, new and existing, to ensure their relevance and effectiveness.

## Key learning from our research

- Enabling people to access services without being online
- Providing devices
- Using referral networks/word of mouth
- Reaching people via direct mail/paper-based information
- Contacting people by telephone
- Using digital systems internally
- Developing specialisms in Digital Champions

# Links and resources

- <https://ageing-better.org.uk/digital-inclusion>
- Research reports and case studies
- Blogs, videos
- Webinars
- <https://ageing-better.org.uk/events/digital-skills-connect-webinar>
- <https://ageing-better.org.uk/events/good-digitally-connected-home>