

The logo for REDC, with 'RED' in dark blue and 'C' in red.

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Sheachadadh PFN agus Athchóirithe
Department of Public Expenditure
NDP Delivery and Reform

Digital Public Services Research

2022-2023



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Background & Methodology



Research was conducted to help DPENDR to better understand the public's view of digital public services and to use the outcomes to identify priority areas for improvement

Project Background & Objectives

The Department of Public Expenditure NDP Delivery and Reform carried out a Digital Public Services survey in 2022 amongst those aged 16+ via both Public Consultation and via independent survey parallel through RED C.

The consultation was aimed at individual users or their representatives who access public services in a personal capacity for themselves, family or households and for those who wish to access public services related to setting up a business.

Analysis and reporting was carried out on the combined results of the online Public Consultation survey (n=1,880 participants aged 16+) and the RED C professional online parallel survey (n=2,007 nationally representative participants aged 16+)

Follow on CATI research was then conducted amongst n=90 participants of the Public Consultation who 'opted in' to participation in the research. The purpose of the research was to further investigate the online services used by the public and to identify priority areas for improvement.

2022

2023



Online 'Public Consultation' survey amongst adults 16+ conducted by via DPENDR website page

Nationally representative online survey amongst adults 16+ conducted by RED C via RED C Live panel

Analysis of combined 2022 online surveys conducted, and follow on CATI research carried out



The Big Picture

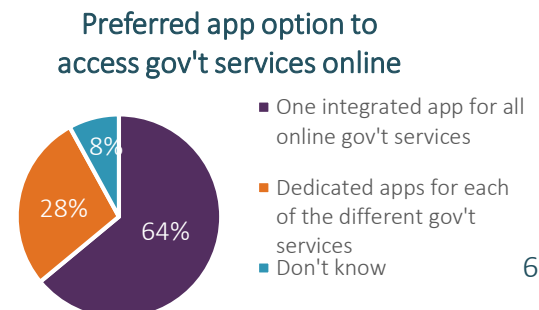
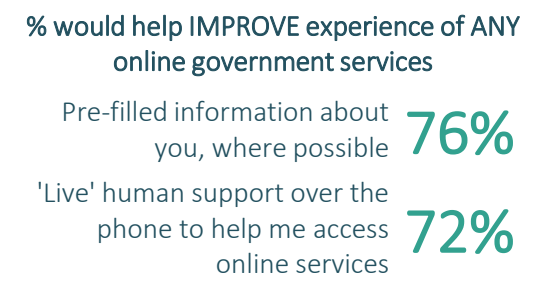
When using public services, the majority of people access these services online. There is potential for increased usage through addition of an app and by adding additional online services, in particular for life events.

1 Over half of the 16+ population uses government services at least 5+ times per year, with vast majority being via online. Even amongst older cohorts, who tend to have greater difficulty with online services, level of usage is high.

2 Although not used as frequently as some other services, the most widely used online public service, by far, relates to tax. However, tax related services are not associated with being easy to use, which suggests opportunities for improvements along with Gov.ie, online Health and Welfare/Social Protection services.

3 One of the challenges in using online government services is in finding relevant service information and in having some sort of assistance to fall back on if one is not able to find this information. This is especially relevant for services which are used more widely and/or more regularly, such as Gov.ie, health, welfare/social, and revenue and tax.

4 Outside of improving what is already available, there is pent up demand for other services, especially pertaining to life events including employment, birth, death, and housing. Majority find the idea of one central app for these services to be appealing.



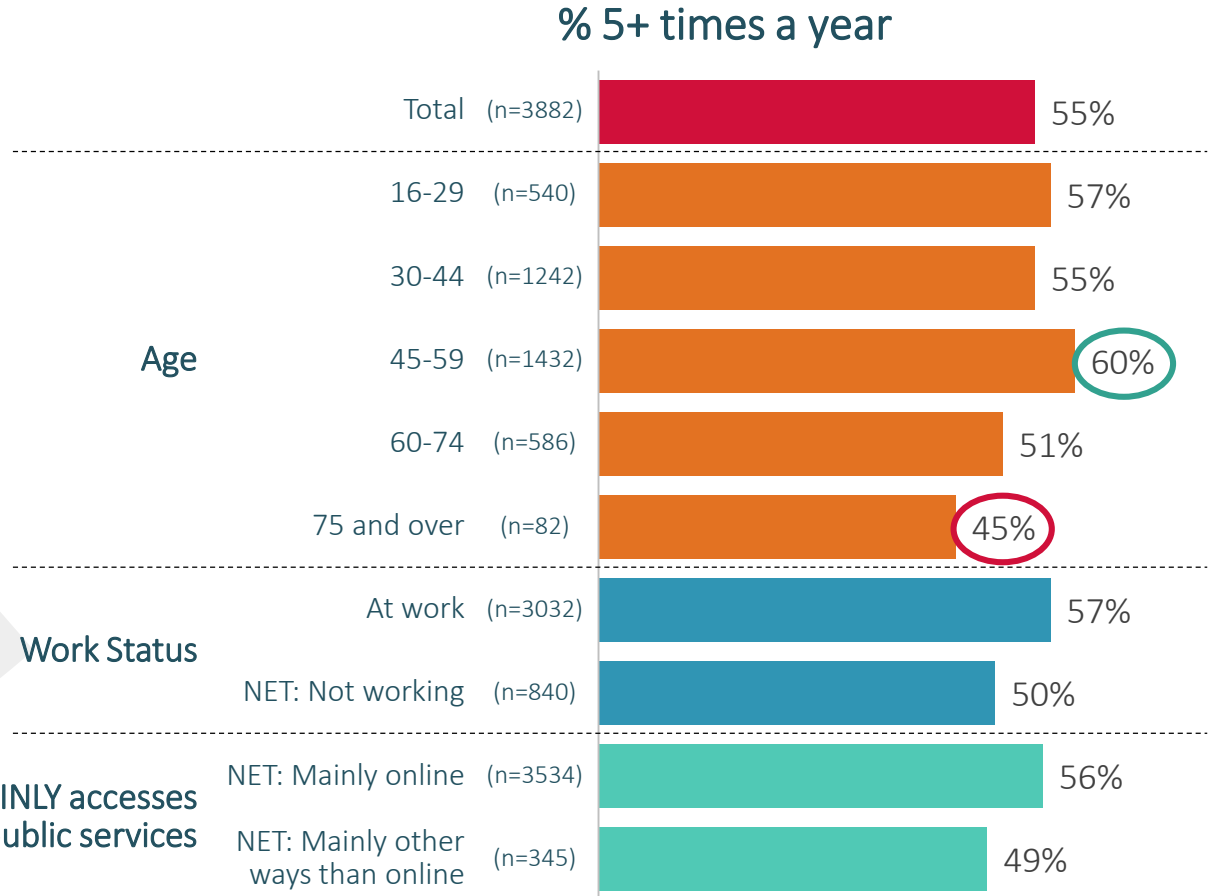
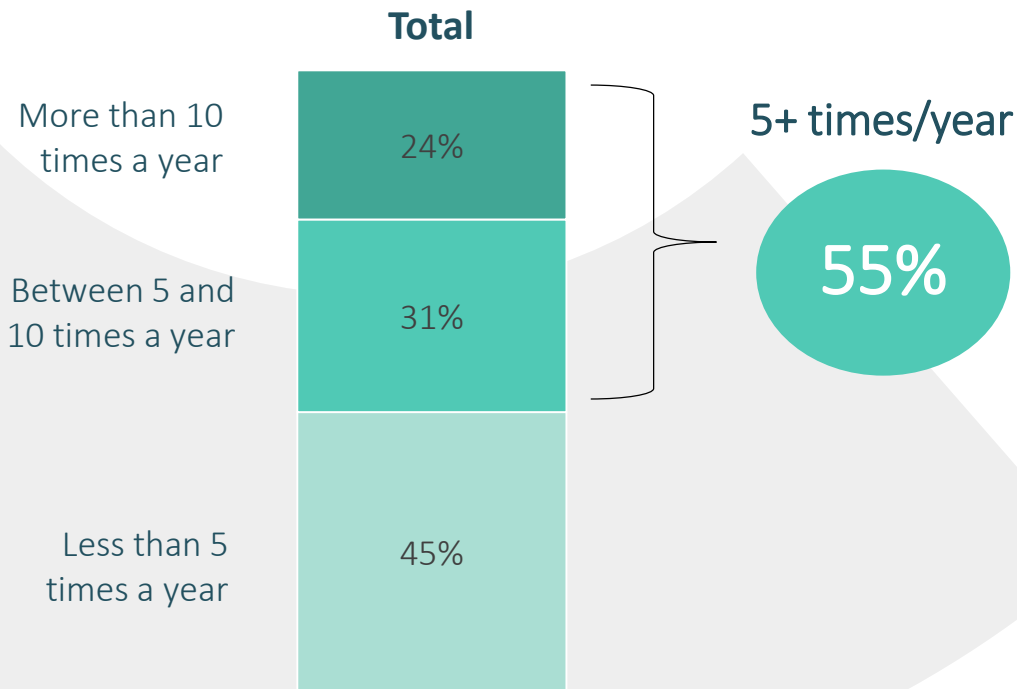
Online is primary means of accessing public services, with indications phone support could help some transition from offline to online

Majority access services 5+ times per year, especially 45-59's



This tends to be lower amongst older people aged 75 and over, with slightly lower usage frequency amongst those who mainly use public services via offline.

How one accesses or inquires about an online or offline public service



Q6. How often do you access or inquire about a public service, either online or otherwise?
(Base: Those aged 16+; n=3882)

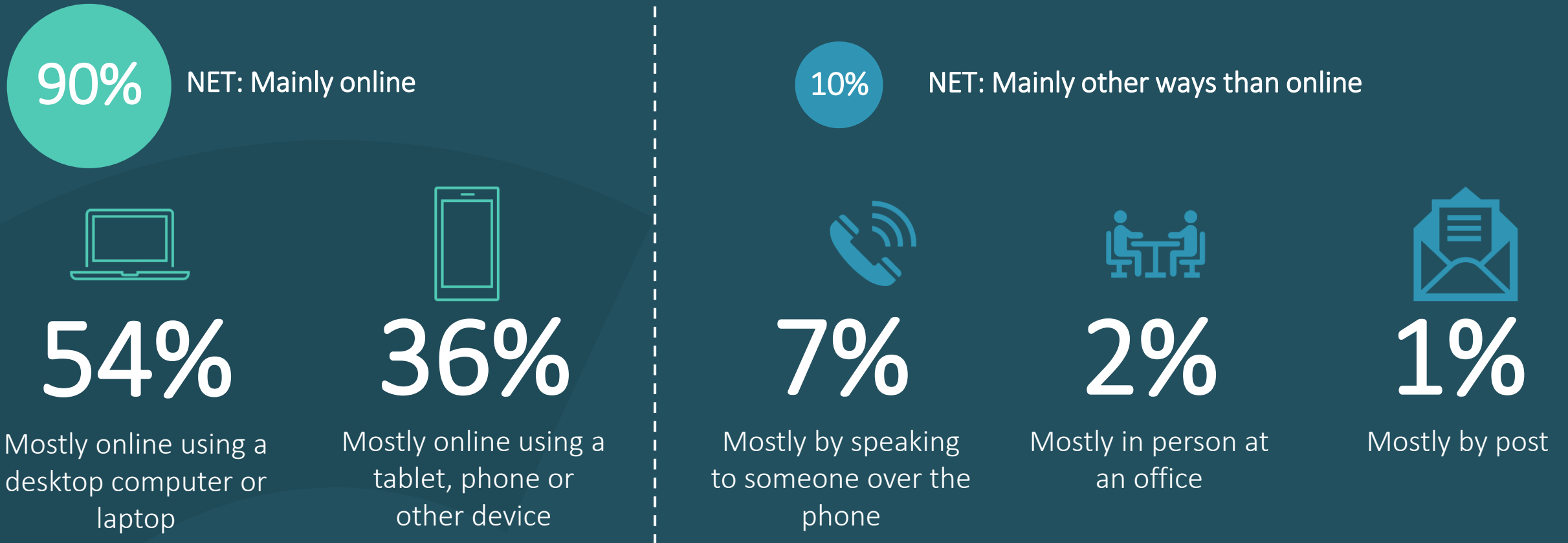
○ Significantly higher vs Total
○ Significantly lower vs Total

Vast majority mainly use public services via online



Online access of public services by desktop computer or laptop is especially prevalent, with tablet, phone, or other device also featuring prominently but not to the same degree.

Public services are accessed...



Q8. How do you access these services?

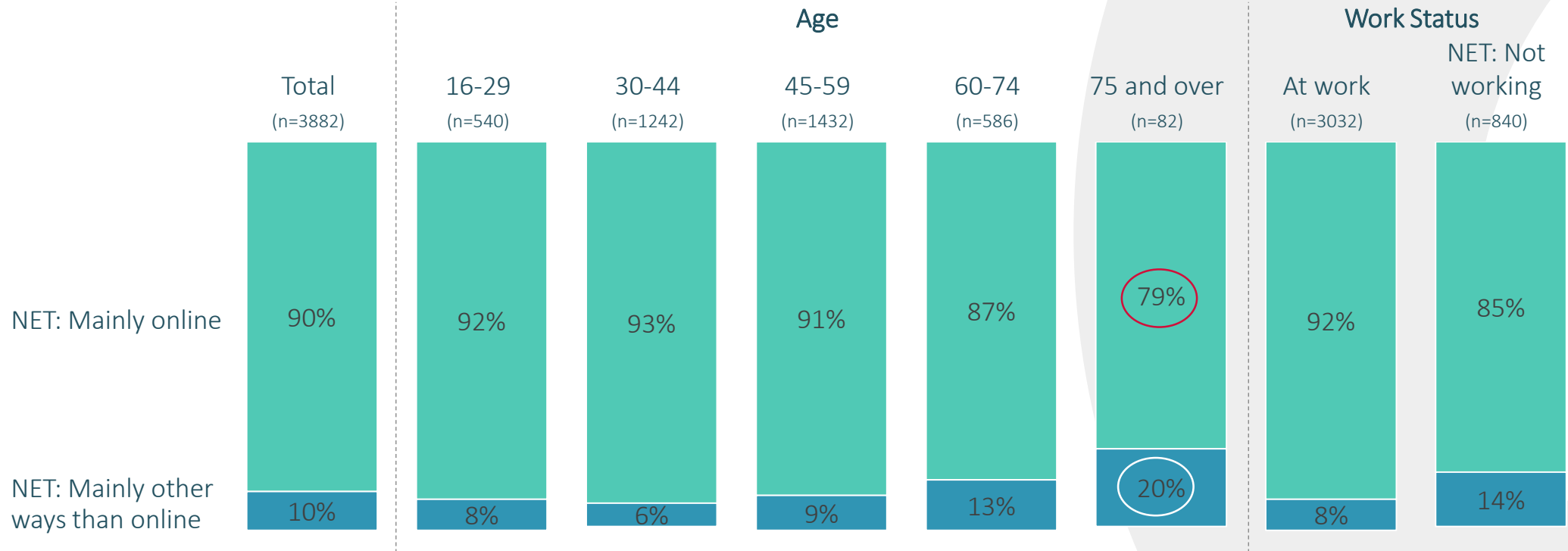
(Base: Those aged 16+; n=3882)

Even with older ages, there is heavy reliance on online services



Use of public services online corresponds with age, with older ages more likely to rely on offline means, but still overwhelmingly favouring online.

How one MAINLY accesses public services: Demographics



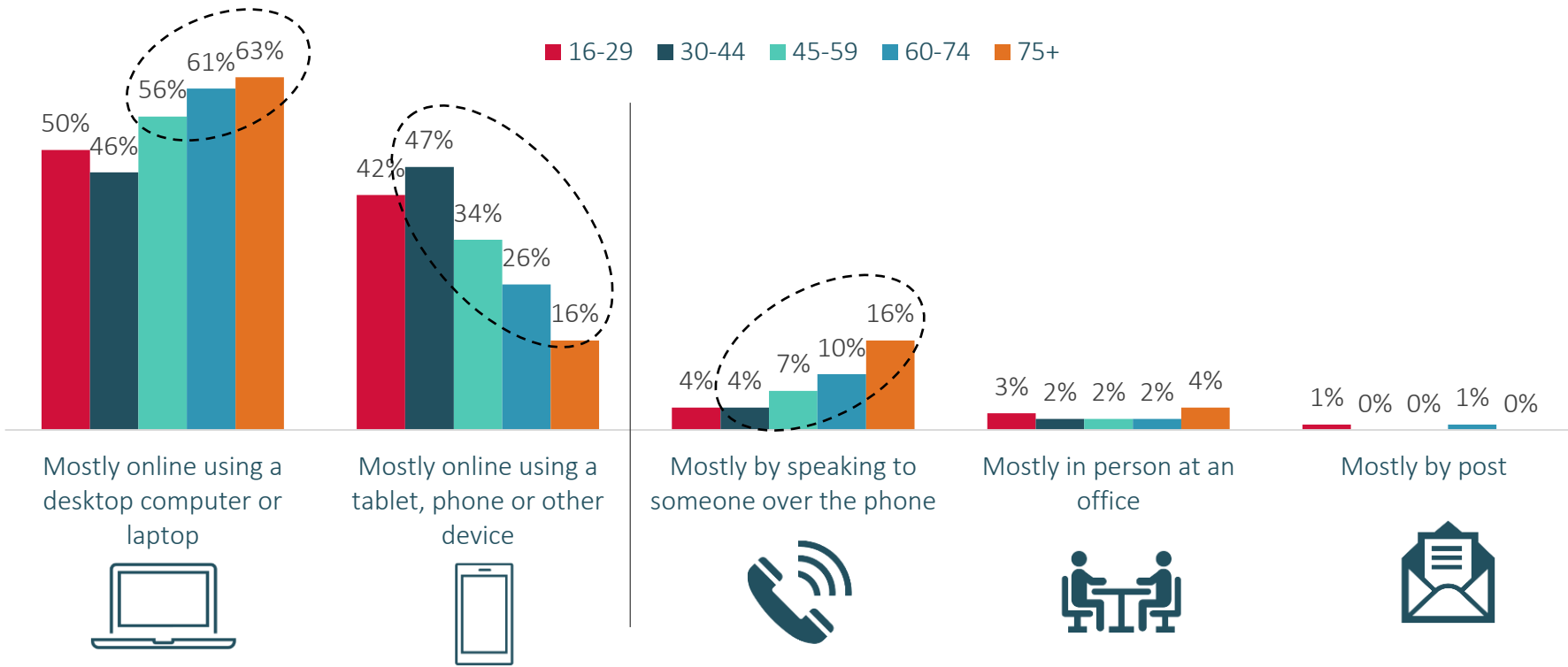
Q8. How do you access these services?
(Base: Those aged 16+; n=3,882)

Significantly higher vs Total
 Significantly lower vs Total

Strong correlation with age with regard to how one accesses public services



How one MAINLY accesses public services



NET: Mainly online

NET: Mainly other ways than online

Older cohorts are more likely to use a desktop computer or laptop and this increases with age along with speaking with someone on a phone, whereas tablet and phone access decreases with age.

Q8. How do you access these services?

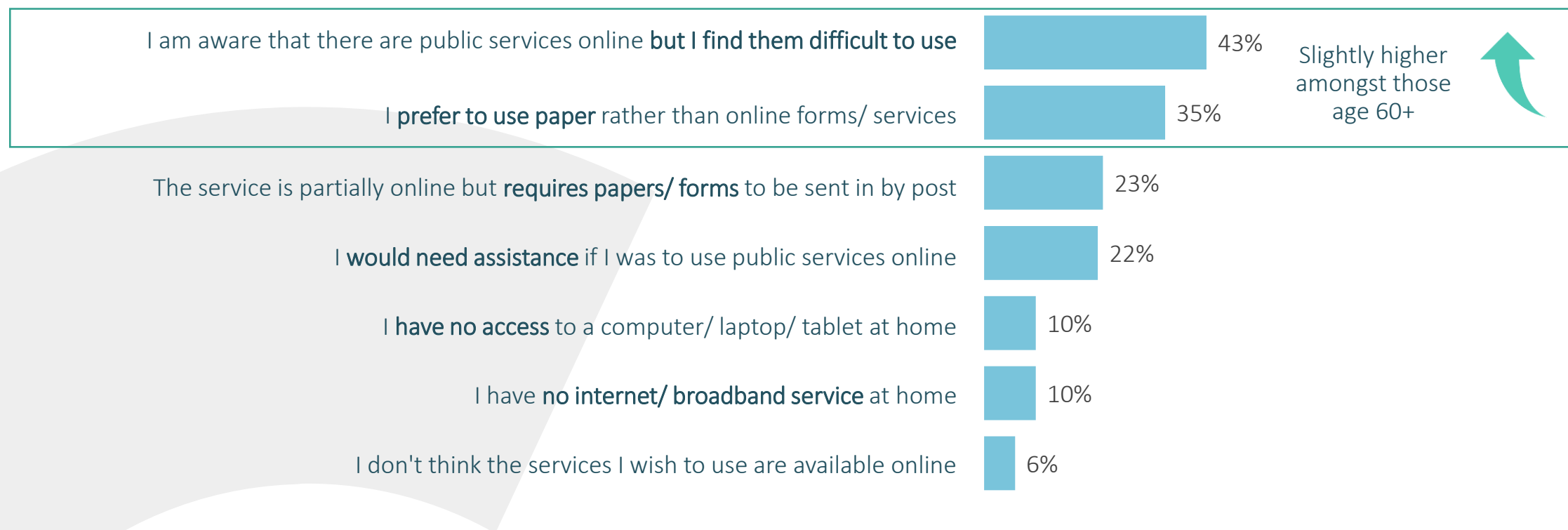
(Base: Those aged 16+; n=3882)

Those who don't use services online tend to find them difficult



This is then closely interlinked with their preference to use paper rather than online forms or services.

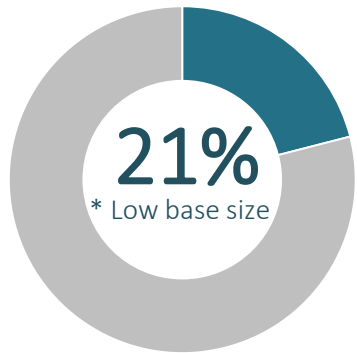
Reason for accessing services 'offline'



Q9. I access services this way because: (you can choose more than one from this list)

(Base: Those not accessing public services online; n=345)

Phone support much more preferred over alternate venue or chat facility



Those who would access public services online if they could go somewhere where they could use a computer/laptop etc.

Q.10

(Base: Those without internet/BB or who do not have access to a computer/laptop/tablet at home; n=45*)

Q.11

(Base: Those who mostly use offline services AND are in need of assistance if using online services, aware of public online services but find them difficult to use, or who prefer paper rather than online forms / services; n=258)

I would use online services...



...if there was someone I could phone who would help me access these services

54%

Higher amongst:
Those aged 60+



...if there was an online chat facility to help me with the service

35%

Higher amongst:
Those aged 16-44 & those who use public services 5-10 times/year



...if there was a place I could go to (for example a library or post office) where someone would help me access these services

33%

Higher amongst:
Those who use public services 10+ times/year

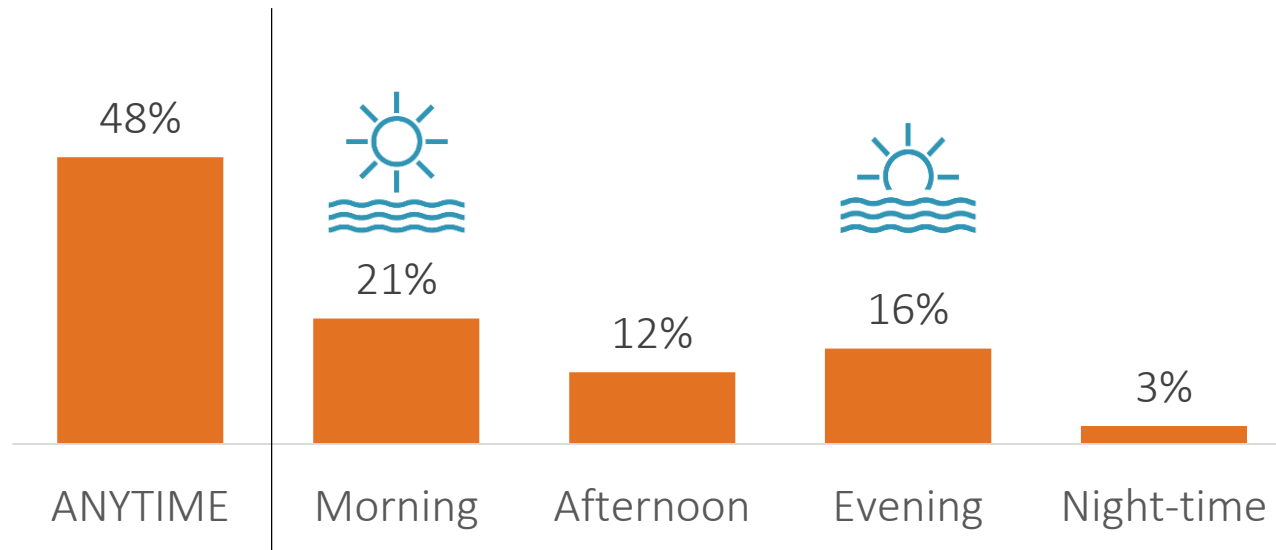
Opportunity to improve online tax services, with half of respondents using this recently but 'ease' lacking versus other online services

Half have no preference for a time to access online public services



However, morning (favoured especially by 60+ ages) and evening times (favoured by those aged 16-29) feature somewhat prominently and above that of afternoon and especially more so than night-time.

Preferred time to access online public services



Morning preference:
Higher amongst those aged 60+

Afternoon preference:
Higher amongst those aged 16-29

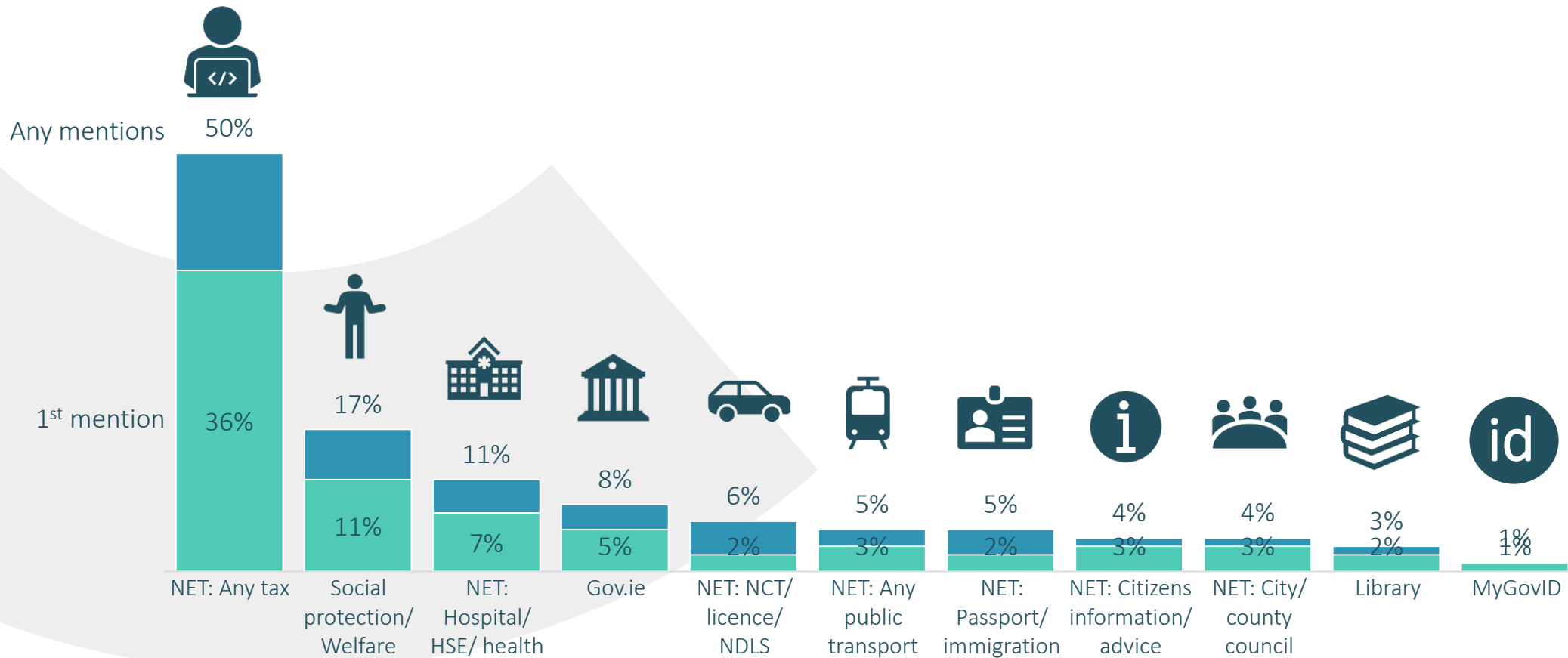
Evening preference:
Lower amongst those aged 75+

Tax services dominate the list of public services used online



Social protection, Health, Gov.ie and other services feature less prominently by comparison.

Public services used online



Q13/18/23 - Tell us the name of a public service that you access most or most recently online.

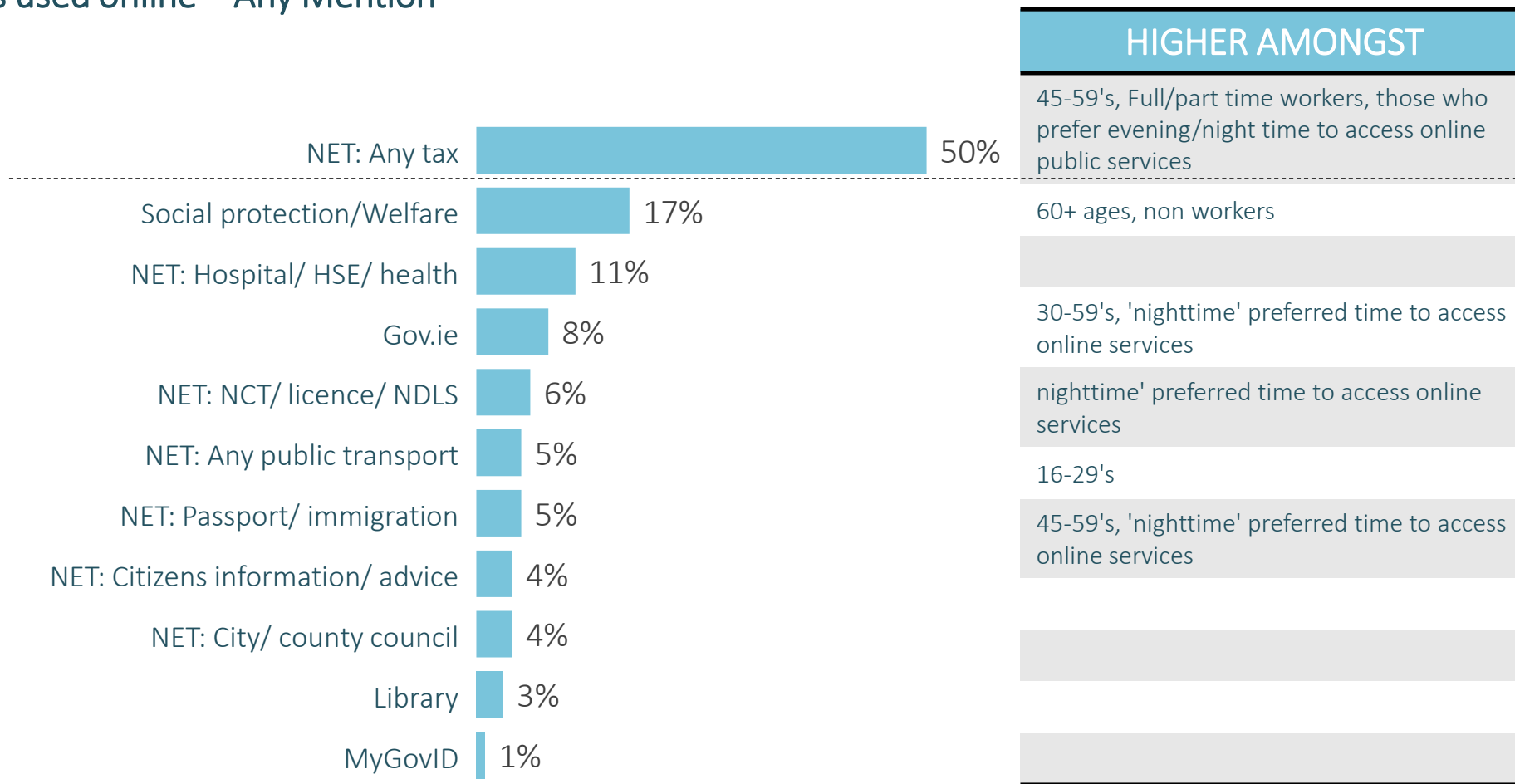
(Base: Those aged 16+; n=3,882)

Tax services especially used by 45-59-year-olds and workers



Meanwhile, older 60+ ages are more likely to be using Welfare services online, and younger 16-29 ages are more likely to be accessing public transport services online.

Public services used online – Any Mention



Q13/18/23 - Tell us the name of a public service that you access most or most recently online.

(Base: Those aged 16+; n=3,882)

Taxes, Gov.ie, and Citizens' information cater to younger profile



How profiles of public service user types vs National 16+ population



YOUNGER

Taxes (n=1,437)

- Higher amongst 30-44's
- Higher amongst who mainly access services via desktop computer or laptop
- Higher amongst those whose preferred time to access online services is in the 'evening' time



OLDER

Social protection/Welfare (n=486)

- Higher amongst 60+ ages
- Higher amongst those who are NOT working, especially retirees
- Higher amongst those who use public services 5+ times/year
- Higher amongst those who 'Mostly online using a tablet, phone or other device



OLDER

Hospital/HSE/Health (n=318)

- Higher amongst those aged 60+
- Higher amongst those not working
- Especially prevalent amongst those whose preferred time to access online services is in the morning time.



YOUNGER

Gov.ie (n=243)

- Users of this service are more likely to be aged 30-44 than the average 16+ population
- They are also more likely to access or inquire about public services 10+ times/year and to mainly access services via desktop computer or laptop

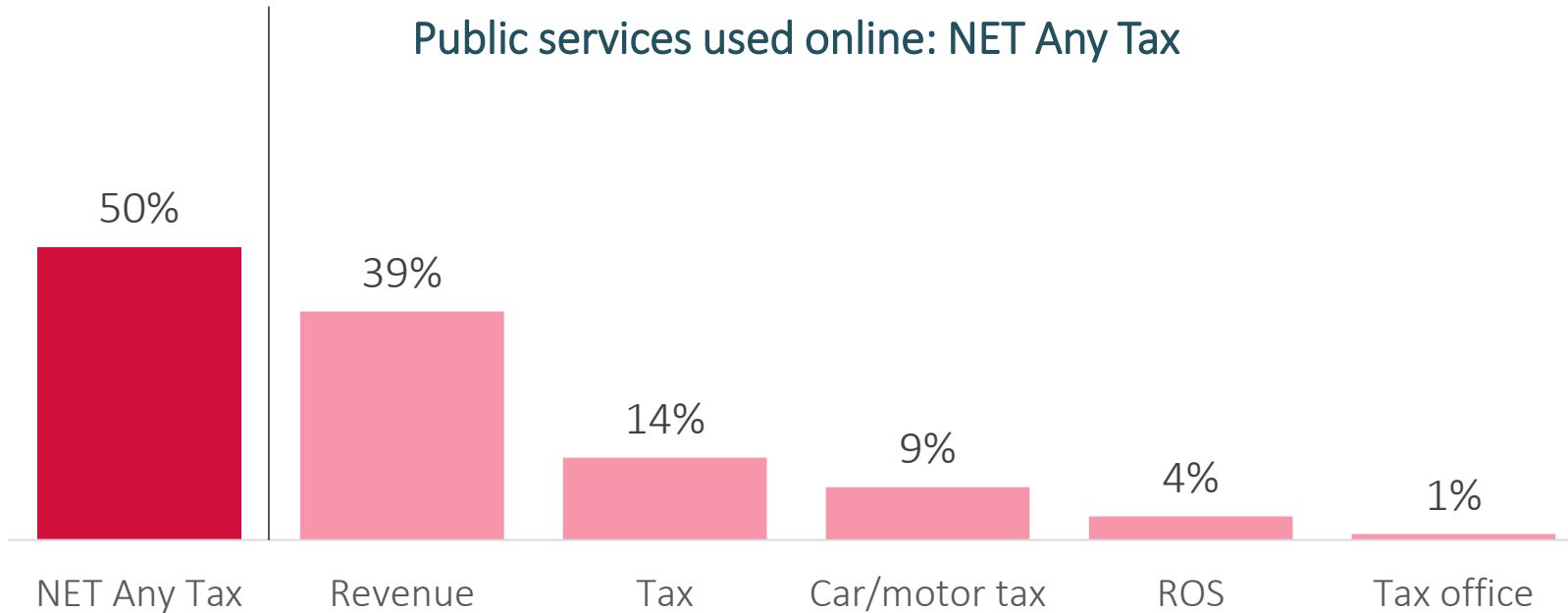


YOUNGER

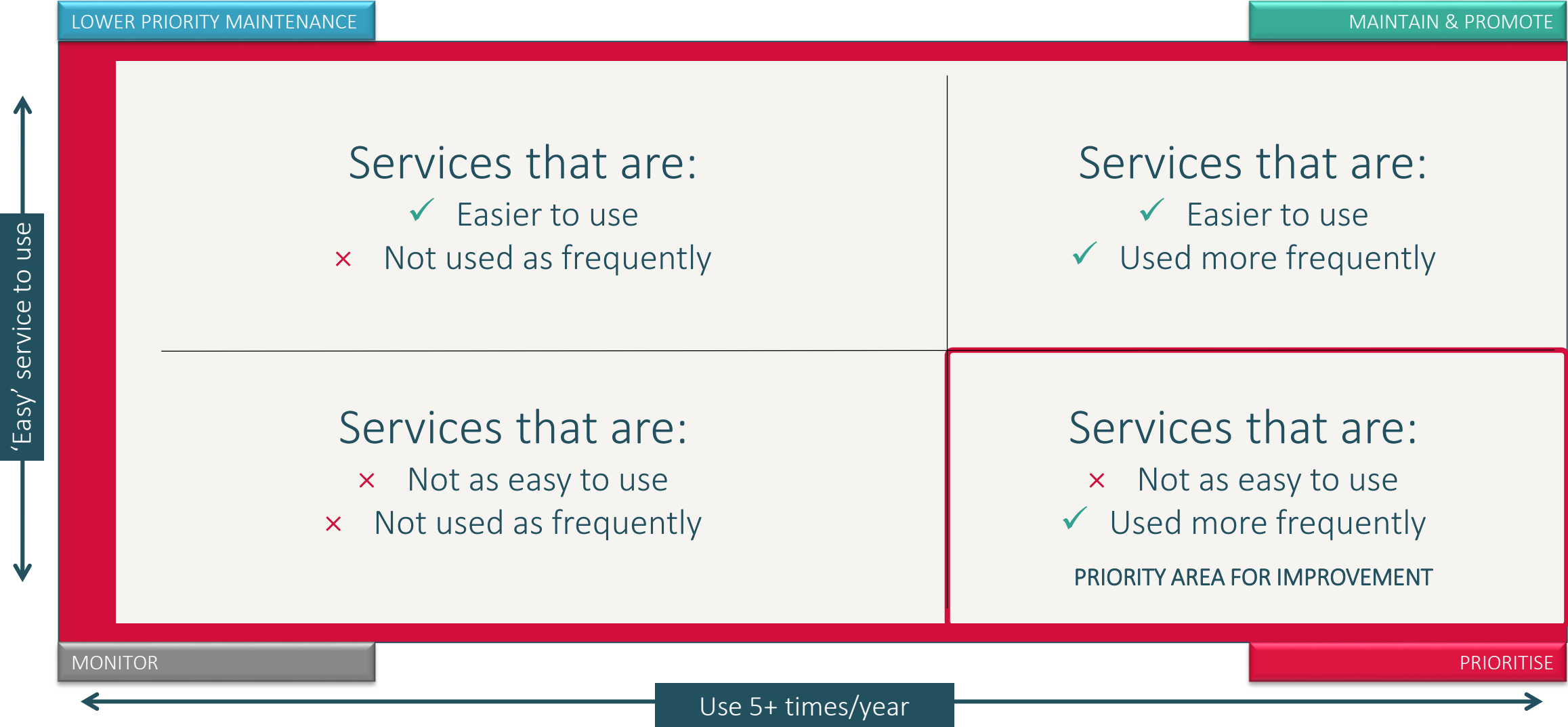
Citizens' information (n=139)

- Users more likely to be aged 30-44 and to be working
- They are more likely than the 16+ population to access or inquire about public services from 5 to 10 times/year and to access online public services via tablet, phone, or other device

'Revenue' is most often-mentioned public service used online out of the various tax services



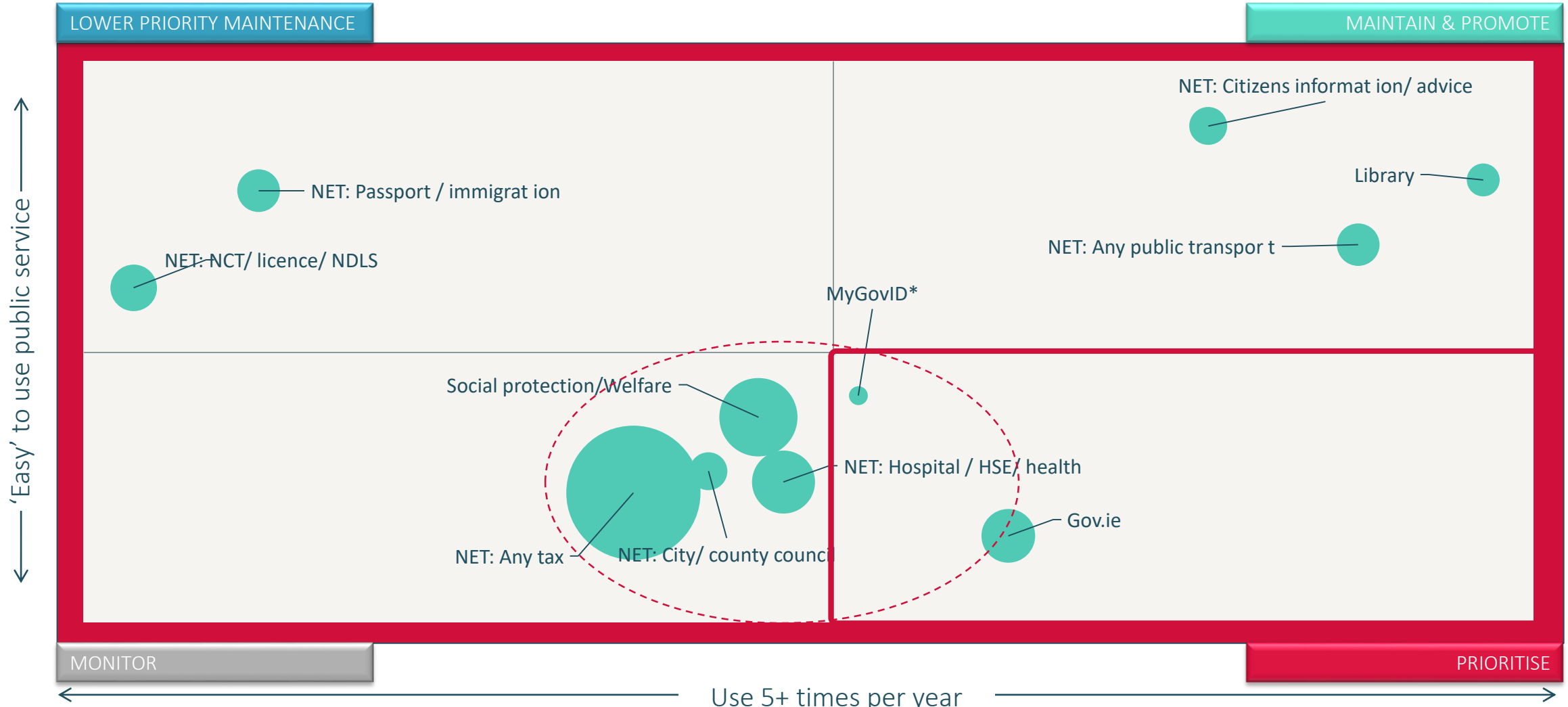
Ease vs Frequency of Service Usage Matrix Explained



Improving online tax services user experience would go long way



Although other services such as Health, Welfare, Social Protection, and Gov.ie are used more frequently, the scale of usage of tax services, combined with their complexity, makes this a higher priority for improvement.



*Low base size
(Q.15/20/25 Q.14/19/24)
(Base: Those aged 16+; n=3882)

 = incidence of public service accessed most or most recently online.

Online service type x frequency, 'ease', and incidence



	5+ times/year	'Easy' to use	Incidence
Library	78%	61%	3%
Any public transport	73%	55%	5%
Citizens information/ advice	67%	66%	4%
Gov.ie	59%	28%	8%
MyGovID*	53%	41%	1%
Hospital / HSE/ health	50%	33%	11%
Social protection/Welfare	49%	39%	17%
City/ county council	47%	34%	4%
Any tax	44%	32%	50%
Passport / immigration	29%	60%	5%
NCT/ licence/ NDLS	24%	51%	6%

*Low base size
(Q.15/20/25 Q.14/19/24)
(Base: Those aged 16+; n=3882)

Majority have no additional feedback to add on services they use



Low proportion of those who have constructive criticism, with this highest for Tax, Social protection / welfare, Health, and gov.ie. However, vast majority have no additional feedback, suggesting satisfaction.

Additional feedback on using online public services used recently:

OVERVIEW OF TOP SERVICES USED

	Any tax n=1437	Social protection /Welfare n=486	Hospital / HSE/ health n=318	Gov.ie n=243	Passport / immigration n=181	Citizens info n=139	City/ county council n=117	NCT/ licence/ NDLS n=97	Library n=92	Any public transport n=80	MyGovID n=42*
Constructive criticism	26%	27%	24%	28%	23%	23%	19%	18%	10%	14%	17%
NET: Can't think of anything else	68%	66%	66%	65%	67%	69%	75%	75%	84%	78%	79%
Positive feedback on public services	6%	7%	10%	7%	10%	8%	6%	7%	6%	8%	4%

*Low base size

Q16/21

(Base: Those who use Tax services online recently; n=1,437)

Website access difficulties noted with Gov.ie and Social Protection

This is also somewhat the case with Health and Welfare services.

Additional feedback on using online public services used recently:

OVERVIEW OF TOP SERVICES USED

	Any tax n=1437	Social protection /Welfare n=486	Hospital / HSE/ health n=318	Gov.ie n=243	Passport / immigration n=181	Citizens info n=139	City/ county council n=117	NCT/ licence/ NDLS n=97	Library n=92	Any public transport n=80	MyGovID n=42*
Difficult to navigate/ searching for/ accessing information/ incomplete information	4%	7%	7%	9%	5%	3%	4%	2%	2%	1%	-
Clunky website/ outdated/ difficult to use/ difficult to navigate/ sometimes doesn't work	4%	3%	4%	7%	1%	6%	4%	3%	2%	-	6%
Confusing/ difficult to understand/ complex/ not user friendly	4%	4%	2%	2%	2%	3%	4%	4%	1%	-	-
Need to improve customer service	2%	2%	4%	2%	2%	3%	2%	3%	-	1%	2%
Others	13%	13%	14%	15%	15%	12%	12%	13%	7%	8%	4%
NET: Can't think of anything else	68%	66%	66%	65%	67%	69%	75%	75%	84%	78%	79%
Positive feedback on public services	6%	7%	10%	7%	10%	8%	6%	7%	6%	8%	4%

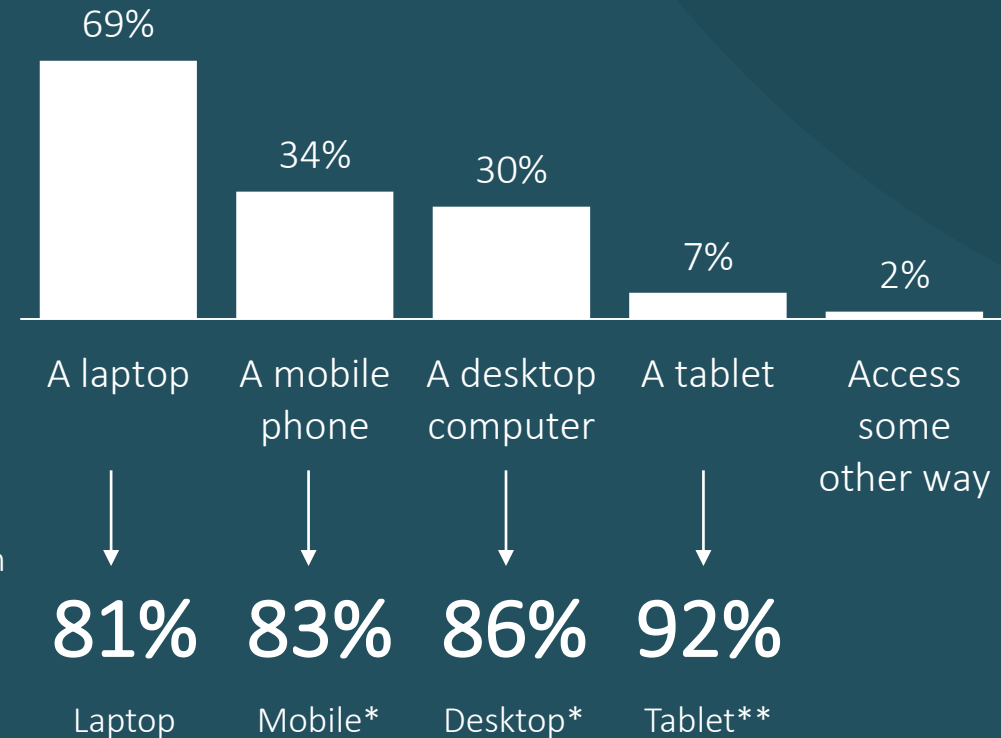
*Low base size

Q16/21

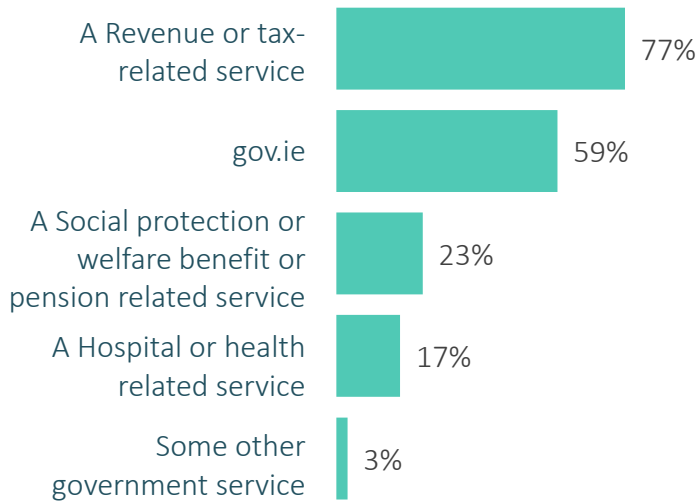
(Base: Those who use Tax services online recently; n=1,437)

High level of satisfaction with devices when using online government services

Devices used when accessing any online government services in past 12 months (n=87)



Government services used online in past 12 months



*Low base size; **Extremely low base size

Q2b/2c

(Base: Past 12 month users of online government services; n=87)

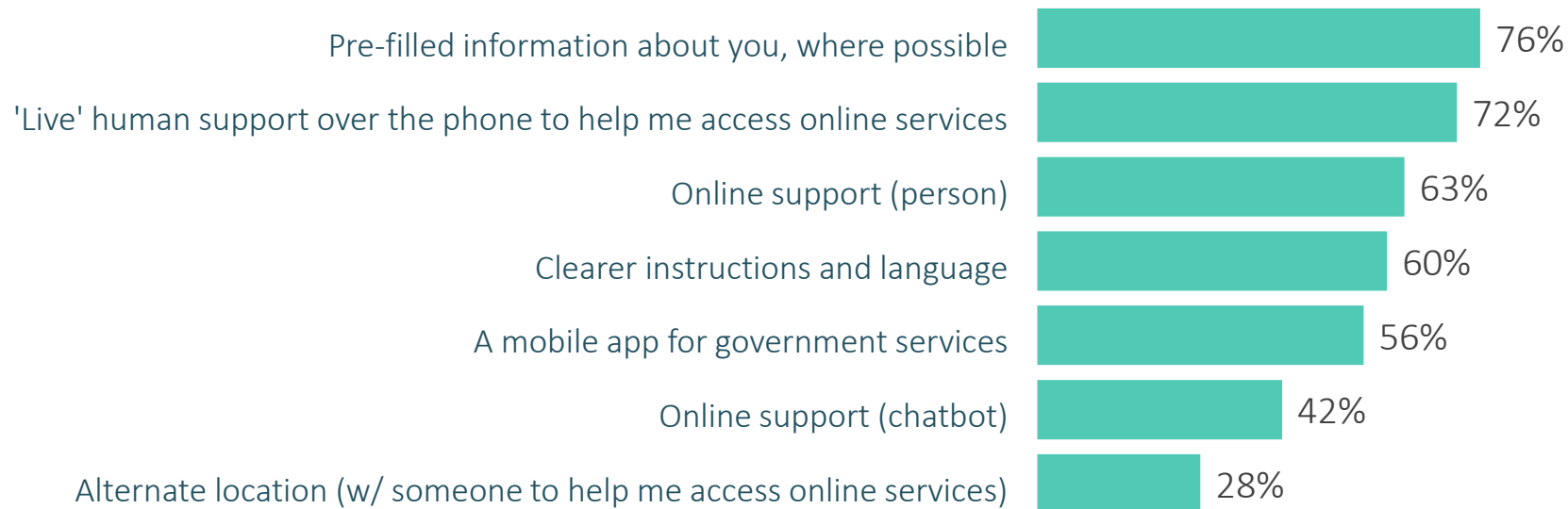


There is room for improvement to help ease online government services experience



Most feel that pre-filled information, along with 'Live' human support over the phone to help access online services would have improved the experience.

Would have IMPROVED experience of ANY online government services
(NET would have improved a lot / a little)



% EASY experience with online government services

77%

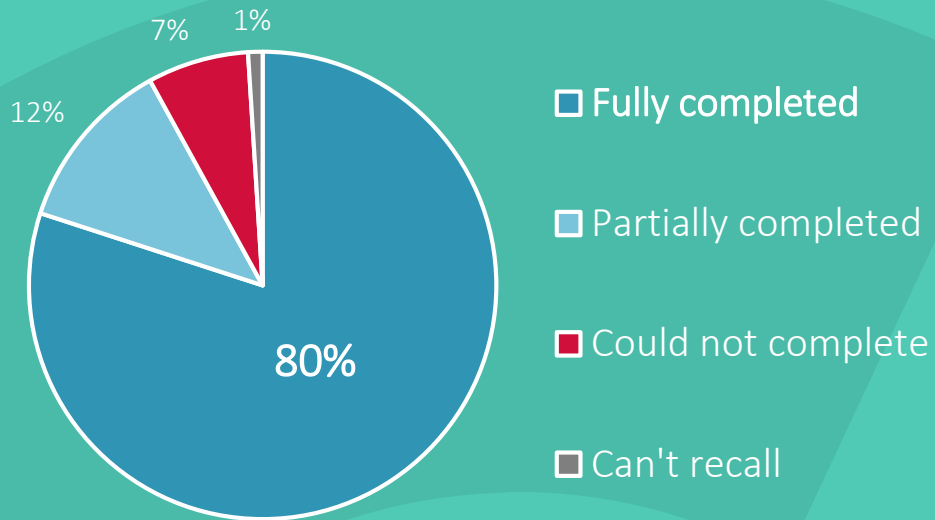


Nearly all feel task is important, but only 4 in 5 fully complete task

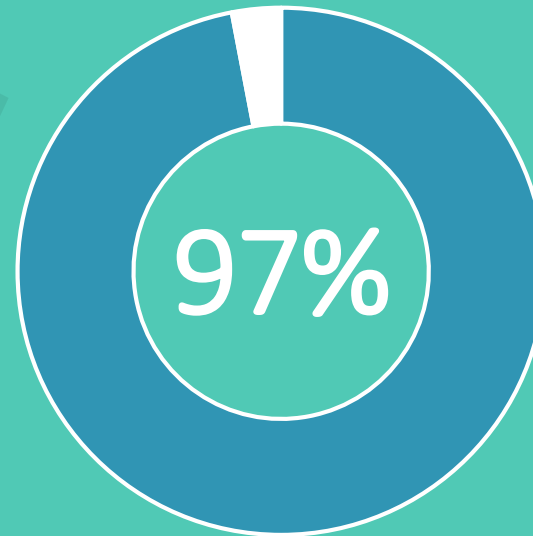
There is room for improvement, with 1 in 5 not able to fully complete the task they initially set out to do despite nearly all feeling their task is important. There are indications that website setup is contributing to this.

Tasks when using online government services

Level of completion of task when using online government services



% IMPORTANCE of task



Top reasons for not fully completing task set out to do

(n=26)*

1. Website too complex/confusing
2. Couldn't find any relevant service or information

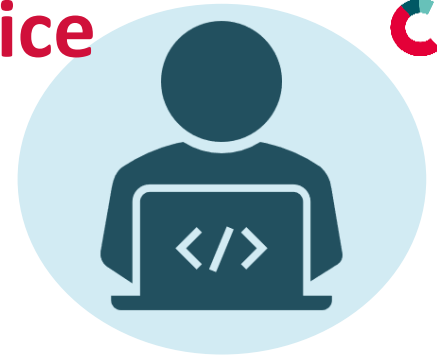
*Low base size; **Extremely low base size

Q5/6/7

(Base: past 12 month users of online government services; n=87)



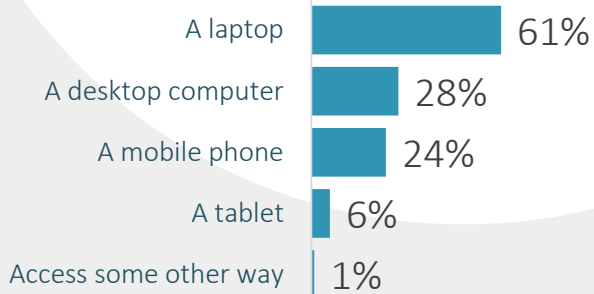
Pre-filled info & 'Live' human support could help tax service



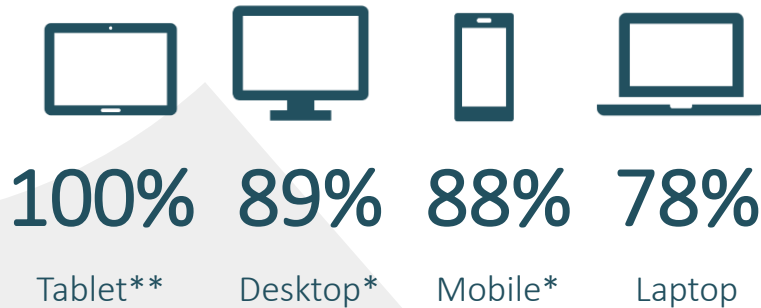
Majority find the experience with Revenue or tax-related service as being 'easy', but finding ways to incorporate pre-filled information and 'live' human support could help build on this.

Past 12 month users of a Revenue or tax-related service

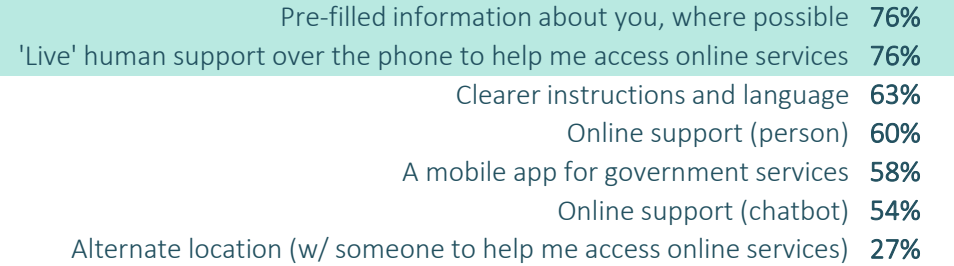
Devices used (n=67)



% SATISFIED with using revenue or tax-related service with each type of device



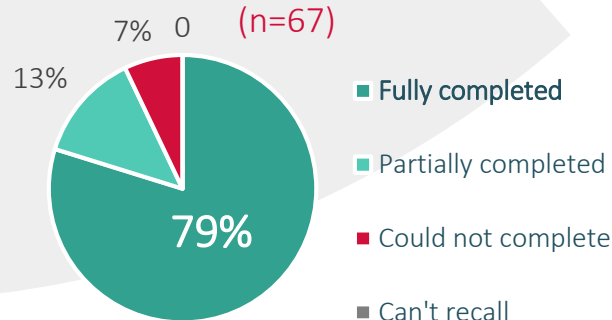
% would have IMPROVED experience of a Revenue or tax-related service (n=67)



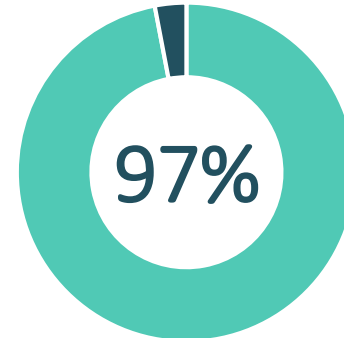
% EASY experience with a Revenue or tax-related service (n=67)



Level of completion of task when using a Revenue or tax-related service (n=67)



% IMPORTANCE of task (n=67)



Top reasons for not fully completing task set out to do (n=14)**

1. Couldn't find any relevant service or information
2. Website too complex/confusing

*Low base size; **Extremely low base size

Q2b/2c/3/4a/5/6/7

(Base: past 12 month users of online government services)

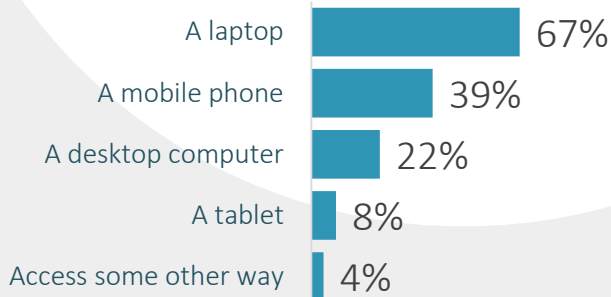
There is a desire for pre-filled information with Gov.ie



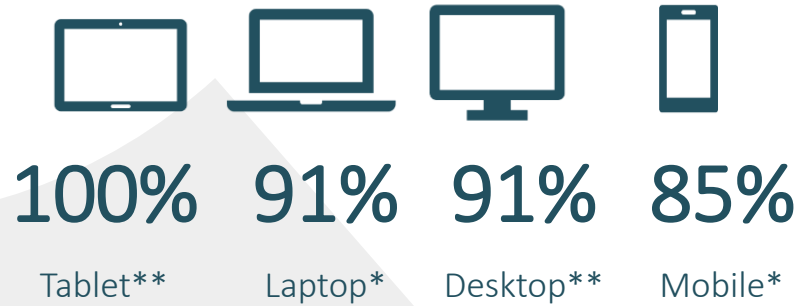
Over 7 in 10 past 12 month users of Gov.ie feel that incorporating pre-filled information into the website would help improve the experience, with 'Live' human support also featuring.

Past 12 month users of Gov.ie

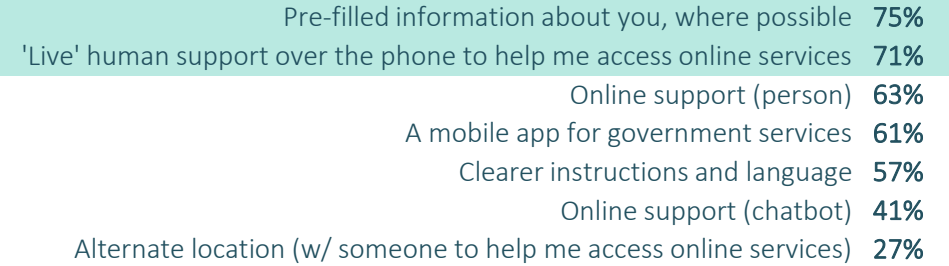
Devices used (n=51)



% SATISFIED with using Gov.ie



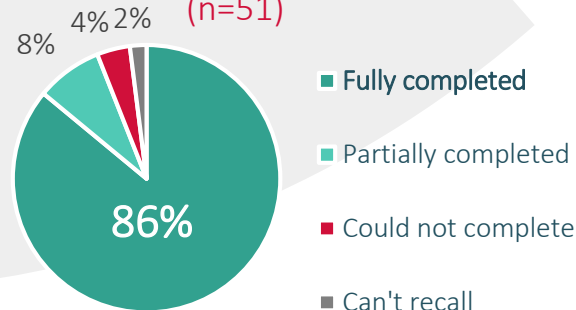
% would have IMPROVED experience of Gov.ie (n=51)



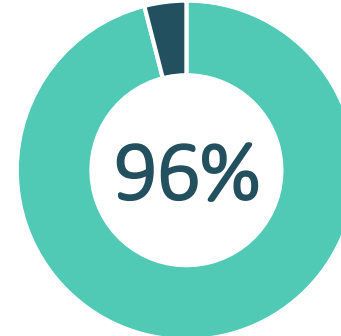
% EASY experience with Gov.ie (n=51)



Level of completion of task when using Gov.ie (n=51)



% IMPORTANCE of task (n=51)



Top reasons for not fully completing task set out to do: (n=6)**

1. Website too complex/confusing
2. Couldn't find any relevant service or information

*Low base size; **Extremely low base size

Q2b/2c/3/4a/5/6/7

(Base: past 12 month users of online government services)

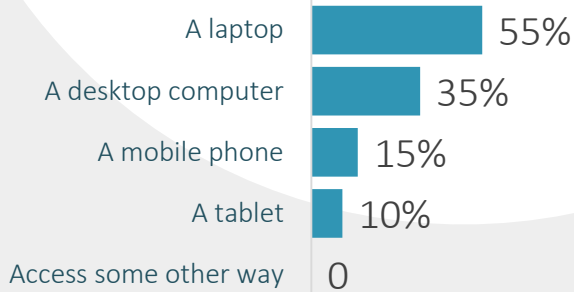
Pre-filled info could help social/welfare/pension service

There are some indications that incorporating pre-filled information into a social protection or welfare benefit or pension related service would help improve user experiences.

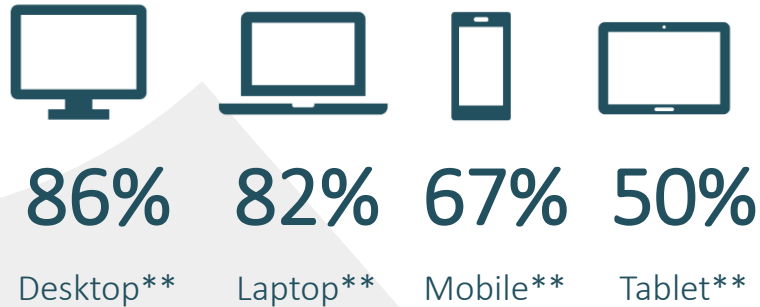


Past 12 month users of a Social protection or welfare benefit or pension related service

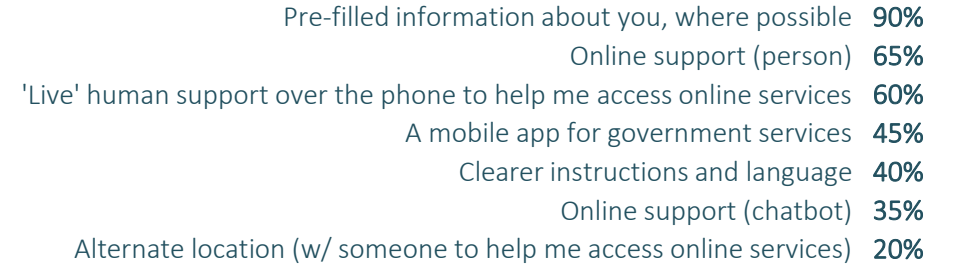
Devices used
(n=20)*



% SATISFIED with using a Social protection or welfare benefit or pension related service



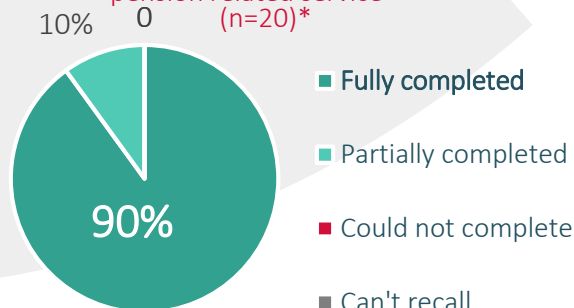
% would have IMPROVED experience of a Social protection or welfare benefit or pension related service
(n=20)*



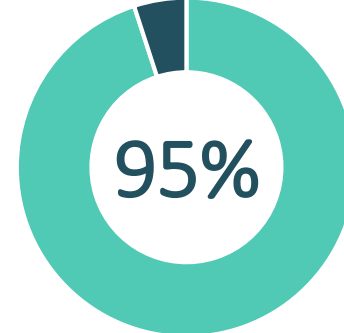
% EASY experience with a Social protection or welfare benefit or pension related service
(n=20)*



Level of completion of task when using a Social protection or welfare benefit or pension related service
(n=20)*



% IMPORTANCE of task
(n=20)*



Top reasons for not fully completing task set out to do
(n=2)**

1. There was no customer support/assistance available to me
2. There were too many steps involved in completing the task

*Low base size; **Extremely low base size

Q2b/2c/3/4a/5/6/7

(Base: past 12 month users of online government services)

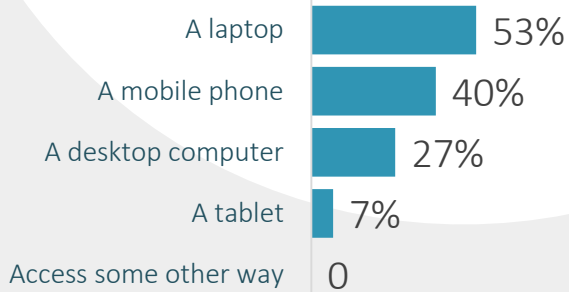
Health services could benefit from 'Live' human support

There are some very slight indications that incorporating 'Live' human support over the phone, along with clearer instructions and language, would help improve experiences.

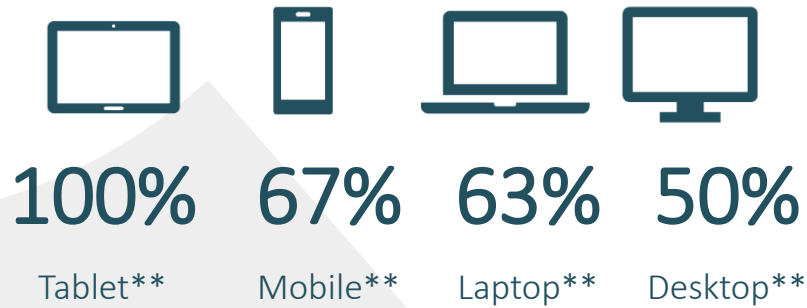


Past 12 month users of a Hospital or health related service

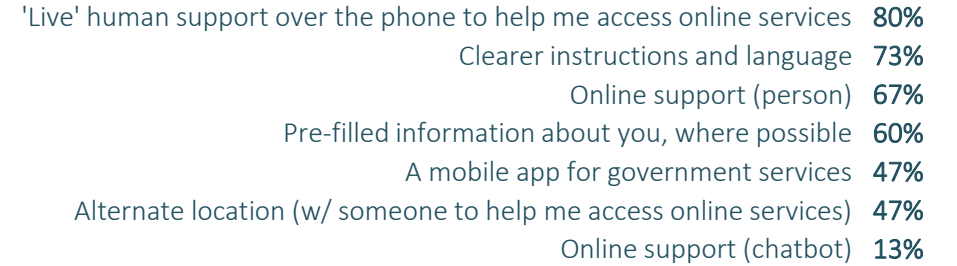
Devices used
(n=15)**



% SATISFIED with using a Hospital or health-related service



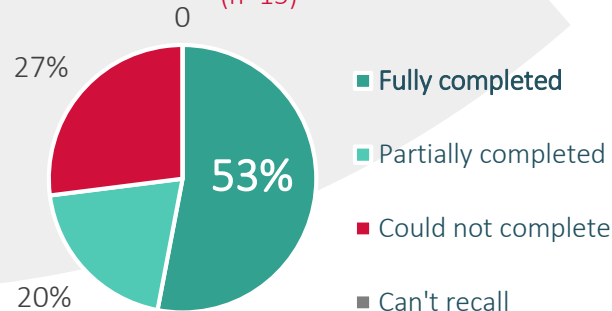
% would have IMPROVED experience of a Hospital or health related service
(n=15)**



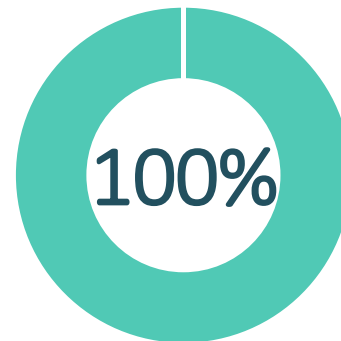
% EASY experience with a Hospital or health related service
(n=15)**



Level of completion of task when using a Hospital or health related service
(n=15)**



% IMPORTANCE of task
(n=15)**



Top reasons for not fully completing task set out to do
(n=7)**

1. Couldn't find any relevant service or information
2. Website too complex/confusing

*Low base size; **Extremely low base size

Q2b/2c/3/4a/5/6/7

(Base: past 12 month users of online government services)

Improving layout & adding 'live chat' could help gov.ie usability



Desired improvements to gov.ie

Make easier to use

- There is demand to streamline the system to make it easier to use
- Some indications that simplification is key here, and that easier navigation could help

Improve search facility

- There is a tendency to use Google over the search features available on Gov.ie
- Incorporating more filters in the search function could help

Improve website layout

- Some feel that the amount of information on the home page is overwhelming
- Simplifying this page could help here

More services

- Provide a consolidated list of services that are easily accessible
- Separate links to these services could be provided

Live chat feature

- Feeling by some that queries and issues are not being dealt with quickly enough.
- Live chat feature could help here and there is some demand for this

Make log in easier

- Creating easier log in process that is more centralised
- *"It's confusing that MyAccount, MyGovID and ROS are all digital services yet different portals requiring different logins."*



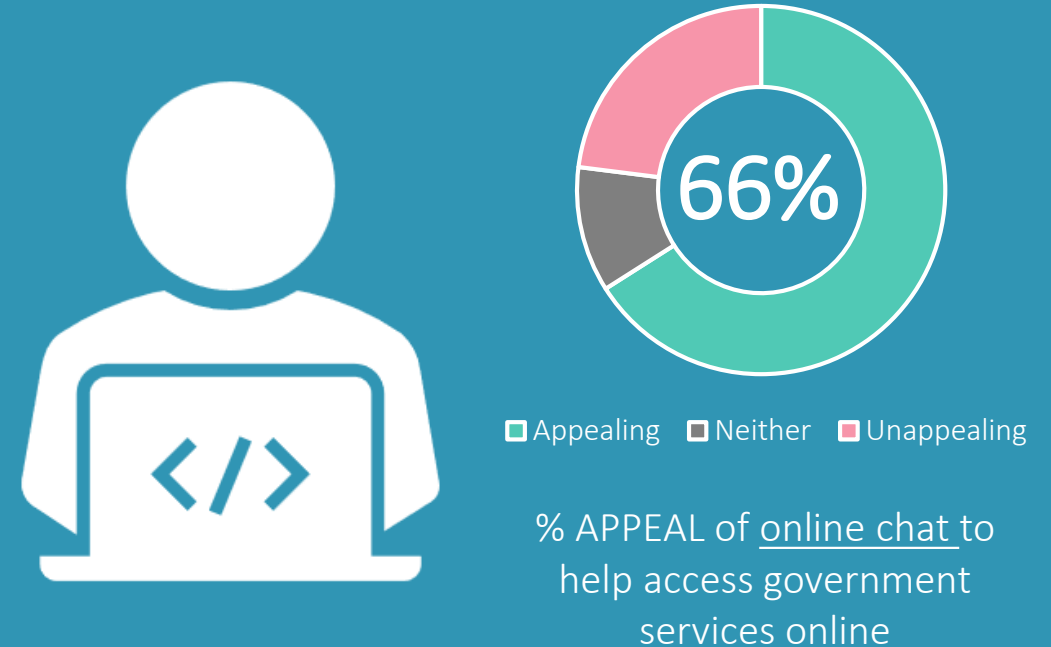
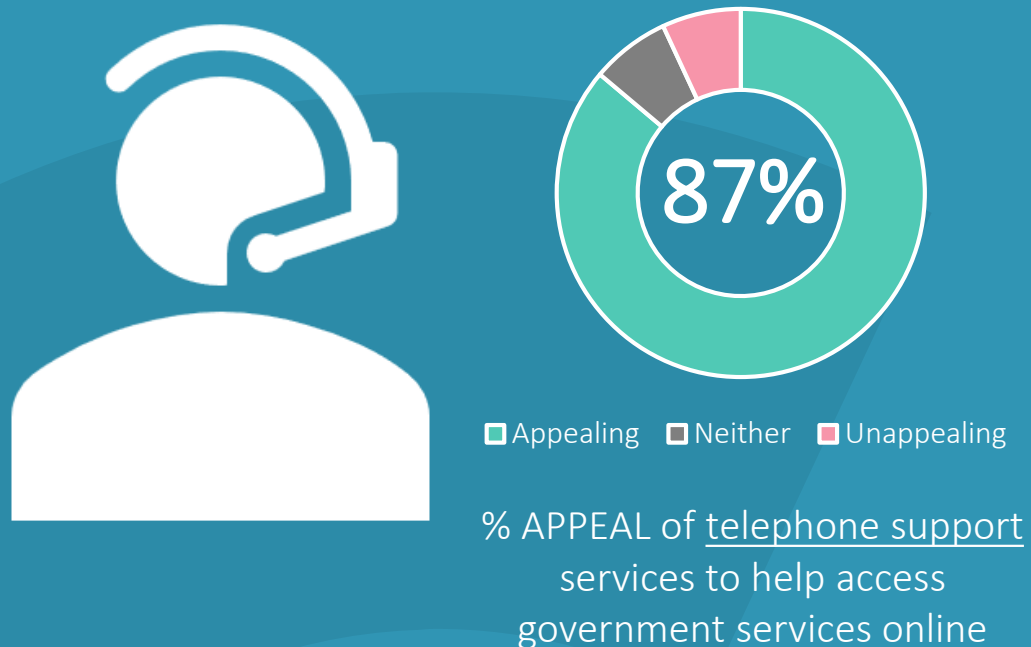
← Perception of there being a log in required even though there is not

Strong appeal of online supports via telephone and online chat



Majority find the idea of telephone and online chat features to be appealing, with stronger appeal (nearly 9 in 10) for telephone support in helping to access government services online.

Appeal of telephone support or online chat to help access government services online

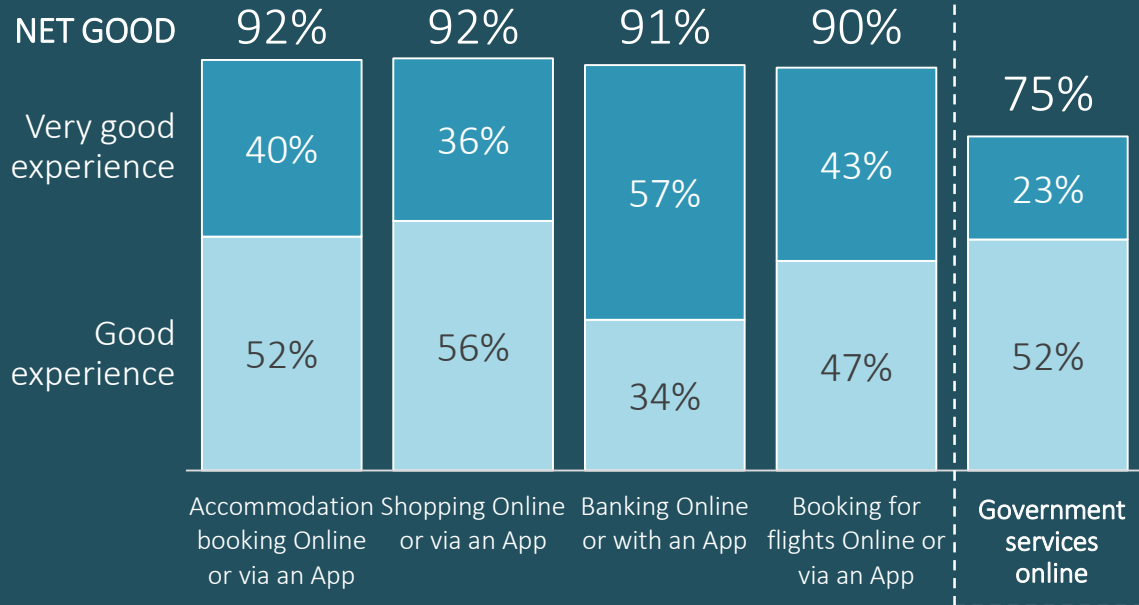


Online government services rated lower vs other industries

One integrated app to access all online government services is much more preferred than separate apps.



Rating of overall experience of online services x industry



Preferred app option to access government services online



64%

One integrated app for all online government services



28%

Dedicated apps for each of the different government services e.g. a separate app for health or for driving

8%

Don't know

Q.10 Based on your recent experiences you may have had with the following online services, how would you rate the overall experience with...

(Base: past 12 month users of online government services excluding not applicable; n=77-87)



CONTACTED VIA CATI TELEPHONE STUDY

When prompted,
online services
relating to job,
death, housing,
and birth
resonate, with
housing especially
cutting through
with younger
cohorts

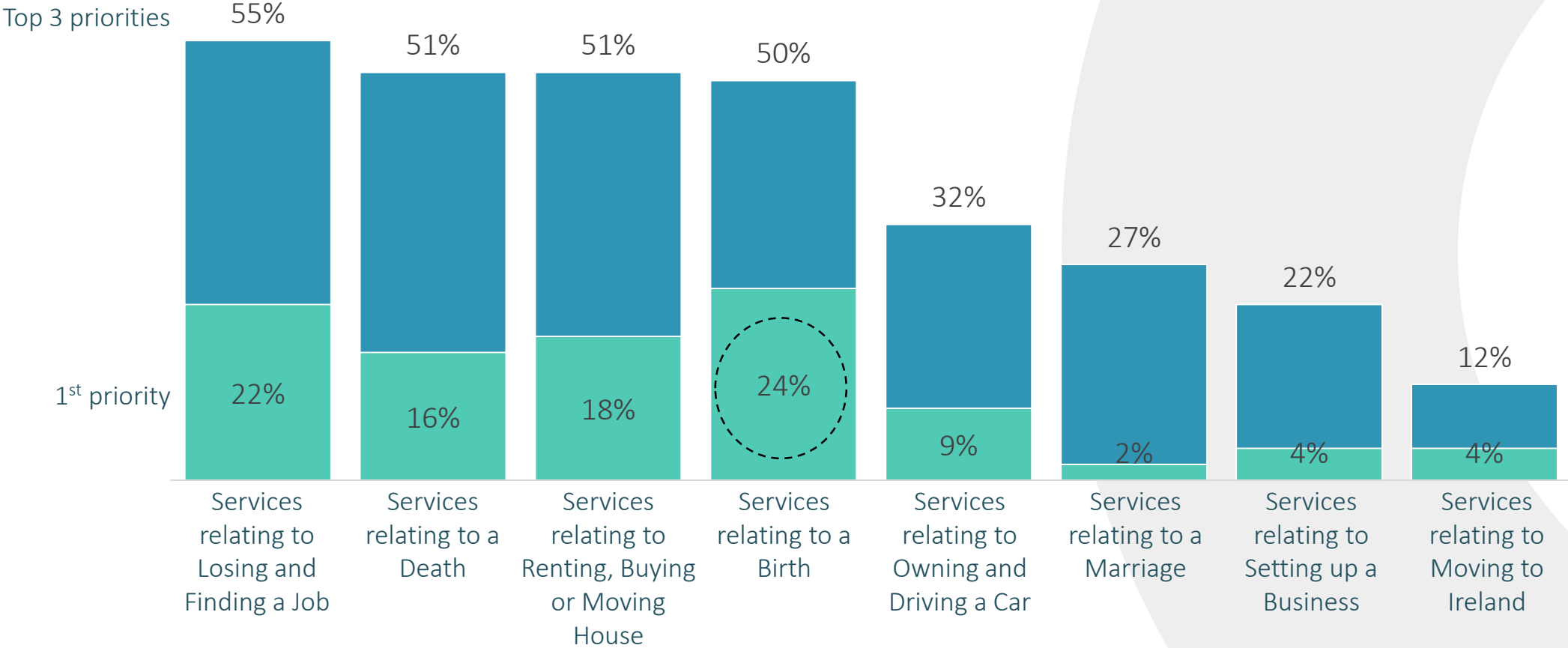


High demand for online job, death, house & birth related services



Birth features especially prominently in that 1 in 4 mention it 1st as a priority for life events that should be online, with job services featuring slightly behind that.

Life events that should be prioritised for online services



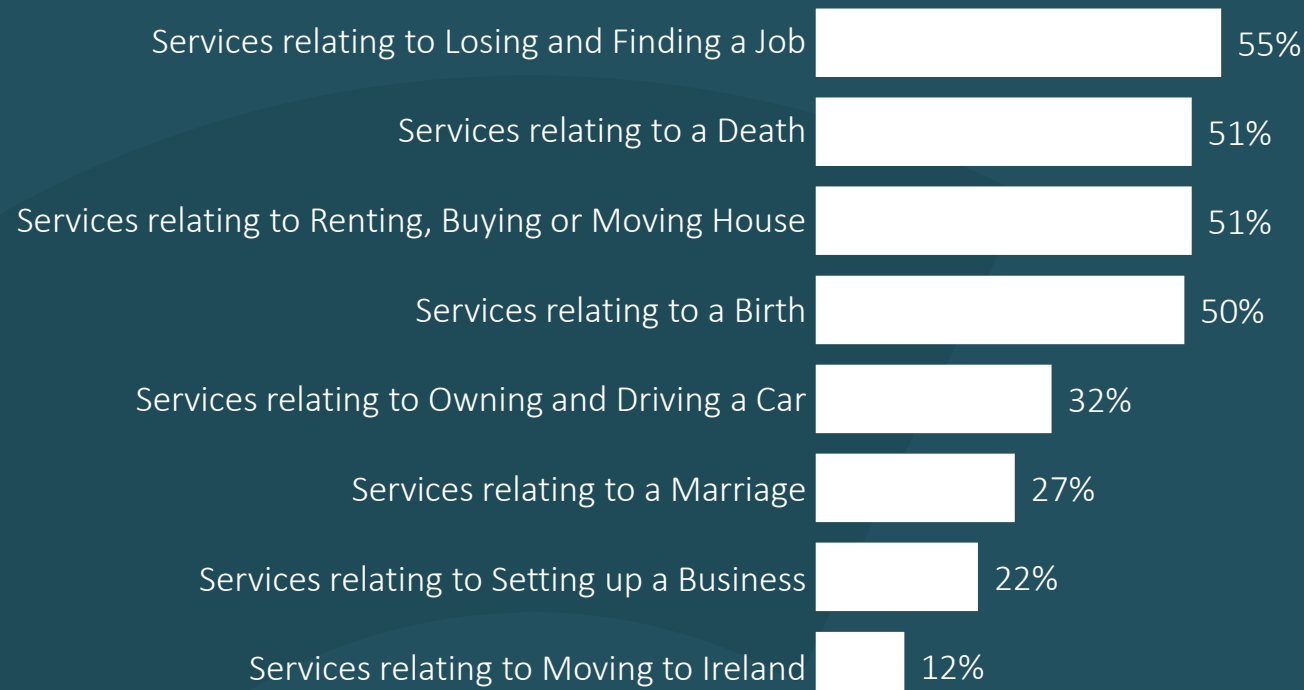
Q27. Which of the following life events should the government prioritise for online services?
(Base: Those aged 16+ who answered; n=3,695)

Online housing services resonate especially with younger cohort



This contrasts with Job and Death related online services, which have more of an appeal with older age groups, particularly with 45-59's and then also for 60-74's for Death related services.

Life events that should be prioritised for online services (NET Top 3 priority)



	Age				
	16-29 (n=531)	30-44 (n=1203)	45-59 (1332)	60-74 (n=554)	75 and over (n=75)
Services relating to Losing and Finding a Job	53%	55%	59%	54%	55%
Services relating to a Death	42%	47%	58%	57%	53%
Services relating to Renting, Buying or Moving House	60%	52%	46%	47%	49%
Services relating to a Birth	47%	54%	53%	47%	43%
Services relating to Owning and Driving a Car	35%	31%	28%	34%	32%
Services relating to a Marriage	26%	27%	25%	27%	31%
Services relating to Setting up a Business	18%	23%	21%	22%	28%
Services relating to Moving to Ireland	19%	12%	9%	11%	9%



Summary & Key Recommendations

Potential for increased usage by adding more online services



Summary of results

1

Of those aged 16+ in Ireland, over half are using public services at least 5+ times per year, with vast majority being online. This tendency to use online services is even prevalent amongst older cohorts.

2

Of those who do not access public services online, there is a preference to use paper primarily because of the perceived difficulty of using public services online and there is a need for assistance here.

3

By far, the most widely used online public service is to do with tax and revenue services, with half of those aged 16+ using these most or most recently online, but only 1 in 3 finding it easy to use.

4

Nearly all tasks being attempted online are deemed by users to be important, but only 4 in 5 are fully completing the task they set out to do, with strong indications that website complexity is making it difficult for users to find the information they are looking for.

5

1 in 10 of those aged 16+ claim to use gov.ie, but the website in many ways acts essentially as an online entry point to other government services and only 3 in 10 find it easy to use. There is some confusion as to which services require log in.

6

The majority would favour one integrated app, as opposed to dedicated apps for each separate service, and there is high level of demand for online and especially live human telephone support to help access online services.

So what are our next steps?

Create one integrated app

Majority favour creation of one integrated app as opposed to separate apps for each service. This will help streamline the services and make information easier to access by creating a 'one stop' shop for users of online government services.

Improve website functionality

Website functionality and finding information is a pain point and needs to be addressed, particularly for those using tax and revenue, health, social / welfare, and gov.ie services. Search functionality is especially in need of attention.

Add supports for online services

There are some who find it daunting to access public services online, and would benefit from some form of support to overcome any challenges they experience. There is public openness to both telephone and online supports and strong indications this would make them use public services online more.

Broaden range of online services

Although there is a need to improve online government services, there is still some demand to increase the number of services that are accessible by a life events approach, with job, death, birth, and housing topping this list and other services featuring less prominently in their demand to be added.





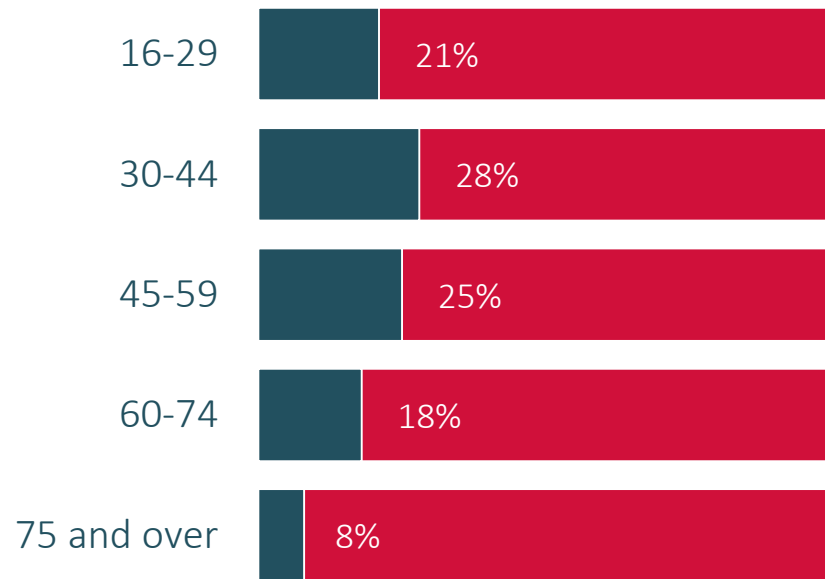
Appendix

Sample profile



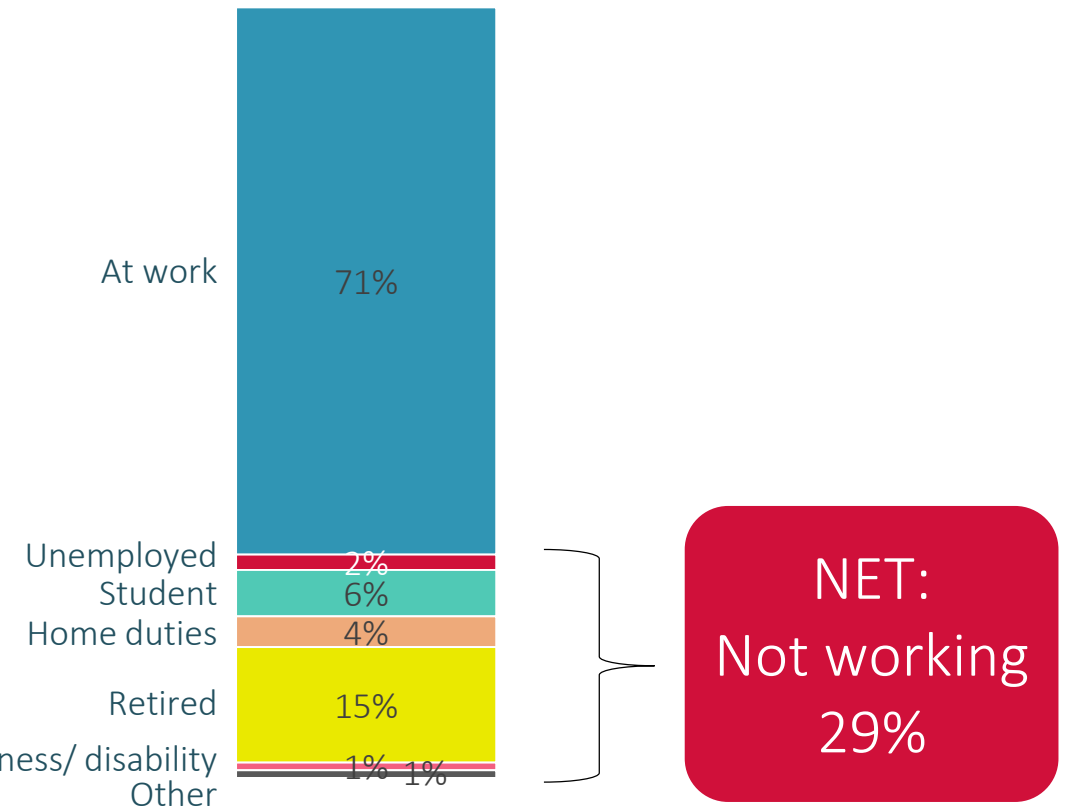
2022 online public consultation and nationally representative RED C study

Age



Unable to work due to permanent sickness/ disability

Work status

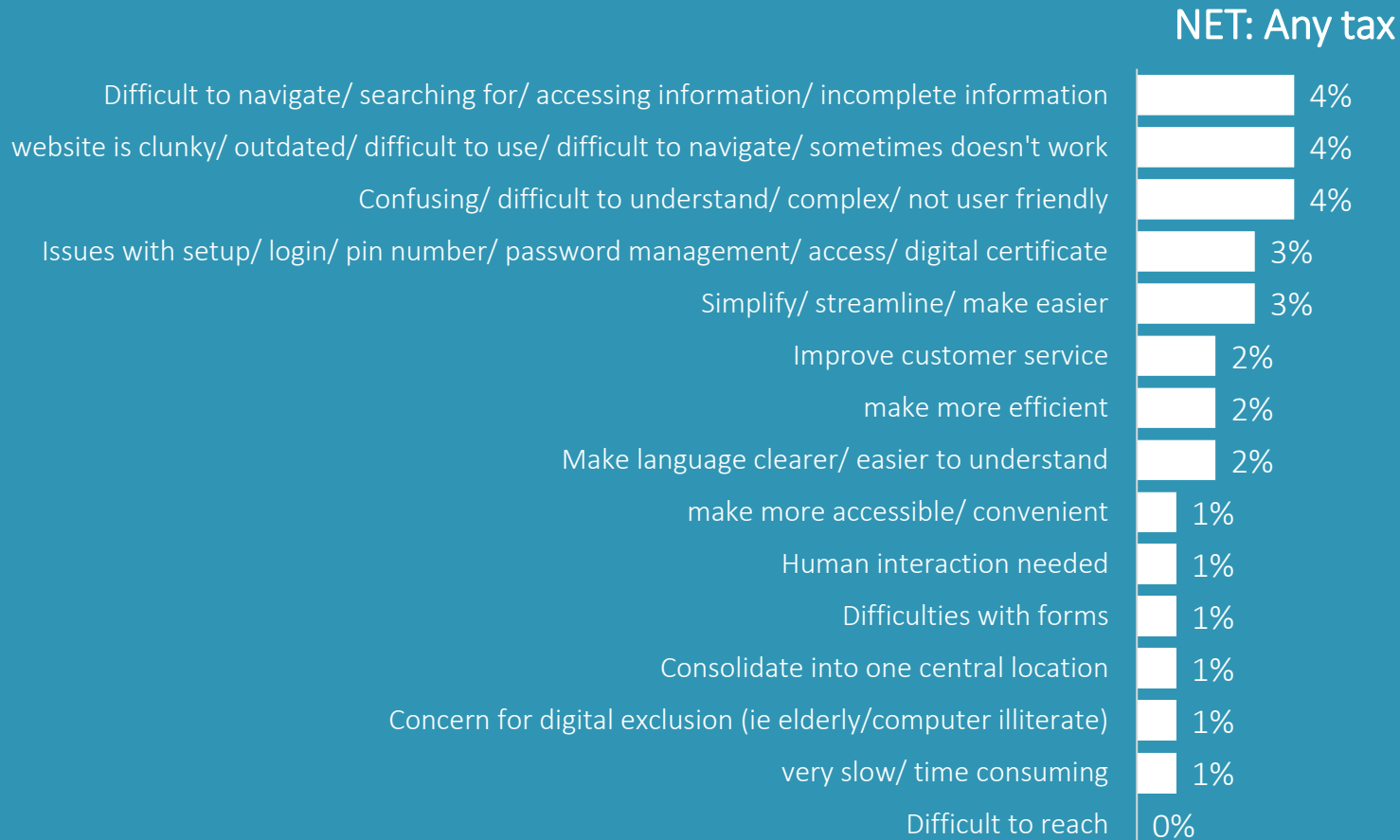


Q1. Which of the following age groups are you in?

Q2. From the following list, which best describes your situation

(Base: Those aged 16+; n=3882)

Additional feedback on using online public services used recently



68%

NET: Can't think of anything else

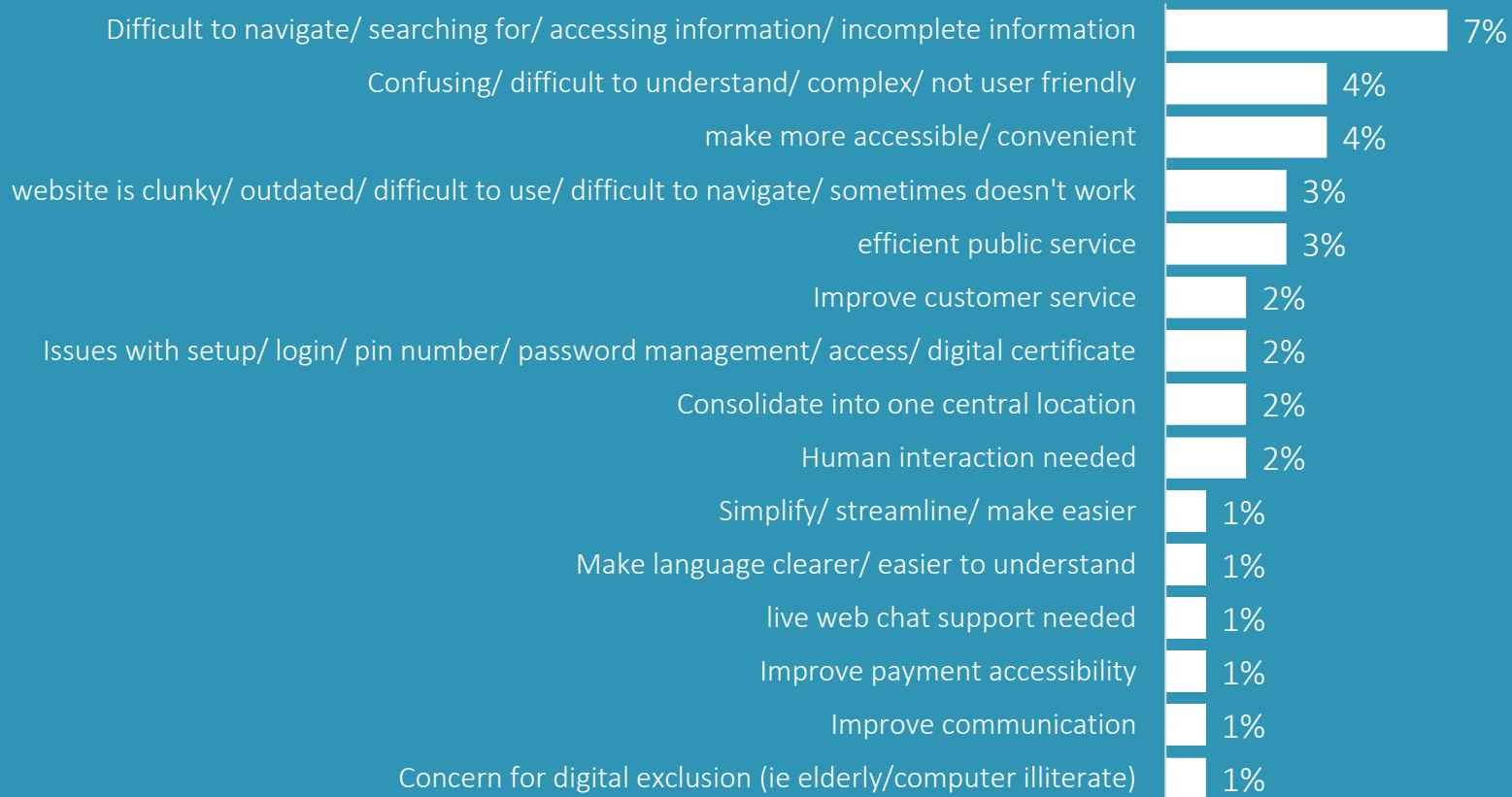
6%

Positive feedback on public services

Additional feedback on using online public services used recently



Social Protection/Welfare



66%

NET: Can't think of anything else

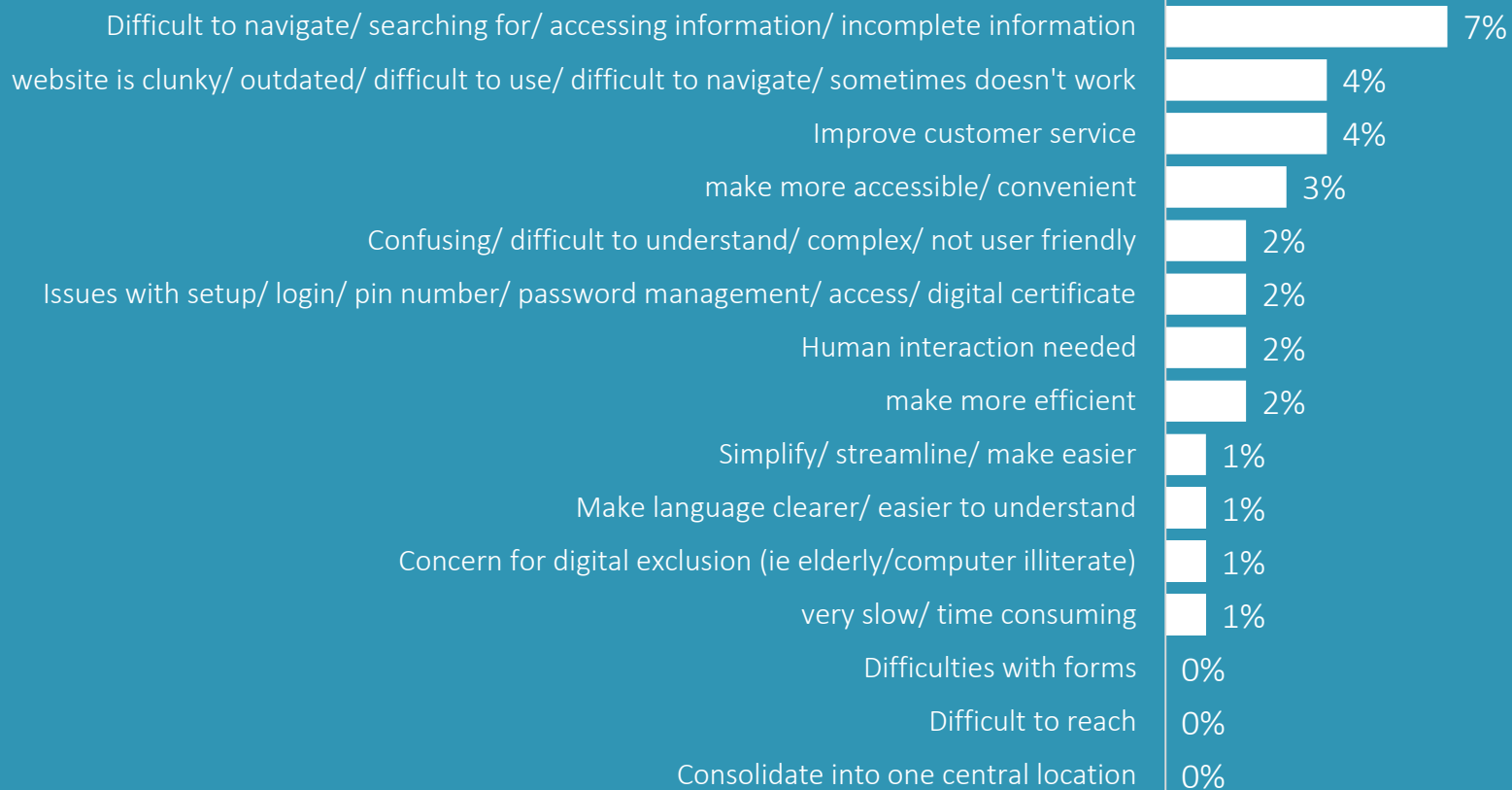
7%

Positive feedback on public services

Additional feedback on using online public services used recently



NET: Hospital / HSE/ health



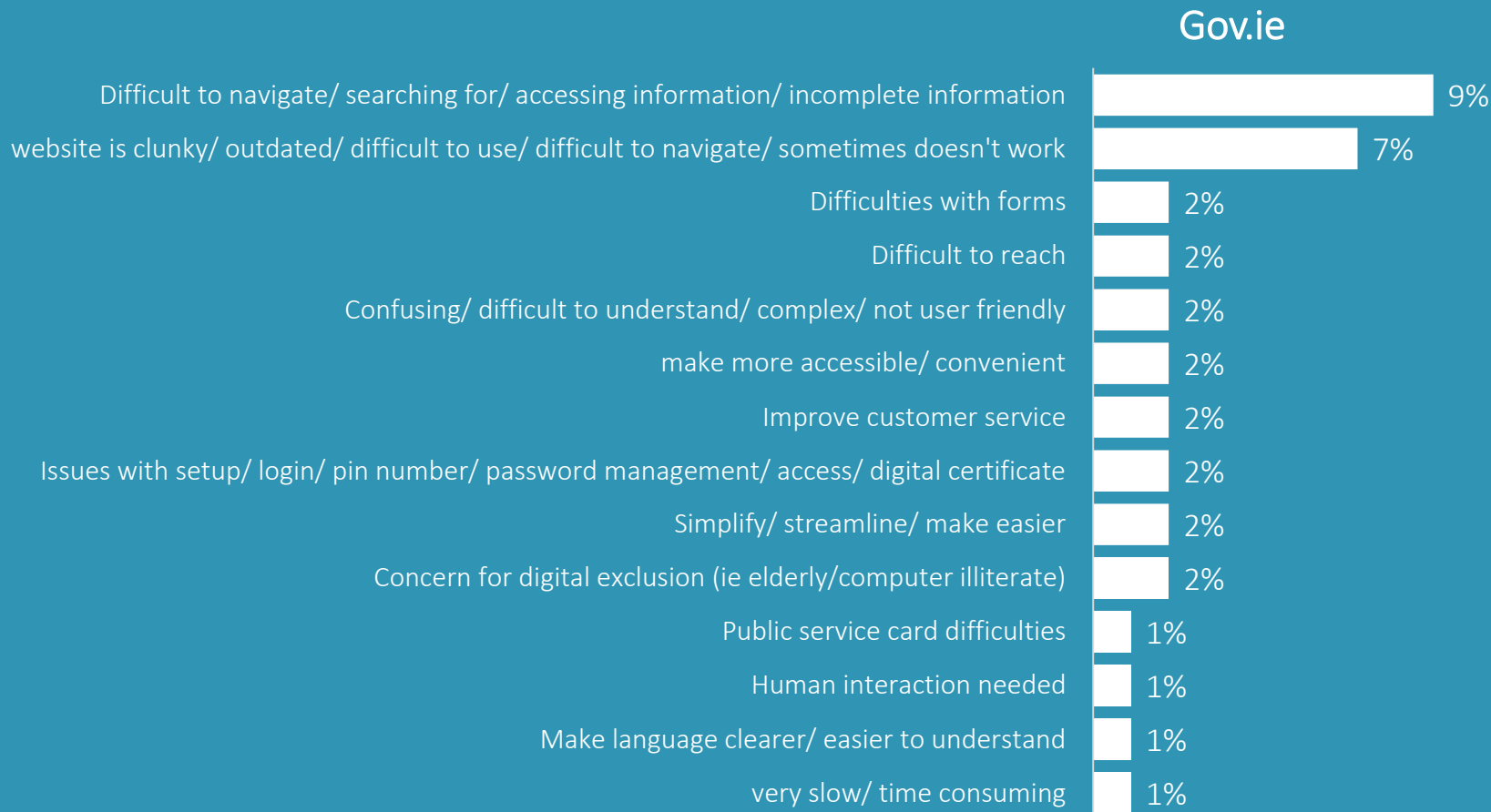
66%

NET: Can't think of anything else

10%

Positive feedback on public services

Additional feedback on using online public services used recently



67%

NET: Can't think of anything else

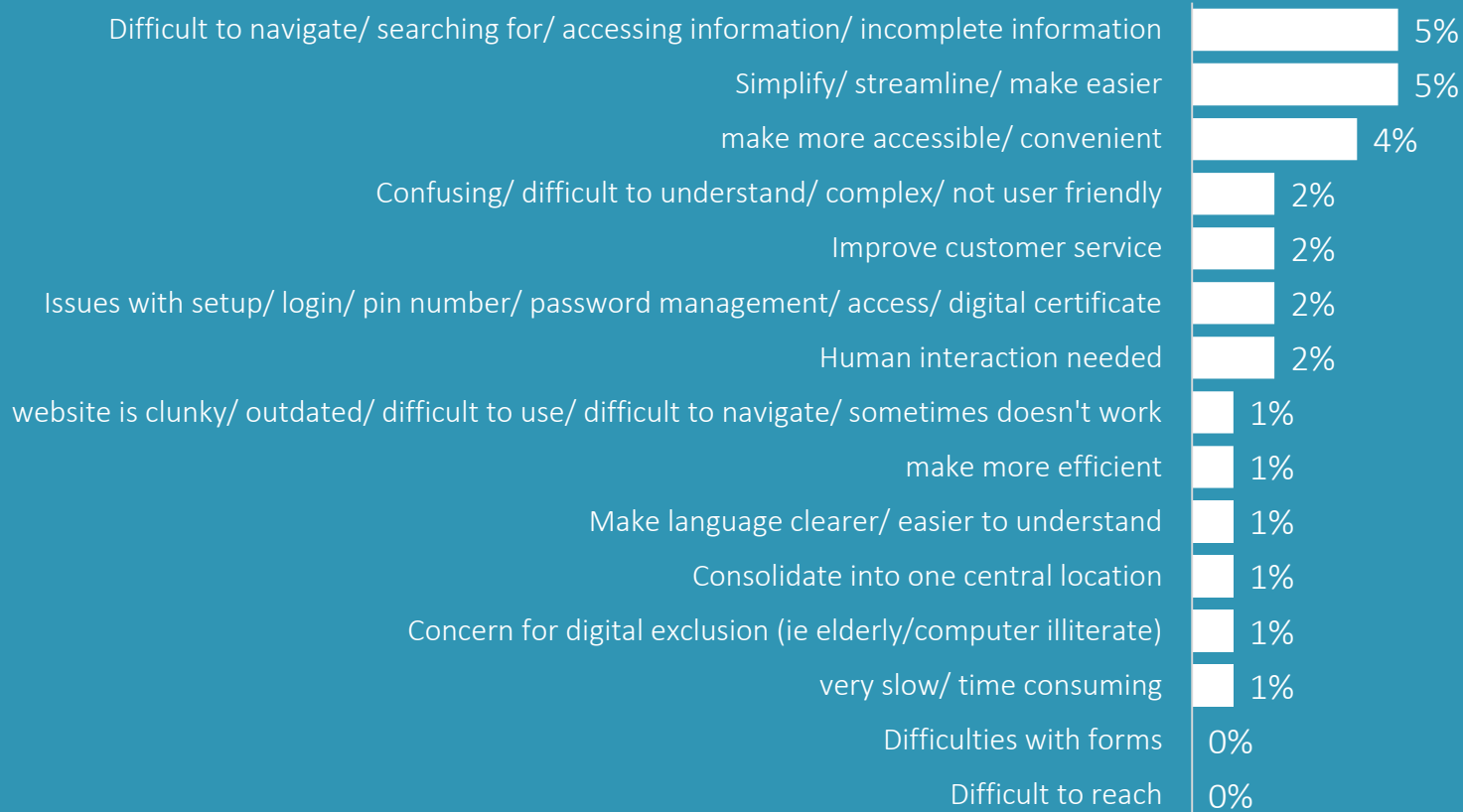
7%

Positive feedback on public services

Additional feedback on using online public services used recently



NET: Passport / immigration



67%

NET: Can't think of anything else

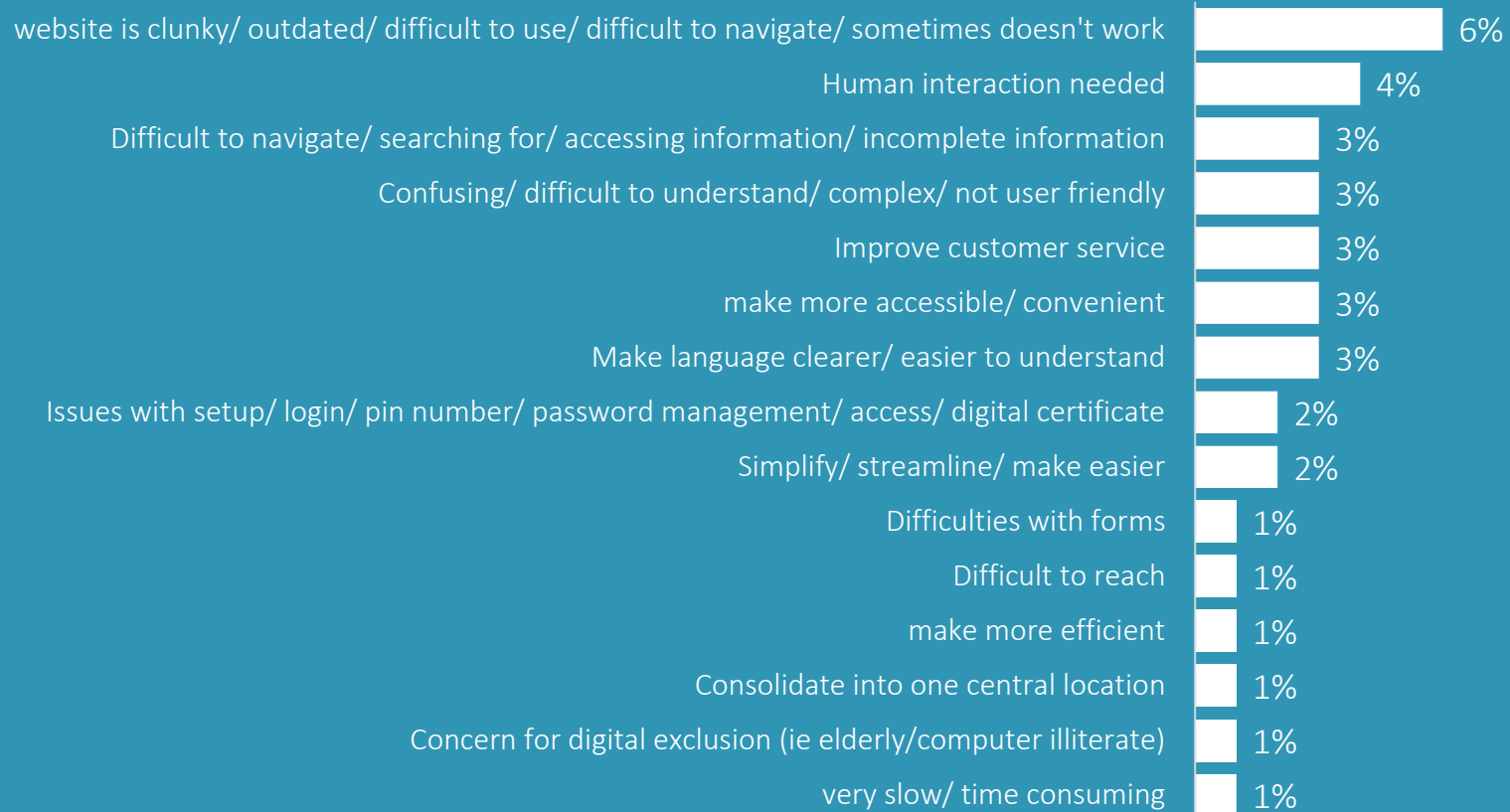
10%

Positive feedback on public services

Additional feedback on using online public services used recently



NET: Citizens information/advice



69%

NET: Can't think of anything else

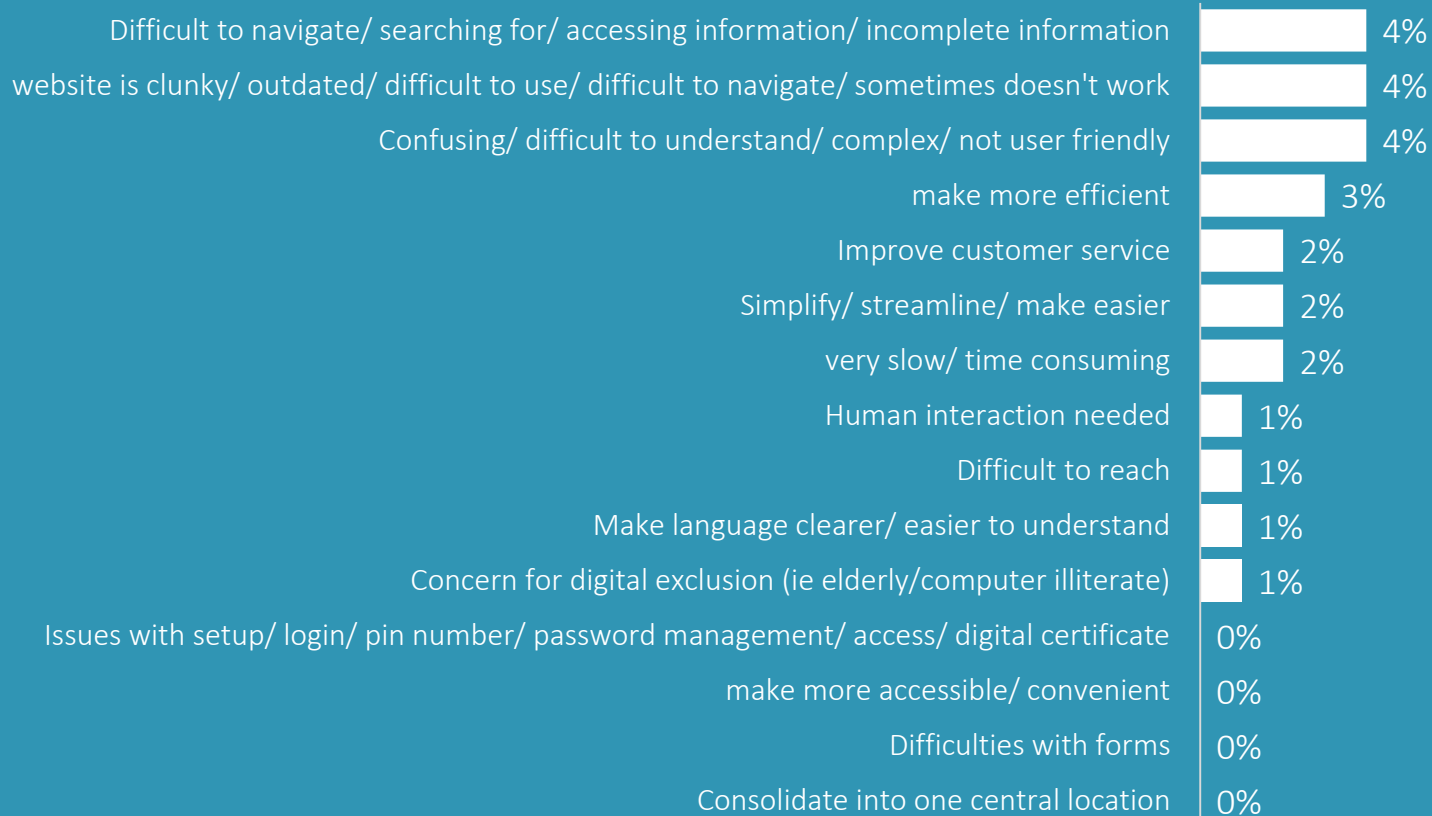
8%

Positive feedback on public services

Additional feedback on using online public services used recently



NET: City/ county council



75%

NET: Can't think of anything else

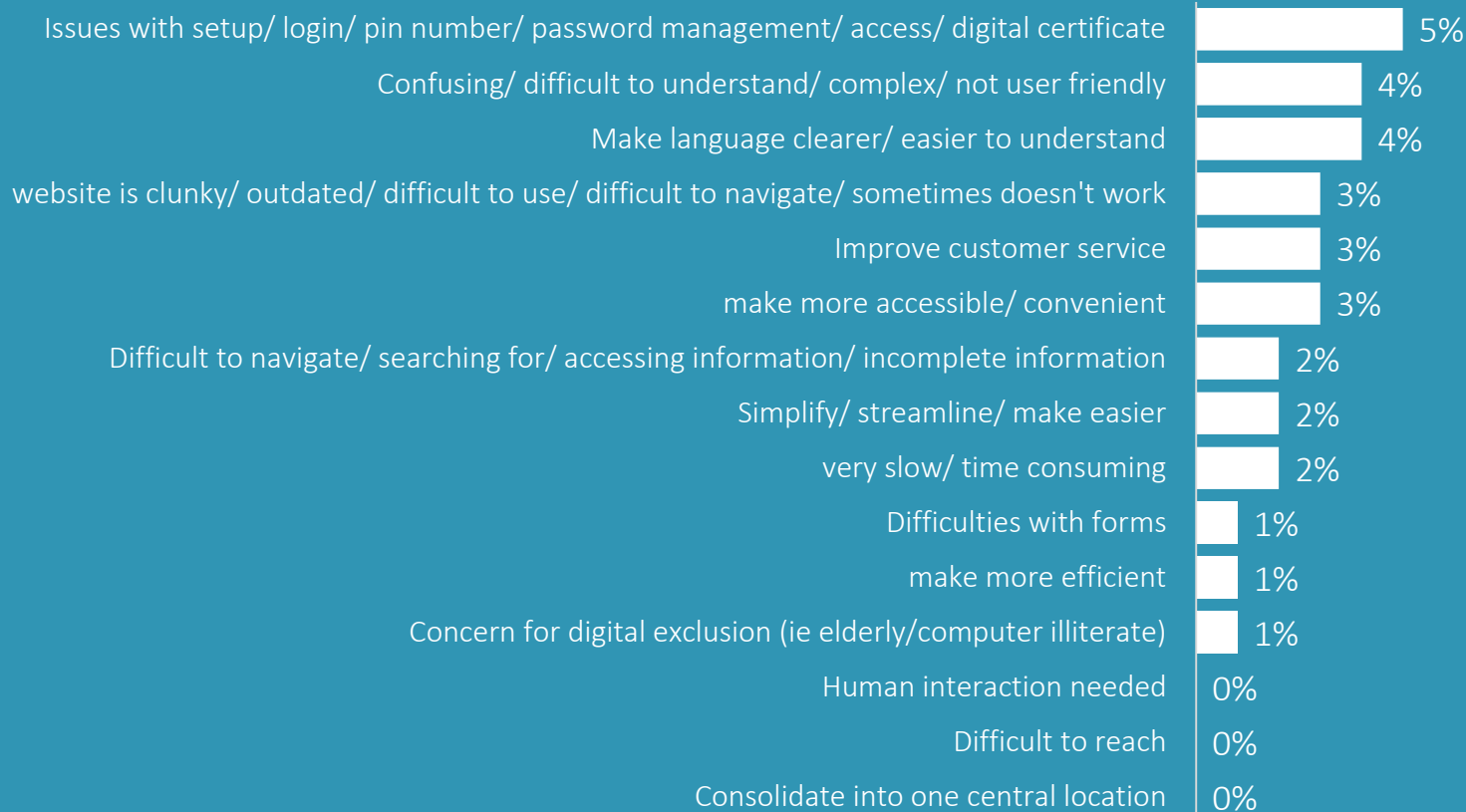
6%

Positive feedback on public services

Additional feedback on using online public services used recently



NET: NCT/ licence/ NDLS



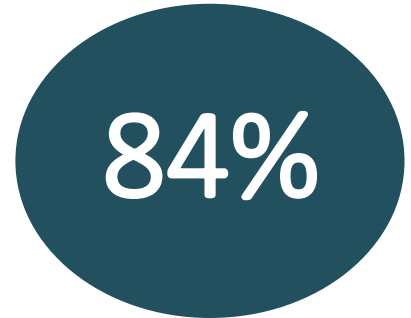
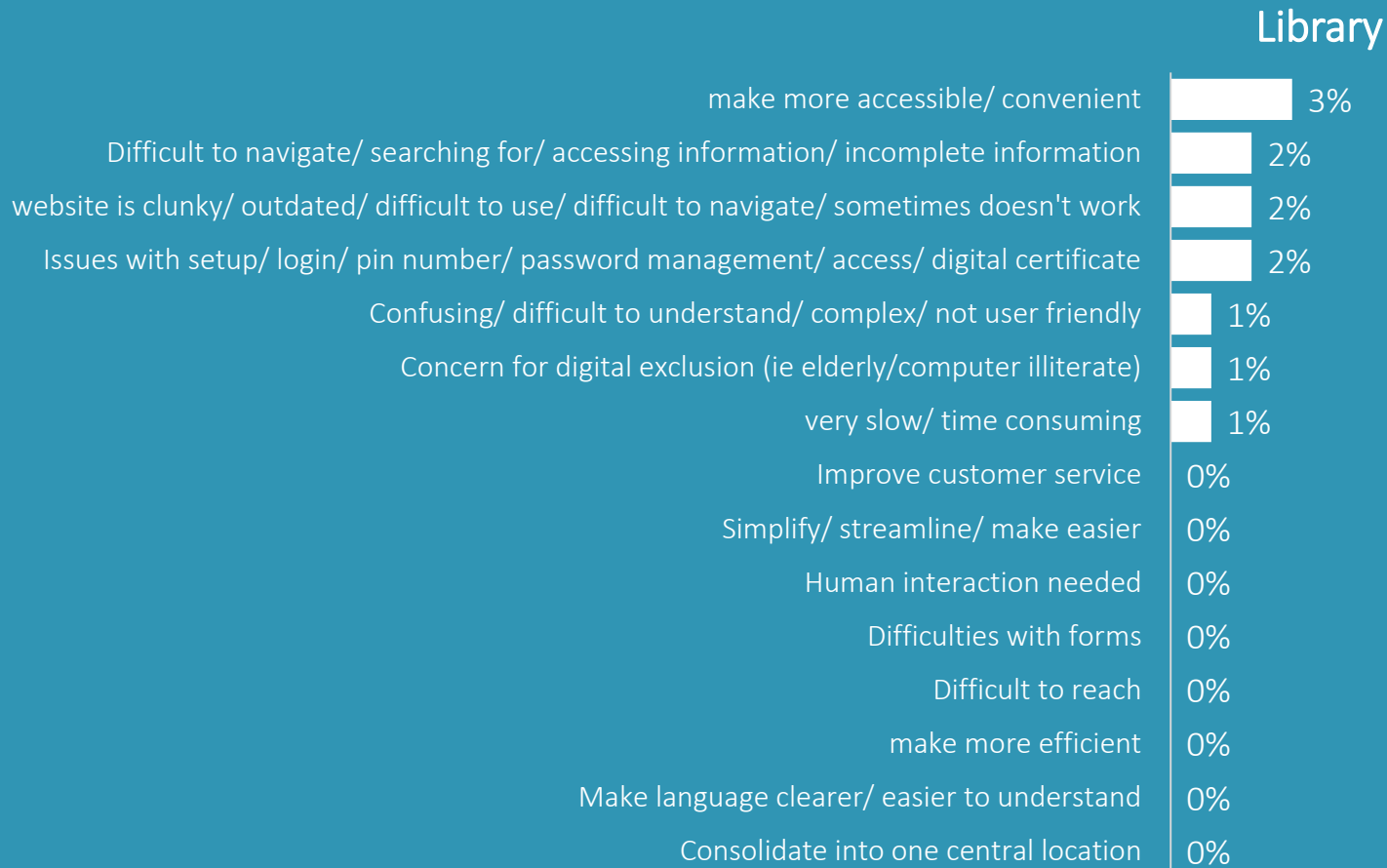
75%

NET: Can't think of anything else

7%

Positive feedback on public services

Additional feedback on using online public services used recently



NET: Can't think of anything else

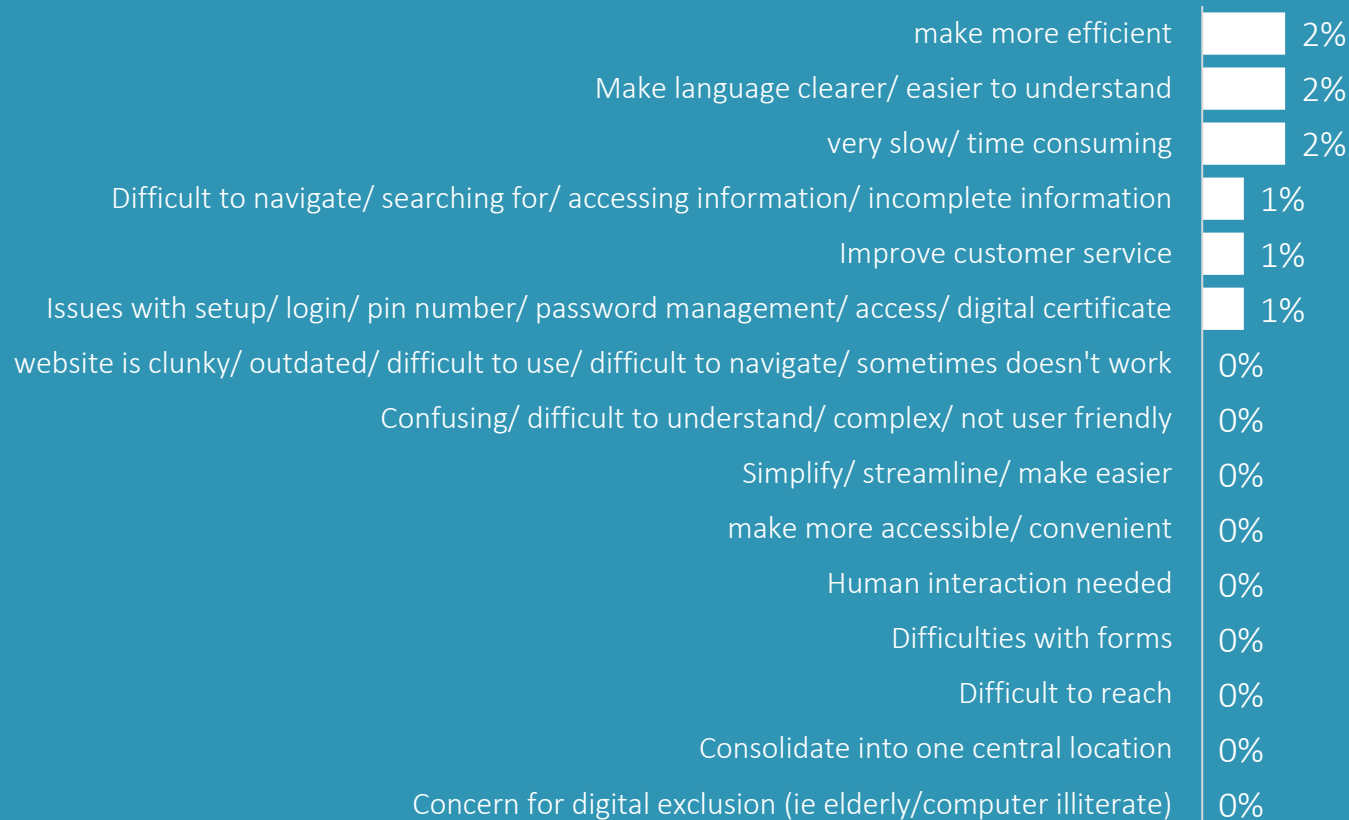


Positive feedback on public services

Additional feedback on using online public services used recently



NET: Any public transport



78%

NET: Can't think of anything else

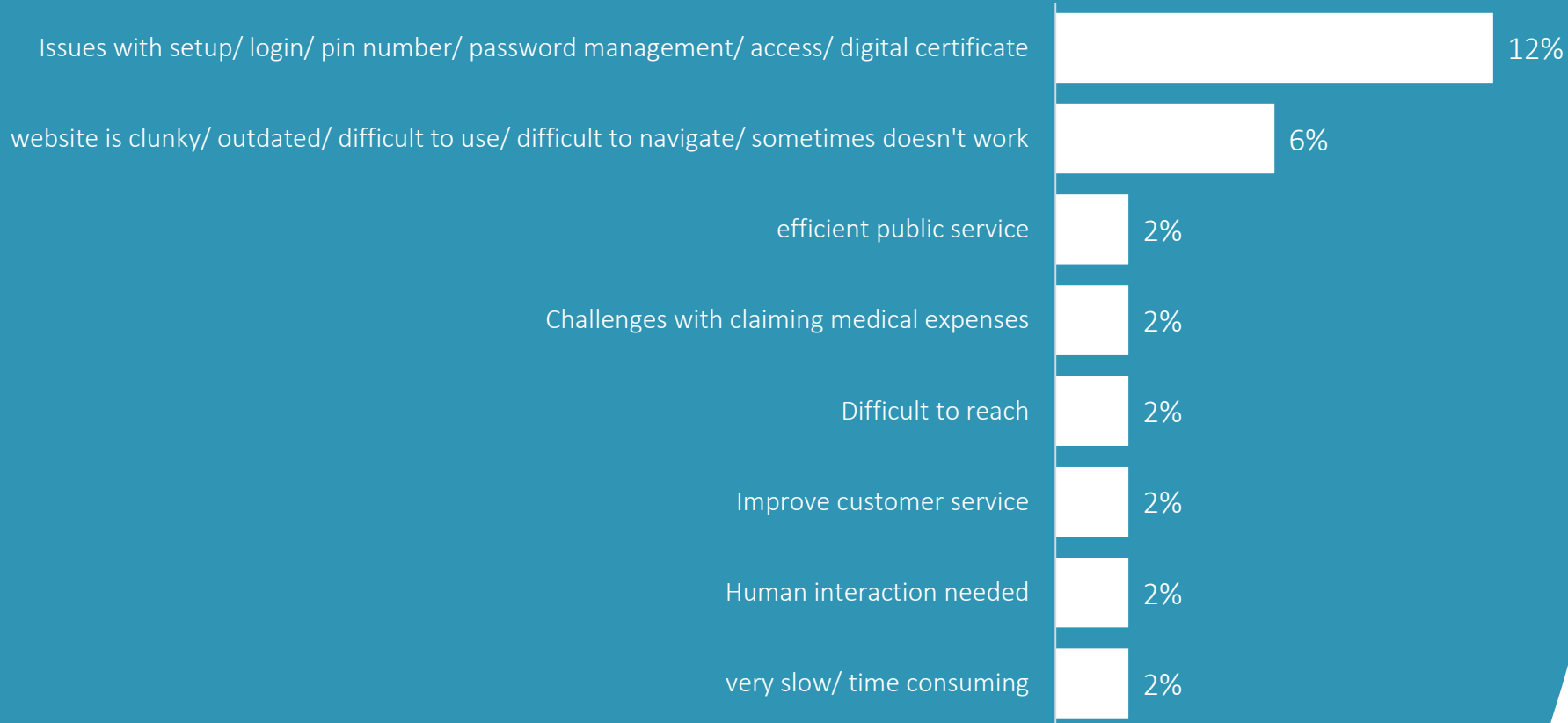
8%

Positive feedback on public services

Additional feedback on using online public services used recently



MyGovID



79%

NET: Can't think of anything else

4%

Positive feedback on public services

*Low base size

Q16/21

(Base: Those who use Social protection/ Dpmt of Social Protection services online recently; n=42*)

Taxes, Gov.ie, and Citizens' information cater to younger profile



How profiles of public service user types vs National 16+ population



Taxes (n=1,437)

Higher amongst 30-44's and lower amongst 16-29's; lower amongst those not working, especially students; higher amongst who mainly access services via desktop computer or laptop; higher amongst those whose preferred time to access online services is in the 'evening' time



Social protection/Welfare (n=486)

Higher amongst 60+ ages and lower amongst 16-29's; Higher amongst those who are NOT working, especially retirees; Higher amongst those who use public services 5+ times/year; higher amongst those who 'Mostly online using a tablet, phone or other device



Hospital/HSE/Health (n=318)

Higher amongst those aged 60+; lower amongst those aged 30-44; higher amongst those not working; especially prevalent amongst those whose preferred time to access online services is in the morning time.



Gov.ie (n=243)

Users of this service are more likely to be aged 30-44 than the average 16+ population; they are also more likely to access or inquire about public services 10+ times/year and to mainly access services via desktop computer or laptop



Citizens' information (n=139)

Users more likely to be aged 30-44 and to be working; they are more likely than the 16+ population to access or inquire about public services from 5 to 10 times/year and to access online public services via tablet, phone, or other device

**THANK
YOU**

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