



HEALTHY & POSITIVE
AGEING INITIATIVE

**Information access: results from the HaPAI
survey**

2018

The Healthy and Positive Ageing Initiative (HaPAI) is a joint research programme led by the Department of Health with the Health Service Executive, the Age-friendly Ireland Programme and The Atlantic Philanthropies.

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PREFACE

This report was completed by the Healthy and Positive Ageing Initiative (HaPAI) which is a research programme led by the Department of Health in association with the HSE, the Age-Friendly Ireland Programme, and The Atlantic Philanthropies. The HaPAI was established in order to achieve Goal 4 of the National Positive Ageing Strategy (1): *Support and use research about people as they age to better inform policy responses to population ageing in Ireland*. National Goal 4 involves two objectives:

- Continue to employ an evidence-informed approach to decision-making at all levels of planning; and
- Promote the development of a comprehensive framework for gathering data in relation to all aspects of ageing and older people to underpin evidence-informed policy making.

The HaPAI is also aligned with several goals and actions of Healthy Ireland – A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013-2025 (2), the national framework for the improvement of population health and wellbeing, and the WHO's Active Ageing: A Policy Framework (3) which provides key policy proposals for enabling active ageing in our societies. The HaPAI commenced in 2015 and is operational in a number of different areas of activity:

- The development of national indicators of older people's health and wellbeing, leading to the 2016 publication of a biennial report on the health and wellbeing of older people in Ireland;
- The establishment of a research fund to commission targeted additional research to fill identified data gaps required to cover all indicators, relevant to the design or configuration of future services and supports for older people; and
- At a local level, the development of indicators using either national data broken down to the county level where possible, or additional data collected locally and published in a series of county reports in selected counties.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Within technology and information-rich environments, accessible and up-to-date information is essential to support healthy and positive ageing. Accessible information is important for accessing services and supports, for exercising one's rights, making informed decisions, and for participating in community life.

Supporting evidence-informed policy and programmes

The purpose of this study was to provide up-to-date evidence about the sources of news and information that are currently used by older people in Ireland, and the difficulties they face in accessing information about services and local activities. For the first time in Ireland this information is reported at local level in order to support the development of programmes and services that improve information provision and access in local areas. Data is from the HaPAI Age-friendly Cities and Counties Survey which involved 10,500 adults aged 55 and older in 21 Local Authority areas.

Key findings

- National television was most frequently reported source of news and information (85%), followed by national radio (73%) and local radio (71%);
- A total of 7.0% of adults have difficulty accessing information on local activities and events and 11% have difficulty accessing information on health and social care;
- Overall, 68% have access to a household internet connection and this ranged from 50% to 87% across the Local Authority areas surveyed;
- Overall, 61% reported using the internet in the last 3 months and this ranged from 45% to 79% across the Local Authority areas surveyed;
- Internet use was particularly low among adults aged 75 and older (31%);
- Those who do not use the internet are also more likely to report difficulty accessing information on local activities and events and health and social care; and,
- Respondents who used the internet were significantly more likely to engage in political, community groups, volunteering, and significantly less likely to feel isolated from others.

Strategy pointers

Several geographic areas and groups of older people are currently at a higher risk of digital exclusion by not having a household internet connection, lower internet use, or both. Improving access and providing support to use the internet among these adults is likely to be of benefit to several aspects of positive ageing; from social participation and civic engagement to access to health services and social care information.

CONTENTS

PREFACE	1
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
LIST OF TABLES	4
LIST OF FIGURES.....	4
1. INTRODUCTION	6
IRELAND'S AGEING POPULATION	6
POSITIVE AGEING.....	6
2. BACKGROUND.....	11
ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION FOR AN AGEING POPULATION.....	11
INTERNET USE.....	11
3. METHODS	14
DATA AND SAMPLE.....	14
FIELDWORK AND DATA COLLECTION	14
RESPONSE RATES AND SAMPLE WEIGHTS.....	14
MEASURES.....	16
ANALYSIS.....	18
SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS.....	18
4. RESULTS	21
INFORMATION SOURCES.....	21
DIFFICULTY ACCESSING INFORMATION.....	21
HOUSEHOLD INTERNET CONNECTION AND INTERNET USE	25
INTERNET USE AND CIVIC AND SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT	32
5. CONCLUSIONS.....	38

REFERENCES.....	40
APPENDIX: MIXED EFFECTS LOGISTIC REGRESSION MODELS.....	44
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	49

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1 SAMPLE AND RESPONSE RATE.....	15
TABLE 2 INFORMATION ACCESS MEASURES	16
TABLE 3 DEMOGRAPHIC, SOCIO-ECONOMIC, AND LOCATION MEASURES	17
TABLE 4 PARTICIPATION MEASURES	18
TABLE 5 RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS	19
TABLE 6 INFORMATION SOURCES	21
TABLE 7 DIFFICULTY ACCESSING INFORMATION, BY SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS	22
TABLE 8 HOUSEHOLD INTERNET CONNECTION.....	26
TABLE 9 HOUSEHOLD INTERNET CONNECTIONS, BY LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA.....	28
TABLE 10 HOUSEHOLD INTERNET CONNECTION AND INTERNET USE BY RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS	29
TABLE 11 FREQUENT OF INTERNET USE, BY LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA	31
TABLE 12 SOCIAL AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION BY INTERNET USE.....	32

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1 NATIONAL POSITIVE AGEING STRATEGY GOALS ALIGNED WITH WHO AGE- FRIENDLY CORE DOMAINS.....	8
FIGURE 2 DIFFICULTY ACCESSING INFORMATION ON LOCAL ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS, BY LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA	24
FIGURE 3 DIFFICULTY ACCESSING INFORMATION ON HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE, BY LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA	25
FIGURE 4 DISTRIBUTION OF INTERNET USE AMONG PEOPLE AGED 55 YEARS AND OVER, BY LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA	30
FIGURE 5 INTERNET USE AND POLITICAL ACTIVITY IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS	33
FIGURE 6 INTERNET USE AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AT LEAST MONTHLY..	34
FIGURE 7 INTERNET USE AND VOLUNTEERING AT LEAST MONTHLY.....	35
FIGURE 8 INTERNET USE AND SOCIAL ISOLATION.....	36



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Positive ageing and age-friendly environments

1. INTRODUCTION

IRELAND'S AGEING POPULATION

Demographic change has the potential to create opportunities and challenges for communities of the future. The demographics of Ireland are changing rapidly and according to a 2017 report from the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) between 2016 and 2030 the population share of people aged 65 and over will increase from 13% to between 17% and 19 % and the number of people aged 65 and over is projected to increase by between 58 and 63% during this time (4).

Demographic ageing represents a triumph in development, as people are living longer lives due to better food, health care, sanitation, education and economic wellbeing (5). However, demographic ageing also has implications for public policy, service provision, long-term planning, and society as a whole in areas as diverse as housing, transport, education, employment, tourism, business development, and civic and social engagement.

Older adults contribute to both their extended families and the wider community in a variety of ways including financial support, family care or other supports and through active citizenship in their communities. Importantly, these relationships are often reciprocal, with older adults benefitting in terms of improved quality of life and psychological wellbeing. Far from being reliant on familial and social support, older members of society are in many instances net contributors to their extended family and communities. As such, it is important that we continue to move away from a predominantly health and medical focus on the ageing population towards a more holistic approach that also includes broader social and economic characteristics (6).

The WHO argues that countries can afford to get old if governments, international organisations and civil society enact “active ageing” policies and programmes that enhance the health, participation and security of older citizens.

POSITIVE AGEING

Strategies and plans such as the National Positive Ageing Strategy (NPAS) (1) and Healthy Ireland – *A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013-2025* (2), have recognised this new reality and have sought to take a different approach to planning for this new Ireland. There has been a shift in the perception of ageing towards the more positive perspective, conceptualising later life as a period of continued growth and development for older people. This view is central to the vision set out in the NPAS and is consistent with international developments in relation to ageing, and in particular the WHO's *Active Ageing: A Policy Framework* (3).

The NPAS set out a vision for Ireland as

"...a society for all ages that celebrates and prepares properly for individual and population ageing. It will enable and support all ages and older people to enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential. It will promote and respect older people's engagement in economic, social, cultural, community and family life, and foster better solidarity between generations".

This vision translated into four goals:

1. Remove barriers to participation and provide more opportunities for the continued involvement of people as they age in all aspects of cultural, economic and social life in their communities according to their needs, preferences and capacities.
2. Support people as they age to maintain, improve or manage their physical and mental health and wellbeing.
3. Enable people to age with confidence, security and dignity in their own homes and communities for as long as possible.
4. Support and use research about people as they age to better inform policy responses to population ageing in Ireland

From the outset it was intended that implementation of the NPAS would require a 'whole of government' response, and be framed within the implementation of Healthy Ireland (2). At local level, the WHO Age Friendly Cities and Counties (AFCC) programme was identified in the National Positive Ageing Strategy (1) as being an important approach to improving the lives of older people throughout the country.

The Age Friendly Cities and Counties programme was built on the understanding that the wide-ranging change and planning required to prepare for demographic ageing called for a collaborative approach. In each local authority, the Age Friendly Cities and Counties programme provides a mechanism for the relevant state agencies, working under the aegis of the Local Authorities, to ensure that their combined resources are used optimally, delivering necessary services to older people within their own local communities.

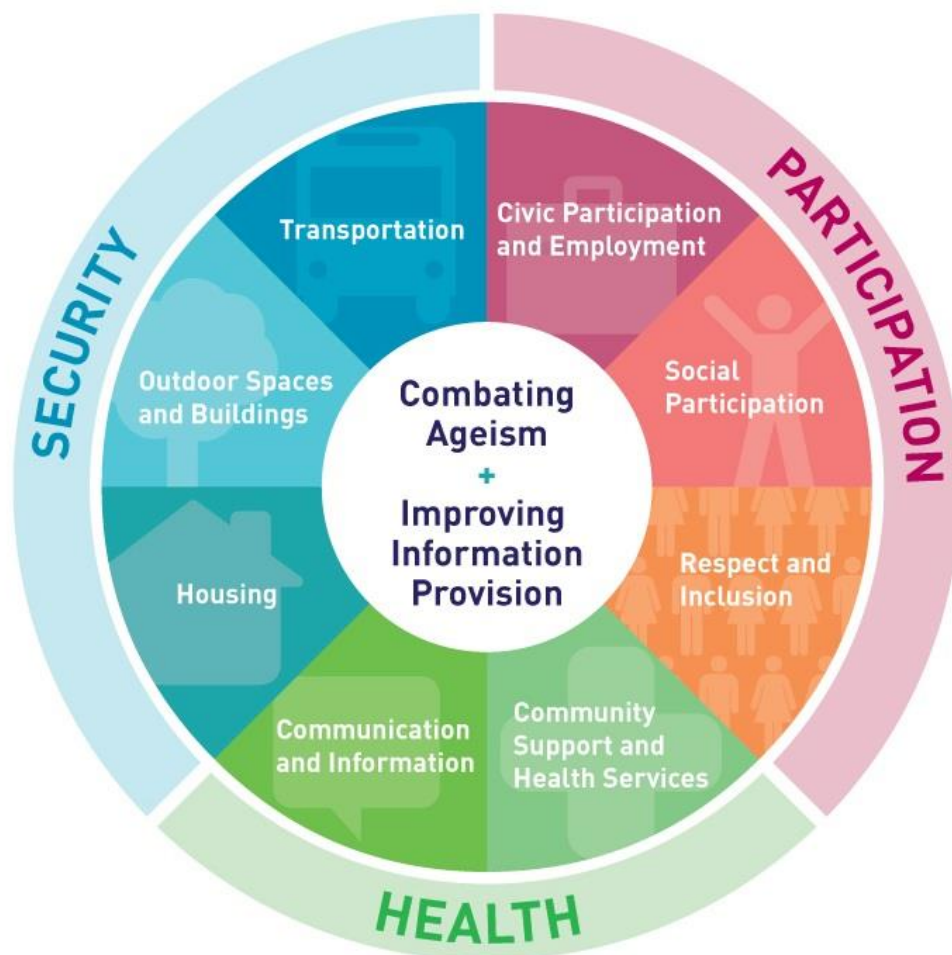
Whilst local government has driven the Programme, the governance is constituted in the multi-agency Age-Friendly Alliances, supported by Older Peoples' Councils. The programme draws in a broad network of stakeholders who collaborate to address issues associated with population ageing and to ensure the health and well-being of community residents as they age. These stakeholders include agencies from local governments, non-profit organisations, advocacy groups, older people themselves and the broader community.

The concept of 'age-friendliness' is linked to an initiative started by the WHO in 2007 called the WHO Global Age-Friendly Cities project (7). In an age-friendly community, policies, services and structures related to the physical and social environment are designed to support and enable older people to "age actively" –

that is, to live in security, enjoy good health and continue to participate fully in society. Public and commercial settings and services are made accessible to accommodate varying levels of ability, to recognise the great diversity among older persons and to promote their inclusion and contribution in all areas of community life.

To achieve this vision each Local Authority in Ireland has committed to developing an Age Friendly Programme based on the World Health Organisation (WHO) Age-Friendly Cities Framework and Guidelines (7). An age-friendly environment fosters health and wellbeing by focusing on and nurturing eight domains which are closely aligned with the goals of the NPAS as illustrated in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1 NATIONAL POSITIVE AGEING STRATEGY GOALS ALIGNED WITH WHO AGE-FRIENDLY CORE DOMAINS



This report focuses on the WHO Age-friendly core domain of '*Communication and Information*' which is aligned with a cross-cutting objective, '*Improving Information Provision*', of the NPAS. This report has four aims:

- Aim 1: Profile the sources of news and information that are currently used.
- Aim 2: Provide a profile of older adults who experience difficulty in accessing information on 1) local activities and events, 2) health and social care.
- Aim 3: Describe access to household internet connections and internet use.
- Aim 4: Explore the role of internet use as a factor for social and civic engagement.

This report is organised as follows: section 2 presents relevant accessible information, barriers to accessible information, internet use and technological advances. Section 3 outlines the methods used in this study. Section 4 presents the results of this study and Section 5 concludes the report.



CHAPTER TWO

BACKGROUND

Accessible information, barriers to accessible information, internet use and technological advances

2. BACKGROUND

ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION FOR AN AGEING POPULATION

Accessible information is important for gaining access to services and entitlements and exercising ones rights (8). Accessible information is essential for managing later life transitions such as housing adaptation, changes in health and social care needs (9), managing financial and legal matters, transitions to retirement and bereavement (10). Participation in civic and social activities also depends on the availability of accessible information on activities. In 2016, the Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL) published “Know Your Rights: A Guide for Older People” which gives an outline of our human rights under the headings of ‘Participation’, ‘Security’ and ‘Health’ in clear and accessible language (11). This ICCL publication is an exemplar of accessible information for an ageing population.

The changes in an older person’s functional ability, for example, sensory and cognitive impairments, may cause difficulties in accessing information (12). Previous research surrounding information provision and building older peoples’ capability to access information in Ireland highlighted that literacy difficulties, low educational attainment, and social or geographical isolation are barriers frequently faced by older people (10). Lack of awareness of available information, not knowing the right questions to ask when seeking information and only receiving biased information from service providers are also problematic (13). According to the HSE and Age Friendly Ireland, the lack of information given to patients’ families and carers and the lack of information on available services are among the main concerns of older people in relation to the health services in Ireland (14).

Older people’s access to information is also hindered by a lack of confidence with new technologies and searching for information, social isolation and lack of support, and negative attitudes and behaviours towards older people from information providers (15). It is important to support and empower older people by giving them the tools to access the information they need. In terms of solutions, the National Centre for the Protection of Older People (NCPOP) and the Older People’s Empowerment Network (OPEN) created a campaign called ‘Keep Control’ which is committed to supporting the empowerment of older people against financial abuse and/or exploitation (16). The campaign provides older people with information and education on how to recognise the signs of financial elder abuse, to be free from financial abuse and bullying, and to take responsibility for one’s own protection by keeping control over ones affairs.

INTERNET USE

Overall, 26% of 65-74 year olds in the Republic of Ireland use the internet everyday (an increase of 5% since 2011) and 51% of 65-74 year olds have never used the internet (17). A study of older internet users and non-users found that these groups differed by gender, age and life stage, gender, education level and literacy skills,

attitude towards the internet, and household composition (18). Psychological characteristics such as 'internet anxiety' and different social environments were particularly important factors differentiating users and non-users (18). The resources available to them through their networks of friends and family also play a role in accessing information and a recent study of older adults showed that those who had grandchildren were more likely to use the internet by 'proxy': asking their grandchildren to find information for them (19).

The unequal distribution of internet resources –both access and use- has been identified in several research studies as a form of social exclusion and contributing to new forms of social inequality (20). The resources available online and opportunities to participate in the online environment and communities can have important social, political, and cultural effects on those who can and do access them (21). As such, there is a growing body of research that now focuses on both access to the internet and patterns or frequency of internet use, and the political and social consequences of this form of digital inequality (22).

The internet can be an empowering tool for those who use the internet regularly due to its convenience and the volume of information available (23). In terms of wellbeing there is a large body of research that shows that internet use facilitate and strengthen social relationships through the use of social media; it can reduce social isolation and feelings of loneliness (24,25) and depression (26); and it can increase self-esteem and a sense of belonging (27). Like other forms of social contact there is also the potential for negative experiences, and problematic internet use has also been linked to increased loneliness and reduced psycho-logical wellbeing, particularly among those who are already socially vulnerable (28,29).

As more and more services are provided online it is vital that people who do not use the internet do not get left behind. It is important to support older people to transition to using the internet for everyday tasks, such as, using online banking services, paying motor tax online and submitting electricity meter readings. In terms of healthcare, the 2016 eHealth Strategy for Ireland (30), aims to enable the delivery of healthcare through information technology-based systems which includes access to personal health records and accredited sources of health information. This new service will present opportunities and challenges for different groups in society; it will enable some to partake in their own healthcare management but will also present challenges for those with lower IT skills and digital literacy. Initiatives such as the "Digital Skills for Citizens" grant scheme have an important role in giving people the confidence and skills to get connected, and 'get online', often for the first time (31).



CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Data, fieldwork, study measures, analysis,
and study sample overview

3. METHODS

DATA AND SAMPLE

Data is from the Healthy and Positive Ageing Initiative (HaPAI) survey. This was a random-sample, population representative survey of people aged 55 and older, living in 21 Local Authority areas in 2015-2016. The following Local Authorities participated in the survey: Dublin City; South Dublin; Fingal; Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown; Galway City; Galway County; Clare; Limerick City; Limerick County; Kildare; Kilkenny; Laois; Louth; Meath; Wexford; Wicklow; Cavan; Cork City; Cork County; Mayo; and Tipperary. Data was collected between 2015 and 2016.

The target population for this survey includes all community-dwelling members of the population aged 55 and older in each Local Authority. This sample did not include people aged 55 and older who were in long-term care or living in an institution at the time of survey.

A multi-stage random-route sampling strategy was used to generate a sample of this population. This sampling approach involved several steps. Firstly, a random sample of 50 District Electoral Divisions (DED) in each Local Authority was selected as the primary sampling units (PSUs). Within each selected DED a starting address was selected at random. Beginning with this address a total of 10 interviews were to be completed in each of the 50 areas.

Detailed information on the approach that interviewers took to identify eligible households within each area for the survey is described below. In summary, from their starting address, interviewers called to every fifth house. The interviewer asked to speak to a person aged 55 years or older in the household. One person aged 55 or older per household was invited to complete the interview. If there were two or more older people in the household the interviewer applied the 'next birthday' rule to select one respondent.

FIELDWORK AND DATA COLLECTION

A total of 10,540 interviews were conducted in Ireland between 2015 and 2016. Each respondent completed a structured Computer-Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI) in their own home with a trained interviewer from Amárach Research. Respondents were also invited to complete an additional, separate, paper-based survey which included subjective wellbeing (depressive mood and quality of life) and experience of elder abuse.

RESPONSE RATES AND SAMPLE WEIGHTS

The response rate is the proportion of selected households that included an eligible respondent who completed an interview. A total of 10,540 surveys were completed. The overall response rate was 56%, and this ranged from 51% to 63% across the areas. This includes an estimate of the households who are likely to contain an eligible household member, but for which eligibility was not determined.

The response rate and number of respondents within each Local Authority area are reported in Table 1 below.

Response rates typically vary among different groups within a given population such as different age groups or levels of education. This variation can lead to biased estimates when reporting results. In order to adjust for this, sample weights have been applied to the survey data. The sample weights corresponded to the number of people, with a given set of characteristics, in the population that were represented by each survey respondent. Weights which were applied to the survey sample were estimated using the Census (2011). The characteristics compared were age, gender, educational attainment (primary/secondary/third level) and marital status (married/not married).

TABLE 1 SAMPLE AND RESPONSE RATE

Area	Sample (n value)	Response Rate (%)
Clare	500	59
Cork County	501	58
Cork City	501	56
Cavan	500	56
Dublin City	502	57
Dublin Fingal	502	50
Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown	502	51
Dublin South	501	57
Galway County	518	55
Galway City	504	63
Kildare	500	62
Kilkenny	500	55
Laois	501	60
Limerick City	501	59
Limerick County	502	59
Louth	500	53
Meath	500	56
Mayo	502	51
Tipperary	502	54
Wicklow	500	57
Wexford	501	51
Total	10,540	56

MEASURES

The survey measures that are used in this study are summarised in Tables 2 and 3.

TABLE 2 INFORMATION ACCESS MEASURES

Question
<p>Information sources:</p> <p>From which of the following sources do you get your news and information?</p> <p>Sources: Word of mouth, newspapers, national radio, local radio, national TV, landline phone, mobile phone, parish or community newsletter, community bulletin boards in public places, and Citizen Information Centre.</p> <p>Responses: 1 = yes, 2 = to some extent, 3 = no, 4 = refusal, or 5= don't know.</p>
<p>Household internet connection:</p> <p>Does your household have access to an internet connection?</p> <p>Responses: 1 = yes, 2 = no cannot afford, and 3 = no for other reasons.</p>
<p>Internet use:</p> <p>How often on average have you used the internet in the last 3 months?</p> <p>Responses: 1 = every day or almost every day, 2 = at least once a week (but not every day), 3 = at least once a month (but not every week), 4 = refusal, 5 = don't know, 6 = not applicable.</p>
<p>Difficulty accessing information:</p> <p>Do you ever experience difficulty getting information about: a) local events and activities, and b) health services and entitlements in your area?</p> <p>Responses: 1 = yes, 2 = no, 3 = refusal, 4 = don't know, 5 = not applicable.</p>

TABLE 3 DEMOGRAPHIC, SOCIO-ECONOMIC, AND LOCATION MEASURES

Measures	Description
Gender	Male or female
Age	Age group categories used in this study: 55+, 55-64, 65-74, and 75+
Marital status	Married/living with a partner as married, single (never married) divorced/separated, or widowed
Household composition	Living alone, living with spouse/partner, or living with family/non-family (without or without spouse/partner)
Occupation	Retired, employed/self-employed, out of work, or looking after the home/family
Material Deprivation	Responding 'no' to two or more items from a list of 11 items about the household E.g. Does the household replace any worn out furniture
Income	Income bands: €501 up to €1,000; €1,001 up to €1,500; €1,501 up to €2,500; €2,501 or more; and missing
Location of home	Rural (open countryside or village) or urban (town, city or city suburb)
Education	Primary or no education, secondary education, or third level education
Health	How is your health in general? Very good, good, fair, bad, very bad
Mental health difficulties	Emotional, nervous or psychiatric problems: yes or no
Driving	Driven in the past week: yes or no
Transport difficulties	Has difficulty accessing essential and/or social services due to a lack of public transport
Location	Open countryside or village, town (1500+ population), city (suburb or inner)

TABLE 4 PARTICIPATION MEASURES

Measures	Description
Political engagement	Responding ‘yes’ to one or more of the following: in the last 12 months have you have you attended a meeting of a trade union, a political party or political action group; attended a protest or demonstration; or contacted a politician or public official?
Community participation	Responding ‘weekly’ or ‘monthly’ to the following: how often do you participate in any groups such as a sports or social club, a church connected group, a self-help or charitable body or other community group or a day centre?
Volunteering	Responding ‘weekly’ or ‘monthly’ to the following: How often did you do unpaid voluntary work through community and social services; educational, cultural, sports or professional associations; social movements; or other voluntary organisations in the last 12 months?
Social isolation	How often do you feel isolated from others? Responses: 1 = hardly ever or never, 2 = sometimes, 3 = often.

ANALYSIS

Stata (version 14) computer software was used to analyse the data. Descriptive statistics (percentages) are presented with Confidence Intervals at the 95% level (95% CI). In the final section of the Results chapter we report the results of a series of mixed effects logistic regression analyses that examine the association internet use and social and civic participation. A multilevel approach was taken to account for the two-stage sampling strategy employed that involved respondents (level 2) being sampled from within Local Authority regions (level 1). An important advantage of this technique is it enables us to statistically control for the effect of a number of factors simultaneously.

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

Sample characteristics are presented in Table 5. Just over half were female (52.7%) and almost half were aged less than 65 years (46.5%). Two-thirds (65.0%) were married and 10.1% were single/never married. Almost one-in-five (17.9%) had a third level education. Half of the sample was retired (50.9%) and a further 25.0% were in paid employment. Almost one-in-ten respondents were considered to be materially deprived. As is typical in surveys like this one, there was a lot of missing information on household income: respondents either refused to answer the

question about their income or could not do so. Of those who did respond, the distribution of household income was quite even across the sample.

TABLE 5 RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Characteristics		%	(95% CI)
Gender	Male	47.3	(46.0-48.5)
	Female	52.7	(51.5-54.0)
Age	55-64	46.5	(44.9-48.1)
	65-74	31.5	(30.3-32.7)
	75+	22.0	(20.7-23.3)
Marital status	Married/living with a partner	65.0	(63.5-66.5)
	Single (never married)	10.1	(9.3-11.0)
	Separated/divorced	6.2	(5.5-6.9)
	Widowed	18.7	(17.8-19.8)
Education	Primary or less	34.4	(32.3-36.4)
	Secondary	47.8	(46.1-49.5)
	Third Level	17.9	(16.6-19.2)
Employment Status	Retired	50.9	(49.2-52.6)
	Employed/self-employed	25.0	(23.7-26.4)
	Looking after home/family	14.2	(13.1-15.4)
	Other	9.9	(9.0-10.8)
Material deprivation	No	92.1	(91.2-93.0)
	Yes	7.9	(7.0-8.8)
Income	€501 up to €1,000	15.1	(13.6,16.6)
	€1,001 up to €1,500	14.3	(13.0,15.6)
	€1,501 up to €2,500	20.8	(19.3,22.5)
	€2,501 or more	17.4	(15.7,19.3)
	Missing	32.4	(29.8,35.1)



CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Information sources, household internet connection, internet use and difficulty accessing information

4. RESULTS

INFORMATION SOURCES

The results in Table 6 show the percentage of all respondent who use each source of news and information. These percentages are also broken down further by whether or not the respondent uses the internet or not.

National TV is the most frequently reported source of news and information (85%), followed by national radio (73%) and local radio (71%). Citizens Information was the least used source of news and information for older people (13%).

TABLE 6 INFORMATION SOURCES

Source	Yes (%)	(95% CI)
Internet	58.1	(56.2, 59.9)
National TV	84.6	(82.8,86.2)
National radio	73.3	(71.0,75.3)
Local radio	71.1	(68.8,73.4)
Newspapers	67.1	(65.2,69.1)
Word of mouth	62.1	(59.4,64.7)
Mobile phone	53.1	(50.7,55.5)
Landline phone	44.3	(41.9,46.7)
Parish/community newsletter	43.9	(41.5,46.4)
Community bulletin boards	21.1	(19.2,23.1)
Citizens Information	12.9	(11.4,14.5)

DIFFICULTY ACCESSING INFORMATION

Table 7 shows the proportion of respondents who reported that they have difficulty accessing information on 1) local activities and events and 2) health and social care and their background characteristics. Overall 7.0% of older adults reported difficulty accessing information on local activities and events and 10% reported difficulty accessing information on health and social care. Difficulty accessing both

types of information is highest amongst those who are aged 75 years and over, female, respondents who were separated or divorced, living alone, out of work, had a low monthly household income, were materially deprived, have a low level of educational attainment, had poor self-rated health and reported having mental health difficulties. A slightly higher proportion of respondents living in urban areas reported difficulty accessing information on local activities and events. Respondents who do not use the internet are more likely to report having difficulty accessing both types of information.

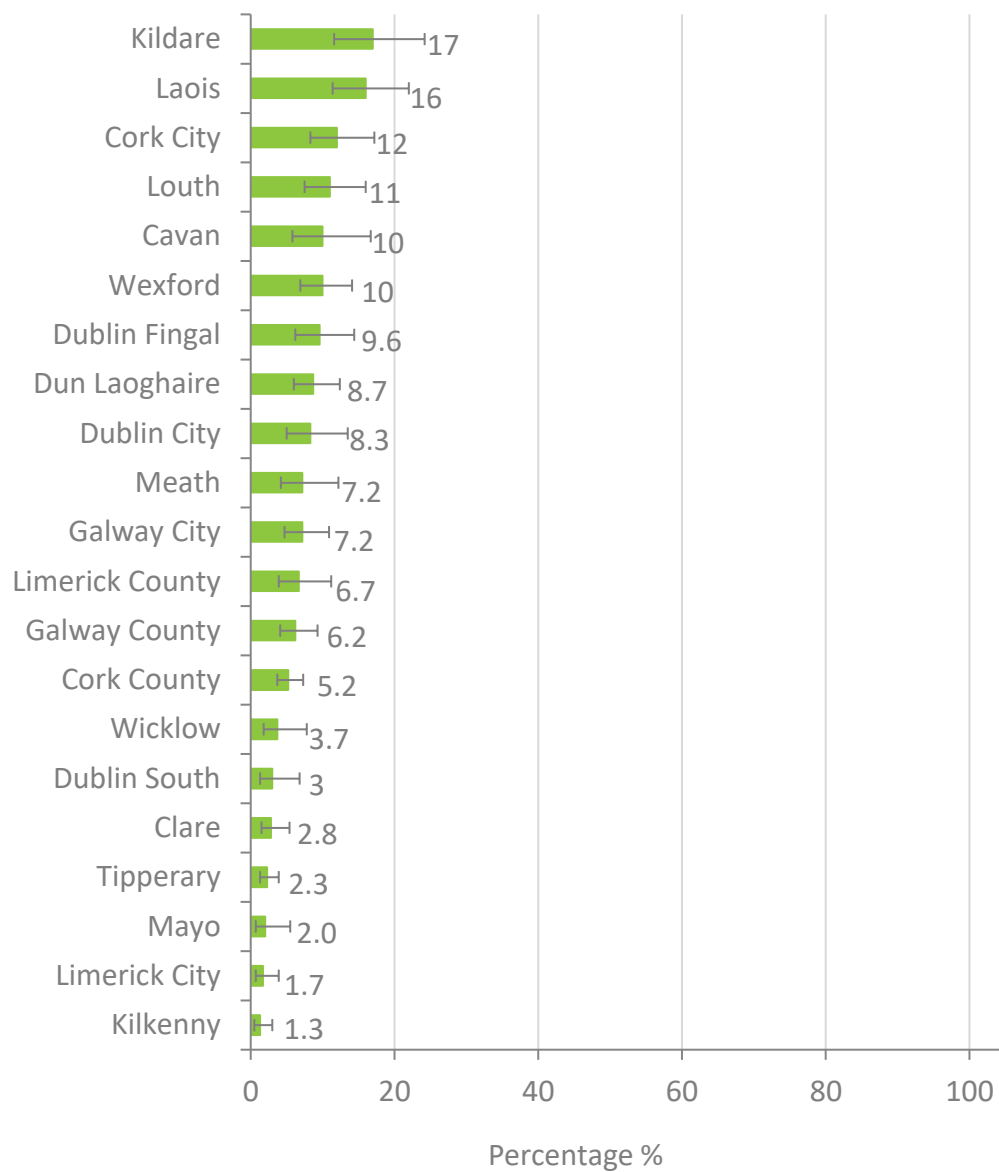
TABLE 7 DIFFICULTY ACCESSING INFORMATION, BY SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

Difficulty accessing information on:		Local activities and events		Health and social care	
		Yes (%)	(95% CI)	Yes (%)	(95% CI)
Age	Age 55-64	6.7	(5.7,8.0)	10.0	(8.7,11.5)
	Age 65-74	6.6	(5.5,8.0)	10.3	(8.9,11.9)
	Age 75+	8.0	(6.5,9.8)	12.4	(10.7,14.4)
Gender	Male	6.2	(5.2,7.4)	9.9	(8.6,11.3)
	Female	7.7	(6.6,8.9)	11.3	(10.0,12.7)
Marital status	Married/Living with partner	5.7	(4.8,6.8)	8.8	(7.7,10.0)
	Single (never married)	10.0	(7.9,12.6)	13.4	(10.9,16.4)
	Separated/ divorced	10.3	(7.6,13.8)	16.5	(13.1,20.6)
	Widowed	8.8	(6.8,11.4)	13.6	(11.3,16.3)
Household composition	Living alone	10.1	(8.3,12.1)	14.5	(12.6,16.7)
	Spouse	5.3	(4.4,6.3)	8.4	(7.3,9.6)
	Spouse/family/ non-family	7.6	(5.9,9.8)	11.4	(9.3,13.8)
Occupation	Retired	7.5	(6.4,8.8)	10.9	(9.7,12.3)
	Employed/self- employed	4.0	(3.1,5.2)	6.2	(5.1,7.6)
	Out of work	13.4	(10.4,17.2)	18.0	(14.7,21.9)
	Looking after the home/ family	6.0	(4.6,7.8)	12.2	(9.8,15.0)
Income (bands)	€501 up to €1,000	11.1	(9.0,13.6)	18.2	(15.4,21.3)
	€1,001 up to €1,500	7.9	(6.2,10.0)	14.3	(12.0,16.9)
	€1,501 up to €2,500	6.1	(4.6,8.0)	10.3	(8.5,12.4)
	€2,501 or more	5.4	(4.0,7.3)	5.6	(4.2,7.5)
	Missing	6.1	(4.8,7.7)	8.5	(7.0,10.2)
Household deprivation	Yes	26.0	(21.9,30.7)	36.4	(31.6,41.5)
	No	5.3	(4.6,6.1)	8.4	(7.5,9.4)
Educational attainment	Primary or less	9.6	(8.0,11.5)	13.4	(11.5,15.5)
	secondary	5.7	(4.9,6.7)	10.0	(8.8,11.4)
	Tertiary	5.4	(4.3,6.8)	7.0	(5.7,8.5)
Health status	Very good/ good	4.6	(3.9,5.4)	7.5	(6.6,8.5)
	Less than good	12.9	(11.0,15.0)	18.1	(15.9,20.5)
Mental health difficulties	Yes	18.5	(13.9,24.2)	22.8	(18.0,28.3)
	No	6.4	(5.6,7.4)	10.1	(9.0,11.3)

Difficulty accessing information on:		Local activities and events		Health and social care	
		Yes (%)	(95% CI)	Yes (%)	(95% CI)
Location	Rural	5.9	(5.0,6.9)	10.7	(9.3,12.3)
	Urban	7.8	(6.6,9.2)	10.6	(9.2,12.2)
Internet use	Yes	5.1	(4.4,6.0)	7.2	(6.2,8.3)
	No	9.8	(8.4,11.5)	16.0	(14.1,18.0)
Total		7.0	(6.2,7.9)	10.6	(9.6,11.8)

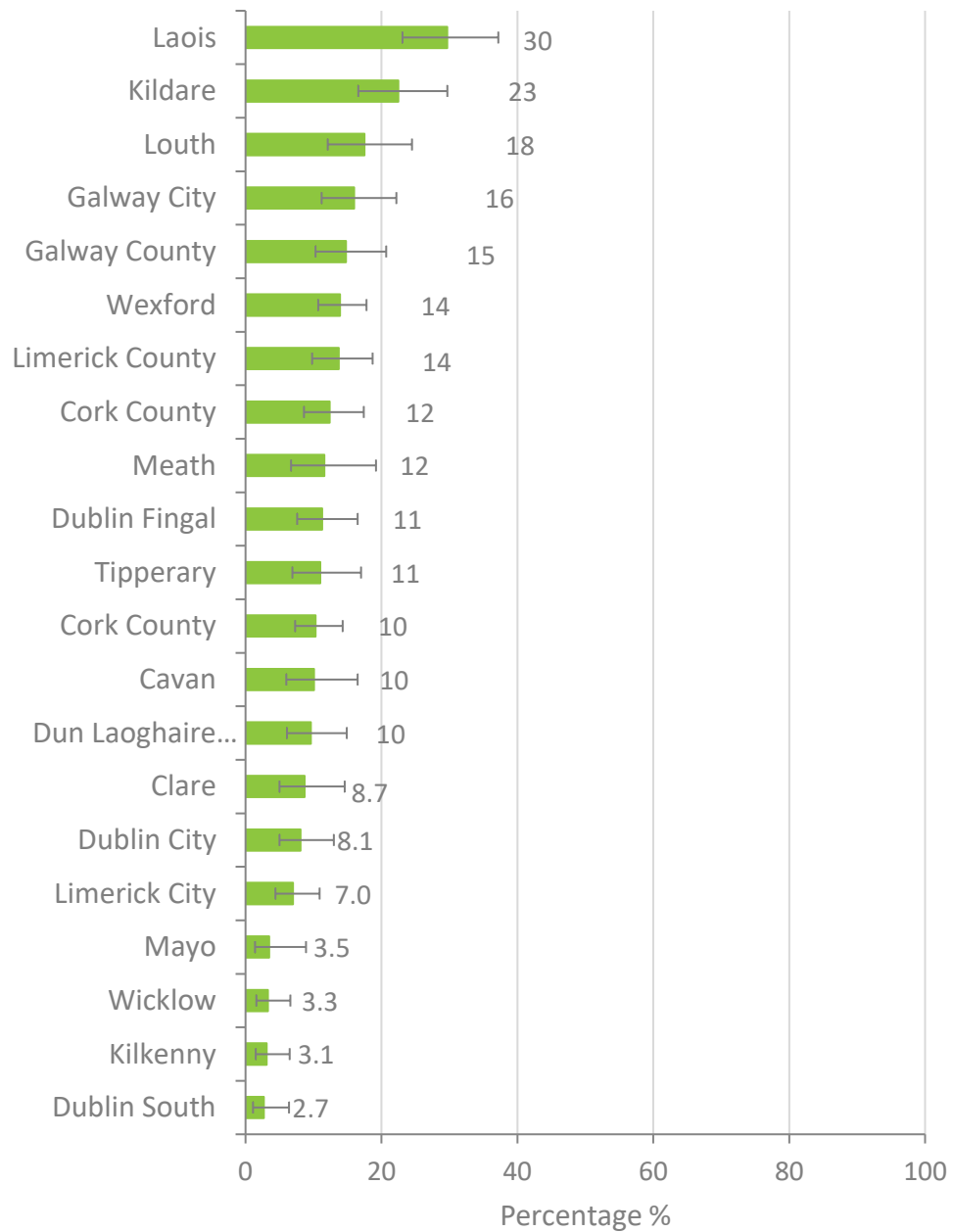
According to Figure 2, difficulty accessing information on local activities and events is highest amongst older people living in Kildare (17%), followed by Laois (16%) and Cork City (12%), and lowest for those living in Kilkenny (1.3%).

FIGURE 2 DIFFICULTY ACCESSING INFORMATION ON LOCAL ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS, BY LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA



According to Figure 3, difficulty accessing information on health and social care is highest for older people living in Laois (30%), followed by Kildare (23%) and Louth (18%), and lowest for those living in Dublin South (2.7%).

FIGURE 3 DIFFICULTY ACCESSING INFORMATION ON HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE, BY LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA



HOUSEHOLD INTERNET CONNECTION AND INTERNET USE

The characteristics of respondents who have a household internet connection are summarised in Table 8.

TABLE 8 HOUSEHOLD INTERNET CONNECTION

Household internet connection		Yes		No, cannot afford		No, other reason	
		Yes (%)	(95% CI)	Yes (%)	(95% CI)	Yes (%)	(95% CI)
Age	Age 55-64	80.5	(78.4,82.5)	3.6	(2.9,4.5)	15.8	(14.1,17.8)
	Age 65-74	68.0	(65.5,70.3)	3.6	(2.8,4.5)	28.5	(26.2,30.9)
	Age 75+	42.1	(38.9,45.3)	3.7	(2.7,5.1)	54.2	(51.0,57.5)
Gender	Male	70.0	(67.9,72.1)	3.2	(2.6,3.9)	26.8	(24.7,28.9)
	Female	66.5	(64.3,68.5)	4.0	(3.3,5.0)	29.5	(27.6,31.6)
Marital status	Married/ Living with partner	79.5	(77.7,81.2)	2.0	(1.6,2.6)	18.5	(16.9,20.2)
	Single (never married)	47.7	(43.1,52.2)	7.1	(5.3,9.3)	45.3	(40.8,49.8)
	Separated/ divorced	59.4	(53.7,64.8)	8.8	(6.2,12.2)	31.8	(26.6,37.6)
	Widowed	42.5	(39.1,45.9)	5.7	(4.3,7.6)	51.8	(48.4,55.2)
Household composition	Living alone	42.6	(39.5,45.7)	7.3	(6.0,9.0)	50.1	(47.0,53.1)
	Living with spouse/partner	77.8	(75.9,79.6)	2.0	(1.5,2.6)	20.2	(18.4,22.1)
	Living with family/non-family (with/without spouse)	77.7	(74.7,80.5)	2.9	(2.0,4.2)	19.3	(16.7,22.3)
Occupation	Retired	62.5	(60.2,64.7)	3.2	(2.5,4.0)	34.3	(32.1,36.6)
	Employed/self-employed	87.3	(84.9,89.3)	1.1	(0.7,1.6)	11.7	(9.7,14.0)
	Out of work	58.2	(53.5,62.8)	11.7	(9.2,14.9)	30.1	(25.8,34.7)
	Looking after home/ family	61.5	(57.5,65.4)	4.2	(3.0,5.8)	34.3	(30.7,38.1)
Income (bands)	€501 up to €1,000	41.4	(37.6,45.3)	9.6	(7.6,12.1)	48.9	(44.9,53.0)
	€1,001 up to €1,500	53.3	(49.2,57.3)	4.9	(3.7,6.5)	41.9	(38.0,45.8)
	€1,501 up to €2,500	75.5	(72.8,78.0)	1.3	(0.8,2.1)	23.2	(20.7,25.9)
	€2,501 or more	89.1	(86.4,91.4)	1.6	(0.9,2.7)	9.3	(7.2,11.9)
	Missing	71.2	(68.1,74.1)	2.9	(2.1,4.0)	25.9	(23.1,28.9)
Household deprivation	Yes	31.0	(26.6,35.8)	36.3	(31.5,41.4)	32.7	(28.5,37.2)
	No	71.3	(69.6,73.1)	0.8	(0.6,1.1)	27.8	(26.1,29.6)
Educational attainment	Primary or less	48.0	(44.8,51.2)	5.0	(4.0,6.3)	47	(43.9,50.1)
	Secondary	74.1	(72.1,75.9)	3.6	(2.9,4.4)	22.3	(20.5,24.2)
	Tertiary	90.5	(89.0,91.9)	1.0	(0.6,1.6)	8.5	(7.2,9.9)
Health status	Very good/ good	75.1	(73.3,76.8)	2.2	(1.7,2.7)	22.7	(21.0,24.5)
	Less than good	51.5	(48.4,54.5)	7.2	(5.9,8.7)	41.3	(38.4,44.4)
Mental health difficulties	Yes	59.7	(53.3,65.8)	7.2	(4.9,10.5)	33.1	(27.6,39.2)
	No	68.2	(66.4,70.0)	3.3	(2.8,4.0)	28.4	(26.7,30.2)
Location	Rural	64.0	(61.5,66.5)	3.5	(2.7,4.4)	32.5	(30.1,35.0)
	Urban	71.2	(68.8,73.4)	3.8	(3.0,4.6)	25.1	(22.9,27.3)
Total		68.2	(66.4,69.9)	3.6	(3.1,4.3)	28.2	(26.6,29.9)

More than two-thirds (68%) of respondents had access to an internet connection within their household. A further 28% did not have access due to an 'other reason' 3.6% reported that this was due to cost.

Not having a household internet connection due to reasons other than cost was more frequently reported by those aged 75 years and older, women, people who were single (never married), living alone, retired or looking after the home/family, earning a low income, materially deprived, those with lower levels of education, in poor physical and mental health and living in rural areas. Although the HaPAI survey did not collect data on the reasons for not having a household internet connection it is widely acknowledged that rural areas are particularly affected by limited connectivity and only basic broadband services (32).

Although only a small proportion of respondents reported that they did not have an internet connection due to cost, this was greater for respondents who were separated or divorced, living alone, out of work, earning a low income, materially deprived, those with lower levels of educational attainment, and had poor physical and mental health.

The percentage of respondents who have a household internet connection in each area is presented in Table 9. Wicklow has the greatest proportion of respondents with a household internet connection (87%), whereas Laois has the lowest proportion (50%). Having no household internet connect due to cost was less common than for another reason.

TABLE 9 HOUSEHOLD INTERNET CONNECTIONS, BY LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA

Household internet connection	Yes		No, cannot afford		No, for other reasons	
	Yes (%)	(95% CI)	Yes (%)	(95% CI)	Yes (%)	(95% CI)
Wicklow	86.5	(79.4, 91.5)	1.8	(0.7,4.9)	11.7	(7.3,18.2)
Dublin South	86.1	(76.2, 92.3)	1.0	(0.3,4.0)	12.9	(7.1,22.4)
Dun Laoghaire Rathdown	82.8	(77.2, 87.2)	4.7	(2.1,10.4)	12.5	(8.9,17.2)
Dublin Fingal	79.3	(73.6, 84.1)	3.2	(1.6,6.3)	17.5	(13.0,23.1)
Meath	78.6	(69.9, 85.3)	2.1	(0.9,4.9)	19.3	(13.0,27.8)
Galway City	72.1	(65.5, 77.8)	7.4	(5.0,10.9)	20.5	(15.8,26.2)
Kildare	72.1	(65.1, 78.1)	9.4	(5.8,15.0)	18.5	(13.1,25.5)
Dublin City	70.9	(64.2, 76.7)	2.5	(1.4,4.6)	26.6	(21.1,33.0)
Louth	70.8	(63.9, 76.9)	0.1	(0.0,1.0)	29.0	(22.9,36.0)
Kilkenny	69.8	(62.5, 76.2)	1.6	(0.7,3.6)	28.6	(22.0,36.2)
Cork City	65.7	(59.6, 71.3)	6.6	(3.9,11.1)	27.7	(22.0,34.2)
Tipperary	64.3	(56.5, 71.3)	6.2	(3.8,10.0)	29.5	(22.9,37.1)
Limerick County	62.5	(56.3, 68.3)	3.0	(1.4,6.3)	34.6	(28.7,41.0)
Wexford	58.5	(50.3, 66.2)	5.0	(3.1,8.2)	36.5	(29.5,44.1)
Mayo	57.8	(51.5, 63.9)	2.2	(0.9,4.9)	40.0	(33.8,46.4)
Galway County	57.5	(50.0, 64.7)	2.4	(1.3,4.5)	40.1	(33.1,47.5)
Cork County	57.4	(51.0, 63.7)	2.5	(1.3,4.7)	40.0	(34.2,46.2)
Cavan	54.4	(46.7, 61.9)	2.3	(0.5,10.7)	43.2	(35.8,51.0)
Limerick City	53.7	(47.4, 59.9)	5.6	(3.8,8.0)	40.8	(34.8,47.0)
Clare	53.7	(46.6, 60.7)	3.1	(1.7,5.4)	43.2	(36.6,50.1)
Laois	50.0	(43.7, 56.3)	13.7	(9.2,19.9)	36.3	(28.4,44.9)
Total	68.2	(66.4, 69.9)	3.6	(3.1,4.3)	28.2	(26.6,29.9)

Table 10 presents a profile of respondents who 1) have a household internet connection and 2) used the internet in the past three months (as an indicator of internet use) based on their background characteristics. Overall, 68% respondents have a household internet connection however significantly fewer (61%) reported that they used the internet in the past three months.

Internet use is higher amongst those who are aged 55-64 years, male, married, living with a spouse/partner, employed, those who reported higher net monthly household incomes and were not materially deprived, those with higher levels of educational attainment, those with good health status, and those living in an urban area.

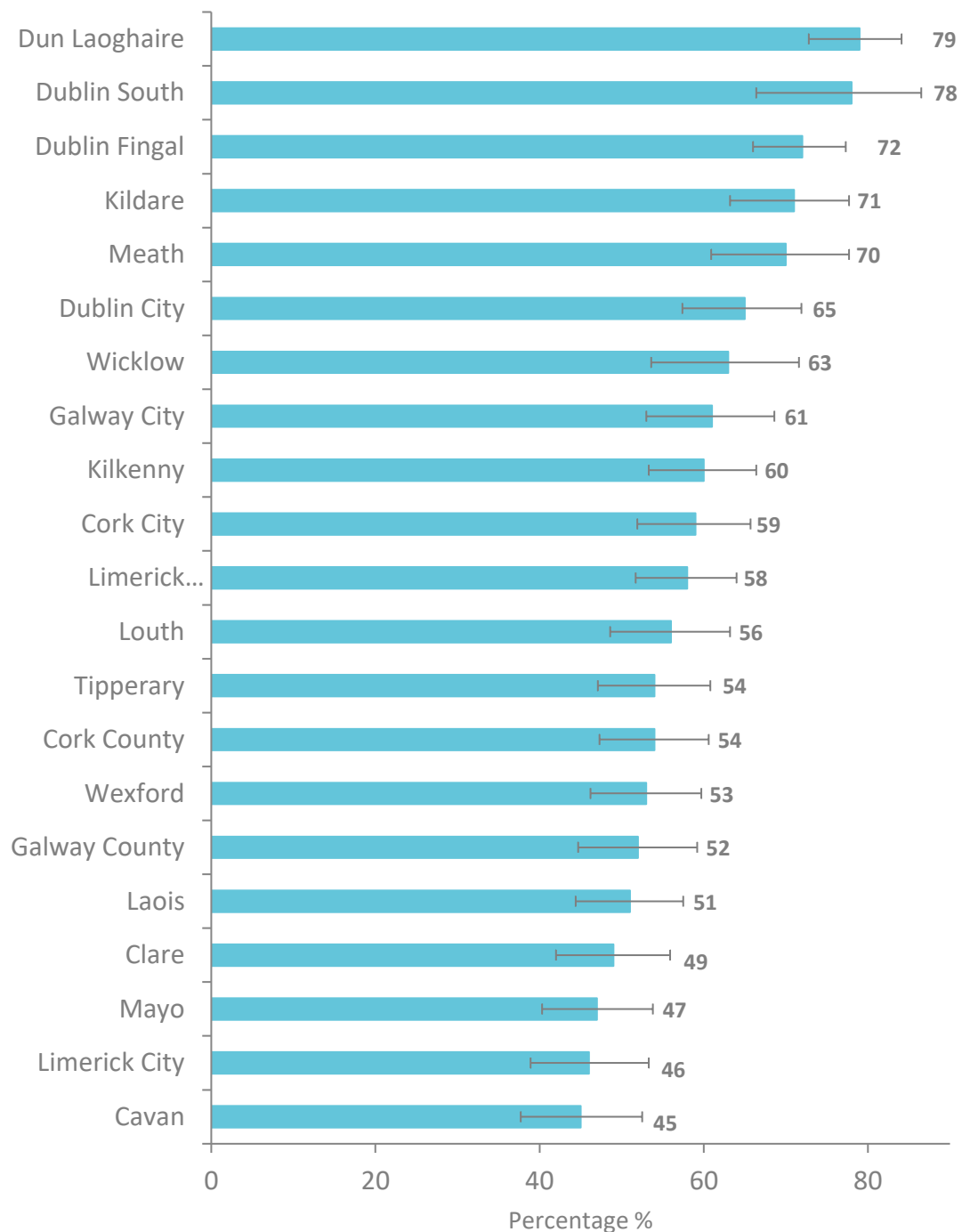
TABLE 10 HOUSEHOLD INTERNET CONNECTION AND INTERNET USE BY RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Characteristic		Has an internet connection		Uses the internet	
		Yes (%)	(95% CI)	Yes (%)	(95% CI)
Age	Age 55-64	80.5	(78.4,82.5)	76.2	(73.8,78.5)
	Age 65-74	68.0	(65.5,70.3)	59.6	(57.1,62.1)
	Age 75+	42.1	(38.9,45.3)	30.4	(27.5,33.4)
Gender	Male	70.0	(67.9,72.1)	62.6	(60.3,64.9)
	Female	66.5	(64.3,68.5)	59.4	(57.2,61.6)
Marital status	Married/Living with partner	79.5	(77.7,81.2)	72.1	(70.1,74.1)
	Single (never married)	47.7	(43.1,52.2)	43.1	(38.5,47.7)
	Separated/ divorced	59.4	(53.7,64.8)	53.7	(47.9,59.5)
	Widowed	42.5	(39.1,45.9)	34.2	(31.1,37.4)
Household composition	Living alone	42.6	(39.5,45.7)	37.9	(35.0,40.9)
	Living with spouse/ partner	77.8	(75.9,79.6)	71.0	(68.7,73.1)
	Living with family/non-family (with/without spouse)	77.7	(74.7,80.5)	65.9	(62.2,69.5)
Occupation	Retired	62.5	(60.2,64.7)	54.3	(51.9,56.6)
	Employed/self-employed	87.3	(84.9,89.3)	84.0	(81.4,86.4)
	Out of work	58.2	(53.5,62.8)	51.6	(46.7,56.4)
	Looking after the home/ family	61.5	(57.5,65.4)	50.4	(46.3,54.5)
Income (bands)	€501 up to €1,000	41.4	(37.6,45.3)	34.1	(30.2,38.3)
	€1,001 up to €1,500	53.3	(49.2,57.3)	47.2	(43.3,51.2)
	€1,501 up to €2,500	75.5	(72.8,78.0)	66.2	(63.0,69.3)
	€2,501 or more	89.1	(86.4,91.4)	85.6	(82.5,88.3)
	Missing	71.2	(68.1,74.1)	63.1	(59.8,66.2)
Household deprivation	Yes	31.0	(26.6,35.8)	30.3	(25.8,35.2)
	No	71.3	(69.6,73.1)	63.4	(61.5,65.3)
Educational attainment	Primary or less	48.0	(44.8,51.2)	34.9	(32.0,37.9)
	Secondary	74.1	(72.1,75.9)	68.5	(66.4,70.6)
	Tertiary	90.5	(89.0,91.9)	89.7	(87.9,91.3)
Health status	Very good/ good	75.1	(73.3,76.8)	69.1	(67.0,71.0)
	Less than good	51.5	(48.4,54.5)	41.3	(38.4,44.3)
Mental health difficulties	Yes	59.7	(53.3,65.8)	47.0	(40.6,53.5)
	No	68.2	(66.4,70.0)	61.0	(59.0,62.9)
Location	Rural	64.0	(61.5,66.5)	57.1	(54.5,59.7)
	Urban	71.2	(68.8,73.4)	63.7	(61.1,66.3)
Total		68.2	(66.4,69.9)	60.9	(59.0,62.8)

According to Figure 4, Dun Laoghaire has the highest proportion of older people who used the internet within the last three months (79%), followed by Dublin South

(78%) and Dublin Fingal (72%), whereas Cavan has the highest proportion of non-internet users (55%).

FIGURE 4 DISTRIBUTION OF INTERNET USE AMONG PEOPLE AGED 55 YEARS AND OVER, BY LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA



Note: internet use is based on whether or not the respondent has used the internet in the past 3 months.

Table 11 displays the frequency of internet use amongst older people who reported using the internet in the last three months in each Local Authority area. The

majority of internet users reported using the internet ‘every day or almost every day’ in the last three months. Dun-Laoghaire/Rathdown has the highest proportion of everyday internet users (56%), followed by Dublin Fingal (50%) and Meath (46%). Again, there appears to be an eastern/western divide in terms of frequency of internet usage, whereby a higher proportion of everyday internet users live in the east of Ireland and surrounding areas of Dublin.

TABLE 11 FREQUENT OF INTERNET USE, BY LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA

Internet use	Every day or almost every day		> Weekly (but not every day)		> Monthly (but not every week)		Not applicable	
	Yes (%)	(95% CI)	Yes (%)	(95% CI)	Yes (%)	(95% CI)	Yes (%)	(95% CI)
Dun Laoghaire Rathdown	55.7	(48.9,62.3)	15.8	(12.5,19.8)	7.6	(5.0,11.4)	20.9	(15.8,27.1)
Dublin Fingal	50.1	(43.8,56.4)	17.8	(12.7,24.3)	4.3	(2.7,6.7)	27.9	(22.6,33.9)
Meath	46.2	(38.1,54.6)	13.6	(9.7,18.8)	9.7	(4.8,18.7)	30.4	(22.7,39.5)
Wicklow	45.9	(37.4,54.6)	13.7	(9.2,20.0)	3.0	(1.4,6.3)	37.4	(28.8,46.8)
Dublin City	45.7	(39.6,51.9)	13.8	(10.6,17.8)	5.3	(3.6,7.7)	35.2	(28.3,42.8)
Kildare	42.9	(35.4,50.8)	18.4	(13.1,25.1)	9.5	(6.0,14.9)	29.2	(22.5,37.0)
Dublin South	41.3	(33.9,49.1)	28.2	(21.7,35.9)	8.0	(4.9,12.7)	22.5	(14.0,34.1)
Galway City	39.2	(32.9,46.0)	18	(13.8,23.1)	3.6	(2.2,6.0)	39.2	(31.6,47.2)
Louth	36	(28.7,43.9)	14.1	(10.7,18.2)	6.3	(3.5,11.2)	43.7	(36.5,51.1)
Kilkenny	35.1	(29.8,40.9)	15.6	(11.2,21.3)	9.3	(6.1,13.8)	40	(33.6,46.7)
Wexford	34	(28.6,39.9)	10.9	(7.8,15.0)	7.7	(4.9,11.9)	47.4	(40.7,54.2)
Cork County	32.5	(26.7,39.0)	16.2	(12.9,20.1)	5.2	(2.9,9.2)	46.1	(39.5,52.8)
Clare	32.3	(26.8,38.3)	13.8	(9.5,19.8)	3.7	(2.3,5.9)	50.2	(43.3,57.2)
Cork City	30.5	(25.5,36.0)	19.3	(14.3,25.4)	9.4	(5.8,14.8)	40.8	(34.1,47.9)
Limerick County	29.8	(25.3,34.9)	20.1	(15.6,25.5)	8.5	(5.6,12.5)	41.6	(35.6,47.9)
Cavan	28.9	(21.6,37.6)	11.1	(8.5,14.3)	4.6	(2.5,8.3)	55.4	(47.9,62.7)
Limerick City	28.6	(22.9,35.0)	13.4	(10.4,17.1)	4.2	(2.3,7.6)	53.9	(46.6,61.0)
Tipperary	28.1	(22.6,34.4)	19.5	(14.5,25.6)	6.7	(3.9,11.3)	45.7	(38.9,52.6)
Laois	28	(22.5,34.3)	12.9	(9.3,17.7)	10.4	(6.9,15.2)	48.7	(42.2,55.3)
Galway County	27.9	(22.9,33.5)	17.3	(13.2,22.5)	7.1	(4.5,10.9)	47.7	(40.5,55.0)
Mayo	25.5	(20.4,31.4)	15.9	(12.8,19.6)	5.6	(3.2,9.8)	52.9	(46.1,59.6)
Total	37.9	(36.2,39.6)	16.5	(15.4,17.6)	6.5	(5.8,7.4)	39.1	(37.2,41.0)

INTERNET USE AND CIVIC AND SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

Previous studies (summarised in Chapter 2) have shown that the regular internet use can be an enabling factor for participation in social and community life by providing opportunities for engagement, as a way of keeping connected with others, and as a means of keeping up-to-date with local activities and events. Table 12 provides a summary of the percentages of internet users and non-users who engaged in political activities, volunteering, community activities, meeting socially, and who feel socially isolated.

TABLE 12 SOCIAL AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION BY INTERNET USE

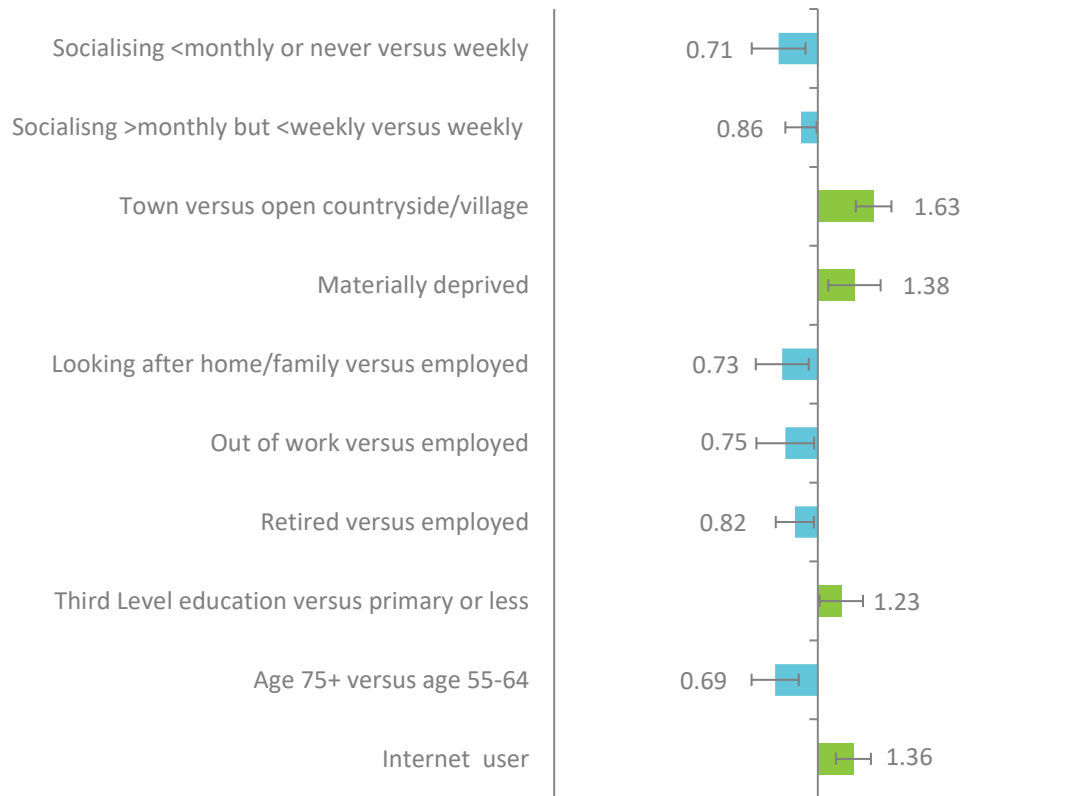
		Uses internet		Does not use internet		All respondents	
		(%)	(95% CI)	(%)	(95% CI)	(%)	(95% CI)
Political activity	Yes	18.3	(16.7,19.9)	12.0	(10.5,13.6)	15.8	(14.6,17.1)
Community group participation	Weekly or monthly	55.7	(53.3,58.1)	34.9	(32.4,37.5)	47.6	(45.5,49.6)
	Less than monthly or never	44.3	(41.9,46.7)	65.1	(62.5,67.6)	52.4	(50.4,54.5)
Volunteer	Monthly	32.1	(30.1,34.1)	13.0	(11.5,14.7)	24.6	(23.1,26.2)
	Less than monthly/never	68.0	(65.9,69.9)	87.0	(85.3,88.5)	75.4	(73.8,76.9)
Meet socially with friends, relatives and colleagues)	Yes (at least weekly)	69.0	(66.6,71.1)	67.5	(64.7,70.1)	68.4	(66.4,70.3)
Feels isolated from others	Yes (sometimes/all the time)	11.1	(9.7,12.6)	21.2	(19.2,23.4)	15.1	(13.8,16.4)

The results contained in table 12 show that a greater number of respondents who use the internet also took part in political activities in the past 12 months, community groups either weekly or monthly, volunteered at least monthly, and fewer respondents who use the internet reported feeling isolated from others. There was no significant difference between internet users and non-users in terms of meeting socially with friends, relatives or colleagues.

In order to explore this relationship further we conducted a series of statistical models to determine the association between internet use and each type of social and civic participation. In each of these models we controlled for a range of other factors that have been found throughout the research literature to influence each of these social and civic outcomes: age, gender, marital status, educational attainment, household composition, net monthly household income, occupational status, material deprivation, mental health, self-rated health status, driving, and difficulty accessing transport. In the analysis for political engagement, volunteering,

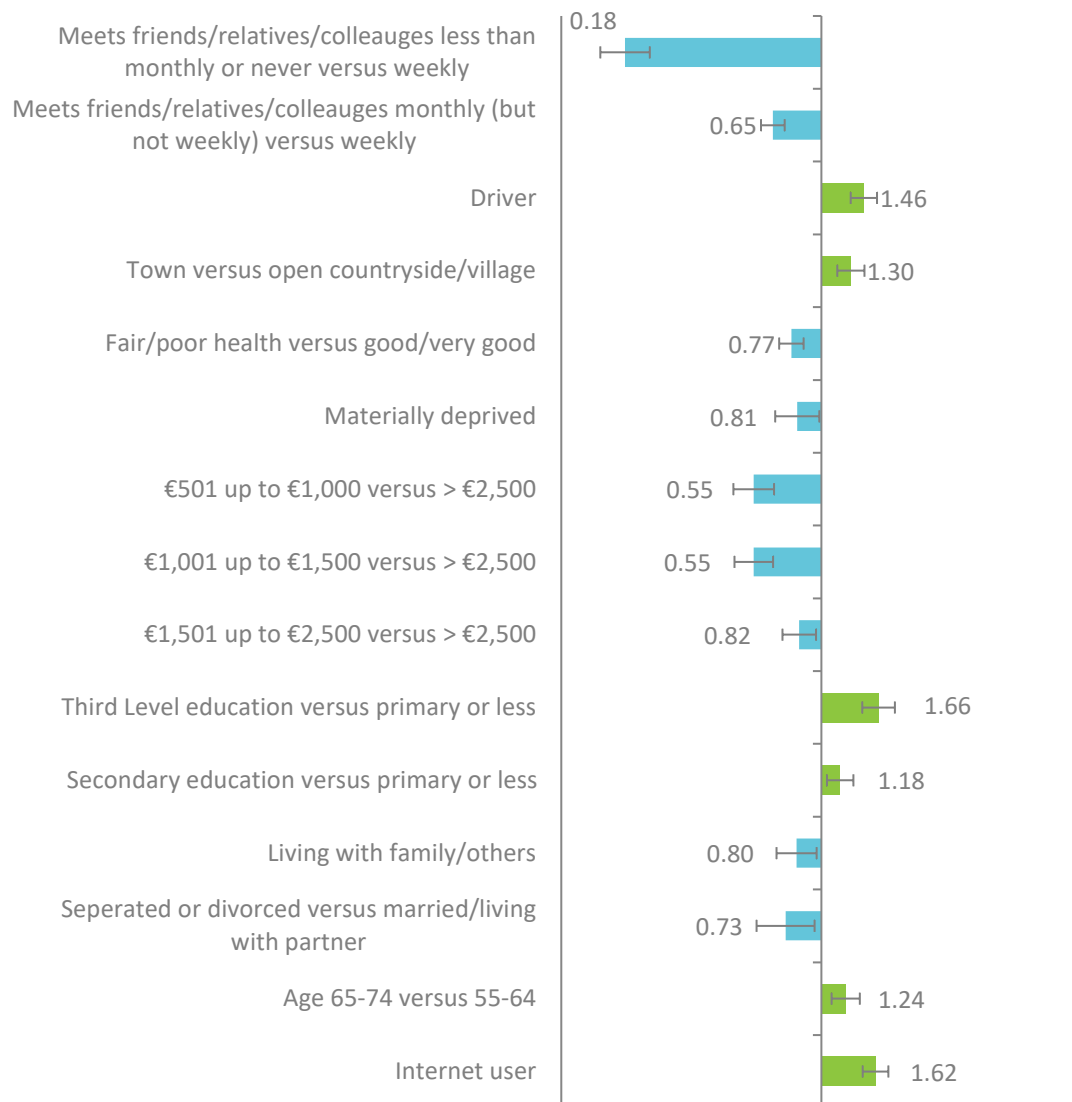
and feeling isolated we also controlled for how often a respondent meets socially with friends, relatives or colleagues. Significant results are presented in the following Figures (Figures 5-8) and the full models are presented in the Appendix (Tables 1-4, pages 45-48).

FIGURE 5 INTERNET USE AND POLITICAL ACTIVITY IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS



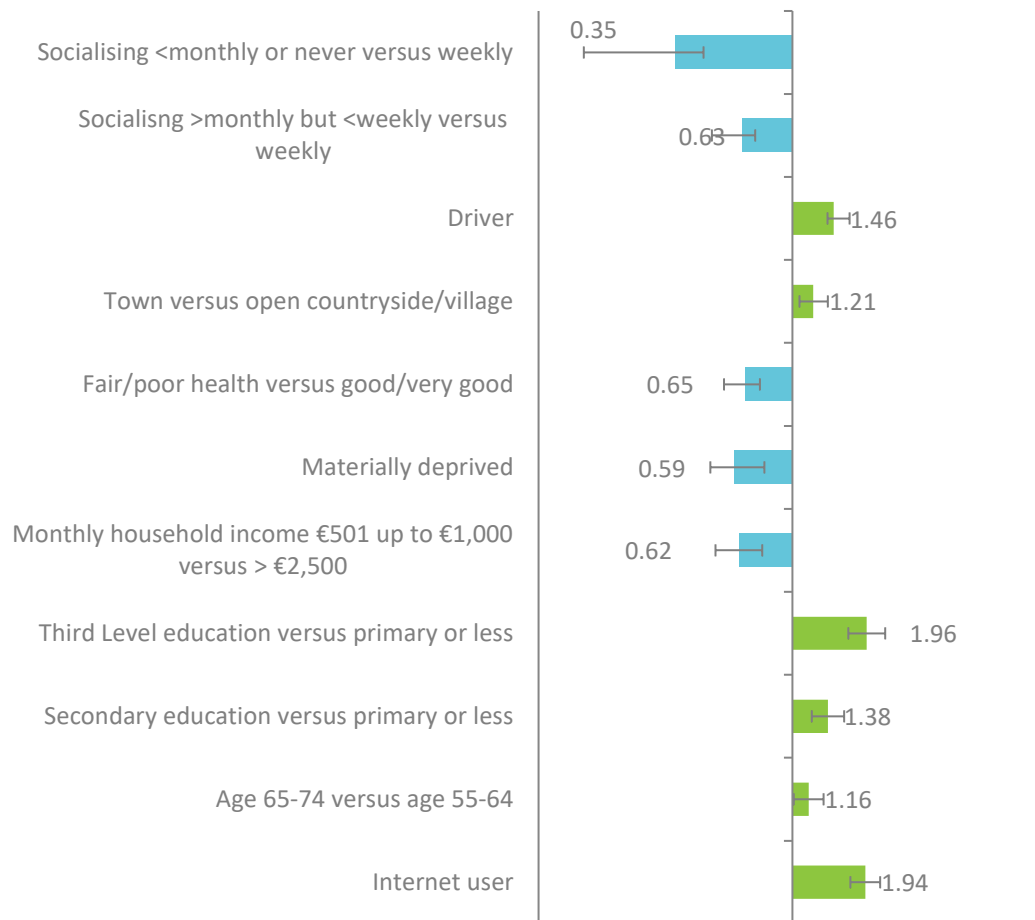
Note: estimates are statistically significant at the 0.05% level. See Appendix Table 1 for full model.

FIGURE 6 INTERNET USE AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AT LEAST MONTHLY



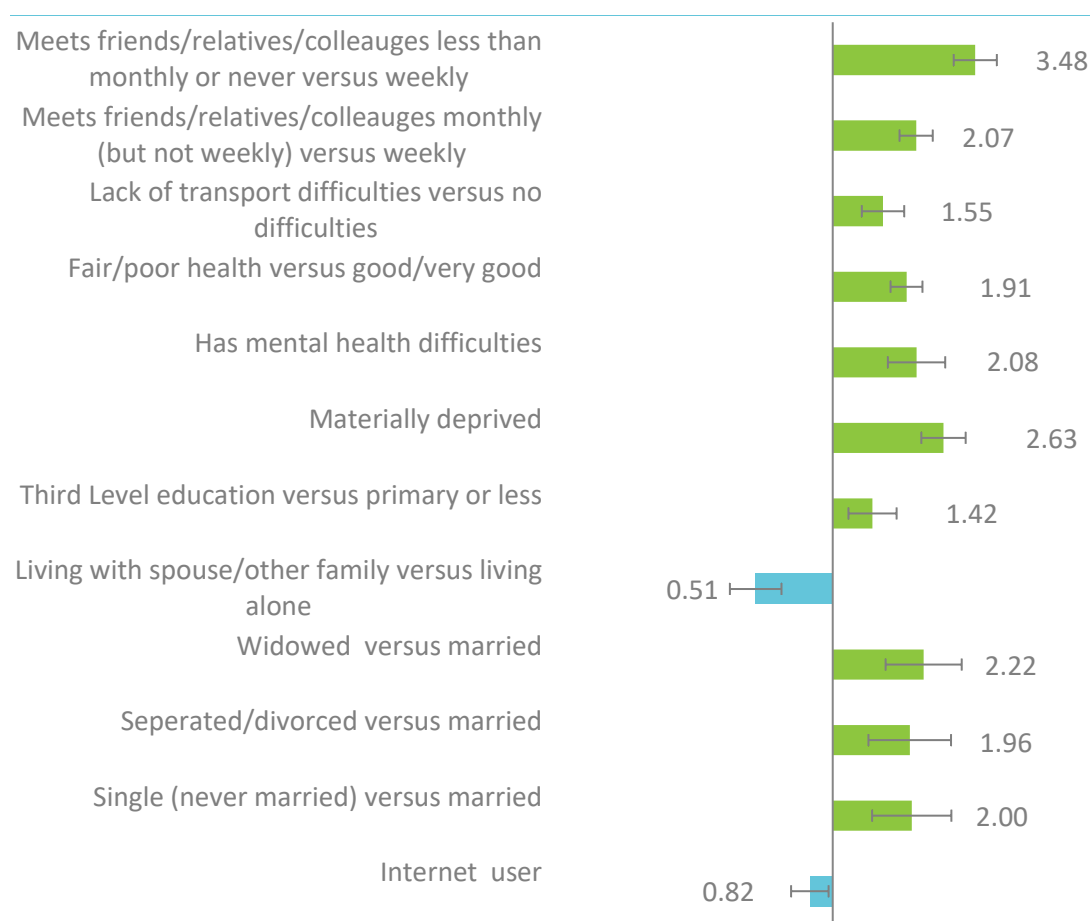
Note: estimates are statistically significant at the 0.05% level. See Appendix Table 2 for full model.

FIGURE 7 INTERNET USE AND VOLUNTEERING AT LEAST MONTHLY



Note: estimates are statistically significant at the 0.05% level. See Appendix Table 1 for full model.

FIGURE 8 INTERNET USE AND SOCIAL ISOLATION



Note: estimates are statistically significant at the 0.05% level. See Appendix Table 1 for full model.

The results presented in Figure 5 show that internet users were significantly more likely to have engaged in political activities in the past 12 months. These activities included attending a meeting of a trade union, political party or political action group, attending a protest or demonstration, contacting a politician or public official, and offering your views as an older person in an official capacity. The result presented in figure 6 show that internet users were significantly more likely to take part in community groups at least every month. Furthermore, the results presented in Figure 7 show that internet users were significantly more likely to volunteer (at least monthly) for a variety of organisation including community and social services, educational, cultural, sport or professional associations, social movements, and other voluntary organisations. The results of Figure 8 show that internet users are also significantly less likely to feel socially isolated from others. Net of other factors we did not find that internet users were significantly more or less likely to meet socially (at least weekly) with friends, relatives or colleagues.



CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

5. CONCLUSIONS

Improving information provision is a cross-cutting objective of the National Positive Ageing Strategy (2013) (1). As accessible information is a key requirement for enabling older people to age well and for empowering them to continue participating in all aspects of life, the NPAS promotes actions that will ensure that older people can exercise choice and control over their own lives by being able to access user-friendly, up-to-date, comprehensive and coordinated information and advice in relation to entitlements, services, support and activities.

Communication and information is a core element of the World Health Organisations' Age-Friendly Cities Guide (7), which emphasises the need for being able to stay connected with people and events, and get timely, useful information to manage life and remain independent (7), living at home for as long as possible and engaging in social and community life. Using information collected by the HaPAI Age Friendly Cities and Counties Survey (2016) this report provided a profile of the sources of news and information that older people rely on, the level of difficulty they have accessing information on local events and health and social care services.

The results show that the majority of older people get their news and information from national television and national and local radio. Almost one-in-ten (7.0%) older people experience difficulty accessing information on local activities, however this is almost one-in-five (19%) in some Local Authority areas. Overall 11% of people aged 55+ experience difficulty accessing information about health and social care, however this increases to almost one-in-three in some Local Authority areas. This is a major cause of concern and anxiety and previous reports have highlighted a lack of information on available services is a major concern among older people in relation to the health services in Ireland (14).

In this study we also investigated differences in internet access and internet use across each Local Authority area, and whether or not internet use was significantly associated with different types of political, civic, and social participation. Over two-thirds of the older population have access to a household internet connection (68%) however fewer use the internet (61%). The results of this study provide further evidence of the digital divide that is faced by older people in terms of internet use which we have also shown to have implications for different forms of social and civic participation and social isolation. It is important to note that while none of the forms of participation that we investigated explicitly involved online forms of engagement, they may require the respondent to use the internet and/or provide opportunities for online participation. Therefore it is likely that the relationship between internet use and social participation is bi-directional: internet users participate more and those who participate are more likely to use the internet.

There was no significant association between whether or not a respondent users the internet and how often they meet socially with friends, relatives or colleagues. In

this instance and within the broad area of social participation it is useful to make a distinction between personal social ties (e.g. friends and family) and more formal forms of social and community engagement (e.g. volunteering). While internet use can support and provide new ways of keeping in touch with a persons' personal social network there is little evidence that internet use translates to more frequent face-to-face contact (29,33). Internet use has, however, been consistently linked with more formal forms of social and community engagement such as increased civic and political engagement (33). The results of this study are consistent with previous literature in this regard.

It has been suggested that certain characteristics of the information age, such as the internet, connect the connected more than the peripheral (34). The increasing role of online information services presents a particular challenge to large number of older adults in Ireland who either do not have access to the internet and/or do not use it – approximately two thirds of those aged 55 and older. While future improvements in information provision should harness the many advantages of online service provision in enabling older people to participate in different areas of social, civic and economic life, this should not be at the expense of other forms of media and communication which to play an important role in the lives of older people. In this study we have seen the significant role of national and local radio and national newspapers as sources of news and information for older people in their communities. Continued investment and innovation in equipping Citizens with the skills to fully engage online(31), and ensuring the provision of accessible forms of information for those who do not or cannot access internet, will reduce the risk of digital exclusion in this information age.

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APPENDIX: MIXED EFFECTS LOGISTIC REGRESSION MODELS

TABLE 1: RESULTS OF A REGRESSION MODEL OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY ON INTERNET USE

Measures	OR	CI (95%)
Internet user	1.36	(1.36,1.59)
Age group Reference: age 55-64		
65-74	1.02	(1.02,1.19)
75+	0.69	(0.69,0.85)
Gender: reference male		
Female	0.63	(0.63,0.71)
Marital status Reference: married		
Single (never married)	0.90	(0.90,1.23)
Separated or divorced	1.31	(1.31,1.78)
Widowed	0.90	(0.90,1.20)
Household composition		
Reference: living alone		
Living with spouse/partner	1.07	(1.10,1.42)
Living with spouse/family/others	1.15	(1.15,1.45)
Educational attainment		
Reference: primary or less		
Secondary	1.08	(1.08,1.26)
Third Level	1.23	(1.23,1.48)
Net monthly household income Reference: >€2,500		
€1,501 up to €2,500	1.07	(1.07,1.29)
€1,001 up to €1,500	1.07	(1.07,1.33)
€501 up to €1,000	0.95	(0.95,1.20)
Missing	1.03	(1.03,1.22)
Occupational status Reference: employed/self-employed		
retired	0.82	(0.82,0.97)
out of work	0.75	(0.75,0.97)
looking after home/family	0.73	(0.73,0.92)
Materially deprived (reference 'no')	1.38	(1.378,1.73)
Has mental health difficulties (reference 'no')	1.12	(1.12,1.49)
Fair/poor self-rated health (reference good/very good)	1.00	(1.00,1.15)
Location Reference: open countryside or village		
Town (1500+ pop.)	1.63	(1.63,1.90)
City (suburb or inner)	1.12	(1.12,1.40)
Driven in the past week	1.07	(1.10,1.25)
Difficulty with lack of transport	1.09	(1.10,1.35)
Meets socially		
Reference: weekly		
>monthly but <weekly	0.86	(0.86,1.00)
<monthly or never	0.71	(0.71,0.90)
Constant	0.25	(0.26,0.40)

TABLE 2: RESULTS OF A REGRESSION MODEL OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION ON INTERNET USE

Measures	OR	CI (95%)
Internet user	1.62	(1.44,1.81)
Age group Reference: age 55-64		
65-74	1.24	(1.09,1.41)
75+	1.15	(0.99,1.34)
Gender: reference male		
Female	0.97	(0.88,1.06)
Marital status		
Reference: married		
Single (never married)	0.96	(0.75,1.22)
Separated or divorced	0.73	(0.56,0.94)
Widowed	1.06	(0.85,1.33)
Household composition		
Reference: living alone		
Living with spouse/partner	0.92	(0.73,1.14)
Living with spouse/family/others	0.80	(0.67,0.96)
Educational attainment		
Reference: primary or less		
Secondary	1.18	(1.05,1.33)
Third Level	1.66	(1.44,1.92)
Net monthly household income Reference: >€2,500		
€1,501 up to €2,500	0.82	(0.71,0.95)
€1,001 up to €1,500	0.55	(0.46,0.65)
€501 up to €1,000	0.55	(0.46,0.66)
Missing	0.49	(0.43,0.57)
Occupational status Reference: employed/self-employed		
retired	1.07	(0.94,1.23)
out of work	0.88	(0.71,1.08)
looking after home/family	1.04	(0.87,1.23)
Materially deprived (reference 'no')	0.81	(0.66,0.98)
Has mental health difficulties (reference 'no')	1.17	(0.93,1.48)
Fair/poor self-rated health (reference good/very good)	0.77	(0.69,0.85)
Location Reference: open countryside or village		
Town (1500+ pop.)	1.30	(1.15,1.46)
City (suburb or inner)	0.88	(0.74,1.05)
Driven in the past week	1.46	(1.3,1.64)
Difficulty with lack of transport	0.92	(0.78,1.08)
Meets socially Reference: weekly		
>monthly but <weekly	0.65	(0.59,0.72)
<monthly or never	0.18	(0.14,0.22)
Constant	0.85	(0.59,1.24)

TABLE 3: RESULTS OF A REGRESSION MODEL OF VOLUNTEERING ON INTERNET USE

Measures	OR	CI (95%)
Internet user	1.94	(1.69,2.22)
Age group Reference: age 55-64		
65-74	1.16	(1.01,1.32)
75+	0.85	(0.71,1.01)
Gender: reference male		
Female	0.92	(0.83,1.03)
Marital status		
Reference: married		
Single (never married)	1.00	(0.76,1.31)
Separated or divorced	0.89	(0.66,1.19)
Widowed	1.00	(0.78,1.30)
Household composition		
Reference: living alone		
Living with spouse/partner	1.03	(0.80,1.32)
Living with spouse/family/others	0.98	(0.80,1.21)
Educational attainment		
Reference: primary or less		
Secondary	1.38	(1.19,1.60)
Third Level	1.96	(1.66,2.32)
Net monthly household income Reference: >€2,500		
€1,501 up to €2,500	0.98	(0.84,1.14)
€1,001 up to €1,500	0.97	(0.81,1.17)
€501 up to €1,000	0.62	(0.50,0.76)
Missing	0.86	(0.74,1.00)
Occupational status Reference: employed/self-employed		
retired	1.04	(0.90,1.16)
out of work	1.05	(0.83,1.33)
looking after home/family	0.93	(0.77,1.13)
Materially deprived (reference 'no')	0.59	(0.45,0.78)
Has mental health difficulties (reference 'no')	1.11	(0.84,1.46)
Fair/poor self-rated health (reference good/very good)	0.65	(0.57,0.75)
Location Reference: open countryside or village		
Town (1500+ pop.)	1.21	(1.06,1.38)
City (suburb or inner)	0.70	(0.59,0.85)
Driven in the past week	1.46	(1.26,1.68)
Difficulty with lack of transport	1.10	(0.90,1.34)
Meets socially		
Reference: weekly		
>monthly but <weekly	0.63	(0.56,0.71)
<monthly or never	0.35	(0.27,0.45)
Constant	0.19	(0.13,0.29)

TABLE 4: RESULTS OF A REGRESSION MODEL OF SOCIAL ISOLATION ON INTERNET USE

Measures	OR	CI (95%)
Internet user	0.82	(0.69,0.96)
Age group Reference: age 55-64		
65-74	1.02	(0.85,1.22)
75+	1.15	(0.93,1.42)
Gender: reference male		
Female	0.89	(0.78,1.03)
Marital status		
Reference: married		
Single (never married)	2.00	(1.41,2.82)
Separated or divorced	1.96	(1.37,2.81)
Widowed	2.22	(1.59,3.09)
Household composition		
Reference: living alone		
Living with spouse/partner	0.77	(0.55,1.08)
Living with spouse/family/others	0.51	(0.41,0.64)
Educational attainment		
Reference: primary or less		
Secondary	1.15	(0.98,1.34)
Third Level	1.42	(1.15,1.75)
Net monthly household income Reference: >€2,500		
€1,501 up to €2,500	0.86	(0.69,1.07)
€1,001 up to €1,500	0.83	(0.65,1.06)
€501 up to €1,000	0.92	(0.72,1.17)
Missing	0.59	(0.47,0.73)
Occupational status Reference: employed/self-employed		
retired	0.86	(0.7,1.05)
out of work	1.13	(0.87,1.48)
looking after home/family	1.06	(0.83,1.37)
Materially deprived (reference 'no')	2.63	(2.17,3.2)
Has mental health difficulties (reference 'no')	2.08	(1.62,2.67)
Fair/poor self-rated health (reference good/very good)	1.91	(1.66,2.19)
Location Reference: open countryside or village		
Town (1500+ pop.)	1.05	(0.89,1.24)
City (suburb or inner)	1.01	(0.79,1.29)
Driven in the past week	0.82	(0.71,0.96)
Difficulty with lack of transport	1.55	(1.29,1.87)
Meets socially		
Reference: weekly		
>monthly but <weekly	2.07	(1.79,2.4)
<monthly or never	3.48	(2.88,4.2)
Constant	0.11	(0.06,0.18)

TABLE 5: RESULTS OF A REGRESSION MODEL OF MEETING SOCIALLY ON INTERNET USE

Measures	OR	CI (95%)
Internet user	1.04	(0.93,1.17)
Age group Reference: age 55-64		
65-74	0.91	(0.81,1.04)
75+	0.91	(0.78,1.06)
Gender: reference male		
Female	0.95	(0.87,1.05)
Marital status		
Reference: married		
Single (never married)	0.69	(0.54,0.88)
Separated or divorced	0.9	(0.7,1.16)
Widowed	0.84	(0.67,1.05)
Household composition		
Reference: living alone		
Living with spouse/partner	0.64	(0.51,0.8)
Living with spouse/family/others	0.76	(0.64,0.9)
Educational attainment		
Reference: primary or less		
Secondary	1.11	(0.99,1.24)
Third Level	1.15	(0.99,1.33)
Net monthly household income Reference: >€2,500		
€1,501 up to €2,500	1.06	(0.91,1.23)
€1,001 up to €1,500	1.02	(0.86,1.21)
€501 up to €1,000	0.97	(0.81,1.17)
Missing	1.03	(0.9,1.18)
Occupational status Reference: employed/self-employed		
retired	1.5	(1.31,1.72)
out of work	1.11	(0.92,1.35)
looking after home/family	1.07	(0.9,1.27)
Materially deprived (reference 'no')	0.6	(0.5,0.71)
Has mental health difficulties (reference 'no')	0.96	(0.77,1.19)
Fair/poor self-rated health (reference good/very good)	0.67	(0.6,0.74)
Location Reference: open countryside or village		
Town (1500+ pop.)	0.93	(0.83,1.05)
City (suburb or inner)	1.05	(0.89,1.25)
Driven in the past week	1.11	(0.98,1.24)
Difficulty with lack of transport	0.87	(0.75,1.02)
Constant	2.69	(1.86,3.91)

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This report presents information collected by the HaPAI Age-friendly Cities and Counties Survey, a study involving adults aged 55 and older in 21 Local Authorities in Ireland.

The study was conducted by the HaPAI research team:

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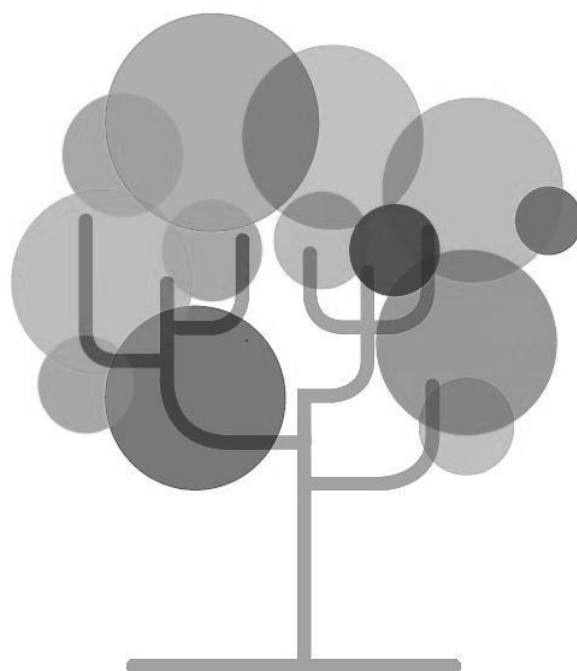
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