

Disabled users access to and use of communication devices and services

Research summary: Hearing-impaired people

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Key points



- **People with a hearing impairment are more likely to be older than non-disabled people.** Six in ten (58%) of those with a hearing impairment are aged 65 and over, compared to just 16% of non-disabled people. Reflecting their older age skew, people with a hearing impairment are more likely than non-disabled people to be retired.
- **Household ownership of computers, games consoles and smartphones is less likely for people with a hearing impairment than non-disabled people.** However, people with a hearing-impairment are more likely to have a landline phone and a simple mobile phone in their household. The same pattern is true for personal use of communications services and devices.
- **Personal use of the internet is much less likely for people with a hearing impairment than non-disabled people.** They are also less likely to use the internet in all locations we asked about (home, work, public places and through mobile devices) and less likely to do the majority of internet activities we asked about (e.g. communicate through email and social networking, shopping and banking).
- **People with a hearing impairment are most likely to say that their use of TVs is either limited or completely prevented due to their condition.** Nearly a quarter (23%) said their use of TV was limited or prevented, while 12% said the same for landline and simple mobile phones.
- **People with a hearing impairment are more likely than non-disabled people to be the sole decision maker for choice of service provider for landline and TV.** They were just as likely to be the sole decision maker for choice of internet and mobile services provider.

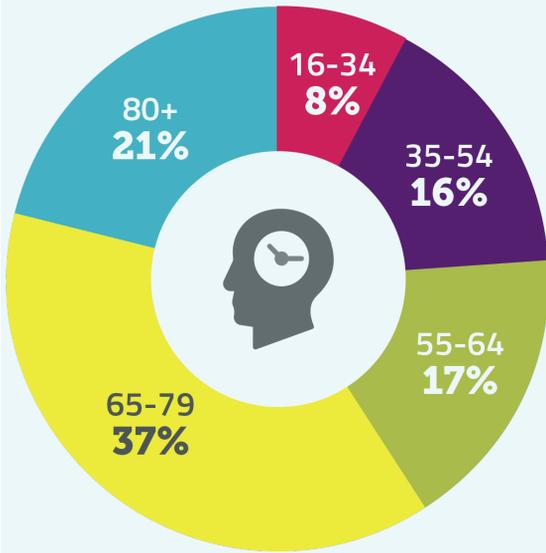
Sample profile



Summary

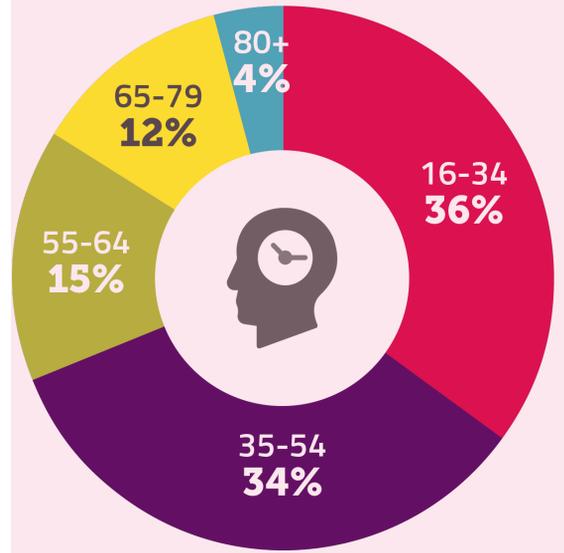
Six in ten people we interviewed with a hearing-impairment are aged over 65, compared to just 16% of non-disabled people. Reflecting their older age profile, hearing-impaired people are more likely to be retired than non-disabled people (60% vs. 18% of non-disabled consumers). People with a hearing impairment are less likely than non-disabled people to be employed or in education and more likely to be unemployed.

Hearing-impaired

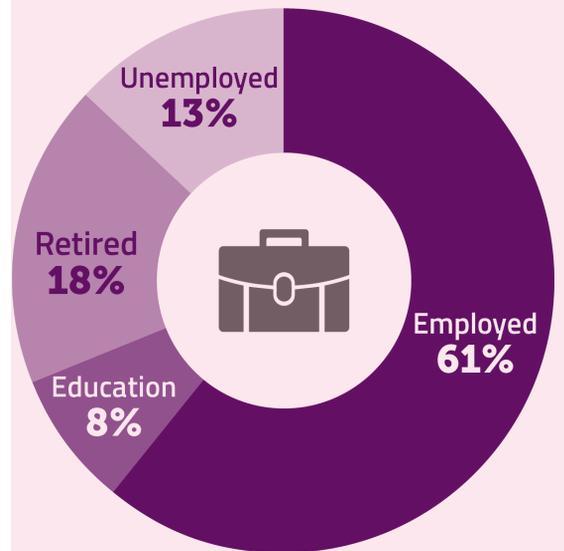
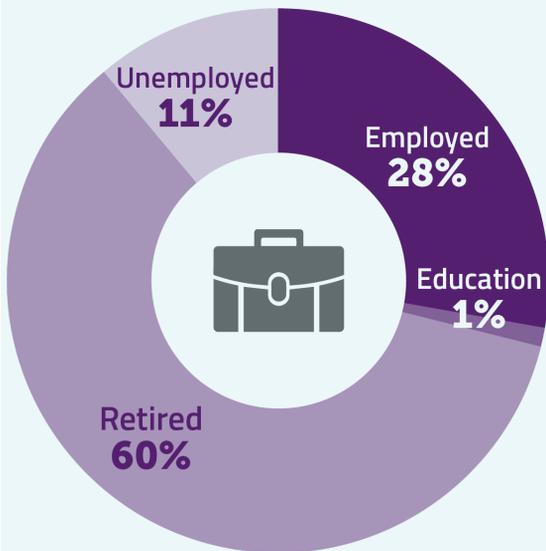


Age profile

Non-disabled



Working status



Household ownership of communications devices and services

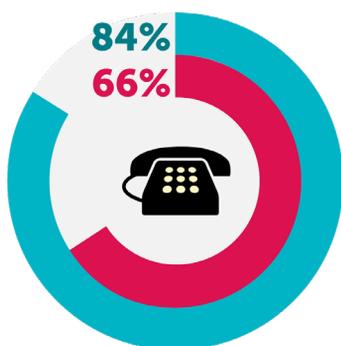


Summary

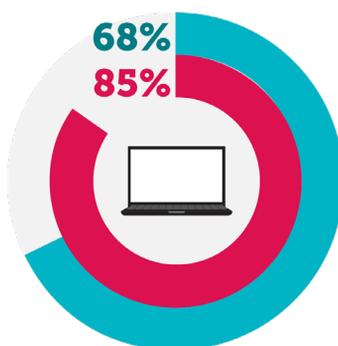
People with a hearing-impairment are more likely than non-disabled people to have a landline phone or a simple mobile phone in their household. However, the opposite is true for computers (including PCs, laptops and tablets), games consoles and smartphones. The biggest difference in household ownership levels between hearing-impaired people and non-disabled people is for the smartphone (81% of non-disabled people have a smartphone in their household compared to 53% of those with a hearing impairment).

 = Hearing-impaired
 = Non-disabled

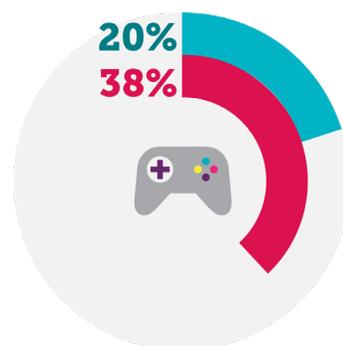
Landline



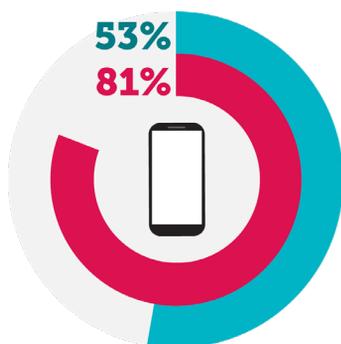
Computer (PC, laptop and tablet)



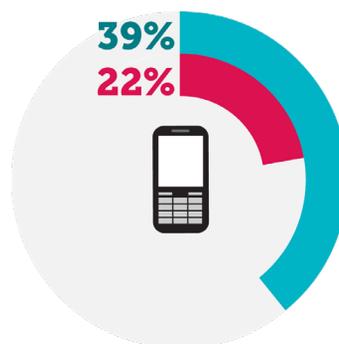
Games console



Smartphone



Other phone



Personal use of communication devices and services

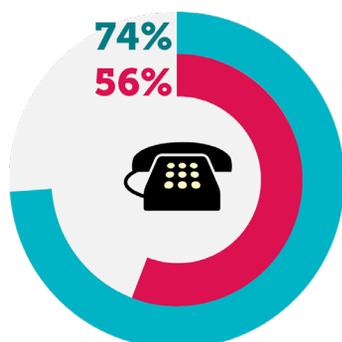


Summary

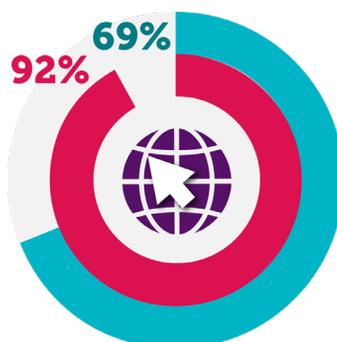
Reflecting household ownership of communications devices and services, people with a hearing-impairment are more likely than non-disabled people to personally use a landline phone and a simple mobile phone. Again, the opposite is true for games consoles, computers (including PCs, laptops and tablets) and smartphones. Non-disabled people are also more likely than people with a hearing-impairment to personally use the internet anywhere.

 = Hearing-impaired
 = Non-disabled

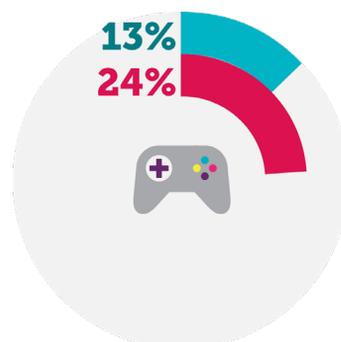
Landline



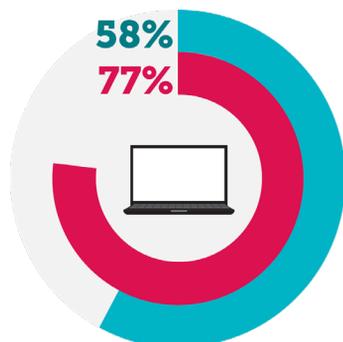
Internet*



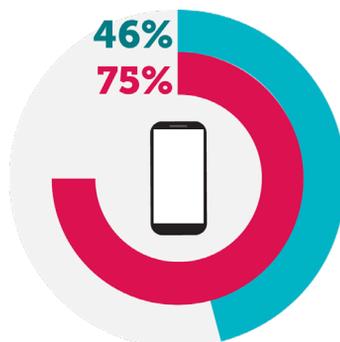
Games console



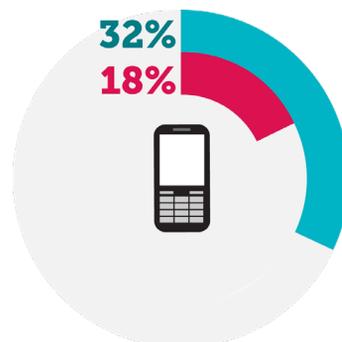
Computer (PC, laptop and tablet)



Smartphone



Other phone



*Personal use of internet can include any number of the following: internet use at home, at work, via a mobile phone/tablet using a mobile network (e.g. 3G or 4G), through a publicly accessible computer (e.g. internet café or library) or any other type of internet access.

Internet use

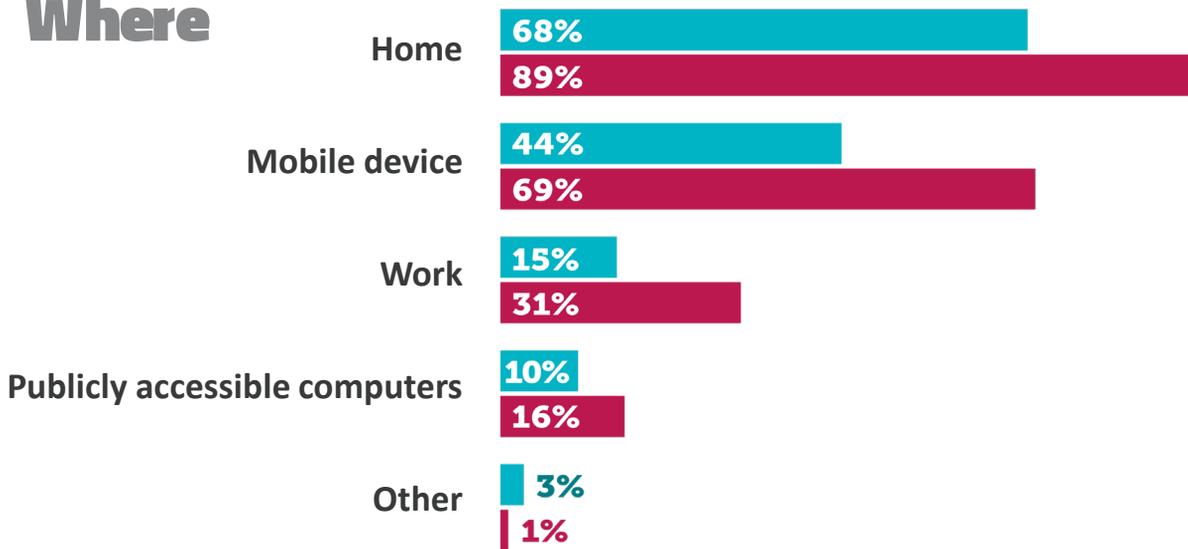


Summary

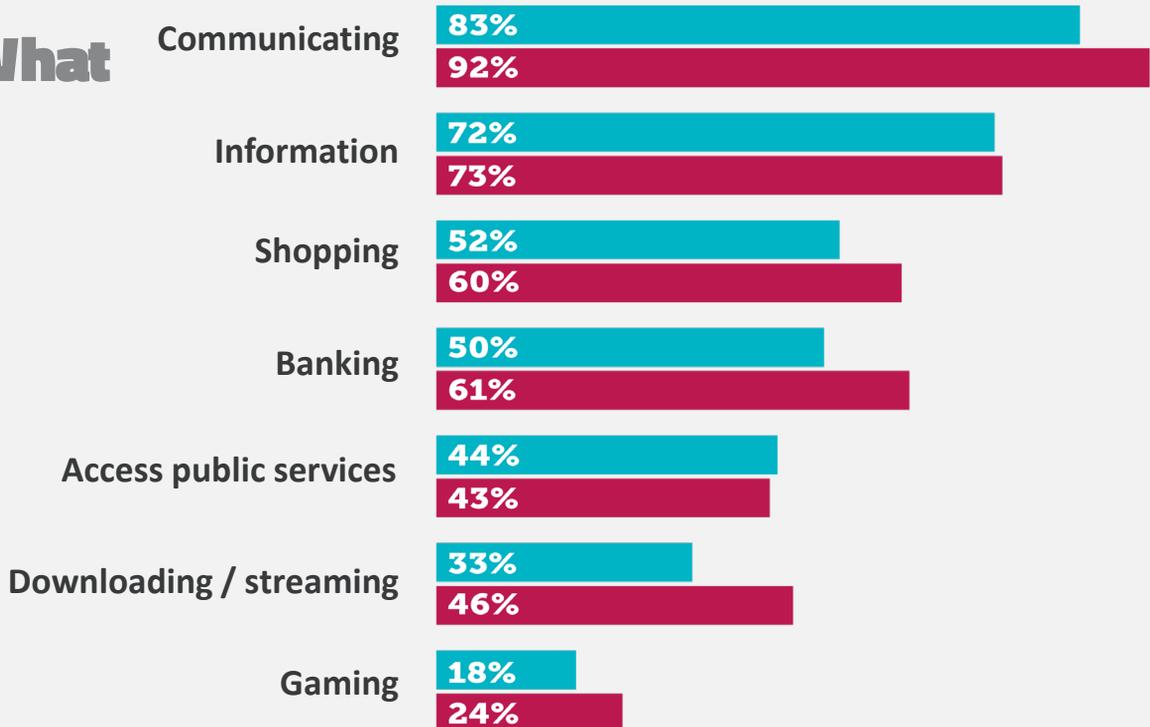
People with a hearing impairment are less likely than non-disabled people to access the internet in all the locations asked about. They were also less likely to do the majority of the internet activities asked about, including; communicating (e.g. through email and social networking), shopping and banking.

 = Hearing-impaired
 = Non-disabled

Where



What



Prevention and limitation of use of communications services and devices

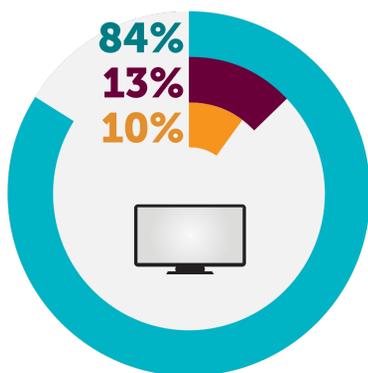


Summary

Hearing-impaired people are most likely to be prevented or limited from using a television (23%), a landline (12%) and a simple mobile phone (12%) because of their hearing impairment. One percent of people with a hearing impairment say that their condition prevents their use of the internet.



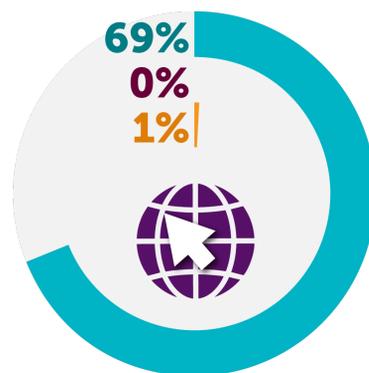
Television



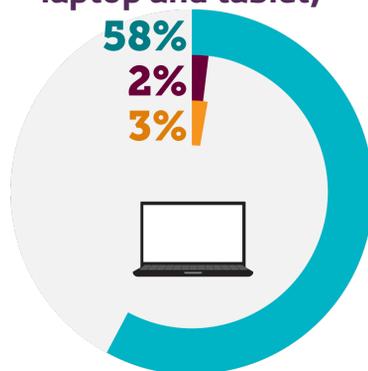
Landline



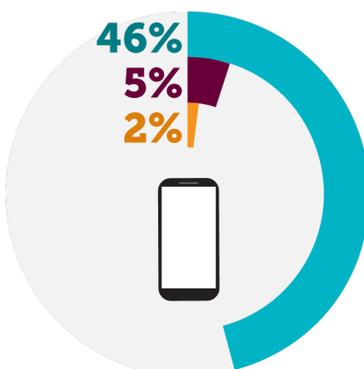
Internet



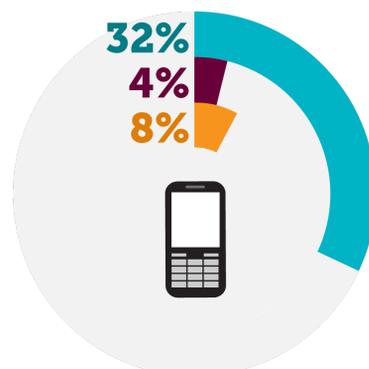
Computer (including PC, laptop and tablet)



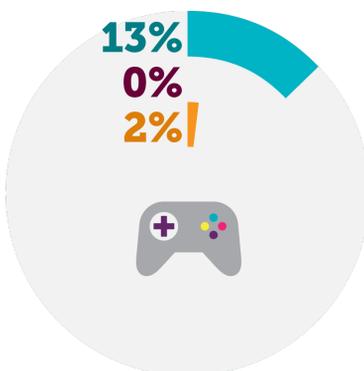
Smartphone



Other phone



Games console



Decision-making

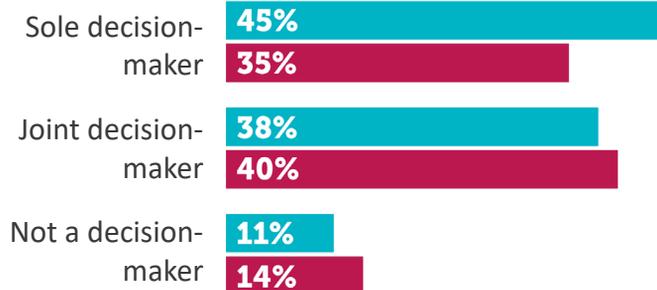


Summary

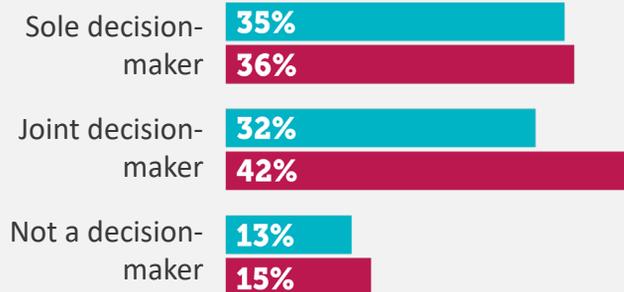
Hearing-impaired people are more likely than non-disabled people to be the sole decision-maker for choice of provider for landline and television services, but just as likely for internet and mobile services.

 = Hearing-impaired
 = Non-disabled

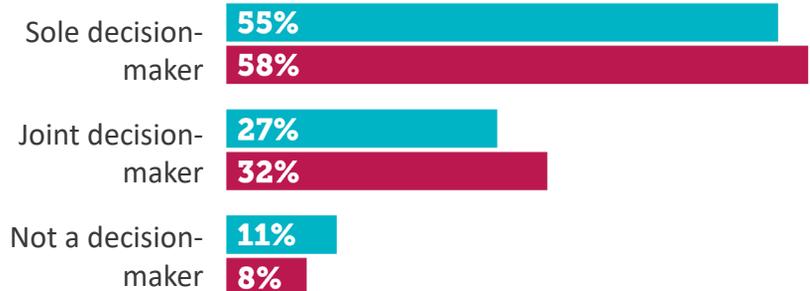
Landline



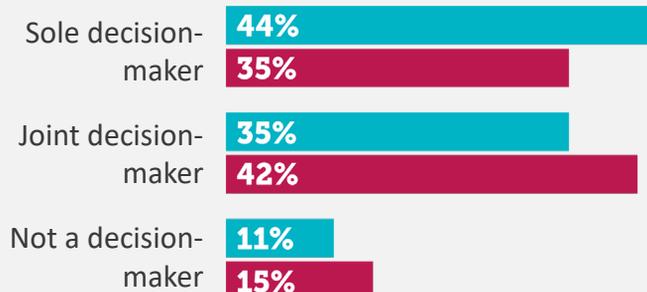
Internet



Mobile



Television



Background to the research and methodology



Under the Communications Act 2003, Ofcom has a specific duty to have regard to the needs of people with disabilities. To meet these responsibilities, we publish research which provides a summary of disabled consumers' household access to, and personal use of, communications devices and services, making comparisons with non-disabled consumers and drawing out the differences between disabilities.

In 2018, we commissioned Kantar Media to conduct Ofcom's Disability Consumer Research via their face-to-face omnibus. The research included 21,321 interviews, carried out between May and July, among UK adults aged 16+. The sample is reflective of the UK profile by sex, age, socio-economic group, region, and employment status.

It is important to note that we made several changes to the 2018 Disability Consumer research compared to previous waves. This included changes to existing questions in order to ensure that the survey is relevant and future-proofed. We have also asked additional questions relating to whether respondents are the decision-makers for the choice of communications service providers used in their household. Furthermore, we have moved the research to Kantar's face-to-face omnibus. This gives Ofcom greater flexibility over the content and design of the survey and enables analysis at a UK level (previously this was limited to GB). However, it should be noted that this change in approach reduces the comparability to previous waves. As such, trend comparisons should not be made.