

Disabled users access to and use of communication devices and services

Research summary: Learning disability

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Key points



- **People with a learning disability are more likely to be younger than non-disabled people.** Just over half (53%) of those with a learning disability are under the age of 35, compared to 36% of non-disabled people. Reflecting their younger age skew, people with a learning disability are less likely to be retired and more likely to be in education than non-disabled people. They are also much less likely than non-disabled people to be employed.
- **Household ownership of landline phones, computers and smartphones is less likely for people with a learning disability than non-disabled people.** However, people with a learning disability are just as likely to have a games console or a simple mobile phone in their household. A similar pattern is true for personal use of communications services and devices.
- **Personal use of the internet is less likely for people with a learning disability than non-disabled people.** They are also less likely to use the internet in most locations we asked about (home, work and publicly accessible computers) and less likely to do most of the internet activities we asked about. However, they were more likely than non-disabled people to stream or download content.
- **People with a learning disability are most likely to say that their use of TVs or computers is either limited or completely prevented due to their condition.** Nearly two in ten (18%) said their use of TVs or computers was limited or prevented, while around one in ten said the same for the internet, landline, smartphones or simple mobile phones.
- **People with a learning disability are more likely than non-disabled people to not make the decision in choice or provider for all communication services asked about.** They were just as likely as non-disabled people to be the sole decision maker for choice of landline and TV service provider.

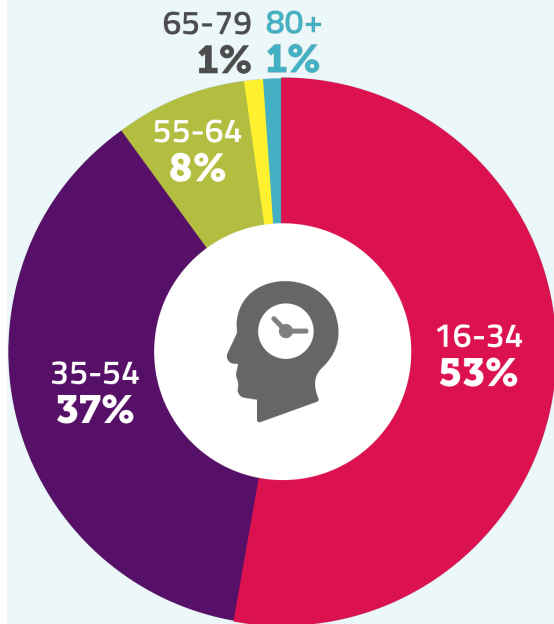
Sample profile



Summary

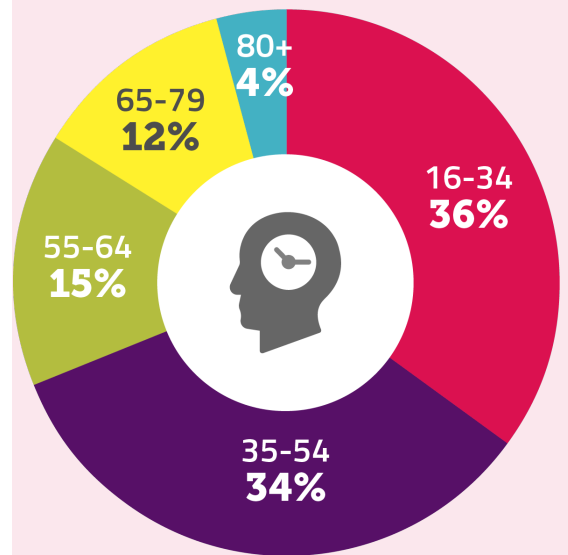
The majority of people we interviewed with a learning disability are aged 16-34 (53%), compared to just 36% of non-disabled people. Reflecting their younger age profile, people with a learning disability are more likely than non-disabled people to be in education and less likely to be retired. People with a learning disability are much more likely than non-disabled people to be unemployed (53% vs. 13%).

Learning-impaired

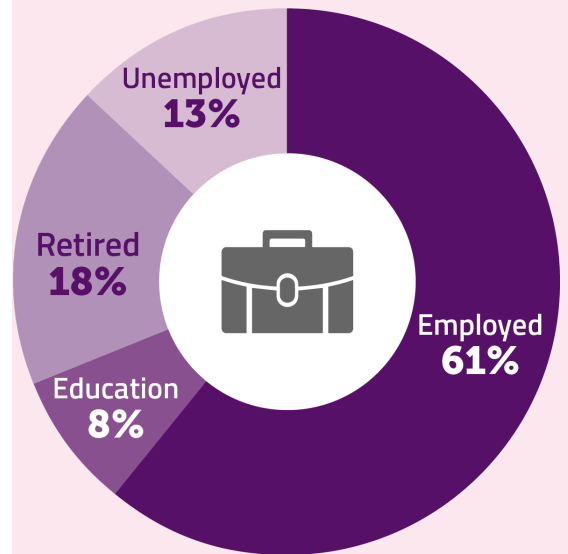
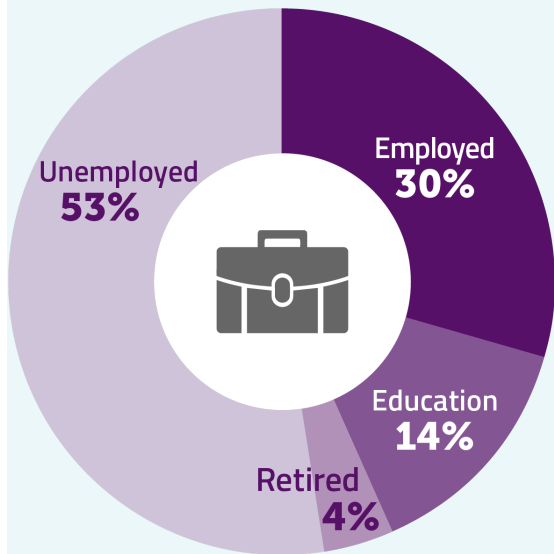


Age profile

Non-disabled



Working status



Household ownership of communications devices and services

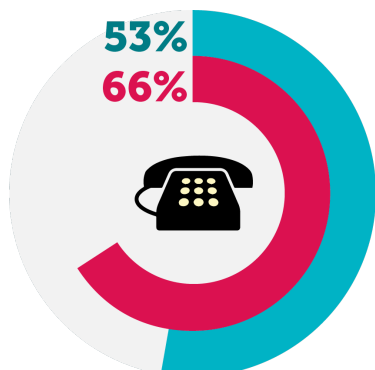


Summary

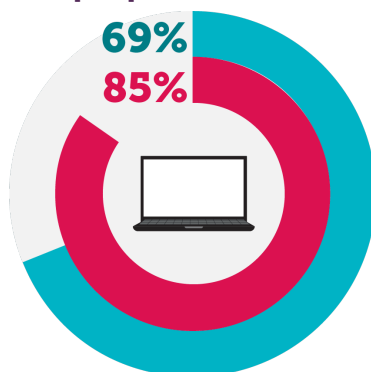
People with a learning disability are less likely than non-disabled people to have a landline phone, computer (PC, laptop or tablet) and smartphone in their household. However, they are just as likely as non-disabled people to have a games console or other type of phone (not a smartphone) in their household.

 = Learning-impaired
 = Non-disabled

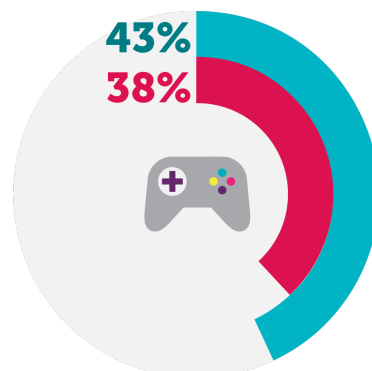
Landline



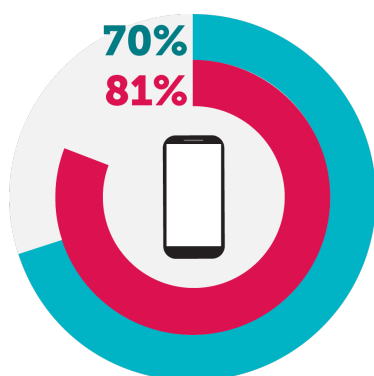
Computer (including PC, laptop and tablet)



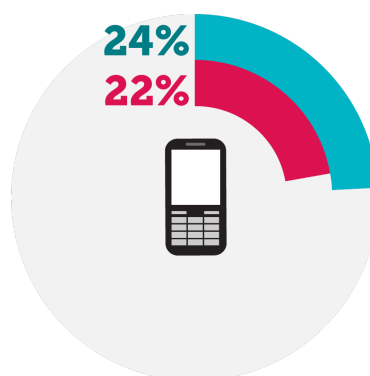
Games console



Smartphone



Other phone





Personal use of communication devices and services

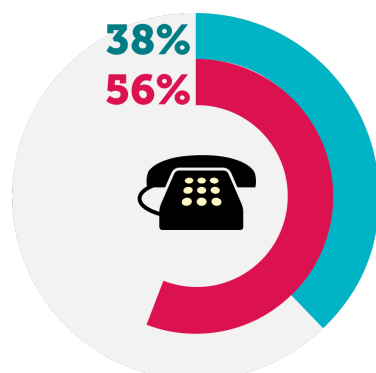


Summary

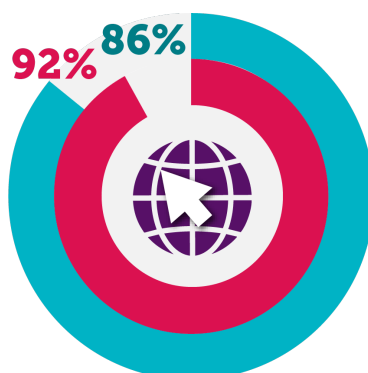
Reflecting household ownership of communications devices and services, people with a learning disability are less likely than non-disabled people to personally use landline, computers and smartphones. Non-disabled people are also more likely than people with a learning disability to personally use the internet anywhere. However, people with a learning disability are more likely than non-disabled people to personally use a games console.

 = Learning-impaired
 = Non-disabled

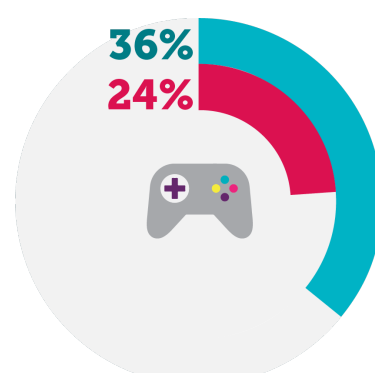
Landline



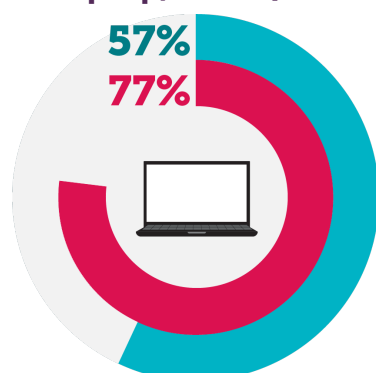
Internet*



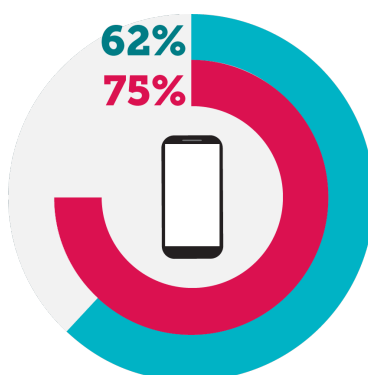
Games console



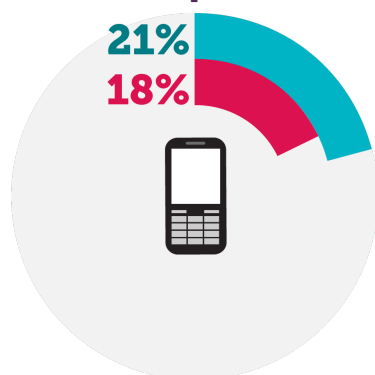
Computer (including PC, laptop, tablet)



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

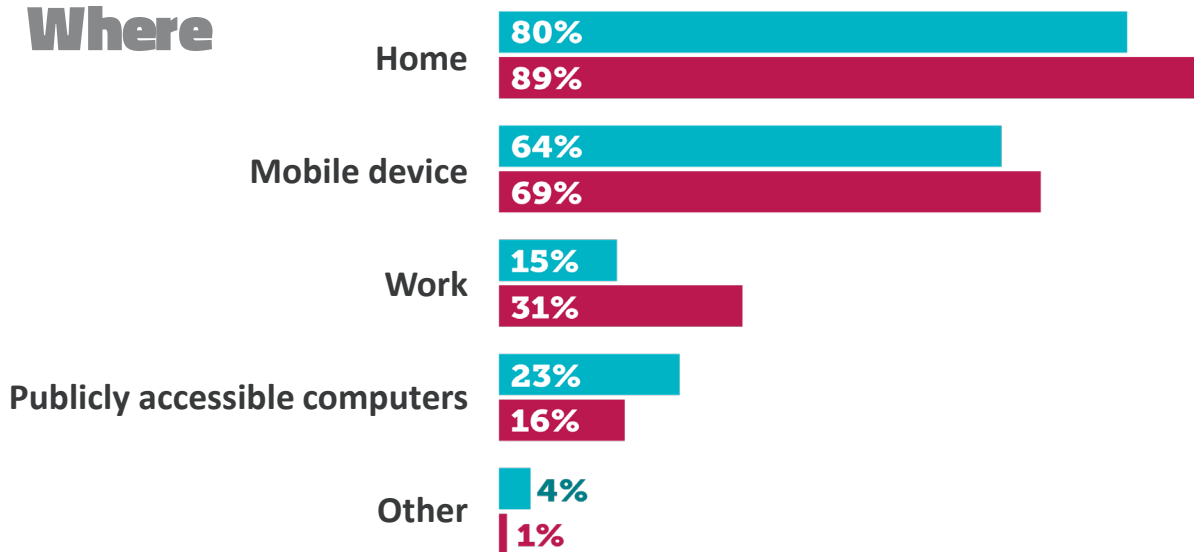


Summary

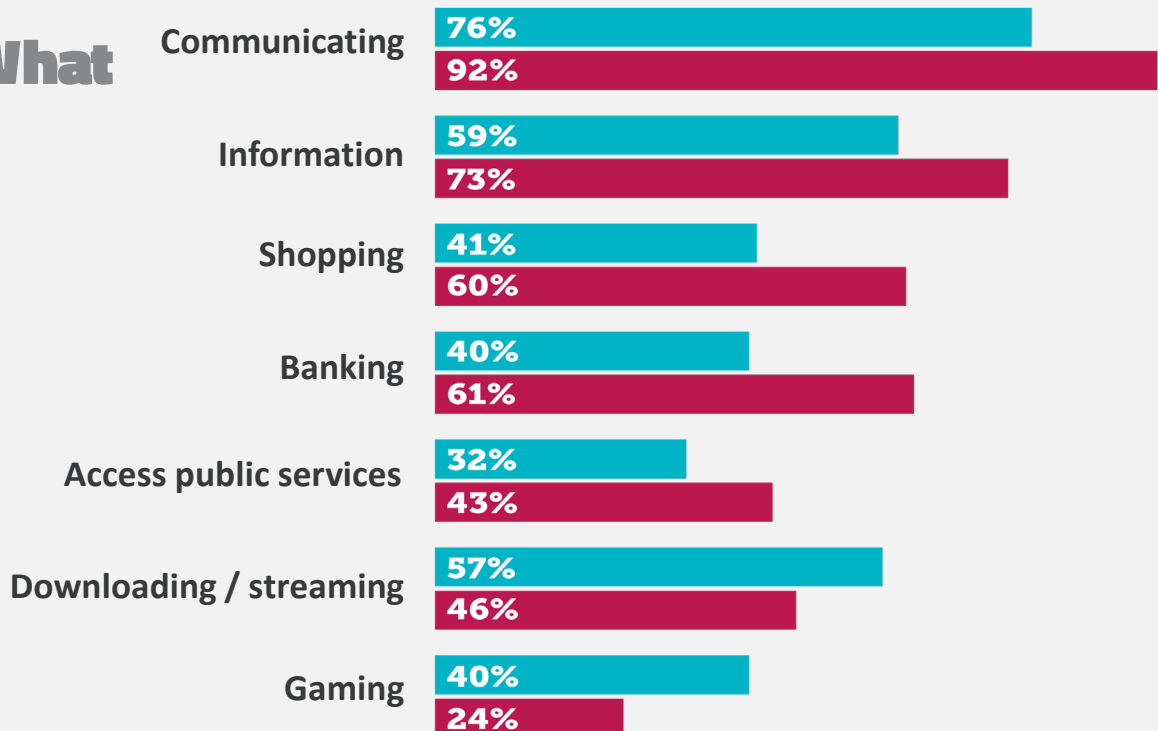
People with a learning disability are less likely than non-disabled people to access the internet at home, at work and via publicly accessible computers. They are just as likely to access the internet through a mobile network (e.g. 3G/4G) on a mobile device. People with learning disability are also less likely than non-disabled people to do the majority of internet activities we asked about. However, they are more likely to download or stream content.

 = Learning-impaired
 = Non-disabled

Where



What

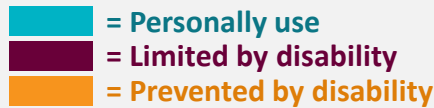


Prevention and limitation of use of communications services and devices

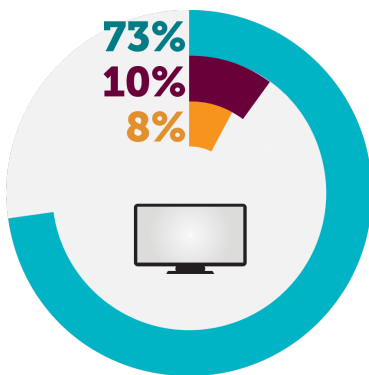


Summary

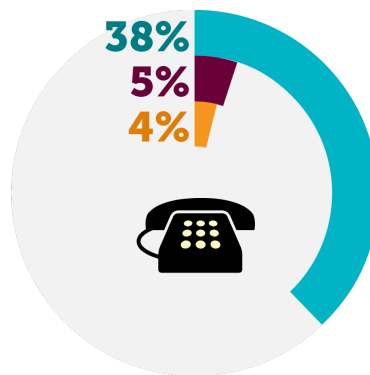
People with a learning disability are most likely to be prevented or limited from using a television and computer (both 18%). One in ten people with a learning disability said they were limited or prevented from using the internet, landline, smartphone or any other type of phone.



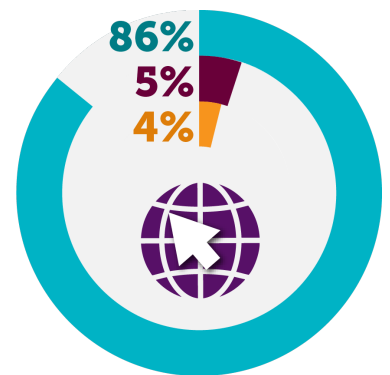
Television



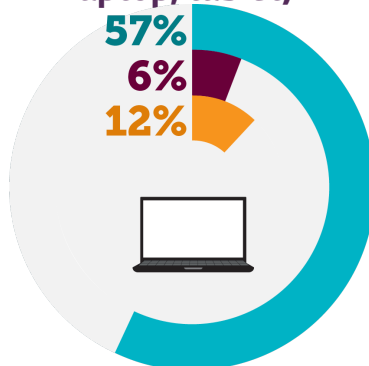
Landline



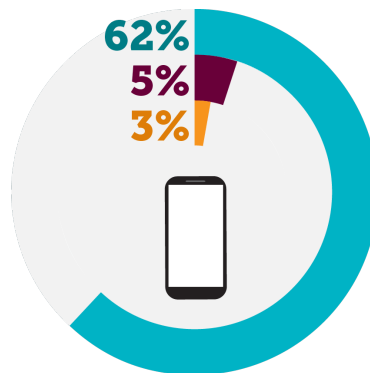
Internet



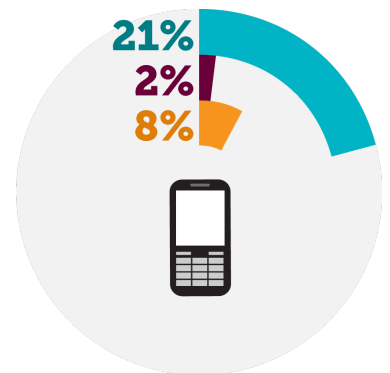
Computer (including PC, laptop, tablet)



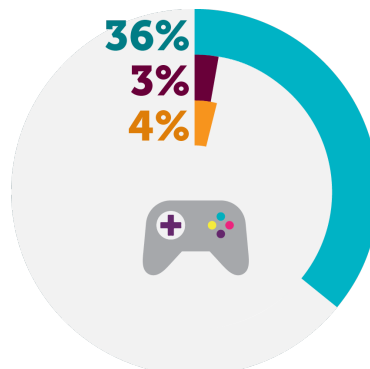
Smartphone



Other phone



Games console



Decision-making

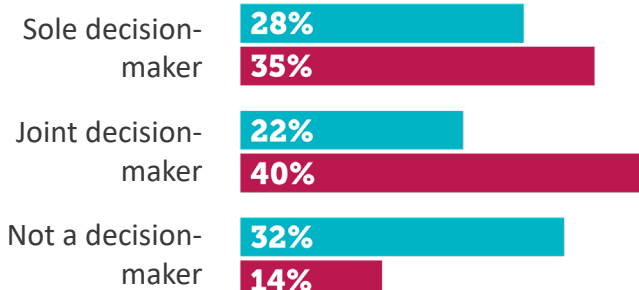


Summary

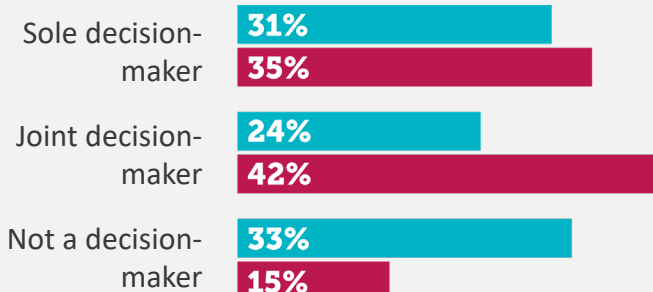
People with a learning disability are just as likely as non-disabled people to be the sole decision-maker for choice of service provider for landline and television services. However, they are more likely than non-disabled people to not be a decision-maker (neither sole or joint) for all communication services asked about.

 = Learning-impaired
 = Non-disabled

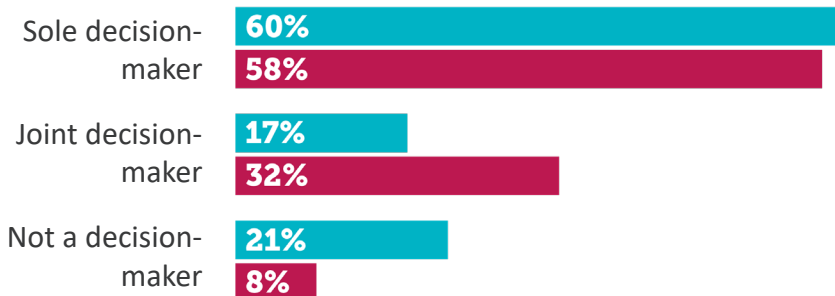
Landline



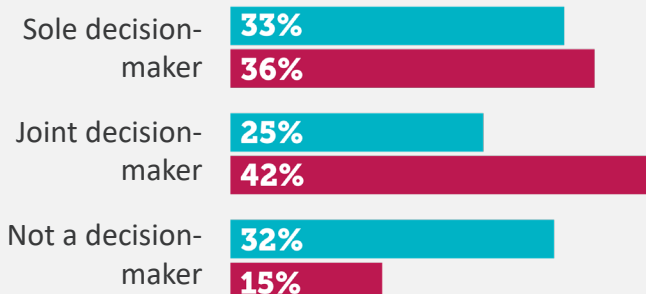
Internet



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.