

Disabled users access to and use of communication devices and services

Research summary: Vision-impaired people

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Key points



- **People with a visual impairment are more likely to be older than non-disabled people.** Just over half of those with a visual impairment are aged 65 and over, compared to just 16% of non-disabled people. Reflecting their older age skew, people with a visual 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 visual impairment than non-disabled people.** However, people with a visual impairment are more likely to have 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 less likely for people with a visual impairment than non-disabled people.** They are also less likely to use the internet in all locations we asked about (home, work, publicly accessible computers and through mobile devices on mobile networks) and less likely to do the majority of the internet activities we asked about (e.g. communicate through email and social networking and accessing public services).
- **People with a visual impairment are most likely to say that their use of TVs is either limited or completely prevented due to their condition.** A third said their use of TV was limited or prevented, while 18% said the same for computers (PC, laptop or tablet).
- **People with a visual impairment are more likely than non-disabled people to be the sole decision maker for choice of service provider for landline and TV services.** They were just as likely to be the sole decision maker for choice of mobile and internet service provider.

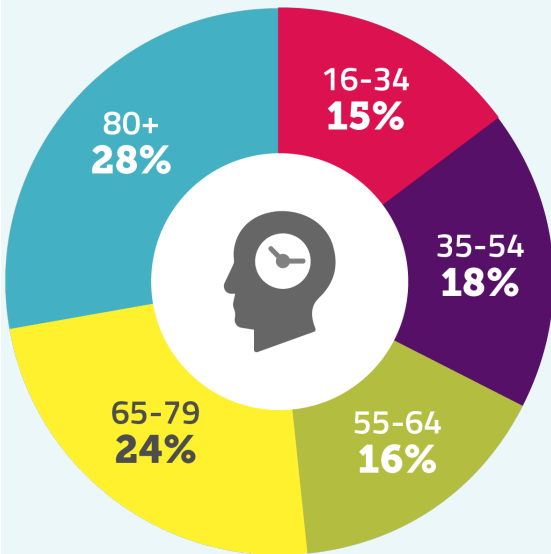
Sample profile



Summary

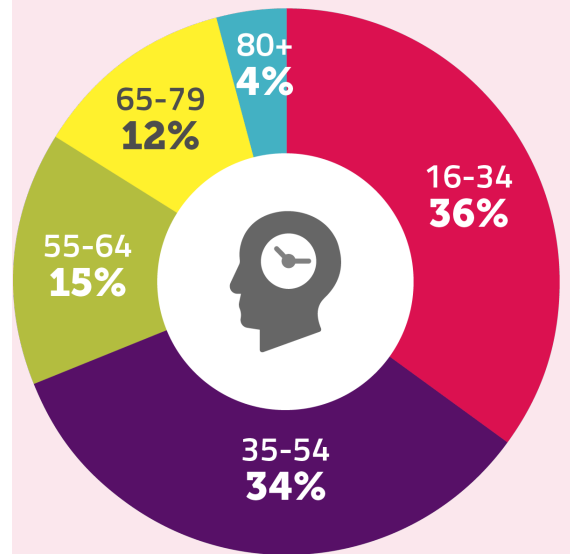
Just over half of those we interviewed with a visual impairment are aged 65 and over, compared to just 16% of non-disabled people. Reflecting their older age profile, visually impaired people are more likely to be retired than non-disabled people (57% vs. 18% of non-disabled consumers). People with a visual impairment are less likely than non-disabled people to be employed.

Vision-impaired

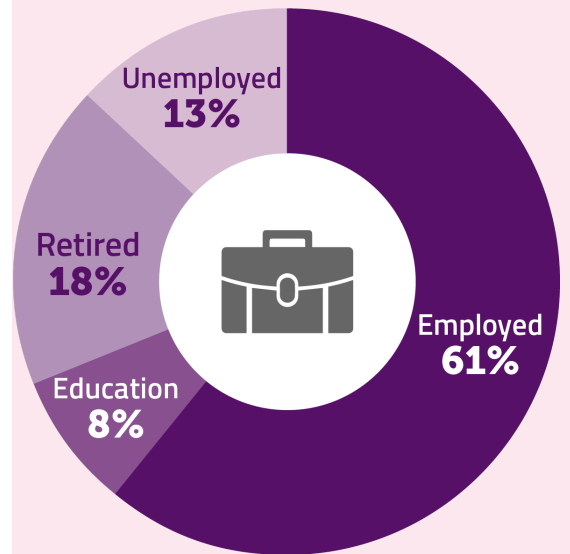
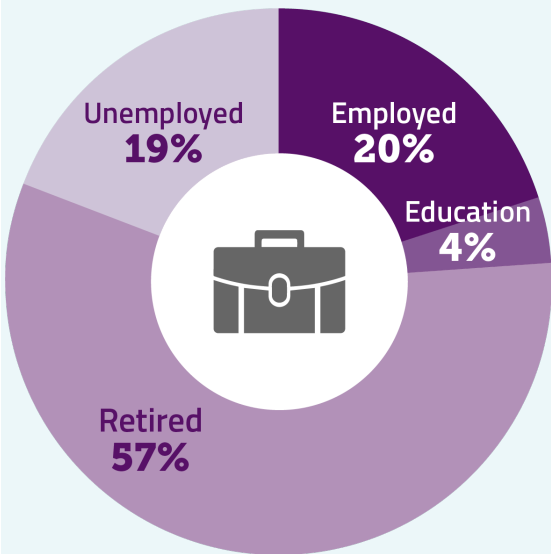


Age profile

Non-disabled



Working status



Household ownership of communications devices and services

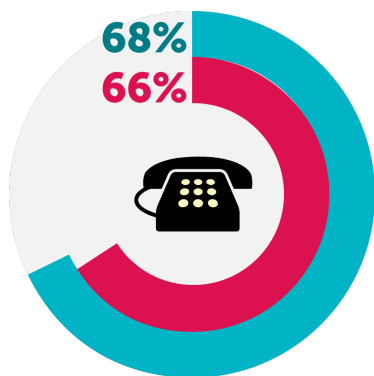


Summary

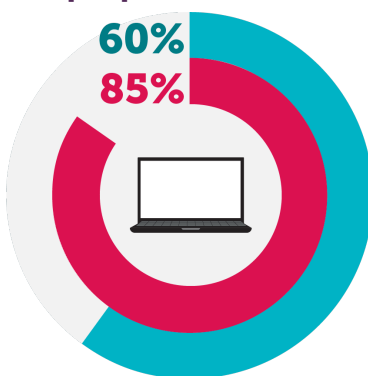
People with a visual impairment are more likely than non-disabled people to have a simple mobile phone in their household. However, the opposite is true for computers (including PCs, laptops and tablets), games consoles and smartphones. People with a learning disability are just as likely as non-disabled people to have a landline phone in their household. The biggest difference in household ownership levels between visually impaired people and non-disabled people is for the smartphone and computer.

 = Vision-impaired
 = Non-disabled

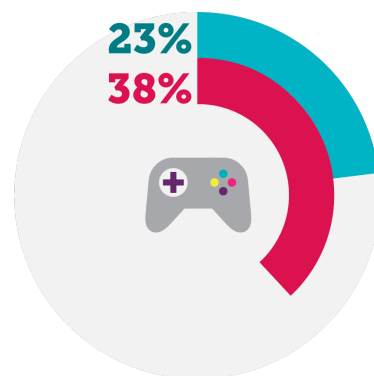
Landline



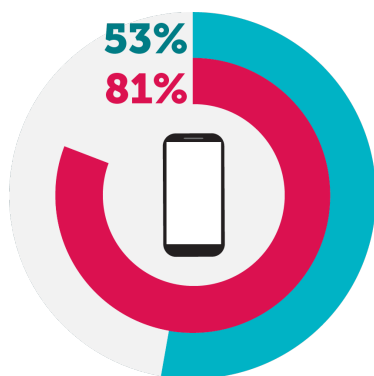
Computer (including PC, laptop and tablet)



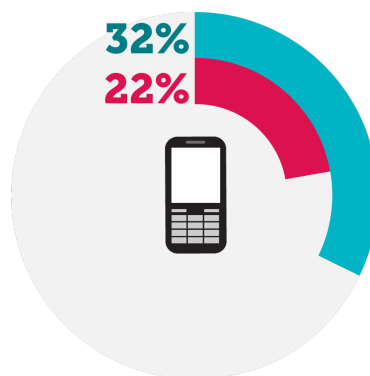
Games console



Smartphone



Other phone



Personal use of communication devices and services

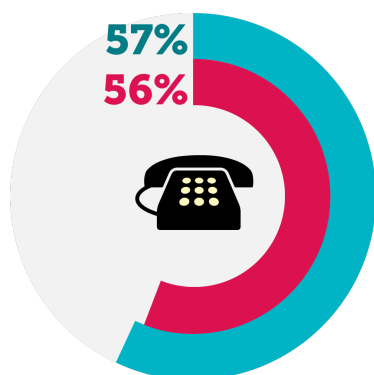


Summary

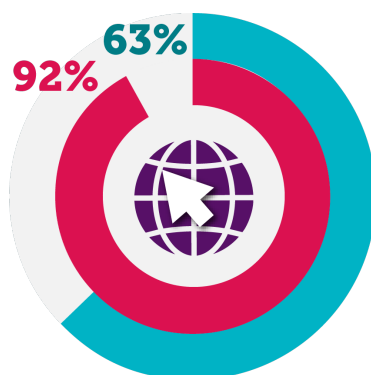
Reflecting household ownership of communications devices and services, people with a visual impairment are less likely than non-disabled people to personally use a computer (PC, laptop or tablet), smartphone or games console. They are also less likely to personally use the internet anywhere than non-disabled people. The opposite is true, however, for simple mobile phones.

 = Vision-impaired
 = Non-disabled

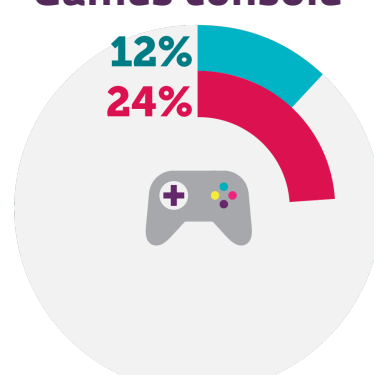
Landline



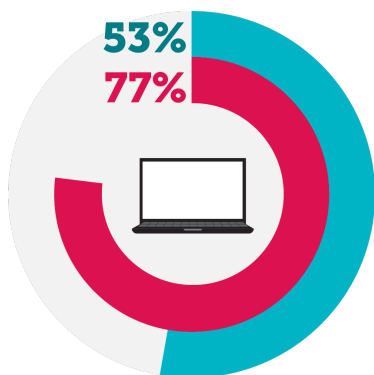
Internet*



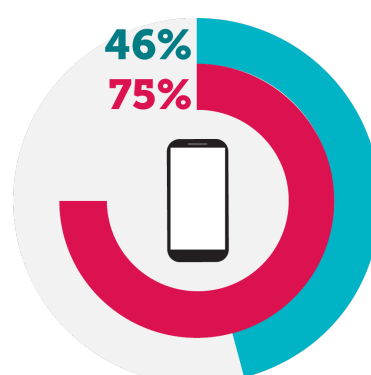
Games console



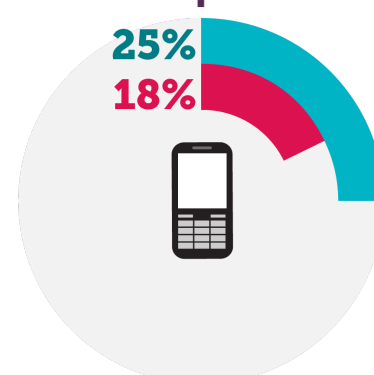
Computer (including PC, laptop and tablet)



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

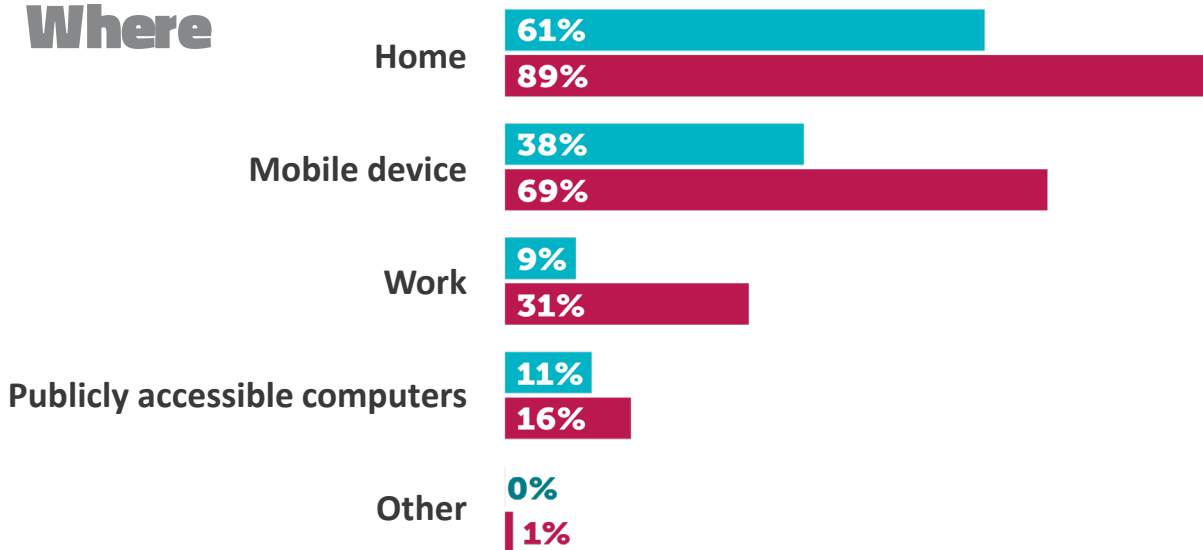


Summary

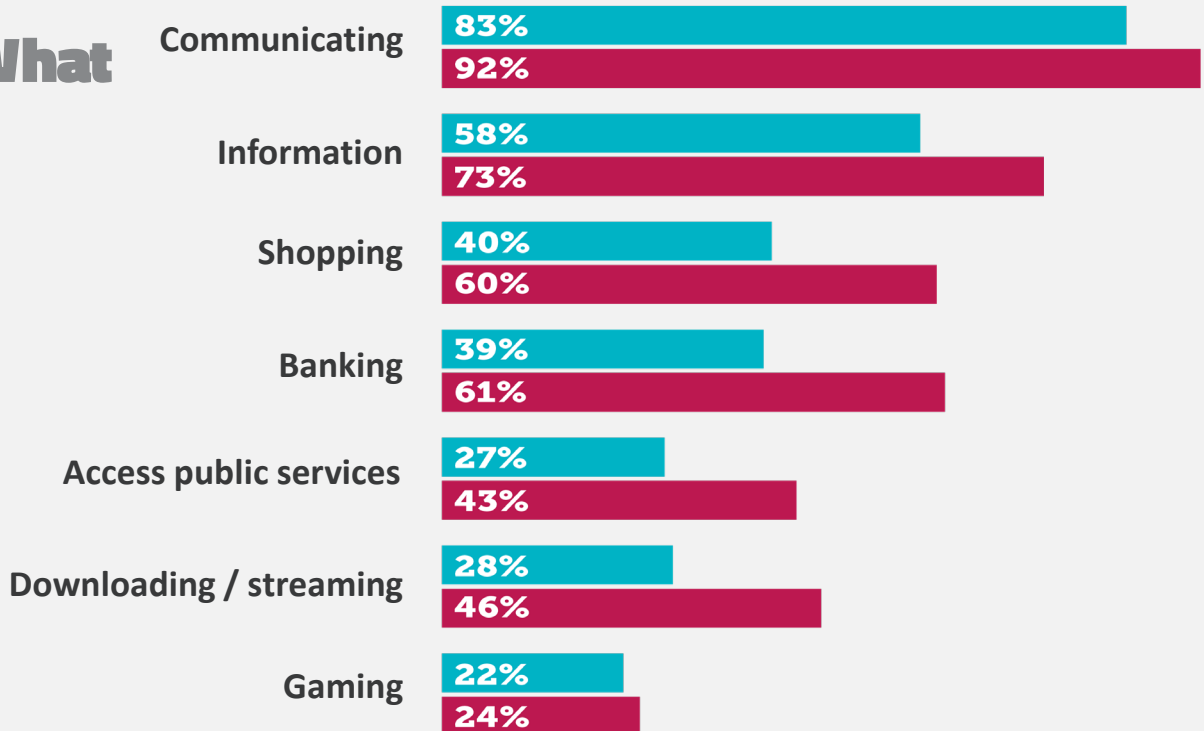
People with a visual impairment are less likely than non-disabled people to access the internet in all locations we asked about. People with a visual impairment are also less likely than non-disabled people to use the internet for the majority of activities (e.g. accessing public services, communicating via email or social networks and for finding information).

 = Vision-impaired
 = Non-disabled

Where



What

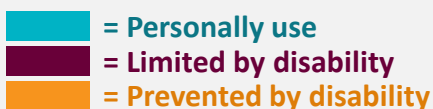


Prevention and limitation of use of communications services and devices

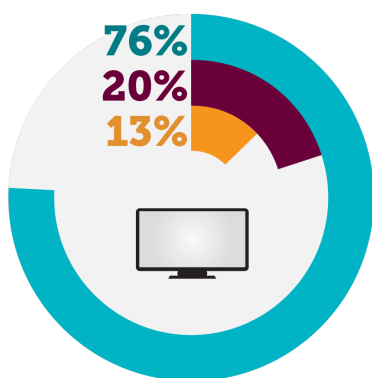


Summary

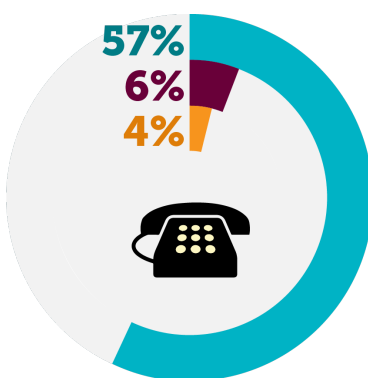
Visually impaired people are most likely to say their condition limits or prevents their use of TVs (33%) and computers (18%). Just over one in ten said the same for the internet, smartphones and simple mobile phones.



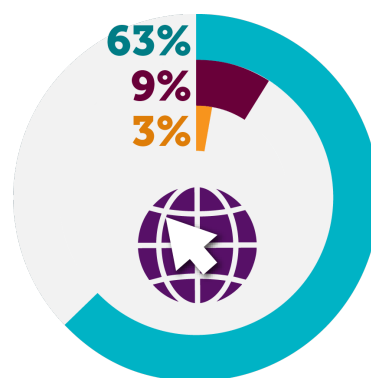
Television



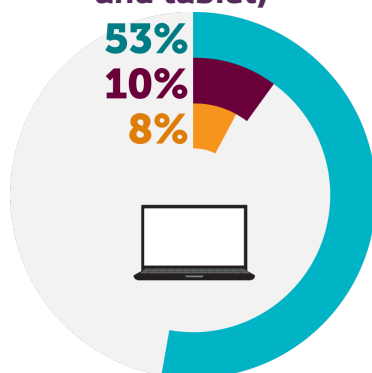
Landline



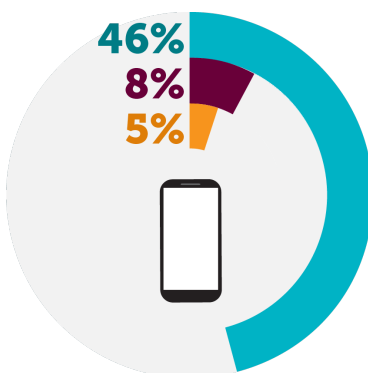
Internet



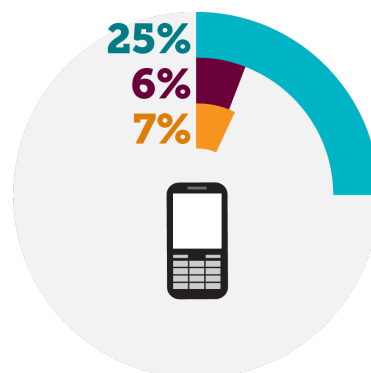
Computer (including PC, laptop and tablet)



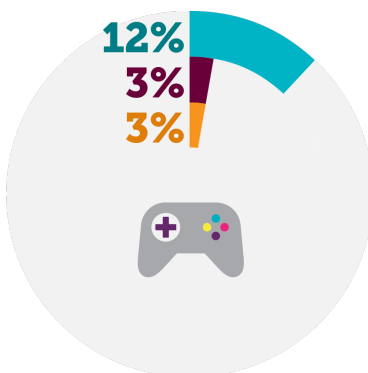
Smartphone



Other phone



Games console



Decision-making

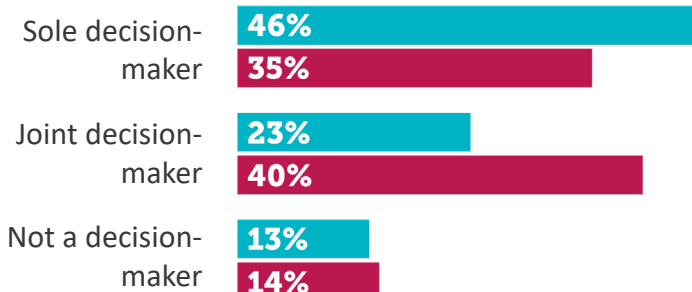


Summary

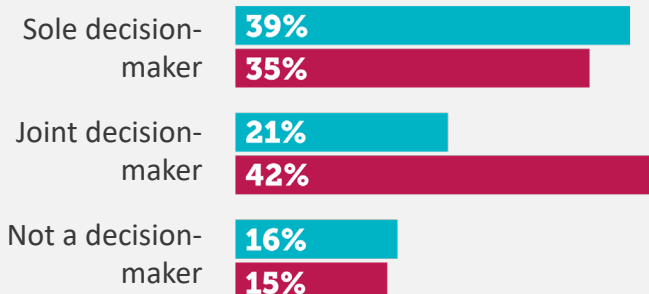
Visually impaired people are more likely than non-disabled people to be the sole decision-maker for choice of provider for landline and TV services but just as likely for mobile and internet services.

 = Vision-impaired
 = Non-disabled

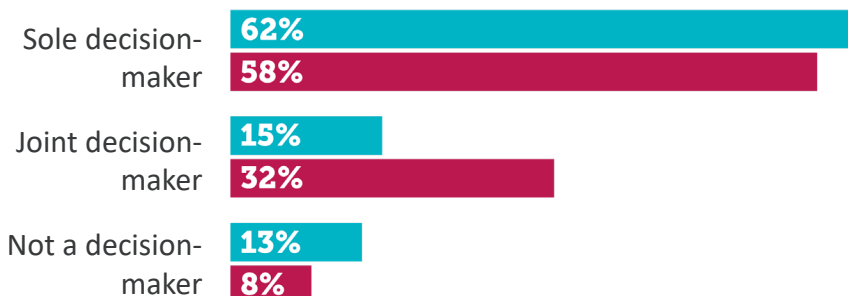
Landline



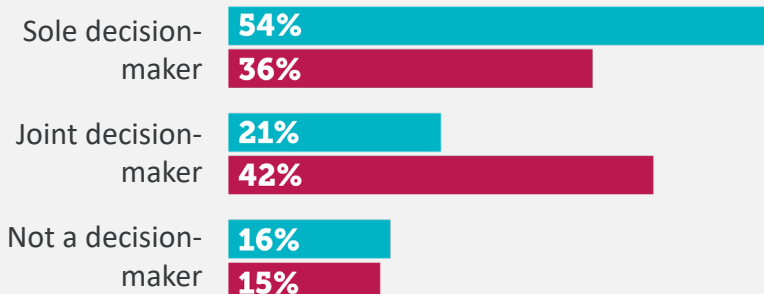
Internet



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.