

Disabled users access to and use of communication devices and services

Research summary: Multiple impairments

Published 14 January 2019





Key points

- **People with multiple impairments are more likely to be older than non-disabled people.** Nearly half (47%) of those with multiple impairments are aged 65 and over, compared to just 16% of non-disabled people. Reflecting their older age skew, people with multiple impairments are more likely than non-disabled people to be retired. They are also more likely to be unemployed.
- **Household ownership of computers, games consoles and smartphones is less likely for people with multiple impairments than non-disabled people.** However, people with multiple impairments 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 less likely for people with multiple impairments 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 on mobile networks) and less likely to do most of the internet activities we asked about (e.g. communicating, information, shopping and banking).
- **People with multiple impairments are most likely to say that their use of TVs or computers is either limited or completely prevented due to their condition.** Two in ten (20%) said their use of TV was limited or prevented, while 19% said the same for computers (PC, laptop or tablet).
- **People with multiple impairments are more likely than non-disabled people to be the sole decision maker for choice of service provider for landline, internet and TV services.** They were just as likely to be the sole decision maker for choice of mobile service provider.

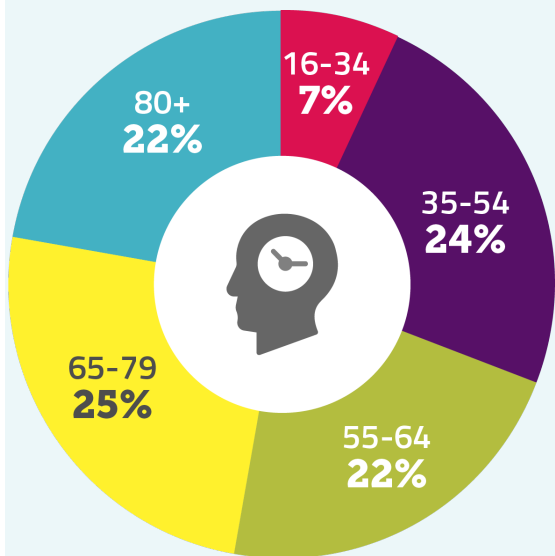
Sample profile



Summary

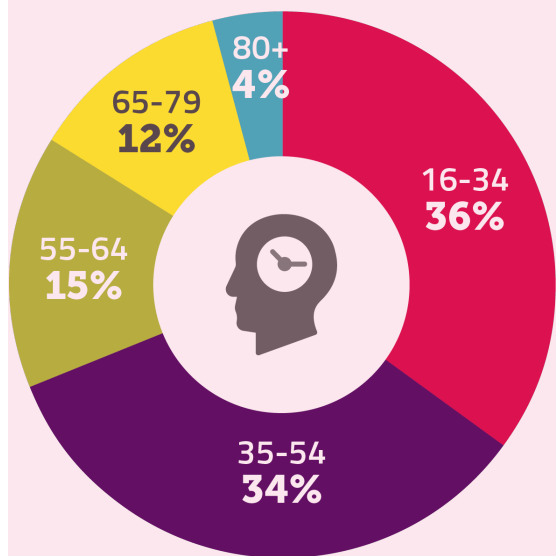
Nearly half of the people we interviewed with multiple impairments are aged over 65, compared to just 16% of non-disabled people. Reflecting their older age profile, people with multiple impairments are more likely to be retired than non-disabled people (52% vs. 18% of non-disabled consumers). People with multiple impairments are less likely than non-disabled people to be employed or in education.

Multiple disability

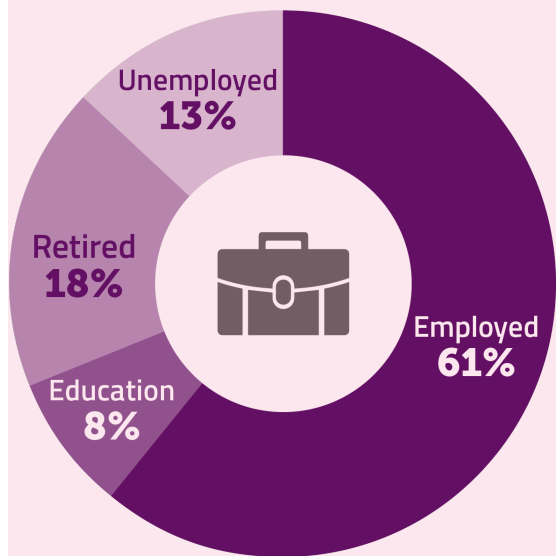
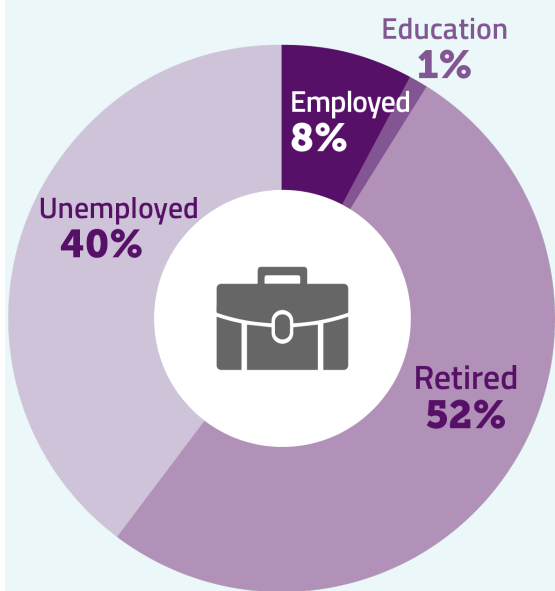


Age profile

Non-disabled



Working status



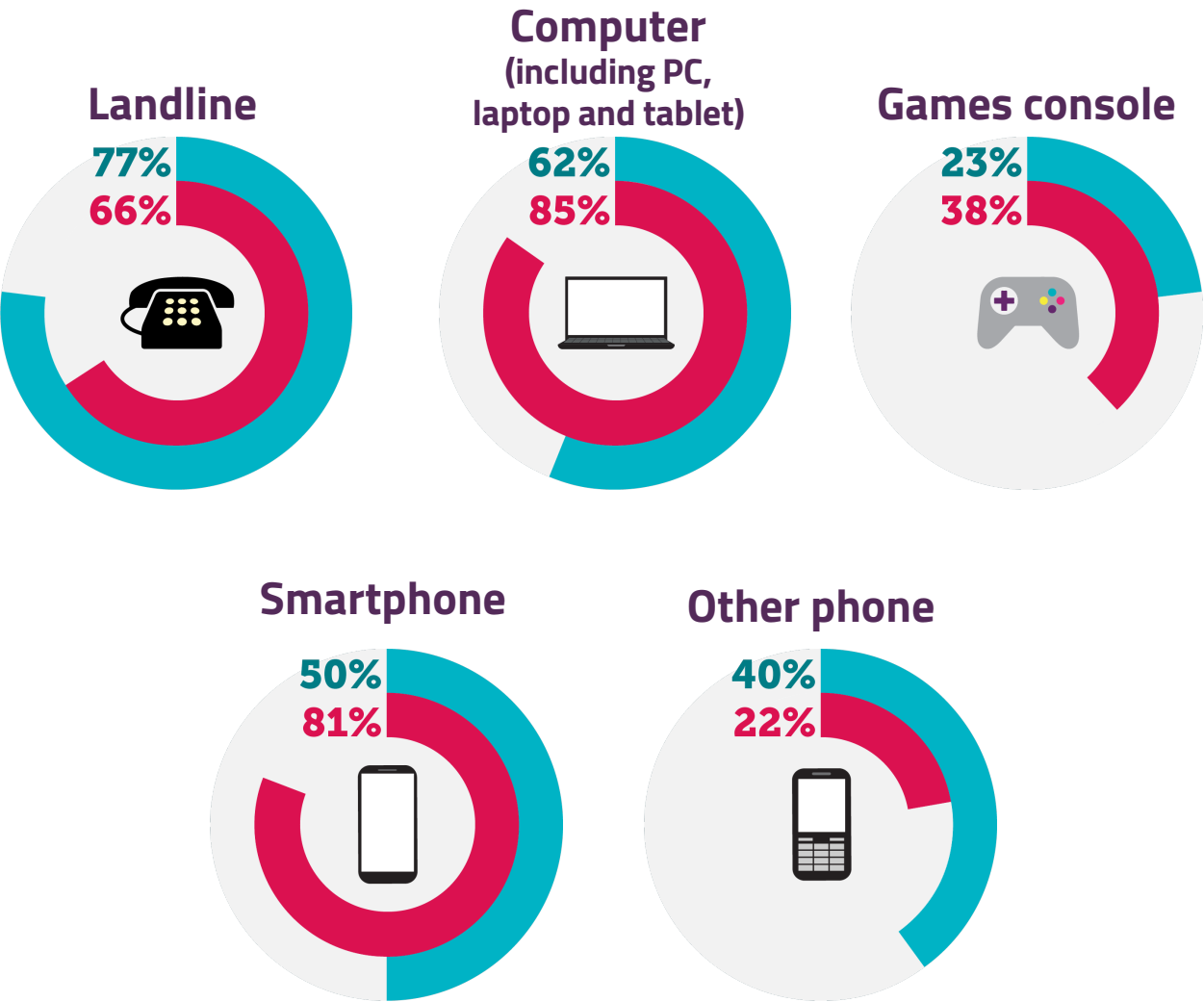
Household ownership of communications devices and services



Summary

People with a multiple impairments 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 multiple impaired people and non-disabled people is for computers and smartphones.

 = Multiple disability
 = Non-disabled

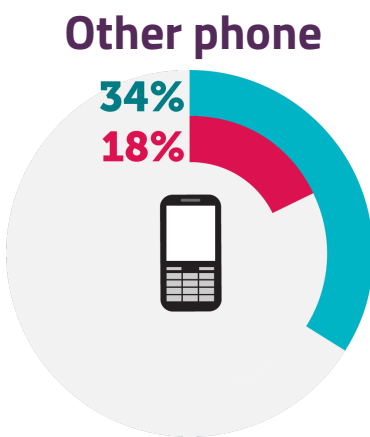
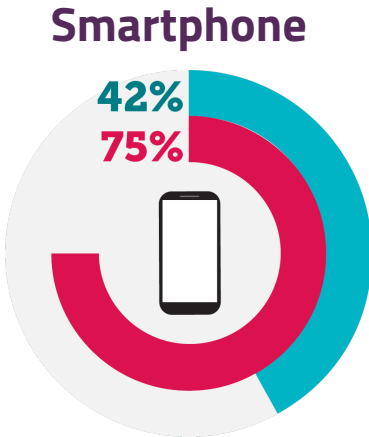
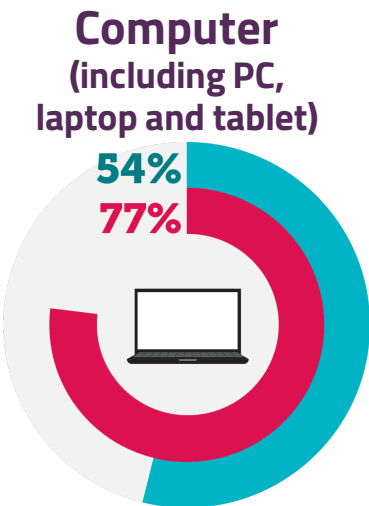
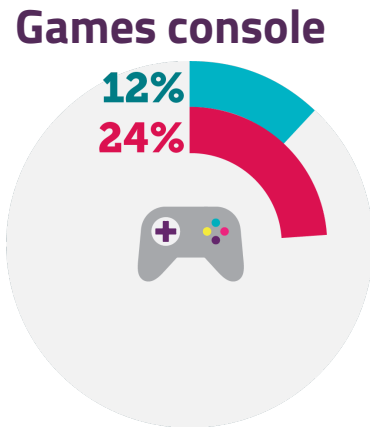
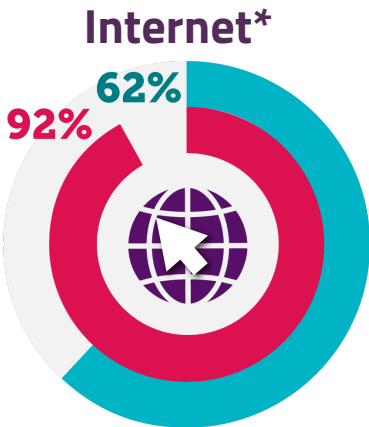
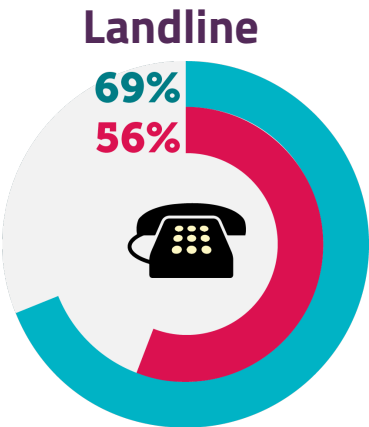


Personal use of communication devices and services



Summary

Reflecting household ownership of communications devices and services, people with a multiple impairments 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 multiple impairments to personally use the internet anywhere.



*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

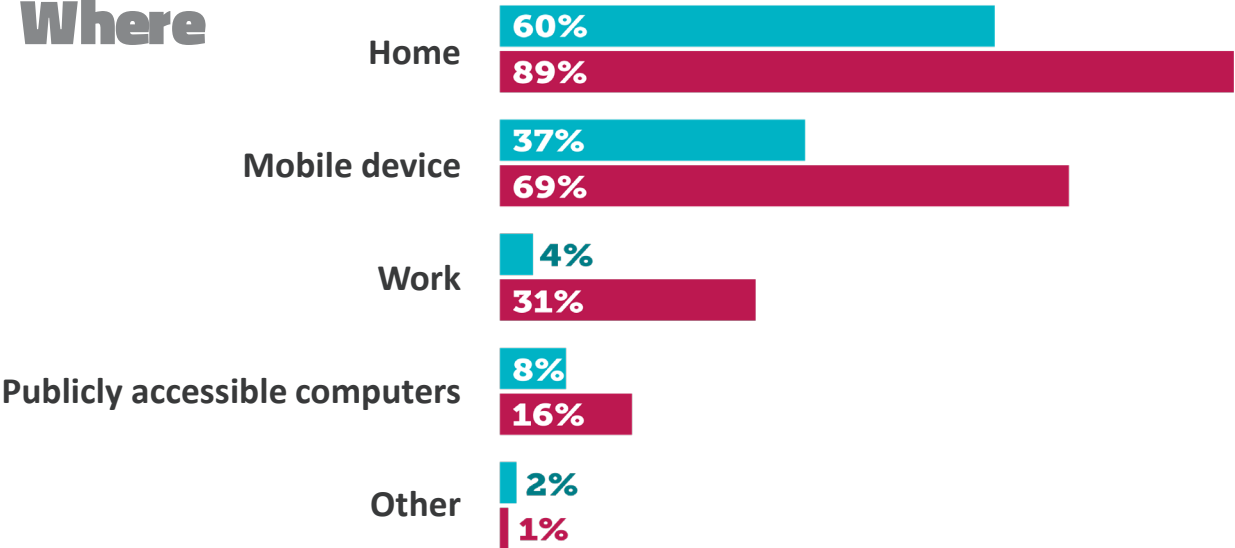


Summary

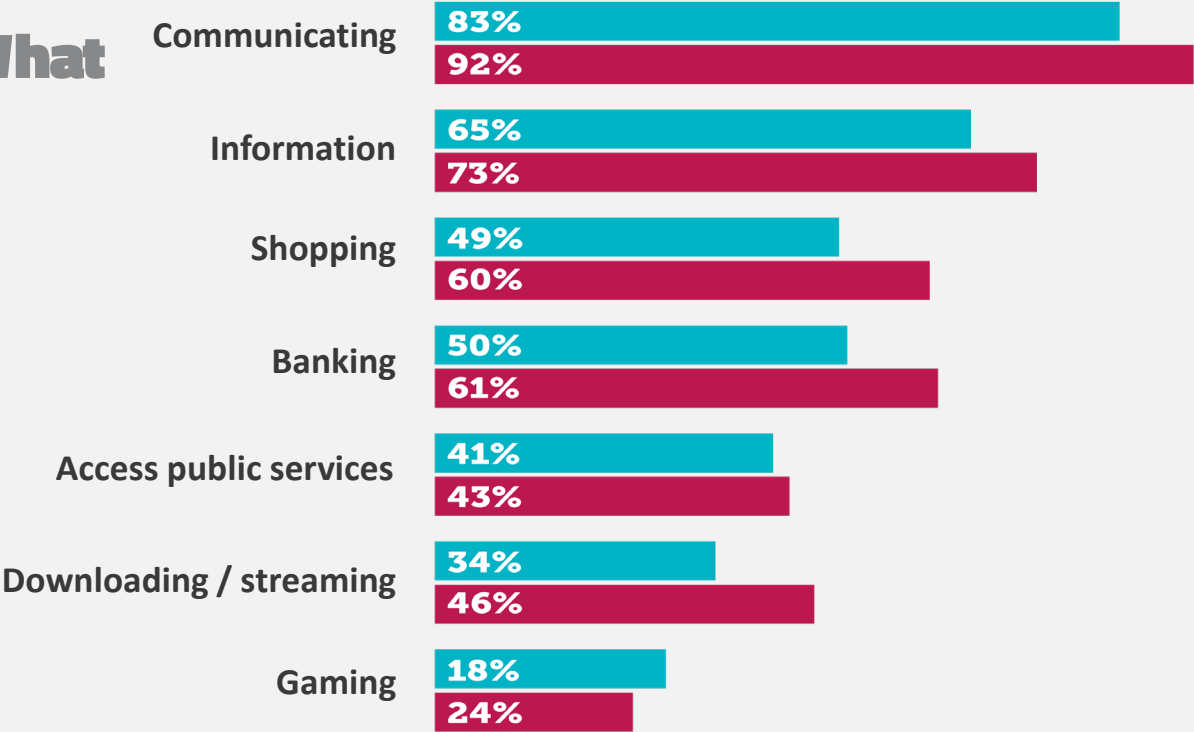
People with a multiple impairments are less likely than non-disabled people to access the internet in all of the locations we asked about. People with multiple impairments were also less likely than non-disabled people to use the internet for communicating (e.g. via email or social networks), finding information, shopping and banking.

= Multiple disability
 = Non-disabled

Where



What

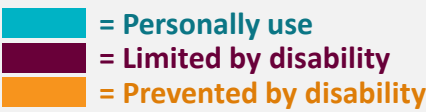


Prevention and limitation of use of communications services and devices

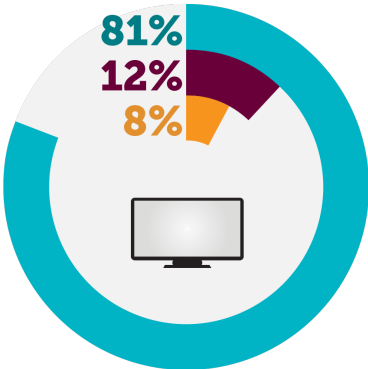


Summary

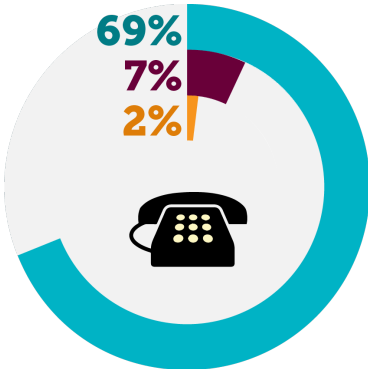
People with multiple impairments are most likely to be prevented or limited from using a television (20%) or a computer (19%) because of their condition. One in ten people with multiple impairments said their condition limited or prevented their use of smartphones or simple mobile phones.



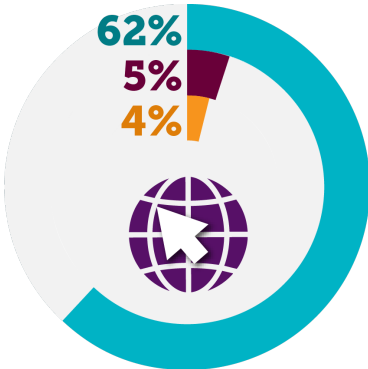
Television



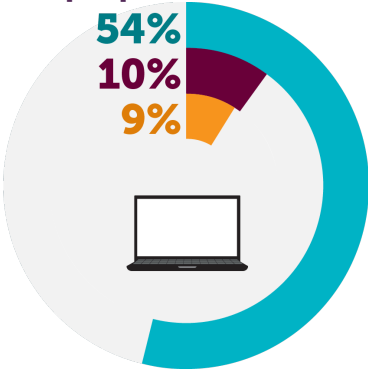
Landline



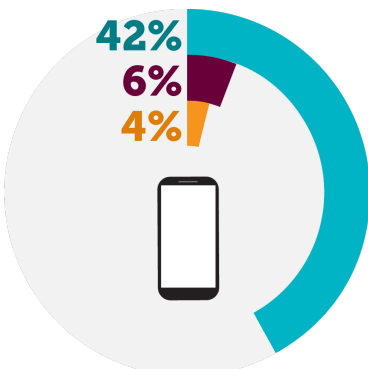
Internet



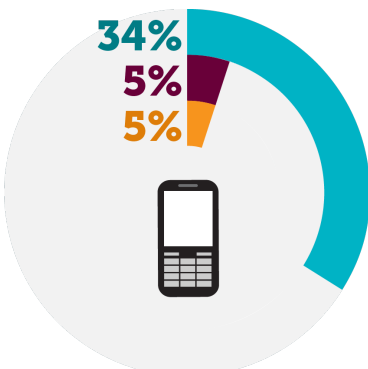
Computer
(including PC,
laptop and tablet)



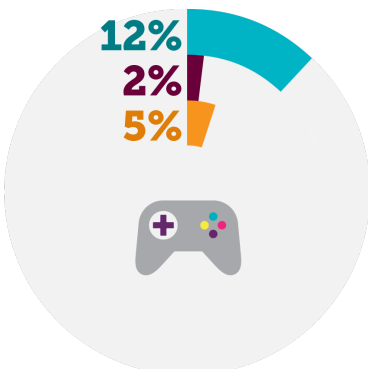
Smartphone



Other phone



Games console



Decision-making

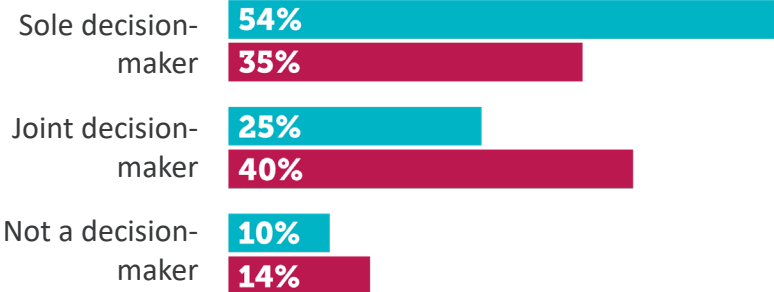


Summary

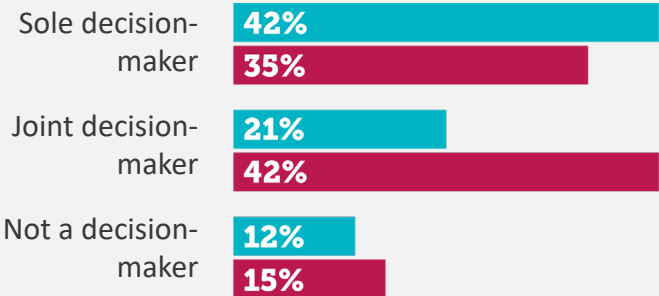
People with multiple impairments are more likely than non-disabled people to be the sole decision-makers for choice of service provider for landline, internet and TV services. They are just as likely for mobile services.

Multiple disability
Non-disabled

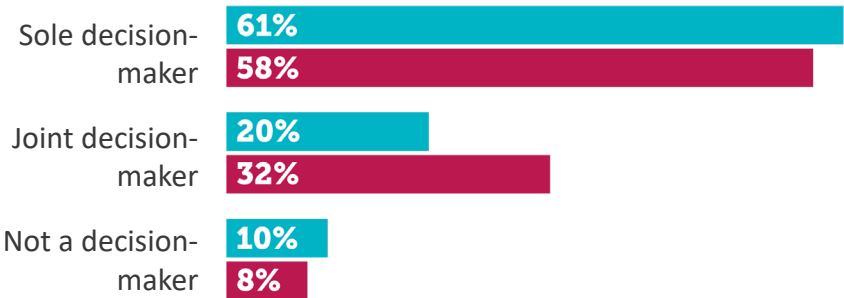
Landline



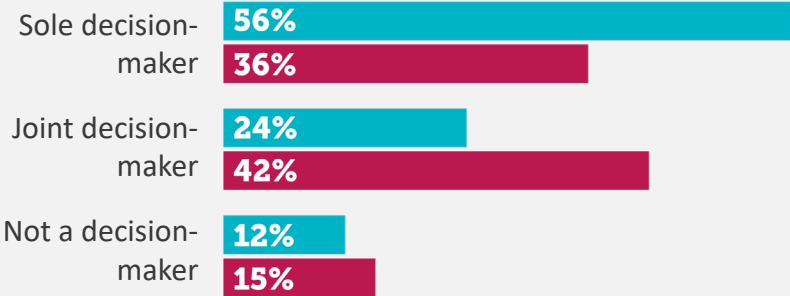
Internet



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.