

September 2023

Dr. Bernie O'Donoghue Hynes

Dr. Des Delaney

Holly Morrin



2022 Local Government Customer Services Report:

Service Awareness, Engagement, Satisfaction, and Sentiment

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September 2023

LGMA Research

ISBN: 978-1-911692-02-7

This document should be cited as:

O'Donoghue Hynes, B., Delaney, D and Morrin, H. (2023). 2022 Local Government Customer Services Report: Service Awareness, Engagement, Satisfaction, and Sentiment. Dublin. LGMA

Acknowledgements

This report captures findings in relation to a programme of work that was delivered by the LGMA Research Unit with oversight by the CCMA Corporate Committee Research Advisory Group. The authors wish to extend their gratitude to each of the group members who gave so generously of their time.

We also wish to thank, REDC who carried out the national Customer Service Survey and Diane Richmond of Unique Insights who undertook the focus groups. Thanks also to Ailish Mitchell, LGMA Student Researcher, and the LGMA Central Data Unit staff who helped with the analysis of the data.

CCMA Corporate Committee Research

Advisory Group Members

- Ruth McNally, Galway City Council, Chair and CCMA Corporate Committee representative
- Mairin O’Sullivan, Cork County Council
- Pauline Treacy, Dublin City Council
- Gemma Whitty, Wicklow County Council
- Karen Boyle, Wicklow County Council

Foreword

This is the second year the local government sector has published a customer service report. This provides us with the opportunity, for the first time, to assess whether we are making improvements in how we engage with the public and whether perceptions about local authorities are changing. What we see in the report is, that in 2022, people were more aware of the range of services being provided by local authorities and were using services more than in the previous year. There were also improvements in how people rated local authorities in relation to overall service delivery and, encouragingly, those who were actively using local authority services were more positive than the small number of non-service users.

The results illustrate that there was a marked increase in the use of websites and other electronic methods of engagement over the past two years, reflecting a general shift towards using online technologies and social media platforms to carry out business and engage with people. However, traditional forms of engagement, such as in-person, over the phone, or public meetings, continue to be important to many service users, particularly older people, and new communities.

While the 2021 report had a particular emphasis on local authority service delivery during the pandemic, in 2022 the focus switched to how effective local authorities were at communication

and engagement with the public. The previous report identified this as a weak area of performance for local authorities, but the 2022 findings reveal noticeable improvements. Respondents felt more informed about what was going on in their area and knew their local authorities better than the previous respondents, however, there is still a lot that needs to be done.

Key information provided in the report will assist the local government sector in their communications strategies, allowing, for instance, insight into the information people expect from their local authority, the topics and services on which they are less informed, and their preferred channels of information, including by demographic. For instance, there is evidence of high reliance on local newspapers and radio for information among older people, and those located outside the Dublin area, while younger people do not use websites but engage more with social media. Meanwhile, people in the Dublin region get a lot of their information from posters, national newspapers, radio and TV. These nuanced differences help us to understand and target messages about services more effectively. The focus groups added even more detail revealing that expectations about the volume and variety of information differs regionally, with those outside the Dublin region seeking more information across a wider array of channels.

The information and insights provided will inform and influence the local government sector communications strategy and have also been considered in the development of the Local Government Digital and ICT Strategy. In addition, the results are provided to each local authority and will be relied upon to inform their strategic priorities and plans.

This year's report also helps us to understand how external variables can influence the views of the public about local authorities. The evidence suggests that people living in their local area for more than 20 years and those who are settled with young children (i.e., living in an area 6-10 years) have the strongest sense of attachment to their area and are most positive about local authorities. This illustrates the value of settled communities with ample opportunities for community engagement and involvements; values which we can promote through our planning processes, community outreach, environmental services, housing services, libraries and much more.

Ann Doherty
Chair

CCMA Corporate Committee



Cumann Lucht Bainistíochta Contae agus Cathrach
County and City Management Association

Contents

Acknowledgements	3	Sentiment	40
Foreword	4	Communications and service provision	42
Executive summary	8	Equality and access	43
Introduction	12	Improvements in customer service	44
Background and context	12	Special Theme: Communication and Engagement	45
Methodology	14	Use of social media and websites	45
Research objectives	14	Information the public want from local authorities	45
Research design and methods	14	Preferred communication services	46
A mixed-methods approach	14	Further Insights	46
2022 national survey	14	Sentiment of service users vs non-service users	46
2022 focus groups	15	The influence of a sense of belonging and years living in an area on sentiment scores	47
2022 case studies	15	2022 Focus Groups	49
Findings	16	Focus group participants	49
Format of findings presented in the report	16	Focus group findings: communications and engagement	50
Respondent profile	17	Focus group findings: value for money	53
Age, gender, and region	17	Conclusions	54
Sense of belonging to the local area	18	Case studies	55
Duration living in local authority area	19	Case Study One	56
Awareness	21	Case Study Two	59
Overall service awareness	21	Case Study Three	62
Awareness by age category	22	Bibliography	67
Awareness by gender	22	Appendix 1: 2022 Survey Changes	68
Awareness by region	24		
Service use	26		
Overall service use	26		
Service use by age category	27		
Service use by gender	28		
Service use by region	29		
Satisfaction with services used	31		
Channels of engagement	32		
Sources of information	33		
Source of information by age	34		
Source of information by gender	39		
Source of information by region	39		

Figure 1: Age profile of respondents	17	Table 5: Years living in the local area by age group 2022	20
Figure 2: Likelihood of being aware local authorities provide services 2022	25	Table 6: Years living in the local area by region 2022	20
Figure 3: Local authority services used in past 12 months	27	Table 7: Percentage of respondents who were aware local authorities provide service	21
Figure 4: Likelihood of using services by age cohorts in 2022	29	Table 8: Awareness of local authority services by age 2022	23
Figure 5: Satisfaction rates with local authority services 2022	31	Table 9: Significant service awareness variances by gender 2022	23
Figure 6: Source of Information	33	Table 10: Awareness of local authority services by region 2022	24
Figure 7: Likelihood of using local authority information channels by age cohort 2022	35	Table 11: Most utilised local authority services 2021 and 2022	26
Figure 8: Likelihood of using traditional media channels by age cohort 2022	36	Table 12: Services used over the past 12 months by age 2022	28
Figure 9: Likelihood of using social media channels by age cohort 2022	37	Table 13: Variations in service use by gender 2022	29
Figure 10: Likelihood of using face to face channels by age cohort 2022	38	Table 14: Services used over the past 12 months by region 2022	30
Figure 11: Sentiment statement responses 2022	40	Table 15: Channels of engagement used over the past five years 2022	32
Figure 12: Sentiment statement responses 2021	41	Table 16: Source of information about local authorities by age group 2022	34
Figure 13: Agreement with communication and service provision sentiment statements 2022 and 2021	42	Table 17: Source of information about local authorities by region 2022	39
Figure 14: Agreement with equality and access sentiment statements 2021 and 2022	43	Table 18: Information public want from public authorities 2022	45
Figure 15: Agreement with improved customer service statements 2021 and 2022	44	Table 19: Preferred communication services 2022	46
Figure 16: Type of information wanted by public - focus group 2022	52	Table 20: Sentiment of services users and non-service users 2022	46
Figure 17: Preferred channel of engagement by target group - focus group 2022	52	Table 21: Sentiment agreement and sense of belonging to the local area 2022	47
Table 1: Sense of belonging to the local area by gender 2022	18	Table 22: Number of years living in the local area and agreement with sentiment statements 2022	48
Table 2: Sense of belonging to the local area by age 2022	18	Table 23: Breakdown of focus groups by location and target group 2022	49
Table 3: Sense of belonging to the local area by region 2022	19	Table 24: Value for money focus group participant mix 2022	50
Table 4: Years living in the local area by gender 2022	19		

Executive Summary

Respondent profile

- 1,858 people participated in the survey. The sample was representative of the general population by gender and aged 18+ and they were proportionately located across all local authority areas.
- 69% of respondents had been living in their local area for more than 20 years (or all their lives) and 72% felt a strong attachment to their area.

Awareness of local authority services

29 services were detailed, and respondents were asked whether they were aware local authorities provided the services.

- More than half of the respondents were aware that local authorities provided 28 of the 29 services detailed.
- Awareness levels increased in 2022 compared to 2021 with more services being classified in the high awareness category (15 vs 13) and less classified in the low awareness category (1 vs 3).
- Respondents aged 65+ had highest awareness levels for 28 of 29 services and those aged 18-25 had the lowest levels of awareness for 22 of the 29 services.
- Men were more aware of sport and leisure facilities and community and youth centres, as well as business support services while women showed higher awareness about motor tax collection services, new housing development supports and street lighting.
- Respondents in Munster were most aware of services while those in the Dublin region were least aware.

29 Local Authority Services

Footpaths

Street Cleaning

Street Lighting

Litter Control

Roads

Library Services

Housing

Local Outdoor Leisure Amenities

Recycling Services

Community Supports

Water/Roadside drainage

Planning & Development

Parking & Road Safety

Dog Warden Service

New Housing Dev Support

Promoting County Development

Cemeteries and Burial Grounds

Register of Electors/Elections

Traveller Accommodation

Sports/Leisure & Com/Youth Centres

Homeless Supports

Fire Services

Urban and Village Renewal

Arts & Heritage Services

Environ Protect/Awareness/
Enforcement

Tourism/Events

Motor Tax Collection

Monitoring Waterways/Beaches

Business Support Services

Reported service use

The survey sought to identify how many respondents had used any of the 26 services detailed in this section, over the previous year.

- 95% of respondents had used at least one local authority service in the previous 12-months.
- Usage rates had increased across most services compared with 2021.
- The top six local authority services used by customers were: litter bins, recycling centres, parking, motor tax collection, library services, and local outdoor leisure amenities, the same services as those identified in 2021.
- The youngest age cohort (18-24) were more likely to use 17 of the services compared to any other age cohort, despite having lowest levels of awareness of services provision overall.
- Females were more likely to use motor tax collection services and libraries, than males. Males were more likely to use the register of electors than females.
- Connacht/Ulster respondents were least likely to use 19 of the 26 services. The Rest of Leinster and Munster had highest usage of 11 services while those in the Dublin region had highest usage of 8 services.

Satisfaction with services used

- More than 70% of service users were satisfied with 12 of the 26 services.
- More than 50% of service users were happy with 23 of the 26 services, except for (i) roads, (ii) planning and (iii) environmental protection, awareness, and enforcement.
- Satisfaction was strongest for library services (90%) followed by fire services (83%), recycling centres (80%),

cemeteries and burial grounds (78%), and outdoor leisure amenities (77%).

Channels of engagement

Respondents were asked to select the channels they had used to engage with local authorities over the past five years.

- Websites were the primary mode of engagement with local authorities over the previous two years, superseding in-person contacts with staff, which had been the preferred mode of engagement prior to that.
- Engagement using email, online services, social media, text alerts had all increased over time while engagement in public meetings and via letter had decreased.
- While numbers engaging using third parties (i.e., councillor, interpreter, family member) were small, the rate of use remained stable over the 5 years.

Sources of information

The various sources of information about local authority services were identified by respondents.

- Websites were the primary source of information with 47% using local authority websites and 9% using other websites.
- In-person information sources remain important with 25% relying on family or friends, 16% councillor and 11% local authority staff.
- Females were more inclined to use Facebook than males.
- The older cohorts were more reliant on traditional sources of information such as newspapers, radio, or contacting councillors or local authority staff. The youngest cohorts (18-25) were least likely to use any of the channels (especially

websites) except for asking family or friends for information. Those aged between 25-44 had higher engagement with social media channels compared to those younger or older, while local authority websites were utilised by the 45-64 cohort at a higher rate than the other age groups.

- Respondents in Munster showed a preference for face-to-face communication to get information. In Connacht/Ulster local newspapers and local radio were utilised more than in other regions. Facebook was most popular in the Rest of Leinster. In the Dublin region, respondents used a mix but were least likely to use local newspapers or radio and most likely to get information from posters and leaflets.

Special theme: communications and engagement

- Respondents wanted information from local authorities about what was going on in the local area and operational information about services (e.g., opening hours). There was less interest in information about how local authorities functioned or council meetings.
- Email alerts and email newsletters were preferred communication tools while there was less interest in podcasts.

Sentiment

12 statements were provided under three themes and respondents were asked whether they agreed with those statements.

- Opinions in 2022 were more polarised than in 2021. While there were higher levels of agreement with most statements, there were also several

instances where there were higher levels of disagreement and lower levels of neutrality overall.

- There were increased agreement rates for three of the four sentiment areas under the theme of communications and service provision compared to 2021: my local authority keeps me informed; I know my local authority well; and it is simple and easy to engage with my local authority.
- There were decreases in two of the sentiment areas (improved access to services and decision making for minorities and people with disabilities) and an increase in one area (local authorities treat people in a fair and equal manner) under the theme of equality and access.
- All four sentiment statements showed higher rates of agreement in the customer service theme compared with 2021, particularly in relation to online service provision, innovation, and customer focus.

Further insights

- Service users were more positive about local authorities and had higher rates of agreement with all sentiment statements compared to non-service users.
- Respondents with a strong sense of belonging to their local area had higher levels of agreement to all sentiment statements compared to those who did not have a strong sense of belonging.
- Those living in their local area for 20+ years or between 6 and 10 years had higher levels of agreement with sentiment statements and those living in an area for 5 years or less had the lowest level of agreement with sentiment statements.

Focus groups

The focus groups explored local authority communications and engagement and value for money. In total, 74 people participated across 8 focus groups.

- Participants identified two types of information that they wanted from local authorities:
 - Urgent information relating to events that could have the potential to disrupt their normal behaviour
 - Non-urgent information that could enhance or add value to their lives or enable them to participate in or respond to topics of interest or concern.
 - There was a preference for emails, especially for non-urgent information but phone for more urgent information.
 - There was a view that local authorities communicated in a reactive rather than proactive way.
 - Participants wanted more effective use of social media and more comprehensive and consistent websites, particularly in relation to service access.
 - Outside the Dublin region, participants had higher expectations about the amount and variety of information that should be provided by local authorities and consequently felt local authorities could be doing better. In contrast, Dublin based participants, did not expect as much information to be provided via a wide range of channels. They were much happier with local authority communications and engagement.
 - In relation to value for money, rural participants who were experienced in advocacy and engagement with local authorities to push for change gave lower rating than Dublin based participants, who only engaged with local authorities for service provision.
- Opinions about value for money were informed by personal experience or views about local authorities and statistical and quantitative information provided had little impact on the views of participants.
 - Participants felt qualitative information would be more useful to assist with informing views.

Introduction

Background and context

The LGMA was designated as the body responsible for tracking customer satisfaction by the National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) in the NOAC Strategy and Framework Work Programme 2020-2022 (2019). A three-year programme of work was developed by the LGMA that included three distinct elements:

- an annual national survey of the public to assess levels of awareness, engagement, and satisfaction with local authority services, and to assess sentiments levels in relation to local authority customer service levels and adherence to the Public Sector Equality Human Rights Duty (IHREC, 2021), OPS2020 (Government of Ireland, 2017) and Better Public Service 2030 (Government of Ireland, 2023),
- focus groups to explore emerging themes and findings in more depth, and
- case-studies to illustrate examples of good practice relating to customer service.

A Research Advisory Group (RAG) was established to oversee the delivery of the work programme, assist in the interpretation of findings, and assist in dissemination of results across the sector. The RAG members reported into the County and City Management Association (CCMA)¹ Corporate Committee and the

Chair of the RAG provided an update on the project at each bi-monthly meeting.

Consultation also took place with NOAC to review the content of the national survey and to identify themes for further exploration through the focus groups and via additional questions on the national survey. Following a review of the 2021 national survey results, the theme agreed to by all parties that needed further exploration in 2022 was how to improve communications and engagement between local authorities and the public.

The 2022 report contains findings for 2022 and a comparison with 2021 to assess whether there were any significant changes to the results. This year's report also includes an additional section in relation to levels of satisfaction with services. The focus in 2021 was to ascertain whether respondents were using services, and following confirmation that service users were being targeted, the survey was revised to assess levels of satisfaction amongst those who had used services.

It is acknowledged that there are limitations to the satisfaction findings in the report. The ideal method of service satisfaction assessment is to engage with customers directly at the end of the customer service cycle, but the academic literature confirms that there is still a level of reliability, although reduced, if the service has been used within the previous twelve-month period (Boyle,

¹ The 31 local authority chief executives and the assistant chief executives in Dublin City Council are members of the CCMA. The CCMA operate through seven policy committees, one of which is the CCMA Corporate Committee. Customer service falls within the remit of this committee.

2020). Additionally, when asked in the survey about the services used, only generic service titles were provided for selection (e.g., housing, planning, etc.) with no option to be more specific about the exact service used (e.g., planning appeal, rent payment, etc.). In the case of housing, there are 90 distinct services identified in the local government services catalogue² but we cannot identify which of these 90 services was used by a respondent. However, the findings provide some valuable insights into general levels of satisfaction and through comparison over years to come, it will provide some scope to test the consistency and reliability of findings.

This report also includes a summary of findings from the six focus groups that sought to identify the type of information that the public were most interested in receiving from local authorities and channels that could most effectively be used to disseminate this information. Results are also presented from two focus groups who explore the theme of 'value for money' in a local authority context. Finally, case-studies are provided that illustrate communication and engagement initiatives and were chosen from the Excellence in Local Government Awards shortlists for 2022.



² <https://services.localgov.ie/en-ie/Home>

Methodology

Research objectives

The primary goal of the LGMA customer service research is to assess the performance of the sector and generate findings that will aid the sector to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery as well as improving access to services for all members of the public.

More specifically the objectives are to:

- a. Determine the levels of customer satisfaction, engagement, and awareness in relation to services provided by local authorities as well as sentiments about service delivery.
- b. Explore the reasons for these responses.
- c. Assist the sector to improve and enhance services and staff training in local authorities.
- d. Assess whether improvements were being made over time i.e., trend analysis.

Research design and methods

A literature review was commissioned to examine the most effective ways to gather information about customer experiences in a public sector setting (Boyle, 2020). This was used to inform a mixed-methods approach, comprising three distinct components:

• National Survey

A key advantage of the national survey is that large representative samples of the customers can be engaged with at a single point in time. As the data is quantitative in nature, surveys facilitate

the production of measurable results and the development of trend data over time. However, they are not an appropriate tool to explore detailed or complex 'why' questions.

• Focus Groups

Focus groups are used to explore 'why' questions and facilitate the provision of additional information to participants to help understand the topic, if necessary. Participant numbers are restricted so that each participant has sufficient time to speak about the topic in some depth.

• Case studies

Case studies are an important research tool to provide a comprehensive and accurate view of customer experiences and to illustrate the efforts of local authorities in meeting the needs of customers.

A mixed-methods approach

2022 national survey

The 2021 national survey template was reviewed with the RAG and NOAC, and modifications were made to take account of the previous survey findings, new service and policy developments, and requests for additional information. When the 2022 survey was finalised, it contained the following key changes:

- The number of local authority services detailed was reduced from 36 to 29. This involved the amalgamation of some services and the introduction of some new services.

- A new section was added to assess levels of satisfaction with services used by respondents.
- Sources of information about local authorities were updated to include more technology-based options.
- A new section to assess 'sense of belonging to the local area' and 'number of years living in the area' was added.
- A new sentiment statement was added on the theme of 'age friendly' services.
- The special theme section for 2022 was added on the theme of 'communications and engagement'.

2022 focus groups

Two themes were explored in the focus groups in 2022. The first related to local government's **communications and engagement** with the public. The 2021 national survey reported relatively low levels of agreement and high levels of disagreement with the survey sentiment statements relating to communications and engagement with local authorities:

- In 2021, 18% of respondents agreed and 50% disagreed with the statement "My county council keeps me well informed about what's going on in the area" and
- In 2021, 28% agreed and 40% disagreed with the statement "I know a lot about my county council by seeing or hearing their advertisements, seeing them work in the community, or contacting them".

Given these results, the local government Communications Network, the CCMA Corporate Committee and the LGMA Head of Communications, requested that the theme of communications and engagement be explored further. NOAC agreed that this should be the primary theme for the 2022 focus groups but asked that a second topic also be explored.

NOAC were interested in exploring the public's perception of value for money in the context of local government. This is a topic that had been included on the 2018-2020 IPSOS surveys but had been omitted from the REDC surveys. This was because focus groups were identified as a more appropriate channel through which to explore the topic.

Additionally, NOAC asked that particular attention be paid to issues that older persons and new communities may experience when engaging or communicating with local authorities.

2022 case studies

The case studies showcase local authority examples of communications and engagement that yield benefits for the customer and the local authorities. Three local authorities were selected from the Excellence in Local Government Awards shortlists that had projects with a strong focus on customer engagement. Templates were provided to Longford, Donegal, and Dun Laoghaire so that the information could be presented in a consistent manner, with key learnings highlighted.

Findings

REDC conducted the second annual national customer service survey for the LGMA in July 2022. Most respondents completed the survey via the REDC online omnibus, but additional boost surveys were administered to ensure a minimum quota of 50 persons per local authority. Quota controls were implemented to ensure there was a representative sample of adults aged 18 and above from the Republic of Ireland. The collected data was weighted based on gender, age, region and social class to ensure it represented the national population according to the Central Statistics Office (CSO) 2016 Census figures. The four geographic regions used in the report for analysis, correspond to the same regions selected last year, i.e., Dublin, Rest of Leinster, Munster, and Connacht/Ulster as they were of similar population size.

Format of findings presented in the report

The data findings in this report are presented under the themes that appeared in the survey:

- Respondent profile (gender, age group, region of residence, duration living in the area, sense of belonging to the area)
 - Levels of awareness of local authority services
 - Levels of local authority service use over the past 12 months
 - Levels of satisfaction with local authority services used
 - Channels of engagement with local authorities over the past five years
- Sources of information about local authority services
 - 2022 special theme: communication and engagement with local authorities in relation to services
 - Sentiment about local authority service provision

In addition, the final section reports on further insights garnered when the survey data was cross tabulated across service use, sense of belonging to the local area, duration living in the area and sentiments about local authorities.

Under each heading the data is presented and reviewed under four headings (i) the overall results for all respondents (ii) gender (iii) age, and (iv) region. Where relevant, a comparison with 2021 is included.

Respondent profile

One thousand, eight hundred and fifty-eight people responded to the survey which was administered between July 7th and July 20th, 2022. This was a small increase in the number of participants when compared with 2021 when 1,744 respondents completed the survey.

Age, gender and region

All respondents were aged 18 years or older and six age bands were identified for respondents to select from. The numbers recruited under each age band were proportionate to the numbers reported for these age bands in the CSO Census 2016 figures.

Those aged 35-44 represented the largest number of participants and made up 21% of respondents. The 65+ age group represented 19% of the sample, the 45-54 age group was 18%, the 25-34 age group was 17%, while the 55-64 age cohort accounted for 14% of the sample. The lowest representation was in the 18-24 age group, comprising 11% of the respondents.

As was the case in 2021, 51% of respondents were female, and 49% were male. There were 524 (28%) respondents from the Dublin region; 504 (27%) from the Rest of Leinster; 500 (27%) from Munster and 330 (18%) from the Connacht/Ulster region.

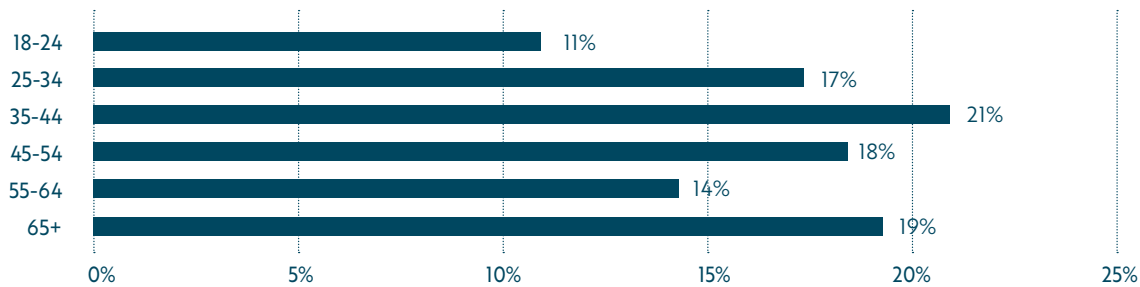


Figure 1: Age profile of respondents

Sense of belonging to the local area

In 2022 a new section was added to the survey to explore how attached respondents felt to their local area and how long they were living in the area. The objective was to use this data to assess whether any correlation existed between these features and how participants responded to statements relating to local authority services.

Overall, 72% of respondents had a strong sense of belonging to their local area, 12% did not have a strong sense of belonging and 16% were neutral in their sense of belonging to their local area. More females

had a strong sense of belonging to their area (75%) compared to males (70%). Males tended to be more neutral in their sense of belonging (14%) than females (9%).

Respondents' sense of belonging increased as they aged. Eighty-two percent of those aged 65+ reported a strong sense of belonging to their local area compared with 58% of those aged between 18 and 24. Conversely, the youngest cohort (18-24) were more likely to have a weak (24%) or neutral (18%) sense of belonging to their local area while those aged 65+ were less likely to have a weak (5%) or neutral (12%) sense of belonging to their area.

Table 1: Sense of belonging to the local area by gender 2022

	All respondents	Male	Female
N=	1,858	909	947
Net strong	72%	70%	75%
Net weak	12%	17%	16%
Net neutral	16%	14%	9%

Table 2: Sense of belonging to the local area by age 2022

	All respondents	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
N=	1,858	204	317	390	335	260	352
Net strong	72%	58%	69%	72%	73%	73%	82%
Net weak	12%	24%	11%	13%	10%	10%	5%
Net neutral	16%	18%	21%	15%	16%	17%	12%

Legend Highest point Lowest point

Table 3: Sense of belonging to the local area by region 2022

	All respondents	Dublin	Rest of Leinster	Munster	Connacht / Ulster
N=	1,858	524	504	500	330
Net strong	72%	69%	70%	76%	74%
Net weak	12%	12%	12%	11%	11%
Net neutral	16%	19%	18%	13%	15%

Legend Highest point Lowest point

Regionally, those living in the Dublin region were least likely to have a strong sense of belonging (69%) followed closely by the Rest of Leinster (70%). Those in Munster were most likely to have a strong sense of belonging (76%) as were those in Connacht/Ulster (74%). Having a weak sense of belonging was relatively consistent across regions as the percentages ranged between 11% and 12%. Those most inclined to be neutral were in the Dublin and Rest of Leinster regions.

Duration living in local authority area

Forty-five percent of respondents were living in their local area all their life, and 24% were living locally for over twenty years. Eighteen percent of respondents were living in their area ten years or less and 14% were between 11 and 20 years in their area. There were no significant differences between males and females.

Table 4: Years living in the local area by gender 2022

	All respondents	Male	Female
N=	1,858	909	947
Less than two years	3%	3%	3%
2-5 years	8%	7%	8%
6-10 years	7%	7%	7%
11-20 years	14%	14%	15%
Over 20 years	24%	24%	24%
All my life	45%	45%	44%

Table 5: Years living in the local area by age group 2022

	All respondents	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
N=	1,858	204	317	390	335	260	352
Less than two years	3%	6%	6%	2%	2%	2%	0%
2-5 years	8%	9%	18%	8%	4%	3%	3%
6-10 years	7%	3%	12%	12%	4%	3%	2%
11-20 years	14%	13%	9%	21%	21%	16%	5%
Over 20 years	24%	7%	9%	13%	23%	36%	51%
All my life	45%	61%	46%	44%	45%	40%	39%

Legend Highest point Lowest point

Table 6: Years living in the local area by region 2022

	All respondents	Dublin	Rest of Leinster	Munster	Connacht / Ulster
N=	1,858	524	504	500	330
Less than two years	3%	4%	1%	2%	3%
2-5 years	8%	11%	7%	6%	6%
6-10 years	7%	7%	7%	6%	6%
11-20 years	14%	12%	19%	13%	14%
Over 20 years	24%	27%	24%	20%	26%
All my life	45%	39%	42%	53%	45%

Legend Highest point Lowest point

For all age groups, the most frequent duration living in an area was 'all their lives'. The rate was high for those aged 18-24 at 61% but ranged between 39% for those aged 65+ and 46% for those aged between 25 and 34.

Those aged 65+ were most likely to have lived in their local area for more than 20 years. Those aged 35 to 54 were most prevalent amongst those living in an area for 11-20 years, while those aged 25-44 were most prevalent amongst those living in an area between 6-10 years. Those aged 18-34 were prevalent amongst those living in an area for less than 5 years.

People in Munster were most likely to have lived in their area all their lives (53%) while those in Dublin were least likely to have lived in their local area all their lives (39%). However, those in the Dublin region (27%) and Connacht/Ulster (26%) were more likely to have lived in the area for over 20 years than those in Munster (20%) or Rest of Leinster (24%). Those living in the Dublin region were most prevalent amongst those living in an area for less than 5 years. Rest of Leinster had the highest percentage of people living in the local area for 11-20 years while the spread was quite even across the regions for those living in an area for 6-10 years.

Awareness

Local authorities offer a wide range of services but not all services are relevant in every area. To focus on meaningful data, the survey identified 29 key services that are commonly available across all local authorities and assessed respondents' awareness that local authorities were responsible for the provision of these services.

Overall service awareness

Ninety-nine percent of respondents were aware that local authorities provided some, or all, of the services listed. Highest levels of awareness related to footpaths, street cleaning, street lighting and litter control in 2022 as was the case in 2021. Overall, there appears to be a general increase in awareness levels in 2022 when compared with 2021.

Table 7: Percentage of respondents who were aware local authorities provide service

Local Authority Service	N=1,858	2022	2021
Footpaths	1680	90%	87%
Street Cleaning	1639	88%	86%
Street Lighting	1610	87%	82%
Litter Control	1597	86%	81%
Roads	1548	83%	76%
Library Services	1532	82%	78%
Housing	1527	82%	79%
Local Outdoor Leisure Amenities	1475	79%	78%
Recycling Services	1451	78%	74%
Community Supports	1428	77%	77%
Water/Roadside drainage	1408	76%	72%
Planning & Development	1406	76%	74%
Parking & Road Safety	1339	72%	63%
Dog Warden Service	1334	72%	65%
New Housing Dev Support	1324	71%	67%
Promoting County Development	1189	64%	58%
Cemeteries and Burial Grounds	1176	63%	58%
Register of Electors/Elections	1167	63%	59%
Traveller Accommodation	1138	61%	58%
Sports/Leisure & Com/Youth Centres	1106	60%	61%
Homeless Supports ³	1094	59%	n/a
Fire Services	1070	58%	53%
Urban and Village Renewal	1064	57%	52%
Arts & Heritage Services	1054	57%	60%
Environ Protect/Awareness/Enforcement ⁴	1026	55%	48%
Tourism/Events	979	53%	45%
Motor Tax Collection	968	52%	52%
Monitoring Waterways/Beaches	943	51%	45%
Business Support Services	829	45%	52%

Legend

High awareness 70% +

Medium awareness 50-69%

Low awareness 49 + lower

³ Homeless services were not on the service list in 2021.

⁴ In 2021, environmental information, awareness and enforcement were listed separately

In 2022, fifteen of the 29 services appear in the high awareness category (i.e., 70% or more of respondents knew local authorities provided the service), which is an increase compared to 2021 when 12 services were classified in this category. Parking and road safety, dog warden services, and services for new housing developments moved from the medium awareness category to the high awareness category in 2022.

Three services moved from low levels of awareness in 2021 to medium levels of awareness in 2022. They were environmental information, awareness, and enforcement; monitoring waterways and beaches; as well as tourism and events. Only one service, business support services, was listed under the low awareness category in 2022. However, compared with 2021, this reflects a decline in awareness among respondents from 52% in 2021 to 45% in 2022.

Awareness by age category

Similar to 2021, awareness levels were highest among older age groups and lower among younger age groups. Individuals aged 65 and above exhibit the highest levels of awareness for 28 out of the 29 services, with the exception being monitoring lakes/waterways/beaches where those aged 35-44 have the highest levels of awareness. Additionally, those aged 35 to 44 share high awareness levels for homeless supports with the 65+ age group.

In contrast, individuals aged 18-24 and 25-34 displayed the lowest levels of awareness across all services. The 45-54 age group as well as the 25-34 age group shared low levels of awareness that local authorities provide sports/leisure services and community/youth centres.

Awareness by gender

Awareness levels were similar for males and females for most services. However, there were variances of 5% or more between the genders for five services. Men tend to have higher awareness of (i) sport/leisure & community/youth centres and (ii) business support services, while women show higher awareness that local authorities provide (iii) motor tax, (iv) new housing development supports, and (v) street lighting services.

Table 8: Awareness of local authority services by age 2022

Service	All respondents	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
N=	1,858	204	317	390	335	260	352
Footpaths	90%	81%	85%	90%	93%	93%	96%
Street Cleaning	88%	74%	83%	87%	91%	93%	97%
Street Lighting	87%	80%	83%	89%	82%	90%	93%
Litter Control	86%	78%	80%	85%	87%	90%	93%
Roads	83%	73%	81%	87%	81%	85%	88%
Library Services	82%	68%	72%	81%	86%	88%	95%
Housing	82%	60%	70%	83%	88%	89%	95%
Local Outdoor Leisure Amenities	79%	64%	71%	79%	80%	86%	90%
Recycling Services	78%	76%	71%	77%	77%	83%	84%
Community Supports	77%	72%	73%	77%	77%	73%	86%
Water/Roadside drainage	76%	66%		73%	78%	79%	81%
Planning & Development	76%	58%	68%	70%	79%	84%	90%
Parking & Road Safety	72%	63%	69%	68%	75%	76%	79%
Dog Warden Service	72%	42%	61%	72%	76%	84%	86%
New Housing Dev Support	71%	60%	65%	69%	72%	75%	82%
Promoting County Development	64%	53%	57%	63%	63%	66%	77%
Cemeteries and Burial Grounds	63%	41%	53%	62%	67%	73%	76%
Register of Electors/Elections	63%	45%	52%	61%	62%	73%	78%
Traveller Accommodation	61%	36%	50%	55%	65%	72%	81%
Sports/Leisure & Com/Youth Centres	60%	57%	56%	59%	56%	59%	68%
Homeless Supports	59%	43%	56%	63%	60%	62%	63%
Fire Services	58%	38%	44%	54%	52%	69%	81%
Urban and Village Renewal	57%	54%	48%	57%	57%	58%	67%
Arts & Heritage Services	57%	49%	48%	57%	55%	61%	67%
Environ Protect/Aware/Enforcement	55%	54%	50%	57%	53%	53%	61%
Tourism/Events	53%	55%	49%	52%	50%	51%	59%
Motor Tax Collection	52%	28%	38%	53%	54%	65%	67%
Monitoring Waterways/Beaches	51%	47%	49%	55%	49%	49%	53%
Business Support Services	45%	51%	39%	44%	40%	42%	53%
None of these	1%	5%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%

Legend Highest point Lowest point

Table 9: Significant service awareness variances by gender 2022

	All respondents	Male	Female
N=	1,858	909	947
Street Lighting	87%	84%	89%
New Housing Dev Support	71%	67%	75%
Sports/Leisure, Com/Youth Centres	60%	64%	56%
Motor Tax Collection	52%	46%	58%
Business Support Services	45%	47%	42%

Awareness by region

Respondents in Munster had the highest levels of awareness for 16 of the 29 services in 2022. This demonstrates a significant increase in awareness levels as respondents in 2021 recorded high levels of awareness for 5 services. The Dublin region continues to have the lowest levels of awareness, reporting the lowest percentage in 19 out of the 29 categories (compared to 18 categories in 2021). Connacht/Ulster respondents reported

highest levels of awareness in 7 of the 29 categories in 2022, which is a drop from 2021 when regional respondents reported highest awareness in 15 of the 30 categories. Rest of Leinster respondents had highest awareness about 9 of the 29 services, which is similar to 2021 where they had highest awareness about 10 services. Overall, the national rates and regional rates do not vary very significantly except in a small number of cases.

Table 10: Awareness of local authority services by region 2022

	All respondents	Dublin	Rest of Leinster	Munster	Connacht/ Ulster
N=	1,858	524	504	500	330
Footpaths	90%	90%	91%	91%	91%
Street Cleaning	88%	86%	88%	91%	87%
Street Lighting	87%	88%	87%	86%	85%
Litter Control	86%	85%	87%	86%	87%
Roads	83%	79%	82%	86%	88%
Library Services	82%	86%	83%	80%	80%
Housing	82%	78%	84%	82%	86%
Local Outdoor Leisure Amenities	79%	80%	78%	81%	77%
Recycling Services	78%	79%	77%	79%	77%
Community Supports	77%	75%	81%	79%	71%
Water/Roadside drainage	76%	71%	80%	77%	75%
Planning & Development	76%	71%	78%	77%	77%
Parking & Road Safety	72%	73%	69%	75%	72%
Dog Warden Service	72%	64%	71%	77%	76%
New Housing Dev Support	71%	67%	73%	74%	72%
Promoting County Development	64%	55%	69%	69%	62%
Cemeteries and Burial Grounds	63%	59%	61%	74%	59%
Register of Electors/Elections	63%	56%	66%	66%	66%
Traveller Accommodation	61%	54%	64%	63%	66%
Sports/Leisure, Com/Youth Centres	60%	71%	57%	56%	50%
Homeless Supports	59%	59%	58%	62%	56%
Fire Services	58%	47%	61%	64%	60%
Urban and Village Renewal	57%	48%	63%	59%	61%
Arts & Heritage Services	57%	54%	58%	59%	55%
Environ Protect/Awareness/ Enforcement	55%	50%	56%	58%	56%
Tourism/Events	53%	48%	55%	56%	52%
Motor Tax Collection	52%	32%	60%	57%	63%
Monitoring Waterways/Beaches	51%	53%	48%	57%	43%
Business Support Services	45%	46%	47%	44%	40%
None of these	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%

Legend

Highest point

Lowest point

There are four services that have a variance of +/- 10 percentage points when compared with the figures for all respondents. The highest positive variances relate to (i) awareness of cemeteries and burial grounds in Munster, (ii) sport/leisure facilities and community/youth centres in the Dublin region, and (iii) motor tax collection in Connacht/ Ulster, all 11 percentage points higher than the national figures. In the Dublin region, awareness about local authorities providing fire services was 11% percentage points lower than the national figure.

In relation to motor tax, the high levels of awareness in Connacht/ Ulster (+11 percentage points) contrast with the very low levels of awareness in the Dublin Region (-20 percentage points). Similarly, the high levels of awareness about sports/leisure facilities and community/youth centres in the Dublin region (+11 percentage points) are countered by the low levels of awareness in the Connacht region (-10 percentage points).

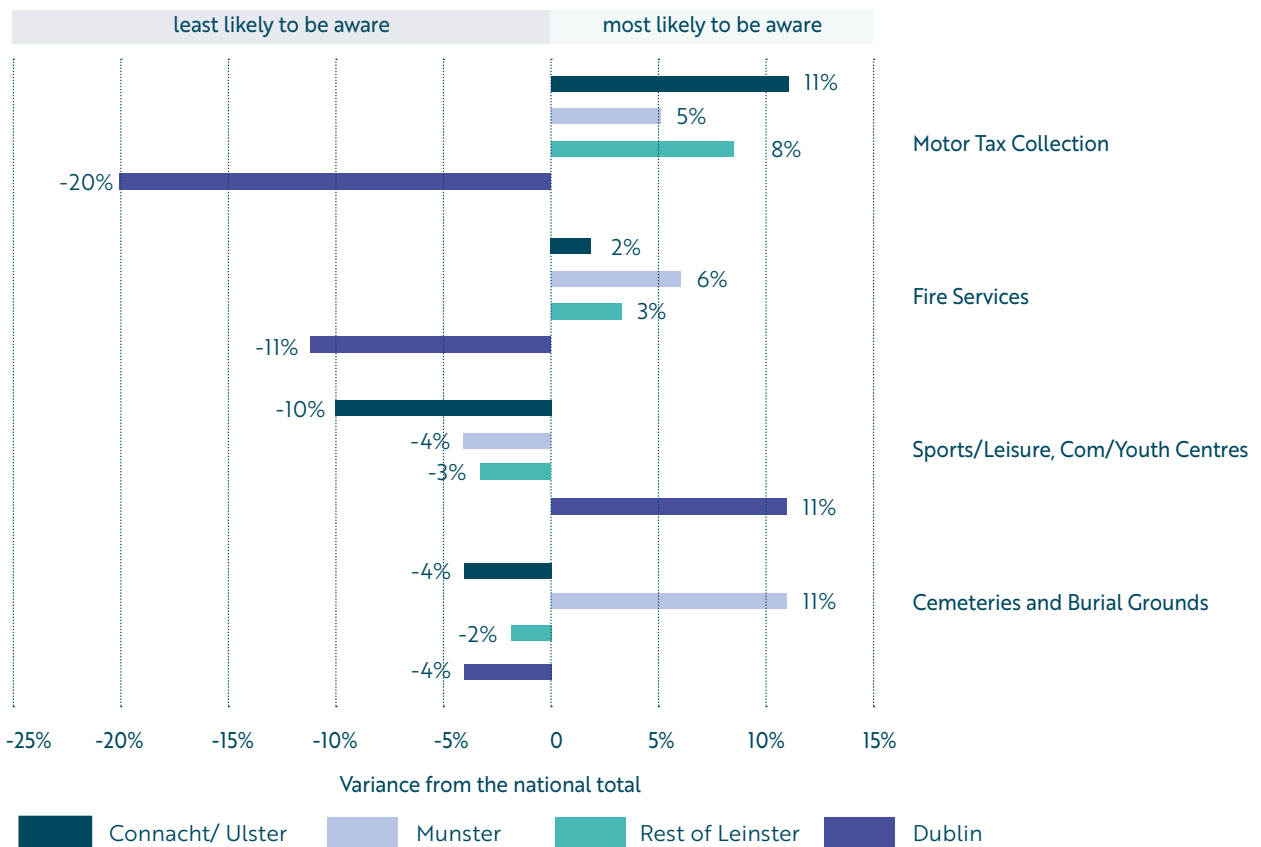


Figure 2: Likelihood of being aware local authorities provide services 2022

Service use

Overall service use

The 2022 survey aimed to determine which services were used by respondents within the previous twelve months⁵. Ninety-five percent of respondents had used at least one local authority service, up 2 percentage points compared to 2021; thereby, meeting the definition of a 'customer' who is a direct recipient of services (Boyle, 2020).

There was no change to the six most commonly used services in 2022 compared to 2021. They were litter bins, recycling centres, parking, motor tax collection, library services, and local outdoor leisure amenities. Rates of utilisation increased across all these services in 2022, which may be partly attributed to the relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions in 2022.

Seventy percent of respondents reported using litter bins and 68% recycling centres, which is an increase from 64% usage

reported for both in 2021. Public parking was used by 64% of respondents (up from 51% in 2021), while 48% used motor tax services, an increase of 5 percentage points compared to 2021. Furthermore, 38% engaged with library services (up from 31% in 2021), and 37% made use of local amenities such as playgrounds and parks (up from 33%).

Thirty-six percent of respondents reported using road related services in 2022, but there was no comparable figure for 2021. There were 10 services that saw utilisation rates ranging from 5% to 21% among respondents. These services include (i) cemeteries and burial grounds, (ii) sports/leisure and community/youth centres, (iii) local tourism and events, (iv) arts and heritage services, (v) register of electors, (vi) local community services, (vii) local authority housing, (viii) water/roadside drainage, (ix) planning, and (x) monitoring of lakes/waterways.

Table 11: Most utilised local authority services 2021 and 2022

Service	2021	2022	Increase
Litter Bins	64%	70%	6%
Recycling Centres (Bottle Banks)	64%	68%	4%
Parking	51%	64%	13%
Motor Tax Collection	43%	48%	5%
Library Services	31%	38%	7%
Local Outdoor Leisure Amenities	33%	37%	4%

⁵ Footpaths, streetlights and street cleaning were excluded from the list of services provided to respondents as there is little element of choice available to the public about using these services. Roads had also been omitted in 2021 but included in 2022 as services under this heading extend beyond driving on the roads.

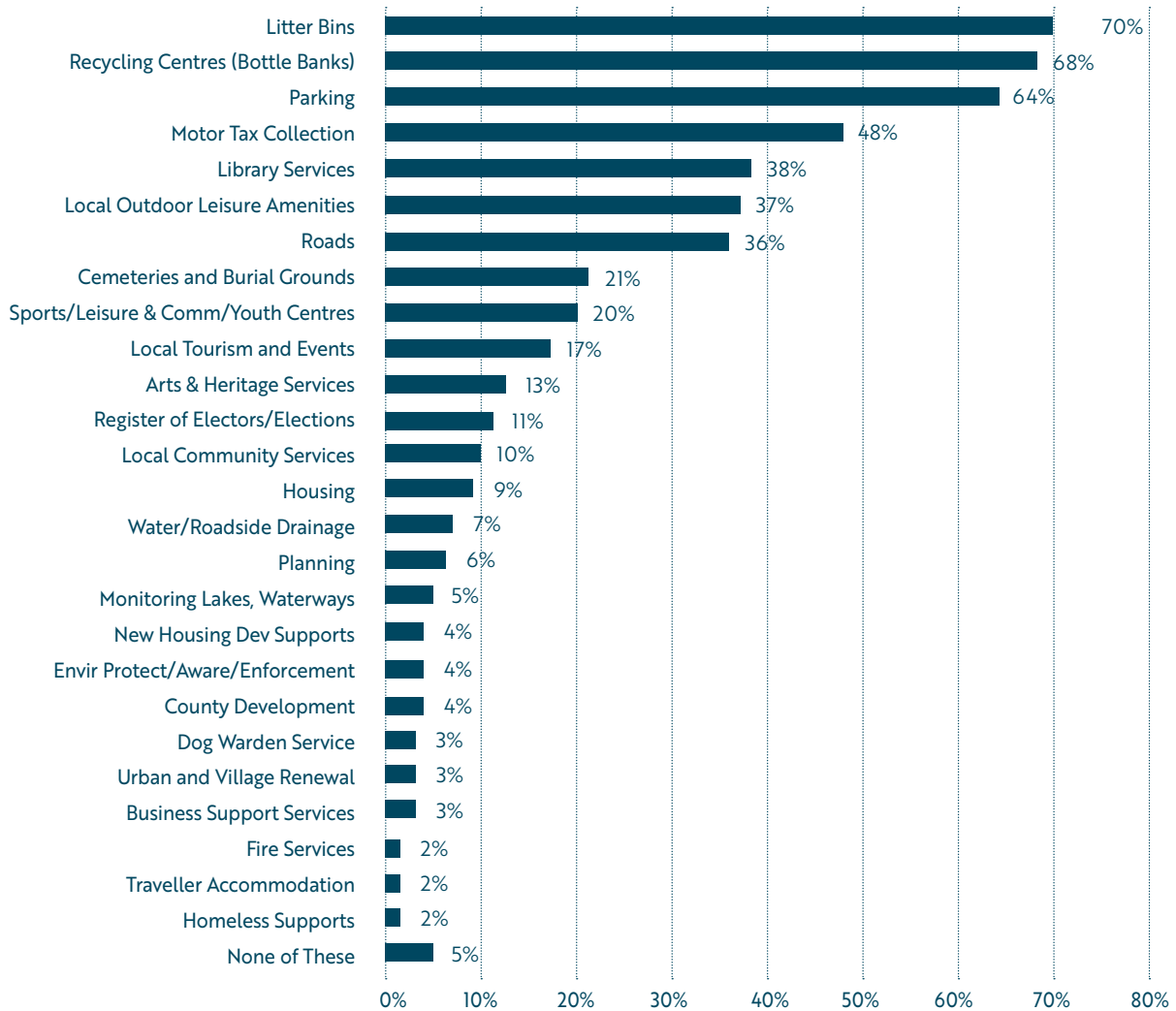


Figure 3: Local authority services used in past 12 months

Nine services reported less than 5% usage among respondents. These services were (i) new housing development supports, (ii) environmental protection, awareness, and enforcement, (iii) county development, (iv) dog warden service, (v) urban and village renewal scheme, (vi) business support services, (vii) fire services, (viii) traveller accommodation, and (ix) homeless supports.

Service use by age category

In 2021 service utilisation was evenly spread across the six age groups but in 2022 a greater percentage of the youngest cohort were service users relative to the other age groups. The 18-24 cohort were more likely to be service users of 17

of the 26 services. In 2021 this was true for 8 of 30 services.

The oldest age cohort (65+) showed highest rates of use of 4 services (i) recycling centres, (ii) parking, (iii) motor tax collection, and (iv) library services. This compares with the highest rates of utilisation of 9 services in 2021.

The remaining service users were aged between 25 and 64 and had higher utilisation rates, compared to younger and older service users for (i) local authority housing, (ii) planning, (iii) local leisure amenities, (iv) sports/leisure and community centres, (v) local tourism and events, as well as (vi) cemeteries and burial grounds.

Table 12: Services used over the past 12 months by age 2022

		18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	
	N=	1,858	204	317	390	335	260	352
Litter Bins	70%	73%	68%	73%	68%	70%	69%	
Recycling Centres (Bottle Banks)	68%	49%	55%	65%	69%	79%	84%	
Parking	64%	60%	60%	65%	66%	64%	67%	
Motor Tax Collection	48%	23%	38%	50%	51%	57%	61%	
Library Services	38%	37%	34%	37%	36%	40%	42%	
Local Outdoor Leisure Amenities	37%	43%	35%	44%	38%	31%	31%	
Roads	36%	51%	42%	39%	34%	30%	27%	
Cemeteries and Burial Grounds	21%	22%	16%	21%	23%	21%	22%	
Sports/Leisure & Comm/Youth Centres	20%	29%	20%	31%	20%	9%	11%	
Local Tourism and Events	17%	22%	16%	22%	16%	12%	13%	
Arts & Heritage Services	13%	29%	9%	9%	9%	13%	13%	
Register of Electors/Elections	11%	19%	10%	7%	10%	9%	14%	
Local Community Services	10%	19%	8%	9%	6%	3%	14%	
Housing	9%	7%	14%	12%	8%	6%	3%	
Water/Roadside drainage	7%	14%	7%	7%	6%	4%	7%	
Planning	6%	6%	8%	5%	6%	6%	5%	
Monitoring Lakes, Waterways,	5%	13%	5%	5%	4%	2%	2%	
New Housing Dev Supports	4%	8%	7%	4%	3%	4%	2%	
Environmental Protection/ Awareness/Enforcement	4%	6%	5%	4%	3%	3%	3%	
County Development	4%	8%	5%	3%	2%	0%	5%	
Dog Warden Service	3%	5%	4%	2%	4%	4%	2%	
Urban and Village Renewal	3%	9%	2%	2%	4%	2%	2%	
Business Support Services	3%	9%	3%	2%	2%	1%	1%	
Fire Services	2%	6%	3%	2%	1%	1%	1%	
Traveller Accommodation	2%	8%	3%	0%	0%	1%	1%	
Homeless Supports	2%	5%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	
None of these	5%	6%	7%	5%	4%	5%	1%	

Legend Highest point Lowest point

While there were variances in utilisation rates across the age cohorts, the data reveals that there were five services where the variances are worth highlighting (i.e., +/- 10 percentage points compared to the overall national figures), (i) arts and heritage, (ii) sports/leisure facilities and community/youth centres, (iii) road related services, (iv) motor tax collection, and (v) recycling centres.

Those aged 18-25 were most likely to use arts and heritage services as well as road related services but were the least likely to use motor tax collection services or

recycling services. Those aged 35-44 and 18-25 were more likely than older age cohorts to use sports/leisure facilities and community and youth centres. Those aged 55 and over were considerably more likely to use recycling centres and the motor tax collection offices than younger age cohorts.

Service use by gender

There were minimal differences in the utilisation of local authority services between males and females in general, except for three cases where there was a difference of 5% or more evident.

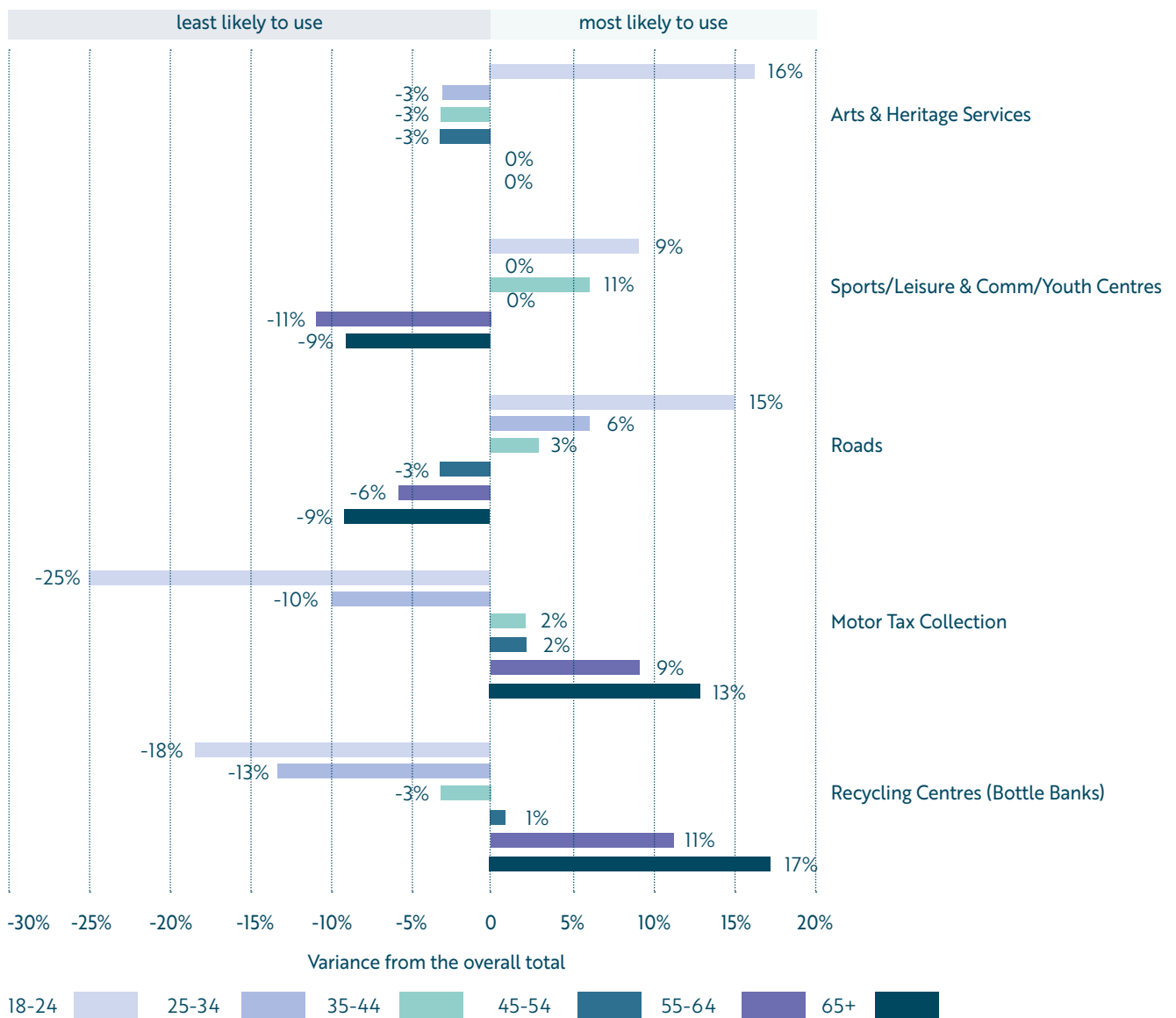


Figure 4: Likelihood of using services by age cohorts in 2022

Table 13: Variations in service use by gender 2022

Service used in past 12 months	Male	Female
Motor Tax Collection	45%	51%
Library Services	35%	40%
Register of Electors/Elections	14%	9%

Six percent more females (51%) used the motor tax service compared males (45%). Additionally, library use was higher for females (40%) than males (35%). Lastly, there was a 5% variance between the use of the register of electors for males (14%) and compared to females (9%).

Service use by region

In terms of service use by region, the Rest of Leinster and Munster both had the highest utilisation rates for 11 services, the Dublin region for 8 services and Connacht/ Ulster for 4 services.

Table 14: Services used over the past 12 months by region 2022

		Dublin	Rest of Leinster	Munster	Connacht/ Ulster
	N=	1,858	504	500	330
Litter Bins	70%	75%	65%	73%	66%
Recycling Centres (Bottle Banks)	68%	68%	67%	66%	72%
Parking	64%	58%	67%	65%	67%
Motor Tax Collection	48%	36%	53%	53%	53%
Library Services	38%	41%	36%	39%	33%
Local Outdoor Leisure Amenities	37%	42%	36%	37%	30%
Roads	36%	30%	39%	39%	39%
Cemeteries and Burial Grounds	21%	20%	23%	22%	17%
Sports/Leisure & Comm/Youth Centres	20%	24%	21%	18%	16%
Local Tourism and Events	17%	13%	19%	18%	17%
Arts & Heritage Services	13%	14%	13%	12%	11%
Register of Electors/Elections	11%	15%	9%	11%	8%
Local Community Services	10%	10%	11%	10%	7%
Housing	9%	8%	8%	11%	7%
Water/Roadside drainage	7%	6%	8%	8%	5%
Planning	6%	5%	7%	8%	4%
Monitoring Lakes, Waterways,	5%	5%	6%	4%	3%
New Housing Dev Supports	4%	6%	3%	5%	3%
Environmental Protection/Awareness/Enforcement	4%	5%	4%	5%	1%
County Development	4%	4%	5%	4%	1%
Dog Warden Service	3%	2%	3%	5%	3%
Urban and Village Renewal	3%	3%	4%	4%	1%
Business Support Services	3%	2%	4%	3%	2%
Fire Services	2%	2%	2%	3%	1%
Traveller Accommodation	2%	1%	2%	3%	1%
Homeless Supports	2%	2%	2%	3%	1%
None of these	5%	4%	5%	4%	6%

Legend Highest point Lowest point

Lower rates of service use were observed in the Dublin region compared with the other regions for (i) motor tax, (ii) parking and (iii) road maintenance and improvements. The regional variance for motor tax collection was higher than other services. In the Dublin region, 36% of respondents reported using local authorities for motor tax collection, while the 53% of respondents in each of the other three regions used motor tax collection. This is a similar finding to 2021.

In terms of road maintenance and improvement, the three regions outside Dublin reported a usage rate of 39%, while

30% of the Dublin region respondents reported using the service. Similarly, use of parking in the Dublin region was below that of the other regions with 58% of respondents using this service compared with between 65% and 67% across the other three regions.

Conversely, in relation to local outdoor leisure amenities, the Dublin region had the highest rate of use at 42%, while respondents in the other three regions reported utilisation rates ranging between 30% and 37%.

Satisfaction with services used

In addition to collecting data on the level of local authority service use over the previous twelve-months, the survey also explored levels of satisfaction with those service engagements⁶.

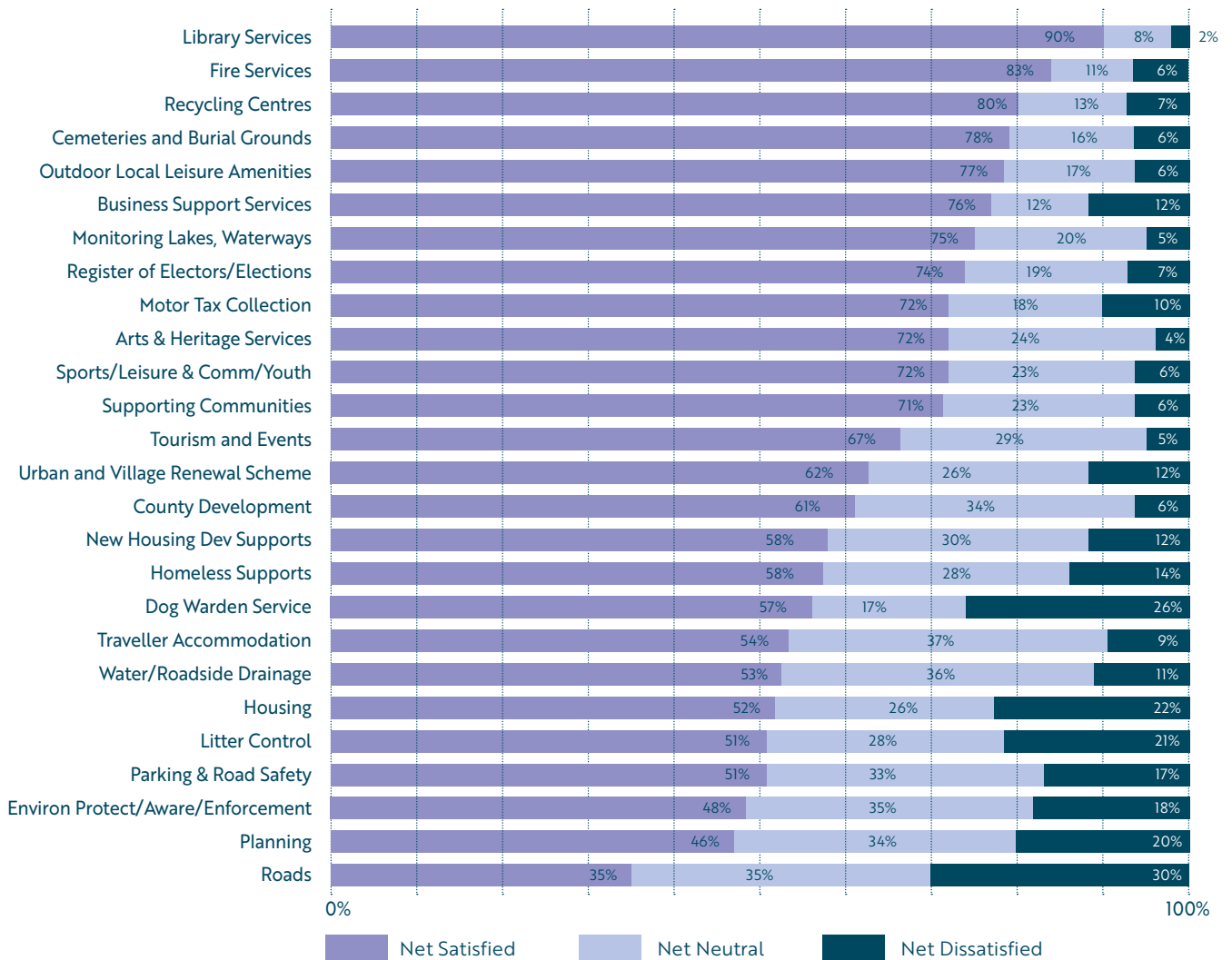


Figure 5: Satisfaction rates with local authority services 2022

⁶ The data was not collected in 2021.

Of the 26 services reviewed, the percentage of respondents satisfied with services ranged from 90% for libraries to 35% for road related services. For 12 service, more than 70% of respondents were satisfied with their service, and more than half of service users (50%+) were happy with 23 of the 26 services, except for (i) roads, (ii) planning and (iii) environmental protection, awareness and enforcement.

People who were not satisfied tended to be more neutral rather than dissatisfied, except for dog warden services. Rates of neutrality ranged from between 8% for libraries and 37% for traveller accommodation. Dissatisfaction for services ranged from a high of 30% for road service users to a low of 2% for libraries.

In addition to libraries, high percentages of respondents were satisfied with fire services (83%), recycling centres (80%), cemeteries and burial grounds (78%), and outdoor local leisure amenities (77%).

Channels of engagement

Respondents were asked what channels they had used to contact or engage with local authorities over the past five years. For those who had contacted local authorities within the past two years, websites were the most frequently used channel of engagement, and the rate of use increased from 11% if the respondents engaged 1 to 2 years ago, to 17% for engagements that took place between 6-12 months previously and finally to 31% of respondents where the engagement was during the previous six months.

Table 15: Channels of engagement used over the past five years 2022

	Visited Website	Email	Online	Social Media	Text Alerts	Over Phone	In Person	Third Party	Public meeting	Letter
N=	1,858	1,858	1,858	1,858	1,858	1,858	1,858	1,858	1,858	1,858
Past 6 months	31%	14%	17%	14%	7%	16%	13%	6%	2%	7%
6-12 months	17%	10%	11%	6%	3%	8%	8%	5%	3%	6%
1-2 years	11%	8%	7%	4%	3%	9%	9%	5%	4%	6%
2-5 years	6%	6%	5%	2%	2%	8%	10%	6%	5%	5%
5 years +	4%	7%	4%	2%	1%	11%	13%	8%	9%	12%
	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	=	=	↓	↓
Never	32%	55%	57%	73%	85%	48%	47%	70%	77%	64%

Legend Highest point Lowest point

Prior to that, in-person contacts were the most prevalent form of engagement as 10% reported this form of engagement between 2 and 5 years ago and 13% if engagement was more than five years ago. There was an increase in the use of email, online services, social media, text alerts and over the phone engagements when recent rates were compared to those of five years ago. Simultaneously, engagement in public meetings and via letter decreased over the same time period.

Engagement in-person with staff was the option for 13% of people who engaged with local authorities over the past 6 months as well as those engaging more than five years ago. There was a dip in engagement in between those time periods, most likely influenced by the restrictions to in-person service access because of Covid-19 restrictions.

Sources of information

The survey also collected data about where people got their information about local authorities from. In 2021, 51% of respondents relied on websites for information but no assessment could be made as to whether these were local authority websites or other websites. In 2022 the distinction was made in the survey and results revealed that local authority websites were the primary source of information for 47% of respondents, while 9% of respondents also reported using other websites as well. As in 2021, local newspapers were the second most frequently used source of information, but the percentage of respondents using local newspapers increased from 26% in 2021 to 30% in 2022. Once again, friends and neighbours were the third most frequently used source of information but there was a slight decrease from 26% in 2021 to 25% in 2022.

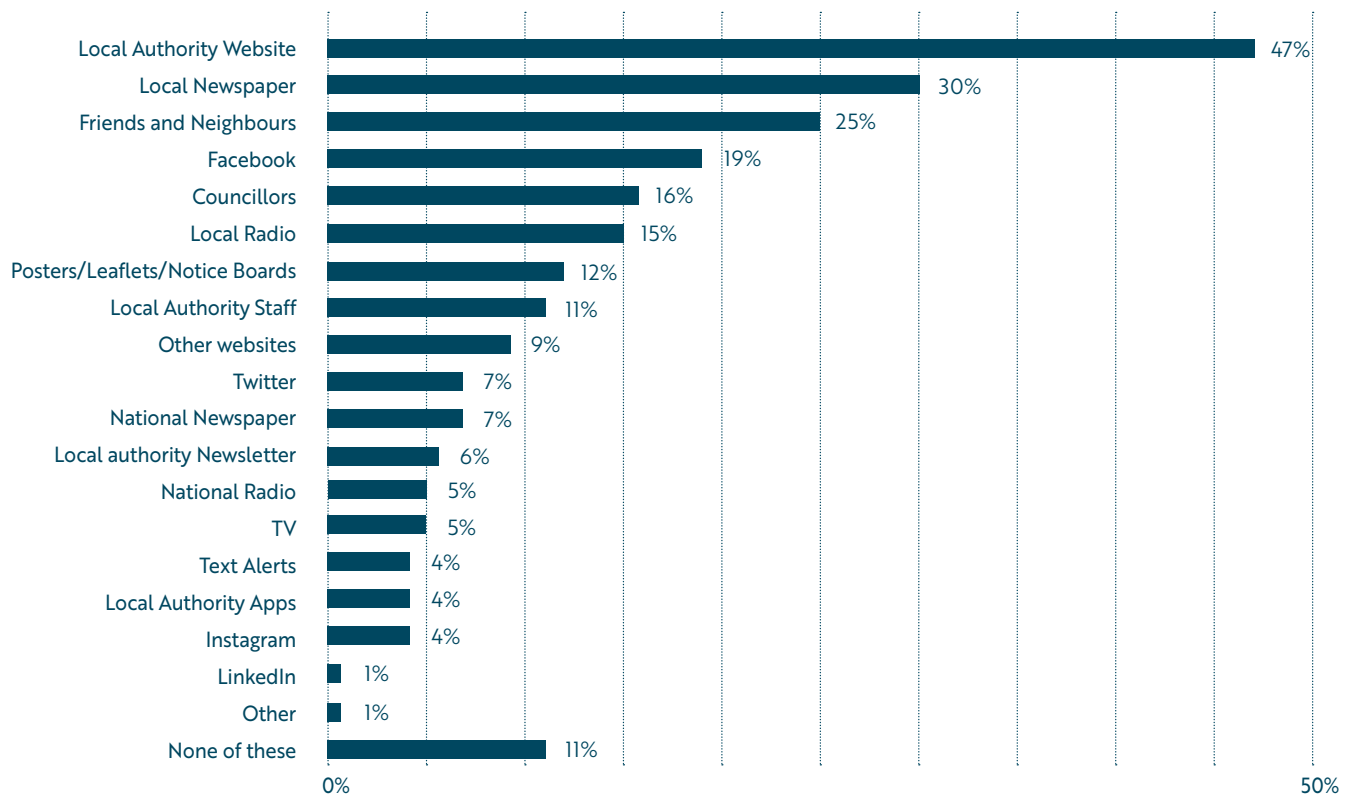


Figure 6: Source of Information

Among various social media platforms, Facebook remains the most utilised source of information, being used by 19% of respondents in 2022, compared to 18% in 2021. Other social media platforms were also used, but less frequently. Twitter was used by 7% of respondents, which is a slight increase from 6% in 2021, while usage of Instagram and LinkedIn remained at 4% and 1% respectively.

People continued to use posters and leaflets as a source of information, but a decline of four percentage points was noted, dropping from 16% in 2021 to 12% in 2022. Similarly, contacting local authority staff remains important but also decreased from 14% in 2021 to 11% in 2022. There was also a decline in the number of respondents who reported using local

authority apps as a source of information from 6% in 2021 to 4% in 2022.

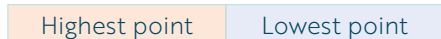
Source of information by age

There were quite defined preferences evident when the data was reviewed by age cohort. The older cohorts were more reliant on traditional sources of information such as newspapers, radio or contacting councillors or local authority staff. The youngest cohorts (18-25) were least likely to use any of the channels except for asking family or friends for information. Those aged between 25-44 had higher engagement with social media channels compared to those younger or older, while local authority websites were utilised by the 45-64 at a higher rate than the other age groups.

Table 16: Source of information about local authorities by age group 2022

		18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
	N=	1,858	204	317	390	335	352
LA website	47%	26%	42%	51%	55%	55%	47%
Local Newspaper	30%	24%	24%	21%	30%	33%	47%
Friends and neighbours	25%	32%	24%	20%	24%	24%	30%
Facebook	19%	14%	22%	26%	24%	11%	14%
Councillors	16%	6%	12%	12%	19%	15%	26%
Local Radio News	15%	10%	12%	8%	12%	20%	24%
Posters/Leaflets etc	12%	16%	9%	9%	7%	17%	16%
Local Authority staff	11%	7%	10%	7%	13%	14%	16%
Other websites	9%	9%	10%	12%	8%	8%	5%
Twitter	7%	11%	9%	13%	6%	2%	2%
National Newspaper	7%	6%	4%	4%	5%	9%	14%
Local authority newsletter	6%	6%	5%	5%	6%	5%	11%
National Radio	5%	4%	2%	4%	3%	7%	12%
TV	5%	2%	8%	3%	4%	7%	6%
Text alerts	4%	2%	1%	5%	5%	7%	6%
Local Authority Apps	4%	1%	3%	5%	5%	5%	4%
Instagram	4%	7%	8%	6%	2%	1%	1%
LinkedIn	1%	0%	3%	1%	0%	0%	1%
Other	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	2%
None of these	11%	19%	19%	9%	9%	8%	5%

Legend



Local authority information channels

When looking at the variances between what the total engagement rates for all respondents and what was reported under each age category, it was evident that younger people were significantly less likely to use local authority sources of information compared with older cohorts. The more extreme example relates to the

use of local authority websites. Those aged 18-24 were 21 percentage points less likely to use them compared to totals for all respondents, while those aged between 45-64 were 8 percentage points more likely to use the websites.

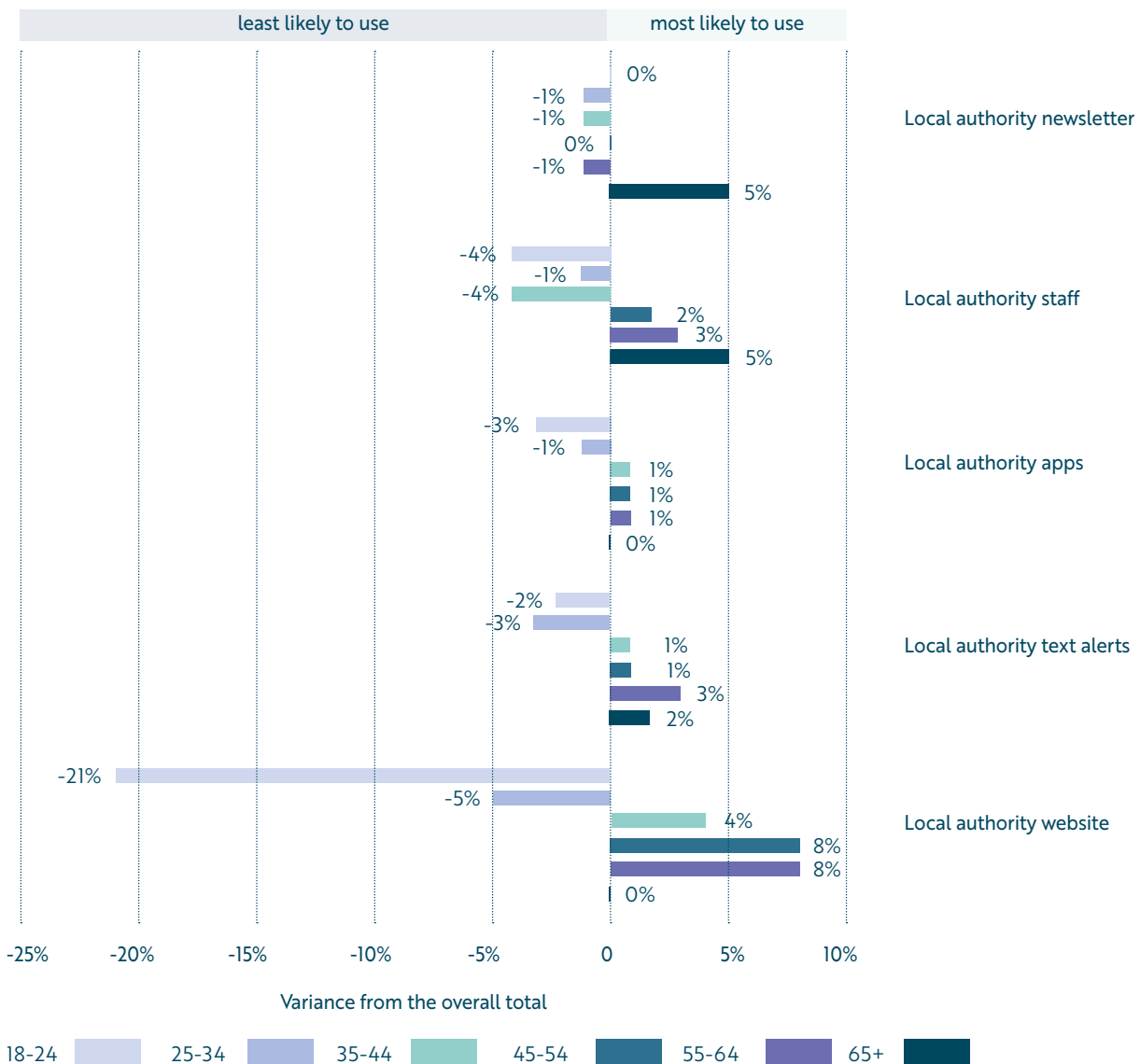


Figure 7: Likelihood of using local authority information channels by age cohort 2022

As well as local authority websites, people under 35 were less likely to use text alert and local authority apps and those under 45 were less likely to contact local authority staff compared those aged 45+. Local authority newsletters were more likely to be utilised by those aged 65+.

newspapers. Those aged 65+ were 9 percentage points more likely to listen to local radio and 17 percentage points more likely to read local newspapers compared to the total for all respondents. While those aged between 34-44 were 7 percentage points and 9 percentage points, respectively, less likely to engage with local radio and local newspapers.

Traditional media

Traditional media sources were more clearly favoured by those aged 55+, especially local radio and local

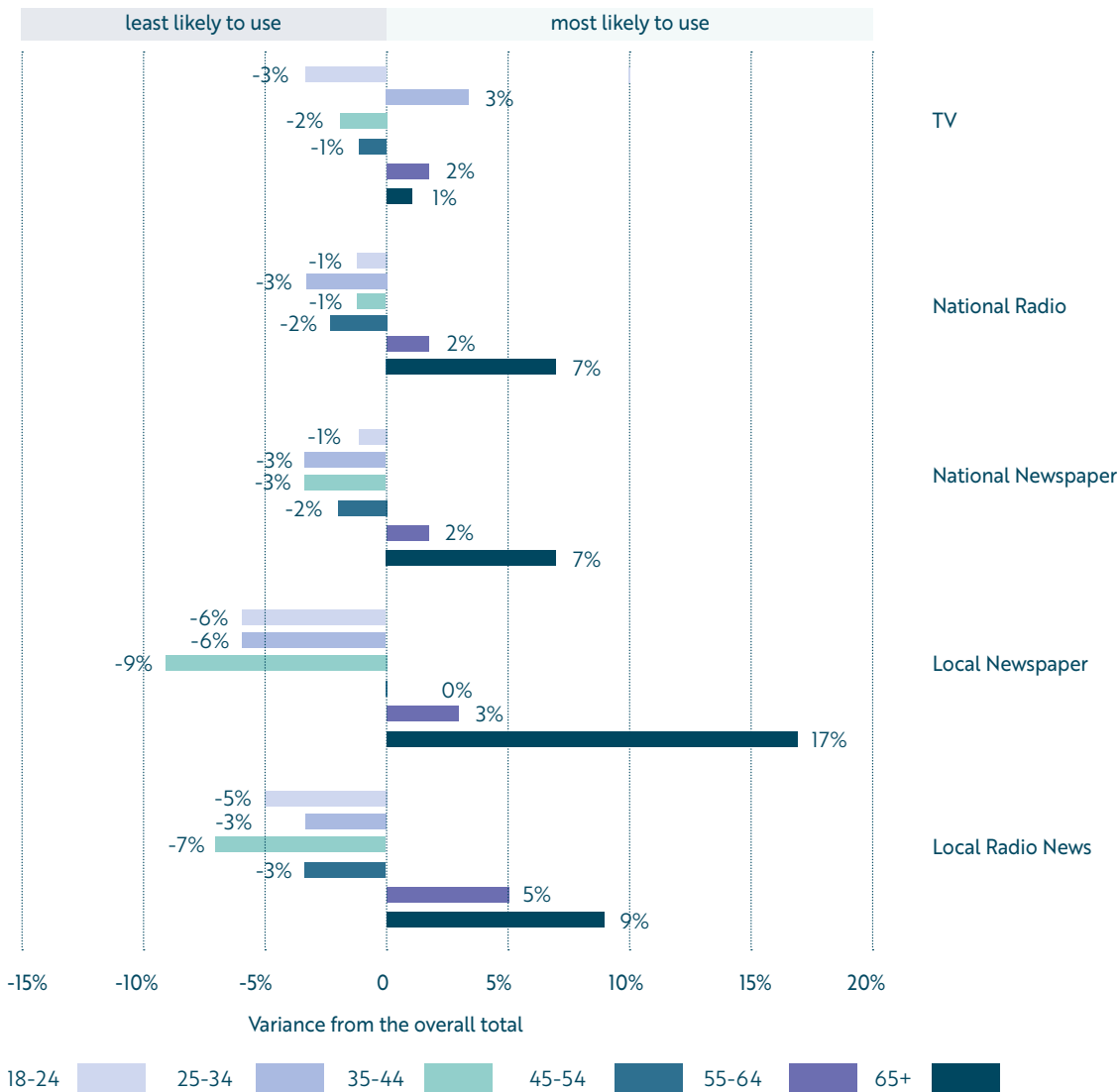


Figure 8: Likelihood of using traditional media channels by age cohort 2022

The results were similar for national radio and newspapers although slightly less pronounced with respondents aged 55+ more likely to rely on these as a source of information. Variances were smaller in relation to TV but those aged 55+ and those aged 25-34 were more likely to get information from TV than the other age cohorts.

Social media

Overall, social media use was more likely amongst younger age cohorts aged between 18 and 44, with the noticeable exception being Facebook, as those aged between 18 and 24 were least inclined to use it to get information. Conversely, those aged 45+ were least inclined to use social media with the exception of Facebook which was used more than average by those aged 45-54.

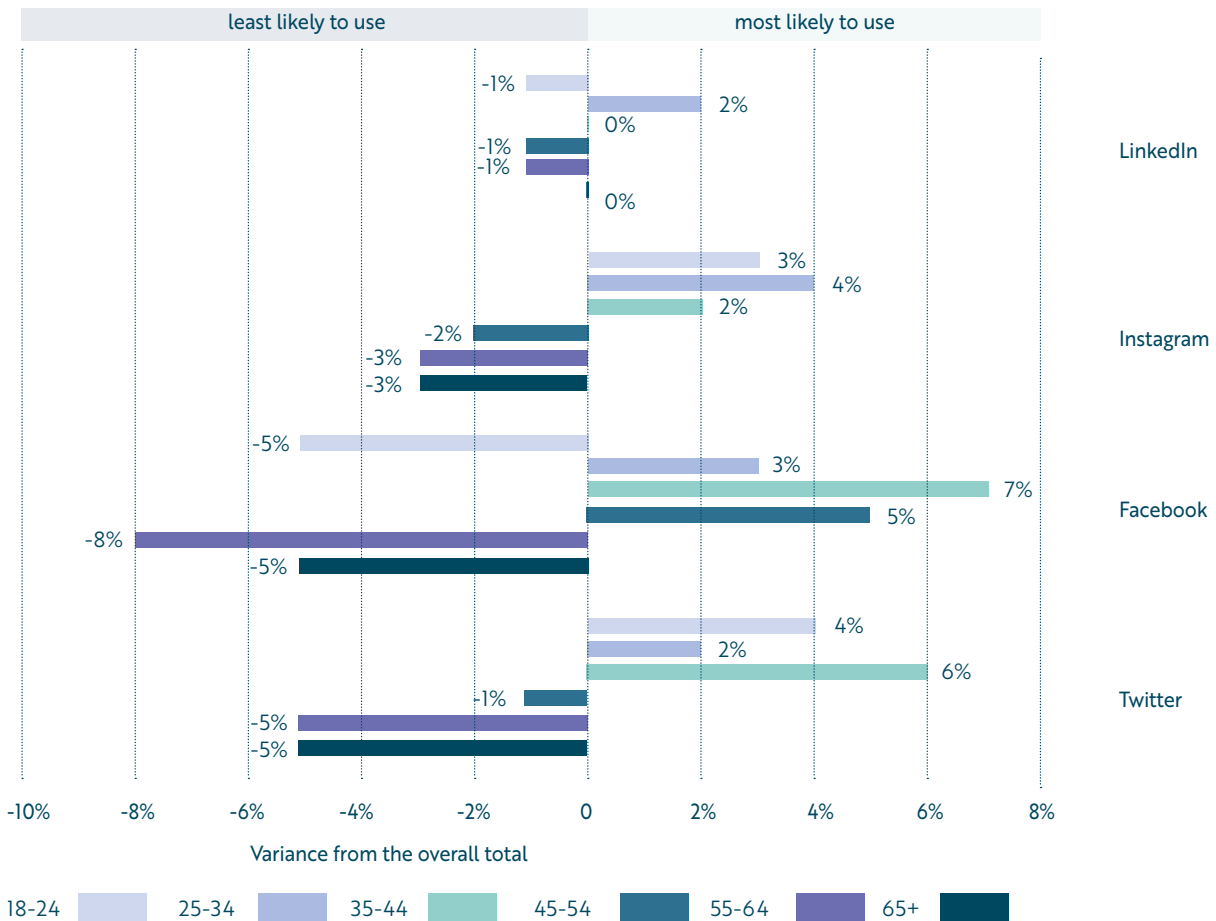


Figure 9: Likelihood of using social media channels by age cohort 2022

Face to face engagement

In addition to speaking with local authority staff, there were two face-to-face communication options available to respondents: getting information from friends and neighbours or from councillors. Younger people were even less likely to contact councillors than local authority staff but most likely to ask friends and neighbours for information

about local authorities. Those aged 65+ were the most likely to go to local authority staff and councillors for information and were similar to young people in their reliance on friends and neighbours for information.

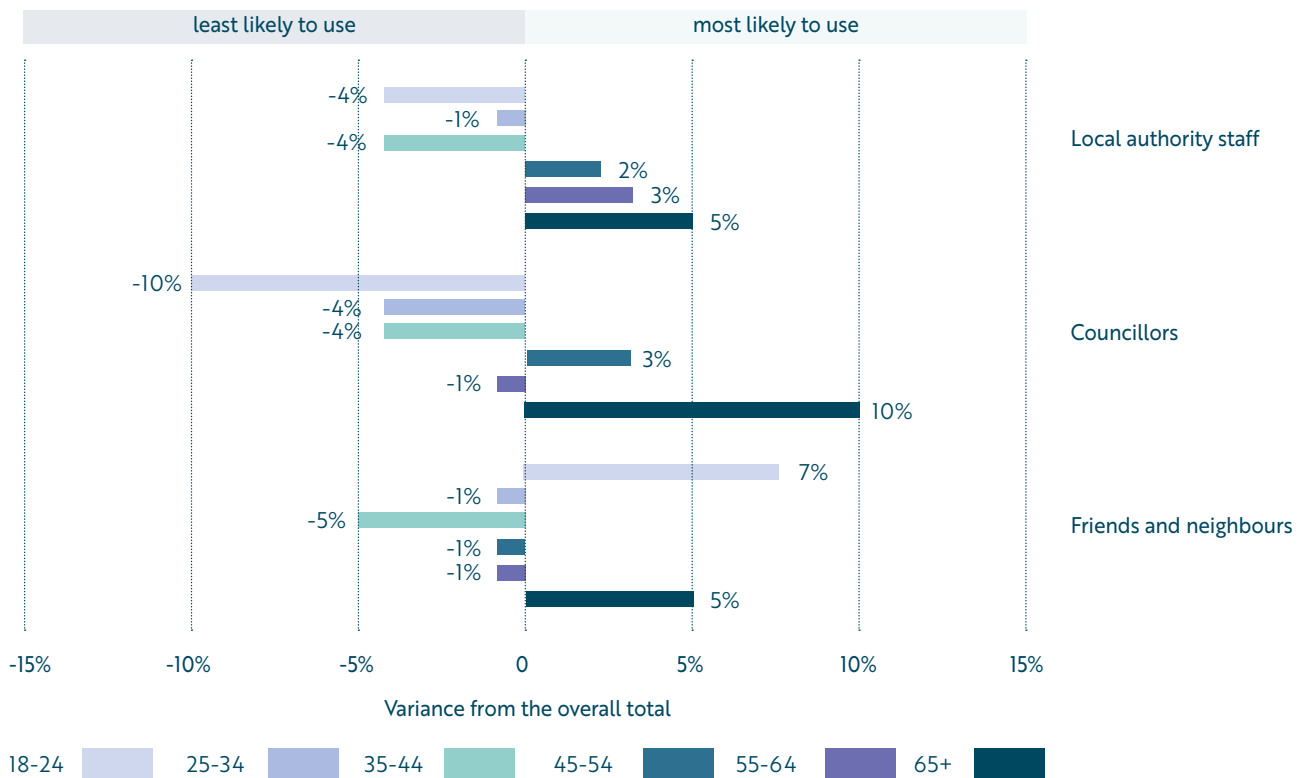


Figure 10: Likelihood of using face to face channels by age cohort 2022

Source of information by gender

There were few differences in the choice of information sources between males and females apart from Facebook. Twenty-four percent of females used Facebook compared with 15% of males.

Source of information by region

In the Dublin region respondents relied on posters and leaflets (17%), local authority newsletters (13%), Twitter (12%), national newspapers (11%), other websites (10%), national radio news (7%), and TV (8%), more than respondents in the other three regions.

Both Dublin and the Rest of Leinster respondents were more likely to use local authority apps (5%), compared to the other regions (3%).

In the Rest of Leinster, Facebook was more likely to be used compared to the other regions, with 26% using it compared to 19% of respondents in Munster and Connacht/Ulster and 14% in the Dublin region. It was

also the region where text alerts were more prevalent (6%) although there was only slightly lower rate of utilisation in Munster and Connacht/Ulster (4%-5%). Instagram was used by 5% of respondents in the Rest of Leinster but this was only slightly higher than the other regions where usage rates are between 3% and 4%.

Respondents in Munster showed a preference for face-to-face communication to get information. They were more likely to go to friends and neighbours (32%), councillors (19%), and local authority staff (15%) compared to the other regions, where rates were between 21%-25%, 12%-16%, and 7%-12% respectively.

In Connacht/Ulster local newspapers (37%), and local radio news (23%) were utilised more than in other regions, especially the Dublin region where rates for local newspaper were 21% and local radio 4%.

Table 17: Source of information about local authorities by region 2022

		Dublin	Rest of Leinster	Munster	Connacht/ Ulster
	N=	1,858	524	504	500
Local Authority website	47%	50%	48%	42%	51%
Local Newspaper	30%	21%	32%	32%	37%
Friends and neighbours	25%	25%	21%	32%	23%
Facebook	19%	14%	26%	19%	19%
Councillors	16%	15%	16%	19%	12%
Local Radio	15%	4%	14%	21%	23%
Posters/Leaflets	12%	17%	11%	11%	5%
Local Authority staff	11%	7%	12%	15%	10%
Other websites	9%	10%	7%	10%	6%
Twitter	7%	12%	5%	5%	6%
National Newspaper	7%	11%	5%	5%	6%
Local authority newsletter	6%	13%	5%	2%	3%
National Radio	5%	7%	6%	5%	3%
TV	5%	8%	4%	4%	4%
Text alerts	4%	2%	6%	4%	5%
Local Authority Apps	4%	5%	5%	3%	3%
Instagram	4%	4%	5%	3%	4%
LinkedIn	1%	1%	1%	2%	0%
Other	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
None of these	11%	10%	12%	9%	12%

Legend Highest point Lowest point

Sentiment

In the sentiment section of the 2022 national survey, twelve statements were presented, and respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statements. The results are deemed to provide an indication of the public's sentiment in relation to the selected topics. The twelve statements were used to assess sentiment under three themes:

- Communications and service engagement
 - My local authority **keeps me informed** about what they are doing
 - I **know my local authority well** through seeing advertisements and contacting them
 - I am **happy with how enquiries are handled**
 - It is **simple and easy to interact** with my local authority
- Equality and access
 - My local authorities treat people in a **fair and equal way**
 - There has been **improved access** to services and decision making for **people with disabilities**
 - There has been **improved access** to services and decision making for **minorities**
 - My local authority has become **more age friendly over the past 3 years** (new indicator for 2022)
- Improvements in customer service
 - My local authority has become **more customer focused** over the past 3 years
 - My local authority has become **more innovative** over the past 3 years
 - My local authority is doing **a good job providing online digital services** (In 2021 wording was: my local authority is doing enough to provide digital services.)
 - The **level of service provided has improved** over the past 3 years

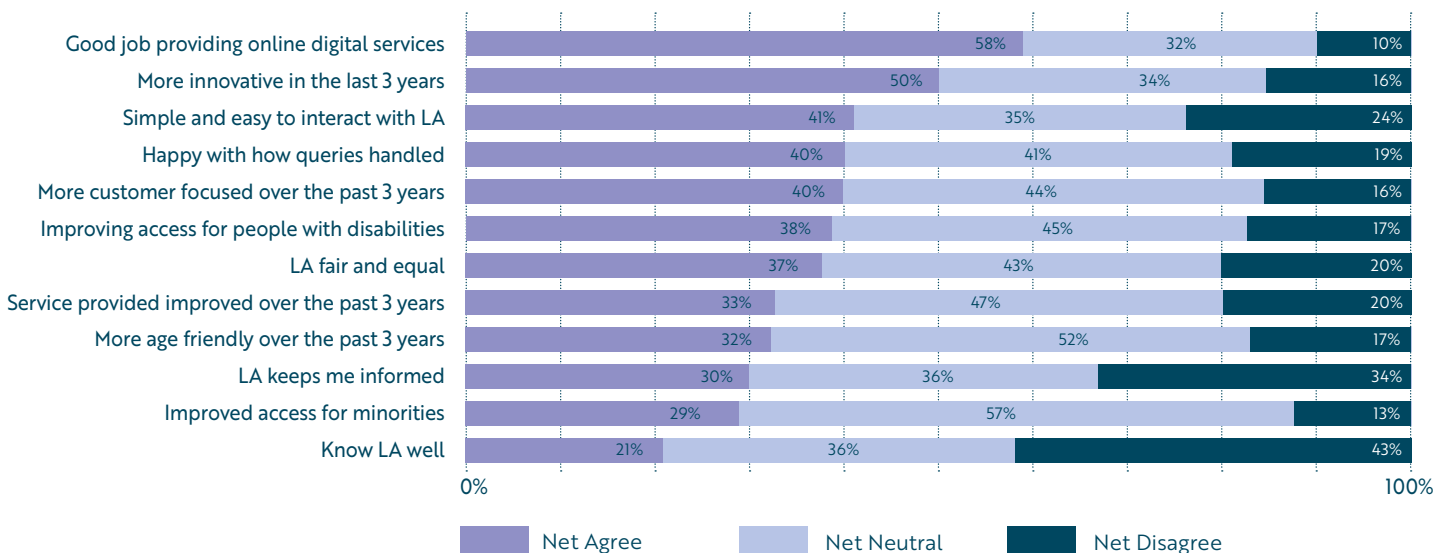


Figure 11: Sentiment statement responses 2022

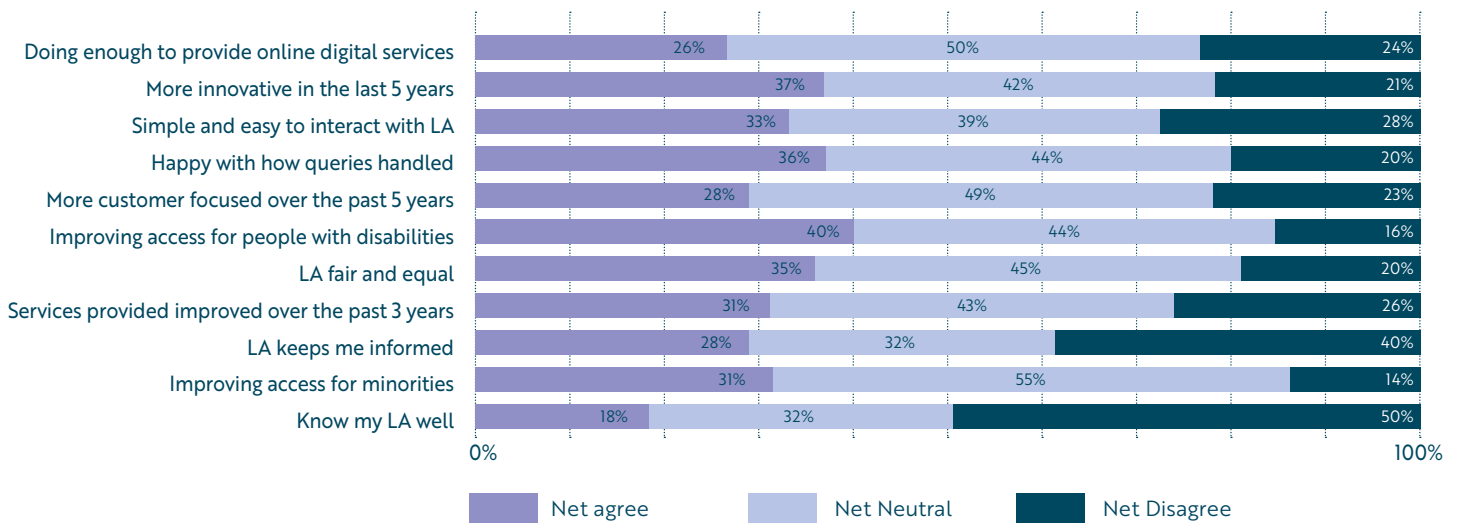


Figure 12: Sentiment statement responses 2021



Communications and service provision

There was an increase in the levels of agreement between 2021 and 2022 regarding (i) local authorities keeping people informed, (ii) knowing the local authority well, and (iii) simple and easy to interact with, but a decrease in agreement with (iv) how queries were handled.

In 2021, 28 percent agreed that local authorities kept people informed about what was going on in their area, but this increased to 30 percent in 2022. Similarly, there was an increase in the percentage of respondents who agreed that they knew their local authority well through seeing advertisements and contacting them. Eighteen percent was reported in 2021 but this increased to 21 percent in 2022.

Regarding service provision, the most significant increase related to those agreeing with how simple and easy it was to interact with local authorities. Thirty three percent of respondents agreed with this statement in 2021 compared with 41% in 2022. However, there was a decrease of 5 percentage points in 2022 compared with 2021 in levels of agreement with how happy people were with how queries were handled, from 45% to 40%.

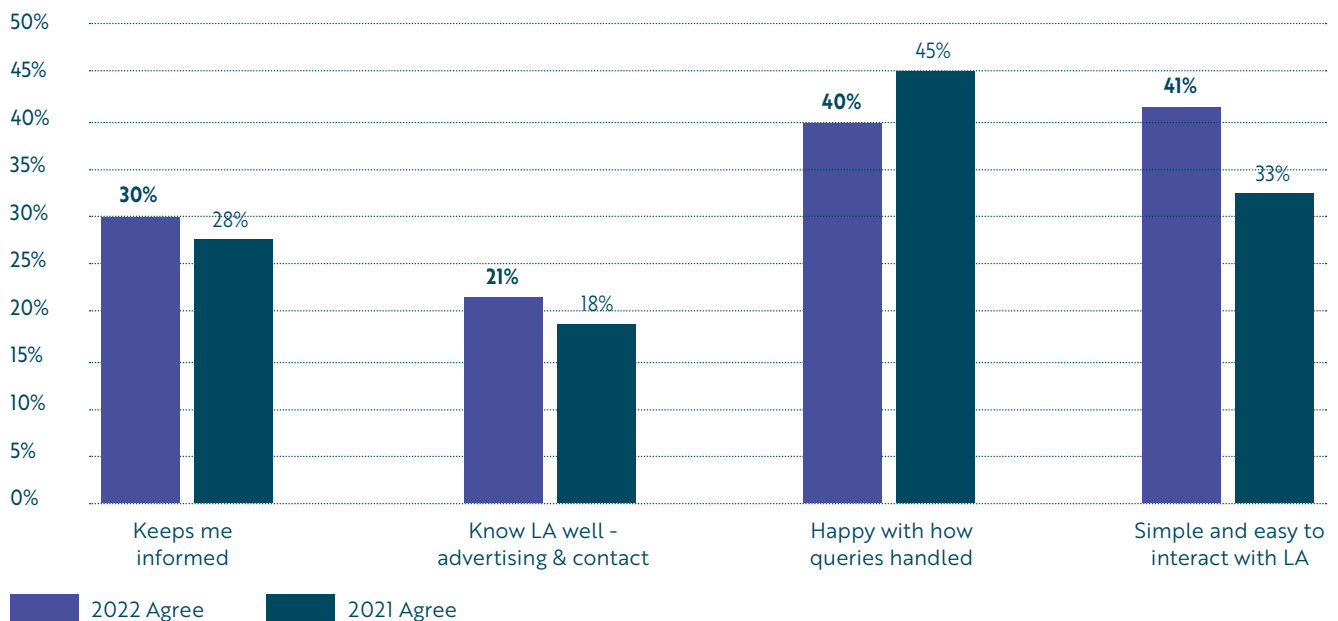


Figure 13: Agreement with communication and service provision sentiment statements 2022 and 2021

Equality and access

In 2021 there was a high level of agreement that there had been improved access to services and decision-making for people with disabilities but a small decrease in agreement was evident in 2022. The percentage agreeing fell from 40% in 2021 to 38% in 2022.

Similarly, there was a two percentage point drop in agreement from 31% in 2021 to 29%

in 2022 about improved access to services and decision making for minorities. Conversely, there was an increase in those agreeing with the statement that local authorities treat people in a fair and equal way, up from 35% in 2021 to 37% in 2022.

Thirty-two percent of respondents in 2022 agreed that local authorities had become more age friendly over the past three years.

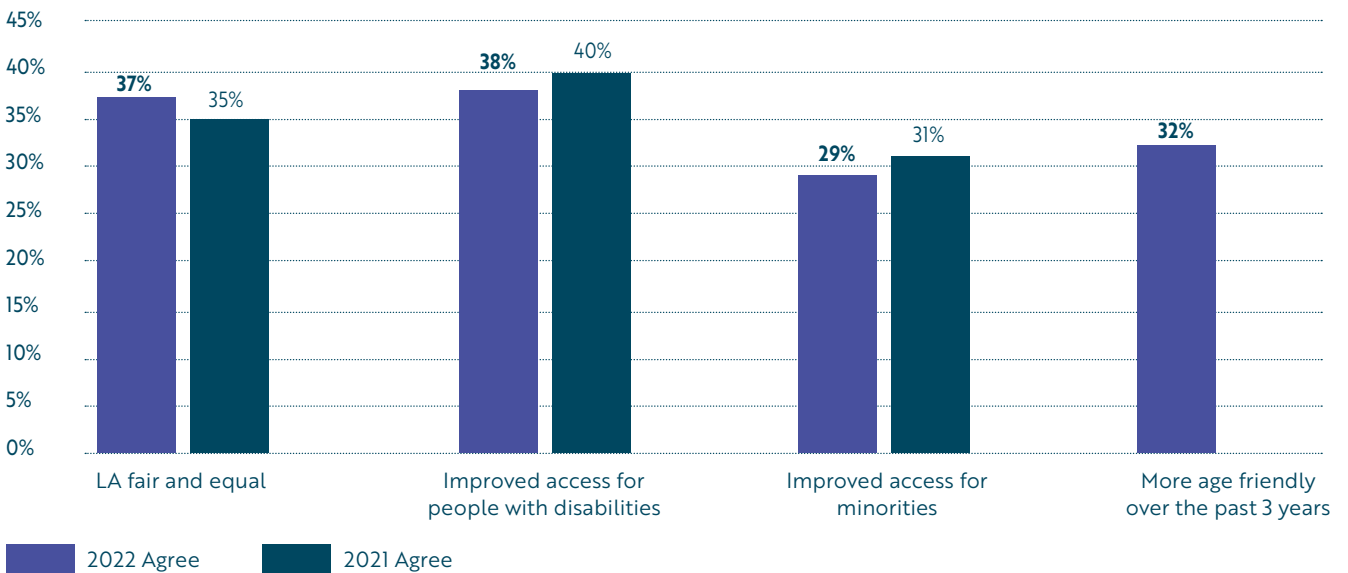


Figure 14: Agreement with equality and access sentiment statements 2022 and 2021

Improvements in customer service

There were increases recorded in 2022 across all statements under this theme when compared to 2021. The highest levels of agreement were also recorded in this section in 2022.

Fifty-eight percent of respondents agreed that local authorities were doing a good job providing digital services. This is an increase of 26 percentage points compared with 2021. However, the wording of the statement changed, and this may have partially contributed to the large increase in agreement. The focus in 2022 shifted to whether local authorities were doing a good job providing digital services while in 2021 the statement focused on whether local authorities were doing enough.

Fifty percent of respondents agreed that local authorities had become more innovative over the past 3 years in 2022. In 2021, 37 percent of respondents agreed local authorities had become more innovative over a five-year period. While the timeframe is different, the results are most likely still comparable and not the primary reason for the increase recorded.

There was a twelve-percentage point increase from 28% in 2021 to 40% in 2022 in relation to local authorities being more customer focused. There was also a small but important increase from 32% in 2021 to 33% in 2022 regarding overall improvements in service provided over the past three years.

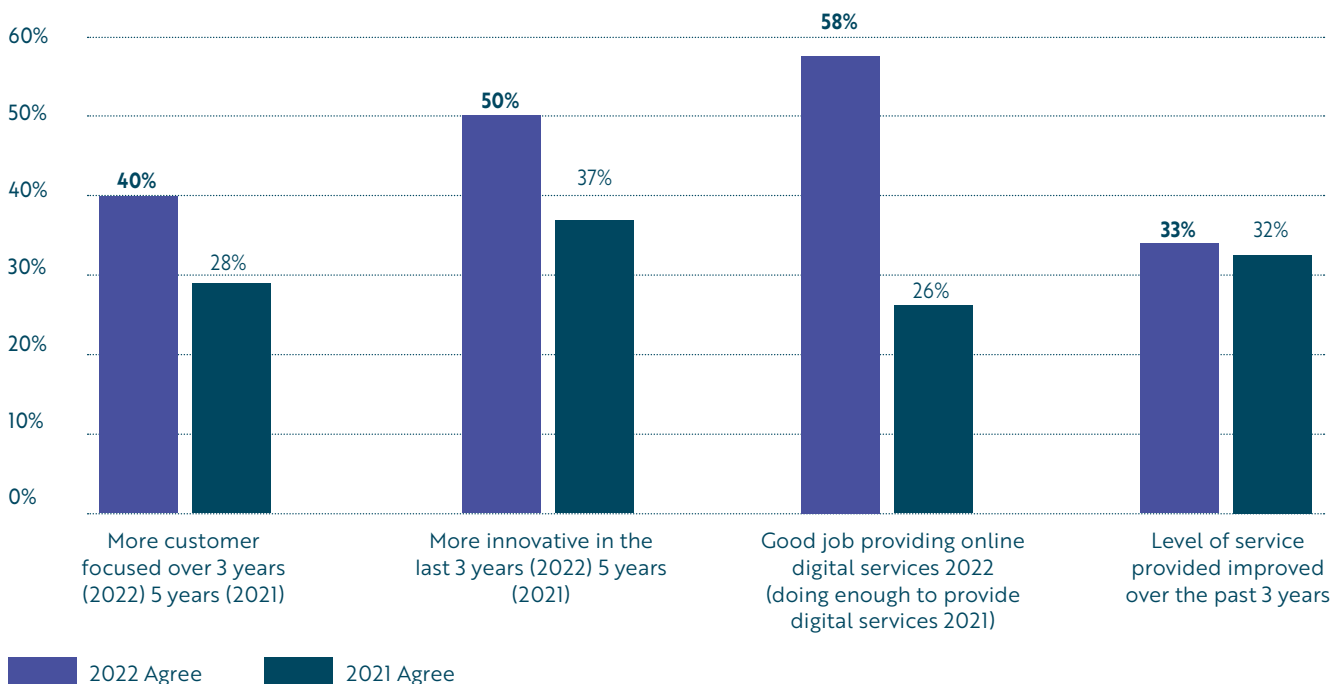


Figure 15: Agreement with improved customer service statements 2022 and 2021

Special Theme: Communication and Engagement

The special theme explored through the national survey in 2022 related to communication and engagement with the public. There were three questions in this section. The first sought to explore whether people were currently following their local authority on social media or using their websites. Respondents were then asked what information they would like to receive from local authorities and whether they would subscribe to different services.

Use of social media and websites

Twenty-three percent of respondents followed their local authority on social media, but females were more inclined to actively follow their local authority (25%) compared to males (20%). The age group most likely to follow their local authority were those aged between 35-54 (31%) and the lowest aged 55+ (14%).

Sixty percent of respondents visited their local authority's website. The figure was lower for those aged between 18 and 34 (47%) while 66% of all other age categories visit local authority websites.

Information the public want from local authorities

Respondents were asked whether the following categories of information were important to them:

- Information about services (e.g., hours of business, how to make payments, apply for grants, where local offices are, etc.).
- Information on what is planned for the area (e.g., consultations, events, response to severe weather events, etc.).
- Information on council meetings and decisions.
- Information to help understand how the council works.

The highest level of interest was in receiving information in relation to what was going on in the local area (79%) and information about accessing services (77%). There was slightly less interest in receiving information to understand how local authorities work (58%) or information about council meetings or decisions being made at the council meetings (53%).

Table 18: Information public want from public authorities 2022

What LA are doing in area	Information about Services	How LA works	Council Meetings
79%	77%	58%	53%

Preferred communication services

Respondents were asked whether they were interested in signing up for email alerts, email newsletters or podcasts. More than half said they would sign up for email alerts and 45% would subscribe to an email newsletter. There was less interest in podcasts, with only 20% expressing an interest in these.

Further Insights

The 2022 data was explored to address the following questions:

- Do service users' responses to the sentiment statements differ to those who had not used services?
- Does a 'sense of belonging' or 'number of years living in an area' impact on the sentiment of participants to local authorities?

Sentiment of service users vs non-service users

Of the 1,858 survey participants, 95% were service users (n=1,772) and 5% were not (n=86). A review of responses from both groups reveals that those who had not used services within the past twelve months were less inclined to agree with any of the sentiment statements by between 34 and 9 percentage points. Therefore, service users, who were better positioned to comment on service provision, had a more positive view of local authorities than those who had not used services.

Table 19: Preferred communication services 2022

Email Alerts	Email Newsletter	Podcasts
53%	45%	20%

Table 20: Sentiment of service users and non-service users 2022

Agree with Sentiment	Service users (n=1,772)	Non-Service users (n=86)	Difference
Good online services	59%	25%	-34%
More customer focused	41%	10%	-31%
More innovative	52%	22%	-30%
Improved access – disabilities	39%	11%	-28%
Easy to engage	42%	15%	-27%
Improved services	34%	12%	-22%
Keeps me informed	31%	12%	-19%
More age friendly	33%	15%	-18%
LA fair and equal	37%	20%	-17%
Improved access - minorities	30%	13%	-17%
Know LA well	22%	10%	-12%
Happy - enquiries handled	40%	31%	-9%

The influence of a sense of belonging and years living in an area on sentiment scores

In 2022, survey participants were asked whether they had a sense of belonging to their local area and how long they had been living in the area. The data suggests that these factors have a strong impact on the views of respondents about local authority service provision.

- Sense of belonging to a local area

Those with a strong sense of belonging to their area scored all sentiment questions between 6 and 8 percentage points

higher than the total for all respondents, reflecting a more positive view of local authorities. This contrasts with those who had no strong sense of belonging to their local area. They were less likely to agree with any of the sentiment questions. The lowest level of disagreement was with the provision of online services where only 29% of respondents agreed, compared with 64% of people who feel they belong to their area.

Table 21: Sentiment agreement and sense of belonging to the local area 2022

Agree with Sentiment	"Strong" Sense of Belonging to LA Area	Sentiment total	"No Strong" Sense of Belonging to LA Area
N=	898	1,858	108
Good online services	64%	58%	29%
More innovative	58%	50%	24%
Easy to engage	48%	41%	30%
Happy - enquiries handled	47%	40%	20%
More customer focused	47%	40%	13%
Improved access - disabilities	46%	38%	14%
LA fair and equal	44%	37%	15%
Improved services	41%	33%	10%
More age friendly	38%	32%	12%
Keeps me informed	36%	30%	10%
Improved access - minorities	36%	29%	13%
Know LA well	27%	21%	5%

- Years living in the local area

When the duration living in an area was compared with the sense of belonging to the local area, what was revealed was that those with a strong sense of belonging had resided in their local area for over 20 years in half of the cases and between 6-10 years in the remainder of cases. Those with no strong sense of belonging to their local area were in all cases living in the area for five years or less.

Intuitively, it could be expected that those living in an area for 20 years or more had a strong sense of belonging to an area and were thus reporting high levels of agreement with sentiment statements. However, the number of incidents

amongst those living in an area between 6-10 years were a bit more unexpected. However, research currently being carried out by Maynooth University's ICLRD⁷ has revealed that people are largely brought into communities via children joining sports or other clubs (ICLRD, pending, InPlace Research). Given this, the sense of belonging to an area may be fostered after people have children and those children start school or joining local activities. This may go some way to explaining this finding in the data.

The lowest levels of agreement with sentiment questions were in all cases amongst those living in their local areas for 5 years or less.

Table 22: Number of years living in the local area and agreement with sentiment statements 2022

Sentiment	No. Years Living in Area	Highest Agreement by Years Living in Area	Agree with Statement - National	Lowest Agreement by Years Living in Area	No. Years Living in Area
Good online services	20 years +	65%	58%	45%	2-5 years
More innovative	20 years +	55%	50%	32%	2-5 years
Easy to engage	20 years +	46%	41%	18%	> 2 years
Happy - enquiries handled	6-10 years	48%	40%	30%	> 2 years
More customer focused	20 years +	44%	40%	28%	> 2 years
Improved access - disabilities	11-20 years	42%	38%	26%	2-5 years
LA fair and equal	6-10 years	42%	37%	28%	> 2 years
Improved services	6-10 years	37%	33%	23%	2-5 years
More age friendly	20 years +	36%	32%	22%	> 2 years
Keeps me informed	6-10 years	37%	30%	22%	2-5 years
Improved access - minorities	20 years +	32%	29%	23%	2-5 years
Know LA well	6-10 years	30%	21%	15%	2-5 years

⁷ The InPlace research project is co-funded by the LGMA and will be completed in Q4 2023.

2022 Focus Groups

The 2021 and 2022 survey results highlighted the need for local authorities to improve their communications and engagement with customers. The findings reveal that customers do not feel informed about what local authorities were doing in their local area and there were low or moderate levels of awareness about many key services. To understand how this issue could be tackled more effectively, six focus groups were held to explore this topic in more detail.

Consultations took place with the LGMA Communications Unit to agree the focus group objectives and question flow for the six 'communications and engagement' focus groups. It was agreed that there would be an exploration of the views of participants about current local authority communication and engagement activities, the type of information they wanted from local authorities and the channels preferred to get information from local authorities.

A second area that was explored through two focus groups was whether people considered local authorities value for money. When NOAC commissioned the 2018-2020 Local Authority Satisfaction Survey, one of the questions they asked was whether local authorities provided value for money. Twenty-eight per cent of respondents agreed that they were good value for money.

The focus group objectives were expanded to also explore a more fundamental question about the type of information that participants needed if they were to develop an informed opinion about whether local authorities were value for money.

All focus groups were recorded and transcribed, and inputs were analysed using MAXQDA, a qualitative data analysis software that facilitated coding and analysis of the feedback. To encourage participation, all participants received a €25 One4All voucher after the focus group, and all the focus groups were conducted online using Zoom⁸.

Focus group participants

Participants were drawn from the four regions, Dublin, Munster, Connacht/ Ulster, and Rest of Leinster, and included a mix from both urban and rural local authorities. In addition, two of the focus groups targeted older persons and one targeted new communities, as these were identified by NOAC as groups that may have specific requirements in relation to communication and engagement. The focus groups were held between December 12th, 2022, and February 1st, 2023. In total, 62 people participated in the focus groups 45 females and 17 males.

Table 23: Breakdown of focus groups by location and target group 2022

Region	Urban	Rural	Targeted Groups	Participants
Dublin	Dublin		General Public	9
Munster	Cork City		General Public	8
Connacht/Ulster		Mayo	General Public	8
Munster		Kerry	Older Persons	8
Connacht/Ulster	Galway City	County Galway	Older Persons	9
Rest of Leinster	Waterford, Dublin	Waterford	New Communities	8

⁸ The focus groups with older persons and new communities were scheduled to take place in-person but as there was an increase in incidences of Covid-19 and respiratory viruses being reported at the time, these sessions were changed to online focus groups to protect the health of participants.

Over a quarter of the Communication and Engagement focus group attendees were over 65, and just under a quarter were under 35, so half of attendees were aged between 35 and 64. The age profile for those attending the Value for Money focus groups was different with 17% under 35 and none of the attendees were over 65. Therefore, 93% of attendees were aged between 35 and 64.

Recruitment of participants for three general focus groups was done with the assistance of the Public Participation Networks (PPN) and local authorities' social media promotional services. When targeting older persons, the same channels were used as well as direct engagement with the Age Friendly Coordinators in both Kerry and Galway County Council and organisations working with older persons. In Kerry, referrals from registered participants were critical to ensuring adequate numbers enrolling. Recruitment for the new communities focus group involved contacting groups in Wexford, Waterford and South Dublin as well as the PPNs, but there was no uptake from anyone in Wexford.

The recruitment for the two 'value for money' focus groups differed to the 'communications and engagement' focus groups. In the Longford area, those engaged in the community

and voluntary sector in the area were targeted. Participants had experience engaging with local authorities and making representations on behalf of community groups and residents. Those participating in the Dublin region were recruited via Dublin City University (DCU), the Education and Training Boards (ETBs) and various enterprises and enterprise programmes. Participants were not experienced in engaging with local authorities and would have had less awareness about the role of local authorities generally.

Focus group findings: communications and engagement

For the purpose of the focus groups, **communication** was defined as a 'one-way' process where local authorities were providing information to the public, and **engagement** was defined as a 'two-way' process involving an exchange of information between the local authority and the public. The focus groups were structured to discuss views on existing local authority communication and engagement activities, the type of information people wanted from local authorities, and the preferred communication and engagement channels.

Table 24: Value for money focus group participant mix 2022

Region	Urban	Rural	Targeted Groups	Participants
Rest of Leinster		Longford	Enterprise & Education	7
Dublin	Dublin		Community & Voluntary	5

Comments about local authority communications and engagement

Several themes emerged during discussions relating to participants' experience of their local authorities' communication and engagement activities, including:

- **Ineffective use of social media:** Twenty percent of participants said they used social media. However, most comments suggested that their local authority did not engage with them effectively using this channel. The key feedback was that social media was used as a one-way channel to get messages out to people, rather than as a method of engagement (i.e., two-way communication). The local authority was often slow to respond or did not respond.
- The **lack of clear engagement routes** was raised throughout the focus groups, in both urban and rural areas. People felt engagement was not straightforward. Many people reported a lack of clarity about who was responsible for what, who the relevant person was to raise their issue with and how to contact them.
- Half of the comments relating to engagement were negative in their disposition (52%), describing local authorities as **more reactive than proactive**. However, one quarter of comments tended to be positive (25%), pointing out examples of where things are done right.
- **Dublin people tended to be more positive** about their experience of engagement (38%), followed by rest of Leinster and Galway. People from Cork City⁹ and Mayo made fewer positive comments (6% respectively).

- In relation to overall satisfaction levels with communications and engagement, 74% of people said that there was room to improve.
- Frustrations were exacerbated when people found it hard to navigate local authority websites. They were often unclear about the headings on the website, and which departments were responsible for what. Much of the dissatisfaction or uneasiness was caused by poor timing of communication, inappropriate communication channels and the perceived unreliability of online data.
- Many people did not really know what information they wanted to receive from their local authority and did not feel well informed enough about what local authorities were responsible for to be able to decide.

Type of information required

Focus group participants identified the type of information they wanted from their local authorities as either (i) urgent or (ii) non-urgent, but of interest.

- (i) **Urgent information** relates to events that have the potential to disrupt their normal behaviour.

For instance, two thirds of participants said that they would like up-to-date information about roadworks, weather warnings, water outages and generally would like this information as soon as possible. Water quality was also mentioned, given the increase in people involved in outdoor swimming.

⁹ The Cork focus group was for people living or working in the city, 6 of the 8 attendees lived in the city, 1 worked in the county. The remaining 2 lived in the county but worked in the city.

(ii) Non-urgent information relates to information that could enhance or add value to their lives or enable them to participate or respond to a topic of interest or concern.

There was a particular interest in knowing what was going on locally (e.g., events and initiatives), as well as service schedules, and opening hours of council managed facilities (such as leisure centres, recycling facilities and so on). There was some interest in local issues related to planning and housing developments, particularly those who were using local authority alerts notifying them of local activity. Fewer people wanted information about what local authorities did, but they were interested in understanding which services were delivered directly and which were contracted out, for example,

bin collections and road works. People emphasised the need for the information to be up to date.

Preferred channels of engagement

Amongst participants, email was the preferred mode of engagement (52%), as it facilitated keeping a record of contacts. Social media came in second at 33% but did not feature as a preferred channel amongst older people or new communities. Older persons preferred the phone, or email as did new communities and were more inclined than others to engage with councillors. New communities also expressed a desire to be able to engage with staff in persons (11%). Older persons also mentioned libraries as a source of information (7%).

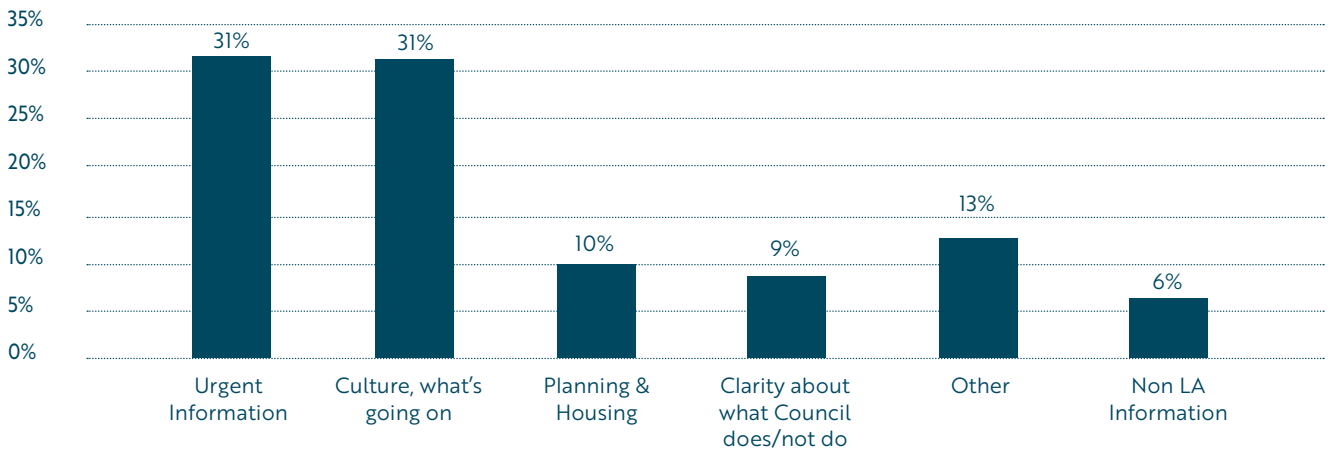


Figure 16: Type of information wanted by public - focus group 2022

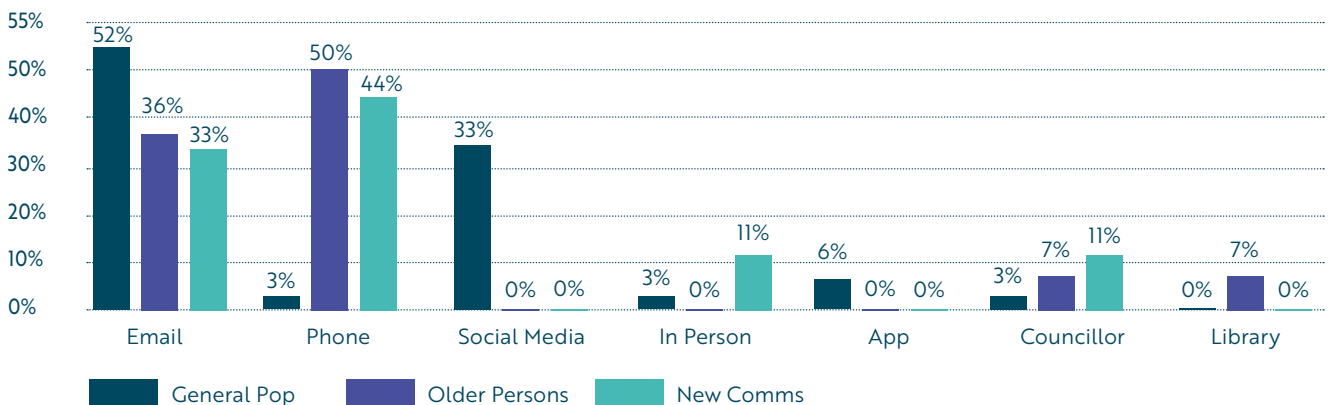


Figure 17: Preferred channel of engagement by target group - focus group 2022

Overall, three quarters of participants felt there was room for improvement in relation to communication and engagement with the public. However, in Dublin, the rate drops to just over one third of people who felt there was room for improvement. Half of Dublin based respondents were generally happy with how the local authority was communicating with the public. The feedback indicated that this was because there were different expectations about the amount and range of information local authorities could or should provide. Expectations in areas outside the Dublin region were very high with participants saying local authorities should keep all community members informed about all local activities.

Focus group findings: value for money

Participants were asked to score their local authority in relation to value for money on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is poor and 10 is excellent. They were then asked to discuss the factors that influenced that score, before being shown a presentation that had been prepared by the LGMA, outlining key statistics, budgetary information, and information about staffing levels and services available.

Following the presentation, the discussion centred on determining if this was the kind of information that would help inform decisions about value for money, and if not, what kind of information would be helpful. The session concluded by asking participants to rate local authorities again if their view had changed on foot of the information provided.

The focus group in the Dublin region, which included participants from a business and education background and who do not typically engage with local authorities, scored local authorities 6/10 prior to the presentation and it increased to 6.57/10 when they considered the

scope of work local authorities were responsible for. They felt somewhat more informed by the presentation provided but thought more information about the impact of services on people would be more beneficial.

In Longford, the participants, who were from the community and voluntary sector and were experienced in bringing their views to policy makers, scored local authorities 2.33/10 before the presentation. After the presentation, there was no change to the scores, except for one participant who lowered their score by one. Generally, they felt that statistics and quantitative information was not useful in making an assessment in relation to value for money. They also felt local authorities should have more information available to keep people informed regarding processes and outcomes so people could assess progress of local authorities at all times.

Overall, there was considerable differences in the views between the two focus groups, which may have been in some part due to the higher expectations about levels of community communications that local authorities should provide in local authorities outside the Dublin region. Another factor may have related to the previous experiences and background of participants. In Longford, the community and voluntary representatives were experienced in advocating for resources so were more experienced in critiquing services.

However, both groups agreed that the provision of quantitative or statistical data had a limited benefit and felt that impact assessment data and illustrated examples of impact would have been of more interest to them if trying to make an assessment on the theme of value for money.

Conclusions

This is the second customer service report published by the LGMA on behalf of the CCMA Corporate Committee. A key addition to the survey in 2022 was collection of information in relation to how long respondents were living in their local area and whether they had a strong sense of belonging to their area. The analysis revealed that they appear to be key variables that influence the views people have about local authority service provision. The more attached to the area, the more positive the sentiment. It would appear that attachment to the area aligns to residency of more than 20 years or between 6-10 years, a point at which many residents have young children who are connecting to the area through school and joining local clubs. The data also revealed that people actively using local authority services were more positive in their views about local authorities than those who did not use services.

The findings shed light on the many factors related to communications and engagement. The report provides more clarity about two types of information wanted by the public:

- Urgent information about things that may cause disruption to their lives – which they would like to receive within a short time frame, possibly via text, and
- Non-urgent information that adds value to their lives and enables them to participate in or gain more understanding about topics of interest – which could be sent via email as it was not as urgent.

The survey clearly identified the channels preferred by the various age groups and regions with noticeable differences evident. One such finding was the high reliance on local newspapers and radio outside the Dublin region, more face-to-face engagement in Munster and the importance of posters as an information source in the Dublin region. It was also interesting to note the low level of website usage of those aged 18-25 while older people demonstrated a strong reliance on traditional media for information.

Finally, the survey shows increased levels of awareness of local authority service provision and an increase in the percentage of respondents using services compared to 2021. Satisfaction rates were high for the majority of services, but some high levels of dissatisfaction were evident for a small number of services. More insight will be gained into this topic in 2023 as results can be compared to the 2023 findings.

Case studies

In order to illustrate some of the initiatives in place across the sector, three case studies are presented below. The case studies focus on communication and engagement initiatives and were chosen from the Excellence in Local Government Awards shortlists.

1. Longford County Council - Urban Horse Project
2. Donegal County Council - Trail Gazers Project
3. Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council - Digital Inclusion 'Acorn Project'

The case studies outline how local authorities respond to customer needs across a range of service areas including community, leisure and recreation, environment, tourism, library services and information technology.

The vision set out in Better Public Services 2030 is 'inclusive, high quality and integrated Public Service provision that meets the needs and improves the lives of the people of Ireland' (Better Public Service, 2030). The case studies offer valuable insights and learnings from local government communication and engagement initiatives while also highlighting how the sector delivers innovative services to meet the needs of its customers.

Case Study One

Longford County Council

Urban Horse Project

Local Authority	Longford County Council
Title	Urban Horse Project
Brief description of the initiative	<p>This is a positive community horse initiative delivered to disadvantaged groups, which is led by the Local Authority Veterinary Service (LAVS) and Longford Sports Partnership (LSP) in coordination with Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine (DAFM) and Longford Community Resource Limited (LCRL). The urban horse project started as a horse control project. It broadened to providing a service to disadvantaged comm by promoting animal welfare, educating young people on horse care and handling, and offering horse-riding opportunities. It is an increasingly successful programme, which is continuing to gather momentum.</p> <p>An interagency approach was instrumental in ensuring the success of the project. The LAVS collaborated with stakeholders to fulfil initiatives and provide community services, especially for under privileged groups. Professional management, oversight and vast experience sports programmes came from the LSP. The horse warden was involved with issues relating to horse welfare. The LRCL helped engage with hard-to-reach young people from disadvantaged communities. Strong support came from senior management within Longford County Council and the DAFM. The DAFM also provided direct funding for the project.</p>
Objectives	<p>Objectives of this initiative include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support the education and development of children from the Traveller community and other ethnic minority groups and bring awareness to regulation in the relation to horses and to influence their own community. • To provide safe stabling and grazing of horses for the families who engage with the project. • To provide the children with an opportunity to increase their confidence and their social interaction with others. • The promotion of positive mental health and wellbeing. • To provide education on the handling, care, and welfare of horses with a view to future career progression in the equine industry. • To give the children a positive sporting experience with the aim of them staying involved in sport.

<p>How was the initiative developed</p>	<p>In September 2010, following the economic collapse and the increase in the number of stray and unwanted horses in Ireland, the DAFM reconsidered their strategy in relation to the Control of Horses Act 1996. In November 2014, the DAFM announced a financial allocation to County Managers to support the development of facilities to provide shelter for the urban horse population and to educate young people in the care and welfare of horses.</p> <p>The initiative commenced with discussions at management level within the local authority. It was initiated by the Local Authority Veterinary Service in cooperation with the Department of Agriculture. A working group, including the LSP and local stakeholders, was established, and enthusiasm was generated through explanation of possible projects and potential benefits to young people and their families.</p> <p>The initiative was mainly delivered through in-person education and learning. However, technology was used through a group messaging service, which allowed for direct communication with participant families to ensure they were informed. Throughout the project, photographs were taken, and a video of the activities was compiled to document the achievements and progression of these young people. This also allowed for the promotion of the programme to various organisations and bodies and was also promoted on our social media and website. Local traditional media also featured the programme.</p> <p>The initiative was funded by DAFM (central government funding), LCC (local government funding) and LCRL and LSP funding. Communication and engagement between internal and external stakeholders was crucial to the project's success. External stakeholders included animal welfare charities, equine centres, participants, and photographers. The positive momentum of the project then attracted other additional individuals and organisations to participate; and therefore, give impetus to the dynamic development of the project over successive years.</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>The initiative commenced in 2016 and has been running annually since then. As part of a wide variety of services provided by LSP and LAVS, the timeline is roughly over a year. The annual process includes a preparatory scoping and funding meeting between LAVS and SP in January. Administrative and operational communications are then progressed by LSP. This is followed by a funding application in February and steering group meetings in March, April, and May. The programme is implemented over June and July. An evaluation of the initiative takes place in September. A report is submitted to DAFM and funding is then drawn down. Funding is generally received in October/November and annual reporting is completed in the form of an annual report and an M1 evaluation.</p>
<p>Identify the service area/s impacted by the challenge</p>	<p>Environment, Veterinary, Community, Leisure and Recreation – Sports Partnership</p>

Case Study One (Contd)

Results	<p>The initiative has allowed Longford County Council to improve communication and engagement with communities, who may usually be suspicious or unwilling to engage with organisations, such as the local authority. The LCC have used the template from this project for other initiatives as part of the Community Safety Partnership pilot. This project demonstrates that local government services can deliver effectively on central government policies.</p> <p>Results of the initiative include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Horse seizure figures have reduced from 56 in 2014 to four in 2022.• Fifty-four children benefitting from the project over the four years.• M1 reporting shows increases in participants' physical activity levels, which shows that because of this programme 100% of participants' physical activity levels have increased.• Eight young people were given the opportunity to return to the project the following year to further progress their skills. <p>Additionally, the children gain confidence from being involved in the programme. Each child became a leader with their horse giving them a sense of responsibility. The participants gain knowledge of caring for horses as well as learning how to ride. This promoted health and wellbeing for the young people as well as ensuring that positive animal welfare practices are embedded. It is also an example of the One Health concept where people, animals and the environment all influence the health of the other. The participants, managers, funders, and service providers exhibit a sense of satisfaction and achievement about being involved in this initiative.</p> <p>The initiative is sustainable as the Urban Horse Project approach is better value for money than solely an enforcement approach. As it is an intergenerational approach, it will continue to sustain value and improvement in the long term for urban horse owners and society. Through integration and inclusion, mutual respect between urban horse owners and groups in society is fostered.</p>
Key learnings and/or obstacles for the local authority	<p>Key learnings include the benefit of respectful communication and engagement between sections within the local authority and between the local authority and target groups. It has been uplifting to see what can be achieved when different sections within Longford County Council and other organisations work together.</p> <p>The importance of clear and concise communication between organisations and with participants has been vital to the success of the programme. There has got to be a positive desire for the initiative from all those involved in order for it to succeed.</p> <p>Another key learning is that horses and physical activity can break down barriers for these young people and have a huge effect on them and how they see the world and society.</p> <p>Obstacles to successful implementation of the initiative could be workload of sections involved, engagement of participants and the failure to assess operational risks and manage them.</p>
Additional Information	<p>Longford County Council is very pleased that our Urban Horse Project has been selected as a case study by the LGMA. Acknowledgement of the importance of the horse in the history and culture with people gives an opportunity for positive communication and engagement, which can then extend far beyond horse control regulation.</p>

Case Study Two

Donegal County Council

Trail Gazers Project

Local Authority	Donegal County Council
Title	Trail Gazers Project
Brief description of the initiative	<p>Trail Gazers is a European project being piloted at Inch Levels Wildfowl Reserve in Donegal, one of eight locations in Europe (only 2 of which are in Ireland). It is working to stimulate rural economic development by linking investments made by local authorities into walking and recreational infrastructure to the surrounding small towns and villages. It encourages footfall to these areas; and thereby, contributes to sustaining local communities.</p> <p>Local players are key to the success of this project. By developing a bespoke community trail plan and animating local people to become 'community trail ambassadors' or custodians of these natural sites, it reignites ambition for the area and that one person can make a difference and become the difference in that community.</p>
Objectives	<p>Huge investment has been made in strategic infrastructure in walking trails in Donegal. This project will help policy makers to quantify the impact on the surrounding towns and villages and how this impact can be increased.</p> <p>The overall project aim is to examine how walks and recreational trails can be used as catalysts for the sustainable economic and social development of small rural economies and communities.</p>
How was the initiative developed	<p>Over the years significant investment has been made in developing walking and recreational trails across the Atlantic Area, showcasing the regions rich natural and cultural heritage and allowing visitors to safely navigate and enjoy the region's most precious assets. The Trail Gazers Project set out to determine the impact of this investment on sustaining rural communities and explored innovative ways that this impact can be enhanced. It nurtured community trail ambassadors, developed community trail plans and provided a model of best practice for how these assets can become catalysts for the long-term development of small rural communities in the Atlantic Area.</p>

Case Study Two (Contd)

<p>How was the initiative developed</p>	<p>Project Partners: Trail Gazers was made up of 10 project partners Municipio de Viana do Castelo (Portugal); Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (Wales); Dirección General de Protección de la Naturaleza-Gobierno de Canarias (La Palma); Glasgow Caledonian University (Scotland); Ulster University (Northern Ireland); Ville de Louvigné du Désert (France); Navarra De Suelo Y Vivienda, S.A.U. (Spain); Sligo County Council (Ireland); Universidade do Algarve (Portugal); and was led by the Economic Development Section of Donegal County Council (Ireland).</p> <p>Pilot Sites: Eight pilot trail sites in ‘Chemin De Mémoires’; in Bretagne, France; ‘Via Verde del Plazola’ in Navarra, Spain; ‘La Caldera de Taburiente’ on the Canary Island of Las Palma; the ‘Seven Hanging Valleys’ in the Algarve, Portugal; ‘Sacred Mountain’ in Viana do Castelo, Northern Portugal; the ‘Taff Trail’ in West Wales and the Valleys; the ‘Knocknarea / Killaspugbrone loop’ in Sligo; and ‘Inch Levels’ in Donegal.</p> <p>Key outputs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deployment of footfall technology including 21 sensors installed at the pilot site in Donegal. • Production of a ‘Customer and Business Insights’ paper, working with local businesses to develop initiatives to encourage footfall. • Development of Community Trail Plans / Community Trail Ambassadors – encouraging local people to become custodians of their trails. • Development of multiplier algorithms to determine the return for investment and how much each trail visitor spends (for Inch in Donegal, it works out at 0.70 cent). • Development of communication tools including a website, a target audience database and virtual tourism material. Twelve videos were created for the Inch / Lost Trail Stories App. • Publication of a Best Practice Toolkit, which can be adapted to any trail.
<p>Identify the service area/s impacted by the challenge</p>	<p>Planning, Business and Economy (Economic Dev), Environment, Roads and Transport, Leisure and Recreation, Heritage and Conservation, Tourism, Information Technology, Governance and Administration, Community</p>
<p>Timeline</p>	<p>This three-year project launched in 2020.</p>

<p>Results</p>	<p>The Trail Gazers Project has developed a toolkit as our legacy to demonstrate to others how innovative data capture technologies, such as sensors, GIS mapping, bespoke surveys can be used to capture information on each trail site. The Trail Gazers Project estimated the multiplier impact or return to the rural community for every euro invested in walks or trail infrastructure and examined and tested ways that this return can be enhanced. This toolkit is suitable for all citizens, business owners, tourism providers, educational providers, health care providers, environmental protection groups, sports and recreational groups, policy makers and others, who live or have a role in the small rural communities that surround each of these trail sites. The toolkit contains evidence-based data, which will allow community stakeholders to understand what stage of development their trail is at, identify assets and constraints and determine potential options for the future development of each trail site.</p> <p>Trail Gazers strived to revitalise, regenerate, and reimagine rural communities by developing a future vision, which is community led, evidenced-based and enshrined in the concept of slow tourism, which these small communities can sustainably manage. Target walking and cycling visitors, who are interested in the 'unique experience' offered by small rural or often remote areas that are steeped in a rich array of natural, built and cultural heritage.</p> <p>The toolkit can be adapted to inform policy makers with a framework that identifies the required levels of investment, programming and management required to assist trails to become more economically and socially driven; thus, increasing and attracting more visitors to the Atlantic regions.</p>
<p>Key learnings and/or obstacles for the local authority</p>	<p>In summary, Trail Gazers was a truly collaborative and innovative project that set out to develop a toolkit to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) identify accepted best practise in different trail technologies and methodologies that set out to capture footfall data; develop dashboards; administer visitors surveys; calculate trail multipliers; develop bespoke trail plans; and to mobilise the communities. b) select, implement, and test a range of technologies and methodologies given the unique socio-economic characteristics and stage of development of each of the 8 participating trail sites. c) And finally, will document key learnings and ways forward so that other small rural communities can 'enhance their natural and cultural assets to stimulate economic development' and increase the attractiveness of their area as places to live, work and thrive.
<p>Additional information</p>	<p>www.trailgazers.eu</p>

Case Study Three

Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council Digital Inclusion 'Acorn Project'

Local Authority	Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown
Title	Digital Inclusion 'Acorn Project'
Brief description of the initiative	<p>To overall aim of the initiative was to collaborate on finding solutions to address digital exclusion. During the pandemic, those who did not have access to devices, or the necessary skills to use them, became increasingly marginalised. Many services had pivoted remotely and the need to assist isolated citizens particularly in an older demographic was identified by Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council (dlr) as a priority.</p> <p>According to research on the response to the Community Call, conducted by Dr Louise Kinlen of Southside Partnership, digital literacy and digital poverty in the county was flagged as an issue that needed to be addressed. According to a National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) report of 2020, 55% of adults class themselves as having 'low digital skills', especially 'older citizens'.</p> <p>The cross-departmental dlr Digital Inclusion Working Group was formed in 2021, composed of staff from Library, Community, Information Technology & Communications sections, to collaborate on finding innovative ways of addressing digital exclusion.</p> <p>The Acorn Project was the first project of the group, designed to identify funding and resources to deliver devices & training to targeted groups, assisting them to gain skills and confidence online.</p>
Objectives	<p>To collaborate cross-departmentally in dlr to build on relationships developed during the community call and respond to an identified need in a key vulnerable demographic. The view was that collaboration would reach and impact more stakeholders.</p> <p>The target sector was older members of the community and their advocacy groups and service providers. Consultation carried out as part of the preparation of the dlr Age Friendly Strategy 2022-2026 identified access to technology and keeping-up with digital literacy skills as one of the main issues impacting the lives of older people in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown over the next 5 years.</p>

<p>Objectives</p>	<p>The main objectives of the pilot project included addressing that challenge by providing devices, upskilling and a means of connectivity to those impacted by the digital divide, especially the older demographic.</p> <p>A lateral objective was empowerment with improved digital literacy skills and the confidence that comes with that knowledge. Greater opportunities follow better access to information and the ability to assess its value and distinguish it from misinformation, along with ability to access training, education, health, and financial services online.</p> <p>Crucially, the ability to reach out to friends, families, and social networks online, as well as the opportunity to create new social networks there, has been proven to enhance health and wellbeing, so that was a key goal.</p> <p>The collaborative aspect of this project aimed to create a culture of sharing ideas, research, resources, and funding streams within dlr, to seek value for money, skills development of staff and capacity building.</p> <p>Another key objective was for better connectivity and consultation with citizens and increased active citizenship leading to more timely and targeted service delivery.</p>
<p>How was the initiative developed</p>	<p>In September 2020, dlr Community section sourced funding from the Department of Rural and Community Development for the purchase of a variety of devices to be given to members of the dlr Older People’s Council (OPC), to provide them with equipment and training to communicate with each other online. A range of devices (Acorn tablets) were provided, including for those with basic or no skills.</p> <p>Acorn tablets are an Irish product designed by the supplier (Cliffmun Media) specifically for older people, with low/no technology skills. They are accessible in appearance, with an intuitive design, strong colours and large fonts.</p> <p>Library staff contacted each of the OPC members, who had a range of experience and skills relating to technology and engaged them with training remotely as an initial project. At that time, of the 13 members, nine did not own their own devices, so were supplied with these by dlr Community section. All nine undertook training provided by library staff, which was tailored to their needs, at a time and mode of their choosing. Documented progress was impressive, especially given the challenge of remote training.</p> <p>Following the success of this initiative, Acorn tablets were purchased with funding under a special project budget, launched in October 2021 to mark UN International Day of Older Persons, and given to nursing homes and daycare centres. Staff of the centres were offered training on these tablets remotely as was their preference.</p>

Case Study Three (Contd)

How was the initiative developed	<p>A working group was established in libraries to examine a pilot lending scheme for the public. The working group looked at the terms and conditions of loans and a training programme was established. The lending scheme from libraries was launched late 2021, together with one-on-one training by library staff at the pilot libraries.</p> <p>Forty-two tablets were eventually made available for two-month loan periods, and they are now available at all Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown library branches. Two thirds of devices are Wi-Fi enabled; the rest have a data sim allowing connectivity for those with no home broadband. There are now waiting lists at all branches for these popular devices and supports.</p> <p>The Digital Inclusion group undertook and continues to promote a programme of outreach to Active Retirement and other age-friendly groups, demonstrating Acorns and outlining other services and facilities available from their local authority. A promotional video was created by dlr to showcase the initiative and is playing on all digital screens in the libraries and also shared on libraries social media accounts on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok.</p> <p>Collaboration with other organisations e.g., National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) has led to further collaborations and initiatives. A key hardcopy promotion has been the production of the digital focused 2022 dlr Age Friendly Magazine, where key organisations have contributed information on the digital supports on offer. Age Action have also provided hard copies of the Getting Started Computer training guide for distribution with these, to daycare centres, churches, shopping, and community centres.</p> <p>Evaluation and monitoring have been in the form of a feedback form, which was launched with the Acorn tablets, to assess impacts and seek feedback directly from the users. Feedback overall has been positive: "Very rewarding...It's not just the knowledge you observe, but the confidence that comes with it. I've sent my first email, so I was over the moon!" Nancy Forsyth, OPC member.</p>
Identify the service area/s relevant to the initiative	Community, Libraries, Information Technology, Leisure and Recreation, Arts and Culture.

<p>Timeline</p>	<p>The project began in 2020 in response to the Covid-19 pandemic but developed over the course of the last three years in response to user needs and staff learnings. Due to the success of the initiative, it is continuing and plans to expand the scheme are underway.</p> <p>The initiative is extremely sustainable in that interdepartmental collaboration naturally maximises resources, ideas and funding streams. Key service indicators have increased with lending of devices, new and renewed membership of the libraries and visits to libraries increasing on foot of outreach and promotion'; thereby, helping dlr to stay relevant to its service users.</p> <p>For the staff, the opportunity to take part in the project has been reported as 'rewarding', leading to greater job satisfaction and staff upskilling.</p> <p>The Acorn project is also suitable for those who have visual impairment sensory processing or intellectual issues, due to its accessible display uncluttered by icons, use of plain English, and with easy video tutorials inbuilt. Plans to expand for these users are underway.</p>
<p>Results</p>	<p>The impact of this initiative was a greater collaboration between sections of dlr County Council, with not only the formation of a cross-departmental working group, leading to enhanced collegiality and a culture of sharing ideas, research, resources, and funding streams, but also achieving greater reach into the community and a more timely and targeted delivery of services, helping us all to better achieve our corporate goals.</p> <p>Key service indicators have increased, with lending of devices, and new and renewed membership of libraries. It has also, for some users, provided access to the full range of online resources provided by dlr Libraries. For the users of dlr services, the impact has been improved access to devices, skills, and services, as well as increased awareness of what the local authority can do for their citizens, leading to good relations and an enhanced reputation.</p> <p>For the staff, the opportunity to take part in upskilling members of the community has been very rewarding, and has also led to staff themselves upskilling, and taking pride in staying relevant to their service users.</p> <p>Key outputs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 13 members of the Older Persons Council received training, and all engaged and benefited from the pilot. Documented progress was impressive, especially given the challenge of remote training. • Sixty-eight tablets were purchased after funding was expanded by a special project revenue budget. • Twenty digital skills sessions for training nursing home staff as well as individuals took place, and there have been countless one-on-one tailored training sessions by library staff in-branch. • There have been many outreach visits, which brought new and renewed library memberships as well as contributing to lending figures, overall benefiting Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). • Increased collaborations with the dlr Age-Friendly Alliance and other stakeholders, such as the Dublin and Dún Laoghaire Education & Training Board, Age Action, dlr Making Connections, ALONE, Southside Partnership, Age Friendly Ireland and the dlr Public Participation Network as well as the Men's Sheds, NALA, and others.

Case Study Three (Contd)

Key learnings and/or obstacles for the local authority	<p>There was the initial challenge of trying to contact and train-up older users remotely, especially difficult without being able to demonstrate in-person, due to Covid restrictions.</p> <p>Staff training and upskilling was required in both digital skills and mentoring users. This was of benefit to staff and continues to interest staff as a rewarding project.</p> <p>Lack of confidence by the target audience was a challenge. There were concerns to overcome about technology not being 'for them', about the perceived skills required to use devices, concern about damaging technology on loan, concerns about privacy and connectivity, and concerns about accessing Wi-Fi and the additional cost of purchasing Wi-Fi (internet connectivity costs).</p> <p>Training remains challenging but rewarding. Finding the time and impact on resources can sometimes be at issue particularly in smaller branches, or busy larger branches, when users must be taken from basics, such as having to set up an email address, and then through the functionality of the device, so we have learned that several staff (on different shifts) should be liaison points and that training is best delivered one-on-one by prior appointment.</p> <p>The prospect of taking onboard such a range of new skills can be overwhelming to the user. Some learnings include identifying what they wish to use the device for, and tailor it / simplify the display as such (for example, reducing the number of options if the photo app is less likely to be used).</p>
Additional information	<p>The medium and long-term impacts of the project on the community include better access to information and services for all our citizens, greater confidence navigating online, greater participation in their communities and their community, and service providers will benefit from greater engagement with this demographic.</p> <p>YouTube video for promotional purposes can be viewed here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N6d3vWAZhyc</p>

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Appendix 1: 2022 Survey Changes

Section: Awareness & Importance	
<p>What services do you think your [Local Authority] provides or is responsible for?</p> <p>Group 1: outdoor / local infrastructure</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Local Leisure Amenities (e.g., Parks/Playgrounds/Bathing Areas/Open Spaces/Sports Fields) 2. Footpaths 3. Street Lighting 4. Parking & Road Safety 5. Roads (e.g., Maintenance and Improvement of Road Network) 6. Litter Control 7. Street Cleaning 8. Dog Warden Service (Dog Wardens, Provision of Dog Shelters, Seizure of Dogs, imposing of fines) 9. Water/Roadside drainage 10. Control and Monitoring Lakes, Waterways, Rivers, Streams, Beaches 11. Cemeteries and Burial Grounds <p>Group 2: community / business related services</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Business Support Services (LEO, Enterprise Centres, Hubs, Business Supports) 13. Library Services 14. Sports/Leisure & Community/Youth Centres 15. Arts & Heritage Services 16. Supporting Communities (e.g., Tidy Towns, Public Participation Networks, Local Community Development Committees, Joint Policing Committees) 17. Tourism and Events – Assisting and Attracting Tourism <p>Group 3: additional services</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 18. Planning Applications, Development and Enforcement 19. Local Authority Housing/Social Housing 20. Traveller Accommodation 21. Homeless Supports 22. New Housing Development Supports (roads, lighting, footpaths) 23. Urban and Village Renewal Scheme 24. Environmental Protection/Awareness/Enforcement 25. Recycling Centres (Bottle Banks) 26. Fire Services 27. Motor Tax Collection 28. Register of Electors/Elections 29. Promoting the Development of the County 30. Other (SPECIFY _____ & CODE) <p>Adjustments made to 2021 Services List:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merged services as detailed in 2021 published report: The original survey contained 36 categories but in four areas, data was merged where services were deemed to be similar so that the final list contains 30 categories. 1. community and voluntary combines: (i) Supporting and hosting events, (ii) Supporting community and voluntary organisations and (iii) Promoting the interests of the local community. 2. Net arts and heritage: (i) Support for the arts and (ii) Heritage service. 3. business services combines: (i) Local Enterprise Office, (ii) Enterprise centres / hubs and (iii) Business/enterprise support and development. 4. Facilities/Centres combines: (i) Sports and leisure and (ii) Community and youth. 	List of services changed

Section: Awareness & Importance	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional merged categories agreed for 2022: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 5. Environmental Protection/Awareness: (i) Protecting the Environment/ Controlling Pollution and (ii) Environmental Protection, Information and Awareness. ○ Removal of Enforcement of Planning and Environment Issues and allocate out to planning and Environment. ○ Move events from community to tourism. • Additional Service included on IPSOS MRBI Survey but not on RedC: Homeless Supports 	List of services changed
Section: Channels of Engagement	
<p>Have often, if at all, have you engaged directly with your local authority, via any of the following channels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In person (with local authority staff) • Over the phone • E-mail • Letter/ correspondence • Intermediary (e.g., Co. Councillor/agent/family member) • Attended a Public Meeting (in-person or virtually online) • Visited the Website for information • Engaged with social media (e.g., follow, comment or like items on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) <p>Scale</p> <p>Past 6 months</p> <p>6-12 months</p> <p>Over 1-2 years ago</p> <p>Over 2-5 years ago</p> <p>5 years +</p> <p>Never</p>	Remove one channel from the list
<p>From which, if any, of the following sources do you obtain most of your information about your local authority?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Newspaper • Local Radio News Programme • National Newspaper • National Radio News Programme • Posters/Leaflets/screens/notice boards in libraries/other Local Authority buildings • TV (new) • Friends and neighbours • Facebook • Instagram • Twitter • LinkedIn • Website • Local authority newsletter (new) • Contact with Local Authority staff • Apps related to Local Authority services • Councillors (new) • None • Other Source (Specify_____) 	Add 3 new channel to the list

Appendix 1: 2022 Survey Changes (Contd)

Sentiment Statements: Improvements in Service Provision	
My local authority has become more customer focused over the past 3 years	Change 5 years to 3
I feel that the service provided by my local authority has become more innovative in the last 3 years	Change 5 years to 3
My local authority is doing a good job providing online digital services	Remove 'doing enough' replace with 'doing a good job'

Notes:

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