

NOVEMBER 2021

**GWENT HOUSING SUPPORT
SERVICE USER SURVEY 2021**
FOCUS ON TECHNOLOGY



Introduction

The Gwent Housing Support annual service user survey has now been running for five years. It adds to the wide range of consultation and engagement exercises that form part of Gwent's strategic and inclusive needs planning process carried out annually by the Housing Support Grant Teams and has become an important and established element of the needs mapping process. It is the responsibility of the local authorities in the region to ensure that engagement is undertaken with those who have used services.

Those who have needed to use services funded through the Housing Support Grant come from a wide range of backgrounds and receive support on a range of different issues; the support they receive is person centred and aims to help people to secure and maintain sustainable housing and to develop the skills needed to help them thrive. The Housing Support Grant seeks:

"A Wales where nobody is homeless and everyone has a safe home where they can flourish and live a fulfilled, active and independent life".

Great importance is placed on engaging with people who use services as part of Gwent's inclusive and strategic needs assessment process. The annual service user survey is promoted through the www.gwenthousingsupport.co.uk website and providers of services are encouraged to promote and enable the people they support to complete the questionnaire.

People who receive services are experts in these services, they have lived and experienced them and are in the best position to know what works, what doesn't and what improvements need to be made. This report provides an overview of the responses received to the 2021 annual service user consultation survey.

The difficulties that people experienced in relation to their digital skills and/or lack of access to technology to engage with services was one of the clear issues that was highlighted in the 2020 survey. An overview of some of the responses from the 2020 survey are provided here:

"I'm not very good with technology so restricted to phone calls/texts"

"It was very hard to use technology as I don't own mobile"

"I have never used a phone. I was glad for staff to come in face to face"

"I don't understand the internet"

"I am unable to read or write so could not do virtual calls as I don't have a phone to allow me to do"

"I couldn't use the face app on phone"

"I haven't got a camera phone but I got a phone"
"I can't use them posh phones I don't understand them"
"I am not good on computers"
"Don't have broadband and not able to put much credit on my phone"
"I don't have a smart phone but looked forward to my weekly phone calls"

Going forward support services will need to continue to operate on a hybrid basis, engaging with people both face to face and via technology provides increased opportunities to support people in a wider variety of ways. Other services that people need to access such as benefits, banking and health services are moving further towards online operation. This already has a huge impact for the people we work with; in terms of them being able to access the services they need in a timely manner and potentially lack of skills in this area leads to an unacceptable ongoing lack of access and digital exclusion, that will continue when support has ended.

Increasing access to digital technology and increasing digital inclusion is highlighted as a key area of action on the Regional Housing Support Collaborative Groups (RHSCG) work plan. Along with asking people how they felt about the service they have received, this survey enabled us to take a deeper dive to understand service users use of technology and the barriers that exist. The analysis gathered from this survey will be used to determine next steps in terms of this work.

The Gwent HSG teams have agreed the 7 recommendations which are detailed at the end of this report and these will be taken forward as part of 2022 -2023 work plans.

The questionnaire was widely circulated during July to September 2021 and asked the following questions:

- Q1 In which area of Gwent do you live?
- Q2 What type of service are you receiving?
- Q3 Please tell us how you have received support during the last few months?
- Q4 How happy have you been with the support you have received over the last few months?
- Q5 Is there anything that could have been improved?
- Q6 Please tell us which electronic items you own or use to access support and other services on-line?
- Q7 Have you received any help to access IT equipment?
- Q8 What IT equipment have you received help to access?
- Q9 Who helped you to access this IT equipment?
- Q10 Please tell us whether your on-line access has improved over the past year?

- Q11 Are there any barriers preventing you from getting on-line? (tick all that apply)
- Q12 What sort of things do you access / or would you access on-line? (tick all applicable)
- Q13 As we move out of the coronavirus restrictions, we anticipate that some of the new ways of working (e.g. on-line services) will continue. What would further help you to get on-line? (tick all applicable)
- Q14 If you could access training, how would you prefer to receive it? (tick all that apply)
- Q15 If you had access to IT equipment, would you use this to access support or would you still prefer phone calls or face to face meetings?
- Q16 Are there any other comments that you would like to make?

Survey Questions Analysis

Part 1 Customer satisfaction with services received

The survey was split into two parts; the first part of survey focused on where people lived, what type of service they receive and how satisfied they were with the service received. 182 people completed the survey to give us their views; providing a wealth of information that can be used for future planning purposes.

Q1. In which area of Gwent do you live?

A total of 262 responses were received to the questionnaire with engagement in the consultation exercise across all Gwent Local Authorities.

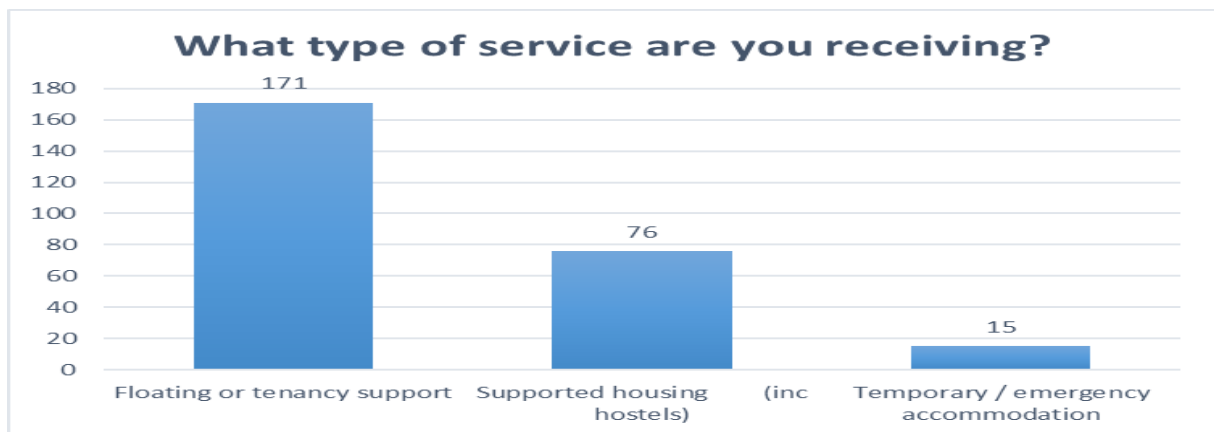
The consultation ran through the summer months and was extended to run through September to try and encourage more engagement.

There are approximately 7000 people receiving support across Gwent at any one time from services funded through the Housing Support Grant; finding ways to encourage people to engage in the survey continues to be an important consideration going forward.

Recommendation 1

- *Understanding the barriers to engaging in the consultation exercise to be considered as part of next year's survey.*

Q2. What type of service are you receiving? (total =262 responses)



The greatest number of people who responded were receiving floating or tenancy support i.e. support that is delivered in their own home. Those who responded to say they lived in supported housing includes those who live in accommodation with onsite support such as hostel and refuge provision. The smallest number of responses came from people living in temporary accommodation which would include bed and breakfast and other emergency accommodation. The largest number of services currently commissioned across Gwent are floating support services.

Recommendation 2

- *Increasing the number of responses from all service provision types should be an action and focus for next year's survey.*

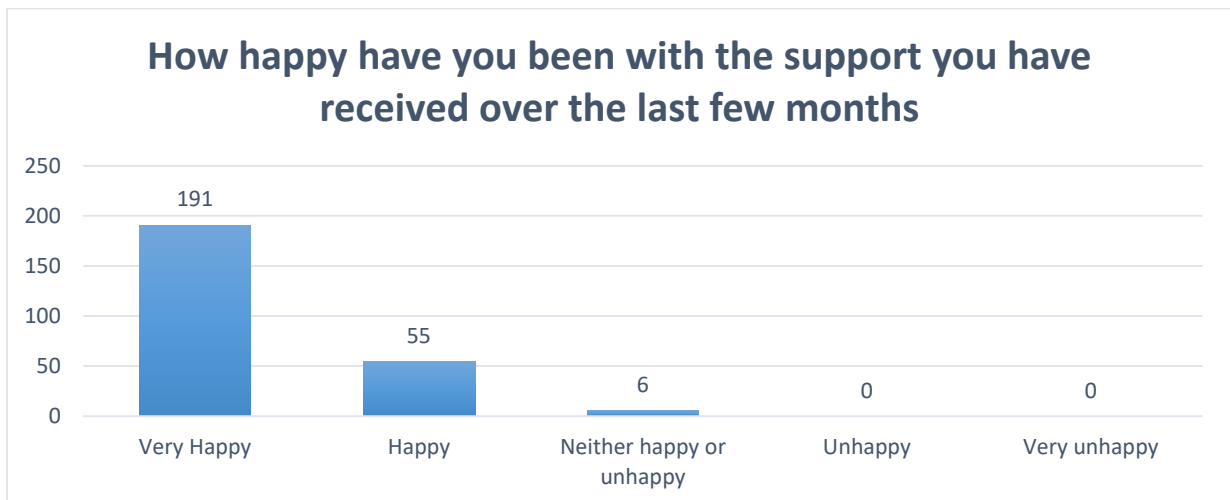
Q3. How have you received support during the last few months? (total = 281 responses)



People who engaged in the survey have advised that they are continuing to receive support using traditional methods of engagement of either face to face or

telephone support; these numbers follow similar responses received to last year's survey with very few receiving support via virtual calls.

Q4. How happy have you been with the support you have received over the last few months? (total =252 responses)



246 people who engaged with the survey reported that they were either very happy or happy with the support they have received over the last few months.

Q5. Is there anything that could have been improved? (total = 146 responses)

129 people answered no or provided positive feedback. Some examples of comments received are below:

No. My support worker visits every week and is very helpful	No everything we have discussed & planned we're working through	No the whole team, especially ***** have made what had been a traumatic experience bearable	All the staff are very professional friendly and approachable
No - you've been very helpful and kept in touch and helped me when I've needed help	Support workers who give as much support as mine has given me need to be recognised more and rewarded more	I am happy with the support I receive from *****	Am happy with everything at present
Helps me with every thing i need. And i couldn't be happier. Thank you	My support worker has been fantastic during this pandemic, she keeps me informed of everything	Happy with everything at the moment	No nothing at all very happy with support
No - you've done everything and over and above	Impossible to improve a perfect service! I am so grateful of the high standards experienced from *****	Nothing can be improved excellent service	Nothing - my support worker is excellent

15 people provided suggestions for improvements:

Communication was mentioned by 5 people with 2 people advising that improving communications about work that would be happening at their project was needed and 1 person advising that they have not been kept informed by their support worker of progress. 2 People mentioned that better advertising was needed as they were not aware that such services existed

4 people said they would like face to face support advising that they would like to have either more face to face support and on a more regular basis e.g. weekly

2 People advised that a faster referral process was needed

2 people advised they would like more support or more support from their dedicated support worker who had been called to cover elsewhere a lot

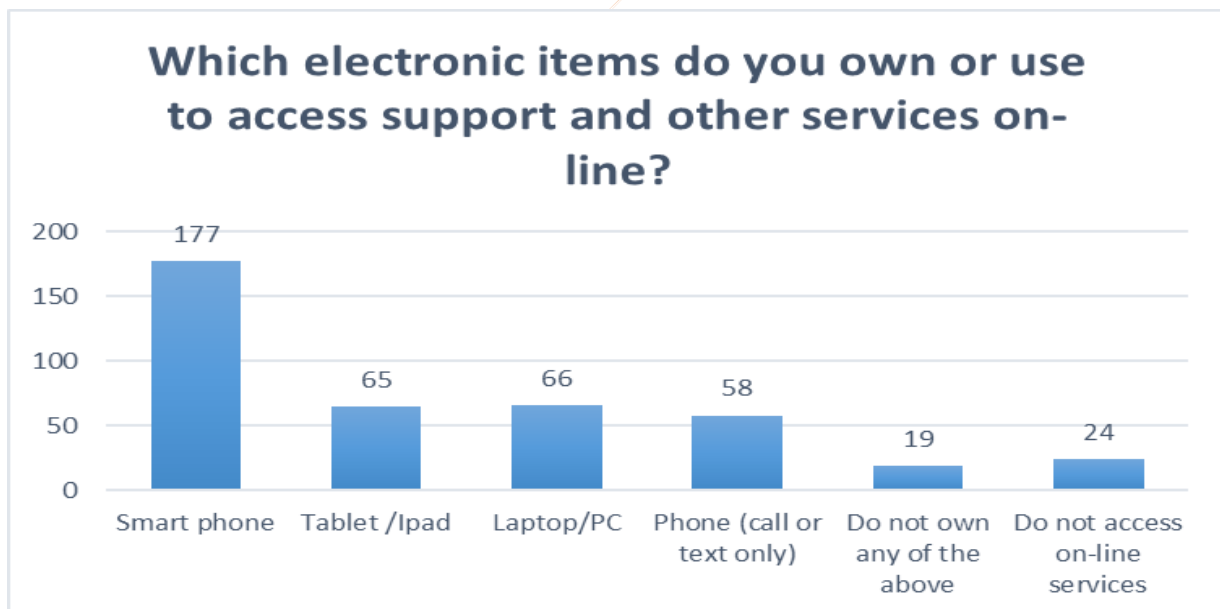
1 person said they would like more events

1 person mentioned that wanted more availability in order to move closer to family

Part 2 Use of Technology

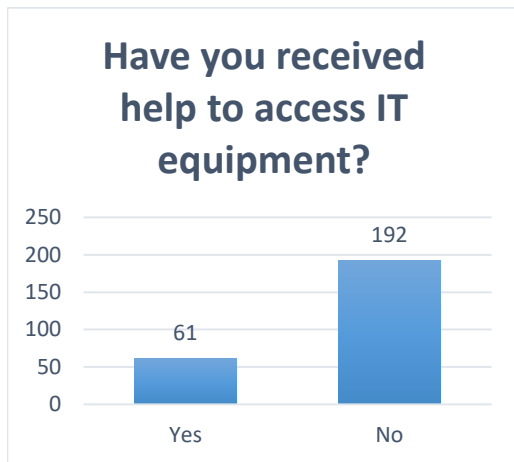
The second part of the survey focussed on the use of technology:

Q6. Please tell us which electronic items you own or use to access support and other services on-line (total = 409 responses)

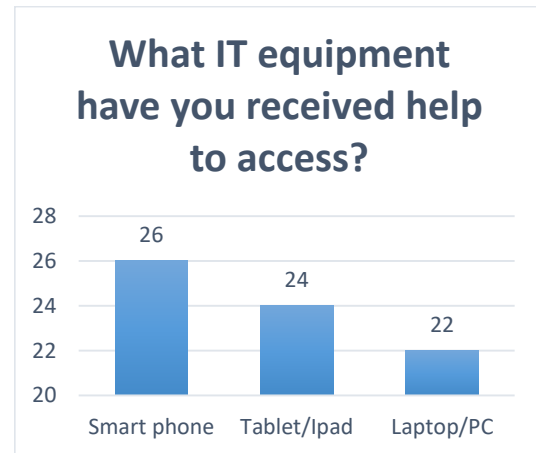


Two thirds of people who engaged with the survey owned a smart phone. 7% of people who took part in the survey did not own either a phone, tablet or laptop/pc and 9% of people that took part advised they do not access any online services.

Q7. Have you received help to access IT equipment? (253)



Q8. What IT equipment have you received help to access? (72)



Q9. Who helped you to access this IT equipment? (66 responses)

SUPPORT WORKER / FAMILY 63

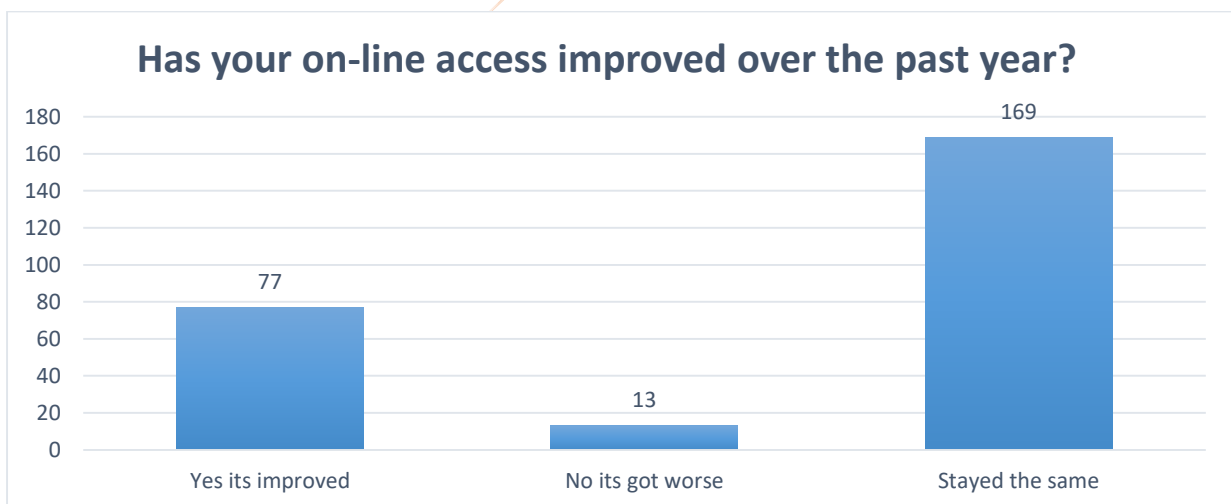
SCHOOL 2

LIBRARY 1

Recommendation 3

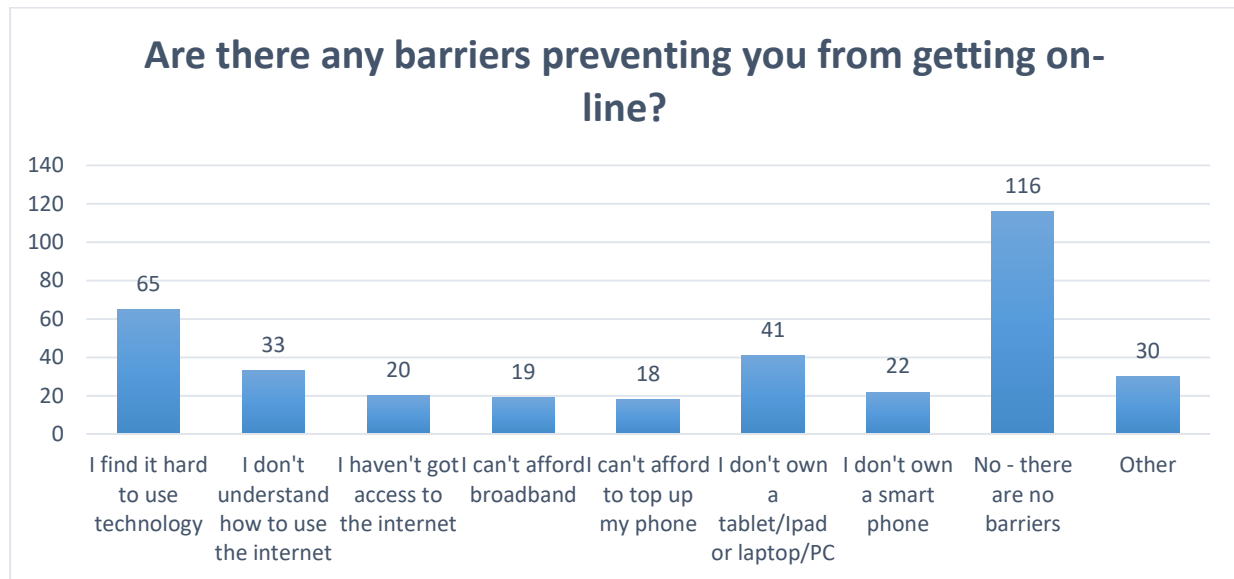
- *All service users should be asked about their access to technology as part of the support planning process.*

Q10 Please tell us whether your on-line access has improved over the past year? (259 responses)



For two thirds of the people there has been no improvement in their on-line access. For just under a third of people their access had improved and for 5% of people their online access had got worse.

Q11. Are there any barriers preventing you from getting on-line? (tick all that apply) (364 responses)



For 44% of the people that engaged with the survey there were no barriers to getting on-line. There are though still wide ranging barriers that are preventing people from being digitally included; with reasons covering lack of understanding, affordability and access to equipment. Those that ticked "other" on this question were asked to give further information through the following question:

Q11a. Are there any barriers preventing you from getting on-line? Other - Please specify (24 responses)

7 people were unable to get on-line due to their health conditions which included sight problems, severe dyslexia, Autism, Huntington's disease and mental health conditions.

6 people advised that they could not get on-line due to poor Wi-Fi connections in projects which included supported housing and temporary accommodation; some reported that there was signal in communal areas but not in their rooms, others reported that the broadband connection at their project was too slow and that they were having to buy more data.

4 people had barriers due to literacy issues, not being able to read or write or lack of understanding on how to use technology.

3 people advised that they were not interested in accessing the internet or on-line services.

1 person advised that the cost to purchase equipment and pay for connection was too expensive.

1 person advised that a hospital stay was a barrier.

1 person advised that they weren't allowed to have a phone or tablet

Recommendation 4

- Service users with additional needs in relation to digital inclusion e.g. due to a physical or mental health problem should be supported to access equipment or help suited to their needs and this should be clearly identified in their support plan.

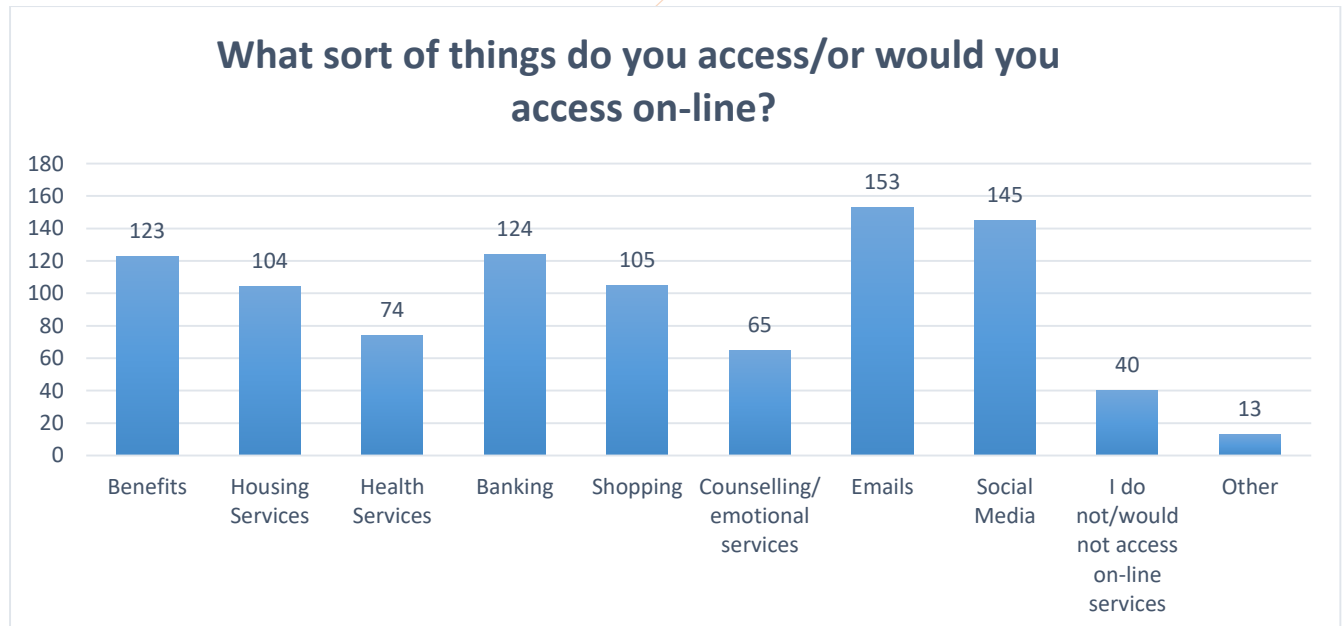
Recommendation 5

- Closer links need to be made with digital inclusion projects delivered across the region and HSG funded services and HSG teams and local authorities should facilitate and support this.

Recommendation 6

- Wi-Fi signal and services should be reviewed in supported and temporary accommodation projects to ensure that coverage and strength of signal are fit for future purpose.

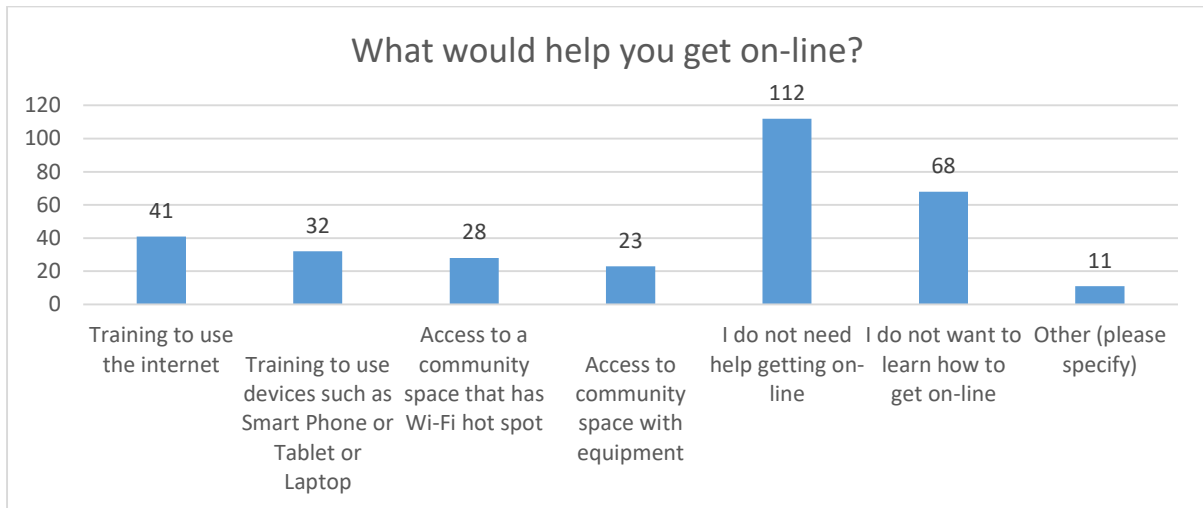
Q12. What sort of things do you access / or would you access on-line? (tick all that apply) (946 responses)



946 responses were received to this multiple choice question highlighting the wide range of services that people are either accessing or would access if they were on-line. When asked which other services they access or would access 13 people provided additional responses which included household management sites such as council recycling services, utility companies, information for self-care and

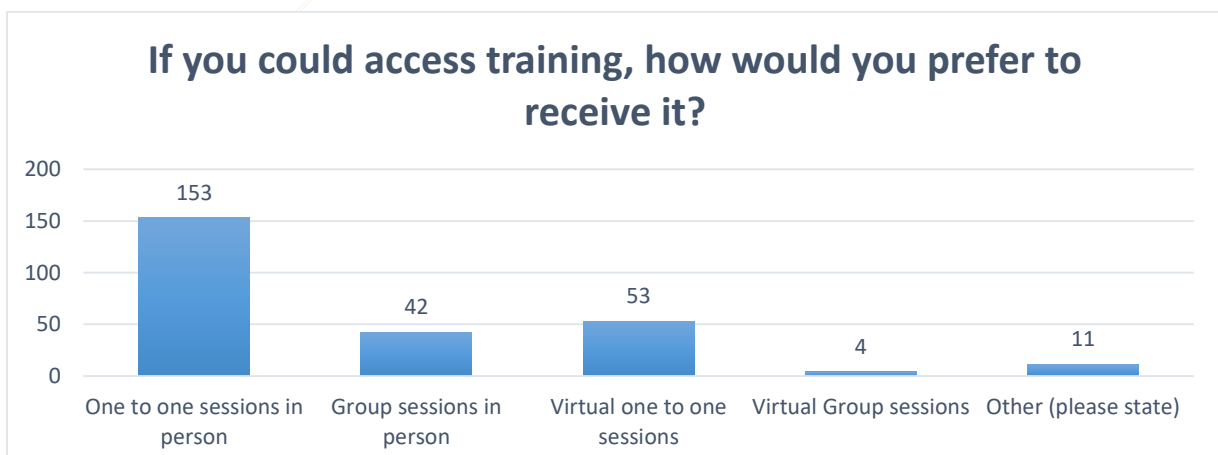
physical health and leisure activities e.g. watching videos, listening to music and looking at sites related to hobbies.

13. As we move out of the coronavirus restrictions, we anticipate that some of the new ways of working (e.g. on-line services) will continue. What would further help you to get on-line? (tick all that apply) (315 responses)



42% of people completing the survey did not need any help to get online; and 25% of people who responded to this question advised that they did not want to learn how to get online. Training and access to facilities were areas that a number of people did want support with and additionally people who ticked "other" to this question overwhelmingly needed additional support to get online due to a health condition. For 4 people completing this question it was the cost and ability to have a broadband connection that they needed further help with.

14. If you could access training, how would you prefer to receive it? (tick all that apply) (192 responses)

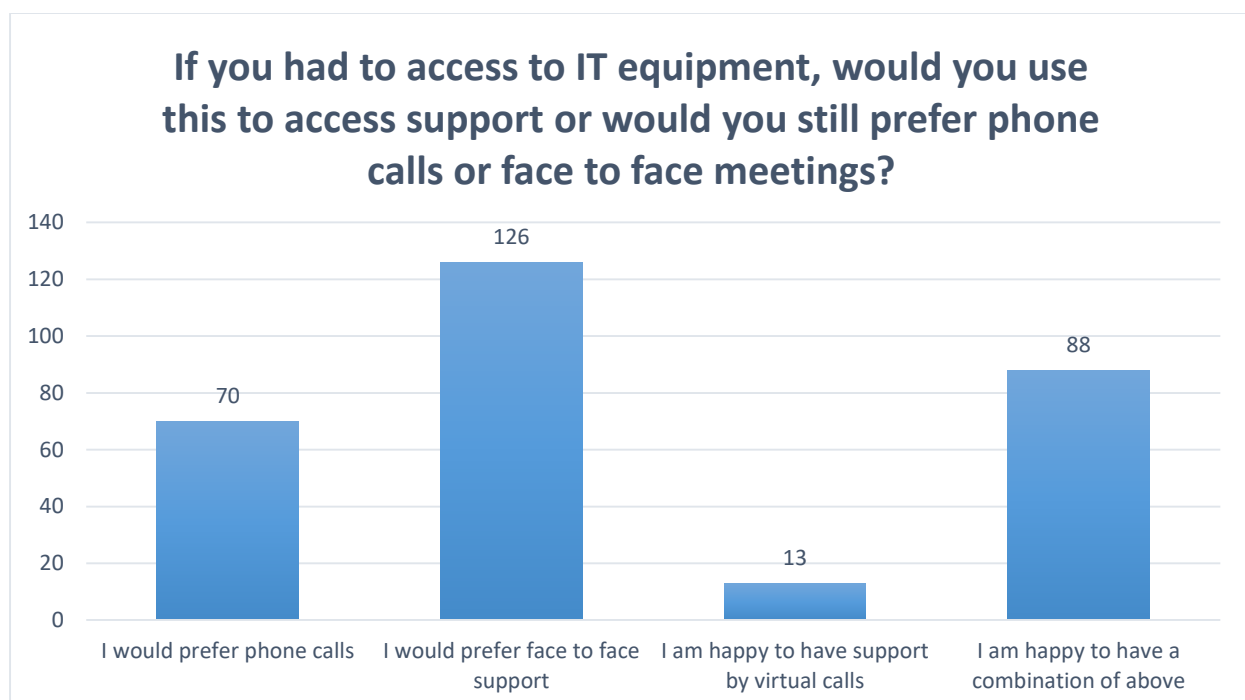


Overwhelmingly people wanted to receive one to one in person sessions to develop their digital inclusion skills. Of those that ticked other to this question most were not interested in accessing training to get online. One person advised that they were unable to access online services due to their disability.

Recommendation 7

- All service users should be offered access to digital inclusion services and projects to improve their skills and develop their learning in this area and this should be clearly identified in their support plan.

15. If you had access to IT equipment, would you use this to access support or would you still prefer phone calls or face to face meetings? (214 responses)



It was clear from the responses received that people prefer the more traditional methods of support either face to face or by phone or a combination.

Q16. Are there any other comments that you would like to make?

74 additional comments were received to this question covering broadly the following three areas:

- Positive feedback
- Difficulties using technology and access to technology
- Preference of receiving support face to face

Positive Feedback



Difficulties using technology and access to technology

"i find technology very hard, i cant take a photo even"	"i do not see why everything has to be online i like to be able to talk to a human face to face"	"I don't trust banking & internet services not with all the scams going on"
"My son accesses the internet i do not and do not want to"	"Because I've not been brought up with technology, I prefer and find it easier having human contact"	"Hostel needs better wifi that all rooms can access"
"i have learning difficulties so would need basic training"	"I'm good on using the internet, but I sometimes need support from my support worker"	"better access to wifi and access to computer or laptop"

Recommendations

1. Understanding the barriers to engaging in the consultation exercise to be considered as part of next year's survey.
2. Increasing the number of responses from all service provision types should be an action and focus for next year's survey.
3. All service users should be asked about their access to technology as part of the support planning process.
4. Service users with additional needs in relation to digital inclusion e.g. due to a physical or mental health problem should be supported to access equipment or help suited to their needs.
5. Closer links need to be made with digital inclusion projects delivered across the region and HSG funded services and HSG teams and local authorities should facilitate and support this.
6. Wi-Fi signal and services should be reviewed in Supported and temporary accommodation projects to ensure that coverage and strength of signal are fit for future purpose.
7. All service users should be offered access to digital inclusion services and projects to improve their skills and develop their learning in this area and this should be clearly identified in their support plan.

The Gwent Housing Support Teams and the Regional Housing Support Collaborative Group would like to thank everyone who took the time to complete the annual survey.

There are 7 clear recommendations that will be taken forward and actioned as a result of people engaging and telling us what they thought as part of the 2021 Service User Survey.

"You Said - We'll do!"

