

Sevenoaks District Seniors Action Forum

Working together in the interests of people age 50 plus

Findings from I.T. Connectivity Survey (revised at 28th February 2021)

- 90% of respondents have some access to online services
- 60% are confident or fairly confident users
- 30% of all have little or no personal access compared to 40% of over 65s in the U.K.
- That's about 5 million over 65s nationally and 7,800 in the SDC area
- Most non users say that "It's not for people like me", "or they don't know how to use it
- 80% of non-users age 65+ say "Nothing would prompt me to go online in the next 12 months. That's about 4 million in the UK and possibly 6,000+ in the SDC area
- Based on this research, some 20% i.e. 1 million non-users aged 65+ in the UK and 1,600 in the SDC area would seem to be wanting and needing help in the near future
- Accessible opportunities for training do exist and the Forum will be publicising these in the future, and when lockdown measures are relaxed
- For some, setting up and running costs can be prohibitive, but some help is also possible

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RESEARCH & RESOURCE

We received 61 replies by email, post or telephone to the survey that accompanied the last newsletter. These are more of a straw poll and not necessarily representative of all members, but they have given us a good steer and have been looked at in conjunction with other published data.

In particular:-The OFCOM Media Literacy Study "On-line Nation" published in June 2020 based on 1883 personal in-home interviews of Adults age 16+ across the UK during Sept/Nov 2019

The ONS Internet Access report of 7th August 2020 based on 1100 interviews in Great Britain who were mainly on-line users, with no data on non users. This showed that 96% of respondents' homes had access to the internet. This is misleading and we suspect that many public organisations are using this to support their view that most of the population can be reached and will respond on-line.

The on-going work done by the charitable organisation – The Good Things Foundation, and Ability Net IT Can Help.

HAVING ACCESS IN HOME IS NOT THE SAME AS USAGE

Members' responses showed that 92% have access to the internet in their household, not dissimilar to the 89% in the OFCOM study of a year ago. But there are 30% of members who personally have little or no connection to the internet, compared to the 40% of over 65s in the Ofcom studies. This is not readily taken into account by public bodies, many of whom assume that if there is equipment in the home, all the people there must be able to use it! Clearly this is not true and allowances need to be made – we are highlighting this to MPs and public bodies.

PART 1. LIGHT AND NON USERS

Amongst those that have little or no personal internet usage half depend on close family and friends for help or support. There are four main reasons given for not being connected according to The Good Things Foundation.

A) **It's not for me, don't see any benefit**, that was only 7% of our replies, but the OFCOM research which was based on personal in-home interviews found out that 80% of non users said that “ Nothing would prompt me to go online in the next 12 months” and reiterated that it's not for people like them. This is the group that are being marginalised and we will be campaigning to ensure that other means of communication are available and importantly user friendly e.g. priority phone numbers such as that used by Lloyds Bank for the over 70s. We want to reassure our members that those that prefer newsletters by post will continue to receive them that way and that no attempt will be made to change this. There is also a genuine fear of being scammed and that they would feel unsafe with using it for banking, shopping, etc.

B) **The support I need is not available to me.** Training and one to one help is not available during lockdown. However, the voluntary organisation The Good Things Foundation is there to help. For those that don't know how to log on they can usually get a friend to find “ good things foundation- learn my way “ and fairly soon be able to self navigate their way through a whole series of training sites from how to use a key board to creating family budget spread sheets. There are also videos that accompany the charts. Once we are out of lockdown they can signpost you to up to 5,000 places in the country where one to one help, is available free of charge. They are located in libraries, community centres, G.P. practices and churches to social housing projects We hope to find ways of getting some of our more experienced members to help with training on a local basis

C) **It's too complicated** ,with a bit of help most people can handle the basics and need only progress on a need basis. Here's a story that helps – A lady wanted to know a bit more about her breed of dog. A friend looked it up online whilst she sat there. She was fascinated and wanted to learn more and it wasn't long before she was hooked onto searching online for more and more information. That's how many people get started. From those initial steps people can progress to learning from others or get help from the Good Things Foundation.

D) **The cost of going online is too much for me.** Not many people give this as a reason on our questionnaire or in the OFCOM studies, but from our telephone interviews and just talking to people we know it is a real barrier for some. We plan to get help for members to access value basic starter equipment, but the other costs for being on-line such as broadband rental can still be off putting and national and local government may need to provide help if they want more of us to be connected. Here again The Good Things Foundation may be able to help as they have some funds for this purpose from the National Lottery and sponsors like Barclays Bank

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CHART 1

Which of these devices do you use

	OFCOM 65+	SDC Area 65+
Population (mid 2019)	12.37m	26,100
SDSAF Member responses		61
Useage:		
Computer	44%	72%
Smartphone	39%	51%
Tablet	44%	46%
Go on-line	60%	80%
Non-users	40%	non or light users 30%

CHART 2

Reasons for not going on-line- non users

	OFCOM 65+	SDC Area 65+
Population	12.37m	26,100
SDSAF Member responses		61
% of total sample	11%	30%
MAIN REASON It's just not for people like me/ I don't see the need/I'm not interested in doing this/I don't know how to use it	54%	61%
OTHER REASON		
Don't trust/Not safe	19%	28%
Too expensive/not worth the money	16%	6%
Too complicated	22%	
I don't have the right equipment	12%	
Keyboard problems		22%
Small screen problems		17%
Someone else goes on-line for me	8%	
Get help from others		39%
I don't have the right help to start	8%	
Nothing would prompt me to go on-line in the next 12 months	82%	

CHART 3

Verbatim Comments

- I'm slow and frightened of making mistakes
- Have equipment, but not confident in their use
- Reasonable ability on basics, but gets help from her son
- I am on my own and don't want the worry of a computer
- Have equipment, but not sure how to use it
- Have equipment, but dependent on daughter and grandchildren for help
- Don't want to think about it, had enough disasters at work!
- Used all the time by my wife and son
- Limited use of computers, don't want to be a silver surfer

PART 2 OUR EXPERIENCED MEMBERS

70/80% of members have a wide range of equipment and seem to use it quite prolifically, the main points are that sending and receiving email are the major use and that it is used by some of our light and non users. The most phenomenal growth has been in the use of Zoom used by 60% of respondents, Zoom and similar video facilities are not yet monitored in the ONS and OFCOM studies. This opens up for us the opportunity to have more shared input into our Action Groups and Social Activities and we are thinking of using it for informal training sessions.

CHART 4

PRINCIPAL ON-LINE ACTIVITIES

	ONS Respondents age 65+	SDSAF Members
Sending/receiving email	72%	90% including many light and non users
Shop online	65%	59%
E bay	not asked	30%
Finding info on goods or services	64%	61%
Internet Banking	49%	Not asked but well mentioned in comments
Social Media e.g. Facebook	34%	“ “ “
Reading online newspapers/magazines	47%	“ “ “
Playing or downloading games	17%	30%
Making medical appointments	19%	Not mentioned directly
Zoom/ Video	not asked	61%

PART 3

SOME CONCLUSIONS AND ACTION

For those that want help and training there are some free facilities. Of note is The Good Things Foundation which is a social charity that supports socially excluded people to improve their lives. They have an On-line Centres Network of over 5,000 grassroots organisations such as libraries, community centres and Citizens Advise Bureau. .

They also have a website of free online courses to help people develop their digital skills with 30 free online courses to help beginners get started. These range from the basics of using a keyboard and mouse up to creating documents and spreadsheets. Just search online or get someone to search for you “good things foundation- learn my way “ or telephone 0114 349 1666

Compaid have signed up to offer groups or one to one help and training free of charge. At the moment many are not available because of lockdown. There are others who are not part of these networks

Then there’s the Zoom BOOM. We plan to expand the use of this as outlined in Part 2 of this report.