

DIGITAL WELLBEING REPORT

From the findings of our
survey created by the
Digital Wellbeing Group



**WHO
CARES?**
SCOTLAND

EQUALITY | RESPECT | LOVE



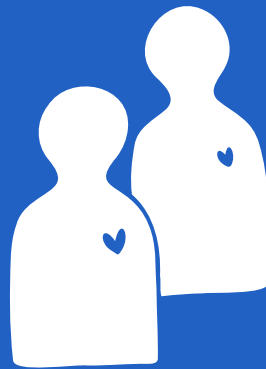
NOMINET
SOCIAL IMPACT

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HIGHLIGHTS

We spoke to
96 people
across 24 local
authorities



40% of
respondents said
digital media is
very important
for maintaining
relationships
online

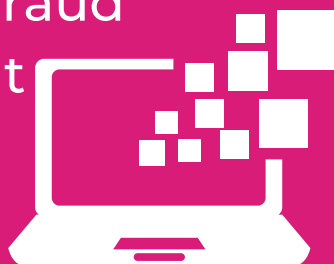
80% know their
digital rights



65% of
participants feel
safe online



The main dangers
identified online were –
cyberbullying and
facing stigma, fraud
and harassment



31 responses mentioned
connecting with people
online makes them feel
good



MESSAGE FROM THE DIGITAL WELLBEING GROUP

The group



Reflection from Digital Wellbeing group member Megan - Transcribed from a video created for a Corporate Parenting training event.

"Before I started the Digital Wellbeing group, I didn't know half the things that I know now and It's scary because I've had a lot of issues online where I have been hurt and I've got myself into silly situations that I really shouldn't have. Yeah through that experience I have learned new things but actually I didn't have clue about digital rights, I didn't have a clue about cookies or scams or anything like that. It's actually made me go wow that's new and that's new, I should have known that but actually not many people know. This is where the groups coming into to be like 'this is how you do this'. Such serious issues that I should of known about but I didn't because I didn't have anyone telling me, this is what you do when you get hacked, this is what you do if someone threatens you with photos or whatever.

The digital group helped me so much to understand things, such as scams and all that. Digital Wellbeing for me personally means being able to go online and enjoy it without getting yourself in any dangerous situations. And if you do get yourself in situations that sometimes can't be avoided being able to deal with it safely and being able to go to a trusted professional, trusted Corporate Parent and say this is what's going on. Digital Wellbeing also means to me, being able to be mature online. 'Should I be saying that' or 'that person is obviously just trying to wind me up I should just step away'. Digital Wellbeing means so much to me personally now but I think the overall definition of being able to enjoy online because its such a big part of our lives but being able to be safe."

WHAT IS DIGITAL WELLBEING?

When talking about digital wellbeing we are referring to the effects that digital skills and technology have on an individual's emotional, social, physical, and mental health. Digital wellbeing affects us all, and the last few years have shown us the highs and lows of being online during a pandemic. For people with care experience, our Digital Wellbeing Group said that:

'Digital wellbeing means being able to reach your full potential by having your rights upheld, and a sense of belonging, empowerment, freedom and feeling loved. It describes how digital media can improve people's mental, physical, social and emotional health. Understanding and removing barriers to accessing technology is key to digital wellbeing.'

Our Project

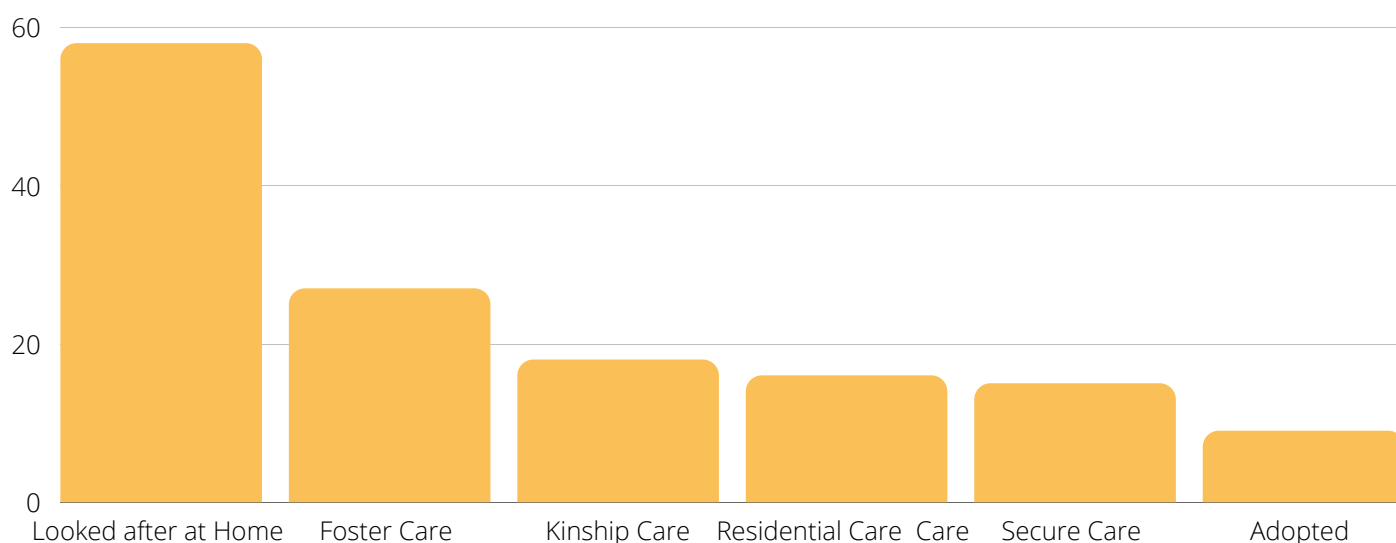
In October 2021 we brought together a group of four skilled and passionate members to focus on looking into Digital Wellbeing, as part of our Annual Participation Programme. The members have met once or twice a month since then, mostly online, and in our first session came up with a group charter to ensure everyone in the group felt comfortable and confident when together, setting a collective expectation to be respectful of each other's opinions, and ensure that when we meet as a group, it is a safe space.

This project is funded by Nominet Social Impact, and has been supported throughout by Dr Autumn Roesch-Marsh from the University of Edinburgh. The project began in October and has been shaped by the Care Experienced members involved, ensuring that voice is embedded in every element. For example, in the initial meetings we developed our group charter, our own definition of digital wellbeing, and built relationships to ensure that members of the group felt safe and confident in deciding what our next steps were.

At our third meeting we did a skills audit to identify training needs of the group. There was a good base level of skills in Microsoft suite, a good knowledge of digital rights and some members were interested in research. However, the group wanted to gain confidence in public speaking, graphic design skills and facilitation, so these were areas we wanted to focus on when offering upskilling sessions. The group have so far had research and digital rights training, and will receive training in facilitation, social media, confidence, and design skills over the next few months.

Once the group had completed training on research, we did a scoping exercise to decide how we wanted to gather information from the Care Experienced community about digital wellbeing. The group chose to do a survey as it was something they all enjoy doing and felt it would be the most accessible option for people to fill out. Once we had established our method, we then identified what themes we wanted the survey to focus on through a series of interactive activities. The group chose online safety, digital rights, and online relationships.

We launched the survey in the beginning of April, with a rap promoting the survey, that was created and performed by a talented group member Bob Hamilton. We received 92 valid responses to the survey, which came from across 24 local authorities. We also had participants from across the whole care community having 58% from Looked after at Home, 27% from Foster Care, 18% from Kinship Care, 16% from Residential Care, 15% from Secure Care and 9% Adopted.



Female - 80%

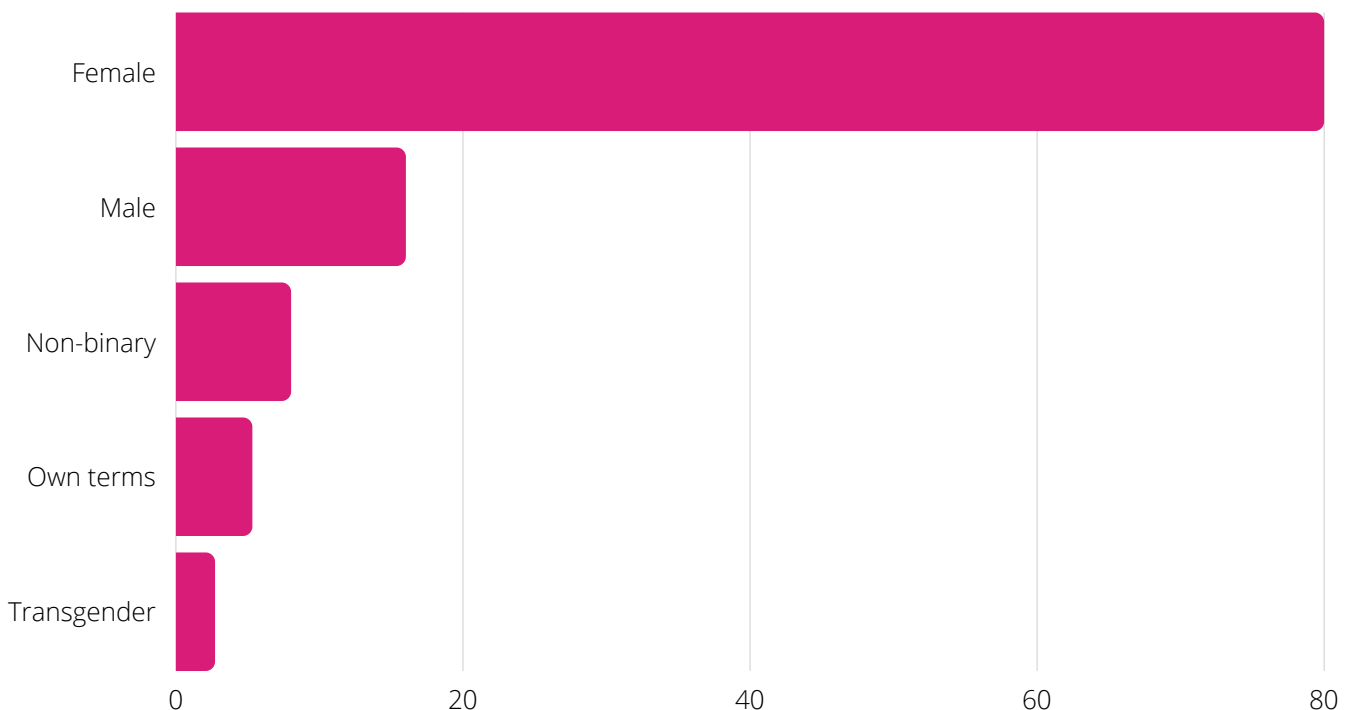
Male - 16%

Non-binary - 8%

Own terms - 5.3%

Transgender - 2.7% *

*The total score is more than 100% due to people being able to choose multiple answers ensuring that their gender identity is represented.



This report documents our analysis phase of the project, and the groups next steps will be using the information gathered from the care community's lived experience and views on online safety, digital rights, and relationships online to co-design influencing and information outputs. These will be used to inform and support our wider membership, Corporate Parents, and professionals around Digital Wellbeing directly from the community's lived experience. The group plans on creating a resource summarising their experience on the project, as well as an article with Dr Autumn Roesch-Marsh from the University of Edinburgh. This report is going to present and analyse the findings of our survey on online safety, relationships and digital rights.

ONLINE SAFETY

Many of us try to be safe online by ensuring we don't click on pop-up ads, avoid sharing our bank details and removing anything that makes us feel unsafe.

In the initial stages of our Digi Group (Digital Wellbeing Group), we spoke about all the areas around Digital Wellbeing that we wanted to focus on, and they decided a big part of the project should be looking at online safety. Some of the group felt they lacked knowledge and awareness around how to remain safe online, and they thought this might be a shared experience across the community.

When asked how safe they feel online, Care Experienced people fed back that 66% feel 'somewhat safe' online. They felt well informed due to school, online courses, documentaries and talking to trusted people in their life i.e., parents, carers, and friends.

We then asked if they had ever attended an online safety course, a total of 35% had received the chance to attend a course through school, Young Scot, work and by attending extra-curricular clubs like Girl's Brigade. However, 65% of participants had never had access to this training.

When the Digital Wellbeing group reflected on this finding, they had said local authorities should encourage schools "to do a GDPR or online privacy lesson. It happens at college and university so they could share resources."

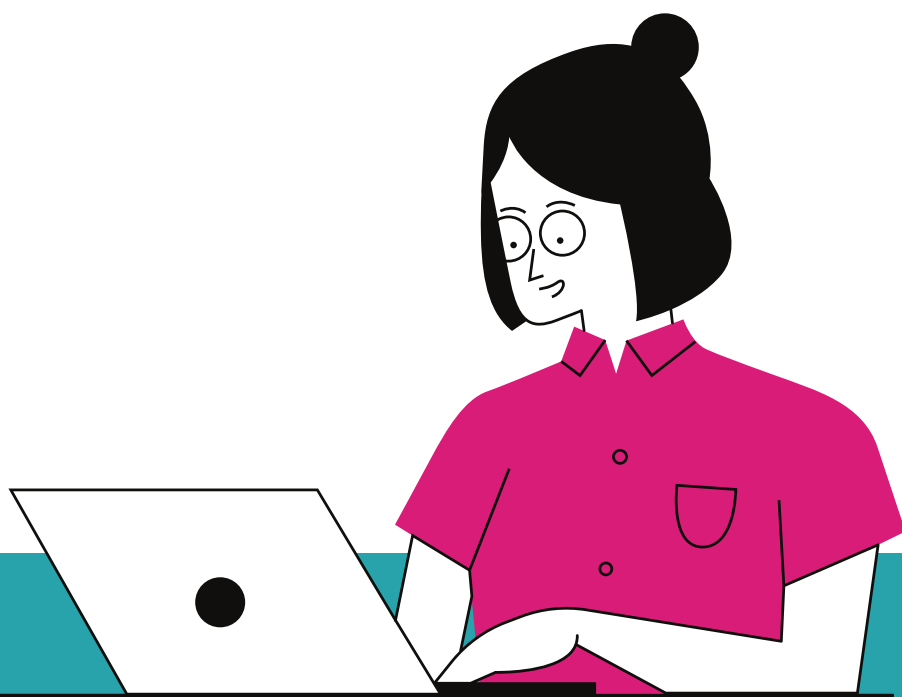
Participants were also asked how they know if a website is safe. 16% stated that they didn't know how to tell if it was a safe site to be on. The reason the group wanted to find out people's understanding of online safety was to be able to see the knowledge gaps as this will help us create useful, informative resources to help ensure the Care Experienced community is safe. Therefore, the group have decided to create an information pack, storybook for younger members and a podcast for Care Experienced people around online safety.

To follow the last question, we also wanted to know where people would go to find out information about online safety. The majority of individuals said that they would go to a trusted person - either a parent, friend, carer or "I talk to my librarian about online safety if I am unsure".

21 respondents stated that they would go online, either searching in google or going to a known trusted website "Government Website", "National Online Safety", "Childline".

When asked to rate online dangers from most to least worrying, participants responded that their main concerns were online scams and fraud, then cyberbullying, grooming, sexual exploitation and harassment, unwanted contact, and phishing. When asked which online dangers worried them, participants ticked every danger listed including cyberbullying, grooming, sexual exploitation and harassment, unwanted contact, and phishing. In the qualitative part of the survey about online dangers, cyberbullying and facing stigma, fraud and harassment were of most concern. The Digital Wellbeing group were surprised that the majority of participants feel safe online despite the severity of dangers highlighted. They want to follow-up by signposting other safe places in their resources, and ask Corporate Parents what other resources are needed.

Some respondents felt that Care Experienced people are more at risk than their peers, due to being more likely to encounter scam support lines, being in a vulnerable situation or being able to connect with your birth family.



RELATIONSHIPS

Over the last two years we have all gained a shared understanding of how important online connection to our friends and family is for our health and wellbeing. This was one of the main reasons the group wanted to make one of the themes of the survey all about relationships and hear what the Care Experienced community had to say.

When asked if they had ever used social media to find or contact family and or friends online, 81% of participants had, and when asked about that experience the answers were varied as 15 responses were neutral, 10 negative and 22 positive.

'End of story it made my life more difficult and my mental health got worse'

'Happy to be able to keep in touch'

'It didn't feel real and was hard to build a proper relationship'

'Great, especially through lockdown!'

'Quite scary as I never knew if they would accept me or even speak to me'

'Uncertain. It wasn't someone I had even been told about so I didn't talk to them and I feel kind of bad about it.'

A majority of participants felt that digital media helped them maintain relationships with their friends and family.

We also asked participants about what makes them feel good online. 31 responses mentioned connecting with people online be it "messaging friends", "connecting with communities (disability community etc. because I can't leave home much)" and "keeping in contact with family".

This helped the group to see the whole picture of what an online presence can mean to the Care Experienced community. Online is such a vital part of our everyday lives and we want to ensure that we can all stay connected, safe and have fun online. Other positives online were;



DIGITAL RIGHTS

One of the main things we spoke about when we established our Digi Group was everyone's understanding about Digital Rights, what they are and where to access them. The group had a good amount of knowledge about their digital rights knowing that our human rights also transfer into a digital space. However, they still felt this was something we should enquire whether the Care Experienced community knew enough about.

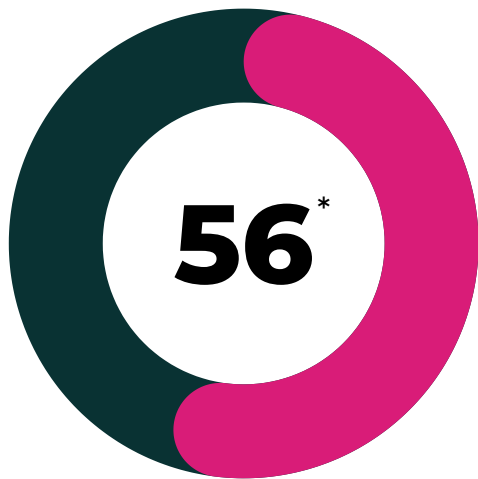
When asked about their awareness of each of the digital rights, the Care Experienced community were familiar with them as shown in the graph below. When the Digital Wellbeing group reflected on this, they were initially surprised that 80% of participants knew their Digital Rights. However, this still has room for improvement as we want everyone to be confident in their rights on screen as much as off screen. When asked about what extra support is needed to access their Digital Rights participants said that.

'Information packs and where to find information about it'

'Schools should provide devices for those who don't have them to access at home for learning'

'Free internet'

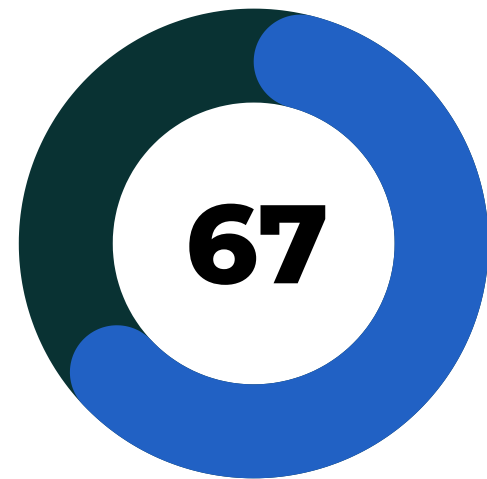
'Better access to wifi'



The ability and funds to get online when and how I want to



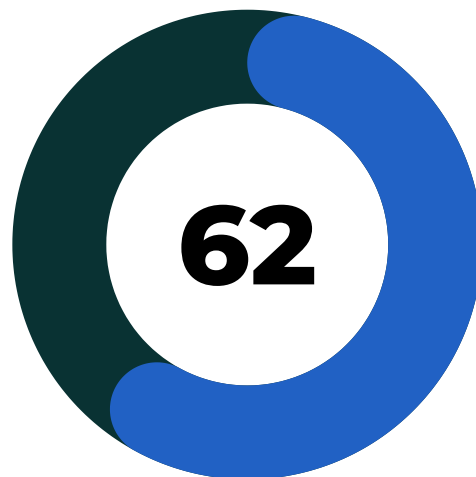
The kit I need to stay connected (e.g. phone, laptop, etc.)



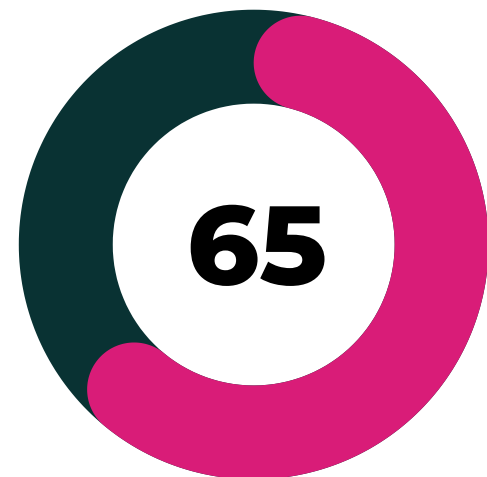
How to find and share important information to stay connected



The freedom to connect online with people and issues that are important to me



The knowledge that my information will be kept safe online and my privacy will be protected



Opportunities to learn new digital skills and take part in new online learning experience

The group reflected it would be good to include digital rights in our podcast, info-pack and storybook which is all resources we will go onto create. These resources will touch on the findings from the survey including but not limited to the right to access internet.

OUR NEXT STEPS

From the findings of the survey, the Digital Wellbeing group are going to create influential and informative outputs that will have a focus on online safety, digital rights and useful resources to share with the wider community, Corporate Parents and Professionals to ensure they know the importance of the Care Experience community having good access, support and knowledge of the digital world.

When we shared the findings with the group it was agreed that they would;

- Create a podcast, information pack and storybook around online safety and digital rights
- Create a poster of the report to link to our resources
- Signpost to Digital rights websites
- Creating a relationship mapping tool
- Blogs from the group based on their experience of the project
- The group also want to create a song about connection

This piece of work will be completed by October 2022, but throughout this we will be sense checking ideas with the wider Care Experienced community via online polls, reaching out to local groups. This is to ensure our resources are useful to the community and that their voice is heard throughout.

