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### **Over 200,000 older Londoners over 75 do not use the internet**

Age UK London has today published a report on older Londoners' internet usage and warns that London must not create a digital underclass as we recover from the pandemic. The report reveals that:

- Over 200,000 older Londoners over 75 do not use the internet at all
- One in four of older Londoners over 65 would like to use the internet more
- Just 20% aged 75+ reported using the internet more during the pandemic

Contrary to the belief that the pandemic has seen an acceleration in internet use amongst older people, just 20% aged 75+ reported using the internet more during the pandemic and 10% used it less.

The most frequently cited reasons for not using the internet more are: a lack of digital skills; followed by not having access a computer, tablet or Wi-Fi; and lack of confidence and trust in the internet, including a fear of scams.

Local Age UKs provide a vital service in supporting older people who would like to use the internet. This includes running digital skills sessions centred on the specific needs and preferences of older people and providing devices and connectivity. Lockdown measures made it much harder to deliver these services that rely on face-to-face contact.

Older Londoners told the charity:

*"I was getting a bit down in the lockdown and my local Age UK called me asking if I would like to attend activities on Zoom... I get to have a laugh and talk to someone and that's what makes my day".*

*"I have been using [the internet] to listen to music and access church activities..... It has made a huge difference to my life."*

*"I'm not interested because I can't understand it, I've never been on the internet or looked at it because I have no interest to and don't really enjoy that type of thing."*

Abigail Wood, CEO of Age UK London said:

*"We want the experiences and views of older Londoners to form part of the discussion on digital inclusion in London. To address the profound challenge of digital exclusion we propose a range of actions that would help to tackle some the barriers to getting online outlined in our report."*

*"As the city recovers from the pandemic we need action to support those older people who want to get online to do so, by ensuring that they have access to affordable data and devices and are supported to develop the skills and confidence need to participate online. Local Age UKs in London play a vital role in delivering digital skills programmes."*

*"At the same time we must do everything we can to ensure that those who do not use the internet, for whatever reason, are never disadvantaged or even discriminated against when it comes to accessing support and services."*

**-End-**

**Notes to editors:**

1. One of the missions of the London Recovery Board is *Digital Access for All* and Every Londoner to have access to good connectivity, basic digital skills and the device or support they need to be online by 2025.
2. Case studies and additional quotes from older Londoners available on request.
3. Abigail Wood, Age UK London's Chief Executive, is available for interviews. Please contact Aurelie Leroy for more information.
4. You can find out more information about our digital exclusion on our website:  
<https://ageuk.org.uk/london/projects-campaigns/mind-the-digital-gap/> (live as of 21/07/21 08:00am).