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# UK Business Digital Index 2016

Benchmarking the digital maturity  
of small businesses and charities in  
the UK



**LLOYDS BANK**

02 **FOREWORD**  
Lloyds Bank  
Doteveryone

04 **EXECUTIVE  
SUMMARY**

08 **CALLS TO  
ACTION**

09 **THE 2016  
INDEX AND  
BASIC DIGITAL  
SKILLS**

11 **SMALL BUSINESSES**  
12 **Trends in use of digital**  
12 How small businesses are using digital  
13 Link to success  
13 Spotlight on social media  
15 Government digital services  
15 Exporting  
17 Importance of mobile  
19 **Digital Behaviour**  
19 Advice and guidance  
20 Investment in digital skills  
22 Benefits of digital  
23 Barriers to being more digital  
23 Cyber security  
24 **Digital Demographics**  
24 Turnover  
25 Size of business  
26 Age of business  
26 Gender  
28 Regional trends  
30 **Index score and Basic Digital Skills**  
30 Index score  
31 Basic Digital Skills

33 **CHARITIES**  
34 **Trends in use of digital**  
34 How charities are using digital  
36 Link to success  
38 **Digital Behaviour**  
38 Advice and guidance  
39 Investment in digital skills  
40 Benefits of digital  
41 Barriers to being more digital  
42 **Digital Demographics**  
42 Size of charity  
43 Age of charity  
44 Regional trends  
46 **Index score and Basic Digital Skills**  
46 Index score  
47 Basic Digital Skills

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## FOREWORD



**LLOYDS BANK**

NICK WILLIAMS

Managing Director, Consumer Digital

*Nick Williams*

I am delighted to publish the third annual Lloyds Bank Business Digital Index. In the twelve months since the last report, the UK has witnessed significant change in its economic and political landscape.

However, some things have not changed with digital technology continuing to evolve at pace. Alongside the latest smartphones, a proliferation of digital fitness devices and smart watches have been launched. And whilst devices may often be the domain of individual consumers, the rise of mobile payments has had a considerable impact on small businesses.

The Digital Sector itself has also grown significantly. The Department for Culture, Media & Sport's Sectors Economics report states digital is growing at a faster rate than the overall economy. The sector accounts for more than £118bn of gross value to the UK economy and exports more than £32bn a year. To reflect these themes, the 2016 Business Digital Index now includes new analysis on the importance of mobile, on how digital can support exporting and on how organisations are adapting their use of digital. We have a new important section, looking specifically at the charitable sector to understand how digital can enable and help these organisations reach more beneficiaries in a cost efficient and effective way.

The Index figures are compelling and, while the analysis shows an increase in overall digital capability levels both for small businesses and charities, there are still a staggering 1.44m small businesses and 98,000 charities without Basic Digital Skills.

Interestingly in 2016, there are different reasons for why organisations are not doing more online. Previously, this focused on attitudinal barriers, such as not feeling relevant. This year, there has been a rise in those recognising and stating a lack of digital skills (19% of charities and 15% of businesses) and online security (14% of small businesses) as reasons for holding back on its potential. The Index continues to demonstrate the clear link between digital maturity and organisational success. The benefits are not just about increased revenue. 65% of small businesses have used digital to cut costs and 87% of charities say saving time is one of the key advantages to being online. And most encouragingly, more charities are accepting online donations, with 53% of them now doing so – more than double since 2015.

Since the publication of the 2015 Business Digital Index, Lloyds Banking Group has developed a number of new initiatives to support small businesses, including a new scheme to help 5,000 businesses each year, up until 2020, to start exporting their products

and services. This features a new International Trade Portal, created in partnership with the Department for International Trade. Lloyds Bank has also increased the amount of available lending by more than £1bn during 2016, while continuing to support 100,000 start-ups every year.

Over the last twelve months I have been heartened by how policy makers and practitioners have continued to use the Business Digital Index as a source of crucial insight and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for using the report to inform their own digital strategies and policies. One great example I'm personally familiar with has been Google's Digital Garage programme in partnership with the Tinder Foundation which is bringing insights and upskilling to local communities across the UK.

I would also like to thank our partner, Accenture, for invaluable input into creating this report. Finally, our gratitude goes to Doteveryone and the Department of Culture, Media and Sport for their support in continuing the publication of the Business Digital Index.



MARTHA LANE FOX

Executive Chair  
Doteveryone

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Martha Lane Fox".

In the year the UK voted to leave the EU and our political parties underwent unprecedented leadership turmoil, this year's Business Digital Index is more relevant than ever. The insights it gives will help our small organisations to become more digitally capable and able to face the challenges of the internet age. Digital technology harnessed positively is a force for social cohesion and community building, as well as economic growth and productivity. But this requires everyone to have the relevant digital skills.

One clear trend is the link between digital capability and organisational success. In last year's Index, the most digital small businesses were a third more likely to report an increase in turnover than the least digital. This year, the most digital businesses are over twice as likely to increase their turnover. And businesses are increasingly using digital to make sales or take orders online.

Whilst this is good news, there is still a long way to go. Half of sole traders – representing millions of small businesses across the UK – do not have five Basic Digital Skills. If we are to reposition the UK as a robust modern digital economy we need to help these organisations to make better use of all that digital has to offer.

This year, the charity sector has made some major improvements in its digital skills. However 49% of charities still lack all five Basic Digital Skills. A strong digital economy is not enough. We also need a strong civil society, to tackle the challenges we face today. As a workforce and a society we have the capacity, the talent and the ability to do this. But we must be brave and forward thinking. We need to embrace the technology that continues to reshape our world, and help those who need support to realise their potential.

I would once again like to thank Lloyds Banking Group for their support as a Doteveryone Principal Partner and for their ongoing commitment to the Business Digital Index. I would also like to congratulate the teams at Lloyds Banking Group and Accenture on their exemplary work in researching and producing this report.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Digital Index analyses actual online behaviour and survey research of small businesses and charities to understand their attitudes towards and usage of digital technology.

The 2016 report now includes new analysis on exporting, gender and mobile, plus a change to how Basic Digital Skills and the Index score are defined. For the first time, this report also includes qualitative findings, following in-depth interviews with organisations\* to further understand how they use digital.

This third Index report has highlighted an overall rise of digital maturity as well as the continued and strengthening link between digital maturity and organisational success for small businesses and charities.

Charities are showing progress, with an encouraging rise in digital maturity and a strong increase in the use of online donations. The number of charities accepting online donations has more than doubled since 2015.

There has also been a shift in how organisations are using digital, including a rise in the use of 'informal' and free channels for learning, including friends, relatives and colleagues.

2016 sees small businesses using digital to help with overseas trading, yet many could still do more. There also continues to be an opportunity for sole traders to further benefit from adopting digital technology.

A new challenge has arisen in the 2016 research, with a growing concern over cyber security skills becoming a clear theme amongst many organisations. Looking at regional trends, there is a positive picture with many regions increasing their Index score by more than 10 points since 2015.

Finally, the 2016 Index demonstrates equality for gender, with no significant digital differences between male and female decision-makers.



It's great to see Lloyds Bank helping small businesses and charities improve their digital skills and online presence. Their Index shows being online can help make businesses more profitable. Alongside the work of many other forward thinking companies, and together with the Government's work in boosting digital skills and cyber security, this will help create the world-leading businesses of tomorrow.

**The Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP**  
Minister of State for Digital and Culture



\*'Organisations' refers to both small businesses and charities

## Key findings

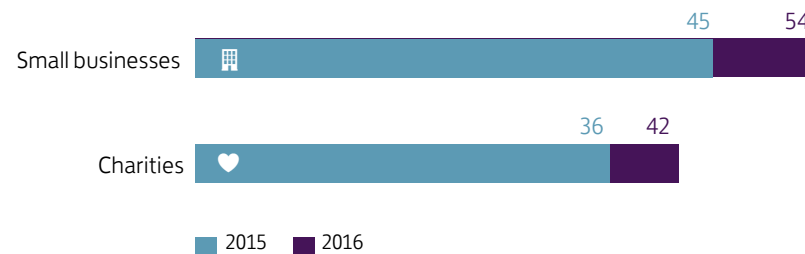
### 1 Good progress in overall digital maturity for small businesses and charities

Small businesses have seen an increase in their digital maturity, with their Index score rising nine points to 54 since 2015 (Figure 1a).

Using the new Doteveryone framework for Basic Digital Skills (see page 10) this year's report shows that 62% of small businesses have all five Basic Digital Skills. This means there are 1.44m (38%) small businesses (Figure 1b) who do not have Basic Digital Skills.

For charities, there is also a rise in the Index score, showing an increase in overall digital maturity. The charities' Index score has increased by six points to 42 since 2015 and just over half of charities (102,000, 51%) have all five Basic Digital Skills, suggesting there is significant opportunity in this sector (see Figures 1a and 1b).

**Figure 1a:** Organisations' Index scores out of a maximum of 100, 2015 vs. 2016



**Figure 1b:** Organisations with Basic Digital Skills, 2016





## 2 Link to success

The link between digital maturity and organisational success continues in 2016 for small businesses and charities. Nearly three in five small businesses (58%) report increased sales as one of the key advantages to using digital – which rises to 68% for start-ups.

The most digital small businesses are now more than twice as likely to report an increase in turnover than the least digital (64%). Furthermore, three in five of the most digital have seen an increase of more than 20%.

The more digital charities are 28% more likely to report an increase in turnover or funding than less digital charities. In addition, when asked to state the key advantages to being online, over half (52%) of charities cite cost savings.

The report also shows that 65% of small businesses are using digital to cut costs and be more efficient.

## 3 Greater importance of social media

49% of small businesses and 43% of charities do not have a website, vs. 47% and 45% respectively in 2015. Yet both groups have improved their use of, and attitudes towards, social media over the past 12 months, a trend reflected by qualitative research respondents. 1.36m small businesses (36% vs. 23% last year) and 72,000 charities (36% vs. 23% in 2015) believe a social media presence can help generate higher revenues and donations.

45% of small businesses report creating social media communities in 2016, vs. 27% in 2015.

## 4 Small businesses not taking full advantage of exporting

New for 2016 is analysis of how digital helps small businesses to trade overseas. There are still further opportunities for them to do so, with only one in five (21%) currently using digital to support their overseas trade activities. This does vary by sector, with retail rising to 26% and manufacturing using digital to trade overseas the most at 39%.

## 5 Cyber security skills emerge as a new opportunity

As uptake and usage of digital increases, so does the opportunity to develop the right skills to help protect organisations online. 2.62m small businesses (69%) and 144,000 charities (72%) state they need to develop these skills. Security is also a rising barrier for some organisations to do more online, with 14% of small businesses stating it was the main reason.

## 6 Shift in advice preferences

In terms of advice and guidance, the use of free and peer to peer advice including GOV.UK has significantly increased – 53% of small businesses seek advice from a friend, relative or colleague (nearly doubling from 28% in 2015). The increase in social media and use of free digital support may explain why 66% (2.5m) of small businesses and four out of five charities (156,000) are still not investing their budget in digital skills. Organisations may instead be looking to more informal, low cost (or free) resources to improve their digital skills.

## 7 Opportunity for sole traders to further embrace digital

There is significant opportunity for sole traders and businesses with one or less employee\* to develop their digital skills. Only 50% have Basic Digital Skills, in comparison to organisations with 10 or more employees, where 87% have Basic Digital Skills. 16% of sole traders report a lack of digital skills as being the main barrier to them doing more online. Despite this, they are less likely to invest in digital skills, with 78% investing nothing in 2016, twice as many as those small businesses with 10 or more employees.



Being able to do my tax return online makes such a difference to the amount of time I have to spend with my clients.

Jay, Personal Trainer, South East



\*For the purposes of this analysis, all firms are said to have at least one employee, equivalent to the 'zero employee' classification for sole traders used by the Department of Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and Office for National Statistics (ONS)

**8** Positive regional results for small businesses

The Index scores have increased across all regions in the past 12 months. The report shows there has been strong growth, with many regions' digital maturity scores increasing by more than 10 points since 2015. The West Midlands has shown slightly slower growth, with an increase of four points in the past year.

**9** Charities make progress but still have an opportunity to improve their digital maturity

Just as with small businesses, charities have seen an increase in their overall digital maturity, rising by six points in the last 12 months. They have also seen a shift in how they use digital, demonstrated by the proportion taking online donations, which has more than doubled in the last year.

**10** Index demonstrates equality for gender

One of the new areas of insight for 2016 is the view of digital capability by gender. The findings reveal little difference between male and female decision makers in terms of Index score, with a score of 55 for men and 56 for women. There is also no significant difference in terms of Basic Digital Skills, with 61% of men and 64% of women achieving all five Basic Digital Skills.





## CALLS TO ACTION

### Focus on benefits realisation

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The 2016 Index demonstrates the clear link between digital maturity and organisational success, showing there is significant benefit beyond increasing revenue.

Saving money, a wider audience, becoming more efficient and saving time are strong benefits and are crucial to small organisations. It is also important to recognise that not every organisation has a desire to grow but all will want to save money and time. Any messaging created for this audience should reflect these tangible and universal benefits.

### Use digital to help drive international trade

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The analysis suggests there is a significant opportunity to do more overseas by using digital. Organisations need support and guidance to help them reach new markets. For example, the Department for International Trade and Lloyds Banking Group are developing an online International Trade Portal to help organisations take their first steps.

### A partnership approach can help drive targeted messaging

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Partners should continue to work together across the private, public and voluntary sectors to ensure content, help, support and training is available. There is an opportunity to create syndicated content and utilise the existing channels that small businesses and charities already use, to encourage them to improve their digital skills.

### Continue to support charities in improving their digital capabilities

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The charity sector faces unique challenges and action is needed to create greater awareness of how digital can truly benefit their organisations from a funding and cost perspective. For example, organisations which support charities could look to also offer digital skills advice.

### Focus on the smallest of small businesses

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The 2016 Index shows that the smallest businesses, with one employee, have the lowest level of Basic Digital Skills and maturity and therefore have the most to gain. They are least likely to invest in developing these skills but represent the largest proportion of SMEs in the UK. These organisations have an opportunity to invest the time in building digital capability to save time, both for their business and personal lives. Any advice and guidance created for this audience should recognise this.

### Support organisations to develop their cyber security skills

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Any formal or informal support should include cyber security as a key skill. Understanding how to use digital safely and the associated benefits will encourage organisations to do more online.

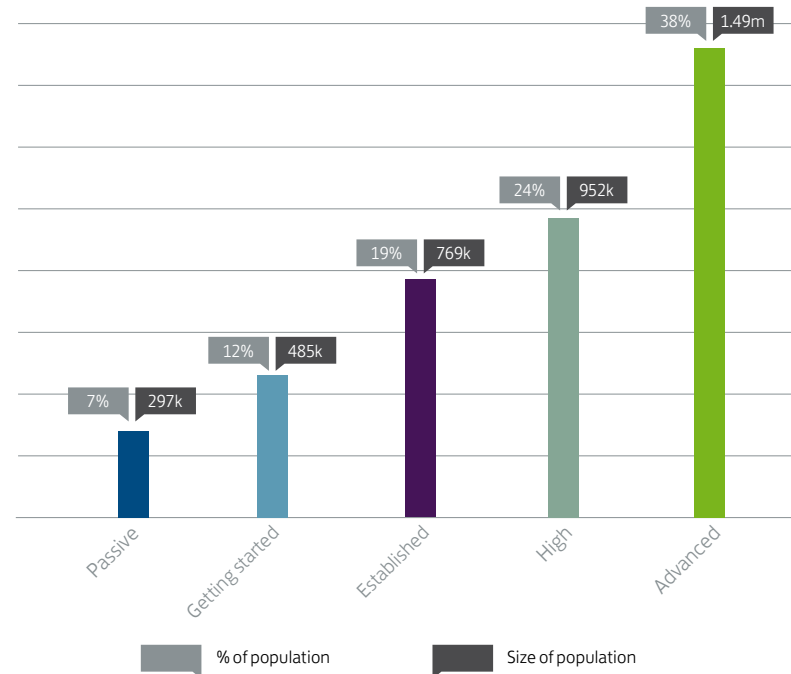
## THE 2016 INDEX AND BASIC DIGITAL SKILLS

### Segmentation

There are five segments of digital maturity. Figure 2 shows the segments and their corresponding traits.

The five segments represent different levels of digital maturity, from Segment 1 being the least digitally mature, to Segment 5, where organisations demonstrate the highest levels of digital capability. A small business or charity must demonstrate all the previous skills or capability before they can move into the next segment.

**Figure 2:** Digital maturity segment definitions for organisations, 2016



#### 1 Passive

**Score range:** 0-18

- Less than one-quarter have websites
- Less than 10% have a social media presence
- Less than one-quarter use Government digital services
- Over one-quarter use email
- No internet banking

#### 2 Getting started

**Score range:** 18-34

As **1** plus:

- One-quarter have websites
- More than 10% have a social media presence
- Over half use Government digital services
- Over three-quarters use email
- Less than 10% of their transactions are carried out with internet banking

#### 3 Established

**Score range:** 34-48

As **2** plus:

- Around one-third have websites
- One-third have a social media presence
- Over two-thirds use Government digital services
- 90% use email
- Over one-quarter of their transactions are carried out with internet banking

#### 4 High

**Score range:** 48-62

As **3** plus:

- Nearly two-thirds have websites
- Nearly half have a social media presence
- Over 80% use Government digital services
- Nearly all use email
- Nearly half of their transactions are carried out with internet banking, some exclusively
- Two-thirds have digital internal tools (e.g. online accounting)

#### 5 Advanced

**Score range:** 62-100

As **4** plus:

- Over three-quarters have websites
- Three-quarters have a social media presence
- Almost all use Government digital services
- Three-quarters of their transactions are carried out with internet and mobile banking
- Over three-quarters have digital internal tools (e.g. online accounting)
- Over two-thirds have internal teams in place for digital development

## Index Score

The Lloyds Bank Business Digital Index is calculated as follows:

**1. Actual online behaviour of UK organisations** – An analytics driven review of anonymised internal Lloyds Banking Group data to gain an oversight of the online banking activities of customers at an aggregate level, as a representative proxy for the UK's charity and small business-banked population.

**2. Primary quantitative research** – An in-depth questionnaire with 2,000 small businesses and charities was carried out across the UK to reach a rounded view of their digital activities and perceptions.

This year, the Index score has a maximum of 100. This is a change from previous years and is a simpler method to measure year-on-year progress.

**Qualitative research** – New for 2016, qualitative research was undertaken via one-to-one in-depth interviews with 20 organisations, in the South East of England and Manchester, to understand some of the underlying reasons behind attitudes and behaviour towards digital technology.

## Basic Digital Skills

Doteveryone revised the skills definition for digital capability in 2015, moving from the previous categories of Basic Online Skills to a new definition of Basic Digital Skills. This updated definition introduced a new 'problem solving' category, and refreshed many of the tasks required for the other basic skills. Organisations have 'Basic Digital Skills' when they have all five of the skills (see appendix 2)<sup>†</sup>.

### Digital Skills – New Definition

- **Managing information**  
Find, manage and store digital information and content
- **Communicating**  
Communicate, interact, collaborate, share and connect with others
- **Transacting**  
Purchase and sell goods and services, organise finances, register for and use Government digital services
- **Creating**  
Engage with communities and create basic digital content
- **Problem Solving**  
Increase independence and confidence by solving problems using digital tools and finding solutions

  
**1.44m\***

small businesses do not  
have Basic Digital Skills

  
**98,000\***  
charities do not have  
Basic Digital Skills

\* Source: Small business population defined by total number of UK business banked SMEs with annual turnover up to £25m and fewer than 250 employees, 2015/16 using Charterhouse source data. Charity population based on 2015/16 figures from Charity Commission for England & Wales, Scottish Charity Regulator and Charity Commission for Northern Ireland

<sup>†</sup> All appendices can be found online at [lloydsbank.com/businessdigitalindex](http://lloydsbank.com/businessdigitalindex)

# Small Business Digital Index



## TRENDS IN USE OF DIGITAL

### How small businesses are using digital

As Figure 3 shows, digital functions such as email and search are becoming routine for most small businesses showing they are almost ubiquitous with nearly 90% usage. What is also encouraging is the significant growth in those making and accepting payments online, with 75% and 55% doing so respectively. However, only 51% of small businesses have a website in 2016, and, while the use of digital for making sales or taking orders is increasing, there is also room for growth in more advanced capabilities, such as cloud-based systems and digital training tools.



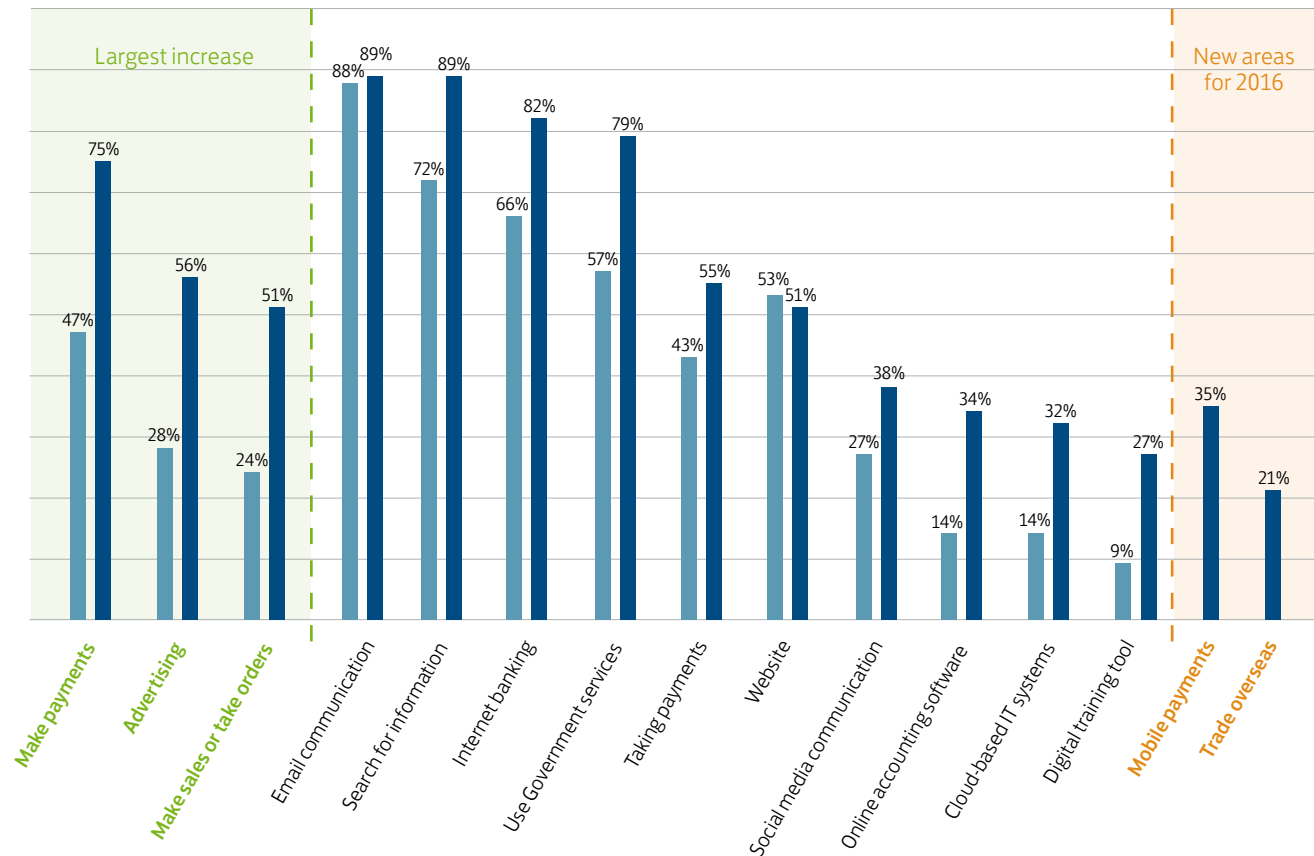
Being able to make payments to my suppliers online has really helped with my cash flow and my overall money management.

Ian,  
Construction company owner,  
London



**Figure 3:** Proportion of small businesses using digital for different purposes, 2015 vs. 2016

■ 2015 ■ 2016





### Link to success

The Index has previously shown positive links between digital maturity and organisational success. This continues and develops in 2016. 58% of small businesses say increased sales is one of the advantages to using digital. The number rises to 68% for start-ups (see appendix 3).

The most digital small businesses are now more than twice as likely to report an increase in turnover than the least digital (64%) (see appendix 4a). This is a greater disparity than in 2015, when the most digital small businesses were a third more likely to say the same. This suggests an even greater impact of digital on revenue than 12 months ago.

Not only that, but 58% of the most digital small businesses have increased their turnover by more than 20%, in contrast with just 39% of the least digital businesses (see appendix 4b).

In addition to impact on income or sales, small businesses are using digital to a greater extent to reduce their costs. 65% state that they use technology to cut costs and increase efficiency (see appendix 5).

### Spotlight on social media

The Index shows that the proportion of small businesses operating a website remains relatively unchanged (down 2% year on year), while at the same time, the proportion communicating through social media has risen by 11% to 38% this year – 1.44m small businesses (see appendix 6).

The qualitative research findings also confirms this. Small businesses look to social media for an easier, cheaper way to keep in touch with customers, yet they are concerned about their ability to keep up with the larger social media companies in terms of offers and sophistication.

The year's research reveals increasingly positive attitudes towards social media as a revenue driver, with more than 1.36m small businesses (36% of the total) agreeing that a social media presence can help them generate revenues (see appendix 7). Also, skill levels are becoming prominent for social media use, with 1.71m small businesses (45%) reporting they have the skills needed to promote themselves on social media and are now able to establish social media communities (see appendix 5). This reflects the growing emergence of social media as a key platform for small businesses to reach customers and how there is clearly scope to do a lot more.



Without adopting digital technology, we would have stayed as a £2m - £3m business. Now we are a £20m turnover business, all because our stock management system is completely digital.

**Simon, Vibration Music, London**



When exhibitors see that you've got so many 'likes' they think "this is an established business". That makes a big difference. When they look at what we're doing for our exhibitors by advertising them that helps as well. We can target whether they are engaged, we can target whether they are within 15 miles (of a site) so it's really specific advertising.

**Zoe, Wedding Fairs, South East**





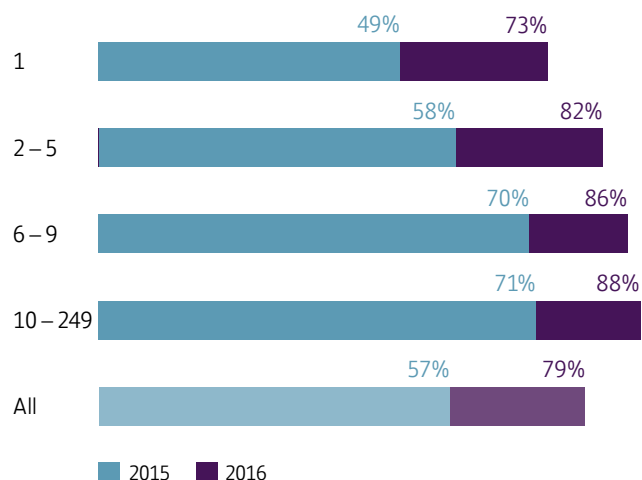


The most digital small businesses are twice as likely  
to report increase in turnover than the least digital

## Using Government digital services

Small businesses accessing Government services online has seen a large increase from 57% to 79% from 2015 to 2016 (see appendix 6). In general, usage of Government digital services is stronger among larger small businesses, with a particular peak among firms with 10 or more employees (see Figure 4). This may reflect that larger firms are often more complex, and may have a greater need to interact with Government, such as applying for permits or licences, and filing regulatory reports or tax returns.

**Figure 4:** Small businesses report using Government digital services, by number of employees, 2015 vs. 2016



## Exporting

New for 2016 is analysis of how digital helps organisations to trade overseas. One in five (21%) small businesses are using digital to support their overseas trade activities. A quarter (26%) of small businesses in retail and 39% in the manufacturing sector are using digital to do business in other countries (see appendix 9a). Of the proportion of small businesses who have reported an increase in turnover over the past 12 months, a quarter (24%) are trading overseas (see appendix 9b).

The qualitative research shows that some organisations are using the basics to more effectively trade overseas, such as email to overcome time zone differences, or international online payments.



Our online case management system handles all our administration, from accounting to communication and timesheets. It means clients know exactly where they are at all times. We rely on it so much that you almost feel like we couldn't function without it.

**Eimear, Law Firm, North West**





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Only 1 in 5 small businesses use digital  
to support their trade overseas

## Importance of mobile

Also new for 2016 is analysis of small businesses' attitude towards using digital mobile services – 35% of small businesses now accept mobile payments (see appendix 6). 71% of small businesses believe that having a mobile is 'crucial to the success of my business', rising to 78% when looking at the most digitally mature in Segment 5 (see appendix 10). Small businesses with one employee or less are especially realising the benefits of mobile, with 78% agreeing or completely agreeing with the statement (Figure 5).

65% of all small businesses acknowledge the benefits of being able to 'do business on the move'. Again, smaller small businesses are the most likely to realise the benefits, with 70% of sole traders and 67% of small businesses with two to five employees agreeing with the statement, compared to 52% of organisations with 10 or more employees (see appendix 11).

**Figure 5:** Percentage of small businesses who agree and completely agree that 'Having a mobile is crucial to the success of my business' split by number of employees, 2016



My laptop is in the car, it wires to the phone and everything else. We're so mobile.

**Michael, Transport Planning Consultancy, North West**





10X



as many bookings  
by establishing a website

## CASE STUDY

### FAIRY GODMOTHERS' PAMPER PALACE, RADCLIFFE, GREATER MANCHESTER

Fairy Godmothers' Pamper Palace is a one-stop pamper party shop in Greater Manchester that hosts celebrations for all ages including children's birthday parties, hen parties, prom queen parties, baby showers and more. The parties include make-up, nails and hair styling, as well as food and entertainment.

The firm was launched as a mobile business in 2014 by trained make-up artist Rebecca Warwick and qualified beauty therapist Jodie Clough, and they moved into their first premises in Stand Lane, Radcliffe, in 2015.

Rebecca credits social media, and in particular Facebook, with driving the success of the business right from the start.

"We run the Facebook page @FairyGodmothersNw together and it is our main source of business. We have more than 5,000 likes, and we are using it for recruitment too. It's a great way to find good candidates and to check them out before inviting them to interview. While Facebook is the first point of contact for most customers, they still want the reassurance of being able to visit the company's website too.

"I think that having a well-designed website as well gives them the confidence that we are an established and professional business. We went from hosting two to three parties a month to seven or eight a week."

## DIGITAL BEHAVIOUR

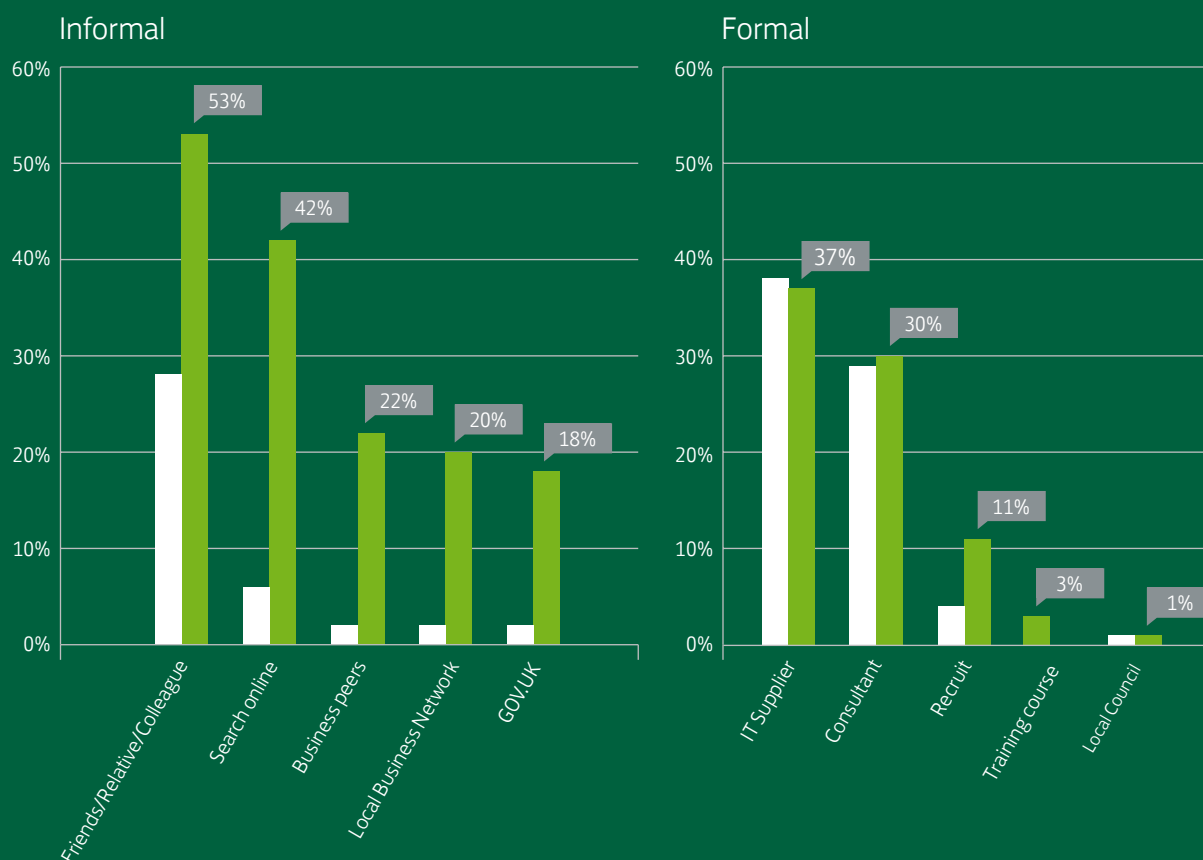
### Advice and guidance

A key trend this year is the increase in small businesses using more 'informal' and free sources of advice on how to use technology and the web (see Figure 6), with online searches up from 6% to 42% and friend/relative/colleague up from 28% to 53%. This is particularly evident with sole traders, 64% of whom go to a friend/relative/colleague for digital advice – up by more than half since 2015 (see appendix 12). Organisations using GOV.UK have increased from 2% to 18% – with a number of Government services moving online in the past year.

In contrast, there is very little growth and often decline in more formal routes to advice, with only 3% saying they use training courses. This may be due to a lack of signposting or availability of training courses on a national scale.

**Figure 6:** Where small businesses go to get advice on how to use technology and the web, 2015 vs. 2016

2015 2016





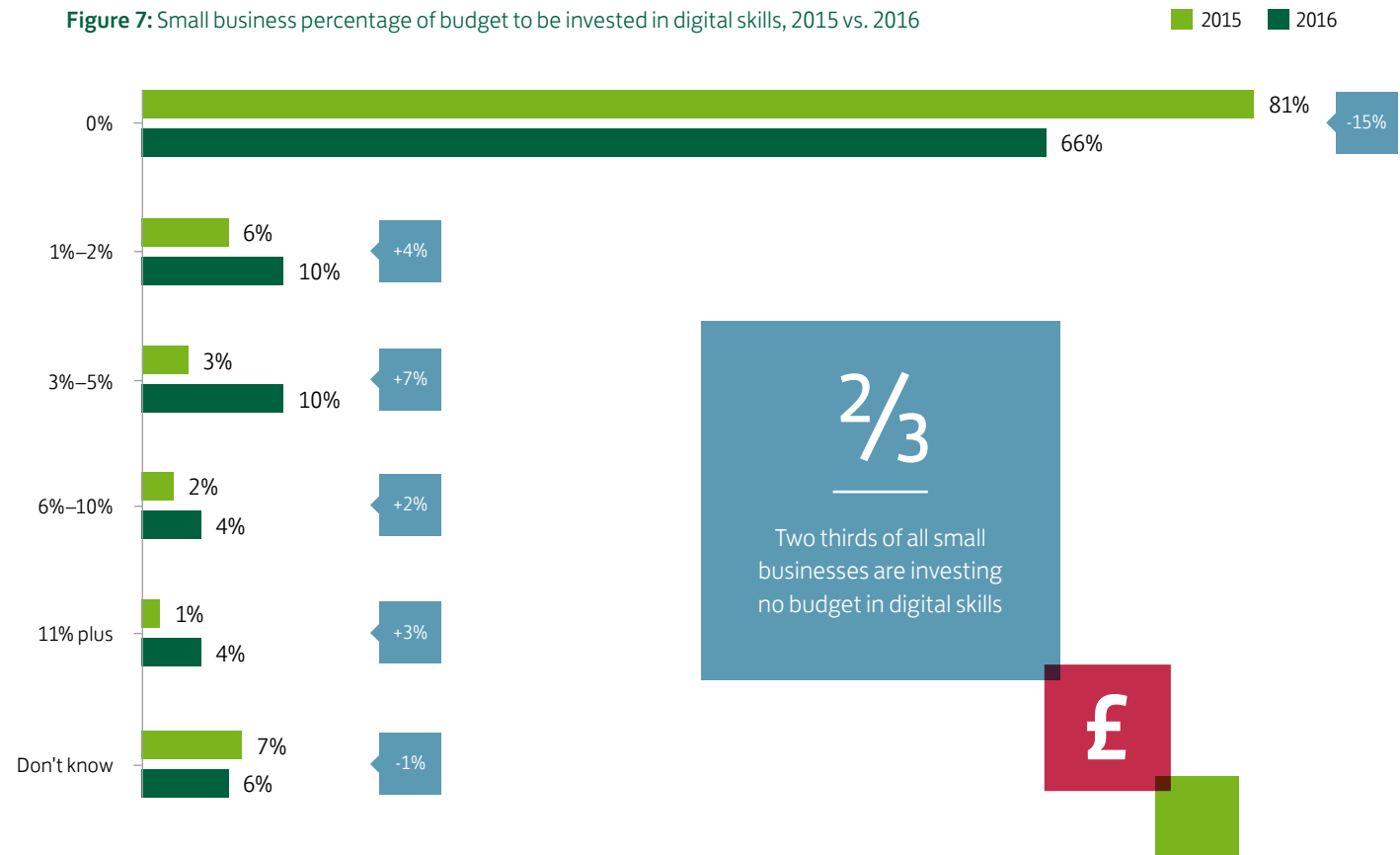
## Investment in digital skills

An overall increase in budget being invested in digital skills may indicate a shift towards small businesses seeing the importance of digital capability, with 28% investing budget into digital skills in 2016 compared with 12% in 2015. However, two thirds of all small businesses (66%) are still investing no budget at all in digital skills (Figure 7).

Sole traders or small businesses with one or less employees are even less likely to invest budget in digital skills, with 78% of sole traders investing nothing, compared to 36% of small businesses with 10 or more employees (see appendix 13).

There is still an opportunity to acknowledge the value of more formal support. Again, this may be due to availability or low awareness of formal training or support with digital skills.

Figure 7: Small business percentage of budget to be invested in digital skills, 2015 vs. 2016



£0

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78% of sole traders invest no money in digital skills

## Benefits of digital

As in the 2015 Index report, the biggest benefit to small businesses is still a 'wider geographic reach in the UK', although this has decreased over the past 12 months, from 36% to 24% (see Figure 8). 'Effective marketing' and 'Time saving' also continue to be seen as key benefits.

Again, just as in 2015, wider geographic coverage is significantly more prominent than any other reason.



Now we're online, we have been able extend our business to offer princess hire up and down the North West. We couldn't have done that without using social media.

**Rebecca Warwick, Owner,  
Fairy Godmothers' Pamper Palace,  
Greater Manchester**



**Figure 8:** Small business 'What is the main business benefit to you as a company of being digital?' 2015 vs. 2016

Benefits	2015	2016
Wider geographic coverage (UK)	36%	24%
Effective marketing	11%	10%
Time saving	19%	9%
Wider geographic coverage (overseas)	6%	5%
No business benefit	1%	4%
Simplified process taking orders/payments	4%	3%
More efficient back office/admin systems	7%	3%
Better service experience	8%	2%
Business cost saving	1%	2%
Lead generation	2%	1%
Learn more about customer/donor	1%	1%

## Barriers to being more digital

The 2016 Index suggests there is a shift in which barriers prevent organisations from doing more online. In 2015, the reasons were broadly motivational and, for example, focused on lack of relevance and feeling they already did everything they could. Twelve months on, digital skills and more practical reasons are more prominent.

A lack of digital skills is now the main reason small businesses are not doing more online, with 15% stating this as the key barrier, more than doubling since 2015. It is slightly higher for sole traders, up from 7% (see appendix 19). Lack of time stays consistently high (see Figure 9), something which was also found in the qualitative research.

Despite this rise in practical barriers, motivation is still important. Whilst there are fewer businesses saying digital is not relevant (21% in 2015 vs. 14% in 2016), it is still the joint second highest reason given.

## Cyber security skills

A concern about security is now a key hurdle for some, with 14% citing it as the reason they don't do more online, nearly double from 2015 (see Figure 9). Furthermore, 2.62m small businesses (69%) state they need to develop cyber security skills (see appendix 5).

**Figure 9:** Small business main reason for not being more digital, 2015 vs. 2016

Factors	2015	2016
Lack of staff digital/online skills	7%	15%
Not relevant for our business	21%	14%
Concerns about security	8%	14%
No time to set up and go online	14%	13%
Other priorities for investment	5%	8%
Poor connectivity	3%	6%
Too expensive	6%	5%
Not worth the investment	7%	4%
Prefer face-to-face transactions	2%	4%
No interest	9%	3%
Use word of mouth	9%	3%
Cost of investment unknown	2%	3%
Doing all we can	0%	2%



Businesses have to find the time, in a time and resource poor environment... to keep up to date with how their audiences use digital.

**Qualitative research findings,**  
**Lucy Purdy, Director,**  
**Rainmakers CSI Ltd**



# 2.62m



small businesses (69%)  
state they need to develop  
cyber security skills

## DIGITAL DEMOGRAPHICS

### Turnover

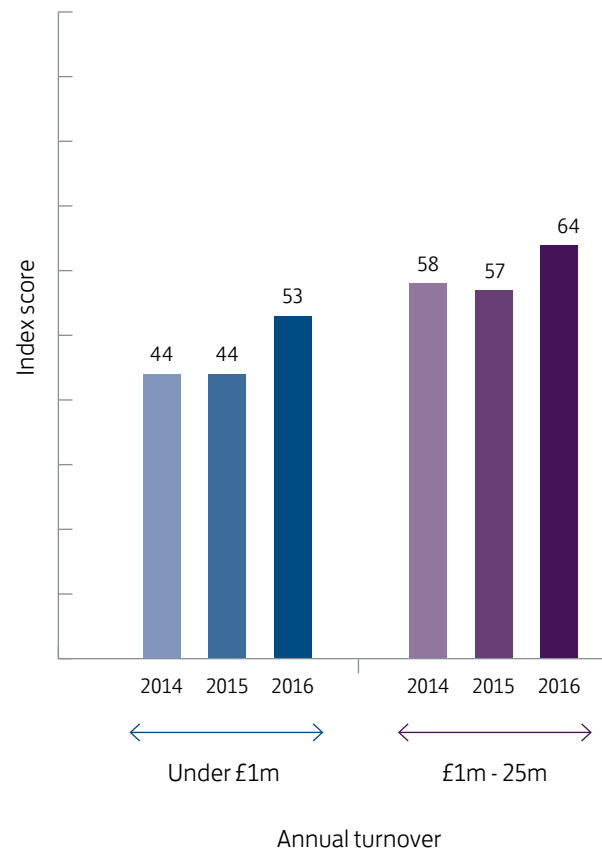
Segmenting small businesses by annual turnover (under £1 million vs. £1 million to £25 million), reveals an Index score of 64 for those with the largest turnover (up from 58 in 2014), compared to an Index score in 2016 of 53 for those with a turnover of under £1m, up from 44 in 2014, showing those with a larger turnover are more digitally mature (see Figure 10).

40% of small businesses with a turnover of under £1million do not have Basic Digital Skills...

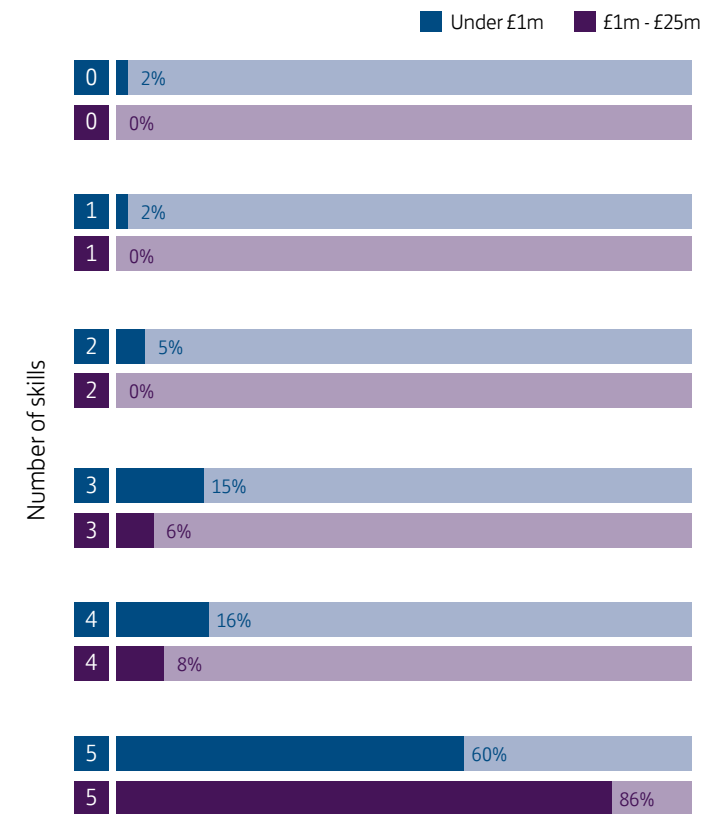


...compared with 14% of those with a turnover of £1 million to £25 million

**Figure 10:** Small business average Index score by annual turnover, 2014 – 2016



**Figure 11:** Small business Basic Digital Skills by annual turnover, 2016



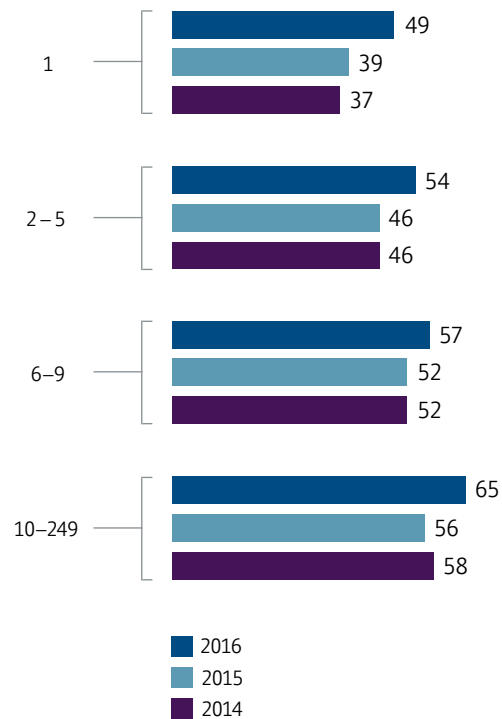
## Size of business

Digital capability has increased for all sizes of business. Sole traders still have the biggest opportunity to increase their digital capability although they have increased their Index score by 10 points since 2015 (Figure 12a).

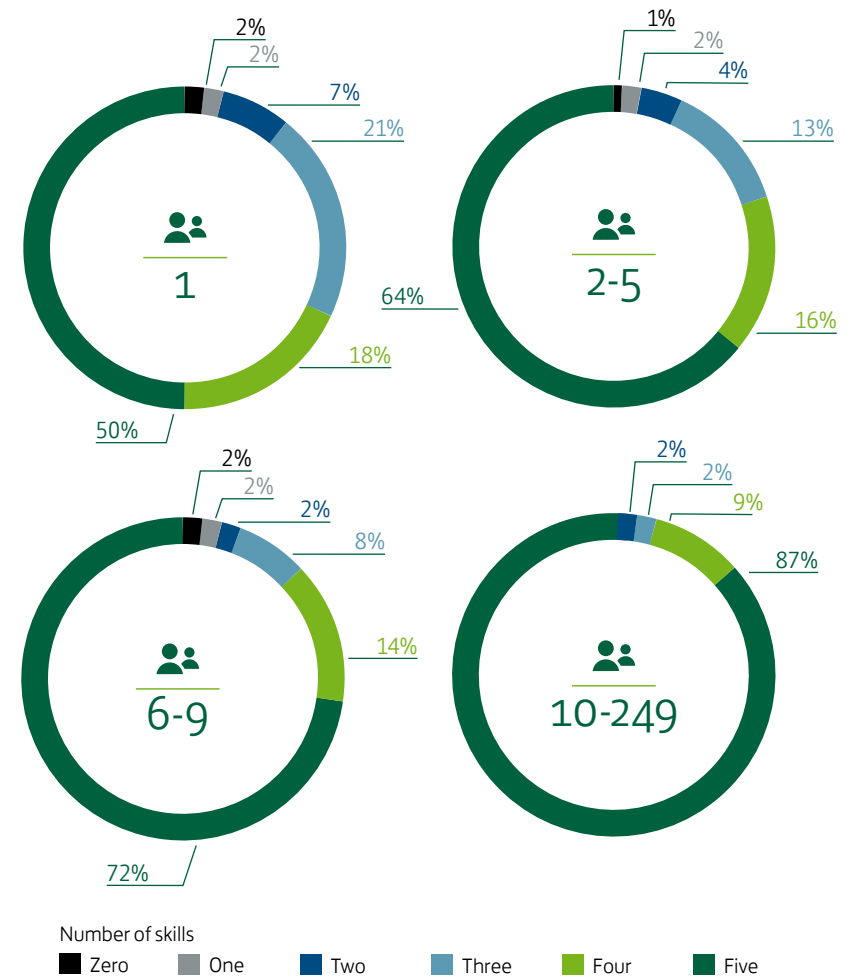
The smallest businesses are also less likely to have Basic Digital Skills – 50% of sole traders have Basic Digital Skills in 2016, compared to 87% of small businesses with 10 or more employees. 2% of sole traders report having no skills in any of the categories (see Figure 12b).



**Figure 12a:** Small business average **Index score** by number of employees, 2014 – 2016



**Figure 12b:** Small business **Basic Digital Skills** by number of employees, 2016





## Age of business

64% of small business startups (under three years old) have Basic Digital Skills. Small businesses who are 3 – 4 years old are the most likely to have Basic Digital Skills, at 74%. The least likely are those over 10 years old, where 58% have Basic Digital Skills (see Figure 13).

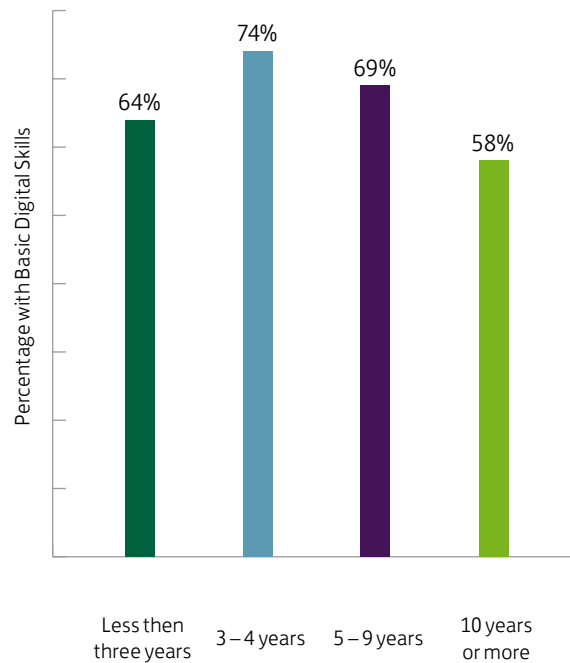
Small businesses less than three years old have an Index score of 55 in 2016, compared to small businesses who are at least 10 years old, who have an Index score of 52 (see Figure 14).

## Gender

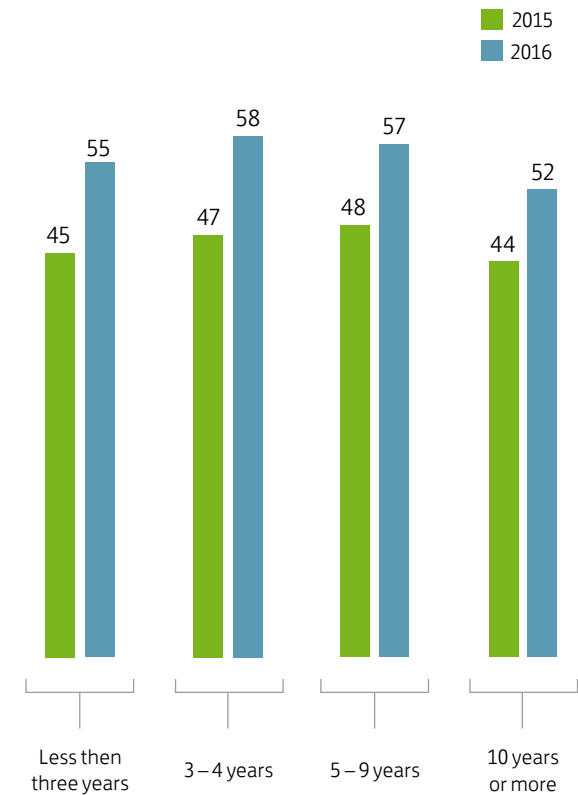
Analysis of Basic Digital Skills by gender shows no difference – 61% of males have Basic Digital Skills, compared with 64% of females (see appendix 14a).

There is also very little difference in Index score when split by gender, with men scoring 55, women scoring 56 (see appendix 14b).

**Figure 13:** Small business **Basic Digital Skills** by age of business, 2016



**Figure 14:** Small businesses average **Index score** by age of business, 2015 vs. 2016



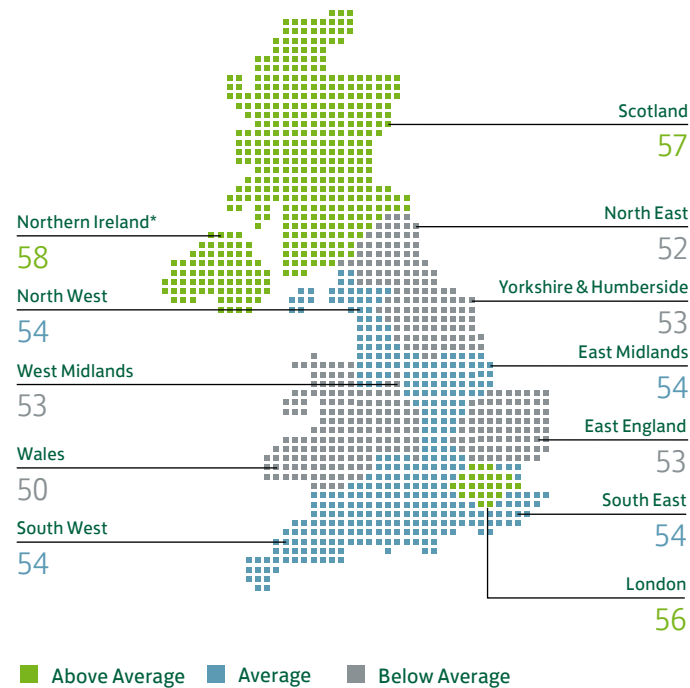


Gender equality for Basic Digital Skills

## Regional trends

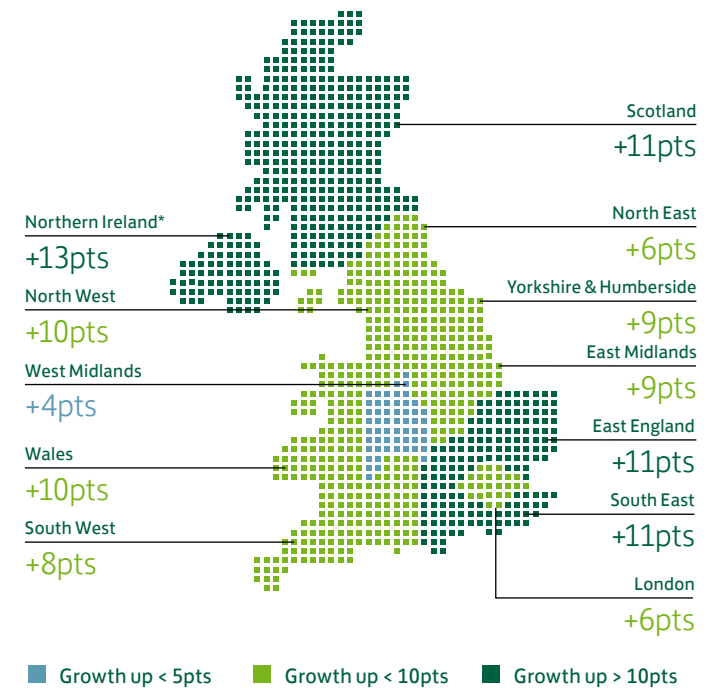
The 2016 UK average Index score is 54 (a nine point increase on 2015). All regions are showing growth over the past year for small businesses' Index scores, with limited variation across the UK (see figures 15a and 15b). Many regions have shown increases of more than 10 points since 2015. The West Midlands has shown slightly slower growth, at four points, but is still improving.

**Figure 15a:** Small business Index score by region, compared to the UK average of 54, 2016



\*Northern Ireland sample in 2016 was small (n-24) and accordingly data should be treated with care.

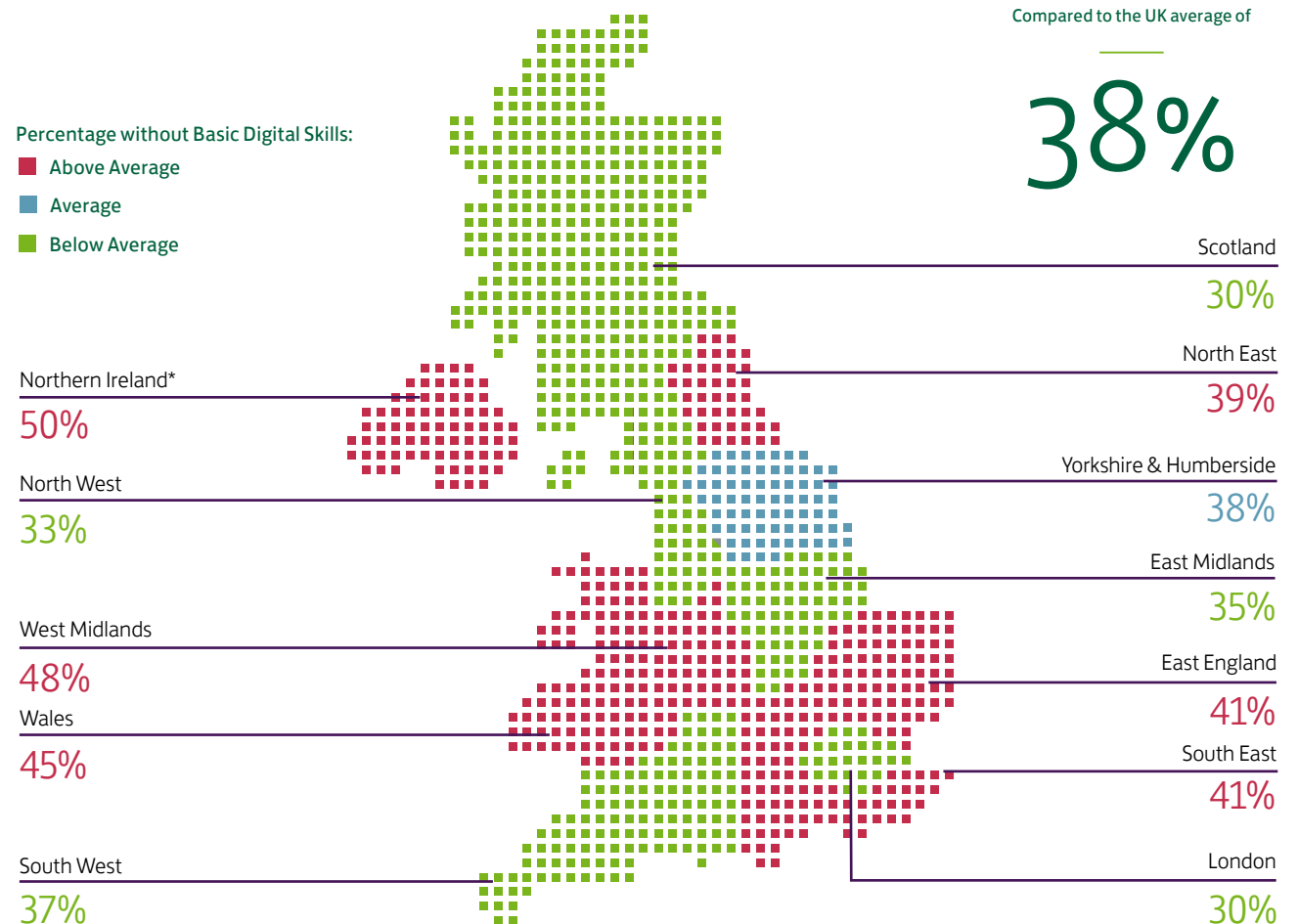
**Figure 15b:** Change in Index score by region, 2015 vs. 2016



\*Northern Ireland sample in 2016 was small (n-24) and accordingly data should be treated with care.

Using the new Basic Digital Skills definition, the 2016 Index shows that there is some variance in skill level across the UK regions (Figure 16). An average of 38% of small businesses in the UK don't have Basic Digital Skills. Different regions fall either below or above this, as indicated in Figure 16.

**Figure 16:** Average percentage of small businesses without **Basic Digital Skills** by region, 2016



\*Northern Ireland sample in 2016 was small (n=24) and accordingly data should be treated with care.

## INDEX SCORE AND BASIC DIGITAL SKILLS

### Index Score

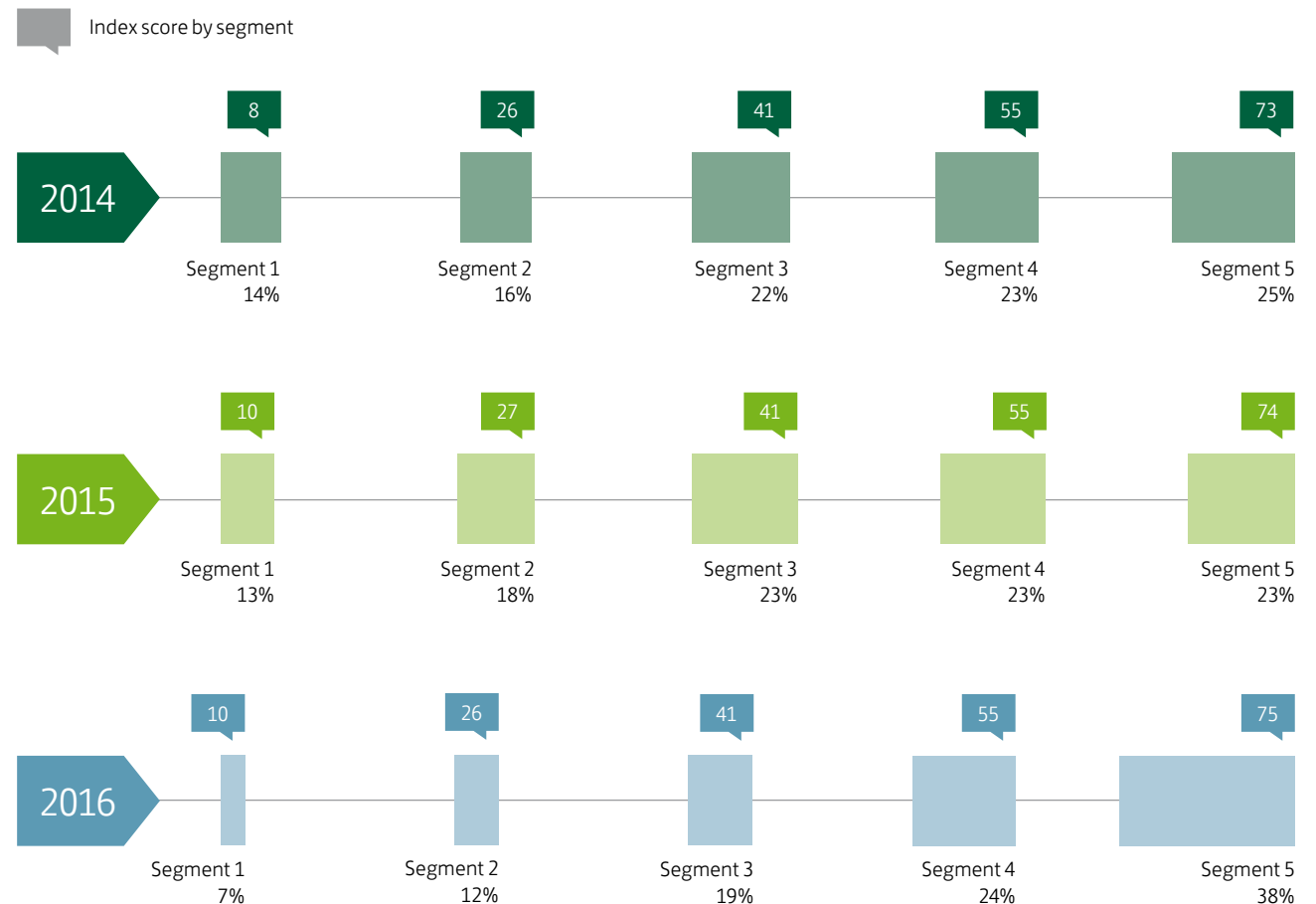
There has been an encouraging growth in digital maturity for small businesses in the past 12 months. The small business Index score has increased by nine points, from 45 to 54, as seen in Figure 1a on page 5. A comparison of five small businesses' Index scores across the five digital maturity Segments shows some interesting insights. Year on year, the maturity of Segment 5 is slowly increasing, and in 2016 is now averaging 75 (see Figure 17). No significant growth is seen in the other segments, as the most mature firms instead progress into a higher segment.

The overall Index score for small businesses rose by nine points



This is driven primarily by Segment 5, which has just over 1.44m small businesses within it

**Figure 17:** Small businesses' average **Index score** by segment (percentages denote size of segment, and year on year change), 2014 – 2016



## Basic Digital Skills

Whilst there are 1.44m small businesses classified as not having Basic Digital Skills, 15% of these do have skills in four of the five categories and are therefore close to achieving full digital skills. Only 2% (75,800) report no skills across all the categories. This suggests that many small businesses are, in practice, close to gaining Basic Digital Skills, with only a small percentage struggling to achieve any digital skills. (Figures 18a and 18b).

In the 2016 Index, 95% of small businesses have transacting skills, followed by 93% with communication skills. 90% of small businesses state they have managing information skills. The skills which the fewest small businesses report in 2016 are creating (77%) and problem solving (69%).

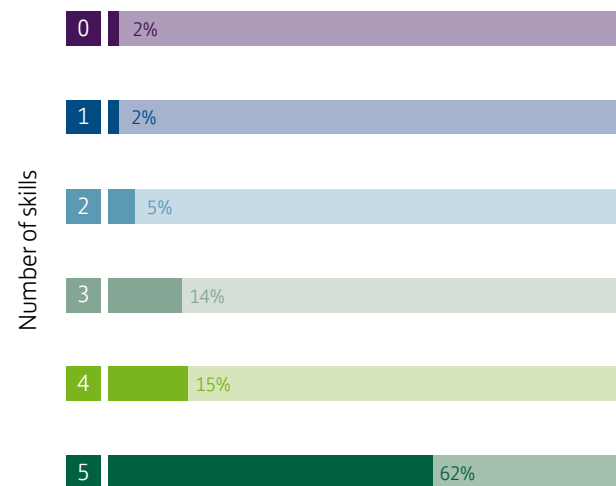


It's encouraging to see more small businesses with at least four out of the five Basic Digital Skills. But the large gap between those at this level and those that have all five skills shows there is still much work to do if businesses are to benefit fully from being online, particularly around the new skill of problem solving.

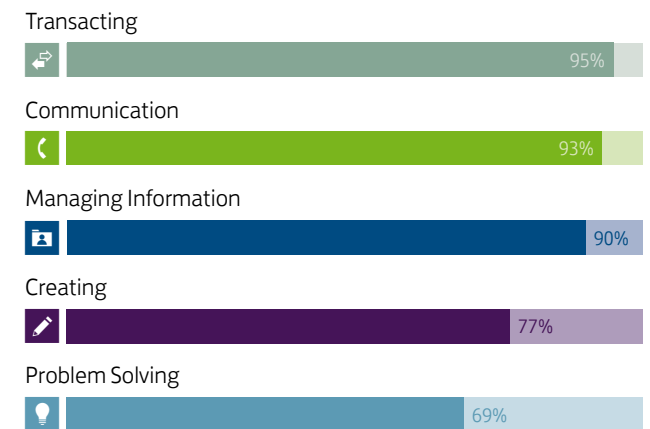
**Rachel Neaman, Director, Doteveryone**



**Figure 18a:** Small businesses reported number of **Basic Digital Skills**, 2016



**Figure 18b:** Small businesses reported digital skills, 2016







38% of small businesses and  
49% of charities lack Basic Digital Skills

# Charity Digital Index



## TRENDS IN USE OF DIGITAL

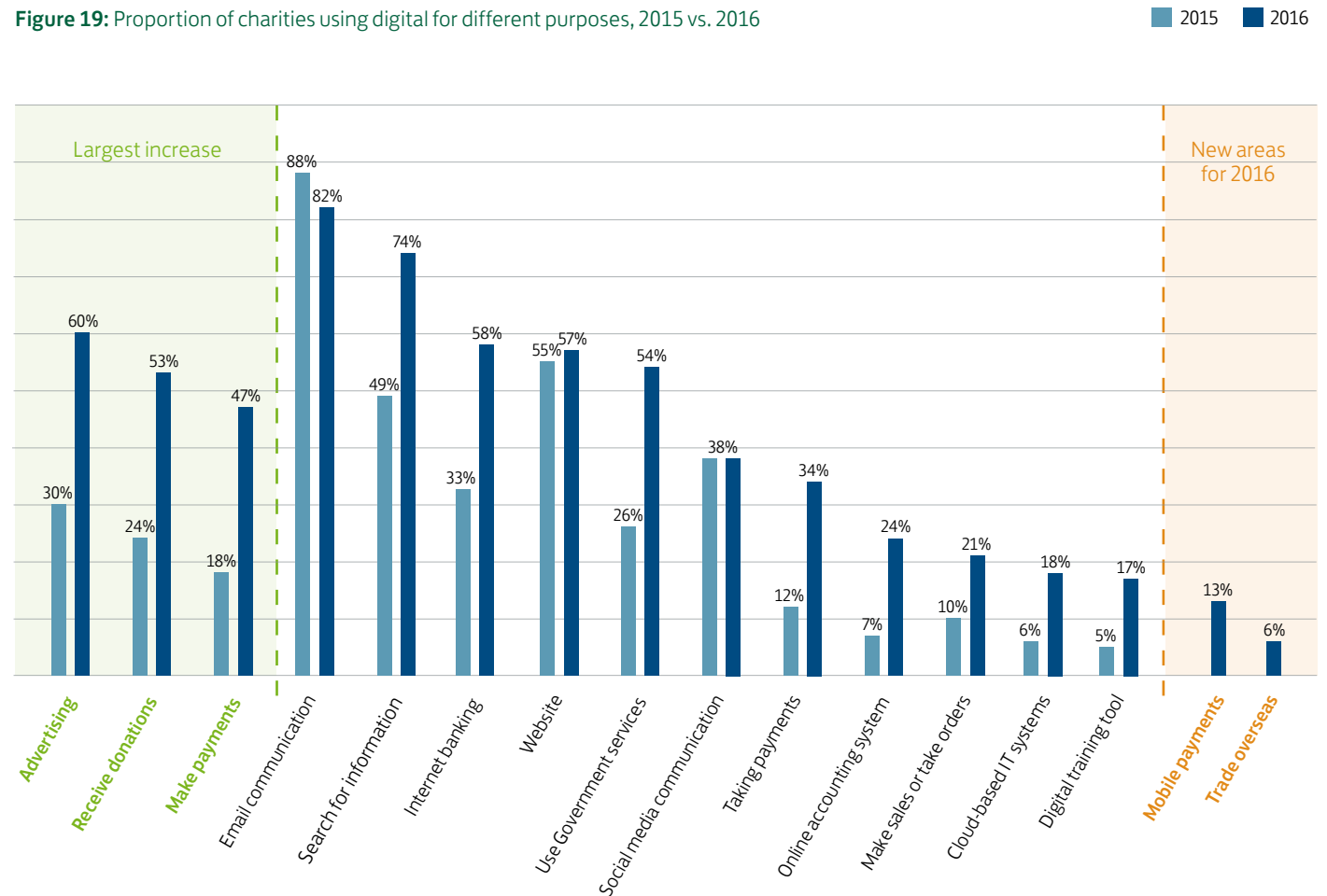
### How charities are using digital

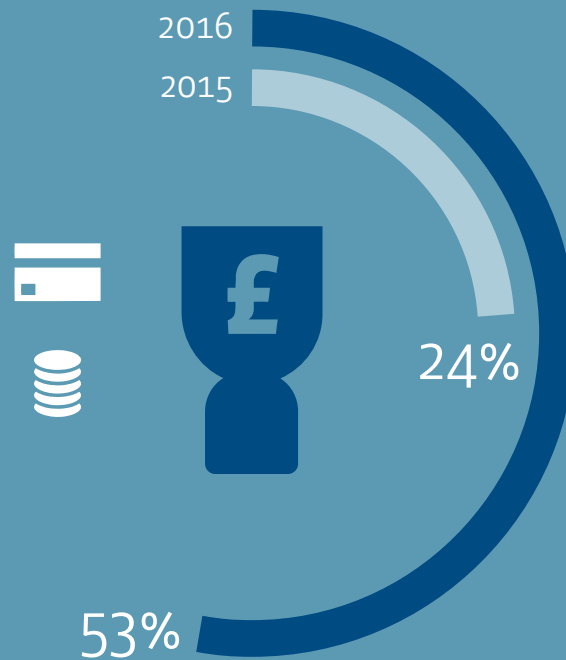
Progress is being made across most categories. 74% of charities are searching for information online compared to 49% in 2015. 60% are now advertising online, vs. 30% a year ago and 34% are now also taking online payments, vs. 12% in 2015 (Figure 19).

There is still an opportunity for charities to reap the benefits of digital, with fewer than 3 in 5 having their own website. Encouragingly however, 21% are making sales or taking orders online, vs. 10% in 2015, and 47% are making online payments, vs. 18% in 2015. Advertising has seen the largest increase in digital usage, followed by receiving donations (going from 24% to 53% in 12 months).

Attitudes towards social media usage are changing, with 36% agreeing or completely agreeing that a social media presence can help them generate revenues, compared with 23% in 2015 (see appendix 15). In addition, new analysis for 2016 shows nearly a third of charities (32%) agree or completely agree that having a mobile is crucial to the success of their organisation (see appendix 16).

**Figure 19:** Proportion of charities using digital for different purposes, 2015 vs. 2016





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The number of charities accepting online donations has more than doubled since 2015

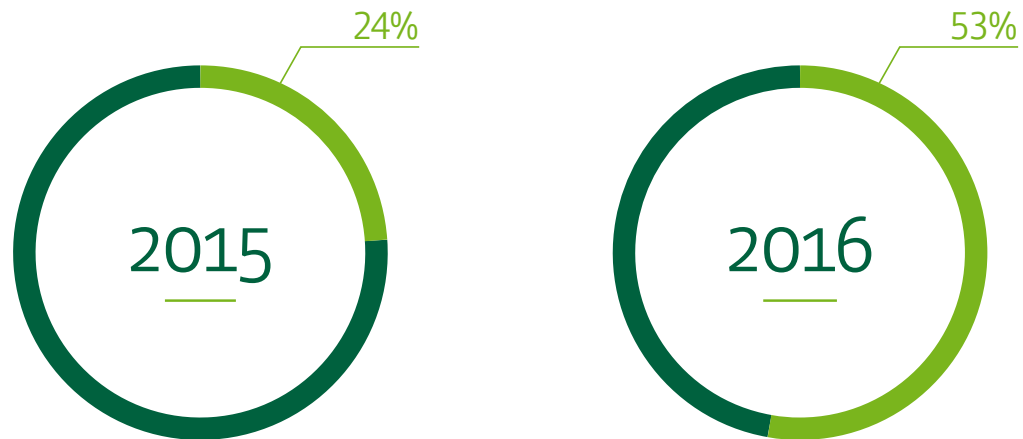
## Link to success

There is a strengthening link for charities between digital and success in 2016. Nearly half (47%) of charities say increased donations are one of the main advantages to using digital, up from 36% in 2015 (see appendix 17). The more digital charities are 28% more likely to report an increase in turnover or funding than less digital charities.

Charities have realised a number of other benefits to being online, with 87% saying that saving time is an advantage of being online in 2016, compared to 68% in 2015. Additionally, 52% state cost savings is one of the advantages to being online, a significant increase from 33% in 2015 (see appendix 17).

There has been a marked improvement for charities in 2016, with the proportion of charities taking donations more than doubling from 24% in 2015 to 53% this year (Figure 20).

**Figure 20:** Percentage of charities taking online donations, 2015 vs. 2016



The more digital charities are 28% more likely to report an increase in turnover or funding than less digital charities

# 28%

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Charities that are more digitally mature are 28% more likely to report an increase in funding than those who aren't

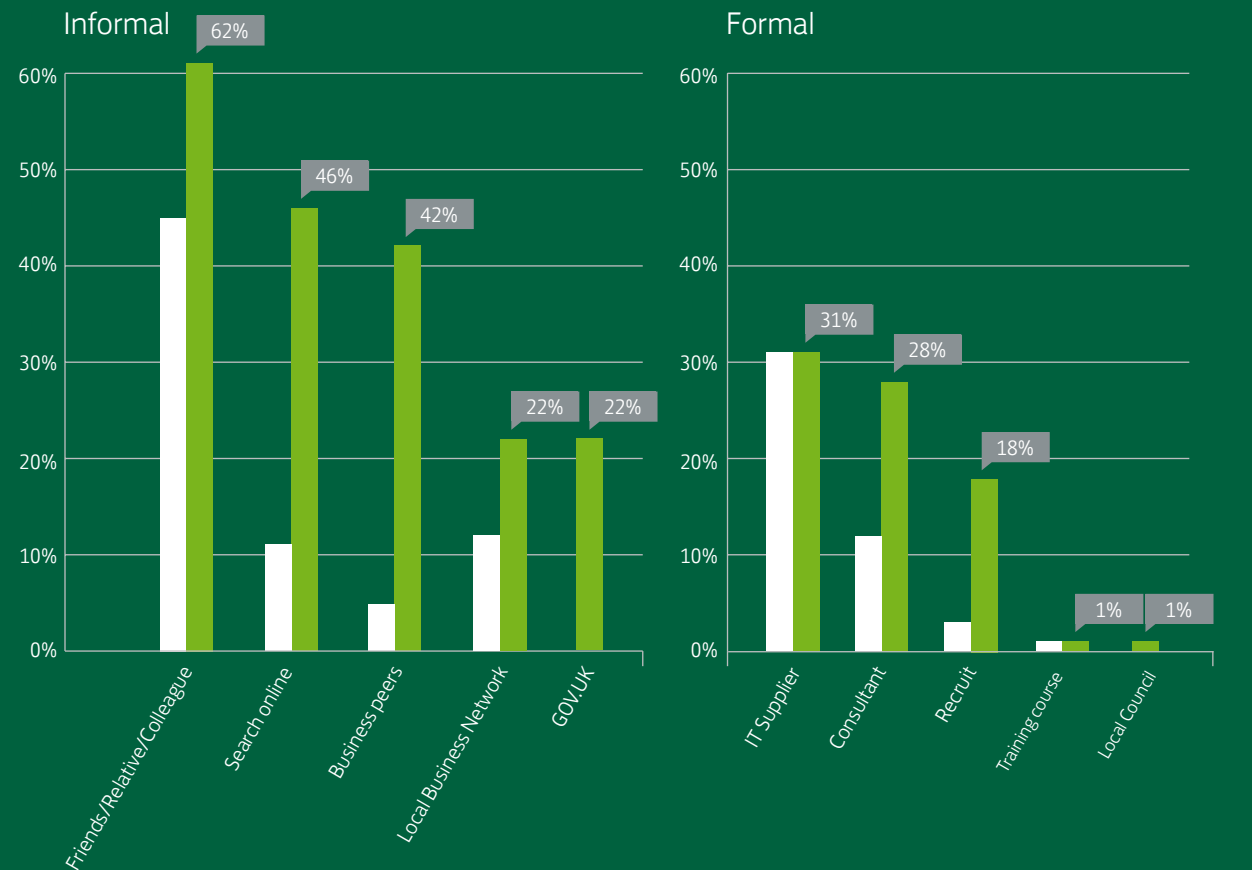
## DIGITAL BEHAVIOUR

### Advice and guidance

Charities are more likely to look to more informal and free forms of advice than they were in 2015, with the proportion searching online rising from 11% in 2015 to 46% this year, and those going to a friend, colleague or relative for advice, going from 45% to 62% (Figure 21). They are also more likely to look to business peers for advice than they were in 2015, with the proportion rising steeply from 4% to 42% in 12 months.

Charities are also much more likely than previously to go to a consultant for advice, rising from 12% to 28% in the past year indicating that they may still be willing to pay for advice on digital skills. They are also more likely to recruit to cover this role, jumping from 3% in 2015 to 18% in 2016 (see Figure 21). However, this means fewer than 1 in 5 charities are willing to recruit to bring in digital skills. There has been an interesting rise in the proportion of charities going to GOV.UK for advice, from 0% in 2015 to 22% in 2016.

**Figure 21:** Where charities go to get advice on how to use technology and the web, 2015 vs. 2016



## Investment in digital skills

This year's research shows that more charities are investing budget in digital skills, however four out of five charities (78%) are investing no money in digital skills in 2016 – down from 88% 12 months ago (see Figure 22). Again, as with small businesses, this may indicate a shift towards realising the importance of digital capability.

Smaller charities, with 0-9 employees, are less likely to invest budget in digital skills, with 82% investing nothing, down from 88% in 2015 (see appendix 18), compared to charities with 10 or more employees where 69% report investing nothing in digital skills (down from 88% last year). Charities may be unable rather than unwilling, to invest budget in digital skills, due to lack of funding.

**Figure 22:** Charities percentage of budget to be invested in digital skills, 2015 vs. 2016



We do not have the in-house knowledge to create our own website and therefore looked to local providers to develop a site for us. Unfortunately, our site was then hacked and it brought home to us how vulnerable our site was at that time. We learned quickly from this lesson and we sought expert IT advice to help us to scope our requirements for a new website including assurances that it would be hosted safely and that robust ongoing support is in place. As a result of our experience, we would encourage all charities to obtain IT support from companies who have been recommended.

**Carmen Conquer, Aspired Futures charity, Blackpool**





## Benefits of digital

Just as in 2015, there are two clear benefits for many charities to being digital. The largest is wider geographic UK coverage, with 23% stating this is the biggest benefit. This is following by saving time at 12% (Figure 23). This continuing polarisation suggests that there is still an opportunity to raise awareness of the other benefits. The research shows that the more digital organisations can increase funding and cut their costs, in comparison with the least digital. However, this is not yet being reflected in charities' understanding of what this means for them.

The qualitative research showed that charities are focused on three things:

- Delivering their services
- Raising revenues/funding
- Gaining the active engagement of volunteers

The main benefits identified in the main survey (see Figure 23) support this. If digital can save time, then charities can focus on delivering their services. By widening geographic coverage, funding and revenues may be more easily sought.



Our social media posts have gone from reaching just 15 to 30 people, to reaching – in one case – 4,000. This has helped us get noticed further afield. Recently a PR company running a campaign with a national brand doing a series of roadshow events were looking for a local charity partner in each area. They found us. I don't think we'd have been top of the list this time last year.

**Sam, Back on Track charity, North West**



**Figure 23:** Charities "What is the main benefit to you, as a charity, of being digital?" 2015 vs. 2016

Factors	2015	2016
Wider geographic coverage (UK)	34%	23%
Time saving	23%	12%
No organisational benefit	6%	5%
More efficient back office/admin systems	7%	4%
Simplified process taking orders/payments	2%	3%
Effective marketing	7%	2%
Wider geographic coverage (overseas)	5%	2%
Better service experience	11%	2%
Lead generation	1%	1%
Organisational cost saving	2%	1%

## Barriers to being more digital

As found in 2015, the largest barrier to charities doing more online is not yet understanding the full benefits digital can offer and believing it is not relevant to their organisation. However, this has decreased in the past 12 months, which is an encouraging direction (see Figure 24).

Similarly with the benefits to charities, there are two clear barriers which are far more prominent than any others – relevance and a lack of the right digital skills, which has increased from 17% last year to 19% in 2016. Concerns about security remain low year on year, at 5% in 2016, however 72% of charities state they still need to develop their cyber security skills further.

The qualitative research suggests that, for charities, relatively high turnover of staff and volunteers means it is difficult to retain digital skills, and charities are often reliant on individual volunteers coming forward to help, rather than embedding skills within the organisation itself. So, even if charities do understand the benefits of digital, they are not always in a position to capitalise on them within their own organisation.

**Figure 24:** Charities main reason for not being more digital, 2015 vs. 2016

Factors	2015	2016
Not relevant for our organisation	25%	21%
Lack of staff digital/online skills	17%	19%
No time to set up and go online	16%	8%
Other priorities for investment	7%	8%
No interest	9%	5%
Concerns about security	4%	5%
Not worth the investment	3%	5%
In process of doing more	2%	4%
Too expensive	4%	2%
Cost of investment unknown	0%	2%
Poor connectivity	1%	2%
Doing all we can	0%	2%
Use word of mouth	2%	2%
Willingness of customers to pay online	1%	2%
Prefer face-to-face transactions	4%	1%



We would love to do more online, it's crucial to the development of our charity and for reaching a wider audience. We have a website but we need more time and resources to develop it into what we really need.

**Sarah Smart, Chief Executive,  
Reedham Children's Trust, South East**



72% of charities state they still need to develop their cyber security skills

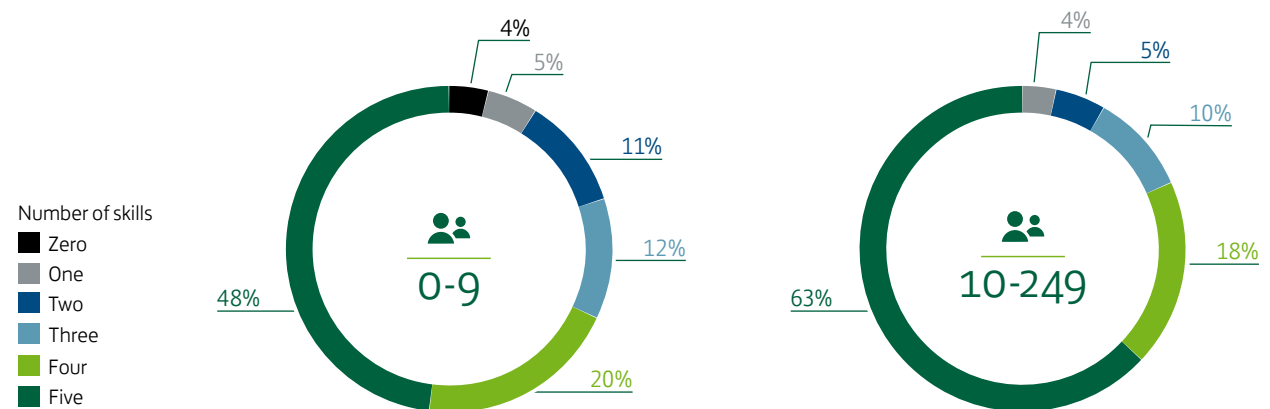
## DIGITAL DEMOGRAPHICS

### Size of charity

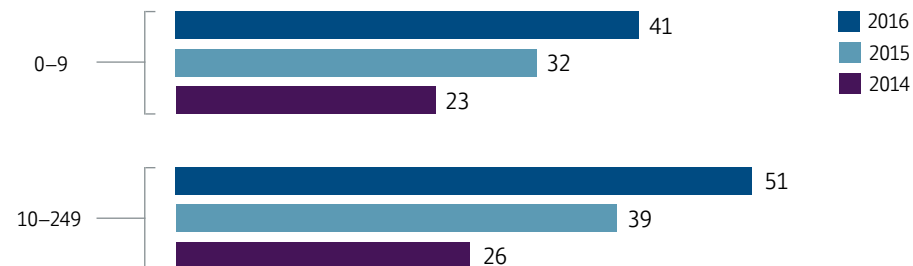
Smaller charities are less likely to have Basic Digital Skills, with 48% of charities with fewer than 10 employees having Basic Digital Skills in 2016, compared to 63% of charities with 10 or more employees. 4% of charities with fewer than 10 employees report having no skills in any of the categories (see Figure 25).

The highest digital maturity is found among the largest charities – the '10 to 249' group has nearly doubled its average Index score since 2014, and is also growing faster (see Figure 26). However, the growth in maturity is relatively strong in both groups.

**Figure 25: Charities' Basic Digital Skills** by number of employees, 2016



**Figure 26: Charities' average Index score** by number of employees, 2014 – 2016



## Age of charity

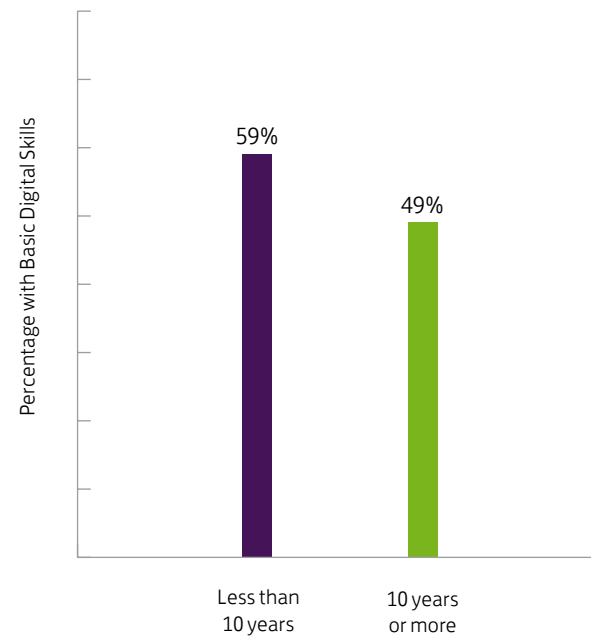
For charities less than 10 years old, 59% have Basic Digital Skills.

For those 10 years old or more, 49% now have Basic Digital Skills (Figure 27).

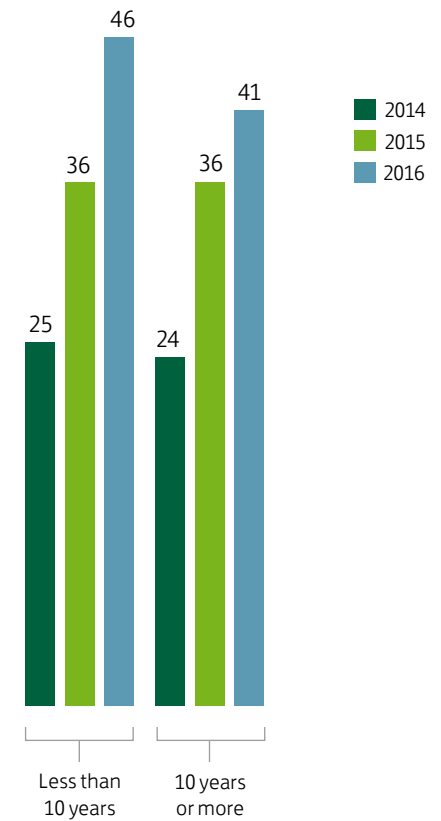
Analysis shows that younger charities tend to have the highest digital maturity, and have seen an increase of 10 points in their average Index score since 2015 (see Figure 28).

Older charities have also increased their average score since 2015, albeit by only five points – a much slower increase than the 12 point uplift seen between 2014 and 2015.

**Figure 27: Basic Digital Skills** by charity age, 2016



**Figure 28: Charities' average Index score** by charity age, 2014 – 2016



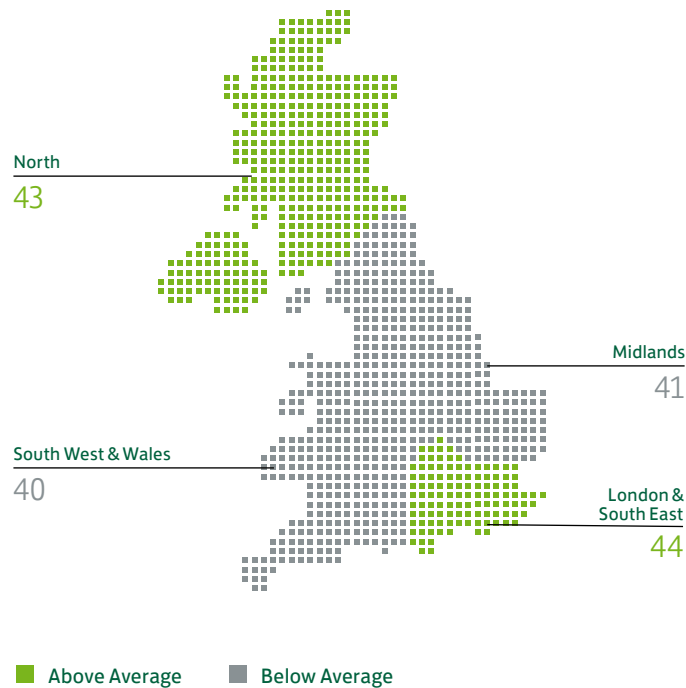
## Regional trends

New for 2016, charities are analysed across four regional areas:

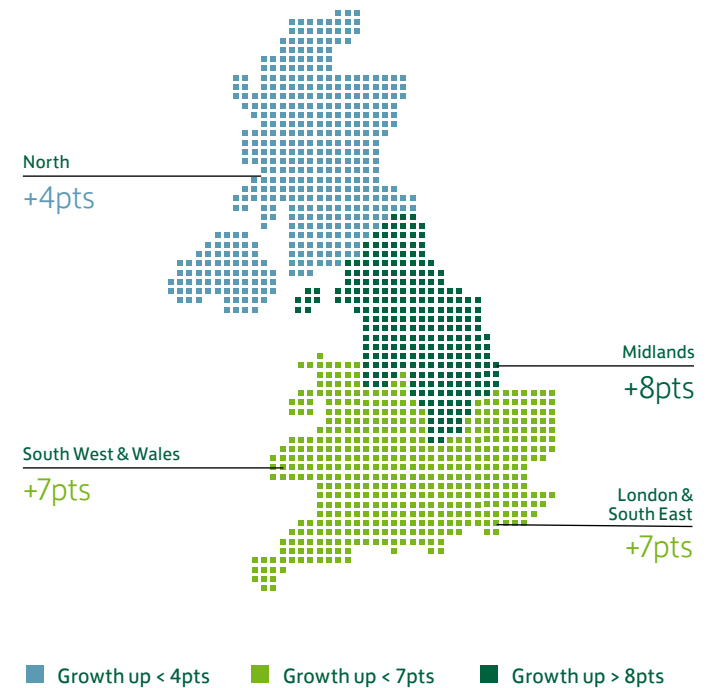
- London & South East
- South West & Wales
- Midlands
- North (including Scotland & Northern Ireland)

All four areas have increased their digital maturity, with the Midlands rising the most – by eight points since 2015. However, overall there is limited variance across the four (see Figures 29a and 29b).

**Figure 29a:** Charity **Index score** by region compared to the UK average of 42, 2016

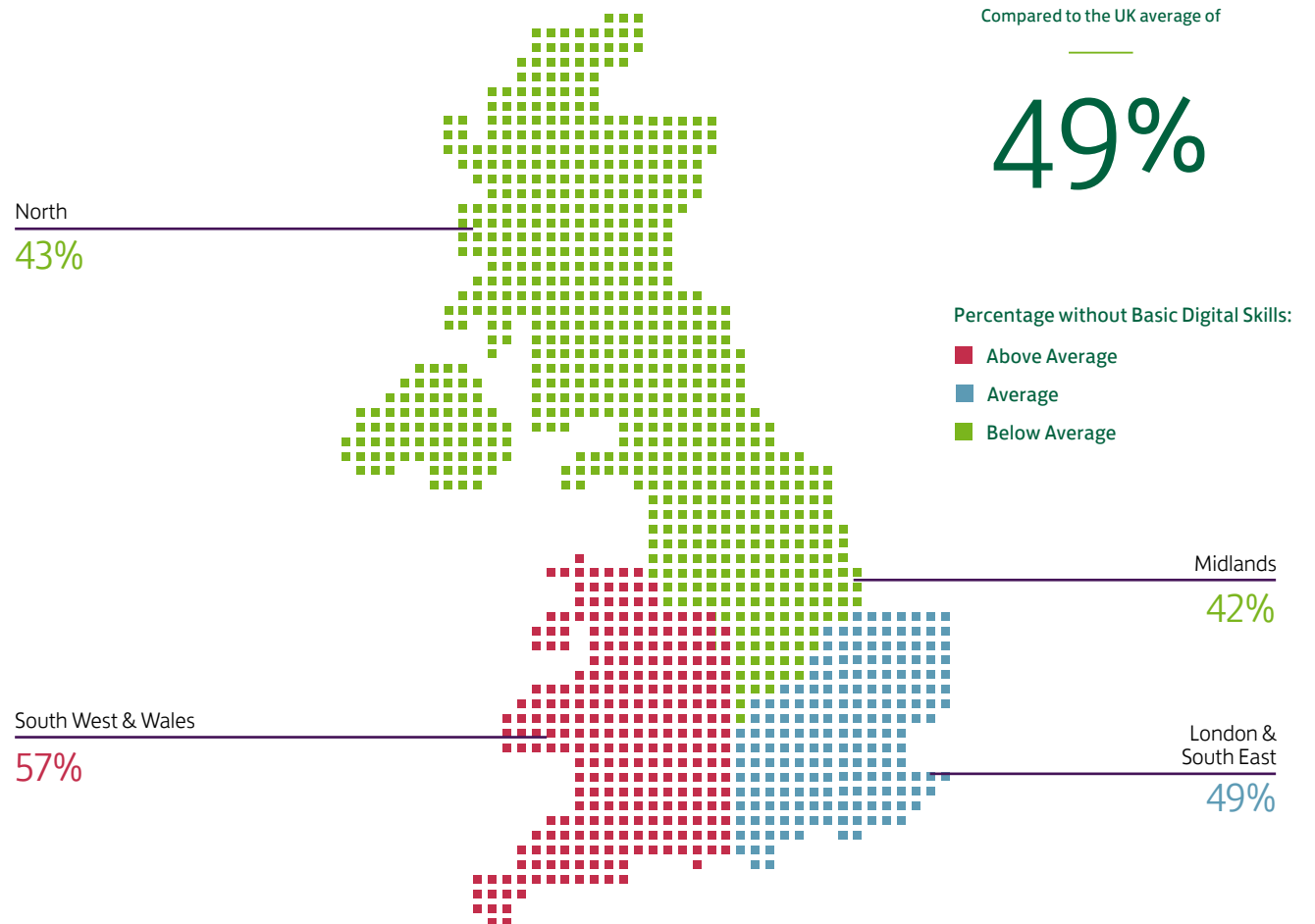


**Figure 29b:** Change in **Index score** by region, 2016



There is slightly more differentiation between Basic Digital Skills levels. As shown in Figure 30, 57% of charities in the South West & Wales do not have Basic Digital Skills, compared to 42% in the Midlands, where the highest level of Basic Digital Skills can be found. The North is just behind with 43% missing Basic Digital Skills, followed by London & South East at 49%.

**Figure 30:** Average percentage of charities without **Basic Digital Skills** by region, 2016



## INDEX SCORE AND BASIC DIGITAL SKILLS

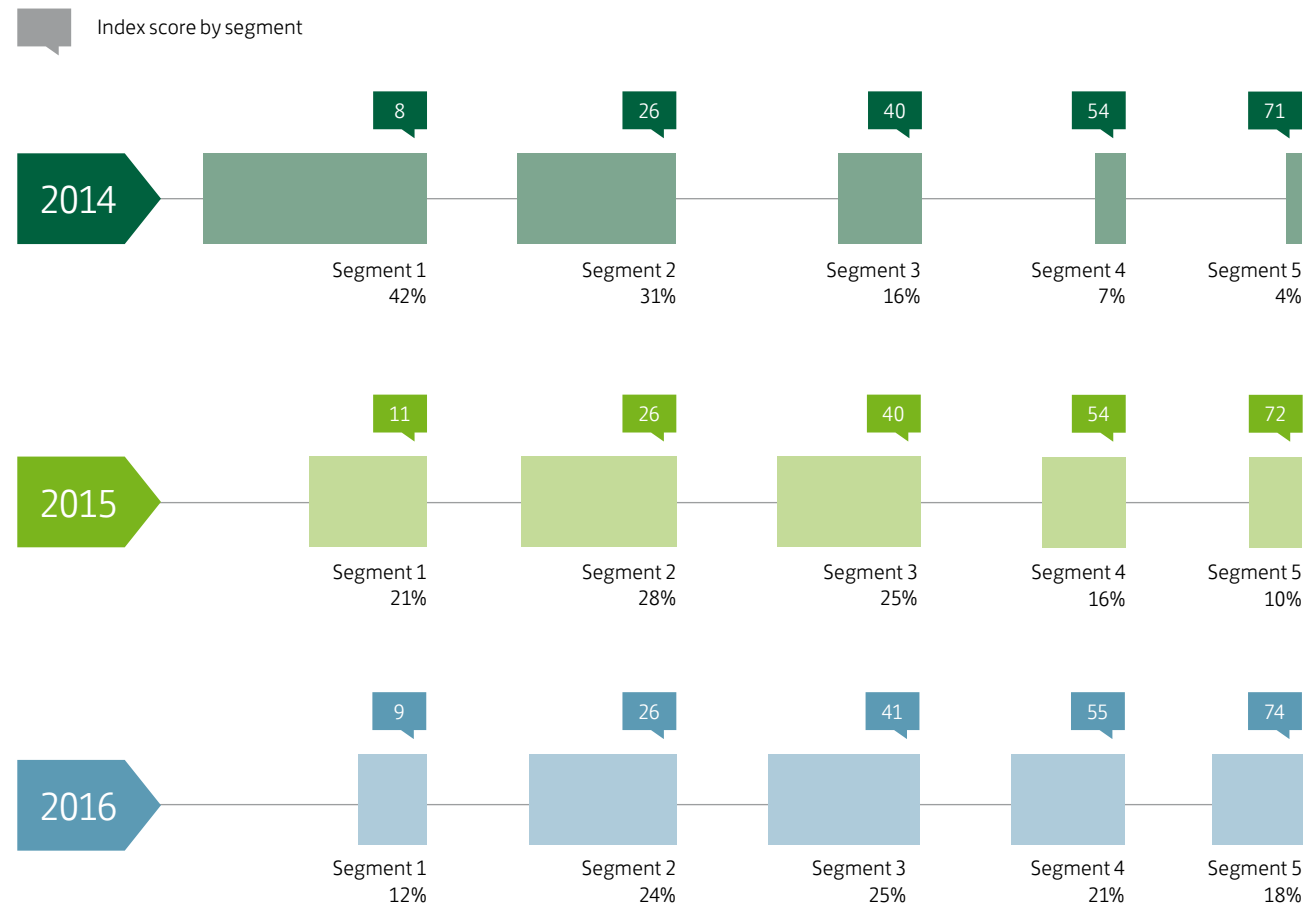
### Index Score

There has been encouraging growth in digital maturity for charities in the past 12 months. The charity Index score has increased by six points, from 36 in 2015 to 42 in 2016, see Figure 1a, p5. (For segmentation and Index score definitions, see pages 9 and 10).

Charities' average Index score across the five segments between 2014 and 2016 reveals a gradual upward shift in Segment 5 (Figure 31). This is a similar pattern to that seen with small businesses, and again suggests that not only is the number of charities occupying this space growing, but also that they are increasingly sophisticated in their digital activities.

All other segments are relatively flat with the exception of Segment 1, where maturity is dropping. This suggests that as the population of this bottom segment decreases, only the very least advanced remain in it.

**Figure 31:** Charities' average **Index score** by segment, (percentages denote size of segment, and year on year change), 2014 – 2016

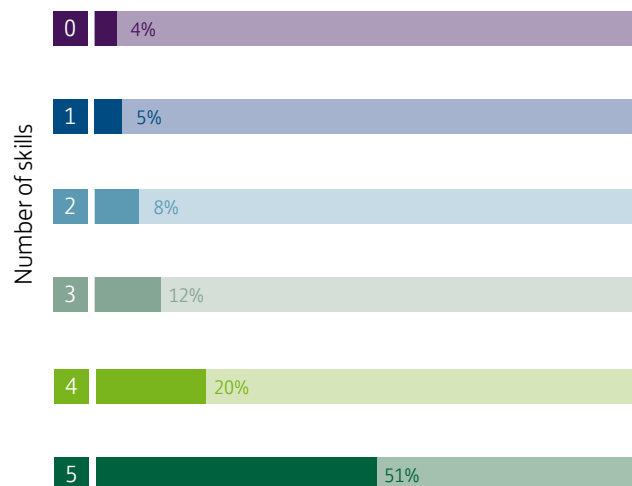


## Basic Digital Skills

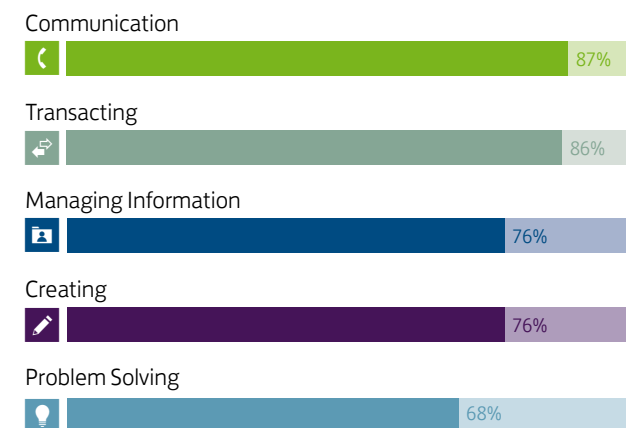
102,000 charities (51%) have Basic Digital Skills. 40,000 (20%) have four out of the five skills, with 8,000 (4%) having none of them. 98,000 charities (49%) do not have Basic Digital Skills, when using the Doteveryone framework (Figure 32a). For more information on the Basic Digital Skills definition, see page 10.

87% of charities have communication skills, followed by 86% with transacting skills. 76% of charities state they have creating and managing information skills. For example, 44% have created social media communities to engage with their customers/donors, up from 31% in 2015. Problem solving skills are the most challenging for charities, with only 68% having this skill (Figure 32b).

**Figure 32a:** Charities' reported number of **Basic Digital Skills**, 2016



**Figure 32b:** Charities' reported digital skills, 2016



It is great to see that whilst there is still an opportunity to do more, with just over half of charities having all five Basic Digital Skills, there is a further 20% which have four skills – a smaller gap than small businesses.

**Rachel Neaman, Director, Doteveryone**



44% of charities have created social media communities to engage with their customers or donors, up from 31% in 2015



## CASE STUDY

### ME NORTH EAST

ME North East is a busy regional charity supporting ME sufferers and carers. Specialising in helping members directly, they did not have the opportunity to prioritise the development of their social media content. Their existing Facebook page was often not used and wasn't very engaging.

After receiving training funded through the Lloyds Bank Foundation Enhance programme, the charity's following increased by 50% to over 1,000 and their Facebook page became a main communication channel for their members.

Jennifer Elliott, Chief Executive, said "It was a whole new world to me, yet in a short space of time we're already reaping the benefits. Our Facebook feed now covers many streams of work; from latest research information at home and abroad, details of local group meetings and workshops, members' personal stories, and our fundraising events. Our posts now regularly reach more than 3,000 people.

It is saving us money. We produced a newsletter which was printed and posted out to more than 1,800 addresses. Now we are focussing on social media, building on our Facebook popularity. The best thing is that unlike the printed newsletter, Facebook is not just one way. We can respond to enquiries and actually talk to people about our posts, at a time and pace to suit individual need, and our audience really needs that."

50%



increase in  
Facebook followers





Skilling businesses outside of London has been a key component of our Digital Garage programme, so it's great to see the promise of the regions reflected in the pace of their development. Overall we've seen a nine point increase in digital maturity for small businesses and this shows a real appetite for digital skills amongst UK small businesses. But as the report reminds us, there is still lots more for us - businesses, Government and third sector organisations - to do to ensure all businesses can reach their full digital potential and continue to grow.

**Alice Mansergh, Director of Google Marketing Solutions for UK and Ireland**



It is very encouraging to see that charities are increasing their digital maturity and feel that they are benefiting from the use of technology. However, with one in five charities citing a lack of skills as a barrier there is a continuing need to support people in charities to develop their confidence and knowledge.

**Megan Griffith Gray, Head of Planning, Digital and Communications, NCVO**



Increasing numbers of entrepreneurs are recognising how important it is to develop their digital skills and invest in an online presence for their business. We are particularly keen to support sole traders who haven't yet gone digital to take advantage of the benefits of being online as it can provide a significant boost to business. It may seem daunting to set up a website and start trading online but a small investment in digital skills can generate a big increase in sales. Being active on social media is a good place to start and can help even the smallest of businesses reach and retain customers.

**Jo Harris, Managing Director, Retail Business Banking, Lloyds Banking Group**



**LLOYDS  
BANKING  
GROUP**





At Lloyds Bank, we focus on supporting our clients to grow their businesses, and make the most of new opportunities. Trading overseas represents one of these opportunities for small businesses, and effective digital engagement can be the vehicle for achieving it. Our research indicates one in five small businesses already use digital to support their overseas trade activities. Better use of digital not only opens up new markets, suppliers and customers, but also enables small businesses to access a host of information which can help support them in taking this next step.

**Gareth Oakley, Managing Director, SME Banking, Lloyds Banking Group**



## LLOYDS BANKING GROUP



What is increasingly clear is that more digitally engaged businesses are more resilient, more positive and have more opportunities to export. It is fantastic that there has been good progress in bringing small businesses into digital – and there is a lot more work to do. As a sector we need to keep working to articulate the benefits of digital to small businesses and ensure that no small business gets left behind.

**Michelle Ovens MBE, Director, Do It Digital**



Digital skills are crucial for everyone in today's society, whether for their personal life or to make their businesses and charities more effective, as this report demonstrates. It's important to remember that the people running or working in these organisations are just that – people – and in order to support them it's vital we can help them see how relevant digital is for them.

Through our work with partners including Lloyds Banking Group, Lloyds Bank Foundations and Google, and through the significant reach of the UK Online Centres' network, we've been able to support thousands of businesses and charities - in particular sole traders and very small charities - to gain the skills they need to do things that matter to them, and to see significant impacts.

As this report shows there is still more to do, and we can only achieve this by working in partnership.

**Helen Milner, Chief Executive, Tinder Foundation**



## Find out more

 Go to [lloydsbank.com/businessdigitalindex](https://lloydsbank.com/businessdigitalindex) for the full appendices

 #BizIndex16

Please contact us if you would like this information in an alternative format such as Braille, large print or audio.

If you have a hearing or speech impairment you can use Text Relay (previously Typetalk).

### Important information

Great care has been taken to ensure that the information used here cannot be in any way traced to a specific individual. This report has used aggregated data to highlight the trends and insights that will help small businesses, charities and UK Government to understand more about our nation's digital inclusion landscape.

While all reasonable care has been taken to ensure that the information provided is correct, no liability is accepted by Lloyds Bank for any loss or damage caused to any person relying on any statement or omission. This is for information only and should not be relied upon as offering advice for any set of circumstances. Specific advice should always be sought in each instance.

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