

Statistical bulletin

Internet users in the UK: 2017

How internet use is correlated to various socio-demographic characteristics, such as age, sex, disability and geographical location. The annual estimates are based Quarter 1 of each survey year.



Contact:
Cecil Prescott
esociety@ons.gsi.gov.uk
+44 (0)1633 456767

Release date:
19 May 2017

Next release:
22 May 2018

Table of contents

1. [Main points](#)
2. [Things you need to know about this release](#)
3. [Recent internet use for those aged 65 and over is catching up with younger age groups](#)
4. [Men are more likely to use the internet than women](#)
5. [Adults who have never used or no longer use the internet](#)
6. [Internet use by disabled adults](#)
7. [Regional internet use](#)
8. [Quality and methodology](#)

1 . Main points

- In Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) 2017, 89% of adults in the UK had recently used the internet (in the last 3 months), up from 88% in 2016; while 9% had never used the internet, down from 10% in 2016.
- Virtually all adults aged 16 to 34 years were recent internet users (99%), in contrast with 41% of adults aged 75 years and over.
- 90% of men and 88% of women were recent internet users, up from 89% and 86% in 2016.
- Recent internet use among women aged 75 and over had almost trebled from 2011.
- 22% of disabled adults had never used the internet in 2017, down 25% in 2016.
- Northern Ireland is catching up with the other UK regions in recent internet use, reaching 84% in 2017, however, it remained the region with the lowest recent use.

2 . Things you need to know about this release

In this release each year represents the period Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar). The estimates included in the release are from the survey period January to March in each year equivalent to estimates shown for Quarter 1 in the 2017 release.

The estimates are derived from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and are not seasonally adjusted.

The detailed regional estimates are based on smaller sample sizes than the higher level regional estimates and are therefore subject to a greater degree of sampling variability, so should be treated with caution. In addition, in the more detailed regional estimates, the categories of "last used the internet more than 3 months ago" and "never used" have been combined due to the small number of responses at this level of geography.

Comparisons made between estimates in this release and the annual Internet access – households and individuals publication should be undertaken with caution. The [Internet Access – Households and Individuals 2016](#) statistical bulletin provides more information on the range of activities carried out on the internet but the estimates are derived from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey, which has a much smaller sample size than the LFS from which Internet users is derived.

Estimates of adults with a disability, as defined by the Equality Act, are presented from 2014. The term "disabled" is used to refer to those who self-assess that they have a disability in line with the Equality Act. These should not be compared directly with the estimates for 2011 to 2013, which are defined by the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

3 . Recent internet use for those aged 65 and over is catching up with younger age groups

In 2017, almost all adults aged 16 to 24 and 25 to 34 years (99%) were recent internet users.

Since the survey began in 2011, adults aged 75 years and over have consistently been the lowest users of the internet. In 2011, of adults aged 75 and over, 20% were recent internet users. However, recent internet use in the 65 to 74 age group has increased from 52% in 2011 to 78% in 2017, closing the gap on younger age groups.

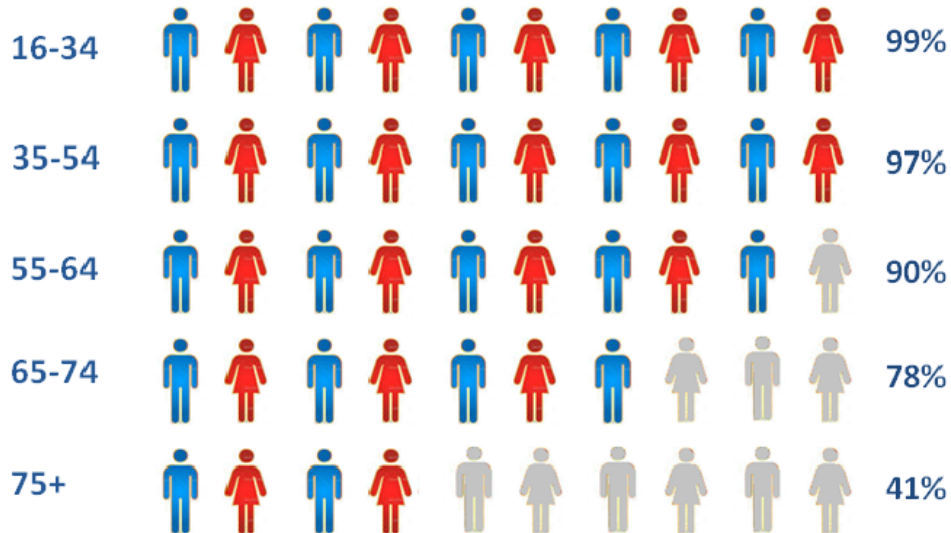
Recent internet use by retired adults has increased by almost 22 percentage points since 2011 to 61% in 2017. Recent internet use by adults who were economically inactive, increased by 16 percentage points over this period to 86%.

Figure 1: Recent internet users by age group, UK, 2017



Almost 9 in 10 adults in the UK have recently used the internet (89%)

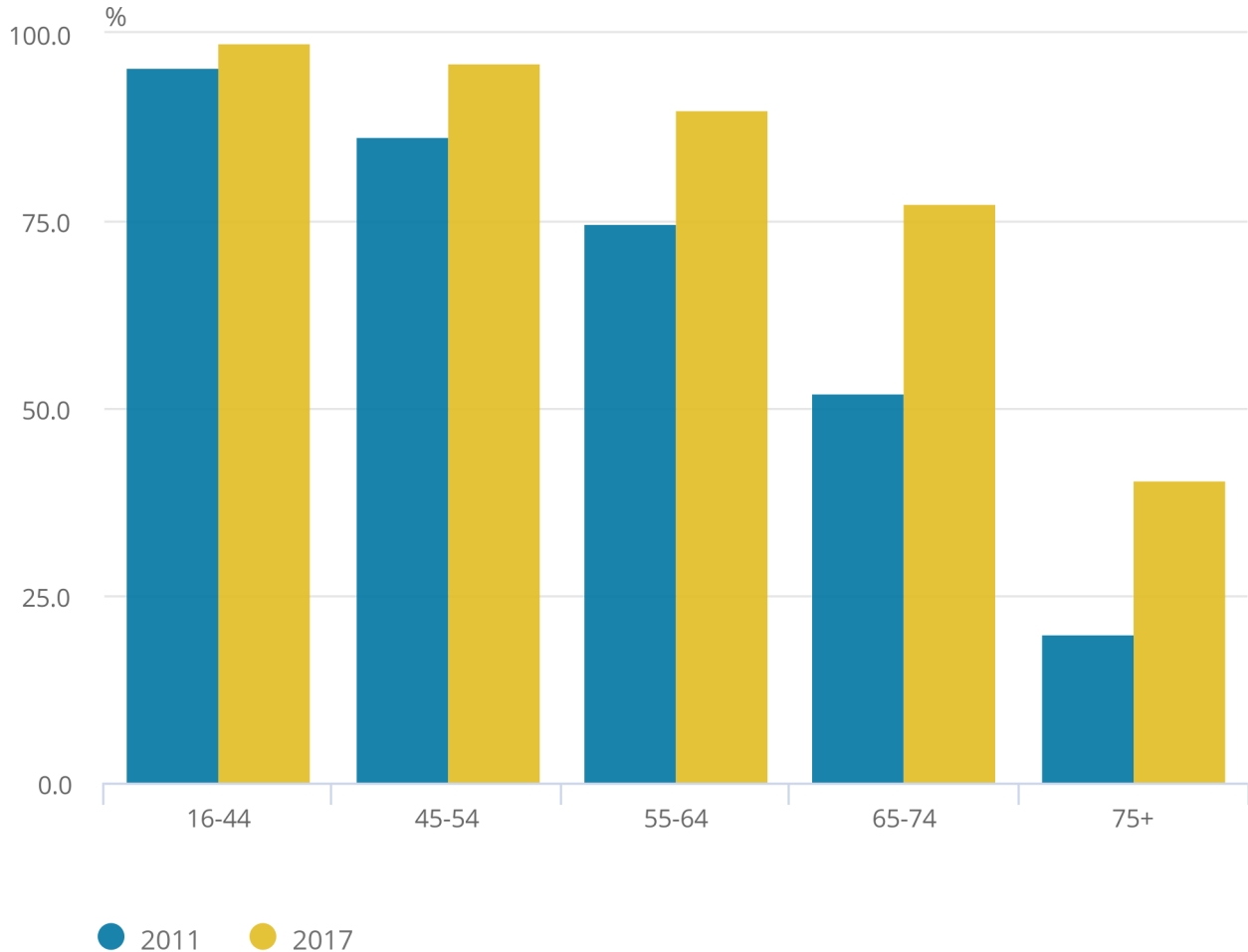
Almost all adults aged 16 – 54 years have recently used the internet ...



... but just 4 in 10 adults aged 75+ years have used the internet in the last 3 months

Figure 2: Recent internet use in 2011 and 2017 by age group, UK

Figure 2: Recent internet use in 2011 and 2017 by age group, UK



Source: Office for National Statistics

Source: Office for National Statistics

4 . Men are more likely to use the internet than women

The proportion of men who had recently used the internet was 90% in 2017 compared with women at 88%.

The difference in recent internet use between men and women was larger in the oldest age groups. Recent internet use by men aged 65 to 74 years was 79% and by men aged 75 years and over was 47%. This compares with recent internet use by women in these age groups at 76% and 35% respectively.

The gap between men and women who had recently used the internet has been closing in all age groups since 2011, with the percentage rising to 90% for men and 88% for women in 2017. This compared with 82% for men and 77% for women in 2011.

There is still a higher proportion of women who had never used the internet at 10.5% compared with men at 7.8%.

The largest increase in the number of recent internet users was in women aged 75 years and over, which trebled from 0.3 million in 2011 to just over 1 million in 2017.

Figure 3: Recent internet use in 2011 and 2017 by age group and sex, UK

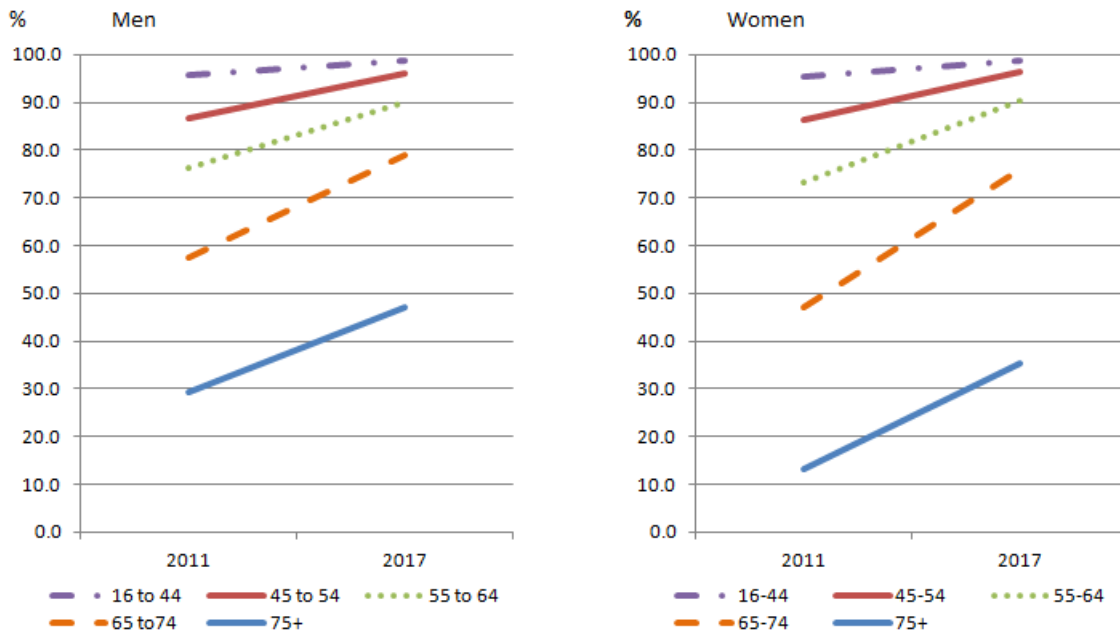
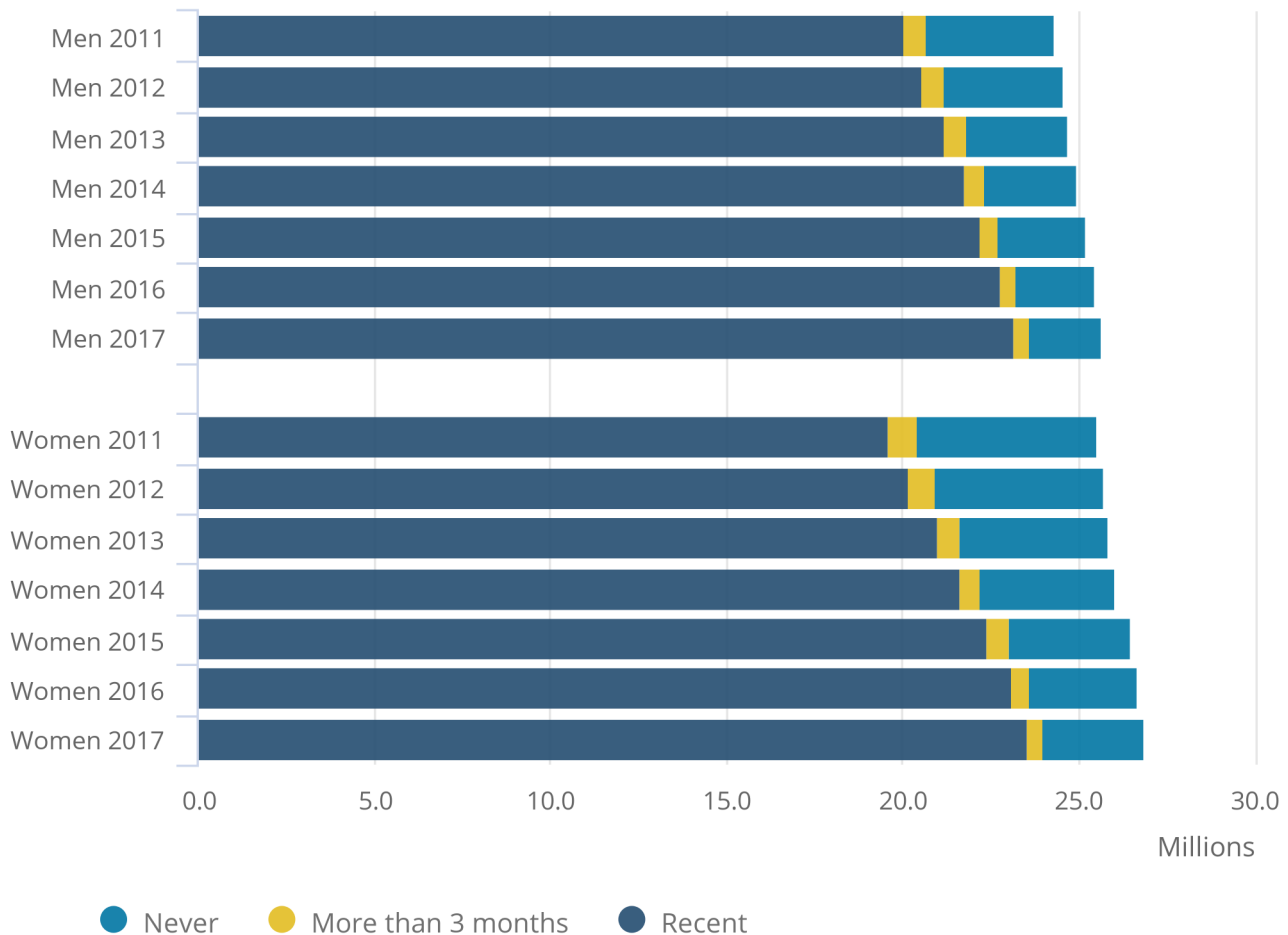


Figure 4: Internet use and non-use by sex, 2011 to 2017, UK

Figure 4: Internet use and non-use by sex, 2011 to 2017, UK



Source: Office for National Statistics

Source: Office for National Statistics

5 . Adults who have never used or no longer use the internet

In 2017, almost 1 in 10 adults had never used the internet.

Of the 4.8 million adults who had never used the internet in 2017, just over half (2.6 million) were aged 75 years and over. This age group made up 9.6% of the population aged 16 years and over.

Adults aged 75 years and over had the highest rate of lapsed internet users at 7%, up from 5% in 2016. This suggests that, although more adults aged 75 years and over started using the internet, they are not necessarily continuing to use it.

Of the 0.9 million adults who had last used the internet over 3 months ago, 0.5 million were disabled.

6 . Internet use by disabled adults

In 2017, of disabled adults aged 16 to 24 years, 97.1% were recent internet users, compared with 99.5% who were not disabled. Of disabled adults aged 75 years and over, 34% were recent internet users, compared with 50% who were not disabled.

Since 2016, the number of disabled adults who had used the internet in the last 3 months increased by 5% to 9 million in 2017.

Across all age groups, the proportion of adults who were recent internet users was lower for those that were disabled, compared with those that were not.

7 . Regional internet use

London remained the region with the highest proportion of recent internet users in 2017 (93%) compared with other regions of the UK.

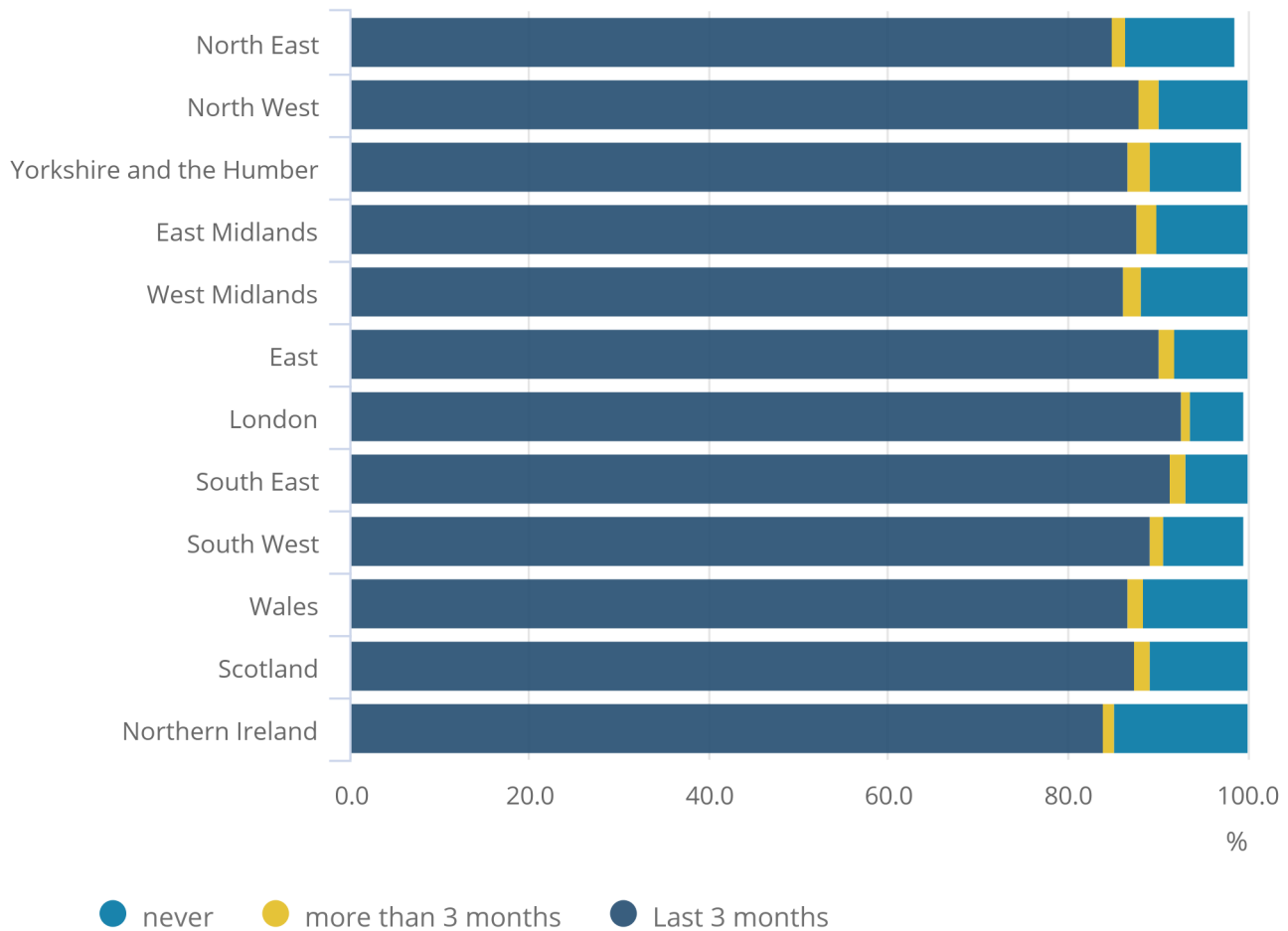
Northern Ireland had the largest increase in recent use since 2011, a rise of 15 percentage points, although this region still had the lowest proportion of recent internet users (84%).

In both Scotland and Wales, 87% of adults were recent users.

In 2017, the region with the highest proportion of adults who had last used the internet more than 3 months ago, or who had never used it, was Northern Ireland (16%).

Figure 5: Internet use and non-use by region, 2017, UK

Figure 5: Internet use and non-use by region, 2017, UK



Source: Office for National Statistics

Source: Office for National Statistics

8 . Quality and methodology

The [Labour Force Survey Quality and Methodology Information](#) contains important information on:

- the sample used for this release
- how the output was created
- the quality of the output including the accuracy of the data

