



Front Door: The effects of access route on social care destination

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Summary

People with care needs often find it challenging to request and access social care support. This difficulty is partly due to the lack of accessible information and the responsibilities associated with application, e.g., paperwork and waiting time. In response, local governments have provided easy read information and self-assessment tools on their websites. These efforts aim to make access to services easier for people, reduce their unmet needs, and improve their well-being.

The research team investigated the prevalence of these digital channels in England and their associations with the types of social care support that is offered (i.e., ongoing low-level support, short-term care, and long-term care).

They found that only 20% of local authorities provided online, digital easy read information on their websites, and about 25% offered online self-assessment tools. Local authorities with easy read information had a higher rate of utilising ongoing low-level support (e.g., telecare, community alarm, and minicom line) than those without such a front door arrangement.

The findings highlight how online portals with built-in, easy to read and self-assessment can make a difference to people accessing local authority services. These insights could inform policymakers interested in developing digital channels for service access. Local authorities could introduce these digital channels to supplement traditional support methods, allowing people to choose the approach that best suits their needs and preferences.



Dissemination

1. Disseminating the research to Kent County Council (23 November 2023).
2. ARC KSS Winter Symposium (31 January 2024): presenting research to academics and stakeholders.
3. Presenting research to academics: China Health Policy and Management Society Annual Conference (6 July 2024).

Publications

[Association Between Digital Front Doors and Social Care Use for Community-Dwelling Adults in England: Cross-Sectional Study, *Journal of Medical Internet Research* \(January 2025\).](#)

