

Ageing in digital societies: enablers and barriers to older persons exercising their social rights

Malta

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1. Legal and policy framework

1.1 National legislation on digital public administration

Malta does not have an act of primary legislation which directly regulates digital public administration, nor does national legislation on public services contain provisions mentioning equal access for everyone or groups with special needs, such as older persons or persons with disabilities.¹

However, Subsidiary Legislation 418.03 Accessibility of the Websites and Mobile Applications of Public Sector Bodies Regulations contains some relevant provisions.² This act of subsidiary legislation transposes Directive (EU) 2016/2102 on the accessibility of the websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies, and falls under Chapter 418 of the Laws of Malta, the Malta Communications Authority Act.³

The purpose of the Regulations is to set down accessibility requirements of websites and applications of public sector bodies, “enabling those websites and mobile applications to be more accessible to users, in particular to persons with disabilities.”⁴ Four principles underpin the accessibility rules: perceivability, operability, understandability, and robustness.⁵ Perceivable websites and apps present information in a way users can understand.⁶ Operational elements include navigational and interactive elements that respond correctly to user input.⁷ The requirement for a service to be understandable means both the way an individual controls the website and the information provided, must be comprehensible.⁸ Finally, the content presented must be robust enough to be interpreted accurately by a wide range of devices, including assistive technologies.⁹ Public sector bodies may deviate from

¹ Information request from servizz.gov (2022), received 05 May 2022.

² Malta, [Accessibility of the Website and Mobile Application of Public Sector Bodies Regulations](#) (*Regolamenti dwar l-Aċċessibbiltà tas-Siti Elettronici u tal-Applikazzjonijiet Mobbli tal-Korpi tas-Settur Pubbliku*), 07 May 2019.

³ Malta, [Accessibility of the Website and Mobile Application of Public Sector Bodies Regulations](#) (*Regolamenti dwar l-Aċċessibbiltà tas-Siti Elettronici u tal-Applikazzjonijiet Mobbli tal-Korpi tas-Settur Pubbliku*), 07 May 2019, Art. 1(2), Art 2; Malta, [Malta Communications Authority Act](#) (*Att għat-Twaqqif ta Awtorità ta' Malta dwar il-Komunikazzjoni*), 01 August 2000.

⁴ Malta, [Accessibility of the Website and Mobile Application of Public Sector Bodies Regulations](#) (*Regolamenti dwar l-Aċċessibbiltà tas-Siti Elettronici u tal-Applikazzjonijiet Mobbli tal-Korpi tas-Settur Pubbliku*), 07 May 2019, Art. 3(1).

⁵ Malta, [Accessibility of the Website and Mobile Application of Public Sector Bodies Regulations](#) (*Regolamenti dwar l-Aċċessibbiltà tas-Siti Elettronici u tal-Applikazzjonijiet Mobbli tal-Korpi tas-Settur Pubbliku*), 07 May 2019, Art. 4.

⁶ Malta, [Accessibility of the Website and Mobile Application of Public Sector Bodies Regulations](#) (*Regolamenti dwar l-Aċċessibbiltà tas-Siti Elettronici u tal-Applikazzjonijiet Mobbli tal-Korpi tas-Settur Pubbliku*), 07 May 2019, Art. 4(a).

⁷ Malta, [Accessibility of the Website and Mobile Application of Public Sector Bodies Regulations](#) (*Regolamenti dwar l-Aċċessibbiltà tas-Siti Elettronici u tal-Applikazzjonijiet Mobbli tal-Korpi tas-Settur Pubbliku*), 07 May 2019, Art. 4(b).

⁸ Malta, [Accessibility of the Website and Mobile Application of Public Sector Bodies Regulations](#) (*Regolamenti dwar l-Aċċessibbiltà tas-Siti Elettronici u tal-Applikazzjonijiet Mobbli tal-Korpi tas-Settur Pubbliku*), 07 May 2019, Art. 4(c).

⁹ Malta, [Accessibility of the Website and Mobile Application of Public Sector Bodies Regulations](#) (*Regolamenti dwar l-Aċċessibbiltà tas-Siti Elettronici u tal-Applikazzjonijiet Mobbli tal-Korpi tas-Settur Pubbliku*), 07 May 2019, Art. 4(d).

these standards where they would impose a disproportionate burden, such as financial or organisational burdens.¹⁰

The Regulations only refer to users with disabilities. Older persons are not mentioned.

1.2 National policy, strategy or action plan on the digitalisation of public services or digital inclusion

The digitalisation of public services in Malta is addressed by three separate policies: The Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Strategy, the Public Service Strategy, and the Digital Transformation of the Public Administration Strategy.

Malta has not yet released its Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Strategy for 2021-2027.¹¹ The most recent ICT strategy is the National Digital Strategy 2014-2020, titled “Digital Malta”.¹² Digital Malta sets out a series of reforms intended to increase the quality of life of all Maltese citizens, by encouraging the uptake of technology across many sectors.¹³ These reforms are categorised in three thematic areas: “digital government”, “digital citizen”, and “digital business”.¹⁴ The first two are relevant to this analysis.

The “digital government” area of the plan reflects Malta’s intention to increase citizen use of public services by making them easier to use and increasing the number of channels through which to access them.¹⁵ This area of the strategy includes plans for the creation of a “one-stop shop” service by which all public services could be accessed, digitally and in in-person community hubs.¹⁶ This service is now fully functional, operating under the name of “servizz.gov”.¹⁷ Since 2015, 23 servizz.gov community hubs have opened, and in 2016 the servizz.gov.mt website was launched as Malta’s national hub for digitalised public services.¹⁸ The implementation of Malta’s eHealth service “myHealth” was also executed under the provisions of the “digital government” thematic area.¹⁹ The “digital government” section does not address older persons or other groups at risk of digital exclusion.

The goal of “digital citizen” is to “improve the quality of life of all citizens.”²⁰ Goal 4.1 of this thematic area states that “Every Maltese, irrespective of age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, education,

¹⁰ Malta, [Communications Authority Act](#) (*Att għat-Twaqqif ta' Awtorità ta' Malta dwar il-Komunikazzjoni*), 01 August 2000, Art. 5(1).

¹¹ Information request from Ministry of the Economy, European Funds and Lands (2022), received 04 May 2022.

¹² Malta, Office of the Prime Minister (2014), ‘[National Digital Strategy 2014-2020: Digital Malta](#)’, Valletta, 24 March 2014.

¹³ Malta, Office of the Prime Minister (2014), ‘[National Digital Strategy 2014-2020: Digital Malta](#)’, Valletta, 24 March 2014, p. 8.

¹⁴ Malta, Office of the Prime Minister (2014), ‘[National Digital Strategy 2014-2020: Digital Malta](#)’, Valletta, 24 March 2014, p. 8.

¹⁵ Malta, Office of the Prime Minister (2014), ‘[National Digital Strategy 2014-2020: Digital Malta](#)’, Valletta, 24 March 2014, p. 38.

¹⁶ Malta, Office of the Prime Minister (2014), ‘[National Digital Strategy 2014-2020: Digital Malta](#)’, Valletta, 24 March 2014, p. 42.

¹⁷ Malta, [Servizz.gov Agency \(Establishment as an Agency Order\)](#) (*Ordni li Jwaqqaf l-Aġenzija Servizz.gov*), 20 May 2016.

¹⁸ Public Service of Malta (2020), [About Us](#); Public Service of Malta (2016), ‘[Another Two Servizz.Gov Hubs Inaugurated](#)’, 02 December 2016.

¹⁹ Malta, Office of the Prime Minister (2014), ‘[National Digital Strategy 2014-2020: Digital Malta](#)’, Valletta, 24 March 2014, p. 45.

²⁰ Malta, Office of the Prime Minister (2014), ‘[National Digital Strategy 2014-2020: Digital Malta](#)’, Valletta, 24 March 2014, p. 24.

*economic means and race should grow as a digital citizen with rights, responsibilities and abilities to access and use ICT.*²¹ To this end, the “digital citizen” area contains several initiatives meant to address the diverse needs of different demographic groups, including children, persons with disabilities, vulnerable persons, members of minority groups, and older persons.²² These include community education and awareness programs tailored for vulnerable groups and the integration of digital awareness into the national curriculum.²³ In addition, two initiatives specifically target older persons and “the vulnerable”: the creation of ICT access and training centres within communities; and the adoption of internet accessibility standards, as well as the promotion and facilitation of assistive technologies.²⁴ In order to widen access, “digital citizen” also plans for the creation of public Wi-Fi networks in public buildings and public outdoor spaces.²⁵

The Strategic Plan for Digital Transformation of the Public Administration 2019-2021, dubbed “Mapping Tomorrow”, represents Malta’s desire to build on its previous successes in digitalisation.²⁶ Mapping Tomorrow is guided by the principles of client centricity—that digitalised services should meet the needs of their users; and accessibility—that these services must “meet the requirements of persons with differing needs.”²⁷ However, no specific groups are mentioned or considered, and the plan prioritises “digital by default” without acknowledging the risks of digital exclusion faced by certain demographic groups, such as older persons and persons with low incomes.²⁸

The 5-Year Strategy for the Public Service “Achieving a Service of Excellence” sets out the current priorities and goals for improving the Maltese Public Service, based on the principles of quality, accountability, and sustainability.²⁹ Quality Outcome 4 “Designing and offering services which are accessible from anywhere and at any time” has two initiatives relevant to digitalisation of public services and the risk of digital exclusion: Initiative 14 and Initiative 18.³⁰

Initiative 14 “Adopting and promoting inclusive service design standards” accepts that public services “should be accessible by default to all segments of society.”³¹ The past efforts of servizz.gov in support of this principle are acknowledged, namely the improvement of digital services, as well the opening of physical service locations.³² In furtherance of this, Initiative 14 states a commitment to reviewing

²¹ Malta, Office of the Prime Minister (2014), ‘[National Digital Strategy 2014-2020: Digital Malta](#)’, Valletta, 24 March 2014, p. 24.

²² Malta, Office of the Prime Minister (2014), ‘[National Digital Strategy 2014-2020: Digital Malta](#)’, Valletta, 24 March 2014, pp. 28-29.

²³ Malta, Office of the Prime Minister (2014), ‘[National Digital Strategy 2014-2020: Digital Malta](#)’, Valletta, 24 March 2014, p. 28.

²⁴ Malta, Office of the Prime Minister (2014), ‘[National Digital Strategy 2014-2020: Digital Malta](#)’, Valletta, 24 March 2014, p. 28.

²⁵ Malta, Office of the Prime Minister (2014), ‘[National Digital Strategy 2014-2020: Digital Malta](#)’, Valletta, 24 March 2014, p. 29.

²⁶ Malta, Office of the Principal Permanent Secretary (2019), ‘[Mapping Tomorrow: A Strategic Plan for the Digital Transformation of the Public Administration](#)’, Valletta, June 2019, p. 9.

²⁷ Malta, Office of the Principal Permanent Secretary (2019), ‘[Mapping Tomorrow: A Strategic Plan for the Digital Transformation of the Public Administration](#)’, Valletta, June 2019, pp. 21-22.

²⁸ Malta, Office of the Principal Permanent Secretary (2019), ‘[Mapping Tomorrow: A Strategic Plan for the Digital Transformation of the Public Administration](#)’, Valletta, June 2019, p. 21.

²⁹ Malta, Office of the Principal Permanent Secretary (2021), ‘[Achieving a Service of Excellence: a 5-year strategy for the public service](#)’, Valletta, November 2021.

³⁰ Malta, Office of the Principal Permanent Secretary (2021), ‘[Achieving a Service of Excellence: a 5-year strategy for the public service](#)’, Valletta, November 2021, pp. 52-53.

³¹ Malta, Office of the Principal Permanent Secretary (2021), ‘[Achieving a Service of Excellence: a 5-year strategy for the public service](#)’, Valletta, November 2021, p. 52.

³² Malta, Office of the Principal Permanent Secretary (2021), ‘[Achieving a Service of Excellence: a 5-year strategy for the public service](#)’, Valletta, November 2021, p. 52.

all current services and to reviewing future ones during the planning stage, in order to make sure that all aspects of accessibility are given proper consideration.³³

Initiative 18 “Fostering a digitally enabled and confident nation” recognises that despite the rapidly increasing rate of the global digital transition, not all of the Public Service’s “clients” are comfortable or capable of using these technologies.³⁴ In response, Initiative 18 announces a partnership between servizz.gov and the eSkills Malta Foundation to help and guide “clients” who lack skills needed to access digital public services.³⁵

While both of the two initiatives from “Achieving a Service of Excellence” acknowledge that digital services should be equally accessible to all, neither recognises or targets specific demographic groups.³⁶

1.3 National recovery and resilience plans covering the digitalisation of public services

Malta’s Recovery and Resilience Plan (RRP) briefly addresses the digitalisation of public services in Component 3 titled “Fostering a digital, smart and resilient economy”.³⁷ The objective of Component 3 is to prioritise digitalisation efforts by enacting stronger, more suitable legislation, “*facilitating the further digitalisation of services in public administration and regulatory bodies.*”³⁸ Component 3 consists of two reforms supported by four areas of targeted investments. The first of these reforms “Deepening the digital transformation through policy reform, with a focus on reducing the digital divide and promoting digital skills” is particularly relevant. Foreseen investments include allocations to enhance digitalisation and modernisation of the public administration. Also mentioned are new public and intra-facing services through the implementation of solutions to improve the front-end customer experience, data sharing and reuse, virtual desktops, property transfer processes, as well as a National Single Window for customs purposes. In line with the European Commission’s seven recommended “flagship areas” for RRP investments, the overall aim is that “*this component will contribute towards the European Flagship ‘Modernise’ by promoting modernised and secure digital services that are accessible to all.*”³⁹ However, no details are provided on how this is to be achieved, nor are any groups at risk of digital exclusion acknowledged.

While the main document fails to mention specific groups at risk of digital exclusion, the Annex to the RRP does refer to the low income demographic.⁴⁰ It describes “*the launch of a programme aimed to support families with low income to be connected and have access to computers as well as related*

³³ Malta, Office of the Principal Permanent Secretary (2021), ‘[Achieving a Service of Excellence: a 5-year strategy for the public service](#)’, Valletta, November 2021, p. 52.

³⁴ Malta, Office of the Principal Permanent Secretary (2021), ‘[Achieving a Service of Excellence: a 5-year strategy for the public service](#)’, Valletta, November 2021, p. 53.

³⁵ Malta, Office of the Principal Permanent Secretary (2021), ‘[Achieving a Service of Excellence: a 5-year strategy for the public service](#)’, Valletta, November 2021, p. 53.

³⁶ Malta, Office of the Principal Permanent Secretary (2021), ‘[Achieving a Service of Excellence: a 5-year strategy for the public service](#)’, Valletta, November 2021, pp. 52-53.

³⁷ Malta, Office of the Prime Minister (2021), ‘[Malta’s Recovery and Resilience Plan](#)’, Valletta, February 2021, p. 8.

³⁸ Malta, Office of the Prime Minister (2021), ‘[Malta’s Recovery and Resilience Plan](#)’, Valletta, February 2021, p. 8.

³⁹ Malta, Office of the Prime Minister (2021), ‘[Malta’s Recovery and Resilience Plan](#)’, Valletta, February 2021, p. 8; European Commission (2020), ‘[Next Generation EU: Commission presents next steps for €672.5 billion Recovery and Resilience Facility in 2021 Annual Sustainability Growth Strategy](#)’, Press release, 17 September 2021.

⁴⁰ European Commission (2021), [Annex to the Proposal for a Council Implementing Decision on the approval of the assessment of the recovery and resilience plan for Malta](#), 16 September 2021, pp. 29-30.

knowledge, thus improving digital literacy, reducing digital divide and improving socioeconomic cohesion".⁴¹ This detailed description of Component 3 acknowledges economic barriers to accessing digitalised services but does not address the issues faced by older people. In fact, in both the main RRP and the explanatory Annex, any age-specific measures concerning digital literacy relate to young people.⁴²

In its analysis of Malta's RRP, the European Commission noted "*The improvement and increased accessibility of public services thanks to new technologies (Component 3) has the potential to ensure broader access for all, including for those who are more difficult to reach.*"⁴³ Despite the Commission's favourable analysis, Malta's RRP fails to acknowledge or cater to the specific challenges faced by older persons in accessing digitalised public services.

2. Programmes and practices aimed at ensuring equal access to public services in the digital age

No specific programs or practices are in place to ensure equal access to digitalised public services. However, the recently completed "ICT 4 the Elderly" was a project which sought to create a training programme on internet skills for older persons. The skills learned by participants could then be used across a range of websites and services.

ICT 4 was an international Erasmus+-funded partnership between national organisations in Malta, Slovenia, Switzerland, Germany, and a pan-European association based in Belgium.⁴⁴ The Maltese partner was Tech.mt, a public-private partnership between the Government of Malta and the Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry.⁴⁵

ICT 4 the Elderly ran from 01 September 2018 to 30 November 2021.⁴⁶ The aim of the project was to address the concept of "online ageing" and inform older persons between 55 and 75 years old of the many opportunities offered by the internet.⁴⁷ The project comprised three stages.⁴⁸ In the first stage, the partners gathered and studied best practices.⁴⁹ The second stage saw the creation of a training manual and online academy based on the best practices reviewed in the first stage.⁵⁰ Finally, ICT 4 partners produced a project exploitation guide to facilitate the transfer and implementation of the programme to other countries and organisations.⁵¹ The training programme was piloted with five Maltese participants in a "national training session" and three Maltese participants in an

⁴¹ European Commission (2021), [Annex to the Proposal for a Council Implementing Decision on the approval of the assessment of the recovery and resilience plan for Malta](#), Brussels, 16 September 2021, pp. 29-30.

⁴² Malta, Office of the Prime Minister (2021), '[Malta's Recovery and Resilience Plan](#)', February 2021, p. 8; European Commission (2021), [Annex to the Proposal for a Council Implementing Decision on the approval of the assessment of the recovery and resilience plan for Malta](#), Brussels, 16 September 2021.

⁴³ European Commission (2021), Commission Staff Working Document, [Analysis of the recovery and resilience plan of Malta](#), Brussels, 16 September 2021, p. 48.

⁴⁴ Ruseva, G. (All Digital) (2021), [ICT 4 the Elderly Policy Recommendations for stakeholders and policy makers](#), 26 November 2021, p.4.

⁴⁵ Tech.mt, [Home](#).

⁴⁶ Ruseva, G. (All Digital) (2021), [ICT 4 the Elderly Policy Recommendations for stakeholders and policy makers](#), 26 November 2021, p.4.

⁴⁷ ICT 4 the Elderly, [About the Project](#); Ruseva, G. (All Digital) (2021), [ICT 4 the Elderly Policy Recommendations for stakeholders and policy makers](#), 26 November 2021, p.4.

⁴⁸ ICT 4 the Elderly, [About the Project](#).

⁴⁹ ICT 4 the Elderly, [Collection of best practices](#), 24 November 2021.

⁵⁰ ICT 4 the Elderly, [Training manual](#), 24 November 2021; Wiki Books, [ICT 4 the Elderly](#), 23 September 2021.

⁵¹ ICT 4 the Elderly, [Policy Recommendations](#), 04 January 2022.

“international training session” which brought together participants from Germany, Malta, Switzerland, and Slovenia.⁵²

The training manual is divided into six areas of competence: (intentional) digital communication, digital transactions, smart living for wellbeing, digital collaboration, security and privacy, and self-organisation.⁵³ While none of these areas specifically addresses digital public services such as pension services or digital health records, the training programme helps to establish a wide range of internet skills which are also transferable to other websites beyond the ones specifically taught. In addition, the post-pilot “Policy Recommendations for stakeholders and policy makers” note that when implementing training for older persons, it should be tailored to the needs of the group.⁵⁴ This includes asking participants if there are any topics in particular that they would like addressed.

In terms of evaluation, participants in the pilot training sessions were asked to give feedback on their experiences, and this was used to inform the final Policy Recommendations.⁵⁵

3. Research and data focused on equal access to public services in the digital age

There were no complaints made to Maltese oversight bodies in 2021 related to discrimination on the ground of old age in the context of access to public services.⁵⁶

Digital discrimination and the digital divide are an ongoing problem in Malta according to the public consultation draft of Malta’s National Strategic Policy for Active Ageing.⁵⁷ This is attributed to the limited digital competence of Malta’s older population.⁵⁸ During the Covid-19 pandemic, this situation worsened as “*the gap between those with digital skills and an available internet connection, and others lacking such abilities was highly apparent*”.⁵⁹ These statements are supported by data drawn from both European Union and United Nations studies on the subject.

In response to a request by the committee on Employment and Social Affairs of the European Parliament, the Policy Department for Economics, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies conducted a study in 2021 on ageing policies and access to services across different European Union Member States, including Malta.⁶⁰ The study cites Eurostat data collected in 2020 which shows that only 20% of Maltese aged 65-74 use the internet for interacting with public authorities in the previous 12

⁵² Ruseva, G. (All Digital) (2021), [ICT 4 the Elderly Policy Recommendations for stakeholders and policy makers](#), 26 November 2021, p.11.

⁵³ Yinternet.org, MCA, SDC, Simbioza & All Digital (2019), [ICT 4 the Elderly Training Manual](#), Version 1.2, November 2019, pp. 8-9.

⁵⁴ Ruseva, G. (All Digital) (2021), [ICT 4 the Elderly Policy Recommendations for stakeholders and policy makers](#), 26 November 2021, p.12.

⁵⁵ Ruseva, G. (All Digital) (2021), [ICT 4 the Elderly Policy Recommendations for stakeholders and policy makers](#), 26 November 2021, p.11.

⁵⁶ Information request from the Office of the Ombudsman (2022), received 11 May 2022; Information request from the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) (2022), received 09 May 2022; Information request from the Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD) (2022), received 10 May 2022.

⁵⁷ Malta, Ministry for Senior Citizens and Active Ageing (2021), ‘[National Strategic Policy for Active Ageing](#)’ (Consultation Document), Valletta, November 2021, pp. 10-11.

⁵⁸ Malta, Ministry for Senior Citizens and Active Ageing (2021), ‘[National Strategic Policy for Active Ageing](#)’ (Consultation Document), Valletta, November 2021, p. 37.

⁵⁹ Malta, Ministry for Senior Citizens and Active Ageing (2021), ‘[National Strategic Policy for Active Ageing](#)’ (Consultation Document), Valletta, November 2021, p. 37.

⁶⁰ European Parliament (2021), [Ageing Policies: Access to Services in the Different Member States](#), October 2021.

months, compared with an average of 34% across the EU.⁶¹ In contrast, just under 50% of Maltese in this age group reported using the internet in the three months prior to their response, as opposed to an EU average of 61%.⁶² This suggests that for around 30% of Malta's older population, a lack of digital skills might not fully explain a lack of engagement with digitalised public services. However, both values reported for Malta are below the EU average, suggesting that older persons in Malta have a lower level of digital competency than persons of the same age in many other EU countries.

Similar figures are reported by The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Working Group on Ageing in their July 2021 Policy Brief on Ageing, titled "Ageing in the Digital Era".⁶³ The Policy Brief also relies on Eurostat data in its analysis regarding the use of digital technologies by older persons. The data presented therein suggests that Malta's older population does not have the necessary skills to access digitalised public services. For example, it is reported that in 2020 50% of Maltese 65-74 year-olds had never used the internet.⁶⁴ While this number is significantly lower than the 75% reported in 2011, this is likely mostly explained by generational differences, rather than the provision of more or better digital education programs for older persons.⁶⁵ It is also worth noting that in Malta there is a gap between the percentage of men and women aged 65-74 who reported using the internet in the previous three months. Data from 2019 showed that for women in this age group the figure was just under 60%, while for men it was around 65%.⁶⁶ This suggests that older women in Malta are less comfortable using the internet, (and by extension digital public services), than older men.

Both the EU Parliament and UNECE reports show that Malta's older population is affected by the so-called "digital divide", having a lower than average use of internet services, and that women especially, suffer from this disparity.

⁶¹ European Parliament (2021), [Ageing Policies: Access to Services in the Different Member States](#), October 2021, pp. 47-48.

⁶² European Parliament (2021), [Ageing Policies: Access to Services in the Different Member States](#), October 2021, pp. 47-48.

⁶³ United Nations (UN), United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Working Group on Ageing (2021), [Policy Brief on Ageing No. 26](#), July 2021.

⁶⁴ United Nations (UN), United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Working Group on Ageing (2021), [Policy Brief on Ageing No. 26](#), July 2021, p. 5.

⁶⁵ United Nations (UN), United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Working Group on Ageing (2021), [Policy Brief on Ageing No. 26](#), July 2021, p. 5.

⁶⁶ United Nations (UN), United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Working Group on Ageing (2021), [Policy Brief on Ageing No. 26](#), July 2021, p. 8.

State of digitalisation of selected public services

		Selected public services relevant for older persons			
		Access to health records myHealth	Public statutory pensions mySocialSecurity	Social benefits mySocialSecurity	Other (as relevant in your context)
Stage of digitalisation	Not digitalised (Y/N)	N	N	N	
	Information is available online (Y/N)	Y	Y	Y	
	Transactions are possible online (Y/N)	Y	Y	Y	
Recognition of groups at risk of digital exclusion	Service specific regulation recognises barriers to digital inclusion / vulnerable and disadvantaged groups (Y/N).	Y Accessibility Statement	Y Accessibility Statement on Terms of Use Page	Y Accessibility Statement on Terms of Use Page	
	If yes, please list the barriers and groups that are mentioned.	“persons with disabilities” Accessibility of the Websites and Mobile Applications of Public Sector Bodies Regulations , Article 5(1).	“persons with disability” Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act	“persons with disability” Equal Opportunities (Persons with Disability) Act	
Multichannel access options	Telephone service (Y/N)	Y	Y	Y	
	If yes, please describe what kind of personalised services it provides.	Freephone 153 central (servizz.gov service)	Freephone 153 central (servizz.gov service)	Freephone 153 central (servizz.gov service)	

		<p>Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 08:00-16:00;</p> <p>Wednesday: 08:00-19:00</p> <p>Information is provided in both Maltese and English. The call is recorded for quality purposes, and by selecting 2, an automated voice will repeat the instruction in English.</p> <p>There is an option to speak directly with a public employee who will reply to any queries about the myHealth portal and its services.</p>	<p>Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 08:00-16:00;</p> <p>Wednesday: 08:00-19:00</p> <p>Information is provided in both Maltese and English. The call is recorded for quality purposes, and by selecting 2, an automated voice will repeat the instruction in English.</p> <p>Information about public statutory pensions is under the social security section. The person calling receives general instructions from an automated voice and can choose to be assisted by an operator.</p>	<p>Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 08:00-16:00;</p> <p>Wednesday: 08:00-19:00</p> <p>Information is provided in both Maltese and English. The call is recorded for quality purposes, and by selecting 2, an automated voice will repeat the instruction in English.</p> <p>Information about social benefits is under the social security section.</p> <p>The automated voice guides the caller between contributory benefits (choosing 1) and non-contributory benefits (choosing 2)</p> <p>By selecting 4, the client can ask any other questions, and an operator will personally assist them.</p>	
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<p>Physical administrative access points (Y/N).</p> <p>If yes, please specify the level of availability (local, regional, national), the opening days and hours.</p>	<p>Y</p> <p>23 servizz.gov Regional Hubs, each with their own opening times.</p>	<p>Y</p> <p>23 servizz.gov Regional Hubs, each with their own opening times.</p>	<p>Y</p> <p>23 servizz.gov Regional Hubs, each with their own opening times.</p>		
<p>Specific locations that facilitate offline access to the service (Y/N)</p> <p>If yes, indicate the location(s).</p> <p>Please describe what kind of support is provided.</p>	<p>N</p> <p>However physical health records can be accessed in the hospital or offices of the doctor who provided them to myHealth.</p>	<p>Y</p> <p>23 servizz.gov Regional Hubs, each with their own opening times.</p> <p>Services include: “Pensions and elderly care”.</p>	<p>Y</p> <p>23 servizz.gov Regional Hubs, each with their own opening times.</p> <p>Services include: “Pensions and elderly care; Welfare benefits; Social care”.</p>		
<p>Specific locations that facilitate online access to the service (Y/N).</p> <p>If yes, indicate the location(s).</p> <p>Please describe what kind of support is provided.</p>	<p>Y</p> <p>23 servizz.gov Regional Hubs, each with their own opening times.⁶⁷</p> <p>Services include: “E-Id” (the method for logging on</p>	<p>Y</p> <p>23 servizz.gov Regional Hubs, each with their own opening times.</p> <p>Services include: “E-Id” (the method for logging</p>	<p>Y</p> <p>23 servizz.gov Regional Hubs, each with their own opening times.</p> <p>Services include: “E-Id” (the method for logging</p>		

⁶⁷ The servizz.gov Hubs operate as a “one-stop shop” within communities, providing a majority of government services. They eliminate the need for residents to travel to Valletta to visit multiple government agencies or the use of other services, such as post offices, as support locations for such government services. Regional servizz.gov Hubs provide technical and administrative support for the government’s online portals, as well as practical support, such as the distribution of forms and assistance with filing them. All Hubs offer appointments with “servizz.gov experts” for those needing more assistance. More information can be found on [their website](#).

		to servizz.gov services) support.	on to servizz.gov services) support.	on to servizz.gov services) support.	
	Other – please indicate any other access channels to the service.	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Other forms of support for online use	Please indicate any other form of support to facilitate the use of the online service for older persons such as easy-to-read versions, different language versions, etc.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can be accessed in either English or Maltese. 2. “Help” function with FAQs and instruction guides. 3. servizz.gov has a live chat function allowing users to receive real-time support. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can be accessed in either English or Maltese. 2. servizz.gov has a live chat function allowing users to receive real-time support. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can be accessed in either English or Maltese. 2. servizz.gov has a live chat function allowing users to receive real-time support. 	