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## **Will automation improve the quality of service in the public sector?**

### **According to the survey, 77pc of Irish people believe automation would enhance the quality of service in the public sector.**

More than three-quarters (77 per cent) of Irish citizens believe automation would enhance the quality of service within the public sector said OpenSky, the digital transformation specialist for government organisations and large private enterprises.

The research, which was carried out by Censuswide and involved more than 1,000 people across Ireland, found that 55 per cent (pc) prefer to contact public service bodies and government agencies online.

Online or digital communication is the preferred method across public sector activities including collecting benefits, applying for visas, renewing passports and driving licences, filing or accessing tax records and accessing health records.

It was also the channel of choice for private sector activities such as renewing insurance, making appointments and banking enquiries.

The research also revealed what people see as the main benefits of online public services, with 56pc saying it would mean they can chase up their requirements at any time.

Faster response times was the second highest answer (52pc) and increased efficiency was third (43pc). Almost one-third of respondents (28pc) said that not having to deal with unhelpful public servants was a main benefit to moving online.

When it comes to dealing with public services under the current system, the most popular complaint was the long waiting times (33pc). A quarter of respondents also expressed frustration with poor customer service levels, with 22pc citing rudeness or unhelpfulness of staff as one of their biggest criticisms.

“In recent years, and even more so over the past few months with the coronavirus pandemic, there has been a marked shift towards the use of digital services and self-service options across both the private and public sectors,” said William Flanagan, technology and commercial director at OpenSky.

“Increasingly, people want more information and greater access at their fingertips – as illustrated by the significant uptake of the Covid-19 contact tracing app. They also want better, faster service

which has resulted in online channels of communication and technologies that enable automation coming to the fore.

“Our survey shows that Irish people think these can make a real impact in service delivery and efficiency. By digitalising processes and engaging with cutting-edge technologies, there is an opportunity for organisations and businesses to give people back more time – not just citizens but also workers. An online approach with people at the centre has the potential to improve how we as a nation work, across all facets of life, and benefit everyone,” added Mr Flanagan.

*By Stephen Larkin*

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