Ofcom News Consumption
Technical Report for Children aged 12-15 years

A. Preface

Ofcom is the regulator for the UK communications industries, with responsibilities across television, radio, video-on-demand, telecommunications, wireless and postal communications. Ofcom regularly carries out research into these markets to stay informed on new technology developments and the impact that they might have on the sectors they regulate.

As part of their regulatory duties Ofcom monitors consumption and attitudes towards news across television, radio, print and online.

Ofcom's adult News Consumption survey has been conducted amongst adults on a yearly basis, since 2013, using a face to face omnibus methodology.

Under the new Royal Charter and Agreement, regulation of the BBC has now passed from the BBC Trust to Ofcom. One of Ofcom's central responsibilities will be to hold the BBC to account for its performance in fulfilling its Mission and promoting its Public Purposes. For this assessment to be meaningful, Ofcom need it to be based in a clear understanding of a range of factors, including audiences' own views on the BBC's performance.

Because of this additional responsibility, in 2017 Ofcom sought to commission a bespoke quantitative survey that could incorporate the adult News Consumption survey and provide additional questioning that would fulfil Ofcom's regulatory requirements of the BBC. At this time, Ofcom also decided to seek the views of 12-15 year old children as part of this research.

Jigsaw Research Limited was commissioned to conduct an online study amongst those aged 12-15 years. The sample frame was designed to be representative of male and female children in these age groups. Interviews were conducted over two waves of research (24th November – 7th December, 2020 and 27th February – 24th March 2021) to achieve a robust and representative view of UK 12-15 year olds. Interviewing periods have remained largely consistent over the last four years to ensure comparability.

The data has been weighted on age, gender, socio-economic group (SEG) and nation, to match known population profiles.

Details of the sample design, methodology and weighting procedures are outlined in the following pages. A note on statistical reliability is also included.

B. Sample Design

B.1. Online Interviewing approach

The fieldwork was underain two stages*:*

- Stage 1: Adults were approached using an online panel and asked if they had a 12-15 year old at home that might be willing to take part in an interview for Ofcom. If they did, the parents were screened on key demographic questions, to ensure we recruited a representative sample of participants (see section B.2 for further information).
- Stage 2: The parent then asked their qualifying child to complete the rest of the questionnaire.
  NB: the child was introduced to the study and was able to opt out at this stage, if they didn't want to take part. They could also opt out at any other point during the survey.

B.2. Online Interviewing quotas

Jigsaw Research used quotas to ensure that the sample was representative of UK 12-15 year olds. The sample frame was developed at a UK level, covering the following key subgroups:

- Age and gender of child – interlocked (12 year old males, 12 year old females, 13 year old males, 13 year old females, 14 year old males, 14 year old females, 15 year old males and 15 year old females)
- Socio-economic group (AB/C1/C2/DE)
- BBC TV region (East, East Midlands, London, North East & Cumbria, North West, South, South East, South West, West, West Midlands, Yorkshire, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales)

C. Weighting

At the analysis stage, data from both waves were combined and then weighted.

C.1. Demographic weights

The data was weighted by age, gender, socio-economic group (SEG) and nation. Rim weights were applied using targets from Nomis, December 2020 (age and gender (interlocked) and nation) and the 2011 Census (SEG).

The initial unweighted sample and the weighted sample profiles are illustrated below:

Weighting Category	Sub-group	Unweighted	Weighted
Age and gender	Age 12 boys	13%	13%
	Age 13 boys	12%	13%
	Age 14 boys	12%	13%
	Age 15 boys	13%	12%
	Age 12 girls	13%	13%
	Age 13 girls	12%	12%
	Age 14 girls	13%	12%
	Age 15 girls	13%	12%
SEG	AB	32%	23%
	C1	28%	30%
	C2	19%	22%
	DE	21%	25%
Nation	England	80%	85%
	Scotland	8%	8%
	Wales	5%	5%
	Northern Ireland	2%	3%
	(Postcode not provided)	5%	

D. Statistical reliability and significance

D.1. Effective sample size

This section details the variation between the sample results and the "true" values, or the findings that would have been obtained with a census approach. The confidence with which we can make this prediction is usually chosen to be 95%: that is, the chances are 95 in 100 that the "true" values will fall within a specified range. However, as the sample is weighted, we need to use the effective sample size (ESS) rather than actual sample size to judge the accuracy of results.

The following table compares ESS and actual samples for some of the main analysis groups:

Weighting Category	Sub-group	Actual interviews achieved	Effective sample size (ESS)
Age	Age 12 male	129	115
	Age 13 male	124	115
	Age 14 male	122	111
	Age 15 male	128	114
	Age 12 female	128	117
	Age 13 female	123	112
	Age 14 female	129	116
	Age 15 female	127	112
SEG	AB	319	296
	C1	283	270
	C2	188	172
	DE	215	204
Nation	England	804	768
	Scotland	81	78
	Wales	50	47
	Northern Ireland	23	22

D.2. Confidence interval

The table below illustrates the required ranges for different sample sizes and percentage results at the "95% confidence interval":

Effective sample size	10% or 90% ±	20% or 80% ±	30% or 70% ±	40% or 60% ±	50% ±
911 (Total)	1.95%	2.60%	2.98%	3.18%	3.25%
457 (Female)	2.75%	3.67%	4.20%	4.49%	4.58%
270 (C1)	3.58%	4.77%	5.47%	5.84%	5.96%
180 (London)	4.38%	5.84%	6.69%	7.16%	7.30%

For example, if 30% or 70% of a sample of 911 gives a particular answer, the chances are 95 in 100 that the "true" value will fall within the range of +/- 2.98 percentage points from the sample results.

D.3. Significant differences

When results are compared between separate groups within a sample, different results may be obtained. The difference may be "real", or it may occur by chance (because not everyone has been interviewed). To test if the difference is a real one – i.e. if it is "statistically significant" – we again have to know the size of the samples, the percentages giving a certain answer and the degree of confidence chosen. If we assume "95% confidence interval", the difference between two sample results must be greater than the values given in the table below to be significant:

Sample sizes being compared	10% or 90% ±	20% or 80% ±	30% or 70% ±	40% or 60% ±	50% ±
455 vs 457 Male vs Female	3.89%	5.19%	5.59%	6.36%	6.49%
232 vs 225 12 years old vs 15 years old	5.50%	7.34%	8.40%	8.98%	9.17%

For example, comparing a score of 11% for Males and 14% for Females, the scores will need to be at least 3.89% different (using the table) to indicate a significant difference.