Ofcom News Consumption
Technical Report for Teens 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 2018 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 boys and girls in these age groups. Interviews were conducted over two waves of research (5th November – 6th December 2021 and March 6th – April 4th 2022) to achieve a robust and representative view of UK 12-15 year olds. Interviewing periods have remained largely consistent over the last five 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 undertaken in 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 boys, 12 year old girls, 13 year old boys, 13 year old girls, 14 year old boys, 14 year old girls, 15 year old boys and 15 year old girls)
- 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	12%	13%
	Age 13 girls	12%	12%
	Age 14 girls	13%	12%
	Age 15 girls	12%	12%
SEG	AB	32%	23%
	C1	25%	30%
	C2	22%	22%
	DE	21%	25%
Nation	England	85%	85%
	Scotland	8%	7%
	Wales	5%	5%
	Northern Ireland	2%	3%

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 boys	130	124
	Age 13 boys	121	115
	Age 14 boys	125	118
	Age 15 boys	127	120
	Age 12 girls	123	117
	Age 13 girls	124	118
	Age 14 girls	127	120
	Age 15 girls	124	117
SEG	AB	322	320
	C1	248	245
	C2	219	217
	DE	210	208
Nation	England	848	805
	Scotland	78	74
	Wales	52	50
	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% ±
947 (Total)	1.91%	2.55%	2.92%	3.12%	3.18%
472 (Girls)	2.71%	3.61%	4.13%	4.42%	4.51%
245 (C1)	3.76%	5.01%	5.74%	6.13%	6.26%
174 (London)	4.46%	5.94%	6.81%	7.28%	7.43%

For example, if 30% or 70% of a sample of 947 gives a particular answer, the chances are 95 in 100 that the "true" value will fall within the range of +/- 2.92 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 must 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:

Effective sample sizes being compared	10% or 90% ±	20% or 80% ±	30% or 70% ±	40% or 60% ±	50% ±
476 vs 472 Boys vs Girls	4.15%	5.33%	5.99%	6.31%	6.36%
241 vs 236 12 years old vs 15 years old	6.04%	7.65%	8.52%	8.92%	8.94%

For example, comparing a score of 11% for boys and 14% for girls, the scores will need to be at least 4.15% different (using the table) to indicate a significant difference.