Ofcom BBC Children's Tracker 2023 and 2024 Technical Report

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Preface

The BBC Children's Tracker has been run by Critical Research on behalf of Ofcom, as part of the wider BBC Performance Tracker research which is conducted among adults aged 16 and over.

The objective of the BBC Children's Tracker survey is to gain an understanding of media consumption and attitudes among children aged from 3 to 16 living in the UK. The research conducted in 2023-2024 replicated the study that was conducted for Ofcom in both 2022-2023 and 2021-2022.

The primary objectives were:

- To understand children's consumption of different BBC services (e.g. iPlayer, BBC Sounds, BBC Bitesize)
- To understand children's brand awareness of the BBC in the wider context of the market (e.g. where do they go and find content first)
- To understand children's perceptions of different BBC services

In 2023-2024 Critical Research interviewed a sample of 4,607 parents of 3- to 16-year-olds, also interviewing the child concerned if they were aged 8 to 16.

Interviewing was conducted across two waves:

- Wave 1 fieldwork in November and December 2023 – 2,304 interviews
- Wave 2 fieldwork in March 2024– 2,303 interviews

All interviews were carried out across the UK through an online panel. Parents of children aged 3-16 were recruited to take part. Parents whose child was aged 3 to 7 would answer about their child throughout the survey. Where the child concerned was aged 8 to 16, both the parent and the child would be invited to take part.

Overall quotas were set for gender within age, age within nation and socio-economic group for the overall sample. Within England soft quotas were set to ensure a good mix by English region.

The 2011 Census has been used as a basis for most of the quotas. Specifically for socio-economic group, the Census is not a particularly good source, and one which has seen many changes over time. Our source is therefore historic NRS data, using large scale studies (such as the Technology Tracker) to identify the profile of households with children compared to all households.

Details of the sampling frame and weighting procedures are outlined below. A note on statistical reliability is also included.

Sample design, fieldwork and quotas

Sample was provided through Critical Research's online consumer panel partners. The sample was de-duplicated to ensure that respondents could not complete the survey more than once.

The sample was designed to be able to report on children aged 3 to 16. Specific targets were set at an overall level for each of the four UK nations, to achieve a minimum of 150 interviews per wave in Northern Ireland and a minimum of 300 interviews per wave in each of Scotland and Wales. In addition, quotas were set by gender within age. Within England soft quotas were set to ensure a good mix by English region.

The total number of interviews achieved across the two waves of the study, was as follows:

	England	Scotland	Wales	N Ireland	Total
Aged 3-7	1,029	226	199	103	**1,557**
Aged 8-11	1,018	199	197	113	**1,527**
Aged 12-16	1,028	187	200	108	**1,523**
Total	**3,075**	**612**	**596**	**324**	**4,607**

Weighting

Weighting was used to align the profiles to the UK population based on the available Census 2021 data by age, nation and socio-economic group. The following table shows the initial unweighted sample and the final weighted sample profile for the final sample.

	% Unweighted Interviews achieved	% Weighted Profile
Aged 3-7	34%	35%
Aged 8-11	33%	29%
Aged 12-16	33%	36%
England	67%	85%
Scotland	13%	8%
Wales	13%	5%
Northern Ireland	7%	3%
SEG – AB	33%	30%
SEG – C1	21%	28%
SEG – C2	25%	19%
SEG – DE	22%	23%

Guide to statistical reliability

The variation between the sample results and the "true" values (the findings that would have been obtained if everyone had been interviewed) can be predicted from the sample sizes on which the results are based, and on the number of times that a particular answer is given. 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[1] (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.

	Actual	ESS
TOTAL 3-16s	4,607	3,631
Aged 3-7	1,557	1,261
Aged 8-11	1,527	1,200
Aged 12-16	1,523	1,195
Boys aged 3-16	2,295	1,815
Girls aged 3-16	2,312	1,819
England	3,075	2,783
Scotland	612	578
Wales	596	583
Northern Ireland	324	298
SEG – AB	1,453	1,182
SEG – C1	968	784
SEG – C2	1,152	954
SEG – DE	1,024	869

[1] Effective Sample Size shown as Effective Weighted Sample in the data tables produced

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

Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages at or near these levels

Effective sample size	10% or 90% ±	20% or 80% ±	30% or 70% ±	40% or 60% ±	50% ±
3,361 (Total aged 3-16)	1.0%	1.3%	1.5%	1.6%	1.6%
578 (Nation: Scotland)	2.4%	3.3%	4.0%	4.1%	4.1%
869 (SEG: DE)	2.0%	2.7%	3.0%	3.3%	3.5%

For example, if 30% or 70% of a sample of 3,631 gives a particular answer, the chances are 95 in 100 that the "true" value will fall within the range of ±1.5 percentage points from the sample results.

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:

Differences required for significant at or near these percentages

Sample sizes being compared	10% or 90% ±	20% or 80% ±	30% or 70% ±	40% or 60% ±	50% ±
1,182 vs. 869 (AB vs. DE)	2.6%	3.5%	4.0%	4.3%	4.4%
1,815 vs. 1,819 (Boys vs. Girls)	2.0%	2.6%	3.0%	3.2%	3.3%