Audio listening in the UK

2025

Report

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Overview

This report outlines the findings from Ofcom research into people's audio listening

With more choice than ever before, listeners' needs and expectations of audio services are changing. Once limited to live radio and physical formats like vinyl, cassettes and CDs, online streaming has allowed people to choose from a near-infinite range of algorithmically personalised playlists, implausibly niche podcasts and carefully curated radio stations with music to suit every mood, genre and decade across numerous services.

This summary report primarily focuses on findings from our 2025 annual Audio and Podcast Surveys, which ask people about their use of and attitudes towards different types of audio. Additional data from RAJAR and other sources are also included in this report for context. Insight into podcast listening is supported, for the first time, by data from Edison Podcast Metrics UK which measures podcast listening across all networks, shows, and platforms in the UK.

This report complements our annual Media Nations report, which looks more broadly at the wider radio industry and market developments.

What we have found – in brief

- **The number of people listening to online music services each week is now on a par with those listening to music radio**, at around six in ten adults aged 16+. Younger people are more than twice as likely to listen to music streaming services compared to those aged 55+.
- **A fifth of time spent listening to audio in cars is now to music streaming services and podcasts**. For all adults, listening to streamed music services while travelling in a car has increased by 8pp between 2018 and 2024, taking time from CDs and cassettes (-3pp) but especially radio (-7pp).
- **Over seven in ten (71%) people who use a voice assistant (such as Amazon Alexa, Google Assistant or Apple's Siri) use it to listen to both radio stations and other types of audio, such as music streaming or podcasts.** Smart speakers are the most widely used device for voice assistants, and over half of voice assistant users (54%) that listen to radio make their voice requests using a smart speaker, compared to just one in five (20%) using a smartphone.
- **Although just over a fifth (22%) of UK adults listen to podcasts, this has been a gradual build and appears to be stabilising**. Podcasts and radio typically serve different needs and are enjoyed in different ways, with podcasts more likely to be listened to on a personal device (e.g. smartphone) while radio, particularly music radio, is more likely to be listened to on shared household devices (e.g. radio sets and smart speakers).

Methodology note

In a change from previous years, the first question of this year's Audio Survey was conducted using an online-only survey, as opposed to a combination of online and telephone interviews (CATI). This change means we are unable to compare figures for reach of audio types with those published in the 2024 Audio Report. Technical reports, with more information on how our surveys are conducted, and full data tables are available to download from the Ofcom statistical release calendar.

Audio listening

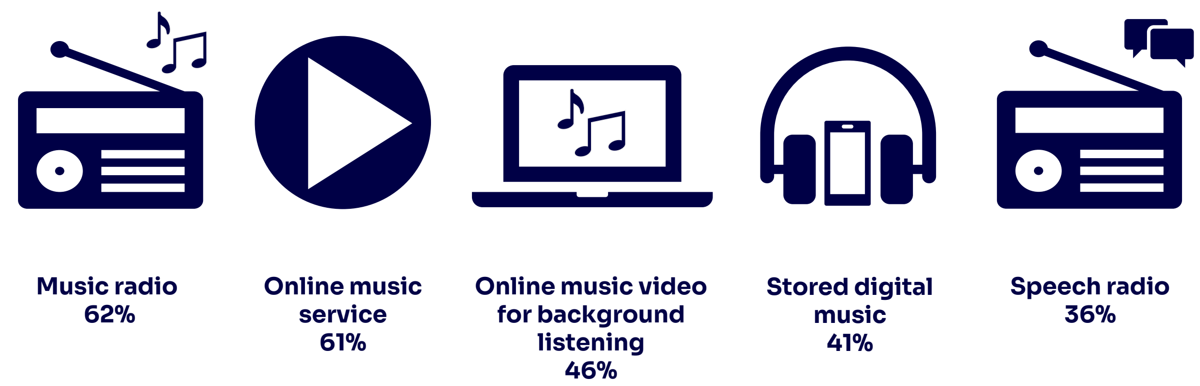
What are people listening to?

Reach of online music services is now level with music radio, with six in ten of us tuning in each week

Audio continues to play an important role in our everyday lives. Over nine in ten of us (93%) listen to some form of audio content each week – be it the radio, a streaming service or beloved record collection – and this figure increases to 98% of 16–34-year-olds.

Music radio and online music services such as Spotify and Amazon Music are the most popular source of audio, used by six in ten of us each week (62% and 61% respectively). These are followed by online music videos used for background listening (46%) and personal music stored on a digital device (41%). Just over a third report listening to speech radio (36%), which is much lower than music radio (-26pp) but higher than weekly reach of podcasts, which we focus on later in this report. Over a fifth of respondents reported listening to CDs, vinyl records or cassette tapes each week (27%) but a third (33%) said they never listened to these.

Figure 1: Top five audio types used each week

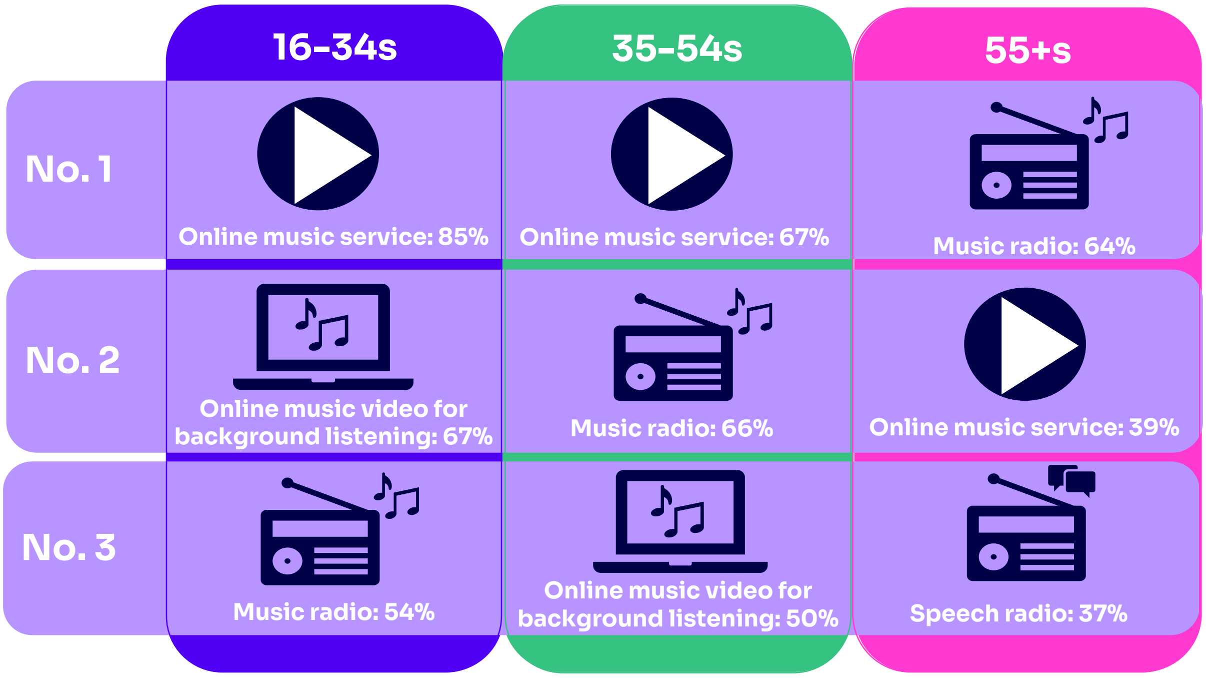


Source: Ofcom Audio Survey 2025. Base: All respondents (3,484). Percentages refer to average weekly reach of each audio type.

Younger people are more than twice as likely to listen to music services compared to those aged 55 and older

According to our latest survey results, more than eight in ten 16–34-year-olds (85%) use an online music service weekly, compared to two thirds of those aged 35-54 (67%) and 39% of those aged 55+. Listening to an online music service and speech radio are the second and third most popular audio types for the 55+ age group, the latter of which does not feature in the top three audio types for younger demographics. Just under eight in ten (78%) of those aged 55+ have ever listened to their personal collection on CD, vinyl and cassette, compared to just over half of 16-34-year-olds (54%), though weekly listening is more even at 29% and 25% respectively.

Figure 2: Top three audio types used each week by age group



Source: Ofcom Audio Survey 2025. Base: All respondents (3,484). Percentages refer to average weekly reach of each audio type in each age group.

Across listeners of all ages, speech radio is mainly used to catch up on news (52%), to learn something new (36%) or for entertainment (35%). Music radio, meanwhile, is used mostly for background listening (54%). Streaming music on an online service continues to be used largely for entertainment (59%) followed by relaxation (50%) and background listening (49%).

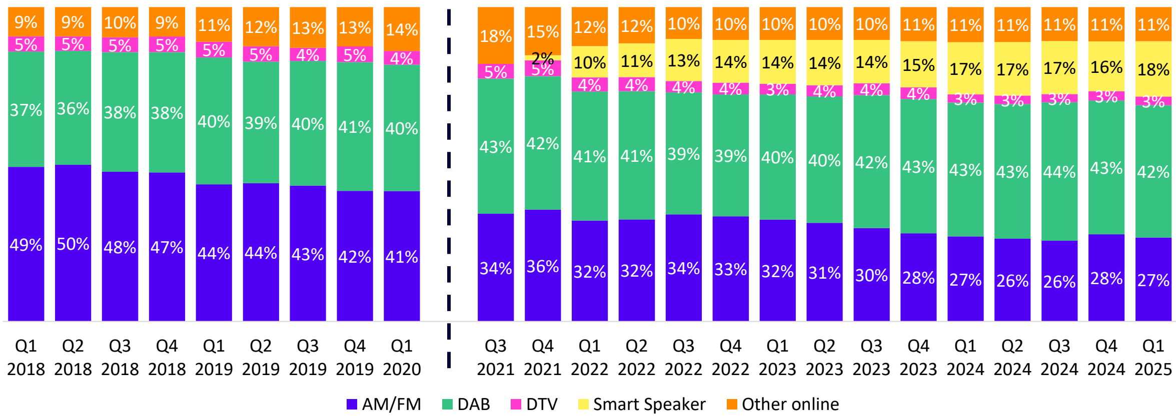
How are people listening?

The radio set remains the most common way to listen to the radio, while smart speaker and online listening continue to rise slowly

According to RAJAR (the industry body responsible for measuring radio audiences in the UK), most radio listening is through an AM/FM or digital (DAB/DAB+) set, accounting for 69% of all radio listening hours. As we can see in Figure 3 below, most of the decrease in radio listening through AM/FM radio sets over time has switched to DAB sets, while listening through smart speakers or other online devices (e.g. smartphones, laptops and tablets) has been increasing slowly and steadily, from 22% in Q1 2022 to 28% in Q1 2025.

However, there are differences depending on where people are when they're listening and the devices they have access to. For example, smart speakers understandably account for a much higher proportion of listening hours at home (26%) compared to the average across all locations (18%) while laptops, smartphones and other online devices account for a higher proportion of listening at work and elsewhere (18% vs 11% average). Digital radio, meanwhile, plays a much greater role in cars, vans and lorries, as we discuss later in this report.

Figure 3: Share of radio listening by platform over time

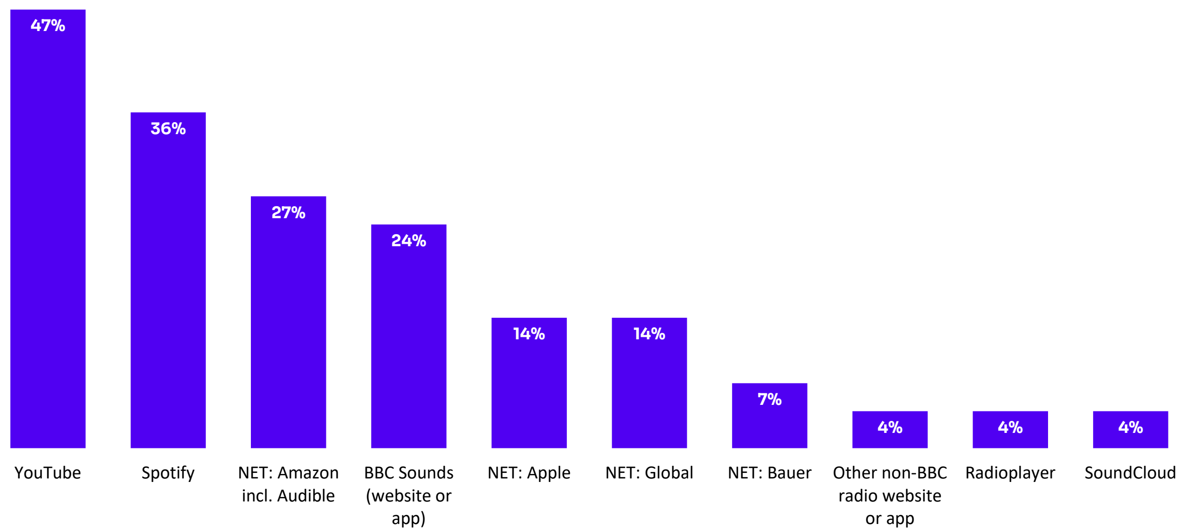


Source: RAJAR. Note: dotted line indicates suspension of fieldwork from the end of Q1 2020 until Q3 2021 due to the Covid-19 lockdowns. This led to subsequent changes in methodology, so comparison with previous quarters should be made with caution. DTV is digital television – respondents self-classify so it may include some IPTV / television delivered via the internet. DAB includes DAB+, as separate figures are not available in RAJAR.

YouTube and Spotify are the most listened to online audio services but BBC Sounds has boosted its reach this year

YouTube and Spotify are the most listened to online audio services, used by 47% and 36% of UK adults each week respectively. Around three in ten (27%) listen to Amazon services including Amazon Music and Audible at least once a week, while the number of people each week using Apple's online audio services – such as Apple Music, iTunes and Apple Podcasts – is lower at 14%. Global's Global Player, station websites and apps also reach 14% of adults each week, double the percentage who report using Bauer's Rayo and station-specific services (7%).

Figure 4: Weekly reach of audio services across all audio types



Source: Ofcom Audio Survey 2025. Question: Q9b/d/f/h/j. Thinking specifically about listening to [radio online / online music / podcasts / audiobooks / music video websites or apps for background listening], which of these ways do you listen (using websites or apps)? Base: All respondents (3.484) Note: 'NET: Global' includes Global Player and individual Global station websites or apps. NET: Amazon includes Amazon Music, Audible and

Kindle. NET: Apple includes Apple Music. Apple Podcasts / iTunes and Apple Books. NET: Bauer includes Rayo / planetradio.co.uk and Bauer station websites or apps.

BBC Sounds is the most popular online audio service from a traditional broadcaster, reaching just under a quarter of UK adults each week (24%) – a significant increase from last year (3pp). Much of this increase has been driven by greater reach among the 16-24 age group (up from 14% last year to 22%) and the 45-54 age group (from 16% to 25%), bringing them both more in line with the average. The BBC's launch of the online-only Radio 1 Anthems and Radio 3 Unwind streams in November last year may have contributed to this audience being driven to BBC Sounds in the months since.

Figure 5: Weekly reach of BBC Sounds split by age group

Weekly reach of BBC Sounds	All adults	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55+
2024	21%	14%	25%	25%	16%	23%
2025	24%	22%	27%	24%	25%	22%

Source: Ofcom Audio Survey. Base: all respondents (2025: 3,484) (2024: 2,301)

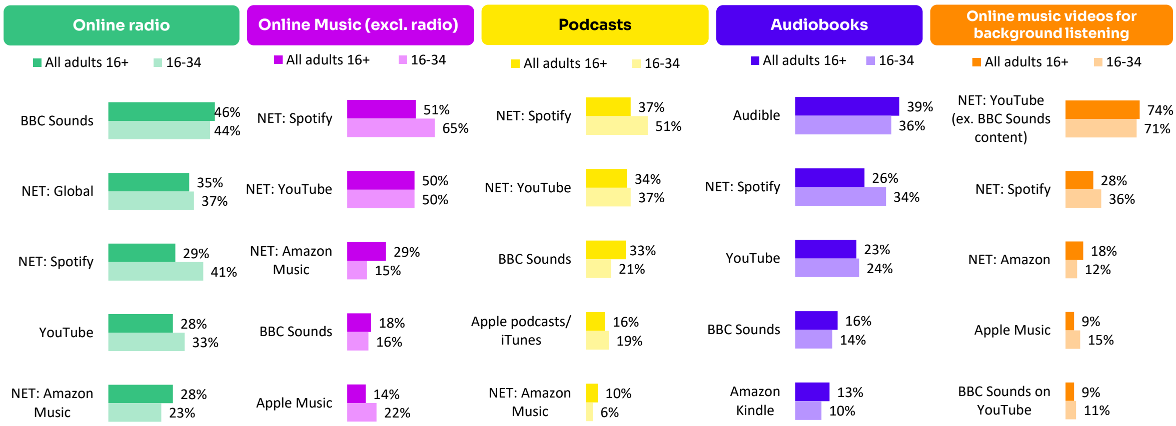
That said, most online audio services skew considerably more towards the younger demographic. YouTube, for example, reaches 65% of 16-34s each week compared to 47% of all adults. This difference is even more pronounced in the case of Spotify, which reaches 64% of 16-34s compared to 37% of all adults, and Apple Music where reach among 16-34s is double the average across all age groups (23% vs 11%).

Despite some services expanding their remit to including more types of audio, listeners still choose their platform depending on what they're listening to

Looking at what people are using these services for, our research shows that Spotify is the most used service for online music and podcasts, BBC Sounds for online radio and Audible for audiobooks. The usage of the two largest commercial radio groups' services for online radio, Global (35%) and Bauer (16%), when combined puts them almost level with BBC Sounds at 44%. Unsurprisingly, YouTube is most used for music videos as background listening, far ahead of any other service which offers music videos alongside their main music streaming offer like Amazon Music and Apple Music.

We also see some differences by age group. Related to the shift in BBC Sounds audience mentioned above, the proportion of under 35s using BBC Sounds for online radio has increased in the last year (up to 44% from 31%) while use among those aged 55 and over has decreased (down to 50% from 58%). While fewer listeners in this older age group report using BBC Sounds for online radio compared to last year, around one in five are still using it for podcasts (21% in 2025 vs 20% in 2024). Amazon Music is a significantly more popular source of online music among those aged 55+ (43%) than 16-34s (15%).

Figure 6: Most-used audio services by audio type and age group



Source: Ofcom Audio Survey 2025. Base: All respondents who listen to the radio online (1,424), Online music (2,466), Podcasts (1,593), Audiobooks (903), Music video websites or apps for background listening (2,100). Note: 'NET: Global' includes Global Player and individual Global station websites or apps. In previous waves of our Audio Survey, respondents added Spotify and Amazon Music under the 'other' option for online radio, presumably due to their 'Radio' and 'Stations' functionalities, which is why we now list these as options for this audio type.

Smart speakers and voice assistants

What is the difference between a smart speaker and a voice assistant?

Voice assistants such as Amazon's Alexa and Google Assistant are voice-controlled platforms through which people can access audio content, search for information and control connected devices and household systems such as lights and heating. Voice assistants can be accessed through a range of devices, including smartphones, tablets, smart TVs and in cars, as well as smart speakers. Smart speakers are dedicated audio hardware (such as the Amazon Echo or Google Nest) which people can interact with by using their voice. Most smart speakers are only compatible with a single voice assistant, although some brands (such as SONOS) allow users to choose which voice assistant they would like to use with their smart speaker device.

How are people using smart speakers?

People's use of smart speakers ranges from just an enhanced speaker to a control hub for the home

Smart speakers have become a part of everyday life for many UK households, with people using them – even relying on them – for a variety of activities. Last year, our Technology Tracker found that 41% of households had a smart speaker, with the majority of owners using them for listening to a music through a streaming service (63%) and listening to live radio (57%). The next most popular uses were accessing weather reports (40%), alarms and reminders (39%), searching for answers to questions (38%) and listening to news reports (24%).

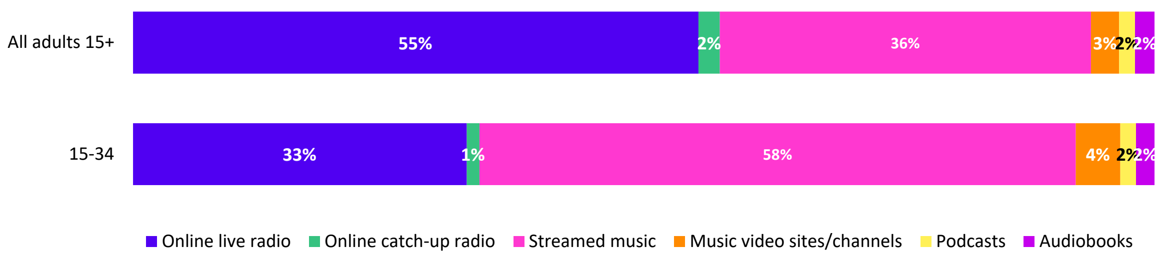
Research we published in 2022 found that smart speaker users broadly fall into three categories: those for whom it was 'just a speaker', who tended not to use it for much beyond listening to radio and music; those for whom it was 'a speaker with added fun and functions', who used a variety of additional features; and those for whom smart speakers were 'a control hub', who depended on their speakers for their daily routines and household management. This latter group included people with mobility difficulties and disabilities, for whom smart speakers provided assistive and facilitative technology helping them to lead more independent lives.

Most participants were positive about their experiences with smart speakers, particularly highlighting the convenience of using voice controls while keeping their hands free. Some noted that their speakers did not always respond correctly to commands, but downsides were generally seen as minor irritations that didn't fundamentally impact peoples' enjoyment of the devices.

Live radio accounts for the largest share of listening through smart speakers

Looking in more detail at what people are listening to on smart speakers, there is little change year-on-year: online live radio retains the greatest share, accounting for just over half of time spent listening (55%). Streamed music is next, accounting for over a third (36%) of audio time on smart speakers each week. However, when we look at users aged 15-34 we see that this is flipped, with streaming music making up the largest proportion (58%) and online live radio coming in second (33%).

Figure 7: Share of listening by audio type on smart speakers



Source: IPA TouchPoints 2024 Superhub.

As noted above in Figure 3, the share of total radio listening accounted for by smart speakers has continued to increase steadily – albeit slowly – over time, from 14% in Q1 2023 to 18% in Q1 2025. Other online listening has increased even more gradually over the same period, from 10% in Q1 2023 to 11% in Q1 2025. This demonstrates the remarkable perseverance of traditional broadcast radio sets, which still account for most radio listening, but the trend remains towards online listening.

There are differences in how the main broadcasters draw listeners to their online offerings: while the BBC is just marginally more appealing to its online audiences through smart speakers compared to other online devices (13% of BBC station hours compared to 10% on other online devices), over a fifth of Bauer's hours are through smart speakers and just 9% on other online devices. This pattern is broadly the same for Global (21% vs. 12%) and News Broadcasting (20% vs. 15%). It should also be noted that the BBC still has the largest share of listening on smart speakers, as it does across all platforms, but Global and Bauer are much closer behind on smart speaker listening compared to DAB or AM/FM.

Three in five smart speaker users say their device has played the wrong thing when asked to play a particular radio station

In our research we ask about people's awareness and experience of using different features on these devices. For example, we asked smart speaker users how aware they are of who provides the news when they ask their devices for a news update. Around half (51%) indicated that they have some awareness of the original source, either 'always' (17%) or 'sometimes' (34%). Just under one in ten users (8%) said they were 'never aware' while four in ten (38%) said they never used their smart speaker for news.

Many smart speakers allow users to select a preferred provider for news updates and music, but the majority of users indicate they've never changed these preferences from the default settings. Seven in ten smart speaker users (70%) said they'd never changed their settings to an alternate provider of news or music, and in both cases just 22% said they had done so. The majority (53%) of those who said they'd never changed their default news or music provider also said they were unaware they had this option.

Almost three in five (58%) smart speaker users who use their device to listen to the radio said that their smart speaker had started playing the wrong thing in response to a request for a particular station or programme. This is a significant increase compared to last year, where there was a more equal split between those who said they had and had not experience this (49% and 48%).

How are people using voice assistants more broadly?

Smart speakers are more popular than smartphones for requesting radio through a voice assistant, though listening to other types of audio sees more smartphone usage

Radio and audio lend themselves to being controlled by voice, as the need to look at a screen is generally optional. While smart speakers are the predominant device people use to access radio and audio using voice, this functionality has also been added to smartphones, computers, connected TVs (either built into the set or via a smart TV stick or set top box), in-vehicle entertainment systems and wearable technology like smart watches and earbuds. It offers users benefits such as hands-free convenience, enhanced accessibility and safety (particularly in cars). The main technology companies offer branded voice assistants that operate similarly across these different types of device, such as Amazon Alexa, Google Assistant and Apple's Siri.

More than half of adults in our survey say they have used a voice assistant in the past three months (54%). Among these voice assistant users, 66% reported using Amazon Alexa, more than double the number who reported using Google Assistant (31%) and Apple Siri (28%). Use of other voice assistants, including Samsung's Bixby (4%) and Microsoft Cortana (3%), was much lower. The living room and kitchen are the most popular places for people to use a voice assistant, with over a third of voice assistant users using them in each (37% and 36% respectively). This is likely linked to their integration in smart speakers, which our 2024 Technology Tracker revealed were also most likely to be located in these rooms. Just over one in ten say they use a voice assistant in their car (13%).

Seven in ten voice assistant users told us they use a voice assistant to listen to both radio stations (71%) and other types of audio, such as music streaming, podcasts or other on-demand audio (also 71%). Smart speakers are the most widely used device for voice assistants, and over half of voice assistant users (54%) that listen to radio make their voice requests using a smart speaker, compared to just one in five (20%) using a smartphone. Voice assistants on smartphones are more popular for listening to other types of audio, with 30% of people using them in this way compared to 44% for smart speakers. Listening through voice assistants on smart TVs, smartphones through in-cars speakers and other devices is less frequent.

Research we commissioned in September 2024 found that Amazon Alexa is more likely to be used to listen to the radio compared to other voice assistants, whereas Amazon Alexa and Google Assistant's use for other types of audio is more comparable. Apple's Siri is more likely to be used for other, non-audio tasks compared to the other voice assistants, while Amazon Alexa is less likely to be used for non-audio purposes.

In-car listening

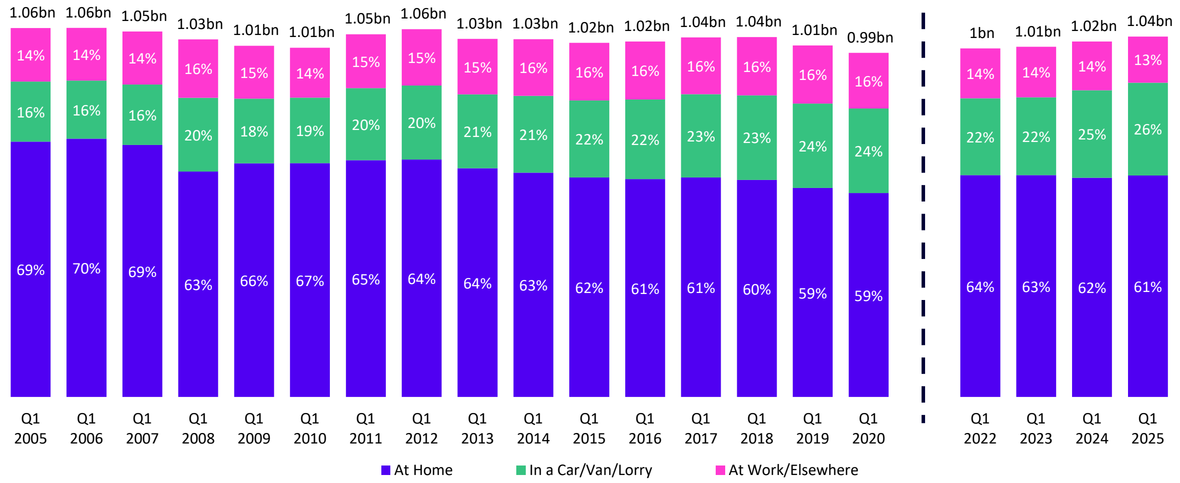
What are people listening to in cars?

A quarter of live radio listening is in vehicles

Since the first car radios were fitted over 100 years ago, tuning into to a familiar mix of music, chat and, of course, traffic and travel, has become an integral part of our driving experience. In a world of omnipresent screens, the car remains one of the few places where our eyes must be fixed on the real-world road ahead and our ears take over the search for entertainment. In fact, for increasing numbers of people the car is the only place where they listen to the radio, up by 47% in the past five years from 7.8m adults a week in Q1 2020 (14%) to 11.5m a week in Q1 2025 (20%).[1]

The importance of in-car listening to the radio industry is exemplified by its steady, gradual growth. Just over a quarter of live radio listening took place in cars, vans and lorries in Q1 2025 (26%), up by 4pp in the last decade, while total listening has remained fairly flat. Looking further back in the rear view, we can see that the growth of in-car listening – both hours and share – is set against a decline in at-home listening. In the past twenty years, radio listening in cars has grown by 55% from 172m in Q1 2005 to 266m weekly hours in Q1 2025, while listening at home has decreased by 13% (from 733m to 636m) in the same period.

Figure 8: Average weekly radio listening by location: 2005 – 2025



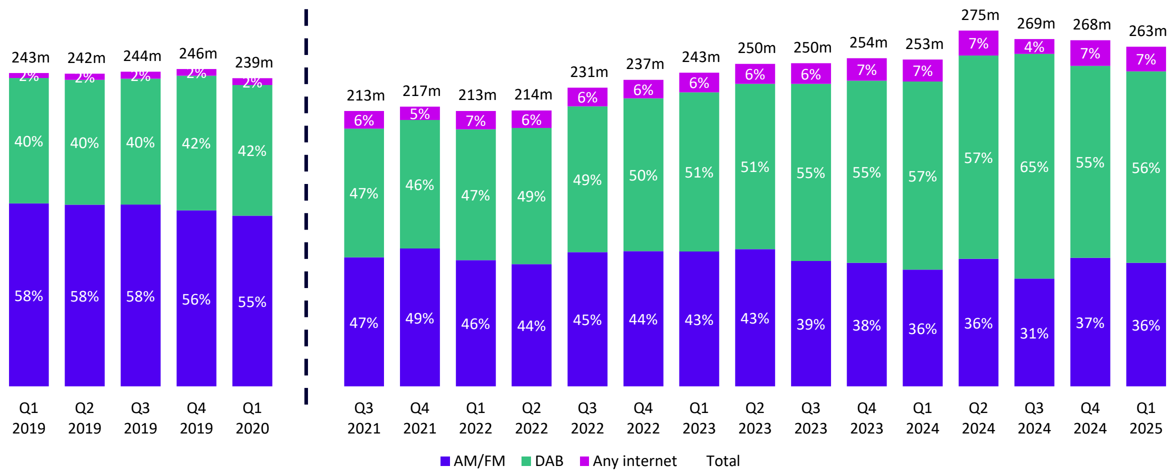
Source: RAJAR. 12-month weighting. Note: dotted line indicates suspension of fieldwork from the end of Q1 2020 until Q3 2021 due to the Covid-19 lockdowns. This led to subsequent changes in methodology, so comparison with previous quarters should be made with caution. Note: listening in locations recorded as 'Not Stated' for each quarter rounds to 0% and labels have been removed from the chart.

The majority of this listening (56%) is via DAB, which has been steadily subsuming AM/FM listening in cars as the technology has become more widely available. Since September 2020, commercial radio has continued to launch new digital stations and all new passenger cars have had DAB radio fitted as standard, both of which are driving factors in the technology's increasing share of listening. The prioritisation of digital radio in cars, as opposed to radio delivered via the internet, is borne out

[1] RAJAR; Reach of UK adults aged 15+ who exclusively listen in a car/van/lorry; 3-month weight

by the latest RAJAR figures which indicate that only 7% of radio listening in cars, vans and lorries is via the internet.

Figure 9: Average weekly radio listening in cars, vans and lorries by platform and quarter: Q1 2019 – Q1 2025

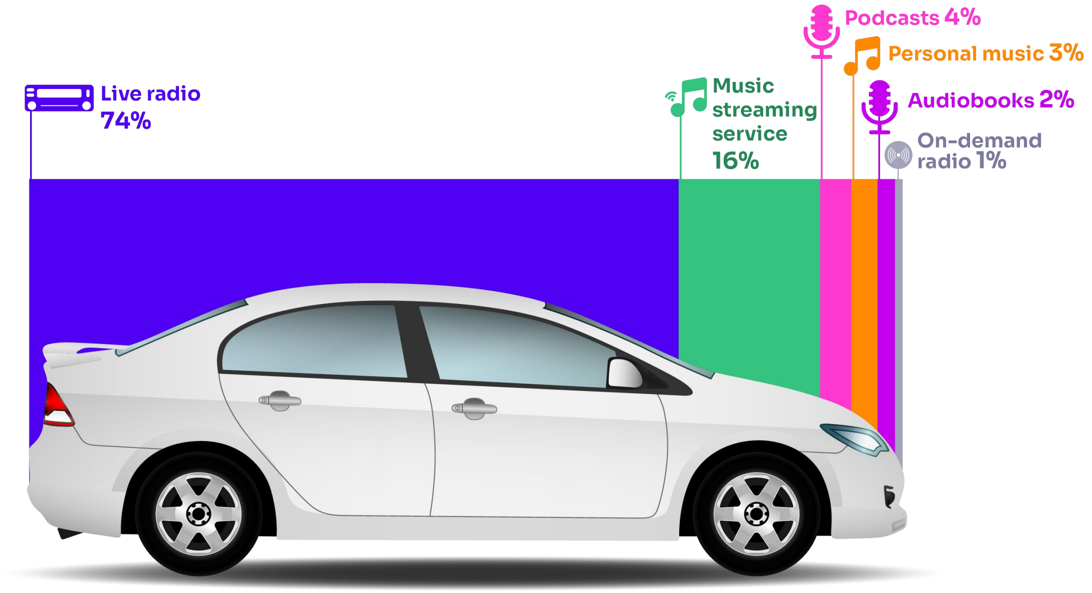


Source: RAJAR. Note: dotted line indicates suspension of fieldwork from the end of Q1 2020 until Q3 2021 due to the Covid-19 lockdowns. This led to subsequent changes in methodology, so comparison with previous quarters should be made with caution. Note: 'Any internet' includes radio listening recorded as either 'internet' or 'smart speaker'. For all quarters apart from Q4 2021, where it rounds to 1%, in-car smart speaker listening rounds to 0%. DAB includes DAB+, as separate figures are not available in RAJAR.

While radio still provides the soundtrack to most of our car journeys, it faces competition from other audio, enabled by in-car technology

Access to the internet of course enables us to listen to other forms of audio in cars beyond radio. According to data from IPA TouchPoints, live radio still provides the soundtrack to the majority of our car journeys, but a fifth of in-car audio time (20%) is now spent listening to music from streaming services and podcasts.

Figure 10: Share of in-car audio listening



Source: IPA TouchPoints 2024 SuperHub

In our 2024 Media Nations report, we noted that having access to streaming services in vehicles is particularly important to younger people, with over three-quarters of 15-24 year olds saying they listen to less radio because they have access to these other services in the car (76%) and about two-thirds saying these services are essential when travelling in vehicles (67%).[2] Depending on the age and type of vehicle (and passengers), these services can be accessed via touchscreen or by connecting your smartphone to the car wirelessly using Apple CarPlay and Android Auto.

A fifth of voice assistant radio listeners use them in the car, and this was higher for Google Assistant and Siri users

The relative ease of smartphone mirroring, which lets you view your smartphone screen from your car's infotainment screen, and the mix of devices used at home are important factors in determining how people access and control their audio in car. Just under a fifth of people who used their voice assistant to listen to the radio reported doing this when in the car (19%). This proportion was higher among users of Google Assistant (28% of users) and Siri (35%), likely due to these companies also manufacturing smartphones and offering Android Auto and Apple CarPlay.[3]

[2] Ofcom In-car Audio Survey 2024. Question 13. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about listening to audio when you are travelling in a vehicle, in general? Base: All UK adults (16+) that travel as passenger or driver in car, van or lorry at least once a week (1,540).
[3] Ofcom Audio Survey 2025. NEW4 Where do you typically listen to the radio using voice assistant? Base: All using voice assistant to listen to the radio (1,340)

Podcast deep dive

What is a podcast?

A podcast is commonly defined as audio, and now increasingly video, based content that typically follows an episodic form. It is difficult to characterise much beyond this, as there are few defining features and many variations across the medium. Podcasts vary in length, can explore a variety of topics and can be published, streamed and downloaded by anyone on a range of services.

This variety is in part what makes measuring podcast listening so challenging. Estimating the amount of listening to the long tail of podcasts available across different services is currently not possible, as there is no single industry measurement standard that allows us to compare performance between titles and across platforms. Some platforms may use downloads as a metric, or count how many times someone pressed 'play'; others provide data on the number of users that listened for a minimum of 60 seconds, or any seconds at all. PodNews' article How To Understand Podcast Stats provides a helpful overview of the data available to creators and how it varies by platform and source.

In this year's report, we have included data from Edison Podcast Metrics UK which describes itself as "the only podcast measurement service that measures listening, not downloads, across all networks, shows, and platforms in the UK". Edison surveys a minimum of 2,000 weekly podcast listeners aged 15 and older each quarter to provide information on weekly reach and listening regardless of platform.

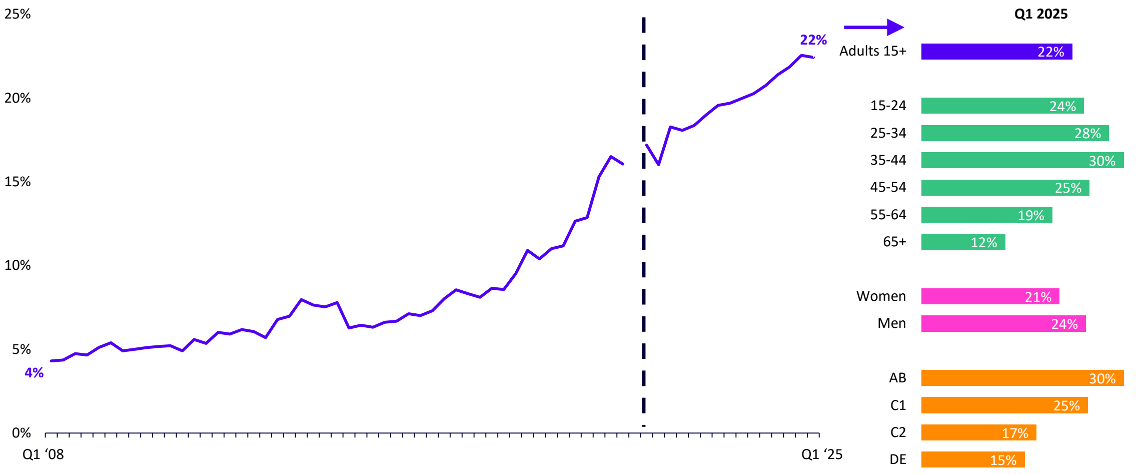
In our own research we ask about people's overall podcast listening habits and attitudes, including the number and nature of podcasts they listen to, the services they use and what they're doing while listening.

Who is listening to podcasts?

Over a fifth of adults listen to podcasts each week, with reach higher among younger people and those in AB socio-economic groups

Since RAJAR began tracking podcast listening, we've seen a slow increase in the proportion of people listening to them, from just 4% in 2008 to over a fifth of all adults each week (22%) at the start of 2025. Given the shift towards online listening and an increasing number of podcasts being released by celebrities and established media brands, it is perhaps surprising that podcasts have comparatively low reach compared to music streaming services. The difference in popularity between these types of audio bears a similarity to the differences between music and speech radio listenership. Music radio and streaming are often characterised as a more passive 'lean-back' listening experience, where people can easily listen in the background while driving or doing housework. Speech radio and podcasts, meanwhile, are generally viewed as more of an active 'lean-in' listen, asking for more of the listener's attention. This difference may go some way to explaining the different scale of their listenership, with speech-based audio requiring more focus whereas music listening is more flexible.

Figure 11: Weekly reach of podcasts over time and in selected demographic groups (Q1 2025)



Source: RAJAR. Average weekly reach of podcasts among adults aged 15+ each quarter on a 3-month weight. Note: dotted line indicates suspension of fieldwork from the end of Q1 2020 until Q3 2021 due to the Covid-19 lockdowns. This led to subsequent changes in methodology, so comparison with previous quarters should be made with caution.

Those that do listen to podcasts each week are more likely to be younger (28% of 25-34s and 30% of 35-44s listen weekly), in AB socio-economic groups (30% reach) and live in the South-East of England (29% reach). Those between the ages of 35 and 44 are the most likely to listen to podcasts, with 15-24s less likely to listen (24%) and those aged 65 and over the least likely of any group (12%). Reach drops to 17% and 15% for those in C2 and DE socio-economic groups respectively and around four in ten people (40%) never listen to podcasts.

There is a slight difference between reach of podcasts to men and women, with 24% and 21% listening weekly respectively. This disparity isn't seen across listening to radio in general, but we do see an even more pronounced difference between men and women's listenership of speech radio. RAJAR shows that UK-wide speech radio reaches 38% of men, and 27% of women[4] and the popularity of sports radio stations, which reach considerably more men than women, may contribute in part to this difference. Sports podcasts are also among some of the most popular, but there is a much broader range of content available from podcasts compared to speech radio. Our podcast survey also shows that among regular podcast listeners, men are more likely than women (24% to 17%) to strongly agree with the statement '*podcasts allow me to enjoy my hobbies more*'.

Nearly a quarter (23%) of regular podcast listeners tell us their podcast listening has encouraged them to listen to the radio more, whereas just under three in ten (28%) say they listen to the radio less. The activities most likely to be impacted by podcast listening are listening to personal music collections and reading newspapers, which 30% and 29% of regular listeners say they do less of as a result of their podcast listening, as well as listening to music streaming services, which almost a third (31%) say they do more often. This may well be linked to the services people are using to access and listen to podcasts, which we discuss in more detail below.

[4] RAJAR Q1 2025; All Radio TSA; 3-month weight

How are people listening to podcasts?

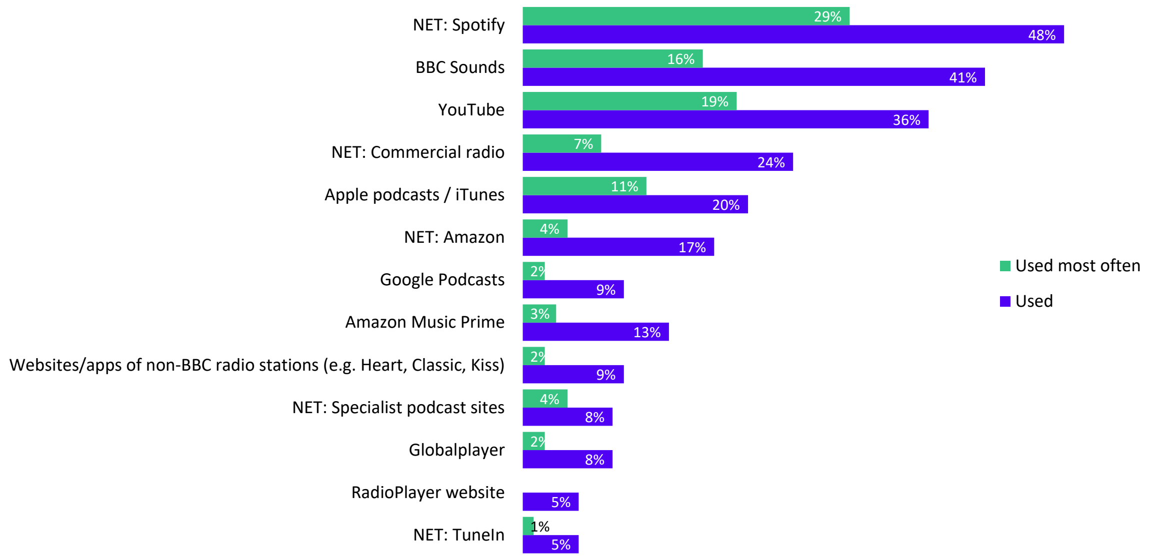
People use a range of devices but smartphones are the most frequently used for podcast listening

While we may tend to think of radio listening as more of lean-back listen or background activity, playing out loud in spaces with other people around – e.g. in the kitchen and the car, at the hairdressers or the dentist's office – as noted above, podcast listening seems to be more of a lean-in, personal activity. Take devices, for example: podcasts are much more likely to be accessed on personal devices like smartphones and laptops than on shared devices like smart speakers. Nine in ten weekly podcast listeners listen on a smartphone, with almost seven in ten (69%) using this device most often. Half listen on a laptop or desktop and over a third listen on a voice-enabled speaker (35%), but only 11% and 6% use these as their primary devices for podcast listening respectively.[5] In many ways this is unsurprising, as podcasts have always been distributed, shared and downloaded via the internet and internet-enabled devices without a dedicated player. This is in contrast to radio, which can refer to both the audio format and the physical device i.e. the radio set. In the age of streaming and 'walled gardens', where exclusivity is often regarded as key to subscriber retention, the more interesting question is: which services people are using on these devices?

Spotify is the most widely used platform for podcast listening

When it comes to the services UK audiences are using for podcasts, Spotify is the most commonly used, followed by BBC Sounds. While more people say they have *ever* listened to podcasts on BBC Sounds compared to YouTube (41% vs 36%), BBC Sounds falls behind both YouTube and Spotify among the services people claim to use *most often*. This is likely due to a combination of factors, such as paid subscribers seeking to get more value from service, YouTube being free to access without an account, and these other services offering broader range of audio content than BBC Sounds. There is also another key factor that has been emerging in recent years across the audio sector: video.

Figure 12: Services used for podcast listening



[5] Edison Podcast Metrics UK Q1 2025

Source: Ofcom Podcast Survey 2025. Q19 How do you tend to access the podcasts you listen to? By this we mean the app or website you use to listen to the podcast, not necessarily who created it / Q19b. Which of these do you use most often? Base: all respondents who listen to podcasts at least once a week (1,504). Services shown on chart are those used by at least 5% of weekly podcast listeners.

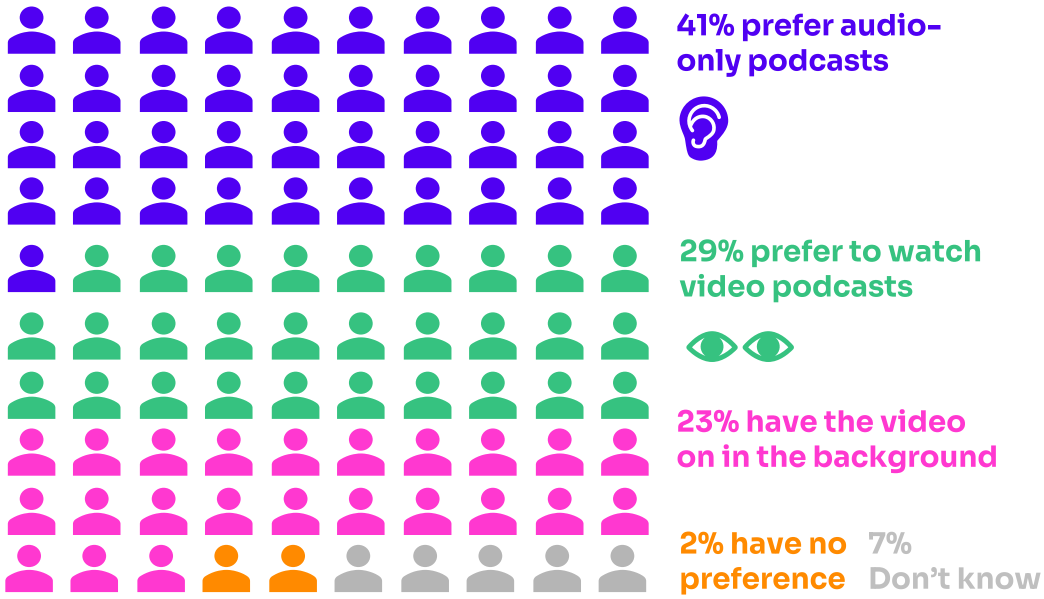
Many listeners are audio-only podcast purists, but a significant minority prefer video when available

Watching a podcast isn't exactly a new phenomenon, but it does seem to be an increasingly available option for listeners. Shows which started on YouTube, such as *The Joe Rogan Experience*, naturally have their roots in video, while other popular podcasts like *Call Her Daddy* and Goalhanger's *The Rest Is…* titles started as audio-only offerings and later began filming their recordings, so listeners now have the option to watch as well as listen to conversations. When asked about different types of podcast listened to, around seven in ten podcast listeners say they ever listen to podcasts that also have videos (69%), and over a third say they do so weekly (37%).[6] This leads to the question of what listeners prefer when presented with the choice of audio-only and audio-visual content.

Of those who ever listen to podcasts with video, four in ten say they prefer to listen to podcasts as audio-only content (41%). However, of the remaining proportion, the majority prefer to watch a podcast with video if available (29%) while some are happy to play the video in the background but not actively watch it (23%). People who use YouTube, Amazon and TuneIn to listen to podcasts are much more likely to prefer actively watching video podcasts than the average listener, while there was no significant difference in terms of appetite for video for BBC Sounds or Spotify listeners. This is particularly interesting in the case of Spotify, which has been steadily increasing the type and amount of video content available to its Premium subscribers in recent years. While not a new idea, as highlighted by this BBC news article from 2015, the pivot to pushing video highlights the platform's desire to hold subscribers' attention on a screen, which older forms of audio – e.g. radio, owned recorded music – have not needed. And, according to the results of this survey, is not yet gaining traction with podcast listeners.

[6] Ofcom Podcast Survey 2025. Q21 How often, if at all, do you listen to the following types of podcasts? Podcasts that also have videos e.g. TED Talks. Base: all respondents who listen to podcasts at least once a week (1,504)

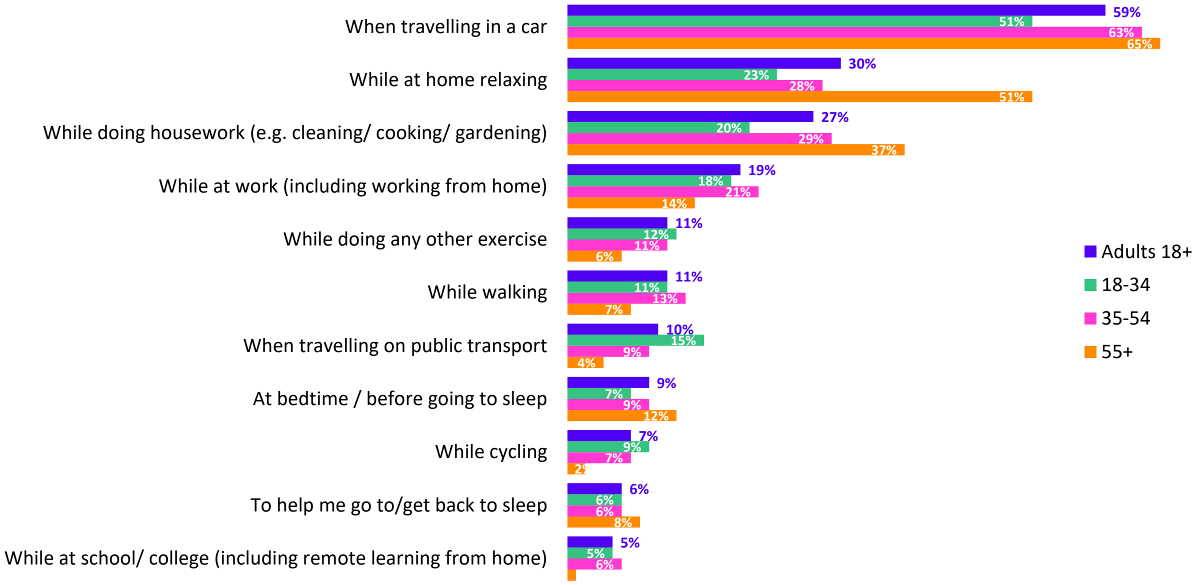
Figure 13: How listeners prefer to consume video podcasts



Source: Ofcom Podcast Survey 2025. Q21B(NEW). Not all podcasts are audio-only, many also have video. Thinking about the majority of your podcast listening, which statement best describes how you consume podcasts? Base: All respondents who listen to Podcasts that also have videos (1,032)

As we've touched on above, the question of whether to watch or listen to a podcast is entirely inseparable from what people are doing at the time. Certainly for some listeners, the preference for audio-only podcasts – or at least their ambivalence towards video – stems from the fact that they are doing something else at the time that requires their attention. The car is an important environment for audio for this reason, as mentioned above, and also according to our survey the most popular location for podcast listening. Just under six in ten adults say they usually listen in the car (59%) with the next most popular activities being while at home relaxing (30%) and while doing housework (27%).

Figure 14: Activities and locations for podcast listening



Source: Ofcom Podcast Survey 2025. Q7 When do you usually listen to them? Base: all respondents who listen to podcasts at least once a week (1,504)

What types of podcasts are people listening to?

The average podcast listener listens to five podcasts each week

Consistent with our findings last year, the average podcast listener follows or subscribes to six podcasts and listens to five episodes each week. Findings from Edison Podcast Metrics reveal that almost two thirds of podcast listeners (64%) spend more than three hours each week listening to podcasts, with around one in six listening for ten hours or more (17%).[7] Three in five (60%) podcast listeners also say that they spend more time listening to podcasts now than they did a year ago and almost three quarters (74%) say they've binge-listened to podcasts in the past.[8] Our research also reveals that four out of five (78%) of people agree that podcasts offer more choice in what to listen to compared to radio.

Entertainment, news and current affairs, comedy and discussion shows remain the most popular types of podcasts

Looking at the kinds of podcast people are listening to; entertainment, news and current affairs, comedy and discussion and talk shows remain the most popular, with each reaching 45-50% of regular podcast listeners each week.

News and current affairs podcasts remain the most popular type of podcast among those aged 55 and over, but have also taken the top spot among 35-54s, surpassing both entertainment and comedy podcasts. While news and current affairs, politics and discussion and talk shows remain the top three types of podcasts among the 55+ age group, their popularity has declined over the past year as other genres have increased their listenership, potentially suggesting this age group are listening to a wider range of podcasts. Politics podcasts remain popular in both the 35-54 and 55+

[7] Edison Podcast Metrics UK Q2 2024 – Q1 2025
[8] Edison Podcast Metrics UK Q2 2024 – Q1 2025

age groups, but this year also sees them enter the top ten genres for 18-34s, replacing true crime podcasts.

Figure 15: Top ten types of podcast listened to at least weekly by age group

	18-34		35-54		55+	
1	Entertainment	57%	News and current affairs	48%	News and current affairs	46%
2	Comedy	53%	Entertainment	45%	Politics	37%
3	Discussion and talk shows	50%	Comedy	45%	Discussion and talk shows	32%
4	News and current affairs	46%	Discussion and talk shows	45%	Entertainment	31%
5	Society and culture	44%	Politics	40%	Comedy	30%
6	Health and Wellbeing	42%	Health and Wellbeing	37%	Music	29%
7	TV and film	42%	Society and culture	35%	Football	22%
8	Politics	40%	Football	35%	Society and culture	21%
9	Football	40%	TV and film	33%	TV and film	20%
10	Hobbies	39%	Hobbies	32%	Health and Wellbeing	19%

Source: Ofcom Podcast Survey 2025. Base: all regular podcast listeners (1504) NET weekly figure. Percentages refers to percent of weekly podcast listeners in each age group.

The Joe Rogan Experience is the most popular podcast in the UK and Goalhanger has the most entries in the top ten

The Edison Podcast Metrics UK Podcast Ranker places *The Joe Rogan Experience,* hosted by American comedian, presenter, and mixed martial arts commentator Joe Rogan, as the show with the largest weekly audience in the UK over the last year, reaching one in ten (10.0%) weekly podcast listeners aged 15 and older. This podcast's audience is particularly popular among those aged 15-34 and the vast majority of its listeners are male (86.9%).

The second most popular podcast *The Diary of a CEO*, in which British entrepreneur and investor Steven Bartlett interviews guests, reaches just half has many weekly podcast listeners (5.1%). The UK's largest independent podcast producer Goalhanger has three podcasts from its *"The Rest is…"* series in the top ten: *The Rest is Politics* (5.1% weekly reach), *The Rest is History* (3.1%) and *The Rest is Football* (3.1%). *The Rest is Politics*, hosted by Alastair Campbell and Rory Stewart, takes the top spot among listeners aged 55 and older.

The only podcast from a UK broadcaster in Edison's top ten list is Global's daily news podcast *The News Agents*, with the BBC's first entry being *Newscast* at number 11. BBC podcasts feature significantly more prominently when looking at podcasts among listeners aged 55 and older, with half of their top ten podcasts coming from the broadcaster.

Edison Research uses Apple's broad genres to categorise podcasts, which differ from the genres we ask audiences about in our research. Discussion/interview podcasts where a regular hosts talk to rotating guests are a popular format that may not fit so neatly into classic radio genres, often straddling the line between entertainment, news and comedy. While Edison doesn't use entertainment as a genre, we can still see the trend that younger audiences tend to prefer comedy podcasts whereas those aged 55 and older have a greater interest in news.

Figure 16: Top 10 podcasts in the UK with the largest weekly audience, split by age group: Q2 2024 – Q1 2025

Rank	Adults 15+		Adults 15-34s		Adults 55+	
1	The Joe Rogan Experience	10.0%	The Joe Rogan Experience	15.1%	The Rest is Politics	8.3%
2	The Diary of a CEO	5.1%	The Diary of a CEO	5.6%	Newscast	6.1%
3	The Rest is Politics	5.1%	Saving Grace	5.5%	The Archers	5.7%
4	Sh**ged Married Annoyed	3.3%	ShxtsNGigs	4.7%	Desert Island Discs	4.7%
5	The Rest is History	3.1%	The Fellas	3.7%	The News Agents	4.5%
6	The Rest is Football	3.1%	Sh**ged Married Annoyed	3.6%	The Rest is History	4.4%
7	That Peter Crouch Podcast	3.0%	The Rest is Politics	3.4%	Americast	4.4%
8	Off Menu	2.8%	Off Menu	3.4%	That Peter Crouch Podcast	3.3%
9	The News Agents	2.6%	Call Her Daddy	2.8%	Uncanny	3.2%
10	Saving Grace	2.4%	The Rest is Football	2.7%	The Rest is Entertainment	3.0%

Genres:	Comedy	Business	News	Sports	History	Society & Culture	Others

Source: Edison Podcast Metrics UK, Q2 2024 – Q1 2025. Base: Weekly podcast listeners aged 15 and older (8508). Genres reflect the broad primary genre category chosen by the podcast creator on Apple Podcasts, as defined by Apple. Percentage refers to percent of weekly podcast listeners who listen to the podcast in each age group.

The majority of listeners are comfortable with the amount of adverts in their podcasts and two in five would be willing to pay

The majority of podcasts that aren't produced by the BBC rely on advertising and sponsorships as a primary means of income. Advertising is often included in podcasts in a different way to other forms of media, for example the hosts of a podcast may read and discuss a sponsored product rather than having an advert inserted into a break in the content. We've found that a sizeable minority of people (40%) agree that advertising and sponsorships on podcasts are less intrusive than on other forms of media they consume. However, our research also reveals mixed views around the amount of advertising on podcasts: the majority of listeners (55%) are comfortable with the amount of advertising on the podcasts they listen to, but more than four in ten (45%) say that they think there are too many adverts.

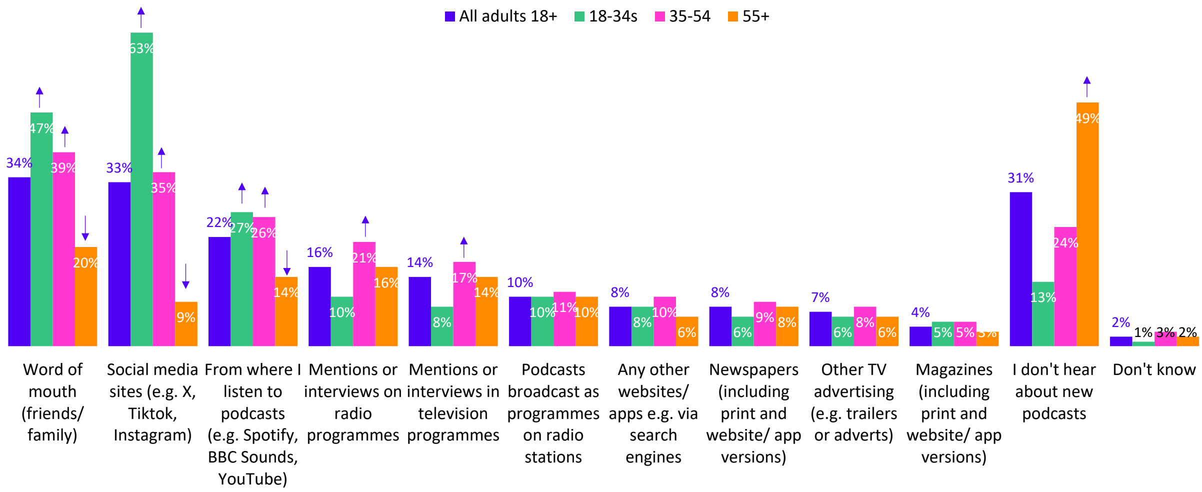
Many podcasts also offer listeners a paid premium subscription which might give them an ad-free version of the podcast, exclusive content or other perks. Our research shows that two in five podcast listeners (38%) would be happy to pay for a subscription to their favourite podcasts, though this willingness decreases with age.

Where are people hearing about new podcasts?

Social media and word of mouth are the most popular ways to hear about new podcasts, particularly for younger listeners

A key challenge for any new podcast is how to cut through the noise and connect with listeners. When it comes to discovering new podcasts, social media and word of mouth are the most effective way to reach new audiences, particularly younger listeners. Around a third of listeners hear about new podcasts from friends and family (34%) or social media (33%), but this jumps to 47% and 63% for listeners aged 18-34. Similarly, listeners under the age of 55 are also more likely to report hearing about new podcasts from where they listen to them (e.g. Spotify, BBC Sounds, YouTube) than the average. Older listeners are much more likely to say they don't hear about new podcasts: almost half (49%) compared to the average of 31%.

Figure 17: Where listeners hear about new podcasts, split by age



Source: Ofcom Podcast Survey 2025. Q6I Where do you tend to hear about new podcasts? Base: all respondents (2368). Arrows indicate results are statistically significant compared to adults 18+ figure at the 95% confidence level or above.

Wherever you hear about new podcasts, you can find further analysis of radio and audio trends, across a breadth of industry and audience metrics, in our annual Media Nations report. Our next report will be published in the summer.