

Two large, stylized arrows pointing upwards and to the right. The front arrow is blue, and the back arrow is grey. They are overlapping, with the blue arrow in front of the grey one.

OFCOM BBC CHILDREN'S TRACKER YEAR 5 (2024-2025) TECHNICAL REPORT

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1 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 2024-2025 replicated the study that was conducted for Ofcom in 2023-2024, 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 2024-2025 Critical Research interviewed a sample of 4,561 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 2024 – 2,250 interviews
- Wave 2 fieldwork in March 2025 – 2,311 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 2021 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.

2 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	1,009	203	203	102	1,517
Aged 8-11	1,019	204	204	98	1,525
Aged 12-16	1,017	203	198	101	1,519
Total	3,045	610	605	301	4,561

3 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	33%	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	34%	30%
SEG – C1	22%	28%
SEG – C2	21%	19%
SEG – DE	23%	22%

4 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 size¹ (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	4,561	3,615
Aged 3-7	1,517	1,199
Aged 8-11	1,525	1,216
Aged 12-16	1,519	1,226
Boys aged 3-16	2,286	1,812
Girls aged 3-16	2,275	1,806
England	3,045	2,772
Scotland	610	584
Wales	605	548
Northern Ireland	301	290
SEG – AB	1,538	1,262
SEG – C1	994	825
SEG – C2	965	803
SEG – DE	1,053	818

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%
	±	±	±	±	±
3,615 (Total aged 3-16)	1.0%	1.3%	1.5%	1.6%	1.6%
584 (Nation: Scotland)	2.4%	3.2%	3.7%	4.0%	4.1%
818 (SEG: DE)	2.1%	2.7%	3.1%	3.4%	3.4%

For example, if 30% or 70% of a sample of 3,615 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%
	±	±	±	±	±
1,262 vs. 818 (AB vs. DE)	2.6%	3.5%	4.0%	4.3%	4.4%
1,812 vs. 1,806 (Boys vs. Girls)	2.0%	2.6%	3.0%	3.2%	3.3%