

The Online Experiences Tracker (Wave 9, January 2026) Technical Report

To accompany The Online Experiences data tables

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Contents

1.Preface & Objectives	3
1.1 Summary of Approach	3
2.Methods	3
2.1 Population & sampling frame	3
2.2 Recruitment & quota design	4
2.3 Boost	4
2.4 Weighting	5
2.5 Fieldwork timings ethics & participant support; QA checks	7
2.6 Significance Testing	7
3.Sample Representativeness	7
4.Statistical Reliability	9
5. Appendix	11
Appendix A. Prioritisation of codes for summary tables:	11
Appendix B. Financial vulnerability	11
Appendix C. Changes to the questionnaire between waves	12
NET definitions featured in the published tables:	22

1. Preface & Objectives

Wave 9 of the Online Experiences Tracker was undertaken by YouGov on behalf of Ofcom.

The objectives of this quantitative tracking study, as with previous waves of the research, were to gain a deeper understanding of internet users' attitudes towards and use of the internet, and their experiences of potential harms online, and to monitor these over time.

The insights collected from this tracking data over time have served to shape Ofcom's preparations for their duties under The Online Safety Act 2023. The data from the tracker continues to inform policymakers and other users of these statistics about items covered by the Act.

This report refers to the ninth wave completed in January 2026. Further information about the study is summarised in the sections below. More information on the previous wave's approach and methodology is available [here](#).

1.1 Summary of Approach

- The **Online Experiences Tracker** is conducted among a nationally representative sample of UK internet users aged 18+ and explores attitudes toward and use of the internet, as well as experiences of potentially harmful behaviour or content online.
- The **Online Experiences Tracker** is a multi-wave study with fieldwork in November 2021, May 2022, July 2023, January 2024, May/June 2024, January 2025, June/July 2025 and, most recently, January 2026 (**Wave 9**).
- Waves 1-7 were conducted among a nationally representative sample of **UK internet users aged 13-84**. From **summer 2025 (Wave 8 onwards)**, the sampling frame was revised to **adults aged 18+** only, reflecting Ofcom's decision to run a dedicated, parallel study of children's online experiences. For more information, please refer to [this document](#).
- All recruitment was conducted via the **YouGov panel**. For Wave 8 (18+), the **quota frame was updated**: YouGov implemented **interlocking quotas** across **gender, age, region, education and socio-economic group**, replacing the earlier, simpler scheme. Targeted boosts are used for low-incidence groups to support robust subgroup analysis (e.g. residents of specific UK nations, people of specific religions, and minority ethnic groups).
- A total of **7,494 interviews** (including boosts) were completed for Wave 9, with overall **18+** sample sizes similar to Waves **1, 2, 5, 6 and 7**. Fieldwork ran **5th - 20th January 2026**.
- The average interview length was 16 minutes 50 seconds at Wave 9, compared with 16 minutes 45 seconds at Wave 8.

2. Methods

2.1 Population & sampling frame

The population is UK adults aged 18+ who use the internet.

Why the YouGov panel?

Fieldwork is conducted via the YouGov online panel using active sampling (invite-only access; one completion per panellist). YouGov's large, deeply profiled panel enables: (i) implementation of interlocking quotas and targeted boosts for low-incidence groups; (ii) rapid fieldwork at national scale; and (iii) consistent quality

controls and recontact options where consent is given.

Targets for quota setting and weighting

Quota and weighting targets are derived from established reference sources, specifically:

- the UK Census;
- large-scale random-probability surveys (e.g. Labour Force Survey, National Readership Survey, British Election Study);
- Official ONS population estimates.

(See [Sections 2.2](#) and [2.4](#) for quota design and weighting details.)

2.2 Recruitment & quota design

All participants were recruited from the YouGov online panel. YouGov maintains a large online panel recruited via multiple sources (standard advertising and strategic partnerships across a wide range of websites). On joining, panellists provide detailed socio-demographic information. For this study, YouGov used active sampling: a sub-sample of the panel representative of UK adults (18+) was drawn and invited to participate. Only selected invitees could access the questionnaire via their username/password, and each panellist could complete the survey only once.

From Wave 8 (Summer 2025), interlocking **quotas** were applied to control fieldwork across key variables - age × **gender × region × education × social grade** - with all recruitment occurring within the YouGov panel. (Earlier waves used a simpler quota scheme; [see comparability note.](#))

2.3 Boost

Upon completion of the main fieldwork, targeted boosts were applied to secure sufficient base sizes for analysis: a minimum combined base of n=100 across ethnic minority groups, and n=100 across low-incidence religious minority groups (Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism). Additional nation boosts brought the achieved samples to n=399 in Wales and n=366 in Northern Ireland.

Due to the significantly low incidence rate seen among some specific ethnic groups, a boost is implemented to encourage best efforts, however it is not necessary to attain a maximum of 100 completes (e.g. Gypsy or Irish travellers or Arab).

There was an overlap observed among certain groups, such as Irish (ethnicity) and Northern Ireland (UK nation), Hindus (religion) and Indians (ethnicity), which consequently led to certain groups having a higher number of completions compared to others.

The boost interviews are included in overall totals; however, they are not weighted back to population proportions in those totals. As a result, overall totals may over-represent boosted groups relative to the population. For subgroup reporting, we show unweighted base sizes alongside weighted percentages.

The table below shows the unweighted and weighted numbers of completes for each boosted group:

Demographic	Category	Total achieved	Nat rep achieved	Boost achieved	Total achieved	Nat rep achieved	Boost achieved
		Unweighted			Weighted		
Ethnicity	Irish	131	62	69	131	62	69
	Gypsy or Irish Traveller	34	3	31	34	3	31
	White and Black Caribbean	102	35	67	103	36	67

	White and Black African	101	16	85	102	17	85
	White and Asian	107	40	67	107	40	67
	Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background	107	30	77	108	31	77
	Indian	258	54	204	260	56	204
	Pakistani	104	40	64	105	41	64
	Bangladeshi	101	12	89	102	13	89
	Chinese	110	26	84	111	27	84
	Any other Asian background	112	36	76	113	37	76
	African	103	83	20	106	86	20
	Caribbean	102	20	82	103	21	82
	Any other Black / African / Caribbean background	102	10	92	102	10	92
	Arab	55	5	50	55	5	50
	Any other ethnic group	104	19	85	104	19	85
Religion	Judaism	122	38	84	121	37	84
	Hinduism	134	24	110	135	25	110
	Sikhism	106	9	97	106	9	97
	Buddhism	119	23	96	119	23	96
UK nations	Wales	399	283	116	396	280	116
	Northern Ireland	366	159	207	364	157	207

2.4 Weighting

Results are rim-weighted to YouGov's national 18+ profile on age, gender, region, education and social grade. Boosts: handled as described in [§2.3 Boosts](#); in brief, boosted interviews are included in totals but not rebalanced to population proportions. Subgroup outputs show unweighted bases alongside weighted percentages.

For Waves 1-7, weighting followed the earlier quota/target frame (covering internet users aged 13-84) and those original weights are retained. No retrospective reweighting has been applied. Consequently, differences between Waves 8 and 9 and earlier waves may reflect both true change and the different quota/weighting schemes used across waves.

Below is a comparison of the final sample for Wave 5, Wave 6, Wave 7, Wave 8 against the final data in Wave 9 across key demographics:

Demographic group	Category	Wave 5	Wave 6	Wave 7	Wave 8	Wave 9
Total sample	Adults 18+ only	7,068	7,280	7,378	7,340	7,494
Gender	Male	47%	47%	48%	46%	47%
	Female	51%	51%	51%	52%	51%
Age	18-24	11%	12%	11%	10%	10%
	25-34	19%	20%	20%	17%	16%
	35-44	19%	18%	19%	19%	20%
	45-54	19%	19%	19%	15%	16%
	55-64	15%	14%	15%	17%	17%
	65-74	11%	11%	11%	15%	15%
	75-84	6%	6%	6%	7%	7%
Region	Scotland	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%
	North East	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%
	North West	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%
	Yorkshire & Humberside	7%	7%	7%	8%	8%
	West Midlands	9%	9%	9%	8%	8%
	East Midlands	6%	6%	6%	7%	7%
	Wales	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%
	East of England	9%	9%	8%	8%	9%
	London	17%	17%	17%	17%	16%
	South East	13%	13%	13%	13%	13%
	South West	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%
	Northern Ireland	4%	4%	5%	5%	5%
Social Grade	ABC1	59%	60%	60%	62%	61%
	C2DE	41%	40%	40%	38%	39%
Ethnicity	English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	66%	62%	63%	70%	70%
	Irish	4%	4%	4%	2%	2%
	Gypsy or Irish Traveller	1%	1%	1%	1%	0.5%
	Any other White background	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
	White and Black Caribbean	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%
	White and Black African	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%
	White and Asian	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%
	Indian	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%
	Pakistani	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%
	Bangladeshi	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
	Chinese	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%
	Caribbean	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%
	African	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%
Arab	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	
Religion	No religion	50%	49%	48%	50%	49%
	Catholic	9%	11%	11%	9%	8%
	Church of England/Scotland/Ireland	17%	17%	17%	18%	19%

Muslim	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%
Hindu	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Jewish	1%	2%	2%	1%	2%
Sikh	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Buddhist	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%
Other religion	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Prefer not to say	4%	5%	5%	5%	5%

2.5 Fieldwork timings ethics & participant support; QA checks

Nationally representative main fieldwork ran **5th-12th January 2026**; boost interviewing was completed by **20th January 2026**.

Due to the highly sensitive nature of some of the research topics (e.g. experiences of potentially harmful behaviour or content online), respondents were given the option to end the survey at three points. They were also forewarned of the sensitive nature of the research topic and asked to give their consent to participate, in line with MRS guidelines.

Participants who opted out (and also those who completed the survey) were provided with a list of resources if further support was needed.

The questionnaire also included questions designed to obtain consent to be contacted for participation in further qualitative research into online habits, attitudes and behaviours, as well as experience of potential online harms. This data is managed and stored in line with GDPR commitments.

Quality assurance included in-survey controls (incidence and attention check questions, and bespoke open-end prompts) and post fieldwork manual reviews: removal of respondents with invalid or unreasonable response patterns, flatlining checks across grids/scales, and open-end reviews to ensure thoughtful, non-spam responses. Cases failing QA are removed and excluded from final demographic quotas and the analysis dataset.

2.6 Significance Testing

Significance testing is applied at the **95%** confidence level for comparisons within Wave 9. In Wave 9 tables, significance testing is carried out between subgroups, while each subgroup is additionally tested against the total.

For comparisons between Wave 9 and other Waves we carry out significance testing at the **99%** confidence level due to the larger sample size.

3. Sample Representativeness

This section shows how the Wave 9 achieved sample (unweighted) compares with the weighted profile after calibration to YouGov's 18+ national targets. We present three standard views - age × gender, region, and social grade - to illustrate the effect of weighting on key dimensions of representativeness. As expected, weighting makes modest adjustments (e.g. correcting slight under/over-representation in some cells) so that the final profile aligns with the UK adult internet-user population.

Use the unweighted counts/percentages to understand raw sample composition and the weighted figures to interpret population estimates.

Notes: Weighted percentages may not total 100% due to rounding. "Counts" reflect rounded totals (Wave 9

achieved N≈7,494).

The following table shows both the initial unweighted sample and the final weighted sample profiles for Wave 8:

Demographic group	Unweighted counts	Unweighted %	Weighted counts	Weighted %
Male 18-34	860	11.5	887.7	11.8
Male 35-54	1265	16.9	1303.4	17.4
Male 55+	1429	19.1	1362.4	18.2
Female 18-34	948	12.7	971.2	13
Female 35-54	1307	17.4	1325.2	17.7
Female 55+	1580	21.1	1538	20.5
North East	265	3.5	260.8	3.5
North West	734	9.8	727.1	9.7
Yorkshire and the Humber	591	7.9	589.5	7.9
East Midlands	526	7	520.1	6.9
West Midlands	631	8.4	626.9	8.4
East of England	686	9.2	687.3	9.2
London	1185	15.8	1207.2	16.1
South East	984	13.1	978.2	13.1
South West	584	7.8	583.5	7.8
Wales	399	5.3	396	5.3
Scotland	543	7.2	553	7.4
Northern Ireland	366	4.9	364	4.9
AB	2507	33.5	2478.3	33.1
C1	2076	27.7	2075.5	27.7
C2	1349	18	1387.5	18.5
DE	1562	20.8	1552.7	20.7

4. Statistical Reliability

This section explains how to read sampling error in the results. We report 99% confidence intervals for estimates, and - because data are weighted - we judge precision using the effective sample size (ESS) rather than the raw N. The table below shows ESS vs. actual N for key groups to guide interpretation.

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 calculated at the 99% level: that is, the chances are 99 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 groups within the sample

KEY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS	ACTUAL BASE	ESS
TOTAL	7494	7458
GENDER: Male	3835	3820
GENDER: Female	3554	3533
AGE: 18-24	717	716
AGE: 25-34	1150	1148
AGE: 35-44	1462	1458
AGE: 45-54	1142	1138
AGE: 55-64	1240	1238
AGE: 65-74	1209	1206
AGE: 75+	574	572
SEG: AB	2507	2498
SEG: C1	2076	2067
SEG: C2	1349	1341
SEG: DE	1562	1553

The table below illustrates the required ranges for different sample sizes and percentage results at the “99% confidence interval”:

Variables	Actual Sample	Effective Sample	10% or 90%	20% or 80%	30% or 70%	40% or 60%	50%
Total	7494	7458	0.90	1.19	1.37	1.46	1.49
Female	3835	3820	1.25	1.67	1.91	2.04	2.09
Male	3554	3533	1.30	1.73	1.99	2.12	2.17
18-24	717	716	2.90	3.86	4.42	4.73	4.83
25-34	1150	1148	2.29	3.05	3.49	3.73	3.81
35-44	1462	1458	2.03	2.70	3.10	3.31	3.38

45-54	1142	1138	2.30	3.06	3.51	3.75	3.83
55-64	1240	1238	2.20	2.93	3.36	3.59	3.67
65-74	1209	1206	2.23	2.97	3.41	3.64	3.72
75+	574	572	3.24	4.32	4.95	5.30	5.41
AB	2507	2498	1.55	2.06	2.36	2.53	2.58
C1	2076	2067	1.70	2.27	2.60	2.78	2.84
C2	1349	1341	2.11	2.82	3.23	3.45	3.52
DE	1562	1553	1.96	2.62	3.00	3.21	3.27
Ethnic Minorities	1568	1566	1.96	2.61	2.99	3.19	3.26
White	5666	5633	1.03	1.37	1.57	1.68	1.72

For example, if 30% or 70% of a sample of 7,358 gives a particular answer, the chances are 99 in 100 that the “true” value will fall within the range of +/- 1.37 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 “99% 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 significance at or near these percentages:

Variable		Actual Sample	Effective Sample	10% or 90%	20% or 80%	30% or 70%	40% or 60%	50%
Gender	Female	3554	3533	1.80	2.41	2.76	2.95	3.01
	Male	3835	3820					
Age	18-24	717	716	4.99	6.65	7.62	8.15	8.31
	25-34	1150	1148					
	35-44	1462	1458					
	45-54	1142	1138					
	55+	3023	3016					
Social Grade	ABC1	4583	4565	1.84	2.45	2.81	3.00	3.06
	C2DE	2911	2894					
Ethnicity	Minorities	1568	1566	2.21	2.94	3.37	3.61	3.68
	White	5666	5633					

5. Appendix

Appendix A. Prioritisation of codes for summary tables:

Regarding the Q7_any named harm summary tables, where respondents' concern levels were asked for listed potential harms, codes are prioritised in the following order: Code 5 (Very concerned_ >4>3>2> 1(Mildly Concerned). If a respondent answered code 6 (Not concerned at all) or code 7 (Don't know), then code 6 was kept.

Prioritisation was also applied to Q46 combined summary tables, where respondents were asked confidence in the Online Safety Act in keeping adults and children safe, codes are prioritised in the following order: (Very Confident 1>2>3>4>5 Not at all confident).

Appendix B. Financial vulnerability

We have included in each set of data tables a measure for household financial vulnerability, ranging from most to least vulnerable. This definition was provided by Ofcom and is based on household income and household composition (i.e., size of household and number of children) and can only be run on data where respondents have given a response at each of these questions. The definition of each group has remained in line with Wave 2 specifications.

The following breakdown shows the detailed definitions for each group:

MOST financially vulnerable	POTENTIALLY financially vulnerable	LEAST financially vulnerable
Household income under £10,399	Earning between £10,400 - £25,999	Earning between £26,600 - £36,399
All respondents	1-2 adults, 0-1 child	1 adult, 0 children
	3 adults, no children	
Earning between £10,400 - £25,999	Earning between £26,000 - £36,399	Earning between £36,400 - £51,999
1-2 adults, 2+ children	1 adult, 1 to 3 children	1 adult, 0-1 child
3+ adults, 1+ children	2 adults, 0 to 3 children	2 adults, 0 children
4+ adults	3 adults, 0 to 1 child	
	4 adults, no children	
Earning between £26,000 - £36,399	Earning between £36,400 - £51,999	Household income £52,000+
1 adult, 4+ children	1 adult, 2-3 children	All households
2 adults, 4+ children	2 adults, 1-2 children	
3 adults, 2+ children	3 adults, 0-2 children	
4 adults, 1+ children	4 adults, 0-1 child	
5+ adults	5 adults, 0 children	
Earning between £36,400 - £51,999		
1 adult, >3 children		
2 adults, 3+ children		
3 adults, 3+ children		

4 adults, 2+ children		
5 adults, 1+ children		
6+ adults		

Appendix C. Changes to the questionnaire between waves

Multiple additions and amendments were made to the questionnaire as either improvements or revisions, in line with the shifting policy focus. A summary of changes has been included below ¹.

Category	Question/Net	Wave	Definition
Wellbeing			
New questions added	WB1	Wave 7	Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?
	WB2		Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?
	WB3		On a scale where 0 is "not at all anxious" and 10 is "completely anxious", overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?
	WB4		Overall, to what extent do you feel that the things you do in your life are worthwhile?
Attitudes			
Text change (delete changed to remove)	Q1_5	Wave 9	The Internet has an important role in supporting free speech, even when some users might find the content offensive vs. It is important for sites to monitor and remove offensive views to protect other users
<p style="color: red;">Question removed:</p> <p style="color: red;">Q2. Please think about how much of your personal time you spend online across a typical week. This includes time using social media and messaging, watching films, TV programmes and videos online, playing games online, on video calls, searching for information online and doing homework. Please do not include any time you spend online for work or at your school, college or university.</p>	Q2	Wave 7	None
			Less than 6 hours
			6 to 11 hours
			11 to 22 hours
			22 to 30 hours

¹ For reference, copies of questionnaires have been published alongside this report: <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/online-research/internet-users-experience-of-harm-online>

<p>This could be using a mobile phone, laptop, tablet (like an iPad), computer, games console or Smart TV. Please think about weekdays and weekends, either at home or anywhere else. How many hours in a typical week would you say you spend online?</p>			Over 30 hours
			Don't know/unsure
Question removed:	Q5	Wave 7	Only used websites or apps that you have used before
<p>Q5. In the last month, when you have gone online, have you....</p>			Used maybe one or two websites or apps that you have not used before
			Used lots of websites or apps that you have not used before
			Have not gone online in the last month
Q7/8/9			
<p>New codes added to Q7/Q8/Q9</p>	<p>Q7/Q8/Q9</p>	<p>Wave 5</p>	Content that shames or stigmatizes certain body types e.g. body size, shape or features
			Receiving unrequested gifts or in-game gifts from someone you've had brief, or no communication with, online or offline
		<p>Wave 8</p>	Content that promotes or glamourises the carrying of weapons
			Content which facilitates the access to 3D printed firearms and other weapons, digital files and instructional material
		<p>Wave 9</p>	Content that helps illegal or unlawful immigration into the UK

			False reporting (when someone or their content is maliciously reported to a platform)
			Lockout and control (when someone takes control of your account, for example to remove or post content, without your permission)
	Q8/9 - Any Named Harm	Wave 8	Q8/Q9 any named harm codes 1-49
		Wave 9	Q8/Q9 any named harm codes 1-52
Text change	Q7/Q8/Q9	Wave 7	Content encouraging or assisting serious self-harm
			Content encouraging or assisting suicide
		Wave 9	Hateful, offensive or discriminatory content that targets a group or person based on specific characteristics such as race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, disability or gender identity; e.g. hate speech
			Content facilitating human trafficking (including sexual and labour exploitation, or recruitment for county lines activity)
Codes removed as a result of change to 18+ sample in Wave 8	Q7/Q8/Q9	Wave 8	Sexual/ pornographic content [ONLY SHOWN TO UNDER 18]
			Content encouraging gambling, e.g. sports betting, or casino-style games [ONLY SHOW TO UNDER 18]

			Content showing dangerous stunts or online challenges [ONLY SHOW TO UNDER 18]	
			Content which advertises alcohol or cigarettes [ONLY SHOW TO UNDER 18]	
			Content which promotes and/or encourages children to eat or ingest harmful substances e.g. bleach, detergent [ONLY SHOW TO UNDER 18]	
			Content which promotes and/or encourages children to eat or ingest harmful substances e.g. bleach, detergent [ONLY SHOW TO UNDER 18]	
Q21				
Text change	Q21	Wave 5	Gaming platform website or app e.g. PlayStation Network, Nintendo Online, Roblox	
New code added		Wave 5	File sharing service e.g. Google Drive, Apple iCloud	
Text change		Wave 6		Social media website or app e.g. Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram
				Online gaming website or app, but not including in-game chat e.g. Fortnite, EA Sports FC 24, Roblox
				A Q&A website or app e.g. Quora
				Video on demand website or app e.g. Netflix, Now
				Generative AI e.g. ChatGPT, Snapchat MyAI
Codes removed		Wave 6	Shopping website or app e.g. Amazon, eBay, Depop	
New codes added	Wave 6	User to user marketplaces e.g. Facebook Marketplace, eBay, Vinted		

			Retail shopping e.g. Amazon, Tesco, Temu
Q21a			
New code added to Q21a	Q21a	Wave 5	In an advertisement
Q22			
New codes added to Q22	Q22	Wave 7	Trovo Kawi
Q23			
New codes added to Q23	Q23	Wave 5	Google Bard
			Bing AI
			Ekoru
		Wave 6	Ocean Hero
			Search HQ
			Tineye
Code wording updated		Wave 6	Google Gemini
		Wave 8	Qwant
Q24			
Code wording updated	Q24	Wave 5	Twitter/X
		Wave 6	X (formerly Twitter)
New codes added to Q24		Wave 5	DeviantArt
			Threads
		Wave 6	Mastodon
			XPro (formerly Tweetdeck)
			Bluesky
			Tusky
			Twidere
			Fedilab
			Tooot
		Toot!	
Wave 8		Stars Messenger	
		Kinzoo	
		TextNow	
		Wizz	
	JusTalk		
Codes removed (11, 21,22 & 23 [21-23]because of change to 18+ sample in Wave 8)	Wave 8	Skype	
		Grom [ONLY SHOW 13-17]	
		Momio [ONLY SHOW 13-17]	
			GoBubble [ONLY SHOW 13-17]
Q25			
Code wording updated	Q25	Wave 5	Twitter/X
		Wave 6	X (formerly Twitter)

New codes added to Q25		Wave 5	Clapper	
		Wave 7	Trovo	
Q26				
Codes removed	Q26	Wave 5	Threads	
			Wave 5	Omegle
New code added to Q26			Wave 5	Clapper
		Wave 8		Stars Messenger
				Kinzoo
				TextNow
			Wizz	
		JusTalk		
Code wording updated		Wave 9	Instagram direct (DMs)	
Q27				
Code wording updated	Q27	Wave 5	Xbox Network (formerly Xbox LIVE)	
			Wave 8	EA Sports FC
Code removed			Wave 5	Fruitlab
				Metaverse
		Wave 6		Nintendo Online
				PlayStation Network
				Steam
				Xbox Network (formerly Xbox LIVE)
				Apple Arcade
				VR Chat
				Rec room
			Horizon World	
		Metaverse		
		Wave 8	FIFA	
New codes added		Wave 6		Fortnite
				EA Sports FC 24
				Call of Duty HQ (Modern Warfare III, Modern Warfare II, Warzone)
			Grant Theft Auto V/Online	
			Rocket League	
			Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Siege	
			F1	
			FIFA	
			The Legend of Zelda	
			Super Mario (Wonder, Mario Kart)	
			Candy Crush Saga	
			Royal Match	
	Pokémon GO			
	Among Us			

		Wave 8	Block Blast
			Toca Boca World
			Magic Tiles 3
Q28			
Code removed	Q28	Wave 6	Yahoo Answers
Q29			
<p>New question added</p> <p>Q29. Which file sharing service were you using when you experienced [insert harm selected at Q9]?</p>	Q29	Wave 5	DropBox
			Google Drive
			One Drive
			WeTransfer
			Box
			Apple AirDrop
			Apple iCloud
			Other
			Can't remember
			Prefer not to say
New codes added		Wave 7	Mega
			Amazon Photos
Q30			
<p>New question added:</p> <p>Q30. Which generative AI tool were you using when you experienced [insert harm selected at Q9]?</p>	Q30	Wave 7	ChatGPT plugin e.g. on Expedia, Kayak
			Snapchat My AI
			Google Gemini (formerly Bard)
			Microsoft CoPilot (formerly Bing Chat)
			DALL-E
			Midjourney
			Character.AI
			Scribe
			AlphaCode
			Quillbot
			Synthesia
			Claude from Anthropic
			Perplexity
			Stability AI's tools
			Grok on X (formerly Twitter)
			Other
Can't remember			
Prefer not to say			
New codes added		Wave 8	Gauth
			Talkie AI
			DeepAI
			DeepSeek
			Sora

			Apple Intelligence
Q32a			
New code added	Q32a	Wave 6	Someone I don't know online e.g. a stranger on social media
Q32c			
Question wording/routing change	Q32c	Waves 5, 6 & 7	<p>You mentioned that you received an [insert contact harm from Q9] Thinking about the most recent experience you had, can you please tell us who this content/message was from? Please remember that you do not have to answer this question.</p> <p>Contact harms routed from this question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Unwelcome friend or follow requests, or message ○ Stalking, cyberstalking or harassing behaviour ○ People pretending to be another person, e.g. 'catfishing' ○ Persistent bullying online ○ Trolling, i.e. a person who says something to cause intentional upset or provoke a negative reaction ○ Pressure to send sexual or nude images or videos ○ People sending unwanted/unsolicited sexual or nude images or videos, e.g. 'cyber flashing' ○ Private/intimate information made public, e.g. 'doxxing' ○ Sharing of, or threats to share, intimate images without consent e.g. 'revenge porn' ○ Intentional harassment during gaming, e.g. 'griefing' ○ Private conversations shared without consent

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Unwanted sexual messages ○ One-off abusive behaviour or threats ○ Receiving unrequested gifts or in-game gifts from someone you've had brief, or no communication with, online or offline
		<p>Wave 6</p>	<p>You mentioned that you received an [insert contact harm from Q9] Thinking about the most recent experience you had, can you please tell us who this content/message was from? Please remember that you do not have to answer this question.</p> <p>Contact harms routed from this question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Unwelcome friend or follow requests, or message ○ Stalking, cyberstalking or harassing behaviour ○ People pretending to be another person, e.g. 'catfishing' ○ Persistent bullying online ○ Trolling, i.e. a person who says something to cause intentional upset or provoke a negative reaction ○ Pressure to send sexual or nude images or videos ○ People sending unwanted/unsolicited sexual or nude images or videos, e.g. 'cyber flashing' ○ Private/intimate information made public, e.g. 'doxxing' ○ Sharing of, or threats to share, intimate images without consent e.g. 'revenge porn' ○ Intentional harassment during gaming, e.g. 'griefing' ○ Private conversations shared without consent ○ Unwanted sexual messages ○ One-off abusive behaviour or threats ○ Receiving unrequested gifts or in-game gifts from someone you've

			had brief, or no communication with, online or offline
Q34			
Code changes		Wave 4	Yes – but I don’t understand why it was taken down (removed)
		Wave 5	Yes – but I don’t think it breached the service’s policies
Q33			
Question wording change		Wave 4	As far as you are aware, which of the following body or bodies is the regulator for online safety in the UK?
		Wave 5	As far as you are aware, which of the following body or bodies is the regulator for online safety in the UK?
Q45			
New question added: Which of the following best describes your knowledge of the Online Safety Act?		Wave 5	I have heard of the Online Safety Act and know a fair amount about it
			I have heard of the Online Safety Act but don’t know much about it
			I have never heard of the Online Safety Act
			Don’t know
Q46			

<p>New question added:</p> <p>The UK Online Safety Act 2023 makes companies that operate a wide range of online services legally responsible for keeping people in the UK, especially children, safe online when using services such as social media, chat and instant messaging services, gaming, search services etc.</p> <p>How confident are you, if at all, that the Online Safety Act will keep each of the following safe online?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Children (under 18s) -Adults 		Wave 5	Fairly confident
			Not very confident
			Not at all confident
			Don't know

Where appropriate YouGov used ‘PDLs’ which are information identifiers assigned to panel members based on their previous responses. PDLs used in Waves 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9:

- Region
- Ethnicity
- Religion
- Social Grade

NET definitions featured in the published tables:

Certain subgroups within the sample were grouped together to aid analysis and are featured alongside this report in the published data tables. The definitions of these so-called ‘NETs’ are in the table below.

Changes to some ‘NET’ definitions were made between the different waves of the research. Wherever present, these have been noted in the ‘Wave’ column in the table below:

Category	NET	Wave	Definition
Demographics			
Ethnicity	White		English/ Welsh/ Scottish/ Northern Irish/ British
			Irish
			Gypsy, Traveller or Irish Traveller
			Any other white background
	Mixed/ Multiple ethnic groups		White and Black Caribbean

			Waves 5, 6 7, 8 & 9	White and Black African
				White and Asian
				Any other mixed/ multiple ethnic background
				Indian
				Pakistani
				Bangladeshi
				Chinese
				Any other Asian background
				Caribbean
				African
				Any other black/ African/ Caribbean background
				Arab
				Any other ethnic background
Limiting/Impacting Conditions* Adults and Children (No longer asking about Wave 8)	Any	Waves 5, 6 7, 8 & 9	Any reported limiting/impacting condition	
	Mental Health Condition		Your mental health? Anxiety, depression, or trauma-related conditions, for example	
	No disability		Nothing – no impairments or conditions impact or limit your daily activities or the work you can do	
Q2: Internet Usage				
Hours online	Low usage	Waves 5 & 6	None	
	Medium usage		Less than 6 hours	
			6 to 11 hours	
			12 to 22 hours	
	High usage		23 to 30 hours	
			Over 30 hours	
Q3: Attitudes				
Platform vs individual responsibility	It is the responsibility of the website or app to control what is posted on their site	Onus on platform	Waves 5, 6 7, 8 & 9	If score 0-3

y	vs. It is the responsibility of the individual to ensure what they are posting is appropriate for other users	The neutrals		If score 4-6
		Onus on the individual		If score 7-10
Search engine vs individual responsibility	It is the responsibility of the search engine to control what is presented in search results vs. It is the responsibility of the individual to ensure they have the correct settings in place to only be presented with content appropriate for them	Onus on the search engine	Waves 5, 6 7, 8 & 9	If score 0-3
		The neutrals		If score 4-6
		Onus on the individual		If score 7-10
Confidence in staying safe online	I feel confident in my ability to stay safe online vs. I do not feel confident in my ability to stay safe online	Safety confident	Waves 5, 6 7, 8 & 9	If score 0-3
		The neutrals		If score 4-6
		Not confident		If score 7-10
Benefits vs risks of going online	The benefits of going online outweigh the risks vs. The risks of going online	Benefits outweigh risks	Waves 5, 6 7, 8 & 9	If score 0-3

	outweigh the benefits	The neutrals		If score 4-6
		Risks outweigh benefits		If score 7-10
Sufficiency of common sense to protect from exposure to potential harms	Using a bit of common sense when you're online usually prevents you from seeing harmful or offensive photos and videos vs. It is impossible to avoid seeing harmful or offensive photos and videos if you go online	Common sense is sufficient	Waves 5, 6 7, 8 & 9	If score 0-3
		The neutrals		If score 4-6
		Resigned to potential harms		If score 7-10
Free speech vs content monitoring	The Internet has an important role in supporting free speech, even when some users might find the content offensive vs. It is important for sites to monitor and remove offensive views to protect	Free speech advocates	Waves 5, 6 7, 8 & 9	If score 0-3
		The neutrals		If score 4-6

	other users	Protection prioritisers		If score 7-10
Support for more online safety measures	There are enough online safety measures in place vs there should be more online safety measures in place	Measures meets needs	Waves 5, 6 7, 8 & 9	If score 0-3
		Th neutrals		If score 4-6
		Further measures needed		If score 7-10
Benefits vs risks of going online	For me personally, the benefits of going online outweigh the risks vs. For me personally, the risks of going online outweigh the benefits	Benefits outweigh risks	Waves 5, 6 7, 8 & 9	If score 0-3
		The neutrals		If score 4 to 6
		Risks outweigh benefits		If score 7-10
Societal impact	The internet is good for society vs. the internet is damaging to society	Internet is good for society	Waves 5, 6 7, 8 & 9	If score 0-3
		The neutrals		If score 4-6
		Internet is damaging society		If score 7-10
Q7 - Online harms concern				
Concern of potential harm	Net Low concern/Not concerned at all		Waves 5, 6 7, 8 & 9	1 - Mildly concerned or 2 or 6 - Not concerned at all
	Net: Low concern			1 - Mildly concerned or 2
	Net: High concern			4 or 5 - Very concerned
Q8/Q9 - Experience of Harms				

Experience of potential harm	Any Named Harm	Waves 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9	Q8 any named harm codes 1-52
	Contact/Conduct harm	Waves 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9	Unwelcome friend or follow requests, or messages
			Stalking, cyberstalking or intrusive behaviour
			People pretending to be another person, e.g. 'catfishing'
			Persistent bullying online
			Trolling, i.e. a person who says something to cause intentional upset or provoke a negative reaction
			Pressure to send sexual or nude images or videos
			People sending unwanted/unsolicited sexual or nude images or videos, e.g. 'cyber flashing'
			Private/intimate information made public, e.g. 'doxxing'
			Sharing of, or threats to share, intimate images without consent e.g. 'revenge porn'

			Intentional harassment during gaming, e.g. 'griefing'	
			Private conversations shared without consent	
			Group shaming, boycotting, or excluding someone based on their views, opinions on actions, including online 'pile-ons'	
			Generally offensive or 'bad' language, e.g. swearing, rudeness	
			Unwanted sexual messages	
			One off abusive behaviour or threats	
		Wave 8 & 9	Receiving unrequested gifts or in-game gifts from someone you've had brief, or no communication with, online or offline	
			Wave 9	False reporting (when someone or their content is maliciously reported to a platform)
				Lockout and control (when someone takes control of your account, for example to remove or post content, without your permission)
		Content harm	Waves 5, 6 7, 8 & 9	Hateful, offensive or discriminatory content that targets a group or person based on specific characteristics like race, religion, disability, sexuality or gender identity; e.g. hate speech

			Sexual/ pornographic content
			Content or language which objectifies, demeans or otherwise negatively portrays women
			Content depicting the sexual abuse or sexual exploitation of children [NOT SHOWN TO UNDER 18]
			Content encouraging extremism, radicalisation or terrorism
			Content depicting or encouraging violence or injury
			Content encouraging gambling, e.g. sports betting, or casino-style games [ONLY SHOW TO UNDER 18]
			Misinformation i.e. false or misleading stories, claims or assertions e.g. 'fake news'
			Content promoting self-harm
			Content promoting suicide
			Content promoting excessive or unhealthy dieting/exercise

			Content relating to eating disorders
			Promotion of female genital mutilation (FGM) [NOT SHOWN TO UNDER 18]
			Fake or deceptive images/videos, e.g. 'deep fakes'
			Content glamourising unhealthy or abusive lifestyles, e.g. binge drinking, drug taking
			Content depicting animal cruelty
			Content depicting dangerous stunts or online challenges [ONLY SHOWN TO UNDER 18]
			Content which advertises alcohol or cigarettes [ONLY SHOWN TO UNDER 18]
			Content facilitating human trafficking (including sexual and labour exploitation, or recruitment for county lines activity)
			Content which promotes and/or encourages children to eat or ingest harmful substances e.g. bleach, detergent [ONLY SHOW TO UNDER 18]
		Wave 9	Content that helps illegal or unlawful immigration into the UK

	Commercial harm	Waves 5, 6 7, 8 & 9	Sale or advertisement of illegal drugs or psychoactive substances e.g. ‘magic mushrooms’
			Sale or advertisement of weapons
			Collection or use of my data without my knowledge or permission
			Scams, fraud, or phishing
			Unintentionally spending money on in-app purchases or gifts
			Paid-for or sponsored content which was not clearly marked as such, e.g. ‘astroturfing’
			Content which advertises prostitution, or offers accommodation etc. in exchange for sex [NOT SHOWN TO UNDER 18]
	Net: Abusive/Bullying/Threats/Hate Speech	Wave 6, 7, 8 & 9	Hateful, offensive or discriminatory content that targets a group or person based on specific characteristics like race, religion, disability, sexuality or gender identity; e.g. hate speech
			Persistent bullying online
			Trolling, i.e. a person who says something to cause intentional upset or provoke a negative reaction

			One-off abusive behaviour or threats
	Net: Weapons and associated violence	Wave 8 & 9	Content depicting or encouraging violence or injury
			Sale or advertisement of weapons
			Content that promotes or glamourises the carrying of weapons
			Content which facilitates the access to 3D printed firearms and other weapons, digital files and instructional material
	Net: Illegal product sales and ads	Wave 8 & 9	Sale or advertisement of illegal drugs or psychoactive substances e.g. 'magic mushrooms'
			Sale or advertisement of weapons
	Net: Human trafficking or illegal/unlawful immigration	Wave 9	Content facilitating human trafficking (including sexual and labour exploitation, or recruitment for county lines activity)
			Content that helps illegal or unlawful immigration into the UK
Q12- Exposure to potential harms in the last 4 weeks			
Frequency of exposure to potential harms	Net: All experience	Waves 5, 6 7, 8 & 9	Once
			2-3 times

			4-5 times
			6-10 times
			More than 10 times
	Net: More than 6 times	Waves 5, 6 7, 8 & 9	6-10 times
			More than 10 times
	Net: High frequency	Wave 7,8 & 9	4-5 times
			6-10 times
			More than 10 times
	Q13 - Group or characteristic potential harms were directed at		
Online harms directed at	Net: Any	Waves 5, 6 7, 8 & 9	A specific age group
			Disabled people (physical or mental)
			Trans people
			Pregnant people/ those on maternity leave
			People of a particular marital status (e.g. married, single, civil partnership)
			Ethnicity
			A religious group
			Sexual orientation
			Another group (please specify)
			Men and boys
			Women and girls
			Non-binary people
			Asylum seekers

			A political group
			Gypsy or Irish Travellers
			Nationality
			Regionality
Q15 - Action taken			
Action taken after experiencing potential harm	Any Action	Waves 5, 6 7, 8 & 9	Clicked the report/flag button, or marked as junk
			Reposted/forwarded the content to highlight that it was wrong/misleading/harmful
			Contacted others in the community to make them aware of the issue
			Complained to the website/app, social media site or email sender
			Informed the police
			Informed Ofcom
			Informed a support service
			Contacted the account/user responsible for the issue

			Closed my account/left the service
			Unfollowed/unfriended/blocked/muted the person who posted it/ deleted the email
			Told a friend or family member
			I use the platform less
			I have stopped using the platform altogether
			I have stopped commenting, liking or posting
			I stopped what I was doing/closed down the app or website
			Changed my settings to change the type of content I see
			Changed my settings to change who can see my profile
			I flagged/reported content I am not interested in seeing

			Something else (informed your internet service provider, informed another regulator, contacted the press, informed the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO))
	Reported or flagged content	Waves 5, 6 7, 8 & 9	Clicked the report/flag button, or marked as junk
			Contacted others in the community to make them aware of the issue
			Complained to the website/app, social media site or email sender
			Informed the police
			Informed Ofcom
			Informed a support service
			Contacted the account/user responsible for the issue
			I flagged/reported content I am not interested in seeing
			Something else (informed your internet service provider, informed another regulator, contacted the press, informed the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO))

	Disengaged or changed engagement behaviour	Waves 5, 6 7, 8 & 9	Closed my account/left the service I use the platform less I have stopped using the platform altogether I have stopped commenting, liking or posting I stopped what I was doing/closed down the app or website
Q16 - Didn't think it was that serious			
Why no action	Didn't think it was that serious	Waves 5, 6 7, 8 & 9	I didn't consider it to be offensive, disturbing or harmful I didn't like it, but I didn't consider it bad enough to do something about I didn't see the need to do anything
Q17- Awareness of result of reporting			
Results of reporting	Awareness of result of reporting	Waves 5, 6 7, 8 & 9	The content was removed I got a written response I was asked to provide further information

			Something else
Q21- Non-email			
Site/service when experience harm	Non-Email	Waves 5, 6 7, 8 & 9	A website or app where you view videos posted by other users e.g. YouTube, TikTok
			Social media website or app e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram
			Livestreaming website or app – this could be part of a social media website or app e.g. Twitch, Facebook Live
			A search engine e.g. Google, Yahoo
			Instant messenger website or app e.g. Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp
			News website or app e.g. BBC News, The Guardian, Daily Mail Online
			Gaming platform website or app e.g. PlayStation Network, Nintendo Online, Roblox
			A Q&A website or app e.g. Quora, Yahoo! Answers
			Blog website or app e.g. WordPress, Bloglovin’
			Shopping website or app e.g. Amazon, eBay, Depop
			Online dating websites or apps e.g. Tinder, Bumble
			Video on demand application e.g. Netflix, Now TV
			An in-game chat / chat room

			'Adult' site containing sexual content
			Generative AI e.g. ChatGPT
		Waves 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9	File sharing service e.g. Google Drive, Apple iCloud
		Wave 6, 7, 8 & 9	User to user marketplaces e.g. Facebook Marketplace, eBay, Vinted
			Retail shopping e.g. Amazon, Tesco, Temu
			Online gaming website or app, but not including in-game chat e.g. Fortnite, EA Sports FC 24, Roblox
Q24- Social Media sites/apps			
Social media website/app used when online harm experienced	Net: Microblogging sites	Wave 6, 7, 8 & 9	X (formerly Twitter)
			Mastodon
			XPro (formerly Tweetdeck)
			Bluesky
			Tusky
			Twidere
			Fedilab
			Tooot
			Toot!
Q45 - Knowledge of Online Safety Act			
Awareness of the Online Safety Act	Have heard of the Online Safety Act	Wave 9	I have heard of the Online Safety Act and know a lot about it
			I have heard of the Online Safety Act and know a fair amount about it
			I have heard of the Online Safety Act but don't know much about it
Q46- Confidence in the Online Safety Act			
Confidence in the Online Safety Act keeping Children/Adults safe	Confident	Waves 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9	Very confident
			Fairly confident
	Unconfident	Waves 5,	Not very confident



		6, 7, 8 & 9	Not at all confident
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