

UK General Election news and opinion- formation survey 2024

[Welsh version available](#)

Report

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Overview

The 2024 UK General Election survey was set up during the election period to monitor UK adults' interest in and engagement with news, the role different media sources had in them forming their opinions, and their experiences of potential misinformation, during the 2024 UK General Election period.

The survey was designed to deepen understanding of issues around news and misinformation.

In this short document we highlight some key findings from the surveys. An [interactive report](#) and full [data tables](#) are also available for further exploration of the data.

What we have found – in brief

- **On the whole, respondents said they were broadly as interested in news and current affairs during the election as “in general”.** The biggest increase in interest during the General Election period compared to normal was among those aged 18-24. Conversely, older adults aged 50+ were more likely than usual to be disinterested during the General Election period.
- **Less than one in five (17%) agreed that “people like me have a voice in society”.** Around half (49%) of respondents felt that “people like me *don't* have a voice in society”. The perception of *not* having a voice increased with age, and people from C2DE¹ households were also more likely than average to feel this way.
- **Almost half (46%) of respondents agreed that “it is important to engage with lots of different news sources”,** whereas under a quarter (22%) said “it is better to stick to one news source that you trust”.
- **Opinions were split on the value of hearing the “opinions of those around me” vs news providers and official sources to help people make up their mind.** Older adults aged 65+ were more likely to turn to news providers and official sources, while young adults aged 18-24 were more likely to prefer to use the opinions of those around them; although the majority for all age groups were neutral in that they had no preference between the two options.
- **A majority (55%) of people said they “rarely” change their mind on topics to do with the General Election** – more likely among those aged 65+. A minority (11%) said they “often” change their mind – more likely among 18-24s.
- **A majority (60%) claimed they had encountered information regarding the General Election that they felt might have been false or misleading at least once in the prior week.** There was more uncertainty over deepfakes with almost half (46%) saying they didn't know if they had seen one in the prior week, although more than a quarter (27%) claimed they had at least once.
- **A majority (57%) of respondents said they were either quite or very concerned about the impact of deepfakes during the General Election campaign.**

¹ A person's socio-economic status is based on the type of work they do, or what they used to do if they are retired. AB: higher and intermediate managerial, administrative, professional occupations; C1: supervisory, clerical and junior managerial, administrative, professional occupations; C2: skilled manual occupations; DE: semi-skilled and unskilled manual occupations, unemployed and lowest-grade occupations.

Methodology

The survey consisted of 24 questions split across three sections:

1. Sources of news and current affairs: The sources that respondents used to find out news and current affairs both outside of and during the General Election period.
2. Attitudes towards news and current affairs: Respondents' attitudes towards news and current affairs to do with the General Election, how they form their opinions and the role of different media sources within this.
3. Misinformation and deepfakes: Respondents' experiences of perceived misinformation and deepfakes during the General Election period.

The survey was fielded four times during the General Election period to nationally representative samples of UK adults (2,000 respondents per wave), using YouGov's political omnibus.

Fieldwork was conducted on the following dates: 19-20 June (W1); 26-27 June (W2); 3-4 July (W3); 10-11 July (W4). The UK General Election was held on 4 July 2024, meaning the research provides three waves of fieldwork in the run up to the election, and one wave in the week after.

Minimal differences were observed across all sections between the four waves. Therefore, for the purposes of this summary, we use the rolled figures made from combining all four waves of the tracker. Figures broken down by wave are available in the [data tables](#) and [interactive report](#).

Key findings

Source of news and current affairs

Please note that the separate [News Consumption Survey](#) is the main source for comprehensive measures of consumption of news by individual source. Our General Election survey metrics on news consumption sources should be seen as complementary rather than replacing these.

TV was the most popular way to consume news and information regarding the UK General Election (49% of respondents). This was followed by social network websites or apps (26%), news apps on mobile/tablet devices (24%), radio (24%), newspaper websites (19%), news websites not associated with newspapers (17%), and word of mouth (16%).² Nearly nine in ten (87%) adults used at least one source to follow news and information on the General Election.

Consistent with broader trends in news consumption, younger adults aged 18-24 were more likely than average to turn to social media for General Election news and information, and older adults aged 50+ less likely. 18-24 year olds were also more likely than average to use word of mouth, search engines, and podcasts as General Election news sources and less likely than average to rely on traditional media like TV, radio, and printed newspapers.

The BBC was the most common TV, radio and news website or app source used overall. Audiences from C2DE households were less likely than average to use BBC sources, although it was still the most-used source for each of TV, radio and online news websites or apps among this group.

Social media news consumers used a range of social media sources for news and information on the General Election, but no single social media source was used by a majority. The most commonly used was X (formerly Twitter) by 43% of social media news users, followed by Facebook (39%), Instagram (32%), YouTube (28%), TikTok (21%), Reddit (10%), and WhatsApp (10%).

The most commonly-seen type of information on social media was from traditional TV or press sources (57% in the week prior) among those who had identified social media as their primary news source. Around half (49%) saw opinions from people they didn't know personally. This was more likely than seeing opinions from people they did know (37%).

Adverts from UK political parties were more likely to be seen in the week prior to the election than at any other time in the General Election period. In the run up to the election, 36% of those who use social media as their primary source of news claimed they saw UK political parties' adverts on social media in the last week in wave 1 and 38% in wave 2, before peaking at 48% in wave 3, and then falling back down after the election to 39% in wave 4.

² These figures should not be directly compared against News Consumption Survey figures for platform use on account of the different methodology and question set-up which here asks "Thinking of the LAST WEEK, which of the following sources, if any, have you used for news and information on the UK General Election?", while the News Consumption Survey asks "Which of the following platforms do you use for news nowadays?".

Attitudes towards news and current affairs

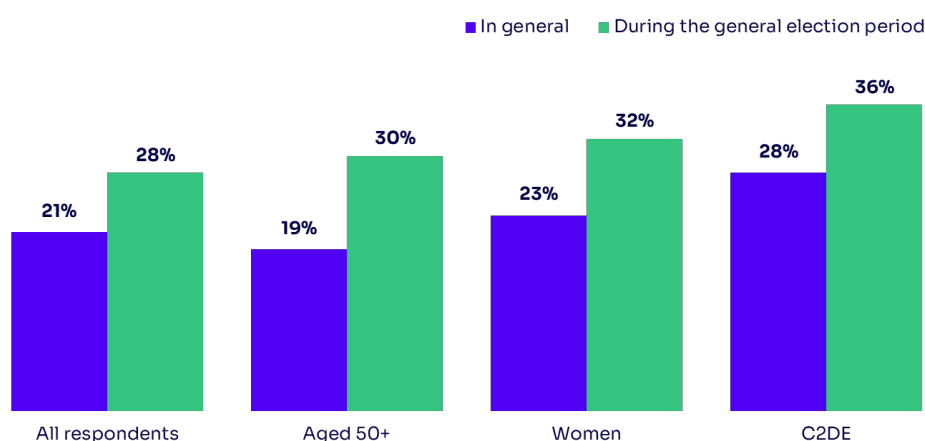
Interest in news and current affairs

On the whole, respondents said they were broadly as interested in news and current affairs during the election period as “in general”. Around half of respondents said they were interested; 48% during the election period, and 50% in general.

The biggest increase in interest during the General Election period compared to normal was among those aged 18-24; 58% were interested during the general election period compared to 39% in general.

However, there was a rise in the proportion of people who said they were not interested in news and current affairs during the General Election period compared to in general; 28% during general election compared to 21% in general. This was driven by older adults aged 50+, women, and those in C2DE households, who were all more likely than usual to be uninterested during the General Election period. There was a corresponding decrease in those who were neither interested nor uninterested.

Figure 1: Proportion of respondents not interested in news and current affairs



Source: UK General Election survey 2024 Q8. On a scale of 1-5 where 1 is “Not at all interested” and 5 is “Very interested”, how interested are you in the news and current affairs ...in general; ...during the General Election period.

Among respondents who said that they were not interested in news and current affairs, the main reasons given were that they felt nothing will change (51%) and it brings their mood down (44%). Smaller proportions said it is too confusing (15%), it is not relevant to their life (14%), and they didn’t have time (9%).

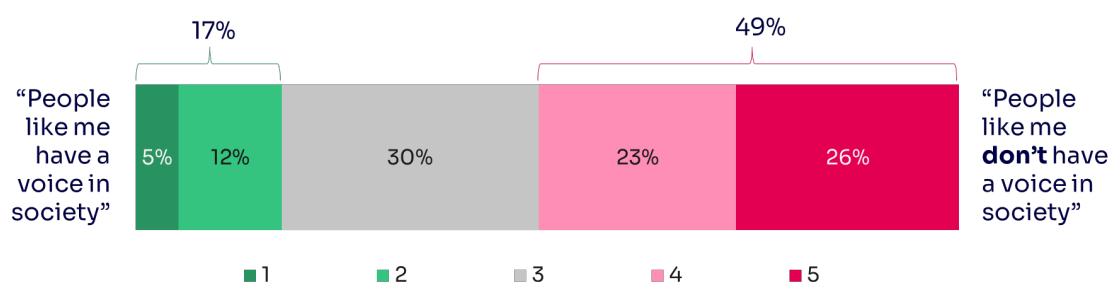
A slightly lower proportion of people felt well-informed about news and current affairs than were interested; 43% said they were well-informed during the election period, and 45% in general. Men and those in ABC1 households were more likely to feel well-informed both generally and during the election.

One in ten (11%) of respondents said they were not at all informed about the election, compared to 7% for in general. Women and those in C2DE households were more likely to feel not at all informed in both periods.

How people form their opinions

Less than one in five (17%) agreed that “people like me have a voice in society”. Around half (49%) of respondents felt that “people like me don’t have a voice in society”. The perception of *not* having a voice increased with age, and people from C2DE households were also more likely than average to feel this way.

Figure 2: Perception of having a voice in society, on a scale of 1-5



Source: UK General Election survey 2024 Q16. On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means “People like me have a voice in society” and 5 means “People like me don’t have a voice in society”, where would you place your own views? Chart excludes the 5% who responded ‘Don’t know’.

Almost half (46%) of respondents agreed that “it is important to engage with lots of different news sources”, whereas under a quarter (22%) said “it is better to stick to one news source that you trust”. Those in a C2DE household were more likely to prefer sticking to one source, whereas those in an ABC1 household put more value on engaging with multiple sources.

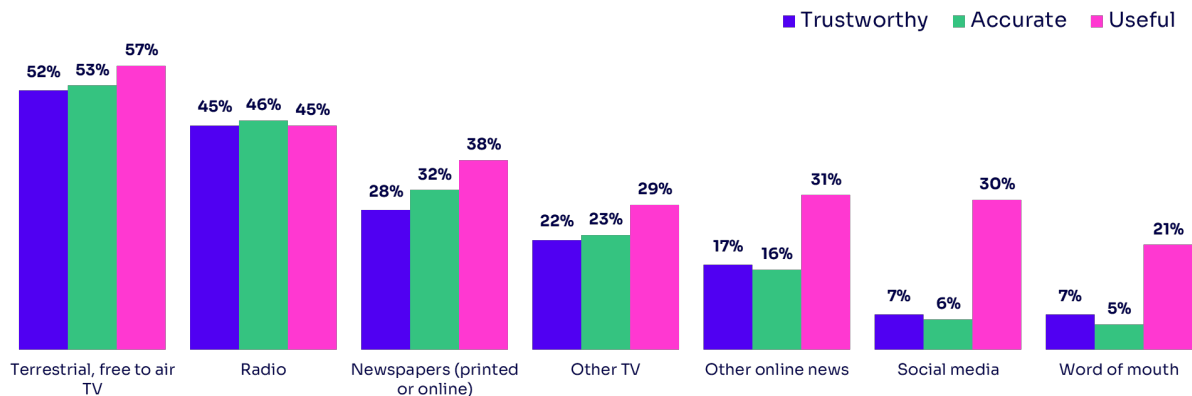
Opinions were split on the value of hearing the “opinions of those around me” vs news providers and official sources to help people make up their mind. Older adults aged 65+ were more likely to turn to news providers and official sources, while younger adults aged 18-24 were more likely to use the opinions of those around them; although the majority for all sat in the ‘neutral’ option of this question.

A majority (55%) of people said they “rarely” change their mind on topics to do with the General Election – more likely among those aged 65+. A minority (11%) said they “often” change their mind – more likely among 18-24s.

Perceptions of news sources

Consistent with other research, TV and radio were consistently rated higher for trust, accuracy and usefulness. However, sources like social media and word of mouth that were rated lower for trust and accuracy were still deemed to have comparatively higher usefulness for the respondent.

Figure 3: Proportion of respondents that agree with the description of different sources as trustworthy, accurate and useful



Source: UK General Election survey 2024 Q12/13. Generally speaking, how trustworthy or untrustworthy/accurate or inaccurate do you rate the following sources of information? Q14. And how useful do you find the following sources to find information about the General Election?

Perceptions of voters

We used YouGov’s political omnibus survey for this research, and so took the opportunity to explore how attitudes and behaviour differed – or not – according to political view, during this period of heightened political activity. Respondents were asked how they voted in the 2024 election, and while the share of responses broadly follows the share of vote in the General Election, just over a quarter of respondents said they didn’t vote or didn’t know who they voted for, compared to 40% of the actual UK population that didn’t vote. Our findings in this section relate solely to wave 4 of the survey, which occurred after voting took place.³ Any comparisons against UK-wide data are made against the wave 4 figures rather than the rolled figures used elsewhere in this report.

Those who said they voted Labour, Liberal Democrat or Green reported being more interested in news and current affairs during the election period compared to “in general”. In contrast, those who said they voted Conservative or Reform UK were more likely than usual to be uninterested during the election period.

Reform UK and Green voters were more likely to say they use the opinions of those around them than news providers and official sources to help make up their mind. Labour, Liberal Democrat and Conservative voters were more likely to turn to news providers and official sources over the opinions of those around them, but while Conservative voters were more likely to prefer sticking to one source, Labour and Liberal Democrat voters put more value on engaging with multiple sources.

Labour, Liberal Democrat and Conservative voters were more likely than average to say that more traditional news sources such as PSB⁴ TV, radio and newspapers are trustworthy, accurate and useful. Reform UK voters were less likely than average to rate those sources highly on any of the three attributes and more likely to say that that social media and word of mouth were trustworthy and accurate sources of information.

³ Findings are given for those who said they voted Labour, Conservative, Liberal Democrats, Reform UK and Green. These were the parties for which sufficient interviews were achieved with voters to meet minimum reporting requirements in the UK-wide sample.

⁴ Public Service Broadcasters: i.e. those providing Channel 3 services, Channel 4, Channel 5, S4C and the BBC.

Misinformation and deepfakes

Almost half (46%) of adults were confident that they could spot misinformation in the media. This increases to a majority of men and adults aged 18-49, while those in ABC1 households were more likely to be confident than those in C2DE households. A minority were not confident (17%). A further 37% were neither confident nor unconfident or unsure.

A much smaller proportion, just 21%, were confident in their ability to spot a deepfake in the media.⁵ Similarly, men and adults aged 18-49 were more likely than average to be confident. Around four in ten (41%) were not confident and this was more likely among women and adults aged 50+.

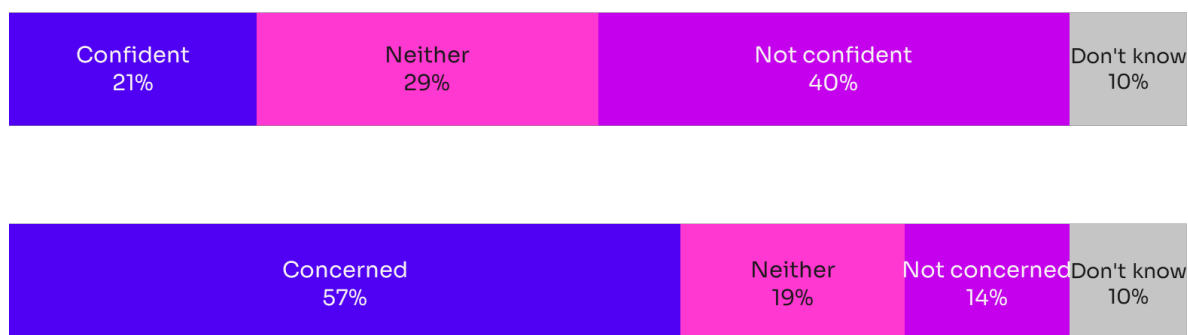
A majority (60%) claimed they had encountered information regarding the General Election that they felt might have been false or misleading at least once in the prior week. This included one in ten who said they saw such information several times a day. Three in ten (30%) were unsure if they had encountered misinformation in the last week.

More than a quarter (27%) of adults claimed they had encountered a deepfake at least once in the last week. Reflecting the lower confidence in spotting deepfakes, almost half (46%) said they didn't know if they had seen one in the prior week.

Among those who said they had come across content that they considered might have been a deepfake, the most common reaction was to simply ignore it (69%). A minority took some action including blocking the source it came from (19%) or reporting it (12%). One in ten took steps to verify it was a deepfake.

A majority (57%) of respondents said they were either quite or very concerned about the impact of deepfakes during the General Election campaign. Older adults aged 65+ were more likely than average to express concern, and those in ABC1 households were more likely than to be concerned than those in C2DE households.

Figure 4: Confidence in ability to spot deepfakes and concern about the impact of deepfakes during the General Election campaign



Source: UK General Election survey 2024 Q21. How confident are you, if at all, in your ability to spot a deepfake source in the media? Q24. And generally how concerned are you, if at all, about the impact of deepfakes in the media during the General Election campaign?

⁵ For the purpose of this survey, we consider a deepfake to be an audio, image, video or text source created using AI tools. Respondents were provided with this description.

Attitudes & experiences during the UK 2024 General Election, by nation



England

49%

used TV to follow news on the 2024 UK General Election, the most common source.

48% vs. 49%

said they were interested in news during the General Election period vs. 'in general'.

28% vs. 21%

said they were *not* interested in news during the General Election period vs. 'in general'.

17%

believe "people like me have a voice in society".

45% vs. 22%

believe "it is important to engage with lots of different news sources" vs. "it is better to stick to one news source that you trust".

21%; and 27%

said they were confident in their ability to spot a deepfake; and claimed they'd encountered a deepfake during the General Election period.



Scotland

50%

used TV to follow news on the 2024 UK General Election, the most common source.

49% vs. 54%

said they were interested in news during the General Election period vs. 'in general'.

27% vs. 18%

said they were *not* interested in news during the General Election period vs. 'in general'.

19%

believe "people like me have a voice in society".

51% vs. 19%

believe "it is important to engage with lots of different news sources" vs. "it is better to stick to one news source that you trust".

24%; and 27%

said they were confident in their ability to spot a deepfake; and claimed they'd encountered a deepfake during the General Election period.



Wales

50%

used TV to follow news on the 2024 UK General Election, the most common source.

48% vs. 49%

said they were interested in news during the General Election period vs 'in general'.

32% vs. 22%

said they were *not* interested in news during the General Election period vs. 'in general'.

14%

believe "people like me have a voice in society".

45% vs. 19%

believe "it is important to engage with lots of different news sources" vs. "it is better to stick to one news source that you trust".

22%; and 25%

said they were confident in their ability to spot a deepfake; and claimed they'd encountered a deepfake during the General Election period.



Northern Ireland

53%

used TV to follow news on the 2024 UK General Election, the most common source.

51% vs. 57%

said they were interested in news during the General Election period vs. 'in general'.

26% vs. 19%

said they were *not* interested in news during the General Election period vs. 'in general'.

20%

believe "people like me have a voice in society".

49% vs. 22%

believe "it is important to engage with lots of different news sources" vs. "it is better to stick to one news source that you trust".

17%; and 25%

said they were confident in their ability to spot a deepfake; and claimed they'd encountered a deepfake during the General Election period.