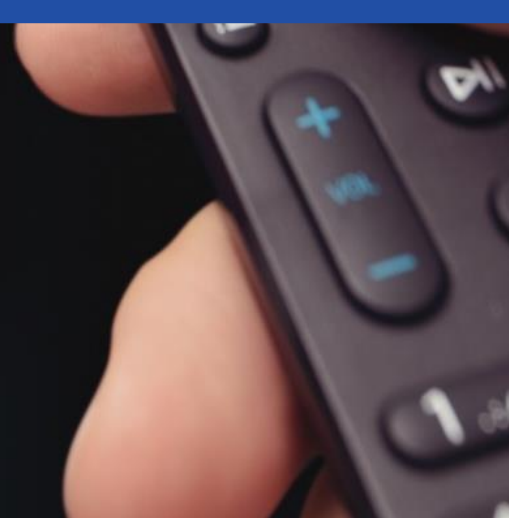# Ofcom PSM Tracker 2023

Technical Report

Preface

This document contains details of the methodology, questionnaire, quotas, sampling, and weighting for the 2023 Public Service Media (PSM) tracker study run by BMG Research on behalf of Ofcom.

Based on the public service purposes presented in the 2003 Communications Act, Ofcom developed a range of PSB purposes and characteristics in its first PSB review in 2005. The PSB channels (the BBC channels, ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5) are expected together to fulfil these purposes and characteristics, although each PSB channel has a specific remit.

The PSB purposes and characteristics were put into everyday language for the PSM Tracker survey, which asks respondents to give their opinions on the PSB statements, both in terms of the importance and the delivery of these by the PSB channels. Other perceptions and attitudes towards PSBs, BVoDs and SVoDs are also captured.

This is the third year of the PSM tracker, which was developed in 2021 to reflect today's more complex media market and replaces the Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) tracker (last conducted in 2019). As a result, while 2023 data is comparable with 2022 and 2021, results are not directly comparable with 2019.

Methodology

In previous years, the Public Service Broadcasting tracker had been conducted as an online and face-to-face blend, with fieldwork taking place in two waves.

In 2021, the methodology was changed from previous years to a 50:50 push-to-web and online panel approach, with the online panel being supplemented by river sampling and the push-to-web approach supplemented by a low connectivity boost and an option to complete via telephone. The same approach has been maintained since, and the table below demonstrates the split of sample across methods.

Method	Number of completes
Push-to-web: Letter to address followed by completing online	1,516
Telephone: Letter to address followed by completing over the phone	33
Panel: Stratified random sample of online panel	1,362
River sampling: Recruiting respondents via panels who are not full panel members	149
Total	**3,060**

The fieldwork period was from 7th March to 22nd December. It took the form of five online panel batches, plus one river sampling period and eight push-to-web batches, enabling a continuous period of fieldwork. A £10 incentive in the form of a voucher was used throughout the push-to-web fieldwork to encourage responses.

A total of 3,060 interviews were undertaken, including 2,180 in England, 318 in Scotland, 310 in Wales and 252 in Northern Ireland. Sample sizes at the devolved nation level were higher than the national proportion to allow for more confident estimates for each nation.

Category	Push-to-web	Telephone	Panel	River sampling
Total	49%	1%	45%	5%
GENDER				
Male	49%	1%	44%	6%
Female	49%	1%	45%	5%
AGE				
16-24	36%	0%	53%	11%
25-34	33%	0%	57%	10%
35-44	44%	0%	49%	7%
45-54	50%	0%	44%	6%
55-64	60%	0%	39%	1%
65-74	70%	2%	28%	0%
75+	51%	8%	41%	0%
SOCIAL GRADE				
ABC1	54%	0%	41%	5%
C2DE	42%	2%	51%	5%
REGION				
England	51%	1%	44%	5%
East Midlands	46%	1%	48%	5%
West Midlands	48%	1%	45%	6%
East	51%	1%	45%	3%
London	30%	0%	64%	6%
North East	66%	2%	26%	6%
North West	48%	2%	45%	5%
South East	55%	0%	40%	5%
South West	73%	3%	21%	3%
Yorkshire and the Humber	54%	1%	40%	5%
Scotland	39%	1%	53%	7%
Wales	49%	0%	45%	6%
Northern Ireland	54%	1%	42%	2%
ETHNICITY				
White	53%	1%	42%	4%
Ethnic minority	26%	0%	65%	9%

Quotas

No hard quotas were included as part of the push-to-web approach. In the online survey, quotas were set on age, gender, social grade, region/country, and ethnicity, which were updated throughout fieldwork to work in tandem with the push-to-web approach to ensure sample balance.[1]

Sample design

For the 'main' component of the push-to-web approach, the sample was drawn at a postcode level through stratification by Government Office Region, urban/rural designation, and IMD decile. Selection for each region was proportional to mid-year population estimates except for Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland which were purposefully oversampled.

For the 'low connectivity boost' component, the sample was selected by creating an index based on the available demographic indicators of low connectivity and selecting addresses at random within the upper decile of the custom index.

A letter was sent to each selected address inviting an adult in the household to take part in the survey. An initial reminder letter and a final reminder letter were sent to those who didn't respond after two weeks and three weeks respectively.

A helpline option allowing respondents to complete the survey via telephone was available to all those who received a letter. The 'low connectivity boost' sample' made this option more prominent, given these letters were targeted at respondents with a greater likelihood of having lower levels of connectivity. The table below sets out the numbers of low internet-use households that completed the survey after being sampled.

Level of internet use	Completes via 'push-to' components	% of total 'push-to' completes
No internet access at all	23	1%
Have access but don't use at home	8	1%
Use up to 5 hours per week	116	7%
Total	**147**	**9%**

There were also targets for certain groups to have a readable base size for each. All targets were reached except for Northern Ireland, which came in slightly under the desired target due to lower than expected response rates. However, robust analysis is still possible.

Targets	Target (minimum)	Final total
English regions	100 per region	At least 100 in each region
Wales	300	310

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[1] Ofcom set a number of additional minimum sample number requirements on groups such as Asian (Bangladeshi, Indian, Pakistani, Chinese & Other Asian) and Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual. These targets were monitored throughout.

Northern Ireland	300	252
Scotland	300	318
Over 65s with limiting condition	150	291
Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual	150	205
Black (African, Caribbean & Other Black)	100	106
Asian (Bangladeshi, Indian, Pakistani & Other Asian)	200	197

Weighting

Results were weighted in the same way as 2022, by the following variables:

- Region within England (using mid-2020 population estimates)
- Age by gender within each nation (using mid-2020 population estimates)
- Social grade within each nation (using 2011 census)
- Ethnicity within each nation (using 2017 annual population survey)
- Educational attainment at a UK level (using 2017 16+ annual population survey)

Despite some new census data being published in 2023, the decision was made not to weight by this and to wait instead until complete UK data is available. Therefore, no changes were made across the 2023 fieldwork period, maintaining consistent quotas and weighting.

The weighting process was used to adjust for any differences between targets and fieldwork numbers and to down-weight the devolved nations (which were oversampled to ensure a robust sample size for these countries) to make the sample nationally representative. The final weight had an effective sample size of 84%.

In 2021, regression analysis was conducted on four variables to test for mode impact. This controlled for demographic factors and found that the mode of survey (panel or push-to-web) had either no impact or an extremely minimal driver of survey response depending on the variable. No weighting adjustments were necessary because the mode only had a very minimal impact on the survey response.

Category	Achieved %	Weighted	Unweighted sample size	Effective Sample Size (ESS[2])
Total	100%	100%	3060	2560
GENDER				
Male	45%	48%	1372	1155
Female	54%	50%	1646	1382
AGE				
16-24	10%	13%	319	269
25-34	17%	17%	507	440

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[2] Effective Sample Size (ESS) is an estimate of the sample size required to achieve the same level of precision as would be expected to be obtained by a simple random sample.

35-44	16%	16%	495	409
45-54	16%	16%	487	405
55-64	17%	16%	529	443
65-74	13%	12%	407	344
75+	10%	10%	316	268
SOCIAL GRADE				
ABC1	63%	53%	1916	1657
C2DE	36%	46%	1113	979
REGION				
England	71%	84%	2180	2006
East Midlands	7%	7%	204	186
West Midlands	8%	9%	233	216
East	8%	9%	237	217
London	11%	13%	322	300
North East	3%	4%	105	97
North West	10%	11%	317	291
South East	11%	14%	349	323
South West	7%	9%	214	200
Yorkshire and the Humber	7%	8%	199	183
Scotland	10%	8%	318	271
Wales	10%	5%	310	263
Northern Ireland	8%	3%	252	205
ETHNICITY				
White	86%	86%	2629	2195
Ethnic minority	14%	14%	416	352

Confidence interval

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

Effective Sample Size	10% or 90% ±	20% or 80% ±	30% or 70% ±	40% or 60% ±	50% ±
2,560 (Total)	1.16%	1.55%	1.78%	1.90%	1.94%
2,006 (England)	1.31%	1.75%	2.01%	2.14%	2.19%
1,382 (Female)	1.58%	2.11%	2.42%	2.58%	2.64%
352 (MEG Total)	3.14%	4.18%	4.79%	5.12%	5.22%

If 20% or 80% of a sample with an effective sample size of 2,560 gives a particular answer in 95 out of 100 cases, we would expect the "true" value to fall within the range of +/- 1.55 percentage points from the sample results.

Significant differences

When comparing two separate groups within a sample, the difference may be a "real" difference, or it may occur due to change (because not everyone within the two groups has been interviewed). To find whether a difference is statistically significant, we need the sample sizes of both groups and the numbers of those groups giving a certain answer. To get to a 95% confidence interval, the difference between the two % levels of answers must be greater than those given in the example table below.

Effective Sample Size comparison	10% or 90% ±	20% or 80% ±	30% or 70% ±	40% or 60% ±	50% ±
1155 (Male) vs 1382 (Female)	2.3%	3.1%	3.6%	3.8%	3.9%
269 (16-24) vs 440 (25-34)	4.6%	6.1%	7.0%	7.4%	7.6%

For example, to check whether an answer of 20% for male and 24% for female is significant, the difference has to be greater than 3.1%.