

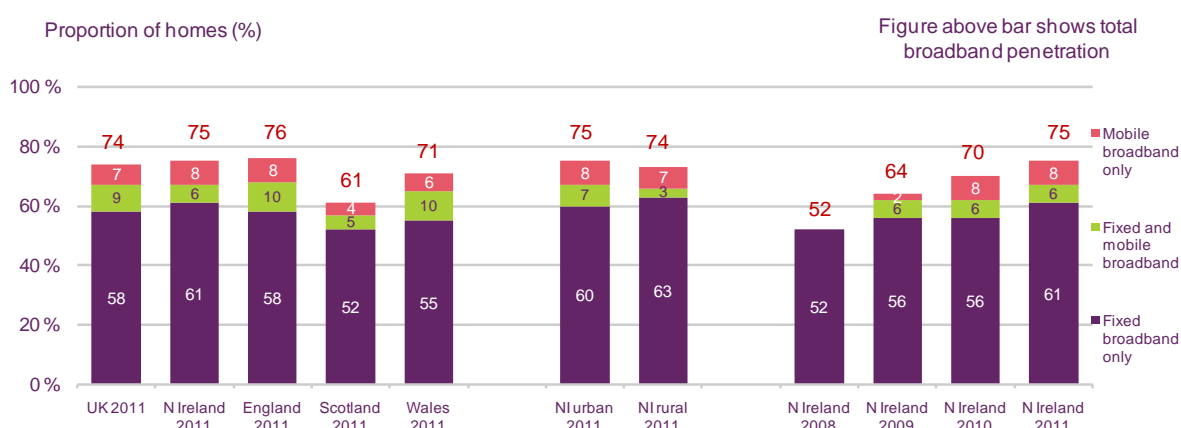
# 4 Internet and web-based content

## 4.1 Broadband take-up

### Three-quarters of Northern Ireland homes have broadband

Broadband take-up in Northern Ireland has increased by five percentage points since Q1 2010, with 75% of homes now connected. This is on a par with the UK average (74%). This increase has been driven by take-up of fixed broadband connections: 67% of homes in Northern Ireland have a fixed broadband connection and 61% have it as their only connection. Across Northern Ireland, 14% of homes have a mobile broadband connection, although in rural areas take-up is slightly lower, at 10%, compared to 15% in urban areas.

**Figure 4.1 Broadband take-up at home**



Source: Ofcom research, Q1 2011

Base: All adults aged 16+ (n = 3474 UK, 511 Northern Ireland, 1983 England, 487 Scotland, 493 Wales, 259 Northern Ireland urban, 252 Northern Ireland rural, 629 Northern Ireland 2008, 652 Northern Ireland 2009, 761 Northern Ireland 2010, 511 Northern Ireland 2011)

QE9. Which of these methods does your household use to connect to the internet at home? (NB 2008 survey did not cover mobile broadband. 2008 measure shows any broadband)

### Broadband take-up is lowest among over-55s and DE households

Figure 4.2 shows that, as in the rest of the UK, broadband take-up in Northern Ireland varies considerably by demographic factors. Less than half (44%) of those aged 55+ in Northern Ireland have broadband in the home, while take-up is also relatively low among DE socio-economic groups (54%), and in households with incomes less than £17.5k per annum (56%). Whether there are children in the home also has a significant bearing on take-up – 92% of households with children have a broadband connection.

**Figure 4.2 Broadband take-up in Northern Ireland (by demographic)**



Source: Ofcom research, Q1 2011

Base: All adults aged 16+ (n =511 Northern Ireland, 178 16-34s, 172 35-54s, 161 55+, 99 AB, 135 C1, 100 C2, 177 DE, 225 <£17.5k income, 142 £17.5k+, 209 children in home, 302 no children in home, 162 Belfast metropolitan area)

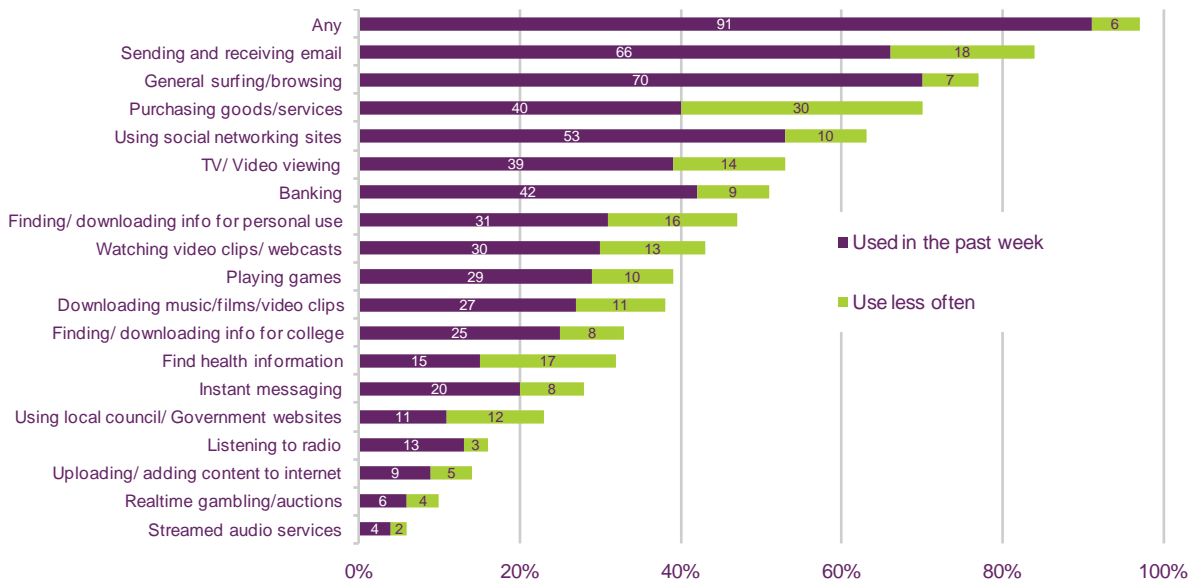
QE9. Which of these methods does your household use to connect to the Internet at home?

## 4.2 Internet use

### Nearly half of consumers use social networking

Those in Northern Ireland with a broadband connection at home use their connection for a range of purposes, as shown in Figure 4.3. The applications used by broadband consumers in Northern Ireland are similar to those used across the rest of the UK.

**Figure 4.3 Use of online applications among broadband users**



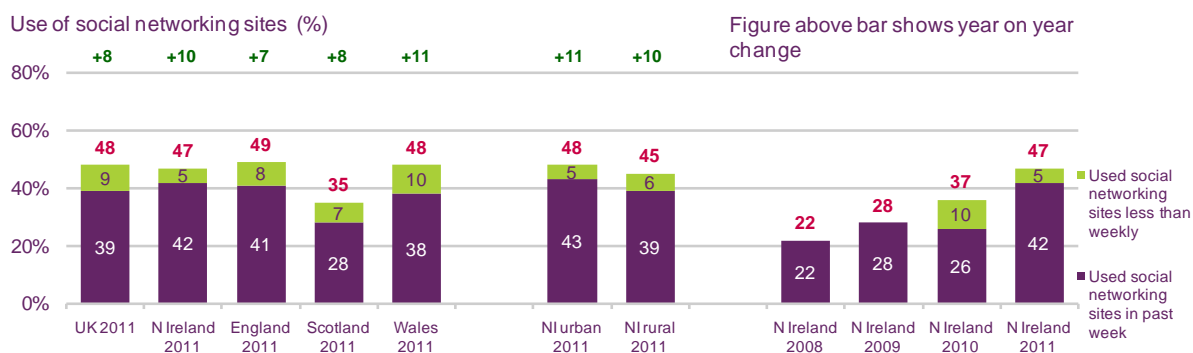
Source: Ofcom research, Q1 2011

Base: Adults aged 16+ with a broadband connection at home (n= 317 Northern Ireland)

QE5. Which, if any, of these do you or members of your household use the internet for while at home?

Use of social networking sites increased by eleven percentage points between Q1 2010 and Q1 2011 (when it was used by 63% of broadband users – marginally above the UK average of 60%). This equates to almost half of all consumers in Northern Ireland (47%) visiting such sites, the majority doing so on at least a weekly basis.

**Figure 4.4 Use of social networking sites**



Source: Ofcom research, Q1 2011

QE5A-B. Which, if any, of these do you or members of your household use the internet for while at home?/ And, which, if any, of these activities have you or members of your household used the internet for in the last week?/ QD28A-B. Which, if any, of the following activities, other than making and receiving calls, do you use your mobile for?/ And, which of these activities have you used your mobile for in the last week? (NB 2008 and 2009 surveys did not cover use in past week – 2008 and 2009 measures show any use. 2008, 2009 and 2010 surveys did not ask about using mobile to visit social networking sites)

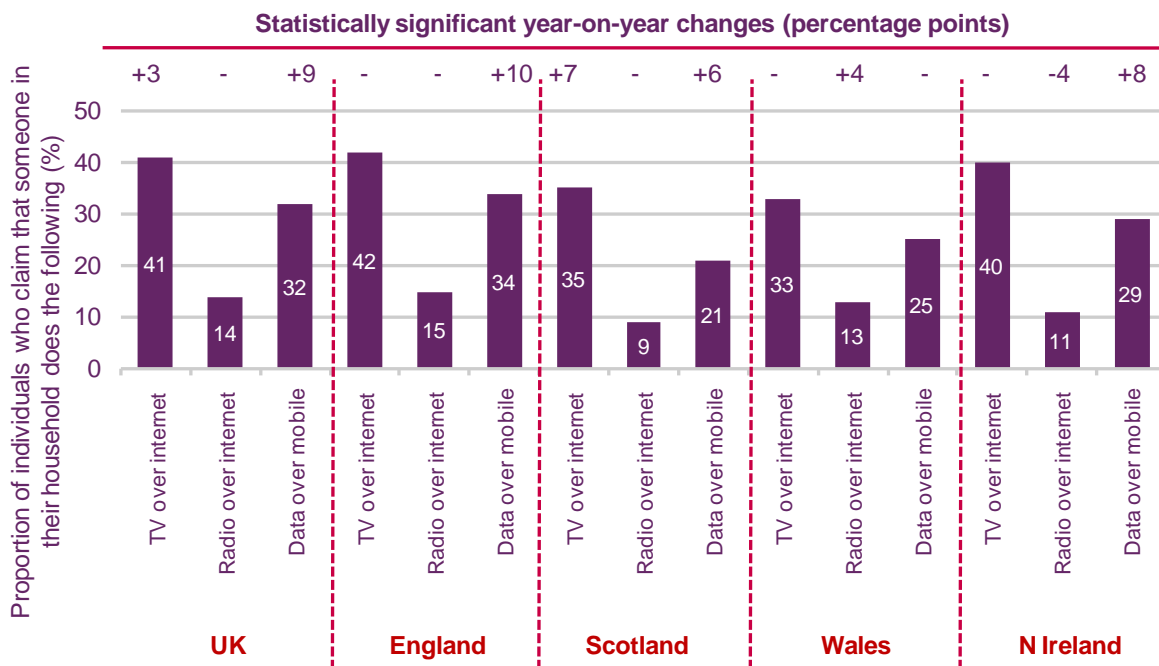
Base: All adults aged 16+ (n = 3474 UK, 511 Northern Ireland, 1983 England, 487 Scotland, 493 Wales, 259 Northern Ireland urban, 252 Northern Ireland rural, 629 Northern Ireland 2008, 652 Northern Ireland 2009, 761 Northern Ireland 2010, 511 Northern Ireland 2011)

### A third of adults in Northern Ireland use data on mobile handsets

Three in ten (29%) consumers in Northern Ireland now say that somebody in their home uses their mobile phone to access data services (internet, emails, web-enabled apps etc.), with this figure increasing by eight percentage points since last year. In comparison, a third of UK consumers access data over mobile, an increase of nine percentage points last year. This rapid growth has been driven by the fast-increasing popularity of smartphones. More detail on consumers' use of smartphones is shown in Figure 1.4.

Watching audio-visual content over the internet continues to be a popular pastime in Northern Ireland, with four in ten homes watching services such as BBC iPlayer, 4oD and ITV Player. Eleven per cent of homes use the internet to listen to the radio, broadly in line with the UK average (14%).

**Figure 4.5 Consumers' use of converging platforms**



Source: Ofcom research, Q1 2011

Base: All adults aged 16+ (n = 3474 UK, 1983 England, 487 Scotland, 493 Wales, 511 Northern Ireland)

Questions. Which, if any, of these do you or members of your household use the internet for whilst at home?/ Which, if any, of the following activities, other than making and receiving calls, do you use your mobile for?/ Includes download free applications, download paid for applications, send/ receive emails, accessing the internet, connecting to the internet using Wi-Fi, using VoIP service, download a new video clip, video streaming, TV streaming, accessing/ receiving, sports/ team news/ scores, accessing/ receiving news, use IM/ Instant messaging