

Annex 4

Media Tracker survey: key findings from parents

Introduction

This Annex provides information from Ofcom's 2011 Media Tracker survey, focusing on responses by parents of children under 18. These include opinions on TV programme standards and regulation. It should be noted that the survey asks for the personal views of respondents, and is therefore largely distinct from parents' opinions about the content their children actually watch.

The Media Tracker has a UK-representative quota sample of approximately 1,750 adults (aged 16+), 34% of whom are parents. Interviews are face-to-face, using the paper and pencil (PAPI) interviewing technique, and the questionnaire is conducted in two waves in order to counter seasonality issues. Typically, the first wave is conducted in April and the second wave in October.

Further analysis from the Media Tracker is published as part of Ofcom's UK audience attitudes report. The report, containing further results from the 2011 Media Tracker, is available here: <http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/tv-research/UK-Audience-attitudes.pdf>

Summary of key findings

- Among parents, 27% of respondents feel that programme standards have become worse over the past year, while 59% feel standards have stayed the same, compared to 53% of non-parents. Older respondents are more likely to believe that programme standards have got worse, with 46% of over-65s stating they feel programme standards have worsened in the past year.
- Parents are less likely than all UK adults to say that mainly parents should be responsible for making sure their children don't see unsuitable programmes (40% compared to 45%). However, opinions on who is responsible for children's viewing have remained relatively stable over time, with very few parents (3%) thinking that mainly broadcasters should be responsible.
- Eighty per cent of parents agree that the 9pm watershed is about right, and three-quarters (77%) agree that there is about the right amount of television regulation.
- Parents are more likely than non-parents to say they have seen content harmful to children (13% compared to 10%). Among parents who have seen any type of harmful content, 10% cite 'violence', followed by sexual content (8%) and bad language (5%).

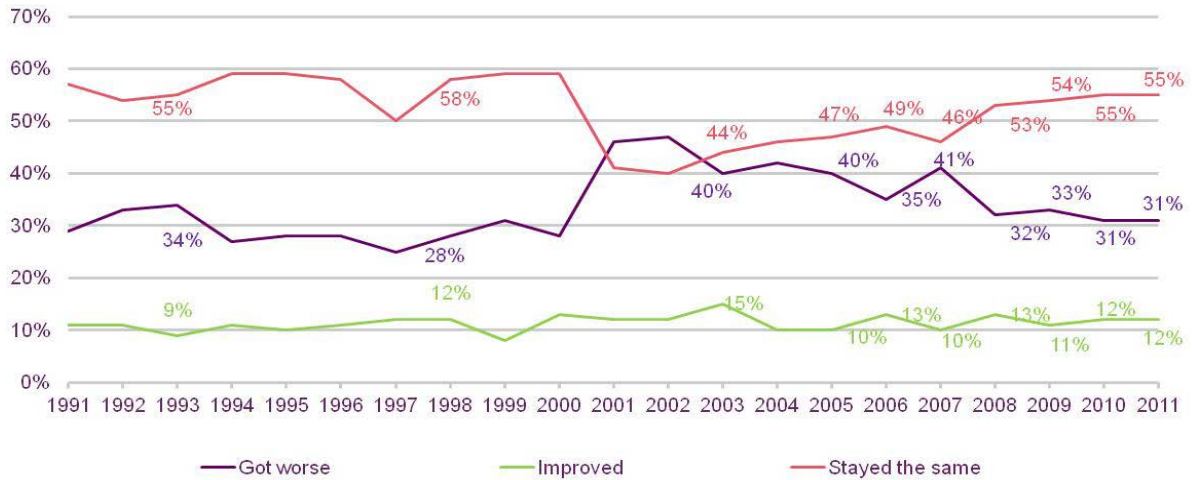
Opinions on programme standards

Progressively fewer people think that programme standards have worsened.

Figure 1 shows that since 2002 all UK adults are less likely to think programme standards have worsened (from 47% in 2002 to 31% in 2011). The opinion that 'programme standards have stayed the same over the past year' has tended to increase (from 40% in 2002 to 55%

in 2011). Those who feel standards have improved have remained fairly constant at around 10-15%.

Figure A4.1: Opinions on programme standards over the past 12 months (all respondents): 1991-2011



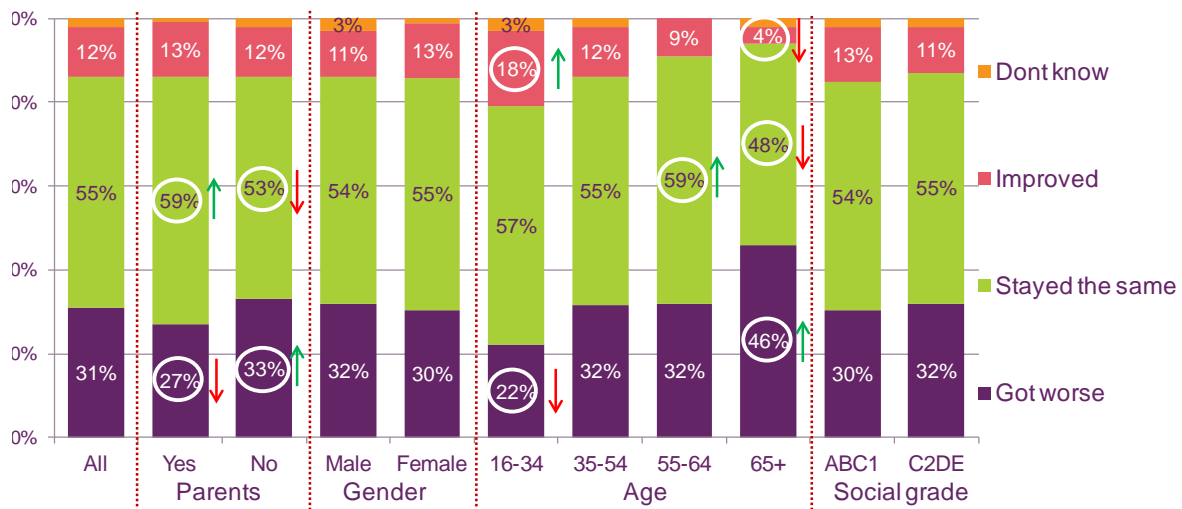
Source: Ofcom Media Tracker.

Q - Do you feel that over the past year television programmes have improved, got worse or stayed about the same? Base: All respondents. Note: methodologies have varied slightly over time.

Focusing on parents, about three in five parents (59%) think standards have not changed in the past 12 months – higher than the all-respondent figures of 55%. As Figure 2 shows, there is a positive correlation between older age groups and the likelihood to say that programme standards have got worse. Nearly half (46%) of over-65s and 32% of 55-64 year olds say that programme standards have become worse, compared to 22% in the 16-34 age group and 32% for 35-54s.

Parents are less likely to say that standards have fallen, at over a quarter (27%) compared to a third (33%) of non-parents. With the exception of the over-65s, over half of all respondents, across all demographics, believe programme standards have stayed the same over the past year.

Figure A4.2: Opinions on programme standards over the past 12 months, by demographic



Source: Ofcom Media Tracker 2011.

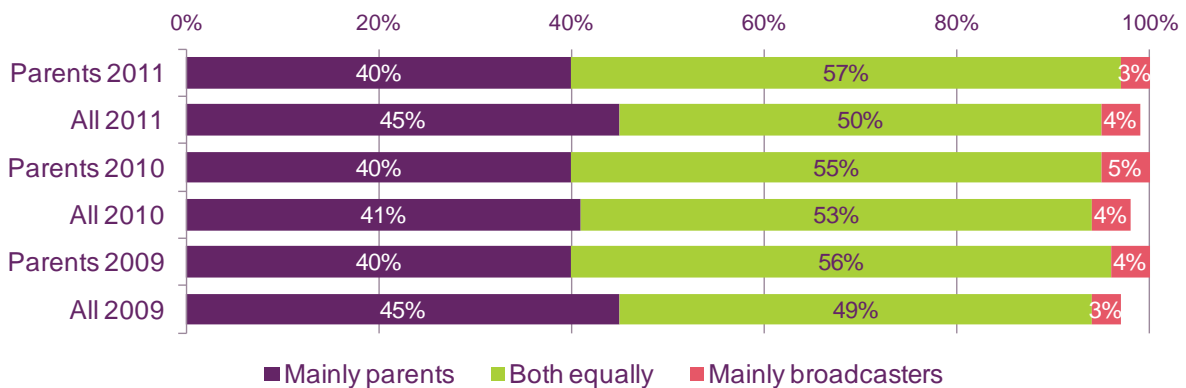
Q - Do you feel that over the past year television programmes have improved, got worse or stayed about the same? Significant differences to all respondents circled.

Opinions on responsibility and regulation

Over half (57%) of parents say that broadcasters and parents have equal responsibility for ensuring that children do not see unsuitable programming

The vast majority (97%) of parents believe that parents have some responsibility to ensure children do not see unsuitable programming. This is made up of 40% who believe it is mainly the parent's role and 57% who see it as an equal responsibility with broadcasters. These figures have remained relatively stable over time. Only 3% in 2011 said that it was mainly the broadcasters' responsibility.

Figure A4.3: Opinion on whose responsibility it is to ensure children do not see unsuitable programming



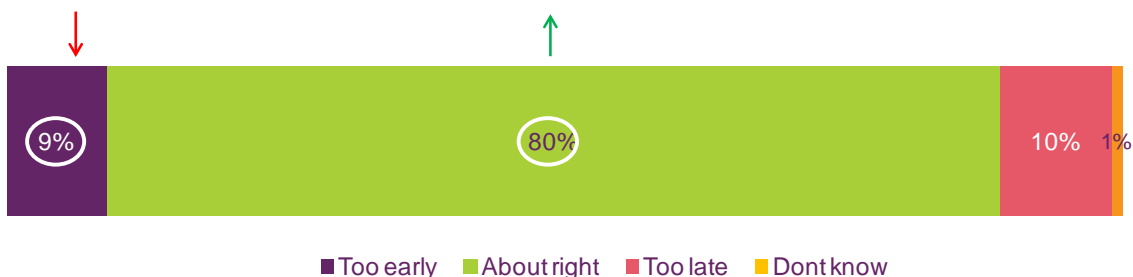
Source: Ofcom Media Tracker 2011.

Q - Do you think it is mainly the responsibility of parents, broadcasters or both equally, to make sure that children don't see unsuitable programmes? Base: Parents with TV and children in the household (589).

Four in five (80%) parents believe the 9pm watershed is at about the right time

After being told that the UK watershed was set at 9pm, three-quarters (80%) of respondents answered they felt this was about right. The number of parents who believed the watershed was too early (9%) was lower than among non-parents (12%).

Figure A4.4: Opinions on current time of watershed



Source: Ofcom Media Tracker 2011.

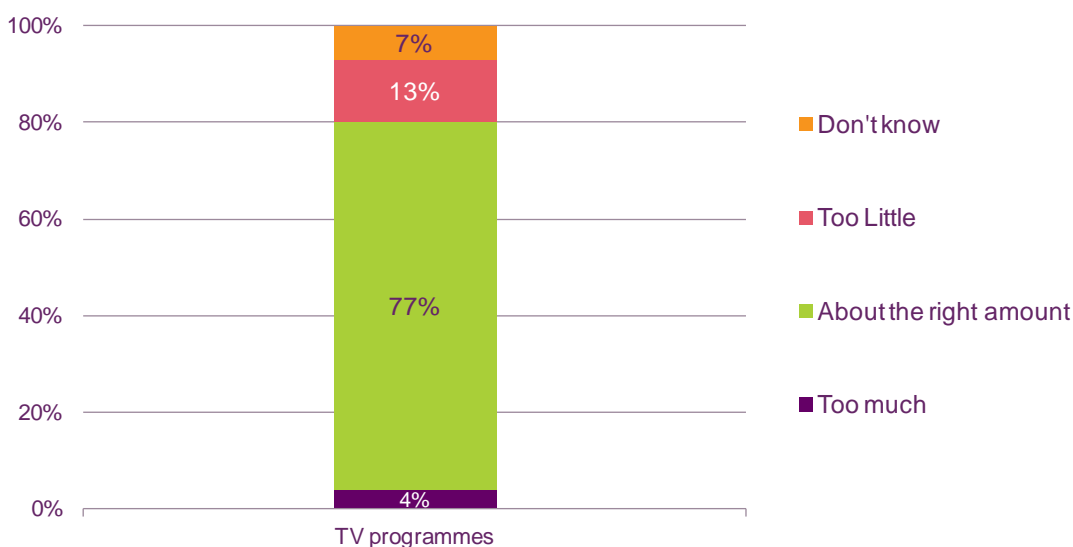
Intro to question: On TV channels the time after which these programmes unsuitable for children may be shown is 9pm. Q - Do you think this is....?

Base: Parents with children in household (589). Significant differences to non-parents circled.

More than three in four parents (77%) believe that the level of regulation for TV programmes is about right

When respondents were asked if they thought TV programmes were regulated, 89% of parents thought they were. These are similar to awareness figures measured across the total adult sample (89% thought TV programmes were regulated). Following this question, all respondents were asked for their opinion on the amount of regulation. The majority of parents considered the current level of television programme to be about right, at 77% in 2011 (Figure A4.5).

Figure A4.5: Opinions on current levels of television regulation



Source: Ofcom Media Tracker 2011. Q - Do you think the amount of regulation for [television] is: i) Too much? ii) Too little? iii) About the right amount? Base: Parents with children in household (589). Note: there are no significant differences to non-parents.

Opinions on harmful content

More than four in five parents (83%) could not recall seeing harmful content on TV in the past 12 months

Over four-fifths (83%) of parents said they had not viewed any content they considered to be harmful over the past 12 months. In total, 15% had seen content they considered to be harmful. Non-parents were almost as likely to have seen what they considered to be harmful television content for children (13% of parents compared to 10% of non-parents).

Of those who said they had seen harmful content, violence was the most common kind, mentioned by 10% of all parents. Sexual content came second, with 8% having seen it, (significantly lower than non-parents). Bad language followed, with 5% saying they had seen it in the past 12 months.

Figure A4.6: Respondents seeing what they consider to be harmful content



Source: Ofcom Media Tracker 2011.

Q - Have you seen anything on TV in the past 12 months that you thought was harmful either to yourself, other adults or children? Multicode, unprompted. Base: All parents (589) Non-parents (1167). Note: there are no significant differences to non-parents.