
Covid-19 news and information: 12-15 year old children's news consumption and attitudes

Overview

As a response to the Covid-19 outbreak, Ofcom is providing a range of information about how people are getting news and information about the crisis. This is designed to support a range of stakeholders with their activities during this time.

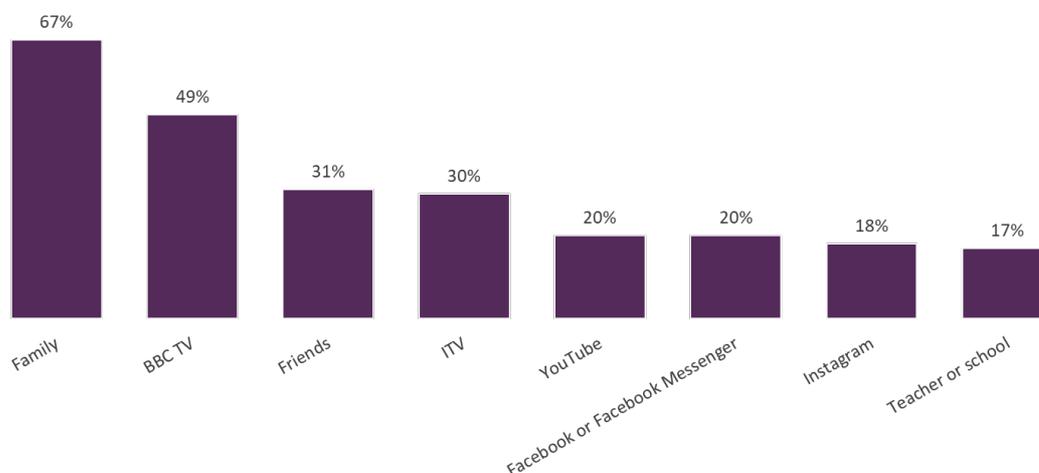
As part of our 2020 News Consumption in the UK study, we asked c. 500 12-15-year-old children about their use of news content across different platforms and their attitudes towards that content during the Covid-19 outbreak¹. The online survey took place between 1st and 20th April 2020, which corresponds approximately with weeks three and four of the UK 'lockdown'.

Consumption of news and information about Covid-19

- Nearly all 12-15-year-old respondents (96%) say they accessed news and information about Covid-19 in the last week. People known to respondents were the most common source. Two-thirds of 12-15-year olds (67%) said they got news and information about the pandemic from family members, three in ten (31%) said from their friends and 17% cited their teacher or school.
- Seven in ten said they used television as a source of news and information about Covid-19 (72%). BBC TV was the most used broadcaster, with nearly half of 12-15-year-old respondents (49%) saying they used it as a source. A third said they used ITV (30%) and a fifth used Sky (21%) for information about Covid-19.
- Just under half of 12-15s (48%) said they used social media as a source of information about the topic. YouTube (20%), Facebook/Facebook Messenger (20%) and Instagram (18%) were the most commonly used online sources. Girls aged 12-15 were more likely than boys of the same age to say they used Facebook or Facebook Messenger (25% girls vs. 15% boys), Snapchat (12% vs. 3%) and TikTok (14% vs. 6%) as sources of information.

¹ These were additional questions as part of the News consumption in the UK – Children's survey. The full set of data tables will not be published until June 2020. Please see our [Statistical release calendar 2020 schedule](#) for further details.

Figure 1: Most commonly cited sources used for news/information about Covid-19



Source: Ofcom, News Consumption Survey – Children’s survey, April 2020

F3. Which, if any of the following sources have you got information/news from about the Coronavirus outbreak in the LAST WEEK?

Base: All children aged 12-15 (505)

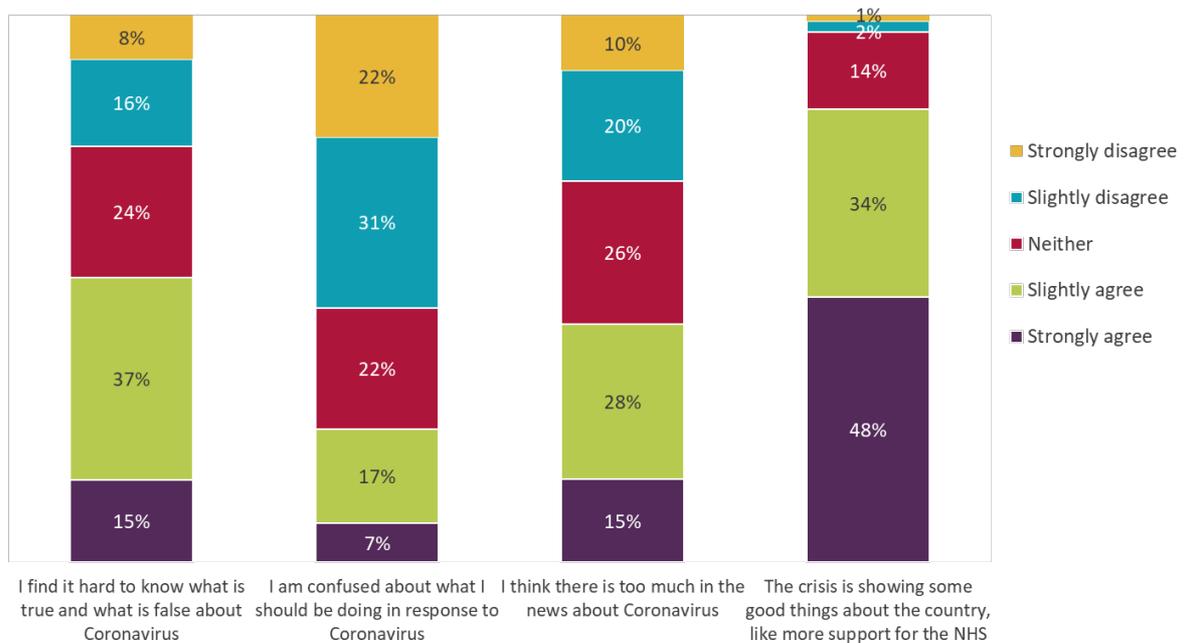
Attitudes towards Covid-19 and media coverage

- Family members are the most trusted source of information about the Coronavirus outbreak². Of the 12-15-year olds who said they used their family as a source of information, 92% said they trust them tell the truth about the outbreak. By comparison, half of those who said they used their friends as a source said they trusted the information provided (50%).
- BBC TV is also highly trusted, with 87% of 12-15-year-olds who use it saying they trust it to tell the truth about the outbreak. This compares to 69% of those who said they used ITV as a source.
- Half of 12-15-year-old respondents (52%) agree they ‘find it hard to know what is true and what is false about Coronavirus’. A quarter (24%) agree that they are ‘confused about what I should be doing in response to Coronavirus’. Children from the ABC1 socio-economic group are more likely than children from the C2DE group to say they disagree that they are confused about what they should be doing (59% ABC1 vs. 47% C2DE).

² Children were asked about trust (F4) for a maximum of 5 sources. Where 6 or more sources had been chosen, the trust question was asked for sources on a ‘least fill’ basis. ‘Least fill’ means that, sources with a lower response rate (at that time) were prioritised i.e. the 5 sources selected for a respondent noting 6 or more (at F3), would include those with the fewest responses at that point in the fieldwork.

- Four in ten 12-15-year olds (43%) think there ‘is too much in the news about Coronavirus’. 12-year olds are most likely to agree with this statement compared to children of other ages (59%).
- However, a clear majority of 12-15 year old children agree that the crisis ‘is showing some good things about the country, like more support for the NHS’ (83%). Nearly half of respondents (48%) ‘strongly agree’ with this statement.

Figure 2: Attitudinal statements about Covid-19 and media coverage



Source: Ofcom, News Consumption Survey – Children’s survey, April 2020

F2. How much do you agree or disagree with some things other children have said about the Coronavirus outbreak?

Base: All children aged 12-15 (505)