

Technical report – The Online Experiences Tracker (Wave 4, July 2023)

Preface

Wave 4 of the Online Experiences Tracker (2023) was undertaken by YouGov on behalf of Ofcom.

The objectives of this quantitative tracking study, as with previous waves of the research, were to gain a deeper understanding of internet users' attitudes towards and use of the internet, and their experiences of potential harms online, and to monitor these over time.

The insights drawn from this data continues to inform Ofcom's preparations for The Online Safety Bill, which was introduced to Parliament earlier this year, eventually granting Ofcom new responsibilities in helping to protect internet users online.

This report refers to the fourth wave completed in July 2023. Further information about the study is summarised in the sections below.

Summary of Approach

- The **Online Experiences Tracker (Wave 4)** survey was conducted amongst a nationally representative sample of UK internet users aged 13-84, and addresses their attitudes towards and use of the internet, and their experiences of potentially harmful behaviour or content online.
- The **Online Experiences Tracker** is a multi-wave study with research taking place in November 2021, May 2022 and most recently July 2023. It builds on previous work of similar focus ('Pilot Online Harms Survey'¹) which was commissioned by Ofcom in 2020 to explore internet usage and behaviours, attitudes towards online safety regulation, and experiences of potential online harms. The pilot study informed preparations for the Online Safety regime.
- Data from the third wave (Wave 3) was removed after further quality assurance found errors in the questionnaire design. These errors affected our measures of encountering harmful content.
- As a result of the removal of Wave 3, a total of 14,181 interviews were conducted for Wave 4 to produce a more robust data set, which also helped to achieve a large enough sample size for low-incidence groups such as younger respondents and those living in specific UK nations (Wales & Northern Ireland). Hence, unlike the previous waves, these groups did not need any additional 'boost' and so no 'boosts' were applied in Wave 4.

Significance Testing

Significance testing for the **Online Experiences Tracker** has been applied at a 99% confidence interval during the analysis of Wave 4 data. Due to a significantly larger sample size than Wave 2, the wider 99% confidence interval was selected instead of 95% as it is more likely to contain the true population value than the narrower 95% confidence interval. Significance testing has been applied between subgroups, while each subgroup has also been tested against the total.

Financial vulnerability

We have included in each set of data tables a measure for household financial vulnerability, ranging from most to least vulnerable. This definition was provided by Ofcom and is based on household income and household composition (i.e., size of household and number of children) and can only be run on data where respondents have given a response at each of these questions. The definition of each group has been remained in line with Wave 2 specifications.

The following breakdown shows the detailed definitions for each group:

MOST financially vulnerable	POTENTIALLY financially vulnerable	LEAST financially vulnerable
Household income under £10,399	Earning between £10,400 - £25,999	Earning between £26,600 - £36,399
All respondents	1-2 adult, 0-1 child	1 adult, 0 children
	3 adults, no children	
Earning between £10,400 - £25,999	Earning between £26,000 - £36,399	Earning between £36,400 - £51,999
1-2 adults, 2+ children	1 adult, 1 to 3 children	1 adult, 0-1 child
3+ adults, 1+ children	2 adults, 0 to 3 children	2 adults, 0 children
4+ adults	3 adults, 0 to 1 child	
	4 adults, no children	
Earning between £26,000 - £36,399	Earning between £36,400 - £51,999	Household income £52,000+
1 adult, 4+ children	1 adult, 2-3 children	All households
2 adults, 4+ children	2 adults, 1-2 children	
3 adults, 2+ children	3 adults, 0-2 children	
4 adults, 1+ children	4 adults, 0-1 child	
5+ adults	5 adults, 0 children	
Earning between £36,400 - £51,999		
1 adults, >3 children		
2 adults, 3+ children		
3 adults, 3+ children		
4 adults, 2+ children		
5 adults, 1+ children		
6+ adults		

Sample and Fieldwork Design

All respondents who took part in the research were drawn solely from the YouGov panel of over 2.7m people who live in the UK. The approach taken was to survey a nationally representative sample of UK internet users. The YouGov panel is large enough to enable the selection of nationally representative samples that reflect the actual breakdown of the population across the key demographics of age, gender, region and social grade.

Children between 13-17 were recruited through their parents or guardians. The survey was passed to the children after obtaining parents' or guardians' consent. Children then gave their own consent and

had the opportunity to decline to participate in the research if they wanted. If there was more than one child in the household aged 13-17 years, the parent or guardian was asked to select one child to take part in this survey.

Quotas

Interview quotas were applied so that the final sample was representative of UK internet users by age, gender, region and socio-economic group (SEG).

Targets for quotas were derived from Ofcom. There were no “boosts” applied to the sample in Wave 4.

Quotas were set on the following variables:

- Age (13-17, 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 64-74, 75-84)
- Gender
- Region
- Socio-economic group (SEG)

The table below details the specific quotas used for this study:

Demographic group	Category	Quota
Gender	Male	49%
	Female	51%
Age	13-17	7%
	18-24	11%
	25-34	17%
	35-44	16%
	45-54	18%
	55-64	14%
	65-74	11%
	75-84	6%
Region	Scotland	8%
	North East	4%
	North West	11%
	Yorkshire & Humberside	8%
	West Midlands	9%
	East Midlands	7%
	Wales	5%
	Eastern	9%
	London	14%
	South East	14%
	South West	9%
	Northern Ireland	3%
Social Grade	AB	27%

	C1	30%
	C2	21%
	DE	22%

YouGov considers a 'complete' response if a respondent has answered all sections of the questionnaire. Those that choose not to answer specific section within the script were removed from the final dataset. This is different to the approach taken in Wave 1 and Wave 2 where those respondents were included in the final data set.

Below is a comparison of the final sample for Wave 4 against the final data in Wave 2 across key demographics. There is slight difference in the Social Grade composition, driven by C2DE. We do not expect this to impact the results in any meaningful way, i.e. it will not result in significant differences in results driven by this respondent group.

Demographic group	Category	Wave 2	Wave 4
Total sample		6,666	14,181
Gender	Male	49%	48%
	Female	51%	51%
Age	13-17	7%	7%
	18-24	11%	10%
	25-34	17%	17%
	35-44	16%	16%
	45-54	18%	19%
	55-64	14%	14%
	65-74	11%	11%
	75-84	6%	6%
Region	Scotland	8%	9%
	North East	4%	4%
	North West	11%	11%
	Yorkshire & Humberside	8%	8%
	West Midlands	9%	9%
	East Midlands	7%	8%
	Wales	5%	5%
	Eastern	9%	9%
	London	14%	11%
	South East	14%	14%
	South West	9%	9%
	Northern Ireland	3%	3%
Social Grade	ABC1	57%	57%
	C2DE	43%	36%
Ethnicity	English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	80%	84%
	Irish	1%	1%
	Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0%	0%

	Any other White background	4%	4%
	White and Black Caribbean	1%	0%
	White and Black African	1%	0%
	White and Asian	1%	1%
	Indian	2%	1%
	Pakistani	2%	1%
	Bangladeshi	1%	0%
	Chinese	1%	1%
	Caribbean	1%	0%
	African	2%	1%
	Arab	0%	0%
Religion	No religion	49%	59%
	Catholic	10%	8%
	Church of England/Scotland/Ireland	22%	20%
	Muslim	4%	5%
	Hindu	1%	2%
	Jewish	1%	1%
	Sikh	1%	1%
	Buddhist	1%	0%
	Other religion	1%	1%
	Prefer not to say	2%	2%

Weighting

The data has been weighted to be representative of the UK internet user population on age within gender, and overall, to regional and SEG profiles. There were no “boosts” applied to the sample in Wave 4.

Fieldwork

All interviews were conducted over a 10-day period between 7th and 17th July 2023. Due to the highly sensitive nature of some of the research topics (e.g. experiences of potentially harmful behaviour or content online), respondents were given the option to end the survey at three points. They were also forewarned of the sensitive nature of the research topic and asked to give their consent to participate, in line with MRS guidelines.

Participants who opted out (and also those who completed the survey) were provided with a list of resources if further support was needed.

The questionnaire also included questions designed to obtain consent to be contacted for participation in further qualitative research into online habits, attitudes and behaviours, as well as experience of potential online harms. This data is managed and stored in line with GDPR commitments.

YouGov carried out the following standard checks during and post-fieldwork:

- Manual checks post-fieldwork to remove anyone who responded in unreasonable ways.

- Manual ‘flatlining’ checks post-fieldwork to check grid questions and ensure respondents did not answer the same codes across an unreasonable range of grid / scale questions.
- Open-end checks to ensure respondents answered thoughtfully and were not ‘spamming’ answers.
- The participants removed from the survey through the QA checks were excluded from final demographic quotas as well as from the dataset.

Sample Representativeness

The following table shows both the initial unweighted sample and the final weighted sample profiles:

Demographic group	Unweighted counts	Unweighted %	Weighted counts	Weighted %
Male 13-17	498	7%	509	7%
Male 18-34	1,751	26%	1,872	27%
Male 35-54	2,406	36%	2,361	35%
Male 55+	2,115	31%	2,091	31%
Female 13-17	458	6%	465	7%
Female 18-34	1,935	27%	1,961	28%
Female 35-54	2,496	35%	2,396	34%
Female 55+	2,288	32%	2,290	32%
Scotland	1,207	9%	1,134	8%
North East	594	4%	567	4%
North West	1,588	11%	1,560	11%
Yorkshire and the Humber	1,181	8%	1,134	8%
West Midlands	1,244	9%	1,276	9%
East Midlands	1,064	8%	993	7%
Wales	719	5%	709	5%
East of England	1,329	9%	1,276	9%
London	1,616	11%	1,985	14%
South East	1,957	14%	1,985	14%
South West	1,304	9%	1,276	9%
Northern Ireland	378	3%	284	2%
AB	3,864	29%	3,320	25%
C1	4,247	32%	4,079	31%
C2	2,301	17%	2,805	21%
DE	2,793	21%	2,985	23%

Guide to Statistical Reliability

The variation between the sample results and the “true” values (the findings that would have been obtained if everyone had been interviewed) can be predicted from the sample sizes on which the results are based, and on the number of times that a particular answer is given. The confidence with which we can make this prediction is calculated at the 99% level: that is, the chances are 99 in 100 that the “true”

values will fall within a specified range. However, as the sample is weighted, we need to use the effective sample size (ESS) rather than actual sample size to judge the accuracy of results. The following table compares ESS and actual samples for some of the main groups within the sample.

KEY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS	ACTUAL	ESS
TOTAL	14,181	13,776
GENDER: Male	6,770	6,572
GENDER: Female	7,177	6,979
AGE: 13-17	976	948
AGE: 18-24	1,384	1,342
AGE: 25-34	2,432	2,370
AGE: 35-44	2,312	2,252
AGE: 45-54	2,658	2,595
AGE: 55-64	1,957	1,905
AGE: 65-74	1,617	1,575
AGE: 75+	845	824
SEG: AB	3,864	3,812
SEG: C1	4,247	4,188
SEG: C2	2,301	2,272
SEG: DE	2,793	2,757

The table below illustrates the required ranges for different sample sizes and percentage results at the “99% confidence interval”.

Effective sample size		10% or 90%	20% or 80%	30% or 70%	40% or 60%	50%
		±	±	±	±	±
TOTAL	13,776	0.65	0.87	0.99	1.06	1.08
GENDER: Male	6,572	0.94	1.25	1.43	1.53	1.56
GENDER: Female	6,979	0.92	1.22	1.4	1.5	1.53
AGE: 13-17	948	2.46	3.28	3.76	4.01	4.1
AGE: 18-24	1,342	1.96	2.61	2.99	3.2	3.27
AGE: 25-34	2,370	1.58	2.1	2.41	2.57	2.63
AGE: 35-44	2,252	1.62	2.17	2.48	2.65	2.71
AGE: 45-54	2,595	1.53	2.04	2.34	2.5	2.55
AGE: 55-64	1,905	1.74	2.32	2.65	2.84	2.89
AGE: 65-74	1,575	1.96	2.61	2.99	3.2	3.27
AGE: 75+	824	2.66	3.54	4.06	4.34	4.43
SEG: AB	3,812	1.34	1.79	2.05	2.19	2.24
SEG: C1	4,188	1.21	1.61	1.85	1.98	2.02
SEG: C2	2,272	1.46	1.95	2.23	2.38	2.43
SEG: DE	2,757	1.42	1.89	2.16	2.31	2.36

For example, if 30% or 70% of a sample of 14,181 gives a particular answer, the chances are 99 in 100 that the “true” value will fall within the range of +/- 0.99 percentage points from the sample results.

When results are compared between separate groups within a sample, different results may be obtained. The difference may be “real”, or it may occur by chance (because not everyone has been interviewed). To test if the difference is a real one – i.e. if it is “statistically significant” – we again have to know the size of the samples, the percentages giving a certain answer and the degree of confidence chosen. If we assume “99% confidence interval”, the difference between two sample results must be greater than the values given in the table below to be significant.

Prioritisation of codes for overall concern levels

Regarding the Q7_any named harm summary tables, where respondents’ concern levels were asked for listed potential harms, codes are prioritised in the following order: Code 5 (Very concerned_ >4>3>2>1(Mildly Concerned). If a respondent answered code 6 (Not concerned at all) or code 7 (Don’t know), then code 6 was kept.

Differences required for significance at or near these percentages

Sample sizes being compared	10% or 90%	20% or 80%	30% or 70%	40% or 60%	50%
	±	±	±	±	±
GENDER: Male vs. Female	1.31%	1.75%	2.00%	2.14%	2.18%
AGE: Younger (13-17) vs. Older (75+)	3.61%	4.82%	5.52%	5.90%	6.02%
SEG (social grade): ABC1 vs. C2DE	1.36%	1.81%	2.07%	2.21%	2.26%

Changes to the questionnaire between waves

Multiple additions and amendments were made to the questionnaire for Wave 4 as either improvements or revisions, in line with the shifting policy focus. A summary of changes has been included below ².

Category	NET	Wave	Definition
Break Group 1: Demographics			
Ethnicity	White	Waves 1, 2 & 4	English/ Welsh/ Scottish/ Northern Irish/ British
			Irish

² For reference, copies of both wave 1 and 2 questionnaires have been published alongside this report: <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/research-and-data/online-research/internet-users-experience-of-harm-online>

			Gypsy, Traveller or Irish Traveller
			Any other white background
			White and Black Caribbean
			White and Black African
			White and Asian
			Any other mixed/ multiple ethnic background
			Indian
			Pakistani
			Bangladeshi
			Chinese
			Any other Asian background
			Caribbean
			African
			Any other black/ African/ Caribbean background
			Arab
			Any other ethnic background
Limiting/Impacting Conditions*	Any	Waves 1, 2 & 4	Any reported limiting/impacting condition
	Mental condition	Wave 1 only	Mental abilities? Such as learning, understanding, concentration, memory, communicating, cognitive loss or deterioration
			Social/ behavioural? Conditions associated with this such as autism, attention deficit disorder, Asperger's, etc.
*NET name change in Wave 2			Your mental health? Anxiety, depression, or trauma-related conditions, for example

Wave 4 separate break for Adults and Children	Physical condition	Wave 1 only	Hearing? Poor hearing, partial hearing, or are deaf	
			Eyesight? Poor vision, colour blindness, partial sight, or are blind	
			Mobility? Cannot walk at all/ use a wheelchair or mobility scooter etc., or cannot walk very far or manage stairs or can only do so with difficulty	
			Dexterity? Limited ability to reach/ difficulty opening things with your hands/ difficulty using a telephone handset/ television remote control/ computer keyboard etc.	
			Breathing? Breathlessness or chest pains	
	Mental Health Condition	From Wave 2 & 4	Your mental health? Anxiety, depression, or trauma-related conditions, for example	
None	Waves 1, 2 & 4	Nothing – no impairments or conditions impact or limit your daily activities or the work you can do		
Break Group 2: Internet Usage				
Internet usage	High / Medium / Low	Low usage	Wave 1 only	None
			Less than 5 hours	
		Low usage	From Wave 2 & 4	None
			Less than 6 hours	
		Medium usage	Waves 1, 2 & 4	6 to 11 hours
				12 to 22 hours
		High usage	Waves 1, 2 & 4	23 to 30 hours
				Over 30 hours
Break Group 3: Attitudes				

Platform vs individual responsibility	It is the responsibility of the website or app to control what is posted on their site vs. It is the responsibility of the individual to ensure what they are posting is appropriate for other users	Platform dependents	Waves 1 & 2	If score -5 to -2
		Neutral		If score -1 to 1
		Self-regulators		If score 2 to 5
		Platform dependents	Wave 4	If score 0-3
		Neutral		If score 4-6
		Self-regulators		If score 7-10
Search engine vs individual responsibility	It is the responsibility of the search engine to control what is presented in search results vs. It is the responsibility of the individual to ensure they have the correct settings in place to only be presented with content appropriate for them	Search engine dependents	Wave 4	If score 0-3
		Neutral		If score 4-6
		Self-regulators		If score 7-10
Confidence in staying safe online	I feel confident in my ability to stay safe online vs. I do not feel confident in my ability to	Safety assured	Waves 1 & 2	If score -5 to -2
		Neutrals		If score -1 to 1

	stay safe online	Safety self-doubters		If score 2 to 5
		Safety confident	Wave 4	If score 0-3
		The neutrals		If score 4-6
		Not confident		If score 7-10
Parent vs platform responsibility	Websites and apps have a particular responsibility to protect children vs. It is the responsibility of parents/ carers to monitor what their children do online	Platform dependents		Wave 1 only
		Neutrals	If score -1 to 1	
		Parental controllers	If score 2 to 5	
Benefits vs risks of going online	The benefits of going online outweigh the risks vs. The risks of going online outweigh the benefits	Online optimists	Wave 1 only	If score -5 to -2
		Neutrals		If score -1 to 1
		Online pessimists		If score 2 to 5
		Benefits outweigh risks	Wave 4 only	If score 0-3
		Neutral		If score 4-6
		Risk outweigh benefits		If score 7-10
Sufficiency of common sense to protect from exposure to potential harms	Using a bit of common sense when you're online usually prevents you from seeing harmful or offensive photos and videos vs. It is impossible to avoid seeing harmful or offensive photos and videos if you go online	Common sense supporters	Waves 1 & 2	If score -5 to -2
		Neutrals		If score -1 to 1
		Disempowered defeatists		If score 2 to 5
		Common sense is sufficient	Wave 4	If score 0-3
		Neutral		If score 4-6
		Resigned to potential harms		If score 7-10

Free speech vs content monitoring	The Internet has an important role in supporting free speech, even when some users might find the content offensive vs. It is important for sites to monitor and delete offensive views to protect other users	Free speech advocates	Waves 1 & 2	If score -5 to -2
		Neutrals		If score -1 to 1
		Cautious protectors		If score 2 to 5
		Free speech advocates	Wave 4	If score 0-3
		The neutrals		If score 4-6
		Protection prioritisers		If score 7-10
Support for more online safety measures	There are enough online safety measures in place vs there should be more online safety measures in place	Status quo supporters	Waves 1 & 2	If score -5 to -2
		Neutrals		If score -1 to 1
		Safety measure advocates		If score 2 to 5
		Measures meets needs	Wave 4	If score 0-3
		Neutral		If score 4-6
		Further measures needed		If score 7-10
Benefits vs risks of going online	For me personally, the benefits of going online outweigh the risks vs. For me personally, the risks of going online outweigh the benefits	Benefits outweigh risks	From Wave 2	If score -5 to -2
		Neutral		If score -1 to 1
		Risks outweigh benefits		If score 2 to 5
Societal impact	The internet is good for society vs.	Internet is good for society	From Wave 2	If score -5 to -2

	the internet is damaging to society	Neutral	Wave 4 only	If score -1 to 1
		Internet is damaging to society		If score 2 to 5
		Internet is good for society		If score 0-3
		Neutral		If score 4-6
		Internet is damaging society		If score 7-10

BREAK 4 - Experience of Harms

	Any Named Harm	Wave 1 & 2	Q8 any named harm
	Any Named Harm	Wave 4	Q8 any named harm codes 1-45
	Contact harm	Waves 1, 2 & 4	Unwelcome friend or follow requests, or messages
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	Stalking, cyberstalking or intrusive behaviour
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	People pretending to be another person, e.g. 'catfishing'
		Waves 1, 2	Bullying, abusive behaviour or threats
		Wave 4	Persistent bullying online
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	Trolling, i.e. a person who says something to cause intentional upset or provoke a negative reaction

	Waves 1, 2	Pressure to send photos or personal information to someone
	Wave 4	Pressure to send sexual or nude images or videos
	Waves 1, 2 & 4	People sending unwanted/unsolicited sexual or nude images or videos, e.g. 'cyber flashing'
	Waves 1, 2 & 4	Private/intimate information made public, e.g. 'doxxing'
	Waves 1, 2	Sharing of intimate images without consent
	Wave 4	Sharing of, or threats to share, intimate images without consent e.g. 'revenge porn'
	Waves 1, 2 & 4	Intentional harassment during gaming, e.g. 'griefing'
	Waves 1, 2 & 4	Private conversations shared without consent
	Waves 1, 2 & 4	Group shaming, boycotting, or excluding someone based on their views, opinions on actions, including online 'pile-ons'
	Waves 1, 2 & 4	Generally offensive or 'bad' language, e.g. swearing, rudeness

		Waves 1, 2 & 4	Unwanted sexual messages
		Wave 4	One off abusive behaviour or threats
	Content harm	Waves 1, 2 & 4	Hateful, offensive or discriminatory content that targets a group or person based on specific characteristics like race, religion, disability, sexuality or gender identity; e.g. hate speech
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	Sexual/ pornographic content inappropriate for the site/app
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	Content or language which objectifies, demeans or otherwise negatively portrays women
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	Content depicting the sexual abuse or exploitation of children [NOT SHOWN TO UNDER 18]
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	Content encouraging extremism, radicalisation or terrorism
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	Content depicting violence or injury
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	Content encouraging gambling, e.g. sports betting, or casino-style games [SHOWN TO 18 IN WAVE 1 / SHOWN TO UNDER 18 IN WAVE 2 AND WAVE 3]
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	Misinformation i.e. false or misleading stories, claims or assertions

Waves 1 & 2	Content relating to self-harm or suicide
Wave 4	Content promoting self-harm
Wave 4	Content promoting suicide
Waves 1 & 2	Content relating to negative body image, excessive or unhealthy dieting/exercise and/or eating disorders
Wave 4	Content promoting excessive or unhealthy dieting/exercise
Wave 4	Content relating to eating disorders
Waves 1, 2 & 4	Promotion of female genital mutilation (FGM) [NOT SHOWN TO UNDER 18]
Waves 1, 2 & 4	Fake or deceptive images/videos, e.g. 'deep fakes'
Waves 1, 2 & 4	Content glamourising unhealthy or abusive lifestyles, e.g. binge drinking, drug taking
Waves 1, 2	Content which impacted negatively on my self-esteem

	Waves 1, 2 & 4	Content depicting animal cruelty
	From Wave 2	Content depicting dangerous stunts [ONLY SHOWN TO UNDER 18]
	From Wave 4	Content depicting dangerous stunts and online challenges [ONLY SHOWN TO UNDER 18]
	From Wave 2 & 4	Content which advertises alcohol or cigarettes [ONLY SHOWN TO UNDER 18]
	From Wave 4	Content facilitating human trafficking (including sexual and labour exploitation, or recruitment for county lines activity) and illegal immigration
	From Wave 4	Content which promotes and/or encourages children to eat or ingest harmful substances e.g. bleach, detergent
Commercial harm	Waves 1 & 2	Sale or advertisement of illegal goods
	Wave 4	Sale or advertisement of illegal drugs or psychoactive substances e.g. 'magic mushrooms'
	Wave 4	Sale or advertisement of weapons
	Waves 1, 2 & 4	Collection or use of my data without my knowledge or permission

		Waves 1, 2 & 4	Scams, fraud, or phishing
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	Unintentionally spending money on in-app purchases or gifts
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	Paid-for or sponsored content which was not clearly marked as such, e.g. 'astroturfing'
		Wave 4	Content which advertises prostitution, or offers accommodation etc. in exchange for sex [NOT SHOWN TO UNDER 18]
Q15 - Action taken			
Action taken after experiencing potential harm	Any Action	Waves 1, 2 & 4	Clicked the report/flag button, or marked as junk
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	Reposted/forwarded the content to highlight that it was wrong/misleading/harmful
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	Contacted others in the community to make them aware of the issue
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	Complained to the website/app, social media site or email sender
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	Informed the police
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	Informed Ofcom



Waves 1, 2 & 4	Informed a support service
Waves 1, 2 & 4	Contacted the account/user responsible for the issue
Waves 1, 2 & 4	Closed my account/left the service
Waves 1, 2 & 4	Unfollowed/unfriended/blocked/muted the person who posted it/ deleted the email
Waves 1, 2 & 4	Told a friend or family member
Waves 1, 2 & 4	I use the platform less
Waves 1 & 2	I have stopped using the platform
Wave 4	I have stopped using the platform altogether
Waves 1, 2 & 4	I have stopped commenting, liking or posting
Waves 1, 2 & 4	I stopped what I was doing/closed down the app or website

		From wave 2 & 4	Changed my settings to change the type of content I see	
		From wave 2 & 4	Changed my settings to change who can see my profile	
		From wave 2 & 4	I flagged/reported content I am not interested in seeing	
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	Something else (informed your internet service provider, informed another regulator, contacted the press, informed the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO))	
	Reported or flagged content		Waves 1, 2 & 4	Clicked the report/flag button, or marked as junk
			Wave 1 only	Reposted/forwarded the content to highlight that it was wrong/misleading/harmful
			Waves 1, 2 & 4	Contacted others in the community to make them aware of the issue
			Waves 1, 2 & 4	Complained to the website/app, social media site or email sender
			Waves 1, 2 & 4	Informed the police
			Waves 1, 2 & 4	Informed Ofcom

		Waves 1, 2 & 4	Informed a support service
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	Contacted the account/user responsible for the issue
		From wave 2 & 4	I flagged/reported content I am not interested in seeing
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	Something else (informed your internet service provider, informed another regulator, contacted the press, informed the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO))
	Disengaged or changed engagement behaviour	Waves 1, 2 & 4	I use the platform less
		Waves 1 & 2	I have stopped using the platform
		Wave 4	I have stopped using the platform altogether
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	I have stopped commenting, liking or posting
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	I stopped what I was doing/closed down the app or website
		From wave 2 & 4	Closed my account/left the service

Q16 - Didn't think it was that serious

Why no action	Didn't think it was that serious	Waves 1, 2 & 4	I didn't consider it to be offensive, disturbing or harmful
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	I didn't like it, but I didn't consider it bad enough to do something about
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	I didn't see the need to do anything
Q17- Awareness of result of reporting			
Results of reporting	Awareness of result of reporting	Waves 1, 2 & 4	The content was removed
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	I got a written response
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	I was asked to provide further information
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	Something else
Q21- Non-email			
Site/service when experience harm	Non-Email	A website or app where you view videos posted by other users e.g. YouTube, TikTok	A website or app where you view videos posted by other users e.g. YouTube, TikTok
		Social media website or app e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram	Social media website or app e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram
		Livestreaming website or app – this could be part of a social media website or app e.g. Twitch, Facebook Live	Livestreaming website or app – this could be part of a social media website or app e.g. Twitch, Facebook Live
		A search engine e.g. Google, Yahoo	A search engine e.g. Google, Yahoo
		Instant messenger website or app e.g. Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp	Instant messenger website or app e.g. Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp
		News website or app e.g. BBC News, The Guardian, Daily Mail Online	News website or app e.g. BBC News, The Guardian, Daily Mail Online

	Gaming website or app e.g. PlayStation Network, Nintendo Online	Gaming website or app e.g. PlayStation Network, Nintendo Online
	A Q&A website or app e.g. Quora, Yahoo! Answers	A Q&A website or app e.g. Quora, Yahoo! Answers
	Blog website or app e.g. WordPress, Bloglovin'	Blog website or app e.g. WordPress, Bloglovin'
	Shopping website or app e.g. Amazon, eBay, Depop	Shopping website or app e.g. Amazon, eBay, Depop
	Online dating websites or apps e.g. Tinder, Bumble	Online dating websites or apps e.g. Tinder, Bumble
	Video on demand application e.g. Netflix, Now TV	Video on demand application e.g. Netflix, Now TV
	'Adult' site containing sexual content	'Adult' site containing sexual content

Where appropriate YouGov used 'PDLs' which are information identifiers assigned to panel members based on their previous responses. PDLs used in Wave 4:

- Region
- Ethnicity
- Religion

NET definitions featured in the published tables

Certain subgroups within the sample were grouped together to aid analysis and are featured alongside this report in the published data tables. The definitions of these so-called 'NETs' are in the table below.

Changes to some 'NET' definitions were made between the different waves of the research. Wherever present, these have been noted in the 'Wave' column in the table below.

Category	NET	Wave	Definition
Break Group 1: Demographics			
Ethnicity	White	Waves 1, 2 & 4	English/ Welsh/ Scottish/ Northern Irish/ British

	Mixed/ Multiple ethnic groups		Irish
			Gypsy, Traveller or Irish Traveller
			Any other white background
			White and Black Caribbean
			White and Black African
			White and Asian
			Any other mixed/ multiple ethnic background
			Indian
			Pakistani
			Bangladeshi
			Chinese
			Any other Asian background
			Caribbean
			African
			Any other black/ African/ Caribbean background
			Arab
Any other ethnic background			
Limiting/Impacting Conditions*	Any	Waves 1, 2 & 4	Any reported limiting/impacting condition
	Mental condition	Wave 1 only	Mental abilities? Such as learning, understanding, concentration, memory, communicating, cognitive loss or deterioration
Social/ behavioural? Conditions associated with this such as autism, attention deficit disorder, Asperger's, etc.			
Your mental health? Anxiety, depression, or trauma-related conditions, for example			
*NET name change in Wave 2			

Wave 4 separate break for Adults and Children		Physical condition	Wave 1 only	Hearing? Poor hearing, partial hearing, or are deaf
				Eyesight? Poor vision, colour blindness, partial sight, or are blind
				Mobility? Cannot walk at all/ use a wheelchair or mobility scooter etc., or cannot walk very far or manage stairs or can only do so with difficulty
				Dexterity? Limited ability to reach/ difficulty opening things with your hands/ difficulty using a telephone handset/ television remote control/ computer keyboard etc.
		Breathing? Breathlessness or chest pains		
		Mental Health Condition	From Wave 2 & 4	Your mental health? Anxiety, depression, or trauma-related conditions, for example
None	Waves 1, 2 & 4	Nothing – no impairments or conditions impact or limit your daily activities or the work you can do		
Break Group 2: Internet Usage				
Internet usage	High / Medium / Low	Low usage	Wave 1 only	None
				Less than 5 hours
		Low usage	From Wave 2 & 4	None
				Less than 6 hours
		Medium usage	Waves 1, 2 & 4	6 to 11 hours
				12 to 22 hours
		High usage	Waves 1, 2 & 4	23 to 30 hours
				Over 30 hours
Break Group 3: Attitudes				

Platform vs individual responsibility	It is the responsibility of the website or app to control what is posted on their site vs. It is the responsibility of the individual to ensure what they are posting is appropriate for other users	Platform dependents	Waves 1 & 2	If score -5 to -2		
		Neutral		If score -1 to 1		
		Self-regulators		If score 2 to 5		
			It is the responsibility of the search engine to control what is presented in search results vs. It is the responsibility of the individual to ensure they have the correct settings in place to only be presented with content appropriate for them	Platform dependents	Wave 4	If score 0-3
				Neutral		If score 4-6
				Self-regulators		If score 7-10
Search engine dependents	If score 0-3					
Neutral	If score 4-6					
Self-regulators	If score 7-10					
Search engine vs individual responsibility		Safety assured	Waves 1 & 2	If score -5 to -2		
		Neutrals		If score -1 to 1		

	stay safe online			
		Safety self-doubters		If score 2 to 5
		Safety confident	Wave 4	If score 0-3
		The neutrals		If score 4-6
		Not confident		If score 7-10
Parent vs platform responsibility	Websites and apps have a particular responsibility to protect children vs. It is the responsibility of parents/ carers to monitor what their children do online	Platform dependents	Wave 1 only	If score -5 to -2
		Neutrals		If score -1 to 1
		Parental controllers		If score 2 to 5
Benefits vs risks of going online	The benefits of going online outweigh the risks vs. The risks of going online outweigh the benefits	Online optimists	Wave 1 only	If score -5 to -2
		Neutrals		If score -1 to 1
		Online pessimists		If score 2 to 5
		Benefits outweigh risks	Wave 4 only	If score 0-3
		Neutral		If score 4-6
		Risk outweigh benefits		If score 7-10
Sufficiency of common sense to protect from exposure to potential harms	Using a bit of common sense when you're online usually prevents you from seeing harmful or offensive photos and videos vs. It is impossible to avoid seeing harmful or offensive photos and	Common sense supporters	Waves 1 & 2	If score -5 to -2
		Neutrals		If score -1 to 1
		Disempowered defeatists		If score 2 to 5
		Common sense is sufficient	Wave 4	If score 0-3

	videos if you go online	Neutral		If score 4-6
		Resigned to potential harms		If score 7-10
Free speech vs content monitoring	The Internet has an important role in supporting free speech, even when some users might find the content offensive vs. It is important for sites to monitor and delete offensive views to protect other users	Free speech advocates	Waves 1 & 2	If score -5 to -2
		Neutrals		If score -1 to 1
		Cautious protectors		If score 2 to 5
		Free speech advocates	Wave 4	If score 0-3
	The neutrals	If score 4-6		
	Protection prioritisers	If score 7-10		
	Status quo supporters	Waves 1 & 2		If score -5 to -2
	Neutrals		If score -1 to 1	
Safety measure advocates	If score 2 to 5			
Measures meets needs	Wave 4		If score 0-3	
Neutral		If score 4-6		
Further measures needed		If score 7-10		
Support for more online safety measures	There are enough online safety measures in place vs there should be more online safety measures in place			
Benefits vs risks of going online	For me personally, the benefits of going online outweigh the risks vs. For me personally, the risks of going online	Benefits outweigh risks	From Wave 2	If score -5 to -2
		Neutral		If score -1 to 1

	outweigh the benefits	Risks outweigh benefits		If score 2 to 5
Societal impact	The internet is good for society vs. the internet is damaging to society	Internet is good for society	From Wave 2	If score -5 to -2
		Neutral		If score -1 to 1
		Internet is damaging to society		If score 2 to 5
		Internet is good for society	Wave 4 only	If score 0-3
		Neutral		If score 4-6
		Internet is damaging society		If score 7-10
BREAK 4 - Experience of Harms				
		Any Named Harm	Wave 1 & 2	Q8 any named harm
		Any Named Harm	Wave 4	Q8 any named harm codes 1-45
		Contact harm	Waves 1, 2 & 4	Unwelcome friend or follow requests, or messages
			Waves 1, 2 & 4	Stalking, cyberstalking or intrusive behaviour
			Waves 1, 2 & 4	People pretending to be another person, e.g. 'catfishing'
			Waves 1, 2	Bullying, abusive behaviour or threats
			Wave 4	Persistent bullying online

	Waves 1, 2 & 4	Trolling, i.e. a person who says something to cause intentional upset or provoke a negative reaction
	Waves 1, 2	Pressure to send photos or personal information to someone
	Wave 4	Pressure to send sexual or nude images or videos
	Waves 1, 2 & 4	People sending unwanted/unsolicited sexual or nude images or videos, e.g. 'cyber flashing'
	Waves 1, 2 & 4	Private/intimate information made public, e.g. 'doxxing'
	Waves 1, 2	Sharing of intimate images without consent
	Wave 4	Sharing of, or threats to share, intimate images without consent e.g. 'revenge porn'
	Waves 1, 2 & 4	Intentional harassment during gaming, e.g. 'griefing'
	Waves 1, 2 & 4	Private conversations shared without consent
	Waves 1, 2 & 4	Group shaming, boycotting, or excluding someone based on their views, opinions on actions, including online 'pile-ons'

	Waves 1, 2 & 4	Generally offensive or 'bad' language, e.g. swearing, rudeness
	Waves 1, 2 & 4	Unwanted sexual messages
	Wave 4	One off abusive behaviour or threats
Content harm	Waves 1, 2 & 4	Hateful, offensive or discriminatory content that targets a group or person based on specific characteristics like race, religion, disability, sexuality or gender identity; e.g. hate speech
	Waves 1, 2 & 4	Sexual/ pornographic content inappropriate for the site/app
	Waves 1, 2 & 4	Content or language which objectifies, demeans or otherwise negatively portrays women
	Waves 1, 2 & 4	Content depicting the sexual abuse or exploitation of children [NOT SHOWN TO UNDER 18]
	Waves 1, 2 & 4	Content encouraging extremism, radicalisation or terrorism
	Waves 1, 2 & 4	Content depicting violence or injury
	Waves 1, 2 & 4	Content encouraging gambling, e.g. sports betting, or casino-style games [SHOWN TO 18 IN WAVE 1 / SHOWN TO UNDER 18 IN WAVE 2 AND WAVE 3]

	Waves 1, 2 & 4	Misinformation i.e. false or misleading stories, claims or assertions
	Waves 1 & 2	Content relating to self-harm or suicide
	Wave 4	Content promoting self-harm
	Wave 4	Content promoting suicide
	Waves 1 & 2	Content relating to negative body image, excessive or unhealthy dieting/exercise and/or eating disorders
	Wave 4	Content promoting excessive or unhealthy dieting/exercise
	Wave 4	Content relating to eating disorders
	Waves 1, 2 & 4	Promotion of female genital mutilation (FGM) [NOT SHOWN TO UNDER 18]
	Waves 1, 2 & 4	Fake or deceptive images/videos, e.g. 'deep fakes'
	Waves 1, 2 & 4	Content glamourising unhealthy or abusive lifestyles, e.g. binge drinking, drug taking

	Waves 1, 2	Content which impacted negatively on my self-esteem
	Waves 1, 2 & 4	Content depicting animal cruelty
	From Wave 2	Content depicting dangerous stunts [ONLY SHOWN TO UNDER 18]
	From Wave 4	Content depicting dangerous stunts and online challenges [ONLY SHOWN TO UNDER 18]
	From Wave 2 & 4	Content which advertises alcohol or cigarettes [ONLY SHOWN TO UNDER 18]
	From Wave 4	Content facilitating human trafficking (including sexual and labour exploitation, or recruitment for county lines activity) and illegal immigration
	From Wave 4	Content which promotes and/or encourages children to eat or ingest harmful substances e.g. bleach, detergent
Commercial harm	Waves 1 & 2	Sale or advertisement of illegal goods
	Wave 4	Sale or advertisement of illegal drugs or psychoactive substances e.g. 'magic mushrooms'
	Wave 4	Sale or advertisement of weapons

		Waves 1, 2 & 4	Collection or use of my data without my knowledge or permission	
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	Scams, fraud, or phishing	
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	Unintentionally spending money on in-app purchases or gifts	
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	Paid-for or sponsored content which was not clearly marked as such, e.g. 'astroturfing'	
		Wave 4	Content which advertises prostitution, or offers accommodation etc in exchange for sex [NOT SHOWN TO UNDER 18]	
	Primary Priority Content (PPC)	Wave 4		Sexual/ pornographic content
				Content promoting self-harm
				Content promoting suicide
				Content promoting excessive or unhealthy dieting/exercise
				Content relating to eating disorders

Priority Content (PC)	Wave 4	Hateful, offensive or discriminatory content that targets a group or person based on specific characteristics like race, religion, disability, sexuality or gender identity; e.g. hate speech
		Content or language which objectifies, demeans or otherwise negatively portrays women
		Content depicting or encouraging violence or injury
		Persistent bullying online
		Trolling, i.e. a person who says something to cause intentional upset or provoke a negative reaction
		Private/intimate information made public, e.g. 'doxxing'
		Intentional harassment during gaming, e.g. 'griefing'
		Private conversations shared without consent
		Content glamourising unhealthy or abusive lifestyles, e.g. binge drinking, drug taking
		Group shaming, boycotting, or excluding someone based on their views, opinions or actions, including online 'pile-ons'

			<p>Content depicting animal cruelty</p> <p>Content showing dangerous stunts or online challenges</p> <p>Content which advertises alcohol or cigarettes</p> <p>Content which promotes and/or encourages children to eat or ingest harmful substances e.g. bleach, detergent</p> <p>One off abusive behaviour or threats</p>
	<p>Primary Priority Content /Priority Content (PPC & PC)</p>	<p>Wave 4</p>	<p>Sexual/ pornographic content</p> <p>Content promoting self-harm</p> <p>Content promoting suicide</p> <p>Content promoting excessive or unhealthy dieting/exercise</p> <p>Content relating to eating disorders</p>

		Hateful, offensive or discriminatory content that targets a group or person based on specific characteristics like race, religion, disability, sexuality or gender identity; e.g. hate speech
		Content or language which objectifies, demeans or otherwise negatively portrays women
		Content depicting or encouraging violence or injury
		Persistent bullying online
		Trolling, i.e. a person who says something to cause intentional upset or provoke a negative reaction
		Private/intimate information made public, e.g. 'doxxing'
		Intentional harassment during gaming, e.g. 'griefing'
		Private conversations shared without consent
		Content glamourising unhealthy or abusive lifestyles, e.g. binge drinking, drug taking
		Group shaming, boycotting, or excluding someone based on their views, opinions or actions, including online 'pile-ons'

			Content depicting animal cruelty
			Content showing dangerous stunts or online challenges
			Content which advertises alcohol or cigarettes
			Content which promotes and/or encourages children to eat or ingest harmful substances e.g. bleach, detergent
			One off abusive behaviour or threats
Q15 - Action taken			
Action taken after experiencing potential harm	Any Action	Waves 1, 2 & 4	Clicked the report/flag button, or marked as junk
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	Reposted/forwarded the content to highlight that it was wrong/misleading/harmful
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	Contacted others in the community to make them aware of the issue
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	Complained to the website/app, social media site or email sender
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	Informed the police

	Waves 1, 2 & 4	Informed Ofcom
	Waves 1, 2 & 4	Informed a support service
	Waves 1, 2 & 4	Contacted the account/user responsible for the issue
	Waves 1, 2 & 4	Closed my account/left the service
	Waves 1, 2 & 4	Unfollowed/unfriended/blocked/muted the person who posted it/ deleted the email
	Waves 1, 2 & 4	Told a friend or family member
	Waves 1, 2 & 4	I use the platform less
	Waves 1 & 2	I have stopped using the platform
	Wave 4	I have stopped using the platform altogether
	Waves 1, 2 & 4	I have stopped commenting, liking or posting

		Waves 1, 2 & 4	I stopped what I was doing/closed down the app or website	
		From wave 2 & 4	Changed my settings to change the type of content I see	
		From wave 2 & 4	Changed my settings to change who can see my profile	
		From wave 2 & 4	I flagged/reported content I am not interested in seeing	
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	Something else (informed your internet service provider, informed another regulator, contacted the press, informed the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO))	
	Reported or flagged content		Waves 1, 2 & 4	Clicked the report/flag button, or marked as junk
			Wave 1 only	Reposted/forwarded the content to highlight that it was wrong/misleading/harmful
			Waves 1, 2 & 4	Contacted others in the community to make them aware of the issue
			Waves 1, 2 & 4	Complained to the website/app, social media site or email sender
			Waves 1, 2 & 4	Informed the police

		Waves 1, 2 & 4	Informed Ofcom	
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	Informed a support service	
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	Contacted the account/user responsible for the issue	
		From wave 2 & 4	I flagged/reported content I am not interested in seeing	
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	Something else (informed your internet service provider, informed another regulator, contacted the press, informed the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO))	
	Disengaged or changed engagement behaviour		Waves 1, 2 & 4	I use the platform less
			Waves 1 & 2	I have stopped using the platform
			Wave 4	I have stopped using the platform altogether
			Waves 1, 2 & 4	I have stopped commenting, liking or posting
			Waves 1, 2 & 4	I stopped what I was doing/closed down the app or website

		From wave 2 & 4	Closed my account/left the service
Q16 - Didn't think it was that serious			
Why no action	Didn't think it was that serious	Waves 1, 2 & 4	I didn't consider it to be offensive, disturbing or harmful
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	I didn't like it, but I didn't consider it bad enough to do something about
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	I didn't see the need to do anything
Q17- Awareness of result of reporting			
Results of reporting	Awareness of result of reporting	Waves 1, 2 & 4	The content was removed
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	I got a written response
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	I was asked to provide further information
		Waves 1, 2 & 4	Something else
Q21- Non-email			
Site/service when experience harm	Non-Email	A website or app where you view videos posted by other users e.g. YouTube, TikTok	A website or app where you view videos posted by other users e.g. YouTube, TikTok
		Social media website or app e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram	Social media website or app e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram
		Livestreaming website or app – this could be part of a social media website or app e.g. Twitch, Facebook Live	Livestreaming website or app – this could be part of a social media website or app e.g. Twitch, Facebook Live
		A search engine e.g. Google, Yahoo	A search engine e.g. Google, Yahoo

	Instant messenger website or app e.g. Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp	Instant messenger website or app e.g. Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp
	News website or app e.g. BBC News, The Guardian, Daily Mail Online	News website or app e.g. BBC News, The Guardian, Daily Mail Online
	Gaming website or app e.g. PlayStation Network, Nintendo Online	Gaming website or app e.g. PlayStation Network, Nintendo Online
	A Q&A website or app e.g. Quora, Yahoo! Answers	A Q&A website or app e.g. Quora, Yahoo! Answers
	Blog website or app e.g. WordPress, Bloglovin'	Blog website or app e.g. WordPress, Bloglovin'
	Shopping website or app e.g. Amazon, eBay, Depop	Shopping website or app e.g. Amazon, eBay, Depop
	Online dating websites or apps e.g. Tinder, Bumble	Online dating websites or apps e.g. Tinder, Bumble
	Video on demand application e.g. Netflix, Now TV	Video on demand application e.g. Netflix, Now TV
	'Adult' site containing sexual content	'Adult' site containing sexual content