

Two large, stylized arrows pointing upwards and to the right. The front arrow is blue, and the back arrow is grey. They are positioned on the right side of the page, partially overlapping the text area.

CROSS-PLATFORM MEDIA TRACKER 2024 TECHNICAL REPORT

To accompany the Adults Tracker and
Teens Tracker data tables

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1 Preface

Under the Communications Act 2003, Ofcom has a duty to set, and from time to time revise, a code for television and radio, covering standards in programmes, sponsorship, product placement in television programmes and fairness and privacy.

Ofcom recognises that audience views on what are generally accepted standards are subject to change over time, and so should be explored by ongoing audience research. This survey is one of a range of sources that Ofcom uses in undertaking its broadcasting standards duties. This research includes the Cross-Platform Media Tracker, which measures the use of, and attitudes towards, broadcast and online media among UK adults (aged 16+), and among a separate sample of children aged 12-15 through the 'teens' survey.

This document details the methodology, sampling and weighting for the 2024 Cross-Platform Media Tracker surveys with Adults and Teens, which have been run by Critical Research on behalf of Ofcom. Both the Adult and Teens Trackers are run on a biennial basis, with fieldwork conducted across two waves in a fieldwork year (March/ April and September/ October in 2024).

2 Cross-Platform Media Tracker - Adults

The main research objectives for the Adults Tracker are:

- To understand perceptions of the quality of TV programmes and the reasons why audiences believe this may have changed;
- To uncover any concerns audiences have about potentially harmful or inappropriate content within TV and radio programmes; including offensive language, violent content and sexual content, as well as views on the watershed;
- To understand awareness of regulation within radio and TV and whether audiences feel the current levels of regulation are appropriate;
- To explore awareness of advertising and product placement on TV and whether audiences have any concerns about these;
- To uncover experiences of harm and offence when viewing Broadcast Video on Demand (BVOD) or Subscription Video on Demand (SVOD) content, and to explore perceptions of regulation on these platforms.

The Cross-Platform Media Tracker among Adults has been running since 2005. In 2022, there was a thorough review of the questionnaire, and this was updated to better reflect the current media landscape. As part of this review, the Adult's survey refocused the live broadcast TV, online and on-demand sections, and updated the advertising section to reflect current concerns. The questionnaire used in 2024 required some updates to specific channel/ service names, but otherwise was unchanged.

2.1 Sample design and fieldwork

Prior to 2020, the fieldwork for the Adult tracker had been conducted using a 50:50 online/ computer-assisted personal interviews (CAPI) blend of methodology for both waves. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, in 2020 the methodology shifted to online and computer-assisted telephone interviews (CATI) (83% online, 11% CATI and 6% CAPI).

For the 2022 Adult survey, Ofcom had decided not to return to a face-to-face/ CAPI approach, and so an alternative approach was needed to be conducted alongside online panel interviewing. The Adult survey used a postal approach inviting respondents to complete an online interview via a unique reference number, or request a self-completion paper questionnaire if they did not go online or only did so occasionally. The postal approach allowed for up to two respondents aged 16 and over per household through providing unique reference numbers in the invitation letter. In order to maintain comparability, this same approach was used for the interviewing for the Adult tracker in 2024.

The postal sample was drawn across the whole of the UK, stratified by nation, region and urbanity. Sample for the online panel part of the study was provided via online consumer panels. The sample was de-duplicated to ensure that respondents could not complete the survey more than once.

Overall quotas were set for each wave of interviewing regarding the respondent's age, gender, household socio-economic group, and region/ nation.

For the 2024 fieldwork, Critical Research interviewed an overall sample of 2,036 adults aged 16 and over in the UK. Interviews were split broadly 50:50 across two waves:

- Wave 1 fieldwork in March/ April 2024– 1,028 interviews
- Wave 2 fieldwork in September/ October 2024 – 1,008 interviews

The Adult Tracker interviews achieved a roughly even split through online panels (1,061) and the postal approach (975).

2.2 Weighting

In previous years, the Cross-Platform Media Tracker was weighted to be representative of the adult 16+ population of the UK based on the 2011 Census. These weights have been adjusted to reflect the 2021 Census, with the exception of SEG which comes from the National Readership survey to allow consistency across nations.

The combined panel and postal data are weighted¹ to the UK profile of age and gender, and overall to the correct SEG profile based on Census 2021 data. The following table shows the initial unweighted sample and the final weighted sample profile.

Figures based on UK adults	% Unweighted Interviews achieved	% Weighted Profile
Gender – Man 16+	50%	47%
Gender – Woman 16+	49%	51%
Age – 16-34	27%	29%
Age – 35-54	32%	32%

¹ Data is weighted at an overall level not by interview method. While there are some differences in responses by method in the unweighted data (e.g. number of responses at multi-coded questions, attitudes towards advertising frequency), matching the interviewing method samples through weighting made very little differences to these responses. Making comparisons by interview method is not wise in that section C (TV advertising) is particularly sensitive to modal differences. Due to commonality across all other responses, modal weighting was not found necessary.

Age – 55-64	18%	16%
Age – 65+	24%	23%
SEG – AB	26%	27%
SEG – C1	26%	26%
SEG – C2	22%	20%
SEG – DE	26%	25%
Nation – England	70%	84%
Nation – Scotland	10%	8%
Nation – Wales	10%	5%
Nation – Northern Ireland	10%	3%

The percentages described above as ‘% Weighted’ are the targets used to weight the data. The figures for age, gender and location are taken from the 2021 Census, where available. SEG profiles come from NRS published data. The ‘% Unweighted’ column shows the actual percentage of interviews achieved in the 2024 fieldwork.

2.3 Significance testing

Due to the mixed method approach adopted for the Cross-Platform Media Tracker Adult study, significance testing for these data tables is applied at the 99% level².

2.4 Trend reporting

As detailed earlier, prior to 2020 this research was conducted 50% face-to-face and 50% online. In 2020, due to the impact of Covid a mixed method approach was used - combining online, face-to-face (up until March 2020) and telephone. Both the 2022 and the 2024 interviewing was conducted through a mix of online panel, post-to-online and post-to-post approaches.

² Testing at 99% can be a preferred methodology when using mixed mode to recruit and interview respondents. The rationale is that the mixed effect means that there are unquantifiable design effects due to the fact that online panels may be attitudinally different to those responding to push to web or encountered face-to-face. Testing at a higher level means those design effects are accommodated for and there is certainty that any reported differences by demographic are significant.

While direct comparisons can be made with the 2022 data, we might expect some differences to earlier years due to these changes in method and so direct comparisons should be considered indicative only.

2.5 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% limit for this 2024 data due to the mixed method approach.

This means that 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 analysis groups.

Figures based on UK adults	Actual	ESS
Total	2,036	1,690
Age – 16-34	546	439
Age – 35-54	642	538
Age – 55-64	360	321
Age – 65+	488	407
Gender – Man 16+	1,009	842
Gender – Woman 16+	1,004	835
SEG – ABC1	1,044	852
SEG – C2DE	960	818

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

Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages at or near these levels

Effective sample size	10% or 90%	20% or 80%	30% or 70%	40% or 60%	50%
	±	±	±	±	±
1,690 (Total)	1.5%	1.9%	2.2%	2.4%	2.4%
842 (Gender: Man)	2.1%	2.8%	3.2%	3.4%	3.4%
818 (SEG: C2DE)	2.1%	2.8%	3.2%	3.4%	3.5%
407 (Age: 65+)	3.0%	4.0%	4.5%	4.9%	5.0%

For example, if 30% or 70% of a sample of 1,690 give a particular answer, the chances are 99 in 100 that the ‘true’ value will fall within the range of +/- 2.2 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 must 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.

3 Cross-Platform Media Tracker – Teens

The main research objectives for the Teens Tracker are:

- To understand teens’ media activities and the devices they use to consume content;
- To uncover and concerns teens have about potentially harmful or inappropriate content within TV and radio programmes and online;
- To understand awareness of regulation across TV, on-demand and online and whether teens feel the current levels of regulation are appropriate.

The survey with Teens has been running since 2017, initially focused on attitudes towards online and on demand content, as well as regulation of online services. Prior to conducting fieldwork in 2022, the questionnaire for the Teens survey was comprehensively reviewed and expanded in order to align it more closely to the adult’s tracker. This included new and edited sections covering live broadcast TV and experience of viewing any offensive content, content of concern on an on-demand service, and awareness of and attitudes towards regulation among teen viewers. The questionnaire used in 2024 required some updates to specific channel/ service names, but otherwise was unchanged.

3.1 Interviewing children and obtaining consent

Interviewing was conducted online with teenagers aged from 12 to 15. These teenagers are contacted via their parent through online panel providers. The parent is given clear information about the project and asked for their consent to interview the child participant aged 12 to 15. The child participant aged 12 to 15 is also provided with an overview of the study. The teenagers were explicitly asked at the beginning of the questionnaire if they give consent to take part in the survey and were given the option to opt-out. Specific consent was gained ahead of questions relating to “things that might have caused you concern when watching TV programmes or films”. Those that did not give consent (4% of those aged 12-15 who had watched any live broadcast TV, broadcaster catch up services or subscription video on-demand services in the last 12 months) were not asked this section of questions.

3.2 Sample design and fieldwork

As in previous years, all interviewing was conducted online. Quotas for gender and nation were set for each individual age from 12 to 15 to ensure that a UK representative sample was achieved. A total of 1,000 interviews with 12-15 year olds was achieved in 2024. Interviewing was conducted across two waves:

- Wave 1 fieldwork in March 2024 – 500 interviews
- Wave 2 fieldwork in September 2024 – 500 interviews

All interviews were carried out across the UK through an online panel, as detailed above. Overall quotas were set for gender within age, nation within age and socio-economic group within age.

3.3 Weighting

The fieldwork conducted across the two waves successfully met the quotas that had been imposed to ensure UK-representative coverage by age, gender and socio-economic group. As a result, it was decided that it was not necessary to weight the data tables. This matches the approach used in 2022.

The table below shows the final (unweighted) sample profile.

Figures are based on UK children aged 3-17	Interviews achieved Unweighted
Aged 12	25%
Aged 13	25%
Aged 14	25%
Aged 15	25%
Boys aged 12-15	51%
Girls aged 12-15	49%
England	85%
Scotland	7%
Wales	5%
Northern Ireland	3%
SEG – ABC1	54%
SEG – C2DE	46%

3.4 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 95% limit for this online panel-only study in 2024. This means that the chances are 95 in 100 that the “true” values will fall within a specified range. As the sample is unweighted we use the actual sample size to judge the accuracy of results.

The following table details actual samples for some of the main analysis groups within the main sample.

	Actual
Total 12-15s	1,000
Aged 12	250
Aged 13	250
Aged 14	251
Aged 15	249
Boys aged 12-15	506
Girls aged 12-15	494
SEG – ABC1	539
SEG – C2DE	458

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

Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages at or near these levels

Actual sample size	10% or 90% ±	20% or 80% ±	30% or 70% ±	40% or 60% ±	50% ±
1,000 (Total aged 12-15)	1.9%	2.5%	2.9%	3.1%	3.2%
506 (Boys aged 12-15)	2.7%	3.6%	4.1%	4.4%	4.4%
458 (SEG C2DE aged 12-15)	2.8%	3.7%	4.3%	4.6%	4.7%

For example, if 30% or 70% of a sample of 1,000 gives a particular answer, the chances are 95 in 100 that the “true” value will fall within the range of +/- 2.9 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 “95% confidence interval”, the difference between two sample results must be greater than the values given in the table below to be significant:

Differences required for significant at or near these percentages

Sample sizes being compared	10% or 90% ±	20% or 80% ±	30% or 70% ±	40% or 60% ±	50% ±
539 vs. 458 (ABC1 vs. C2DE aged 12-15)	3.7%	5.0%	5.7%	6.1%	6.2%
506 vs. 494 (Boys vs. Girls aged 12-15)	3.7%	5.0%	5.7%	6.1%	6.2%