

News Consumption Survey – Children aged 12–15-years-old

Produced by: Critical Research
Fieldwork: November 2025 to March 2026

15 September 2026

Background and objectives

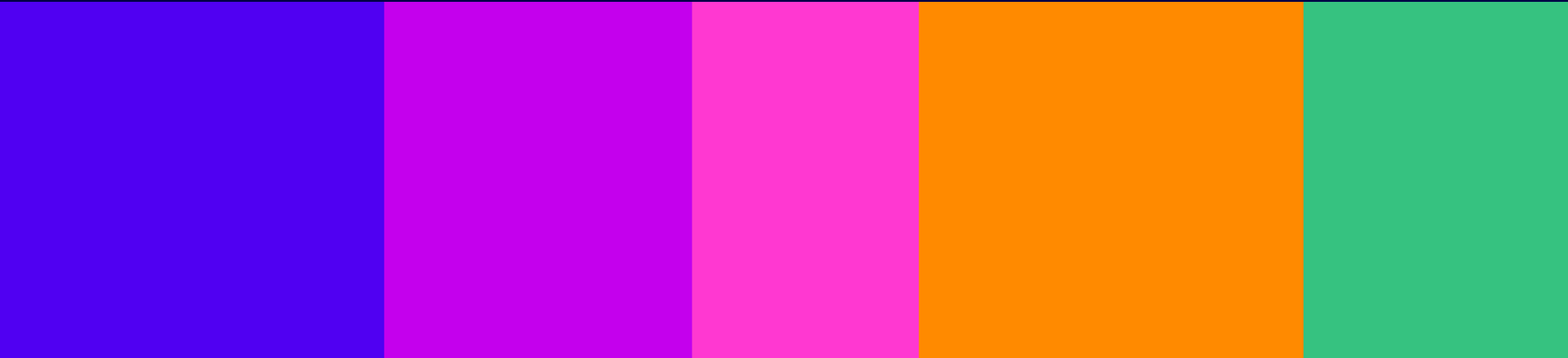
- This supporting slide pack provides the findings of Ofcom's 2025/26 research into news consumption across television, on-demand/catch-up services, audio, websites/apps and online intermediaries (social media, search engines and aggregators). It is published as part of our range of market research reports examining the consumption of content, and attitudes towards that content, across different platforms.
- The aim of the News Consumption Survey (NCS) is to examine the consumption of news, and attitudes towards that news, across different platforms. It also informs understanding of news consumption across the UK and within each UK nation and provides us with a single source of cross-platform news consumption.*
- This slide pack provides an understanding of news consumption among children aged 12-15-years-old. There are separate packs for adults aged 16+ and for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

*We note that there are industry metrics which provide platform specific measures but do not provide a complete cross-platform view of news consumption.

Changes made to the 2025/26 survey

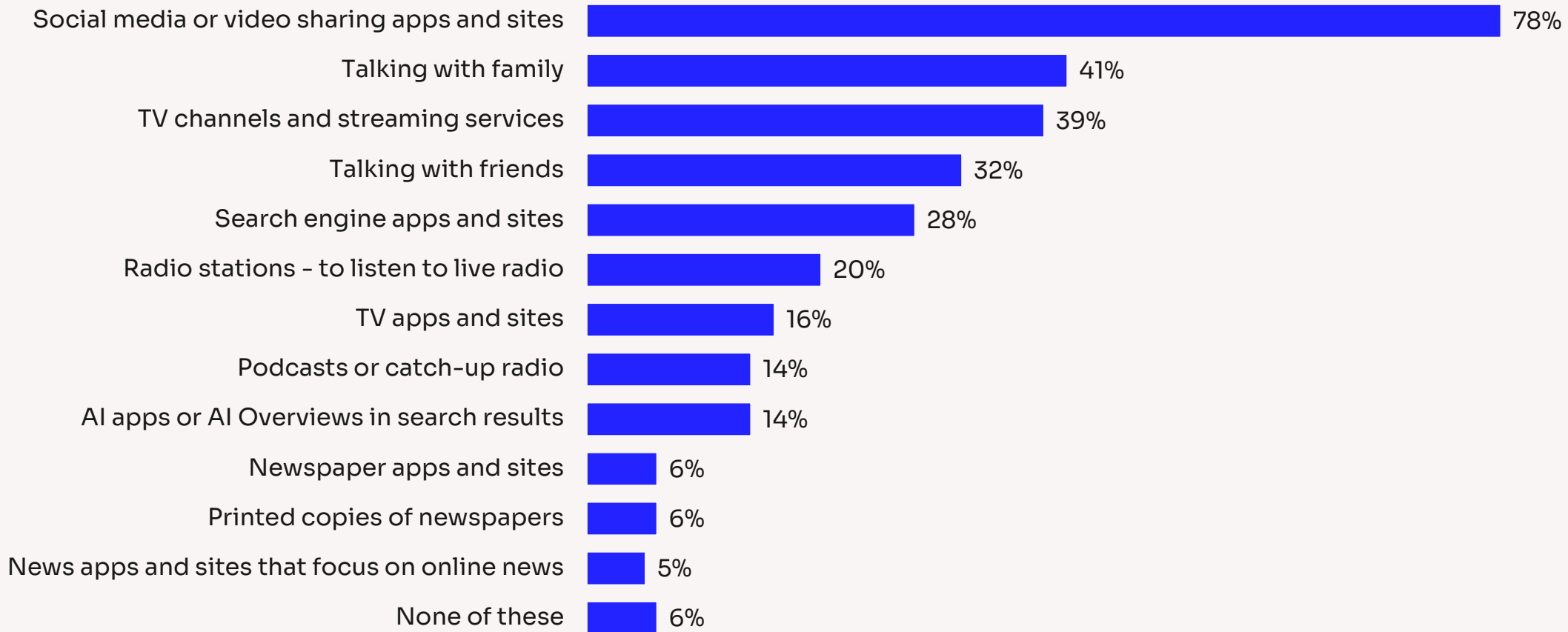
- There was a major overhaul of the questionnaire for adults (and children) in 2025:
 - **Broadened the definition** of news (not just 'the news') . Further details are in the appendix.
 - Framed consumption to **include passive/ incidental use** (seeing & hearing rather than watching & listening)
 - Updated the brands/services used for news consumption and incorporated the use of AI applications
 - Reordered existing questions to enable better survey and topic flow and using news source logos throughout to aid recall and keep respondents engaged
 - Some questions were removed, see [here](#) for further details

How news is accessed and the individual sources used



Almost eight in ten (78%) 12-15-year-olds have accessed news through social media or VSPs.

Platforms used for news in the last month, among 12-15s



Source: News Consumption Survey 2025-2026 – 12-15s

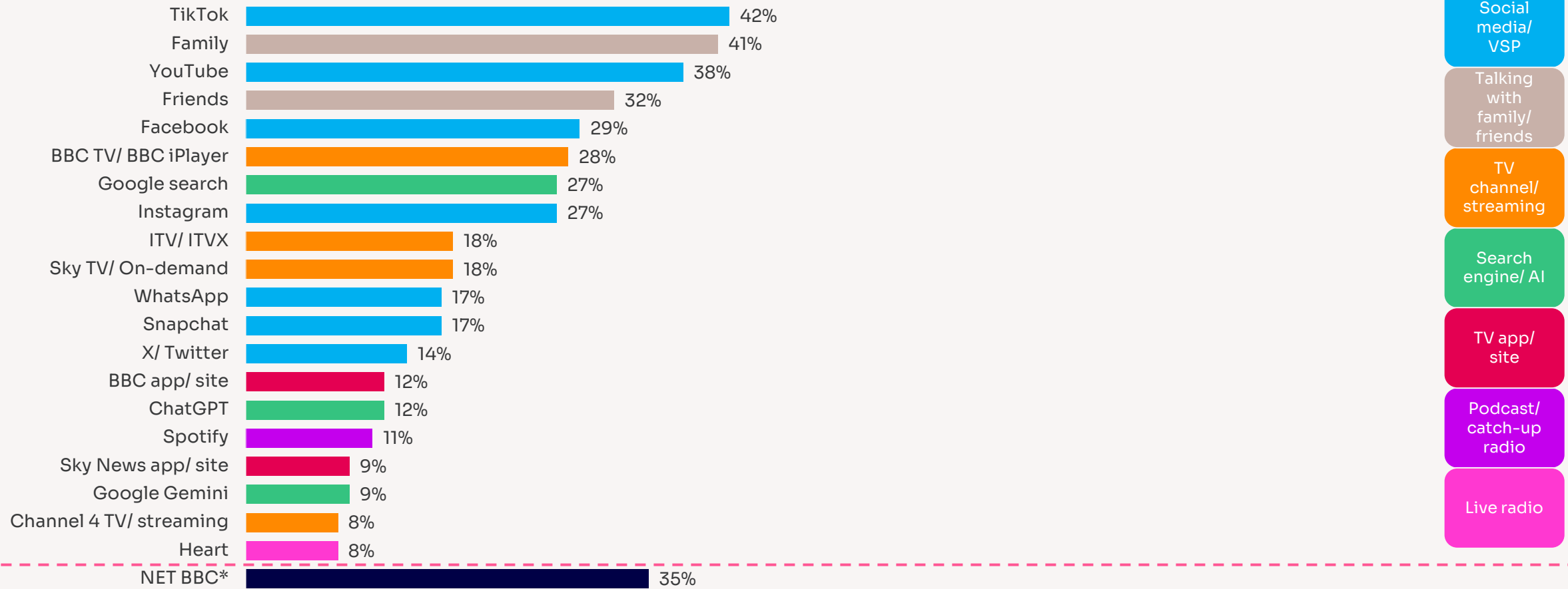
Question D1. Which, if any, of these ways have you seen or heard news in the last month? Remember this could be news that you actively choose to watch or read or listen to, and it could be news that you just happen to see or hear or come across. It could be any type of news. *ANY MEDIA SOURCES includes all sources apart from Talking with family/ friends.

ANY ONLINE MEDIA SOURCES includes social media, search engines, TV apps, podcasts or catch-up radio, AI apps or Overviews, Newspaper apps and News apps.

Base: All 12-15s (1,045) Highlighting responses which are different between boys and girls, or between those in AB or DE households compared to all.

Social media and friends and family are the top five ways to access news, followed by the broadcasters and search engines and AI apps

Top 20 ways news is accessed, among 12-15s



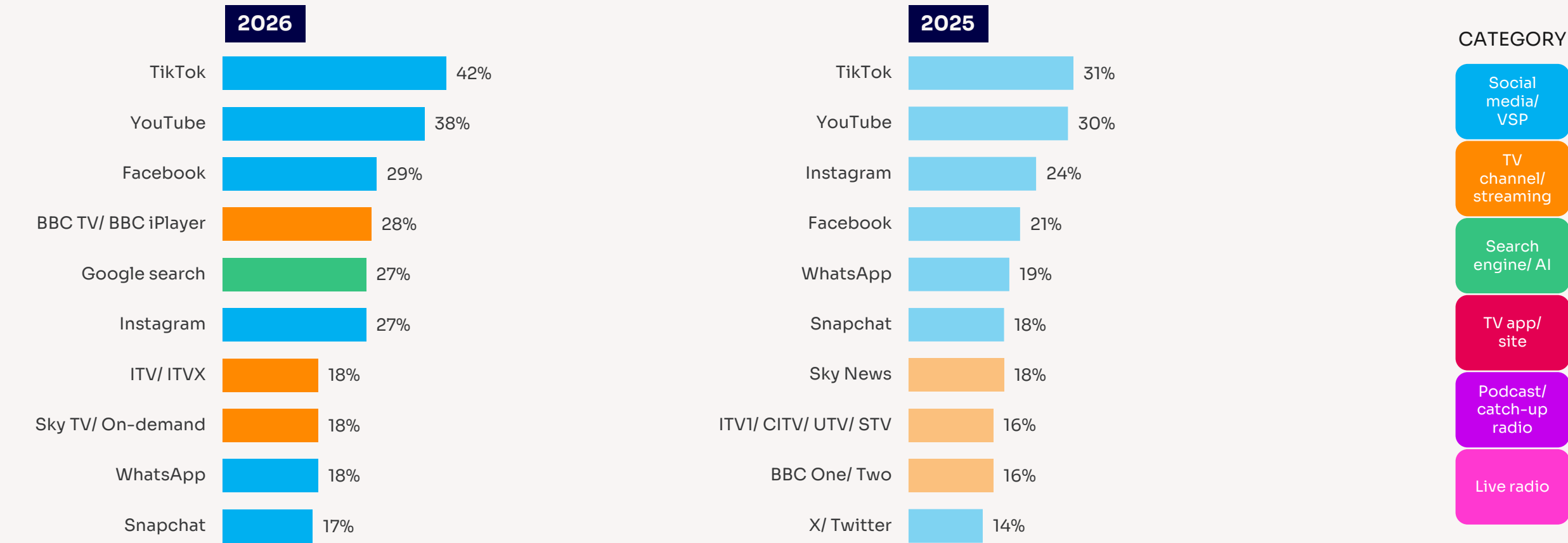
Source: News Consumption Survey 2025-2026 – 12-15s

Question D3-D11. Which, if any, of these have you seen or heard news on in the last month? Remember this could be news that you actively choose to watch or read or listen to, and it could be news that you just happen to see or hear or come across. *NET BBC includes BBC TV/ BBC iPlayer, BBC apps/ sites, BBC Radio, BBC Sounds

Base: All 12-15s (1,045)

The top 10 ways to access news show the dominance of the social media and VSPs, with TikTok and YouTube at the top.

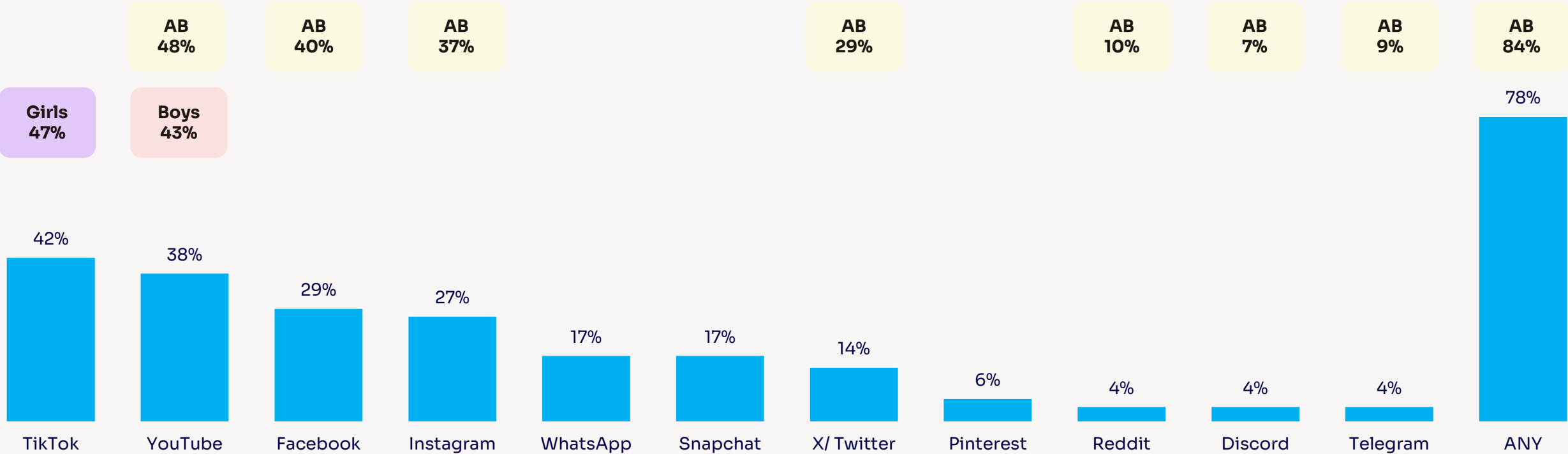
Top 10 ways news is accessed, among 12-15s



Source: News Consumption Survey 2025-2026 – 12-15s
Question D3-D11. Which, if any, of these have you seen or heard news on in the last month? Remember this could be news that you actively choose to watch or read or listen to, and it could be news that you just happen to see or hear or come across. / D1. Which, if any, of the following do you use to read, watch, listen to or follow news stories?
Base: All 12-15s (1,045)/ Base: All 12-15-years-old – 2025=1000

The top sources of social media and VSPs used for news are TikTok (especially girls), YouTube (especially boys), followed by Facebook and Instagram.

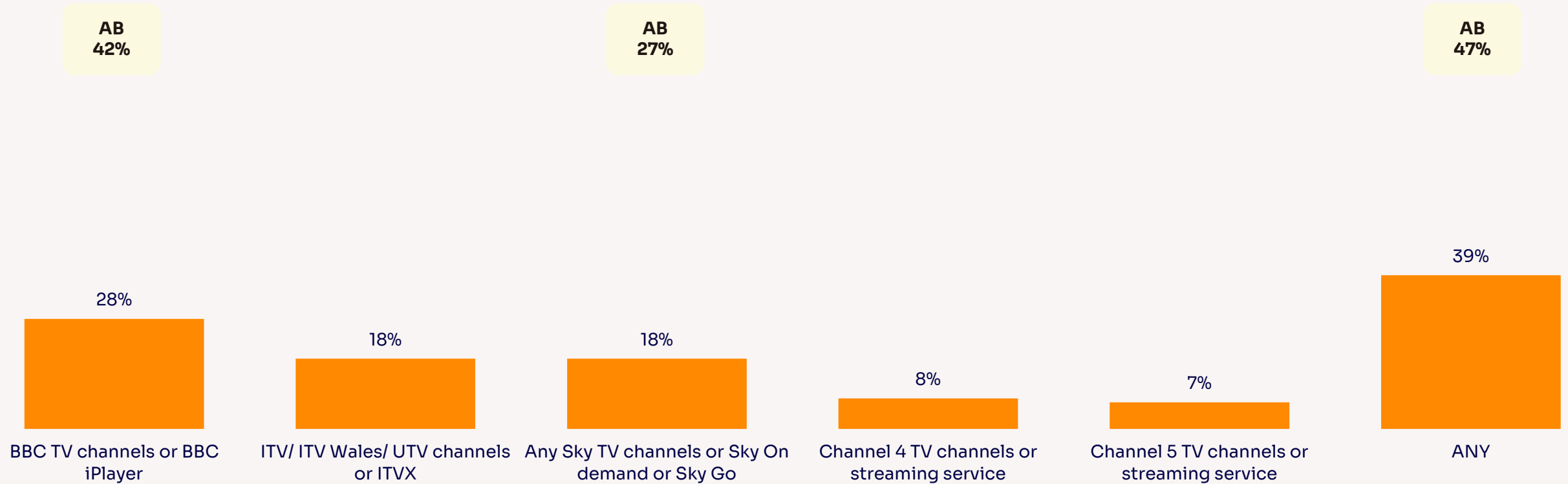
Social media or video sharing apps/ sites used for news on in the last month, among 12-15s



Source: News Consumption Survey 2025-2026 – 12-15s
Question D3. Now thinking of social media and video sharing apps or sites where you might see or hear news... Which, if any, of these apps or sites have you seen or heard news on in the last month? Remember this could be news that you actively choose to watch or read or listen to, and it could be news that you just happen to see or hear or come across. It could be any type of news. (SHOWS MENTIONS FROM 4% OR MORE OF ALL 12-15S)
Base: All 12-15s (1,045). Highlighting responses which are different between boys and girls, or between those in AB or DE households compared to all.

Almost three in ten (28%) 12-15s used BBC TV channels or BBC iPlayer more than other broadcaster TV channels and on-demand / catch-up services.

TV channels or streaming services used for news in the past month, among 12-15s



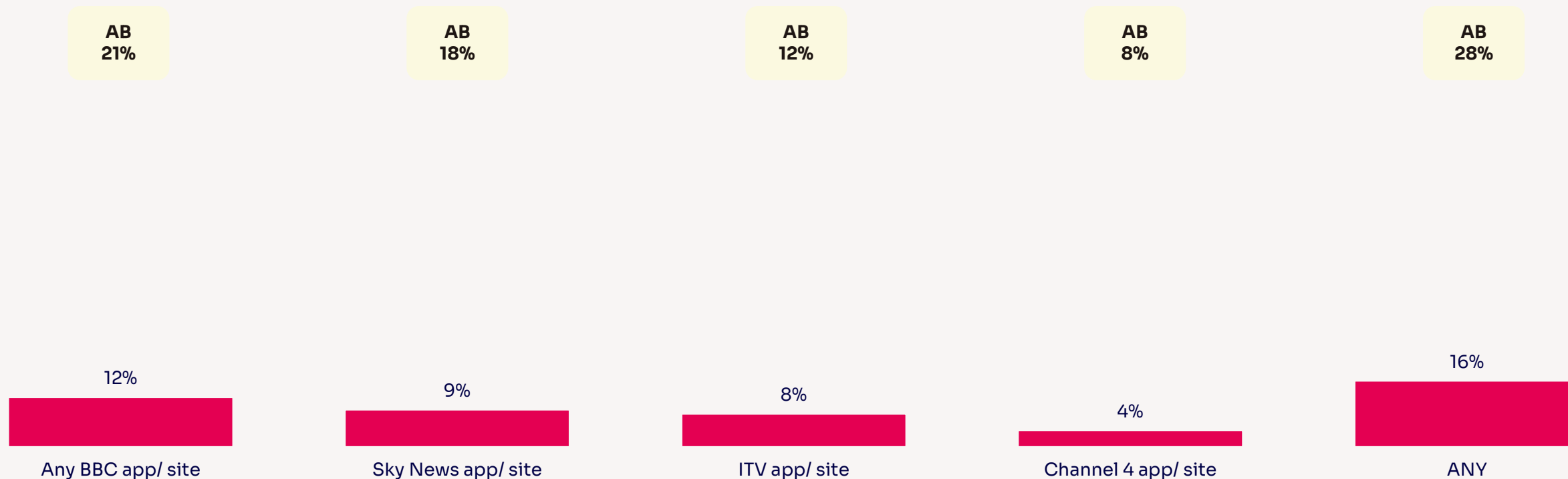
Source: News Consumption Survey 2025-2026 – 12-15s

Question D4. Now thinking of TV channels or streaming services where you might see or hear news... Which, if any, of these have you seen or heard news on in the last month? Remember this could be news that you actively choose to watch or listen to, and it could be news that you just happen to see or hear or come across. It could be any type of news. (SHOWS MENTIONS FROM 4% OR MORE OF ALL 12-15S)

Base: All 12-15s (1,045). Highlighting responses which are different between boys and girls, or between those in AB or DE households compared to all.

Around one in six (16%) 12-15s have used TV broadcaster apps or sites for news in the past month.

TV apps/ sites used for news in the past month, among 12-15s



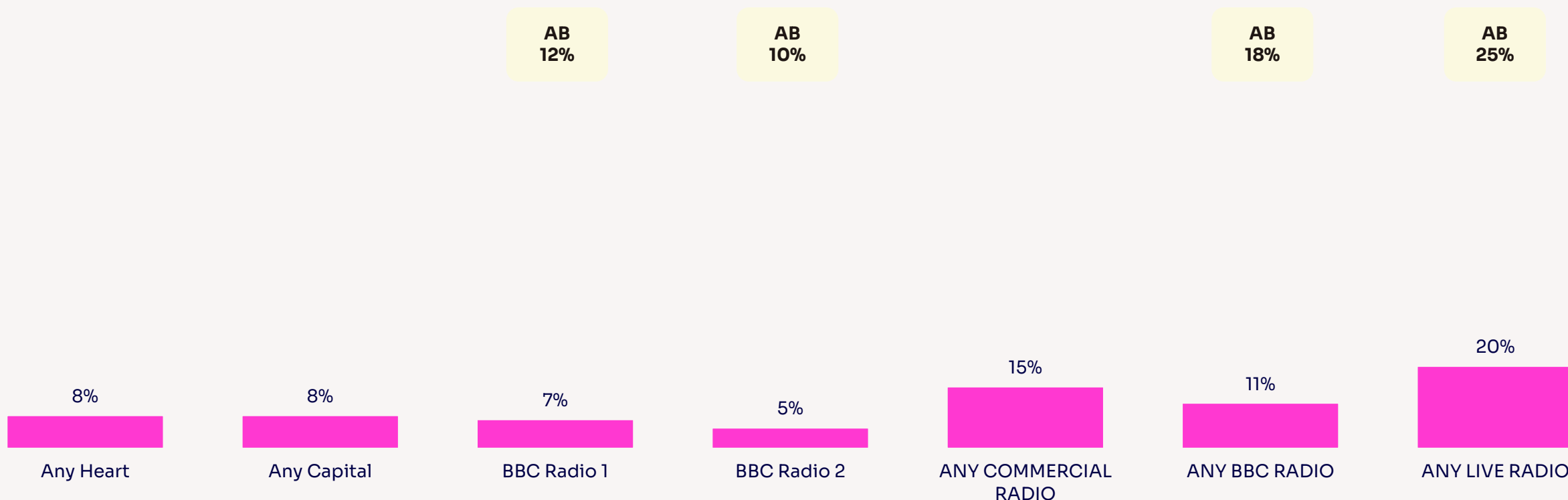
Source: News Consumption Survey 2025-2026 – 12-15s

Question D5. Now thinking of TV apps or sites where you might see or hear news... Which, if any, of these apps or sites have you seen or heard news on in the last month? Remember this could be news that you actively choose to watch or listen to, and it could be news that you just happen to see or hear or come across. It could be any type of news. (SHOWS MENTIONS FROM 4% OR MORE OF ALL 12-15S)

Base: All 12-15s (1,045). Highlighting responses which are different between boys and girls, or between those in AB or DE households compared to all.

One in five (20%) 12-15s have heard any news on live radio in the past month .

Radio stations where news was consumed in the last month, among 12-15s



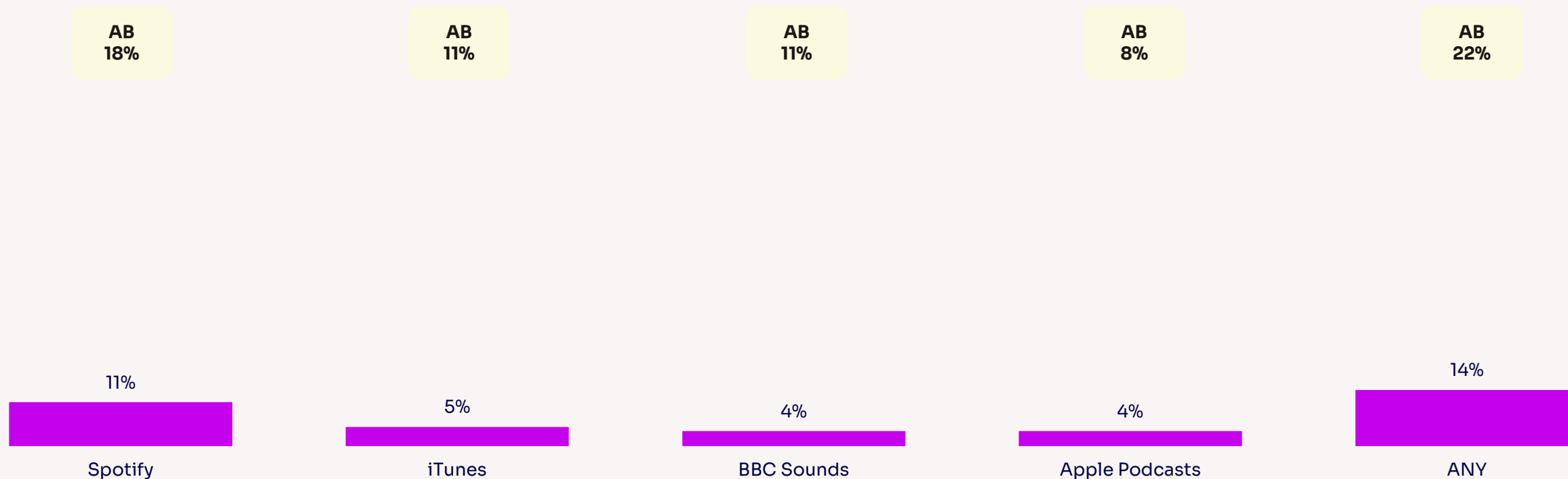
Source: News Consumption Survey 2025-2026 – 12-15s

Question D6. Now thinking of TV apps or sites where you might see or hear news... Which, if any, of these apps or sites have you seen or heard news on in the last month? Remember this could be news that you actively choose to listen to, and it could be news that you just happen to hear or come across. It could be any type of news. (SHOWS MENTIONS FROM 4% OR MORE OF ALL 12-15S)

Base: All 12-15s (1,045). Highlighting responses which are different between boys and girls, or between those in AB or DE households compared to all.

One in seven (14%) 12-15s have heard any news on catch-up radio or podcasts in the past month, led by Spotify (11%).

Catch-up radio or podcasts where news was consumed in the past month, among 12-15s



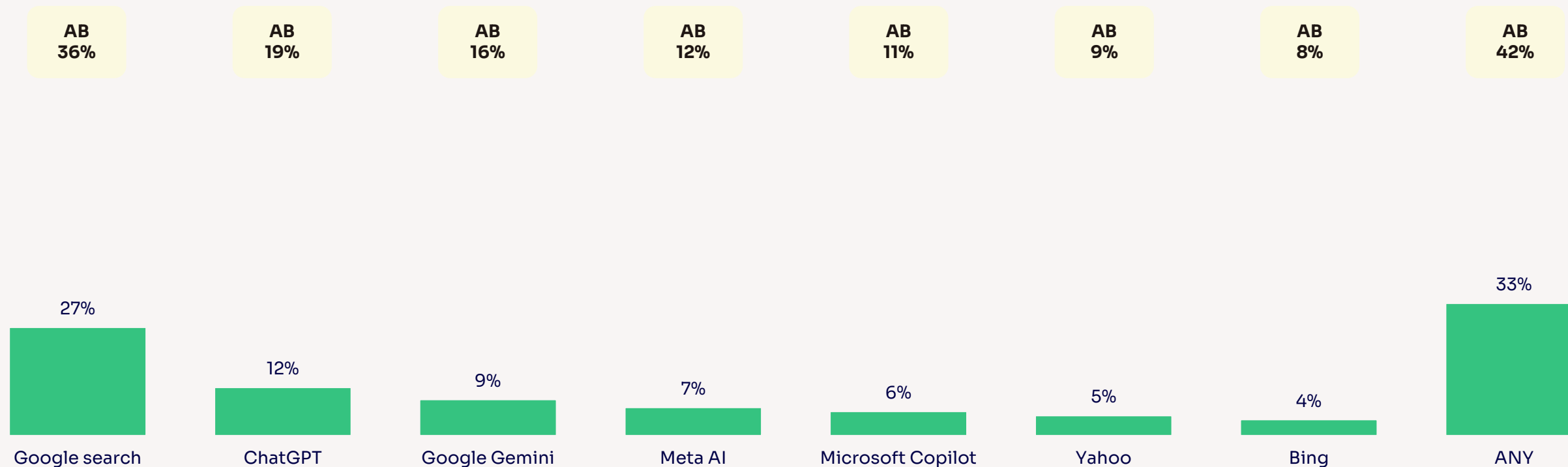
Source: News Consumption Survey 2025-2026 – 12-15s

Question D7. Now thinking of when you're listening to podcasts or catch-up radio when you might hear news... Which, if any, of these ways of listening have you heard news on in the last month when you're listening to podcasts or catch-up radio? Remember this could be news that you actively choose to watch or listen to, and it could be news that you just happen to see or hear or come across. It could be any type of news. (SHOWS MENTIONS FROM 4% OR MORE OF ALL 12-15S)

Base: All 12-15s (1,045). Highlighting responses which are different between boys and girls, or between those in AB or DE households compared to all.

A third (33%) of 12-15s have used a search engine or AI tool for news in the past month. A quarter (27%) have used Google search.

Search engines or AI Overviews or AI apps used for news in the past month, among 12-15s

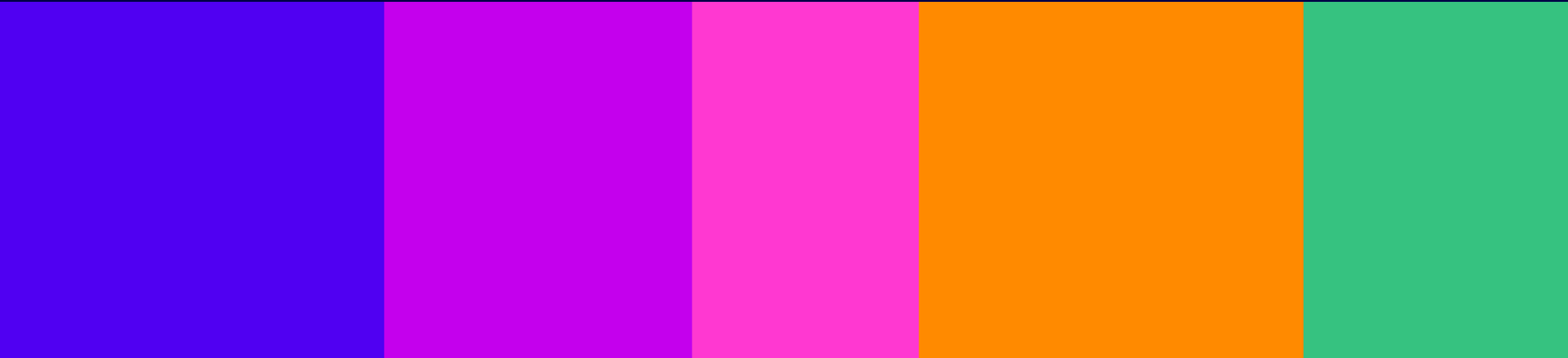


Source: News Consumption Survey 2025-2026 – 12-15s

Question D8. Which, if any, of these search engines, AI Overviews or AI apps have you seen or heard news on in the last month? Remember this could be news that you actively choose to watch or read or listen to, and it could be news that you just happen to see or hear or come across. It could be any type of news. (SHOWS MENTIONS FROM 4% OR MORE OF ALL 12-15S)

Base: All 12-15s (1,045). Highlighting responses which are different between boys and girls, or between those in AB or DE households compared to all.

Types of news seen/ heard on social media/ VSPs



UK news is the most encountered across all social media and VSPs, however there are differences with other types of news. TikTok also skews to memes or jokes, while Facebook skews to local news, and Snapchat skews to fun or feel-good news.

Types of news encountered on social media / VSPs

	TikTok	YouTube	Facebook	Instagram	Snapchat	X
Base / Seen or heard in the past month	446 / 42%	391 / 38%	302 / 29%	284 / 27%	178 / 17%	140 / 14%
Local	25%	30%	55%	31%	30%	48%
UK	47%	55%	57%	53%	36%	68%
Other countries	43%	42%	41%	39%	26%	58%
Headlines	37%	36%	39%	34%	29%	48%
Breaking	38%	36%	41%	29%	31%	44%
Fun or feel-good	43%	39%	33%	36%	36%	33%
Memes or jokes	51%	32%	34%	36%	31%	26%

Source: News Consumption Survey 2025-2026 – 12-15s

Question E7A-F. Which, if any, of the following types of news do you see or hear on [SOCIAL MEDIA/ VSP APP/ SITE]?

Base: All 12-15s who have seen or heard news on the social media/ VSP apps/ sites in the last month (446 TikTok, 391 YouTube, 302 Facebook, 284 Instagram, 178 Snapchat, 140 X/ Twitter)

Across selected social media and VSPs, traditional broadcasters were the most reported news providers. The extent of this varies by platform. Half (53%) of 12-15s who encountered news on X saw BBC content. Less news from the BBC on TikTok was encountered (29%).

Attribution of news source on selected social media/VSPs, among 12-15s who have seen or heard news on social media posts

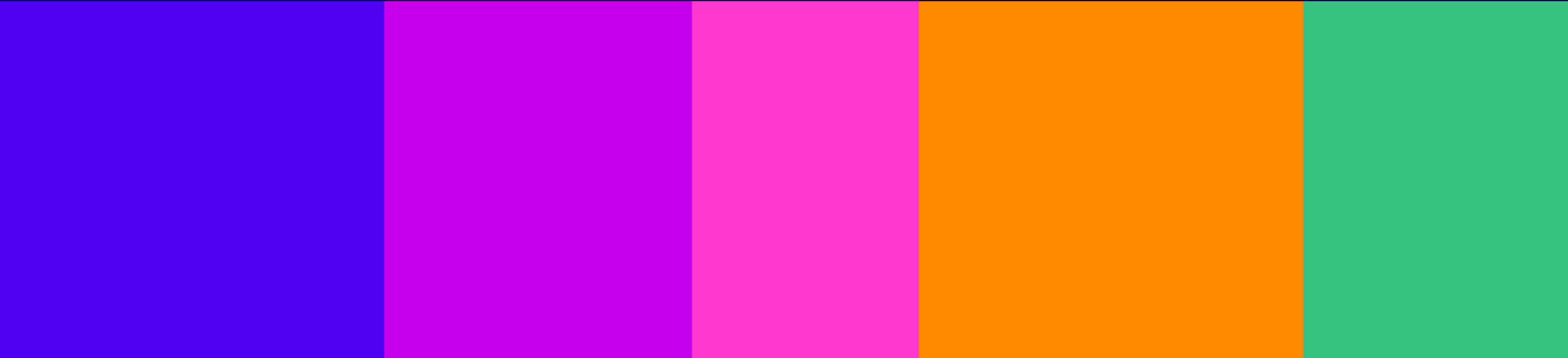
	TikTok	YouTube	Facebook	Instagram	Snapchat	X
Base / Seen or heard in the past month	446 / 42%	391 / 38%	302 / 29%	284 / 27%	178 / 17%	140 / 14%
Any UK broadcaster	42%	64%	63%	61%	43%	70%
BBC	29%	46%	43%	41%	27%	53%
Sky News	20%	33%	33%	33%	20%	35%
ITV	15%	24%	30%	23%	13%	29%
Channel 4	8%	15%	16%	19%	16%	25%
Channel 5	7%	10%	13%	11%	13%	21%
Any US TV news broadcaster	13%	18%	19%	17%	12%	29%
Political parties / politicians	9%	5%	13%	8%	9%	12%
Influencers / independent commentators / online-native creators	46%	30%	27%	31%	29%	26%
None of these	11%	9%	13%	11%	18%	9%

Source: News Consumption Survey 2025-2026 – 12-15s

Question E8A-F. When you see or hear news on [SOCIAL MEDIA/ VSP APP/ SITE], is it posts from any of these?

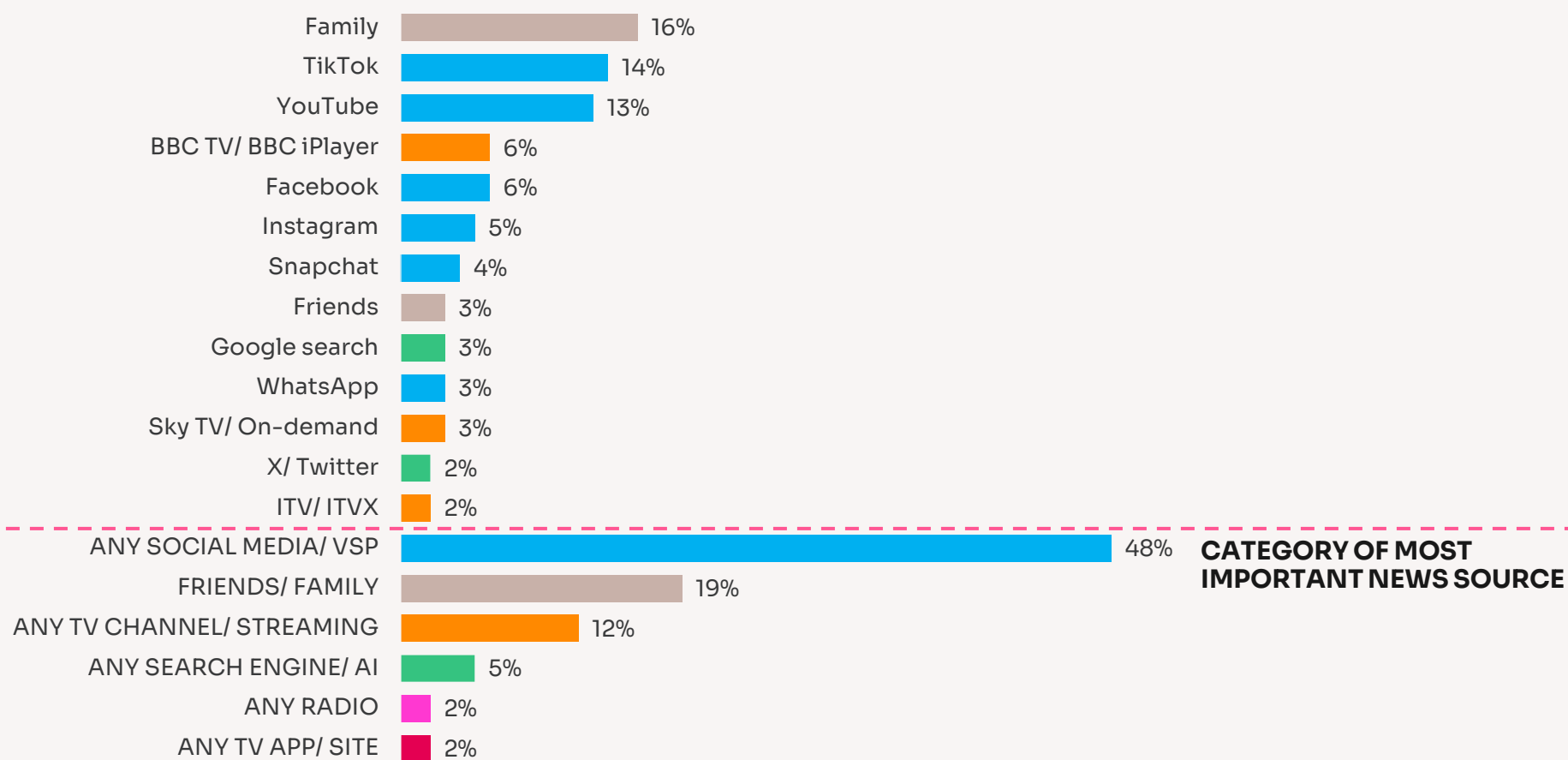
Base: All 12-15s who have seen or heard news on the social media/ VSP apps/ sites in the last month (base shown in table)

Importance and attitudes towards news provision



Half (48%) of 12-15s considered social media and VSPs as the single most important platform to access news, followed by friends and family (19%).

Most important sources and platforms to access news among 12-15s



CATEGORY

Social media/
VSP

Talking with
family/
friends

TV
channel/
streaming

Search
engine/ AI

TV app/
site

Podcast/
catch-up
radio

Live radio

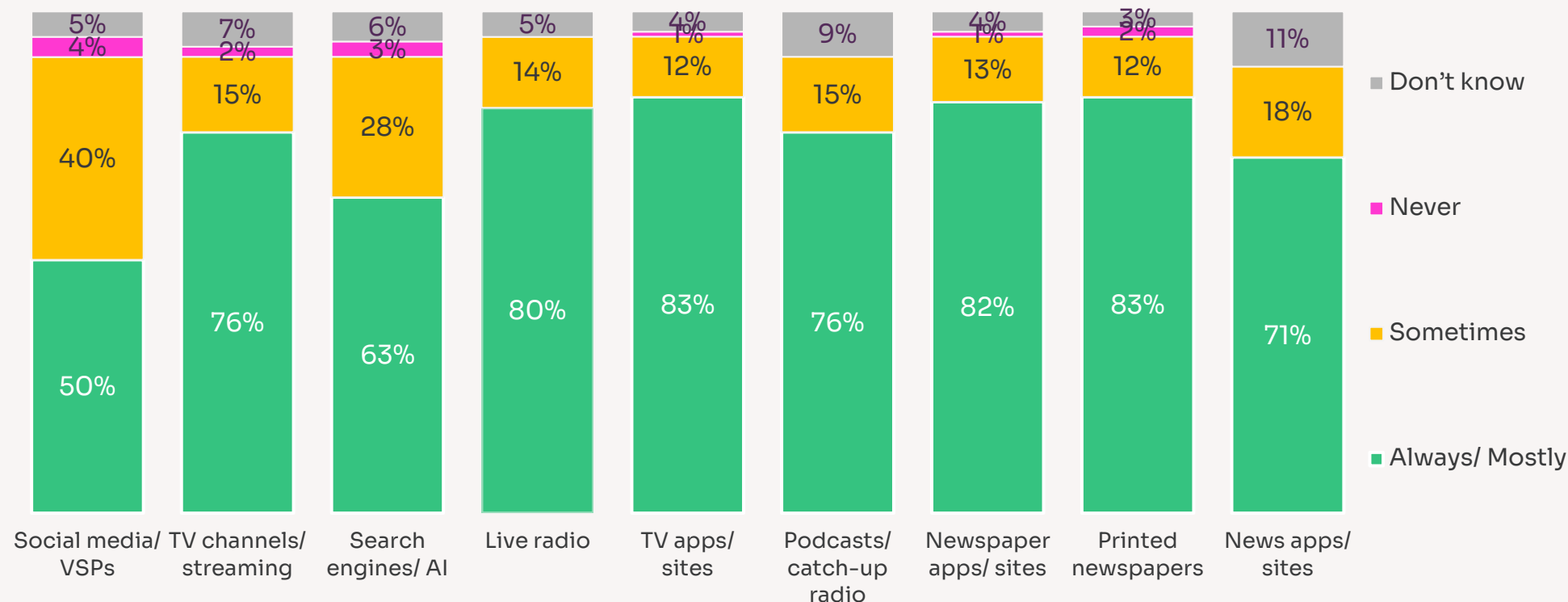
Source: News Consumption Survey 2025-2026 – 12-15s

Question E1. Looking at all of the ways that you have seen or heard news in the last month, which one do you feel is the most important to you? Please think about the one way of seeing or hearing news that matters most to you. (SHOWS MENTIONS FROM 2% OR MORE OF ALL 12-15S)

Base: All 12-15s (1,045)

Ratings of the trustworthiness of news are relatively lower for social media/ VSPs and search engines/ AI compared to other news platforms

Trustworthiness of news platforms among 12-15s



Of all who have **seen/ heard news through any media sources** – 68% rate any news source categories as Always/ Mostly trustworthy

78%	39%	33%	20%	16%	14%	6%*	6%*	5%*
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% of 12-15s who have seen/ heard news this way

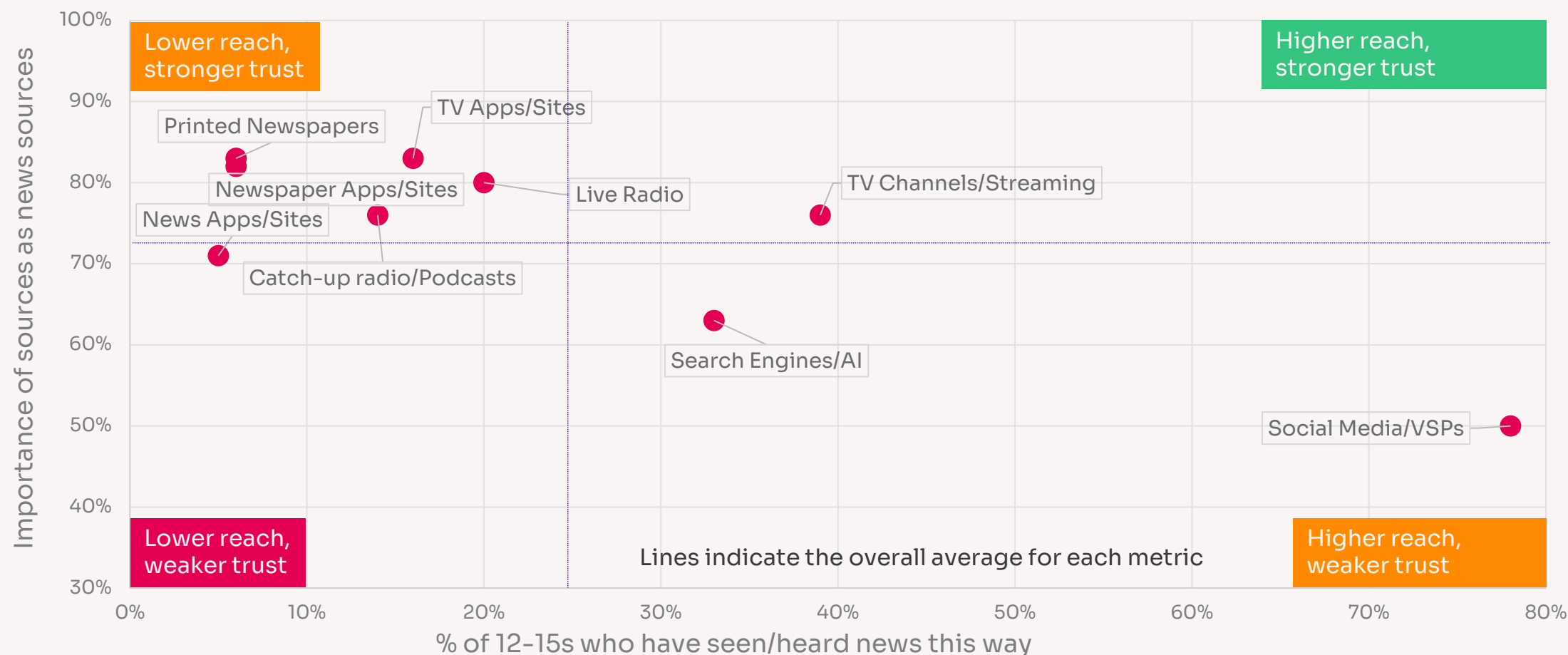
Source: News Consumption Survey 2025-2026 – 12-15s

Question E3A-I. How trustworthy is the news that you see or hear on [NEWS SOURCE CATEGORY] (e.g. EXAMPLES FROM D3-D11)?

Base: All 12-15s who have seen or heard news each way in the last month (813 Social media/ VSPs, 402 TV channels/ streaming, 341 search engines/ AI, 207 Live radio, 168 TV apps/ sites, 148 Podcasts/ catch-up radio, 64* newspaper apps/ sites, 56* Printed newspapers, 54* News apps/ sites) *Caution: Low base

Despite higher reach for social media and VSPs and search engines/AI, trust in the news from these sources is relatively lower. TV channels and streaming services have relatively high reach and trust.

Comparison of use of ways of accessing news and their perceptions of trust



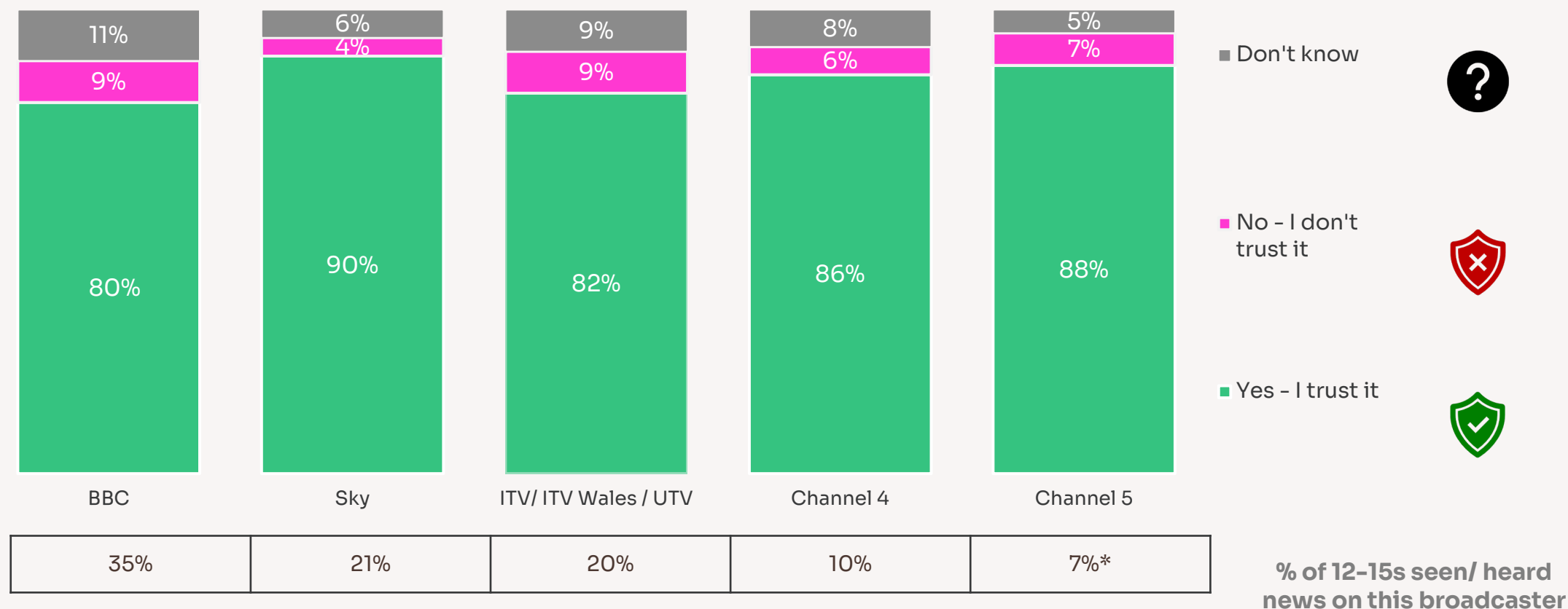
Source: News Consumption Survey 2025-2026 – 12-15s

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Base: All 12-15s who have seen or heard news each way in the last month (813 Social media/ VSPs, 402 TV channels/ streaming, 341 search engines/ AI, 207 Live radio, 168 TV apps/ sites, 148 Podcasts/ catch-up radio, 64* newspaper apps/ sites, 56* Printed newspapers, 54* News apps/ sites) *Caution: Low base

Trust in the news seen or heard on broadcaster services is high for all broadcasters – and higher for Sky compared to BBC

Broadcasters – whether trust the news that you see or hear



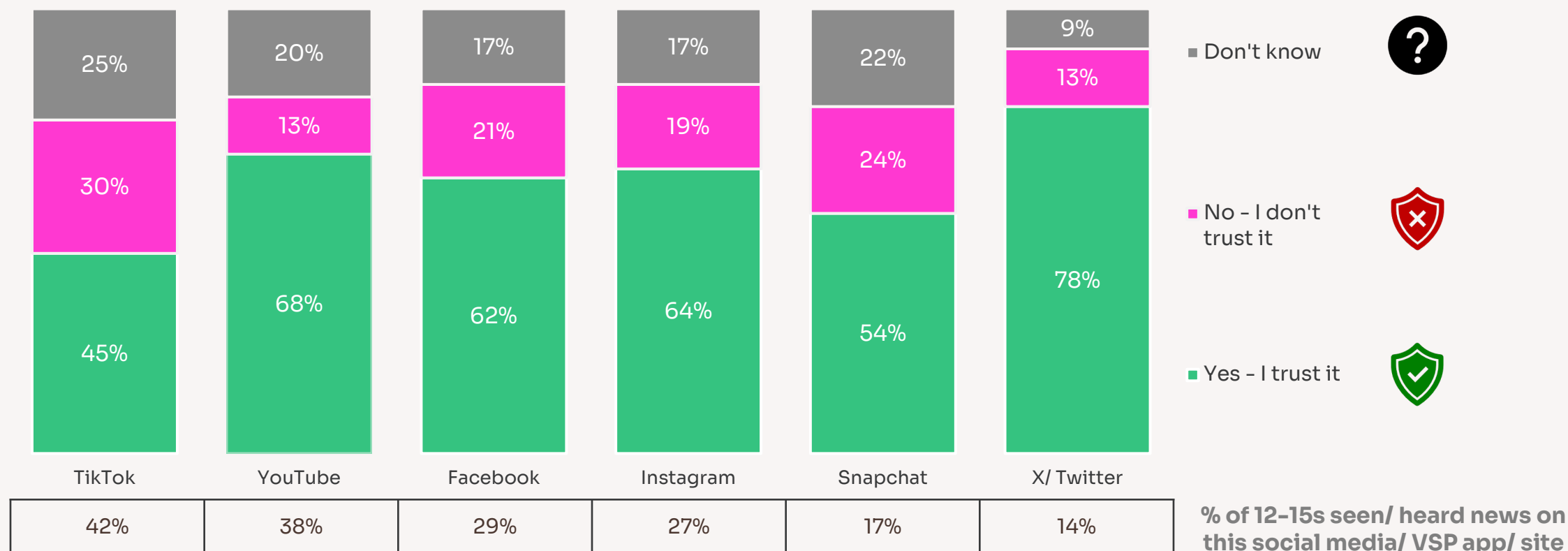
Source: News Consumption Survey 2025-2026 – 12-15s

Question E5A-F. Do you trust the news that you see or hear on [NEWS SOURCE]?

Base: All 12-15s who have seen or heard news on broadcasters in the last month (359 BBC, 213 Sky, 215 ITV / ITV Wales / UTV, 105 Channel 4, 78* Channel 5) *Caution: Low base

Trust in the news seen or heard on social media/ VSPs is lower compared to broadcasters, in particular on TikTok and Snapchat. A significant minority are unsure whether to trust.

Social media/ VSPs – whether trust the news that you see or hear



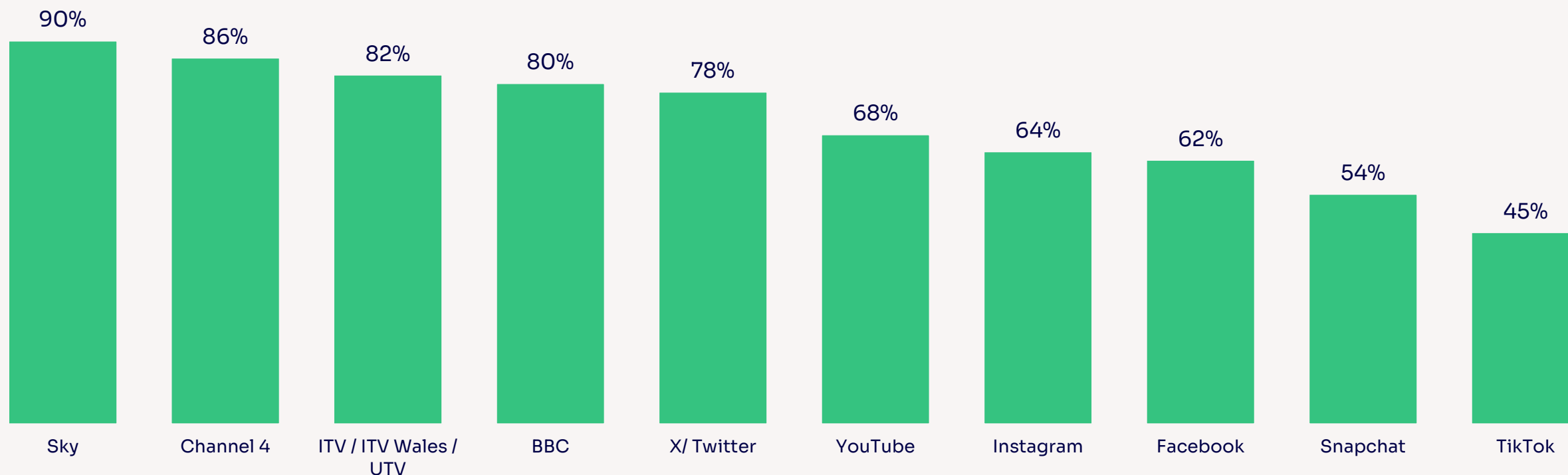
Source: News Consumption Survey 2025-2026 – 12-15s

Question E5H-M. Do you trust the news that you see or hear on [NEWS SOURCE]?

Base: All 12-15s who have seen or heard news on the social media/ VSP apps/ sites in the last month (446 TikTok, 391 YouTube, 302 Facebook, 284 Instagram, 178 Snapchat, 140 X/ Twitter)

News on social media/ VSPs is less likely to be trusted compared to news on broadcasters in most cases, however trust in news on X/ Twitter is level with the BBC

Broadcasters, social media/ VSPs – whether trust the news that you see or hear



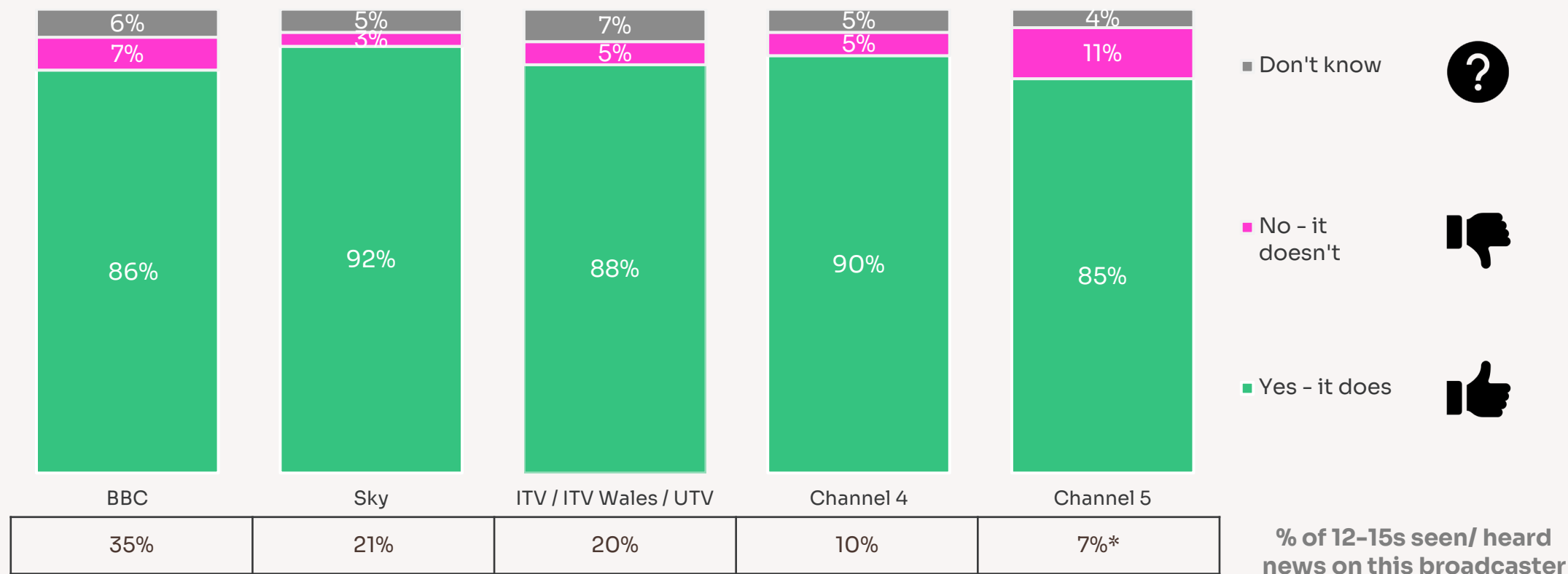
Source: News Consumption Survey 2025-2026 – 12-15s

Question E5A-M. Do you trust the news that you see or hear on [NEWS SOURCE]?

Base: All 12-15s who have seen or heard news on the broadcaster's services/ social media/ VSP apps/ sites in the last month (359 BBC, 213 Sky, 215 ITV / ITV Wales / UTV, 105 Channel 4, 446 TikTok, 391 YouTube, 302 Facebook, 284 Instagram, 178 Snapchat, 140 X/ Twitter) NB Excludes low base broadcasters

Around nine in ten say the news seen or heard on broadcaster services explains what is going on in the world – higher for Sky compared to BBC

Broadcasters – whether the news that you see or hear explains what is going on in the world



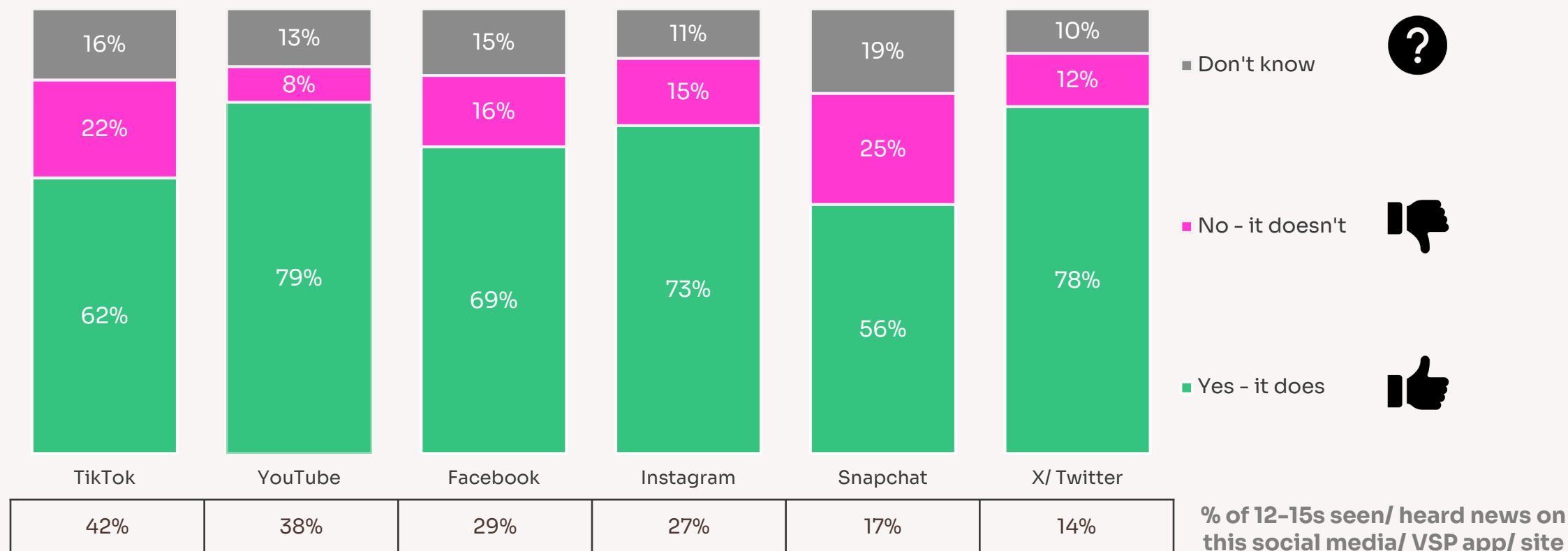
Source: News Consumption Survey 2025-2026 – 12-15s

Question E6A-G. Does the news that you see or hear on [NEWS SOURCE] explain what is going on in the world?

Base: All 12-15s who have seen or heard news on the broadcaster's services in the last month (359 BBC, 213 Sky, 215 ITV / ITV Wales / UTV, 105 Channel 4, 78* Channel 5) *Caution: Low base

News on TikTok and Snapchat is the least likely to be rated as explaining what is going on in the world – perhaps as more only see fun/ feel-good/ memes/ jokes and not broadcaster posts

Social media/ VSPs – whether the news that you see or hear explains what is going on in the world



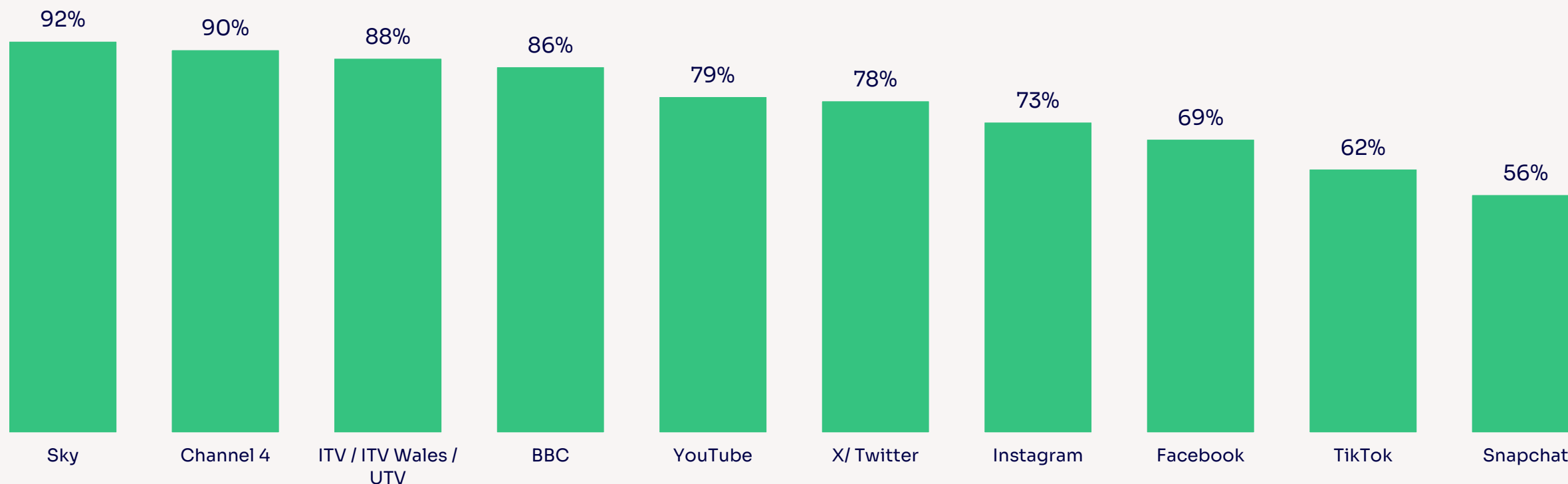
Source: News Consumption Survey 2025-2026 – 12-15s

Question E6H-M. Does the news that you see or hear on [NEWS SOURCE] explain what is going on in the world?

Base: All 12-15s who have seen or heard news on the social media/ VSP apps/ sites in the last month (446 TikTok, 391 YouTube, 302 Facebook, 284 Instagram, 178 Snapchat, 140 X/ Twitter)

News on broadcasters is more likely to be seen to explain what is going on in the world, with YouTube and X/ Twitter leading the social media/ VSPs on this measure

Broadcasters, social media/ VSPs – whether the news that you see or hear explains what is going on in the world



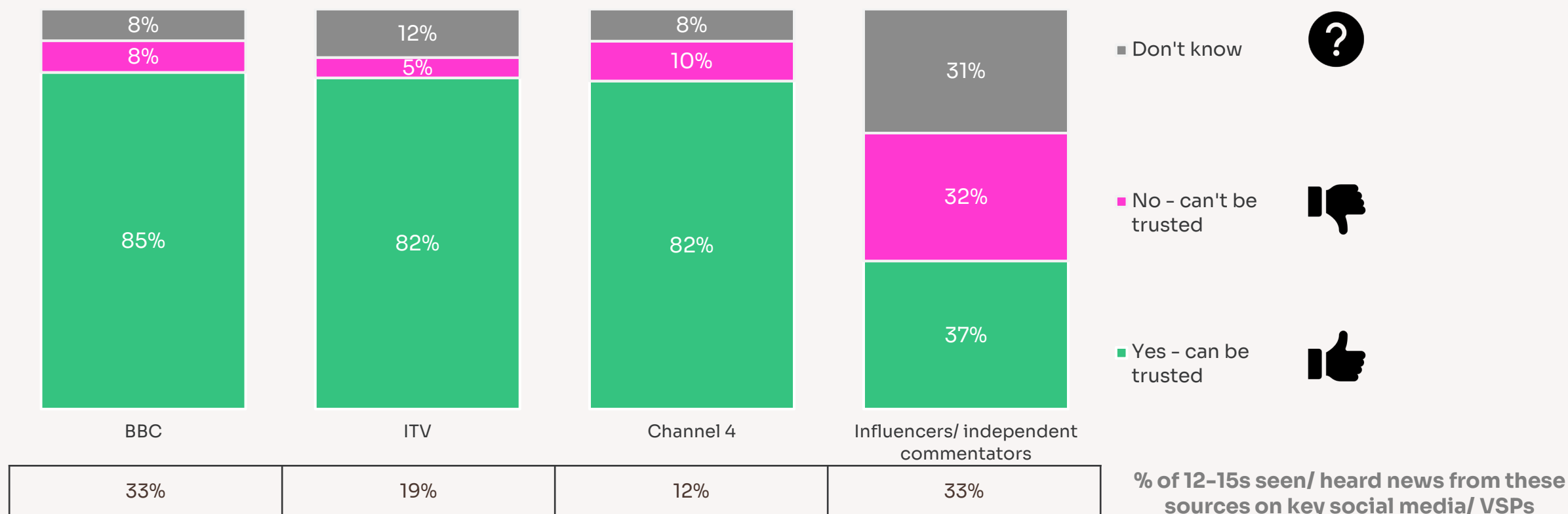
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Question E6A-M. Does the news that you see or hear on [NEWS SOURCE] explain what is going on in the world?

Base: All 12-15s who have seen or heard news on the broadcaster's services/ social media/ VSP apps/ sites in the last month (359 BBC, 213 Sky, 215 ITV / ITV Wales / UTV, 105 Channel 4, 446 TikTok, 391 YouTube, 302 Facebook, 284 Instagram, 178 Snapchat, 140 X/ Twitter) NB Excludes low base broadcasters

News encountered on social media from PSBs is generally seen as more trustworthy compared to news content encountered from influencers or other social media-native news providers.

Trust in news from different provider on social media, among 12-15s

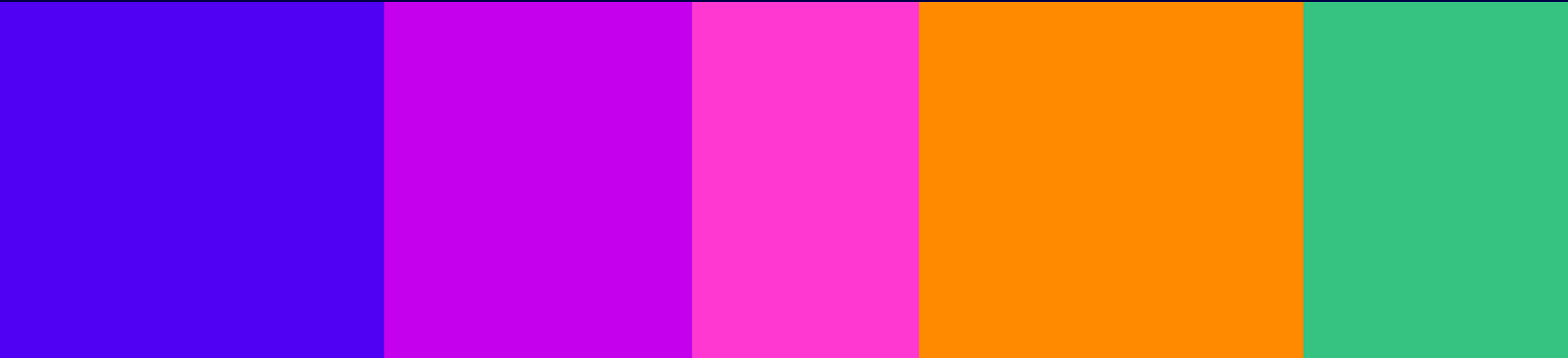


Source: News Consumption Survey 2025-2026 – 12-15s

Question E9A-D. News from [SOURCE OF POSTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA] can be trusted.

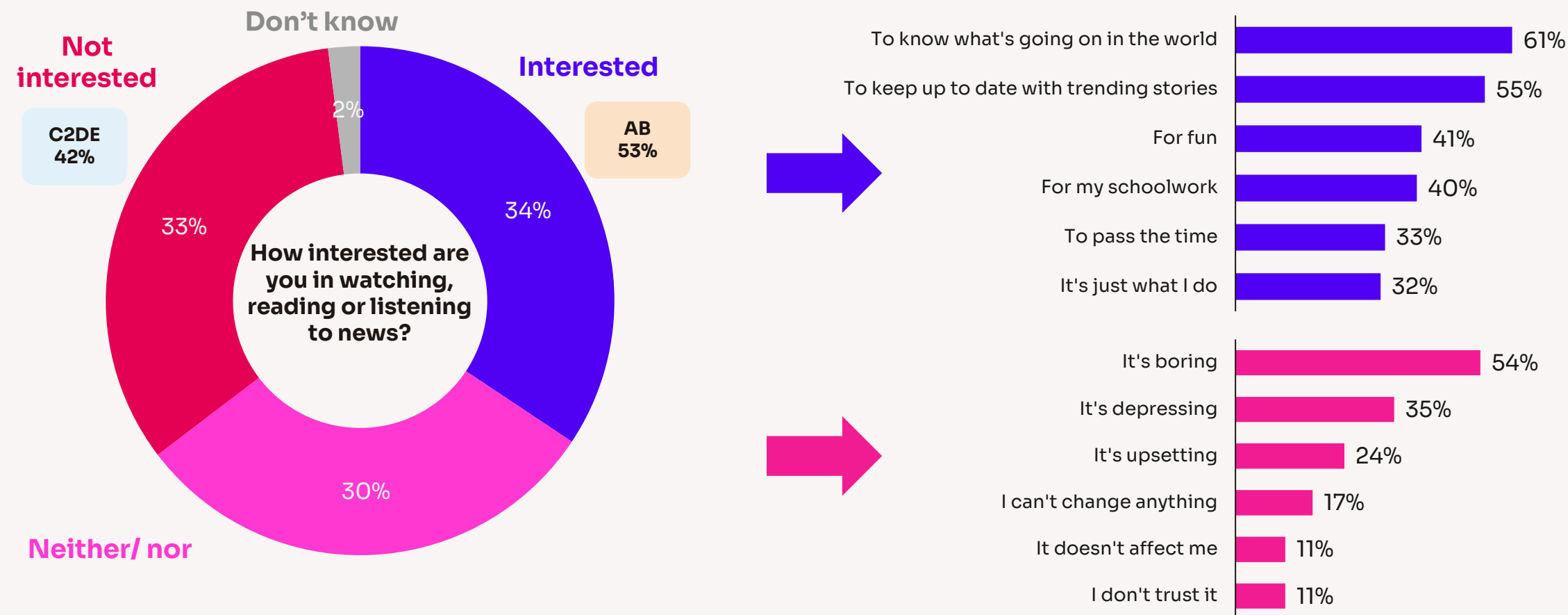
Base: All 12-15s who have seen or heard news posts from the BBC (335)/ ITV (196)/ Channel 4 (123)/ influencers (338) on social media (any of YouTube/ Instagram/ Snapchat/ X/ Twitter/ TikTok/ Facebook)

Interest in news



Broadly equal proportions of 12–15s say they are either interested in news, neutral towards it, or not interested. Interest in news varies by SEG with higher levels of interest among those in AB households than those in C2DE households.

Interest in news and the reasons for being interested or not being interested, among children aged 12–15



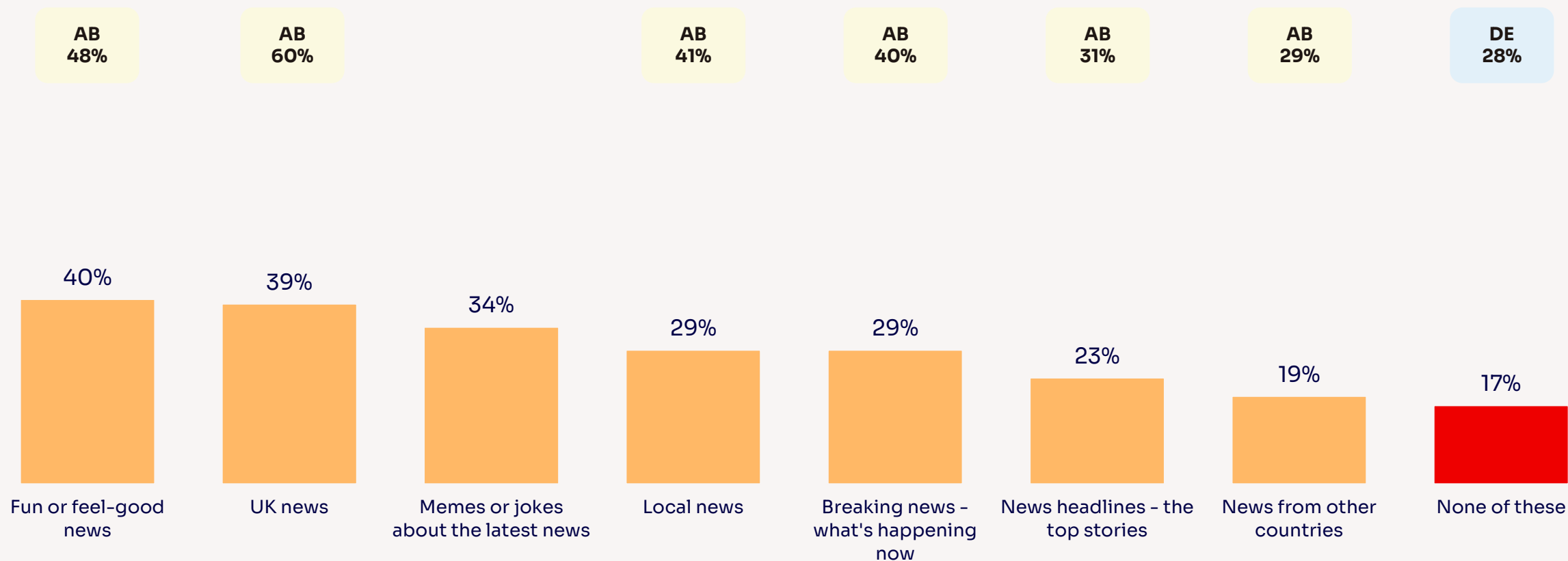
Source: News Consumption Survey 2025–2026 – 12–15s

Question C1. How interested are you in watching, reading or listening to news? C4. Which, if any, of these reasons for **being interested** in watching, reading or listening to news apply to you? C5. Which, if any, of these reasons for **not being interested** in watching, reading or listening to news apply to you?

Base: All 12–15s (1,045), All 12–15s who are interested (353), All 12–15s who are not interested or neither interested nor not interested (672). Highlighting responses which are different between boys and girls, or between those in AB or DE households compared to all.

No single type of news is of interest to a majority of 12-15s, with no differences between boys and girls. Those in AB households are more likely to be interested in almost all types of news.

News types of interest – by gender and SEG



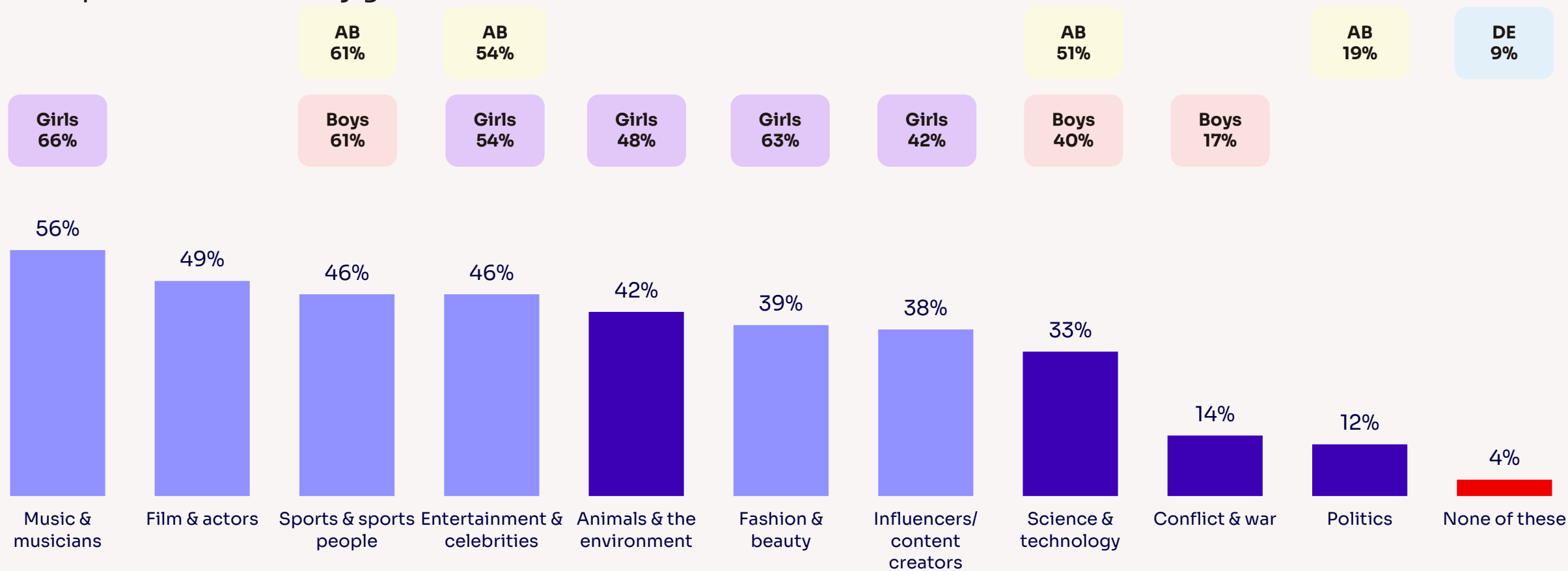
Source: News Consumption Survey 2025-2026 – 12-15s

Question C3. And which, if any, of the following types of news are you interested in at all?

Base: All 12-15s (1,045). Highlighting responses which are different between boys and girls, or between those in AB or DE households compared to all.

Almost all 12-15s are interested in news about one or more topics, with 'soft news' topics more popular, particularly among girls

News topics of interest – by gender and SEG

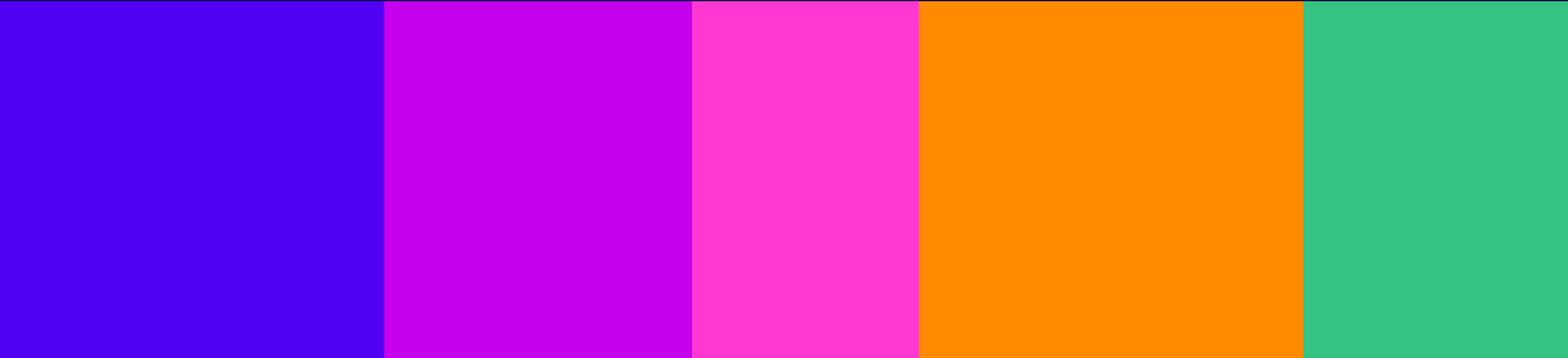


Source: News Consumption Survey 2025-2026 – 12-15s

Question C2. Which, if any, of the following are you interested in at all? News about...

Base: All 12-15s (1,045). Highlighting responses which are different between boys and girls, or between those in AB or DE households compared to all.

Appendix



Methodology

Sample

- 1,045 children aged 12-15 – screened via their parents through online panels
- Quotas set on nation/ region, child's age and gender, household socio-economic group

Data collection

- Online – screening online panellists to reach parents of 12-15-year-olds, gaining consent from both the parent and the child
- Screening questions and demographic measures asked of parents, news consumption and attitude questions asked of children aged 12-15
- Conducted by Critical Research from November 2025 to March 2026

Data reporting

- Weighted to be nationally representative of the UK
- Data available in pdf tables (aggregated), SPSS and CSV (respondent level)
- Significance testing applied at the 95% confidence level

How we ask about news

We would now like to ask you some questions about **news that you might see or hear**.

This could be news that you **actively choose** to watch or read or listen to, and it could be news that you just **happen to** see or hear or come across.

It could be **any type of news** – maybe about entertainment, sport, politics, celebrities, news from your local area or around the world.

Participants were shown a list of the media sources they had used for any reason in the last month, plus ‘Talking with friends’ and ‘Talking with family’ and asked:

Which, if any, of these ways have you **seen or heard news** in the last month?

Remember – this could be news that you **actively** choose to watch or read or listen to, and it could be news that you just **happen to** see or hear or come across. It could be **any type of news**.