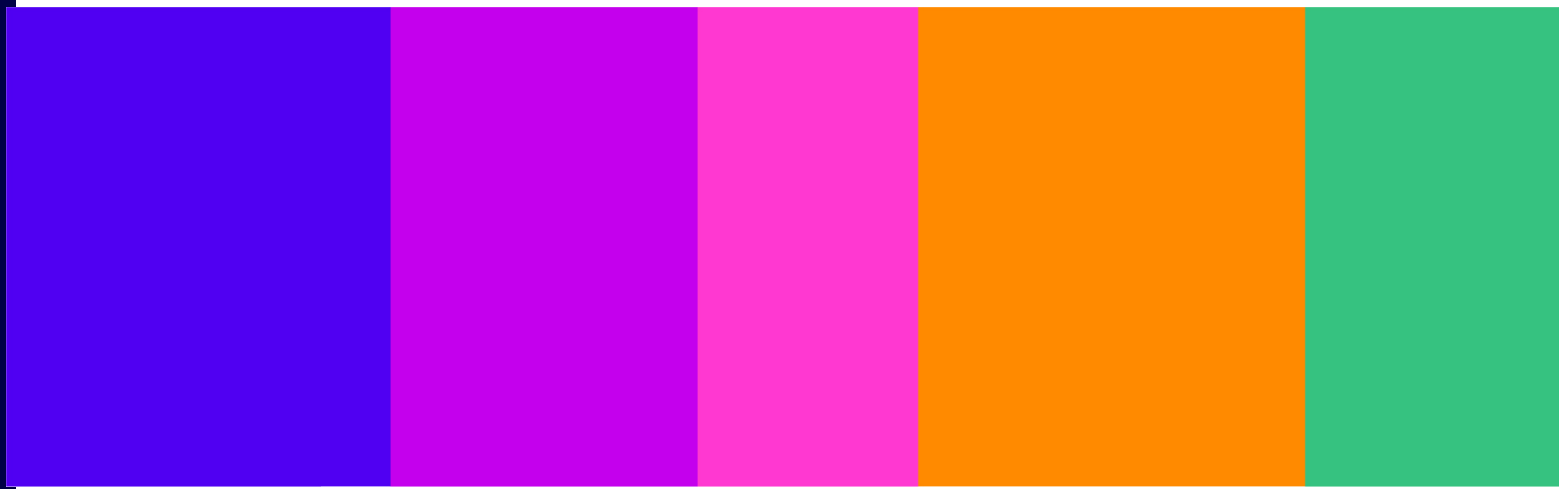


News Report 2026

An overview of how people get their news
and attitudes towards the provision of news

Report

Published 15 September 2026



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Overview

This report highlights the key insights from Ofcom's latest News Consumption Survey (NCS), which explores the different ways UK adults aged 16+ and children aged 12-15 access news today and their attitudes towards different providers and platforms.

For additional context, the report also incorporates findings from our Public Service Media Tracker and Local Media Survey. This year we also conducted a survey immediately following the Scottish Parliament and Senedd Cymru elections in those areas, and also in those areas of England where local elections / mayoral Elections took place to provide a snapshot of behaviours and attitudes in a specific news moment.

Accompanying this report are supplementary data and analysis for adults, children and the UK nations. We have also published additional findings from our Local Election Survey and have published those data tables and questionnaire alongside the Local Media Survey data tables and questionnaire.

Important context for interpreting this year's results

We updated the News Consumption Survey in 2025 to better reflect how audiences access news. The key change was to broaden how respondents are asked to think about 'news', enabling us to capture more passive or incidental exposure. We also ask participants to think about news they've come across over the past month, rather than 'nowadays', which encourages people to think more specifically about their behaviours.

We also changed the survey to be continuous across the year. This ensures we capture fluctuations in news consumption and audience attitudes throughout the year – previously we conducted the survey using two waves. While the adults' survey continues to be conducted using a mixed-mode approach, the online: face-to-face mix is now 70:30 (previously 60:40). The children's survey continues to be conducted online-only.

The changes introduced in the latest survey mean that, as expected, there are some differences from previous years. Most notably, an impact of the updated approach is that reported news consumption is higher across all platforms.

As a result, direct comparisons with previous years should be made with caution. While the overall patterns in the data remain informative when compared with 2025, the report focuses primarily on findings from 2026.

We will continue to refine our measurement of news consumption, including exploring the use of passive monitoring techniques, and will share findings in future reports.

Further details on this year's approach can be found in the [technical report](#).

Definitions to note in this report

The table below provides a short glossary of some of the terms used throughout this report.

Term	What we mean
Online intermediaries	Services that facilitate the distribution of content from news publishers rather than producing and distributing their own news content. These include search engines, news aggregators, social media and video-sharing platforms.
Online-native creators	Individuals or organisations that create and distribute content primarily through digital platforms, rather than through traditional media such as television, radio or newspapers.
Online news aggregators	a service, such as Google News or Apple News, that curates and displays news stories from a range of publishers in one place.
On and off platform	We use these terms to describe when content is seen on services owned by the news provider (on platform) or news seen on services not controlled or owned by the provider (off platform).
Platform	The overall distribution method: e.g. television, radio, online, print.
Traditional media/platforms	We use this term to describe television, radio or print media.
Source	We use this term to specifically refer to organisations that create news stories, rather than necessarily where people access news.

What we have found – in brief

While news consumption is increasingly on digital platforms, with 82% of people accessing it online, traditional news providers remain highly important

Almost all UK adults (96%) consume news. Online as a platform, including content direct from traditional news providers as well as through online intermediaries, is used by more people than any other platform, although television remains a major way for audiences to access news. News consumption habits vary substantially by age, with younger adults much more likely to use online services and older adults continuing to rely heavily on television. However, accessing news online has increased significantly even among older audiences.

People now access news through a much broader range of platforms, providers, intermediaries and formats than in the past. This is particularly so for younger adults who use the widest variety of routes to news.

Online intermediaries are central to news discovery

Nearly three-quarters (73%) of adults access news using online intermediaries such as social media, video-sharing platforms, search engines, news aggregators and AI tools. In contrast, 57% access news directly through news publishers' websites and apps.

Social media and video-sharing platforms remain the most common intermediary route, used by 60% of adults. News aggregators are used by 17%, while 21% report using AI tools for news. AI use is concentrated among younger adults and those in the AB socioeconomic groups.

Importantly, very few people rely exclusively on online intermediaries for news. Only 5% use intermediaries alone, and only 2% access news solely through social media. This suggests that using intermediaries generally complements rather than replaces other ways of accessing news.

The BBC remains the UK's most-used news provider

Despite increasing competition and audience fragmentation, the BBC remains the most widely used news provider in the UK, reaching 77% of adults across its services. ITV reaches 50% of adults, while Sky and Global each reach around a third of the population.

The BBC is also the most widely used news source among younger adults. Around two-thirds (66%) of 16-24-year-olds accessed BBC News in the past month, rising to 87% among people aged 75 and over. BBC One remains the most-used service for news, used by 59% of adults each month.

For some audiences, particularly younger users, intermediaries extend the reach of news

Social media and video-sharing platforms are important gateways to news, with audiences accessing news from established broadcasters through this route as well as -online-native creators.

Across the major social media and video-sharing services measured, BBC News was reported as the most frequently encountered news provider, while ITV News and Sky News were also prominent. Public service broadcasters and other traditional news providers accounted for a substantial proportion of news encountered on social platforms. Reach of BBC News increases from 77% to 80% when exposure through social media and video-sharing platforms is included, rising from 66% to 73% among 16-24-year-olds.

YouTube is becoming increasingly significant as a platform for watching news content

Facebook remains the largest social platform for news (39%), but YouTube is close behind (33%) and is growing rapidly. The gap between the two platforms has halved since 2025. YouTube occupies a distinctive position in the news ecosystem, combining content from broadcasters, publishers, influencers and user-generated sources, and increasingly competes with broadcasters as people watch it on connected TV sets.

Children's news consumption is primarily through online intermediaries

For children aged 12-15, social media and video-sharing platforms are the main way of accessing news. Seventy-eight per cent access news through social media. TikTok (42%) and YouTube (38%) are the most-used individual services.

As with adults, much of the news children aged 12-15 encounter through social media is from established broadcasters. For example, 70% of X users in this age group reported seeing news from UK broadcasters on this platform, while this was the case for 64% of YouTube users aged 12-15. Children seeing news on TikTok are slightly more likely to see it from influencers / independent commentators / online-native creators (46%) than from UK broadcasters (42%). However, on YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and X they are more likely to see news from broadcasters. Meanwhile, 39% of children aged 12-15 had watched television news and 16% had accessed news organisations' websites and apps directly.

Children are primarily interested in entertainment-related news topics such as music, film, celebrities and sport rather than politics or international conflicts.

Trust, accuracy and impartiality

Traditional news platforms generally score higher on perceptions of trustworthiness, accuracy and impartiality compared with online platforms.

The lowest ratings are for news seen on social media and video-sharing platforms followed by news delivered through AI services. Of the online ways to consume news, online aggregators, which primarily direct people to traditional news providers, have the highest ratings.

These findings are echoed in data from our Public Service Media Tracker which show that trusted and accurate news is the most important role audiences want public service broadcasters to deliver. Half of adults rank trusted and accurate news among the top three priorities for public service broadcasting.

Local news is highly valued by audiences

Local news and information continue to be important to UK audiences. Seventy-one per cent rate local news among the most important forms of news, with local weather being the most valuable type of local information.

Almost all adults (95%) access local news and information. Word of mouth (54%), social media (48%) and television (42%) are the most common ways of accessing it. In total, 81% of adults use online ways to access local news. The BBC remains prominent in local news provision: its website/app and regional television bulletins are among the most-used local news sources.

The election period highlighted the importance of longer-form media such as TV bulletins

Research conducted following the May 2026 elections found that television was the most widely used platform for election information, reaching 62% of those aware of the elections. Although audiences increasingly consume everyday news in shorter digital formats, election coverage appears to drive demand for more detailed content. Nearly two-thirds (64%) preferred longer-form election coverage such as articles and news bulletins, compared with 18% who preferred shorter formats.

Traditional news providers were also rated significantly more trustworthy, accurate and impartial for election news than news accessed through social media. Public service broadcasters were among the highest-rated providers across these measures.

How news is accessed

This section provides an overview of how people access their news. This includes at an overall platform level as well as from specific providers of news and online intermediaries.

Context: The evolution of the news market

The way news is distributed and consumed has evolved over time. Scheduled television and radio bulletins, as well as daily newspapers, used to set the national news agenda. Audiences were concentrated around a handful of providers, meaning large parts of the population consumed the same stories and shared a common news agenda.

The arrival of satellite and cable television in the 1980s and 1990s began to increase audience choice. The launch of Sky News in 1989 introduced rolling 24-hour news to the UK, while commercial radio also expanded its range of news providers.

However, even then, news consumption remained largely linear and provider-led. Newspapers still commanded substantial readership, and most people got their news from broadcast television.

The emergence of the internet fundamentally changed how news was distributed. News providers launched websites, giving audiences access to news throughout the day rather than at fixed broadcast times. Initially, digital news largely supplemented traditional media, with audiences using websites associated with familiar brands such as the BBC, or newspaper brands such as The Guardian or Daily Mail. However, audiences were beginning to move from habits of buying a newspaper or watching or listening to a bulletin, to an 'always-on' environment of continuous updates.

The next major shifts came with smartphones and then social media and video-sharing platforms (VSPs) such as Facebook, Twitter/X, YouTube and later Instagram and TikTok. News increasingly reached people through algorithm-driven feeds and shares from other users rather than only being accessed directly from publishers. Consumption became more personalised, mobile and continuous and audiences could encounter news incidentally while using social platforms for other reasons.

This period marked the beginning of significant media fragmentation. Instead of a few major gatekeepers determining what news people had access to, a growth in the volume of news being produced has been accompanied by audiences having the choice of accessing news through a multitude of intermediaries, commentators, influencers and specialist outlets, as well as from the traditional news brands and publishers. While the latter remain important, they no longer control distribution. The growing use of AI tools adds another layer of intermediation, with audiences increasingly able to access news and information through AI-generated summaries and responses rather than directly from news providers. The result is a more diverse and decentralised news ecosystem, characterised by a growing number of sources operating outside traditional regulatory frameworks and competing for audiences' attention.

More people access news online than on any other platform

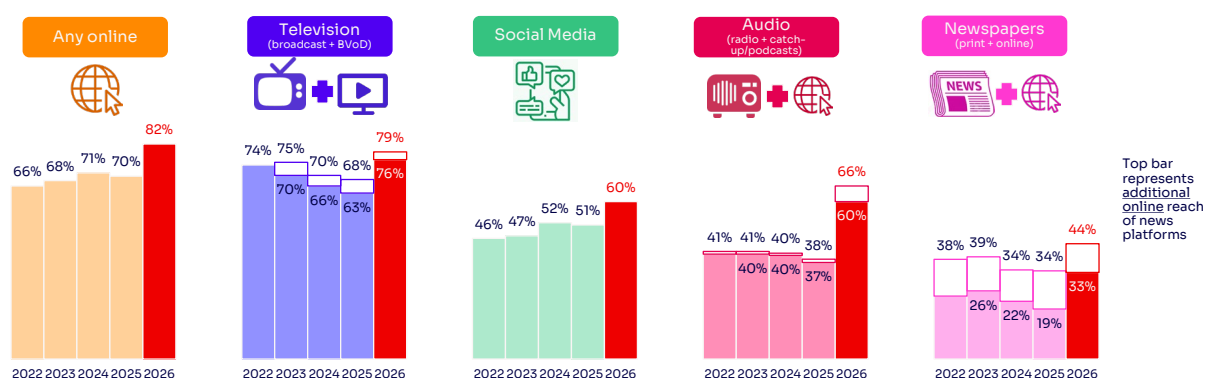
Our latest News Consumption Survey finds that almost everyone (96% of adults) consumes news, and they do so across a wide range of providers and platforms.

In recent years, our research has shown a steady increase in the proportion of people accessing news online, with a corresponding decline in people accessing it on broadcast television and radio,

and printed newspapers. Changes to the survey methodology mean that this year's results are not directly comparable with previous years. However, continuing the trend first seen in 2024, we can see that more people are using online sources than broadcast television for news.

The higher numbers for all platforms in our 2026 survey are the result of a change in approach: we asked participants to consider any news consumed in the past month rather than applying a narrower interpretation of the news they consume 'nowadays'. This provides a more comprehensive and reliable measure of overall news consumption. It is also designed to more effectively capture passive news consumption. This explains the much higher figures for audio news, with passive consumption a key feature of radio listening. Reported use of printed newspapers has also increased substantially, with 33% of adults saying they access news in this way.¹

Figure 1: Platforms used for news²



Source: Ofcom News Consumption Survey 2022-2026 – Adults 16+. 2022-2025 Question: C1. Which of the following platforms do you use for news nowadays? / 2026 Question: D1-D22. Which, if any, of the following [MEDIA TYPE] have you seen or heard news on in the last month?

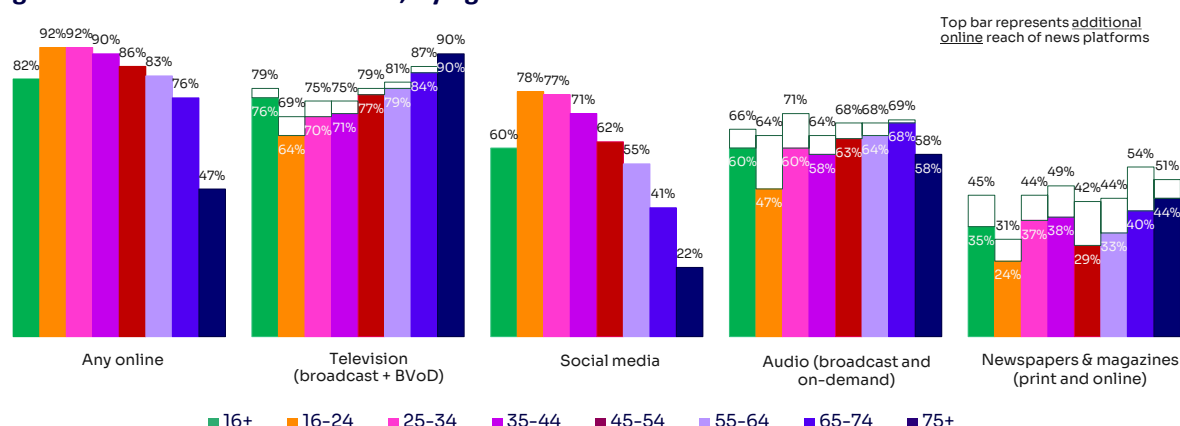
While older people are more likely to watch news on television, they are increasingly using online ways to access news

News consumption behaviours vary considerably by age. Older adults, particularly those aged 75 and over, continue to favour traditional platforms, in particular TV: 90% access news this way compared to 69% of 16-24-year-olds. The opposite pattern is evident for online news consumption: 92% of 16-24-year-olds access news this way, compared with just 47% of those aged 75 and over. However, even accounting for the change in methodology, we have seen an increase in the use of online for news among older audiences, particularly 65-74-year-olds, whose use of online for news has risen from 41% in 2018 to 76% in 2026. This increase is likely to reflect greater familiarity with using different technologies and shows that they are increasingly supplementing their news diet when they go online.

¹ This figure for print newspaper readership is now more in line with other measures such as the IPA TouchPoints survey which indicates a monthly print readership of 30%.

² In 2022 W1, data is not shown because face-to-face fieldwork was not possible during Covid-19 pandemic. In 2023, BVOD was included. In 2026, 'Online' now includes use of TV on-demand /catch-up, TV apps/ sites, newspapers apps/ sites, magazine apps/ sites, news apps/ sites, podcasts/ catch-up radio, social media or video sharing apps/ sites, search engines/ AI, news aggregators and 'Audio' includes live radio and catch-up radio/podcasts.

Figure 2: Platforms used for news, by age



Source: Ofcom News Consumption Survey 2025-2026 – Adults 16+. Question: D1-D22. Which, if any, of the following [MEDIA TYPE] have you seen or heard news on in the last month?

Online intermediaries³

Online intermediaries, including social media, VSPs and AI tools, are the main way people access news online

Almost three-quarters (73%) of adults aged 16+ access news through an online intermediary compared to around six in ten (57%) who go directly to the online apps and sites of news publishers, such as broadcasters, newspaper brands or online-only news publishers. Online intermediaries provide multiple routes to news and include social media and VSPs (used by 60% of adults to access news), messaging or neighbourhood apps (22%) and news aggregators (17%).

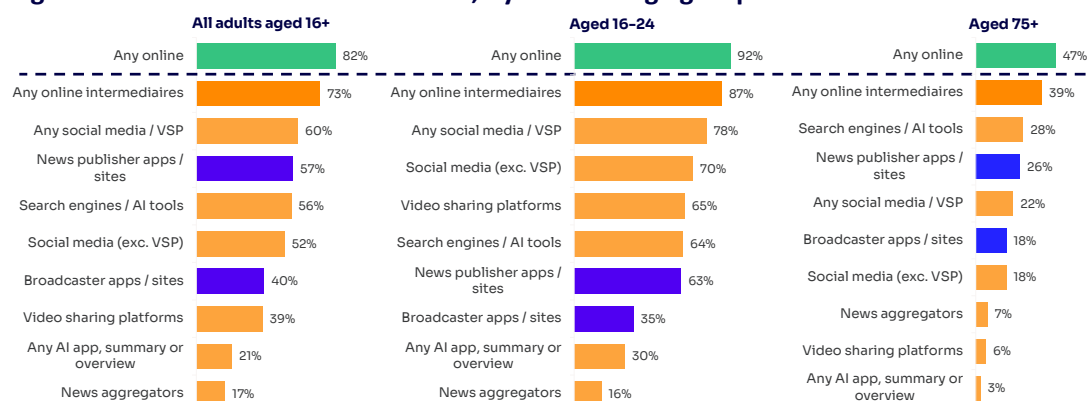
Almost nine in ten 16-24-year-olds have accessed news via an online intermediary, compared to only four in ten of those aged 75 and over. More specifically, 78% of 16-24-year-olds have accessed news via a social media or VSP, compared with 22% of those aged 75 and over.

It should be noted here that among those who say they are using any of these online intermediaries for news, many will be accessing news provided by traditional news organisations on these platforms but have indicated that the place they get their news is through the intermediaries. We discuss this in more detail later.

Despite the use of online intermediaries for news, few adults rely on them exclusively: only 5% of adults accessed news solely through online intermediaries, with just 2% only using social media to access news.

³ Online intermediaries are made up of social media or VSP sites, search engine or AI tools and news aggregators

Figure 3: How news is accessed online, by selected age groups

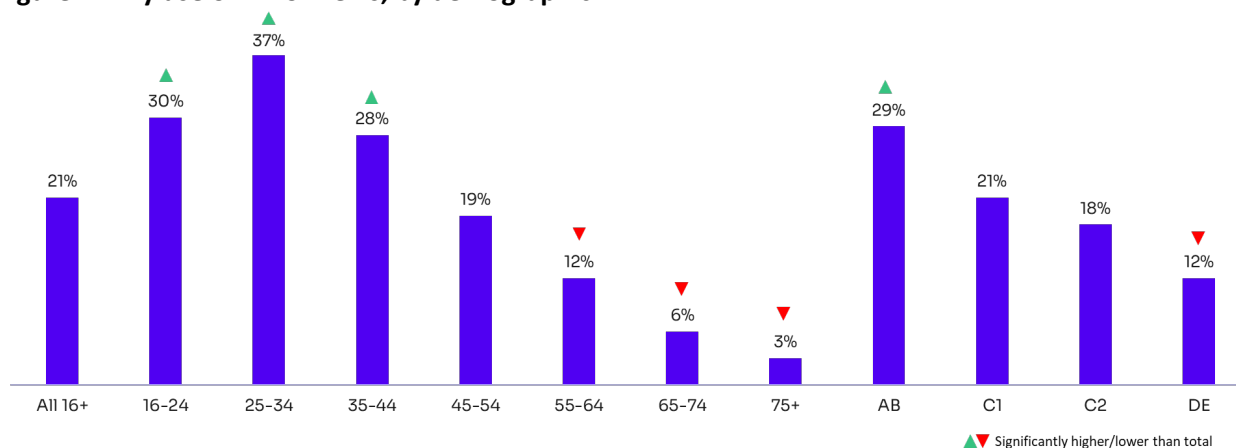


Source: Ofcom News Consumption Survey 2025-2026 – Adults 16+ Question D1-D22. Which, if any, of the following [MEDIA TYPE] have you seen or heard news on in the last month? Any online intermediaries = any social media/VSP, search engines/AI and news aggregators

One of the most significant recent developments has been the emergence of AI as a news intermediary. The latest [Digital News Report](#) by the Reuters Institute identified AI platforms and chatbots as an emerging challenge for publishers, as users increasingly encounter news through AI-generated summaries and answers rather than directly through news brands. AI tools are creating new pathways to news, allowing audiences to access information through generated summaries and conversational interfaces rather than directly from news providers.

For the first time we asked about the use of AI applications and services for news, and 21% of respondents told us they had used an AI tool for news. The most popular of these was ChatGPT, used by 13% of respondents for news. AI use for news is driven primarily by younger age groups, while adoption is lagging among older individuals. Wider use of AI for news is also reported by those belonging to AB socioeconomic households, compared to those from DE socioeconomic households.⁴ This is an evolving dimension within the news eco-system and we will continue to monitor audiences' use of it in accessing news.

Figure 4: Any use of AI for news, by demographic



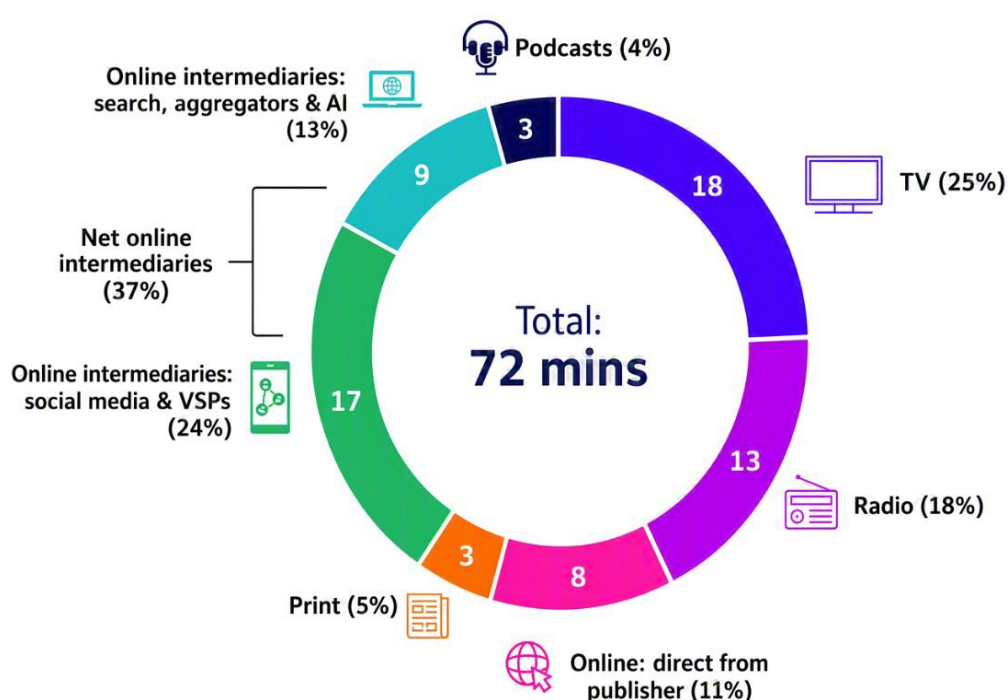
Source: Ofcom News Consumption Survey 2025-2026 Adults 16+. Question: Question D20. Which, if any, of the following search engines, AI Overviews or AI apps have you seen or heard news on in the last month? Base: All adults (5,397)

⁴ Adults in households classified as DE group (semi- and unskilled workers; and those at the lowest levels of subsistence, including some pensioners and unemployed people).

People spend similar amounts of time accessing news through TV as they do through social media and VSPs

Overall, we estimate that UK adults spend an average of 72 minutes a day consuming news – up from 61 minutes last year. For the first time, we have been able to separate out online intermediaries into ‘search, aggregators and AI’ and ‘social media and VSPs’. This year, television news and news accessed via social media/VSPs each account for around a quarter of this time. The absolute minutes of news consumed on TV, radio, print and directly accessed online are in line with the figures we reported last year, though the proportion of total news minutes accounted for by TV has dropped (from 31% to 25%). Online intermediaries account for 37% of time spent consuming news each day.

Figure 5: Estimated average daily minutes of news consumed across all platforms, all adults 16+, 2026 ⁵



Source: Share of attention analysis is derived from several data sources: Barb (TV), RAJAR (radio), Ipsos Iris (Online: direct from publishers) and Ofcom’s News Consumption Survey 2025-2026 - Adults 16+ (Online intermediaries; Print & Podcasts). See footnote for more detail on the methodology.

⁵ This share of attention analysis is constructed from several data sources: Ofcom’s News Consumption Survey (NCS) 2025-2026 – Adults 16+, Barb, RAJAR and Ipsos Iris. TV (including BVoD) news, radio and online news direct from publisher is calculated directly from the relevant industry source and for the others they are calculated using a share of attention ratio from NCS. Figures should be regarded as coming from the appropriate source or modelled considering how much attention is paid for other news media categories. News is defined as news bulletins or news articles as distinct from opinion or current affairs, but this division is in practice difficult to rigorously delineate depending on the news media category. The overall output can be regarded as effective minutes spent paying attention to news per person per day across the 2026 UK population, as a snapshot across periods in the year.

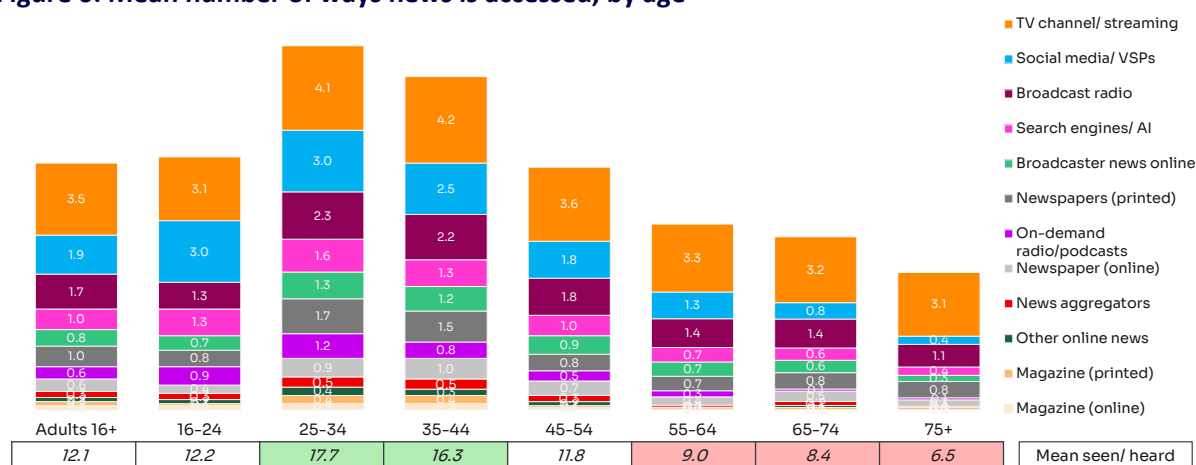
The proliferation of online distribution channels means that people now have a range of ways to access news

The plethora of online distribution channels means that people now have access to a wide a range of ways they can come across news, resulting in a growth in the average number of ways people access news. However, this varies considerably by age. Those aged 25-34 use the widest range of ways to access news at an average of almost eighteen, with similarly high levels for 35-44-year-olds (16.3 on average). In contrast, older adults aged 55 and over rely on a narrower range, especially those aged 75 and over, who use just 6.5 on average. What is apparent is that all audiences, including those in older age groups, are using a mix of traditional *and* online ways to access news.

There are also notable differences by other demographics. People in the AB socioeconomic group use significantly more ways to access news than the population average (17.2 compared with 12.1). In contrast, those in the DE group use an average of just 8.4 different ways to access news.

Differences are also evident by ethnicity. Black adults and adults with mixed heritage typically use a significantly wider range of ways to access news compared to White adults. This is likely to be influenced, at least in part, by the younger age profile of the Black and mixed heritage populations, as younger adults generally use a broader mix of news sources and platforms.

Figure 6: Mean number of ways news is accessed, by age



Source: Ofcom News Consumption Survey 2025-2026 – Adults 16+. Question D1-D22. Which, if any, of the following [MEDIA TYPE] have you seen or heard news on in the last month? Coloured cells show significant differences by age group compared to adults 16+.

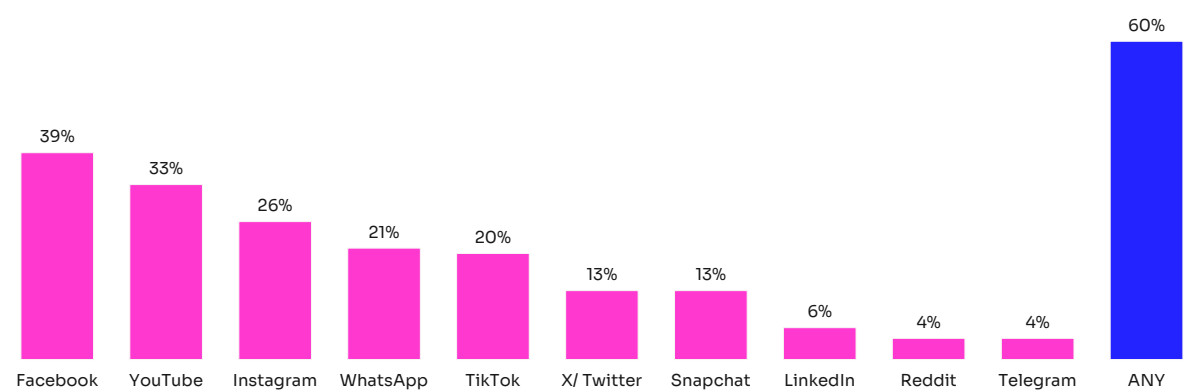
YouTube is becoming increasingly significant as a platform for watching news content

While Facebook (39%) remains the highest reaching social media platform for news among all adults, YouTube is gaining ground (33%).

YouTube has characteristics of both social media and broadcast media, with a huge range of both long-form and short-form videos, and user-generated content as well as content from a range of media professionals and media organisations, including news brands and public service broadcasters (PSBs). YouTube's role as a news and media provider has been strengthened by changing viewing

behaviours as more of its content is being viewed on TV sets in the living room, accounting for nearly half (46%) of all video viewing to YouTube in-home in 2025, up from 27% in 2022.⁶

Figure 7: Social media or video-sharing-platforms used for news



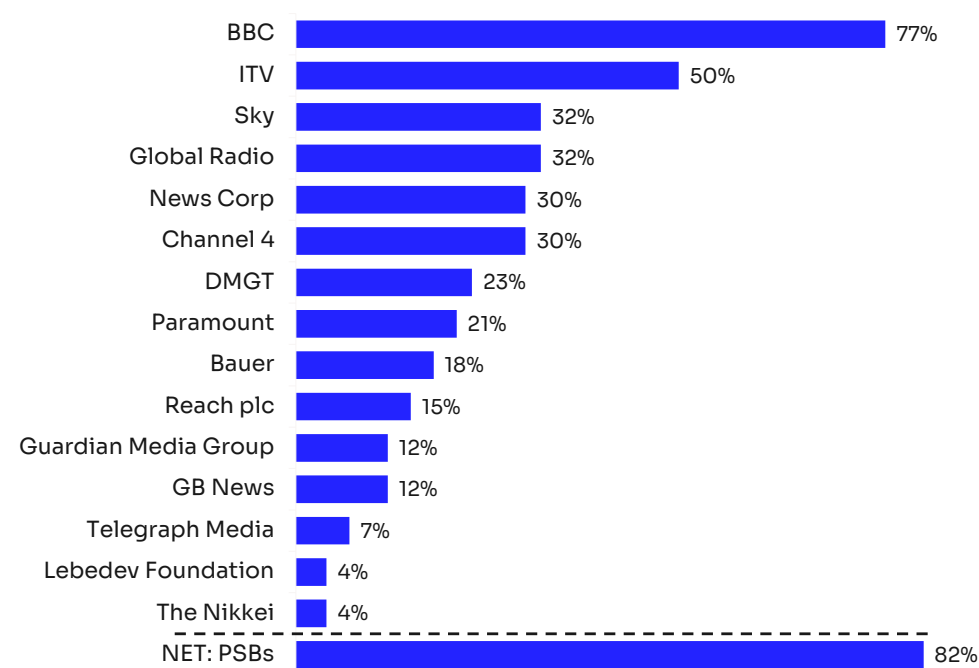
Source: Ofcom News Consumption Survey 2025-2026 – Adults 16+. Question D18. Which, if any, of the following social media or video sharing apps or sites have you seen or heard news on in the last month?

Use of specific news providers

Despite the market becoming more complex and crowded, the BBC remains the most used news provider

With a presence across TV, radio and online, the BBC is the most used news provider in the UK, reaching 77% of all adults through its services. ITV (50%) follows with Sky and Global on 32%.

Figure 8: Reach of specific news providers through their own services



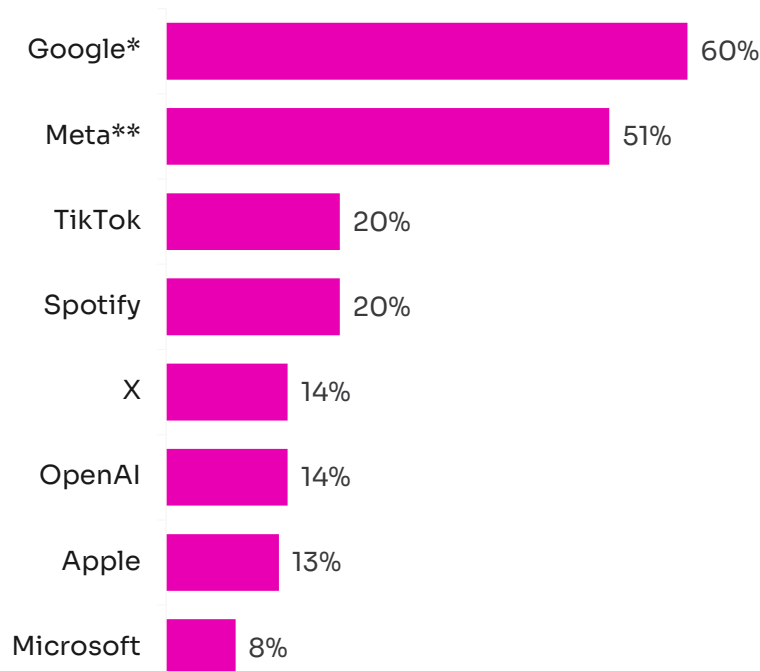
Source:

Ofcom News Consumption Survey 2025-2026 – Adults 16+. Question D1-D22. Which, if any, of the following [MEDIA TYPE] have you seen or heard news on in the last month? N.B. ITV includes STV, UTV and ITV Wales

⁶ Barb as-viewed, in-home video viewing over the home broadband only. All individuals (age 4+)

Among online intermediary brands, Google (dominated by Google Search) has the highest reach for news content (60%), followed by Meta (51%), which includes Facebook (39%), Instagram (26%) and WhatsApp (21%).

Figure 9: Reach of online intermediary brands



Source: Ofcom News Consumption Survey 2025-2026 - Adults 16+.

Question D1-D22. Which, if any, of the following [MEDIA] have you seen or heard news on in the last month?

** Google = Google search + YouTube + Google News + Google Gemini + Google Play, **Meta = Facebook + Instagram + Threads + WhatsApp*

The BBC is the main individual source of news, including among 16-24-year-olds: two thirds of whom said they had used it in the past month

The BBC is the most used news brand across all age groups, although its reach is considerably higher among older audiences: almost nine in ten of those aged 75+ reported using a BBC service for news in the past month compared to two thirds of 16-24-year-olds. BBC One is the most used service for news, reaching 59% of adults, demonstrating the continued importance of TV in accessing news.

Figure 10: Top five direct sources of news, by selected age groups

All adults 16+		Adults 16-24		Adults 75+	
Source	Monthly reach (%)	Source	Monthly reach (%)	Source	Monthly reach (%)
BBC One	59%	BBC One	40%	BBC One	78%
ITV1*	51%	BBC iPlayer	36%	ITV1*	58%
BBC iPlayer	32%	BBC News channel	31%	Channel 4 TV channel	23%
BBC News channel	31%	ITV1*	28%	BBC News channel	23%
BBC News online	27%	ITVX	26%	BBC Two	21%
Any BBC (on platform)	77%	Any BBC (on platform)	66%	Any BBC (on platform)	87%

Source: Ofcom News Consumption Survey 2025-2026 – Adults 16+.

Question D1-D22. Which, if any, of the following [MEDIA TYPE] have you seen or heard news on in the last month? *ITV1 includes STV, UTV and ITV Wales

News encountered on social media and VSPs is primarily from traditional broadcasters

Online intermediaries play an important role in helping people access news, facilitating the distribution and discovery of news rather than acting as news publishers themselves. They provide access to news stories from long-established news brands such as the BBC or Sky as well as news from independent commentators and online-native influencers who also comment on and share news this way - which in turn may also include stories from traditional news publishers. To better understand the news that people encounter on social media and video-sharing platforms, in this year's survey we asked people about the news providers they see or hear on these services.

Across selected social media and VSPs included in our survey, traditional broadcasters were the most reported news providers. Around half of those who saw news on YouTube and X, reported seeing BBC News content on the service in the past month.

Alongside these established news organisations, online-native influencers and content creators are also part of the news landscape. Their presence was particularly evident on X and TikTok, where around one in five adults reported seeing news from these sources, compared with around one in ten on Facebook and YouTube.

Figure 11: Attribution of news source on selected social media/VSPs, among adults who have seen or heard news on social media

	YouTube	X	Instagram	Facebook	TikTok	Snapchat
Base / Seen/heard news in the past month	1806 / 33%	764 / 13%	1458 / 26%	2301 / 39%	1139 / 20%	693 / 13%
Any UK broadcaster	69%	68%	60%	58%	57%	47%
Any PSB	59%	58%	52%	52%	49%	41%
BBC	52%	50%	44%	44%	41%	32%
Sky	29%	30%	22%	22%	25%	17%
ITV	20%	25%	21%	20%	22%	18%
Channel 4	11%	12%	11%	8%	11%	12%
GB News	11%	19%	9%	9%	10%	8%
Channel 5	8%	11%	8%	6%	10%	9%
Any international TV broadcaster	11%	19%	8%	7%	9%	6%
Any online-only news providers	3%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%
Political parties / politicians	3%	10%	6%	6%	4%	2%
Journalists	5%	12%	7%	5%	6%	4%
Influencers / independent commentators/ online-native creators	10%	19%	17%	10%	22%	15%
None of these	15%	11%	16%	18%	17%	27%

Source: Ofcom News Consumption Survey 2025-2026 – Adults 16+. Question: D26A-F. When you see or hear news on <SOCIAL MEDIA APP OR WEBSITE>, is it from any of these providers? Note: Participants were asked about selected social media app or websites only. N.B. ITV includes STV, UTV and ITV Wales

Established news providers remain an important route through which people connect with news, including on online intermediaries

While exposure to news on social media and VSPs is often driven by recommendation algorithms, users can also shape their news experience by choosing which news providers to follow. As online news consumption continues to grow, PSBs maintain a strong presence across these platforms. BBC News was the most widely followed news provider on the selected social media and VSP services, attracting around a third of news users on YouTube (36%), X (35%) and Instagram (32%). PSBs collectively were followed by more than four in ten news users on YouTube and X (both 42%). This indicates that, even as audiences access news through increasingly diverse digital environments, established news brands remain an important route through which people connect with news.

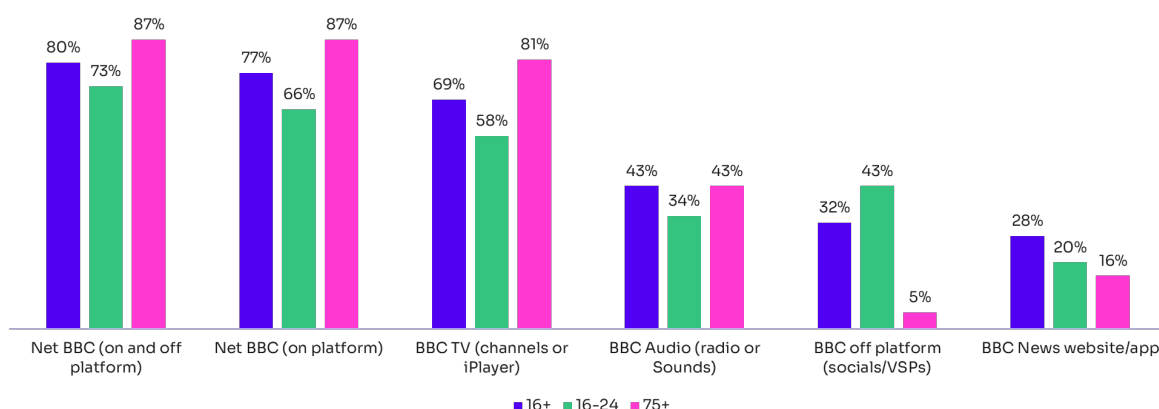
Figure 12: News providers followed on selected social media/VSPs, among adults who have seen or heard news on social media

	YouTube	X	Instagram	Facebook	TikTok	Snapchat
Base / Seen/heard news in the past month	1806 / 33%	764 / 13%	1458 / 26%	2301 / 39%	1139 / 20%	693 / 13%
Any UK broadcaster	51%	51%	46%	41%	41%	37%
Any PSB	42%	42%	39%	35%	34%	30%
BBC	36%	35%	32%	28%	26%	22%
Sky	16%	18%	14%	13%	14%	10%
ITV	11%	15%	12%	12%	12%	12%
Channel 4	6%	8%	6%	4%	6%	7%
GB News	6%	10%	5%	5%	5%	4%
Channel 5	4%	6%	4%	3%	5%	6%
Any international TV broadcaster	5%	9%	4%	4%	4%	2%
Any online-only news providers	2%	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%
Political parties / politicians	1%	6%	3%	2%	1%	0%
Journalists	3%	5%	4%	2%	2%	1%
Influencers / independent commentators/ online-native creators	7%	13%	12%	5%	16%	11%
None of these	40%	36%	40%	51%	42%	51%

Source: Ofcom News Consumption Survey 2026 – Adults 16+. Question: D27A-F. Which, if any, of these sources of news do you follow on [SOCIAL MEDIA/ VSP]? Base: All adults who have seen or heard news on <social media app or website> in the last month 2026. Note: Participants were asked about selected social media app or websites only. N.B. ITV includes STV, UTV and ITV Wales

For some users, online intermediaries are their only way of accessing news from news publishers: incremental BBC reach increases from 77% on BBC services to 80% when encounters with BBC news content on selected social media and VSPs are included. Among 16-24-year-olds, incremental reach of BBC News increases from 66% to 73% when access using social media and VSPs are included.

Figure 13: Reach of BBC news: on and off platform, by age



Source: Ofcom News Consumption Survey 2025-2026 – Adults 16+. Question D1-D22. Which, if any, of the following [MEDIA TYPE] have you seen or heard news on in the last month? D27A-F. Which, if any, of these sources of news do you follow on [SOCIAL MEDIA/ VSP]? Base: All adults who have seen or heard news on <social media app or website> in the last month. Note: Participants were asked about selected social media app or websites only.

Use of news among children aged 12-15

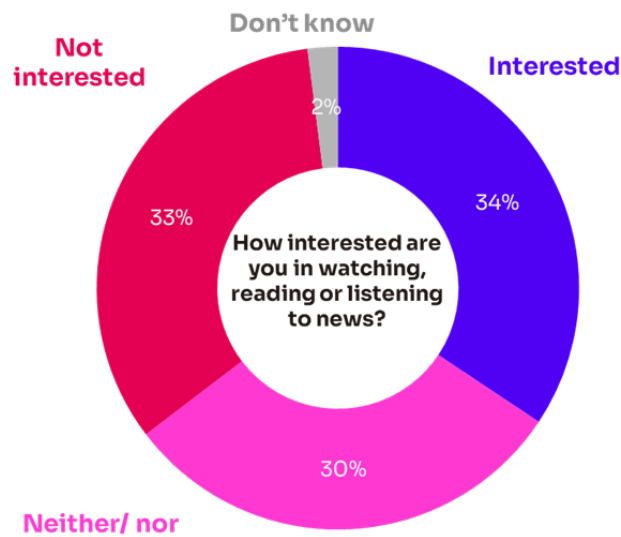
This section explores where and how children aged 12-15 engage with news. Understanding where children get their news is vital as news can help young people make sense of the world around them, participate in civic life and develop critical understanding of information.

Children in ABC1 socioeconomic households are more likely to be interested in news

Broadly equal proportions of 12–15-year-olds say they are interested in news, neutral towards it, or not interested. This suggests that, while news is not inherently disengaging for this age group, it does not hold universal appeal and must compete with a wide range of other content for their attention. Around a third (34%) of 12-15s say they are interested in news compared to 46% of 16-24-year-olds and 67% of all those aged 16+.

Children from AB and C1 socioeconomic households (53% and 34% respectively) are significantly more likely than those from C2 (23%) and DE (25%) socioeconomic households to be interested in news.

Figure 14: Interest in news among children aged 12-15



Source: Ofcom News Consumption Survey 2025-2026 - Children's. Question: C1. How interested are you in watching, reading or listening to news?

Among children who are interested in news, motivations are largely information-based: 61% say they want to know what is going on in the world, while 55% want to keep up to date with trending stories. In contrast, lack of engagement is driven by perceptions that news is uninteresting or emotionally challenging. Over half (54%) of those who not interested in news describe it as boring, making this the most common barrier to engagement, while 35% find it depressing and 24% say it is upsetting. A smaller proportion (11%) say they avoid news because they do not trust it.

This suggests that children's relationship with news is shaped not only by its relevance, but also by the emotional experience it creates. While many are drawn to news as a way of understanding the world around them, negative perceptions and emotional responses act as barriers to engagement.

Children's engagement with news is shaped by entertainment-focused topics and accessible and engaging formats

Children's interest in news is strongly shaped by topic, with a clear preference for informal entertainment-related content over traditional 'hard' news. Over half (56%) are interested in news about music and musicians, 49% in film and actors, and 46% in sports or entertainment and celebrities. In contrast, interest is much lower for topics such as conflict and war (14%) and politics (12%).⁷

Children's engagement in news is also influenced by how it is presented. Many favour more accessible and engaging formats, with 40% interested in fun or feel-good news and 34% in memes or jokes about current events. Fewer are interested in more traditional news formats such as breaking news (29%) or headlines (23%).

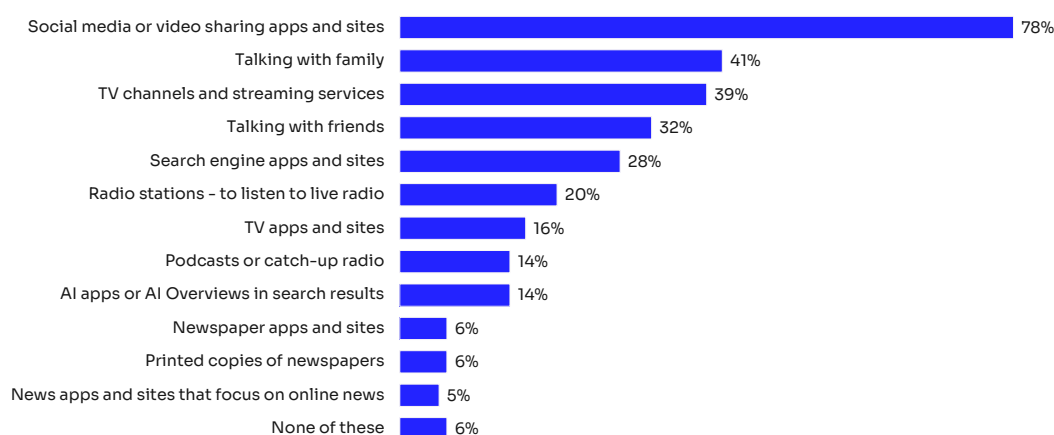
⁷ See accompanying children's chart pack

Social media and VSPs are the main way for 12-15-year-olds to access news

Children are more likely to encounter news within social media feeds, where content is selected and prioritised by platform algorithms, which can be based on the behaviours of the user, or informally via family and friends, rather than by necessarily intentionally seeking out news.

Social media is by far the most widely used platform among children aged 12–15-years-old, with 78% reporting that they access news this way. This is followed by 41% saying they get news by talking with family, and 39% via TV channels or streaming services. Other ways of accessing news are used far less frequently, including radio (20%), podcasts or catch-up radio (14%), and websites or apps of news organisations (16%).

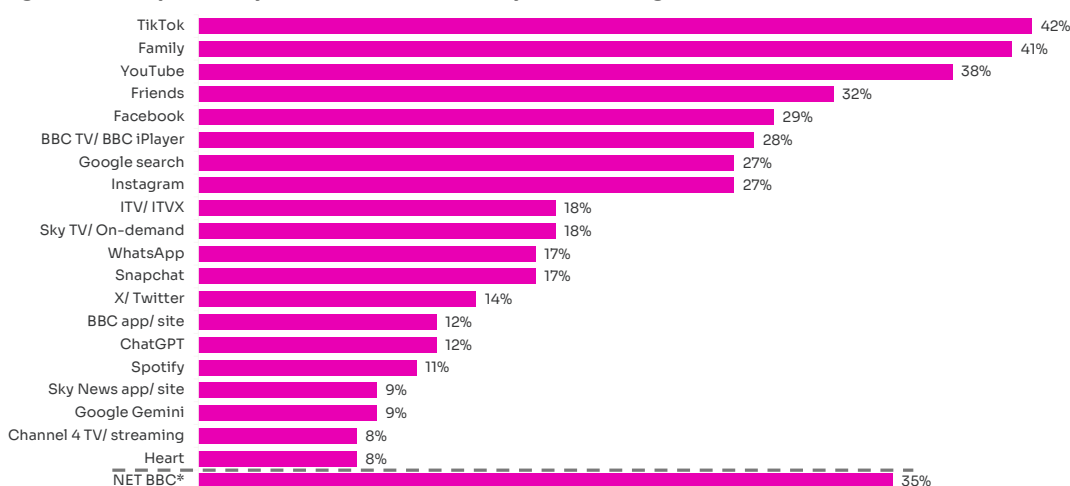
Figure 15: Platforms used for news, among children aged 12-15



Source: Ofcom News Consumption Survey 2025-2026 - Children's. Question: D1. Which, if any, of these ways have you seen or heard news in the last month?

The prominence of social media in children's consumption is evident from the sources that they say they use. Among the top five ways for children aged 12-15 to access news, the majority are social media or video-sharing services, including TikTok (42%), YouTube (38%) and Facebook (29%).

Figure 16: Top 20 ways news is accessed by children aged 12-15



Source: Ofcom News Consumption Survey 2025-2026 – Children's. Question: D3-D11. Which, if any, of these have you seen or heard news on in the last month? Base: All 12-15s (1,045)

Children encounter content from traditional news organisations on social media, though the extent of this varies by platform

Among children who encounter news on X, 53% report seeing BBC content, compared with 41% on Instagram. Only 29% report seeing BBC News content on TikTok, while 46% of children who use TikTok for news report encountering news through influencers and other content creators.

Children encounter less news from the BBC on TikTok when compared to adults (41% of adults who see news on TikTok reported seeing BBC News, compared to 29% of children). Conversely, children are more likely to see news from influencers or content creators on TikTok than adults (children 46%, adults 22%).

Our [Children's Media Lives research](#), showed that while children do see news from traditional news organisations on social media, they also get news from news influencers, or contextless, humorous news-related memes.

Figure 17: News seen on social media and video-sharing platforms, by children aged 12-15

	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: Ofcom News Consumption Survey 2025-2026 – Children's. 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. N.B. ITV includes STV, UTV and ITV Wales

Attitudes towards news provision

This next section looks at people's attitudes towards news, focusing on perceptions around trust, accuracy and impartiality. Here we mainly consider attitudes towards organisations that make the news rather than attitudes towards how they access news, but we also provide an overview at a platform level.

Newspapers, television and radio are rated higher for trustworthiness, impartiality and accuracy than online platforms

We asked participants to assess the news services they use against a series of attributes, enabling us to then make comparisons across platforms. Overall, traditional platforms are highly rated for their delivery of news. Perceptions of online news delivery news sources differ widely depending on the type of service used. The lowest ratings are for news seen on social media and VSPs followed by news delivered through AI services. Of the online ways to consume news, online aggregators, which primarily direct people to traditional news providers, have the highest ratings.

Figure 18: Perceptions towards news attributes on traditional platforms, among users of news on each platform

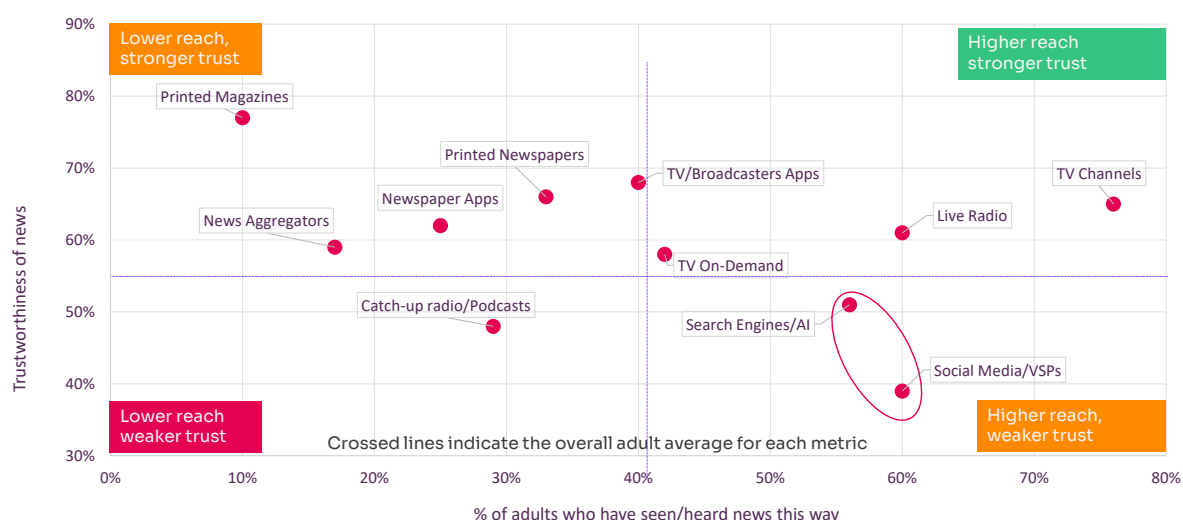
	Base	Is trustworthy	Is impartial	Is accurate
Broadcast TV	4,077	65%	56%	66%
Radio	2,716	61%	56%	62%
Print newspapers	1,404	66%	59%	67%
Any online*	4,129	50%	45%	51%
Social media / VSPs	2,927	39%	36%	40%
Online news aggregators	406	59%	61%	66%
AI apps/services	647	44%	42%	44%

Source: Ofcom News Consumption Survey 2025-2026 – Adults 16+. Question: E3. The news I see on [NEWS PLATFORM] is trustworthy/impartial/accurate. Base: Those who have seen or heard news on/in each category in the last month (size varies). *Any online includes online distribution of traditional news providers.

Television and radio news have high reach and are highly trusted

Figure 19 below compares reach and trust. The chart shows that social media/video-sharing platforms and search engines/AI services are some of the most widely used ways to access news but are less likely to be regarded as trustworthy when compared to other ways. In contrast, TV channels have large audiences who hold relatively high opinions about the trustworthiness of news available on these channels. Notably, while reach of TV channels is the highest of any way to access news, and higher than the reach of the broadcaster video-on-demand services (BVoDs), perceptions of trust of news delivered through TV channels or BVoDs are comparable.

Figure 19: Comparison of use of ways of accessing news and their perceptions of trust



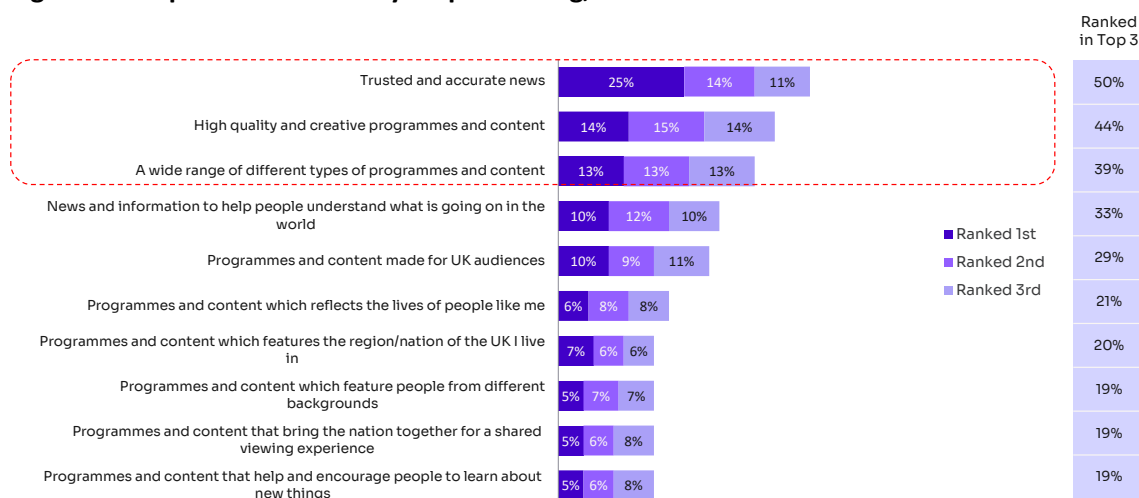
Source: Ofcom News Consumption Survey 2025-2026 – Adults 16+. Question: E3. The news I see on [NEWS PLATFORM] is trustworthy. Base: Those who have seen or heard news on/in each category in the last month (size varies)

Audiences rank the provision of trusted and accurate news as the most important role of public service broadcasters

We know from our other research that trusted and accurate news is very important to audiences. Ofcom's Public Service Media Tracker shows that a quarter (25%) of UK adults considered *'trusted and accurate news'* as the most important attribute for PSBs to deliver to society overall. Half (50%) of all adults ranked it in their top 3.

Preferences vary across different groups. Among 16-34-year-olds, high-quality and creative content is considered just as important as trusted and accurate news (42% vs 41%). Adults who have lived in the UK for five years or less place the greatest importance on news and information that helps them understand what is happening in the world (41%), followed by trusted and accurate news (37%). In contrast, those who have lived in the UK their whole life rank trusted and accurate news highest (51%), followed by high-quality and creative content (46%).

Figure 20: Importance to society: Top 3 ranking, adults 16+

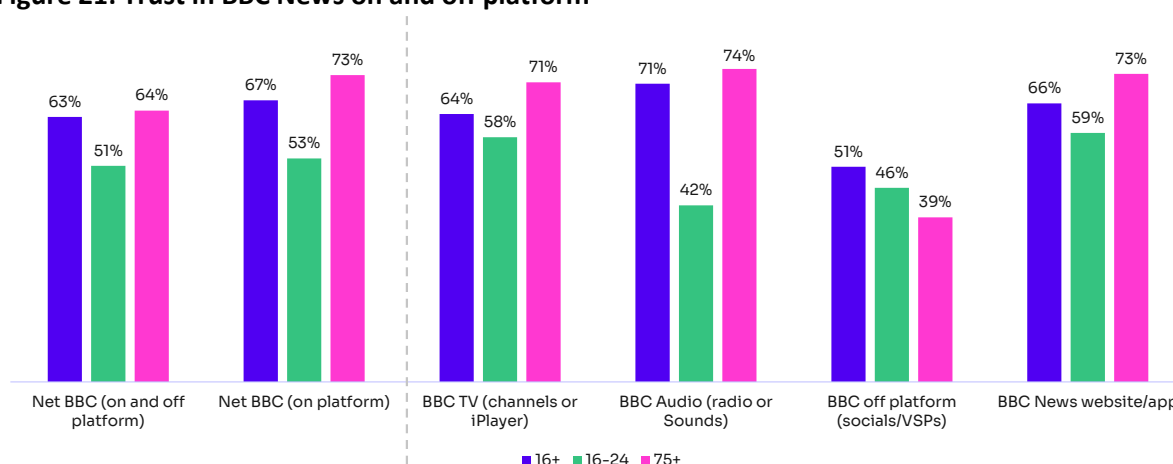


Source: Ofcom PSM Tracker 2025-2026 – Adults 16+. Question: We now want you to think about what you feel is most for public service broadcasters - in other words, the BBC, ITV (ENGLAND)/ STV/ ITV (SCOTLAND)/ ITV Cymru Wales/ ITV (WALES)/ UTV/ ITV (NORTHERN IRELAND), Channel 4, Channel 5, and S4C - to deliver for society overall, so for everyone in the UK. Please select the top three, starting with the most important.

Where news is consumed can impact how trusted it is

As reported in our [adults' media literacy report](#) earlier this year, experiences on social media indicate an environment of uncertainty about what to trust - 56% of social media users say they have seen false or misleading news in the past year. Analysis of findings in our News Consumption Survey also show that context influences perceptions of trust. BBC News is present across all major news distribution channels but trust in it varies across the different avenues of access. Overall, older users tend to be more trusting of BBC News, across its proprietary channels (TV, audio and the website/app) than younger users – and both age groups are less trusting of BBC News seen on social media. A pattern of trust based on level of use also seems to emerge: those aged 75+ use social media for news less and trust BBC News accessed on social media, while 16-24s, who use radio less, trust BBC News received through the radio less.

Figure 21: Trust in BBC News on and off platform



Source: Ofcom News Consumption Survey 2025-2026 – Adults 16+. Question: E3B / E4A. The news I (see on/ hear on) <NEWS SOURCE> is trustworthy. Base: All who have seen or heard news this way in the last month

Children have higher trust in broadcasters' news than news on social media and VSPs in general

For children aged 12-15, news from broadcasters such as the BBC are trusted more than news in general seen on social media and VSPs, noting that some news seen on these platforms will itself be from broadcasters. X is the only social media platform that comes close, with news seen on this platform trusted by 78% of children who use it for news. While TikTok is the most used way of accessing news among children, it has the lowest levels of trust among those who get news through it, with only 45% of children saying they trust news seen on it.

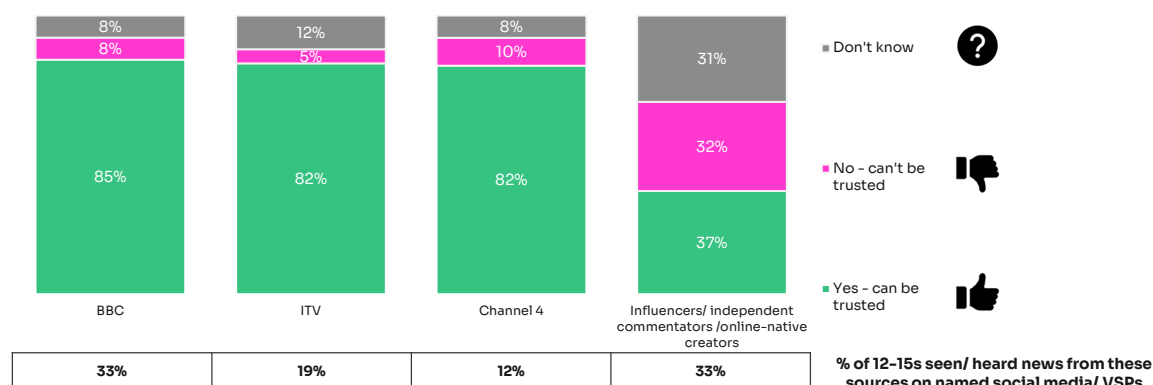
Figure 22: Trust in news from broadcasters and news seen on social media platforms, among children aged 12-15

	Reach	Yes, I trust it	No, I don't trust it	Don't know
BBC	35%	80%	9%	11%
Sky	21%	90%	4%	6%
ITV	20%	82%	9%	9%
Channel 4	10%	86%	6%	8%
Channel 5	7%	88%	7%	5%
TikTok	45%	45%	30%	25%
YouTube	38%	68%	13%	20%
Facebook	29%	62%	21%	17%
Instagram	27%	64%	19%	17%
Snapchat	17%	54%	24%	22%
X	14%	78%	13%	9%

Source: Ofcom News Consumption Survey 2025- 2026 – Children's. Question: E3A-I. How trustworthy is the news that you see or hear on [NEWS SOURCE CATEGORY]? Base: All 12-15s who have seen or heard news each way in the last month: BBC (359), Sky (213), ITV (215), Channel 4 (105), Channel 5 (78), X (140), YouTube (391), Instagram (284), Facebook (302), Snapchat (178), TikTok (446). Note: base sizes below 100 and should be treated with caution.

Children's trust in news provided by traditional news also extends to the digital realm. As seen in Figure 23, 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. This implies a level of critical thinking with news provided by influencers online being considered as less trustworthy and requiring greater scrutiny than content from regulated news providers such as public service broadcasters.

Figure 23: Trust in news from different providers on social media, among children aged 12-15



Source: Ofcom News Consumption Survey 2025-2026 – Children's. Question: E9A-D. News from [SOURCE OF POSTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA] can be trusted? Base: 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)

Local media

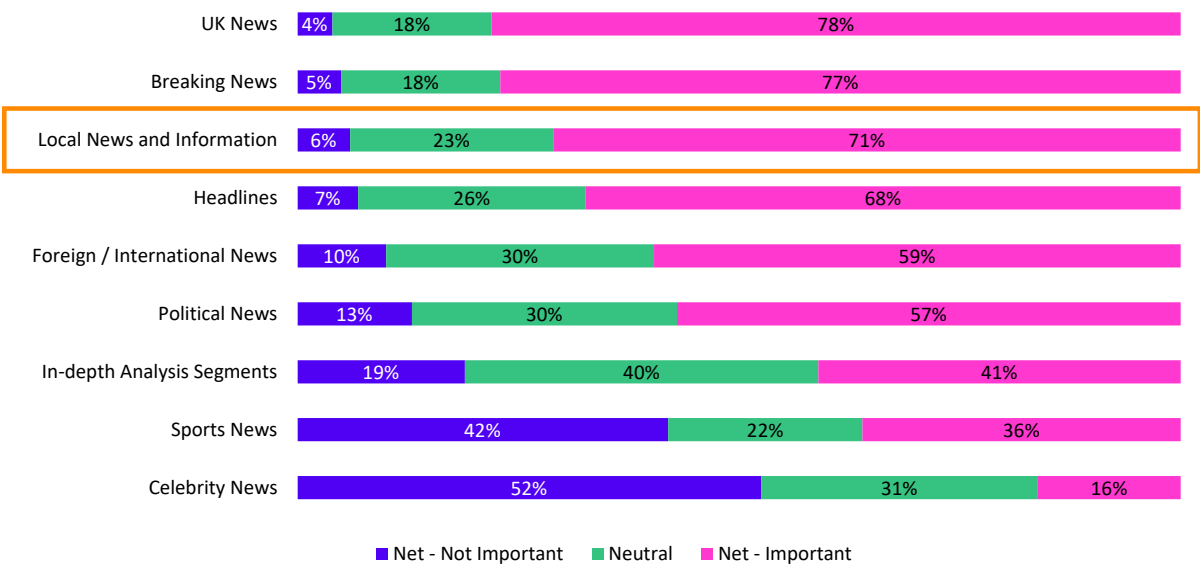
Local media plays an important role in the lives of people across the UK, providing audiences with news and information about what is happening in their local areas. This next section provides a snapshot of peoples’ use of and attitudes towards local news and information, drawing on findings from our 2026 Local Media Survey.

Local news and information is highly valued

We know from [previous research](#) that local news is valued as it helps people understand what is happening in their immediate communities and is seen as personally relevant particularly in tight-knit communities. Our findings this year again emphasise the value of local news and information, with it being rated as one of the top three most important types of news (71%) behind UK news (78%) and breaking news (77%).

Importance ratings vary by audience type with people aged 55 and over (75%), and those living in Scotland (76%) and Northern Ireland (79%) giving significantly higher importance ratings compared to the UK average.

Figure 24: Importance of different types of news and information

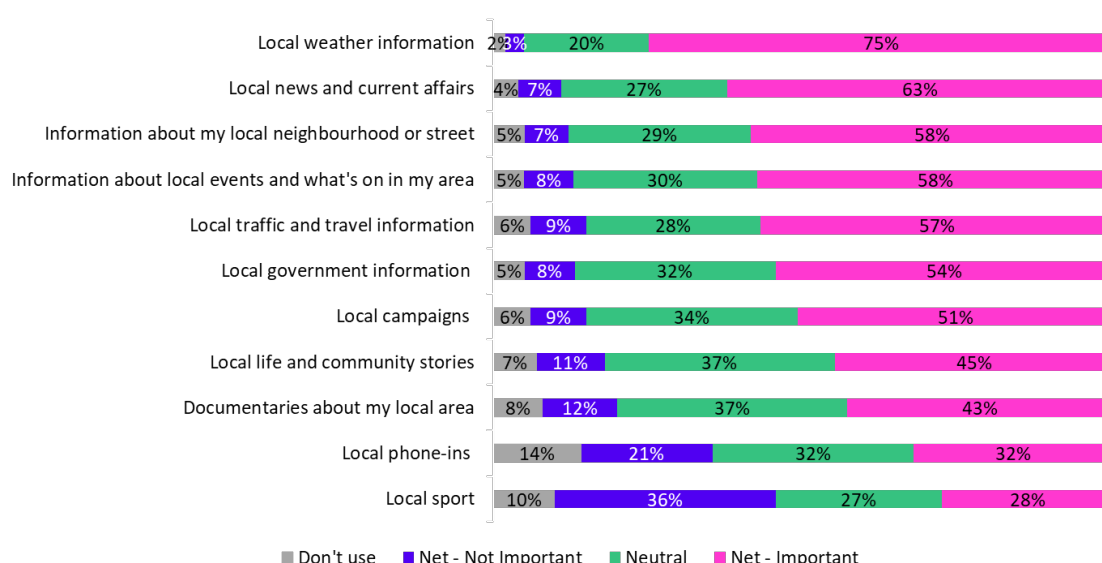


Source: Ofcom Local Media Survey 2026. Question: Q1. How important is each of the following types of news and information to you? Base: All respondents aged 16+ (2831)

Local weather is the most valued type of local news or information

Local weather was rated as important by 75% of respondents, followed by local news and current affairs (63%), information about local neighbourhoods or streets and local events (both at 58%) and local traffic and travel (57%).

Figure 25: Importance of different types of local news and information

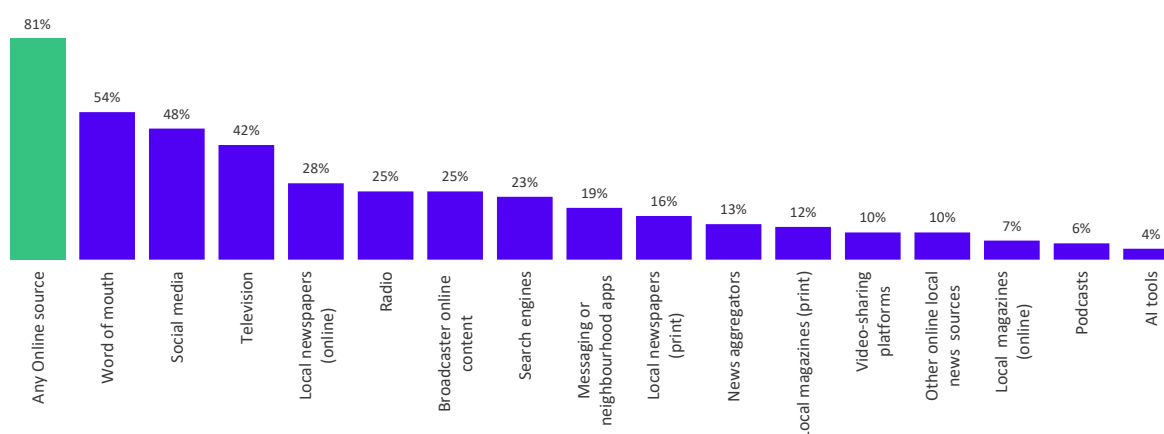


Source: Ofcom Local Media Survey 2026. Question: Q1b. How important, if at all, are each of the following different types of local news and information to you? Base: All respondents aged 16+ (2831)

In 2026, 95% of respondents said they accessed local news, the most common of which was through word of mouth (54%), followed by social media (48%) and television (42%). Use of television as a way to access local news has dropped from last year, when it was used by 51% for local news, while word of mouth has risen, from 45% in 2025 to 54% in 2026.

When grouped together, any online way of accessing news, including social media, was used by 81% of adults for local news and information. While 23% of people reported using AI tools for news overall, just 4% said they used AI for local news.

Figure 26: Ways of getting local news and information



Source: Ofcom Local Media Survey 2026. Question: Q2. Which of the following ways do you find out about local news and information nowadays? i.e. in the last month or so? Base: All respondents aged 16+ (2831)

The top individual sources used for local news are local groups or accounts on social media (36%), the BBC website or app (33%) and regional news bulletins on BBC One (30%). While the order has changed, the top three individual sources for local news remain the same as those in 2025.⁸ Age differences in these top three services are most pronounced for regional TV News: while half of

⁸ 2025 order: 1. BBC website or app (37%) 2. Regional news bulletins on BBC One (35%) 3. Local groups or accounts on social media (34%)

those aged 75 and over used news bulletins on BBC One (52%), only one in ten of 16-24-year-olds did so (10%). In contrast, the two digital sources show much smaller age differences, indicating that online sources play a more consistent role in connecting both younger and older audiences with local news.

More people used BBC television services on a daily basis for local news (58%) than those who used non-BBC television news service daily (46%). However, daily use of non-BBC sources is higher online (57% vs. 52% for BBC online) and on radio (52% vs. 44% for BBC radio).

Figure 27: Top twenty ways local news is accessed



Source: Ofcom Local Media Survey 2026. Question: Q3-6. Thinking specifically about the sources you use, which of the following do you use for local news and information nowadays – i.e. which have you used in the last month or so for news? Base: All respondents aged 16+ (2831)

Social media and messaging apps are used for the most 'local' news, while TV, radio and their websites and apps are used for regional news

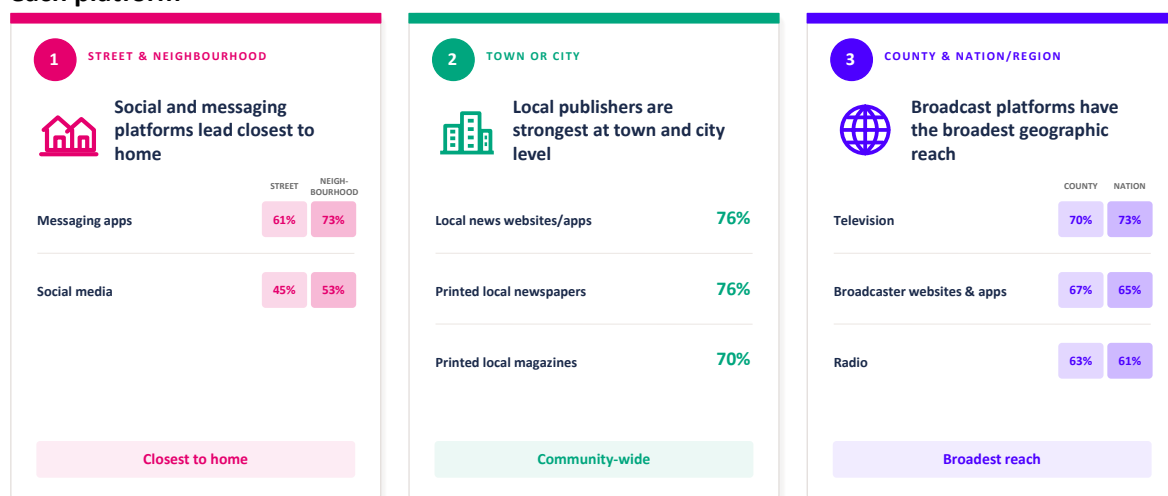
Looking at differences by degrees of localness, the survey found that the closer the story is to home, the more people turn to social and messaging platforms, while broadcast platforms become more prominent across wider geographic regions.

Messaging apps are especially important for the most hyperlocal layer: 61% of messaging app users get news about their street and 73% get news about their neighbourhood through this route. Social media is also strong at street and neighbourhood level, used by 45% for street-related news and 53% for neighbourhood news.

TV is more associated with broader geography, including county and nation/region news, with 70% of TV users getting county news and 73% getting nation/region news through TV. Radio follows a

similar broader pattern, with 63% of listeners using it for county news and 61% for nation/region news.

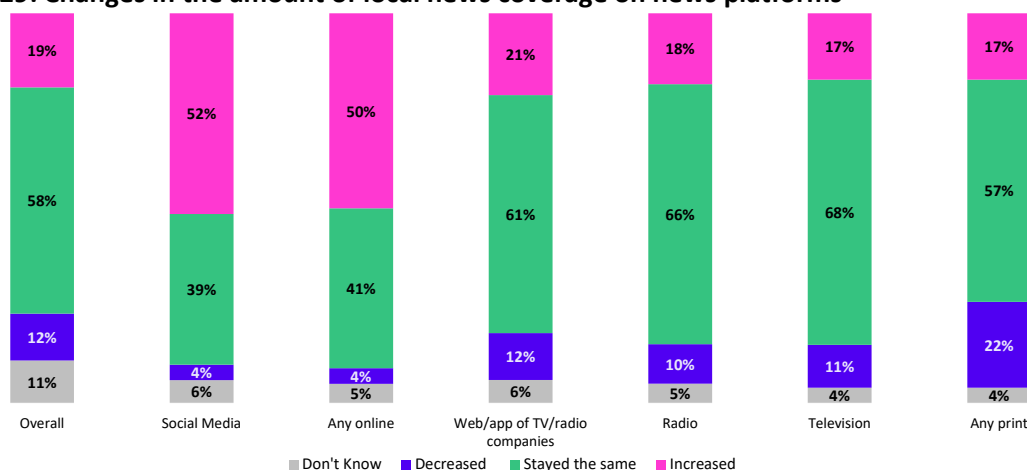
Figure 28: Perceived level of local information received from different platforms, among users of each platform



Source: Ofcom Local Media Survey 2026. Question: Q2b. Which of these types of local news and information do you get from the platforms you use? Base: All respondents who use each platform for local news and information (various)

Overall, over half of people (58%) thought the amount of news coverage provided in their area had remained the same over the last five years, with slightly more thinking it had increased (19%) than decreased (12%). Most people felt that local news coverage on television, radio and print had remained stable, while half felt that the amount of local news online had increased.

Figure 29: Changes in the amount of local news coverage on news platforms



Source: Ofcom Local Media Survey 2026. Question: Q9a. Over the past five years, would you say that the local news coverage provided in your area has overall... / Q9b. Over the past five years, would you say that the amount of local news coverage provided by each of the following platforms has... Base: All respondents: 2831

News consumption relating to May 7th 2026 elections

This year we carried out audience research in Scotland and Wales immediately after the Scottish Parliament and Senedd Cymru elections, and also in those areas of England⁹ where local elections /

⁹ 136 local authorities including all London boroughs, and six directly-elected mayoralities.

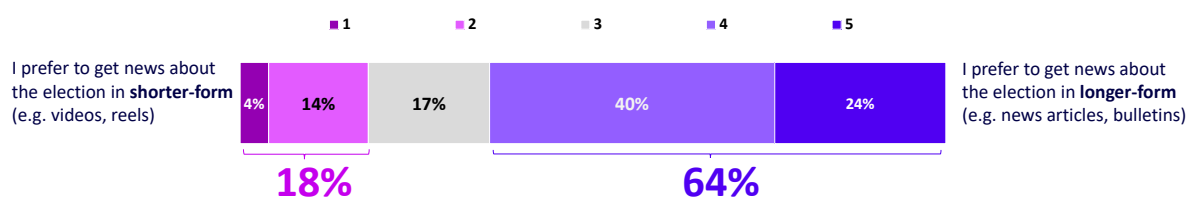
mayoral Elections took place – collectively, the largest set of elections in the UK since the 2024 General Election. The research was designed to understand how people across Great Britain accessed news and information about the elections, the sources they used and trusted, and their broader interest in, and sense of being informed about, current affairs.

For election news, longer-form media, such as articles or TV bulletins, were generally preferred to shorter formats, including social media reels

Among all adults, 90% were aware of the elections. Older adults had higher levels of awareness than younger adults (94% among those aged 55 and over compared to 85% among 16-24-year-olds). However, interest in news during the election period was at a similar level to interest in news in general with around half of all adults saying they were interested in both general news (51%) and election-period news (50%).¹⁰

Most people said that they preferred to get news about the election in longer-form formats such as news articles and bulletins (64% compared to 18% for shorter formats). In line with age-related differences around traditional versus digital news media preferences, younger adults held stronger preferences for shorter-form election content (40% of 16-24-year-olds and 31% of 25-34-year-olds tending to prefer shorter-form content), while older adults were more likely to prefer longer-form content (79% preference for longer-form among those aged 55 and over compared to 7% for shorter-form).

Figure 30: Election related news content preferences



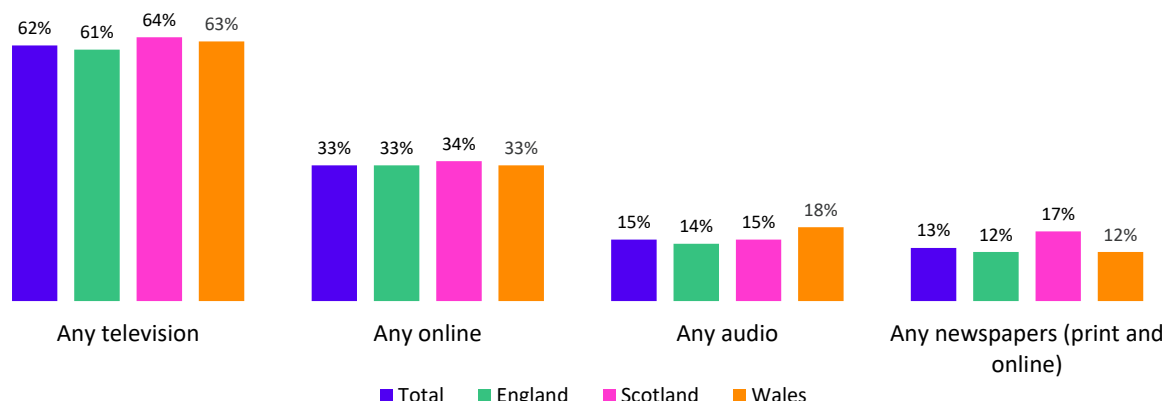
Source: Ofcom Local Election Survey 2026. Question: Q10. For each pair of statements, please drag the slider to indicate where your own view lies and click to confirm your choice before moving to the next pair of statements. Base: All aware of the elections (5,550)

People were most likely to see news about the elections on television

Election news on the television reached the largest audience with 62% of people who were aware of the election citing TV as a source of awareness. This was almost double those who used online sources (33%). Audio (15%) and newspapers (13%) both reached around one-in-seven.

¹⁰ 'Highly interested' refers to those selecting '5' on a five-point scale.

Figure 31: Platforms used for election news by nation

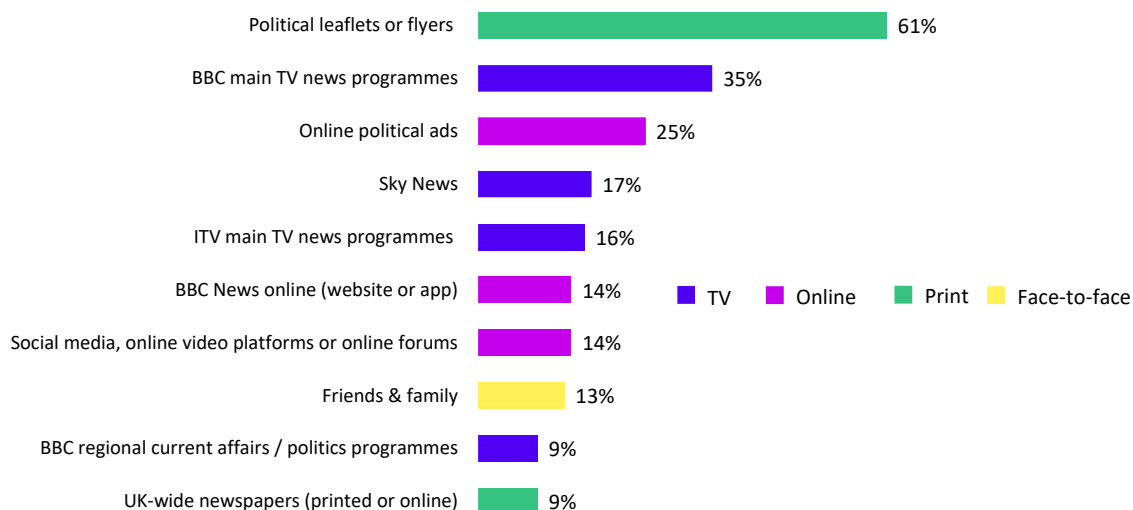


Source: Ofcom Local Election Survey 2026. Question: Q3A. Thinking about the weeks leading up to the elections, through which of the following sources, if any, did you see news and information about the election? Base: All aware of the election (5,550), England (3,566), Scotland (1,002), Wales (977).

Election-specific sources such as political leaflets or flyers (61%) and online political ads (25%) were prominent sources of election-related news and information. Flyers were more likely to be seen by those aged 55 and over (68%) while online ads were more prominent among those aged 16-34-year-olds (36%).

The BBC main TV news bulletin was the leading media source for election news at 35%, followed by Sky News at 17%, ITV main TV news at 16%, BBC News online at 14% and social media/online video/forums at 14%.

Figure 32: Top ten election news sources



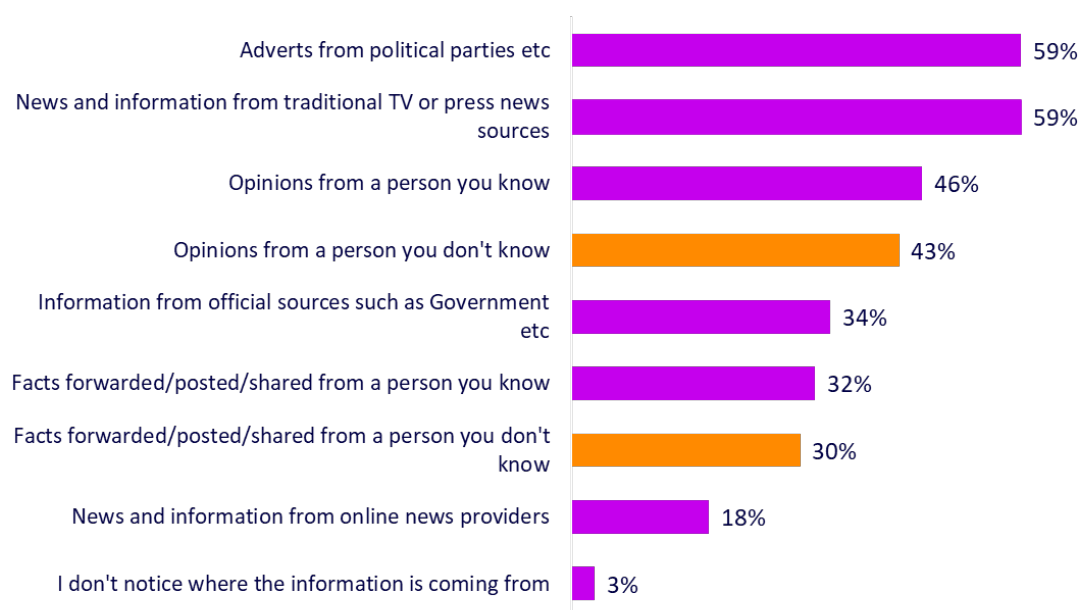
Source: Ofcom Local Election Survey 2026. Question: Q3A. Thinking about the weeks leading up to the elections, through which of the following sources, if any, did you see news and information about the election? Base: All aware of the election (5,550).

The majority of respondents (56%) who were aware of the election used or saw between two and five election news sources, while 27% saw or used only one election news source, 11% used six to ten sources, and 2% used 11 or more. The mean number of sources through which election-related news and information was obtained among those aware of the elections was 3.3 individual sources.

News from traditional media and political ads were the primary ways of encountering election information on social media, VSPs or online forums

People encountered a range of news, facts and opinions related to the elections from a broad mix of sources including political party ads, traditional news sources, and government information. The top two sources encountered were adverts from political parties and news and information from traditional TV or press news sources (both at 59%). In terms of more informal sources, 46% encountered opinions from someone they knew, 43% from someone they did not know, 32% saw facts forwarded or shared by someone they knew, and 30% saw facts forwarded or shared by someone they did not know.

Figure 33: Ways of getting election news and information on social media, VSPs or forums



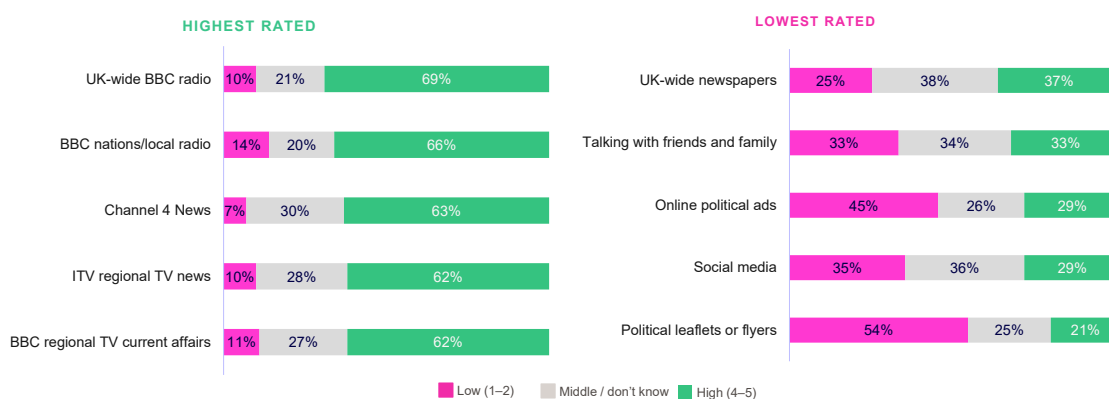
Source: Ofcom Local Election Survey 2026. Question: Q4. In the previous question you said that you used social media, online video or online forums for news and information about the election. Within the last weeks, which of the following, if any, have you seen on these platforms? Base: All who had seen news and information on social media during the election (812).

Traditional media sources were widely considered to be more accurate, trustworthy and impartial than election news from other sources

People were most likely to rate traditional media as accurate sources of election news - BBC main news bulletin (74%), BBC Regional programming (78%) and Channel 4 News (77%) - compared to political leaflets (44%), online political ads (44%), and election news seen on social media (45%). Perceptions of trust in election news sources showed a similar pattern.

By contrast, views were more mixed on impartiality with positive perceptions generally lower across the board. Perceptions of impartiality were highest for PSB news providers which included BBC national radio (69%), BBC regional radio (66%) and Channel 4 News (63%). However, views were more mixed towards the main BBC television news bulletin with just over half (56%) of people who used it as a source for election news rating this positively and one in seven (14%) rating it poorly on impartiality. Social media was one of the lowest rated sources for impartiality: 29% rated it positively while 35% rated it negatively. Political leaflets and flyers (21%) and online political ads (29%) also received low positive ratings on this measure.

Figure 34: Perceptions of impartiality of different types of election related news and information



Source: Ofcom Local Election Survey 2026. Question: Q5. Using the following scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is NOT AT ALL and 5 is COMPLETELY, to what extent do you think these statements (is impartial) apply to the following sources for news about the election? Base: All who used each election news source (between 104 – 3,368).
 *Social Media includes video sharing platforms and online forums. Only sources available across the total sample shown.