



Ofcom Children and Parents Media Literacy Survey 2025/6 Technical Report

20 March 2026



Table of Contents

Overview3

Methodological changes4

Sample design.....6

Weighting approach.....7

Survey design and modular structure..... Error! Bookmark not defined.

Additional information.....10

Overview

The Children and Parents Media Literacy Tracker is a longstanding quantitative study which is run by BMG Research on behalf of Ofcom. The key objective of the survey is to provide robust research into the different elements of children's media literacy. More specifically, the surveys provide data about children's media use, attitudes and understanding, as well as parents' views about their children's media use, and the ways parents seek to – or decide not to – monitor or limit use of different types of media. The survey covers children aged 6 months to 17 years old, although questions are only asked to children if they are age appropriate.

In 2025, we conducted a full review of the survey which resulted in methodological and questionnaire changes. Before 2025, the Childrens and Parents Media Literacy Tracker was made up of three separate surveys.¹ Following a review of the tracker, we streamlined the three original surveys into a single, overarching survey.

This document details the methodology, sampling and weighting for the 2025/26 Children's and Parents' Media Literacy Tracker.

Children and Parents Media Literacy Study	
Respondent	Parents of children aged 6 months to 17 years old and children themselves aged 8 to 17.
Content	Media use and attitudes among children and young people aged 6 months to 17 years old. Includes parents' views on media consumption, mediation and supervision of child's online behaviour and rules for going online, as well as children's knowledge and understanding of the online world (e.g. awareness of algorithms/recommender tools and misinformation).
Method	Interviewing was conducted through a mixed methods approach involving online and face-to-face interviews.
Interviews	A total of 5,008 interviews were conducted in total. This included 1582 interviews with parents of children aged 6 months to 17 years old and 3426 with children themselves aged 8 to 17 (4,007 interviews were conducted via an online panel and 1,001 were through face-to-face self-completion technology).
Fieldwork dates	All fieldwork was conducted between 19 th November 2025 and 22 nd February 2026.

¹ Ofcom Children and Parents Media Literacy 2024 Technical Report provides an overview of the three separate surveys <https://www.ofcom.org.uk/siteassets/resources/documents/research-and-data/data/statistics/2025/childrens-media-literacy-tracker-2024/technical-report.pdf?v=390153>

Methodological changes

In 2025 we conducted a review of the Children's and Parents Media Literacy Tracker, the rest of this section sets out the changes we have made to the survey as a result of this review. These changes have been implemented with an intent to preserve the integrity of certain key measures within the existing time series, as well as to ensure the programme of research is future-proofed and fit-for-purpose.

Questionnaire changes

In previous years, the Children and Parents Media Literacy Tracker was made up of three separate surveys. While this approach offered benefits in terms of depth and volume of questionnaire coverage, we needed to be able to improve cross-comparability between questions, to understand the interrelationships between various types of behaviour and attitude. Therefore, the 2025/26 Children and Parents Media Literacy survey introduced a new combined survey.

During the review of the tracker, we also made changes to the questions we ask respondents. To combine the three previous questionnaires into one survey, each question was mapped into one framework. This process identified:

- **Retained questions:** typically, long-term key metrics or questions essential for time series
- **Modified questions:** where wording or routing was adjusted to ensure effectiveness in the new survey
- **Removed questions:** where content was no longer needed
- **New questions:** added to reflect emerging areas of focus such as AI use

The unified questionnaire maintains a similar format for parent-reported and child-reported measures to ensure comparability across the two samples. For children aged 8–17, self-completion was used for most questions, while parents continued to provide demographic information and responses on areas beyond the child's direct knowledge (e.g. household digital rules, income, educational attainment).

Younger children were only shown questions suitable for their developmental stage. Cognitive testing (interviews with 25 participants, including parents of 6 month to 7-year-olds and paired parent child interviews for children aged 8-17) highlighted several areas where younger respondents (particularly 8–12s) seemed to struggle with certain concepts. As a result, some items were rephrased or age restricted, ensuring that the final survey was accessible and meaningful for all respondent groups.

Modular design

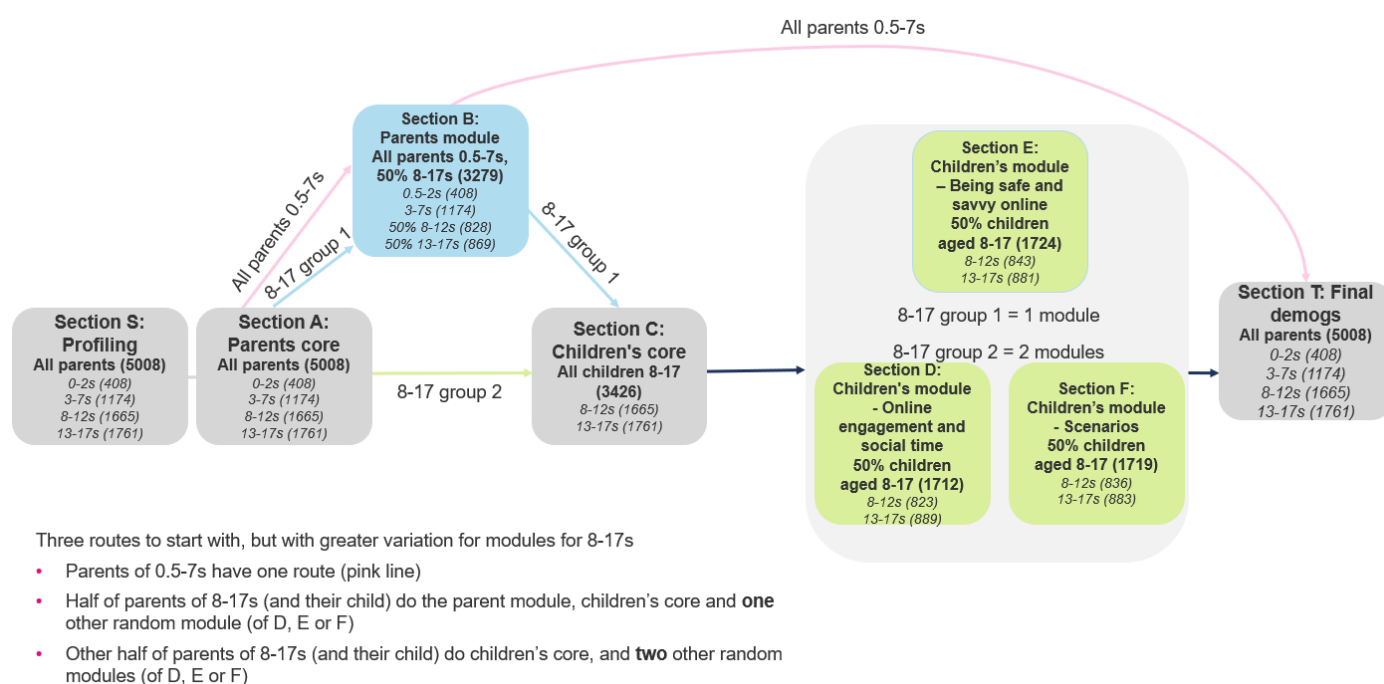
To balance the breadth of content covered in the survey with a consideration of the length of time that it would take respondents, the 2025/26 survey adopted a modular design. All parents complete a core set of questions, with additional modules for either parents or children rotated to ensure the questionnaire covers a breadth of topics but remains a manageable overall length for respondents.

The survey included the following modules:

- **Profiling (opening demographic questions):** all parents complete
- **Parents core:** all parents complete

- **Parents module:** all parents of children aged 0.5-7 and 50% of parents of 8-17s complete
- **Children's core:** all children aged 8-17 complete
- **Children's module (Online engagement and social time):** 50% of 8-17s complete
- **Children's module (Being safe and savvy online):** 50% of 8-17s complete
- **Children's module (Online scenarios):** 50% of 8-17s complete
- **Profiling (closing demographic questions):** 100% parents complete

Below is a diagram outlining the different routes through the survey, and the number of children that completed each module.



Methodology

In addition, while the tracker was previously conducted via online panels and postal invites (which invited respondents to complete the survey online), this year we introduced face-to-face interviews alongside an online panel to ensure the survey could also include children who do not go online/do not go online often.

The total sample size is c.5,000, split between the modular survey routes. This enables a robust subgroup analysis among core measures.

Quota and weighting variables have been updated using the most recent population estimates. In addition to age, gender, nation, region, and socio-economic group of parent, the 2025/26 design also incorporated new variables including ethnicity, and parental education, to ensure a more accurate representation of the UK population of 0-17 year olds and their parents.

Sample design

The 2025 Children and Parents survey approach involved:

- Face-to-face Computer-Assisted Self-Interviewing (CASI), designed to maintain a self-completion experience, and;
- An enhanced online panel blend drawing on multiple recruitment sources

The sample for the face-to-face element was stratified by nation, region and urbanity. A total of 100 sampling points from across the UK were selected, with a target of 10 interviews each for each sampling point. Each sampling point was selected from Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs). Sampling points were selected to ensure a reasonable share of the local population were aged 0-17 year olds within each LSOA.

The sample for the online version of the survey was drawn using an online panel blend.

Quotas were set for both face-to-face and online panels to ensure targets for child age, gender, region, social grade, and urbanity.

An additional boost of previously or currently looked after children was targeted to ensure a minimum of 100 completes within this group.

Fieldwork

Fieldwork for online panel started on November 19th 2025 and finished on February 22nd 2026.

Fieldwork for face-to-face started on December 4th 2025 and finished on February 20th 2026.

Weighting approach

The data was weighted within each nation to the profile of the following measures:

- **Age x gender:** mid-2023 population estimates
- **Region:** England and Wales mid-2024 population estimates, Scotland and NI mid-2023 population estimates
- **Social grade:** England and Wales based on 2021 census; NI based on 2021 census; Scotland based on 2011 census
- **Urban/rural:** England based on rural population mid-2020; Scotland based on OA22 2020. NI based on 2015 settlement
- **Ethnicity:** based on 0-17s using Census 2021 data

The following table shows the initial unweighted sample and the final weighted sample profile for the final sample.

Figures are based on UK children aged 0-17	Interviews achieved: Unweighted	Interviews achieved: Weighted
Boys aged 0-2	4%	8%
Girls aged 0-2	4%	7%
Boys aged 3-5	7%	8%
Girls aged 3-5	6%	8%
Boys aged 6-7	5%	6%
Girls aged 6-7	5%	5%
Boys aged 8-9	7%	6%
Girls aged 8-9	6%	6%
Boys aged 10-12	10%	9%
Girls aged 10-12	10%	9%
Boys aged 13-15	11%	9%
Girls aged 13-15	10%	9%
Boys aged 16-17	7%	6%
Girls aged 16-17	7%	5%
SEG - AB	38%	38%
SEG - C1	20%	17%
SEG - C2	19%	21%
SEG - DE	23%	24%
Urban	86%	81%
Rural	14%	19%
White	75%	75%
Non-white	21%	25%

Effective sample size

The variation between the sample results and the “true” values (the findings that would have been obtained if everyone had been interviewed) can be predicted from the sample sizes on which the results are based, and on the number of times that a particular answer is given. The confidence with which we can make this prediction is calculated at the 99% limit for this study. This means that the chances are 99 in 100 that the “true” values will fall within a specified range. However, as the sample is weighted, we need to use the effective sample size (ESS) rather than actual sample size to judge the accuracy of results.

The following table compares ESS and actual samples for some of the main analysis groups within the main sample:

	Actual	ESS
Total 0-17s	5,008	3,233
Age: 0-2	408	290
Age: 3-5	673	463
Age: 6-7	501	336
Age: 8-9	649	452
Age: 10-12	1,016	708
Age: 13-15	1,065	746
Age: 16-17	696	483
Boys aged 0-2	198	146
Girls aged 0-2	210	144
Boys aged 3-5	350	233
Girls aged 3-5	323	231
Boys aged 6-7	255	173
Girls aged 6-7	246	163
Boys aged 8-9	326	229
Girls aged 8-9	323	222
Boys aged 10-12	517	370
Girls aged 10-12	499	338
Boys aged 13-15	556	388
Girls aged 13-15	509	358
Boys aged 16-17	358	255
Girls aged 16-17	338	228
SEG – AB	1907	1235
SEG – C1	1003	608
SEG – C2	952	635
SEG – DE	1133	753
Urban	3687	2902
Rural	678	432
White	3736	2392
Non-white	1069	717

Confidence intervals

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

Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages at or near these levels

Effective sample size	10% or 90% ±	20% or 80% ±	30% or 70% ±	40% or 60% ±	50% ±
3,233 (Total aged 0-17)	1.4%	1.8%	2.1%	2.2%	2.3%
229 (Boys aged 8-9)	5.1%	6.8%	7.7%	8.2%	8.5%
753 (SEG DE aged 0-17)	2.8%	3.8%	4.3%	4.6%	4.8%

For example, if 30% or 70% of a sample of 3,233 gives a particular answer, the chances are 99 in 100 that the “true” value will fall within the range of +/- 2.1 percentage points from the sample results.

Significance testing

When results are compared between separate groups within a sample, different results may be obtained. The difference may be “real”, or it may occur by chance (because not everyone has been interviewed). To test if the difference is a real one - i.e. if it is “statistically significant” - we again have to know the size of the samples, the percentages giving a certain answer and the degree of confidence chosen.

If we assume “99% confidence interval”, the difference between two sample results must be greater than the values given in the table below to be significant:

Differences required for significant at or near these percentages

Sample sizes being compared	10% or 90% ±	20% or 80% ±	30% or 70% ±	40% or 60% ±	50% ±
1235 vs. 753 (AB vs. DE aged 0-17)	3.6%	4.8%	5.5%	5.8%	6.0%
229 vs. 222 (boys vs. girls aged 8-9)	7.3%	9.7%	11.1%	11.9%	12.1%

Additional information

Age groups for children

In order to align with Ofcom's ages and developmental stages for online safety work², the age groups used to set quotas for the research were updated in 2024. An additional age band for 0.5-2 was added in 2025. Targets were set to achieve interviews in seven age bands: regarding children aged 0-2, 3-5, 6-7, 8-9, 10-12, 13-15, and 16-17.

Interviewing children and obtaining consent

Children interviewed in the survey are contacted via their parent through online panel providers. The parent is given clear information about the project and asked for their consent to interview the child participant aged 8 to 17.

The child participant aged 8 to 17 is also provided with an overview of the study and provided with appropriate assurances and the ability to opt-out if they do not wish to take part. The child is explicitly asked if they give consent to take part in the survey.

Financial vulnerability

We have included in each set of data tables a measure for household financial vulnerability, ranging from most to least vulnerable. This analysis is based on household income and household composition (i.e. size and number of children) and can only be run on the data where respondents have given a response at each of these questions. We are able to show the financial vulnerability measure for 83% of respondents.

The table below shows how respondents fall into each category, based on their household income and the number of adults or children in the household. For example, if a household is earning between £10,400 - £25,599, and has one adult and two children, they would be classified as being in the most financially vulnerable group. If the household was earning between £10,400 - £25,599 and had one adult and one child, they would be classified as being potentially financially vulnerable.

The following breakdown shows the detailed definitions for each group.

Most financially vulnerable	Potentially financially vulnerable	Least financially vulnerable
Household income under £10,399		
All respondents	No respondents	No respondents
Earning between £10,400 - £25,599		
1 adult, 2+ children	1 adult, 0-1 children	No respondents
2 adults, 2+ children	2 adults, 0-1 children	
3 adults, 1+ children	3 adults, no children	
4+ adults, 0+ children		
Earning between £26,000 - £36,399		
1 adult, 4+ children	1 adult, 1-3 children	1 adult, 0 children
2 adults, 3+ children	2 adults, 0-3 children	
3 adults, 2+ children	3 adults, 0-1 children	

² [Child development ages, stages and online behaviour](#)

4 adults, 1+ children	4 adults, 0 children	
5+ adults, 0+ children		
Earning between £36,400 - £51,999		
1 adults, 4+ children	1 adult, 2-3 children	1 adult, 0-1 children
2 adults, 3+ children	2 adults, 1-2 children	2 adults, 0 children
3 adults, 3+ children	3 adults, 0-2 children	
4 adults, 2+ children	4 adults, 0-1 children	
5 adults, 1+ children	5 adults, 0 children	
6+ adults, 0+ children		
Household income over £52,000		
No respondents	No respondents	All respondents

