Ofcom BBC Children's Tracker 2022 and 2023 Technical Report

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Preface

The BBC Children's Tracker has been run by Critical Research on behalf of Ofcom, as part of the wider BBC Performance Tracker research which is conducted among adults aged 16 and over.

The objective of the BBC Children's Tracker survey is to gain an understanding of media consumption and attitudes among children aged from 3 to 16 living in the UK. The research conducted in 2022-2023 replicated the study that was conducted for Ofcom in 2021-2022.

The primary objectives were:

- To understand children's consumption of different BBC services (e.g. iPlayer, BBC Sounds, BBC Bitesize)

- To understand children's brand awareness of the BBC in the wider context of the market (e.g. where do they go and find content first)

- To understand children's perceptions of different BBC services

In 2022-2023 Critical Research interviewed a sample of 4,572 parents of 3- to 16-year-olds, also interviewing the child concerned if they were aged 8 to 16.

Interviewing was conducted across two waves:

- Wave 1 fieldwork in November and December 2022 – 2,286 interviews

- Wave 2 fieldwork in March 2023– 2,286 interviews

All interviews were carried out across the UK through an online panel. Parents of children aged 3-16 were recruited to take part. Parents whose child was aged 3 to 7 would answer about their child throughout the survey. Where the child concerned was aged 8 to 16, both the parent and the child would be invited to take part.

Overall quotas were set for gender within age, age within nation and socio-economic group for the overall sample. Within England soft quotas were set to ensure a good mix by English region.

The 2011 Census is used as a basis for most of the quotas. While some key results from the 2021 Census were released in 2022, these updates have not yet been incorporated into our analysis of the study, as we are currently conducting analyses (across multiple projects) to identify the impact of using the 2021 Census on results. Specifically for socio-economic group, the Census is not a particularly good source, and one which has seen many changes over time. Our source is therefore historic NRS data, using large scale studies (such as the Technology Tracker) to identify the profile of households with children compared to all households.

Details of the sampling frame and weighting procedures are outlined below. A note on statistical reliability is also included.

Sample design, fieldwork and quotas

Sample was provided through Critical Research's online consumer panel partners. The sample was de-duplicated to ensure that respondents could not complete the survey more than once.

The sample was designed to be able to report on children aged 3 to 16. Specific targets were set at an overall level for each of the four UK nations, to achieve a minimum of 150 interviews per wave in Northern Ireland and a minimum of 300 interviews per wave in each of Scotland and Wales. In addition, quotas were set by gender within age. Within England soft quotas were set to ensure a good mix by English region.

The total number of interviews achieved across the two waves of the study, was as follows:

	England	Scotland	Wales	N Ireland	Total
Aged 3-7	1,022	215	224	115	**1,576**
Aged 8-11	1,001	199	184	95	**1,479**
Aged 12-16	1,029	190	198	100	**1,517**
Total	**3,052**	**604**	**606**	**310**	**4,572**

Weighting

Weighting was used to align the profiles to the UK population by age, nation and socio-economic group. The following table shows the initial unweighted sample and the final weighted sample profile for the final sample.

	% Unweighted Interviews achieved	% Weighted Profile
Aged 3-7	35%	36%
Aged 8-11	32%	29%
Aged 12-16	33%	36%
England	67%	82%
Scotland	13%	9%
Wales	13%	5%
Northern Ireland	7%	4%
SEG – AB	31%	28%
SEG – C1	25%	25%
SEG – C2	21%	21%
SEG – DE	22%	26%

Guide to statistical reliability

The variation between the sample results and the "true" values (the findings that would have been obtained if everyone had been interviewed) can be predicted from the sample sizes on which the results are based, and on the number of times that a particular answer is given. The confidence with which we can make this prediction is usually chosen to be 95%, that is, the chances are 95 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[1] (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.

	Actual	ESS
TOTAL 3-16s	4,572	3,865
Aged 3-7	1,576	1,315
Aged 8-11	1,479	1,277
Aged 12-16	1,517	1,304
Boys aged 3-16	2,281	1,929
Girls aged 3-16	2,291	1,936
England	3,052	2,867
Scotland	604	579
Wales	606	601
Northern Ireland	310	294
SEG – AB	1,429	1,251
SEG – C1	1,164	1,005
SEG – C2	974	826
SEG – DE	992	832

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[1] Effective Sample Size shown as Effective Weighted Sample in the data tables produced

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

Approximate sampling tolerances applicable to percentages at or near these levels

Effective sample size	10% or 90% ±	20% or 80% ±	30% or 70% ±	40% or 60% ±	50% ±
3,865 (Total aged 3-16)	1.0%	1.3%	1.5%	1.6%	1.6%
579 (Nation: Scotland)	2.5%	3.3%	3.8%	4.1%	4.2%
832 (SEG: DE)	2.1%	2.8%	3.2%	3.4%	3.5%

For example, if 30% or 70% of a sample of 3,865 gives a particular answer, the chances are 95 in 100 that the "true" value will fall within the range of $\pm$1.5 percentage points from the sample results.

When results are compared between separate groups within a sample, different results may be obtained. The difference may be "real", or it may occur by chance (because not everyone has been interviewed). To test if the difference is a real one – i.e. if it is "statistically significant" – we again have to know the size of the samples, the percentages giving a certain answer and the degree of confidence chosen. If we assume "95% confidence interval", the difference between two sample results must be greater than the values given in the table below to be significant:

Differences required for significant at or near these percentages

Sample sizes being compared	10% or 90% ±	20% or 80% ±	30% or 70% ±	40% or 60% ±	50% ±
1,251 vs. 832 (AB vs. DE)	2.6%	3.5%	4.0%	4.3%	4.4%
1,929 vs. 1,936 (Boys vs. Girls)	1.9%	2.5%	2.9%	3.1%	3.2%