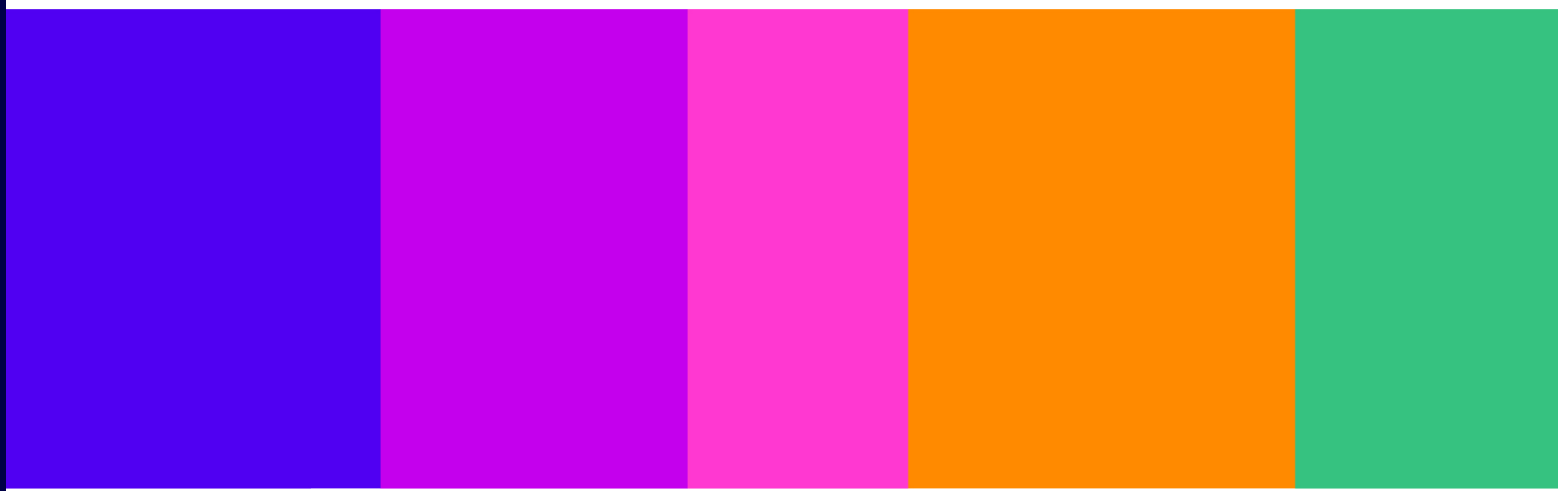


Ofcom BBC performance and Public Service Media tracking surveys

Confirmation of changes

Report

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Overview

Official statistics

As a producer of official statistics, Ofcom follow the guidance set out in [Changing or ceasing to publish official statistics – Government Analysis Function \(civilservice.gov.uk\)](#). In line with this guidance, where substantial changes are made to a piece of research that is established as an official statistic, we notify stakeholders of the changes that are planned to be made and allow a period of time for stakeholders to provide feedback if they wish to do so.

Following the [notification of proposed changes to Ofcom’s BBC performance and Public Service Media tracking surveys](#), this document provides an overview of the changes Ofcom intends to make to these surveys from April 2025 onwards.

The current tracking surveys

BBC Performance Tracker

As regulator of the BBC, one of Ofcom's central responsibilities is to hold the BBC to account for its performance in fulfilling its Mission and delivering its four public purposes that fall within Ofcom's regulatory role, namely:

- Public purpose 1: To provide impartial news and information to help people understand and engage with the world around them.
- Public purpose 2: To support learning for people of all ages.
- Public purpose 3: To show the most creative, highest quality and distinctive output and services.
- Public purpose 4: To reflect, represent and serve the diverse communities of all the UK's nations and regions.

Ofcom's BBC Performance Tracker is an annual quantitative tracker that has been conducted each year since 2017 to include audiences' own views on the BBC's performance. The main research objectives of the study are:

- To understand the public's perception of the BBC's delivery of the public purposes.
- To understand the public's views on the importance of the public purposes.
- To evaluate the BBC's performance in comparison to traditional and emerging competitors.
- To understand brand awareness of the BBC in the wider context of the market (e.g. where do they go and find content first).

While the method of conducting fieldwork for the BBC Performance Tracker has been adapted over time, the survey is currently carried out using a mix of computer-assisted personal interviews (CAPI) and online panel interviewing. We conduct c.4,300 interviews each year among people aged 16+.

In addition, we currently run a Children's BBC Performance Tracker. For this survey, we conduct roughly 4,600 interviews each year among 3-16-year-olds via an online panel. We speak to parents of 3-7 year-olds and the children themselves if they are aged 8-16. The interviews are split into two waves, with half of the interviews being conducted in November-December and half in March. Data from all of the interviews is then aggregated and the findings are published alongside the results of the adult's BBC Performance Tracker data in June each year.

Public Service Media Tracker

Ofcom has a number of specific duties in relation to public service television broadcasting. This includes a duty, as set out in section 264 of the Communications Act 2003, to review periodically the extent to which the designated public service broadcasters (PSBs) have provided relevant television services which (taken together) fulfil the purposes of public service broadcasting.

Based on the public service purposes presented in the Communications Act, Ofcom developed a range of PSB purposes and characteristics in its first PSB review in 2005. The PSB channels (the BBC's 5 channels, and the main channels of ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5) are expected together to fulfil these purposes and characteristics, although each PSB channel has a specific remit. In 2021 we revised the PSB purposes and characteristics to reflect today's more complex media market. At this

time we also developed the current Public Service Media (PSM) Tracker to account for these changes and this replaced the Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) tracker. The PSM Tracker asks about key PSB characteristics, as well as other perceptions and attitudes towards PSBs, BVoDs and SVoDs.

The PSM Tracker's main research objectives are to:

- Assess audience satisfaction with PSB services.
- Understand how well individual PSB services are delivering in the marketplace, across a range of attributes, as a whole and individually.
- Understand the importance of different aspects of PSB to audiences.
- Understand the performance of BVoD and SVoD services.

The Tracker is currently conducted by a 50:50 push-to-web and online panel approach, with the online panel being supplemented by river sampling and the push-to-web approach being supplemented by a low connectivity boost and an option to complete via telephone. We conduct c. 3,000 interviews each year.

The new approach

Overview of changes

Following a review of both surveys and their existing questionnaires, we proposed to combine them into one tracker in our Notification of proposed changes document. Following this, we have decided to enact this change. Both surveys will continue in their current form in 2024 (BBC Performance Tracker fieldwork will conclude end of March 2025), reporting as usual in 2025, and the new combined survey will begin in field from April 2025.

Given the similarity of the surveys both in terms of objectives, and the content, we are confident that merging the surveys will continue to help us capture an accurate and full picture of use of and attitudes towards PSM services and will ensure that our tracking survey remains up-to-date and fit for purpose. The overall objective of monitoring audience perceptions toward the performance delivery of the PSM system, as well as the individual PSB providers will remain at the core.

While some questions will remain largely similar to how they are currently asked in the existing questionnaires, other questions will be re-designed, removed or placed on more appropriate tracking surveys (e.g. Ofcom's VoD Survey or Audio Survey), as well as new questions being added in.

As an official statistic, these surveys provide important trend data. However, the changes we are making will mean that we will not be able to directly compare data to previous years, although we hope to be able to make meaningful indicative comparisons for some questions.

Adults' Public Service Media Tracker

The new Adult's Public Service Media Tracker will begin fieldwork from April 2025. Interviews will be conducted every month for 12 months, meaning that year 1 of fieldwork will be completed at the end of March 2026. The data from year 1 will be published on Ofcom's statistical release calendar in Summer 2026.

Like the current BBC Performance Tracker, we will conduct interviews via a mix of online panels and computer-assisted personal interviews (CAPI). We will be conducting around 5,000 interviews over the course of the year, 70% of these will be online interviews and 30% will be conducted face-to-face. The overall sample will be nationally representative, but we will put quotas in place to ensure a minimum number of interviews for various demographic groups to allow detailed analysis (e.g. among various ethnicity groups).

In addition to this main survey, we will be establishing a complementary survey to work alongside the main one. This survey will be conducted via online panels in two to three waves per year. It will include c.3,000 online interviews and like the main survey it will be nationally representative of internet users but with quotas on specific demographic groups. The data from this survey will also be published in Summer 2026. The content of this survey will be largely focused on providing an additional depth of understanding to questions asked in the main survey or for topics which are suited to an online-only methodology (e.g. consumption of PSB catch-up and on-demand content). The content of this survey may change each year.

Children's Public Service Media Tracker

Like the current Children's BBC Performance Tracker, for our new Children's Public Service Media Tracker, we will continue to conduct interviews with children and parents of children aged 3-16 via online panels. As before, parents will answer for their children aged 3-7 while we will speak to children aged 8-16 directly. We will be increasing the overall sample of the survey from c.4,600 to c.5,200 children and parents of children aged 3-16 which will help us to have more confidence in our findings across the four nations and offer more scope for analysis of differences between demographic groups. As is the case with the Adult's Public Service Media Tracker, the overall sample will be nationally representative of internet users, but we will put quotas in place to ensure minimum sample sizes for various demographic groups to aid with analysis.

We will also be making positive changes to improve the overall effectiveness of the survey. For example, instead of conducting the interviews in two waves per year as we did previously, we will now conduct interviews continuously every month for 12 months. This will help us to gain more accurate representation of year-round sentiment which is less impacted by outside influences or specific events which may happen during the year. In addition, we will be redesigning the look and feel of the survey and reviewing all language used to ensure the survey is age appropriate for all respondents.

The content of the questions will be similar to the previous surveys, but as is the case with all our surveys, it will be reviewed to ensure it remains useful and relevant.