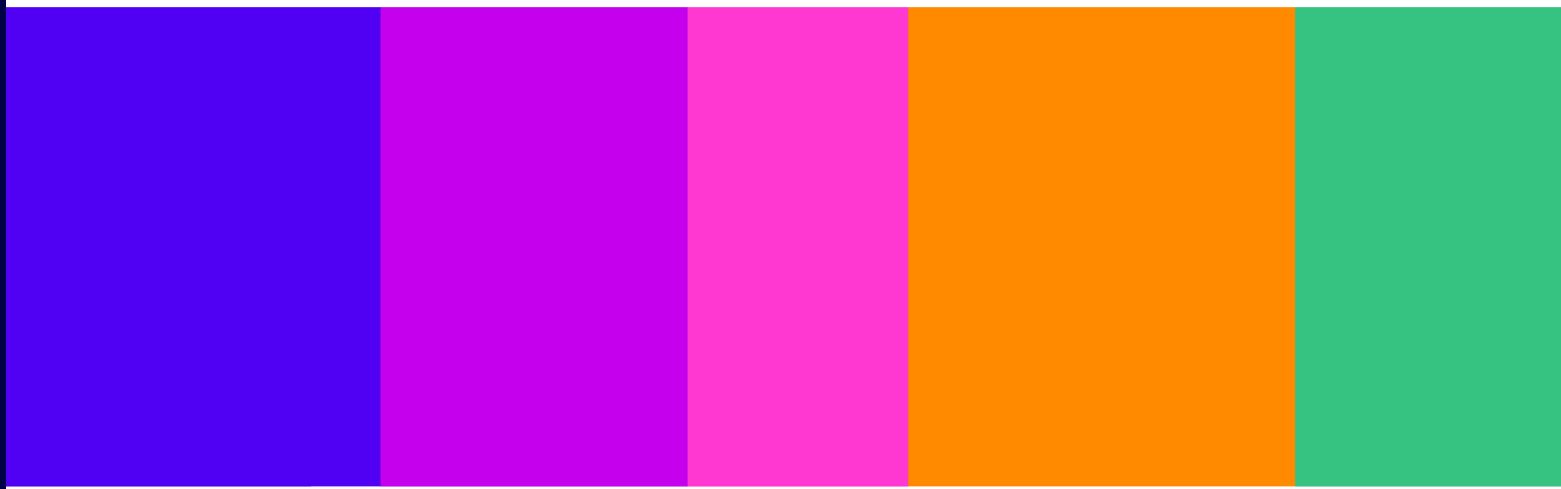# Survey: Understanding misinformation: an exploration of UK adults' behaviour and attitudes 2024

Technical Report

Published 27 November 2024

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Introduction

Summary of approach

YouGov is a professional research and consulting organisation, focused on collecting high quality, in-depth data for market research and has extensive experience of youth, the television and radio broadcasting sectors as well as on-demand services policy research.

This research was conducted with a sample of respondents that is politically representative of the UK population aged 16 and above, taking into account recalled vote and a measure of political attention to include a range of perspectives, including those who did not vote or were too young. All research was carried out online, with respondents recruited from YouGov's online panel.

A total of 4,269 interviews were conducted in this study. Fieldwork was conducted between 27th June - 2nd July 2024

Significance testing and data redaction

Significance testing has been applied at 95% for the purposes of analysis, meaning that there is only a 5% possibility that the difference occurred by chance rather than by being a real difference. This is a commonly accepted level of confidence.

All base sizes below 10 have been redacted/removed from the data tables completely. Base sizes between 10-49 are marked with an * to indicate a low base.

Sampling

Sample design

The sample is designed to be nationally representative of the UK population aged 16 and above in terms of political alignment.

A sample frame was constructed using the demographic information available from the YouGov online panel, which consists of over 3.3 million adults in the UK. This frame includes individuals aged 16 and above, as well as relevant demographic and political attributes to ensure representativeness.

A total sample of 4,269 respondents was interviewed. This sample size was determined to provide a high level of statistical confidence and reliability for the survey results.

Selected individuals were invited to participate in the survey via email. Participants consented to complete the survey, understanding that their responses would be used for research purposes.

The survey was administered online, utilising YouGov's survey platform. Participants were provided with a modest financial incentive upon completion.

Quotas

Interview quotas were applied so that the final sample was politically representative of the UK by age/gender/education level, social grade, region/2019 General Election vote, and EU referendum vote.

Boost

To ensure adequate representation of ethnic minority groups, sample boosts were applied to achieve a minimum of 50 interviews among each of the following groups, resulting in a total of 200 additional interviews:

Black Ethnic Groups: African, Caribbean, Any other Black/African/Caribbean background

Asian Ethnic Groups: Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese, Any other Asian background

Mixed Ethnic Groups: White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, Any other Mixed/Multiple ethnic background

Other Ethnic Backgrounds: Arab, Any other ethnic group

Table 2: The following table shows the targeted minority ethnic groups and achieved numbers in the national representative (nat rep) and boost samples:

Targeted Minority Ethnic Groups	Total counts (Unweighted)	Nat rep counts	Boost counts
Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	149	97	52
Asian and British Asian	175	117	58
Black and Black British	142	88	54
Other ethnic group	61	8	53
Net: Minority ethnic groups	527	310	217

Weighting:

The data, excluding the boosted samples, has been weighted to be representative of the UK politically representative population by age/gender/education level, social grade, region/ 2019 General Election vote, and EU referendum vote.

Demographic breakdown

Table 3 - The following table shows the demographic breakdown of the sample:

Demographic group	Category	Weighted Counts	Weighted Percentages
Total sample	All respondents	4,269	-
Gender	Male	2,028	47%
	Female	2,174	51%
Age	16-17	130	3%
	16-24	568	13%
	25-34	843	20%
	35-44	679	16%
	45-54	595	14%
	55-64	588	14%
	65-74	697	16%
	75+	299	7%
Region	Scotland	340	8%
	North East	171	4%

Demographic group	Category	Weighted Counts	Weighted Percentages
	North West	452	11%
	Yorkshire & Humberside	363	9%
	West Midlands	359	8%
	East Midlands	323	8%
	Wales	207	5%
	East of England	409	10%
	London	586	14%
	South East	587	14%
	South West	366	9%
	Northern Ireland	107	3%
Social Grade	ABC1	2463	58%
	C2DE	1806	42%
Ethnicity	English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	3281	77%
	Irish	39	1%
	Gypsy or Irish Traveller	1	0%
	Any other White background	142	3%
	White and Black Caribbean	39	1%
	White and Black African	55	1%
	White and Asian	29	1%
	Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background	29	1%
	Indian	59	1%
	Pakistani	30	1%
	Bangladeshi	17	0%
	Chinese	32	1%
	Any other Asian background	35	1%
	African	105	2%
	Caribbean	24	1%

Demographic group	Category	Weighted Counts	Weighted Percentages
	Any other Black / African / Caribbean background	13	0%
	Arab	21	0%
	Any other ethnic group	39	1%
	Prefer not to say	279	7%
	NET: White	3463	81%
	NET: Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	153	4%
	NET: Asian and British Asian	172	4%
	NET: Black and Black British	142	3%
	NET: Other ethnic group	60	1%
Religion	No religion	2246	53%
	Catholic	408	10%
	Church of England / Scotland	806	19%
	Other Christian	284	7%
	Muslim	103	2%
	Hindu	30	1%
	Jewish	26	1%
	Sikh	15	0%
	Buddhist	18	0%
	Other religion	104	2%
	Prefer not to say	228	5%

NET definitions featured in published tables

Certain subgroups within the sample were grouped together to aid analysis and are featured alongside this report in the published data tables. The definitions of these so-called NETs are in the table below.

Table 4 - The following table show the nets created for analysis:

Category	NET	Definition
Demographic nets		
Ethnicity	White	English/ Welsh/ Scottish/ Northern Irish/ British
		Irish
		Gypsy, Traveller or Irish Traveller
		Any other white background
	Minority ethnic background	White and Black Caribbean
		White and Black African
		White and Asian
		Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background
		Indian
		Pakistani
		Bangladeshi
		Chinese
		Any other Asian background
		African
		Caribbean
		Any other Black / African / Caribbean background
		Arab
		Any other ethnic group
	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	White and Black Caribbean
		White and Black African
		White and Asian
		Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background

Category	NET	Definition
	Asian and British Asian	Indian
		Pakistani
		Bangladeshi
		Chinese
		Any other Asian background
	Black and Black British	African
		Caribbean
		Any other Black / African / Caribbean background
	Other ethnic group	Arab
		Any other ethnic group
Sexuality	All LGB+	Gay or Lesbian
		Bisexual
		Other
Employment status	Working	Working full time (30 or more hours per week)
		Working part time (8 - 29 hours per week)
		Working part time (Less than 8 hours a week)
	Not working	Full time student
		Retired
		Unemployed
		Not working
		Looking after the home and/ or family
		Full time carer
		Receiving sickness benefit
		Other
Limiting and impacting conditions	Any	Hearing? Poor hearing, partial hearing, or are deaf
		Eyesight? Poor vision, colour blindness, partial sight, or are blind

Category	NET	Definition
		Mobility? Cannot walk at all/ use a wheelchair or mobility scooter etc., or cannot walk very far or manage stairs or can only do so with difficulty
		Dexterity? Limited ability to reach/ difficulty opening things with your hands/ difficulty using a telephone handset/ television remote control/ computer keyboard etc.
		Breathing? Breathlessness or chest pains
		Mental abilities? Such as learning, understanding, concentration, memory, communicating, cognitive loss or deterioration
		Difficulty with speech? e,g. due to stroke, stutter or stammer
		Social behaviour? Conditions associated with this such as autism, attention deficit disorder, Asperger's, etc.
		Your mental health? Anxiety, depression, or trauma-related conditions, for example
		Other illnesses/ conditions which impact or limit your daily activities or the work you can do (please state – optional)
	Mental Health Conditions	Your mental health? Anxiety, depression, or trauma-related conditions, for example
	No disability	Nothing – no impairments or conditions impact or limit your daily activities or the work you can do
HouseHold Size	1	1
	2 to 3	2
		3
	4 to 5	4
		5
	6+	6
		7
		8 or more

Category	NET	Definition
Number of children in household	1	1
	2 to 4	2
		3
		4
	5+	5 or more
	NET: Any HH with children	1
		2
		3
		4
		5 or more
	HH w/o children	0
First language spoken	NET: English is not first language	Arabic
		Bengali
		Cebuano
		Cantonese
		Cayman Creole
		Cornish
		French
		German
		Gujarati
		Gaelic
		Greek
		Hindi
		Italian
		Irish
		Lithuanian
		Llanito
		Malay

Category	NET	Definition
		Mandarin
		Nepalese
		Persian/Farsi
		Pitkern
		Polish
		Portuguese
		Punjabi
		Romanian
		Russian
		Scots
		Scottish Gaelic
		Shelta
		Somali
		Spanish
		Tagalog/Filipino
		Tamil
		Thai
		Turkish
		Turks-Caicos Creole
		Urdu
		Ulster-Scots
		Welsh
Question Nets		
Q1	NET: Online	A newspaper's website
		A news website not associated with a newspaper
		A news app on a mobile or tablet device
		Email newsletters or RSS feeds
		Social network websites or apps

Category	NET	Definition
		Blogs not associated with major media organisations
		Podcasts
		Search engines
	NET: Offline	A printed copy of a newspaper
		TV
		Radio
		Word of mouth
Q3a	NET: Online news from broadcasters	BBC News online
		ITV or ITN News online
		Channel 4 News online
		Sky News online
		CNN Online
		NBC News online
		CBS News online
		GB News online
		LBC online
		TalkTV online
		Other – Please specify
	NET: Online newspapers	The Sun online
		The Daily Mail online
		The Daily Star online
		The Daily Express online
		The Daily Mirror online
		The Guardian/Observer online
		The Independent online
		The i online
		The Times/Sunday Times online
		The Telegraph online

Category	NET	Definition
		The Financial Times online
		The Metro online
		The Evening Standard online
		The New York Times online
		The Washington Post online
		Any local newspaper websites
		Other – Please specify
	NET: Other sources of online news	Time.com online
		The Week online
		Private Eye website
		The Economist online
		HuffPost online
		BuzzFeed website
		Vice online
		The LAD Bible online
		Joe.co.uk online
		Personal blog
		The Spectator online
		Other – Please specify [OPEN] [FIXED]
Q3b	NET: Non-BBC UK public service broadcasters	ITV/STV/UTV
		Channel 4
		Channel 5
		S4C
	NET: UK non- public service broadcasters	Sky
		GB News
		Other UK news channels
Q4	NET: followed any 3 topics	Health or medical information
		OR
		UK politics including the general election

Category	NET	Definition
		OR
		International politics and current affairs
	NET: followed any topic	Health or medical information
		OR
		UK politics including the general election
		OR
		International politics and current affairs
		OR
		Other - please specify
Q5	Codes to be selected in grid	(1- written misinformation or disinformation, i.e. false or misleading stories, claims or assertions, e.g. "fake news"
		OR
		2-…fake or deceptive images/videos e.g. deep fakes
		OR
		98- None of these
		OR
		99- Don't know)
	NET: Seen mis/disinformation or fake/deceptive images/videos on 3 topics	if code 1 or 2 selected for any:
		Q5_1 Health or medical information
		Q5_2 UK politics including the general election
		Q5_3 International politics and current affairs
	NET: Seen mis/disinformation or fake/deceptive images/videos on any topics	if code 1 or 2 selected for any:
		Q5_1 Health or medical information
		Q5_2 UK politics including the general election
		Q5_3 International politics and current affairs
		Q5_97 Other
	NET: Seen written mis/disinformation	if code 1 selected for any:
		Q5_1 Health or medical information
		Q5_2 UK politics including the general election

Category	NET	Definition
Q6a		Q5_3 International politics and current affairs
		Q5_97 Other
	NET: Seen fake/deceptive images/videos	if code 2 selected for any:
		Q5_1 Health or medical information
		Q5_2 UK politics including the general election
		Q5_3 International politics and current affairs
		Q5_97 Other
	NET: Not seen any mis/dis or fake/deceptive images	if code 98 selected for all:
		Q5_1 Health or medical information
		Q5_2 UK politics including the general election
		Q5_3 International politics and current affairs
		Q5_97 Other
Q6a	NET: COVID-19 and Vaccines Misinformation	Claims about COVID being fake or exaggerated
		Misinformation about COVID vaccines causing harm or being part of a conspiracy
		General unsubstantiated claims about COVID
	NET: Political misinformation concerning health policies	Assertions about lies and false statistics spread by politicians about NHS or health policies, particularly during elections
		Misleading claims about NHS funding and performance
		Unsubstantiated claims about political policies and party positions
	NET: Health Products and Treatments Misinformation	Unsubstantiated claims about miracle cures, supplements, diets and weight loss products
		Misleading advertisements for health products and treatments
	NET: Media and Social Media Misinformation	Spread of misinformation through social media platforms

Category	NET	Definition
		False news stories and deepfakes circulating online
	NET: General Health Misinformation	Misleading information about various health conditions and treatments
		Unsubstantiated claims made by influencers and non-professionals about health
		Anti-Vaccine Misinformation (Unrelated to COVID-19)
Q6b	NET: Misleading or False Information in Political Contexts	Deepfake videos of politicians
		Misleading edits and clips of political speeches or debates
		Fake or manipulated images and videos in political campaigns
		Unsubstantiated claims about political policies and party positions
		Election-related misinformation and misrepresentations
	NET: Accusations Against Specific Politicians or Parties	Statements and accusations targeting specific politicians
		Specific party claims against another party
		Allegations of misinformation spread by political parties
	NET: Manipulative Campaign Techniques	Use of actors or deceptive tactics in political campaigning
		Misleading or deceptive advertisements and social media posts by political parties
		Politicians misrepresenting their opponents' policies (e.g.,NHS, immigration, economy)
	NET: General Political Misinformation and Disinformation	General statements about politicians lying or spreading misinformation
		Misinformation about immigration policies
		Misinformation about economic and tax policies

Category	NET	Definition
		Social media posts spreading false information about political figures and policies
Q6c	NET: US Elections and Politics	Misinformation and/or misleading images about the US presidential candidates and elections
		Allegations of misleading claims made by US politicians
		Claims about biased or one-sided media reporting of the US election campaign by specific media outlets
	NET: Media and Reporting Bias	Claims about biased or one-sided media reporting of the US election campaign by specific media outlets
		Claims about media bias, particularly involving conflicts like the situation in the Middle East
		Skepticism toward how media outlets report on political figures and conflicts, with mentions of specific news channels and social media platforms
		Accusations against specific media outlets for biased or one-sided reporting on the Israeli–Palestinian conflict
		Accusations against specific media outlets for biased or one-sided reporting on the Ukraine-Russia conflict
		Specific mentions of how media outlets favor certain narratives or political agendas over others
	NET: Israeli–Palestinian conflict	Claims about media bias, particularly involving conflicts like the situation in the Middle East
		Misinformation or fake images/videos related to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict
		Accusations against specific media outlets for biased or one-sided reporting on the Israeli–Palestinian conflict
	NET: Ukraine -Russia conflict	Misinformation, fake images, videos associated with the Ukraine and Russia conflict

Category	NET	Definition
		Accusations against specific media outlets for biased or one-sided reporting on the Ukraine-Russia conflict
		Politicians' claims about the West provoking Russia and blaming EU/NATO expansion for Russia's actions
		Internal Russian misinformation about ongoing conflicts and the true situation
	NET: Conflict and War Misinformation	Claims about media bias, particularly involving conflicts like the situation in the Middle East
		Misinformation or fake images/videos related to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict
		Accusations against specific media outlets for biased or one-sided reporting on the Israeli–Palestinian conflict
		Misinformation, fake images, videos associated with the Ukraine and Russia conflict
		Accusations against specific media outlets for biased or one-sided reporting on the Ukraine-Russia conflict
		Politicians' claims about the West provoking Russia and blaming EU/NATO expansion for Russia's actions
		Internal Russian misinformation about ongoing conflicts and the true situation
	NET: Misleading Public Information and Deepfakes	Mentions of deepfakes, altered images, and videos specifically designed to mislead public perception about political figures or events
		Specific references to AI-generated content that distorts the truth
	NET: General Skepticism and Distrust in Sources	General expressions of distrust toward the information coming from various sources, without specific details
		Mentions of not remembering specifics, indicating a pervasive sense of skepticism
	NET: Claims of Specific Misdeeds by Political Entities	Claims that states spread their own propaganda through media sources

Category	NET	Definition
		Statements attributing unsubstantiated claims to political figures regarding sensitive topics like conflicts and international relations
	NET: Cultural and Racial Bias in Reporting	Discussions about the racial or cultural biases in how news is reported, especially in the context of international politics and conflicts
		Specific mentions of how media outlets favor certain narratives or political agendas over others
	NET: Impact of Misinformation on Public Perception	How misinformation affects public opinion and the portrayal of political figures
		The role of misinformation in shaping political debates and election outcomes
	NET: International Relations and Diplomacy Misinformation	Misinformation related to international diplomacy, treaties, and negotiations
		False claims and narratives about international relations that impact diplomatic efforts
	NET: Technology and Misinformation:	The role of technology in spreading misinformation, including social media and online platforms
		Specific instances of technology being used to create or spread false information about political events
Q7	Made me think twice	1.Made me think twice
		2.
	Did not make me think twice	5.Did not make me think twice
		4.
Q8	Concerned	Very concerned
		Slightly concerned
	Unconcerned	Slightly unconcerned
		Not at all concerned
Q9	Concerned	Very concerned
		Slightly concerned
	Unconcerned	Slightly unconcerned

Category	NET	Definition
		Not at all concerned
Q11	NET: Non BBC UK public service broadcasters	ITV/STV/UTV
		Channel 4
		Channel 5
		S4C
	NET: UK non-public service broadcasters	Sky
		GB News
		Other UK news channels
Q17	NET: at least used once	Use regularly
		Use occasionally
		Used once or twice
	NET: at least heard of	Use regularly
		Use occasionally
		Used once or twice
		Heard of but do not use
Q18	NET: Any Action	Ask family or friends their opinion in person
		Share online or via messaging to ask family or friends for their opinion
		Check the comments section to see what others are saying about it
		Look for information on an established news website (e.g. BBC website, Sky website)
		Use a search engine to find information on authoritative sources (e.g. scientific journals or official sources related to the topic)
		Use a fact checking tool or website (e.g. Full Fact or NewsGuard)
		Comment on the post to let people know that the content might be untrue
		Something else (please state)

Category	NET	Definition
Q19	NET: Confident	Very confident
		Fairly confident
	NET: Unconfident	Not very confident
		Not at all confident
Q20	Agree	Strongly agree
		Agree
	Disagree	Disagree
		Strongly disagree
Q21	Agree	Strongly agree
		Agree
	Disagree	Disagree
		Strongly disagree
Q22	True	Definitely true
		Probably true
	False	Probably false
		Definitely false