

# A1. Annex 3: News Consumption Data

## Background

In 2021, Ofcom commissioned Professor Stephen Cushion at Cardiff University and Dr Richard Thomas at Swansea University to provide an independent assessment of how UK network news providers report devolved policy issues on television and online. This involved a detailed content analysis of news output and interviews with senior editors at the main TV network news broadcasters.

To accompany this, Ofcom have conducted some data analysis, looking at some of our key sources of data on news consumption. This includes:

- Ofcom's News Consumption survey
- BARB data: The UK television industry audience ratings provider

This annex is intended to provide context the content analysis, highlighting how audiences in different nations use different news services.

- 79% of UK adults claim to use television for news nowadays (rising to 81% when TV news viewed online was considered). 73% say they use online sources. Similar proportions of adults use these platforms across the devolved nations.
- Average weekly reach of UK-wide television network news among adults aged 16+ is highest in Northern Ireland (73%), and lowest in Wales (66%). BBC One had a higher weekly reach compared to ITV for UK-wide network news across all the nations.
- Average weekly reach of news programming specific to the nations is lower compared to UK-wide television network news. Reach is highest in Northern Ireland (64%). BBC One has a higher weekly reach than UTV/STV/ITV Cymru Wales.
- Northern Ireland also has the highest average weekly reach for both UK-wide network news and nations news.

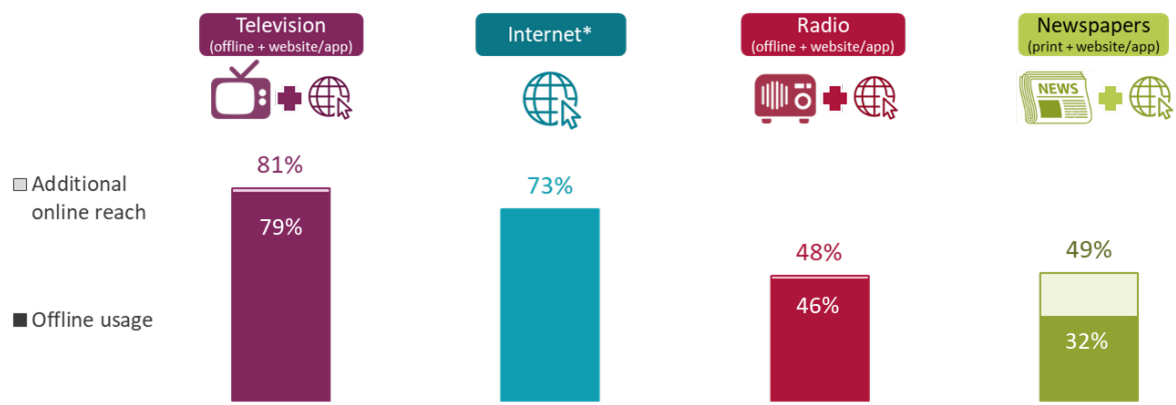
## Claimed consumption of news by platform

Television is still the most used platform for news amongst adults for UK news, closely followed by online news. According to Ofcom's News Consumption Survey, 79% of UK adults claim to use television for news nowadays (rising to 81% when TV news viewed online was considered) and 73% use online sources, with similar proportions using these platforms across the devolved nations<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> [News Consumption Survey, Ofcom, 2021](#)

**Figure 1: Platforms used for news nowadays 2021**



Source: Ofcom News Consumption Survey 2021. COMBINED CATI & ONLINE sample. Question: C1. Which of the following platforms do you use for news nowadays? Base: All Adults 16+ - 2021=4605. \*Internet figures include use of social media, podcasts and all other websites/apps accessed via any device

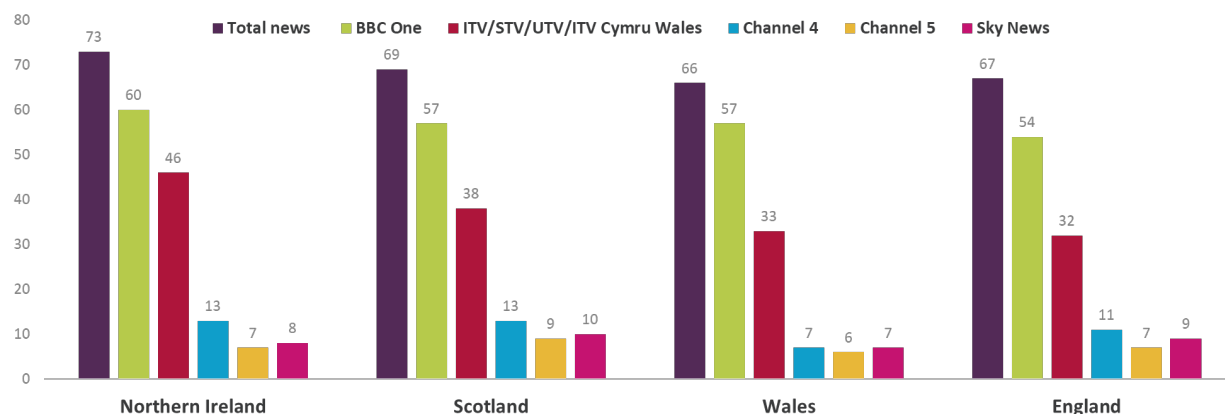
### UK-wide television network news: Weekly reach among adults aged 16+

According to BARB data, in the first half of 2021, audiences in Northern Ireland had the highest weekly reach of UK-wide network news (defined by BARB as national/international news), with a 73% average weekly reach amongst adults aged 16+. Wales had the lowest reach (66%).

BBC One had a higher weekly reach compared to ITV/STV/UTV/ITV Cymru Wales for national/international news in this period, and this is consistent across all the nations.

Channel 4 News achieved the highest levels of weekly reach when compared to the other commercial network news broadcasters, but this is a fractional amount when compared to BBC One and ITV.

**Figure 2: Average weekly reach – National/International news (Jan-June 2021): Adults 16+**



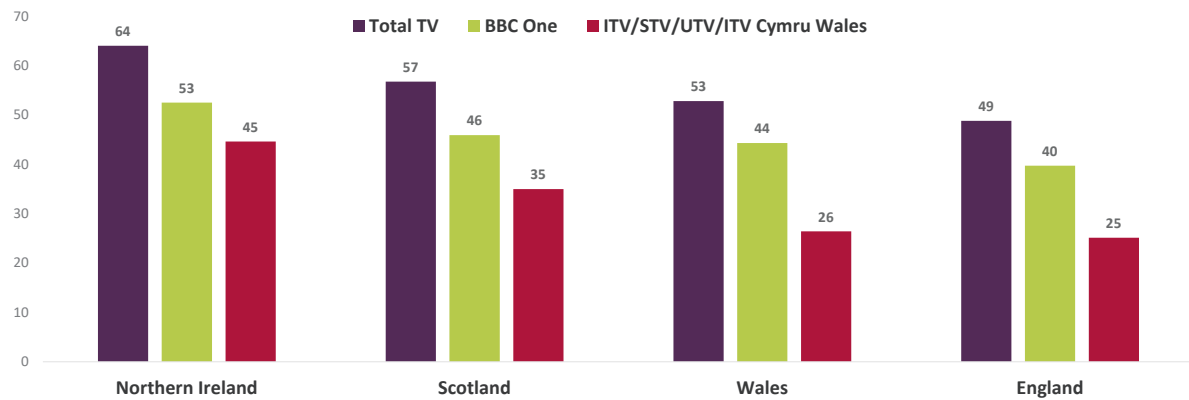
Source: BARB. Weekly reach % of adults 16+ watching at least 3+ consecutive minutes of the national/international network news genre between Jan-Jun 2021. 7 day consolidated.

## Nations based news: Weekly reach among adults aged 16+

Average weekly reach of news programming specific to the nations (defined by BARB as nations/regional news) is lower compared to UK-wide television network news. Reach is highest in Northern Ireland (64%) compared to Scotland (57%) and Wales (53%), with audiences in England watching the least (49%).

Similar, to network news, BBC One has a higher weekly reach than ITV/STV/UTV/ITV Cymru Wales.

**Figure 3: Average weekly reach – Nations/regions news, (Jan-June 2021): Adults 16+**



Source: BARB. Weekly reach % of adults 16+ watching at least 3+ consecutive minutes of regional news genre between Jan-Jun 2021. 7 day consolidated.