## Deloitte.



Digital Consumer Trends 2024

# CONTENTS CONTENTS CONTENTS CONTENTS

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# CONTENTS CONTENTS CONTENTS CONTENTS

Introduction	02
About Digital Consumer Trends	03
Generative AI	05
Gen Al usage	07
Gen AI use at work	10
Al-created content	12
Devices	14
Adoption rates	15
Second-hand	19
Greenwashing	21
Networks	23
Satisfaction	24
Mobile broadband	26
Metrics that matter	28
Video	30
Access to SVOD	31
Churn factors	33
Account sharing	34
Online	37
News sources	38
Online misinformation	40
Subscriptions	42
Contacts	45

#### About the research

Digital Consumer Trends is a multi-country study of how people engage with and purchase digital products. It spans devices, connectivity, media and emerging technologies, and is now in its fifteenth year of publication. It was previously known as the Mobile Consumer Survey.

In 2024, the UK edition of this research comprises a nationally representative sample of 4,150 consumers, aged 16-75, and weighted for demographics such as age, gender, region and working status.

The survey took place in April 2024, and was conducted by an independent research entity. Questions cited in this document may be simplified for the sake of visualisation.

#### **Know your acronyms**

Before you dive in, get to know some of the industry terms we used in this report:

**Gen Al** Generative Al

VR Virtual Reality

AR Augmented Reality

**FWA** Fixed wireless access

**SVOD** Subscription video on demand

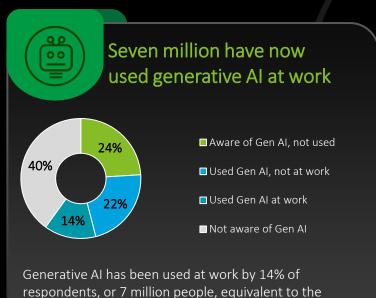
**AVOD** Ad-supported video on demand

**BVOD** Broadcaster video on demand

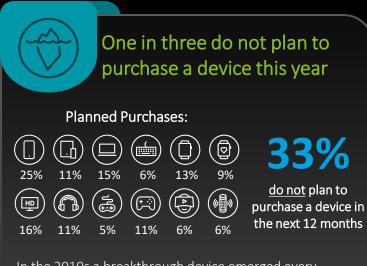
**FAST** Free ad-supported streaming television

#### Key takeaways

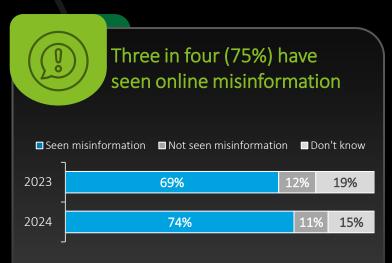
Generative Al is on everyone's lips, but is it at everyone's fingertips? Digital Consumer Trends 2024 finds generative Al has been used by 18 million people in the UK, and their responses range from euphoria to indifference. In hardware, consumers are increasingly delaying upgrading their devices, and lack trust that companies are as green as they claim. In networks, consumers are content with internet speed, but less so with reliability and coverage. In video, consumers have largely accepted sharing crackdowns (so far). And finally, online there is a concerning increase in acknowledgement of misinformation, as 'fake news' spikes ahead of UK and global elections.



Generative AI has been used at work by 14% of respondents, or 7 million people, equivalent to the majority of knowledge workers. However, usage is immature: the most common applications are generating ideas and looking up information – not the best utilisation of the technology). Workers using Gen AI tend to be very positive about its impact on their productivity. However workers also feel that most companies are not encouraging its use.



In the 2010s a breakthrough device emerged every couple of years (e.g. tablet, smart speaker, smart watch and wireless audio). This has sequence has not carried on in the 2020s. As device innovation becomes incremental, consumers are keeping devices longer. A third do not plan to buy any new device in the next year. Some vendors have used their carbon footprint to differentiate, but consumers struggle to comprehend total impact, and 65% say companies overstate their eco-credentials.



Fake news is not new, but it is becoming more prevalent. Interactions with digital content can impact how we think and what we do. Consumers are noticing online misinformation more, particularly among young people (87% of 16–24-year-olds in the last year), who tend to prefer social media as a news source. As consumers start to ingest news from a wider variety of sources, they need to be extra vigilant to fact-check stories, particularly ahead of elections.



#### Adoption of generative AI is up to over a third of respondents; however, two-fifths have not heard of it

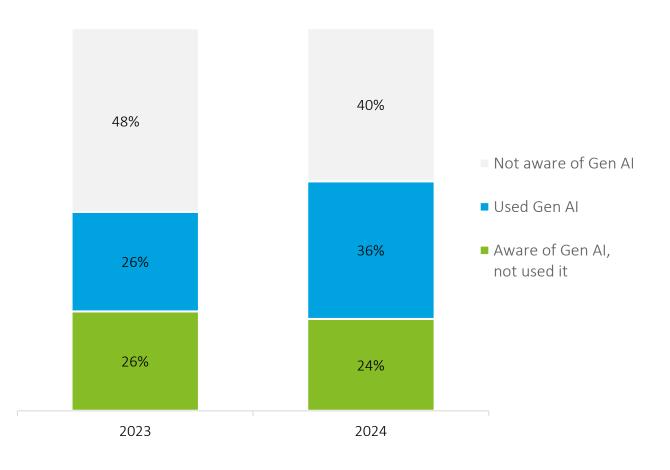
# A third of UK citizens (18 million people between 16-75), have used a Generative AI tool, such as ChatGPT, Google Gemini, or Midjourney.

In the 2024 survey, 36% of consumers claimed to have used Generative AI, a 10 percentage-point increase on 2023.

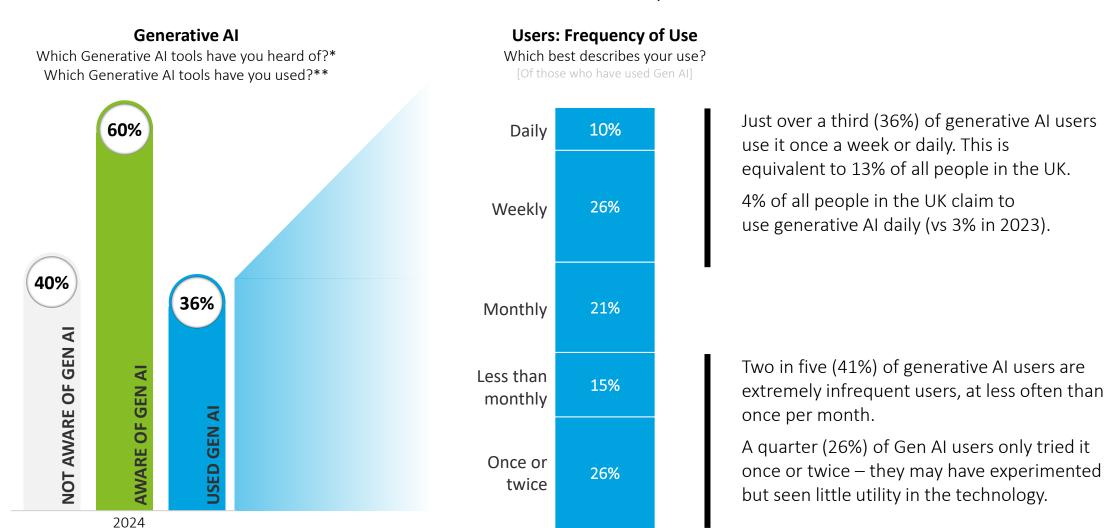
Consumers who wanted to try
Generative AI may have already done so:
the most popular generative AI
applications are easy to access, via web
browser or app. Sign-up takes minutes, and
most offer a free version.

#### Generative Al

Which Generative AI tools have you heard of?\*
Which Generative AI tools have you used?\*\*



#### Two in five who have used Gen AI now use it less than monthly



#### Low frequency users of Gen AI find the technology unhelpful and its answers unsatisfactory

#### **Low Frequency Users**

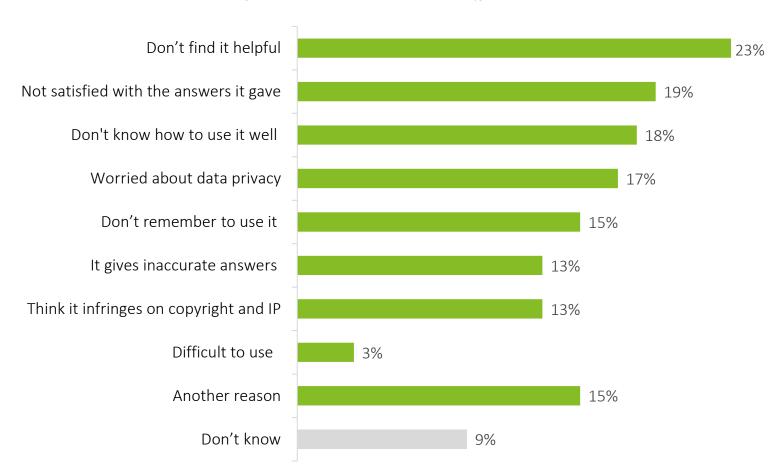
Why don't you use Gen AI more frequently?

Of those who use Gen AI less than monthly]

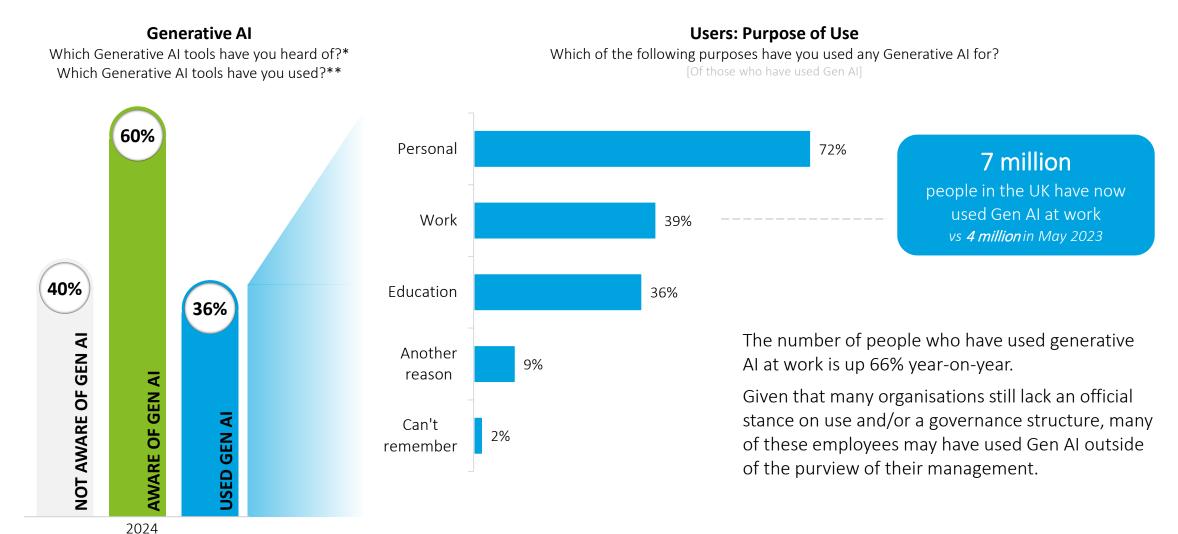
41%

of Gen Al users now use it less than monthly.

Of those...



#### Seven million in UK have used Gen AI at work, up 66% from 2023; education use remains elevated



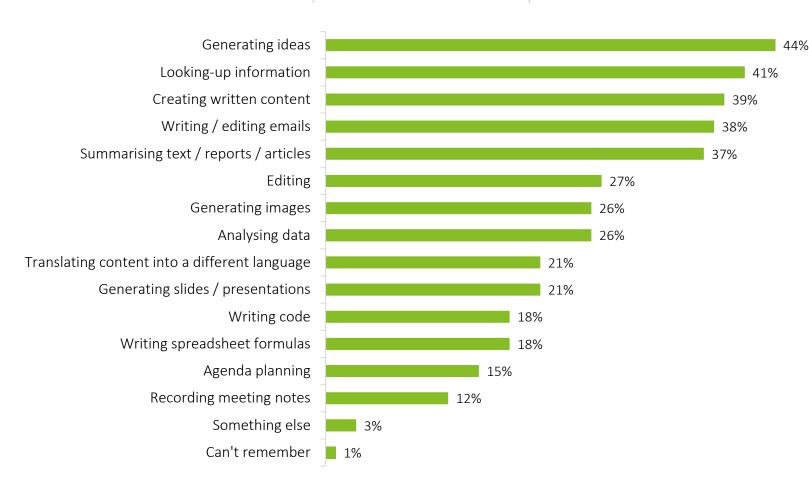
Weighted base: All respondents aged 16-75 years, 2024 (4,150), who have used generative AI (1,473)

#### Generating ideas and searching are the most common applications of Gen AI at work

#### **Using Gen AI for Work: Work Tasks**

Which of the following work tasks have you used any Generative AI tools for?

[Of those who have used Gen AI at work]



Employees may largely still be at experimentation stage with generative AI, whether they are using consumer-grade tools or if their employer now provides them with an official tool.

Two in five (41%) of those using Gen AI for work are "looking up information" using Gen AI. This is likely concerning given its propensity to 'hallucinate', which is a function of being a probability engine rather than a knowledge model.

18% of workers report using Gen AI are writing code. Given that less than 1% of people can code – clearly Gen AI use is popular with software engineers.

#### Majority using Gen AI at work claim productivity boost; most users' employers still do not encourage use

#### **Using Gen AI for Work: Productivity Boost**

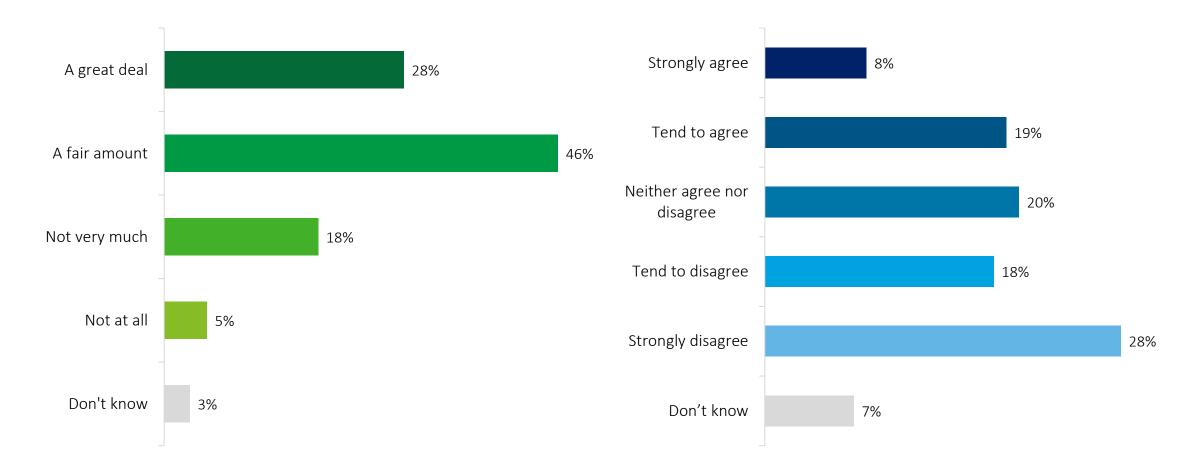
To what extent do you think Gen AI boosts your productivity at work?

[Of those who have used Gen AI at work]

#### **Aware of Gen Al: Company Encouragement**

Agree or disagree: "My company actively encourages the use of Gen AI at work"

[Of those who have heard of Gen AI, in employment]



#### Respondents are wary of Al-created e-mails and chatbots

One application of Gen AI might be to create bespoke customer service chatbots, trained on data and transcripts from previous interactions. Consumers are hesitant about the hypothetical usage of gen AI in such services, but it may be possible to overcome anticipated aversion to this new technology. Early deployments of Gen AI in customer service have been shown to increase satisfaction, but companies still need to be careful to control how their use of Gen AI use is perceived – that it is there to improve quality, not to reduce cost, and sensitive interactions should still be handled by humans.

"I would be less inclined to trust an email if I knew it was created using Generative AI."



**59%** agree

14% disagree

27% neither agree or disagree or don't know

"I would be *less inclined to use customer services* if I knew I was conversing with a Generative AI assistant."



56% agree

17% disagree

27% neither agree or disagree or don't know



#### Consumers slightly more knowledgeable, but a number still unaware of 'hallucination' and bias

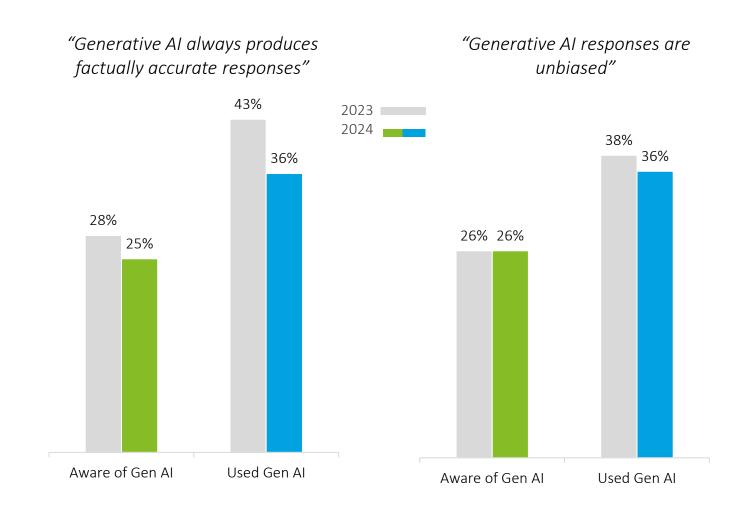
Generative AI can 'hallucinate', or in other words produce mistakes. It can also produce biased responses, which might be due to the type of data contained in its training set.

These may be inherent properties of how Gen Al works. Overcoming these issues with a technical solution may be challenging.

A subset of consumers remain underinformed about how generative AI works, and its drawbacks. While 25% of those who are aware of Gen AI think it is always correct, an even greater 36% of users think it is always correct.

Given that 7 million people in the UK are using Gen AI at work, a robust governance structure and employee training are important to mitigate these risks.

Those who agree that...





#### Devices reach natural plateau at different levels; no new form factors have emerged

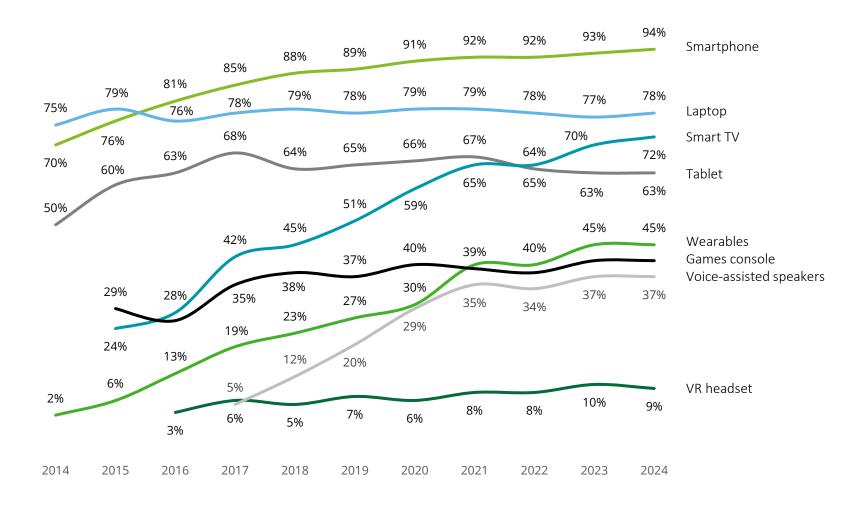
### **Devices**Which of the following devices do you own or have ready access to?

In 2024, smartphone (94%) and smart TV (72%) were the only device categories to reach all-time high adoption rates.

Devices tend to plateau at different levels, depending on their utility to the market.

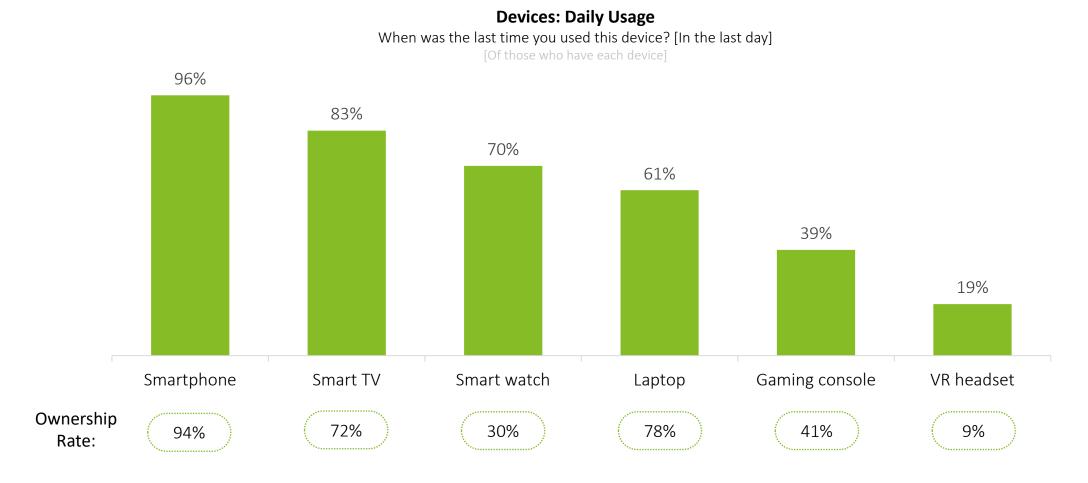
Most major consumer electronic categories have reached, or are approaching, their plateau.

Attempts at new form factors, such as compact AI devices, may struggle to challenge existing, incumbent devices.



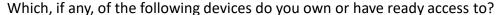
#### There are substantial differences in device usage rates, and device utility

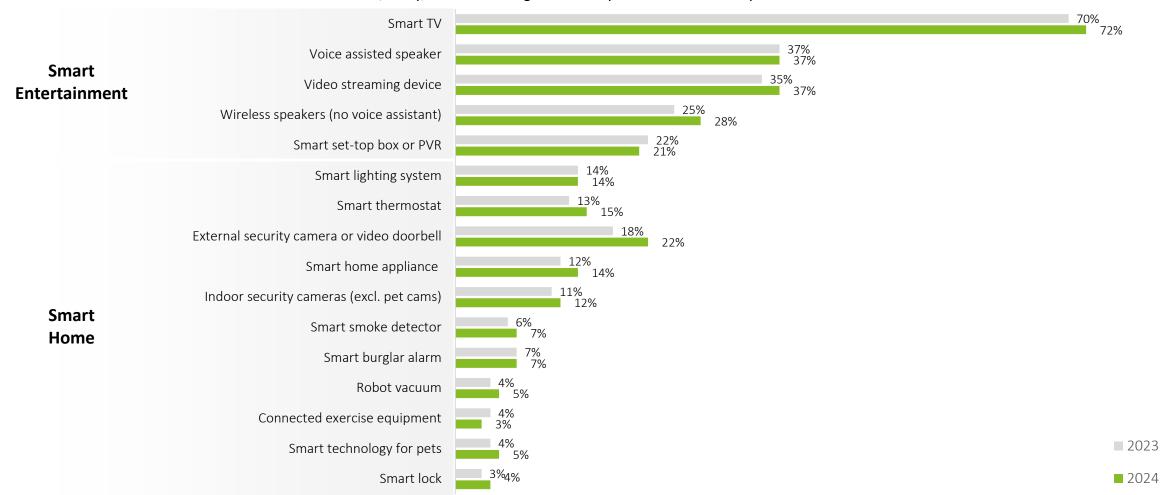
Claimed usage of devices in the last day varies from 96% for smartphones to 19% for VR headsets. Smartphones are multi-functional and portable and are often used for several hours per day.



Smart home continues to grow slowly; and it's no longer because of affordability, so it's likely down to perceived utility

#### **Smart Entertainment and Smart Home**

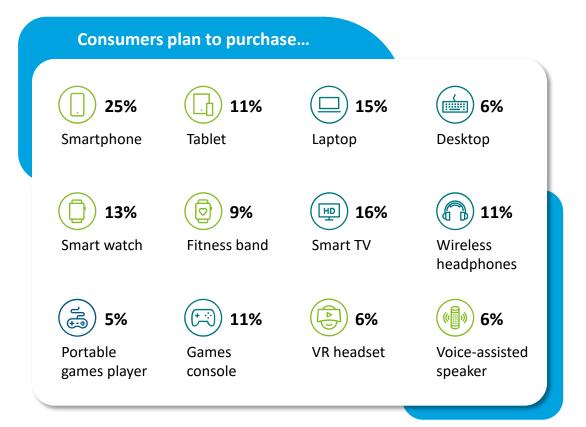




#### One in three consumers (33%) do not plan to make a device purchase in the next year

#### **Devices: Planned Purchases**

Which, if any, of the following devices do you intend to purchase in the next 12 months?



33%

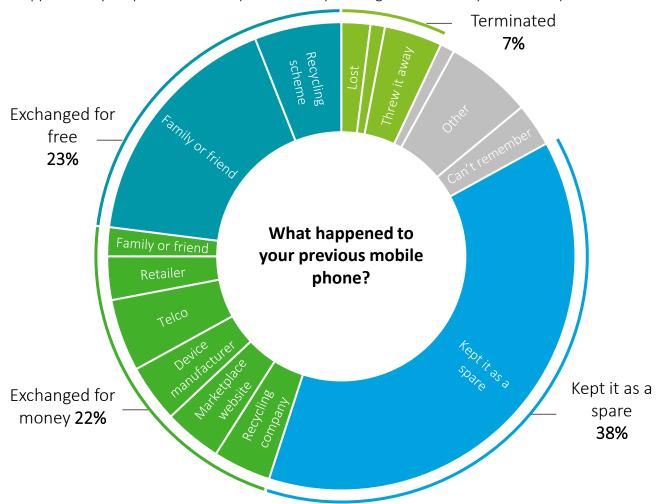
of consumers <u>do not</u> plan to purchase a device in the next 12 months

There are no brand-new device categories, and many incumbent categories (such as smartphones) have become predictable replacement cycles for consumers.

#### More than a third of consumers (38%) still keep their old smartphone as a spare

#### **Previous smartphone**

What happened to your previous mobile phone when you bought or received your current phone?



The best outcome for the environment is that mobile phones stay in use for as long as possible. One way to extend the lifecycle of a device is to sell, trade or exchange it (essentially, releasing it back into the open market).

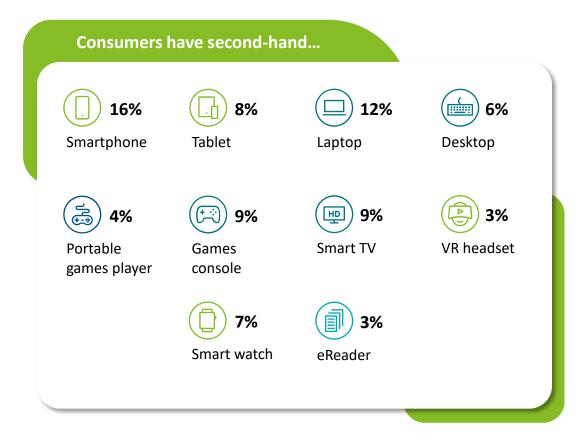
However, 38% of consumers still claim to have kept their previous phone as a spare. This has not changed since the last time this question was asked in 2022.

Consumers are keeping their old phone for two main reasons: in case their new one breaks, and to protect valuable data on the old device. Both of these reasons can be solved by the industry (e.g. device insurance and cloud storage), so steps should be taken to help consumers release these old devices back into the market.

#### One in three consumers uses a second-hand device

#### **Devices: Second-Hand Ownership**

Which, if any, of the following devices that you currently use were previously owned by someone else?



38%

of consumers have at least one second-hand or refurbished device

Consumers use second-hand products for a variety of reasons, but primarily it is due to convenience (say a friend of family member has one spare), and most importantly, cost.

Second-hand smartphone ownership has increased only slightly from 2023, when it was 15%.

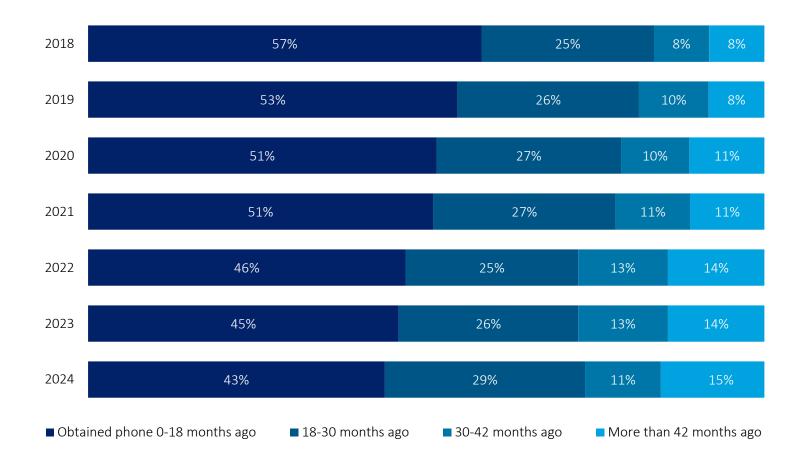
#### Smartphones in our pockets are getting steadily older, with every year

#### Age of smartphone

When did you obtain your current phone?

In 2024, over half (55%) smartphones are at least 18 months old. Given that smartphone hardware improvements are iterative, and software developers create apps which run fine on older devices, many consumers are comfortable keeping their smartphone for longer.

In fact, many consumers use the length of ownership as justification for paying more for a premium or flagship device at the point of purchase.



#### Consumers struggle to comprehend carbon footprint

Sustainability fatigue may be setting in amongst consumers. Life can be complex, and tracking personal emissions is challenging. Consumers may feel unequipped to properly accredit the companies and brands they buy from, and while they may wish to make eco-conscious decisions, they have few methods to validate them. Consumers tend not to trust companies are genuine in their FSG ambitions.



feel companies often overstate their "green" image



trust that tech companies are transparent when declaring their carbon footprint

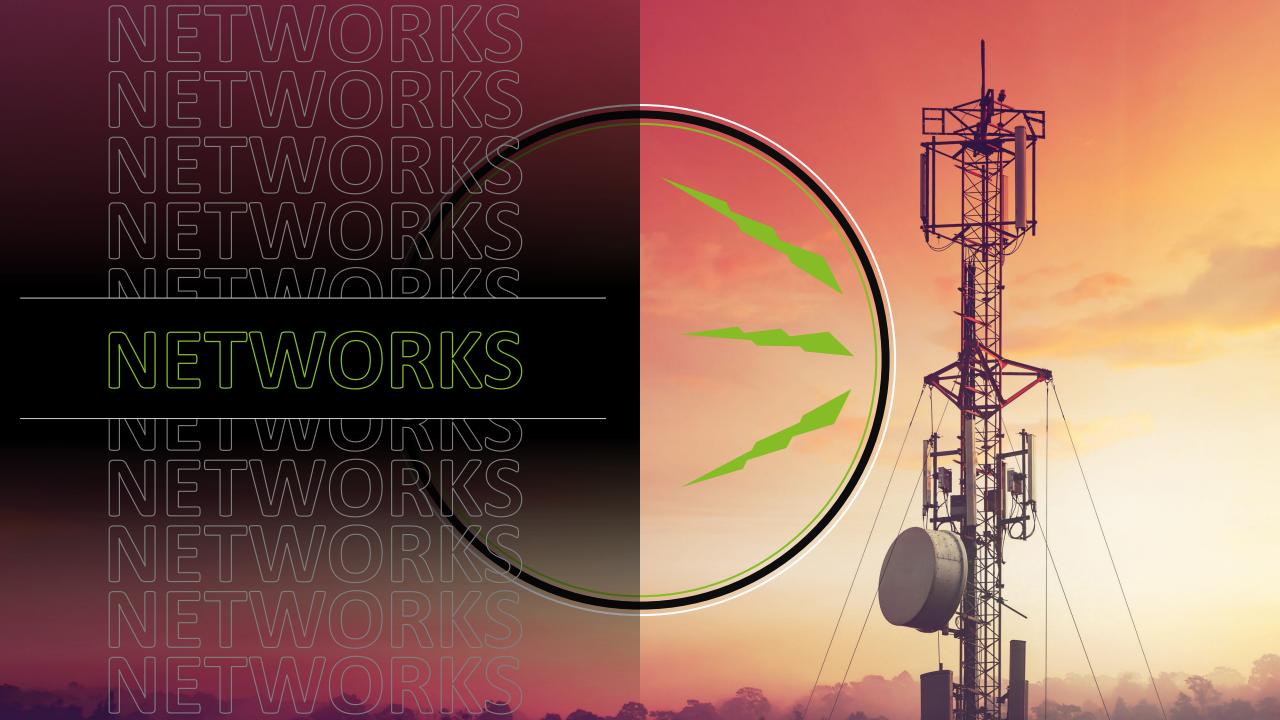


have regular conversations with family and friends about carbon footprint



have some idea what their carbon footprint is



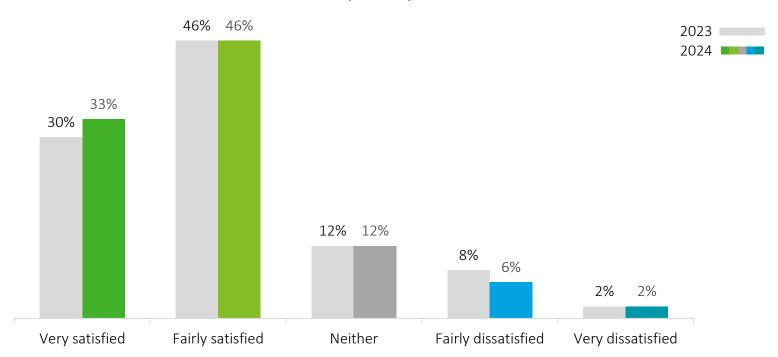


#### Broadband satisfaction levels continue to nudge upwards

Four in five (79%) are now at least "fairly" satisfied with their broadband, regardless of underlying technology: fibre to the home (FTTH), or fibre to the cabinet (FTTC), or cable broadband. For most broadband users, the applications they predominantly use - video streaming, social media, online gaming, and work tasks like video calls and file upload/download - are well-served by their broadband network they have. Most mainstream online applications are optimised for 5 Mbit/s or lower.

#### Satisfaction with internet connection

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your internet connection overall?





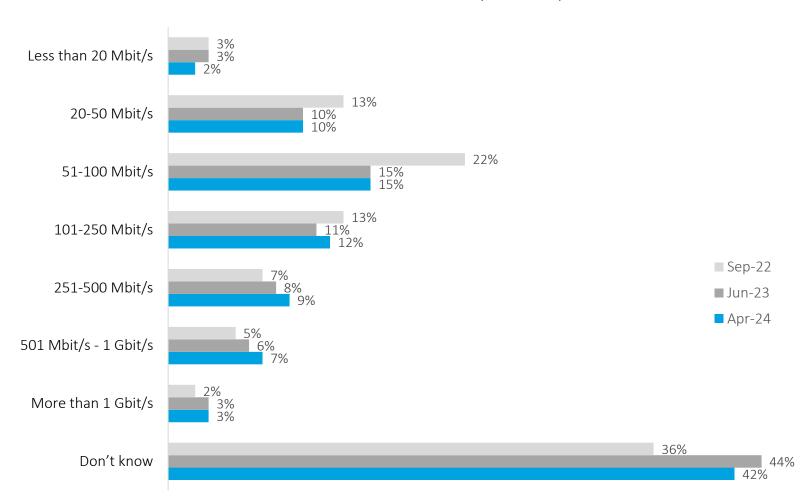
#### Speed may be solved for households; reliability and in-home coverage may become the differentiator

#### **Broadband Speeds**

How fast is the home internet connection you currently have?

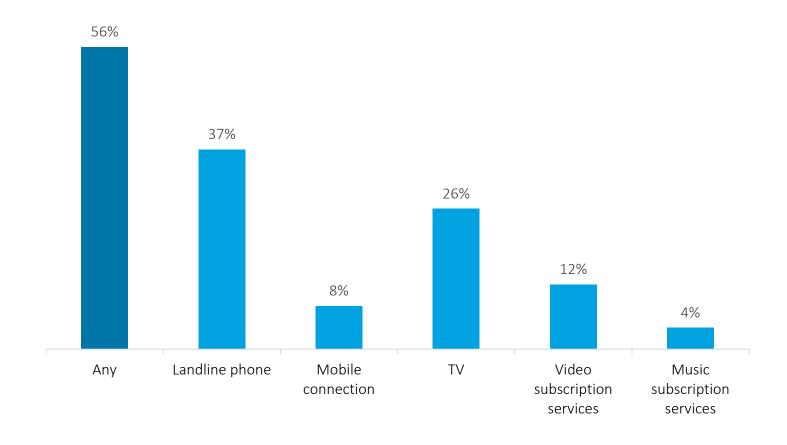
Two in five (42%) do not know what their home broadband speed is, possibly because speed is not an issue.

Household size is declining across much of Europe and including the UK, with single-and dual-occupancy homes increasingly common.



#### More than half (56%) of households buy broadband bundled with other services

**Bundles**Is your broadband service at home bundled with any of the following?



Bundles are common in the UK, as customers look for discounts in bringing together broadband with telephony and media services.

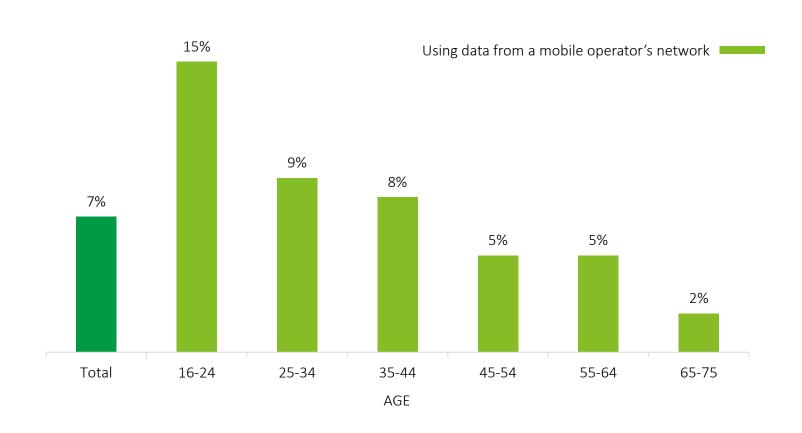
For the consumer, other major benefits of this are convenience – with one bill to pay – and also simplicity, with one company to call if a particular application does not work on a home network.

Landlines remain popular – particularly among 55–65-year-olds (49%) and 65–75-year-olds (56%), who may be taking inbound calls from friends and relatives in older age groups.

#### Younger groups lean on mobile connections for flexibility and price

#### **Mobile as a Primary Connection**

Which, if any, of the following types of internet or home broadband connection is the MAIN one you use in your household? [Using data from a mobile operator's network]

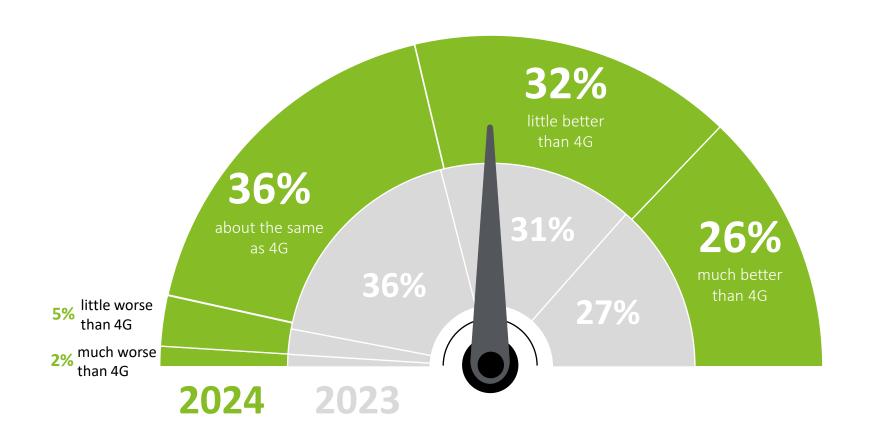


One in six people between 16-24 (15%) claim that their primary household connection is data from a mobile operator's network.

For young people on lower salaries, who are more likely to be in rented accommodation, and more likely to move often, forms of fixed wireless access (FWA), including informal FWA which might be tethering from a smartphone, may provide a compelling alternative to a potentially expensive and inflexible fixed broadband product.

#### Perception of 5G has not changed; only a slight majority can tell the difference

**4G vs 5G**Since using a 5G network on your phone, how has your overall experience of mobile internet been?\*



It is five years since the first 5G networks launched in the UK. Over that time roll out of 5G base stations, and the availability of 5G smartphones has expanded.

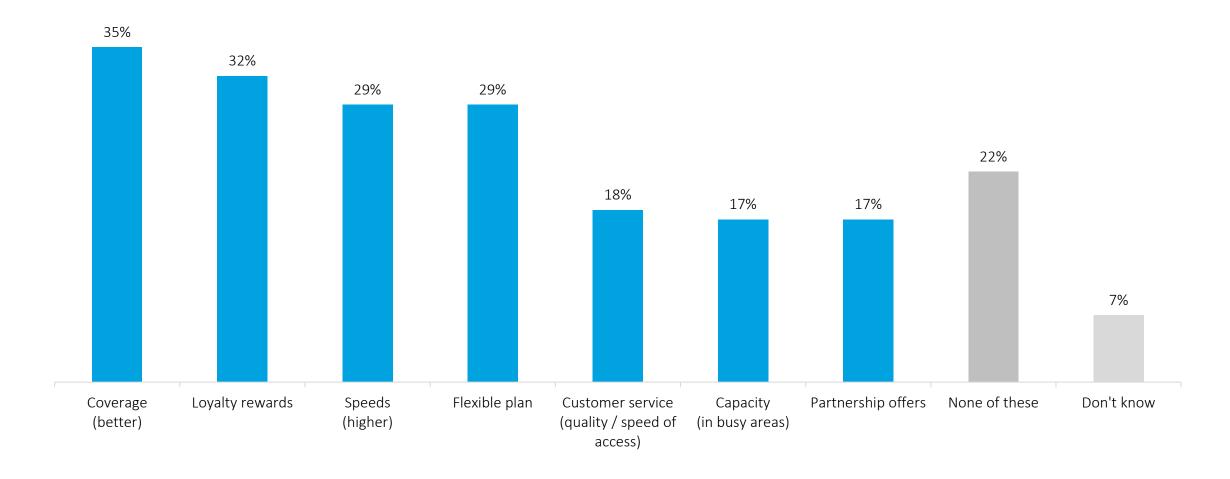
However, perception of 5G as a superior technology relative to 4G has barely changed in the last 12-months.

A slight majority (58%) consider 5G to be better than 4G, but a significant number of users see little difference. This may be why few consumers have been willing to pay a premium for 5G.

#### Consumers value better coverage and loyalty rewards more than higher speeds

**Churn factors** 

Which, if any, of the following would encourage you to switch mobile network provider?

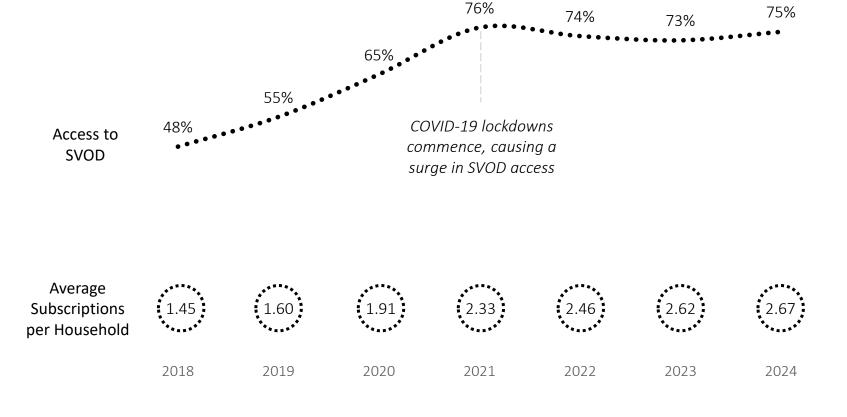




#### Subscription video on demand remains at four-year plateau; but subscriptions per household maintain

Access to SVOD

Which paid digital subscription services do you have access to? [Video]



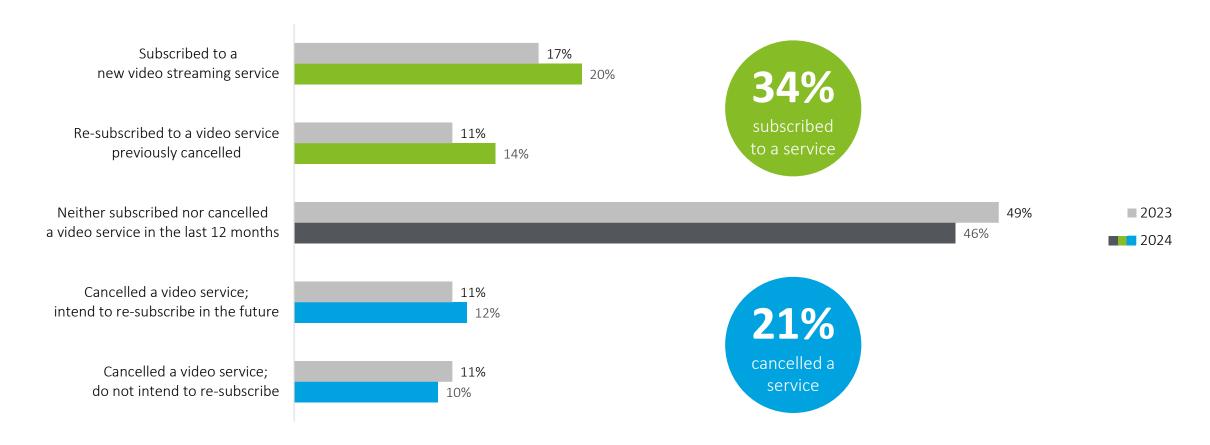
Subscription video on demand (SVOD) is now a staple of most UK households, but the final quarter of the market (25%) yet to purchase SVOD have proved difficult to convince. This group tends to be older and are satisfied with free-to-air content from PSBs.

Hence, SVOD platforms have focused on extracting more value from the three quarters (75%) of the market which already pays — with many now cracking down on password-sharing, and adding ad-funded tiers.

#### Positive momentum in 2024: churn is static, and a fifth took on a brand-new subscription

#### **Subscribing and Churning**

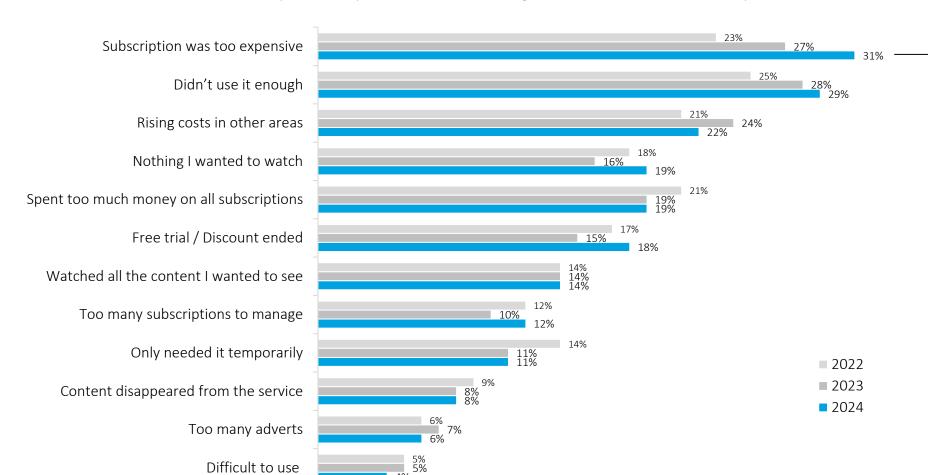
In the last 12 months, have you or your household subscribed to any paid subscriptions for a video streaming service, or cancelled any existing ones?



#### SVOD price increases likely contributing to churn

#### **SVOD: Reasons for Cancelling**

You have cancelled a paid subscription for a video streaming service in the last 12 months, why?



"Subscription was too expensive" moves to the top of the list of churn factors.

Some consumers may resent price increases – two of the three largest SVOD platforms raised prices in 2023.

Password sharing crackdowns may also be a factor here, as consumers may be faced with the prospect of funding a service alone, rather than as a group.

Sharing crackdowns appear to have reduced the extent of account sharing, with a 6-percentage point decline in sharing to 29% between 2023 and 2024

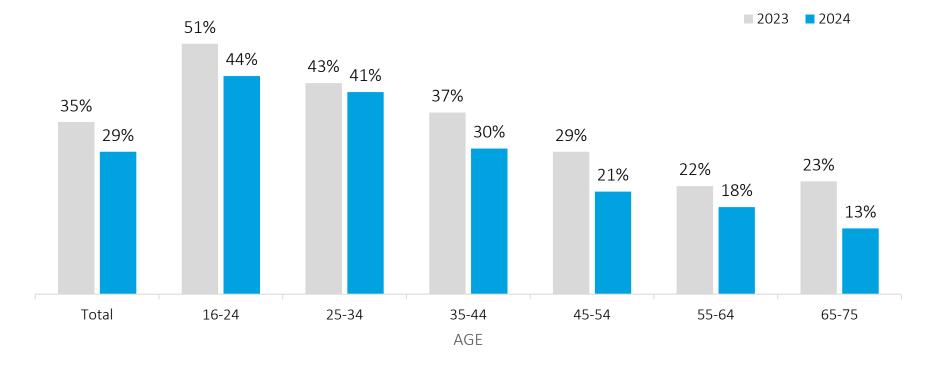
Streaming platforms have started to act to restrict sharing, using metrics like using IP address, device ID, and account activity to limit streaming to a single home location.

#### **SVOD: Sharing Outside the Household**

How many households share the following accounts?\*

29%

of SVOD users share at least one service outside their household



#### One in five (22%) claim to be impacted by sharing crackdown

#### **Sharing Crackdown**

In the last 12 months, have you stopped sharing access to a video streaming service with another household because the provider ended free sharing?

Over a fifth (22%) report that they have stopped sharing an SVOD account with another household as a result of a password-sharing crackdown.

However, this has not resulted in a discernible uplift in overall churn (21% in 2023 and 21% in 2024): it seems that the early SVOD platforms to crack down have been successful.

In other words, some households are no longer sharing, but continue to pay for/ are now paying for SVOD.

22%

either stopped sharing with another household, or had another household stop sharing with them



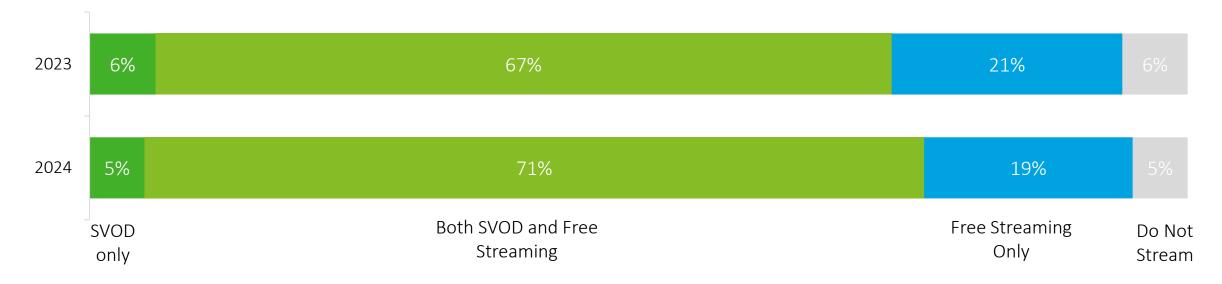
#### Almost everyone uses a free video streaming service

Nine in ten consumers (90%) use a free video streaming service. This includes broadcaster video on demand (BVOD) which can be ad-supported and license fee-supported, FAST (free ad-supported TV) channels, and online video platforms.

Public service broadcasters are attempting to diversify to be less dependent on traditional TV advertising, and to grow digital income streams. Content strategies are also evolving, with growing focus on cost, efficiency and potential viewership.

#### **SVOD, Free Streaming, or Both**

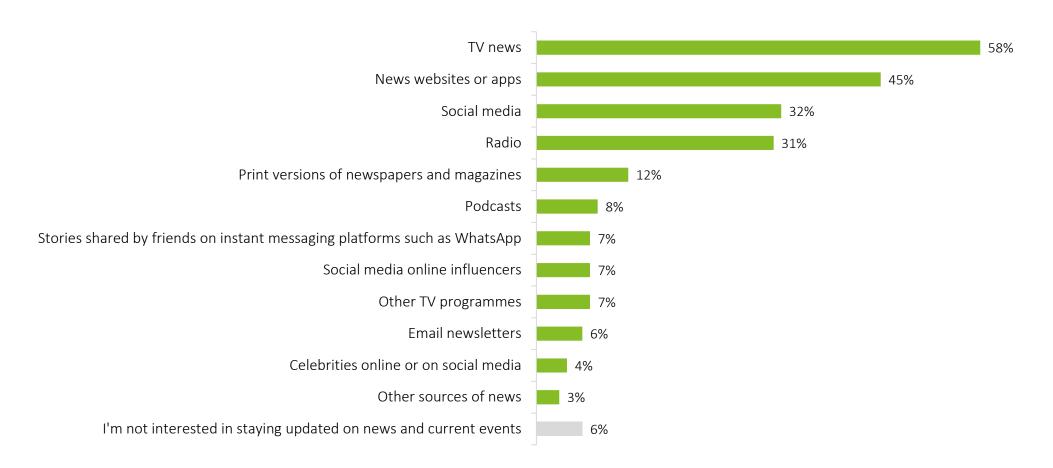
Which of the following paid subscription accounts do you have access to?\*
Which of the following free video streaming services do you currently use?\*





#### TV remains a primary source of news content for most, but there are variations by age group

**News**What are your most preferred methods to stay updated on news or current events?



#### Young groups use social media for news; older groups skew towards TV

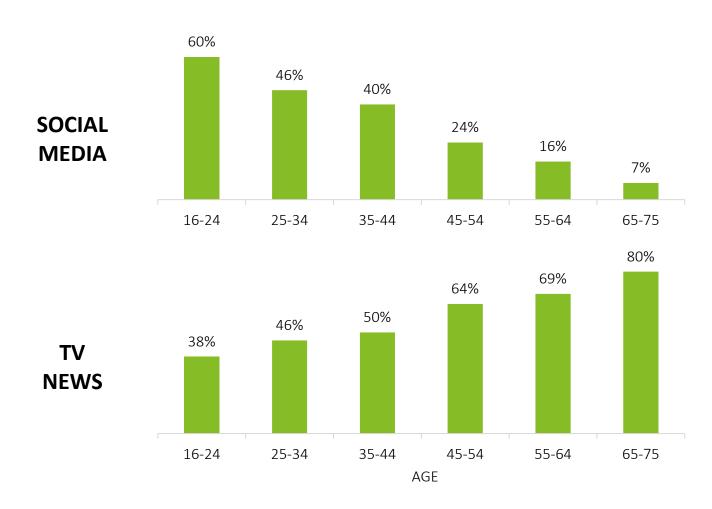
Three in five (60%) 16–24-year-olds cite social media as a top-three preferred news source. Younger groups tend use more social media, and may engage organically with news content which is algorithmically tailored to them. They have access to a wide range of perspectives, including interactive elements like comments and debate, but the breath of potential sources means that verifying the accuracy and authenticity of a story is crucial.

In contrast, a mere 12% of 55–75-year-olds cite social media as a top-three source. This group prefers traditional sources of news such as TV news – three-quarters (74%) cite it as a preferred source.

News websites and apps are a popular middle ground (45% of everyone cites them as a preferred source), which bridge the gap between preferences of old and young.

**News**What are your most preferred methods to stay updated on news or current events?

[Respondents selected too three]



#### Online misinformation becomes more prevalent ahead of elections

The UK will hold General Election in 2024 or at latest early 2025. Given that news is now sourced from such a wide variety of sources, including social media, bad actors have a wide surface area to try and create false narratives.

In the last 12 months, three in four (74%) of people claim to have seen information deliberately designed to mislead. This is up from 69% in the previous year. This figure is self-reported, so only accounts for people who have actually identified misinformation (some may have seen misinformation, but not identified it). Younger groups are more likely to have seen misinformation, with just 4% of 16–24-year-olds claiming they had definitely not seen it in the last 12 months.



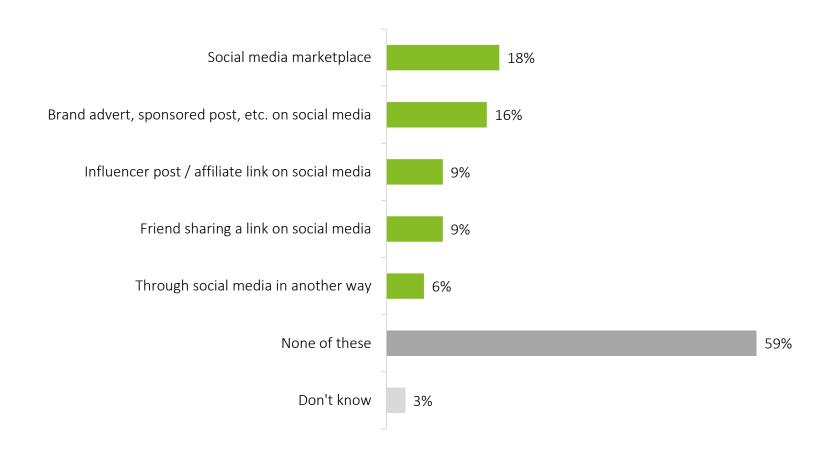
#### One in ten (9%) made a purchase via influencer post or affiliate link on social media

#### **Social Media Purchasing**

In the last 12 months, in which of the following ways have you made an online purchase through a social media platform?

37%

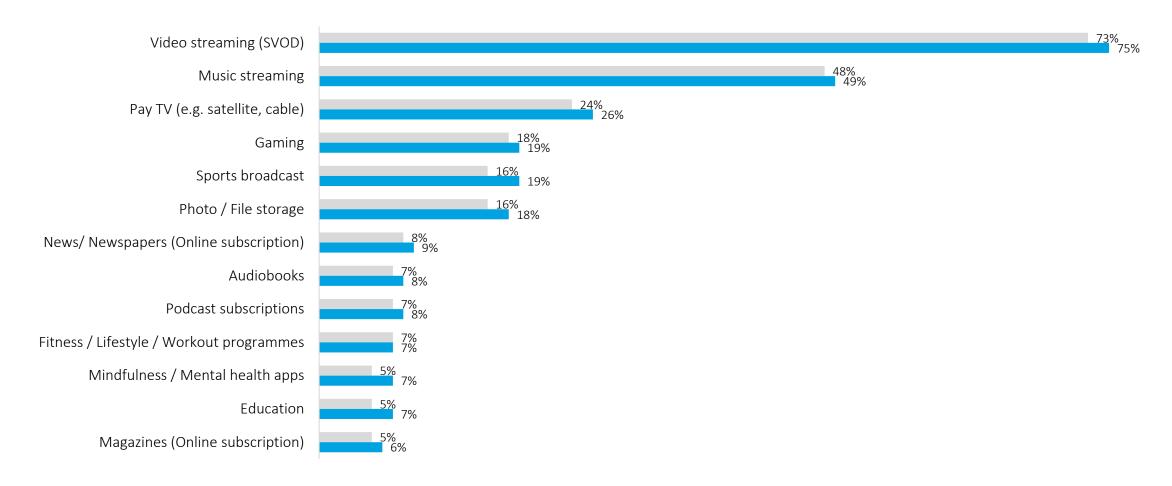
made a purchase through social media in the past 12 months



#### Video streaming, music and pay TV are the most popular subscriptions

#### **Subscriptions**

Which, if any, of the following paid digital subscription services do you have access to? [SVOD and Music only] Thinking about paid services or subscriptions, which, if any, of the following do you have access to?\*

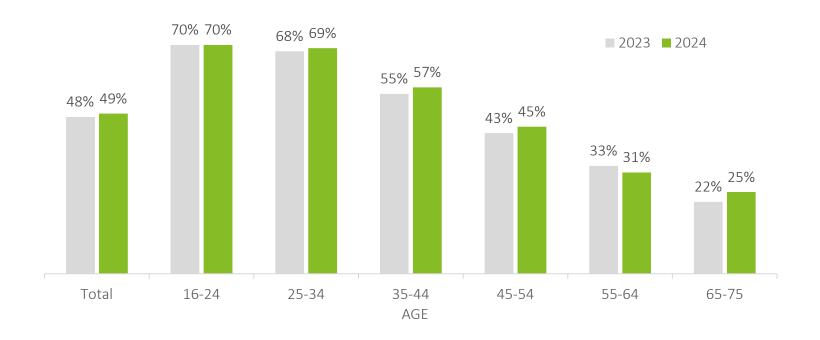


#### Paid music subscriptions up despite price increases

Access to paid music streaming services continued to rise, in spite of price increases. Subscribers tend to be sticky, given the substantial logistical effort to reassemble a music library and playlists when switching service, or quitting altogether.

#### **Music Subscriptions**

Which, if any, of the following paid digital subscription services do you have access to?\* [Music]





#### Almost half of respondents have used an app to support mental health

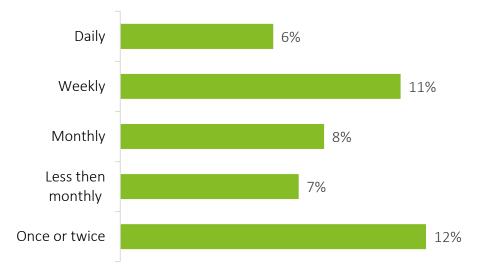
In 2024, one in four people (24%) use an app for mental health support, wellness or mindfulness at least monthly. These applications are not an alternative to professional medical advice and therapy, but can be used as a supplement between or in addition to treatment, or by those whose objective is to maintain a positive mental balance with a light-touch approach.

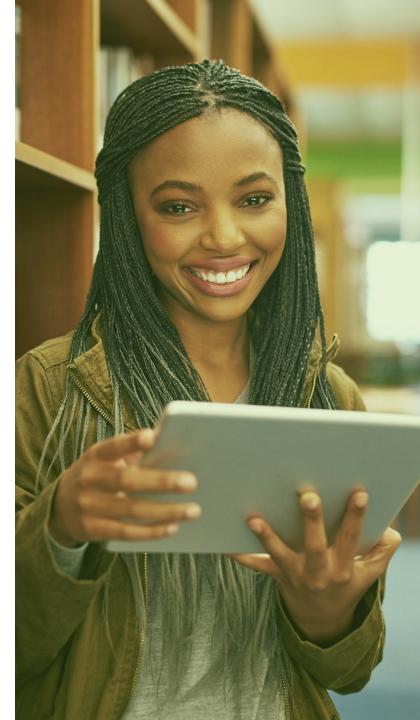
#### **Mental Health Applications**

How often, if at all, do you personally use apps dedicated to mental health support, wellness or mindfulness?

44%

have used a dedicated app for mental health, wellness or mindfulness







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#### **Digital Consumer Trends 2024**

For more information on the Deloitte Digital Consumer Trends UK survey, visit our hub page. Here you can find full-length reports on key topics like generative AI, as well as materials from previous years.

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