Office for National Statistics

Statistical bulletin

Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: August 2024

Social insights on daily life and events, including important issues, cost of living, and artificial intelligence from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN).

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Next release:
18 October 2024

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1 . Main points

The following information is from data collected from 7 August to 1 September 2024, based on adults in Great Britain.

- When asked about the important issues facing the UK today, the most commonly reported issues were the cost of living (86%), the NHS (81%), the economy (66%), crime (65%), immigration (60%) and housing (58%).

- Crime (65%) and immigration (60%) being reported as important issues facing the UK today has gradually increased since we first started asking this question in October 2022 (49% and 43%, respectively).

- Around half (49%) of adults reported that their cost of living had increased in the past month, and around a half (49%) reported it had stayed the same.

We also examined people's attitudes towards artificial intelligence (AI) using data over the period 10 April to 30 June 2024.

- Around 1 in 6 (17%) adults said they often or always recognised using AI; this awareness was higher among adults aged 16 to 29 years (35%), decreasing with age to just 5% among those aged 70 years and over, and was also higher among men (22%) than women (12%), and among adults with a degree or equivalent (23%) than those with no degree (15%).

- Just under 4 in 10 (37%) adults strongly agreed or agreed that AI would benefit them; adults in professional occupations (56%), Asian or Asian British adults (55%), adults aged 16 to 29 years (54%), those with a degree or equivalent qualification (53%), and men (44%) were more likely to report this.

- Adults were more likely to report using AI in their home (37% of all adults) if they were parents of a dependent child (50%), qualified to degree level or equivalent (46%), or aged 30 to 49 years (45%).

- The majority of adults (65%) reported they have not undertaken any learning on AI in the past 12 months; those most likely to report this were retired (84%), in administrative and secretarial occupations (75%), without a degree (72%), and women (70%).

- Areas of AI that people would like to know more about included how AI is regulated (44%), how to judge the accuracy of information generated by AI (42%), how to recognise when they were using AI (42%), and AI ethics and responsible use (35%).

2 . Important issues facing the UK

Estimates in this section of the release are based on data collected between 7 August and 1 September 2024 (the "latest period").

The cost of living (86%) and the NHS (81%) have remained the two most commonly reported important issues facing the UK today. Those reporting the cost of living as an important issue has gradually decreased since we first started asking this question in October 2022 (from 93% to 86% in the latest period).

The proportion of adults reporting the economy (66%) as an important issue has also gradually fallen (down from 79% in October 2022). The proportion of adults reporting crime (65%) and immigration (60%) as an important issue has increased since October 2022, when these proportions were 49% and 43%, respectively (Figure 1).

Figure 1: The cost of living, the NHS, and the economy have been the most commonly reported important issues facing the UK since October 2022

Proportion of adults reporting each important issue, Great Britain, October 2022 to September 2024

Notes:

1. Question: "What do you think are important issues facing the UK today?"

2. Base: All adults.

3. Respondents could select more than one option, estimates and associated confidence intervals for all response categories are provided in the datasets associated with this release.

4. The length of each data collection period presented in this time series may be different.

Download the data

Estimates of important issues by age group are available for all time periods collected in Table 26 of our Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: personal well-being and loneliness dataset provided with this release.

3 . Cost of living

Cost of living increases

In the latest period, we continued to ask adults about their experiences of changes to their cost of living.

Around half (49%) of adults reported that their cost of living had stayed the same in the past month, and around half (49%) reported that their cost of living had increased (Figure 2).

The proportion of adults reporting increases to their cost of living has gradually declined from 80% in the period 12 to 23 October 2022, to 49% in the latest period. Those reporting that their cost of living has stayed the same has increased over the same period, to 49% reporting this in the latest period.

The small proportion of adults reporting that their cost of living has decreased has remained stable and was 3% in the latest period.

Figure 2: The number of adults reporting an increase in their cost of living has fallen since October 2022, while those reporting that their cost of living stayed the same increased over the same period

Proportion of adults reporting changes to their cost of living in the past month, Great Britain, September 2022 to September 2024

Figure 2: The number of adults reporting an increase in their cost of living has fallen since October 2022, while those reporting that their cost of living stayed the same increased over the same period

Proportion of adults reporting changes to their cost of living in the past month, Great Britain, September 2022 to September 2024

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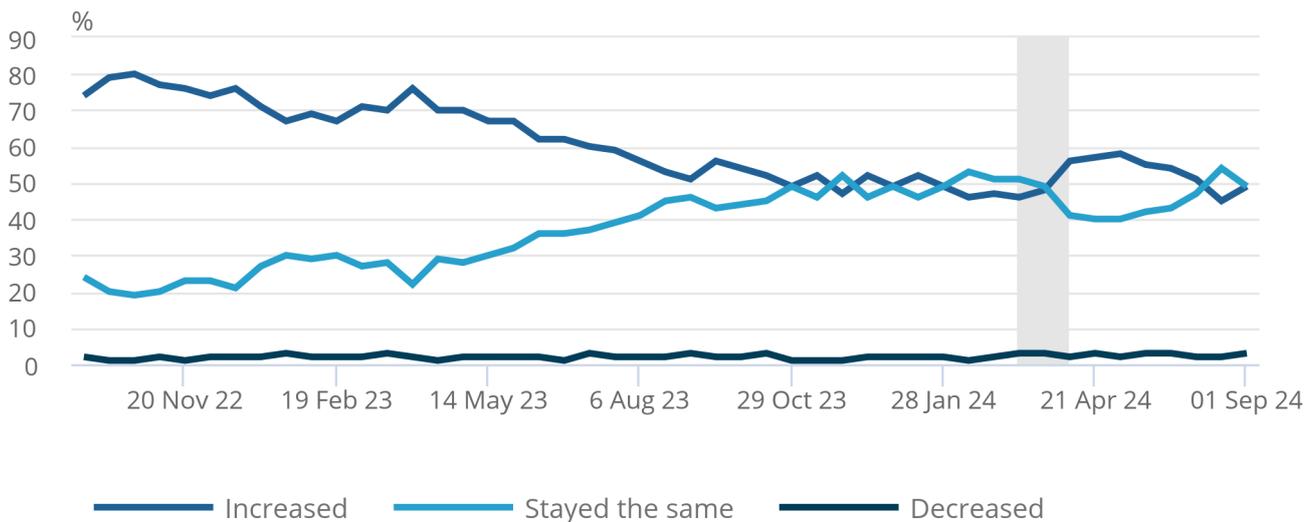
Source: Opinions and Lifestyle Survey from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Question: "Has your cost of living changed compared to one month ago?"

2. Base: All adults.

3. In the period 27 March to 7 April 2024 changes were made to the survey design to allow us to measure the short and long-term impacts of the cost of living. These may have impacted responses to this question.

Estimates of the cost of living by age group are available for all time periods collected in Table 4, Table 5 and Table 13 of our Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: household finances dataset provided with this release.

4 . Attitudes towards artificial intelligence

Our monthly survey continued to ask adults about their opinions on artificial intelligence (AI). Data on AI for the latest period can be found in our Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: artificial intelligence (AI) dataset provided with this release.

In our analysis, we used a pooled dataset covering 10 April to 30 June 2024 to explore what different groups of the population understood about AI, including their opinions about AI use and learning.

Being able to recognise when using AI

Around 1 in 6 (17%) adults in Great Britain reported that they can often or always recognise when they are using AI. Around half (50%) of adults reported that they can recognise AI some of the time or occasionally, and 33% said they hardly ever or never recognised using AI.

Adults most likely to report they can often or always recognise AI were:

- younger (35% of adults aged 16 to 29 years compared with 21% aged 30 to 49 years, 9% aged 50 to 69 years and 5% aged 70 years and over)

- adults with a degree or equivalent (23%) compared with adults without a degree (15%)

- men (22%) compared with women (12%)

Men in each age group were more likely than women to report that they often or always recognise using AI. This includes those aged 16 to 29 years (42% among men, 29% among women), 30 to 49 years (28% among men, 13% among women), 50 to 69 years (11% among men, 7% among women) and 70 years and over (6% among men, 3% among women).

Figure 3: The proportion of men and women who often or always recognised the use of AI decreased with age, with men more likely to report higher levels of recognition across all age groups

Proportion of adults by age and sex reporting that they can often or always recognise when they are using artificial intelligence (AI), Great Britain, 10 April to 30 June 2024

Figure 3: The proportion of men and women who often or always recognised the use of AI decreased with age, with men more likely to report higher levels of recognition across all age groups

Proportion of adults by age and sex reporting that they can often or always recognise when they are using artificial intelligence (AI), Great Britain, 10 April to 30 June 2024
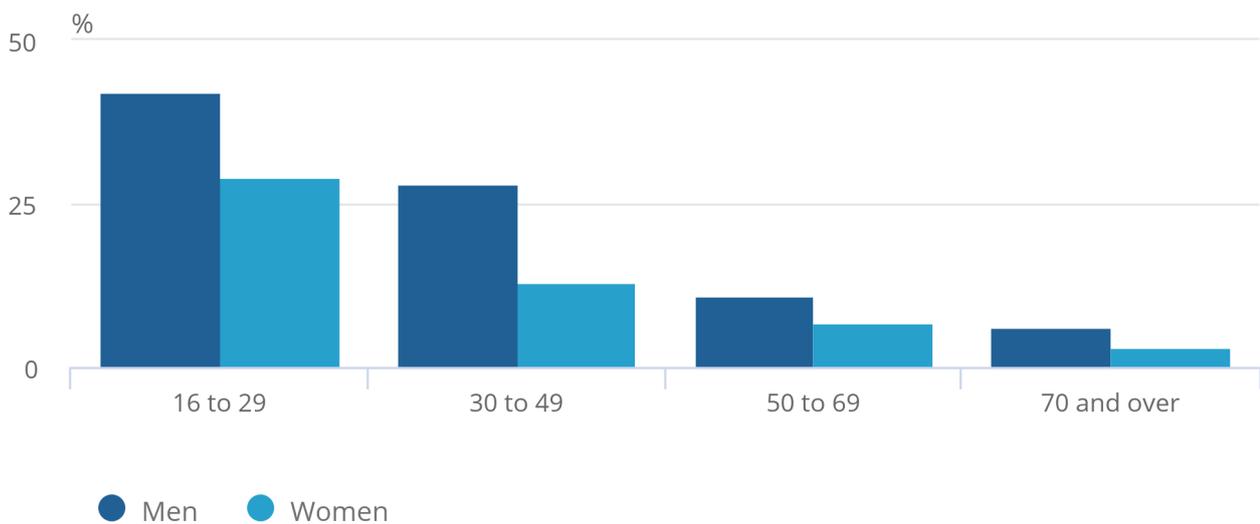
Source: Opinions and Lifestyle Survey from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Question: How often do you think you can recognise when you are using artificial intelligence (AI)?

2. Base: All adults

Benefits and risks of using AI

When asked which statement best reflected their view about the benefits and risks of AI, around half (46%) of adults felt that the benefits and risks of AI were equal, with 27% feeling that there were more risks than benefits. Around 15% felt that there were more benefits than risks, and 12% reported that they "don't know".

Adults more likely to report that there were more benefits to risks included:

- those with a degree or equivalent (24%) compared with those with no degree qualification (12%)

- men (20%) compared with women (11%)

- non-disabled people (18%) compared with disabled people (11%)

- those aged 16 to 29 years (17%), 30 to 49 years (21%) or 50 to 69 years (12%), compared with those aged 70 years or over (8%)

Perspective of adults on the benefits of AI

When asked to what extent adults agreed or disagreed that AI will benefit them, 46% neither agreed nor disagreed, 37% strongly agreed or agreed and 17% strongly disagreed or disagreed.

Those more likely to report that they strongly agreed or agreed that AI would benefit them included:

- adults working in professional occupations (56%) compared with those working in skilled trades (27%)

- Asian or Asian British adults (55%) compared with White adults (35%)

- adults aged 16 to 29 years (54%) or 30 to 49 years (44%) compared with those aged 50 to 69 years (28%) or 70 years and over (19%)

- those with a degree or equivalent (53%) compared with those with no degree qualification (30%)

- men (44%) compared with women (29%)

Figure 4: Adults aged 16 to 29 years, men, and adults with a degree or equivalent are among those more likely to agree that AI will benefit them

Proportion of adults reporting the extent to which they agree or disagree that artificial intelligence (AI) will benefit them, Great Britain, 10 April to 30 June 2024

Figure 4: Adults aged 16 to 29 years, men, and adults with a degree or equivalent are among those more likely to agree that AI will benefit them

Proportion of adults reporting the extent to which they agree or disagree that artificial intelligence (AI) will benefit them, Great Britain, 10 April to 30 June 2024
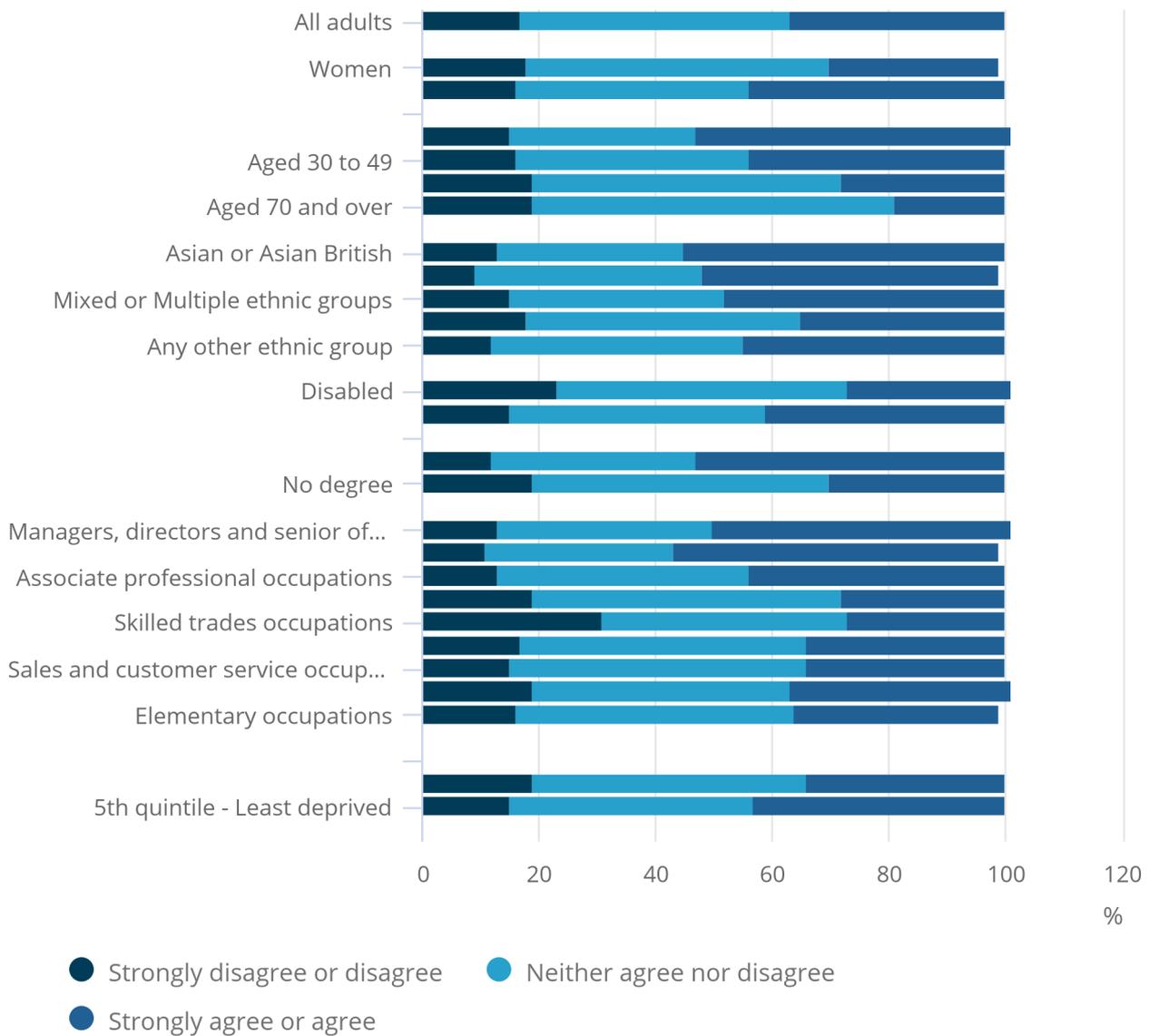
Source: Opinions and Lifestyle Survey from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Question: "To what extent do you agree or disagree that artificial intelligence (AI) will benefit you?".

2. Percentages may not sum to 100% because of rounding.

3. Base: All adults, except for occupation where the base is all adults in employment.

Areas in which people had knowingly used AI in their lives

The most commonly reported areas in which adults had used AI in the past 12 months were in their home (37%), the way they travel (27%), their finances (26%), and in their work or education (25%). Please note that responses relate to informed use and replies assume a level of understanding of AI.

Older adults aged 70 years and over were more likely to say that they had not knowingly used AI in the past 12 months (54%) compared with all adults (31%).

Younger adults aged 16 to 29 years were more likely to report using AI for their work or education (44%) compared with all adults (25%). Those aged 30 to 49 years were more likely to report using AI in their home (45%) compared with all adults (37%); for travel (31% compared with 27%); and for their finances (31% compared with 26%).

Adults who were managers, directors, or senior officials (42%) were more likely than all adults (26%) to have used AI for their finances.

Adults with a degree or equivalent, or those who were a parent of a dependent child, were more likely to have used AI in a range of settings including their home, travel, finances, or work or education (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Adults were more likely to use AI in their home if they were a parent of a dependent child

Proportion of adults reporting in what areas of their life they had used artificial intelligence (AI), Great Britain, 10 April to 30 June 2024

Notes:

1. Question: "In the past 12 months, in which areas of your life, if any, have you used artificial intelligence (AI)?"

2. Respondents were able to choose more than one option.

3. Base: All adults, except for occupation where the base is all adults in employment.

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AI for work or education

Adults living in London were more likely to have used AI for work or education (34%) compared with 25% of all adults. Adults were also more likely to report this if they worked full-time (36%) compared with part-time (27%).

Those more likely to report that they have used AI for work or education were adults working in professional occupations (51%), managerial directors and senior official roles (46%), or associate professional occupations (37%) compared with adults working in caring, leisure and service occupations (20%) or skilled trades (15%).

Adults working in universities or other grant-funded education establishments (52%) were more likely than those working in local government or council (31%) or in health authorities (31%) to have used AI in work or education.

Figure 6: Full-time workers were more likely to have used AI for work or education than those who work part-time

Proportion of adults reporting they have used artificial intelligence (AI) in their work or education, Great Britain, 10 April to 30 June 2024
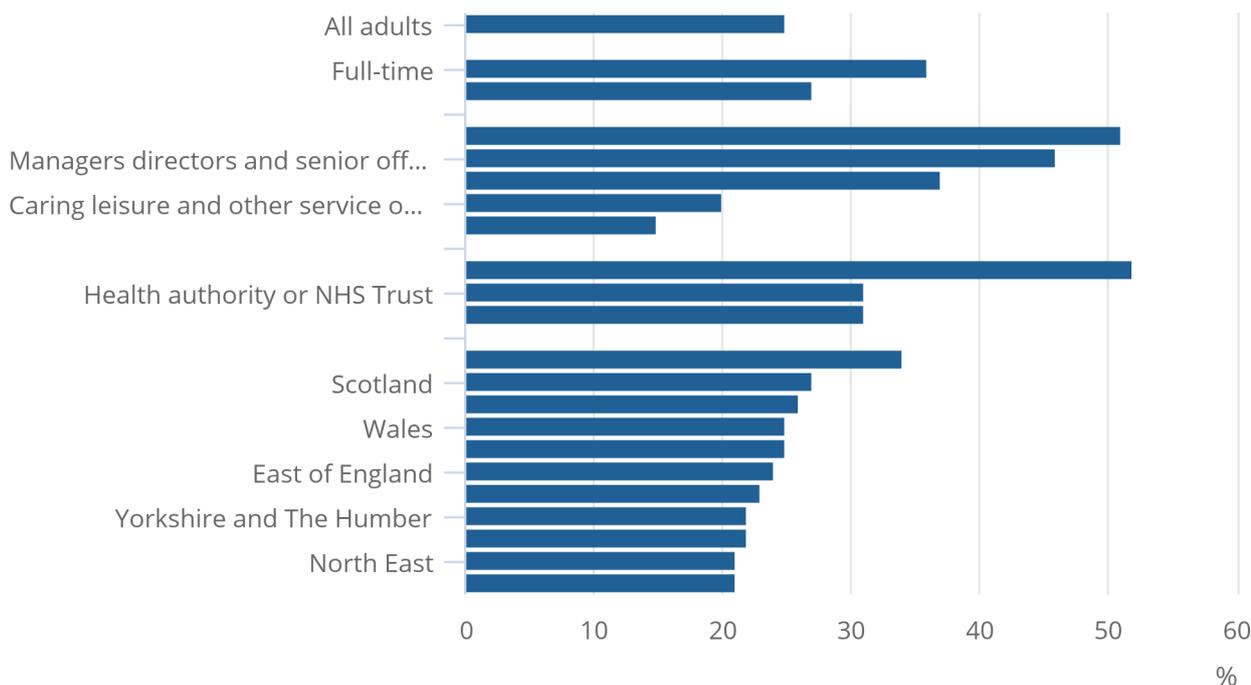
Source: Opinions and Lifestyle Survey from the Office for National Statistics

Notes:

1. Question: In the past 12 months, in which areas of your life, if any, have you used artificial intelligence (AI)?.

2. Base: All adults, except for occupations, sectors and working hours, which are all adults in employment.

3. Not all occupations or sectors are shown.

Actions taken to learn about AI

The majority of adults (65%) reported they have not undertaken any learning on AI in the past 12 months.

Those more likely to report this were:

- retired adults (84%)

- older adults (77% for adults aged 50 to 69 years and 84% for adults aged 70 years and over)

- those working in administrative and secretarial occupations (75%)

- adults without a degree or equivalent qualification (72%)

- women (70%)

The most commonly reported actions taken to learn about AI were adults self-learning in their own time (22%) and adults learning from friends or family (16%).

For those self-learning in their own time (22%), this action was higher for unemployed adults (39%), adults working in professional occupations (37%), those aged 16 to 29 years (37%), adults with a degree or equivalent qualification (35%) and men (30%).

For those learning from friends or family (16%), this action was higher for younger adults aged 16 to 29 years (26%).

Women (18%) were more likely to report taking this action than men (14%). Those with a degree or equivalent qualification (20%) were more likely to report taking this action than those with no degree qualification (15%).

Areas of AI that people would like to know more about

When asked which areas of AI people would like to know more about, commonly reported areas were:

- how AI is regulated (44%)

- how to judge the accuracy of information generated by AI (42%)

- how to recognise when they were using AI (42%)

- AI ethics and responsible use (35%)

Age

Those aged 16 to 29 years were more likely to want to know about how AI is regulated (51%) and about AI ethics and responsible use (42%) than adults aged 70 years and over (37% and 22%, respectively).

Adults aged 50 to 69 years (47%) and aged years 70 and over (45%) were more likely to want to learn how to recognise when they are using AI.

Adults aged 70 years and over were more likely (37%) than other age groups to report that they do not want to know more about AI (Figure 7).

Qualifications

Those with a degree or equivalent qualification were more likely than those with no degree or equivalent qualification to want to know more about:

- how to judge the accuracy of information generated by AI (57% compared with 36%)

- how AI is regulated (55% compared with 39%)

- AI ethics and responsible use (51% compared with 28%)

- what businesses and institutions use AI for (31% compared with 19%)

- how to use AI to find information (24% compared with 20%)

- how AI can help with household tasks (23% compared with 17%)

In contrast, those with no degree level qualification (14%) were more likely than those with a degree or equivalent qualification (10%) to report they would like to learn about what AI is.

Parents

Parents of a dependent child were more likely than adults without a dependent child to report that they wanted to know more about how AI can help with household tasks (26% compared with 17%) and how to use AI to create or share content (16% compared with 9%).

Figure 7: Adults aged under 50 years were more likely to want to know about how AI is regulated, AI ethics and responsible use than those aged 50 years and over

Proportion of adults reporting in what areas of artificial intelligence (AI) they would like to learn about, Great Britain, 10 April to 30 June 2024

Notes:

1. Question: "Which of the following areas of artificial intelligence (AI), if any, would you like to know more about?"

2. Respondents were able to choose more than one option.

3. Base: All adults.

Download the data

5 . Data on public opinions and social trends

[Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: household finances](#)
Dataset | Released 20 September 2024
Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) of people's experiences of changes in their cost of living and household finances in Great Britain.

[Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: personal well-being and loneliness](#)
Dataset | Released 20 September 2024
Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) of personal well-being, loneliness and what people in Great Britain felt were important issues.

[Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: artificial intelligence (AI)](#)
Dataset | Released 20 September 2024
Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) on the public's awareness, opinions and expectations about artificial intelligence (AI).

[Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: artificial intelligence (AI) by personal characteristics](#)
Dataset | Released 20 September 2024
Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) on the public's understanding of artificial intelligence (AI).

[Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: working arrangements](#)
Dataset | Released 20 September 2024
Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) related to the working arrangements of people in Great Britain.

[Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: social mobility](#)
Dataset | Released 20 September 2024
Indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) relating to social mobility and life opportunities across different generations in Great Britain.

6 . Glossary

Deprivation

Deprivation is represented by the [Index of Multiple Deprivation](#) (IMD) and is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas in England. The IMD ranks every small area in England from 1 (most deprived area) to 32,844 (least deprived area).

Deciles are calculated by ranking the 32,844 small areas in England from most deprived to least deprived, and dividing them into 10 equal groups. These range from the most deprived 10 percent of small areas nationally to the least deprived 10 percent of small areas nationally. To ensure robust sample sizes, we have further grouped deciles into quintiles.

Disability status

To define disability, we refer to the [Government Statistical Service (GSS) harmonised "core" definition of disability](#). This identifies "disabled" as a person who has a physical or mental health condition or illness that has lasted or is expected to last 12 months or more that reduces their ability to carry out day-to-day activities. Respondents are asked the GSS harmonised questions in the survey, meaning that disability status is self-reported.

Parental status

In the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN), an adult is defined as a parent if they are the parent of a dependent child living in the household. In this case, dependent children include children and stepchildren.

A dependent child is someone aged under 16 years, or someone who is aged 16 to 18 years, has never been married, and is in full-time education.

Other definitions

Definitions of all breakdowns of estimates used in this bulletin are available in more detail in the Notes tab of our accompanying datasets.

Statistical significance

This bulletin presents the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) data as a summary of results. Further data, including confidence intervals for the estimates shown in the charts presented, are contained in our associated datasets. Where comparisons between groups are presented, 95% confidence intervals should be used to assess the statistical significance of the change. For more information on these terms, see our Uncertainty and how we measure it for our surveys methodology.

7 . Data sources and quality

The analysis in this bulletin is based on adults aged 16 years and over in Great Britain. This is based on two time points. Data referring to the "latest period" are based on 2,254 responding adults for the period 7 August to 1 September 2024.

The analysis in Section 4: Attitudes towards artificial intelligence is based on the period 10 April to 30 June 2024. This comprises responses from 11,755 adults collected during six waves of data collection for the following periods:

- 10 April to 21 April 2024

- 24 April to 6 May 2024

- 8 May to 19 May 2024

- 22 May to 2 June 2024

- 5 June to 16 June 2024

- 19 June to 30 June 2024

Pooling six waves of data together increases sample sizes and allows us to provide estimates among different groups of the population.

Survey weights were applied to make estimates representative of the population, based on our population estimates. Estimates for some groups of the population may be subject to greater uncertainty because of smaller sample sizes for these groups (for example, younger adults).

For all estimates in the datasets, confidence intervals are provided. Where changes in results from previous weeks are presented in this release, or comparisons between estimates are made, associated confidence intervals should be used to assess the statistical significance of the differences.

Further information on the survey design and quality can be found in our Opinions and Lifestyle Survey Quality and Methodology Information (QMI).

8 . Related links

[Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators: 19 September 2024](#)
Bulletin | Released 19 September 2024
Early data on the UK economy and society. These faster indicators are created using rapid response surveys, novel data sources and innovative methods. These are official statistics in development.

[Impact of increased cost of living on adults across Great Britain: July to October 2023](#)
Article | Released 4 December 2023
Analysis of the groups of the population affected by recent increases in the cost of living using data from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey and of the characteristics associated with financial resilience from the Wealth and Assets Survey.

[Private rent and house prices, UK: September 2024](#)
Bulletin | 18 September 2024
The Price Index of Private Rents (PIPR) produces rent price and inflation statistics for the UK, tracking prices paid for new and existing tenancies in the private rental sector. Includes headline UK House Price Index statistics.

[Retail sales, Great Britain: August 2024](#)
Bulletin | Released 20 September 2024
The Retail Sales Index (RSI) is an important economic indicator and one of the earliest short-term measures of economic activity.

[Public awareness, opinions and attitudes towards artificial intelligence: July to October 2023](#)
Article | Released 30 October 2023
An analysis exploring adults' awareness of artificial intelligence (AI) use and attitudes towards the adoption of AI, including benefits and risks.

[Understanding AI uptake and sentiment among people and businesses in the UK: June 2023](#)
Article | Released 16 June 2023
An exploration into the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and how people feel about its uptake in today's society and business.

9 . Cite this statistical bulletin

Office for National Statistics (ONS), released 20 September 2024, ONS website, statistical bulletin, [Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain: August 2024](#)