Office for Product Safety & Standards

OPSS Product Safety and Consumers: Wave 5

Wave 5 research findings

December 2023

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Executive summary

Key findings

Perceptions of safety

- Half of the UK public feel that the UK's regulatory system ensures that products are safe (52%), a slight increase on last wave's low of 49%.
- When buying a product, one in ten (9%) consider product safety, consistent with previous waves. Considering product safety is most likely when purchasing baby products (29%) or toys (17%).
- There has been a fall in the proportion who think the user is responsible for using a product safely (51% W1, 42% W5) or that the manufacturer is responsible for resolving safety issues (62% W1, 52% W5).
- Trust in consumer protection bodies remains high, with three quarters (74%) agreeing that they are trustworthy.

Perceptions of the Office of Product Safety and Standards

- Consistent with previous findings, a majority of UK adults have heard of the OPSS (60%) and a third report that they know something about their work (34%).
- Most of those aware of the OPSS understand that it is a UK government department (61%) - one in seven believe it is a consumer protection body (15%).
- Half of those aware of the OPSS think it is trustworthy in how it operates (50%), but this is a downward trend driven by increased uncertainty (24%). This pattern of declining trust is seen across most other organisations asked about.
- There has been no change in perceived effectiveness at the overall level, with just under half of those aware (48%) thinking the OPSS is effective.
- The most common word associated with the OPSS remains 'professional' (26%), followed by 'accountable' (21%), 'impartial' (20%), and 'trustworthy' (19%).

A focus on online purchasing

- Three-fifths of consumers report that a product purchased in the last 6 months was bought online (59%) – a return to the proportions seen in wave three (58%).
- General attitudes towards online shopping are broadly consistent with previous waves, with four-fifths (81%) thinking the seller is responsible for ensuring the safety of a product bought online.
- There has been a small fall in the proportion who care about the location of the seller (64%), but this is a return to previous levels after a slight rise in wave three (67%).
- Two thirds continue to feel concerned about the safety of products on online marketplaces from outside the UK/ EU (65%).

Experiences of safety issues

- Of respondents who bought a product within the last 6 months, 11% report experiencing a safety issue of some kind.
- Those who bought changing tables (25%), baby carriers (23%), musical instruments (23%), and gas appliances (22%) are the most likely to have a safety issue.
- Issues with baby products are reported as the most serious by respondents (average severity of 5.6 out of 10).

- Distress or increased stress is the most common impact from a safety issue with a product (21%), with the exception of 'none of the above' (57%).
- Of those who experienced physical harm due to a safety issue, 34% needed no form of aid. 31% needed first aid and 11% required urgent medical attention.
- Consistent with previous waves, respondents are most likely to take any action as a result of a safety issue with a baby product (87%).

Perceptions and experiences of product recall

- Awareness of product recalls is no longer falling as it was previously (58% W1, 53% W2, 50% W3, 54% W5), with young people maintaining the strongest awareness of product recalls.
- Consistent with previous waves, most of the UK public would prefer to be contacted directly about a product recall for something they own – either via the manufacturer (56%) or seller (53%).
- Despite lower awareness in general, the proportion reporting a product they own having been recalled is consistent at one in ten (11%).
- Electrical appliances have replaced large domestic appliances as the most common product recalled (20% compared to 17%).
- Despite the changes in type of product recalled, and source of awareness, the actions taken because of a recall remain consistent with previous waves, with the exception of don't know, which doubled. The most common activity is still to return/ exchange the product (33%).

Perceptions and experiences of product registration

- A third of those who purchase an eligible product register it (32%) and uptake remains highest for large domestic appliances (66%).
- The most common reason for registering a product is still to validate a warranty (74%), a significant increase from wave three (68%).
- The majority of those who register their products do so online (79%), with two fifths (43%) using manufacturers websites and a quarter (26%) using retailer websites.
- Almost all of those who registered a product found the product registration process to be easy (91%).
- The most common reason to not register an eligible product that they did not know they could (39%).
- Those that do not think registration is necessary continue to say there is no benefit to registration (45%).

Background

The Department for Business and Trade (DBT)[1] has policy responsibility for consumer product safety. To that end, the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) was established by the previous Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) in January 2018.

As the national regulator for all consumer products (excluding vehicles, medicines, food), construction products, and for legal metrology, OPSS protects people and places from product-related harm, ensuring consumers and businesses can buy and sell products with confidence.

As OPSS's Product Regulation Strategy 2022-2025 notes, product regulation must align with changing technology, evolving markets, and shifts in the needs of society. It should be informed by an understanding of the real world and real people to reflect differences of need and vulnerability.

Researching consumer attitudes and awareness is key in developing reactive regulation. This survey provides insight on consumer awareness and behaviour, alongside attitudes to policy areas and awareness of policy changes. It also investigates how vulnerable consumers' experiences could differ to identify how vulnerable consumers could be better assisted in matters of product safety. This study works to inform and evidence OPSS's objectives outlined in the OPSS's Product Regulation Strategy 2022-2025.

Aims and objectives

This tracker seeks to build on a body of existing research and evidence in this area, including the Consumer Attitudes to Product Safety study. It aims to benchmark and measure various key objectives of OPSS as well as filling evidence gaps for various policy topics.

Key objectives of this research include:

- To understand and monitor consumers' awareness and attitudes to a range of product safety issues
- To gain new attitudinal insight on OPSS policy areas
- To increase understanding of vulnerabilities and vulnerable groups

To support these objectives, OPSS commissioned YouGov to understand and monitor consumers' awareness and attitudes of product safety, their attitudes towards the product safety regulatory system, and understanding of different organisations concerned with product safety.

This report presents the findings from the fifth wave of tracking, including comparisons against wave one, two, three, and four where applicable. The report also includes an exploration of key topical policy areas including online purchases, the circular economy, eyelash serums/ creams, and personal light electronic vehicles.

The study represents one of the largest of its type and provides invaluable insight into thousands of experiences of how people perceive the safety of products and handle any safety issues they face.

[1] The Department for Business and Trade was established in February 2023, absorbing the OPSS from the former Department of Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)

Approach

The findings are based upon a large-scale representative sample of 10,182 people from across the United Kingdom (UK) collected through online research methods. Fieldwork was carried out between 23rd November and 11th December 2022. A supporting survey of 250 people who are very low or non-internet users was conducted via telephone between 24th November 2022 and 3rd January 2023.

Where appropriate, comparisons have been made with survey data from wave one, two, three and four. Not all sections or questions are asked in every survey. The technical report contains details of wave-on-wave questionnaire design and section inclusion.

The sample sizes and fieldwork dates for all waves of the survey are listed below:

	Online survey	**Offline survey**
Wave one	10,230 UK adults, 17th to 30th November 2020	512 offline adults, 23rd November to 12th December 2020
Wave two	10,296 UK adults, 17th May to 15th June 2021	251 offline adults, 3rd to 28th June 2021
Wave three	10,187 UK adults, 23rd November to 14th December 2021	251 offline adults, 25th November 2021 to 5th January 2022
Wave four	10,156 UK adults, 22nd June to 5th July 2022	252 offline adults, 6th July to 28th July 2022
Wave five	10,182 UK adults 23rd November to 11th December 2022	250 offline adults, 24th November 2022 to 3rd January 2023

Where a question has been asked in more than four waves, only the most recent four waves are included in charts/ graphs.

After the close of the online survey, 4 text-based online focus groups were conducted with survey participants. Groups were split by age and social grade, and included a mix of genders, ethnicities, and locations. There were 9 participants per group, each group lasted 90 minutes. Participants were asked to respond to an open-ended question as part of the recruitment criteria to ensure that participants were able to communicate effectively enough to participate in text-based research. Participants were incentivised via retail vouchers, in line with the MRS Code of Conduct.

Focus groups were conducted in December 2023. 10 follow up interviews were then conducted with participants from the focus groups to get into depth about their Christmas shopping, the cost-of-living crisis, product repairs and recalls. Follow up interviews lasted approx. 30 minutes and were conducted in January 2023.

Guidance on analysis

Blue boxes have been included throughout to highlight findings from the offline sample or demographic analysis from the online survey which particularly involved minority groups.

Unless otherwise stated, figures and data presented are from the online survey. Where two or more groups are discussed, only statistically significant differences to the 95% confidence interval are mentioned. Significance testing is not applied for figures based on

fewer than 50 respondents. Where included, figures based on fewer than 50 respondents are noted and should be treated with caution. Figures based on fewer than 30 respondents are not included or reported upon. All analysis is conducted to two decimal places.

Where a question has been asked for four or more waves, only the most recent four waves are included in charts/ images. Figures in charts/ images may not sum to 100% due to rounding or due to the question allowing multiple selections.

Findings from the low/ non-internet users are noted as “the offline survey” or “offline adults”. Findings are only presented where offline adults report disparate behaviours or notable divergences when compared to the online survey data. These are presented as indicative comparisons only; due to the difference in methodology from the online survey, comparisons are not statistically reliable.

Findings from the qualitative research are noted as “the qualitative research” or “focus groups.” Due to the nature of the qualitative research, no findings are statistically significant.

Throughout the online survey, offline survey, and focus groups, participants were presented with examples of organisations or products, definitions of terms, and visual stimuli where appropriate.

Full methodological details and the full survey materials can be found in the accompanying technical report.

Perceptions of safety

In wave five, questions on perceptions of safety were shown to all respondents (n=10,182). Exact base sizes for specific questions are shown below each chart.

Key findings

- Half of the UK public feel that the UK's regulatory system ensures that products are safe (52%), a slight increase on last wave's low of 49%.
- When buying a product, one in ten (9%) consider product safety, consistent with previous waves. Considering product safety is most likely when purchasing baby products (29%) or toys (17%).
- There has been a fall in the proportion who think the user is responsible for using a product safely (51% W1, 42% W5) or that the manufacturer is responsible for resolving safety issues (62% W1, 52% W5).
- Trust in consumer protection bodies remains high, with three quarters (74%) agreeing that they are trustworthy.

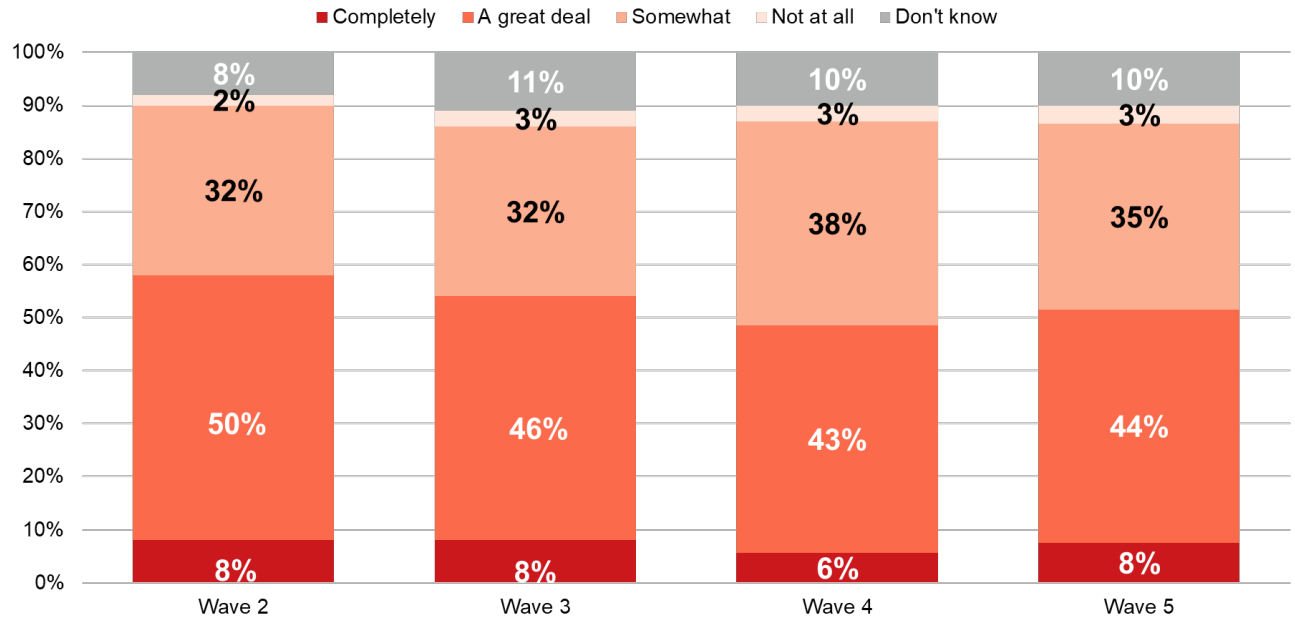
The UK system for regulating product safety

Just over half (52%) of the UK public feel that the current system of product safety regulations ensures that products they purchase are 'completely' or 'a great deal' safe. This has returned to levels seen in wave three (54%) after dropping down slightly in wave four (49%). The proportion who feel that the current system does not ensure safety is consistent at 3%, with the change resulting from fewer people saying they feel that it 'somewhat' ensures safety (35%).

As seen previously, older people are more likely to feel that the UK system for regulating product safety is able to ensure product safety 'completely' or a 'great deal', peaking at 55% for 50 to 64 year olds. Additionally, those in higher social grades (ABC1) are more likely to feel the current system is able to ensure safety completely or a great deal (53%) than those in lower social grades (50%).

The offline population are less likely to report they feel the UK's system for regulating the safety of products is 'completely' or 'a great deal' safe (36%).

Figure 1. Extent that the UK's regulatory system ensures that products are safe



Q: To what extent do you feel that the UK's system for regulating the safety of products ensures that products you purchase are safe?
Base: All respondents (W2=10,296; W3=10,187; W4=10,156, W5=10,182)

Factors that influence perceptions of safety and product purchasing

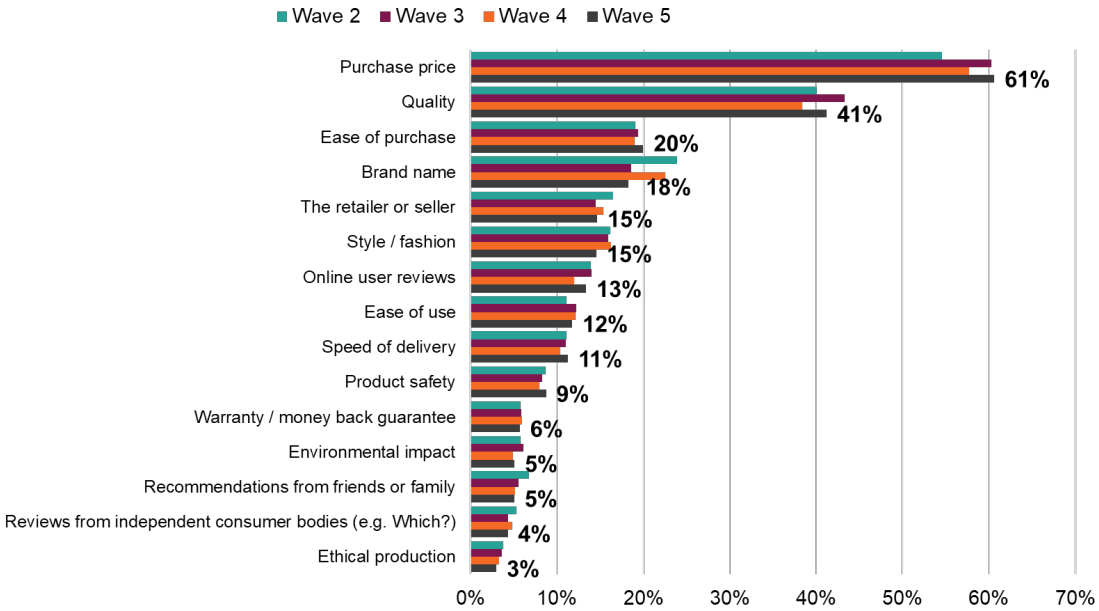
Product safety remains a factor not considered by the majority, with around one in ten reporting they consider this when making a purchase (9%). Women are more likely to consider safety than men (10% for women, 7% for men). Those in the lower social grades (C2DE) are also more likely to consider safety (10%) than those in higher grades (8%).

When asked about the top three features considered when purchasing a product, the purchase price remains the feature most commonly taken into account by the most UK consumers (61%). Quality comes in second, with 41% reporting taking this into account when considering making a purchase. Again we see slight uplift in this after dipping down in wave four (38%) Those with children in their household are less likely to consider quality (38%) as a top three priority than those without children in the household (42%). Those with low educational attainment are less likely to consider quality in their top three priorities than those with medium or high educational attainment (38% for low, 42% for medium, 43% for high educational attainment).

Ethnic minority members of the public are more likely to consider product safety when making a purchase (11%, 9% white).

Those with an ethnic minority background are also less likely to consider the retailer or seller (11%, 15% white) or ease of purchase (17%, 20% white).

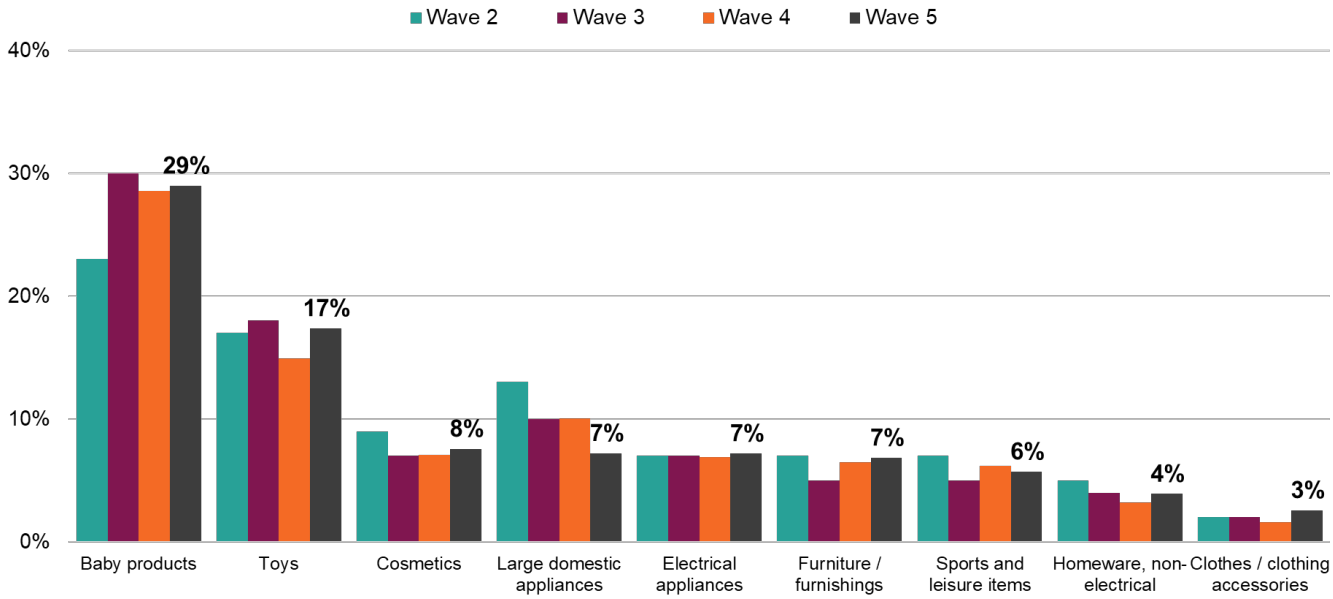
Figure 2. Factors taken into account when considering purchasing a product



Q: Which, if any, of the following did you take into account when you were considering buying the [product]? (Please select the THREE most important factors)
Base: All respondents allocated a product (W5=8,407)

The importance of product safety as a top three consideration varies by the product being considered, with those considering buying baby products most likely to say they would prioritise product safety (29%), followed by those purchasing toys (17%). This is consistent with previous waves. Those considering product safety when thinking about purchasing large domestic appliances has dropped down to just 7% this wave, after being considered by almost twice that (13%) in wave two. Product safety is comparatively less often considered as a top three concern when buying clothes or non-electrical homeware (3% for clothing, 4% for non-electrical homeware).

Figure 3. Importance of product safety in purchase choice by category of product purchased

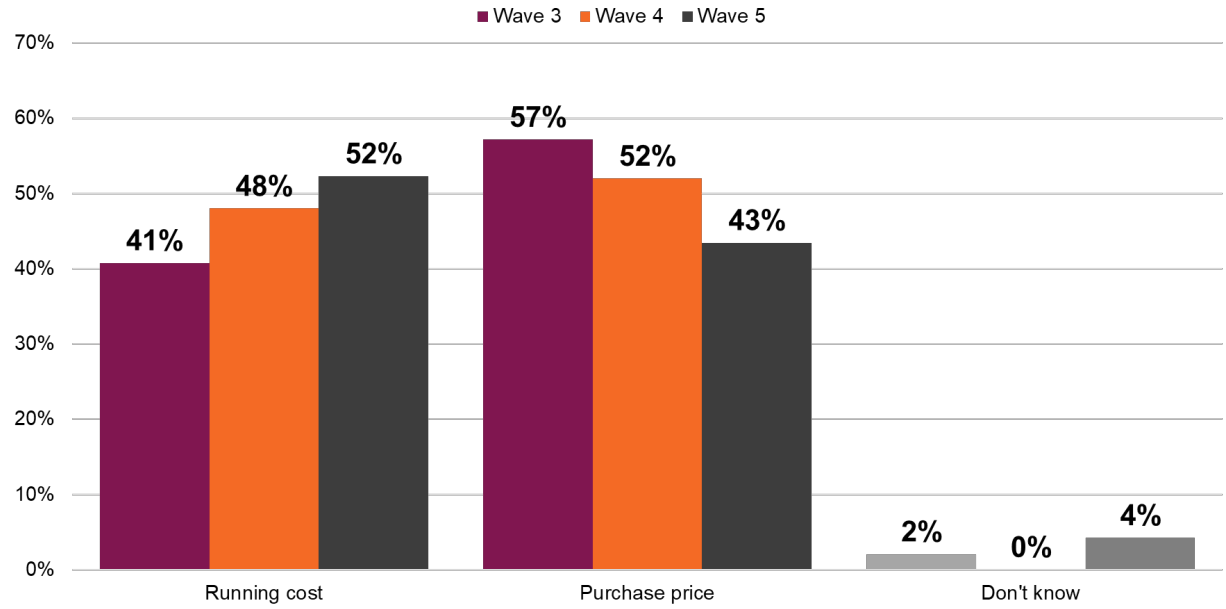


Q: Which, if any, of the following did you take into account when you were considering buying the [product]? (Please select the THREE most important factors)
Base: Asked about a product (in wave five: baby products=464; toys=1,047; large domestic appliances=745; electrical appliances=1,151; cosmetics=1,180; sports and leisure items=864; furniture/ furnishings=1,112; homeware=702; clothes/ clothing accessories=1,142)

When thinking about electrical appliances and large domestic appliances, the running cost is also a prominent factor for consideration. For large domestic appliances, a quarter (23%) of those asked say they considered this before purchasing, whereas for electrical appliances only 6% consider the running costs when considering purchasing. This could be due to large domestic appliances being more heavily used or running constantly in the case of refrigerators.

When those who reported considering both purchase price and running costs when buying, just over half (52%) felt that running cost was the more important of the two considerations. The relative importance of running costs has steadily increased since wave three, overtaking purchase price for the first time when comparing the two directly.

Figure 4. Comparative importance of purchase price and running cost



Q: You previously said they you took both price and running costs into account when buying If you had to choose… Which was most important to you when purchasing this product?
Base: All respondents who identified purchase price and running costs (W3=70; W4=65; W5=138)

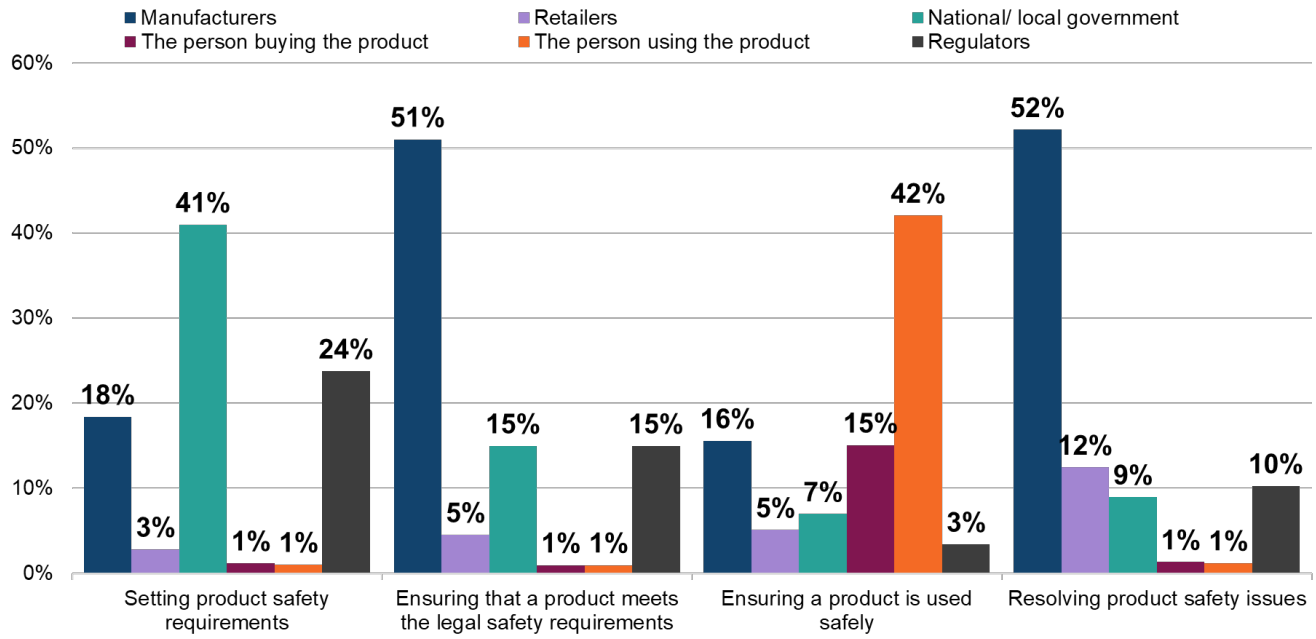
Responsibilities for product safety

The responsibility for product safety is thought to lie with different parties depending on the situation. National/local governments are more often thought of as being responsible for setting product safety requirements (41%), broadly consistent with wave three (39%) but lower than in wave one (47%).

Manufacturers are generally thought to be most responsible for ensuring that a product meets legal safety requirements (51%) and for resolving product safety issues (52%). The latter has seen a decline – three in five thought manufacturers were responsible for resolving product safety issues in wave one (62%), falling to 54% in wave three and now 52%.

There has been an ongoing decline in the proportion who think the person using the product is primarily responsible for ensuring the product is used safely (51% W1, 45% W3, 42% W5). The decline appears to have been driven by a corresponding increase in the proportion not being sure who is responsible (5% W1, 9% W3, 10% W5).

Figure 5. Responsibility for aspects of product safety



Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
Base: All respondents (W5=10,182)

Those aged 50 and over are more likely to feel the national government is responsible for setting product safety requirements, with those in the younger age groups less likely to place responsibility with them (35% 18 to 29, 34% 30 to 49, 40% 50 to 64, 40% 65+). Perception that the national government is responsible for setting product safety standards rises by education level (29% low, 36% medium, 45% high).

Regulators are also thought to have a role to play here, with a quarter feeling they are responsible for setting product safety requirements (24%). This is consistent across age groups, and again there is a rising trend with those who have higher levels of education being more likely to place responsibility for setting product standards with regulators (20% low, 24% medium, 27% High).

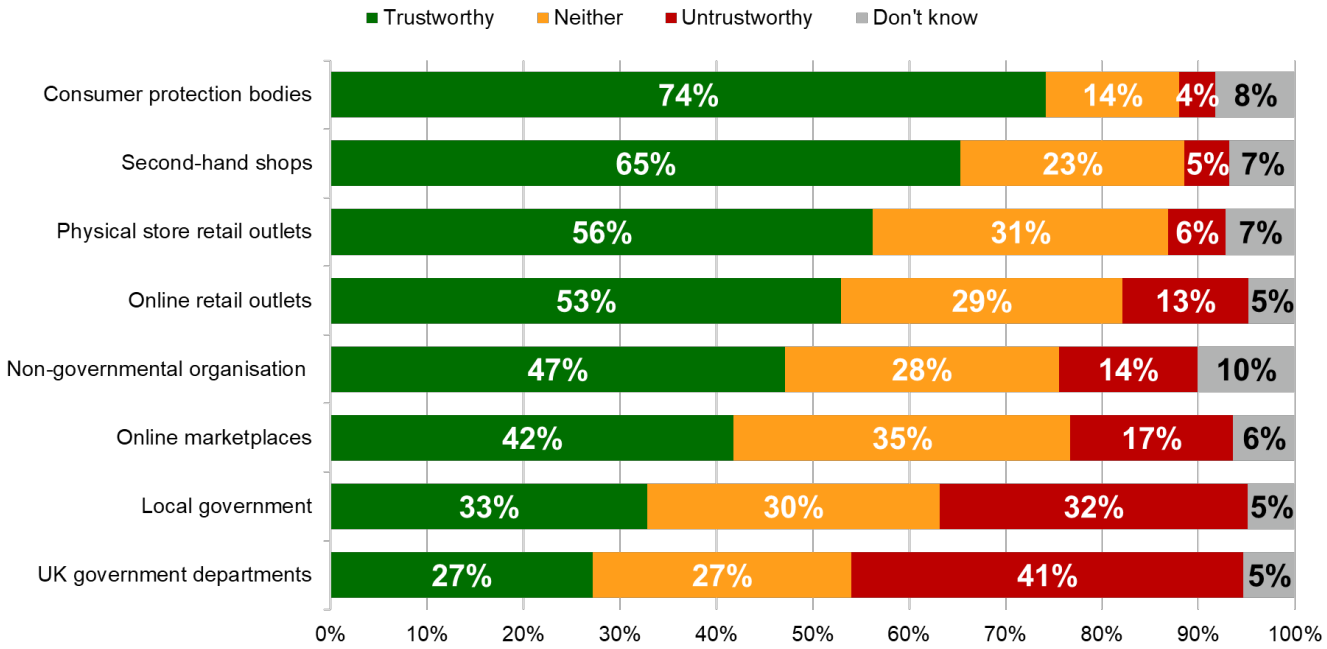
Higher social grades are more likely to believe that regulators are responsible for setting product safety standards (26% ABC1) than those in lower social grades (21% C2DE).

Trust in organisations associated with product safety

The UK public were asked how trustworthy or not they feel organisations relating to product safety are, including consumer protection bodies, retailers, government departments and other non-governmental organisations.

Trust is highest for consumer protection bodies (74%). This is maintained from the last wave (74%) after dropping down from a high point in wave one (79%). Retail outlets have a high level of trust, with second-hand shops most likely to be seen as trustworthy (65%), and over half of the UK public also feel that physical store retail outlets and online retail outlets are trustworthy (56% for physical outlets, 53% for online outlets). Online marketplaces are seen as less trustworthy, with 42% feeling they're trustworthy and 35% saying they are neither trustworthy nor untrustworthy.

Figure 6. Levels of trust in different organisations



Q: Of the following types of organisations, in general how trustworthy or not do you think each are in how they operate towards you?
Base: All respondents (W1=10,230; W3=10,187; W4=10,156, W5=10,182)

Those aged 18 to 29 are least likely to trust online retail outlets (48% agree they are trustworthy). This is similar for online marketplaces, where those under 50 are significantly more likely to consider these untrustworthy than the older age groups (22% 18 to 29; 17% 30 to 49; 14% 50 to 64; 14% 65+).

At a total level, there are lower levels of trust in governmental bodies, including local government (33%) and UK government departments (27%) – but both are broadly in line with the proportions seen in wave four. Trust in UK government departments is higher amongst high social grades (30% for ABC1, 24% for C2DE).

Men are more likely to trust UK government departments (25% of women, 29% of men) while women are more likely to feel consumer protection bodies are trustworthy (76% of women, 72% of men).

Trust is also higher for those from an ethnic minority (30%, 27% white).

Perceptions of the Office for Product Safety and Standards

In wave five, questions on the Office for Product Safety and Standards were first shown to all respondents (n=10,182), and then to those who were aware of the OPSS (n=3,347). Exact base sizes for specific questions are shown below each chart.

Key findings

- Consistent with previous findings, a majority of UK adults have heard of the OPSS (60%) and a third report that they know something about their work (34%).
- Most of those aware of the OPSS understand that it is a UK government department (61%), but one in seven believe it is a consumer protection body (15%).
- Half of those aware of the OPSS think it is trustworthy in how it operates (50%), but this is a downward trend driven by increased uncertainty (24%). This pattern of declining trust is seen across most other organisations asked about.
- There has been no change in perceived effectiveness at the overall level, with just under half of those aware (48%) thinking the OPSS is effective.
- The most common word associated with the OPSS remains 'professional' (26%), followed by 'accountable' (21%), 'impartial' (20%), and 'trustworthy' (19%).

Awareness of OPSS

Consistent with wave one and three, a majority of UK adults have at least heard of the Office of Product Safety and Standards (60%). Similarly, around a third report that they *know* something about the OPSS and their work (34%) – this is broadly consistent with wave one (33%) and wave three (31%), when the question was previously asked.

Awareness of the Department of Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)[2] has grown, now around two thirds of UK adults report that they have heard of the department (65%). This is mostly driven by those who have 'heard of, but know nothing about' BEIS – rising from 27% in both wave one and three, now 31% of UK adults. Knowledge of BEIS is on par with OPSS, with one in three reporting that they know about BEIS and its work (34%).

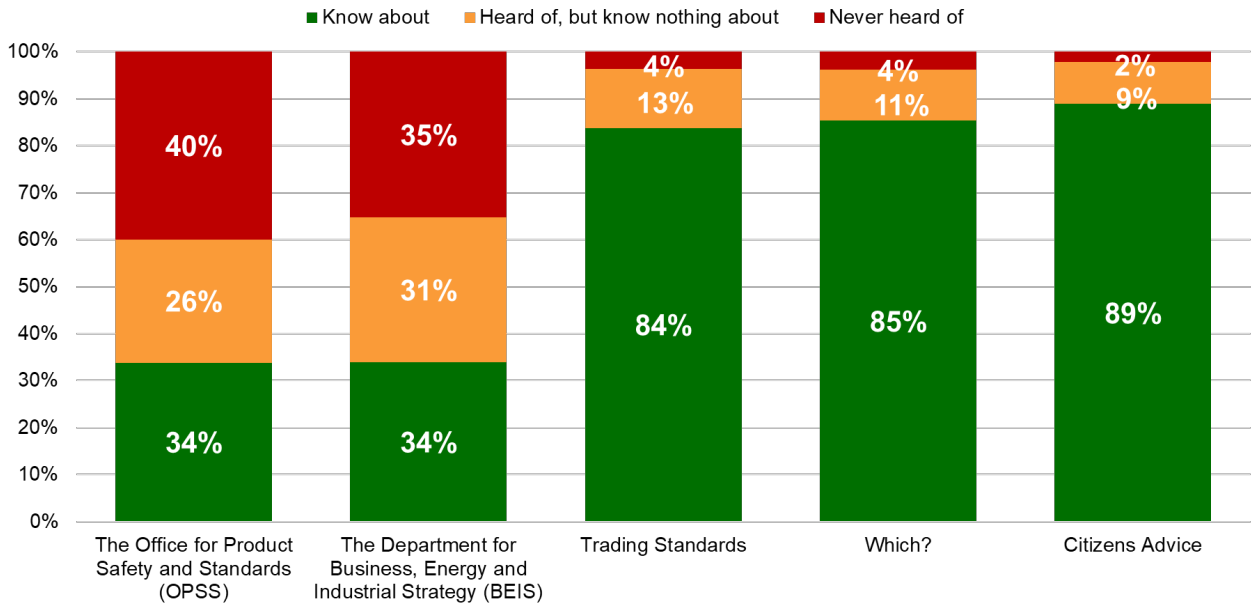
Of those who are aware of the OPSS, the majority understand it is a UK government department (61%). However, one in seven think it is a consumer protection body like Citizens Advice or Which? (15%). Knowing the OPSS is a government department increases with age – only half (47%) of those under 30 chose this, compared to 71% of those aged 65+.

[2] The wave five fieldwork was conducted from November 2022 to January 2023, before the Department of Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy was dissolved.

Offline adults are more likely than the general population to think the OPSS is a consumer protection body (38% vs 15%).

Adults from an ethnic minority background are the most likely to think the OPSS is a charity (8% vs 2% white respondents).

Figure 7. Awareness of organisations (wave five)

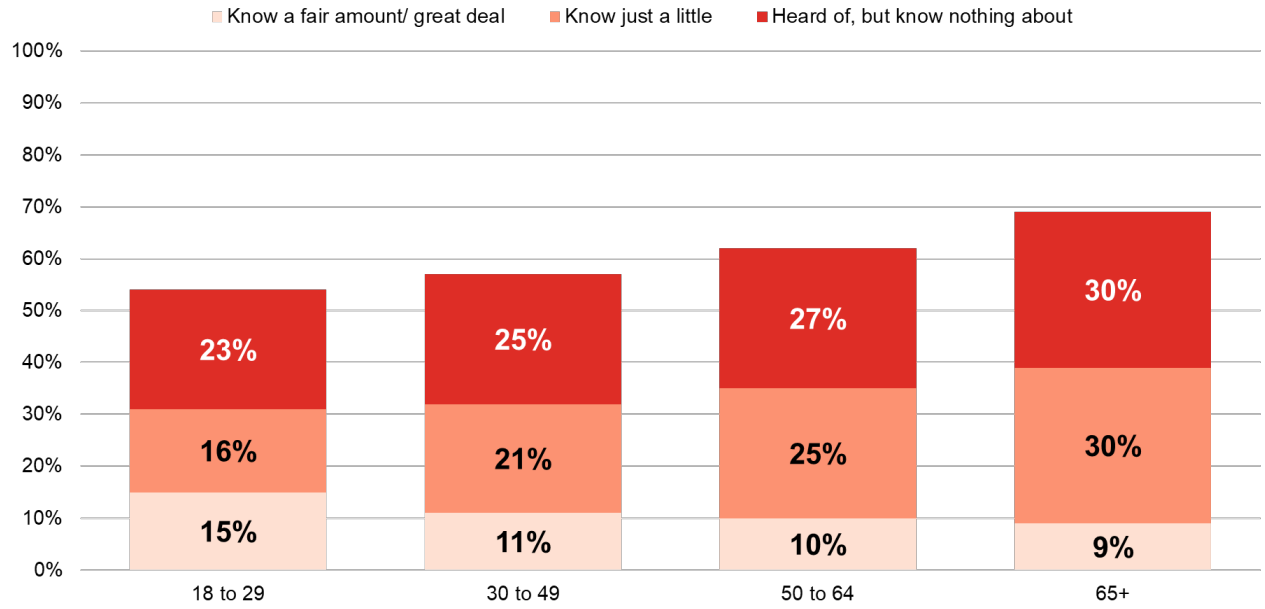


Q: How much, if anything, would you say you know about the following organisations and their work?
Base: All respondents (W5=10,182)

Knowledge of consumer organisations remains higher than government departments with over eight in 10 reporting familiarity with the work of Trading Standards (84%); Which? (85%), and Citizens Advice (89%). However, awareness of consumer organisations may be falling as all three see significantly lower levels of knowledge than in wave one – with Trading Standards (88% W1, 85% W3, 84% W5) and Which? (89% W1, 86% W3, 85% W5) seeing sharper falls than Citizens Advice (91% W1, 90% W3, 89% W5).

In line with the previous waves, older respondents are more likely to be aware of OPSS with 69% of those aged 65 and over reporting awareness compared to 54% of 18 to 29 year olds. However, in-depth knowledge is the opposite – knowing a fair amount/ great deal about the OPSS and its work is highest for younger respondents and declines with age, while older respondents are more likely to report that they know ‘just a little’. In wave one, there was no such variation by age, but this trend of younger respondents having more in-depth knowledge was also present in wave three (12% 18-29, 10% 30-49, 8% 50-64, 9% 65+).

Figure 8. Awareness of the OPSS, by age (wave five)



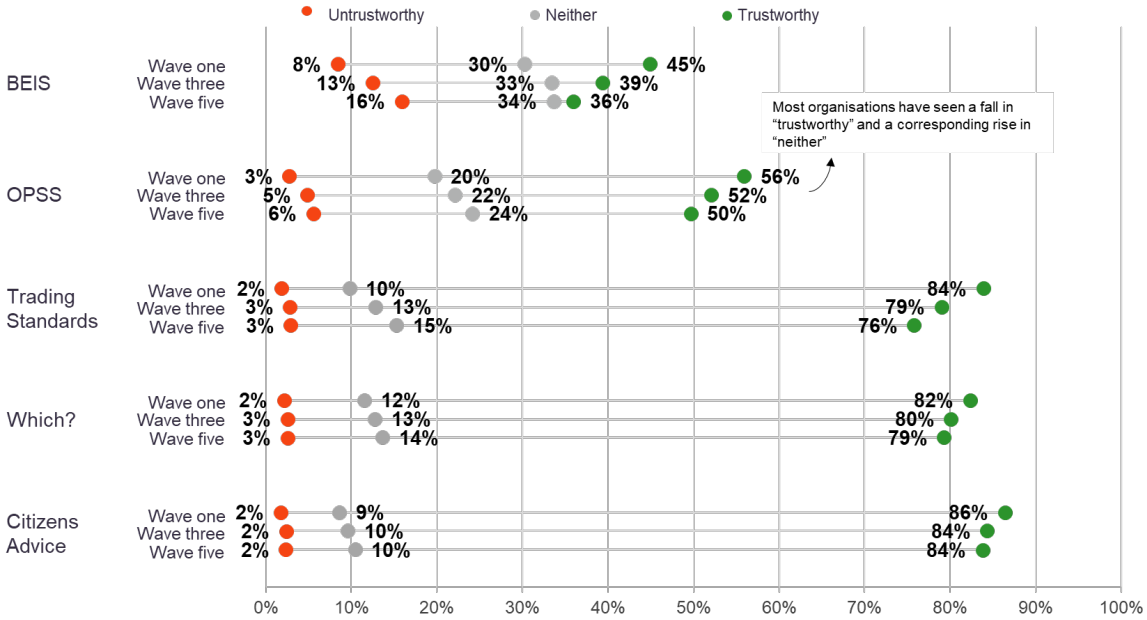
Q: How much, if anything, would you say you know about the following organisations and their work?
Base: All respondents in wave 5 (18 to 29=1,995; 30 to 49=3,434; 50 to 64=2,540; 65+=2,213)

Trust in OPSS

Among those aware of the OPSS, half think that it is trustworthy in how it operates (50%). However, this is a decline compared to wave one (56%) but not significantly down compared to wave three (52%). There has been a corresponding rise compared to wave one in the proportion who think OPSS is neither trustworthy nor untrustworthy in how it operates – and this pattern of declining trust with increasing ambivalence is common across most organisations asked about.

The Department of Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and OPSS both see a marked rise in the proportion who think it operates in an untrustworthy way – now double the proportions from wave one (BEIS: 8% W1, 16% W5; OPSS: 3% W1, 6% W5).

Figure 9. Organisations perceived as trustworthy/ untrustworthy



Q: Of the following organisations, in general how trustworthy or not do you think each are in how they operate? ('Don't know' not shown)
Base: All who know of organisation: OPSS (W1=3,314; W3=3,124; W5=3,347); Citizens Advice (W1=9,280; W3=9,131; W5=9,064); BEIS (W1=3,241; W3=3,185; W5=3,393); Trading Standards (W1=8,932; W3=8,621; W5=8,525); Which? (W1=9,073; W3=8,813; W5=8,739)

The decline in trust in the OPSS and trust in BEIS are driven by different groups – for BEIS, there is a clear age trend as older respondents are more likely to have seen trust wane (65+: 45% W1, 38% W3, 34% W5) than younger respondents (18-29: 44% W1, 45% W3, 43% W5). For OPSS, the decline is seen across most age groups, but those aged 30 to 49 are the most likely to have changed their perspective (55% W1, 49% W3, 47% W5), while there has been little change in the opinion of those aged 50 to 64 (57% W1, 57% W3, 54% W5).

Consistent with previous waves, around half of white adults or ethnic minority adults think the OPSS is trustworthy (both 50%) – however, those from an ethnic minority are more likely to say the OPSS is untrustworthy (9% vs 5%) while white respondents are more unsure (17% vs 21%).

Effectiveness of OPSS

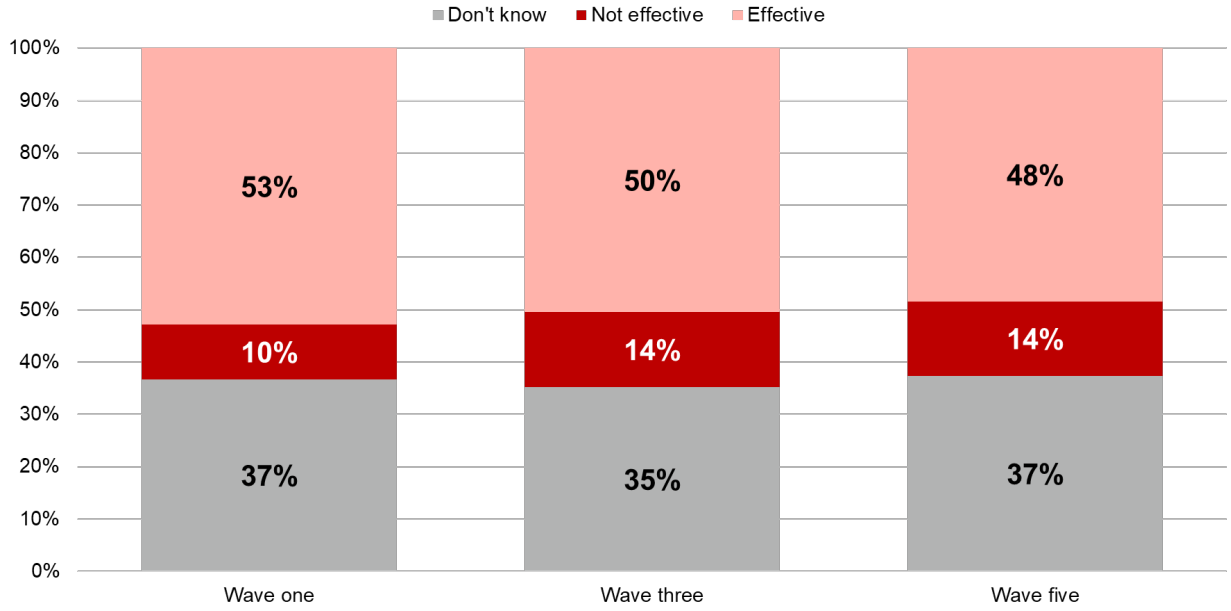
Just under half of those aware of the OPSS (48%) consider their work to be effective, while only one in seven (14%) think their work is not effective. However, the proportion of those who believe the OPSS is effective has been slowly waning and is now significantly lower than in wave one (53%).

The decline in perceived effectiveness is seen across a range of demographics, including women (53% W1, 51% W3, 46% W5), those aged 30 to 49 (54% W1, 52% W3, 47% W5), and lower social grades (C2DE: 56% W1, 52% W3, 50% W5).

Almost two-thirds of offline adults (64%) think the OPSS is effective, much more than the general population (48%).

There has been a marked increase in the proportion of 18 to 29 year olds who think the OPSS is not effective (13% W1, 19% W3, 23% W5). There has also been a smaller rise amongst women (8% W1, 11% W3, 13% W5). These demographic shifts have not yet had an impact on overall perceived ineffectiveness - there was an increase between wave one and wave three, but the total proportion has not changed between wave three and five.

Figure 10. Effectiveness of the work of OPSS



Q: How effective or not do you think the work of The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) is?
Base: All respondents who know of OPSS (W1=3,314; W3=3,124; W5=3,347)

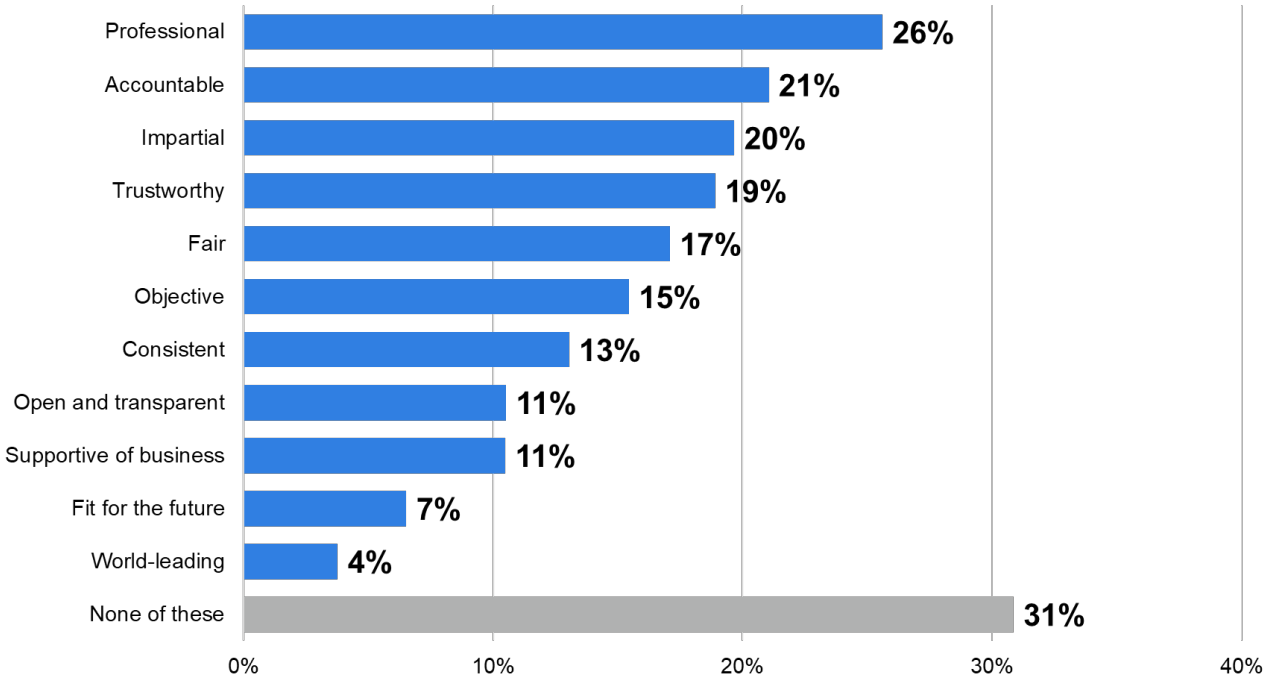
Associations with OPSS

There have been no overall changes in the words associated with the OPSS – the top word remains 'professional' with a quarter of those who know of the OPSS choosing this (26%). This is then followed by around a fifth choosing 'accountable' (21%), 'impartial' (20%), and 'trustworthy' (19%). Three in ten choose 'none of these' (31%) – indicating that no word on the list reflects their perception of the OPSS.

As in previous waves, all associations are significantly higher for those who report thinking that UK government departments are generally trustworthy in the way they operate. Among those who trust UK government departments, there has been a significant rise in seeing the OPSS as 'consistent' (13% W1, 15% W3, 19% W5).

In line with previous waves, the offline population are more likely than the online survey to think the OPSS is fair (39% vs 17%).

11 Figure 11. Word association with OPSS



Q: Which of the following words, if any, do you most associate with how the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) operates?
Base: All respondents who know of OPSS (W5=3,347)

There has been a slow decline amongst adults with a disability in thinking the OPSS is impartial (22% W1, 21% W3, 18% W5) or trustworthy (20% W1, 19% W3, 17% W5).

A focus on online purchasing

In wave five, questions on online purchasing were shown to all respondents (n=10,182). Exact base sizes for specific questions are shown below each chart.

Key findings

- Three-fifths of consumers report that a product purchased in the last 6 months was bought online (59%) – a return to the proportions seen in wave three (58%).
- General attitudes towards online shopping are broadly consistent with previous waves, with four-fifths of respondents (81%) thinking the seller is responsible for ensuring the safety of a product bought online.
- There has been a small fall in the proportion who care about the location of the seller (64%), but this is a return to previous levels after a slight rise in wave three (67%).
- Two thirds continue to feel concerned about the safety of products on online marketplaces from outside the UK/ EU (65%).

Perceptions around safety when purchasing online

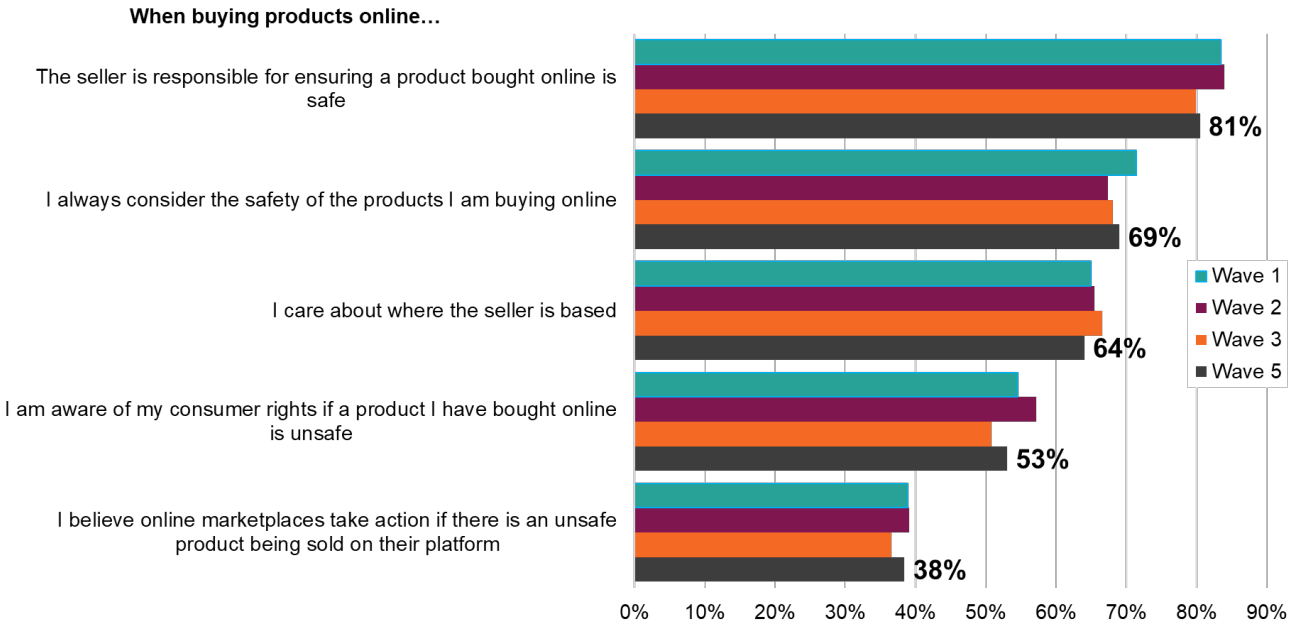
In wave five, three-fifths of those who purchased a product in the last six months said they did so online (59%). This is a return to the proportions previously seen in wave three (58%) after a drop in reported online purchase in wave four (55%).

Similarly, general attitudes towards buying products online have not changed greatly since they were last evaluated in wave three. Four-fifths of the general public think the seller is responsible for ensuring a product bought online is safe (80% W3, 81% W5).

Offline adults are much less likely than the general public to think the seller is responsible for ensuring a product bought online is safe (64% vs 81%).

There has been a slight fall in the proportion who care about where the seller is based (67% W3, 64% W5), but this is broadly a return to levels seen in wave one and wave two (both 65%). The decline has been driven by women in lower social grades (67% W3, 61% W5) and adults with a low level of education (65% W3, 59% W5).

Figure 12. Attitudes towards buying products online



Q: For the following question please think about when you are buying products online…To what extent, if at all, do you agree with the following statements?
Base: All respondents [in online section]: (W2=5,161; W3=5,096; W5=10,182)

When asked directly about the risk of a product purchased from outside the UK/ EU through an online marketplace being unsafe, there has been no change in the level of concern. Two-thirds continue to feel concerned about the product being unsafe (67% W1, 65% W2, 65% W3, 65% W5) while a fifth are not concerned about the product's safety (20% W1, 21% W2, 20% W3, 21% W5).

Experiences of safety issues

In wave four, questions on experiences of safety issues were initially shown to all respondents who had bought a product in the last 6 months (n=7,577), and then subsequently to those who experienced a safety issue (n=717). Exact base sizes for specific questions are shown below each chart.

Key findings

- Of respondents who bought a product within the last 6 months, 11% report experiencing a safety issue of some kind.
- Those who bought changing tables (25%), baby carriers (23%), musical instruments (23%), and gas appliances (22%) are the most likely to have a safety issue.
- Issues with baby products are reported as the most serious by respondents (average severity of 5.8 out of 10).
- Distress or increased stress is the most common impact from a safety issue with a product (21%), with the exception of 'none of the above' (57%).
- Of those who experienced physical harm due to a safety issue, 34% needed no form of aid. 31% needed first aid and 11% required urgent medical attention.
- Consistent with previous waves, respondents are most likely to take action as a result of a safety issue with a baby product (87%).

Seriousness of safety issues

Out of those who bought a product within the last 6 months, one in ten (11%) experienced a safety issue of some kind. This is in line with previous waves. The most common products with which to have a safety issue, from the options provided, in wave five are within the baby products category, this is in line with previous waves.

The top product to have a safety issue is a changing table (18% W1, 23% W2, 13% W3, 27% W4, 25% W5). This is followed by baby carriers (10% W1, 8% W2, 13% W3, 23% W4, 23% W5), musical instruments (6% W1, 18% W2, 14% W3, 13% W4, 24% W5), then gas appliances (23% W4, 22% W5) . In previous waves, issues with baby monitors were more frequently reported - in this wave safety issues with baby monitors have reduced, although this difference is not significant given the small sample sizes (7% W1, 9% W2, 16% W3, 21% W4, 13% W5).

Offline respondents were significantly more likely to have no safety issues (99%) compared to the online respondents (89%).

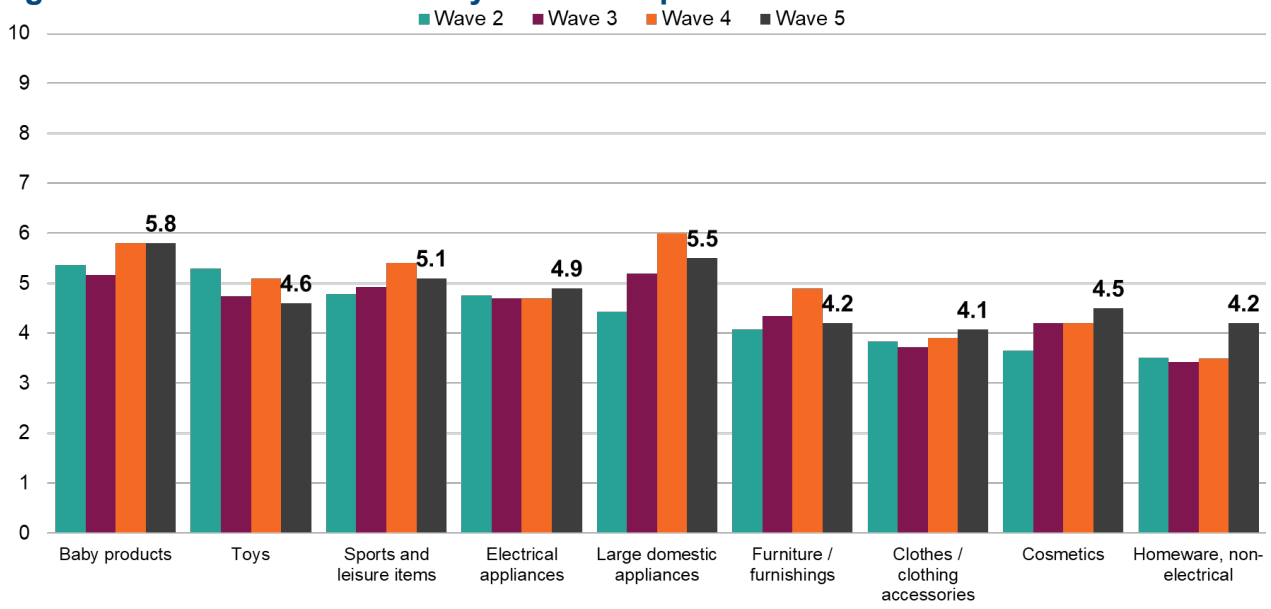
There has been no significant change in the seriousness of safety issues, with wave four and five having a mean of 4.7 on a ten-point scale (where 10 is the most serious), and comparative to 4.6 in wave three and 4.3 in wave two. However, the previous decreasing trend in the percentage of those who said the issue was less serious has continues into wave five, with 36% saying the issue was less serious, significantly less than 46% in wave two. This reduction has been steady from 40% in wave three and 37% in wave four.

Safety issues with baby products are consistently considered to be more serious (5.8) than safety issues with most other products.

Respondents with older children in their household (aged over 18) were significantly more likely to consider their safety issue as not serious (36%), when compared to respondents with children under five in the household (21%).

Those with no children in their household were more likely to report that safety issues were not serious (43%), compared to those with any children in the household (25%).

Figure 13. Seriousness of safety issue with product



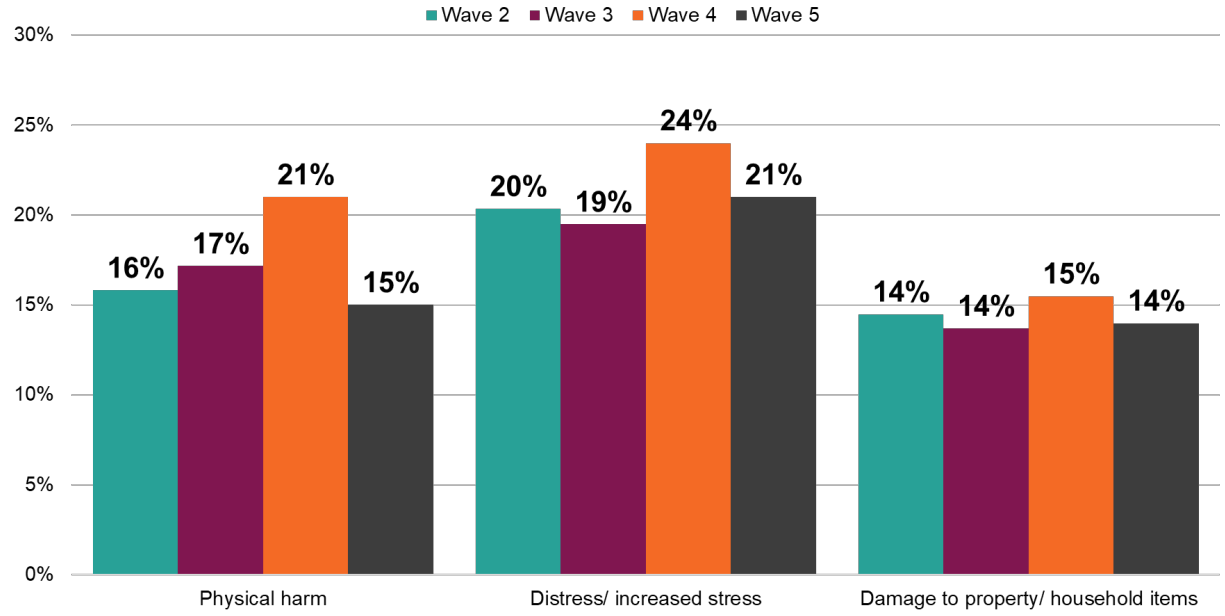
Q. Thinking about the safety issue you had with the following product…Please consider a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 represents the least serious type of issue you could face and 10 represents the most serious. What number best represents the seriousness of the issue?
Base: All who experienced a safety issue with a listed product: (in wave five: baby products=75; toys=75; large domestic appliances=75; electrical appliances=141; cosmetics=122; sports and leisure items=86; furniture/ furnishings=102; homeware=58; clothes/ clothing accessories=180)

Impact of safety issues

There is a significant increase in the proportion of those who say their safety issue had no serious impacts in wave five compared to wave four, bringing the proportion more in line with previous waves (56% W1; 56% W2; 56% W3; 48% W4; 57% W5). The impact to decrease the most in wave five is physical harm (15% W1; 16% W2; 17% W3; 21% W4; 15% W5), which is a significant decrease from wave four, but more in line with wave three. This decrease is driven by older respondents (22% 18 to 29, 15% 30 to 49, 11% 50 to 64, 5% 65+).

This results in distress/increased stress (21%), being the most common effect of the safety issues in wave five, behind none of the above (57%). Despite None of the above being a significant increase from the previous wave (W5 57% vs W4 48%), it is in line with wave three, wave two and wave one (all 56%).

Figure 14. Effects of the safety issue



Q. You said you experienced a safety issue with the following product: product … Did that safety issue cause any of the following?
Base: All who experienced a safety issue with a listed product (W2=783; W3=721; W4=691; W5=893)

Of those who experienced physical harm due to a safety issue with a product, a third (34%) needed no form of aid. 31% needed first aid, 15% needed non-urgent medical attention and 11% required urgent medical attention.

Out of those who experienced property damage due to a safety issue with a product, there was a significant increase in those saying dents and scratches (42%). This was followed by electrical damage (33%) and smoke and fire damage (both 25%). Over a quarter (28%) of those who had a safety issue which resulted in property damage estimated the cost of the damage to be £1-£100, with the majority (55%) being unsure of the value of the damage and repairs.

Respondents were asked to provide more detail of their safety issue with the product. They were asked to describe the circumstances that lead to the safety issue, what the issue was, who was affected by the safety issue and whether any healthcare was needed as a result of the safety issue. In figure 15, an indicative selection of explanations given by respondents about their safety issues is provided.

Figure 15. Open response safety issues in detail

Product type	Circumstances that led to the safety issue	What was the safety issue?	Who was affected?	Healthcare needed?
Large domestic appliance	*"Preheating of oven."*	*"Automatic cut off of pre temperature not accurate."*	*"My Wife."*	*"No healthcare, upset stomach"*
Clothes/ clothing	*"Part of the fastening mechanism on the shoe did not operate properly so would become disconnected repeatedly and dangle causing a trip hazard"*	*"The dangling mechanism and loose shoe led to a trip hazard"*	*"My toddler"*	*"First aid, plaster, anti-septic, wound cleaning"*
Electrical appliances	*"The wires were loose."*	*"It caused electrical damage and give ne an wlectric* [electric] *shock"*	*"Me"*	*"A&E visit for high heart rate and static hair"*
Homeware, non -electrical	*"Preparing dinner"*	*"Cracked plates"*	*"Cut my hand, grabbing as plate fell apart while carrying"*	*"Plaster, antiseptic cream"*
Toys	*"the fabric on the toy fell off"*	*"my grandchild had bits of fabric in his mouth"*	*"my grandchild"*	*"none."*
Baby products	*"I bought a car seat online from Boots. It was a Mothercare brand."*	*"The carry handle was broken and unable to be fixed. Luckily we realised while I was still pregnant so we had not used it with our baby in it."*	*"Me."*	*"None."*

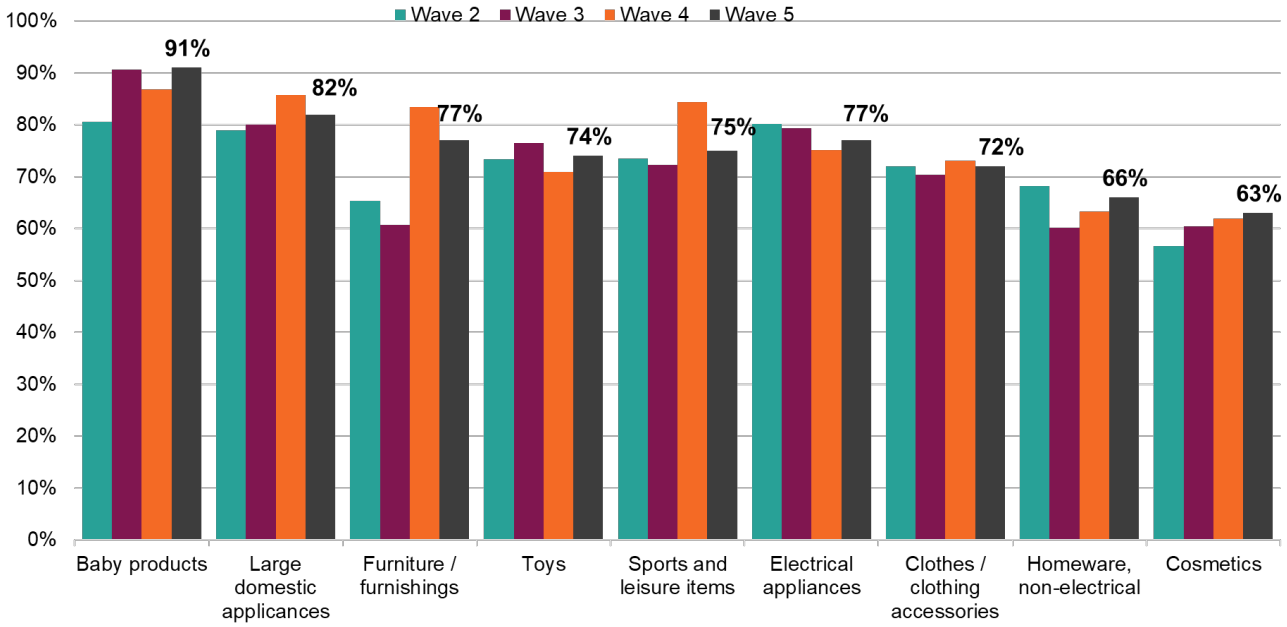
Q. We are interested in learning more about the safety issue you experienced…Please describe, in as much detail as possible what happened (e.g. what circumstances led to the safety issue, what was the issue, who was affected, if healthcare was needed) Base: All who experienced a safety issue (W5=893)

Actions as a result of safety issues

Of those who experience a safety issue with a product, the majority (74%) report they took action in some form as a result of the safety issue. Issues with baby products were most likely to have action taken (91%) which is understandable as safety issues with these products were considered to be more serious, as shown in figure 13. However, despite issues with cosmetics being seen as serious, they were the least likely product to have action taken as a result of the safety issue (63%). The proportion who took action as a result of a safety issue overall has remained consistent with previous waves (75% W1, 71% W2, 71% W3, 75% W4, 74% W5).

Younger respondents aged 18-29, are more likely to take any action (80%), compared to older age groups (30-49 75%, 50-64 71%, 65+ 67%). This is particularly driven by younger respondents being more likely to allow the manufacturer to make modifications (18-29 17%, 30-49 10%, 50-643%, 65+2%).

Figure 16. Proportion who took action, by product category of the safety issue

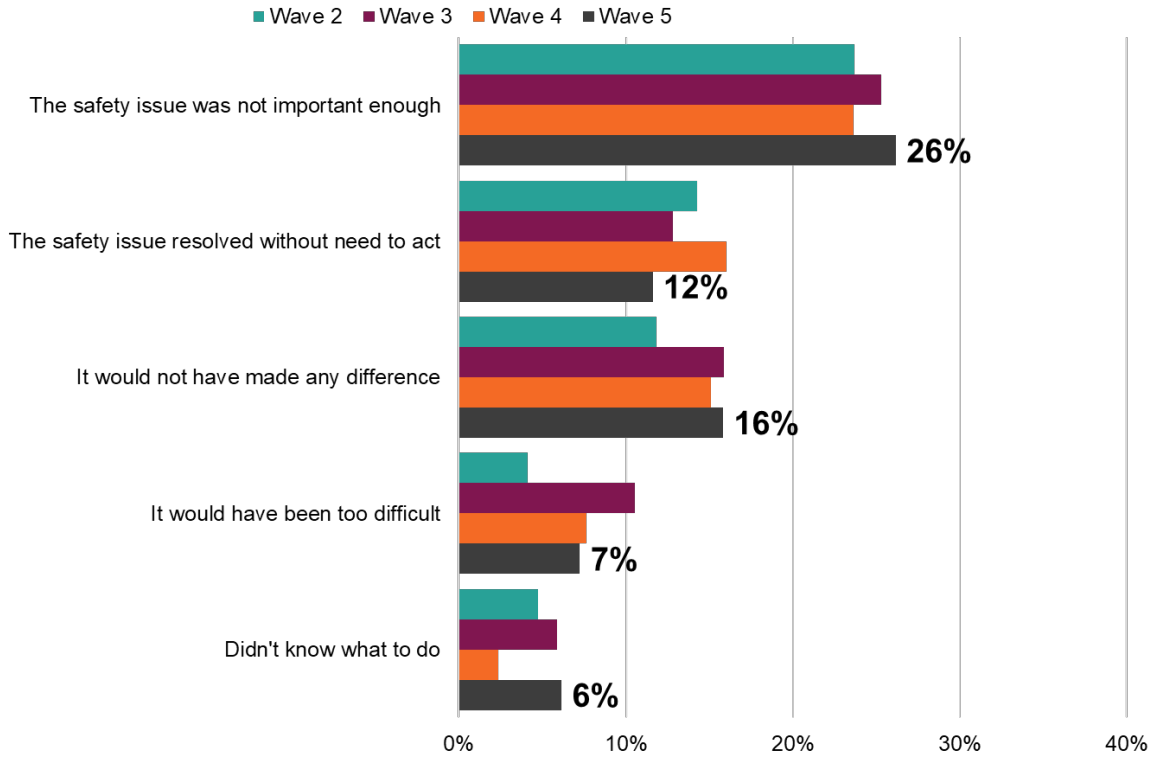


Q. Which of the following actions did you take after becoming aware of the safety issue with the product?
Base: All who experienced a safety issue with a listed product: (in wave five: baby products=75; toys=75; large domestic appliances=75; electrical appliances=141; cosmetics=122; sports and leisure items=86; furniture/ furnishings=102; homeware=58; clothes/ clothing accessories=180)

Consistent with previous waves, the most common action taken by those who have a safety issue is to return/ refund the product (21%). This is followed by complaining to where the respondent bought it from (18%) and trying to fix it myself (16%).

Those who had a safety issue with furniture or furnishings were the most likely to complain to where they bought it from (23%), followed by those who had a cosmetics safety issue, or an issue with a baby product (both 21%). The product where people were least likely to take any action after a safety issue was clothes/ clothing accessories (26%).

Figure 17. Reason not taken as a result of product safety issue



Q. Which, if any, of the following best explain why you decided not to take any action?
Base: All who experienced a safety issue, but did not take action (W5=162)

A quarter of those who took no action, said they did not because the safety issue was not important enough to do so (26%), which is broadly consistent with previous waves. However, 16% said they did not take any action because it would not have made any difference, and 12% reported that the issue resolved without the need to act. In every wave, respondents are most likely to report that they do not know why they did not take any action (25% W1, 35% W2, 33% W3, 32% W4, 35% W5).

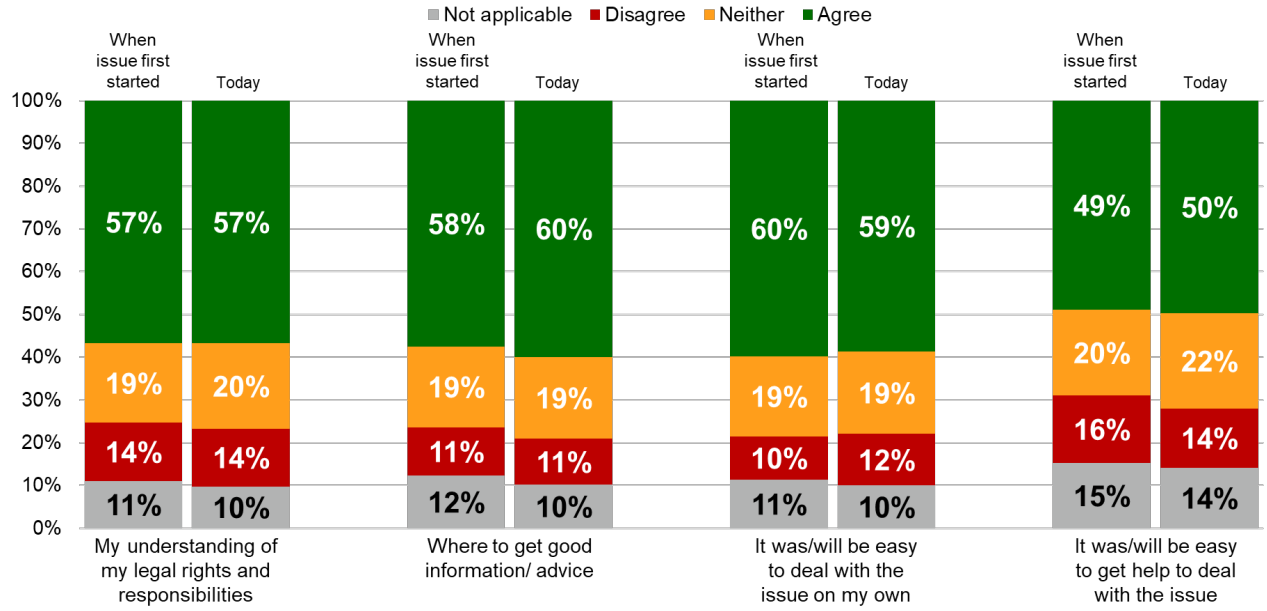
Understanding rights and responsibilities

When respondents who experienced a safety issue of some kind were asked to think about when their issue first started, the majority (60%) believed the issue would be easy to handle on their own and 49% believed it would be easy to get help with the issue. These figures are consistent with the wave three data (61% believed the issue would be easy to deal with on their own, 52% thought it would be easy to get help). While both agreement levels change slightly when the respondents were asked how they feel about the statement ‘today’, they are still broadly comparable with how the respondents felt at the beginning of the safety issue.

Over half of respondents (57%) agreed that they understood their legal rights and responsibilities when the issue first started; despite being consistent with the previous wave (56%) this is a significant reduction from wave one data (63%). The wave five proportion remains consistent when asked the same question thinking about ‘today’.

Comparing how they felt when the issue first started to the point of interview, there was consistency in the number of respondents who agreed that they knew where to get good information/ advice, from 58% when the issue first started to 60% today.

Figure 18. Do you agree or disagree with the statements about the safety issue you had: When the issue first started…/ And today…



Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the safety issue you had with the following product: product? When the issue first started/ And today…
Base: All who experienced a safety issue with a listed product (W5=893)

Perceptions and experiences of product recall

In wave five, questions on product recalls were shown to all respondents (n=10,182). Exact base sizes for specific questions are shown below each chart.

Key findings

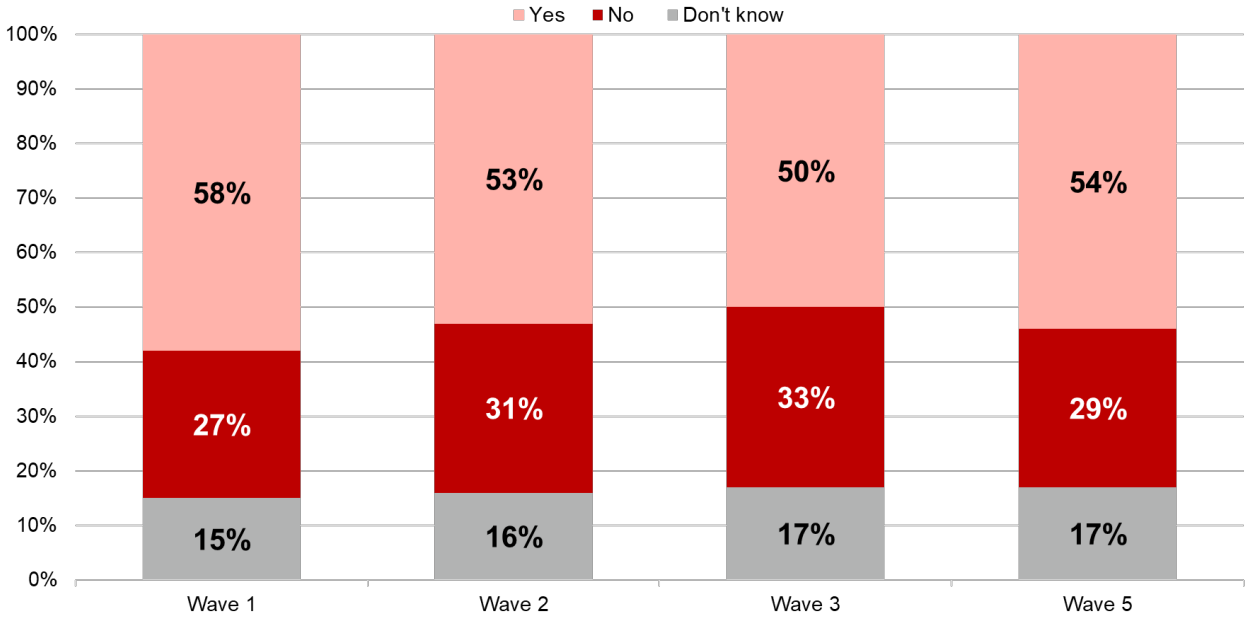
- Awareness of product recalls is no longer falling as it was previously (58% W1, 53% W2, 50% W3, 54% W5), with young people maintaining the strongest awareness of product recalls.
- Consistent with previous waves, most of the UK public would prefer to be contacted directly about a product recall for something they own – either via the manufacturer (56%) or seller (53%).
- The proportion reporting a product they own having been recalled is consistent at one in ten (11%).
- Electrical appliances have replaced large domestic appliances as the most common product recalled (20% compared to 17%).
- Despite the changes in type of product recalled, and source of awareness, the actions taken because of a recall remain consistent with previous waves, with the exception of don't know, which doubled. The most common activity is still to return/ exchange the product (33%).

Attitudes towards product recalls

The UK public were asked about their experience of product recalls and given a description of what this would entail to ensure clarity. Over half of respondents (54%) reported having seen a product recall or safety warning about a product, including those for products they did not own.

There has previously been a downward trend in the UK public seeing product recalls/ other safety warnings for a consumer product (excluding food, pharmaceutical, vehicle products) in the last two years – from 58% of the UK public in wave one recalling a product recall, 53% in wave two, down to half (50%) in wave three. However, this decline has not continued into wave five, with figures now more closely reflective of awareness in wave two.

Figure 19. Awareness of product recalls in the last two years



Q: In the past two years have you ever seen or heard about a product recall or other product safety warning?
Base: All respondents (W1=10,230; W2=10,296; W3=10,187; W5=10,182)

Consistent with wave three, those aged under 50 are more likely than those over 50 years old to report having seen a recall. This trend is now less pronounced compared to wave three, where the youngest respondents were more than ten percentage points more likely to have seen a recall than the oldest age group (56% 18 to 29, 52% 30 to 49, 48% 50 to 64, 45% 65+). Now the greatest difference is seven percentage points (between 57% 18 to 29 and 50% 65+). The reduction in this trend is due to an increase in awareness among the older age groups, with the 65+ age group increasing by five percentage points compared to wave three.

It is specifically young women who are maintaining awareness of product recalls. In all waves, men are generally less likely than women to have seen a product recall in the last two years (56% vs 60% W1, 50% vs 55% W2, 48 vs 52% W3, 50% vs 57% W5).

Consistent with previous waves, those with children in their household are more likely than those without children to be aware of product recalls (56% vs 53%). However, those with older children aged over 18 years old in their household, were significantly less likely than those without any children in their household to be aware of product recalls (49% vs 53%).

Those with any health issues were more likely to be aware of product recalls (56%), compared to those with no health issues (52%).

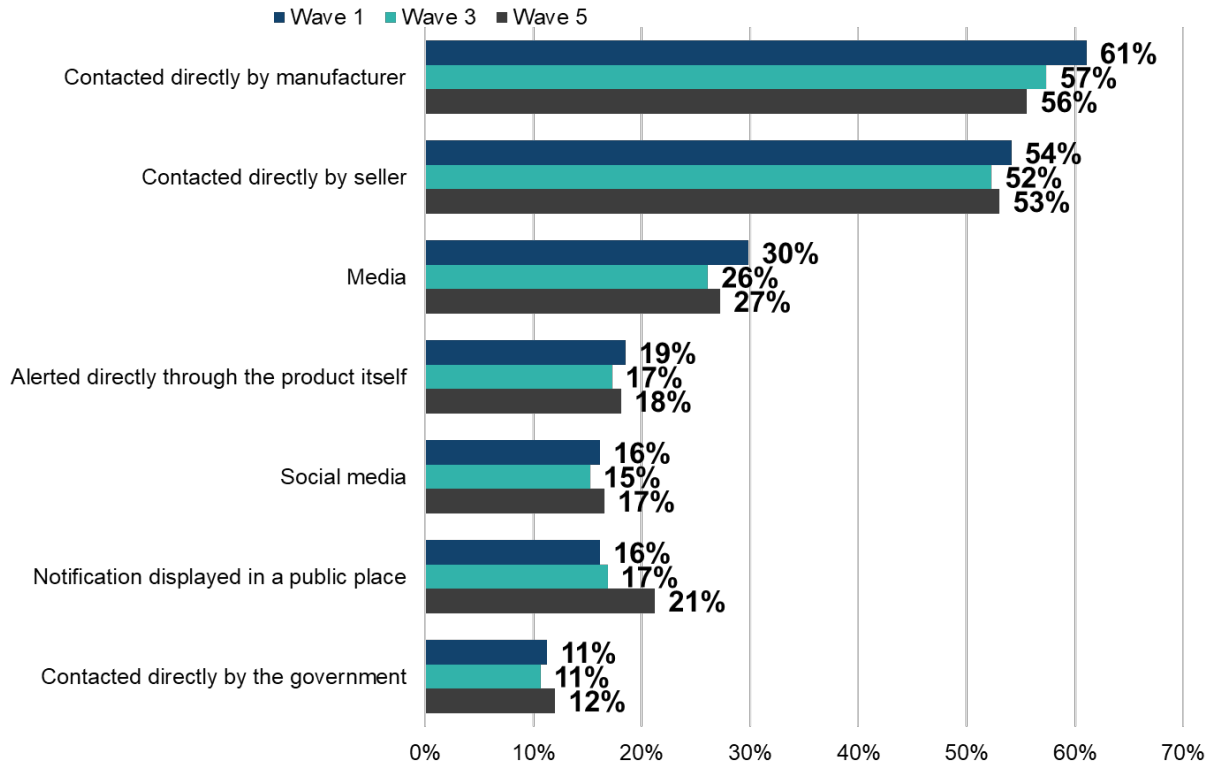
Offline respondents are less likely to have seen or heard a product recall in the past two years (43%), compared to online respondents (54%).

Product recall preferences

Consistent with wave one, most of the UK public would like to be contacted directly if a product they own is recalled: 56% would prefer to be contacted by the manufacturer and 53% would like to be contacted by the seller. As in the previous waves, there is a clear age trend with those aged 65 and over the most likely to prefer direct contact from either the manufacturer (66%) or seller (59%), compared to younger respondents (62% and 56% 50-64; 50% and 49% 30-49; 46% and 48% 18-29).

As with general awareness of product recalls, there is a sharp divide by age for how people would prefer to be contacted. Those over 50 years old prefer to be contacted directly by a manufacturer or seller while those under 50 prefer to be alerted directly through the product (21% 18-29, 20% 30-49; 17% 50-64, 15% 65+), on social media (20% 18-29, 21% 30-49; 14% 50-64, 10% 65+) or via a notification in a public place (24% 18-29, 24% 30-49; 20% 50-64, 17% 65+). These age trends are consistent with wave one and wave three data. However, the trend of younger respondents aged 18 to 29 being increasingly likely to want direct contact from the government (15% W5, 13% W3, 11% W1).

Figure 20. Preferred way to be informed of a product recall notice



Q: How would you best like to be informed about a product recall notice for a product you own? Please choose up to three methods.
Base: All respondents (W1=10,230; W3=10,187; W5=10,182)

Those whose first language is not English prefer to find out about product recalls via social media (21% vs 16% English as first language).

The offline population have a lower preference for being contacted by the seller than the wider UK public (45%) and a higher preference for being alerted through the media (36%).

Amongst younger consumers, there is higher level of preference for being alerted directly through the product itself, for example by an LED indicator or onscreen message, although this generally less preferred at an overall level when looking at all age groups (21% 18 to 29, 20% 30 to 49; 17% 50 to 64; 15% 65+). This is also true for those with medium or high levels of educational achievement, who are more likely to have a preference for being alerted directly through the product (14% low, 18% medium, 21% high).

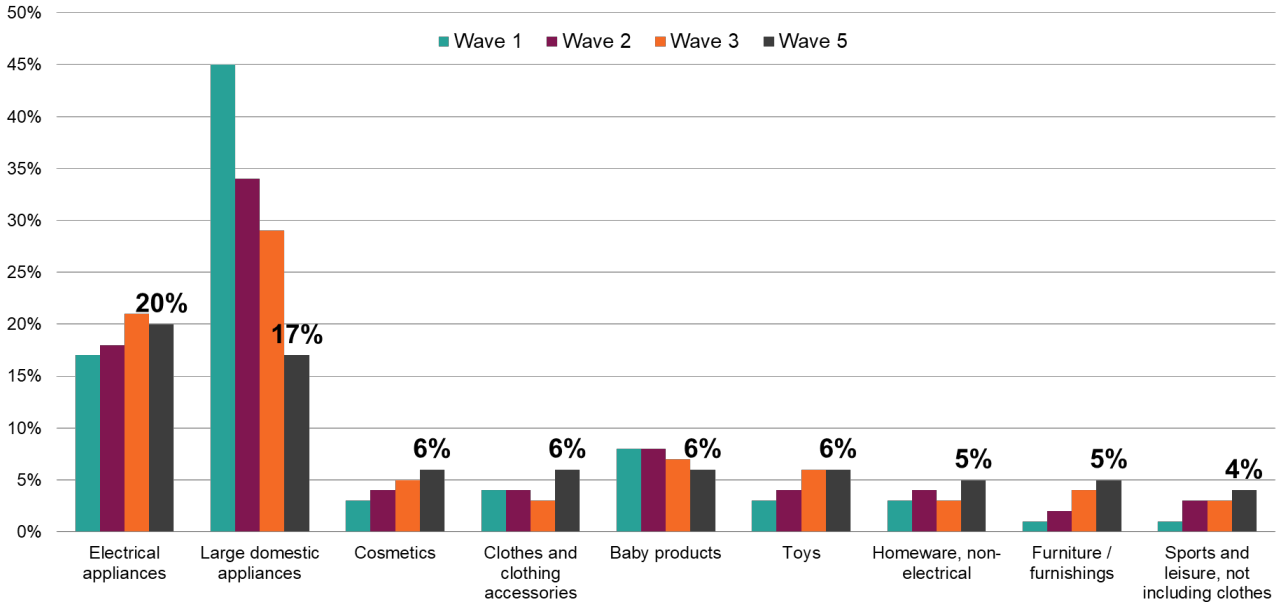
Experience of product recalls

Of those who saw something, one in ten said it was for a product they owned (11%) – unchanged compared to previous waves. Of these, the most commonly seen recall notices of products owned continue to be for electrical appliances (20%) or white goods (17%).

The latter has continued to see a significant fall in the proportion saying their large domestic appliance has been recalled – less than one in five (17%) now report this, compared to 45% in wave one. This may be due to a series of high-profile large domestic appliances recalls now being more than two years ago and no longer within the recall period for the tracker. Despite the reduction overall, older respondents are still more likely to report that they had seen a recall about a large domestic appliances compared to younger age groups (30% 65+, 22% 50-64, 13% 30-49, 10% 18-29). Whereas younger respondents were more likely than older to have recalls on cosmetics (11% 18-29, 8% 30-49, 4% 50-64, 0% 65+), and furniture/ furnishings (11% 18-29, 5% 30-49, 1% 50-64,1% 65+).

Respondents from an ethnic minority are more likely than white respondents to have seen a recall for furniture/ furnishings (10% vs 3%).

Figure 21. Product recall seen by type of products owned

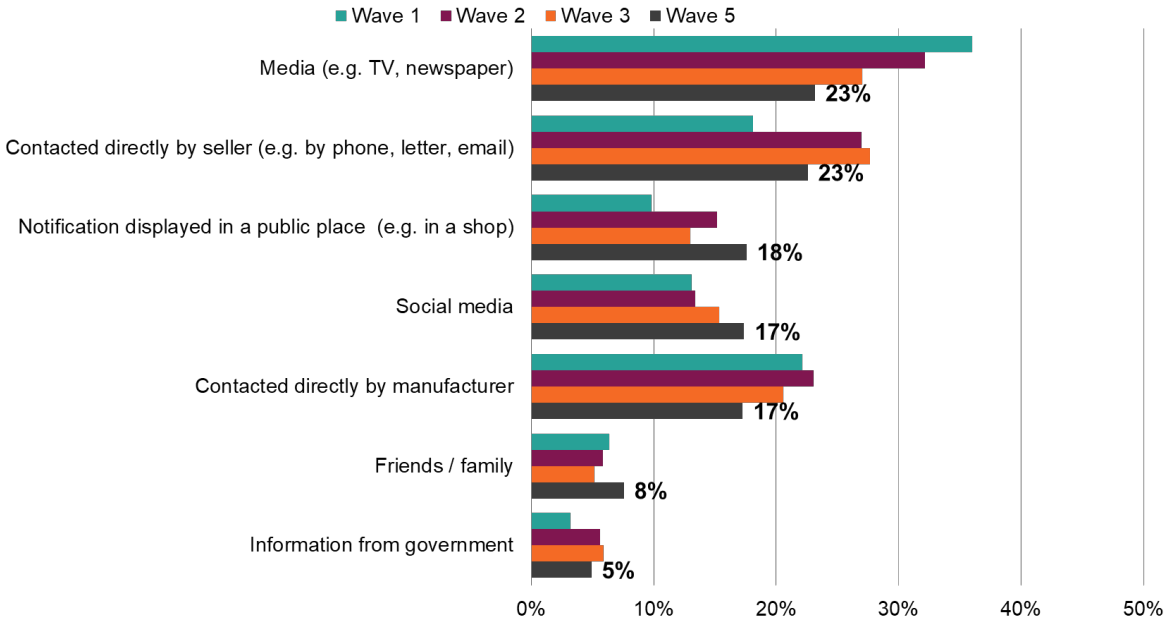


Q. You said that in the past two years, you've seen a product recall notice for something you own. If you've seen more than one, please think about the most recent excluding any food, pharmaceutical, or vehicle product recalls...What type of product was it that you saw a product recall notice for?
Base: All who saw product recall notice for something they own (W5=545)

In terms of where they heard about the product recall, there has been a consistent fall in the proportion saying they saw something in the media (36% W1, 32% W2, 27% W3, 23% W5), although those aged 65 and over are still most likely to find out about a recall in this way (34%). With younger respondents driving the increased awareness of product recalls, it is interesting to note that there are also higher levels of younger respondents finding out about recalls through a notification displayed in a public place (23%) and in social media (21%).

In wave five, the proportion of 18 to 29 year olds finding out about product recalls via social media has remained consistent from wave three, although this is almost twice as many since wave one (11% W1, 20% W2, 22% W3, 21% W5). While younger respondents are more likely to have heard about recalls through a notification displayed in a public place, this has not seen such a pronounced increase as hearing on social media (17% W1, 20% W2, 22% W3, 23% W5).

Figure 22. Source of recall awareness



Q: Where did you hear about the product recall notice, or other safety warning?
Base: All who saw product recall notice for something they own (W5=545)

Men are more likely to have heard information about the recall from the government (8% compared to women 2%).

Ethnic minority respondents are more likely to have heard about product recalls on products that they own from their friends and family compared to white people (15% vs 6%).

After seeing a recall notice, 81% of the UK public continue to report that they took some action. The most common action was returning the item for a refund/ exchange, which a third of those affected claim to have done (33%), unchanged from previous waves. One in five allowed the manufacturer to make a modification to their product (18%) or followed the manufacturers guidance for safe usage (18%).

Fewer still opted to throw away or cease use without returning the product (17%) – rising back to levels seen in wave two (15%) after briefly dipping in wave four (17%). Consistent

with previous waves, younger respondent are more likely than older respondents to throw away the item (24% 18 to 29 vs 7% 65+).

Items most commonly thrown away without returning were cosmetics (31%), sports and leisure items (27%) toys (25%), and non-electrical homeware (25%). White goods were least likely to be thrown away without returning (4%), possibly due to higher financial value.

A lower proportion of the offline population took any form of action after seeing a recall or warning (80%) than of the online population (90%).

Out of those who did not take any action as a result of seeing the product recall notice the most common reason was that there was generally a low risk and they thought the product would be fine (23%), that there was another reason (23%), that the process for the recall was too inconvenient (21%), but these are all behind the proportion saying don’t know/ can’t recall (27%).

Perceptions and experiences of product registration

In wave five, questions on product registration were initially shown to those who had bought an eligible product (n=3,603). Exact base sizes for specific questions are shown below each chart.

Key findings

- A third of those who purchase an eligible product register it (32%) and uptake remains highest for large domestic appliances (66%).
- The most common reason for registering a product is still to validate a warranty (74%), a significant increase from wave three (68%).
- The majority of those who register their products do so online (72%), with two fifths (43%) using manufacturers websites and a quarter (26%) using retailer websites.
- Almost all of those who registered a product found the product registration process to be easy (91%).
- The most common reason to not register an eligible product was that they did not know they could (39%).
- Those that do not think registration is necessary continue to say there is no benefit to registration (45%).

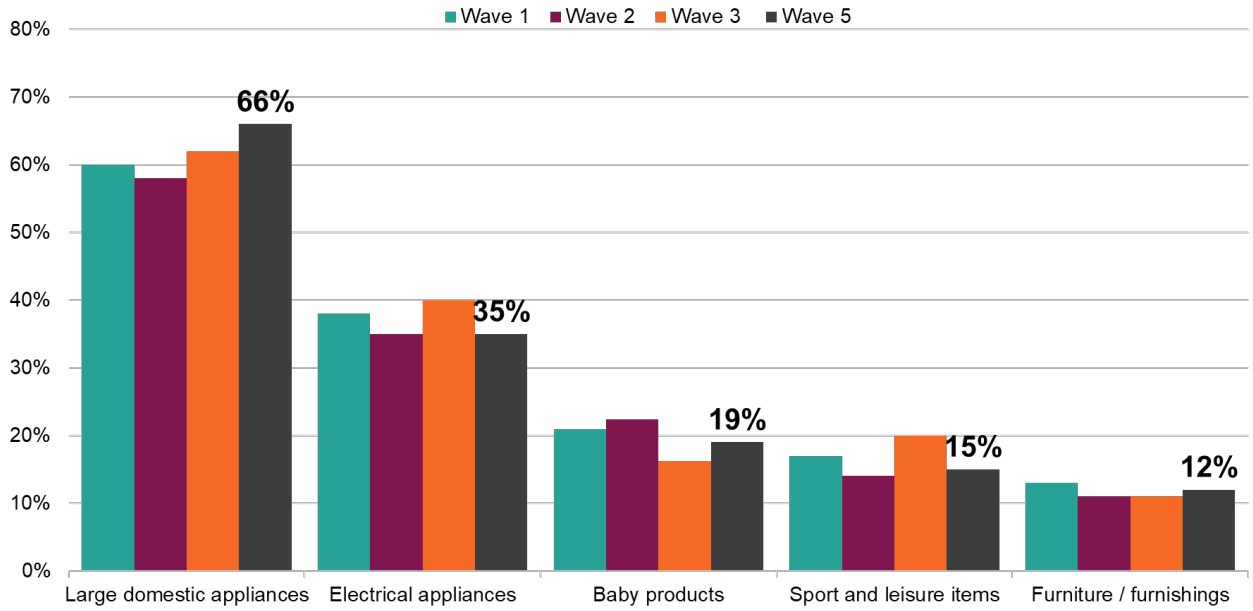
Experiences of registering an eligible product

Eligible products included in this survey include electronic appliances, selected baby products, large domestic appliances, selected furniture/ furnishings, and selected sports/ leisure equipment. A full list can be found in the technical report.

Those who had purchased an eligible product in the last six months were asked about their experiences of the product registration process – the process of providing their details and the product's details to the manufacturer when they bought it so that the manufacturer can contact them if a safety issue is later identified with that make/ model.

In line with previous waves, around a third of individuals who bought an eligible product registered it (32%) and uptake remains highest for those who have purchased a large domestic appliance (66%). Over a third of those who bought an electrical appliance registered it (35%), a significant decrease on wave three (40%). Similarly, a decrease in registration can also be seen among those who bought an eligible sports and leisure item, with 15% reporting they registered it, compared to 20% in wave three. One in five (19%) of those who bought selected baby products registered them who and only one in ten of those who bought eligible furniture/ furnishings (12%) did the same.

Figure 23. Proportion who registered product, by product category



Q: Product registration involves providing your details and model details to the manufacturer when you bought it so that they could contact you if a safety issue was later identified with your make/model of product. Did you register the [product] when you bought it?
Base: All who purchased an eligible item in the last six months: (in wave five: electrical appliances=1,151; baby products=347; large domestic appliances=745; furniture/ =815; sports and leisure items=545)

Consistent with previous waves, those with high education levels are generally less likely to register their product than those with medium or lower education levels. Just under three in 10 of those with high education levels registered their product (27%), compared to over a third of those with medium (34%) or lower education levels (35%) – reinforcing the perception that education is not a barrier to product registration.

Respondents living with a disability are more likely to report they have registered an eligible product (37%), compared to those without a disability (29%).

Those with children in their household are less likely to have registered an eligible product (28%), compared to 33% of those without children in their household.

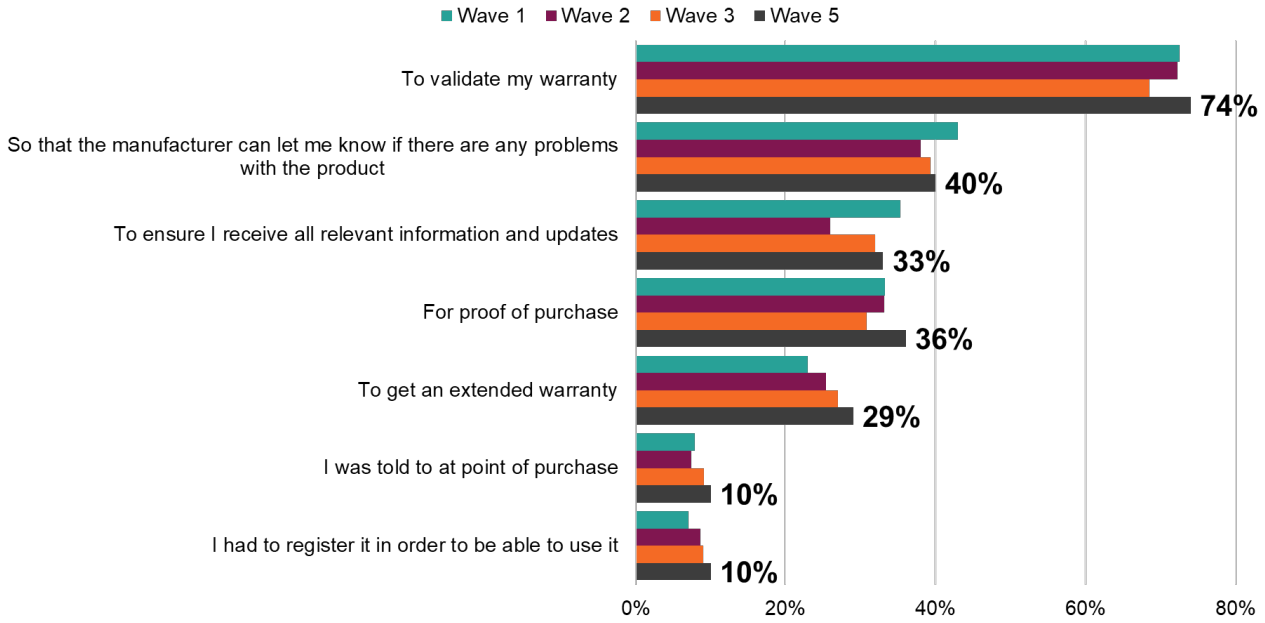
As in previous waves, there continues to be an upward trend by age. In wave five, a fifth of 18 to 29 year olds registered their product (20%), a quarter of 30 to 49 year olds (26%), over a third of 50 to 64 year olds (36%) and almost half of those aged 65+ (47%). As discussed in previous waves, this may in part be due to the types of products purchased across age – for example, those aged 18 to 29 are the least likely to purchase white goods (8%), compared to older age groups (12% 30-49, 13% 50-64, 14% 65+).

Linked to this, those who live in rented accommodation are less likely than those who own their home to report registering a product (24% compared to 36% respectively). This intersects somewhat with age of respondent, as those aged 18-49 are more likely to live in rented rather than owned accommodation.

It remains that the most commonly cited reason for registering a product is to validate warranty (74%), which is a significant increase compared to wave three (68%) but consistent with waves one and two. Product safety is a consideration, a fifth report they register their products so that the manufacturer can let them know if there are any problems (40%), this is consistent with previous waves.

Those aged 65 and over are most likely to report registering a product so they can be notified of any problems by the manufacturer (51%), compared to 30% of 18 to 29 year olds, and 32% of 30 to 49 year olds. This is also the case when validating warranty: 84% of those aged 65 and over register their products to do this, compared to 45% of 18 to 29 year olds. Indeed, it remained that there is an upward trend for registering a product to validate the warranty, with identification incrementally increasing (45% 18-29, 69% 30-49, 81% 50-64, 84% 65+).

Figure 24. Reasons for registering a product



Q: Which, if any, of the following are reasons you registered the [product]? (Please select all that apply)
Base: All who registered their eligible product (W5=1,102)

Respondents living with children are less likely to register to validate their warranty (65%), compared to those with no children in the household (77%).

Those who have purchased large domestic appliances are most likely to report registering their product to validate their warranty (83%). Those with electrical appliances and baby products were the most likely to have to register the products in order to be able to use it (both 19%); compared to sports and leisure equipment (7%), furniture and furnishing (5%) and large domestic appliances (2%).

Figure 25. Top three reasons for registering a product, by product category (wave one, two and three figures in brackets)

Large domestic appliances	Electrical appliances	Baby products	Sports and leisure items	Furniture/ furnishings
To validate the warranty **83%** (W1 82%; W2 81%; W3 78%)	To validate the warranty **72%** (W1 70%; W2 68%; W3 64%)	To validate the warranty **62%** (W1 63%; W3 49%)	To validate the warranty **60%** (W1 64%; W2 62%; W3 59%)	To validate my warranty **61%** (W1 59%; W2 64%; W3 65%)
So the manufacturer can let me know if there are any problems **43%** (W1 51; W2 44%; W3 44%)	To ensure I receive all relevant information and updates **39%** (W1 35%; W2 29%; W3 40%)	So the manufacturer can let me know if there are any problems **48%** (W1 45%; W3 51%)	So the manufacturer can let me know if there are any problems **35%** (W1 30%; W2 27%; W3 42%)	For proof of purchase **38%** (W1 28%; W2 39%; W3 40%)
For proof of purchase **35%** (W1 35%; W2 31%; W3 30%)	So the manufacturer can let me know if there are any problems **39%** (W1 40%; W2 35%; W3 34%)	To ensure I receive all relevant information and updates **39%** (W1 42%; W3 41%)	For proof of purchase **28%** (W1 47%; W2 28%; W3 34%)	So the manufacturer can let me know if there are any problems **27%** (W1 33%; W2 34%; W3 29%)

Q: Which, if any, of the following are reasons you registered the [product]?
Base: All who registered their eligible product: (in wave five: electrical appliances=387; large domestic appliances=485; baby products=65[3]; furniture/ furnishings=93; sports and leisure items=73)

Three quarters (72%) of those who register their products do so online. Of this group 43% use the manufacturers website and 26% use the retailers website. Under one in ten report registering a product by phone (8%) or through an app (7%). All remain consistent wave on wave. Large domestic appliances continue to be the most likely product to be registered over the phone (15%). Consistent with wave three, those registering their electrical appliances were the most likely to do so over an app (13%), compared to those registering other products. The inconsistency in those registering a sport and leisure item through the government is maintained, with a significant increase between wave one (3%) and two (11%), and subsequent decrease in wave three (1%), and an increase again in wave five (12%), bringing it in line with wave two.

Those aged 18 to 29 are less likely than all other age groups to report registering the product on the manufacturer's website (29% compared to 42% 30-49, 47% 50-64, 47% 65+), however, as in previous waves, they are the most likely to report doing this via an app (13%), significantly more likely than those aged 50 to 64 (5%) or 65 and over (3%).

Respondents from a minority ethnic background are less likely to be registering on the manufacturer's website (33%) compared to white respondents (45%).

[3] In wave two, only 24 respondents had registered an eligible baby item. This group has not been reported on due to small sample size

In line with previous waves, almost all of those who registered their eligible product found the process easy (91%), with 54% reporting it was very easy and 37% reporting it was fairly easy. These figures have remained consistent wave on wave.

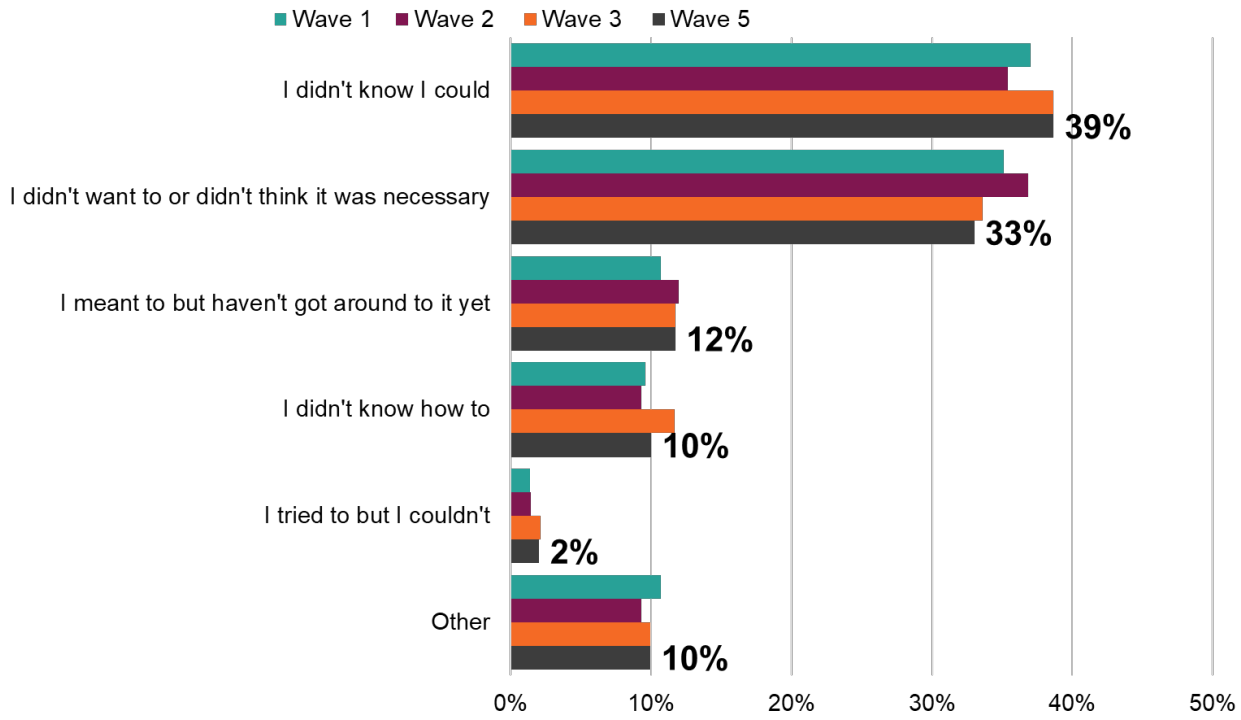
Reasons for not registering products

For those who have not registered an eligible product, the most common reasons are that they did not know they could (39%) or that they did not want to/ did not think it was necessary (33%). Around one in ten meant to register their product but had not done so yet (12%) or did not know how to register it (10%), both figures are consistent with previous waves.

Younger respondents in wave five have the least knowledge about registering products: two fifths (17%) of 18 to 29 year-olds who did not register a product stated that they do not know how, and over half (53%) stated that they did not know they could – both proportions are significantly higher than any other age group.

There is some link between educational attainment and knowing how to register a product. The same proportion of respondents with a medium educational attainment stated that they did not know how to register a product as those with a high level of attainment (11% and 12% respectively). Respondents with a low educational attainment were significantly less likely to say that they did not know how to register their product (5%), compared to those with more education. However, those with a high level of educational attainment are more likely to state that they did not know they could (42%) compared to those with a low level of attainment (34%).

Figure 26. Reasons for not registering an eligible product



Q: You said you didn't register the [product] when you bought it. Which, if any, of the following are reasons for this?
Base: All who did not register product (W5=2,122)

Respondents for whom English is not their first language are significantly more likely to not have registered an eligible product because they did not know how (18%) compared to native English speakers (10%).

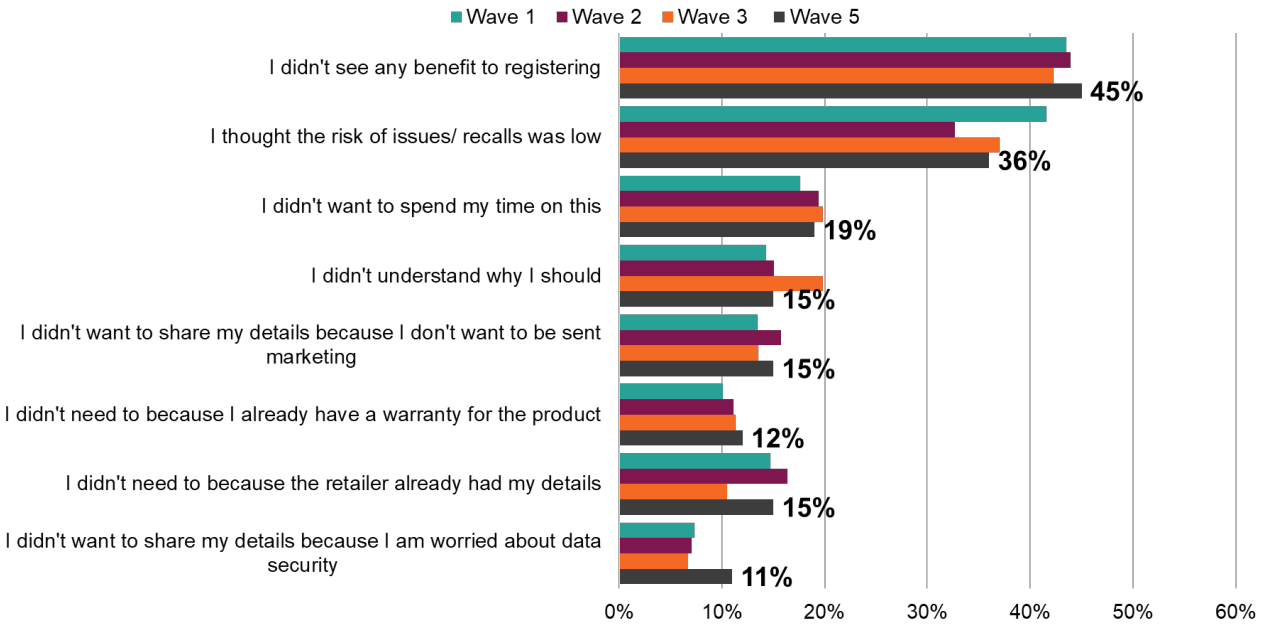
Those with a disability are less likely than those without to report they did not register an eligible product because they did not know how (8% compared to 11%). However, they are significantly more likely than those without a disability to state that they tried to register but could not (3%, compared to 2%).

Those who purchased baby products were the most likely to say they did not know they could register their products (53%); slightly higher than those who purchased furniture and furnishings (46%) and significantly more than those who purchased sports and leisure items (38%), electrical appliances (35%) and large domestic appliances (16%)

When those who did not want to register their product or did not think it was necessary were asked why they thought this, the top answer is consistent – not seeing any benefit to doing so (45%). However, in wave five there is an increase from previous waves, of those saying that they did not want to share their details because they are worried about data security (11%, W3, W2, W1 all 7%).

Overall, there was an increase in those saying they did not because the retailer already had their details (from 11% in W3 to 15%) and this has brought figures back in line to previous waves (W1 15%, W2 16%).

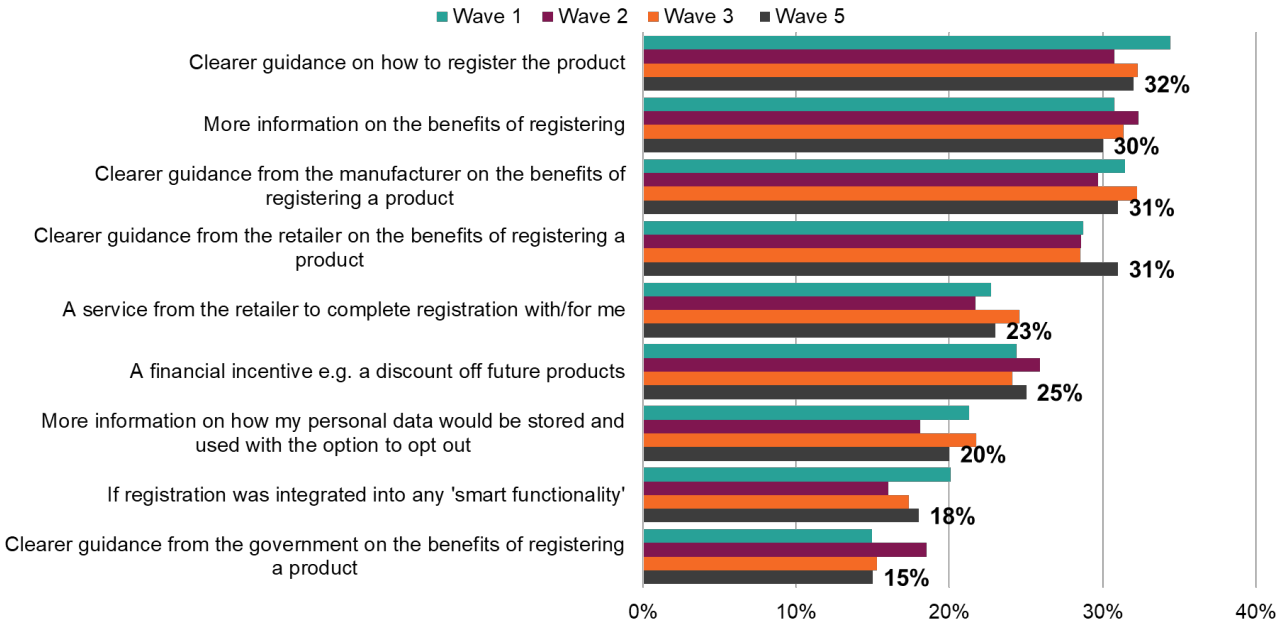
Figure 27. Reasons for not wanting to register product/ not thinking registration necessary



Q: You said that you didn't want to register [product]/ didn't think it was necessary… Which, if any, of the following are reasons for this? (Please select all that apply)
Base: All who did not register product because they did not want to/ didn't think it was necessary (W5=698)

After declining in waves two and three, the appetite for clearer guidance has increased to be in line with wave one proportions – six in ten of those who did not register their product in wave five (59%) say that clearer guidance would make them more likely to register a product in the future (60% W1, 55% W2, 56% W3).

Figure 28. What would encourage registration of products in future



Q: Which, if any, of the following would make you more likely to register your products in the future?
Base: All who did not register their eligible product (W5=2,122)

Those who bought a large domestic appliance that they did not register are less likely, on average, to report that they would like clearer guidance on how to register the product (23%) or that they would like clearer guidance from the retailer on the benefits of registering a product (19%). Comparatively, those who have purchased furniture or furnishings are more likely than average to identify that they'd like clearer guidance from the retailer on benefits (38%).

Overall, two fifths (40%) identified that they would want more information before registering, in line with previous waves. As seen in previous waves, younger respondents are the most likely to support incentives for future registration of products, including a particular desire for financial incentives (30%), guidance on how to register the product (39%), or guidance from the government on what the benefits are (22%). This suggests that advice and guidance is still valuable for those who have had fewer opportunities to register products over a lifetime, even if it is now less necessary for the UK public overall.

Conclusions

This report presents findings from the fifth wave of tracking the UK's perceptions and experiences across product safety policy areas. Now more than two years of tracking, the research provides valuable insight into the public's experiences and attitudes around product safety with data from before the COVID-19 pandemic and now into the Cost-of-Living crisis.

Previously, there had been a slow downward trend in perception that the UK's regulatory system keeps products safe. This trend has now stopped and half of the UK public feel regulation ensures the products they use are safe; a return to the proportions seen in wave three. Similarly, awareness of the OPSS has remained consistent and most understand that it is a government department. However, there appears to be a slow decline in feeling the OPSS is trustworthy – driven by increasing uncertainty, which is rising for most other bodies asked about. Despite this, there is no change in perceived effectiveness of the OPSS' work and no change in the proportion considering product safety when they make a purchase.

There has been a decline in the proportion who think the user themselves is responsible for ensuring product safety, or that the manufacturer is responsible for resolving product safety issues. Again, this appears to be the result of growing uncertainty over the research period, with the UK public increasingly saying they do not know who is responsible for aspects of product safety. However, attitudes around shopping online remain consistent with the majority of consumers continuing to say that, when shopping online, the seller is responsible for ensuring the safety of a product.

A small minority of the UK public experienced a safety issue with a product they purchased in the last six months; this is in-line with previous waves. The perceived severity and impact of safety issues rose notably in wave four but have now returned to levels consistent with previous waves. Similarly, behaviour as a result of a safety issue is broadly unchanged, with the most common response being returning/ exchanging the item.

The UK public has also maintained its awareness of product recalls after a dip in wave three, with young women maintaining the strongest overall awareness. Awareness of recalls for large domestic goods continues to fall as the time since several high-profile recalls increases. Now, people are more likely to see recalls for electrical appliances.

However, uptake for product registration remains highest for large domestic appliances. Only around a third of those who purchased an eligible electrical appliance in the last six months registered it, compared to two-thirds of those purchasing large domestic goods. The main reason to do so is to validate a warranty, and there has also been a steady increase in the proportion registering products to get an extended warranty.

Appendix A: Topical spotlights

Fireworks

In wave five, questions on fireworks were shown to approximately a third of all respondents, allocated randomly (n=3,395). Exact base sizes for specific questions are shown below each chart.

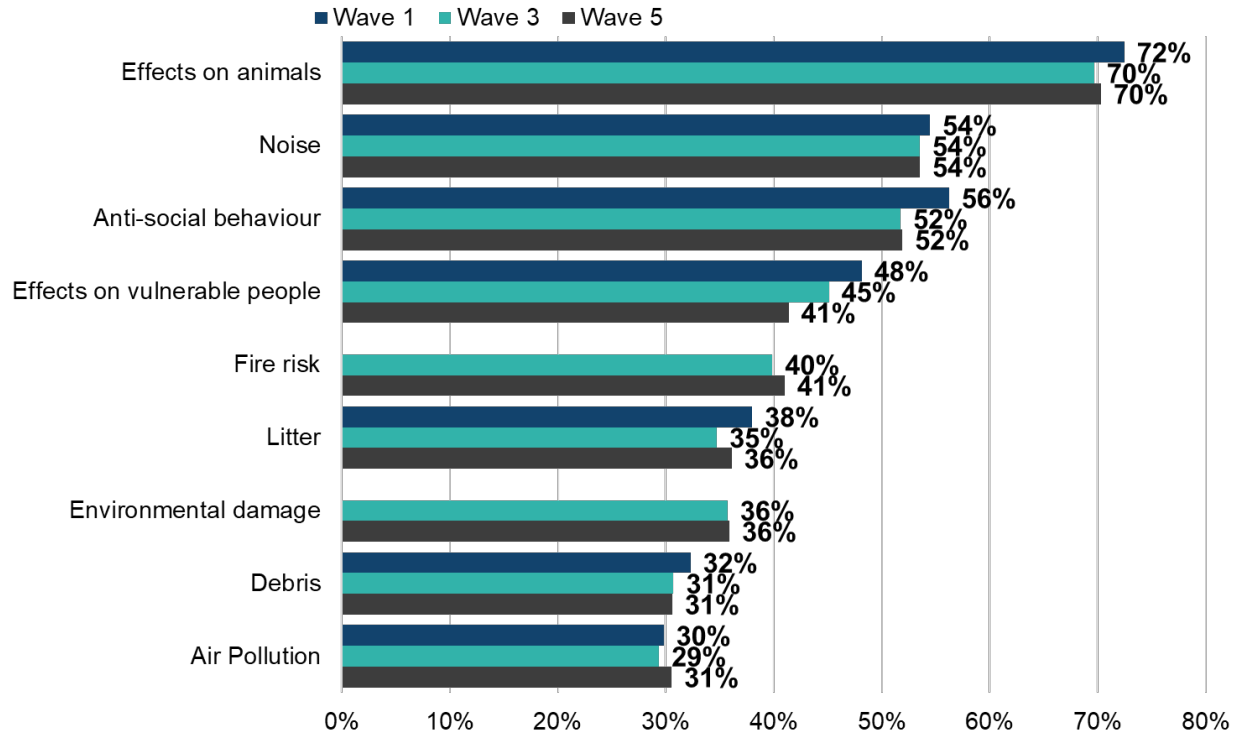
There is a slight majority in the proportion of respondents who enjoy fireworks (54%), this is compared to 44% who do not like fireworks. Younger respondents have higher levels of enjoyment, with 18-29 year olds (59%) having the highest levels of enjoyment and those aged 65+ (48%) having the lowest levels of enjoyment.

Among those who do not fully enjoy fireworks, the effect on animals is reported as the top reason for not enjoying them (70%), with women (75%) reporting this at a greater rate than men (65%). Women also dislike the noise at a greater rate than men (60% vs 47%) and the effects on vulnerable people (46% vs 37%). Men report no effect at a significantly greater rate than women.

Respondents living with a disability are less likely to enjoy fireworks than those without a disability (58% vs 45%) and more likely to say they do not like them (52% vs 39%). Those with a disability report that their reason for not enjoying fireworks is the effect on animals (73%), followed by the noise (59%) and anti-social behaviour (58%). They are significantly more likely to not like fireworks due to the effects on vulnerable people (48%) than respondents who do not have a disability (38%). These figures are broadly consistent with previous wave.

Offline respondents are less likely to enjoy fireworks compared to the online respondents (41% offline vs 54% online). Noise is the top reason not to like fireworks among the offline community (51%), followed by the effect on animals (48%) and anti-social behaviour (46%).

Figure 29. Reasons for not enjoying fireworks



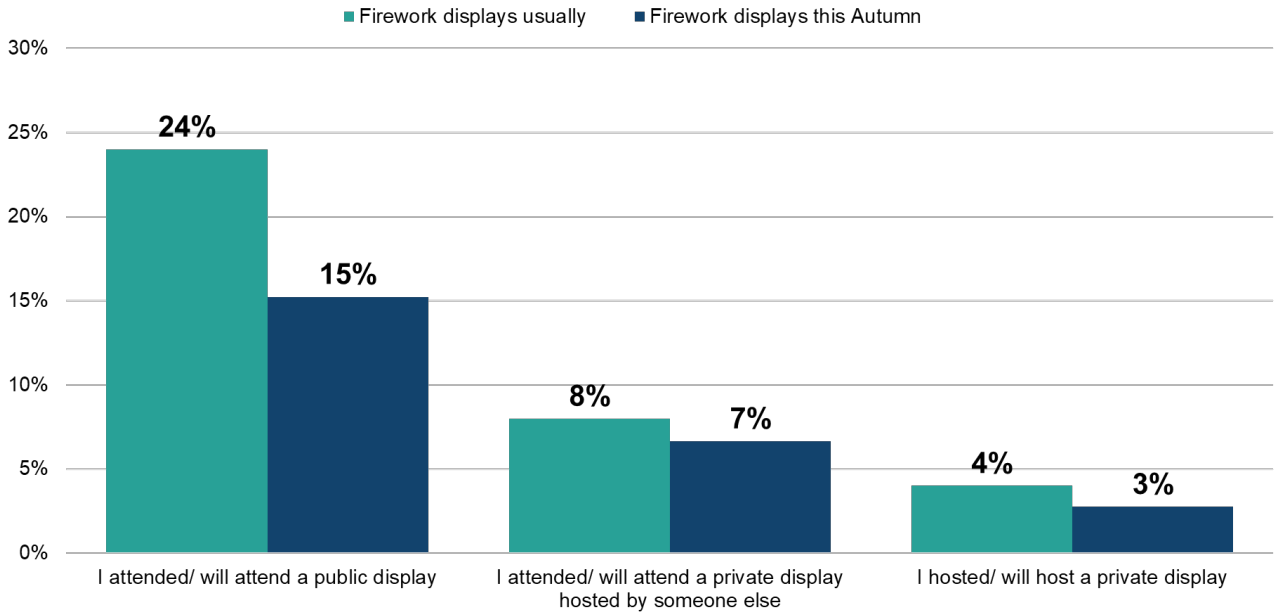
Q: What is it that you do not like about fireworks?
Base: All in fireworks section who don't completely enjoy fireworks (W1=2,681; W3=5,161; W5=2,607)

The vast majority of respondents (77%) said they did not/ will not attend a fireworks display in autumn 2022, although this is a significant reduction on previous waves (91% W1, 81% W3). 21% said they attended/ will attend a display. When looking at the kinds of displays respondents attended/ will attend, 15% said a public display, 7% said a private display hosted by someone else and 3% said a private display which they hosted. Due to the previous wave of data collected on this question being during a national lockdown, the data is consistent with the previous wave but significantly higher than wave one, with the exception of respondents who reported hosting private displays which remains consistent with wave one and wave three (both 3%).

Those with children in their household are more likely to attend a display of any kind (38%) than those without (15%), with attending a public fireworks display being the most popular option (15%).

Respondents from an ethnic minority are also more likely to attend a fireworks display, with 27% saying they did/ will attend a fireworks display compared with 20% of white respondents.

Figure 30. Firework display attendance



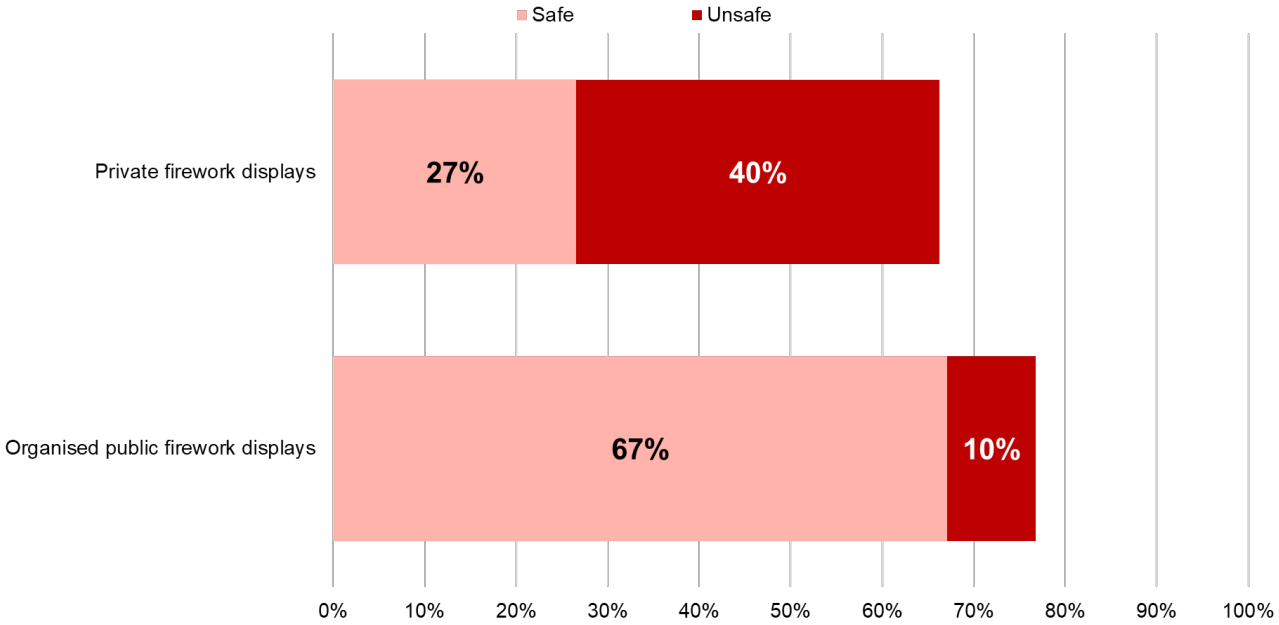
Q: Thinking about fireworks displays this autumn (e.g. for Diwali, Bonfire night), which of the following apply to you?
Base: All in fireworks section (W5=3,395)

When compared with respondent answers to whether they would attend fireworks displays normally, a larger proportion say they do attend public displays (15% attending in autumn 2022, to 24% usually). While figures are consistent with wave three (23%), there is a reduction from the number of respondents who said they usually attend fireworks displays in wave one (28%). Due to the previous wave being asked during a COVID-19 lockdown, it could be that more respondents would have considered going to a fireworks display because they had limited options to do so.

Half (51%) of respondents who purchase fireworks for a private display do not take noise into account, compared with 47% who report they do take noise into account. This is consistent with wave three data.

Public displays are considered to be safe, with 67% of respondents saying that they believed the last public fireworks display they attended was safe, compared to 10% saying unsafe. This is in comparison to private displays, for which more respondents say they are unsafe (40%) than safe (27%). Both public and private fireworks displays were considered less safe in wave five compared to wave three. There has been a significant decrease in those saying their public fireworks display was safe (67% W5 vs 70% W3), and an increase in those saying it was unsafe (10% W5 vs 8% W3). This pattern is consistent in private firework displays with 29% calling them safe in wave three (vs 27% W5), and 38% saying they were unsafe (vs 40% W5).

Figure 31. Safety of last firework display attended

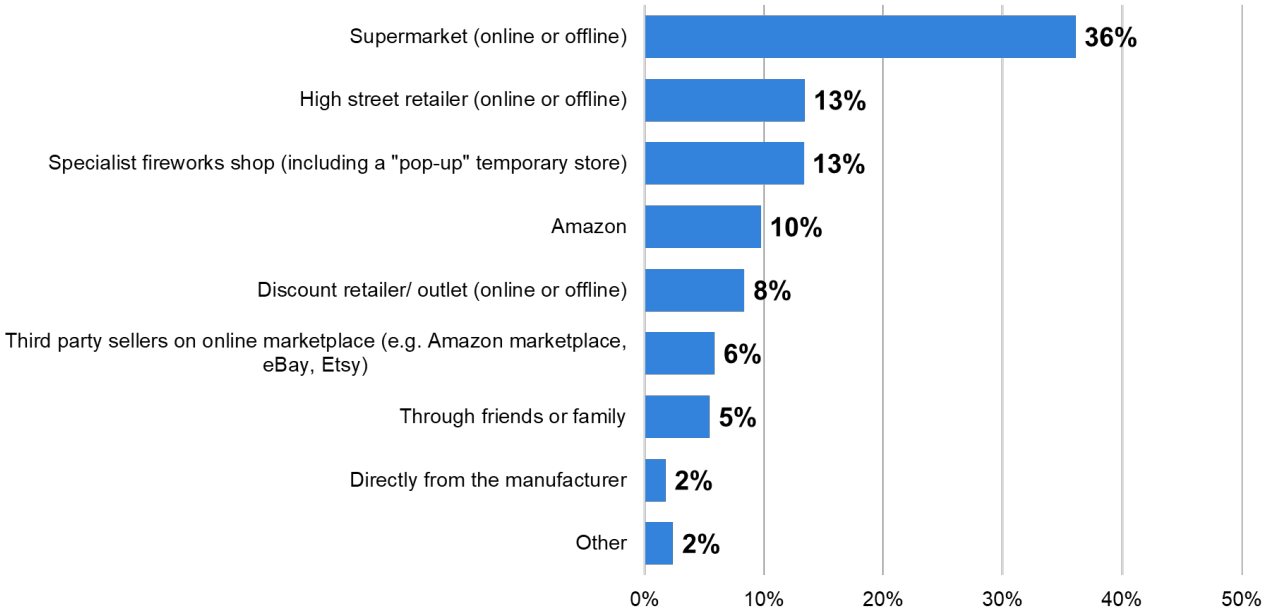


Q: Thinking about the last fireworks display you attended of each of the following types... Overall how safe, if at all, do you think the fireworks display was?
Base: All in fireworks section (W5=3,395)

When asked what they felt made the public fireworks display they attended unsafe, respondents mostly cited that fireworks are generally unsafe/ unpredictable (51%), followed by the fact that there were too many attendants (38%) and that fireworks were set off too close to people (31%). A few respondents said that someone was hit by a firework (17%, which is an increase from 10% in W3) at the public display they attended and 9% reported that something caught fire. Similarly, almost half of those who felt unsafe at a private display said fireworks were set off too close to people (47%).

At a total level, 4% of respondents have bought fireworks in the past three months. The most common place to have purchased them from was the supermarket (online or offline) (36%). This was followed by a high street retailer and specialist fireworks shop (both 13%). The most common place to store the fireworks once they had been bought was in the home (75%): inside the house (37%), in a garage (23%) or in a shed (22%).

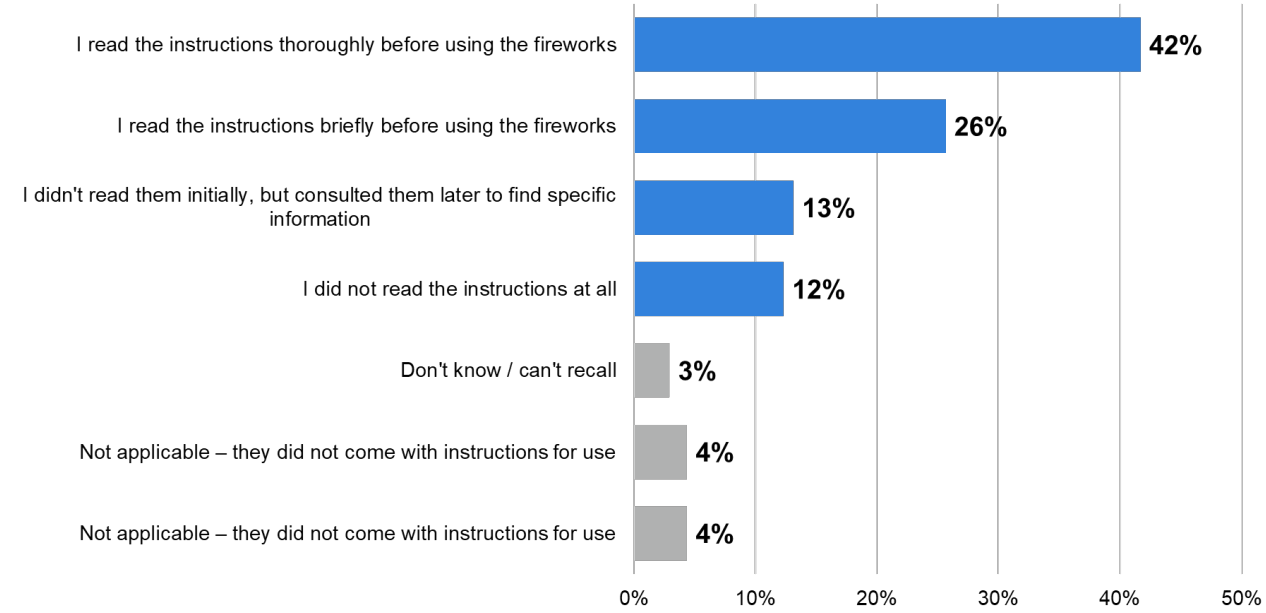
Figure 32. Retailer/ shop purchased fireworks from



Q. Thinking about the last time you purchased fireworks, where did you purchase them?
Base: All in fireworks section who recently purchased fireworks Wave 5 (n=136)

The majority of respondents who had bought fireworks in the past three months did report reading the instructions at some point (80%). Over one in ten (12%) said they did not read the instructions at all.

Figure 33. Fireworks instructions statements

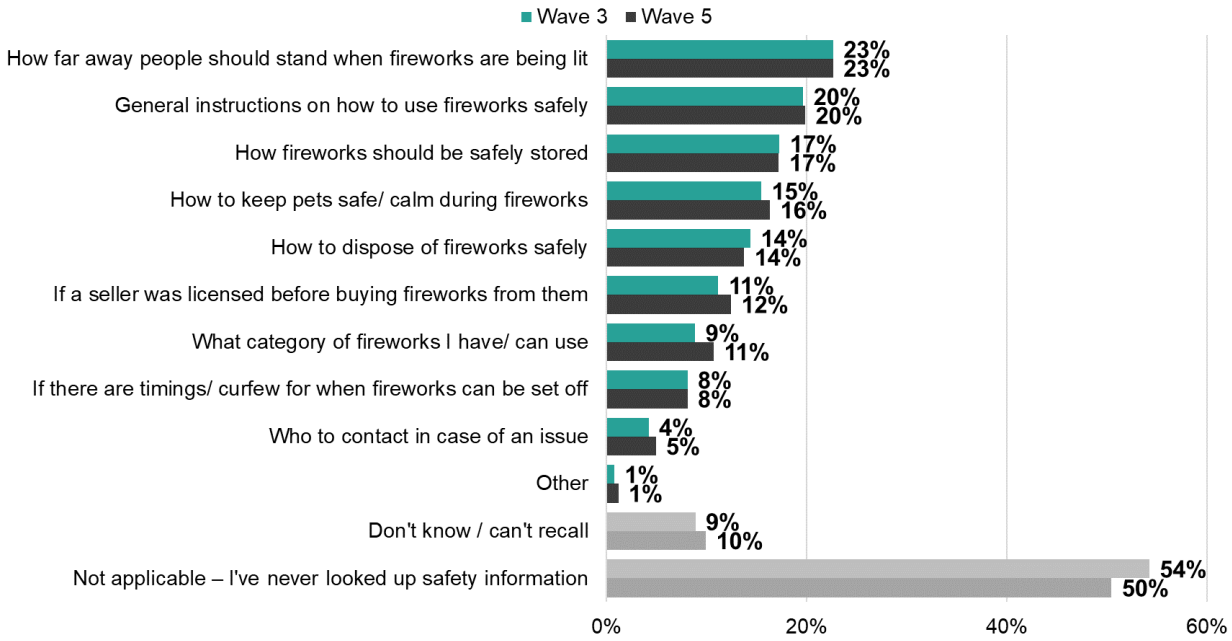


Q. Thinking about the fireworks' instructions for use, which of the following best applies to you? Base: All in fireworks section who recently purchased fireworks Wave 5(n=136)

Four in ten (40%) respondents looked for any safety advice about fireworks. The most common advice searched for was how far away people should stand when fireworks are being lit (23%), followed by general instructions on how to use fireworks safely (20%) and how fireworks should be safely stored (17%). More than half of respondents have never looked up any safety advice about fireworks (50%), while the remaining 10% could not

recall. Men are more likely to have looked for any safety advice (42%), compared to women (38%), despite both groups being broadly as likely to purchase fireworks (5% men, 4% women).

Figure 34. Safety information about fireworks looked for



Q. What, if any, safety information or advice about fireworks have you ever looked for? This might have been before using fireworks or attending an event.
Base: All in fireworks section (W3=6,777; W5=3,395)

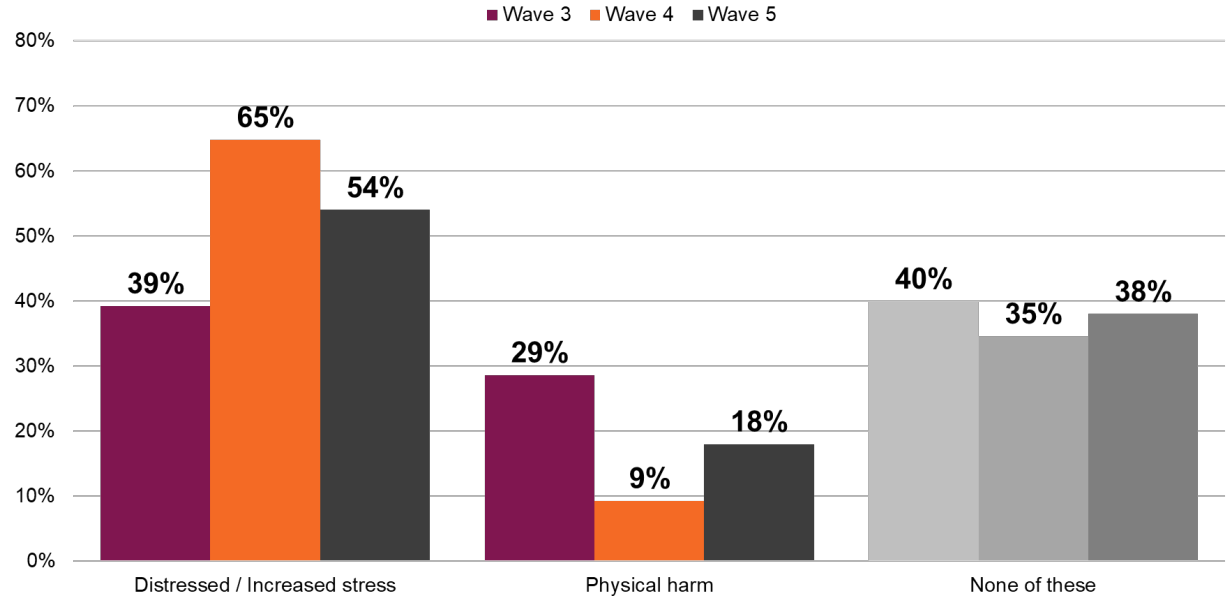
Button batteries

In wave five, questions on button batteries were shown to all respondents (n=10,422). Exact base sizes for specific questions are shown below each chart.

When asked whether they or anyone in their household had ever swallowed or nearly swallowed a small battery, 1% reported that they had and a further 5% said they didn't know or couldn't recall.

Of those who had experienced someone in their household swallowing or nearly swallowing a button battery, the most common issue experienced was distress or increased stress (54%). Physical harm was far less common, with only 18% experiencing that in wave five. For 39%, there was no safety issue resulting from swallowing or nearly swallowing a button battery.

Figure 35. Impact of safety issue experienced with button batteries



Q. You said you had a safety issue with a button battery. If you've experienced more than one, please think about the most recent. Did that safety issue cause any of the following?
Base: All who had a safety issue with a button battery (W3=167; W4=104; W5=61)

2% of those with children aged up to five years old reported they or someone in their household had or nearly had swallowed a small battery.

Circular Economy

In wave five, questions on the circular economy were shown to approximately a third of all respondents, allocated randomly (n=3,398). Exact base sizes for specific questions are shown below each chart.

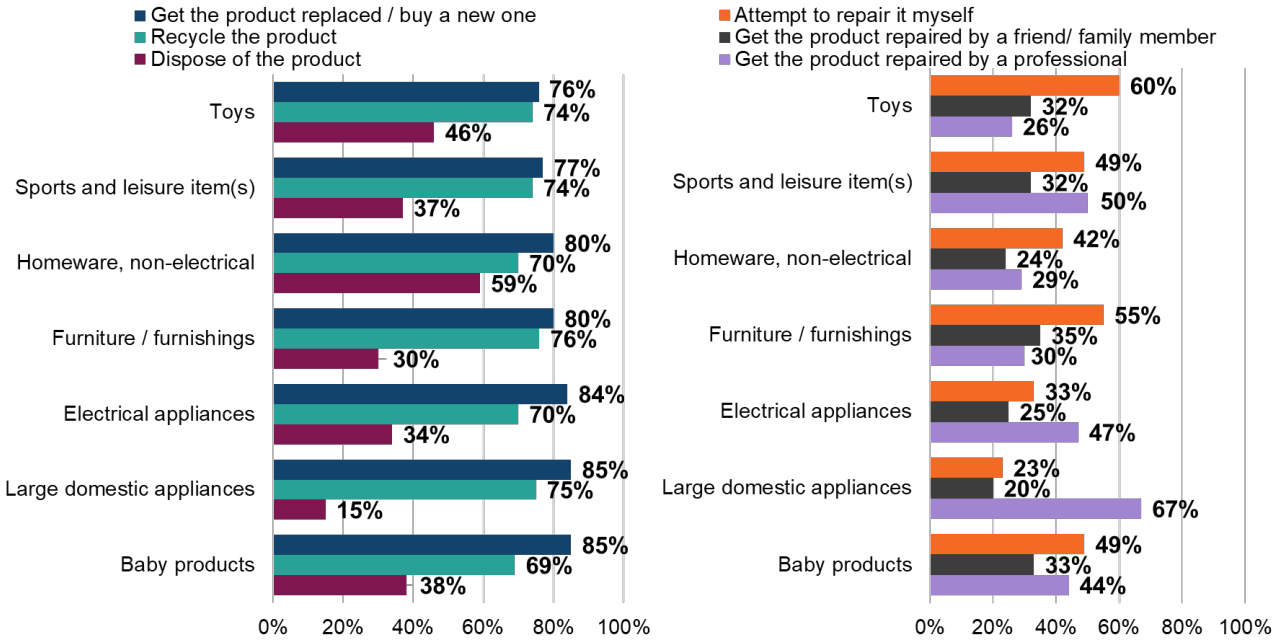
Perceived likelihood to repair

When asked what they think they would do if a specific product broke and was no longer operating correctly, the most common response continues to be directly replacing the item/ purchasing a new one. Over eight in ten said they would replace broken baby products (85%), large domestic appliances (85%), or electrical appliances (84%), and the remaining product categories are not far behind.

Consistent with a similar question in wave three, over half would attempt to personally repair toys (56% W3, 60% W5) or furniture (58% W3, 55% W5). Respondents are most likely to get a professional involved if a large domestic appliance breaks (67%).

Around three-quarters of respondents think they would recycle furniture (76%), large domestic appliances (75%), toys (74%), or sports/ leisure items (74%). There is an upward trend by age for thinking they would recycle an electrical item – only two-thirds of those under 30 say they would do this (65%), compared to eight in ten of those aged 65 and over (81%). Respondents from higher social grades tend to be more likely to recycle than those from lower social grades – around eight in ten would recycle a broken toy (78% ABC1 vs 70% C2DE) or large domestic appliance (78% vs 71%) while three quarters would recycle a broken electrical appliance (73% vs 66%).

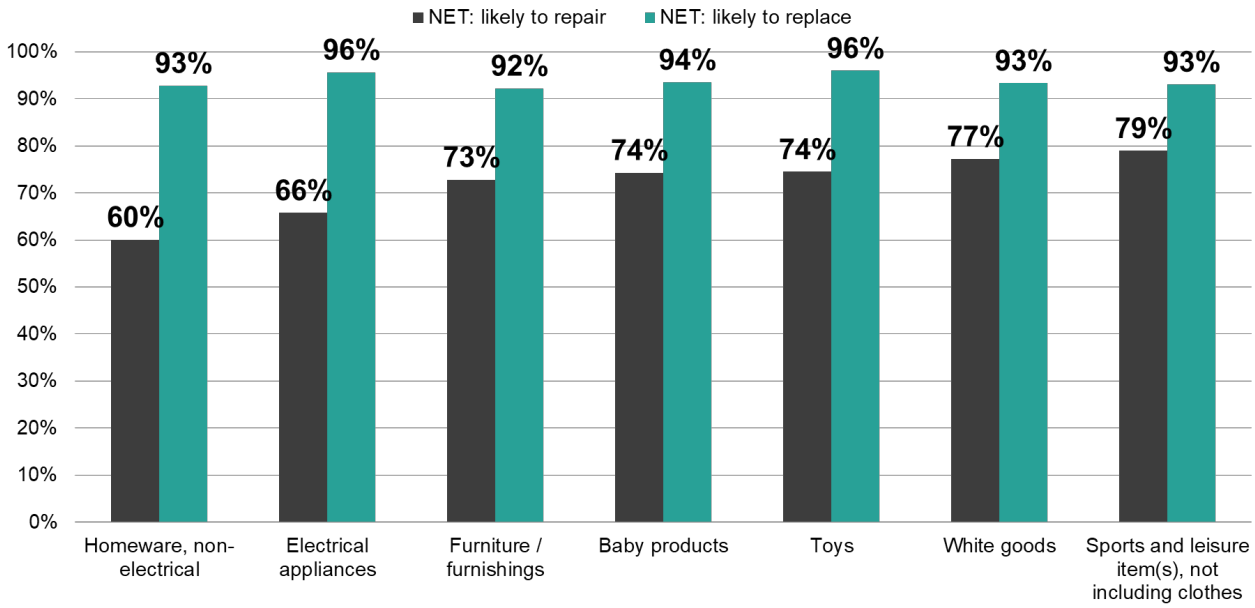
Figure 36. Proportion likely to take each action if a given item was no longer operating correctly



Q: For the following question, please imagine you owned a [product] which had broken and was no longer operating correctly. How likely, if at all are you to do each of the following things?
Base: All in circular economy section (in wave five: electrical appliances=541; baby products=464; toys=540; large domestic appliances=540; furniture=618; homeware, non-electrical=233; sports and leisure items =462)

If the actions related to disposal/ replacement are grouped together (i.e. get the product replaced/ buy a new one, recycle the product, dispose of the product), and compared to the likelihood of repair (personally, by a friend/ family member, by a professional), the preference for disposal/ replacement is clear. Over nine in ten say they would be likely to take at least one of the disposal/ replacement actions for each item, compared to three-quarters or less who would attempt any repair (figure 37).

Figure 37 38. Proportion likely to take replacement activities/ repair activities if a given item was no longer operating correctly



Q: For the following question, please imagine you owned a [product] which had broken and was no longer operating correctly. How likely, if at all are you to do each of the following things?
Base: All in circular economy section (in wave five: electrical appliances=541; baby products=464; toys=540; large domestic appliances=540; furniture=618; homeware, non-electrical=233; sports and leisure items =462)

Key drivers of attitudes and behaviours on repairing, replacing, or throwing away products

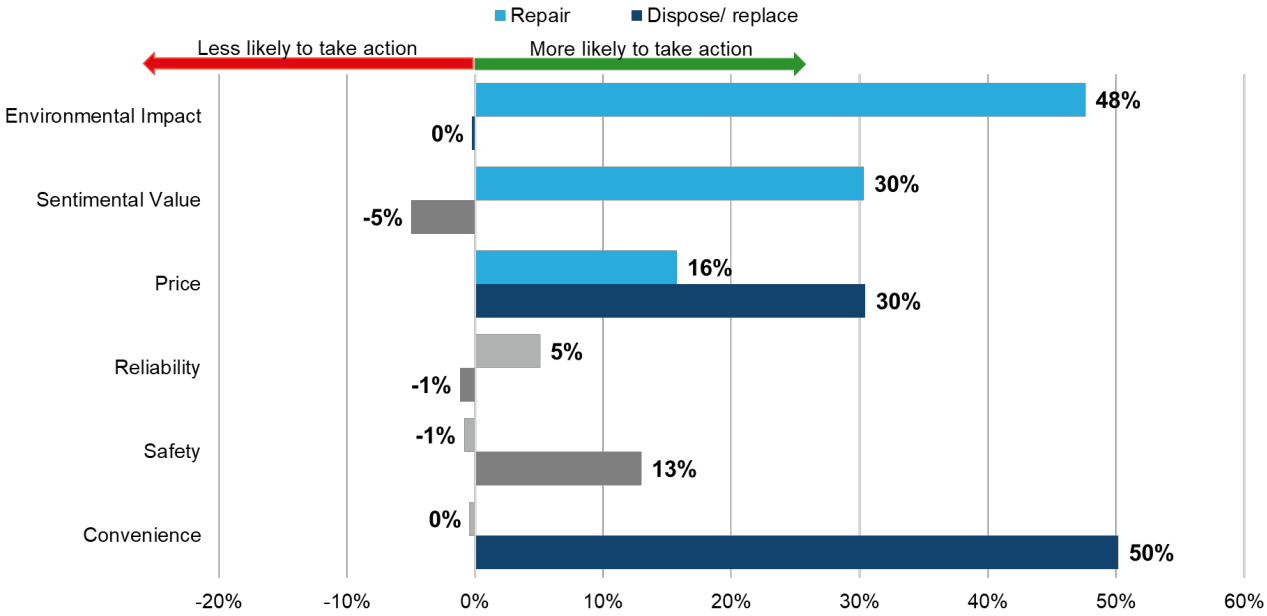
The results in this section are the outputs of logistic regression models that aim to understand the demographic or contextual factors driving attitudes and behaviours around repairing, replacing, or throwing away dysfunctional products.

The analysis draws conclusions by connecting a theoretical appraisal of what individuals would do if a specific product were to stop working (repair it personally, have it repaired by a professional, have it repaired by a family member or friend, replace it with a new one, throw it away or recycle it) with several consideration that could play a role in driving the course of action, as well as demographic factors that could influence their choices.

For this analysis, all repair options are grouped together (repair it personally, have it repaired by a friend/ family member, have it repaired by a professional). Similarly, the replace/ disposal options are grouped together (replace it with a new one, throw it away, recycle it). Some analysis is provided at a more detailed level

When choosing between repairing a product and replacing/ disposing of it, in a hypothetical situation the main factors driving likelihood of repair are the environmental impact, the sentimental value and price. For those who choose to replace or dispose of the product, convenience and price are key drivers.

Figure 39. Relative importance of factors when choosing to repair or dispose/ recycle



Note: grey bars indicate the relative importance is not statistically significant.

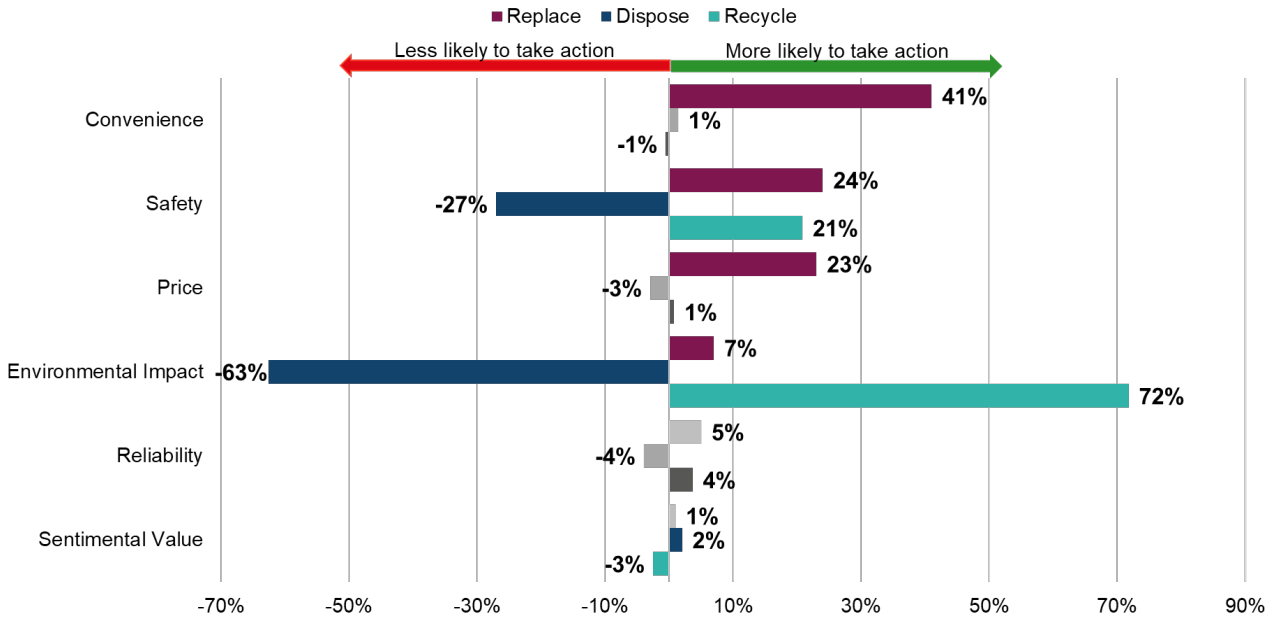
If choosing to repair a product themselves, sentimental value is most important, acting as a positive influence in the decision to repair. Safety concerns are a negative influence – the more people think about safety, the less likely they are to attempt repairs themselves.

In contrast, thinking of safety makes people more likely to choose a professional repair, potentially due to concerns of accidents. Consideration of the environmental impact and reliability of the product also influence people to seek professional repair services.

If choosing to replace a product, convenience, safety, and price are key – convenience is the purchase factor most likely to be considered when choosing to replace an item. Safety and price are slightly lower importance but are similarly important drivers of the decision.

When thinking of throwing away a product, environmental concerns are front of mind. Thinking of the impact on the environment more makes people less likely to throw a product away and encourages people to recycle broken or faulty products. Safety is the second most important driver of the decision to either replace or throw away a product, discouraging people from throwing away a product but encouraging recycling. This could mean people think both of their own safety, and how to dispose of an item safely when broken or faulty.

Figure 40. Relative importance of factors when choosing to replace, dispose, or recycle a product



Note: grey bars indicate the relative importance is not statistically significant.

A further set of analyses looked at actual situations of a product breaking down and the associated behaviour as a result. The product influences the course of action that would be taken. It seems that people are less likely to repair electrical appliances and non-electrical homeware and more likely to repair large appliances and sports/ leisure equipment. Some nuances are present depending on whom does the repairing. For example, toys are by far the most likely to be repaired by individuals themselves, in contrast to any other product category. The reverse is also mostly true, as toys are by far the least likely to be replaced, and most likely to be disposed of in contrast to the other product categories, with only non-electrical homeware scoring higher odds of being thrown away when broken.

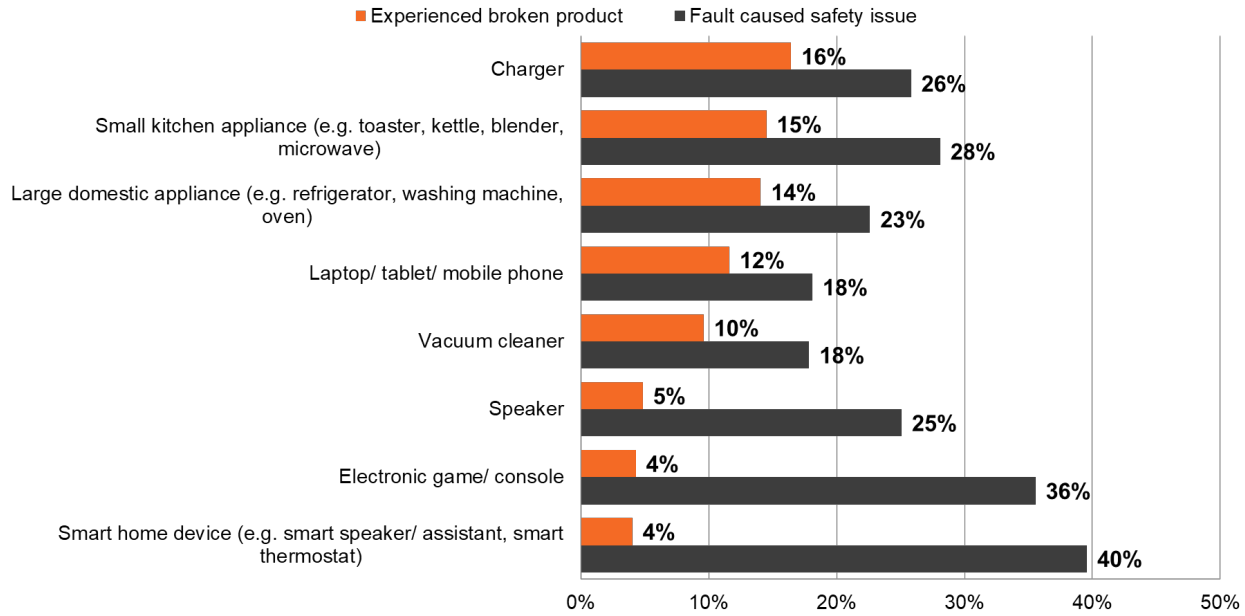
Experiences of electrical repairs

The circular economy involves reducing, reusing, and recycling resources – which includes repairing items to ensure their lifespan is as long as possible. In the last year, two-fifths report that they experienced at least one electrical appliance/ large domestic appliance not covered by guarantee or warranty stop working (40%).

The most common electrical/ domestic appliances to break outside of warranty/ guarantee are chargers (16%), small kitchen appliances (15%), and large domestic appliances (14%). A quarter of those who experienced each of these said that the fault caused a safety issue (figure 42).

The prevalence of broken product categories does not appear to correlate with the experience of safety issues – despite the low incidence of smart home devices breaking out of warranty (4%), they are the most likely to report safety issues as a result of the fault (40%). Similarly, only a small minority report an electronic game/ console breaking outside of guarantee/ warranty (4%), but over a third of those who experienced a fault said a safety issue arose as a result (36%).

Figure 40. Experienced a broken electrical/ domestic appliance in the last year/ whether a safety issue arose as a result



Q: In the last year, have you had any of the following appliances, that were not covered under guarantee or warranty, stop working (i.e. no longer operating correctly)?/ You previously said that the following had stopped working in the last 12 months. If more than one of this type of product stopped working in the past year, please think about the most recent instance of this. Did the fault cause a safety issue in the following product(s)?
Base: All [in circular economy section] (W5 n=3,398)/ All [in circular economy section who experienced a product breaking out of warranty: (laptop/ tablet/ mobile n=395; charger n=554; speaker n=147; small kitchen appliance n=488; electronic game/ console n=139; vacuum cleaner n=318; smart home device n=120; large domestic appliance n=466)

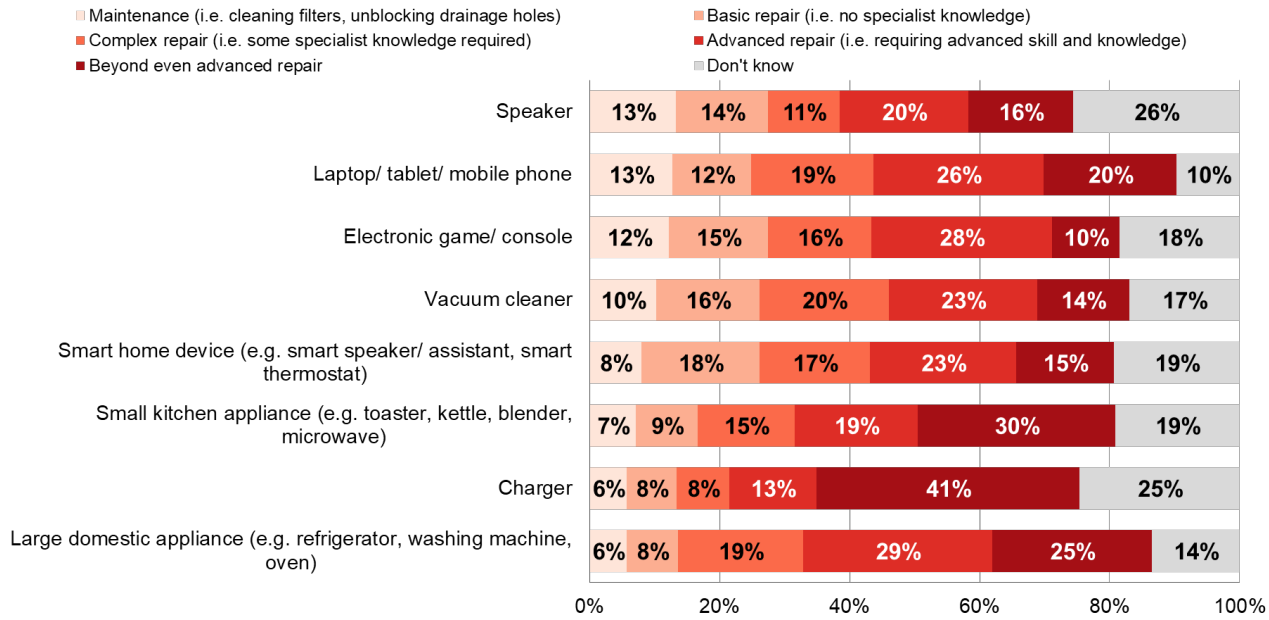
Electrical/ domestic appliances appear to last up to five years. Smart home devices, speakers, and chargers all had a median age of two years at the point they broke outside of guarantee/ warranty. Laptops/ tablets/ mobile phones, small kitchen appliances, electronic games/ consoles, and vacuum cleaners last slightly longer with a median age of three years at the point they broke. Only large domestic appliances last longer than three years, with a median age of five years before they break.

Asked to imagine the item was going to be repaired and brought back to full working order, two-fifths of those with a broken charger say it was beyond advanced repair (41%). This is also the most common answer for small kitchen appliances (30%), while three in ten with broken large domestic appliances say it would require advanced skill and knowledge to bring it back to working order (29%).

Requiring advanced repair is the main perceived need – being the most common answer to almost all broken electrical/ domestic appliances. Just under three in ten report needing advanced skill and knowledge to fix a broken electronic game/ console (28%) and around a quarter report needing this for a laptop/ tablet/ mobile (26%), vacuum cleaner (23%), or a smart home device (23%).

By contrast less than a fifth think they could repair their broken device(s) with no specialist knowledge. Speakers are the device seen as the easiest to fix – 13% say it simply requires maintenance and 14% think it would return to working order with basic repairs. Similar proportions think they could perform maintenance (12%) or basic repairs (15%) on their electronic game/ console to fix it.

Figure 41. Complexity of repair required to bring broken item back to working order



Q: You previously said that you had one of the following stop working in the last 12 months. If more than one of this type of product stopped working in the past year, please think about the most recent instance of this. If you were going to repair the fault to bring the product back to full working order, what would be the level of maintenance or repair required? Base: All [in circular economy section] who experienced a product breaking out of warranty: (laptop/ tablet/ mobile n=395; charger n=554; speaker n=147; small kitchen appliance n=488; electronic game/ console n=139; vacuum cleaner n=318; smart home device n=120; large domestic appliance n=466)

Those who experienced a broken electrical/ domestic appliance were then asked to think about what they did with the item that broke most recently. The top action for most products is to simply buy a new one (figure 44) – over half of those who experienced a broken charger (70%), small kitchen appliance (58%), or large domestic appliance (54%) did this.

Seeking a professional repair only features in the top three responses to a broken laptop/ tablet/ mobile (20%), smart home device (23%), or large domestic appliance (18%). Respondents are more inclined to attempt a repair themselves – this features in the top three actions in response to an electronic game/ console (17%), vacuum cleaner (27%), smart home device (19%), or small kitchen appliance (8%).

Figure 42. Top three actions taken as a result of a broken item

Laptop/ tablet/ mobile	Charger	Speaker	Small kitchen appliance	Electronic game/ console	Vacuum cleaner	Smart home device	Large domestic appliance
Bought a new one **44%**	Bought a new one **70%**	Disposed of it **27%**	Bought a new one **58%**	Contacted manufacturer/ retailer **25%**	Bought a new one **37%**	Exchanged item for another **30%**	Bought a new one **54%**
Professional attempted a repair **20%**	Disposed of it **45%**	Bought a new one **22%**	Disposed of it **45%**	Did not take any action **18%**	I attempted a repair **27%**	Professional attempted a repair **23%**	Disposed of the product **21%**
Disposed of the product **16%**	Exchanged item for another **6%**	Did not take any action **22%**	I attempted a repair **8%**	I attempted a repair **17%**	Disposed of it **26%**	I attempted a repair **19%**	Professional attempted a repair **18%**
n=196	*n=296*	*n=44**	*n=262*	*n=35**	*n=152*	*n=37*	*n=279*

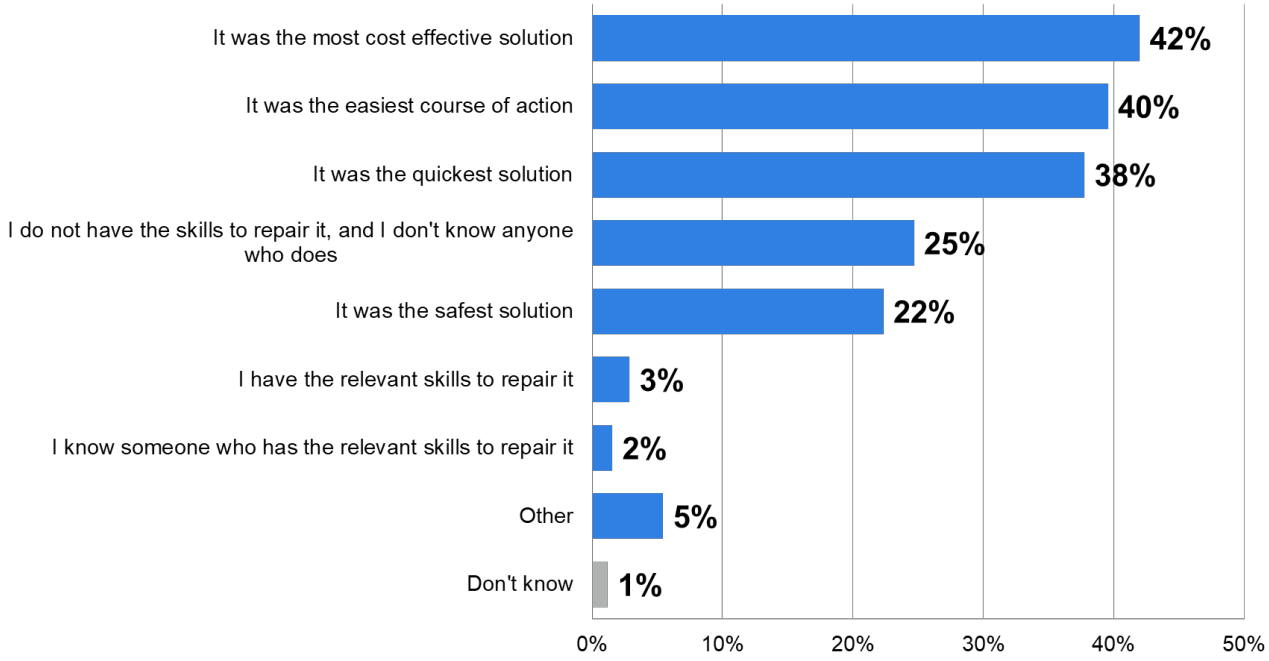
Q: Thinking about your [product] that stopped working. If multiple products have stopped operating correctly in the past year, please think about the most recent instance of this. Which, if any, of the following actions did you take when this product stopped operating correctly?
Base: All [in circular economy section] who experienced each item breaking most recently (variable base, see table)

Around two-fifths say they took a particular action because it was cost-effective (42%), easy (40%) or quick (38%). Half of respondents who personally attempted to repair their product say they did so because it was the most cost-effective thing to do (52%). More than two-fifths of those who disposed of their broken product (46%) or bought a new one (44%) report doing so because it was the easiest course of action. A similar proportion who bought a new item say it was the quickest solution (46%).

Around three in ten who disposed of the product (29%) or got a professional to attempt a repair (32%) say it was the safest thing for them to do. The most common reasons to get a professional involved are cost (46%) or not having the skills to attempt a repair themselves (42%).

One in ten who attempted any kind of repair (personally, friends/ family, or professional) say that someone experienced a safety issue as a result of the repair (9%). Those whose non-professional friends/ family attempted the repair are the most likely to say so – one in six say a safety issue resulted as a result of the repair (16%). Those who attempted a repair themselves are the least likely to report a safety issue as a result (5%), while one in ten who sought a repair from a professional said there was an issue (11%).

Figure 43. Reasons actions were taken



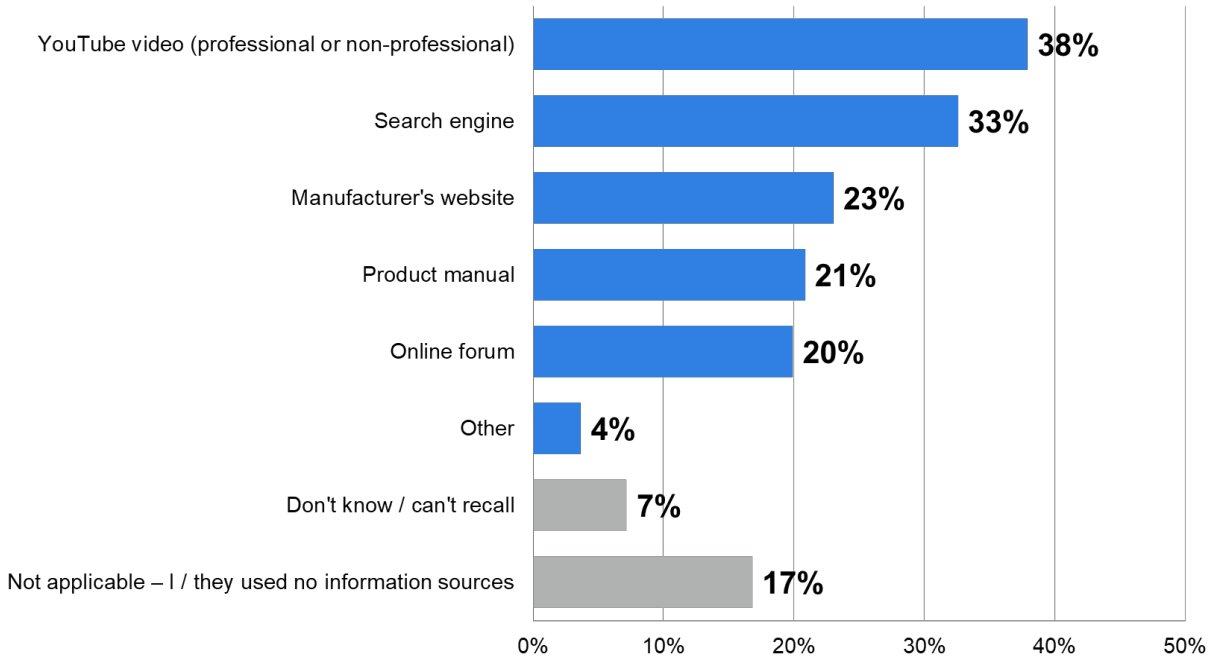
Q: Which, if any, of the following, were reasons you took these actions?
Base: All [in circular economy section] who took an action after a product stopped working (W5 n=1203)

A third of those who attempted to repair an item themselves also say they bought a new one (35%) and a quarter say they also disposed of the product (24%) – indicating that not all repair attempts are successful. Just over a third who attempted a repair themselves report that the item was fixed (36%). Half of those who got a professional involved report that the broken product was successfully repaired (52%).

Among those who attempted a repair themselves or got a non-professional friend/ family member to attempt a repair, just under two-fifths sought out information on YouTube to guide their repair attempt (38%). A third looked for information via a search engine (33%), while less than a quarter looked at the manufacturer's website (23%) or product manual (21%).

Those who attempted a repair on a laptop/ tablet/ mobile are the most likely to use YouTube as a resource (51%), compared to only 35% who attempted a repair on a small kitchen appliance (35%). Those repairing a vacuum clearer are the most likely to look at the manufacturer's website (29%), compared to only 15% who were repairing a charger.

Figure 44. Source of information used during repair attempt



Q: You previously said you, or a friend or family member personally attempted to repair the [product]. Which, if any, of the following information sources were used while attempting the repair?
Base: All [in circular economy section] who personally or whose non-professional friends/ family attempted a repair (W5 n=208)

Attitudes and behaviours around electrical repairs

Some participants would consider repairing the items they owned however, they would consider the following factors before deciding whether something is 'worth' repairing or should be replaced.

- The value of the item
- The cost of repair
- The complexity of repair
- The potential for harm
- The availability of spare parts and instructions online
- The length of time they had the item for (including warranty)
- Any sentimentality towards the item

Price is also a factor for many, if an item was cheap, they would be more likely to dispose of it and purchase a new product, compared to a more expensive item.

Furthermore, there was a perception that some appliances are only designed to last a certain amount of time (often quoted as 5 years). So many felt that repairing an item may not be worth their time.

"Depends on the fault I might try myself. If I can't it will depend on the value of the item and the cost of repair." Group 1, 18-40, Male

"Often buy from John Lewis, where you get an extended warranty with the purchase, good for [peace] of mind" Group 4, 40+, Male

"Anything complicated or electrical, I always engage the professionals" Group 4, 40+, Male

“Sometimes a repair can be just as much as buying a new one” Group 4, 40+, Female

Particularly with technology, many said they would be more likely to replace it, especially if they had it for some time, as they felt that the technology is changing rapidly, and a replacement is likely to provide more value for money. Some have previously extended their warranty for larger appliances.

“To be honest, when an electric appliance stops working, I would usually buy a new one if not in warranty. Mainly because technology changes so quickly... sometimes not worth repairing.” Group 1, 18-40, Female

For some participants, the cost-of-living crisis has impacted the way they approach repairs, and some said that whilst previously they would not have thought of repairing an item, they would now be more likely to attempt it. Others had a personal interest in DIY and wanted to understand how different appliances work through fixing them.

“A year or so ago, if I couldn't be bothered, I wouldn't do a repair and replace – now, I will absolutely give a repair a go”’ Group 1, 18-40, Male

“I actually changed my phone display once too actually. I didn't consult the manufacturer. but used YouTube for tutorials, something like ifixit” Group 3, 18-40, Male

With regards to repairing items themselves, most said that would only feel comfortable with minor repairs, such as changing batteries or a mobile phone screen, particularly if they were able to find information online about how to do it online. Damaging the item or invalidating the warranty were the key concerns when it came to more complex repairs. The majority of participants also said that they would not attempt to repair items, such as gas appliances, boiler, TV, due to the risks associated, including damage to the items and injuries. With regards to taking the item for a repair, some said they would prefer to go directly to the manufacturer, as there was more trust, even if the cost was higher.

“Wouldn’t touch a TV or anything that heats up, would worry we will blow it up!” Group 2, 40+, Female

“I worry about self-repairs in case I void any warranty I have if I cause further damage, so I tend to avoid.” Group 1, 18-40, Female

Mostly, participants were not aware of the ‘Right to Repair’ legislation. For most, the key concern about the legislation was how it would work in practice, and whether it would invalidate the warranty. Some felt that the legislation puts the responsibility on the customer rather than the companies or manufacturers. However, many also felt that such legislation was important, as it would help to ensure that items can be repaired instead of being thrown out, allowing for more sustainable consumer practices.

“Much cheaper to replace and upgrade as built in obsolescence seems to be the norm today” Group 4, 40+, Male

Eyelash serums/ creams

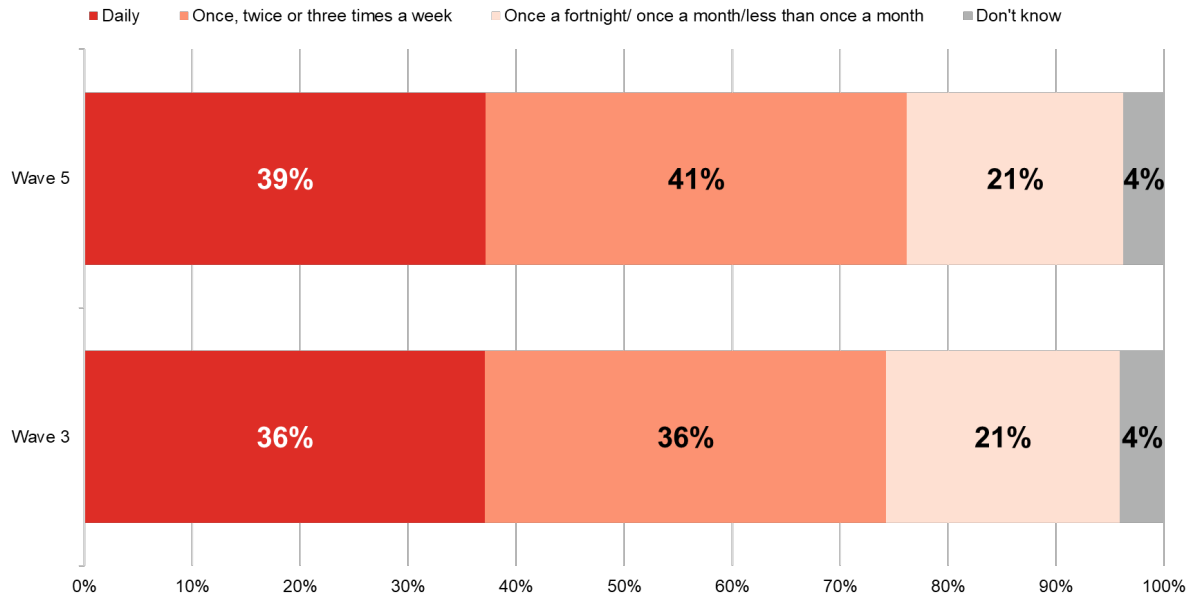
In wave four, questions eyelash serums/ creams were shown all respondents, (n=10,136). Exact base sizes for specific questions are shown below each chart.

The majority of respondents have not used any eyelash serums/ creams (89%). However, there has been a significant increase in usage from wave three (8% W5 vs 6% W3). 18 to 29 year olds (14%) are significantly more likely to have used them, compared to any other age groups (9% 30-49, 5% 50-64, 3% 65+). Women are more likely to have used them (11%), than men (4%). LGB+ respondents are also more likely to use them (10%) compared to heterosexual respondents (7%), this is mostly driven by those who identify their sexuality as other (19%).

Offline respondents are significantly less likely to have used eyelash serums/ creams in the past year (2%), compared to online respondents (8%).

Out of those who do use eyelash serums/ creams, 39% use them daily, while 75% use them once a week or more (75%). Women (44%) are more likely than men (24%) to use them daily.

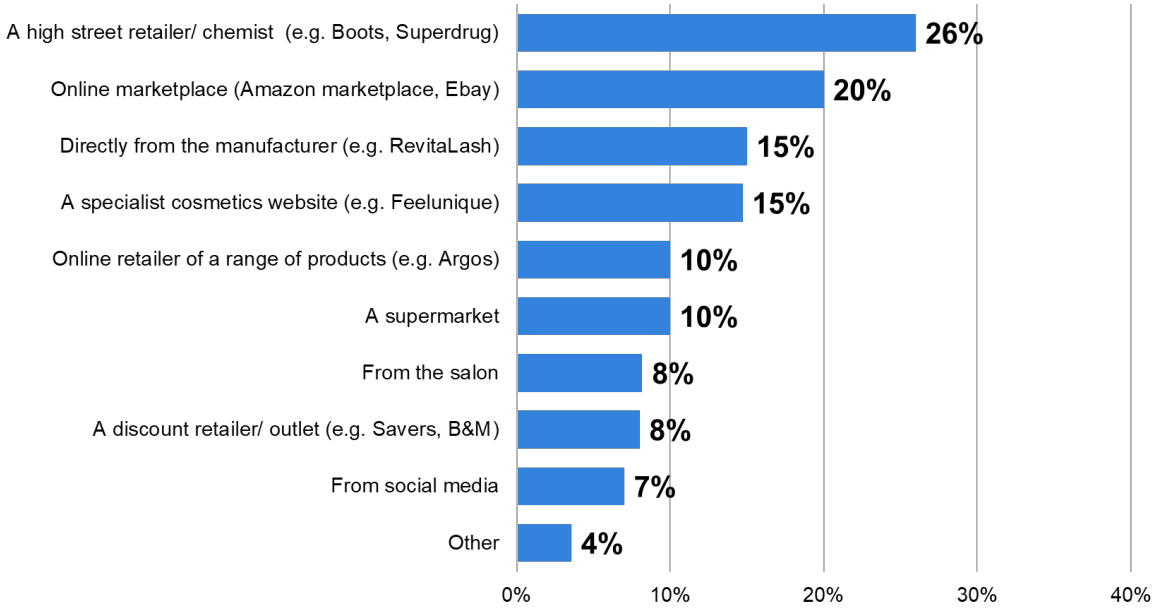
Figure 45. How often eyelash serums/ creams used



Q. You said that you have used a cosmetic product for the purpose of lengthening your eyelashes (not including mascara)...How often do you/did you usually apply the product?
Base: All who used eyelash serums/creams (W3=537; W5=707)

Out of those who purchased the eyelash serum/ cream themselves, the most common place to buy them was at a high street retailer (26%), followed by an online marketplace (20%) and then a specialist cosmetics website or directly from the manufacturer (both 15%). Heterosexual respondents are more likely to purchase from a high street retailer (29%, vs 14% LGB+), while LGB+ respondents are more likely to purchase from an online retailer (18% vs 9% of heterosexual respondents).

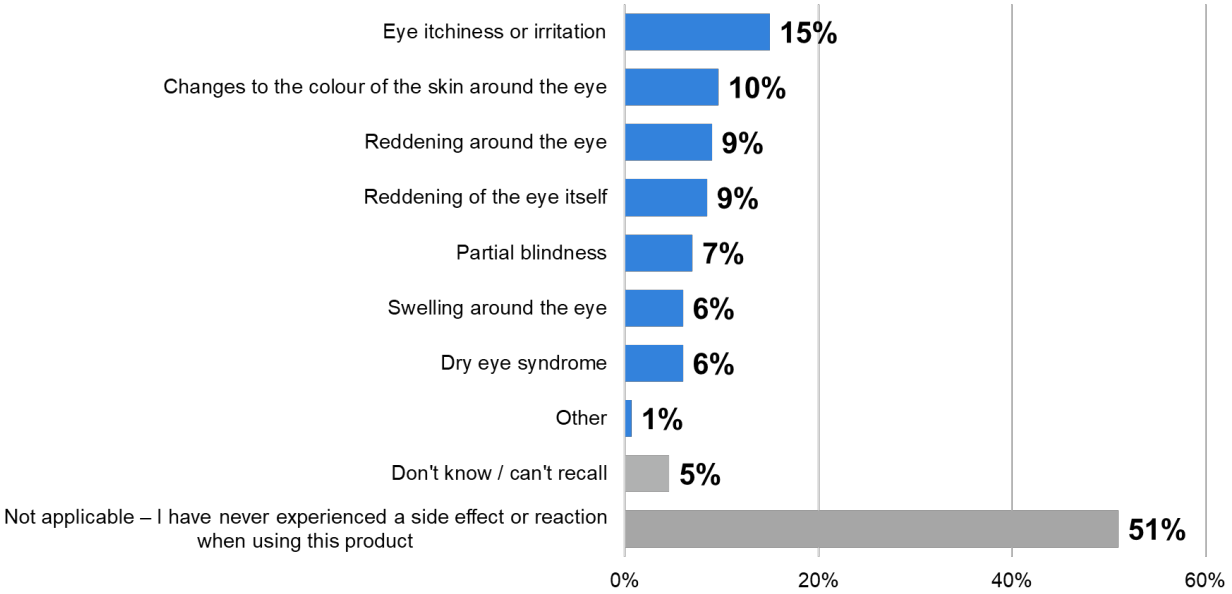
Figure 46. Places purchased eyelash cream/ serum



Q. From which, if any, of the following places did you purchase this product? (Please select all that apply). Base: All who used eyelash serums/creams (W5=707)

Out of those who use eyelash serums 42% experienced a side effect of some kind. Men who used the product were significantly more likely (83%) to experience a side effect than women who had used eyelash serums (29%). At a total level, the most common side effects are eye itchiness and irritation (15%), changes to the colour of the skin around the eye (10%) and reddening around the eye (9%).

Figure 47. Side effects experienced from using the eyelash cream/ serum



Q. From which, if any, of the following places did you purchase this product? (Please select all that apply). Base: All who used eyelash serums/creams (W5=707)

Personal Light Electric Vehicles (PLEVs)

In wave five, questions on personal light electric vehicles (PLEVs) were initially shown to all respondents (n=10,182) and then subsequently to those who own a PLEV (n=637). Exact base sizes for specific questions are shown below each chart.

Ownership and charging behaviours

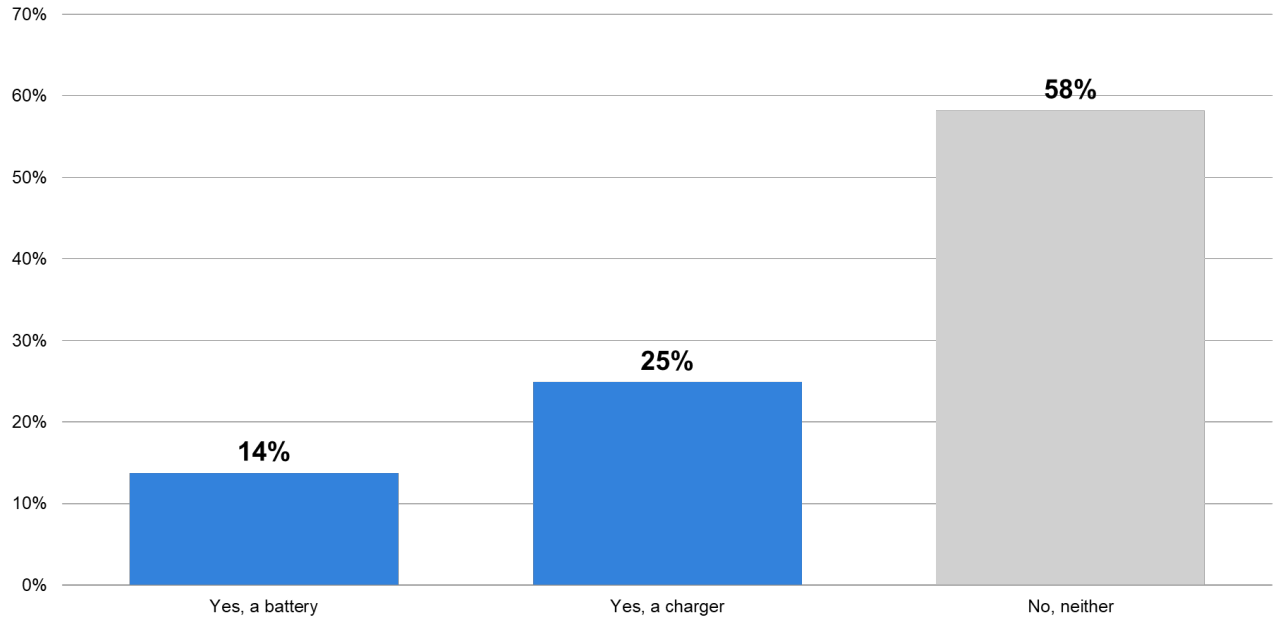
At a total UK level, 7% of the public currently owns a personal light electric vehicle (PLEVs). This is most commonly an eBike, electrically assisted pedal cycle (EAPC), or eScooter, with 2% each saying they own one of these. A further 1% own a hoverboard or unicycle / self-balancing mono-wheel.

Ownership of any PLEV is highest amongst younger age groups and declines with age (18-29=11%; 30-49=8%; 50-64=5%; 65+=5%). Ownership is also higher for ethnic minority members of the public when compared to white members of the public (13%, 6% white).

Those with low or medium educational attainment are more likely to own a PLEV than those with high educational attainment (Low=8%; Medium=7%; High=6%).

Of those who own a PLEV, the majority haven't purchased a battery or charger separately. The proportion who have bought a battery or charger separately is higher amongst younger age groups (46% 18 to 29, 37% 30 to 49, 19% 50 to 64, 21% 65+) and ethnic minority members of the public when compared to White respondents (51% vs 30%), as we say in ownership proportions.

Figure 48. PLEV battery purchase

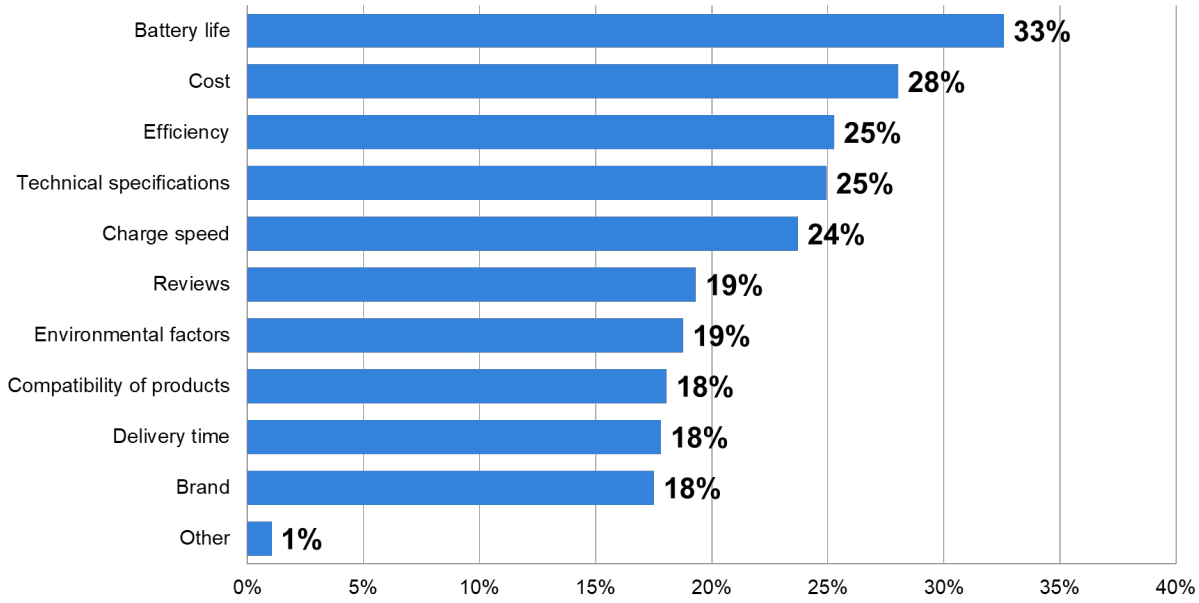


Q. You said you own Personal Light Electric Vehicle (PLEV)... Have you ever separately purchased a battery or charger for one of these devices? Please select all that apply.
Base: All who own a PLEV (637)

Amongst those who have bought a PLEV battery or charger separately, a third of those considered battery life when purchasing (33%), and three in ten considered cost (28%). A

further quarter each considered efficiency (25%), technical specifications (25%), or the speed of charging (24%) when purchasing.

Figure 49. Factors taken into account when purchasing a PLEV battery or charger

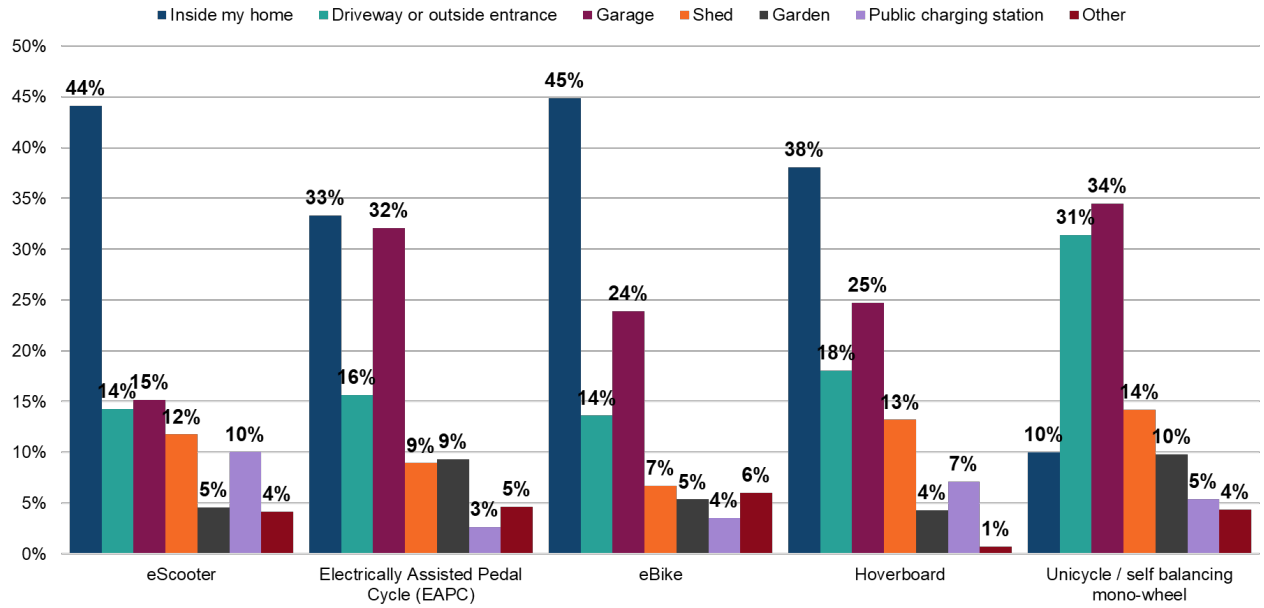


TPL3. Which, if any, of the following factors were important to you when purchasing a charger or battery for your Personal Light Electric Vehicle (PLEV)? Please select all that apply.
Base: All in PLEV module who have separately bought a battery (n=208)

When purchasing, cost was more likely to be a consideration amongst those in C2DE social grades (23% for ABC1, 37% for C2DE), while ethnic minority owners were more likely to consider environmental factors than white owners (28%, 15% white).

For those who own PLEVs, charging inside the home is most common for eScooters (44%), eBikes (45%) and hoverboards (38%). Charging in the home is also most common for EAPCs, although a similar proportion report charging these in a garage (33% in home, 32% in garage). For unicycles or self-balancing mono-wheels, charging in a garage is most commonly reported, although only slightly fewer charge these on a driveway or outside entrance (34% in garage, 31% on driveway or an outside entrance). This was broadly consistent across demographics.

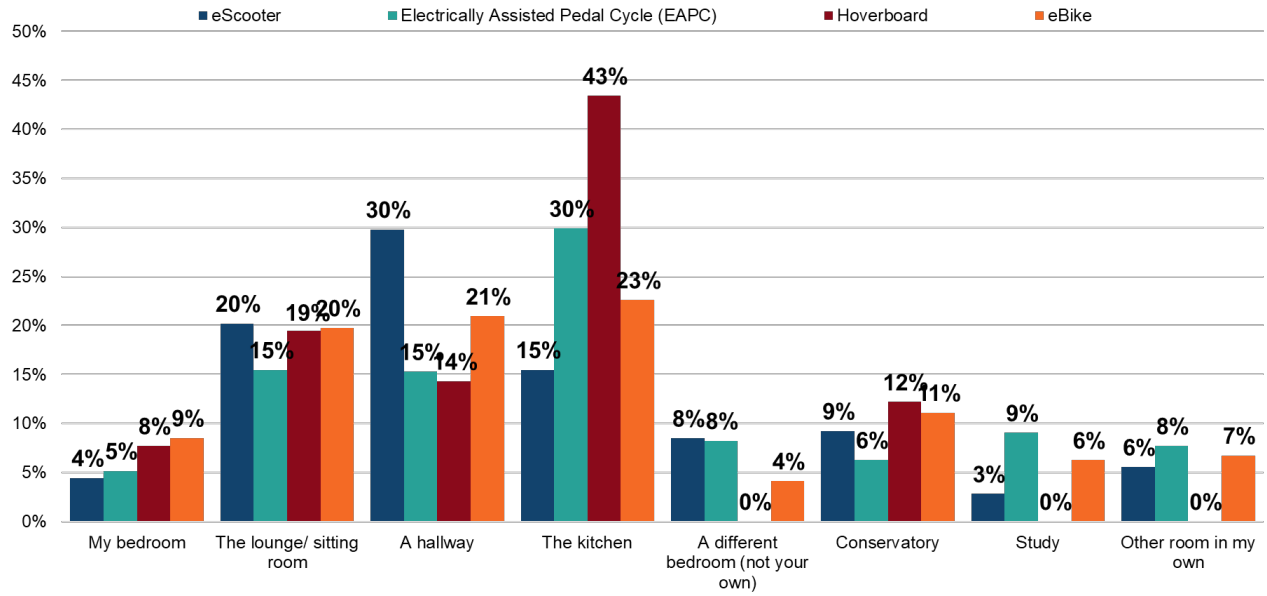
Figure 50. PLEV charging location



Q: Where do you most frequently charge your Personal Light Electric Vehicle(s) PLEV(s)? Please select all that apply
Base: All who own each vehicle: (eScooters=145; Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycle (EAPC)=161; eBike=231; Hoverboard=104; Unicycle/ self-balancing mono-wheel=57)

The in-home location where the PLEV was charged is dependent on the type of vehicle owned. For hoverboards and EAPCs, the kitchen is most commonly used (43% for hoverboards, 30% for EAPCs). For eScooters, hallways are more common (30%). E-bikes charging locations are more variable, with a quarter reporting charging in the kitchen (23%), and a further one fifth each report charging in a hallway (21%) or lounge (20%).

Figure 51. PLEV charging location in home

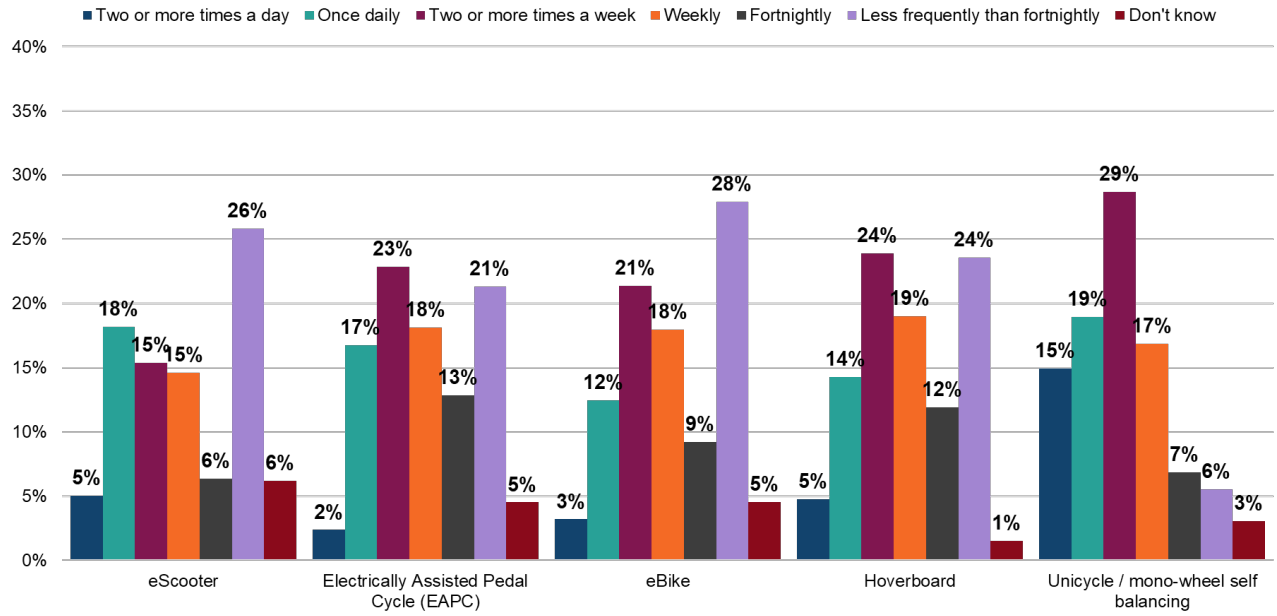


Q. Where do you most frequently charge your Personal Light Electric Vehicle(s) PLEV(s)? Please select all that apply
Base: All in PLEV module who frequently charge their PLEV in the home: (eScooters=63; Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycle (EAPC)=61; eBike=107; Hoverboard=42; Base size too small to show unicycle / self-balancing mono-wheel)

Frequency of charging is also dependent on the vehicle owned. EAPCs and unicycles are most likely to be charged two or more times a week, while eScooters and eBikes are more

commonly charged less frequently than fortnightly (26% for eScooters, 28% for eBikes). This could be due to a lower frequency of use or longer battery life for eScooters and eBikes.

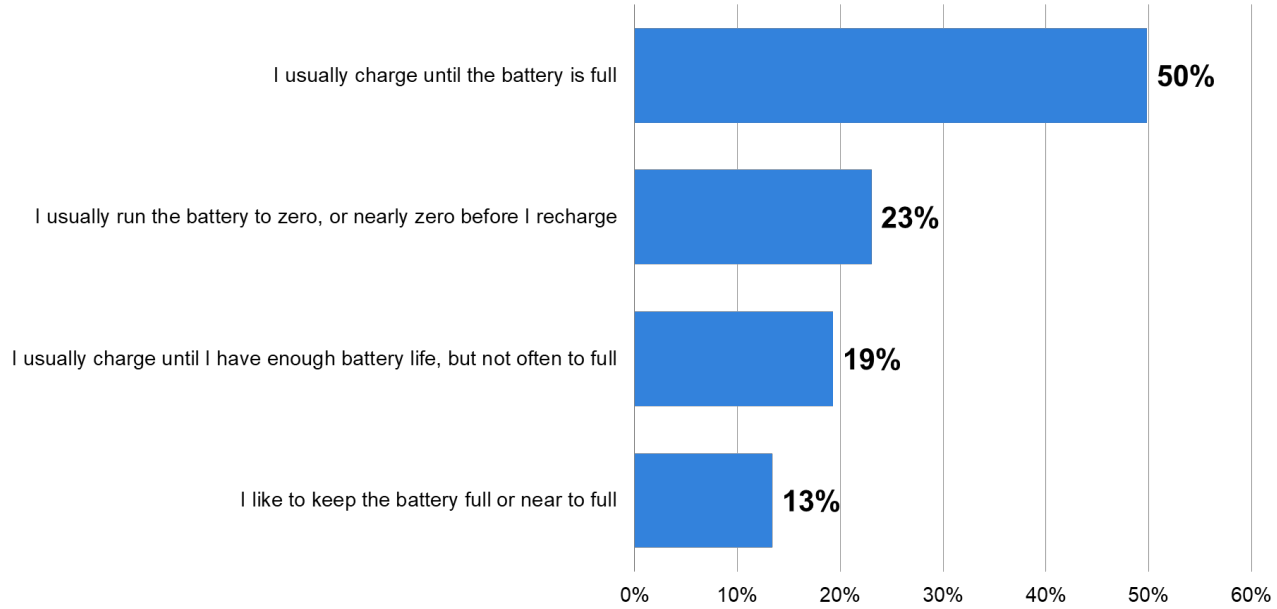
Figure 52. PLEV frequency of charging



Q. How often do you usually charge each of your Personal Light Electric Vehicle(s) PLEV?
Base: All who own each vehicle: (eScooters=145; Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycle (EAPC)=161; eBike=231; Hoverboard=104; Unicycle / self-balancing mono-wheel=57)

When charging their vehicles, half of owners charge until the battery is full (50%). One in ten report that they like to keep their vehicle battery full or near to full (13%), and a further fifth of owners charge until they have enough battery, but rarely charge to full (19%).

Figure 53. PLEV charging behaviour



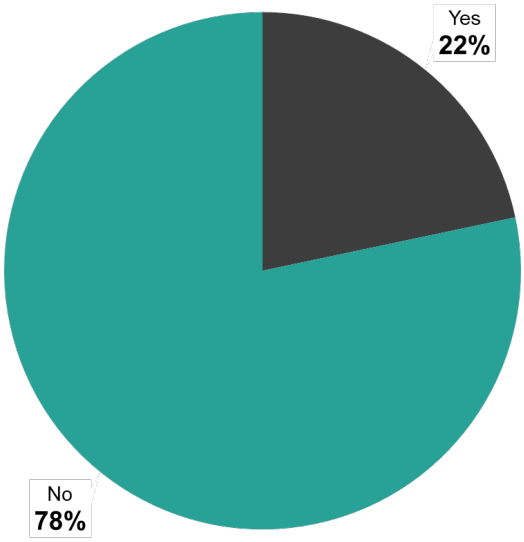
Q. Thinking about when you charge your Personal Light Electric Vehicle(s) (PLEV), which of the following apply to you? Please select all that apply.
Base: All who own a PLEV (637)

The time of day PLEV owners charge their vehicle also varies, with little consensus on this. Three in ten charge in the daytime whilst at home (28%), and a further two in ten (21%) charge in the daytime whilst not at home, while 22% charge their vehicles overnight.

Experience of safety issues with PLEVs

Amongst owners of PLEVs, 22% have experienced safety issues with the battery or charger for their vehicle. This is more common amongst those aged 18 to 49, with very few over 50s reporting experiencing issues with this (18-29=36%; 30-49=25%; 50-64=6%; 65+=2%). Ethnic minority owners are also more likely to have experienced issues than white owners (43%, 16% white).

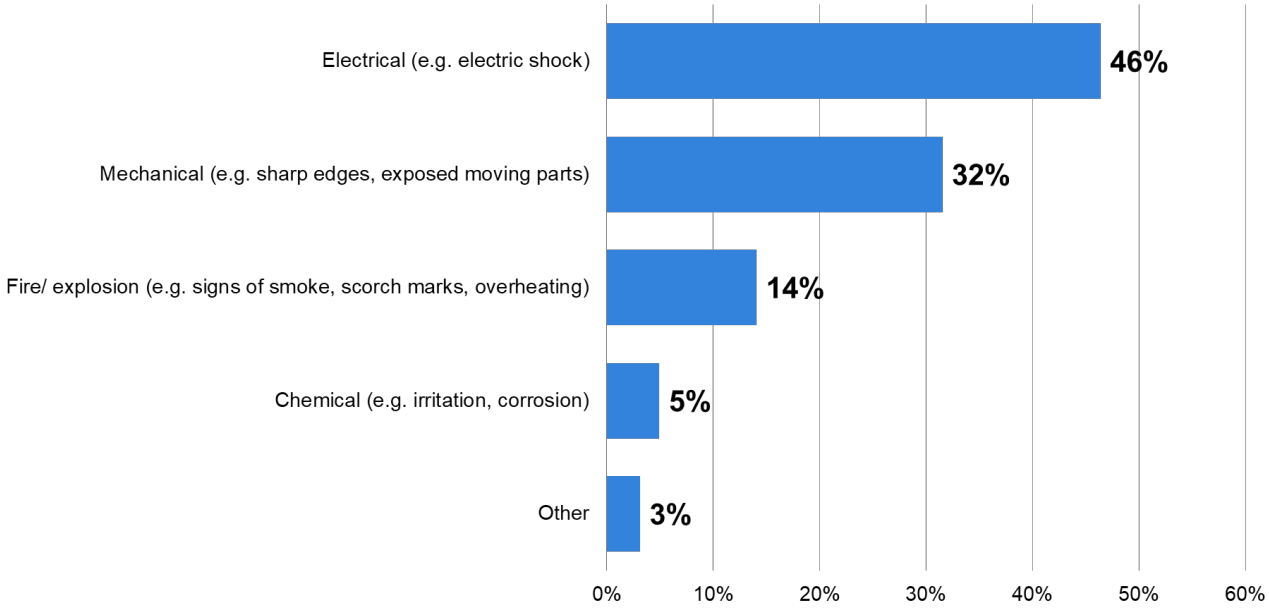
Figure 54. Prevalence of PLEV battery or charger safety issues



Q.
Have you had any safety issues specifically with the battery or charger for your Personal Light Electric Vehicle(s) (PLEV)?
Base: All who own a PLEV (637)

When asked in more detail about their experience of safety issues with their battery or charger, nearly half of owners experienced an electric issue (46%), and a further third experienced a mechanical issue (32%). Fire or explosion was less common, with 14% experiencing this, and even fewer (5%) reported having a chemical safety issue with their vehicle's battery or charger.

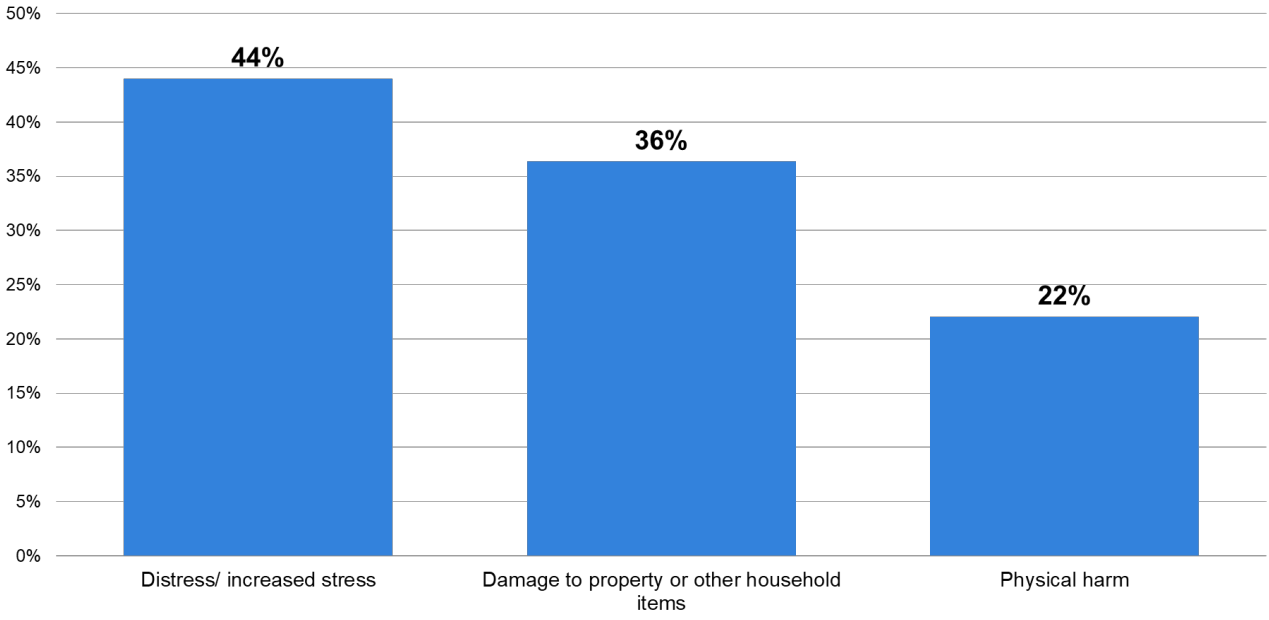
Figure 55. Safety issue experienced with PLEV battery or charger



Q. What type of safety issue did you experience with the battery/ charger of your Personal Light Electric Vehicle(s) (PLEV)?
Base: All who had a safety issue (122)

Distress or increased stress was the most commonly experienced outcome of the battery or charger safety issues (44%). Overall, 87% of those who experienced a safety issue had some negative outcome, whether increased stress, damage to property or physical harm. A small proportion (13%) did not have any of the negative outcomes mentioned. There are no statistically significant differences in the outcome experienced across demographic groups.

Figure 56. Outcome of PLEV battery charger safety issue

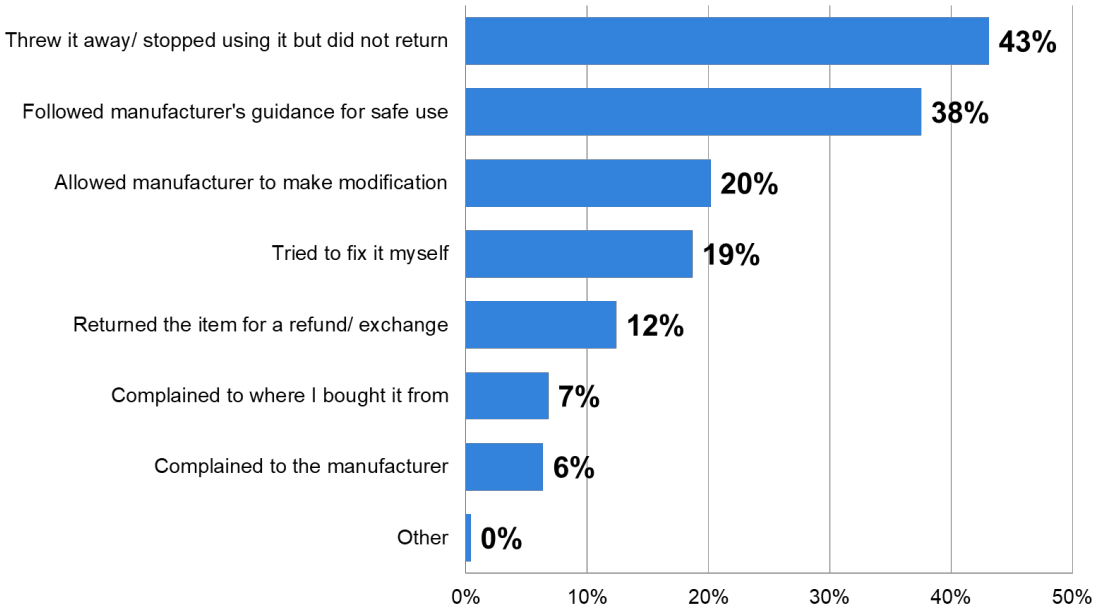


Q. Did that safety issue cause any of the following? (Please select all that apply)
Base: All who had a safety issue (122)

For those who experienced a safety issue, throwing the battery or charger away or ceasing use without returning the product was the most common course of action taken (43%). A

further 38% continued use, following manufacturers guidance for safe use. Repairing was less common, whether through the manufacturer (20%) or trying to fix the problem themselves (19%). Ethnic minority owners were more likely to allow the manufacturer to make modifications to their vehicle (29%, 14% white). Complaining or returning the product were also uncommon, and this was reflected across all key demographic groups.

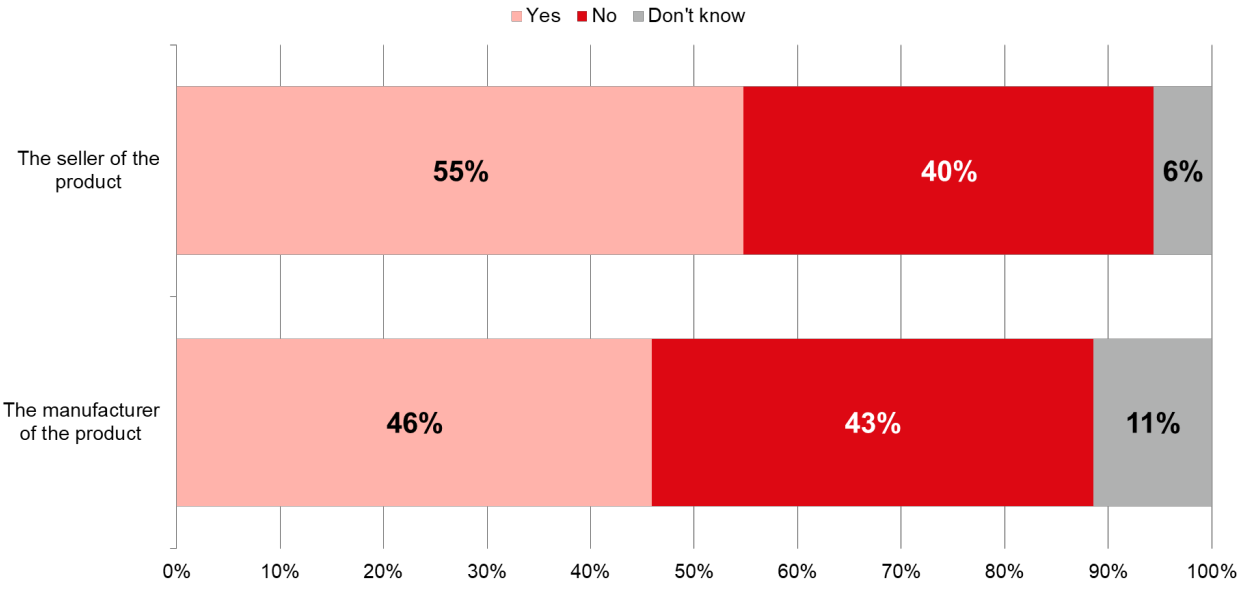
Figure 57. Action taken as a result of PLEV battery or charger safety issue



Q. Which, if any, of the following did you do as a result of the safety issue? (Please select all that apply)
Base: All who had a safety issue (122)

The product seller's advice was more likely to be thought helpful when a safety issue was experienced, rather than the manufacturer. Over half were provided help or advice by the seller (55%), compared to 46% who received help or advice from the manufacturer of the product. This was consistent across groups, with all demographic groups having a similar experience.

Figure 58. Help and support received



Q.

To the best of your knowledge, did either of the following provide help and advice (e.g. a support line)?
Base: All who had a safety issue (122)

Cost of living

In wave five, questions on the cost of living were shown to all respondents (n=10,156). Exact base sizes for specific questions are shown below each chart.

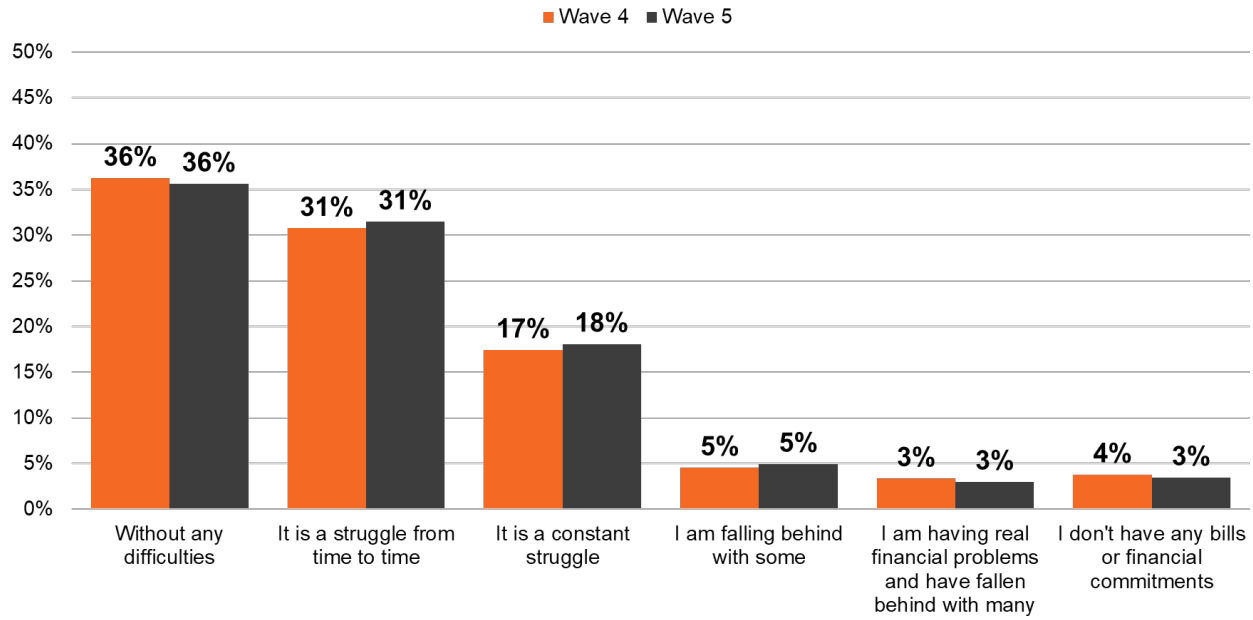
Given the changes in cost-of-living over 2022, additional questions were asked in wave four and five to ascertain the impact on UK consumers, and how this has affected their purchasing habits. Overall, the majority (57%) report struggling to keep up with bills and financial commitments to some extent, although only a small amount report that they are having real financial problems (3%). Three in ten (31%) state that they find keeping up with bills and financial commitments a struggle from time to time, and 18% report that it is a constant struggle to keep up with.

While over a third (36%) in total report that they are able to keep up with bills and financial commitments without any difficulties, this falls to just under three in ten (29%) when looking at those who are currently on any benefits, and a similar proportion (27%) among people whose day-to-day activities are limited at least a little due to a disability. Comparatively, four in ten (40%) of those without a disability report that they can keep up with financial commitments, significantly higher than those with a disability. This is consistent with the results from wave four.

Parents are also less likely to report that they are able to keep up with their financial commitments without any difficulties: one quarter (24%) of those who have any children report this, compared to two fifths (40%) of those without children. This is seen further among those who have younger children living in their household, with only a fifth (22%) of those who have children under 5 reporting that they are able to keep up with their financial commitments without any difficulty, and three quarters who report they are struggling financially (73%). Comparatively, a third (33%) of those who have children older than 18 years in their household report they are managing, although six in ten (63%) of parents with older children report that they are struggling financially.

Older respondents aged 65+ are more likely report no financial difficulties (55%) compared to younger respondents aged 50-64 (35%), 30-49 (28%) and 18-29 (26%).

Figure 59. Keeping up with bills and financial commitments

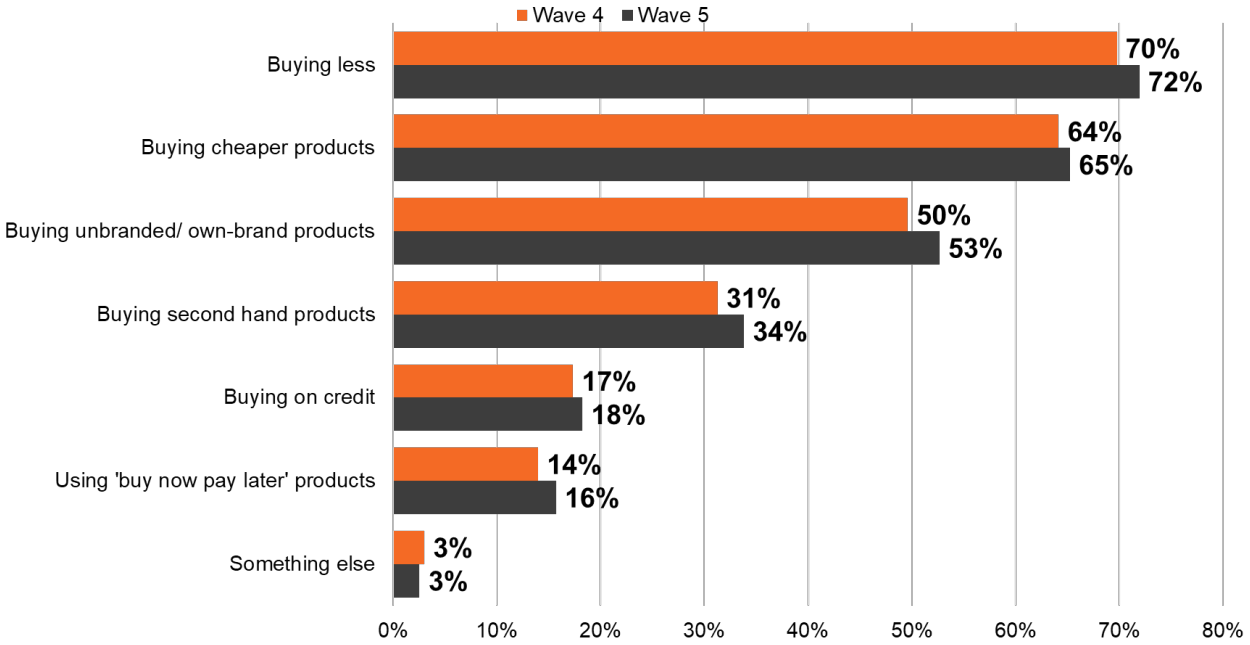


Q. Which one of the following statements BEST describes how well you are keeping up with your bills and financial commitments at the moment?
Base: All respondents (W4=10,156; W5=10,182)

Those who previously reported at least some financial difficulties were asked what steps they are taking to manage their financial commitments when buying products. The majority (72%) reported that they were buying less, more than in wave four (70%). Other methods to reduce spend are spending less on products with 65% buying cheaper products, 53% buying unbranded products (50% W4) and 34% buying second hand products (31% W4). A smaller proportion are buying on credit (18%) or using 'buy now pay later' products (14% W4, 16% W5).

Those who report they are able to keep up with their financial commitments but that it is a struggle from time to time, are less likely to report buying on credit (13%) or using 'buy now pay later' products (11%), compared to those who are having real financial problems (26% buying on credit, 30% using 'buy now pay later' products). However, those who are keeping up with their financial commitments but find it a constant struggle are the most likely to report that they are buying less (74%), compared to those who are falling behind on financial commitments or having real financial problems (both 63%). This could suggest that those in more difficult financial positions are unable to take further steps to reduce spend when buying products.

Figure 60. Managing financial commitments



Q. You previously said you are at least struggling somewhat with keeping up with bills and financial commitments. When you are buying products, which if any of the following are you doing to manage this? Base: All who are finding it difficult to cope on present income (W4=5,685; W5=5,897)

Attitudes and behaviours around Christmas shopping and the cost-of-living crisis

In groups 1 and 2, conducted before Christmas, many participants had either already started or completed their Christmas shopping. Most preferred online shopping either partially due to the convenience however, a few were concerned about missing deliveries or wanted to avoid paying delivery fees. Those who went shopping in stores, did so either because they had specific stores in mind that they wanted to visit, or were looking for gift ideas and inspiration. For most, COVID did not make a significant impact on how they approached shopping, although some did shop online more as a result.

The cost-of-living crisis had evident impacts on the way in which most participants approached shopping, as many were budgeting more compared to the previous years and were looking out for offers, as well as focusing on buying more meaningful gifts that the recipient would appreciate or would find useful. A few mentioned that they preferred buying from smaller businesses to support them, as opposed to buying from large retailers. Some had to sacrifice other daily spending to make sure they can buy gifts, and a few tried making more gifts themselves.

> *"Definitely trying to cut down or make my presents more meaningful. Less 'filler' gifts and trying to stick to my budget per person more strictly." Group 1, 18-40, Female*

> *"I'm buying less, and less expensive this year." Group 2, 40+, Male*

In groups 3 and 4, conducted after Christmas many were aiming to spend less on Christmas presents compared to previous years due to the cost-of-living crisis. Many were setting tight budgets, only purchasing the essentials, or only purchasing presents for immediate members of their family. The older group (40+) have been less impacted by the cost-of-living crisis. Similarly with groups 1 and 2, some bought presents throughout the year in order to take advantage of sales but others did last minute shopping. Participants shopped both online and in store, many were shopping online for ease and ability to do

research and find the best deals. Some older participants were concerned about shopping in store due to crowds and the risk of covid.

"This year has been exceptionally tough on the money side of things. So, I only bought for immediate family" Group 3, 18-40, Female

"Rent going up due to fuel rises have been the worse. On top of that every time I do a food shop it is more and more expensive." Group 3, 18-40, Male

"I've shopped online this year as theirs better discounts online" Group 3, 18-40, Female

"My wife has a compromised immunity system, so we try to do as much shopping online as possible to avoid coming into contact with lots of people" Group 4, 40+, Male

Across groups, quality was an important factor for the majority, as was the value for money, and many participants said that they prioritised making sure that the items they bought would last and would save money in the long term. For some, this was particularly the case due to the rising costs, as they felt it was important to spend their money meaningfully. Sustainability was also important for some, however there was a general perception that sustainable items tended to be more expensive, and not everyone felt they could invest into the upfront costs, which meant that it was less prioritised.

"Value for money is really important - especially as my budget per person isn't as large as I would like it to be. So, I want to know that the money I am spending per item is going as far as it possibly can." Group 1, 18-40, Female

Generally, participants did not consider product safety, unless they were buying toys for children or electricals, in which case the product safety was a priority. For many, there was an assumption that the product would be safe and conform to the safety standards if it was of a good quality and from a reputable brand. Ways of ensuring the product safety included checking the warranty and buying products from trusted brands and reputable sellers that they trusted and assumed would follow safety regulations. Some said that they would also be looking out for CE mark, check the reviews, and would only buy branded items, particularly if they were buying electricals.

"I don't really think I buy too many products where safety is a concern "I don't really think I buy too many products where safety is a concern personally, but if it's something like an electrical I'm keen to buy from a reputable seller with a decent warranty!" Group 1, 18-40, Female

"I think that when you are buying quality, product safety is more of a given." Group 2, 40+, Male

"I don't really think about product safety apart from when I buy anything electronic/ electric. I do not trust any unbranded/ generic stuff on [eBay] or Amazon because I don't trust their quality control/CE marks." Group 2, 40+, Male

"If buying from a retailer product should have been tested already before going on sale" Group 4, 40+, Male

"I would rather pay a bit more for something that I know is worth it or will last than something cheap and is of poor quality or will not last" Group 3, 18-40, Male

Comparing measurements to value

Across groups many participants said they would often compare the value of a range of products to make sure they get the best value. However, this was mainly done when it was easy to make the comparisons and the product measurements were clearly indicated on the packaging. Those who are currently on a diet were more likely to make these types of measurements as well as those who were cooking a specific recipe and wanted to be efficient, however for most taking measurements is felt to be a lengthy process.

"If I see the same item at a much cheaper price, I check the measurements to see if it's worth buying or the cheaper option." Group 3, 18-40, Female

"I do compare to make sure I am getting the best value for money but also to make sure I don't waste anything" Group 4, 40+, Female

For many, the cost of living was the key driver for comparing a range of product values and sizes, and some were also worried about ''shrinkflation'' and products being reduced in size. Mostly, participants were concerned with getting the best value for money, particularly when buying products that were similar and to make sure they are getting the cheaper option.

"I am more careful with shopping as everything has shrunk in size and gone up in price!" Group 2, 40+, Female

"I have started buying more loose fruit/veg- mainly to reduce waste and it is cheaper than buying a packet that you won't finish." Group 1, 18-40, Female

"I've found myself doing that more since inflation started rising." Group 2, 40+, Male

In general, there were high levels of confidence among most participants that they are getting the right measurements for items that were shown on the board. The key reason for their trust was because they believed that majority of these items are regulated throughout the manufacturing process, as well as by supermarkets, which means that they are likely to get the correct measurements.

Participants specifically mentioned that they trusted pre-packaged food sold in supermarkets, as well as drinks and petrol, which some said that they were aware that these were being tested for accuracy (those who do not drive has less confidence in petrol measurements). However, a few participants said they did not trust the legislation and felt it allowed for some levels of tolerance, which reduced their confidence in getting the right measurements.

"I feel confident with pre-packaged food because I always weigh them myself" Group 3, 18-40, Female

‘’I do try and look at the cost per gram etc and compare for value - sometimes the 'cheap' option isn't actually the best!’’ Group 1, 18-40, Female

“Most of these items have been regulated for some time, so I have confidence in all of them” Group 4, 40+, Male

‘’I assume that the measuring equipment is calibrated/audited and there is a level of trust there.’’ Group 1, 18-40, Male

There was hardly any knowledge of the estimate ‘e’ sign in the groups however many felt that they would feel more confident in buying things if they saw this mark.

“It [‘e’ mark] is a good thing but it needs better promotion for people to understand” Group 4, 40+, Male

Appendix B: Qualitative case studies

The following two case studies were based on interviews conducted after the text-based focus groups.

Case study: Philip

Christmas shopping

Throughout the year, Philip uses Evernote, where he adds a list of gift ideas. He is quite flexible when it comes to gift prices but tries to make sure that the gifts he buys are of good quality and from a reputable brand. He did most of his Christmas shopping online, as it was more convenient, particularly as he already knew what he was buying. Some of the gifts he purchased included items with batteries, but he did not have any safety concerns about these items.

Repairs on electrical appliances

He recalls doing minor repairs, such as changing a broken mobile phone screen for which he followed a YouTube video guide. Due to the simplicity of the repair, he was comfortable carrying it out however, would be hesitant to repair larger appliances, as he would worry that it could result in breaking the item, voiding the warranty, or posing safety issues.

"Purely like from a value perspective and confidence if we were talking about like a fridge freezer for example, I don't know where to start and if I break this further, then attempting to repair it could void a warranty."

Experiences of safety issues

A few months ago, an electrical fire occurred inside his washing machine. He called the fire brigade immediately however; he did not contact the manufacturer or the retailer as the washing machine was out of warranty (it was 7-8 years old). He also felt discouraged from raising this with the manufacturer, as he felt it would be a lengthy process and no guarantee of a positive outcome. He would have raised this is the washing machine was bought more recently however, instead he made a decision to buy a new one.

Recalls

Philip was not been aware of any product recalls however, if a product that he owned was recalled, he would feel discouraged by the process of returning it or having the item collected and then waiting for a refund or a replacement. He said he would expect to hear about it on the manufacturer's website, but would not expect to hear directly, unless the store had his contact details.

"I honestly thought to myself, I can't be bothered … no damage was caused other than to the washing machine. So, we just had to buy a new one anyway. And it really puts me off that you just have to go through a lengthy process to get hold of somebody and then if the outcome is nothing, you kind of feel it was pointless."

Case study: Emma

Christmas shopping

Emma didn't have a specific budget for her Christmas shopping, but she did complete shopping early in order to get the best online deals. She was more likely to consider safety for presents for younger children or for electrical items, particularly if they are imported from other countries. Emma would also look at reviews for these products to reassure herself about the safety.

Repairs on electrical appliances

She prefers replacements over repairs on electrical and gas related products due to safety concerns. However, Emma and her partner have previously attempted to fix simple appliances and inexpensive products, they do this by watching YouTube tutorials or reading manufacturer's instruction manuals. They decide whether to fix items based on complexity of the fix and availability of spare parts. Their repairs have had mixed results, some have worked out and other appliances worsened and need to be replaced.

"I wouldn't touch anything electrical, or gas related, because I think there are people out there that are better suited and qualified to do that."

Experiences of safety issues

Emma was more concerned with safety when her child was younger. She is less concerned now but is still cautious about quality of items and handling electrical products with care (as per manufacturer's instructions). She has not faced any major safety issues in the past but has received defective products from online deliveries (which were refunded).

Recalls

Emma's car was recalled due to its radio and satnav issues, her car software was updated by the manufacturer at no extra cost. She felt that information about recalls should be shared on social media, on TV and in newspapers. She would expect retailers to contact her directly about recalls (if she has had supplied her personal information).

"I didn't buy my car from the manufacturer so there was no way of knowing [there was a problem with the satnav]. We had been online and could see that other people were experiencing a similar issue so we went to the manufacturer to check what they could do"

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