Office for Product Safety & Standards

OPSS Product Safety and Consumers: Wave 8

DBT Research Paper

September 2024

This report was commissioned by the Office for Product Safety and Standards from YouGov.

The views expressed in this report are those of the authors, not necessarily those of the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) or the Department for Business and Trade (DBT), nor do they necessarily reflect government policy.

Contents

Project background and methodology

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 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 consumer vulnerability could be better addressed 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 eighth wave of tracking, including comparisons against the previous waves where applicable. The report also includes an exploration of key topical policy areas including online purchasing, e-labelling, personal light electric vehicles (PLEVs) and smart devices/cybersecurity.

[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 10,060 people from across the United Kingdom (UK) collected through online research methods during wave eight. Fieldwork was carried out between 1st – 19th July 2024. A supporting survey of 261 people who are very low or non-internet users was conducted via telephone between 11th July – 3rd August 2024.

Where appropriate, comparisons have been made with survey data from previous waves. 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
Wave six	10,216 UK adults 16th June to 3rd July 2023	252 offline adults 29th June to 19th July 2023
Wave seven	10,023 UK adults 13th December to 13th January 2024	251 offline adults 3rd to 17th January 2024
Wave eight	10,060 UK adults 1st to 19th July 2024	261 offline adults 11th July to 3rd August 2024

Qualitative methodology

After the close of the online survey, four text-based online focus groups were conducted with survey participants. Groups were split by age, experiences of safety issues, and e-bike/e-scooter ownership status.

- **Group 1: 10 participants** – aged 18 to 40, e-bike/e-scooter owner.
- **Group 2: 10 participants** – aged 40+, e-bike/e-scooter owner.
- **Group 3: 10 participants** – 18-40 year olds, experienced safety issue with a product.
- **Group 4: 12 participants** – 40+ year olds, experienced safety issue with a product.

A mix of demographics (age, social grade, genders, ethnicities, and locations) were included across groups. There were between 10-12 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 August 2024.

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. This analysis may be highly correlated with other findings in the data (for example, LGB+ respondents are more prevalent in younger age 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 with 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 group participants”. 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.

The statements in this report are based on the data collected from consumer research conducted by YouGov. The findings reflect general trends in consumer behaviour and experiences, such as with PLEV's and smart devices. OPSS makes no representation or endorsement regarding specific products, retailers or practices. Although every effort has been made to ensure accuracy of the data, OPSS does not guarantee that the findings are exhaustive or representative of all consumers.

Key findings

Perceptions of safety

- The proportion of UK adults who feel that the current system of product safety regulations ensures that products they purchase are “completely” or “a great deal” safe has risen from wave seven – over half (53%) now believe this.
- UK adults continue to expect a product to be safe regardless of the price they paid (83%) and believe that regulations ensure products sold in the UK are generally safe (74%).
- Product safety is rarely a top factor for people purchase consideration of a product; just under one in ten (9%) report considering this, consistent with previous waves. It continues to be a more common consideration for baby products and toys than other categories.
- The key factor driving trust in a product being safe remains previous experience of that product (42%).
- The public continue to trust consumer protection bodies (75%). Trust in government, whilst remaining low, has risen compared with wave seven (35% trust local government, compared with 33% in W7; 33% trust UK government departments, compared with 29% in W7).

Experiences of safety issues

- Overall, 14% report having experienced a product safety issue with a listed product category in the last year.
- Among those who experienced a safety issue, the most common product category reported is electrical appliances (43%).
- The mean seriousness score for product safety issues is 5.79. Baby products are among the most likely category where issues were rated as “most serious”, with 40% of those who experienced an issue ranking it as eight out of ten or higher.
- The most common impact as a result of a safety issue continues to be distress/ increased stress (32%), a figure which is substantially higher than all previous waves (23% in W7). The same is true for damage to property or other household items at 26% (18% in W7).
- The proportion who took some form of action as a result of their safety issue has risen this wave to 90%, again the highest proportion recorded across all survey waves.

A focus on second-hand purchasing

- A majority (73%) of the UK public report that they would be likely to buy at least one of the types of products listed second-hand rather than new.
- Clothes/clothing accessories are the most common category the UK public say they would be likely to purchase second-hand (45%). This is followed by furniture/furnishings (36%) and toys (33%). These three categories being the most popular second-hand purchases is consistent with previous waves.
- The top three places the UK public would be likely to purchase second-hand items from remain charity shops (74%), online marketplaces (65%), and online community buy and sell pages (53%).

- Just under three-quarters (73%) say they always consider the safety of the product they are buying.
- The most common way UK adults check the safety of second-hand items continues to be checking reviews and feedback on the seller (49%).

Perceptions of safety

In wave eight, questions on perceptions of safety were shown to all respondents (n=10,060). Exact base sizes for specific questions are shown below each chart.

Key findings

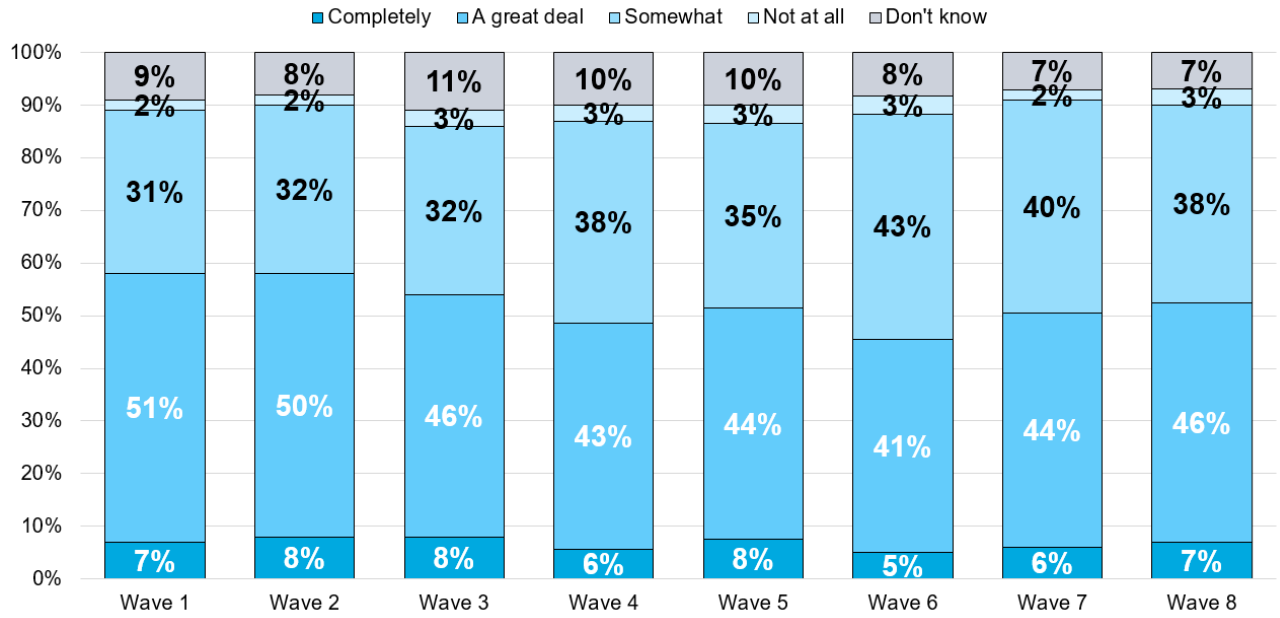
- The proportion of UK adults who feel that the current system of product safety regulations ensures that products they purchase are “completely” or “a great deal” safe has risen from wave seven – over half (53%) now believe this.
- UK adults continue to expect a product to be safe regardless of the price they paid (83%) and believe that regulations ensure products sold in the UK are generally safe (74%).
- Product safety is rarely a top factor for people purchase consideration of a product; just under one in ten (9%) report considering this, consistent with previous waves. It continues to be a more common consideration for baby products and toys than other categories.
- The key factor driving trust in a product being safe remains previous experience of that product (42%).
- The public continue to trust consumer protection bodies (75%). Trust in government, whilst remaining low, has risen compared with wave seven (35% trust local government, compared with 33% in W7; 33% trust UK government departments, compared with 29% in W7).

The UK system for regulating product safety

Over half (53%) 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 (figure 1). This is two percentage points higher than in wave seven and is broadly consistent with previous waves. Conversely, the proportion of people who feel that the current system “somewhat” ensures safety has decreased from a peak in wave six down to 38%. The proportion who feel that the current system does not ensure safety at all remains consistent at 3%.

Similar to wave seven, younger people are more likely to feel that the UK system can ensure product safety “completely” (12% of those aged 18 to 29, 8% of those aged 30 to 49, 5% of those aged 50 to 64). Those aged 65 and over are the least likely to feel that the UK’s regulation ensures that products are “completely” safe (3%). Consistent with previous waves, those in higher social grades (ABC1) are more likely to feel that the current system is able to ensure safety to some extent (92%), compared with C2DE’s (89%). Men are also more likely than women to feel that the current system is able to ensure safety to some extent (92%, compared with 89% for women), consistent with previous waves.

Figure 1. Extent to which product safety regulation systems are effective



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. W1 (10,230); W2 (10,296); W3 (10,187); W4 (10,156); W5 (10,182); W6 (10,216); W7 (10,023); W8 (10,060)

Factors that influence perceptions of safety and product purchasing

When asked about the top three features considered when purchasing a product, the purchase price remains the factor chosen by the most UK consumers (57%). Figure 2 shows that this is in line with the previous three waves, and continues the slight decrease seen since wave five (61%). Quality comes in second, with 39% taking this into account, consistent with waves six and seven.

Product safety continues to be a factor that is rarely taken into account when purchasing a product; just under one in ten report that product safety was one of their top three considerations when making a purchase (9%), consistent with wave seven.

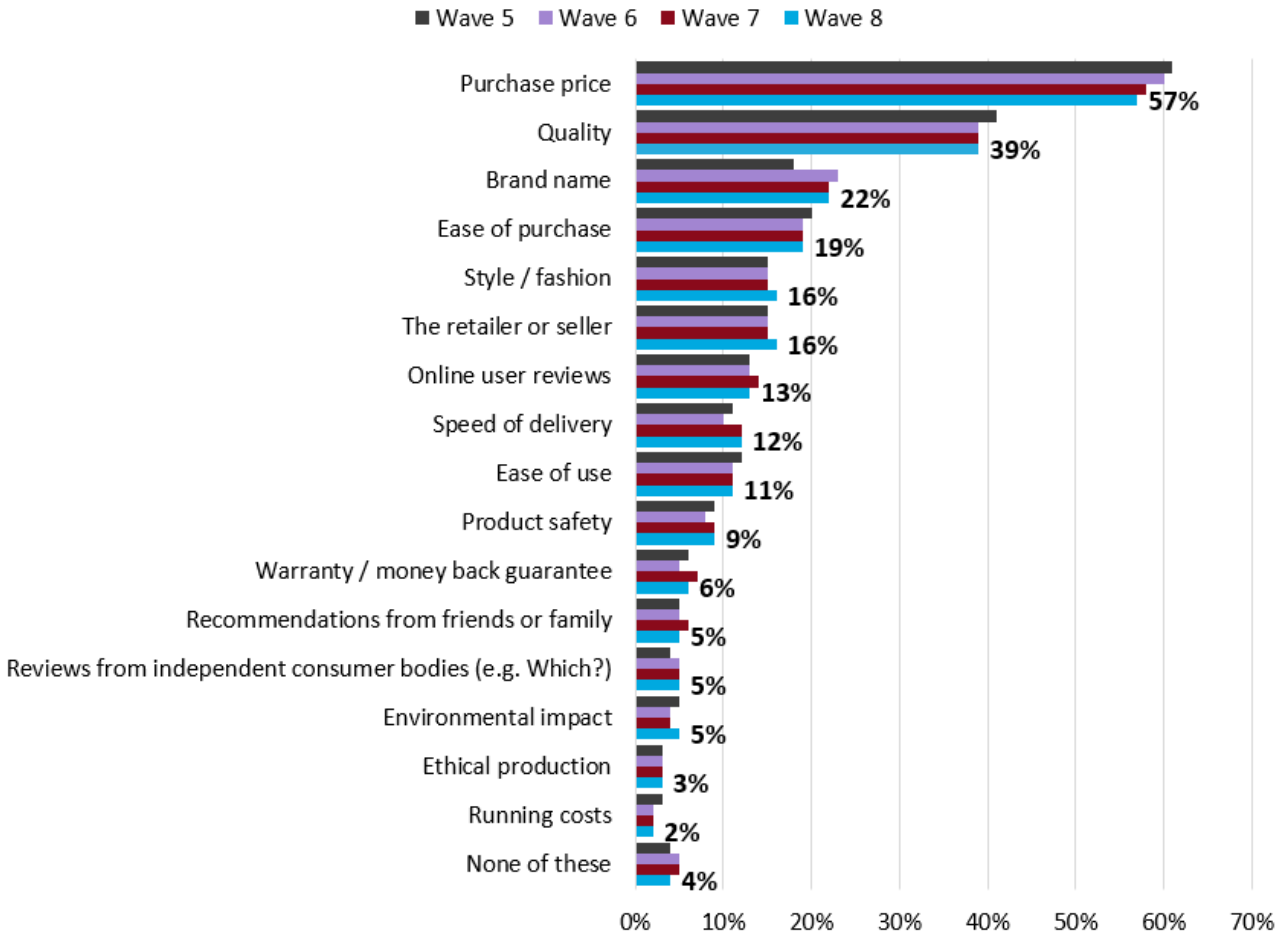
Those with children in their household are more likely to consider product safety as a top consideration (12%, compared with 7% for those with no children). In particular, those with children under five in their household are more likely to consider product safety (16%) than those in a household with children of any other age, consistent with wave seven.

Those who are in the 50 to 64 year old age bracket tend to focus more on purchase price when purchasing a product – 51% of those aged 18 to 29 select this as an important factor, rising to 65% of those aged 50 to 64. This finding is consistent with wave seven. Older respondents are also more likely to value the retailer or seller (13% of those aged 18 to 29, compared with 23% of those aged 65+), ease of purchase (15% of those aged 18 to 29, compared with 21% of those aged 65+), and brand name (20% of those aged 18 to 29, compared with 26% of those aged 65+).

Those from an ethnic minority background are less likely to consider purchase price when making a purchase (49%, compared with 59% for white adults).

However, those from an ethnic minority background are more likely to consider product safety when making a purchase (11%, compared with 8% for white adults).

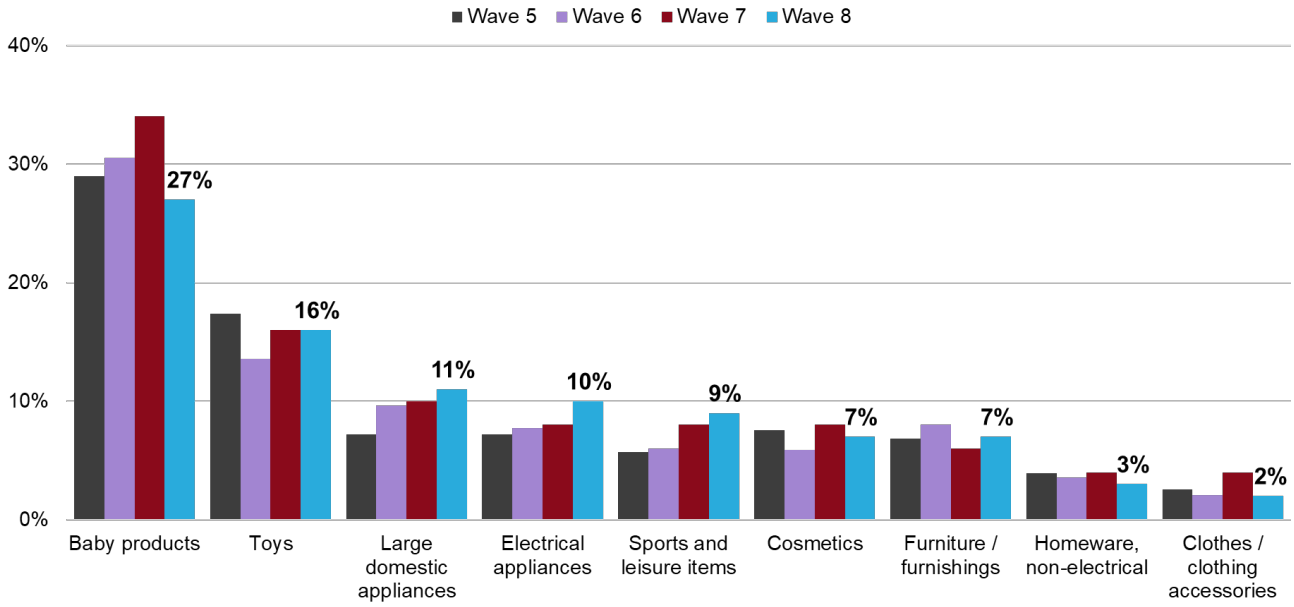
Figure 2. Most important factors affecting purchasing decisions



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 allocated a product (W5= 8,407; W6=8,036; W7=8,181; W8=7,933)

The importance of product safety varies by the product being considered (figure 3). Those considering purchasing baby products are the most likely to say they prioritise product safety (27%), followed by those households with one or more children are more likely to consider product safety when purchasing products (12%), compared with households with no children (7%). Product safety is less common as a top-three concern when buying non-electrical homeware (3%) or clothes (2%).

Figure 3. Importance of product safety by product category

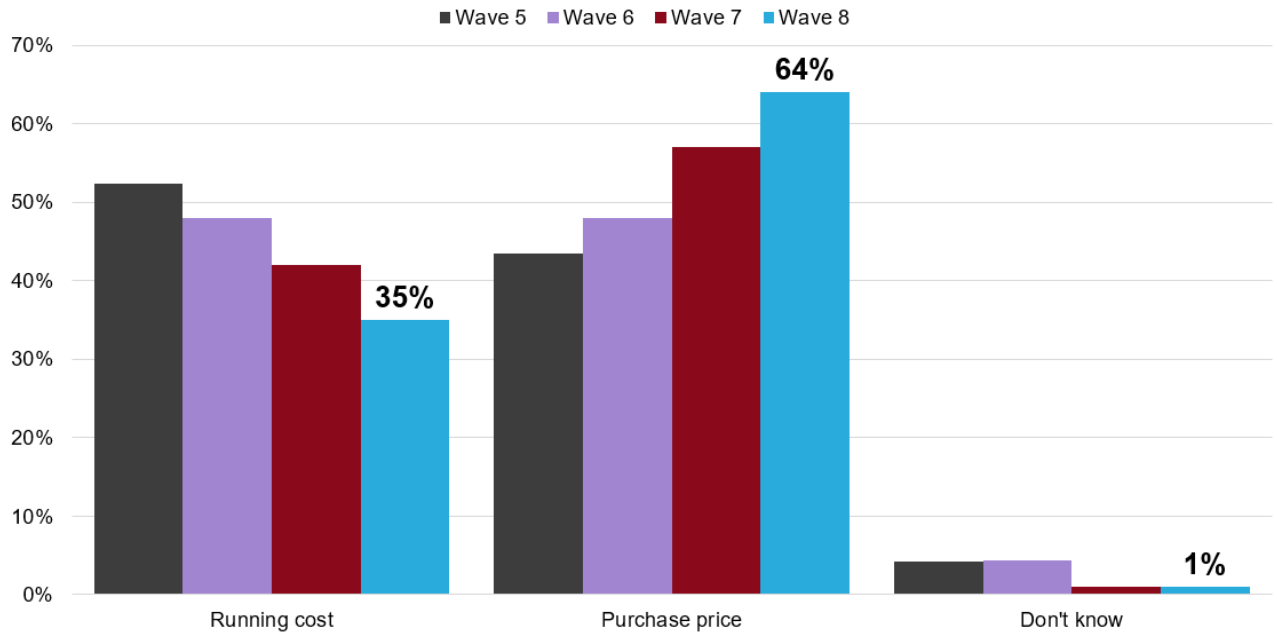


Q: Which, if any, of the following did you take into account when you were considering buying the [product]? (Please select the THREE most important factors)
Base: All allocated a product. (in W8: baby products=408; toys=869; large domestic appliances=681; electrical appliances=1,008; cosmetics=1,253; sports and leisure items=836; furniture/ furnishings=902; homeware=645; clothes/ clothing accessories=1,331)

When thinking about large domestic appliances, the running cost is also a prominent factor for consideration; 15% of those reflecting on large domestic appliance purchases report that they considered this, compared with only 4% who consider the running costs for small electrical appliances.

Across all product categories, those who considered both purchase price and running costs were asked which they felt was more important (figure 4). In wave eight, 64% of those consumers consider purchase price as a more important consideration, compared with just over a third (35%) who consider the running cost more important.

Figure 4. Importance of purchase price and running cost in purchasing decisions



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 who selected price and running cost (W5=138; W6=88; W7=88; W8=83)

The UK public continues to expect a product to be safe regardless of the price they pay for it (83%), consistent with previous waves (figure 5). This attitude is more commonly held among older adults compared with those under 30 (79% of those aged 18 to 29, 83% of those aged 30 to 49, 85% of those aged 50-64, 85% of those aged 65+), consistent with wave seven.

Similarly, three quarters (73%) of the UK public disagree that they are willing to have a product that is less safe if that product cost less. Just under three quarters (74%) of the public agree that products sold in the UK are generally safe as there are regulations in place to ensure this. Both are consistent with the proportions seen in wave seven.

Those with children in their household are more likely to have a product that is less safe if it costs less compared with those without children, a difference that increases with the number of children in the household (8% of those with no children, 16% of those with one child, 16% of those with two children, 23% of those with three children, 29% of those with four children).

Just over two in five (42%) agree that safety issues are more likely to be caused by people misusing products rather than an issue with the product itself, level with previous findings. This belief is more commonly held among those under 30 (50% of those aged 18 to 29, 43% of those aged 30 to 49, 36% of those aged 50 to 64, 41% of those aged 65+), as well as among those with children of any age in their household (47%, compared with 40% for those with no children), consistent with the previous two waves.

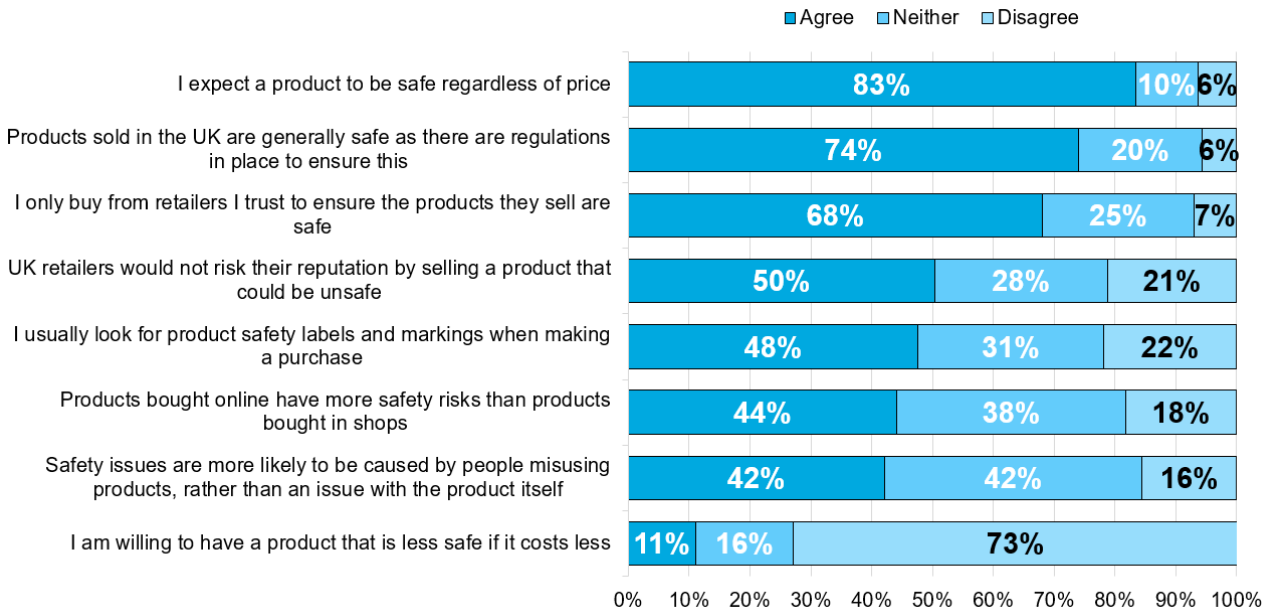
Over two in five (44%) also think that products bought online have more safety risks than those bought in-store, an increase of three percentage points from wave seven. This change is driven by a decrease in the proportion of people who are neutral about this statement (from 40% in wave seven to 38% in wave eight), rather than an increase in the

proportion of people who disagree (19% W7, 18% W8). As with previous waves, younger respondents appear to be more cautious when thinking about online purchases: agreement with this statement increases to 49% among those aged 18 to 29, significantly higher than all other age groups (44% of those aged 30 to 49, 41% of those aged 50 to 64, 43% of those aged 65+). Men are also more likely than women to be cautious about online purchasing (48%, compared with 41% for women), consistent with wave seven.

Those from an ethnic minority background are less likely to expect a product to be safe regardless of its price (78%, compared with 84% for white adults), but are more likely to choose a product that is less safe if it costs less (21%, compared with 10% for white adults). This trend was also found in wave seven.

Those with disabilities are more likely to usually look for product safety labels when making a purchase (50%) compared with those without disabilities (46%).

Figure 5. Assumptions of product safety



Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
Base: All respondents (W8=10,060)

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 (figure 6).

Trust is highest for consumer protection bodies (75%). This is maintained from the previous three waves (75% at wave seven, 74% at waves five and six) after dropping down from its highest point in wave one (79%). Retail outlets have a generally high level of trust, with second-hand shops the most likely to be seen as trustworthy (66%), whilst almost three in five of the UK public feel that physical store retail outlets or online retail outlets are trustworthy (61% for physical outlets, 57% for online outlets). The perceived trustworthiness of physical and online outlets have both increased from wave seven (58% physical outlets, 55% online outlets). Online marketplaces are seen as less trustworthy

than other retailers, with 45% of UK adults saying they are trustworthy, consistent with wave seven.

Similar to previous waves, those aged 18 to 29 are the most likely age group to trust online marketplaces; 52% of 18 to 29 year olds trust them, compared with 40% of those aged 65 and over. This may be due to more use of online marketplaces amongst younger people.

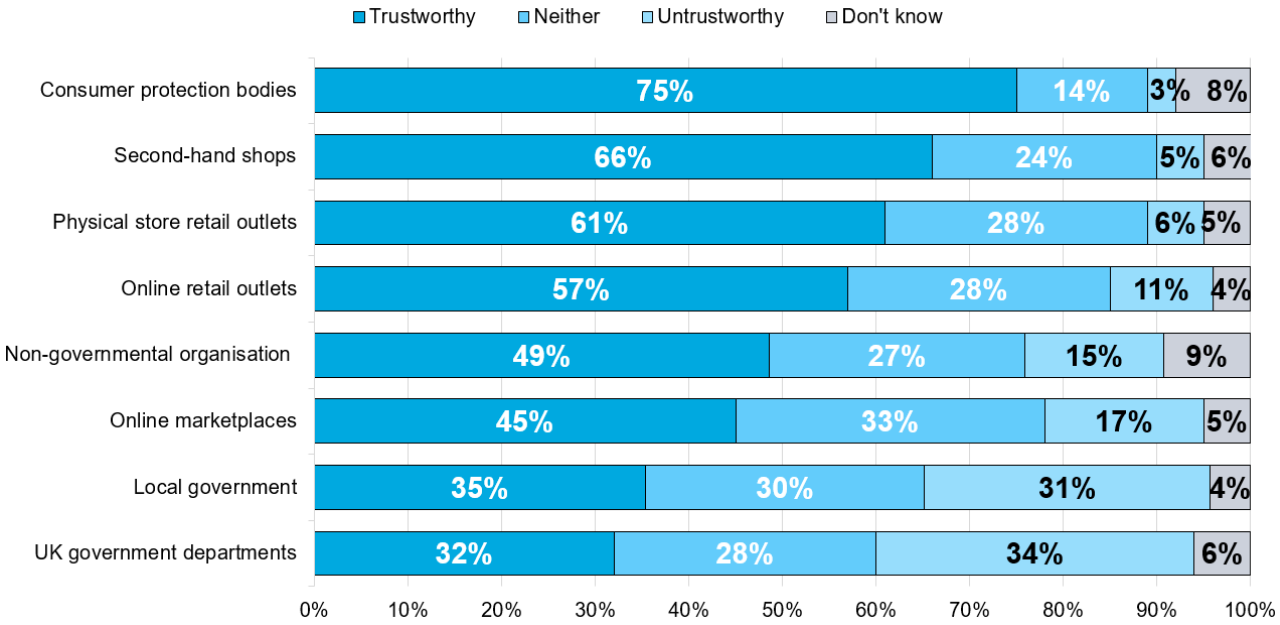
Trust in local government has risen significantly compared with the previous two waves, from 27% in wave six to 33% in wave seven and now 35% in wave eight. Similarly, trust in UK government departments has risen compared with the previous four waves (25% W4, 27% W5, 21% W6, 29% W7) to 32% for wave eight. Trust in UK government departments remains higher amongst high social grades (36% ABC1, compared with 28% C2DE).

Those from an ethnic minority background have greater trust in both UK government departments (41%, compared with 31% for white adults) and their local government (41%, compared with 35% for white adults), consistent with the previous two waves.

Those from an ethnic minority background also have greater trust in online marketplaces (52%, compared with 44% for white respondents), although they have less trust in second-hand shops (60%, compared with 66% for white respondents).

Those with disabilities have less trust in both the UK government departments (27%, compared with 35% for those without disabilities) and their local government (31%, compared with 37% for those without disabilities), a finding mirrored by previous waves.

Figure 6. Trustworthiness of organisations

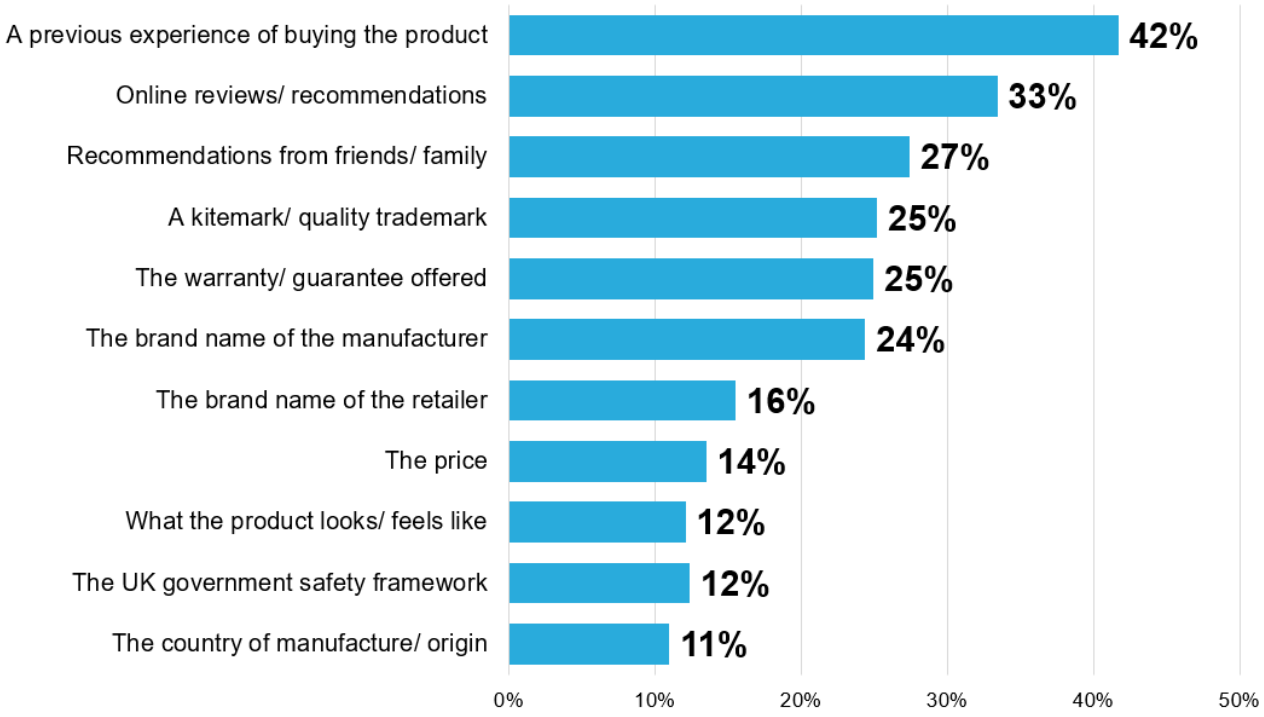


Q: Of the following types of organisations, in general how trustworthy or not do you think each are in how they operate towards you?
Base: All respondents (W8=10,060)

A previous experience of buying a product remains the most commonly cited factor that builds trust in a product being safe (42%), consistent with wave seven (41%) (figure 7). Other factors such as online reviews (33%) and recommendations from friends and family (27%) also remain consistently important factors when it comes to trusting in a product is safe.

Those from ethnic minority backgrounds consider the price more than those who are white (17%, compared with 13% for white adults), but are less likely to value quality trademarks (17%, compared with 26% for white adults), or previous experiences of buying the product (37%, compared with 42% for white adults).

Figure 7. Factors influencing levels of trust in product safety



Q: Which, if any, of the following most influence you having trust in a product being safe?
Base: All respondents (W8=10,060)

Experiences of safety issues

In wave eight, questions on experiences of safety issues were initially shown to all respondents (n=10,060), and then subsequently to those who experienced a safety issue (n=1,220). Exact base sizes for specific questions are shown below each chart.

The approach used in this section has been updated for wave eight. As a result, caution should be taken when comparing results from wave eight with previous waves.

Key findings

- Overall, 14% report having experienced a product safety issue with a listed product category in the last year.
- Among those who experienced a safety issue, the most common product category reported is electrical appliances (43%).
- The mean seriousness score for product safety issues is 5.79. Baby products are among the most likely category where issues were rated as “most serious”, with 40% of those who experienced an issue ranking it as eight out of ten or higher.
- The most common impact as a result of a safety issue continues to be distress/ increased stress (32%), a figure which is substantially higher than all previous waves (23% in W7). The same is true for damage to property or other household items at 26% (18% in W7).
- The proportion who took some form of action as a result of their safety issue has risen this wave to 90%, again the highest proportion recorded across all survey waves.

Seriousness of safety issues

Overall, across all the product categories listed, 14% report having experienced a safety issue in the last year. Safety issues were described in the survey as issues that may have occurred during normal use of the product, which may have occurred due to the product being poorly designed, manufactured or otherwise not being fit for purpose. Previous waves asked about safety issues with a recent purchase (bought in the last 6 months). With that previous approach, 12% reported a safety issue in wave seven.

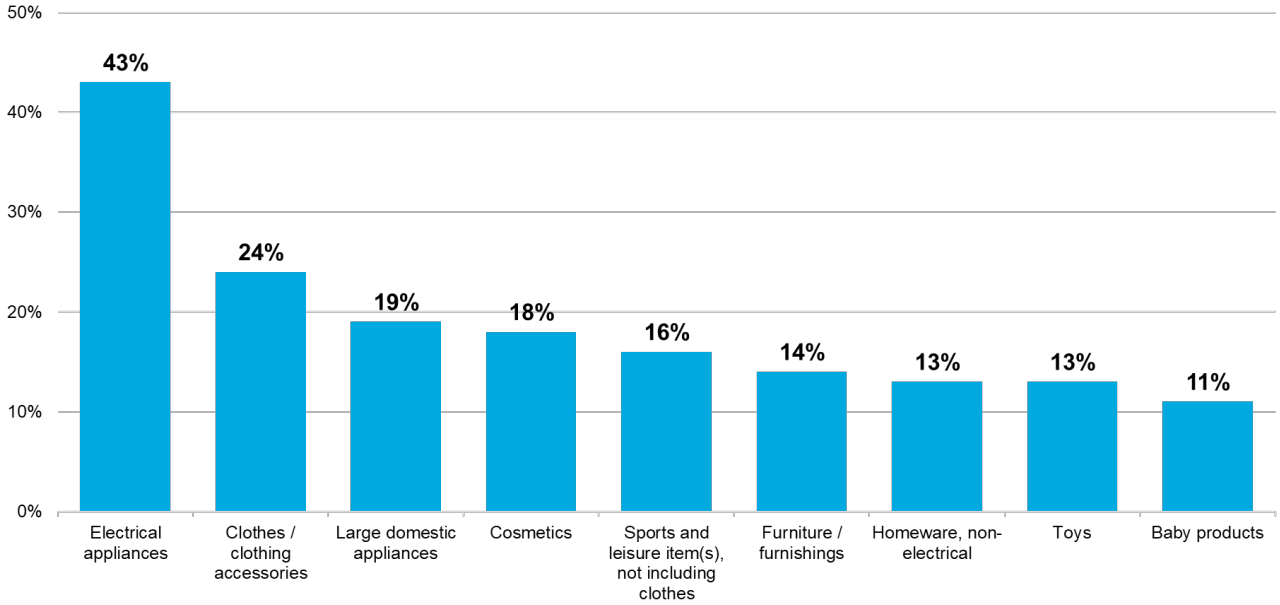
In wave eight, young people are substantially more likely to report having experienced a safety issue in the last year, with 27% of under 30s and 18% of those aged 30 to 49 saying this, compared with 8% of those aged 50 to 64 and 5% of those aged 65 and over.

Those from an ethnic minority background are twice as likely to report having experienced a safety issue (27%, compared with 12% for white adults).

Those with children in the household are also much more likely to say this (23%, compared with 10% for those without children).

Among those who have experienced a safety issue in the last year, the product category where people are most likely to report issues with is electrical appliances (43%). One in four (24%) report having experienced a safety issue with clothes/clothing accessories, while large domestic appliances (19%) and cosmetics (18%) are next highest. It follows that the specific products people are most likely to mention are also found in the electrical appliances category; 16% of those who have experienced a safety issue in the last year report it was with a small kitchen appliance, 12% with a charger (e.g. for phone, laptop, camera), and 8% with a laptop/tablet/mobile phone. Other products ranking highly here come from the clothing/accessories category; 14% report having experienced a safety issue with clothing, and 10% with footwear.

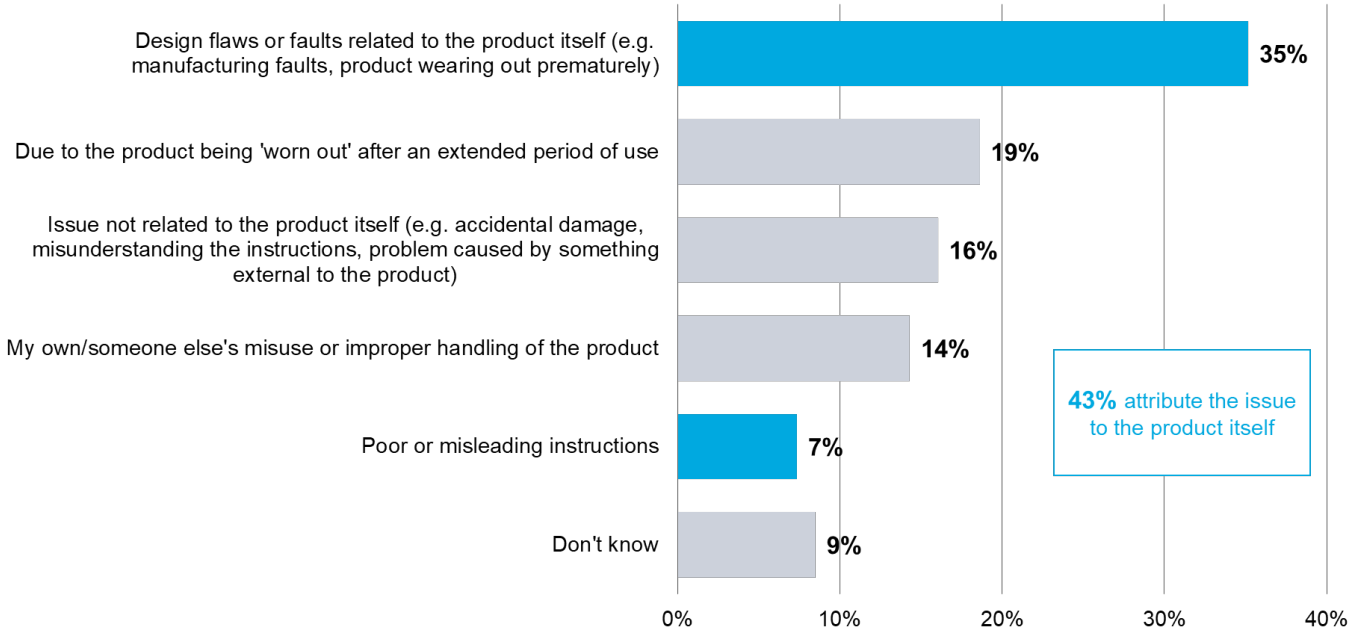
Figure 8. Product safety issues by category



Q: Thinking about the last year (i.e. since June 2024)… Which, if any, of the following types of products have you experienced a safety issue with? Please select all that apply.
Base: All who experienced a safety issue (W8=1,220)

A new question in wave eight asked respondents what they believed to be the main cause of the safety issue that occurred with their product (figure 9). The top response was design flaws or faults related to the product itself (35%), while 7% say it was due to poor or misleading instructions. Overall, this equates to 43% who believe their safety issue was directly attributable to the product itself. A further one in five (19%) say it was due to the product being “worn out” after an extended period of use. Some (16% say the safety issue was caused by a problem not related to the product itself (e.g. accidental damage), while 14% say it was caused by their own/someone else’s misuse of the product.

Figure 9. Main cause of safety issue



Q: On balance, which of the following do you think was the main cause of this safety issue?
Base: All who experienced a safety issue (W8=1,220)

Those who experienced a safety issue with an electrical appliance are the most likely to report that it was the result of a design flaw (50%). By contrast, only 20% of those who experienced an issue with baby products said the same. Instead, the most common cause of issues with baby products are unrelated to the product (e.g. accidental damage) (26%).

Older respondents are more likely to attribute the safety issue to design flaws or faults related to the product itself. 54% of 50 to 64 year olds and 46% of those aged 65 and over say this was the cause, compared to 37% aged 30 to 49 and 24% aged under 30. Under 30s are more likely than all other age groups to say it was caused by an issue not related to the product itself (21%, compared with 16% of 30 to 49 year olds, 9% of 50 to 64 year olds and 3% aged 65+), while the same is true for misuse or improper handling of the product (20%, compared with 13% of 30 to 49 year olds, 2% of 50 to 64 year olds and 11% aged 65+).

Those with a disability are more likely to attribute the issue to design flaws or faults with the product itself (42%, compared with 32% for those without a disability).

Those without children in the household are also more likely to say this (42%, compared with 30% for those with children). Those with children in the household are around twice as likely to say it was due to an issue not related to the product itself (20%, compared with 11% for those without children).

On a 10-point scale (where 10 is the most serious), respondents report that safety issues in wave eight had a mean seriousness score of 5.79. This is significantly higher than all other waves, including wave seven when it was 5.15. While mean seriousness is higher than previous waves, caution should be taken when comparing this wave's results with earlier waves; the shift from asking about products purchased in the past six months to any product in the last year may mean that the specific safety issues people are

responding about in wave eight are meaningfully different, which may be contributing to this shift.

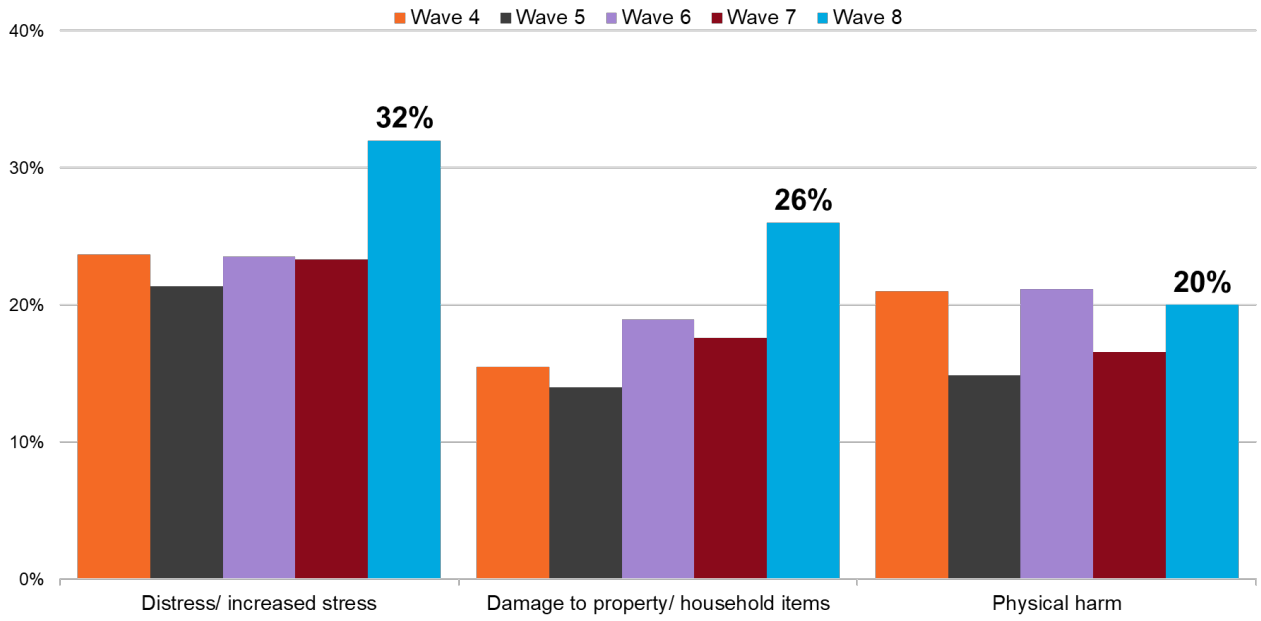
While the mean seriousness score is higher this wave, the proportion ranking their safety issue as highly serious (eight out of ten or higher) has remained statistically unchanged compared with wave seven (25% W7, 26% W8). The higher mean score is instead principally driven by a lower proportion giving a score of one out of 10 to their safety issue, which is 5% this wave, having ranged in the high teens or twenties in all previous waves.

Safety issues with baby products are reported to be among the most serious, with 40% of those reporting a safety issue giving it a score of eight out of ten or higher. A third (32%) say this about large domestic appliances, while similar proportions say this about toys (30%) or furniture/furnishings (29%).

Impact of safety issues

The most common impact as a result of a safety issue continues to be distress/increased stress (32%), a figure which is substantially higher than all previous waves, including wave seven when it was 23% (figure 10). The same is true for damage to property or other household items (26%), again rising significantly from 18% in wave seven. However, caution should be taken with these changes over time – as mentioned previously, the shift in methodology used in this section in wave eight likely contributes to any changes here.

Figure 10. 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 (W4=691; W5=893; W6=752; W7=932; W8=1,220)

Among those reporting that their safety issue caused damage, the specific type of damage follows a similar pattern to previous waves. Dents and/or scratches to property remain most common (35%) though this has dropped from 48% in wave seven. Prevalence of all other types of damage remains unchanged, with 35% reporting electrical damage, 26% fire damage, 25% flood damage and 22% smoke damage.

When it comes to the financial impact of the damage, 3% report that there were no associated costs with rectifying the damage caused by the safety issue, 25% report

spending between £1 to £25, 25% spent £26 to £50, 21% spent £51 to £100 and 21% spent more than £100.[2]

Among those reporting physical harm from the safety issue, the level of healthcare needed remains comparable to previous waves. Three in ten (30%) report that no aid was needed, 31% needed first aid, 10% required non-urgent medical attention (e.g. GP), 12% required urgent medical attention (e.g. A&E) and 12% required tertiary medical attention (e.g. prolonged healthcare).

Actions as a result of safety issues

Most (90%) have taken some form of action as a result of the safety issue they experienced in the last year. In wave seven, 77% reported taking action on a safety issue with a product they had purchased in the last six months. This shift is principally driven by an increase in the proportion reporting that they threw the item away/stopped using it but did not return it, rising from 17% in wave seven to 27% this wave.

As noted elsewhere, the shift from asking about products purchased in the past six months to any product in the last year may mean that the specific safety issues people are responding about in wave eight are meaningfully different and also provides a longer timeframe in which they may have taken action – both of which may be contributing to this shift.

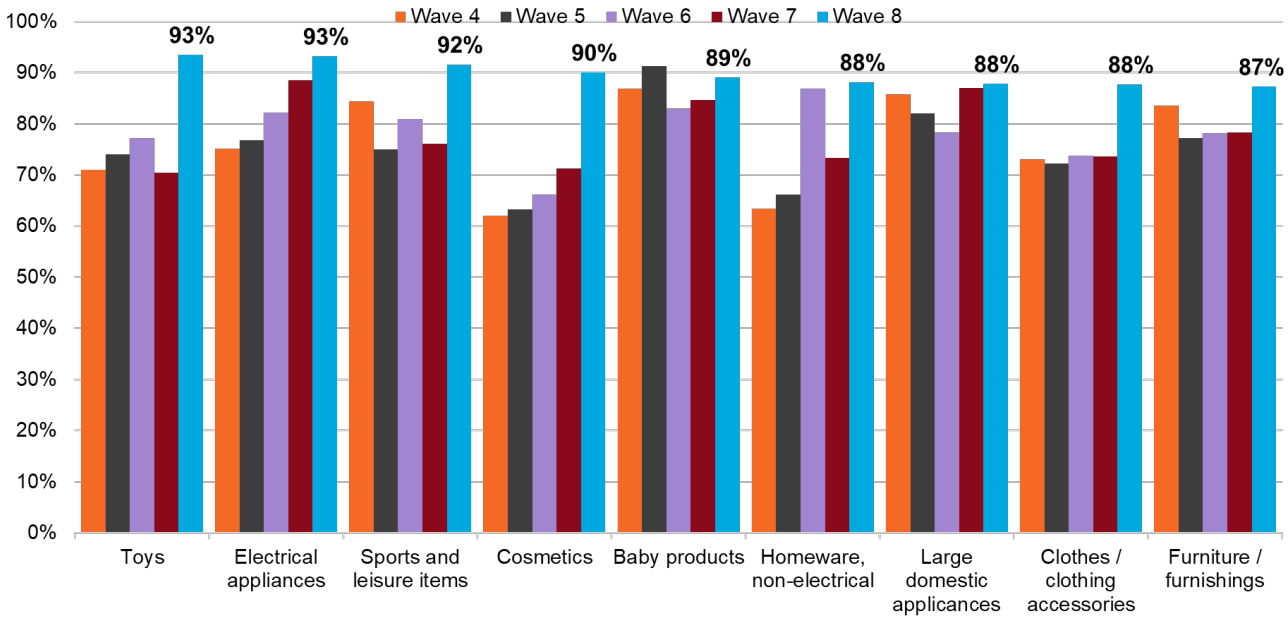
The next-most common answers include returning the item for a refund/exchange (20%), complaining to where they bought it from (19%) or trying to fix it themselves (19%), though all of these are at the same level as in wave seven.

Despite the increased proportion who report taking at least one action, there is little difference by specific product category. Electrical appliances remain among the most likely product type for people to have taken action (93%) with the same figure saying this for toys (93%) or sports and leisure items (92%) – though all other product categories also see high levels of reported action between 87-90% (figure 11).

As detailed further in the chart below, a number of product categories have seen increases in the proportions reporting taking at least one action as a result of a safety issue this wave. Specifically, the categories where reported action was relatively lower in earlier waves (i.e. sport and leisure items, clothes, homeware non-electrical, cosmetics and toys) have all seen statistically significant increases from wave seven to wave eight. It should be noted that these results are based on small sample sizes and activities may differ due to the change in timeframe for wave eight, so figures should therefore be considered with caution.

[2] Note that this question was asked in previous waves in an open-ended format, whereas in wave eight respondents were provided with bracket options to select from. The data is therefore not comparable to previous waves.

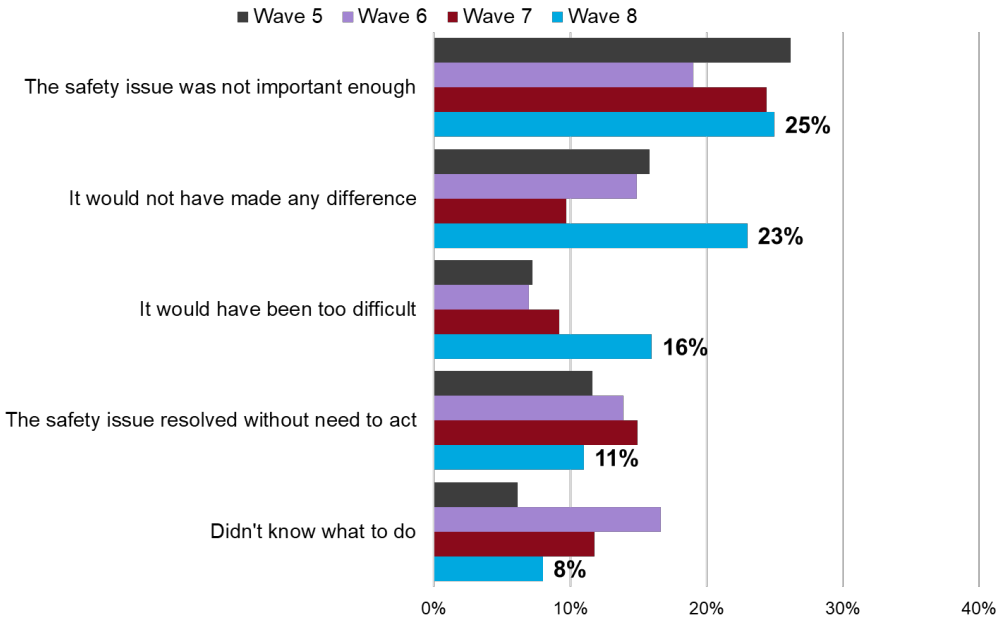
Figure 11. Proportion who took action, by product category of the safety issue



Q. Which of the following actions did you take after becoming aware of the safety issue with the product?
Base: All asked about a safety issue with a listed product: (W8: electrical appliances=316; baby products=92; toys=106; cosmetics=107; large domestic appliance=158; clothes/ clothing accessories=141; furniture/ furnishings=123; homeware, non-electrical=72; sports and leisure items=105)

Only a small proportion (7%) report not taking any action following the safety issue they experienced. The most common reasons for saying this remain largely similar, with 25% reporting that the safety issue was not important enough to take action, unchanged from wave seven. The proportion reporting it would not have made any difference (23%) is higher than in wave seven (10%), though not statistically significantly different from other previous waves (figure 12).

Figure 12. Reason action 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; W6=153; W7=161; W8=85)

When asked about the current status of the safety issue, 53% say it is no longer a safety issue/they no longer have the item, unchanged from the proportion saying this last wave (54%). One in six (17%) say it is still an issue and they are still trying to resolve it, while one in five (21%) say it is still an issue, but they have given up trying to resolve it.

Older respondents are more likely to say it is no longer an issue, with 74% of those aged 65 and over, and 65% of those aged 50 to 64 saying this (compared with 45% of 18 to 29 year olds). In contrast, the other two responses see the opposite age pattern; 26% of under 30s report having given up trying to resolve the issue, compared with 6% of those aged 65 and over. When it comes to differences by product category, those asked about baby products (34%) are most likely to report having given up trying to resolve their safety issue, followed by those asked about sport/leisure items (30%), both of which are higher than all other product categories.

Three in ten of those from an ethnic minority background (29%) report having given up trying to resolve their safety issue, compared with 18% for white respondents.

Discussing safety issues

Participants in two qualitative focus groups had experienced a safety issue with a product in the past.

Safety was a top priority for them. However, they also felt that an item being sold should be safe, no matter the product type. Some participants felt that safety is more important for certain products, particularly electricals, which could have a significant impact if they were unsafe - for example, causing harm to individuals, fire, or if they are used by children.

There was a mixed response to whether an issue is commonly caused by the user or the product itself; some felt that the user must operate the product correctly, but others felt that responsibility was more likely to fall on the product itself and whether the seller has made it safe.

General safety is assessed through reading the product description including quality assurance markings, reading reviews and inspecting the item face to face. Most also look to reputable brands rather than “cheap” “unknown” brands.

“I wouldn't normally think about it since most items should be safe when purchased, but it would be a big deal if I noticed something that could be a safety issue.” (Male, 18-40, experienced safety issue)

“A lot of items could cause an injury if you do not use it properly, but those are things you should be aware of and careful to avoid” (Male, 18-40, experienced safety issue)

“It [safety] is very important to me, because I know of the kinds of things that can go wrong. But I'll admit that sometimes I can be complacent.” (Female, 40+, experienced safety issue)

“Goods sold to children should have a higher safety threshold.” (Male, 40+, experienced safety issue)

Participants also shared detail about the safety issues they had experienced during the focus groups, these varied from less to more severe:

Less severe

- *"I had issues with a handheld fan that my children used and the batteries kept falling off. I took the items back to the retailer and requested a refund after explaining the problem"*
  (Female, 18-40, experienced safety issue)
- *"I bought a garden strimmer... Safety guard came off and blades ... Luckily nobody hurt.. No long term impact"*
  (Male, 40+, experienced safety issue)

Severe

- *"I had an issue with USB gloves which shocked me and also ruined my laptop battery. I didnt do anything about it though as it seemed like too much effort. I wish I had though"*
  (Female, 18-40, experienced safety issue)
- *"My e-bike, a battery was getting extremely hot when it was being charged up, this was result of a faulty charging cable, which i got replaced, at the time I was scared it would cause a fire"*
  (Male, 40+, experienced safety issue)
- *"It was a speaker, the incident was a loud bang and it had burned the wood underneath it.. I returned it and got my money back and about 6months later they recalled it."*
  (Male, 18-40, experienced safety issue)

More severe

- *"Camping fridge, caught fire (under-spec component), ruined my holiday. Retailer wasn't bothered at all. Will never buy from Halfords again." (Male, 18-40, experienced safety issue)*
- *"Mine was with an ebike where it went faster than the limits and the brakes failed. Had an error code confirmed when investigated. Caused me to crash and suffer a traumatic subdural haemorage... Amazon refunded me after me owning the bike outside their usual 90 day guarantee under an A-Z return policy and there's an ongoing external claim being made now"*
  (Male, 40+, experienced safety issue)

Action taken varied according to the severity of the issue; issues considered less severe led most to seek a refund or a replacement. Issues which were more severe led participants to make formal complaints and even seek legal advice.

Those who experienced more severe issues which caused physical harm were more likely to report them to the manufacturer or seller. When lodging their complaints some faced issues with products being out of warranty or sellers placing responsibility on manufacturers.

Experiencing safety issues has led participants to be more conscious when charging or using electrical items, particularly when not at home or overnight where they cannot be monitored.

"Contacted no one, couldn't remember who or where I had bought the charger from"
(Female, 40+, experienced safety issue)

"Both of my incidents were minor so I just disposed of the items, it did not seem worth chasing up" (Female, 40+, experienced safety issue)

"I learnt a valuable lesson... Be very wary what you buy 2nd hand on marketplace" (Male, 40+, experienced safety issue)

"It was scary to witness, I am paranoid about charging things, do not leave anything on when no one is home, switch things off at night too" (Female, 40+, experienced safety issue)

Modelling behaviour around safety issues

This section investigates the results of a logic model that evaluates the extent to which people who experienced a safety issue were able to resolve the issue themselves or if they may have needed support.

This process was conducted in two stages. First, respondents were split into sixteen different groups, based on their responses to four different questions in the survey. The objective of this process was to identify the specific situations in which people may be more or less in need of support based on the characteristics of the product safety issue they experienced. The second step, discussed later in this section, was to identify which groups were likely to be most in need of support.

In order to split out respondents into their constituent groups based on the characteristics of their product safety issue, the model considers whether the individual believes the safety issue was due to a product fault or poor instructions, the severity of the safety issue, whether action was taken as a result, and whether it is still an issue. If an individual reports that their safety issue is not due to a product fault, is more serious, and is still an issue, they are considered to be potentially in need of support. Support could include education and awareness of their rights or actions to take in response to a safety issue.

To identify respondents, participants were asked if they had experienced any safety issues in the past year. If they had experienced more than one safety issue, they were asked follow-up questions about one specific product chosen at random from those they had experienced an issue with. It should be noted that people's behaviour does vary based on the type of product they experienced a safety issue with (see "Actions as a result of safety issues" on page 21), and Key Driver Analysis has been conducted in previous waves to evaluate perceptions and considerations around product safety. The results in this chapter should be considered with those findings in mind.

A summary of how the model was calculated is included below. Those who reported that they did not know the severity or status of their issue were excluded from the model.

Figure 13. Summary of logic model

Cause of safety issue	Severity	Action taken	Issue status
Not due to product fault	More/ less serious	Any/ no action	Still/ no longer an issue
Product fault	Less serious	Any/ no action	Still/ no longer an issue
Product fault	More serious	Any/ no action	No longer an issue
Product fault	More serious	Any action	Still an issue
Product fault	More serious	No action	Still an issue

In total, 14% of those who experienced a safety issue and were included in the model are in need of further support (coloured blue in the above summary). That is, the issue was due to a fault with the product itself, their issue was serious, and it is still an issue.

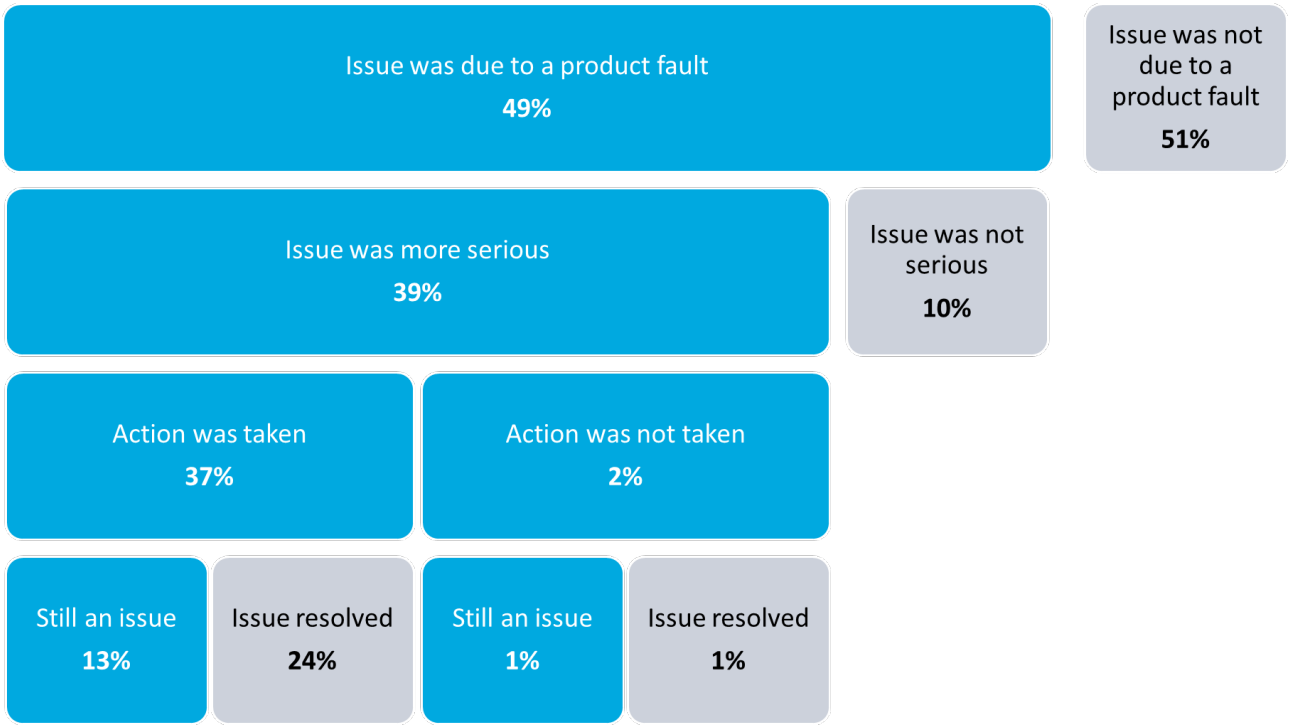
Half (49%) of those in the model are not considered in need of support as the issue was due to either accidental damage, their own misuse, or the product becoming 'worn out' after an extended period of use. Specifically, 16% say the issue was not related to the product itself but instead due to something external such as accidental damage, misunderstanding the instructions etc. Similar proportions say the issue arose as a result of their or someone else's improper handling of the product (15%), or due to the product becoming "worn out" over time (19%).

Then too, 10% said that although their issue was due to a product fault, the issue was not serious – i.e. they rated their issue a score of 1 to 3 out of 10. If an issue is of low severity, it is assumed that the issue was reasonably minor and that the individual could have reasonably dealt with it themselves.

Finally, a quarter (25%) of those who were included in the model reported that, although their issue was serious, it is now resolved and no longer an issue. Most (24%) had taken some form of action such as exchanging/ disposing of the faulty product. However, a small proportion (1%) report no recollection of taking action, but that the issue has now resolved and is no longer a problem anyway.

This then leaves 13% who took action but have not been able to resolve their issue, and a small proportion who did not take action and still experiencing their issue (1%).

Figure 14. Safety issues logic model

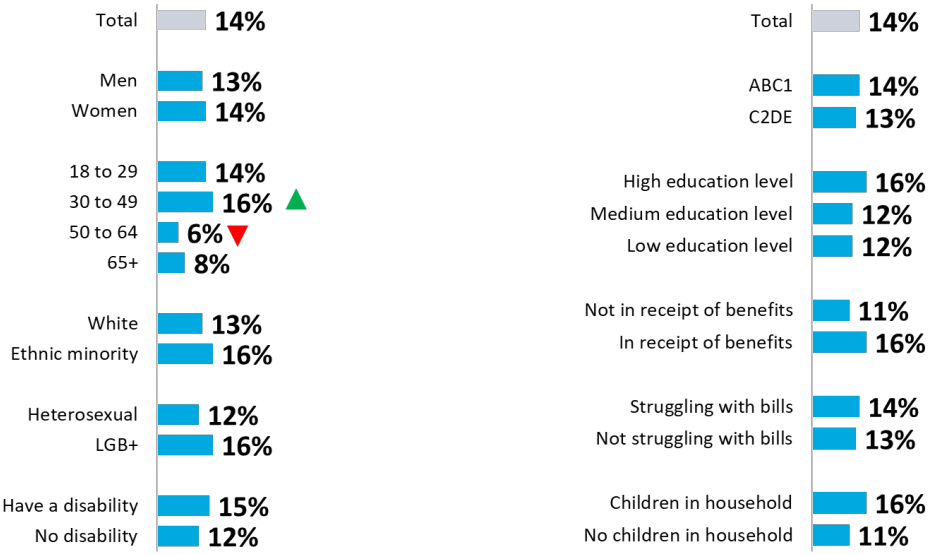


When looking at those who may be in need of support there are clear differences by the type of product they had an issue with. Although electrical appliances are the product with which safety issues are most commonly reported (figure 8), they are less likely to be identified as needing support. In the model, 9% of those who had an issue with an

electrical appliance may be in need of support, compared to a fifth who had issues with sports and leisure items (22%). A similar proportion of those who had issues with furniture (19%) or toys (18%) may be in need of support.

There is a trend by age, with younger respondents more likely to be in need of support (15% of those aged under 50) than older respondents (7% of those aged 50+). However, the model finds no differences for need of support by gender, ethnicity, social grade, education level or whether the household is struggling with finances. This suggests the need for support may be concentrated predominantly amongst those under 50 years old.

Figure 15. Proportion considered in need of support by demographics



Red and green arrows note a significant difference from the total figure.

Safety issues and recalls

Participants in the focus groups were provided with a hypothetical scenario where a new electrical children's toy has been released and widely sold across the country, but one of these products has overheated and exploded. Looking at this example, they were asked whether a single safety issue in one product should result in all the items being recalled.

Some participants felt that one issue was not sufficient to recall all the items because this one issue could have been caused by incorrect or irresponsible use of the item, including not reading instructions. However, others felt that one issue was sufficient for a recall, particularly as it was an item used by children.

The impact and severity of the issue should also have an impact - for example, if there was a fire which caused physical harm or if no harm was caused to individuals/property. Some participants commented that an investigation should be conducted in order to ascertain the cause of the problem and decide the most appropriate next steps to recall, redesign, or offer new instructions on the product.

"If it's clear that it was misused then a warning would be more appropriate. If it's a manufacturing issue or unclear what caused it, then the safest thing would be a recall. Especially if it would be used unsupervised by the kid"
(Male, 18-40, experienced safety issue)

"It's important to have detailed investigations in each case. An investigation would show what caused the problem, this would save costly recalls when the real problem is the parent/child/user!" (Male, 18-40, experienced safety issue)

"One issue should cause greater research and caution, probably not a product recall" (Male, 40+, experienced safety issue)

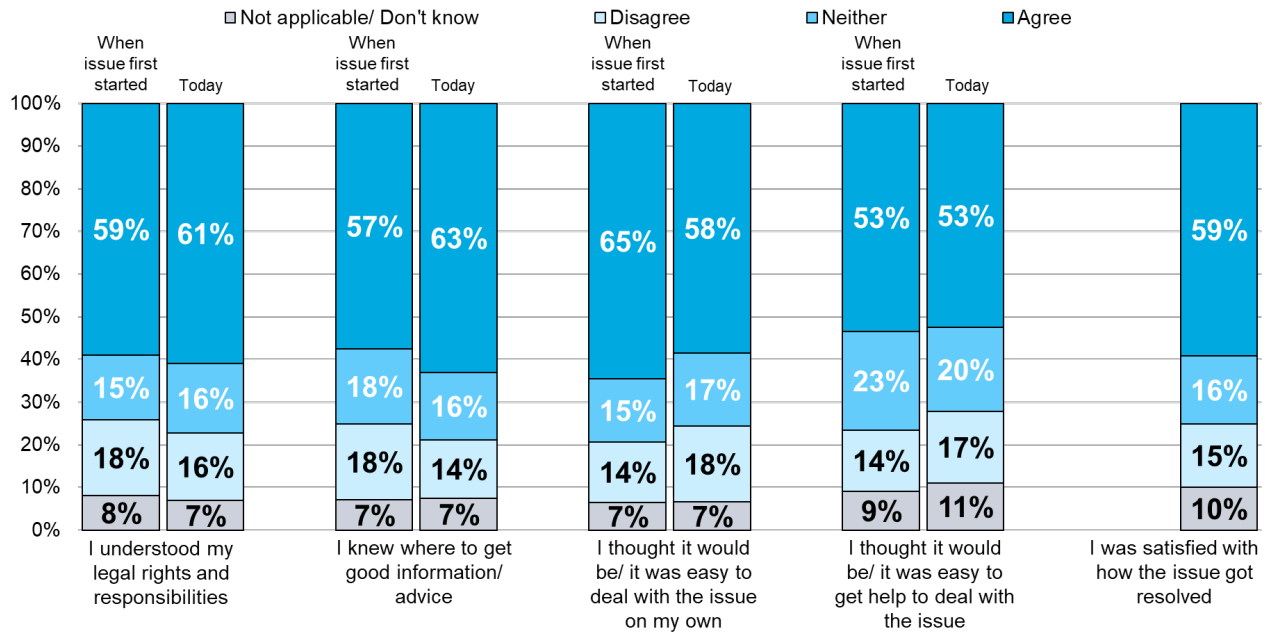
Understanding rights and responsibilities

When respondents who experienced a safety issue of some kind were asked to think about when their issue first started, most (65%) believed the issue would be easy to handle on their own; this figure is unchanged from wave seven (figure 16). While there have been declines in the proportions saying they understood their legal rights and responsibilities (64% W7, 59% W8) and that they knew where to get good information/advice if needed (63% W7, 57% W8), both of these figures have fluctuated across waves. Just over half (53%) said they thought it would be easy to get help to deal with the issue, again not a statistically significant difference from wave seven (56%).

As has been discussed in previous reports, when asked about their agreement with these statements today, little has changed compared to when the issue first started. As shown in the chart below, around six in ten agree with the first three statements "today" (i.e. at the point they were surveyed), while half agree with the statement that it was easy to get help to deal with the issue. While there have again been some small statistically significant changes when compared to wave seven, the results are largely consistent when looking across all previous waves where this question was asked.

Finally, a new statement was added in this wave, measuring levels of satisfaction with how their safety issue was resolved. Overall, 59% agree that they are satisfied with the outcome.

Figure 16. 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 (W8=1,220)

A focus on second-hand purchasing

In wave eight, questions on second-hand purchasing were shown to approximately a quarter of all respondents, allocated randomly (n=2,568). Exact base sizes for specific questions are shown below each chart.

Key findings

- A majority (73%) of the UK public report that they would be likely to buy at least one of the types of products listed second-hand rather than new.
- Clothes/clothing accessories are the most common category the UK public say they would be likely to purchase second-hand (45%). This is followed by furniture/furnishings (36%) and toys (33%). These three categories being the most popular second-hand purchases is consistent with previous waves.
- The top three places the UK public would be likely to purchase second-hand items from remain charity shops (74%), online marketplaces (65%), and online community buy and sell pages (53%).
- Just under three-quarters (73%) say they always consider the safety of the product they are buying.
- The most common way UK adults check the safety of second-hand items continues to be checking reviews and feedback on the seller (49%).

Purchasing second-hand products

Nearly two-thirds (73%) of the UK public identified at least one product they would be likely to buy second-hand rather than new, consistent with wave six when this section was last asked (72%). Of the listed products, respondents are most likely to purchase second-hand clothes/ clothing accessories (45%), furniture/ furnishings (36%), and sports and leisure items (32%) (figure 17). In particular, there has been a decrease in the proportion saying they are willing to purchase sports and leisure items second-hand, although this is due to a peak in wave six rather than a marked decline (31% W1, 28% W3, 35% W6, 32% W8).

As with previous waves, women are more likely to say they would purchase any second-hand products than men (77%, compared with 69% for men). This is largely driven by clothing products, which women are more likely to purchase second-hand (57%, compared with 32% of men).

There is also a negative correlation between age and the likeliness of purchasing a product second-hand – that is, the older a person is, the less likely they are to purchase a product second-hand. This trend continues from all previous waves, and is particularly pronounced for some product categories including electrical appliances (34% of those aged 18 to 29, decreasing to 26% of those aged 30 to 49, 19% of those aged 50 to 64, and 10% of those aged 65+), and sports and leisure items (39% of those aged 18 to 29, 38% of those aged 30 to 49, 29% of those aged 50 to 64, and 21% of those aged 65+).

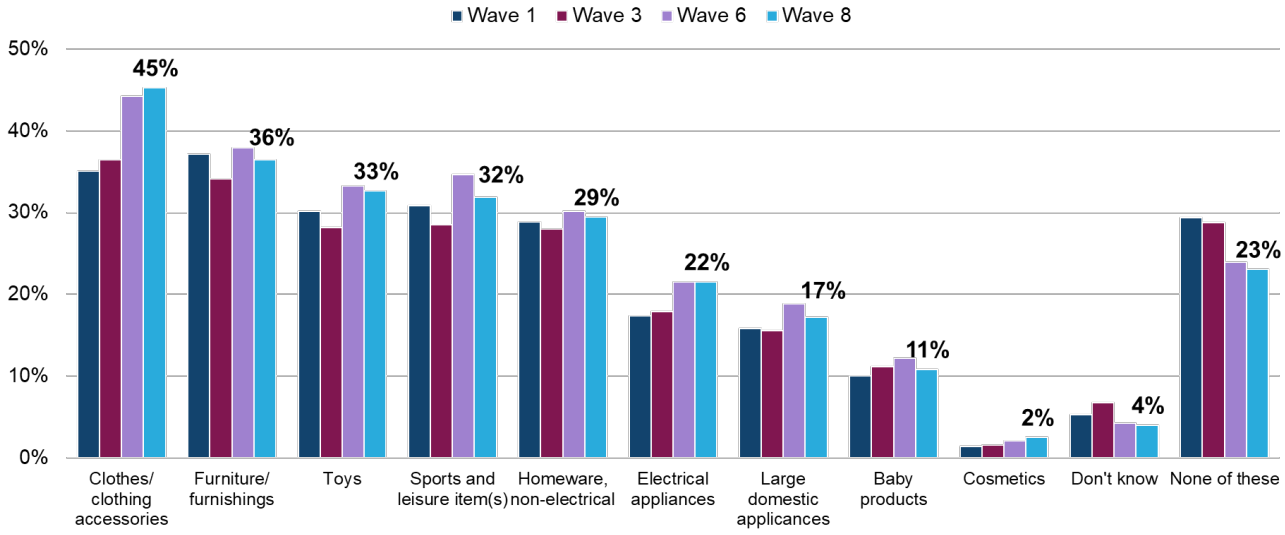
Consistent with previous waves, those with children in their household are more likely to report they would purchase at least one product second-hand (81%) than those with no children in their household (70%). In particular, those who have children in the household are more likely to purchase toys second-hand (45%, compared with 28% for those without

children in the household), as well as sports and leisure items (39%, compared with 29% for those without children in the household), electrical appliances (25%, 20% without children), and large domestic appliances (21%, compared with 16% for those without children). Those with young children aged five or under in the household are more likely to purchase any of the listed products second-hand (86%), compared with those who have children aged 18 and over (71%). This is largely driven by toys (54% with children under 5, compared with 31% of those with children aged 18 and over) and baby products (29% with children under 5, compared with 10% of those with children aged 18 and over). These findings are in line with all previous waves these questions were asked.

Respondents who are at least coping on their current income are less likely to say they would purchase second-hand (71%), compared with those who are finding it difficult (81%). Also, those with low educational attainment (70%) are less likely than those with high attainment (76%) to report doing so. These findings are in line with previous waves.

Offline adults are less likely to purchase products second-hand (46%), compared with those aged 65 or over who are online (63%).

Figure 17. Products likely to buy second-hand



Q. Today, if you were looking to buy these types of products, which would you be likely to purchase second-hand rather than new? (Please select all that apply)
Base: All in second-hand section (W1=5,115, W3=5,091, W6=2,527; W8=2,568)

Although people are more likely to purchase second-hand products offline than online overall (84%, compared to 79%), the top three methods of purchase are charity shops (74%), online marketplaces such as Amazon, eBay, Etsy etc. (65%) and online community buy and sell pages such as social media community groups such as Facebook Marketplace, Gumtree (53%) (figure 18). Although charity shops remain the top place to purchase second-hand goods, there is a decreasing trend from when this question was first asked in wave one (79% W1, compared with 74% W8). Car boot sales has also seen a decrease from 34% in wave six to 30% in wave eight. The other second-hand retailers have remained broadly consistent.

Those likely to buy homeware second-hand are the most likely to report they would use charity shops (86%). While those likely to buy sports and leisure items second-hand are

the most likely to purchase from online marketplaces (74%), as are those likely to buy second-hand large domestic appliances (70%). These findings are consistent with wave six.

Women are more likely than men to report that they would use a charity shop for a second-hand purchase (82%, compared with 65% for men), in line with findings from wave six. Conversely, men are more likely to use an online marketplace (70%, compared with 62% for women).

Similarly in line with wave six findings, respondents aged 65 and over are the most likely to report they would use a charity shop for a second-hand purchase (64% of those aged 18 to 29, 69% of those aged 30 to 49, 80% of those aged 50 to 64, 87% of those aged 65+), but they are significantly less likely than all other age groups to use online marketplaces (51%), online community buy and sell pages (37%), or other second-hand shops (33%).

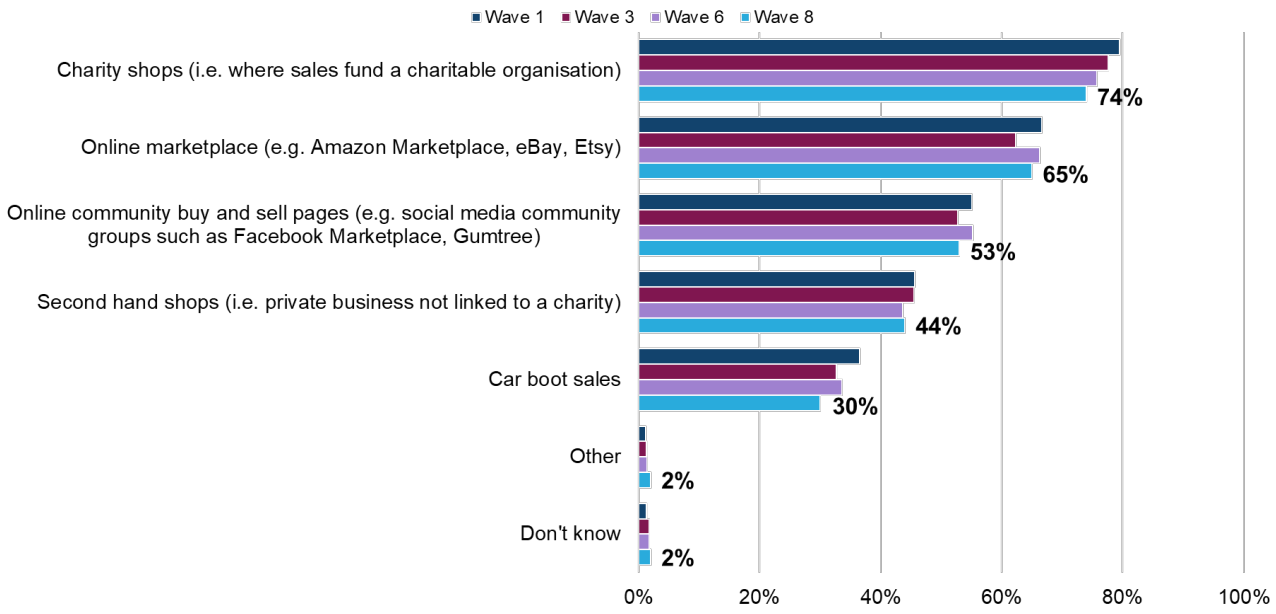
Similar to wave six, respondents of a lower social grade (C2DE) are more likely to identify car boot sales (33%) compared with those from a higher social grade (28% ABC1).

Respondents with a disability are less likely than those without a disability to shop at online marketplaces (61%, compared with 67% without a disability), but are more likely to say they would use a charity shop (80%, compared with 72% without a disability). These patterns are consistent with wave six.

However, now, those with a disability are less likely to shop at second-hand shops (40%, compared with 46% without a disability), where there was previously no difference by disability in wave six.

In wave six, there was no difference by sexuality in the likelihood to use charity shops for second-hand purchases. Now, in wave eight, LGB+ respondents are more likely to do so (80%, compared with 74% of heterosexual respondents).

Figure 18. Places to purchase second-hand products



Q: In which, if any, of the following places would you purchase second-hand products? (Please select all that apply).
Base: All who would buy second-hand (W1=3,383; W3=3,338; W6=1,828; W8=1,896)

Perceptions of safety when purchasing second-hand

There is an increase this wave in those saying that they always consider the safety of the product they are buying second-hand, from 68% in wave six to 73% in wave eight. However, this has come after a dip in wave six – the proportion in wave eight is still less than the proportion who agreed with this statement in waves one and three (78% W1, 79% W3) (figure 19). Similarly, there has been a significant rise in the proportion reporting that the seller is responsible for ensuring a product is safe, but this comes after a fall in wave six and is in line with earlier waves (77% W1, 76% W3, 73% W6, 76% W8).

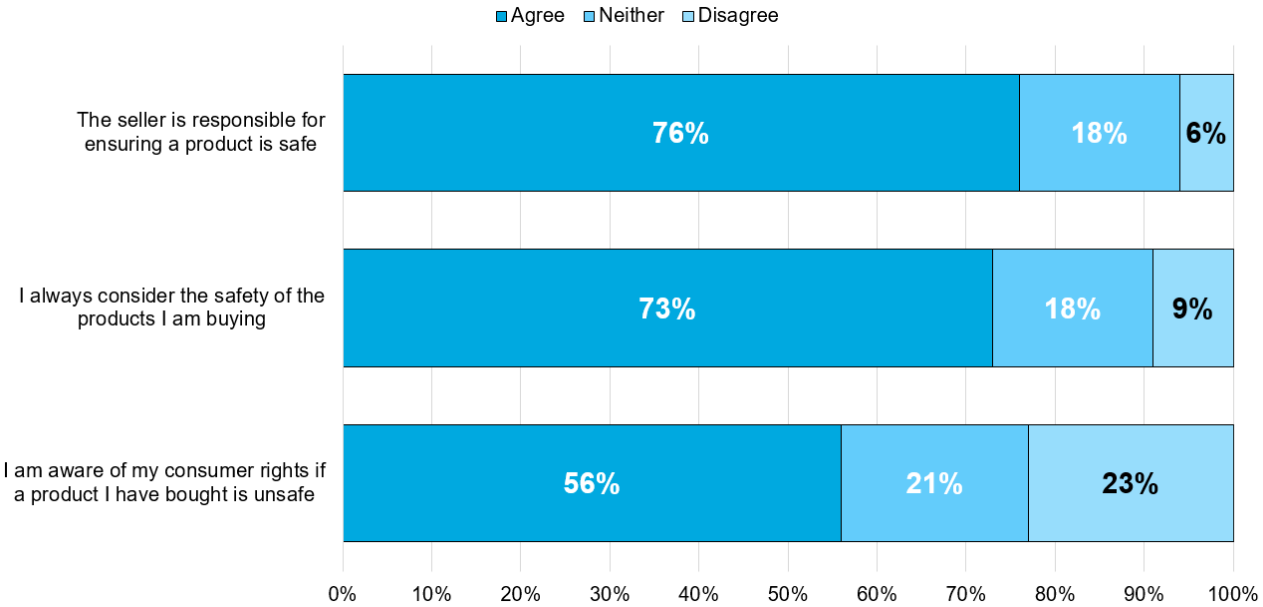
Nonetheless, the proportion agreeing that they are aware of their consumer rights if a product is unsafe has also increased this wave to 56%, the highest since tracking began (51% W1, 49% W3, 49% W6).

In line with wave six, those aged 65 and over are the most likely to agree they consider the safety of the products they are buying (84%), significantly higher than all other age groups. Comparatively, those aged 18 to 29 are the most likely to disagree that they consider the safety of their second-hand purchases (15%).

Older respondents are also the most likely to agree that they are aware of their consumer rights if a product they have bought is unsafe (60% of those aged 65+, compared with 49% of those aged 18 to 29). As seen in previous waves, younger age groups are the most likely to agree that the seller is responsible for ensuring a product is safe (81% of those aged 18 to 29) compared to three quarters (76%) of respondents overall.

Those with low educational attainment are more likely than those with high levels of education to agree they are aware of their consumer rights if a product they have bought is unsafe (60%, compared with 49% for those with high attainment). This is consistent with previous waves.

Figure 19. Agreement on second-hand products and safety



Q: To what extent, if at all, do you agree with the following statements?
Base: All who would buy second-hand in second-hand section (W8=1,896)

In line with all previous waves, only a small minority of respondents who would buy second-hand do not do anything to determine whether a product is safe (8% W1, 8% W3, 9% W6, 8% W8).

People most commonly check safety by checking reviews and feedback on the seller – just under half report this (49%), broadly comparable with all previous waves (47% W1, 50% W3, 52% W6) (figure 20). The other common methods used to check if a second-hand product is safe include checking if it looks “used" (38%), checking if a product comes with its original packaging/product information (37%), or if it is covered by a warranty (37%).

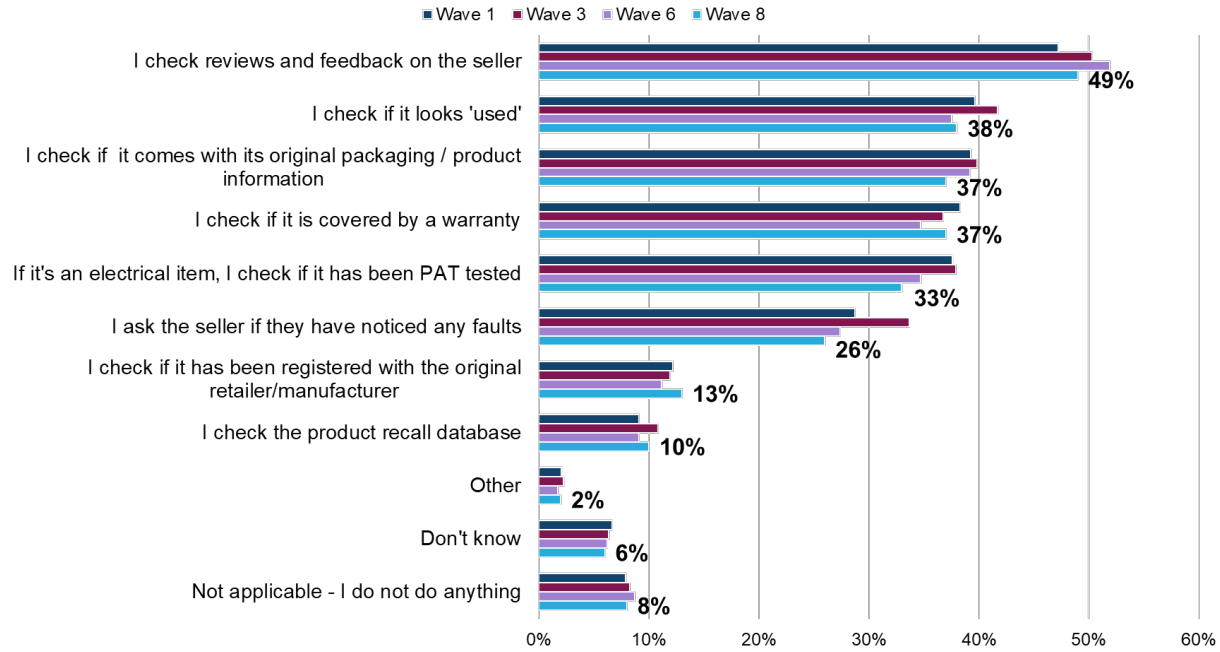
Similar to wave six, younger respondents are more likely than older respondents to check if second-hand products are safe through “informal” processes, such as checking if a product looks “used” (50% of those aged 18 to 29, compared with 35% of those aged 65+) or asking the seller if they have noticed any faults (36% of those aged 18 to 29, compared with 17% of those aged 65+). On the other hand, older respondents are more likely to check a product through more formal processes – for example, by ensuring electrical appliances have been PAT tested (47% of those aged 65+, compared with 23% of those aged 18 to 29).

Those living with disabilities are now more likely than those who are not to check if an electrical item has been PAT tested (42%, compared with 30% for those without disability). In wave six, there was no difference by disability.

Conversely, those with children in their household are less likely than those without children in their household to check if an electrical item has been PAT tested (27%, compared with 36% for those without children).

Those without access to the internet are more likely to check if a product comes with its original packaging or product information (45%) than those aged over 65 with access to the internet (32%). They are also more likely to check if the product looks “used” (64%, compared with 35% of those online). However, those without internet access are less likely to check if an electrical item has been PAT tested (34%, compared with 47% of those online) or ask the seller if they have noticed any faults (17%, compared with 38%).

Figure 20. Methods to check second-hand product is safe



Q: In which, if any, of the following are ways you determine whether a second-hand product is safe?
Base: All who would buy second-hand (W1=3,383; W3=3,338; W6=1,828; W8=1,896)

Appendix A: Topical spotlights

Online purchasing

In wave eight, questions on online purchasing were shown to approximately half of respondents (n=5,065). Exact base sizes for specific questions are shown below each chart.

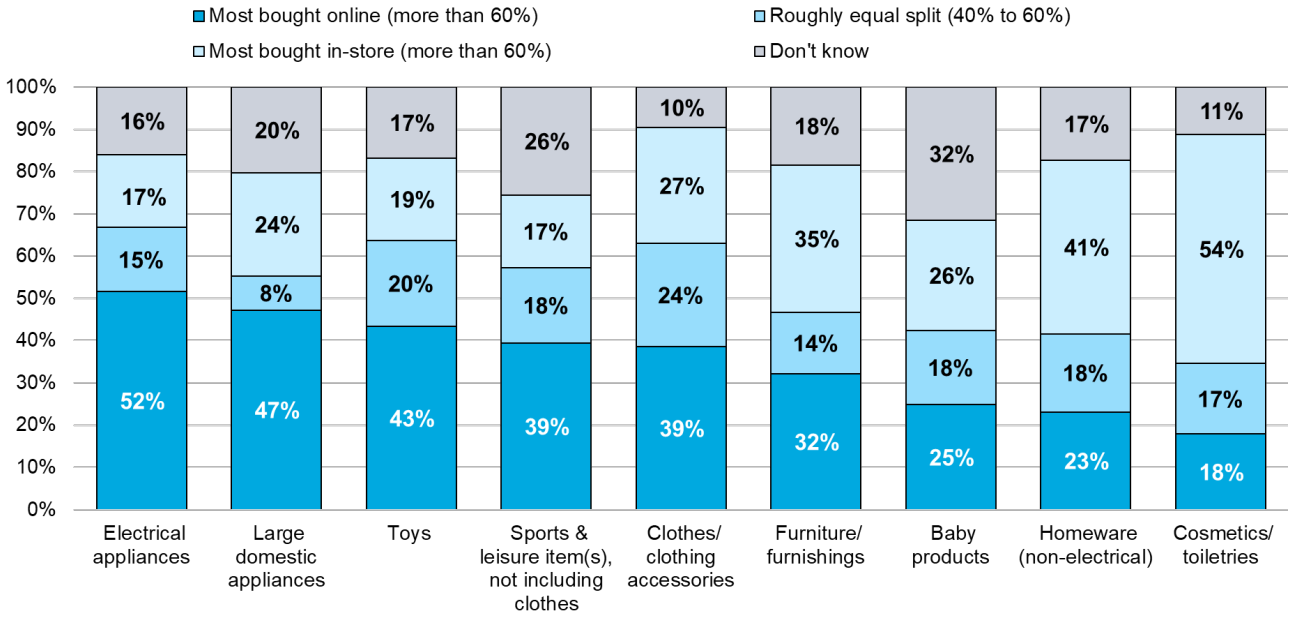
Purchasing products online

Respondents were asked to estimate what proportion of some product categories they had purchased online or in-store over the last six months. Consistent with the findings from wave six, when this was last asked, electrical appliances (52%) and large domestic appliances (47%) are the products people are most likely to say they usually purchase online. Similarly, people have continued saying that they tend to purchase their cosmetics/toiletries (54%) and non-electrical homeware (41%) online (figure 21).

There has been a shift for large domestic appliances. In wave six, the majority said that they usually purchased these online, but this has fallen to just under half (55% W6, 47% W8). As a result, the proportion saying they usually purchase large domestic appliances in-store is now the highest since first asked in wave four (20% W4, 24% W8).

Consistent with patterns seen in the previous waves, there tends to be an upward trend by age, with older respondents more likely to usually buy their products in-store. For example, 24% of those aged 65 and over purchase electrical appliances in-store, compared with 15% of those aged 18 to 29. Similarly, 37% of those aged 65 and over made most of their recent clothing purchases in-store, compared with 26% of those under 30.

Figure 21. Proportion of items bought in the last six months online or in-store



Q: Approximately, what percentage of the following products have you purchased online in the past 6 months (incl. click+collect) and in-store?
Base: All in online purchase section who purchased this category in the past 6 months (W8: electrical appliances=2,286; large domestic appliances=1,212; toys=1,424; clothes/ clothing accessories=3,794; sports and leisure items=1,001; furniture/ furnishings=1,354; baby products=651; homeware (non-electrical)=1,758; cosmetics=3,928)

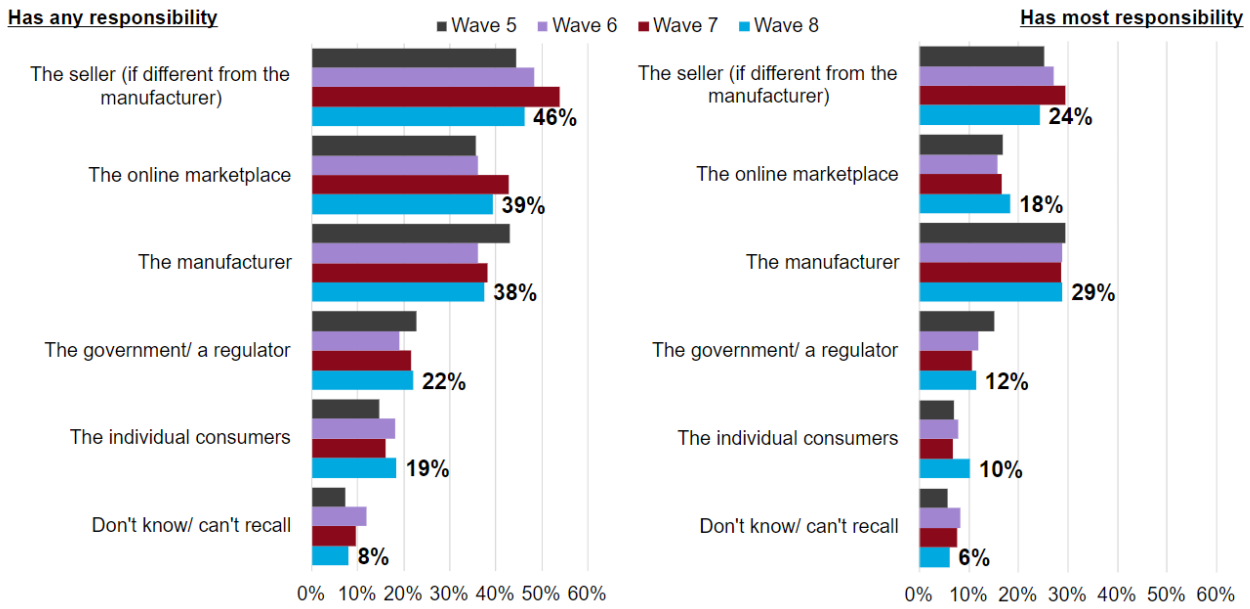
Buying and selling products on online marketplaces

When thinking about who has responsibility for the safety of products bought from third parties on online marketplaces, there has been a fall in the proportion assigning responsibility to the seller. Previously, among those who purchased an item via a third party on an online marketplace, there had been growing sentiment that the seller had responsibility after particularly low proportions in wave five. Prior to wave five, half of those buying products via third parties thought the seller had some responsibility (52% W2, 50% W3). Now, in wave eight, the proportions assigning product safety responsibility to the seller have fallen to those lower levels last seen in wave five (figure 22).

The change in perceived responsibility for sellers is seen across demographics, with consistent patterns across age and gender. The fall in perceived responsibility for the online marketplace is driven by younger consumers – in wave seven, there was a rise amongst those aged under 30 thinking the online marketplace has responsibility but now their views have fallen back to level with wave six (18 to 29s: 33% W5, 40% W6, 53% W7, 43% W8).

Those from an ethnic minority background are now less likely to think the seller has any responsibility for ensuring a product is safe for UK consumers (37%, compared with 48% for white respondents). However, this is consistent with the pattern seen in wave seven.

Figure 22. Responsibility for ensuring online marketplace products are safe for UK consumers



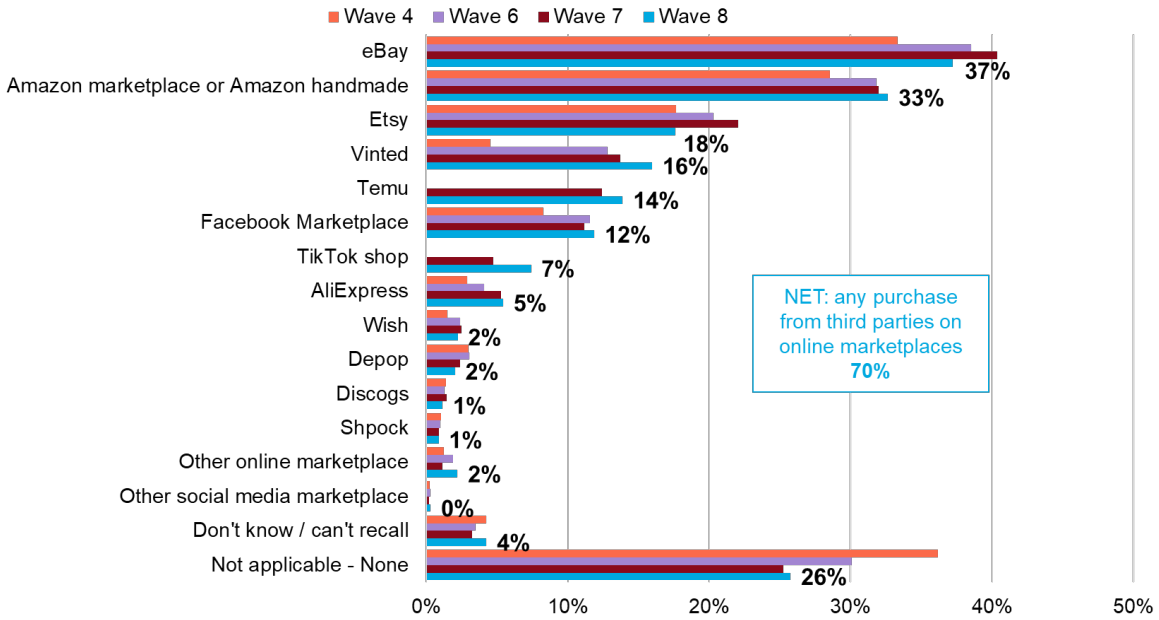
Q: You said you purchased [product] from an online marketplace...Who do you think has any responsibility for ensuring that the product is safe for UK consumers? / Who do you think is most responsible for ensuring that the product is safe for UK consumers?
Base: All whose purchase was bought from third party on online marketplace (W5=959; W6=1,054; W7=1,403; W8=1166)

Regardless of perceived responsibilities, the majority of the UK public continue to buy from third parties on online marketplaces – over two-thirds (70%) of UK adults have done so in the last six months. While eBay remains the most popular online marketplace, it has seen a significant decline since wave seven (37%). By contrast, Vinted, Temu and TikTok shop

have all grown in popularity with 16% of UK adults having purchased a product from Vinted in the past six months (figure 23).

UK adults with a disability are more likely than those without to have purchased from Temu (16%, compared with 13% for those without a disability). However, they are less likely to have purchased from Vinted (13%, compared with 17% for those without a disability).

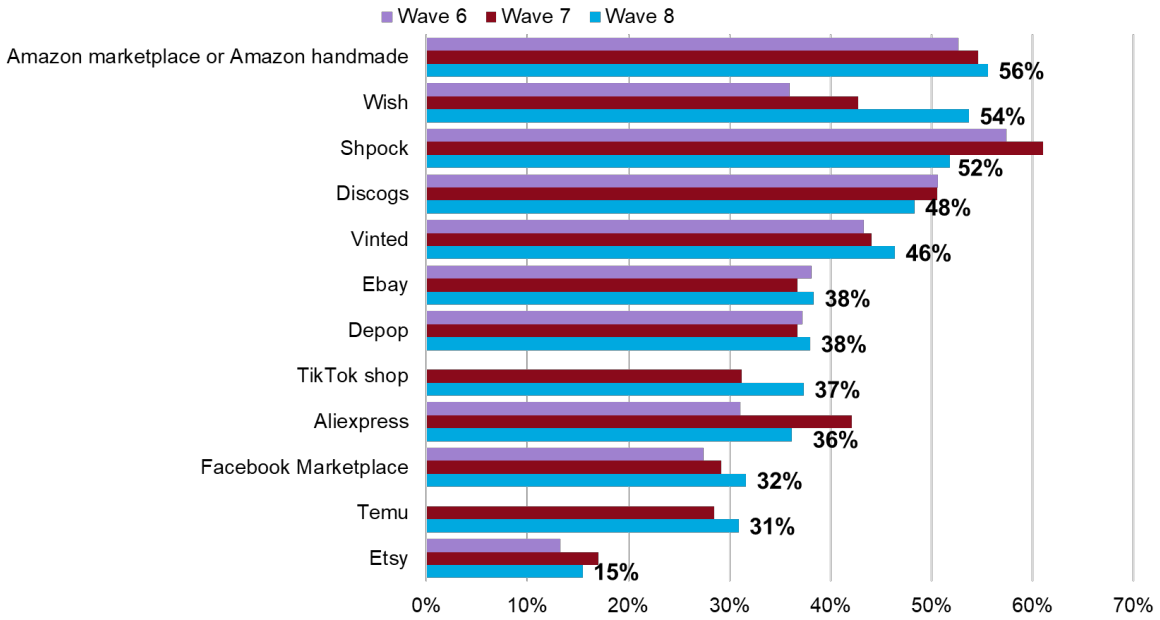
Figure 23. Online marketplaces purchased from in the past six months



Q: Have you purchased any products from third parties selling on the following platforms in the past 6 months?
Base: All in online purchase section (W4=5,067; W6=5,159; W7=10,023; W8=5,002)

Respondents who have purchased a product from a third party on an online marketplace in the last six months were asked how often they had done so. Half of those purchasing from Amazon marketplace/handmade (56%), Wish (54%), or Shpock (52%) do so once a month or more (figure 24).

Figure 24. Monthly purchases from online marketplaces



Q: How often have you purchased products from each of the following platforms in the past 6 months?
Base: All who purchased products from third party online platform (W8: Amazon marketplace/ Amazon handmade=1,636; Etsy=912; Wish=107; eBay=1,869; AliExpress=286; Vinted=817; Shpock=40; Depop=107; Facebook Marketplace=613; Discogs=56; TikTok shop=368; Temu=684)

Monthly users of online marketplaces were also asked to estimate their monthly spend. Wish, AliExpress, and Amazon marketplace/handmade users had the highest median monthly spend estimate, with a third or more of monthly platform users saying they spend more than £50 per month (34% Amazon marketplace/handmade , 45% AliExpress, 46% Wish). At the other end of the scale, monthly Vinted users spend a median of £20 a month with a third (35%) only spending up to £15 per month.

Consistent with previous waves, men tend to spend more across most online marketplaces – for example, spending a median of £50 a month on Amazon marketplace/handmade, compared to a median of £30 among women. There are few differences in spend by social grade or income.

The types of products purchased on each online marketplace vary considerably and may go some way towards explaining differing shopping habits. Vinted and Depop are used mainly for a single product type, with 84% of Vinted shoppers buying clothes from the marketplace and 67% of Depop shoppers doing so. By contrast, those shopping on Amazon marketplace/handmade do so for a range of reasons – a quarter buy electrical appliances (24%), cosmetics (24%) or clothes (24%) while 20% buy non-electrical homeware.

There has been a rise in using apps to access online marketplaces. Among those who shop on online marketplaces, over a third now say they tend to use the app (27% W4, 33% W6, 35% W8). This may be linked to the rise of app-based platforms rather than a change in consumer behaviour – across the waves, around half of Vinted users say they tend to use the app (47% W4, 50% W6, 49% W8).

When it comes to selling products on an online platform, 28% of UK adults have sold something in the past six months. This figure has remained consistent with waves four and six, when it was last asked. Over these waves, the popularity of selling on Vinted has grown – with 12% of UK adults having sold on the platform in the last six months, making it the most popular online marketplace. By contrast, the proportion selling on eBay has fallen

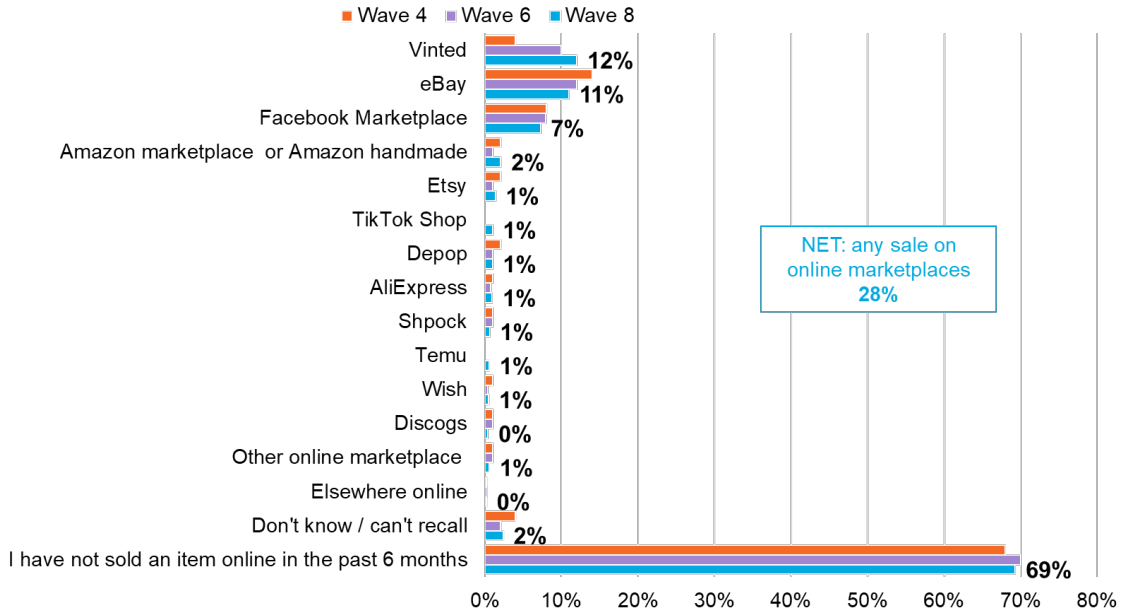
over the last year, with 11% having sold something in the last six months compared to a peak of 14% in wave four (figure 25).

Consistent with previous waves, women are more likely than men to have sold something on an online marketplace (32%, compared with 25% for men). As before, this difference is predominately due to the use of Vinted amongst women – in wave eight, one in five (19%) women have sold something on Vinted in the last six months, compared with 5% of men.

It is specifically younger women driving the dominance of Vinted. As noted previously, there is an age trend with younger adults selling on online platforms (38% of those aged under 30, compared with 13% of those aged 65 and over). Looking specifically at women, 29% of women under 30 years old have sold on Vinted in the last six months, compared to 4% of women aged 65 and over.

Nearly a third (32%) of LGB+ adults have sold something on an online marketplace in the last six months, compared with 28% of heterosexual adults.

Figure 25. Online marketplaces sold on in the past six months



Q: In the past 6 months, have you sold an item on the following online platforms? Please select all that apply.
Base: All in online purchase section (W4=5,067; W6=5,159; W8=5,002)

Perceptions of safety when purchasing online

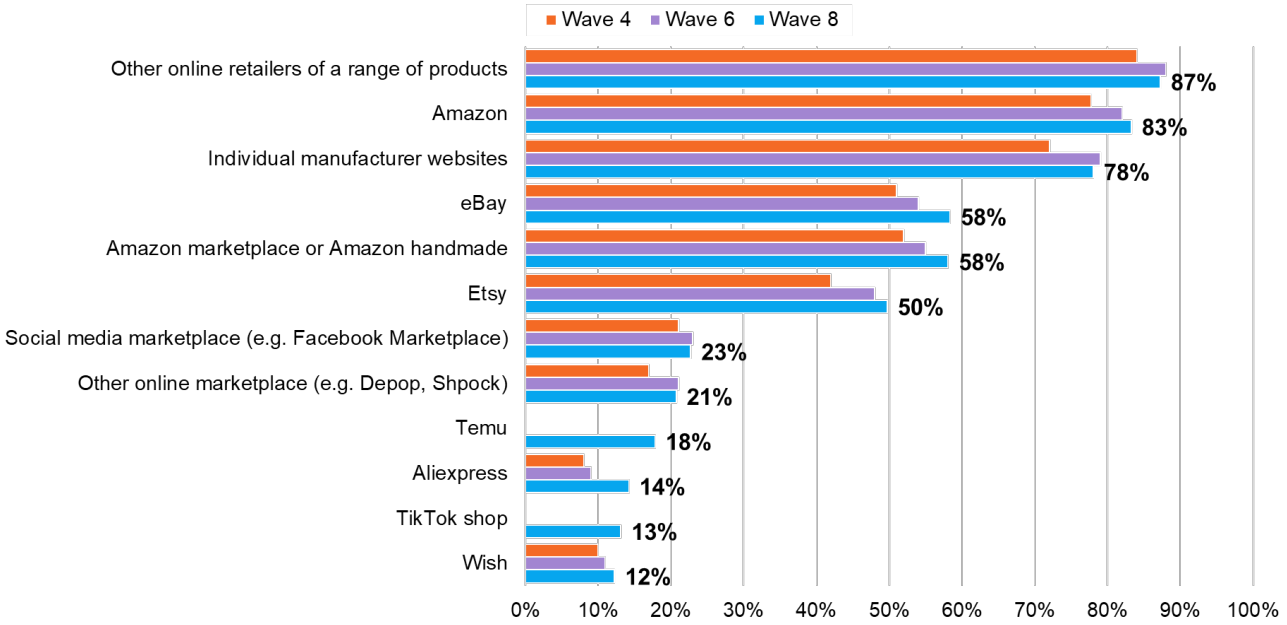
The perception that products bought online are safe have risen this wave. Products bought from online retailers who sell a range of products continue to be those most likely to be thought of as safe (87%). There has been an increase in the proportion thinking products from eBay (58%), Amazon marketplace/handmade (58%) and AliExpress (14%) are safe - continuing the upward trend seen between wave four and six (figure 26). This trend has also been seen for Etsy (50%) and Wish (12%).

Included for the first time this wave, a minority of UK adults believe products bought from Temu (18%) or TikTok shop (13%) are safe.

Consistent with the findings from previous waves, there is a trend by age with younger respondents being more certain in their answers about each online retailer – they appear to be more likely to consider each platform's products both "safe" and "not safe", but this is

due to less uncertainty. For example, one in five (20%) of those under 30 think products on Wish are safe, compared to 6% of those aged 65 and over. However 84% of those aged 65 and over are uncertain about the safety of Wish's products, compared to 25% of those aged 18 to 29. In fact, 55% of those aged 18 to 29 think products sold on Wish are not safe.

Figure 26. Proportion who report products on each online retailer are "safe"

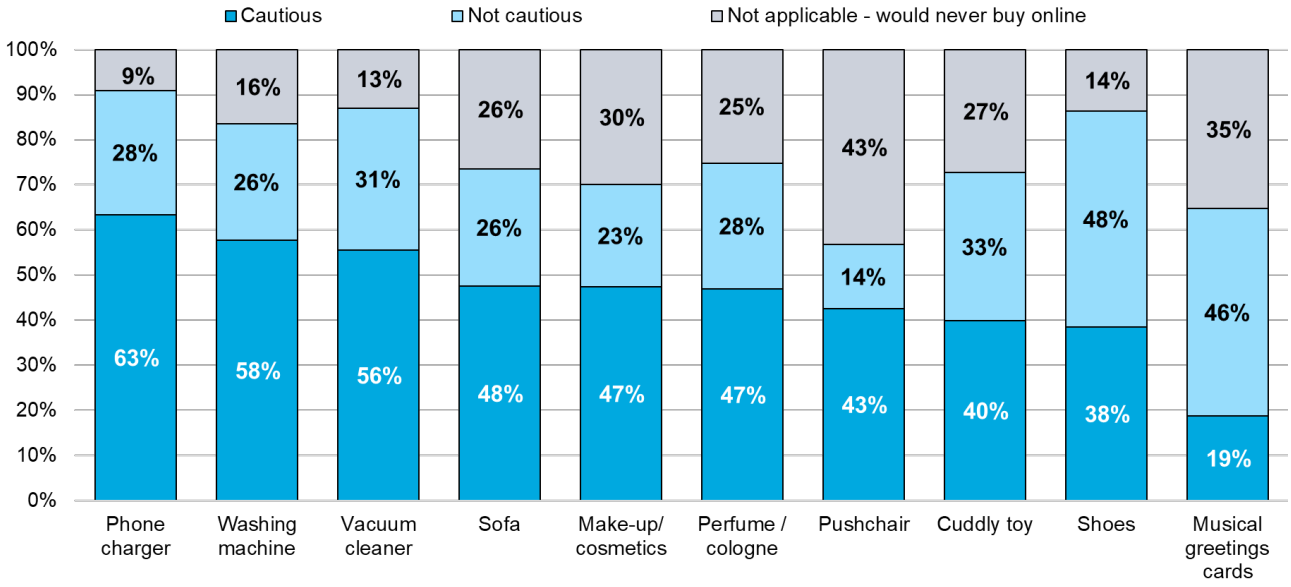


Q: Generally when purchasing products online from online marketplaces or direct from individual company websites how safe or not do you think the products you purchase are?
Base: All in online purchase section (W4=5,067; W6=5,159; W8=5,002)

Perceived product safety for products bought online was explored in more detail across ten product types (figure 27). The product types people are most cautious about remain consistent - as was the case in waves four and six, people are most cautious about the safety of a phone charger bought online, followed by washing machines, and vacuum cleaners. These have all seen a higher degree of caution than in wave six - with an eight percentage point rise in the proportion who are cautious about vacuum cleaners bought online (56% W8, 48% W6), and a six percentage point rise in the proportion who are cautious about online purchases of phone chargers (63% W8, 57% W6) or washing machines (58% W8, 52% W6).

In line with previous waves, women tend to be more likely than men to say they would be cautious about the safety of each product.

Figure 27. Caution about safety of products purchased online



Q: How cautious or not, would you feel about the safety of the following products if you were purchasing them online?
Base: All respondents in online purchase section (W8=5,002)

E-labelling

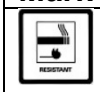
In wave eight, questions on e-labelling were shown to approximately a quarter of all respondents, allocated randomly (n=2,490). Exact base sizes for specific questions are shown below each chart.

Understanding conformity assessment marks

In this section, respondents were asked around their awareness and understanding of safety labelling and conformity assessment marks. A summary of each kitemark/label can be found below. Further information is provided in the technical report.

Figure 28. Conformity assessment mark summary

Mark image	Name	Definition/ applicable products
CE	CE mark	"New approach" product legislation including toys, electronics
UKCA	UKCA mark	The UKCA (UK Conformity Assessed) marking is a new UK product marking that is used for goods being placed on the market in the UK. It applies to most goods which required CE marking.
	BSI kitemark	Products having been assessed by BSI's certification group
0-3	Age warning logo	Toys which would be hazardous to children
	Lion mark	Toys
	Radio equipment pictogram	Radio equipment with restrictions on putting into service or requirements for authorisation of use.

Mark image	Name	Definition/ applicable products
	Display label pursuant to Regulation 10 FFRs	Furniture/ furnishings

Following an increase from wave four to six (when this question was last asked), awareness of conformity assessment marks remains comparable with wave six across all five product categories tested. The proportions of those looking for marks remains comparable with wave six, as do the proportions of UK adults not looking for any marks, and the proportions of those who are unsure.

When purchasing electrical appliances, around two in five would look for the CE mark (39%), followed by a third who would look for the BSI kitemark (35%), both in line with wave six following significant increases from wave four. These two marks are also the most commonly looked for when buying large domestic appliances (36% CE mark, 34% BSI kitemark), in line with findings from wave six.

Over a third (35%) report they would look for the Age Warning Logo when purchasing baby products, consistent with wave six (34%) after a significant increase compared to wave four (28%). Those with children in their household are not statistically more likely to do so; 36% report that they would look for this mark, compared to 34% for those without children.

A similar proportion (33%) would look for the Age Warning Logo when purchasing toys, consistent with wave six. Those with children in the household are more likely to look for the Age Warning mark than those without children (38% with children, 31% without). It is particularly relevant for those with young children in the household – 43% of those with a child up to five years old say they would look for this marking on toys compared to 32% of those with a child aged between 16 and 18.

Two in five (42%) UK adults identify the display label as a mark they would look for when purchasing furniture/furnishings, a decrease from almost half (46%) at wave six. Similar to previous waves, homeowners are more likely to look for this mark on furniture than renters (46%, compared with 35% of renters).

Figure 29. Conformity assessment marks looked for on products[3]

	Electrical appliances	Baby products	Toys	Large domestic appliances	Furniture / furnishings
CE mark	39% (W6 41%)	26% (W6 26%)	28% (W6 30%)	36% (W6 36%)	24% (W6 24%)
UKCA mark	15% (W6 12%) +	9% (W6 8%)	9% (W6 8%)	14% (W6 13%)	10% (W6 9%)
Age Warning Logo	6% (W6 7%)	35% (W6 34%)	33% (W6 35%)	4% (W6 5%)	5% (W6 5%)

[3] Wave-on-wave significant differences have been signified using coloured text and plus and minus signs. Red text and a minus sign identifies a significant decline, green text and a plus sign identifies a significant increase

	Electrical appliances	Baby products	Toys	Large domestic appliances	Furniture / furnishings
BSI Kitemark	35% (W6 36%)	23% (W6 25%)	19% (W6 20%)	34% (W6 35%)	23% (W6 26%) -
Lion Mark	5% (W6 4%)	13% (W6 14%)	20% (W6 22%)	5% (W6 4%)	6% (W6 5%)
Radio Equipment Pictogram	6% (W6 8%) -	6% (W6 6%)	9% (W6 9%)	7% (W6 8%)	6% (W6 6%)
Display label pursuant to Regulation 10 FFRs	10% (W6 10%)	14% (W6 15%)	8% (W6 10%)	11% (W6 11%)	42% (W6 46%) -
None of these	13% (W6 13%)	13% (W6 13%)	14% (W6 13%)	14% (W6 14%)	13% (W6 13%)
Do not know	24% (W6 26%)	26% (W6 28%)	24% (W6 26%)	26% (W6 28%)	23% (W6 24%)

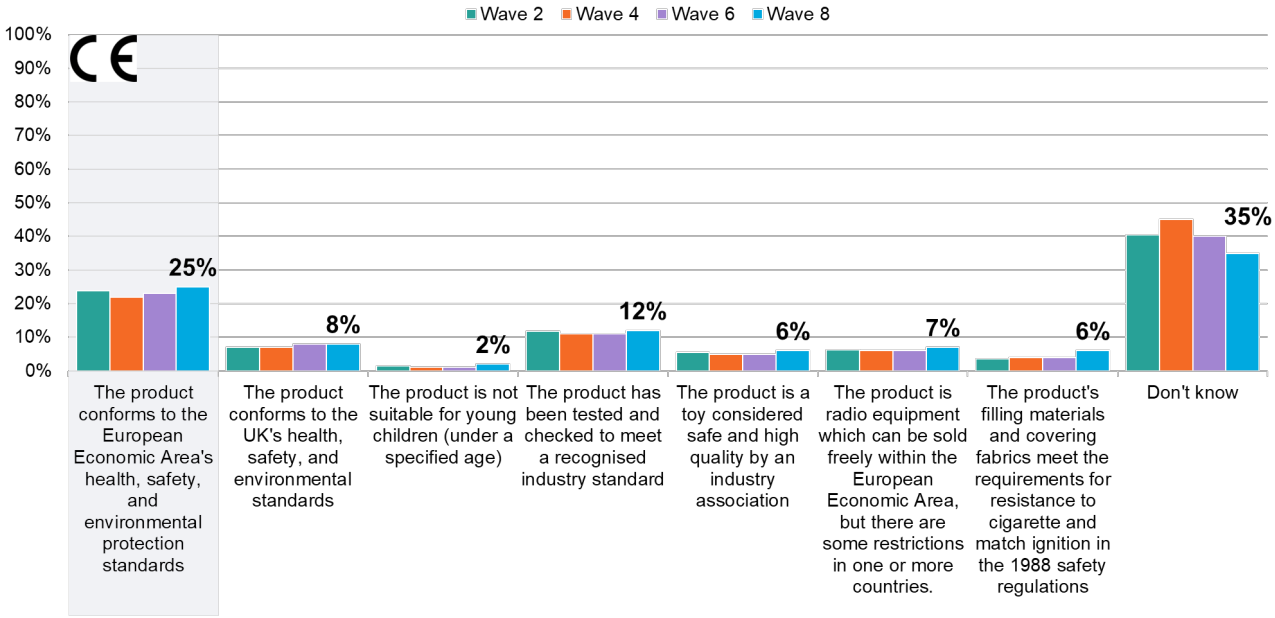
Q: Which, if any, of the following marks would you look for when purchasing each of the following types of products?
Base: All in E-labelling section (W6=2,530; W8=2,490)

As in previous waves, the key differentiator in likelihood to check for each of these labels is age. Specifically, younger adults are more likely than older adults to report that they would not look for any of the listed labels or markings across every listed product type. For example, 18% of those aged 18 to 29 would not look for any marking on an electrical appliance, compared to 8% of those aged 65 and over.

UK adults were asked to match each conformity assessment mark to a definition of its meaning. One in four (25%) correctly identified the CE Mark as indicating that the conforms to the European Economic Area's health, safety, and environmental protection standards, broadly consistent with the 23% saying this when last asked in wave six (figure 30). As with all previous waves, the most common response is uncertainty around the definition (35% chose “do not know”), although this has seen a decrease from 40% in wave six.

Consistent with the previous two waves (four and six), men are more likely to correctly identify the meaning of the CE mark than women (28%, compared with 22% for women). A strong education gradient also remains, with those of high education attainment (30%) more likely than those of medium (22%) or low (22%) education level to select the correct meaning for the CE mark.

Figure 30. Definition of CE mark



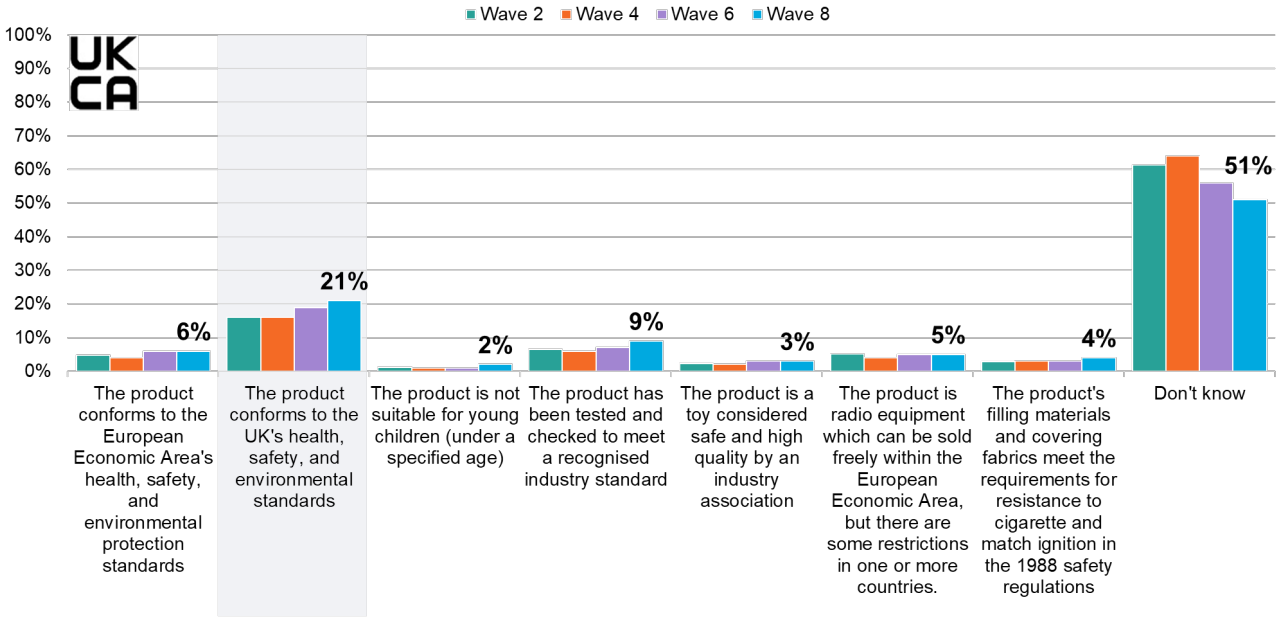
Q: Which, if any, of the following definitions comes closest to what you think each of the following marks mean?
Base: All in E-labelling section (W2=5,135; W4=5,089; W6=2,530; W8=2,490)

The proportion able to correctly identify that the UKCA mark means the product conforms to the UK's health, safety and environmental standards is 21% in wave eight, statistically unchanged compared with wave six (19%) (figure 31). Knowledge of this mark overall remains low, with a majority (51%) saying that they do not know what this mark means.

Those with high levels of educational attainment are more likely than those with low levels of educational attainment to correctly identify the UKCA mark (24% high, compared with. 17% for those with low educational attainment).

Similarly, those living in a household with children are more likely than those without to correctly identify the UKCA mark (24% with children, vs. 19% without).

Figure 31. Definition of UKCA mark



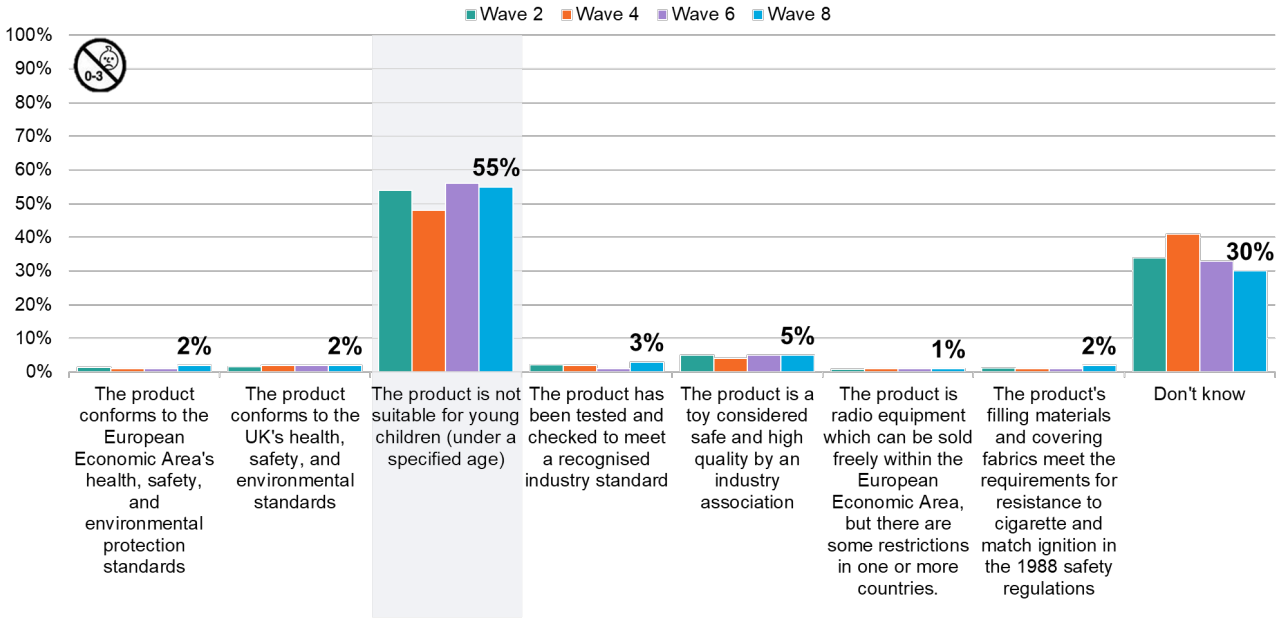
Q: Which, if any, of the following definitions comes closest to what you think each of the following marks mean?
Base: All in E-labelling section (W2=5,135; W4=5,089; W6=2,530; W8=2,490)

Just as the proportion who say they look for the Age Warning label has remained consistent this wave, so has the proportion able to correctly identify its meaning. A majority (55%) say that this label indicates that the product is not suitable for young children (under a specific age), in line with 56% in wave six (figure 32). This mark is by far the most likely to be correctly identified of all of those shown in the survey.

As has been reported in previous waves, there is no difference between those who have children in their household and those who do not in correctly identifying the Age Warning label (both 55%). There is also no difference by gender.

As with the UKCA mark, those with higher levels of educational attainment are more likely to correctly identify the meaning of the Age Warning Label than those with low or medium levels of educational attainment (47% low, 55% medium, 60% high).

Figure 32. Definition of Age Warning label

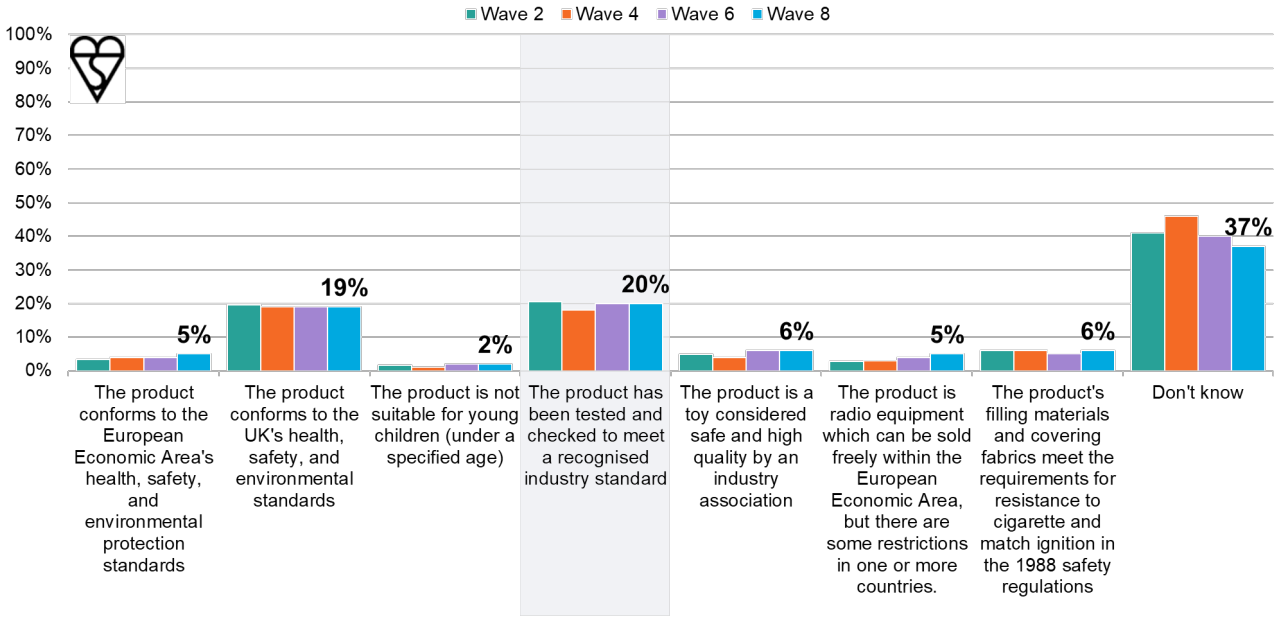


Q: Which, if any, of the following definitions comes closest to what you think each of the following marks mean?
Base: All in E-labelling section (W2=5,135; W4=5,089; W6=2,530; W8=2,490)

One in five (20%) identify that the BSI Kitemark means that the product has been tested and checked to meet a recognised industry standard, the same proportion who correctly identified the mark in wave six (figure 33). As in previous waves, a similar proportion of people believe the BSI Kitemark indicates that the product conforms to UK standards (19%).

There are few demographic differences in the choice of definition for the BSI Kitemark. Older adults are more likely than younger adults to give the correct definition (11% of those aged 18 to 29, compared with 23% for those aged 65+), but they are also more likely to say it means the product conforms to UK standards (13% of those aged 18 to 29, compared with 23% for those aged 65+).

Figure 33. Definition of BSI Kitemark

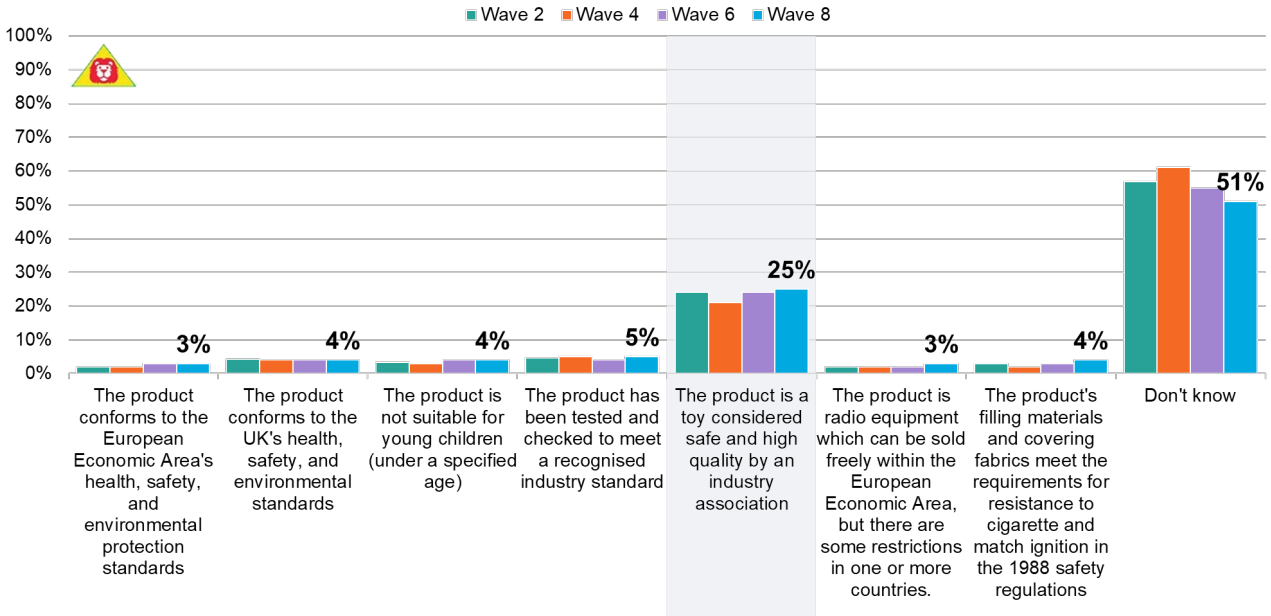


Q: Which, if any, of the following definitions comes closest to what you think each of the following marks mean?
Base: All in E-labelling section (W2=5,135; W4=5,089; W6=2,530; W8=2,490)

One in four (25%) identify that the Lion Mark means the product is a toy considered safe and high quality by an industry association, comparable with wave six (24%) (figure 34).

As with the Age Warning label, likelihood to correctly identify the definition is not statistically different regardless of whether UK adults have children in their household or not (25% with children, 24% without). However, there is a difference by age; those aged between 30 and 49 are more likely than all other age groups to correctly identify the mark (21% of those aged 18 to 29, 30% of those aged 30 to 49, 25% of those aged 50 to 64, 19% of those aged 65+).

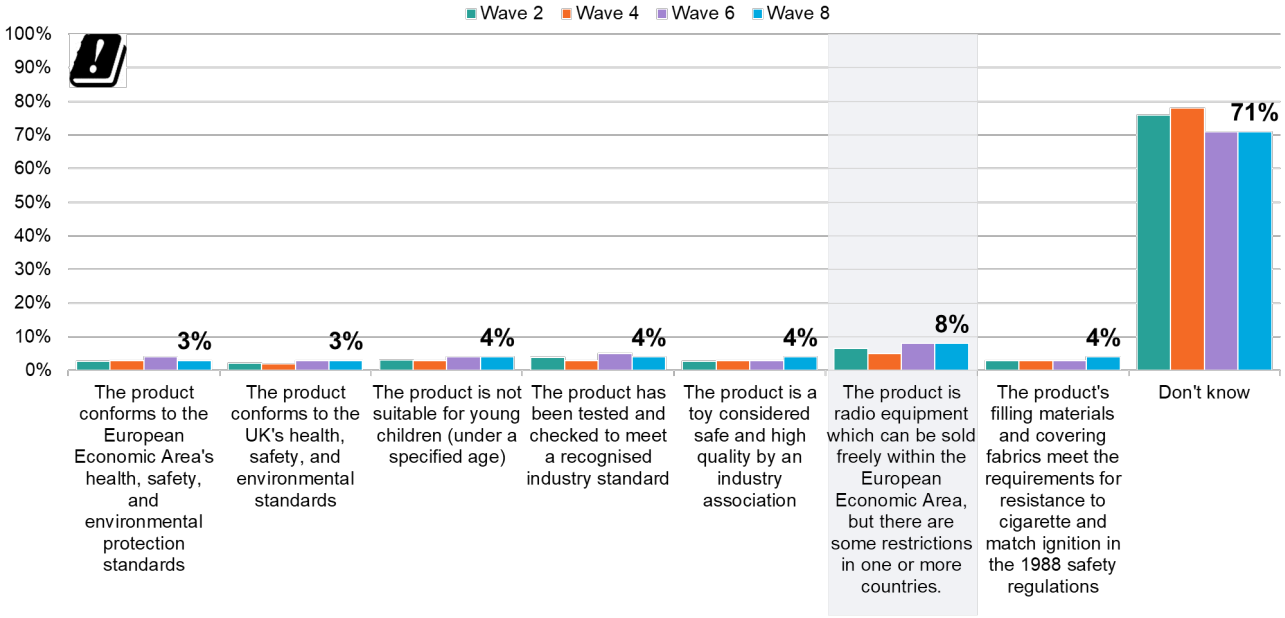
Figure 34. Definition of Lion Mark



Q: Which, if any, of the following definitions comes closest to what you think each of the following marks mean?
Base: All in E-labelling section (W2=5,135; W4=5,089; W6=2,530; W8=2,490)

The pictogram mark continues to be the least well known of the marks shown, with just 8% identifying that this means the product is radio equipment which can be sold freely within the European Economic Area with some restrictions in one or more countries (figure 35). Seven in ten (71%) report they do not know the definition, consistent with wave six.

Figure 35. Definition of Radio Equipment Pictogram

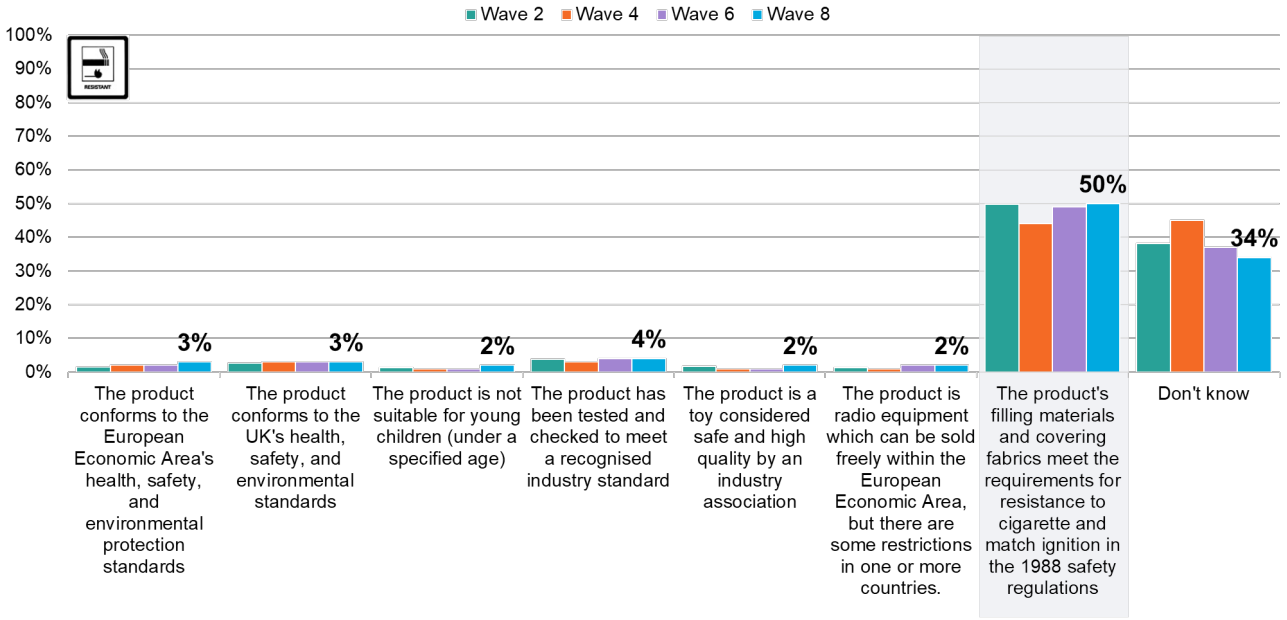


Q: Which, if any, of the following definitions comes closest to what you think each of the following marks mean?
Base: All in E-labelling section (W2=5,135; W4=5,089; W6=2,530; W8=2,490)

Half (50%) of UK adults correctly identify the definition of a display label as meaning the product's filling materials and covering fabrics meet the requirements for resistance to cigarette and match ignition in the 1988 safety regulations (figure 36). This proportion is consistent with those seen in waves six (49%).

Knowledge of this label is higher among those aged between 50 and 64 (45% of those aged 18 to 29, 53% of those aged 30 to 49, 57% of those aged 50 to 64, 43% of those aged 65+), as well as white adults (51%, compared with 41% for those from an ethnic minority) and those with higher levels of educational attainment (44% low, 50% medium, 54% high).

Figure 36. Definition of Display Label Pursuant to Regulation 10 FFRs (Fire Resistance)



Q: Which, if any, of the following definitions comes closest to what you think each of the following marks mean?
Base: All in E-labelling section (W2=5,135; W4=5,089; W6=2,530; W8=2,490)

Labelling preferences

Respondents were asked how they would best like to access safety information for electrical appliances, baby products, toys, cosmetics, large domestic appliances, and furniture/furnishings. They were asked to think about one product category when answering the questions in this section.

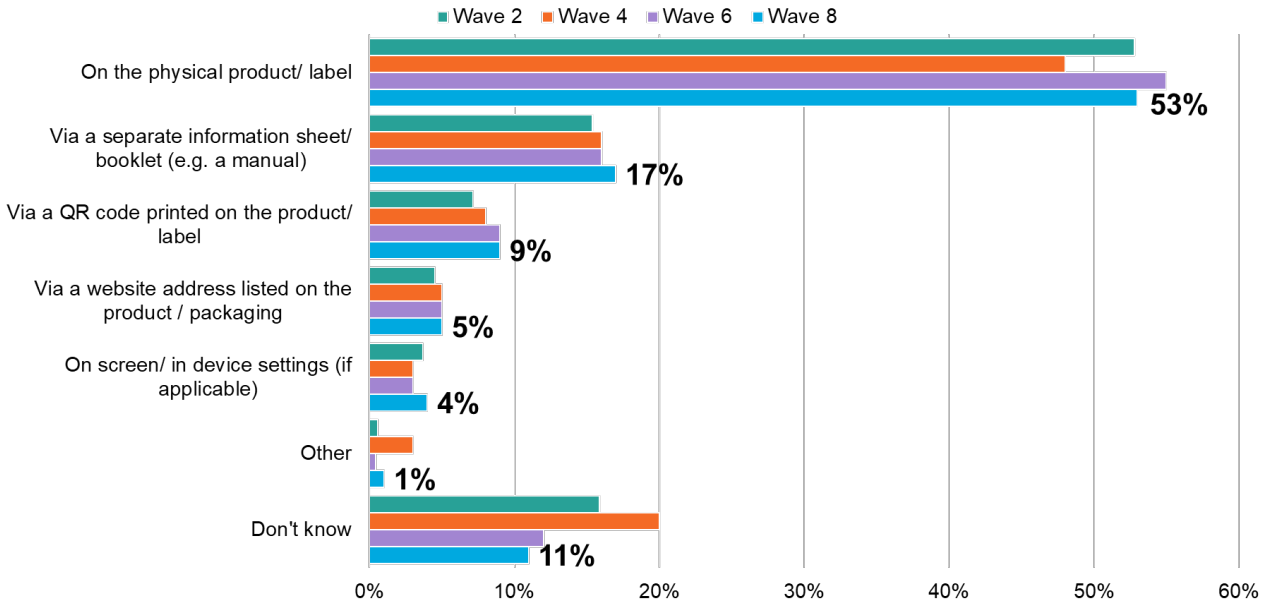
As was seen in all previous waves, the most popular place where people would like to see this information is on the physical product/label (53%) (figure 37). This finding is consistent with wave six (55%). Those asked about furniture/furnishings in this question are particularly likely to select this option (59%), while those asked about large domestic appliances are the least likely (46%).

The next-most popular location for safety information is on a separate information sheet/booklet (e.g. a manual), with 17% of respondents selecting this. Those thinking about electrical appliances and large domestic appliances (both 25%) are particularly likely to choose this.

The proportion who would like to find safety information via a QR code printed on the product/label is 9%, consistent with wave six. Those thinking about baby products are the least likely to select this option (6%).

The proportion of respondents who say they do not know where they would prefer to access safety information is 11%, broadly consistent with wave six but nine percentage points lower than in wave four.

Figure 37. Preference for labelling of safety information



Q: For the following question, by "product label" we mean a permanent label or marking attached to the physical product. In which ONE, if any, of the following ways would you prefer to access safety information about [category]?
Base: All in E-labelling section (W2=5,135; W4=5,089; W6=2,530; W8=2,490)

As was the case in wave six, younger respondents are more likely to express a preference for non-traditional methods of seeing safety information, such as a QR code (13% of those aged 18 to 29, compared with 3% for those aged 65+) or on screen/ in device settings (7% of those aged 18 to 29, compared with 2% for those aged 65+), whilst older people lean towards seeing the information on the physical product/label (42% of those aged 18 to 29, compared with 64% for those aged 65+).

Similarly, LGB+ respondents are more likely than heterosexual respondents to express a preference for non-traditional methods of seeing information; for example, 14% of LGB+ respondents would prefer seeing safety information on a QR code (compared with 8% for heterosexual respondents). In contrast, heterosexual respondents are more likely to prefer seeing the information on the physical product/label (55%, compared with 44% LGB+).

Personal Light Electric Vehicles

In wave eight, questions on personal light electric vehicles (PLEVs) were initially shown to all respondents (n=10,060) and then to those who own a PLEV (n=789) Exact base sizes for specific questions are shown below each chart.

Ownership of Personal Light Electric Vehicles

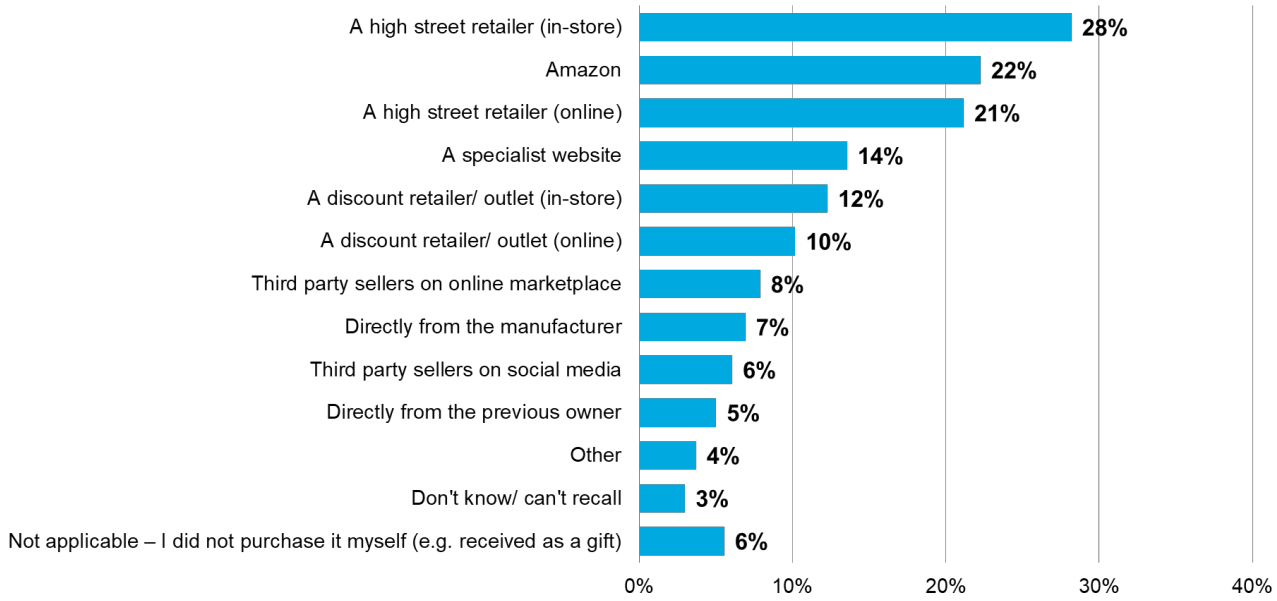
Overall, 8% of the UK public currently owns or has access to a Personal Light Electric Vehicle (PLEV). This is significant growth in ownership of PLEVs compared to wave seven (7%) and wave six (6%). The types of PLEVs people own or have access to follow the same pattern seen previously - with 4% reporting they have an eBike/ Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycle (EAPC), 3% an eScooter, 2% a hoverboard, and 1% an e-unicycle.

Age remains a key driver of owning a PLEV, with 13% of those aged 18 to 29 and 9% of those aged 30 to 49 reporting owning one, compared to 6% of 50 to 64 year olds and 5% of those aged 65 and over. Men also remain more likely to own one that women (10% of men, compared with 7% for women). No substantive shifts are seen in terms of ownership among these age or gender groups compared to wave seven.

Respondents from an ethnic minority background (14%) remain twice as likely to own a PLEV than those who are white (7%).

A high-street retailer (in-store) is the most common location where people have purchased a PLEV (28%) (figure 38). This is followed by Amazon (22%) and a high-street retailer (online) (21%).[4] Age is again a key determinant of behaviour patterns here. Younger people are more likely to have purchased a PLEV is a high street retailer (online) (32% of 18 to 29 year olds compared with 8% of those aged 65+), Amazon (29% of 18 to 29 year olds compared with 2% of those aged 65+), and discount retailers (either online or in-store) (27% vs. 3%). Older people tend to stick to more traditional purchasing methods, with 36% of those aged 65+ reporting having purchased from a high-street retailer (in-store), compared with 23% of those aged under 30.

Figure 38. Purchase location of PLEVs



Q. You said you own/ have access to a Personal Light Electric Vehicle (PLEV) such as an eScooter, eBike, hoverboard etc. From which, if any, of the following places have you purchased PLEVs from? (Please select all that apply)
Base: All who own/ have access to a PLEV (W8=789)

While traditional retail sources are the dominant way in which people are purchasing PLEVs, a sizeable proportion do report purchasing from discount retailers or third party sellers. A new question in wave eight therefore asked respondents whether they had purchased their PLEV new or second-hand.[5] The majority (72%) report that they bought their PLEV new, with 25% having purchased second-hand and 7% saying they do not

[4] Note that due to changes in the options used for this question in wave eight, the data is not comparable to wave seven.
[5] Respondents owning more than one PLEV could select both options to this question if both applied to them.

know. The groups most likely to have purchased second-hand include under 30s (40%, compared with 23% of those aged 30 to 49, 16% of those aged 50 to 64 and 12% of those aged 65+) and those with gross household incomes of less than £25,000 (33%, compared with 22% of those earning more than this).

Respondents from an ethnic minority background (36%) are more likely to have purchased second-hand than white respondents (22%).

Respondents were also asked whether they are the sole user of the PLEV they own/have access to, or whether other people also use them. Just over half (53%) report that they are the sole user, while 38% report that at least one other person uses their PLEV (the remaining 10% responding “do not know” or “other”). The 38% reporting that someone else also uses their PLEV includes 24% who say that one other person uses their PLEV, 10% who say two other people, and 4% who say three or more other people. Young people are much more likely to say that one or more other people use their PLEV (54% of those aged 18 to 29, 42% of those aged 30 to 49, 20% of those aged 50 to 64, 16% of those aged 65+). A gap is also seen when it comes to having children in the household; half (50%) of PLEV owners with children say someone else has access to their PLEV, compared with 24% without children.

Three in ten of those who own an eBike say that it was converted from a manual bike (30%). While this is not a statistically significant difference from wave seven (25%), this figure is significantly higher than in wave six (22%), indicating that there may be an increasing trend towards eBike conversion. Among those who say their eBike was converted, 47% did the conversion themselves, the same figure as was recorded in wave seven. Among this group, 93% report having used a specialised conversion kit to carry the conversion, though a significant minority (31%) report having bought parts separately when doing so. Likelihood to own a converted eBike remains much higher among those in younger age groups (49% of those aged 18 to 29, 43% of those aged 30 to 49, 9% of those aged 50 to 64, 8% of those aged 65+), while men are also more likely to say this (34%, compared with 24% for women).

When asked about the amount of time that they personally spend using their PLEV(s) in a typical week, the most common response is one to two hours per week (42%).[6] 24% say they spend three to four hours, 13% five to six hours and 14% seven hours or more. Only 13% say they do not use it in a typical week. When it comes to how much time is spent using their PLEV(s) by other people, among those who report that at least one other person has access to their PLEV, similar figures are seen with 45% saying that other people use their PLEV(s) for one to two hours per week, 26% three to four hours, 13% five to six hours, 20% seven or more hours and 11% not in a typical week.

The most commonly reported main purpose for which people use their PLEVs remains leisure, selected by 42%. While this represents a slight decline from 48% in wave seven, this is likely attributable to the addition of two new options in wave eight. Around one in five (22%) say the main purpose is commuting, while 12% say it is for work. Of the new options added this wave, 11% say they mainly use their PLEV for running errands, while 6% say it is for mobility/disability.

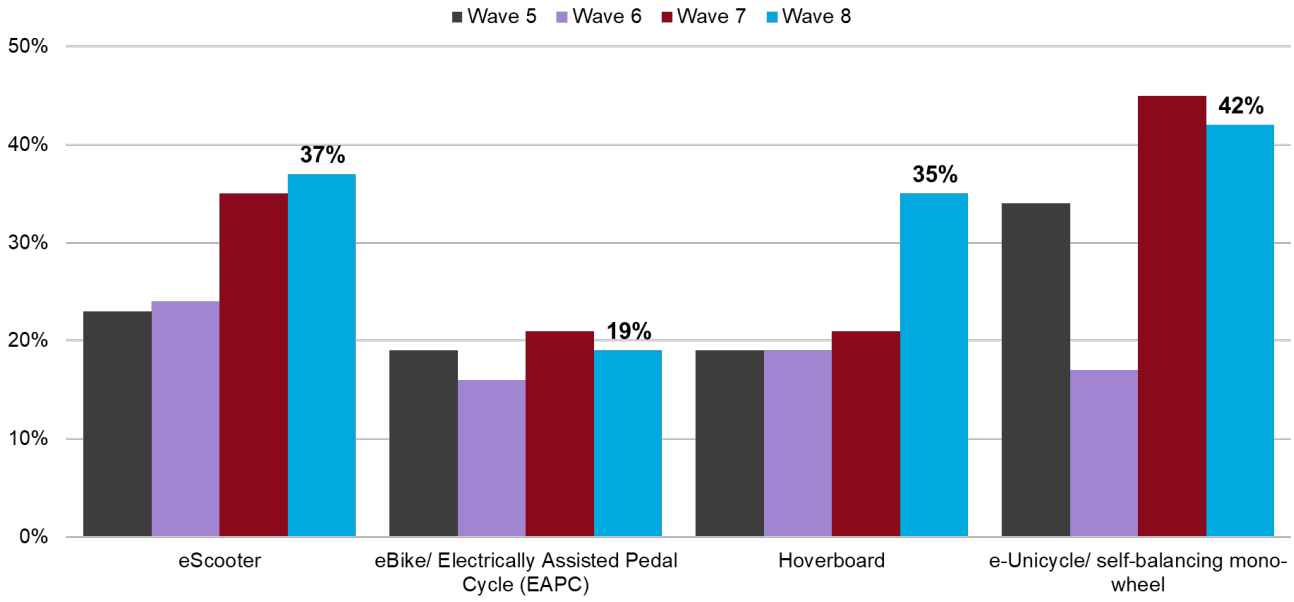
[6] Those responding ‘not sure’ excluded from calculations.

Charging Personal Light Electric Vehicles

Charging patterns for PLEVs are similar to those reported in wave seven, with e-unicycle/mono-wheels remaining the most likely PLEV to be charged at least once a week (93%), the same figure as wave seven. The proportion charging their hoverboard at least daily has risen sharply from 21% in the last wave to 35% in this, though caution should be taken when analysing changes such as these across individual waves as the sample sizes are relatively small. The proportion charging their eBike/EAPC or e-unicycle/mono-wheel on a daily basis remain unchanged since the last wave (figure 39).

In line with the lack of changes in terms of frequency of charging, there have been no statistically significant changes in the level to which users charge their PLEV. Three in five (61%) usually charge until the battery is full, the same figure as in wave seven. One in five (22%) usually charge until they have enough battery life, but not often to full, while 16% usually run the battery to zero, or near zero, before they recharge.

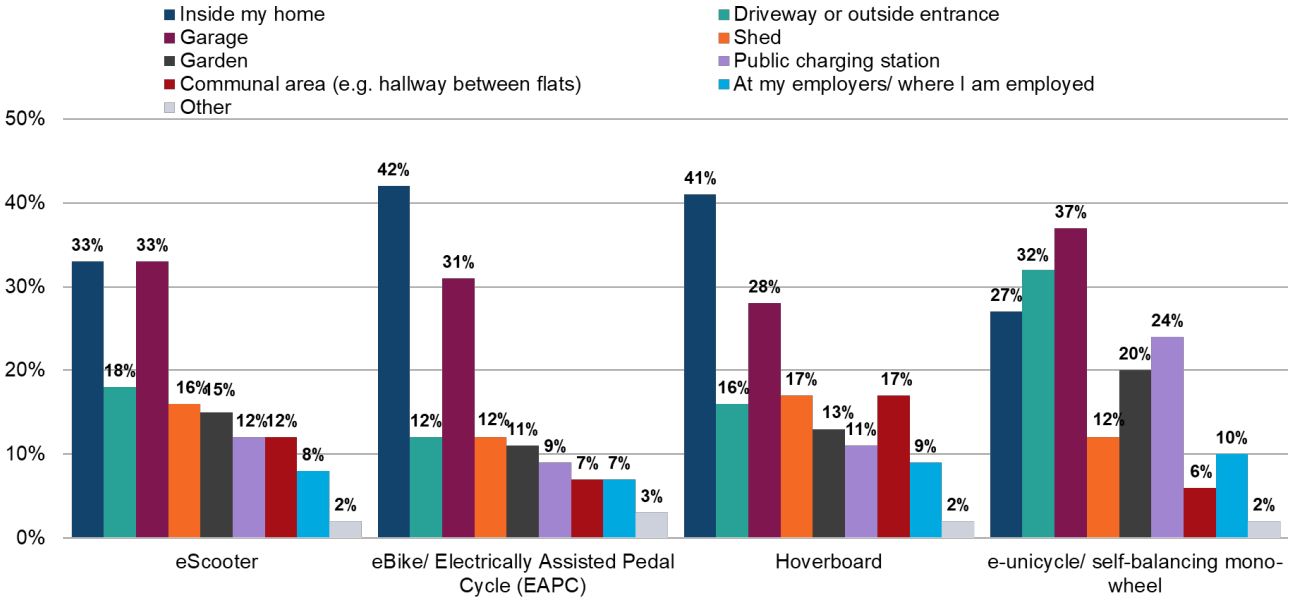
Figure 39. Proportion of PLEV owners who charge the battery at least daily



Q. How often do you usually charge each of your Personal Light Electric Vehicle(s) PLEV?
Base: All who own/ have access to a PLEV (W8: eScooter=243; eBike=432; Hoverboard=153; e-Unicycle/self-balancing mono-wheel=126)

The location in which people most frequently charge their PLEV also holds the same pattern to wave seven; inside their home is the most frequently selected response for all types of PLEV, apart from unicycle/mono-wheel where the garage is the most common charging location (figure 40).

Figure 40. 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/ have access to each: (W8: eScooters=243; eBike/ Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycle (EAPC)=432; Hoverboard=153; e-Unicycle/self-balancing mono-wheel=126)

Among those who frequently charge their PLEV at home, the top reason for doing so because it is the most convenient place, at 38%. Around three in ten (28%) say they do not have anywhere else to charge it, while 18% are worried about theft. These reasons are all unchanged versus wave seven. A new question this wave also asked this group whether the room where they charge their PLEV is connected to an external door to the property, with two-thirds (66%) saying that it is.

Personal Light Electric Vehicle batteries/ chargers

The proportion of PLEV owners who report having purchased a battery or charger separately for their PLEV is 59% this wave.[7] One in four (26%) report having purchased a separate battery, 23% a separate charger, and 20% a battery and charger purchased together as a single product. Those who own a unicycle/mono-wheel are most likely to report this, with 91% having purchased a separate battery/charger. This is followed by e-Scooters and hoverboards (both 73%), with eBike/EAPC owners less likely to do so (51%).

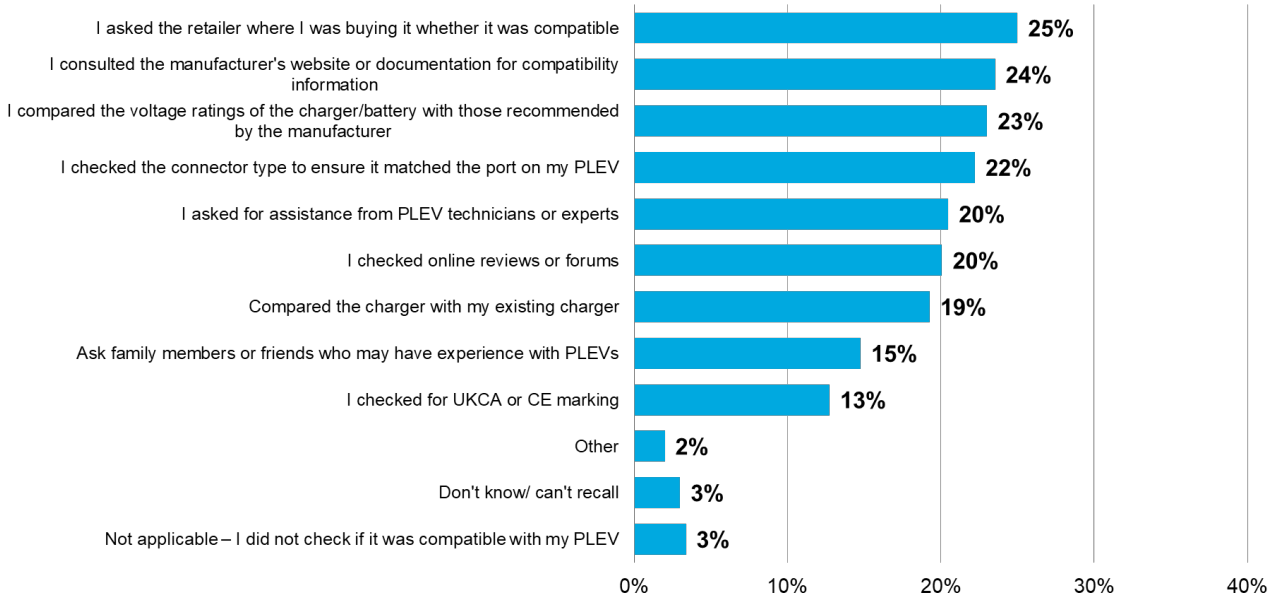
Among those who report that they own one or more additional batteries, 71% say that they use them in addition to the original battery that came with the device, while 35% say they use them as a replacement for the additional battery.[8] The most common location where people have purchased separate batteries/chargers is Amazon (29%), followed by specialist websites (21%) and high street retailers (in-store) (20%).[9]

The most important factors people consider when purchasing a charger or battery have remained consistent across waves, with no statistically significant changes since wave seven. Battery life (40%), efficiency (28%) and cost (28%) remain the top three reasons given, followed by product safety at 27%.

[7] Note that due to changes in the list of options used for this question in wave eight, the data is not comparable to previous waves.
[8] Respondents could select both options if applicable (e.g. if they own more than one PLEV)
[9] Note that due to changes in the list of options used for this question in wave eight, the data is not comparable to previous waves.

In wave eight, respondents who had previously purchased a separate battery or charger for their PLEV were asked if they took any actions to ensure that the battery/charger was compatible with their PLEV before purchasing. Nine in ten (92%) report having taken at least one action to ensure this, with the top selected options being: asking the retailer (25%), consulting the manufacturer's website or documentation (24%), or comparing the voltage rating of the charger/battery with the manufacturer's recommendation (23%) (figure 41).

Figure 41. Actions taken to ensure battery compatibility



Q: You said you have separately purchased a battery/ charger for a Personal Light Electric Vehicle (PLEV)… Which, if any, of the following actions did you take in order to ensure that the battery/ charger was compatible with your PLEV before purchasing? Please select all that apply.
Base: All who have purchased a separate battery/charger for their PLEV (W8=458)

Experience of safety issues with PLEVs

The proportion who have experienced a safety issue with their PLEV related to the battery or charger has risen significantly this wave, with 37% reporting this (22% W5, 21% W6, 23% W7). Younger people, a group who were already substantially more likely to report having experienced a safety issue with their PLEVs battery/charger in previous waves, are a key group driving this increase - with 59% of those aged 18 to 29 and 44% of those aged 30 to 49 reporting this, up from 31% and 30%, respectively, in wave seven. The corresponding figures for those aged 50 to 64 and 65 and over in wave eight are 8% and 7%.

Respondents from an ethnic minority background (60%) are twice as likely to report having experienced a safety issue with their PLEV's battery/charger than white respondents (31%).

Reported incidences of safety issues are also higher among those limited by a long-term health condition or disability (45%) than those not limited (32%).

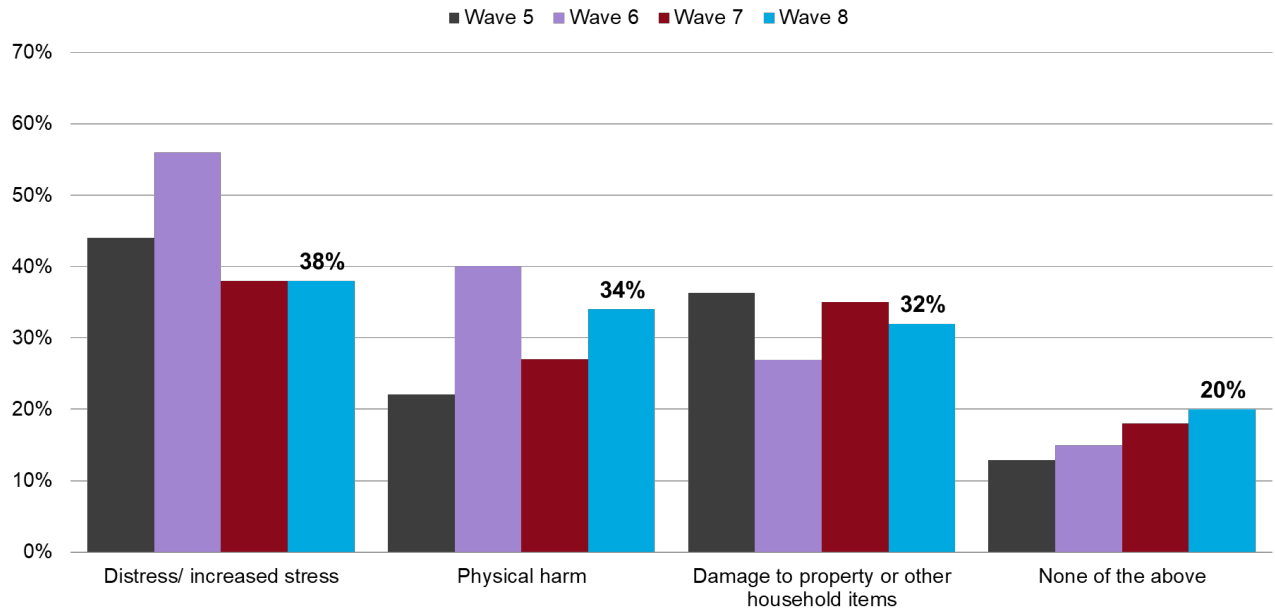
While overall reported incidence of these types of PLEV safety issues has risen this wave, the specific types of issues this group have experienced remains steady. Electrical issues (e.g. electric shock) remain the most common type of safety issue related to PLEV

batteries/chargers, at 46%, followed by mechanical (e.g. sharp edges, exposed moving parts) (42%), fire/explosion (e.g. signs of smoke, scorch marks, overheating) (37%) and chemical issues (e.g. irritation, corrosion) (15%). None of these represent statistically significant shifts from the previous wave.

Distress/increased stress remains the most commonly reported negative effect experienced as a result of this, mentioned by 38% (figure 42). This is followed by physical harm (34%) and damage to property or other household items (32%). Again, none of these represent statistically significant shifts from wave seven.

Among the 34% reporting physical harm as a result, 33% say it was very mild (no first aid needed), while a further 34% say it was mild (only first aid needed). A quarter (25%) said it was moderate (requiring a visit to GP/A&E), 6% severe (requiring an overnight stay in hospital) and 1% very severe (a longer stay in hospital). Among the 32% reporting damage to property, dents/scratches remain the most common form of damage reported (54%), followed by smoke damage (44%), fire damage (39%) and electrical damage (28%).[10]

Figure 42. Outcome of PLEV battery/charger safety issue



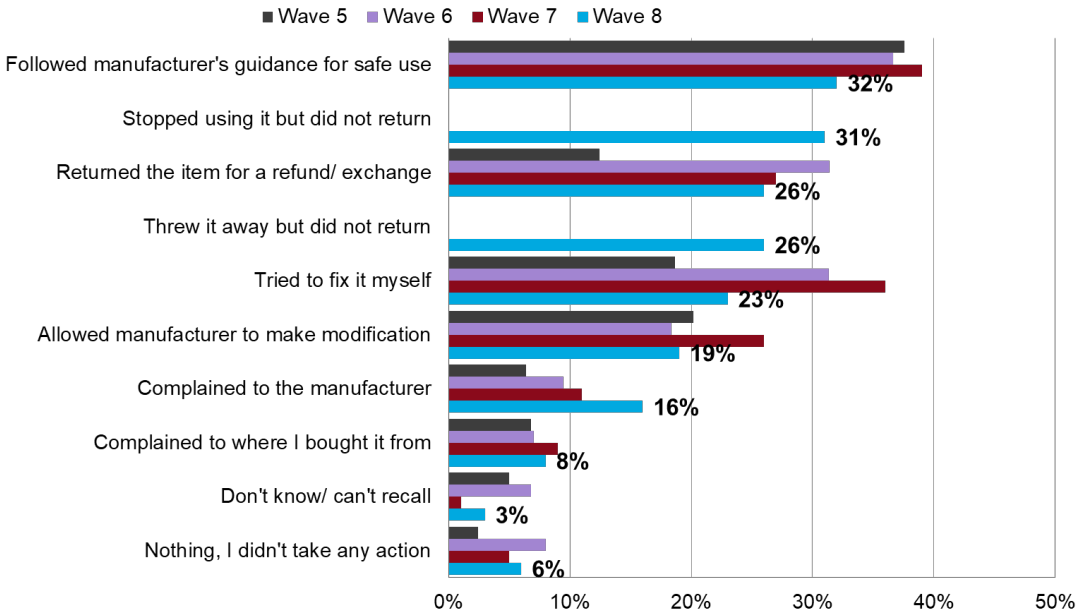
Q. Did that safety issue cause any of the following? (Please select all that apply)
Base: All who had a safety issue with a PLEV (W5=122; W6=117; W7=153; W8=284)

As has been reported in previous waves, the majority report that the most serious battery/charger safety issue they have had with the PLEV occurred with the original battery/charger (63%); 28% say it was with an additional battery/charger.

The most common action taken as a result of the safety issue are broadly similar to those reported in previous waves.[11] Three quarters (74%) of those who had experienced a safety issue acted on this. The most commonly reported actions are that they followed the manufacturer's guidance for safe use (32%) or that they stopped using the item but did not return it (31%) (figure 43).

[10] Note that due to changes in the options used for this question in wave eight, the data is not comparable to previous waves.
[11] Note that due to changes in the options used for this question in wave eight, the data for certain response options is not comparable to previous waves.

Figure 43. Action taken as a result of PLEV battery/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 with a PLEV (W5=122; W6=117; W7=153; W8=284)

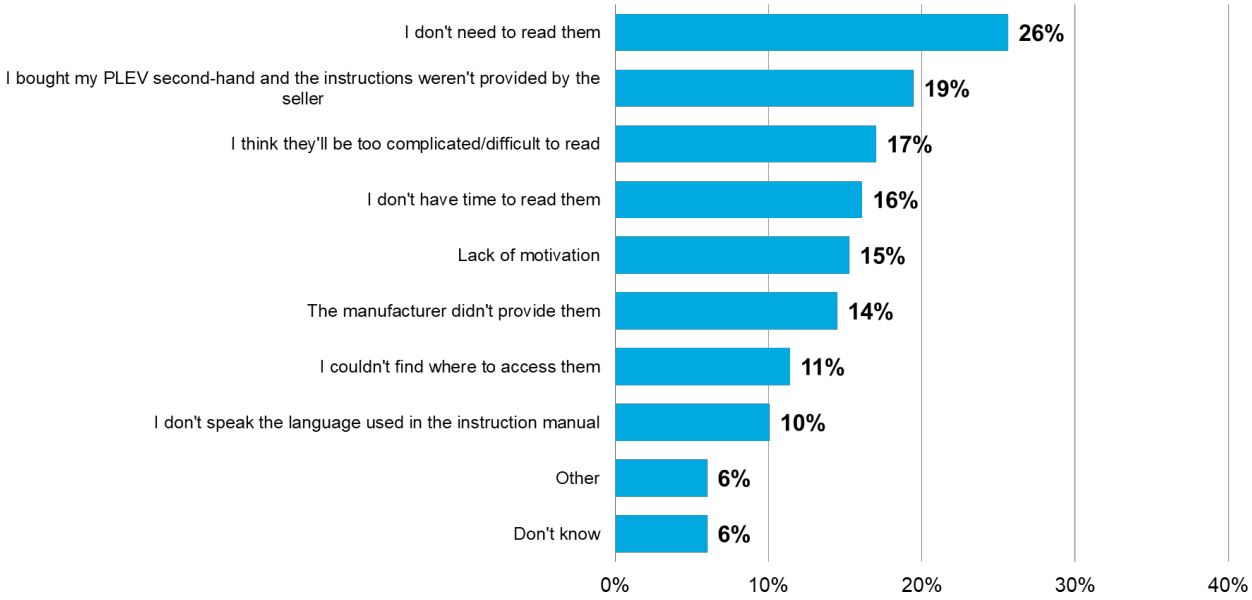
Manufacturer's instructions for Personal Light Electric Vehicles

Around two-thirds (64%) of PLEV owners say that they have read the manufacturer's instructions for using their PLEV. The proportion reporting to have done so rises substantially with age, with 52% of 18 to 29 year olds reporting to have done so, compared with 61% of those aged 30 to 49, 70% of 50 to 64 year olds and 89% of those aged 65 and over. Those in higher social grades (ABC1) are also more likely to have done so (69%, compared with 55% for those in C2DE).

Among those who have read the instructions, the most common source was the paper booklet that came with the PLEV (77%). Two in five (40%) report having read the instructions online on the manufacturer's website (40%), while 6% read them online on a different website.

Among those who have not read the instructions, 26% say it was because they do not need to read them, followed by 19% saying it was because they bought their PLEV second-hand and were not given them by the seller (figure 44). A wide range of other reasons were selected by similar proportions of respondents, including a belief they would be too complicated (17%), not having time (16%), lack of motivation to do so (15%) or that the manufacturer did not provide them (14%).

Figure 44. Reasons for not reading manufacturer's instructions for using PLEV



Q. For which, if any, of the following reasons did you not read the manufacturer's instructions for using your PLEV? Please select all that apply.
Base: All who did not read the manufacturer's instructions for using their PLEV (n=208)

Nine in ten (90%) of those who have read the manufacturer's instructions for using their PLEV have read the specific instructions relating to charging their PLEV. There is no statistically significant difference here between those who have experienced a safety issue with their PLEV battery/charger (92%) and those who have not (89%).

Experiences with e-bikes and e-scooters

Participants in the focus groups who owned e-bikes/scooters researched brands and models before purchasing; some researched using various online sites including Amazon and others visited stores like Halfords to physically evaluate the product. Motivations to purchase varied from a cheaper alternative to a car or a faster way to commute.

Factors which were deemed important centred around range and battery life. Others prioritised safety, security and the ability to fold up the bike for easy storing and transportation.

"I did research mine and loved the range it had, and removable battery was really important for me cause I like the ease of being able to charge it."
(Male, 18-40, e-bike/scooter owner)

"I used comparing site to research and then went on the websites of each one I love, I search YouTube to virtually see, I went to bike stores to, before making the final decision" (Male, 18-40, e-bike/scooter owner)

"We researched and set a budget. When we went to the bike shop, we tried out a few bikes, test rode them. The Moustache was expensive, but we got the quality."
(Male, 18-40, e-bike/scooter owner)

"Did quite a lot of research - wanted a reliable brand (as far as possible) and also a battery with a fair bit of range - a lot of them are quite small"
(Female, 40+, e-bike/scooter owner)

Most participants bought their e-bike/e-scooter new from an established and reputable retailer due to concerns around safety or the possibility that it had been stolen if purchasing second hand on sites such as eBay. Participants also value the ability to read reviews and receive warranty details.

A few participants had purchased new batteries from manufacturer websites, when purchasing new battery participants were looking for durability, compatibility, safety, longevity, and quality, along with cost. Most would not feel comfortable with purchasing a new battery second hand or used due to the potential risk or incompatibility, poor range/quality and lack of warranty compared to an established and reputable retailer.

"Compatibility, brand and quality was considered"
(Male, 18-40, e-bike/scooter owner)

"I would be wary of buying a second hand one from eBay or similar as I'd be worried it was a stolen one - so many about!" (Female, 40+, e-bike/scooter owner)

"I haven't purchased a separate battery or charger. I think I would only do so directly from the manufacturer of my bike as I would be mistrustful of random separate ones being sold" (Female, 40+, e-bike/scooter owner)

"I'd go to the same bike manufacturer and buy direct from them only, even if more expensive" (Female, 40+, e-bike/scooter owner)

Their charging point usually depends on accessibility and safety. Participants tend to charge their e-bike/scooter in their garage or in their porch, although some charge in their living rooms or hallway. A few participants mentioned that they are limited as to where they can charge their e-bike/scooter.

Some are charging their PLEV overnight but others charge during the day so they can monitor its charging and ensure there is no safety issue, with particular concerns around fires.

"I charge mine in my garage, and this is because I have kid in other to prevent hazard" (Female, 18-40, e-bike/scooter owner)

"Directly at the socket in my hall way, only when I am around so never unsupervised" (Female, 40+, e-bike/scooter owner)

"In the garage where e-bike is stored, this using a smart electric socket which allows me to start/stop charge based on timer" (Male, 40+, e-bike/scooter owner)

"As I live in a small flat so the hallway is the 'safest' but it does mean it is by the door" (Female, 40+, e-bike/scooter owner)

Most wait to charge until their e-bike/scooter is near empty, they then prefer to charge to ensure it has a full battery. Frequency of charging depends on frequency of use, particularly around commuting.

Some have a charger which powers off when fully charged as they are concerned about the impact of charging when fully charged, though most do not take significant safety precautions other than removing any nearby liquid when charging.

"I charge mine when I know the battery is low. The charge then powers off itself when fully charged so I have no issue leaving it on overnight"
(Male, 18-40, e-bike/scooter owner)

"I wait till nearly empty to charge and charge till full"
(Male, 40+, e-bike/scooter owner)

Participants were generally aware of safety concerns around charging e-bikes/e-scooters particularly due to the use of lithium batteries causing fires, which leads to many not leaving their bike unattended when charging. Some participants also had concerns about their e-bike/e-scooter overheating or the brakes failing when travelling at speed or the battery failing.

"Never charge mine unattended or overnight been too many reports of bikes and scooters catching fire in hallways" (Male, 40+, e-bike/scooter owner)

"I'm aware of Lithium ion batteries being causes of significant fires"
(Male, 40+, e-bike/scooter owner)

"So many tales of house fires with dodgy bike batteries"
(Female, 40+, e-bike/scooter owner)

Smart devices/ cybersecurity

In wave eight, questions on smart devices were initially shown to all respondents, (n=10,060), and then to those who own a smart device (n=9,101). Exact base sizes for specific questions are shown below each chart.

Ownership of smart devices

The prevalence of smart domestic appliances continues to rise. Of those who bought a large domestic appliance in the last six months, a third (33%) said this was "smart" – now the highest level since tracking began.

Those from higher social grades do report recent purchases of "smart" domestic appliances at higher rates than those from lower social grades, but the growth is seen across demographics (ABC1: 13% W1, 36% W8; C2DE: 15% W1, 29% W8).

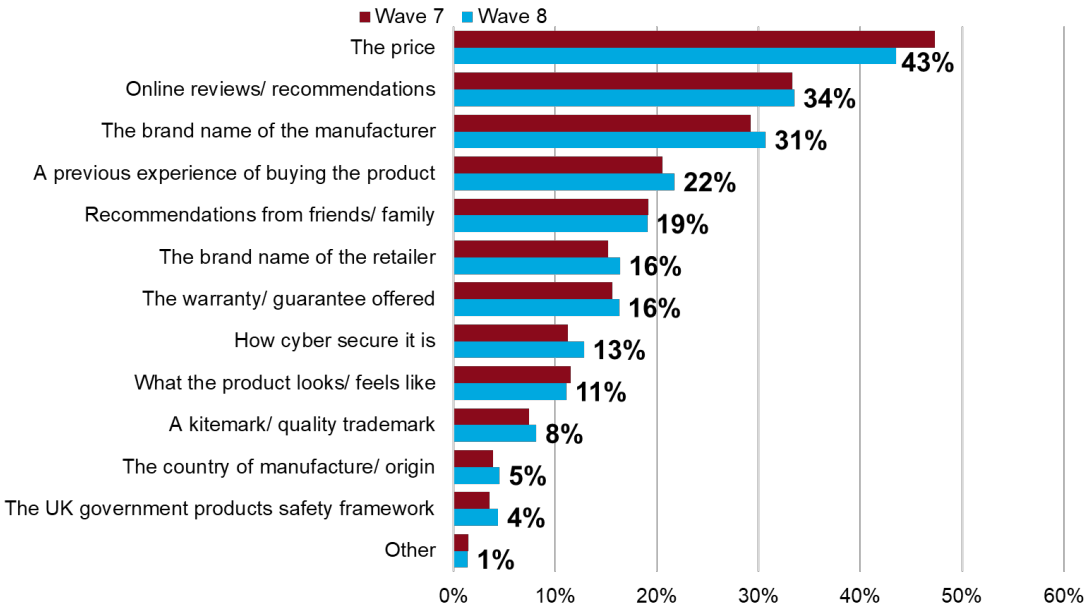
The majority of UK adults own or have access to at least one smart device. In particular, access to smart home security continues to rise (10% W2, 12% W4, 16% W6, 17% W7, 18% W8). Consistent with previous waves, this growth is seen across both homeowners and renters (owners: 21% W7, 23% W8; renters: 11% W7, 12% W8).

Price remains a key consideration when purchasing a smart device but has fallen slightly compared to wave seven (47% W7, 43% W8) (figure 45). By contrast, cybersecurity consideration has risen and now 13% of smart device owners report considering this in their purchases (compared to 11% in wave seven). This is particularly driven by older respondents – in wave seven, 9% of those aged 65 and over reported cybersecurity as a consideration. This has now risen to 13% of those aged 65 and over.

LGB+ adults are more likely than heterosexual adults to say cybersecurity was an important factor (16%, compared with 13% of heterosexual adults).

Offline/ low internet adults are more likely to rely on personal reviews – 36% of low-internet smart device owners say recommendations from a friend/ family member influence their purchase.

Figure 45. Top-three purchase considerations for smart devices



Q: Which, if any, of the following most influence you when choosing which smart device to purchase? If you currently own more than one smart product, please think about the most recent one you purchased.
Base: All who own/ have access to smart devices (W7=4,493; W8=9,193)

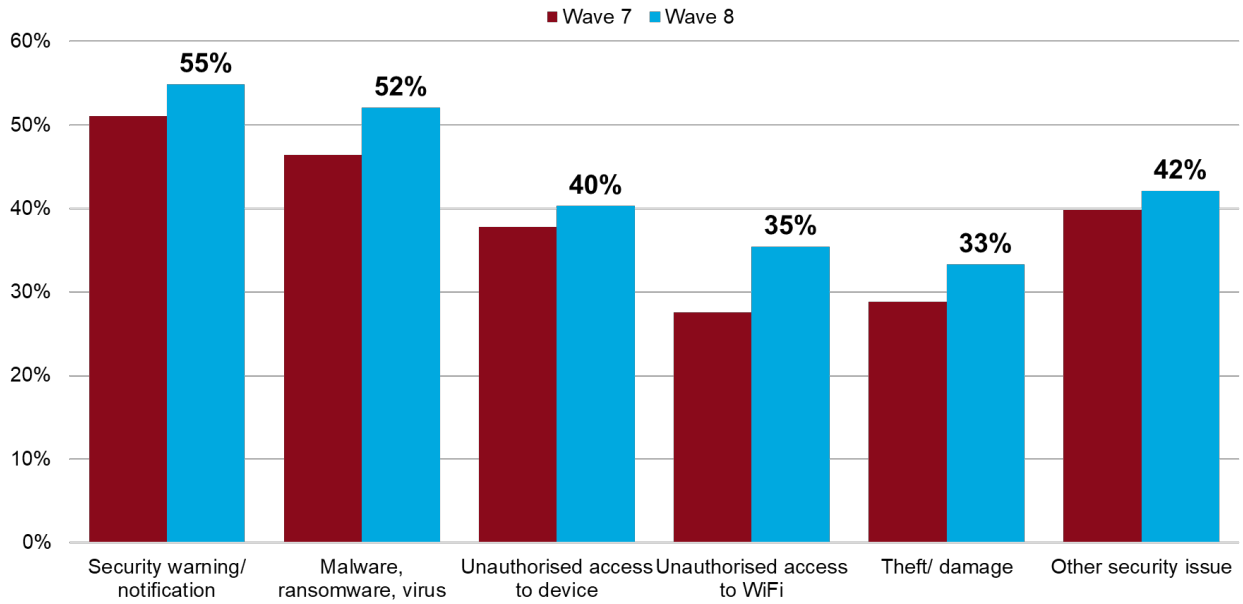
Experiences of cybersecurity issues

Consideration of cybersecurity in purchasing smart devices has risen, but so too have experiences of cybersecurity issues. Amongst smart device owners, 14% have experienced a cybersecurity issue, up from 12% in wave seven.

Consistent with the previous wave, smart toys are the most prone to issues – 18% of those who own/ have access to smart toys report experiencing a cybersecurity issue with it. This is followed by smart baby products, where 15% of those who own/ have access to smart baby products report a cybersecurity issue.

The most common cybersecurity issue is a security warning/ notification, with over half (55%) of those who experienced an issue with a smart device reporting this (figure 46). However, there have been significant rises in the proportion of affected consumers reporting that their issue was malware/ ransomware/ a virus (46% W7, 52% W8) or unauthorised access to Wi-Fi (28% W7, 35% W8).

Figure 46. Type of cybersecurity issue experienced



Q: Which, if any, of the following most influence you when choosing which smart device to purchase? If you currently own more than one smart product, please think about the most recent one you purchased.
Base: All who had a cybersecurity issue with a smart device they own/ have access to (W7=531; W8=1,275)

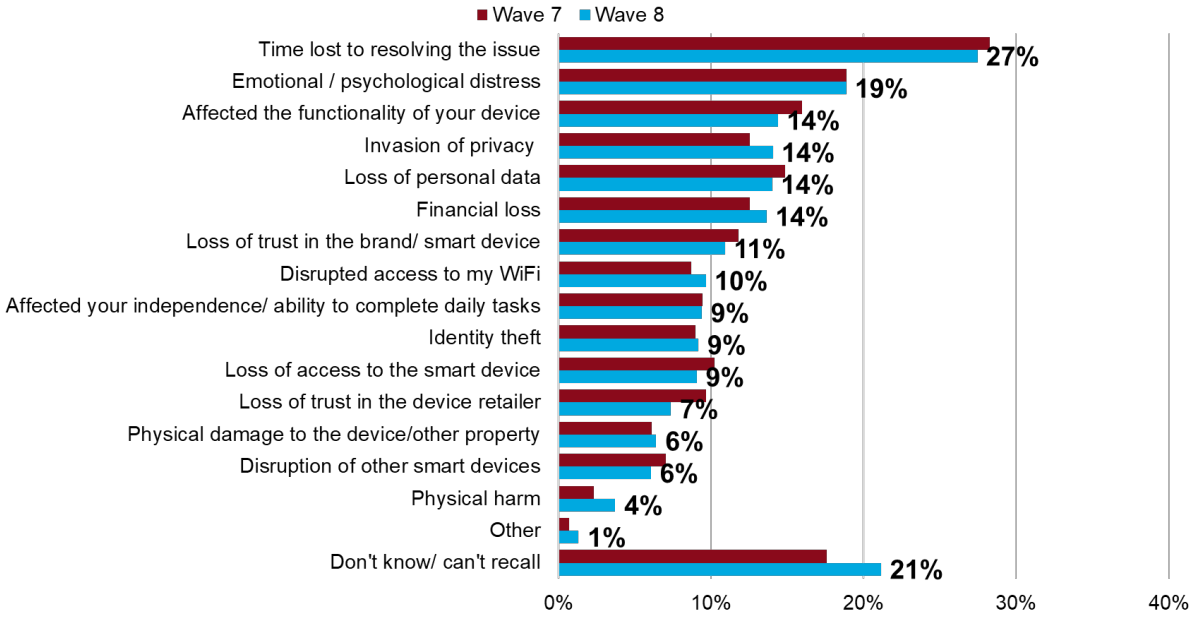
The perceived severity of cybersecurity issues has also increased. On a 10-point scale (where 10 is the most serious issue they could face), cybersecurity issues have a mean score of 5.78 – notably higher than the mean of 5.36 reported in wave seven.

Consistent with wave seven, smartphones cause the most concern when affected by a cybersecurity issue. Among those who experienced an issue with more than one device, over a third (36%) said the issue which affected their smartphone was the most concerning.

The impacts of cybersecurity issues have remained level broadly level with wave seven. The most common impact is the time lost to resolving the issue with over a quarter (27%) reporting this as an impact (figure 47). Around a fifth (19%) experienced emotional/ psychological distress as a result of the cybersecurity issue.

The previously reported age trend also remains present – older respondents are more likely than younger respondents to report time lost to resolving the issue (18% of those aged 18 to 29, compared with 49% of those aged 65+). Older respondents are also more likely than younger respondents to report emotional/ psychological distress (26%, compared with 15% of those aged 18 to 29).

Figure 47. Impacts of the cybersecurity issue

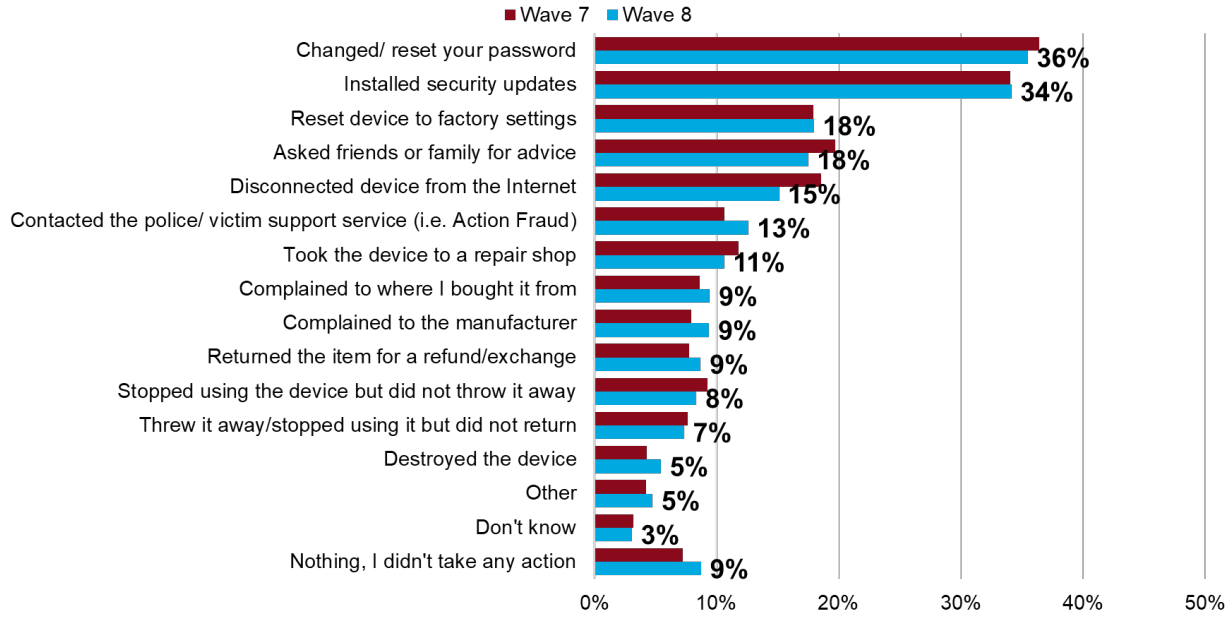


Q: Which of the following impacts did you experience as a result of the cybersecurity issue you faced? If you have had security issues more than one smart product, please think about the most recent time this occurred.
Base: All who had a cybersecurity issue with a smart device they own/ have access to (W7=531, W8=1,275)

In line with wave seven, nearly all (88%) individuals who experienced a cybersecurity issue took action as a result. The most common activities remain changing/ resetting passwords (36%) or installing security updates (34%) (figure 48). There are no significant differences between the waves in terms of actions taken.

However, in wave eight, women are now more likely than men to ask their friends/ family for advice (22%, compared with 14% for men). Those under 30 are also now the least likely to take action with one in ten (11%) saying they did not do so, compared with 3% of those aged 65 and over.

Figure 48. Actions taken to deal with cybersecurity issues

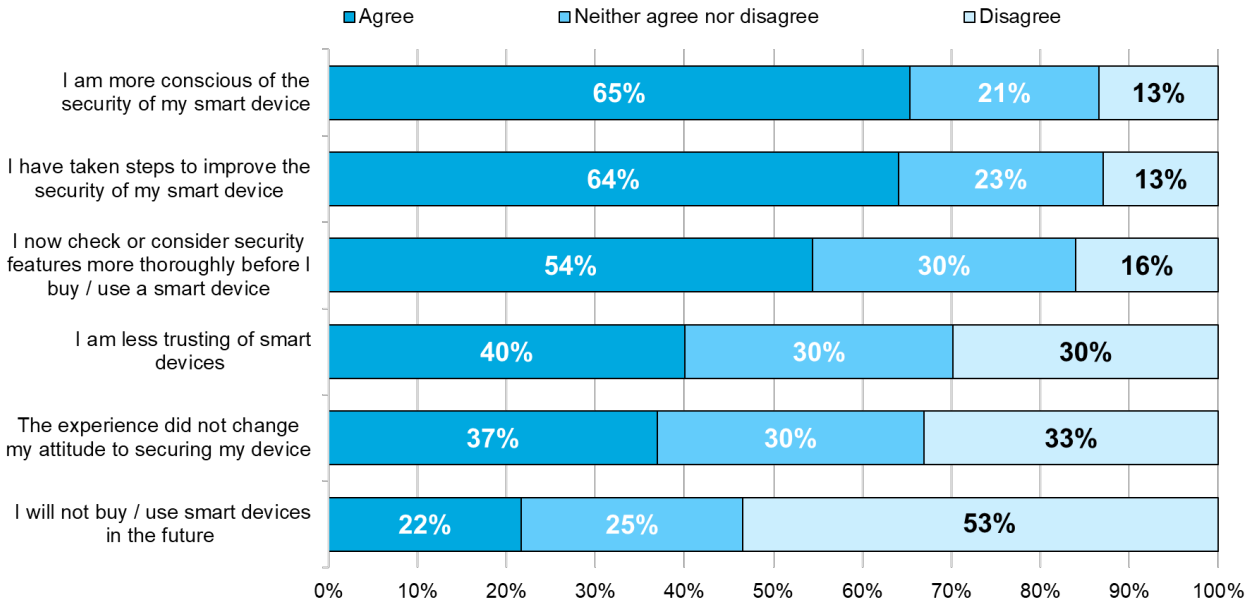


Q: What action(s) did you take to deal with the security issue(s) which affected your smart device(s)? If you have had security issues more than one smart product, please think about the most recent time this occurred.
Base: All who had a cybersecurity issue with a smart device they own/ have access to (W7=531, W8=1,275)

The majority (80%) of those who take action are very or fairly confident that they resolved the issue for that particular device. Nearly all (89%) of those who installed security updates are confident the issue is resolved, followed by 86% of those who changed their password.

Reflecting on their issue, over a third (37%) said the experience did not change their attitude to securing their device. However, around two-thirds say they are more conscious of the security of their smart device (65%) or that they have taken steps to improve their device's security (64%) (figure 49). Broadly, these patterns are in line with those seen as a result of cybersecurity issues experienced in wave seven.

Figure 49. Attitudes after experiencing cybersecurity issue



Q: Based on your experience of a security issue on your consumer smart device(s), please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements:
Base: All who had a cybersecurity issue with a smart device they own/ have access to (W8=1,275)

Sources of cybersecurity information

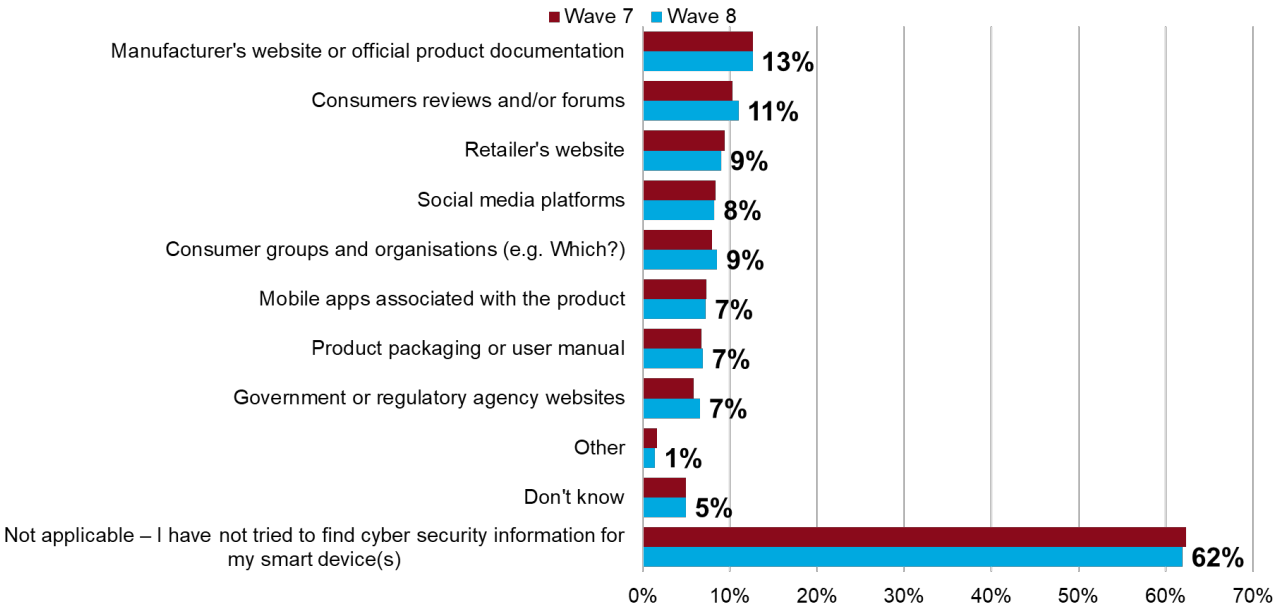
Despite the increase in prevalence and severity of cybersecurity issues, most (62%) smart device owners have not tried to find any cybersecurity information – unchanged from wave seven. Just 13% have looked at the manufacturer's website or the official documentation for their product. One in ten or less have looked at each of the other sources (figure 50).

Consistent with wave seven, younger adults are the most likely to have looked for information – 43% of those aged 18 to 29 have done so, compared to 29% of those aged 65 and over. However, there is no difference by likelihood for looking at manufacturer websites/ product documentation – 13% of those under 30 report doing this, as do 14% of those aged 65 and over.

Those who have experienced a safety issue are the most likely to say they have searched for information, with a quarter (24%) referring to the manufacturer's website/ product documentation (figure 50). A fifth turn to social media (23%) or consumer reviews/ forums (23%).

LGB+ adults are more likely than heterosexual adults to have sought out cybersecurity information. For example, 15% of LGB+ adults look at consumer reviews/ forums, compared with 11% of heterosexual adults.

Figure 50. Sources of cybersecurity information



Q: In which, if any, of the following places have you tried to find cybersecurity information for your smart device(s)?
Base: All who own/ have access to a smart device (W7=4,493; W8=9,101)

Among those who did look for cybersecurity information, most (65%) say it is easy to find, broadly consistent with the proportion reporting this in wave seven (62%). However, in wave seven, there was no difference by age at the overall level. Now, there is a clear age trend with younger adults much more likely to report that finding cybersecurity information was easy to do (73% of those aged 18 to 29, 67% of those aged 30 to 49, 64% of those aged 50 to 64, 52% of those aged 65+).

Attitudes towards emerging technologies

As part of the qualitative focus groups, participants were asked to reflect on 5 emerging technologies: 3D printing, social commerce, home robots, extended reality headsets and internet of things devices, and share their experiences with these technologies and their perceived benefits and drawbacks of them.

Emerging technologies are valued for their convenience, but participants have significant concerns about how secure their data is.

3D Printing

Most participants are familiar with 3D printing, and learned about it through television, social media or news stories. Some had used it before, often through work or in their studies, but did not own their own 3D printer due the cost associated. Other participants have purchased 3D printed products in the past.

3D printing is considered to be ‘innovative’ as well as ‘accessible’ and ‘flexible’. Some participants were excited about how 3D printing could create artificial meat, advance the medical field, create product prototypes, produce spare parts and reduce cost in producing various goods.

One of the barriers for purchasing a 3D printer is the perceived cost of purchasing one and repairing one, another is the environmental impact, related to the amount of plastic being used. There were also concerns around how 3D printing could be used to create weapons or other harmful products or technologies.

“Used it [3D printer] as part of a project team making a research nano bot for intravascular surgery” (Female, 40+)

“Easy to make prototypes before committing to manufacturing costs for businesses” (Male, 40+)

“I've used 3D printed parts. It's been convenient to get something specific that wouldn't be mass produced” (Male, 18-40)

“Can be used to create harmful items, such a weapon” (Male, 18-40)

Social Commerce

Participants were familiar with social commerce, and many had previously shopped through social media platforms like Facebook Marketplace, TikTok Shop and Instagram.

The perceived benefits of social commerce include the cheap pricing, sustainability and contributing to a circular economy (when purchasing items from local community). However, most participants approach shopping on social media with caution.

The key drawback is the potential for scams, many had experienced receiving poor quality items or fake users/sellers selling products, while others were concerned about sharing their personal information with unknown sellers to be used for data harvesting. Participants commented that it is more difficult to ascertain a scam on social media compared to established businesses; many research buyers and products before purchasing as they are also concerned about their lack of protection when purchasing products through social media.

“Easy way to move on stuff that's maybe not needed anymore. Circular economy.” (Male, 40+)

“Sometimes what you order is not how it looks when it arrives” (Male, 18-40)

“I have used it a bit - but with huge amounts of caution! Definitely have to be very careful - a lot of scams around!” (Female, 40+)

“Data harvesting and also no oversight of quality and safety of goods sold” (Female, 40+)

Home robots

Some participants owned home robots including robotic vacuum cleaners, lawn mowers and smart home assistants including Google Home and Alexa.

Home robots are valued for their convenience as they save time in completing household tasks, as well as by those with disabilities as they make tasks more accessible to complete remotely. Other benefits mentioned include their ability to reduce costs and energy consumption in the home, as well as home security.

Concerns include home robots being tripping hazards and collection of private data through “listening” to consumers, along with robots encouraging ‘lazy’ attitudes at home.

“Ill health means I spend a fair time in bed and its great being able to turn tv, fan or lights on or off without having to get up.” (Male, 40+)

"I have a heating system that can be controlled remotely, which is really useful when out of the house - also smart switches that we do not use all the time but do use to turn lamps on and off for security purposes if away" (Female, 40+)

"Benefits are ease of use especially for the older generation with mobility issues, convenience and time saving opportunities to get on with other things" (Female, 18-40)

Extended Reality Headsets

Some participants had tried extended reality headsets in shops or in class in the past, but most were discouraged from purchasing their own due to the cost.

Participants expect ER headsets to be used to encourage learning (particularly around healthcare) and enhance gaming. It could also be used to sell products (e.g. see what a sofa looks like in the home) or holidays (e.g. experience what Thailand looks like).

A couple of participants across younger groups owned their own headset for gaming but often felt unwell when using if for an extended period. The over-forty age group felt this technology is aimed at a younger age bracket.

There were some concerns about the psychological impact of regularly using extended reality headsets, particularly for children who may "lose touch with reality" or become addicted to the technology. Others were concerned about the physical impact, particularly around the effect on eyes in the long term and sickness.

"I love it. Makes gaming so realistic and much more fun. Just have to be careful not to mess up the real world while doing it." (Male, 18-40)

"I have experience with VR, and I really detest it. The headset movement makes me physically sick" (Female 40+)

"I work for the fire service, and we have used them to give young adults a feeling of being involved in a car crash and being trapped whilst emergency services rush to free them." (Male, 40+)

"People might get addicted to this way of escaping real life. Young people could spend a lot of time in an alternative reality" (Female, 40+

"I've not used this technology, probably never will. Maybe the wrong demographic. Might be a big thing in the future for training" (Male, 40+)

Internet of things devices and smart appliances

Most are familiar with smart appliances and value them for their convenience, specifically their ability to complete certain tasks faster, as well as their energy saving abilities. However, some are sceptical about how much time they can save and how reliable the technology is.

Those who own smart appliances use them for a wide range of tasks in the home, such as managing heating and cooking e.g. turning on the oven or the heating on the way home from work or when on holiday.

There were some concerns about data being sold on to companies as well as an overreliance on connected online appliances, while others were concerned about using smart meters in their homes. Similar to feedback on home robots, some were concerned

that smart appliances encourage lazy attitudes and can lead to overreliance on technology which may not always be reliable.

"Drawbacks are data can be used and sold and sometimes controlling things from a phone is not that great. My air fryer works from phone, but I still have to put the food in it before I can use my phone to turn it on. So, it's a bit pointless at times." (Male, 18-40)

"Smart lighting and smart door locks are very convenient" (Male, 18-40)

"Refused to have any smart appliances when installing a new kitchen. Too much scope for spying/loss of privacy/data theft" (Female 40+)

"I have a smart thermostat that was included with my new boiler. It's really handy to be able to set the heating when I'm on my way home from work, and have it turn off automatically when I leave." (Male, 18-40)

In conclusion, 3D printing was considered to be the safest emerging technology and the most likely respondents would engage with. Social commerce, home robots and extended reality headsets were felt by some to be potentially dangerous to regularly engage with.

"I am personally suspicious of them all. Maybe 3D printing is the least harmful, re: security, hacking" (Male, 40+)

Cost of living

In wave eight, questions on online purchasing were shown to all respondents (n=10,060). Exact base sizes for specific questions are shown below each chart.

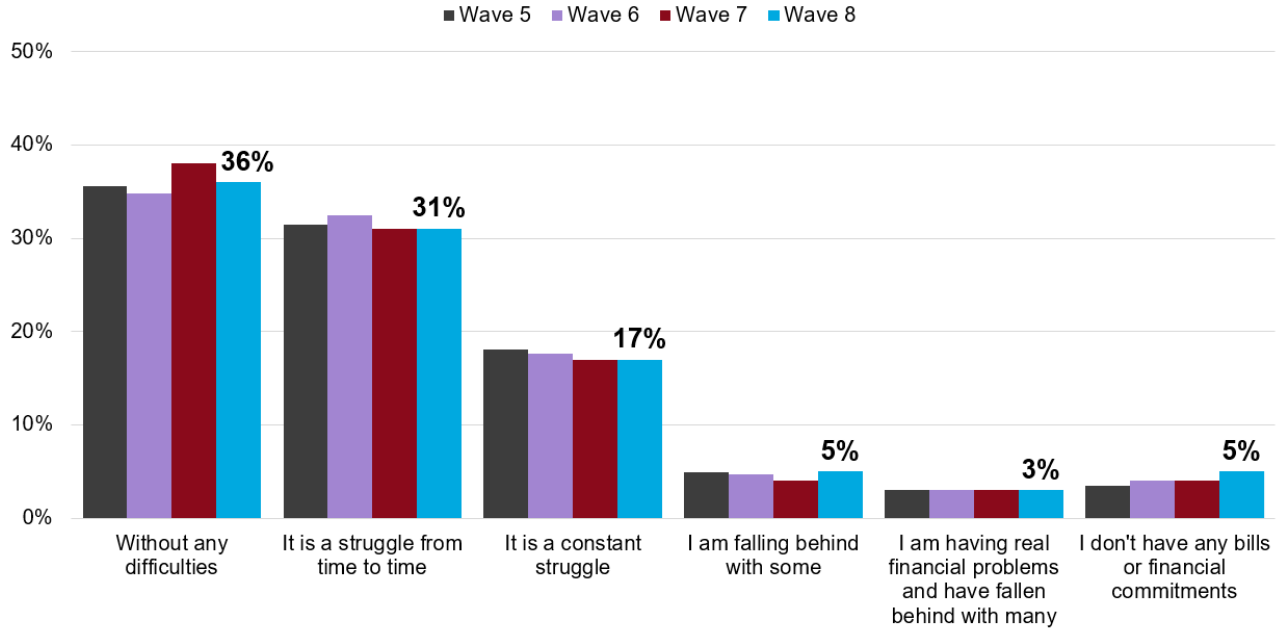
A majority (56%) of the UK public continue to report struggling to some extent to keep up with their bills and financial commitments (figure 51). This is consistent with wave seven (55%), but significantly lower than waves five (57%) and six (58%). Just over a third report being able to keep up with bills and financial commitments without any difficulty (36%), a small but significant decrease from wave seven (38%).

Among those with low household incomes (under £25,000 gross per annum), seven in ten report any level of financial struggle (69%), and a quarter report that it is a constant struggle to keep up (25%). This is unchanged from previous waves.

Also consistent with previous waves, those living in a household with children are more likely than those living without children to report struggling to some extent with their bills (63%, compared with 53% for those without children).

Those living with disabilities are also more likely than those living without to struggle to some extent with their bills (64% with disabilities/ health conditions, compared with 52% without). Around one in five (22%) of those living with disabilities say it is a constant struggle to keep up with bills, compared to 15% of those living without disabilities. This is consistent with the patterns seen in previous waves.

Figure 51. Keeping up with bills and financial commitments



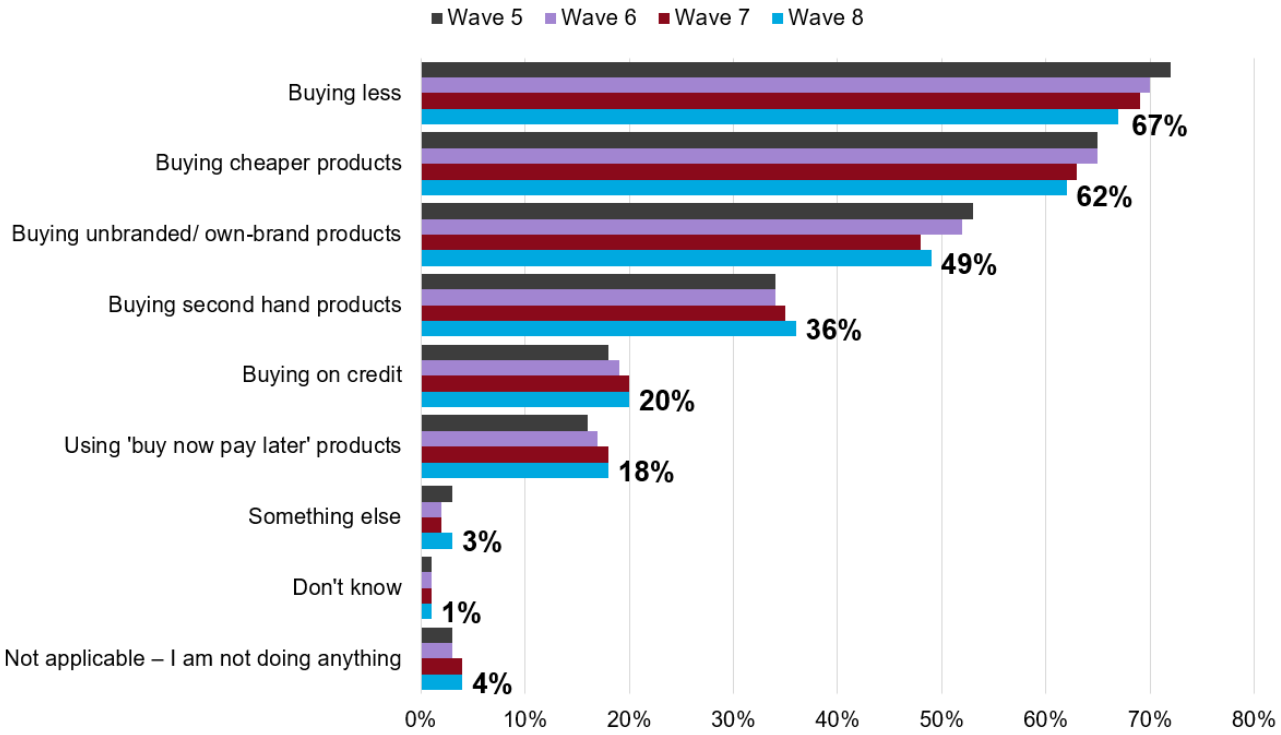
Q. Which one of the following statements BEST describes how well you are keeping up with your bills and financial commitments at the moment?
Base: All respondents (W5=10,182; W6=10,216; W7=10,023; W8=10,060)

Those who mentioned some level of financial struggle were asked what steps they are taking to mitigate this when purchasing products. In line with previous waves, most say they are buying less (67%) or buying cheaper products (62%) (figure 52). The proportions reporting both of these mitigation strategies in wave eight are in line with wave seven (69% buying less, 63% buying cheaper), but represent a significant decrease compared to waves five and six (buying less: 72% W5, 70% W6; buying cheaper: 65% W5 and W6).

“Buy now-pay later” agreements are most popular among younger consumers (19% of those aged 18 to 29, 24% of those aged 30 to 49, 16% of those aged 50 to 64, 8% of those aged 65+). These agreements are also more popular among those on higher incomes. Only 16% of those with a household income of less than £25k say they use these, compared to 21% with a household income between £25k to £49k and 24% of those with a household income of £50k or more. The same pattern is seen for buying products on credit – lower income households are less likely than higher income households to use this in response to struggling with finances (15% less than £25k, 21% 25k to 49k, 29% £50k or more). These findings support those of the previous three waves.

Similarly, those living with children in their household are more likely than those living without to use “buy now-pay later” agreements (25% with children, compared with 15% without children) or purchase items on credit (25% with children, compared with 17% without children).

Figure 52. 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 (W5=5,897; W6=5,990; W7=5,536; W8=n=5,649)

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