



Office for Product
Safety & Standards

OPSS Product Safety and Consumer Survey: Topical Research Wave One

DBT Research Paper

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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.

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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 project aims to enhance OPSS's understanding of consumer attitudes and behaviours in relation to product safety. This research builds on the previous OPSS Product Tracker (running from 2020 to 2025) and will provide more information into emerging product safety issues, and how consumers perceive and respond to them. The research will provide information on the following areas that will support the growing evidence base on product safety and will be utilised for multiple different teams and purposes. The research will investigate:

- Perceptions of product safety in the UK
- Sources of information for product safety in the UK
- Understanding more about experiences with safety issues
- The financial and physical impacts of safety issues
- Perceptions of fireworks and their impact on the community
- Ownership of smart devices and their security

Approach

The findings are based upon a large-scale representative sample of 10,250 people from across the United Kingdom (UK) collected through online research methods during wave one. Respondents were sampled from YouGov's proprietary panel of volunteers. Fieldwork was carried out between 12th January and 12th February 2026. A supporting survey of 152

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)

people who are low or non-internet users (“offline/low internet adults”) was conducted via telephone between 28th January and 13th February 2026.

Where appropriate, comparisons have been made in text with survey data from the 2020 to 2025 research in the Product Safety and Consumers tracker. Not all sections or questions were asked in the previous Product Safety and Consumers survey, or with the same framing.

The sample sizes and fieldwork dates can be found below.

	Online survey	Offline survey
Wave One	10,250 UK adults, 12 th January to 12 th February 2026	152 offline adults, 28 th January to 13 th February

Qualitative methodology

After the close of the online survey, 2 text-based online focus groups were conducted with survey participants who opted in for follow up research. All participants owned smart devices and groups were split by experiences of safety issues.

- **Group 1: 9 participants** – experienced safety issues with a product or a cybersecurity issue.
- **Group 2: 11 participants** – have not experienced a safety or cybersecurity issue.

A mix of demographics (age, social grade, genders, ethnicities, and locations) were included across groups. There were between 9 and 11 participants per group and each group lasted 90 minutes.

Participants were asked to respond to an open-ended question as part of the recruitment criteria to ensure they were able to participate in text-based research. Participants were incentivised via retail vouchers, in line with the MRS Code of Conduct.

Focus groups were conducted on Wednesday 25th February 2026.

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, ethnic minority 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. 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.

In the quantitative survey, we showed respondents this definition of smart devices (later referred to as connected products in the focus groups): ‘by “smart” we mean that the product(s) can be connected to the internet and are controlled via an app’. In the focus groups, we showed participants this definition of connected products: a connected product is a device that is linked to the Internet so it can share information about itself, its environment and its users. This can include products, such as smart appliances (e.g., fridges, thermostats, washing machines, TVs, and speakers), baby monitors, smart lighting and heating, and wearables. We are not including phones, tablets, laptops or computers for the purposes of this discussion.

We also shared this definition for security update provision: the provision for security updates for connected products involves a mandatory, transparent, and defined commitment from manufacturers to support their products against cyber threats.

This research reflects the views, perceptions and self-reported experiences of the participants involved. It does not represent the formal views, positions or conclusions of OPSS, nor should it be taken as evidence of definitive findings or policy positions.

Key findings

Perceptions of safety, regulation and advice

Most UK adults (86%) agree that products sold in the UK are safe due to the regulations in place. The qualitative focus group findings show that participants trust that the products sold in the UK tend to be safe, which is mostly due to their confidence in the UK safety regulations. However, this perception is generally limited to buying products from reputable retailers.

In the focus groups, participants mentioned that they often consider safety when buying products, particularly electricals and children's toys. Some look for warnings on the product packaging, as well as product specifications, including safe use and installation. Only a minority mentioned looking for safety marks or certificates that the product conforms to specific standards.

When deciding what products to buy, in the quantitative survey, it was most common for respondents to use online reviews (64%), friends and family (57%), and consumer organisations (37%). This was also reflected in qualitative focus groups as friends and family and online reviews are the main sources of advice, many also use consumer organisations, such as 'Which?' or Money Saving Expert. Some younger participants rely on social media reviews. The quantitative survey findings suggest that these sources are the most used because they are the most trusted. A majority trust friends and family (71%) and consumer organisations (69%).

Experiences of safety issues

A minority (7%) of UK adults have experienced a safety issue with a product they own in the last 6 months. Among those who did, 61% report that this caused some damage or harm, with 35% reporting it did not.

As a result of the safety issue, three in 10 (30%) experienced distress/stress as a result and a fifth (20%) reported that they experienced damage. When thinking about the financial impact typically the value of any damage was under £100 (29%), with the overall financial impact most commonly between £1 and £50. The value of these impacts perhaps links to the fact that the majority (70%) did not make an insurance claim.

Fireworks

A majority (58%) of UK adults enjoy fireworks, with enjoyment higher among younger adults and those with children, whilst those who do not enjoy them most commonly cite noise related issues, particularly the impact on animals. Of those who do not enjoy fireworks, older adults, white respondents and those limited by disability are more likely to identify a broad range of negative effects. Four in five (79%) of UK adults have witnessed at least one negative effect from fireworks in the past 12 months, most commonly fireworks set off after 10pm, while younger adults are more likely to have witnessed risky behaviours such as fireworks being set off on public land.

Three quarters (76%) say they have not attended a fireworks display in the last three months, though attendance is notably higher among younger adults and those from ethnic minority backgrounds. Only 4% of UK adults purchased fireworks in the past three months, most commonly in supermarkets. While younger adults and those from ethnic minority

backgrounds are more likely to purchase fireworks online, including from third-party sellers, overall, this is one of the least common places to buy fireworks.

Among those who host private displays, most (87%) engage in at least one safety consideration, two in five (44%) say they take noise into account only a little or not at all, and preferences for loud versus quiet fireworks are evenly split. Younger adults consistently report engaging in fewer safety behaviours when hosting displays.

Awareness of current firework regulations is mixed: only 14% correctly identify the Bonfire Night cut-off time, half (52%) correctly identify all legal locations for setting off fireworks. A minority (38%) feel confident in their knowledge of firework regulations.

Smart devices

For the purposes of this research, 'smart devices' were defined as products that can be connected to the internet and controlled via an app. Most UK adults (82%) report having access to at least one smart device. Of those who own a smart device, large proportions report either actively purchasing their device because of its smart functionality (77%) or using this functionality in the last month (89%).

Smart devices are valued for their convenience and control, particularly with the ability to manage one's home. However, participants feel that some smart devices are more useful and convenient than others due to the complexity of setting up, linking and using them. Others are concerned by the security of smart devices; specifically, how personal information is stored and shared.

When thinking about confidence in their smart devices, some focus group participants feel confident in the smart device itself whereas others feel confidence in the brand, particularly those which are larger and well-known as they are expected to have consumer protections in place and expected to be able to fix issues quickly through updates.

However, concern around the security of smart devices is relatively high; over half of UK adults (54%) report some level of concern, with this increasing among non-owners (65%). Data privacy is most cited as a security concern among smart device owners; 56% identified this as a concern for at least one of the products they own, with this concern being particularly high among smartphone owners (58%). Concerns around physical safety is lower (22%) and is most cited by owners of smart toys (26%) and smart baby products (18%). This is echoed in the focus group findings. Security expectations tend to differ between types of smart devices; most participants would be more concerned about devices which record video or sound (particularly baby monitors) as the personal data being collected is significant compared to a device which they can control, for example a washing machine.

Despite higher levels of concern, a minority (9%) of smart device owners report experiencing a cybersecurity issue with their device, with incidence being highest among those aged 18 to 29 (15%).

The minority of smart device owners (19%) report that their device came with a password they were required to change and most (92%) of this group report changing it. Most focus group participants were the responsible person in their household for managing password changes on their smart device, though this can change based on the device, for example if another person in the household uses it more frequently or if they need extra protections for their child.

Most do not change passwords regularly unless they are prompted by the device, as they feel it was difficult to manage constantly changing passwords. Although some change passwords if they forgot them or if the password was part of a data breach. Most participants install software updates when prompted by their smart device due to concerns about security.

The quantitative data shows that most UK adults (79%) are not aware that smart device manufacturers must have a policy allowing consumers to report security issues. Two thirds (66%) state that the amount of time the manufacturer offers security updates is important to them when choosing a new smart device, and among those who own a smart device, 21% report that they know how long at least one of their current devices will receive security updates for. The data suggests that most smart device owners are proactive when thinking about updates for their devices; the majority of owners (76%) update the firmware or software on at least one of their smart devices as soon as the updates are available, and 66% report that they have automatic updates enabled on at least one of their devices.

Perceptions of safety, regulation and advice

In wave one, questions on perception of safety, regulation and advice were shown to all respondents (n=10,250). Exact base sizes for specific questions are shown below each chart.

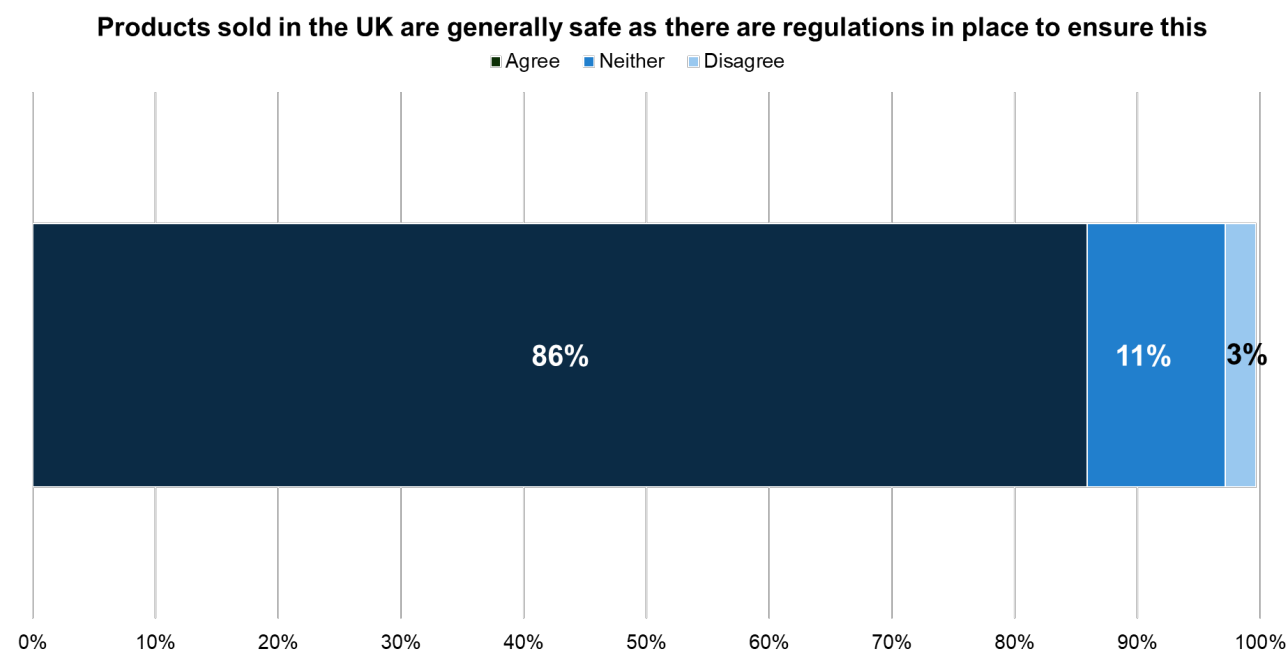
Key findings

- The majority of UK adults (86%) agree that products sold in the UK are generally safe as there are regulations in place to ensure this.
- UK adults are most likely to have heard of Citizens Advice (97%), Trading Standards (96%) and Which? (95%), with half (52%) saying they have heard of OPSS.
- This awareness doesn't necessarily translate into use, as the most common sources of advice are reviews (64%), friends and family (57%), and consumer organisations (37%).
- Use does tend to correlate with trust as friends and family (71%) and consumer organisations (69%) tend to be the most trusted.

Perceptions of product safety in the UK

A vast majority of UK adults (86%) agree that products sold in the UK are generally safe as there are regulations in place to ensure this. A small minority (3%) of UK adults disagreed with this statement. Overall, a quarter (25%) reported they strongly agreed, while three in five (61%) reported they agreed.

Figure 1. Perceptions of product safety in the UK



Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
Base: All respondents (n=10,250)

The qualitative focus group findings similarly show that participants trust that the products sold in the UK tend to be safe, which is mostly due to their confidence in the UK safety regulations. However, this perception is generally limited to buying products from reputable shops; many feel that when buying online from marketplaces or less reputable retailers, products may not be compliant, particularly when imported from overseas. Some participants also highlight having safety concerns about the products that are sold due to hearing about instances of products being recalled or causing fire.

“Yes mostly [trust that the products sold in the UK are safe], however you see some cases in the news which make you doubt.” (Female, 34, experienced safety issue)

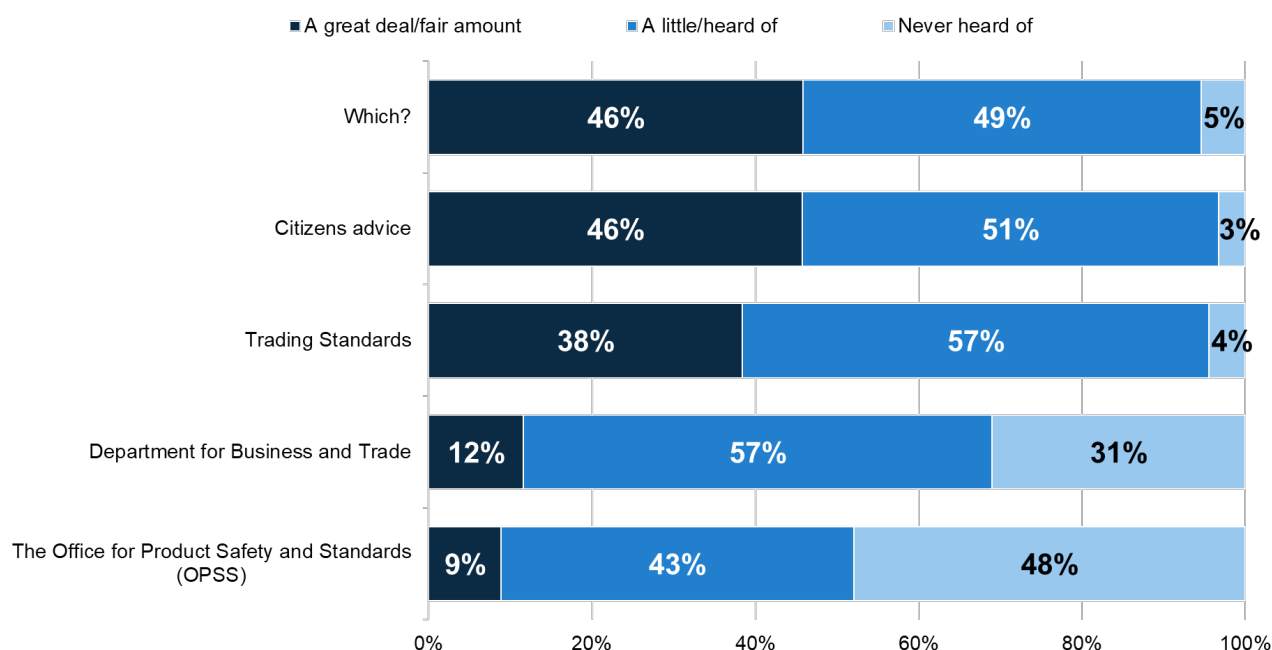
“Mostly - you see horror stories occasionally of fake products being sold as real on Amazon, and of product recalls, but generally I trust that things are safe.” (Female, 57, not experienced safety issue)

Knowledge of product safety organisations

Approximately half (52%) of UK adults have heard of OPSS. Over two in five (43%) report they have heard of or heard a little about OPSS, while around one in 10 (9%) know a great deal or fair amount. In comparison to other organisations asked about, UK adults are the least likely to know about OPSS.

UK adults are most likely to have heard of Citizens Advice (97%), Trading Standards (96%) and Which? (95%). UK adults are most likely to say they know about the work of Which? and Citizens Advice, with just under half reporting they know a great deal or fair amount about their work (46%).

Figure 2. Knowledge of product safety organisations



Q: How much, if anything, would you say you know about the following organisations and their work?

Base: All respondents (n=10,250)

Those aged 65+ are most likely to have at least heard of OPSS (60%) compared to other age groups (49% of those aged 18-29, 48% of those aged 30-49, 52% of those aged 50-64). However, awareness does not necessarily translate to knowledge. While those aged

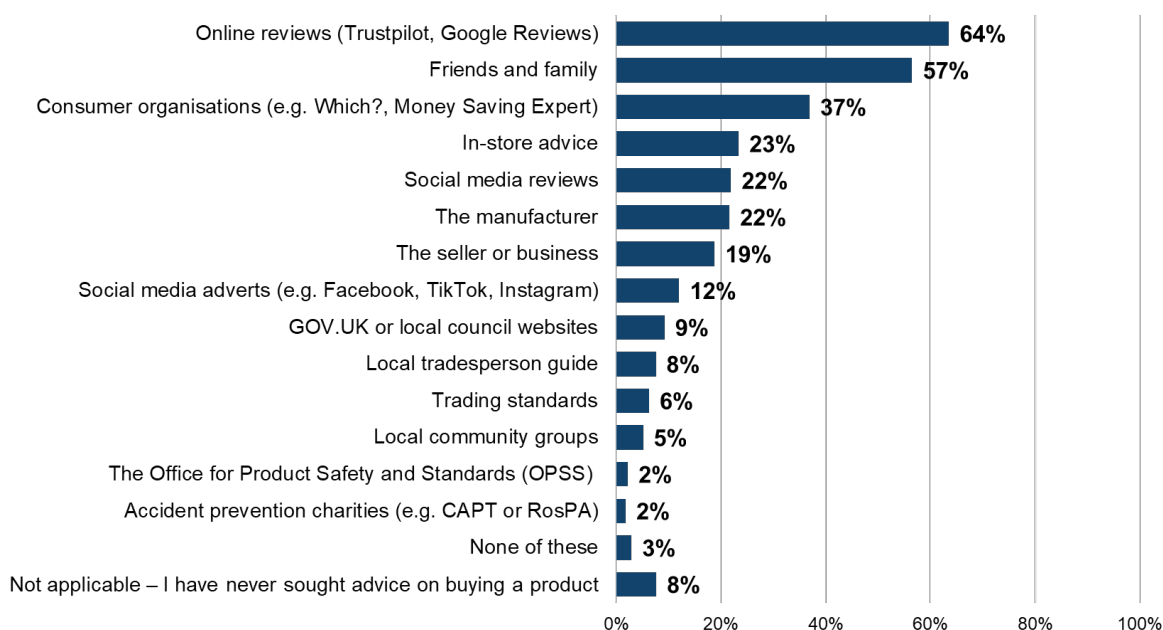
18-29 are among the least likely to be aware of OPSS, they are more likely to report that they know a great deal or fair amount (16%), while those aged 65+ are the least likely to report this (5%).

Offline/ low internet adults are more likely to be aware of OPSS (81%) than the UK public. They are also more likely to have knowledge of OPSS as one in five (20%) report knowing a great deal or fair amount.

Sources of advice when buying a product

Most commonly the UK public use online reviews from sites like Trustpilot and Google Reviews (64%) for advice before buying a product. This is followed by friends and family (57%) and consumer organisations such as Which? or Money Saving Expert (37%). A small proportion (2%) would use OPSS for advice.

Figure 3. Sources used for consumer advice



Q: When you are deciding to buy a product in general, which, if any, of the following do you use for advice?
Base: All respondents (n=10,250)

There are notable differences by age in the sources of consumer advice. Those aged 18-29 are more likely to use social media reviews (40%) and social media adverts (27%) than those in older age categories. In addition, where young people are more likely to know about what OPSS does, they are also more likely to use OPSS for advice (6%) than those aged 65+ (1%).

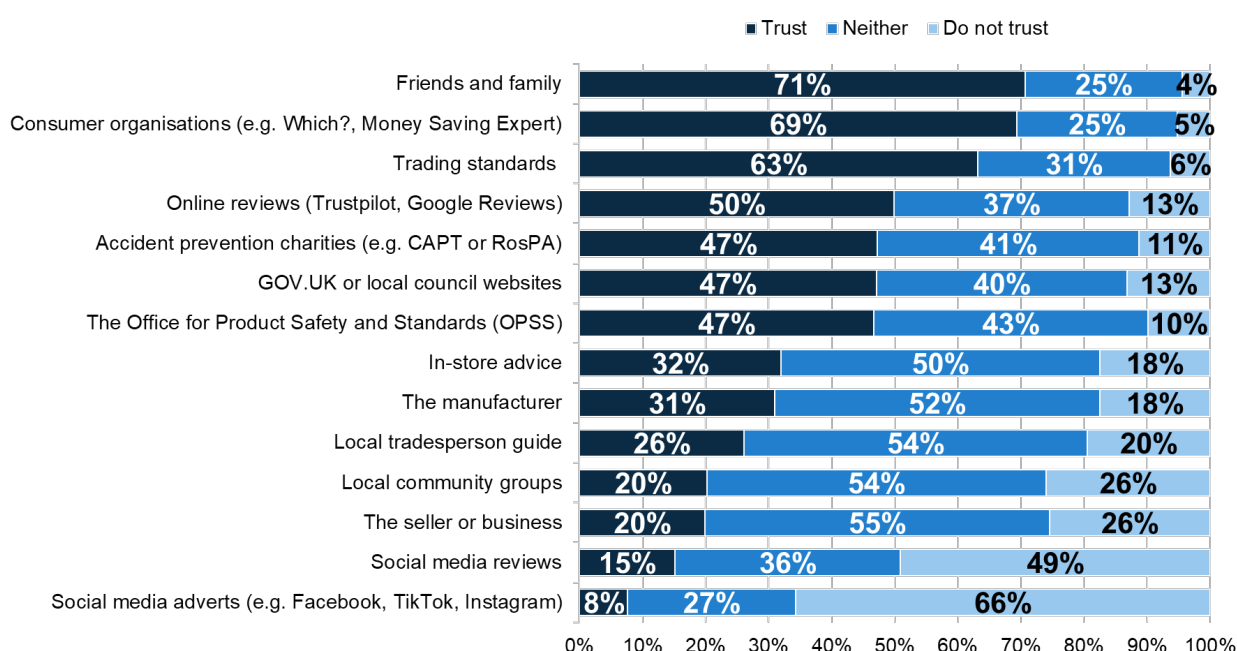
Those from an ethnic minority background are more likely than those from a white background to use social media reviews (30% vs 21%) and social media adverts (20% vs 11%). Though this is likely due to the younger age profile of this group. People from an ethnic minority background are also more likely than those from a white background to get advice from any government source including GOV.UK (12% vs 9%), Trading Standards (9% vs 6%), and OPSS (4% vs 2%).

UK adults were also asked where they would seek advice for specific products. This included a list of nine products, including electrical appliances; baby products; toys; cosmetics; large domestic appliances; clothes and accessories; furniture/furnishings; homeware and non-electrical items; and sports and leisure items. Across each product type, online reviews and friends and family are consistently within the top three sources of advice.

Trust in sources of product information and advice

Respondents were then asked how much they trust each source of product information, even if they do not use it. Despite online reviews being the most common source of information, it is not the most trusted source. Friends and family (71%), Consumer organisations (69%) and Trading Standards (63%) are the most trusted sources of information. In comparison, half (50%) report they trust online reviews. Close to half (47%) report they trust OPSS.

Figure 4. Trust in sources of product information and advice



Q: To what extent, if at all, do you trust each of the information from the following sources when looking to purchase a product?

Base: All respondents (n=10,250)

While those aged 18-29 are more likely to use social media as a source of information, they tend to be split on whether to trust it. Three in 10 (31%) trust social media reviews, compared to 23% who do not trust them. While 16% trust social adverts, close to half (49%) do not trust them.

Despite those from an ethnic minority background being more likely to use government organisations as a source of advice, they are no more likely to trust these sources than those from a white background. Over two in five (44%), trust OPSS compared with close to half (47%) from a white background. While half (50%) trust GOV.UK compared to close to half (47%) from a white background. Those from an ethnic minority background are also less likely to trust Trading Standards than those from a white background (53% vs 64%). This is consistent across all age groups among those from an ethnic minority background, except for in reference to Trading Standards, where those aged 18-29 are less likely to trust the organisation (45%) than those in every other age group (30-49: 54%, 50-64: 61%, 65+: 63%).

Offline adults are less likely to trust OPSS (22%) than the wider public, despite their higher levels of awareness.

Similarly, the findings from qualitative focus groups show that friends and family and online reviews (e.g. Google, Trustpilot, retailer websites) are the main sources of advice. Some younger participants rely on social media reviews (e.g. TikTok, Reddit). Many also use consumer organisations, such as Which? or Money Saving Expert, and a smaller proportion mention seeking advice in-store or on manufacturers websites.

Despite often relying on online reviews either on social media or on retailer or marketplace websites, levels of trust are mixed. While some feel that reviews can provide a good insight into the product based on real experiences, many highlight issues around fake, biased or paid-for reviews. As a result, consumers tend to compare information across various platforms and sources. In contrast, consumer organisations, in-store advice and manufacturers websites are often trusted sources, due to the perception that they are unbiased and reputable.

*“Mostly social media. I always scroll on TikTok to get people's opinions and look for reviews on the website. I ask friends if I know they've bought that product before.”
(Female, 22, experienced safety issue)*

“Reviews that are clearly from real people with real experiences. The paid reviews and AI slop are usually easy to spot. Reddit and other forums can also be a good source of info especially for the software & app side of things.” (Male, 61, not experienced safety issue)

“Money Saving expert, friends and family. Usually, unbiased reviews and real-life experience of products.” (Male, 34, not experienced safety issue)

Sources of advice tend to vary depending on the product. For instance, there is a tendency to consider various sources or only those they trust most (e.g. consumer organisations, manufacturers websites, in-store advice) when buying a more expensive item, or items where they consider safety more, such as children's toys and electricals.

When participants seek product information, they tend to look for information about how to use the product and if any safety issues have been reported, alongside the perceived quality of the product and its value for money. There is a preference for seeing how the product is being used in real life, often prompting them to look for videos online and on social media, or asking friends and family who have used the product.

“It depends on how big a purchase it is. I spend a lot of time working out what to get if I'm spending more money.” (Female, 57, experienced safety issue)

“[I look at] if the item will be appropriate for me, if there have been any issues reported, I might compare different products based on the reviews, maybe watch a video of it being used if I can find it.” (Female, 57, not experienced safety issue)

“How to use the product effectively, any issues people have had with the products in the past. How well the product is rated or viewed by people who use it already.” (Female, 48, not experienced safety issue)

Sources of product safety information

The most common sources UK adults would use for information on product safety are similar to those they would use generally. Most commonly they would use consumer organisations (59%), online reviews (42%) and friends and family (42%). However, the UK public are more likely to use every government source for product safety information than for general information (Trading Standards 32%, GOV.UK 25%, OPSS 22%).

The qualitative findings align with quantitative data on the sources that participants trust or would be likely to use for advice on product safety. Most would be likely to trust government and charity sources, including OPSS, GOV.UK, Trading Standards and accident prevention charities, as well as consumer organisations.

However, some have mixed views on whether to trust the manufacturer, seller or tradesperson guides. Trust in social media adverts and reviews, as well as other online reviews (e.g. Trustpilot, Google Reviews) with regards to product safety is also low. This is due to participants being concerned about paid-for reviews, alongside potentially biased views from these sources.

“[Social media adverts, Online reviews, Local tradesperson guide] - don't trust their independence too many fake / paid for reviews.” (Male, 61, not experienced safety issue)

“Not a big fan of social media sites can't be sure if they are genuine reviews or placed by the manufacturer.” (Male, 58, not experienced safety issue)

“Accident prevention charities. They have experience of what can go wrong and are independent.” (Male, 52, not experienced safety issue)

“They [OPSS] look like the main regulator so should provide accurate advice.” (Female, 48, not experienced safety issue)

Figure 5. Sources of product safety information



Q: Please imagine that you needed to find out more about product safety. Which, if any, of the following sources would you use for advice? Please select all that apply.

Base: All respondents (n=10,250)

Again, young people are more likely to trust social media adverts (20%) and social media reviews (20%) than UK adults (adverts: 8%, reviews: 10%) and those aged 65+ (adverts: 3%, reviews: 4%).

People from an ethnic minority background are again also more likely than those from a white background to trust social media adverts (18% vs 7%) and social media reviews (17% vs 9%). Again, this is perhaps due to the younger age profile of this group.

Offline/ low internet adults are more likely to seek advice from friends and family (93% vs 42%) and take in store advice (83% vs 22%).

In the qualitative focus groups, participants mentioned that they often consider safety when buying products, particularly electricals and children's toys. Only a minority mentioned that they do not tend to consider safety, for example, when buying appliances from online marketplaces, as they would trust that most products, particularly from reputable brands would be safe.

Before purchase, most do not tend to specifically look out for product safety information. This is because they believe that if they are buying from reputable manufacturers or retailers, the product safety would be guaranteed. However, some highlight that they would not know what information to look for when it comes to product safety, beyond what is indicated on the product packaging or information online.

Those who look for this information, tend to mostly check either online reviews, such as if there is a mention of people experiencing safety issues, or the general product information, such as choking risks for children's toys. Some look for warnings on the product packaging, as well as product specifications, including safe use and installation.

Only a minority mentioned looking for safety marks or certificates that the product conforms to specific standards.

“I don’t seek it out but if safety is mentioned in reviews I take more notice of it.” (Male, 29, not experienced safety issue)

“I don’t have the expert knowledge to know what safety standards we should look to but might check re choking for kids and look at reviews for any concerns.” (Female, 48, not experienced safety issue)

The awareness and understanding about UKCA/UKNI/CE marks and what they mean is low, with only a few looking for these marks when purchasing electrical items. While some recognise the CE mark due to having frequently seen it on products, many do not know what it means.

When participants were shown information about these marks, most mention that having an understanding about what they mean is helpful, particularly as they trust the regulatory process when it comes to the product safety, so would be more likely to look out for them in the future. Though awareness and understanding of the marks are limited, among those who are aware of the marks, most expect that to obtain these marks, the products would need to be tested in a way that aligns with government regulations to ensure that they comply with the relevant safety standards.

“They would probably need to meet set standards, go through testing and get certification from official bodies before being allowed.” (Female, 27, experienced safety issue)

“Knowing what these markings mean, they would certainly make a difference. I really trust government testing and now I would feel unconfident buying a large and expensive electric product missing these.” (Female, 22, experienced safety issue)

Experiences of Safety Issues

In wave one, questions on experiences of safety issues were shown to all respondents (n=10,250) with follow ups asked to those who experienced a safety issue (n=744). Exact base sizes for specific questions are shown below each chart.

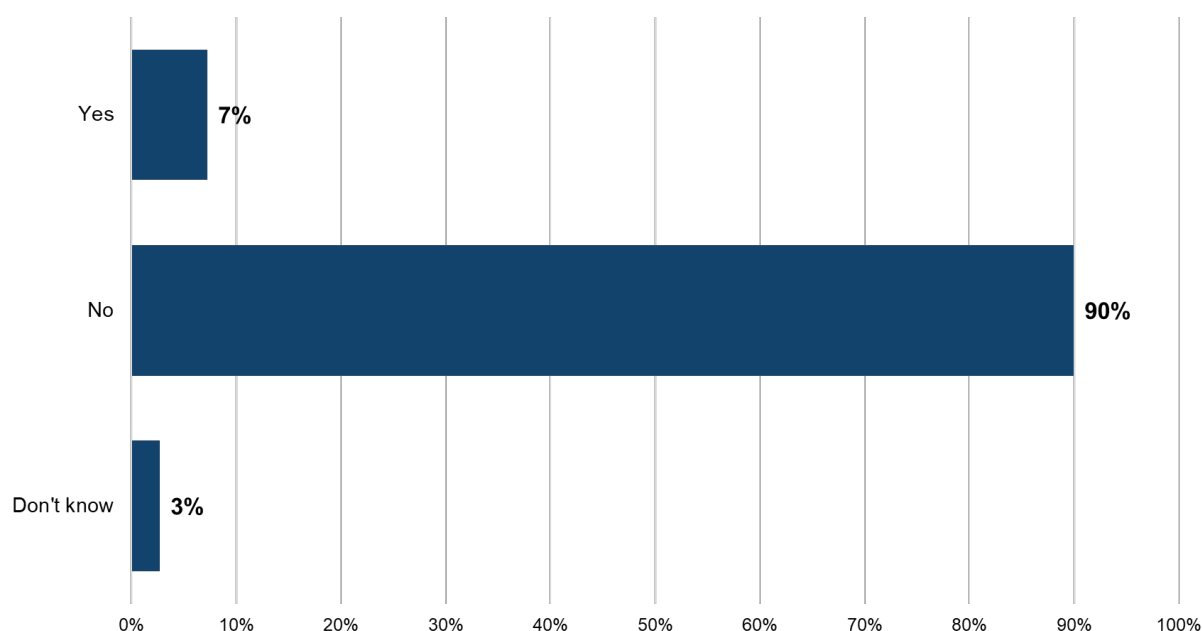
Key findings

- A minority (7%) of UK adults have experienced a safety issue with a product in the last 6 months. For those who did have a safety issue, most commonly this didn't cause harm or damage (35%). Three in 10 (30%) experienced stress/distress as a result, with a fifth (20%) reporting they experienced damage.
- Typically, the value of the damage caused was under £100 (29%). The value perhaps links to the finding that the majority (70%) did not make an insurance claim.
- Similarly, in total it was most common for the financial impact to be nothing (20%). The most common cost associated was between £1 and £50.
- For those who did have a cost associated with the damage, this was most likely to be the cost of replacing or repairing the product (62%).

Experience of a safety issue

Less than one in 10 (7%) of UK adults have experienced a safety issue with a product they own in the last 6 months. The vast majority (90%) have not experienced an issue.

Figure 6. Experiences of safety issues in the last six months



Q: Thinking about the past 6 months... Have you personally experienced a safety issue with a product you own? Please exclude any food, pharmaceutical, or vehicle products.

Base: All respondents (n=10,250)

Those with children in their household are more likely to have experienced a safety issue in the last six months compared with those who do not have a child in the household (9% vs 7%).

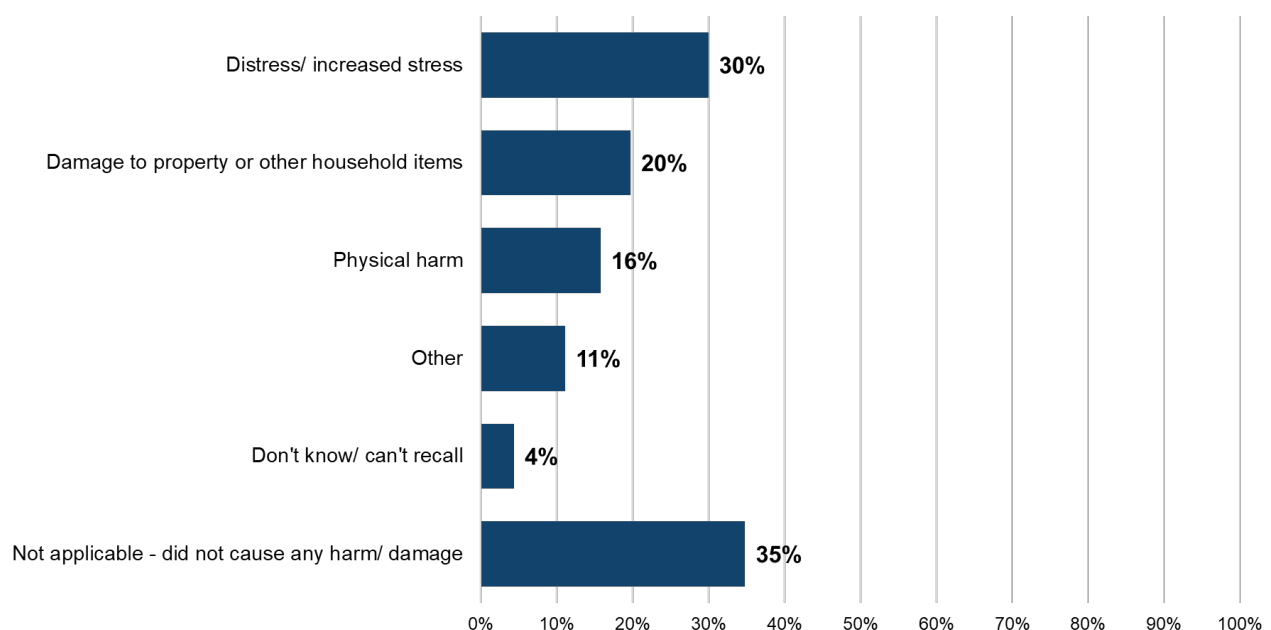
Those from an ethnic minority background are more likely to report having experienced a safety issue in the last 6 months (10%) compared to those from a white background (7%). Those who are limited by a disability are also more likely to have experienced a safety issue (11%) compared to those not limited (6%).

Additionally, those from low-income households are more likely to have experienced a safety issue (10%), along with offline and low internet users (13%).

Impact of safety issues experienced

Among those who experienced a safety issue, 61% reported they experienced some kind of harm or damage as a result with 35% reporting it did not cause any harm or damage. For those who did experience harm or damage, most commonly this was distress/ increased stress (30%), followed by damage to property or other household items (20%) and physical harm (16%).

Figure 7. Impact of safety issues experienced in the last six months



Q: You said you experienced a safety issue with a product. Did that safety issue cause any of the following? (Please select all that apply)

Base: All who experienced a safety issue in the last six months (n=744)

Those with children in their household are more likely to have experienced both damage to property or other items (28% vs 16%) and physical harm (22% vs 13%) than those without children in their household.

In the OPSS Product Safety and Consumers research running from 2020 to 2025, safety issues asked about specific products: indoor exercise equipment; bikes and accessories; musical instruments; books; gardening tools/ equipment/ arts and crafts supplies; sports equipment; and other products. In comparison this research asked, 'Please exclude any food, pharmaceutical, or vehicle products.'

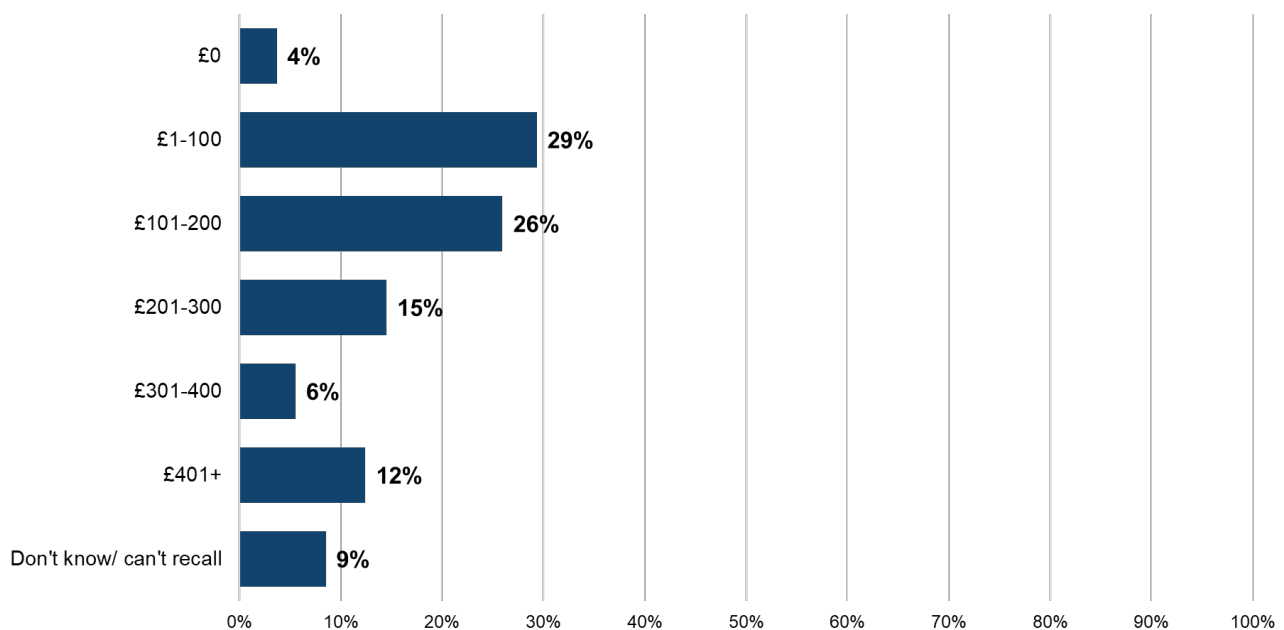
However, we can draw some comparisons with previous research. While a similar proportion report experiencing distress as in previous waves (W9: 25%, Topical W1: 30%), the proportion who report that the experience caused them physical harm has decreased from a quarter (25%) in wave 9 of the Product Safety and Consumer research to over one in 10 (16%) in this research.

In addition to those from an ethnic minority background being more likely to have experienced a safety issue, they are also more likely to have experienced harm as a result. A quarter (25%) of those from an ethnic minority background have experienced physical harm compared to over one in 10 from a white background (14%).

Outcomes of the safety issue

Over half (55%) of those who experienced damage as a result of their safety issue stated that the value of damage and repairs caused by their safety issue was between £1 and £200. Most commonly the value of the damage caused by the safety issue was between £1 and £100 (29%). Over a quarter (26%) also experienced damage to the value of £101-£200.

Figure 8. Value of the damage caused by the safety issue



Q: What was the monetary value of the damage and any repairs needed?

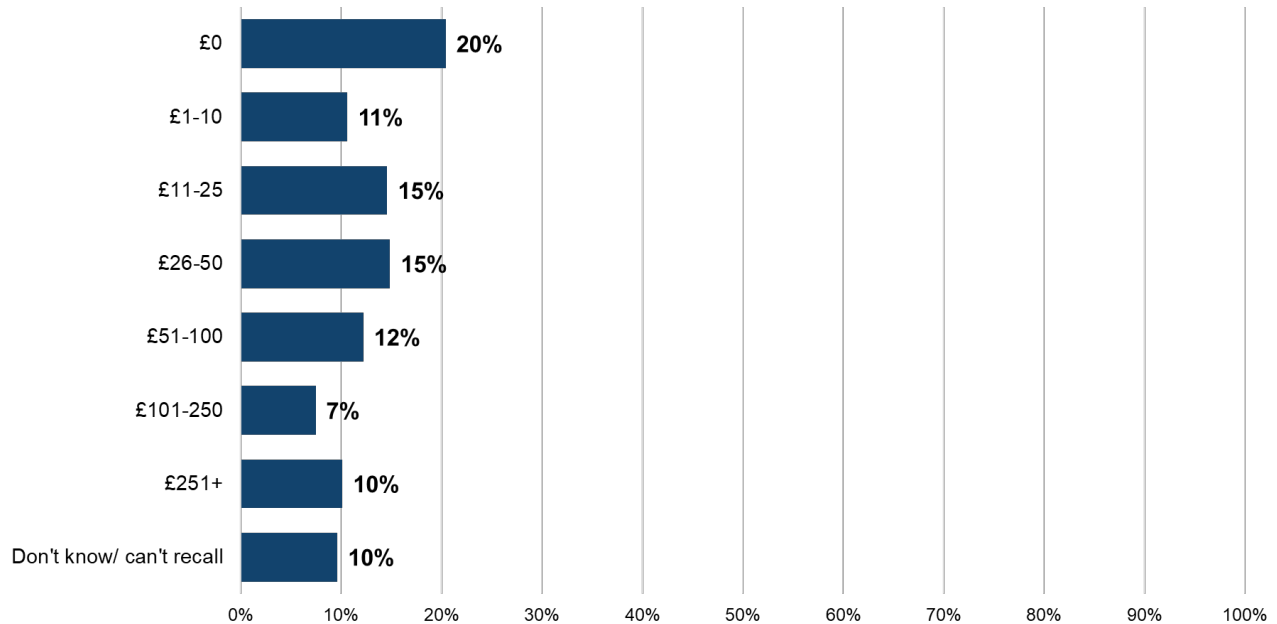
Base: All who experienced a safety issue in the last six months that resulted in damage (n=147)

Just over a quarter (26%) who experienced a safety issue that resulted in damage made an insurance claim as a result. The majority (70%) did not make an insurance claim and a further 4% do not know whether they did or not. In comparison to the OPSS Product Safety and Consumers research the proportion who mentioned they made a consumer claim has increased. In wave 9 of the research, one in six (16%) reported that they made an insurance claim, compared with over a quarter (26%) in wave one of this research.

When thinking about the total financial impact (e.g. damage, repairs, hospital charges etc.) of their safety issue among all those who experienced an issue, most commonly the cost

was nothing (20%). However, where there was a cost associated for two in five this was between £1 and £50 (40%). One in 10 (10%) reported that the cost was over £250.

Figure 9. Total financial impact of safety issue



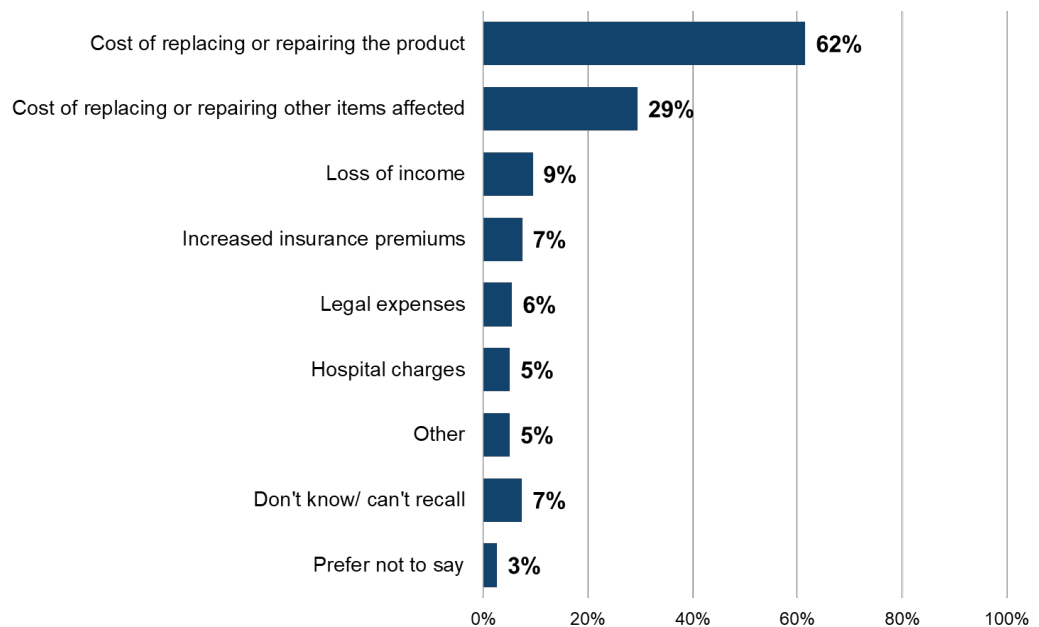
Q: What was the total financial impact of this safety issue on you (e.g. cost of replacing or repairing the product, cost of replacing or repairing other items that were affected by it, hospital charges etc.)? If you are unsure, please give your best estimate.

Base: All who experienced a safety issue in the last six months (n=744)

Where those with children in their household are more likely to have experienced a safety issue, they are also more likely to have experienced a financial impact. Three quarters (76%) of those with a child in their household had a cost associated with their safety issue, compared to two thirds (67%) of those with no children in their household.

Among those who had a cost associated with their safety issue, the majority said this came from the cost of replacing or repairing the product (62%). This is followed by the cost of replacing or repairing other items (29%).

Figure 10. Type of financial impact experienced



Q: Which, if any, of the following types of financial impacts did you experience as a result?

Base: All who experienced a financial impact from their safety issue (n=524)

Those with no children in the household are more likely to say that the financial impact came from replacement or repair (65%) compared with those who have children in the household (55%). However, those who have children in the household are more likely to report that the issue caused them loss of income (17%).

Those from an ethnic minority background are more likely than those from a white background to report that the financial impact came from loss of income (21% vs 7%) and hospital charges (14% vs 3%).

By age among the total sample, those aged 18-29 are more likely to have experienced several financial impacts compared to those aged 65+ including hospital charges (12% vs 0%), loss of income (16% vs 0%), legal expenses (12% vs 1%) and increased insurance premiums (16% vs 1%).

Product recalls

In the qualitative focus groups, familiarity and experiences with product recalls were explored. Most have previously come across information about products being recalled, either in the news or on posters in stores.

Some participants report having personally experienced a product they purchased being recalled; this included a tumble dryer, smart plug and children's bed. While some received emails about the product being recalled and were able to return the product for a refund, one person was not offered a replacement or a refund, however, they did not continue using the product.

“Have had child's bed recalled as gap between mattress and sides too wide... See lots of toy recalls on the wall in Boots.” (Female, 59, experienced safety issue)

“I haven't had anything I bought recalled (that I know of), but I often see posters in shops about recalled items.” (Female, 29, not experienced safety issue)

Participants were presented with a hypothetical scenario of a product they purchased being recalled, most would be likely to follow the instructions to return the product for a refund or replacement. Some shared that they would want to obtain a refund, as product recalls would affect their confidence in manufacturer. Others noted that for cheaper items, they might recycle instead of returning the product. A small minority shared that they would be likely to look at how significant they believe the risk to be, before deciding if it is worth returning or keeping the product.

“Depends on the reason. I would probably want a refund as it may undermine my confidence in the product/manufacturer.” (Male, 52, not experienced safety issue)

“It depends on the product and the issue. If it was a major safety issue... then I could contact the manufacturer or seller to try to return it. I would expect a full refund! If I couldn't get a refund, I'd do nothing and keep the product as long as it was reasonably safe.” (Female, 22, experienced safety issue)

Participants note that in order to encourage them to return recalled products, the return process must be easy. Most expect to receive full refund, with return costs being covered by the seller or the manufacturer, or the option being offered to return products in store. For larger items, they would expect that the collection would be arranged.

“If it was a safety recall I would expect them to arrange a return at the seller's expense and for a refund to be provided.” (Male, 62, experienced safety issue)

“A free postal return if it was something I had bought online, or easy return if it was in person. A reasonable return window as well, and a refund.” (Female, 57, not experienced safety issue)

Fireworks

In wave one, questions on fireworks were shown to all respondents (n=10,250) and follow ups asked to those who attended displays (n=1,858) and hosted displays (n=352). Exact base sizes for specific questions are shown below each chart.

Questions were asked in January and February of 2026. Some questions ask participants to think about ‘the last 3 months’, which would have covered the primary fireworks usage period in the UK.

Key findings

- Approaching three in five (58%) UK adults enjoy fireworks, with enjoyment higher among younger adults and those with children; those who do not enjoy them most commonly cite noise-related issues, particularly the impact on animals.
- Among those who do not enjoy fireworks, older adults, white respondents and those limited by disability are more likely to identify a broad range of negative effects, and over half (52%) notice these most during Autumn.
- Four in five (79%) of UK adults have witnessed at least one negative effect from fireworks in the past 12 months, most commonly fireworks set off after 10pm, while younger adults are more likely to have witnessed risky behaviours such as fireworks being set off on public land.
- Three quarters (76%) did not attend a fireworks display in the Autumn and Festive period; attendance is notably higher among younger adults and those from ethnic minority backgrounds.
- Only 4% of UK adults purchased fireworks in the past three months, most commonly in supermarkets, while younger adults and those from ethnic minority backgrounds are more likely to purchase fireworks online, including from third-party sellers.
- Among those who host private displays, most (87%) take at least one safety step, though a little over two in five (44%) say they take noise into account only a little or not at all, and preferences for loud versus quiet fireworks are evenly split. Younger adults consistently report engaging in fewer safety behaviours when hosting displays.
- Awareness of firework regulations is mixed: only 14% correctly identify the Bonfire Night cut-off time, just over half (52%) correctly identify all legal locations for setting off fireworks, and nearly six in 10 (59%) are not confident in their answers.

Enjoyment of fireworks

There is a relatively even split across the UK public when looking at the enjoyment of fireworks; approaching three in five (58%) report they enjoy fireworks, compared to 41% who do not. This broadly aligns with levels previously measured in the OPSS Product Safety and Consumer research, running from 2020 to 2025, where enjoyment has consistently remained a majority (55% W1, 56% W3, 54% W5, 60% W7), versus those who do not enjoy (43% W1, 41% W3, 44% W5, 38% W7).

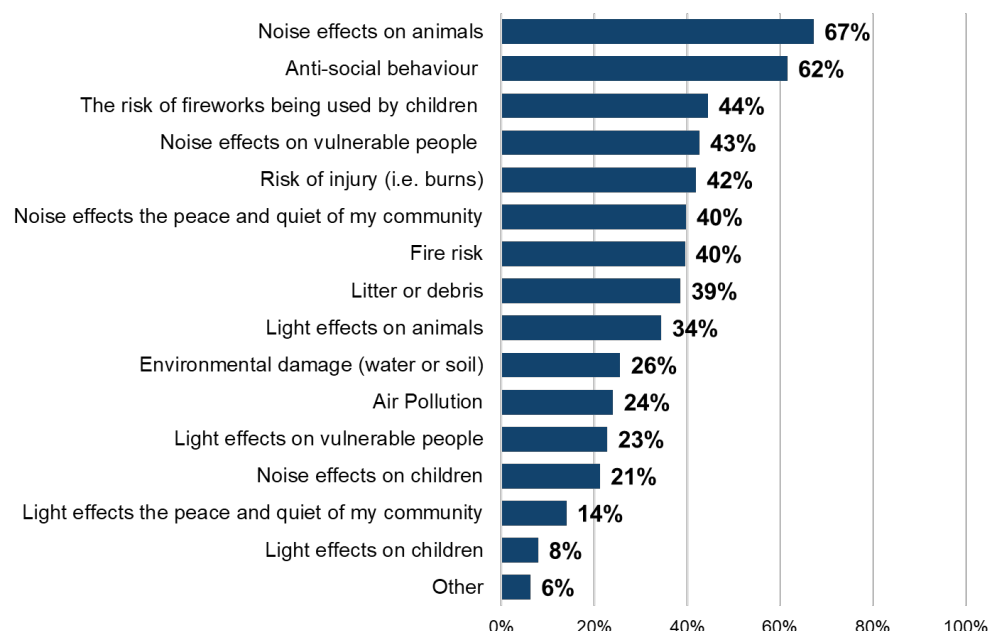
Younger respondents are significantly more likely to report enjoying fireworks, with two in three (67%) of those aged 18–29 reporting this, compared to 52% of those aged 65 and

over. Likewise, respondents with at least one child in the household are significantly more likely to report enjoying fireworks (67%) than those without any children (55%).

Those limited by disability are less likely to say they enjoy fireworks (52%), compared to those who are not limited by disability at all (61%)

All those who say they do not enjoy fireworks a lot were asked what characteristics or consequences of fireworks they do not like. The most commonly reported reason is the effect of the noise on animals (67%), followed by 62% who cite anti-social behaviour, and 44% who report the risk of fireworks being used by children. Overall, four in five (80%) say they do not like a noise-related element of fireworks, whereas just over two in five (44%) mention a light-related element.

Figure 11. Characteristics of fireworks disliked



Q: What is it that you do not like about fireworks? Please select all that apply.

Base: All who say they do not like fireworks a lot (n=7,986)

Younger respondents are less likely to select almost all listed reasons. This is true of the reasons most commonly selected overall such as noise effects on animals (57% of those aged 18-29, 63% 30-49, 71% 50-64, 77% 65+) and anti-social behaviour (49% of those aged 18-29, 56% 30-49, 67% 50-64, 73% 65+), as well as those less commonly selected such as risk of injury (35% of those aged 18-29, 43% 50-64, 55% 65+) and fire risk (34% of those aged 18-29, 38% 50-64, 51% 65+). Men are also less likely to select almost all reasons compared with women.

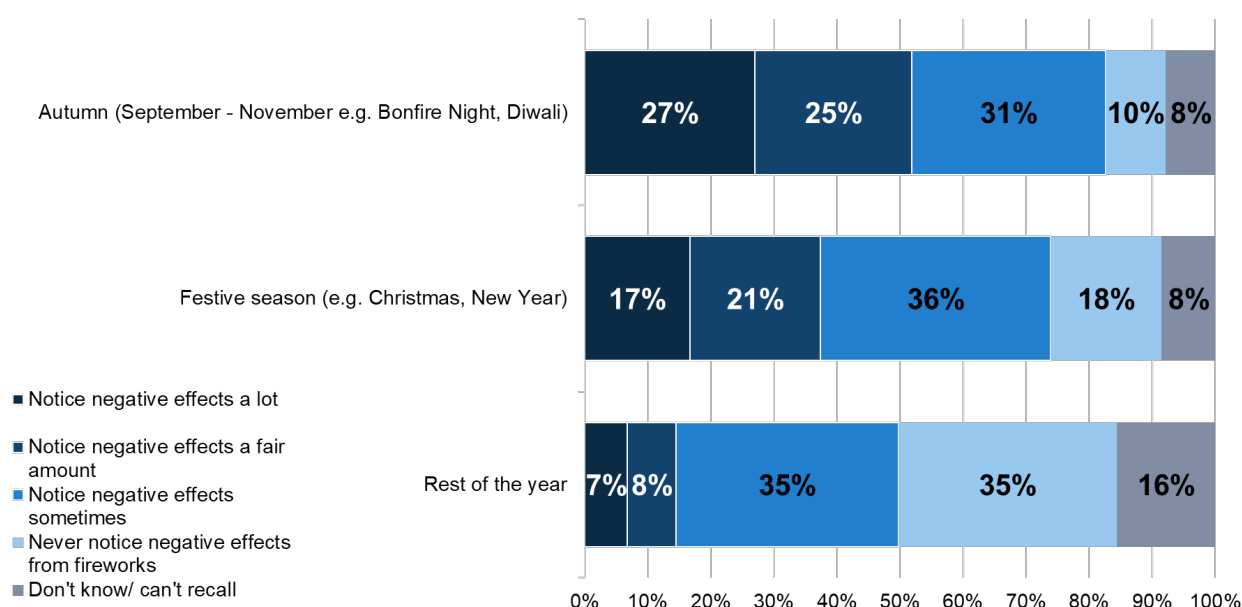
As well as being less likely to report enjoying fireworks, those without children in their household are more likely to select multiple reasons to dislike fireworks, compared with those who do have children in their household. The only exception to this is the proportion who identify noise effects on children (19% vs 27%).

White respondents are more likely to select most of the reasons listed, compared to those from an ethnic minority background. These include noise affecting animals (70% white, 43% ethnic minority background), anti-social behaviour (63% white, 45% ethnic minority background) and the risk of fireworks being used by children (46% white, 31% ethnic minority background).

Those limited by disability are more likely to select all listed reasons compared to those who are not limited at all, most notably light effects on vulnerable people (32% vs 19%).

All those who said they do not enjoy fireworks a lot were then asked how often they notice the negative effects of fireworks, during different periods across the year. This audience most commonly report noticing negative effects in the Autumn; more than half (52%) say they notice the negative effects either a lot or a fair amount during this time. This figure declines to 37% over the festive period, and 14% during the rest of the year.

Figure 12. How often negative effects of fireworks are noticed during the year



Q: Thinking about the reasons you don't enjoy fireworks... During the following periods how often, if ever, do you notice negative effects from fireworks?

Base: All who say they do not like fireworks a lot (n=7,986)

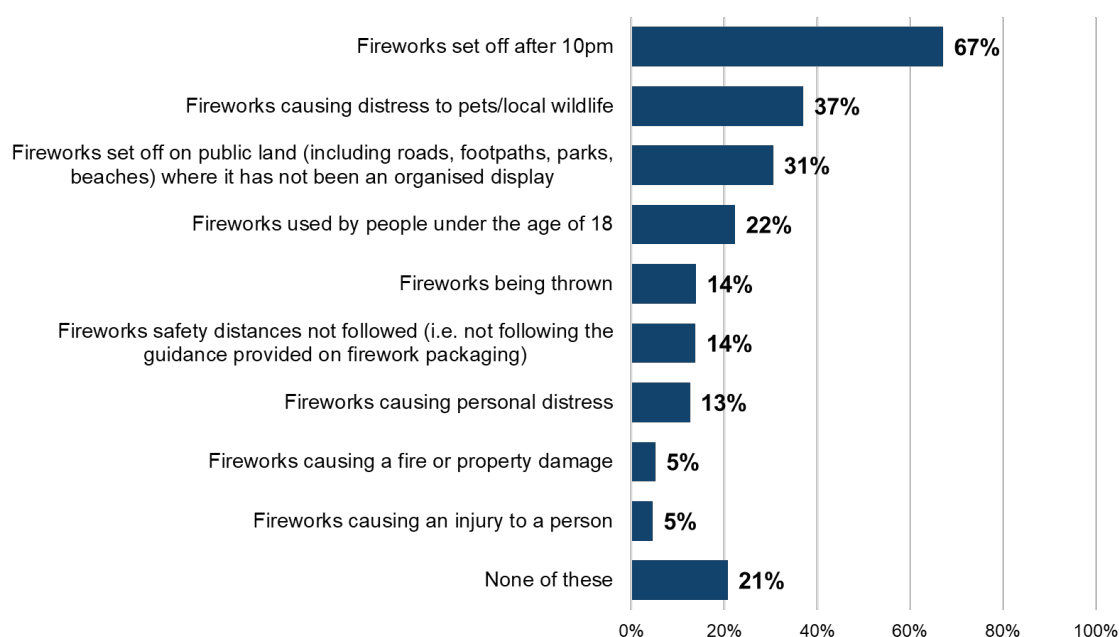
As well as being more likely to identify reasons for disliking fireworks, older respondents are more likely say they notice the negative effects during Autumn, compared to younger age groups (53% 65+, 58% 50-64, 50% 30-49, 45% 18-29). Those aged 50-64 are more likely to notice negative effects of fireworks during the festive season (41%), compared to those aged 18-29 (34%), however there are no other differences between age groups over this period.

In addition to being more likely to identify reasons for disliking fireworks, respondents from a white ethnic background are more likely to notice the negative effects of fireworks during Autumn (53% vs 40%) and the festive season (38% vs 28%). There is no difference between the two groups regarding the rest of the year.

Continuing the trend, those limited by disability are more likely than those not limited at all to say they notice the negative effects of fireworks throughout each of the time periods: Autumn (60% vs 49%), festive season (46% vs 34%) and rest of the year (18% vs 13%).

When asked which negative effects of fireworks they've seen in the past 12 months, a majority report witnessing fireworks set off after 10pm (67%), followed by fireworks causing distress to pets or local wildlife (37%) and fireworks set off on public land where it has not been an organised display (31%).

Figure 13. Experience witnessing types of negative effects of fireworks



Q: Which, if any, of the following have you personally witnessed in the past 12 months? By witnessed, we mean personally experienced, as opposed to seen/heard about on the news/social media
Base: All (n=10,250)

Younger respondents are significantly less likely to say they have seen fireworks set off after 10pm (61% 18-29, 69% 65+) - a trend which is consistently seen within both white respondents and those from an ethnic minority background. Younger respondents are also less likely to say they have seen fireworks causing distress to pets or local wildlife (32% 18-29, 38% 65+). However, they are more likely to report seeing fireworks set off on public land (33% 18-29, 24% 65+) and firework safety distances not being followed (21% 18-29, 7% 65+).

White respondents are more likely to say they have seen fireworks set off after 10pm compared to those from an ethnic minority background (69% white, 52% ethnic minority background), as well as fireworks causing distress to pets or local wildlife (39% white, 24% ethnic minority background) and fireworks set off on public land (31% white, 24% ethnic minority background). However, white respondents are less likely to report witnessing fireworks causing injury to a person (4% white, 10% ethnic minority background).

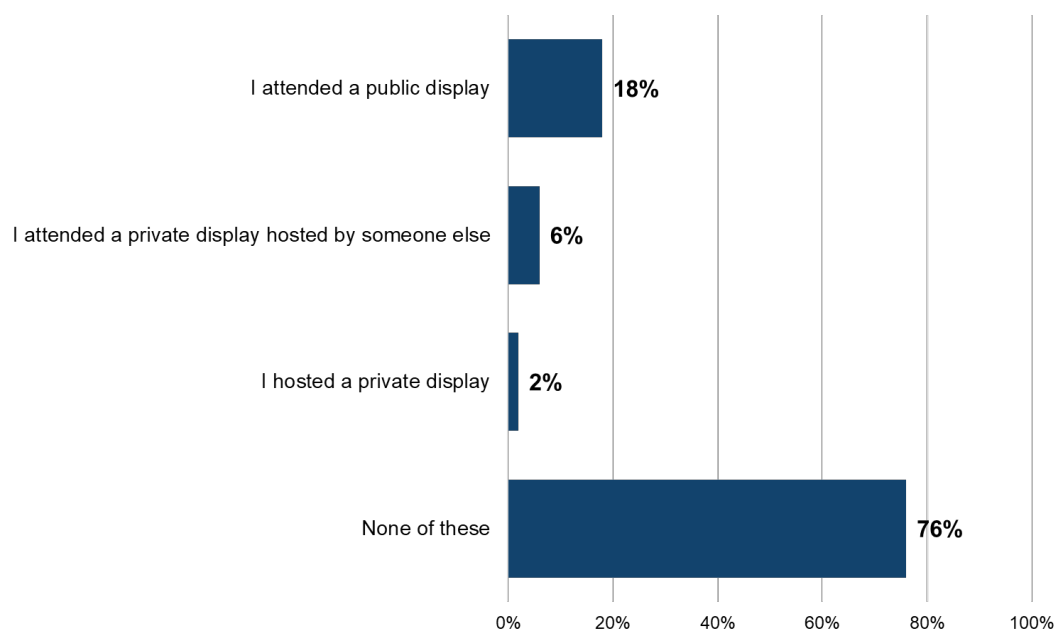
Those limited by disability are more likely to report witnessing several of the negative effects of fireworks, compared to those not limited at all. These include fireworks causing distress to pets/local wildlife and fireworks causing personal distress (18% vs 10%).

Offline/ low internet adults are significantly less likely to say they have seen multiple negative effects of fireworks, such as fireworks being set off after 10pm (34% vs 67%), and fireworks being set off on public land (2% vs 31%).

Attendance of firework displays

Three quarters of the public (76%) say they did not attend a fireworks display in the past 3 months (i.e. Autumn and Festive period of 2025). This aligns with levels previously measured in the OPSS Product Safety and Consumer research² (77% W5, 76% W7). When looking at the kinds of displays respondents attended, 18% say they attended a public display, 6% say they attended a private display hosted by someone else while 2% have hosted a private display. Again, these figures are consistent with the findings of Wave 5 and Wave 7 of the OPSS Product Safety and Consumer research.

Figure 14. Attendance of firework displays in past 3 months



Q: Thinking about fireworks displays in the last 3 months (i.e. the Autumn and Festive period), which of the following apply to you? (Please select all that apply)

Base: All (n=10,250)

Younger adults are significantly more likely to report attending or hosting *any* display in the past 3 months (41% those aged 18-29), compared to older adults (11% 65+). This trend is linear across the age groups, and consistent across all display attendance types. Men are also more likely than women to have attended or hosted a display (27% men, 21% women).

² The equivalent question in the OPSS Product Safety and Consumer tracker was asked slightly differently, as it was asked during the Autumn period and referenced both reported behaviour as well as future intention.

White respondents are less likely to have attended or hosted a display, compared to those from an ethnic minority background (22% white, 34% ethnic minority background).

Those limited by disability are less likely to have attended or hosted a display (18%), compared to those who are not limited at all (26%).

Those who attended a public display were asked who organised the display they attended. The results were mixed, with two in five (40%) reporting it being run by a charity or voluntary organisation, and three in ten (31%) saying the display was run by local government.

One in ten (10%) of those who attended a public display report attending a drone display, while a significant majority saying they did not (86%). Younger adults are more likely than older adults to say they attended a drone display, though they remain a minority (16% those aged 18-29, 9% 30-49, 6% 50-64, 4% 65+).

All respondents were asked their usual attendance habits regarding firework displays during the Autumn and Festive periods. A quarter (24%) report usually attending public displays, with 7% saying they usually attend a private display, and 3% saying they usually host a private display.

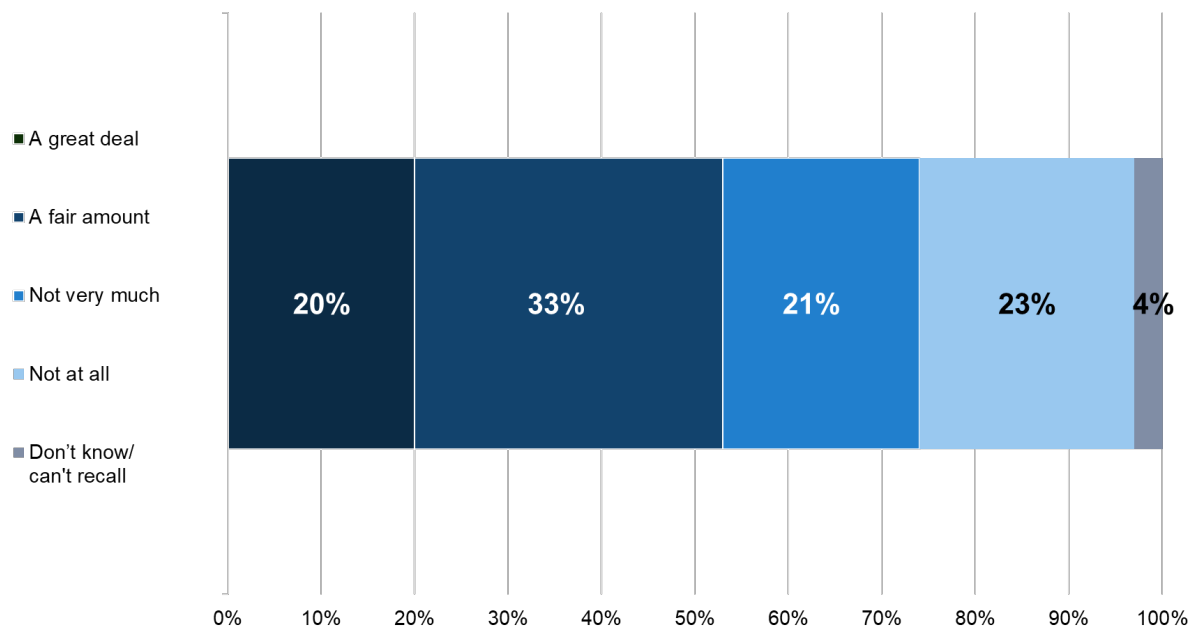
Mirroring the trend of reported attendance in the past three months, young adults are more likely to say they usually attend a display compared to older adults. This is the case for public displays (37% 18-29, 14% 65+), attending a private display (14% 18-29, 4% 65+) and hosting a private display (4% 18-29, 2% 65+). Aligning with age, those with children in their household are more likely to attend a public display than those without children (37% vs 20%), but also more likely to attend a private display hosted by someone else (12% vs 5%) and host their own private display (4% vs 2%).

Considerations when hosting private fireworks displays

Over two in five (44%) of those who have hosted a private fireworks display in the past three months, or usually host one during autumn or festive season, say they do not take noise into account very much or at all. This is an increase on levels previously measured in the OPSS Product Safety and Consumer research wave 7 (38%) but remains lower than levels in waves prior to this (51% W3, 51% W5)³.

³ The routing from this question is slightly different compared to the OPSS Product Safety and Consumer tracker as it was asked during the Autumn period and referenced both reported behaviour as well as future intention.

Figure 15. Private display noise consideration



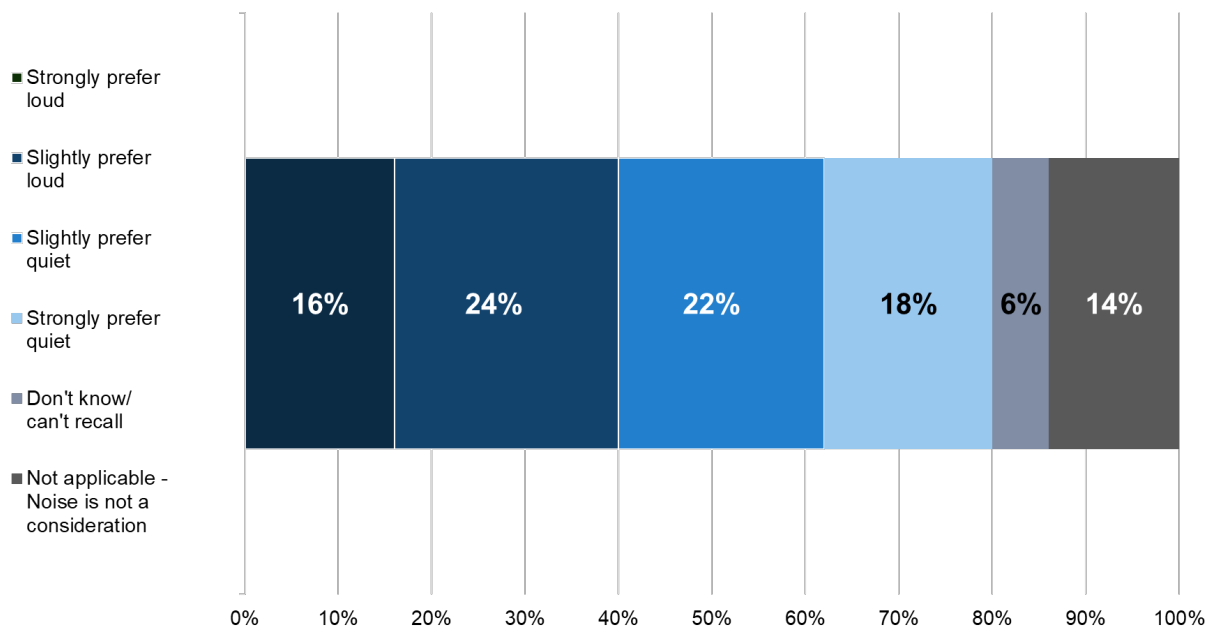
Q: When purchasing fireworks for a private display, to what extent do you take the noise of the fireworks into consideration?

Base: All who have hosted a private fireworks display in past three months, or usually host one during autumn/festive season (n=352)

Men are significantly more likely to say they do not take noise into account (49%) compared to women (36%). Those with no children in their household are also more likely to say they do not take noise into account (53%), compared to those who have any children in their household (36%).

Those who have hosted a private fireworks display in past three months, or usually host one during autumn/festive season, are also split on their preference for loud or quiet fireworks when purchasing for a private display. Two in five (40%) say they prefer loud fireworks, while the same proportion (40%) say they prefer quiet fireworks. More than one in 10 (14%) say they do not consider noise when purchasing at all.

Figure 16. Preference for loud or quiet fireworks



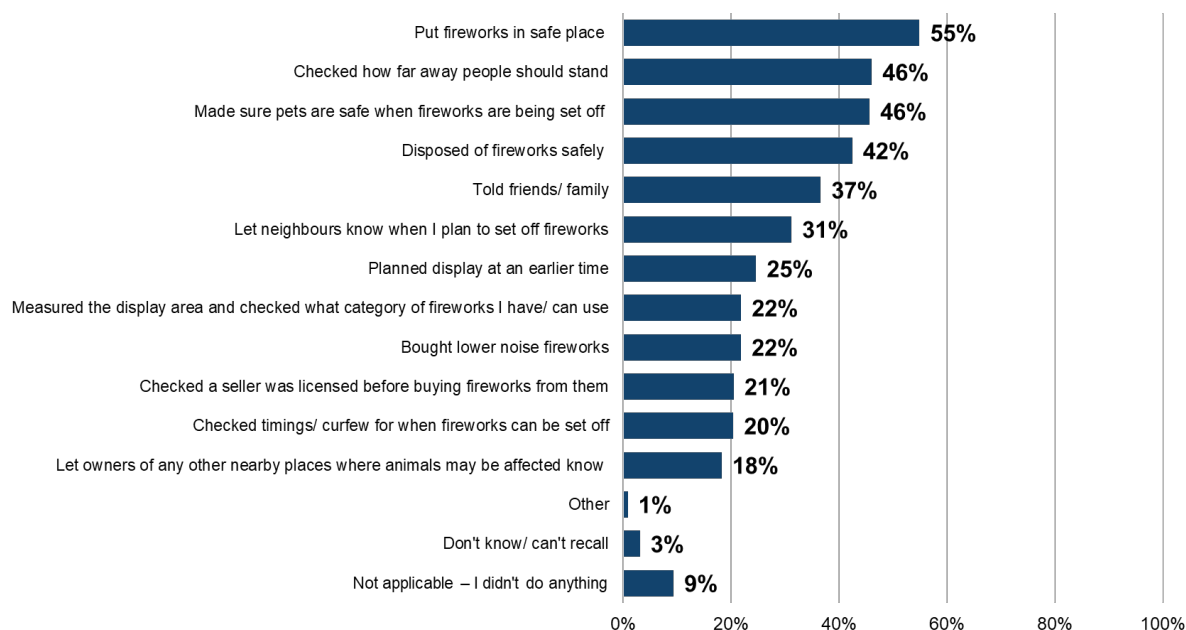
Q: When purchasing fireworks for a private display, do you prefer to buy loud or quiet fireworks?

Base: All who have hosted a private fireworks display in past three months, or usually host one during autumn/festive season (n=352)

Men are more likely than women to say they prefer purchasing louder fireworks (46% men, 30% women), and less likely to say they prefer purchasing quieter fireworks (30% men, 54% women). Those with no children in their household are less likely to say they prefer quieter fireworks (33%), compared to those with any children in their household (50%).

The majority of those who report either hosting private fireworks displays in the last 3 months or usually doing so over the festive period, say that they took steps to consider safety (87%). Over half report that they store the fireworks in a safe place (55%); while approaching half (46%) say they check how far away people should stand when fireworks are being lit, and make sure pets are safe when fireworks are being set off (46%). Almost one in 10 say they did not engage in any safety considerations (9%).

Figure 17. Safety consideration steps taken



Q: When purchasing fireworks for a private display, do you prefer to buy loud or quiet fireworks?

Base: All who have hosted a private fireworks display in past three months, or usually host one during autumn/festive season (n=352)

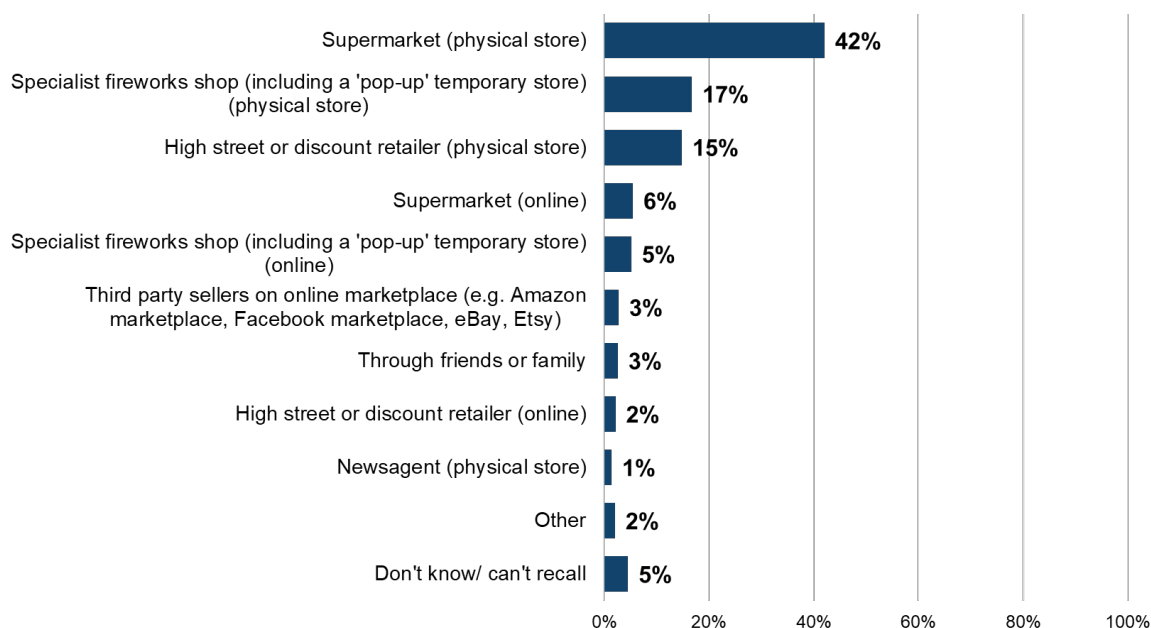
Younger adults are significantly less likely than older adults to engage in many of the safety considerations. Most notably, two fifths (39%) of those aged 18-29 say they put fireworks in a safe place compared to almost nine in 10 (87%) of those aged 65+. Less than a third (31%) of those aged 18-29 say they checked how far away people should stand when the fireworks are lit, compared to 72% among those aged 65+.

Firework purchasing behaviour

Less than one in 20 (4%) of UK adults report purchasing fireworks in the past three months. This is consistent with the results when this question was asked previously in the OPSS Product Safety and Consumer research (4% W3, 4% W5, 5% W7).

Of those who say they have purchased fireworks in the past three months, they most commonly report purchasing at a supermarket (in-store) (42%). This is followed by those who say they purchased at a specialist fireworks shop (in-store) (17%), and a high street or discount retailer (in-store) (15%). Overall, less than one in five (16%) say they bought their fireworks online.

Figure 18. Where fireworks were purchased



Q: Thinking about the last time you purchased fireworks, where did you purchase them?

Base: All who have bought fireworks in past three months (n=396)

Younger adults who purchased fireworks in the past three months are significantly more likely to say they purchased fireworks online compared to older adults (27% 18-29 vs 6% 65+).

Overall, those from an ethnic minority background are more likely than white respondents to report purchasing fireworks from a third-party seller on an online marketplace (7% vs 2%). Respondents from an ethnic minority background are also more likely to report purchasing fireworks online more generally (24% vs 13%).

Perceptions of current firework regulations

Respondents were then asked three questions on their perceptions of what is legal under current firework regulations. A minority (14%) correctly identified midnight as the latest time they are allowed to set off a firework on Bonfire Night, with the most common response being 10pm (44%), followed by 11pm (18%).

UK adults were then asked where they believe it is legal to set off a firework, with half (52%) answering totally correctly, by identifying both correct responses (their own property and someone else's property with their permission) and none of the incorrect responses (public land, a road or footpath or none of these). The most commonly identified incorrect place to set off fireworks is on public land (17%).

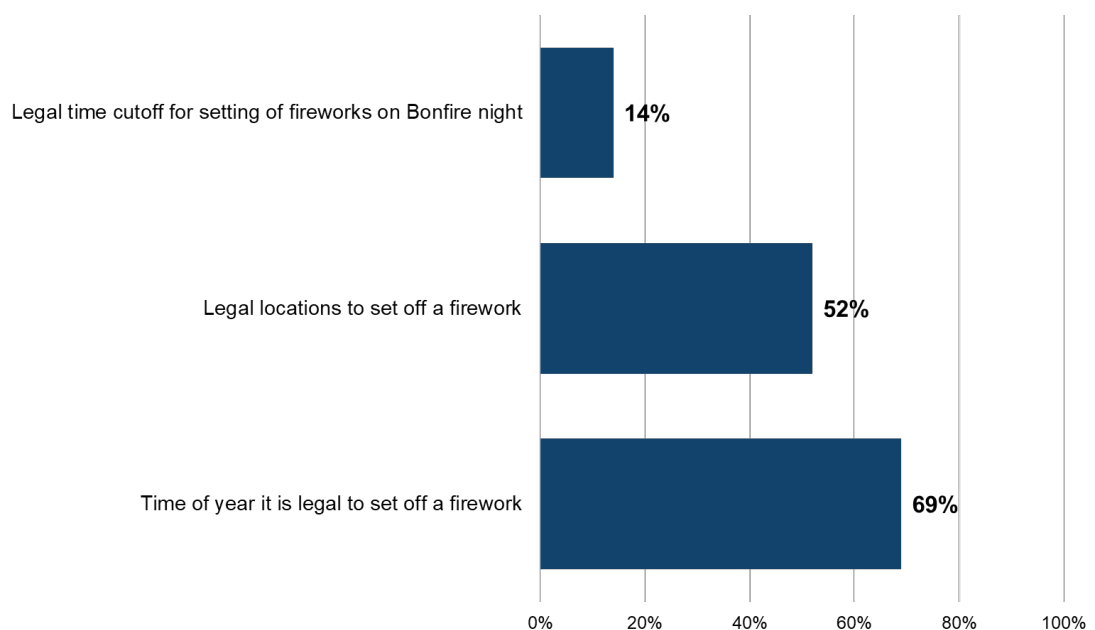
Men are more likely to identify all correct answers and no incorrect answers, compared to women (54% vs 49%).

The majority (69%) of UK adults correctly believe it is legal to set off fireworks any day of the year, whilst a minority (28%) think it is legal only on Bonfire Night, Diwali, New Years or Chinese New Year.

Younger adults are less likely to correctly identify legal locations to set off fireworks compared to older adults (47% 18-29, 54% 50-64, 57% 65+), whilst men are more likely to identify these compared to women (54% men, 49% women).

White respondents are less likely to correctly identify midnight as the legal cutoff time on Bonfire Night, compared to those from an ethnic minority background (13% white, 18% ethnic minority background). White respondents are also significantly more likely to correctly report the legal locations to set off fireworks compared to those from an ethnic minority background (54% white, 33% ethnic minority background), as well as the time of year it is legal to set them off (71% white, 50% ethnic minority background).

Figure 19. Correct perceptions of firework regulations



Q: What is the latest time you can set a firework off on Bonfire Night? / In which of these places, if any, is it legal to set off fireworks? Please select all that apply. / When can you legally set off fireworks during the year?
Base: All (n=10,250)

Overall, a majority (59%) say they are not confident that they gave the correct answers to these previous three questions. Men are more likely to be confident than women (42% men, 35% women), whilst those who have achieved a low level of education are more likely to be confident than those who have achieved a high level of education (44% low, 34% high). A total of 6% of UK adults answered all three perceptions questions correctly. However, even among those who answered all firework regulation questions correctly, confidence in their answers remained similar to those who did not answer the questions correctly (37% vs 39%).

Smart devices and security

In wave one, questions on smart devices were initially shown to all respondents (n=10,250). Follow ups were asked to those who own a relevant smart device (n=8,373). Exact base sizes for specific questions are shown below each chart.

In the quantitative survey, 'smart devices' were defined as products that can be connected to the internet and controlled via an app.⁴

This report will refer to these devices as 'smart devices'.

Key findings

- Eight in 10 (82%) of UK adults report having access to at least one smart device, with smart TVs being most commonly identified.
- Seventy-seven percent of smart device owners report actively purchasing their device because of its smart functionality, and 89% report using this functionality in the last month.
- Concern around the security of smart devices is relatively high; over half of UK adults (54%) report some level of concern, with this increasing among non-owners (65%).
- Data privacy is most cited as a security concern among smart device owners; 56% identified this as a concern for at least one of the products they own, with this concern being particularly high among smartphone owners (58%).
- Concerns around physical safety is lower (22%) and is most cited by owners of smart toys (26%) and smart baby products (18%).
- Nineteen percent of smart device owners report that their device came with a password they were required to change. The majority (92%) of this group report changing it. The qualitative focus groups highlighted that most do not change passwords unless they are prompted to by the device.
- One in 10 (9%) report experiencing a cybersecurity issue with their device, with incidence being highest among those aged 18 to 29 (15%).
- Nearly eight in 10 (79%) UK adults are not aware that smart device manufacturers must have a policy allowing consumers to report security issues.
- Most UK adults (66%) state that the amount of time the manufacturer offers security updates is important to them when choosing a new smart device. Among those who own a smart device, 21% report that they know how long at least one of their current devices will receive security updates for.
- Three quarters (76%) of smart device owners update the firmware or software on at least one of their smart devices as soon as the updates are available, and 66% report that they have automatic updates enabled on at least one of their devices.

⁴ Definition of connected shown to participants: A connected product is a device that is linked to the Internet so it can share information about itself, its environment and its users. This can include products, such as smart appliances (e.g., fridges, thermostats, washing machines, TVs, and speakers), baby monitors, smart lighting and heating, and wearables. We are not including phones, tablets, laptops or computers for the purposes of this discussion.

Ownership of smart devices

The majority of UK adults own or have access to at least one smart device (82%). Most commonly, adults report owning a smart TV (62%), smart speakers (41%) and a smart watch / fitness tracker (35%). In this wave, 23% report owning smart home security. This continues the increasing trend in smart home security ownership, previously measured in the OPSS Product Safety and Consumers research, running from 2020 to 2025 (10% W2, 12% W4, 16% W6, 17% W7, 18% W8). Homeowners are more likely to report owning smart home security (28%), compared to 15% of renters who report the same.

Offline/ low internet adults are less likely to report owning any smart device (11%), with the most owned smart device being a Smart TV (10%).

Just over three quarters (77%) of smart device users report actively purchasing their device because of its smart functionality. Owners of smart plugs (76%), smartphones (71%) and smart watches/fitness trackers (70%) are most likely to identify purchasing this item because of its functionality. While owners of smart large domestic appliances are the least likely to (24%).

The majority (89%) of respondents who own a smart product report using the functionality in the past month, this is most identified by smartphone (86%), smart home security (85%) and smart thermostat (83%) owners. Across both ownership and usage, the same pattern emerges across age: those aged 30 to 49 are most likely to report owning (84%) and using (90%) the smart products, compared to all other age groups.

There is no difference in ownership when comparing respondents from an ethnic minority background and white respondents. However, among those who do own smart devices, ethnic minority respondents are more likely to state that they purchased their device because of its functionality (80% vs 76% white).

Respondents without a disability are slightly more likely to report owning a smart device than those with a disability (83% vs 80%). They are also more likely to report purchasing the device because of its smart functionality (78% vs 75%) and using the functionality in the last month (89% vs 87%).

Participants in focus groups own a range of smart devices⁵ in their home from baby monitors to smart speakers and doorbells, to smart lightbulbs and plugs to smart washing machines and fridge.

"I own quite a few [connected products]! I have a smart TV, a Google Home, an Amazon Alexa, an Apple Watch, a smart plug, and two smart lightbulbs" (Female, 22, experienced safety issue)

"I have a smart TV and smart speakers, and smart lightbulbs as well" (Female, 57, not experienced safety issue)

Smart devices are valued for their convenience and control, particularly with the ability to manage one's home e.g. on lights and heating when not at home. However, participants feel that some smart devices are more useful and convenient than others due to the complexity of setting up, linking and using them. Others are concerned by the security of

⁵ In the focus groups smart devices were referred to as 'connected products'

smart devices; specifically, how personal information is stored and shared. Some are also concerned with lack of internet access making products unusable. There are also concerns around the accuracy of devices and how they can be unable to understand requests.

“Some are definitely more convenient than others. The smart TV is super easy, and it's great to be able to control the lights when I'm out of the house. The smart speaker often gets basic maths wrong, which is stressful while baking” (Female, 57, not experienced safety issue)

“[Smart devices] makes devices easy to manage and control from home or anywhere” (Male, 58, not experienced safety issue)

“Downsides - the smart lighting can be a faff to change and take longer than just walking to the wall switch. Apple Watch can get a bit intrusive.” (Female, 57, not experienced safety issue)

Privacy and security concerns are at the forefront for participants, particularly for devices which collect images, videos or audio (e.g. baby monitors) and how content is collected, stored and shared.

“I'm always wary of how much info is collected and how it's used. I also increasingly like an analogue less digital world” (Male, 54, not experienced safety issue)

“It has been said that Google Alexa is constantly on... and listening.” (Male, 57, experienced safety issue)

“Main concern is security, people gaining access either directly through my Wi-Fi or via the provider being compromised” (Male, 61, not experienced safety issue)

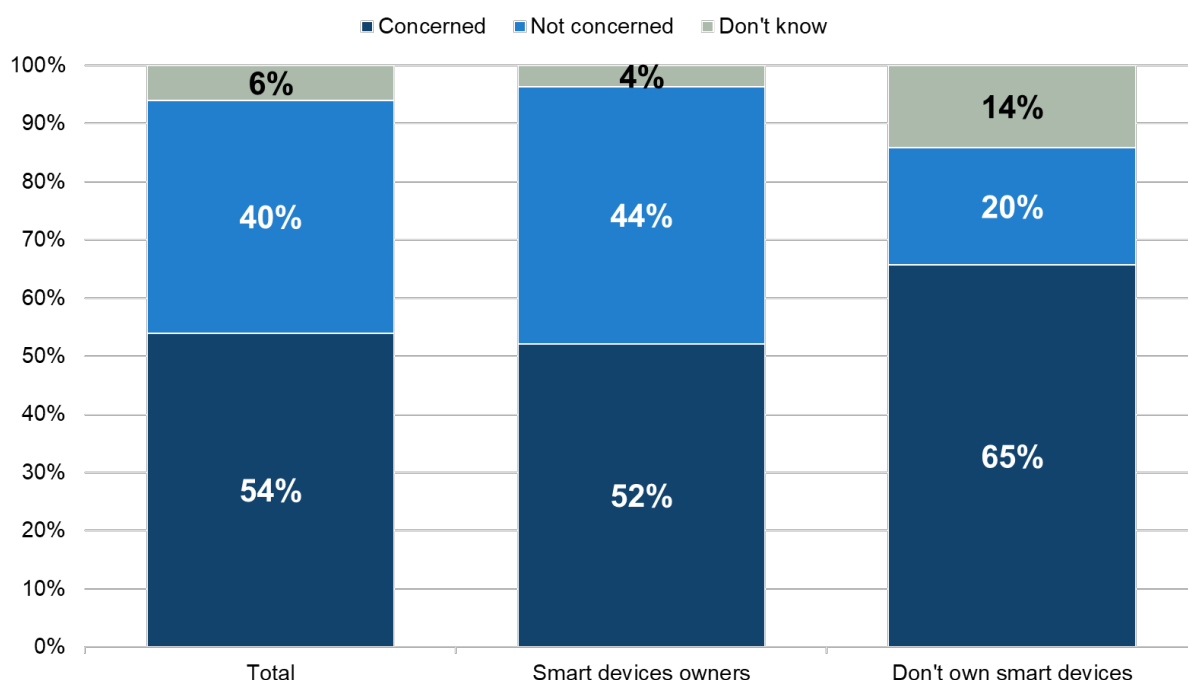
One participant shared that their smart speaker had been hacked by neighbours who played music loudly, this led her to feel concerned about others hacking the device. Other participants are concerned by devices ‘listening’ to them and selling them products on other devices.

“I stopped using the smart camera and doorbell as I found them intrusive and wondered why I was using them.” (Female, 56, not experienced safety issue)

Smart devices and security risks

Just over half (54%) of UK adults state that they are concerned about the security risks with smart devices, while 40% report they are not concerned. There is a relationship between ownership of smart devices and lower levels of concern, with 52% of smart device owners reporting concern, compared to 65% of non-owners. Looking specifically at owners, those who own smart toys and smart baby products are slightly more likely to report concern than all other owners (58% and 57% respectively).

Figure 20. Concern regarding security risks of smart devices



Q: To what extent, if at all, are you concerned about security risks with smart devices?

Base: All respondents (W1=10,250); All who own any relevant smart device (W1=8,396); all who do not own any smart device (W1=1,668)

Levels of concern across age groups do not necessarily mirror those seen in ownership and usage. Those aged 65 and over are the least likely to report concern (49%), with concern increasing as respondents' age decreases (54% of those aged 50 to 64, 55% of those aged 30 to 49, 61% of those aged 18 to 29).

Those with a disability are more likely to report being concerned about the security risks associated with smart devices (58%) compared with those without (53%), possibly corresponding with the lower ownership and usage levels.

Participants in the focus groups were asked to define security for smart devices; they shared that security implies that their personal data is safe and is not used or sold to third parties.

Security is also defined by devices not feeling 'intrusive', for example, not tracking location without consent. Participants appreciate adding personal protection settings onto their device. They also appreciate being informed if there has been a data breach so they can change passwords and adjust settings. Transparency with regards to security offers consumers control and confidence in their smart devices. Clarity on how data is stored (and preferably encrypted) is also appreciated.

"Security means not using personal data for targeted adverts" (Female, 34, experienced safety issue)

"I would only purchase products from companies I consider would have protections in place to keep information secure" (Male, 62, experienced safety issue)

“With AI and the power of tech companies, allowing them so much access to data is concerning about how it can be manipulated” (Male, 54, not experienced safety issue)

Some participants feel confident in the smart device itself whereas others feel confidence in the brand (particularly those which are larger and well-known as they are expected to have consumer protections in place and expected to be able to fix issues quickly through updates).

Participants also feel confidence in smart devices when they see positive online reviews from other users, they can change settings like location tracking or add two factor authentication, and they see regular software updates.

Some participants have trust in smart devices which are made or sold in the UK, they have less trust in products made abroad from unknown brands.

“For me, I trust the company more than the product yes. I know they're under more scrutiny and public attention than smaller companies. I would never buy a smart device off of Temu, for example.” (Female, 22, experienced safety issue)

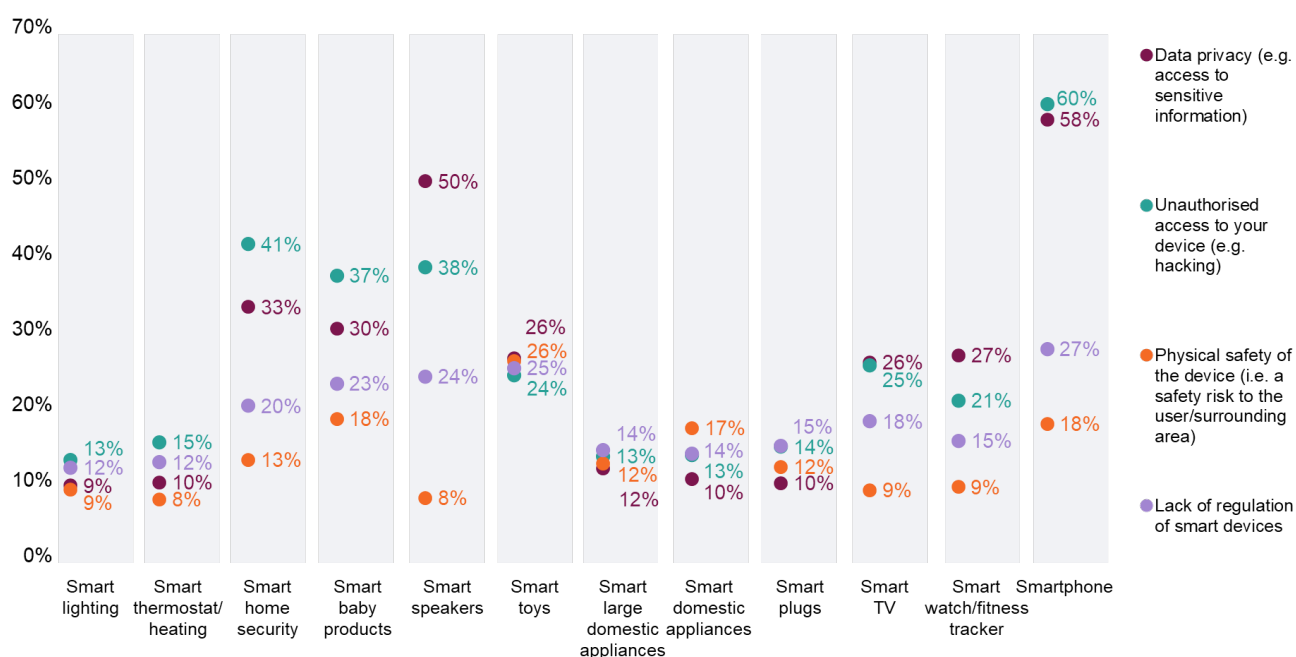
“From a trusted company, I personally don't worry too much about it and expect most products we would buy in UK should be ok” (Female, 48, not experienced safety issue)

In the quantitative survey, smart device owners were asked about specific security concerns related to their devices. Data privacy is most commonly cited as a concern for their device (56%), but this is especially prevalent among owners of smartphones (58%) and smart speakers (50%). Slightly fewer (54%) identify being concerned about unauthorised access to at least one of their smart devices, although again, this is most cited for smartphones (60%), followed by smart home security (41%).

Concerns around physical safety of smart devices is comparatively lower, with just under 22% of smart device owners identifying this as a concern for one of their products. One quarter (26%) of smart toy owners identify this as a concern, followed by smart baby product owners (18%) and smartphone owners (18%).

Three in 10 (31%) smart device owners identified concern about lack of regulation for one of their devices. However, the data shows higher levels of uncertainty when thinking about this concern, over two in 10 (22%) state that they did not know, higher than all other areas of concern (13% physical safety, 11% unauthorised access, 10% data privacy).

Figure 21. Specific concern related to smart devices



Q: Which, if any, of the following are you concerned about with your own smart device? (Please select all of the devices where you are concerned about the issue)

Base: All who own any relevant smart device (Smart lighting=1,567; smart thermostat=1,829; smart home security=2,364; smart baby products=232; smart speakers=4,216; smart toys=189; smart large domestic appliances=522; smart plugs=1,581; smart TV=6,373; smart watch/fitness tracker=3,654; smartphone=2,983)

Security expectations tend to differ between types of smart devices; most participants would be more concerned about devices which record video or sound (particularly baby monitors) as the personal data being collected is significant compared to a device which they can control, for example, a washing machine. Overall participants felt that every smart device should be safe, but this means the brand having security processes alongside the consumer following them, for example, having a secure password.

"I would be much more concerned about a device that can record video or sound than something like a fridge or washing machine" (Male, 62, experienced safety issue)

"I think a baby monitor would need the highest level of security" (Female, 34, experienced safety issue)

"I'd expect something that can listen to me to be much more secure than something I just turn on and off" (Female, 57, not experienced safety issue)

In the quantitative survey, the minority (19%) of smart device owners report that their smart device came with a default password that they were required to change before using it. Of this group, 92% state they did change the password.

Most focus group participants are responsible for managing password changes on their smart devices, though this can change based on the device, for example, if another person in the household uses it more frequently.

Those who live with partners or family will share passwords, those who do not know those they live with well are less likely to share devices and passwords. Some like to keep devices and passwords separate so they can personalise their experience. Parents will often have separate accounts for children so they can ensure the content they see is safe and controlled.

*“There are only two of us in our household so I would share passwords with my wife”
(Male, 62, experienced safety issue)*

“I have an 8-year-old who has a separate kids YouTube account. Other internet access is supervised and monitored via an app on my partners phone” (Male, 57, experienced safety issue)

“I share responsibility with my partner. We both use password-storage services so it's easy to synchronise passwords and other accounts.” (Male, 61, not experienced safety issue)

A strong password was defined by participants as long (more than 8 characters), using random characters rather than full words, using numbers and symbols and using upper- and lower-case words. Participants commented that names or birthdays should not be included in a strong password. Overall strong passwords should be “easy to remember but hard to guess”.

Some design their own passwords and use a password manager to store them, and others use password generators suggested by their device.

“The longer the password is the stronger it is, so I use passwords of 3 unconnected words plus capitals and numbers” (Male, 62, experienced safety issue)

“No words, names, birthdays, non-sequential letters and numbers and special characters” (Female, 67, experienced safety issue)

“I use the randomly generated passwords which I consider to be strong since no one would ever guess them and they're unique” (Female, 30, not experienced safety issue)

Most do not change passwords regularly unless they are prompted by the device, as they felt it was difficult to manage constantly changing passwords. Although some change passwords if they forgot them or if the password was part of a data breach.

Most participants would immediately change a default password to secure their personal data, although during groups many could not recall whether devices came with default passwords and whether they changed them.

“I rarely change them and only if prompted or directed, it is a hassle. I work on the premise “if it's not broke why fix it” (Female, 34, experienced safety issue)

“I always change immediately as it's not secure with a default password” (Male, 29, not experienced safety issue)

“The only things I'm concerned about re passwords are my bank and email. I don't think the information that someone would get from my speaker would be exciting to everyone” (Female, 30, not experienced safety issue)

In a hypothetical scenario where participants were asked to imagine that they purchased a connected product with a pre-set password they couldn't change many felt sceptical and some would return the product, others wouldn't want or use it, and some would find an alternative product.

Most would not know how to report the issue if this scenario occurred. They were unsure of who they would report to e.g. the manufacturer or the seller or the regulator. Many were

not aware of which regulator they should report to although participants in one group would report to Trading Standards.

“I would be very cautious and possibly return it and buy something else. Someone could dial into your device and harvest all the information you’ve inputted, and it has collected autonomously.” (Male, 57, experienced safety issue)

“I think manufacturers might find that people like their autonomy and it triggers mistrust to be told what password to use by a corporate entity” (Female, 57, experienced safety issue)

“Depends on what it is, if it was a lightbulb or similar I wouldn’t be concerned” (Male, 53, not experienced safety issue)

“I’d just return it, if I couldn’t return it I’d look into report it (not sure to who though)” (Male, 61, not experienced safety issue)

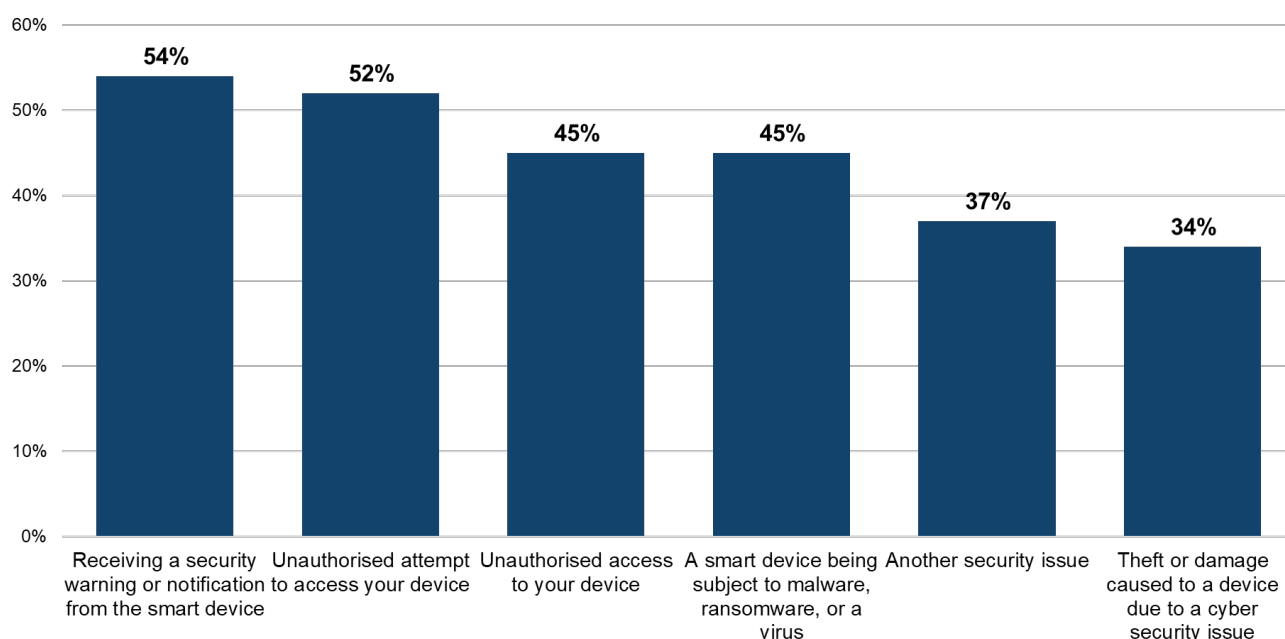
In the quantitative survey, one in 10 (9%) smart device owners report that they have experienced cybersecurity issues with their device. This is most identified by smart toy owners (16%) and smartphone owners (12%). Those aged 18 to 29 are most likely to state that they have experienced a cybersecurity issue with a smart device (15%), higher than all other age groups (10% 30 to 49, 6% 50 to 64, 5% 65 and over).

Those from an ethnic minority background are more likely to report having experienced a cybersecurity issue with a smart device (18%, compared with 8% for white adults).

Those with children in the household are also much more likely to say they have experienced a cybersecurity issue with a smart device (13%, compared with 7% for those without children).

The most common cybersecurity issue is a security warning/ notification, with over half (54%) of those who experienced an issue with a smart device reporting this. This is followed by 52% who report an unauthorised *attempt* to access their device, and 45% who report successful unauthorised access. Forty-five percent report their device had been subject to malware, ransomware or a virus while over one in three report another security issue (37%), or theft or damage caused to a device due to a cybersecurity issue (34%).

Figure 22. Type of cybersecurity issue experienced



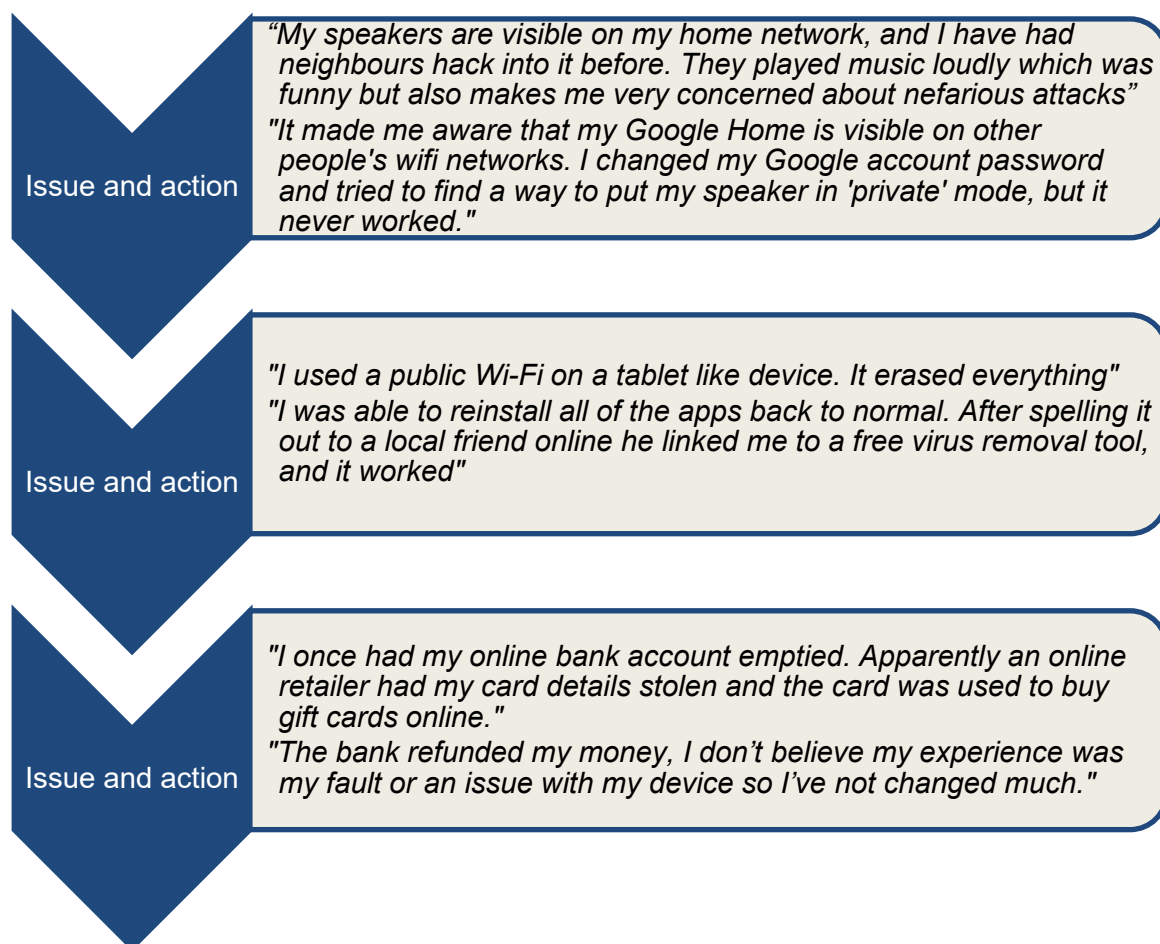
Q: Which of the following security issues did you have with your device(s)?

Base: All who have experienced security issue with smart device (N=724)

Nearly eight in 10 (79%) UK adults are not aware that smart device manufacturers must have a policy allowing consumers to report security issues. Smart device owners who have experienced a security issue with their smart device are more likely than those who have not to report awareness of this policy (42% smart device owners who have experienced an issue, 20% smart device owners who have not experienced an issue).

Some participants in the research had experienced cybersecurity issues⁶ and shared their experiences and actions following the issue:

⁶ By “cybersecurity issues” this means any type of cyber-attack, this includes theft or damage of devices or services (e.g. smartphones, laptops, tablets). It also includes unauthorised access to personal information stored on devices/ online.



If participants experienced a cybersecurity issue they would change passwords, notify their bank or manufacturer, do a factory reset or take devices offline. Many say they would report the incident to the police and would potentially stop using the product, others would be more vigilant in future with their devices.

Smart devices and security updates

Two in three (66%) UK adults state that the amount of time the manufacturer offers security updates is important to them when choosing a new smart device. Only 8% report that it is not important, with 26% saying it is not something they have considered. Those who own a smart device are more likely to state that this is important to them (70%), in comparison to those who do not (49%). The latter audience are most likely to say it is not something they have considered (48%).

Those from an ethnic minority background are more likely to state the amount of time a manufacturer offers security updates is important to them when choosing a new smart device (75%, compared with 65% for white adults).

Among those who own a smart device, 21% report that they know how long at least one of their current devices will receive security updates for, with only 7% stating they know this for all their devices. Just under three in five (59%) state they are not sure. Those aged 18 to 29 are the most likely to report they know how long their devices will receive security updates for (30%), with awareness decreasing with age (22% of those aged 30 to 49, 19% of those aged 50 to 64, 16% of those aged 65 and over).

Three quarters (76%) of smart device owners update the firmware or software on at least one of their smart devices as soon as the updates are available, and 66% report that they have automatic updates enabled on at least one of their devices. While younger respondents are more likely to be aware of how long they will receive security updates for, there is limited difference across age groups in their behaviour associated with updates; only those aged 65 and over are less likely than all other age groups to report having automatic updates enabled (63%).

Participants in the focus groups had limited knowledge of a security update period, some guessed it referred to how long it takes updates to install, others believed it referred to warranty on how long protection measures last.

“The period during which a product is updating, so when it’s running and installing the updates?” (Female, 57, not experienced safety issue)

“Not a term I’ve come across. The time between a vulnerability being found and a patch being issued?” (Male, 61, not experienced safety issue)

After participants were shown the definition of security update period⁷ most noted that they had never noticed a security update period when buying a smart device. Although some recalled seeing labels or instructions on products which could have related to the security updated period.

Most felt that this period would not have a significant influence on whether to buy a new smart device, although many would now look for it on new products at a higher price point where they would like for it to last.

Participants felt information about the security update period should be clearly presented at point of purchase rather than ‘hidden’ within the product instructions. Some would now assume that the security update period would be standardised across products.

“I’m aware that some might state how long you’d get them for but likely only after a purchase. [Some] might advertise 2/3 years on labels, like a red label maybe” (Male, 58, experienced safety issue)

“I might go for a more expensive model of hardware if its fully supported. My Chromebook is now useless and can’t be updated” (Female, 59, experienced safety issue)

Most participants install software updates when prompted by their smart device due to concerns about security. Most are more comfortable with the latest software with any bugs fixed, security updates and the best performance possible.

However, some delay updating if they are not aware of the new features or functionality or are concerned about how potential changes could impact their device, others feel updating is a “hassle”.

“I love getting updates and any new whistles and bells” (Female, 57, not experienced safety issue)

“I wouldn’t install them if I’ve heard they’ll make my device worse via social media or friends. I’ve seen Apple updates get a lot of flak for ruining the UI of phones. For

⁷ Definition of security update provision shown to participants: the provision for security updates for connected products involves a mandatory, transparent, and defined commitment from manufacturers to support their products against cyber threats.

instance, I haven't installed the new Apple update because I don't like the 'liquid glass' look.” (Female, 22, experienced safety issue)

*“I’m just in the habit of installing updates as it means everything is more secure”
(Female, 35, not experienced safety issue)*

Conclusions

This report presents findings from a large-scale survey investigating the UK's perceptions and experiences related to product safety, with a particular focus on the topic areas of fireworks and smart devices.

Overall, there is a broad belief that products sold in the UK are generally safe due to the regulations in place. This trust is often linked to buying from recognised and reputable retailers who are expected to offer stronger protections and ongoing security updates. Confidence diminishes when people think about online marketplaces or unfamiliar brands. When seeking advice, consumers continue to rely heavily on online reviews, friends and family, and consumer organisations. However, trust in these sources varies considerably particularly for online and social media reviews, where concerns about fake or biased content is referenced.

While most consider safety when purchasing products, the qualitative research found that few proactively check for safety marks and certification as there can be presumption of safety. Consumers rely on interpersonal and online sources for reassurances around purchase decisions. Younger participants were more likely to look to social media reviews for information and reassurance.

Experiences of safety issues are relatively uncommon, with fewer than one in 10 UK adults reporting a safety issue in the last six months. When issues do occur, they more commonly lead to emotional distress or damage to property rather than physical harm. However, groups such as, those with children in the household, people from ethnic minority backgrounds and those on lower incomes, are more likely to report both experiencing safety issues and experiencing harm as a result.

Most report enjoying fireworks, however, uptake of steps to ensure safety varies. Those who host displays report storing fireworks securely and checking safety distances, but a substantial minority report taking few or no precautions. Younger adults, who are more likely to host or attend displays, consistently report engaging in fewer safety behaviours, including lower likelihood of checking viewing distances or safe storage. Awareness of firework regulations is mixed, with many adults unsure about legal times or where fireworks may be set off. Additionally, the majority also report not being confident that they correctly answered about regulations, further compounding uncertainty in this area.

Smart device ownership is widespread, with most owners reporting recent use of the smart functionality. They are valued for their convenience; however perceived usefulness varies depending on how easy products are to set up and integrate into homes. At an overall level, many report concern about security, particularly data privacy and unauthorised access, particularly for devices that collect audio or video. Although most consumers update software promptly and change default passwords when prompted, awareness of manufacturers' responsibilities (such as having a security reporting policy or providing a defined security update period) is low. Younger adults tend to be more familiar with digital security concepts but are also more likely to have experienced a cybersecurity issue.

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