

# ATTITUDES TO FALSE INFORMATION

## FULL FACT RESEARCH

April 2024

# Key findings

1

The majority of UK adults **do not find it easy to identify** false information online; they also believe it has a **negative effect on democracy** in the country.

2

A quarter of UK adults – particularly regular users of **social media** – are worried their political opinions are **based on false information**.

3

The majority of UK adults expect **misinformation** to have at least some **impact the next UK general election result** and back the regulation of political claims.

# Methodology

**Ahead of the general election in 2024, Full Fact commissioned Ipsos to conduct an online survey of 2,000 adults aged 18+ across the United Kingdom to understand attitudes to misinformation and politics.**

Much has changed in the UK since the study was previously run in 2021, and therefore a new read on public opinion was required.

Experts have called the current macro context a 'polycrisis'. In the past three years the UK has been through COVID-19 lockdowns and vaccinations, seen three Prime Ministers in one year, while the war in Ukraine and subsequent inflation and interest rates have risen to levels that, to a new generation, are unknown.



Fieldwork was conducted from the 19<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> of December 2023.



15-minute online self-completed survey of UK adults aged 18+ representative by age, gender, and region, conducted across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The data were weighted to the known population of these demographics. Data shown in this report refers to the UK adults 18+ unless otherwise noted.



Sub-sample groups reported on include:

All UK adults 18+ (n=2,000), UK adults 18-34 (n= 478), UK adults 55-64 (n=335), Those who have changed their voting preference because of false or misleading claims in politics (n=576), Those who are worried about false or misleading information (n=1,353), Those who have social media in top 5 channels (n=834), Those who strongly agree false information has a negative effect on democracy in the UK (n= 645), Those who agree that when they get involved in politics it is possible to make real changes to how the UK is run (n=706)



# 01

## Misinformation & the media

# The majority of UK adults are worried about the spread of false or misleading information.

Fieldwork: Online 19th – 21st December 2023

Q. To what extent, if at all, are you worried about the spread of false or misleading information about the news, current affairs or issues that affect you? (% worried)

Base: All UK adults 18+ (n=2,000)

Q. What would you say are the most important issues facing Britain today? (Top 20)

Base: All UK adults 18+ (n=2,000)



# 68%

are worried about the spread of false or misleading information about the news, current affairs or issues that affect them



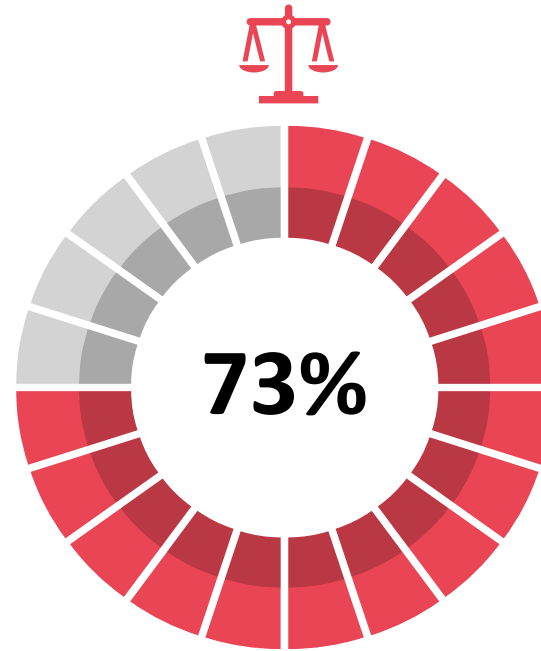
# 23%

Nearly a quarter say the spread of **fake news and misinformation** is one of the most important issues facing Britain today.

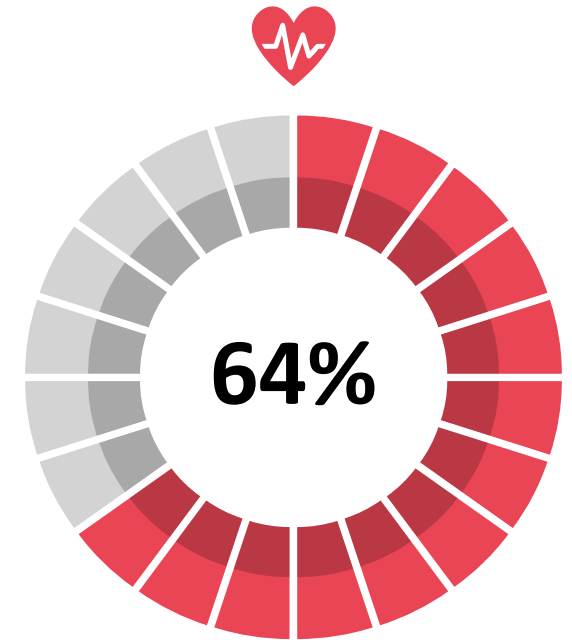


About 3 in 4 think the prevalence of false information online is harming UK democracy, politics and people's health.

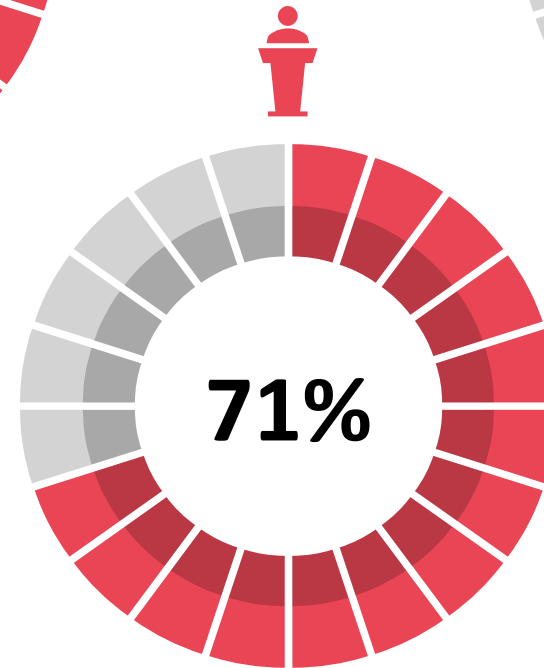
## False information online has...



...a negative effect on **democracy in the UK**



...a negative effect on **people's health**



...a negative effect on **UK politics**

Fieldwork: Online 19th – 21st December 2023

Q. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. (% agree)

Base: All UK adults 18+ (n=2,000)

**Less than half find it easy to tell the difference between true and false information online, and one in three has falsely believed a news story.**

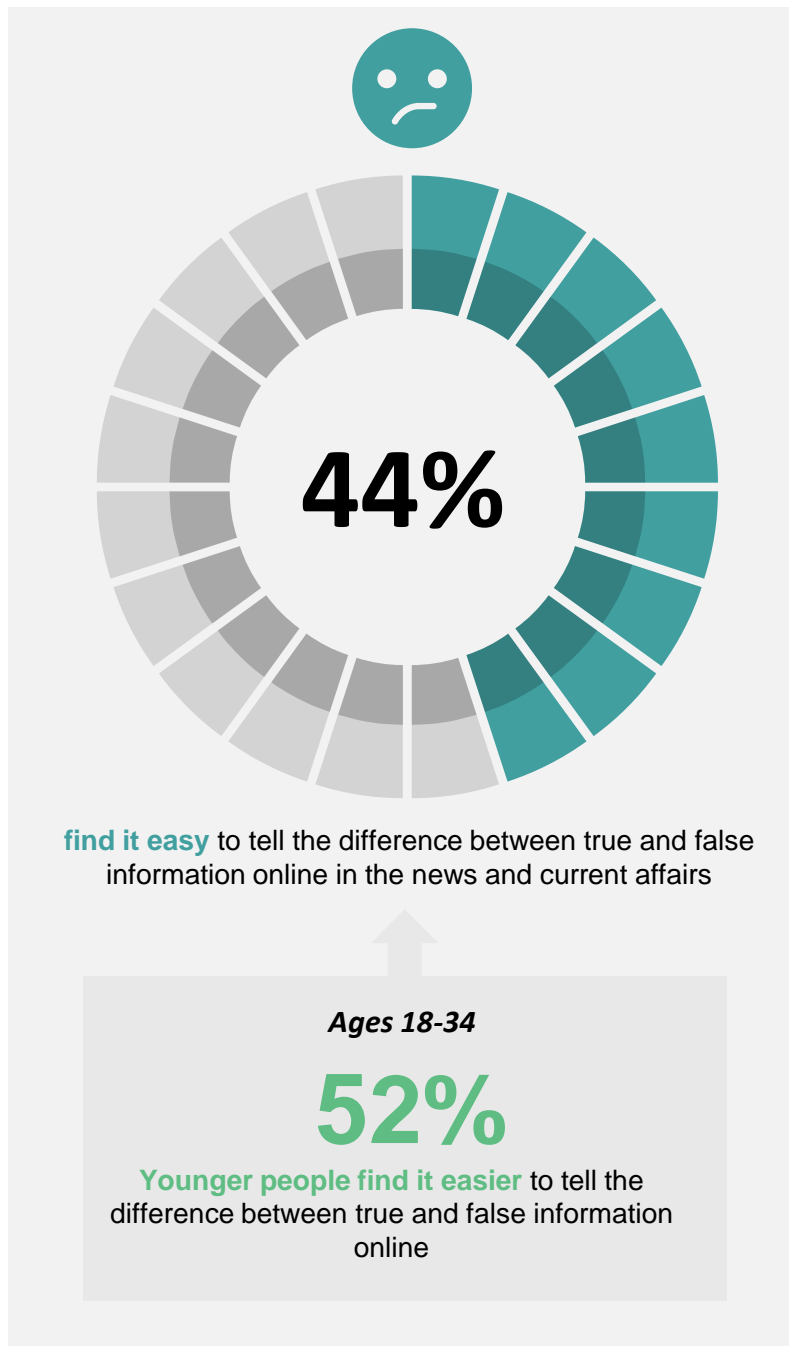
Fieldwork: Online 19th – 21st December 2023

Q. Thinking about all the different types of information in the news and current affairs that you see online, how easy or difficult do you find it to tell the difference between [...]. (% difficult / neither easy or difficult / don't know)

Base: All UK adults 18+ (n=2,000)

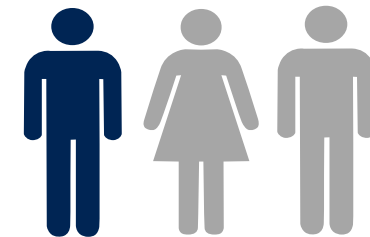
Q. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. (% agree)

Base: All UK adults 18+ (n=2,000), UK adults 18-34 (n=478)



**Half** say they do not find it easy to tell which sources are trustworthy and which are not\*

\*50% 'not easy'



**1/3** have falsely believed a news story was real until they found out it was fake\*

\*34% agree



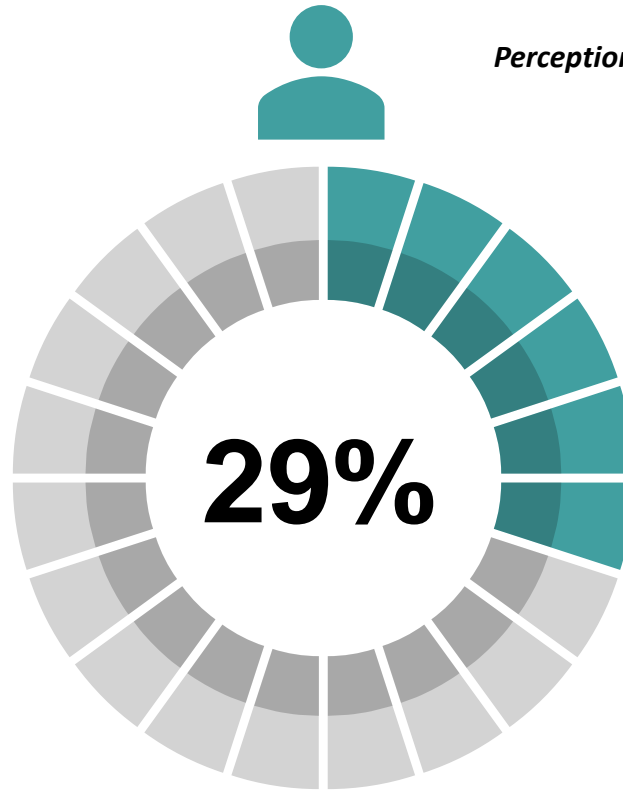
While the majority don't think they live in an 'internet bubble', they are much more convinced that others do.

Fieldwork: Online 19th – 21st December 2023

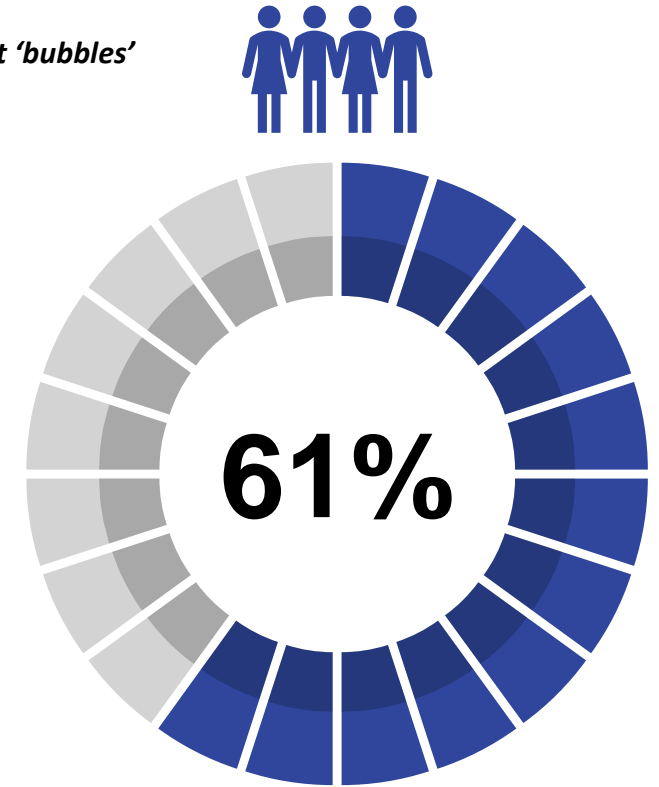
Q. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. (% agree)

Base: All UK adults 18+ (n=2,000), UK adults 18-34 (n=478), UK adults 55-64 (n=335)

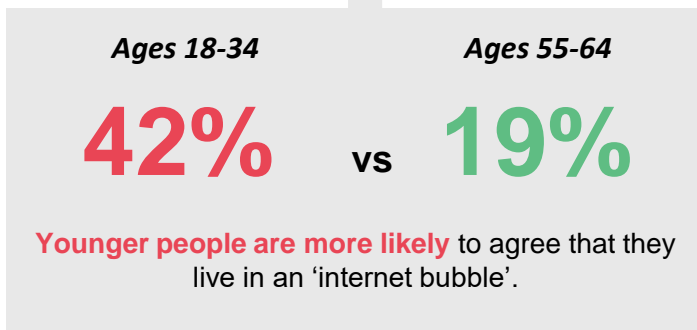
Perceptions of internet 'bubbles'



I live in my own bubble on the internet, mostly connecting with people like myself and looking for opinions I already agree with.



The average person in the UK lives in their own 'bubble' on the internet, mostly connecting with people like themselves and looking for opinions they already agree with.





# More than half think the average person in the UK is indifferent to facts but they themselves always do further research on the news.

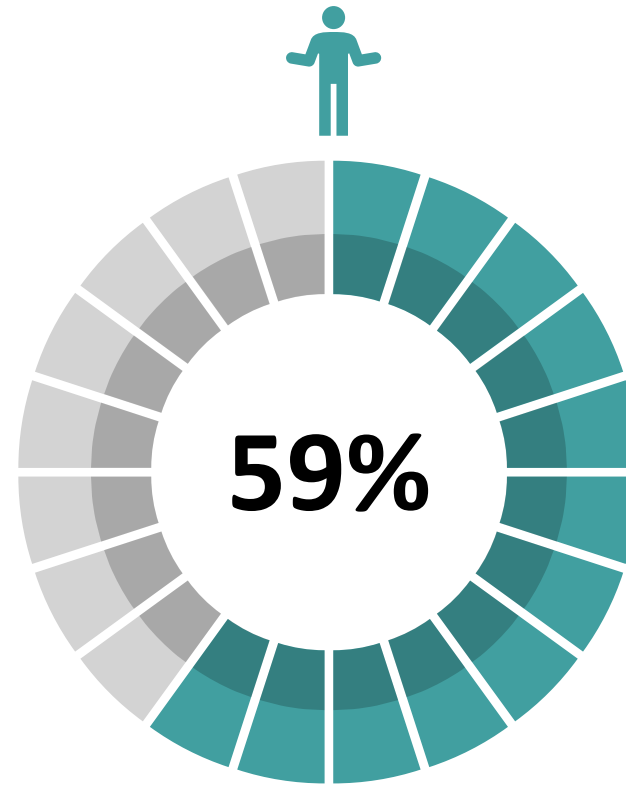
Fieldwork: Online 19th – 21st December 2023

Q. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. (% agree)

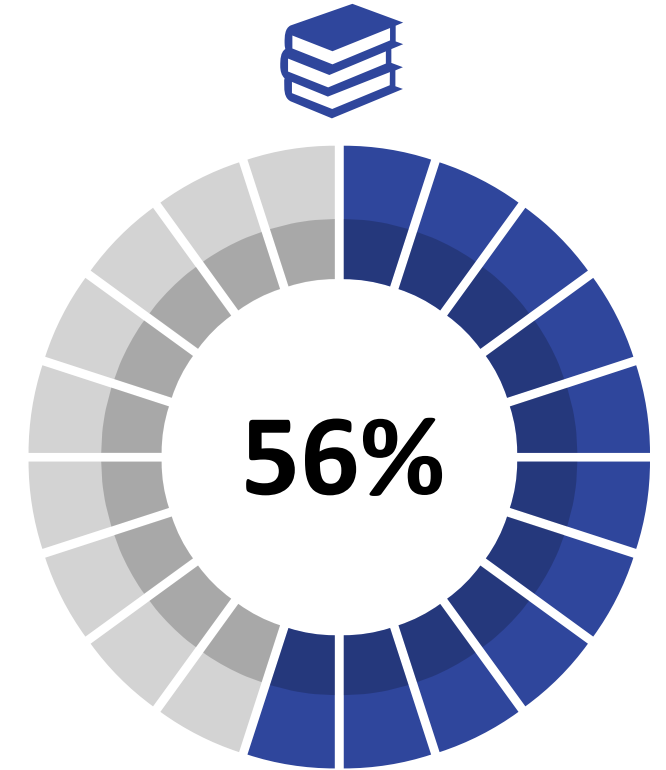
Base: All UK adults 18+ (n=2,000), Those who have changed their voting preference because of false or misleading claims in politics (n=576)

Below is a list of statements about the upcoming general election. Please indicate to what extent you agree, or disagree, with each of the following statements. (% agree)

Base: All UK adults 18+ (n=2,000)



The **average person in the UK** doesn't care about facts about politics and society anymore, they just believe what they want.



I always **do further research on the news** and current affairs information before I believe it.

72%

Those who say they have **changed their voting preference because of false or misleading claims in current politics / the previous election campaign** are significantly more likely to agree that the average person doesn't care about facts anymore.

# Television remains widely used and highly trusted, in contrast to video sharing websites.

Fieldwork: Online 19th – 21st December 2023

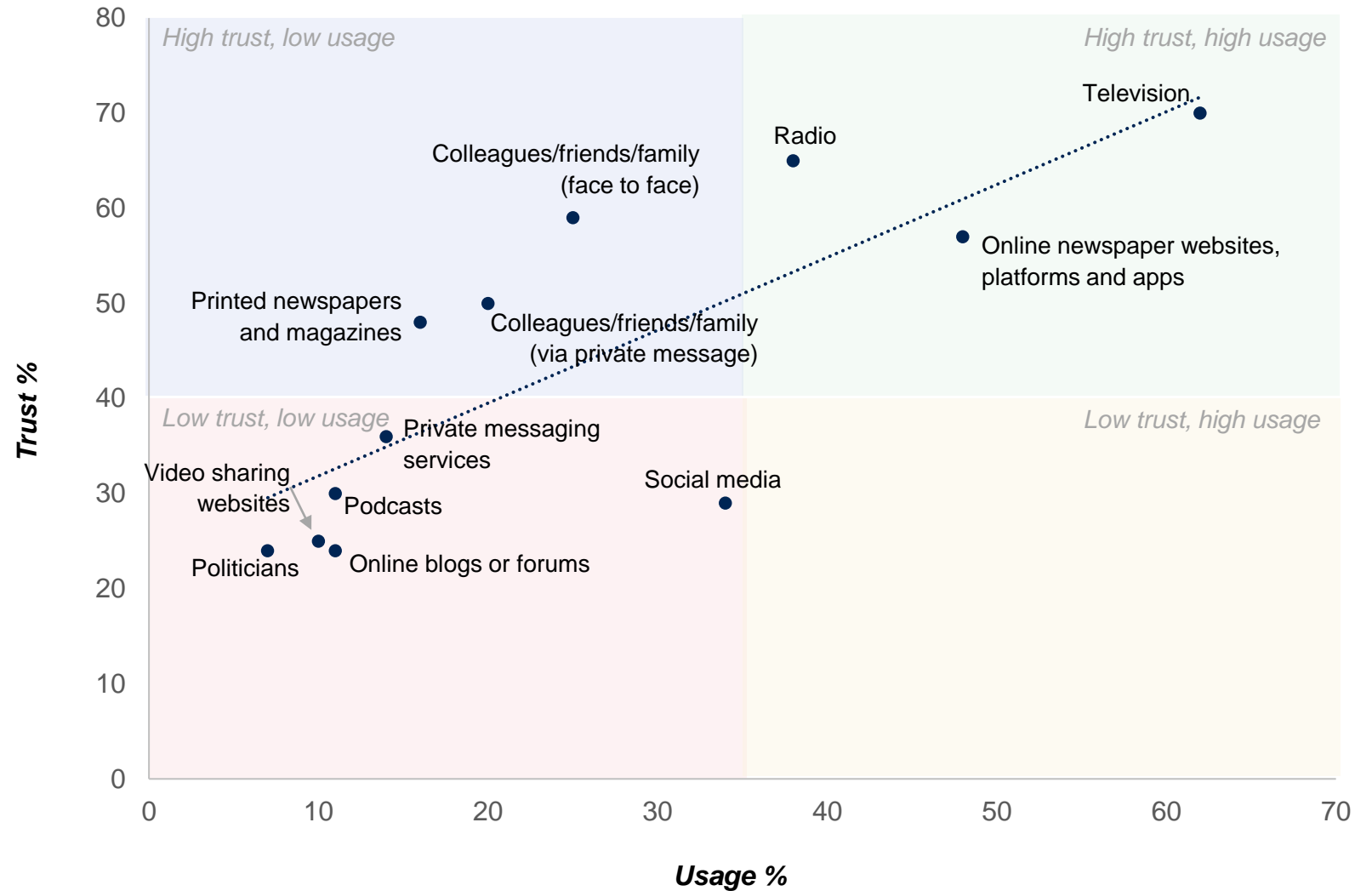
Q. Where, if anywhere, do you typically get your information from about the news, current affairs, and issues that affect you?

Base: All UK adults 18+ (n=2,000)

Q. To what extent, if at all, do you trust what you read or hear from each of the following? (% trust)

Base: All UK adults 18+ (n=2,000)

Sources of information about news, current affairs and issues that affect you  
Usage vs Trust



Note: Usage of media sources was asked about local, regional and national printed newspapers and magazines separately. The figure for 'Printed newspapers and magazines' is therefore an average of these three ratings.



# Social media is overwhelmingly blamed for false information, and approximately half feel Government should take responsibility.

Fieldwork: Online 19th – 21st December 2023

Q. Who, if anyone, do you think is most to blame for the spreading of false or misleading information in the news, current affairs, or about issues that affect you?

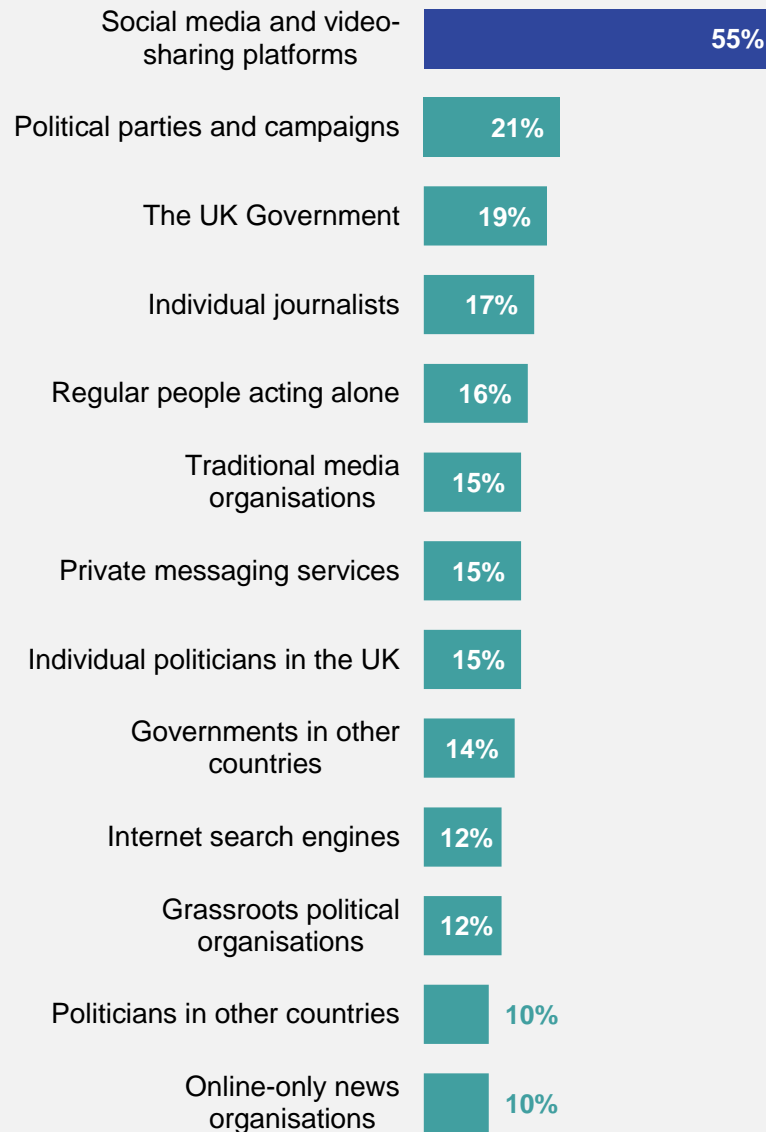
Base: All UK adults 18+ (n=2,000)

Q. In your opinion, who, if anyone, should be responsible for tackling the problem of spreading false or misleading information in the news, current affairs or issues that affect you?

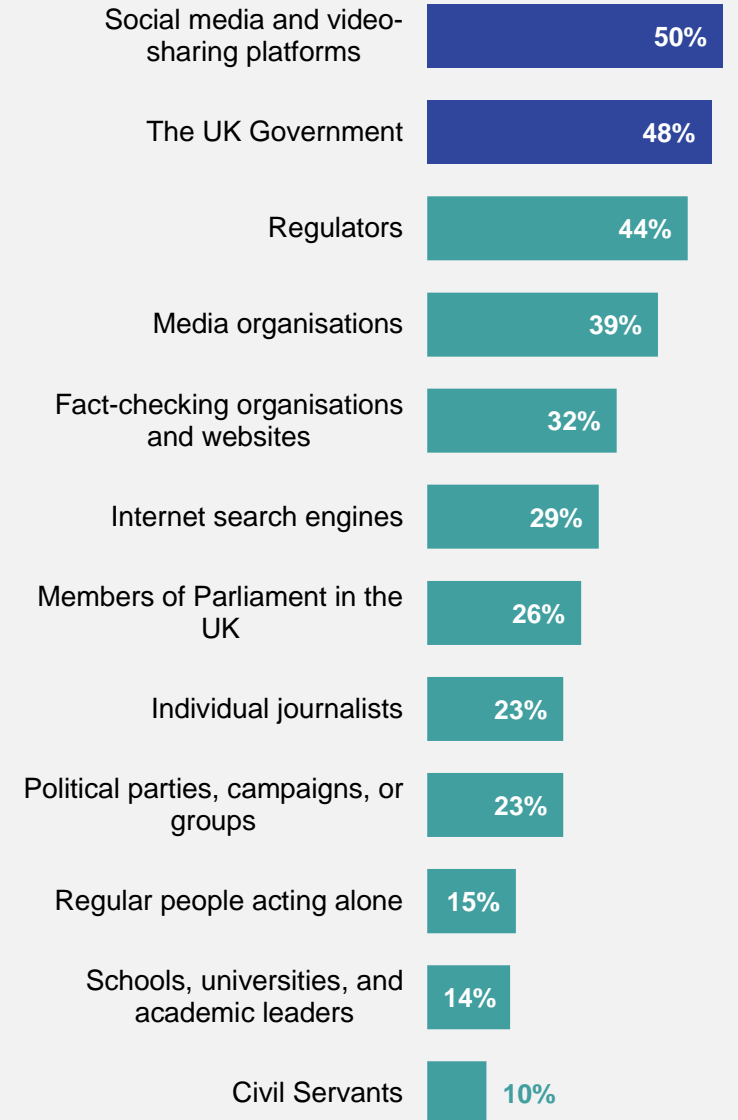
Base: All UK adults 18+ (n=2,000)

## Sources of information about news, current affairs and issues that affect you

### Sources most to blame for spreading false information



### Responsibility for tackling the spreading of false information



# The majority do not think the false or misleading information is spread accidentally.

Fieldwork: Online 19th – 21st December 2023

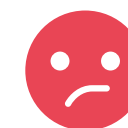
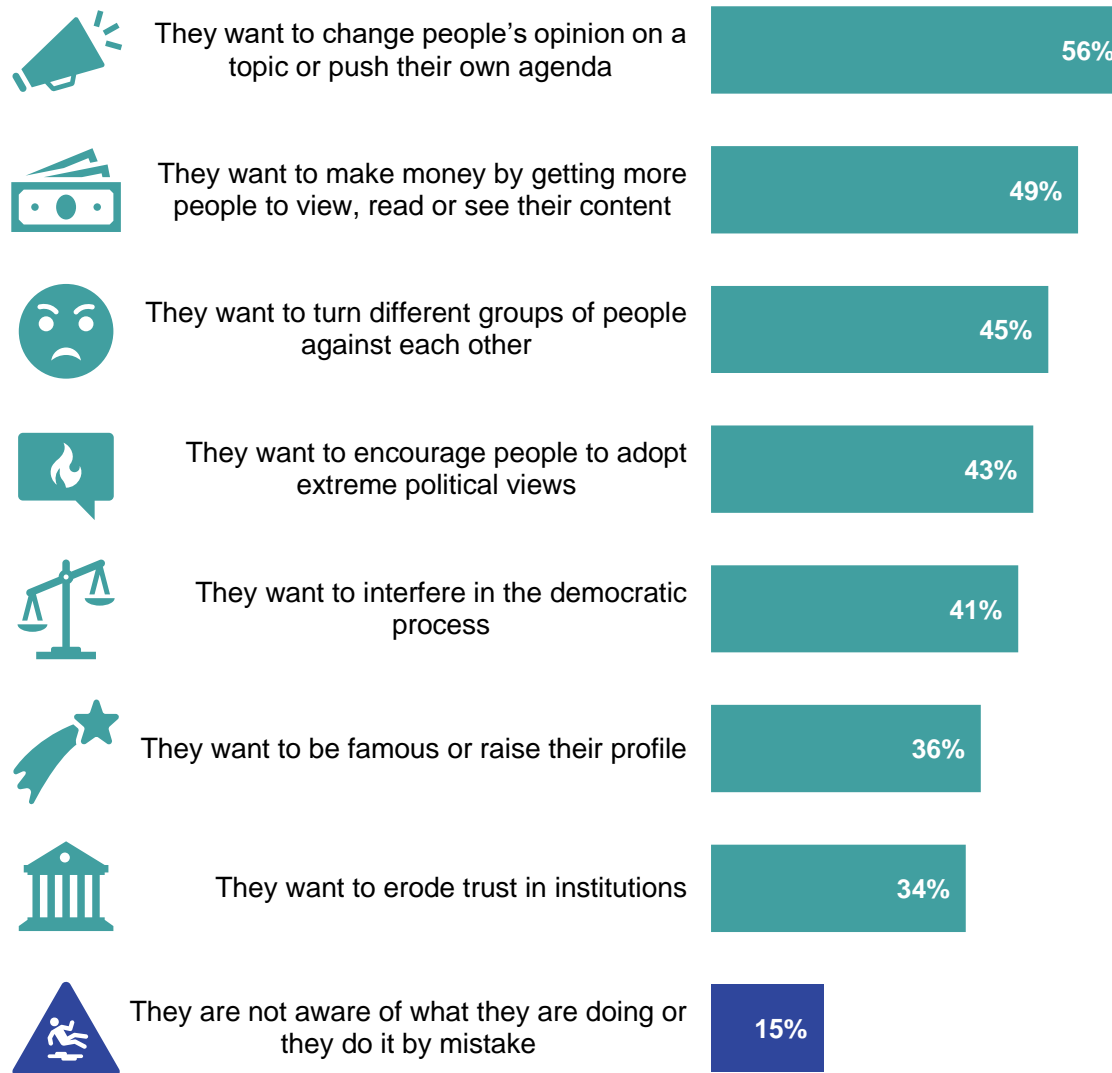
Q. What do you think are the main reasons, if any, some people or organisations spread false or misleading information in the news, current affairs, or about issues that affect you?

Base: All UK adults 18+ (n=2,000)

Q. To what extent, if at all, are you worried about the spread of false or misleading information about the news, current affairs or issues that affect you? (% worried)

Base: Those who are worried about false or misleading information (n=1,353)

## Reasons for spreading false information in the news, current affairs, or about issues that affect you



Those who are **worried about false or misleading information** are more likely to state **all factors** as motivations except for the **accidental spread** of false information.

# 02

## Political impact of false information

WELCOME TO YOUR POLLING STATION

Please follow the signs and report to the desk, then follow the instructions given to you.

Kindly note that there are various penalties for misconduct at elections and referendums.

In particular, be aware that it is a serious offence to vote when you are not entitled to do so or to pretend to be another person.

THANK YOU FOR VOTING

Automatic door

Automatic door

# POLLING STATION

**OPENING TIMES**

**7.00am - 10.00pm**

Note that as long as you are in the polling station, or in a queue outside, before 10.00pm you will be entitled to apply for a ballot paper

Project Part-Financed  
European Union  
Regional Development Fund

Craven Arms Community Centre & Library is changing its Friday opening hours. From the 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2016

**CasCA** will be open from **9.00am - 5.00pm** Instead of 9.00am - 8.00pm. Apologies for any inconvenience caused

live happy!  
with Slimming World  
Here at the CASCA Centre  
Every Wednesday  
5.30pm + 7.30pm

# About 2 in 3 are concerned voters will be misled by false or misleading claims in next UK election campaign.

Fieldwork: Online 19th – 21st December 2023

Q. Below is a list of statements about the upcoming general election. Please indicate to what extent you agree, or disagree, with each of the following statements. (% agree)

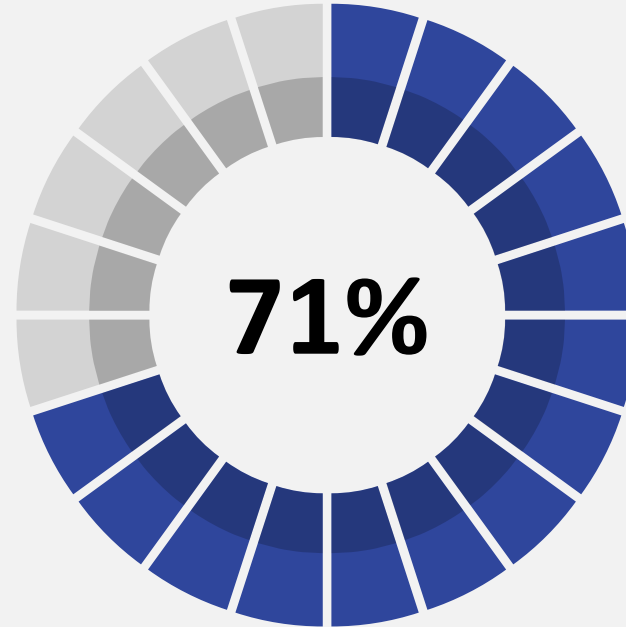
Base: All UK adults 18+ (n=2,000)

Q. Out of the following list, please select the top 5 media channels you watch, read, or listen to.

Base: Those who have social media in top 5 channels (n=834)

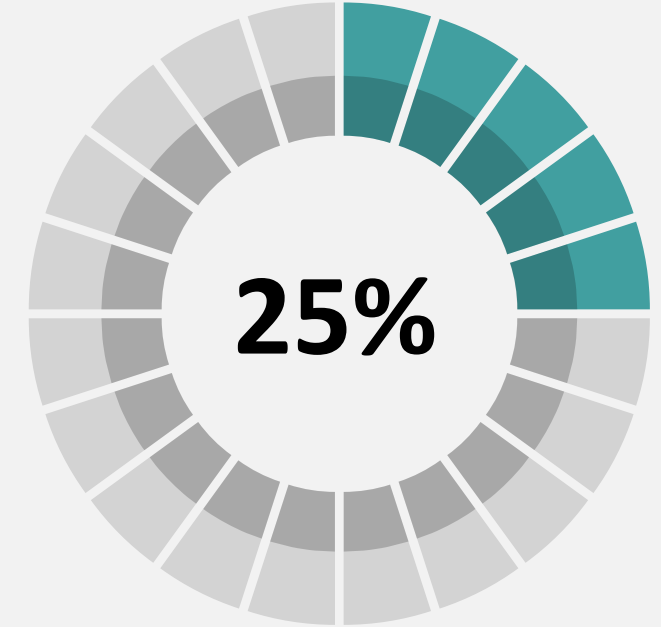
Q. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. (% agree)

Base: Those who strongly agree false information has a negative effect on democracy in the UK (n= 645)



I am concerned **voters will be misled** by false or misleading claims in the election campaign.

**80%** Those who think **false information online has a negative effect on democracy** in the UK are more likely to feel that voters will be misled by false or misleading claims.

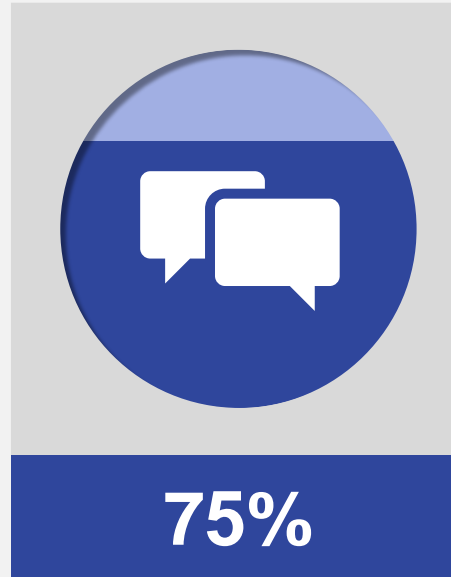


I am worried that **my own political opinions** are based on false or misleading information.

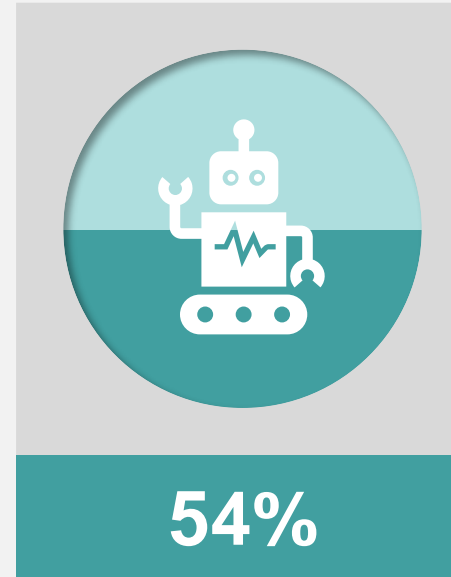
**34%** Those who say **social media channels are among their top 5 media sources** are more likely to be concerned that their own political opinions are based on false or misleading information.

# The majority think misinformation, generative AI, and deepfakes will have at least some impact on the UK election result.

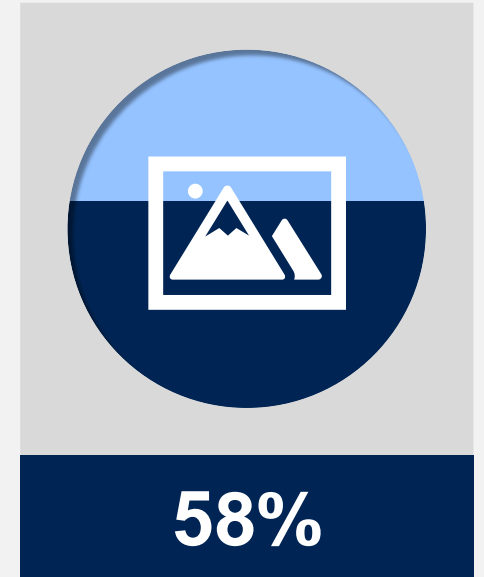
At least some impact on the general election result



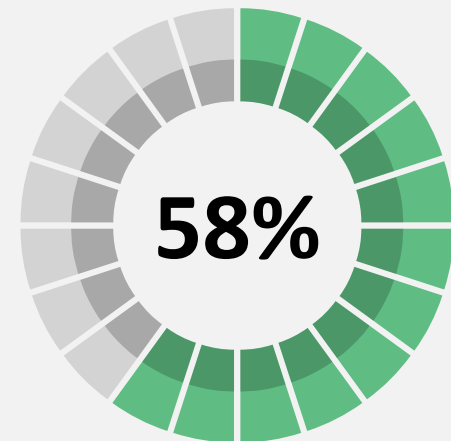
Misinformation



Generative AI



Deepfakes\*



it is possible to have a better, safer and more truthful internet in the future

63%

Ages 18-34

66%

Younger people are more likely to think that generative AI and deepfakes will have at least some impact on the upcoming UK general election result.

Fieldwork: Online 19th – 21st December 2023

Q. Thinking further about the upcoming election, what impact, if any, do you think the following will have on the general election result? % At least some impact

Base: All UK adults 18+ (n=2,000)

Q. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. (% agree)

Base: All UK adults 18+ (n=2,000)

\*Deepfakes refers to manipulated image, audio, or video content

**Faith in the political system is low – the majority think lying has increased in the last five years, and politicians are the least trusted source of news.**

Fieldwork: Online 19th – 21st December 2023

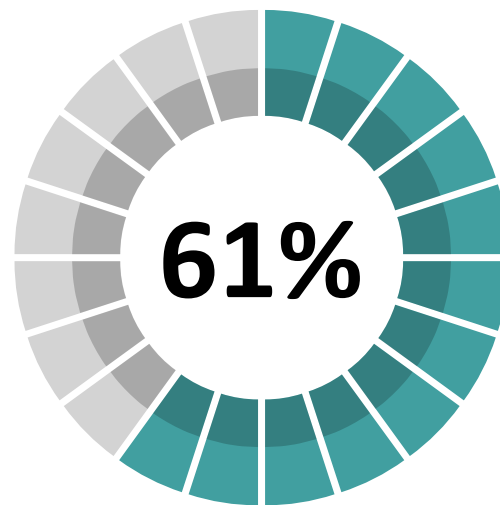
Q. And finally, do you think there is more, less or about the same amount of lying and misuse of facts in politics and media in the UK than there was five years ago? (% more)

Q. Below is a list of statements about the upcoming general election. Please indicate to what extent you agree, or disagree, with each of the following statements. (% agree)

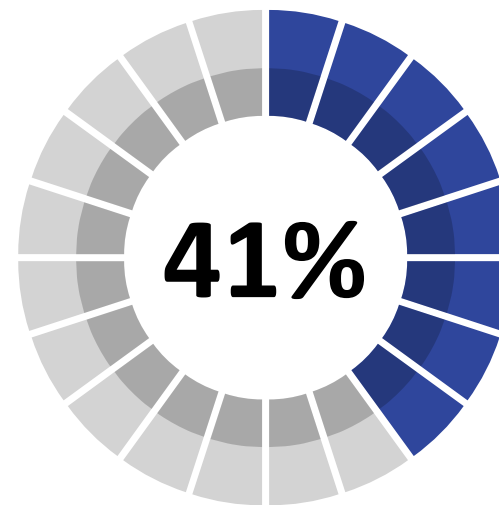
Q. Below is a list of different ways you might get news about politics and current affairs. To what extent, if at all, do you trust what you read or hear from each of the following? (% not very much / at all)

Base: All UK adults 18+ (n=2,000)

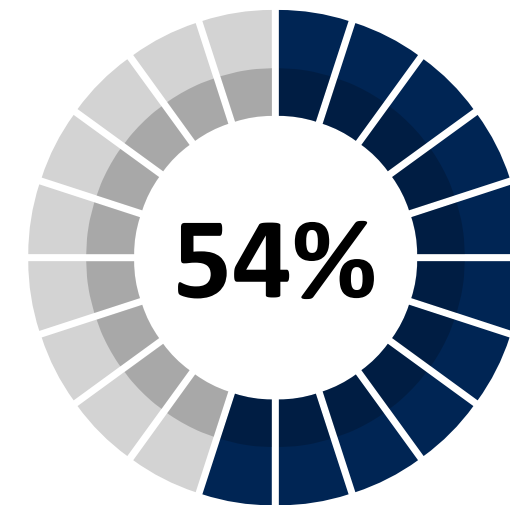
*Trust in politics and politicians*



think there is **more lying and misuse of facts** in politics and media in the UK than there was five years ago



think traditional parties and **politicians act against their interests**



tend to **ignore what parties and politicians say** because they don't know if they can be trusted



**Politicians are considered the least trustworthy source** of news about politics and current affairs.

65% do not trust what they read or hear from politicians.





# Manipulating evidence is seen as the most unacceptable behaviour in campaigns; the public strongly back regulation of political adverts.

Fieldwork: Online 19th – 21st December 2023

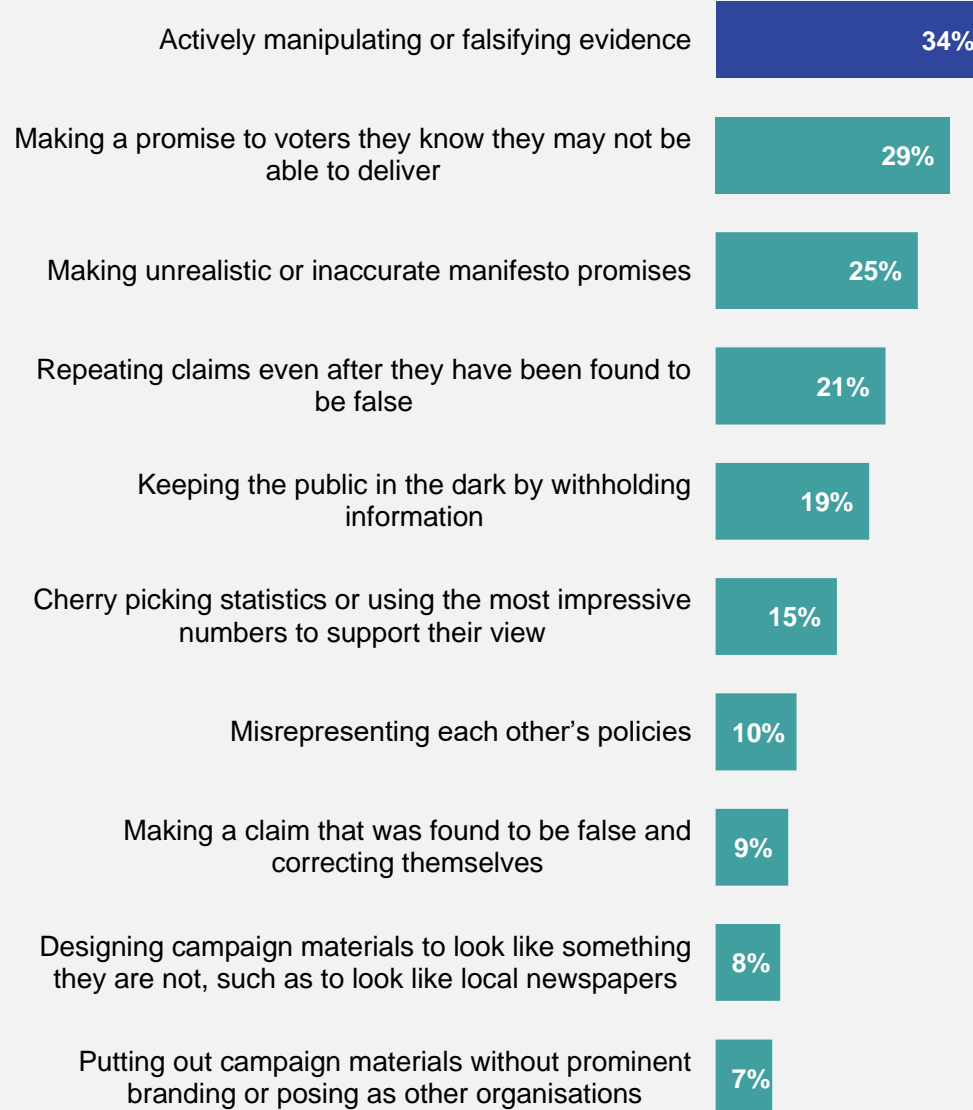
Q. Below is a list of behaviours politicians and parties may engage in as part of a general election campaign. Which of these, if any, do you consider to be the most unacceptable?

Base: All UK adults 18+ (n=2,000)

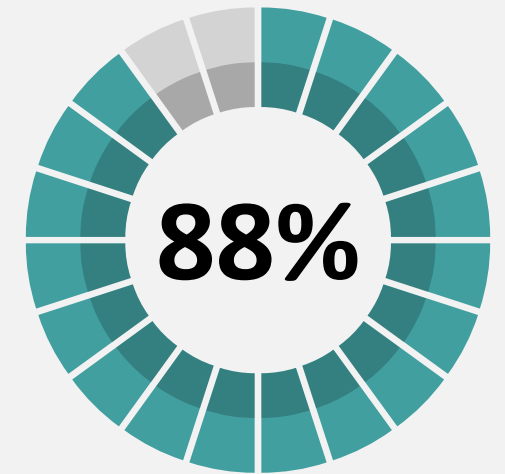
Q. Do you think it should or should not be a legal requirement that factual claims in political adverts must be accurate?

Base: All UK adults 18+ (n=2,000)

## Most unacceptable behaviours among political parties



## Legal requirement for political adverts



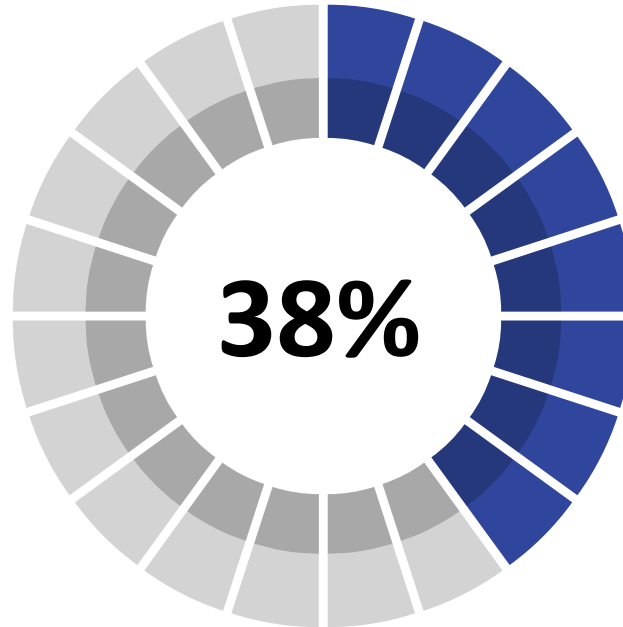
agree it should be a legal requirement that factual claims in political adverts must be accurate

# Over a third have been put off voting due to misleading political claims, and more than a quarter have changed their voting preference.

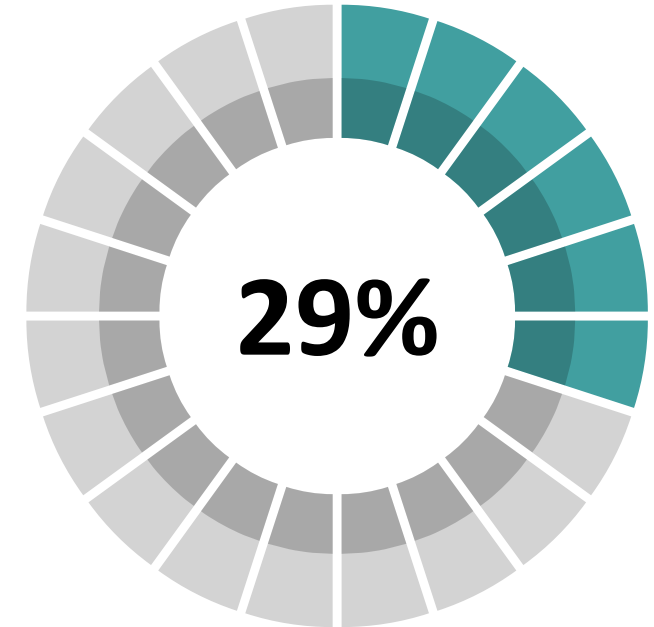
Fieldwork: Online 19th – 21st December 2023

Q. Below is a list of statements about the upcoming general election. Please indicate to what extent you agree, or disagree, with each of the following statements. (% agree)

Base: All UK adults 18+ (n=2,000), UK adults 18-34 (n=478), UK adults 55-64 (n=335)



I have been **put off voting** by the level of false or misleading claims in current politics / the previous election campaign



I have **changed my voting preference** due to false or misleading claims in current politics / the previous election campaign

**Ages 18-34**

**52%**

vs

**Ages 55-64**

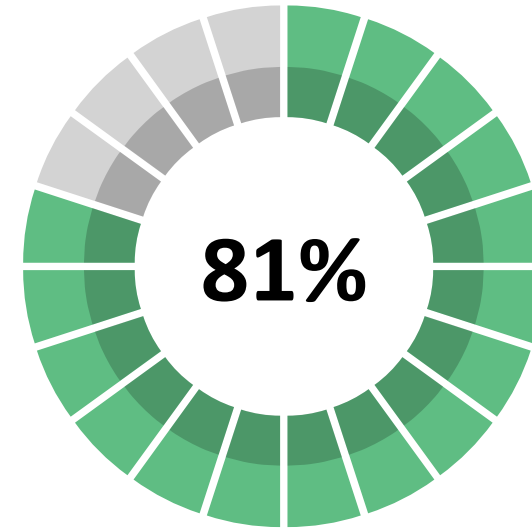
**30%**

**Younger people are more likely** to have been put off voting by misinformation.



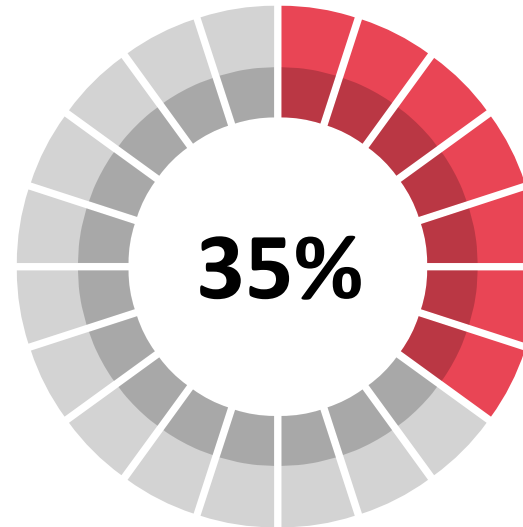
# 4 in 5 want to see politicians held to account on their claims, but only a minority feel empowered to make a difference.

The majority feel that...

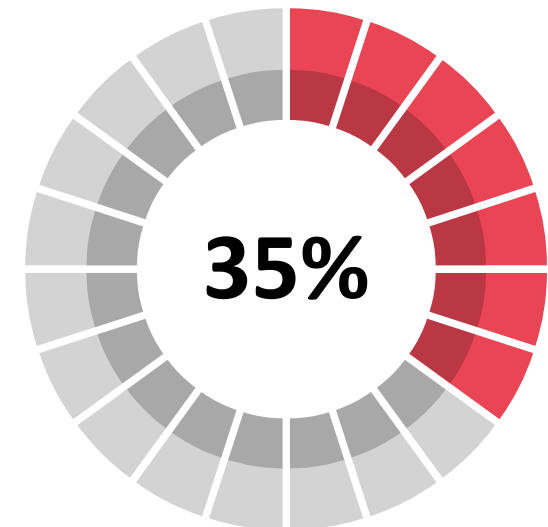


It's important to **hold public figures to a higher standard and demand truth from politicians**

A third feel that...



People like me have the power to **hold politicians to account**



When people like me get involved in politics it is **possible to make real changes to how the UK is run**

Fieldwork: Online 19th – 21st December 2023

Q. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. (% agree)

Base: All UK adults 18+ (n=2,000)

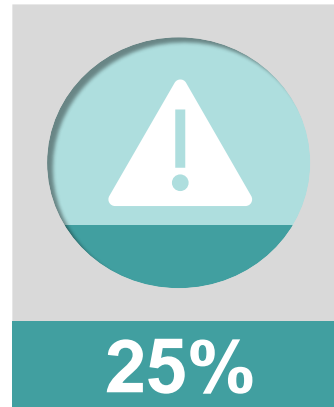
# There is high support for parties adopting honest standards in manifestos and having spending commitments independently checked.

Fieldwork: Online 19th – 21st December 2023

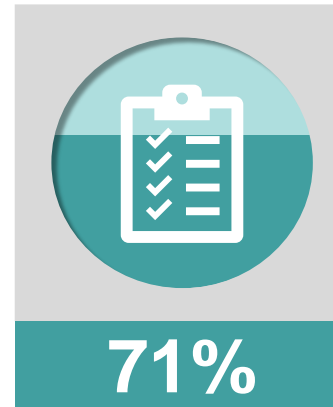
Q. Below is a list of statements about the upcoming general election. Please indicate to what extent you agree, or disagree, with each of the following statements. (% agree)

Base: All UK adults 18+ (n=2,000), UK adults 18-34 (n=478), UK adults 55-64 (n=335)

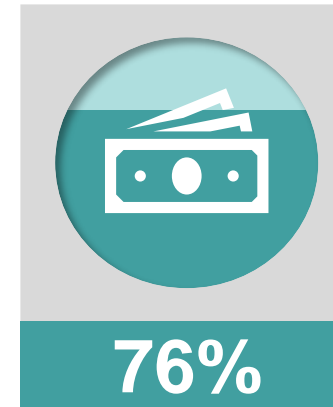
## Opinions on political party manifestos



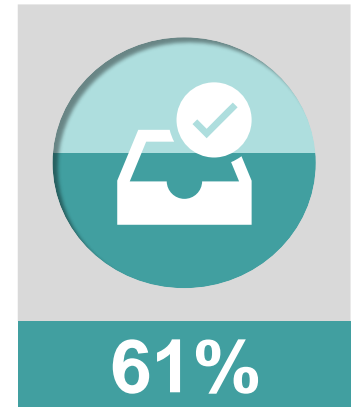
I trust what I read in or hear about political party manifestos



I support political parties adopting a set of standards for honesty and transparency in manifestos



The spending commitments political parties make in their manifestos should be checked and costed by an independent body



The commitments made in political party manifestos are important to me when determining my vote



Ages 18-34

44%

vs

Ages 55-64

8%

Younger people are significantly more likely to trust what they read in or hear about political party manifestos than older generations.

# Nearly a third have been motivated to get more involved due to false claims in politics and the previous election.

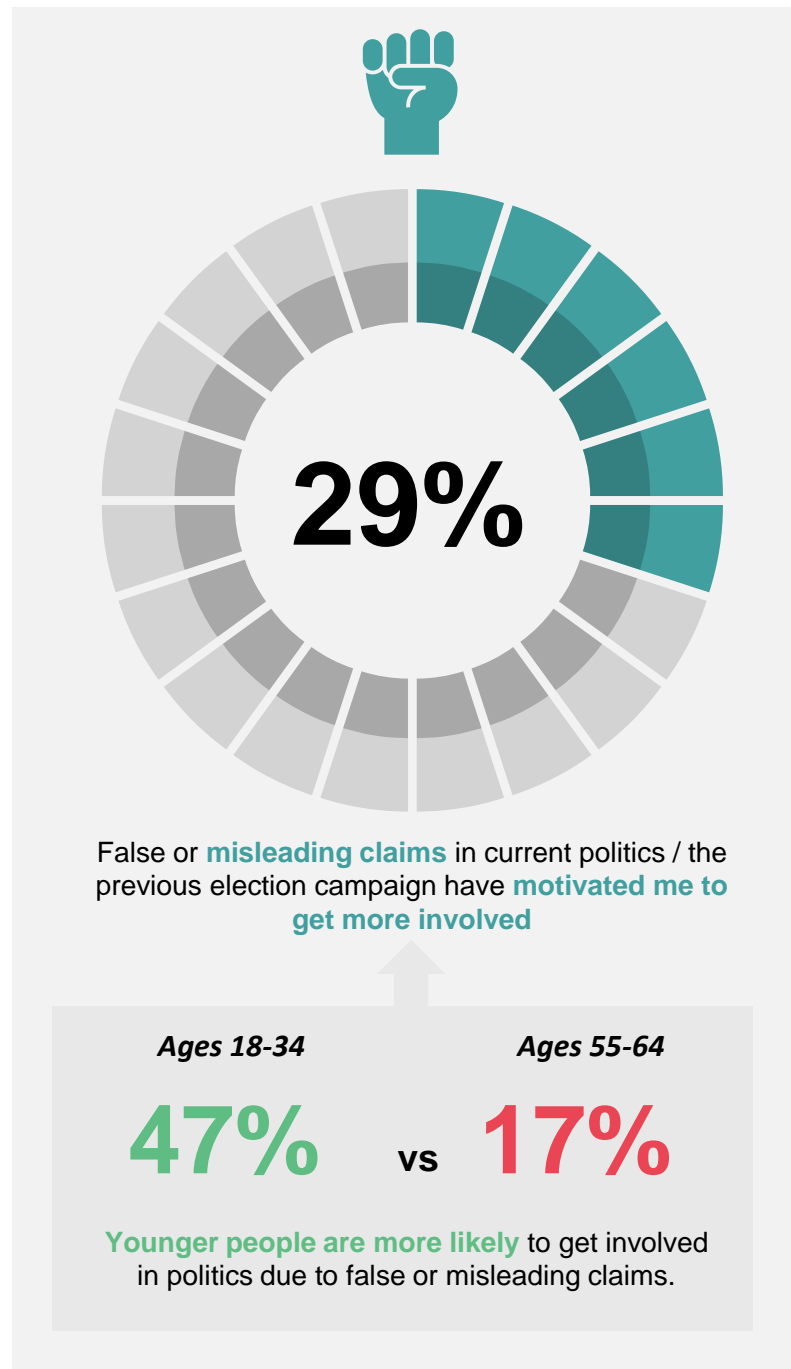
Fieldwork: Online 19th – 21st December 2023

Q. Below is a list of statements about the upcoming general election. Please indicate to what extent you agree, or disagree, with each of the following statements. % agree

Base: All UK adults 18+ (n=2,000), UK adults 18-34 (n=478), UK adults 55-64 (n=335)

Q. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. (% agree)

Base: Those who agree that when they get involved in politics it is possible to make real changes to how the UK is run (n=706)



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At Ipsos we believe our clients need more than a data supplier, they need a partner who can produce accurate and relevant information and turn it into actionable truth.

This is why our passionately curious experts not only provide the most precise measurement, but shape it to provide True Understanding of Society, Markets and People.

To do this we use the best of science, technology and know-how and apply the principles of security, simplicity, speed and substance to everything we do.

So that our clients can act faster, smarter and bolder.

Ultimately, success comes down to a simple truth:

**You act better when you are sure.**

\*\*\*

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**ISO 27001** – International standard for information security designed to ensure the selection of adequate and proportionate security controls. Ipsos UK was the first research company in the UK to be awarded this in August 2008.



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**HMG Cyber Essentials** – A government backed and key deliverable of the UK's National Cyber Security Programme. Ipsos UK was assessment validated for certification in 2016. Cyber Essentials defines a set of controls which, when properly implemented, provide organisations with basic protection from the most prevalent forms of threat coming from the internet.



**Fair Data** – Ipsos UK is signed up as a 'Fair Data' Company by agreeing to adhere to twelve core principles. The principles support and complement other standards such as ISOs, and the requirements of Data Protection legislation.

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**This work was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the international quality standard for market research, ISO 20252 and with the Ipsos UK Terms and Conditions.**

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