

Information Rights Strategic Plan: Trust and Confidence



Prepared for:

Information Commissioner's Office



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A. Background

A.1 Background

Goal #1 of the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) Information Rights Strategic Plan 2017-21 is to "increase the trust the public has in government, public bodies and the private sector in terms of how personal information is used and made available" and in doing so, to increase public trust through transparency and creating a culture of accountability, both in the digital economy and in digital public service delivery.

It is therefore important for the ICO to gauge and monitor the public's changing perceptions in this area and where possible to use benchmarks from previous waves of the research to understand trends.

The trust and confidence research was last undertaken in July 2019. This year's study took place during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, which started in March 2020.

B. Aims & Objectives

B.1 Overall Objective

The main aim of this research is:

"To gauge the general public's awareness and perceptions of their information rights and to monitor any change in people's trust and confidence in organisations who use their personal information. Also, to provide a measure of how the Commissioner/ ICO is perceived by the UK public."

In more detail, the research aims to:

- Monitor the differing levels of the public's trust and confidence in how companies and organisations collect, use and store personal information and in doing so assess what drives people's level of trust and confidence.
- Measure public perceptions about the regulator.
- Identify individuals' awareness of their legislative rights and how to exercise them.
- Understand individuals' perceptions around handing over personal information in return for access to products and services.

C. Executive Summary

Below is a summary of the key findings from the 2020 research.

Trust & Confidence

- There has been a significant shift towards the middle ground in terms of the public's trust and confidence in companies and organisations storing and using personal information. Levels of both high and low trust and confidence have decreased.
- Amongst those with medium levels of trust and confidence, there has been an increase in data hacking concerns being given as a reason for their response, as well as stating that it depends on the company as some are better than others.
- Levels of trust and confidence in the NHS/local GP, financial services and mobile, broadband and utility providers have risen, whilst that of social media providers remains relatively low.
- There have been slight decreases in stated levels of understanding of how personal information is used and made available.
- Significantly more people agree that current laws and regulations sufficiently protect their personal information, that it is easy to access and change personal information and that companies/organisations are transparent about how they collect and use information. However, a large proportion still disagrees with these last two aspects.
- Those who have heard about or experienced a data breach are more likely to have lower levels of trust and confidence.

Accountability

- The data protection concerns of most importance to the public and which would most stop them using a company/organisation are having their personal information stolen or shared/sold to third parties and being a victim of fraud/scams.
- More people state they would search online or contact the company in question this year for information on protecting their personal information.
- The public believe that companies/organisations – more so than company directors – should be held accountable for data breaches. They state that banning companies and organisations from sharing personal information with third parties without permission and making it a legal requirement to inform customers of data breaches would increase trust and confidence.

Perceptions of the regulator

- Two fifths of the public are aware of the ICO, and two thirds of these are aware that it is the regulator for data protection in the UK.
- A majority of the public agrees that some of the ICO's purposes apply to it (i.e. they are there to act in the interests of the public and can enforce data protection through the courts). However, there is often uncertainty.

Perceptions of legislative rights and how to exercise them

- There is substantial appetite to exercise both data protection and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) rights, but there is often uncertainty around how to do this.
- Those who have exercised their rights are more likely to have higher levels of trust and confidence than those who haven't.
- The public's awareness of FOIA rights has decreased in 2020.

Perceptions of the exchange of information

- The public are often willing to trade personal information for access to products and services. However, they are largely against contact from companies as a result of information being shared.

D. Methodology and Response Rates

D.1 Methodology – main sample and regional boost

Harris Interactive, an independent market research agency, designed and implemented an online quantitative self-completion questionnaire using an online UK panel.

To ensure robust sample sizes for each of the devolved nations, a boost sample was undertaken to ensure a minimum of 100 interviews were achieved in each of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

D.1.1 Interviews achieved

2150 online interviews were obtained amongst UK adults between 25th June - 6th July 2020.

Table 1. Number of online interviews achieved by gender

	Total	%
Male	1025	48%
Female	1125	52%
TOTAL	2150	100%

Table 2. Number of online interviews achieved by age

	Total	%
18-24	209	10%
25-34	356	17%
35-44	359	17%
45-54	390	18%
55-64	362	17%
65+	474	22%
TOTAL	2150	100%

Table 3. Number of online interviews achieved by region

	Total	%
England	1742	81%
Scotland	156	7%
Northern Ireland	137	6%
Wales	115	5%
TOTAL	2150	100%

D.1.2 Reporting

The data has been weighted to be nationally representative by age, gender and region.

Where relevant, comparisons have been made to the 2019 survey.

D.1.3 Interpreting the results

This is a trended report documenting differences and similarities between the 2019 and 2020 results, at a total and sub-group level, including age, BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) status, and countries.

Where meaningful year-on-year changes have occurred, or exist between sub-groups, these are highlighted as significant differences. Significant differences refer to data that is statistically significant, i.e. there is statistical evidence that the difference between two figures has not occurred by chance to a level of 95% significance level.

D.2 Methodology – Offline boost

A nationally representative telephone omnibus study was also commissioned to help obtain the views of those who have not got access to the Internet (referred to as offline adults in this report).

80 interviews were obtained with UK offline adults between 3rd – 17th July 2020.

The results for this audience are not included in the total data shown, but any differences to the online survey are highlighted.

E. Research Findings

E.1 Understanding public trust & confidence levels

The public continues to be split on the trust and confidence it has in companies and organisations storing and using their personal information, with a significant shift towards the neutral middle point in 2020.

- Just over a quarter (27%) of people have high trust and confidence (rating 4-5 out of 5) in companies and organisations storing and using their personal information, which is significantly down from the 32% stating this in 2019.
- The proportion with low trust and confidence (rating 1-2 out of 5) has also significantly decreased from 38% to 28%.
- There has been a significant increase in people stating “3 out of 5” in 2020 (45%, up 15% points on 2019).

Q1. How much trust and confidence do you have in companies and organisations storing and using your personal information?

	2019	2020
NET: Low trust and confidence	38%	28%
1 – None at all	10%	10%
2	28%	18%
3	30%	45%
4	27%	21%
5 – A great deal	6%	6%
NET: High Trust and Confidence	32%	27%

Base: All Adults: 2019 (2259) / 2020 (2150)

- Males (31%) are significantly more likely to have high trust and confidence in companies and organisations storing and using their personal information than females (23%).
- Trust and confidence is significantly higher amongst 18-34 year olds (39%) than 35-54 (27%) and 55+ year olds (18%).
- Those living in urban areas (39%) have a significantly higher level of trust and confidence than those living in suburban areas (25%) and rural areas (19%).
- BAME respondents (36%) also have a significantly higher level of trust and confidence than non-BAME respondents (26%).
- Offline respondents (61%) are significantly more likely to have a low trust and confidence in companies than online respondents (28%).

As seen in 2019, the main stated reasons given by the public for having a high level of trust and confidence (rating 4-5 out of 5) in companies and organisations storing and using their personal information are centred primarily around trust (borne out of experience or reputation) followed by awareness of legislation.

- There have been slight increases in the proportion stating that the reason for their high level of trust and confidence is due to legislation (15% from 13% in 2019) and because companies protect their customers' data and don't sell/share data without gaining the appropriate consent first (7% from 5% in 2019).

Q1a. What is the main reason for the level of trust and confidence you have in companies and organisations storing and using your personal information?
 (Most cited reasons amongst those with a high level of trust and confidence)

	2019	2020
Good (previous) experience (Never had any problems/No experience of data breaches/loss etc.)	15%	15%
Legislation (protected by the law, regulations, Data Protection Act etc.)	13%	15%
Trust/I trust them/their policies	11%	12%
Security (safe, good security systems)	11%	9%
Companies protect my data (they don't share/sell my information without my consent etc.)	5%	7%
(I choose/use) Reputable/Well-known companies	4%	6%
Their reputation is at stake (They care for their reputation, it's in their own interests to protect data, not lose customers etc.)	4%	4%
New GDPR policy/Companies have to comply to the new GDPR policy	5%	4%
Other	11%	15%
None/Nothing/No reason	3%	7%
Don't know/Not sure	5%	2%

All Adults with a high level of trust and confidence in companies and organisations storing and using personal information:
 2019 (728) / 2020 (583)

The main reasons given by the public for having a low level of trust and confidence (rating 1-2 out of 5) in companies and organisations storing and using their personal information are similar to those cited in 2019 and are centred around concerns about data hacking/leaks and the belief that companies sell personal information to third parties.

- There has been a notable increase in 2020 in the proportion of adults stating the reason for their low level of trust and confidence is a belief that companies and organisations are profit-driven (13% up from 9%), and this is now at the same level as data leaks/breaches.
- There has also been a notable increase in the proportion of adults stating the reason for their low level of trust and confidence is resulting from a general lack of trust (11% rising from 7%).

Q1a. What is the main reason for the level of trust and confidence you have in companies and organisations storing and using your personal information?

(Most cited reasons amongst those with a low level of trust and confidence)

	2019	2020
They sell your personal information (to 3rd parties)	17%	18%
Data hacking	16%	16%
Data leaks/breaches	15%	13%
They are profit-driven (they use data for their own purposes/interests)	9%	13%
Concerns about data/information being misused (not sure what they do with my data)	11%	12%
Lack of trust/Not trustworthy/I don't trust anyone	7%	11%
Concerns about security (Lack of safety/ Security issues/ Poor security systems/It's not (completely) secure)	11%	9%
They share your personal information with 3rd parties (without my consent)	11%	7%
Spam (junk/ unsolicited emails)	4%	5%
Marketing/Advertising purpose (used in advertising, for targeted advertising)	3%	5%
Other	5%	8%
Don't know/Not sure	1%	1%

All Adults with a low level of trust and confidence in companies and organisations storing and using personal information:
2019 (853) / 2020 (600)

Given the significant increase in the proportion of adults with a medium level of trust and confidence (rating 3 out of 5) in companies and organisations storing and using their personal information in 2020, it is also worth looking at the reasons given for this level. The most commonly cited reason is data hacking concerns, and this has significantly increased from 9% in 2019 to 13% in 2020.

- There has also been a significant increase in the proportion of people with a medium rating of trust and confidence stating that it depends on the company, as some are better/safer than others. This has increased from 8% in 2019 to 12% in 2020.

Q1a. What is the main reason for the level of trust and confidence you have in companies and organisations storing and using your personal information?

(Most cited reasons amongst those with a medium level of trust and confidence)

	2019	2020
Data hacking concerns	9%	13%
Depends on the company (some are better/safer than others etc.)	8%	12%
Concerns about data/information being misused (not sure what they do with my data)	9%	9%
Data leaks/breaches	8%	9%
They sell your personal information (to 3rd parties)	7%	9%
Concerns about security (Lack of safety/ Security issues/ Poor security systems/It's not (completely) secure)	9%	7%
I remain vigilant/careful (I have my doubts)	6%	6%
They share your personal information with 3rd parties (without my consent)	8%	5%
Good (previous) experience (Never had any problems/No experience of data breaches/loss etc.)	3%	5%
Other	7%	8%
Don't know/Not sure	5%	4%

All Adults with a medium level of trust and confidence in companies and organisations storing and using personal information: 2019 (679) / 2020 (976)

The highest levels of trust and confidence (rating 4-5 out of 5) in different types of companies and organisations storing and using personal information continue to be for the NHS, Police and national governmental bodies, and the lowest levels of trust and confidence (rating 1-2 out of 5) continue to be for social media companies.

- Nearly three quarters (73%) of people say they have high trust and confidence in the NHS or their local GP storing and using their personal information. This is up significantly (by 7% points) on 2019.
- The proportion of people saying they have high trust and confidence in financial services (56%) and mobile, broadband and utility providers (34%) have both significantly increased since 2019 (up from 52% and 29% respectively).
- Levels of trust and confidence in social messaging platforms storing and using personal information remain low with only one in six (16%) people stating high levels of trust and confidence in them. This is stable with 2019.
 - Less than one in twenty (4%) of offline respondents have a high level of trust and confidence in social media companies.

Q2. How much trust and confidence do you have in the following companies and organisations storing and using your personal information?

	2019		2020	
	NET LOW TRUST & CONFIDENCE	NET HIGH TRUST & CONFIDENCE	NET LOW TRUST & CONFIDENCE	NET HIGH TRUST & CONFIDENCE
The NHS or your local GP	11%	66%	8%	73%
The Police	15%	60%	17%	59%
National Governmental departments/ organisations	18%	55%	18%	57%
Financial services	21%	52%	16%	56%
Local Government	22%	48%	20%	51%
Online retailers	30%	34%	29%	35%
Mobile, broadband, utility providers	34%	29%	27%	34%
Social messaging platforms	63%	15%	60%	16%

Base: All Adults: 2019 (2259) / 2020 (2150)

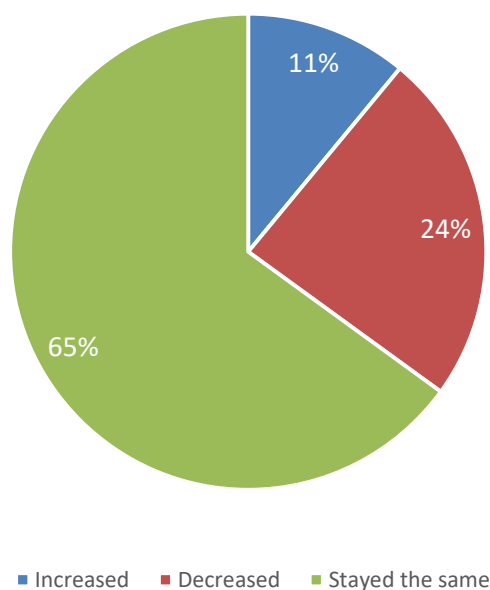
- Males and 18-34 year olds are significantly more likely to have a high level of trust and confidence in online retailers, mobile, broadband and utility providers and social messaging platforms than females and 35+ year olds.
 - 18-34 year olds (62%) are significantly more likely to have high trust and confidence in financial service providers than 35-54 year olds (51%) and 55+ year olds (57%).
 - Males are significantly more likely to have a low trust and confidence in local Government, the Police and financial service providers than females.
- Those living in urban areas are also significantly more likely to have a high level of trust and confidence in online retailers, mobile, broadband and utility providers and social messaging platforms than those living in suburban or rural areas.

- Non-BAME respondents (60%) are significantly more likely to have a high level of trust and confidence in the Police storing and using their personal information than BAME respondents (50%).
- Offline respondents are significantly more likely to have a low level of trust and confidence in National Government or Local Government (both at 43%) storing and using their personal information than their online counterparts (18% and 20% respectively).

The majority (65%) of the public perceive that their trust and confidence in companies and organisations storing and using personal information has stayed the same (65%) in the past year.

- Just over one in ten (11%) feel that their trust and confidence has increased, whereas nearly a quarter (24%) state that it has decreased.

MQ2a. Has your trust and confidence in companies and organisations storing and using your personal information increased, decreased or stayed the same in the past year?



NB: This question was not asked in 2019

Base: All Adults: (2150)

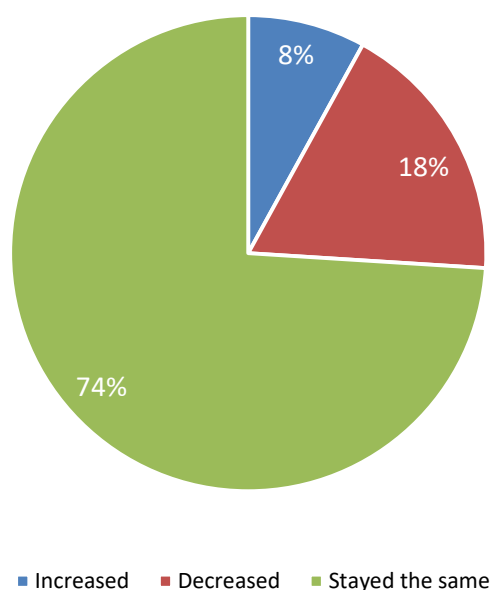
- Males (14%) are significantly more likely to feel that their trust and confidence has increased in the last year compared with females (8%).
- 18-34 year olds (22%) are significantly more likely to feel that their trust and confidence has increased in the last year than 35-54 year olds (11%) and 55+ year olds (3%).
- Those living in urban areas (23%) are significantly more likely to feel that their trust and confidence has increased in the last year than those living in suburban (8%) or rural areas (5%).
- BAME respondents (23%) are significantly more likely to feel that their trust and confidence has increased in the last year compared with non-BAME respondents (10%).

- Over seven in ten (72%) offline respondents feel that their trust and confidence has stayed the same in the last year.

A similar picture is seen in regard to the public's perception of changes to their trust and confidence in companies and organisations storing and using personal information since the COVID-19 lockdown in March 2020, with the majority (74%) stating that their trust and confidence is unchanged.

- Less than one in five (18%) feel that their trust and confidence levels have decreased since March 2020.
- Under one in ten (8%) feel that their trust and confidence levels have increased since the COVID-19 lockdown.

MQ9a. Since the COVID-19 lockdown has been in place (March 2020), has your level of trust and confidence in companies and organisations storing and using your personal information increased, decreased or stayed the same?



NB: This question was not asked in 2019

Base: All Adults: (2150)

- As seen with perceptions of change in levels of trust and confidence over the last year, males (12%) are significantly more likely to feel their trust and confidence levels have increased since the March 2020 lockdown compared to females (5%).
- Similarly, those living in urban (21%) areas are significantly more likely to feel their trust and confidence levels have increased compared to those living in suburban (5%) or rural (3%) areas.
- BAME respondents (15%) are significantly more likely to feel that their trust and confidence has increased since the March 2020 lockdown compared with non-BAME respondents (8%).

Levels of understanding of how personal information is used by companies and organisations remain at similar levels to 2019. Around one in six (15%) adults feel they have a good understanding of how their personal information is used by companies and organisations in the UK. This is slightly down from the 16% who felt they had a good understanding in 2019.

- The proportion of people who feel they know very little or nothing at all about how their personal information is used by companies and organisations has increased slightly from 27% in 2019 to 31% in 2020.

Q3. Which of the following statements comes closest to your understanding of how your personal information is being **used** by companies and organisations in the UK?

	2019	2020
I have a good understanding of how my personal information is used	16%	15%
I am familiar with some aspects of how my personal information is used, but not all aspects	57%	54%
I know very little about how my personal information is used	24%	27%
I know nothing at all about how my personal information is used	3%	4%

Base: All Adults: 2019 (2259) / 2020 (2150)

- Males (20%) are significantly more likely to feel they have a good understanding of how their personal information is used than females (11%).
 - Respondents from urban areas (26%) are significantly more likely to feel they have a good understanding of how their personal information is used than respondents from suburban (11%) or rural areas (14%).
 - BAME respondents (24%) are significantly more likely to feel they have a good understanding of how their personal information is used than non-BAME respondents (14%).
- 55+ year olds (37%) are significantly more likely to feel that they know very little or nothing at all about how their personal information is used than 18-34 year olds (25%) and 35-54 year olds (30%).
- Members of the public from Northern Ireland (38%) are most likely to feel that they know very little or nothing at all about how their personal information is used compared to those from Wales (30%), England (31%) and Scotland (32%).

There has been a slight decrease in the proportion of people with a good understanding of how their personal information is made available to third parties and the public by companies and organisations in the UK since 2019.

- Around one in eight (13%) adults feel they have a good understanding of how their personal information is made available to third parties and the public by companies and organisations in the UK. This is a slight decrease from the 15% who felt they had a good understanding in 2019.
- Just over two fifths (41%) feel they know very little or nothing at all about how their personal information is made available by companies and organisations. This is slightly up from the 38% feeling this in 2019.

Q4. Which of the following statements comes closest to your understanding about how your personal information is being **made available to third parties and the public** by companies and organisations in the UK?

	2019	2020
I have a good understanding of how my personal information is made available	15%	13%
I am familiar with some aspects of how my personal information is made available, but not all aspects	47%	46%
I know very little about how my personal information is made available	32%	33%
I know nothing at all about how my personal information is made available	6%	8%

Base: All Adults: 2019 (2259) / 2020 (2150)

- Males (17%) are significantly more likely to feel they have a good understanding of how their personal information is made available than females (9%), whereas females are significantly more likely to feel that they know very little or nothing at all about how their personal information is made available than males (47% vs 36% respectively).
- Respondents from urban areas (24%) are significantly more likely to feel they have a good understanding of how their personal information is made available than respondents from suburban or rural areas (both at 9%).
- BAME respondents (23%) are significantly more likely to feel they have a good understanding of how their personal information is made available than non-BAME respondents (13%).

In the post GDPR society, the public is by and large more aware that they have control over access and amendments to their personal information held by companies and organisations, and thus feel more protected than in 2019.

- There has been a notable positive shift in responses to statements about the use personal information, especially so with “current laws and regulations sufficiently protect personal information”, with the proportion agreeing up significantly from 33% to 49% since 2019.
 - Around a quarter (24%) of offline respondents feel that “current laws and regulations sufficiently protect personal information”.
- Significantly more people also agree that “it is easy to access and change personal information held by companies/organisations” than in 2019 (40% compared to 31%).
 - A notably lesser proportion of offline respondents (27%) agree that “it is easy to access and change personal information held by companies/organisations”
- The proportion of the public that agrees that “companies/organisations are open and transparent about how they collect and use personal information” has also increased significantly since 2019 (37% compared to 26%).
 - Around a quarter (23%) of offline respondents feel that “companies/organisations are open and transparent about how they collect and use personal information”.
- Despite these positive shifts, over half of the public disagrees that “companies/organisations are open and transparent about how they collect and use personal information”, “it is easy to find out how my personal information is stored and used by companies/organisations” and “it is easy to find out whether my personal information is shared with third parties”.

Q5. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the use of personal information in the UK?

	2019			2020		
	NET Agree	NET Disagree	Don't know	NET Agree	NET Disagree	Don't know
Current laws and regulations sufficiently protect personal information	33%	58%	9%	49%	41%	11%
It is easy to access and change my personal information held by companies/organisations	31%	56%	13%	40%	45%	15%
Companies/organisations are open and transparent about how they collect and use personal information	26%	65%	9%	37%	54%	9%
It is easy to find out how my personal information is stored and used by companies/ organisations	23%	64%	13%	31%	55%	13%
It is easy to find out whether my personal information is shared with third parties	23%	63%	14%	29%	58%	13%

Base: All Adults: 2019 (2259) / 2020 (2150)

Nearly three fifths (57%) of the public state that they or a close friend/family member have heard about or actually experienced a data breach (i.e. personal information being shared without permission, used fraudulently or lost/stolen) in the last 12 months, which is a significant increase of 8% points since 2019.

- The increase since 2019 has been driven by a rise in incidents personally affecting the public (up from 42% to 51%), mainly due to significant increases in “heard a news story about a data breach in a company/organisation that I have shared personal information with, but was not personally notified” (up from 22% to 26%) and “been told by a company or organisation I’ve contacted/hold an account with or are employed by, that my personal details may have been lost or stolen” (up from 11% to 15%).
- Over one in ten (11%) offline respondents state that they have heard about or actually experienced a data breach.

Q7i & Q7ii. Thinking about personal information you may hold with companies and organisations, have any of the following things happened to you or a close friend/family member in the last 12 months?

	2019			2020		
	Happened to you	Happened to a friend/family	NET Happened to you/friend or family	Happened to you	Happened to a friend/family	NET Happened to you/friend or family
Net: ANY	42%	39%	49%	51%	36%	57%
Heard a news story about a data breach in a company/ organisation that I/they have shared personal information with, but was not personally notified	22%	16%	28%	26%	12%	31%
Personal information has been shared with a third party without permission	15%	14%	21%	15%	9%	20%
Had an online account(s) accessed or used fraudulently by someone else	12%	15%	20%	12%	13%	22%
Had personal details stolen and used to commit fraud	8%	12%	16%	8%	11%	16%
Been told by a company or organisation I/they’ve contacted/ hold an account with or are employed by, that my/their personal details may have been lost or stolen	11%	9%	15%	15%	9%	19%
None of these	58%	61%	51%	49%	64%	43%

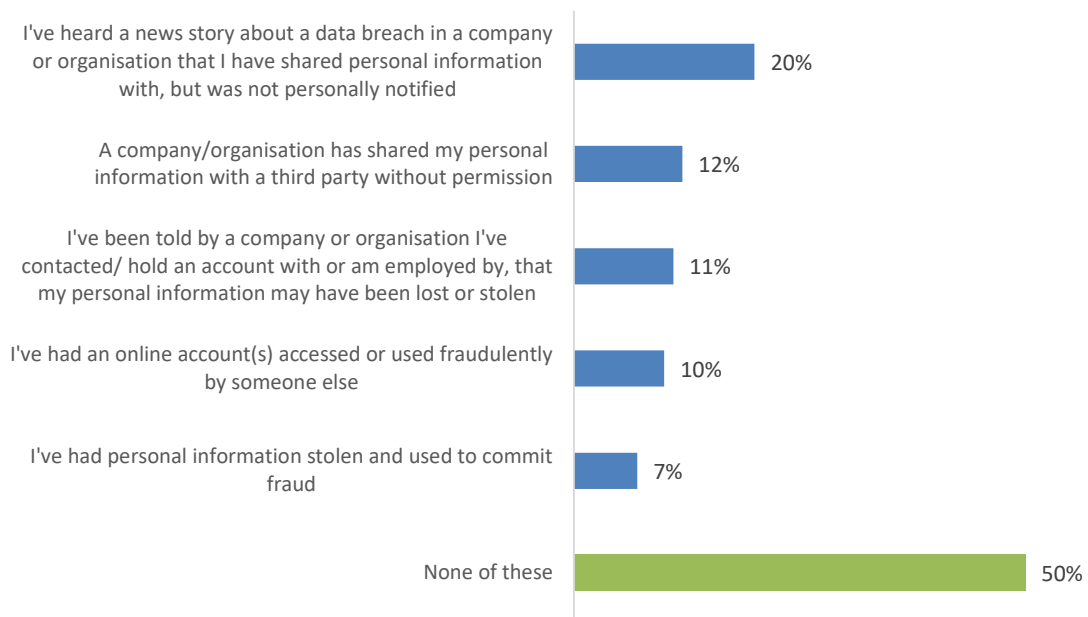
Base: All Adults: 2019 (2259) / 2020 (2150)

- Those who have heard about or experienced a data breach are more likely to have low trust and confidence. Amongst those who have heard about or experienced a data breach, a third (33%) have low trust and confidence. Whereas amongst those who haven't heard about or experienced a data breach, less than a quarter (24%) have low trust and confidence.
 - Furthermore, two in five (40%) of those having heard about or experienced a data breach have medium trust and confidence, and this rises to half (50%) amongst those not having heard about or experienced a data breach.

Amongst those who have heard about or actually experienced a data breach in the past year, half (50%) report these things occurring since the COVID-19 lockdown in March.

- Of those who have heard about or actually experienced a data breach since the March COVID-19 lockdown, the most commonly mentioned breach is "hearing of a news story about a data breach in a company or organisation that they have shared personal information with, but was not personally notified" (20%).

Q7ia. Again, thinking about your personal information held by companies and organisations, have any of the following things happened to you since the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown in March?



NB: This question was not asked in 2019

Base: All Adults who have had something happen to their personal information in the last 12 months: (1085)

Almost three quarters (73%) feel that if a company/organisation that they used was affected by a data breach and their information was lost or stolen, the company holding the data should be held responsible.

- Two fifths (39%) of the public feel that the culpability should rest with the directors of the company/organisation holding their personal information.

Q8. If a company/organisation that you used was affected by a data breach and your information was lost or stolen, who do you think should be held responsible?

	2020
The company/ organisation who was holding my personal information	73%
The directors of the company/organisation holding my personal information	39%
A regulatory body	17%
The Government	11%
You	9%
Don't Know	5%
None	2%
Other	1%

NB: This question was not asked in the same way in 2019

Base: All Adults: (2150)

- Males (42%) are significantly more likely to state that the directors of the company/organisation holding their personal information should be held responsible compared to females (35%).
- 55+ year olds (81%) are significantly more likely to state that the company/organisation holding their data should be held responsible than 35-54 year olds (72%) and 18-34 year olds (62%).
- 18-34 year olds (14%) were significantly more likely to state that if a data breach occurs, the individual affected should be held responsible than 35-54 year olds (9%) and 55+ year olds (5%).
- BAME respondents are significantly more likely to state that if a data breach occurs, the regulatory body or Government (27% and 19% respectively) should be held responsible than non-BAME respondents (16% and 10% respectively).

People are most likely to state that either “banning companies/organisations from sharing personal information with third parties without permission” or “making it a legal requirement for companies/organisations to tell customers that they have been affected by a data breach” would increase their trust and confidence in how their personal information is used and made available. These are ranked first of six options by 24% and 23% respectively and in the top three by 62% each.

- The public is least likely to state that “companies/organisations having to register with the UK body that upholds the public’s information rights” would increase trust and confidence in how personal information is used and made available. This is ranked first by one in ten (10%).

Q9. Which of the following, if any, would increase your trust and confidence in how your personal information is used and made available by companies and organisations?

	2020	
	1 st Choice	NET: Top 3
Ban companies/organisations from sharing personal information with third parties without permission	24%	62%
Make it a legal requirement for companies/organisations to tell customers that they have been affected by a data breach	23%	62%
Give custodial sentences (i.e. prison) for those responsible for the most severe breaches in the use of personal information	17%	46%
Fine companies and organisations if they are found to use personal information without permission	15%	58%
Make it easier to see and change any consent I have given to companies/ organisations regarding the use of my personal information	11%	40%
Register companies/organisations with the UK body that upholds the public’s information rights	10%	34%

NB: This question was not asked in the same way in 2019

Base: All Adults: (2150)

E.2 Public knowledge/awareness of the regulator of data protection

Unprompted, the largest proportion of the public states that if they wanted to get advice and/or information on protecting their personal information, they would search online, mentioned by more than three in ten (31%), up from the 28% mentioning this in 2019.

- One in six (17%) would contact the company in question, a significant increase on the proportion stating this in 2019 (13%).
- Just under one in ten (7%) would seek advice from the Citizens Advice Bureau, down from 11% in 2019.
- However, knowing where to source advice and/or information on protecting personal information remains an area of uncertainty for many, with almost one in five (19%) of the public stating they are unsure. This is down slightly on the 22% stating this in 2019.

Q13a. What would you do if you wanted to get advice and/or information on protecting your personal information? (UNPROMPTED)
(Most cited reasons)

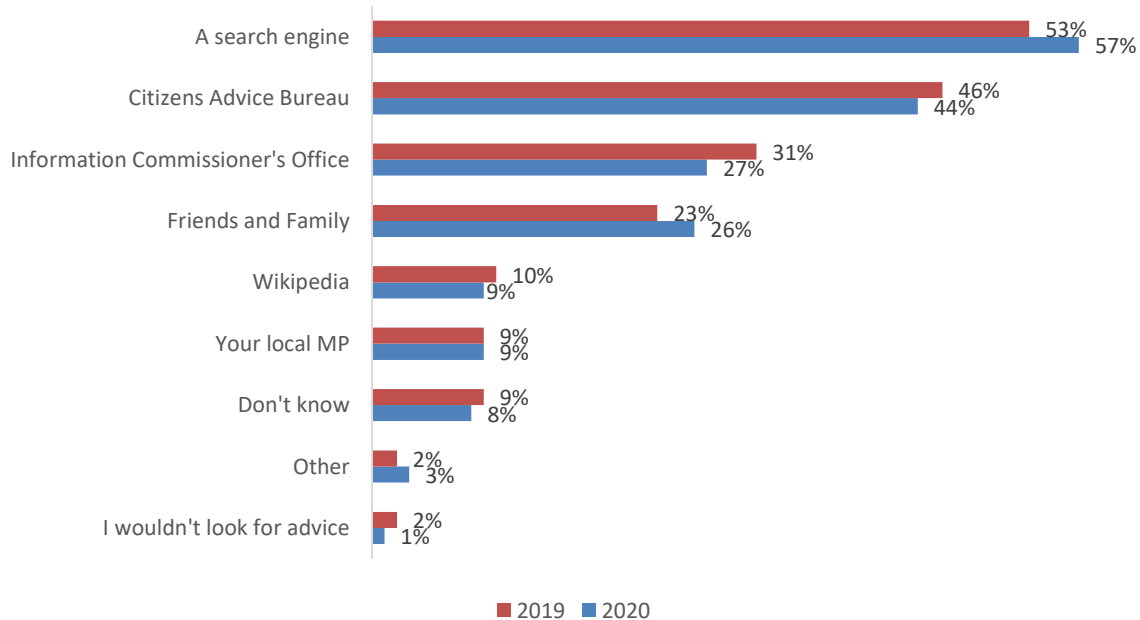
	2019	2020
Search online (NET)	28%	31%
Contact the company in question (NET)	13%	17%
Contact Citizens Advice Bureau/CAB (for advice)	11%	7%
Look on/seek help on government websites (gov.uk)	5%	4%
Contact a solicitor/lawyer/seek legal advice	3%	2%
Ask/search for information/seek advice (generic)	2%	2%
Contact the government/government bodies	2%	2%
Contact the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) (website)	2%	2%
Other	7%	6%
Don't know/Not sure	22%	19%

Base: All Adults: 2019 (2259) /2020 (2150)

When prompted, the most common way that the public would look to get advice and/or information on protecting their personal information is via a search engine, mentioned by nearly three fifths (57%). This is significantly up on the proportion stating this in 2019 (53%).

- The proportion of people who would seek advice and/or information on protecting personal information from the Citizens Advice Bureau has slightly decreased (44% vs 46% in 2019)
- There has been a significant decrease in the proportion stating they would get advice and/or information from the ICO (27% compared with 31% in 2019).
- Offline respondents are significantly more likely to ask a friend/family member (56%) for advice and/or information on protecting their personal information than their online counterparts (26%).
- Offline respondents (13%) are more likely to seek advice and or information on protecting their personal information from their local MP, than the online respondents (9%)

Q13. Where would you go to get advice and/or information on protecting your personal information? (PROMPTED)

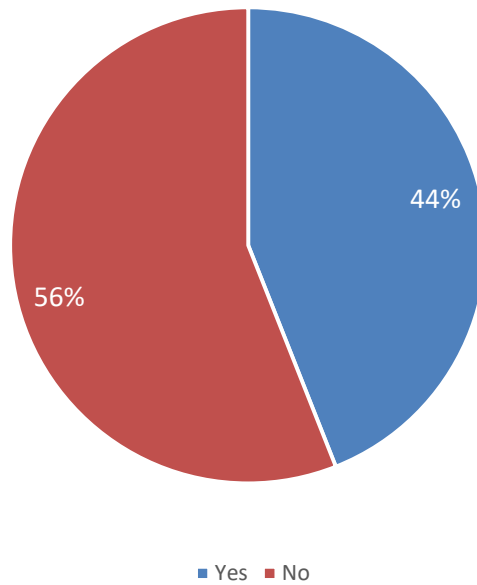


Base: All Adults: 2019 (2259) / 2020 (2150)

- 55+ year olds (11%) are significantly more likely to be unsure as to where to get advice and/or information on protecting their personal information than 18-34 year olds (5%) and 35-54 year olds (7%).

Over two in five (44%) people have heard of the ICO.

Q13c. Have you ever heard of the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)?



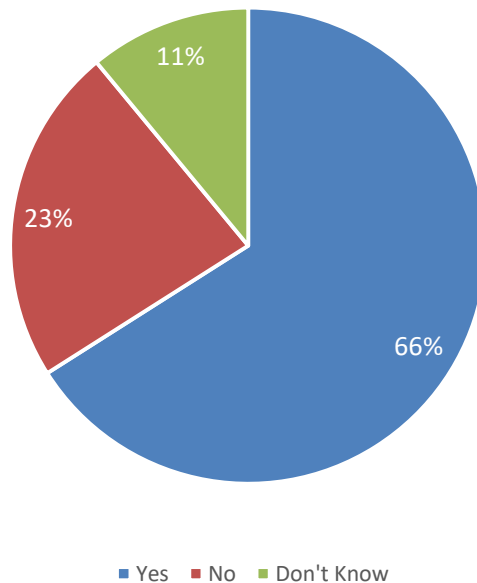
NB: This question was not asked in 2019

Base: All Adults (2150)

- Males (50%) are significantly more likely to be aware of the ICO than females (37%).
- Those living in urban areas (52%) are significantly more likely to be aware of the ICO than those living in suburban (42%) and rural (38%) areas.

When prompted, two thirds (66%) of those aware of the ICO are aware that it is the regulator for data protection in the UK.

Q13d. The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is the regulator for data protection in the UK. Were you aware of this before today?



NB: This question was not asked in 2019

Base: All Adults aware of the ICO: (937)

- Males (71%) are significantly more likely to be aware that the ICO is the regulator for data protection in the UK than females (60%).
- 35-54 year olds (72%) are significantly more likely to be aware that the ICO is the regulator for data protection in the UK than 55+ year olds (59%).

Nearly seven in ten (69%) adults believe that the “regulator is there to act for the interests of the public”, and three in five (60%) agree the “regulator can successfully enforce data protection through the courts”.

- However, one in six (17%) state “the public cannot contact the regulator” and a further one in five (21%) state “the regulator will only deal with data breaches from large companies”, enforcing the continued need to ensure the ICO’s purposes continue to be made public.
- Furthermore, there is often uncertainty around the purposes of the regulator of data protection, with between 22% - 49% of adults stating they don’t know if the purposes actually apply.

Q13bb. From the following list, please say whether you think these apply to the regulator of data protection in the UK?

	2020		
	Yes	No	Don't know
The regulator is there to act for the interests of the public	69%	9%	22%
The regulator can successfully enforce data protection through the courts	60%	9%	31%
The regulator has the power to impose a monetary penalty on a company	57%	9%	34%
The regulator can audit any company, at any time	54%	10%	36%
The regulator is a governmental department	45%	18%	36%
The regulator supports organisations to use personal information in innovative ways	30%	21%	49%
The regulator will only deal with data breaches from large companies	21%	44%	35%
The public cannot contact the regulator	17%	41%	42%

NB: This question was not asked in 2019

Base: All Adults: (2150)

- With the exception of “supporting organisations to use personal information in innovative ways” and “acting for the interests of the public”, males are significantly more likely than females to feel that these purposes apply to the regulator of data protection.
- There is less awareness of the purposes of the regulator amongst the offline audiences, with just half (51%) stating the regulator is there to act for the interests of the public and a third believing the regulator can enforce data protection through the courts.
 - One in five (21%) of the offline audience believe that the public cannot contact the regulator and two in five (39%) state that the regulator is a Governmental department.

E.3 Legislative rights and concerns

E.3.1 Personal Information

When considering the personal information held by companies and organisations in the UK, the right the public deem of most importance is the “right to access my personal information”, ranked first of eight options by 19% and in the top three by 49%.

- One in six (16%) state that the personal information right of most importance to them is the “right to restrict the processing of my personal information” with nearly half (48%) ranking it in the top three rights.
- The “right to be informed about the collection and use of my personal information” is also important for many, with around one in six (16%) ranking it first of eight options and in the top three by 43%.
- The “right to move personal information from one provider to another” is the least important right, with only one in twenty (5%) ranking it first of eight options and in the top three by 18%.

Q12a. For the personal information held about you by companies and organisations in the UK, which of the following rights are the most important to you?

	2020	
	1 st Choice	NET: Top 3
The right to access my personal information	19%	49%
The right to be informed about the collection and use of my personal information	16%	43%
The right to restrict the processing of my personal information	16%	48%
The right to be forgotten / to have personal information erased	15%	39%
The right to object to personal information being processed	13%	42%
The right to have inaccurate personal information rectified, or completed if it is incomplete	9%	31%
The right not to be the subject of automated decision making and profiling	8%	29%
The right to move personal information from one provider to another	5%	18%

NB: This question was not asked in the same way in 2019

Base: All Adults: (2150)

The proportion of the public that claims to have exercised or experienced each personal information protection right is relatively low. However, many are open to doing so in the future.

- The public's two most important personal information protection rights (based on 1st choice) - "being informed about the collection and use of my personal information" and "accessing my personal information" are also the rights with the highest proportion of the public having already done or experienced them (20% and 18% respectively).
- Between 48% - 64% either want to do or experience each right but have not yet or would consider doing or experiencing it in the future. The right with the highest proportion being open to doing it in the future is "objecting to personal information being processed" (64%), while the third most important right (based on 1st choice) – "restricting the processing of personal information" – is at similar levels (62%).
- The right with the lowest proportion being open to doing it in the future is "moving my information from one provider to another" (48%) which is also the right with the largest proportion feeling they don't know anything about it.

Q12b. Again, looking at the following personal information protection rights, which of the following best describes you on each?

	2020				
	I have already done this or experienced this	I want to do this or experience this, but have not yet	I would consider doing or experiencing this in the future	I don't know anything about this data protection right	Unsure
Being informed about the collection and use of my personal information	20%	28%	30%	12%	10%
Accessing your personal information	18%	26%	33%	13%	11%
Restricting the processing of my personal information	13%	27%	35%	15%	10%
Objecting to personal information being processed	11%	27%	37%	15%	10%
Having inaccurate personal information rectified, or completed if it is incomplete	11%	23%	37%	17%	12%
Requesting to be 'forgotten' / have personal information erased	11%	25%	35%	18%	11%
Moving my information from one provider to another	7%	17%	31%	27%	18%
Not being the subject of automated decision making and profiling	7%	25%	29%	23%	15%

NB: This question was not asked in 2019

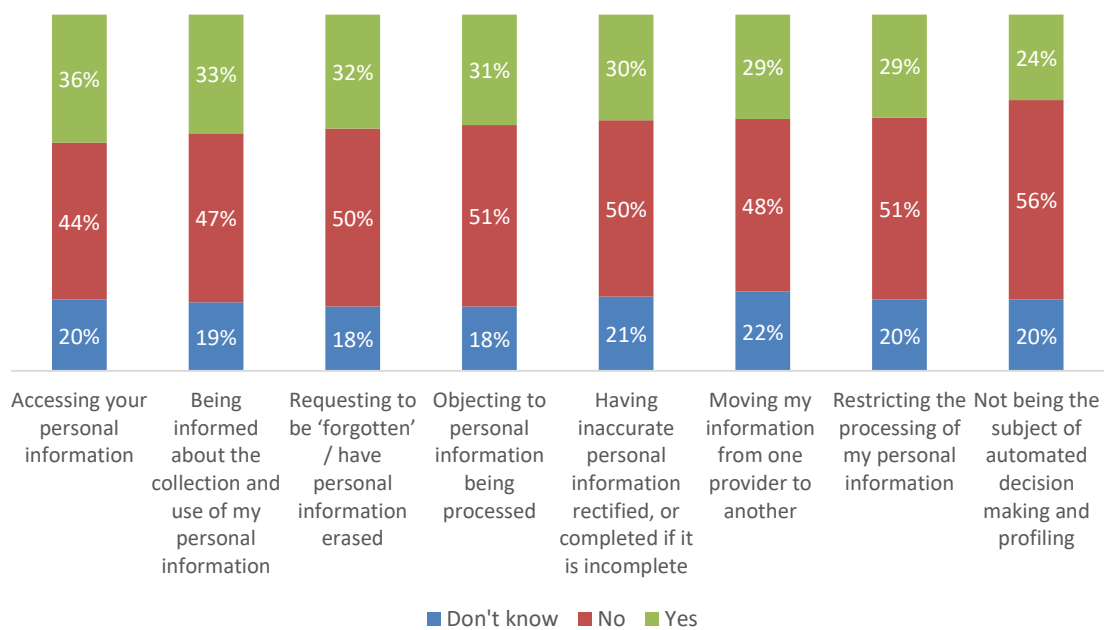
Base: All Adults: (2150)

- Members of the public who have exercised or experienced personal information protection rights have higher levels of trust and confidence than those who haven't.
 - A third (33%) of those having exercised or experienced personal information protection rights have high trust and confidence, compared with just over one in five (22%) who have not exercised or experienced personal information protection rights.
 - Nearly half (48%) of those not having exercised or experienced personal information protection rights have medium trust and confidence, compared with two in five (40%) who have exercised or experienced rights who have medium trust and confidence.
- 18-34 year olds are significantly more likely to have already done or experienced personal information protection rights than 35+ year olds.
- With the exception of “being informed about the collection and use of personal information” and “accessing personal information”, females are significantly more likely than males to be unsure as to how they would describe themselves in terms of the other personal information data protection rights.
- The offline audiences are significantly more likely to state that they don't know anything about the personal information protection rights, with between 60% to 72% stating this.
- Around one in ten of the offline audience mention they would consider doing/experiencing “objecting to personal information being processed” (10%) or “restricting the processing of my personal information” (9%) in the future.

Of those who would consider exercising their data protection rights in the future, there are varying levels of awareness of how to actually do it, with the majority of the public either not aware or unsure.

- Under two in five (36%) of those who want to or would consider “accessing their personal information” are aware how to do so.
- This falls to 24% of those who want to or would consider “not being the subject of automated decision making” being aware how to do so.

Q12c. You mentioned you want to or would consider doing the following in the future. Would you say you are aware of how to do each of these?



NB: This question was not asked in 2019

Base: All Adults who would consider doing/experiencing the personal information rights: (ranging from 1034 to 1356)

- With the exception of “objecting to personal information being processed”, “being informed about the collection and use of my personal information” and “not being the subject of automated decision making and profiling”, males are significantly more likely to claim to be aware of how to exercise these data protection rights than females.

Unprompted, the overriding concerns stated by the public are that their data could be sold/shared with third parties (20%) and being a victim of fraud/scams (18%).

- Having data shared/sold to third parties and being a victim of fraud/scams are the main concerns for those with low, medium or high levels of confidence in companies and organisations storing/using personal information.
- Beyond these two main concerns, those with lower levels of trust and confidence are more likely to say their next biggest concerns are identify theft/fraud or misuse of data, whereas those with high levels of trust and confidence are more likely to be concerned that their bank details might be accessed.
- Those with high levels of trust and confidence are much more likely to say that have no concerns about the protection of their personal information (22%) than those with medium or lower levels of trust and confidence (6% and 4% respectively).

Q14a. Thinking about the protection of your personal information, what would you say are your concerns? (UNPROMPTED)

	Total	Low trust & confidence (600)	Medium trust & confidence (967)	High trust and confidence (583)
Having my data shared/passed on to 3rd parties/sold to others	20%	22%	22%	15%
Being the victim of fraud/scams (no mention of identity)	18%	20%	19%	14%
Identity theft/fraud	10%	12%	10%	6%
Misuse of my data (including by 3rd parties)	9%	13%	9%	6%
Being hacked/Having my computer/accounts hacked	8%	7%	10%	7%
Bank details (might get stolen)/Access to my bank account/credit cards	7%	5%	8%	9%
Other	7%	9%	6%	6%
Nothing	10%	4%	6%	22%

NB: This question was not asked in 2019
All Adults: (2150).

When prompted, the data protection concern of most importance to the public is “personal information being used for scams or fraud”, ranked first of nine options by 31% and in the top three by 65%.

- This is followed by “personal information being stolen”, ranked first by a quarter (26%) and nearly two thirds (64%) ranking it in the top three.

Q14a.iii. Please rank the following data protection concerns in order of their importance to you.

	2020	
	1 st Choice	NET: Top 3
My personal information being used for scams or fraud	31%	65%
My personal information being stolen	26%	64%
My personal information being shared without a valid reason	9%	36%
Children's personal information being used online	8%	26%
Use of surveillance, for example, facial recognition	6%	20%
My personal information being used to target me with online advertising	6%	19%
My personal information being used in an automated way to make decisions about me	5%	24%
The ability for companies/organisations to access personal information held about me	5%	24%
Inaccurate information being held about me by companies/organisations	5%	21%

NB: This question was not asked in 2019

Base: All Adults: (2150)

- Females and 55+ year olds are significantly more likely than males and 18-54 year olds to state that personal information being used for scams or fraud is of most importance to them.

Having personal information used for scams/fraud (72%) or stolen (71%) are events that would be most likely to prevent the public from using an organisation.

- Over three in five (62%) feel that if their personal information was being shared without a valid reason, this would prevent them from using an organisation.

Q14aiii. And which, if any, of these would prevent you from using any organisation?



NB: This question was not asked in 2019

Base: All Adults: (2150)

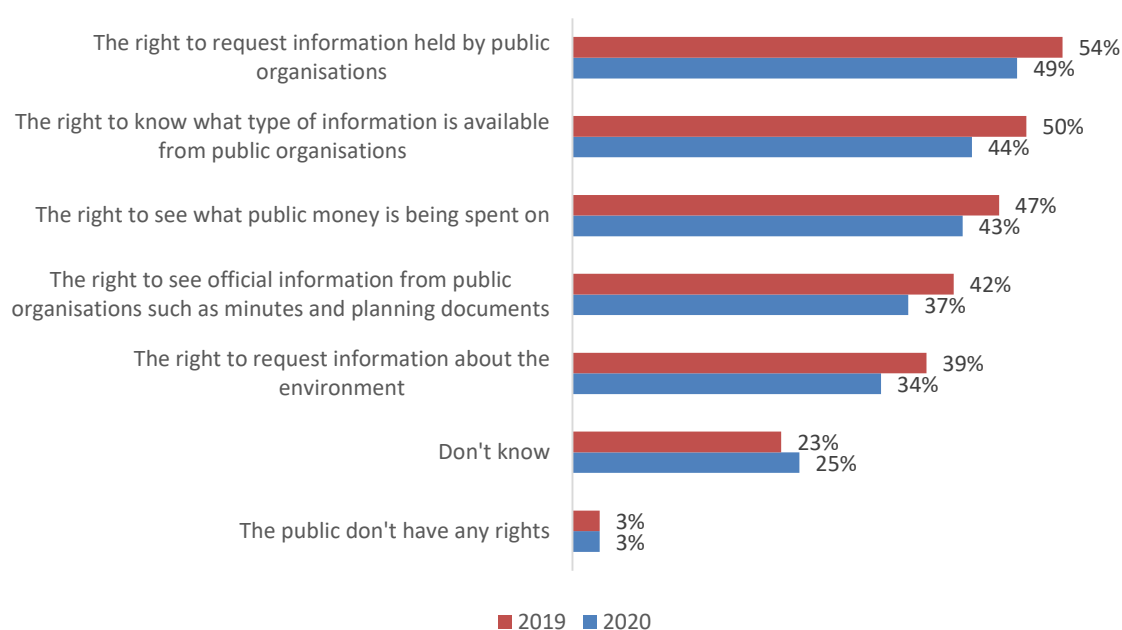
- Females and 55+ year olds are significantly more likely to not use an organisation because of any of these events compared with males and 18-54 year olds.
- Those living in rural areas are significantly more likely to not use an organisation because of any of these events than urban dwellers.

E.3.2 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

Across the board, there has been a significant decrease since 2019 in the awareness of rights that the public feels it has to access information held by the Government, public authorities and/or publicly owned companies.

- The biggest shift in awareness is seen on the right to know what type of information is available from public organisations (50%, 2019 and 44%, 2020).

Q17. What rights under law do you think you have to access information held by the Government, public authorities and/or publicly owned companies and organisations in the UK?



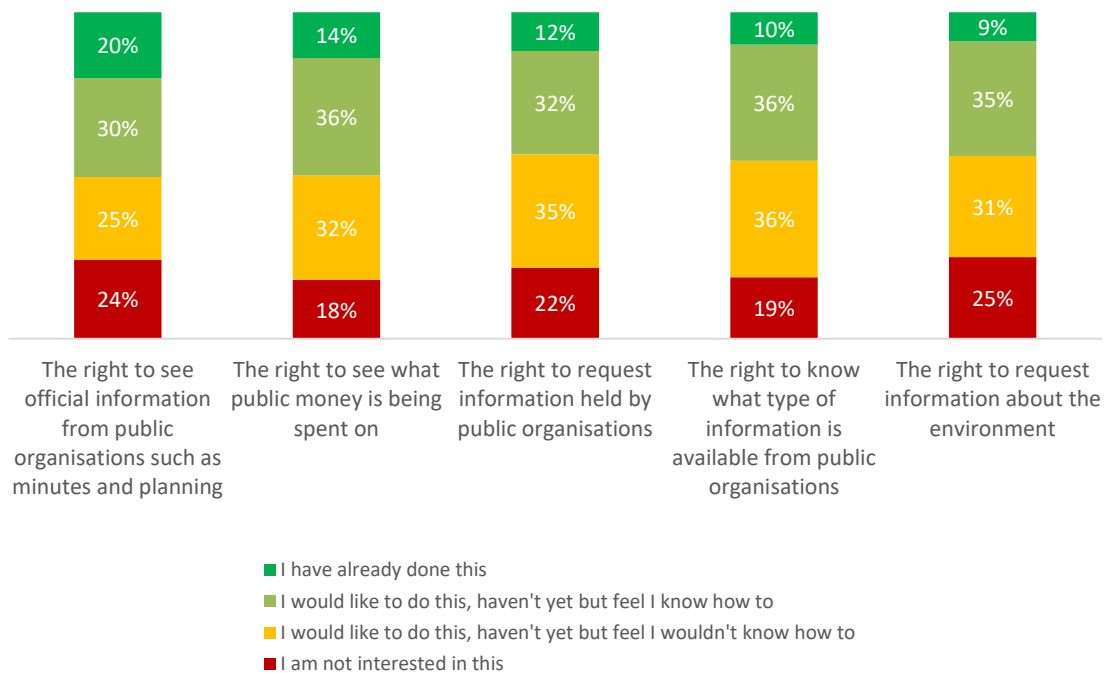
Base: All Adults: 2019 (2259) / 2020 (2150)

- Males (52%) are significantly more likely to be aware of the “right to request information held by public organisations” than females (46%).
- 55+ year olds (52%) are significantly more likely to be aware of the “right to request information held by public organisations” than 18-34 year olds (46%).

The proportion of the public that claims to have exercised each FOIA right is relatively low. Many who haven't would like to do so in the future but are often unsure how to.

- “Seeing official information from public organisations such as minutes and planning” is the FOIA right with the highest proportion of the public already having done (20%) whereas “requesting information about the environment” is the right with the least already having done (9%).
- Around a third (between 30%-36%) would like to exercise each right and feel they know how to. The right to “know what type of information is available from public organisations” and to “see what public money is being spent on” (both 36%) are the FOIA rights with the highest future interest and knowledge how to do so.
- Between 25%-36% would like to exercise each right but feel they don't know how to. The right to “know what type of information is available from public organisations” (36%) is also the FOIA right with the highest level of future intent of wanting to do, but no knowledge how to do so.

Q17a. Which of the following best describes you for each of the following rights?



NB: This question was not asked in 2019

Base: All Adults: (2150)

- With the exception of “the right to see official information from public organisations such as minutes and planning”, 18-34 year olds are significantly more likely to have already exercised FOIA rights than 35+ year olds.

There have been notable shifts in public perception around the availability of information about Government, public authorities and/or publicly owned companies.

- The level of agreement (47%) that information the public wants about Government, public authorities and or publicly owned companies is available and accessible has increased significantly since 2019 (40%), with the proportion who disagree halving from 24% to 12%.
- Conversely, the proportion who agree that the more information they can access about Government, public authorities and/or publicly owned companies the more trust and confidence they are likely to have in their work has significantly decreased since 2019 (down from 58% to 45%). The proportion who neither agree nor disagree has increased from 27% to 43%.

Q18. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	2019			2020		
	Net Agree	Neither	Net Disagree	Net Agree	Neither	Net Disagree
Information I want about Government, public authorities and/or publicly owned companies is available and accessible	40%	36%	24%	47%	41%	12%
The more information I can access about Government, public authorities and/or publicly owned companies the more trust and confidence I am likely to have in their work	58%	27%	15%	45%	43%	12%

Base: All Adults: 2019 (2259) / 2020 (2150)

- Males are significantly more likely to agree with these statements (49% and 51% respectively) than females (42% and 43%).
- BAME respondents are significantly more likely to agree with these statements (59% and 60% respectively) than non-BAME respondents (44% and 45%).
- 18-34 year olds are significantly more likely to agree with these statements than 35+ year olds.

E.4 Perceptions towards the exchange of personal information

The public is often willing to undertake online activity that risks compromising their personal information. Opinion is split on willingness to trade-off personal information online for something in return, free access to websites or the ability to purchase products and services they want. A majority are against contact from companies they haven't dealt with before if the information has been sourced from either publicly available information or between partner companies.

- Over half (55%) of the public state they agree that “when prompted, they will agree to accept cookies from a website without looking at the details”, and nearly half (48%) agree that “they are comfortable accessing online banking on their mobile while away from home”.
- Over two in five (43%) agree that they are willing to share their personal information freely if they feel there is a benefit in doing so. However, opinion is split in terms of “not minding seeing advertisements targeted to me if I can use websites free of charge” and being “more important to them to purchase and use products and services than what organisations do with their personal information” (with 38% and 35% respectively agreeing, whilst 32% and 29% disagreeing).
- The lowest agreement levels are shown in response to companies and/or organisations sharing information, with less than a quarter agreeing that “they are fine with a company contacting them that they haven't dealt with before, if their details have been sold between partner organisations” or “...if they are getting details from publicly available information” (20% and 24% respectively), with more than half disagreeing with these statements (60% and 52% respectively).

Q19. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements...?

	2020		
	Net Agree	Neither	Net Disagree
When prompted, I will agree to accept cookies from a website without looking at the details they give me	55%	26%	19%
I am comfortable accessing online banking on my mobile while away from my home	48%	19%	32%
I am willing to share my personal information freely if I feel there is a benefit for me	43%	32%	25%
I don't mind seeing advertisements targeted to me if I can use websites free of charge	38%	30%	32%
It is more important to me to purchase and use products and services than what organisations do with my personal information	35%	36%	29%
I am fine with a company contacting me that I haven't dealt with before, if they are getting my details from publicly available information	24%	24%	52%
I am fine with a company contacting me that I haven't dealt with before, if my details have been sold between partner	20%	20%	60%

organisations			
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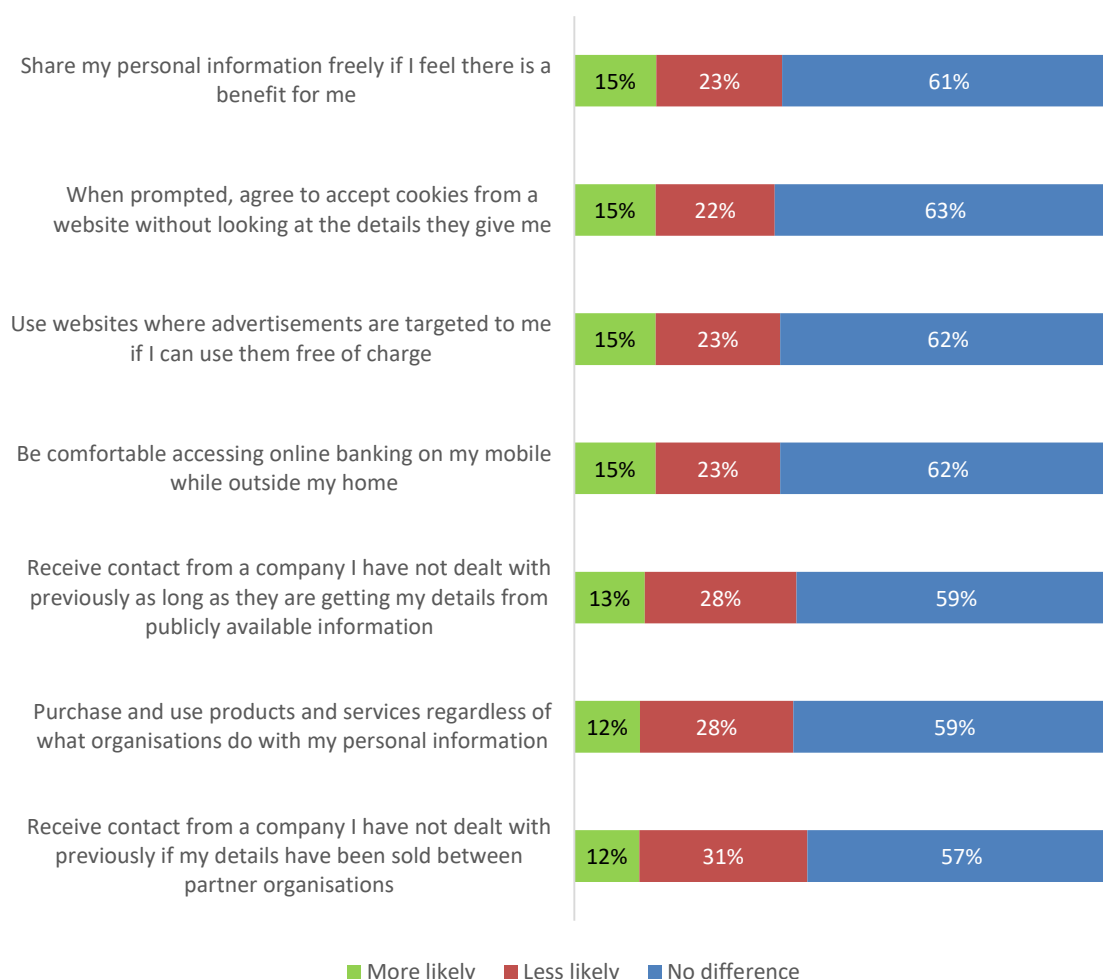
NB: This question was not asked in 2019

Base: All Adults: (2150)

The majority of the public feel that there would be no difference in their behaviour in terms of exchanging personal information with organisations/companies as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, a net decline in willingness to exchange personal information is observed across the statements, with more people saying they are “less likely” than “more likely”.

- As a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic, nearly one in three (31%) state they would be less likely to be willing to “receive contact from a company they have not dealt with previously as long as they are getting their details from publicly available information”.
- A similar proportion (29%) state they would be less likely to be willing to “purchase and use products and services regardless of what organisations do with their personal information”.

Q20. As a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic, are you more or less likely to do the following, or has it not made a difference?



NB: This question was not asked in 2019

Base: All Adults: (2150)

- Males and 18-34 year olds are significantly more likely to exchange personal information with organisations/ companies than females and 35+ year olds.