Full Fact Public Attitudes Research
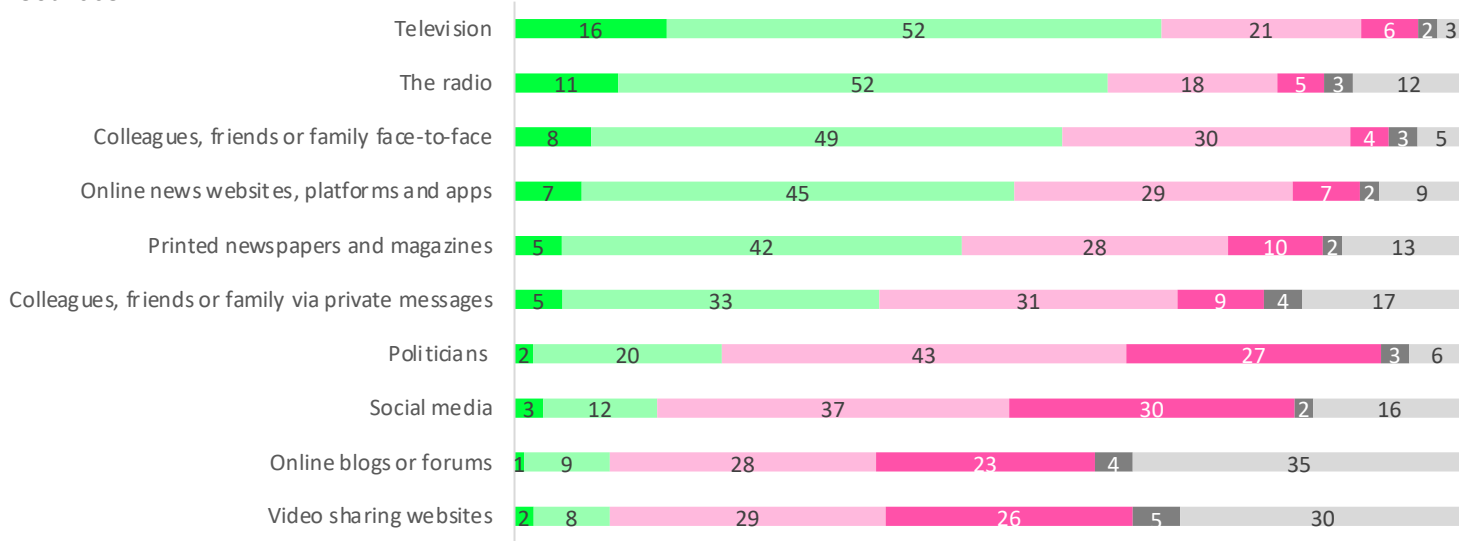
June 2021

Ipsos MORI

Key Findings

Britons' trust in media has fallen in recent years and in 2021 only half trust what they hear from traditional or online news organisations
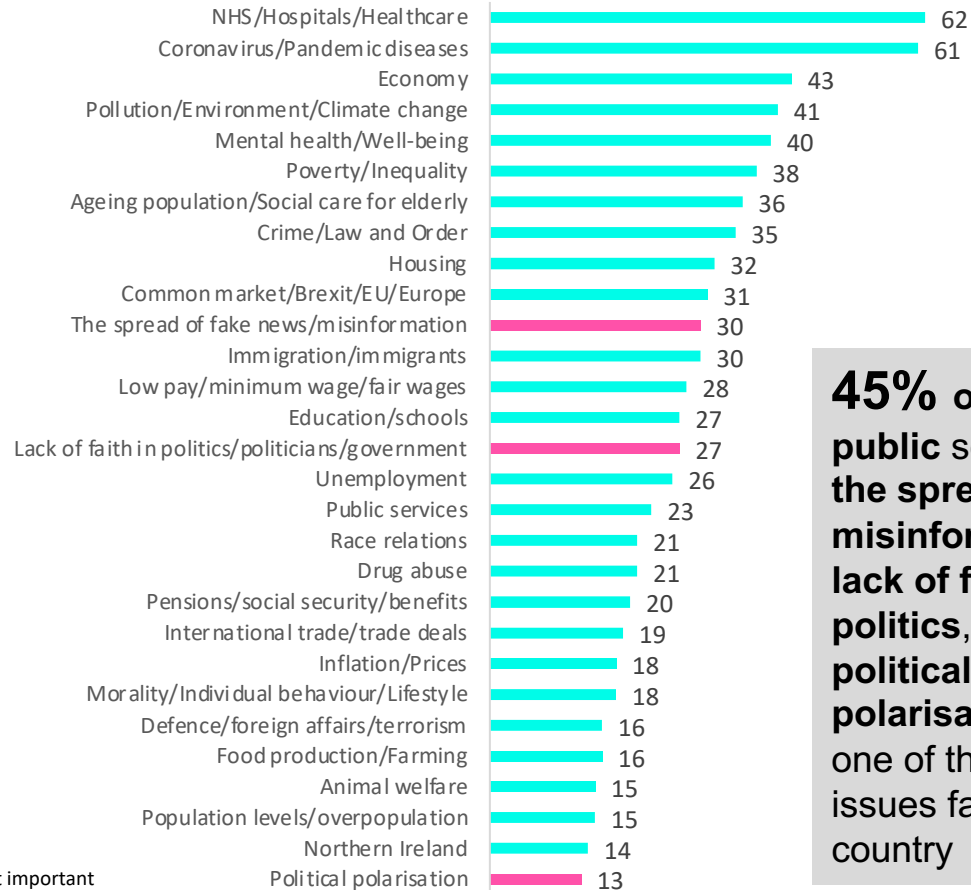
Trust in current affairs news sources

Trust…

■ A great deal ■ A fair amount ■ Not very much ■ Not at all ■ Don't know ■ Do not use this

Source	A great deal	A fair amount	Not very much	Not at all	Don't know	Do not use this
Television	16	52	21	6	2	3
The radio	11	52	18	5	3	12
Colleagues, friends or family face-to-face	8	49	30	4	3	5
Online news websites, platforms and apps	7	45	29	7	2	9
Printed newspapers and magazines	5	42	28	10	2	13
Colleagues, friends or family via private messages	5	33	31	9	4	17
Politicians	2	20	43	27	3	6
Social media	3	12	37	30	2	16
Online blogs or forums	1	9	28	23	4	35
Video sharing websites	2	8	29	26	5	30

Q4. 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? Base: 2049

*External Ipsos MORI data shows declining public trust in media & journalists from 2018-2019

Public concern is focussed on the pandemic and health, but concern with the spread of misinformation is on a par with immigration and Brexit/the EU
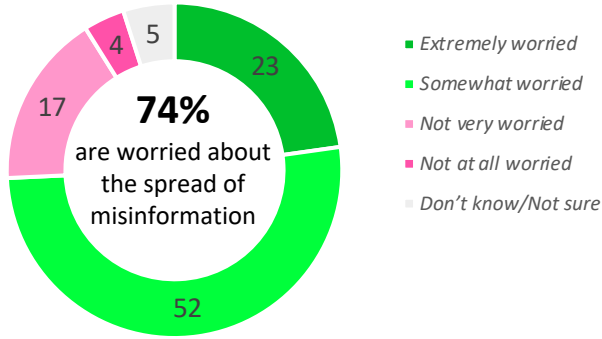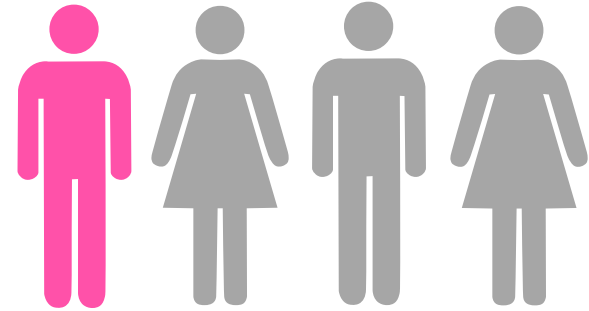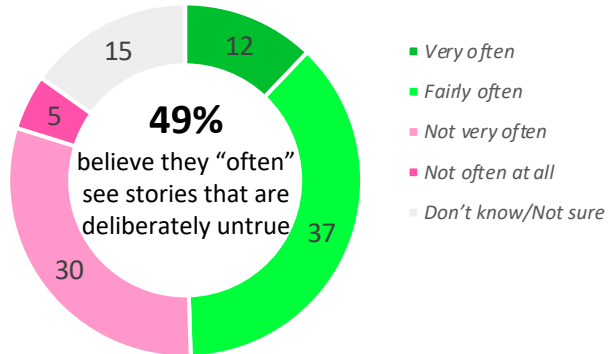
Top issues, UK today

Issue	Value
NHS/Hospitals/Healthcare	62
Coronavirus/Pandemic diseases	61
Economy	43
Pollution/Environment/Climate change	41
Mental health/Well-being	40
Poverty/Inequality	38
Ageing population/Social care for elderly	36
Crime/Law and Order	35
Housing	32
Common market/Brexit/EU/Europe	31
The spread of fake news/misinformation	30
Immigration/immigrants	30
Low pay/minimum wage/fair wages	28
Education/schools	27
Lack of faith in politics/politicians/government	27
Unemployment	26
Public services	23
Race relations	21
Drug abuse	21
Pensions/social security/benefits	20
International trade/trade deals	19
Inflation/Prices	18
Morality/Individual behaviour/Lifestyle	18
Defence/foreign affairs/terrorism	16
Food production/Farming	16
Animal welfare	15
Population levels/overpopulation	15
Northern Ireland	14
Political polarisation	13

45% of the UK public see either **the spread of misinformation**, **lack of faith in politics**, or **political polarisation** as one of the biggest issues facing the country

FULL FACT

fullfact.org

QISSUES. What would you say are the most important issues facing Britain today? *Please select all that apply.* Base: 2049

Most are aware they are being targeted with fake news and disinformation, with 1 in 2 reporting seeing it 'often' & 1 in 4 falling victim

FULL FACT

Worry about spread of misinformation

- ■ Extremely worried
- ■ Somewhat worried
- ■ Not very worried
- ■ Not at all worried
- ☐ Don't know/Not sure

23 / 52 / 17 / 4 / 5

74% are worried about the spread of misinformation

Perceived exposure to misinformation

- ■ Very often
- ■ Fairly often
- ■ Not very often
- ■ Not often at all
- ☐ Don't know/Not sure

12 / 37 / 30 / 5 / 15

49% believe they "often" see stories that are deliberately untrue

1/4 agree they have falsely believed a news story was real until they found out it was fake*

*27% agreement. Data is in line with Ipsos 2018 UK GP findings

fullfact.org

Base: 2049

Q9. To what extent are you worried about the spreading of false or misleading information online around news and current affairs, if at all?
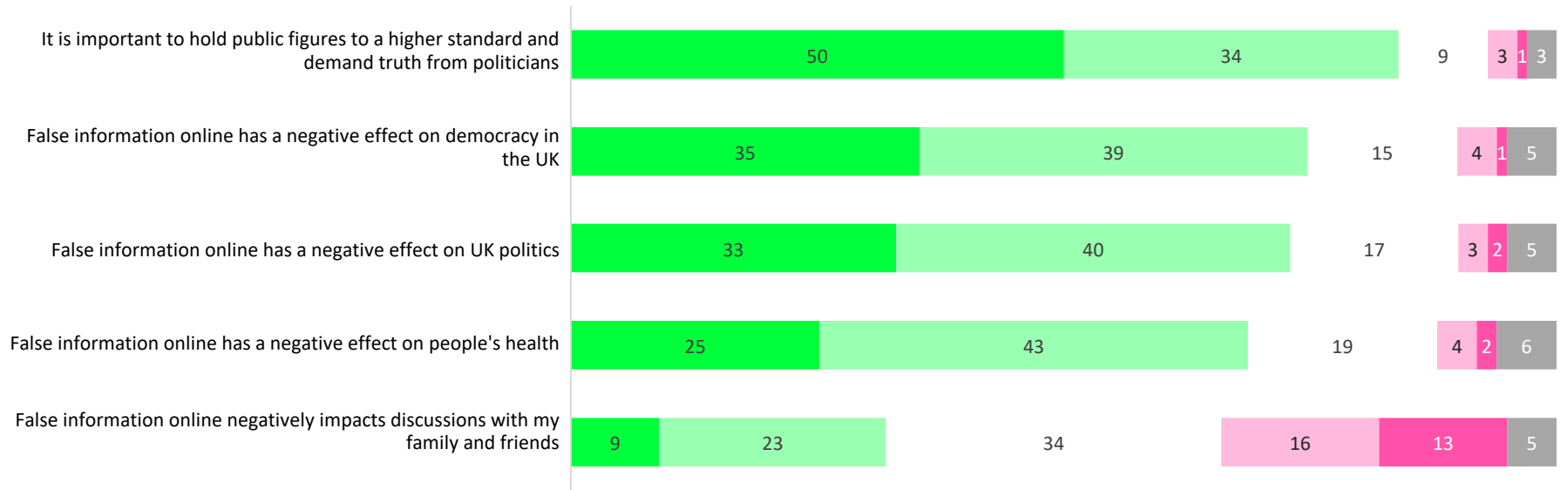Q6. How often, if at all, do you think you see stories where news organisations have deliberately said something that isn't true?
Q5: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: I have falsely believed a news story was real until I found out it was fake

And they agree that false information online has a negative effect on the UK's democracy, politics and on public health

FULL FACT

% agree or disagree that...

■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ Don't know/not sure

Statement	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
It is important to hold public figures to a higher standard and demand truth from politicians	50	34	9	3	1	3
False information online has a negative effect on democracy in the UK	35	39	15	4	1	5
False information online has a negative effect on UK politics	33	40	17	3	2	5
False information online has a negative effect on people's health	25	43	19	4	2	6
False information online negatively impacts discussions with my family and friends	9	23	34	16	13	5

fullfact.org QATTITUDES2. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements...
Base: 2049

But Britons are also more confident in their own ability to curate a bias-free online environment than others' ability to do likewise

This cognitive bias makes the public more vulnerable to accepting rather than challenging misinformation

60% feel the average person in the UK lives in a bubble on the internet, mostly connecting with people like themselves and looking for opinions they already agree with
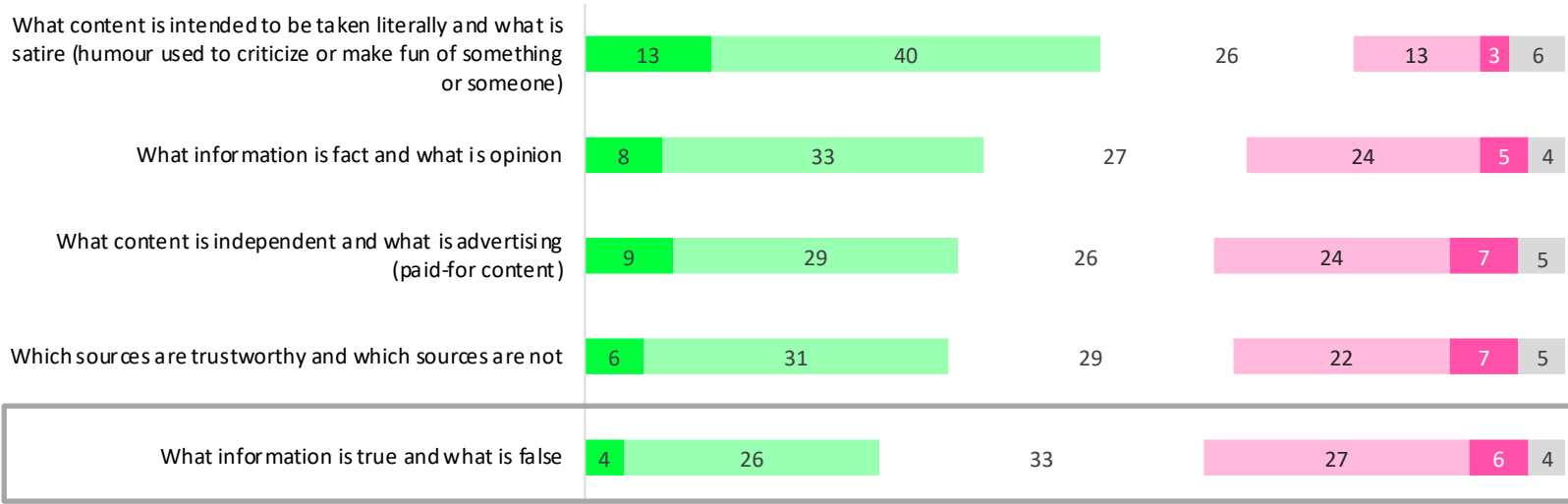
20% believe they themselves behave this way

fullfact.org

FULL FACT

However many do recognise the challenges they face in the current media ecosystem

"Fake news" is the most challenging to distinguish from 'truth,' with satire, opinion, paid-for content and source bias seen as easier to judge

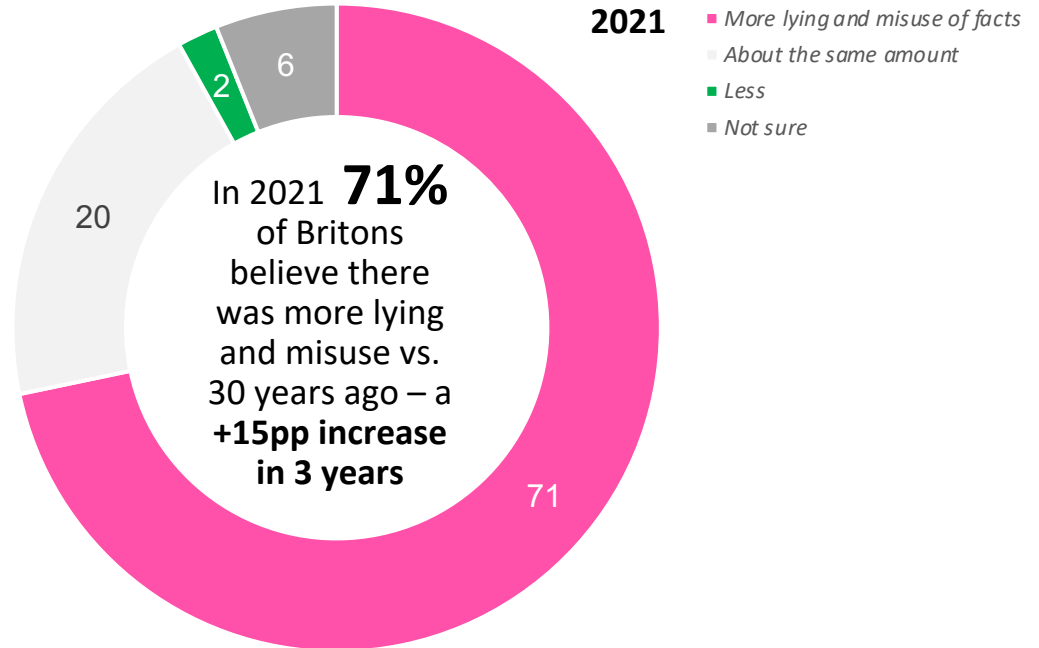
FULL FACT

Confidence in personal ability to tell between…

■ *Very easy* ■ *Somewhat easy* *Neither* ■ *Somewhat difficult* ■ *Very difficult* ■ *Don't know/not sure*

What content is intended to be taken literally and what is satire (humour used to criticize or make fun of something or someone): 13 | 40 | 26 | 13 | 3 | 6

What information is fact and what is opinion: 8 | 33 | 27 | 24 | 5 | 4

What content is independent and what is advertising (paid-for content): 9 | 29 | 26 | 24 | 7 | 5

Which sources are trustworthy and which sources are not: 6 | 31 | 29 | 22 | 7 | 5

What information is true and what is false: 4 | 26 | 33 | 27 | 6 | 4

Q7. Thinking about all the different types of information about news and current affairs that you see online, how easy or difficult do you find it to tell the difference between…
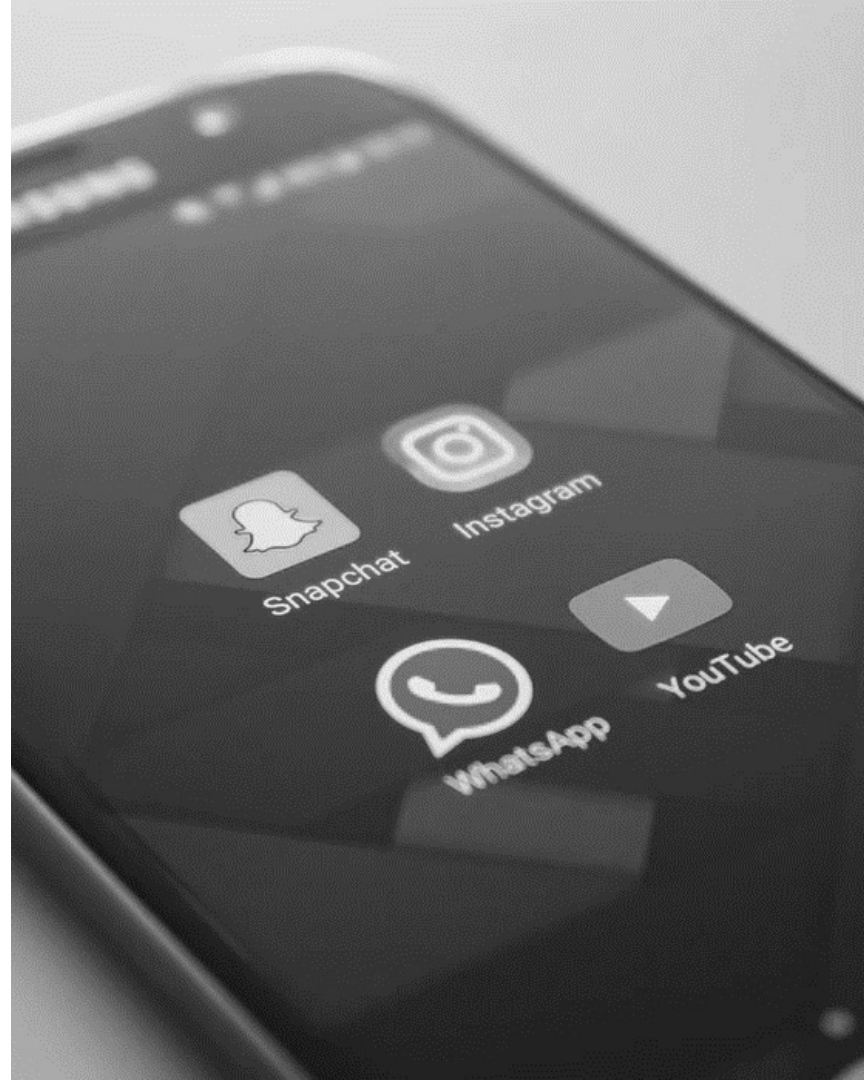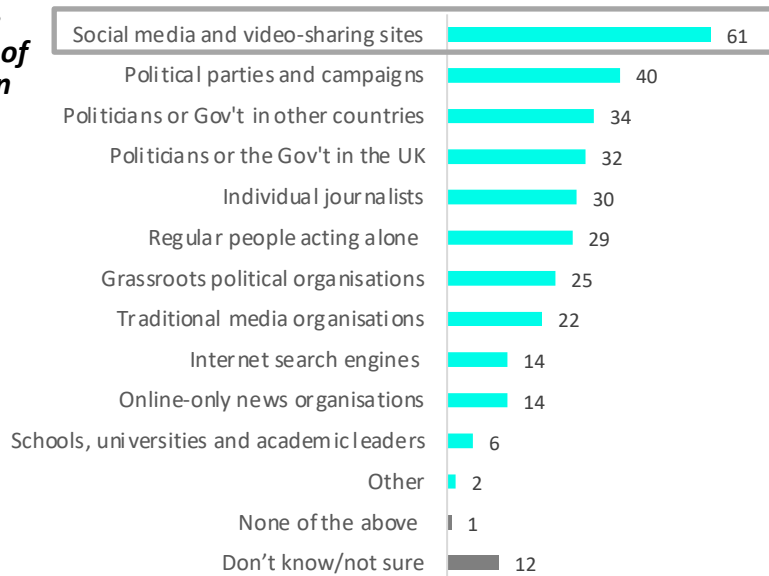Base: 2049

A growing majority believe the problem is getting worse

In 2018, **56%** of Britons agreed there was more lying and misuse of facts in politics & media compared to 30 years go
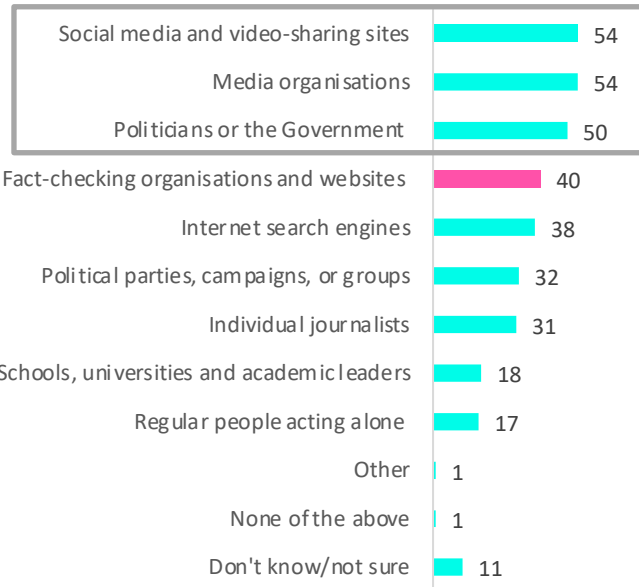
2021

- More lying and misuse of facts
- About the same amount
- Less
- Not sure

6

2

20

71

In 2021 **71%** of Britons believe there was more lying and misuse vs. 30 years ago – a **+15pp increase in 3 years**

Q30YEARS. 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 30 years ago?
Base: 2049

Social media is seen as bearing most blame for the spread of 'fake news'

Most to blame for the spread of misinformation

Social media and video-sharing sites	61
Political parties and campaigns	40
Politicians or Gov't in other countries	34
Politicians or the Gov't in the UK	32
Individual journalists	30
Regular people acting alone	29
Grassroots political organisations	25
Traditional media organisations	22
Internet search engines	14
Online-only news organisations	14
Schools, universities and academic leaders	6
Other	2
None of the above	1
Don't know/not sure	12

fullfact.org Q12. Who do you think, if anyone, is most to blame for the spreading of information around news and current affairs online that is false or misleading?
Base: 2049

But slowing misinformation's spread is a shared responsibility, with traditional media and politicians sharing liability alongside social media
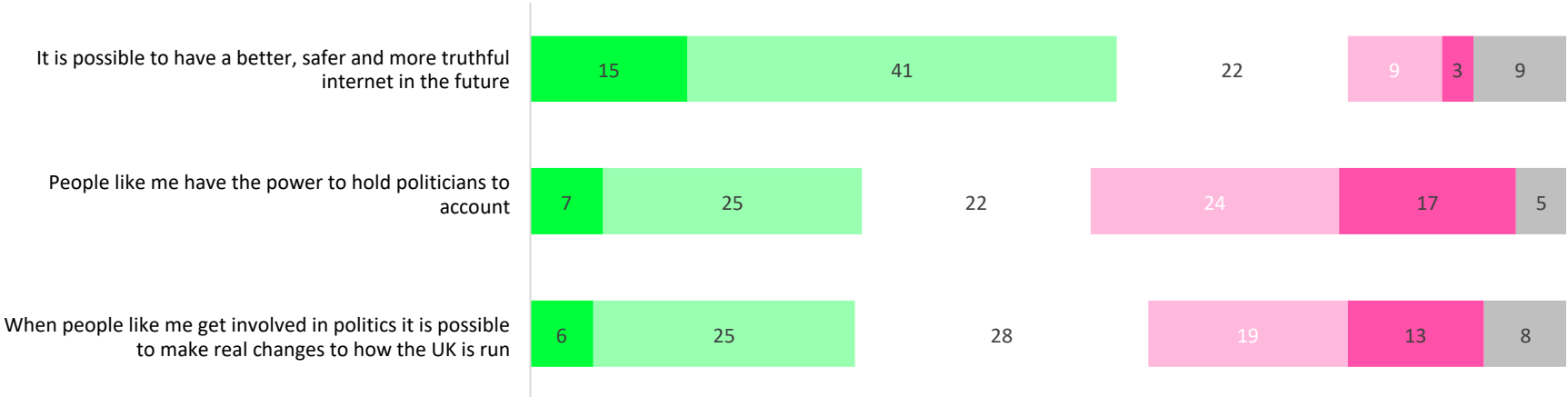
FULL FACT

Who is responsible for tackling the spread of misinformation

Social media and video-sharing sites	54
Media organisations	54
Politicians or the Government	50
Fact-checking organisations and websites	40
Internet search engines	38
Political parties, campaigns, or groups	32
Individual journalists	31
Schools, universities and academic leaders	18
Regular people acting alone	17
Other	1
None of the above	1
Don't know/not sure	11

Q14. In your opinion, who, if anyone, should be responsible for tackling the problem of the spreading of false or misleading information on news and current affairs online?

Base: 2049

Britons are more optimistic that an internet with less misinformation is within reach than they are about their ability to effect change in government and a more truthful political discourse

% agree or disagree that...

■ Strongly agree   ■ Somewhat agree   Neither agree nor disagree   ■ Somewhat disagree   ■ Strongly disagree   ■ Don't know/not sure

Statement	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/not sure
It is possible to have a better, safer and more truthful internet in the future	15	41	22	9	3	9
People like me have the power to hold politicians to account	7	25	22	24	17	5
When people like me get involved in politics it is possible to make real changes to how the UK is run	6	25	28	19	13	8

QATTITUDES2. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements...
Base: 2049

For more information:

Brita Cooper
Associate Director

✉ Brita.Cooper@Ipsos.com

Nadya Valkova
Research Manager

✉ Nadya.Valkova@Ipsos.com

Yasmin Lamb
Graduate Research Executive

✉ Yasmin.Lamb@Ipsos.com

Ipsos MORI   Ipsos

FULL
FACT

Research Methodology

- The findings in the report come from a survey conducted by Ipsos MORI for Full Fact between 11 June and 18 June 2021.

- 2049 15-minute online, self-completed interviews were conducted with a nationally representative sample of the adult UK public across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Data shown in this report refers to the UK General Public unless otherwise noted.

- Quotas set on key demographics to match UK population profile. The data is weighted so that the sample composition best reflect the demographic profile of the UK adult population according to the most recent census data.

Ipsos MORI's Standards & Accreditations

Ipsos MORI's standards & accreditations provide our clients with the peace of mind that they can always depend on us to deliver reliable, sustainable findings. Moreover, our focus on quality and continuous improvement means we have embedded a 'right first time' approach throughout our organisation.

ISO 20252 – is the international market research specific standard that supersedes BS 7911 / MRQSA & incorporates IQCS (Interviewer Quality Control Scheme); it covers the 5 stages of a Market Research project. Ipsos MORI was the first company in the world to gain this accreditation.

MRS Company Partnership – By being an MRS Company Partner, Ipsos MORI endorse and support the core MRS brand values of professionalism, research excellence and business effectiveness, and commit to comply with the MRS Code of Conduct throughout the organisation & we were the first company to sign our organisation up to the requirements & self regulation of the MRS Code; more than 350 companies have followed our lead.

ISO 9001 – International general company standard with a focus on continual improvement through quality management systems. In 1994 we became one of the early adopters of the ISO 9001 business standard.

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

The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) & the UK Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) – Ipsos MORI is required to comply with the UK General Data Protection Regulation and the UK Data Protection Act; it covers the processing of personal data and the protection of privacy.

HMG Cyber Essentials – A government backed and key deliverable of the UK's National Cyber Security Programme. Ipsos MORI 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 MORI is signed up as a 'Fair Data' Company by agreeing to adhere to ten core principles. The principles support and complement other standards such as ISOs, and the requirements of Data Protection legislation.

This work was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the international quality standard for market research, ISO 20252 and with the Ipsos MORI Terms and Conditions {please remove if the work was under a MSA or client contract}.