

Information Rights Strategic Plan: Trust and Confidence



Prepared for:

Information Commissioner's Office

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A. Background

A.1 Background

Goal #4 of the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) Information Rights Strategic Plan 2017-21 is 'to increase the public's trust and confidence in how data is used and made available'. It is therefore important for the ICO to gauge the public's changing perceptions in this area.

Since the Trust and Confidence research was last undertaken, GDPR has come into effect, and the ICO has also published its Technology Strategy 2018-21 in support of the Information Rights Strategic Plan. There is therefore also a need to provide benchmarks in these areas.

B. Aims & Objectives

B.1 Overall Objective

The **main aim** of this research is:

"To gauge public perceptions and awareness on how data is shared with and used within organisations and to monitor any change in the trust and confidence in how data is used and made available."

Other objectives of this research are to:

- 1) Understand awareness and perceptions of the General Data Protection Regulation and how it affects their personal data.
 - 2) Explore the public's perceptions around technology in relation to the personal data that companies hold on individuals.
 - 3) Investigate individuals' knowledge around the Freedom of Information Act.
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C. Executive Summary

Trust and Confidence

- The proportion of people who trust businesses with their personal data has risen slightly since 2017.
- Furthermore, the proportion of the public with high trust and confidence in companies storing and using personal data has increased significantly. However, the proportion with low trust and confidence remains greater.
- People are most likely to have trust and confidence in public bodies than private bodies storing and using their personal data.
- Of the types of organisations asked about, levels of trust and confidence are lowest towards social messaging platforms.
- Levels of good understanding of how personal data is used and made available to third parties and the public by companies and organisations has almost doubled, yet remain low overall.
- The proportion of people stating that they or a close friend/family member have heard about a data breach has risen slightly.
- Partly due to a decrease in the proportion of people stating 'don't know', a majority of the public now disagrees that:
 - It is easy to access and change my personal information held by businesses/organisations
 - Current laws and regulations provide sufficient protection of personal information
 - Businesses/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 businesses/organisations
 - It is easy to find out whether my personal information is being made available to third parties.

GDPR

- A majority of the public feels it is important that their personal data/ information is protected when they share it.
- A large majority of the public is aware of the GDPR, but there is more work to be done to reach the levels of awareness that the Data Protection Act had achieved previously.

- Awareness of the GDPR rights varies considerably.
- There has been a shift towards public bodies being where the public claim they would seek information from. The ICO has seen a significant rise, with Citizen's Advice Bureau and Local MP seeing slight rises.

Technology

- The public is divided on whether companies and organisations protect their personal information from the risks arising from technology.
- The public's biggest concern when companies and organisations use their personal information is 'personal information being stolen by criminals'.

FOI

- Although agreement that information about Government, public authorities and/or publicly owned companies is available and accessible is stable from 2016, there has been a decrease in awareness of the public's rights.

D. Methodology and Response Rates

D.1 Quotas and weighting

Harris Interactive, an independent market research agency, interviewed 2,131 adults online aged 18+ between 23rd July and 25th July 2018.

Table 1. Number of interviews achieved by gender

	Count	%
Male	1013	48%
Female	1118	52%
TOTAL	2131	100%

Table 2. Number of interviews achieved by age

	Count	%
18-24	245	11%
25-34	392	18%
35-44	358	17%
45-54	368	17%
55-64	340	16%
65+	428	20%
TOTAL	2131	100%

Table 3. Number of interviews achieved by region

	Count	%
England	1749	82%
Scotland	173	8%
Wales	107	5%
Northern Ireland	102	5%
TOTAL	2131	100%

D.2 Reporting

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

Where relevant, comparisons have been made to previous surveys from 2016 and 2017.

E. Research Findings

E.1 Trust & Confidence

The public continues to be split on the trust and confidence it has in companies and organisations storing and using their personal information. However, the percentage of people with high levels of trust and confidence has increased since 2017.

- One in three (34%) 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 up from the 21% stating this in 2017.
- Also, the proportion stating 'none at all' has dropped, from 14% to 9%.

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

	2017	2018
NET: Low trust and confidence	38%	37%
1 – None at all	14%	9%
2	24%	28%
3	41%	30%
4	17%	28%
5 – A great deal	4%	6%
NET: High Trust and Confidence	21%	34%

Base: All Adults: 2017 (2049) / 2018 (2131)

- Males (37%) are more likely to have high trust and confidence in companies and organisations storing and using their personal information than females (30%).
- Trust and confidence in companies and organisations storing and using personal information is significantly higher amongst 18-34 year olds (49%) than 35-54 (31%) and 55+ year olds (25%).

As in 2017, people are significantly more likely to have high trust and confidence (rating 4-5 out of 5) in the NHS, Police and national governmental bodies than in private companies.

- Nearly two in three (65%) people say they have high trust and confidence in the NHS/their local GP storing and using their personal information, up 5% points from 2017.
- Only one in seven (15%) people state they have high trust and confidence in social messaging platforms storing and using their personal information, similar to the 12% reported in 2017.
- The biggest gain in high trust and confidence since 2017 was seen for financial services providers (this has seen a 7% increase to 46% between 2017 to 2018).

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

	2017		2018	
	NET LOW TRUST & CONFIDENCE	NET HIGH TRUST & CONFIDENCE	NET LOW TRUST & CONFIDENCE	NET HIGH TRUST & CONFIDENCE
The NHS or your local GP	13%	60%	12%	65%
The Police	17%	53%	18%	54%
National Governmental departments/ organisations	21%	49%	20%	51%
Financial services	27%	39%	22%	46%
Local Government	27%	37%	24%	42%
Online retailers	32%	29%	29%	33%
Mobile, broadband, utility providers	39%	22%	33%	28%
Social messaging platforms	62%	12%	60%	15%

Base: All Adults: 2017 (2049) / 2018 (2131)

- 18-34 year olds are significantly more likely to have a high level of trust and confidence in “financial services companies”, “online retailers”, “mobile, broadband and utility providers” and “social messaging providers” than 35+ year olds.
- Males (18%) are more likely to have high trust and confidence in “social messaging providers” than females (12%). Similarly, 18-34 year olds (28%) were significantly more likely to have high trust and confidence in “social messaging providers” than 35-54 year olds (13%) and 55+ year olds (7%).

Nearly one in five (18%) adults feel they have a good understanding of how their personal data is used by companies and organisations in the UK. This is notably up from the 10% who felt they had a good understanding in 2017.

- The proportion of people who feel they know very little or nothing at all about how their personal data is used by companies and organisations has fallen from 39% in 2017 to 26% in 2018.

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

	2017	2018
I have a good understanding of how my personal data is used	10%	18%
I am familiar with some aspects of how my personal data is used, but not all aspects	52%	55%
I know very little about how my personal data is used	33%	22%
I know nothing at all about how my personal data is used	6%	4%

Base: All Adults: 2017 (2049) / 2018 (2131)

- Males (23%) are significantly more likely to feel they have a good understanding of how their personal data is used than females (14%).
- 55+ year olds (31%) are more likely to feel that they know very little or nothing at all about how their personal data is used than 18-34 year olds (21%) and 35-54 year olds (27%).
- Members of the public from England (25%) are least likely to feel that they know very little or nothing at all about how their personal data is used compared to those from Scotland (33%), Wales (35%) and Northern Ireland (39%).

There has also been an increase in the proportion of people with a good understanding of how their personal data is made available to third parties and the public by companies and organisations in the UK.

- Around one in six (16%) adults feel they have a good understanding of how their personal data is made available to third parties and the public by companies and organisations in the UK. This is a marked increase from the 8% who felt they had a good understanding in 2017.
- Just over a third (35%) feel they know very little or nothing at all about how their personal data is made available by companies and organisations. This is notably down from the 48% feeling this in 2017.

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

	2017	2018
I have a good understanding of how my personal data is made available	8%	16%
I am familiar with some aspects of how my personal data is made available, but not all aspects	44%	49%
I know very little about how my personal data is made available	39%	29%
I know nothing at all about how my personal data is made available	9%	6%

Base: All Adults: 2017 (2049) / 2018 (2131)

- Males (19%) are more likely to feel they have a good understanding of how their personal data is made available than females (13%), whereas females are significantly more likely to feel that they know very little or nothing at all about how their personal data is made available than males (39% vs 31% respectively).
- Respondents from Wales (22%) are more likely to feel they have a good understanding of how their personal data is made available than respondents from England (16%), Scotland (13%) and Northern Ireland (11%).

The proportion of people disagreeing with each of the statements has increased since 2017, which highlights that more can be done by businesses and organisations to facilitate the access to, the amendment of and use of personal data.

- The proportion of people disagreeing that “it is easy to access and change my personal information held by businesses/organisations” has seen a 15% point increase since 2017. This highlights that, post GDPR, the public is more aware that they have more rights but is still unsure how to go about exercising them.
- The public is more inclined to have a view this year, with levels of agreement and disagreement up on all other statements.
- The proportion of people disagreeing that “current laws and regulations provide sufficient protection of personal information” has risen from 49% in 2017 to 57% in 2018.

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

	2017			2018		
	NET Agree	NET Disagree	Don't know	NET Agree	NET Disagree	Don't know
It is easy to access and change my personal information held by businesses/organisations	32%	44%	24%	29%	59%	12%
Current laws and regulations provide sufficient protection of personal information	30%	49%	21%	33%	57%	10%
Businesses/ organisations are open and transparent about how they collect and use personal information	24%	61%	15%	26%	66%	8%
It is easy to find out how my personal information is stored and used by businesses/ organisations	21%	57%	22%	23%	64%	13%
It is easy to find out whether my personal information is being made available to third parties	20%	59%	21%	23%	63%	14%

Base: All Adults: 2017 (2049) / 2018 (2131)

If an organisation that held personal data was either affected by a data breach or was sharing data with third parties, the public largely continues to feel that this would have a negative impact on their trust and confidence in the organisation.

- The biggest change since 2017 is on 'sharing my personal information to third parties with my permission'. While there been a slight increase in those saying it would have a positive impact on trust and confidence in the organisation (up from 14% to 23%), a larger increase is seen amongst those saying it would have a negative impact (up from 23% to 41%). This indicates that greater awareness around data protection has polarised people's views.

Q6. If an organisation that held your data was affected by any of the following, what impact would this have on your trust and confidence in this organisation?

	2017			2018		
	Net Positive	No impact	Net Negative	Net Positive	No impact	Net Negative
The organisation was sharing my personal information to third parties with my permission	14%	63%	23%	23%	36%	41%
The organisation was affected by a data breach (unauthorised access to or loss of my personal data) and told me	13%	16%	71%	18%	18%	64%
The organisation was affected by a data breach (unauthorised access to or loss of my personal data) and didn't tell me	7%	9%	84%	12%	11%	77%
The organisation was sharing my personal information to third parties without my permission	6%	9%	85%	12%	11%	77%

Base: All Adults: 2017 (2049) / 2018 (2131)

- 55+ year olds are notably more likely to feel that there would be a negative impact on their trust and confidence in the organisation, particularly if it was sharing information without their permission.

Around three in five (58%) of the public stated 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), a slight increase on the 54% stating this in 2017.

- 23% of the public state that they have personally “heard of a news story about a data breach in a company/ organisation they have shared personal information with and were not personally notified”, and 17% have had this happen to a close friend/family member. Both of which are increases on the proportions stating this in 2017.
- Furthermore, the proportion stating they or friends/family members have not experienced any of the data breaches has decreased from 46% in 2017 to 42% in 2018.

Q7. Thinking about personal data you may hold with companies and organisations, have any of the following things happened to you or a close friend/family member?

	2017			2018		
	Happened to you	Happened to a friend/family	Net you/friend or family	Happened to you	Happened to a friend/family	Net you/friend or family
Net: ANY	45%	38%	54%	51%	46%	58%
Personal data has been shared with a third party without permission	20%	11%	24%	19%	15%	26%
Had an online account(s) accessed or used fraudulently by someone else	17%	17%	29%	15%	16%	24%
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	15%	11%	21%	23%	17%	29%
Been told by a company I/they hold an account with or are employed by, that my/their personal details may have been lost or stolen	12%	10%	18%	15%	13%	22%
Had personal details stolen and used to commit fraud	10%	17%	24%	12%	15%	21%
None of these	55%	62%	46%	49%	54%	42%

Base: All Adults: 2017 (2049) / 2018 (2131)

Nearly four in five (78%) felt 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.

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?

	%
The company/ organisation who was holding your data	78%
A regulatory body	15%
The Government	11%
Yourself	11%
Other	4%
None	6%
Don't Know	1%

Base: All Adults: 2018 (2131)

- 55+ year olds (90%) are significantly more likely to state that the company/organisation holding their data should be held responsible than 35-54 year olds (75%) and 18-34 year olds (65%).
 - 18-34 year olds (21%) were notably more likely to state that if they were affected by a data breach, a regulatory body/ Government should be held responsible than 35-54 year olds (14%) and 55+ year olds (11%).

As seen in 2017, people are most likely to state that 'banning companies/ organisations from sharing personal information with third parties without permission' would increase their trust and confidence in how their personal data is used and made available. This was ranked first of six options by 26% and in the top three by 65%.

- However, the proportion stating this has fallen since 2017, and is now at similar levels to 'making it a legal requirement for companies/organisations to tell customers that they have been affected by a data breach' (23% first choice, 65% top 3)

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

	2017		2018	
	1 st Choice	NET: Top 3	1 st Choice	NET: Top 3
Banning companies/ organisations from sharing personal information with third parties without permission	35%	74%	26%	65%
Making it a legal requirement for companies/ organisations to tell customers that they have been affected by a data breach	20%	66%	23%	65%
Fining companies and organisations if they are found to use personal information without permission	13%	59%	15%	58%
Custodial sentences (i.e. prison) for those responsible for the most severe breaches in the use of personal information	16%	43%	15%	47%
Making it easier to see and change any consent I have given regarding the use of my personal information	10%	40%	14%	44%
None of the above	5%	5%	7%	7%

Base: All Adults: 2017 (2049) / 2018 (2131)

There has been a slight increase in the extent to which the public trusts businesses with their personal information (25%, compared to 22% in 2017).

Q10. To what extent do you trust businesses with your personal information?

	2017	2018
NET: Trust	22%	25%
Trust completely	2%	3%
Trust a little	20%	22%
Neither trust nor distrust	29%	30%
Distrust a little	36%	36%
Distrust completely	13%	9%
NET: Distrust	49%	45%

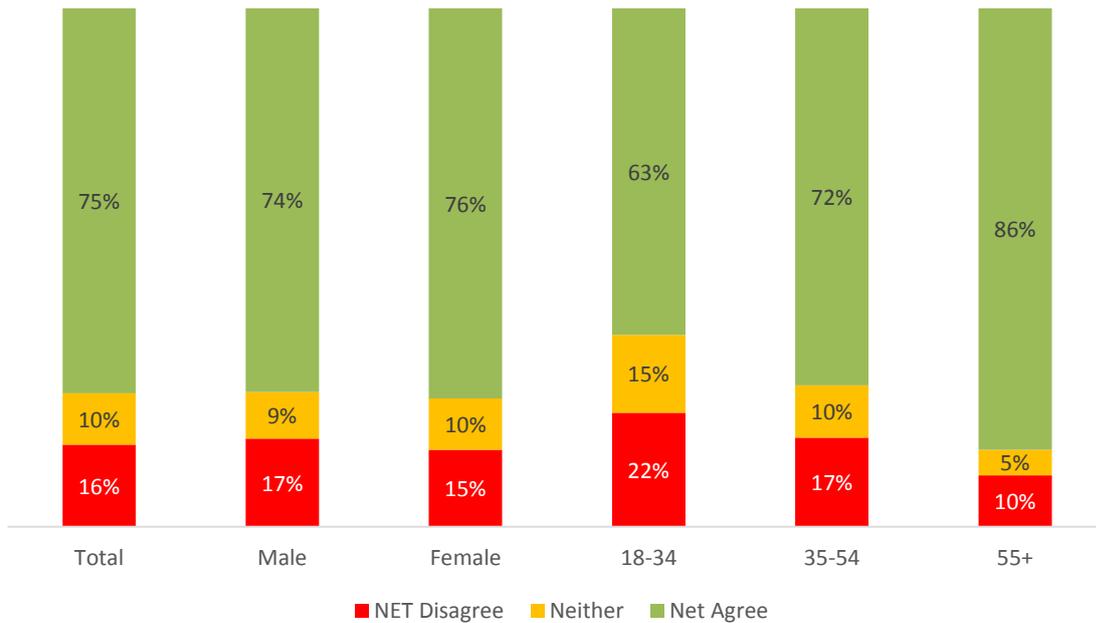
Base: All Adults: 2017 (2049) / 2018 (2131)

- 18-34 year olds (34%) are significantly more likely to state that they trust businesses with their personal information than 35-54 year olds (24%) and 55+ year olds (21%).

E.2 GDPR

Three quarters (75%) of the public agree that it is important that their personal information is protected when they share it with businesses.

Q11. How much do you agree or disagree that “it is important that my personal information is protected when I share it with businesses”?



Base: All Adults: Total (2131), Males (1013), Females (1118), 18-34 (637), 35-54 (726), 55+ (768)

- 18-34 year olds (63%) are less likely to agree that it is important that their personal information is protected when they share it with businesses than 35-54 year olds (72%) and 55+ year olds (86%).

The public's awareness varies in terms of the data protection rights they have varies with regards to personal details held on them by companies and organisations in the UK.

- The right that most are aware of is the 'right to access your personal data' (58%), followed by the 'right to be informed about the collection and use of your personal data' (52%) and the 'right to have inaccurate personal data rectified, or completed if it is incomplete' (45%).
- The rights least known were the 'right to move data from one provider to another' (27%), and the 'right not to be subject of automated decision making and profiling' (30%).

Q12. What rights under law do you think you have with regards to personal details held about you by companies and organisations in the UK?

	Total %	18-34 %	35-54 %	55+ %
The right to access your personal data	58%	48%	61%	64%
The right to be informed about the collection and use of your personal data	52%	44%	52%	59%
The right to have inaccurate personal data rectified, or completed if it is incomplete	45%	35%	43%	55%
The right to be forgotten / to have personal data erased	44%	37%	46%	47%
The right to object to personal data being processed	43%	35%	46%	47%
The right to restrict the processing of their personal data	39%	30%	41%	43%
The right not to be subject of automated decision making and profiling	30%	28%	31%	31%
The right to move data from one provider to another	27%	27%	28%	27%
None of the above - individuals have no rights under law	3%	2%	2%	4%
Don't Know	13%	12%	12%	15%

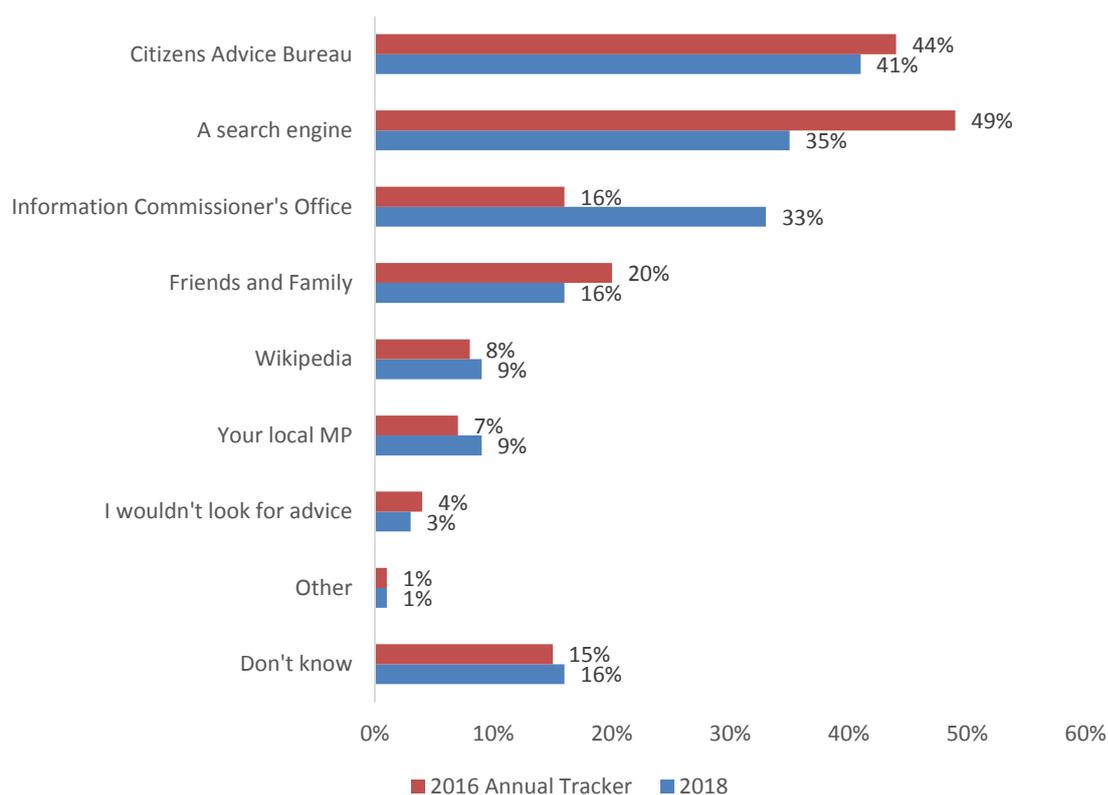
Base: All Adults: Total (2131), 18-34 (637), 35-54 (726), 55+ (768)

- Awareness of the rights largely increases with age, with 55+ year olds being most aware.

The most common way that the public would look to get advice and/or information on protecting their personal data is via the Citizens Advice Bureau, mentioned by over two in five (41%), slightly down on the number saying this in 2017 (44%).

- There has been a significant increase in the proportion stating they would get advice and/or information from the ICO (33%), a 17% point increase from 2016.
- The proportion who would use a search engine to get advice and/or information on protecting their personal data in 2018 (35%) has significantly decreased since 2016. It appears that, with greater specific awareness, the public feels more able to turn to official bodies ('Local MP' has also seen a slight rise).
- There remains around one in six (16%) who are unsure as to where they would get advice and/or information.

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



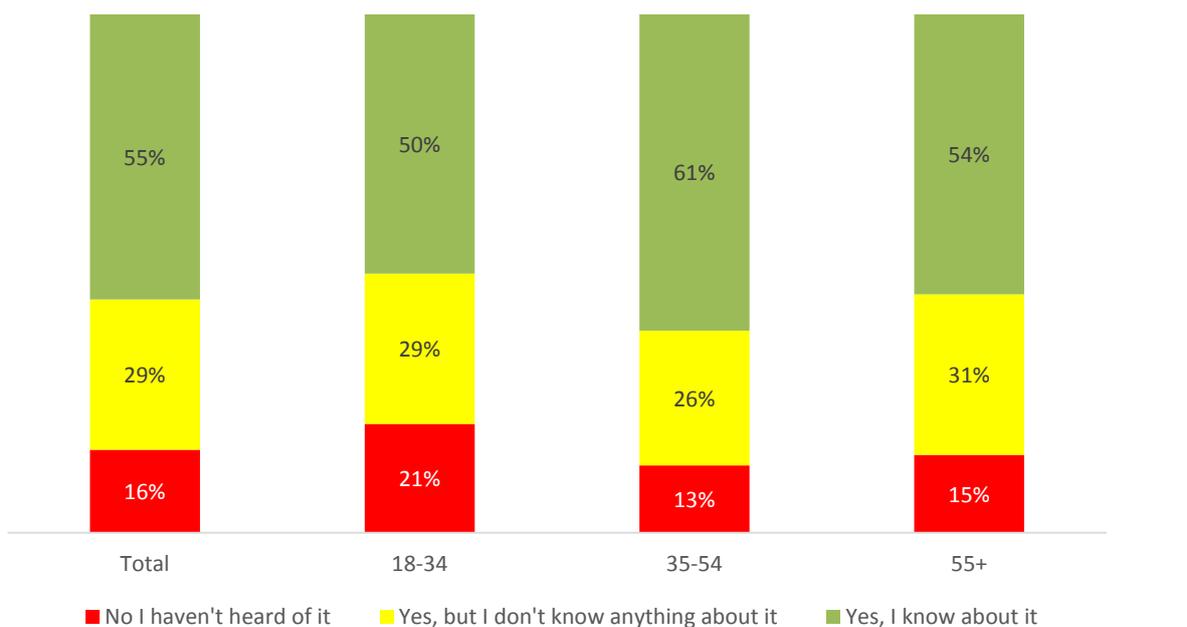
Base: All Adults: 2016 (1249) / 2018 (2131)

- Females (18%) are more likely to be unsure as to where to get advice and/or information on protecting their personal data than males (13%).
- 55+ year olds (40%) are more likely to look to get advice and/or information on protecting their personal data from the Information Commissioner's Office than 18-34 year olds (23%) and 35-54 year olds (33%).
- 18-34 year olds (27%) are more likely to use "friends and family" to get advice and/or information than 35-54 year olds (15%) and 55+ year olds (9%).

84% have heard of the GDPR, although 29% have “heard about it, but do not know anything about it”. This compares to 97% awareness of the Data Protection Act in 2016, highlighting that there is more work to do to further increase awareness.

- Females (18%) are more likely to state that they haven't heard about GDPR than males (14%).

Q14. Have you ever heard of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)?



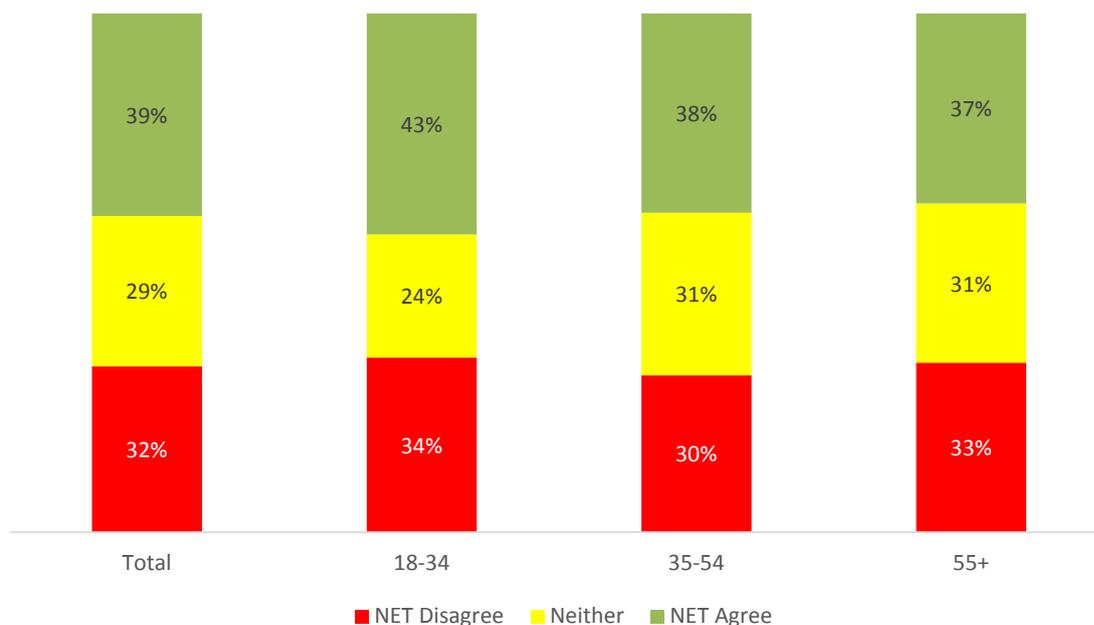
Base: All Adults: Total (2131), 18-34 (637), 35-54 (726), 55+ (768)

- Respondents from Scotland and Northern Ireland (both 22%) are more likely to have not heard about GDPR than members of the public from England (15%) and Wales (16%).

E.3 Technology

Nearly two in five (39%) of the public agree that companies and organisations protect their personal information from the risks arising from technology, whereas one in three (32%) disagree.

Q15. To what extent do you agree or disagree that companies and organisations protect your personal information from the risks arising from technology?



Base: All Adults: Total (2131), 18-34 (637), 35-54 (726), 55+ (768)

- Respondents in Scotland (35%) are slightly more likely to disagree that companies and organisations protect their personal information from the risks arising from technology than those in England (32%), Wales (31%) and Northern Ireland (33%).

'Personal information being stolen by criminals' is a concern for nearly three quarters (74%) of the public when companies and organisations use their personal information.

- A further half are concerned about 'personal information being used in an automated way to make decisions about me' (51%) and 'online activity being tracked' (53%).
- Just 7% are not concerned about any of these outcomes.

Q16. Which of the following outcomes are you most concerned about when companies and organisations use your personal information?

	Total		18-34	35-54	55+
Personal information being stolen by criminals	74%		60%	73%	85%
My online activity being tracked	53%		50%	55%	53%
Personal information being used in an automated way to make decisions about me	51%		48%	52%	54%
None of these	7%		9%	8%	3%

Base: All Adults: Total (2131), 18-34 (637), 35-54 (726), 55+ (768)

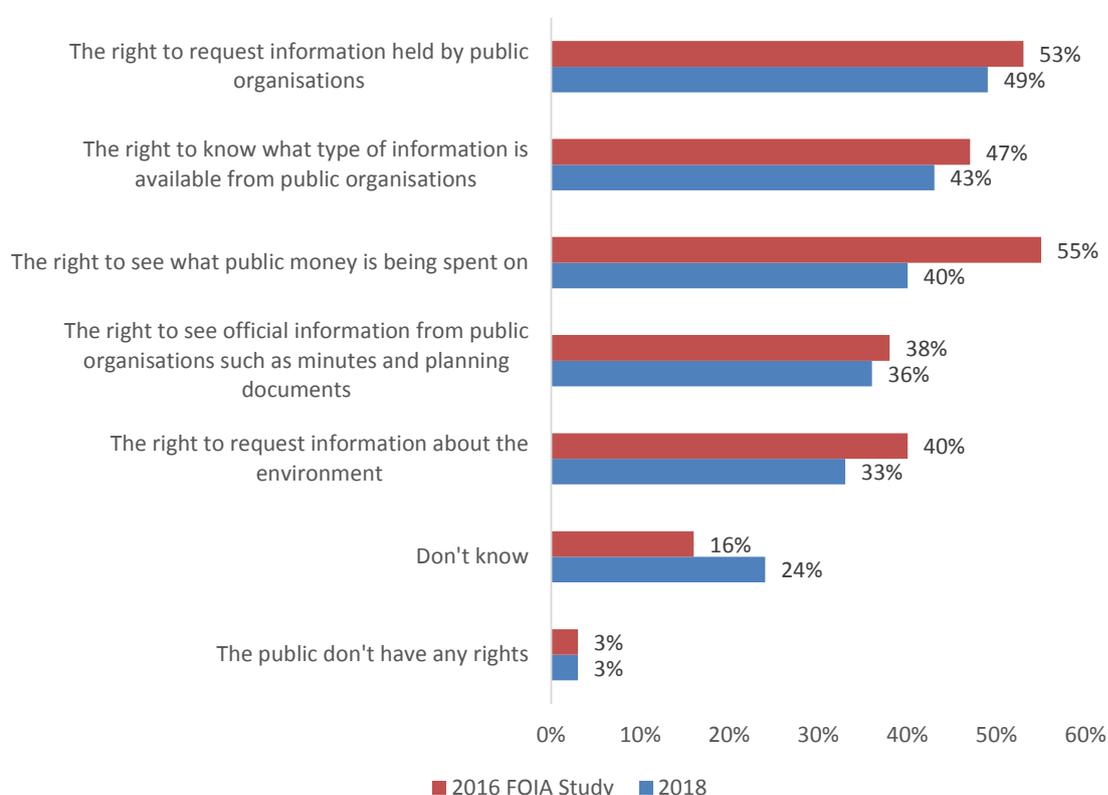
- 55+ year olds are significantly more worried about their 'personal information being stolen by criminals' (85%) than 18-34 year olds (60%) and 35-54 year olds (73%).
- Females (77%) are more worried about their 'personal information being stolen by criminals' than males (71%).
- Males are more worried about 'their online activity being tracked' (55%) and 'personal information being used in an automated way to make decisions about them' (54%) than females (50% and 49% respectively).

E.4 Freedom of Information (FOI)

Compared with 2016, there is a decrease 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 in the UK.

- The biggest shift in awareness is seen on the “right to see what public money is being spent on” (2016 55% and 2018 40%)
- The proportion stating they do not know what rights they have has risen from 16% in 2016 to 24%.

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



Base: All Adults: 2016 FOIA Study (1251) / 2018 (2131)

- Males (53%) are significantly more likely to be aware of ‘the right to request information held by public organisations’ than females (46%).
- 55+ year olds (57%) are significantly more likely to be aware of ‘the right to request information held by public organisations’ than 18-34 year olds (41%) and 35-54 year olds (48%).

The level of agreement that information the public wants about the government, public authorities and or publicly owned companies is available and accessible has remained constant with 2016 (39% vs 38% respectively).

Q18. Do you agree or disagree that information you want about the government, public authorities and or publicly owned companies is available and accessible?

	2016	2018
NET: Agree	38%	39%
Strongly agree	12%	9%
Tend to agree	26%	31%
Neither agree nor disagree	31%	31%
Tend to disagree	23%	25%
Strongly disagree	7%	5%
NET: Disagree	30%	30%

Base: All Adults: 2016 FOIA Study (1251) / 2018 (2131)

- Male respondents are significantly more likely to agree (44%) that information they want about the government, public authorities and or publicly owned companies is available and accessible than females (35%).