Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)

Public Attitudes on Information Rights Survey 2025

Information Commissioner's Office

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Executive Summary

Research objectives[1]

- To track ICO25 KPIs to inform decision-making and prioritisation within the ICO.
- To deliver quantitative evidence on a number of privacy related topics.
- To explore the experiences of those with very low or no digital familiarity.
- To identify barriers and opportunities for public engagement with information rights.

Methodology

Online population (CAWI - Computer Assisted Web Interviewing)

Savanta conducted a 15-minute online survey amongst 8,019 members of the UK public. Fieldwork took place between 10 January and 21 February 2025. The data is representative of the UK adult online population by age, gender, ethnicity, region, disability and socio-economic status.

Digitally disengaged audience (CATI - Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing)

Savanta conducted a 20-minute telephone survey amongst 500 members of the UK public who had either very low or no digital familiarity. Fieldwork took place between 6 January and 13 February 2025. The data is representative of UK adults who have very low or no digital familiarity by age, gender, ethnicity and region.

Key findings

Data privacy

Attitudes towards data privacy appear to be on a positive trajectory, with the public more likely to say they feel confident than in 2024 (20% vs. 18%), though caution remains the dominant sentiment (52%). Most people say they have had at least some exposure to data protection (70%), and there has been a decrease compared to 2024 in the number of people saying they have had little to no exposure (25% vs. 27%).

There has been a notable shift in people seeking data protection advice or information from formal to informal information sources. This year search engines took the top spot from official

[1] Please see introduction and methodology sections for full details.

government websites or resources, which has decreased since 2024 (36% vs. 40%). While data protection experts remain the most trusted source of advice, this figure has decreased since 2024 (45% vs. 43%).

Online harms

Data breaches remain a relatively common experience, with over half (56%) of people reporting they have experienced a data breach, consistent with 2024 (55%). Though the number of data breaches remains steady, people who have been victims are more likely this year to say they have been impacted in any way (71% vs. 69%).

The most common impacts are time and effort (35%), loss of trust (35%) and emotional distress (35%), while the most commonly experienced harms are psychological (27%). However, though people are more likely to say they have been impacted by data breaches this year, they are also more likely to report receiving assistance from data holders (58% vs. 56%).

"Consent or pay" choices

When presented with "consent or pay" choices, people are most likely to say they chose to access websites for free with personalised ads and cookies (37%) than to pay for access.

While some people say that they understand the options, just over two in five (42%) are not entirely sure what the options mean. Only one in five say they feel informed (19%) and in control (19%) when it comes to "consent or pay" access options. People are most likely to say they feel sceptical (24%), with feelings of pressure (17%) and frustration (16%) also being frequently reported.

Digitally disengaged audience

In 2025, there was an increase in the proportion of digitally disengaged people who depend on others for help when using the internet (68% vs. 58%), and who feel under pressure to use computers or smartphones even when they didn't want to (47% vs. 37%).

Digitally disengaged adults also receive a high number of nuisance/spam communications per year, yet only a minority report them, mostly due to not knowing how. Fewer than three in ten (28%) digitally disengaged people say they report these communications, compared to more than half in the online population (55%).

ICO 2025 KPIs

When looking at the online population, the story for the ICO's performance against its 2025 KPIs is a largely positive one, with both awareness and exercising of information rights increasing since 2024. When presented with a list of information rights, three quarters (76%) of the online population say they are aware of **at least one**, up from 73% in 2024.

Three quarters (76%) of people say they have exercised **at least one** information right. While this figure is similar to the 2024 findings, people are significantly more likely to say they are aware of their right to erasure (49% vs. 46%), data usage limits (45% vs. 41%), informed consent (48% vs. 44%), and information access (45% vs. 36%).

There are also positive signs on awareness of the ICO and the role it plays. Over half of the online population (57%) claim they are aware of the ICO, with a quarter (26%) expressing a clear understanding of its functions and roles; a substantial rise vs. 2024 on both (53% and 22% respectively).

It remains important to focus on reaching digitally disengaged people, as their awareness is significantly lower than the online population and increases in awareness and exercising of rights were not seen among this group.

Introduction & research objectives

As the ways people use and manage data continue to evolve rapidly, the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) must stay informed about the public's understanding, priorities, and trust regarding information rights.

Savanta was commissioned by the ICO to conduct the Public Attitudes on Information Rights survey (hereafter referred to as the "Public Attitudes Survey"). The main goal of this survey is to gather reliable data to check how well the ICO is performing against its key performance indicators (KPIs) related to increasing public awareness and understanding of information rights, and what people think about the ICO's job in protecting these rights. The survey also gauges public attitudes and behaviours towards other topics including data privacy, online harms, and emerging issues such as "consent or pay" choices.

This research follows earlier surveys: the Public Attitudes 2023 pilot survey conducted in October 2023, and the Public Attitudes 2024 survey conducted in January 2024. As with the 2024 survey, this survey also includes interviews with UK adults who have no or low digital skills, completed via telephone.

Objectives of the research

- To track ICO25 KPIs to inform decision-making and prioritisation within the ICO.
- To deliver quantitative evidence on a number of privacy related topics.
- To explore the experiences of those with very low or no digital familiarity (CATI sample).
- To identify barriers and opportunities for public engagement with information rights.

Methodology

Online population (CAWI - Computer Assisted Web Interviewing)

Approach

Savanta conducted a 15-minute online survey amongst 8,019 members of the UK public. Fieldwork took place between 10 January and 21 February 2025. The Public Attitudes 2025 Survey included a sample boost to n=1,000+ total respondents from each of the devolved nations of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. For the analysis contained in this report, these respondents have been weighted to be representative of the UK adult online population as a whole.

Sample

The data is representative of the UK adult online population by age, gender, ethnicity, region, disability, and socio-economic status, achieved by setting quotas to collect the appropriate number of respondents for each demographic group. To correct for any remaining imbalances and ensure national representativeness, the data was weighted to match official UK statistics across these variables. The Random Iterative Method (RIM) was used to ensure the weighted sample accurately mirrors the national population profile.

According to the data obtained from the Financial Lives 2022 survey[2], approximately 93% of the population demonstrate a robust level of digital skills. Throughout this report they will be referred to as "the online population".

Digitally disengaged audience (CATI - Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing)

Approach

Savanta conducted a 20-minute telephone survey amongst 500 members of the UK public who had either very low or no digital familiarity. Fieldwork took place between 6 January and 13 February 2025.

People were included in the telephone interview if they either agree with at least three of the following five statements, or if they say that they abstain from the activities described below:

[2] Please click here or use the link to access the report of FCA's Financial Lives 2022 survey: https://www.fca.org.uk/publication/financial-lives/financial-lives-survey-2022-key-findings.pdf

Statements:

- I don’t typically use email
- I am not comfortable performing tasks like online banking
- I prefer shopping in person rather than online
- I find it challenging to use online devices such as smartphones
- I usually rely on family or friends for help with using the internet

Sample

The data is representative of UK adults who have very low or no digital familiarity by age, gender, ethnicity, and region, achieved by setting quotas to collect the appropriate number of respondents for each demographic group. To correct for any remaining imbalances and ensure national representativeness, the data was weighted to match official UK statistics across these variables. The Random Iterative Method (RIM) was used to ensure the weighted sample accurately mirrors the national population profile of digitally disengaged people.

The sample of adults with very low or no digital familiarity naturally skews towards older age groups. The proportion of older respondents among this audience has also increased from 2024 to 2025, in line with nationally representative quotas. Those aged 75+ rose from 38% to 48%, while 55-74 fell from 49% to 41%, and 18-34 dropped from 4% to 2%. According to the data obtained from the Financial Lives 2022 survey, approximately 7% of the population demonstrates low to no digital familiarity. Throughout this report they will be referred to as “digitally disengaged”.

Analysis

Comparisons have been made to the 2024 iteration of the Public Attitudes survey throughout this report. All reported differences between the 2024 and 2025 iterations of the Public Attitudes Survey and between demographic sub-groups are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. Any significant year-on-year differences between 2024 and 2025 are represented by the following indicators on charts:

Chapter 1: Online population

This chapter will explore the responses of the online adult population of the UK across three key areas of questioning from the online survey:

- **Data privacy**: This includes people's attitudes and behaviours towards their personal information, exposure to data protection and sources of guidance.
- **Online harms**: This explores people's experience of data breaches, how they respond, and the impacts and harms caused.
- **"Consent or pay"**: This explores people's experience with "consent or pay" choices, their understanding of the choices shown, and how this choice makes them feel.

1.1 Data privacy

Introduction

This section explores public attitudes and behaviour around the privacy of their personal information, as well as their exposure to data protection and where they are most likely to seek advice should they need it.

For this report, personal information is any data or information about a particular person, which could include (but is not limited to) people's photos of themselves, information about their health, political views, events or activities attended, and things they have bought.

Personal information

When prompted to select which words best represent how they feel about the privacy of their personal information, the most common sentiment among the public is one of caution (51%). This finding is consistent with the 2024 iteration of the Public Attitudes Survey.

Nonetheless, people are more likely to select positive feelings than negative. This includes feeling confident (20%), secure (18%), informed (17%) and relaxed (16%), while negative feelings such as anxious (15%), insecure (12%) and uninformed (6%) are less frequently selected.

Similarly, 2025 has seen a positive shift in people's confidence around the privacy of their personal information compared to 2024. This is reflected in the fact that people are more likely than in 2024 to say that they feel confident (20% vs. 18%), and less likely to say that they feel uncertain (21% vs. 23%).

People are most likely to report sharing login details for streaming services (61%) and passcodes for tablets or smartphones (53%), and there has been an increase in the number of people who share login details for social media accounts compared to 2024 (29% vs. 27%).

Across all types of information tested, people are most likely to share with their spouse or partner, with sharing rates ranging from 20% for social media login details to 42% for streaming services login details. Sharing personal information with children is the next most common, ranging from 5% for bank login details to 21% for streaming services login details. Sharing with parents, siblings, other family members, friends, and colleagues is typically lower for most types of information.

Figure 1: Types of personal information shared with others (% selected)

Q7. Some people share information with others. Who, if anyone, do you share each of the following pieces of information with? | Base = All Public Attitudes 2025 respondents (8,019), 2024 respondents (5,533).

Login details for streaming services	Passcodes for tablets or smartphones	Login details for online shopping websites	Log in details to email accounts	Bank login details	Login details to personal social media accounts
61%	53%	44%	36%	30%	29% (+2pp)

Besides an increase in the small proportion of those that are willing to share all types of access details, comfort with sharing personal information remains unchanged since 2024. Over seven in ten (72%) say they have shared at least one type of security information with others, whilst one in six (17%) say they have shared all types of information presented (vs. 15% in 2024).

Data protection

Most people say they have had at least some exposure to data protection (70%), and there has been a decrease compared to 2024 in the number of people saying they have had little to no exposure to data protection (25% vs. 27%). Though there has been no increase in reported exposure overall, there has been an uplift among young people aged 18-34 (81% vs. 76%) and people with a vulnerability (76% vs. 73%).

Age - 18-34

18-34s are more likely than 35-54s and 55+ to say they have had at least some exposure to **data protection** (81% vs. 74% and 60%). They are also **more likely than in 2024** to say this is the case (81% vs. 76%).

Vulnerability

Those with a vulnerability are more likely than those without to say they have had at least some exposure to **data protection** (76% vs. 68%). They are also **more likely than in 2024** to say this is the case (76% vs. 73%).

In terms of where people say they would seek specific advice or information about data protection, people are most likely to say they would do so via a search engine (38%). Search engines have taken the top spot from official government websites or resources, which has decreased since 2024 (36% vs. 40%).

This is indicative of a broader shift away from formal information sources. For example, although around a third of people also say they would seek information or guidance from legal advice websites or services (36%) and data protection regulatory bodies/organisations (32%), both figures have decreased since 2024 (from 39% and 34% respectively). This is also true for data protection blogs by experts in the field, which has decreased from 15% to 13%.

On the other hand, while informal sources such as family and friends (24%) and social media (10%) continue to rank slightly lower, both have increased since 2024 (from 21% and 8% respectively).

Figure 2: Sources used to seek specific advice or information about data protection (% selected, Top 10)

S1. If you needed specific advice or information about data protection due to an incident or concern, which of the following sources would you use to seek guidance? | Base = All Public Attitudes 2025 respondents (8,019), 2024 respondents (5,533).

Search engines	Legal advice websites or services	Official government websites or resources	Data protection regulatory body/ organisation	Family/ friends	Data protection blogs by experts in field	Social media
38%	36% ▼(-3pp)	36% ▼(-4pp)	32% ▼(-2pp)	24% ▲(+3pp)	13% ▼(-2pp)	10% ▲(+2pp)

Shifts away from formal information sources are potentially linked to who people trust to give advice on protecting their personal information. While data protection experts remain the most trusted source of advice, this figure has decreased since 2024 (45% vs. 43%)[3], with family and friends second most trusted (35%).

1.2 Online harms

<u>Introduction</u>

This section explores the public's experience of and attitudes towards data breaches, including how they have responded or would respond in the event of finding out their data had been breached. It will also explore the impacts and harms that data breaches can cause.

<u>Data breaches</u>

Data breaches remain a relatively common experience, with over half (56%) of people reporting they have experienced any type of data breach in the past 12 months or prior, consistent with 2024 (55%). Although overall levels have remained stable, people are now more likely than in 2024 to report having heard a news story about a company or organisation losing or having personal data stolen (34%, vs. 32%). Data breaches also have a disproportionate impact on vulnerable groups, as those with a vulnerability are more likely to report being a victim of a breach than those without a vulnerability (67% vs. 50%), as are those with a disability compared to those without (62% vs. 54%).

[3] Trust scores are calculated by subtracting NET: Distrust figures from NET: Trust figures.

Figure 3: Types of data breach experienced (% selected)

Q15. Which of the following, if any, have happened to you before? | Base = All Public Attitudes respondents 2025 (8,019) and 2024 (n = 5,533).

Impacts and harms

Though the number of data breaches remains consistent, those who have experienced them are more likely than in 2024 to say that they have been impacted by the incident (71% vs. 69%). The most significant impact is the time and effort needed to resolve the issue (35%), while emotional impacts such as loss of trust (35%) and emotional distress (30%) are also felt strongly.

Figure 4: Impact of data breaches on those who have experienced them (% selected)

Q16. You said that someone got access to your personal information without your permission. Thinking about this incident, what was the impact on you? If this has happened more than once, please think about the most recent incident. | Base = All who have been victim of a data breach 2025 (n = 4,521) and 2024 (n = 3,091).

These impacts are again most strongly felt by vulnerable audiences. Those with a vulnerability are more likely than those without to say they felt any of the impacts presented (76% vs. 67%), as are those with a disability compared to those without (77% vs. 69%).

For 2025, the Public Attitudes Survey also asked people to outline, in their own words, any harms suffered because of the data breach they experienced, the responses to which were then coded into quantitative data.

Figure 5: Harms resulting from data breaches (% selected)

Q16b. And in a few sentences, could you tell us about the impact this incident has had on you? | Base = All Public Attitudes respondents who have been victim of a data breach and said it caused an impact (n = 3,437).

"It has made me more careful and wary. I had to report to the police, bank and ombudsman."

"It created clear panic and caused real distress. It also made me more wary and careful about the type of passwords I use and how often I should change them. Certainly lost trust."

"At the time, I was upset, annoyed and felt like I was not in control. However the person I spoke to on the phoned calmed me down, and I had trust in him."

"It was distressing and it look time and effort to resolve the issue. I never used the company again as I had lost trust in them."

"It made me feel foolish and violated."

"I felt a bit stupid because, on reflection, I now know how the incident happened, so it has made me so much more cautious."

The most commonly experienced harms are psychological (27%), with costs of avoiding or mitigating the breach (11%), adverse effects on rights/freedoms (10%) and financial harms (10%) ranking lower. Much like the impacts question before, people with a disability are more likely than those without to say they experienced psychological harm because of a data breach (31% vs. 26%).

However, though people are more likely to have been impacted by data breaches, they are also more likely to report receiving assistance from data holders than in 2024 (58% vs. 56%). This includes those with vulnerabilities (61% vs. 57%) and those with disabilities (62% vs. 56%), who are both more likely to report receiving assistance than in 2024.

Almost half of those who have experienced a data breach followed the advice given by the organisation (47%), but one in five (21%) report receiving no advice at all. Similarly, around one in ten either felt like the actions were more effort than the problem was worth (10%) or did not trust the organisation to follow their advice (7%).

This suggests that whilst data holders are getting better at assisting victims of data breaches, including those with vulnerabilities, more needs to be done to ensure they reach out and provide clear and straightforward information and guidance on how to proceed. This is particularly crucial to mitigating the harms and impacts discussed above, which have a disproportionate impact on vulnerable audiences.

No experience of data breaches

Most people who have not experienced a data breach say they would act if they found out an organisation had failed to keep their personal information safe (79%). The most common action they would take is to get in touch with the organisation to find out exactly what information has been lost (51%), while more than a third would get in touch with a regulator to find out what they can do and what their rights are (37%).

Nevertheless, the number of people who say they would do nothing in response has increased since 2024 (9% vs. 6%). Whilst those who would do nothing make up a small proportion of the overall sample, this increase has largely been driven by less knowledgeable groups. This includes those with low digital familiarity (7% vs. 4%) and those with no knowledge of the ICO (10% vs. 7%).

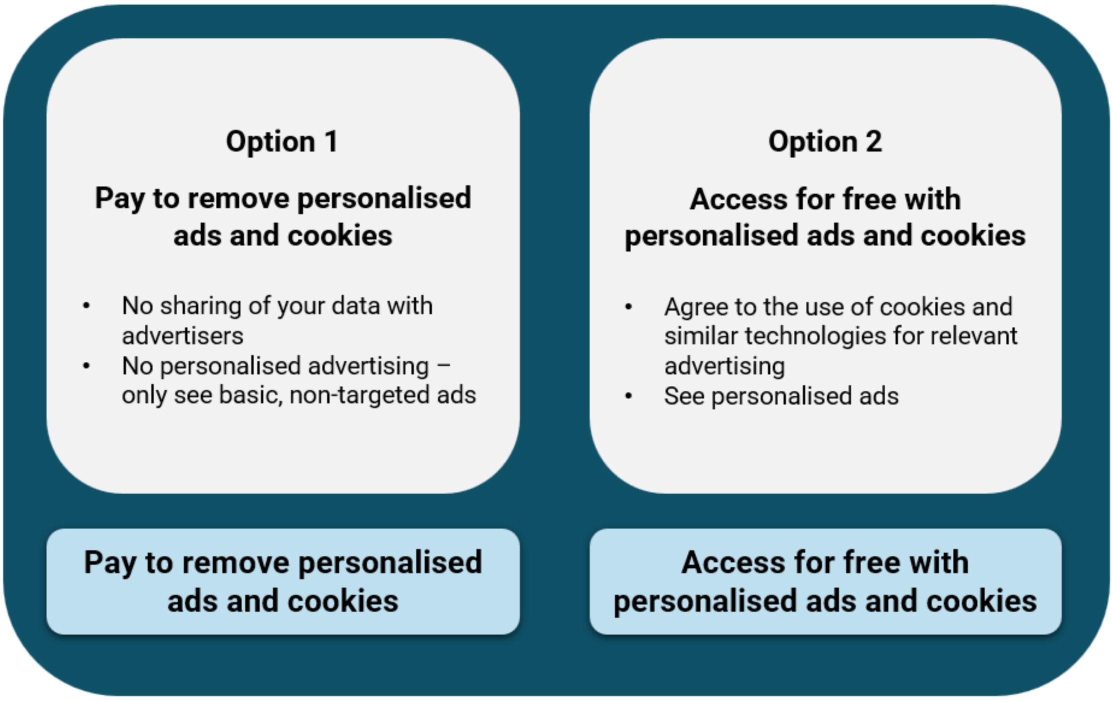
1.3 “Consent or pay”

Introduction

Recently, more and more companies have begun to use "consent or pay" choices on their websites. These choices allow people to decide between accessing websites for free while accepting personalised adverts and cookies, or paying to access the site without personalised adverts and cookies.

As these “consent or pay” models become increasingly common, it is important to understand how the public approaches them. Questions were therefore added for the 2025 iteration of the Public Attitudes Survey to find out more about people’s understanding of this choice, and how they balance convenience and privacy online.

As part of our approach, Savanta and the ICO created a simple and easily understandable example of how a “consent or pay” choice may look when browsing online:



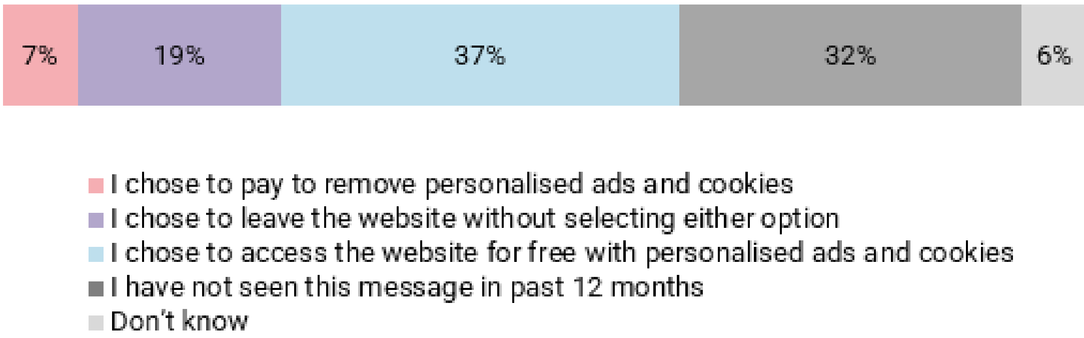
This example was presented to people in the online survey, who were then asked a series of questions on how they have responded to such a choice in the past (if they have seen one), their understanding of the choice shown, and how being given this choice made them feel.

Preference and understanding of "consent and pay" choice

When presented with the "consent or pay" choice above and asked to think about the last 12 months, people say they typically chose to access the website for free with personalised ads and cookies (37%), and one in five (19%) say they typically left the website altogether without selecting either option. In contrast, less than one in ten (7%) say they usually paid to remove personalised cookies.

Figure 6: Choice made when presented with options to access a website for free or pay to remove ads and cookies (% selected)

Q5b. In the last 12 months, have you been presented with an option like this when trying to access a website? If so, what did you typically do? If you came across this message more than once, please choose the option that best represents what you usually did. | Base = All Public Attitudes 2025 CAWI respondents (n = 8,019).



People generally feel confident that they understand the options presented to them when making such a choice, as nine in ten (89%) claim to have at least some understanding. However, when exploring this in more detail, just over two in five (42%) say that while they do have some understanding of the options, they are not entirely sure what these mean; suggesting there is a disconnect between headline understanding and then what this means in terms of actual day-to-day implications.

Perhaps linked to this, only one in five say they feel informed (19%) and in control (19%) when it comes to their "consent or pay" access options. Instead, people are most likely to say they feel sceptical (24%), with negative feelings of pressure (17%) and frustration (16%) also scoring highly.

Age - 55+

Those aged 55+ are less likely than 18-34s and 35-54s to say they **understand** the "consent or pay" options presented to them **very well** (44% vs. 49% and 49%). They are also more likely to say they feel **sceptical** (31% vs. 19% and 21%) and **pressured** (22% vs. 14% and 14%) when presented with the "consent or pay" choice.

Vulnerability

Those with a vulnerability are less likely than those without to say they **understand** the "consent or pay" options presented to them **very well** (45% vs. 49%).

Chapter 2: Digitally disengaged audience

Introduction

The Public Attitudes research in 2024 and 2025 has also included a separate survey for people with very low or no digital familiarity (i.e., "digitally disengaged"), conducted via telephone interviews. The inclusion of digitally disengaged people allows us to capture the range of attitudes and experiences spanning the entire digital engagement spectrum. It should be noted, as outlined in the methodology section above, that this group has a different demographic makeup to the online population.

People are classified as having very low or no digital familiarity if they either agree with at least three of the following five statements, or if they say that they abstain from the activities described below:

- I don't tend to use email
- I don't feel comfortable doing tasks such as online banking
- I feel more comfortable shopping in person than online
- I find using online devices such as smartphones difficult
- I usually get help from family and friends when it comes to the internet

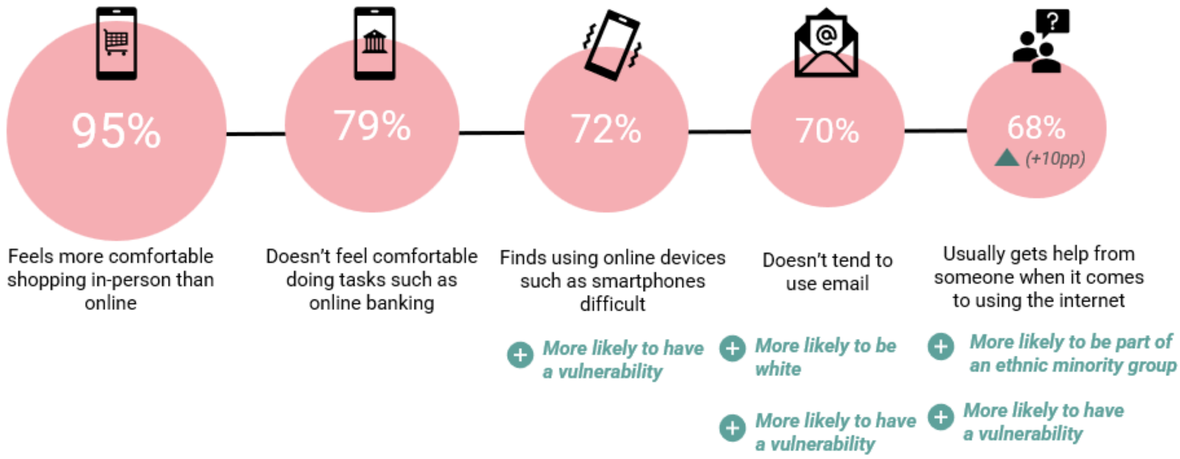
2.1 Key themes

Engagement and attitudes towards being online

As may be expected, the digitally disengaged audience are generally uncomfortable doing activities online. For example, almost the whole of this group say they feel more comfortable shopping in-person than online (95%), and four in five (79%) say they do not feel comfortable doing tasks such as online banking. Similarly, and perhaps most notably for 2025, almost seven in ten (68%) say they usually get help from someone when it comes to using the internet. This is an increase from 2024 (58%).

Figure 7: Comfort with online tasks (% agree)

D1. I'll read out some statements. For each, tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with the statement. Your options are agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree or don't know. | Base = All Public Attitudes respondents who are digitally disengaged 2025 (n=500) and 2024 (n = 500).



When asked why they use the internet/digital technology less frequently than other groups in society, digitally disengaged people are most likely to say it is because they would rather do things the old way (90%), are worried about having information about them which they don't want online (84%), and that they don't know how to use the internet or have limited knowledge of it (77%).

Whilst a lack of knowledge and a preference for online methods are prevalent among digitally disengaged people, a lack of access is also a significant issue, as almost half of this group say they have no or limited access to the internet or a device to connect from (49%).

Perhaps linked to the increase in likelihood of getting help with using the internet, digitally disengaged adults are also more likely to report getting help with online devices or doing tasks online than they were in 2024 (70% vs. 60%). This overall increase in getting help with being online has largely been driven by more digitally disengaged adults getting help from their children than they did in 2024 (36% vs. 27%).

This is potentially reflective of an older digitally disengaged audience compared to 2024[4], with those aged 75+ now being more likely to say they get help from their children (43% vs. 34% in 2024).

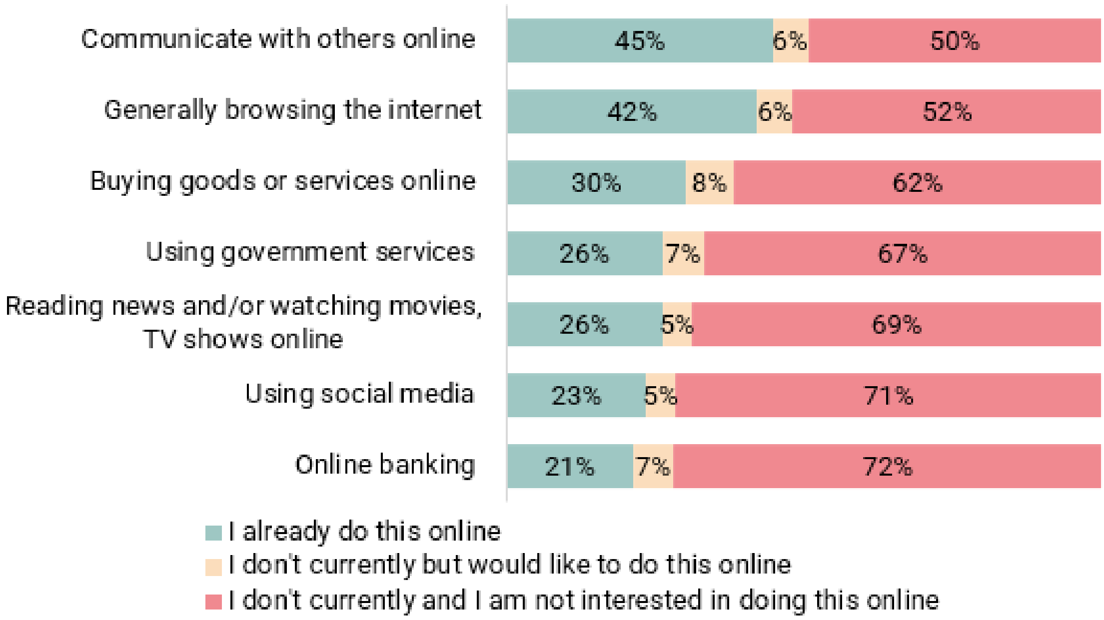
[4] See Methodology section.

Similarly, more digitally disengaged adults report having had to use a computer or smartphone – even when they didn't want to – than in 2024 (47% vs. 37%). Shopping (13%), applying for/renewing official documents (11%), and banking (9%) are the most common reasons for having had to do so.

Yet despite more digitally disengaged adults reporting that they get help with or feel forced to be online, this has not translated into increased uptake of online activities themselves. On the contrary, three in ten (30%) say they don't do and would not be interested in doing any of the activities listed below.

Figure 8: Current activity online / desire to do activity online (% selected)

Q4. I am now going to read out some activities that could be done online. For each statement, please could you tell me whether you already do this online, you don't currently but would like to do this online, or you don't currently and are not interested in doing this online. | Base = All Public Attitudes respondents who are digitally disengaged 2025 (n = 500).



Much like the online population, this group are also becoming more cautious about sharing personal information with others. Whilst remaining a small proportion of the overall sample, people are more likely to say they have not shared any kind of personal information with others than in 2024 (7% vs. 4%).

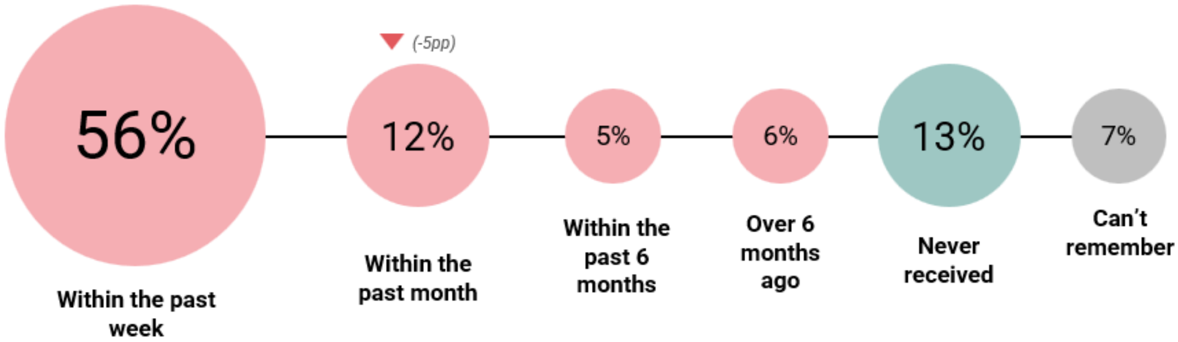
Despite this increased caution, almost two thirds (65%) have shared at least one type of personal information with others, most commonly with their children or spouse. They are most likely to report having shared personal health information (54%), financial information (35%) and login details to their email accounts (32%).

Nuisance/spam communications

Four in five (80%) digitally disengaged people say they have received nuisance/spam communications (such as calls or text messages), with more than half (56%) saying they have within the past week. By frequency, they report receiving an average of 49 nuisance/spam communications per year. Both figures remain consistent with 2024.

Figure 9: Last time a nuisance/spam communication was received (% selected)

QNC1. When was the last time you received a nuisance/spam communication (either a call or text message)? | Base = All Public Attitudes respondents who are digitally disengaged 2025 (n = 500) and 2024 (n = 500).



However, despite the high volume of nuisance/spam communications this group receive, only a minority know how to report them. Less than three in ten (28%) digitally disengaged people say they report these communications, compared to more than half among the online population (55%).

When asked why, three in ten (29%) say it is because they don't know how to report them. This is more frequently selected than other reasons, such as not thinking reporting them will make a difference (19%), not being bothered by them (16%), or it being too time consuming (15%). All three of these figures have also decreased since 2024, whilst a lack of knowledge has remained steady.

Almost half (49%) of those who report receiving nuisance/spam communications say this has had an impact on them, with the most frequently reported being annoyance or frustration (27%). However, there are also psychological impacts to consider such as causing people to feel worried or stressed (9%), or unsafe or scared (5%).

These communications are also more likely to have a negative impact on some groups than others, including those with disabilities and those from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Disability

Digitally disengaged individuals **with a disability** are **more likely than those without a disability** to report being **impacted by nuisance or spam** communications (55% vs. 43%).

Ethnic minority

Digitally disengaged individuals **from ethnic minorities** are **more likely than their white counterparts** to report being **impacted by nuisance or spam** communications (64% vs. 47%).

Chapter 3: ICO 2025 KPIs

Introduction

The Public Attitudes survey also provides the ICO with an important assessment of its performance across several key performance indicators (KPIs), which can be tracked over the course of a number of years. These KPIs mainly focus on increasing public awareness and understanding of information rights and the ICO, and what people think about the ICO's job in protecting these rights. This section will provide a snapshot of how the ICO has performed against these KPIs this year (and vs. 2024), both for the online population and the digitally disengaged audience.

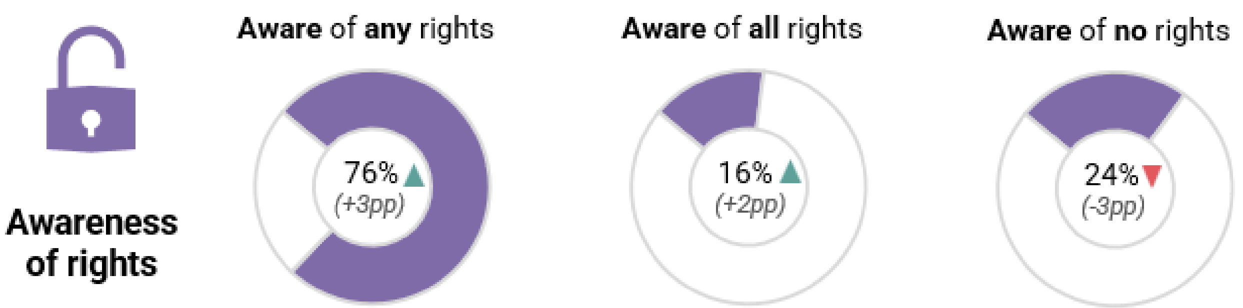
Online population

3.1 Awareness of information rights

The overall story on awareness of information rights is a positive one for 2025, with an increase in the number of people who say they are aware of their rights. When presented with a list of information rights, three quarters (76%) of the online population say they are aware that **at least one** of the rights is a legal right they hold, up from 73% in 2024. A much smaller proportion (16%) are aware that **all** listed rights are legal rights they hold, also up from 14% in 2024. Meanwhile, though almost a quarter (24%) are **not** aware of any rights, this has decreased from 27% in 2024.

Figure 10: Awareness of selected information rights (NET %)

*Q3. For each of these legal rights below, could you say whether you were aware that it was a legal right you held and that it was protected by law? * "To ask for copies of all the information that a company or organisation has about you" had a change in wording this year, this could impact findings/shifts in data. | Base = All Public Attitudes 2025 respondents (8,019), 2024 respondents (5,533).*

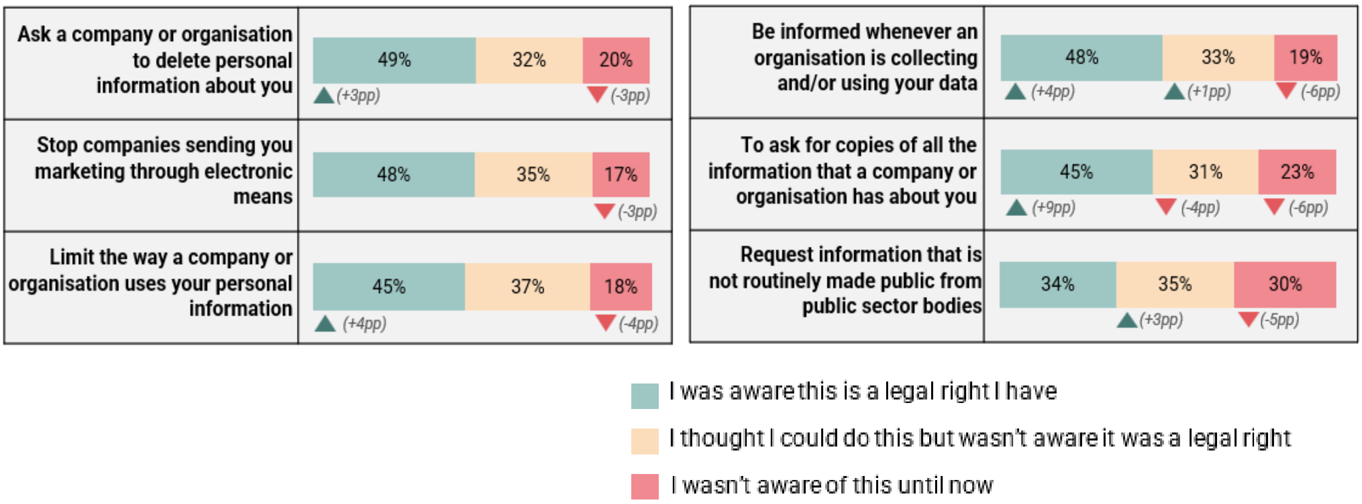


Looking at individual information rights tested (see figure X below), there have been increases in awareness across numerous rights vs. 2024: awareness of the right to erasure (49%, vs. 46%), limiting the way an organisation uses your personal information (45% vs. 41%), being informed when an organisation is collecting or using your data (48% vs. 44%) and finding out if a company is storing your personal data and ask to get copies of it (45%, vs. 36%).

Furthermore, across **all** tested information rights, there have been decreases in the number of people who say they are **not** aware they could do this until now.

Figure 11: Awareness of selected information rights (% saying the following)

*Q3. For each of these legal rights below, could you say whether you were aware that it was a legal right you held and that it was protected by law? * "To ask for copies of all the information that a company or organisation has about you" had a change in wording this year, this could impact findings/shifts in data. | Base = All Public Attitudes 2025 respondents (8,019), 2024 respondents (5,533).*



Age - 35-54

35-54s (19%) are more likely than 18-34s (13%), 55-74s (16%), and 75+ (13%), to say they **are aware of all presented information rights. 35-54s** are also **more likely** to say they are aware of **all** tested information rights in **2025** vs. 2024 **(19%** vs. 15%).

Vulnerability

Those **without** a vulnerability (18%) are more likely than those **with** a vulnerability (13%) to say they **are aware of all presented information rights.** Those **without a vulnerability** are also more likely to say they are aware of **all** tested information rights in **2025** vs. 2024 **(18%** vs.15%).

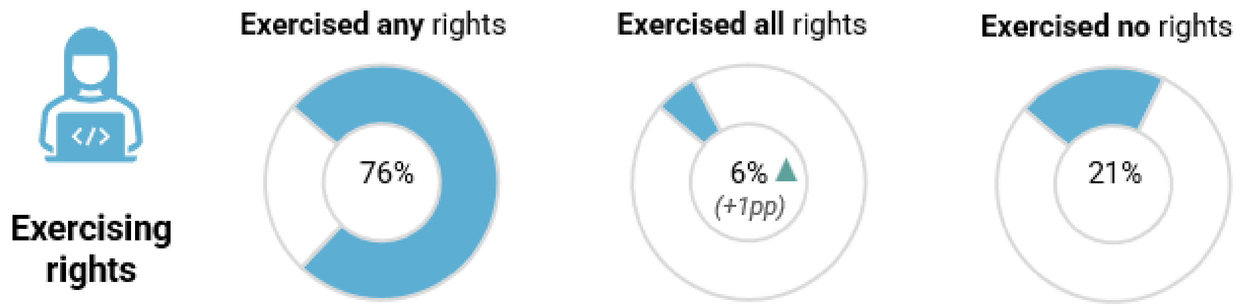
3.2 Exercising information rights

At the overall level, the proportion of the online population who report having exercised their information rights in the past 12 months or prior has stayed mostly consistent with 2024, albeit with a small increase in the number of people who say they have exercised **all** of the listed information rights. However, it is important to note that, at a more detailed level, there have been increases in the exercising of individual rights in 2025. This may indicate that, overall, the public are making broader and more comprehensive use of their information rights in 2025.

Three quarters (76%) of people say they have exercised **at least one** information right, similar to the 2024 findings. Only 6% say they have exercised **all** listed information rights, up from 5% in 2024. One in five (21%) have not exercised any information rights, consistent with 2024.

Figure 12: Exercising selected information rights (NET % in the past 12 months or prior)

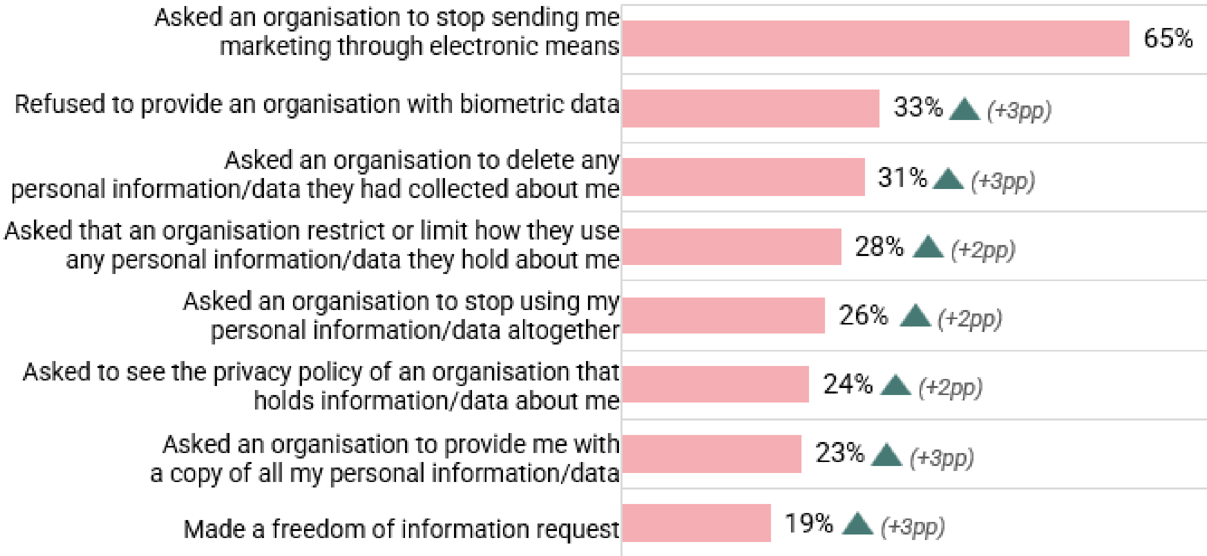
Q4. Have you done any of the following? | Base = All Public Attitudes 2024 respondents (5,533). Base = All Public Attitudes 2025 respondents (8,019), 2024 respondents (5,533), 2023 respondents (2,017).



Interestingly, while the overall findings remain mostly consistent year-on-year, there are increases in 2025 in the number of adults exercising each tested information right, except for asking organisations to stop electronic marketing, which has remained steady — likely because its uptake was already high.

Figure 13: Exercising selected information rights (showing % NET: Have done this in the past 12 months or prior)

Q4. Have you done any of the following? | Base = All Public Attitudes 2024 respondents (5,533). Base = All Public Attitudes 2025 respondents (8,019), 2024 respondents (5,533).



Age – 18-34

18-34s (10%) are more likely than 35-54s (8%), 55-74s (3%), and 75+ (2%), to say they **have exercised all presented information rights.**
18-34s are also more likely to say they **have exercised all** presented information rights in **2025** vs. 2024 **(10%** vs. 7%).

Vulnerability

Those **with** a vulnerability (10%) are more likely than those **without** a vulnerability (4%) to say they **have exercised all presented information rights.**
Those **with a vulnerability** are also more likely to say they **have exercised all** presented information rights in **2025** vs. 2024 **(10%** vs. 8%).

Satisfaction with the exercising of information rights is also positive. Noteworthy increases were observed in 2025 vs. 2024 among those requesting copies of their information and data (61%, vs. 54%), those submitting freedom of information requests (59%, vs. 51%), as well as individuals seeking to view an organisation's privacy policy (58% vs. 54%).

3.3 Awareness and perceptions of the ICO

In 2025, public awareness of the ICO saw a notable increase. Over half of the online population (57%) claim they are aware of the ICO, with a quarter (26%) expressing a clear understanding of its functions and roles; a substantial rise vs. 2024 on both scores (57% vs. 53% and 26% vs. 22% respectively). This suggests that initiatives to enhance public engagement and knowledge about the ICO's mission are yielding positive results.

Age – 18-34

18-34s (34%) are more likely than 35-54s (30%), 55-74s (18%), and 75+ (15%), to say they are **aware of and know about the ICO.**
18-34s are also more likely to say they **are aware of and know about the ICO in 2025** vs. 2024 **(34%** vs. 25%).

Vulnerability

Those **with** a vulnerability (28%) are more likely than those **without** a vulnerability (25%) to say they are **aware of and know about the ICO.**
Those **with a vulnerability** are also more likely to say they **are aware of and know about the ICO in 2025 vs. 2024 (28%** vs. 24%).

Men

Men (31%) are more likely than women (21%) to say they **are aware of and know about the ICO.**
Men are also more likely to say they **are aware of and know about the ICO in 2025** vs. 2024 **(31%** vs. 27%).

Mentions of the ICO are most prominently recalled in the news (27%), through workplace training (16%), and through social media (15%). However, two in five (21%) say they have not heard anything about the ICO in the past 12 months. Those 75+ (43%) and those with low digital familiarity (32%) are more likely to say this[5].

[5] This question was changed in 2025 to show less options. Findings are therefore not comparable year-on-year.

Digitally disengaged audience

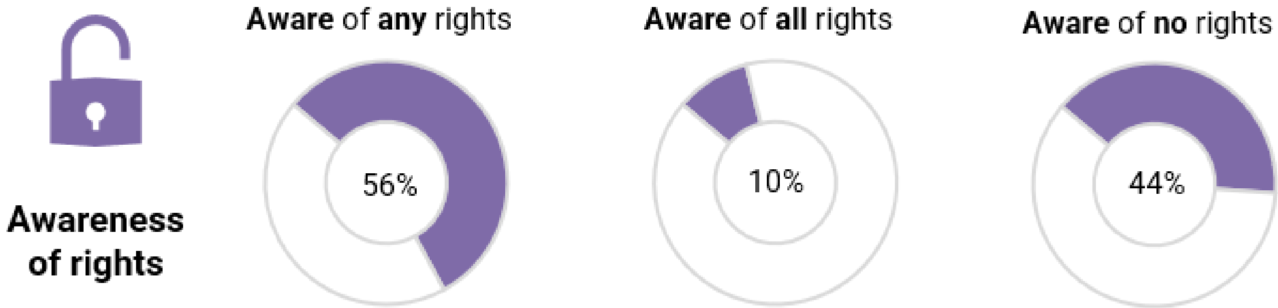
3.4 Awareness of information rights

Over half (57%) of digitally disengaged adults have **not** heard the term "information or data rights," a figure that has remained stable since 2024. However, there have been notable declines since 2024 in awareness among adults aged 75+ (35%, vs. 44%), women (38% vs. 47%), and white people (41% vs. 50%).

Since the 2024 findings, awareness of individual information rights among the digitally disengaged audience has remained consistent, and remains lower than that of the online population. When asked about information rights, over half (56%) of digitally disengaged individuals recognise **at least one** right as a legal entitlement. However, only one in ten (10%) are aware that **all** listed rights are legal entitlements. Notably, over two in five (44%) of this audience are **unaware** of any legal rights listed.

Figure 14: Awareness of selected information rights (digitally disengaged NET %)

Q7. I am going to read out a list of legal rights, protected by law. For each of them, could you say whether you were aware that it was a legal right you held, you were aware of it but you didn't know it was a legal right, or if you were not aware of this legal right? | Base = All Public Attitudes respondents who are digitally disengaged (n = 500).

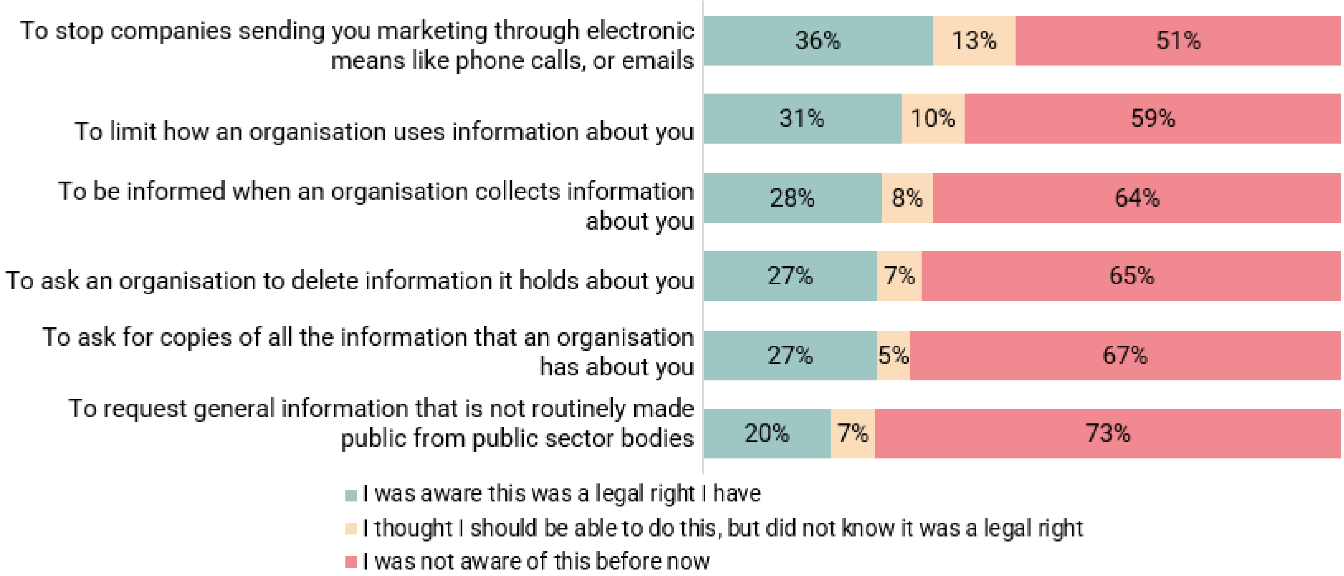


When examining specific legal information rights, digitally disengaged adults are most aware of their right to prevent companies from sending marketing materials electronically (36%) and to restrict how organisations use their information (31%). There has been no change in the awareness of any individual rights since 2024.

In contrast, the online population are most aware of the right to request the deletion of their personal information by companies or organisations (49%), and similarly, their awareness of the ability to halt electronic marketing communications remains high at 48%.

Figure 15: Awareness of selected information rights (% digitally disengaged saying the following)

Q7. I am going to read out a list of legal rights, protected by law. For each of them, could you say whether you were aware that it was a legal right you held, you were aware of it but you didn't know it was a legal right, or if you were not aware of this legal right? | Base = All Public Attitudes respondents who are digitally disengaged (n = 500).



Disability

Digitally disengaged individuals **with a disability (50%)** are more likely to say they are not aware of any information rights than those **without a disability (39%).**

3.5 Exercising information rights

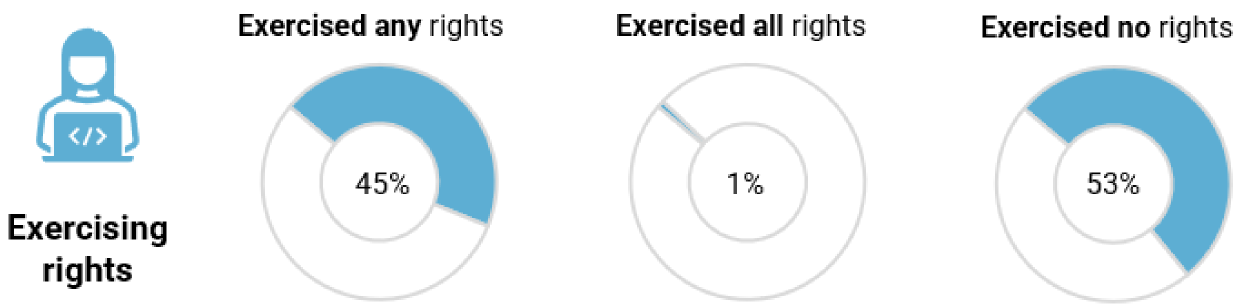
At an overall level, the number of digitally disengaged people who report having exercised their information rights in the past 12 months or prior has remained consistent with 2024.

Recent findings reveal that over two in five (45%) digitally disengaged individuals have exercised at least one information right, while only 1% have exercised all listed rights. Over half of digitally disengaged adults (53%) have not exercised any information rights, consistent with 2024 results.

A comparison between the online and digitally disengaged audiences shows that three quarters (76%) of the online population have exercised at least one information right, whereas just over two in five (45%) of the digitally disengaged have done so. Moreover, over half (53%) of digitally disengaged individuals have not exercised any information rights, which is higher than the one in five (21%) observed in the online population.

Figure 16: Exercising selected information rights (NET % in the past 12 months or prior)

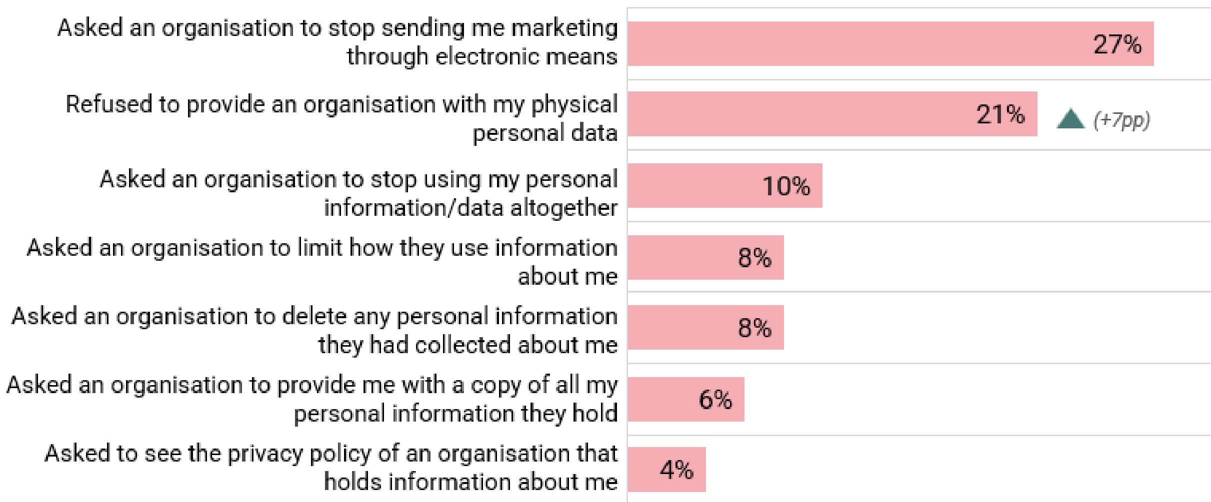
Q8. I am now going to read out a list of statements. For each of them, could you please tell me whether you have done this in the last 12 months, you have done this but more than 12 months ago, or if you have never done this. | Base = All Public Attitudes respondents who are digitally disengaged 2025 (n = 500).



Regarding individual rights, the most exercised right among both digitally disengaged (27%) and the online population (65%) is the right to ask organisations to cease sending marketing materials electronically. There has also been a noticeable increase vs. 2024 (21% vs. 14%) in the proportion of digitally disengaged adults who refuse to provide their physical data to organisations.

Figure 17: Exercising selected information rights (showing % NET: Have done this in the past 12 months or prior)

Q8. I am now going to read out a list of statements. For each of them, could you please tell me whether you have done this in the last 12 months, you have done this but more than 12 months ago, or if you have never done this. | Base = All Public Attitudes respondents who are digitally disengaged 2025 (n = 500) and 2024 (n = 500).



3.6 Awareness and perceptions of the ICO

Digitally disengaged adults demonstrate very low awareness of the ICO, with less than one in five (17%) saying they are aware of the organisation, and less than one in ten (7%) reporting that they know what the ICO does. Knowledge of the ICO among this group is more than three times lower than that of their online counterparts (26%). Furthermore, four in five (80%) digitally disengaged people have never heard of the ICO at all. However, of those who do know about the ICO, half (50%) say they are doing a good job.[6]

Disability

Digitally disengaged individuals **with a disability (9%)** are more likely to say they are aware of the ICO than those **without a disability (5%).**

News media is the leading channel through which digitally disengaged adults hear about the ICO (35%), while just 4% have heard about the ICO via social media. Other personal sources, such as friends and family (6%) or colleagues (5%), also contribute, albeit to a lesser extent. Less than one in ten (8%) say they have heard of the ICO directly from the organisation itself, and 3% through official government sources. Notably, nearly a third (32%) of people report not hearing anything about the ICO in the past year, underlining an ongoing challenge in reaching this audience segment[7].

[6] As the sample size for this question is small (n=35), findings are indicative only.
[7] This question was changed in 2025 to show fewer options. Findings are therefore not comparable year-on-year.

Conclusion

In summary, this research has provided invaluable insight for the ICO into the public's understanding, priorities and trust regarding information rights, and how the organisation is performing against its key performance indicators (KPIs).

Against the KPIs, the story for 2025 is a positive one, with both awareness and exercising of all information rights increasing significantly compared to 2024. There are also positive signs on awareness of the ICO and the role it plays, with people more likely than in 2024 to say they have both heard of and know about the organisation.

Attitudes and perceptions around data privacy also remain on a positive trajectory, with the public more likely to feel confident about the privacy of their data than in 2024, and significant uplifts in the number of young (18-34), vulnerable and female respondents saying they have had exposure to data protection. Similarly, more victims of data breaches report receiving assistance from data-holders compared to 2024, including those with vulnerabilities and disabilities.

However, it remains important to focus on reaching the digitally disengaged members of the public, as the wider significant increases in awareness and exercising of rights has not been replicated among this group. 2025 has also seen a significant increase in the number of people in this category who depend on others for help using the internet, as well as feeling under pressure to use the internet to get something important done.

Similarly, the ever-evolving threat to the general public's data is exemplified by the fact that though the number of data breaches remains steady, people who have been victims of a data breach are more likely than in 2024 to say they have been impacted. This includes practical impacts such as the time and effort needed to resolve the issue, but also emotional impacts such as loss of trust or emotional distress.

To conclude, these findings highlight both significant progress and ongoing challenges for the ICO as it seeks to increase awareness and enactment of information rights amid an evolving digital landscape. Sustained improvements in awareness, confidence, and engagement signal that the organisation's efforts are having a tangible impact, while targeted action is still needed to support digitally disengaged groups and ensure the general public are empowered to understand and enact the information rights they hold.