



# UK DATA PRIVACY: WHAT THE CONSUMER REALLY THINKS 2022

Research partner



# CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	2
FOREWORD	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
PART 1: THE CHANGING UK CONSUMER LANDSCAPE	6
PART 2: PROMOTING A HEALTHY UK DATA ECONOMY	11
PART 3: RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES	23
PART 4: EMERGING THEMES FOR THE DATA ECOSYSTEM IN 2022	27
METHODOLOGY	31
ABOUT ACXIOM	32
ABOUT THE DMA	33
ABOUT FORESIGHT FACTORY	34

# INTRODUCTION

This latest edition of our look into how consumers feel about privacy and their data was conducted against the backdrop of rapid change and innovation, accelerated by the global pandemic that has changed how we all live, work, play and shop.

The UK-specific report is now in its fourth iteration and represents over a decade of tracking since it was first conceived in 2012. Moreover, it is now part of a global report representing over half of the world's population across 16 key markets – created in partnership with the [Global Data and Marketing Alliance](#) (GDMA).

The UK findings demonstrate that the empowered consumer mindset towards online privacy and data exchange has matured and evolved over the last 10 years in a consistent direction. Overall, concern with data privacy is in decline, while the levels of happiness with the amount of data shared and comfort with the notion of data exchange are on the rise. In addition, public awareness and understanding of the role that data exchange plays in the modern digital economy has increased dramatically since 2012.

The research confirms the importance of both the [DMA Code](#) here in the UK and the [GDMA's Global Privacy Principles](#). Both are sets of principles designed to enable a consistent approach to data protection legislation and industry best practice, balancing the consumer's right to privacy with the organisation's ability to market to them.

Ultimately, consumers continue to be aligned in their call for us, as an industry, to be accountable for our decisions, transparent with customers and offer them greater control. Successful brands will be those that can combine being diligent and responsible with their data while putting the customer at the heart of what they do to create intelligent marketing that engages.

We'd also like to thank Acxiom for partnering with us on bringing this valuable insight to our community and continuing to support its global growth too.

'Put the customer first' is the guiding principle of the DMA Code and for the many organisations that are DMA members. If your product or service creates real benefits for people by using their data then you should be happy to say so, openly and proudly. Consumers will reward you with their trust and their custom.

**Chris Combemale**

CEO at the Data & Marketing Association (DMA)

# FOREWORD

The digital revolution has dramatically enhanced our ability to enjoy everyday life, improving everything from healthcare, science, and humanitarian work to travel, hospitality, software, shoes, and showerheads. Those who work with data every day know it is data that makes much of life today possible. When vaccines are developed in record time to tackle a global pandemic? That's thanks to data.

And while our world is changing, so too is legislation. Since the last iteration of this report in 2018, we've seen key legislation introduced such as the GDPR. With much talk about data privacy, data use, and data control in the public discourse, consumers are increasingly aware of data and its role in our society.

It is against this backdrop that the 2022 survey results should be seen.

As people get ever more familiar with data and technology their overall concern is falling. Perhaps this is in part due to people's increasing understanding of data and the work brands have done to improve transparency. It also seems clear that the increasing percentage of the population who have grown up with digital technology is having an effect as well, but the AdTech and MarTech industry must continue to find an answer to this axiomatic message: people still don't see themselves benefiting from data as much as industry does.

We must drive home the value exchange between brands and people – in other words, strive harder to help people understand what they receive in return for sharing their data. For marketers, we must continue to make that value clear, whether it's in more straightforward scenarios like relevant discounts and offers or in more complex processing such as cross domain personalised experiences that surprise and delight.

A value exchange requires transparency; as the report shows, the majority of people expects transparency around data use, and rightly so. Transparency requires a level of understanding, and data use can often be complex and difficult to explain, especially when consumers simply want to get on with their daily digital lives with minimal interruption. We expect the use of layered privacy notices to remain a key tool for the foreseeable future as we all strive for openness and understanding in an increasingly complicated ecosystem with many players. We strongly believe that people should reasonably expect their data to be used for the purposes set out in a well-crafted privacy notice.

In the quest to continue delivering exceptional customer experiences, we also anticipate a rise in data aggregation or cohorts, as any perceived privacy impact on individuals is minimised while still delivering the value they've come to expect. Such privacy enhancing processes need to be considered an essential part of data quality. So, our position as an industry aligns with that of the regulator - transparency is not only a key ingredient to lawfulness of processing, but it is also good business for brands and imperative for people. Transparency breeds data trust.

Acxiom is proud to partner with the DMA for the third time, on this the fourth iteration of the Foresight Factory's independent research and for the second time as part of a wider international programme. For more than fifty years, we've believed in, invested in, and advocated for ethical data use that delivers growth for businesses, our economies, and most importantly delivers value for people.

**Alex Hazell**  
Head of Privacy and Legal

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## **The majority of UK consumers remain Data Pragmatists**

In 2022, almost half (46%) of UK consumers are Data Pragmatists; people who are happy to exchange data with businesses so long as there is a clear benefit for doing so. Just under 1 in 3 (31%) of UK consumers are Data Unconcerned; people who show little or no concern about their data privacy. Less than 1 in 4 (23%) fall into the Data Fundamentalists segment; people who are unwilling to share personal information. Consequently, in 2022, the vast majority of UK consumers (77%) are open to engaging with the data economy.

## **And the Data Unconcerned are in the ascendency**

Since 2012, there has been a notable increase in the proportional size of the Data Unconcerned vs. the other segments. The Data Unconcerned have increased from 16% of the UK population in 2012 to 31% in 2022. Conversely, the Data Pragmatists have declined from 53% in 2012 to 46% in 2022 and the Data Fundamentalists have also decreased from 31% in 2012 to 23% in 2022. Consequently, while the Data Pragmatists remain the most prevalent segment, there is a clear long-term trend in the UK towards the growth of the Data Unconcerned over time.

## **Online privacy concerns remain high, but are in notable decline since 2012**

The proportion of UK consumers who claim to have high levels of concerns about their online privacy has fallen notably over the past decade. In 2022, 69% of UK consumers stated high levels of online privacy concerns, compared to 84% in 2012.

## **UK consumers are increasingly comfortable with data sharing and the amount of information shared**

Growing numbers in the UK claim to feel more comfortable with the idea of exchanging personal information with companies, with 55% agreeing with this statement in 2022 compared to 49% in 2015. At the same time, the proportion of UK consumers who claim to be happy with the amount of personal information they give to organisations has also increased, rising from 57% in 2012 to 64% in 2022.

## **Significant increase in public awareness of the role of data sharing for the running of modern societies**

The number of UK consumers who view the exchange of personal information as essential for the smooth running of modern society has grown dramatically over the previous decade, rising from 38% in 2012 to 60% in 2022.

## **A consumer capitalist mindset has continued to advance in the UK**

Since 2012 there has been a clear shift towards a UK consumer who is more likely to view personal data as having an intrinsic value that can be utilised for personal advantage. In 2022, 61% view their personal information as an asset that can be used to negotiate better prices and offers with companies, up from 40% in 2012.

## **Industry is still seen to benefit most from the data economy**

Almost 7 in 10 (68%) of UK consumers believe that businesses benefit most from data exchange. However, this is down from 80% in 2015. At the same time, more consumers now believe that they themselves benefit most from data exchange, with 12% now holding this view compared to 7% in 2015.

## **UK consumers say they have increased control over data sharing, but would like even more**

The proportion of UK consumers who believe they have no control over aspects of their personal information and data exchange with brands has declined since 2015. In 2022, 42% of UK consumers believe that they had no control over ensuring that brands used their data for the purpose they had initially agreed to, down from 52% of consumers in 2015. Despite this, the vast majority (88%) in the UK still seek more control over the information they share with companies.

### **Building trust remains paramount, despite a decline in relative importance since 2015**

Trust in an organisation remains the most important factor driving consumer willingness to share personal information with a company in the UK. While it has declined in importance since 2015, it remains the top influencer in facilitating data sharing. In 2022, 40% of UK consumers place trust in an organisation in their top three factors that make them happy to share their personal information with a company, down from 58% in 2015.

### **UK consumers continue to seek transparency as a precursor to data sharing**

Transparency remains a fundamental factor when sharing personal information with a company in the UK, although this is becoming less crucial over time. In 2022, 79% of UK consumers claim that transparency about how their data is collected and used is important to them when sharing their personal information with a company, but this is down from 87% in 2015. This rises to 90% among the 65+, but falls to 60% of 18-24s; signifying that transparency is a more fundamental requirement among older age groups.

### **An array of incentivisation strategies exist to engage the UK consumer**

The UK consumer continues to show an interest in a wide spectrum of rewards and benefits to entice their engagement with the data sharing ecosystem. However, those benefits linked to clear direct financial rewards have decreased in influence compared to other types of perks. For example, the number of consumers who claim they would be likely to exchange personal data in return for free products and services has fallen, while incentives linked to the personalisation of product, service and brand recommendations have all increased. Such findings suggest that UK consumers are becoming more open to service-led incentives that offer forms of personal enhancement alongside more direct financial rewards.

### **UK consumers show high levels of responsibility for their own data security, but also have growing expectations of industry**

UK consumers remain most likely to claim that they themselves have ultimate responsibility for their own data security. However, this has declined notably since 2018, falling from 48% to 38% in 2022. Concomitantly, there is a growing proportion of consumers in the UK who claim that brands/industry should have primary responsibility, rising from 7% in 2018 to 13% in 2022.

### **Significant growth in public awareness of GDPR in the UK**

There has been a rapid increase in public awareness of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in the UK over the previous 5 years. Awareness of GDPR has more than doubled, rising from 32% in 2018 to 73% in 2022.

### **Growing interest in B2B data sharing for service and product enhancements**

UK consumers are increasingly happy for businesses to share their personal information with other businesses in order to deliver more personalised services and products. Agreement with this notion has risen from 31% in 2018 to 45% in 2022.

### **The majority of UK consumers believe data sharing can help industry respond better to the needs of all parts of a diverse society**

A significant majority (67%) of UK consumers agree that the sharing of personal information helps ensure that organisations can better meet the needs of a diverse society, by better understanding the attitudes and wants of a wider range of groups and identities.

### **Younger consumers show a particularly strong willingness to share personal data to drive the competitiveness of smaller businesses**

The role that data sharing can play in driving more competitive economies is a compelling reason for many UK consumers to share personal information, with just over half of UK consumers (52%) stating that they would be more likely to exchange personal data to provide a competitive advantage to smaller companies. What's more, the agreement increases significantly to approximately 7 in 10 among consumers aged 18-44.

# PART 1: THE CHANGING UK CONSUMER LANDSCAPE

The findings presented here demonstrate that the mature and empowered consumer mindset towards online privacy and data exchange, first identified in 2012, has continued to develop across the UK over the previous decade. Overall concern with data privacy is in decline, while the levels of happiness with the amount of data shared and comfort with the notion of data exchange are on the rise. In addition, public awareness and understanding of the role that data exchange plays in the modern digital economy has increased dramatically since 2012.

## A pragmatic view towards data exchange remains the most prominent in the UK, and the unconcerned mindset is in the ascendency

In 2012, the DMA and Foresight Factory constructed a segmentation analysis that categorised consumers according to their attitudes towards privacy and data exchange. The key segments adopted were:

- **Data Pragmatists:** those who are concerned about online privacy but will make trade-offs on a case-by-case basis as to whether the service or enhancement of service offered is worth the information requested
- **Data Unconcerned:** those who are unconcerned about online privacy in general and characterised by lower levels of concern about the sharing of personal data
- **Data Fundamentalists:** those who are concerned about online privacy and are unwilling to provide personal information even in return for service enhancement

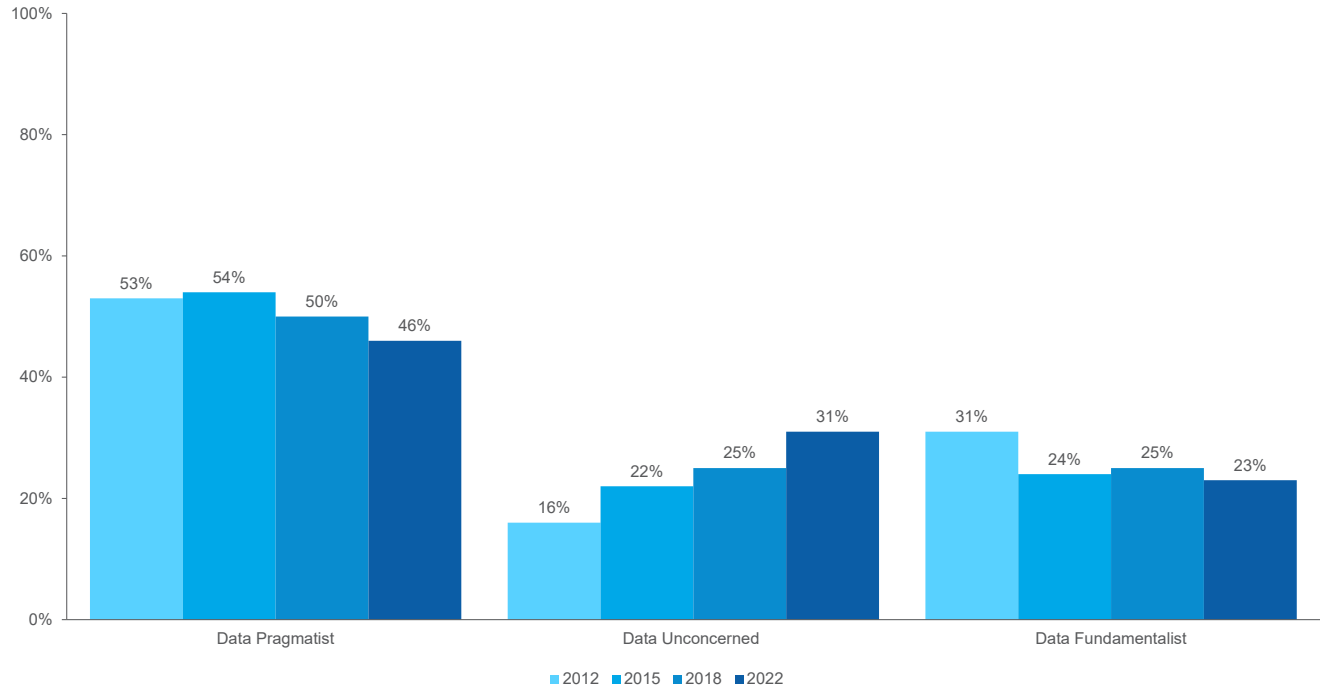
This same segmentation was re-examined in 2015 and 2018. For this report, we have re-created the same segmentation to explore how macro attitudes towards privacy and data exchange have evolved. In 2022, we find that:

- **Data Pragmatists:** 46% of the UK population (down from 50% in 2018, 54% in 2015 and 53% in 2012)
- **Data Unconcerned:** 31% of the UK population (up from 25% in 2018, 22% in 2015 and 16% in 2012)
- **Data Fundamentalists:** 23% of the UK population (down from 25% in 2018, 24% in 2015 and 31% in 2012)

While the Data Pragmatists remain the largest segment in the UK, the significant change over the past decade has been the growth of the Data Unconcerned. Indeed, the proportion of the Data Unconcerned has almost doubled over this period, rising from 16% in 2012 to 31% in 2022. Conversely, the Data Pragmatist segment has declined from 53% in 2012 to 46% in 2022, as has the Data Fundamentalist segment; from 31% in 2012 to 23% in 2022.

Such findings indicate that attitudes towards online privacy and data exchange in the UK are following a consistent trend; towards a consumer landscape that is less concerned about data privacy and more open to engaging with the data ecosystem. Moreover, it is now a high majority of UK consumers (77%) who show no fundamental objection to engaging with the data sharing ecosystem.

**A segmentation of attitudes towards privacy in the UK (2012 – 2022)**



The growing prominence of the Data Unconcerned is partly explained by the high number of 18-24s who fall into this segment: 44% compared to a total average of 31%. As most of this age group were not part of the adult population in the 2018 research, this goes some way to explaining the notable shift towards the Data Unconcerned in recent years. Indeed, 25% of 18-24s were Data Unconcerned in 2012 compared to 46% in 2022. However, there has been a growing number of Data Unconcerned across all age groups; this is not just a trend driven by the younger age cohorts. For example, the proportion of the Data Unconcerned among those aged 55-64 has grown significantly, from just 9% in 2012 to 27% in 2022. Consequently, the findings presented here indicate that as the digital economy has expanded and matured, resulting in more consumers having increased engagement with data exchange, there has been a gradual decline in public concern about online and data privacy across all ages.

Despite such findings, there remains a notable minority of UK consumers who remain unwilling to share personal information, even in return for a personal benefit. Conversely to the Data Unconcerned, it is older age groups who are the most likely to fall within the Data Fundamentalist segment. In fact, among the 65+ age group, more consumers in 2022 are Data Fundamentalists (40%) compared with 2012 (35%). However, across all other age segments, there has been a decline in the number of Data Fundamentalists. Indeed, this is particularly notable among the under-45 age groups, with the most significant decline apparent among the 35-44s where the number of Data Fundamentalists has fallen from 37% in 2012 to 13% in 2022.

**A segmentation of attitudes towards privacy in 2022, by age**

	Data Pragmatists	Data Unconcerned	Data Fundamentalists
18 – 24	45%	46%	9%
25 – 34	62%	29%	9%
35 – 44	58%	29%	13%
45 – 54	39%	37%	24%
55 – 64	41%	27%	33%
65+	37%	23%	40%

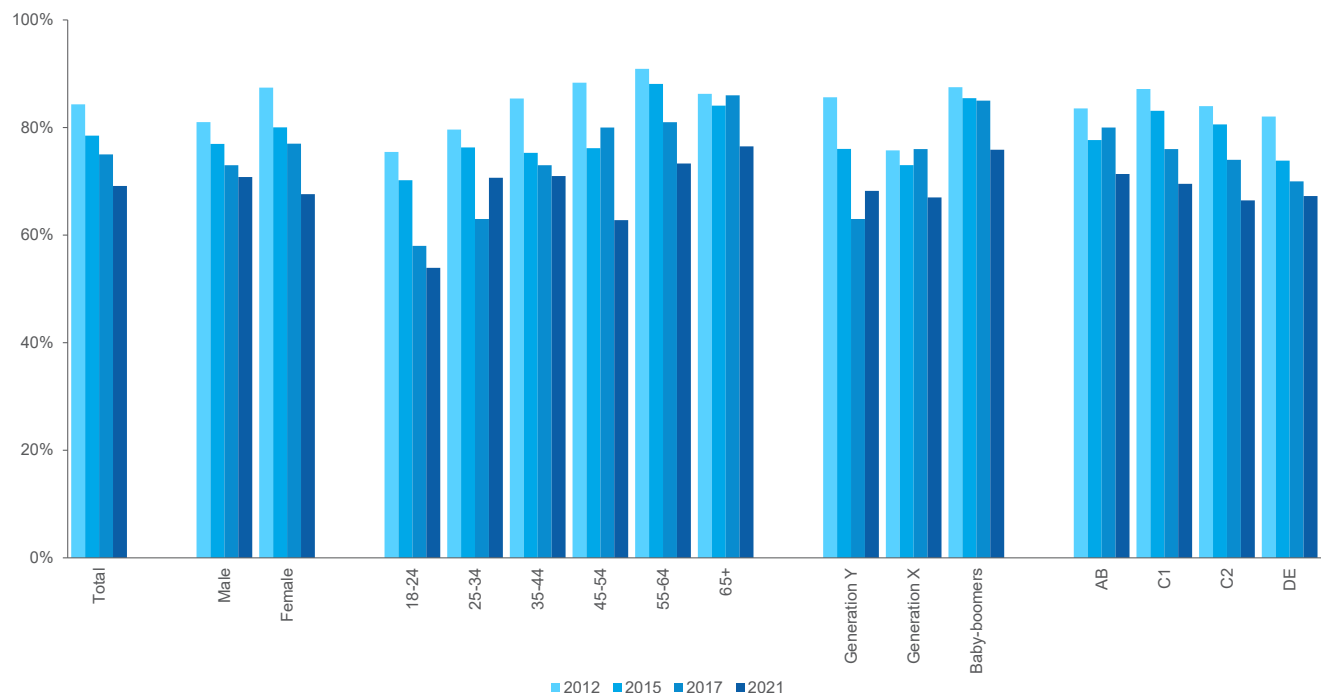


The largest number of UK consumers continue to fall into the Data Pragmatist segment, indicating that a mindset characterised by a level of privacy concern but with a clear willingness to engage in data exchange for a perceived personal benefit, remains the most prevalent in the UK. Interestingly, as the table above highlights, it is the 25-34s who are more likely to fall within this segment, while the 65+ are the least likely.

**Clear decline in levels of public concern about the issue of online privacy**

The proportion of UK consumers who claim to have high levels of concern about their online privacy has fallen notably over the past decade. In 2012, 84% in the UK stated high levels of online privacy concern and this has fallen to 69% in 2022. In 2022, levels of concern about online privacy have fallen to a low of 54% among 18-24s and reach a high of 77% among the 65+.

**“On a scale from 1 to 10 where 1 is ‘not at all concerned’ and 10 is ‘very concerned’, how do you rate your levels of concern about the issue of online privacy these days?”**  
**% who answer 7-10**

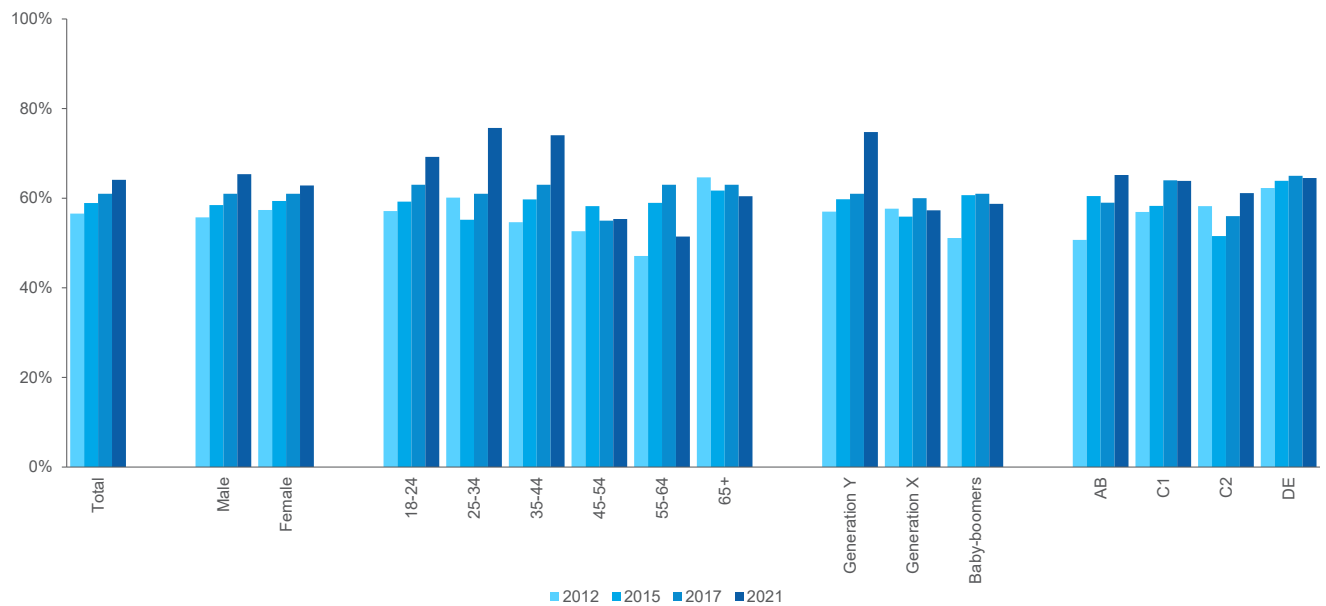


What's more, there has been a significant decline in concern across most age groups. For example, online privacy concern among those aged 45-54 has fallen from 88% in 2012 to 63% in 2022.

**Growing levels of happiness and comfort with data sharing**

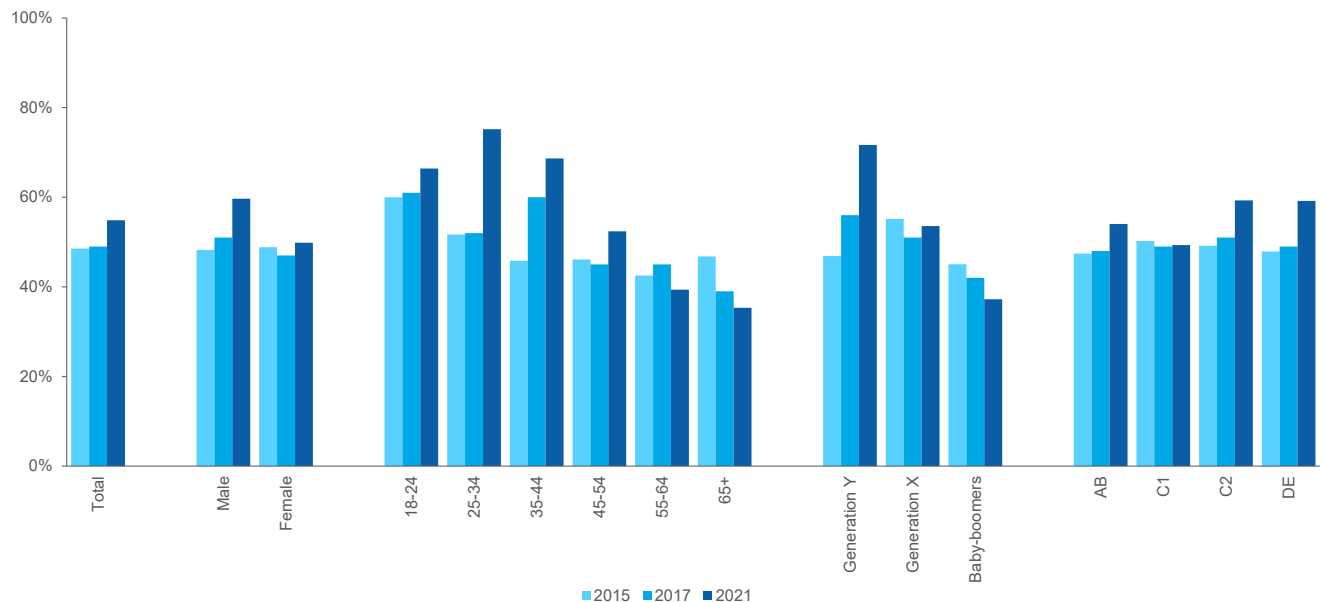
The number of UK consumers who claim to be happy with the amount of personal information they give to organisations has continued to increase over the previous decade, rising from 57% in 2012 to 64% in 2022. However, such attitudes have evolved differently across age groups. Among the 65+, agreement levels have declined from 65% in 2012 to 60% in 2022, while among the 55-64s, agreement has fallen more sharply: from 63% in 2018 to 51% in 2022. Conversely, across those aged 18-45, the level of happiness with the amount of information shared has grown significantly. Indeed, among the 25-34s, agreement has grown from 61% in 2018 to 76% in 2022.

**“On the whole I am happy with the amount of personal information I give to organisations these days” | % who strongly agree or agree**



Similarly, growing numbers of UK consumers claim to feel more comfortable with the idea of exchanging personal information with companies, albeit with significant differences in agreement across age groups. In total, 55% of UK consumers are more comfortable with data exchange compared to 49% in both 2015 and 2018. However, comfort levels are in decline among those aged 55 and over. For example, 47% of the 65+ claimed to be comfortable with the idea of data exchange in 2015 compared to 35% in 2022. This is contrasted by dramatic increases in comfort among younger age groups. Indeed, among those aged 25-34, agreement levels have increased from 52% in 2015 and 2018 to 75% in 2022.

**“I feel more comfortable with the idea of exchanging some personal data with companies than I did previously” | % who strongly agree or agree**

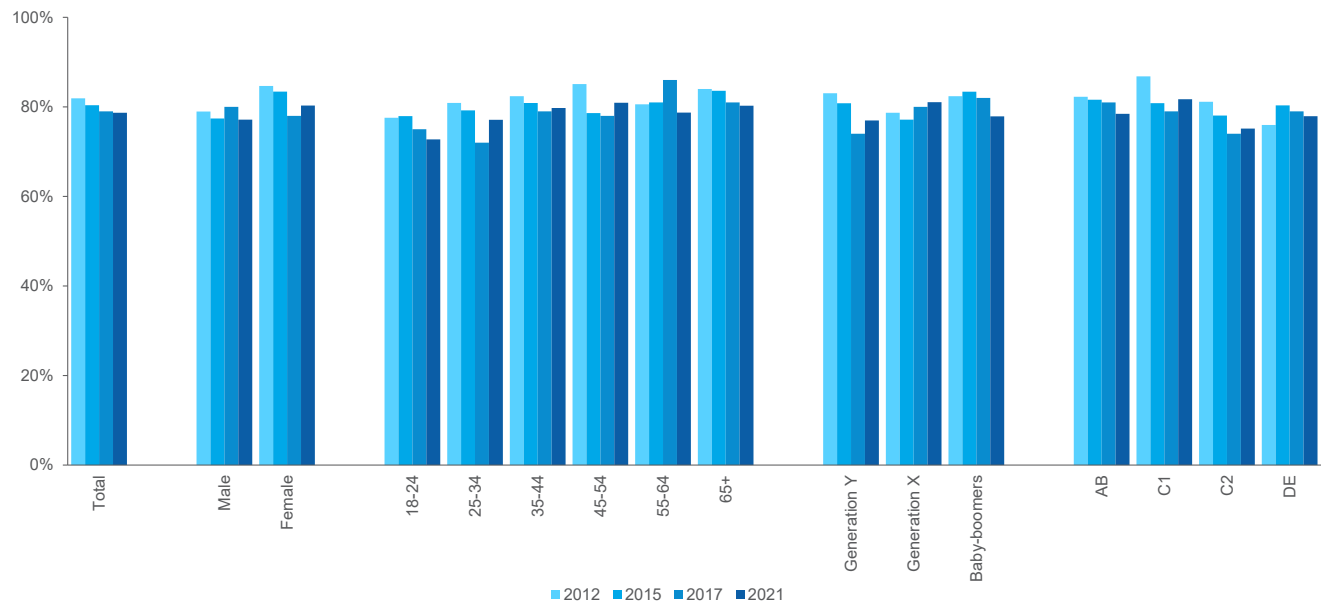


It should also be noted that a gender divide is apparent, with 60% of UK men claiming to be more comfortable with the idea of exchanging personal information, compared to 50% of UK women.

**Growing awareness of the role of data sharing for the running of modern societies**

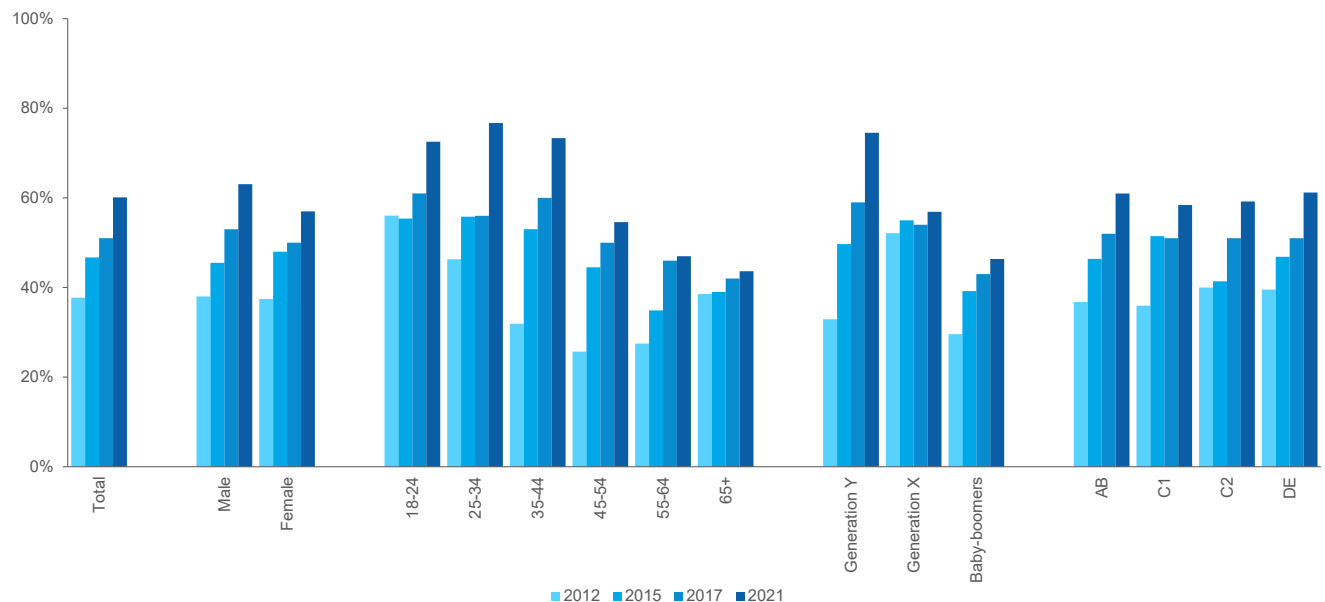
The vast majority of UK consumers continue to see the sharing of personal information as a part of modern life, with approximately 8 in 10 agreeing with this statement across each wave of research since 2012. Agreement has fallen slightly from 82% in 2012 to 79% in 2022.

**“Disclosing personal information is an increasing part of modern life”  
% who strongly agree or agree**



Moreover, the number of UK consumers who view the exchange of personal information as essential for the smooth running of modern society has grown notably over the previous decade. In 2022, 60% of UK consumers hold this view, compared to just 38% in 2012. What’s more, agreement with this statement has grown across all age groups and dramatically so for all age groups other than the 65+. For example, the proportion of those aged 45-54 who view data exchange as essential to the running of modern societies has more than doubled from 26% in 2012 to 55% in 2022. Among the relatively younger age groups, those aged 18-44, it is now approximately 3 in 4 who hold this view.

**“The exchange of personal information is essential for the smooth running of modern society” % who strongly agree or agree**



Taken together, such findings point towards an increasingly comfortable, knowledgeable and empowered UK consumer, providing fertile ground for the continued growth of the data economy in the 2020s. To capitalise on the positive trends outlined above and to expand wider consumer confidence and engagement with data exchange across the UK consumer landscape, increased focus will need to be placed on the factors that drive healthy and sustained engagement with the data ecosystem. Indeed, such a focus will be needed to overcome the notable polarisation of engagement with data exchange across age groups. It is these factors that will be explored in part 2 of this report.

## PART 2: PROMOTING A HEALTHY UK DATA ECONOMY

Since 2012, UK consumers have become increasingly aware of the intrinsic value of their data and are developing a more entrepreneurial attitude towards data sharing.

However, there are continued challenges to the perceived value exchange on offer. A majority of the UK public continue to believe that industry benefits the most from data sharing, while the vast majority expect to receive continuously enhanced levels of service without the need to share more personal information. Despite evidence of a growing appreciation of the value offered to consumers themselves via data exchange since 2015, such findings point to an emerging disconnect between consumers and industry over the requirement of data sharing to fuel future innovation and improvements in customer experience and service.

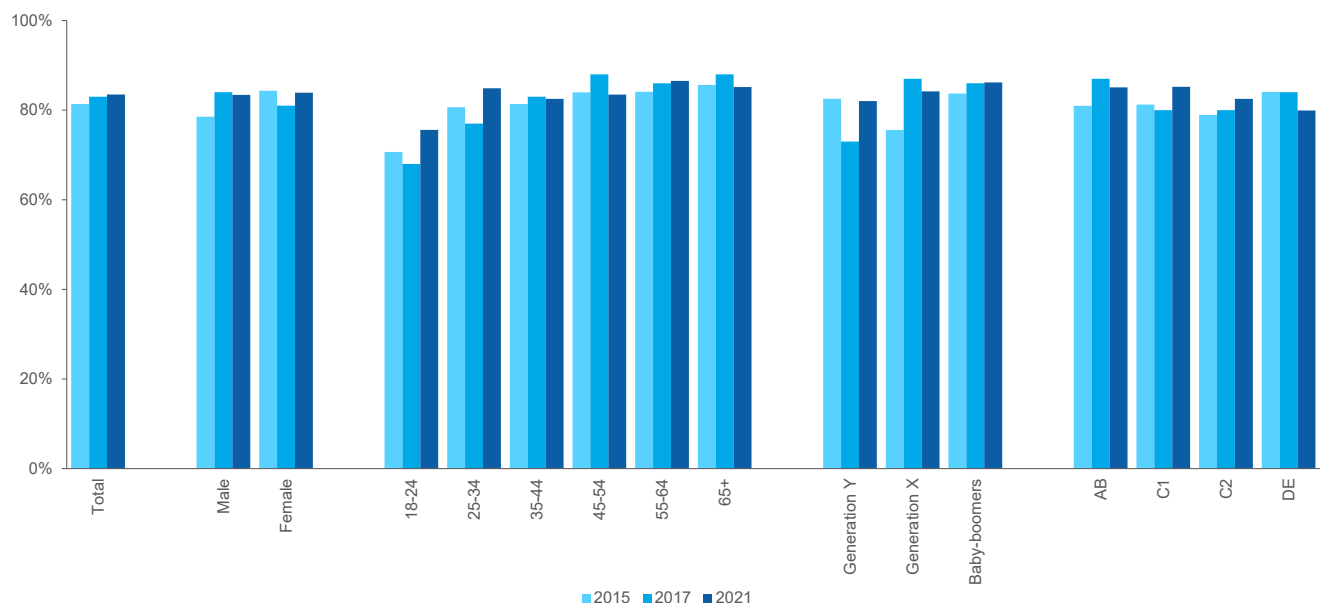
To build a healthier data ecosystem, trust, control and transparency remain the foundational factors that encourage UK consumers to engage in data sharing with brands and organisations. Furthermore, there are a wide range of incentives that UK consumers are willing to exchange personal information for, providing industry with a diverse arsenal of value exchange options to engage different consumer groups with.

However, more innovative, visible and compelling incentivisation strategies will be required if UK businesses are going to ensure they have sustainable access to the required levels of consumer data in the 2020s.

### A consumer capitalist mindset retains its stronghold across demographics

The vast majority of consumers across demographic groups in the UK agree that their data is their property and that they should be able to trade it if they wish, with 84% in total agreeing with this statement, rising from 81% in 2015. The most notable increase in agreement with this sentiment is among 18-24s where agreement has risen from 71% in 2018 to 76% in 2022.

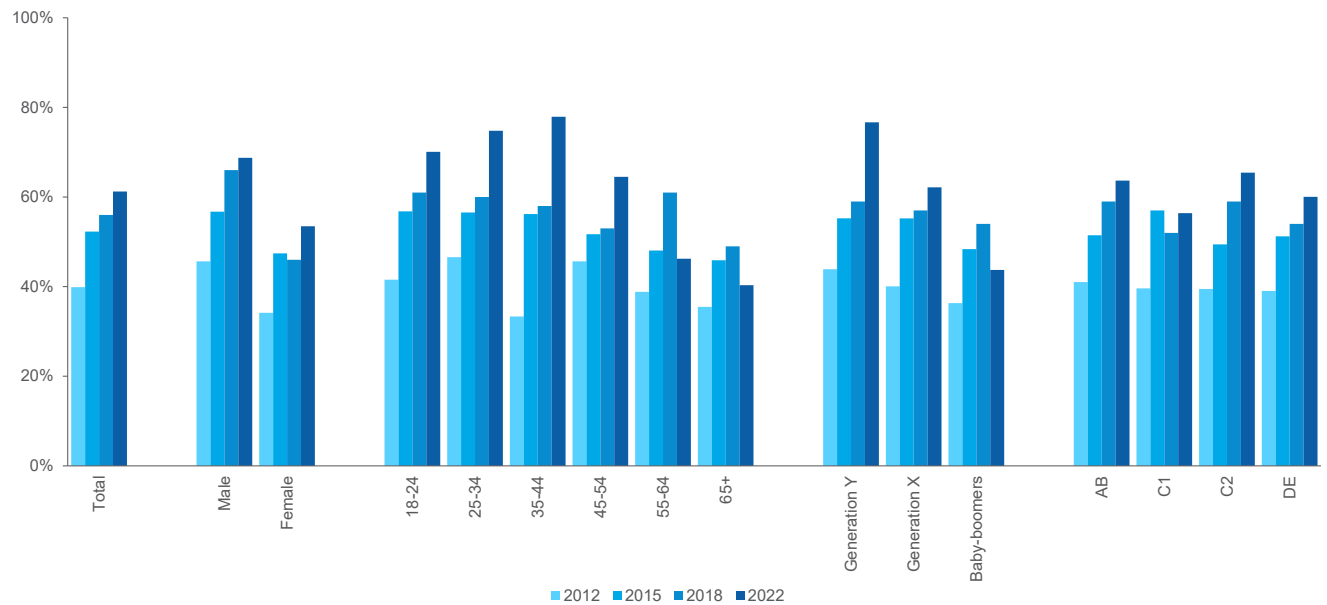
#### “My data is my property and I should be able to trade it if I like (e.g., for better offers, services)” | % who agree strongly or agree



At the same time, the past decade has seen a continuous increase in the proportion of the UK public who see their personal information as an asset that can be used to negotiate better prices and offers with companies. In 2022, 6 in 10 now hold this view compared to 40% in 2012. However, there is a significant gap in views towards personal data as an asset between genders and age cohorts. For example, over 7 in 10 agree with this notion across those aged 18-44, but this falls to 4

in 10 among the 65+. Moreover, just 53% of UK women agree with this statement compared to 69% of UK men.

**“I see my personal information as an asset that I can use to negotiate better prices and offers with companies” | % who agree strongly or agree**

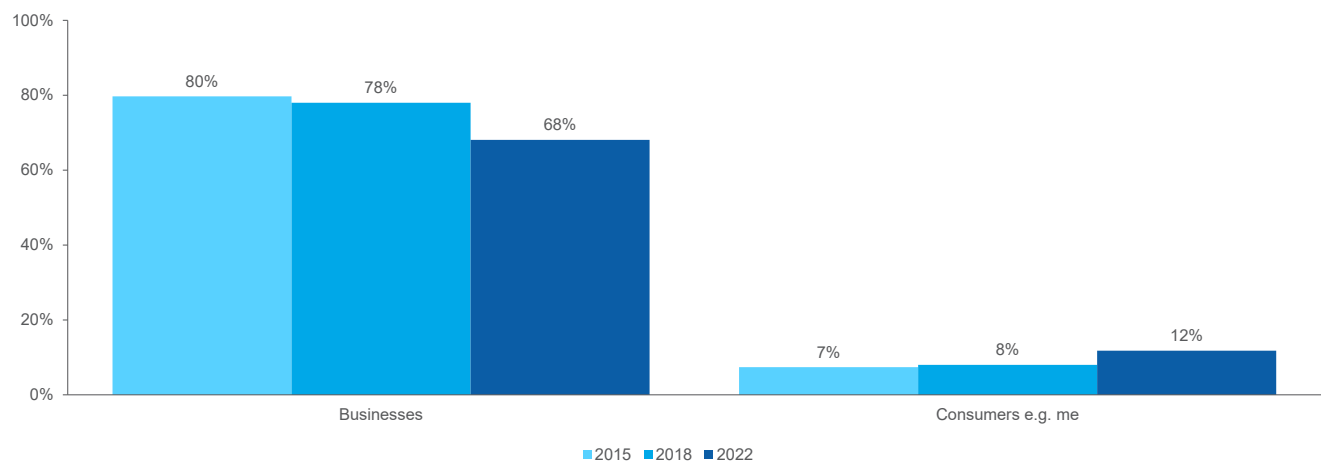


Since 2012, there has been a clear, continuous trend towards a UK consumer landscape that is more likely to view personal data as having an intrinsic value that can be utilised for personal advantage within the data economy. However, such attitudes will need to become more widely distributed across age groups and genders if all parts of UK society are going to develop stronger engagement levels with the data economy in the 2020s.

**Most UK consumers believe that industry benefits most from data exchange, but growing numbers believe consumers themselves are gaining more advantage**

Alongside the growth in consumers seeing their personal information as an actionable asset, there has been a notable decline among UK consumers in the belief that businesses benefit most from data exchange, dropping from 80% in 2015 to 68% in 2022. Moreover, there has been a concomitant increase in the belief that consumers benefit the most from data exchange, rising from 7% in 2015 to 12% in 2022. While most UK consumers still do not believe that they are being rewarded by the data economy to the same degree as industry, there has been a shift towards a slightly more balanced picture since 2015.

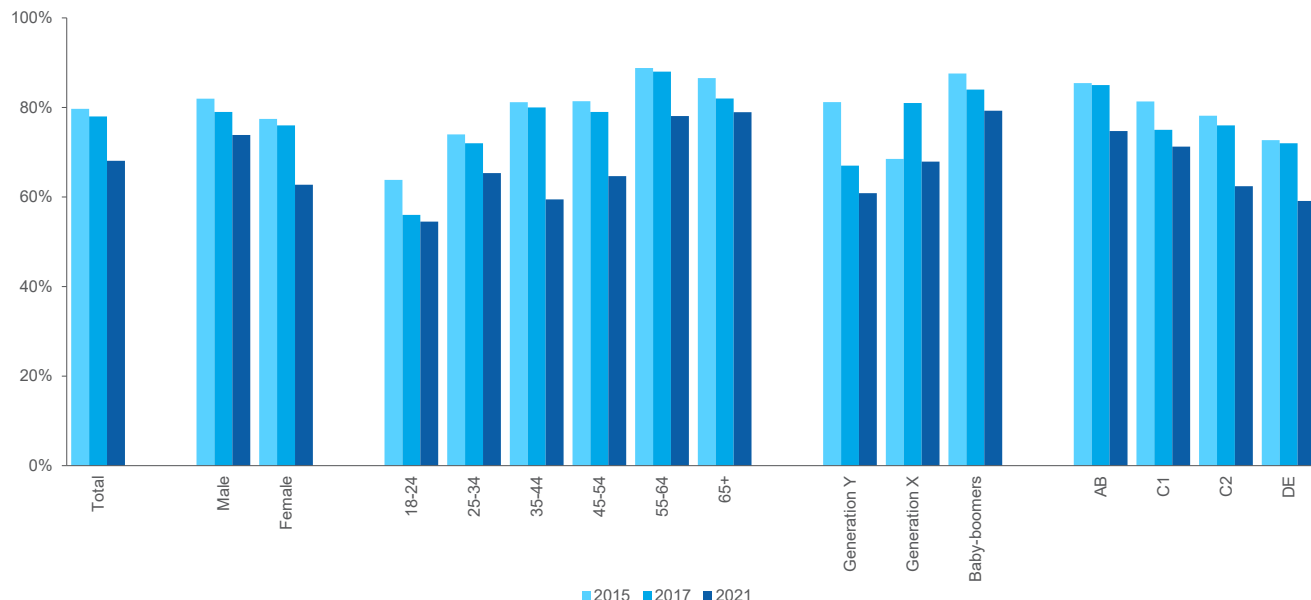
**“In your opinion, who currently benefits the most from personal data exchange in the UK?”**



Source: Foresight Factory Research | Base: 2072 UK respondents aged 18+, December 2021

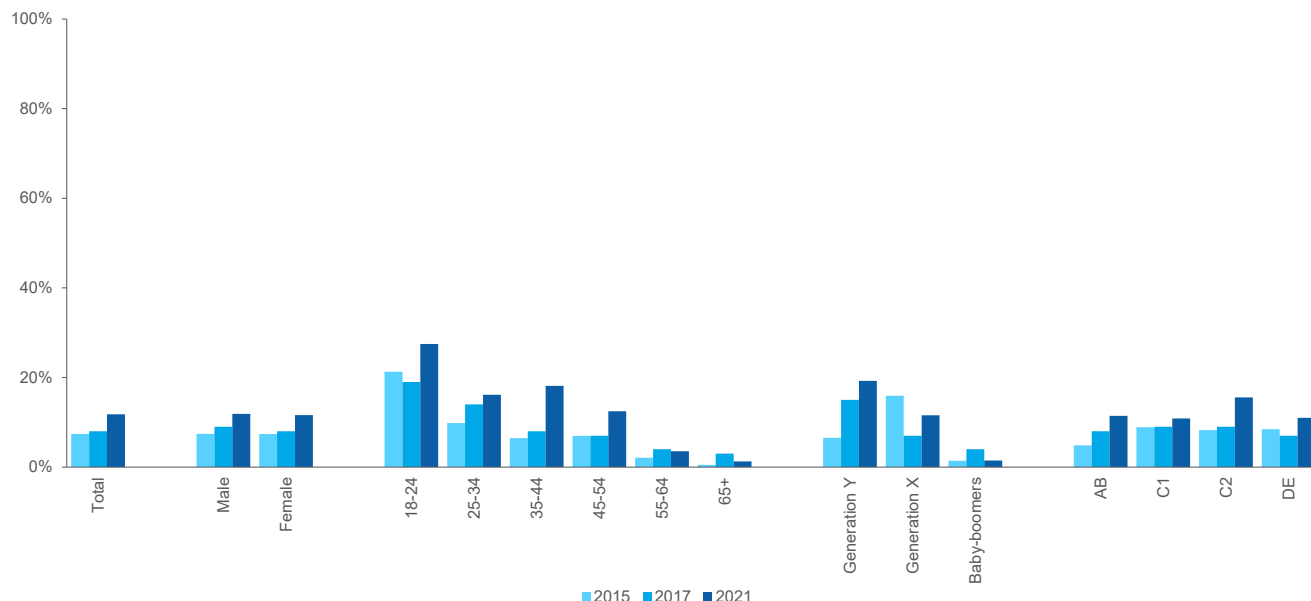
While the belief that industry benefits most from personal data exchange has fallen across all age groups, there remains a significant divide in such opinions between younger and older age groups. Indeed, in 2022, just 55% of 18-24s now claim that industry benefits most from data exchange, compared to almost 8 in 10 among the 55+.

**“In your opinion, who currently benefits the most from personal data exchange in the UK?”  
% selecting businesses**



Correspondingly, it is now almost 1 in 3 (27%) of 18-24s in the UK who claim that they themselves benefit most from personal data exchange. This compares to a mere 4% of those aged 55-64 and just 1% among the 65+.

**“In your opinion, who currently benefits the most from personal data exchange in the UK?”  
% selecting consumers**



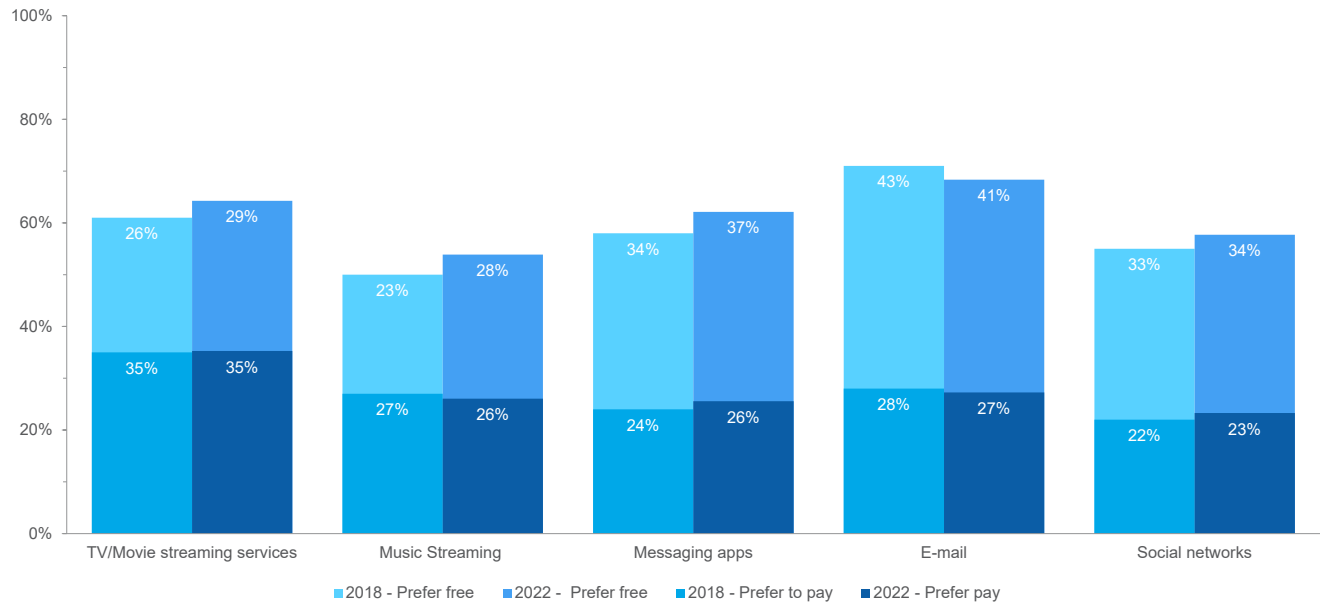
Consequently, while the majority of the UK public believe that industry is gaining the most advantage from data exchange in 2022, there is a trend since 2015 towards a consumer landscape that is perceiving a growing and more proportional level of personal benefit vis-à-vis businesses.

**Challenges for the current UK data economy: public perceptions of the current and future value exchange**

In 2022, UK consumers remain more likely to exchange data than pay for messaging apps, email

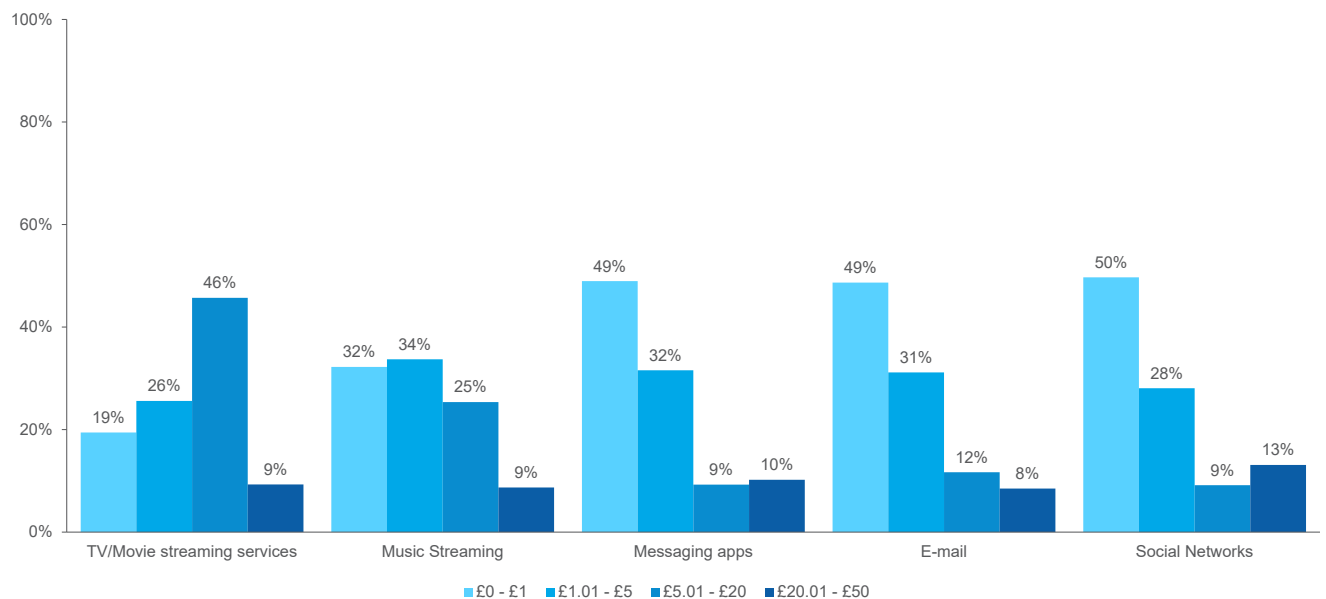
and social networks. Such findings are consistent with the current business models available for such services i.e., those services that are currently free on the premise of exchange of personal data are the same services that most consumers most want to maintain this value exchange model for. Moreover, in 2022, increased numbers of UK consumers would prefer to share data to receive music streaming services for free rather than pay directly; a reverse of the findings from 2018. Consequently, even for services that are traditionally paid for, there is a shift towards a preference for data sharing led value exchange models. Such findings further support the growing appreciation of personal data in the UK as an asset to be utilised.

**For each of the following services please state whether you would prefer to pay for the service or share personal information in exchange for free access to the service**



Despite this, a significant minority would still prefer to pay for services currently free today rather than exchange their personal information for access. However, the vast majority of UK consumers who would rather pay for typically freely available services (messaging apps, email and social networks) state that they would be prepared to pay a maximum of £5 a month to access these services. Indeed, 1 in 2 would only pay up to £1 a month for messaging apps, email and social network services if they preferred direct payment over the exchange of data.

**What would be the most you would be willing to pay per month for each service?**

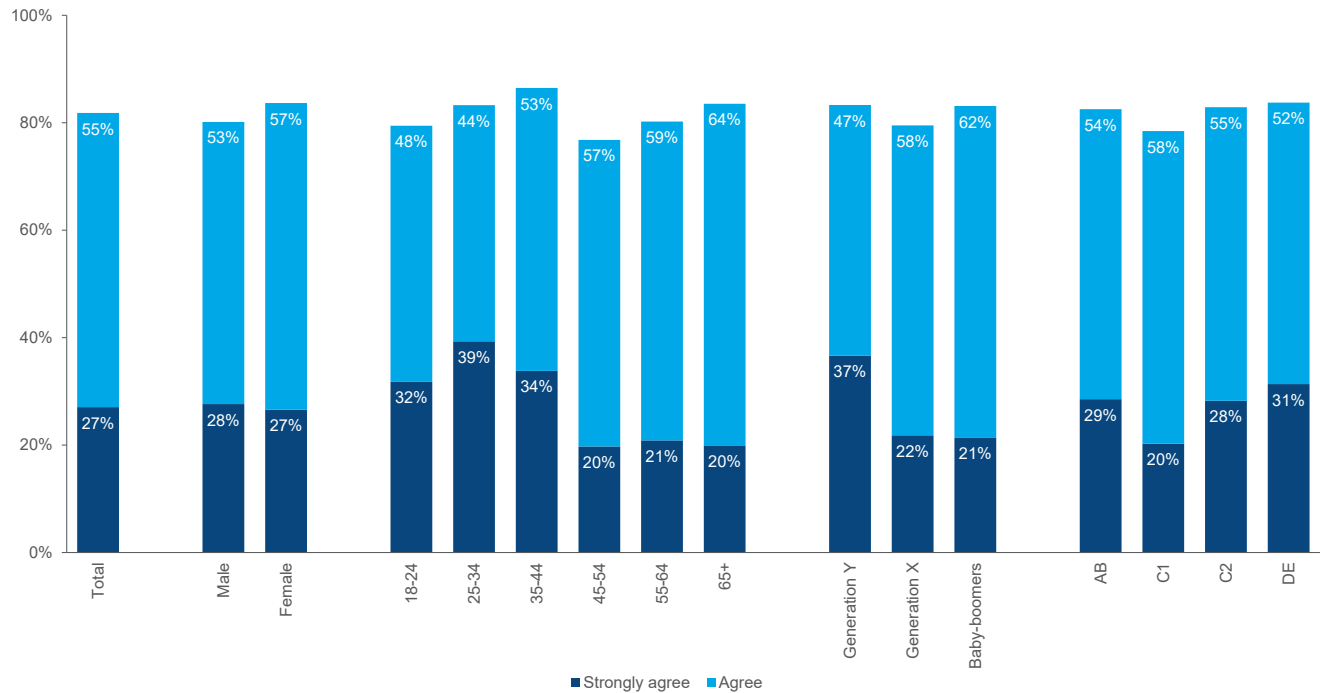


Source: Foresight Factory Research | Base: 2072 UK respondents aged 18+, December 2021

Looking at the future value exchange within the data economy in the 2020s, there is evidence of a disconnect between consumer expectations for data sharing and continually enhanced levels of service. In 2022, 82% of UK consumers claim that they expect companies to keep improving the levels of personalisation they provide without having to provide more personal information. Such attitudes are also broadly consistent across age groups.

**“I expect companies to keep improving the levels of personalisation they provide without having to give them more of my personal information”**

**How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? | % who agree**



These findings point to an emerging divide between the data sharing requirements for sustainable engagement with the future data economy and current public attitudes in the UK. For the UK industry, the challenge will be to not just communicate the value exchange on offer today, but also the future value offered by expanded data sharing that will drive future innovation and optimise consumer services and experiences.

**Foundations for a healthy data economy**

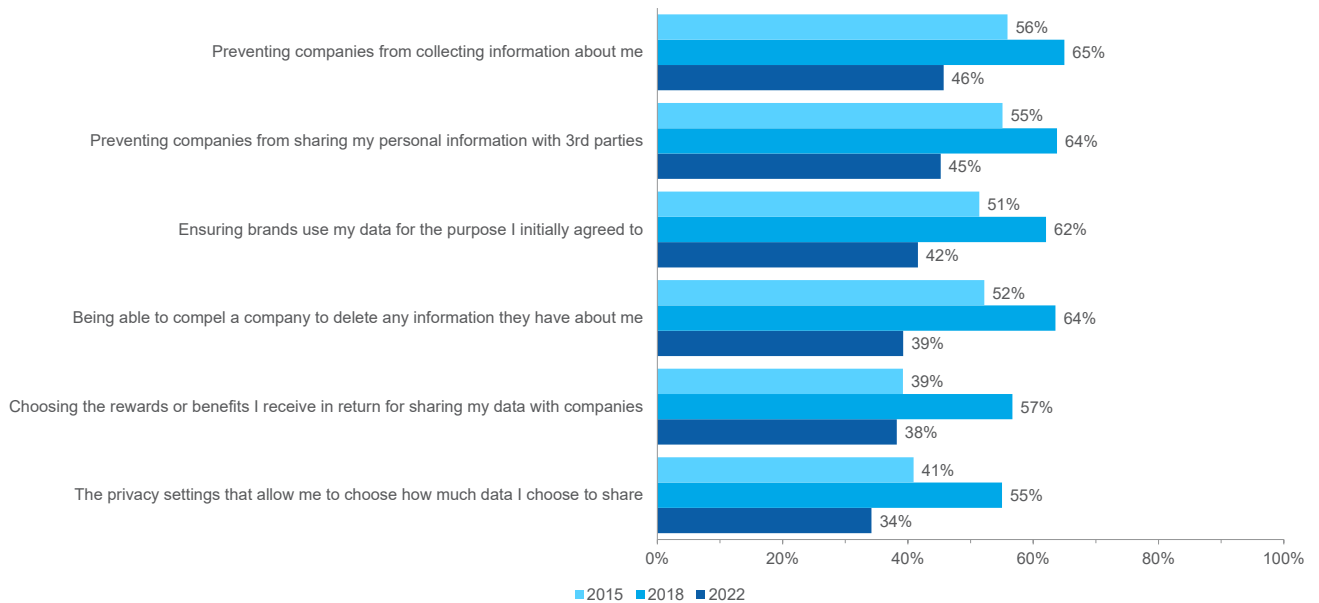
The three foundational pillars of positive engagement with the data ecosystem outlined in 2012 - control, trust and transparency - remain integral in 2022. As the awareness and confidence of the UK public has increased over this time, consumer expectations around these pillars have also evolved.

**Control remains key**

The number of consumers who believe they have no control over aspects of their personal information has declined significantly since 2015 (and particularly since 2018). For example, in 2015, 51% of UK consumers believed that they had no control in ensuring that brands used their data for the purpose they had initially agreed to, declining to 42% of consumers in 2022. What’s more, in 2015, 55% believed they had no control over the privacy settings that allow them to choose how much data they share; this has dropped to 34% in 2022. Indeed, the majority of UK consumers now claim to have a relatively high level of control over core aspects of their data exchange with brands.

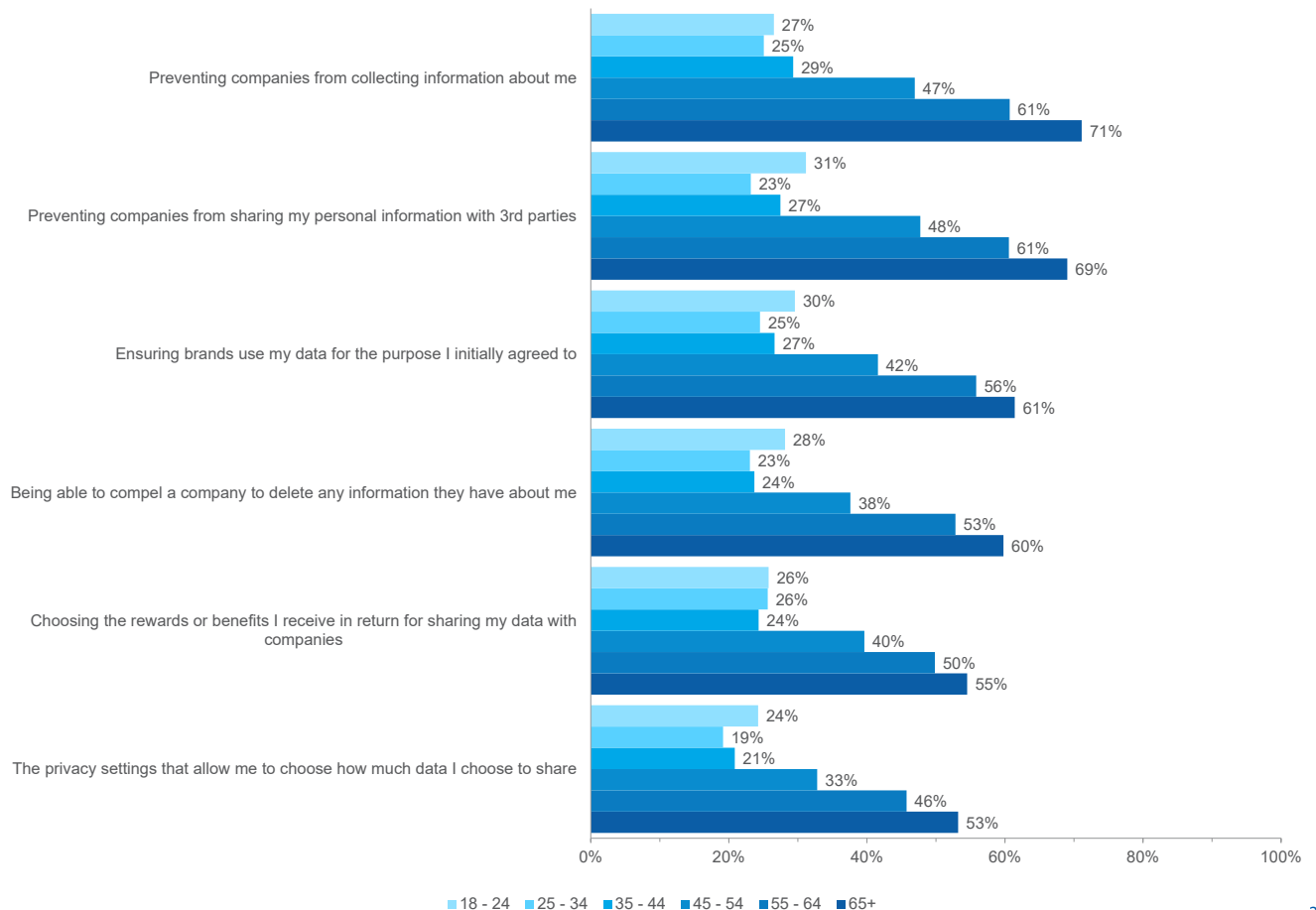


**How much control do you think you have over the following?  
Net: Does not feel they have any control**



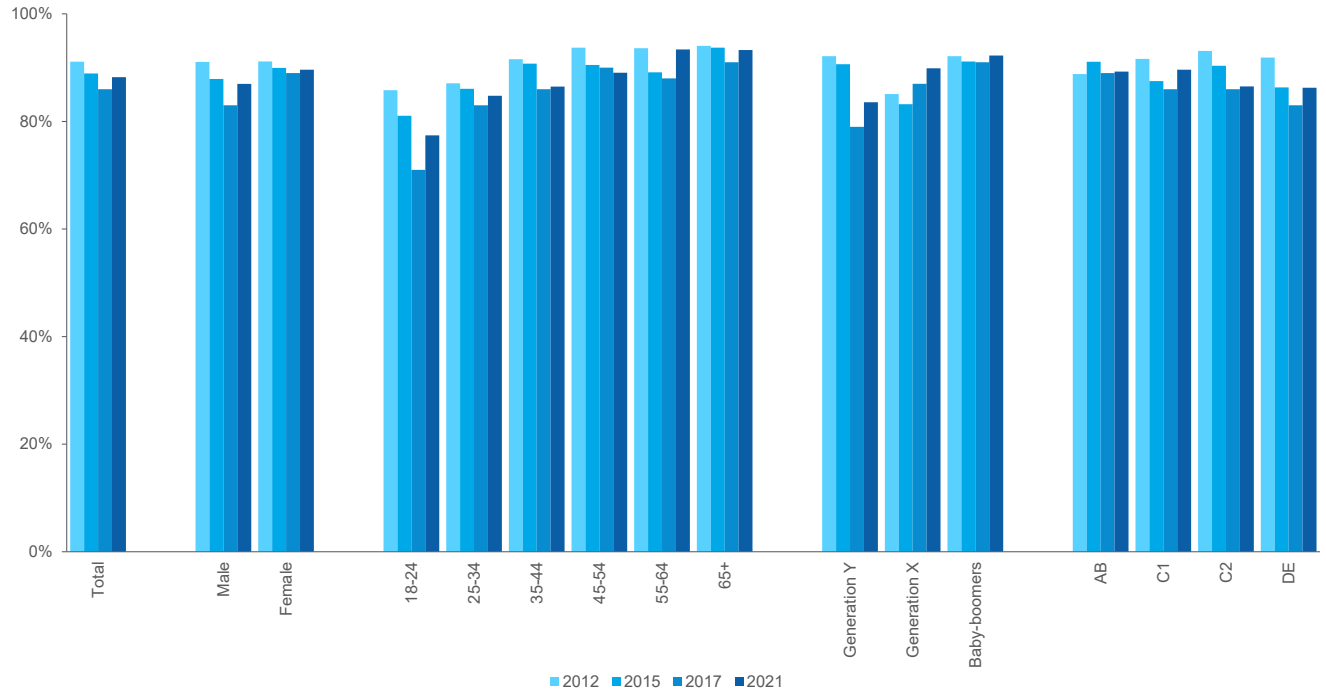
It should be noted that the level of control consumers feel they have about the use and exchange of their personal information varies dramatically by age. Indeed, among consumers aged 18-44, under 1 in 3 claim they do not feel they have control over preventing companies from collecting information about them. However, this rises significantly to 71% among the 65+. Such findings highlight that the increased level of control felt by younger age groups is a factor in driving their increased levels of comfort with data sharing as outlined in part 1 of this report.

**How much control do you think you have over the following?  
Net: Does not feel they have any control, by age**



Despite UK consumers believing they have more control over aspects of their exchange of personal information, the vast majority (88%) still seek more control over their data. Even as consumers grow in confidence with how they regulate their personal data exchange, continued efforts to help consumers feel in control of their personal information will be essential.

**I would like more control over the personal information I give companies and the way in which it is stored” | % who strongly agree or agree**

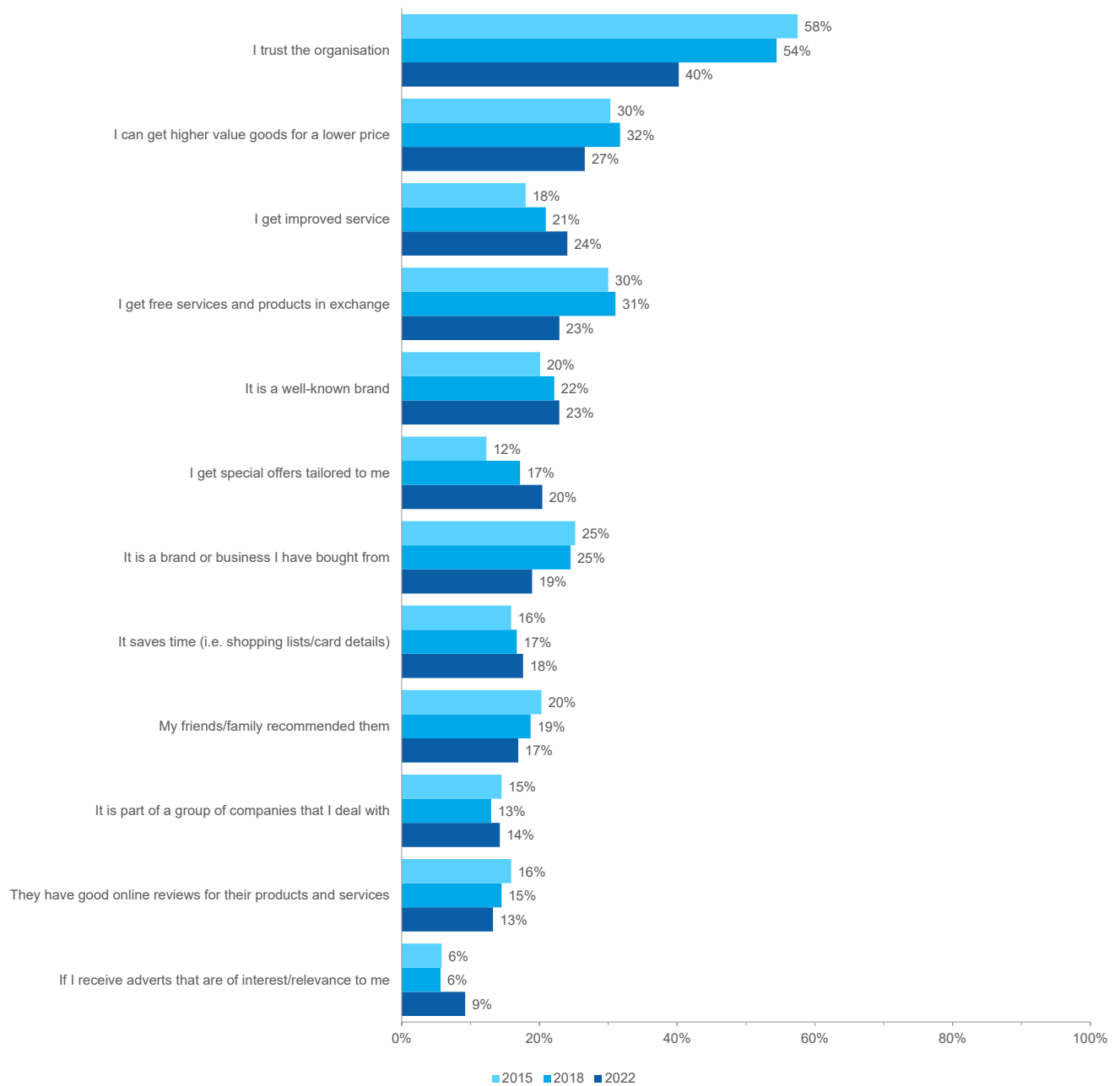


It is also notable that older age groups in the UK are more likely to seek more control over the exchange of their personal information with brands. For example, over 9 in 10 of the 55+ hold this view in the UK, compared to 77% of 18-24s.

**Building trust remains paramount**

Trust in an organisation continues to be essential in ensuring that UK consumers are happy to share their personal information with a company. While it has declined in importance since 2015, it remains the top influencer in facilitating data sharing, followed by cost-related benefits. Indeed, in 2022, 40% of UK consumers place trust in an organisation in their top three factors that make them happy to share their personal information with a company. This is followed by receiving higher value goods for a lower price in second place, which was selected as part of the top 3 motivations by 27% of UK consumers.

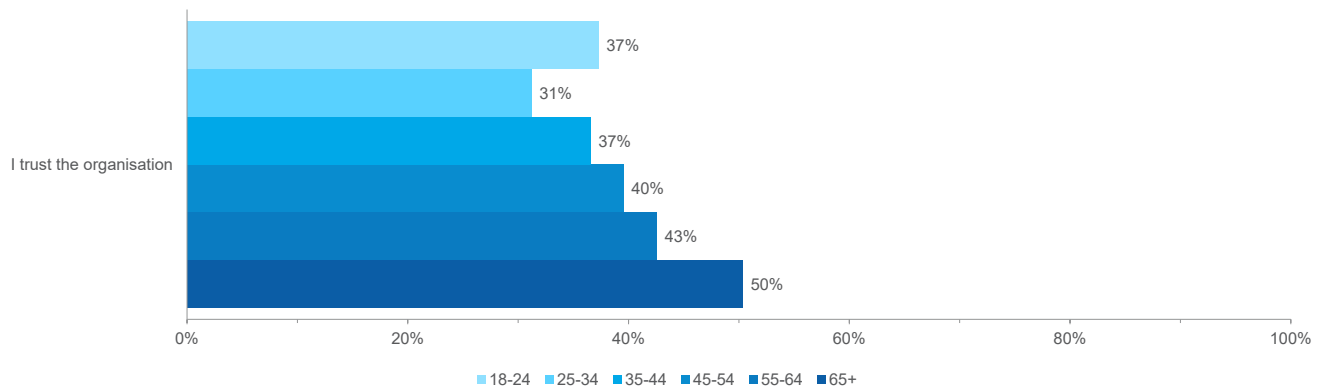
**Please rank the following in terms of what makes you happy to share your personal information with a company? | Net: Top 3**



Interestingly, factors related to the personalisation or enhancement of a service have grown most notably in importance. For example, 24% of UK consumers placed getting an improved service in their top 3 factors compared to 18% in 2015. What’s more, 20% now place getting tailored offers in their top 3 factors compared to 12% in 2015.

The age of the consumer also influences the extent to which trust is a significant driver of data exchange, with older age groups prioritising trust in an organisation more than younger consumers. For example, 31% of those aged 25-34 placed trust in an organisation in their top 3 factors that make them happy to share their personal information with a company. This compares to half of consumers aged 65+.

**Please rank the following in terms of what makes you happy to share your personal information with a company? | Net: Top 3, by age**

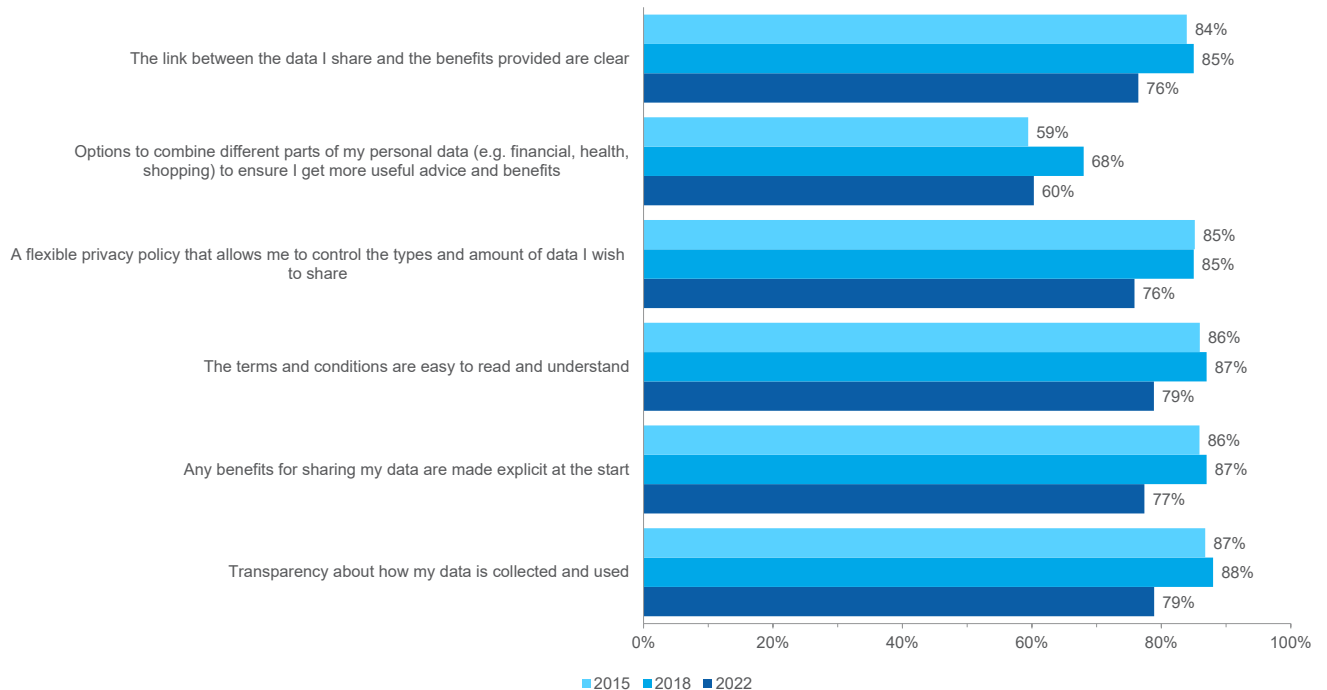


As younger consumers display lower levels of privacy concern, higher levels of comfort with data sharing and a greater sense of control over their data exchange with brands, this has potentially resulted in trust in an organisation becoming less of a critical factor as they feel more empowered in their personal interaction with industry within the data ecosystem.

**UK consumers continue to seek transparency as a precursor to data sharing**

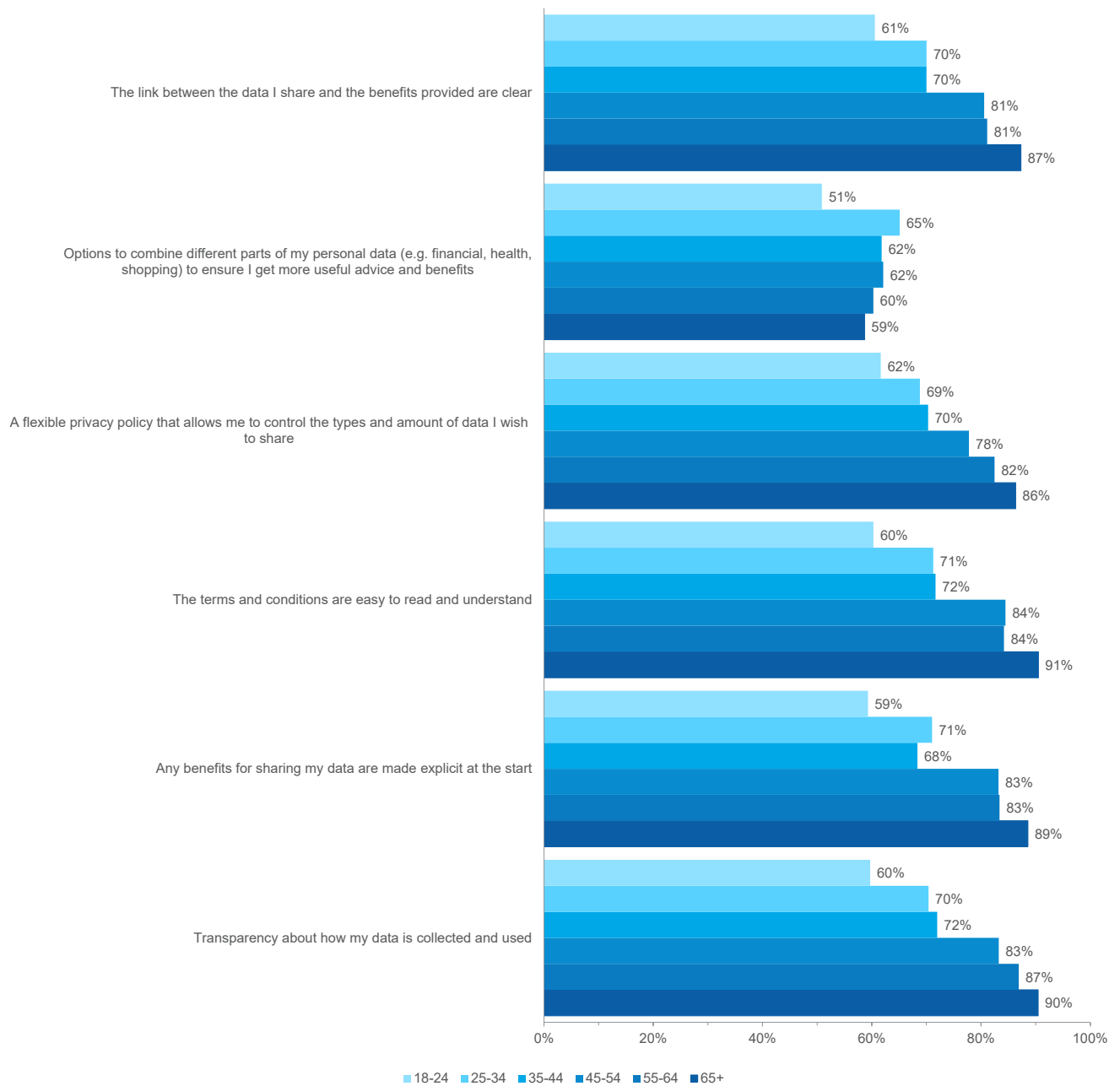
Closely related to both control and trust is the consumer desire for companies to be transparent about how consumer data is collected and used. Transparency remains a fundamental factor when sharing personal information with a company in the UK, although it is now less crucial than in the past. Indeed, 79% in 2022 claim that transparency about how their data is collected and used is important to them when sharing their personal information with a company, but this is down from 87% in 2015. Similarly, 86% claim that having terms and conditions that are easy to understand is an important factor in 2022, compared to 79% in 2015.

**How important are each of the following to you when sharing your personal information with a company? | Net: Very Important & Important**



In addition, older consumers show a far stronger demand for transparency compared to younger age groups. For example, 90% of the 65+ claim that transparency about how their data is collected and used is important to them vs. 60% of those aged 18-24.

**How important are each of the following to you when sharing your personal information with a company? | Net: Very Important & Important, by age**



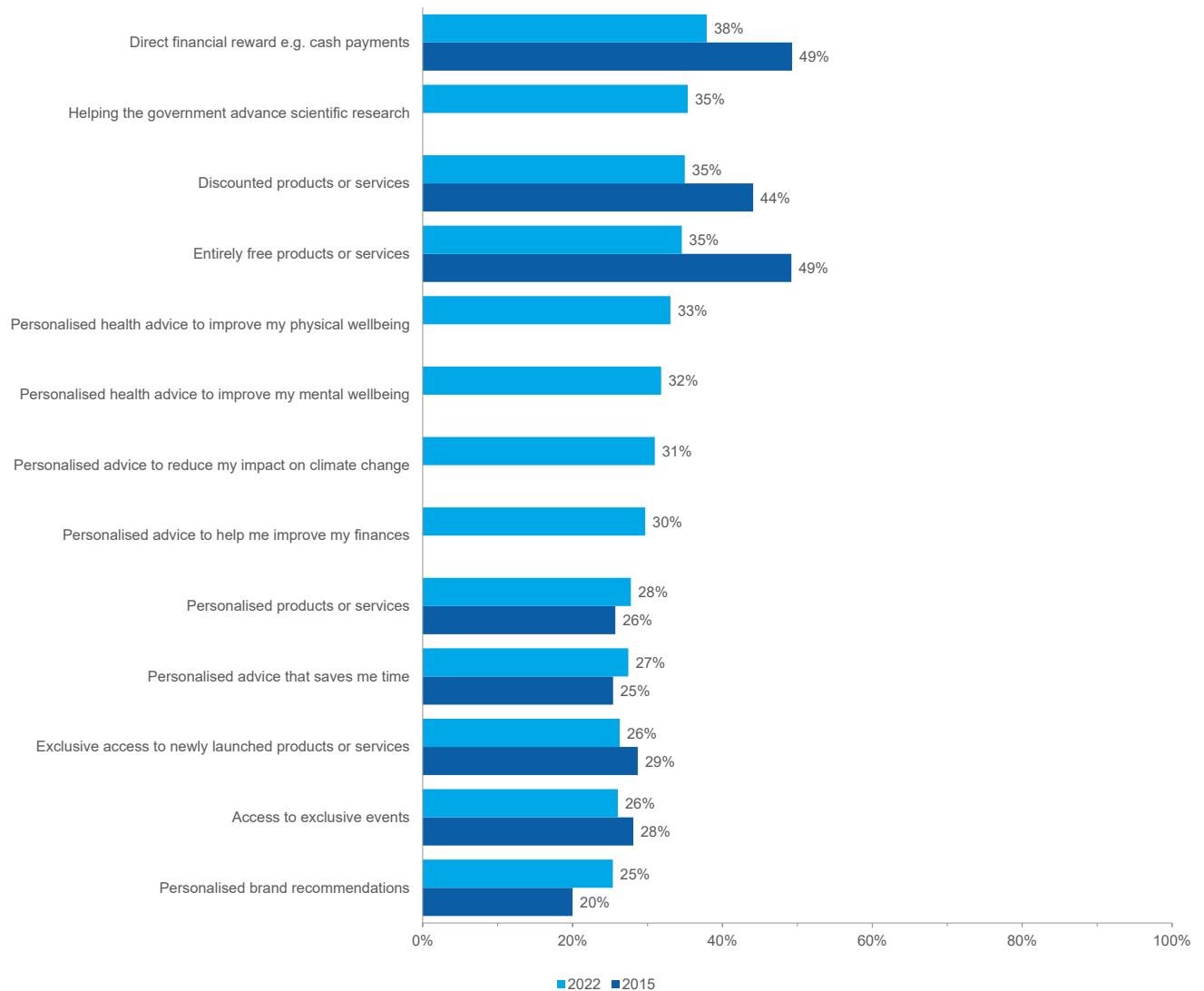
Such findings demonstrate that transparency remains a priority pillar that drives trust and eagerness to engage with the data ecosystem for the majority of consumers across age groups. However, it is clearly older consumers for whom this is a more fundamental factor.

**An array of incentivisation strategies exist to engage the UK consumer**

When testing the forms of incentives that would most entice UK consumers to share personal information – across a wide spectrum of enhanced rewards and services – notably, there has been a broad decline in interest in the options tested between 2015 and 2022. Moreover, while incentives linked to clear direct financial rewards remain the most popular, they have decreased in influence more than other forms of incentives. For example, the number of UK consumers who claim that they would be likely to exchange personal data in return for free products and services has fallen from 50% in 2018 to 35% in 2022. However, there has been a notable growth in interest in incentives that provide enhanced levels of personalisation across service, product and marketing.

Such findings point to a growing sense of apathy among UK consumers towards the current forms of data incentivisation on offer. Indeed, as the capitalist mindset continues to develop across UK society, industry will have to either communicate the value of such rewards/benefits more convincingly or seek more innovative forms of data incentivisation. What's more, the evidence presented here also highlights that consumers are becoming more open to service-led incentives that offer some form of personal enhancement, over more blunt financial rewards.

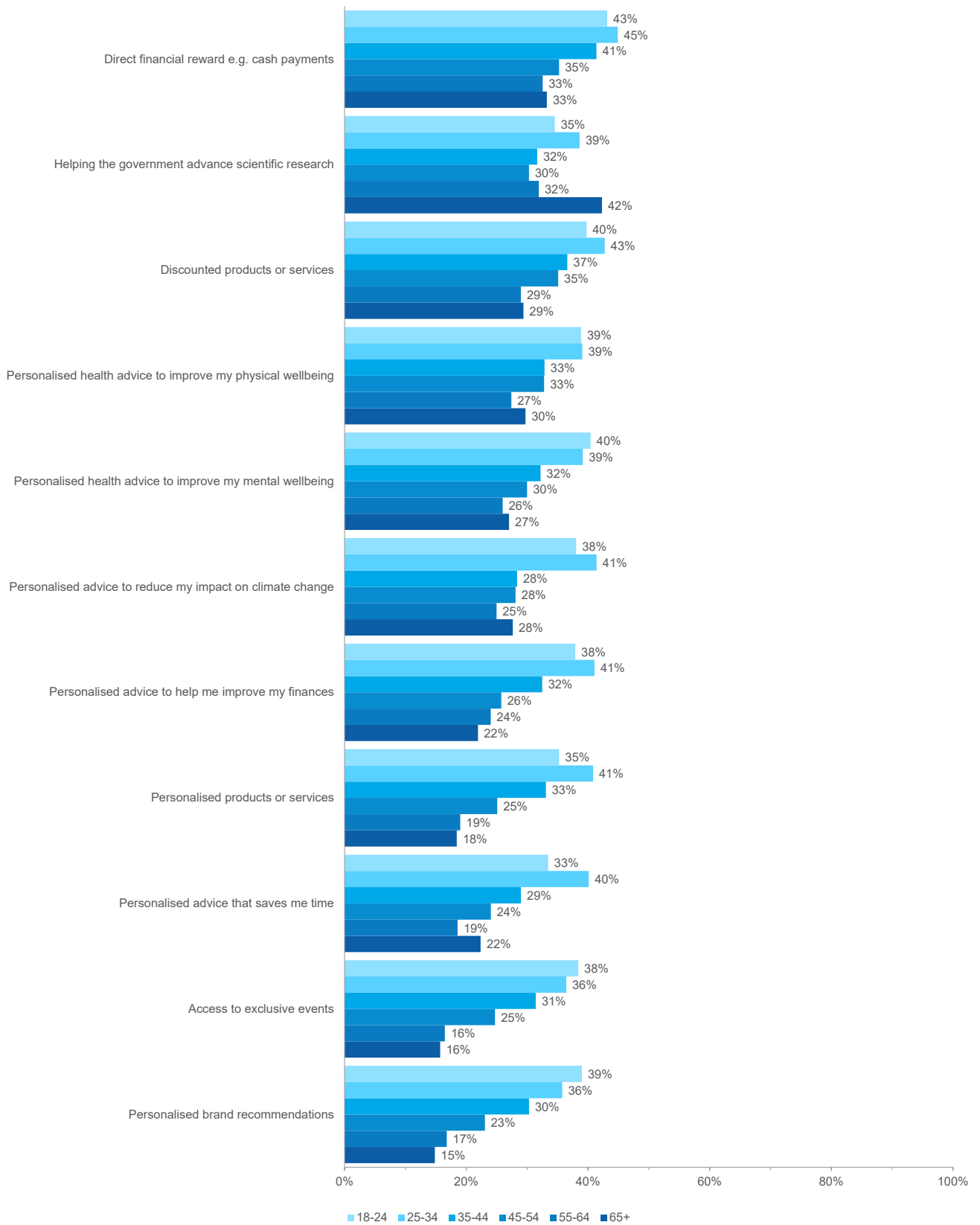
**“How likely would you be to share your personal information in exchange for the following incentives?” % who select each option | % who say likely (1-4)**



The COVID-19 pandemic also appears to have increased the value placed on data sharing incentives linked to supporting scientific research. In 2022, helping the government advance scientific research, ranked as the second most enticing type of incentive, only behind direct financial rewards.

Finally, it should be noted that age heavily influences how likely UK consumers are to be interested in data sharing incentives. This is particularly true of incentives connected to personalisation and service enhancement. For example, 41% of 25-34s claim they would be likely to exchange their personal information in return for personalised products and services, but this falls to less than 1 in 2 among those aged 55 and older.

**“How likely would you be to share your personal information in exchange for the following incentives?” % who select each option | % who say likely (1-4), by age**



Despite the differences in attitude by age, there remains a clear array of incentives that brands and organisations can utilise to increase data sharing in the UK. The primary challenge will be to decode the precise forms and combinations of incentives that will most entice and reflect the needs of different segments of society.

# PART 3: RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

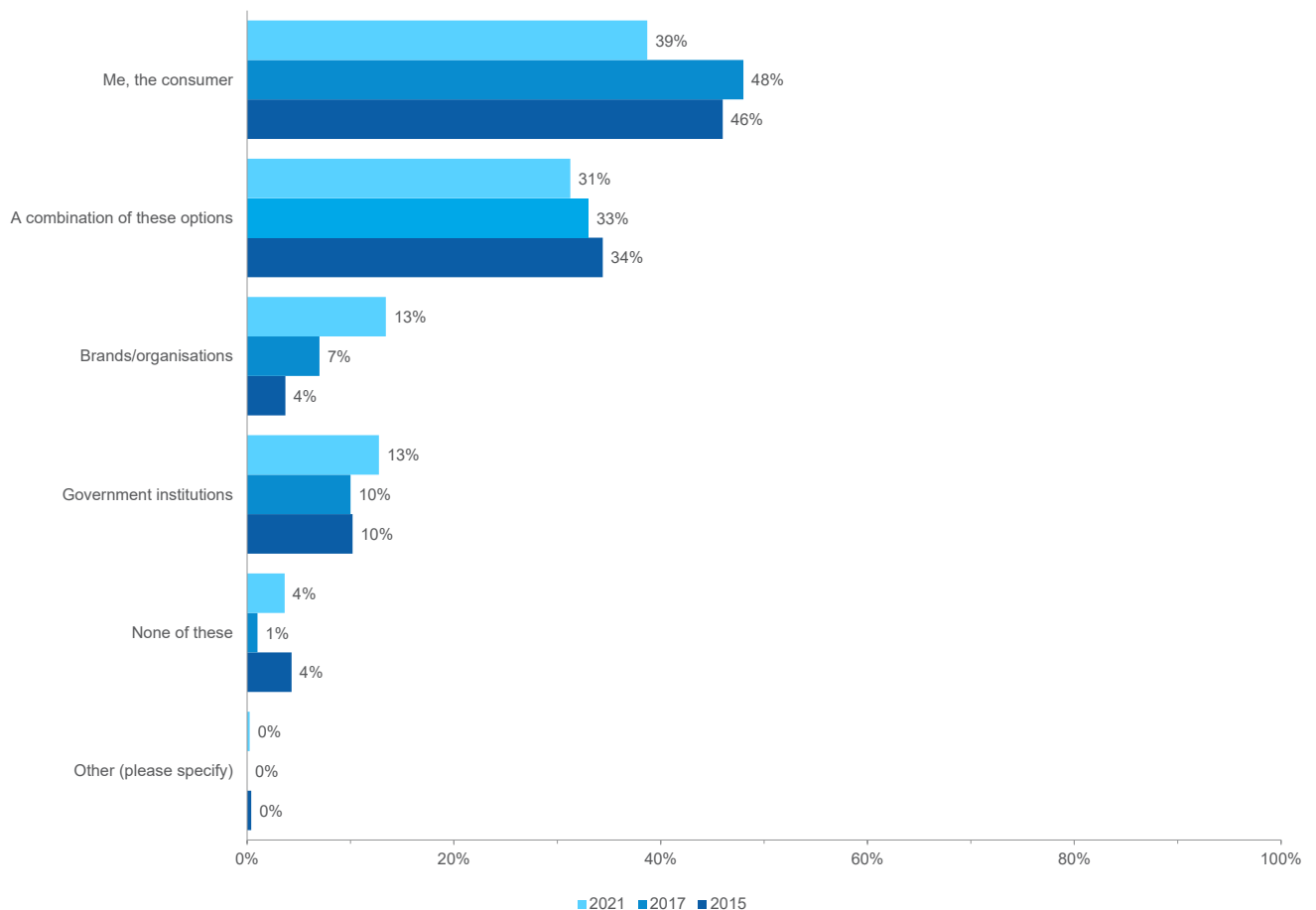
In this part of the report, we explore UK consumers’ attitudes to their personal data rights and responsibilities, as well as their awareness of regulatory data protections.

In 2022, UK consumers continue to place most responsibility on themselves for their own data security. However, there has been a notable shift towards expectations of institutional-led, particularly brand-led, responsibility for consumer data security. Moreover, trended data demonstrates a significant increase in awareness of data protection regulations since 2018. Such findings suggest that rising levels of public regulatory awareness has been a key potential driver of the increased levels of comfort and confidence UK consumers demonstrate towards their engagement with the data sharing ecosystem (as outlined in part 1 of this report).

## Relatively high levels of individual responsibility remain, but growing expectations are placed on industry

UK consumers remain most likely to claim that they themselves have ultimate responsibility for their own data security. However, this has declined notably since 2018, falling from 48% to 38% in 2022. Concomitantly, there is a growing proportion of consumers in the UK who claim that brands/industry should have primary responsibility, rising from 7% in 2018 to 13% in 2022. While less significant, there has also been an increase in the number of consumers who believe that the government should have ultimate responsibility for data security, with 13% holding this view in 2022 compared to 10% in 2018. Consequently, while UK consumers continue to show a high level of personal responsibility about their own data security, the trend since 2018 has been towards growing expectations of increased institutional responsibility.

### “In your opinion, who should have ultimate responsibility for your data security?” % who selected each option



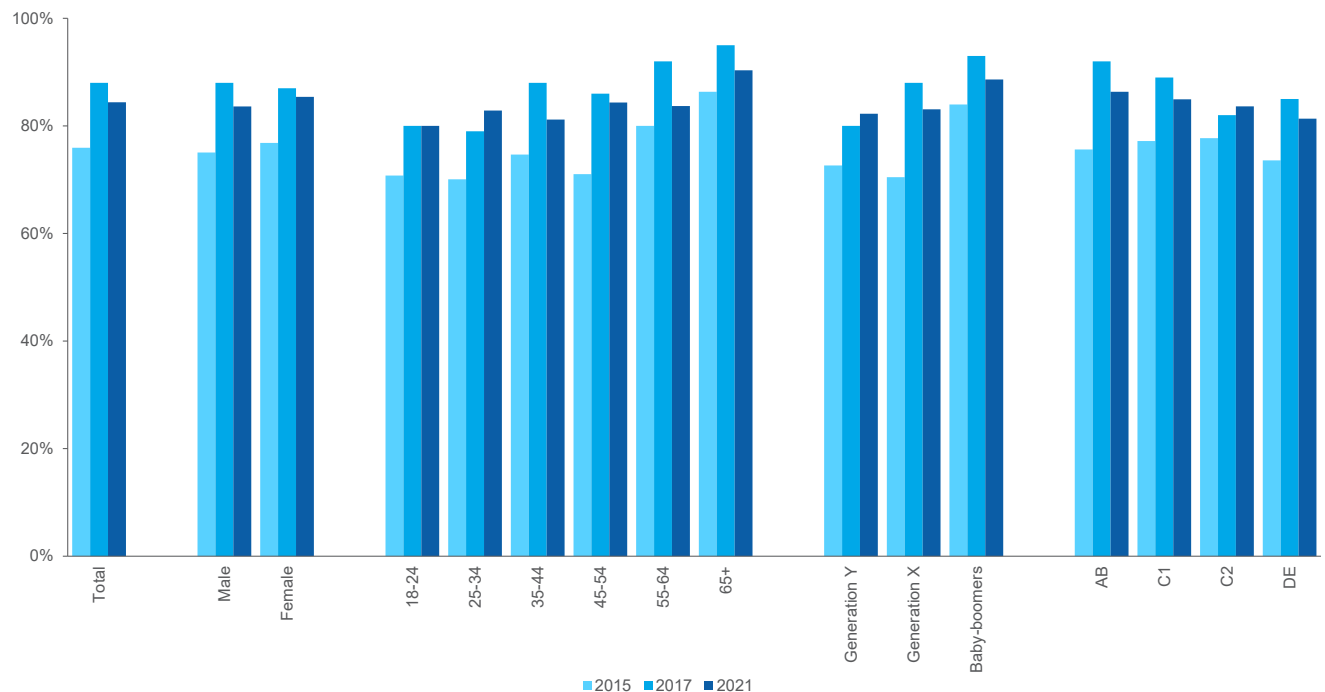


It is interesting to note that older consumers are more likely to believe a combination of stakeholders (consumer, brand and government) should be responsible for their data security, while younger age groups are more likely to opt for government- and brand-led responsibility. Indeed, in 2022, over 1 in 4 of the 55+ selected a combination of all three options compared to just 11% of 18-24s. What’s more, 22% of 18-24s believe that government institutions should have ultimate responsibility vs. just 7% of the 65+. Similarly, 22% of those aged 25-34 state that brands should have ultimate responsibility for their data security, while this drops to just 6% among the 65+.

**News headlines continue to shape public attitudes towards personal data privacy**

News stories about data security continue to influence the opinion of the vast majority of the UK public. However, this influence has declined somewhat over the previous 5 years. The proportion of UK consumers who indicated that recent news headlines had heightened their awareness of their own personal data privacy peaked in 2018 at 88%, up from 76% in 2015. In 2022, this has dropped slightly to 84%.

**“News headlines about data security breaches have heightened my awareness about my own personal data privacy” | % who strongly agree or agree**

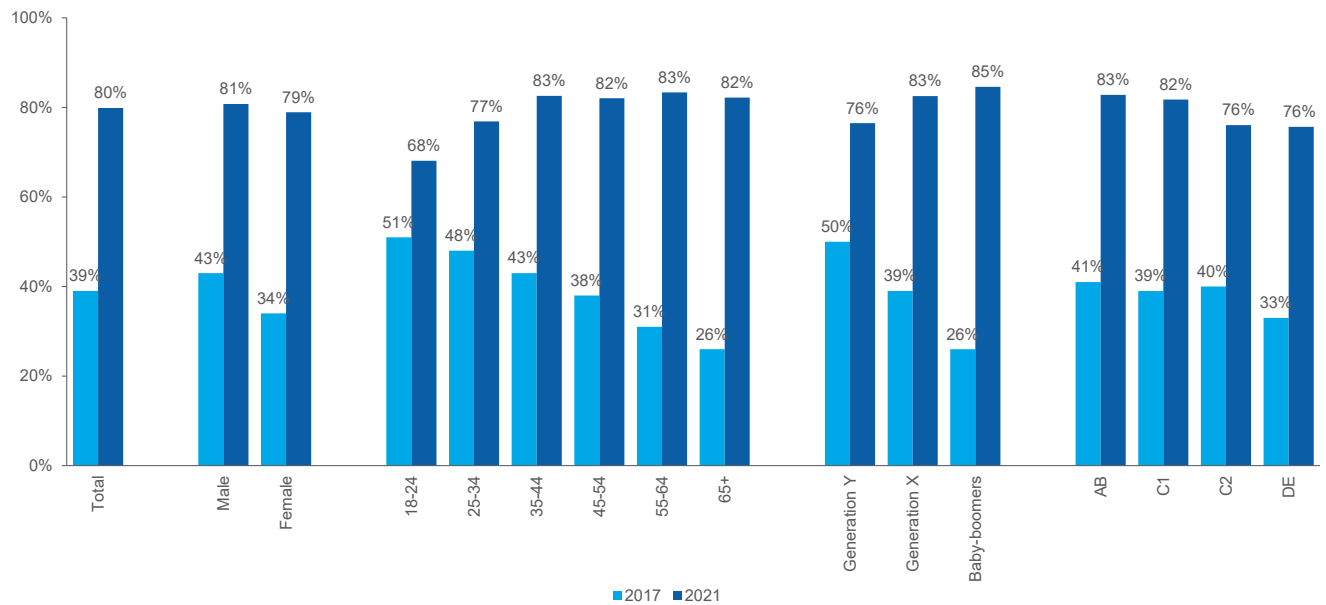


While such attitudes are strongly prevalent across all ages, especially higher numbers of older age groups state that new headlines shape their awareness of personal data privacy. In 2022, 90% of the 65+ hold this view, compared to 80% of 18-24s. Despite some differences across age groups, news headlines remain a strong influencer of overall public attitudes towards data privacy in the UK.

**Significant growth in public awareness of GDPR**

There has been a rapid increase in public awareness of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in the UK. Indeed, awareness has more than doubled, rising from 32% in 2018 to 73% in 2022. However, it should be noted that while GDPR was publicised via public media and discourse in 2018, at the time of the previous research GDPR had not yet come into force (GDPR came into force in May 2018).

**“I am aware of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)”  
% who strongly agree or agree**

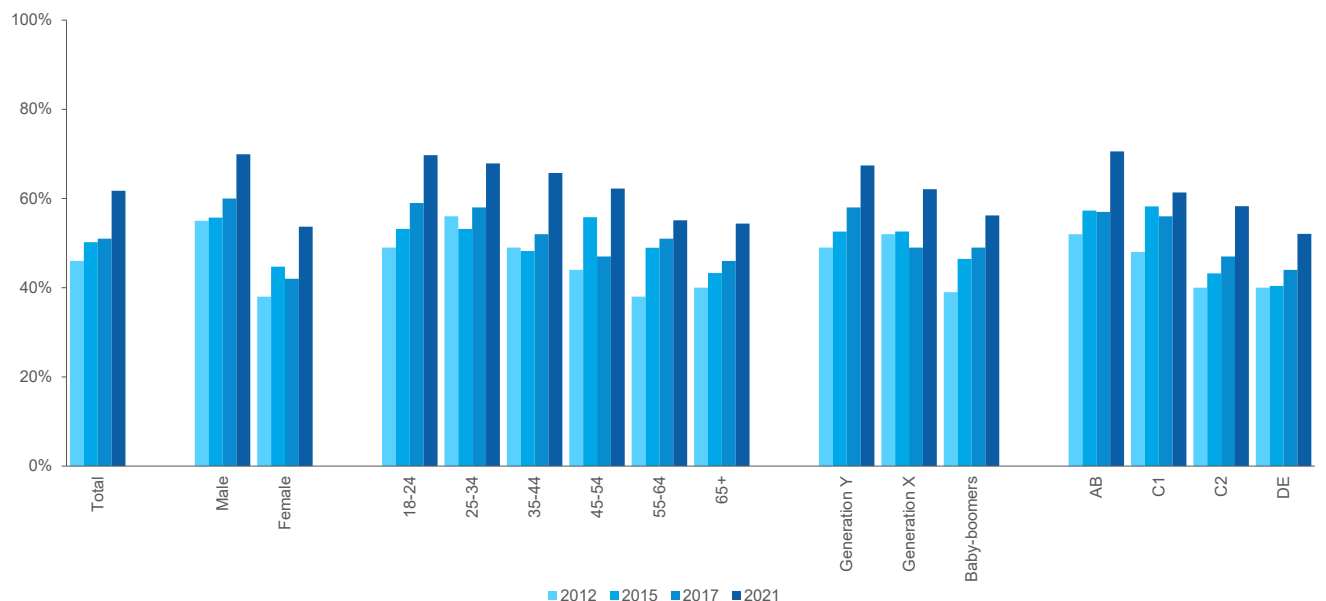


Moreover, there has been a dramatic change in the relative awareness of GDPR among age groups. Indeed, in 2018, younger age groups showed the highest levels of awareness. However, since 2018, awareness among older age groups has grown significantly. For example, in 2022, awareness among the 65+ has reached 74%, up from just 20% in 2018. In fact, it is now the older age groups in the UK who show the highest levels of GDPR awareness.

**Increased awareness and actioning of existing data protection rights**

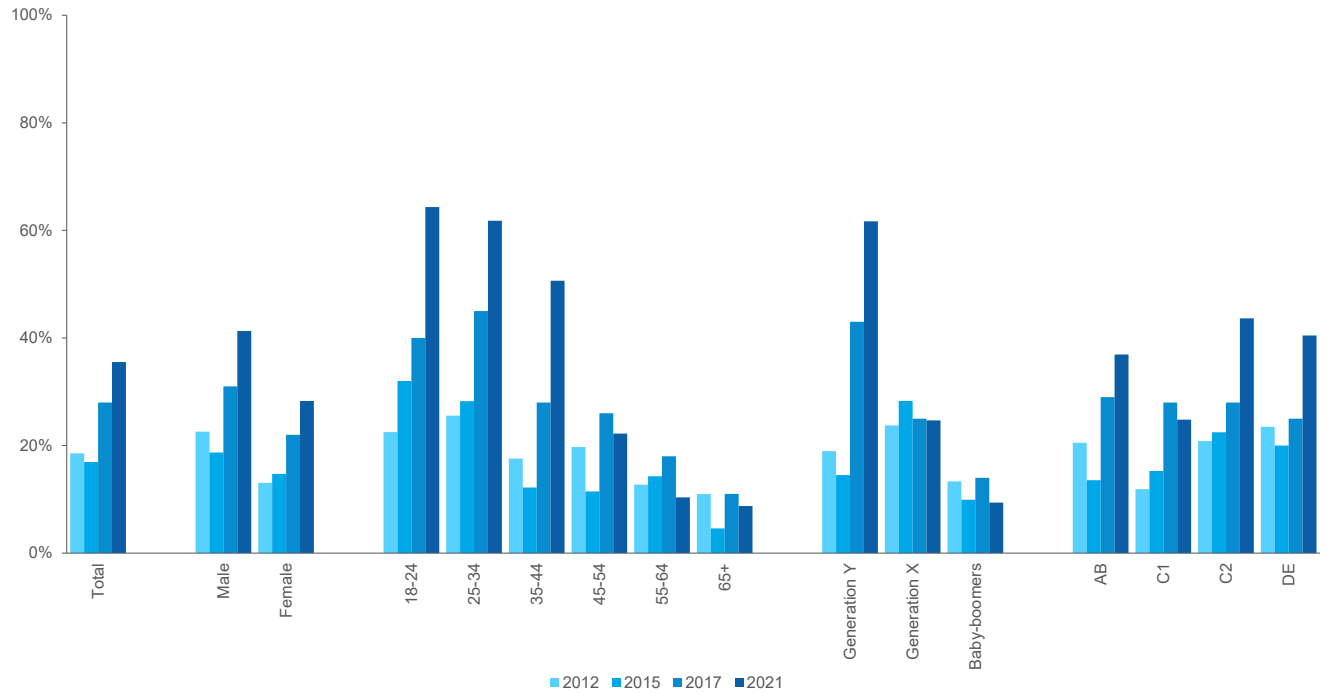
There has been significant growth in the number of UK consumers who claim they are aware that they can request to see the personal information an organisation holds on them. It is now over 6 in 10 (62%) who agree with this statement, rising from 46% in 2012. However, awareness does vary across age and gender. For instance, 70% of 18-24s claim they are aware they have this right compared to approximately 55% of the 55+. In addition, 70% of male UK consumers indicate awareness of this right compared to 54% of UK women.

**“Are you aware that you can ask any organisation to see the personal data they hold on you?” | Yes**



Moreover, in 2022, more UK consumers are also actioning their personal data rights. Over 1 in 3 (36%) in the UK claim they requested to see the information held about them from a specific organisation. This is up from just 19% in 2012. Such growth is most dramatic among younger age groups, as it is now over 6 in 10 of those aged 18-35 who claim they have actioned this right. However, far fewer older consumers have requested to see personal data held on them, with only 1 in 10 of the 55+ claiming they have done this.

**“Have you ever requested to see information held on you by a specific organisation?”  
Yes | Among those aware they can ask organisations for personal data**



Taken together, the findings presented here show a UK consumer landscape that continues to take personal responsibility for their data security and has growing awareness and understanding of the data protection and regulatory rights that are in place.

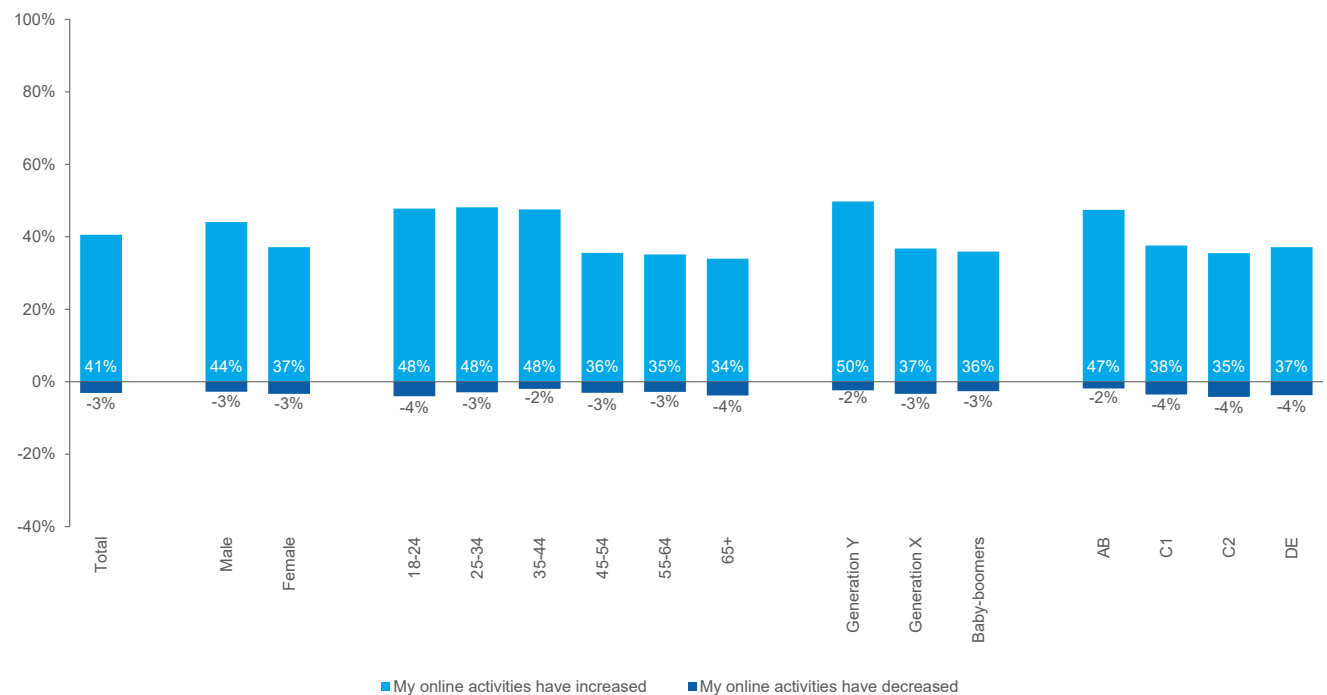
## PART 4: EMERGING THEMES FOR THE DATA ECOSYSTEM IN 2022

In the final part of this report, we explore new and emerging themes shaping or impacting the future UK data ecosystem that have been tested for the first time in 2022, from the impact of COVID-19 on data attitudes to the role of information sharing in facilitating a more diverse and competitive commercial landscape in the 2020s.

### COVID-19 has accelerated engagement with the digital world, but has impacted attitudes toward data sharing differently across age groups

As the chart below outlines, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly increased the level of online activities of UK consumers. Considerably higher numbers across all demographics claim that the pandemic has seen their online activity levels increase (41% in total) compared to the very small minority who claim these have decreased (3%).

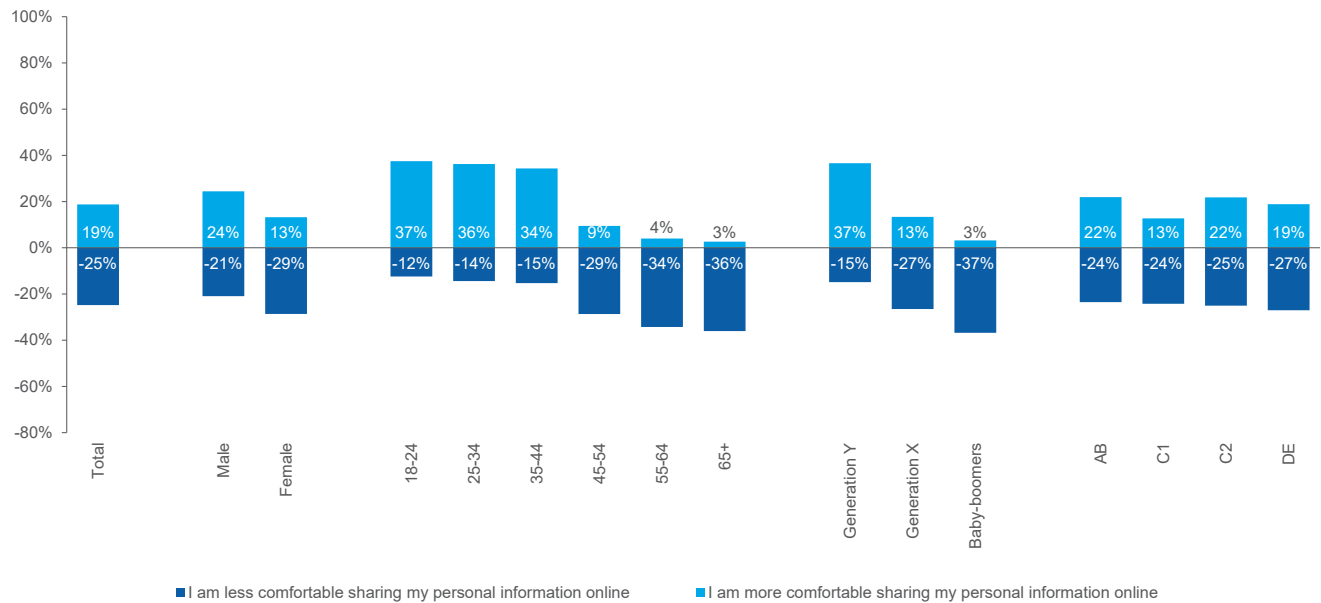
#### How have your online activities changed, if at all, since before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic?



Changing living patterns during the COVID-19 pandemic – where how people work, shop and socialise have all shifted to more digital channels – have clearly accelerated UK public engagement with the digital world. As a result, more consumers, especially older ones, will have likely engaged more with the exchange of data. When specifically asked about the extent to which the COVID-19 pandemic has increased or decreased comfort levels with sharing data online, it is interesting to note that more consumers say that it has had a negative effect; just 19% of UK consumers claim that their comfort level has increased, in contrast to 25% who claim their comfort level have decreased.

While on the surface such findings suggest that, as more consumers have engaged with data sharing, this had led to a concomitant decrease in comfort with data sharing, changes in such attitudes by age indicate that the COVID-19 impact has been polarised across younger and older consumers. Younger age profiles are far more likely to state that the pandemic has made them more comfortable with sharing data while older consumers are much more likely to claim the opposite; decline in comfort levels only outweighs an increase in comfort levels among those aged 45+.

### How comfortable are you sharing your personal information online now compared to before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic?

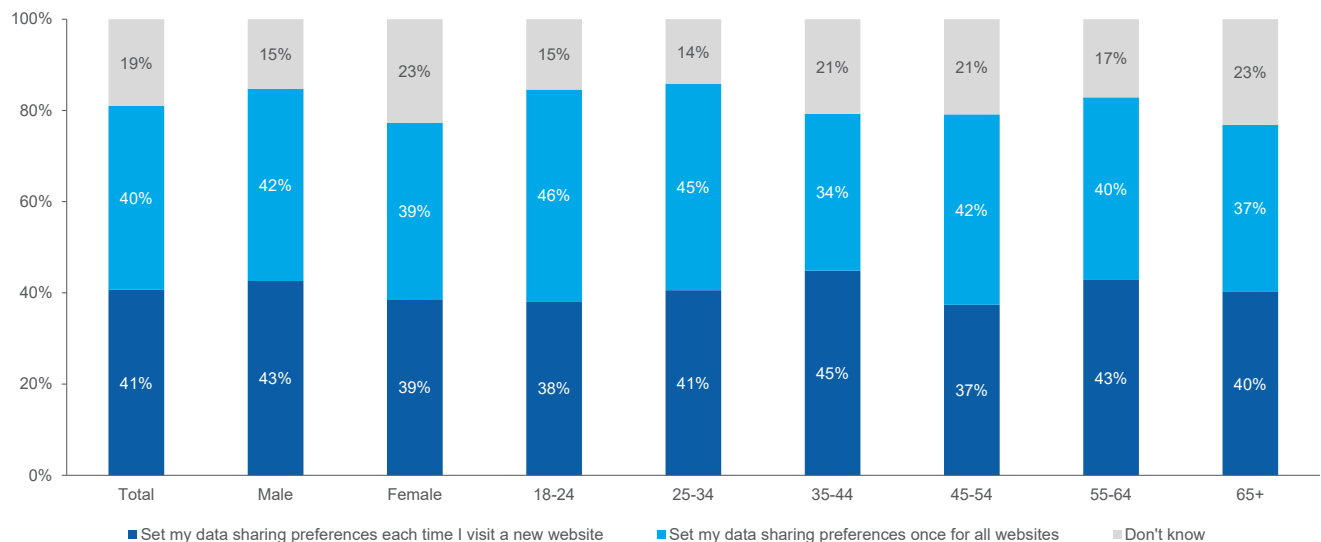


The accelerated levels of digital engagement necessitated by the pandemic have resulted in many consumer groups, particular older age segments, having to use digital channels and services more frequently (or even for the first time). As a result, the findings presented here suggest that the impact of increased digital behaviours throughout the pandemic has led to growing levels of discomfort among older age groups. Such findings are consistent with the research outlined throughout this report which consistently highlights age as a key influencing factor in levels of confidence and comfort with interacting with the data ecosystem. Increased efforts to capitalise on wider societal engagement with the digital world, via initiatives aimed at increasing comfort with data sharing among older generations, will optimise wider consumer engagement with data exchange in the UK throughout the 2020s.

### UK consumers demonstrate polarised views towards setting data sharing preferences online

When it comes to setting data sharing preferences online, 41% of UK consumers claim that they would prefer to set such preferences each time they visit a new website, while 40% would rather set their preferences once for all websites. Even across demographics, the split remains relatively even. Such findings indicate an evenly divided UK public in terms of setting their data sharing preferences when engaging with the online and digital world.

### Which of the following ways of setting your data sharing preferences would you prefer?

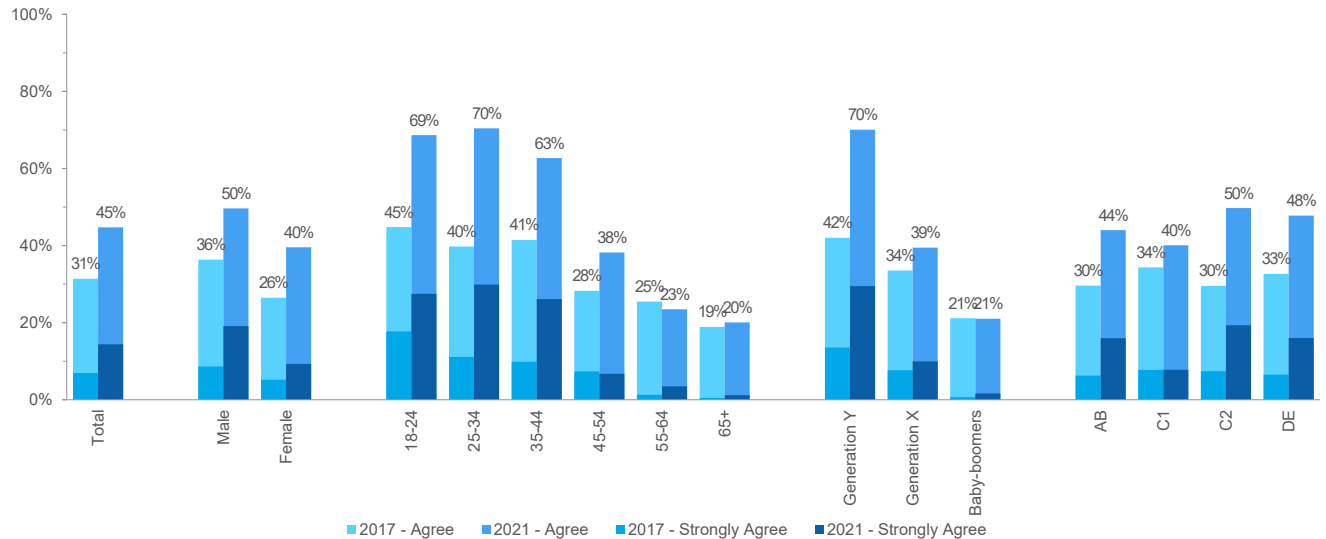


Source: Foresight Factory Research | Base: 1281 UK respondents aged 18+, December 2021

**Increased interest levels in B2B data sharing for service and product enhancements**

UK consumers are increasingly happy for businesses to share their personal information with other businesses in order to deliver more personalised services and products. Agreement with this notion has risen from 31% in 2018 to 45% in 2022. Interest in B2B data sharing propositions is even higher among young age groups, reaching around 7 in 10 among those aged 18-34.

**“I would be happy for a business to share my personal information with other businesses if it will give me more tailored services and/or products” | % who strongly agree or agree**



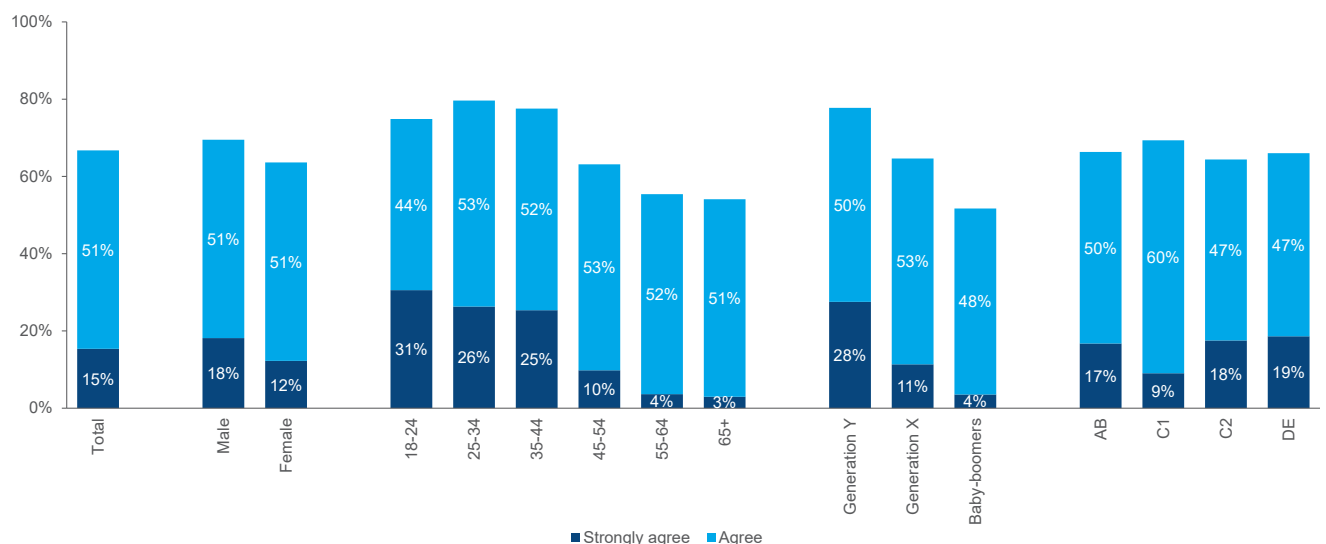
The increasing levels of interest shown in B2B data sharing should incentivise wider industry innovation in this space, seeking to develop more holistic and sophisticated data sets that can be utilised to better meet growing consumer expectations for improved levels of product, service and marketing as a result of their engagement with data sharing.

**High awareness of the role of data sharing in helping organisations respond better to the needs of all parts of society**

A high majority (67%) of UK consumers agree that the sharing of personal information helps ensure that organisations can better meet the needs of a diverse society, by better understanding the attitudes and wants of a wider range of groups and identities. Such agreement reaches a high of 80% among 25-34s.

**“People sharing their personal information with organisations helps organisations develop a better understanding of different types of people in society”**

**How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? | % who agree**

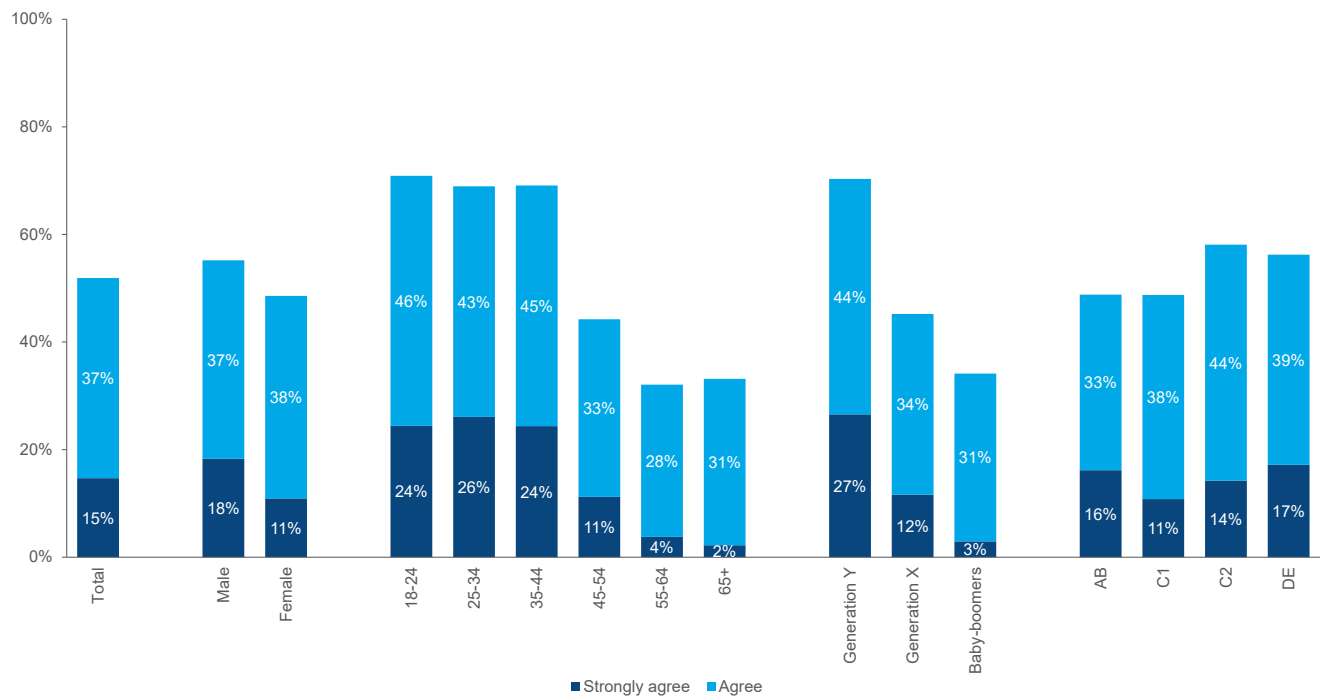


As the use of data becomes more central to the business practices of UK brands, restricted access to the same levels of data across different groups in society will risk marginalised groups emerging who are less well understood and catered to by industry. The role that data sharing can play in encouraging more diverse and inclusive commercial offerings/services will be an effective message to entice wider engagement with the future data ecosystem across the UK consumer landscape.

**UK consumers show a willingness to share personal data to drive the competitiveness of smaller businesses, particularly younger age groups**

Just over half of UK consumers (52%) state that they would be more likely to share personal information to provide a competitive advantage to smaller companies over larger ones. Agreement increases significantly among younger age groups, reaching around 7 in 10 for those aged 18-44.

**“I don’t mind sharing personal information with smaller companies if it helps give them a competitive advantage over larger companies”  
How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? | % who agree**



Consequently, the role that data sharing can play in driving more competitive economies by providing more equal access to customer intelligence for smaller businesses, will be a compelling reason for many UK consumers to share personal information in the 2020s.

# METHODOLOGY

In December 2021, Foresight Factory conducted, on behalf of the DMA/Axiom, an online survey of 2,072 respondents exploring public attitudes towards privacy in the UK. Unless referenced, all data included in this report is taken from this survey and the previous iterations of this research from 2012, 2015, and 2018. For this research, Foresight Factory set interlocking nationally representative quotas on age, gender and region. This ensured the sample was representative of the UK population. Weighting was also applied to further ensure a nationally representative sample. The analysis of the data, and the segmentation of findings was conducted in-house by Foresight Factory's quantitative analysis team.

The data presented in this report has removed responses from respondents who answered "don't know" to agreement statement questions where this was an option (i.e., questions where respondents are asked their level of agreement to a specific statement). In 2012, the agreement statement questions asked in this survey were advanced and forward looking and removing "don't know" responses at the time developed a clearer picture of consumer attitudes to key emerging themes. We have maintained this same approach for all subsequent research waves, including 2022, to allow for accurate trending of the research over the time. Please note, that for the global iteration of this report, first published in 2018, the "don't know" responses were included for the agreement statement questions. Any minor differences in the UK data presented in this report, compared to the UK data in the global comparison report, are due to the above. The one exception to this is the question regarding awareness of GDPR, where we have added "don't know" responses into the data shown in this report for 2018 and 2022, as this agreement question relates to a specific area of consumer knowledge rather than agreement with a wider statement.



# ABOUT ACXIOM

Acxiom is a customer intelligence company that provides data-driven solutions to enable the world's best marketers to better understand their customers to create better experiences and business growth. A leader in customer data management, identity, and the ethical use of data for more than 50 years, Acxiom now helps thousands of clients and partners around the globe work together to create millions of better customer experiences, every day. Acxiom is a registered trademark of Acxiom LLC and is part of The Interpublic Group of Companies, Inc. (IPG).

For more information, visit [acxiom.co.uk](https://www.acxiom.co.uk)



# ABOUT THE DMA

The Data & Marketing Association (DMA) comprises the DMA, Institute of Data & Marketing (IDM) and DMA Talent. We seek to guide and inspire industry leaders; to advance careers; and to nurture the next generation of aspiring marketers.

We champion the way things should be done, through a rich fusion of technology, diverse talent, creativity, insight – underpinned by our customer-focussed principles. We set the standards marketers must meet in order to thrive, representing over 1,000 members drawn from the UK's data and marketing landscape.

By working responsibly, sustainably and creatively, together we will drive the data and marketing industry forward to meet the needs of people today and tomorrow.

For more information, visit [www.dma.org.uk](http://www.dma.org.uk)



# ABOUT FORESIGHT FACTORY

Foresight Factory is a leading international consumer futures business. Our core expertise is based on identifying and forecasting social and consumer trends and determining the extent of their impacts on markets, services, brands and products. Since our launch in 1996, we have worked to meet the strategic needs of businesses through the application of insight. We identify, measure and examine trends, attitudes and behaviours through the rigorous analysis of quantitative and qualitative research. Our robust programme of research provides businesses with the grounding and confidence to anticipate the likely impact of the evolving consumer environment and identify new market and revenue opportunities.

For more information, visit [foresightfactory.co](https://foresightfactory.co)

