

Family Screen Use During the Pandemic

Collaborative findings from



Researchers:

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Introduction



- Research information
- Main findings
- Implications
- Conclusion

'British Families in Lockdown/BFIL' (2020- ongoing)

- Lockdown 1- online/telephone interviews (60 parents)
- Lockdown 2- online survey (31 parents)
- Lockdown 3 – online/telephone interviews (10 parents)
- Post-lockdown- online/telephone interviews (20 parents)
- Parents from diverse backgrounds

'New Uses of Screens in Post-Lockdown Britain/NUSPB' (2021-ongoing)

- National survey (2021)
- Nationally representative
- Over 500 participants, included parents
- Online/telephone interviews (22 parents)

Uses of screens during lockdown

- Screen use mostly increased (TV, computers, mobile phones, tablets) for adults and children
- Factors for this included: home-schooling, working from home, recreational pursuits limited outside of home, connecting with others, entertainment purposes etc
- Reliance on screens for everyday activities and pursuits
- Increase in subscription services

“Kids watching TV was a particular bugbear of mine before lockdown, but I'm guilty of it, immediately went out and got a Disney subscription, and one of those fire sticks, we had Amazon as well.” Nathan



Positive bonding experiences



“On like a Saturday night, we've got Netflix as a family thing. I'm making tea, we've been trying to like make our own take away, our daughter might do a bit of baking for it.” Arianna

- Families spending more time together during lockdowns
- Shared viewing experiences
- Spontaneous events
- Pre-planned – ‘movie nights’
- Became a regular feature of ‘lockdown’ family life
- Could help strengthen and maintain family bonds

Concerns about screen use

- Fake news, negative impact of COVID news on individuals
- Children's access to screens and content
- Screens as 'babysitters'
- Binge watching
- Age appropriateness of content



“Grandpa's already invested the children with his full Harry Potter collection of films. You know which are pretty scary I mean, you know these are verging on horror films at times. We shouldn't have allowed him to do that. They are really too scary for children.” Joseph

Overview

Positive Perceptions

- Expanded interests and learning
- Entertainment
- Promoted discussions within the home and a better understanding of issues within the family
- Enable social connections to continue

Negative Perceptions

- Excessive use (parents and children)
- Screen use at the expense of physical and other activities
- Health issues
- Mental health concerns



“He watches a lot of Netflix, binge watches series... I do worry about [Son], I think he’s very susceptible to becoming depressed or a recluse. My partner’s now getting him downstairs cooking and not just watching Netflix all the time, which was the concern”.

Daria

Post-lockdown screen use

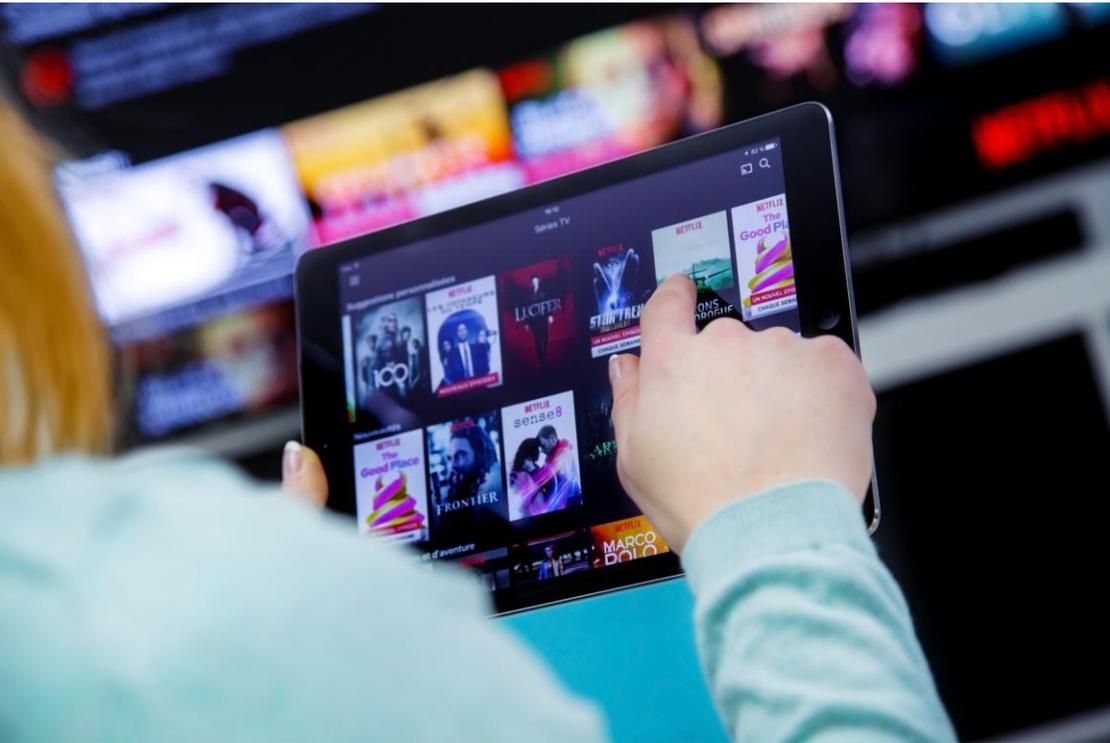
- 54% of adults now use screens more as a result of lockdown.
- 27% are using screens more at work.
- 51% are using screens more for leisure.
- Disproportionately impacted - Ethnic minorities and Higher earners and Women
- Half the population are exposed to screens for 11 hours or more each day combined.

“I’ve never sat somewhere for so long to do so many things at once on technology...”. Luke



Absence of Guidelines

78% of adults are unaware of Government guidance on screen use.



- 59% of British adults have said that screen use has had a negative impact on their health.
- 40% of British adults have said that screen use has negatively affected them physically.
- 28% say that screen use has negatively affected their mental health.
- Health examples: eye strain, poor posture, lethargy, lack of exercise etc
- Mental health examples: depression anxiety, irritability, reclusiveness etc.

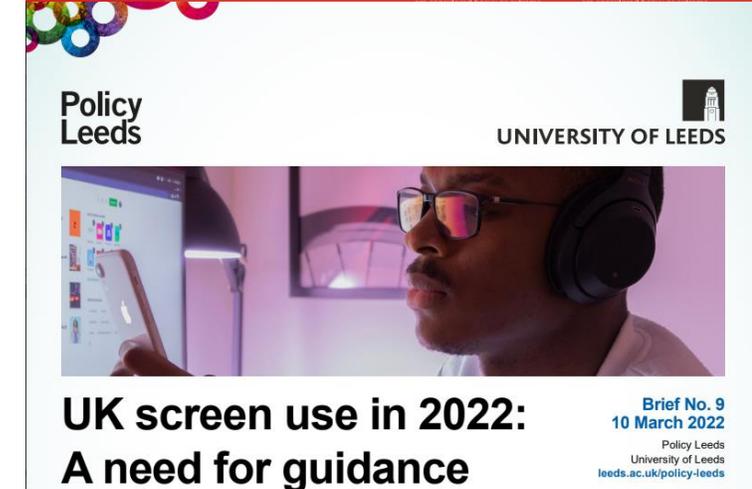
- 93% of Health impacts occur in those who are exposed to screens for 6 hours or more a day.
- 75% of impacts occur at over 9 hours a day.

Policy and practice implications

2 reports published this month:

- **UK Families Experiences of Film and TV during COVID and Beyond.**
- **UK screen use in 2022: A need for guidance.**

- There are clear benefits to screen use across multiple aspects of life.
- Lack of guidance currently available for adults
- Guidelines for children and adults potentially needed
- Study participants welcomed the idea of formal guidelines
- To alleviate risks of health impacts, it may be valid to recommend people to limit their screen use to under 6 hours each day and to try avoiding combined exposure that regularly exceeds 9 hours a day.



UK screen use in 2022: A need for guidance

Brief No. 9
10 March 2022
Policy Leeds
University of Leeds
leeds.ac.uk/policy-leeds

Rafe Clayton and Carmen Clayton

The use of screens has become integral to our work and leisure in the UK. New research looking at UK adults' use of screens during and after the coronavirus lockdowns has found a steep rise in total screen use. This was linked to perceived negative health impacts, with some groups being more vulnerable. Here we discuss the need for clear national guidance on screen use in the UK.

Conclusion

- Screen use has increased during lockdowns
- Pattern has continued post-lockdown
- Some positive benefits for screen use for individuals and families
- Negative impacts and concerns also however
- Reliance and use of screens post-pandemic
- Guidelines urgently needed



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