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GfK. Growth from Knowledge



Reflections on Childhood - Lifestyle



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1 Executive Summary

1.1 Lifestyle

This section covers issues around *today's* children's lifestyle, and draws comparisons between life nowadays and that of the respondents' childhood.

A series of statements were put to the sample; using a five point scale ranging from agree strongly to disagree strongly, they were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with each of the statements.

When asked to what extent they agreed with the statement that *'children and young people's self esteem is damaged by the negative portrayal of their age group in the media'*, overall, six in ten agreed. However, a quarter disagreed with this notion.

Nine in ten agreed with the statement that *'children nowadays are more materialistic than past generations'*. On this issue, there were some notable age and gender differences.

The sample was asked for their views on the maximum amount of time they thought was appropriate for children aged 12 or under to spend on the computer, playing computer games and watching TV, including DVDs and videos on a normal school day.

Interestingly, just three per cent were opposed to children spending any time at all on computers or watching television. The majority felt it was appropriate for some time (1-3 hours) to be allowed for these activities. Younger respondents (aged 16-17) were more liberal, and were more likely to think longer hours were acceptable.

A majority of eight in ten disagreed that *'children aged 12 should be free to spend their money on whatever they want'*. Interestingly, the younger participants, those aged 16-17 (33%) were more inclined to agree with the statement.

Seven in ten of the sample agreed that *'violent video games make children more aggressive'*, conversely, one in five disagreed.



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Nine in ten thought that 'advertising to children at Christmas puts pressure on parents to spend more than they can really afford', with 68% agreeing strongly. Interestingly, parents were less inclined to agree with this statement.

Overall, six in ten agreed that 'The Government should ban advertising of unhealthy food. Around three in ten disagreed, thus thinking the government should not ban advertising of unhealthy foods.



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2 Introduction

The Children's Society's *'Good Childhood inquiry'* is the UK's first independent national inquiry into childhood. The Children's Society commissioned GfK NOP to undertake some research looking at views on learning and lifestyles from an adult (18+) perspective. Additionally, views were sought from young adults (16 and 17 year olds) to gauge whether their views deviated or were in line with those of the adult population.

According to research¹, children's well being, particularly mental well being, is lower in the UK than many European countries. Children are increasingly subject to influences which require them to consume, behave and achieve like adults. The inquiry aims to renew society's understanding of childhood for the twenty-first century to inform, improve and inspire all our relationships with children. The inquiry has six themes which are friends, family, learning, lifestyle, health and values.

The inquiry will:

- Listen to the voices and views of children, young people and adults about their experience and understanding of childhood in the UK today.
- Identify and address the most important issues facing children and young people in the UK today.
- Make recommendations to improve the way in which childhood is experienced and understood in the UK today.

The findings from the 'Reflections on Childhood' series will be used as part of the inquiry.

¹ Children's society website (<http://sites.childrensociety.org.uk>)/UNICEF



3 Methodology

A total of 1255 telephone interviews were conducted with a sample of UK residents aged 16 or over. The sample was proportionately drawn, with the exception of Northern Ireland and Wales, where a booster sample was drawn to ensure we interviewed at least 100 people to produce more robust data than would be the case with a representative sample. Additionally, we boosted interviews with 16-17 year olds to allow for more detailed inferences, in total, 102 interviews were conducted with this age group.

All interviewing was conducted by fully-trained interviewers from the GfK NOP field-force working to the criteria of the Interviewer Quality Control Scheme.

A questionnaire taking an average of seven minutes to complete was developed by the Children's Society and GfK NOP Social Research. Interviews were conducted using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). A pilot study was conducted to test the questionnaire and interview length. At the end of the pilot, participants were asked a series of questions about the survey and how they interpreted some of the questions. After the pilot, the questionnaire was very slightly adjusted to reflect the pilot findings. A total of 15 interviews were conducted at the pilot stage.

The data was slightly weighted to ensure representativeness. The data was weighted on interlocked working status and gender and age for each region/nation using Government Standard Region statistics. The data was also weighted to remove the over-representation of the booster samples in Wales and Northern Ireland.

Fieldwork took place between 21 August and 5 September 2007.

3.1 Sampling

A random sample of telephone numbers was obtained for each English region and for Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. The sample drawn was reflective of the size of the region/nation (except in the booster nations where more sample was drawn to allow for 100 completed interviews). Respondents were asked to confirm their age prior to interviewing to ensure that only residents aged 16 or over were interviewed. Age, region and interlocked gender and working status quotas were set to ensure that the resultant sample was representative of the UK population.



4 Main findings

Throughout this report, the findings refer to children. In this context, children are those aged 16 or under.

4.1 Lifestyle

This section covers issues around *today's* children's lifestyle, and draws comparisons between life nowadays and that of the respondents' own childhood.

A series of statements were put to the sample, and using a five point scale ranging from agree strongly to disagree strongly, they were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with each of the statements.

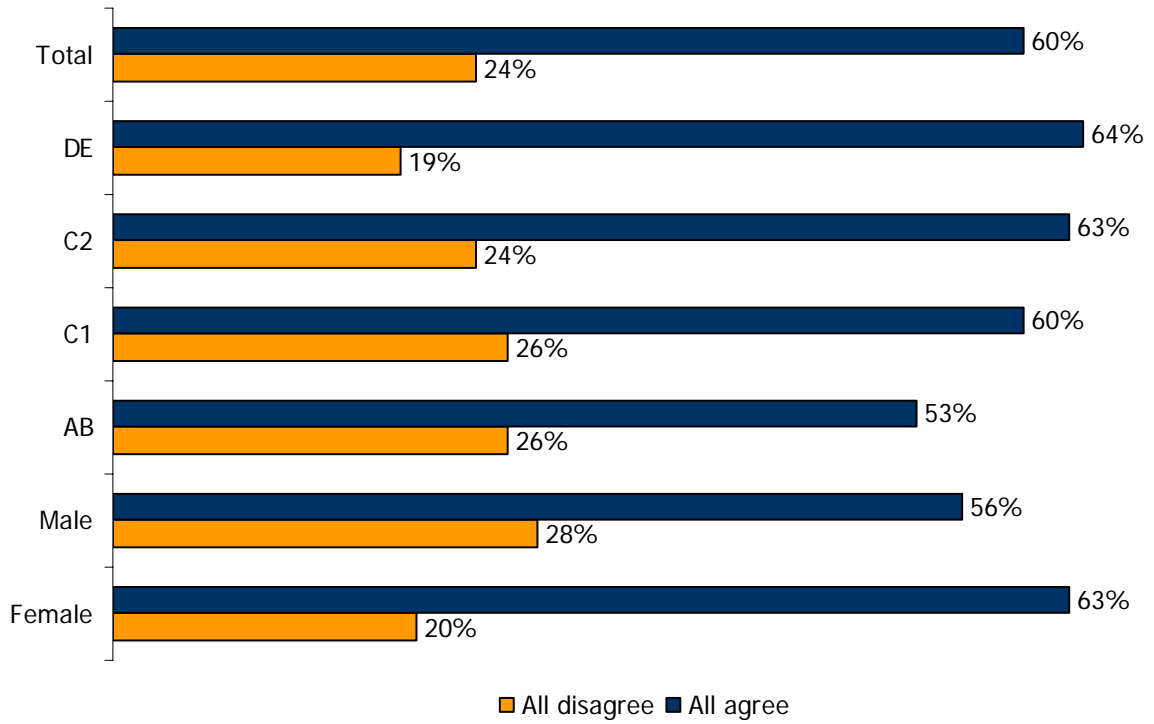
Overall six in ten agreed with the statement that *'children and young people's self esteem is damaged by the negative portrayal of their age group in the media'*, with 27% agreeing strongly. A quarter disagreed with this notion, with 6% disagreeing strongly.

Women were significantly more likely than men to think the media is causing damage, with 63% agreeing, compared to 56% of men. Those in the AB socio group (53%) were less inclined to agree than those in the C2 (63%) and DE (64%) groups.

Interestingly, on this issue there were no differences of opinion between those with children aged 16 or under and those without. Chart 1 gives a more visual picture of subgroup differences.



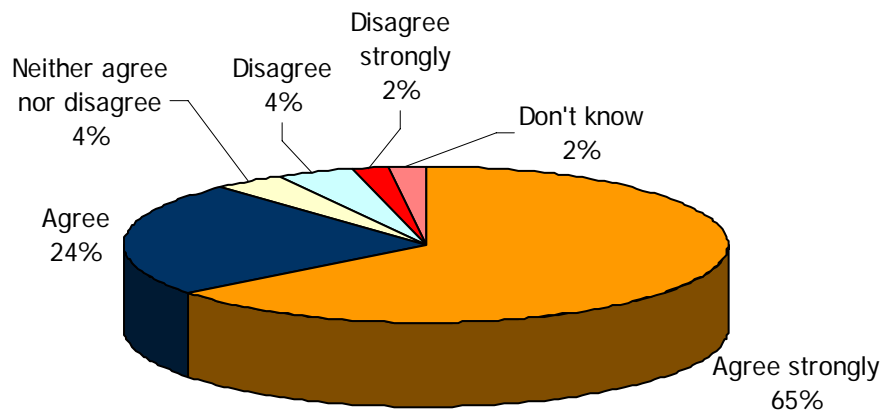
Chart 1: Children and young people's self esteem is damaged by the negative portrayal of their age group in the media'



Base: All (unweighted 1255)

Nine in ten agreed with the statement that 'children nowadays are more materialistic than past generation', with 65% strongly holding this view. Just 6% of the sample disagreed with the statement, whilst 4% did not have strong views either way.

Chart 2: Children nowadays are more materialistic than past generation



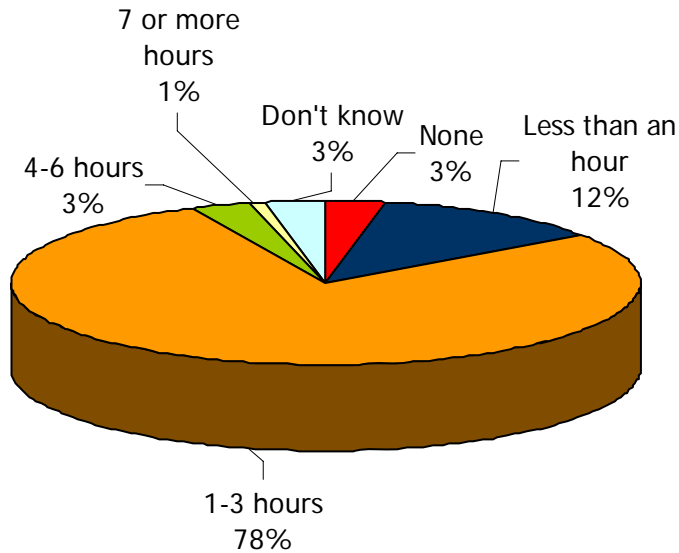
Base: All (unweighted 1255)

On this issue, those aged 16-17 (11%) and 25-34 (10%) were more inclined to disagree that children are more materialistic than past generation than those aged 35 or older (3%). Similarly, men were more likely to disagree (7% compared with 4% of women).

The sample was then asked for their views on the maximum amount of time they thought was appropriate for children aged 12 or under to spend on the computer, playing computer games and watching TV, including DVDs and videos on a normal school day.

Just three per cent were opposed to children spending any time at all on computers or watching television. The majority felt it was appropriate for some time to be allowed for these activities with over three quarters (78%) saying the maximum should be 1 - 3 hours. As shown in chart 3, at the other extreme, one per cent thought that 7 or more hours was more appropriate.

Chart 3: How many hours do you think children aged 12 and under should be allowed on the computer or playing computer games and watching TV, DVDs and videos on a normal school day?



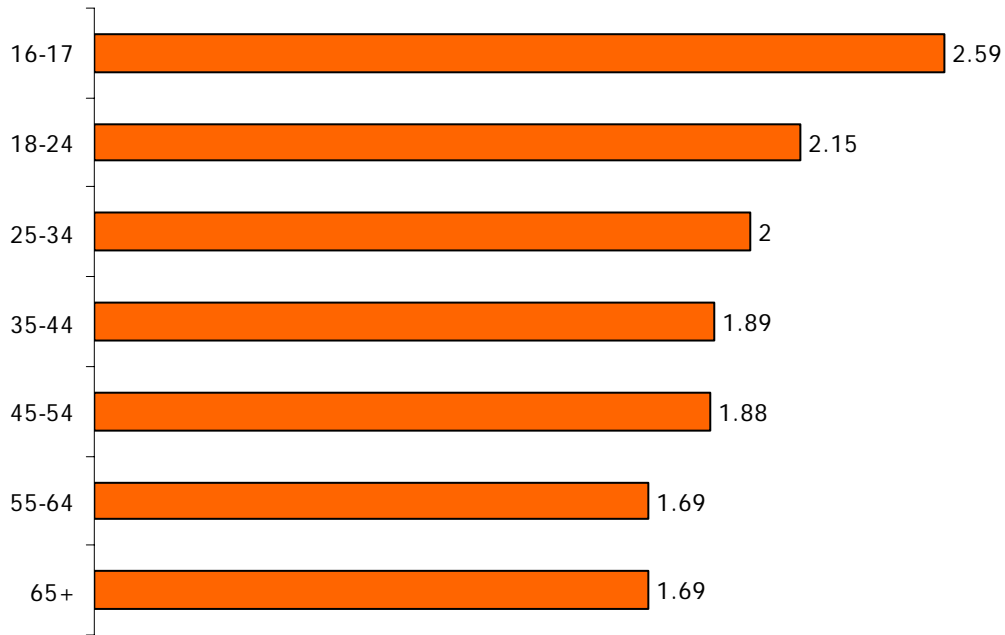
Base: All (unweighted 1255)

On this issue, opinion varied amongst age groups. Younger respondents were more liberal, and were more likely to think that longer periods were acceptable; 15% of 16 - 17 year olds felt 4 to 6 hours was appropriate compared to only 2% of over those aged 25 or over.

As chart 4 shows, the average number of hours deemed acceptable falls as the age of the respondent increases. This is perhaps unsurprising given that it is more probable younger ages have had most exposure to these mediums (particularly new technology) and possibly place more value on their need compared to older respondents. There were no other notable differences in opinion between subgroups.



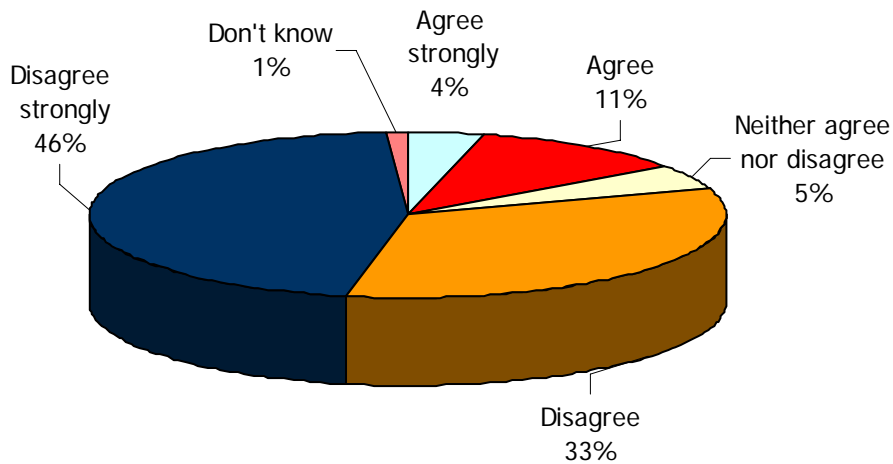
Chart 4: How many hours do you think children aged 12 and under should be allowed on the computer or playing computer games and watching TV, DVDs and videos on a normal school day? Mean number of hours by age



Base: All (unweighted 1255)

As shown in chart 5, overall nearly eight in ten disagreed that 'children aged 12 should be free to spend their money on whatever they want', with 46% disagreeing strongly. Just 15% agreed that this should be the case, whilst 5% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Chart 5: Children aged 12 should be free to spend their money on whatever they want



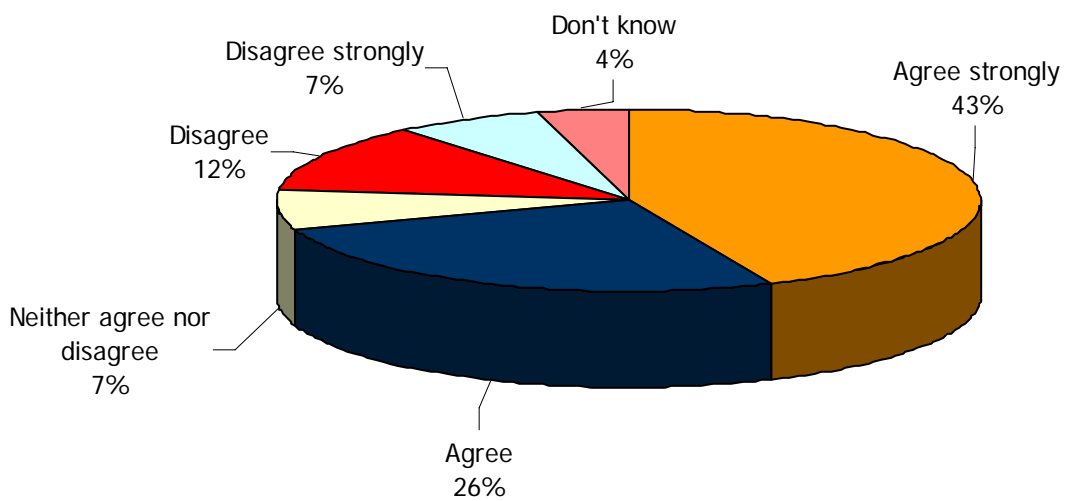
Base: All (unweighted 1255)

Interestingly, on this matter, the younger participants, those aged 16-17 (33%) were more inclined to agree that children aged 12 should be free to spend their money on whatever they want', and to a lesser extent those falling into the 45-55 age group also shared this view (22%). Those aged 18-44 (14%) and 55+ (13%) were less likely to agree with the statement.

There were notable gender differences; men were more liberal on this issue. Around one in six (18%) indicated that children aged 12 should be free to spend their money on whatever they want, whilst only 13% of women agreed with this view.

Seven in ten of the sample agreed that '*violent video games make children more aggressive*', with 43% agreeing strongly. However, one in five (19%) disagreed with the statement, thus thinking that violent video games do not have this adverse impact on children.

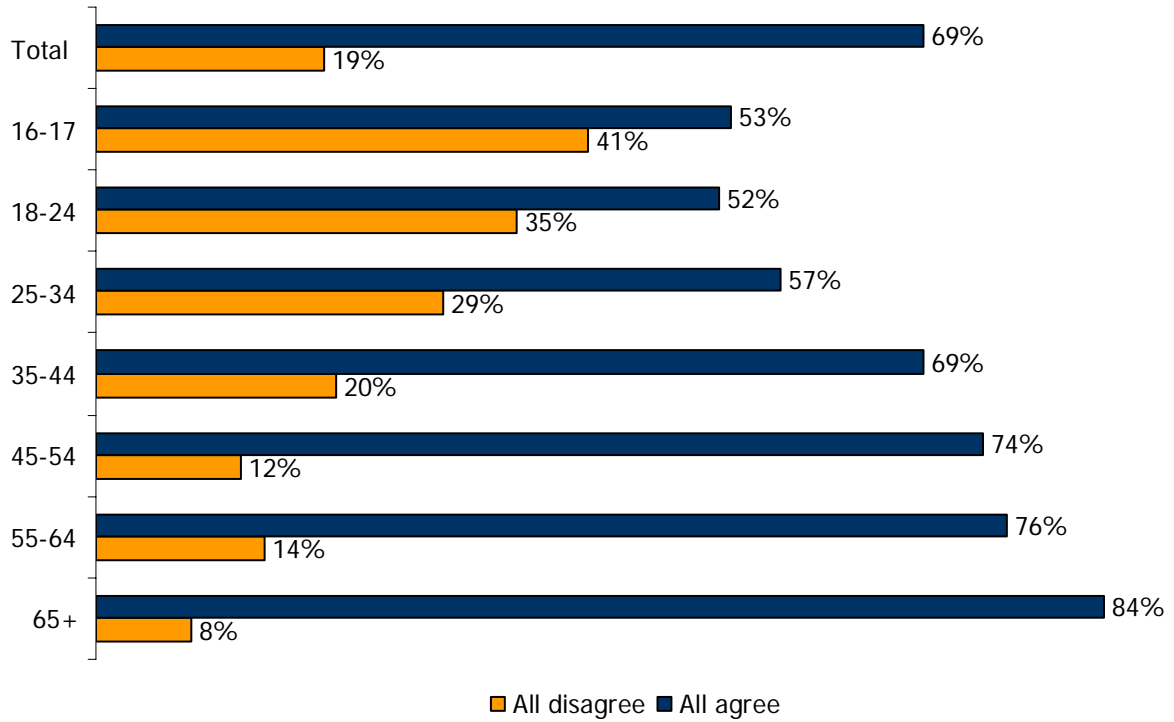
Chart 6: Violent video games make children more aggressive



Base: All (unweighted 1255)

On this issue, there were some clear age differences. Those in the younger age groups (16-34) were more likely to disagree that violent video games make children more aggressive, whilst those aged 35+ held opposing views. Chart 7 gives a visual illustration of this finding.

Chart 7: Violent video games make children more aggressive (Age breakdown)



Base: All (unweighted 1255)

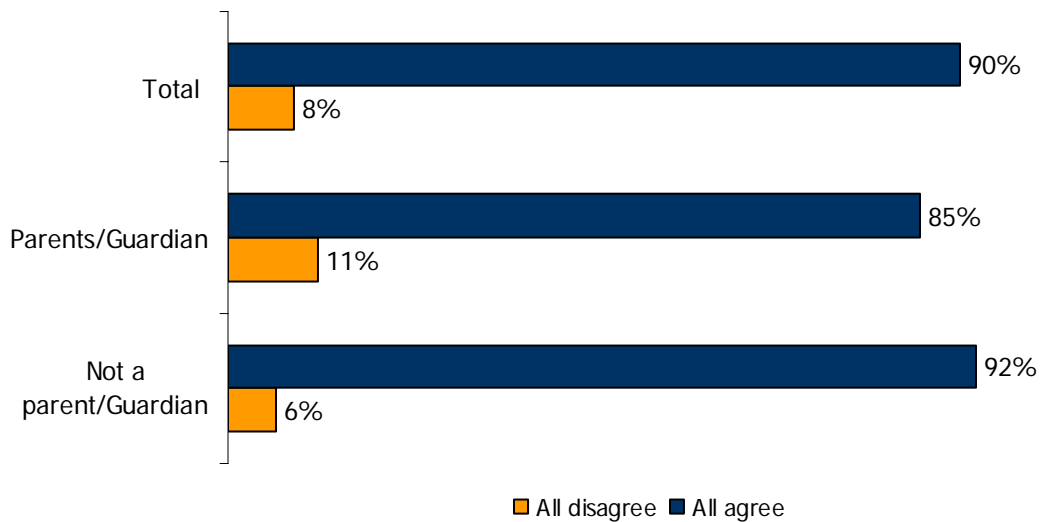
There were also differences between men (62%) and women (76%), with the latter, more likely to agree that violent video games had an impact on children. Similarly, those out of work (75%) also shared this view, whilst their counterparts in work were less inclined to indicate this (65%).



A clear majority, agreed that *'advertising to children at Christmas puts pressure on parents to spend more than they can really afford'*, with 68% agreeing strongly. Eight per cent disagreed with the statement, whilst three per cent did not hold any strong views either way.

Overall, the majority of the sample agreed that there was pressure on them to spend at Christmas. However, the group being debated (i.e. parents) were less inclined to state this 85%, interestingly this view was more prevalent amongst those with no children (92%).

Chart 8: Advertising to children at Christmas puts pressure on parents to spend more than they can really afford



Base: All (unweighted 1255)



Six in ten participants agreed that 'The Government should ban advertising of unhealthy food', with 35% agreeing strongly with this notion. Overall 28% disagree, thus thinking the government should not ban advertising of unhealthy foods.

There was a visible age divide - those aged 35 or over (67%) were more likely to think that the government should apply a ban, whilst younger participants (aged 16-34) were less likely to agree with this view, with just 49% agreeing that the government should impose a ban on the advertising of unhealthy food. Table 1, gives a more detailed breakdown of these findings.

Interestingly, those in the DE socio groups were more likely to agree to the ban on advertising (71%) compared to other social groups (60%).

Table 1: The government should ban advertising of unhealthy food – (Breakdown by age)

Base: All aged 18+	Total	16-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
Unweighted base	1255	102	115	182	230	200	184	221
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agree strongly	35	23	24	31	37	37	34	46
Agree	26	22	25	21	29	30	30	24
Neither agree or disagree	9	12	15	14	6	9	6	7
Disagree	21	25	25	25	21	17	23	16
Disagree strongly	7	17	10	9	6	7	5	5
Don't know	1	*	-	1	1	1	2	2
All agree	62	46	50	51	66	67	64	70
All disagree	28	42	36	34	27	24	28	21
Mean score	0.62	0.10	0.28	0.39	0.70	0.73	0.66	0.92



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5 IPA Social Grade classification

Social grade	Occupation
AB	Higher/Intermediate managerial, administrative or professional
C1	supervisory or clerical, junior managerial, administrative or professional
C2	skilled manual workers
DE	semi/unskilled manual workers, lower grade workers and those on the state pension/benefits



6 Sample Profile

Base All (unweighted)	1255
	%
Married or in a civil partnership (and living with spouse/partner)	54
Living with someone as a couple	8
Widowed	8
Divorced	7
Separated	3
Single and never been married	21
Ethnicity	
White	92
Other	7
Working status	
Employed full time (30+hours)	39
Employed part time (8-29 hours)	12
Self employed full time (30+hours)	6
Self employed part time (8-29 hours)	1
Still at school	2
In full time higher education	5
Retired	25
Not able to work	1
Unemployed and seeking work	2
Looking after the home	3
Not working for other reason	3



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Base All (unweighted)	1255
	%
Gender	
Male	49
Female	51
Age	
16-17	3
18-24	11
25-34	16
35-44	19
45-54	16
55-59	7
60-64	8
65+	20
Parent/Guardian	
Yes	32
No	68
Social Class	
AB	23
C1	33
C2	24
DE	18



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7 Lifestyle questions for GfK NOP poll

Good morning/afternoon/evening. My name is From GfK NOP Research. I am calling on behalf of the Children's Society who are carrying out an important survey looking at matters that affect children in your local community. The survey will take approximately 7 minutes. Everything you say will be treated in the strictest confidence. Is this a convenient time to talk or would you like me to call back later? IF NECESSARY: It is not necessary that you have children to take part in the survey.

QA. First of all, can I check, are you aged 16 or over?

Yes (CONTINUE)

No

QAB. Is there anyone in the household aged 16 or over I can speak with?

Yes

No (THANK AND CLOSE)

QC To start with can you give me your Local authority? We need this to check that we are interviewing in the right area.

QD. What was your age last birthday?

RECORD EXACT AGE

IF REFUSED

Which of the following age bands applies to you? READ OUT

16-17

18-24

25 - 34

35 - 44

45 - 54

55-59

60-64

65+

Refused

QB. Can I just check, are you the parent or guardian of any children aged 16 or under?

Yes

No

Refused



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Lifestyle

ASK ALL

I am now going to ask you questions about children's lifestyles.

Q5 Could you tell me the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Please tell me whether you agree strongly, tend to agree, neither agree nor disagree, tend to disagree or disagree strongly

READ STATEMENT (ROTATE)

- A) Children today are more materialistic than past generations
- B) Children aged 12 should be free to spend their money on whatever they want
- C) Violent video games make children more aggressive
- E) Advertising to children at Christmas puts pressure on parents to spend more than they can really afford?
- F) Children and young people's self esteem is damaged by the negative portrayal of their age group in the media.

- 1 Agree strongly
- 2 Tend to agree
- 3 Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 Tend to disagree
- 5 Disagree strongly
- 6 Don't know
- 7 Refused



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ASK ALL

Q6. How many hours maximum do you think children aged 12 and under should be allowed to spend on the computer or playing computer games and watching TV, including DVDs and videos on a normal school day?

DO NOT READ OUT, PROMPT IF NECESSARY

- None
- Less than an hour
- 1 – 3 hours
- 4 – 6 hours
- 7 or more hours
- Don't know
- Refused

ASK ALL

Q7 I am now going to ask you questions about children's physical health

Could you tell me the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

Please tell me whether you agree strongly, tend to agree, neither agree nor disagree, tend to disagree or disagree strongly

ROTATE

1 The government should ban advertising of unhealthy foods

- 1 Agree strongly
- 2 Tend to agree
- 3 Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 Tend to disagree
- 5 Disagree strongly
- 6 Don't know
- 7 Refused



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DEMOGRAPHICS

ASK ALL

Finally I want to ask you some questions about yourself for classification purposes.

Q9. At present are you..

..married or in a civil partnership (and living with your (*wife/husband/partner*))
living with someone as a couple,
widowed,
divorced,
separated,
single and never been married
Refused

Q11. And how would you describe your ethnic origin? Are you.. READ OUT

White -

British
Irish
Other White background

Black or Black British –

Caribbean
African
Any other Black background

Asian or Asian British -

Indian
Pakistani
Bangladeshi
Any other Asian background

Mixed -

White and Black Caribbean
White and Black African
White and Asian

Chinese

Other ethnic group



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Q12 Which of the following best describes your situation? Would you say you are...

- 1) ...employed full time (30+ hours)
- 2) Employed part time (8-29 hours)
- 3) Self-employed full time (30+ hours)
- 4) Self-employed part time (8-29 hours)
- 5) Still at school
- 6) In full time higher education
- 7) Retired
- 8) Not able to work
- 9) Unemployed and seeking work
- 10) Looking after the home
- 11) Not working for other reason
Refused

Q13 Code Sex

Male
Female

Q14. We need to speak to a broad cross section of people. Could you therefore please tell me the occupation of the chief income earner in your household?

JOB TITLE
JOB DESCRIPTION
INDUSTRY
QUALIFICATIONS
SIZE OF COMPANY
IF MANAGER/SUPERVISOR/SELF-EMPLOYED - NUMBER OF PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE FOR
INTERVIEWER: RECORD SOCIAL GRADE

CODE SOCIAL CLASS

AB
C1
C2
DE

Thank and close