



Teachers' media habits report

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Making Education Relevant

www.edge.co.uk



About Edge

The world is changing fast and education needs to keep up. Edge is an independent, politically impartial education foundation. We want education to be relevant to the twenty-first century. We gather evidence through research and real world projects and partnerships and use this to lead the debate and influence policy and practice.

Edge believes all young people need to be equipped with the skills that today's global, digital economy demands, through a broad and balanced curriculum, high quality training, engaging real world learning and rich relationships between education and employers.

Foreword

I often question whether I'm using the best, quickest and most efficient methods to reach our chosen audience. Are there secrets or shortcuts that I'm not yet aware of? Are others doing something different, new, better?

Communications in the education sector is complex and constantly changing. The education media is an important channel for all communications professionals so Edge commissioned this report to get a better understanding of how teachers and headteachers are engaging and consuming the media so that we could target and engage with them more effectively.

Securing coverage is challenging and in any climate requires careful planning and resource. Although media owners have substantial information about their circulation, these figures alone don't provide insight into whether teachers are engaging. The media has become much more fragmented in recent years so

understanding the role social media and podcasts play in helping teachers to remain informed is also an important consideration.

Targeting the media that your audience consumes means hard won coverage is more likely to achieve your ultimate goals. As an independent foundation we want to know that we are focusing our resources on the right targets.

Increasing the impact of coverage is important for us all. Increasing our joint understanding can help us all to have a greater impact. **We invite you to join the Edge Communications Network to connect, share and support others working in education marketing and communications.**

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A photograph showing a person's hands interacting with a tablet computer on a wooden desk. The tablet screen displays a news website with various articles and images. In the background, there is a white coffee cup on a saucer and some papers. The overall scene is a professional workspace.

Introduction

By producing this report, sharing our findings and showcasing three first-rate case studies we hope that Edge can help to build a community of education communications professionals that are generous, supportive but most of all collaborative.

This report considers new ways teachers are accessing education news, what media are they consuming and how often are they consuming it. It looks at the most popular times of day teachers consume media and breaks the data down by seniority. It identifies the newspapers teachers are reading and the broadcast channels they watch and listen to for news updates. It also touches on what media sources teachers trust most.

The use of social media is studied, including the platforms teachers use regularly for work activities and what they use in their own time. Data is broken down by seniority, gender and region. The report ends by investigating the popularity of podcasts. It looks at the types of podcasts teachers are listening to and digs deeper in to the habits of teachers by age, gender and subject. Each theme that is covered includes a summary of what the information means for communications professionals to help pull out the most important information.

We are delighted to showcase case studies from marketing and communications teams at three leading organisations in the education landscape; Association of Colleges (AoC), Oak National Academy and Skills Builder Partnership.

Methodology

This report is based on a survey undertaken by Teacher Tapp between 2nd and 7th May 2020. The survey asked 6,801 teaching staff about their use of social media, broadcast media, newspapers and podcasts.

The survey was completed by teachers, senior leaders and headteachers in England across state and private schools. There were more than 6500 respondents ranging from 6563 to 6801.

Participants were asked a series of questions about their use of media sources both in their work-related activities and personal activities. Responses were indicated based on a selection of choices.



Accessing education news

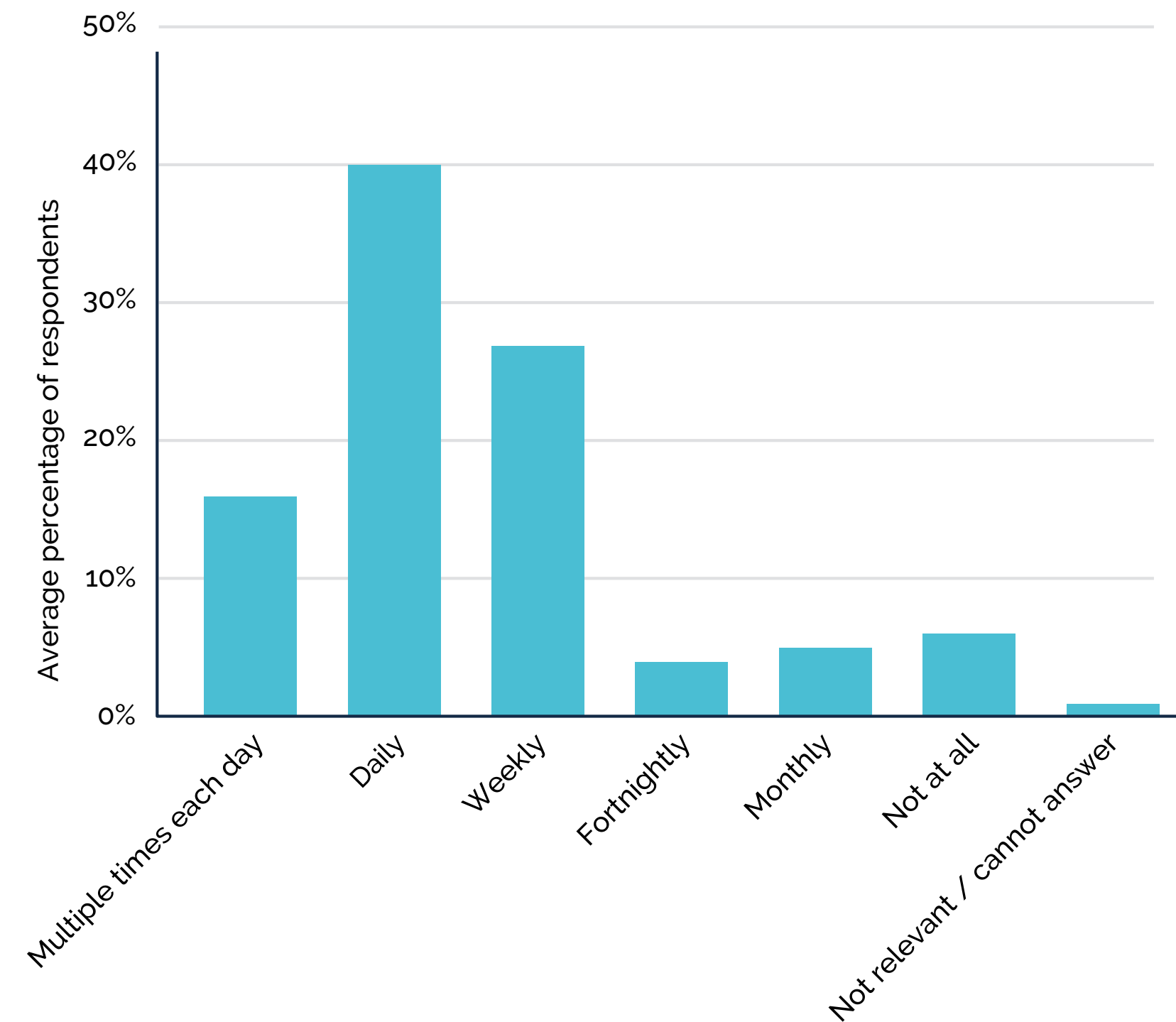


How many teachers access education news and how often?

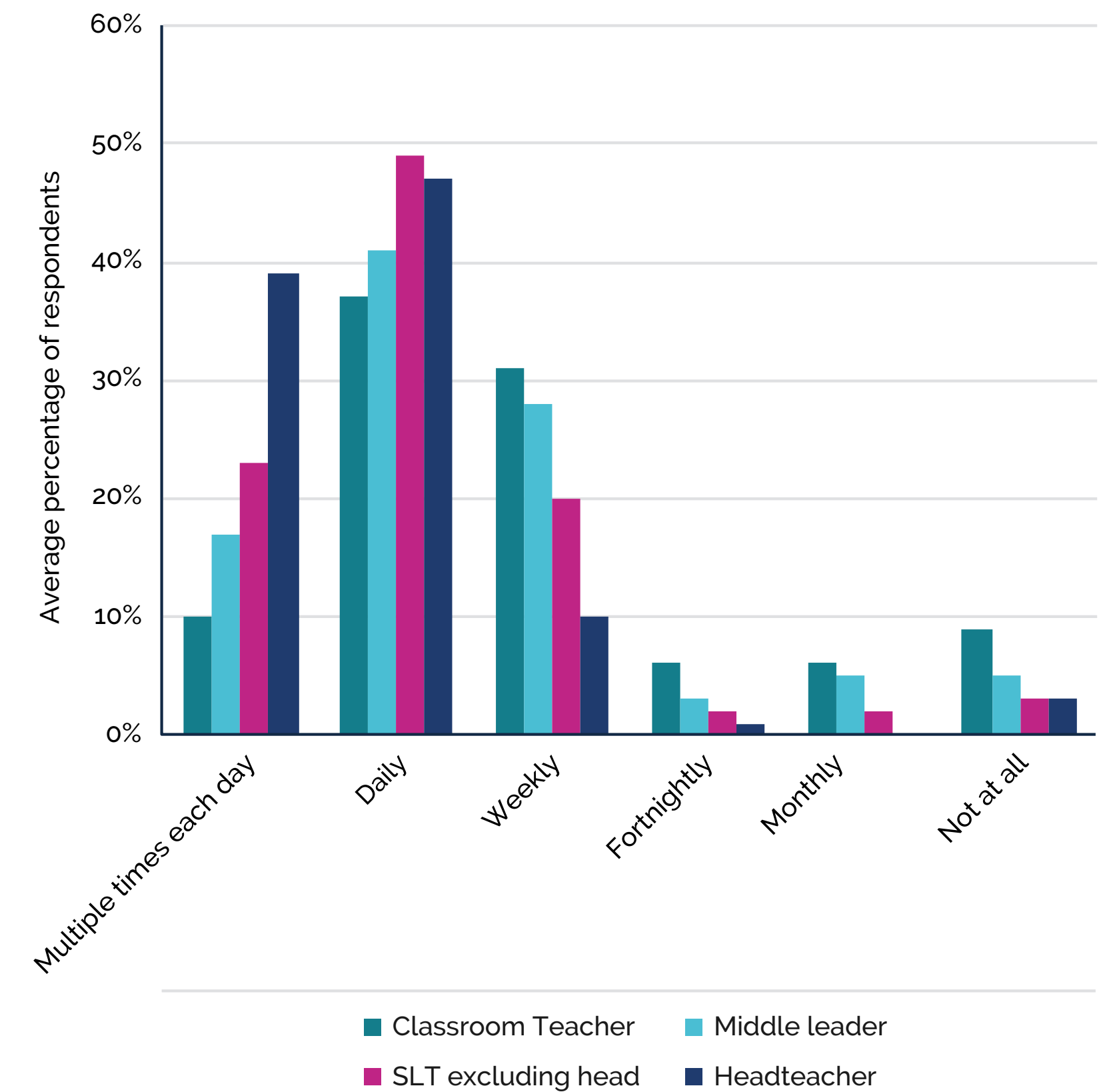
Virtually all teachers (92%) surveyed said that they accessed education news. Of these, 83% access education news weekly with more than half consuming education news daily.

Differences can be seen according to seniority. 39% of headteachers replied with 'multiple times a day', compared to just 10% of classroom teachers. Classroom teachers were more likely to respond with 'weekly' than other seniority groups – just 10% of headteachers provided this response.

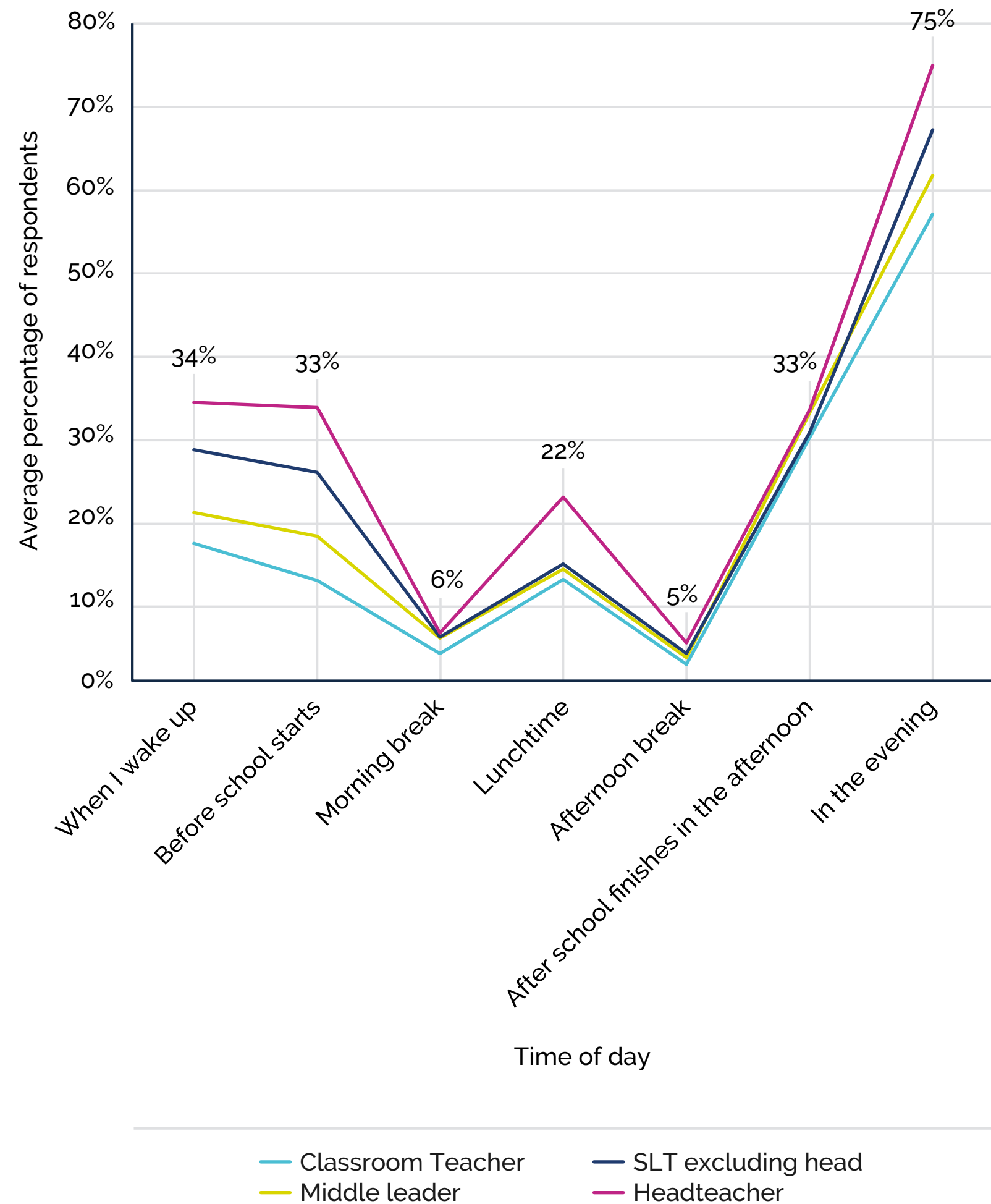
Average frequency teachers access education news



How many teachers access education news and how often



Time spent accessing education news by seniority

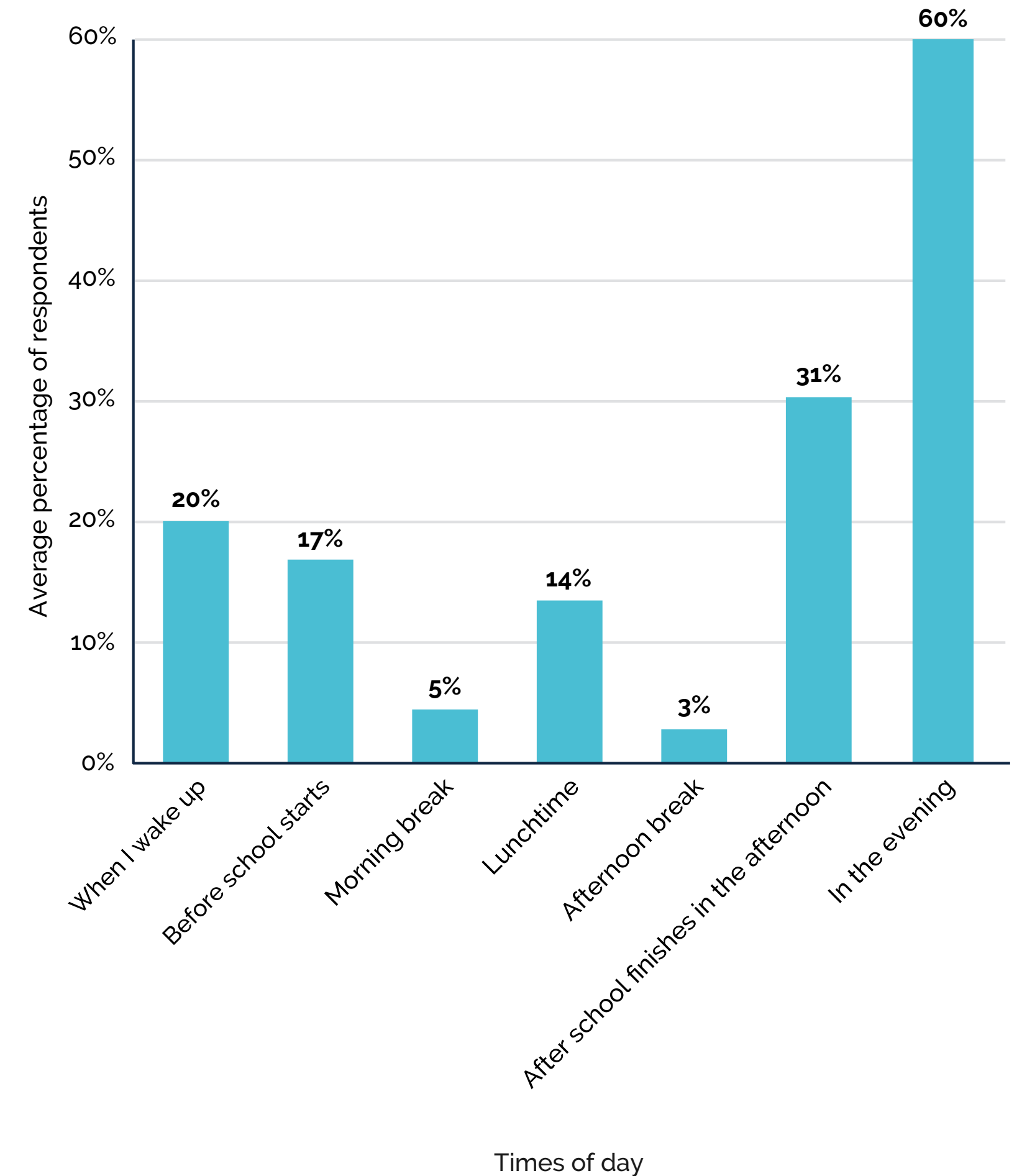


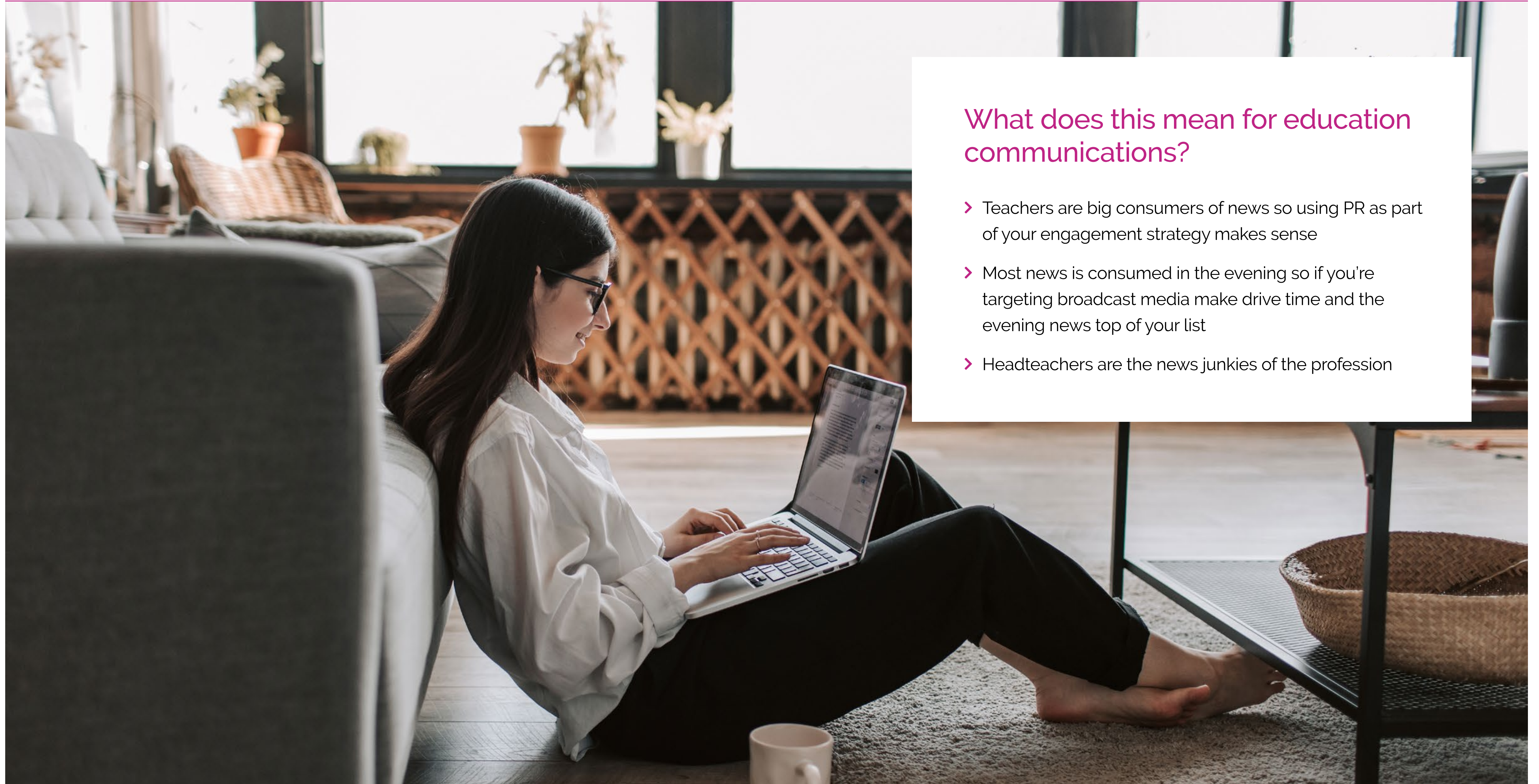
When do teachers access education news?

SLT and headteachers are more likely to access the news when they wake up (34%) or before school starts (33%). However, they're also most likely to access news again in the evening (75%). Less experienced and younger teachers are more likely to access education news after school finishes in the afternoon or in the evening

Interestingly, English teachers access education news more often than other subject specialisms. In terms of age, those in their 50s and over are more likely to access the news in the evening (67%) compared to 51% of those in their 20s.

Times of day teachers access education news





What does this mean for education communications?

- › Teachers are big consumers of news so using PR as part of your engagement strategy makes sense
- › Most news is consumed in the evening so if you're targeting broadcast media make drive time and the evening news top of your list
- › Headteachers are the news junkies of the profession



Reading national newspapers



What newspapers do teachers read?

Key findings about The Guardian/Observer

- 60% of English teachers read it and it is also popular in humanities (56%) and languages teachers (54%)
- It is less popular with primary teachers (38%)
- Men are more likely to read The Guardian (51%) compared to women (41%)
- Readership of The Guardian increases with age; 37% of those in their 20s read The Guardian, compared to 51% of those over 50

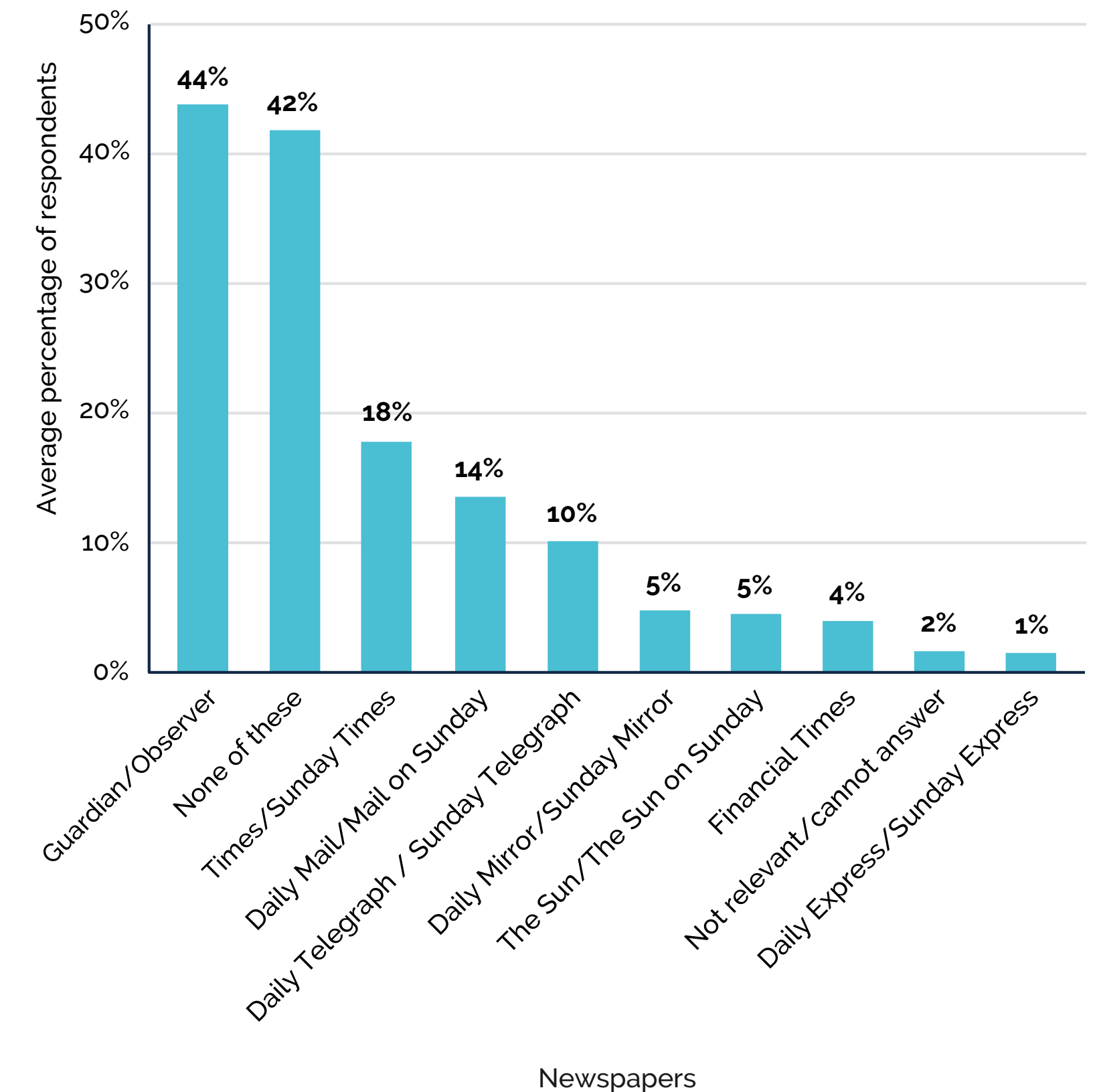
Key findings about The Times/Sunday Times

- Read by more teachers in the private sector (28%) than the state sector (16%)
- Teachers in schools rated Outstanding are more likely (18%) to read these
- Read most by senior leadership teams (23%) and Headteachers (21%)
- Title most likely to be read by the over 50s (22%)

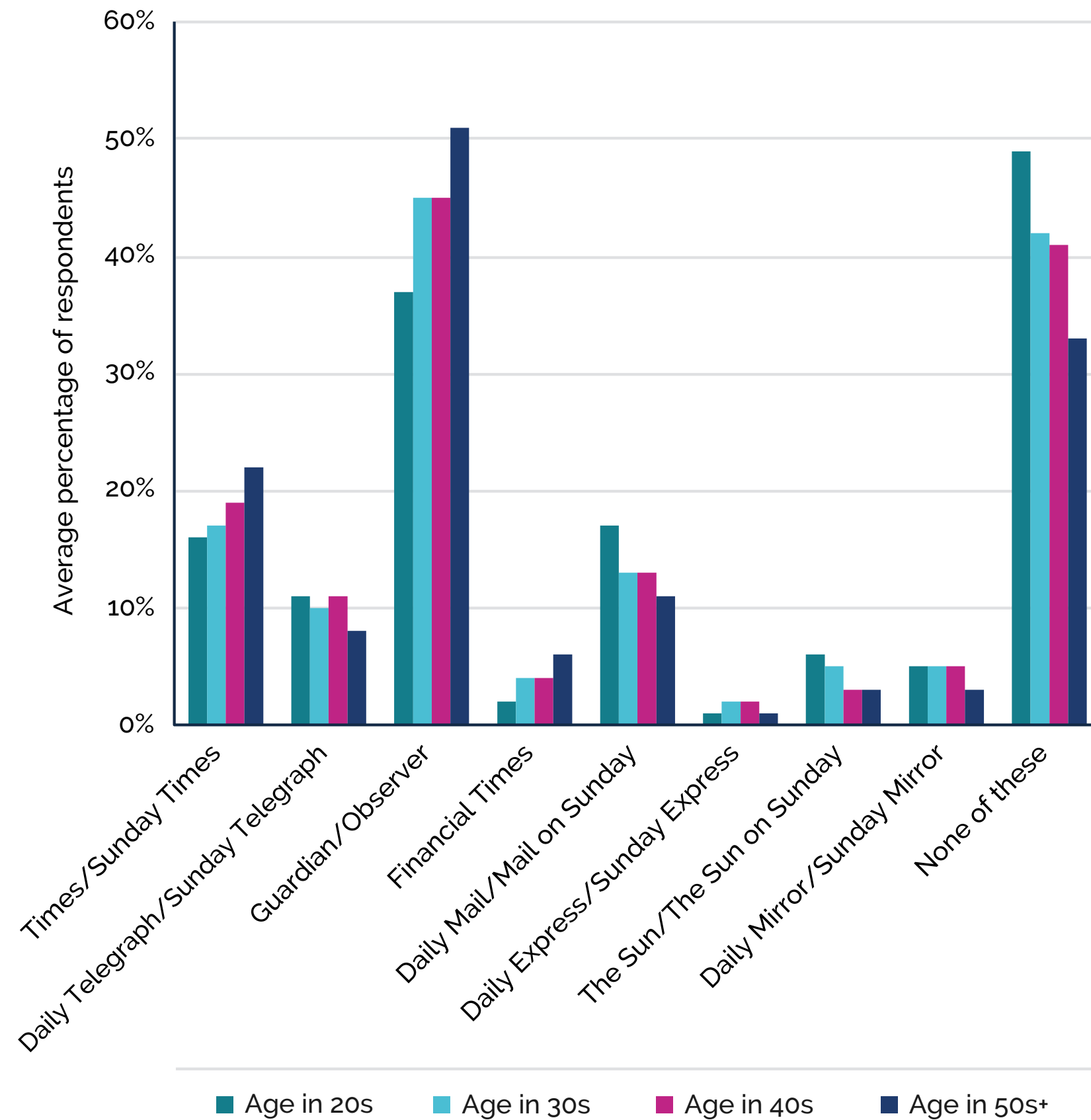
Key findings about The Mail/Mail on Sunday

- More likely to be read by women than men (16% vs 8%)
- More primary school teachers read the Mail/Mail on Sunday than secondary
- Regionally it is most popular in the West Midlands (18%) and the North East (17%)

Newspapers teachers read (in print or online) in the past week



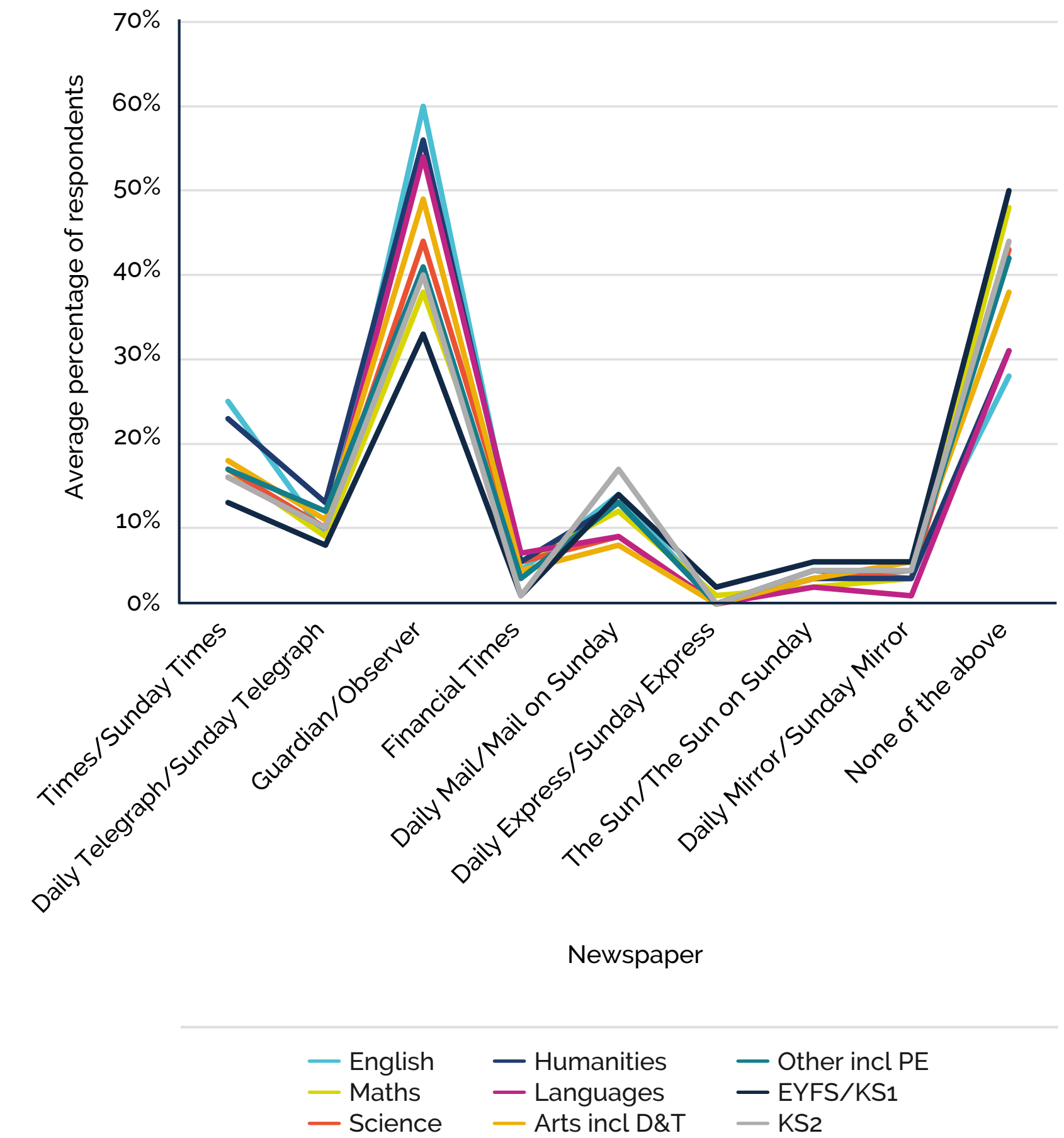
Newspaper popularity by teacher age

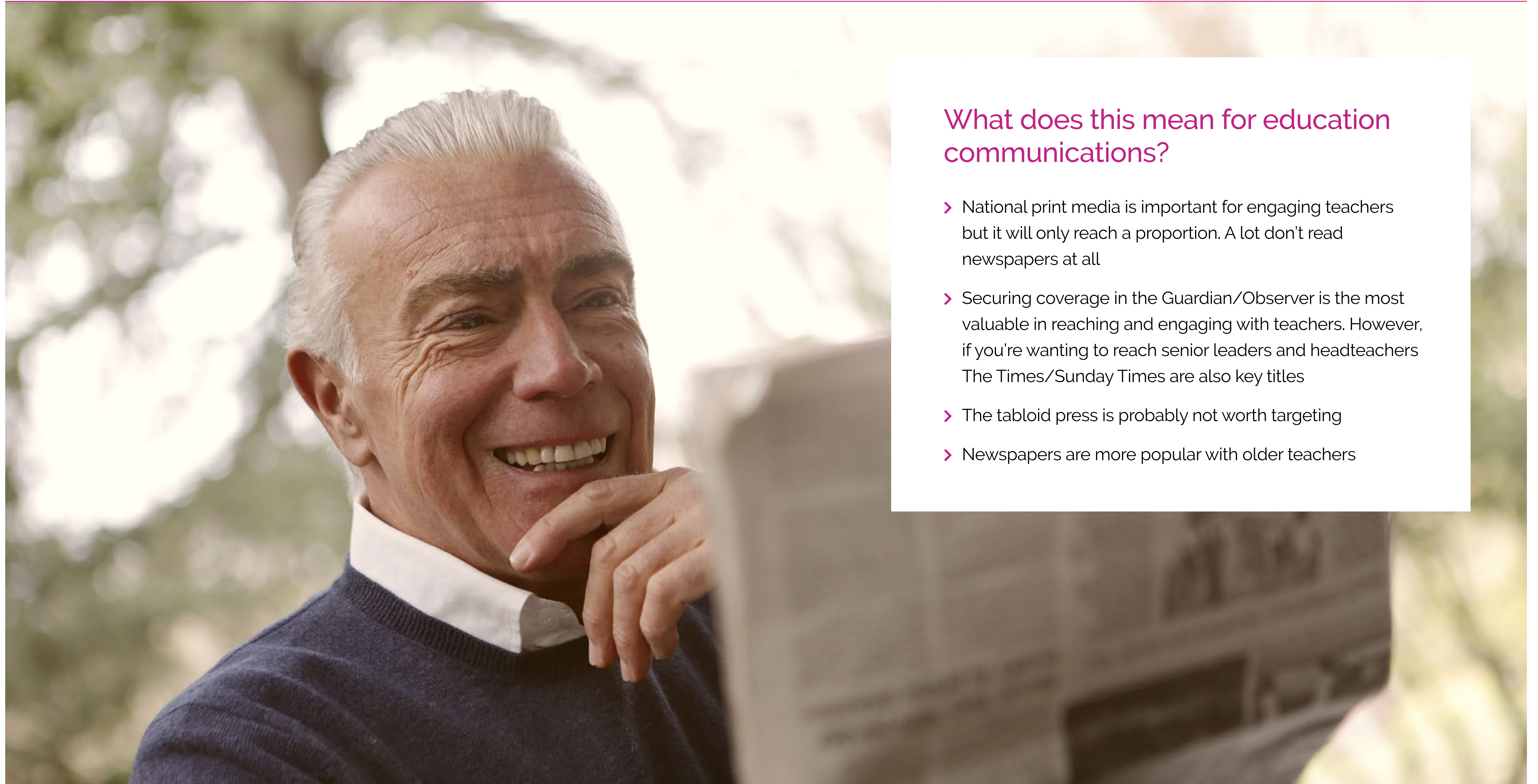


Useful to know

- > 42% of teachers don't read any newspaper - print or online - and this increases to 49% with those aged 20-29 years
- > EYFS/KS1 teachers (50%) and maths teachers are least likely (48%) to read a newspaper
- > English teachers are most likely (only 28% don't read a paper)
- > More than half (52%) teachers in the East Midlands don't read a paper
- > The red tops are read by very few teachers and neither is the Financial Times
- > The Daily Telegraph is not read by many teachers but readership is higher in the private sector

Popularity of newspaper by teacher subject





What does this mean for education communications?

- › National print media is important for engaging teachers but it will only reach a proportion. A lot don't read newspapers at all
- › Securing coverage in the Guardian/Observer is the most valuable in reaching and engaging with teachers. However, if you're wanting to reach senior leaders and headteachers The Times/Sunday Times are also key titles
- › The tabloid press is probably not worth targeting
- › Newspapers are more popular with older teachers



Reading education newspapers and magazines



Which education newspapers and magazines do teachers read?

Tes dominates the education sector for teachers and is read by almost half of the profession. Schools Week follows some way behind and other sector media have less penetration.

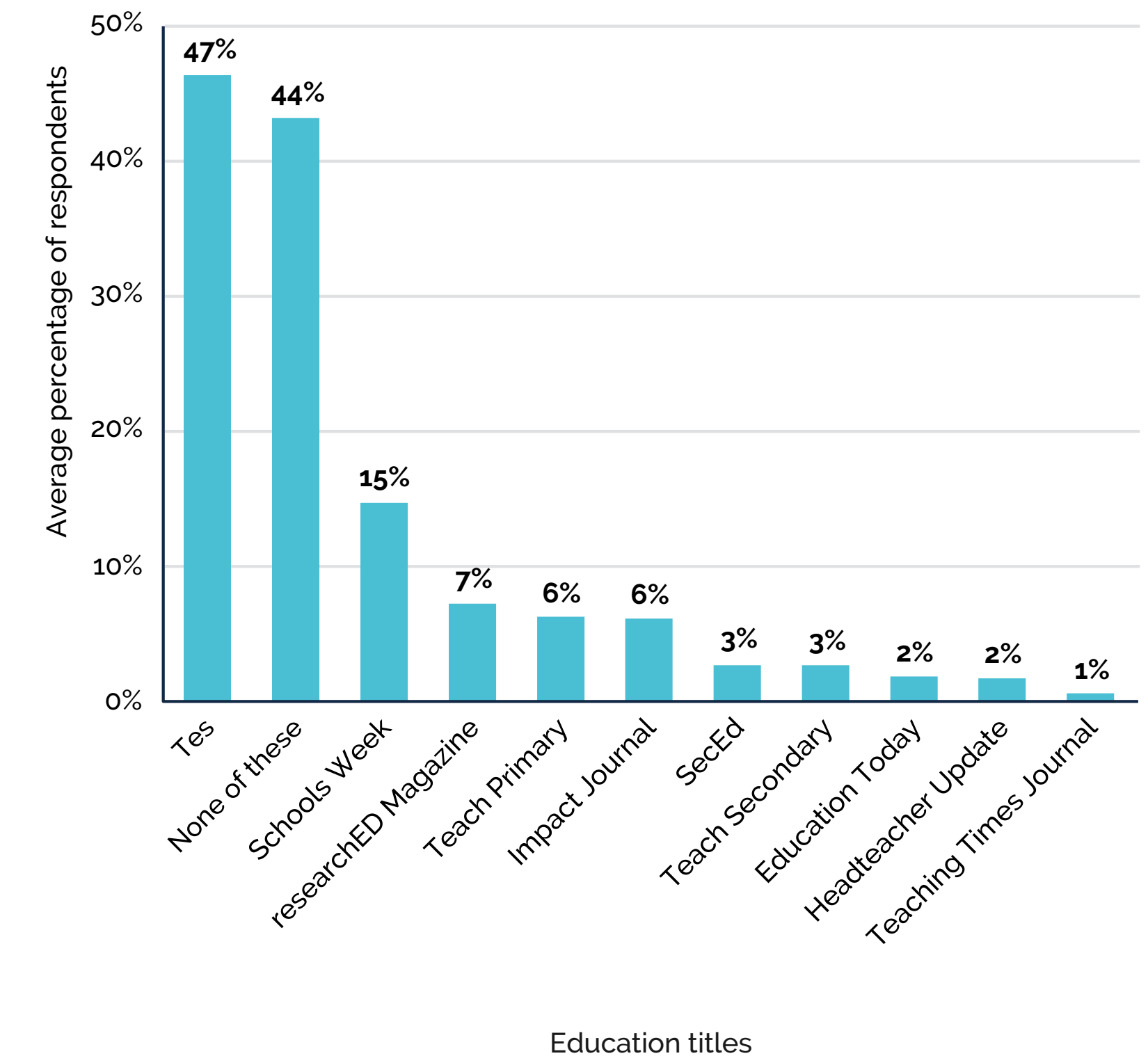
Differences in responses can be seen according to seniority. Readership of Tes increases with seniority, with 56% of headteachers reading this compared to 42% of classroom teachers. Schools Week is also most likely to be read by headteachers (39%) and other SLT (27%).

Other sector media – still significant

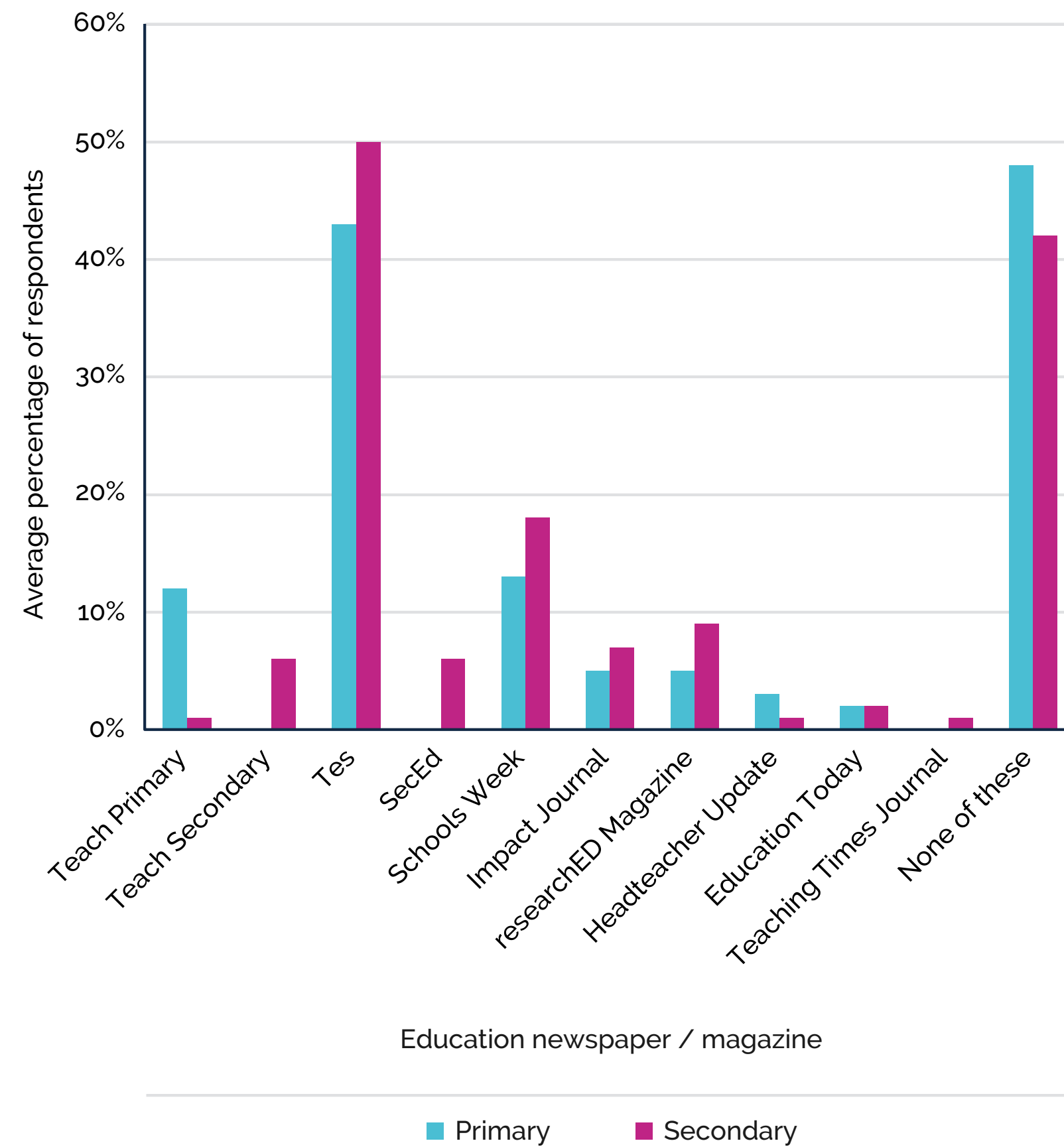
Although they have smaller penetration, other sector media still cumulatively reach 30% of the workforce. Some publications are aimed specifically at primary or secondary, e.g. Teach Primary. Where this is the case penetration with the key audience increases. For example:

- Teach Primary is read by 12% of primary teachers, 10% of EYFS/KS1 and 14% of KS2 teachers read the publication
- Headteacher Update is aimed at primary headteachers and 24% read the publication

Most read education titles (in print or online) in the past month



Education newspaper and magazines read by primary and secondary teachers



Findings about Tes:

- › Stronger in secondary than primary (similar to national media)
- › Slightly higher readership in private than state-funded
- › Tes is most popular in the north east
- › Popular across age and experience
- › Amongst subject teachers MFL teachers are most likely to read it
- › Those teaching in EYFS or KS1 are least likely to read (39%)



What does this mean for education communications?

- Tes should be the key title when looking to engage with the sector
- Schools Week is also important and trusted by headteachers
- When planning a campaign other sector media should still be part of the mix as they cumulatively reach almost a third of teachers
- Other sector media may have a smaller penetration but can help to reach specific audiences
- Important to note that 44% don't read any sector media, meaning that national and local media continue to be important in engaging teachers



Broadcast media for education news



Which broadcast media do teachers watch or listen to for education news and current affairs?

BBC TV national news is the most popular media channel for teachers and dominates consumption. Other national news providers collectively account for 41% which is quite significant.

In radio the picture is similar and BBC Radio 4 is the most popular. Local media are also consumed by some teachers with the BBC also being most popular.

There is little difference across the regions, school type, phase, or by sex.

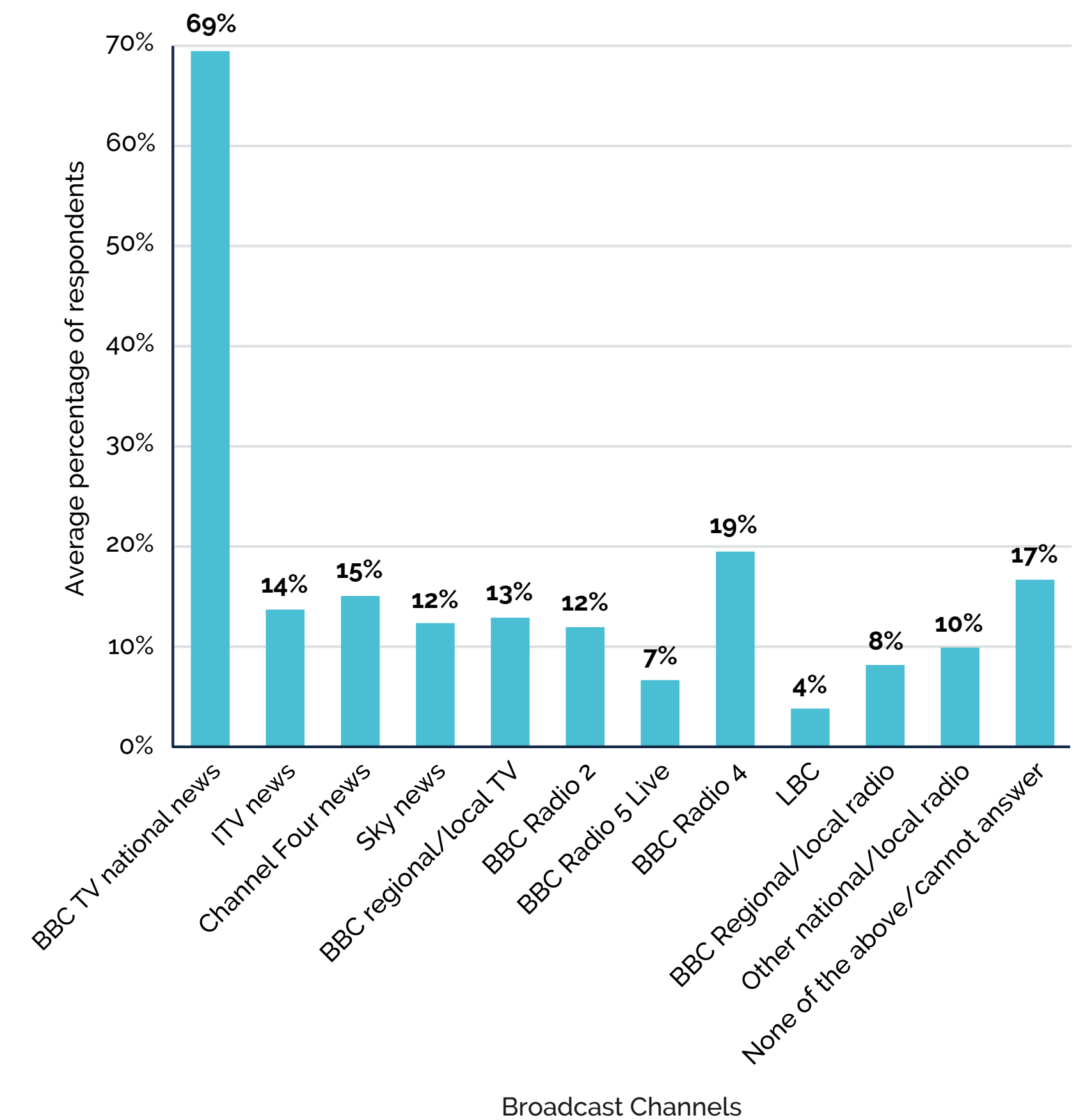
Findings about BBC TV news consumption

- SLT and headteachers are more likely to watch BBC TV news
- Older or more experienced teachers are more likely to watch BBC TV news
- Art teachers and design & technology teachers are most likely (77%) to watch BBC TV news

BBC Radio 4

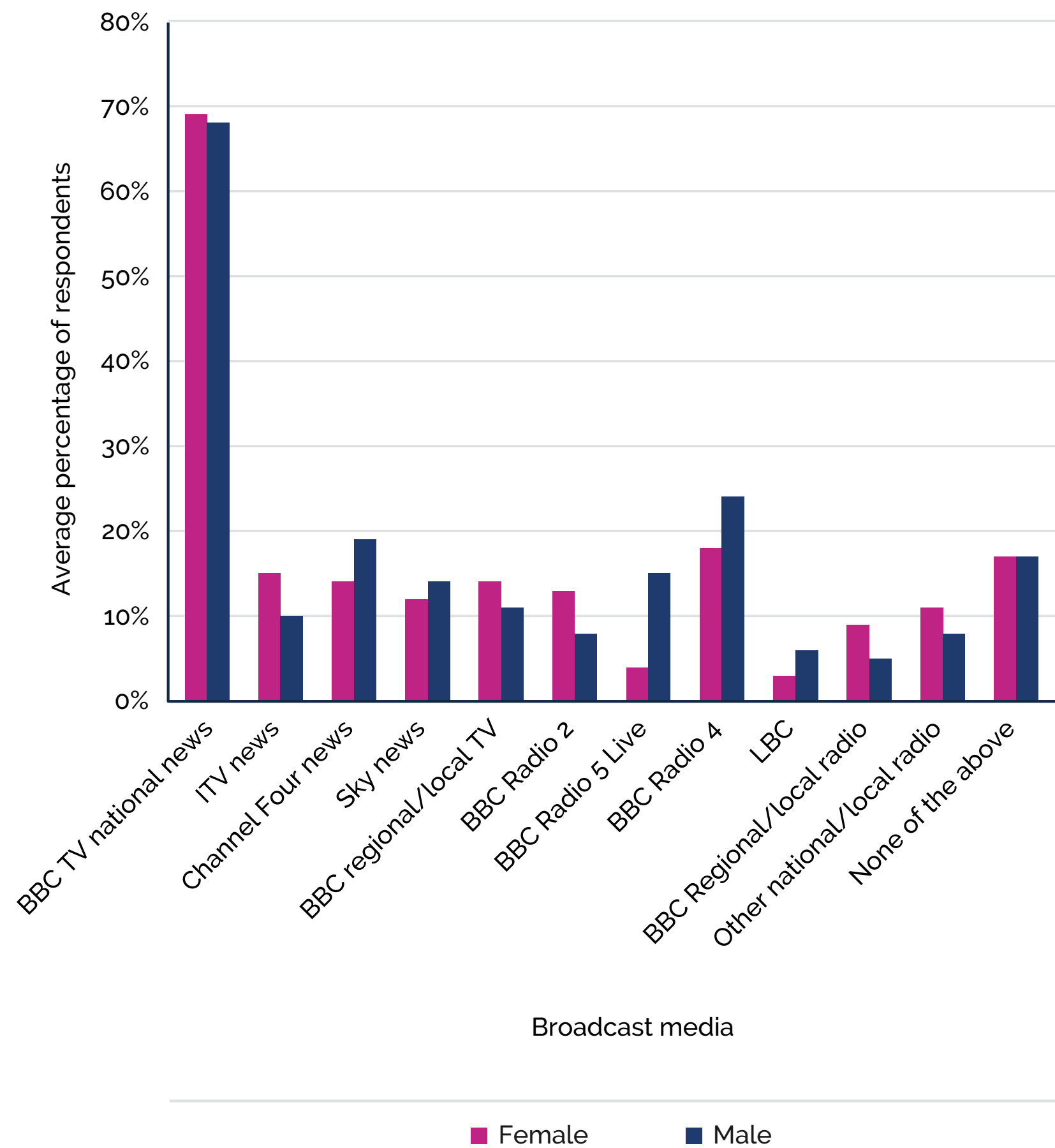
- More in secondary than primary listen, and more in private than state-funded schools
- Those at more affluent schools (based on FSM %) are more likely to listen (22%)
- Teachers in London are more likely to listen
- SLT and headteachers are more likely to listen
- English teachers are most likely to listen in terms of specialisms

Broadcast media channels watched or listened to for education news and current affairs (in an average week)



Broadcast media consumption amongst male and female teachers

More males than females listen to BBC Radio 4 and BBC Radio 5 Live. This switches in the case of BBC Radio 2 and local radio where females are more likely to listen.



What does this mean for education communications?

- › When looking to secure broadcast news coverage the focus should be on BBC TV News and BBC Radio 4
- › The BBC national news channel is challenging to secure so target the other national broadcasters too as together, they represent a substantial chunk of the audience
- › Don't forget about regional and local as teachers also tune in





Trust in the media

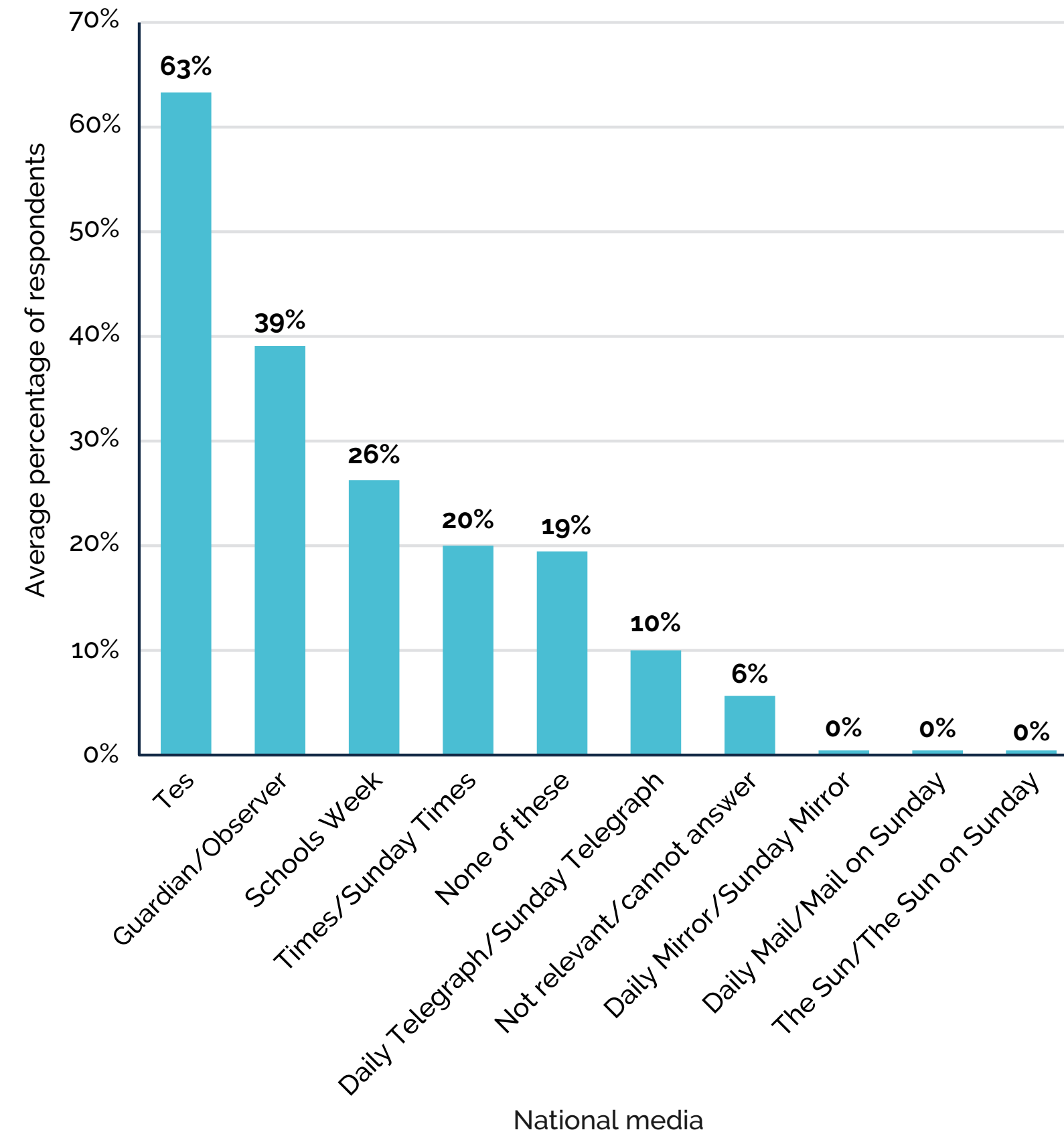


Which media news sources are most trusted by teachers?

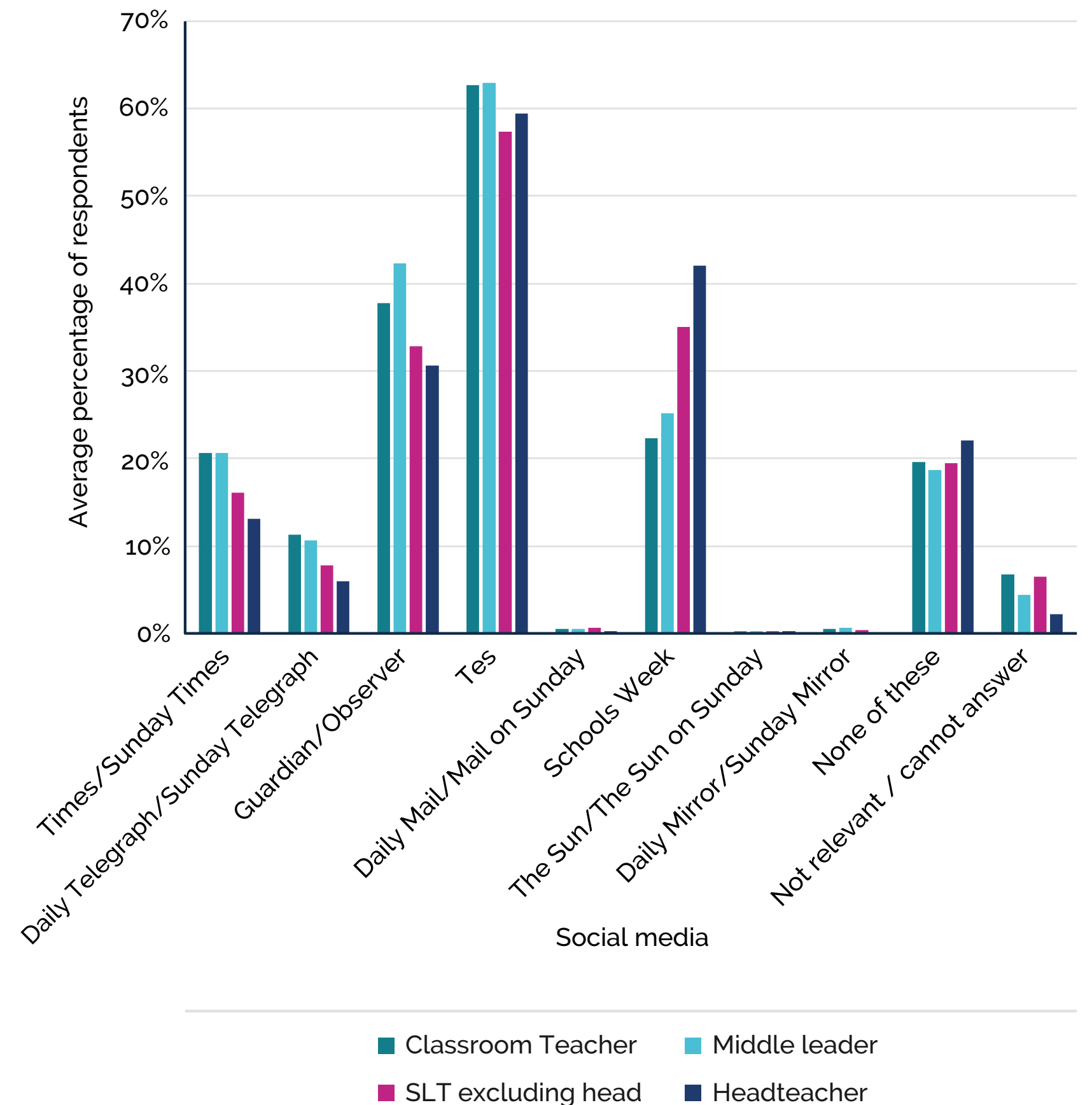
Tes ranks the most trustworthy with teachers with The Guardian coming in second and Schools Week in third place. Given other findings this is not surprising. However, a significant number of teachers indicated they didn't trust any of the sources listed (19%).

Responses differ most according to school region. London-based teachers are more likely to think of media outlets as trustworthy, with 67% of them saying Tes is trusted, and 51% of them saying the same for The Guardian. Teachers based in the North West are least likely to see media outlets as trustworthy, with only 56% of respondents approving of Tes and 33% seeing The Guardian as trustworthy.

Most trusted source for education news



Most trusted source by seniority



Key findings about the Tes

- › Trusted most in London (67%)
- › Trust increases with age, however not with seniority. Classroom teachers and middle leaders trust the Tes more than SLT and headteachers
- › EYFS, KS1 & KS2 teachers trust the Tes less than other subject areas

Key findings about The Guardian

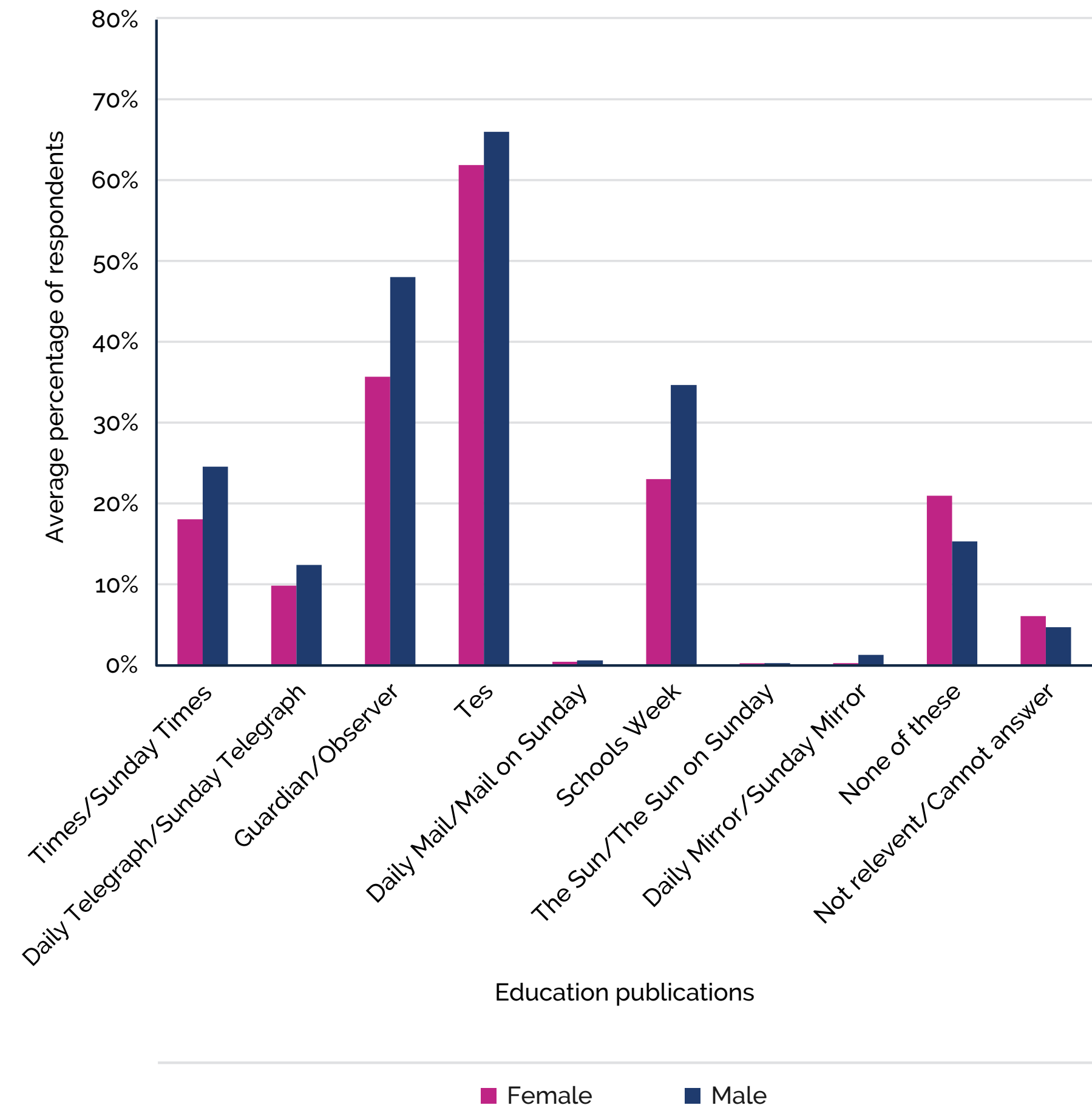
- › Trusted more in secondary (44%) than primary (34%)
- › 36% of females see the Guardian/Observer as trusted, compared to 48% of males
- › Trusted most in London (51%) and least in the West Midlands and Yorkshire & Humberside (both 33%)
- › English teachers trust it most (51%) in terms of specialism
- › Middle leaders trust it most (43%) and headteachers least (31%)

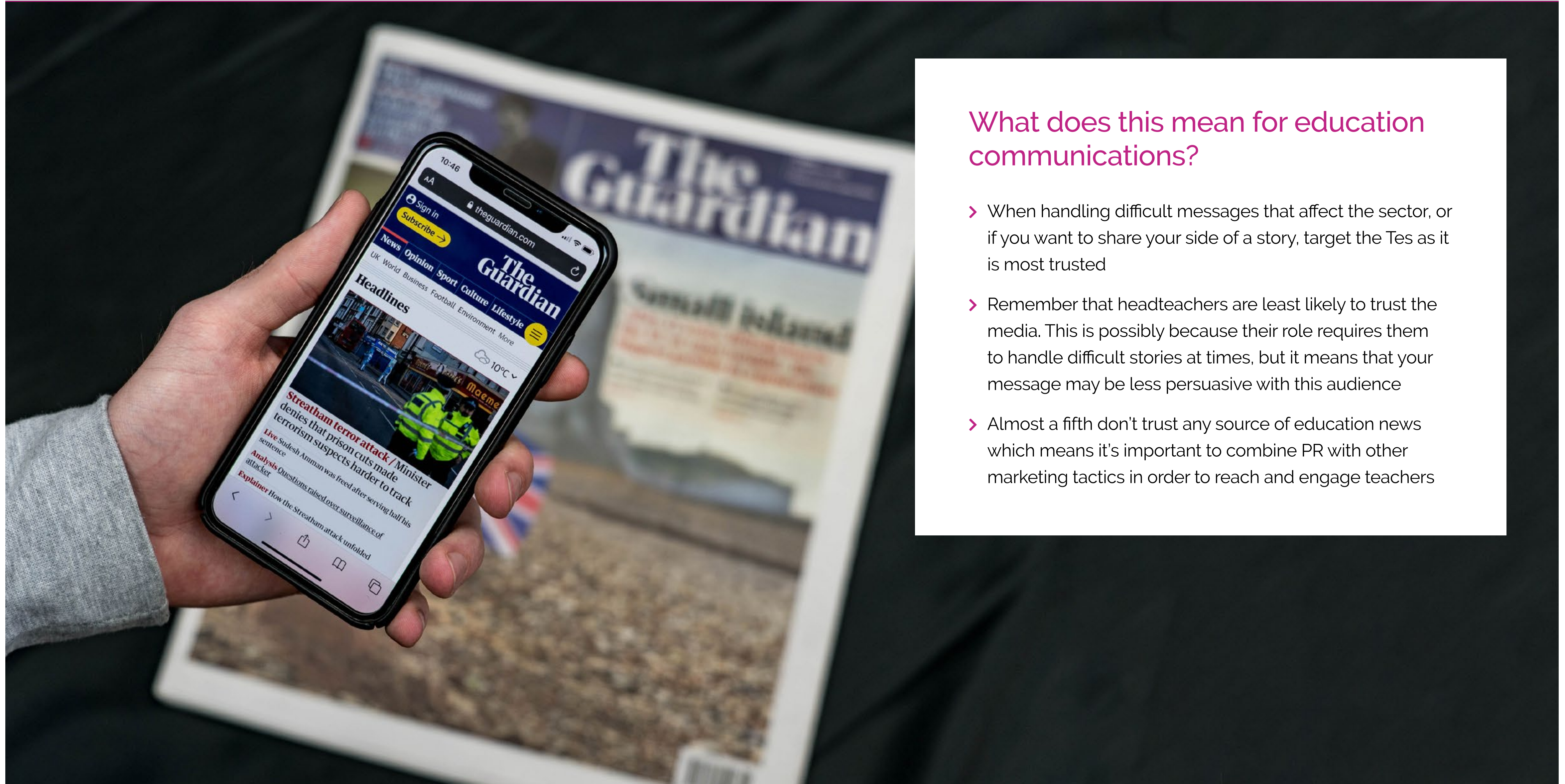
Key findings about Schools Week

- › Trusted more in secondary (30%) than primary (23%)
- › Trusted more in the state sector (27%) than the private sector (21%)
- › Teachers at Outstanding schools are more likely to trust it (31%)
- › MATs and academies are more likely to trust it than LA schools
- › Trust is highest in the North East (37%) and London (32%)
- › More males (34%) than females (23%) trust Schools Week

In general males trust the media more than females

Most trusted source by gender





What does this mean for education communications?

- When handling difficult messages that affect the sector, or if you want to share your side of a story, target the Tes as it is most trusted
- Remember that headteachers are least likely to trust the media. This is possibly because their role requires them to handle difficult stories at times, but it means that your message may be less persuasive with this audience
- Almost a fifth don't trust any source of education news which means it's important to combine PR with other marketing tactics in order to reach and engage teachers



Use of social media

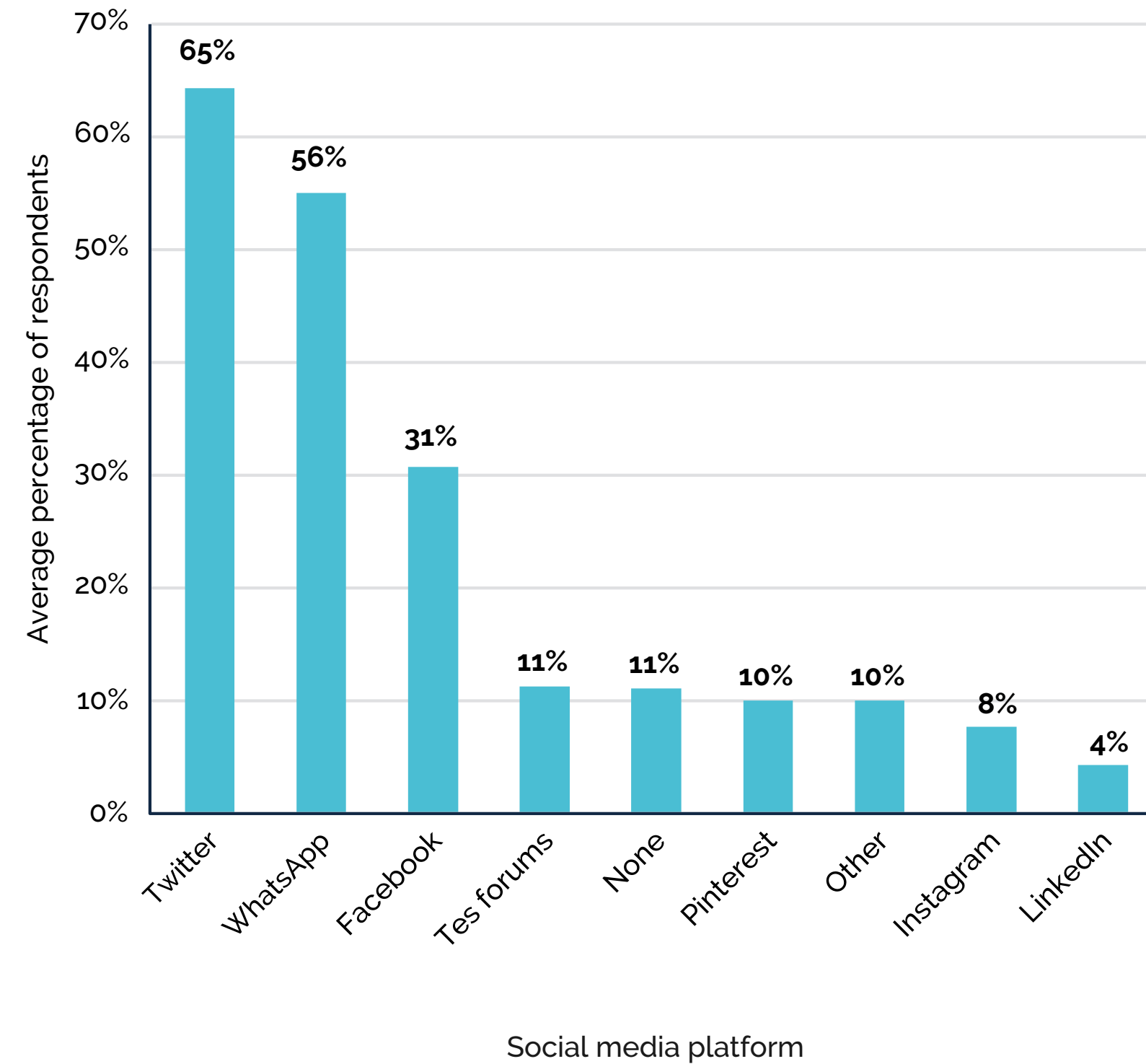


Which of the following social media platforms do teachers use regularly for work related activities?

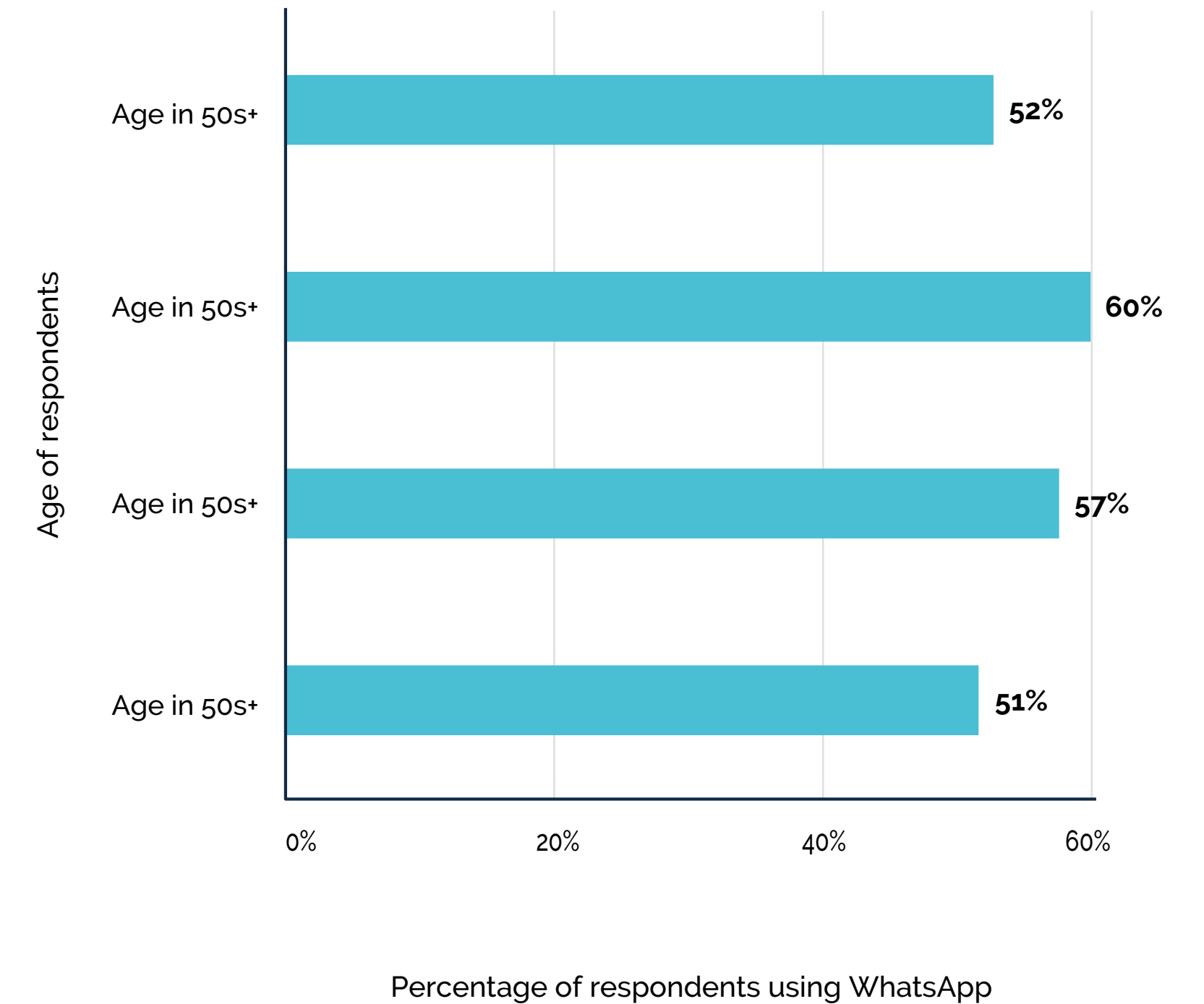
Twitter and WhatsApp are the key social media platforms for teachers when they are in 'work mode'. Facebook usage is much lower for teachers using social media in work mode.

Those in their 40s use WhatsApp the most (60%) whilst those in their 20s use it the least (51%).

Most used social media platform (for work related activities)



WhatsApp use by age



Use of social media

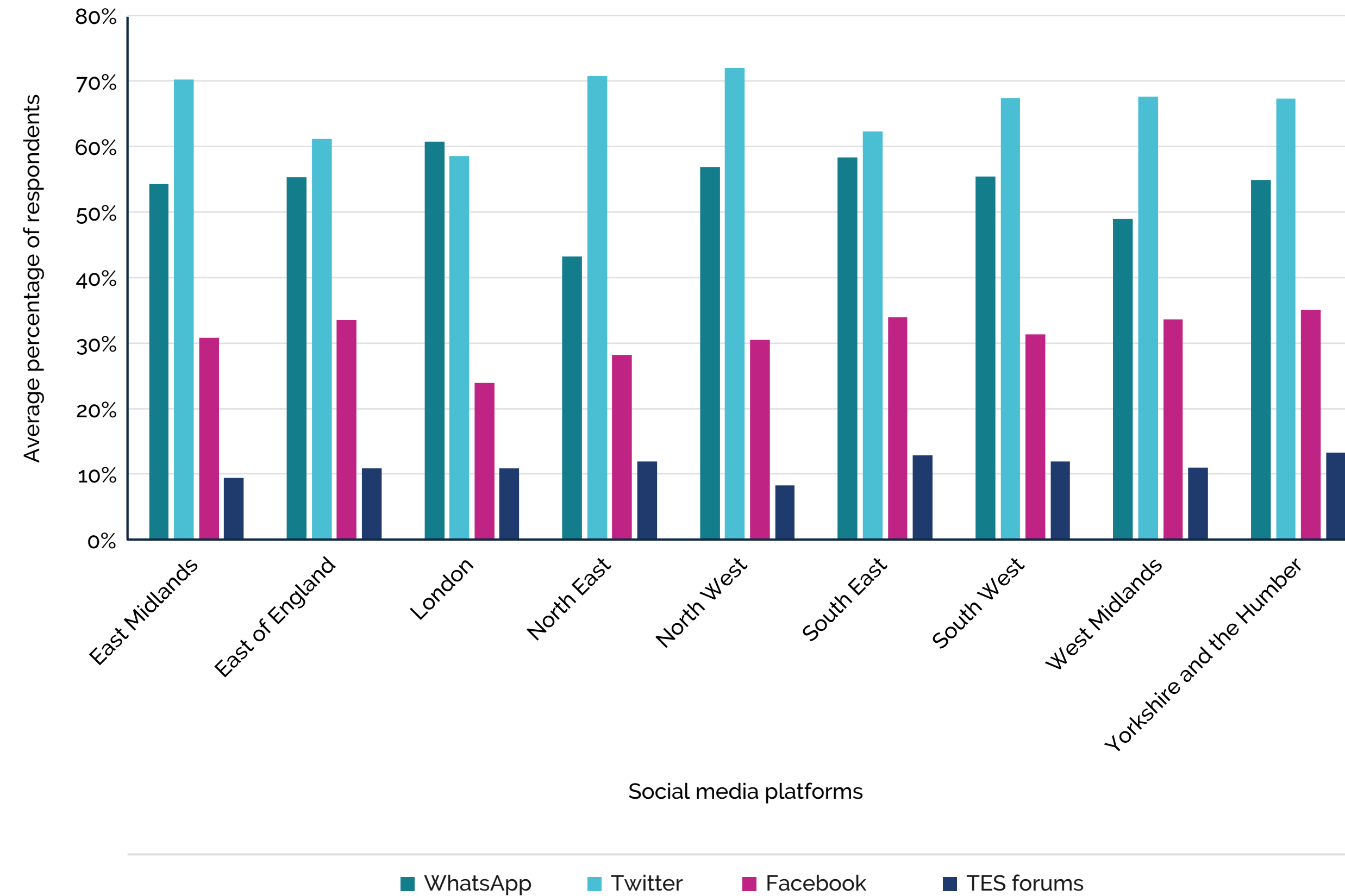
Notable variations are seen between school regions.

London-based teachers use Facebook the least (24%), whilst those in Yorkshire and the Humber use Facebook the most (35%). Londoners also use Twitter the least (59%) but use WhatsApp the most (61%). Those in the North East use WhatsApp the least (43%).

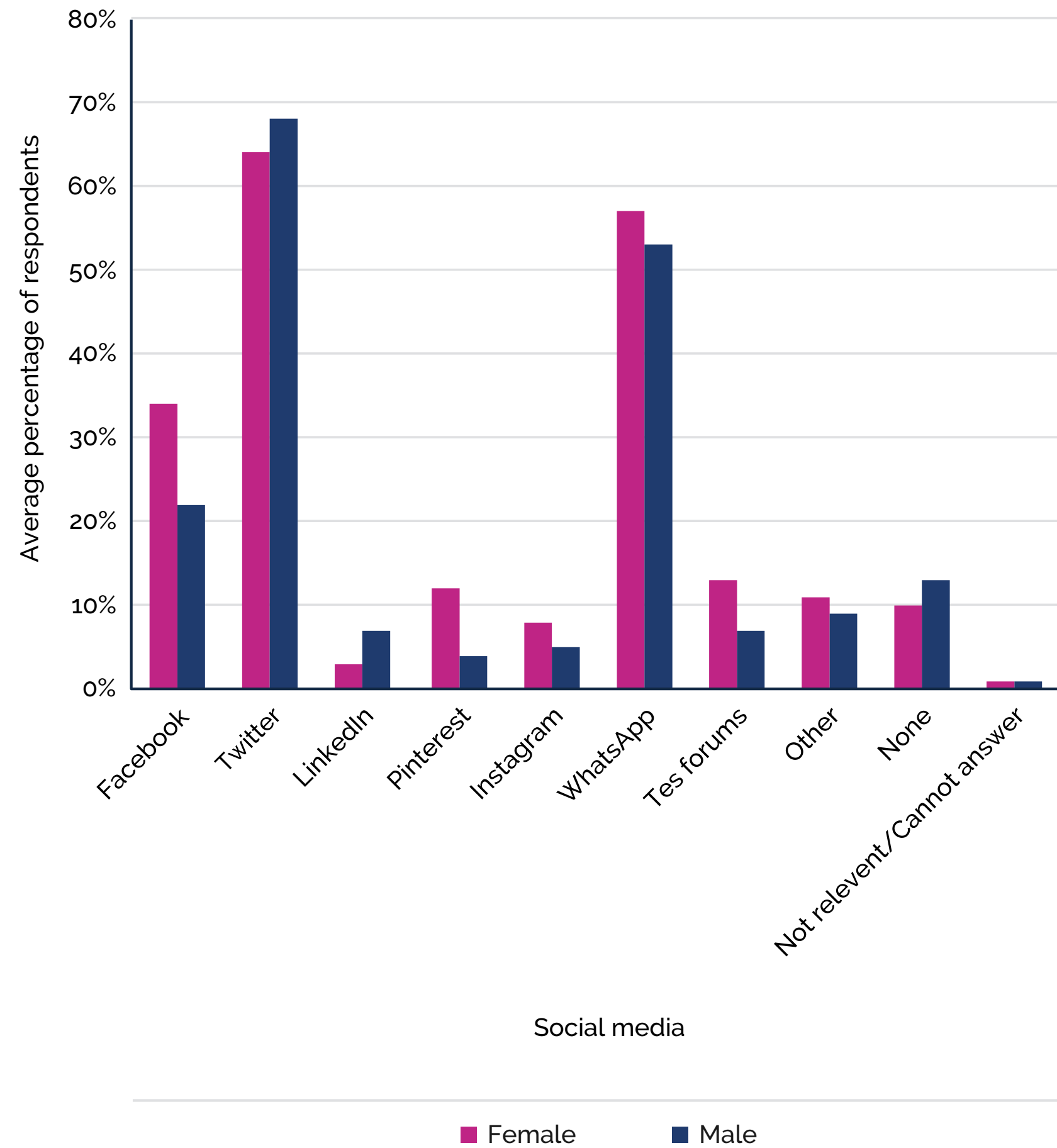
Use of social media is lower in London than elsewhere apart from WhatsApp where London teachers use it the most.

Twitter is used most in the NE, NW, and East Midlands

Social media used for work related activities by region



Social media use according to gender



Usage of social media is slightly higher amongst women apart from Twitter where this is reversed.

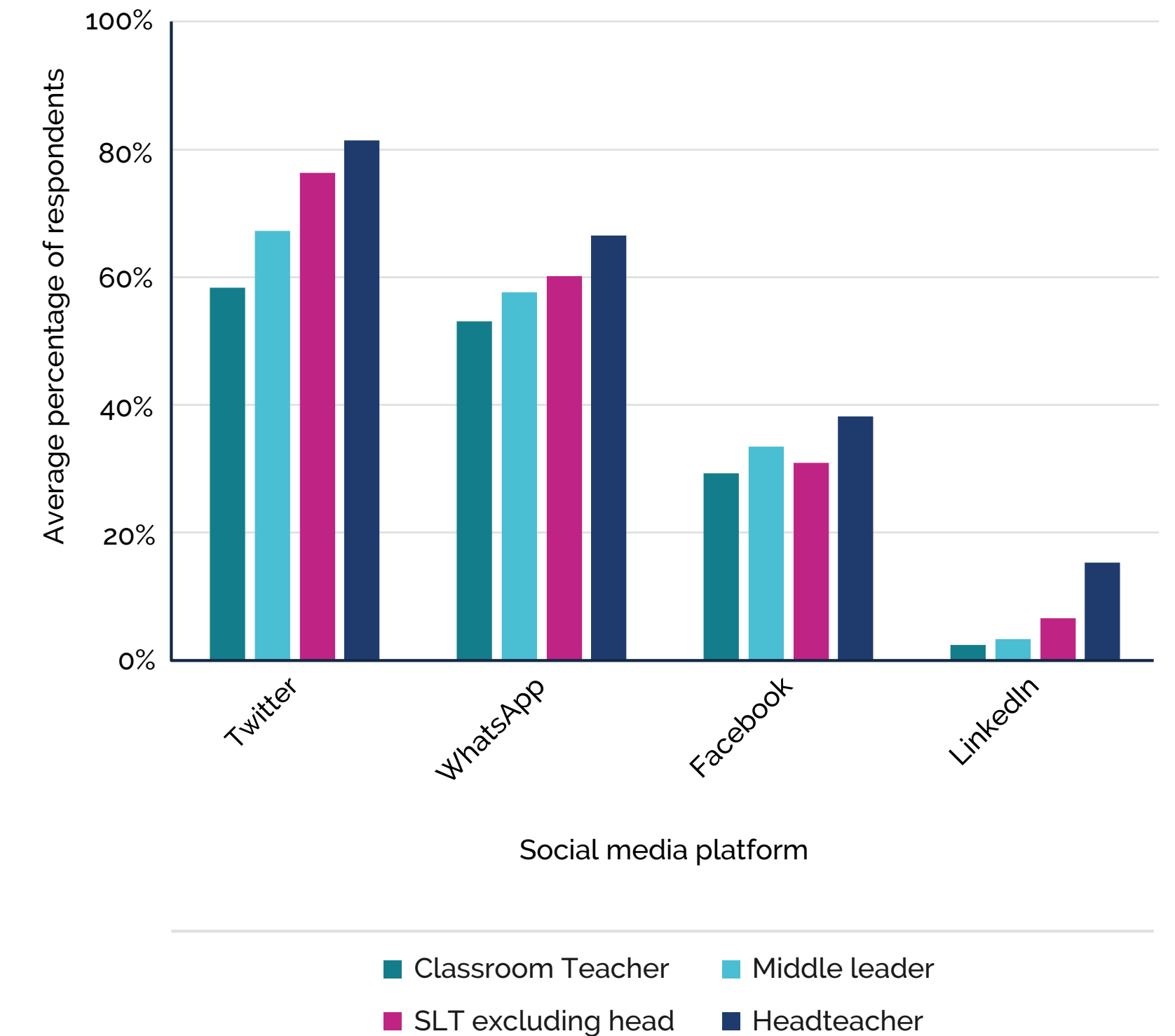
LinkedIn is the least popular social media platform for work use. However usage is slightly higher for headteachers and for men.

More primary teachers use Pinterest (17%) although overall this is still a less popular social media platform.

Social media use also differs by gender, particularly Facebook, Pinterest and Tes Forums. Three times as many women use Pinterest than men (12% vs 4%) and women are also more likely to use Facebook (34% vs 22%).

Seniority also affects usage. Whilst only 58% of classroom teachers use Twitter, 81% of headteachers use it. Headteachers are also more likely to use Facebook (38%) and WhatsApp (67%) and only 3% don't use social media. Classroom teachers are least likely to use Facebook (29%) and WhatsApp (53%). 13% of classroom teachers do not use social media at all for work related activities.

Social media use according to seniority



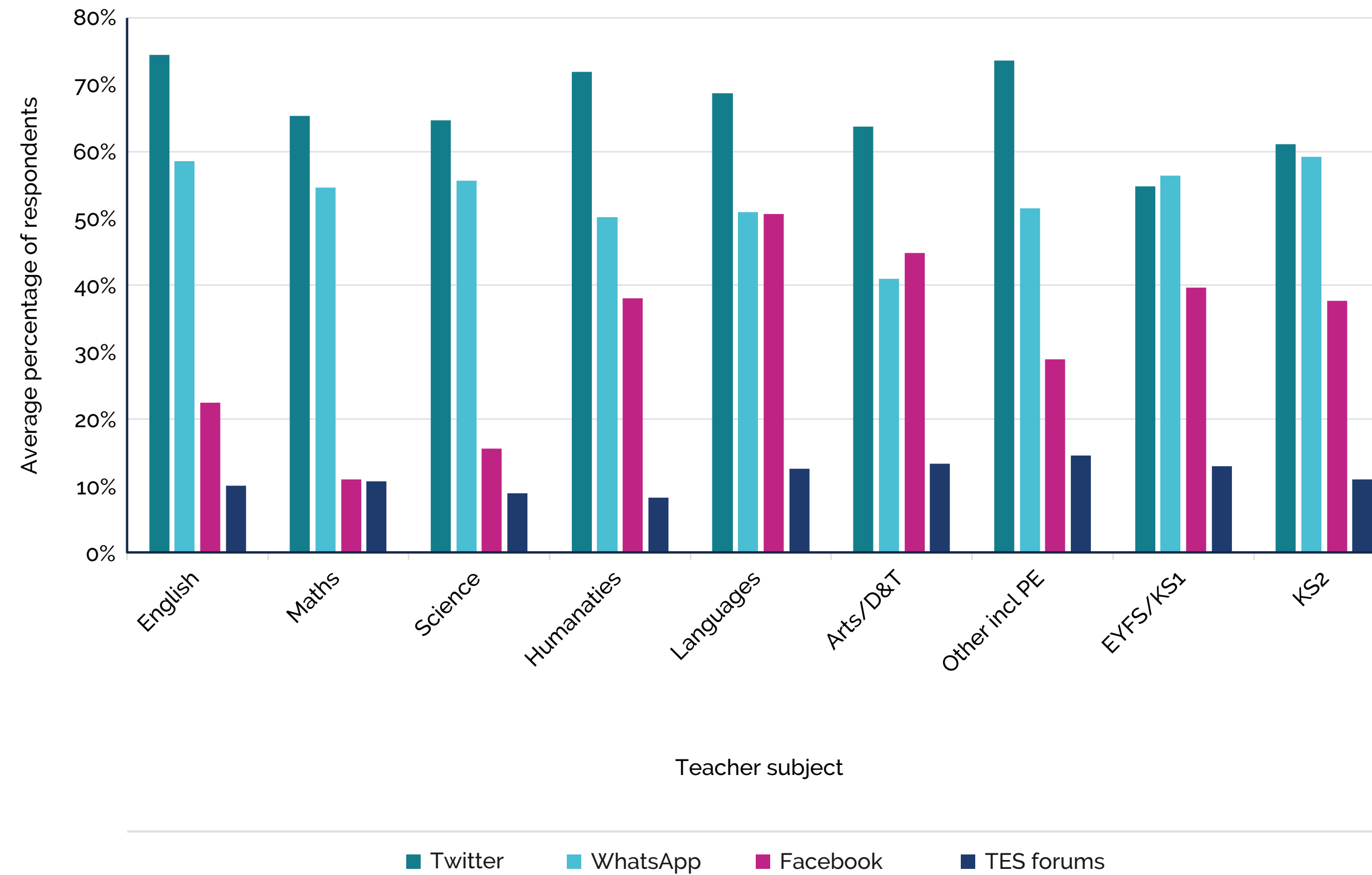
Only 3% of headteachers *don't* use social media in their work.

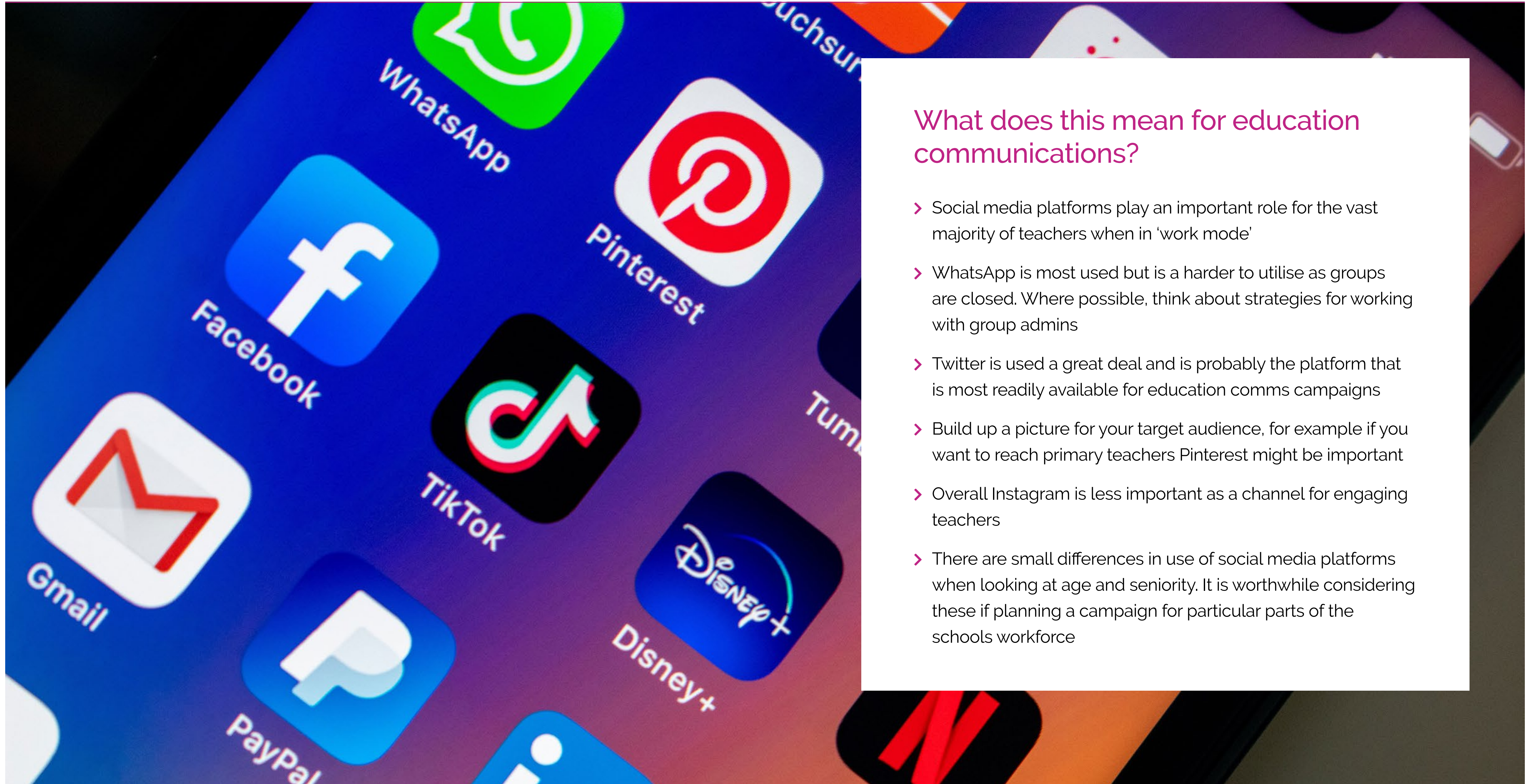
Teacher subjects also produce some key differences.

Language teachers are most likely to use Facebook (51%) whilst Maths teachers are least likely (11%). Art inc. D&T are least likely to use WhatsApp (41%) whilst KS2 teachers are most likely (59%).

EYFS/KS1 use Pinterest the most (27%), whilst Maths, Science, Humanities and Languages all have less than 10% of respondents using Pinterest.

Work-related social media usage by teacher subject





What does this mean for education communications?

- › Social media platforms play an important role for the vast majority of teachers when in 'work mode'
- › WhatsApp is most used but is a harder to utilise as groups are closed. Where possible, think about strategies for working with group admins
- › Twitter is used a great deal and is probably the platform that is most readily available for education comms campaigns
- › Build up a picture for your target audience, for example if you want to reach primary teachers Pinterest might be important
- › Overall Instagram is less important as a channel for engaging teachers
- › There are small differences in use of social media platforms when looking at age and seniority. It is worthwhile considering these if planning a campaign for particular parts of the schools workforce



Social media – beyond work



How teachers use social media when not working

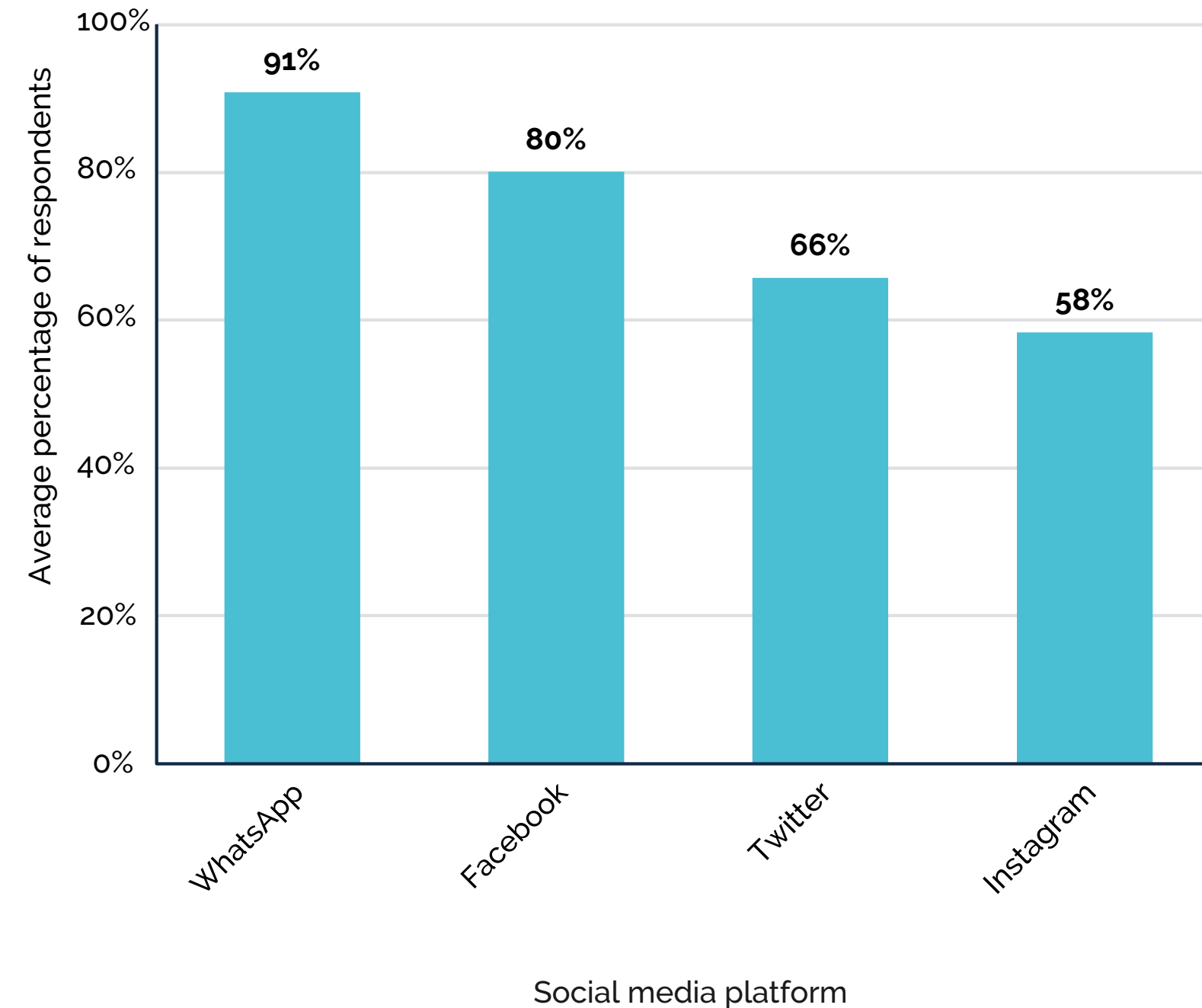
Although our focus is on teachers in work mode it is still useful to get an insight into how teachers use social media when not working.

Outside of work, social media platforms are more frequently used. Only 1% of teachers don't use social media outside of work.

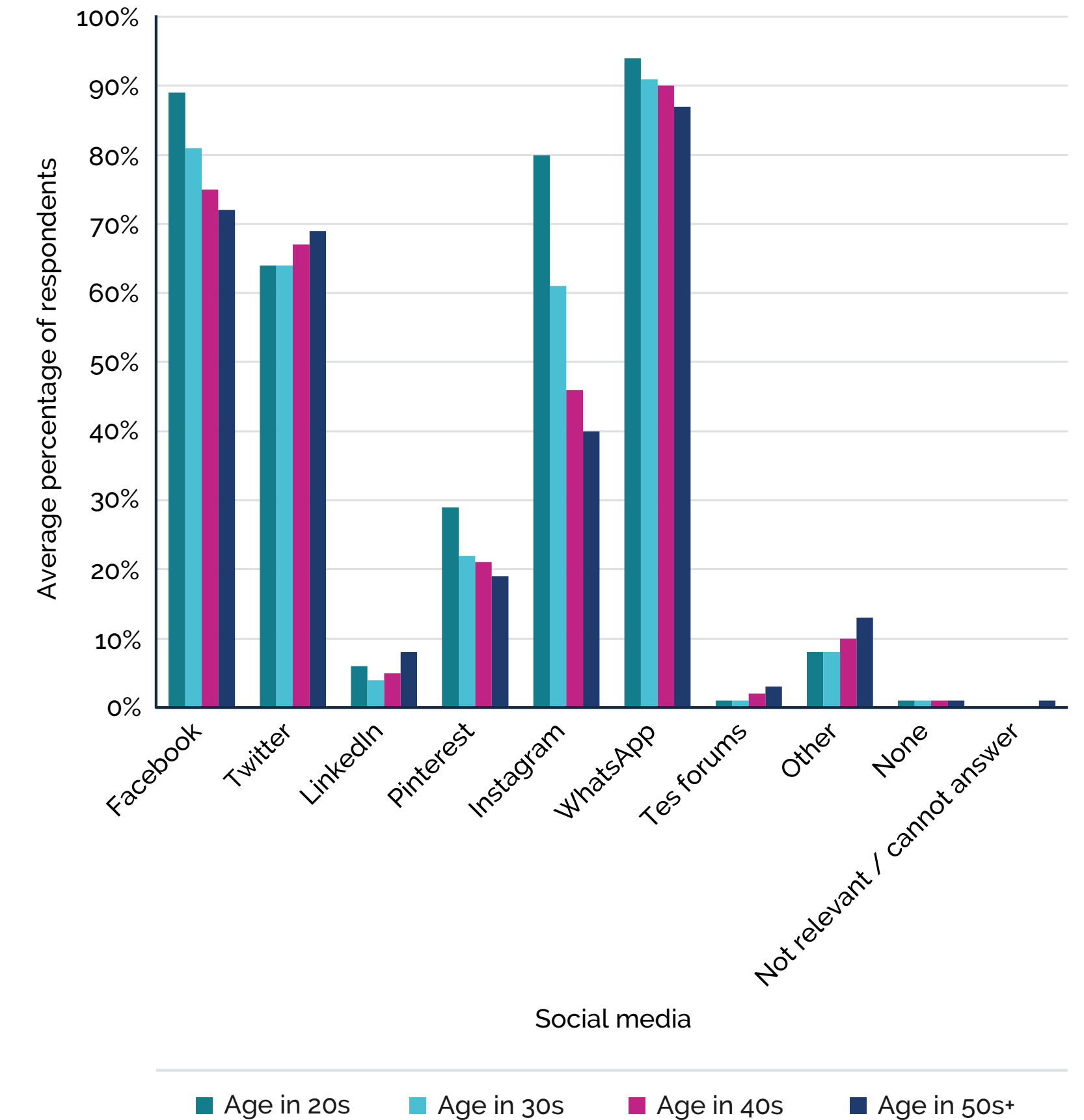
WhatsApp is now the most used social media platform (91%) followed closely by Facebook (80%). Twitter and Instagram come in third and fourth place with 66% and 58% respectively.

The biggest variances are seen in age, gender and seniority. Those in their 20s are the most likely to use Facebook (89%), with use decreasing as age increases. 72% of those in their 50s or over use Facebook. Younger staff are also more likely to use Instagram. 80% of teachers in their 20s use Instagram, compared to 46% of those in their 40s, and 40% of those in their 50s+.

Social media used outside of work (top four)



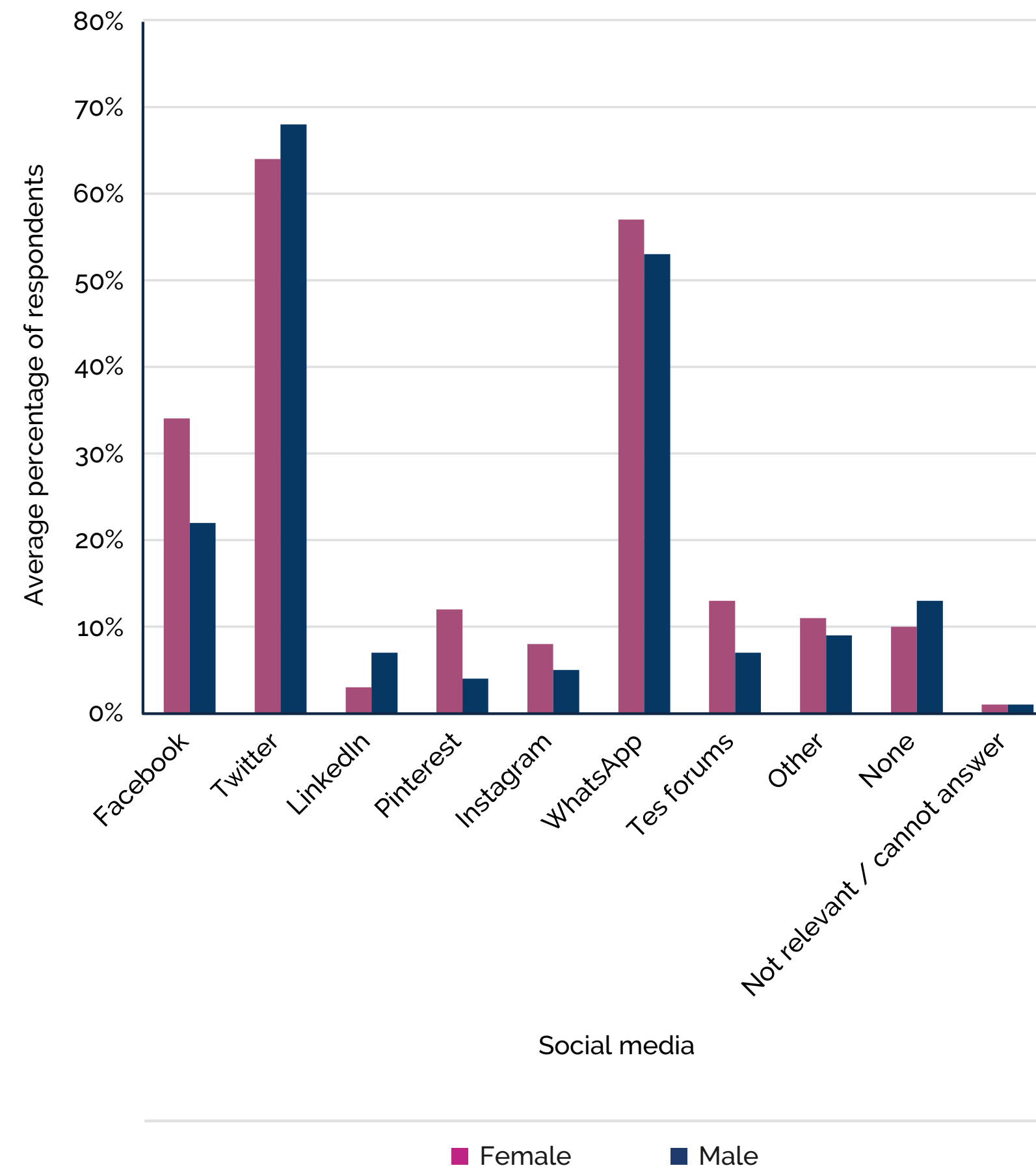
Social media usage by age



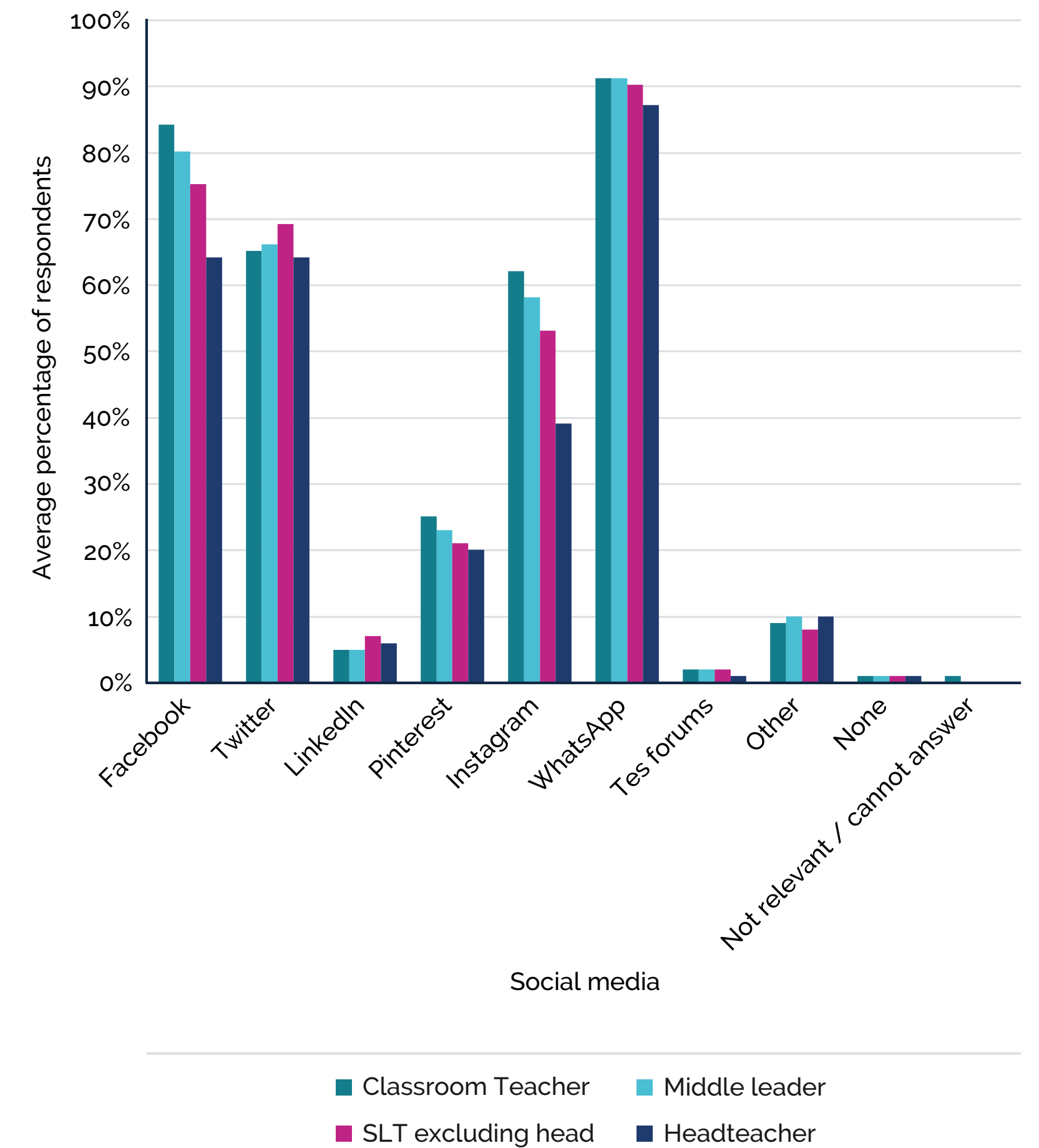
When we look at gender, we see that women are more likely to use Facebook (82%), Pinterest (28%), Instagram (63%) and WhatsApp (92%) than men. Men are more likely to use Twitter (74%), whilst 72% of men use Facebook, 45% of men use Instagram and only 9% of men use Pinterest.

Seniority also affects usage, with bigger differences than years of teaching experience. 84% of classroom teachers use Facebook compared to 64% of Headteachers. 62% of classroom teachers use Instagram, vs 39% of headteachers.

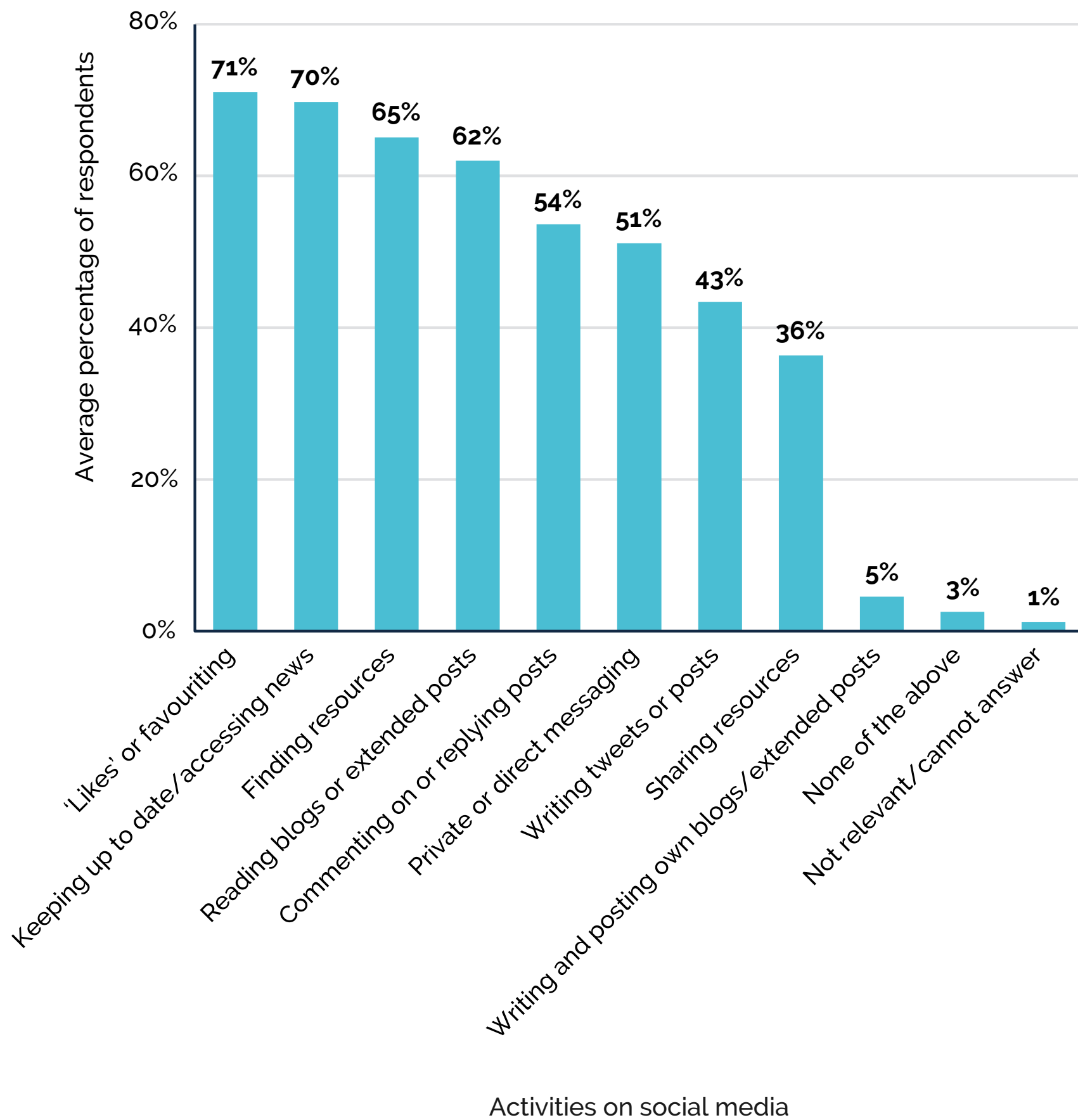
Social media usage by gender



Social media usage by seniority



What teachers do on social media

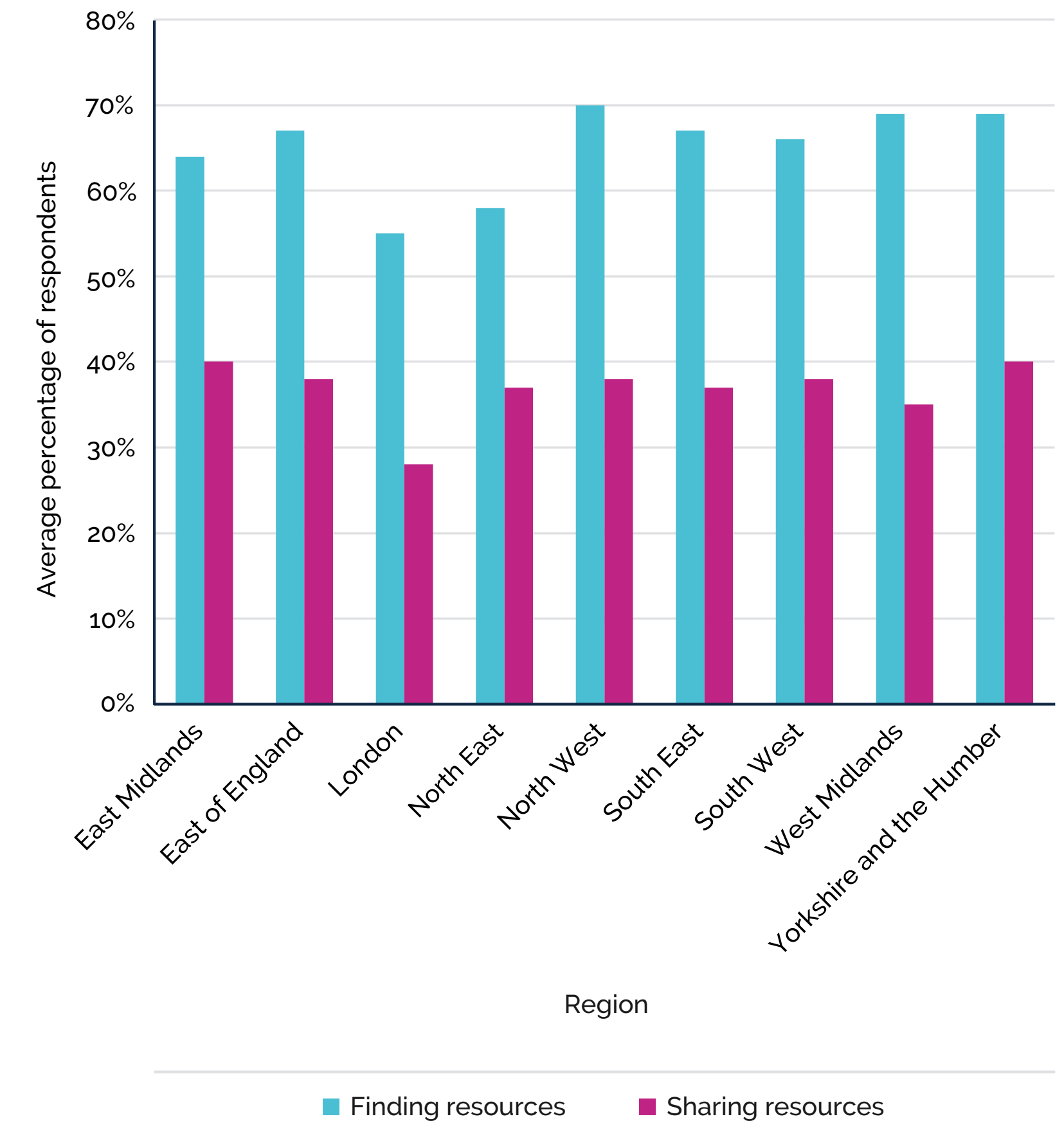


Overall the most common uses for social media were to keep up to date/access news (70%), finding resources' (65%), 'reading blogs or extended posts' (62%) and 'commenting on or replying to posts' (54%).

Primary staff from private schools are most likely to use social media for finding resources (74%) compared to secondary staff from private schools (57%).

The use of social media for finding/sharing resources also differs according to location, with London (55%) and North East (58%) staff least likely to do this, compared to those in the North West (70%).

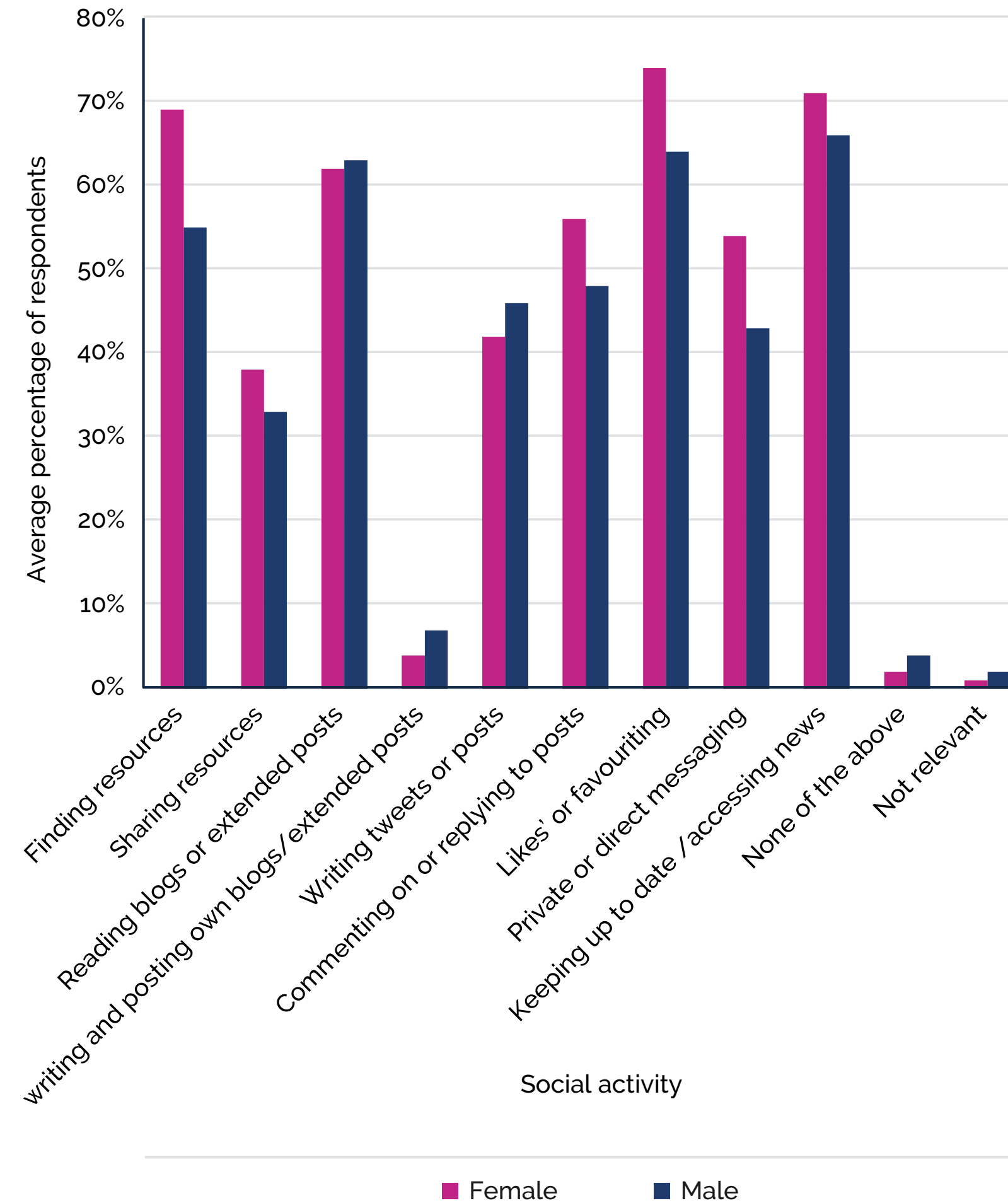
The use of social media to find/share resources by region



Gender also presents some difference, and overall female teachers use social media more.

Teachers are more likely to use social media to find resources than headteachers and SLT.

Social activities use by gender





What does this mean for education communications?

- › Social media is a great way to help teachers to find free resources you might wish to promote
- › Securing blogs is a valuable form of PR particularly where they are promoted well on social media. It is clear teachers are using social media to find them
- › Although teachers report using social media to 'stay up to date/access news' we think this is less likely to be specifically education news and more likely to be updates from friends, etc.



Listening to podcasts



What podcasts are teachers listening to?

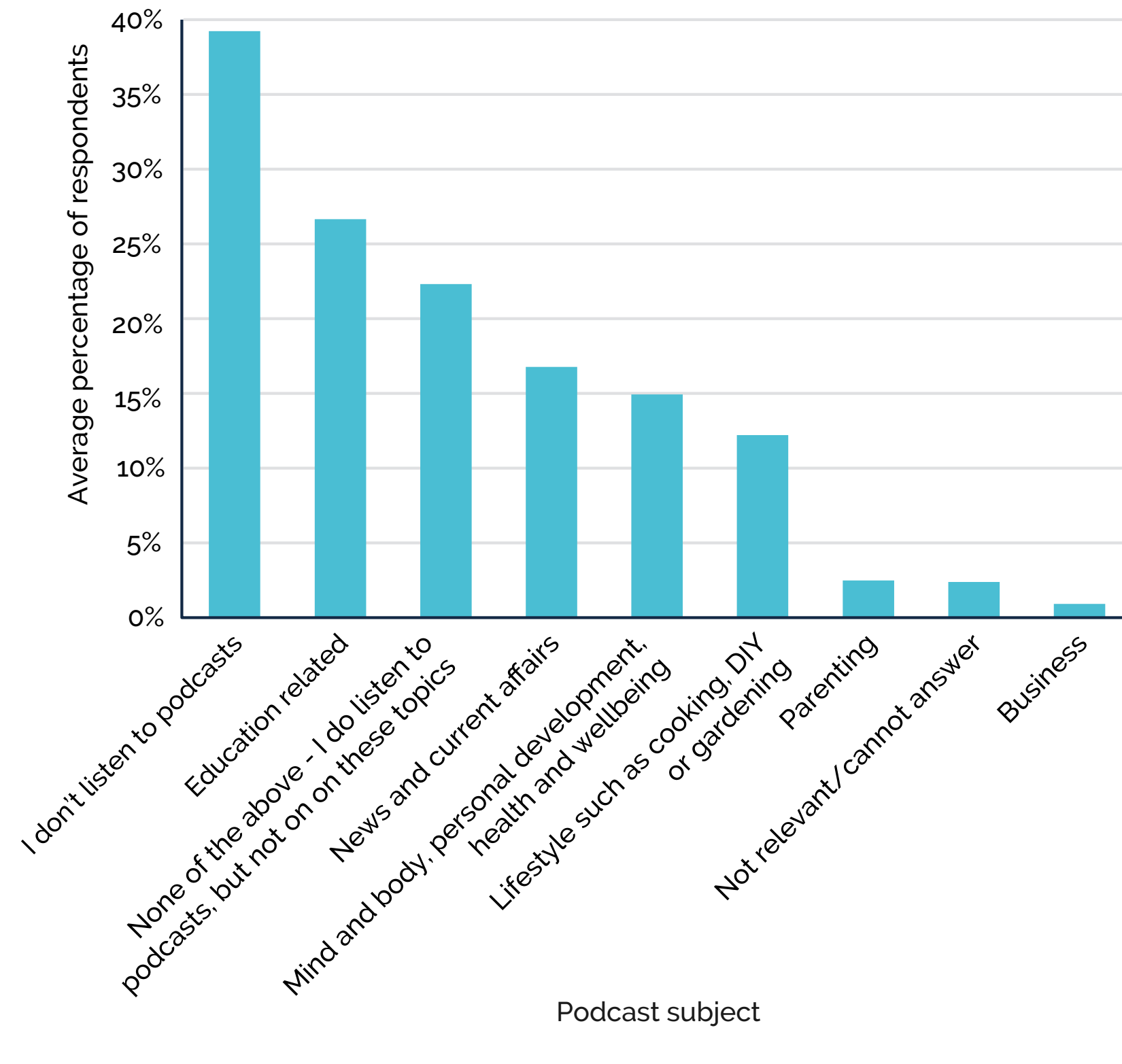
Just over a quarter of teacher respondents (27%) said they listen to 'education related' podcasts. Interestingly, news is also popular (17%) so it's possible that education stories placed on national channels will also be listened to by those accessing news podcasts. It is also worth noting that personal development/wellbeing podcasts are also popular.

When looking at differences according to respondent categories, age has an effect. 36% of those in their 50s, and over, listen to education podcasts. This decreases with age, with only 18% of those in their 20s listening to education podcasts.

Seniority also has an effect here. 34% of headteachers listen to education podcasts, compared to 22% of classroom teachers.

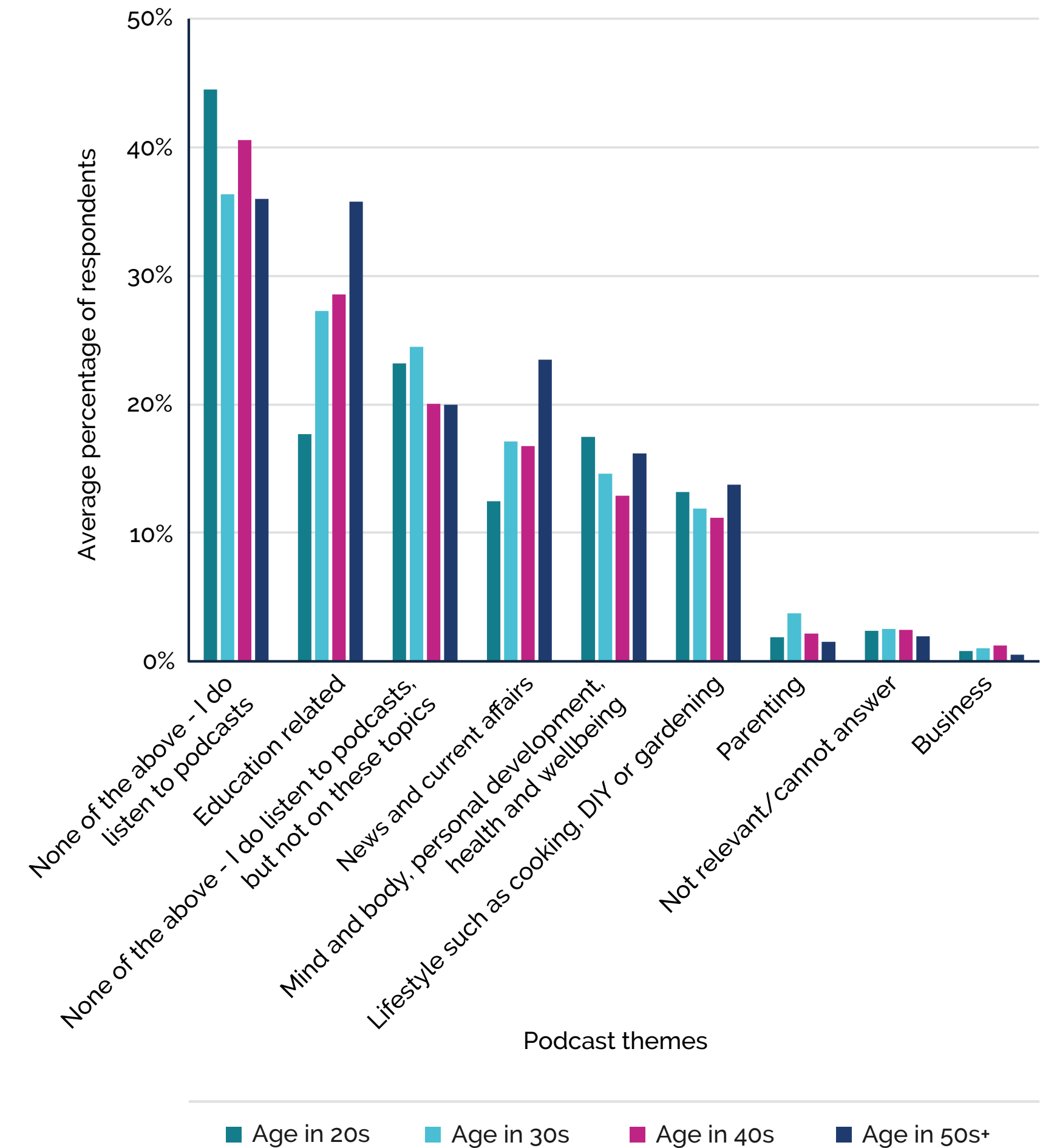
Interestingly, teacher subject also has an effect. This is most clearly seen with maths teachers who are most likely to listen to education-related podcasts (40%).

Types of podcast accessed in the past month



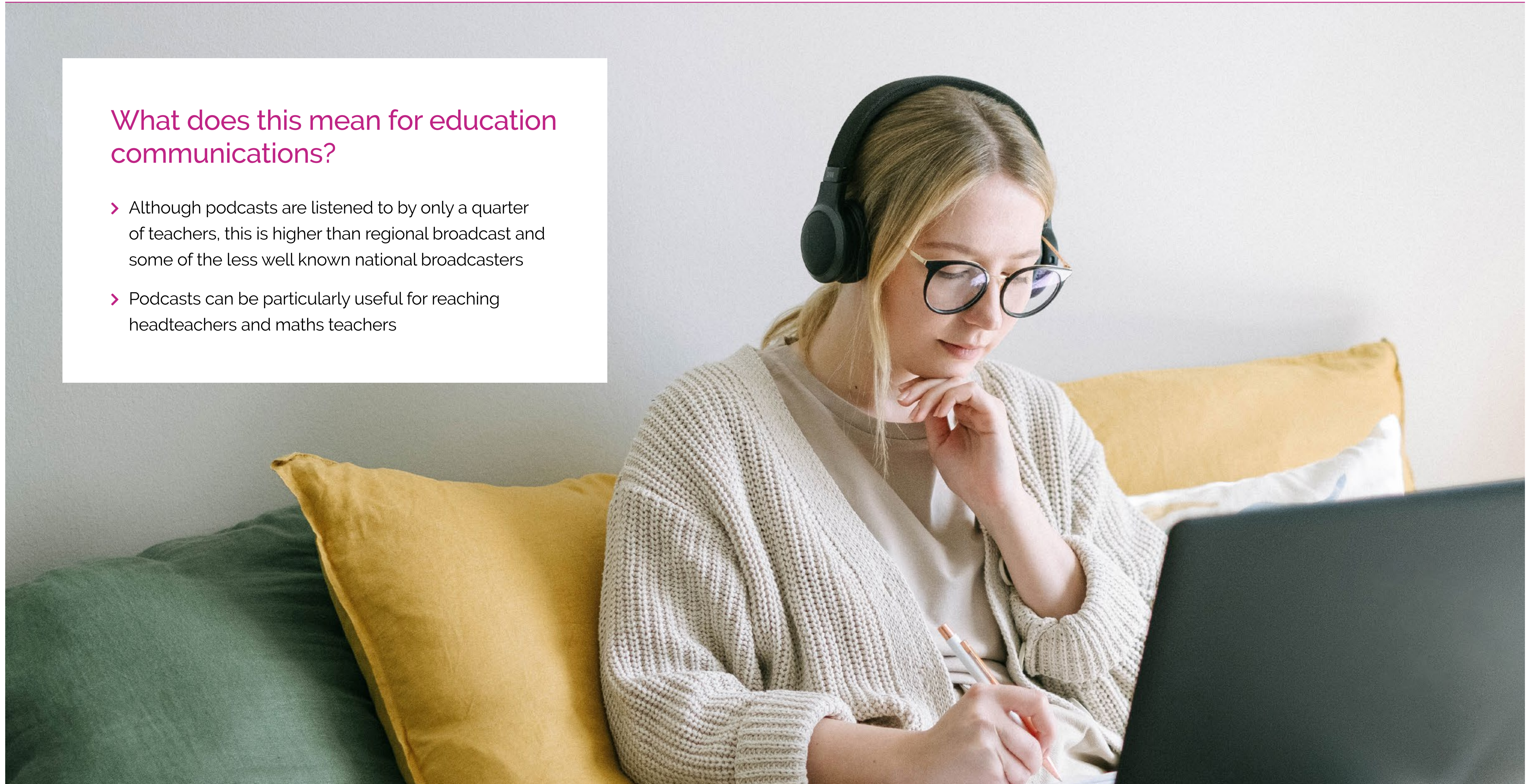
- Secondary teachers are more likely to listen to podcasts
- Teachers in London are least likely to listen to podcasts
- Males are more likely than females to listen to podcasts

Types of podcasts listened to by age



What does this mean for education communications?

- Although podcasts are listened to by only a quarter of teachers, this is higher than regional broadcast and some of the less well known national broadcasters
- Podcasts can be particularly useful for reaching headteachers and maths teachers





Partner case studies

Comms and Campaigns planning for a national membership organisation



In 2018, Association of Colleges launched #LoveOurColleges. It has been one of the strongest campaigns to date and local engagement activities at key moments throughout the year, culminating with October's 'Colleges Week' annually, which continues to make a big impact.

A key success has been the flexibility and adaptability of the campaign, where every college (member) can get involved, using their relationships to raise the profile and prestige of colleges with a range of key influencers. Thanks to the campaign, as a sector we are getting better at influencing key decision makers and set piece political events.

Our strategy, aims and objectives included:

- Working together to build an effective, coordinated and coherent approach nationally, based on every college's relationships

- Building on every existing relationship we had to maximise impact. This included: MPs, DfE officials, journalists.
- Engage a broad range of our stakeholders to reinforce our asks. Influential organisations, bodies and trade unions, including ASCL, GMB Union, NUS, NEU, UCU and Unison, are all partners of the campaign

A key campaign moment... What we did for Colleges Week 2018

Further develop relationships with your MP(s) for the long term - Throughout Colleges Week 2018, there were numerous examples where colleges involved MPs in local events in a way that engaged them in the work of the college, and showed the breadth of the work we deliver, whilst also engaging them in supportive campaigning work on behalf of the sector.

Given the volatile nature of politics, influencing through local press has never been more important.

Here's just a few examples of colleges getting their messages across with real impact

Principals, tutors and students from North East to march on Parliament over funding.
The Northern Echo



North East Colleges successful secured extensive coverage across local and regional media using one well drafted press release and a picture of a number of principals with the 'Love Our Colleges' logo.

Gillian Keegan MP tries bricklaying as part of 'Love Our Colleges' campaign.
Chichester Observer



Chichester College ensured their MP had a great photo opportunity and a chance to see and talk about the vital work that the college does.

Sheffield City Regional Mayor visits The Sheffield College.
Sheffield City Region



Sheffield College secured regional press by inviting a local prominent politician and focusing on economic impact.

For members

Every year we produce a simple checklist of key activities that members can undertake. These include campaign information, like headline asks and key messages. Support for media relations and social media including draft releases, tips for working with local and regional press, blog guides and social media graphics. For influencing parliamentarians and stakeholders, we put together template letters to send to MPs and a Campaigns and Influencing guide, a draft letter to parents and a guide to engaging local stakeholders.

Simple asks are key, give people a range of activities they can get involved in. From light touch support on social media for instance, to more timely tasks, such as MP letters and days of action. That way everybody feels included, even if they do not have access to a lot of time and resource.

Gathering evidence to reinforce key messages

As an organisation we have extensive analysis which shows the value of what colleges deliver; and extensive analysis too which shows the level of cuts that we have received, and the impact that this is having. This not only helps with getting people to support the campaign but adds weight and validity to stories for the national media.

Using your data and research to tap into the current trends and national stories is a good way to boost the chances of getting coverage. When using spokespeople in your organisation, always have an up to date briefing to hand so they are never caught off guard. Also, do your homework on the interviewer.

The screenshot shows the 'LOVE OUR COLLEGES' website. The navigation bar includes 'HOME', 'OUR HEROES', 'COLLEGES WEEK 2020', 'PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS', and 'FAQS'. The main heading is 'Resources' in red. Below it, a sub-heading reads 'You will find all the tools you need to show support and help create a buzz for this campaign.' Underneath, there is a section titled 'Campaigning and Influencing' with four yellow boxes: 'Develop relationships with MPs', 'Local media and reputation', 'Building relationships across FE', and 'Campaign checklist'. At the bottom, it says 'You can download the full Campaign and Influencing guide produced by Association of Colleges.'

The screenshot shows a news article from 'THE INDEPENDENT'. The top navigation bar includes 'NEWS', 'CORONAVIRUS ADVICE', 'UK POLITICS', 'US POLITICS', 'VOICES', 'SPORT', 'CULTURE', 'INDY LIFE', 'INDYBEST', 'INDY100', and 'LONG READS'. The article features a video player showing a protest with a banner that reads 'Turn-up: the country - yet Colleges + universities pay the CUTS to EDUCATION!!'. The headline is 'Thousands of college principals, staff and students marched on Westminster to protest funding cuts'. The sub-headline is 'Government's treatment of college staff is 'disgraceful', Jeremy Corbyn tells protest'. The byline is 'Eleanor Busby Education Correspondent | @Eleanor_Busby | Monday 29 October 2018 17:00'. Social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and Email are visible at the bottom right.

Challenge: In response to COVID-19 teachers needed to get their lessons online, fast



Idea: Oak National Academy – An online classroom where teachers and pupils could access a weekly schedule of shared lessons for children aged 4 to 15.

Launch comms team:

- 4 comms staff seconded from education organisations, led by Jonathan Dando, Teach First's Director of Marketing & Communications
- 2 volunteers on furlough
- Johnson Banks - agency designed the brand in 4 days
- Havas London – agency support to create social media assets on a pro-bono basis

Timings

10 days from idea to launch.

Key measures

No. of children and teachers accessing lessons

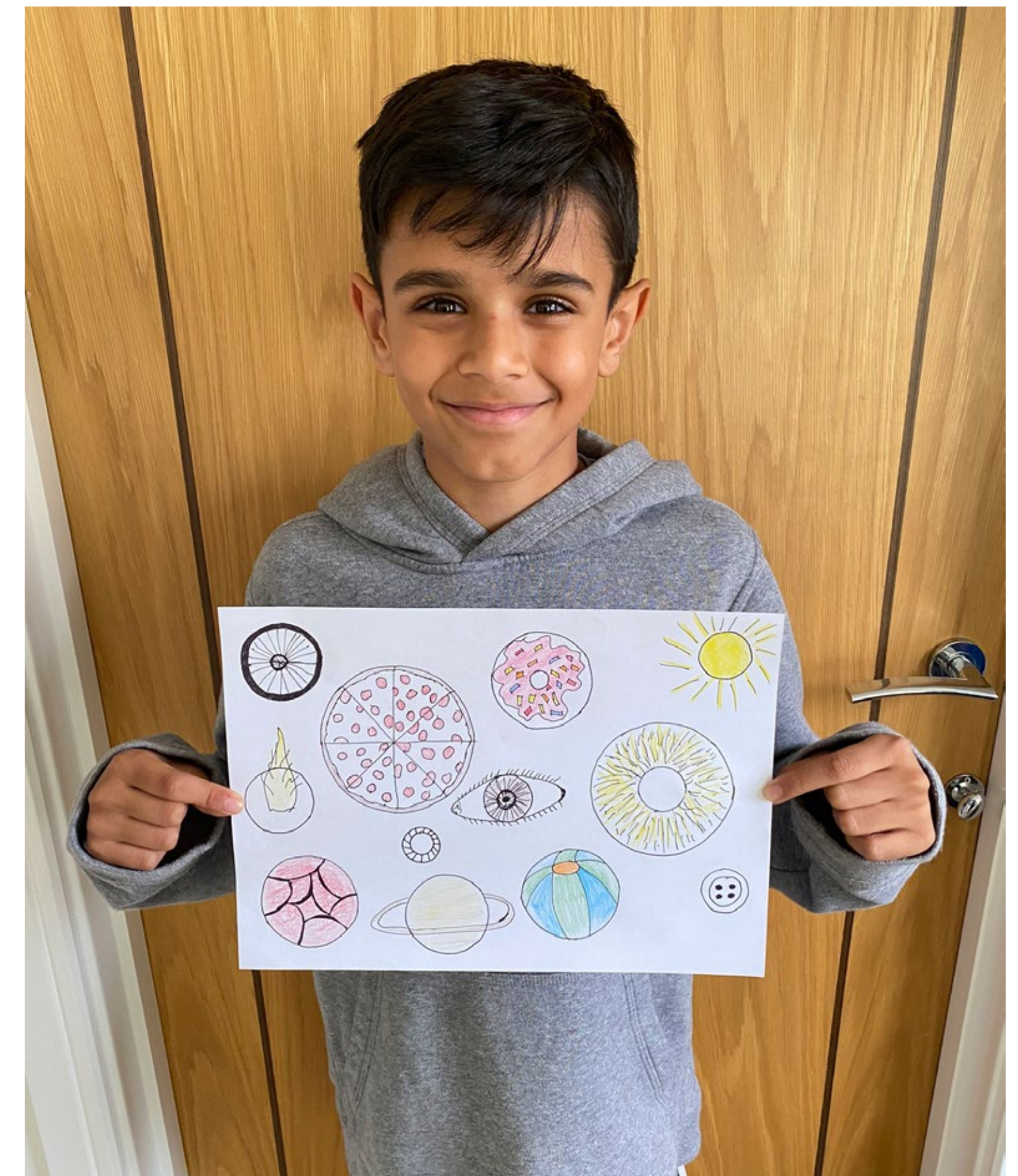
Background

When COVID-19 hit, schools needed to find a way to deliver lessons to children who were trying to learn while at home. A group of teachers and people working in education organisations wanted to support the work teachers were doing. We quickly discussed the idea over WhatsApp and then, over the Easter holiday, held our first online meeting to cement the idea.

Within 10 days we had gathered 40 teachers, filmed and recorded 180 lessons, developed a platform for the lessons and created a communications campaign to coincide with the start of school summer term.

Key messages

- Supporting teachers to support their pupils
- Developed by teachers for teachers
- Optional resource to complement existing teaching and planning
- Workload reliever
- Sector led, but backed by the Government





Focus groups and stakeholder engagement

Before launch we tested our messaging with a group of teachers and a group of parents. As timings were tight we only had 24hrs to recruit people to participate. The information we gathered from these sessions was incredibly valuable. Their feedback and ideas helped us understand who our target audiences were, what they needed and crystallised our messaging.

We wanted to make sure our support empowered not disempowered teachers and parents and that we were speaking clearly in a time of national challenge. We worked with a partner who led the focus groups for us.

We also spoke to other stakeholders in the sector, making sure they were aware, understood and comfortable with our offer and message before anything went live.

Setting up focus groups and talking to stakeholder helped:

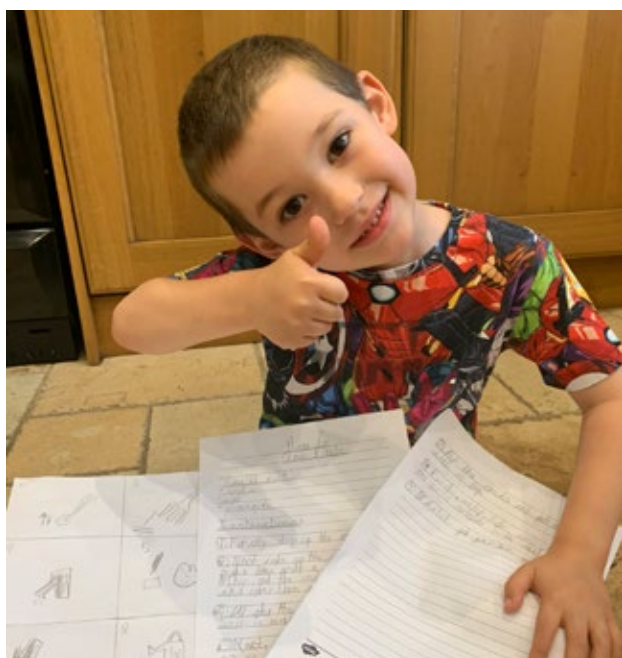
- Test and crystallise messaging
- Opportunity to modify scope
- Bring key stakeholders on board and get their support
- Developed our tag line

Campaign assets

- Press release, with supportive quote from the Secretary of State
- A 2-minute introduction video (filmed over zoom) - released the day before to help explain our offer and preview our teachers
- Simple graphics, animations and lesson previews for social media
- Press resource bank on dropbox with examples of lesson videos and images
- Stakeholder briefing packs to key contacts and those with large audiences
- FAQs and explainers for different audiences including teachers and parents

Results

- 250,000 lessons accessed on day one. By the end of term there's been 4.7 million users, accessing 20 million lessons
- From 0 followers to 10,000 followers on Twitter on day one (now 38,000)
- Press Association ran the launch story, helping secure widespread local coverage
- 2,700 mentions in press and online coverage over the first term, including coverage in all broadsheets, interviews on Sky and radio
- Platform initially grew to over 100 teachers, creating 200 lessons a week
- Now staying open for all of 2020/21. Over summer 300 teachers created nearly 10,000 lessons, so the whole year's content was available from September 2020



Conclusion

- Our platform gave teachers and parents what they needed at just the right time. Promoting a great product makes the job a lot easier!
- Focus groups don't need to be complicated and the benefits make them well worth the effort.
- Engaging stakeholder in advance helps improve your product and communications
- Securing the backing of government and running high profile assemblies gave people confidence and significantly amplified our reach

Tips:

- Call in favours, be ambitious, be creative. I rang everyone I knew to ask for help, to get things for free or to get significant discounts
- Be authentic, don't let the excitement of a launch mean you over sell
- Give people a taste of the product and examples of resources in advance
- Ask stakeholders (particularly influencers and those with large followings) to share and promote with their networks – but only once they're brought in
- Don't be afraid to pro-actively admit the current limitations or improvements you'd like to make. Then listen and show you're responding to feedback

Be aware!

- New social media accounts on Twitter can't post ads
- Google takes a couple of days to index your website – before which you won't show up in search results nor be able to post Google Ads

How we successfully launched the Skills Builder Universal Framework



On 20th May 2020, we launched the Skills Builder Universal Framework. It shows how to build the eight essential skills for success, by breaking each skill down into sixteen teachable and measurable steps. Developed over four years, in collaboration with experts across industries, it is truly universal: joining up how these skills are built in schools and colleges with recruitment and development by employers.

This was our most important launch yet: the culmination of all of our work so far. Our goals from a communications perspective were:

- To make the Universal Framework easy to access and browse
- To ensure everyone had the tools they needed to start building essential skills right away
- To encourage those who wanted a greater impact building essential skills to work with us

On launch day, we tripled our average daily traffic to skillsbuilder.org and broke our record for daily page views. To date, the Universal Framework and has been accessed more than 23,000 times by educators, employers, impact organisations and individuals looking to build the essential skills for success.

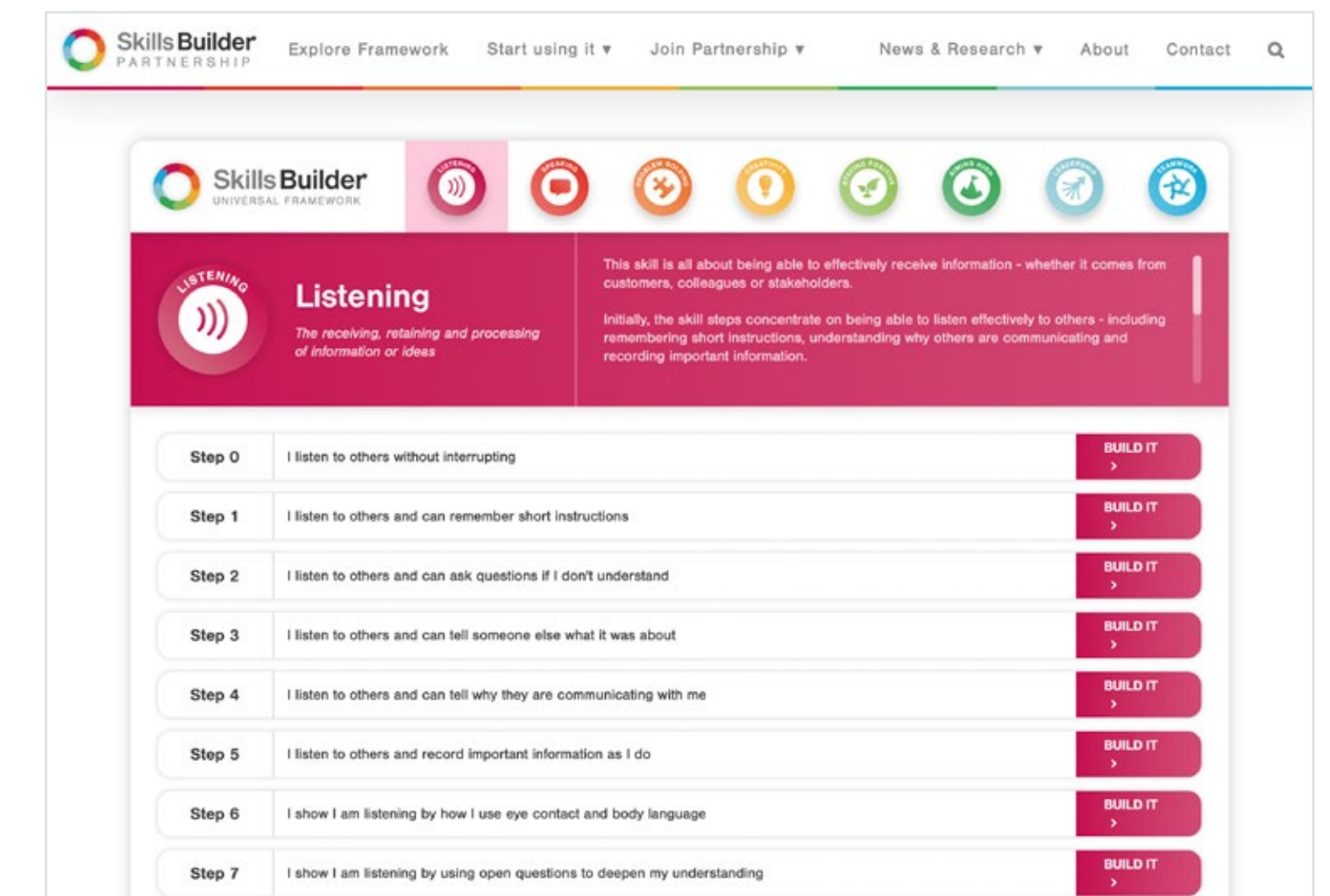
Here's how we did it.

Tailoring to different audiences

We work with schools and colleges, employers across industries and impact organisations – from sports to arts to careers provision. So we came up with lists of audience priorities, and at every stage we developed communications to address these needs. We also made audiences easily distinguishable with bold colour gradients: blue for educators, green for employers, and orange for organisations.

An interactive Framework

We knew the Universal Framework had to be easy to browse. So from early we committed to building an interactive website, where users could explore the skills and how to build each step. Team members across the organisation coordinated to write practical advice, create animations, and design and develop the tool.

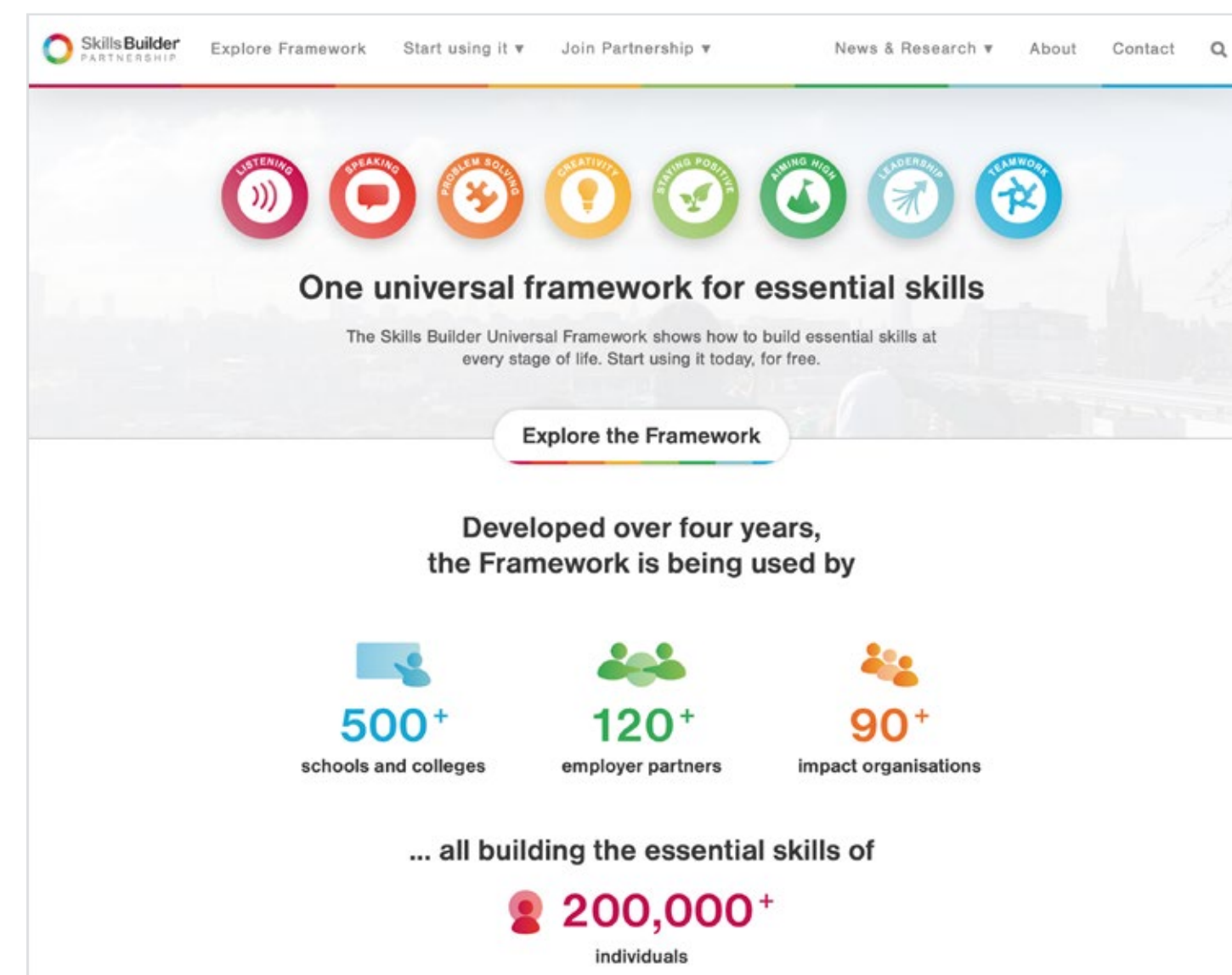


A more focused homepage

We redesigned our homepage to focus on the Universal Framework, with explanations of what it is and who it's for – plus a big colourful button to 'Explore the Framework'.

Audiences want to hear about others using the approach, so we produced case studies to demonstrate impact.

Finally, we provided avenues for everyone to get the tools they need to start building skills right away – or work with us directly.



A blog post from our CEO

Our founder and CEO Tom Ravenscroft wrote a blog post, explaining what the Universal Framework was, its story, and the significant changes – as well as a look at our goals for the Framework's national uptake.

Sharing the research behind it

The latest changes to the Universal Framework were made as part of the Essential Skills Taskforce, chaired by Sir John Holman, the author of the Gatsby Benchmarks. Alongside were colleagues from Business in the Community, Careers & Enterprise Company, CBI, CIPD and EY Foundation.

To demonstrate the underlying research, we produced a report and an Executive Summary. Both were made available on the homepage.

Toolkits for every context

For each audience, we created a specific Toolkit containing the Universal Framework, the six Principles for building essential skills effectively, as well as the story of the approach itself. These were pitched as the way to get started building skills right away, and downloading them featured as the 'call to action' in our launch communications (along with browsing the Framework online).

An email newsletter campaign

We produced an email newsletter focused on the Universal Framework launch, providing easy access to the tools needed to get started. This was sent to our mailing list of nearly 2,000 contacts who have opted into updates.

A social media campaign with lots of support

Finally, for social media, we collaborated with Business in the Community, who helped with producing content, enlisting partner support, and scheduling. We produced a social media pack to prepare partners from both networks to help with the launch – all pointing towards our website.

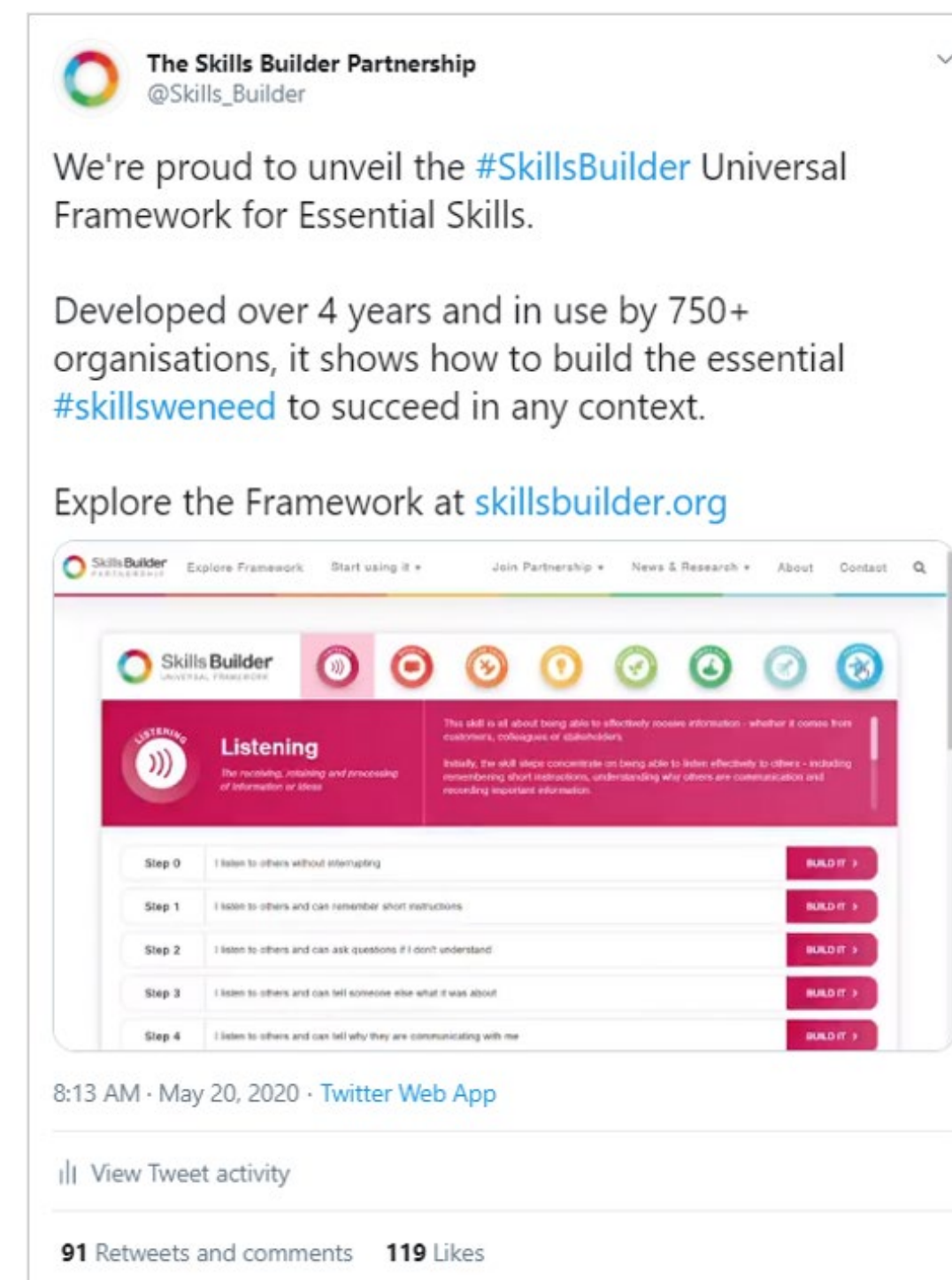
Some partners wrote blog posts on their websites about how they have been building essential skills in their context. This helped amplify the sense of a partnership working together around a universal language.

We shared quotes and videos where people from the Essential Skills Taskforce endorsed the Universal Framework, as well as videos of our own staff talking about how they use the skills every day.

Finally, we put modest funding towards boosting central posts so more people would be able to see the content, aided by organic engagement.

Overall, we were pleased with the campaign's success: on the 20th May, we were mentioned by many accounts throughout the day, driving record website traffic. The central video post received more than 15,000 views in one day.

The launch itself generated valuable leads and the Universal Framework is now being used by 500+ schools and colleges, 120+ employers and 90+ impact organisations.





Acknowledgements

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