

# FindCheapVPNs Finds UK VPN Interest Up 172% After Ban Plan

Analysis of 53 weekly and 270 monthly Google Trends observations tracks the latest spike and the history of UK VPN demand since 2004.



**Leeds, West Yorkshire Jun 16, 2026** ([IssueWire.com](https://www.IssueWire.com)) - [FindCheapVPNs](#) has published new research showing that [UK searches for VPNs rose sharply](#) following confirmation of the government's under-16 social media policy.

The latest weekly Google Trends index reached 34, compared with an average of 12.5 during the preceding four weeks. FindCheapVPNs calculated this as a 172% increase in relative search interest.

The result is the highest weekly reading since early August 2025, although it remains below the exceptional peak recorded after online age-check requirements came into force in July 2025.

Google Trends does not disclose the exact number of searches. It converts search activity into a relative index between zero and 100 for the selected location and period. A score of 100 represents the most popular point in that particular dataset.

The latest score of 34 therefore does not mean that searches increased by 34% or that only 34 searches took place. The separate 172% figure was calculated by comparing the latest score with the previous four-week average.

July 2025 remains the largest surge

FindCheapVPNs analysed 53 weekly observations covering June 2025 to June 2026.

The index reached 100 in the week beginning 27 July 2025, immediately after strong online age checks took effect for services that allow pornography and other harmful material.

During the five weeks from 20 July to 17 August, the average index was 47.4. That was approximately 427% above the average of 9 recorded during the previous five weeks.

The July peak was followed by a gradual decline, but search interest remained above its earlier baseline for much of the following year.

“The current increase is significant, but it is important not to describe it as an all-time record,” said Martin Needs, Director at NeedSec LTD and Lead Technical Assessor for FindCheapVPNs.

“Our data shows that the July 2025 age-check rollout created a much larger immediate response. The new June 2026 increase is different because people are researching VPNs before the proposed social-media restrictions have taken effect.”

More than 22 years of UK search history

The research also examined 270 monthly observations running from January 2004 to June 2026.

Average relative interest increased across each major period examined:

- 1.3 between 2004 and 2013
- 10.2 between 2014 and 2019
- 20.9 between 2020 and 2024
- 46.0 between January 2025 and June 2026

July and August 2025 both reached the maximum long-term index of 100. By comparison, June 2026 reached 50 in the long-range monthly dataset, although the month was incomplete when the data was collected.

The two charts use separate Google Trends scales. Their weekly and monthly index values cannot be compared directly because Google assigns a new peak of 100 to each export.

FindCheapVPNs also identified smaller changes that coincided with major internet-policy events, including the Investigatory Powers Act in November 2016 and increased remote working during 2020.

However, the data showed no clear spike when the Online Safety Act received Royal Assent in October 2023. FindCheapVPNs believes this supports a broader finding: search demand responds more strongly when rules directly affect access than when legislation is announced before practical enforcement begins.

Policy, legality and price dominate rising searches

FindCheapVPNs separately examined the fastest-rising UK queries associated with VPNs during the past month.

All 10 leading queries were marked “Breakout” by Google, indicating relative growth of more than

5,000% compared with the previous comparable period.

Seven of the 10 queries focused on the social-media policy, whether VPNs are legal or whether the UK could restrict VPN services. The remaining three concerned free trials, free VPNs for iPhone and the cheapest VPN options.

The searches included:

- “social media ban”
- “vpn free trial”
- “are vpns illegal”
- “social media ban uk”
- “are vpns legal”
- “free vpns for iphone”
- “uk to ban vpns”
- “cheapest vpns”
- “will uk ban vpns”

The data cannot identify the ages or intentions of individual searchers. It also does not prove that users downloaded a VPN or successfully bypassed an age check.

“The most revealing part of the current increase is the combination of policy questions, legal uncertainty and immediate interest in low-cost services,” Needs said.

“This is not only a story about people looking for a workaround. It is also a sign that many users do not yet understand what the new rules will mean for ordinary VPN use, personal data and age verification.”

Full research and interactive charts

The complete FindCheapVPNs report includes interactive weekly and long-term charts, research methodology, calculations, policy timelines and an explanation of the Google Trends scoring system.

The full report is available at:

<https://findcheapvpns.com/guides/uk-vpn-searches-surge/>

About FindCheapVPNs

FindCheapVPNs is a UK-focused VPN research and comparison website covering online privacy, VPN technology, internet regulation, provider features and consumer security.

Its research includes technical explainers, original data analysis, VPN comparisons and guidance designed to help readers understand how privacy tools work and where their limitations lie.

Technical analysis is led by Martin Needs, Director at NeedSec LTD and Lead Technical Assessor for FindCheapVPNs.

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