

# UNDERSTANDING DATA PROTECTION ATTITUDES

Produced for the ICO

January 2022





THE  
**INSIGHTS**  
**FAMILY**

---

**The Insights Family purpose is to provide children, parents and families a voice to shape their worlds.**

**Our mission is to be the business-critical partner for the world's top brands who are looking to engage children, parents, and families.**

# A GLOBAL, REGIONAL & LOCAL SOLUTION

## An intuitive global solution...



383,760 children surveyed and  
187,200 parents surveyed  
every year.

## With a regional perspective...

### AMERICAS



Brazil Canada Mexico US

### EMEA



France Germany Italy Russia Spain Poland UK

### ASIA - PACIFIC



Australia China India Indonesia Japan S. Korea Philippines

In each country we operate, we survey  
21,320 children and 10,400 parents each  
year.

Or 1 every 60 seconds

## And unrivalled local understanding.



Our sample - which is collected  
continuously - is age, gender and  
nationally representative.  
We also track income, ethnicity and  
household information.

## The most comprehensive and dynamic solution in the world

Find out more and watch a video of the portal



### REAL-TIME DATA

View, filter, interrogate and analyse survey data to make decisions with clarity and confidence.



### PORTAL TOOLS

Analytical tools, such as Question Time and In Focus intuitively designed to help you make informed decisions.



### BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

A suite of tools, such as the Media Mix Compass and Persona Perspectives provide tailored recommendations for your business.



### API DATA

Track data from third party sources, including the top 100 channels across YouTube, TikTok, Twitch, Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.



### ON TRACK REPORTS

16 reports per year, per territory for children Insights and 4 per year, per territory for Parents Insights - automatically uploaded to your portal.



### CONTENT HUB

A curated content site, featuring insight blogs, videos plus the latest news from around the web.

## Online, self complete survey

**Sample:** Children aged 8-17 & their parents/carers  
**Breaks:** 8-11 / 12-15 / 16-17

**Even gender split for the children**

**Sample: 1,535 Total**

- **1,191** - England
- **133** - Scotland
- **117** - Wales
- **94** - Northern Ireland





THE  
**INSIGHTS**  
**FAMILY**

---

# **PARENTAL/ CARER SECTION**



## KEY TAKEAWAYS:

8 in 10 parents/carers worry about their child's data protection

71% haven't heard of the Children's code

64% only have a little idea what the code is. When given detail on the Children's code, over half think it's a good thing but 1 in 10 still were unsure what it meant for them

Children accessing age-inappropriate sites is the biggest concern for parents/carers. However, over half have allowed their child access to a site they knew they were too young for

9 in 10 believe schools should play some role in educating parents/carers and children around the Children's code

4 in parents/carers don't understand how data is processed

## PARENTS/ CARERS

1

With only 1 in 10 parents/carers aware of the ICO, the organisation needs to increase brand awareness to encourage parents/carers to turn to them to address their data concerns

2

The ICO needs to improve awareness around the Children's code (with lower income families less aware), as without this it cannot fulfil the function it sets out to do

3

The description of the Children's code needs to be reviewed to ensure it's clear and addresses parents/carers' key issues, which in turn will help improve trust in the code

4

More instruction is needed on why age restrictions on online sites exist so parents/carers can talk to their children about the purpose of following legislations

5

The ICO needs to equip parents/carers and schools with the resources to help communicate information around data privacy and online security, with only a quarter of parents/carers turning to the ICO's website for more information

6

More guidance is needed to aid those with concerns about their child being online but don't know how to address these concerns



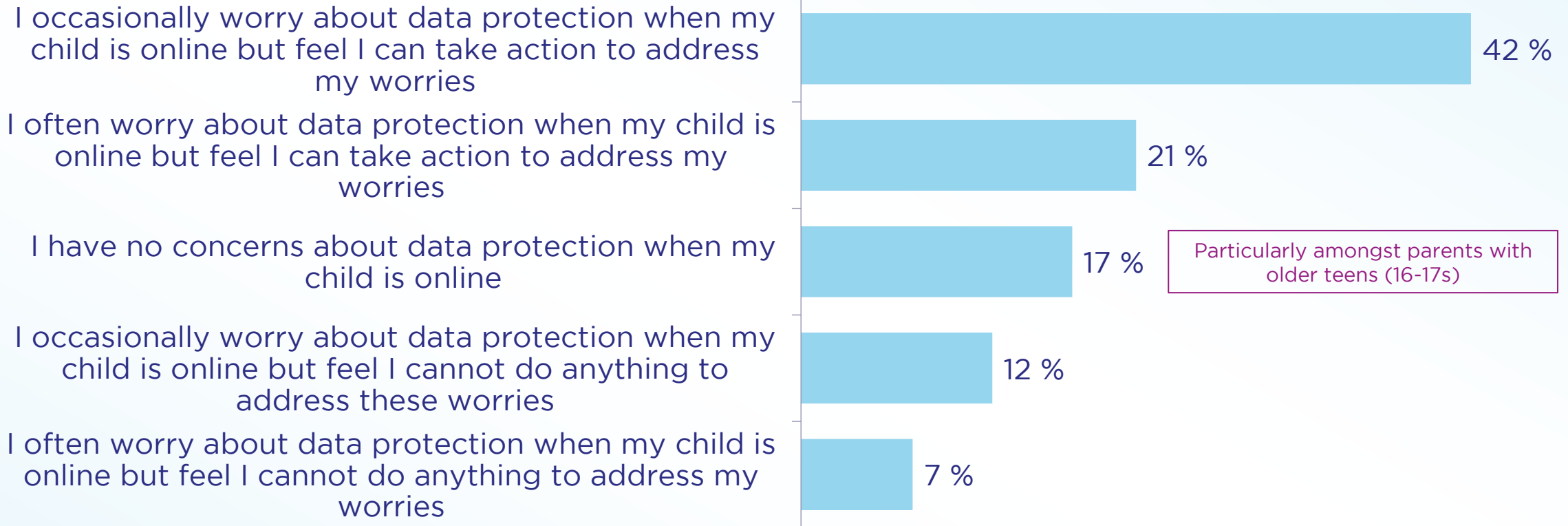
## KEY ISSUES:



# ATTITUDES AROUND DATA PROTECTION

Key Takeaway: 8 in 10 of parents/carers worry about their child's data protection\*. However, three quarters of those parents/carers feel they can take action to address these worries.

Parents/Carers



## Key Issue:

- Parents/carers need guidance on how they can address their worries around their child being online, with almost 1 in 5 parents/carers having concerns and not knowing how to address them.

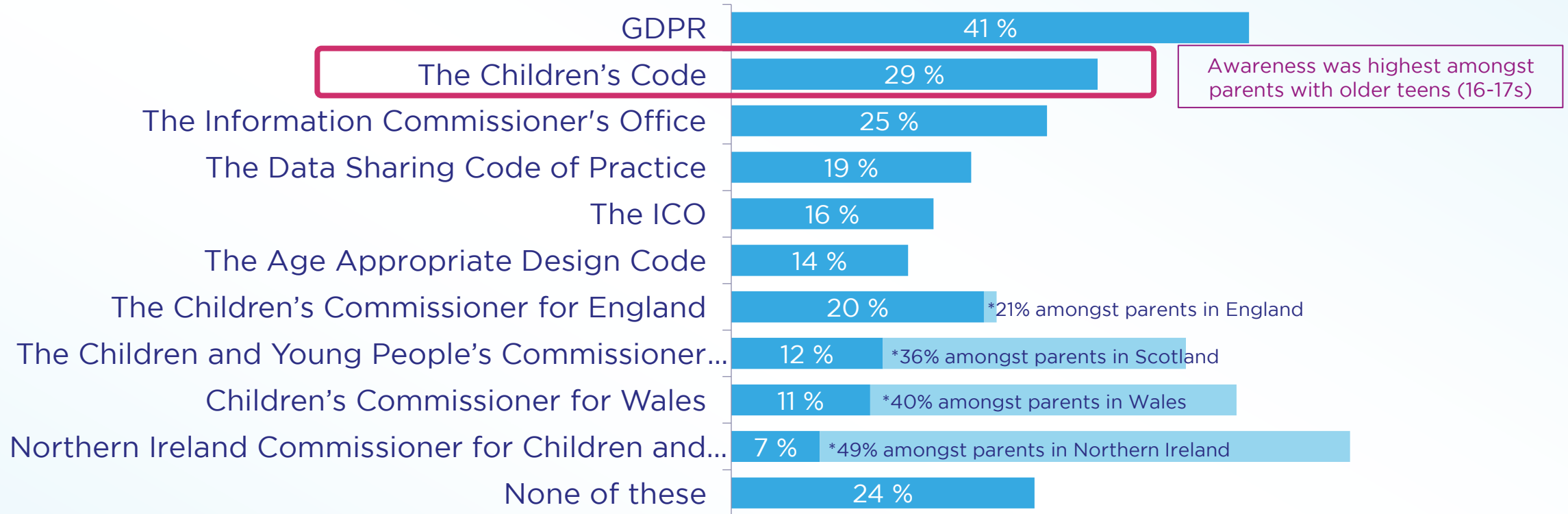
\*Based on sum of all saying often and occasionally

Q. Parents: What would you say is your general attitude around data protection (how data and personal information is used) when it comes to your child being online? *BASE: 1535.*



# AWARENESS AROUND GOVERNANCE

Key Takeaway: 71% of parents have not heard of the Children's code and only 1 in 10 have heard of the ICO. Awareness of the code is highest with parents of older children, showing greater education for younger children is needed.



**Key Issue:**

➤ There is a real need to create awareness of the code; without this it can not fulfil the function it sets out to do.

Q. Have you ever heard of any of the following? *BASE: 1535.*

\* Caution: Small base number for Scotland (133), Wales (117) and Northern Ireland (94).

## **AWARENESS OF THE CHILDREN'S CODE**

### **DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN:**

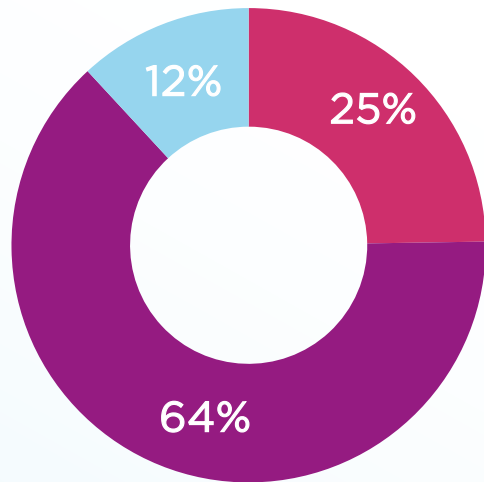
- Parents/carers in Scotland are most likely to have heard of the Children's code, followed by parents/carers in England.
- East Anglia saw the lowest level of awareness, whilst London saw the highest level.
- On the whole, as income increases, awareness of the Children's code follows; lowest levels of awareness sits with parents/carers earning under £10k, whilst greatest awareness is amongst parents/carers earning over £125k.



Key Takeaways: Only a quarter of parents/carers are certain what the Children's code is. Raising awareness of the code will help encourage word-of-mouth from friends, family and schools.

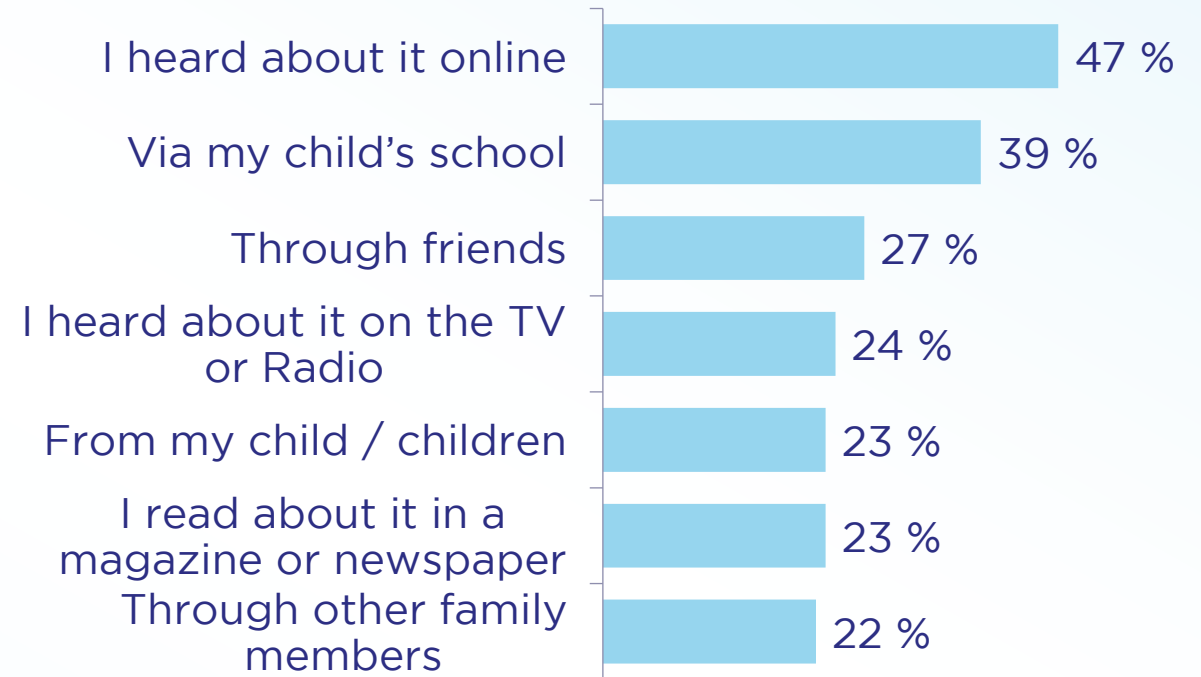
Parents/Carers

## Do you know what the Children's code is?



- Yes, I know what this is/does
- I have a bit of an idea
- No, not at all

## Where did you hear about the Children's code?



### Key Issue:

- The ICO needs to aid parents/carers with their understanding around the Children's code and how it benefits their family.
- Only 2 in 10 parents/carers have heard about the code from their children, suggesting children's awareness is also low.

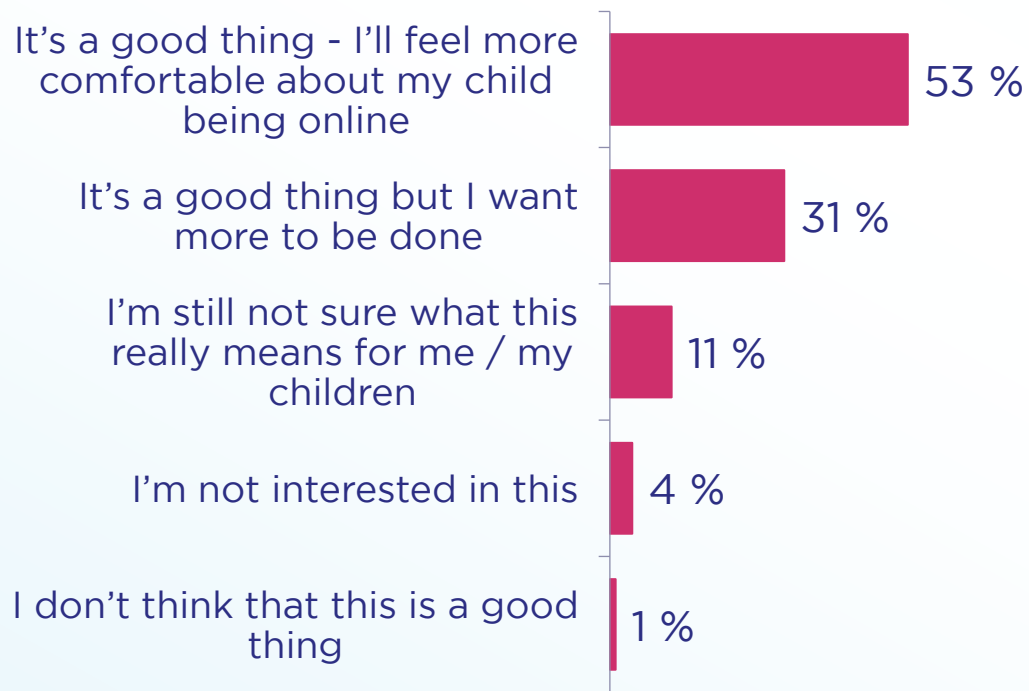


# PERCEPTIONS OF THE CHILDREN'S CODE

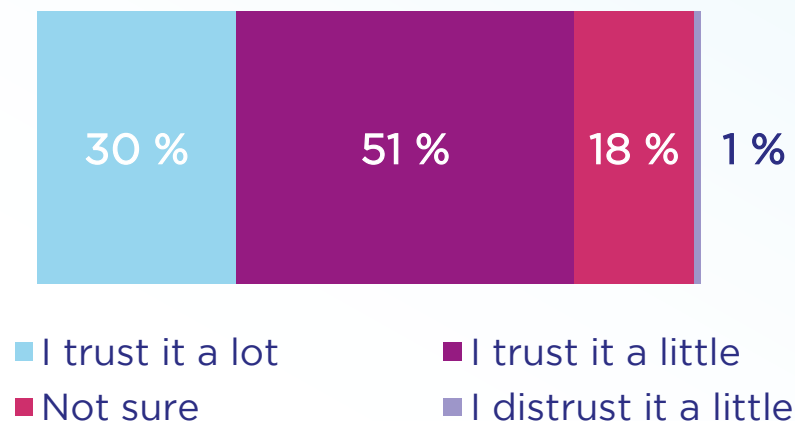
Key Takeaways: After reading about the Children's code, over half of parents/carers think it's a good thing for their child. 1 in 10 parents are still not sure what the code means for them. However, 8 in 10 trust the code will make the internet safer for their children.

Parents/Carers

## What do you think of the Children's code?



## To what extent do you trust the Children's code?



### Key Issue:

- There is still room to improve parents/carers' perceptions of the Children's code – perhaps with greater explanation and detail – to help trust move from 'a little' to 'a lot'.

Q. What do you think of the Children's code as described above? *BASE: 1535.*

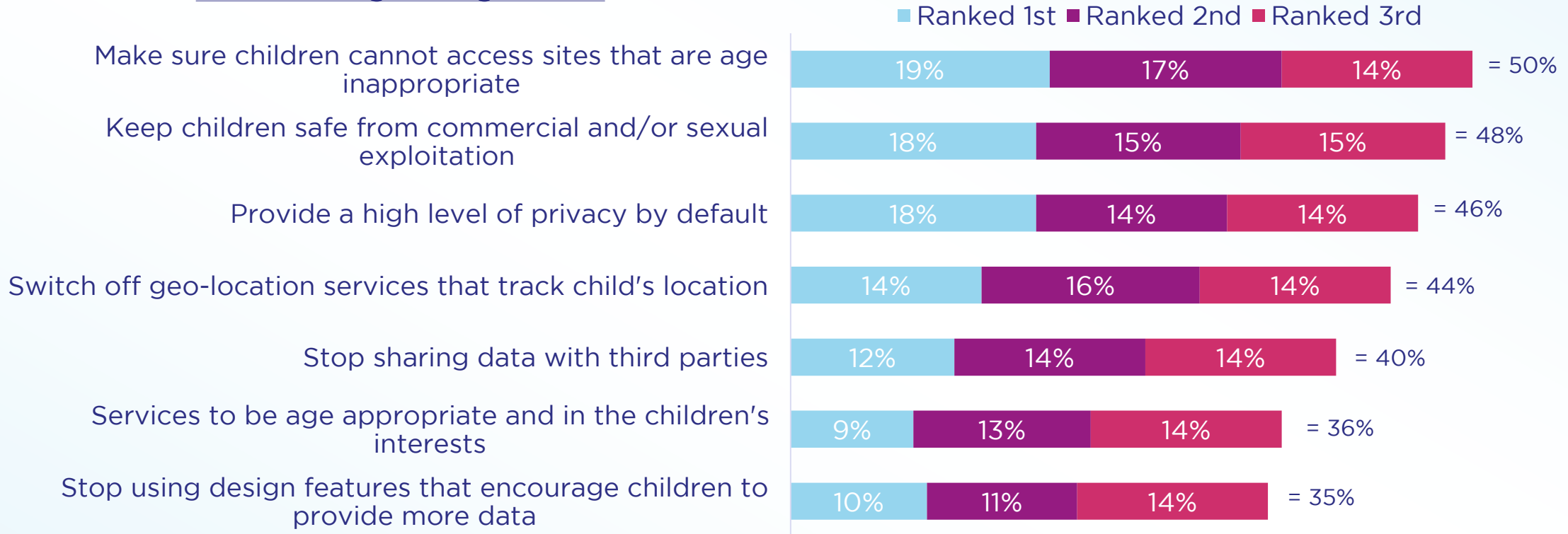
Q. Having read this information about the Children's code, to what extent do you trust this to make the internet better and safer for your child / children? *BASE: 1535.*



# IMPORTANCE OF THE CODE'S FEATURES

Key Takeaway: Parents/carers are more concerned about children accessing age inappropriate sites; there are stronger concerns around the outcome of ensuring children are protected over the processes that allow for this.

## Ranked safeguarding actions



### Key Issue:

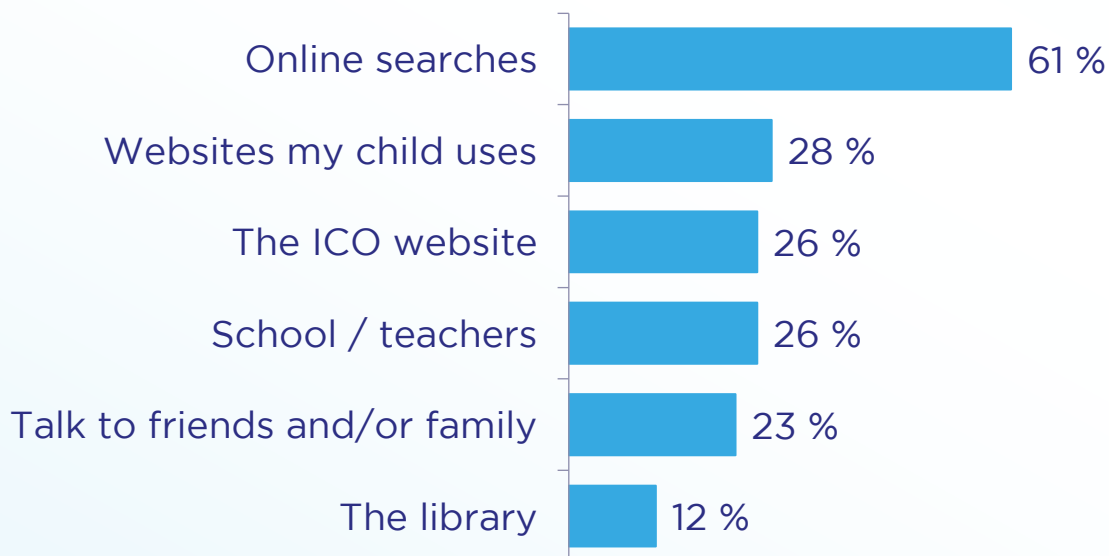
- Age appropriateness and avoiding commercial and sexual exploitation are the biggest concerns for parents/carers; highlighting how the code can address these could help improve trust



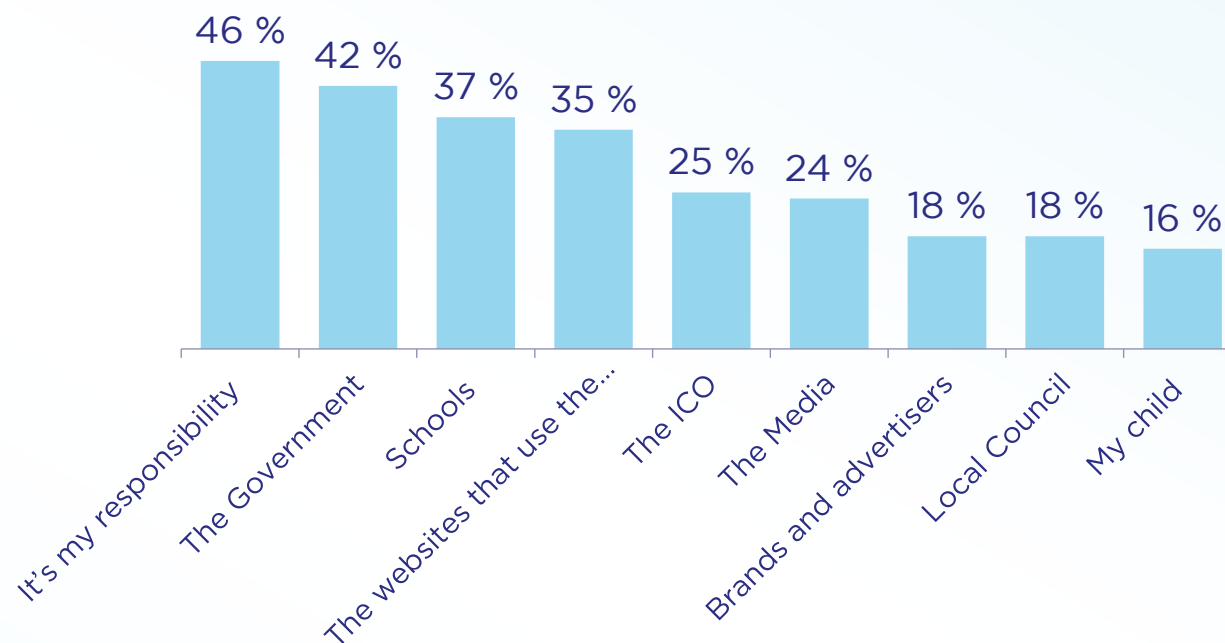
Key Takeaways: Three quarters of parents/carers don't plan on going to the ICO's website to find out more about the Children's code. Spotlighting the website is necessary. A quarter of parents/carers believe the ICO should be communicating the code's information to them.

Parents/Carers

## Means of discovering more information on the code



## Whose responsibility is it to communicate information about the code?



### Key Issues:

- As 6 in 10 parents/carers will turn to the internet to look for information round the code, search engine optimisation should be utilised to ensure parents/carers are finding the ICO's content when they search the web for information.
- If parents are putting the onus on themselves to communicate information about the code, the ICO needs to ensure they are fully educated on the matter.

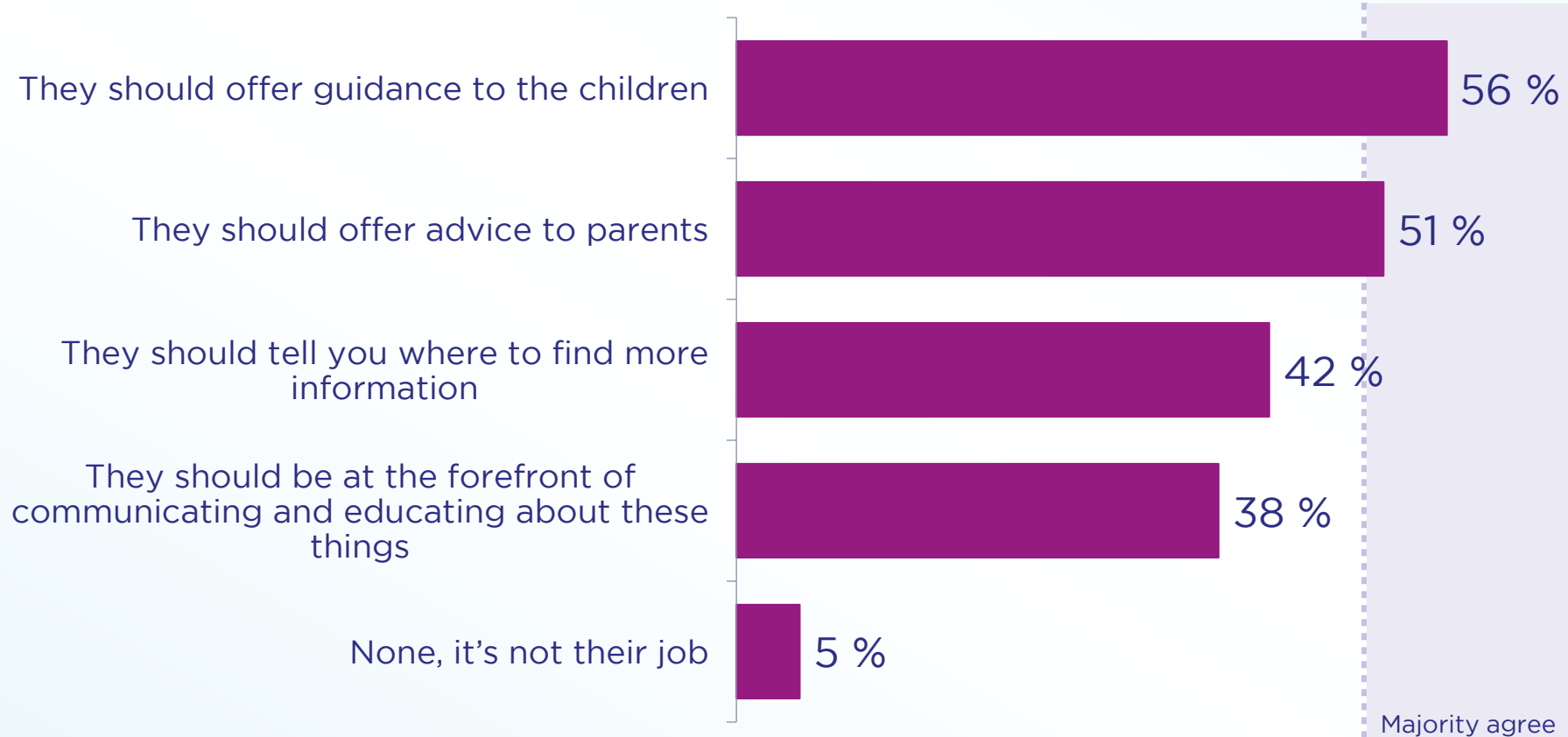
Q. Where will you go to find out more information about the Children's code? *BASE: 1535.*  
Q. Whose responsibility do you believe it is to communicate information about the Children's code to you? *BASE: 1535.*



# SCHOOL'S ROLE IN THE CHILDREN'S CODE

Key Takeaway: 9 in 10 parents/carers believe schools should play some role in educating parents and children about the Children's code.

Parents/Carers



Parents/carers of boys are more likely to think that schools should be involved in communicating the Children's code to families.

**Key Issue:**

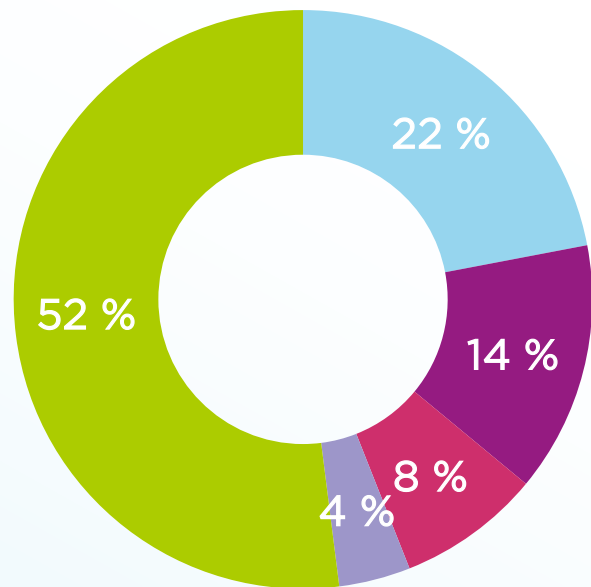
- The majority of parents/carers want schools to offer guidance or advice to children and parents, highlighting a need to equip school teachers to do so.

Q. What role should your child's school have when it comes to the Children's code and Data Privacy? *BASE: 1535.*

Key Takeaway: Over 2 in 10 parents/carers were either unsatisfied with the outcome of reporting a concern or didn't know how to.

Parents/Carers

## Have you ever reported something to an online site that concerned you in relation to your child?



Parents/carers of boys are more likely to report a concern to an online site.

- Yes and I was satisfied with the outcome
- Yes but I was unsatisfied with the outcome
- No but I wanted to and didn't know how
- No because I don't think there's any point
- No because I've never needed to

### Key Issue:

- More support is needed to educate parents/carers on why it's important to report concerning sites, and how to do so effectively.

Q. Have you ever reported something to an online site that concerned you in relation to your child? *BASE: 1535.*



# DISCUSSION WITH CHILDREN AROUND DATA

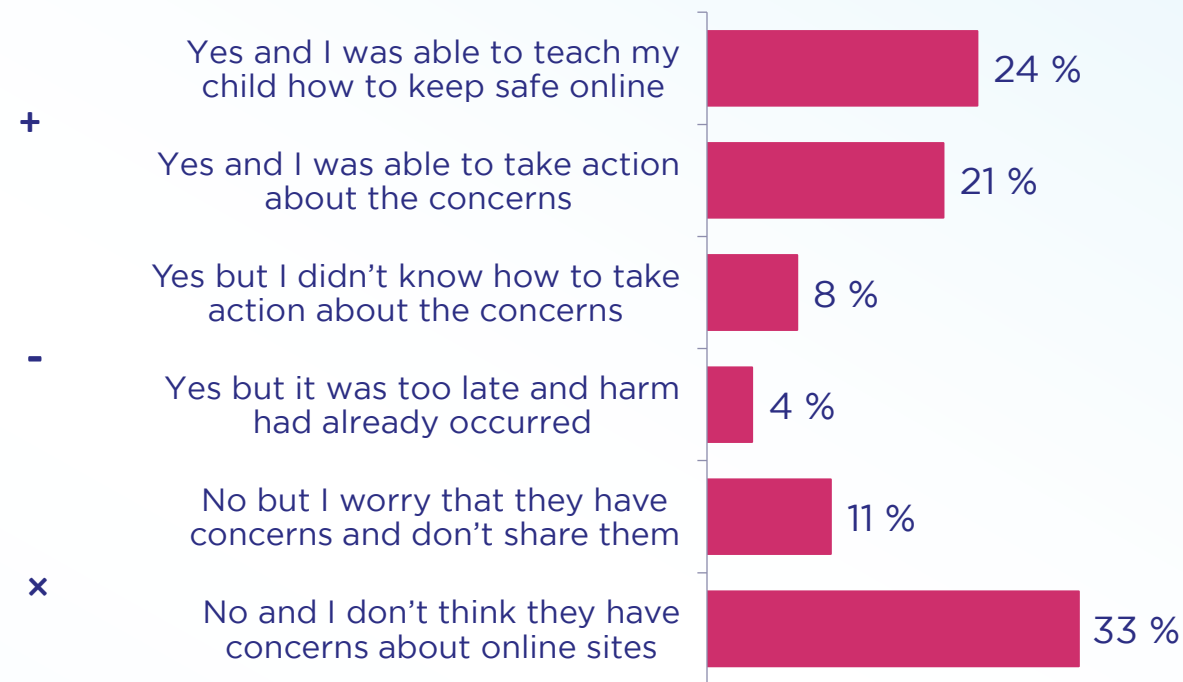
Key Takeaways: 4 in 10 parents/carers don't understand how data is processed. A quarter of parents/carers have been approached by their child with online concerns but have felt comfortable to take action.

Parents/Carers

## Have you discussed how online data is processed with your child?

|                                     | I understand how data is processed | I don't understand how data is processed |       |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|-------|
| Yes, I have discussed with my child | 44%                                | 26%                                      | = 70% |
| No, I have not discussed my child   | 13%                                | 17%                                      | = 30% |
|                                     | = 57%                              | = 43%                                    |       |

## Has your child approached you to discuss online concerns?



### Key Issues:

- Providing parents/carers with the correct information around data processing, will empower them to have more conversations about data. Is there a need for the ICO to suggest 'conversation starters'?

Q. Have you ever discussed with your child how their data is processed when they are online?  
Q. Has your child ever approached you to discuss concerns they had about an online site?

BASE: 1535.

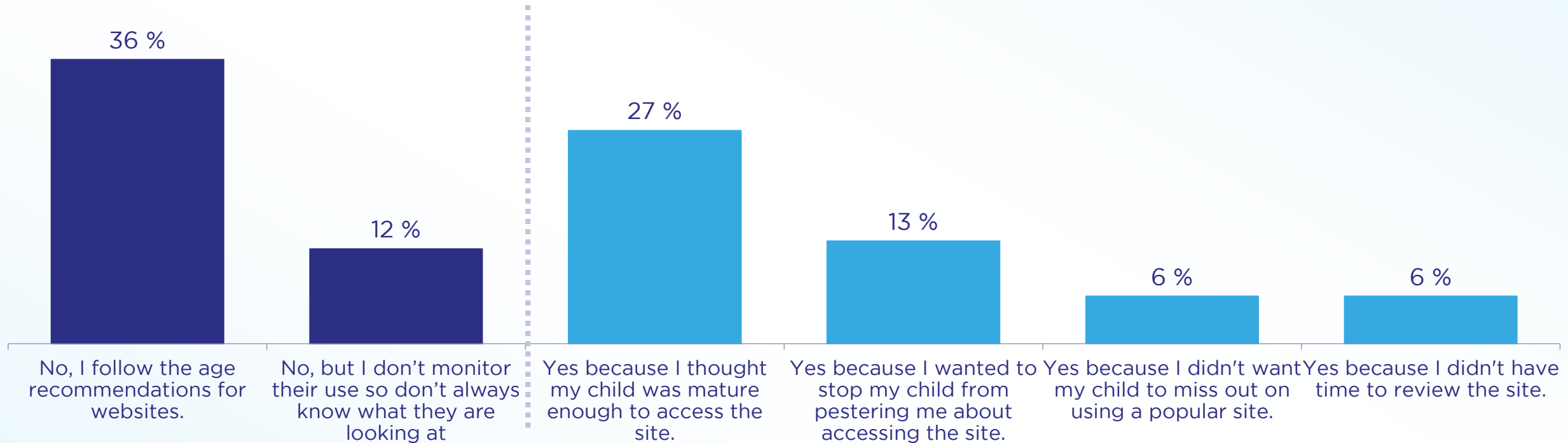


# ABIDING BY AGE RESTRICTED WEBSITES

Key Takeaway: Over half of parents/carers have allowed their child access to an online site they knew they were too young for.

Parents/Carers

## Online access to sites their children are too young for



### Key Issue:

➤ More instruction is needed on why age restrictions exist, and the implications for what risks parents/carers could expose their children to, if they allow them to use different age inappropriate sites. This also has implications for the code itself to protect children.

Q. Have you ever allowed your child access to an online site that you knew they were too young to access? *BASE: 1535.*

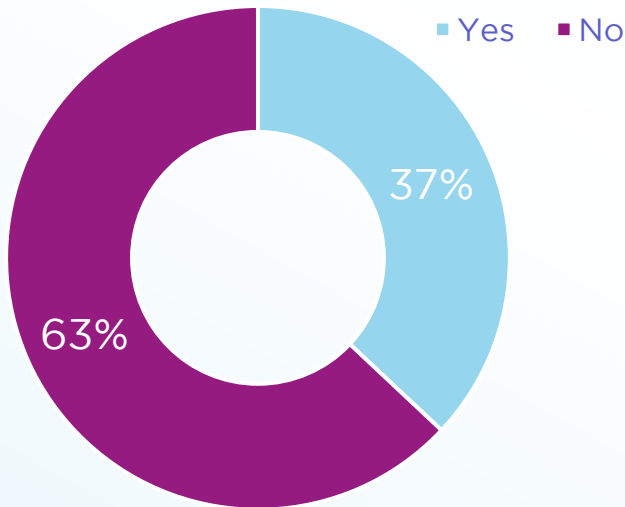


# ACCESS TO SITES WITH INAPPROPRIATE AGE CONTENT

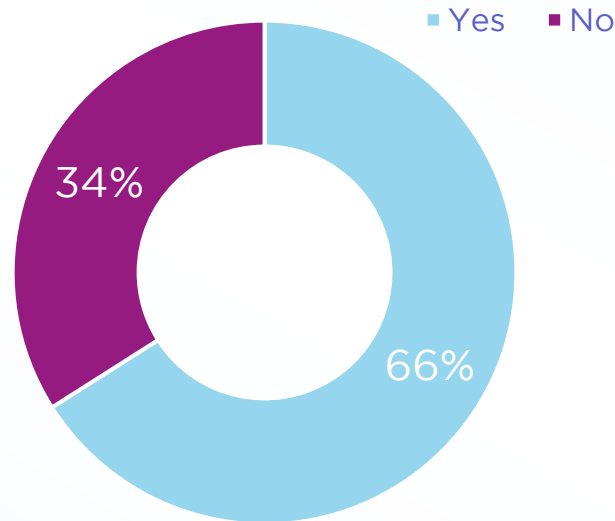
Key Takeaway: Over half of these parents/carers said their child has lied about their age online. The Children's code should address how parents/carers can talk to their children about the purpose of following legislations.

Parents/Carers

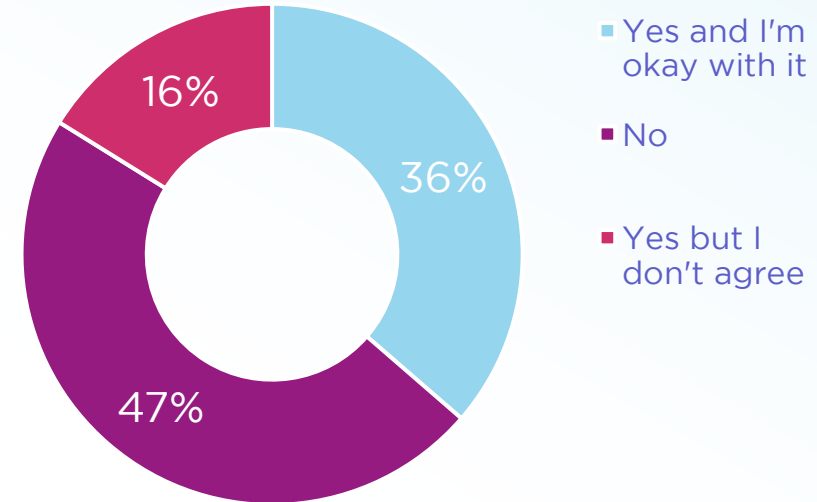
Have you given your child your login to access sites with inappropriate age content?



Do you use parental controls?



Has your child lied about their age to access a site?



### Key Issues:

- Parental education is needed on why age restrictions exist, and the implications for what risks parents/carers could expose their children to if they allow them to use different login details.

Q. Have you ever used your login details so that your child can access online sites they are too young to access with their own login details?

Q. Do you use any form of parental controls to monitor your child's activity online?

Q. When using the internet, are you aware of your child having ever said that they were a different age than they really are in order to access a site or service?

# “WHAT MORE DO YOU THINK NEEDS TO BE DONE TO ENSURE ONLINE SAFETY?”

“Encourage parents to talk to their children”

“Add links or easy click buttons for children to easily report anything they feel uncomfortable about”

Concern for children and their experience online

“More lessons regarding this at primary school level”

“Workshops at schools”

“More tutorials for parents”

Education is key

“Data must be kept anonymous up to a certain age”

“Do not share data with third party players”

Parents wary of the impact of data collection and sharing

Number of responses were keen to increase parental involvement in online safety regulations

“Security checks that have to be validated by parents every so often”

“To be able to approve or deny the child access to certain things by an app “

“Age verification to require parental involvement”



THE  
**INSIGHTS**  
**FAMILY**

---

# **CHILDREN'S SECTION**



## KEY TAKEAWAYS:

### CHILDREN

## KEY ISSUES:



Over half of the children surveyed worry about their data protection when they're online

In line with parents/carers, 71% of children have not heard of the Children's code

Almost three quarters of children aren't certain what the code is. However, once provided more detail, 6 in 10 think the code is a good thing and trust it

The most effective means for hearing about the Children's code was from schools

Privacy is the biggest concern for children but almost half of children have lied about their age to access a site

1

With over half of children being concerned about data protection, the Children's code is well-positioned to provide guidance and reassurance

2

The ICO need to encourage children to recognise the ICO as an organisation working to protect them online, especially around the Children's code (only 14% have heard of the ICO)

3

After reading about the Children's code, more children didn't know what that meant for them than parents, showing the need for a clearer child-friendly description of how the code can help them online

4

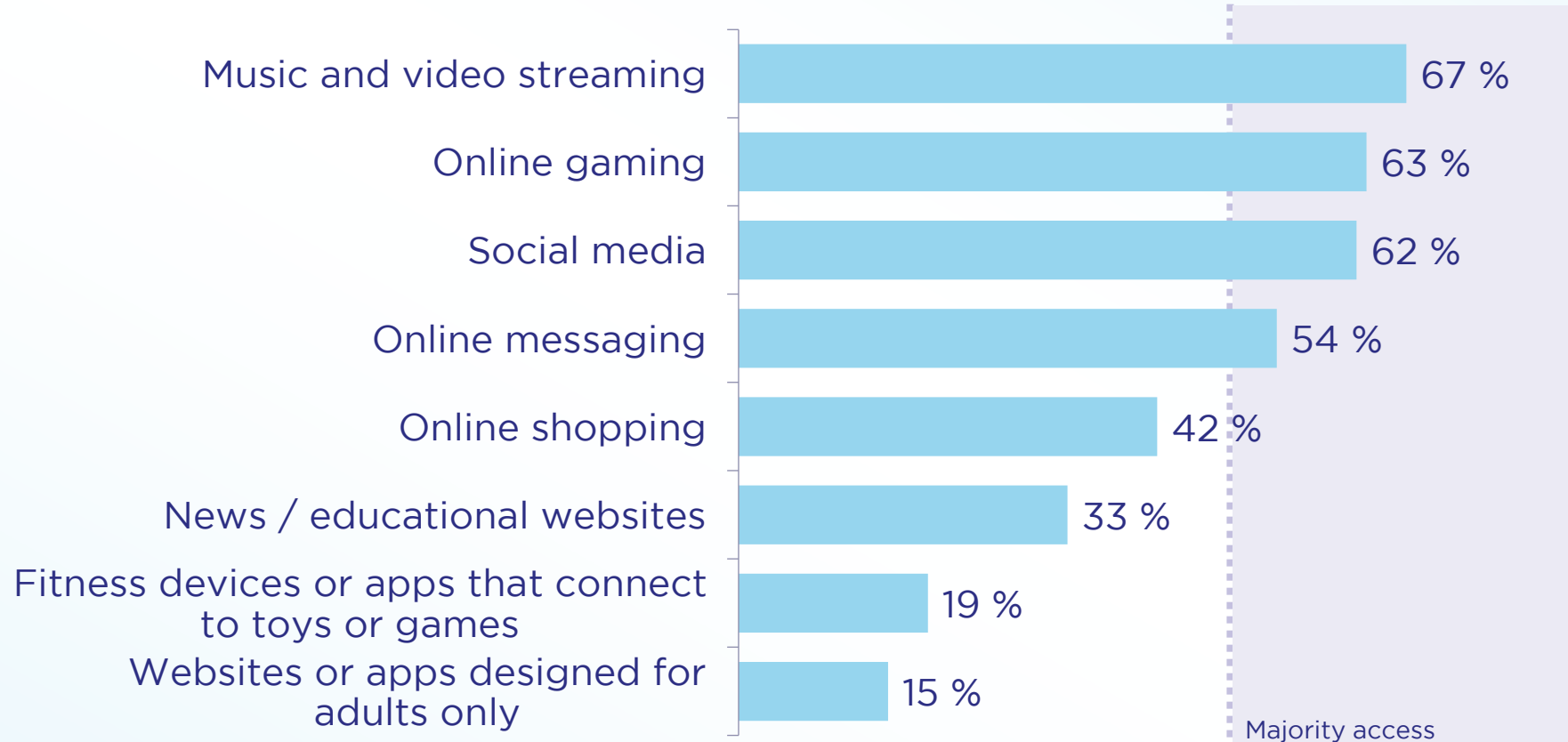
There's a present need to empower teachers with resources on the topic, to ensure if children are predominantly hearing about the code from schools, the information is digestible and clearly understood

5

More awareness is needed around the implications for using online accounts with fake ages. This will encourage children to make better and safer choices online and show them how their privacy concerns could be alleviated

# ONLINE SERVICES ACCESSED

Key Takeaway: The average 8-17 year old has access to four online services. With music and video streaming being the most prominent services, these platforms could be used in example scenarios in marketing materials for children.



Girls are more likely than boys to shop online, use social media and also stream music and videos.

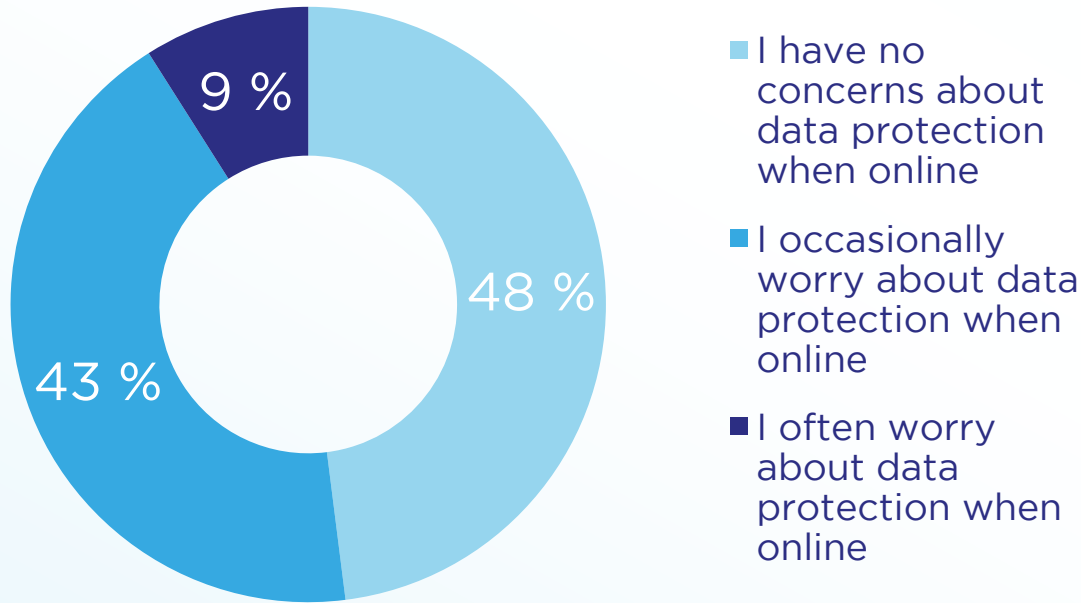
### Key Issue:

- As expected, use of online services increases with age. The Children's code should consider how online safety differs between genders and ages.

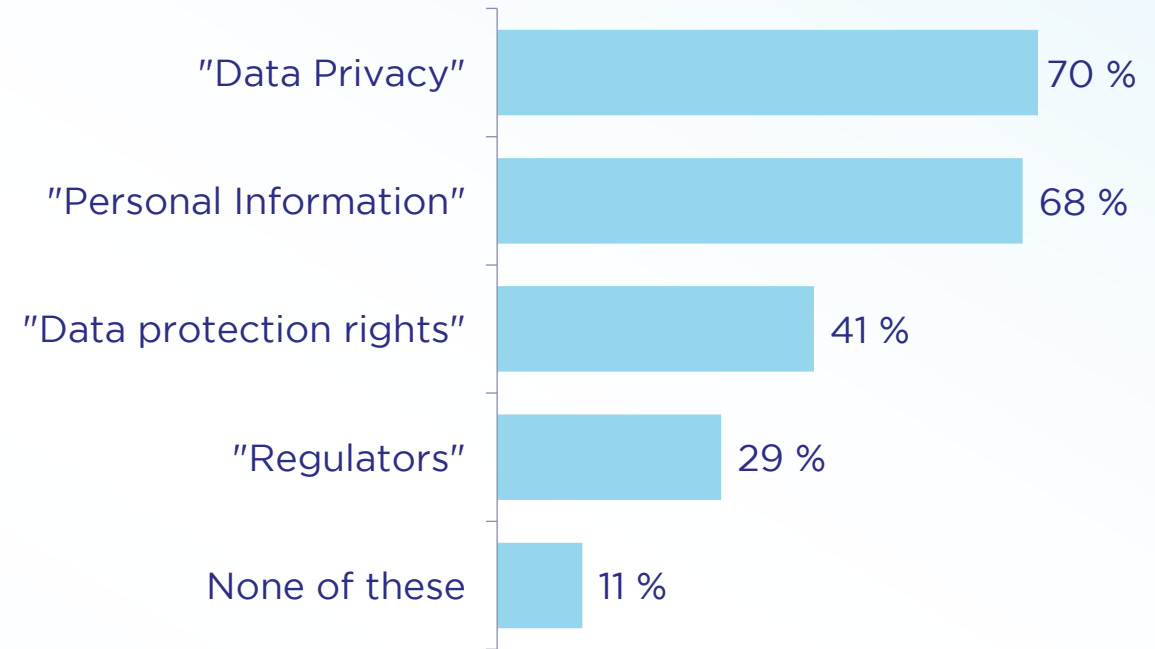


**CONCERNS OVER DATA PROTECTION**  
Key Takeaways: Over half of the children surveyed worry about their data protection when they're online. The terms "data privacy" and "personal information" are most well-known among children, whilst "regulators" is less common.

### How do you feel about data protection?



### Have you heard of these words?



#### Key Issue:

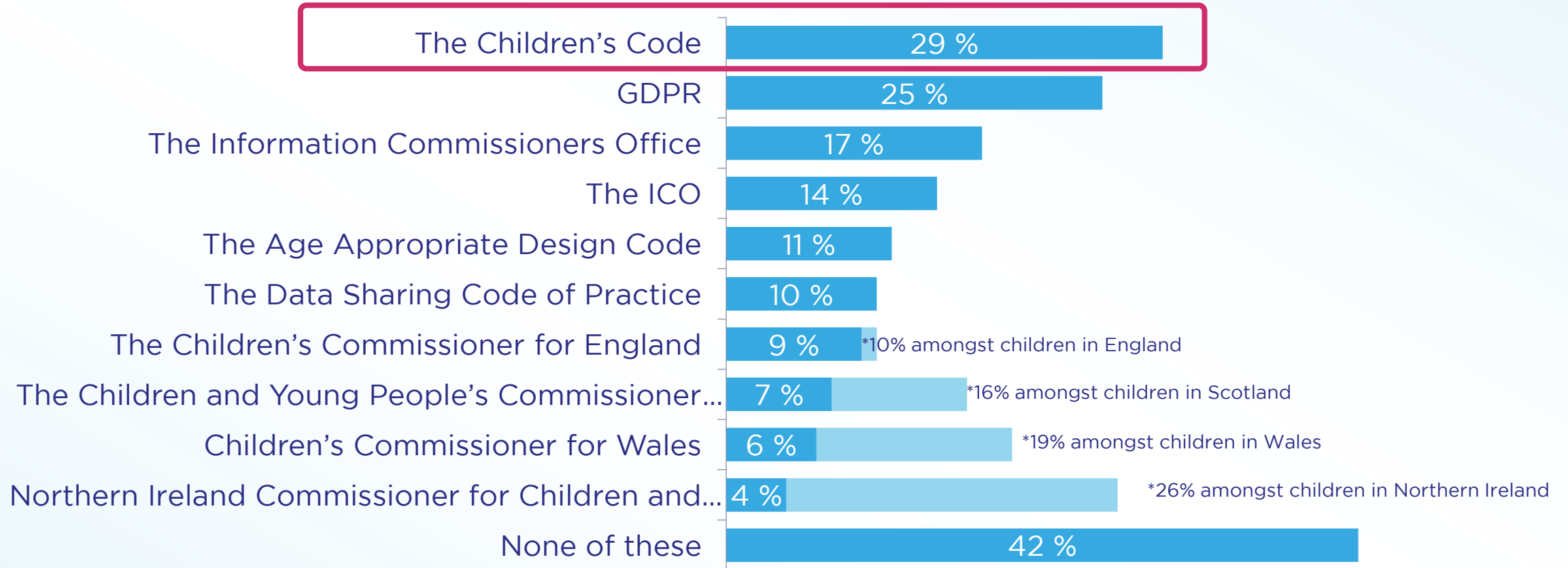
➤ With a large number of kids being concerned about data protection, the Children's code is well-positioned to provide guidance and reassurance.

Q. When you're online, how do you tend to feel about data protection (i.e., how your data is used and stored by the websites that you use)?  
Q. Have you heard of these words, terms and phrases? *BASE: 1535.*





**Key Takeaways:** 4 in 10 kids haven't heard of any of these governances. However, 29% have heard of the Children's code, which mirrors their parent's awareness levels. Boys and 16-17 year olds were most likely to have heard of the Children's code.



**Key Issue:**

- The ICO need to encourage children to recognise the ICO as an organisation working to protect them online, especially around the Children's code.

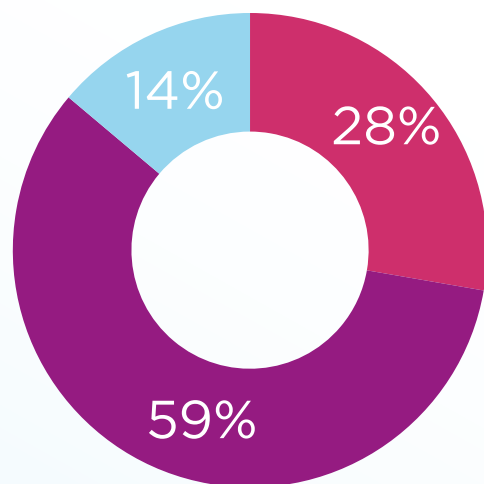
Q. Have you ever heard of any of the following? *BASE: 1535.*

\* Caution: Small base number for Scotland (133), Wales (117) and Northern Ireland (94).

# AWARENESS AND DISCOVERY OF THE CHILDREN'S CODE

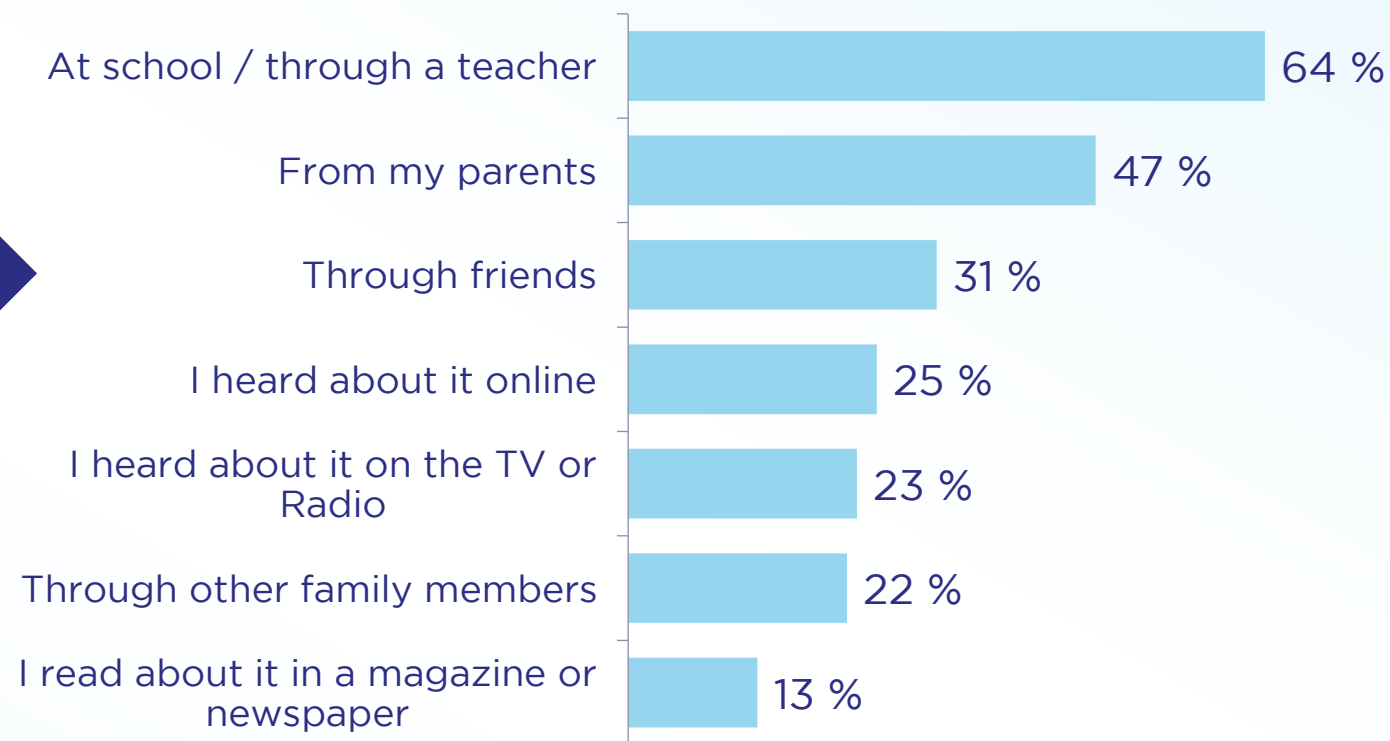
Key Takeaways: In line with parents, almost three quarters of children aren't certain what the code's purpose is. Boys are more likely to know exactly what the code is.

## Do you know what the Children's code is?



- Yes, I know what this is / does
- I have a bit of an idea
- No, not at all

## Where did you hear about the Children's code?



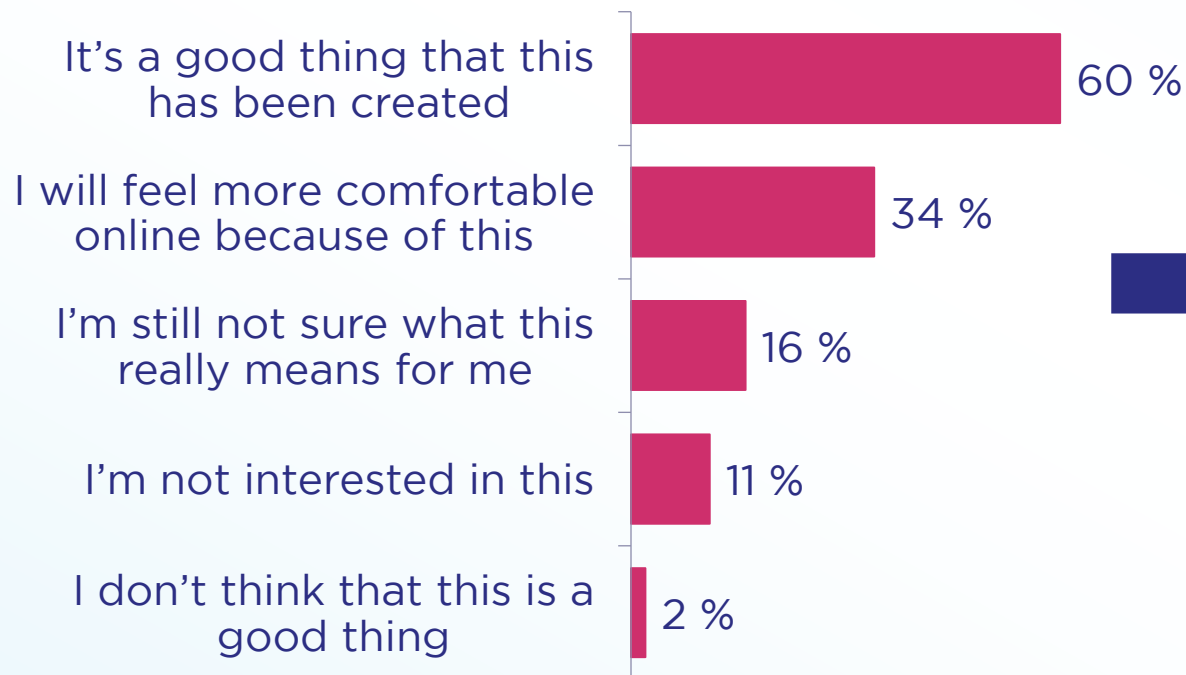
### Key Issue:

- The most common way for children to have learnt about the Children's code is through trusted sources of information, specifically schools and parents. The ICO should focus on providing these groups with the appropriate resources.

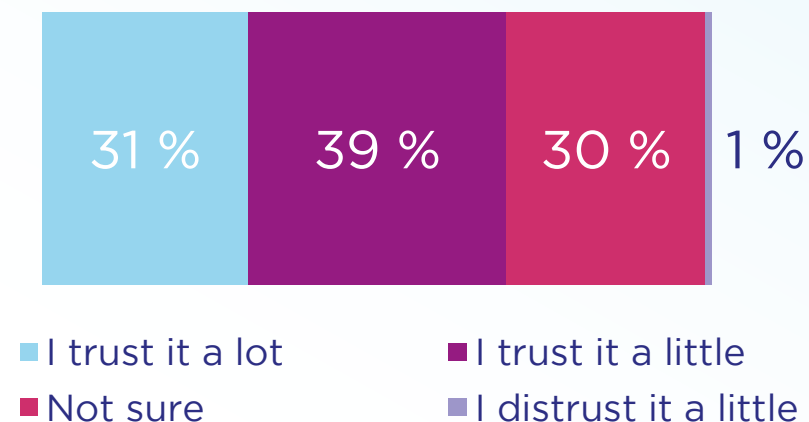
# THOUGHTS ON THE CHILDREN'S CODE

Key Takeaways: Once shown more detail on the Children's code, 6 in 10 children think it's a good thing but 30% are still not sure if it will make the internet safer for them.

## What do you think of the Children's code?



## To what extent do you trust the Children's code?



### Key Issue:

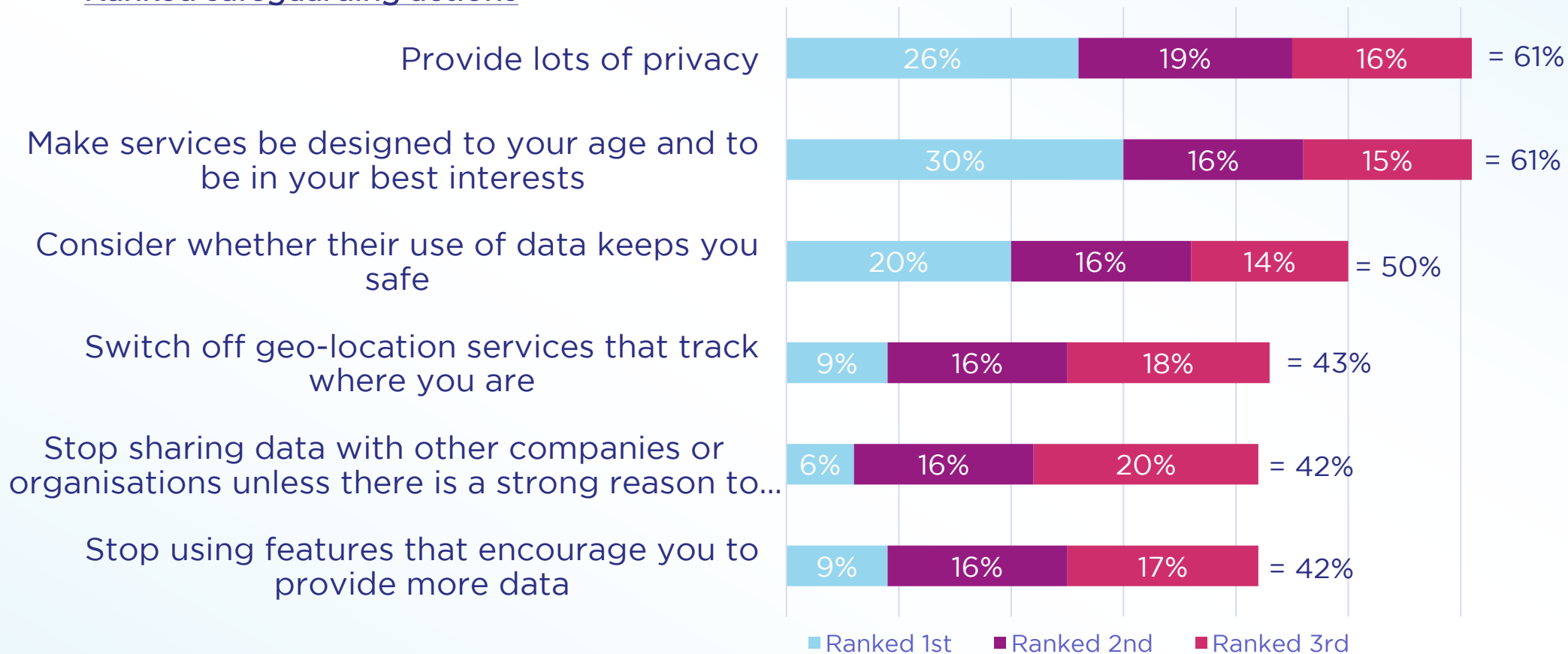
- After reading the description of the code, only 3 in 10 trust it to keep them safe online "a lot". Focusing on areas that are important to children when it comes to online safety will help improve trust.

Q. What do you think of the Children's code as described above? *BASE: 1535.*  
 Q. Having read this information about the Children's code, to what extent do you trust this to make the internet better and safer for you? *BASE: 1535.*

# IMPORTANCE OF THE CODE'S FEATURES

Key Takeaways: Children want to feel safe and looked after when using online services. The factors children find most important are those which make it easy and simple for them to find safe places online.

## Ranked safeguarding actions



### Key Issue:

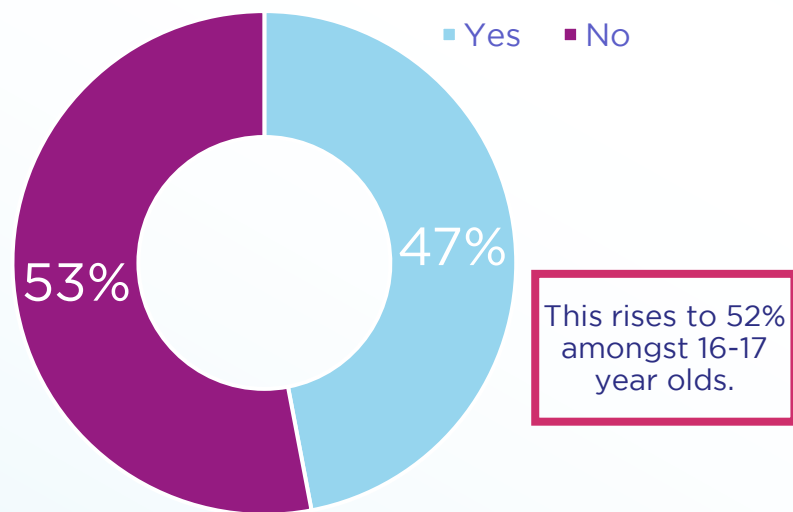
➤ In the guidance provided for children, emphasis should be put on what the Children's code means for children's privacy, as this is the main concern.

Q. More specifically, the Children's code means that online companies must appropriately safeguard children's data. Please can you re-order this list to show us which you think is most important. *BASE: 1535.*

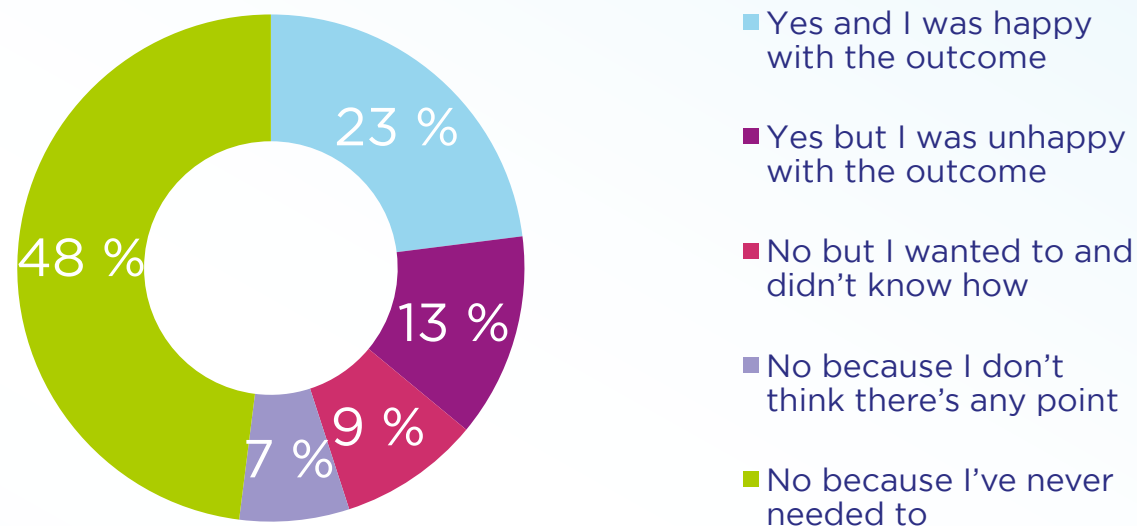
# ACCESS TO SITES WITH INAPPROPRIATE AGE CONTENT

Key Takeaways: Almost half of children admit to having lied about their age online to access a site. 1 in 10 wanted to report an online concern, but didn't know how to, rising to 13% amongst 8-11 year olds.

## Have you lied about your age to access a site?



## Have you ever reported something to an online site that concerned you?



### Key Issue:

- ICO should aim to empower children to recognise concerning content on a site and to know how to report it effectively.

Q. When using the internet, have you ever said that you were a different age than you really are – in order to access a site or service?

Q. Have you ever reported something to an online site that concerned you? *BASE: 1535.*

# DISCUSSION OF DATA WITH ADULTS

Key Takeaways: 4 in 10 children don't understand how data is processed online, but over half have discussed this with their parents/carers, showing a disjoint between comprehension and discussion.

Have you ever discussed with a responsible adult how your data is processed when you're online?

|  | I understand how data is processed | I don't understand how data is processed | I don't want my parents knowing what I look at online |       |
|--|------------------------------------|--|---|-------|
| Yes, I have discussed with an adult    | 36%                                | 20%                                      | n/a   | = 56% |
| No, I have not discussed with an adult | 11%                                | 24%                                      | 8%  | = 43% |
|  | = 47%                              | = 44%                                    |   |       |

55% of 8-11 year olds said they do not understand how data is processed online.

### Key Issue:

- More education is needed on how data is processed online, via educators, to make children feel more confident in having data conversations with their parents. Education about online safety should start from a younger age so children feel more confident.

Q. And finally, have you ever discussed with a responsible adult, such as a parent, teacher or carer, how your data is processed when you're online? *BASE: 1535.*

# “WHAT MORE DO YOU THINK NEEDS TO BE DONE TO ENSURE ONLINE SAFETY?”

“Education at schools”

“Teachers should talk about online safety more”

“Clearer, simpler instructions on where my data goes”

“Encourage people to change their passwords each month”

Education a shared value between children and parents

Children want more online support

“Hotline for concern”

“Have a link to report data cases”

Cautious about other adults  
- children see older people as part of the danger

“Prevent grown up people from accessing sites designed for children”

“Less strangers on sites”

“Adults should prove their ID when registering accounts”

“Tighter laws for businesses to follow when creating their websites”

“Less spam or dangerous links on websites”

Children want to see changes to make digital landscape more safe



THE  
**INSIGHTS**  
**FAMILY**

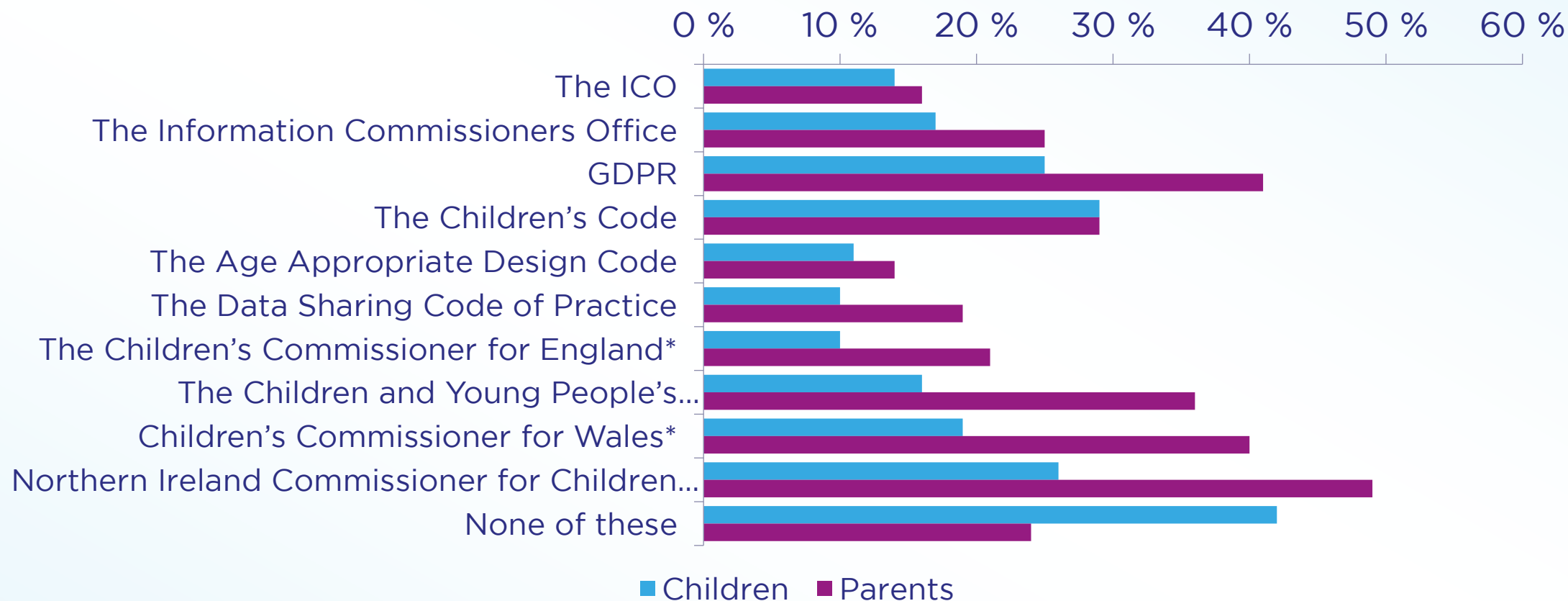
---

# **PARENTS / CARERS AND CHILDREN: A COMPARISON**



# AWARENESS OF GOVERNANCE

Key Takeaways: Awareness of governance codes and organisations is higher amongst parents/carers than it is amongst children – as you might expect. The Children’s code is the only example where knowledge was equal between the two groups.



### Key Issue:

- Around 70% of both parents/carers and children have not heard of the Children’s code. More work is needed across both children and parents/carers to make the ICO recognisable as the go-to resource spearheading children’s online safety.

\*Data shown is the parents & children of each relevant country


Q. Have you ever heard of any of the following? *BASE: 1535.*

# IMPORTANCE OF THE CODE'S FEATURES

Key Takeaways: Overall, parents/carers and children believe privacy is the most important factor, followed by safety.

| Factor*   | Rank amongst parents/carers | Rank amongst children | Average of parents/carers & children ranks |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Provide a high level of privacy   | 2                           | 1                     | 1.5  |
| Consider whether their use of data keeps children safe                          | 1                           | 3                     | 2  |
| Make services be designed for children's ages and to be in their best interests | 5                           | 2                     | 3.5  |
| Switch off geo-location services that track where children are                  | 3                           | 4                     | 3.5  |
| Stop sharing data with third parties unless there is a strong reason to do so.  | 4                           | 5                     | 4.5  |
| Stop using features that encourage children to provide more data                | 6                           | 6                     | 6  |

**Highest Rank**



**Lowest Rank**

\*Excludes 'Check a user's age to make sure children cannot access sites that are age inappropriate' from Parent survey, which parents ranked above all other factors

### Key Issue:

- Privacy should be highlighted as a core aspect of the Children's code in any materials looking to jointly target parents/carers and children.

Q. More specifically, the Children's code means that online companies must appropriately safeguard children's data. Please can you re-order this list to show us which you think is most important. *BASE: 1535.*

## Extra Insights



- Parents with children aged 3-9 are +17% more likely to name online safety as their top concern compared to those with kids aged 10-16.
- The number of parents with kids aged 3-8 reporting online safety as a major concern has increased +15% in the last 3 months.
- Older parents are more concerned with online safety, reporting it as the 4<sup>th</sup> top concern, whereas younger parents rank online safety 6<sup>th</sup>.
- 56% of parents worry their child spends too long online (parents of 3-11s and 12-16s).
- 62% of parents of children aged 12-16 worry that their child isn't always safe online. Equally, 65% of parents of children aged 5-11 worry.



- Younger children (3-9s) spend an average of 39 minutes a day on the internet/social media, whereas older children (10-18s) spend an average of 1:23 minutes online.
- Tween boys (10-12s) are more concerned about online safety than girls of the same age, ranking it in the top 5 concerns. This has increased +63% in the last 3 months (June-August 2021 vs. September - November 2021)
- Cyber-bullying is the top concern about being online for children (3-18s) in the UK, followed by privacy and hacking.

# WE HOPE TO BE A PART OF YOUR FUTURE

## CONTACT US

### The Insights Family

76 King Street  
Manchester, M2 4NH

United Kingdom

+44 (0)161 528 7982  
[hello@theinsightsfamily.com](mailto:hello@theinsightsfamily.com)  
[www.theinsightsfamily.com](http://www.theinsightsfamily.com)

