# The Children's code

Understanding Awareness, Effectiveness and Impact amongst Children, Parents and Teachers

**February 2023**

THE INSIGHTS FAMILY

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To understand the awareness, effectiveness and impact of 'The Children's code' amongst children, parents, and teachers

To create a benchmark and track future metrics with a view to assessing how awareness and understanding changes as more materials are published.

To understand differences and similarities in metrics between the nations.

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## Research was conducted in three stages:

**Stage 1:**      **Parents and Carer's / Children's Survey**
Fieldwork dates:      24-28th October
Sample:      Children aged 8-17 years old
Breaks:      8-11 / 12-15 / 16-17

**Stage 2:**      **Teachers Survey**
Fieldwork dates:      24-28th October
Sample:      Teachers with some responsibility for PSHE or Safeguarding
Breaks:      50% Primary schools / 50% Secondary schools

**Stage 3:**      **Children's Focus Groups**
Fieldwork dates:      16th November
Sample:      Children aged 12-17 (and their parents)

| |
|---|
| **Total Sample; n=1,616** |
| England; n=1,345 |
| Scotland; n=120 |
| NI; n=57 |
| Wales; n=94 |
| **Total Sample; n=300** |
| England; n=144 |
| Scotland; n=72 |
| NI; n=42 |
| Wales; n=42 |
| **Total Sample; n=14** |

- The report was put together by using the Parent's and Children's Surveys as a framework, then by overlaying relevant Teacher's Survey data and focus group findings.

- The majority of figures reported are percentages, however in a few cases where it provides greater insight, we have used NET figures. A typical example would be, for a question where we ask people to what extent they agree with a statement, the NET figure would refer to everyone that either said they 'slightly agree' or 'strongly agree'.

Survey Summary

The hurdles to protecting children's data privacy remain similar to those identified in last year's surveys. Despite broad overall concern about the risks they face on the internet, it is the minority of parents and children who are aware of the guiding organisations and regulations that exist to protect them. Smaller still is the proportion of them who fully understand the risks, and the ways in which organisations aim to intervene. Teachers are making efforts to educate children and parents, however their work would be more effective with greater support, resources, and teaching standardisation.

In the specific case of The Children's code, the primary focus needs to be continuing to raise awareness, then deepening understanding. In turn, this will mean that parents and children can become informed Internet users, empowered with the knowledge to protect themselves and their data.

Focus Group Summary

It seems there is **no opposition** to the idea of The Children's code or what it seeks to achieve. However, in order to have significant impact, it needs to:

- Be better known
- Be backed with more publicity around the dangers of misuse of data
- Be perceived as having real teeth, with prosecutions being brought to enforce it.

Young people are getting a great deal of pleasure from socialising, seeking information, and learning from the internet. They **believe themselves to be smart enough to avoid its dangers** and their parents, though concerned, tend to **feel they've armed their children with the knowledge and wisdom to avoid danger.**

A campaign to scare people would likely be counter-productive. However, **a campaign that informs this audience about dangers, solutions and effective steps that can be taken for recourse looks like it would be very positive.**

# PARENTS' AND CARERS' SURVEY

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# KEY FINDINGS:

# KEY ACTIONS:

Parents are not overly confident in their knowledge of data protection and privacy. A minority of parents have heard of the code (20%), and of those that are aware, it remains the case that most of them only have a little idea of what it's about. Also, the lack of knowledge about DP is impeding parents' ability to have discussions with and support their children when concerns are raised (Slide 8, 14, 25).

Address knowledge deficits. It is the minority of parents who are well-informed about data privacy issues and the guidance and legislation that exist to deal with them.

9 in 10 parents are worried about their child's data privacy, up from 8 in 10 last year. Whilst this remains an issue, parents perceive the code positively and believe it will provide benefits (Slide 14).

Position compliance with the code as an effective intervention that will give parents peace of mind regarding their child's data privacy. In turn, generate a call to action for concerned parents to engage with and/or get in touch with relevant companies to suggest compliance with the code; so parents can effect change both in their individual cases and for children generally.

Parents recognise the increasingly internet-based life their children are leading, and many don't want to get in the way of this. Parents are aware of and at times, assist their children in circumventing age restrictions (Slide 24).
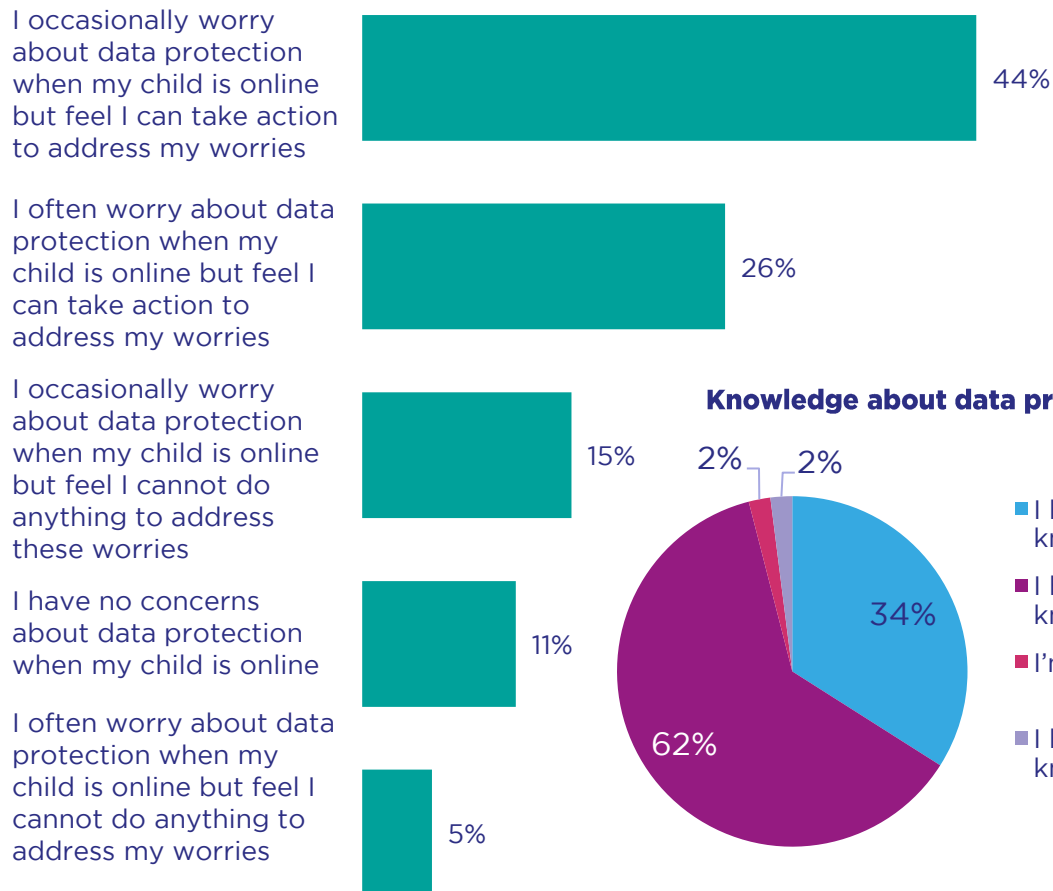
Provide guidance for parents that both recommends best practice, but also helps them operationalise guidance in a way that suits the specifics of their situation.

Lack of alignment between the approaches of teachers and parents with regards to the responsibility to educate children and deal with data protection issues. There's a disconnect between the efforts of teachers to educate and the extent to which parents are engaging with this (Slide 10,15, 19, 20, 21, 27).

Encourage parents to engage further with educational outreach from teachers, with a view to supporting their child and protecting their data privacy. Emphasise the extent to which protecting their child's data is best achieved via the combined efforts of themselves, teachers, the Government, and relevant charities and organisations.

Risks associated with the content that can be accessed through a range of online activities, were front of mind more so than data protection risks (Slide 9).
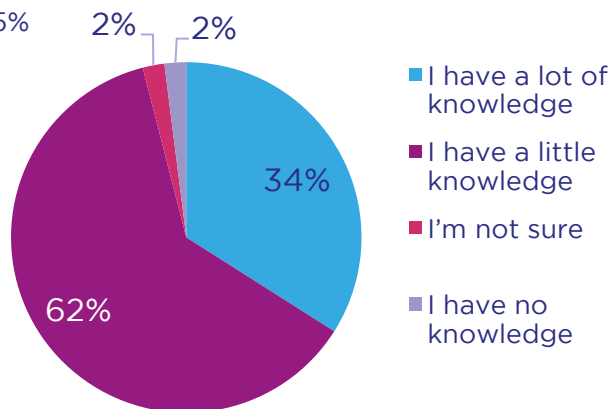
Working with the fact that inappropriate content is a risk priority for parents, highlight the aspects of the code that deal with these, whilst also using it as a stepping stone to further education about data protection risks and how the code is in place to address these.

# PARENTS' DATA PROTECTION ATTITUDE AND KNOWLEDGE

## Attitudes around data protection

I occasionally worry about data protection when my child is online but feel I can take action to address my worries — **44%**

I often worry about data protection when my child is online but feel I can take action to address my worries — **26%**

I occasionally worry about data protection when my child is online but feel I cannot do anything to address these worries — **15%**

I have no concerns about data protection when my child is online — **11%**

I often worry about data protection when my child is online but feel I cannot do anything to address my worries — **5%**

## Knowledge about data protection



- 34% I have a lot of knowledge
- 62% I have a little knowledge
- 2% I'm not sure
- 2% I have no knowledge

- Parents reported feeling an underlying level of anxiety, with regards to data protection and their children being online; only 1 in 10 parents reported having no concerns.
  - Irrespective of their level of concern, 7 in 10 parents said that they felt they could take action to address their worries, with the remaining 20% of parents saying they felt like they couldn't do this.

- When asked about their own knowledge of data protection, most parents said they had 'a little' knowledge of the issue.
  - Only a third (34%) of parents reported that they considered themselves to have 'a lot of knowledge' on the matter.
  - Parents who classified their job as a higher managerial, administrative, or professional role, were significantly more likely to report that they had 'a lot of' knowledge about data protection, than parents with any other type of profession

- Despite most parents feeling like they can intervene, it remains a concern amidst all the other worries parents have to contend with.
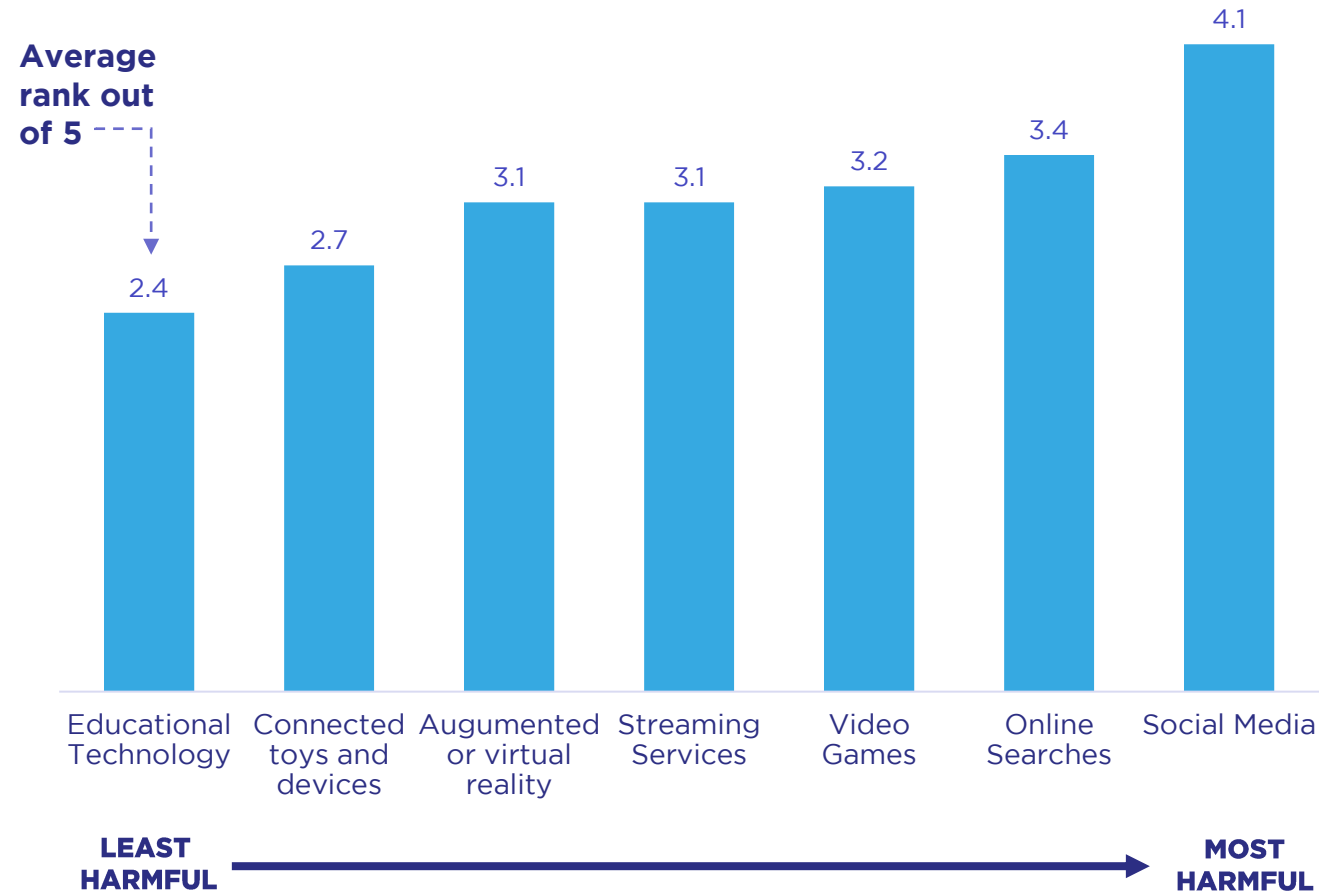
**Focus Group Findings:** Until the concept was introduced to them during the groups, neither children nor parents tended to think about the protection of their data privacy when considering their online activities. The concept of data potentially being misused does not appear to resonate at all. This is interesting because many parents are conscious of the risks of misuse of, for example, their own credit card information and often speak of irritation that they are seeing advertising which is clearly traceable to things they have looked up in the past. Data protection risks to their children seem less pertinent, perhaps in part because the other dangers they are presented with seem much graver

B1.What would you say is your general attitude around data protection (how data and personal information is used) when it comes to your child/young person being online?
B3.Please select the following option that best describes your knowledge about data protection risks of harm from online services?
*BASE: All Respondents - 1616*

# PARENTS' DATA PROTECTION RISK PERCEPTION

**Please rank the following online services based on the level of data protection risks they pose to children.
Where 1 is the least harmful and 5 is the most harmful?**

**Average rank out of 5**



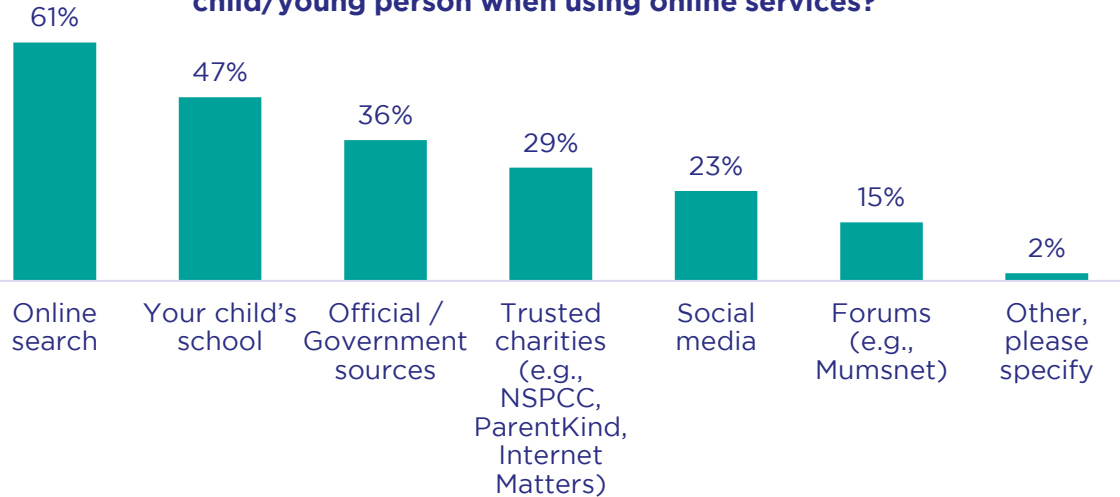| Educational Technology | Connected toys and devices | Augmented or virtual reality | Streaming Services | Video Games | Online Searches | Social Media |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2.4 | 2.7 | 3.1 | 3.1 | 3.2 | 3.4 | 4.1 |

**LEAST HARMFUL** → **MOST HARMFUL**

- Social media stands out as the top most potentially harmful online activity, as rated by parents.
  - 43% of parents assigned this online activity a score of 5/5, in terms of how harmful they think it is.

- Use of AR/VR, streaming services, and video games, were all regarded as similarly harmful by parents.
  - Risk perception of social media – parents are using it, and may have more certainty about the risks because they have more experience.
  - Risk perception of video games and AR/VR – children are using it more than their parents, the concern is about the unknowns.

- Since parents are nearly twice as likely to say they have a little knowledge rather than a lot with respect to data protection , it likely that risk perception is in part felt due to a lack of understanding. Further, the rankings suggest concern about the content that can be presented in each of the activities, rather than data protection issues that come with them.
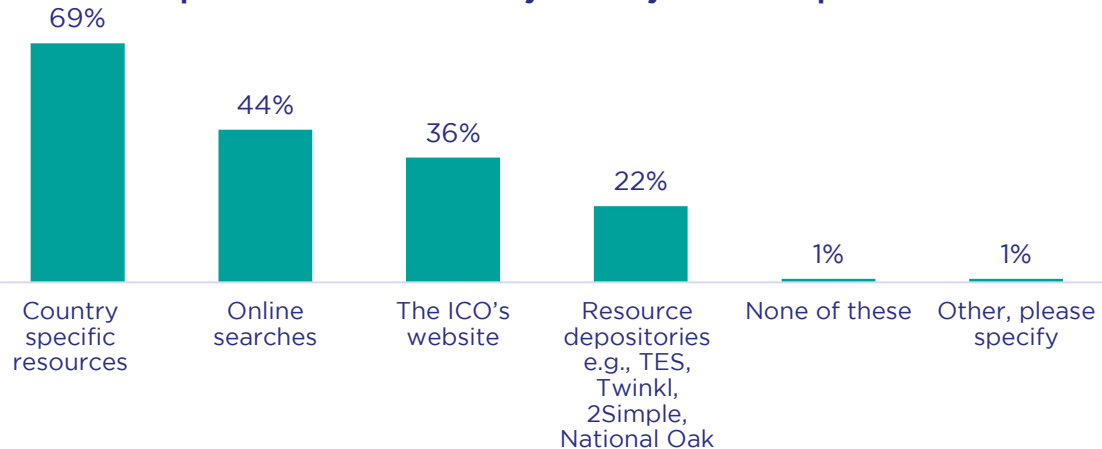
**Focus Group Findings:** When asked about safety on the internet (before it is defined) children, young people and parents all automatically think of the dangers of relationships being formed where someone befriends a child claiming to be of similar age and interests looking to make friends, and actually is a much older person with far less honourable motives. The utter horror of the potential consequences here clearly represent a significant part of why this is the thing that first comes to mind when internet safety is considered.

# PARENTS' AND TEACHERS' SOURCES OF INFORMATION REGARDING DATA PROTECTION

**PARENTS: Where do you seek information to support your child/young person when using online services?**



- Online search: 61%
- Your child's school: 47%
- Official / Government sources: 36%
- Trusted charities (e.g., NSPCC, ParentKind, Internet Matters): 29%
- Social media: 23%
- Forums (e.g., Mumsnet): 15%
- Other, please specify: 2%

**TEACHERS: Where do you obtain information on protecting personal data to inform you and your lesson plans?**



- Country specific resources: 69%
- Online searches: 44%
- The ICO's website: 36%
- Resource depositories e.g., TES, Twinkl, 2Simple, National Oak: 22%
- None of these: 1%
- Other, please specify: 1%

- The majority of parents use online search, when seeking information to support their child when using online services., at 61%. This is followed by their child's school (47%).

- Parents who considered themselves as having 'a lot of knowledge' about data protection, were significantly more likely to seek information from official/government sources and trusted charities.

- In comparison, initially most teachers use a more targeted approach, utilising country specific resources (e.g., in England, the PSHE Association, in Wales, the Wales Hwb and South-West Grid for Learning, in Northern Ireland, the Education Authority, and in Scotland the Education Scotland Website), followed by online searches.

  - Further, around a third of teacher's use The ICO's website directly.

**Do you provide parents with information about how they can support their child to protect their personal data at home?**



- No 11%
- Unsure 4%
- Yes 85%
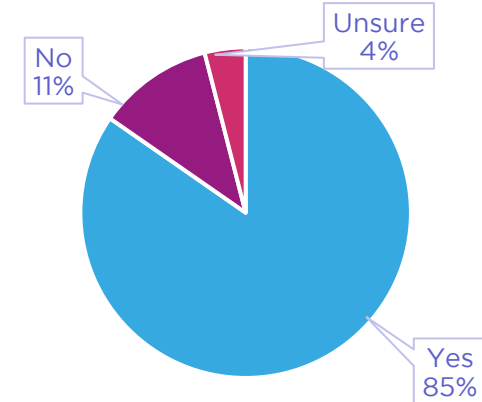
- More than 8 in 10 teachers reported that they do provide parents with information as to how they can support their child in protecting their personal data (85%).

# PARENTS' PERCEPTION OF EXISTING GUIDANCE

**To what extent do you agree that data protection legislation and associated guidance is a...**

| | Strongly disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Slightly agree | Strongly agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Barrier to children's use of online services | 7% | 22% | 31% | 30% | 11% |
| Protector of children (against privacy risks and harms) | 2% | 5% | 26% | 49% | 19% |
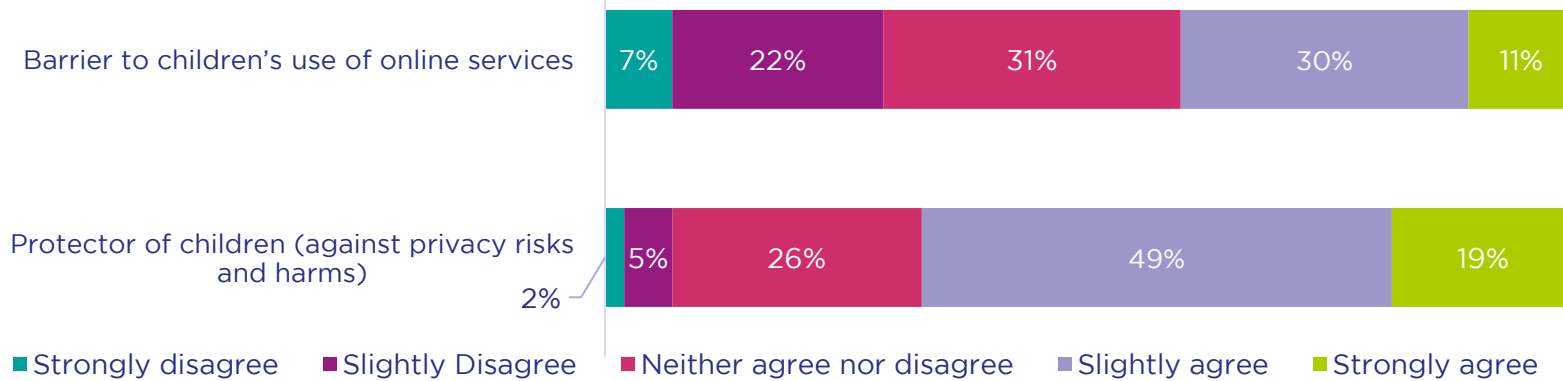
**Those who gave the same answer for both barrier and protector**

| | Protector | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Barrier | Strongly disagree | Slightly disagree | Neither agree nor disagree / not sure | Slightly agree | Strongly agree |
| **Strongly disagree** | 1% | 1% | 0% | 2% | 3% |
| **Slightly disagree** | 0% | 2% | 5% | 12% | 3% |
| **Neither agree nor disagree / not sure** | 0% | 1% | 14% | 13% | 3% |
| **Slightly agree** | 0% | 1% | 6% | 18% | 4% |
| **Strongly agree** | 0% | 0% | 0% | 4% | 6% |

| 0-5% | 5-10% |
|---|---|
| 10-15% | 15-20% |

- Barrier but also a protector; inherent to guidance that seeks to influence the behaviour of internet users, parents have a fear of missing out on behalf of their child, if other children are partaking in online activities they technically shouldn't be – See slide 49 Focus Group Finding.
- More of them view it as protective, 68% vs. 41%.
- 29% (NET Disagree) of parents don't view such legislation and guidance as a barrier, potentially viewing it as a way to make online services accessible to children, in an appropriate way.
- 6% of parents answered 'Strongly agree' to data protection guidance and legislation as being a barrier and a protector.

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B5. To what extent do you agree that data protection legislation and associated guidance (such as UK GDPR or the Children's code) is...
B6. Have you ever heard of any of the following?
*BASE: All Respondents - 1616*
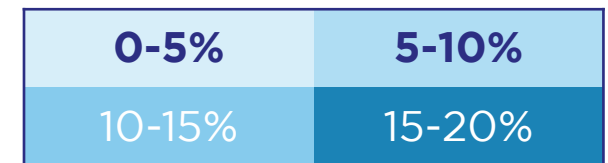
# PARENTS' AWARENESS OF EXISTING GUIDANCE

**Have you ever heard of any of the following?**



| | |
|---|---|
| UK GDPR | 56% |
| Online Safety Bill | 37% |
| The Data Sharing Code of Practice | 26% |
| The Information Commissioners Office | 24% |
| None of these | 20% |
| The Children's Code | 20% |
| The ICO | 14% |
| The Age Appropriate Design Code | 12% |
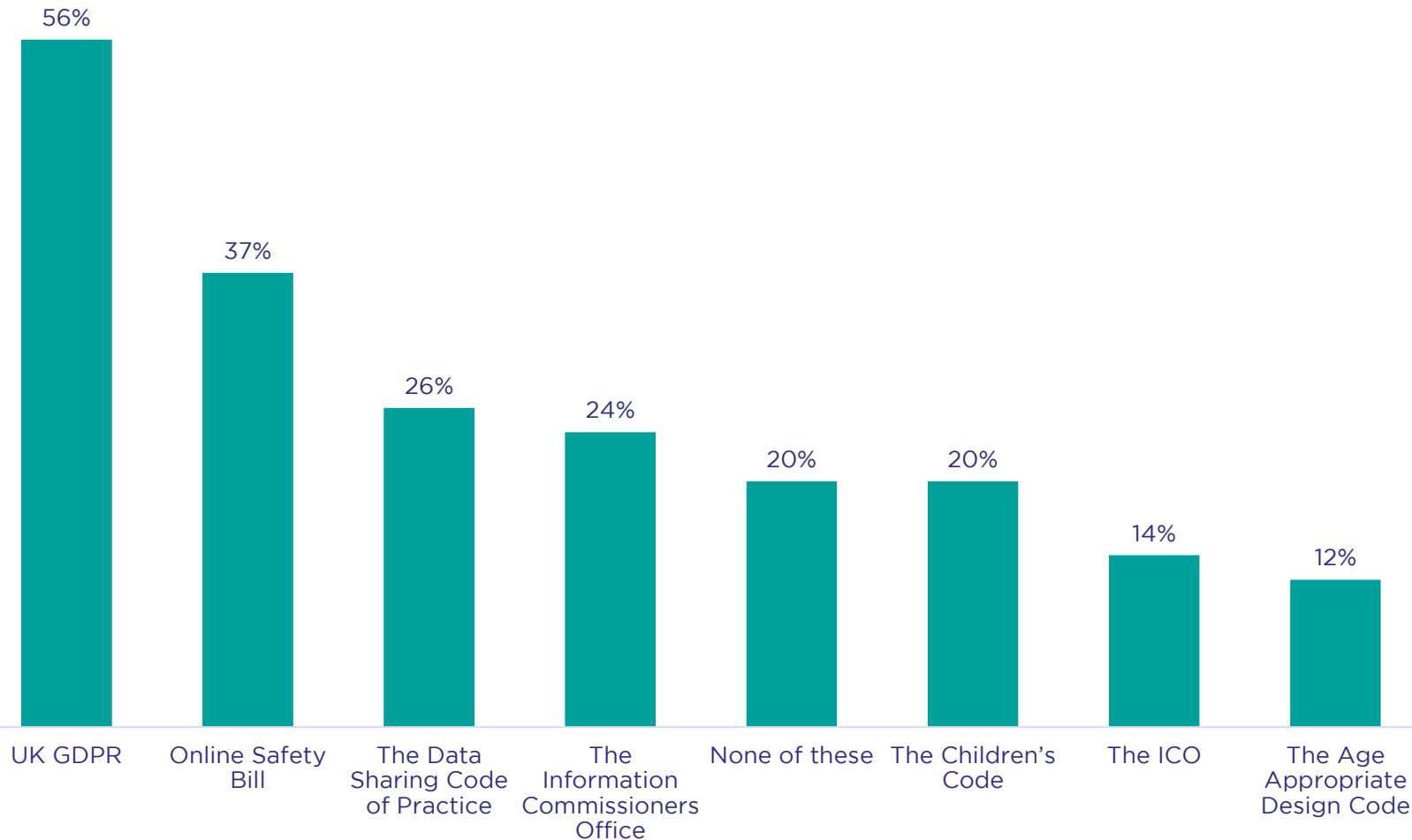
- UK GDPR was recognised by the largest proportion of parents, nearly three times the number that had heard of the ICO
- The same number of parents who had heard of the Children's code (20%), were unaware of any of the guiding organisations and regulations, indicating that 1 in 5 parents have not heard of any of the core organisations dealing with data protection and privacy

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*B5. To what extent do you agree that data protection legislation and associated guidance (such as UK GDPR or the Children's code) is…*
*B6. Have you ever heard of any of the following?*
*BASE: All Respondents - 1616*

# PARENTS' AWARENESS AND PERCEPTION OF DATA PROTECTION AND ASSOCIATED GUIDANCE:

Parents/carers in all regions occasionally worry about data protection when their child is online but feel like they can take action to address their worries, particularly so for parents/carers in Northern Ireland.

Regarding obtaining information to support their child when using online services, parents/carers of younger children are significantly more likely to believe information should come from the child's school.

Knowledge about data protection risk of harm from online services is also relatively consistent across regions. Although, parents/carers in England are more likely to report having 'a lot of knowledge'.

Parents and carers of younger children are more likely to rank social media and online searches as the most harmful online service.

Although not significant, parents/carers in Northern Ireland are most likely to have heard of the Children's code, followed by parents/carers in Scotland.

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**(ASKED ONLY TO PARENTS WHO WERE AWARE OF THE CHILDREN'S CODE)**
**Do you know what the Children's code does/is for?**

No, not at all
13%

Yes, I know what this is / does
13%

I have a bit of an idea
74%
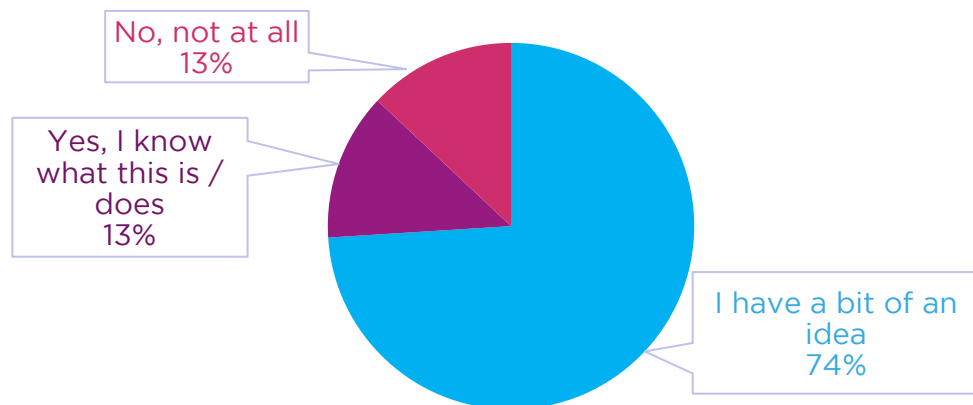
**Has knowing about the Children's code changed your behaviour to online services, including how you allow your children use these services?**

65%
Yes, a little

22%
Yes, a lot

7%
No, not at all

6%
Unsure
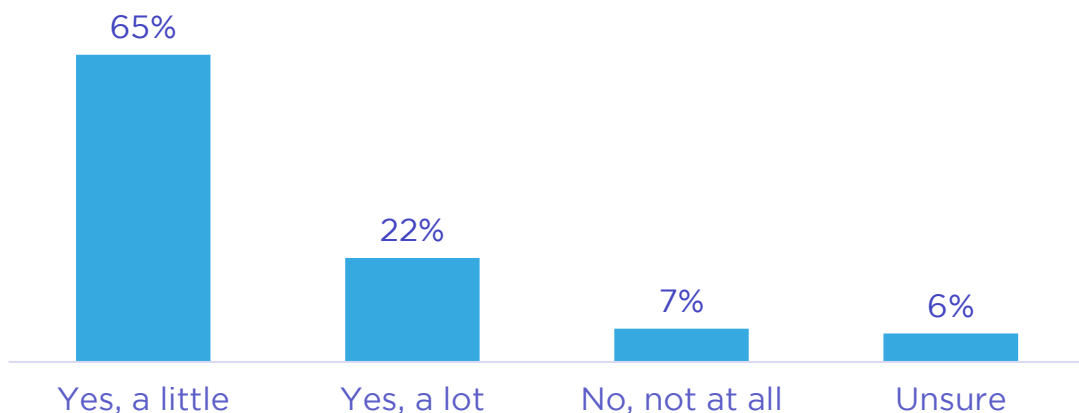
- Of the parents who had heard of it, just under three-quarters said they 'have a bit of an idea' of what the Children's code does/is for, illustrating that even in those aware of it, understanding is limited.

  - Equal numbers of parents consider themselves to be well informed, knowing exactly what the Children's code does, as the number of parents who say they have no idea – both 13%.

- Of those who are aware of the Code, and have at least some idea of what it is, the majority state that it has impacted their behaviour regarding online services and how they allow their children to access them to some extent, at 87% (NET).

  - 1 in 5 have made 'a lot' of change to their behaviour, whilst over 3 in 5 have made 'a little change'
  - This demonstrates that the existence of the code has inspired individual change for the parents who know about it, but that there is still progress to be made.

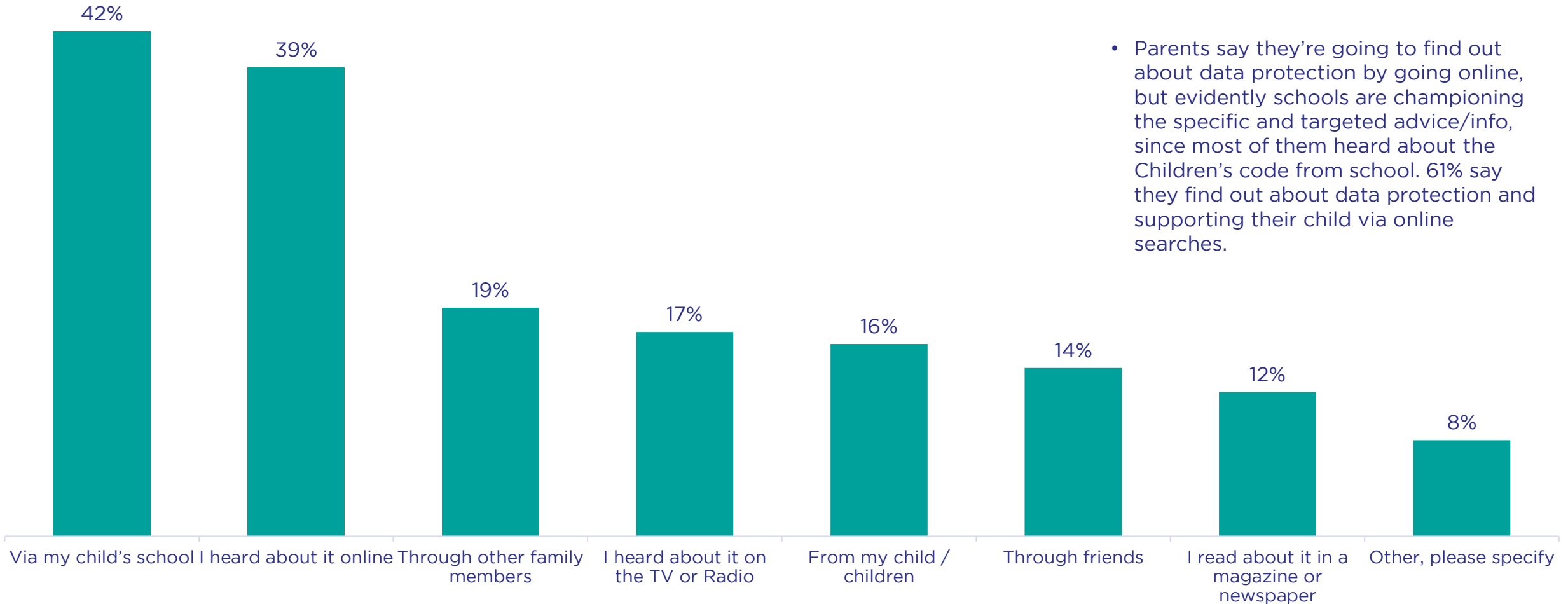B7. Do you know what the Children's code does / is for?
*BASE: Those aware of The Children's code - 317*
B9.Has knowing about the Children's code changed your attitude and behaviour to online services, including how you allow your children use these services?
*BASE: Those who know/have a bit of an idea what The Children's code is/does - 277*

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



- 42% — Via my child's school
- 39% — I heard about it online
- 19% — Through other family members
- 17% — I heard about it on the TV or Radio
- 16% — From my child / children
- 14% — Through friends
- 12% — I read about it in a magazine or newspaper
- 8% — Other, please specify

- Parents say they're going to find out about data protection by going online, but evidently schools are championing the specific and targeted advice/info, since most of them heard about the Children's code from school. 61% say they find out about data protection and supporting their child via online searches.

B8. Where did you hear about / learn about the Children's code??
BASE: Those who know/have a bit of an idea what The Children's code is/does - 277

# PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE CHILDREN'S CODE AND ITS POTENTIAL IMPACT

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

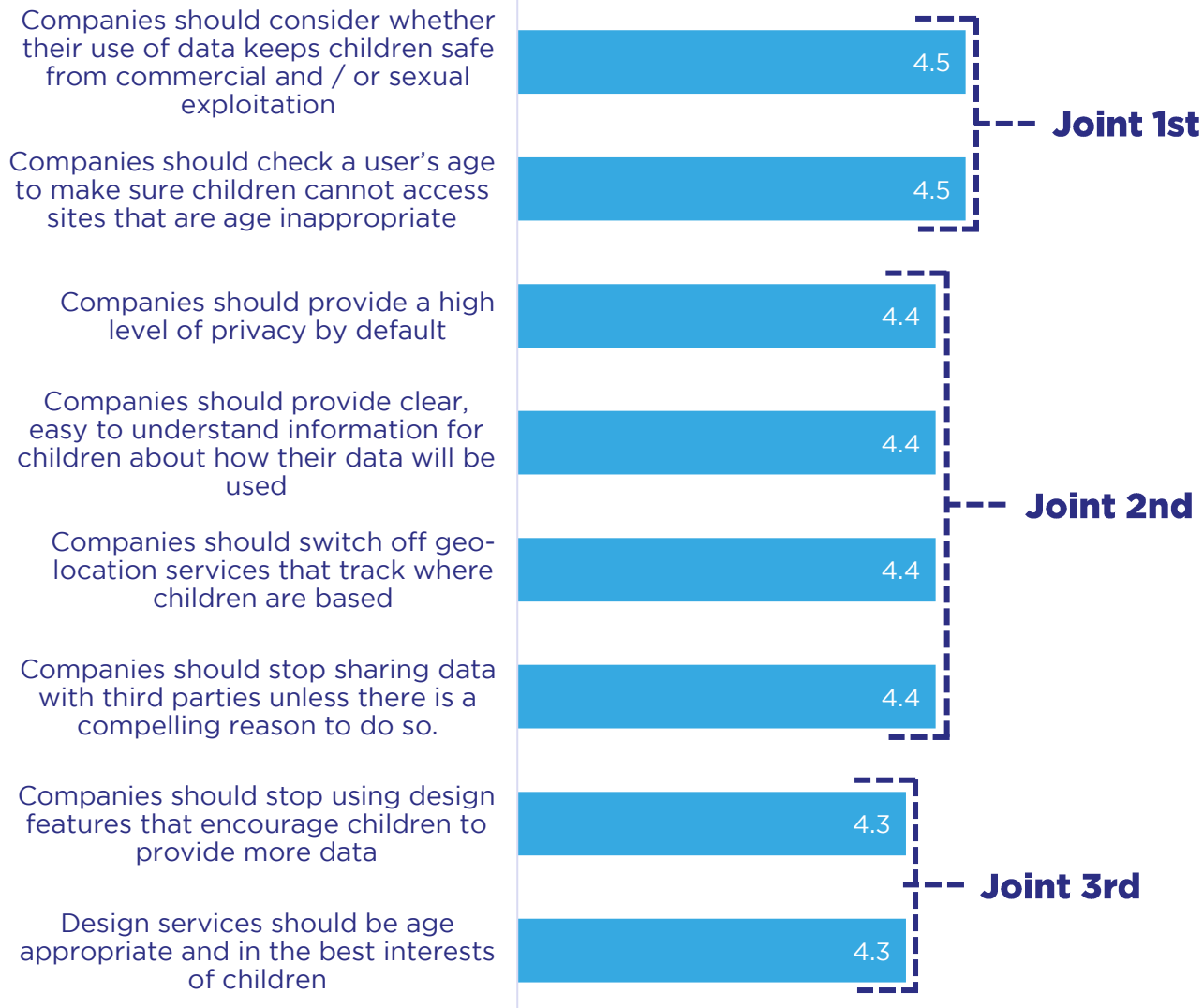| | |
|---|---|
| It's a good thing that this has been created and I'll feel more comfortable about my child being online | 43% |
| It's a good thing that this has been created but I want more to be done in order to feel comfortable about my child being online | 41% |
| I'm still not sure what this really means for me / my children | 13% |
| I'm not interested in this | 3% |
| I don't think that this is a good thing | 0% |
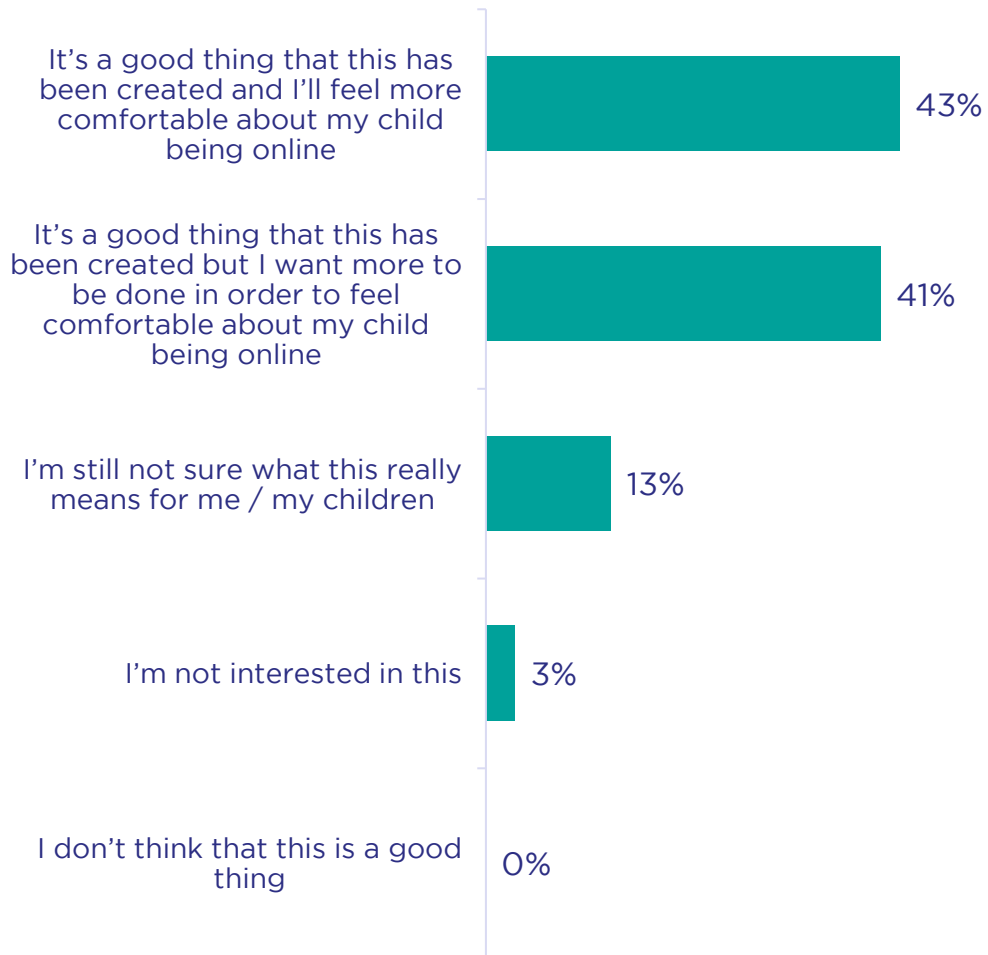
- The majority of parents think it a good thing the Children's code has been created (84% NET)
- 2 in 5 parents said that they want more to be done so that they can feel comfortable with their child's online activities
- 1 in 10 parents are unsure as to what the code means for themselves or their child

- 4 out of 5 parents believe the code will have at least a minor positive impact, with 40% believing the positive impact of it will be significant

## How will the Children's code impact the internet for your child?

| | |
|---|---|
| I believe it will have a minor positive impact | 40% |
| I believe it will have a significant positive impact | 40% |
| Not sure | 16% |
| I believe it will have no impact | 3% |
| I believe it will have a negative impact | 0% |

# PARENTS' ATTITUDES ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF INDIVIDUAL CODE RULES

Companies should consider whether their use of data keeps children safe from commercial and / or sexual exploitation
**4.5**

Companies should check a user's age to make sure children cannot access sites that are age inappropriate
**4.5**

**— — Joint 1st**

Companies should provide a high level of privacy by default
**4.4**

Companies should provide clear, easy to understand information for children about how their data will be used
**4.4**

**— — Joint 2nd**

Companies should switch off geo-location services that track where children are based
**4.4**

Companies should stop sharing data with third parties unless there is a compelling reason to do so.
**4.4**

Companies should stop using design features that encourage children to provide more data
**4.3**

**— — Joint 3rd**

Design services should be age appropriate and in the best interests of children
**4.3**

- This chart is showing the average ranking that parents gave out of five, for the importance of each rule in The Children's code.

- Ranked individually, parents consider the individual rules to be of roughly equal importance.

- By a small margin, the highest ranking rules concerned whether companies were being conscientious with their use of data, and whether it protects children from commercial and sexual exploitation, and that they should check user's ages to stop children from being able to access age inappropriate content.
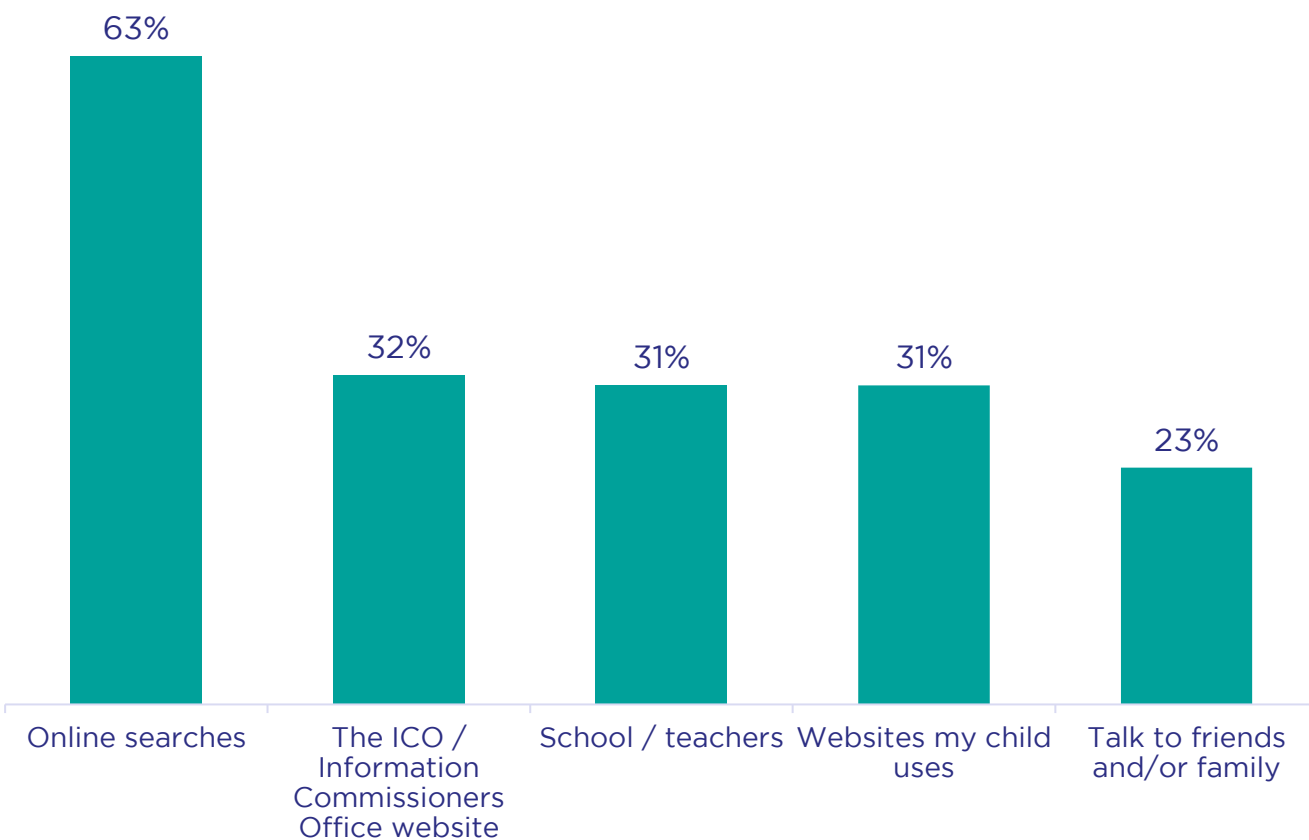
**Focus Group Findings:** The Children's code objectives, in principle, are welcomed by both parents and children, though there is some cynicism around its practical application. Its wording is thought by many parents to be very woolly. Phrases like 'code', 'appropriately protect', 'age appropriate', 'compelling reason' etc. are felt to contain a lot of 'wriggle room' and scope for variation in interpretation.

B11. Consider the various rules of the Children's code shown here and rate each from 1 to 5 as to how important they are.
*BASE: All Respondents - 1616*

# PARENTS' KNOWLEDGE OF THE CHILDREN'S CODE AND ITS IMPACT:

- In England and Northern Ireland, parents/carers' knowledge of the Children's code is most likely obtained from their child's school. Whereas, in Wales and Scotland it is most likely to be heard about online.

- Parents/carers in Northern Ireland are significantly more likely, than Scottish parents, to agree the Children's code is a good thing, but they want more to be done to feel comfortable.

- Parents/carers of children aged 12-15 are the key demographic struggling to understand what the Children's code really means for them/their children, particularly when compared to parents of 16-17-year-olds

- No significant differences are seen, across regions and genders, in beliefs regarding the impact the Children's code will have.

**Where would you go to find more information about children's privacy?**



Bar chart values:
- Online searches: 63%
- The ICO / Information Commissioners Office website: 32%
- School / teachers: 31%
- Websites my child uses: 31%
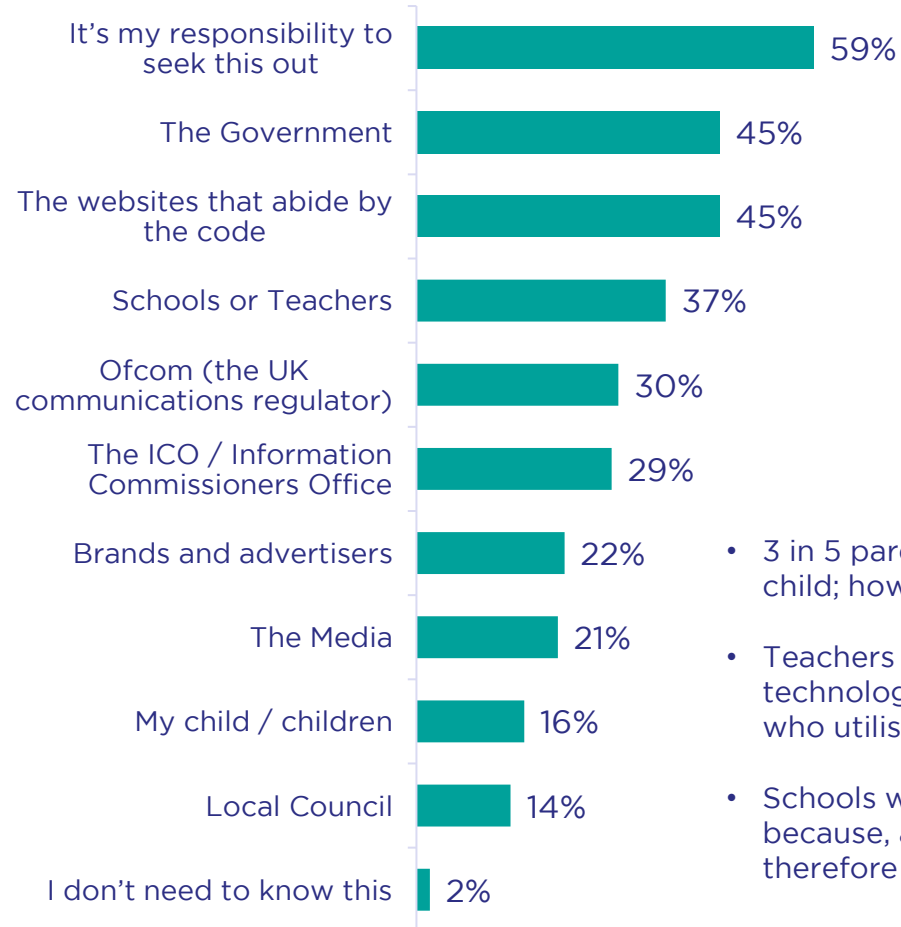- Talk to friends and/or family: 23%

**Focus Group Findings:** There are calls for more education for the public on what dangers and protections exist and for schools to play a key role in this. It's the assumption of the focus group attendees that they/their kids are competent enough to avoid real dangers, but other people's children are not.

- When specifically asked about the issues of children's privacy, again most parents would use online searches. This is similar to the figures seen for sources of information for generally supporting their child's use of online services, where online search also ranked first at 61% (See slide 9).

- This is followed The ICO/Information Commissioner's Office Website, at 32%. This differs from parents' prospective sources of information about general support for their child online, in which schools ranked second, at 47% (See slide 9).
  - This illustrates that for the specific matter of children's privacy, parents are more inclined to seek targeted advice. Schools/teachers as a source of information about children's privacy did rank almost equally with The ICO, as did the actual websites their child is using (both 31%), showing an approach that combines expert information, knowledge from children's educators, and personal engagement.
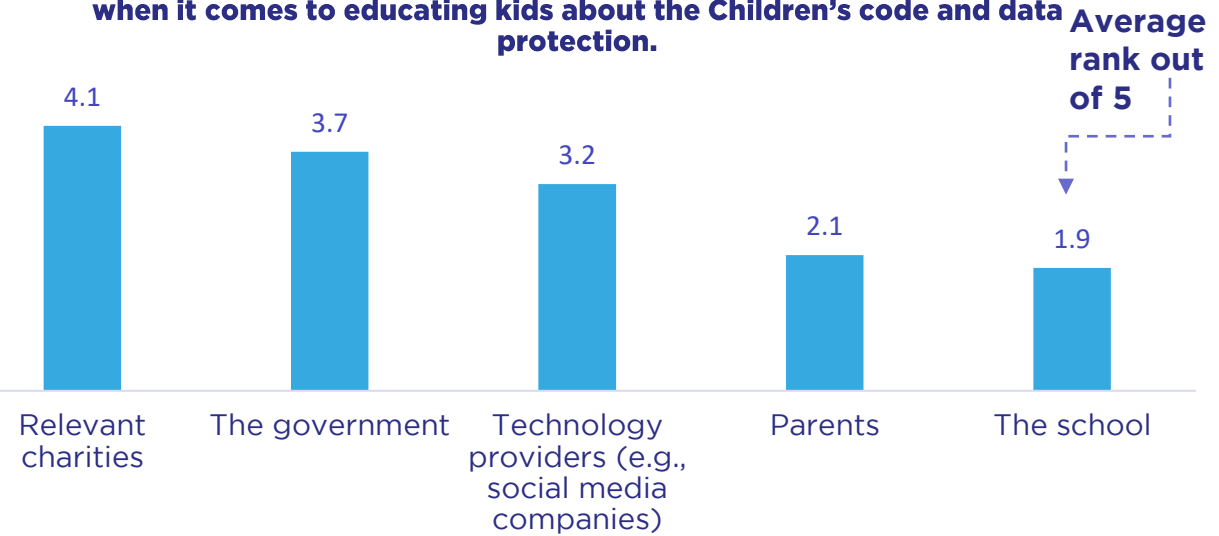
B13. If you wanted to find out more information about children's privacy, where would you go to find this?
*BASE: All Respondents - 1616*

# WHO PARENTS BELIEVE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR INFORMATION ABOUT CHILDREN'S PRIVACY

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## PARENTS: Who is responsible for communicating issues about children's privacy?

- It's my responsibility to seek this out — **59%**
- The Government — **45%**
- The websites that abide by the code — **45%**
- Schools or Teachers — **37%**
- Ofcom (the UK communications regulator) — **30%**
- The ICO / Information Commissioners Office — **29%**
- Brands and advertisers — **22%**
- The Media — **21%**
- My child / children — **16%**
- Local Council — **14%**
- I don't need to know this — **2%**

**Focus Group Findings:** In terms of where responsibility lies for keeping children safe on the internet, the consensus is that, for protection to be effective, it needs to be a shared responsibility of Government, parents, teachers, businesses and online service providers.

## TEACHERS: rank the following to indicate the order of responsibility when it comes to educating kids about the Children's code and data protection.

**Average rank out of 5**

- Relevant charities — **4.1**
- The government — **3.7**
- Technology providers (e.g., social media companies) — **3.2**
- Parents — **2.1**
- The school — **1.9**

- 3 in 5 parents feel as though it is their responsibility to spearhead the task of communicating data privacy info to their child; however this still leaves 2 in 5 parents who are not convinced that it is up to them to do this.

- Teachers were of the opinion that it is relevant charities that are most responsible, followed by the government, then technology providers. This suggests they are looking to secondary interventions before solutions from within companies who utilise user data, but also that educating children requires a combined effort.

- Schools were ranked lowest by teachers, in terms of who bears responsibility for educating children. This is perhaps because, as seen from the data in other questions, most teachers already feel as though they are doing this, and therefore think that other potential educators could stand to do more.

# WAYS TEACHERS PROVIDE PARENTS WITH INFORMATION ABOUT HOW THEY CAN SUPPORT THEIR CHILD

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"Online Safety Officers (Teachers at school) create online leaflets for Parents filled with information to help protect children from the dangers. Contains both actions for parents and children." – *Teacher, Wales*

"Information and links via the app we use to communicate with parents" – *Deputy Head Teacher, Scotland*

"we distribute the leaflet to all parents and they have all king of information and helpline is available there for them if they ever need" – *Deputy Head Teacher, Yorkshire and Humberside*

"Newsletters |Offer training in the evening once a year" – *Department Head, South-East*

"We send home a Responsible User Agreement at the start of each year which the children and parent must discuss together and sign. This sets out the expectation of how to use devices safely in school and includes information on how to access the Internet safely at home." – *Teacher, Scotland*

"We normally send bulletins to group chats will talk about even in one on ones." – *Teacher, London*

"We talk with them about parental control as well as educate them about what activity then want to check" – *Deputy Head Teacher, Scotland*

"Via parentmail" – *Teacher, South-West*

"We send out a monthly email explaining what we have covered in school and where to access the information. And we have a guide we send out every 6 months" – *Deputy Head Teacher, West Midlands*

"We offer online and in person training to parents and care givers. Also link in newsletters" – *Teacher, Scotland*

"Monitoring online activity |Taking away the phone before going to sleep|Parental controls|Etc."- *Teacher, London*

"We provide literature which children take home to show to their parents." – *Head Teacher, North West*

- Teachers described utilising a range of communication channels to try and connect with and educate parents about protecting their child's data. These included:

  - In-person sessions specifically for parents
  - Periodic communications and newsletters
  - Initial discussions/provision of information at the start of the school year
  - Providing links to resources in emails, group chats/messages, 1:1 meetings, leaflets, school websites, and take home packs
  - Verbal or actual signed contracts where parents and children agree to use the internet sensibly and with data protection in mind.

- Their advice to parents often centred around being actively engaged, using parental controls, secure passwords, and security software, as well as monitoring screentime and social media use.

TA7. You said that you provide parents with information about how they can support their child to protect their personal data at home, can you please tell us how you do this?
*BASE: Those who provide parents with information about how to support their child protect their personal data at home - 254*

# PARENTS' BELIEFS ABOUT THE ROLE OF SCHOOLS IN CHILDREN'S PRIVACY

## The role of schools in children's privacy

- They should offer guidance to the children — **59%**
- They should offer advice to parents — **51%**
- They should be at the forefront of communicating and educating about these things — **44%**
- They should tell you where to find more information, not necessarily have all the answers — **43%**
- None, it's not their job — **3%**

- Parents' general view of schools' role in children's privacy, is to offer direct education to children on the topic, as well as having an adjacent role in educating them outside of school hours, by giving advice to parents which they can pass on to their child.
- Parents want to be empowered to find out information themselves, use their own discernment, and not be told exactly how to apply it to their specific circumstances.
- Parents do not expect schools to know everything about children's privacy, but there is an expectation of a baseline of knowledge and the ability to signpost parents to further resources.

## Does your school currently teach data protection or online privacy as part of its PSHE offering?

- England — **89%**
- Wales — **86%**
- Scotland — **86%**
- Northern Ireland — **76%**
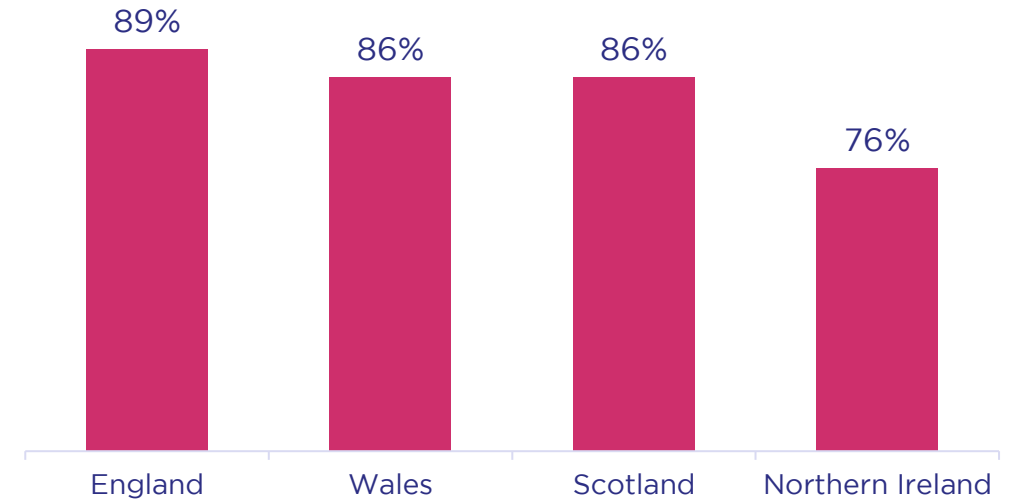
- The majority of teachers reported that their school teaches data protection of online privacy as part of its PSHE/regional variation offering (See Slide 61).
- Whilst teaching on this subject is fairly consistent between countries, actual curriculum standardisation across the UK may be needed to ensure that education on this subject reaches all schools to an equally high level.

# TEACHERS' USE OF ICO DATA PROTECTION SCHOOL RESOURCES

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## 72%
of teachers are **aware of data protection school resources available via the ICO**
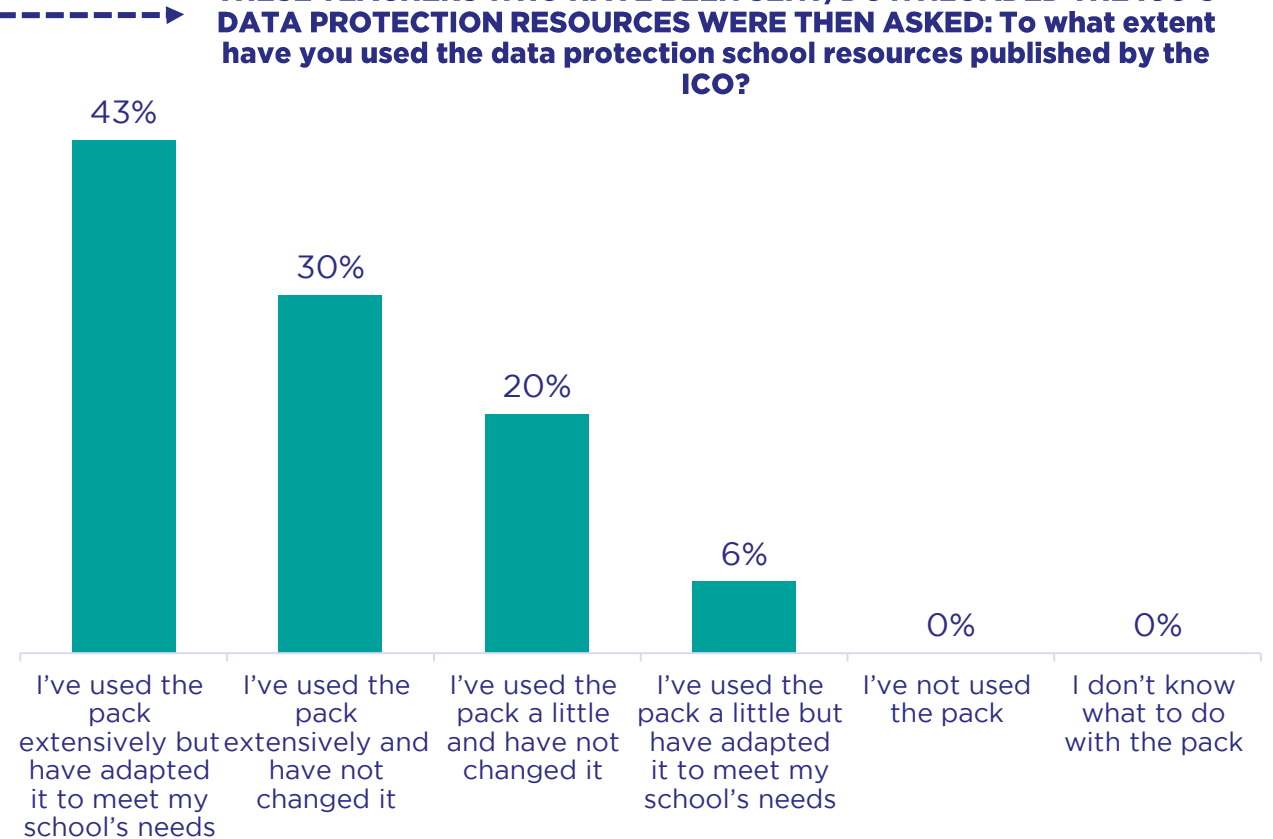
## 82%
of teachers report **their school has been sent or downloaded the data protection school resources published by the ICO**

## 96%
of teachers who have been sent or have downloaded the resources agree that they are useful **agree the resources are (NET) useful**
42% 'quite useful' and '54% 'very useful'

**THESE TEACHERS WHO HAVE BEEN SENT/DOWNLOADED THE ICO'S DATA PROTECTION RESOURCES WERE THEN ASKED: To what extent have you used the data protection school resources published by the ICO?**

| 43% | 30% | 20% | 6% | 0% | 0% |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| I've used the pack extensively but have adapted it to meet my school's needs | I've used the pack extensively and have not changed it | I've used the pack a little and have not changed it | I've used the pack a little but have adapted it to meet my school's needs | I've not used the pack | I don't know what to do with the pack |

**THE INSIGHTS FAMILY**

**Focus Group Findings:** It came as a complete surprise to every one of our children and young people that they have the right to receive a copy of their personal data from a company, they have the right to get inaccurate data corrected and, in some circumstances, they also have the right to ask a company to delete their personal data. None thinks this is a bad idea, but equally, there was no sense that anyone was remotely interested in doing this.
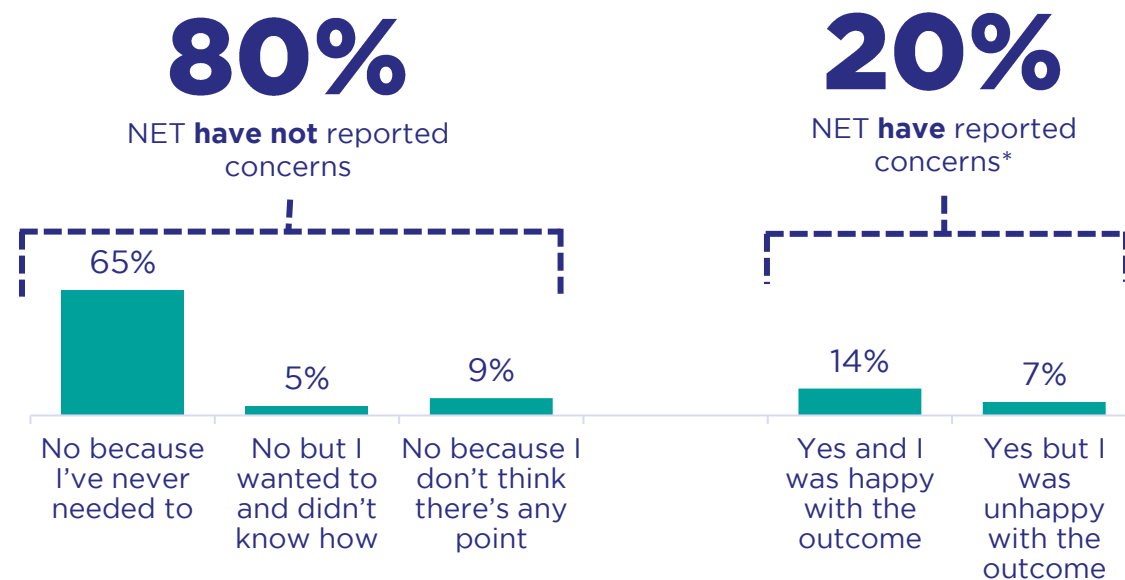
- A third of parents overall have experienced concerns that they reported, or wanted to report, to online sites.
- Of those that have reported concerns, half were satisfied with the eventual outcome, whilst the remainder were not happy with the resolution.

- 4 out of 5 kids said that they had not previously reported concerns to online sites in the past.
- 1 in 3 of kids have had a reportable incident online, the same as parents.

### Incidence of __parents__ reporting concerns to online sites in the past

**81%**
NET **have not** reported concerns

67%
No because I've never needed to

9%
No but I wanted to and didn't know how

6%
No because I don't think there's any point

**19%**
NET **have** reported concerns

10%
Yes and I was satisfied with the outcome

9%
Yes but I was unsatisfied with the outcome
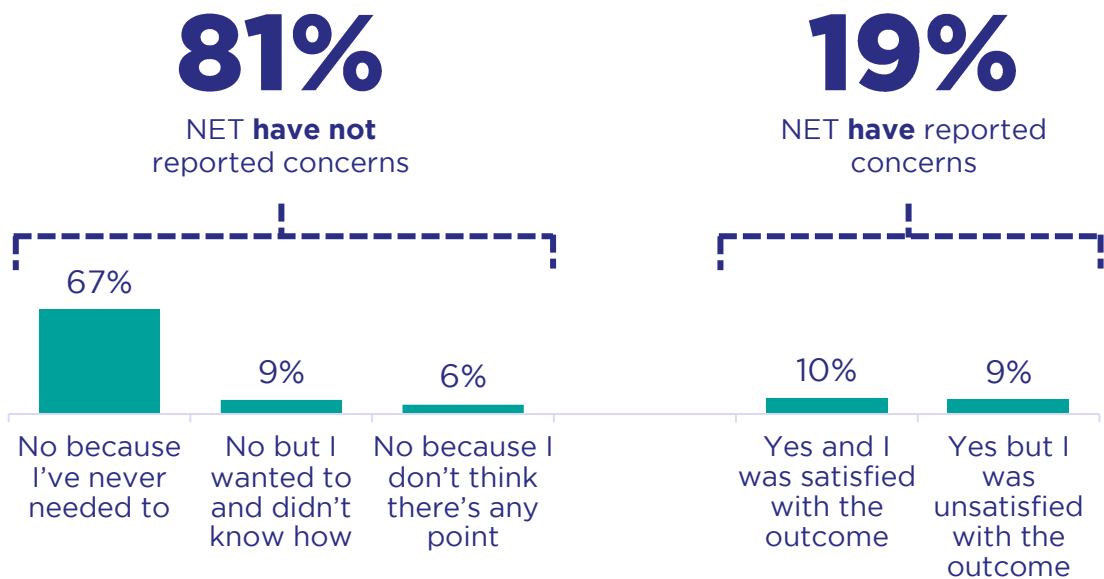
### Incidents of __children__ reporting concerns to online sites in the past

**80%**
NET **have not** reported concerns

65%
No because I've never needed to

5%
No but I wanted to and didn't know how

9%
No because I don't think there's any point

**20%**
NET **have** reported concerns*

14%
Yes and I was happy with the outcome

7%
Yes but I was unhappy with the outcome

*Figures in the charts may not sum due to rounding.

B16. Have you ever reported something to an online site that concerned you in relation to your child?
C16. Have you ever reported something to an online site that concerned you?
*BASE: All Respondents – 1616*

# DISCUSSIONS ABOUT DATA AND ONLINE CONCERNS BETWEEN PARENTS AND CHILDREN
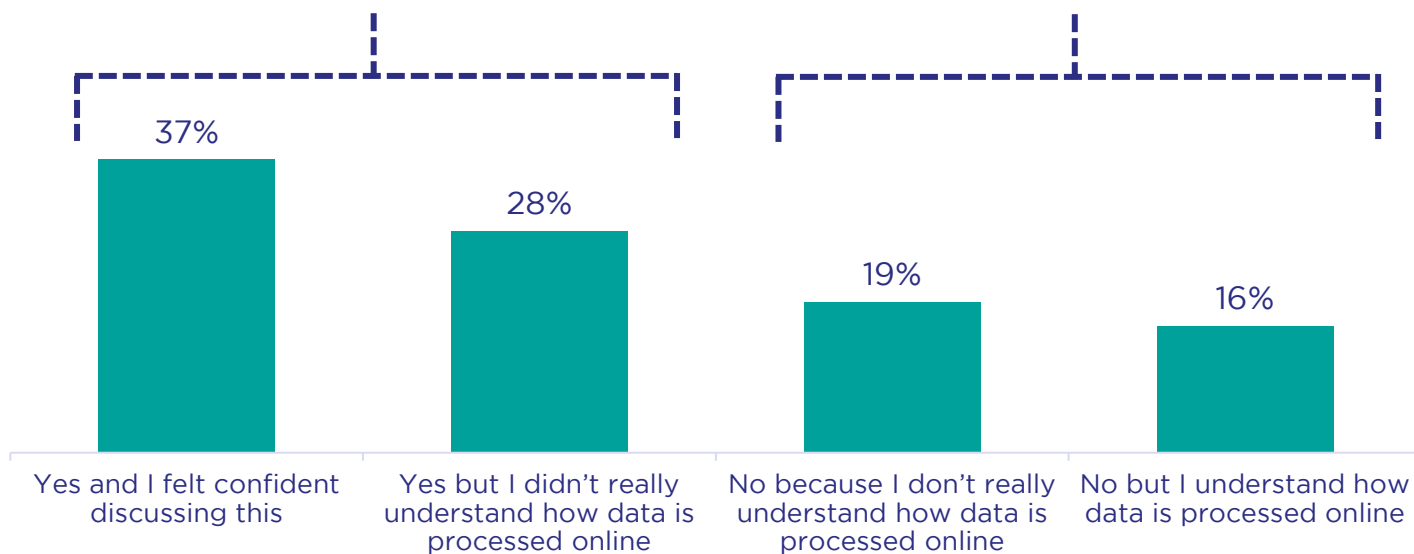
**Have you ever discussed with your child how their data is processed online?**

## 65%
NET of parents **have** had discussions with their child about how their data is processed online*

## 35%
NET of parents **have not** had discussions with their child about how their data is processed online



- 37% — Yes and I felt confident discussing this
- 28% — Yes but I didn't really understand how data is processed online
- 19% — No because I don't really understand how data is processed online
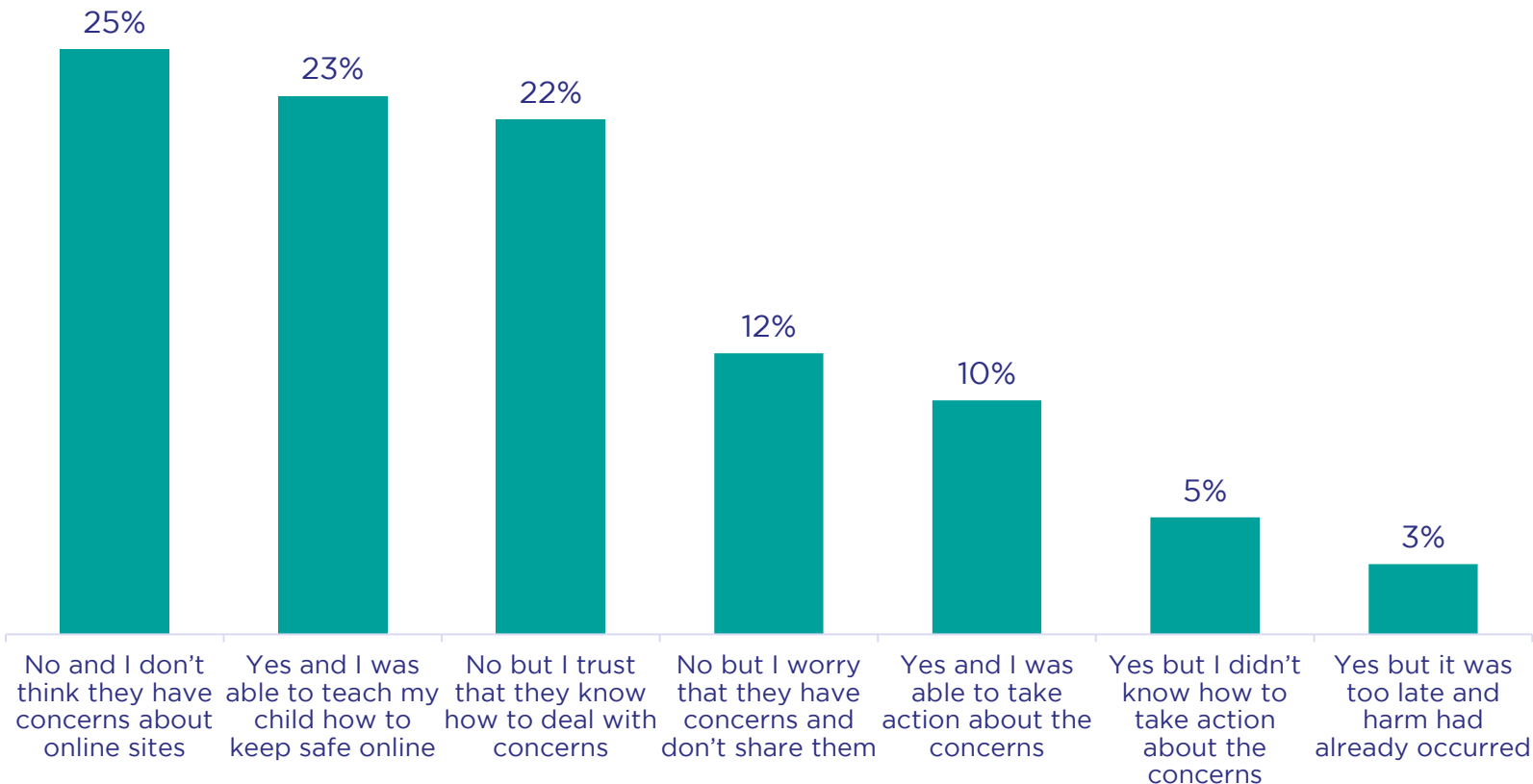- 16% — No but I understand how data is processed online

- A lack of knowledge about how data is processed online is impeding parent-child discussions for 1 in 5 parents

  - Parents whose employment status fell under the 'State Pensioner, Casual and Lowest Grade Workers, Unemployed', were most likely to give this response*

- The number of parents who have had discussions, is composed of 37% who felt confident talking with their child, and a further 28% who don't feel like they have the requisite knowledge to understand online data processing.

*Significantly more than those whose jobs were classed as 'Higher Managerial, Administrative or Professional roles', 'Intermediate Managerial, Administrative or Professional roles', and 'Supervisory or Clerical and Junior Managerial, Administrative or Professional roles'.

B17. Have you ever discussed with your child how their data is processed when they are online?
*BASE: All Respondents – 1616*

**THE INSIGHTS FAMILY**

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



Bar chart values:
- 25% — No and I don't think they have concerns about online sites
- 23% — Yes and I was able to teach my child how to keep safe online
- 22% — No but I trust that they know how to deal with concerns
- 12% — No but I worry that they have concerns and don't share them
- 10% — Yes and I was able to take action about the concerns
- 5% — Yes but I didn't know how to take action about the concerns
- 3% — Yes but it was too late and harm had already occurred

- Parents most commonly answered their child has never approached them about online concerns, and are assured that this means their child has none.

- 41% of parents/carers have been approached by their child to discuss online concerns – this 41% contained the 5% of parents who reported that they didn't know how to action the concerns.

- 1 in 10 parents said that despite their child not approaching them, they worry that their child has concerns and isn't sharing them.

**Focus Group Findings:** All our parent attendees encourage their children to talk to them about anything remotely suspicious that they have seen on the internet.

B18. Has your child ever approached you to discuss concerns they had about an online site?
*BASE: All Respondents – 1616*

# PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT WITH CHILDREN USING ONLINE SITES WHEN UNDERAGE

**THE INSIGHTS FAMILY**

## Have you ever allowed your child access to an online site that you knew they were too young to access?
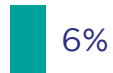
Yes, because I thought my child was mature enough to access the site — **24%**

Yes, because I didn't think there was any risk — **10%**

Yes, because I didn't want my child to miss out on using a popular site. — **6%**

Yes, because I wanted to stop my child from pestering me about accessing the site. — **5%**

Yes, because I didn't have time to review the site. — **4%**

**50%** (NET) of parents **have**

No, I follow the age recommendations for websites. — **40%**
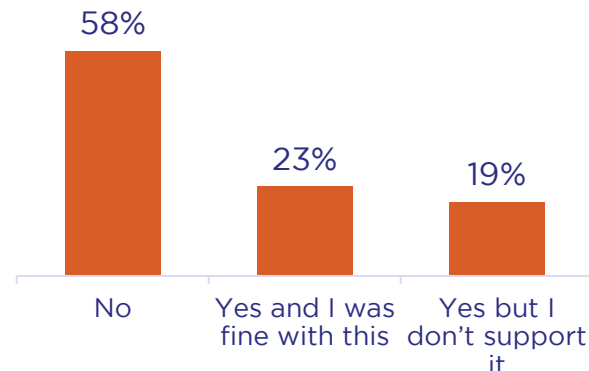
No, but I don't monitor their use so don't always know what they are looking at. — **10%**

**50%** (NET) of parents **have not**

## Has your child ever said that they're a different age to access a site?

- No — **58%**
- Yes and I was fine with this — **23%**
- Yes but I don't support it — **19%**

## (ASKED ONLY TO PARENTS WHO THOUGHT THEIR CHILD WAS MATURE ENOUGH, THEY THOUGHT THEIR WAS NO RISK, TO STOP THEIR CHILD PESTERING THEM AND/OR THEY DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO REVIEW THE SITE)

### Have you helped your child access sites they're too young for?

- No — **57%**
- Yes — **43%**
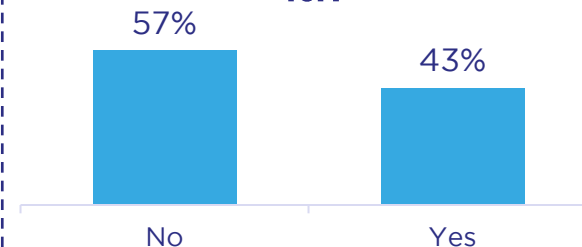
- With regards to their child's online activity, 2 in 5 parents stated that they make sure to follow the age recommendations for websites and don't allow them to access sites they are not old enough to use.

- Of the 50% of parents who knowingly allowed their child to access to sites they were technically too young to use, nearly half of them (24%) stated that this was because they believed their child was mature enough to access the site.

**THE INSIGHTS FAMILY**

## Do you use any parental controls to monitor or restrict your child's activity?

No
35%

Yes
65%
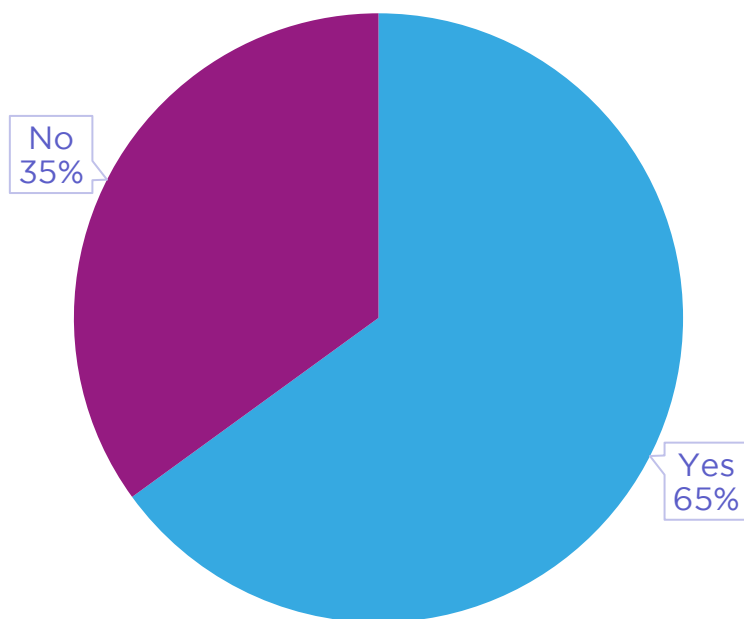
**Focus Group Findings:** There is a strong sense from the young people we spoke to that the internet is a vital component of life for 12-17-year-olds, as it is something their friends are all engaging with. There is a strong sense that they need to use the internet regularly to be a part of what is going on and that they would feel that they were missing out if their access to the internet was time-limited. Parents recognise this, and though they have concerns about safety and about the hours their children are spending looking at a computer screen, they tend not to try to restrict the time spent on the internet for fear of being the cause of their children missing out on what is going on.

**Focus Group Findings:** The degree of parental monitoring of the internet use of their children varies from some having the occasional conversation to others who are monitoring their children's use quite thoroughly, even sometimes to a degree that their children are not aware of.

B21. Do you use any form of parental controls to monitor or restrict your child's activity online to protection their privacy?
*BASE: All Respondents - 1616*

# PARENTS' BELIEFS ABOUT CHILDREN'S DATA PRIVACY AND THEIR PAST EXPERIENCES WITH IT:

Across all regions, online searches are the most common way to seek more information about children's privacy. Followed by the ICO.

Parents/carers in England and Scotland are significantly more likely to expect their child's school to offer advice to parents regarding children's privacy, compared to parents/carers in Wales.

Parents of 8-11-year-olds are more likely to follow the age recommendations for websites their children can access, than parents of older kids. Emphasising the increasing lenience towards the online sites children access, as a child ages up.

CHILDREN'S SURVEY

# KEY FINDINGS:

There is a disconnect between terminology and the lived experiences of children and young people, which impacts their ability to understand and articulate their experiences accurately (Slide 34, 38, 44).

54% of kids have worried about data protection when online – similar to last year's survey (52%) (Slide 32).

Awareness of the code is down versus last year – 20% vs. 2021's 29%. As is the number of those who think it's a good thing and who feel more comfortable online. On the other hand, trust in the code is up from 6 in 10 to 7 in 10 (Slide 34, 41)
Learning about the code's existence remains something that happens primarily at school, but understanding is shallow and a minority of children consider themselves well-informed as to the purpose of the code (17%) (Slide 36, 39).

Privacy was kids' biggest concern, the same as in 2021 (Slide 40).

Fewer have lied about their age than last year, from 47% in 2021, down to 39% this year (Slide 43).

# KEY ACTIONS:

In line with recommendations from last year, make efforts to relevantly articulate and fully develop children's understanding of specific terminology so they can accurately describe experiences and issues. Similarly, use stepping-stone terminology for younger children.

Children's level of concern has increased slightly, showing that in conjunction with educating them about risks, there should be a focus on educating them about keeping themselves safe - increasing confidence and promoting a pragmatic approach.

Awareness and understanding of the code remains a hurdle for the majority of children so broader efforts to raise this will have the greatest initial impact. Bolstering the profile of the ICO and the code through channels that children use directly e.g., YouTube or TikTok.

Continuing work with relevant industry organisations to implement the code, The ICO should provide guidance to organisations on how to write accessibly worded privacy statements, to affirm trust amongst child users.

Whilst 2 in 5 still lie about their age, the drop shows that it is happening less frequently. Greater emphasis on measures that make it very difficult or impossible to do this to companies, as well as championing responsible and age appropriate internet usage to children and teenagers, will be required to continue this downward trend.

# CHILDREN'S ONLINE ACTIVITIES AND CONCERNS ABOUT DATA PROTECTION

**THE INSIGHTS FAMILY**

## Which of the following services do you access online?

| Service | % |
|---|---|
| Music and video streaming | 78% |
| Social media | 70% |
| Online messaging | 63% |
| Online gaming | 60% |
| Educational websites | 59% |
| Online shopping | 51% |
| News | 28% |
| Fitness devices or apps that connect to toys or games | 18% |
| Websites or apps designed for adults only | 15% |
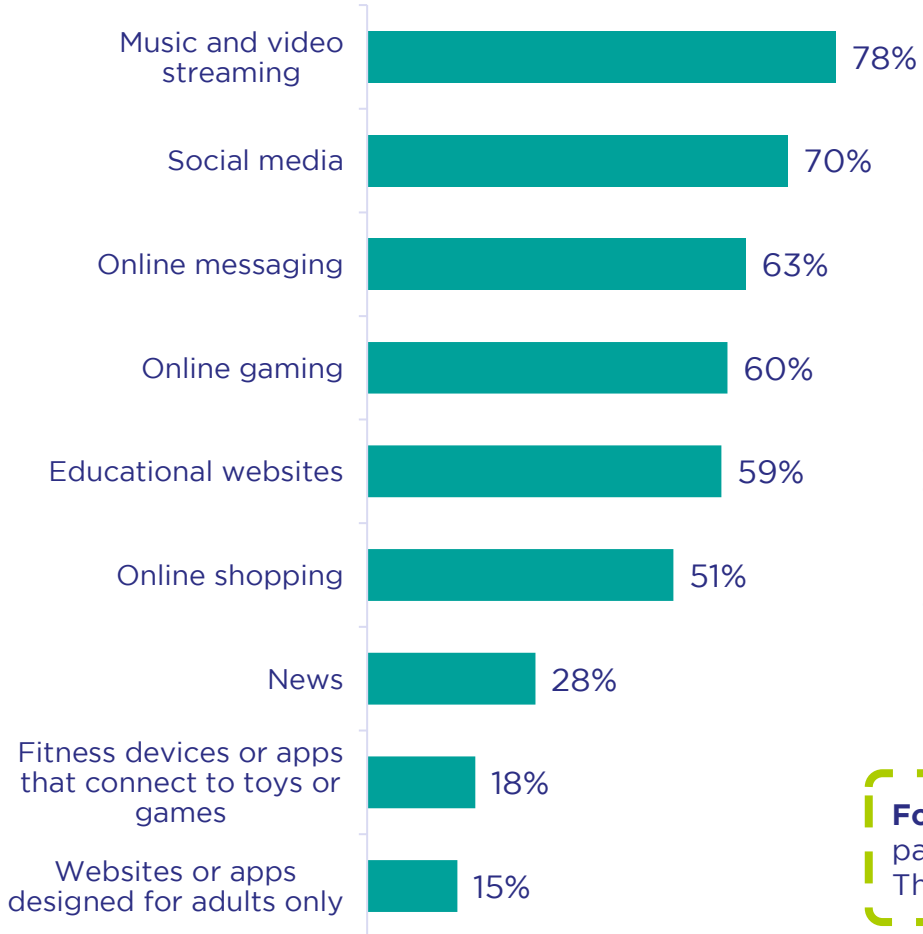
**46%** occasionally **worry** about data protection when online

**46%** have **no concerns** about data protection when online

**8%** **often worry** about data protection when online

**Focus Group Findings:** Internet usage is heavy among all the young people to whom we spoke. It is widely used for:
- Gaming
- Interacting with friends
- Following and interacting with social media
- Studying/Information seeking
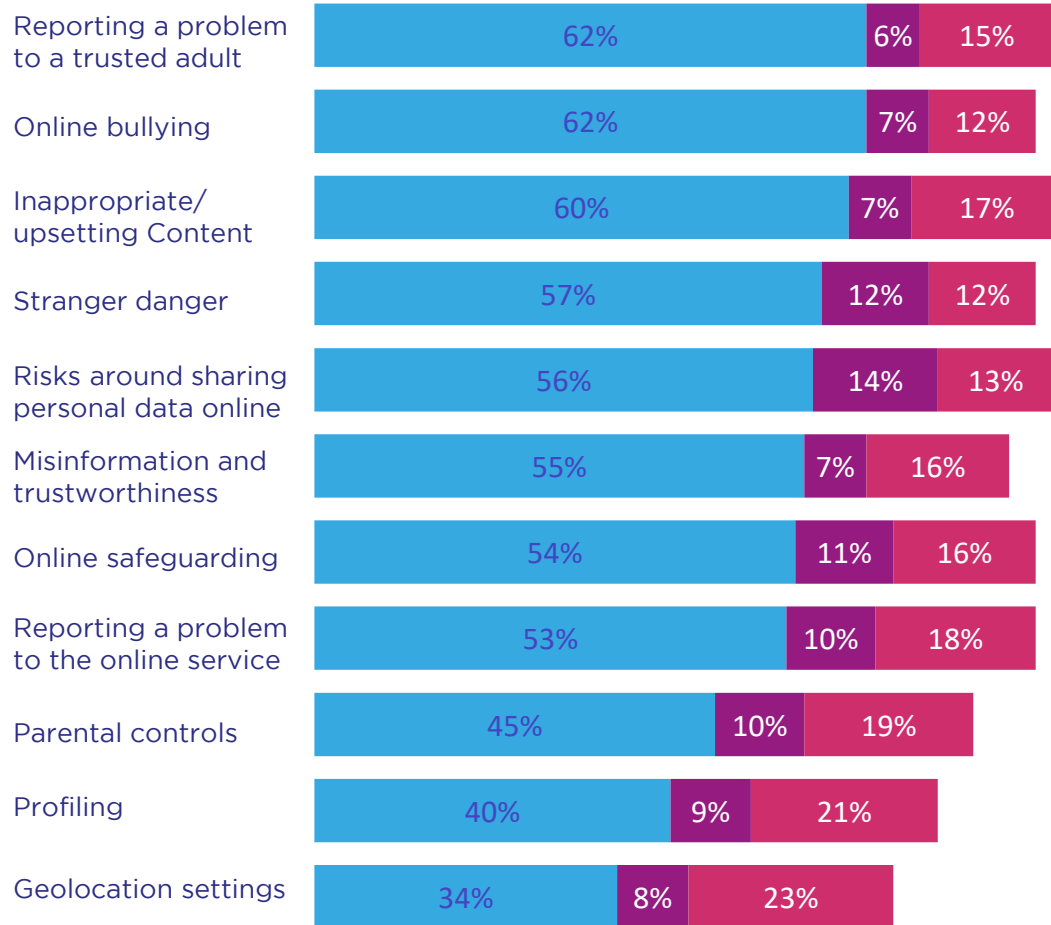- Reviewing possible/desired purchases

- 3 in 5 kids are gamers, 7 in 10 are social media users.
- Children who report that they often worry about data protection when online, are significantly more likely to access fitness devices or apps that connect to toys or games, and websites or apps designed for adults only.
- There were no significant differences in the levels of concern about data protection, from children who said they access music and video streaming, and educational websites when online.

**Focus Group Findings:** Until the concept was introduced to them during the groups, neither children nor parents tended to think about the protection of their data privacy when considering their online activities. The concept of data potentially being misused does not appear to resonate at all.

C3. Which of the following services do you access online?
C4. 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)?
*BASE: All Respondents - 1616*

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| Issue | My school teaches this now | Past | Future |
|---|---|---|---|
| Reporting a problem to a trusted adult | 62% | 6% | 15% |
| Online bullying | 62% | 7% | 12% |
| Inappropriate/ upsetting Content | 60% | 7% | 17% |
| Stranger danger | 57% | 12% | 12% |
| Risks around sharing personal data online | 56% | 14% | 13% |
| Misinformation and trustworthiness | 55% | 7% | 16% |
| Online safeguarding | 54% | 11% | 16% |
| Reporting a problem to the online service | 53% | 10% | 18% |
| Parental controls | 45% | 10% | 19% |
| Profiling | 40% | 9% | 21% |
| Geolocation settings | 34% | 8% | 23% |

- My school teaches this now
- My school taught this in the past but doesn't now
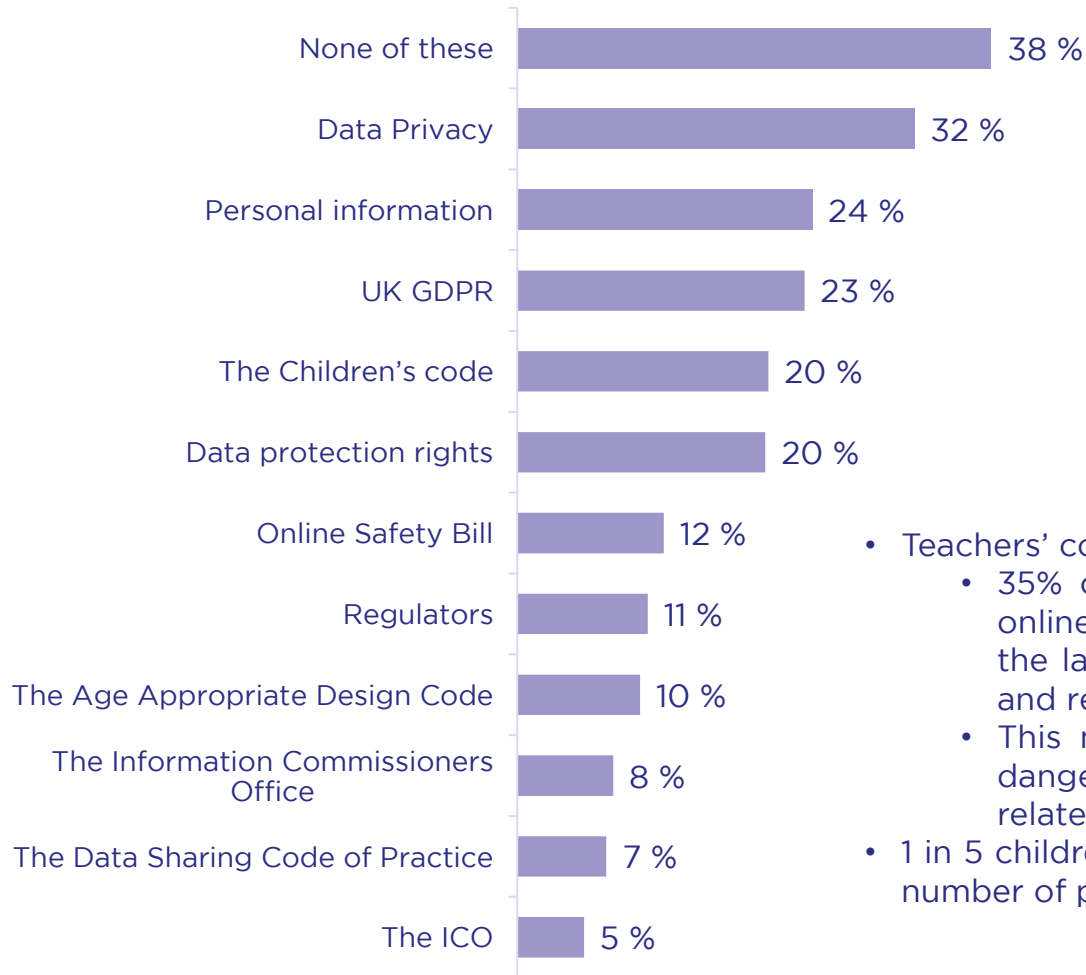- My school will likely teach this in the future

**\*See Slide 52 for full breakdown**

- The majority of teachers said that their schools were currently teaching their pupils about all the online safety issues listed, however, there were some matters which were being given more attention than others

  - For example, schools were nearly twice as likely to be currently teaching about reporting problems to a trusted adult and online bullying, than they were to be educating young people about geolocation settings (both 62% vs. 34%)

- Despite this, broadly, as the incidence of current teaching about an issue decreased, the likelihood of it being taught about in the future increased, indicating that teachers are trying to make up for any deficits in the subject matter covered.

**Focus Group Findings:** Children and young people feel very aware of the dangers and believe that they are in control of them – they wouldn't give out personal details to people they've never met, wouldn't go to meet anyone they don't know etc. They have also been cautioned against sharing images which would have innocent, harmless intent when shared with friends, but could, potentially, be used inappropriately in the wrong hands.There is a strong sense that all our 12-17 year-old's think that they have been made aware of the dangers and are smart enough not to succumb to them. Parents tend to believe this too (though not without anxiety) and to feel that they have instilled enough wisdom into their children to ensure that they avoid the gravest dangers.

TA4. Thinking about the following online safety issues, please tell us which statements are true to your school.

*BASE: All Teachers - 300*

# CHILDREN'S AWARENESS OF DATA PROTECTION TERMS AND GUIDANCE

**CHILDREN: Have you heard of any of the following?**

| Category | % |
|---|---|
| None of these | 38 % |
| Data Privacy | 32 % |
| Personal information | 24 % |
| UK GDPR | 23 % |
| The Children's code | 20 % |
| Data protection rights | 20 % |
| Online Safety Bill | 12 % |
| Regulators | 11 % |
| The Age Appropriate Design Code | 10 % |
| The Information Commissioners Office | 8 % |
| The Data Sharing Code of Practice | 7 % |
| The ICO | 5 % |

**How confident are you that the children you teach at your school understand online data protection?**

- Not confident 10%
- Very confident 35%
- Somewhat confident 54%
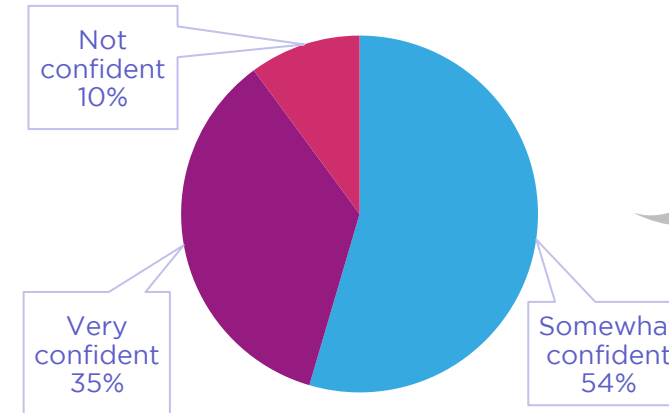
**89%**

(NET) of teachers are **confident** the children they teach understand online data protection

- Teachers' confidence does not translate to children's answers.
  - 35% of teachers said they were 'very confident' that the children they teach understand online data protection, yet when asked only 32% of children said they had heard of it, with the largest share of children having not heard of any data protection and related guidance and regulation-related issues.
  - This may be driven by the terminology used i.e. teachers are confident that kids know dangers of data protection risks, but this doesn't necessarily mean they know how that relates to data privacy, or that it fits under that umbrella term.
- 1 in 5 children and young people had heard about the Children's code, the same proportion as the number of parents who had heard about it.

TA3. How confident are you that the children you teach at your school understand online data protection?
*BASE: All Teachers – 300*
C5. Have you ever heard of any of the following?
*BASE: All respondents - 1616*

# CHILDREN'S AWARENESS OF AND CONCERNS ABOUT DATA PROTECTION:

Music and video streaming is the most popular service kids access online, weighted significantly by 16–17-year-olds compared to 8–11-year-olds.

Concerns regarding data protection when online occurs relatively consistently across regions, with slightly less concerns among children in Wales.

Girls are significantly more likely to occasionally worry about data protection when online, compared to boys who are significantly more likely to have no concerns.

Awareness of the Children's code is consistent across all regions and genders. Although older kids are significantly more likely to have heard of it, compared to younger kids.
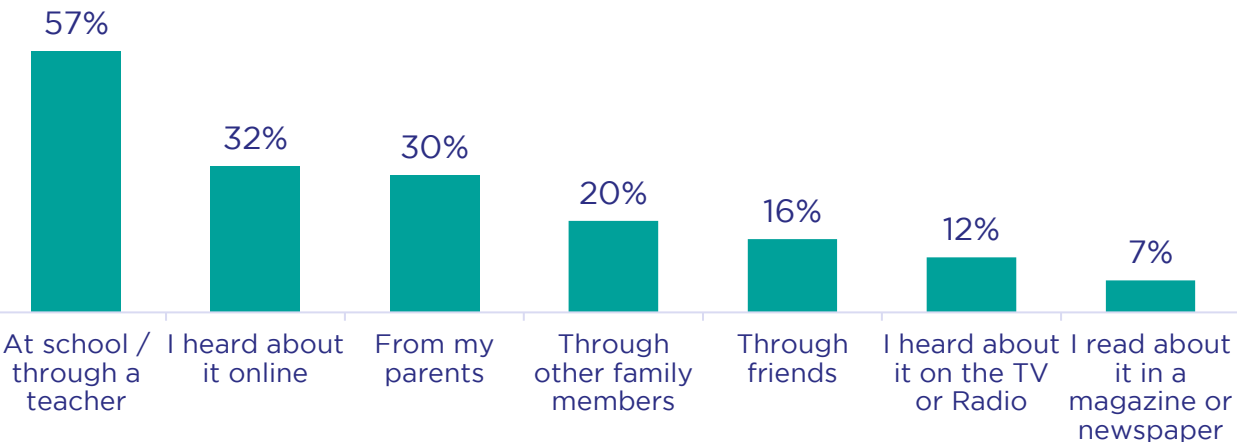
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**Focus Group Findings:** Not one person, adult or child, recognised the Children's code by name, though a number assumed that something along its lines would exist.

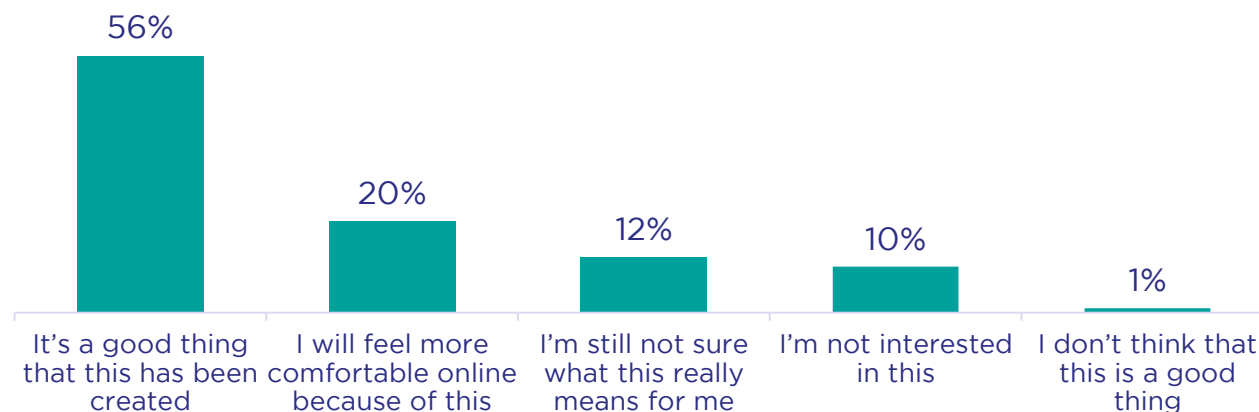## Do you know what the Children's code does / is for?



No, not at all 12%

I have a bit of an idea 71%

Yes, I know what this is / does 17%
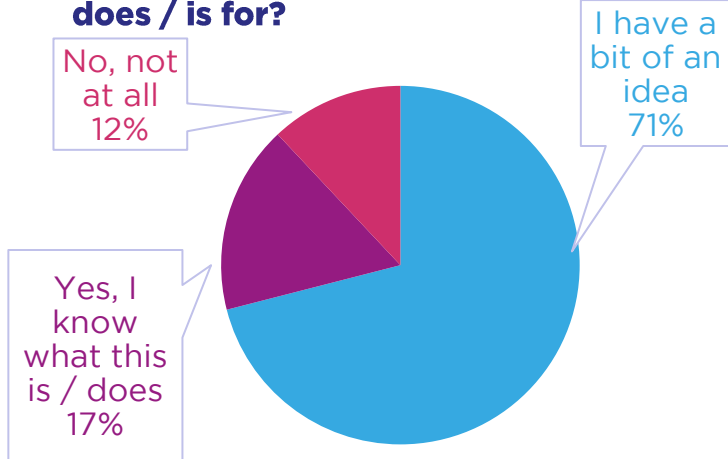
- Most children and young people who were aware of the code, reported that they had a bit of an idea what it does and what it is for (71%)
  - It was a minority of those surveyed overall, who were confident in what the code is and what it is for - at just 17% of those who were aware of it.
- In terms of discovery, it was schools and teachers that were the gateway for learning about the code for most children and young people, at 57%
  - 3 in 10 kids said they had heard about the code from their parents.
- Whilst over half of children agreed that it is a good thing the Children's code has been created, only 1 in 5 said they will feel more comfortable online because of it – this speaks to a finding from the focus groups, where participants questioned whether the existence of the code is enough to enforce real change for companies dealing with their data.

## Where did you hear about / learn about The Children's code?



| At school / through a teacher | I heard about it online | From my parents | Through other family members | Through friends | I heard about it on the TV or Radio | I read about it in a magazine or newspaper |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 57% | 32% | 30% | 20% | 16% | 12% | 7% |

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



| It's a good thing that this has been created | I will feel more comfortable online because of this | I'm still not sure what this really means for me | I'm not interested in this | I don't think that this is a good thing |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 56% | 20% | 12% | 10% | 1% |

C6. Do you know what the Children's code does / is for? (Don't Google it – we just want to know if anyone knows this!) The Children's code is sometimes also called the Age Appropriate Design Code.
*BASE: Those aware of The Children's code or The Age Appropriate Design code - 412*
C7. Where did you hear about / learn about The Children's code?
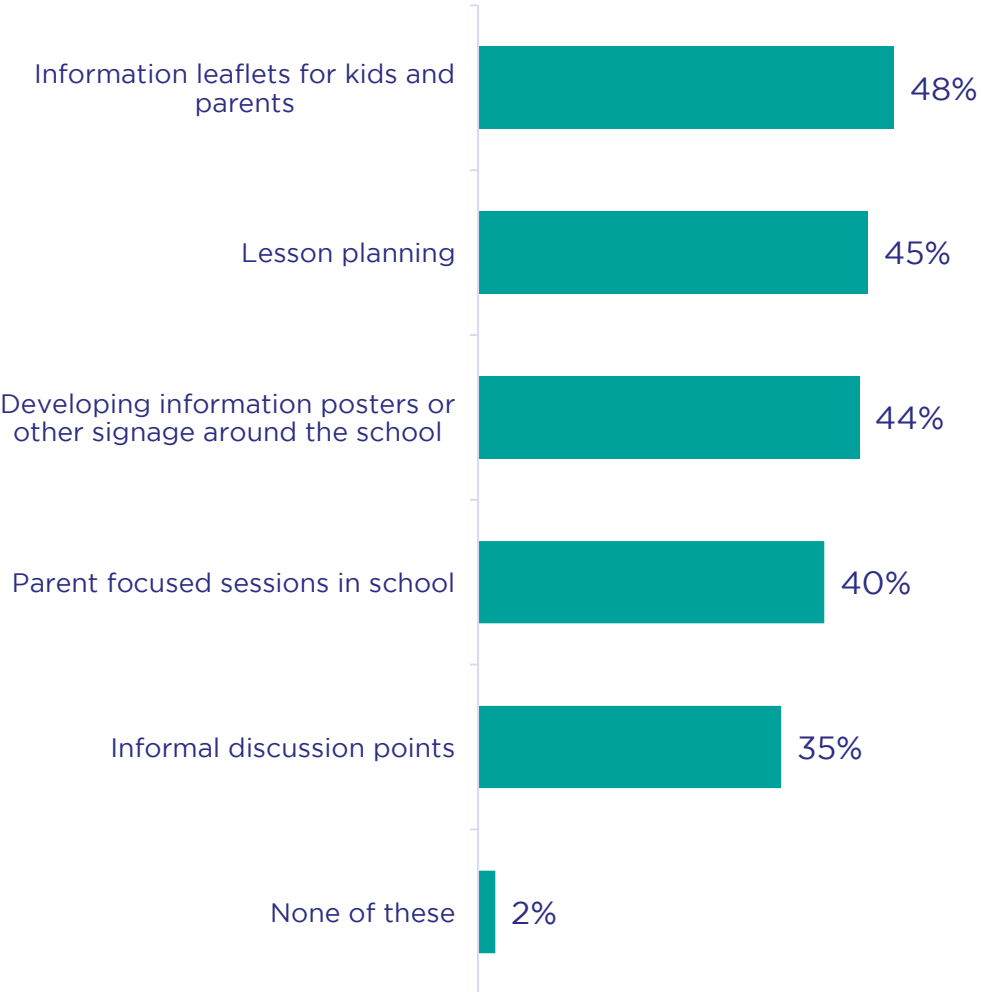*BASE: Those aware of The Children's code - 361*
C8. What do you think of the Children's code as described above?
*BASE: Those aware of The Children's code -1616*

**THE INSIGHTS FAMILY**

## What have you used (or plan to use) the data protection school resources for?

| Category | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Information leaflets for kids and parents | 48% |
| Lesson planning | 45% |
| Developing information posters or other signage around the school | 44% |
| Parent focused sessions in school | 40% |
| Informal discussion points | 35% |
| None of these | 2% |

- The top purpose teachers used the resources was for creating leaflets for both children and their parents, speaking to an intention to involve parents in their child's education, as does the 2 in 5 teachers who are using them for parent focused sessions in school

- Only a quarter of teachers agreed with the statement that the pack is child friendly.
- 31% of teachers who said the pack contains everything they need, and 38% agreed that the pack helps them communicate with / educate kids, which suggests this is not the case for the majority of teachers and that that there is room for improvement in these areas.

## Which of the following statements do you agree with about the data protection school resources from the ICO?

| Statement | Percentage |
|---|---|
| The pack helps us to communicate with / educate kids | 38% |
| The pack is a valuable resource | 37% |
| The pack helps us to communicate with / educate parents | 35% |
| The pack is used widely across the school | 33% |
| The pack contains everything I need | 31% |
| The pack is child friendly | 25% |
| I know how to request a pack if I don't have one | 19% |
| The pack is not helpful | 10% |
| I don't know where the pack is or who uses it | 8% |

# TEACHERS' ADAPTATIONS TO AND SUGGESTIONS FOR ICO RESOURCES

## Adaptations

"I've simplified the language used and implemented a simpler glossary of terms." – Head Teacher, North-West

"Making it more personalised to our pupils, age and stage appropriate lessons for a progressive pack of resources" – Teacher, Scotland

"Made it more suitable for each age group by referencing examples" – Department Head, Northern Ireland

"To make as appropriate to my classes age | Changed examples to more relevant experiences around our area" – Teacher, Northern Ireland

"Such as adapt it to students who may have personnel [sic] learning issues or even word it easier to make .Ore [sic] pupils understand." – Head Teacher, London

"Changes to link in with local authority own documents and guidance" – Teacher, Scotland

## Suggestions

"As the WWW progresses further and further it should include updates that can be taught to |kids in a meaningful and easy to understand way" – Head Teacher, London

"Personal stories from people who have been targeted and how they dealt with the situation" – Teacher, Scotland

"Comes with a better glossary" – Teacher, London

"More case studies" – Head Teacher, London

"Better more interactive tasks" – teacher, South West

"More tools to use for children who are special educational needs" – Department Head, Northern Ireland, South West

"I think this needs to be continually adapted to keep up with technology and keep it relevant for children ie. The latest apps, games and devices to grab their attention and make it relatable" – Teacher, Scotland

A14. Please can you tell us what changes or adaptations you've made to the resources in order to meet your school's needs?
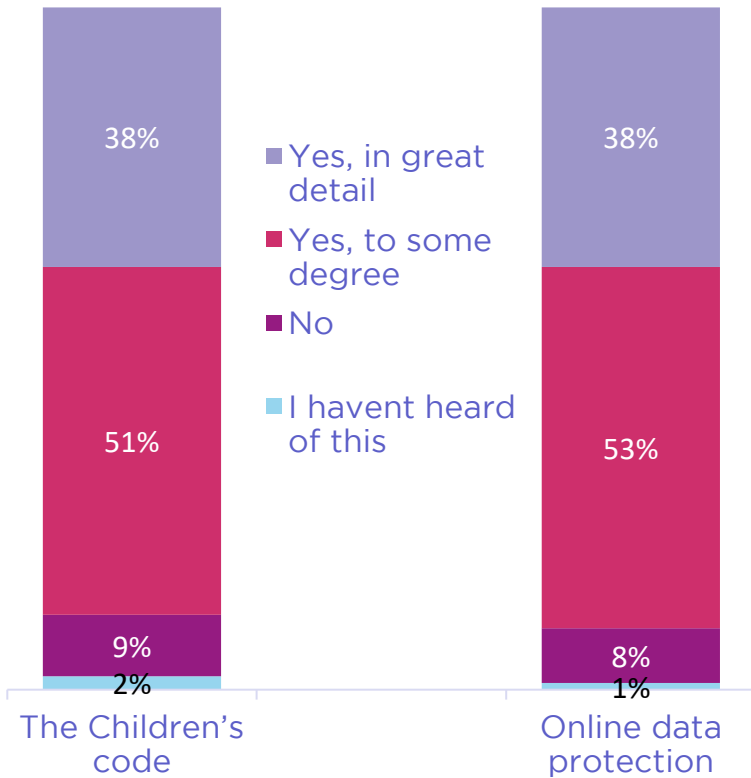*BASE: Teachers who had used the pack a lot/ a little, and had adapted it. 107*
A17. Is there anything else you would like to see in the data protection school resources?
*BASE: Those who were aware of the data protection resources provided by the ICO- 217*
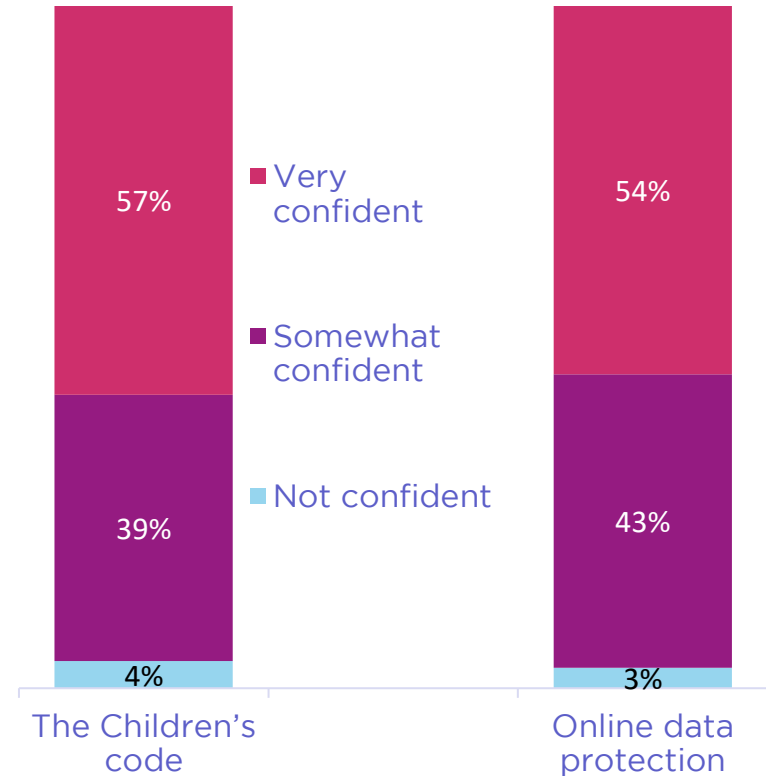
**THE INSIGHTS FAMILY**

## Do you or does your school talk to and educate kids about the Children's code (formally known as the Age-Appropriate design code) and or Online data protection?



- Yes, in great detail — 38%
- Yes, to some degree — 51%
- No — 9%
- I havent heard of this — 2%

The Children's code

38% / 53% / 8% / 1% — Online data protection

- The majority of teachers said that they or their school educates their students about the Children's code to at least some degree (89% NET). Teaching about online data protection saw similar figures, at 92% (NET).

- Whilst properly detailed teaching was reported in just under 2 in 5 cases, it remains that more than 3 in 5 children are not receiving a sufficiently comprehensive education on these topics.

## How confident are you in your own knowledge about the Children's code (formally known as the Age-Appropriate design code) and / or online data protection?

- Most teachers said they were confident in their own knowledge of the Children's code, and broader online data protection.

- Similar to depth of teaching however, more than 2 in 5 teachers did not answer that they were 'very confident', which may be contributing to the less than detailed teaching being reported in the graph opposite.



- Very confident — 57%
- Somewhat confident — 39%
- Not confident — 4%

The Children's code

54% / 43% / 3% — Online data protection

TA8. How confident are you in your own knowledge about the Children's code (formally known as the Age-Appropriate design code) and / or online data protection?
TA9. Do you or does your school talk to and educate kids about the Children's code (formally known as the Age-Appropriate design code) and or Online data protection?
*BASE: All Teachers – 300*

# CHILDREN'S DATA PROTECTION PRIORITIES

**CHILDREN: Show us which you think is most important for companies to do – re-order the list, where 1 is the most important and 7 is the least important.**

**MOST IMPORTANT**

**LEAST IMPORTANT**

| Rule | Average ranking out of 7 | Overall rank |
|---|---|---|
| Provide lots of privacy | 3.2 | 1st |
| Switch off geo-location services that track where you are | 3.8 | Joint 2nd |
| Make services be designed to your age and to be in your best interests | 3.8 | Joint 2nd |
| Consider whether their use of data keeps you safe | 4 | 3rd |
| Stop sharing data with other companies or organisations unless there is a strong reason to do so | 4.1 | 4th |
| Stop using features that encourage you to provide more data | 4.3 | 5th |
| Inform you about how your data is being used | 4.7 | 6th |

- Kids' primary concern when it comes to companies protecting their data, is that they need to provide lots of privacy, suggesting that this is something they think should be an inextricable element of a company's online offering

- Joint second was switching off of geo-location tracking services, and designing services to be age appropriate
    - Open-ended answers provide depth to why these issues which are important to children - see Slide 41.

C9. More specifically, the Children's code means that online companies must appropriately protect children's data. Please can you re-order this list to show us which you think is most important for companies to do:
*BASE: All Children – 1616*

**To what extent do you trust [the Children's code] to make the internet better and safer for you?**

- Just under a quarter of children and young people fully trust the Children's code, to make the internet better and safer for them. 72% (NET) of kids trust it overall.

  - A very small minority responded that they distrust the code a little/a lot, illustrating that whilst some kids are unconvinced that it can make the internet better and safer, most of them are assured of its ability to do this.

  - A quarter of kids surveyed responded that they are 'not sure', if they trust the code based on the information provided in the survey.

I distrust it a lot
1%

I distrust it a little
1%

I trust it a lot
24%

Not sure
26%

I trust it a little
48%

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C10. 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: All Children – 1616*
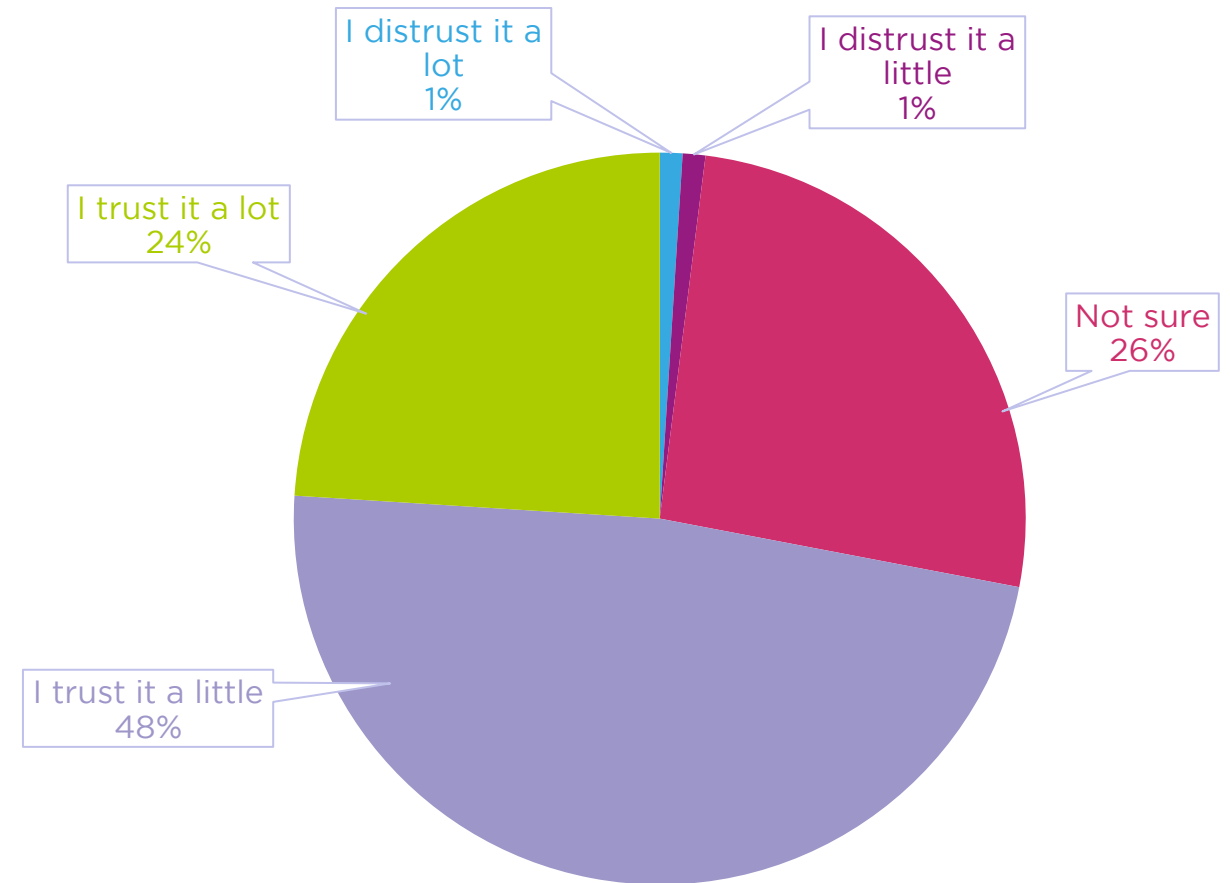
# CHILDREN'S KNOWLEDGE OF AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE CHILDREN'S CODE:

**Knowledge of the Children's code is most likely to be learned at school/through a teacher for all ages, genders and regions.**

**Children in Wales and Scotland are slightly more likely to believe it's a good thing that the code has been created than children in England and Northern Ireland.**

**No significant regional differences occur in children's trust in the code to make the internet better and safer for themselves.**

THE INSIGHTS FAMILY

**Age of children and young people when they first accessed their own social media account**
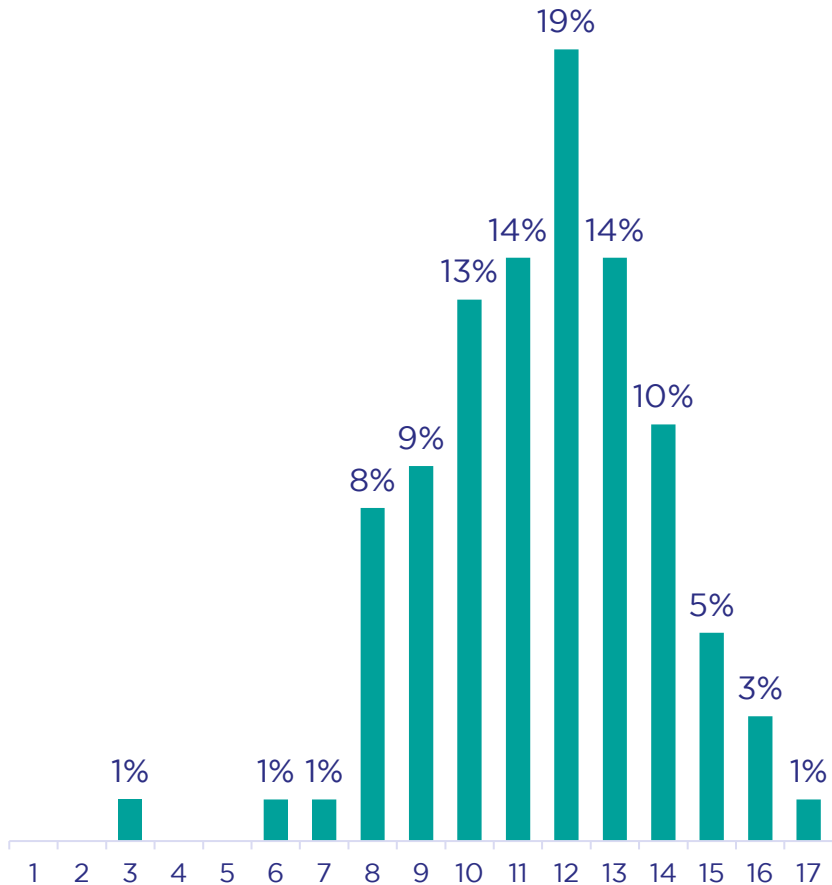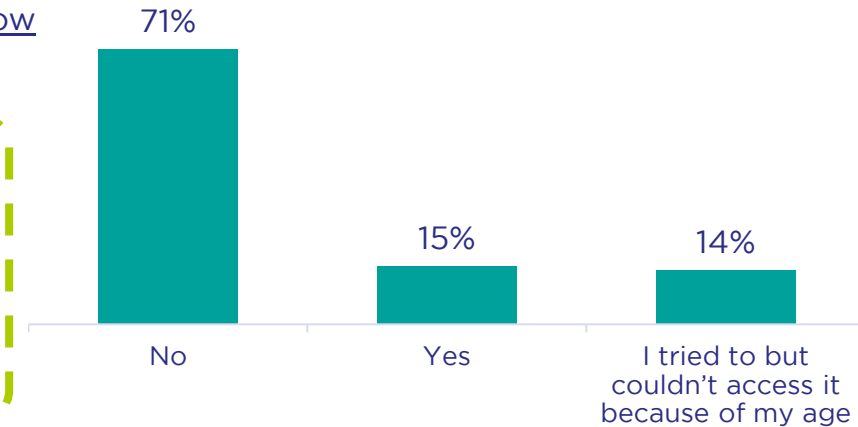


- Two-thirds of kids reported that they first accessed social media below the age of 13, the typical minimum age stipulated for users to access most social networks.

- Children of parents with Higher Managerial/Administrative/ Professional jobs were significantly more likely to have accessed online services with a minimum age of 18, than the children of parents with any other type of jobs.

- Children who identified as LGBTQ+, were significantly more likely to have said they were a different age to access a site (59%), and to have accessed an online service when you had to be 18 or over (30%), than non-LGBTQ+ children. N.B. Low base sizes – see footer.

**Focus Group Findings:** There is also concern that the internet is almost unregulatable. Many young people spoke openly about dishonestly claiming to be of an appropriate age to access Instagram for example. Some parents knew that this was happening and did not challenge it.

**Have you ever said you were a different age to access a site on the Internet?**



61% No
39% Yes
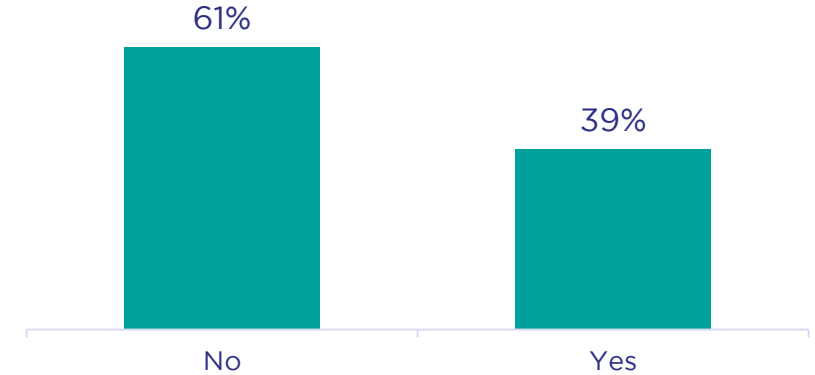
**Have you ever accessed an online service where you had to be aged 18 or over?**



71% No
15% Yes
14% I tried to but couldn't access it because of my age

C12. 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?
C14. When using the internet, have you ever accessed an online service that has a minimum age of 18?
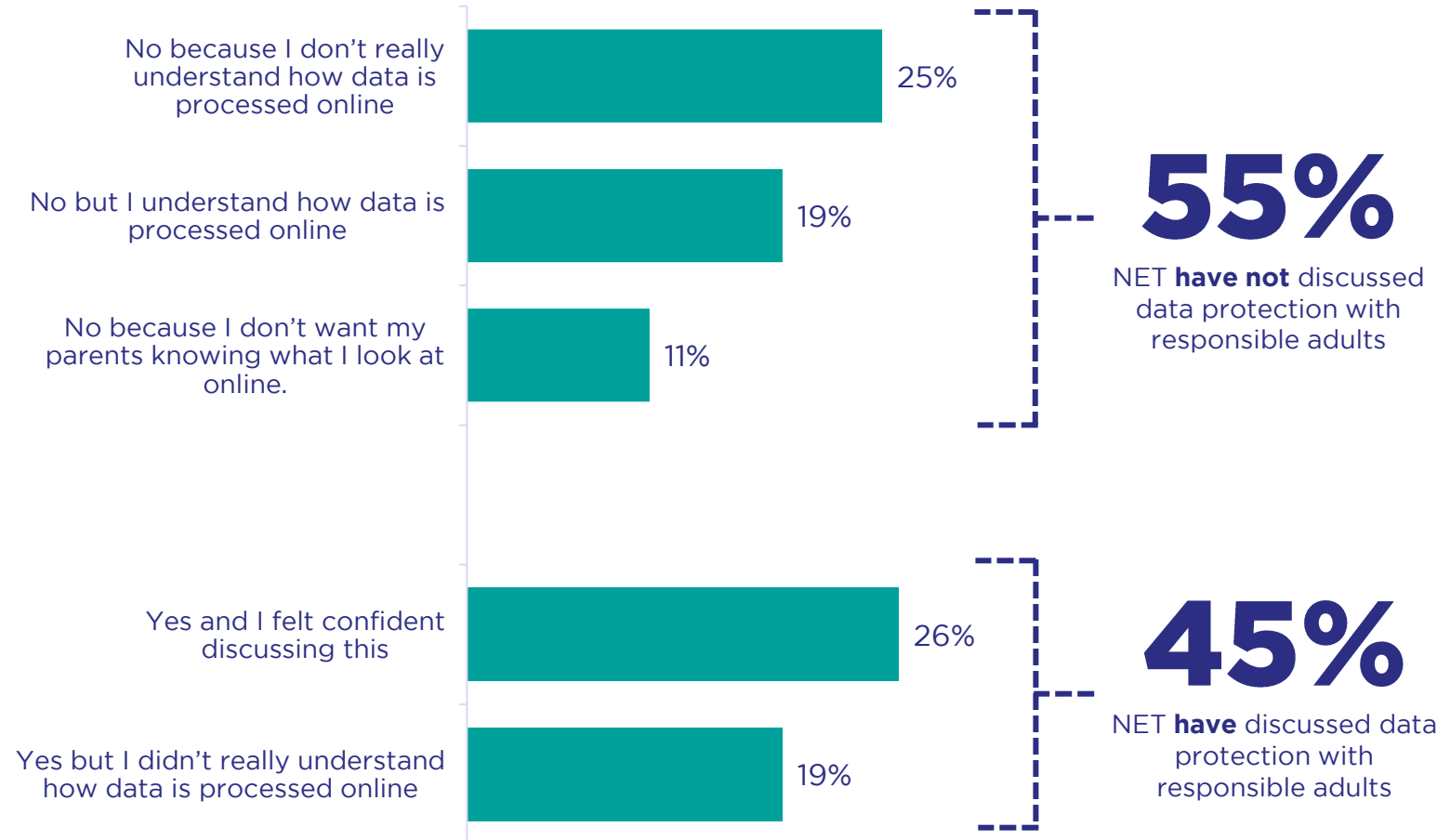C15. How old were you when you first accessed your own social media account?

*BASE: All children: 1616*
*LGBTQ+ BASE: 87*

# CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCES WITH DISCUSSING DATA PROTECTION WITH RESPONSIBLE ADULTS

THE INSIGHTS FAMILY

**Have children discussed how their data is processed online with an adult?**

No because I don't really understand how data is processed online — **25%**

No but I understand how data is processed online — **19%**

No because I don't want my parents knowing what I look at online. — **11%**

## 55%
NET **have not** discussed data protection with responsible adults

Yes and I felt confident discussing this — **26%**

Yes but I didn't really understand how data is processed online — **19%**

## 45%
NET **have** discussed data protection with responsible adults

- More kids reported that they had not previously discussed how their data is processed with an adult, than those who said they had (55% vs. 45%)
  - Of those who hadn't, the majority stated that they were held back by their own lack of understanding about how their data is processed online
- Just over quarter of kids said that they had discussed data protection with a responsible adult, and that they felt confident doing so
  - Kids of parents who jobs could be classed as higher managerial, administrative or professional roles, were significantly more likely to give this answer than kids of parents with any other job types
- 1 in 10 kids reported purposely not discussing data protection, out of concern that their parents would then know what they are looking at online
- As shown on Slide 23, "lack of DP knowledge serves as a barrier for discussion and for support to be sought when needed"

C17. 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: All children: 1616*

# CHILDREN'S THOUGHTS ON HOW THE INTERNET COULD BE MADE BETTER AND SAFER FOR THEM

- The responses from children and teens often included that they wanted clearer, more easily accessible information, on both the age that sites are intended for, and what companies intend to do with their data.

- They also were in favour of an opt-in rather than opt-out approach to data collection, and questioned whether many dimensions of data collection were relevant or necessary, and that they would prefer to only share truly vital data.

- A few of them mentioned harsher consequences for companies found to be in breach of rules.

"More barriers to explicit websites" – Girl, 16-17 age bracket

"I think the reasoning given before is very valid - I feel like simplified versions of data protection and usage will be very helpful for kids and children because often it is just skipped or not paid attention to (enough anyway). I also feel like default settings for location and others should be at "off" instead of "on" whilst waiting for the owner of the device to turn them off manually." – Girl, 16-17 age bracket

"The government coukd [sic] be harder on companies" – Boy, 12-15 age bracket

"Make companies pay if they brake [sic] the rule." – Girl, 8-11 age bracket

"Not allowing people to be anonymous having to prove your age. |I don't want to play some games but my friends parents let them then I think my parents are mean because the don't let me but if we all had to prove our age to play they could not play it either" – Boy, 12-15 age bracket

"Being anonymous [sic], untraceable. An opt in for data collection rather than it being automatic." – Girl, 16-17 age bracket

"There are so many inappropriate ads on social media which should be banned as they have a negative impact on children's lives !!!!!" – Girl, 12-15 age bracket

"Having clear age ratings on sites" – Boy, 12-15 age bracket

"If they asked less questions that are not very important. Like why a game that's not location based needs to know where I live. Or a game that is for everybody needs to know how old I am." – Boy, 8-11 age bracket

"on the website before i use it i get info on what they want from me and how it will be used or stored i think" – Boy, 12-15 age bracket

"Easy to understand safety guidelines||More warnings about staying safe||More education, perhaps a quiz/ game that teaches about online safety" – Girl, 12-15 age bracket

"More information available that young people will understand instead of all the jargon talk" – Girl, 16-17 age bracket

C11. What else do you think could change to make the internet better / safer for you?
*BASE: All children: 1616*

# CHILDREN'S ONLINE EXPERIENCES:

Boys (compared to girls), 16–17-year-olds (compared to younger children) and children in Scotland (compared to England and Northern Ireland) are significantly more likely to have accessed an online service that has a minimum age of 18.

Children aged 12–17 are significantly more likely to have said they were a different age to what they really were in order to access a site or service, compared to children aged 8-11 years old. Boys were also significantly more likely to have done this than girls.

Children in Wales are significantly more likely to not understand how data is processed online, compared to children in England. Similarly, children aged 8-11 are significantly more likely to not understand, compared to older children.

# TEACHERS' CONCLUSIONS YEAR ON YEAR COMPARISONS

## KEY FINDINGS:

The resources that are being distributed aren't as child-friendly as they could be. Teachers are adapting them to be age-appropriate, location-appropriate, and SEN-appropriate and to work in a way that children and young people can relate to from their own lives (Slide 37, 38).

Despite teachers saying they are educating children, it remains questionable as to whether they are getting through to their pupils and whether their data privacy-related content is resonating (Slide 34).

Schools and teachers are playing the central role in educating children about The Children's code (Slide 36).

Increased number of teachers going directly to the ICO website to inform themselves and their lesson plans, ranking third and replacing resource repositories (Slide 10)

Schools and online resources are critical for getting DP knowledge out to parents (Slide 9, 17).

Teaching deficits mirror those from 2021; geolocation settings, profiling, and parental controls remain topics less than half of schools are currently teaching about (Slide 33).

## KEY ACTIONS:

Develop resources that already account for these regional differences, further consult children to obtain relevant examples, and specialise resources to suit different ages.

Bridge the gap between terminology being taught and the way children are thinking about their online activities and data protection, to ensure teacher's confidence in the material they are passing on is correct

Emphasise the extent to which educating children is a combined effort between teachers, the Government, charities and parents.  At the same time, acknowledge the teacher's experience in that they are doing a lot of the work, and others could do more.

Continue to promote ICO's information and resources, so it sustains trajectory towards being the primary destination for teachers seeking data protection information.

Add to existing resources with information specifically for parents, for teachers to pass on in emails, newsletters and workshops, building on work done from 2021 recommendations.

Encourage teachers to move beyond better known risks like cyberbullying, stranger danger, and inappropriate content and raise awareness of lesser known data protection related risks. ICO should maintain efforts to support this.  As in 2021, equip schools with the information and support to do this, and monitor for consistency.

# AWARENESS OF GOVERNANCE

**THE INSIGHTS FAMILY**

## 2021

| | Parents | Children |
|---|---|---|
| **GDPR** | 41 % | 25 % |
| **The Data Sharing Code of Practice** | 19 % | 10 % |
| **The Information Commissioners Office** | 25 % | 17 % |
| **None of these** | 24 % | 42 % |
| **The Children's code** | 29 % | 29 % |
| **The ICO** | 16 % | 14 % |
| **The Age Appropriate Design Code** | 14 % | 11 % |

## 2022

| | Parents | Children |
|---|---|---|
| **GDPR** | 56% | 23% |
| **The Data Sharing Code of Practice** | 26% | 7% |
| **The Information Commissioners Office** | 24% | 8% |
| **None of these** | 20% | 38% |
| **The Children's code** | 20% | 20% |
| **The ICO** | 14% | 5% |
| **The Age Appropriate Design Code** | 12% | 10% |

Parents / Children

- As was the case in 2021, parental awareness of governance was higher than that of children's

- GDPR ranked highest for awareness again for parents and children. Parental awareness increased by +15pp, whilst children's awareness dropped by -2pp.

- There was a uniform drop in awareness of The Children's code, for both parents and children in 2022, going from 29% to 20%.

- Awareness of the ICO, and The Age Appropriate Design Code also decreased.

- Despite this, the number of parents and children who said they had heard of 'none' of the organisations and guidance also decreased slightly, showing that general awareness of data protection is improving, however not in the specific areas of relevance to The ICO and Children's code.

*BASE: 2021. 1535, 2022. 1616*

# IMPORTANCE OF THE CHILDREN'S CODE'S FEATURES

**THE INSIGHTS FAMILY**

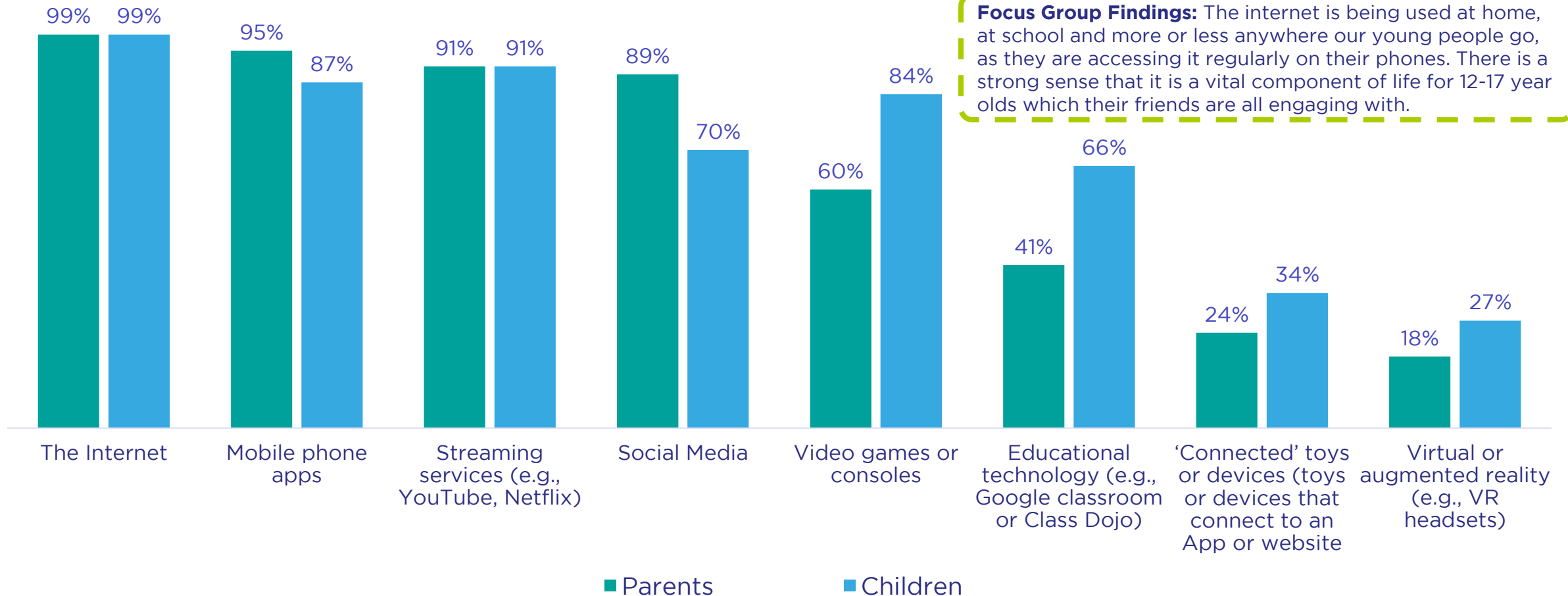| Parents (asked to rank each rule out of 5 individually, where 1 was not very important and 5 was very important) | | Children (asked to rank all statements, in order of importance, where 1 was the most important and 7 the least important) | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Rule** | **Overall Rank: Parents** | **Overall Rank: Children's** | **Rule** |
| Companies should consider whether their use of data keeps children safe from commercial and / or sexual exploitation | **Joint 1st** | **3rd** | Consider whether their use of data keeps you safe |
| Companies should check a user's age to make sure children cannot access sites that are age inappropriate | **Joint 1st** | / | / |
| Companies should provide a high level of privacy by default | **Joint 2nd** | **1st** | Provide lots of privacy |
| Companies should provide clear, easy to understand information for children about how their data will be used | **Joint 2nd** | **6th** | Inform you about how your data is being used |
| Companies should switch off geo-location services that track where children are based | **Joint 2nd** | **Joint 2nd** | Switch off geo-location services that track where you are |
| Companies should stop sharing data with third parties unless there is a compelling reason to do so. | **Joint 2nd** | **4th** | Stop sharing data with other companies or organisations unless there is a strong reason to do so |
| Companies should stop using design features that encourage children to provide more data | **Joint 3rd** | **5th** | Stop using features that encourage you to provide more data |
| Design services should be age appropriate and in the best interests of children | **Joint 3rd** | **Joint 2nd** | Make services be designed to your age and to be in your best interests |

- Children ranked 'providing lots of privacy' as being the most important aspect of the code for companies to adhere to, in the surveys from both 2021 and 2022.

- Similarly, parents prioritised 'companies should consider whether their use of data keeps children safe...' once again this year, as well as companies checking ages to 'make sure children cannot access sites that are age inappropriate', which ranked first in both years.

- Children also expressed that designing services specifically for children and their best interests was important to them, ranking second in both years.

- Direct YOY comparisons are not possible due to changes in the ranking formats between years, and between the questions asked to parents and children. The aspects of the code that were considered to be of the highest importance in 2021, were similar in this year's survey.
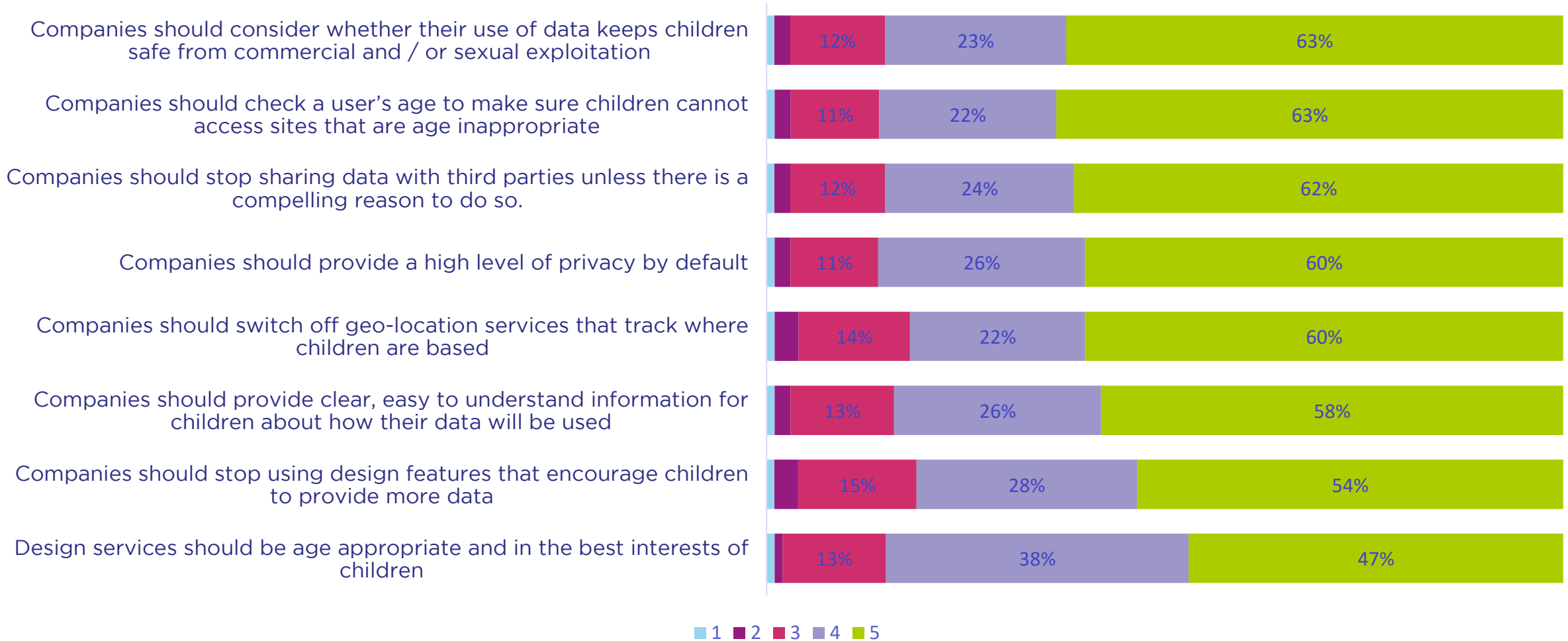
# APPENDIX: EXTRA CHARTS

# PARENTS' & CHILDREN'S TECHNOLOGY USAGE



**Focus Group Findings:** The internet is being used at home, at school and more or less anywhere our young people go, as they are accessing it regularly on their phones. There is a strong sense that it is a vital component of life for 12-17 year olds which their friends are all engaging with.

| Category | Parents | Children |
|---|---|---|
| The Internet | 99% | 99% |
| Mobile phone apps | 95% | 87% |
| Streaming services (e.g., YouTube, Netflix) | 91% | 91% |
| Social Media | 89% | 70% |
| Video games or consoles | 60% | 84% |
| Educational technology (e.g., Google classroom or Class Dojo) | 41% | 66% |
| 'Connected' toys or devices (toys or devices that connect to an App or website | 24% | 34% |
| Virtual or augmented reality (e.g., VR headsets) | 18% | 27% |

■ Parents   ■ Children

- The lower proportion of children using mobile phone apps was as a result of younger children being significantly less likely to use them, when compared to 12-15 and 16-17-year-olds, which in turn in likely due to fewer of them owning mobiles themselves.
- A stark generational gap is evident in the use of video games and EdTech, suggesting that parents' assessment of risk towards them may not be anchored in a solid foundation of personal engagement and knowledge.

# PARENTS' ATTITUDES ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF INDIVIDUAL CODE RULES – FULL CHART
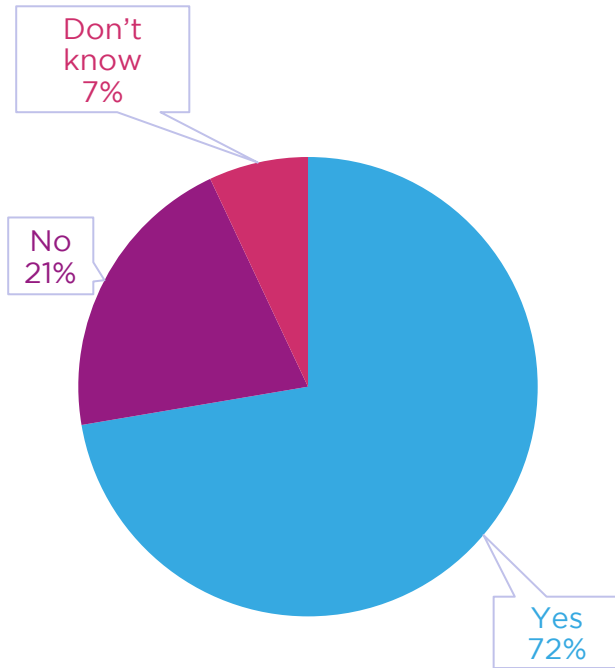
| Statement | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Companies should consider whether their use of data keeps children safe from commercial and / or sexual exploitation | 12% | 23% | 63% |
| Companies should check a user's age to make sure children cannot access sites that are age inappropriate | 11% | 22% | 63% |
| Companies should stop sharing data with third parties unless there is a compelling reason to do so. | 12% | 24% | 62% |
| Companies should provide a high level of privacy by default | 11% | 26% | 60% |
| Companies should switch off geo-location services that track where children are based | 14% | 22% | 60% |
| Companies should provide clear, easy to understand information for children about how their data will be used | 13% | 26% | 58% |
| Companies should stop using design features that encourage children to provide more data | 15% | 28% | 54% |
| Design services should be age appropriate and in the best interests of children | 13% | 38% | 47% |

■ 1 ■ 2 ■ 3 ■ 4 ■ 5

B11. Consider the various rules of the Children's code shown here and rate each from 1 to 5 as to how important they are.
*BASE: All Respondents - 1616*

# DATA PRIVACY ISSUES AND SCHOOLS' TEACHING APPROACHES

THE INSIGHTS FAMILY

**My school teaches this now**
62% 62% 60% 57% 56% 55% 54% 53% 45% 40% 34%

**My school taught this in the past but doesn't now**
7% 6% 7% 12% 14% 7% 11% 10% 10% 9% 8%

**My school will likely teach this in the future**
12% 15% 17% 12% 13% 16% 16% 18% 19% 21% 23%

**My school wants to teach this but doesn't feel equipped to do so**
8% 9% 9% 11% 9% 11% 10% 8% 11% 14% 13%

**My school doesn't teach this**
6% 5% 4% 5% 4% 5% 6% 7% 9% 11% 17%

**My school leaves this to each individual teacher's discretion**
4% 2% 3% 3% 3% 4% 3% 2% 4% 3% 2%

- Online bullying
- Stranger danger
- Online safeguarding
- Profiling
- Reporting a problem to a trusted adult
- Risks around sharing personal data online
- Reporting a problem to the online service
- Geolocation settings
- Inappropriate/upsetting content
- Misinformation and trustworthiness
- Parental controls

A4. Thinking about the following online safety issues, please tell us which statements are true to your school.
*BASE: All Teachers - 300*

# TEACHERS' IMPLEMENTATION OF ICO DATA PROTECTION SCHOOL RESOURCES

THE INSIGHTS FAMILY

**Are you aware of the data protection school resources that are available to schools via the ICO?**

- Don't know 7%
- No 21%
- Yes 72%

**Has your school been sent or downloaded the data protection school resources published by the ICO? (Of those aware/don't know)**

- Don't know 9%
- No 10%
- Yes 82%

**How useful have you found the data protection school resources published by the ICO?**

- Not so useful 2%
- I don't know what these are 2%
- Quite useful 42%
- Very useful 54%

TA10. Are you aware of the data protection school resources/bilingual data protection that are available to schools via the ICO?
*BASE: All Teachers – 300*
TA11. Has your school been sent or downloaded the data protection school resources published by the ICO?
*BASE: All Teachers, excluding those not confident about the Children's code and/or schools don't educate kids about the Children's code – 238*
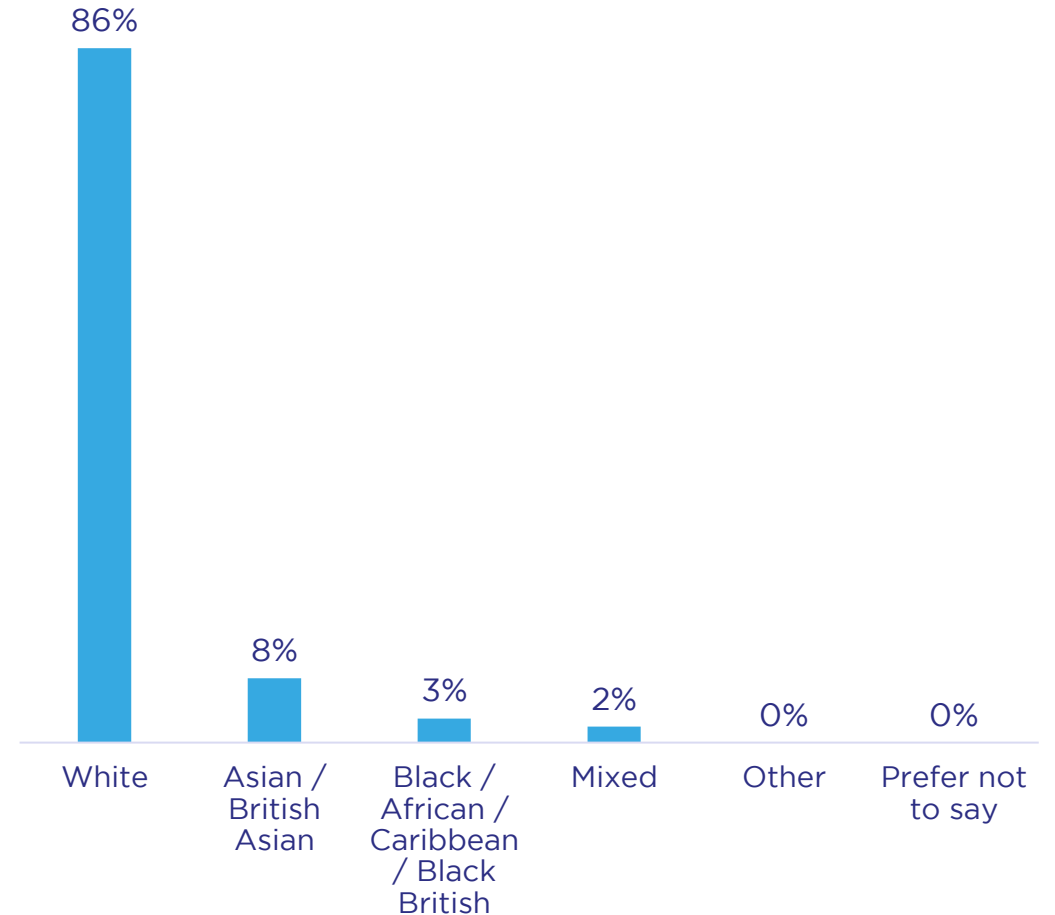TA12. How useful have you found the data protection school resources published by the ICO?
*BASE: All Teachers that have been sent or downloaded the data protection resources – 217*
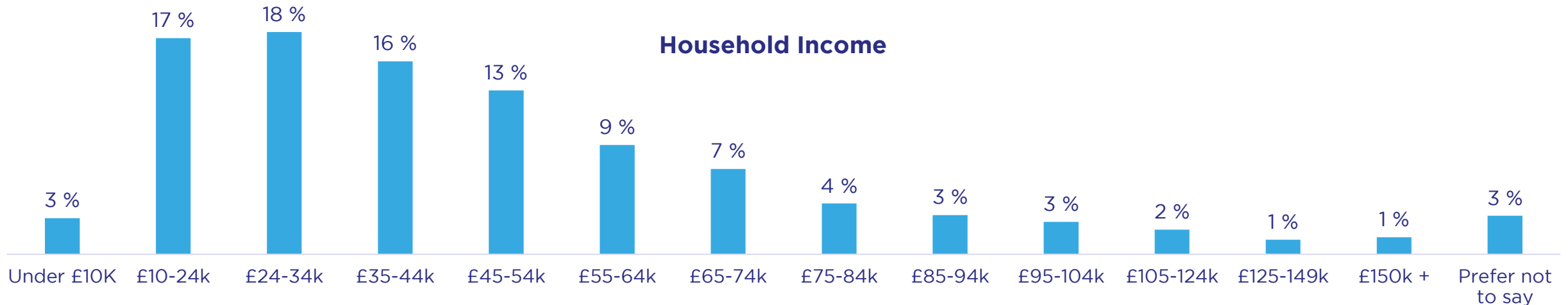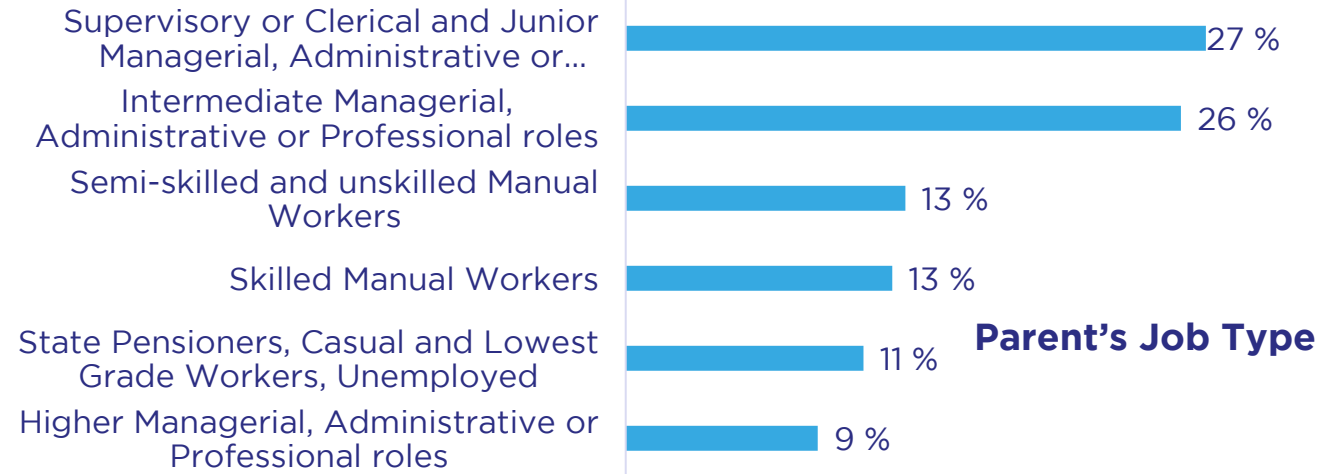
# APPENDIX: DEMOGRAPHICS

## Area

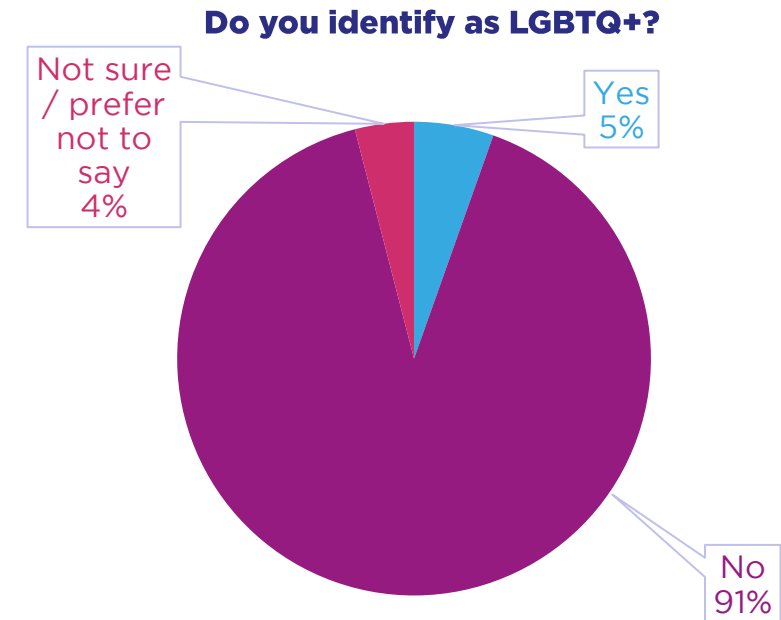| Area | % |
|------|---|
| North-West | 13 % |
| South-East | 13 % |
| London | 11 % |
| Yorkshire and Humberside | 10 % |
| West Midlands | 9 % |
| South-West | 8 % |
| East Anglia | 8 % |
| East Midlands | 7 % |
| North-East | 5 % |
| Scotland | 7 % |
| Wales | 6 % |
| Northern Ireland | 4 % |

## Ethnicity

| Ethnicity | % |
|-----------|---|
| White | 86% |
| Asian / British Asian | 8% |
| Black / African / Caribbean / Black British | 3% |
| Mixed | 2% |
| Other | 0% |
| Prefer not to say | 0% |

A4. Which of the following best describes your ethnicity?
*BASE: All Respondents – 1616*
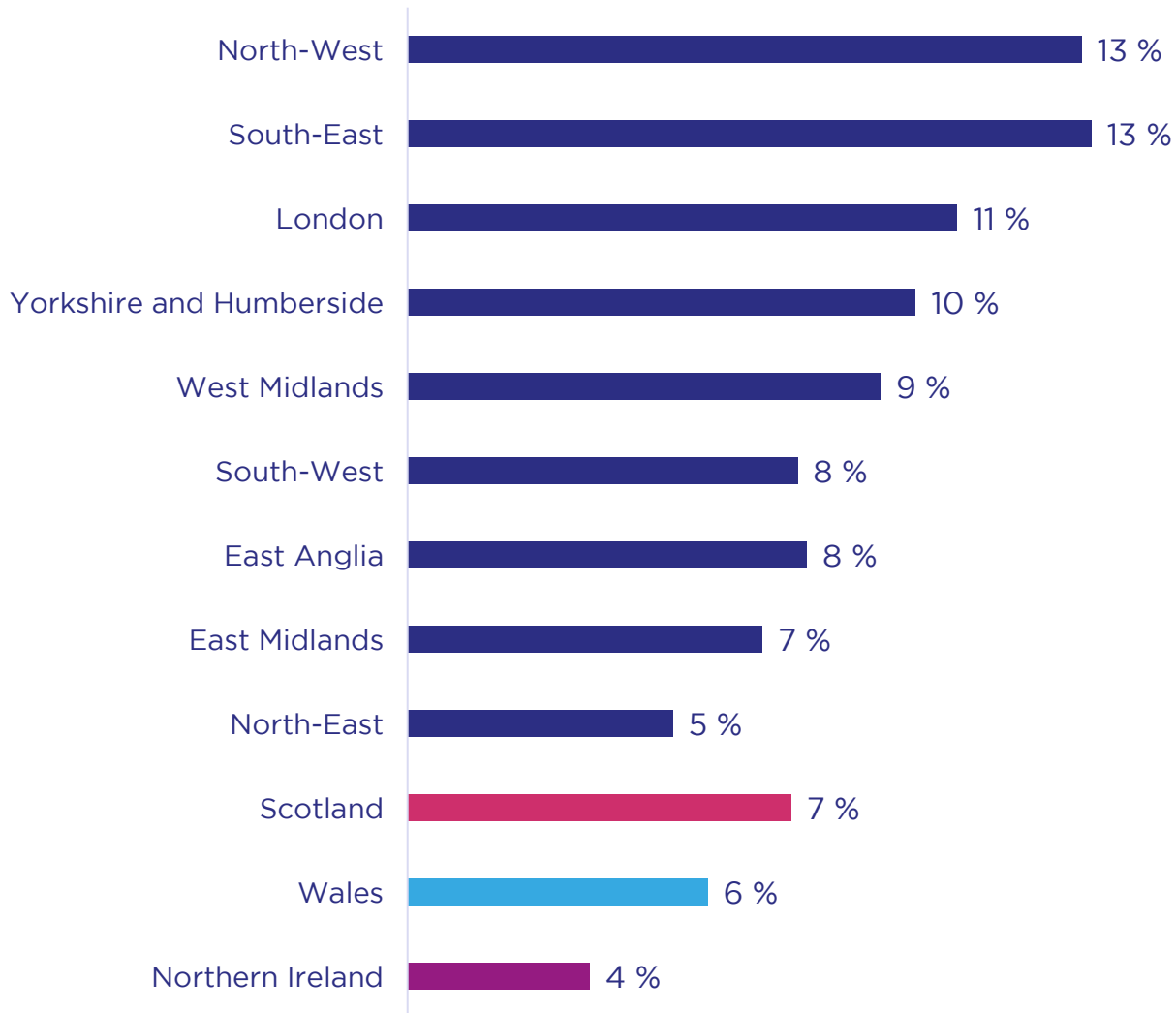
# AGE, HOUSEHOLD INCOME, AND SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC BANDS

THE INSIGHTS FAMILY

## Parent Age

- 18-24: 1 %
- 25-34: 12 %
- 35-44: 49 %
- 45-54: 30 %
- 55-64: 7 %
- 65-74: 0 %
- 75+: 0 %
- Prefer not to say: 0 %

## Parent's Job Type

- Supervisory or Clerical and Junior Managerial, Administrative or...: 27 %
- Intermediate Managerial, Administrative or Professional roles: 26 %
- Semi-skilled and unskilled Manual Workers: 13 %
- Skilled Manual Workers: 13 %
- State Pensioners, Casual and Lowest Grade Workers, Unemployed: 11 %
- Higher Managerial, Administrative or Professional roles: 9 %

## Household Income

- Under £10K: 3 %
- £10-24k: 17 %
- £24-34k: 18 %
- £35-44k: 16 %
- £45-54k: 13 %
- £55-64k: 9 %
- £65-74k: 7 %
- £75-84k: 4 %
- £85-94k: 3 %
- £95-104k: 3 %
- £105-124k: 2 %
- £125-149k: 1 %
- £150k +: 1 %
- Prefer not to say: 3 %

A3. Can you please tell us your age group?
A5. What Is your average household income?
A6. And which of these socio-demographic bands does your job/role fit within?
*BASSE: All Respondents - 1616*

# PARENTS' AND CHILDREN'S DESCRIPTIONS OF CHILD'S GENDER IDENTITY, AND CHILDREN'S LGBTQ+ IDENTITY
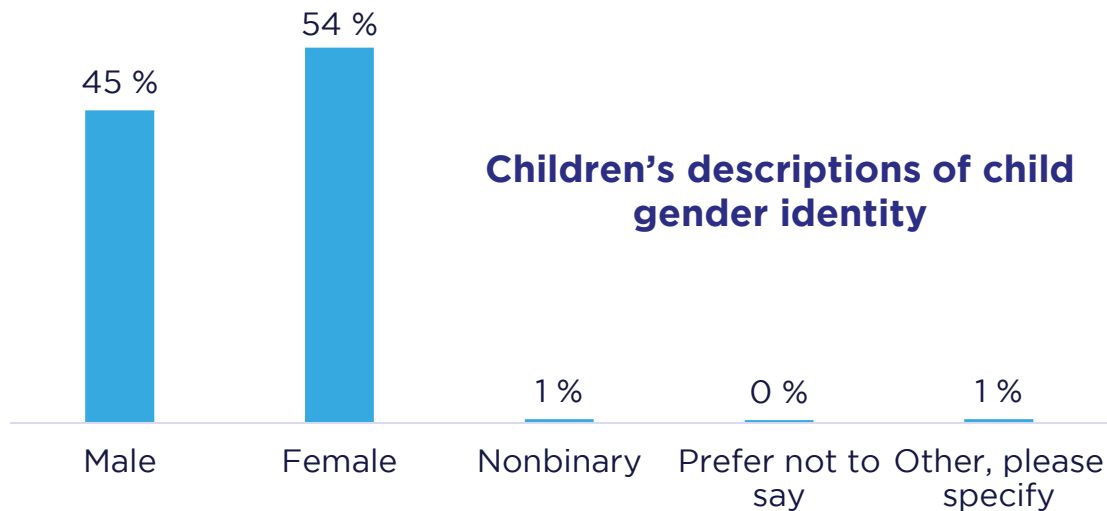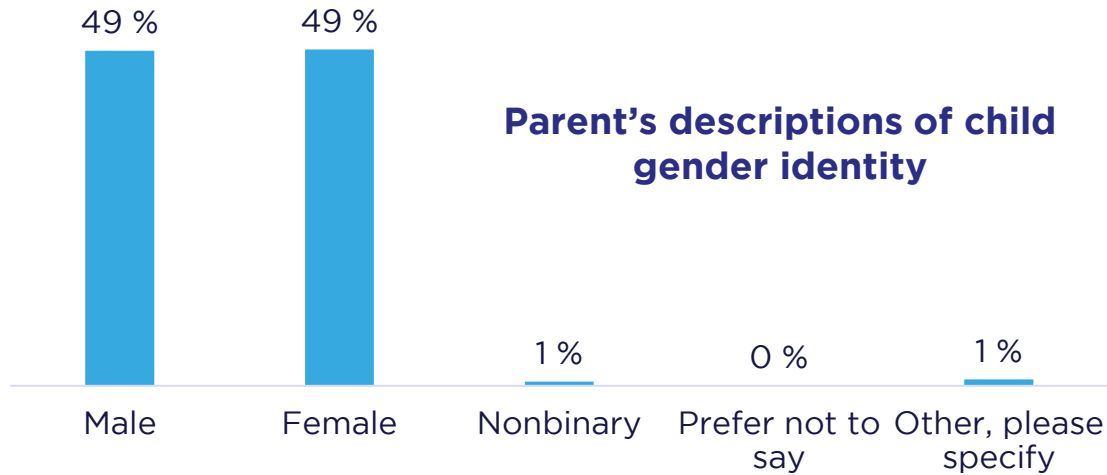
**Parent's descriptions of child gender identity**

| Male | Female | Nonbinary | Prefer not to say | Other, please specify |
|------|--------|-----------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 49 % | 49 % | 1 % | 0 % | 1 % |

**Children's descriptions of child gender identity**

| Male | Female | Nonbinary | Prefer not to say | Other, please specify |
|------|--------|-----------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 45 % | 54 % | 1 % | 0 % | 1 % |

**Do you identify as LGBTQ+?**

- Not sure / prefer not to say 4%
- Yes 5%
- No 91%

## Teacher's Occupation



| Head Teacher | Deputy Head Teacher | Department Head | Year Head | Teacher |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15 % | 13 % | 16 % | 9 % | 47 % |
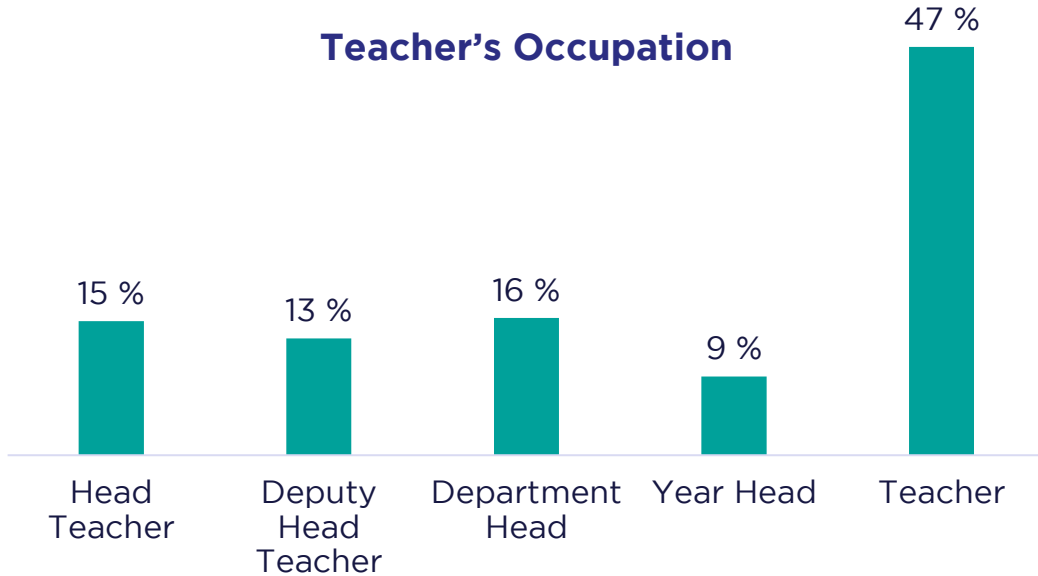
## FSM Qualification



| Below 20% | Between 21 and 35 % | Between 36 and 50% | Between 51 and 65% | Above 65% |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9% | 38% | 35% | 12% | 5% |
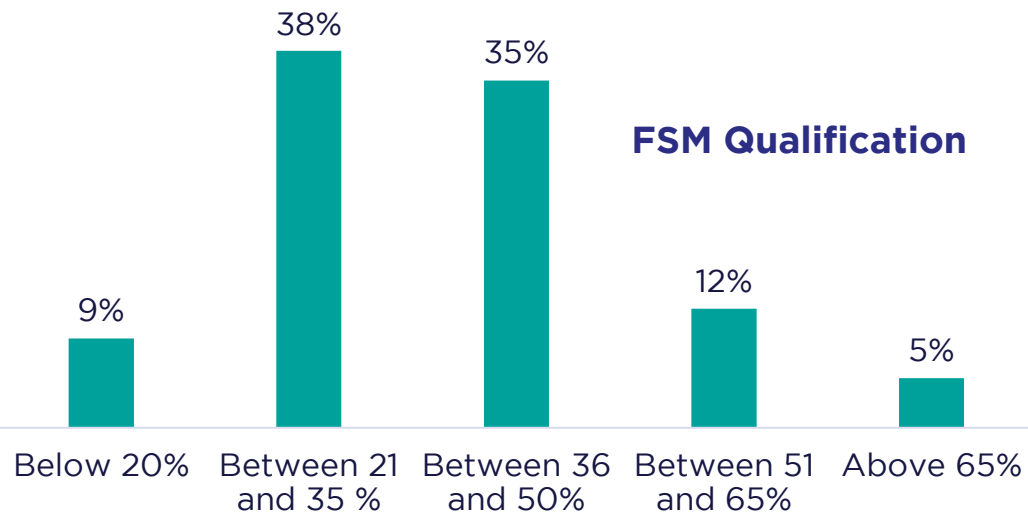
## What type of school do you work in?



Secondary School 50%

Primary School 50%

# TEACHERS' PSHE (PERSONAL, SOCIAL, HEALTH AND ECONOMIC EDUCATION)/REGIONAL VARIATIONS RESPONSIBILITY LEVELS

**England**

- 44% — I have overall responsibility for PSHE
- 42% — I have some responsibility for PSHE
- 25% — I have overall responsibility for Safeguarding
- 22% — I have some responsibility for Safeguarding
- 0% — I have no responsibility for PSHE or Safeguarding

**Scotland**

- 46% — I have overall responsibility for PSHE
- 51% — I have some responsibility for PSHE
- 25% — I have overall responsibility for Safeguarding
- 22% — I have some responsibility for Safeguarding
- 0% — I have no responsibility for PSHE or Safeguarding

**Wales**

- 33% — I have overall responsibility for PSHE
- 55% — I have some responsibility for PSHE
- 31% — I have overall responsibility for Safeguarding
- 19% — I have some responsibility for Safeguarding
- 0% — I have no responsibility for PSHE or Safeguarding

**Northern Ireland**

- 17% — I have overall responsibility for PSHE
- 50% — I have some responsibility for PSHE
- 21% — I have overall responsibility for Safeguarding
- 33% — I have some responsibility for Safeguarding
- 0% — I have no responsibility for PSHE or Safeguarding

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# WE HOPE TO BE A PART OF YOUR FUTURE

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