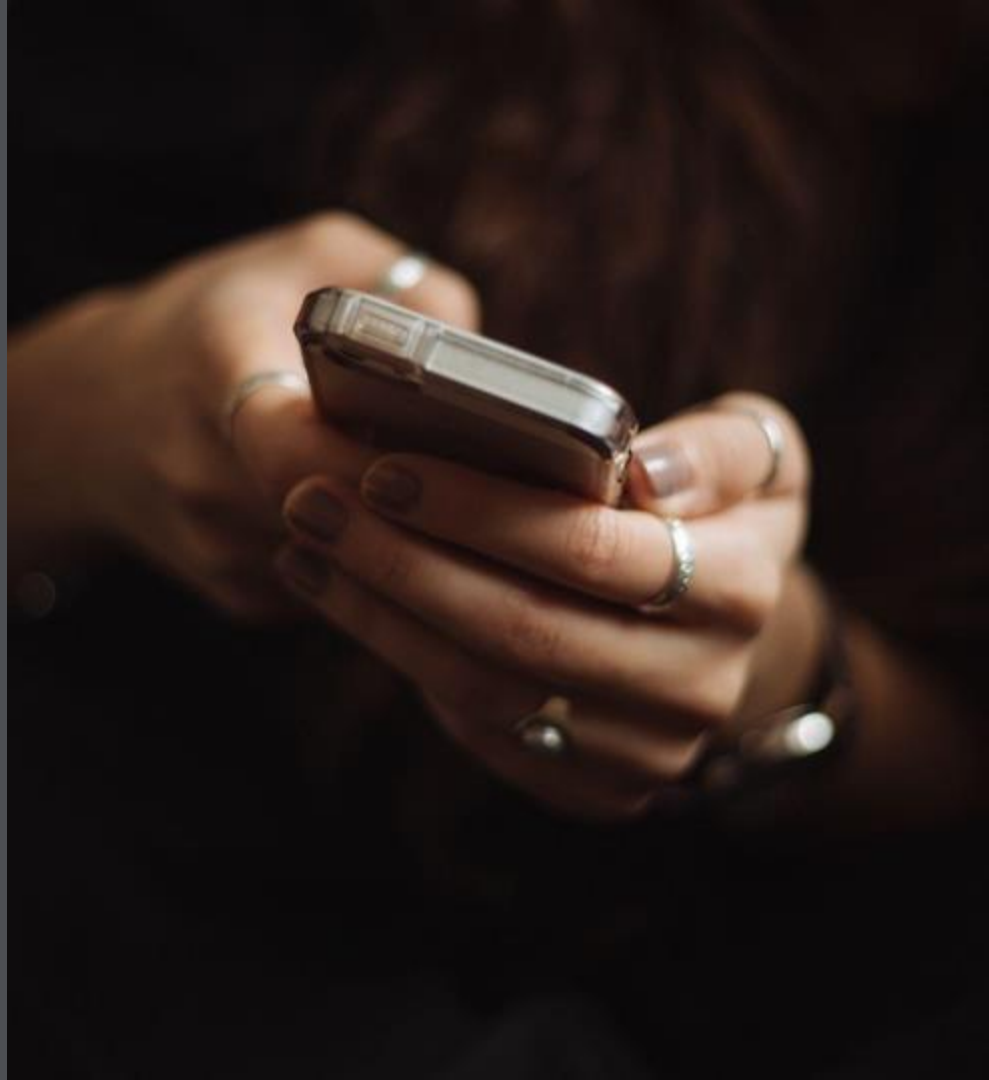


Ofcom: Engaging with User Support Materials Trial

May 2024



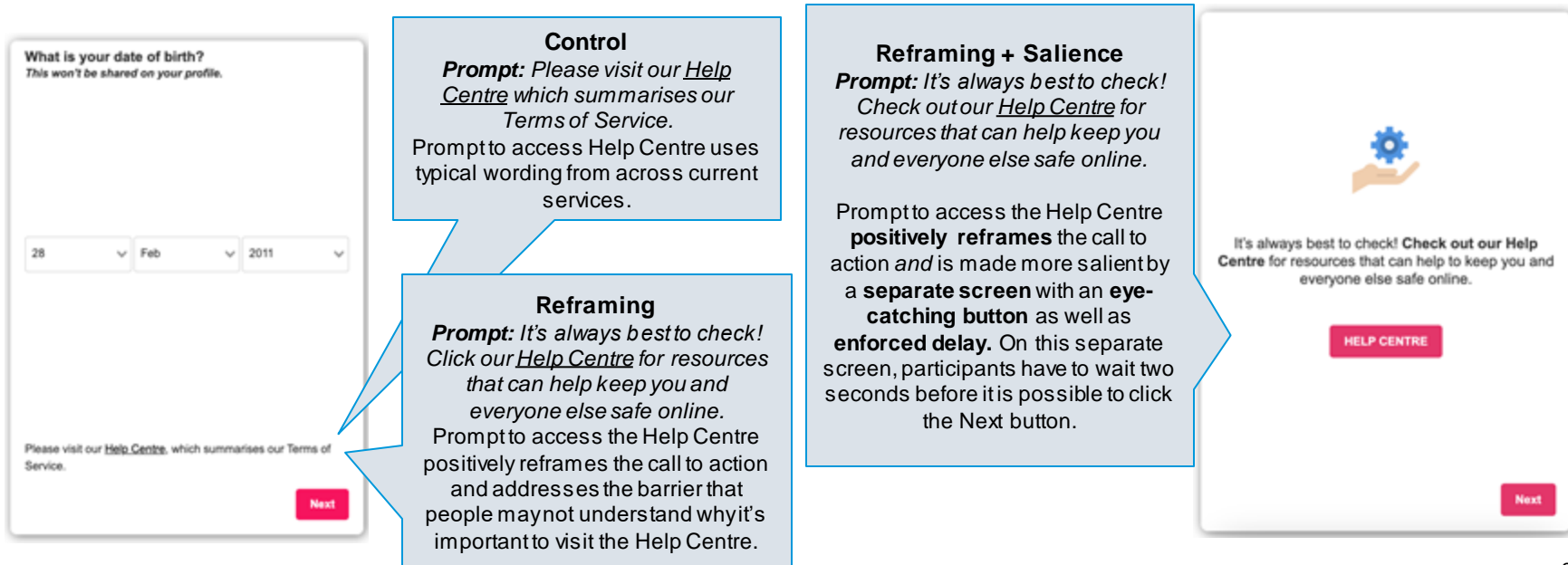
Contents

- [Executive summary](#)
- [Background](#)
- [Methodology](#)
- [Results](#)
 - [Primary analysis](#)
 - [Exploratory analysis](#)
 - [Descriptives](#)
- [Appendices](#)
 - A. [Post-trial survey](#)
 - B. [Eligibility, attention and attrition](#)
 - C. [Additional findings](#)
 - D. [Changes from analysis plan](#)

Executive summary

Experiment design

BIT ran an online trial with a sample of 1,807 UK children aged 13-17. The trial tested the impact of behaviourally-informed prompts on whether children clicked to access a Help Centre explaining a few elements of a service provider's Terms of Service (ToS) when signing up to a service. For the trial, we used a mock online platform, VidScroll. Two intervention arms were tested against a control arm, with around 600 participants in each arm. Participants also completed a survey to collect data on exploratory outcomes and gather information for future trials.



Executive summary

Key findings

- 1 Saliency works to drive children towards a Help Centre.** Participants in the reframing + salience arm were roughly 70x more likely to click-through to the Help Centre compared to those in the control or reframing arm. In real terms, 205 participants (35%) clicked through to the Help Centre in the reframing + salience arm, compared to just three participants in the control arm (<1%) and four participants in the reframing arm (<1%).
- 2 Merely changing the language used to drive people towards a Help Centre was not effective.** Participants in the reframing arm were not more likely to click-through to the Help Centre compared to those in the control arm. Four participants clicked through in reframing arm vs three participants in the control arm.
- 3 Participants in both treatment arms were significantly more likely to recall that there was a Help Centre during sign up than those in the control arm.** However, as per finding 2, even though more participants in the reframing arm (compared to those in the control arm) were aware that there was a Help Centre, the reframing alone didn't help to motivate participants to click-through to the Help Centre.
- 4 Exposure to Help Centre improves comprehension of terms summarised within it.** At the survey stage, participants were randomly assigned to see the Help Centre or not; participants who saw the Help Centre had significantly better comprehension compared to those who did not see the Help Centre. Participants who were exposed to the Help Centre had significantly better comprehension across all comprehension measures - understanding of default privacy settings; what is allowed/ not allowed on VidScroll; understanding of how to respond to content that shouldn't be on VidScroll.
- 5 Over a third of participants said they would be likely to use a Help Centre in the future.** 37% of participants said they are likely to use a Help Centre in the future. The top three reasons for both previous and intended use were: (1) To find out how to set or change your settings (2) To find out how to report content and what happens when you report content (3) General information about the platform and how to use it.

Background



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Ofcom is carrying out research to explore if, and how, services design changes can be used to reduce online harms



Ofcom has a duty to promote and research [media literacy](#), which it defines as "***the ability to use, understand and create media and communications in a variety of contexts***". This includes user ability to understand service providers' Terms of Service (ToS) and give informed consent. Ofcom is also the regulator for video-sharing platforms (VSPs) and since November 2020, VSPs established in the UK must comply with measures designed to protect users. A number of these measures relate directly to ToS. For example, where a VSP has a typically younger user profile, they should consider providing child-friendly explanations ¹.



Additionally, this research will build evidence with respect to Ofcom's new duties under the [Online Safety Act 2023](#) ('the Act'). Under the Act, in-scope service providers should, where proportionate, apply user support measures to help keep children safe from harm (Section 12(8)9(g) and Section 29(4)(e)). Having accessible user support measures is important to help children a) understand the tools and support available to them on a service and b) know how to use or access these to feel safer online.



Ofcom is specifically looking to gather evidence about effective methods to encourage users to engage with simplified age-appropriate user support materials that explain the tools and support available on a service to stay safe from harmful content.

The objective of this project was to develop the evidence around how to motivate children to engage in age-appropriate user support materials.

Background

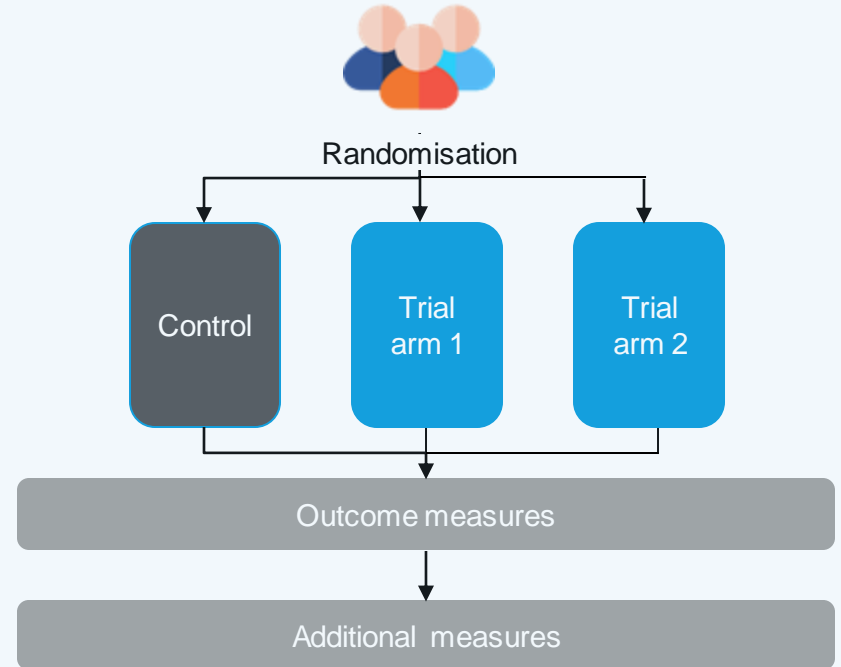
To explore the impact of service design changes, we ran an online Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT)

An online RCT is a way to measure the effectiveness of an intervention. RCTs establish a clear cause-and-effect relationship between features of a social media sign-up process and their impact. They are considered the gold standard for producing causal evidence.

In an RCT, a group of people (participants) are randomly divided into different groups and exposed to either an intervention, in this context a design change, or a control.

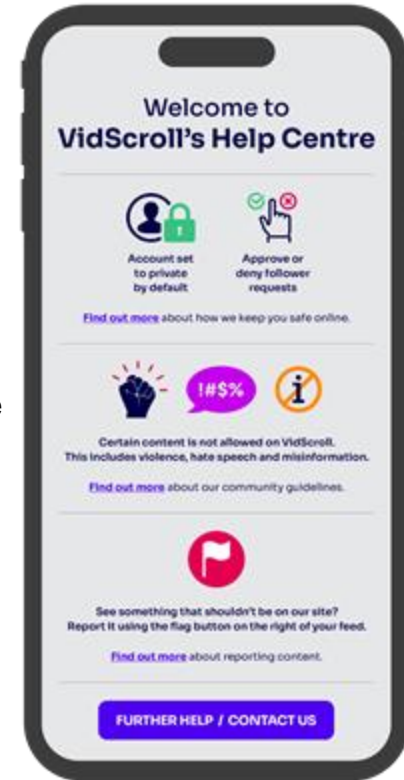
An RCT enables you to then measure the differences in pre-defined outcomes across the groups to see if the intervention(s) were effective.

Randomised controlled trial diagram



The RCT tested ways of motivating children to engage with support materials that summarised service's ToS

- Together with the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT), Ofcom ran an online RCT to test different ways to prompt children to click-through to a Help Centre.
- Participants were prompted to engage with the Help Centre during the sign-up process to a mock online platform.
- The Help Centre, designed by Ofcom for this trial, summarised a few elements of a service's ToS in an age-appropriate way.
- Participants were randomised to see one of three prompts to the Help Centre during the sign-up process (control, plus two interventions).
- After completing the mock sign-up process participants:
 - Answered survey questions to collect data on exploratory outcomes and gather useful information for any future trials.
 - Were randomised to be shown (re-shown for those who had already clicked through), or not shown, the Help Centre, where we tested comprehension of its content.



There are some caveats to be aware of when interpreting the results of this online RCT

Conducting an online RCT enabled us to rapidly test the impact of design changes in the sign-up process to a mock online platform on whether children clicked through to the Help Centre.

The mock online platform simulated ones that already exist so we were able to present the sign-up process, and prompts, in a way that imitated real life. However, there are some caveats to be aware of when interpreting results of online RCTs.

Caveats when interpreting results



How people behave, or say they will behave, in an online lab experiment might differ from what they do in the real world. These differences are likely more pronounced in observed effect sizes (i.e. percentage click through) than in differences between interventions (i.e. one intervention yielding more click-throughs than another). Therefore, while any relative differences in click-through rates between arms can be taken as robust indicators of impact, the observed effect sizes should be interpreted with some degree of caution.



The sample doesn't capture people not inclined to complete online surveys, including those who are digitally excluded. However, as the research required a sample of people who were users of online services, we expect this to be less of a risk to our results.



The sample size enabled us to draw robust inferences between treatment arms for our primary outcome of interest (click-through to Help Centre during mock sign-up process) but not for exploratory outcomes.

Methodology



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Robust randomisation and ethical procedures were followed

Randomisation

Participants were allocated to treatment arms through a random number generator as soon as they enter the survey. This ensures that the sample in each treatment arm is comparable both on observable and unobservable characteristics (see [here](#) for balance checks on demographics).

Incentivisation

Participants' parents were recruited via the panel aggregator Lucid. Each panel provider managed the distribution of incentives to the parents of participants (this varied in form across the different panel providers from cash to points and tokens).

Ethical Review Process

The research went through BIT's and Ofcom's internal ethics review process and received full approval. The trial's main ethical and safeguarding concerns revolved around using child participants (aged 13-17 years). Please see the next slide for details of ethical considerations applied to this research.

We made the following ethical considerations (1/2)

Ethical considerations

The following risk mitigation and safeguarding measures were implemented to ensure the research did not cause harm to participants and researchers.

Informed Consent

Clear, age-appropriate information sheets were provided to children and parents detailing the research purpose and potential risks involved - this and the survey landing page flagged that they can opt-out at any time. **Written informed consent was collected from all participants** to take part. As some participants were under 16, **parental consent was also obtained** on behalf of all participants. If participants changed their mind about taking part, they were **free to withdraw** from the trial at any time.

Children younger than 13 engage in the trial

Our panel provider, Lucid, **routinely collects demographic data such as the age** of dependents when signing participants (parents) up to panels before a specific project is advertised. **Parents were asked to confirm their child's age** when signing up to the trial. This minimised the risk associated with advertising specific projects where people may not be honest about the ages of their children or even if they have children.

We made the following ethical considerations (2/2)

Avoidance of personal and social harm

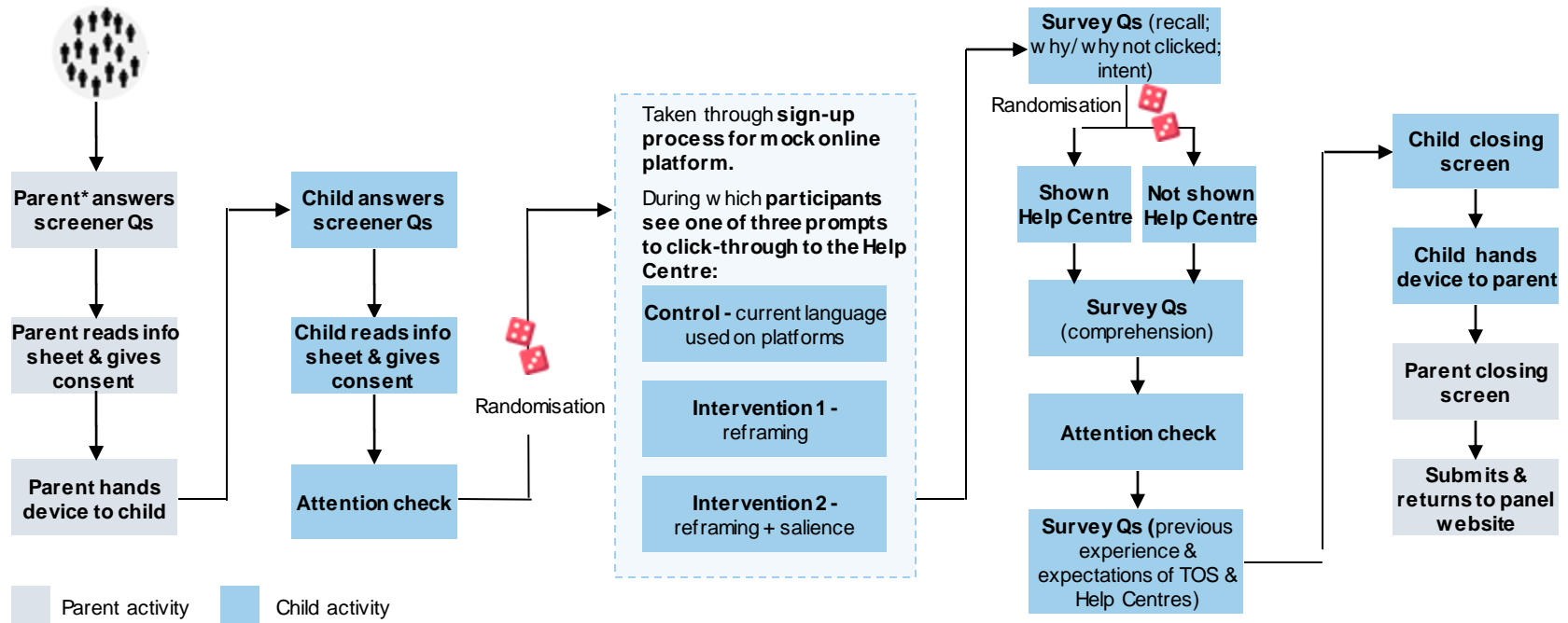
The **risk of harm to participants for this trial was low** - participants followed a conventional sign-up process and were not exposed to any potentially distressing content. Research questions were carefully designed to reduce risk of distress or disclosure e.g. minimising the number of open-ended questions. In the unlikely instance that participants did experience any distress, **age-appropriate support resources were signposted at the end of participation**.

Confidentiality

Participation was anonymous. We did not have access to information that could be used to identify respondents.

Participants completed the sign-up process of a mock online platform and then answered survey questions

Median time spent completing trial and survey: 6m20s



* Due to the age of participants, participants were recruited through their parents

Sample

All participants met pre-defined eligibility criteria

Participants took part in the trial based on the following inclusion and exclusion criteria:



Inclusion criteria



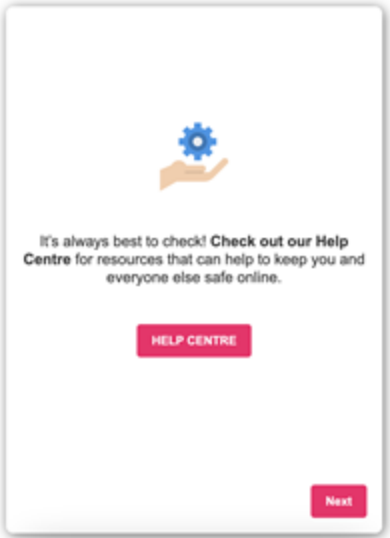
- Aged 13-17 years old.
- Have either a TikTok or YouTube account, that they currently use.



Exclusion criteria

- Parent dropped out without giving consent.
- Child dropped out without giving consent.
- Child fails attention check 1 or 2.

During the sign-up process participants were randomised to one of three trial arms

Control	Reframing	Reframing + Saliency
		
<p>Prompt to access the Help Centre is typical wording currently used across platforms.</p> <p>N = 625</p>	<p>Prompt to access the Help Centre positively reframes the call to action and addresses barrier that people may not understand why it's important to visit the Help Centre.</p> <p>N = 599</p>	<p>Prompt to access the Help Centre positively reframes the call to action <i>and</i> is made more salient by a separate screen with an eye-catching button as well as enforced delay. On this separate screen, participants have to wait two seconds before it is possible to click the Next button.</p> <p>N = 583</p>

Participants were randomised for a second time to either be shown the Help Centre or not

Comprehension of the Help Centre is an exploratory outcome in this trial. However, we anticipated that click-through rates to the Help Centre during the sign-up process would be too low to subsequently measure whether viewing the Help Centre improved comprehension. To collect better data on the impact of the Help Centre on comprehension, we randomised participants for a second time after the sign-up process to either be shown or not shown the Help Centre.

Screen shown to those randomised to be shown the Help Centre

Thanks for your answers so far! VidScroll's Help Centre is shown below.

We will ask you a few questions about it on the next page.



Outcomes

The trial collected data on click-through to the Help Centre during sign-up as well as exploratory outcomes and other objectives

Primary outcome	Exploratory outcomes	Other objectives
Click-through to Help Centre during mock sign-up process*	Recall that there was a link to a Help Centre	Clicks on links in the Help Centre
	Comprehension of the Help Centre content*	Time on Help Centre (during sign-up and if they were shown it after sign-up)
		Attitudes towards Help Centre
		Intent to use a Help Centre in the future*

Throughout the analysis of primary and exploratory outcomes, we compare all arms against each other. All regressions control for age, gender, platform use and whether they know what a Help Centre is and for comprehension, whether they clicked to read the Help Centre during sign up. Primary analysis is corrected for multiple comparisons (Benjamini Hochberg).

***Subgroup analysis** completed on these measures - subgroups of interest: age groups (under 16s vs 16 and over), gender, and social media usage. All other measures reported as exploratory descriptives.

Statistical methods

All analysis was conducted on a clean data set

All analysis has been conducted on a clean data set - excluding failed attention checks, duplicates and incomplete responses.

Screening for failed attention checks:

- Participants who failed the first attention check were excluded from continuing with the experiment.
- Participants who failed the second attention check were excluded from our analysis.
- We report the [number of participants who were excluded](#).

We also report the number of participants who:

- Were ineligible (parents say they do not have a child aged 13-17 who can participate and uses TikTok or YouTube at least sometimes or child says they do not use TikTok or YouTube).
- Dropped out at the consent page.
- Dropped out elsewhere in the experiment.

We didn't anticipate any multicollinearity between the treatment indicator and covariates because we randomise people to their treatment condition as soon as they enter the survey and we have such a large sample size. We double checked that our sample was balanced in terms of demographics across treatments using chi-squared tests for categorical variables, and ANOVAs for continuous variables.

Sample

We recruited a representative sample of 1,807 children

We recruited a sample of 1,807 13-17 year olds from 22 February - 6 March 2024. The sample was representative across gender, UK regions and age groups.

Breakdown of sample across key characteristics

Gender		
	Target	Actual
Female	50%	51%
Male	50%	48%
Non-binary	-	< 1%

Age		
	Target	Actual
13 - 15	60%	63%
16 - 17	40%	37%

UK Region		
	Target*	Actual
South & East	32%	30%
North	23%	26%
Midlands	16%	19%
Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales	16%	14%
London	13%	12%

* Source: [ONS, 2021](#)

Sample

The sample was split into above and below average platform use relative to other participants in the trial

We also asked participants about what platforms they use and how often. We used these responses to create a platform use score and cut groups of above and below average platform use relative to other participants in the trial*. Since we excluded children who do not use TikTok or YouTube, this may not be representative of the wider population but may indicate general trends of children with higher or lower platform use.

% who use this social media app (for reference; no quotas were set)	
TikTok	89%
YouTube	81%
Snapchat	74%
Instagram	71%
Facebook	57%
X/Twitter	27%

Overall platform use*	
Above relative average	46%
Below relative average	54%

* Above and below average platform use refers to relative use in comparison to other participants in the trial. Platform use was measured by asking participants if they had accounts with any of the following platforms and [how often they use them](#): TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, Snapchat, Twitter/X. For each platform, if the participant did not have an account then they were coded as 0. Otherwise, "I don't use this anymore" coded as 0; "Less often" coded as 1; "Once a week" coded as 2; "Several times a week" coded as 3; "Once a day" coded as 4; "Several times a day" coded as 5). The platform use score is the sum across platforms. We then took the median platform use score (18) to determine above and below average cut off.

The sample was balanced across treatment arms for all demographic variables.

		Control (n = 625)	Reframing (n = 599)	Reframing + salience (n = 583)
Age	13-15	63%	63%	64%
	16-17	37%	37%	36%
	Balance check	$\chi^2(2) = 0.19, p > .05$		
Gender	Female	50%	52%	51%
	Male	50%	48%	48%
	Balance check	$\chi^2(4) = 1.53, p > .05$		
Region	South & East	30%	28%	31%
	North	26%	27%	25%
	Midlands	18%	20%	19%
	Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales	14%	14%	13%
	London	12%	12%	13%
	Balance check	$\chi^2(8) = 1.87, p > .05$		
Overall platform use	Mean score	17.3	17.5	17.4
	Balance check	$F(2) = 0.31 p > .05$		

Results



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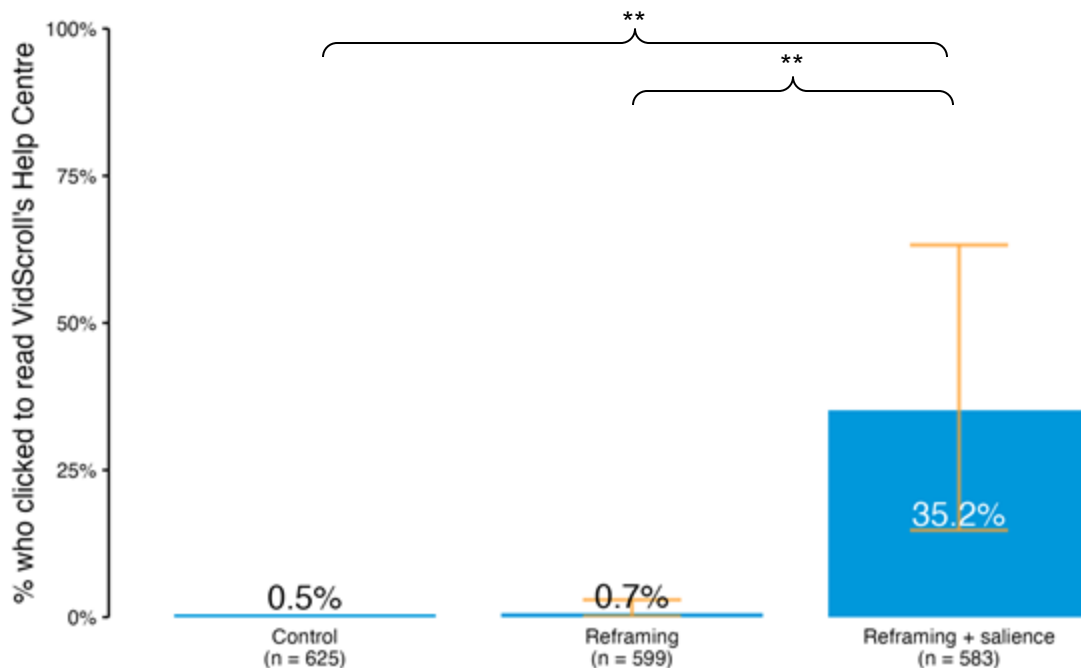


VidScroll's Help Centre



Primary analysis

Participants in the Reframing + Salience arm were roughly 70x more likely to click to read VidScroll's Help Centre than those in the Control arm



** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, + $p < .1$

Significance is corrected for multiple comparisons (Benjamini-Hochberg).

Confidence intervals (95%) on comparisons to the Control arm are not corrected for multiple comparisons.

Logistic regression controls for age, gender and platform use.

Treatment bars show the mean for that group.

N = 1,807. Data collected by BIT 21 Feb-6 Mar 2024.

Participants in the Reframing + Salience arm were significantly more likely to click to read VidScroll's Help Centre than those in the Control arm (35.2% vs. 0.5%, $p < .01$) and those in the Reframing arm (35.2% vs. 0.7%, $p < .01$). There were no significant differences between the Control and Reframing arms, $p < .05$.

Participants with [below average platform use](#) (relative to other participants) were significantly more likely to click to read VidScroll's Help Centre (13% compared to 10% for those with above relative average use, $p < .05$). There were no significant differences between age groups and gender.

Other objectives

Of those who clicked to read the Help Centre, 21% clicked on a link within the Help Centre; most of these were on the further help/contact us button

Of the 212 participants who clicked to read the Help Centre...

Participants had it open for a **median of 6 seconds** (range = 1-81).

44 participants (21%) clicked on at least one of the links within the Help Centre. All links opened to the following pop up:



The majority of clicks were for further help or to contact VidScroll, potentially because this link was much more salient.

10 participants clicked to find out more about **how VidScroll keeps them safe online**.

9 participants clicked to find out more about **VidScroll's community guidelines**.

6 participants clicked to find out more about **reporting content**.

40 participants clicked for **further help or to contact VidScroll**.

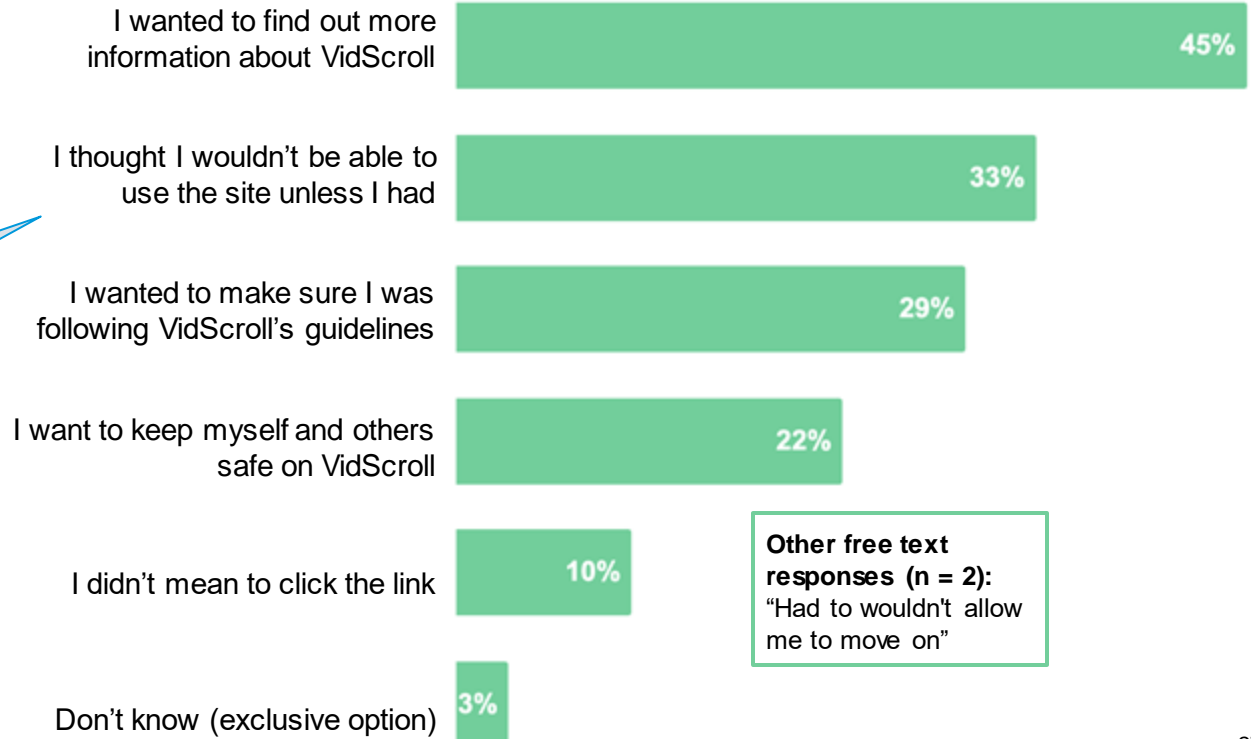


Descriptives

The most common reason for clicking to read the Help Centre was that participants wanted to find out more about VidScroll

Of those who clicked on the Help Centre, *Why did you choose to click on the Help Centre?* (n = 212, participants could select multiple responses)

Since almost everyone who clicked to read the Help Centre did so from the Reframing + Saliency arm, it is important to remember that the **enforced delay** may be contributing to this perception.



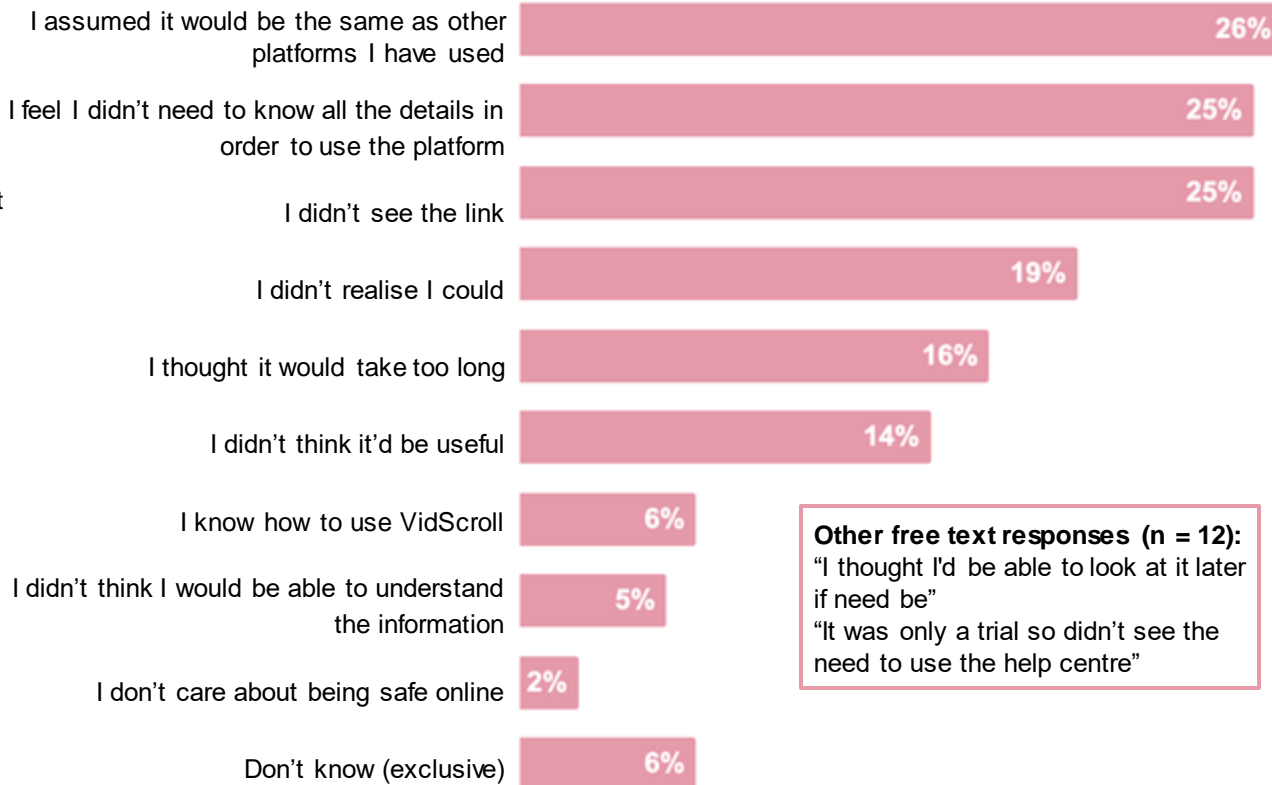
Other free text responses (n = 2):
"Had to wouldn't allow me to move on"

Descriptives

The biggest reason for not clicking to read the Help Centre was that participants assumed it would be the same as on other platforms, that they didn't need to, or that they didn't see the link

Of those who did not click on the Help Centre, Why did you choose not to click on the Help Centre?

(n = 1,595, participants could select multiple responses)



Other free text responses (n = 12):

"I thought I'd be able to look at it later if need be"

"It was only a trial so didn't see the need to use the help centre"

Descriptives

Participants in the Reframing + Salience arm were less likely to say that they didn't see the link or realise they could click it than in the other arms; they seemed to give more 'considered' reasons for not clicking

Of those who did not click on the Help Centre, Why did you choose not to click on the Help Centre? (participants could select multiple responses)	Control (n = 622)	Reframing (n = 595)	Reframing + salience (n = 378)
I assumed it would be the same as other platforms I have used	24%	25%	33%**
I feel I didn't need to know all the details in order to use the platform	25%	23%	31%*
I didn't see the link	31%	32%	5%**
I didn't realise I could	20%	23%	13%**
I thought it would take too long	12%	14%	26%**
I didn't think it'd be useful	12%	14%	17%*
I know how to use VidScroll	6%	7%	5%
I didn't think I would be able to understand the information	6%	4%+	4%
I don't care about being safe online	3%	1%**	1%+
Don't know (exclusive)	6%	5%	6%

Participants in the Reframing + Salience arm may have given their choice to not click on the Help Centre more thought than those in the other arms who didn't see the link.

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, + $p < .1$

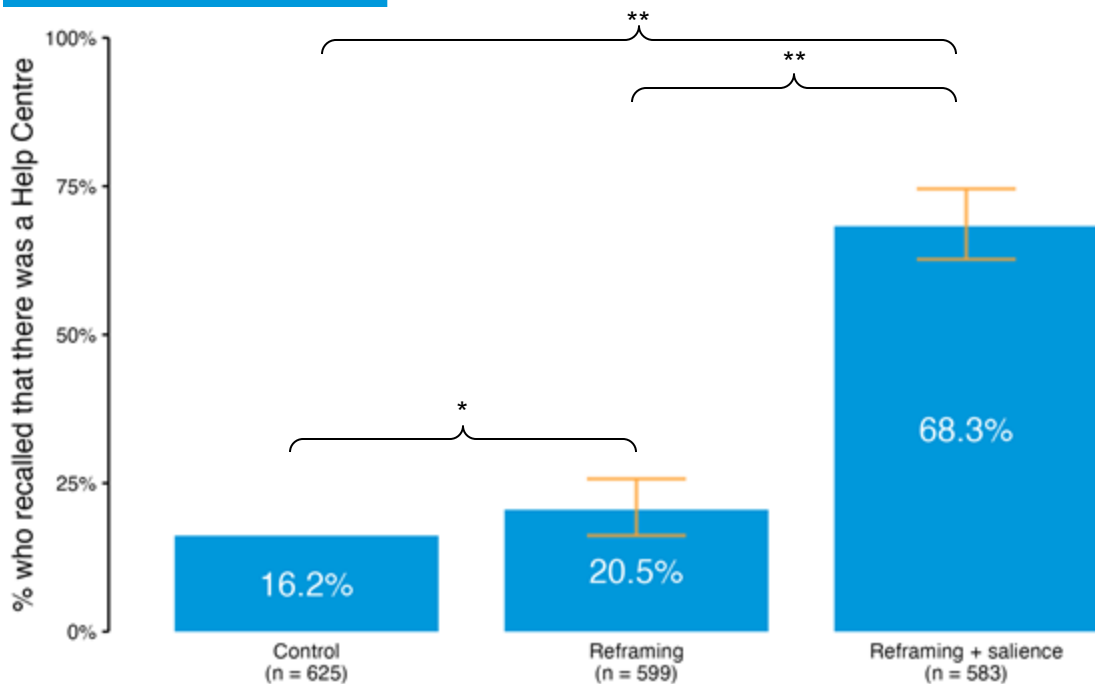
Significance was tested post-hoc and is not corrected for multiple comparisons.

Logistic regression controls for age, gender and platform use.

N = 1,595. Data collected by BIT 21 Feb-6 Mar 2024.

Exploratory analysis

Participants in the treatment arms were significantly more likely to recall that there was a Help Centre than those in the Control arm



Participants in the treatment arms were significantly more likely to recall that there was a Help Centre in the sign-up process than those in the Control arm (20.5% in the Reframing arm, $p < .05$ and 68.3% in the Reframing + Salience arm, $p < .01$ compared to 16.2% in the Control arm).

Between the treatment arms, those who saw the Help Centre linked on a separate screen were significantly more likely to recall that there was a Help Centre those who saw the same message on the age gate, $p < .01$.

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, + $p < .1$

% who selected "A link to VidScroll's Help Centre" in multiple choice question "Which, if any, of the following do you remember in the sign up process?"

Significance and confidence intervals (95%) on comparisons to the Control arm are not corrected for multiple comparisons.

Logistic regression controls for age, gender and platform use.

Treatment bars show the mean for that group.

N = 1,807. Data collected by BIT 21 Feb-6 Mar 2024.

Comprehension



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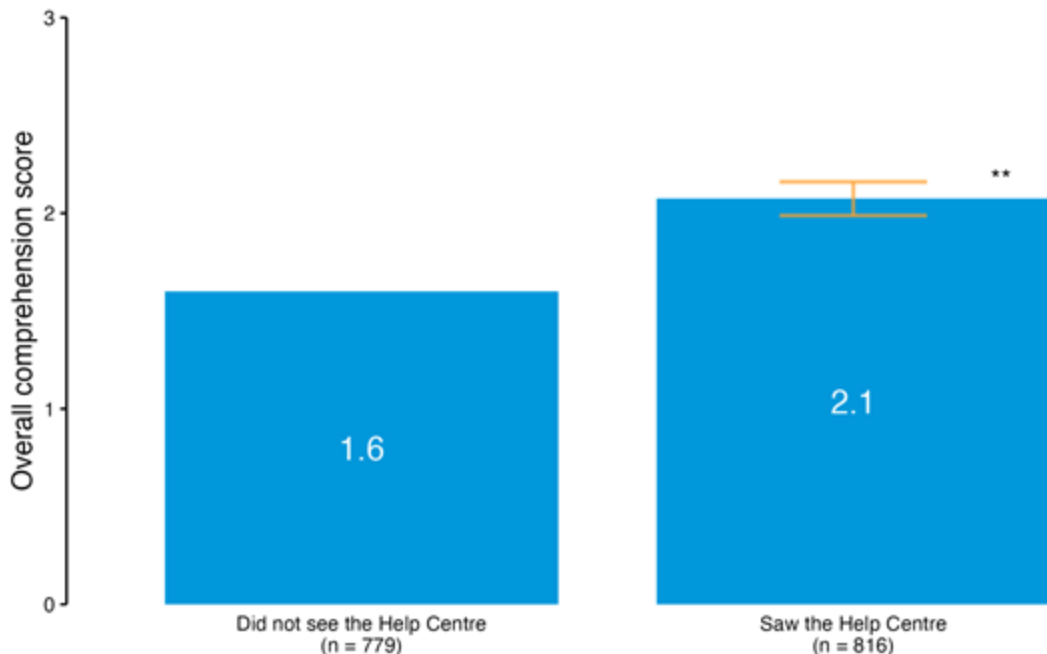


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Exploratory analysis

Participants who saw the Help Centre had significantly better comprehension than those who did not



** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, + $p < .1$

Significance is and confidence intervals (95%) are not corrected for multiple comparisons.

Linear regression controls for age, gender and platform use.

Treatment bars show the mean for that group.

$N = 1,595$ (excluding participants who clicked to see the Help Centre at sign up; $N = 816$ saw the Help Centre). Data collected by BIT 21 Feb -6 Mar 2024.

At the survey stage, participants were randomly assigned to see the Help Centre or not.

Participants who clicked to read the Help Centre at sign up had an average comprehension score of 2.0 but they were removed from this analysis to ensure we could accurately determine the effects of seeing the help centre for the first time ($n = 212$).

Their overall comprehension score is based on their responses to questions on what their default privacy settings are, what type of content is allowed on VidScroll and what to do if they see content that isn't allowed (i.e. information shown on the front page of the Help Centre). Results by question are shown on the next slide.

Participants who saw the Help Centre had significantly better comprehension than those who didn't (2.1 of a maximum of 3 vs. 1.6, $p < .01$).

There were no significant differences between platform use, gender, or age subgroups, $p < .05$.

Exploratory analysis

Participants who saw the Help Centre had significantly better comprehension on all separate outcomes

	Did not see the Help Centre (n = 779)	Saw the Help Centre (n = 816)
% who correctly understood their account is set to Private by default	30%	59%**
Total number of content types participants correctly said is not allowed on VidScroll (max out of 3)	1.7	2.0**
% who said violence is not allowed on VidScroll	62%	75%
% who said hate speech is not allowed on VidScroll	62%	76%
% who said misinformation is not allowed on VidScroll	47%	50%
% who correctly identified all of the above content types as not being allowed on VidScroll	43%	42%
% who identified none of the above content types as not being allowed on VidScroll	32%	15%
% who said they should report content that shouldn't be on VidScroll	73%	82%**
% who got all three comprehension questions correct	13%	26%**

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, + $p < .1$

Significance is not corrected for multiple comparisons. Rows shaded in grey were not tested for significant differences.

Logistic and poisson regressions controls for age, gender and platform use.

N = 1,595 (excluding participants who clicked to see the Help Centre at sign up). Data collected by BIT 21 Feb -6 Mar 2024.

Descriptives

1 in 4 participants who did not see the Help Centre said they did not know what kind of content is not allowed on VidScroll

“According to VidScroll’s Help Centre/Based on what you know about VidScroll, what kind of content is <u>not</u> allowed?” (Participants could select multiple responses)		Did not see the Help Centre (n = 779)	Saw the Help Centre (n = 816)
Correct	Violence	62%	75%
	Hate speech	62%	76%
	Misinformation	47%	50%
Incorrect	Dangerous activities	57%	53%
	Scams	56%	51%
	Swearing	46%	50%
	All content types are allowed (exclusive)	3%	3%
	Don’t know (exclusive)	25%	7%
% who selected all correct responses and did not select any incorrect responses		< 1%	6%

Descriptives only, not tested for significant differences.

N = 1,595 (excluding participants who clicked to see the Help Centre at sign up). Data collected by BIT 21 Feb -6 Mar 2024.

Descriptives

Reporting was the most common thing people said they should do if they saw something that shouldn't be on VidScroll, regardless of if they saw the Help Centre or not

<i>“According to VidScroll’s Help Centre/Based on what you know about VidScroll, what should you do if you see something that shouldn’t be on VidScroll?” (Participants could select multiple responses)</i>		Did not see the Help Centre (n = 779)	Saw the Help Centre (n = 816)
Correct	Report the post	73%	82%
Incorrect	Tell an adult	32%	21%
	Click ‘Not interested’	19%	14%
	Leave a comment asking the user to take it down	6%	7%
	Ignore	8%	4%
	Don’t know (exclusive)	8%	4%
% who selected all correct responses and did not select any incorrect responses		40%	59%

Descriptives only, not tested for significant differences.

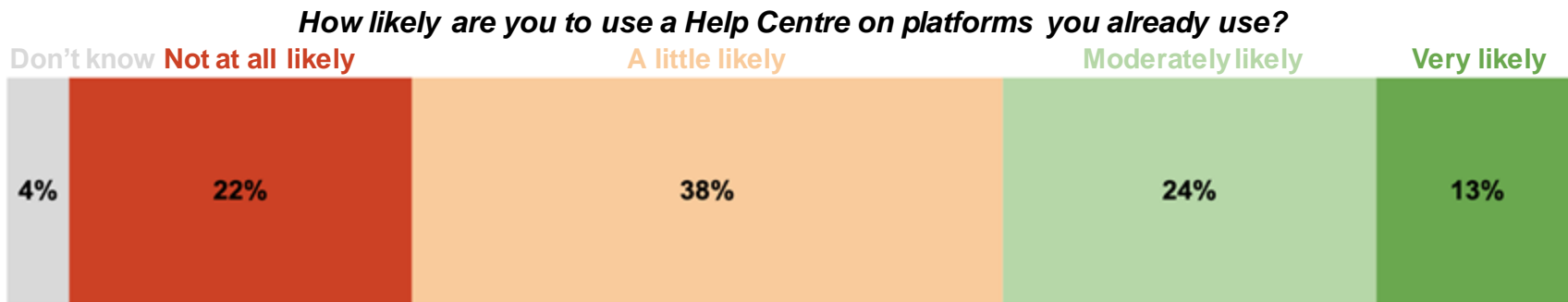
N = 1,595 (excluding participants who clicked to see the Help Centre at sign up). Data collected by BIT 21 Feb -6 Mar 2024.

Additional survey results



Other objectives

37% of participants said they are likely to use a Help Centre; this was higher for participants who frequently use social media, and younger participants.



Overall, **37% of participants said they're moderately or very likely to use a Help Centre** on platforms they already use. This was significantly higher for:

- Participants with above relative average platform usage (41% said they are moderately or very likely compared to 33% for those with below average relative platform usage, $p < .01$)
- Younger participants (38% of 13-15 year olds compared to 33% of 16-17 year olds $p < .05$)
- There were no significant differences in intent for gender

There was little variation in intent between treatment arms:

- 34% said they were moderately or very likely to use a Help Centre in the Control arm
- 36% in the Reframing arm
- 40% in the Reframing + salience arm

This was not tested for significant differences.

Other objectives

72% said they knew about Help Centres before participating in the trial; of them, 38% said they've used one before

72% say they knew platforms have Help Centres (22% said they didn't and 6% don't know)

Of those who say they know that platforms have Help Centres (n = 1,306), **38% said they've used one before** (59% said they have not and 3% don't know)

Overall, **51% said they think other people their age would find a Help Centre very or moderately useful** (22% Very useful, 30% Moderately useful, 37% A little useful, 8% Not at all useful, < 4% Don't know).
This was higher for participants who have used a Help Centre before (71%) than for those who have not (44%).

Other objectives

The most common reason for using a Help Centre was to find out how to set or change their settings; 73% said they thought using a Help Centre was useful

Of those who have used a Help Centre (n = 495)...

Thinking about the last time you used a help centre, what did you use it for? (participants could select multiple responses)

50% To find out how to set or change your settings

36% General information about the platform and how to use it

35% To find out how to report content and what happens when you report content

20% To find out if there are any restrictions on users of the platform

18% Advice about what is allowed on the platform

16% Information on why you're shown certain content

73% thought it was very or moderately useful

(44% Very useful, 29% Moderately useful, 24% A little useful, 2% Not at all useful, < 1% Don't know)

Other objectives

Of those who have never used a Help Centre, the most likely uses for one was to find out how to change their settings and to find out about reporting content

Of those who know of, but have never used, a Help Centre... (n = 811)

% who say they are moderately or very likely to use one...

55% To find out how to set or change your settings

45% To find out how to report content and what happens when you report content

37% For general information about the platform and how to use it

34% For advice about what is allowed on the platform

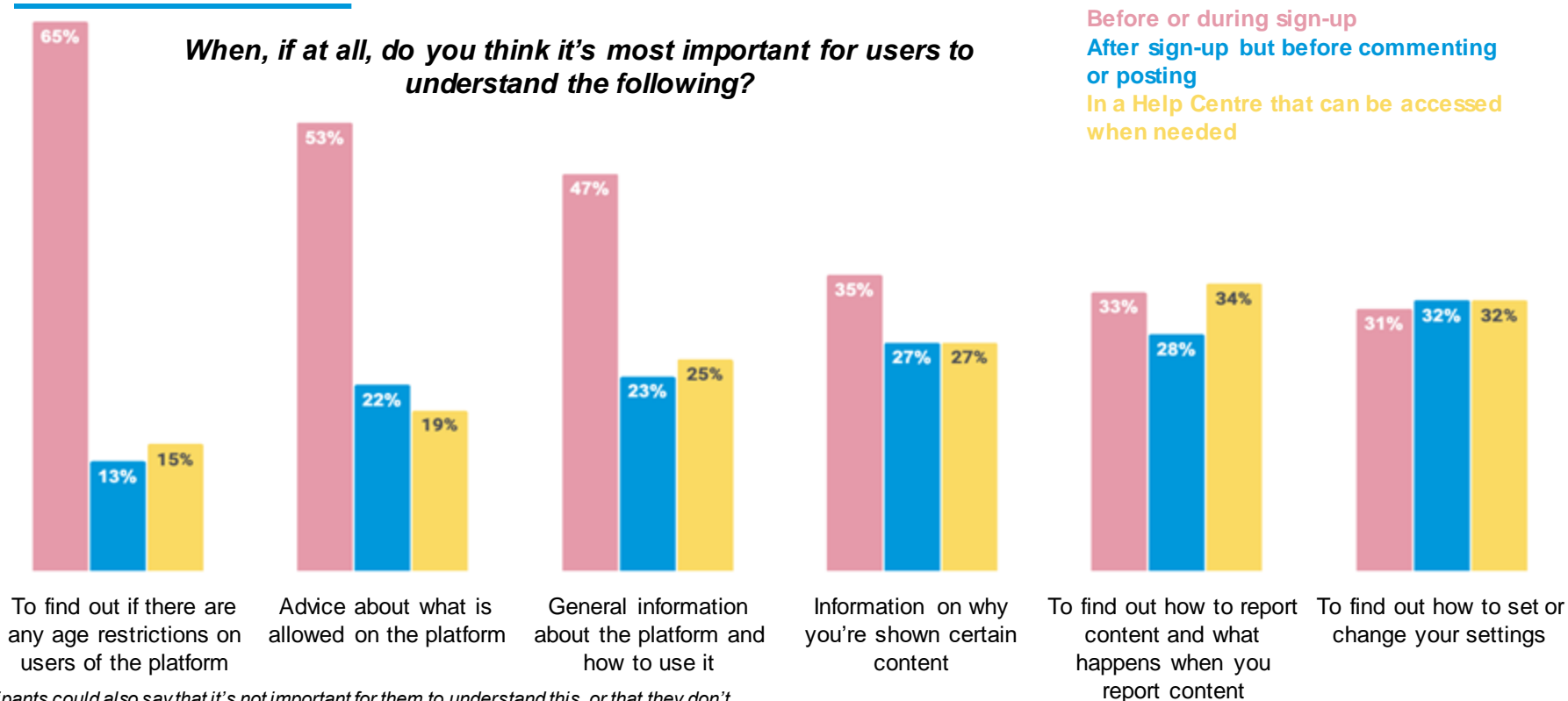
34% To find out if there are any restrictions on users of the platform

32% For information on why you're shown certain content

Full response scale is in the appendix.

Other objectives

Participants generally thought it's most important to understand key information about the platform before or during sign-up

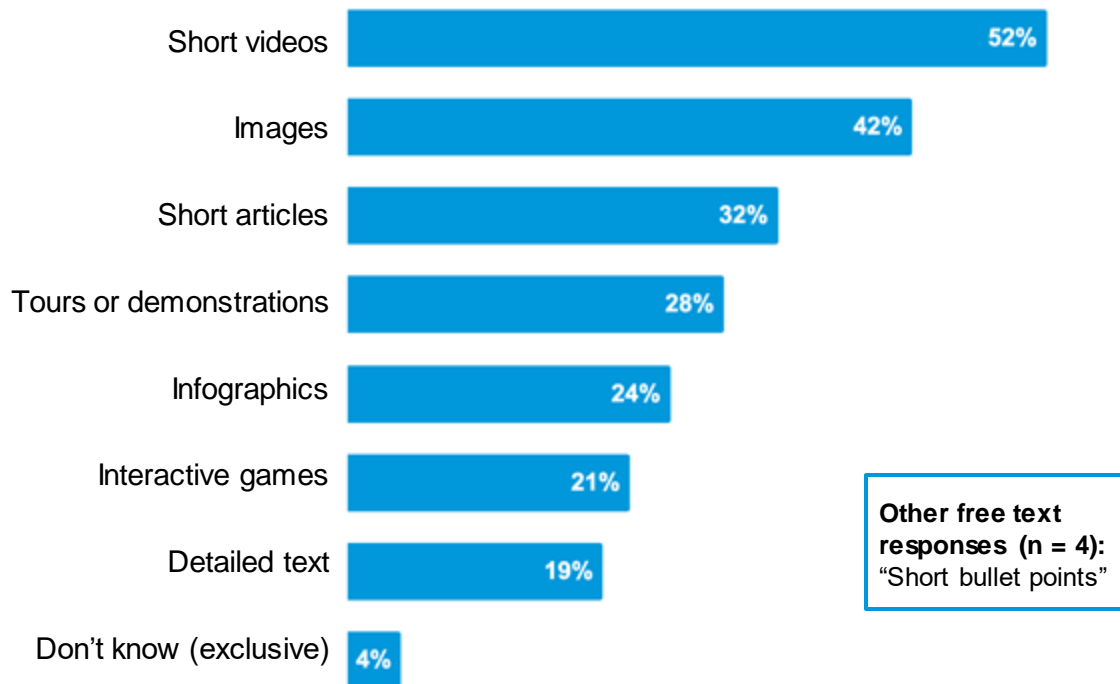


Participants could also say that it's not important for them to understand this, or that they don't know. This was collectively < 12% for each subquestion. Full results are shown in the appendix. N = 1,807. Data collected by BIT 21 Feb-6 Mar 2024.

Other objectives.

Participants said they would most like to see information about a platform's rules or how to do things in the form of short videos and images

How would you like to see information about a platform's rules or how to do things in a help centre? (n = 1,807, participants could select multiple responses)



Appendices



PREDICTIV



Appendix A. Post-trial survey



Appendix A

Post-trial survey

Part 1: recall; why/ why not clicked; intent

Thanks for testing VidScroll's sign-up! We're still building the rest of the app and might invite you back to test again in future.

We'd now like to ask you about your experience of signing up to this pretend app.

Recall

Which, if any, of the following do you remember in the sign-up process? Please select all that apply.

- Entering your date of birth **[correct option]**
- Selecting your interests **[correct option]**
- A link to VidScroll's Help Centre **[correct option]**
- Choosing your username
- Picking a password
- None of the above [exclusive]

Appendix A

Post-trial survey

Why, or why not, clicked

VidScroll's sign-up process featured a Help Centre.

[If participant clicked on the Help Centre during the trial]

Why did you choose to click on the Help Centre? Please select all that apply.

- I wanted to find out more information about VidScroll
- I didn't mean to click on the link
- I wanted to make sure I was following VidScroll's guidelines
- I thought I wouldn't be able to use the site unless I had
- I want to keep myself and others safe on VidScroll
- Don't know (exclusive)
- Other, please specify

[If participant didn't click on the Help Centre during the trial]

Why did you choose not to click on the Help Centre? Please select all that apply.

- I assumed it would be the same as other platforms I have used
- I didn't think I would be able to understand the information
- I know how to use VidScroll
- I didn't realise I could
- I didn't see the link
- I feel I didn't need to know all the details in order to use the platform
- I thought it would take too long
- I didn't think it'd be useful
- I don't care about being safe online
- Don't know [exclusive]
- Other, please specify

Appendix A

Post-trial survey

Intent

How likely are you to use a Help Centre on platforms you already use?

- Not at all likely
- A little likely
- Moderately likely
- Very likely

Appendix A

Post-trial survey

Part 2: Comprehension [if randomised to see the Help Centre]

Thanks for your answers so far! VidScroll's Help Centre is shown below. We will ask you a few questions about it on the next page.

[VidScroll's Help Centre shown to participants]

According to VidScroll's Help Centre what are the default privacy settings?

- Private, you can approve or deny follower requests **[correct option]**
- Public, anyone can follow you, or see your posts
- A mix, anyone can see your posts but you have to approve them before they can comment or like your posts
- Don't know

According to VidScroll's Help Centre what kind of content is not allowed? Please select all that apply.

- Violence **[correct option]**
- Hate speech **[correct option]**
- Misinformation **[correct option]**
- Swearing
- Dangerous activities
- Scams
- Don't know [exclusive]
- All content types are allowed [exclusive]

Appendix A

Post-trial survey

According to VidScroll's Help Centre what should you do if you see something that shouldn't be on VidScroll? Please select all that apply.

- Report the post **[correct answer]**
- Leave a comment asking the user to take it down
- Tell an adult
- Click 'Not interested'
- Ignore it
- Don't know [exclusive]

Appendix A

Post-trial survey

Part 2: Comprehension [if randomised *not* to see the Help Centre]

Thanks for your answers so far!

Based on what you know about VidScroll, what are the default privacy settings?

- Private, you can approve or deny follower requests **[correct option]**
- Public, anyone can follow you, or see your posts
- A mix, anyone can see your posts but you have to approve them before they can comment or like your posts
- Don't know

Based on what you know about VidScroll, what kind of content is not allowed? Please select all that apply.

- Violence **[correct option]**
- Hate speech **[correct option]**
- Misinformation **[correct option]**
- Swearing
- Dangerous activities
- Scams
- Don't know [exclusive]
- All content types are allowed [exclusive]

Appendix A

Post-trial survey

Based on what you know about VidScroll, what should you do if you see something that shouldn't be on VidScroll? Please select all that apply.

- Report the post **[correct answer]**
- Leave a comment asking the user to take it down
- Tell an adult
- Click 'Not interested'
- Ignore it
- Don't know [exclusive]

Appendix A

Post-trial survey

Part 3: Attention check

Please select the “Orange” option below. We are asking this for quality control reasons to check you are paying attention to the questions in the survey.

- Blue
- Orange **[correct option]**
- Green
- Red
- Pink
- Purple
- Brown

Appendix A

Post-trial survey

Part 4: Previous experience, and expectations, of T&Cs and Help Centres

Previous experience of T&Cs and Help Centres

Platforms such as TikTok, Instagram and Snapchat must provide Terms and Conditions to users when they sign-up. These are available at any point, usually within settings, when using the platform.

These Terms and Conditions, or T&Cs, are often very detailed and cover everything a user may need to know about using the platform. You must say (usually by ticking a box) that you agree to a platform's T&Cs when you first sign-up to it.

When signing up to an online platform, what do you usually do when you are asked to agree to the T&Cs?

- Click on the link and read in full
- Click on the link and read some of it
- Tick to accept the T&Cs without reading any of it
- I didn't know I had to agree to T&Cs
- Don't know

Have you ever read the T&Cs for an online platform?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Appendix A

Post-trial survey

Some platforms also provide help centres where you can look for help or advice about using the platform. These are usually short articles or a paragraph that are less detailed than the T&Cs, but more user-friendly. They're designed to answer questions about how to use the platform and support users to use the platform safely.

Before today, did you know that some platforms have help centres?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

[If given response option is “yes” to previous question the participant is asked the following four/five]

1. *Thinking about the last time you used a help centre, what did you use it for? Please select all that apply.*
 - General information about the platform and how to use it
 - To find out how to report content and what happens when you report content
 - Information on why you're shown certain content
 - To find out how to set or change your settings
 - Advice about what is allowed on the platform
 - To find out if there are any restrictions on users of the platform
 - Other, please specify

Appendix A

Post-trial survey

2. *How likely are you to use a help centre for the following?* [For each the options were: Not at all likely / A little likely / Moderately likely / Very likely / Don't know]
 - General information about the platform and how to use it
 - To find out how to report content and what happens when you report content
 - Information on why you're shown certain content
 - To find out how to set or change your settings
 - Advice about what is allowed on the platform
 - To find out if there are any restrictions on users of the platform
2. *Thinking about the last time you used a help centre, how useful was it?*
 - Not at all useful
 - A little useful
 - Moderately useful
 - Very useful
 - Don't know

[If given response option is “not at all useful” or “a little useful” to previous question the participant is asked the following question]

2. *Why didn't you find it useful?*
[Free text]

Appendix A

Post-trial survey

5. *How useful do you think other people your age would find help centres?*
- Not at all useful
 - A little useful
 - Moderately useful
 - Very useful
 - Don't know

Expectations of a Help Centre

When, if at all, do you think it's most important for users to understand the following? [For each the options were: Before or during the sign-up process / After signing up, but before commenting or posting / In a help centre that can be accessed when needed / Not important / Don't know]

- General information about the platform and how to use it
- To find out how to report content and what happens when you report content
- Information on why you're shown certain content
- To find out how to set or change your settings
- Advice about what is allowed on the platform
- To find out if there are any age restrictions on users of the platform

Appendix A

Post-trial survey

How would you like to see information about a platform's rules or how to do things in a help centre? Please select all that apply.

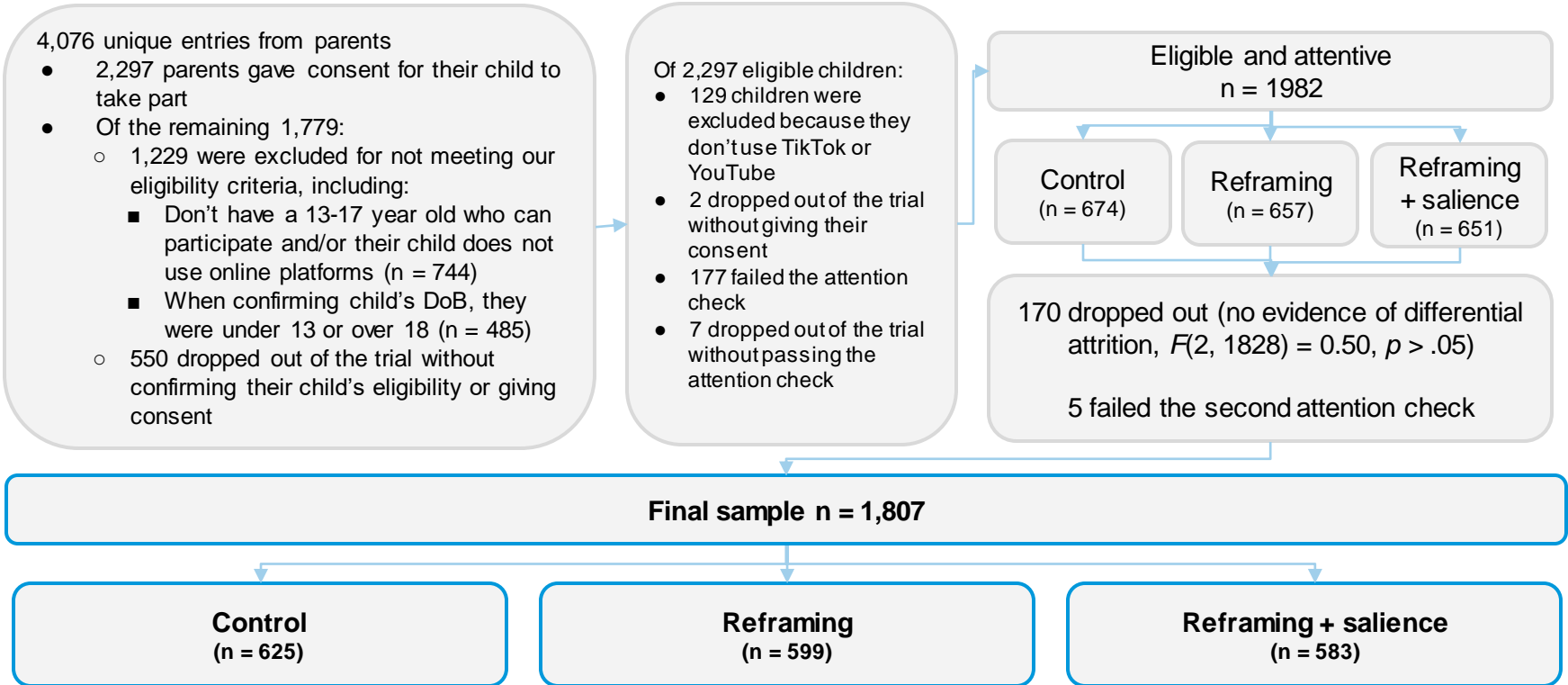
- Infographics (e.g. as a chart or diagram)
- Short videos
- Interactive games (e.g. quizzes)
- Tours or demonstrations of how to do a task
- Detailed text
- Images
- Short articles (less than 100 words)
- Other, please specify

Appendix B. Eligibility, attention and attrition



Appendix B

Eligibility, attention and attrition



Appendix C: Additional findings



Sample demographics

TikTok, YouTube and Snapchat were the most popular social media platforms for our sample

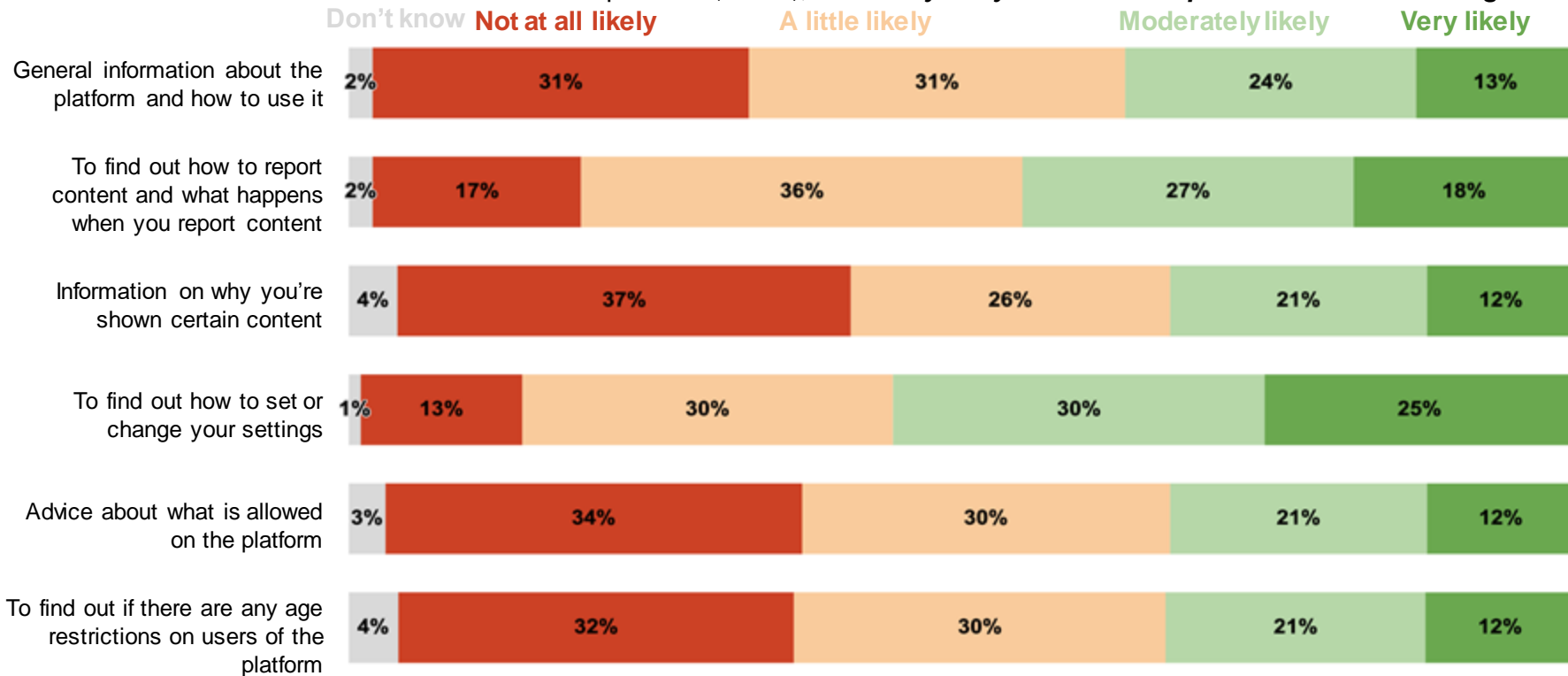
<i>% who say they use this platform*...</i>							
	Several times a day	Once a day	Several times a week	Once a week	Less often	I don't use this anymore	Don't have an account
TikTok	72%	8%	6%	1%	1%	< 1%	11%
YouTube	52%	14%	12%	2%	2%	< 1%	18%
Snapchat	59%	7%	5%	1%	1%	1%	26%
Instagram	44%	13%	9%	3%	2%	< 1%	29%
Facebook	28%	11%	9%	4%	6%	2%	41%
X/Twitter	10%	5%	5%	3%	3%	1%	72%

* Participants in the trial had to have at least one account with either YouTube or TikTok. Therefore this may not be representative of the wider population.

Appendix C

How likely people are to use a Help Centre for different actions - Full responses scale

Of those who know of but have never used a Help Centre (n = 811), *How likely are you to use a help centre for the following?*



Appendix C

Subgroup analysis

	Age		Gender		Platform use	
	13-15 (n = 1,137)	16-17 (n = 670)	Male (n = 876)	Female (n = 925)	Above relative average (n = 828)	Below relative average (n = 979)
% who clicked to read the Help Centre	12%	12%	12%	11%	10%	13%*
% who are moderately or very likely to use a help centre on platforms they already use	38%	33%*	38%	36%	41%	33%**
Overall comprehension score (max of 3)	1.86	1.90	1.83	1.89	1.90	1.83

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, + $p < .1$

Significance is not corrected for multiple comparisons.

Regression controls for age, gender and platform use.

Findings from the ordinal logistic regression on the full response scale for intent was consistent with those of the binarised outcome reported above. Results are on the next slide.

Appendix C

Ordinal logistic regression results from subgroup analysis on intent

		How likely are you to use a Help Centre on platforms you already use?				
		Not at all likely	A little likely	Moderately likely	Very likely	Don't know
Age	13-15 (n = 1,137)	20%	39%	25%	14%	3%
	16-17** (n = 670)	26%	36%	23%	10%	4%
Gender	Female (n = 925)	24%	38%	23%	12%	2%
	Male (n = 876)	21%	37%	25%	14%	5%
Platform use	Above relative average (n = 828)	20%	36%	24%	17%	4%
	Below relative average** (n = 979)	24%	39%	24%	9%	4%

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, + $p < .1$

Significance is not corrected for multiple comparisons.
Regression controls for age, gender and platform use.

Other objectives

Participants generally thought it's most important to understand key information about the platform before or during sign-up

<i>When, if at all, do you think it's most important for users to understand the following?</i>					
	Before or during sign-up	After sign-up but before commenting or posting	In a help centre that can be accessed when needed	Not important	Don't know
General information about the platform and how to use it	47%	23%	25%	3%	2%
To find out how to report content and what happens when you report content	33%	28%	34%	2%	3%
Information on why you're shown certain content	35%	27%	27%	6%	5%
To find out how to set or change your settings	31%	32%	32%	2%	2%
Advice about what is allowed on the platform	53%	22%	19%	3%	3%
To find out if there are any age restrictions on users of the platform	65%	13%	15%	4%	3%

Appendix.

Interests selected at sign up

At sign up, participants were asked to select their interests. **% who selected that they're interested in...** (participants could select up to 3 interests)



49%
Music



48%
Gaming



38%
TV & Film



34%
Food



28%
Animals



27%
Beauty & Style



26%
Sports



17%
Comedy



12%
Travel



3%
News

2% skipped the interests screen

Appendix D: Changes from analysis plan



PREDICTIV



Appendix

Places where we've deviated from the prespecified analysis plan

Exploratory analysis 2 on overall comprehension

We originally specified that we would run the analysis as a poisson regression though as we divided the content outcome by 3 (as to not overweight this outcome in the overall score), comprehension score was no longer a count variable. We ran a linear regression instead.

We also chose to remove participants who saw the Help Centre (n = 212) at sign up so we could get a better measure of how reading the Help Centre improved comprehension. This was to ensure we could accurately determine the effects of seeing the help centre for the first time.

Subgroup analysis 1 on the impact of the interventions on clicks to the Help Centre

We chose not to run this analysis as we only had 3 clicks in the Control arm and 4 clicks in the Reframing arm and cannot be certain that any conclusions drawn would be robust. We instead ran subgroup analysis to see what demographic subgroups were more likely to click, regardless of the intervention they saw.

Descriptives by treatment arm

We did not report descriptives by treatment arm on time in the Help Centre, clicks within the Help Centre and reasons for clicking to see the Help Centre, as the number who clicked in the Control and Reframing arms was very small and we cannot be certain that any conclusions drawn would be robust. We report these for the whole sample.