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Children's Attitudes to Reporting Content Online

Prepared by YouGov Qualitative

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CONTENTS

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1 Introduction

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Background

Disclaimer

All findings contained in this report reflect the perceptions and statements of children interviewed, and not of Ofcom or YouGov. The report investigates participant experiences and perceptions of online reporting processes.

The purpose of this study was to understand children's views on the alternative ways reporting functionalities are presented, it was not intended to provide an assessment of individual platforms. The study used examples to stimulate discussion, these are included in the report. The research team removed any identifying features, such as logos, prior to the fieldwork and did not name any platforms when showing participants these screenshots. Acknowledgements are given in the Appendix.

Participants' suggestions of what could be improved have not been filtered or assessed by the research team, and should not be seen as a validation of the technical feasibility, proportionality or effectiveness of the suggested solutions. Participant views have also not been verified to ensure they accurately reflect the functionalities deployed by the platforms they mention. All of the children in this study are over the age of 13. Where participants mention seeing 'potentially harmful content', this refers to content the children perceive to be harmful, and do not reflect Ofcom's policy position.

Specific online platforms are referenced throughout the report reflecting participants' views and experiences. This should not be interpreted as an indication of the prevalence of potentially harmful content on particular platforms, but rather indicative of the platforms used by those taking part in the research, and their experiences on those platforms.

This research was commissioned to build Ofcom's evidence base regarding children's attitudes to and experiences of platform reporting processes. The findings should not be considered a reflection of any policy position that Ofcom may adopt as part of our role as the online safety regulator.

Background and Objectives

Background

Children can sometimes be exposed to potentially harmful content online which increases risk of psychological harm. This research was designed to better understand the experience of and attitudes towards reporting among children who use social media and/or video sharing platforms.

This research will provide Ofcom with insight into the drivers and barriers to reporting among children aged 13-17. It will help also inform Ofcom on what might encourage more children to report potentially harmful content online.

Objectives

This qualitative study sought to address the following research objectives:

1. To understand children's (13–17-year-olds) attitudes towards, behaviours around, and experiences of, reporting potentially harmful content that they encounter online.
2. What factors influence their decision to report content online (barriers and facilitators).
3. What preconceptions children aged 13-17 have around the reporting process, for example, around potential outcomes or consequences.

Methodology

🔍 Methods

To meet these objectives, YouGov Qual conducted 8 online text-based focus groups between January 31st and February 7th, 2024. Approximately 80 participants took part in synchronous text-based discussions via YouGov's secure online platform, Visions Live.

The focus groups consisted of 13-17-year-olds who regularly (i.e. at least weekly) use video sharing and social media platforms. The participants were separated into groups based on gender, with each group containing a mixture of individuals who have and have not reported potentially harmful content in the past.

Sample frame

Number of FGs	Age	Gender	Reporters/Non-reporters
2 x	13-15-year-olds	Female	Mix
2 x	13-15-year-olds	Male	Mix
2 x	16-17-year-olds	Female	Mix
2 x	16-17-year-olds	Male	Mix

💬 Text-based focus groups

- Overall, participants demonstrated a high level of engagement throughout the discussions and were comfortable sharing their perspectives and personal experiences.

- While some participants mentioned having previously viewed distressing content online, all were respectful - as requested by the moderators – and refrained from detailing or sharing such content.

- Though YouGov did not name any online services during the focus groups, participants often referred to specific services when talking about past experiences, and many participants proactively identified services from unlabeled interfaces they were shown.

Verbatim quotes were included from the text-based groups. There will be idiomatic language and spelling mistakes which the research team have chosen not to correct. Spelling errors have been denoted by [sic] following the word.

2 Key Findings

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Key Findings

Exposure to Inappropriate Content

- Participants in this research said they came across content they found upsetting, offensive or inappropriate on social media on a regular basis - at least once, if not multiple times, a week.

- Common types of inappropriate content that participants alluded to included hateful comments, bullying, sexual content, violence, content related to self-harm and suicide.

Awareness and Understanding of Reporting Systems

- Participants were aware of online services' guidelines and reporting processes, and said they felt confident identifying content that violates guidelines, seeing it as 'common sense'.

- Regardless if they had previously reported or not, most participants were able to identify/recognise the more common user interface icons that would lead them to the reporting process ("•••" or " ⋮ ").

Experiences with Reporting Potentially Harmful Content

- Despite saying they were able to identify content that was against platform guidelines, when encountering this, the most common reaction was to ignore, scroll past, or click 'not interested'. Very few said they reported the content. Some utilised options to block the poster or to 'see less' of that type of content. There were indications that reporting and blocking functions are used for what is perceived to be more severe content.

- The minority who had reported content did so because they found it inappropriate and didn't want others, especially younger users, exposed to it.

Key Findings

Barriers to Reporting

- Participants said the primary deterrent to reporting inappropriate content was the lack of trust in the online service's responsiveness, or that action would be taken. A perceived lack of transparency and feedback about report outcomes left participants feeling unheard.

- Some participants found reporting processes time-consuming, especially on less familiar online services. The effort required to navigate reporting systems and provide detailed explanations discouraged some from reporting.

Impact on Future Reporting Behaviours

- Negative experiences with reporting discouraged many participants from reporting content in the future. The lack of visible results and notifications from online services led to perceptions that reporting was a waste of time.

Improvements to Reporting Processes

- Despite users of reporting functions stating that they were relatively easy to use, there was support for even simpler interfaces, stand-out buttons, comment boxes for context, category groupings that are easy to understand, as well as reassurance around anonymity, and consistency across platforms.

- Participants said they would be more confident in reporting again if they received a confirmation of their report and notifications about report outcomes and actions taken.

Key Findings

Key Differences by Age:

- The younger groups (children aged 13-15) were more likely to say they would tell a parent if they saw something very upsetting online. The older groups (aged 16-17) were less likely to mention parental involvement.

- The older groups seemed slightly more desensitised to upsetting content, reporting that it doesn't affect them any more. The younger groups still found it upsetting.

- Participants aged 16-17 had a stronger opinion that reporting doesn't lead to action, creating more scepticism about the reporting process compared to children aged 13-15.

Key Differences by Gender:

- Female participants said more frequently that content should be moderated by the online services themselves; the male groups focused more on individual responsibility to report or ignore content.

- Females also expressed more concern about anonymity when reporting, not wanting the person they report to find out it was them. This was less of a concern for the male participants.

- Male participants, especially those aged 16-17, were more likely to say reporting is pointless because no action would be taken. Females still expressed this view, but to a lesser degree.

Ensuring trust and confidence in the process requires considering the diverse emotional needs of participants

Before reporting

During reporting

After reporting

What they feel	What they need

What they feel	What they need

What they feel	What they need

Before reporting

Upset	Recognition
Apathy	A proven track record

During reporting

Unsure	Clear process and next steps
Loss of control	Option to block or see less
Concerned about anonymity	Reassurance

After reporting

Impatience	A speedy response
Discouraged	Acknowledge-ment and update

3 General reporting behaviours and attitudes

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Participants used a range of online services to communicate with others

❖ Participants in this study used online services as a tool for **communicating** and **connecting** with friends and family and for personal **entertainment -** these included Snapchat, Instagram and TikTok, among others.

❖ The majority used these services every day (a few times a day) and **tended to watch videos** rather than read. Respondents watched both shorter and longer form content.

❖ Participants were interested in a range of content – music, cars, football, gaming, sports, comedy, celebrities, inspiration and learning.

Online services mentioned by participants:
- WhatsApp
- TikTok
- Snapchat
- Facebook
- YouTube
- Roblox
- BeReal
- Discord
- Spotify
- Instagram
- Reddit
- Pinterest

"

"I tend to watch long videos on YouTube and go on Instagram for memes, WhatsApp and Discord for talking to friends." (13–15-year-old, Female, Non-reporter)

"I use Snapchat mainly to talk to friends and also TikTok for entertainment." (16–17-year-old, Female, Non-reporter)

"Mainly videos, but I do look at blogs or articles occasionally." (16–17-year-old, Female, Non-reporter)

"

Participants expressed a range of attitudes towards reporting potentially harmful content

Current knowledge

Those with experience of reporting mentioned different processes for reporting, including a 'report' button, or **screenshotting** a post and sending it to the group administrator.

Across all groups, most were aware that online services have guidelines and rules about what can be posted, though not always familiar with specifics. However, those who had not reported previously were unsure of what the process might look like.

Some had received **guidance** from **schools** around seeing potentially harmful content and potential next steps. Others had **parents** who monitored their service usage.

Variation by age and gender

There were some differences in attitudes between groups. Female participants in this study said they were **more likely to report** and also tended to report **seeing potentially harmful content** more frequently**.** They shared more specific examples of content they had reported, such as self-harm or suicide-related posts, inappropriate sexual content, hate speech, and misinformation.

Older groups (those aged 16-17) tended to have a greater sense of **apathy** and were more likely to say they feel **disillusioned by** previous negative experiences (i.e. not seeing results, not getting feedback). And male participants said they were desensitised to content that might be upsetting, more likely to disengage from upsetting content, saying they just scroll past or ignore it.
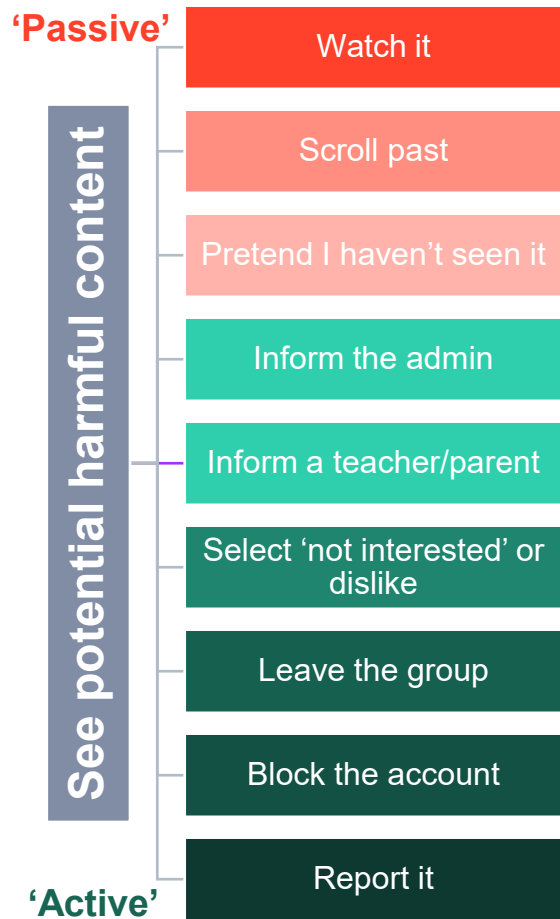
"

"There are lots of videos you see that you don't want to. Like if you watch one, [redacted] thinks you like it and you get more." (13–15-year-old, Female, Non-reporter)

"My mum and dad both work in computers so [they] know a lot and they track what I do and tell me which is the best option if anyone says anything, or stranger tries to contact me." (13–15-year-old, Female, Non-reporter)

"I have not thought about reporting it because it feels normal to see bad comments." (13 - 15-year-old, Female, Non-reporter)

"

Participants' actions varied depending on perceived severity of content

'Passive'

Watch it
Scroll past
Pretend I haven't seen it
Inform the admin
Inform a teacher/parent
Select 'not interested' or dislike
Leave the group
Block the account
Report it

See potential harmful content

'Active'

'Passive' response:
Those who scroll past potentially harmful content often perceived it as '**not serious enough**' to report. In this study, male participants tended to be less likely to know how to report, and they often commented that 'it is not their responsibility' to report. Others commented that it was 'normal' to see potentially harmful content.

> "*I don't report anything on social media if something bothers me, I just ignore it and move along.*" (13–15-year-old, Male, Reporter)

> "*If it upsets me, I just wanna [sic] get past it, reporting it makes me have to think about it even more.*" (16–17-year-old, Female, Non-reporter)

'Active' response:
Those who use a 'not interested' function believe this will mean that they see less of 'that type' of content in the future, although others reflected that this is not always the case. In relation to the most active response, *reporting*, participants commented that reporting can have a limited effect. Those who reported an account said they had seen **accounts for the same users being set up** and appearing on their socials. There were indications that perceived severity of content, (e.g., suicide-related content), does factor into young peoples' decisions, making some more likely to report.

> "*On TikTok you can say you aren't interested, and it says it will make less of that same content come up.*" (16–17-year-old, Female, Reporter)

> "*I would always click not interested and if I think it will affect other users badly, I will report it.*" (16–17-year-old, Female, Non-reporter)

Users and online services were felt to hold different responsibilities in the reporting process

User experience and responsibility

Participants in this study who had previously reported content said they were motivated to report due to a **moral obligation.** They often wanted to **keep others safe** alongside wanting **control** over what they see. Participants felt that ignoring or blocking will only protect the individual users and not others.

However, there was also a perception that reporting **takes too long**, asks for too much detail and **doesn't make a difference** – making it 'easier' to scroll past.

After reporting, participants **expect a notification** outlining the actions the platform has taken and if other people have reported the post. They want **recognition** that someone has investigated, alongside **reassurance** and an **acknowledgment**, saying this keeps them motivated to report again in future. However, if they do not receive this a **sense of apathy** is fostered, as they believe reporting does not 'make a difference'.

Online services' responsibility

Actions from services varied e.g., some participants said they received a report or a notification (saying the post has or hasn't been removed), while others said the post was removed without notification.

Children's decision to take action was often dependent on their previous experience, e.g., if the service does not remove reported content because it 'did not breach community guidelines', then some participants said they were likely to stop reporting.

Ease of reporting depended on the service interface, e.g., number of questions and how/if the report button stands out. Participants noted the **inconsistency across services makes it harder to find and navigate reporting processes, creating a barrier to reporting**.

Participants felt reporting can have limited impact. They discussed posts and accounts being removed by online services, but **replica accounts** being created so they continue to see potentially harmful content – they felt platforms have a **responsibility to monitor this.**
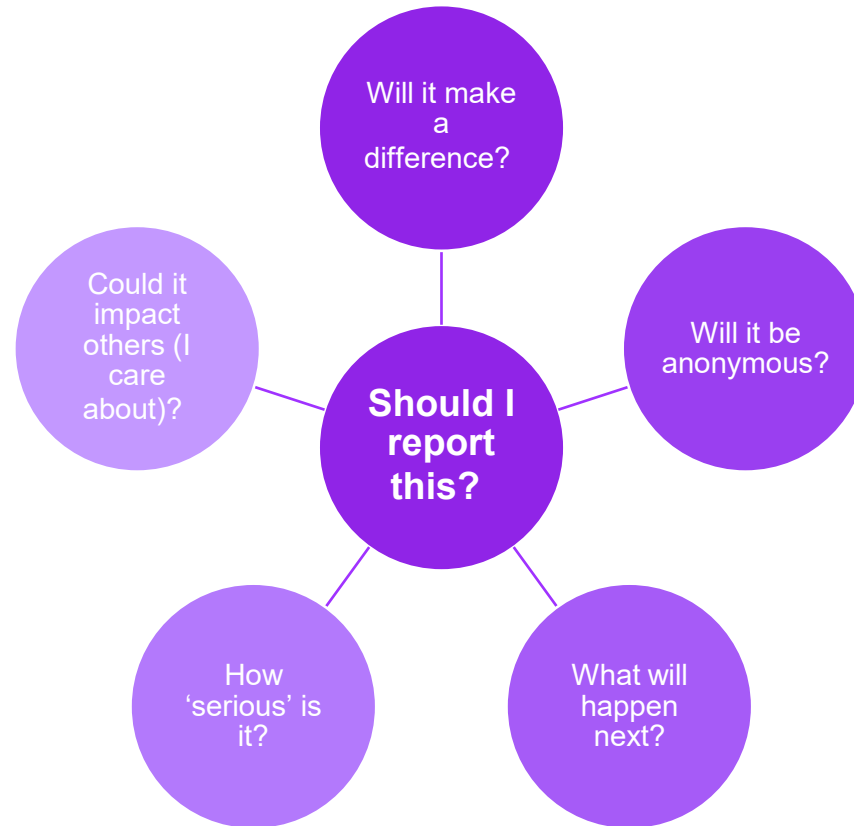
When reporting, participants were motivated by altruism but were concerned about anonymity

Altruism was a key **facilitator** to reporting, with participants often being concerned for the wellbeing of others. In particular, older participants were worried about **young or vulnerable people** seeing potentially harmful content online.

" *"I report things to stop other vulnerable people who might be affected from seeing it." (16–17-year-old, Female, Reporter)*

"It was disturbing for me to see so I didn't want any other people to see things similar." (13–15-year-old, Female, Non-reporter)

"I would want to protect my little sister in case she ever saw something." (13–15-year-old, Male, Non-reporter) "

Will it make a difference?

Could it impact others (I care about)?

Should I report this?

Will it be anonymous?

How 'serious' is it?

What will happen next?

Across groups the importance of **remaining anonymous** was highlighted as a key **barrier** to reporting.

Participants were concerned about being harmed offline by those they reported (if they found out through the platform or word of mouth).

" *"My dad advices [sic] me to always report such content without my details to remain anonymous for security reasons… So that the account report could not find me to avoid physical harm." 13–15-year-old, Male, Reporter)*
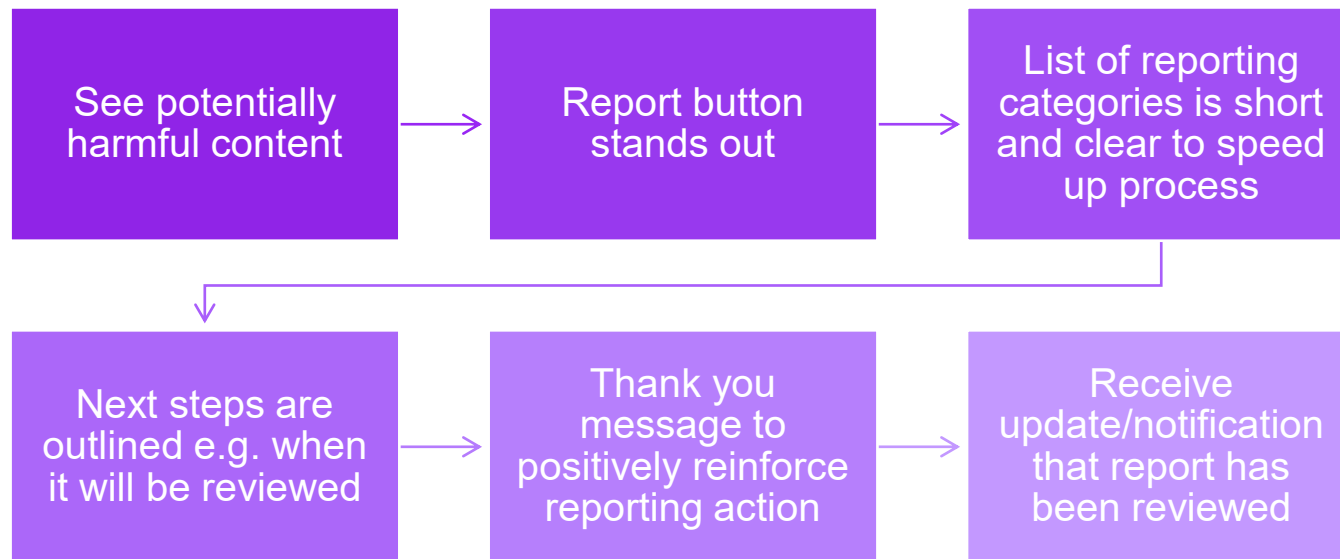
"I was worried someone would know it was me who reported, so [I] didn`t [report] and just left it with my parents." (13–15-year-old, Female, Non-reporter) "

Decision to report is influenced by several motivating factors and barriers

Barriers to reporting

See potentially harmful content	'I don't think reporting makes a difference'	'I'm scared my report will not be anonymous'	'I don't know what the process is, how long it will take and next steps'

Do not report

"I would probably fear that the person I had reported would come after me, like come find [sic] where I live or come and harm my family." (16–17-year-old, Female, Non-reporter)

"There's too much to report, it would be a full-time job!" (16–17-year-old, Female, Non-reporter)

'I don't want others to see what I have just seen'	'This feels serious enough to warrant reporting'	'I feel confident in the process and that the platform will take action'

Report

Motivating factors

The ideal reporting process would be clearly set out, and offer reassurance

See potentially harmful content	→	Report button stands out	→	List of reporting categories is short and clear to speed up process

Next steps are outlined e.g. when it will be reviewed	→	Thank you message to positively reinforce reporting action	→	Receive update/notification that report has been reviewed

According to many participants, an ideal reporting flow would be easily accessible, use clear and simple language, provide confirmation of submission and follow-up on actions taken.

Group 7 (16–17-year-old females), amongst other groups, highlighted the **need for positive reinforcement** after reporting. Some participants talked about reporting content they thought violated guidelines, and the online service disagreeing with them, saying it undermined their trust in the reporting process, and discouraged them from reporting again.

"I reported something that I had seen that was against the app's guidelines and I received a review of the report that it wasn't, even though it was quite offensive." (16–17-year-old, Female, Reporter)

"I think if you've made an effort to try and change something, it would be good to know what happens." (16–17-year-old, Female, Non-reporter)

"It would give me confidence to report again, but I also think they might tell you it's ok and shouldn't be reported, and that would upset me if they didn't think it was bad enough." (16–17-year-old, Female, Non-reporter)

4 Familiarity with rules and guidelines

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All participants knew online services had guidelines, but most didn't read them, instead relying on their own judgement

There are **three factors** which participants said led to them not reading the guidelines on platforms:

Confidence

- The majority felt they were confident about what should/shouldn't be posted, despite not reading online service guidelines. They felt that common sense was sufficient to guide their own behaviour.

- Participants had pre-existing perceptions of what was against guidelines, noting anything overly violent, offensive and sexually explicit (including nudity).

Scepticism and apathy

- There was shared sentiment, especially amongst the 16–17-year-olds, that the rules were ineffective and that 'many people ignore them'. They also felt services do little to enforce them. Therefore, participants said they did not see the value in reading the guidelines.

Inaccessibility

- The length of the rules negatively impacted engagement with the guidelines.

- Additionally, participants perceived rules to be similar across services, further disincentivising engagement

"The usual, racism, homophobic [sic], sexism, violence, drug use etc." (13-15-year-old, Male, Reporter)

"Most do [have guidelines] but it just gets abused." (16-17-year-old, Female, Non-reporter)

"The rules they show you are paragraphs long and no one reads all that." (13–15-year-old, Female, Reporter)

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Many participants would still scroll past potentially harmful content despite thinking it was against the rules

- Across all age groups within the focus groups, participants did not consider the rules or guidelines of the services when deciding to report.

- Content that was perceived as offensive, illegal, overly sexual, graphically violent, hateful, or encouraging self-harm was called out in the discussions as the types of posts that violate online service rules, based on the common understanding of the participants.

- Despite having a general sense of what is allowed on social media, most just scrolled past the potentially harmful content.

- However, within each group there were a couple of participants who said they would turn to their parents, if they were upset by content but unsure whether to report it. This behaviour was more prevalent amongst the younger participants.

"

"I would either come off the platform and ignore or tell my mum as she would give me good advice."
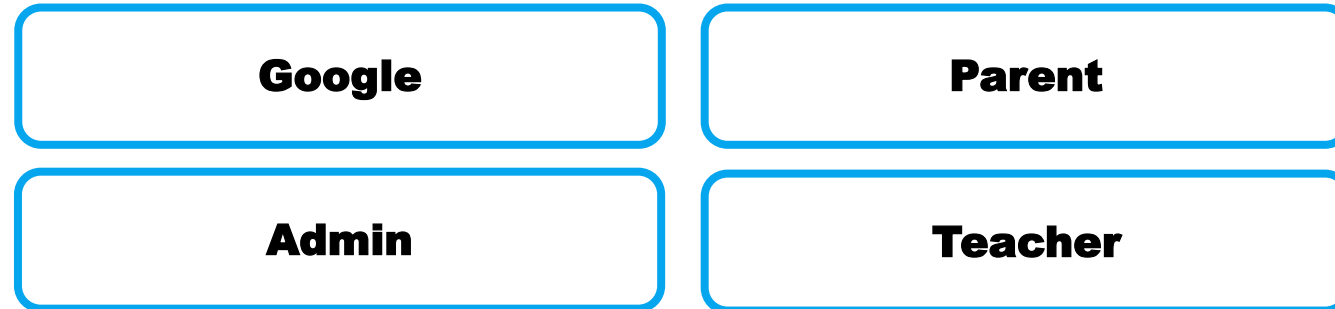*(13-15-year-old, Male, Non-reporter)*

"

"Just scroll past it."
(13-15-year-old, Female, Non-reporter)

Google was the first port of call for information on how to report (outside of the service)

- A minority of participants reported feeling unsure of the rules of online services. Within this group, if they wanted to find more information on how to report, the broad consensus was that Google would be the best place to look.

- For a few participants, they would seek the advice of an authority figure: a parent, teacher and in some cases a group administrator or 'admin' on the online service.

Google	Parent
Admin	Teacher

" *"Parents, a teacher or another member of family."*
(16-17-year-old, Female, Non-reporter) "

" *"I would open a new tab, and Google search, 'How to report content on social media'."*
(13–15-year-old, Male, Reporter) "

# 5 General reflections on the reporting process

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Most participants found reporting straightforward, but doubted its overall effectiveness

General reflections on reporting

Guidance on how to report
When asked where they would look for information on how to report content, the general agreement was that they would search online, go to help or settings sections within apps, or ask a parent.
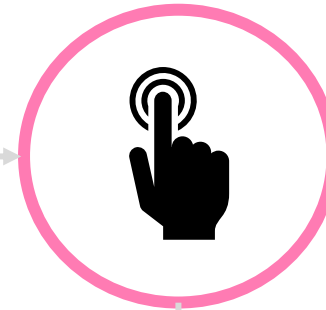
Initial report
When discussing their typical approach to reporting potentially harmful online content, participants who had previously reported indicated that they found the reporting processes easy and straightforward to use, with simple steps to follow.

Outcomes on actions taken
Many participants said in the groups that they felt reporting was ineffective because they hadn't seen any evidence that their reports lead to action being taken. They also wanted the option to hear about the outcome to understand why content might not have been removed.
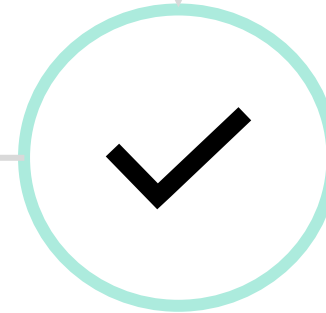
Confirmation
Receiving a response after submitting a report was very important to participants, to provide reassurance that it was being taken seriously and handled properly.

There was a consensus from participants for easier, streamlined systems and service accountability

Children said they are more likely to use reporting tools when they:

1

Are easy to access and navigate
The reporting process must be perceived as straightforward, intuitive to find, and require only a couple quick clicks. Buttons and menus must be easy to spot and access. Additional steps and complicated flows create barriers.

2

Offer clear reporting options
Participants appreciated multiple categories to choose from that cover a wide range of potentially harmful content. It provided helpful specificity and precision about the issue. In addition, the 'other' option was also valued as it allows for additional details if needed.

3

Provide anonymity reassurance
Young participants wanted confirmation that their reports are confidential and anonymous to all other users. They also desired communication from services that confirms receipt and conveys urgency about addressing the reports.

4

Address potentially harmful content
Participants wanted to know that reporting made an actual impact and was not ignored. They suggested they wanted to see deleting posts, suspensions or bans on user accounts, or other actions that signal undesirable content is removed.

Participants wanted simplified, fast reporting processes guaranteeing their anonymity and providing clear confirmation of service responsiveness

Participants' suggested improvements to the reporting process included:

❑ **Simplifying reporting**

✓ Making the report button/flag more visible and noticeable by using a bold colour like red, placing it in a consistent spot like the top corner, and separating it from other buttons.

✓ Simplifying the reasons/categories for reporting by using general groupings or allowing a text box for participants to explain the issue.

✓ Providing the option to give additional details, though keeping it optional as some preferred not to explain further.

❑ **Confirming report receipt**

✓ Sending a confirmation that the report was received and notifications if action was taken. Participants wanted reassurance their report mattered.

❑ **Ensuring transparency**

✓ Sharing follow-up actions and providing participants periodic outcome updates on their specific report.

✓ Quicker response times for reviewing reports, ideally 24 hours to 1 week.

❑ **Protection**

✓ Providing reassurance that their identity would remain anonymous to the person they are reporting (especially important among the 13-15-year-old groups).

❑ **Enforcement**

✓ Protecting participants through stricter content moderation ranked as another top request.

✓ Young people preferred in-app reporting directed at the service itself as the simplest and most effective approach, rather than reporting to a third party.

Participants felt online services need to take more responsibility for online safety

Participants felt that online services do not moderate properly or "crack down" on policy violations, suggesting:

Stricter monitoring and enforcement of guidelines regarding potentially upsetting content.

Participants talked about **including 'humans'** in decisions about borderline pieces of content.

Participants mentioned better identity verification steps to stop anonymous harmful posters.

Participants mentioned being worried about younger users of online services, and said there should be stricter restrictions for younger people, such as **formal ID age checks** to make accounts.

In their words:

"They need to listen to us their [sic] users more people reporting is a good thing" (13–15-year-old, Female, Reporter)

"An easy to see and find report button and simpler options to choose from. And having a follow up notification saying what has happened" (16–17-year-old, Female, Reporter)

"More resources put into dealing with inappropriate content" (13–15-year-old, Female, Non-reporter)

"I think its important that they do give you an update especially if they want people to report again and help make the [sic] social media a safer place" (13–15-year-old, Male, Non-reporter)

"Quicker and more accessible buttons to report inappropriate content" (16–17-year-old, Female, Non-reporter)

"Information boxes to write, colour coding and simplicity[,] additionally information that your report was reviewed" (16–17-year-old, Male, Non-reporter)

5   Reporting processes under the microscope

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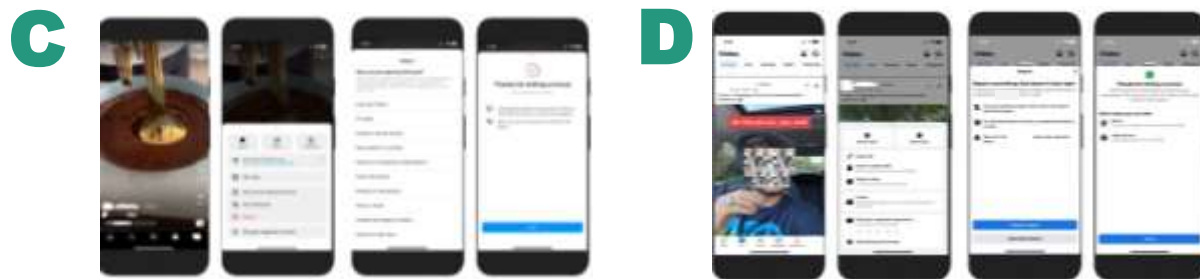# Researchers showed participants four examples of reporting processes, in two groups

Group 1: Additional questions on reporting categories*

A   **B**
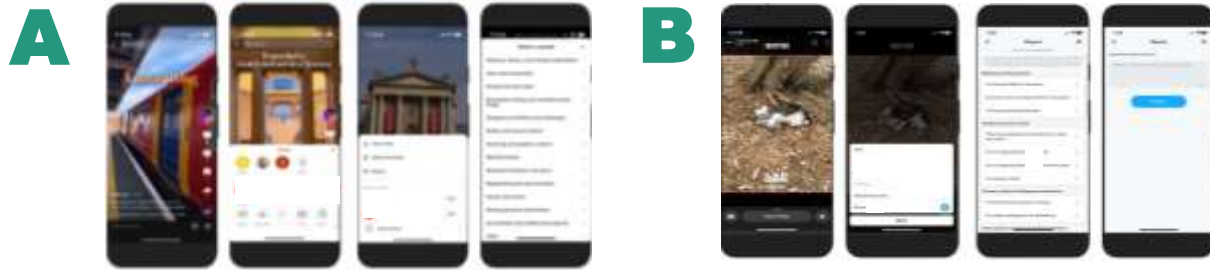
Group 2: Additional questions on report confirmation message*

C   **D**

To assess the user-friendliness of the reporting process, participants were shown four examples of reporting processes.

Platform identities and recognisable branding elements were removed from the reporting processes; however, some participants recognised and mentioned the platforms in the chat. The researchers did not verify such mentions.

Group 1:

For Group 1, containing examples A and B, participants were also asked about the options they were provided with to categorise types of content they might be reporting.

Group 2:

For the second two examples, C and D, participants were asked about the message they might receive following the hypothetical completion of a report.

*Acknowledgements given in the Appendix

Participants highlighted simplicity, responsiveness, and transparency when evaluating reporting processes

Visibility of the report button
Participants struggled to find report buttons that were buried or hidden within submenus. Bright colours and dedicated report sections were preferred. Many recognised the 'three dots' as a menu for further options.

Receiving confirmation
Even automated confirmations that show the report was received was welcomed by most participants. This reassured them time wasn't wasted.

Steps to complete a report
The fewer steps, the better - needing to toggle through interfaces or hunt for reporting pages deters participants. Some called for a simple single prominent report button.

Getting follow-up on outcomes
Not all participants said they wanted updates after reporting but some said that notifications that action was taken could help them rebuild trust in reporting.

Ability to provide context
Text boxes, comment sections, or details sections allow participants to elaborate on reports if pre-set categories don't quite fit – participants valued having this option available.

Process familiarity
If reporting options mimic other online services frequently used, the process seems simpler. Unique processes mean starting anew and create barriers.

Participants liked Example A's comprehensive list of reporting options, and the ability to select 'other'

Stimuli reviewed: Example A

> " *"Too many interfaces. It should just be 1 button in the corner or something."(16–17-year-old, Male, Reporter)*
> *"Still a flag in top corner then when enough people clicked on it then [redacted] should do a search and it should be obvious why people reported it."(16–17-year-old, Male, Non-reporter)*
> *"Too much, should just have simple report and that's it."(16–17-year-old – Male, Non-reporter)*

User-friendly elements of reporting process and categories

- ✓ The majority of participants indicated that Example A provides a **comprehensive list of reporting options** covering different types of violations. They said this makes it easier to accurately classify the inappropriate content. However, some said the amount of options presented could be overwhelming.
- ✓ The **option to select 'other'** was appreciated by participants. They reflected that it might be easier to choose this option if they felt the other categories were confusing.

Less user-friendly...

- ✗ Some participants found the report option difficult to find, noting it was difficult to understand which button to click to find how to report. Some thought that it might be found through the 'Share' button but felt that this was not obvious.
- ✗ Additionally, participants felt that the reporting button was not prominently displayed enough within the menu.

⬎ Key takeaway

Participants wanted the report button to be immediately visible on the content page.

Participants recognised Example B's 'three dots' menu and liked the use of colour to make reporting stand out

Stimuli reviewed: Example B

" *"I think it's better because there's actually a box to type your thoughts into."(16–17-year-old, Female, Non-reporter)*

"Seems put well together as the categories appear easy to navigate and provides an option to block the content in the future." (16–17-year-old, Male, Non-reporter)

" [the] colour makes it stand out."(16–17-year-old, Male, Non-reporter)

User-friendly elements of reporting process and categories

✓ Most found it **easy to find the report button** (behind the 'three dots' - participants liked that the report button **was red and stood out**, making it obvious and easy to locate.

✓ Clear categories/options – Example B provides **clear, grouped options** for reporting different types of inappropriate content, which makes it easy to specify the reason.

✓ Participants liked the option to provide **additional written details,** meaning they could provide context or further detail to explain why something might be upsetting. This was viewed especially positively by children aged 13-15.

Less user-friendly...

✕ **No 'Other' option** - some wanted an open field option to provide additional context or details not covered by the preset categories when submitting a report.

✕ Those less familiar with the menu ('three dots' button) location at the top right of the screen found it harder to locate the report button initially.

↘ **Key takeaway**

Participants appreciated grouped categories of options for reporting, as it made it easier to choose a reason.

Participants found it easy to locate Example C's reporting function, and appreciated recognition of report

Stimuli reviewed: Example C

" *"I think the report button should always be highlighted like this to make it stand out and easy to find." (13–15-year-old, Female, Reporter)*

"The categories make it quicker and easier to report." (13–15-year-old, Male, Non-reporter)

User-friendly elements of reporting process and messaging

✓ Most found it **easy to find the report button** (behind the 'three dots') - participants liked that the report button **was red and stood out**, making it obvious and easy to locate.

✓ Participants also commented on the **'not interested'** option next to the reporting function. This was appealing to participants as they felt they could expect to see less of this type of content on the platform moving forwards.

✓ Participants noted that the categories were **clear and not overwhelming** compared to other examples reviewed. The reduced amount of 'steps' compared to other examples was also appreciated by participants, where a report could be achieved in **three 'clicks'.**

✓ The 'Thanks for letting us know' message was appealing as it offered recognition and positive reinforcement.

Less user-friendly…

✗ A minority felt that the categories were 'too simple' and wanted more options.
✗ One group suggested that the 'report' button could be on the post next to liking, commenting and sending for ease.

⤵ Key takeaway

Participants liked receiving acknowledgement of their report.

Participants were able to find Example D's report button but felt it could stand out more

Stimuli reviewed: Example D

" *"Could have more options but [it] is good because you can block."* (13–15-year-old, Male, Reporter)

"I like that thanks at the end, I don't like the fact that I couldn't see the report button when I first looked." (13–15-year-old, Female, Reporter)

"First time user would struggle and probably give up." (16–17-year-old, Female, Non-reporter)

User-friendly elements of reporting process and messaging

✓ The **option to also block the participant** was appreciated by many participants. Blocking was commonly used by participants and was felt to 'speed up' the process. The same applied for '**seeing less of this type of content'** which participants felt gave them more control over their feed.

✓ Participants appreciated the **message assuring them** that the other participant will not know who reported them, as there were concerns across groups around anonymity and facing repercussions for reporting. Participants reflected that this made them feel more confident about reporting.

Less user-friendly...

✗ **Participants felt that the report button did not stand out** and blended with the other buttons, which could be easy to miss.

✗ The **lack of categories for reporting** made some participants worry that the platform would not be engaged with their report.

⬎ Key takeaway

Participants appreciated having options for what they wanted to do after seeing content, for example Blocking or 'seeing less of this'.

8 Children's conclusions and recommendations

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Participants reflected that simplifying the reporting process could impact their motivation to report

Recommendations <u>during</u> the reporting process:

Participants wanted the **report button to stand out**, preferably in a differentiated colour. They would like it to be easy to locate and not hidden in submenus.

Participants wanted a balanced **number of categories;** these were seen as helpful for providing more detail but participants found long lists and complicated wording confusing.

Participants wanted to be able to **choose whether they received updates** – some thought they might not want to be reminded of the post later.

Participants reported wanting **reassurance** around participant anonymity, especially regarding the participant who had been reported.
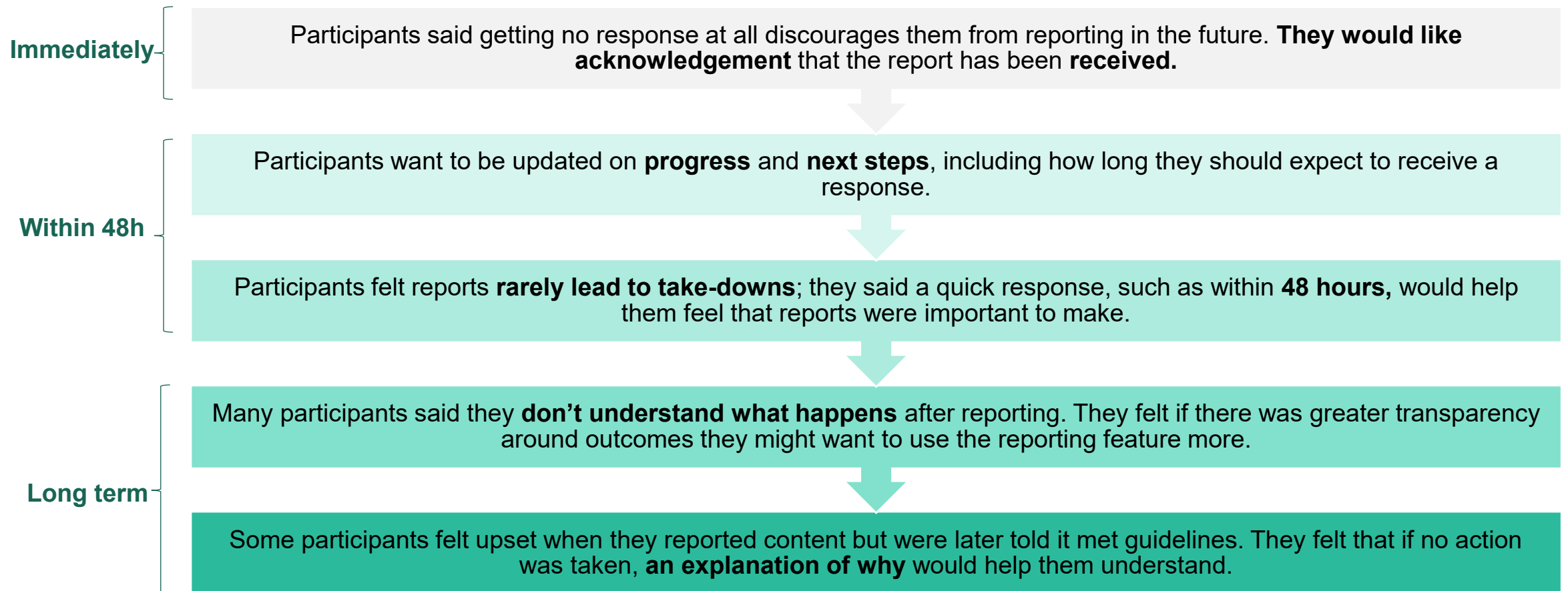
Participants liked the inclusion of 'Other' option or open text fields where they could provide additional context.

Participants liked being able to **make choices** about their feed, by using 'Less of this' or 'Not interested' buttons.

Participants suggested that acknowledgment of their report would improve their trust in the reporting process

Process <u>after</u> a report has been submitted:

Immediately
Participants said getting no response at all discourages them from reporting in the future. **They would like acknowledgement** that the report has been **received.**

Within 48h
Participants want to be updated on **progress** and **next steps**, including how long they should expect to receive a response.

Participants felt reports **rarely lead to take-downs**; they said a quick response, such as within **48 hours,** would help them feel that reports were important to make.

Long term
Many participants said they **don't understand what happens** after reporting. They felt if there was greater transparency around outcomes they might want to use the reporting feature more.

Some participants felt upset when they reported content but were later told it met guidelines. They felt that if no action was taken, **an explanation of why** would help them understand.

Participants suggested a range of improvements for platforms to take outside of reporting

Recommendations from participants:

- Participants felt that online platforms **could be more proactive in monitoring content and enforcing guidelines.** This includes:
  - Stricter monitoring of potentially harmful content
  - Swift removal of potentially harmful content

- Participants said it would be helpful if there was **better consistency** of reporting processes across platforms.

- Participants reflected that sometimes they **were 'recommended' potentially harmful content by 'algorithms'**, and this should be prevented where possible**.**

- **Participants wanted simpler reporting processes**: if the overall process was smoother and acknowledged their experiences, then they'd be more likely to report again**.**

In their words:

" *"It should be the company's responsibility to stop their users from being shown explicit/violent content instead of the user seeing it, being affected by it then having to report it." (16–17-year-old, Female, Non-reporter)*

"I think social media companies need to actually enforce the age limits with an id check or something [else]." (16–17-year-old, Male, Non-reporter)

"Companies could find out fake profiles and ban [them] from the internet." (16–17-year-old, Male, Reporter)

"It should be one universal report system, so everyone knows how to use it." (16–17-year-old, Male, Non-reporter)

Appendix

Slides 42-43: Participant demographics
Slide 44: Acknowledgements

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Sample profiles (G1-G4)

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Group	Name	Age	Gender
G1	Participant 1	15	Male
G1	Participant 2	15	Male
G1	Participant 3	14	Male
G1	Participant 4	14	Male
G1	Participant 5	14	Male
G1	Participant 6	14	Male
G1	Participant 7	14	Male
G1	Participant 8	13	Male
G1	Participant 9	13	Male
G2	Participant 1	15	Female
G2	Participant 2	14	Female
G2	Participant 3	13	Female
G2	Participant 4	13	Female
G2	Participant 5	15	Female
G2	Participant 6	15	Female
G2	Participant 7	13	Female
G2	Participant 8	13	Female
G2	Participant 9	14	Female
G2	Participant 10	14	Female
G2	Participant 11	15	Female
G3	Participant 1	13	Female
G3	Participant 2	14	Female
G3	Participant 3	13	Female
G3	Participant 4	13	Female
G3	Participant 5	15	Female
G3	Participant 6	15	Female
G3	Participant 7	14	Female
G3	Participant 8	13	Female
G3	Participant 9	14	Female
G3	Participant 10	15	Female
G3	Participant 11	13	Female
G4	Participant 1	14	Male
G4	Participant 2	14	Male
G4	Participant 3	15	Male
G4	Participant 4	14	Male
G4	Participant 5	13	Male
G4	Participant 6	13	Male
G4	Participant 7	14	Male
G4	Participant 8	13	Male
G4	Participant 9	15	Male
G4	Participant 10	13	Male
G4	Participant 11	13	Male

Sample profiles (G5-G8)

Group	Name	Age	Gender
G5	Participant 1	17	Male
G5	Participant 2	17	Male
G5	Participant 3	16	Male
G5	Participant 4	16	Male
G5	Participant 5	16	Male
G5	Participant 6	16	Male
G5	Participant 7	16	Male
G5	Participant 8	16	Male
G5	Participant 9	17	Male
G6	Participant 1	17	Female
G6	Participant 2	17	Female
G6	Participant 3	16	Female
G6	Participant 4	17	Female
G6	Participant 5	17	Female
G6	Participant 6	17	Female
G6	Participant 7	17	Female
G6	Participant 8	16	Female
G7	Participant 1	17	Female
G7	Participant 2	17	Female
G7	Participant 3	16	Female
G7	Participant 4	17	Female
G7	Participant 5	17	Female
G7	Participant 6	16	Female
G7	Participant 7	16	Female
G7	Participant 8	16	Female
G7	Participant 9	17	Female
G7	Participant 10	17	Female
G7	Participant 11	16	Female
G8	Participant 1	17	Male
G8	Participant 2	16	Male
G8	Participant 3	17	Male
G8	Participant 4	17	Male
G8	Participant 5	16	Male
G8	Participant 6	16	Male
G8	Participant 7	17	Male
G8	Participant 8	17	Male
G8	Participant 9	17	Male
G8	Participant 10	17	Male

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Acknowledgements

Slide Number	Source*
33	TikTok (https://www.tiktok.com/)
34	Snapchat (https://www.snapchat.com/)
35	Instagram (https://www.instagram.com/)
36	Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/)

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Reporting behaviours and attitudes in children

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