



Livestreaming: The perspective of children and young people who create livestreams

Beano Brain

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Report contents

This is a report by Beano Brain on livestream creation among children, commissioned by Ofcom.

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N.B. Documents related to this report published separately :

Annex A contains the pre-task completed by respondents prior to taking part in interviews with Beano Brain researchers.

Annex B contains the discussion guide used by Beano Brain researchers during interviews with respondents.



Introduction to the project



Image sourced: Pexels, Atlantic Ambience



Research background

The Online Safety Act 2023 sets out duties for regulated online services to protect users from illegal content and, where services are likely to be accessed by children, from content that is harmful to them. In response, Ofcom has published Codes of Practice and guidance to support compliance. As regulation develops, Ofcom is continuing to build its understanding of how children interact with specific online features and functionalities, including those that may present heightened risks

Livestreaming has been identified by Ofcom to be high risk online functionality for children, as identified in the illegal harms (and PoC) registers of risk¹, largely due to its real-time nature. Our children's media literacy research shows that livestreaming is a relatively common activity among children, and that some children create their own livestreams². This combination of prevalence and perceived risk highlighted the need for deeper evidence.

To add to our evidence base, Ofcom commissioned a programme of quantitative and qualitative research exploring children's experiences of livestreaming. These studies and accompanying reports (described in the adjacent table examine motivations, experiences, benefits, and risks, providing a rounded picture of how children experience livestreaming.



NOTE: A more detailed overview of the livestreaming research programme, including a summary of the research, is available [here](#).

1. [Children's Register of Risks](#)
2. [CMUA 2025 tables](#)

The programme of research comprised of UK-wide surveys on children's livestream viewing and creation, alongside in-depth interviews with children and young people who regularly view or create livestreams.

There are three reports in the research programme, and this is the first report in this series, which focuses on the qualitative insights among 20 regular livestream creators aged 8-19.

1. Research among children and young people who create livestreams	Qualitative deep dives into 20 regular livestream creators aged 8-19	Qualitative research explores how children create and consume livestreamed content, the motivations behind these behaviours, and the risks and benefits involved (as perceived by children).
2. Research among children and young people who view livestreams	Qualitative deep dives into 20 livestream viewers aged 8-17	
3. Children's usage of livestreaming: viewing and creating	Quantitative surveys of children aged 8-17 and parents of children aged 8-17	The quantitative research provides information on the prevalence of livestreaming (viewing and creating livestreams) among children aged 8-17, and the data are based on children's reported behaviour, supported by the definition of livestreaming we provided in the survey.

Research Objectives

Overall Objective

To understand children and young people's experiences with creating livestreamed content

Children's motivations for livestreaming

What livestreaming offers compared to pre-recorded content

Children's experiences when creating livestreaming content

How platform features and functionalities shape livestreaming experiences

Children's platform and content choices, and the reasons behind them



Research method: deep dives among children who create livestreams

A multi-stage qualitative research project speaking to a sample of 20 children and young people aged 10-19 **who livestream at least once a month**. Separate research projects were conducted with children who regularly view livestreams, and the findings, along with quantitative data related to livestreaming habits among children in the UK are presented in separate reports.

Fieldwork took place from August 2025 till December 2025 on a rolling basis

Stage 1 Screening calls

In the first stage, we ran 15-minute screening calls to ensure we recruited the right participants. We asked about their online habits, focusing on livestreaming creation or viewing (if livestreaming was chosen unprompted from a list of content types), to check they met the project criteria.

Stage 2 Pre-task via PowerPoint

Once screened, participants completed a pre-task project (*3 tasks in total*) all about their online worlds (*in general, not specific to livestreaming*), including an introduction to them, a moodboard of their online worlds with an explanation of what was included and a look at the good, bad and ugly sides of being online through memes/gifs/ reactions/images or videos with an explanation for each one

Stage 3 60-minute interview

Once they had completed stages 1 and 2, participants took part in an hour interview with a Beano Brain researcher discussing behaviours, features and functionalities, motivations and positive and negative experiences of livestreaming

Safeguarding was a priority, and children were **not asked** to participate in livestreaming as part of the research process. Researchers applied the project's safeguarding policy, which included processes to follow up on any disclosures or safeguarding concerns.



Interpreting the data

The data in this report is qualitative and based on in-depth research among a small number of individuals (20). Findings should not be extrapolated to the broader population due to: 1) the limited number of interviews and 2) a sample design which prioritised ranges of livestreaming activities vs. a proportionally representative sample (see slide 8 for more info on sample and rationale). Further to this, there are limited insights on demographic differences (e.g., age) again due to the smaller sample size

In this report, we refer to our sample of children who livestream as 'creators' to differentiate from creators more generally, which are sometimes referenced



A separate research report refers to the experiences and attitudes of our sample of children that watch livestreams as 'viewers', to differentiate them from viewers more generally



Children who no longer livestream - even if they previously did so frequently are not included in this research, as this is a hard-to-reach sample. The experiences of children who continue to livestream regularly may be skewed towards more positive or neutral views, as those with negative experiences may have stopped. Given this is the sample in the research, this potential skew should be considered when interpreting findings, particularly those related to negative experiences



Research participants

Recruitment targeted by recency, frequency, and to encompass a range of platforms, content and usage of different features and functionalities

Rationale

The sample was structured in this way to ensure depth and relevance of insight. These participants can speak in detail about their behaviours, motivations, and creative practices, yielding richer and more actionable findings.

Low-engagement users offer only surface-level accounts, so including a range of experiences as well as participants with greater engagement in livestreaming enables this research to explore *how and why* livestreaming occurs, not just *whether* it does.

All participants:

- 20 in total, aged 10 to 19
 - 10 to 12YOs n= 4, 13 to 15YOs n= 10, 16 to 17YOs n=4
 - 2 respondents aged 19 were included in order to increase depth of insights related to monetisation)
- All had livestreamed at least once a month

Other aspects of sample coverage where quotas/ targets applied to provide a range of experiences – (full breakdown provided in appendix)

- Gender
- App used to Livestream
- Features used when livestreaming
- A spread across UK Nations
- Livestream via voice only/ voice and video
- Monetisation / rewards received
- Financial security
- Topic of livestream
- Motivation for livestreaming

All participant names have been removed from this report. Gender and age are included alongside verbatim quotations to provide context.





How do we define livestreaming?

*'Livestreaming' refers to "activity undertaken that allows service users (although we are concerned only with children) to **share videos of themselves in real time on a platform that anyone can access** or has access to with an easily shared link. i.e., livestreaming is in real time and **does not limit viewing to designated individuals or curated groups of individuals who have been expressly invited** to see*

This study is specifically looking at broadcast livestreaming - 'one-to-many' - however some 'creators' also spoke of co-hosting and/or guesting which falls under the category of 'many-to-many', also.

This definition was used to ensure validity during recruitment, and as a part of analysis and story-crafting to distinguish insights specific to livestreaming as opposed to other content

Guidance on reading this report, and types of content to be aware of

A glossary is provided in the appendix of the report, to support understanding of certain terms and concepts referenced by children throughout the research. Words that appear in the glossary will have an asterisk next to them.



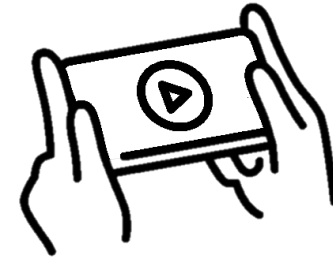
Used to flag where there is **more information** related to a topic elsewhere in the report



Used to flag anything that could be a potential **trigger** for those reading this report



Used to demonstrate insights that refer to the experience or perspective of 'creators'



Used to demonstrate insights that refer to the experience or perspective of 'viewers'

These icons are used throughout the report, to highlight different elements of information

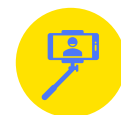
There are **additional slides based on insights from Beano Brain researchers from other research related to online safety they have conducted**. These have been included where relevant to provide context to findings from this research. Where this applies to findings in this report, this is denoted with this symbol.



Summary of key findings from the research



Part 1: Key research findings - headlines



'Creators' found the **entry to livestreaming to be accessible** in terms of tech, planning and/or editing needed, and if necessary, some had found ways to bypass platform age restrictions.

For 'creators', livestreaming feels like a **unique format** that comes with its own distinct experiences, nuanced emotions, benefits and risks

Motivations vary – not all 'creators' are making livestreaming content for the same reasons. Motivations are dependent on their specific niche or passions as well as what they personally find rewarding about livestreaming

There are **greater and different risks associated with livestreaming** compared to pre-recorded content

For 'creators', the decision to go live is often a **trade-off between benefits and perceived risks**. For the children in our sample, the **benefits were felt more strongly than the perceived risks**, as they discussed livestreaming has a positive impact on their lives, which is why they continue

The **live format makes responding to and limiting perceived risks and harms more difficult** to manage or monitor

*Note: There are some similarities in findings relating to the uniqueness of the format, risks and safeguarding behaviours and resources in both this report and the adjacent report relating to children who view livestreams**

The data in this report is qualitative and based on in-depth research among a small number of individuals (20 in total) aged 10 to 19.

All findings reported here are based directly on participants' self-reported experiences and accounts. They reflect what children and young people told us during the research, rather than researchers' interpretation or inference.

Findings should not be extrapolated to the broader population due to: 1) the limited number of interviews and 2) a sample design which prioritised ranges of livestreaming activities vs. a proportionally representative sample (see slide 8 for more info on sample and rationale)

Demographic analysis (such as exploring age) has not been included in this report due to limitations of the sample size, particularly when overlaid with content that 'creators' livestream and their motivations for doing so.



Expanded key research findings (1)



'Creators' found the **entry to livestreaming to be accessible** in terms of tech, planning and/or editing needed, and if necessary, some had found ways to bypass platform age restrictions.

Children in this research perceived livestreaming as an **easy, less pressurised way to create online content** compared to recorded content. Many go live using only a phone and the built-in tools on platforms; however, gaming creators were more likely to have more complex equipment and software setups. Some children perceived there was a need to invest in their tech in order to grow their audience, but even if they had done so, they had typically begun with simple, low-tech setups before upgrading over time.

Some of the children we spoke to were younger than the stated minimum age of a platform but were still able to livestream regularly, and had been able to **circumvent platform age-gating** — for example, joining friends' lives as guests, using parent accounts, or entering a false date of birth.

For 'creators', livestreaming feels like a **unique format** that comes with its own distinct experiences, nuanced emotions, benefits and perceived risks

Children in this research spoke to us about **the distinct experiences, nuanced emotions, benefits and risks that come with livestreaming**. Compared to pre-recorded content, 'creators' feel better able to express their true personality and feelings, it allows for more and real-time opportunities for interactivity between 'creator' and viewer, and it often feels more conversational and spontaneous. However, compared to pre-recorded content, it can also feel less easy to control and is often longer form, meaning more hours spent directly engaging with viewers. **In comparison, pre-recorded content can feel less authentic**, with an impulse to edit out certain parts and offering fewer opportunities for interactivity with viewers.



Expanded key research findings (2)



Motivations vary – not all ‘creators’ are making livestreaming content for the same reasons. Motivations are dependent on their specific niche or passions as well as what they personally find rewarding about livestreaming

Children spoke to us about a variety of reasons that they feel motivated to livestream, which researchers have grouped into 4 key areas:

- **Self-expression** - Being able to talk freely about their passion points or hobbies without the need to self-censor, or to edit/craft content in the same way they feel would be needed with recorded video
- **Social connection & fun** - ‘Creators’ spoke to us about connecting with both friends and their viewers, creating shared memories, sharing their problems and feeling closer to their audience
- **Confidence boosting & validation** – Getting positive comments in real time means that they aren’t missed by ‘creators’ - and having an impact on their viewers or receiving a gift makes ‘creators’ feel like they are doing a good job
- **Fame & fortune** – Livestreaming with a view to making money can feel very motivating, and being on that path can make ‘creators’ feel special

‘Creators’ identified **greater and different risks** associated with livestreaming compared to pre-recorded content

In this research, children told us that the live format makes creating this form of content riskier. ‘Creators’ shared concerns about the inability to predict or edit what happens in a livestream, **difficulty managing and moderating the chat feature** whilst live - sometimes leading to **inappropriate or harmful comments being left in the chat**, the overall lack of control and uncertainty they feel with who is viewing their livestreams*, and the element of impulsivity that can come with the live format, e.g., saying something in the moment that they then cannot take back. **Other risks associated with livestreaming content were categorised by researchers as factors surrounding the cost of the drive to succeed**, for example the pressure to perform in front of viewers.

*Researchers observed with some ‘creators’ a lack of awareness of who may be viewing their livestreams. These ‘creators’ were in turn unaware of the perceived risks of anyone being able to access their livestreams and/or that viewers may be dishonest about their true identity.



Expanded key research findings (3)



For 'creators', the decision to go live is often a **trade-off between benefits and risks**. For the children in our sample, the **benefits were felt more strongly than the risks**, as they perceived livestreaming to have a positive impact on their lives, which is why they continue



The perceived risks unique to the live format did not stop the children in our sample from going live, as they perceive the risks to be outweighed by the associated benefits, unique to the live format. For example:

- The **opportunity for easy self-expression** is seen by some to outweigh the risk of saying something they might later regret
- **The ability to interact in real-time** with followers is seen by some to outweigh the risk of negative commenting
- The **confidence-boosting aspects** are seen by some to outweigh the time investment taken in order to receive these
- **The potential to earn money** is seen by some to outweigh the financial investment to achieve success (e.g., greater numbers of followers, subscribers or viewers)

The **live format can make responding to, and limiting risks and harms, more difficult** to manage or monitor



Children in this research spoke to us about **the difficulties they face with responding to and/or monitoring harms whilst livestreaming**:

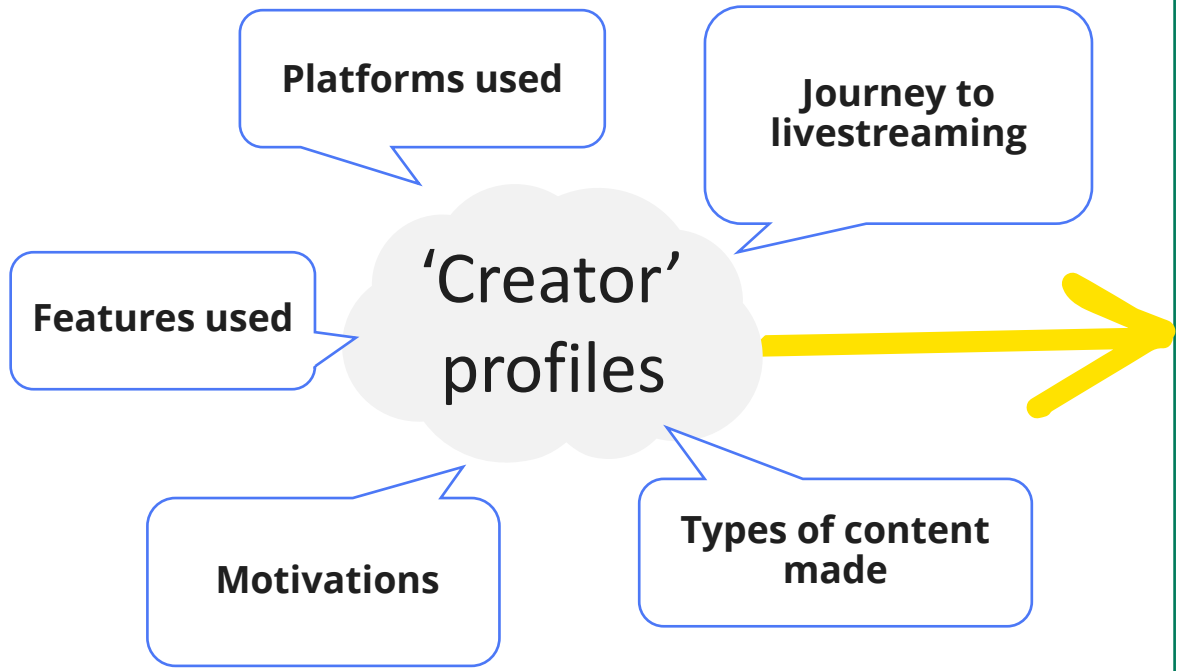
- Firstly, livestreaming **takes a lot of focus**, as they're often multi-tasking.
- Secondly, there is a **pressure that comes with going live to quickly respond to harms** (for example, to quickly delete negative comments and remove the users leaving them, in order to reduce the impact on their viewers and on themselves). However, utilising safeguards can interrupt their interaction with their audience, which may divert their viewers' attention.
- Thirdly, once a livestream ends, any **negative comments are not perceived by 'creators' to be easily traceable**, making it difficult to provide the evidence that might be required to engage with safeguards.
- Lastly, because of the live format, some 'creators' feel that **interacting with any safeguards may impact the entertainment value** of the livestream, as it can break the flow of the content.



Part 2 summary: 'Creator' profiles and pathways



Researchers created four hypothesised 'creator' profiles based on what children we spoke to told us about their experiences of livestreaming, as shown in the diagram below. *These profiles provide a high-level summary of the differences in livestreaming behaviour that children described in the research and are outlined in more detail in part 2 of this report.*



COSY CREATOR

Low-stakes, comfort-first -livestreaming is primarily cathartic and a way to create a calming personal space rather than "performing" for growth.



SOCIAL CREATOR

Friend-led participation - livestreaming is something they do with friends or because of shared boredom and often fades if the social partner drops off.



PASSION-LED CREATOR

Niche-first identity - livestreaming centers on a specific passion or interest, with streaming used to share expertise and build a community around that niche

A taste of success led some 'creators' to take livestreaming more seriously, leading to a fourth pathway



CAREER CREATOR

Explicitly status/earnings oriented — this group approaches livestreaming with clearer goals around career, recognition, and monetary gain.





PART 1:
RESEARCH
FINDINGS

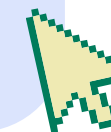
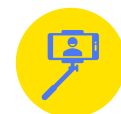
Contextual key findings



Image sourced: Pexels, Tima Miroshnichenko



Overview of platforms used to livestream by children we spoke to



Gaming 'creators' liked the sophistication of Twitch while others liked the simplicity of TikTok and YouTube. Note: our sample was selected to cover a range of platforms so is not necessarily reflective of the platform spread amongst the broader population of livestream creators.

Main platform for 11 'creators'

TikTok

Platform used by: All 'creator' genres, mostly aged 13-17. Mix of highly and casually invested

Livestreaming to: Followers, other TikTok users, friends

What 'creators' liked about it

- No software required and journey to going live feels simple
- Can livestream on-the-go from phone
- Monetisation options inc. scaled LIVE rewards* and TikTok shop

Why it's chosen

- Convenience; first-choice for viewing and making regular, recorded content in addition to live content
- To quickly grow following: due to size of audience, lives appearing directly in user feeds and supported by scaled LIVE rewards
- Extra earning potential from TikTok Shop via Affiliate links or dedicated 'creator' storefront

Main platform for 5 'creators'

Twitch

Platform used by: Gamers, especially highly invested / with longer-term goals. Tended to be 15-17s and skewed towards boys

Livestreaming to: Their own fans, fans of the games they're livestreaming about, sometimes friends/family

What 'creators' liked about it

- A dedicated livestreaming platform designed primarily for live content
- Sophisticated suite of features for interacting with viewers
- Monetisation options through [Affiliate program](#)

Why it's chosen

- To build a highly engaged follower community (Twitch viewers tend to be most invested in individual 'creators' / the format)
- Earning potential associated with highly engaged community

Main platform for 4 'creators'

YouTube

Platform used by: All 'creator' genres, mostly 10-14s
Livestreaming to: Friends, subscribers, other YouTube users

What 'creators' liked about it

- No software required and journey to going live feels simple
- Can livestream on-the-go from phone / tablet
- Seen as a safer space for younger 'creators' vs TikTok

Why it's chosen

- Felt like the obvious choice for younger 'creators' who are more likely to already have an account for viewing content (and making non-live content)
- Some used it to grow existing YouTube channel or presence - to drive viewers to recorded content

Our recruitment scope was not restricted to these platforms; however, we were unable to identify livestream creators in the specified age bracket using other platforms to include in the research. The only exception to this was 2 x 'creators' who had used Facebook as a secondary platform. They liked that it doesn't take a cut of their livestreaming earnings unlike other platforms, and it gave them an extra touchpoint for reaching older fans.

The platforms we explored had a range of minimum age restrictions for going live, which some 'creators' bypassed



Across the 4 main platforms used to create livestreams amongst the children we spoke to, there were different minimum age restrictions, detailed below. The objectives of the research were related to experiences of livestreaming and not how children were able to access livestreaming. However, some children shared information about how they were able to create livestreams despite being younger than the platforms' minimum stated age to use the livestream creation functionality.

Platform	Minimum age to go live <i>As of August, 2025 (start of fieldwork)</i>
TikTok	Minimum 18 years old to go live
Twitch	Minimum 13 years old to go live
YouTube	Minimum 16 years old to go live**
Facebook	None mentioned

Using a **parent account**

Inputting a **false date of birth** when setting up account

'**Guesting**'* on friends' lives (TikTok)

"I've had my [TikTok] lives banned before because of age... I think it blocks you for 3 days and if you do it again it goes up. I actually use my mum's account" - *Girl, 15*

I can't go live on my account because they [TikTok] asked me for my face and they were like oh, you're not 18. So I join my friend's lives. It's just my voice so they can't tell I'm too young" - *Girl, 14*

We also heard instances of children's accounts being blocked due to facial age detection - with some then creating a new account in order to continue streaming

** U16s can livestream on YouTube only if they are participating in an adult's livestream, or if they are livestreaming through their own account with an adult having management control and an adult being physically present in the livestream
Children U16 in our sample who used YouTube to create livestreams did not mention that they needed an adult present during their livestreams.

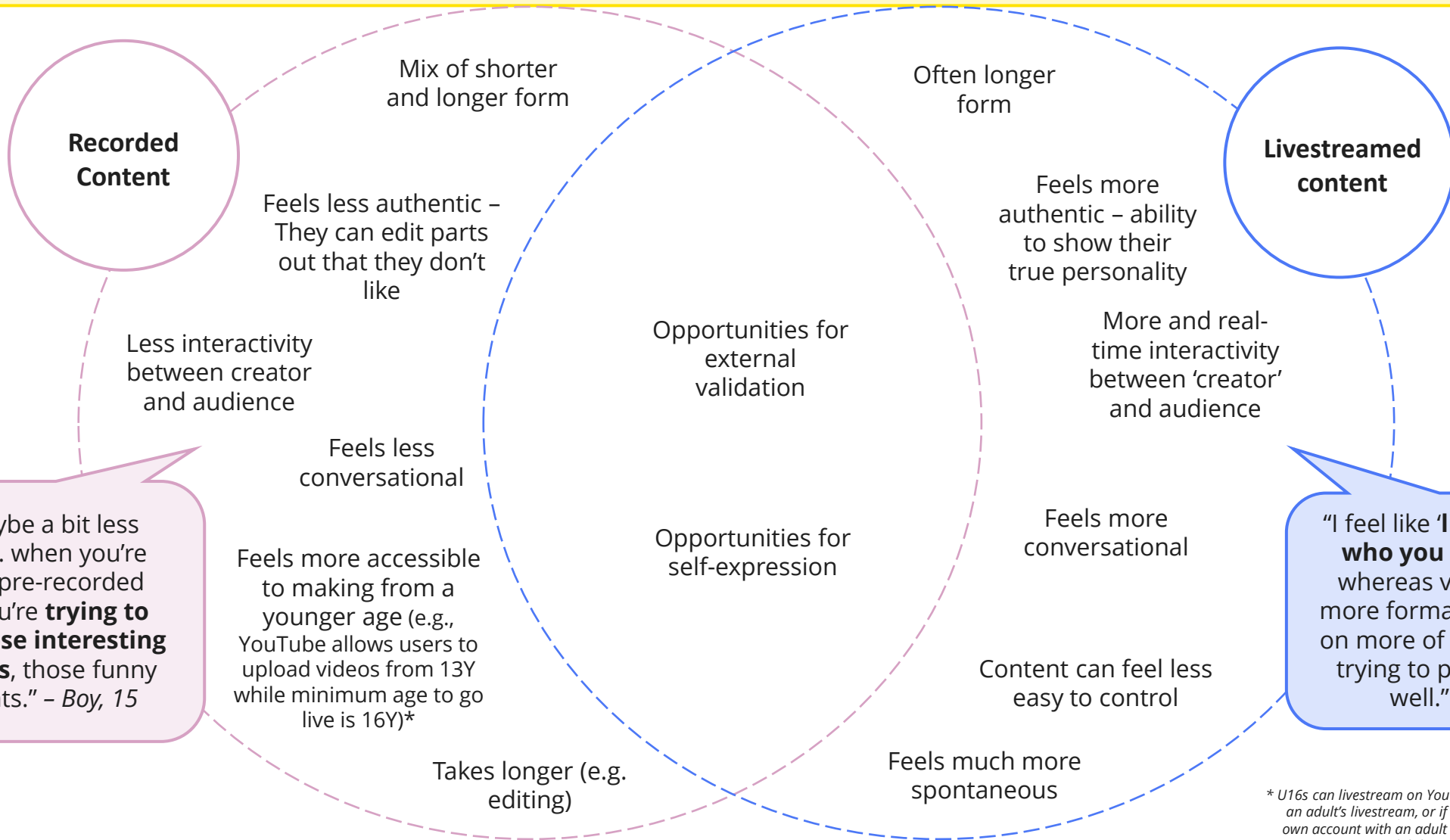
*See 'Glossary' slide in Appendix for definition



'Creators' identified characteristics that set apart making livestreamed content from making recorded content



Children in our research told us about the elements that made making livestreams unique compared to making recorded content, alongside some shared qualities, too



"It's maybe a bit less natural... when you're doing a pre-recorded video you're **trying to make those interesting moments**, those funny moments." – *Boy, 15*

"I feel like **'lives'** are more **who you actually are**, whereas videos are just more formal in a way, I put on more of an act a bit. I'm trying to present myself well." – *Girl, 17*

* U16s can livestream on YouTube only if they are participating in an adult's livestream, or if they are livestreaming through their own account with an adult having management control and an adult being physically present in the livestream





Despite acknowledging its unique qualities, livestreaming was not always 'creators' key format for making content

Children in our research explained how livestreaming fit into their wider content creation world. Some of them talked about livestreaming as *just a part of it*, while others talked about it as *pivotal*

Part of the picture / Casually Invested

For some 'creators', livestreaming is just another way of making content and engaging with their favourite subject matter. It does not have special status above recorded content and they don't strongly identify as livestream creators specifically

Although they still describe the unique benefits offered by the livestream format, these are thought about purely as 'in-the-moment' motivators rather than motivating a big picture livestreaming journey

Associated platforms

TikTok, YouTube

"When I'm outside, I definitely like livestreaming more. **When I'm inside, I think I prefer to just stage them and post short form videos instead of livestreams.**" - Boy, 12

Pivotal to the picture / Highly Invested

For other 'creators', livestreaming occupies a special status, and being a livestream creator is an important part of their identity. They are fans of the livestream format itself (rather than just fans of making content or the subjects they're streaming about)

The benefits of livestreaming don't just spark individual sessions; they motivate their wider livestreaming journey. Therefore, they take an intentional approach, specifically seeking out and planning opportunities to go live

Associated platforms

Twitch, TikTok

"Livestreaming is a big part of my time online. It's a good chance to play any game, I probably do it for **4-5 hours a day.**" - Boy, 15

MORE ON THIS
Certain negative aspects of livestreaming which children identified were more applicable or evident for the highly invested children we spoke to. See slides 48-52 for details



Though some 'creators' dabbled with livestreaming different types of content, they tended to have a go-to category



Researchers organised the children's descriptions of their livestream content into the following broad categories. Some 'creators' focused on a single category and others dabbled across a few, but tended to still have a 'main' category
Researchers observed that livestream content genres tended to be more common amongst particular genders and on certain platforms

Gaming

Associated platforms: Twitch, YouTube, TikTok
'Creator' skew: Boys

Most gaming 'creators' played several different games titles across their streams (though they often had a current favourite). Games mentioned included: FIFA, Rocket League, Roblox, Fortnite, Sekiro: Shadows Die Twice, Elder Ring, The Hunter: Call of the Wild

Passion points

Associated platforms: YouTube and TikTok
'Creator' skew: None

This content often focused on 'creators' talking about and interacting with viewers around niche passion points that they didn't have a large IRL ('in real life') community to talk with. In our sample, this included aeroplanes, music, anime, emergency services and Goth culture

Chit Chat

Associated platforms: TikTok
'Creator' skew: Girls

This type of content tended to be created with friends either physically present, 'guesting' or co-live on their lives, talking together and interacting with viewers commenting in the Chat feature. Sometimes this also involved doing prank calls along with friends

Performing

Associated platforms: TikTok, YouTube
'Creator' skew: None

This ranged from playing instruments, singing and DJing in their bedroom to comedy roasts, reaction videos and challenges
A small number of 'creators' also created livestreams in this category in which they collaborated with brands and/or promoted products e.g., beauty products

Events

Associated platforms: TikTok, YouTube
'Creator' skew: None

Event lives from our 'creators' were often a 'secondary' content type related to passion points e.g., car racing and planes at RAF bases. In contrast, one 'creator' told us about a luxury room tour she livestreamed while on a cruise and another livestreamed themselves doing a charity run

GRWM* (Get Ready With Me)

Associated platforms: TikTok
'Creator' skew: Girls

This content involved putting on make-up, skincare routines and make-up bag clear outs, accompanied by chatter about their day, pop culture or the products they were using

*See 'Glossary' slide in Appendix for definition



Although the entry for many 'creators' is accessible — with some streaming directly from their smartphones — gaming-focused creators often used more fixed, specialist equipment

Among the children we spoke to, a strong contrast was observed between the **complex setups** described by those livestreaming gaming content and the much more **casual setups** of those livestreaming other (non-gaming) content

Gaming 'Creators'
Skew towards more fixed and specialist setups

WHERE: Tend to livestream from their **bedroom** where they have their tech setup, and where they're less likely to be **interrupted**

DEVICES & TECH: Tend to use **at least 2 devices**, i.e., games console and another device or piece of hardware (e.g., mic, webcam (N.B. not all gamers were on camera). Many described a need to **monitor several screens** at once (i.e. gaming screen and streaming screen, especially the chat feature). Several used **software to manage inputs** or provide **extra functionalities**, and **servers e.g., Discord** to create '**private**' spaces within games for themselves, friends and viewers

WHEN: Most created **longer lives (1h+)** so chose moments when they had more **uninterrupted time** to spend – this was often at the **weekend** or in the **evening** after school

Other 'Creators'
Skew towards more flexible and simple setups

WHERE: Some still exclusively livestream from their **bedroom** where they're more likely to be **uninterrupted** and feel **private**. However, some livestream as and when the **mood takes them** or in response to **something happening**, so many livestream in different locations, including **out of home** and in the **company of others**

DEVICES & TECH: Most often as simple as just their **phone** on their **livestreaming app/platform** of choice. The vast majority livestreamed with video (a non-video livestreamer featured as voice on her friend's live)

WHEN: There was greater variation in the length of streams by non-gaming 'Creators', but most often these were **under 1hr** and therefore **easier to fit in** at different points in the day. Though evenings and weekends still featured, we also heard mentions of **school lunchtimes** with friends and in the **morning while they were getting ready** (GRWMs*)

*See 'Glossary' slide in Appendix for definition

An overview of features and functions used by 'creators'



The children we spoke to described a number of different platform features and functions they were aware of and engaged with as livestream 'creators'. This slide presents an overview of these with further detail on how these were used on **slides 26-29**.

Feature / function	Outline of how 'creators' told us they used or engaged with this
Chat	Reading the chat to gauge viewer reactions, interact with viewers and get inspired
Emotes	Akin to emojis. Some are default but certain 'creators' program bespoke codes for their own unique set of emotes – providing viewers with channel-specific ways of communicating with them and other viewers
Channel points & rewards	To reward viewers for time spent watching their livestreams, through exclusive opportunities to influence what they do on their livestream
Polls	Posting polls in the chat to create a more interactive experience for viewers, allowing them to vote on what to do next in their current livestream or subsequent livestreams
Gifts	Once received, gifts are used either to accumulate funds to withdraw as actual money, or to pass on / re-gift to other creators
Subscribing	To monetise livestream creation by charging a monthly fee for exclusive content
Guesting	Joining a friend's live as a 'guest' or allowing a 'guest' on their live by accepting a request from a viewer and then engaging with / gaming alongside them. Unlike a co-live, the guest has fewer controls than the host, and the live is broadcast to the host's audience only
Servers	Used by gaming creators to create a 'private' space within a game where they can play and voice chat with real-life friends while they livestream, or to play alongside viewers (who have access to the server) while they livestream
Co-lives	To go live side-by-side with another 'creator' (typically presented as a split screen). In co-lives, both creators have equal levels of control to one another and broadcast to their audiences concurrently



MORE ON THIS

Certain features were more associated with negative aspects of creating livestreams. See **slides 40-53** for details



Chat was a key element of the livestream experience for some but not all 'creators'



Usage of livestream chat functions among children we spoke to, including how this differed across users and how it influenced livestreaming experiences:

Who used chat functions:

The most widely used function. Quality of the comments varied from one 'creator' to the next. It was (nearly) non-existent with 'creators' who have very few (<5) viewers while those with a dedicated, moderately-sized following (50+ followers) talked about it boosting their experience (see details in blue box below). A few 'creators' mentioned sometimes turning off the chat or not looking at it for the following reasons: when tired and don't have the energy to read it, in response to receiving negative comments, or when people are spamming it

Platforms chat was used on:
Twitch, TikTok, YouTube

Across the sample and across livestreaming moments, we observed a mix of who 'creators' were chatting to. Generally, it was a mix of friends and strangers, but the larger their following the more likely they were to chat to strangers on a regular basis (with no strong link to any particular content genre)

How they engaged with chat:

For the majority, chat is their most used function while livestreaming, used to:

- **Gauge viewer reactions;** i.e., are they enjoying what they're doing, wearing, etc
- **Interact with viewers;** e.g., by answering questions or responding to comments posted in chat
- **Get ideas / help** e.g., for what to do next as part of their live (via viewer suggestions) and for how to tackle something in a game
- **Inspiring future livestreams:** some YouTube 'creators' pin comments from previous livestreams suggesting what they do next

*Some 'creators' used Chat moderators (humans and bots) to help keep their chat a positive space and to prevent spamming, by putting users in timeout or removing them altogether. **See slide 58 for more detail on the use of chat moderators***

*"Sometimes when we're doing prank calls, we'll get the odd person commenting saying 'this is wrong' 'you're wasting your friends' time' 'you're scaring them', **but we just ignore them... they're just boring.**" – Girl, 17*

*"It adds a **level of entertainment**, I can look at my chat and there's people asking me questions and stuff, because **I like questions** and it's always good, if I'm not playing with my friends, I can talk to the chat." – Boy, 15*



Highly invested 'creators' with larger followings also engaged with other features to enhance interaction and a sense of community



Usage by children we spoke to of other more sophisticated interaction features either in addition to the chat, or to enhance possibilities within chat

Emotes

Platforms used on:
Twitch only

Used by:
Only highly invested Twitch Affiliates with larger and more engaged viewership

How they were used:

- Akin to emojis
- Some default options but Twitch Affiliates can **create bespoke emotes** that viewers can use in the chat
- 'Creators' used emotes to provide viewers with an **additional, channel-specific way of communicating** with them and other viewers

"With affiliate, it **unlocks lots of emotes** for your chat, and they can put lots of emojis in your chat."
- Boy, 17

Channel Points & Rewards

Platforms used on:
Twitch only

Used by:
Only highly invested Twitch Affiliates with larger and more engaged viewership

How they were used:

- Twitch **viewers can earn channel points** for time spent watching livestreams of Affiliate 'creators'
- 'Creators' set their own **custom rewards** to spend these points on - typically involving **influencing the livestream** (e.g., making the creator quit the game they're playing and do press ups) or impacting their subscription (e.g., awarding the viewer a free month)

"I have one for **20,000 bits*** which means they would have had to watch **20 streams**, and be a **committed viewer**, once they have that, they can then redeem a free sub for a month." - Boy, 19

Polls

Platforms used on:
Twitch and TikTok

Used by:
Highly invested 'creators', with larger and more engaged viewership

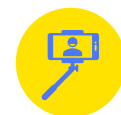
How they were used:

- On TikTok, **Tikfinity*** was used to create a **poll widget**; our Twitch poll users just used the platform itself
 - Used to create a **more interactive experience for viewers**, allowing them to vote on what to do in the current live (e.g., what song to sing next) or subsequent streams (e.g., what game to play)

"Usually in my livestreams... I tend to **create a poll**. Like should I either create racing videos or playing videos or just a different topic." - Boy, 12

*See 'Glossary' slide in Appendix for definition

Some 'creators' used monetisation features to earn from livestreaming; others passed on the livestreaming gifts they had received to support fellow 'creators'



Engagement with gifts and subscribing by children we spoke to, including how this differed across users

Gifts

Platforms used on:
TikTok, Twitch, Facebook

Used by:

Not all 'creators' had received gifts, but there was no clear skew in terms of 'creator' type or demographic. Of those we spoke to who did receive gifts, those who were highly invested 'creators' received gifts of greater monetary value

How they were used:

- There was some disdain over asking for gifts; for example, one respondent referred to creators who did this as 'TikTok Beggars' (i.e. a derogatory term implying that creators who ask for gifts are desperate)
- Only a few 'creators' actively solicited gifts, e.g., by promising something in exchange such as a 'follow'
- 'Creators' rarely received enough in gifts to be worth withdrawing the money (at the time of writing, 1 rose on TikTok was worth 1p); instead they tended to regift to other creators
- Those receiving bigger gifts tended to wait to accumulate before withdrawing (n.b., at the time of writing this report, on TikTok and Twitch you needed a certain amount before you can withdraw)
- Certain platforms take commission from Gifts – see slide 51 for more detail

"They'll send me roses and that's one coin and it gets added to my balance. **You can withdraw it through PayPal but I just send it to other live creators.**" – Girl, 15

Subscribing

Platforms used on:
Twitch, Facebook

Used by:

Those we spoke to who did have subscribers were highly invested 'creators' with engaged viewers

How this was used:

- For 'creators' with more serious livestreaming ambitions, charging a subscription is perceived as a key means of monetising livestream creation
- One 'creator's' subscribers paid £4.99 a month on Twitch; another charged £5 a month on Facebook which allowed access to exclusive live content

"You can pay a subscription to me personally; **you can change how much you charge.** The big streamers have theirs set for £20 a month. **Personally, I've set mine to £4.99 a month.**" – Boy, 19

Subscribers are distinct from regular followers because subscriptions are paid-for and come with exclusive perks; simply following a 'creator' (free) means you're directed to their content on your feed / can receive notifications about new content

Some 'creators' used certain features to livestream and game alongside friends, viewers and/or other 'creators' during their lives



Engagement by children we spoke to of features they used to livestream or game alongside others, including friends, other 'creators' and viewers too

Guesting

Platforms used on:
TikTok

Used by:

No clear skew – not a feature limited to those with larger followings

How this was used:

- **Being a guest on friends' lives:** for one 'creator', being a guest on her friends' lives was her only way to go live (voice only); TikTok had previously detected her age and disabled her from livestreaming
- Those with larger followings could **accept requests from viewers to join their livestream** as a means of having fun with and engaging their viewers, e.g., **chatting with or gaming alongside them**

"People can **request to be a guest**, and they can't turn their camera on like with normal lives, but they can talk to you... **if there's people you really vibe with then it can be fun.**" –Girl, 15

Private Servers (Discord)

Platforms used on:
Twitch

Used by:

Gaming 'creators'

How this was used:

- Private servers were created by some gaming livestreamers as **invite-only spaces** allowing users to **game and chat together**
- Some shared their server with **real-life friends to game together and voice chat** (audible to viewers), for their own and viewers' enjoyment
- Others made their server **accessible to viewers to join during their livestreams** so they could **game alongside** them, boosting sense of community and interactivity

"I'll call my friends over Discord while I'm streaming... it's fun and the viewers can feel more engaged. They're almost observing you have a conversation." –Boy, 15

Co-lives

Platforms used on:
Twitch, TikTok

Used by:

'Creators' with larger followings / status
N.B., Different names across platforms: 'co-live' on TikTok, 'Stream Together' on Twitch

How this was used:

- To go live with another 'creator' (**2 livestreams side by side**); differs from guesting which is a viewer joining a 'creator's' livestream
- Though they weren't used by 'creators' we spoke to, they were aware of competitive features, e.g. 'battles' where co-live 'creators' **compete to get the most gifts**

"I was on a game show, with 2 girl streamers who are popular in the UK and another boy streamer. I got to meet all of them and they got to meet me." – Boy, 17

*See 'Glossary' slide in Appendix for definitions

Prompts and motivations for livestreaming



Image sourced: Pexels, Ivan Samkov

Some 'creators' tended to plan individual livestreaming moments ahead of time, whilst for others, they were sparked into streaming more spontaneously



Children we spoke to described differences in the way that they approach livestreaming, which researchers categorised into spontaneous and planned approaches. Note that due to the small qualitative sample size, some of these approaches were only mentioned by a small number of participants

Spontaneous

Planned

Social

Boredom

Events

Strategic

- Hanging out with friends (physically or digitally)
- Go live to add extra layer of entertainment to what they're doing or about to do (e.g., gaming, prank calling or simply chatting)
- OR go live by jumping on a friend's Live

- Feeling bored with nothing to do or doing something mundane (e.g. cleaning out their make up bag, getting ready) – often on their own in their bedroom (family members elsewhere in the home)
- Go live to inject excitement or feel connected to others / sense of companionship

- Spontaneous events, e.g., being chased by security while on holiday, that feel exciting and share-worthy
- Scheduled events, e.g., a gaming release or attending a concert
- Seasonal occasions, e.g., Halloween, theming the livestream around that occasion

- Schedule a slot when they have ample uninterrupted time and their viewers are likely to be online (e.g., after school, weekend)
- Some then announce when they're going live
- If relevant, agreeing co-live with other livestreamer and/or plan with moderators
- Setting up software (inc. Discord) and/or games to be played



Planned-ahead livestreams tended to have more complex set-ups, but the desire to be uninterrupted was observed across spontaneous and planned moments



Researchers observed similarities and differences in terms of setup needs across different streaming moments, depending on whether it was planned ahead of time or spontaneously sparked:

Spontaneous

Planned

Social

Setup

- Non-gamers via phones on TikTok
- Gamers tend to do this via Twitch on their PC, often involving software and sometimes using Discord

Preferences

- Some 'creators' mention preferring to do this when family aren't around due to feeling embarrassed of family watching or listening in

Boredom

Setup

- Tends to be phone only, low in tech requirements (ring light* at most)
- Most often via TikTok or YouTube

Preferences

- Some mention preferring to stream somewhere private (where family won't hear or walk in)
- Some prefer to use accounts their friends don't know about

Event

Setup

- If spontaneous, tends to be minimal setup and phone only
- Livestreams about gaming-related events e.g., releases typically involve multiple devices / inputs

Preferences

- Gaming event livestreams aside, 'creators' were less likely to want privacy due to public / social nature of event being streamed

Strategic

Setup

- Typically, more complex, involving Twitch, software, servers and multiple screens

Preferences

- Avoiding interruptions, e.g. a family member walking in (especially important if 'creator' has a larger audience as the stakes feel higher)
- Family often aware of the livestream and agree not to make noise / walk in etc.

*See 'Glossary' slide in Appendix for definition



From in-the-moment highs to longer-term feelings of fulfilment, there are many reasons 'creators' keep livestreaming



The children we spoke to told us about their motivations for livestreaming, specifically what makes livestreaming stand out versus making other content. Researchers have grouped these into 4 key areas

Self-expression



"I enjoy putting these looks online as **it sets me apart from different people** and it lets me express myself." – *Girl, 15*

Social Connection & Fun



"I think **Twitch is a good platform for both watching and streaming**. Gaming with friends is great fun and takes your mind off other things like school." – *Boy, 15*

Confidence Boosting & Validation



"You get loads of likes or comments or compliments on something so that can make you feel really good, and **it can be a really big confidence booster**." – *Girl, 17*

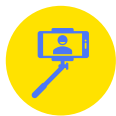
Fame & Fortune



"The meme 'keep moving forward' relates to the **growth when streaming** and that how ever you're feeling, you've got to push through to get to where you want to be!" – *Boy, 17*

For many 'creators', multiple motivations are at play at once





'Creators' spoke about livestreaming as a way of expressing themselves with less pressure than pre-recorded and edited content


SELF-EXPRESSION - Children that we spoke to who expressed their motivations in this way, described this as...

- 'Creators' like being able to freely talk about and engage with things they love (e.g., passion points and hobbies)
- Compared to regular content, 'creators' talked about **not having to worry too much about any consequences** of what they say or do (e.g., being cancelled, subject to negative comments beyond the live moment or their content being taken down) because once the livestream is over, they believe that their trace is gone
- Some also mention that livestreaming removes the temptation or need to spend time editing or re-recording content for fear of being cancelled or self-censoring



SUPPORTING FEATURES & FUNCTIONALITIES
Chat, polls

THIS APPLIES TO...
All 'creators', especially those with a very small following or viewer count

MORE ON THIS 
Some of the children we spoke to do not understand the inherent dangers that come with freely expressing themselves to a public audience (**see slide 43**)

CASE STUDY 1

- **Boy, 12** has a passion for livestreaming planes on YouTube
- He loves being able to share his passion with his followers and likes the 'engagement' (e.g. comments) he gets from them
- *For example*, he visited his local air base and filmed the planes passing by. He loves recording the experience in real time so that his followers can experience it too

CASE STUDY 2

- **Girl, 13** creates singing and makeup content
- She likes the ability to express and share her talents through the content she makes
- *For example*, she sometimes asks her followers for song requests via polls and documents the process of doing special effects makeup through her livestreams, which gives her more room to express herself and share her knowledge

"I can just say what I want to say on live, instead of doing a voiceover and adding text over it and I can explain what I'm doing in real time."
- *Girl, 13*





'Creators' liked that livestreaming gave them the ability to form connections

SOCIAL CONNECTION & FUN - Children that we spoke to who expressed their motivations in this way, described this as...

- Livestreaming with friends can help livestreams feel like a ringfenced space, even when livestreaming to the public as they have the support of friends
- **Either livestreaming with them: to make memories together** and to connect to others outside of their friend group
- **OR friends viewing their livestream: to keep up with them** without physically being present, to **share memories**, to **make a mundane task more interesting**, to **vent and share their problems or to act as moderators**
- Connecting with other viewers through interactive features can also help 'Creators' to: **feel closer to their audience, share, connect and create their own community**



SUPPORTING FEATURES & FUNCTIONALITIES

Chat, emotes, guesting, servers, co-live, polls

THIS APPLIES TO...

All 'creators', except those who actively choose not to use interactive features

MORE ON THIS



Connecting with their viewers can lead to overfamiliarity (**see slide 49**)

CASE STUDY 1

- **Boy, 16** makes gaming content and likes the social element of lives
- He likes being able to connect with his viewers who are also gamers like him
- *For example*, he was struggling on a particularly hard part of a game and asked his viewers for help. They guided him through in the chat and he made it to the next level

CASE STUDY 2

- **Girl, 17**, likes livestreaming when she's on holiday or at events
- *For example*, she once ran away from security on a cruise after missing the curfew and livestreamed it
- She loved sharing this moment in real time with her friends via livestream so that they could experience what she was feeling in real time

"On the cruise, I remember I was live and we were running away from security one time...**It's really cool that my friends get to come in and watch that. I'd miss them being able to experience things like that live with me.**" - Girl, 17





‘Creators’ found that interacting with their viewers in real time gave them a confidence boost and a sense of validation

CONFIDENCE BOOSTING AND VALIDATION – Children that we spoke to, who expressed their motivations in this way, described this as...

- ‘Creators’ **like getting positive feedback, compliments & support (from friends or viewers their own age)**– the fact that it’s live feels even stronger compared to pre-recorded comments or likes that can sometimes be missed
- Getting more followers, subscribers, & viewers shows them that **they’re doing well and that people like their content**
- Influencing/helping others shows that **they’re having an impact on their viewers** and people are listening to what they’re saying
- Receiving gifts is particularly confidence boosting as, **for ‘creators’ with a smaller following, they’re rarer**



SUPPORTING FEATURES & FUNCTIONALITIES
Chat, emotes, polls, gifts, subscribers/followers

THIS APPLIES TO...
All ‘creators’ who interact with viewers

MORE ON THIS
Sometimes this motivation can result in negative feelings if they don’t get the feedback they hope for, and when comments feel inappropriate– **see slide 46**
Some ‘creators’ also describe spending more time livestreaming in order to seek further validation through compliments and gifts – **see following slide.**



CASE STUDY 1

- **Girl, 14** makes ‘GRWM*’ content and shows the products that she uses
- She loves it when people look up to her and likes seeing when she’s inspired others with her content
- *For example*, one of her viewers, bought the product that she recommended on a livestream and that felt very confidence boosting

CASE STUDY 2

- **Boy, 14**, likes making gaming livestreams, particularly Fortnite and Minecraft, and positive interactions with his viewers make him feel like he’s a good ‘creator’
- Gifts feel the most positive as he recognises that they are usually reserved for bigger ‘creators’
- *For example*, lots of people were commenting on his Minecraft building and saying how good of a gamer he is, which made him feel confident in his content

“My followers comment in the chat and say ‘your livestreams are so good, I really like your builds and all that. **It shows that I’m doing a good job and they’re just really supportive.**” – *Boy, 14*

*See ‘Glossary’ slide in Appendix for definition





Spotlight: Compliments, positive interactions and gifts may increase the time 'creators' invest in livestreaming



Some 'creators' described their enjoyment and excitement around receiving compliments and gifts:

Once 'creators' receive **positive comments or have enjoyable interactions** with viewers, the social connection and external validation can lead them to want to **return "again and again"**

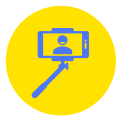
A few 'creators' described how receiving gifts gave them a boost that motivated them to keep **coming back for more - especially if a certain amount was needed** in order to withdraw

"I like the compliments that you can get. I like the positive feedback and stuff. And I like being able to connect with people (...) that encourages you to go back and talk to them again and again."
- *Girl, 15*

"You have to have earned £50 in gifts to withdraw from Twitch... **I'm up to something like £20, £30 pounds... almost there!**" - *Boy, 15*

These discussions demonstrated to researchers the potential for this motivation and the features associated with it to increase frequency of livestreams or time spent livestreaming amongst the 'creators' we spoke to.





'Creators' liked the perception that livestreaming could put them on a path to fame and fortune even if unexpected

FAME & FORTUNE – Children that we spoke to who expressed their motivations in this way, described this as...

- Making content with a view to generating money and becoming recognised **feels very motivating and can lead to them spending more time creating it**
- With fame and fortune as the end goal, **their content is often more planned and thought out**
- The idea that they might make money from something that often started as a hobby **feels very satisfying**
- Because this feels quite unattainable to most, when 'creators' **feel that they've started on this path, it can feel very exciting and make them feel special**



SUPPORTING FEATURES & FUNCTIONALITIES
Chat, gifts, rewards, polls, emotes, subscribing, channel points, gifting, co-lives (and outside of platform software)

THIS SKEWS TOWARDS...
Older boys (although most 'creators' are aware of the potential for fame and fortune, it may not feel attainable) Twitch and TikTok users

MORE ON THIS
To get on this path, 'creators' often have to spend money on equipment and software before they can make money (see slide 52)

CASE STUDY 1

- **Boy, 14**, makes gaming content
- He recently switched from YouTube to TikTok and explained that this is because it's easier to grow your following and get discovered there due to content appearing in people's feeds
- He now averages about 30k viewers vs 4k on YouTube, and has started earning some money from gifts
- Though it's just pocket money amounts at the moment, he can see this growing on TikTok, especially now he's earned his gaming award from the platform in recognition of the time he's spent livestreaming and number of viewers

CASE STUDY 2

- **Boy, 19**, has been making content around his passion points and chit chat on TikTok since lockdown
- Having grown his following, he joined up with a livestream agency within TikTok who offer account protection and content support such as creator collaborations (in exchange for a cut of his earnings)
- Seeing how many gifts he now receives and how much of that goes back to the platform (70%), he's considering shifting over to Facebook where earning potential is much higher (the platform does not take a cut)

"Let's just say I'm wondering about going over to Facebook because **you get paid 8 times the amount you make on TikTok...**" – Boy, 19

No matter what the main motivation is, 'creators' perceive the barrier to entry as lower compared to recorded content



Differences identified by children we spoke to regarding the ease of making livestreams as compared to recorded content:

Livestream content

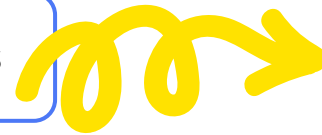
Recorded Content

Less time-consuming to create than regular content – 'creators' do not need to spend time editing



More time is spent by 'creators' editing content once it has been recorded

Some 'creators' found they didn't need to spend as much time preparing due to interaction with viewers guiding what they did and/or talked about



More preparation is felt to be needed by 'creators' to have a vision for each piece of content

Some 'creators' felt there was less pressure / expectation on the content being super entertaining all the way through



Some 'creators' described higher expectations around recorded content needing to be entertaining throughout



MORE ON THIS

See slide 48 for another perspective regarding pressure – with some livestream 'creators' expressing a *greater* pressure to be entertaining

"Livestreams are fun to do, there's less pressure of thinking of something entertaining to do... I couldn't do a regular video of me emptying my bookshelf and talking but I can do that on a live." – *Girl, 14*

"With [recorded content on] YouTube there's a whole production. You have to **record the video, then edit the video, then make thumbnails** for the video. Whereas Twitch streaming is literally you just start it and that's it." – *Boy, 16*

As a result of the above, livestreaming was also perceived by some as lower stakes emotionally, in the sense that if they didn't get many / any viewers, it doesn't matter – because less time has been invested in preparing and editing



Negative experiences & perceived risks

Section note: All participants in this study were recruited as regular, active livestreamers, livestreaming at least once a month. As such, their experiences may not reflect the experiences or behaviours of occasional or former livestreamers. Further, given our sample size of 20, this section does not capture the full extent of actual or perceived risks and harms



Though some of the perceived risks 'creators' told us about related directly to the 'liveness' of the format, others arose as a result of the drive to succeed



Researchers asked children about **negative experiences when livestreaming**, and have **classified the experiences** as fitting within **one of these categories**:



The (perceived) riskier nature of livestreaming

Symbol above denotes findings related to the riskier nature of livestreaming (in contrast to pre-recorded content) for 'creators'

The lack of control over / insight into who is viewing a livestream and their intentions

Concerns about the inability to predict or edit what happens in a livestream

Negative experiences stemming from chat and difficulty moderating these in real time

The element of impulsivity that comes with livestreaming, and experiences of regretting saying or acting in a certain way during a livestream



The cost of the drive to succeed

Symbol above denotes findings related to the cost of the drive to succeed as a livestreamer for 'creators'

The pressure to perform to keep viewers engaged / avoid drop-off*

Not getting their desired audience

The struggle to make money from livestreaming

The expense of buying equipment and software that is felt to be required in order to create higher quality livestreams

**Though some 'creators' saw livestreaming as lower pressure (especially those with smaller followings and those livestreaming primarily as a way of expressing themselves), others felt considerable pressure while live to be entertaining and to keep viewers engaged (especially those with larger followings and those with motivations connected to fame and fortune)*





Negative experiences for 'creators' could arise from uncertainty over who was viewing their livestreams or why they were doing so



Some of the children we spoke to shared concern over **exactly who is joining their livestreams**, e.g., they could be someone who **has unknown nefarious intentions** rather than being interested in their content, or someone who is going to **tease them at school** – but not wanting to kick them out in case they are genuinely interested. Some 'creators' also feel a lack of control over what happens after their livestream ends, e.g., the possibility of having their **livestreams screenshotted or shared to bully them**



Not knowing who's watching

Boy, 16 described feeling uneasy sometimes during livestreams, knowing that unknown viewers – or even classmates – could be silently watching his every move. The fear of being judged or targeted made him feel less positive about livestreaming overall, describing it as sometimes feeling "scary"

"It can be scary sometimes, when there's someone watching your stream and you're just playing and not doing anything... **it's a bit creepy**, why are they watching? Or it might be someone from school who wants to make fun of me." – Boy, 16



Vetting unknown viewers

Girl, 13 has developed her own approach to staying safe during livestreams by vetting viewers she doesn't recognise. She says this quick review helps her feel more confident about interacting with them on her live

"Whenever someone joins my live, **I can click on their profile** and I can have a look at like, the details that they've put on their page already, like photos of them or videos of them or like birthday posts or something." – Girl, 13

- Features & Functions involved
- Chat





Spotlight: Some younger ‘creators’ appeared to be unaware of the perceived risks of anyone being able to access their livestreams, or that viewers may be dishonest about their true identity

For a couple of younger children (one aged 12 and one aged 14), a further perceived risk was observed in connection to the lack of control over viewers. Rather than the nervousness about who may be present on the livestream reported on the previous slide, the perceived risk was in **their lack of awareness of the potential for anybody, including those with negative intent, and those much older than them, to be observing them and interacting with them in potentially dishonest ways** – or simply **trusting that people are who they say they are.**



Not recognising potential risks of who is viewing and interacting

Girl, 14: Since her own TikTok account was blocked from going live after her age was detected by the platform from her videos, she joins her friend's TikTok Lives as a guest. On their Lives, they have chats and interact with friends and TikTok users they don't personally know. **From these unknown individuals she has received requests for her social media accounts on other platforms as well as compliments about her appearance.** Based on their profile information, she judges some of these individuals to be adults and blocks them, but with others **she takes their word and profile information at face value (i.e., if another user says they are a child / their age, this is believed).**

Girl (14): One guy tried to get my Snap and I said no – but I didn't bother blocking him
Researcher: How come that was a no, rather than a block?

Girl (14): Because he's my age

Researcher: How did you know that?

Girl (14): Because he said

Researcher: How much do you think people are who they say they are?

Girl (14): I think they're who they say





Many 'creators' are concerned about the inability to predict or edit what happens in a livestream

We spoke to some 'creators' who described the perceived risk of being unable to predict or edit what happens when making content in real time. Real examples from 'creators' included **embarrassing moments**, such as a parent walking in, or when **personal information is shared accidentally** – like showing a bank card or mentioning a school address – **and, once it's out there, they can't take it back**. Another experience feared by some 'creators' is **accidentally saying something inappropriate** that they cannot edit out, which was identified as an overall downside of livestreaming



Personal address leaked during a livestream

Boy, 15: Whilst livestreaming himself playing Fortnite to approximately 15 viewers, he saw a comment in the chat from a username he did not recognise, sharing his street name. He still felt worried as his personal information had been leaked, but felt slightly better learning it was a friend, and not a stranger

"One time **my mate leaked my address** on my live and I got pretty freaked out because he was using an anonymous username. I was pretty freaked out from that (...) But he messaged me later and said it was him." – Boy, 15



Embarrassing interruption on camera

Girl, 10: She shared that she prefers making recorded videos because they can be edited, unlike livestreams which capture everything in real time. She described an incident whilst on camera during a livestream when her talking cactus toy unexpectedly repeated what she said, leaving her embarrassed in front of her audience.

"What I like about recordings is **you can go back and edit it**, whereas with livestreams you can't... I have this talking cactus and one time I was doing a livestream and it came on and repeated what I said and I felt a bit embarrassed. If I was recording it, I'd have cut it out." – Girl, 10

Features & Functions involved

- Chat
- Guesting

This was a bigger concern for **'creators' with larger followings** who had more at stake due to audience size. However, it was also mentioned by some smaller 'creators'



Spotlight: The unpredictability of going live with guests for 'creators'



Overall, 'creators' viewed having guests on a livestream as a positive experience. However, some noted an element of unpredictability – concerns about what guests might say or how they might behave. Creators described that this sometimes required them to act quickly in response to inappropriate language or behaviour (e.g., swearing or being rude) and remove guests from the live



Guests on TikTok

Girl, 15 regularly livestreams on TikTok, where viewers can request to join her livestream as guests. However, she has experienced situations in which guests behave unpredictably e.g., swearing, resulting in platform warnings being issued to her account. The need to monitor, manage others' behaviour and then act quickly, has made her livestreams more stressful

"Sometimes **you get a warning** on your live because of something somebody said by accident whilst they were like as a guest (...) you have to be quick if you need to kick somebody, then you need to do it fast!"
– *Girl, 15*

This concern was especially strong among **'creators' with larger followings**. With more viewers joining their lives, they felt there was a greater perceived risk if something unpredictable were to happen – not just because more people would see it, but because 'creators' with bigger audiences have more to manage at once



MORE ON THIS
Having guests on a livestream, is different to going "co-live" – please refer back to **slides 25 and 29** for clarification





Many 'creators' have had negative experiences stemming from the chat, and the difficulty moderating these in real time

Many children we spoke to discussed experiences of **reading negative messages in the chat**, and because of the **liveness of the chat, the consequent need to act quickly** in response. These messages came from **viewers, as well as bots**. Examples of negative experiences stemming from reading the chat included seeing inappropriate and offensive comments, expletives, 'trolling', spamming with multiple messages, and unrelated content, **e.g., fake links or scams**. As well as this sometimes causing their own feelings to be hurt, some 'creators' feared that this will create a negative space on their livestreams, dissuading viewers from staying on or tuning into their channel in the future



Racist comments in the chat

Boy, 15, experienced racist comments directed at him in the chat, which made him feel angry and sad. The first time this happened, he showed it to his mum, and she showed him how to report it. For him, this is the most negative experience he has had with livestreaming



Inappropriate commentary

Girl, 14 feels livestreaming exposes her to a higher volume of scam and inappropriate sexual comments, compared with pre-recorded content. During her Lives, she frequently encounters scammers or accounts that appear artificial or AI-generated, which she blocks.

Features & Functions involved

- Chat moderation in the form of people, platforms, or bots

"I've gotten **racist comments** before for no reason... it makes me feel sad and angry. I do usually report these comments, and they do get banned." - *Boy, 15*

"I've had someone called Walter who asked if they can be my **sugar daddy**... I'm like, 14 years old! I just block them and laugh at it on the group chat with my friends. It happens more with Lives than other content I post." - *Girl, 14*

Researchers observed a **gender** nuance in the finding around inappropriate sexual comments in the chat in that only girls describe having experienced this (i.e. viewers asking to be sugar daddy or compliments based on appearance leading to requests to be added as a friend on other platforms)

+ **MORE ON THIS**
Please see **slide 60** for detail on the challenge of responding to harms being harder in the live context due to the nature of 'creators' multitasking whilst live





Some 'creators' described experiences of acting impulsively on a livestream, some of which led to feelings of regret



What children describe as the **real-time, high-pressure nature of being live**, makes them sometimes overshare or react without thinking. Some of the children we spoke to described moments of acting impulsively during livestreams, which sometimes led to feelings of regret later on. This includes **saying things they know will grab attention to boost / maintain viewers (e.g., diss track*)** but that they later regret, and some 'creators' also spoke about **discussing their friends on a livestream and later regretting it** in case they were to see the content



Making a 'diss track'

Boy, 17 invited another creator to join his live and felt upset and angry at some of the negative comments that person made. Following this, on his next livestream, he shared a 'diss track' about this creator. Reflecting on it afterwards, he regretted doing that



Responding to comments in real time

Boy, 16 is actively exploring ways to make his content more engaging, including responding to comments in real time. While he sees being responsive as key to building a stronger connection with his audience, he says that it also increases the likelihood of saying or revealing something unintended



Features & Functions involved

- Guesting**
- Streaming together / co-live**
- Chat

"I made like a **diss track** on someone. I did it for the fun of it, but it kind of made a situation and it was the most pointless thing of all time. And I like if I just didn't make that, I wouldn't get into like the situation I got into (...) **it was one of the biggest things I regret on livestreaming** because I gave that negative person light, I should have just not talked about it." – Boy, 17

"I want to be more interactive so that it's like actually interesting (...) I'm talking to other people, but **I also want to try and interact with the chat more**, but I need to be careful, so I don't leak any of my personal information." – Boy, 16

This factor was a bigger concern for **'creators' with larger followings** – there was deemed to be more at stake for them, with bigger audiences

***Diss track:** a short-form musical or audio post / content designed to publicly call out, mock, or challenge a person or group using lyrics, tone, and cultural references.

**See 'Glossary' slide in Appendix for definitions and the difference between Guesting and Co-Lives





Some 'creators' describe how the pressure to "perform" during livestreams contributed to negative or uncomfortable experiences

Some children we spoke to have felt compelled to meet audience demands in real time, including **fulfilling viewer requests or challenges**. Some also felt **pressure to be constantly energetic, interesting or generally positive to their viewers which they wanted to do, to keep up their viewer count**. Many also noted that livestreams can feel dull without a "hook," creating **pressure to deliver shock-value content** or lean into rage-bait tactics just to keep viewers engaged



Pressure to be positive

Boy, 17 is known for being generally positive and feels like he has to keep up this positivity. For a further incentive for his viewers to join, he sometimes sets himself challenges. For example, in one of his livestreams, he set a challenge that if someone joins with 1,500 channel points, he has to do 5 push-ups

"There are times where people can come into your stream and say, '**you aren't as energetic as I thought you'd be**' and things like that, and I just never take those things personally, I just keep on going." – Boy, 17



Creator burnout

Boy, 15 describes feeling as though his livestreams are a performance in which he is constantly under pressure to entertain – as a result he cannot fully relax or express his authentic self. For him this has led to burnout, and he is currently taking a break from livestreaming, as he explains it feels draining

"**It's very much like a performance.** I'm some kind of monkey or something that people watch in a zoo... You can't fully chill in the sense that they need to be entertained." – Boy, 15

Features & Functions involved

- Chat
- Poll
- Channel points

Though this was felt by some 'creators' with small numbers of viewers (e.g., 5 or fewer), it was a more significant concern for **'creators' with larger followings** – there was deemed to be more at stake for them, with bigger audiences and higher expectations (especially if audience participation fuels the entertainment!)

Spotlight: Feeling too accessible and responsible for viewers



Pressure to comfort and provide advice to viewers

Boy, 19 saw that as he gained more followers, some of his viewers started to become more comfortable divulging personal information and seeking his advice/help for mental health concerns. He found this difficult to deal with, and although he wanted to help, he didn't know how to. Due to this, he has now restricted his private messages to requests only and has also created a list of rules that aim to keep his Discord channel a personal space. However, he finds this hard to implement and hasn't reported this to anyone so far

"It's usually when a viewer gets too comfortable and view you as a friend, someone to talk to, almost someone to look up to. **You can get messages sometimes that say 'I'm struggling or I need help' mostly mental stuff**, especially in this community there are a lot of mental aspects of it especially if you shut yourself in your room and play games all day, that isn't going to be the best for your head. **Whilst it's nice to help, it isn't the best to hear.**" - Boy, 19

V-tubing* as a tool to maintain boundaries with viewers

For 'creators' it can be hard to always maintain boundaries with their audiences. Researchers spoke to a V-tuber who feels their avatar, used when livestreaming, creates built-in distance from viewers. Speaking to viewers from a distance in this way was felt to reduce the sense of personal connection, helping keep parasocial* expectations in check, protecting both sides

"There's a level of parasocialness*, if that's the word, with when people see you as a real person because there's a sense of dependency fans can have on you."
- Girl, 16

Vtuber/ing: A creator who livestreams using a virtual avatar - often animated with motion-capture technology - rather than their real-world appearance.

*See 'Glossary' slide in Appendix for definition





For some 'creators', not getting their desired audience can also make a livestream feel like a waste of time, and a more negative experience

Many of the children we spoke to feel discouraged when their livestreams **attract fewer viewers than hoped**, leaving them questioning whether their time and effort were worthwhile. While some see **low viewership** (e.g. under 20 viewers on a livestream) **as a chance to practice or experiment freely**, others view it as demotivating or disheartening. Viewer engagement also varies by platform, with Twitch more likely to draw committed, intentional audiences compared to TikTok, where viewers often drop in and out while scrolling



Time feeling wasted on Twitch

Boy, 15 describes the frustration of livestreaming for 45 minutes or more and not gaining followers or attracting many viewers which is frustrating. He contrasts this with livestreams where more people are watching and engaging, which he finds more rewarding and productive

"You could stream for like 2 hours and like not get like any followers or not get many views. And it's like that's quite tough because you got to just keep going (...) it feels more of like a waste of time kind of thing (...) Whereas when you've got like more people watching and a bit more engaged, that feels a bit more productive." - Boy, 15



Low viewership on TikTok

Boy, 16 finds livestreaming on TikTok sometimes discouraging because the app makes it easy to see when no one is watching. He also dislikes that TikTok connects livestreams to a phone number, making his activity more visible to classmates, who can see when he goes live, and when he does not get a big audience, which they mock him for

"With TikTok, you can tell how many people are watching you and you can see how many likes you have (...) my friends from school could comment on it or people I don't like from school could like bully me." - Boy, 16

Features & Functions involved

- Chat
- Viewer count displays
- Livestream analytics
- Notifications

Sample Skew:

This factor was a bigger concern for Career Creators - for whom bigger audiences are in part a measure of their success. Given this creator profile often makes content on Twitch - researchers heard this concern on this platform the most





'Creators' who earn money from livestreaming discuss the struggles that come with making profit when platforms take a percentage of their earnings



'Creators' told us about how some livestream platforms **take what they consider to be a significant percentage of creators' earnings**. While this matters less for smaller 'creators', career-focused 'creators' feel the pressure to work harder to make a profit on the platform. Especially because as the children we spoke to explain, **you can only withdraw money from TikTok and Twitch once you have hit a certain amount of in-platform earnings**



Platform and agency profits taken from high earnings

Boy, 19 reported how little he earns even from larger livestreams, including those where he receives considerable amounts through gifts, due to the cut taken by TikTok and his TikTok-affiliated agency that represents him on the platform. He explained how deflating this can be for him

"I had about, I think it was 40K in gifts on that one livestream. Yeah, which is about £200. But the problem is TikTok take about 70% of that (...) and then my TikTok agency takes about 10% as well, so I am not left with much." - Boy, 19



Re-investing low earnings into platform

Boy, 15 explained his frustration around TikTok taking a percentage of his earnings, contributing to his decision to take a break from livestreaming - especially as he cannot withdraw any money - but has to convert it into TikTok currency to re-invest in the platform

"I think they take like 40% or something mad like that (...) If someone gave me 10 roses, I'd make maybe 4 or 6 pence, which is like 50% of how much I got (...) that's kind of another reason I stopped (livestreaming) as well, because I just get annoyed, they've taken most of my money again." - Boy, 15



Features & Functions involved

- Gifts
- Platform currency
- Donation features

Creator Profile Skew:
This factor applies to 'career creators', or 'creators' who are on the path to making more money from livestreaming





Smartphone technology can enable livestreaming, however, some 'creators' feel they need to buy expensive equipment and software to create higher quality livestreams



'Creators' consistently highlighted **the financial pressures tied to the drive to succeed** in livestreaming. Many felt that becoming a professional creator required investing in **expensive equipment (webcams, lights, microphones), software, and strong internet** to match the quality they see from established livestreamers.



Upgrading livestream set-up

Boy, 15 initially livestreamed from a minimal PS5 setup on Twitch but, without a camera or interactive tools, he felt his early lives were limited. After upgrading his equipment, he gained the ability to multitask, engage more dynamically with viewers, and create a more interactive streaming experience

"Since I was doing it on my PS5, I had to buy a £50 part as well, which is so expensive... I have to wire it from my PS5 to my laptop to kind of connect it to the studio [on Twitch] (...) My old set-up was literally just me sat down without any kind of camera, just like playing on my controller, my new setup is better because I could do more things at once and be more kind of interactive and stuff." - Boy, 15



Lacking equipment holding back 'career creator status'

Boy, 14 explains that reaching a professional level is expensive, due to the need for webcams, mics and software. He notes that clear audio, smooth livestreaming, and polished visuals all depend on gear that many young creators like him can't easily afford

"[You need to spend] A lot of money on products, I think people want to see a clear stream and clear camera. It'll just take a lot of money, I want good Internet also to go on these streams, (and) if you aren't playing good then people aren't really going to comment on your stuff." - Boy, 14

Features/ Functionalities involved

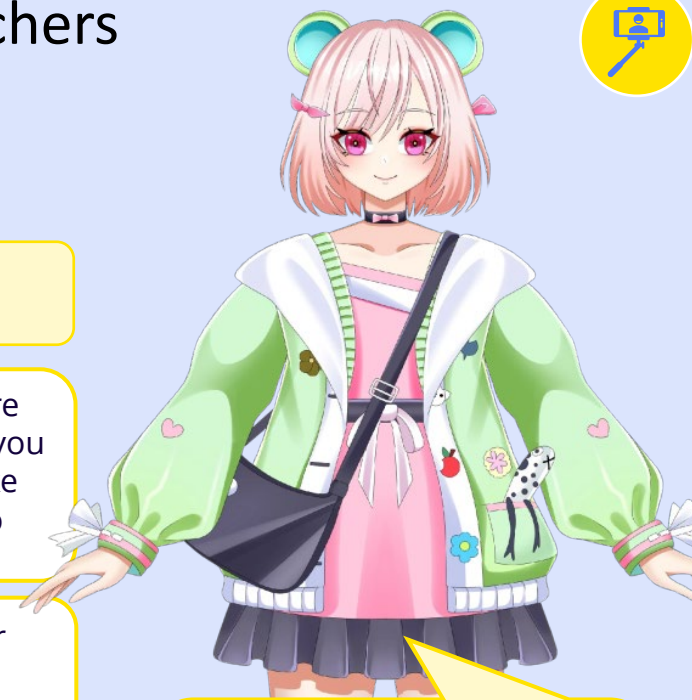
- Accompanying software: OBS, Stream labs, Tikfinity

Sample Skew:

This factor applies more to less affluent 'creators' who do not have access to some of the software or tools they desire to make more professional content



Spotlight: There are perceived risks and negative experiences researchers identified as unique to VTubing in this study



In this research, we spoke with a VTuber who highlighted several specific perceived risks associated with livestreaming in this format. These included:

The Vtuber we spoke to described how VTubing* content was associated with “adult content” amongst the Vtubing community – leading viewers to assume the ‘creator’ behind the avatar is older than they are. As a result, the ‘creator’ might be treated as though they were an adult vs a child (e.g., asking to them drink alcohol whilst on a live)

“VTubing is very highly sold on more adult content (...) so they will talk to you as if you're older and everything like that (...) people trying to get you to drink (on a livestream).” – Girl, 16

Avatars can be taken by viewers or other ‘creators’ to be used in other content – the VTuber we spoke to provided an example of when her avatar has been re-used to feature in inappropriate (sexual) content, which made her feel uncomfortable

“People will create content of your avatar in those compromising situations out of your assumptions (of being older).” – Girl, 16

In addition, the Vtuber we spoke to felt that, as a girl Vtuber, she was **more likely to receive predatory comments** or interactions from viewers

“Most of being online, especially as a female creator and even more so being a female VTuber, there’s a lot of predatory/super uncool behaviour.” – Girl, 16

“The part I play online is an anime princess with a goose sidekick!” – Girl, 15

Image sourced: AI Influencer Company

Ofcom's Children's Online Insight Panel Spotlight
Our **11-year-old boy panellist** has taken to VTubing live via his Twitch account. He then uploads clips to his TikTok account (pre-recorded). He enjoys the creative process and feels much safer posting behind a different persona, however he has been asked questions about his real identity including – name, age and where he was born which he just ignores

***Vtuber:** a creator who livestreams using a virtual avatar—often animated with motion-capture technology—rather than their real-world appearance



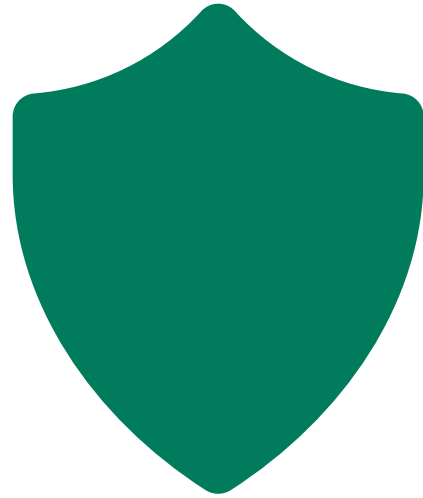
Vtubers were not specifically screened for in recruitment, which is why only one was included in the sample.

Safeguards and Self-Regulation in Livestreaming

Section note: All participants in this study were recruited to be regular, active livestreamers, livestreaming at least once a month. As such, their experiences may not reflect the experiences or behaviours of occasional or former livestreamers



Regarding safeguarding and self-regulation, researchers classified the measures children spoke about as either protective or reactive



PROTECTIVE BEHAVIOUR

Deliberate action or behaviour taken by the 'creator' (and/ or parent) to prevent or lower perceived risks or harm **before** they occur



REACTIVE BEHAVIOUR

Action or behaviour that occurs as an immediate response to a perceived risk or harm experienced in the moment or **after** livestreaming

Symbols above denote findings related to the type of behaviours described in this section of the report





When it comes to the perceived risks of livestreaming, there are ways 'creators' work to protect themselves

Self-regulation

Showing voice only on livestreams, no video or face featured / using an avatar to hide face

Not using or looking at certain features (e.g. Chat) to avoid seeing negativity

Applying filters to certain words to blur or block them from appearing in the chat

Setting rules and restrictions around how often they livestream and how long for

Rules around what they can't do whilst livestreaming (e.g., swearing), and setting clear rules for viewers too

"The creator of the live can filter words. So, if a word is present in like a comment, then it doesn't show (...) people like making fun of the style and stuff, it's just restricting stuff like that, (and) explicit language stuff."
- Girl, 15

Monitoring and safeguarding

Parents being in earshot / in the room next door or sitting in on a livestream to observe

Parents linking account to child's 'creator' profile or channel

Having trusted moderators (e.g., friends, a viewer, or parent), scripted auto-mod*) on the livestream

Rotating reminders (Twitch) - asking viewers to check rules on livestreamers profile

Checking viewers' profiles when they join a livestream to vet them

"I have got one of my friends to be like a moderator. You can join the livestream and then if anyone leaves like such hate comments, he can instantly remove them without me even doing anything."
- Boy, 12

*See 'Glossary' slide in Appendix for definition

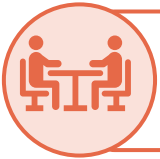




There are different ways 'creators' in this research told us they respond to negative experiences and perceived risks/harms



These are examples provided by some of the children we spoke to of how they reacted to negative experiences from livestreaming:



Speaking to/ confiding in trusted sources e.g., parents, teachers and friends

"I'd sent it (*message from a viewer asking if they could be her sugar daddy*) on the group chat (..) and told my mum. She just thought it was a little bit stupid like me, and she just said make sure I block them."
- Girl, 15



Reporting negative comments in the chat, in-platform

"If they do it [*comment negatively*] constantly then I will either mute them from the chat for a while or report them sometimes." - Boy, 12



Blocking certain viewers or bots if they are spamming them to avoid disruption and harms to further livestreams

"(friends) tend to ban the bots. I can do it myself, but if I'm like playing games, it's easy just to ask my friend to do it for me." - Boy, 15



Taking a break from Livestreaming short term

"It's so draining (...) I uploaded a video onto my page saying I'm sorry for stopping the lives, guys. And I've just got, like, other things on in my life."
- Boy, 15

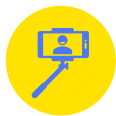


Ignoring the negativity

"I've had no emotion to anything, basically (...) I just ignore it [*negative comments*] and block it out." - Boy, 19

For most 'creators' in the sample, the benefits of livestreaming outweigh the perceived risks or harms, which means 'creators' continue to livestream. Many of the negative experiences they respond to are perceived as short-term by 'creators' and are seen as an accepted part of the livestreaming landscape





Spotlight on moderation: 'Creators' utilise moderators in different forms, to protect themselves and viewers from perceived risks or negative experiences

Some 'creators' used chat moderators to help maintain a positive livestreaming space for them, and their viewers. For example, by preventing spamming, by putting users in timeout or removing them altogether. Children we spoke to described moderators as either taking the form of real people, or automatic bots within platform

Human Moderators



- Some 'creators' use friends, family members, or viewers/ followers of theirs who have volunteered to moderate the chat during a livestream
- This role of moderator is enabled by the 'creator' giving them access in user settings
- Children we spoke to prefer to use moderators in this way, so they do not have to moderate themselves - it allows them to focus on their livestreaming
- Not platform-specific

"That's why you can have moderators in a live. So, they have like nearly all the abilities you have. Like they can kick people [out], they can add people (...) sometimes they volunteer. It's basically you can go on their profile (of chosen moderators), and you can go in settings, and you can change their settings for your lives. You can make them a full-time moderator, or like less. They can filter words, they can kick people [out], they can mute people..." - Girl, 15

Bot/Automated Moderators



- Children we spoke to used this type of moderation on Twitch and TikTok
- As with human moderators, having bots/automated moderators, is described by 'creators' as a supportive feature that allows them to focus on livestreaming
- Though bots can help by responding to usage of 'banned' words, a few 'creators' acknowledged bots' lack of ability to understand context and provided examples where they had unfairly removed viewers
- One 'creator' had programmed a script for her bot moderator to override the default platform setting and improve its effectiveness

"I'd like to have, you can get these bots that come onto your channel and then they can basically moderate for you and then remove anyone who looks like spam or anything that looks bad." - Boy, 12

'Creators' with larger followings were more likely to use a form of moderation, since managing high volumes of comments and interactions becomes difficult without additional support



However, reliance on patronage and a sense of uncertainty means certain 'creators' do not always engage with safeguards



Some 'creators' who had encountered negative experiences described instances of not engaging with safeguards (including platform-based safeguards such as reporting or blocking another viewer, or human safeguards like confiding in a parent or trusted adult – see **slide 56** for full list of safeguards encountered in this research). Their explanations as to why were classified into the following categories by researchers:

I do not want to:

To avoid losing followers or viewers e.g., by removing or reporting them

Divert viewers' attention or disrupt focus during a livestream

Example: Choosing not to report comments to the platform due to not wanting him to get banned or lose him as a follower

Boy, 14 noticed that a viewer was sending inappropriate, racist messages (targeted at him) in the chat of their livestream on YouTube. He blocked the user from his channel but chose not to report these comments because he feared it might remove the viewer's access to the platform and he didn't want that to happen to him

"I think I didn't want to report him because I thought about him being banned. I didn't really want to report him to YouTube." – Boy, 14

I feel uncertain due to:

A lack of knowledge or understanding around safeguards

A belief that safeguarding measures will not have a big impact

Example: Feeling uncertain about where to go for support, in relation to confiding in a trusted adult

Boy, 16 has experienced both online and in-person bullying from classmates who watch his livestreams, mock him for them, and leak his channel. He feels unsure where to turn for help, especially as teachers struggle to understand the situation and offer meaningful support. Because the bullying happens in real time, he also finds it difficult to prove what occurred, leaving him feeling unprotected and isolated

"I've experienced it where people from school have made fun. I reported it to my teachers and they tried to get involved, but there's just not much you can do to prove it." – Boy, 16



The choice not to use safeguards, or for avoiding measures to take action, become heightened in a live format compared with recorded content



Researchers identified ways in which the barriers to engaging with safeguarding measures were specific to the live format:

It is **harder for 'creators' to utilise safeguards when they are focused on making content in the moment** or for example if they are focused on interacting with their audience

Once a livestream ends, **negative comments for example, are not traceable**, making it hard for 'creators' to draw evidence to take action afterwards

The live format also means breaking flow or stopping to engage with safeguards, will impact the entertainment value of the livestream and could cause viewers to leave their livestreams

There is **time pressure with being live, there is a need to be more responsive to perceived risks and harms** – adding a layer of stress to engaging with safeguards whilst live

"I never really outwardly address it unless it's making the community uncomfortable (...) It's a lot less stressful when you don't have the camera and the audience on you at the (same) time [*when it's negativity on pre-recorded content*]!" –Girl, 15





PART 2:
'CREATOR'
PROFILES AND
PATHWAYS



Though no two 'creators' were the same, some were united by similar sets of motivations, behaviours and future goals



The children we spoke to told us about their experiences of livestreaming. Taking into account a combination of:

**Journey to
livestreaming**

Motivations

**Types of content
made**

Platforms used

Features used

Researchers created four hypothesised 'creator' profiles



**COSY
CREATOR**



**SOCIAL
CREATOR**



**PASSION-LED
CREATOR**



A taste of success led some 'creators' to take livestreaming more seriously, leading to a fourth pathway



**CAREER
CREATOR**



PATHWAY 1: THE COSY CREATOR



'The Cosy Creator' is a hypothesised profile for 'creators' that we spoke to for whom their 'creator' pathways and practices feel very low-stakes

Demographic Skew: This 'creator' pathway usually skews younger (13 and under) girls

Journey to Livestreaming

- **STAGE ONE:** They see other livestream creators sharing their passions in a calming way
- **STAGE TWO:** They feel inspired to try it themselves
- **STAGE THREE:** They find the experience cathartic and create a comforting space for themselves

Livestreaming Motivations

For 'Cosy Creators', livestreaming gives them an outlet to be themselves; it feels cathartic; they're able to express their passion or even vent their problems in a comfortable environment



Typical Content Type GRWM, Gaming, Chit Chat, Performing

Future Vision

For 'Cosy Creators', they are less concerned with where livestreaming may take them in the future. Rather than the quality of their viewers, they enjoy social connection and continuing to create a comfortable space for them to share their passion

Platforms TikTok, YouTube

Features and Functionalities Chat, gifts, polls. Overall, this 'Creator' pathway has less engagement with features/functionalities

Representative of this 'creator' pathway as a whole



'CREATOR' CASE STUDY

- **They started livestreaming because:** She has a passion for special effects makeup and performing. She loves when people leave positive comments in the chat on her livestreams and although sometimes, she doesn't get any viewers, she still continues making content
- **Their current content is:** a mixture of makeup tutorials, singing and occasionally random content (e.g., dancing with her teddies)
- **Their future livestreaming ambitions:** Continue to keep her livestreaming space positive and free from bullying
- **Their features/functionalities engaged with:** Chat, Gifts

"What made me really happy is that I met someone through online stuff, and **we're both interested in the same things**, we both do singing and musical theatre. We just started being friends, and I joined her live and **just started talking to her for a long time.**" – Girl, 13

This case study is of an individual 'creator' used as an example to show how this pathway manifests in the 'creators' we spoke to



PATHWAY 2: THE SOCIAL CREATOR



'The Social Creator' is a hypothesised profile for 'creators' that we spoke to for whom their 'creator' pathways and practices revolve around social interaction

Journey to Livestreaming

- **STAGE ONE:** They are either with their friends or speaking to them on another platform
- **STAGE TWO:** They or their friend suggests going live usually due to boredom
- **STAGE THREE:** They continue this as a shared hobby

Livestreaming Motivations



confidence
boosting



social
connection & fun

livestreaming is a shared activity that they wouldn't usually do on their own. They like connecting with people that they know, not necessarily their viewers, although viewers can help to shape their content

Typical Content Type

Chit Chat (including prank calls), GRWM, Gaming

Future Vision

They aren't concerned with the number of followers, dependent solely on connection with a friend or fellow streamer. If / when the other person isn't interested in livestreaming anymore, the social 'creator's' interest tails off

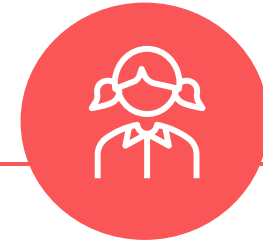
Platforms

TikTok, YouTube

Features and Functionalities

Chat, Guesting, Polls, Gifts

Representative of this 'creator' pathway as a whole



'CREATOR' CASE STUDY

- **They started livestreaming because:** She was bored with friends and wanted something to do
- **Their current content is:** Prank calling with her friends, where they ask people to give them ideas in the comments or get ready with me content when they're going to parties or doing their makeup
- **Their future livestreaming ambitions:** Continue to make fun memories with her friends
- **Their features/functionality engaged with:** Chat function and sometimes gifts (but very rarely)

"Well, sometimes me and my friends like to do prank calls and we go onto no caller ID and we call people, which is normally really funny." – Girl, 17

This case study is of an individual 'creator' used as an example to show how this pathway manifests in the 'creators' we spoke to

PATHWAY 3: THE PASSION-LED CREATOR



'The Passion-Led Creator' is a hypothesised profile for 'creators' for whom their 'creator' pathways and practices feel tied to a particular passion or niche

Journey to Livestreaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STAGE ONE: They develop a passion or niche interest • STAGE TWO: They feel inspired to share their interest and expertise • STAGE THREE: They enjoy honing their skills and sharing their interest with others
Streaming Motivations	Streaming gives them an outlet to explore and share their passion; they enjoy sharing their expertise and making a forum for others to do the same
Typical Content Type	Chit Chat, Gaming, Passion Points, GRWMs, Performing, Events
Future Vision	They are less concerned with growing a following for money or fame, but rather for feeling like they're doing 'good' or sharing their niche with a wider audience. They want to continue to share and grow their knowledge
Platforms	TikTok, YouTube, Twitch, Facebook
Features and Functionalities	Chat, Polls, Gifts, Chat, Co-Lives

Representative of this 'creator' pathway as a whole



'CREATOR' CASE STUDY

- **They started livestreaming because:** Lots of her friends were experimenting with livestreaming, which made her want to do it too. She also thought it could be a good way to meet new people
- **Their current content is:** Gothic makeup, and 'GRWM content', as well as talking and Q&A's about her unique style, and music related content
- **Their future livestreaming ambitions:** To spread her passion, and awareness of gothic style – and also to continue meeting new people, and, getting positive feedback and compliments
- **Their features/functionality engaged with:** Chat, Guests, Polls, Gifts and Rewards

"I like exploring and sharing my gothic style and meeting people with the same interest. The outfits, and the makeup, a bit of music too!" – Girl, 15

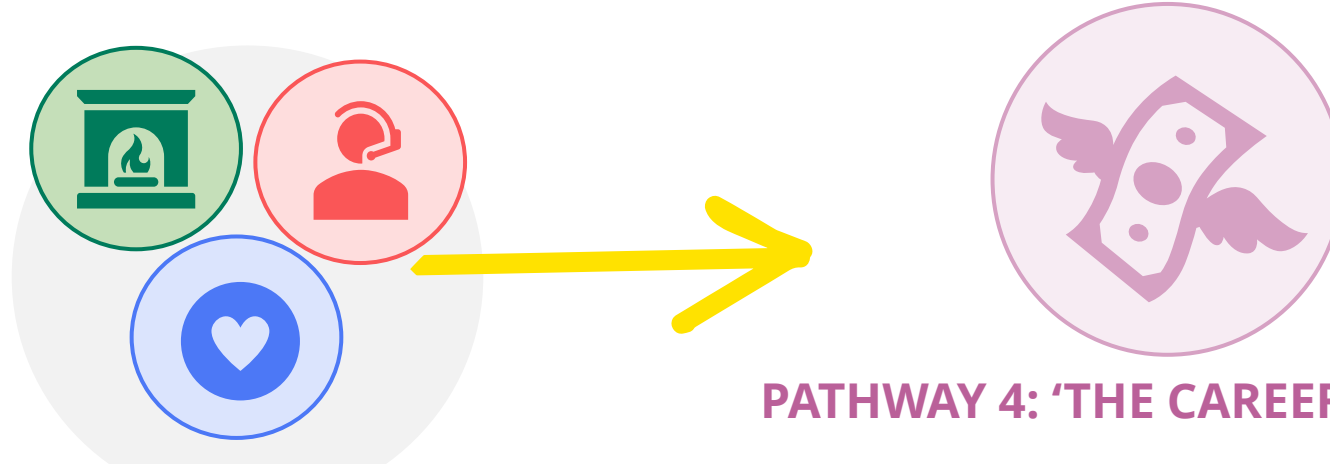
This case study is of an individual 'creator' used as an example to show how this pathway manifests in the 'creators' we spoke to



'Creators' often start out livestreaming as a low-stakes hobby; but a taste of success can lead them to take it more seriously



Many of the children who we spoke to (especially younger) told us fame and fortune aren't their primary goal for making livestreams. However, with increased potential to make money and gain a larger following, some 'creators' switch to a career-focused pathway



PATHWAY 4: 'THE CAREER CREATOR'

They're there to grow a fan base, sharing their skills and passions just for the fun of it

There's also an awareness that **livestreaming is oversaturated** – getting to the next level of making money feels unobtainable to many, which can feel de-motivating

However, a subgroup of the children and young people we spoke to had expanded their livestream creation focus to explicitly grow their following and earn money; this could be for a range of different reasons:

- Often, 'creators' have watched livestreams themselves and are inspired by bigger creators / people they admire
- They start making money/getting more views and therefore, start to view livestreaming as a viable career path







PATHWAY 4: THE CAREER CREATOR



'The Career Creator' is a hypothesised profile for 'creators' who are streaming in pursuit of a career, status or monetary gain

Demographic Skew: This 'creator' pathway skews affluent older boys

Journey to becoming a Career Creator	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• STAGE ONE: They already make pre-recorded content or are livestreaming for fun• STAGE TWO: They start to gain more followers and consider taking livestreaming more seriously• STAGE THREE: They earn money from livestreaming and see it as a viable career
Livestreaming Motivations	They have a passion for livestreaming but are also driven by increased viewership, opportunities and earnings that it brings
 Fame & fortune	
 confidence boosting & validation	
 social connection & fun	
 self-expression	
Typical Content Type	Chit Chat, Gaming, Events, Performing (including collaborating with companies and promoting products)
Future Vision	They are very inspired by bigger creators and see themselves one day having lots of followers and turning livestreaming into their full-time career
Platforms	TikTok, Twitch, YouTube, Facebook (some using multiple platforms as well as their main platform)
Features and Functionalities	Chat, Gifts, Rewards, Polls, Emotes, Subscribers, Channel points, Software e.g. text-to-speech, co-lives

'CREATOR' CASE STUDY

- **They started livestreaming because:** It gave him a break from revision; however, he noticed that he enjoyed it more than his usual content and he could make money by becoming an affiliate. He was eventually recognised by a bigger creator through a 'Raid*' which boosted his following and earning
- **Their current content is:** Gaming (particularly FIFA because that's trending and gets him more views)
- **Their future livestreaming ambitions:** To make more money on Twitch and eventually livestream fulltime
- **Their features/functionality engaged with:** Chat, Subs, Polls, Channel points, Moderators

"I did my first-ever 24-hour stream, and that was the stream he raided me with 4,000 people. That was **the biggest moment of my streaming career** because I went from 800 followers to 1,800 in 2 minutes. That was how it started."
– Boy, 17

This case study is of an individual 'creator' used as an example to show how this pathway manifests in the 'creators' we spoke to

**See 'Glossary' slide in Appendix for definition*

Representative of this 'creator' pathway as a whole



Appendix





Glossary

Glossary of Terms



Term/ acronym	Definition
Affiliates	'Creators' who have met a platform's minimum requirements (e.g. follower count, livestreaming hours) to access monetisation tools such as subscriptions, ads, and virtual gifts
Avatar	A digital animated character or visual representation used by a 'creator' (particularly a Vtuber) during livestreams to protect their identity
Bits	Bits are a virtual currency on Twitch that viewers buy with real money to cheer and support streamers during livestreams. Streamers then receive real income from the Bits viewers spend in their chat
Channel Points & Rewards	A loyalty system on some livestream platforms, where viewers earn points by watching and can redeem them for actions (e.g. push ups from 'creators' or quitting their game)
Chat	The live text-based communication area where viewers send messages, reactions and questions during the livestream
Co-Lives	Shared or collaborative livestreams where two or more 'creators' appear together, side-by-side, often through split-screen - with equal controls to one another, broadcasting to both audiences concurrently
Emotes	Custom or platform-wide emoji-style graphics used by viewers and creators to express reactions in chat
Gifts	Virtual items purchased by viewers and sent to 'creators' during a livestream, sometimes converting to monetary income for the 'creator'
GRWM (Get Ready With Me)	A livestream or video format where 'creators' prepare for their day or an event whilst viewers watch
Guesting	A feature allowing viewers or other 'creators' to temporarily join a livestream - specifically as a 'guest' with fewer controls as compared with a co-live and broadcasting to the host's audience only
OBS (Open Broadcaster Software)	A free, open-source tool used for livestreaming and recording, enabling 'creators' to manage scenes, audio and on-screen elements
Parasocial	A one-sided emotional relationship viewers may form with a 'creator' despite having limited or no real-world interaction.



Glossary of Terms (Cont)



Term/ acronym	Definition
Polls	Interactive voting tools allowing 'creators' to ask questions and gather quick feedback from viewers during a livestream, by getting them to choose from a limited number of answers
Raids	A feature where a 'creator' sends their viewers to another 'creator's' livestream at the end of their own livestream
Ring Light	A circular LED lighting tool designed to fit around a camera lens or smartphone, providing uniform, soft, and nearly shadowless illumination
Scaled LIVE Rewards	Tiered incentives given to 'creators' by a platform for achieving specific engagement or livestreaming milestones (e.g. viewer hours, frequency or activity).
Scripted Auto-mod	Automated moderation tools that filter or block inappropriate or risky content in chat based on preset rules.
Servers	Online communities often hosted on platforms like Discord where creators and viewers interact outside livestreams.
Streamlabs	A livestreaming software suite that offers tools such as alerts, overlays, and monetisation features for livestream creators.
Subscribing	A paid or free (platform-granted) action allowing viewers to support a creator, often unlocking perks like badges, emotes, or ad-free viewing.
TikFinity	A third-party tool that integrates TikTok livestreams with interactive on-screen alerts and automations triggered by viewer gifts.
Uploading	The act of posting pre-recorded content (e.g., clips or highlight videos) to a platform alongside or instead of livestreaming.
Vtuber/ing	A creator who livestreams using a virtual avatar—often animated with motion-capture technology—rather than their real-world appearance.



A decorative border with a scalloped, cloud-like shape, composed of multiple concentric layers of blue and yellow lines, framing the central text.

Detailed Sample Breakdown

Detailed sample breakdown

20 x Participants

Each participant completed an activity related to their online world, before taking part in a 60-minute interview with a Beano Brain researcher



Creator Participants

Creator Participants			
1.	14 year old	Male	<p>Children who took part in this study were aged 10-19 (2 x respondents recruited were aged 19)</p> <p>For this research, we recruited participants to fit certain criteria and ensured we recruited a good mix of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender: however, not necessarily an even mix in order to capture full range of behaviours • Location: across London, North, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales • Platforms used to livestream: YouTube, TikTok, Facebook, Twitch • Type of content livestreamed: Gaming, Get ready with me, Arts & Crafts, Performing, Make Up Tutorials, Unboxing, ASMR, An event/concert, Food and Other • Motivations for livestreaming: e.g. For enjoyment/entertainment, to receive/give comments/gifts, to connect with a community / feel connected to a community, to build a following/get subscribers, to learn / get inspired • Devices owned • Household income: (including 3 x children from lower income households) <p>All 'creators' were recruited to be 'current' livestreamers (ranging from livestreaming daily to a minimum of once a month). Within this, we recruited a some 'creators' who were more 'passive' in their livestreaming (i.e., those who did not engage with features and functions while creating livestreams) and some more 'active'. Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 x Passive 'creators' and 11 x Active 'creators' (with spectrum of active features used including live chats, receiving gifts, polls/Q&A, guest request/calling) <p>We also recruited 'creators' based on the format of livestreams they made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 x 'creators' who livestreamed with their voice only • 12 x 'creators' who livestreamed using their voice & video (their face) • 2 x 'creators' who occasionally livestreamed using their voice only and occasionally with their voice & video (their face)
2.	17 year old	Female	
3.	14 year old	Female	
4.	14 year old	Female	
5.	15 year old	Male	
6.	10 year old	Female	
7.	15 year old	Male	
8.	16 year old	Male	
9.	11 year old	Female	
10.	12 year old	Male	
11.	15 year old	Male	
12.	12 year old	Male	
13.	15 year old	Female	
14.	14 year old	Male	
15.	16 year old	Female	
16.	17 year old	Male	
17.	13 year old	Female	
18.	15 year old	Male	
19.	19 year old	Male	
20.	19 year old	Male	

