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# The Online Experiences Tracker (2021/22): Summary Report

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FOR:

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## Ofcom Foreword

Ofcom has a statutory duty to promote and research media literacy. A key way we seek to fulfil this duty is through our *Making Sense of Media* programme, which aims to help improve the online skills, knowledge and understanding of children and adults in the UK. Ofcom was also given powers in autumn 2020 to regulate UK-established video-sharing platforms (VSPs). And in December 2020, the Government confirmed its intention to nominate Ofcom as the regulator for online safety in the UK, under the Online Safety Bill, which is currently in Parliament.

As referenced in our [Roadmap to Online Safety Regulation](#), this summary report is one in a series of research studies into online safety that will inform our preparations for implementing the new online safety laws. As part of these preparations, we are building a robust evidence base, bringing together internal and external data, collected using different methods, from a variety of different sources.

In this context, this programme of research further develops our understanding of online harms and how we can help to promote a safer user experience. The findings should not be considered a reflection of any policy position that Ofcom may adopt when we take up our role as the online safety regulator.

**The Online Experiences Tracker** was commissioned to enable Ofcom to extend and enrich its understanding of UK users' attitudes towards and experiences of using online services, positive and negative, including their experience of encountering potential online harms. This report summarises findings from Waves 1 and 2, comprising the first full year of the tracker (2021-2).

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## Introduction: methodology

The Online Experiences Tracker is a quantitative tracking study comprising of two waves annually. Fieldwork for Wave 1 was conducted in October-November 2021 with a nationally representative sample of 6,619 UK internet users aged 13+. Fieldwork for the Wave 2 was conducted in April-May 2022 with a sample of 6,666 UK internet users aged 13+.

Research was carried out online, with respondents recruited from Yonder's proprietary online panel 'YonderLive', containing around 150,000 panellists from across the UK. Respondents were recruited to ensure a sample that was nationally representative of the UK internet user population, with quotas set on gender, age, socio-economic group and region. Boosts were applied to low incidence groups to allow for bases sizes robust enough for analysis. Boosts were applied for younger respondents, respondents living in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and respondents from minority ethnic backgrounds.

This report analyses data for both waves at a combined level<sup>1</sup>, with a focus on observed differences among key demographic subgroups. Where appropriate, statistically significant changes in reported experience, opinions, attitude, or behaviours between the two waves are mentioned. All data is analysed at the 99% confidence level.

For a detailed breakdown of the sample design, weighting, net definitions and overall methodology please refer to the accompanying technical report.<sup>2</sup>

## Summary of key findings

### *Time spent online and use of website and apps*

It's important to understand the amount of time people spend online, both in order to be able to understand the differences in consumption between types of user, and also to see whether time spent online has any correlations with the types of negative experiences that people encounter. We focus here on 'free time' which we define as time spent using social media and messaging, watching films, TV programmes and videos online, playing games online, on video calls, searching for information online and doing, but excluding any time spent online for work or at school, college or university.

- **Just under half of UK internet users (49%) are classed as *medium* volume users of the internet, spending 6-22 hours of their free time online a week.<sup>3</sup>**
  - A further 42% are classed as *heavy* volume users of the internet, spending more than 22 hours online, while fewer than one in ten (7%) UK internet users are *light* volume users, spending less than 6 hours online in a typical week.

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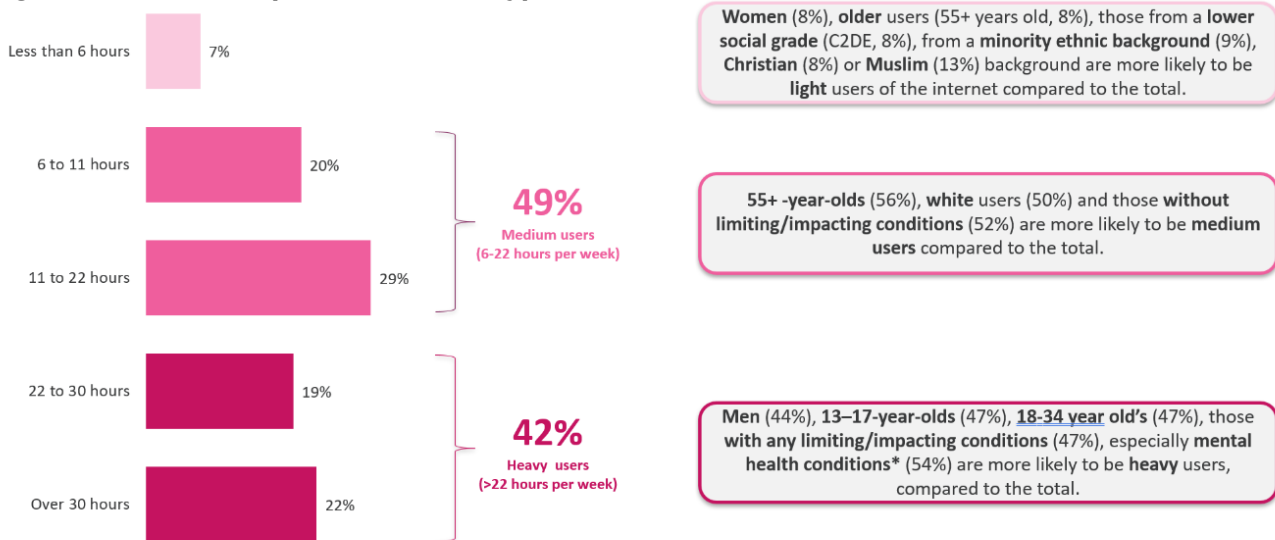
<sup>1</sup> While analysis focuses on the data at a combined level, some questions were only asked in one wave or the other. In these cases analysis is limited to the wave in which the question appears, and a note to acknowledge that fact has been included in the footnotes.

<sup>2</sup> The accompanying [technical report](#) is available on the Ofcom website.

<sup>3</sup> By 'free time' spent online we mean time spent using social media and messaging, watching films, TV programmes and videos online, playing games online, on video calls, searching for information online and doing, but excluding any time you spend online for work or at your school, college or university.

- **Volume of internet use varies by demographic group. Men (44%), 13-17 year olds (47%) and those with limiting or impacting conditions<sup>4</sup> (47% overall, but rising to 54% of those with mental health conditions) tend to be heavy volume users of the internet.**
  - Users aged over 55, (56%), white users (50%) and those who do not have a limiting or impacting condition (52%) are more likely to be *medium* users compared to the average (49%).
  - Women (8%), users aged over 55 (8%), those from a lower social grade (C2DE, 8%), from a minority ethnic background (9%), Christian (8%) or Muslim (13%) users are more likely to be *light* volume users of the internet compared to the average for all users (7%).

**Figure 1. Free time spent online in a typical week**



- **In the last month, just under half of internet users said they have used only websites or apps they have used before (46%). A similar proportion used one or two websites which were new to them (44%).**
  - Fewer than one in ten internet users (9%) used 'lots of websites or apps they have not used before in the last month'.

### Attitudes towards the internet and being online

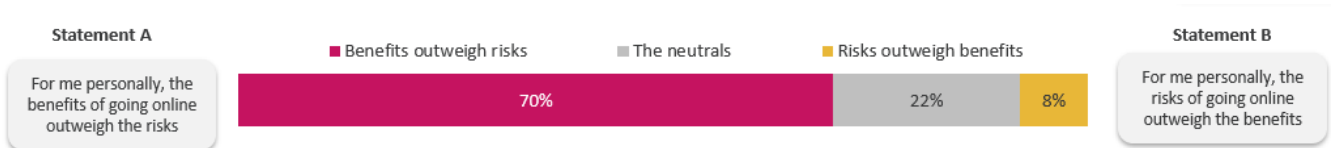
Internet users were asked a range of questions about their overall attitudes to being online. We found that the majority think that the benefits of being online outweigh the risks, and just under half agreed that they can share their opinions and have a voice. Women, particularly, were less likely to feel they can share their opinions and were less likely to feel free to be themselves online.

- **Seven in ten internet users feel that, for them personally, the benefits of being online outweigh the risks. A lower proportion, 51%, feel the internet is good for society.**

<sup>4</sup> A definition of the net 'Any limiting or impacting condition' is available in the accompanying [technical report](#).

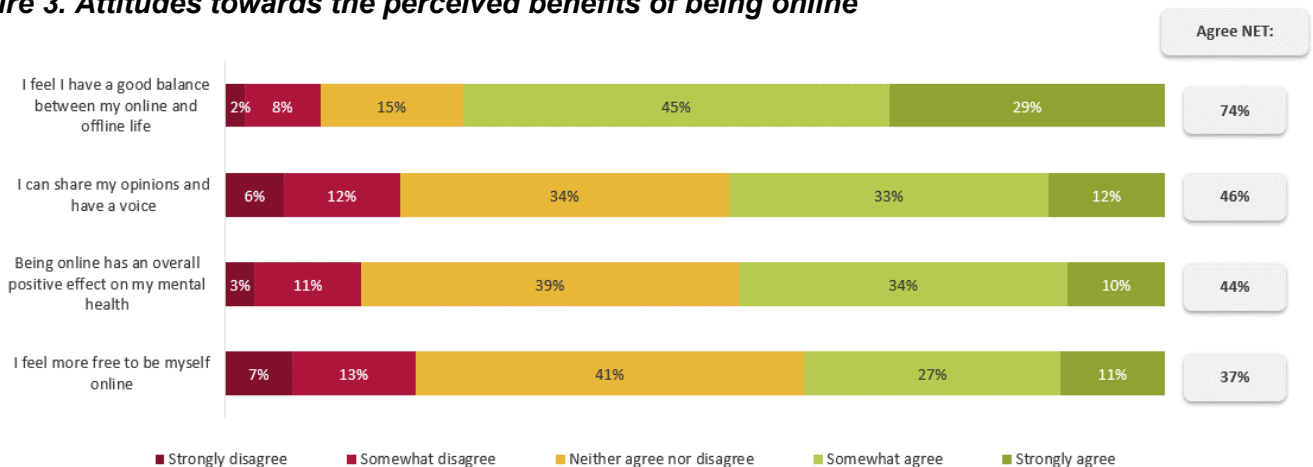
- Fewer than one in ten (8%) believe the risks outweigh the benefits, and 12% believe the internet is damaging for society.
- Women (68%) and users from minority ethnic backgrounds (61%) are less likely to believe the benefits of going online outweigh the risks compared to the average (70%).

**Figure 2. Benefits v. risks of being online**



- **A clear majority of internet users agree that they have a good balance between their online and offline life (74%), compared to one in ten (10%) who disagree.**
  - 55+ year olds (83%), individuals without any limiting or impacting conditions (78%) and white users (75%) are more likely to agree compared to the average (74%).
  - Those with mental health conditions (62%), 18-34 year olds (65%), and users from minority ethnic backgrounds (69%) are less likely to agree than the average.

**Figure 3. Attitudes towards the perceived benefits of being online**



- **Just under half (46%) of internet users agree that they can share their opinions and have a voice online, and under two-fifths (37%) feel more free to be themselves online.**
  - Younger users are more likely to feel they can share their opinions and have a voice (13-17, 62% and 18-34, 53%) and are more free to be themselves online (13-17, 61% and 18-34, 50%) compared to the average.
  - Users from minority ethnic backgrounds (56%)<sup>5</sup>, and those with limiting or impacting conditions (50% overall, rising to 54% of those with mental health conditions), are more

<sup>5</sup> Users from Minority Ethnic Groups are defined as: mixed/multiple ethnic groups, Asian and British Asian, Black and Black British and other any other ethnic background. For a full definition please see the accompanying [technical report](#).

- likely to say they can share their opinions and have a voice more easily online than the average user (46%).
- Gay or lesbian (50%), bisexual users (53%), those with limiting or impacting conditions (39% overall, rising to 45% of those with a mental health condition), and those from minority ethnic backgrounds (55%) are more likely to say they feel more free to be themselves online than the average user (37%).
- **Just over four in ten (44%) agree that being online has an overall positive effect on their mental health, compared to a smaller proportion (15%) who disagree.**
    - 13-17 year olds (58%) are more likely to agree that being online has an overall positive effect on their mental health compared to all other ages (18-34, 43%; 35-54, 43% and 55+, 42%).
  - **Women, however, are less likely to feel they can share their opinions and have a voice more easily (42%), less likely to feel free to be themselves online (34%) less likely to agree that being online has a positive effect on their mental health (41%); compared to men, as shown in Table 1 below.**
  - **There is a high proportion of ‘neutral’ or ‘undecided’ responses – neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the statements provided – regarding attitudes to being online.**
    - Around four in ten neither agree nor disagree that they feel more free to be themselves online than offline (41%) and that being online has a positive effect on their mental health (39%).
    - While 37% neither agree nor disagree when deciding if the internet is good or damaging for society. And a further 34% neither agree nor disagree that they can share their opinions and have a voice online more easily or effectively than they can offline.

**Table 1. Demographic differences regarding attitudes online**

	<b>I can share my opinions and have a voice</b>	<b>I feel more free to be myself online</b>	<b>Being online has an overall positive effect on my mental health</b>
<b>Total % Agree</b>	46%	37%	44%

<b>Men</b>	50% ↑	40% ↑	46% ↑
<b>Women</b>	42% ↓	34% ↓	41% ↓
<b>White</b>	44% ↓	34% ↓	43% ↓
<b>Minority Ethnic Groups</b>	56% ↑	55% ↑	51% ↑
<b>Heterosexual</b>	44% ↓	34% ↓	43% ↓
<b>Gay/Lesbian</b>	53% ↑	50% ↑	47%
<b>Bisexual</b>	59% ↑	53% ↑	43%
<b>Any limiting/impacting conditions</b>	50% ↑	39% ↑	43%
<b>Mental Health conditions</b>	54% ↑	45% ↑	41%
<b>No conditions</b>	44% ↓	36% ↓	44%

Green and red arrows indicate significantly higher/lower differences to the total average

### Attitudes towards online safety

Internet users were also asked a range of questions to gauge attitudes to their own online safety. We found that the majority felt confident in their ability to stay safe online, although a quarter were neutral or undecided.

- A majority of users (69%) are confident about their ability to stay safe online, compared to a much smaller proportion (7%) who do not feel confident.**

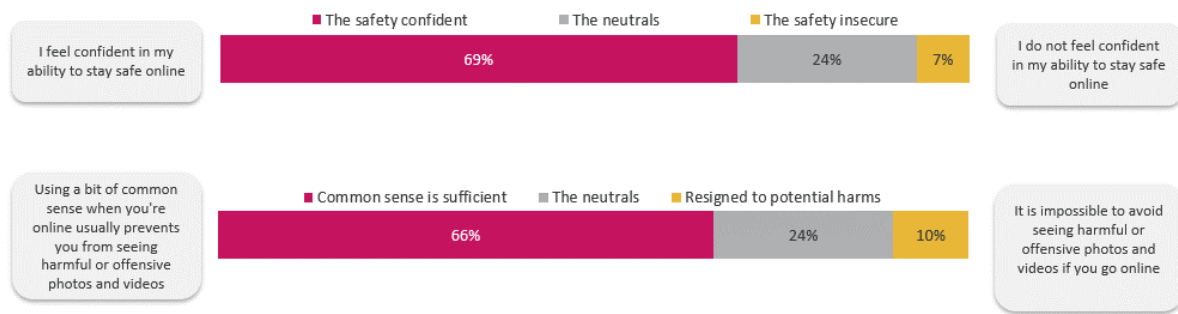
  - Women (65%) and users aged over 55 (67%) are less confident in their ability to stay safe online than average (69%).
- Two thirds of users believe that using a bit of common sense when online usually prevents people from seeing harmful or offensive photos and videos, compared to one in ten (10%) who believe it is impossible to avoid seeing harmful or offensive photos and videos online.**

  - Women (64%), users aged under 34 (13–17 year olds (58%) and 18-34 year olds, (54%)), and parents (59%) are less likely to agree using common sense online usually prevents individuals from seeing harmful content than average (66%).
- There is a high proportion of ‘neutral’ or ‘undecided’ responses – those neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the statements provided regarding attitudes towards online safety.**

  - 24% neither agree nor disagree that they feel confident in their ability to stay safe online.
  - 24% neither agree nor disagree that using a bit of common sense when online usually prevents people from seeing harmful or offensive photos and videos.

**Figure 4. Attitudes towards online safety**





### Experiences of potentially harmful online content and behaviour<sup>6</sup>

Internet users were asked if they had experienced any potential harm in the last four weeks. They were asked about their experience from a list of 34 specific potential online harms. We found that six in ten said they had experienced a potential online harm in the last four weeks, with scams, fraud and phishing the most commonly experienced potential harm.

- **Over six in ten (62%) UK internet users have experienced at least one instance of potentially harmful behaviour or content online in the last four weeks.<sup>7</sup>**
  - Men (65%), users from higher social grades (ABC1, 65%), 18–34-year-olds (70%), users from minority ethnic backgrounds (70%) and those with any limiting or impacting conditions (70%) are more likely to have experienced at least once potential harm in the last four weeks.
- **Experience of at least one potential harm has increased from 61% (November 2021) to 64% (May 2022).<sup>8</sup>**
  - This increase is driven by men (W1 63% to W2 67%), 18–34-year-olds (W1 64% to 75%), users from minority ethnic backgrounds (W1 66% vs 73%) and those with mental health conditions (W1 71% vs W2 77%).

<sup>6</sup> This section of the questionnaire included a sensitivity screener which alerted respondents to the sensitive nature of the topics under discussion and provided them with an option to conclude the survey before any questions of a sensitive nature were asked. Respondents were asked about their experience of a list of 34 specific potential harms. A full breakdown of the incidence of each potential harm is shown below in Table 2.

<sup>7</sup> When respondents were prompted with a list of 34 types of potentially harmful content and behaviour and asked whether they had encountered any of them in the last four weeks. Respondents were able to make multiple selections as appropriate to their experience. In creating the net proportion of those encountering at least one potential harm, codes relating to content depicting dangerous stunts and content advertising alcohol or cigarettes, were excluded as they were only added in wave 2. The definition also excludes content encouraging gambling, which was shown to over 18's in wave 1, and only U18s in wave 2. The last two waves have been iterative improvements ahead of the permanent contract / the data becoming an official stat, hence why there have been changes to definitions between the waves (though not to the raw data itself). A full definition of the nets used to groups harms is available in the accompanying technical report.

<sup>8</sup> In comparing data wave on wave, codes relating to content depicting dangerous stunts and content advertising alcohol or cigarettes, which were added in wave 2, were excluded from the net definition (experience of at least one potential harm) as they were only shown to U18s. The definition also excludes content encouraging gambling, which was shown to over 18s in wave 1, and only U18s in wave 2.

- **Scams, fraud and phishing is the most commonly experienced potential harm (encountered by 28% in the last four weeks)**, followed by: misinformation (23%), generally offensive or 'bad' language (22%), unwelcome friend or follow requests or messages (20%), trolling (16%), hateful, offensive or discriminatory content (11%) and content depicting violence (10%).
- **There is evidence of a strong correlation between volume of internet use and experience of potential harms online: with heavier users (69%) more likely to experience at least one potential harm in the last four weeks compared to the light (44%) and medium (60%) users.<sup>9</sup>**

**Table 2. Incidence of potential harms; wave-on-wave comparison**

	W1 and W2 combined	Wave 1	Wave 2
Scams, fraud, or phishing	28%	27%	30%↑
Misinformation i.e. false or misleading stories, claims or assertions	23%	22%	23%

<sup>9</sup> Heavy volume users are defined as spending more than 22 hours a week online, medium volume users between 6 and 22 hours, and light volume users less than 6 hours. Men (44%), 13-17 year olds (47%) and those with any limiting or impacting conditions (47% overall, but rising to 54% of those with mental health conditions) tend to be *heavy* volume users of the internet.

Generally offensive or 'bad' language, e.g. swearing, rudeness	22%	21%	22%
Unwelcome friend or follow requests, or messages	20%	20%	19%
Trolling, i.e. a person who says something to cause intentional upset or provoke a negative reaction	16%	15%	18% ↑
Hateful, offensive or discriminatory content that targets a group or person based on specific characteristics like race, religion, disability, sexuality or gender identity e.g. hate speech	11%	11%	12%
Content depicting violence	10%	9%	11% ↑
Content which objectifies, demeans or otherwise negatively portrays women i.e misogynistic content	9%	8%	10% ↑
Bullying, abusive behaviour or threats	9%	8%	9%
Content encouraging gambling e.g. sports betting, or casino style games	9%	16%	1% <sup>10</sup>
Content relating to negative body image, excessive dieting and/ or eating disorders	8%	8%	9%
Fake or deceptive images/videos, e.g. 'deep fakes'	8%	7%	9% ↑
Animal cruelty	7%	7%	7%
Received an unwanted sexual message	7%	8%	7%
Content glamourising unhealthy or abusive lifestyles, e.g. binge drinking, drug taking	7%	7%	7%
Paid-for or sponsored content which was not clearly marked as such, e.g. 'astroturfing'	7%	7%	6% ↓

<sup>10</sup> Content encouraging gambling e.g. sports betting, or casino style games was shown to over 18s in wave 1, and under 18s in wave 2, accounting for the steep decline in experience. A wave-on-wave comparison is not possible due to this amendment, and this code has been excluded from any net definition referring to experience of at least one potential harm in the last four weeks.

Sexual/ pornographic content inappropriate for the site/app	7%	7%	7%
People pretending to be another person, e.g. catfishing	6%	6%	7% ↑
Group shaming, boycotting, or excluding someone based on their views, opinions on actions, including online 'pile-ons'	6%	6%	6%
Content which impacted negatively on my self-esteem	5%	5%	5%
Collection or use of my data without my knowledge or permission	4%	4%	4% ↓
Sale or advertisement of illegal goods	4%	4%	4%
Content relating to self-harm or suicide	4%	3%	4%
People sending unwanted/unsolicited sexual or nude images or videos, e.g. 'cyber flashing'	3%	3%	3%
Private conversations shared without consent	3%	3%	3%
Content encouraging extremism, radicalisation or terrorism	3%	2%	3%
Intentional harassment during gaming, e.g. 'griefing'	2%	3%	2%
Unintentionally spending money on in-app purchases or gifts	2%	3%	2% ↓
Stalking, cyberstalking or intrusive behaviour	2%	2%	2%
Pressure to send photos or personal information to someone	2%	2%	1% ↓
Private/intimate information made public, e.g. 'doxxing'	2%	2%	2%
Sharing of intimate images without consent	2%	1%	2%
Content depicting the sexual abuse or exploitation of children	1%	1%	1%

Promotion of female genital mutilation (FGM)	1%	1%	1%
NET: Any harm <sup>11</sup>	62%	61%	64% ↑

Green and red arrows indicate significantly higher/lower differences than Wave 1.

### Concerns towards potential harms online<sup>12</sup>

Although people say they are concerned about some potential online harms, the harms which most internet users are concerned about tend to be those with the lowest incidence.

- **Regarding levels of concern about potential harms existing online, users who express a concern are most concerned about content depicting the sexual abuse or exploitation of children (86%) and content encouraging extremism, radicalisation or terrorism (79%).**
  - Users who express a concern are less concerned about generally offensive or 'bad' language (41%) and unwelcome friend/follow requests or messages (42%).
- **Generally, the harms eliciting the highest concern are encountered online at a relatively low incidence; the exceptions being scams, fraud or phishing, and misinformation, which stand out as harms for which both concern and experience are relatively high.**

### Where and how potential harms are being experienced

Half of internet users say that they experienced a potential harm on a social media site. Facebook is the most likely site or app for users to have encountered their most recent harm. Potential online harms were most likely to be encountered while scrolling or on the 'For You' page.

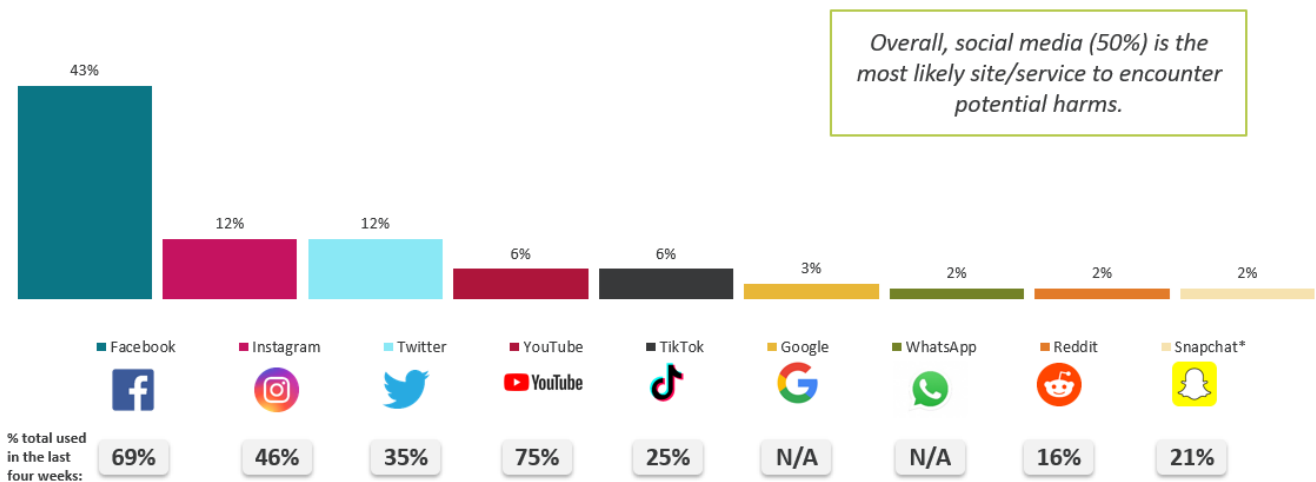
- **Half of those who experienced a potential harm encountered their most recent instance on a social media site or app, as shown in figure 4 below.**

<sup>11</sup> In creating the net proportion of those encountering at least one potential harm, codes relating to content depicting dangerous stunts and content advertising alcohol or cigarettes, which were added in wave 2, were excluded as they were only shown to U18s. The definition also excludes content encouraging gambling, which was shown to all respondents in wave 1, and only U18s in wave 2. A full definition of the nets used to groups harms is available in the accompanying technical report.

<sup>12</sup> Respondents were prompted with a list of 34 types of potentially harmful content and behaviour that someone may come across on the internet and asked how concerned they were about each. In terms of questionnaire flow, respondents were asked about concerns over potential harms before they were asked about actual experience. This question was only asked in Wave 1 and so excludes codes covering content depicting dangerous stunts and content advertising alcohol or cigarettes, which were added in Wave 2. Data from wave 1 was tested at the 95% confidence interval.

- Facebook (43%) is the most likely social media site or app for users to have encountered their most recent potential harm on, followed by Instagram (12%) and Twitter (12%).<sup>13</sup> Conversely, only 6% of users encounter their most recent potential harm on YouTube, despite the fact that it is the most used app.

**Figure 5. Platforms on which most recently-experience harm was encountered**



- **Potential harms are most likely to be encountered while scrolling through a user’s feed or ‘For You’ Page. Around a third (34%) of those who have experienced at least one potential harm have encountered their most recently experienced potential harm this way.**
  - Among the top five most frequently encountered harms: misinformation and scams, fraud and phishing are most likely to be encountered through a user’s feed / For You Page (50% & 18% respectively).
  - While trolling and generally offensive or ‘bad’ language are most commonly encountered in the comments or replies to a post, article or video (52% and 43% respectively); unwelcome friend or follow requests are most commonly encountered while using the private or direct message function to communicate with one other user (24%).

### Impact of potential harms online

As well as measuring internet users’ experience of encountering potential online harms, we also ask about the impact of these potential harms. We found that a fifth said they were *really* bothered or offended by it. Those from minority ethnic backgrounds and those with any limiting or impacting conditions were also more likely to say that they were *really* bothered or offended by their most recent experience of a potential harm.

<sup>13</sup> Data here combined platform mentions across multiple questions (QQ22-28) to give an aggregate score by platform.

- **A fifth of users say their most recent experience of potential harm *really* bothered or offended them<sup>14</sup>.**
  - Around half (49%) say it *slightly* bothered or offended them and just over three in ten (31%) say it did not bother or offend them *at all*.
  - Users are most likely to be really bothered or offended by animal cruelty (71%), hateful, offensive or discriminatory content e.g. hate speech (53%) and content which objectifies, demeans or otherwise negatively portrays women (46%).
- **As well as being more likely to experience potential online harms, users from minority ethnic backgrounds (27%) and those with any limiting or impacting conditions (22%) are more likely to report being *really* bothered or offended by their most recent experience of a potential harm, compared to the average (20%).**
  - Black users (38%) are more likely to report being *really* bothered after experiencing a potential harm compared to white users (18%).
- **While women are less likely to experience potential online harms, they are more likely to say their experience *really* bothered or offended them (22%) compared to men (17%).**

**Table 3. Impact of most recently experienced harm, at an overall level and by demographic subgroup**

	It didn't bother me at all/It didn't offend me at all	It slightly bothered me/It slightly offended me	It really bothered me/I found it extremely offensive
<b>Total %</b>	31%	49%	20%
<b>Men</b>	37% ↑	46% ↓	17% ↓
<b>Women</b>	25% ↓	53% ↑	22% ↑
<b>White</b>	33% ↑	49%	18% ↓
<b>Minority Ethnic Groups</b>	21% ↓	52%	27% ↑

<sup>14</sup> The scale for this question was amended from a 5-point scale to a 3-point scale for Wave 2. Data has been aggregated here for the purposes of analysis and refers only to respondents' *most recently* experienced potential harm in Wave 2. For a description of the change please refer to the associated technical report.

<b>Any limiting or impacting conditions</b>	27%↓	51%	22%↑
<b>No limiting or impacting conditions</b>	35%↑	48%	18%↓

Green and red arrows indicate significantly higher/lower differences to the total average

### Reporting potential harms online<sup>15</sup>

We also ask questions to understand if internet users are using reporting functions online. We found that six in ten did take some action but 15% did not take any action at all. They either did not think it was serious enough to report or felt that it would not make a difference. One in ten of these users did not know what to do or who to inform.

- **Just under six in ten (59%) of those who had encountered a potential harm took any form of action<sup>16</sup>.**
  - A third of users claim to have reported or flagged content (32%) and a further fifth (20%) disengaged from the site/app or changed their engagement behaviour.
  - A quarter of users (26%) experiencing potential harms simply scrolled past the content.
  - Women (62%) are more likely to have taken *any* action compared to men (57%).
- **15% who those who encountered a potential harm took no action at all.**
  - Half of those who took no action at all (51%) felt that the behaviour or content was not serious enough to report.
  - A further fifth (19%) of those who took no action felt it would not make a difference or be acted on, and one in ten (10%) because they did not know what to do, or who to inform.

**Figure 6. Action taken on experiencing a potential harm<sup>17 18</sup>**

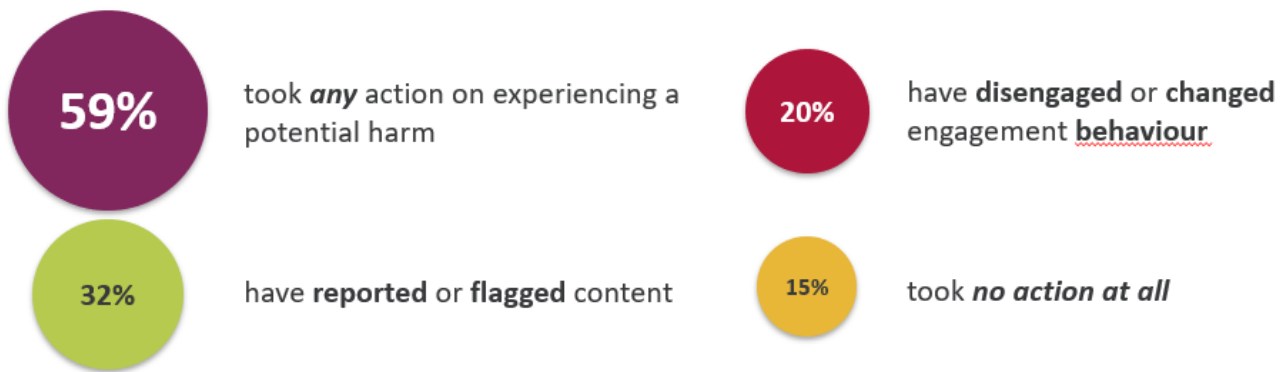
<sup>15</sup> Data in this section relates to a respondents' *most recently* experienced potential harm.

<sup>16</sup> All nets created for analysis ('Any action', 'Reporting or flagging action', 'Disengagement or change of behaviour action') were based on the definitions that remained consistent between waves 1 and 2, despite changes to the action code lists between waves. Those actions that were new for wave 2 were not included in the net definitions. Full definitions are available in the accompanying technical report.

<sup>17</sup> Base: all those experiencing at least one potential harm in the last four weeks, with action taken referring to their most recently experienced harm.

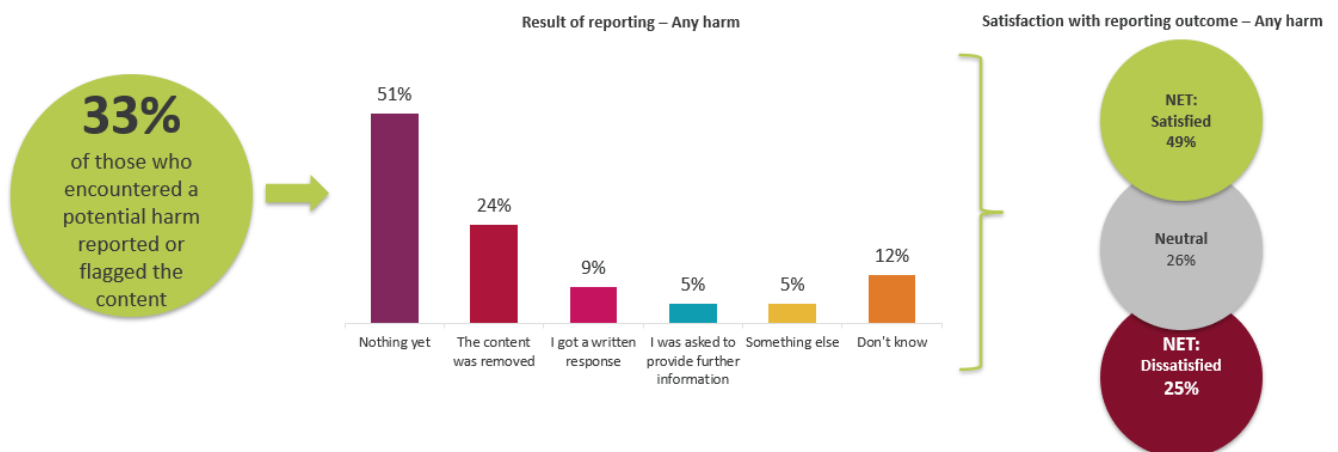
<sup>18</sup> The following codes are included in the 'Any action' NET but not in the others: 'Closed my account/left the service', 'Unfollowed/unfriended/blocked/muted the person who posted it/ deleted the email', 'Told a friend or family member'. Given this is a multicode question responses (including NETs) will not necessarily sum to 100%.





- **Of those who reported or flagged the potentially harmful behaviour or content, half (51%) reported that nothing had yet happened as a result.**
  - Meanwhile around a quarter (24%) said the content had been removed, and just under one in ten (9%) had received a written response.
- **Around half (49%) of users are satisfied with the reporting or flagging process, regardless of the outcome.**
  - Users with any limiting or impacting conditions (29%) are more likely to be dissatisfied with the reporting process than the average (25%) and those with no limiting or impacting conditions (21%).

**Figure 7. Outcome of reporting or flagging potential harm and satisfaction with reporting process**



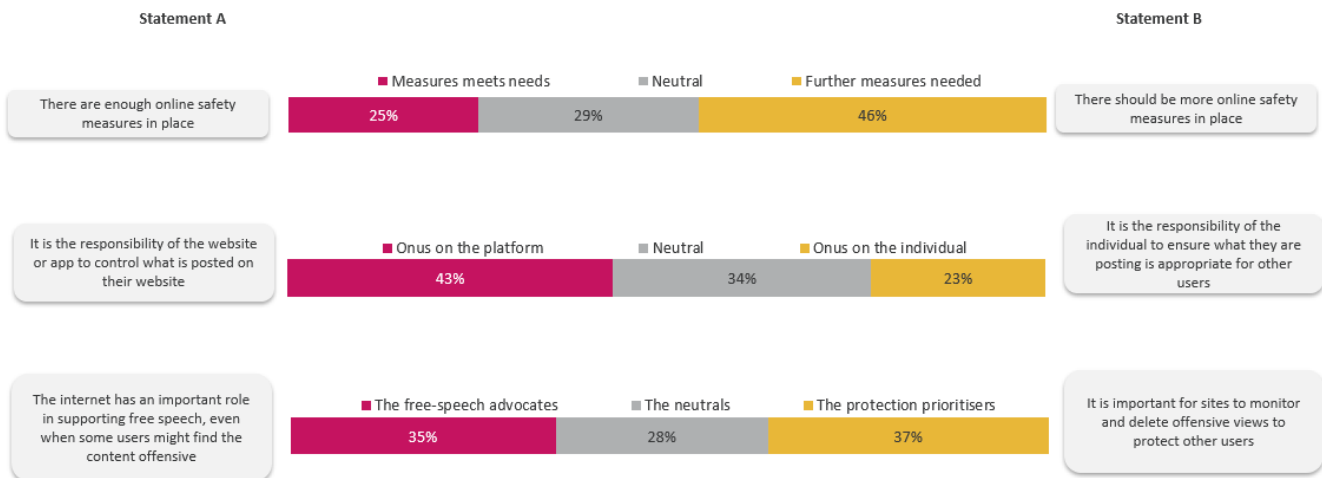
- **Just over one in ten users of social media platforms (12%) have had their own content reported and / or taken down. However, only half of these (6%) understand why.**
  - Users from minority ethnic groups (21%), aged 18-34 (18%), with any limiting or impacting conditions (16%), and men (15%) are all more likely than average (12%) to say that they have had content reported and / or taken down.

### *Awareness of and attitudes towards of regulation*

We wanted to assess awareness and perceptions of regulation of the internet and found that while internet users felt that broadly there should be more online safety measures in place, there was no clear consensus as to whether free speech or user protection should be prioritised online.

- **Just under half (46%) of internet users feel there should be more online safety measures in place, compared to a quarter who believe current measures are sufficient (25%).**
  - Women (53%), 55+ year olds (53%) and those with any limiting or impacting conditions (50%) are more likely to believe further measures are needed compared to the average (46%).
  - While 13-17 year olds (31%), men (30%) and those without any limiting or impacting conditions (26%) are more likely to believe current measures are sufficient compared to the average (25%).
  - There has been a decline in the proportion of users who believe that more online safety features are needed, decreasing from 50% (November 2021) to 43% (May 2022).
- **Internet users are more likely to believe that responsibility for what is posted on a site or app lies with the platform itself (43%), rather than the individual posting the content (23%).**
  - Men (24%) are more likely to believe that the responsibility lies with the individual compared to women (21%).
- **There is no clear consensus as to whether free speech or user protection should be prioritised online. Just under two-fifths of users agree the internet has an important role in supporting free speech even if it might offend others (35%), while a similar proportion also feel it is important for sites to monitor and delete offensive views to protect others (37%).**
  - Women (42%) and users with limiting or impacting conditions (39%) are more likely than average (37%) to believe that it is important for websites to monitor and delete offensive views to protect other users.

**Figure 8. Attitudes towards online regulation and safety**



- There is a high proportion of ‘neutral’ or ‘undecided’ responses – those neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the statements provided regarding attitudes towards online regulation and safety. This may reflect that users are conflicted about key questions related to online safety, or feel unable or unwilling to give a fixed opinion.**

  - 29% neither agree nor disagree that current online safety measures are enough.
  - 34% neither agree nor disagree that it is the responsibility of the website / app or the individual to ensure what is posted is appropriate.
  - 28% neither agree nor disagree that protecting free speech is important even if it may offend others.
- Around a third (33%) think that Internet Service Providers (ISPs) and Ofcom (32%) are currently responsible for overseeing and monitoring online safety. Just under two-fifths (37%) do not know who is responsible.**

  - Users who are not parents are more likely to believe the ISP (35%) and Ofcom (34%) are responsible for overseeing and monitoring online safety compared to parents (ISP, 31% and Ofcom 28%)
  - Those that feel further online safety measures are needed are more likely to feel the ISP (37%) and Ofcom (35%) are responsible compared to the those who feel current online safety measures meets their needs (ISP, 31% and Ofcom, 30%).