

IF NOT NOW...

WHEN?

**326 Safeguarding concerns were identified
and actioned as a part of this survey.**

The shocking reality of what we are yet to
really uncover.



Online Safety UK



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Summary





Lee is a father of two Primary Aged Children with experience & expertise in Safeguarding & Law. Lee was a multi award winning (2019 & 2020) Police Community Support Officer for over 10 years. He is also the Vice Chair of Governors (Safeguarding) in an Infant school, CEOP Ambassador and has a keen eye for the small details.

He is now CEO at Online Safety UK. He says: "My personal goal is to create a culture within the education sector where Online Safety becomes so natural that we don't second guess what to do next any longer. This will ultimately safeguard & protect the generation of tomorrow as well as the generation of today. This comes in many forms but mostly we want to promote a healthier digital lifestyle, improve confidence in the online world and keep everyone fully up to date with the current trends, dangers and changes that may affect them."

Lee is a keen adventurer, who is always asking "but why?" to the answers given to him and is a developing Public Speaker, specifically in topics around families, motivation and the power of positive thinking.

Cath is a mum, PhD Candidate looking at Cybertrauma (Online Harms). She is an author, clinician, researcher, educator and speaker with a background of over 30 years beginning with the Armed Forces Engineering and Optronics, IT, Gaming and Psychology alongside Functional Health and her other passion of Neuroscience. She is a polymath and pattern recognition nerd. She synthesises the presenting issues that people bring to her clinic around online harms and our behaviours online with child development theories, science and research to highlight the larger issues at hand for the human race. She is a futurist regarding the issues we face as we progress with exponential technology. She is an advocate for ethical tech and our rights and freedoms to privacy and protection now and in the future. She educates professionals on data protection, cybersecurity, and privacy laws and provides online safeguarding training to give those responsible for children a wake-up call as to the spaces children need protection in and around. She is a positive disruptor and keen to make the changes we need to see in the world in relation to protection children online.



What Does Online Safety UK Do?

Online Safety UK was setup by Lee Haywood and now reaches schools and families internationally with the aim of achieving it's mission in creating a safer Digital World and better equipping the people of today, for the world of today. We have a small dedicated team of people who represent and/or work for Online Safety UK and push us towards achieving our mission.

Our main business structure is working within Public & Private Sector schools internationally delivering Education to pupils, parents and staff in person, as well as providing real-time safeguarding support, ongoing training, newsletters, parent events and assessing a schools strengths and weakness' in the areas we cover.

Our other focus is obtaining the data, and listening to the voices of those most involved in the online world of the youth. So that we can produce better materials, have much more in depth conversations and identify where society is moving towards so that we can help negate as many risks as possible.

We believe to obtain this, we have to go direct to the schools, and the pupils (of all ages using the internet) to ask questions, in an environment that allows them to be honest but balancing that with not steering them towards risk and still being able to protect them should concerns be raised in the course of our questions.

IF NOT NOW... **WHEN?**



The reason for the title of the survey is that we feel there is a turning point ahead and that we need to be prepared to take advantage of it. With the Online Harms Bill bringing some positive measures forward and raising the profile of the "Online Safety" world, it was time to listen to what all users are saying, even those as young as 6.

What we aim to achieve with this report and more to follow in late 2022, is action. Action on every side, from the Education input & messages changing with the times through to perception of the dangers children face and how quickly these dangers can be negated.

It is our strong belief that "Online Safety" is not all about 'Tech solving Tech' and it's as much about building children's Self Esteem, Problem Solving & Critical Thinking skills so they're better equipped for the world they will inevitably become a part of.

In line with this, identifying moments of trauma that may be caused whilst using Tech and how they can affect someone's thoughts, feelings, behaviours and vulnerabilities going forward is a crucial component.

If this opportunity for change is missed, we fear for our next generation.



If you see this during the report, it's a child's voice being heard.



Respondent Demographics, Data Collection & Voices Heard

As part of the survey, we wanted to empower children to speak freely about anything they wished to when it came to the online world. We believe that giving children a voice will help balance our approach and help build bridges going forward.



"Give reasons on why you should be safe online that kids could see happening to them and not something that will pretty much never happen to any of them."

In total we had more than one hundred schools participate in the survey and we intend to complete this again in November 2022, with a revised version. We had 6,162 child responses and 1,588 parent responses. We will release more information and a document into the parent responses in due time.

All responses were captured in England, and respondents were aged between 6 & 16

To protect the privacy and collection of any personal information, we restricted what data we would obtain from the survey therefore we have no statistics in relation to gender, Non-Pupil Premium and Pupil Premium children etc.

The only information that was obtained in the interest of safeguarding the respondent was their First Name, Class Name & School Name. This information has now been erased before we began analysing data to protect the respondent.



How we managed to safeguard and protect 326 young people whilst giving them a voice.



One thing that is incredibly important to us at Online Safety UK is the safeguarding and wellbeing of everyone that we come into contact with. This is why we offer safeguarding support as standard in our work with schools and why when we were designing these questions for children, we had to give a lot of thought to the process we would need to protect people when they respond.

Firstly, with the design of the questions, we were asking directly, whether children had experienced potentially harmful content online. We knew immediately, we had to have something that followed this up as part of the survey, so we embedded a video that would alert the staff member present also, in case the child wanted to talk as it may be fresh in their minds again.

We then reviewed the responses daily, so that if we had a disclosure in our free text responses later in the survey that we could manage them and work with the school.

We expected 5-10 incidents, we were met with 326. We worked with schools to identify the child in question, identify the real risk being described and offering help & support if it was required to aid the school in dealing with this issue. Sometimes this would simply include a run down of the app or game they were talking about, to begin a conversation with the child.



"give good advice like people who say mean things in game and giving scenarios and seeing how they act"



Whilst speaking with young people as part of the survey, we found a direct link between children using TikTok, and then going onto the website / app named Omegle because they'd seen videos on the app which made them curious.

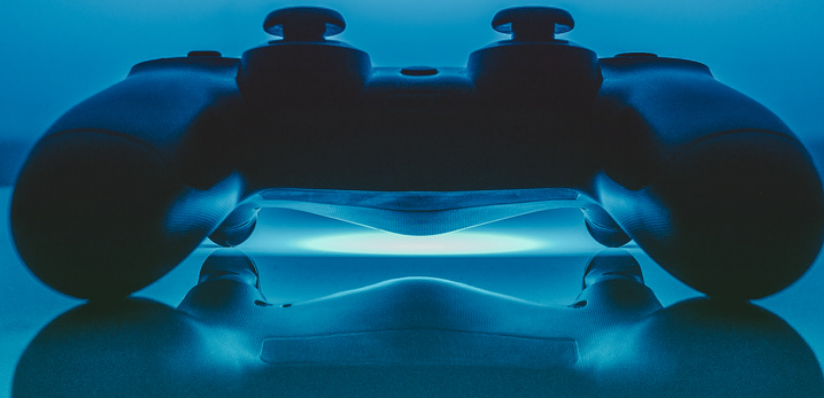
From the age of 8, 3% of children said they'd **seen** it.

By age 12, 8% has **used** it.

By Age 15, 11% has **used it often**, as some point in their teens.



Why did we look into Gaming? And what were we looking to achieve?



From our experience and knowledge of working with children from age 4-18 on a daily basis, we knew that gaming was the easiest place to start a conversation and help the survey feel relatable early on.

It is proven that gaming can have massive benefits for anyone who plays, including young children. It's also the conduit for some risk, like anything else online. The ability to be virtually around people they've never met, the potential to voice chat with them, the concern over abuse given or received with emotions high whilst gaming, the heightened emotions such as Anxiety, Rage & Anger whilst in the middle of gaming are all concerns that we wanted to explore.

We wanted to know how many people play games, as well as finding out what was really popular. We already knew Roblox, Minecraft & Fortnite were going to be 'up there' but there is a massive variety of games online and we wanted to know what else should we be talking about and understanding with them.

We also wanted to correlate the respondents answering to playing more violent games, and how they then felt later on in the survey in terms of emotions whilst playing games and using technology.



"By making young people more aware of how to be safe online whilst appealing to the audience in a way that means that they can understand the risks involved and issues are addressed without making them feel uncomfortable or misunderstood."



Key Messages From Gaming

GAME ON

By the age of **9**, **96%** were playing some form of game often.

By age **14**, it was **75%**.



THOSE PLAYING 18+ GAMES

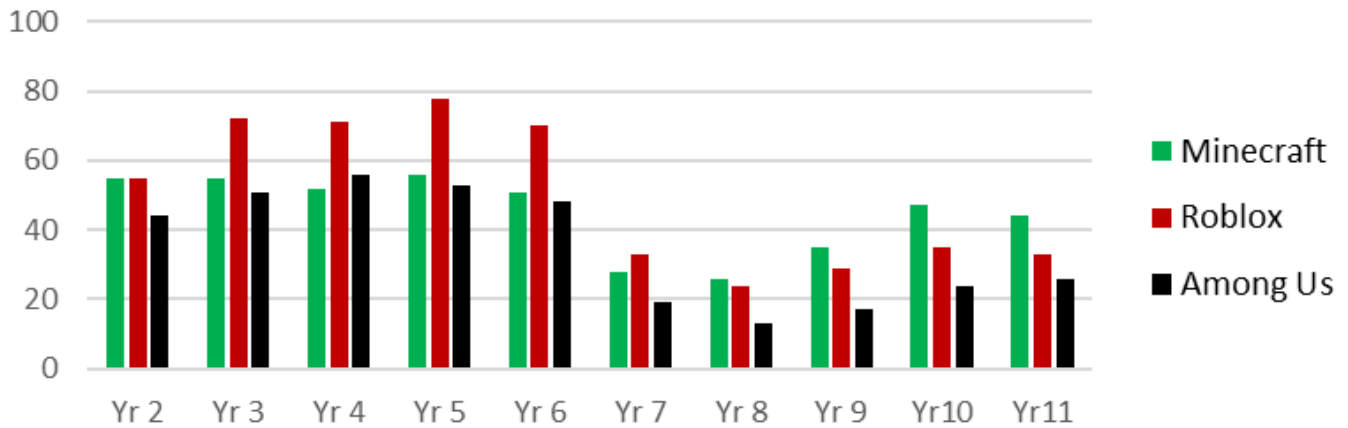
DOUBLES

BETWEEN THE AGES OF 7 & 8, AND DOUBLES
ALMOST EVERY YEAR UP TO AGE 14

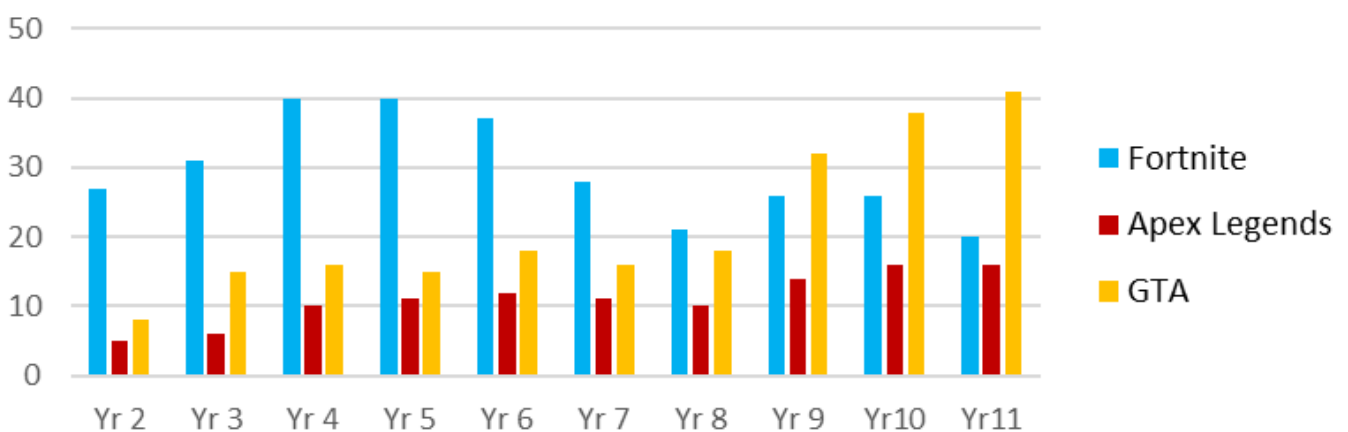


Games Played By Percentages

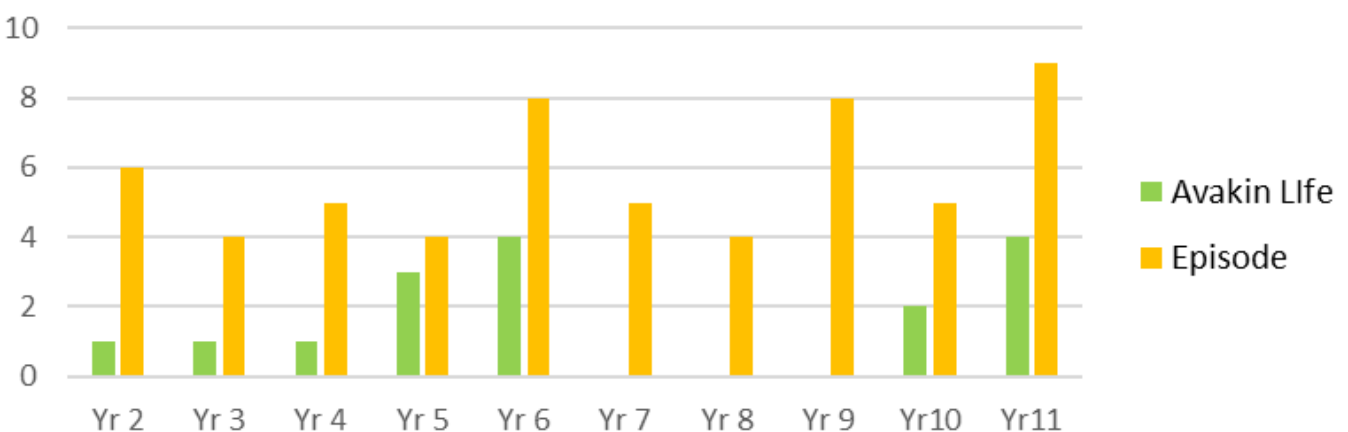
Minecraft / Roblox / Among Us



Fortnite / Apex / GTA



Episode Vs. Avakin Life



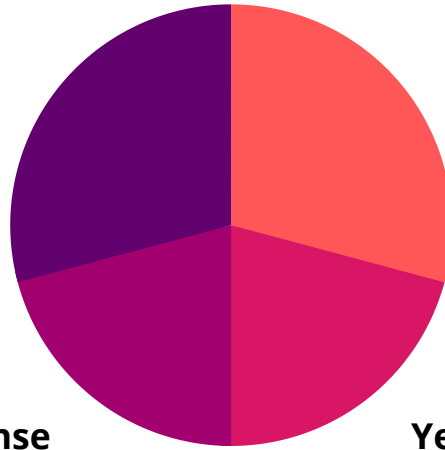
"Give more information about when you are playing on your Xbox/PlayStation and when you get an inappropriate message and what to do about it."

Do Age Ratings Matter To You?



Yes, Only for games
29.2%

No, I don't think they're fair
29.2%



No, They don't make sense
20.8%

Yes, For everything
20.8%



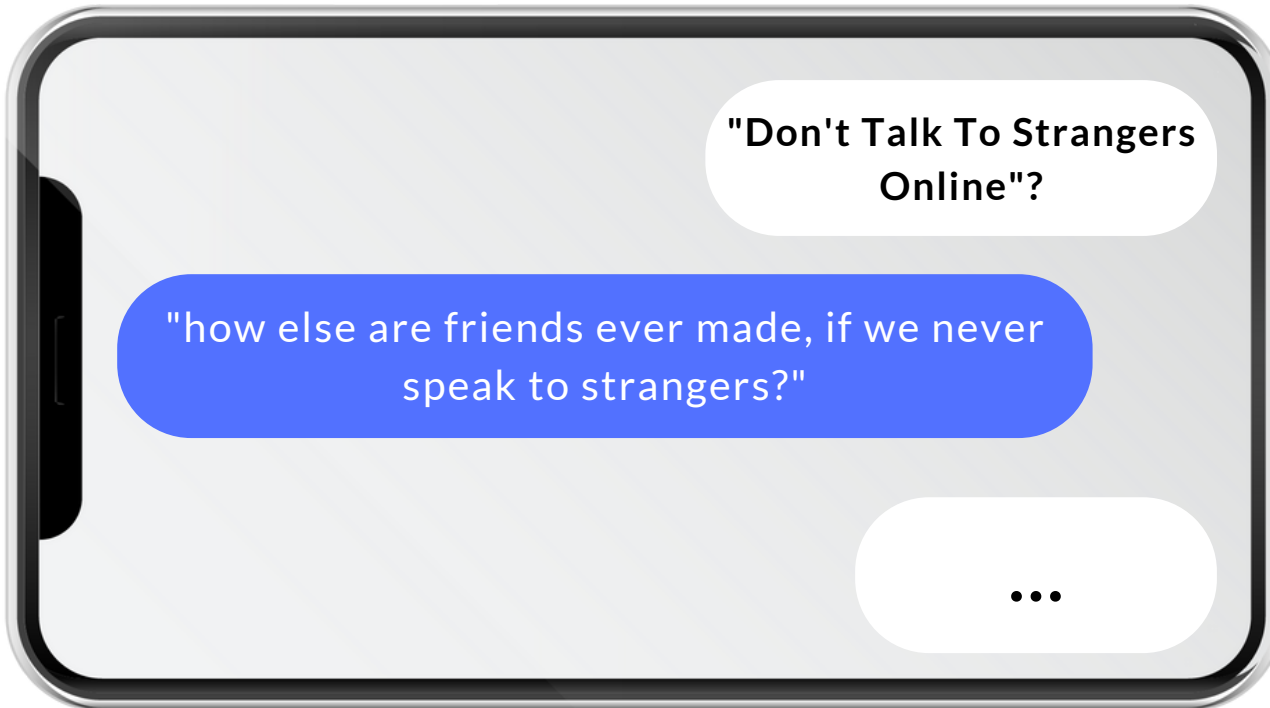
This question makes a fair assumption by the respondents about the confusing nature of age ratings and what they mean in practice. As these are not laws children have been educated about, these can be confusing for adults too. And so the spread of answers is indicative of the confusion, ignorance and circumnavigation of age ratings when compared to the apps used by the children who are ignoring these ratings.

Which Company Age Rating Would You Follow? Confusing....?



Online Safety Messages

Do Our Messages Ever Change As They Get Older?



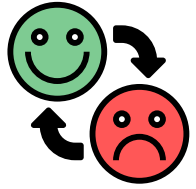
Only 24% of pupils said strangers online cannot be trusted.

Question: Do you think you have friends online, that you haven't met before? If so, can they be trusted?

We don't set the rules at home for parents. People often take the stance that if you're under 13, you just shouldn't be on Social Media and that's where the conversation ends and the walls are put up. A gentle balance between the rules (and the real reasons why there are these rules) and giving younger people the opportunity to have a conversation and build skills to protect themselves is required.



Only 52% of pupils know the age requirement for TikTok.

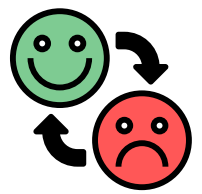


45% SAID
THEY SPEND SO MUCH
TIME ON THEIR
DEVICE BECAUSE
THEY'RE
BORED



Bored is a complicated term and children who feel this are often around other children or adults with whom they are not engaged with on a conversational, relational connection or indeed play based age. This suggests that with the high level of stimulation offered through devices and consoles that overwhelm of choice leads to the closing down of curiosity and so is replaced by endless activity online with little active engagement perhaps.

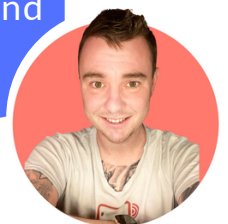
The responses relating to wanting to come off devices and not knowing how highlight the lack of emotional regulation skills that children possess and their ability to detect when they are perhaps tired, at the end of their flow or curiosity peak and so do not have a way to navigate being 'off' the device and how to do this. Supportive education here would be helpful.



Do you ever get angry at games/social media?



Anger & 'Rage Quitting' is something that comes up a lot when we speak with young people. So why is this so common? We think there are multiple factors, including the age rating and type of game they're playing compared to their emotional maturity level, how much sleep they're getting plus other external factors like their current home environment and what they see from their role models within the home, and online with Twitch, YouTube & TikTok all having creators who will get very emotional whilst streaming and playing their game.



"Be more relevant and instead of showing us a video you could actually of examples in class"



52% of **CHILDREN** believe their **PARENTS** **AREN'T** involved in their online activities

75% of **PARENTS** said they **ARE** involved.

Question: Do you feel your parents / guardians are involved in your online life?

A concern is the 2/3 of parents that children consider are not involved in their online lives and leaves the question hanging of; if this is true then who does take a interest in their online behaviours and where they visit?



"Tell us things we don't already know because every online safety talk is just the same things over and over again."

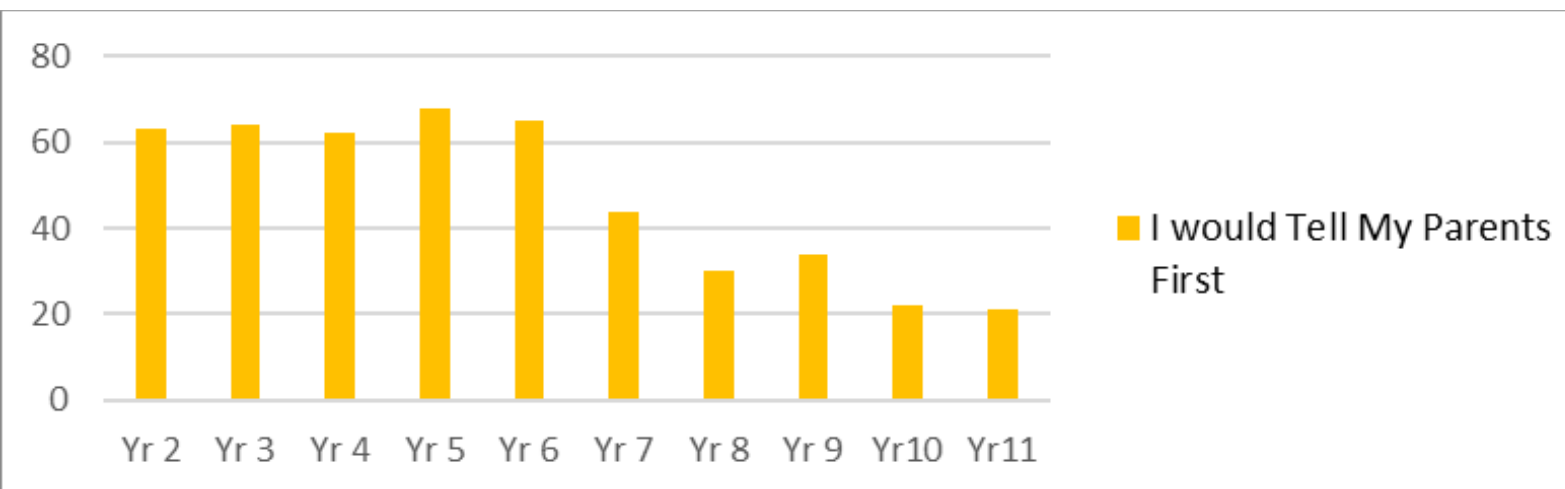


45% of 8-11 year olds say they'd ask their **FRIENDS** or **GOOGLE** before their parents if they had a problem online.

Question: If you were not sure about how to get help or seek advice, when at home, what could be a good way to find out quickly?



"They need to ask their children how they feel."



This highlights that children may not be able to ask their parents questions, their parents may not be present (employment/absent emotionally) and so children are resourceful enough to ask someone else, however that person may not be educated in the answer (the internet/friends)



Home life

Percentages of children who have seen Dangerous, potentially illegal or extreme content



We spent a lot of time working on and structuring this question in a way that young people would understand, in different age ranges. So this question was structured differently depending on the age groups and some explanation and referencing was used in most classrooms to help with understanding before answering. We also identified the need for some immediate re-assurance which meant if they answered Yes, their teacher was informed and a video would appear from Cath, reassuring and explaining what they can do next if they wish to talk.



Age 5-10
Avg 47%



Age 11-13
Avg 25%



Age 14-16
Avg 43%



"Stop trying to tell us that we should not go online instead try to tell us what to do if we see something that we don't like."



More questions...

have been raised following on from our very first report into the world of Online Safety. Our aim was to ask questions that others wouldn't, to age groups others shy away from and we have achieved this. In particular for me, the honesty captured has been incredible and some of the big points that stand out for more investigation are the links between device usage and boredom, and the willingness to separate from it given the ability. Another concern that we found during the course of completing this, and the conversations that followed is that TikTok is being used (as suspected) by the majority of young people and when you ask them how they found out information, or a website, or an app or game it's often "I saw it on TikTok". Lastly, what also frightened me slightly is when we provided preliminary findings to selected industry experts, no-one seemed bothered by the amount of safeguarding cases we'd uncovered. This is an attitude we will endeavour to change.

Time For Action

With this research comes the need for change. At Online Safety UK, we will use this information to inform and put appropriate pressure on bodies that need to take these concerns into consideration going forward. We will also be changing how to teach, talk and engage all our audiences going forward and we will continue to review this on a regular basis. The big shift for us, for young people, is to provide them with interactive examples where they make choices and those choices have consequences.

More to come

You heard it here first, there is more where that came from. We will look to run a new survey in November 2022, up until February 2023 to capture a larger audience again as well as separate some of our efforts into the questions raised from these results. Visit our website for more info www.onlinesafetyuk.com