



Piecing together identity online

A report by the UK Safer Internet Centre for Safer Internet Day 2020



Safer
Internet
Day 2020



About

This report has been published by the UK Safer Internet Centre and launched for Safer Internet Day 2020.

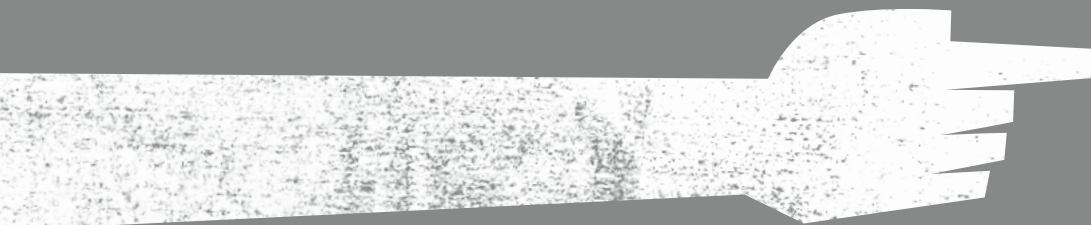
The UK Safer Internet Centre (www.saferinternet.org.uk) is a partnership of three leading online safety organisations; Childnet, the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) and South West Grid for Learning (SWGfL) co-funded by the European Commission and part of the joint Insafe-INHOPE networks. Coordinated in the UK by the UK Safer Internet Centre, Safer Internet Day sees hundreds of organisations get involved to help promote the safe, responsible and positive use of digital technology for children and young people. With thanks to the European Union and Tik Tok for supporting this research.

Methodology

The quantitative survey was conducted online by Censuswide between 16-24th December 2019 with a representative sample of 2001 young people aged 8-17 years olds as well as 2001 parents of those same children in the United Kingdom. Censuswide is a full-service research consultancy specialising in consumer and B2B research. This research was conducted on Censuswide's education network and participants under the age of 16 were contacted via their parents or guardians. Certain questions were only asked of the 13-17s due to their subject matter around online hate. For those questions, we did not report on more detailed demographic cross-breaks as the number of respondents were too low.

Total	Gender of Child		Age of Child		Disability		Ethnicity	
	Male	Female	8-12	13-17	Yes	No	White British	BAME
2001	954	1034	1055	946	366	1609	1671	166

Qualitative research was conducted with young people by Childnet with 13 children aged 9-14 in focus groups as well as an online survey of 41 Childnet Digital Leaders aged 8-18. Young people in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales were also filmed for the Safer Internet Day films.



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Foreword

Are young people free to be themselves online? This report reveals the way young people are managing and curating their identity online.

How are young people creating their online identities and what impact does this have on their sense of self?

Almost 2 in 5 (38%) young people aged 8-17, say it's easier to be themselves online than offline. From uploading a profile photo, liking a post, creating a video or even simply deciding what username to choose – there are numerous decisions young people are having to make on an almost daily basis on how they present themselves online.

These online experiences are essential to young people's identities, with 54% saying that they would feel lost, confused or as if they'd lost a part of themselves if their online accounts were taken away. This Safer Internet Day, we wanted to explore how young people manage their online identity, and how the internet shapes how they think of themselves and others.

The findings are fascinating. They show young people to be effective and careful communicators who are actively curating their online presence, using the different opportunities technology has to offer. Almost a third of 8-17s have created more than one account on the same online service, app or game, with over half (53%) said that it was so they could post different things to different audiences.

They are also finding themselves as part of a larger community with 31% saying they have found support they couldn't find offline, and 46% saying they understand other people's identities better because of the things they have seen online.

These online experiences are informing and inspiring a generation, with 34% of 8-17s saying that, in the last month, the internet has inspired them to take action

about a cause and 43% saying being online makes them feel their voices matter.

Whilst there are many similarities between young people's experiences, the research also shows that they are not a homogenous group and their overlapping and intersecting identities are shaping and informing their online experiences. The research draws on the experiences of different groups of young people, including disabled, BAME, and LGBT+ young people, revealing how much experiences can vary. 54% of disabled young people said it was easier to be themselves online than offline, compared with 38% of non-disabled young people; over a half (52%) also said in the last month they have found people like them they couldn't find offline. Disabled (47%) and BAME young people (43%) are also more likely to be inspired by the internet to take action about a cause in comparison to 34% overall.

It's vital that we understand the unique experiences of young people and how this affects the way they understand themselves and others. This is even more important to understand as we look into the pressures and challenges that emerge for young people today.

Nearly half of 8-17s (47%) think it's important to 'fit in' online and 61% think the internet puts pressure on people to come across as perfect. Young people are having to censor themselves with 62% saying that they are careful about what they share because they've seen people be mean to others based on who they are.

Over a third (36%) of young people aged 8-17 said that they had created more than one account because people had been mean to them. 52% of disabled children said they had done this because people had been mean to them in comparison to non-disabled children (29%). Worryingly, a quarter of 13-17s say that they have been targeted with online hate in the last month because of their gender, sexuality, race, religion, disability or transgender identity, with 45% of disabled teens reporting this.

However young people are trying to reclaim online spaces with over half (52%) sending a nice message to someone

who was being bullied because they are different and 2 in 5 (42%) saying they replied to someone who was posting negative things.

We also asked parents and carers how they supported and talked to their children. The majority of parents are talking to their children about their online lives with 93% saying they had talked to their child about how to keep their information safe online. Over a third of parents (35%) also said that their child has helped them do something online on weekly basis. Yet, for many parents, they still have concerns. 61% worry about their pressure that their child is under to be perfect online and over half (54%) worry about what their child does on the internet. Yet children are wanting to reach out to their parents, with over half (51%) wanting to talk to them about their online identities.

It's clear that the internet is primarily a place of positivity for young people. Whether being inspired to be the next campaigner, supporter or friend – it's a place for them to find their voice, explore their identities, and support each other.

However we must help young people on this journey by acknowledging the pressures, challenges and limits the internet also brings. We can do this by listening to them and starting conversations about our online lives. We know talking works; as a result of Safer Internet Day last year, 78% of young people felt more confident about what to do if they were worried about something online.

It is so important for all of us - adults, businesses, and government – to support young people to harness the internet for good and make it a place where everyone is free to be themselves.



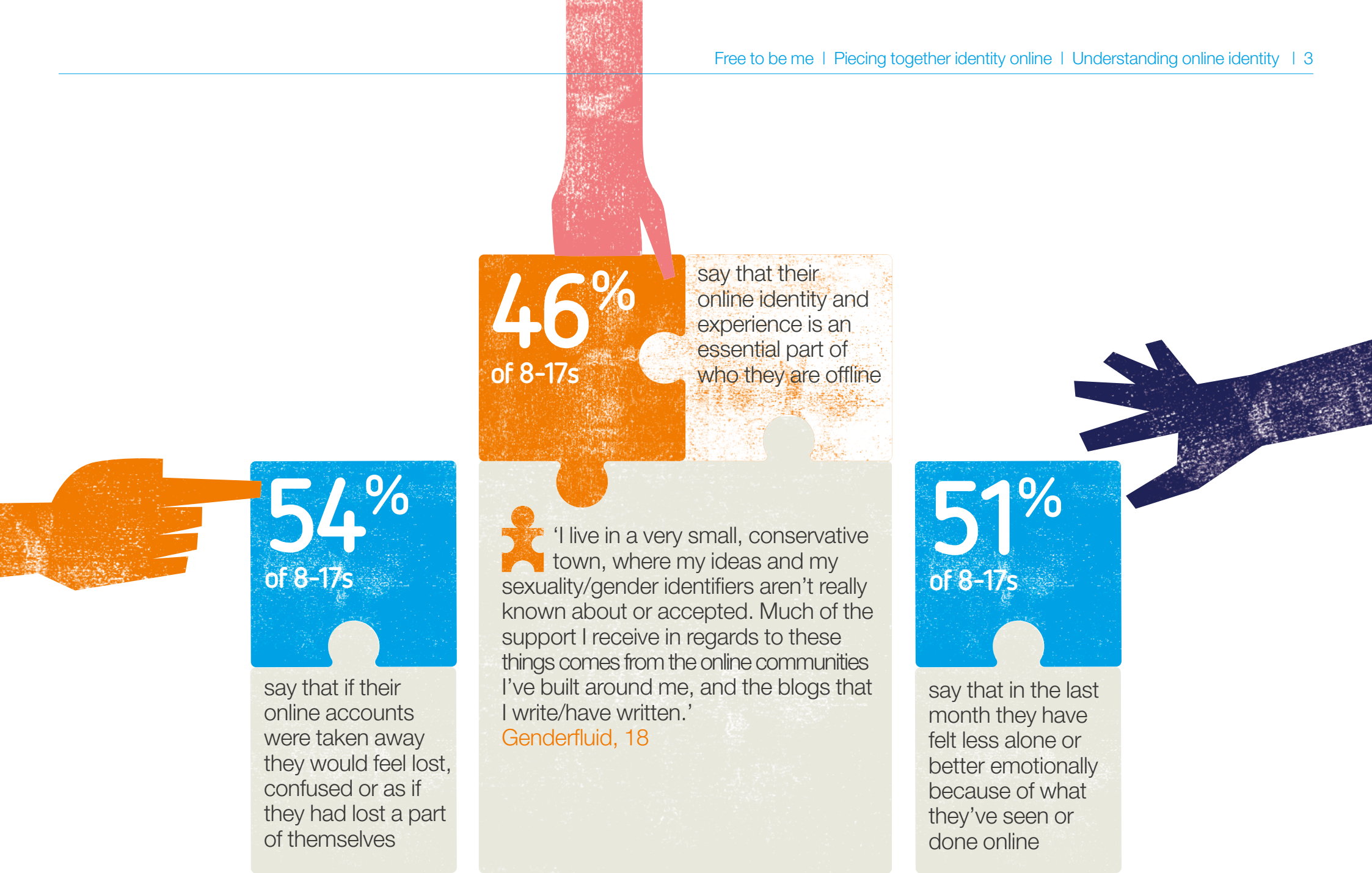
Will Gardner OBE
Director
UK Safer Internet Centre

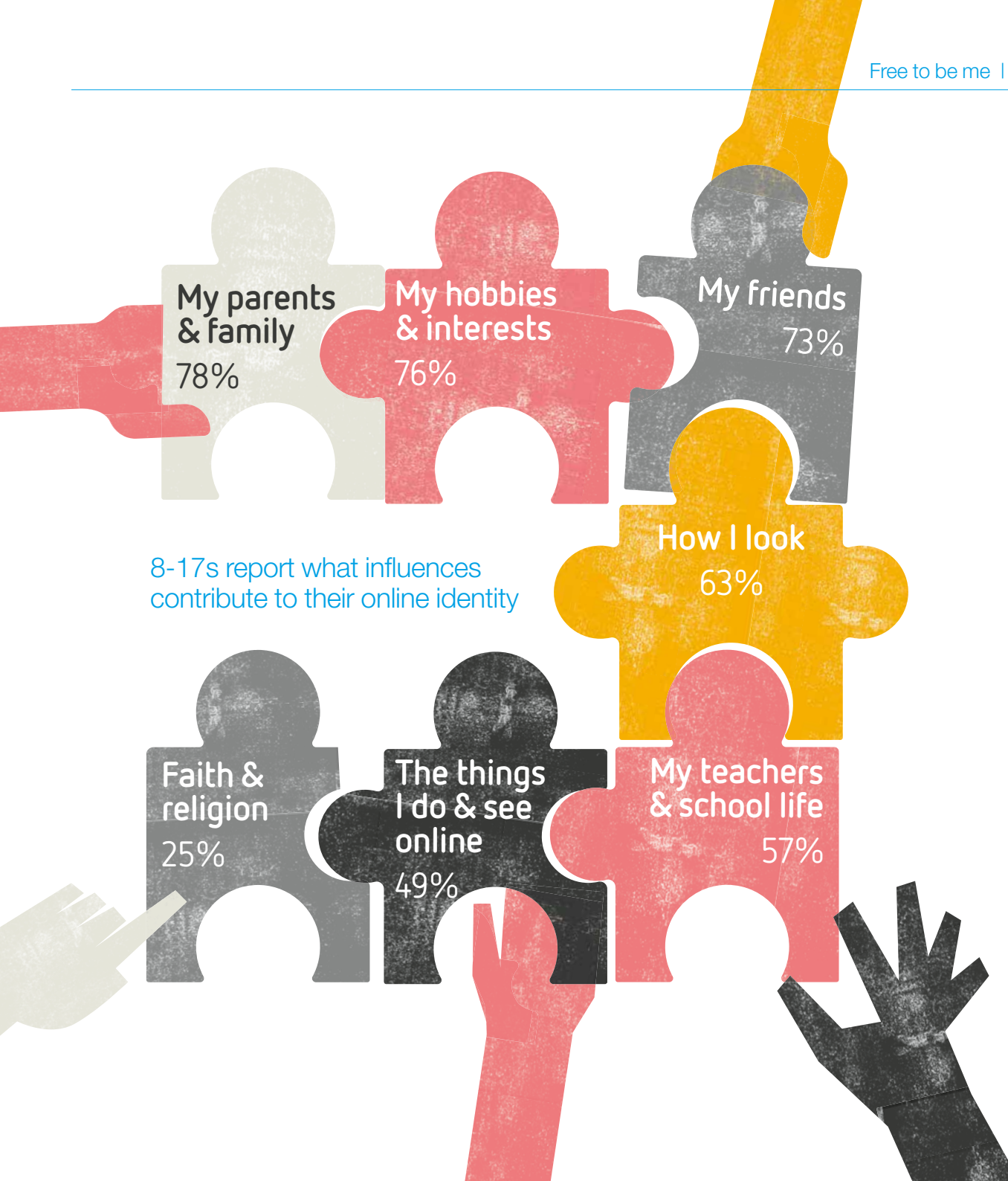
Understanding online identity

'Every single YouTuber, Instagrammer or people on social media always have some sort of community and there are the people who follow or subscribe to them. I just think it's nice to think that the internet has brought everyone together, like through their love for this one thing that the YouTuber does which I think is just great. To the people who are just trying to be mean and ruin that well they should just stop, it's very simple just stop.'



Boy, 9/10





What makes you 'you'?

To understand how online experiences are influencing how children and young people develop their identity, we asked them about the influences on their identity.

46% of 8-17s say that their online identity and experience is an essential part of who they are offline.

Whilst being online is clearly important to young people's sense of self, it does not outweigh other significant influences. Young people see their online identity as one part of a larger puzzle of what makes them who they are.

Half of young people (49%) say that the things they do and see online contribute to their sense of identity. Their parents and family (78%), hobbies and interests (76%), friends (73%), how they look (63%), teachers and school experience (56%) all are reported as being more important influences.

Online communities

Online communities are very significant in young people's lives, giving them a sense of self, figuring out who they are and helping them through difficult situations. This is reported as being most significant for disabled children.

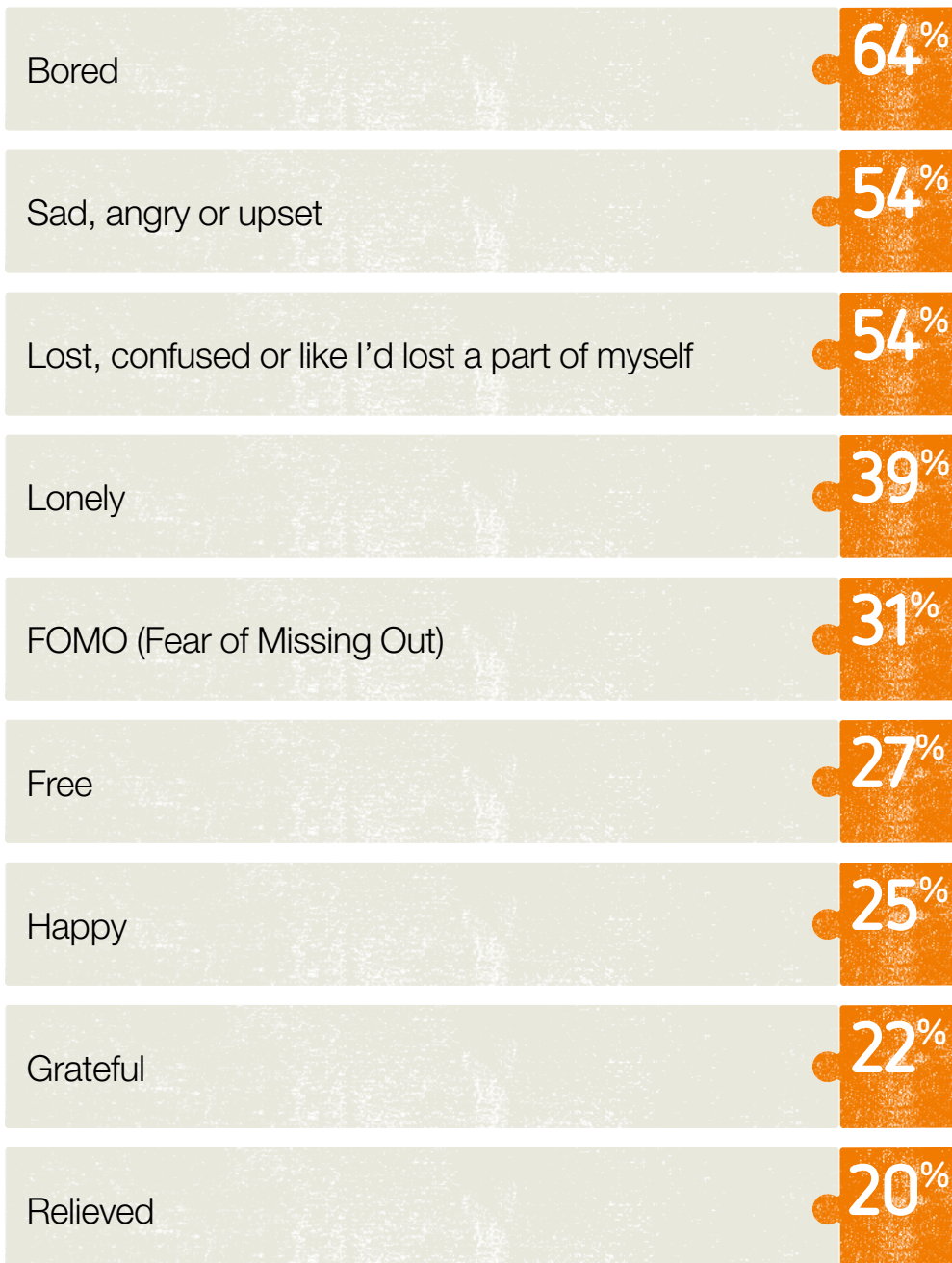
Over a half of young people (51%) say that in the last month they have felt less alone or better emotionally because of what they've seen or done online with 67% of disabled children reporting this. Almost a third of young people (31%) say that in the last month, the internet has helped them through a difficult time with disabled children more likely to say this (48% in comparison to 27% of non-disabled children).

Over half of disabled children say that in the last month they have found people like them that they couldn't find offline, in comparison to 33% of non-disabled children. Disabled children also say that the internet has helped them figure out who they are with 47% saying this in comparison to 26% of non-disabled children.

It was not possible to ask those under 16 about their sexuality or gender identity and therefore the significance of online communities for LGBT+ children was not found in the quantitative survey, although it was apparent in the qualitative research. These online communities were an important place to connect, learn and allow expression for LGBT children.

	Total	8-12	13-17	Disabled children	Non-disabled children	White British	BAME
I've got confidence to be myself offline	47%	43%	50%	54%	45%	46%	43%
I've understood other peoples identity, experience, views, or beliefs better	46%	42%	50%	54%	44%	45%	48%
I've felt less alone	41%	39%	44%	57%	38%	41%	39%
I've felt better emotionally because of what I've seen or done online	36%	34%	38%	47%	33%	35%	39%
I've found people like me that I couldnt find offline	36%	34%	39%	52%	33%	36%	37%
It's helped me through a difficult time	31%	29%	34%	48%	27%	31%	34%
I've found support that I couldn't find offline	31%	27%	36%	44%	28%	30%	36%
It's helped me figure out who I am	30%	29%	32%	47%	26%	30%	30%
I've felt less misunderstood	29%	26%	32%	45%	25%	29%	31%

8-17s report how they feel when thinking about the information, activities, groups and communities they have seen online in the last month.



How 8-17s would feel if their online accounts were taken away (social media, gaming, messaging apps)

Online accounts and experiences are evidently central to young people's lives. If these accounts were to be taken away, the 8-17s surveyed said they would feel bored (64%), sad (54%) or angry or upset (54%). Over half (54%) of young people said that if their online accounts were taken away they would feel lost, confused, or as if they had lost part of themselves, highlighting the significance of the online world on their lives and sense of self.



How young people understand what makes up their online identity

The way that young people's identity is created and shaped online is complex and varied. Young people report a number of different 'characteristics' that they think define their online identity. Young people report that it is their own actions, behaviour and thoughts that are more important to their online identity than what others do or say about them. Half of all young people aged 8-17 (49%) report that their online identity is created by what others share about them online (photos/videos) and say about them (48%).

2 in 5 young people also say that their support for a campaign, social movement or petition also makes them who they are online. Almost half (49%) of disabled children identify their support for a campaign, social movement or petition as important to their online identity in comparison to 38% of non-disabled children.

Creating identity online

When asked about the last online persona or avatar that they created, the top two most important aspects were that it was fun (76%) and that it let them experiment (61%). The young people surveyed were split in whether they thought that it was important that their online persona/avatar looked like or represented them, with 56% saying it was and 45% who didn't. Almost half of young people (44%) said that allowing them to be someone else was important.

Whilst the majority of young people are creating their online personas/avatars with a sense of fun and freedom, safety is also a consideration with half of young people (49%) thinking about whether it stops other people knowing who they are offline. Young people are also weighing up social pressures, with almost half (47%) saying that they thought it helping them to fit in was important and over a third (36%) stating that it was important that it looked better than they do.

	8-17s	Disabled children	Non-disabled children	White British	BAME
That it is fun	76%	75%	76%	77%	72%
That it lets me experiment	61%	68%	59%	61%	61%
That it looks like or represents me	56%	55%	56%	55%	59%
That it stops other people knowing who I am offline	49%	58%	48%	50%	50%
That it helps me fit in	47%	58%	44%	46%	52%
That I can be someone else	44%	57%	41%	43%	52%
That it is silly	42%	48%	41%	42%	44%
That it looks better than I do	36%	49%	33%	35%	44%
That it shows what I want to be when I grow up	33%	44%	31%	33%	39%

Thinking about the last avatar or online persona that you created (e.g. account profile, bitmoji, bio), to what extent do you agree or disagree that the following was important?



'With avatars you can be more creative with it. A photo – maybe, because you can photoshop it or something but to be honest with an avatar they always look kind of funny and... you have creative license to do whatever you want to do.'

Boy, 9/10



'I feel quite represented knowing that there is the difference in skin tone and now that there is a new sari in the update... it's quite cool to be honest. I feel like with emojis it's really nice to have it like a little declaration of me just there. It would be lovely to have more emojis but I'm quite content.'

Girl, 14



'I like weird and wacky things, like strange things that you don't find around in everyday life. The reason I picked this character is because it feels unique to me and weird and wacky.'

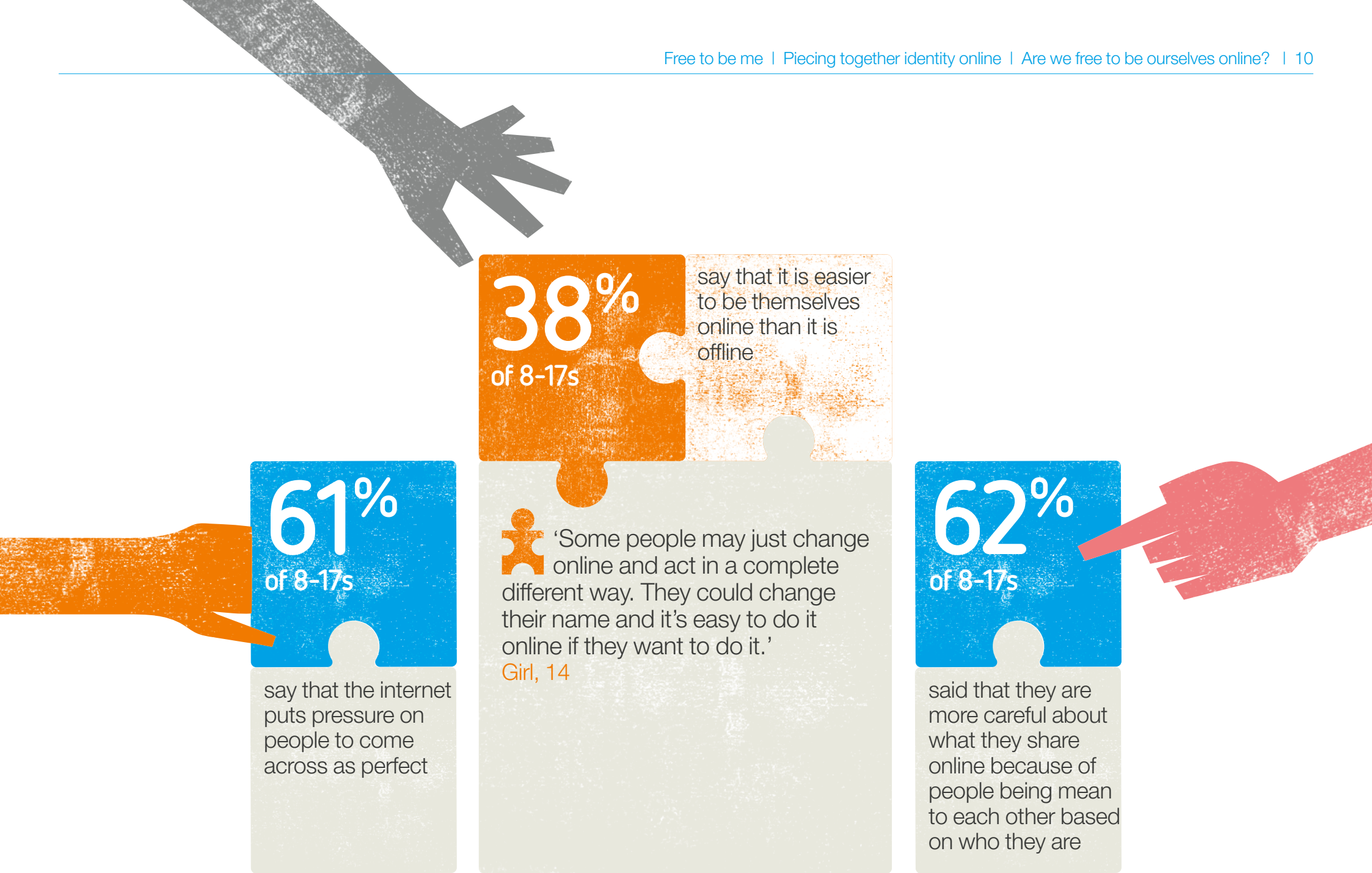
Boy, Safer Internet Day film

Are we free to be ourselves online?

'I think for a long time a lot of minorities have been underrepresented and misrepresented. Black women, other ethnicities, people with special needs and other disabilities, and now we're in an age where everyone is getting changed. They're acknowledging that their change needs to be accepted as well.'



Girl, Safer Internet Day film.



Curating identity

Young people are carefully curating and navigating the many different identities that they may have through the many different opportunities that technology has to offer. Through multiple accounts, different types of services and tools, young people are demonstrating understanding and nuance in the different ways in which they can present themselves.

Almost a third (32%) of 8-17s have created more than one account on the same online service, app or game. The gender or age of the children surveyed made little difference to whether they had created more than one account or not. However, disabled children reported as being significantly more likely to do so (55%) in comparison to non-disabled children (27%).

Young people are creating multiple accounts on the same service for a number of reasons. The most common reason was the simple practicality of forgetting their password (61%). Almost half (46%) said it was so they could get ahead in a game, with 38% saying that it was so what is shown to them by the service they use is varied (e.g. adverts, or suggested videos).



'I don't think it's even needed asking for your gender [talking about apps and services]. I mean at the end of the day you're just using their technologies but maybe it's for data.'

Girl, 14



'I've put down female and on my feed it just has make up and fashion and although that is what I do like I know some girls probably find that really stereotypical...it would be nice for girls or guys who don't for example like football to scroll and see things for them. Instagram should collect on your most recent posts and develop that feed for them.'

Girl, 14

Young people as careful and effective communicators

Young people are also creating more than one account to be in control of what was seen and known about them. They are thoughtful and proactive about how they communicate to their multiple audiences. Over half (53%) said that it was so they could post different things to different audiences. Half of young people (50%) said it was so they can have a public and private account and so that they can keep part of their identity private (49%). 38% say that it was so that their parents didn't know what they do online.

2 in 5 young people (40%) said it was because they wanted to change how they are seen online, with 44% saying it was because they had outgrown their account. 37% reported that it was to preserve their online reputation.



'The new emojis were chosen to fit with modern society.

With LGBT you might have emojis with 2 men or 2 women and different skin tones as well.'

Girl, 13

	Total	Male	Female	8-12	13-17	Disabled	Non-disabled disability	White British	BAME
Because I forgot my password	61%	65%	58%	61%	60%	62%	61%	62%	53%
So that I can post different things to different audiences	53%	49%	56%	46%	60%	58%	51%	51%	59%
So that I can have a public and private account	50%	47%	53%	44%	57%	58%	46%	49%	56%
So that I can keep part of my identity private	49%	50%	49%	45%	54%	57%	46%	49%	53%
So that I can get ahead in a game	46%	51%	42%	46%	46%	55%	42%	44%	47%
Because I've outgrown my account	44%	45%	43%	40%	48%	54%	39%	43%	50%
Because I want to change how I'm seen online	40%	40%	40%	37%	44%	50%	36%	39%	48%
So that my parents don't know what I do online	38%	40%	37%	33%	43%	55%	30%	37%	45%
So what is shown to me by the service I use is varied (e.g. adverts, or suggested videos)	38%	42%	36%	36%	41%	52%	32%	37%	52%
To preserve my online reputation	37%	37%	38%	35%	41%	47%	33%	35%	52%
Because people have been mean to me	36%	37%	35%	37%	35%	52%	29%	36%	33%
As a joke	36%	39%	34%	37%	35%	47%	32%	35%	38%
To pretend to be someone else	31%	32%	31%	32%	31%	45%	25%	31%	38%

8-17s report on the reasons why they created more than one account on the same service



'A lot of teenagers and children our age are scared of getting judged. That's why they have that protective layer and private story because they are scared of getting judged so they only choose people who they are close with to be on their private story because they know they won't get judged by them.'

Girl, 14

Experimenting and freedom

2 in 5 young people aged 8-17 (38%) say that it is easier to be themselves online than it is offline, with this rising to 54% of disabled children feeling this way. The medium of technology also shapes how young people feel in their ability to experiment. 2 in 5 (39%) of young people also say that it is easier to be themselves on temporary posts (e.g. Snapchat or Instagram stories) than on permanent posts. 31% of young people say that livestreaming allows them to show who they truly are.

Yet, 61% of 8-17s say that the internet puts pressure on people to come across as perfect

Less than half of 8-17s (47%) said that they felt free to experiment with how they present themselves online. A third of young people say that in the last month they have felt pressure to show the best version of themselves online. 30% say in the last month they have presented themselves in a different way online to protect their true identity. Disabled children are significantly more likely to do this with 45% saying they have done so in comparison to 26% of non-disabled children.



'Well like maybe if they're on Instagram or something then they might want to post pictures of themselves being really cool. So they are going out of their way to make themselves look as brilliant as possible.'

Boy, 9/10

61%
of 8-17s

say that the internet puts pressure on people to come across as perfect



'With identity it's the way you act and identify yourself and with social media you always have to be careful not to put your whole personality out there or your actual true self out there because it is a dark place sometimes.'

Girl, 14

47%
of 8-17s

say that they felt free to experiment with how they present themselves online

Being targeted based on identity

62% said that they are more careful about what they share online because of people being mean to each other based on who they are.

Over a third (36%) of young people aged 8-17 said that they had created more than one account because people had been mean to them. 52% of disabled children said they had done this because people had been mean to them in comparison to non-disabled children (29%). 70% of young people say that the internet makes it easy for people to be mean, in comparison to 37% who say that the internet makes it easy for people to be kind.

42% of 13-17s say that in the last month they have seen people bullying or attacking someone online because of their gender, sexuality, race, religion, disability or transgender identity. This significantly rises to 62% of disabled children seeing this. The findings show that there can be a disparity between how some groups of young people recognise and understand how online hate manifests and that this can be dependent on whether they belong to a group that is more likely to be targeted.



'Everyone needs to be nice - as childish as it sounds, the internet is actually quite harsh, people are homophobic, islamophobic etc and so it's harder for people to express their feelings and thoughts online, knowing that there are haters and very rude people out there stops people from doing what they want online.'

Girl, 14

A quarter of 13-17s say that they have been targeted with online hate in the last month because of their gender, sexuality, race, religion, disability or transgender identity, with 45% of disabled teens reporting this.

These identities often overlap and intersect with each other and therefore can place even more significant limits for young people to express themselves online.



'As a member of the LGBTQ+ community it is difficult to be yourself online, mainly because people are homophobic and dislike members of this community.'

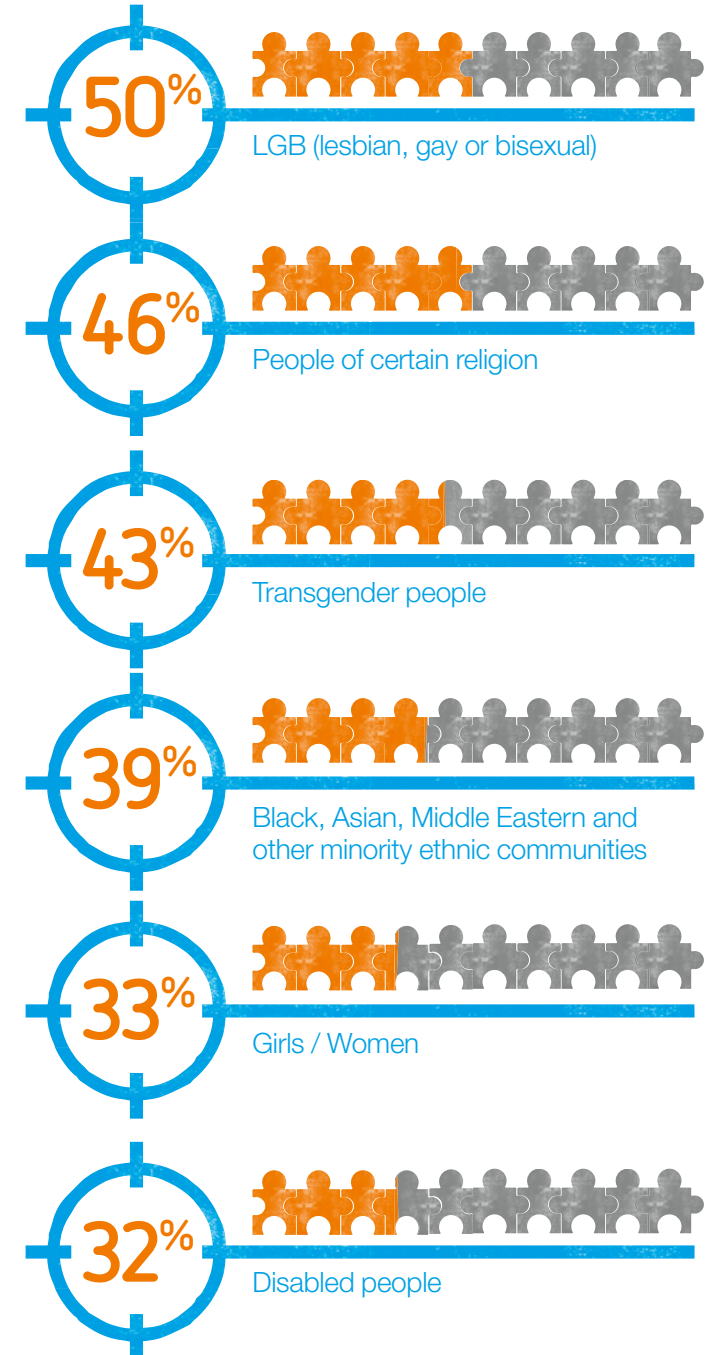
Non binary, 12



'There are a few places in the internet where you can find defamatory pictures or jokes on a certain gender, ethnicity, religion etc... The so called 'Memes' may be funny, but a good portion of them represent different people as inferior or someone you should laugh at.'

Boy, 15

Those who 13-17s said were mostly likely to be targeted with such online hate were:

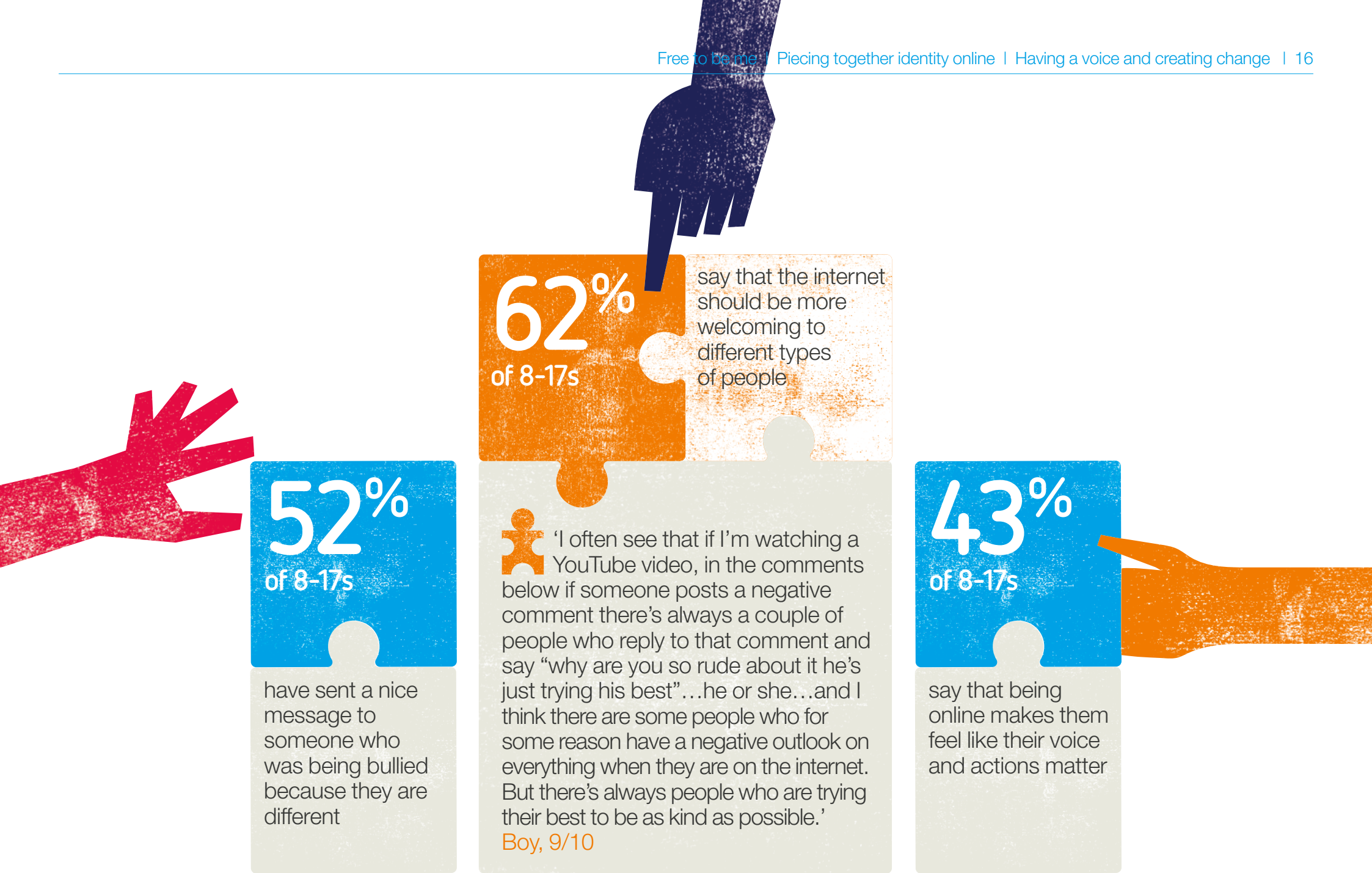


Having a voice and creating change

'You need to lead by example and be the change you wish to see - if you are yourself online it may inspire your friends to do the same.'



Girl, 11



52%
of 8-17s

have sent a nice message to someone who was being bullied because they are different

62%
of 8-17s

say that the internet should be more welcoming to different types of people



'I often see that if I'm watching a YouTube video, in the comments below if someone posts a negative comment there's always a couple of people who reply to that comment and say "why are you so rude about it he's just trying his best"...he or she...and I think there are some people who for some reason have a negative outlook on everything when they are on the internet. But there's always people who are trying their best to be as kind as possible.'

Boy, 9/10

43%
of 8-17s

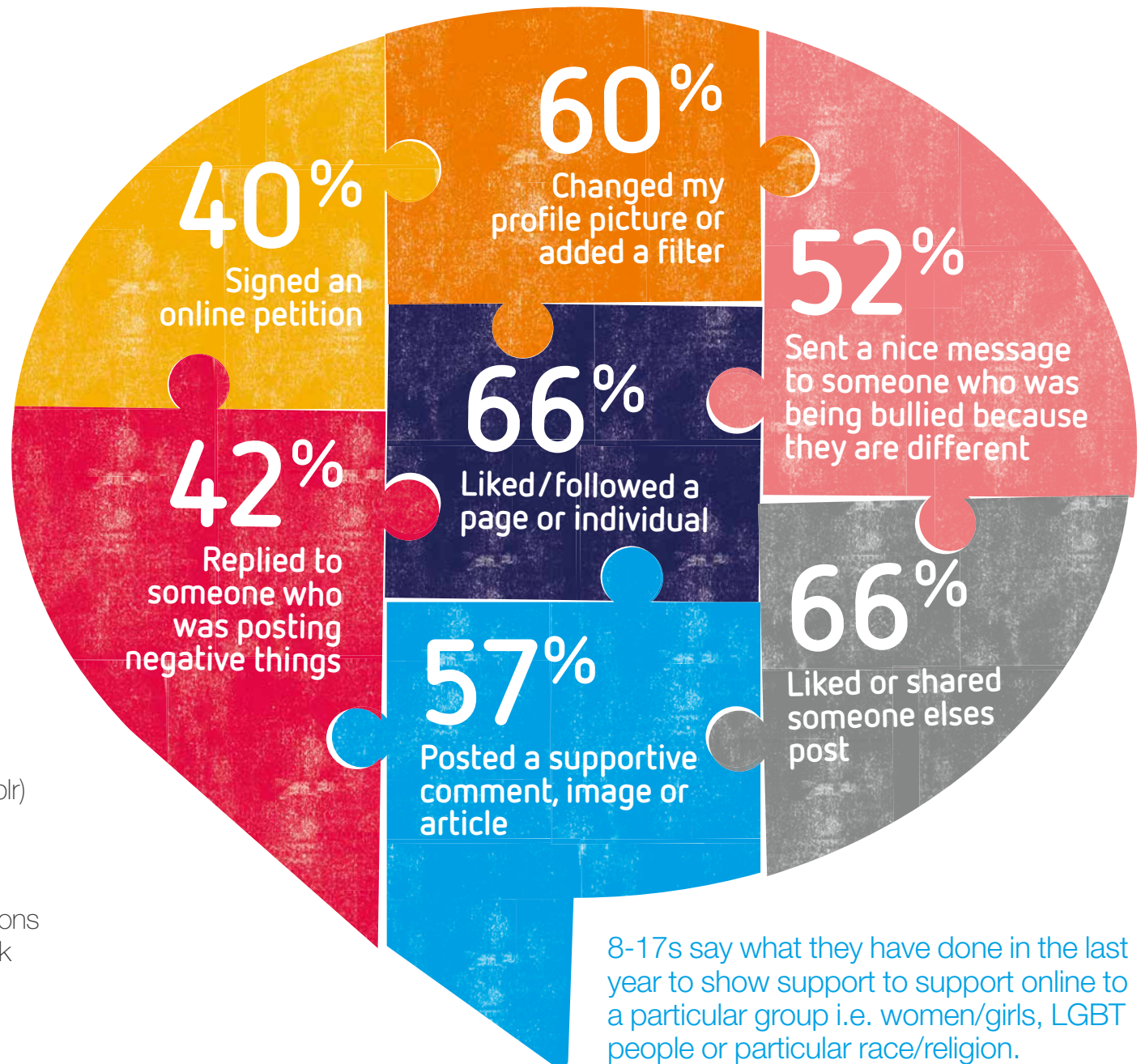
say that being online makes them feel like their voice and actions matter

Agents of change

62% of 8-17s say that the internet should be more welcoming to different types of people. Young people are championing each other and see themselves as these agents of change.

68% of young people say that in the last month they have seen people posting things online that are supportive, kind or positive about a certain group (for example, girls, LGBT people, disabled people or a certain race or religion).

43% of young people say that being online makes them feel like their voice and actions matter. Over a third (34%) say in the last month they have been inspired to take action about a cause because of something that they saw online. Disabled children (47%) and BAME children (43%) were more likely to say they have been inspired to take action this way.



'Create safe spaces. Many sites (i.e. Tumblr) have systems whereby people can create blogs and filter through posts to cultivate a safe space where people can ask questions, be educated or just escape from harmful conversations elsewhere. Some people offline get a lot of slack for aspects of themselves and need an online, anonymous escape.'

Genderfluid, 18

Disabled children reported as being significantly more likely than non-disabled children to show support to another group such as sending a nice message to someone who was being bullied because they are different (71% in comparison to 48%), or signing an online petition (58% in comparison to 35%).

	Total	Disabled children	Non-disabled children
Liked/followed a page or individual	68%	80%	65%
Liked or shared someone else's post	67%	78%	65%
Changed my profile picture or added a filter	60%	73%	57%
Posted a supportive comment, image or article	57%	71%	54%
Sent a nice message to someone who was being bullied because they are different	52%	71%	48%
Replied to someone who was posting negative things	42%	59%	39%
Signed an online petition	40%	58%	35%

In the last year, what 8-17s say they have done to show support online to a particular group (i.e. women/girls, LGBT people or a particular race or religion)



'I often see that if I'm watching a YouTube video in the comments below if someone posts a negative comment there's always a couple of people who reply to that comment and say "why are you so rude about it he's just trying his best"...he or she...and I think there are some people who for some reason have a negative outlook on everything when they are on the internet, but there's always people who are trying their best to be as kind as possible.'

Boy, 9/10



'Usually what I do, I don't suggest to do this but I jump on to the comments and defend the person. I go get facts and do my research to just absolutely destroy the guy and then I report it.'

Boy, 14

Parents

'Sit down with me, and have a one-on-one conversation.'



Girl, Safer Internet Day film



51%
of parents

think their child
feels free to
experiment with
how they present
themselves online



49%
of parents

say that they
feel their child is
shaped by what
they do and see
online

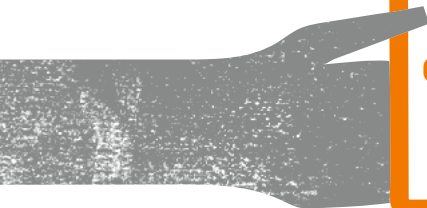


‘And if they are worried [about
their children being online], don’t
go straight up to them. Just slowly
build up to it so both of you get
comfortable talking about the situation
and that just makes it a lot easier for
both sides.’

Girl, Safer Internet Day film

43%
of parents

think their child
feels that their
online identity is
important to who
they are offline





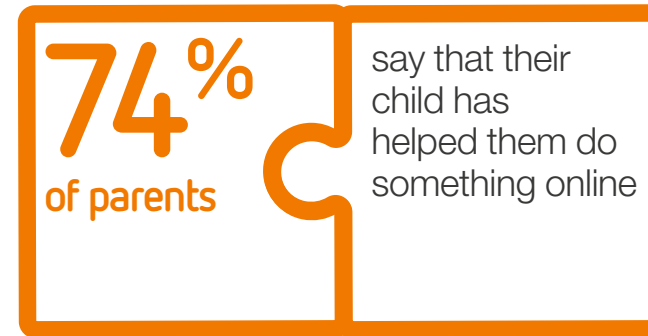
The majority of parents are talking to their children about their online lives.

- Whilst a significant majority of parents (85%) say they have spoken to their child about how they present themselves online, 1 in 10, (10%) have never done this.
- 79% of parents saying they feel confident in supporting their child when they are upset by something online.
- The majority of parents (75%) feel confident in understanding how their child uses the internet, however this leaves a quarter of parents (24%) who do not.



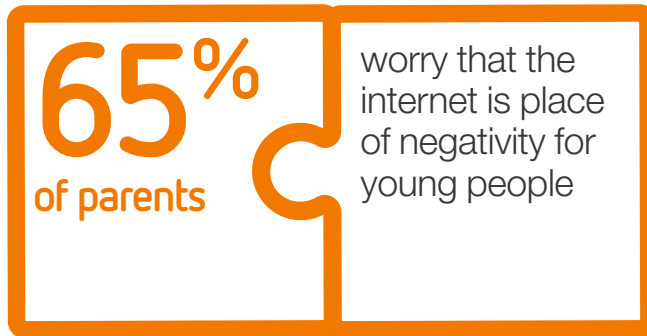
'They [parents] can ask them about their online lives – what they like doing.'

Boy, Safer Internet Day film



They are also using what the internet has to offer to help them understand their children, using it together with their children, and to share content about their children.

- 92% of parents say they have spent time with their child watching or researching something online with 78% doing so at least once a month.
- 80% of parents say they have spent time with their child finding out about different people, places or cultures online.
- 76% of parents have posted a photo or video featuring their child online (e.g Facebook or Instagram) with almost half (47%) doing so at least once a month.
- 74% of parents say that their child has helped them do something online, with over a third (35%) saying their child has done so on a weekly basis.
- Over half of parents (53%) that they have used the internet to learn more about their child's life and who they are.
- 30% say being online has helped their child through a difficult time (this is similar to the 31% of young people saying being online has helped them through a difficult time).



Parents still have concerns about their child's experiences online

- 65% of parents worry that the internet is place of negativity for young people.
- 61% of parents have worried about the pressure that their child feels to be perfect online with over a third (36%) worrying on a weekly basis.
- Over half of parents (54%) worry about what their child does online.
- 2 in 5 parents (39%) say the internet has more influence on their child than they do.
- 35% of parents say that their child doesn't want them involved in their online life (31% of parents of 8-12s, in comparison to 55% of parents of 13-17s) but 51% of 8-17s said that they want to be able to talk to their parents about their online life.
- 31% of parents say their child doesn't want to talk to them about their online life.

'First foster a relationship that is trusting. Don't micromanage, no good can come from that.'



Girl, Safer Internet Day film

Conclusion

Everyone has a responsibility to make a positive difference online and help create inclusive online spaces. We can all promote the positive by being kind and respectful to others and seeking out positive opportunities to create and connect. We can all respond to the negative by reporting any harmful or illegal content, and by being there for our friends, family and wider community.

Safer Internet Day aims to not only create a safer internet but also a better internet, where everyone is empowered to use technology responsibly, respectfully, critically and creatively. Everyone has a right to be safe and happy online.

Young people are calling out for us to listen to them and give them the space and power to create a positive change. It's our responsibility to help, support and guide them to do so.

Let's create an internet where everyone is free to be themselves.

The Young People's Charter

62% of children aged 8 to 17 years old have said they are more careful about what they share online because of people being mean based on who they are. This is not okay. We call on government to make the internet a place where all young people are #freetobe themselves online.

The UK Safer Internet Centre has worked with young people to develop a Young People's Charter for Safer Internet Day 2020 on how government can help make a more inclusive internet where everyone is #freetobe themselves. We have done this through an online poll of over 2001 children, speaking to 13 children in focus groups, 41 Childnet Digital Leaders in an online survey and consulted Childnet Digital Champions.

This charter of four key points comes from the young people we spoke to.



'I believe it's important for to have a Young People's Charter such as this as it gives young people a voice, a chance to stand up for what they want to see being done on the internet. It gives us, as the youth, a platform to be heard and inspire a change within not only our generation, but generations before us and after us to create a better, kinder internet.'

Digital Champion, 14

1) Provide good quality education about the internet

Government must ensure young people receive regular, good quality education about the internet from an early age. This should include respecting others, navigating technology safely and how to ask for help when something goes wrong. Don't just tell us what not to do; give us practical ways to use the internet to get the most out of it. Invest in educating our parents and carers on how important technology is to us, as well as how to support and talk to us. Provide education for wider society on these topics, as well as other challenges we may face online.

2) Protect equal rights and opportunities online and offline

Everyone should feel that they are welcome, celebrated, fairly represented and given a safe space to be themselves online. In the last month, 4 in 10 UK young people have seen people bullying or attacking someone online because of their sexuality, race, religion, disability or gender identity. But this isn't just an online issue. Government should ensure all children are given equal rights online and offline.

3) Establish better protection and accountability

The services we use must think about the pressures and risks they create when designing and creating a public platform, and be held to account. Government must ensure companies are creating services that are appropriate for all users and be clear and transparent on the action they take when people are targeted online. It's our right to have access to the internet – but it's also our right for it to be safe and positive.

4) Give us the space and power to create change

We want to be part of the solution. Give us the opportunity to have our say, whether at parent's evenings or at national meetings on online issues. We want to lead by example and be the change we wish to see. It's our future – we want to help make an internet where everyone is #freetobe themselves.

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