

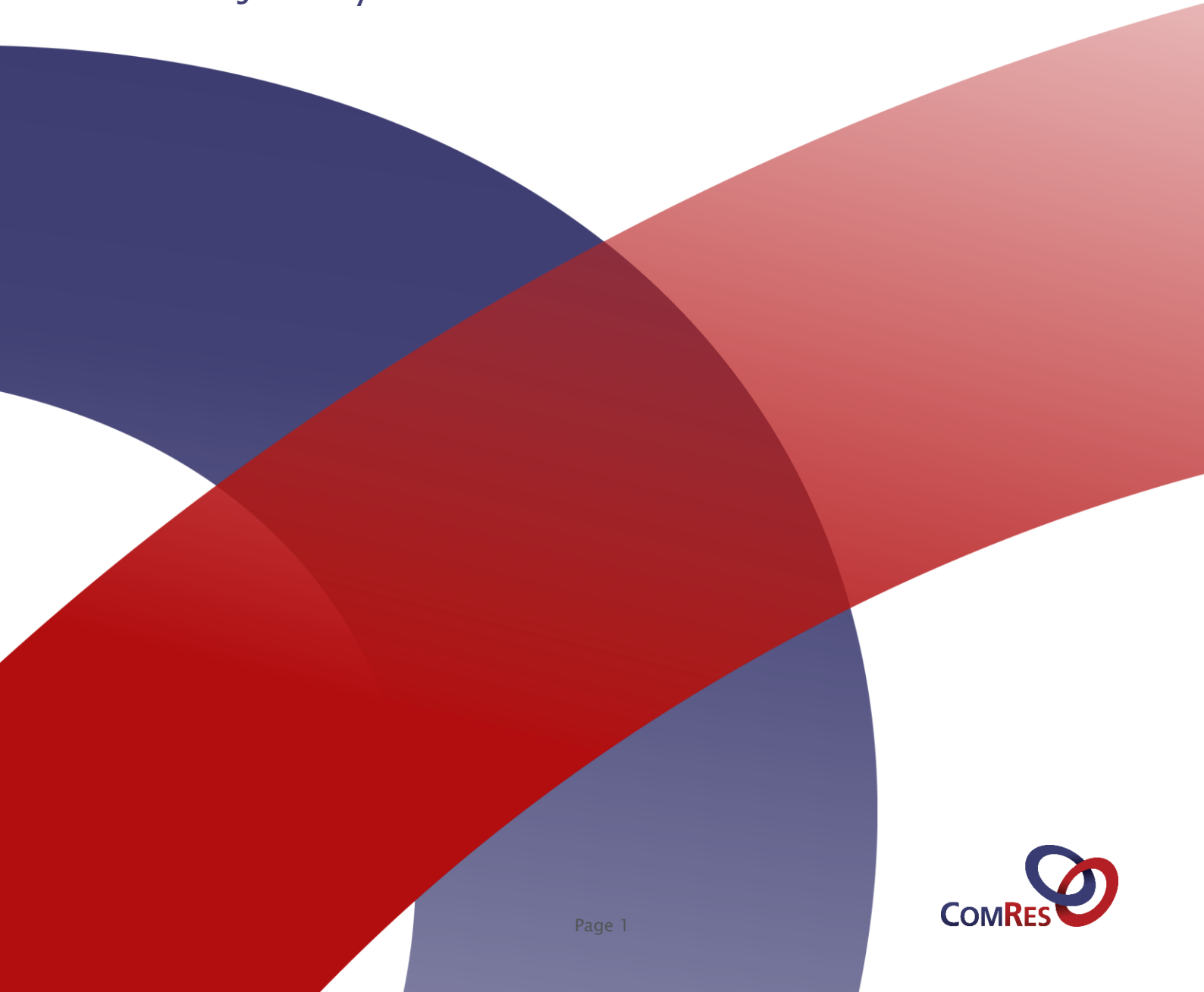


**NSPCC**

**SOCIAL MEDIA & CHILDREN SURVEY  
HEADLINE REPORT**

**NSPCC**

January 2019



# METHODOLOGY

ComRes interviewed 2,748 GB adults, including a booster sample of 1,037 parents of children aged 11–18, between 25<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> January 2019. Data were weighted to be representative of all GB adults by age, gender, region and social grade.

Figures with an asterisk (\*) indicate a low base size, and should be treated with caution.

# FINDINGS IN DETAIL

The majority of British adults say that Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat are unsafe for children aged 11 or 12 to use.

Q1. To what extent do you think each of the following social networks are safe or unsafe for the following groups of children and young people to use:

## Children aged 11 or 12

	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	Snapchat	YouTube	WhatsApp	Tiktok
<b>NET: Safe</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>7%</b>
Very safe	2%	2%	2%	1%	5%	6%	1%
Somewhat safe	20%	21%	18%	14%	37%	34%	6%
Somewhat unsafe	38%	32%	34%	30%	31%	25%	8%
Very unsafe	32%	24%	25%	27%	15%	15%	10%
<b>NET: Unsafe</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>18%</b>
Don't know	8%	21%	21%	27%	12%	19%	75%

Base: All respondents (n=2,748)

- Seven in ten British adults say that Facebook is unsafe for children aged 11–12 (70%). YouTube and WhatsApp are the platforms which are most considered safe for children aged 11–12 with two in five saying this (41% and 40%). Three quarters of adults don't know whether or not Tiktok is safe for children aged 11–12 (75%).
- Parents of children aged 11–12 are more likely than British adults with no children aged 18 or under to say that each of the social networks tested are safe for children aged 11–12. For example, three in ten parents of children aged 11–12 say that Facebook is safe (29%) compared to one in five adults with no children aged 18 or under who say the same (19%).
- At least half of parents aged 11–12 say that Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat are unsafe for children aged 11–12 to use (67%, 49%, 55%, 56%).
- Women are more likely than men to say that Facebook (72% vs. 68%) and Instagram (62% vs. 55%) are unsafe for children aged 11–12.

Around half British adults say that Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat are unsafe for children aged 13 to 18 to use.

Q2. To what extent do you think each of the following social networks are safe or unsafe for the following groups of children and young people to use:

#### Children aged 13 to 18

	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	Snapchat	YouTube	WhatsApp	Tiktok
<b>NET: Safe</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>12%</b>
Very safe	3%	4%	3%	3%	8%	8%	2%
Somewhat safe	33%	34%	32%	27%	42%	41%	10%
Somewhat unsafe	37%	31%	32%	31%	29%	25%	10%
Very unsafe	18%	13%	14%	16%	9%	9%	7%
<b>NET: Unsafe</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>17%</b>
Don't know	9%	18%	19%	23%	12%	17%	71%

Base: All respondents (n=2,748)

- Half of British adults say that Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat are unsafe for children aged 13–18 (55%, 46% and 47%) while a similar proportion say that YouTube and WhatsApp are safe for this age group (50% and 49%).
- Parents with children aged 13 to 18 are significantly more likely than those with no children aged 18 or under to say that each of the following is safe: Facebook (45% vs. 30%), Instagram (45% vs. 29%), Snapchat (42% vs. 23%), YouTube (59% vs. 42%) and WhatsApp (61% vs. 41%). However those with no children aged 18 or under are more likely to say that they ‘don’t know’ for each social network tested.

The majority of British adults disagree that social networks protect children using their platforms from sexual content, inappropriate content, sexual abuse and exploitation and adults contacting children to groom them for sexual purposes.

Q3. To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree that social networks protect children using their platforms from:

	Sexual content	Inappropriate content, such as self-harm, violent or suicidal themes	Adults contacting children to groom them for sexual purposes	Sexual abuse and exploitation	Sharing child abuse images
<b>NET: Agree</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>30%</b>
Strongly agree	8%	8%	8%	9%	10%
Tend to agree	16%	14%	12%	15%	19%
Tend to disagree	32%	32%	32%	32%	25%
Strongly disagree	27%	28%	28%	24%	21%
<b>NET: Disagree</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>46%</b>
Don't know	18%	18%	20%	21%	24%

Base: All respondents (n=2,748)

- Around a quarter of British adults agree that social networks protect children from sexual content (23%), suicidal themes (20%) or sexual abuse or exploitation, compared to three in five who disagree (59%, 60%, 56%).
- Three in ten adults agree that social networks protect children using their platforms from sharing child abuse images (30%).
- Parents are more likely to agree than adults with no children aged 18 or under that social networks protect children using their platforms from: sexual content (29% for parents of children aged 11–12 vs. 21%); inappropriate content, such as self-harm, violent or suicidal themes (32% for parents of children aged 5–10 vs. 20%); adults contacting children to groom them for sexual purposes (28% for parents of children aged 5–10 vs. 18%).

Nine in ten British adults support statutory regulation of social networks to make them legally responsible for keeping children safe on their platforms.

*Q4. To what extent, if at all, would you support or oppose statutory regulation of social networks to make them legally responsible for keeping children safe on their platforms?*

	Total	Parents of children aged 11-12	Parents of children aged 13-18
<b>NET: Support</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>92%</b>
Strongly support	65%	65%	67%
Tend to support	25%	27%	25%
Tend to oppose	3%	3%	3%
Strongly oppose	1%	1%	1%
<b>NET: Oppose</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>4%</b>
Don't know	7%	4%	4%

*Base: All respondents (n=2,748); all parents of children aged 11-12 (n=388); all parents of children aged 13-18 (n=823)*

- Two thirds of British adults strongly support statutory regulation of social networks to make them legally responsible for keeping children safe on their platforms (65%).
- Older adults are more likely than younger adults to support this proposal (95% of those aged 55+ vs. 81% of those aged 18-34).
- Parents of children aged 11-12 and 13-18 are most likely to support this measure (92% for each) compared to 89% of those with no children aged 18 or under.

At least eight in ten British adults support each of the tested statements being made legal requirements for social networks, with nine in ten supporting automatically applying the highest privacy settings for children's accounts.

Q5. To what extent do you support or oppose each of the following being made legal requirements for social networks:

	NET: Support	Strongly support	Tend to support	Tend to oppose	Strongly oppose	NET: Oppose	Don't know
Automatically applying the highest privacy settings for children's accounts	91%	72%	19%	2%	1%	3%	7%
Turning off geolocation settings by default on children's accounts	85%	62%	23%	3%	1%	4%	11%
Children's accounts not being publicly searchable (i.e. a child's account will not appear in Internet search results)	89%	68%	21%	2%	1%	3%	8%
Allowing children to live broadcast (livestream) only to their contacts, rather than to all users	80%	49%	31%	5%	4%	9%	11%
Friend suggestions are turned off for children's accounts (e.g. the 'users you may know' feature that suggests friends or contacts)	82%	53%	29%	4%	1%	5%	13%

Base: All respondents (n=2,748)

- Automatically applying the highest privacy settings for children's accounts, children's accounts not being publicly searchable and turning off geolocation settings by default on children's accounts are strongly supported by the majority of adults (72%, 68% and 62%).
- Less than one in ten adults opposes each of the options tested (ranging from 3% to 9%).
- Parents with older children are generally more likely than those with younger or no children to support each of the suggested options being made legal requirements for social networks. For example, 93% of parents of children aged 11–12 and 92% of parents of children aged 13–18 support automatically applying the highest privacy settings to children's accounts compared to 88% of parents with children aged 0–4; and 93% (11–12) and 91% (13–18) support children's accounts not being publicly searchable compared to 88% of adults with no children aged 18 or under.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Charis St. Clair Fisher

Consultant

+44(0) 20 7871 8636

[charis.fisher@comresglobal.com](mailto:charis.fisher@comresglobal.com)







## LONDON

Four Millbank  
London  
SW1P 3JA

**T:** +44 (0)20 7871 8660

**F:** +44 (0)20 7799 2391

**E:** [info@comres.co.uk](mailto:info@comres.co.uk)

## BRUSSELS

Rond Point Schuman 6  
Box5, 1040  
Bruxelles

**T:** +32 (0)2 234 63 82

**F:** +32 (0)2 234 79 11

**E:** [info@comres.eu.com](mailto:info@comres.eu.com)

[WWW.COMRES.CO.UK](http://WWW.COMRES.CO.UK)