Cybersafe

Research to Support a Safer Internet Campaign

opinion leader

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# Executive Summary 1

1.1 Introduction

Four Internet Service Providers, BT, TalkTalk, Sky and Virgin Media, have come together to develop an information campaign to help parents make their children's usage of the Internet safer. Opinion Leader was commissioned to carry out research to support the development of this campaign, understanding parents' experiences and concerns and identifying appropriate calls to action.

During July and August 2013, a programme of 12 focus groups and 1,500 online survey interviews were carried out with parents of children aged 0-16 living across the UK. This report presents findings from the research, intended to guide the developing campaign.

1.2 Notions of Responsibility

Parents believe they are chiefly responsible for keeping their children safe online **96%**. Only 5% of parents take no action to protect their children online. The main kinds of action taken by parents are:

- Having Internet security software installed **63%**
- Actively restricting their children's online usage **55%**
- Applying parental controls **47%**
- Only allowing access to trusted sites **45%**

63% **55%** **47%** **45%**
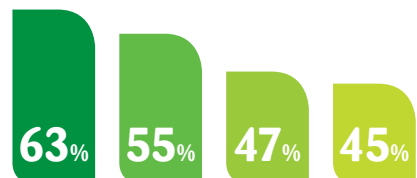
However, perceptions of responsibility are affected by awareness of online risks and levels of technical confidence (a finding which supports evidence from the Byron Review):[1]

> **Awareness of online risks** – Parents who are more risk-aware are more likely to see online safety as their responsibility. A total of **86%** of those who are not very or not at all aware of online risks see themselves as mainly responsible for keeping children safe online, compared to **97%** of those who are somewhat or very aware.

> **Levels of online confidence** – A parent's confidence in their ability to protect their children online makes them more likely to see this as their responsibility. Ninety-eight per cent of those who are somewhat or very confident see

keeping children safe online as their responsibility compared to 86% of those who are not very or not at all confident.

The impact of awareness and confidence on notions of responsibility is borne out by analysis of the survey data. This shows that the degree of protective action taken by parents is strongly determined by their awareness of online risks and levels of technical confidence. The parent segmentation presented in this report builds on and quantifies that hypothesised by the Department for Education and reported in the UKCCIS document, Child Internet and Gaming Safety (2010).[2] Linking awareness of online risks and levels of technical confidence to different parenting types, data from the quantitative survey suggests the six-type segmentation shown in the table below.

1. Safer Children in a Digital World: The Report of the Byron Review, Dr Tanya Byron (2008)

2. Child Internet and Gaming Safety, UKCCIS (2010)

PARENT SEGMENTS

SEGMENT	CHARACTERISTICS	INCIDENCE IN POPULATION
Ill-equipped worriers	Permissive parents with low technological confidence who show little awareness of online risks. They take limited protective action and are not confident their children are safe.	**22**%
Controllers	Authoritative parents with high technological confidence, high awareness of online risks and high levels of concern. They take strong protective action and are reasonably confident their children are safe.	**20**%
Permissive Techies	Permissive parents with high technological confidence. They show high awareness of online risks but are not concerned by them. They take limited protective action and are confident their children are safe.	**18**%
Protectors	Authoritative parents with reasonable technological confidence and a high awareness of online risks. They take strong protective action and are confident their children are safe.	**18**%
Unengaged and overwhelmed	Permissive parents with low technological confidence who show little awareness of online risks. They take limited protective action but are reasonably confident their children are safe.	**15**%
Confident Techies	Parents with high technological confidence, medium awareness of online risks and high levels of concern. They take limited protective action due to young age of children.	**6**%

The table above indicates that certain segments will be more responsive to messages around child Internet safety than others, although the most responsive segments may not always be those most in need of support. While some segments need encouragement to take action, others need to be reminded to stay informed and stay ahead of the emerging risks. This distinction should be borne in mind for delivery of the information campaign.

1.3 **Areas of Concern**

Parents' main online concerns for their children are those which could damage the child's emotional well-being or put them in physical danger, principally: sexual content, inappropriate content they find themselves, violent content and strangers/grooming. However, as children's Internet use becomes more social, new risks emerge and levels of parental concern increase:

age < 10
> Prior to the age of 10, use of the Internet tends to be limited to gaming, streaming video and TV and video calling, with school work and general browsing becoming features between the ages of 5 and 9. At this stage, parental concern is mainly limited to sexual content, inappropriate content, violent content and strangers/grooming.

age 10-13
> The ages of 10-13 are a transitional period, when levels of parental concern are at their highest. It is during this period that children begin to engage in a wider range of online activities, including social networking, email, use of apps and instant messaging and when parents start showing concern about online bullying.

age 14-16
> Between the ages of 14 and 16, children's Internet use is at its most varied. However, parental concern begins to diminish as parents adjust to and worry less acutely about their child's Internet use.

Most parents want to know more about online safety for their children

This suggests that the ages of 10 to 13 represent a critical moment at which parents feel most concerned about their children's Internet use and are in most need of information and advice.[3] To help them prepare for this and develop an appropriate parenting response, information and advice should be targeted at parents some years before their children turn 10, perhaps from the age of 6, when their children's Internet use starts to become more independent. In addition, there is evidence from parents of children under 10 that social media sites are being used at increasingly early ages, with some children having Facebook accounts from the age of eight. Any information campaign will need to be alert to this trend, as the heightened parental concerns around social networking may apply to children younger than 10-13 in the near future.

3. This finding is supported by previous Ofcom research which identified 10-14 as the peak risk period (see Ofcom, 2010).

1.4 **Information Needs**

There is clear demand from parents for information and advice about online safety, with three-quarters ➔ **74%** of parents stating that they wanted to know more. In particular, parents requested advice on filtering content or blocking sites effectively ➔ **18%**, awareness raising and education for parents to keep children safe ➔ **15%** and protection against problematic online behaviour ➔ **10%**.

74% parents stating that they wanted to know more

18% parents requested advice on filtering content or blocking sites effectively

15% parents wanted awareness raising and education for parents to keep children safe

10% parents wanted protection against problematic online behaviour
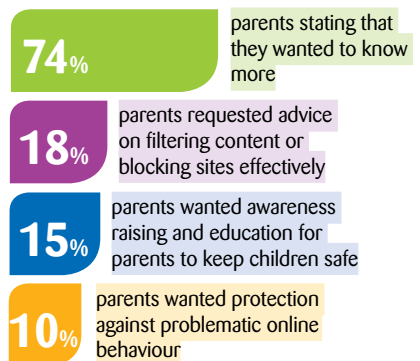
Beyond these specific issues, it is evident that parents are hindered in taking action to protect their children by the lack of established behaviours around use of the Internet (especially on mobile devices) and parents' unfamiliarity with what limits are appropriate at different ages. In the focus groups, situations were reported in which parents did not set limits around the use of online devices in the household in the way they were with the TV, books or toys. Information and advice addressing this, so that parents feel empowered to set limitations and monitor their children's Internet use effectively, would be welcomed and the campaign should aim to empower parents in applying their normal behaviours and parenting boundaries online.

Despite the differences in parents' perspectives and receptivity to any campaign, documented in the segmentation table above, it was clear that their information needs consistently fell into four broad categories: understand, talk, control, monitor. This reinforces findings from Ofcom research (2012).

UNDERSTAND

TALK

CONTROL

MONITOR

A. UNDERSTAND

Parents need to understand their child's online behaviour, the risks associated with this and what can be done to mitigate them.

Certain segments are falling behind in terms of their awareness of online risks, particularly *Ill-equipped Worriers*, where **63%** of parents say they are only 'somewhat aware' of the risks. *Amongst Unengaged and Overwhelmed* the number 'somewhat aware' was also high at **56%**. Parents suggested that information was best delivered in two forms:

› **Information on current risks** – Parents were of the view that ISPs could play a greater role here. It was suggested that they might send email bulletins to parents on the main sites used by children and the current risks they faced. Overall, **39%** of parents saw ISPs as having a role in keeping children safe online.

› **Local delivery of advice** – Many parents were open to going to their child's school for guidance on mitigating the risks they might face online. A total of **70%** of parents saw schools as having a role in keeping children safe online.

39% of parents saw ISPs as having a role in keeping children safe online

70% of parents saw schools as having a role in keeping children safe online.

B. TALK

Parents should talk to their children and keep the conversation open as they mature and technology changes.

One quarter ➔ **26%** rarely or never speak to their children about online safety. In the focus groups, requests were made for online tutorials and for advice and guidance from schools, helping parents find ways of talking to their children about online safety. Raising parents' awareness of the online risks will be important here as well, so that they are aware of the threats and are capable of talking about these with their children.

26% of parents rarely or never speak to their children about online safety

47%

of all parents use parental controls

38%

of all parents use safe search filters

42%

of all parents use passwords to restrict their usage

C. CONTROL

Parents should control what their children are doing online through technical measures or setting limits.

Less than half of all parents use parental controls ➜**47%**, safe search filters ➜**38%**, or passwords to restrict their usage ➜**42%**. It is clear that parental controls need to be improved and made more user-friendly and instructing parents simply to turn their controls on will not contribute to a successful information and advice campaign as parents currently see controls as being difficult to set and either overly-restrictive or easily circumvented by children.

Across the focus groups it was suggested that ISPs could take action here, providing easy-to-set, password protected age filters for households, with categories following the BBFC film classifications and providing technical support to parents to help them set controls on their service or devices.[4]

D. MONITOR

**Parents should monitor what their children are doing online and set conditions of use on their behaviour**

Sixty-seven per cent of all parents always or often accompany or supervise children when they are online. This figure falls significantly as the child gets older and the risks increase. From the ages of 10 to 13, children become more independent in their use of the Internet, making observation more difficult and forcing parents to place greater emphasis on trust, conversation and technical solutions such as parental controls.

Parents would welcome advice at this stage, helping them to monitor their child's use in an open and effective manner, for instance, through setting conditions of use (e.g. allowing children to use Facebook so long as they, or another relative, are included as a friend).

67%

of all parents always or often accompany or supervise children when they are online.

Half of parents would prefer information to be available online

1.5 Delivery Channels

In terms of channels for delivery of the campaign, half of parents would prefer information to be available online ➜**48%** but substantial minorities would prefer TV/Video ➜**14%**, printed material ➜**24%** or face-to-face education ➜**11%**. Beyond this, the research suggests that delivery should involve a central online information hub, with information, advice and support delivered locally (specifically via ISPs and schools).

48% half of parents would prefer information to be available online

14% substantial minorities would prefer TV/Video

24% parent to prefer printed material as a medium

11% parents prefer face-to-face education
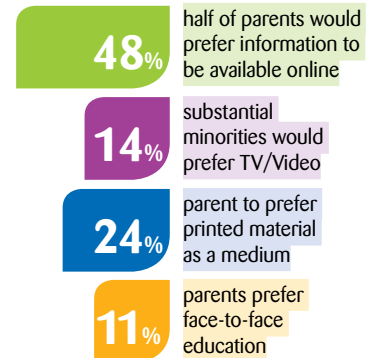
4. See also BBFC research cited in Vodafone, Digital Parenting (2013) which supports this request.

Introduction

2

2.1 Background to the Study

The government has recently been very clear that the safety of children online is a high priority. Research carried out by Ofcom shows that the negative impacts of the Internet are at the forefront of parents' minds. Concerns focus on the struggle to achieve family time away from devices and a perceived decline in traditional written and communication skills as well children accessing inappropriate content.[1]

It has been indicated that parental concern regarding online safety emerges towards the end of primary school and that concerns increase as children approach their teenage years, with parents feeling less able to supervise and monitor their behaviour.[2]

Previous research has shown a strong consensus that some parental involvement in children's Internet use is needed and has demonstrated that parents use a range of methods to mediate their children's use of the Internet.[3] These include the use of parental controls, but also talking to children, setting limits around access and supervising and monitoring online activities. However, parents' understanding of parental controls has been called a 'grey area' and even those who have some level of awareness also have gaps in their understanding.[4]

Experience of technology has a fundamental impact on how parents respond to the parenting challenges posed by their children's online behaviour.[5] Without confidence in their technological abilities, parents are left feeling anxious, disengaged and more prone to having their concerns fuelled by scare stories. Furthermore, use of the Internet today is not limited to one device and this provides an increasing challenge for parents when it comes to keeping children safe online.[6] Published research shows that parents whose children access the Internet using a smartphone or handheld device find it more difficult to monitor their child's online activity on these devices.[7]

Unfortunately, it has been evident that the majority of parents ➔ **57%** do not

1. Ofcom, 2012
2. Byron, 2008
3. Ofcom, 2012
4. Ofcom, 2012
5. Byron, 2008
6. Family Online Safety Institute, 2011
7. Family Online Safety Institute, 2011

know where to get information about how to protect their children online[8] and also say they are unsure where to go if they have a complaint about harmful or inappropriate content on the Internet.[9]

2.2 Research Objectives

Against this background, four Internet Service Providers, BT, TalkTalk, Sky and Virgin Media, have come together to assert that children's safety online is of paramount importance and to develop a campaign, targeted at parents, with the intention of helping them to make their children's usage of the Internet safer. It is envisaged that the campaign will focus on four objectives:

> The use of parental controls
> Increasing parents' confidence by improving their knowledge of the Internet
> Ensuring that calls to action are supported by appropriate information sources
> Encouraging communication between parents and their children

Overall, the campaign will aim to give parents the confidence they need to address Internet safety issues by providing information and signposting them to relevant sources. It is intended to launch in January or February 2014.

Opinion Leader was commissioned to carry out targeted research to support the development of this campaign. The research objectives were to inform the campaign agency of:

> Parents' actual concerns
> Their understanding of the 'real issues' for online security
> Their knowledge of the tools and actions available and how these can be accessed
> The things parents feel would empower them to do the right thing
> The most effective calls to action
> How to reach parents (channel, media and message)

8. Byron, 2008
9. Byron, 2008

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2.3 Research Approach

In response to this brief, Opinion Leader undertook two stages of research, carried out simultaneously:

› **Qualitative exploration** – to develop campaign content through co-creation with parents, and depths with children
› **Quantitative survey** – to scope and size attitudes and behaviour and to develop a segmentation

The qualitative exploration involved 12 focus groups. These were all carried out with parents in order to obtain spontaneous accounts of their experiences and perceptions of their children's online behaviour, the risks involved and their parenting response. Focus groups were also used to generate campaign ideas based on parents' experiences and attitudes.

Sampling for the focus groups was informed by the Department for Education's segmentation reported in the UKCCIS document Child Internet and Gaming Safety (2010). Within each age group, one focus group of more or less authoritative / active parents and one group of more or less permissive / inactive parents were recruited to examine the different perceptions of risk, control behaviour and discussion with children taking place across the sample.

The qualitative exploration involved 12 focus groups.

The quantitative element of this study was conducted online across the UK using access panels. A total of 1,503 fifteen minute interviews were completed with a nationally representative sample of parents of 0-16 year olds. As well as providing a robust measure of parents' attitudes, the survey also enabled Opinion Leader to develop a segmentation of parent types, building on and quantifying the segments hypothesised by the Department for Education.
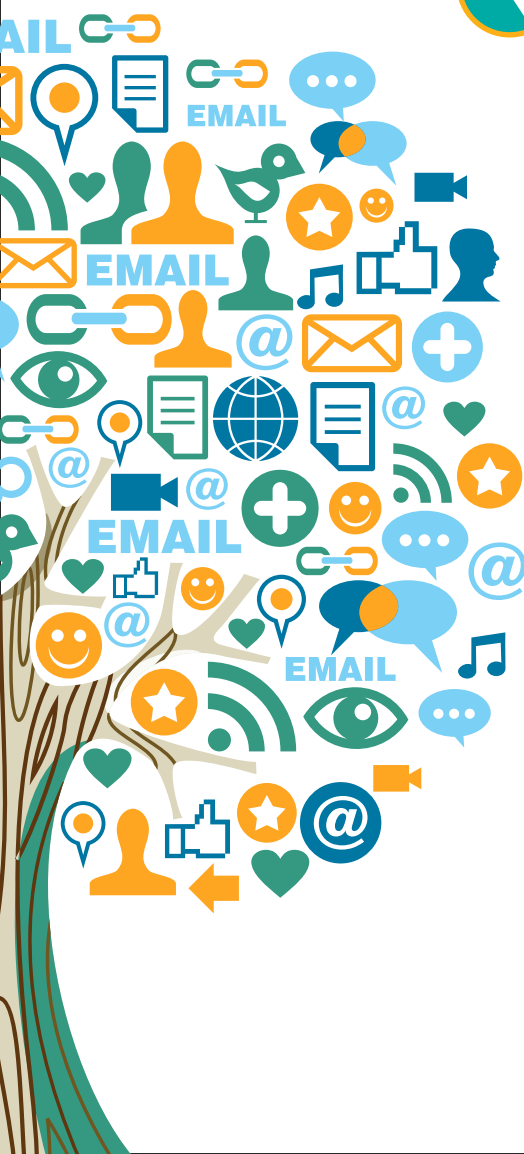
3 Parent Segments

Recent research tells us that parents' responses, behaviour and attitudes to the risks posed by the Internet vary widely (see Ofcom 2012). In order to better understand these reactions beyond simple bivariate relationships, (such as differences between mums and dads or by authoritative / permissive parenting styles), Opinion Leader carried out a cluster analysis on the data from the quantitative survey of parents. This work builds on the DfE segmentation relating to authoritative / permissive parenting styles to online behaviour, which had not previously been quantified. It uses a statistical technique to segment the population into distinct clusters of respondents who have similar characteristics and attitudes to online safety.

The cluster analysis identified six distinct clusters of parents whose children use the Internet. The table overleaf shows the proportion of the GB population of parents that belongs to each cluster and their defining characteristics.

The cluster analysis identified six distinct clusters of parents whose children use the Internet.

SEGMENTATION OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

SEGMENT	CHARACTERISTICS	INCIDENCE OF GB PARENTS WHOSE CHILDREN ARE ONLINE
Ill-equipped worriers	Permissive parents with low technological confidence who show little awareness of online risks. They take limited protective action and are not confident their children are safe.	22%
Controllers	Authoritative parents with high technological confidence, high awareness of online risks and high levels of concern. They take strong protective action and are reasonably confident their children are safe.	20%
Protectors	Authoritative parents with reasonable technological confidence and a high awareness of online risks. They take strong protective action and are confident their children are safe.	18%
Permissive Techies	Permissive parents with high technological confidence. They show high awareness of online risks but are not concerned by them. They take limited protective action and are confident their children are safe.	18%
Unengaged and overwhelmed	Permissive parents with low technological confidence who show little awareness of online risks. They take limited protective action but are reasonably confident their children are safe.	15%
Confident Techies	Parents with high technological confidence, medium awareness of online risks and high levels of concern. They take limited protective action due to young age of children.	6%

The rest of this chapter provides a detailed description of each cluster, including their defining characteristics, demographic makeup and the key messages to address their needs. Where relevant, we supplement the cluster descriptions with findings from the discussion groups.

It is important to note that the clusters group together respondents who tend to have similar attitudes and behaviours regarding child Internet safety, but not identical attitudes. Therefore, if the people in one cluster are more likely to hold a certain view, this does not necessarily mean that most people in that cluster hold this view. Clusters should be seen as illustrative typologies rather than exactly representing the views of a group of the population.

We have given each cluster a name that reflects their overall stance. Again, it should be noted that these names cannot reflect the whole breadth of opinion within each cluster and instead are chosen to represent the overall defining characteristics.

3.1 Ill-Equipped Worriers

Over a fifth of parents whose children use the Internet are *Ill- Equipped Worriers* →**22%**. They will be easy to engage in a campaign regarding Internet safety as they have relatively low confidence that measures they have taken are adequate to protect their children. However, they will need considerable support to overcome their low technical confidence in order to make effective changes.

DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

Ill-Equipped Worriers have low technical confidence and low awareness of the risks to children when they go online. This group are even more likely to agree that **"there is so much on the Internet it feels overwhelming"** than some other parents (**42%** agree compared to **33%** British parents). They also have low personal use of the Internet and importantly, their children have greater access and confidence than they do (Parents have lower than average usage across all devices. Children have higher than average usage across all devices). Given their low personal use of the Internet, they claim lower awareness of **"the risks to children when they go online"** than other parents (**21%** were very aware compared to **48%** of British parents).

Ill-Equipped Worriers are permissive parents. They have average agreement that **"the role of parents is to advise not instruct"** (**42%** compared to **41%** all British parents) and lower agreement that **"they always set boundaries and rules for their children"** (**77%** agree compared to **81%** British parents). They are also less likely than most to take protective action when it comes to online safety (**26%** use parental controls compared to **47%** of British parents).

"I've got a Netflix account so I've put that onto her iPad as well and a couple of times I've caught her watching films and stuff she's not supposed to be watching, same with YouTube."

[Leeds, Permissive, Children Aged 10-12]

Ill-Equipped Worriers have relatively low confidence that *measures they have taken are adequate to protect children* (**41%** not confident, **59%** confident). As a result they are more open to hearing about safety measures. Two fifths would like to hear more about **"where to find good advice on children's Internet safety"** (**41%** compared to average of **36%**) and nearly half →**46%** would like to hear more about **"setting parental controls"**.

> They're quicker than me, they know more than me

DEMOGRAPHICS

The *Ill-Equipped Worriers* are more likely to be mums of older children (**66%** are mums compared to **56%** of all parents respectively and **44%** have 14-16 years olds compared to **25%** of all parents in the survey). They are marginally more likely to be lower social grade (**59%** compared to **40%** C2DE).

KEY MESSAGES

This group are open to messages about Internet Safety but feel technically inept to counter the issues and keep up with their children. They will certainly need practical hands on support to take action as their confidence using technology is not as high as other groups. A campaign signposting the relevant help with the overall message that 'there is practical help to support you to keep your children safe' may guide ill-equipped worriers to the tools to enable them to take positive protective measures.

3.2 Controllers

Like *Protectors*, *Controllers* are authoritative parents. They represent one in five British parents whose children use the Internet → **22%**. *Controllers* also take a number of protective measures to keep their children safe online, but unlike *protectors*, they lack confidence they have done enough and are keen to hear about what more they could do.

DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS
With an authoritative parenting style, *Controllers* are less likely to agree that **"the role of a parent is to advise not instruct"** (**34%** agree compared to **41%** British parents) and more likely to strongly agree that **"they always set boundaries and rules for their children"** (**93%** agree compared to **81%** British parents). Controllers are reasonably confident in using technology. One third agrees that **"there is so much on the Internet it feels overwhelming"** (**35%** compared to **33%** British parents). They are more likely to agree that **"people often seek my advice about technological issues"** (**63%** agree compared to **43%** of British parents). They have high awareness of the risks to children when they go online (**58%** very aware compared to **47%** of British parents) and utilise a number of protective measures (for example, **82%** apply parental controls).

Despite their efforts, they remain wary and nervous about the risks and display the highest levels of concern. This may be because they are also likely to have experienced one or more of the risks in the past (**58%** compared to **48%** of British parents). As a result, *Controllers* retain a high interest in maintaining Internet safety and have one of the largest appetites for hearing more about safety measures. For examples, half → **49%** would like to hear more about **"where to find good advice on children's Internet safety"** (compared to **36%** of British parents).

> **We've seen the risks and we're not going there again**

DEMOGRAPHICS
Controllers are unremarkable demographically and fall in line with the population of British Parents. Their distinguishing feature therefore maybe their exposure or experience of the risk factors that heightens their concern and drives their action.

KEY MESSAGES
Controllers are hungry for information, but are currently one of the most active of the clusters at taking protective action. The key message from any campaign for them is to **'get reassurance that the measures you have taken are adequate.'** However, given their current behaviour and interest in the subject, this cluster is, alongside *protectors*, a low priority for the campaign. It is likely this cluster will pick up information about online safety, even if it is not specifically targeted at them.

3.3 Protectors

Like *Controllers*, *Protectors* are also authoritative parents who represent nearly a fifth of British parents whose children use the Internet →**18%**. *Protectors* are proactive parents who employ a number of safety measures to safeguard their children. As a result they are not concerned about the risk posed by the Internet currently but could suffer from a little complacency.

We've got a lock on everything

DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

Protectors are authoritative parents. They are less likely to agree that **the role of a parent is to advise not instruct** than other parents and more likely to strongly agree that they **always set boundaries and rules for their children** (**34%** compared to **41%** British parents and **92%** compared to **81%** British parents respectively).
They have low personal use of the Internet, and middling technological confidence (**31%** agree that **"there is so much on the Internet it feels overwhelming"** and **21%** **"people often seek my advice about technological issues"** compared to **33%** and **43%** British parents, respectively). Despite this they have high awareness of the risks to children when they go online (**68%** very aware compared to **47%** of British parents) and utilise a number of protective measures (for example, **77%** apply parental controls).

"Well that's it. You have to give them a certain amount of trust, I think, the older ones, you know. But I do think sometimes oh am I nosy? Am I slightly intrusive? But then I think that's my right, isn't it, as a parent?"

[London, Authoritative, Children Aged 12-14]

Protectors are very confident that the measures they have in place are adequate to protect children (**3%** not confident, **97%** confident). As

a result, they have relatively low interest in hearing more about safety measures (**31%** would like to hear more about **"where to find good advice on children's Internet safety"** compared to **36%** of British parents).

"We have a lock on everything, a new website comes up which she wants to look at and if I don't like it, add it to the list [of blocked sites]"

[Manchester, Authoritative, Children aged 8-10]

DEMOGRAPHICS
Protectors are more likely to be C2DE Mums (**69%** are Mums, compared to **56%** Mums overall and **53%** C2DE compared to **38%** overall). Their children are more likely to be between 5 and 13.

KEY MESSAGES
Protectors are one of the most proactive clusters at taking measures to protect their children online and hey are currently satisfied that their actions keep their children safe. As such, this cluster is a low priority for the campaign. However, there could be some complacency amongst this group and any messages directed at them should focus on the need to keep abreast of any new developments in the technology and in sites that children are interested in. Their key message is to **'review measures frequently as things change all the time'**.

Permissive Techies

The *Permissive Techies* represent over one in six of British parents →**18%** whose children use the Internet. They are the hardest to engage concerning their children's online safety because whilst they are aware of risks, they are not concerned by them and believe they are exaggerated.

DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

Permissive Techies have high levels of technical confidence. This group are less likely to agree that **"there is so much on the Internet it feels overwhelming"** than some other parents (**10%** agreed compared to **33%** of British parents) and more likely to agree that **"people often seek my advice about technological issues"** (**61%** agreed compared to **43%** British parents). They have high awareness of **"the risks to children when they go online"** (**62%** very aware compared to **48%** of British parents). Despite high awareness, they demonstrate low concern about the risk factors. Only a third agree that **'My child's safety online is a big concern of mine'** (**32%** agree compared to **63%** British parents).

"Yeah, there is risks online. Don't get me wrong, there's probably 99% of it is probably genuine and legit, but there's that 1% and there is that risk, that little small risk".

[Leeds, Permissive, Children Aged 6-8]

They are permissive parents and have average agreement that **"the role of parents is to advise not instruct"** than other some parents (**40%** compared to **41%** British parents) and lower agreement that **"they always set boundaries and rules for their children"** (**74%** agree compared to **81%** British parents). They also recognise that it is onerous to keep track of what their children are doing.

"He'd keep [an issue] from me. I don't see everything that they post. I'm just not monitoring him all the time. So if there were any issues I think it would be very difficult for me to monitor what they do all the time".

[Manchester, Authoritative, Children Aged 14-16]

"I remember going onto this laptop checking it out and he had no history. I said what have you been doing? He said oh been trying out that in private browsing that has been advertised by Microsoft."

[Manchester, Authoritative, Children Aged 14-16]

Despite their technical confidence they are less likely to use protective measures. For example, a third use parental controls (**34%** compared to **47%** of British parents). Qualitative results suggest that this may because they are ambivalent about the risks and/or that protective measures are time-consuming and restrictive for themselves.

Given their lack of engagement and belief that risks are overplayed they are very confident that **measures they have taken are adequate to protect children** (**93%** confident, **7%** not confident) and very limited interest in hearing more about Internet Safety measures. For example, only a fifth would like to hear more about **"where to find good advice on children's Internet safety"** (**22%** compared to **36%** of British parents) and one in six would like to hear more about **"setting parental controls"** (**16%** compared to **36%** of British parents).

DEMOGRAPHICS

The *Permissive Techies* are more likely to be ABC1 Dads (**64%** are Dads, compared to **44%** Dads overall and **74%** ABC1 compared to **61%** overall). They are slightly more likely to have children who are older than 10.

KEY MESSAGES

This group will be extremely difficult to engage in any campaign regarding Internet safety as they claim to be aware of the risks to children online but disregard them do not take protective measures against them. Any campaign must capture their imagination and jolt them into action. A direct question with a clear path to find out more would be compelling e.g. **'do you really know what your children are up to?'**

3.5 Unengaged and Overwhelmed

The *Unengaged and Overwhelmed* represent nearly one in six of British parents → **15%** whose children use the Internet. They are hard to engage in issues concerning their children's online safety because they find it difficult to conceptualise the issues and are not equipped, technically, to counter the challenges the Internet presents. They prefer to take the stance of 'trusting' their children without taking many specific measures to ensure their safety.

DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

The *Unengaged and Overwhelmed* have low technical confidence and low awareness of the risks to children when they go online. This group are more likely to agree that **"there is so much on the Internet it feels overwhelming"** than some other parents (**42%** agree compared to **33%** British parents). They also have low personal use of the Internet (**52%** generally browse the Internet compared to **88%** of British parents). They have lower awareness of **"the risks to children when they go online"** (**30%** were very aware compared to **48%** of British parents). As a result of this they are only moderately concerned about the risk the Internet poses. The *Unengaged and Overwhelmed* were less likely to agree that **'My child's safety online is a big concern of mine'** (**55%** agree compared to **63%** British parents). The *Unengaged and Overwhelmed* have a permissive parenting style. They have average agreement that **"the role of parents is to advise not instruct"** (**43%** compared to **41%** of all British parents) and lower agreement that **"they always set boundaries and rules for their children"** (**62%** agree compared to **81%** of British parents). Evidence from the focus groups suggests that they were easily swayed by the demands of their children.

"Well I think sometimes I feel a bit under pressure really from my little boy because if I've restricted things in the past a little bit he will come home from school and say his friends are going on particular websites and he wants to go on it so I end up giving in then really."

[Leeds, Permissive, Children Aged 10-12]

Given their low technological confidence, limited awareness of online risks and permissiveness it is perhaps unsurprising that they are less likely to take protective action when it comes to online safety. For example, less than a fifth of *Unengaged and Overwhelmed* parents use parental controls (**18%** compared to **47%** of parents). This is surprising given their confidence that **measures they have taken are adequate to protect children** (**78%** confident, **22%** not confident).

"Yeah, there's no restrictions on my own computer, so if I'm not in the house that's when I'll catch her using it more".

[Leeds, Permissive, Children Aged 6-8]

> I end up giving in

DEMOGRAPHICS

The *Unengaged and Overwhelmed* parents are demographically unremarkable but are slightly more likely to be younger dads (**39%** under 34, **60%** are dads compared to **34%** and **44%** of all parents respectively). The head of the household is more likely to be employed full time (**80%** compared to **69%** of parents) and they come from both ABC1 and C2DE SEGs.

KEY MESSAGES

This group will be difficult to engage in any campaign regarding Internet safety given the limited attention they give to online risks and safeguarding their children against them. Should they become engaged they may need support to take action as their confidence using technology is not as high as other groups. A campaign clearly directed at them with the message **'you must do something to help keep your children safe'** is likely to be required.

Confident Techies

The *Confident Techies* represent over one in 12 of British parents ➔ **6%** whose children use the Internet. Despite being the smallest segment, they have very strong characteristics. They are technically competent but with young children take limited action currently. They are engaged and ready to act when the time is right.

DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

Like the *Permissive Techies*, *Confident Techies* are high Internet users and technically competent. This group is most likely to agree that **"people often seek my advice about technological issues"** (**88%** agree compared to **43%** British parents). They have moderate awareness of **"the risks to children when they go online"** (**51%** very aware compared to **48%** of British parents) and high concern about the risks. For example, **84%** agreed that **My child's safety online is a big concern of mine'** compared to **63%** British parents. *Confident Techies* tend to have children under nine which affects their behaviour as they have relatively low use of protective measures (for example, **32%** use parental controls). They are reasonably confident

that measures they have taken are adequate to protect children (**11%** not confident, **89%** confident). The qualitative research illustrated that some families with younger children felt they were on top of their Internet use currently and that they were adequate gatekeepers for activity without using specific protective measures. However they highlighted that they would need to take further action as the children grew up.

So those restrictions only work for a certain age [the age they are] now, six through to eight, twelve perhaps, but after that you can't govern it.
[London, Authoritative, Children Aged 6-8]

Given their awareness of the growing risks as the child gets older they are very interested in hearing about safety measures in the future (For example, **46%** would like to hear more about **setting parental controls** compared to **36%** of British parents).

We'll do it when they get older

DEMOGRAPHICS
Confident Techies are highly likely to be ABC1 Dads (**74%** are Dads, compared to **44%** Dads overall and **77%** ABC1 compared to **61%** overall). They are slightly more likely to have children who are younger than 10.

KEY MESSAGES
This group are interested in online safety but are not yet fully engaged in taking protective measures. As their children age and new challenges emerge it is possible that they could become either *Permissive Techies or Controllers*. To ensure they take some measures to keep their children safe online a key message should be about setting up good practices and ground rules now before the online socialising starts in earnest. As such messages along the lines of **'Stay ahead to keep your children safe'** will encourage them to take proactive action.
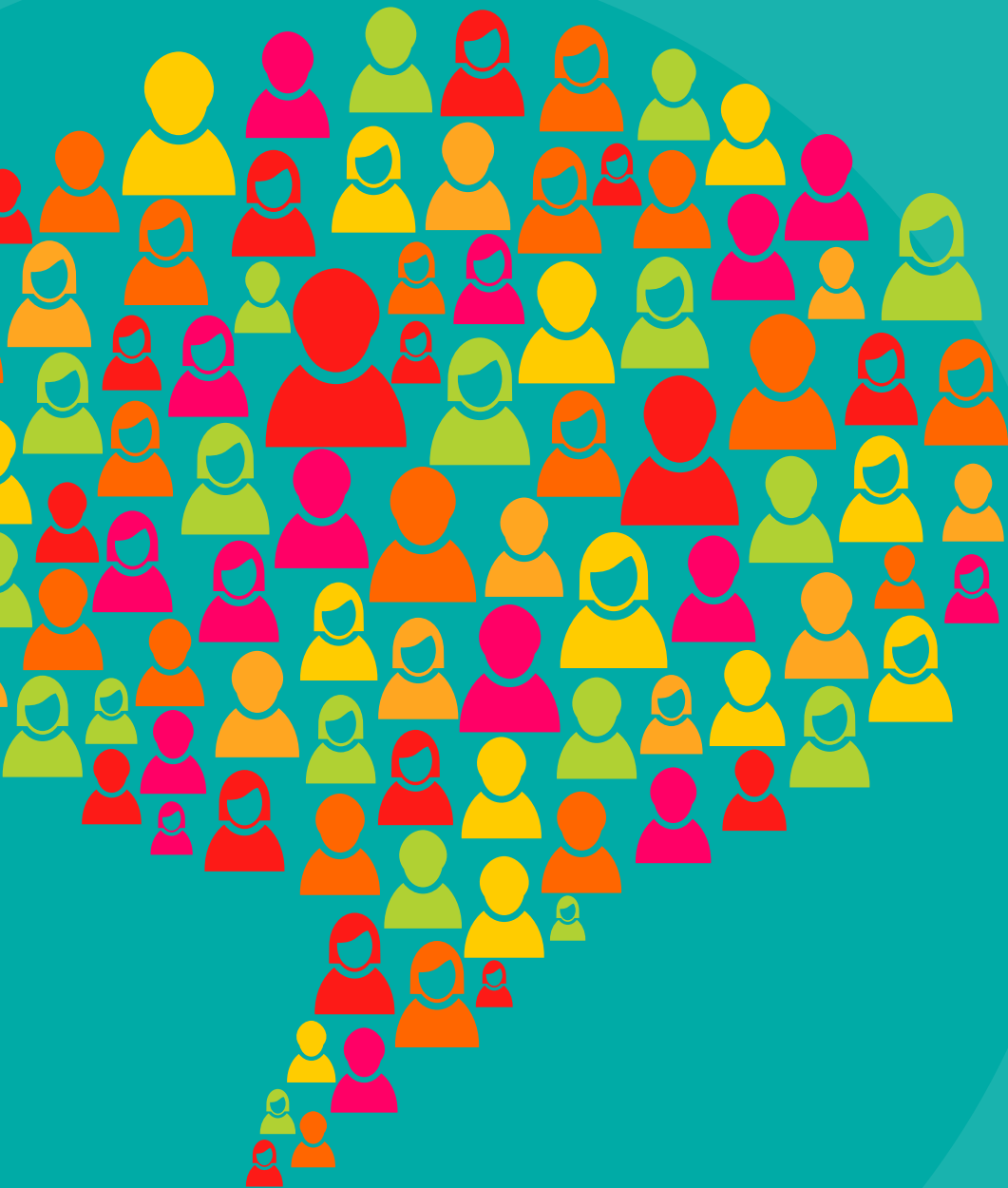
The following table demonstrates how the different segments compare in their attitudes to technology.

ATTITUDES TO TECHNOLOGY BY SEGMENT

F1 Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements (mean scores of 5, with 5 being strongly agree)	Ill -equipped worriers	Controllers	Protectors	Permissive Techies	Unengaged and Overwhelmed	Confident Techies
I always have the latest technology	2.24	3.29	2.48	3.35	3.32	3.96
The Internet is essential to everyday living	4.12	4.25	3.87	4.32	3.83	4.29
There is so much on the Internet it feels overwhelming	3.19	2.84	2.74	2.04	3.36	3.34
I only use websites I know and trust	3.45	3.68	3.94	3.02	3.7	3.78
I feel completely comfortable sharing my experiences on the Internet	3.02	3.55	3.3	3.82	3.42	4.06
People often seek my help about practical issues	2.31	3.62	2.65	3.7	3.37	4.24

They're quicker than me, they know more than me

We've seen the risks and we're not going there again

We've got a lock on everything

They don't want you snooping

I end up giving in

We'll do it when they get older

4

Personal, Social and Online Influences

Parents' attitudes and behaviour towards safeguarding their children online is influenced by a subtle interplay of a variety of factors. These combine in such a way that, very often, parents are not able to apply their own parenting boundaries online.[1] In addition, given the rise of technology and the Internet has occurred over a relatively short

This research highlights a variety of personal, social and online factors

period of time, there is no precedent for today's parents to follow as they cannot imitate their own parents' actions and there is currently an absence of socially accepted 'norms' regarding what is and isn't appropriate access and behaviour online.

This research highlights a variety of personal, social and online factors which influence and determine parents' behaviour and attitudes to cyber safety. Any campaign to

address behaviour, should consider these influences, especially where they present barriers to engagement, for example, technical confidence or lack of socially accepted norms.

4.1 Personal Factors

Personal factors influence how individual's and families respond to the challenge posed by the Internet. They include interplay of:

- ❯ Parenting style (authoritative vs. permissive) and relationship between the parent and child
- ❯ Technical competence, confidence and attitude to technology
- ❯ Awareness, understanding and attitude towards the risks and solutions

Segments with permissive parenting styles are likely to be unengaged with measures to keep their children safe online. The *Unengaged and Overwhelmed* segment showed very limited use of safety measures. Only **18%** use parental controls and **19%** accompany or supervise children online, (compared to **47%** and **45%** of all parents).

1. See Byron (2008)

"I found it difficult to restrict because my son loves music … Now on YouTube they generally don't play the video version of it where the swearing's either cut out or the words are blurred … they get the unedited concert version if you like and they're hearing things on that and I don't necessarily agree with it but they're hearing things on there that they hear in the playground and you can't monitor that all the time".

[Leeds, Permissive, Children Aged 10-12 years].

However, similar difficulties in monitoring online use were seen amongst more authoritative parents.

"I don't know what he is on all the time. I will look at what he is on and then I will turn round and come back and then they are on something else. They are quicker than me, they probably know more than me."

[London, Authoritative, Children aged 0-5]

Very low technical confidence can inhibit ability to keep children safe. For example, *Ill-Equipped Worriers* have low technical confidence and also low awareness of risks, usage of safety measures.

"I'm terrible with the computer and to follow instructions from the computer I'd just throw the lid down and just walk away."

[Manchester, Authoritative, Children aged 12-14]

Their lack of technical competence is compounded by the perception that their children's skill at using the Internet devices may outweigh their own.

"I mean for example we're actually going away tomorrow and I wanted all my photographs taken off the memory stick … simple task … 20 seconds … she'd done it."

[Manchester, Authoritative, Children aged 12-14]

"You get a thirteen year-old kid now and they'll absolutely wipe the floor with most adults when it comes to technology."

[Coventry, Permissive, Children Aged 0-5]

However, technical confidence does not necessarily translate to adequate measures being taken e.g. *Permissive Techies* have high technology usage and confidence but are less likely than most to use protective measures. A third ➔ 34% use parental controls and a similar proportion accompany or supervise children online (36% compared to 47% and 45% of parents respectively).

"He might be sitting on the computer and I might hear the odd 'shit' or swear word but I'd rather he was there than out in a gang running on the streets. So that's the way I look on it."

[Coventry, Permissive, Children Aged 0-5]

Conversely, as seen in the previous section, *Protectors*, who have low personal technology use and middling technology confidence are authoritative parents and have employed a number of safety measures (for example, 77% apply parental controls).

"It's our job as parents to educate our kids. You know my kids are fully aware that there are people out there that pretend to be children, who aren't children and you know paedophiles, whatever. They are completely aware….I've made them aware. First of all they see it on the television, the news. And also I've told them. I've made sure that they know. You know not to be naïve …

[Manchester, Authoritative, Children aged 12-14]

High awareness of risk, especially if coupled with personal exposure or experience of the risk can lead

to safety measures being taken. *Controllers* are highly aware of the risks (**58%** say they are very aware of **"the online risks when their children are online"** compared to **48%** British Parents). This may be partly because they have had relatively high exposure to or experience of the risks.[2] Nearly a quarter of *Controllers* or their children had been **"exposed to offensive or inappropriate content"** (**23%** compared to **14%** British parents), a quarter had had **"devices infected by viruses or other threats"** (**26%** compared to **16%** of British parents) and one in ten had been **subjected to online bullying'** (**10%** compared to **7%** of British parents). This association was highlighted in the qualitative research where parents were often reactive to problems rather than proactive in taking protective measures.

"[I had to] find out how to do it on the iPad, because it is so complex, but it all came about because my son put something in the search bar and there was tab after tab after tab that he must have looked at and we were horrified. It was something dead innocent where he thought brilliant!

[Manchester, Authoritative, Children Aged 8-9]

As a result of experiencing problems, *Controllers* have employed a number of protective measures. For example, four out of five have **"Internet security software (e.g. anti-virus) installed on the devices they use"** (**88%** compared to **63%** British parents), Nearly three quarters **"apply /safe search filters e.g. so search results filter out inappropriate material"** (**71%** compared to **38%** of British parents) and over two thirds **"only allow children to use trusted sites"** (**68%** compared to **45%** of British parents).

Qualitative research highlighted that addressing concerns about Internet safety with children can be a daunting process. Some parents delay or avoid conversations about inappropriate sexual content or appropriate conduct online because they do not want to open up the subject of other 'taboos' or raise their children's interest in subjects they don't believe they are ready for e.g. sex education.

"10 years old, 11 years old, they're doing sex education and stuff like that at school so they're going to come on and they're [coming home with questions so I tell them] 'Google' it.

[Leeds, Permissive, Children Aged 10-12 yrs]

Overall, low awareness and understanding of the risks and/or apathy concerning these dangers, low confidence in their technological ability and permissive parenting styles can result in a lack of proactive measures to safe guard children online. This may lead to children engaging in undesirable online behaviours and be exposed to inappropriate content.

"I wouldn't have a clue what to do. I'm not a technical person."

[Manchester, Authoritative, Children aged 12-14]

Amongst all personal factors considered however, the age of the child is still a fundamental influence as demonstrated by *Confident Techies* who are parents of young children. They are technologically confident and are highly aware and concerned about online risks but have taken limited precautions to date as their children are not yet using the Internet as much as their older counterparts.

Controllers are highly aware of the risks

58% say they are very aware of **"the online risks when their children are online"** compared to **48%** British Parents

2. This is supported by EU Kids Online (2012)

4.2 Social Factors

Social factors impact on parents' abilities to apply their own wishes on the child's behaviour. For example, parents may not wish for their children to spend numerous hours online daily, but believe that it is normal for children their age to do so and do not wish to be more restrictive than other parents. Key social factors include:

> ❯ Peers' and siblings' (and parents') influence on devices children have, the length of time children spend online and the sites they visit

> ❯ Parents' own social networks

> ❯ The significant proportion of the child's social interaction being based online, especially as they grow older

> ❯ Schools' influence and levels of proactivity in educating children and parents about safe use of the Internet

Qualitative research highlighted that peers and siblings, as well as the parents themselves, have a huge influence on children's usage of Internet devices and their desire to be online.

"Well the actual physical thing of not having a laptop, that was like cutting her arm off sort of thing."
[Manchester, Authoritative, Children aged 12-14]

"We got all our children iPods because they were constantly on our phones all the time".
[Coventry, Permissive, Children Aged 0-5]

This research indicates that peers', siblings' and parents' influence on children starts at around school age. Less than half of 0-4 year olds use the Internet, but nearly all 5-9 year olds do (**45%** 0-4 compared to **94%** 5-9). This increase is not purely down to using the Internet for school work as only half 5-9 year olds use the Internet for school work ➜**56%**. Influence on the type of device used also develops as the child gets older and had more personal freedom with **75%** of 14-16 year olds use a smartphone to go on the Internet compared to **45%** of 10-13 year olds.

"And it's a lot of peer pressure, isn't it? From kids their own age at school and – I know a little boy who's in my eldest son's class who's got a mobile phone and it was like – at 6, 7 – and my eldest son's like 'he's got his own phone' and I was like 'ok!'"
[Leeds, Permissive, Children Aged 6-8]

USE OF DEVICES BY AGE OF CHILD

INTERNET DEVICES BY AGE

A7 Which of the following devices do you and your children use for going on the Internet? (%)

Legend:
- 0-4 years
- 5-9 years
- 10-13 years
- 14-16 years

Base: All respondents 1503

Device	0-4 years	5-9 years	10-13 years	14-16 years
Desktop	12	42	51	48
Laptop	20	58	66	79
Tablet	22	46	47	41
Smartphone	17	24	45	75
Games console	11	39	54	62
Internet connected TV	4	12	14	14
None	55	6	0	0

For around a fifth of parents the **"influence of their child's friends"** concerns them a lot (**20%** say this). This is higher for parents of lower social grades (**23%** C2DE vs. **17%** ABC1 say this). Parents in the qualitative research commonly reported experiencing a dilemma where they would like to restrict their children's Internet usage to a greater extent to protect them from the risks, but on the other hand are sure that doing so would inhibit their child's ability to socialise with their friends online and do the things their friends are doing e.g. gaming.

"Call of Duty is an 18 game, people getting blown to bits and shot and yet every ten, eleven and twelve year-old in the whole country's playing it. My older lad was getting grief off all his mates when he was eight because he's not playing Call of Duty."

[Coventry, Permissive, Children Aged 0-5]

"Like for bad language and it's your child that's being punished ... after 10 minutes you heard inappropriate language and you said right turn that off ... and it's your child that's being punished for somebody else's behaviour."

[Manchester, Authoritative, Children aged 12-14]

Qualitative research highlighted that the presence of older siblings in the house had a huge impact on the younger children's interest in the Internet and their exposure to inappropriate content.

"My youngest one sees my oldest one all the time on the phone. She showed her certain things on it and the other day I was sitting there and I couldn't believe like how she got onto something herself."

[Coventry, Permissive, Children Aged 0-5]
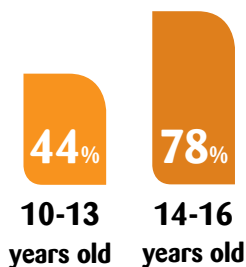
Parents find it difficult, however, to balance 'fairness' between siblings with appropriate protective measures for each child. They also find it more onerous to control and monitor the child's usage when there are numerous children, at different ages, to consider.

"Well if it's their own normally I'd be able to determine certain things that they can look at, but if it's the [family's computer] it's kind of hard in my house 'cause it's older age groups and if I set it up so you can't do that, they'll go 'yeah I can', but then [my seven year old] might go on it later and [she] will put an awful status up on [my 11 year olds'] Facebook. So then in my house everybody knows to log out now."

[Leeds, Permissive, Children Aged 6-8]

The length of time spent online also increases as the child gets older and spends more time on social networking sites. Children start to become social and want to interact with their friends online from the age of 10, with two in five ➔**44%** of 10-13 years olds but over three quarters ➔**78%** of 14-16 year olds use social networking / media sites. As a consequence half ➔**50%** of 14-16 year olds and a quarter ➔**26%** of

10-13 year olds use the Internet for three hours or more per day. Parents are aware that sometimes their children say that friends have access to a certain device or website and it turns out to be untrue. However, parents often feel unable to challenge their children on these matters as they do not know the truth. Compounding this issue is the fact that there is limited awareness or agreement of socially accepted norms which parents can refer to regarding what is acceptable online behaviour by age. There is also no precedent which they can follow (i.e. from their own parents). Parental behaviour is therefore reactive, haphazard and highly individual, with each family finding their own way and imposing their own rules.

Parents are appreciative when schools adopt proactive communications regarding online safety as this gives credence to and legitimises their ability to apply stricter controls.

"I think having a session with the kids to say this is what you're parents are going to do, you know, so that everybody's in the same boat."

[Manchester, Authoritative, Children Aged 10-12 years]

Children start to become social and want to interact with their friends online from the age of 10

44%
10-13 years old

78%
14-16 years old

3 hours

use the Internet for three hours or more per day

50%
14-16 years old

26%
10-13 years old
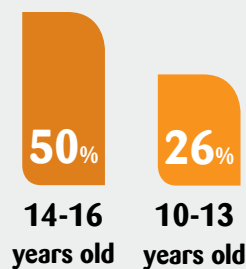
"The same thing about the bullying. Mainly the focus on the bullying, how to report it, how to tell your child to report it. Everything they told us they said this is how you tell your child to do it. So it's nice – it was a package for both of us, really. And it was very, very useful. Very helpful."

[London, Authoritative,
Children Aged 10-12 years]

4.3 **Online Factors**

Three quarters of parents agree that **the Internet is essential to everyday life** (**78%** agree) and half **feel completely comfortable sharing their experiences on the Internet** (**53%** agree.)[3] However, a third of parents agree that **there is so much on the Internet that it feels overwhelming** (**33%**). The qualitative research illustrated that not all parents agree that children are more au fait with technology than they are, but they do recognise that the pace of change makes it hard to keep up and therefore difficult to remain abreast of the risks and solutions.

"I think it's moving too fast the Internet, I mean look at 20 years ago where we were and now you've got like touch screen, you know, they've got iPhone you can type in, well, whatever and you can download anything"

[Leeds, Permissive,
Children Aged 10-12 years]

Some parents also feel vulnerable and believe that technology and content providers only pay lip service to their children's online safety. For example, many parents in the qualitative research highlighted that websites with age restrictions are easily accessed via a date of birth which their children can work out and fabricate.

"Like YouTube and you have to be 18 to have an account but these kids are smart and can just put the right date in and it's like a tick for YouTube but the kid's still got the access"

[Manchester, Authoritative,
Children Aged 12-14 years]

"I found out today…if you've got kids for example in those pictures, your location can be mapped on there if you don't turn off the location…There are naughty people out there who could find you and it is damn scary…Why do they have the location?"

[Manchester, Authoritative,
Children Aged 8-9 years]

These barriers prevent some parents from engaging in proactive safety measures such as content filters, as their response feels inadequate to the perceived challenge.

3. See UKCCIS (2010)
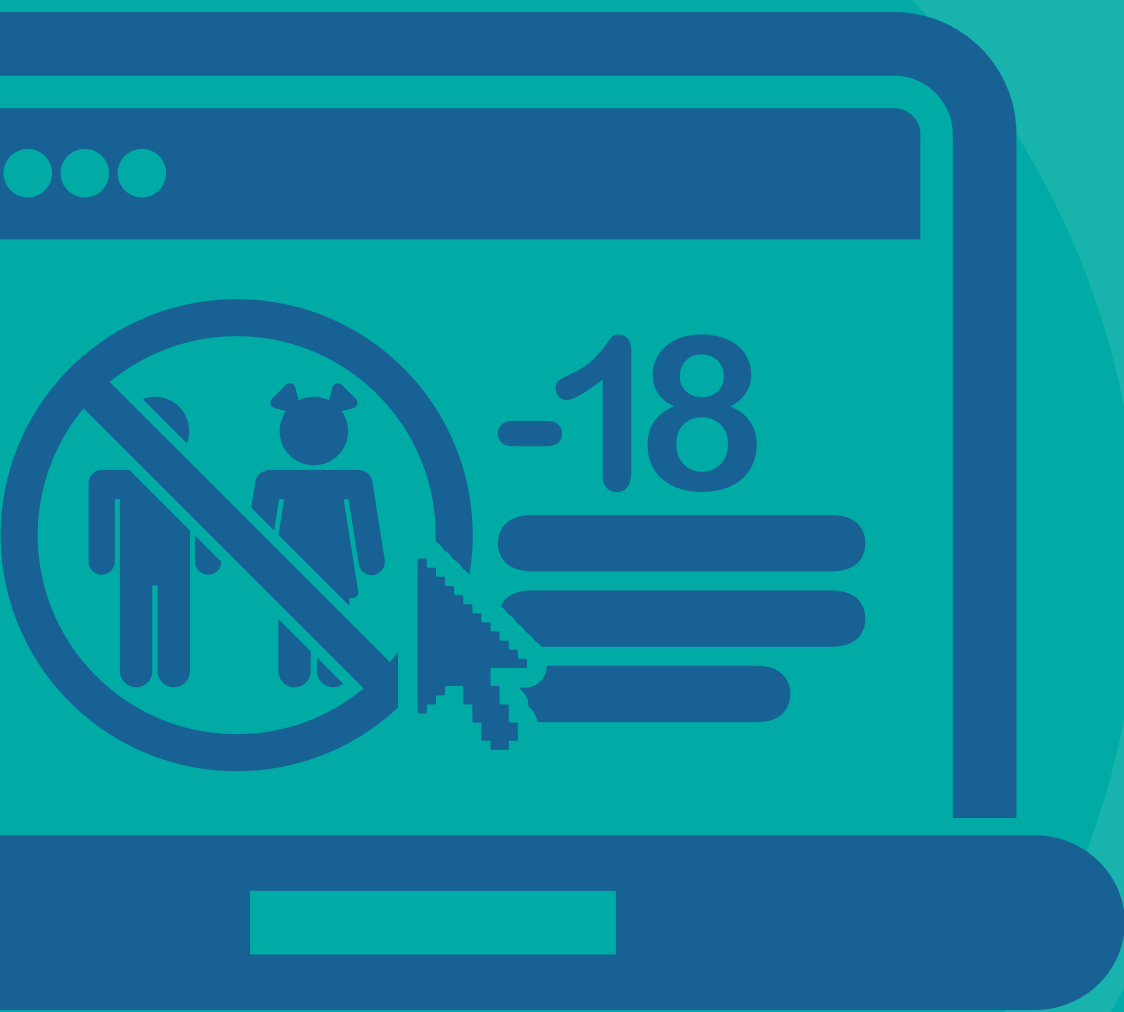
Online Risks and Related Concerns

5

Online safety was not reported to be one of the major concerns of parents of 0-16 year olds and ranked only seventh after factors including alcohol and drugs, diet, and relationships with peers. Emotional wellbeing was parents' biggest concern, although factors related to online risks were seen to be important, such as exposure to inappropriate content and contact with strangers.

AREAS OF CONCERN FOR PARENTS

EMOTIONAL WELL BEING IS THE GREATEST CONCERN FOR PARENTS; ONLINE SAFETY IS SEVENTH ON THIS LIST

QB1a Please rank the following areas in terms of how much you worry about them with regard to your child's well being

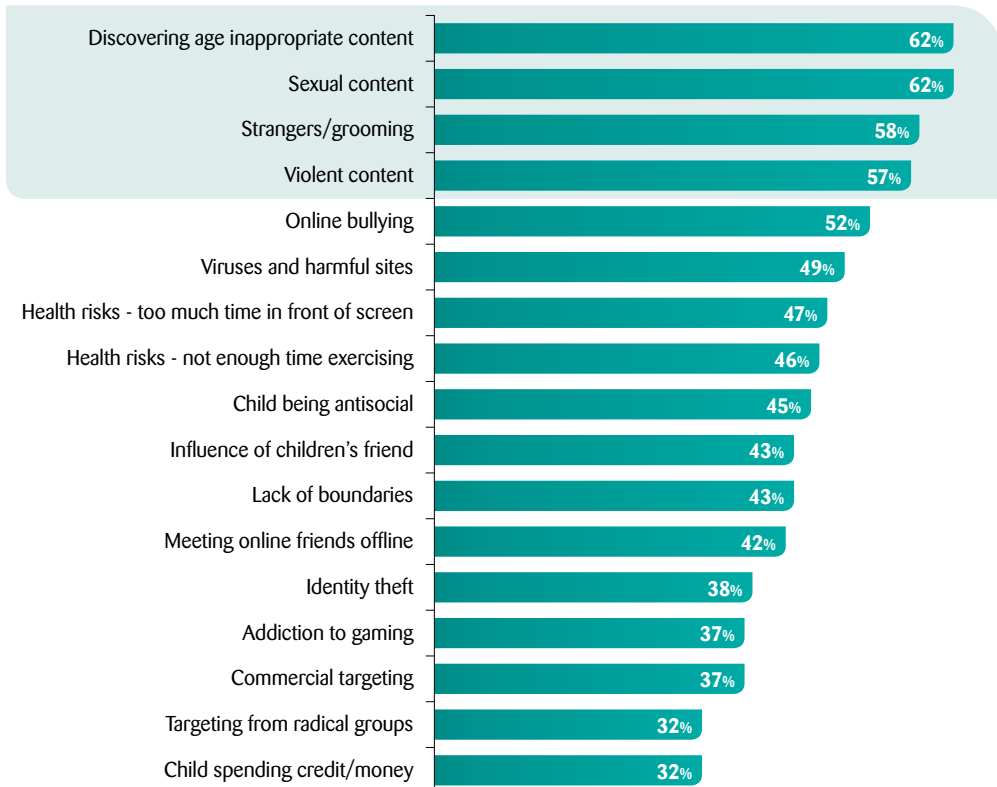| Rank	Area of concern
1	Their emotional well being
2	Physical health
3	Being exposed to inappropriate content/behaviour
4	Education
5	Contact with strangers
6	Being able to provide for them financially
7	Online safety
8	Relationship with peers
9	Diet
10	Alcohol/drugs

Base:
All respondents 2539

Parents' main online concerns for their children are those which could damage the child's emotional well-being or put them in physical danger, principally: sexual content, inappropriate content they find themselves, violent content and strangers/grooming.

PRIORITISATION OF ONLINE CONCERNS

PARENT'S MAIN CONCERNS ONLINE ARE THOSE THAT COULD DAMAGE THE CHILD'S EMOTIONAL WELL BEING

C2 To what extent do the following concern you as risks to your child when they go online?

Concerns me a lot (Score of 4 or 5)

Concern	%
Discovering age inappropriate content	62%
Sexual content	62%
Strangers/grooming	58%
Violent content	57%
Online bullying	52%
Viruses and harmful sites	49%
Health risks - too much time in front of screen	47%
Health risks - not enough time exercising	46%
Child being antisocial	45%
Influence of children's friend	43%
Lack of boundaries	43%
Meeting online friends offline	42%
Identity theft	38%
Addiction to gaming	37%
Commercial targeting	37%
Targeting from radical groups	32%
Child spending credit/money	32%

Base:
All respondents 2539

Evidence from the focus groups emphasised these concerns and demonstrated their reality, with many parents reporting instances in which their children had been caught viewing explicit or inappropriate content, or had been contacted by strangers. This is demonstrated by comments from two of the London focus groups, reported below.

"When my son was younger I found him looking at porn sites. And the graphic nature of what he was able to get at, even with the sort of controls that I thought I'd put on it… I was really shocked, really shocked."

[London, Permissive, Children Aged 14-16]

"She picked up on this overdubbed Peppa Pig. One of the [characters] said, I am going to rip your f*** head off. I thought, what?"**

[London, Authoritative, Children Aged 0-5]

"My daughter did have a BlackBerry and I took that away because, to my horror … when I looked on her phone, a 19 year old boy had started to befriend her and I think she was going to arrange to meet this person … She now has a £10 phone and she can't use the laptop unless she is downstairs in the living room where I can monitor her."

[London, Permissive, Children Aged 14-16]

As children's Internet use becomes more social, new risks emerge and levels of parental concern increase:

age < 10 ❯ Prior to the age of 10, use of the Internet tends to be limited to gaming, streaming video and TV and video calling, with school work and general browsing becoming features between the ages of 5 and 9. At this stage, parental concern is mainly limited to sexual content, inappropriate content, violent content and strangers/grooming.

age 10-13 ❯ The ages of 10-13 are a transitional period, when levels of parental concern are at their highest. It is during this period that children begin to engage in a wider range of online activities, including social networking, email, use of apps and instant messaging and when parents start showing concern about online bullying.

age 14-16 ❯ Between the ages of 14 and 16, children's Internet use is at its most varied. However, parental concern begins to diminish as parents adjust to and worry less acutely about their child's Internet use.

LEVEL OF PARENTAL CONCERN BY AGE OF CHILD

PEAK TIMES OF CONCERN FOR PARENTS FOR ALL ONLINE ISSUES IS WHEN THEIR CHILDREN ARE BETWEEN THE AGES OF 10-13

C2 To what extent do the following concern you as risks to your child when they go online? Mean scores of 5 for all children asked about

Legend:
- Your child discovering age inappropriate information
- Sexual content
- Violent content
- Strangers/grooming
- Online bullying
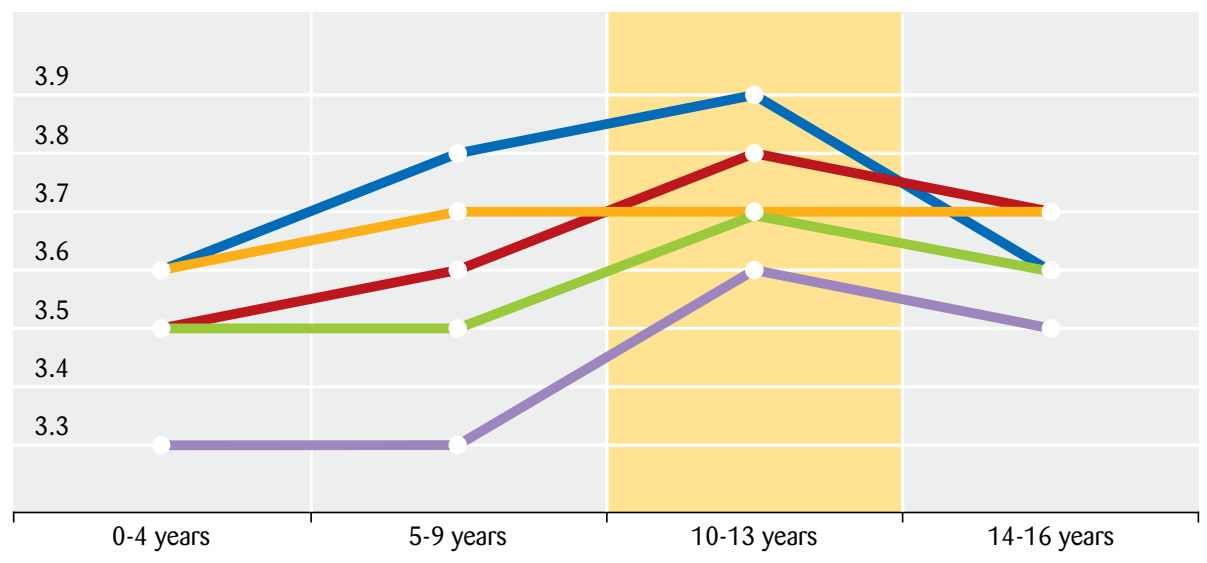
Base: All answers for all children asked about
0-4 years: 600; 5-9 years: 654; 10-13 years: 537; 14-16 years: 392

To some extent, the changing levels of parental concern described above can be attributed to the ability of parents to monitor and control their children's Internet use. The focus groups clearly demonstrated that up to the age of five, monitoring is relatively easy for parents to do, whatever their technical capabilities, as children's use of the Internet is often accompanied and usually takes place in a communal environment. Between 5 and 10, children's use still tends to take place in a communal environment and, though it may be more independent, is relatively easy to observe.

"I'm usually there next to them whether it's cooking dinner or something – but it's always timed. They're not allowed to just sit for hours on end. And they're typical boys, they want to be outside playing football generally anyway, so it's not too hard to take it off them."

[Leeds, Permissive, Children aged 6-8]

From the ages of 10 to 13, children start to become much more independent in their use of the Internet (with **26%** going online for three hours or more a day), making observation more difficult and forcing parents to place greater emphasis on trust, conversation and technical solutions (i.e. parental controls). It is at this age that parents may begin to set conditions of use for certain sites (e.g. allowing children to use Facebook so long as they, or another relative, are included as a friend), that enable them to monitor their child's activity.

"[When she was 13] I said if she wanted to go on Facebook, someone needed to be on there with her … Her aunty is a friend and tells me if she sees anything going on."

[Coventry, Authoritative, Children aged 14-16]

After the age of 13, parents feel much less able to monitor the wide range of online activities their children are engaged in, especial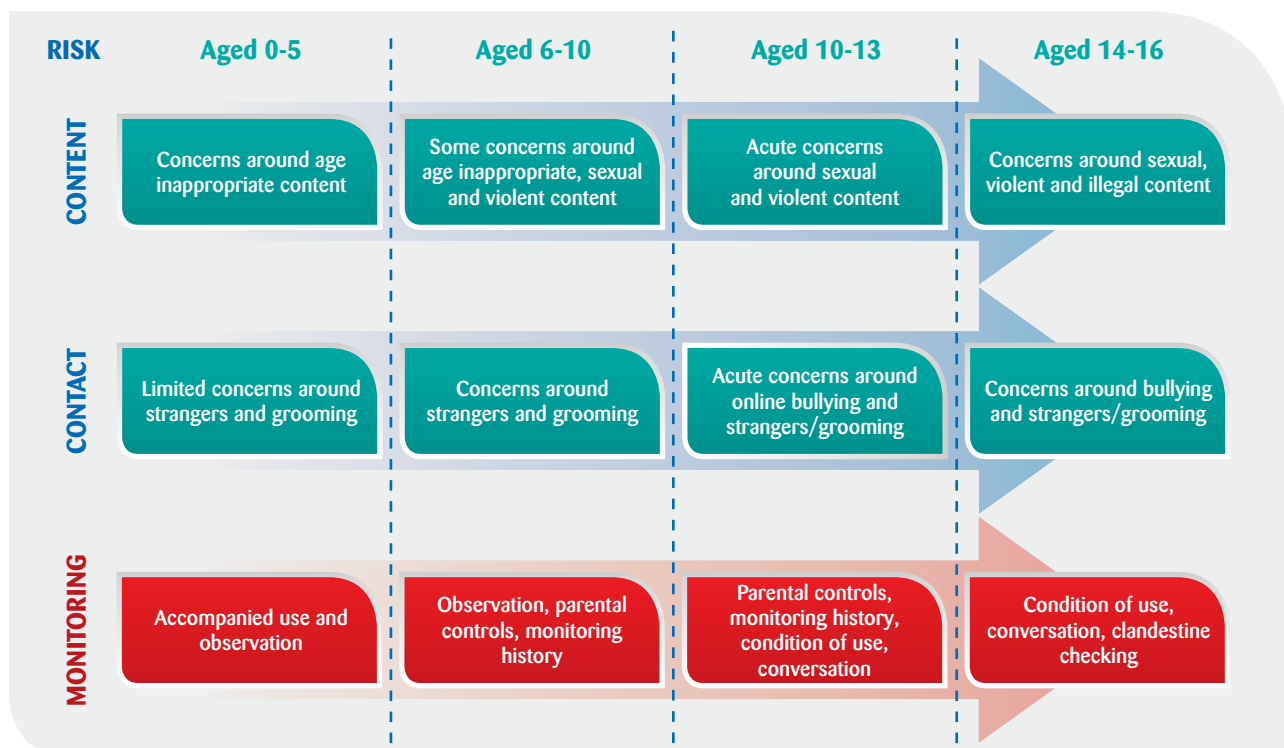ly since use increasingly occurs outside the home (with **75%** using smartphones to access the Internet). This finding is supported by previous Ofcom research which identified 10-14 as the peak risk period (see Ofcom, 2010). At this stage monitoring activity may become more clandestine (checking search history and cookies, looking at children's phones when they are not using them, etc.). However, provided they have experienced no issues of significant concern, they tend to feel less anxious and assume that their child is using the Internet safely.

"You have to give them a certain amount of trust, I think, the older ones, you know. But I do think sometimes, oh am I nosy, am I slightly intrusive? But then I think that's my right, isn't it, as a parent?"

[London, Permissive, Children aged 14-16]

The relationship between age, online risks, parental concern and monitoring activity is illustrated in the diagram below.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AGE, RISK AND MONITORING BEHAVIOUR

RISK	Aged 0-5	Aged 6-10	Aged 10-13	Aged 14-16
CONTENT	Concerns around age inappropriate content	Some concerns around age inappropriate, sexual and violent content	Acute concerns around sexual and violent content	Concerns around sexual, violent and illegal content
CONTACT	Limited concerns around strangers and grooming	Concerns around strangers and grooming	Acute concerns around online bullying and strangers/grooming	Concerns around bullying and strangers/grooming
MONITORING	Accompanied use and observation	Observation, parental controls, monitoring history	Parental controls, monitoring history, condition of use, conversation	Condition of use, conversation, clandestine checking

In addition, levels of parental concern are shaped by factors other than age, the range of online activities children are engaged in and parents' ability to monitor these. Evidence from the focus groups shows that these include:

› **Awareness of risks** – Parents with less awareness of online risks tend to be less concerned

› **Exposure to risks** – Those whose children have been exposed to online hazards show higher levels of concern than others

› **Use of multiple devices** – Where children are using multiple devices, levels of concern may be higher as it is perceived to be more difficult to set controls and monitor their activity

The evidence presented in this section indicates that the ages of 10 to 13 represent a critical moment at which parents feel most concerned about their children's Internet use and are in most need of information and advice. To help them prepare for this and develop an appropriate parenting response, information and advice should be targeted at parents some years before their children turn 10, perhaps from the age of 6, when their children's Internet use starts to become more independent.

"I think it's at this age that it gets really difficult. They want to do what their friends are doing and they don't want you snooping around."

[Manchester, Authoritative, Children aged 12-14]

Related to this, there is evidence from parents of younger children that social media sites are being used at increasingly early ages, with some children having Facebook accounts from the age of eight. Any information campaign will need to be alert to this trend, as the heightened parental concerns around social networking may apply to children younger than 10-13 in the near future.

"My son … he's not supposed to, but he has got a Facebook account. So it's good in a way, he can talk to people, family and stuff, that he's not near, that he doesn't see often."

[Leeds, Permissive, Children aged 6-8]

anti-malware

certificate

encoded authentication

system protocol

password shield

firewall intrusion free

encryption key

ssl https

communications safeguard

encrypted technology

internet hackers free

cyberattack

server

security

web key

locked

protection data global

tls

net

certified business

network information

software secure

access privacy

browser safety guaranteed

6 Protective Actions

6.1 Parental Responsibility

Parents believe they are chiefly responsible for teaching children about Internet security and keeping them safe online (**96%** say that parents are responsible for keeping children safe online).

"I'd say parents are responsible for what their children are looking at. You're supposed to be monitoring them. I'd say it's [parents'] responsibility to talk to them about what they're supposed to be looking at and what they're not supposed to be looking at. It's also their responsibility to monitor what they've been looking at after they've used the computer."

[Leeds, Permissive, Children aged 6-8]

Parents who are more risk-aware are more likely to see this as their responsibility. A total of **86%** of those who are not very or not at all aware of online risks see themselves as mainly responsible for keeping children safe online, compared to **97%** of those who are somewhat or very aware. Similarly, confidence in protecting children online makes adults more likely to see this as their responsibility. Ninety-seven per cent of those who are somewhat or very confident see keeping children safe online as their responsibility compared to **86%** of those who are not very or not at all confident.
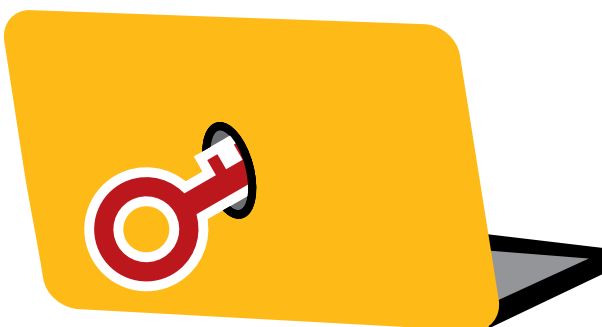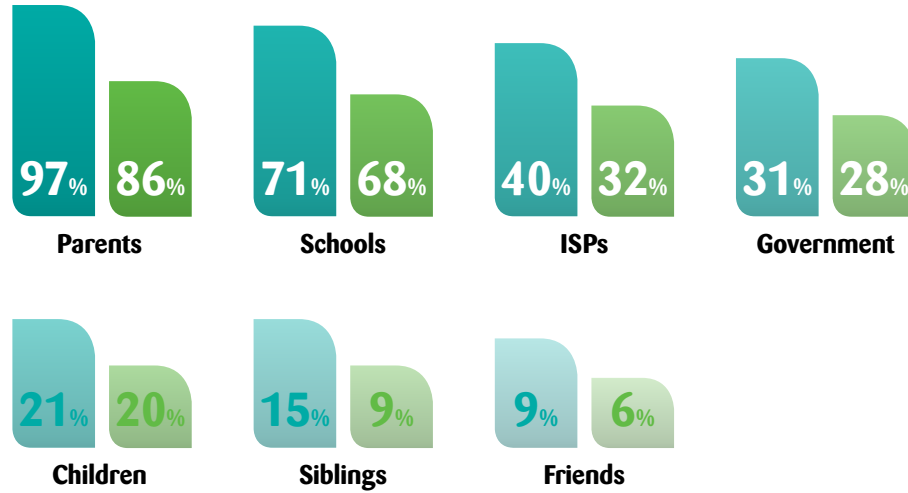
INFLUENCE OF RISK-AWARENESS ON PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

THOSE AWARE OF RISKS ONLINE ARE MORE LIKELY TO ATTRIBUTE RESPONSIBILITY TO THEMSELVES, AS WELL AS TO OTHERS

C3 Who do you think is responsible for teaching about Internet safety and keeping your children safe online?

- ■ Aware/very aware
- ■ Not very/not at all aware

Base: All respondents 1501

	Aware/very aware	Not very/not at all aware
Parents	97%	86%
Schools	71%	68%
ISPs	40%	32%
Government	31%	28%
Children	21%	20%
Siblings	15%	9%
Friends	9%	6%

Differences emerged across the parent segments in terms of the levels of responsibility assumed by parents. Those in the *Unengaged and Overwhelmed* segment were least likely to see themselves as responsible ➔ **83%** reflecting their lack of confidence online. In contrast, **100%** of *Con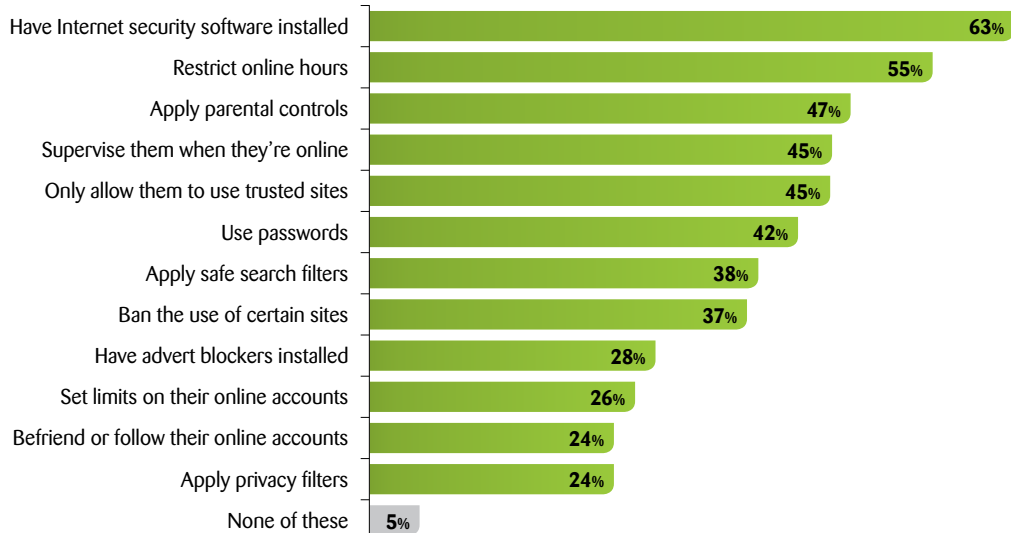trollers* thought that it was a parental responsibility to teach their children about risks and protect them online. The principal actions taken by parents to protect their children online were having Internet security software installed ➔ **63%** and actively restricting their children's online usage ➔ **55%**. Less than half ➔ **47%** applied parental controls in the home or to devices used by their children.

ACTIONS TAKEN TO PROTECT CHILDREN

THE MOST COMMON METHODS OF ENSURING CHILD SAFETY ARE INSTALLING INTERNET SECURITY SOFTWARE AND LIMITING THE TIME CHILDREN SPEND ONLINE

D1 Which of the following do you use to ensure your child's safety online?

Method	%
Have Internet security software installed	63%
Restrict online hours	55%
Apply parental controls	47%
Supervise them when they're online	45%
Only allow them to use trusted sites	45%
Use passwords	42%
Apply safe search filters	38%
Ban the use of certain sites	37%
Have advert blockers installed	28%
Set limits on their online accounts	26%
Befriend or follow their online accounts	24%
Apply privacy filters	24%
None of these	5%

Base: All respondents 1364

However, strong concerns were expressed about Internet security software and the use of parental controls across the focus groups. These showed that few parents were confident about their use of these and that they either saw them as too powerful (often blocking uncontroversial sites) or easy for older children to circumvent. This may explain why only half of parents surveyed were using them.[4]

"I think firewalls are really, really hard to make functional."

[London, Authoritative, Children Aged 0-5]

"I am not confident with the parental controls. I think no matter what parental controls you put in, children find out how to go round it."

[London, Authoritative, Children Aged 0-5]

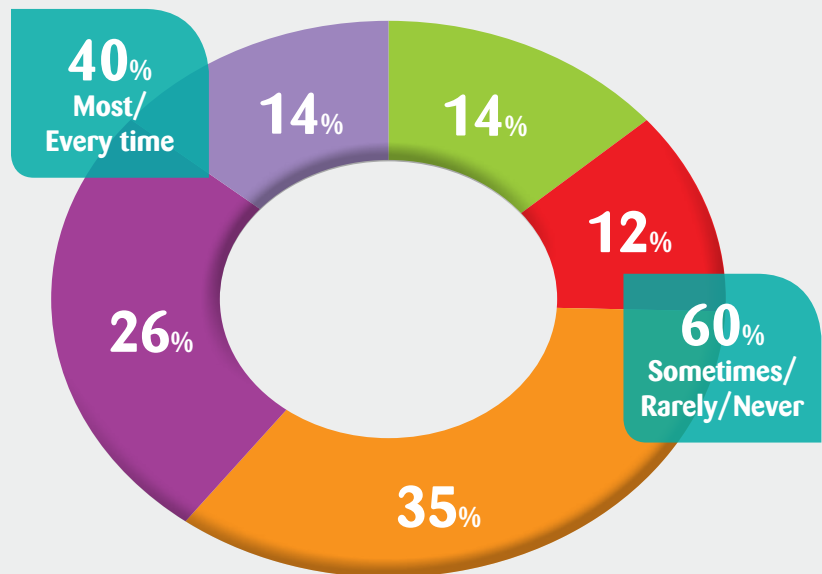In response to this, it is clear that campaign messages simply advising parents to turn on security functions and controls will not be effective, as parents do not have faith in the efficacy of these tools. However, parents did request that more effective and easy-to-use security features and controls were offered by ISPs and anti-virus providers. This is addressed in the next section of the report and should be considered as part of any broad child Internet safety campaign.

Given the absence of social norms guiding parents' response to their children's online behaviour, which has already been discussed, it is important to note that focusing on technical solutions alone will not be adequate to keep children safe. Parents must also talk to their children about their online behaviour and the risks involved and monitor their activities. However, a quarter of parents rarely or never speak to their children about online safety ➡ **26%** and just over a tenth rarely or never supervise them when they go online ➡ **13%**.

4. See UKCCIS (2010)

FREQUENCY OF CONVERSATIONS ABOUT ONLINE SAFETY

The majority of parents **do not regularly speak** to their children about Internet security

40% Most/Every time

14%

14%

12%

60% Sometimes/Rarely/Never

26%

35%

- I've never spoken to them
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Most times they go online
- Every time they go online

B4 How often do you talk to your child about being safe online?

Base: All respondents 2093

More reassuringly, only **5%** of parents say they do nothing to protect their children online. Also, clear gender differences are observable in the actions taken, with mums more likely to take certain kinds of action than dads. These include:

❯ Blocking access to certain sites (**52%** only allow the use of trusted sites as opposed to **36%** of men)
❯ Befriending or following their children online (**29%** of mums to **19%** of dads)
❯ Supervising them online (**49%** of mums to **39%** of dads).

With respect to the different parent segments, **61%** of *Confident Techies* say they speak to their children either every time they go online, or most times, with **58%** of *Protectors* and **55%** of *Controllers* saying the same. In comparison, only **17%** of both *Ill Equipped Worriers* and *Permissive Techies* say they speak to their children every time or most times they go online.

6.2 Sources of Information

The majority of parents were aware of information sources about child Internet safety. Over half, **52%**, said they were somewhat aware, with **19%** saying they were very aware. Less than a third said they were not very or not at all aware ➔**28%** and only **5%** say they are not at all aware of any sources of information at all.

AWARENESS OF INFORMATION SOURCES ON CHILD INTERNET SAFETY

The majority of parents **feel that they are aware of information sources** that help keep their children safe online
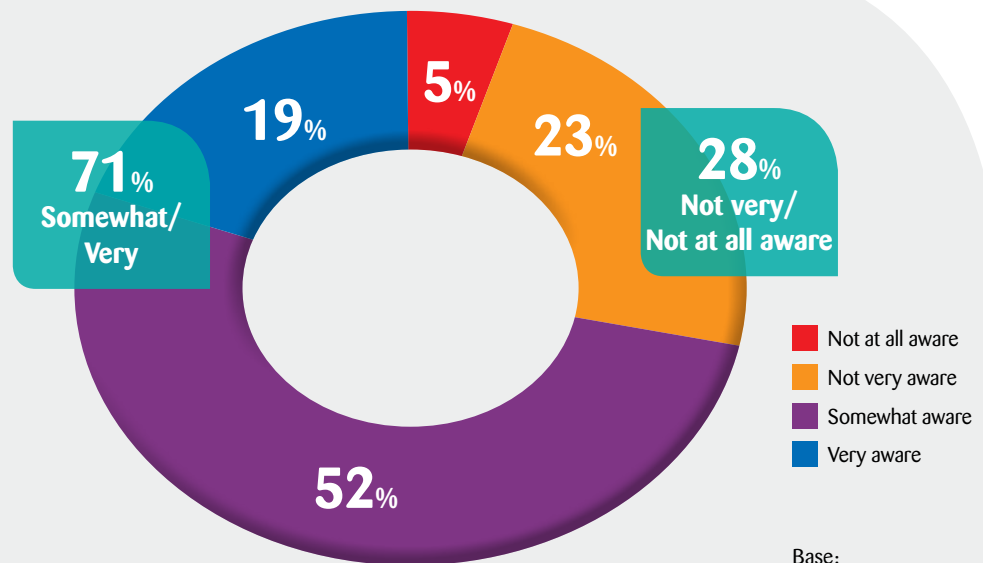
E1 How aware are you of information sources that inform you about keeping your children safe online?

5%

23%

28% Not very/ Not at all aware

19%

71% Somewhat/ Very

52%

- Not at all aware
- Not very aware
- Somewhat aware
- Very aware

Base: All respondents 1503

Internet security providers, such as Norton or McAfee, were the top sources of information cited by parents in informing them about how to keep their children safe online ➔**45%**. Other sources of information were school advice ➔**37%**), search engine sites like Google or Yahoo ➔**35%** and ISPs themselves ➔**31%**.

Television, other parents, government information, the media and forums likes mumsnet.com were used by around a quarter of parents (**27%** use television, **26%** cite other parents and **25%** used government information, media sources and **22%** forums respectively). Around one sixth said they did not use any sources of information.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON CHILD INTERNET SAFETY

INTERNET SECURITY PROVIDERS ARE THE TOP SOURCE OF INFORMATION USED BY PARENTS TO LEARN ABOUT KEEPING THEIR CHILD SAFE ONLINE, BUT ISPs PLAY A KEY ROLE

E2 Which, if any, of the following do you use to learn about keeping your children safe online?

Rank

Rank	Source	%
1	**Internet security providers**	**45%**
2	School advice	**37%**
3	Search engine sites	**35%**
4	Internet service provider	**31%**
5	Television	**27%**
6	Other parents	**26%**
7	Government information	**25%**
8	The news/media	**25%**
9	Parent forums e.g. mumsnet.com	**22%**
10	None of these	**16%**
11	The police	**12%**
12	Charities e.g. NSPCC, Barnados	**9%**
13	Radio	**8%**
14	Other independent advice source	**1%**

Base:
All respondents 1505

It should be noted that the list of sources mentioned spontaneously during the focus groups was much smaller than this. Only media reports, schools, other parents and discussions on Mumsnet were mentioned. Given the online nature of the survey, it is possible that respondents over-claimed the influence of security providers here.

6.3 **Appropriateness of Actions**

Parents generally feel confident that the measures they are taking are appropriate (**82%** say they are confident or very confident that what they are doing to protect their children is effective), with variation across the segments. Those parents with older children are less confident, with only **76%** of those with 14-16 year olds expressing this.

Parents feel generally confident in measures to protect their child; however, those with younger children are more confident overall

Overall levels

1%
20%
16%
62%

D2 How confident do you feel that the measures you take to ensure your child's safety online are effective?

- Very confident
- Confident
- Not very confident
- Not at all confident

0-4 years
1%
30%
13%
56%

5-9 years
1%
20%
14%
66%

10-13 years
2%
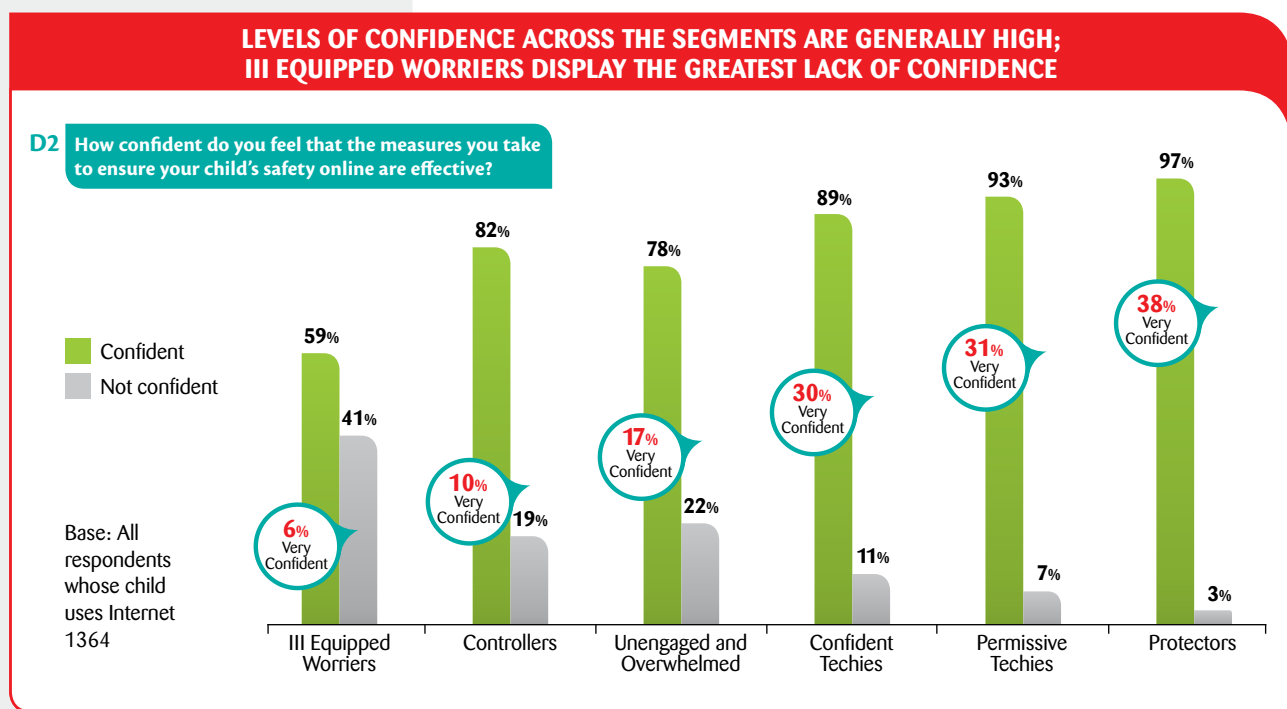16%
17%
66%

14-16 years
1%
15%
24%
60%
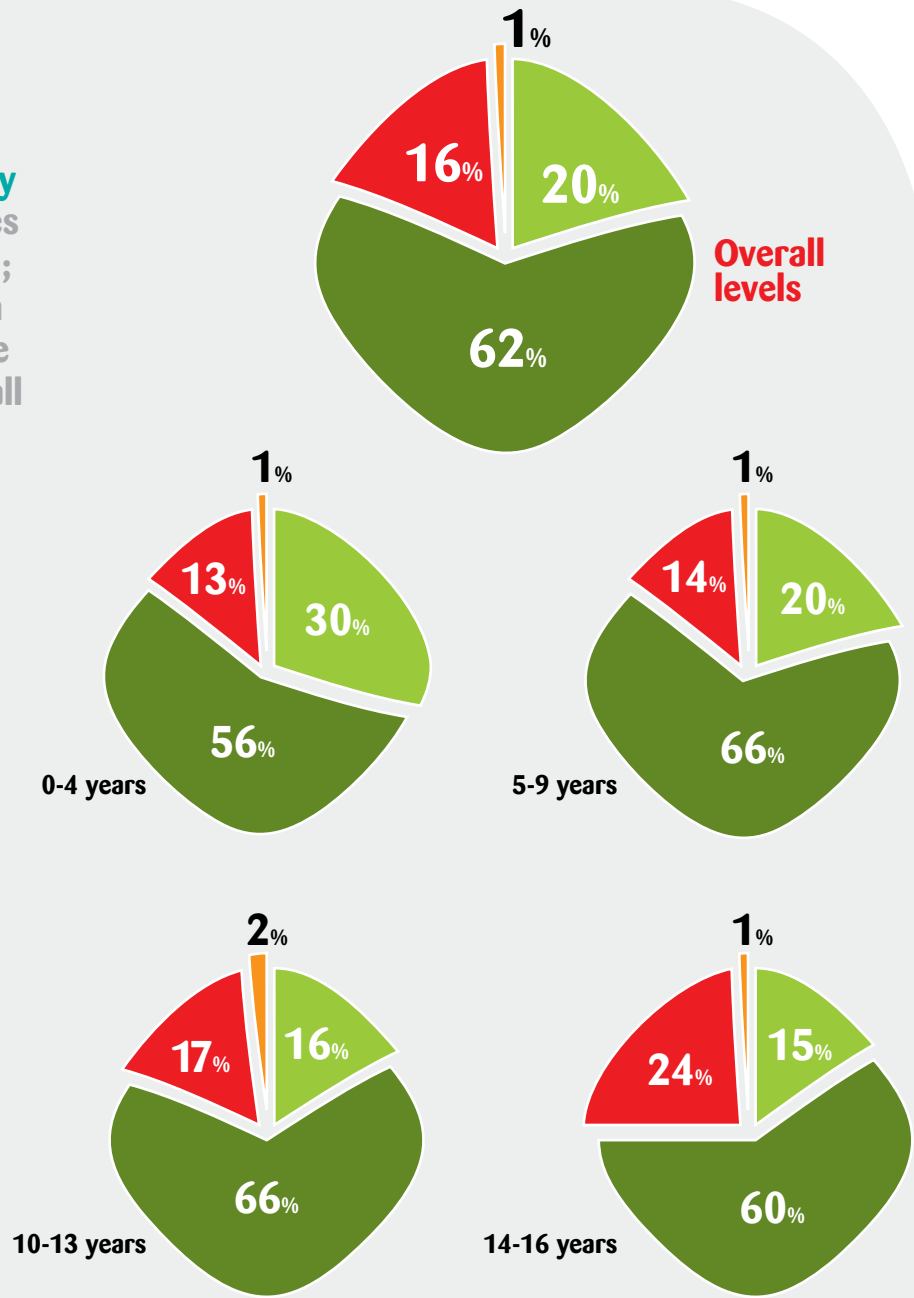
Base:
All respondents whose child
uses the Internet 1364

Overall, **20%** of parents say they feel very confident, with younger parents slightly more likely to report this (**28%** of those with children aged 0-4).

Protectors are the most confident segment with **97%** saying they feel confident or very confident that what they are doing is effective (and a total of **38%** saying they feel very

confident). Other segments that felt similarly confident were *Permissive Techies* ➔ **93%**, *Confident Techies* ➔ **89%** and *Controllers* ➔ **82%**. However, only **78%** of *Unengaged and Overwhelmed* parents and only **59%** of *Ill-equipped Worriers* report feeling confident or very confident that what they are doing to protect their children is effective.

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LEVELS OF CONFIDENCE IN ACTIONS TAKEN BY SEGMENT

LEVELS OF CONFIDENCE ACROSS THE SEGMENTS ARE GENERALLY HIGH;
Ill EQUIPPED WORRIERS DISPLAY THE GREATEST LACK OF CONFIDENCE

D2 How confident do you feel that the measures you take to ensure your child's safety online are effective?

Confident
Not confident

Base: All respondents whose child uses Internet 1364

	Ill Equipped Worriers	Controllers	Unengaged and Overwhelmed	Confident Techies	Permissive Techies	Protectors
Confident	59%	82%	78%	89%	93%	97%
Very Confident	6%	10%	17%	30%	31%	38%
Not confident	41%	19%	22%	11%	7%	3%

Clearly, levels of confidence are not necessarily indicative of the ability of parents to safeguard their children online. Parents may have an over-optimistic sense of their protective capacities and their level of confidence may not be commensurate with the actions they are taking.

For instance, the segmentation shows that *Unengaged and Overwhelmed* parents are reasonably confident that their children are safe online (**22%** say they are not confident and **78%** say they are confident). However, they take only limited protective action (**18%** use parental controls) and show limited awareness of online risks (only **30%** are very aware). The quote below is illustrative of this position.

"The 15 year old, she's got her own computer, she's got a BlackBerry which she uses for this Snapchat thing and … for Facebook, Twittering, all that sort of stuff. I don't keep an eye on what she's doing to tell the truth, she's mainly in her bedroom doing it so I don't know what she's getting up to a lot of the times but I trust her."

[London, Permissive, Children aged 14-16]

In contrast, *Ill-equipped Worriers* showed similarly low levels of protective action (**26%** use parental controls) and limited awareness of the risks (**21%** were very aware) but were less confident that what they were doing to protect their children was effective (**41%** were not confident and **59%** were confident). Arguably, *Ill-equipped Worriers'* estimations of their ability to protect their children were more realistic than those of *Unengaged and Overwhelmed* parents.

This suggests that a communications campaign should take steps to address those who feel confident about safeguarding their children, as well as those who do not. Strategies such as alerting them to current online risks and questioning whether they really know what their children are doing online, ought to form part of the engagement of more confident parents.
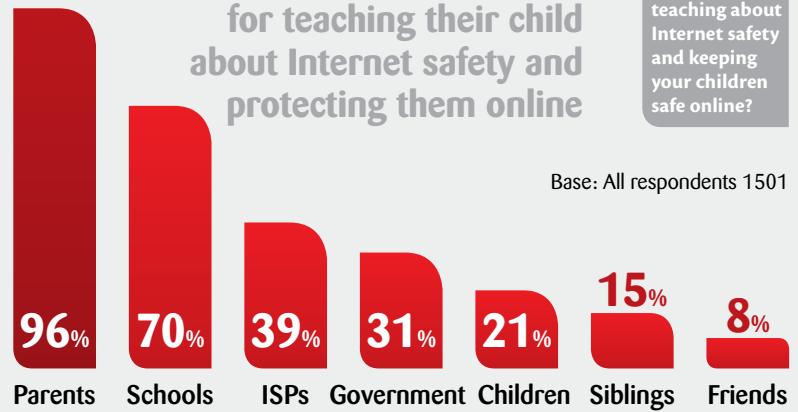
45

While most parents ➔**96%** saw themselves as being responsible for keeping their children safe online, others were also seen as having responsibility for this. A total of **70%** of parents believed schools were responsible for keeping children safe online and **39%** believed ISPs had responsibility for this.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE ONLINE?

Parents see themselves as having key responsibility for teaching their child about Internet safety and protecting them online

C3 Who do you think is responsible for teaching about Internet safety and keeping your children safe online?

Base: All respondents 1501

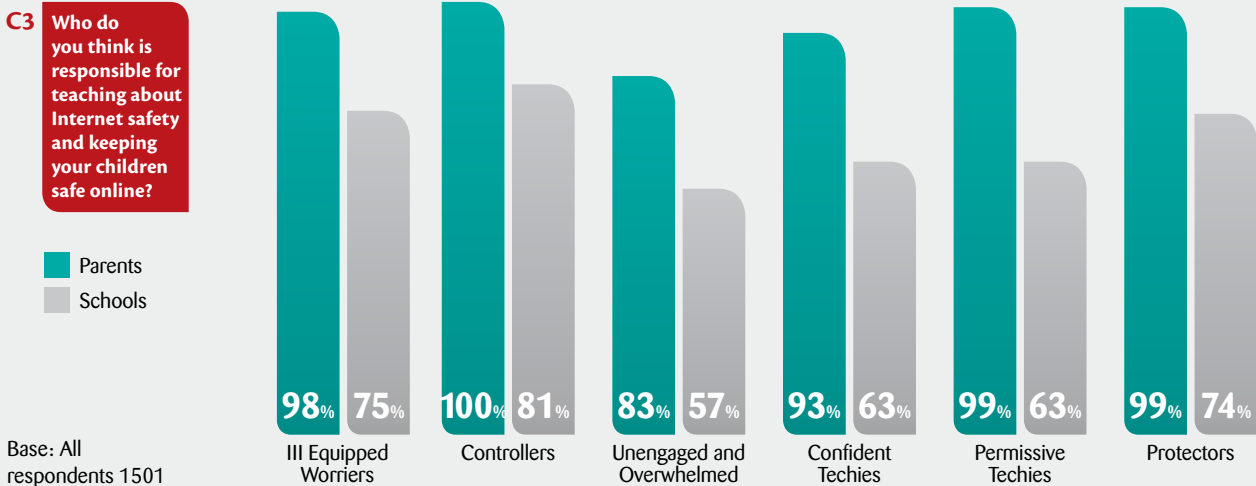| 96%	70%	39%	31%	21%	15%	8%
Parents	Schools	ISPs	Government	Children	Siblings	Friends

Mums were more likely than dads to say that schools were responsible for keeping children safe (**75%** of mums compared to **65%** of dads). Older parents were also more likely to hold this view. Amongst parents over 55, **80%** said that schools should be responsible for keeping their children protected as compared to **69%** of 18-24 year olds.
Confident Techies and *Permissive Techies* were less likely to believe that schools should protect their children online (**63%** held this view) while *Unengaged and Overwhelmed* parents were even less likely to hold this view ➔**57%**. *Controllers* were most likely to see school as having a role (**81%** said schools were responsible for keeping children safe online).

PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTS' AND SCHOOLS' RESPONSIBILITY BY SEGMENT

All segments beieve in parental responsibility for their children's safety online; belief in school's responsibility is mixed

C3 Who do you think is responsible for teaching about Internet safety and keeping your children safe online?

■ Parents
■ Schools

Base: All respondents 1501

	Ill Equipped Worriers	Controllers	Unengaged and Overwhelmed	Confident Techies	Permissive Techies	Protectors
Parents	98%	100%	83%	93%	99%	99%
Schools	75%	81%	57%	63%	63%	74%

While it is clear that some schools were being proactive in offering education and information about online safety to parents and children, delivery of this appeared to be limited to secondary schools and was very patchy nationwide (three instances were mentioned in the focus groups in London and Coventry). Where these kinds of programmes were being run, they tended to cover online bullying and grooming rather than sexual and violent content.

"I think it should be a natural thing for schools [to do] … They did actually do that with [my] children, they made quite a big thing about Internet safety for them. That was a few years ago now and obviously it has moved on since then. So they ought to play quite a major role I think."

[Coventry, Authoritative, Children aged 14-16]

At the more proactive end, schools were inviting parents in to discuss online safety, informing them of the risks and providing them with information and advice. This was said to be happening in one secondary school and one community centre mentioned in the focus groups). Middling levels of proactivity involved schools running campaigns and sessions on similar subjects for children only – though parents might have been informed about these via their children or correspondence from the school. At the lower levels of proactivity, parents were not aware of any information or education being offered in schools, though this does not mean it was not provided to children.

It is clear that parents wanted schools to play a role in offering information and advice, involving parents where possible, and that any campaign should utilise schools to promote

its messages and as a conduit for information. Parents felt there was an obvious connection between online safety and the activity of schools.

"The schools I think should have a responsibility to make sure that parents are fully informed as to the dangers, not all parents give a damn really. Obviously with due respect to everybody there are lots of parents out there that don't."
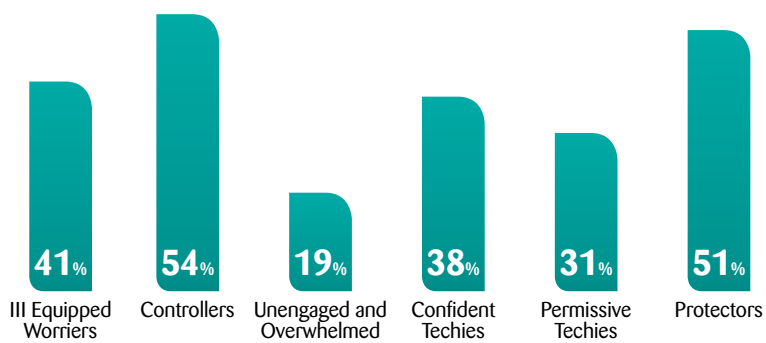
[Coventry, Authoritative, Children aged 14-16]

Thirty-nine per cent of all parents see ISPs as responsible for protecting their children, especially those with older children: a total of **44%** of those with 10-13 year olds and **50%** of 14-16 year olds. *Controllers* and *Protectors* are the most likely to say this (**54%** and **51%** respectively). *Unengaged and Overwhelmed* parents are significantly less likely to think this ➔ **19%**.
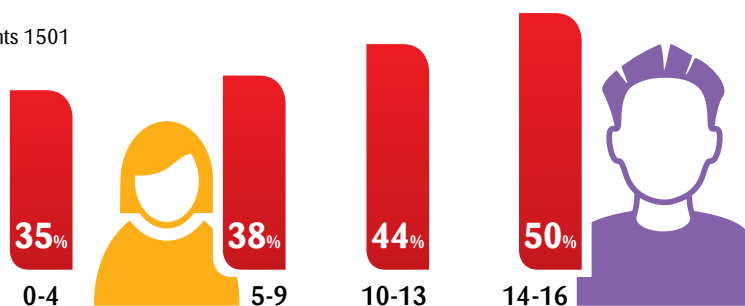
PERCEPTIONS OF ISP'S RESPONSIBILITY

C3 Who do you think is responsible for teaching about Internet safety and keeping your children safe online?

Belief in the role of ISPs **varies by type of parent**, but **increases as the children get older**

III Equipped Worriers	Controllers	Unengaged and Overwhelmed	Confident Techies	Permissive Techies	Protectors
41%	54%	19%	38%	31%	51%

Base: All respondents 1501

0-4	5-9	10-13	14-16
35%	38%	44%	50%

Across the focus groups, it was clear that parents thought there was more ISPs could do to support them. This included providing new, user-friendly parental controls and sending them email updates on the main sites used by children and the current risks. These are addressed in more detail in the following section.

"I think the Internet providers do need to take responsibility because, you know, the Internet is getting more vast every year and younger children are using it and I mean now five year olds are having full access."

[Coventry, Authoritative, Children aged 14-16]

"I think ISPs should be more liable. It is not just putting preventative things in place but making sure that, if something bad happens, that is their responsibility."

[London, Authoritative, Children Aged 0-5]
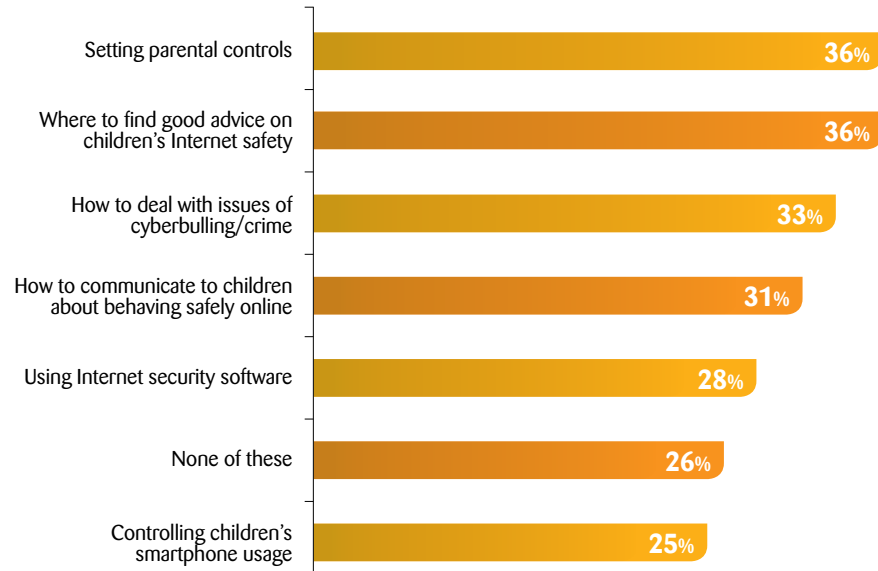
7 Campaign Requirements

This research demonstrates that there is clear demand from parents for more information and advice on child Internet safety. Three-quarters ❯**74%** of parents said they would like to know more about online safety. Particular types of information requested included:

❯ Setting parental controls ➔ **36%**

❯ Where to find good advice
   on children's Internet safety ➔ **36%**

❯ How to deal with issues
   of cyberbullying and crime ➔ **33%**

❯ How to communicate to children
   about behaving safely online ➔ **31%**

PRACTICAL CHALLENGES AND GETTING MORE ADVICE ON HOW TO SPEAK TO THEIR CHILDREN AND DEAL WITH ISSUES ARE THE MAIN AREAS WHERE PARENTS WOULD LIKE TO KNOW MORE

E3 Which, if any, of the following would you like to know more about with regards to your children's safety online?

Category	%
Setting parental controls	36%
Where to find good advice on children's Internet safety	36%
How to deal with issues of cyberbulling/crime	33%
How to communicate to children about behaving safely online	31%
Using Internet security software	28%
None of these	26%
Controlling children's smartphone usage	25%

Base:
All respondents 1503

In addition, parents were asked in a separate question to provide their own, unprompted, suggestions for areas where they would like more information. Almost a quarter ➔ **22%** of parents said they did not want anything further to the items prompted on above. The top three areas where more information could be provided were:

➤ Advice on filtering content or blocking sites effectively ➔ **18%**
➤ Awareness raising and education for parents to keep children safe ➔ **15%**
➤ Protection against problematic online behaviour ➔ **10%**

Given the lack of established social norms around online parenting, it is evident that any campaign seeking to provide information and advice should also aim to empower parents in applying their normal behaviours and parenting boundaries online. As demonstrated in this report, many parents struggle to do this and find it hard even to set time limits on use of online devices in the way they would for their child's use of the television, books or toys.

"I hear her messaging her friends at all hours, but what can you do? That's just the way it is, isn't it?"
[Leeds, Permissive, Children aged 10-12]

The focus groups strongly suggest that this is due to the lack of established behaviours around use of the Internet (especially on mobile devices) and parents' unfamiliarity with what limits are appropriate at different ages. Information and advice helping parents to understand what their children are doing online and assert rules and limits in line with their normal parenting style will be welcomed.

"I think we need to educate ourselves. [At the moment] I can't keep up with it. There is always something new. And because I am not aware of it, I am a single mum and I don't know how to set up broadband and everything, I had to get my kids to help me, so who is the adult?"
[Coventry, Authoritative, Children aged 14-16]

"Nobody knows the children like the parents know the children and I would say ... we manage them as best we can ... [but] if you've got a child that's out of control and is obsessed with games and you know, and you can't control that, so where do you go for help?"
[Manchester, Permissive, Children aged 12-14]

"You've got to give them plenty of freedom but also set boundaries. So when they cross it they know. And I think it's the same online."
[Coventry, Permissive, Children Aged 0-5]

7.1 Campaign Messages

In discussing the various parent segments that emerged from the quantitative data, this report has commented on the need for a range of messages adapted to the different perspectives and needs of parents in different situations. Certain segments will be more responsive to messages around child Internet safety, though these may not always be the ones most in need of support. While some segments need encouragement to take action, others need to be reminded to keep informed and stay ahead of the emerging risks. The table below summarises the various need states of the different segments and indicates relevant campaign messages.

'You must do something to protect your children.

'There is practical support to help you keep your children safe.'

'Do you really know what your kids are up to?'

'Stay ahead to keep your children safe.'

'Keep reviewing what you do as things change all the time.'

'Reassure yourself that you are doing the right things.'

SEGMENTS AND RELEVANT CAMPAIGN MESSAGES

SEGMENT	POSITION	MESSAGE
Unengaged and overwhelmed	Limited awareness and capabilities, over-confidence in child's safety. Hard to engage.	'You must do something to protect your children.
Ill-equipped worriers	Lack confidence and do not know what to do. Easy to engage.	'There is practical support to help you keep your children safe.'
Permissive Techies	High awareness and capabilities, hands-off approach with children. Hard to engage.	'Do you really know what your kids are up to?'
Confident Techies	Reasonably well prepared but dealing with younger children. Easy to engage.	'Stay ahead to keep your children safe.'
Protectors	Take strong action, confident children are safe. Easy to engage.	'Keep reviewing what you do as things change all the time.'
Controllers	Take strong action, less confident children are safe. Easy to engage.	'Reassure yourself that you are doing the right things.'

Despite these differences in parents' perspectives, the focus groups showed that their needs in terms of information and advice consistently fell into four broad categories:

- **Understand** - Parents need to understand their child's online behaviour, the risks associated with this and what can be done to mitigate them
- **Talk** - Talk to your children and keep the conversation open as they mature and technology changes
- **Control** - Control what your children are doing online through technical measures or setting limits
- **Monitor** - Monitor what your children are doing online and set conditions of use on their behaviour

Parents' requirements within each of these categories are described below.

A. **UNDERSTAND**

Parents need to understand their child's online behaviour, the risks associated with this and what can be done to mitigate them.
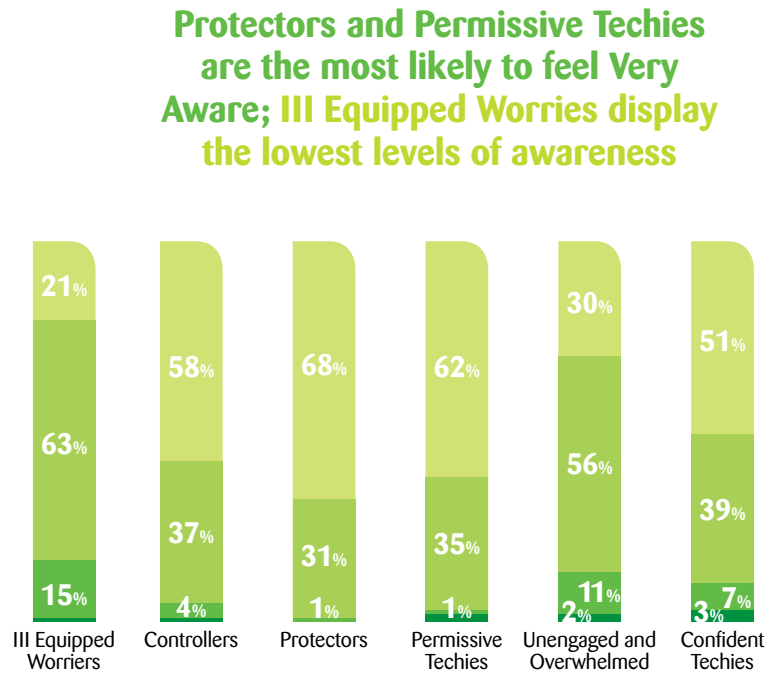
Certain segments are falling behind in terms of their awareness of online risks, particularly *Ill-equipped Worriers*, where **63%** of parents say they are only 'somewhat aware' of the risks. Amongst *Unengaged and Overwhelmed* the number 'somewhat aware' was also high at **56%**.

AWARENESS OF RISKS

C1 | How aware do you feel you are of the risks to your children when they are online?

Protectors and Permissive Techies are the most likely to feel Very Aware; Ill Equipped Worries display the lowest levels of awareness

Legend:
- Very aware
- Somewhat aware
- Not very aware
- Not aware at all

Base:
All respondents 1364

	Ill Equipped Worriers	Controllers	Protectors	Permissive Techies	Unengaged and Overwhelmed	Confident Techies
Not aware at all	21%	58%	68%	62%	30%	51%
Not very aware	63%	37%	31%	35%	56%	39%
Somewhat aware	15%	4%	1%	1%	11%	7%
Very aware					2%	3%

This demonstrates that, for some parents there is a clear lack of information around online risks at present. Certainly, when discussing sources of information during the focus groups, many parents admitted that there was a limited range of sources available to them. Only media reports schools, other parents and discussions on Mumsnet were mentioned in this regard. Nevertheless, when prompted in the quantitative survey, Internet security providers such as Norton or McAfee were the top source of information and were cited by nearly half of participants ➜ **45%**. Given the nature of the survey, it is possible that parents were over-claiming here.

"I know one parent of her friend goes on Mumsnet. There is a forum that she goes on and they discuss lots of things and [Internet safety for children] is one of the regular topics that they do discuss."

[Coventry, Authoritative, Children aged 14-16]

"I get it mainly from the school I would say to be fair, ... from being in reception there was computers, learning how to use them, how to navigate stuff like that."

[London, Authoritative, Children aged 6-8]

Parents suggested that information was best delivered in two forms, information updating them on how young people used the Internet and on the current risks could be provided online, through information sites of email updates. Advice on how to deal with these risks might best be delivered locally, through schools, though there were also requests for online guidance here too.
With regard to the first of these, parents were of the view that ISPs could play a greater role here. It was suggested that they might send bulletins to parents by email on the main sites used by children

and the current risks they faced. This could be emailed to customers along with their statement or bill, so that parents were alerted to it.

"Something like an email every now again. You know, like if you've got Sky broadband, Sky send out an email just to sort of prompt you on the latest dodgy thing that's going on on the Internet."

[Coventry, Permissive, Children Aged 0-5]

With regard to the second, schools were seen as an appropriate place for both children and parents to be alerted to and advised on how to respond to the various online risks. Many parents were open to going to their child's school for guidance on mitigating the risks they might face online. However, the possibility of online tutorials, whether offered by the government or private providers, was also raised here.

"I think having a session with the kids to say this is what you're parents are going to do, you know so that everybody's in the same boat."

[Manchester, Authoritative, Children aged 12-14]

B. TALK

Talk to your children and keep the conversation open as they mature and technology changes.
Parents will struggle to monitor and control their child's use of the Internet as they get older and their use develops and becomes more sophisticated, and as the technology and sites they are using change and develop. Given this, it is essential that parents talk to their children about their use of the Internet and the risks involved. Beyond the age of 13 (especially as their smartphone use increases), it is evident that talking to children may be the only way for parents to monitor their child's Internet use.

"I think as they get older it's purely about the communication. They'll understand these devices a lot better than we will."

[Manchester, Authoritative, Children Aged 8-10]

"There is no substitute for actually spending time with your kids, building up relationships, so you can share things like that."

[Coventry, Authoritative, Children aged 14-16]

However, one quarter of parents rarely or never speak to their children about online safety ➜**26%**. The reasons for this were fairly clear in the focus groups. Parents may be unaware of the online risks and therefore unable to initiate a conversation about them. Some may be over-confident about their child's safety online (as the segmentation suggests) and not think it necessary to address this with them. Some of the risks relate to sensitive subjects such as sex, which may not be broached within the household. Finally, parents may struggle to communicate effectively with their children anyway during adolescence, limiting the opportunities to discuss Internet safety.

"You have got to choose your moments well or you will just get a grunt!"

[Coventry, Authoritative, Children aged 14-16]

Online tutorials or advice and guidance from schools, helping parents talk to their children about online safety more effectively would be welcomed. Raising parents' awareness of the online risks will be important here as well, so that they are aware of the threats and are capable of talking about these with their children.

C. **CONTROL**

Control what your children are doing online through technical measures or setting limits.
This research has shown that less than half of all parents use parental controls →**47%**, safe search filters →**38%**, or passwords to restrict their usage →**42%**. It is clear that parental controls need to be improved and made more user-friendly. Instructing parents simply to turn their controls on will not contribute to a successful information and advice campaign as parents do not find controls easy to use at present. Either they are seen as over-restrictive, or they are perceived to be too easily circumvented by children.

"You put [the controls] on and it stops you seeing anything!"

[Leeds, Permissive, Children aged 10-12]

"I think they're too easy to get round and I don't always know if I've switched them on."

[Leeds, Permissive, Children aged 6-8]

Two focus groups independently suggested that ISPs could take action here, providing easy-to-set, password protected age filters for households, with categories following the BBFC film classifications. These would allow parents to set a filter on all content within the household (or possibly by device) against a rating of PG, 12, 15 or 18. The ISP would then be responsible for policing the system and ensuring blocked content was not accessed.

"It would be useful if they could just say, well you are protected for under-18 content, or whatever, and then you know that anything else can't be accessed."

[London, Permissive, Children aged 0-5]

An obvious barrier to this proposal is that parents' views of what content is appropriate for an under-15 or under-18 child vary varied widely. In one focus group, a parent who clearly would not have wished his eight year old son to view graphic sexual images, was happy for him to play Call of Duty, a graphically violent 18-rated game, highlighting a typical inconsistency in parenting behaviours. If parental controls do not allow parents to access the Internet in ways they believe are appropriate, they may be discarded. Any adaptations to parental controls offered by ISPs will need to be conscious of this limitation.

"Call of Duty – in nanny state England it's like you've got to be eighteen. But everyone watches 18-rated films before they're eighteen. The kids that play PS3 games, they're all playing eighteen plus games at twelve and thirteen."

[Coventry, Permissive, Children Aged 0-5]

"One person's age-appropriate for ten is someone else's non-age-appropriate isn't it? So it would be quite hard."

[London, Authoritative, Children Aged 0-5]

Another way in which it was suggested that ISPs could help was by offering more technical support to parents in setting up parental controls. In a number of groups, parents asked for telephone guidance, particularly when first going online with a provider, to help them set up appropriate controls.

"What if the parent hasn't got any knowledge of what to do? There should be someone there to help them. You know, go through everything with them and then it's down to the parents you know to sort it out."

[Coventry, Permissive, Children Aged 0-5]

"I know Virgin can get into your computer because they've done it to most of my broadband settings but I don't know if they can actually do your parental settings but that would be really helpful."

[Coventry, Permissive, Children Aged 0-5]

In addition to formal controls, an information and advice campaign should also emphasise the informal controls parents can impose to keep their children safe. These will cross over into the talk and monitor categories and will include being present when children are online, setting time limits and conditions of use. As children get older (and especially as they begin to use smartphones) the efficacy of parental controls will decline and parents will need to find other ways of controlling their children's Internet use and keeping them safe.

"Basically I ration it, and I use it as a form of punishment. So if you are naughty you won't go on the computer."

[London, Authoritative, Children Aged 0-5]

D. **MONITOR**

Monitor what your children are doing online and set conditions of use on their behaviour.
This research shows that less than half of all parents often accompany or supervise children when they're online ➔**67%**. This figure falls significantly as the child gets older and the risks increase. Findings here fit with previous research by the Family Online Safety Institute, in which more than half ➔**55%** of parents with younger children (aged under 14) said it was very easy to monitor online behaviour compared to 41% of parents with children aged 14 and over.[5] Parents clearly need some guidance about the kinds of monitoring activity they can undertake and how they should respond as children get older.

This research demonstrates that, up to the age of ten, monitoring is best done through active parental involvement, whether this involves accompanied use or being present in the room. Owing to the extent that children are using the Internet independently within this age group, parental controls should also be set and monitoring may involve checking search histories and cookies.
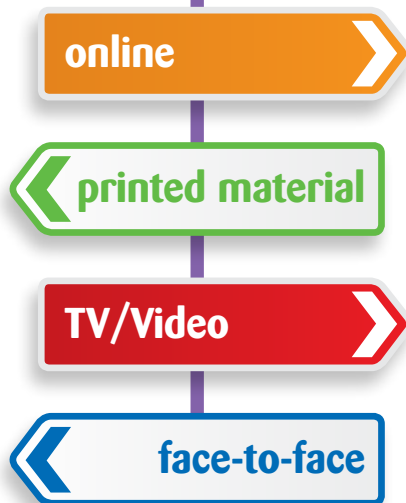
From the ages of 10 to 13, children become more independent in their use of the Internet, making observation more difficult and forcing parents to place greater emphasis on trust, conversation and technical solutions such as parental controls. At this age, parents should also begin to set conditions of use for certain sites (e.g. allowing children to use Facebook so long as they, or another relative, are included as a friend), that enable them to monitor their child's activity.

After the age of 13, monitoring may become more clandestine (parents checking search histories and cookies, looking at children's phones when they are not using them, etc.). Encouraging parents to talk to their children at this stage may help to address the emphasis on clandestine monitoring but better parental controls on mobile devices may also be a solution. Some parents raised the possibility of smartphone providers sending information about sites visited to the bill payer (where this was the parent) so they could monitor their child's mobile Internet use more effectively.

"So if a child's got a device you can pull a report or whatever or an email comes through to your device to say this is where they've been today. This is their activity today."

[Coventry, Permissive, Children Aged 0-5]

5. Family Online
Safety Institute, 2011

Channels for delivery
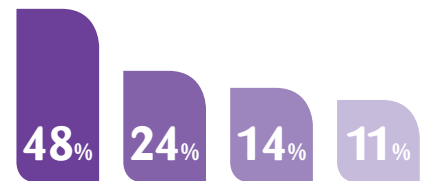

- online
- printed material
- TV/Video
- face-to-face

Campaign Delivery

The most relevant demographic for any campaign appears to be parents of children aged 6 to 14. Between the ages of 10 and 13, children's use of the Internet widens to include social media and levels of parental concern reach their height. While information, advice and guidance are critical at this stage, they will also be needed some years before the tipping point is reached at 10 years of age, so that parents can prepare themselves and take appropriate action to protect their children. This suggests that information and advice should be offered to parents from the time their children are 6 years of age, so that parents can understand the evolving risks and develop their parenting response.

Levels of parental concern are relatively low for 0-5 and 14-16 year olds, where parents either find it easier to control online use (0-5 year olds) or have adjusted to and stopped worrying about it (14-16 year olds). This would indicate that a campaign is not best directed at parents of 0-5 year olds as it would be received prematurely. Similarly, parents of 14-16 year olds will not be the most responsive recipients for an information and advice campaign as their parenting approach will already be firmly established and their ability to influence their child's online behaviour will already be in decline.

In addition to these demographic constraints, attention should also be paid to the parenting segments discussed in this report. While *Ill-equipped Worriers*, *Confident Techies*, *Protectors* and *Controllers* will be easy to engage and receptive to messages, *Unengaged and Overwhelmed*, *Ill-equipped Worriers* and *Permissive Techies* will be most in need of information and advice. Methods of approaching these groups will have to adapt to their circumstances and needs. While the *Unengaged and Overwhelmed* and

Permissive Techies segments need to be provoked into taking action, *Ill-equipped Worriers* would be more responsive to offers of practical support.

In terms of the channels for delivery, half of parents would prefer information to be available online → **48%**, but substantial minorities would prefer TV/Video → **14%**, printed material → **24%** or face-to-face education → **11%**.

48% 24% 14% 11%

Beyond this, the qualitative research suggests that delivery should involve a central online information hub, with information, advice and support delivered locally (via ISPs and schools). As indicated above, parents believe ISPs should be responsible for providing more effective and easier to use parental controls and for alerting customers to online risks. Parents believe ISPs should be responsible for delivering hands-on training and information, both to parents and children, helping them to avoid online risks.

In addition, it is apparent that some parents will need provoking into awareness of the risks children face and into taking action to address them. Certain segments show over-confidence in their children's online safety and may not believe that they are required to act. Consequently, in the focus groups, some parents suggested that an overarching awareness-raising campaign would be useful, encouraging parents to respond to online threats.

"Some sort of advertising campaign would help because … it would bring [online] danger to the surface."

[Manchester, Authoritative, Children aged 12-14]

Appendices 8

Literature Review

1.1 Parents' Concerns

The majority of parents believe the Internet has great potential as an educational resource and perceive this benefit to outweigh any negative impacts.[1] According to previous research, the potential negative impacts of the Internet at the forefront of parents' minds are not specifically risks relating to exposure to inappropriate online content or contact-related risks.[2] Instead, they tend to be issues faced on a regular basis that relate to their children's day-to-day Internet usage. These include the struggle to achieve family time away from devices and a perceived decline in traditional written and communication skills.[3]

Whilst there is good general understanding of some of the potential risks of the digital world, for some parents there is a lack of engagement and they do not see it as a priority.[4] Few parents have direct experience of incidents involving their child's exposure to inappropriate content or contact online. Consequently, they largely approach Internet-related risks as hypothetical.[5] As Dr Tanya Byron states in her report, *Safer Children in a Digital World*, 'For many parents Internet risk remains an abstract concern unless they or their children have actually had a bad experience'.[6] Parents' active mediation of their children's online activity or establishment of digital safety measures is often prompted by their child's direct experience of a risk.[7]

The speed and ease with which you can navigate the Internet leads to people browsing on autopilot without considering their online security.[8] This subconscious mode has been exacerbated by the smartphone revolution which has seen the proliferation of apps, offering a more intuitive and convenient way of accessing information.[9] Consequently, it is becoming increasingly difficult to jolt people from their autopilot setting and make them assess the security of their online actions.[10] In addition, many do not equate the actions they take online with real life consequences and are therefore more likely to take risks in the digital space.[11]

Areas of risk perceived by parents fall into three categories:

1. **Transactional risks**: getting viruses or running up bills
2. **Content risks**: accidental or deliberate access to inappropriate images or messages
3. **Contact risks**: interaction with inappropriate and dangerous individuals online.

New areas of risk identified by parents relate specifically to the unprecedented proliferation of easily accessible violent and sexually explicit material, and the rapidly expanding area of user-generated content e.g. social networking sites.[12]

Traditional risks such as bullying and 'stranger danger' are perceived by parents to have been superseded and magnified by the advent of their Internet equivalents, 'cyber-bullying' and online grooming. Bullying may have used to stop at a child's front door but now it can invade their personal space through a myriad of technological devices.[13]

1. UKCCIS, 2010
2. Ofcom, 2012
3. Ibid
4. UKCCIS, 2010
5. Ofcom, 2012
6. Byron, 2008
7. EU Kids Online 2012
8. National Fraud Authority, 2012
9. Ibid
10. Ibid
11. Ibid
12. Ofcom, 2012
13. Ibid

> ❯ **Transactional risks** are considered to have a relatively low impact on a child's wellbeing, given that the main repercussions are material or financial.[14]
>
> ❯ **Content risks** are perceived to have some impact on children's emotional wellbeing, self-image or view of others but generally would require repeated exposure to create a lasting impact.[15]
>
> ❯ **Contact risks** such as the aforementioned 'cyber-bullying' or grooming are felt by parents to have the greatest potential to cause immediate and serious physical or psychological harm. Therefore, although these risks are assumed to be rare, they are more of a worry than content risks, because of their seriousness.[16]

Whilst inappropriate material is considered to be readily available via the Internet, the risk of parents' own children being either accidentally or deliberately exposed to it is not at the forefront of their minds. This is because few parents are aware of specific incidents that their children have experienced. It should be noted that for parents, 'inappropriate material' is a broad term encompassing violent and sexual images as well as content that might instil a negative body image in their children.[17]

The lack of parent awareness of children's exposure to inappropriate content may well be as a result of their children's technological knowhow.[18] As Sonia Livingstone, Director of the EU Kids Online network has written, hard-core sexual or violent content is readily available on the Internet at the click of a mouse, and children are able to access it without having to ask anyone and without leaving a trace (if you know how to delete your history and cookies which many children do).[19] The EU Kids Online survey found that among those children who said they saw sexual images online, four in ten of their parents thought they had not.[20] Indicating that some parents may be oblivious to inappropriate content their children are viewing online.

Transactional and contact risks are the most top-of-mind with parents. With transactional risks, this is because of the perceived greater prevalence, with some parents having actual experience of them. With regards to contact risks, it is because these are felt to be the most serious of the risks overall even if they are also perceived to be rare.[21]

Research shows that increasing parental concern regarding online safety emerges towards the end of primary school. Sometimes this runs parallel to a parent's sense of distance from their children as they approach their teenage years, as well as concerns about how they might be experimenting and responding to peer pressure online during adolescence.[22] Professor Patti Valkenburg of the University of Amsterdam, refers to adolescence as being characterised by "an enhanced need for

self-presentation, or communicating your identity to others", and social media provides an ideal vehicle through which teenagers can do this. Research conducted into how American teens navigate social networking sites has found that of the 95% of all teens aged 12-17 online, 80% are users of social media sites.[23] This goes some way to explaining why parents' concerns that their children may be giving out personal details to inappropriate people increase with the age of their child.[24] There is a particular focus of attention on the perceived peak risk age group of 10-14 years.[25]

The older children are, and the longer they spend online, the less likely parents are to think it is easy to supervise their online activities. More than half (55%) of parents with younger children (aged under 14) say it is very easy to monitor this behaviour (41%). In contrast, parents of older children (aged 14 and over) are less likely to say it is very easy to monitor this behaviour (41%).[26]

Parents adapt their approach to monitoring their children's Internet use depending on the characteristics of their children; parents tend to be more controlling over use by young children and the first born and ensure that 'rebellious' children are subject to greater controls.[27] Research conducted in Holland has found that parents tend to impose more general rules for boys than for girls when it comes to Internet access.[28]

1.2 Current Practices

Previous research has shown a strong consensus that some parental involvement in children's Internet use is needed and there are a range of methods that parents use to mediate their children's use of the Internet. The primary methods used are:

> ❯ **Rules around limiting access**, e.g. setting time limits or banning certain activities. Most parents of 5-15s have rules in place for their child's use of the Internet (79%).[29]
>
> ❯ **Supervision of activities**, e.g. only allowing children to access the Internet in a communal area where the parent can monitor what they are doing.
>
> ❯ **Monitoring of activities**, e.g. checking their child's Internet history or vetting social network friends.
>
> ❯ **Communicating about staying safe online**, e.g. a formal sit down conversation or a more informal on-going discussion. 79% of parents of 5-15s who use the Internet at home have spoken to their child about staying safe online.[30]
>
> ❯ **Parental controls or other technical controls**, e.g. safe searches or safe modes on websites. 61% of parents of 5-15s say they have at least one parental control or safety mode enabled on their Internet devices.[31]

14. Ibid
15. Ibid
16. Ibid
17. Ibid
18. Vodafone
19. Ibid
20. Ibid
21. Ofcom, 2012
22. Byron, 2008
23. PEW, 2011
24. Ofcom, 2012
25. Ofcom, 2012
26. Family Online Safety Institute, 2011
27. Byron, 2008
28. Nikken & Jansz, 2011
29. Ofcom, 2012
30. Ofcom, 2012
31. Ibid

Each method is generally not used exclusively but in conjunction with others, for example parental controls are almost always used in tandem with other mediation approaches.[32] Parents view controls as part of a wider parenting toolkit and consider the primary means of ensuring their child's online safety to be strong communication.

1.3 Safety and Confidence

The key issues preventing parents from parenting effectively in the online space are:

> **Not knowing what to do about the problem:**
>   – Lack of specific skills
>   – Lack of confidence
>   – Overly complex language
>   – Lack of tools
> **Inability to understand the problem:**
>   – Leaving it to others e.g. the school
>   – Child's independent access
>   – No personal experience
> **Solving the wrong problem:**
>   – Focusing on solving the wrong things
>   – Focusing on the wrong types of solution
> **Failure to recognise the problem:**
>   – Own Internet skill means children will be fine
>   – Blind trust in children
>   – Not seen as a priority when compared with other risks.[33]

Parents' approaches to managing their children's Internet use appear to be consistent with their overall parenting style, except where technical confidence is a barrier.[34] Experience of technology has a fundamental impact on how parents respond to the parenting challenge of monitoring their children's online behaviour.[35] Without confidence in their technological abilities parents are left feeling anxious, disengaged and more prone to having their concerns fuelled by scare stories.

Today's young people have grown up with the Internet and so some see themselves as experts within their families. Parents acknowledge that their children are much more competent than they are in the use of the Internet. Almost half of all parents (47%) believe their child is more skilled at using the Internet than they are.[36] This is especially true of parents with older children. As a result, many parents do not feel fully qualified to give advice about how to manage risks associated with the Internet.[37] For this reason, many feel they would probably not be their child's first port of call if a problem arose. For some parents in low-income, immigrant families, their children's online dexterity provides a lifeline. Dr Vikki Katz, has found that in America the children of some parents who are unable to interact in the majority language, broker connections using the Internet to compensate for their parents' limited traditional and new media literacies.[38] These 'media

brokering' activities often serve as crucial links between the family home and the local community, as children can use these media to connect their families to local resources that they need to integrate into the local area.

Use of the Internet today is not limited to one device and this provides an increasing challenge for parents when it comes to keeping children safe online. Nearly half (48%) of parents say their child uses two or more technologies to access the Internet.[39] Parents whose children access the Internet using a smartphone or handheld device find it more difficult to monitor their child's online activity on these devices.[40] In addition, nearly half of European children go online in their bedroom and one third go online on a mobile phone or handheld device. This rise in privatised and mobile access has made it increasingly difficult for parents to police their children's online activities.[41]

Rules put in place by parents to protect their children are not always strictly enforced.[42] Parents admit they sometimes opt for the path of least resistance, either because they are busy on other things or want to avoid an argument. These arguments can be particularly challenging for parents who themselves use technology all the time and so find it difficult to impose boundaries on their children's use.[43] Some parents admit delaying talking to their children about Internet safety as it was felt to be an uncomfortable topic. Some are also concerned about overly sensitising their children by raising the issues too early.

The majority of parents (57%) do not know where to get information about how to protect their children online.[44] This figure is most striking given the huge amount of information produced by all those with an interest in the Internet and suggests there is a serious gap in the transfer of knowledge about Internet safety. There is some evidence which suggests that scare stories dominate parents' experiences of the Internet. This is reflected in the following excerpt of a statement written by co-creator of Netmums about child Internet safety, '… we have become aware of anecdotal information which combined together, suggested some more disturbing aspects of children and the Internet than we, as parents, had previously been aware of.'[45]

In addition to not knowing where to access information, parents are also unsure where to go if they have a complaint about harmful or inappropriate content on the Internet.[46] Although very few parents say they would not want to make a complaint (3%), some 38% of parents say they do not know who to complain to.[47]

Parents' understanding of parental controls is a 'grey area' and even those who have some level of awareness also have gaps in their understanding. Key factors influencing the lack of take-up of parental controls are:

32. Ofcom, 2012
33. UKCCIS, 2010
34. Ibid
35. Byron, 2008
36. Ibid
37. Ibid
38. Katz, 2010
39. Family Online Safety Institute, 2011
40. Ibid
41. EU Kids Online, 2012
42. Ofcom, 2012
43. Vodafone
44. Byron, 2008
45. NetMums, 2012
46. Byron, 2008
47. Ibid

> ❯ **Perceived complexity of parental controls**
> ❯ **Expectations of considerable effort required**
> ❯ **Lack of engagement with parental controls**
> – parental controls are not at the forefront of parents' minds and consequently many parents do not get round to considering them. Many of those with the tools admit they have not reviewed the tools since they were installed.[48]

Parents want parental controls which are simple and user friendly.

1.4 Support Needs

Research has found that when it comes to child Internet safety the following things work for parents:

❯ Acknowledging their lack of confidence
❯ Linking existing life and parenting skills to online parenting
❯ Providing simple, accessible strategies
❯ Recognising their need to trust their children
❯ Focusing on how their children can make right or wrong choices
❯ Providing support and confidence in the early years to allow parents to keep pace with their children in later years
❯ Making links to long term emotional consequences
❯ Providing tips and strategies they can use
❯ Having relevant information drip fed to them as their child grows and needs change.[49]

When it comes to child Internet safety the following things do not work for parents:

❯ Asking them to take primary responsibility to 'teach' their children how to behave online is too daunting.
❯ Assuming there is a steady progression of freedom as children get older when everyone is different.
❯ Scaremongering and sensationalism as it encourages disengagement.
❯ Allowing them to see their children only as passive recipients of harm as it is disempowering.
❯ Making them feel guilty or patronised.[50]

Dr Tanya Byron states clearly in her report that many

48. Ofcom, 2012
49. UKCCIS, 2010
50. Ibid
51. Byron, 2008
52. Vodafone
53. Byron, 2008
54. UKCCIS, 2010
55. Ibid
56. Vodafone

parents do not understand that helping children to manage risk and be safe offline is an equivalent parental responsibility to helping them manage risk and be safe online. Either they are unaware of the risk, or they lack the confidence to apply their offline parenting skills to an online environment.[51] In a similar vein, Dr Paul Howard-Jones of the University of Bristol writes, 'the general picture emerging about technology and the brain is chiefly this: in many ways, ensuring technology benefits our children is about transferring offline parental wisdom to digital environments.'[52] In a similar way that parents might deter children from having a midnight chat with friends on the doorstep, texting after lights out should also be deterred as it has a detrimental effect on the health and wellbeing of children.

Research has found that whilst there has been considerable commitment to providing parents with information to aid them in protecting their children from the negative impacts of the Internet, much energy has been invested in an uncoordinated and haphazard approach.[53] There is a lot of good information available but it needs to be condensed, simplified and presented in a clear and consistent manner.[54] Safety messages conveyed to parents need to be simple in order to engage at risk groups, and parents need to be provided with easy to follow stories they can pass on to their children to help educate them about the pitfalls of the Internet.[55] In essence, parents would benefit from clear, authoritative information which highlights the dangers of the Internet and equips and empowers them to manage the risks. For instance, research carried out for the British Board of Film Classification in 2011 highlighted a clear demand from parents for a trusted guide to digital content – 82% of parents said that they prefer to download videos if they carry a BBFC rating.[56]

Key to delivering a clear message to parents is a greater understanding of their differing attitudes and behaviours when it comes to their children's safety online. In this respect, whilst existing literature highlights different parenting groups, no strong study with this specific purpose in mind has been conducted. Ultimately, a robust segmentation of parents is vital if communication with them is to prove effective.

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Method Statement

Opinion Leader undertook two stages of research, carried out in parallel in order to meet the challenging timescales for this project. These involved:

> **Qualitative exploration** – to develop campaign content through co-creation with parents, and depths with children
> **Quantitative survey** – to scope and size attitudes and behaviour and to develop a segmentation

The method taken and sample achieved for each approach is described in full below.

3.1 Qualitative Exploration

A total of 12 focus groups were carried out with parents in order to obtain spontaneous accounts of their experiences and perceptions of the children's online behaviour, the risks involved and their parenting response. Focus groups were also used to generate campaign ideas based on parents' experiences and attitudes.

Focus groups lasted 90 minutes and all were attended by eight participants. The total sample for the qualitative research was 96 parents of children between the ages of 0 and 16. The qualitative research was limited to England only and the focus groups took place in four locations:

> London
> Coventry
> Manchester
> Leeds

A mix of mums and dads were recruited to each group. All children within the relevant age group for the discussion had to be using the Internet and quotas were set to ensure a range of devices were used by these children, including PCs, laptops, tablets and mobile phones. In each group, parents of children within two school year groups were recruited to ensure that parenting approaches in relation to relatively discrete age groups can be achieved.

Sampling for the focus groups was informed by the Department for Education's segmentation reported in the UKCCIS document Child Internet and Gaming Safety (2010). This hypothesised a range of parent segments including active managers, gatekeepers, overwhelmed, complacent and disengaged. We did not want to recruit exclusively to these hypothesised segments due to the risk of screening out any demographic or parenting types falling outside of them. We also wanted to use the research to test and develop the segmentation, which suggested recruiting a broad sample of parents. However, we did incorporate two broad categories of parents to the research, following the division between more and less active parents identified by the Department for Education segments.

Within each age group, one focus group of more or less authoritative / active parents and one group of more or less permissive / inactive parents were recruited to examine the different perceptions of risk, control behaviour and discussion with children taking place across the sample. Quotas were also set around Internet use and technical expertise so that the influence of familiarity and confidence with the Internet can be factored into the sample and results. The full sample table of the focus groups is shown overleaf.

FOCUS GROUP SAMPLE

AGE OF CHILD	TOTAL	LONDON	COVENTRY	LEEDS	MANCHESTER
0-5 (to Yr.1)	2	Group 11 Authoritative/Active	Group 9 Permissive/Inactive	-	-
6-8 (Yr.2+3)	2	Group 1 Authoritative/Active	-	Group 2 Permissive/Inactive	-
8-10 (Yr.4+5)	2	Group 3 Permissive/Inactive	-	-	Group 4 Authoritative/Active
10-12 (Yr.6+7)	2	Group 5 Authoritative/Active	-	Group 6 Permissive/Inactive	
12-14 (Yr.8+9)	2	Group 7 Permissive/Inactive	-	-	Group 8 Authoritative/Active
14-16 (Yr.10+11)	2	Group 12 Permissive/Inactive	Group 10 Authoritative/Active	-	-
TOTAL	12	6	2	2	2

A comprehensive discussion guide was produced directing the course of each discussion, so that the objectives were addressed and questions replicated across the sample. The broad flow of each focus group was as follows:

1. **Introduction (10mins)**, To introduce the research and the participants.
2. **Online Behaviour (15mins)**, To open up the conversation and understand online behaviour within the household.
3. **Perception of Online Risks (20mins)**, To understand awareness of and responses to online risks.
4. **Safe Practices Online (15mins)**, To understand awareness and use of parental controls and other approaches to online safety.
5. **Information, Guidance and Support (30mins)**, To explore the tools, information, guidance and support accessed and trusted and identify future requirements.

3.2 Quantitative Survey

The quantitative element of this study was conducted online in the UK using consumer research panels. We completed 15-minute interviews with a nationally representative sample of 1,503 parents of 0-16 year olds between 27th July and 3rd August. The main output of this online survey was a segmentation of these parents, but other cross tabulation analyses were run to provide content for this report.

QUESTIONNAIRE
The 15-minute questionnaire was designed to quantify pre-existing research into parenting and child Internet safety, whilst also filling in any gaps in understanding with new lines of questioning. The broad questionnaire outline was as follows:

- Demographic and screening questions
- Internet questions
- Behaviours and attitudes to child safety online
- Levels of awareness and concern over risks
- Understanding and sources of information used
- General attitudes to technology and parenting

Within the questionnaire parents were asked to answer questions on behalf of up to four of their children. In this way we were able to feed into the segmentation, and other analyses, age specific behaviours and the associated parenting attitudes and styles.

Understandably, the vast majority of respondents' children were Internet users, but we also captured respondents with a mixture of children – some Internet users and some who didn't use it yet, as well as some who had very young children, none of whom had yet used the Internet.

For those with a mixture, this allowed us to build in to our analyses the influence of older children, already online, on their younger siblings and on the behaviours of their parents. Capturing parents whose very young children were yet to go online allowed us to gauge early concerns and attitudes amongst this future-focused group. This latter group, however, was excluded from the segmentation as we wanted to measure actual not predicted future behaviour.

SAMPLING
The sample came from Toluna and Pure Profile; online consumer research panel providers. In order to get a representative sample amongst the parents we set quotas on their:

- Age
- Gender
- Social Economic Grade
- Region

We also consulted the Office of National Statistics for best estimates on the above criteria amongst parents of 0-16 year olds. Below are the quota targets that were set.

AGE		GENDER		SEG		REGION	
18-24	5%	Male	44%	ABC1	51%	North East	4%
25-34	29%	Female	56%	C2DE	49%	North West	11%
35-44	43%					Yorkshire And The Humber	8%
45-54	21%					East Midlands	7%
55+	2%					West Midlands	9%
						East	10%
						London	13%
						South East	14%
						South West	8%
						Wales	5%
						Scotland	8%
						Northern Ireland	3%

As we did not meet the quota targets exactly, the data was weighted back to reflect the above splits.

SEGMENTATION

The segmentation was run on all parents who had at least one child who currently uses the Internet, a total of 1,137.

Modelling was run on respondent level data in order to establish a number of clusters that both represented typical behavioural groups amongst parents, and differentiated distinctly enough between them. Various models were run, analysing different numbers of clusters, but ultimately a model of six clusters was settled upon.

These six clusters then became the six parenting segments we have focused on in this report:

1. Ill-equipped Worriers
2. Controllers
3. Unengaged and Overwhelmed
4. Confident Techies
5. Permissive Techies
6. Protectors

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