

# Online abuse Facts and statistics

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We don't know how many children and young people are affected by online abuse. Children often:

- don't tell anyone because they feel ashamed or guilty
- may not know who to tell
- may not realise they are being abused.



One in five 8 to 11 year olds and seven in ten 12 to 15 year olds has a social media profile.

**Source:** Ofcom (2015) [Children and parents: media use and attitudes report \(PDF\)](#).

**Explanation:** Based on 1,379 in-home interviews with parents and children aged 5-15, conducted from April-June 2015.

3% of parents of children aged 5-7 who go online say their child has a social media profile.

This compares to:

- nearly one quarter of children who go online aged 8-11 (23%)
- and 3/4 who go online aged 12-15 (76%).

When calculated for all children (as opposed to just children who go online) this is the equivalent of:

- 1 in 50 (2%) of 5-7 year olds
- 1 in 5 (21%) of 8-11 year olds
- and 7 in 10 (74%) of 12-15 year olds

who have a social media profile.



1 in 4 children have experienced something upsetting on a social networking site.

**Source:** Lilley, C., Ball, R. and Vernon, H. (2014) [The experiences of 11-16 year olds on social networking sites](#).

**Explanation:** 28% of children aged 11-16 (23% of children aged 11-12) who have a profile on a social networking site, had experienced something upsetting on it in the last year.

Based on a survey of 1,024 young people aged 11-16 across the UK who had a social networking profile.

Children experienced a wide range of upsetting things. The most common upsetting experience was 'trolling' (defined as 'unkind comments or rumours circulated online'). However, a significant minority had received sexual messages, been encouraged to self-harm, or subjected to language which was violent or aggressive.



There were over 11,000 counselling sessions with young people who talked to Childline about online issues last year

**Source:** NSPCC (2016) [Childline annual review 2015/16: It turned out someone did care.](#)

**Explanation:** 11,253 counselling sessions with young people who contacted Childline for support and advice on online issues. This included online sexual abuse, online bullying and online safety.

To find out more see our [Childline annual review 2015/16: It turned out someone did care.](#)



1 in 3 children have been a victim of cyberbullying.

**Source:** McAfee survey of children and parents as reported in the Guardian (14 November 2014) [“Number of children who are victims of cyberbullying doubles in a year”](#)

**Explanation:** Based on a poll of 11- to 17-year-olds undertaken by internet security firm McAfee. 35% reported that they have experienced cyberbullying – compared with 16% the previous year. Four in 10 said they had witnessed others being picked on online – almost double the 22% recorded the previous year.



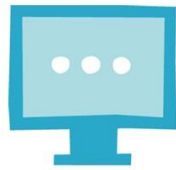
Almost 1 in 4 young people have come across racist or hate messages online.

**Source:** Livingstone, S. (2014) [Net children go mobile: the UK report: a comparative report with findings from the UK 2010 survey by EU Kids Online \(PDF\)](#)

**Explanation:** During Spring/Summer 2010, 1,032 children aged 9-16 years old who use the internet were interviewed in the UK. A follow up interview with a further 516 children aged 9-16 took place in 2013.

Due to the sensitive nature of the nature of the websites, only children aged 11 and older were asked if they had seen instances of potentially harmful user-generated content (UGC).

In 2010, 13% of these children reported exposure to hate messages. This had risen to 23% by 2013.



Three-quarters of parents have looked for or received information or advice about how to help their child manage online risks

**Source:** Ofcom (2015) [Children and parents: media use and attitudes report \(PDF\)](#)

**Explanation:** Based on 1,379 in-home interviews with parents and children aged 5-15, conducted from April-June 2015.

75% parents of children aged 5-15 have looked for or received information or advice from any source, and 53% have looked for or received it from the child's school. 40% say they have looked for or received information or advice from friends or family, 14% from internet service providers, 14% from the child themselves and 12% from the media. 9% have received advice from Government or local authority.

See also Indicator 9 in [How safe are our children? 2016](#).



Around 1 in 7 young people have taken a semi-naked/naked picture of themselves. Over half went on to share the picture with someone else.

**Source:** Martellozzo, et al (2016) [I wasn't sure it was normal to watch it](#).

**Explanation:** An online survey with 1,001 girls and boys aged 11-16 across the United Kingdom found that 13% have taken a topless picture and 3% have taken a fully naked image.

Of the 135 children and young people who said they had taken naked or semi-naked images, 74 (55%) said they had shared them with someone else. 49 (36%) of the 135 children and young people had been asked to show these images to someone online. 15 (31%) of the 49 young people sharing images online did not know the person to whom they showed the image.



There were over 3,700 counselling sessions with young people who talked to Childline last year about online sexual abuse.

**Source:** NSPCC (2016) [Childline annual review 2015/16: It turned out someone did care.](#)

**Explanation:** There were 3,716 counselling sessions with young people who specifically talked about online sexual abuse concerns such as being exposed to online sexually explicit images, sharing sexual images/message and grooming to Childline in 2015/16. This was an increase of 24% compared to 2014/15.



In 2015, the Internet Watch Foundation identified over 68,000 URLs containing child sexual abuse images.

**Source:** Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) (2016) [Annual report 2015 \(PDF\).](#)

**Explanation:** In 2015, the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) identified and worked with partners to remove 68,092 URLs confirmed as hosting child sexual abuse images worldwide – a 118 per cent increase from the previous year.

See also Indicator 9 in [How safe are our children? 2016.](#)

