



THE ROYAL FOUNDATION  
of The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge  
and Prince Harry

# Cyberbullying

Research into the attitudes of 11-16 year olds

Quantitative Findings

20 January 2016



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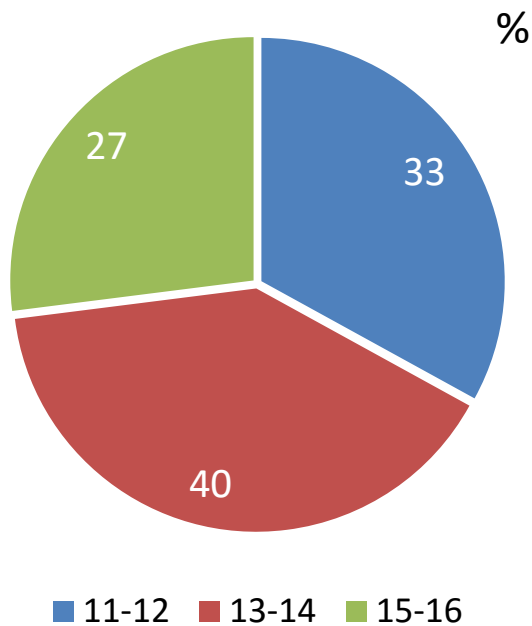
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# Quantitative Method

- Nationally representative online survey of 1,004 11-16 year olds across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland
- Targeted by School Year Group – Years 7-11 in England (and equivalent across nations)
- Quotas were set to achieve the following sample:
  - 200 Year 7 pupils
  - 200 Year 8 pupils
  - 200 Year 9 pupils
  - 200 Year 10 pupils
  - 200 Year 11 pupils
- Split of males/female for each year groups
- Fieldwork took place between 28 November and 6 December 2016

# Sample Profile

- 51% boys (n=510); 49% girls (n=492)
- Average age = 13.4



# Young People's Perception of the Definition of Cyberbullying



# Perception of being cyberbullied – Summary 1

- Views on the definition of cyberbullying are diverse, but young people particularly view the receipt of threats, or recurrent hurtful comments online, to be cyberbullying.
- Some experiences are universally seen as cyberbullying. When asked, an upsetting experience is more likely to be described as cyberbullying by those who have actually had experience of online bullying. This indicates that direct experience of cyberbullying impacts on young people's views on what the definition of cyberbullying may include.
- Not all young people recognise cyberbullying however. Whilst over half (55%, n=550) reported experiencing something online that had upset or really hurt them, nearly two-thirds of these young people (65%; n=356) did not define these experiences as cyberbullying.
- Two-thirds of young people (66%, n=663) have been exposed to experiences related to cyberbullying. Just one third of young people have had no experience of cyberbullying at all.

## Perception of being cyberbullied - Summary 2

- Young people's negative experiences online are frequent and recurrent – particularly amongst girls.
- An increased frequency of upsetting or frightening experiences online leads young people to feel that they are being cyberbullied, suggesting that it may be the recurrent nature of negative experiences online that lead young people to define this as 'cyberbullying'.



# Perception of being cyberbullied - Introduction

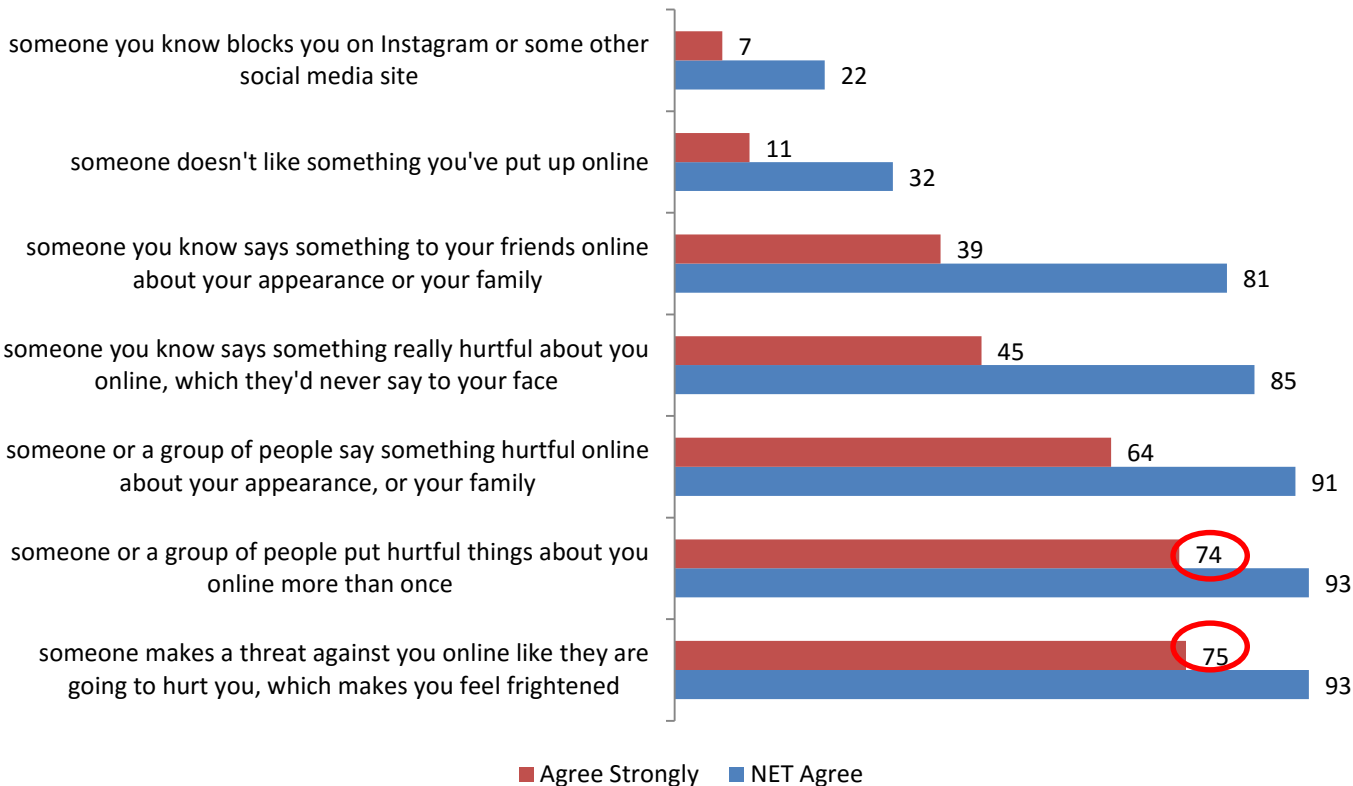
- In this section we describe young people's:
  - views on the definition of cyberbullying;
  - direct experience of cyberbullying;
  - the nature and frequency of their negative experiences online and how these differ by gender and age.
- Young people were asked a direct question about whether they had been cyberbullied. They were also asked whether they had experienced anything that had upset or really hurt them on a digital device.
- The inclusion of both these questions was to ensure that the views of young people who may have experienced something online that upset or really hurt them, but who did not necessarily define it as cyberbullying, were fully explored.
- Where relevant, this section explores how the views and experiences of young people who recognise they have been cyberbullied differ (if at all) to those who experienced something negative online, but do not define it as cyberbullying.



# Young people define cyberbullying in different ways

- Receiving threats online or recurrent hurtful comments in particular were perceived to be cyberbullying

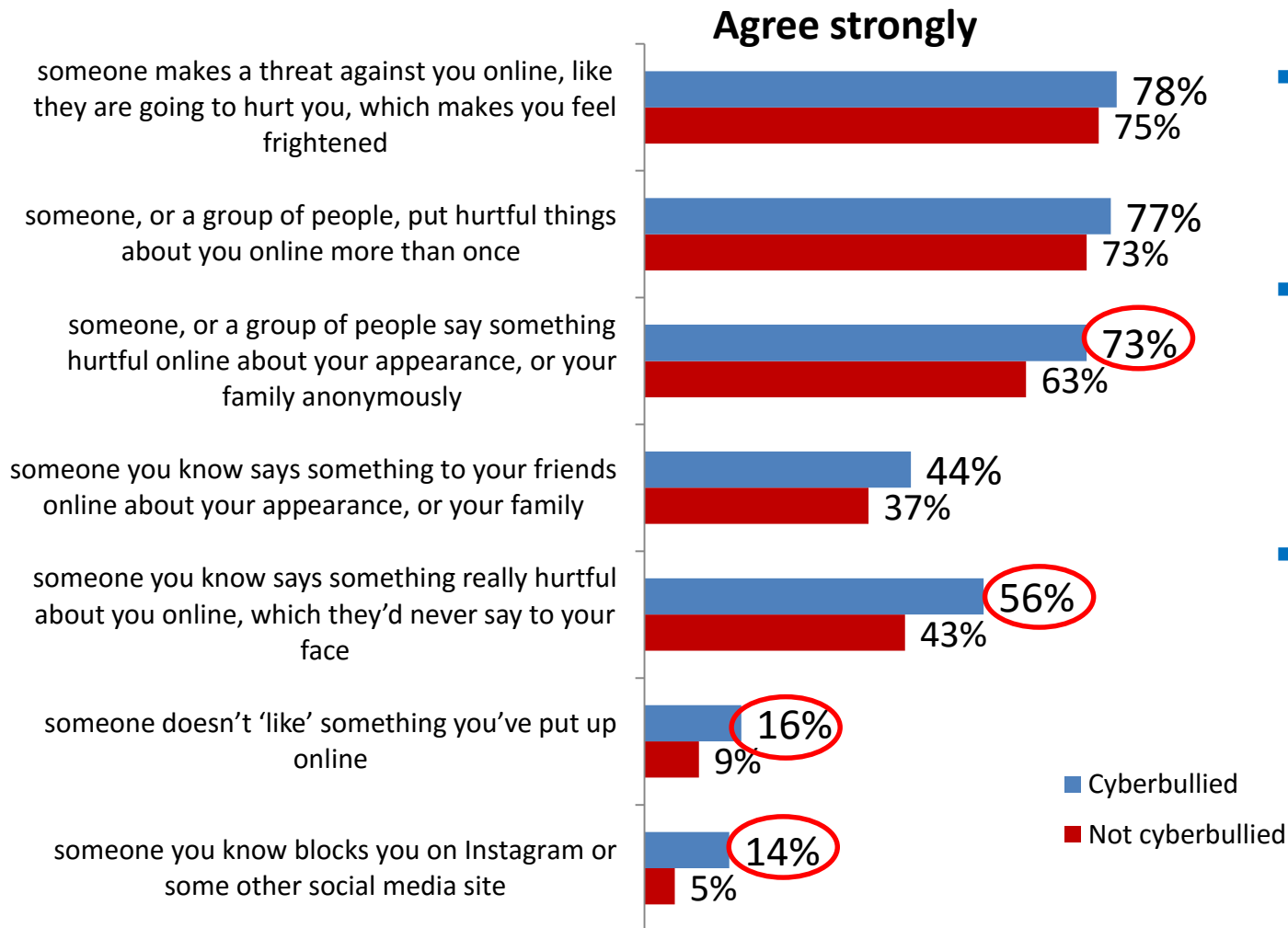
%



- Being blocked on social media or not liking something you posted was generally not perceived to be cyberbullying
- This was particularly the case for Year 11 pupils

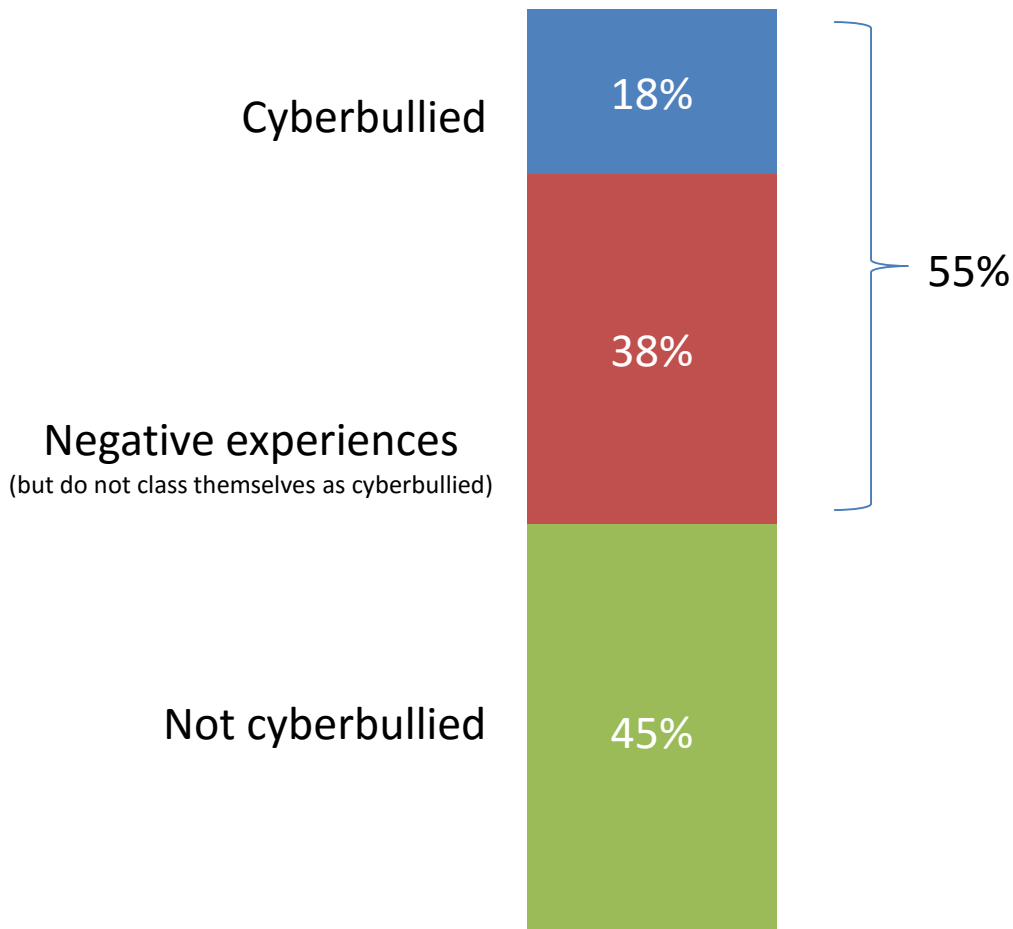
Q1. We'd like to know how you would describe cyberbullying. This is what other people your age have said about cyberbullying. Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with these statements. Base=1,004

# Some experiences are universally seen as cyberbullying



- Making threats to hurt someone is universally seen as cyberbullying
- Repeated hurtful posts online are also strongly seen as cyberbullying by young people
- But experiences are more likely to be seen as cyberbullying by those who have experienced bullying online.

# Young people do not always recognise cyberbullying



- 55% of young people (n=550) reported experiencing something online that had upset or hurt them.
- However, nearly two-thirds of these young people (65%, n=356) did not define these experiences as cyberbullying.
- 18% (n=181) described their experience as cyberbullying.

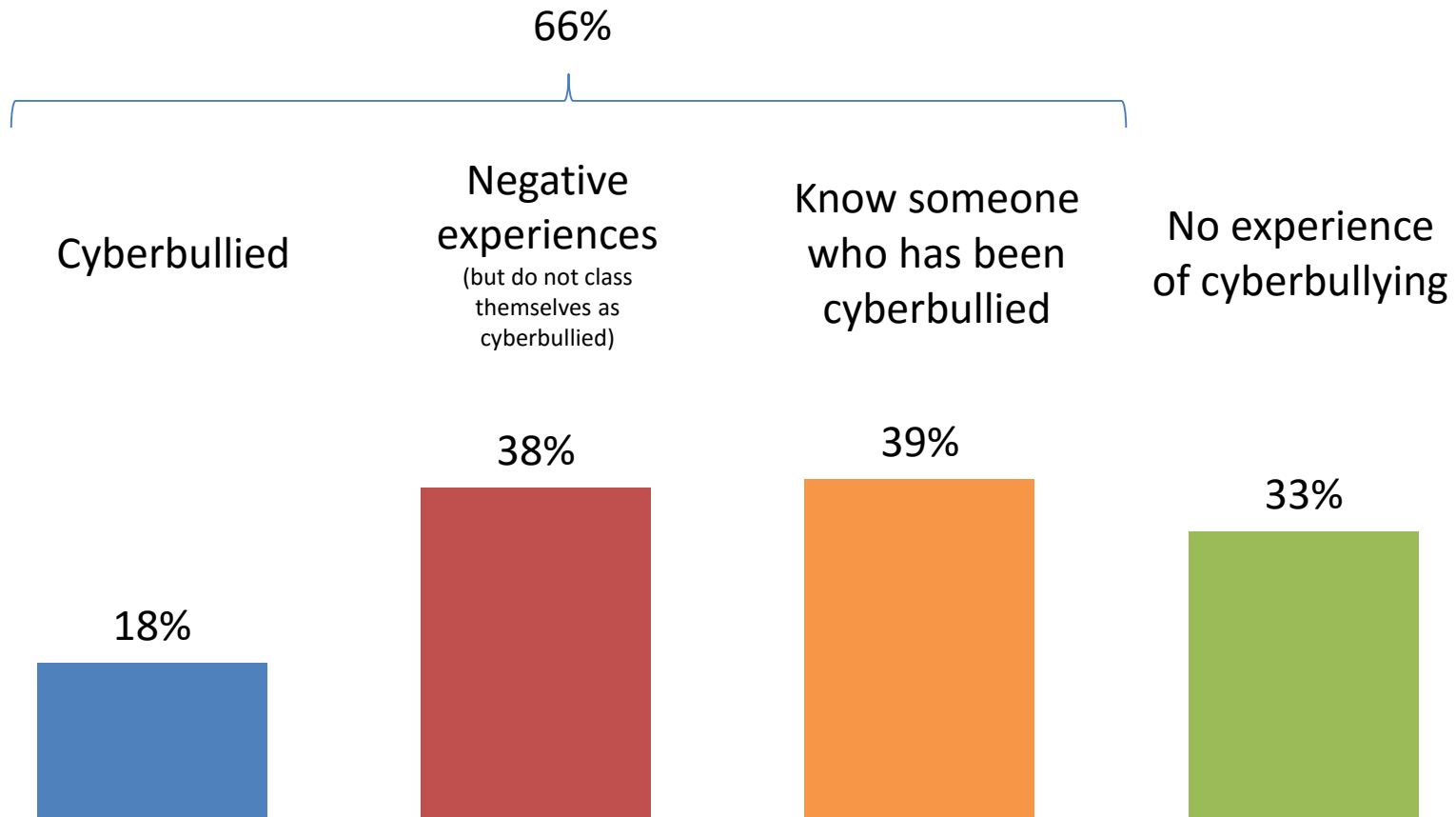


Q1b. Other people your age have described experiences that have upset or really hurt them on digital devices. Have you experienced any of these? Q2. Have you, or had anyone you know, ever been bullied online? Base=1004

All who have experienced things that have upset or hurt them on digital devices. Base=550

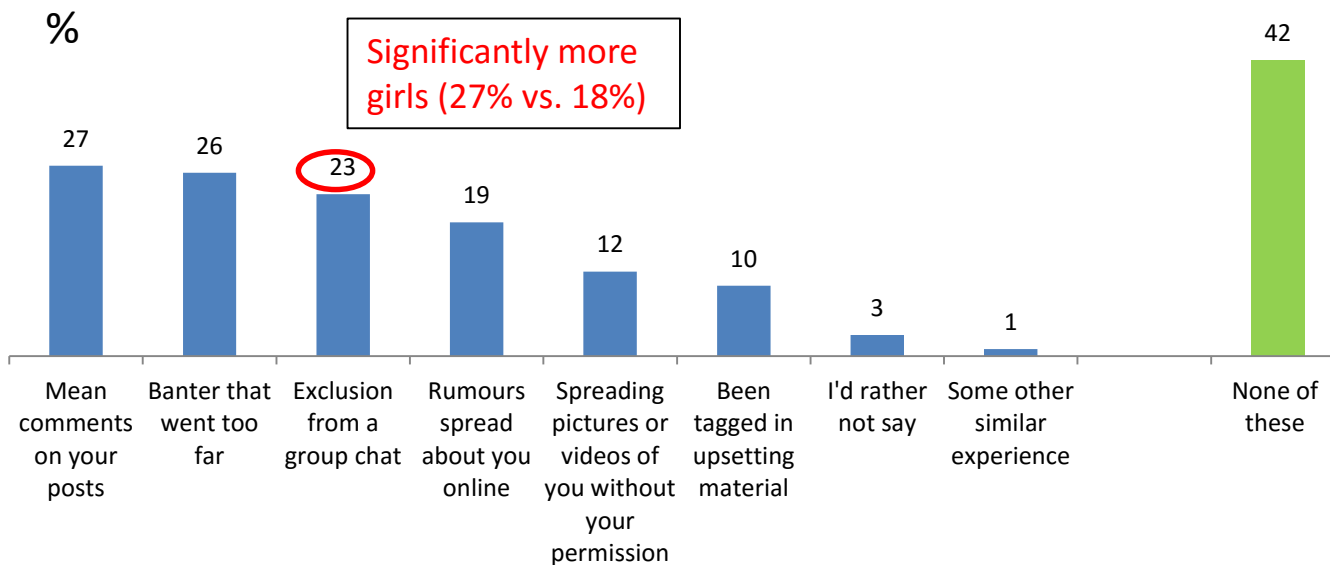
# 2 out of 3 young people have been exposed to cyberbullying

- Just one third of young people have had no experience of cyberbullying at all



# Upsetting or hurtful experiences online

- Over half of young people surveyed (55%, n=550) had an upsetting or hurtful experience on a digital device
- Receiving mean comments on a post (27%), banter that went too far (26%) and being excluded from group chat was most common (23%)



- Young people were encountering different types of negative experiences online

One negative experience - **23%**

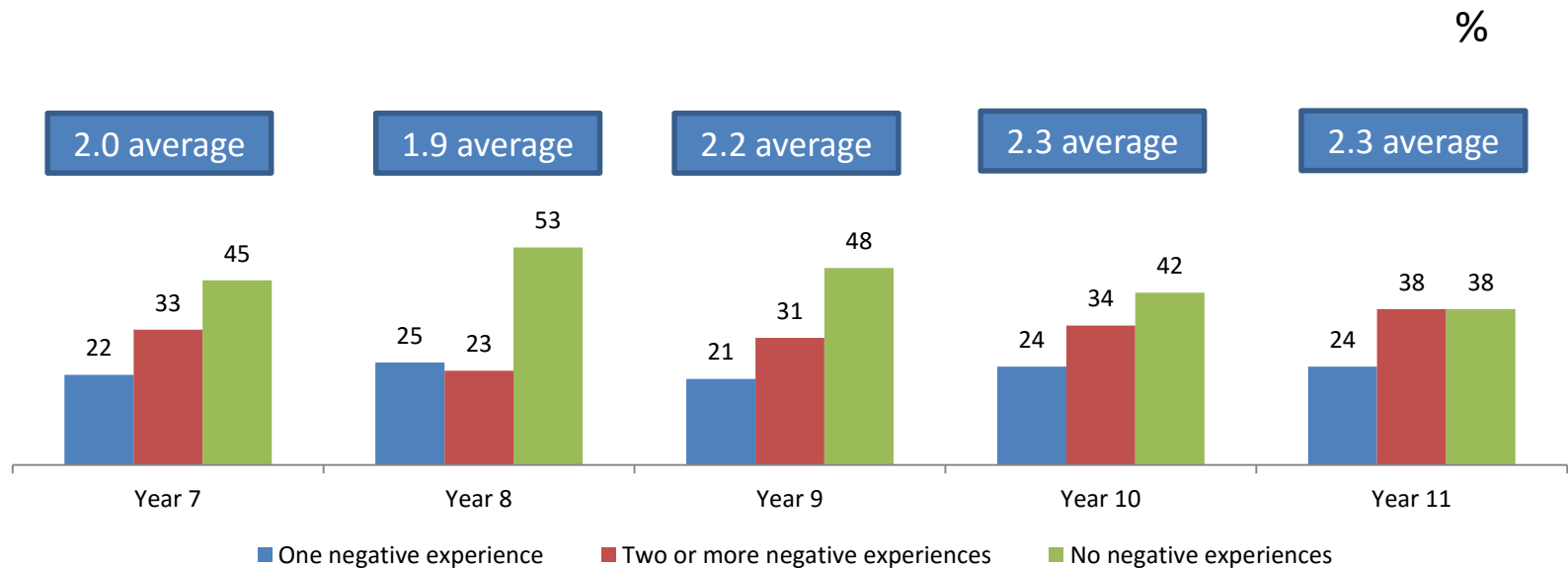
Two or more negative experiences - **32%**

2.2 on average

Q1b. Other people your age have described experiences that have upset or really hurt them on digital devices. Have you experienced any of these?. Base=1,004

# Upsetting or hurtful experiences online

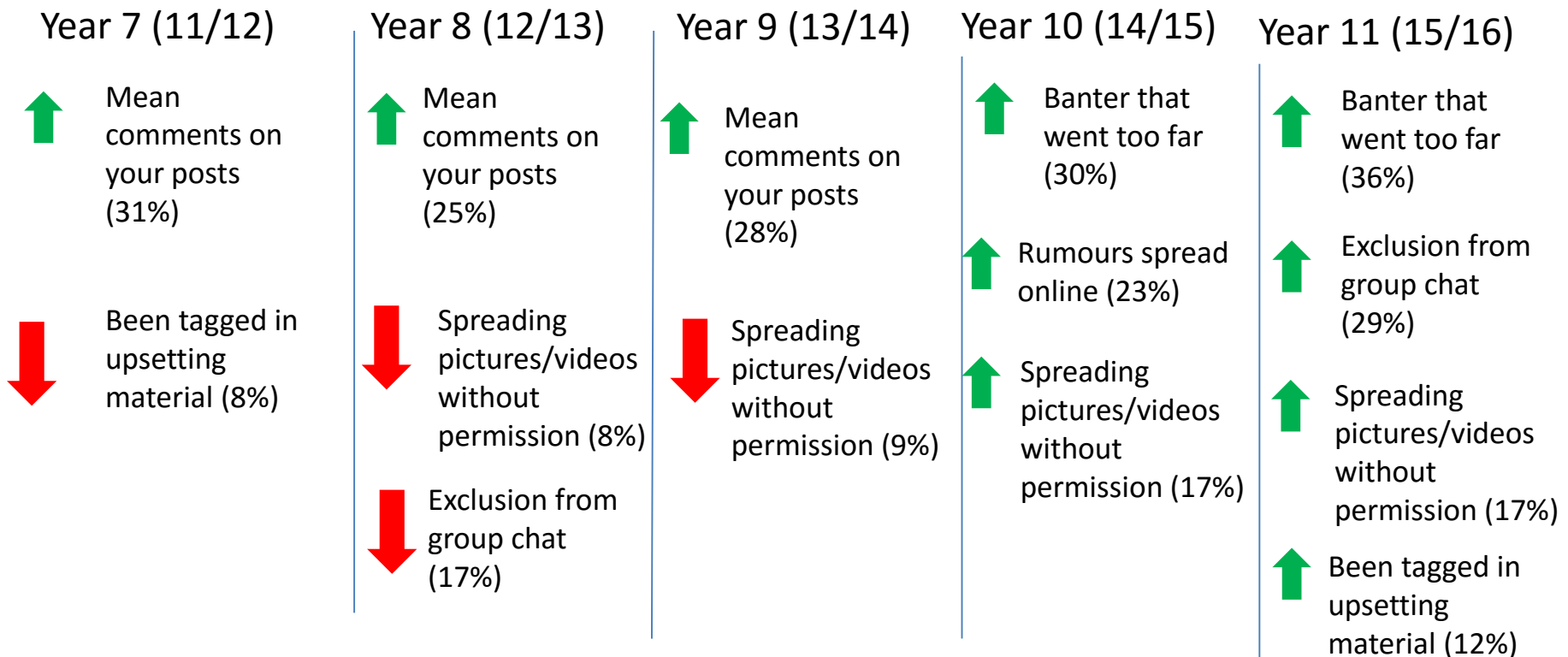
- Direct experience of multiple types of negative incidents online is greatest amongst Year 11 (age 15-16) pupils – 38% had encountered two or more different types of negative experiences online
- Just under half (48%) of Year 9 (age 13-14) pupils admit to having had a negative experience online



Q1b. Other people your age have described experiences that have upset or really hurt them on digital devices. Have you experienced any of these?. Base=1,004

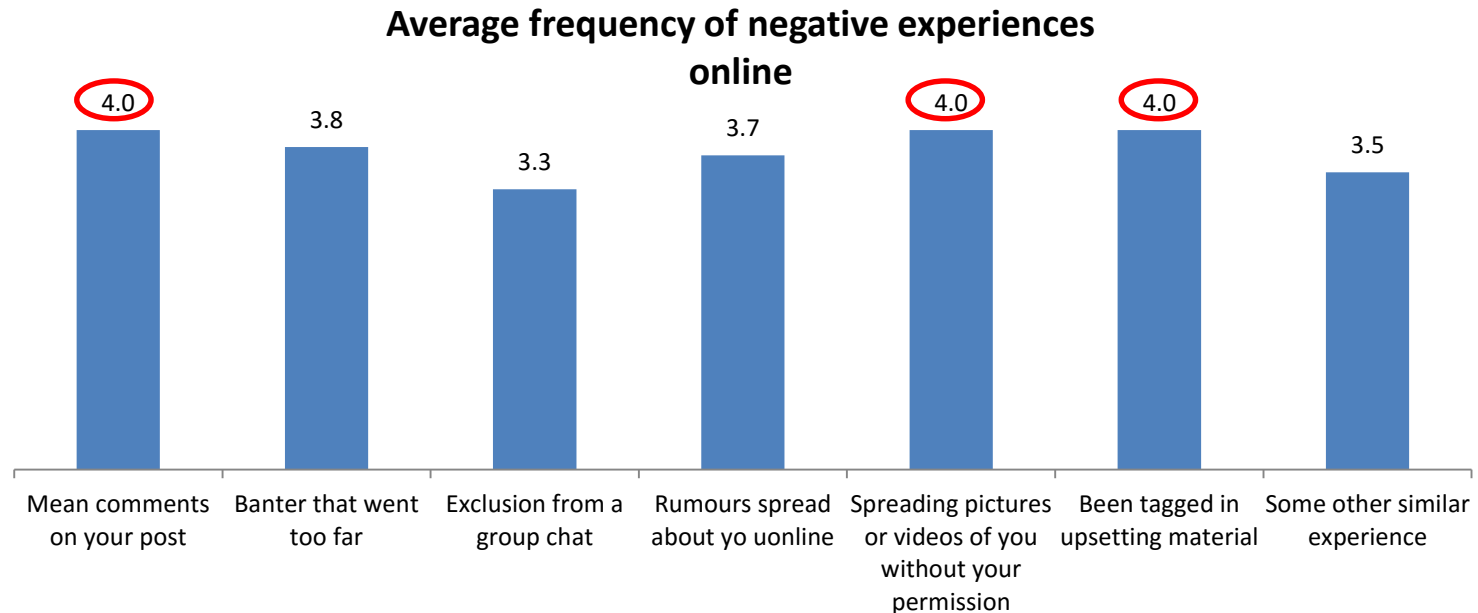
# Types of negative experiences online differ by age

- Receiving mean comments is more common amongst younger ages. Banter going too far, spreading pictures/videos without permission are more common amongst the older age group



# Young people's negative experiences online were frequent and recurrent

- Being tagged in upsetting material, someone spreading pictures or videos or receiving mean comments on their post were particularly recurrent experiences for young people





# Girls' negative experiences online were more likely to be recurrent



Average frequency of negative experiences occurring



Been tagged in upsetting material (**4.4 girls** vs. 3.5 boys)

Banter that went too far (**4.3 girls** vs. 3.3 boys) \*

Mean comments on your post (**4.3 girls** vs. 3.7 boys)

Rumours spread about you online (**4.0 girls** vs. 3.3 boys) \*

Spreading pictures/videos without permission (**4.3 boys** vs. 3.8 girls) \*

Exclusion from group chat (3.3 boys vs. 3.2 girls)

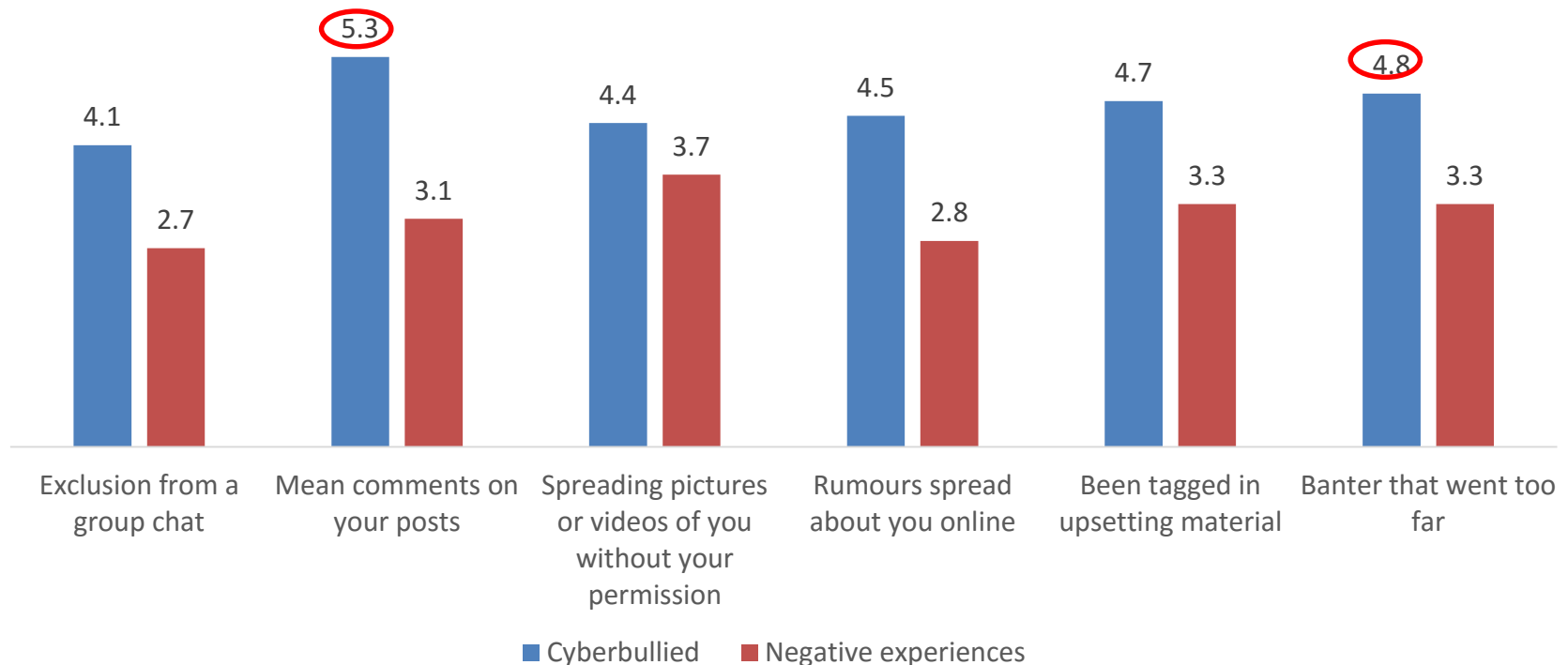
**\*significant difference**

Frequency of negative experiences

# Increased frequency of upsetting or frightening experiences leads young people to feel that they are being cyberbullied

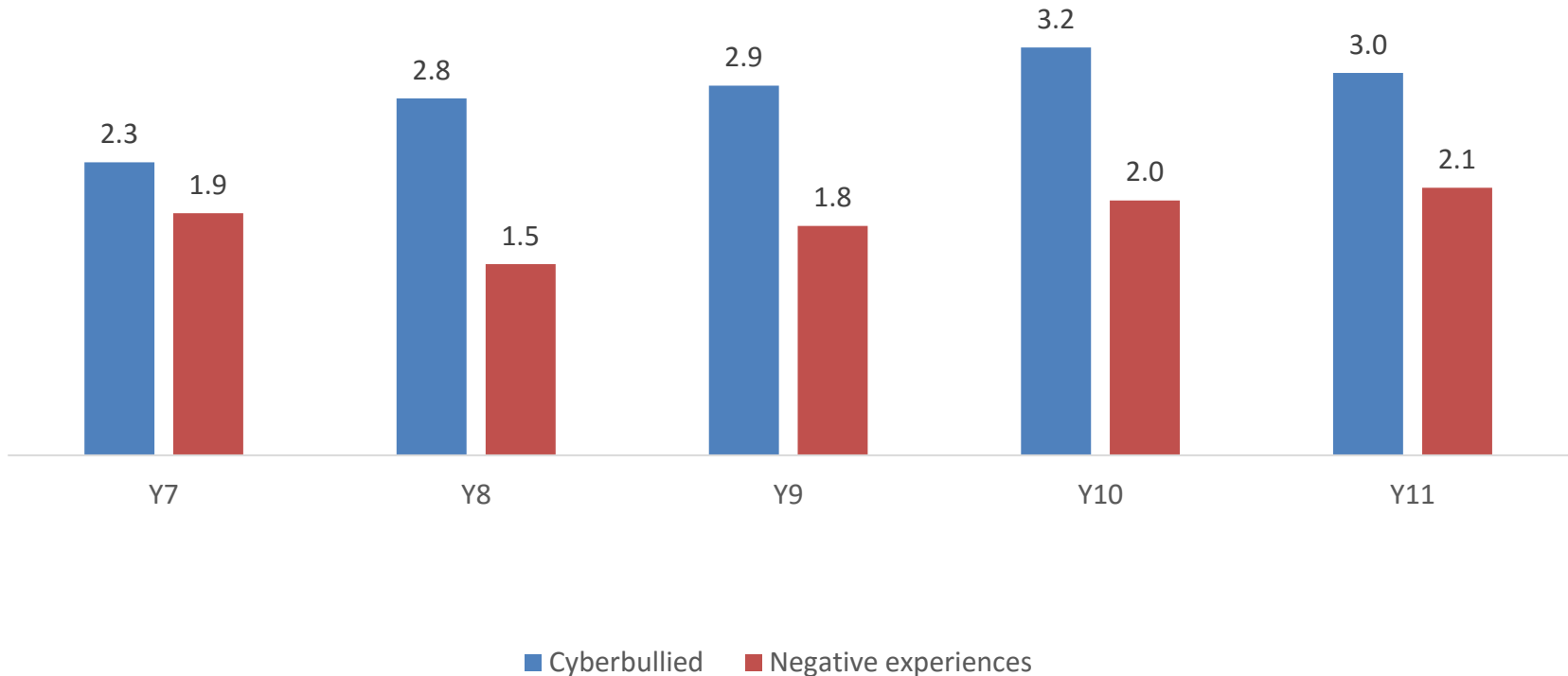
- Those who recognise they have been cyberbullied report higher frequency of negative experiences.

Average frequency of negative experiences online occurring



## The number of different upsetting or frightening experiences increases with age for those who recognise they have been cyberbullied, perhaps suggesting they are becoming more resilient

- The older age group who recognise they have been cyberbullied report more frequent occurrences of negative experiences – this indicates that negative experiences that are persistent and recurrent are more likely to be defined as cyberbullying by this age group



Q1c. How frequently did this experience happen? Q1b. Other people your age have described experiences that have upset or really hurt them on digital devices. Have you experienced any of these? Q2. Have you, or had anyone you know, ever been bullied online?  
Base=550 All who have experienced things that have upset or hurt them on digital devices

Who are young people telling about their negative experiences online?



# Who are young people telling about their negative experiences online? – Summary 1

- Young people who recognise that they have been cyberbullied are most likely to seek help from friends and family.
- It is less like that young people seek external help – although the exception to this is seeking support from school staff.
- Nearly a tenth (8%) of young people who recognise that they have been cyberbullied have not told anyone – this rises to 12% amongst boys.
- Many young people find it difficult to disclose they have been cyberbullied, often through embarrassment. Boys in particular find it challenging, preferring to cope with such an experience themselves. This emphasises the importance for young people to know how and where to access support.
- Reporting cyberbullying issues to social media companies is fairly uncommon – 36% (n=63) of those who recognised they had been cyberbullied had taken the step to report it.

## Who are young people telling about their negative experiences online – Summary 2

- Young people who recognise that they have been cyberbullied and those who have had a negative experience online identify key barriers to reporting issues to the social media companies.
- Amongst those who recognise they have been cyberbullied, a lack of awareness of being able to report the incident, or of knowing how to report it, were key barriers to young people, and a reason for not reporting cyberbullying to the social media companies.
- Furthermore, those who have had a negative experience online are less likely to ask for help from others and are more likely to feel that reporting issues to the social media companies is too difficult and time-consuming.
- Young people's confidence in social media companies' ability to resolve cyberbullying issues is low.
- There is clearly a need for greater guidance on how social media reporting mechanisms work to encourage more young people with experience of cyberbullying to report issues.

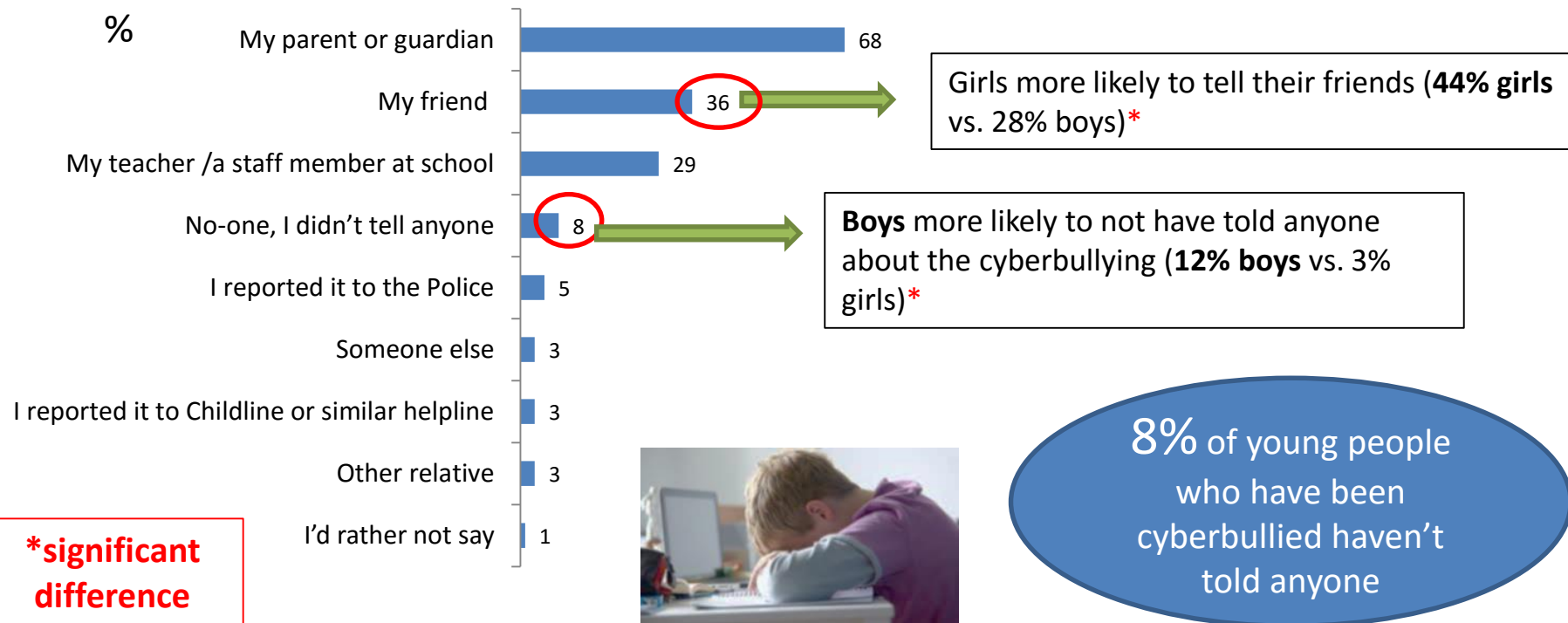
# Who are young people telling about their negative experiences online? - Introduction

- In this section we describe:
  - where young people who have been cyberbullied are seeking help;
  - actual reporting of cyberbullying to the social media companies and likelihood of future reporting;
  - barriers to reporting to social media companies;
  - perceptions of the ease of reporting and confidence in issues being resolved.



## Young people who recognised they had been cyberbullied sought help from friends and family. Seeking external help was less common.

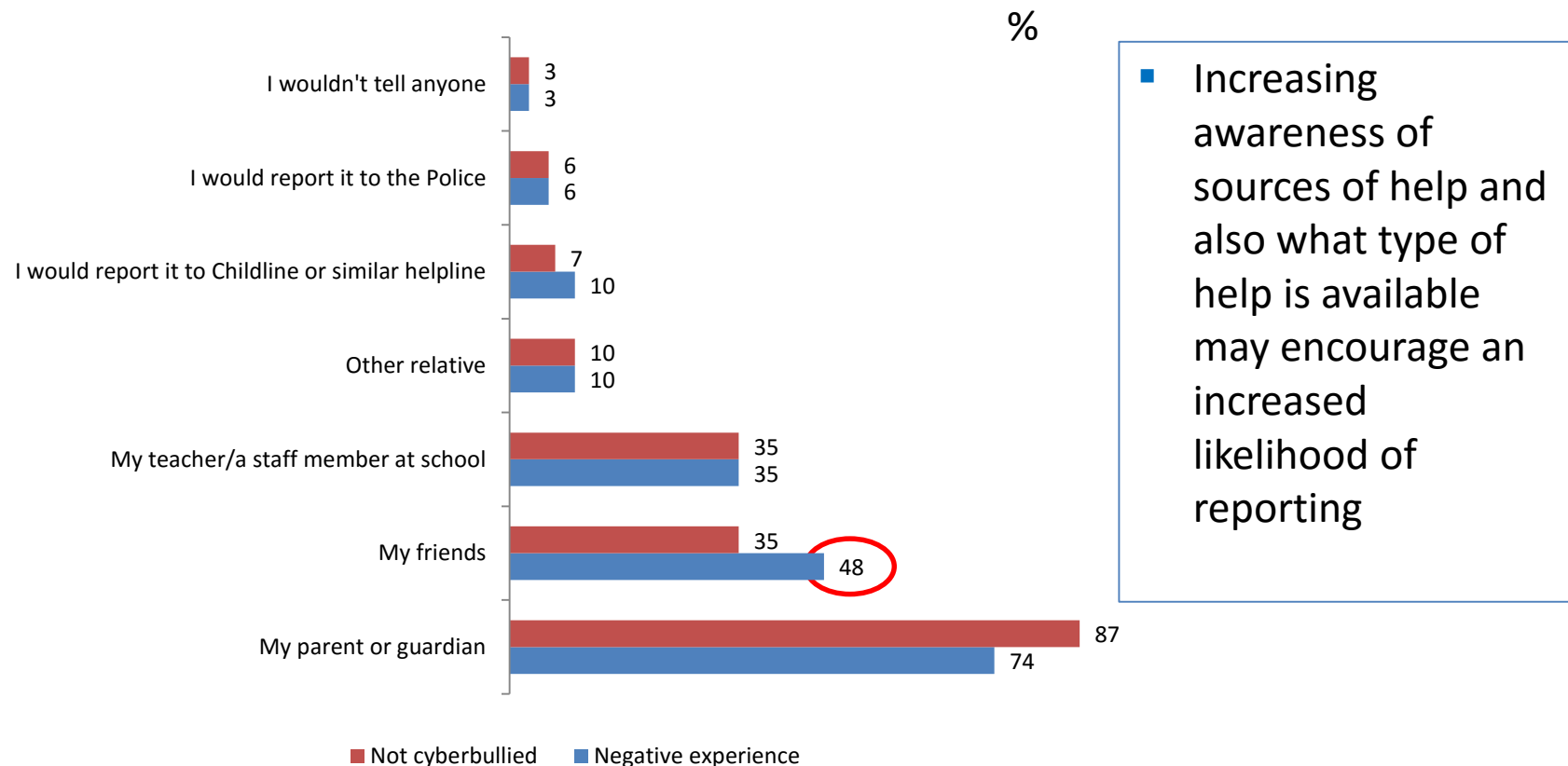
- Young people sought help from their parent/guardian in most cases. Telling friends was also important – particularly for girls.
- Seeking help from school staff was also fairly common.





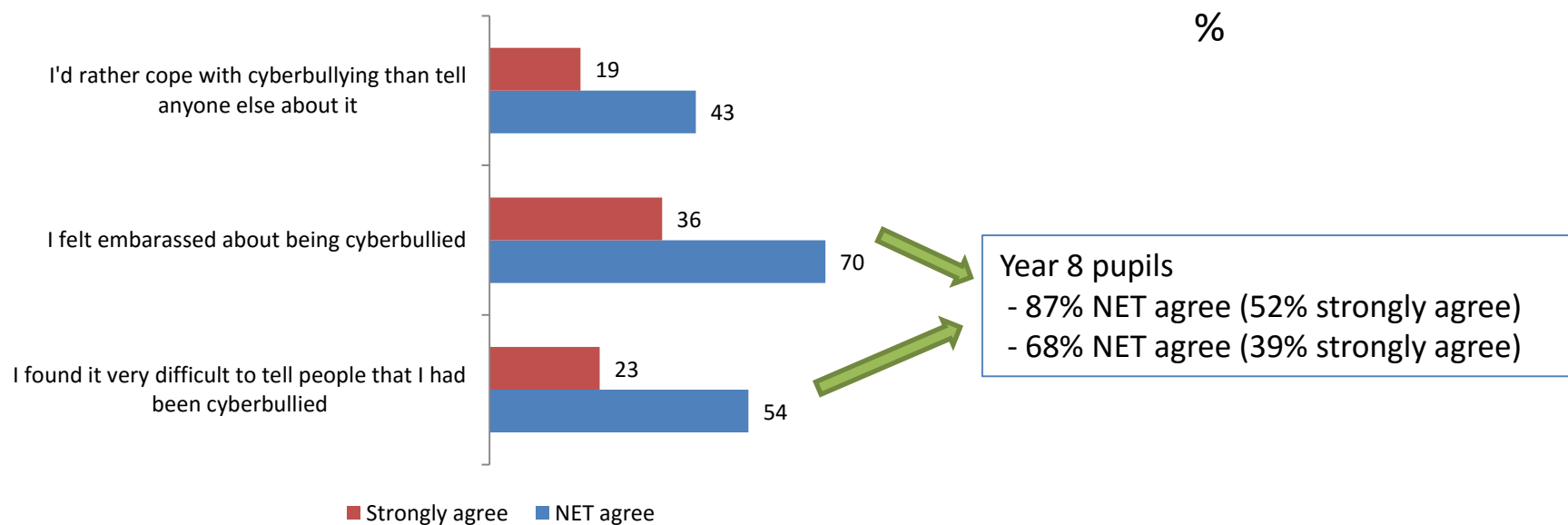
## Young people who have had a negative experience online are more likely to report that they would seek help from friends in the future

- Whilst parents remain an important source of help, there is a greater reliance amongst young people who have had a negative experience online to seek help from friends – peer support is valued



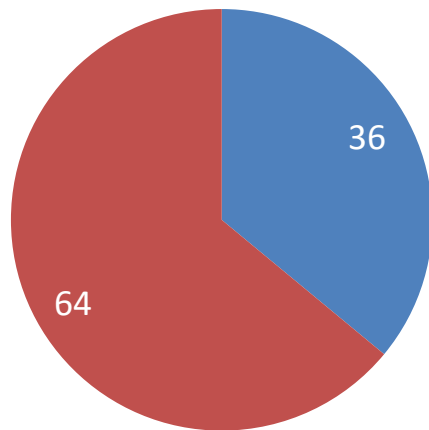
## Young people were embarrassed and found it difficult to disclose that they had been cyberbullied, highlighting the importance of young people knowing how and where to access support

- Boys would rather cope with cyberbullying themselves than tell anybody (48% boys vs 38% girls), reflecting the finding that boys are less likely to report their experience of cyberbullying, or to seek help
- Age impacts on attitudes – Embarrassment and finding it difficult to report is particularly an issue for Year 8 (age 12-13) pupils



## Levels of reporting to social media companies were fairly low amongst those who recognise they have been cyberbullied

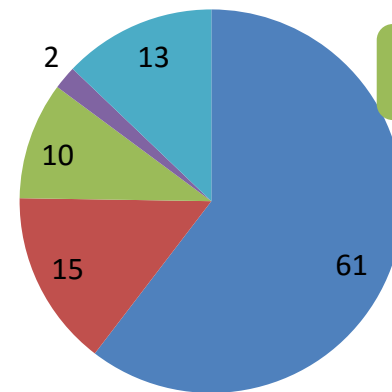
- Over a third of young people who said they had been 'cyberbullied' had reported it to the social media companies (36%, n=63)
- Three-fifths (61%, n=38) of those that had reported made up to three reports



■ Yes ■ No

%

Number of reports made



3.1 reports on average

■ 1-3 ■ 4-5 ■ 6-10 ■ 11-15 ■ Don't know

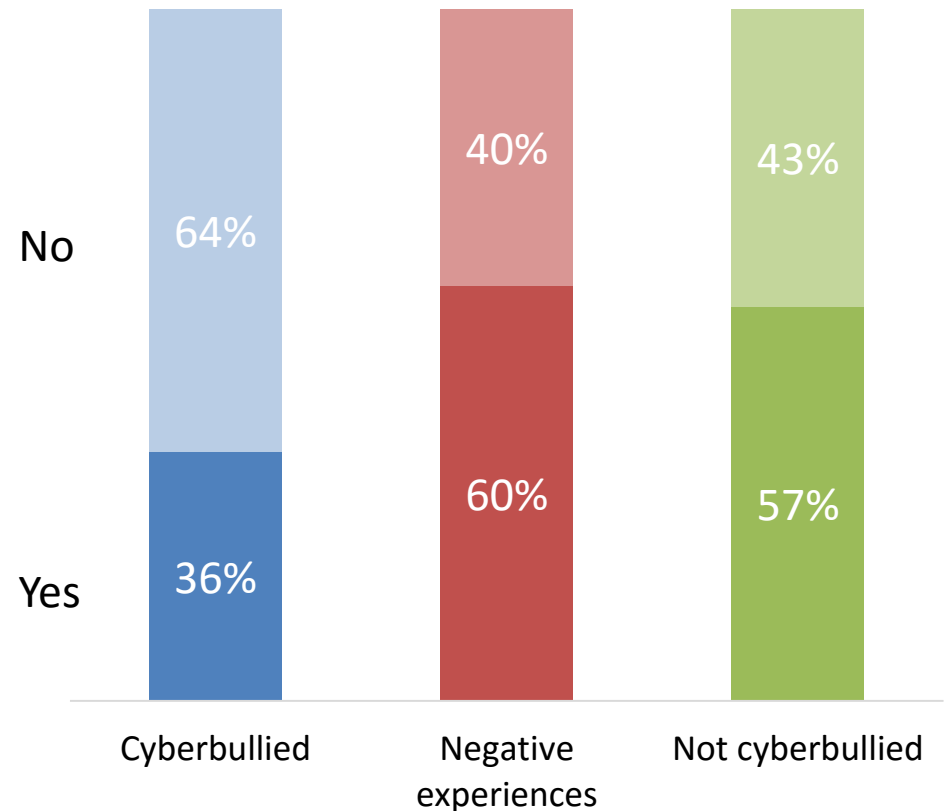
**\*NB. Low base sizes**

Q5. Did you report the cyberbullying to the social media company? Base =177(those who have been cyberbullied)

Q7. How many reports have you made to social media companies? Base=62 (those who have been cyberbullied and reported to social media companies)

# Likelihood of reporting to social media companies

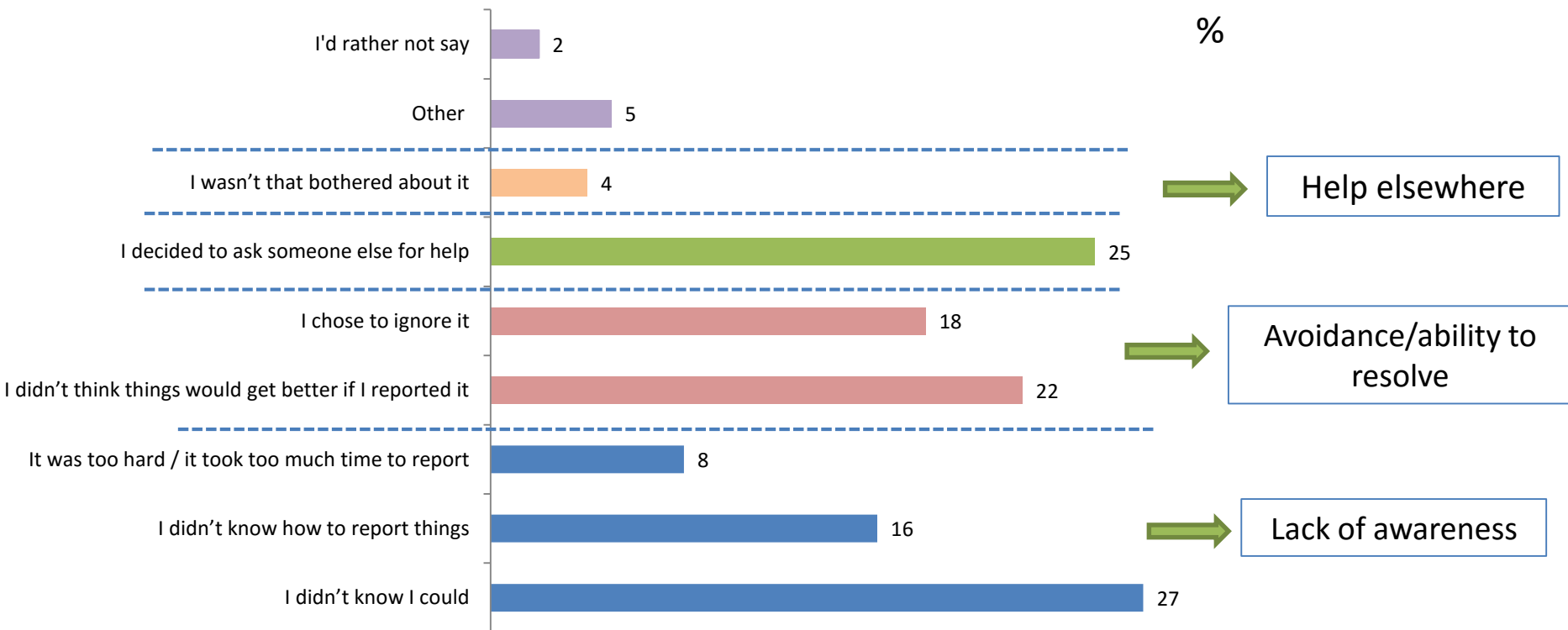
- Levels of likely reporting amongst young people who have had negative experiences online but do not consider themselves to have been cyberbullied are similar to those who have never experienced anything negative online
- Reporting of cyberbullying to social media companies is much lower in reality for those who recognise themselves as being cyberbullied



Q5. Did you report the cyberbullying to the social media company? Cyberbullied Base=177 Q14. If you were cyberbullied do you think you would report this to the social media companies. All who have experienced things that have upset or hurt them on digital devices and do not think they have been cyberbullied. Base=356 All who haven't been cyberbullied Base=389

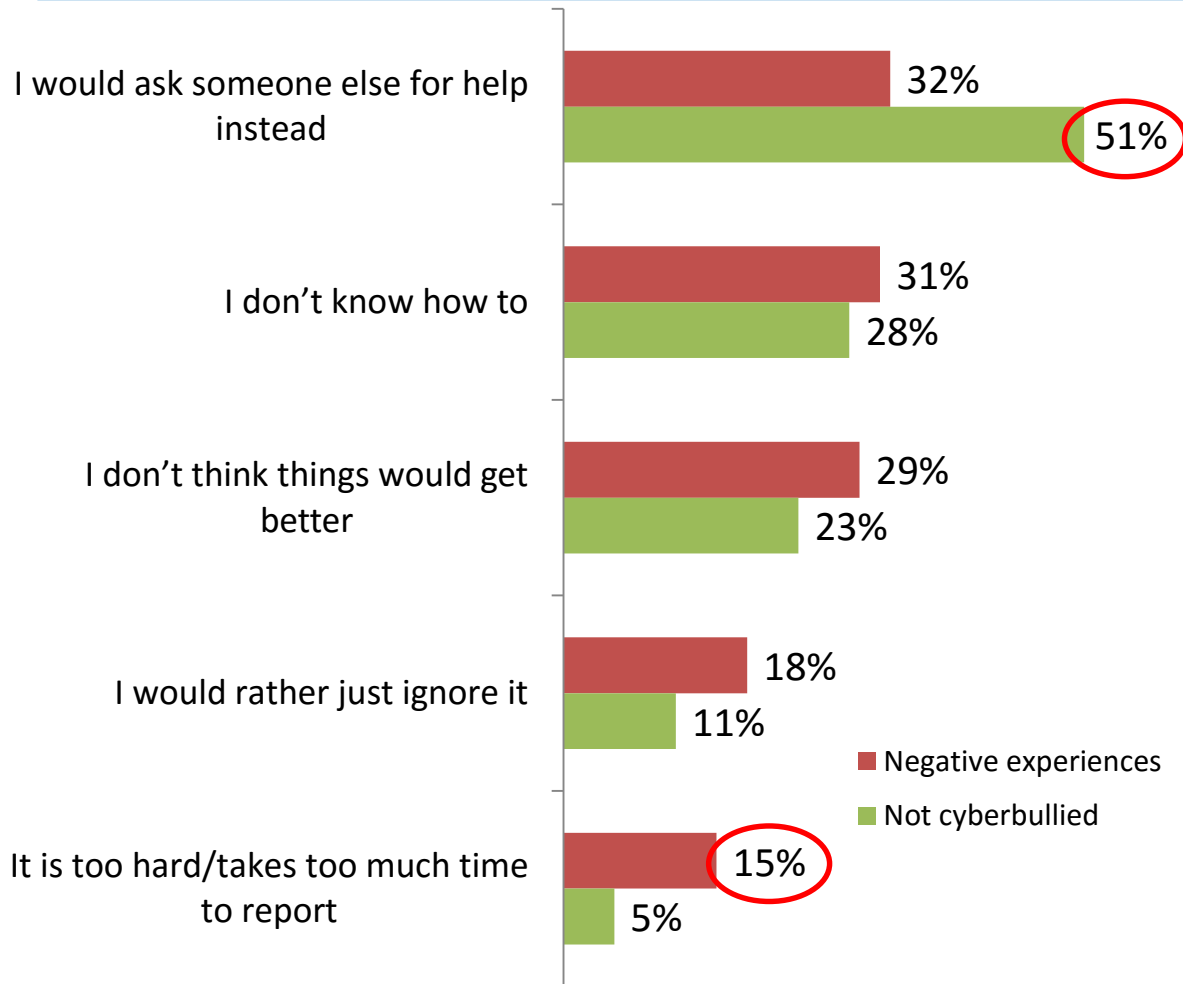
# Lack of awareness of being able to report or knowing how to report were key barriers to young people not reporting cyberbullying to the social media companies

- Choosing to ignore cyberbullying or not feeling that reporting would resolve the issue suggests that there is more to do to make young people feel confident and comfortable about reporting to social media companies
- There is an opportunity to increase awareness of reporting mechanisms to encourage more young people to report cyberbullying issues



Q6. Could you tell us why you didn't report the cyberbullying to the social media company? Base (those who have been cyberbullied, but not reported) = 114

## Those who have had a negative experience online are less likely to ask someone else for help and are more likely to report issues with reporting mechanisms

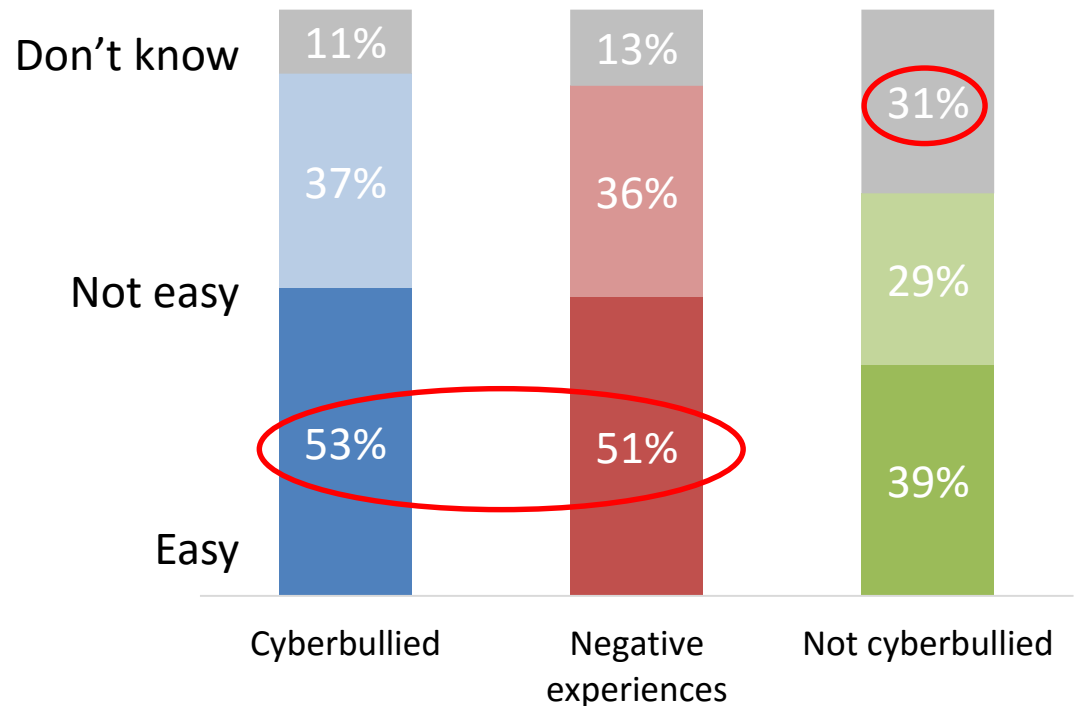


- Amongst young people who do not believe they have been cyberbullied, but who have experienced upsetting or hurtful experiences online are less likely to think they would ask someone else for help compared to those who have had no upsetting experiences
- Those who have had a negative experience are also more likely to report a barrier with the logistics of reporting to the social media companies

# Perception of ease of reporting

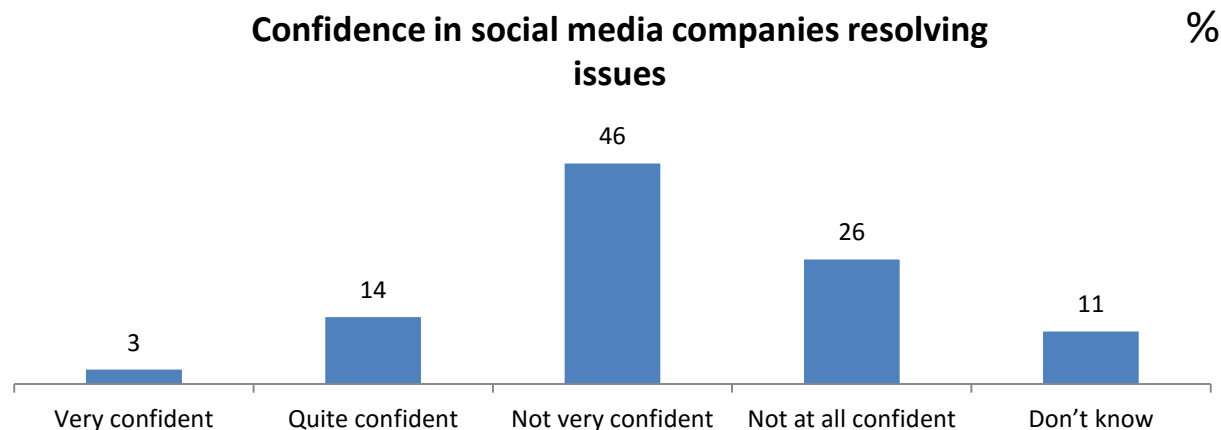
- Young people who have experienced upsetting or frightening experiences have similar opinions on the ease of reporting problems to social media companies, irrespective of whether they recognise these incidents as cyberbullying

- However, there is a lack of awareness about the process of reporting amongst those who have never had negative experiences online



## Young people's confidence in social media companies' ability to resolve cyberbullying issues is low

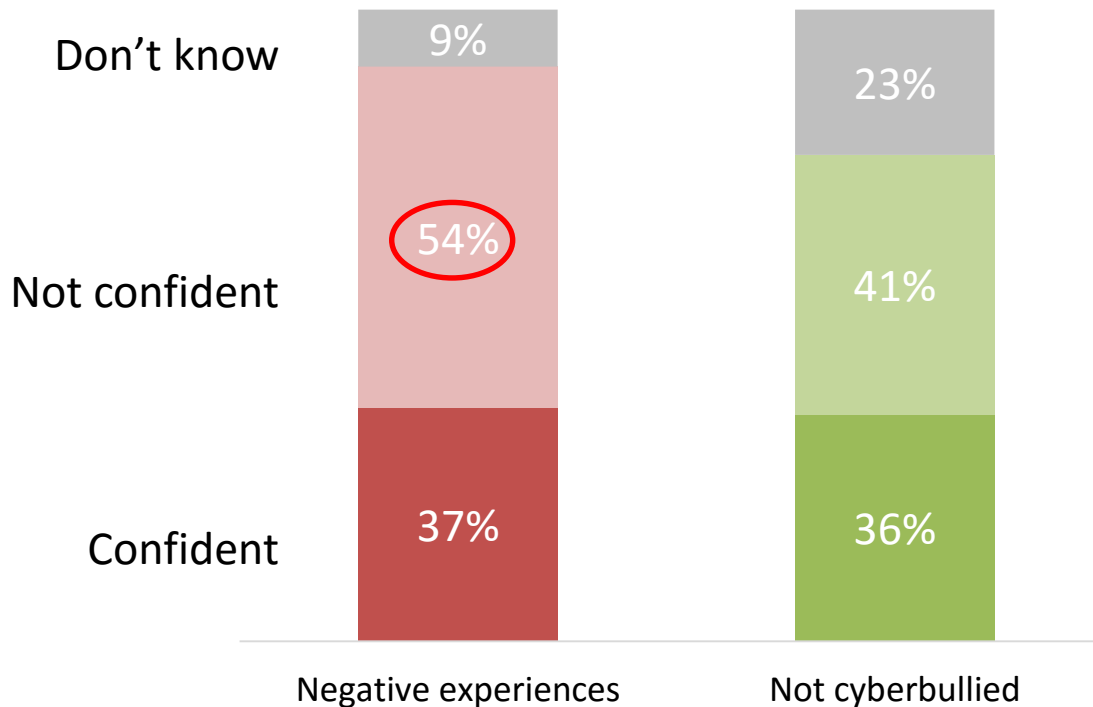
- Nearly three-quarters (72%, n=82) of young people who recognise that they have been cyberbullied but did not report it to the social media companies were not confident that reporting would solve the problem





## Confidence in social media companies

- Young people who do not recognise themselves as having been cyberbullied have less confidence in the social media companies to resolve problems than those who have had no negative experiences



Q16. How confident are you that if you reported cyberbullying to social media companies that they would sort out the problem? All who have experienced things that have upset or hurt them on digital devices and do not think they have been cyberbullied Base=356 All who have not been cyberbullied Base=389

# Experience of reporting to the social media companies



# Experience of reporting to the social media companies

## - Summary

- Facebook and Instagram were the main companies to which young people had reported cyberbullying.
- Speed of response was good – in three out of five cases the social media company responded within 24 hours (60%) and the majority had responded within a week (84%).
- Problems were resolved for the majority of young people – over half (56%, n=35) stated that the problem had been fixed for them.
- Satisfaction with how the social media companies dealt with issues was generally high – three-fifths were satisfied.

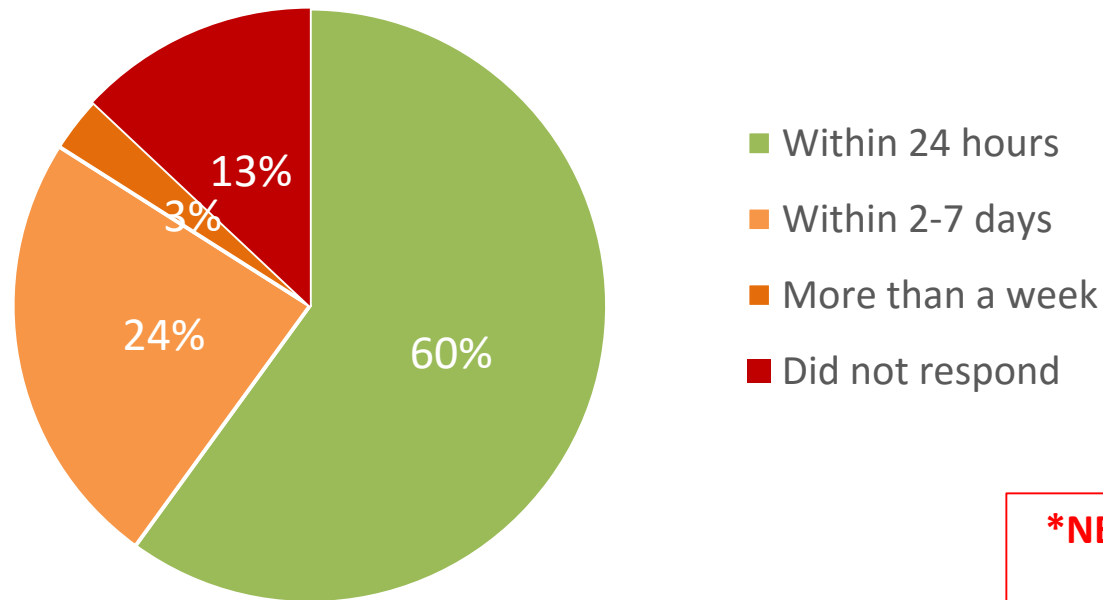
# Experience of Reporting - Introduction

- The next section provides an overview of the experience of those who had recognised they had been cyberbullied and had reported their experience to the social media companies.
- The number of young people who had reported to the social media companies was very low however (n=63).
- Due to such a low base number caution should be taken in the interpretation of the findings. The findings are indicative and the base size is not sufficient to generalise about young people's experience of reporting cyberbullying to social media companies.
- This section details:
  - Reporting to social media companies;
  - Time taken to respond;
  - Outcome of report;
  - Satisfaction with response.



# Speed of response from social media companies

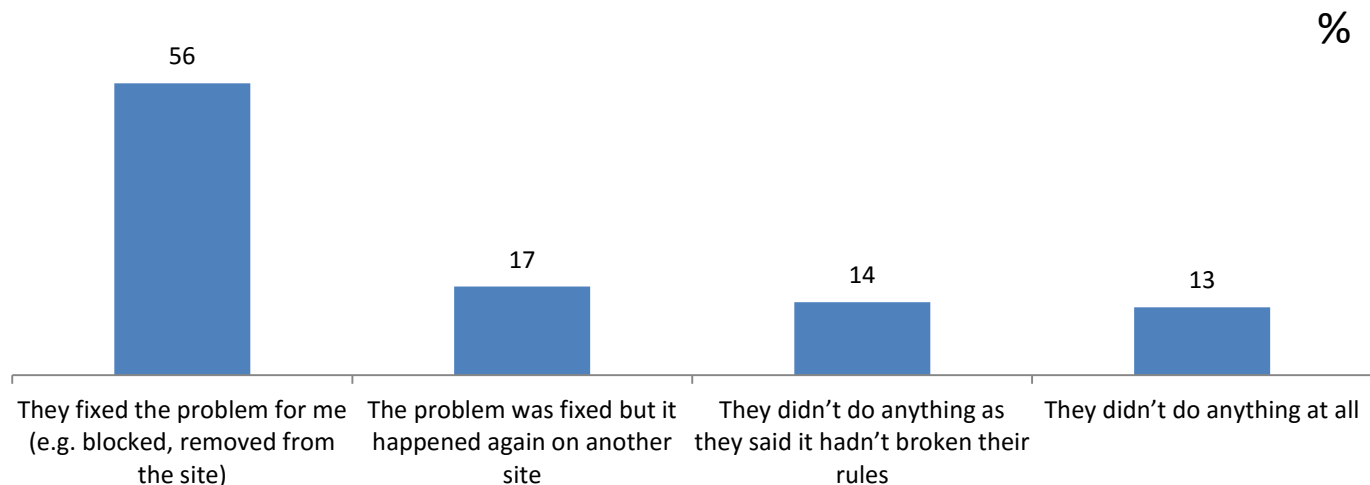
- In 3 out of 5 of cases, the social media company responded within 24 hours and the majority had responded within a week (84%).
- However, for more than one in 8 young people (13%) the social media company did not respond at all.



**\*NB. Low base sizes**

# Reporting cyberbullying to social media companies

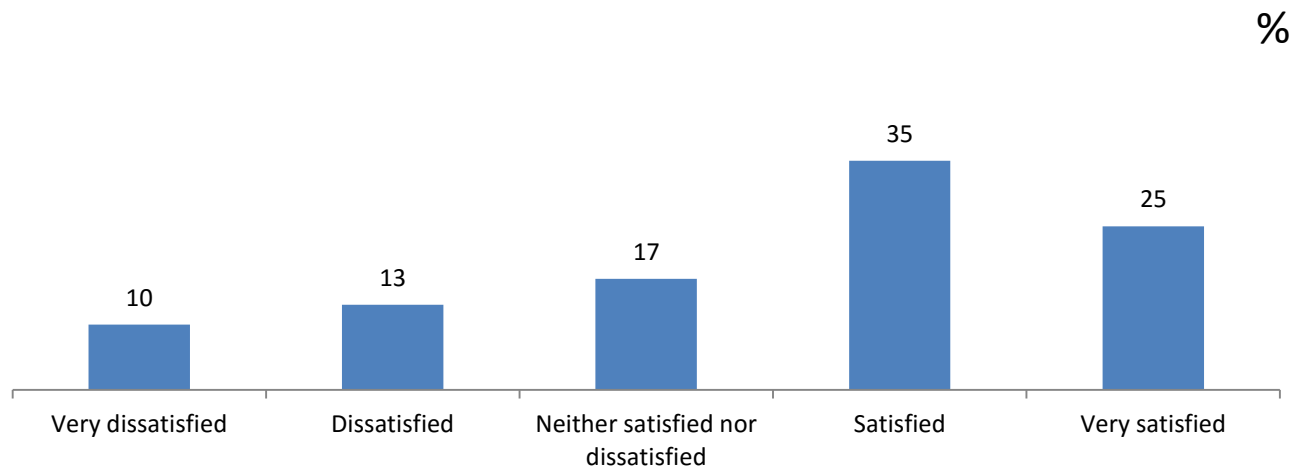
- Of those reporting incidents of cyberbullying to the social media company, the problem had been resolved for the majority. Over half (56%, n=35) stated that they had fixed the problem for them.



**\*NB. Low base sizes**

# Reporting cyberbullying to social media companies

- Young people's satisfaction with how the social media companies dealt with their issue was generally high: three-fifths (60%, n=38) reported being satisfied; 22% were dissatisfied



**\*NB. Low base sizes**

# Views on a Platform





# Views on a Platform - Summary

- Interest in a central place online to help and support young people who are been cyberbullied is strong, particularly amongst those who have had a negative or hurtful experience online or have said they have been cyberbullied.
- In terms of what young people want from such a platform, there is very little difference between young people who recognise their negative online experiences as cyberbullying and those who do not.
- Accessing a platform through an app is more important to those who do not recognise themselves as having been cyberbullied.
- Having a reporting function within an online forum was important to young people, particularly a function to report cyberbullying to social media companies.
- But the types of information and services that young people would find helpful are very similar, irrespective of whether the young people consider their experiences to be cyberbullying.

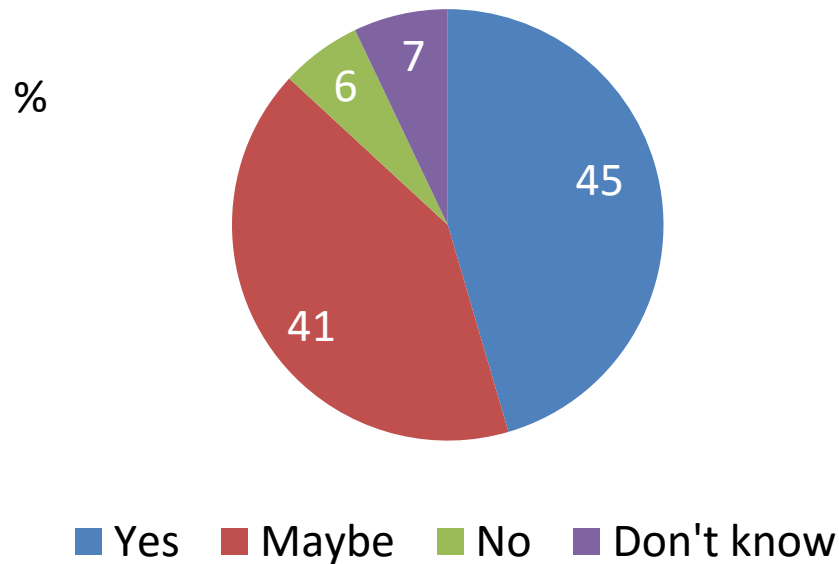
# Views on a Platform - Introduction

- This section details:
  - Interest in an online platform;
  - Accessing an online platform;
  - Useful services and information to be included on an online platform.

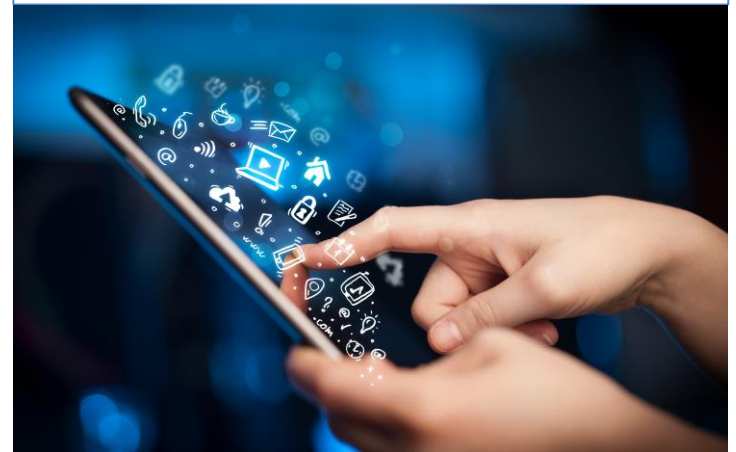


# Strong interest in a central place to help and support young people experiencing cyberbullying

- Nearly half of young people (45%; n=455) stated that they would use an online platform



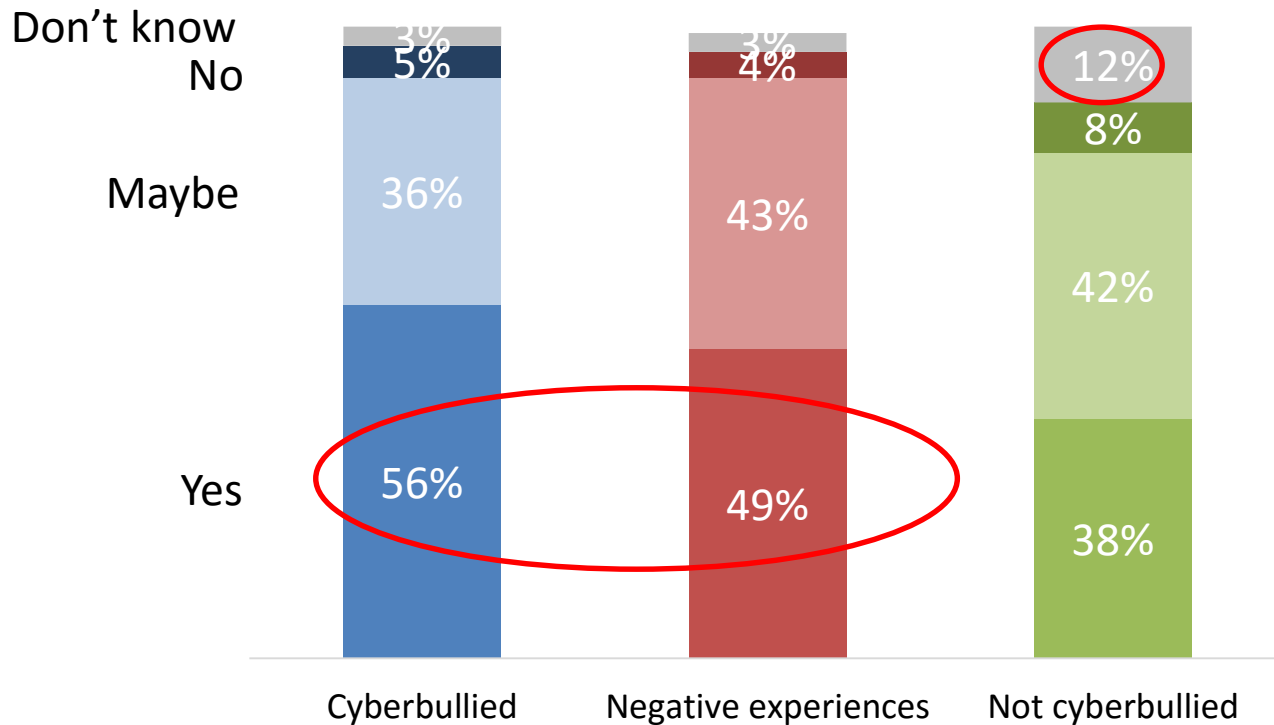
- **Less interest amongst older young people** – 12% of Year 11 (age 15-16) pupils stated that would not use (16% of Year 11 boys)



Q17. If there was a central place online to help and support young people who are experiencing cyberbullying, do you think you would use it?. Base=1,004

# Views on a Platform

- Interest in a central place to help and support young people experiencing cyberbullying is higher amongst those who have had negative experiences online, irrespective of whether they view it as cyberbullying

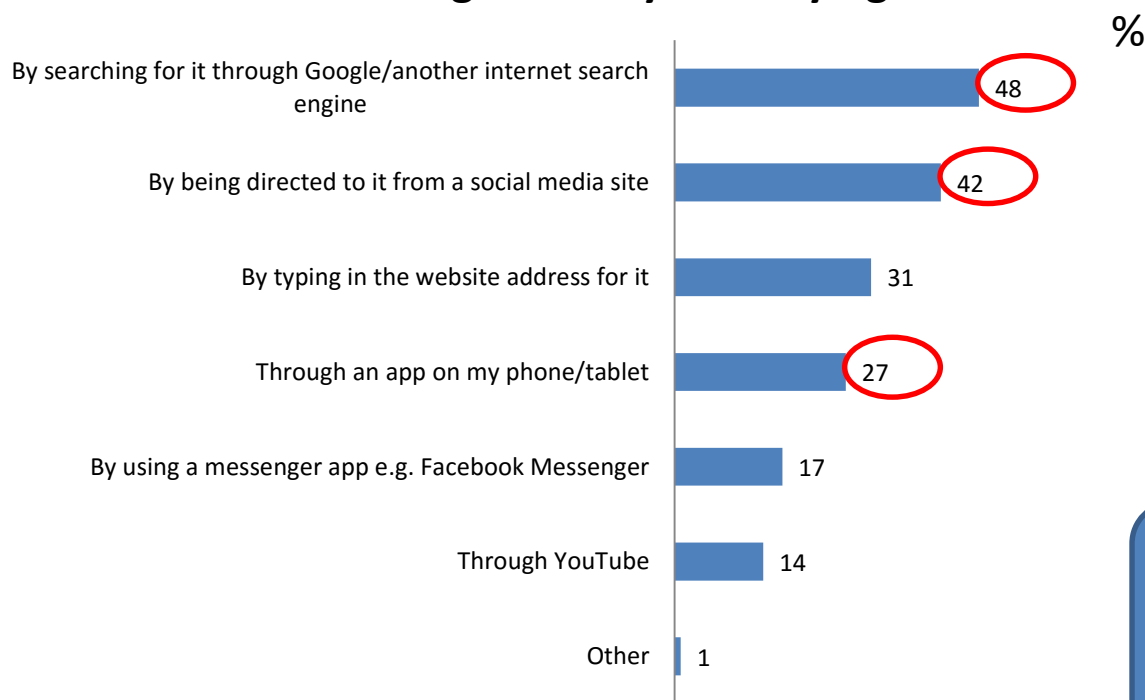


- Emphasises the need for help and support to be easily accessible and available for young people who have had negative experiences online (irrespective of whether they define it as cyberbullying)

# Platform – how it would work

- Nearly half of young people would expect to access a platform by searching for it through an internet search engine. Signposting to a platform from a social media site was also mentioned frequently.

## Accessing online cyberbullying resource



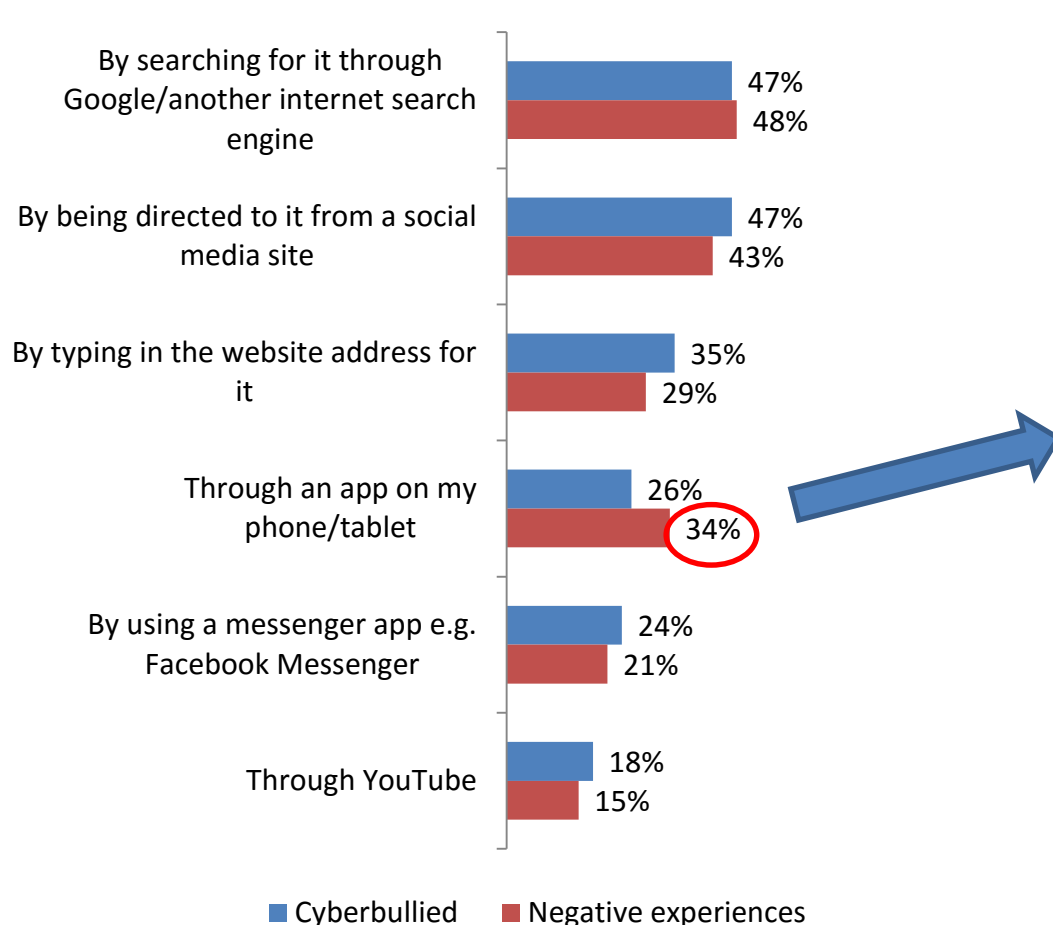
- Interest in accessing through an app, social media site, or google/internet search engine increases by age – Year 11s much more likely to report that they will access through these routes than younger ages



Implications for how the platform is publicised and signposted to ensure reach across 11-16 age group

# Platform – how it would work

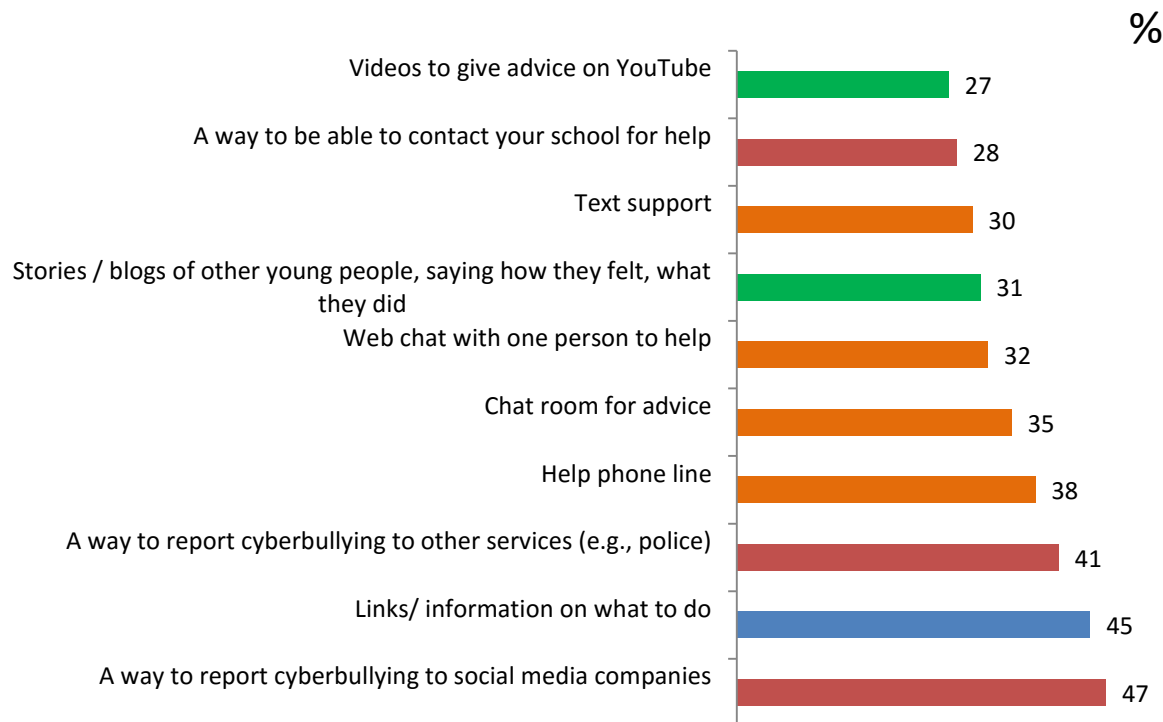
- Accessing a platform through an app is significantly more important to those who do not recognise themselves as having being cyberbullied



Possible implications for design and use of language within an app to ensure it is appealing to those who have had a negative experience online (but do not define it as cyberbullying)

# Platform – Useful Services

- The presence of reporting functions within an online platform was important to young people, particularly a function to report cyberbullying to social media companies. Direct support either virtually or over the phone would also be useful.



**Direct support (virtual or over the phone) 74%**

**Reporting function (67%)**

**Stories/blogs/videos (45%)**

**Links/signposting (45%)**

**Girls would find certain services significantly more useful!**

- **Links/information on what to do (50% vs 40%)**
- **Stories/blogs (39% vs. 24%)**
- **Text support (33% vs. 27%)**

# Platform – Useful Services

## Top 3 most wanted services from a platform the same across age groups:

- Links/information on what to do (between 38%-51%)
- A way to report cyberbullying to social media companies (between 46%-50%)
- A way to report cyberbullying to other services (between 39%-47%)

## Then some differences by ages in terms of useful services

Year 7

Year 8

Year 9

Year 10

Year 11

- ✓ Help phone line (41%)
- ✓ Chat room (35%)
- ✓ A way to contact school for help (35%)
- ✗ YouTube videos (24%)

- ✓ Help phone line (39%)
- ✓ Text support (32%)
- ✗ YouTube videos (25%)
- ✗ Webchat (25%)

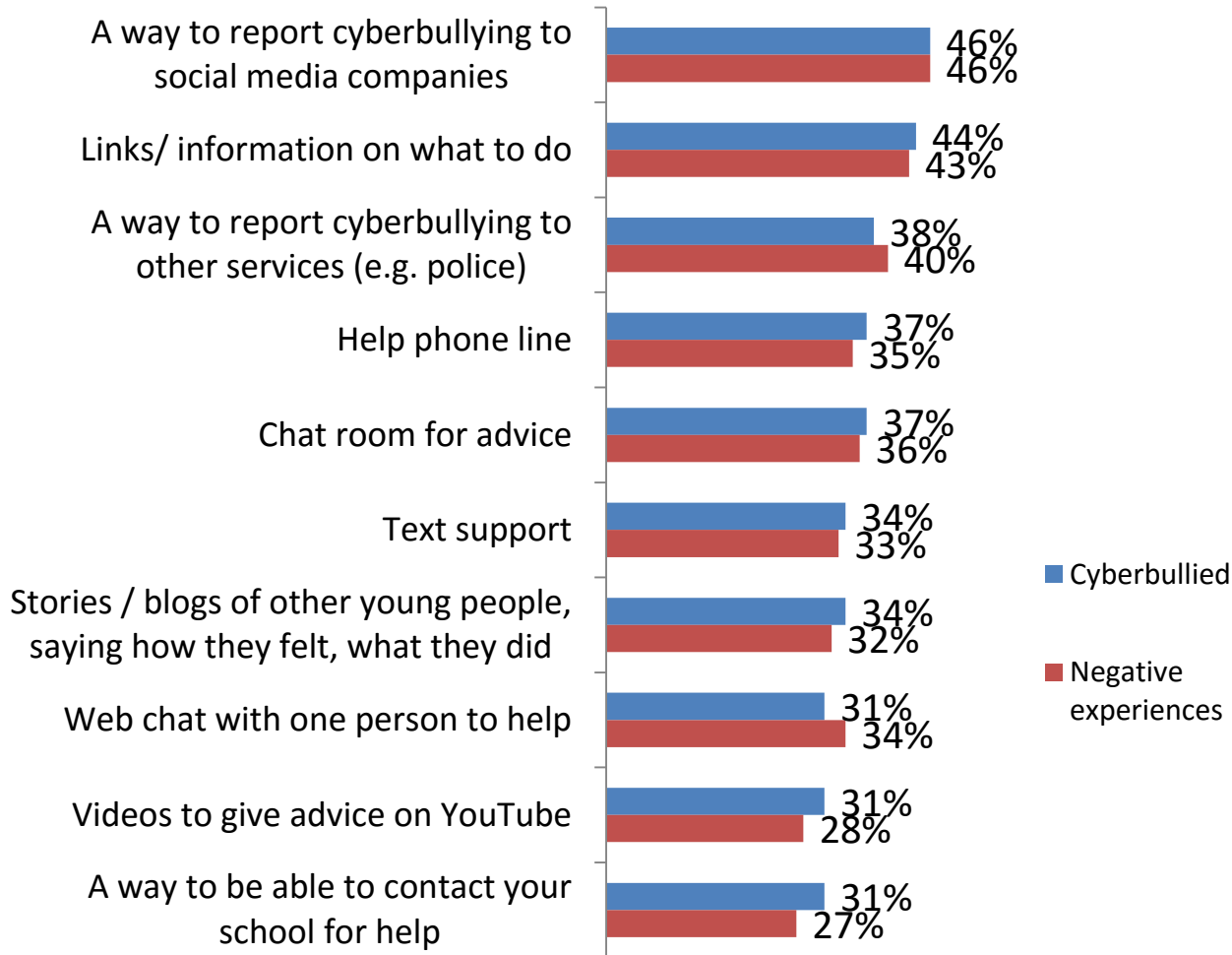
- ✓ Help phone line (34%)
- ✓ Web chat(33%)
- ✗ Way to contact school for help (20%)

- ✓ Webchat (38%)
- ✗ Way to contact school for help (31%)

- ✓ Chat room (43%)
- ✓ Help phone line (39%)
- ✗ Way to contact school for help (31%)



# Platform – Useful Services



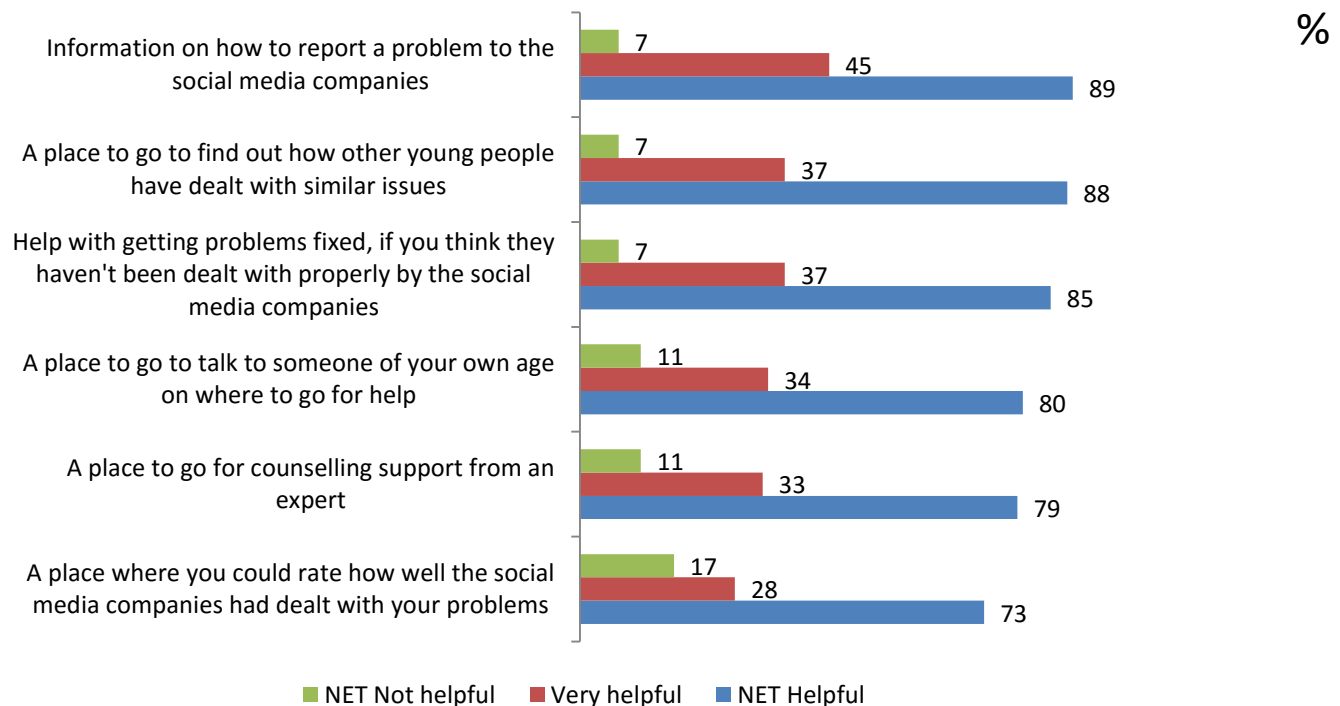
- The services that appeal to young people are similar for those who recognise they have been cyberbullied and those who have had a negative experience online

Q19. Still thinking about one place to help and support young people experiencing cyberbullying, which of these services would be useful for it to have? All who have experienced things that have upset or hurt them on digital devices and feel cyberbullied.

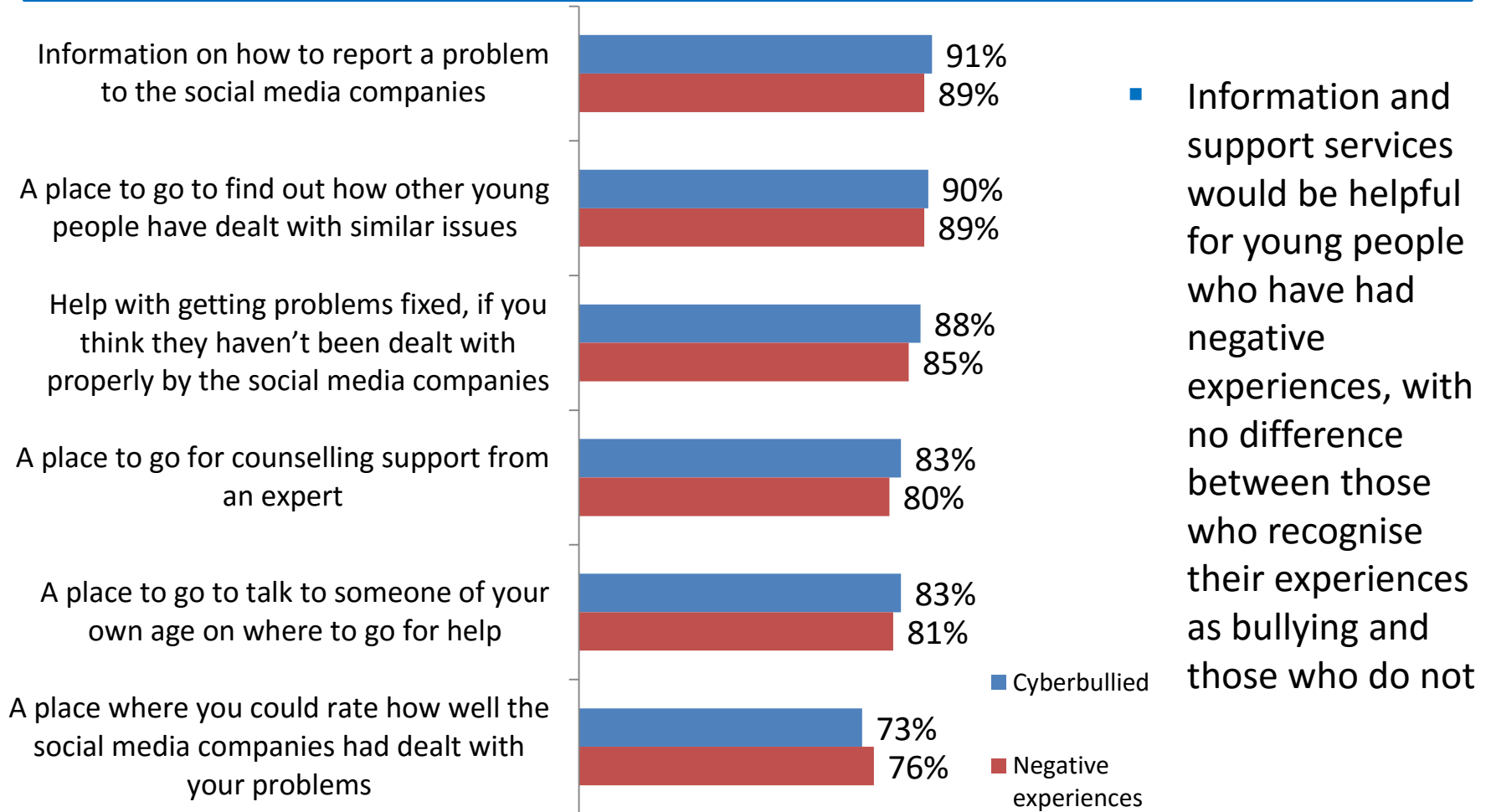
Base=172 ? All who have experienced things that have upset or hurt them on digital devices and no not feel cyberbullied. Base=378 49

## Platform – What would be helpful

- Young people would find information on reporting problems to social media companies the most helpful (45% rated as 'very helpful')
- Over four-fifths also believed help with getting unresolved issues fixed and a place to go to find out how other young people have dealt with issues would be helpful



# Platform – What would be helpful



Q20. If you were being cyberbullied, please tell us how helpful the following things would be? All who have experienced things that have upset or hurt them on digital devices and feel cyberbullied. Base=172 ? All who have experienced things that have upset or hurt them on digital devices and do not feel cyberbullied. Base=378

## Conclusions (1)

- There is clear evidence that young people do not always recognise cyberbullying – around two-thirds of those who had experienced something negative online did not define their experiences as cyberbullying.
- The research suggests that more persistent and recurrent negative experiences online may lead young people to view themselves as being cyberbullied, rather than just as encountering a negative/upsetting experience online (this increases as young people get older).
- Girls are more likely to encounter persistent and recurrent negative experiences online than boys: particularly being tagged in upsetting material; receiving mean comments on posts; having rumours spread about them and banter going too far.
- Embarrassment and stigma is acutely associated with being cyberbullied. Young people are generally unlikely to have sought help, other than from parents/guardians, friends and in some cases school.

## Conclusions (2)

- Girls are reliant on seeking help from friends. Boys are significantly more likely to have not asked for help; they report embarrassment and an expectation to cope with cyberbullying experiences themselves. Gender differences in the source and willingness to seek help have implications for how an online platform or wider support could be tailored to encourage young people to be more open in disclosing their experiences.
- Reporting to social media companies is low amongst those who recognise they have been cyberbullied. This low level of reporting is underpinned by:
  - a lack of awareness of reporting mechanisms or the logistics of how to report;
  - a lack of confidence in the social media companies to resolve issues;
  - not wanting to escalate the issue or feeling that the incident will not be taken seriously.

## Conclusions (3)

- Confidence in social media companies to resolve cyberbullying is low amongst those who have had no direct experience of reporting issues. However, satisfaction amongst those who have reported is much higher.
- Disparity between perceptions and actual experience of reporting indicates there is more social media companies could do to raise awareness and improve clarity of reporting mechanisms. This would help improve perceptions and the likelihood of young people reporting issues in the future.
- Those with direct experience of cyberbullying (whether recognised or not) have a greater interest in the concept of an online platform emphasising the need for available support for these young people.
- The reporting functions within an online platform were of key interest to young people, particularly the ability to report issues to social media companies and other services; reiterating current barriers and negative perceptions of reporting mechanisms highlighted in the research.



Family Kids & Youth (FK&Y) is one of the best known [child and adolescent research agencies](#) and our business is solely about the lives of children and young people and those that care for them. We have a multi-disciplinary team who have worked with children and young people through many years of our research and evaluation programmes. Our team is fully briefed in safeguarding and we have a safeguarding policy in place. All team members have DBS clearance.

We constantly strive to make our research enjoyable and engaging for children and young people using traditional and media tools. We are known for the way in which we engage with and encourage children to share their thoughts and beliefs in a way that is simple, straightforward and highly effective. Each of us has an academic background in psychology or sociology enabling us to bring our deep knowledge of the developmental stages of childhood to identify key drivers. Founder Dr Barbie Clarke has been a trained child and adolescent psychotherapist for twenty years and has worked with young offenders and in schools. Her doctorate at Cambridge was in child and adolescent psycho-social development

# Thank You!



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