26 February 2026

Media Literacy Parents' Study

YouGov®

Conducted by YouGov on behalf of the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT)

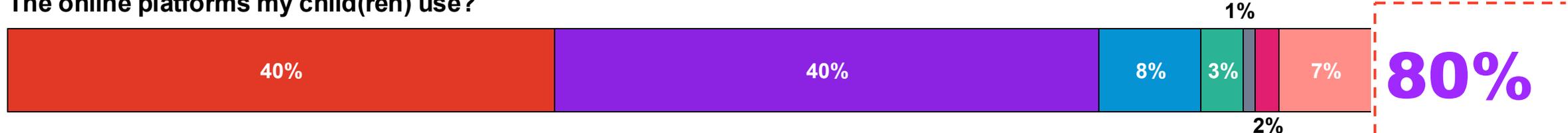**Fieldwork Dates: 23rd December 2025 - 4th January 2026**

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Management Summary of Key Findings

- **Introduction:** This Key Findings report is based on the results from DSIT's "Media Literacy" survey; fieldwork was undertaken between 23rd December 2025 – 4th January 2026. The survey questions were asked to 1,105 parents living in Great Britain who have a child aged 8 to 14 years old. This survey was conducted online.

- **Sample**: YouGov used a sophisticated sampling matrix, which draws a random sample of respondents based on age, gender, region, social grade and education status. The pre-selected respondents were emailed and invited to take part in the survey.

- **Background:** The survey was conducted by YouGov on behalf of DSIT to investigate parents understanding of the content their children come across online, and how they engage in conversations with their children about the content they view online
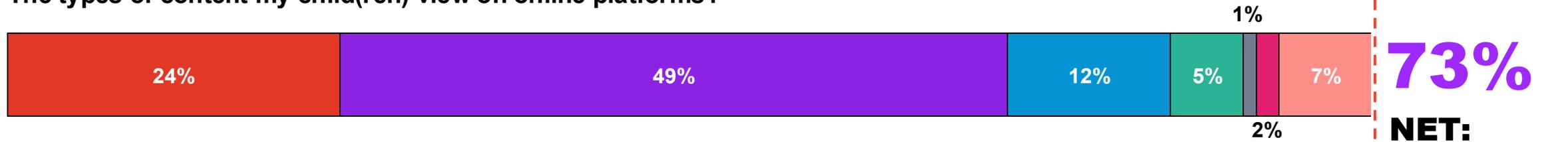
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4 in 5 parents of children aged 8-14 are confident they know about the online platforms their child(ren) uses, but confidence in the content they view is lower at 3 in 4 parents.

How confident are you in knowing…

The online platforms my child(ren) use?

| 40% | 40% | 8% | 3% | | | 7% |

1%

80%

2%

The types of content my child(ren) view on online platforms?

| 24% | 49% | 12% | 5% | | | 7% |

1%

73%

2%

NET: Confident

- ■ Very confident – I'm sure I know this
- ■ Neutral – I'm neither confident nor not confident
- ■ Not at all very confident – I don't know this
- ■ Not applicable - My child(ren) does not use any online platforms
- ■ Fairly confident – I think I know, but not completely certain
- ■ Not very confident – I'm unsure if I know
- ■ Don't know

RAM_Q1. For the following set of questions, when we talk about "online platforms" we are referring to things such as social media sites like Instagram or X, video platforms such as YouTube or Twitch, or gaming platforms and services such as Xbox Live or Roblox. How confident are you in knowing the types of online platforms your child(ren) uses, and the types of content they view on these platforms? (Please select the option that best applies in each column. If your child doesn't use any online platforms, please select the "Not applicable" option)
Base: All GB parents of children aged 8-14 (1105)

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While 80% of parents feel confident they know which platforms their child uses, only 24% feel *very* confident about the content their children actually see. This suggests many parents believe they're more informed than they really are.

The online platforms my child(ren) use?

1%
3%
8%
40%
40%

The types of content my child(ren) view on online platforms?

1%
5%
12%
24%
49%
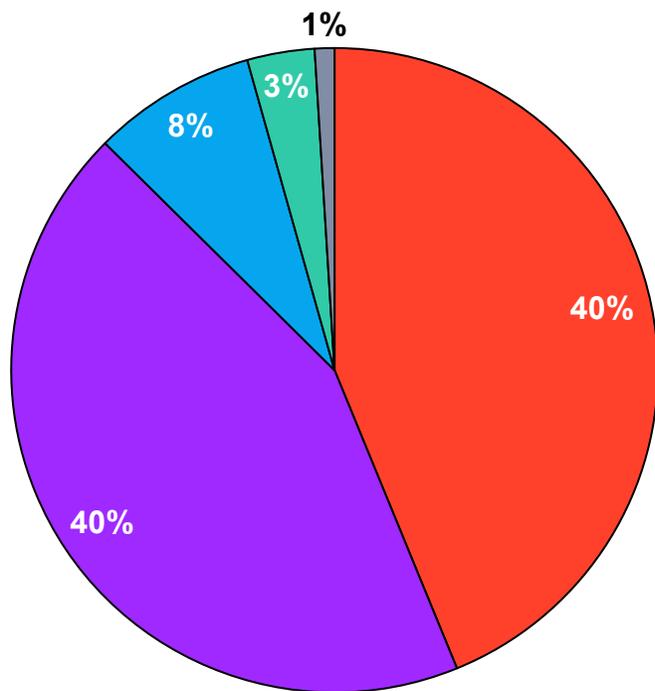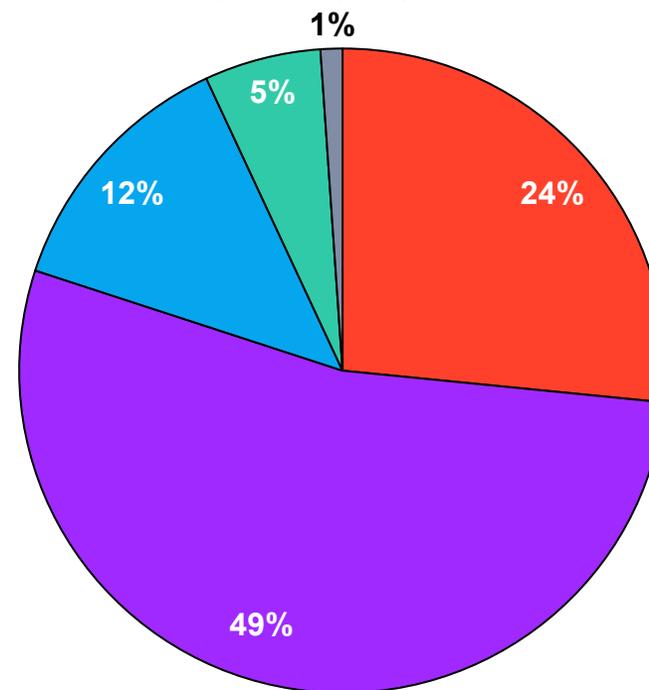
■ Very confident
■ Fairly confident
■ Neutral
■ Not very confident
■ Not at all very confident

RAM_Q1. For the following set of questions, when we talk about "online platforms" we are referring to things such as social media sites like Instagram or X, video platforms such as YouTube or Twitch, or gaming platforms and services such as Xbox Live or Roblox. How confident are you in knowing the types of online platforms your child(ren) uses, and the types of content they view on these platforms? (Please select the option that best applies in each column. If your child doesn't use any online platforms, please select the "Not applicable" option)

Base: All GB parents of children aged 8-14 (1105)

Mothers are more likely to say they are very confident (by 8% points) than fathers, and that children are more likely to speak to their mothers about their online experiences. This suggests that mothers act as the 'primary emotional/digital safety' contact, and that fathers are less confident.

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Fathers confidence in knowing the types of online platforms their child(ren) use, and the types of content they view on these platforms

1%

| 36% | 44% | 8% | 2% | | 6% |

2%

81%

Mother's confidence in knowing the types of online platforms their child(ren) use, and the types of content they view on these platforms

1%

| 44% | 35% | 7% | 4% | | 8% |

2%

79%
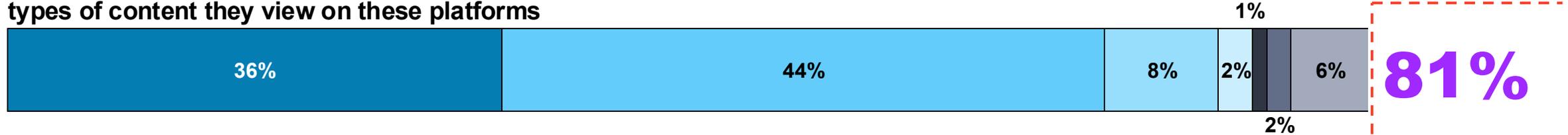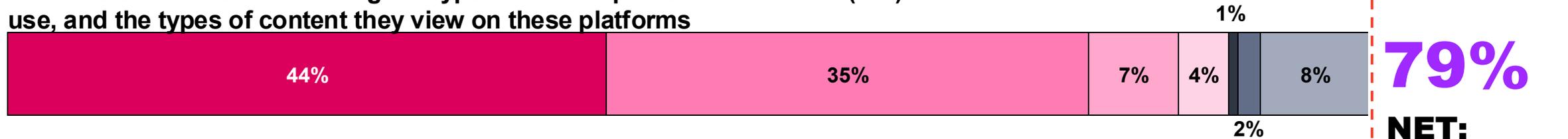
NET: Confident

- 🟥 Very confident – I'm sure I know this
- 🟪 Fairly confident – I think I know, but not completely certain
- 🟦 Neutral – I'm neither confident nor not confident
- ⬜ Not very confident – I'm unsure if I know
- ⬛ Not at all very confident – I don't know this
- 🟦 Don't know
- 🔳 Not applicable - My child(ren) does not use any online platforms

RAM_Q1. For the following set of questions, when we talk about "online platforms" we are referring to things such as social media sites like Instagram or X, video platforms such as YouTube or Twitch, or gaming platforms and services such as Xbox Live or Roblox. How confident are you in knowing the types of online platforms your child(ren) uses, and the types of content they view on these platforms? (Please select the option that best applies in each column. If your child doesn't use any online platforms, please select the "Not applicable" option)

Base: All GB parents of children aged 8-14 (1105); Male parents of children aged 8-14 (562); Female parents of children aged 8-14 (543)

Over half of parents of children aged 8-14 have looked at social media posts together with their child in the past 1 month (60%), with over 7 in 10 (72%) of parents doing this in the past 6 months.

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In the past week	33%
In the past month	27%
In the past three months	9%
In the past six months	4%
More than six months ago	5%
Don't know	4%
Not applicable – I've never done this with my child(ren)	19%
Net: Past 1 month	60%
Net: Past 3 months	69%
Net: Past 6 months	72%
Net: Ever	77%

When was the last time, if ever, that you and your child(ren) looked at social media posts together, and discussed the content of them and/or what they mean?

RAM_Q2. When was the last time, if ever, that you and your child(ren) looked at social media posts together, and discussed the content of them and/or what they mean? (Please select the option that best applies)

Base: All GB parents of children aged 8-14 who's child(ren) uses online platforms (1030)

1 in 4 parents say they struggle to talk to their child about online content because they are not always aware of what their children are seeing online (25%). 1 in 10 (11%) worry they'll say the wrong thing.

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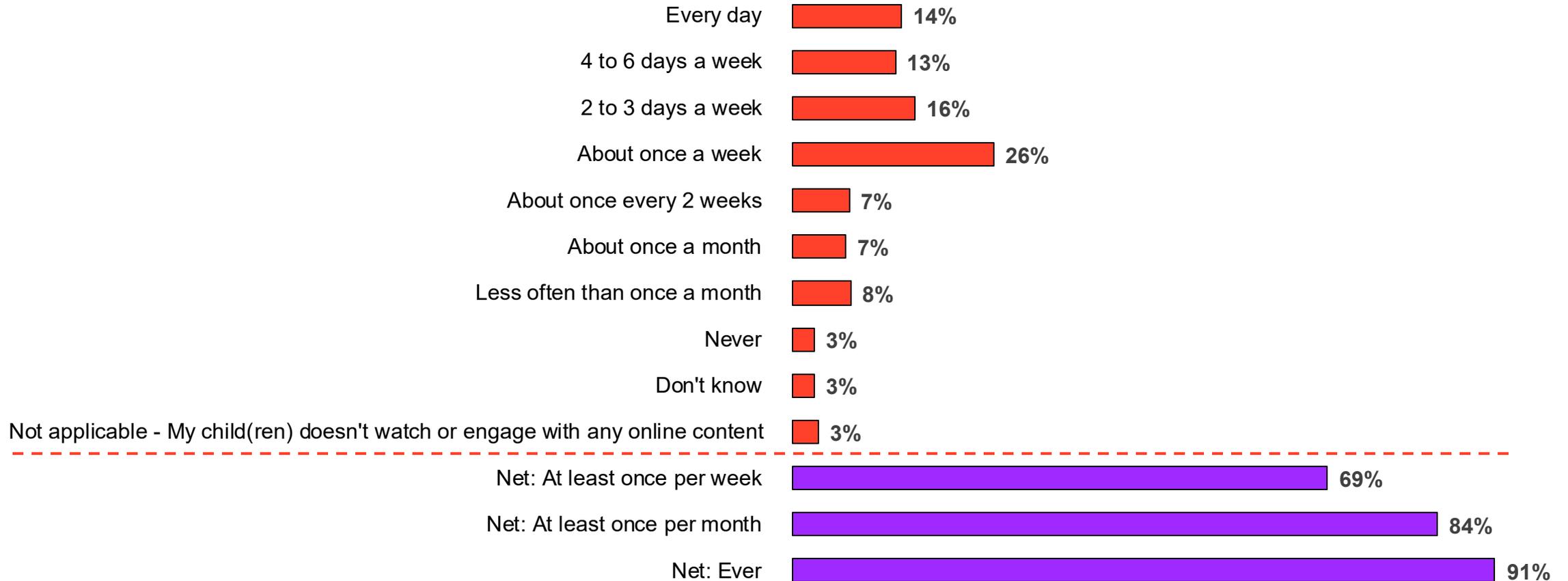|	
I'm not always aware of what they are seeing online	**25%**
I don't feel confident knowing enough about online platforms or trends	**11%**
I worry about saying the wrong thing	**11%**
My child prefers not to talk about what they see online	**9%**
I don't think it's necessary/don't believe my child is at risk	**8%**
We don't have enough time to discuss it	**7%**
I'm unsure how to start the conversation	**7%**
Other	**3%**
Don't know	**2%**
Not applicable - I don't find any difficulties in discussing with my child(ren) about any online content they may see	**44%**

RAM_Q3. For the following question, even if you never talk to your child(ren) about the online content they may see, we are still interested in your opinion. Which, if any, of the following are factors that cause difficulties in discussing any online content your child(ren) see? (Please select all that apply)

Base: All GB parents of children aged 8-14 who's child(ren) uses online platforms (1030)

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Over two thirds (69%) of parents ask their children about the online content they're watching or engaging with weekly, with over 4 in 5 (84%) doing this at least once a month.

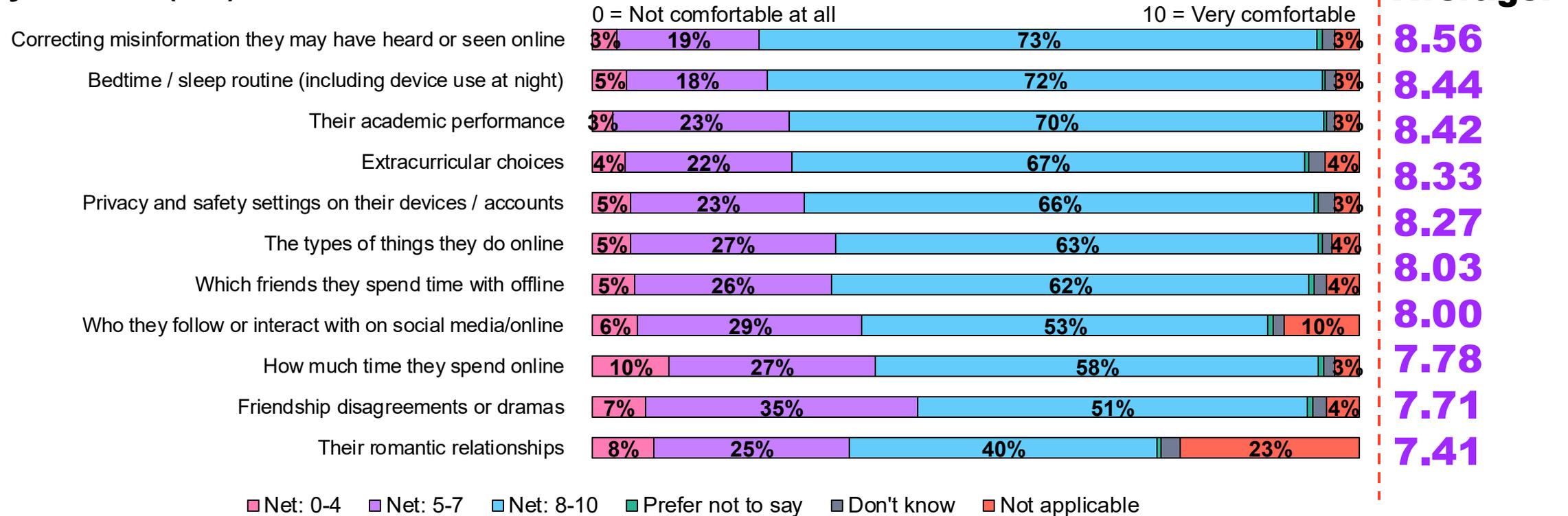| Category	Value
Every day	14%
4 to 6 days a week	13%
2 to 3 days a week	16%
About once a week	26%
About once every 2 weeks	7%
About once a month	7%
Less often than once a month	8%
Never	3%
Don't know	3%
Not applicable - My child(ren) doesn't watch or engage with any online content	3%
Net: At least once per week	69%
Net: At least once per month	84%
Net: Ever	91%

RAM_Q4. How often, if at all, do you ask your child(ren) about any online content they are watching or engaging with? (Please select the option that best applies)

Base: All GB parents of children aged 8-14 (1105)

Parents of children aged 8-14 feel most comfortable when correcting their child about misinformation heard or seen online, but feel less comfortable when it comes to romantic relationships.

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How comfortable, if at all do you feel about intervening in the following areas of your child(ren)'s life?...

0 = Not comfortable at all   10 = Very comfortable

Average:

Area	Net: 0-4	Net: 5-7	Net: 8-10	Not applicable	Average
Correcting misinformation they may have heard or seen online	3%	19%	73%	3%	**8.56**
Bedtime / sleep routine (including device use at night)	5%	18%	72%	3%	**8.44**
Their academic performance	3%	23%	70%	3%	**8.42**
Extracurricular choices	4%	22%	67%	4%	**8.33**
Privacy and safety settings on their devices / accounts	5%	23%	66%	3%	**8.27**
The types of things they do online	5%	27%	63%	4%	**8.03**
Which friends they spend time with offline	5%	26%	62%	4%	**8.00**
Who they follow or interact with on social media/online	6%	29%	53%	10%	**7.78**
How much time they spend online	10%	27%	58%	3%	**7.71**
Friendship disagreements or dramas	7%	35%	51%	4%	**7.41**
Their romantic relationships	8%	25%	40%	23%	**7.41**

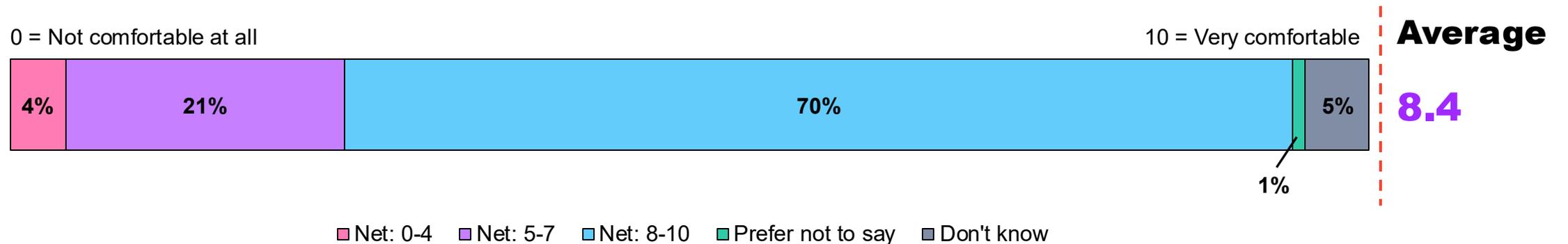■ Net: 0-4   ■ Net: 5-7   ■ Net: 8-10   ■ Prefer not to say   ■ Don't know   ■ Not applicable

RAM_Q5. Still thinking about your child(ren) aged between 8-14 years old...On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is "Not comfortable at all" and 10 is "Very comfortable", how comfortable, if at all, do you feel about intervening in the following areas of your child(ren)'s life? (Please select the option that best applies. If a particular area is not relevant to you / your child(ren) please select the "Not applicable" option)
Base: All GB parents of children aged 8-14 (1105)

Over 2 in 3 (70%) of parents of children aged 8-14 feel comfortable about discussing specific online issues with them.
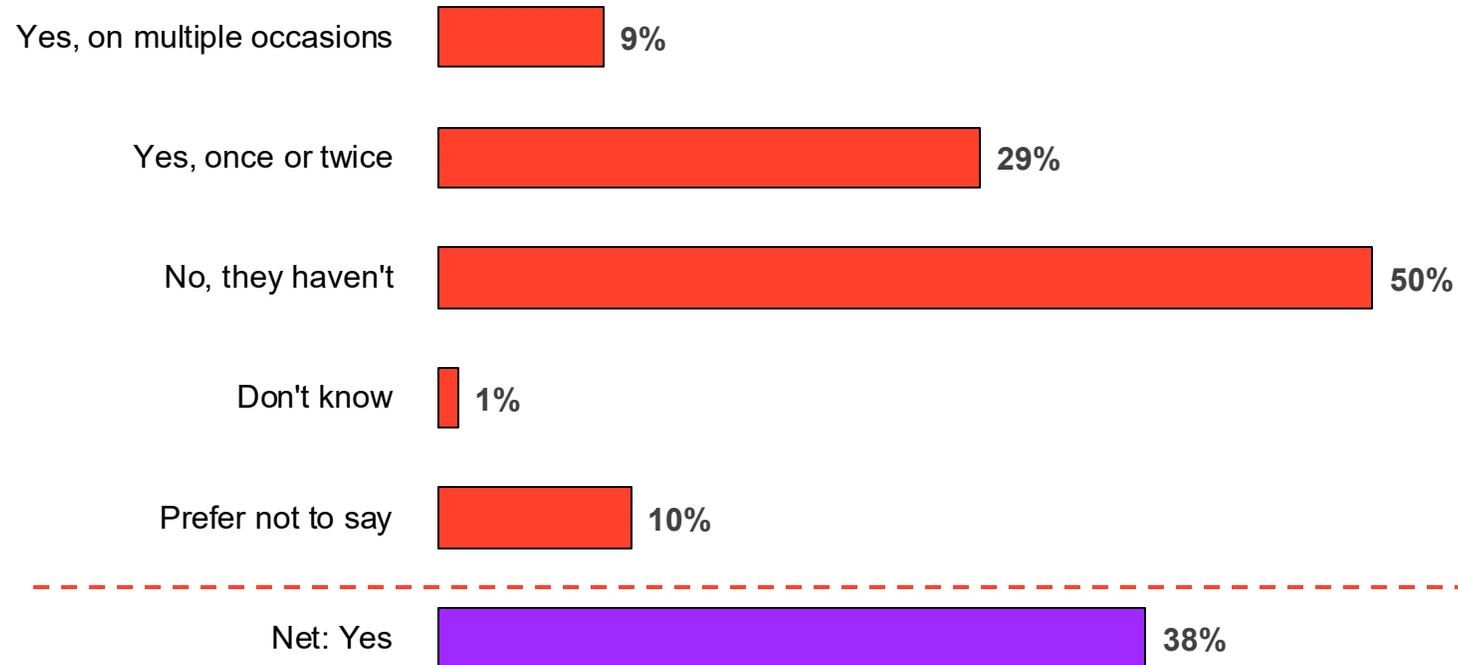
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How comfortable, if at all would you feel about discussing specific online issues with your child(ren)?...

0 = Not comfortable at all
10 = Very comfortable
Average

4%	21%	70%		5%

8.4

1%

■ Net: 0-4　■ Net: 5-7　■ Net: 8-10　■ Prefer not to say　■ Don't know

RAM_Q6. For the following question, when we talk about potentially harmful online content we are referring to online content which may have themes such as misogyny, contain misleading or false information or be otherwise considered as potentially harmful. On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is "Not comfortable at all" and 10 is "Very comfortable", how comfortable, if at all, would you feel discussing specific online issues with your child(ren)? (Please select the option that best applies)

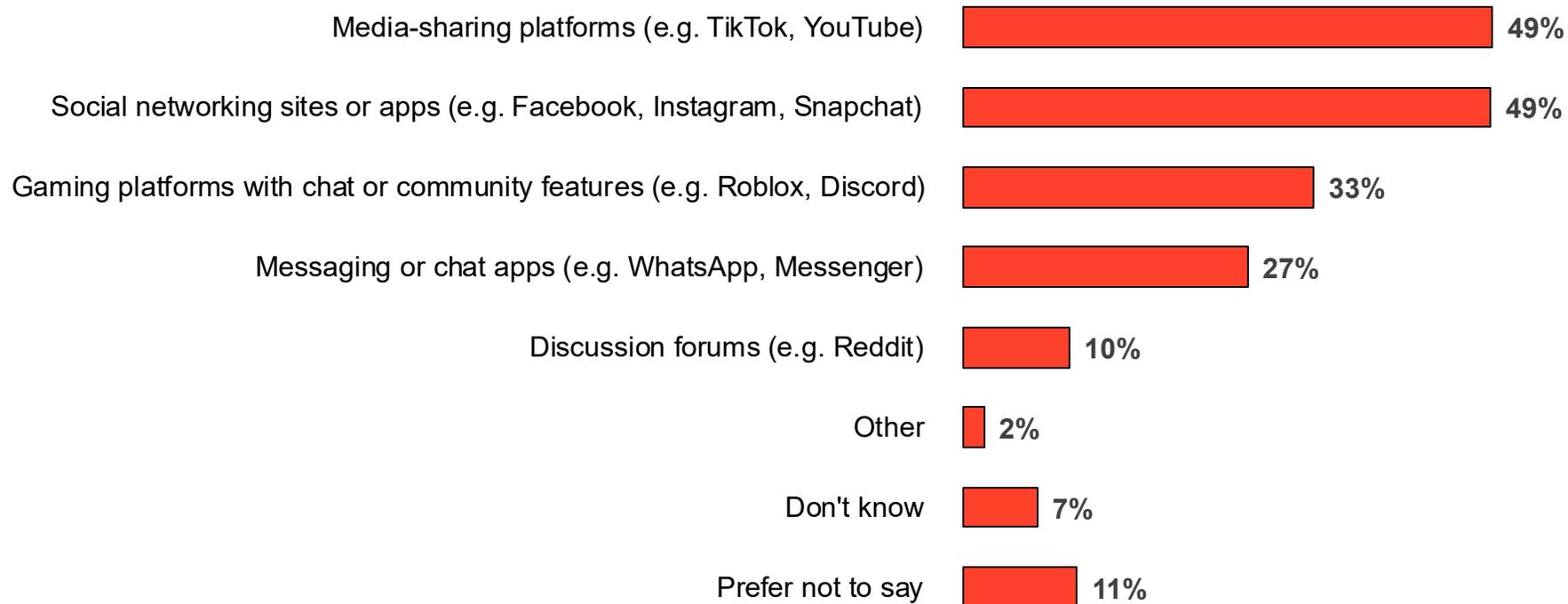*Base: All GB parents of children aged 8-14 (1105)*

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Almost 4 in 10 (38%) of parent's with children aged 8-14 have spoken with their child at least once about harmful or concerning experiences they've had online, with 1 in 10 (9%) doing this on multiple occasions.

Yes, on multiple occasions **9%**

Yes, once or twice **29%**

No, they haven't **50%**

Don't know **1%**

Prefer not to say **10%**

Net: Yes **38%**

RAM_Q7. Still thinking about your child(ren) aged 8-14 and any content they may come across on online platforms...Has your child(ren) ever spoken to you about any harmful or concerning experiences they have had online such as exposure to violence, abusive behaviour, self-harm content, misinformation or malicious links? (Please select the option that best applies)

Base: All GB parents of children aged 8-14 who's child(ren) uses online platforms (1030)
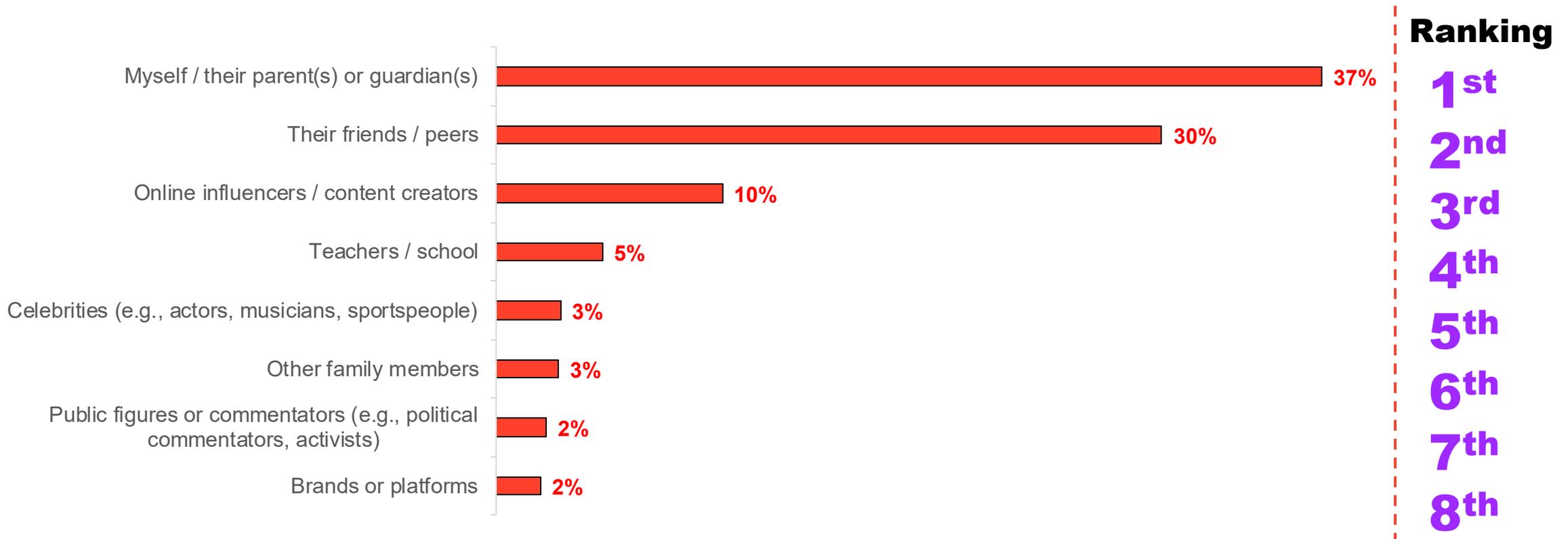
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Parents of 8-14 year olds are most concerned about their children encountering harmful or misleading content on media-sharing platforms or social networking sites (both 49%), meanwhile discussion forums are of least concern (10%).

Platform	
Media-sharing platforms (e.g. TikTok, YouTube)	49%
Social networking sites or apps (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat)	49%
Gaming platforms with chat or community features (e.g. Roblox, Discord)	33%
Messaging or chat apps (e.g. WhatsApp, Messenger)	27%
Discussion forums (e.g. Reddit)	10%
Other	2%
Don't know	7%
Prefer not to say	11%

RAM_Q8. Which types of online platforms, if any, are you MOST concerned about your child(ren) encountering harmful or misleading content on? (Please select up to 3 options)

Base: All GB parents of children aged 8-14 (1105)

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When asked to rank the biggest influencers on their children's views, over a third (37%) of parents of 8-14 year olds said it was themselves with the biggest influence.

Ranking

Category	Value
Myself / their parent(s) or guardian(s)	**37%**
Their friends / peers	**30%**
Online influencers / content creators	**10%**
Teachers / school	**5%**
Celebrities (e.g., actors, musicians, sportspeople)	**3%**
Other family members	**3%**
Public figures or commentators (e.g., political commentators, activists)	**2%**
Brands or platforms	**2%**

1st

2nd

3rd

4th

5th

6th

7th

8th

RAM_Q9_Ranked. Who do you believe has the biggest influence on your child(ren)'s views? Please rank the below in order of how much influence you think they have on your child(ren)'s views. with 1 being the biggest influence.

Base: All GB parents of children aged 8-14 (1105)

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1 in 4 parents of children aged 8-14 have come across resources designed to help them support their children's online safety within the past 12 months.

Yes, I have ████████████████████ **39%**

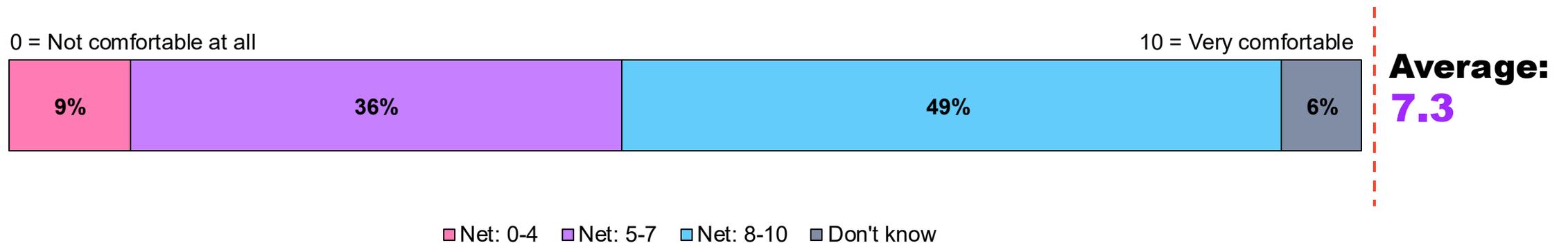**No, I haven't** ████████████████████████ **54%**
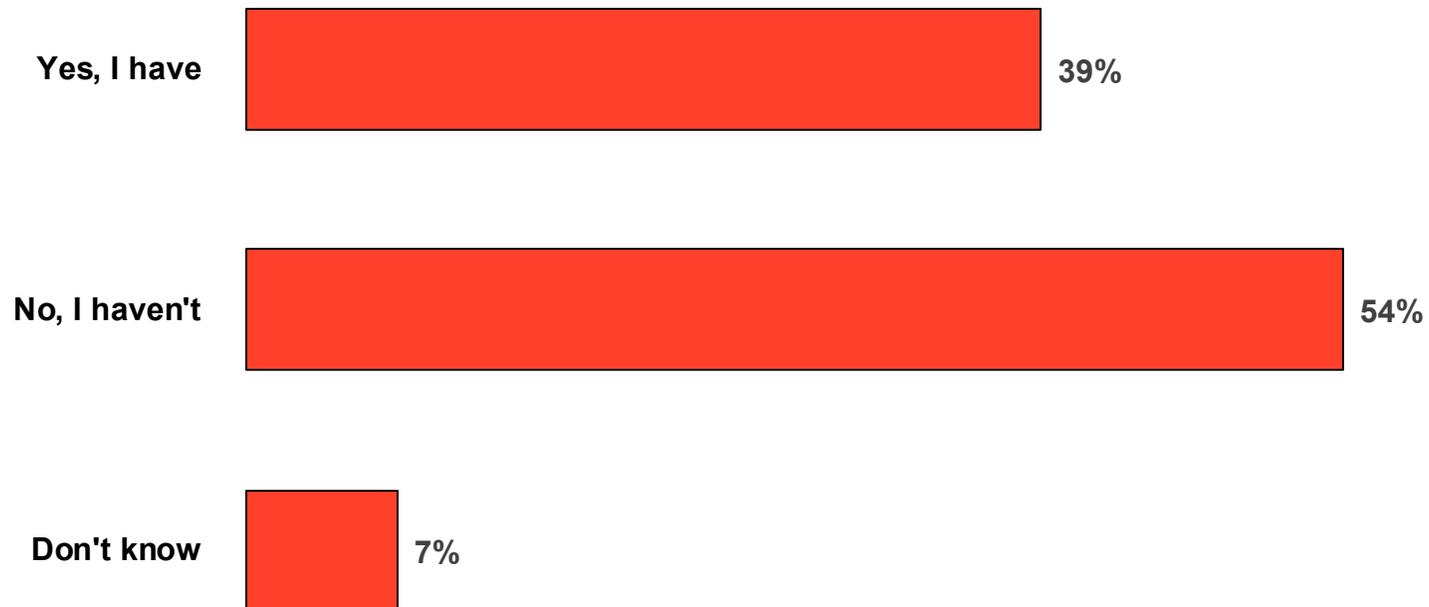
Don't know ████ **7%**

Combining parents who haven't come across any online safety resources with those who don't know or don't recall seeing any gives us a figure of around 61%. This strongly supports the case for clearer signposting and the value of a central hub.

RAM_Q10. Thinking about the past 12 months (i.e. since December 2024)...Have you come across any resources, either online or offline, which have been designed to help parents like yourself support your child(ren)'s online safety?

Base: All GB parents of children aged 8-14 (1105)

YouGov

Almost half of parents of surveyed (49%) suggested they would find a centralised hub that could help provide them with guidance and resources to support their children's online safety as helpful.

How useful would you find it if there was a centralised hub that could help provide you with guidance and resources to support your child(ren)'s online safety?...

0 = Not comfortable at all   10 = Very comfortable

9%	36%	49%	6%

Average:
7.3

■ Net: 0-4　■ Net: 5-7　■ Net: 8-10　■ Don't know

49% would find a centralised online safety hub "very useful" (scoring 8 - 10 out of 10), with an average usefulness rating of 7.3 out of 10 (0 being "not at all useful", 10 being "very useful").

RAM_Q11. Please imagine there was a centralised hub that could help provide you with guidance and resources to support your child(ren)'s online safety...On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is "Not at all useful" and 10 is "Very useful", how useful would you find having access to something like this?

Base: All GB parents of children aged 8-14 (1105)

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