

Building a picture of cyber-bullying in Kent

“I want to build a true picture of young people’s experiences online. It’s an anonymous survey and it will make a difference” - *Matthew Scott, Kent Police and Crime Commissioner, February 2018*

- The OPCC launched an online [Cyber Bullying Survey](#) of young people in February 2018.
- Draft questions were tested on Kent’s Volunteer Police Cadets and adapted based on feedback.
- Final survey link was circulated to 900+ schools across Kent by email, to coincide with Safer Internet Day.
- In total, the OPCC received **6,708** responses via an online form between February and April 2018.
- All responses were given anonymously, to encourage honesty and privacy of the young people taking part.

1. Which of these devices do you use to go online at home? (tick any that apply)

Mobile phone	= 5102
iPad / Tablet	= 4203
Home computer / laptop	= 4155
Games console	= 3304

The most popular method of going online at home for young people in Kent is by using a mobile phone (76% of our 6,708 respondents ticked this option). However, with large numbers of young people ticking other options, or multiple options (21% of respondents ticked all four devices) we should be careful not to solely think of ‘mobile phones’ when we consider how best to help young people protect themselves when going online.

2. At home, when do you normally go online? (tick any that apply)

Before 7am	= 1554
7am – 11am	= 2592
11am – 3pm	= 2232
3pm – 7pm	= 4903
7pm – 11pm	= 3261
After 11pm	= 370

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the period after school (3-7pm) was the time period in which most young people said they go online. But, 29% admitted going online either after 11pm, or before 7am – suggesting almost the online habits of almost a third of young people are preventing or disrupting their sleep.

3. Do you think you could promise not to go online after 7pm?

"No, I need to go online after 7pm" = 3285 (49%)
"Yes, I could promise not to go online after 7pm" = 3423 (51%)*

*Of the 1,372 under-10s who completed the survey, 434 of them (32%) say they "need to go online after 7pm"

*Of the 520 over 16s who completed the survey, 389 of them (75%) say they "need to go online after 7pm"

There have been campaigns encouraging young people to self-restrict their online use, for example pledging not to go online after 7pm. However, our survey found that almost half of young people feel they need to go online after 7pm. This rises to 75% of over-16s who completed our survey.

Knowing that half of young people currently go online after 7pm (according to answers received to question 2), it appears a significant peer-led culture shift is still required to cut late-night online use.

4. Who have you received online safety advice from in the past? (tick any that apply)

'My school ' = 5806
'Parents / guardians' = 4962
'The police' = 1566
'On websites such as NSPCC/ Ceop ' = 1635

The majority of young people said they had received online safety advice in schools (86%), and/or from their parents (74%) which is very encouraging. This fact should not be seen as justification for the police and other partners to cease providing online safety advice to young people – but perhaps more work needs to be done to understand what schools and other agencies are already doing in order to prevent duplication, and to ensure inputs such as the PCC-funded *Is It Worth It?* tours are aimed at plugging any gaps.

5. Which of these do you use regularly to go online? (tick any that apply)

'SnapChat ' = 3553
'Instagram' = 3378
'Whatsapp' = 3324
'Gaming networks (such as Xbox Live
or the PlayStation Network)' = 3296
'Facebook' = 1345
'Twitter' = 777
'Whisper' = 91
None of the above = 726

Young people's social media preferences are increasingly diversifying with Snap Chat, Instagram, Whatsapp and Online Gaming all roughly equally popular. Facebook and Twitter are used, but were much less popular among the younger people we surveyed.

6. Please tell us the names of any other apps you use to chat with people (free text field)

Of the other tools young people said they were using, 'Roblox' was the far most popular answer given (400+ responses). Some of the other more popular tools were 'YouTube', 'Skype', 'Musical.ly', 'Minecraft', 'Fortnite' and 'House Party.'

It is clear young people are using a multitude of online platforms, both for entertainment and to communicate with each other. Some - like Roblox - are inherently risky because they encourage online interaction with strangers. However, due to constantly changing trends, it is perhaps better to provide young people with the tools and knowledge they need to be safe on line generally, rather than investing in knee-jerk campaigns in response to apps which may be only momentarily popular.

7. Do your parents/guardians know what you do online?

They know everything I do online	3329 (50%)
They know about the apps I use, but they don't monitor who I am friends with and all the messages and pictures I send.	2242 (33%)
They don't know very much about what I am doing online and who I talk to, because I don't tell them.	706 (11%)
They don't know very much about what I am doing online and who I talk to, because they are not interested.	431 (6%)

Parental supervision is key in ensuring young people are staying safe online, and 83% of young people say their parents/guardians are at least aware of what apps they are using; but one in nine young people admits keeping their online lives secret from parents/guardians. A further 6% claim their parents are simply "not interested" in their online activity, which means risky behaviours could go un-checked.

8. Have you ever been cyber-bullied?

Yes	= 1180 (18%) ¹
No	= 5528 (82%)

Based on 18% of our sample answering 'yes', we can estimate that around 47,000 young people in Kent (out of a population of 260,000²) have been victims of cyber-bullying. **That's 1 in every 6 young people**
If that 18% figure is extrapolated to all of England and Wales' young people population around 8million³, there could be more than **1.4million cyber-bullying victims nationwide**

¹ For comparison/ratification, it is worth noting that the national [Ditch The Label survey](#) of 10,020 young people (aged 12-20) in 2017 ("the largest survey of its kind") found 17% had experienced cyber-bullying.

² There are **259,675** people in Kent and Medway aged 7-18 years-old, according to 2011 census data

³ <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/KS102EW/view/2092957703?cols=measures>

9. What app or platform were you using when you were cyber-bullied? (free text field)

Most common platform for bullying given was Instagram with 270+ cases

Others included Roblox; Snapchat; and Whatsapp.

Instagram is the platform most young people said they have been bullied on, but the wide variety of answers given makes it clear there is not one 'problem app' which needs making safer and nor is cyber-bullying only perpetrated on platforms associated with the 'social media giants'. Young people need to be wary of cyber-bullying on all online platforms and know what to do.

10. Did you stop using the app after the cyber-bullying happened?

(Of the 1180 young people who said they had been bullied, 1138 answered this follow-up question)

870 (76%) said 'I still use it even though I was cyber-bullied.'

268 (24%) said 'I stopped using the app after the cyber-bullying happened'

It is clear that, for most young people, being cyber-bullied is not sufficient motivation to change their online habits. But then, it is fair to expect a young person to penalise themselves (missing out on a 'digital social life') because they have been bullied?

11. Who did you tell about the cyber-bullying?

(Of the 1180 young people who said they had been bullied, 1155 answered this follow-up question)

Parents/guardians	= 745
I told a friend	= 491
I reported it to the app	= 310
School/Teacher	= 292
No-one	= 167
CEOP report button	= 65
Reported to police	= 68

When faced with cyber-bullying, almost two-thirds of young people confide in their parents/guardians about it – but less than one-third (27%) go as far as to report the problem to the app/platform itself.

Very rarely will the young person report the incident to CEOP or the police – suggesting either the victim considers the bullying to be low-level and/or that it will not be taken seriously by the authorities.

Most alarmingly, of the 1,155 young people who said they had been bullied online, and answered this question, one in seven (14%) said they told no-one anyone about the problem.

12. What school do you go to?

Biggest responses came from:

Sittingbourne Community College (Swale; 555)
Tonbridge Boys School (Tonbridge; 438)
Dover Grammar School for Girls (Dover; 314)
Haberdashers' Aske's Crayford Academy (nr Dartford; 291)
The Marsh Academy (Romney Marsh; 221)
St Anselm's Catholic School (Canterbury; 200)
Ditton Primary (nr Maidstone; 193)

Our sample included pupils from more than 100 different schools - including primaries, secondaries, grammars, private, academies and faith-affiliated schools; with pupils from urban, rural and coastal communities right across Kent and over into catchments of Crayford/Bromley.

Qs 13 -14 Profile of respondents:

Under 10: 1372
10-12years: 2459
13-15years: 2357
Age 16+ 520

Male 3273
Female 3313
Other 122⁴ (1.8%)

The majority (72%) of young people who completed the survey were aged 10-15years; with a near 50:50 split between boys and girls.

15. Do you think you have ever cyber-bullied someone?

Yes 231 (3%)
No 5812 (87%)
Maybe 665 (10%)

One in 7 young people (13.4%) admitted to us that they either have cyber-bullied someone, or "maybe" have.

⁴ based on the text written in adjacent free text fields, which suggest a number of respondents did not take this question seriously, some caution should be exercised when considering the accuracy of this figure.