



Understanding online communications among children

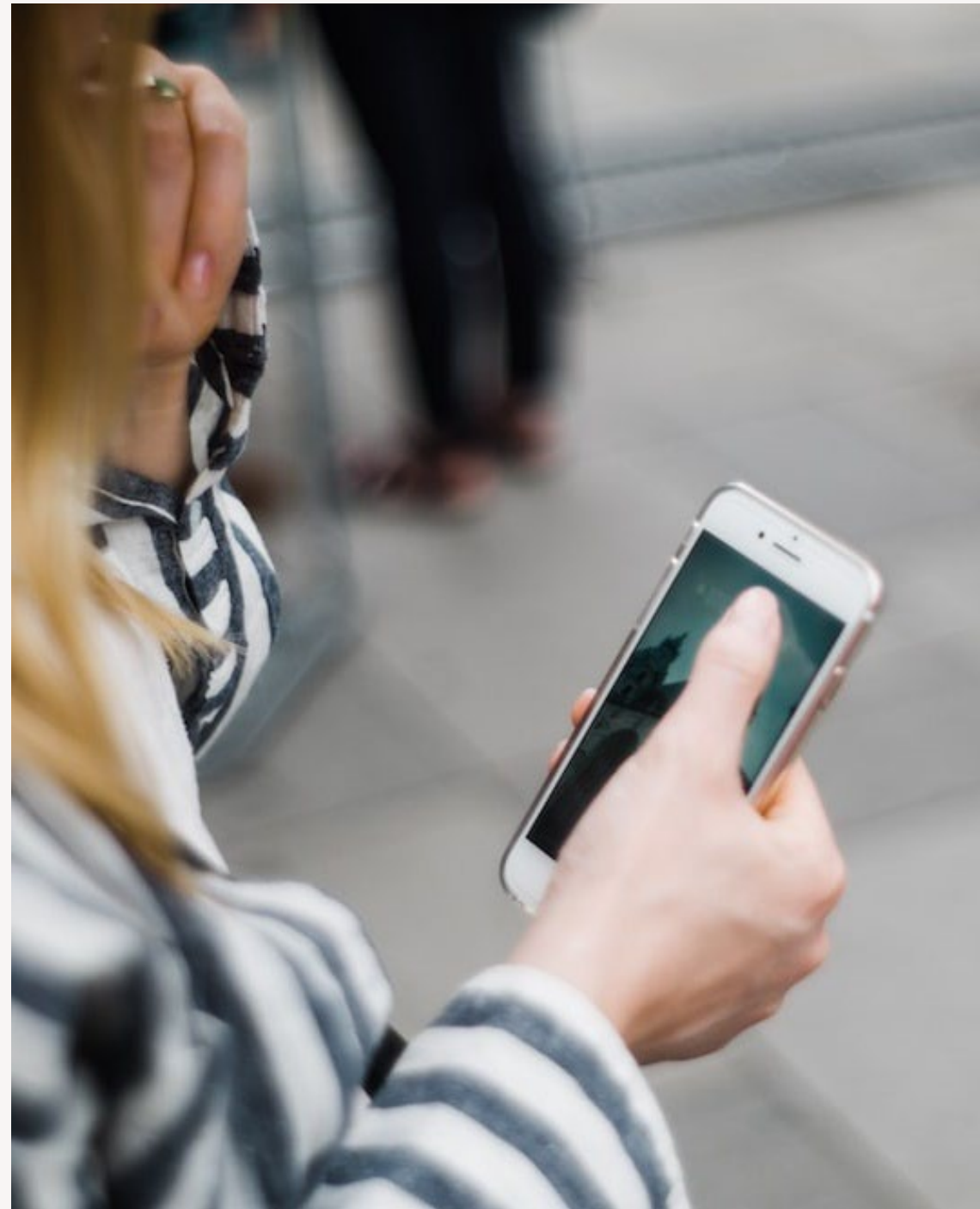
Quantitative research

2023

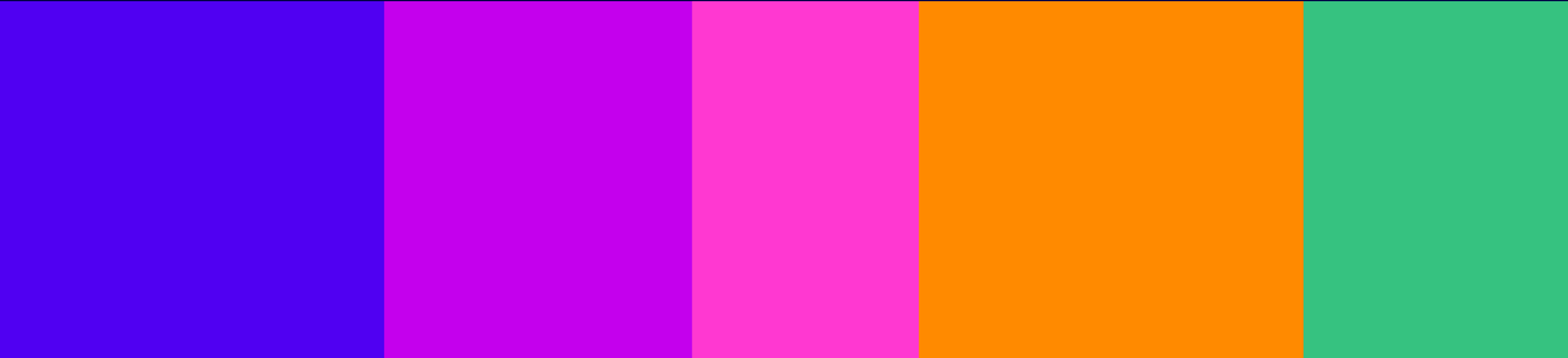


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Background, objectives and methodology



Context and objectives

Overview and context:

- In February 2020, the Government announced it was minded to appoint Ofcom as the regulator for online safety in the UK with duties under the Online Safety Act. Since then Ofcom has been working to get ready for its new role. Among other things, this has involved undertaking a suite of research studies on online safety and technology which will inform our work under the new regime.
- One of the key focuses of the Online Safety Act is the protection of children online. Once regulation begins, all platforms/sites which are assessed to be likely to be accessed by children will be required to assess any risks to children on their platforms and take proportionate steps to address these risks. Companies will also need to tackle any illegal harms that may be present on their service.
- This research aims to understand how children communicate online and the scale and nature of their experience of any unwanted contact.

Objectives

- Understand children's social media use, motivations and ways of communicating on different platforms
- Understand how online networks expand and the factors that influence children's decision-making processes
- Understand children's experience of potentially uncomfortable contact



Methodology



BMG surveyed 2,031 children aged 11-18 in the UK between 7th and 22nd December 2022.



Via parent/guardian approach: Parents/guardians answered household demographic questions before handing to the 11-18 year olds (81% of sample).

Direct approach: 16-18-year olds surveyed directly - no involvement of a parent/guardian (19% of the sample).

NB. 18 year olds were recruited, but told to reflect back on the year before they turned 18.



Quotas were set to ensure a representative sample of the UK population aged 11-18.

Results weighted by age and gender by nation, region, ethnicity and socio-economic grade.

Unweighted sample breakdown (Total = 2,031)			
Gender			
Boys		907	
Girls		1,092	
Age			
11 years old	212	15 years old	247
12 years old	236	16 years old	278
13 years old	254	17 years old	301
14 years old	268	18 years old	235
Region			
East Midlands	150	South West	137
East of England	191	West Midlands	202
London	231	Yorkshire	177
North East	82	Wales	147
North West	232	Scotland	155
South East	252	Northern Ireland	75

Interpretation of platform-specific findings

- Respondents were asked about their use of one platform at random for various platform-specific questions. A 'least fill' approach was used to allocate platforms to respondents. Relevant slides include a note stating where the least fill approach applies.
- The 'least fill' approach prioritised less widely used sites to help ensure a base high enough to perform analysis. It means that respondents using less widely used platforms were more likely to be asked about one of those platforms, and less likely to be asked about a more mainstream platform that they may also use.
- This approach could have two potential effects on the data which are discussed below (further detail on these is provided on slides 7 and 8):
 1. *Total averages:* may not be representative of overall usage across platforms.
 For example, the total sample includes more Kik and Discord users and less WhatsApp and Snapchat users than would naturally occur.
 2. *Platform-specific data:* may under/over-represent users of a wider range of platforms.
 Users of the lower incidence platforms were prioritised by the 'least fill' approach. These tend to be users of a wider range of platforms. Therefore, respondents who were asked about their experiences on the more widely used apps (e.g. WhatsApp and Snapchat) may be skewed towards those using a more narrow range of platforms than would naturally occur.
- Despite the 'least fill' approach, the base size for some platforms is relatively low, i.e. Discord (40), Kik (43), Twitch/Live.me (54) and dating sites/apps (44). These platforms help form the overall averages but we have not reported individual data for these platforms due to the low base sizes and high error margins. Data are included in the data tables with a flag noting their indicative nature.

Platform	Base	Platform	Base
WhatsApp	323	Reddit	106
Snapchat	320	Twitch/Live.me	54*
Facebook / Messenger	315	Dating sites/apps	44*
TikTok	313	Kik	43*
Instagram	310	Discord	40*
Twitter	111		

**Base size below 100 and included only in data tables. Data should be treated as indicative only.*

Decision on whether to apply additional weights to the averages data

- Given the potential impact that the ‘least fill’ approach may have on the data, BMG and Ofcom considered whether any additional weighting was required. The analysis is set out below, with the conclusion that weighting was not appropriate.

Total averages

- Because users of different platforms have different experiences (as borne out by the findings), platforms being over or under-represented in the total sample may affect the overall averages.
- As part of the survey, respondents were asked which sites they used weekly. This allowed the direct comparison of the share of the total visits for each platform (i.e. number of mentions based on weekly use and the associated percentage of all visits across the sample), and the least fill quota allocation (i.e. the sample achieved each platform) (Figure 1).
- A comparison illustrates that the percentages are broadly comparable for the top six platforms (i.e. those having greatest impact on the overall average) and as such weighting was not considered appropriate.

Figure 1. Comparing weekly usage of platforms from survey responses to least fill quotas by platform. For example, Instagram accounts for 15% of all visits among the sample (out of the 11 platforms asked about) and 16% of the sample were asked about Instagram in the survey.

	Proportion of children visiting site	Numbers of mentions	Percentage of all visits		Least fill quotas	Percentage quotas		Weights
Base	2117	10207			2120			
Facebook	51%	1110	11%		333	16%		0.69
Instagram	70%	1512	15%		331	16%		0.95
Whatsapp	86%	1878	18%		333	16%		1.17
TikTok	78%	1692	17%		333	16%		1.06
Snapchat	72%	1574	15%		333	16%		0.98
Twitter	33%	727	7%		119	6%		1.27
Reddit	18%	399	4%		119	6%		0.70
Discord	25%	548	5%		42	2%		2.71
Kik	8%	177	2%		60	3%		0.61
Twitch/Live	23%	498	5%		60	3%		1.72
Dating site:	4%	92	1%		57	3%		0.34

Decision on whether to apply additional weights to the platform data

- Given the potential impact that the 'least fill' approach may have on the data, BMG and Ofcom considered whether any additional weighting was required. The analysis is set out below, with the conclusion that weighting was not appropriate.

Platform specific data

- The achieved sample of users of the higher incidence apps such as WhatsApp were less likely to use a wide range of platforms than the average child in the sample, while the sample of users of lower incidence platforms such as Kik were more likely to use a wide range.
- For example, 67% of WhatsApp users in the sample said they only used WhatsApp out of the 11 platforms in the list, compared to 0% of Kik users (Figure 3).
- Weighting cannot correct this issue, however, as for some groups there are no data to which to weight towards (e.g. no respondents told us that they use Kik but no other app/sites) and in other cases, the required weighting would be very significant and therefore risk distorting the data. Taking Kik as an example, 97% of those asked about Kik in the survey say they use at least 10 platforms in the list (Figure 3), compared to just 62% of Kik users in general (Figure 2).

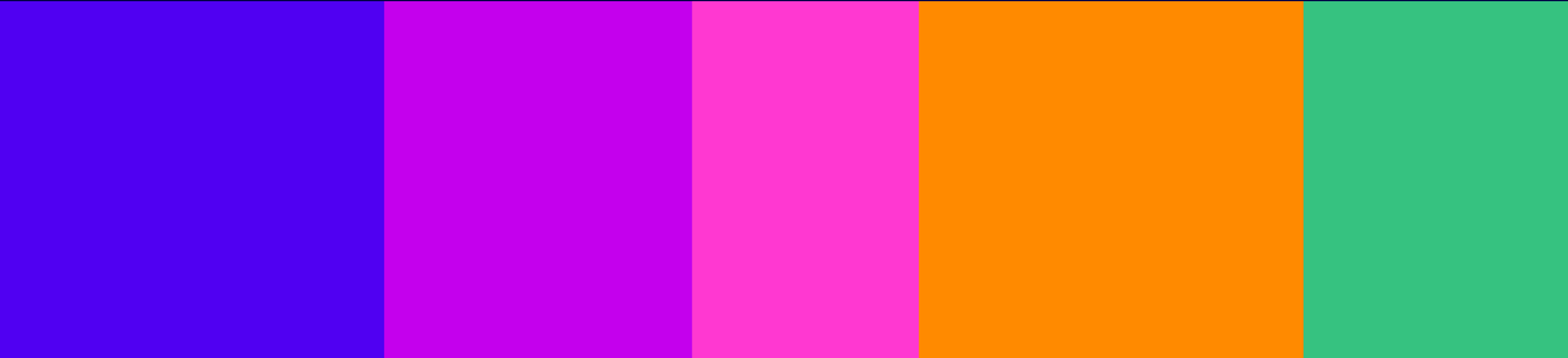
Figure 2. Percentage of platform users who use different numbers of platforms overall. For example, 2% of children in the sample who use Instagram use exactly two sites/apps from the list, whereas 17% use exactly six platforms.

Fallout of weekly usage by number of sites visited												
# sites	Facebook	Instagram	Whatsapp	TikTok	Snapchat	Twitter	Reddit	Discord	Kik	Twitch/Live	Dating sites	
# children	1110	1512	1878	1692	1574	727	399	548	177	498	92	
1	1%	0%	5%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
2	3%	2%	8%	4%	3%	1%	1%	3%	1%	1%	0%	
3	7%	7%	12%	11%	10%	3%	3%	5%	3%	3%	0%	
4	11%	21%	20%	21%	21%	6%	6%	11%	0%	6%	1%	
5	26%	27%	22%	24%	26%	16%	10%	16%	4%	10%	0%	
6	20%	17%	14%	16%	17%	27%	11%	13%	2%	14%	5%	
7	10%	10%	7%	8%	9%	16%	14%	12%	11%	17%	23%	
8	6%	5%	4%	4%	5%	9%	12%	9%	8%	13%	8%	
9	5%	4%	3%	4%	4%	8%	14%	10%	10%	12%	8%	
10	6%	5%	4%	4%	4%	9%	18%	13%	39%	14%	11%	
11	4%	3%	2%	2%	3%	6%	10%	7%	23%	8%	45%	
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	

Figure 3. Percentage of children asked about [PLATFORM] who use different numbers of platforms overall (cumulative %). For example, 21% of children in the sample who use Facebook use up to two sites/apps from the list, whereas 65% use up to five platforms.

# sites	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Base	139	176	274	412	446	278	148	76	62	71	41
Facebook	11%	21%	27%	29%	65%	80%	78%	90%	97%	97%	100%
Instagram	3%	15%	41%	76%	91%	95%	97%	97%	100%	100%	100%
Whatsapp	67%	82%	80%	89%	93%	95%	93%	91%	100%	99%	100%
TikTok	10%	39%	65%	87%	93%	98%	95%	99%	100%	100%	100%
Snapchat	2%	25%	56%	80%	91%	94%	92%	93%	98%	99%	100%
Twitter	2%	3%	8%	10%	26%	71%	77%	83%	92%	96%	100%
Reddit	2%	2%	5%	6%	9%	16%	37%	63%	90%	100%	100%
Discord	1%	9%	11%	15%	20%	25%	45%	68%	89%	99%	100%
Kik	0%	1%	2%	0%	2%	1%	13%	20%	27%	97%	100%
Twitch/Live	1%	3%	6%	8%	12%	25%	57%	87%	95%	100%	100%
Dating sites	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	14%	9%	11%	14%	100%

Executive summary



Executive Summary (1/2)

11-18 year olds' social media use, motivations and ways of communicating

- Eleven to eighteen year olds are more likely to say they feel confident communicating online (71%) than in person (53%).
- They mainly said they used social media platforms to chat and interact with those they already know (58% average) but motivations varied by platform.
- Nearly ninety percent of 11-18 year olds reported gaming at least weekly on one or more platforms. Mobile and tablet (79% weekly) are the most commonly used devices/methods for gaming.
- Four in five (79%) weekly online gamers said they communicate with others online while gaming.

How and why 11-18 year olds expand their online networks

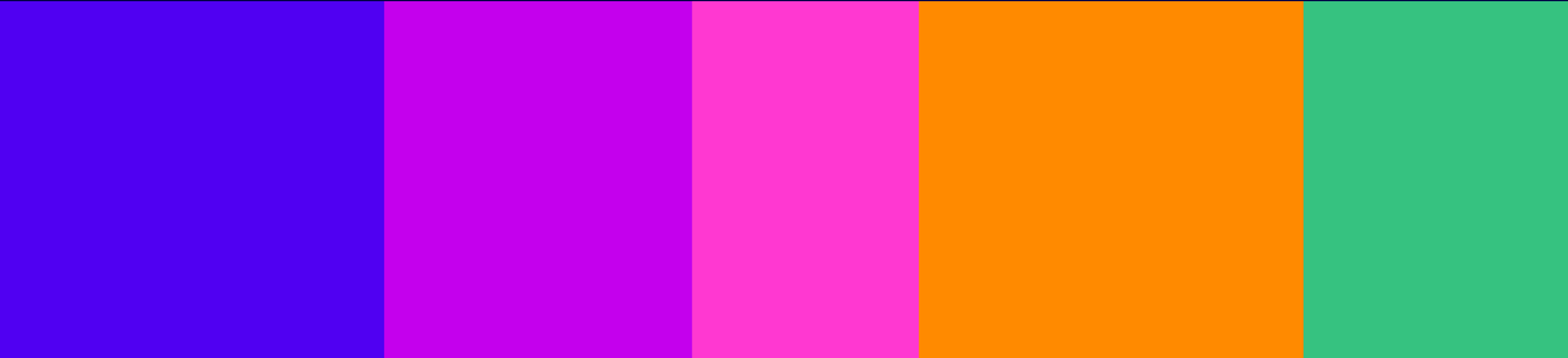
- Accepting friend requests from others (44%) and adding phone contacts (41%) were the most popular ways for 11-18 year olds to expand their online networks – but there was considerable variation by platform.
- Two in five 11-18 year olds (42%) received friend requests at least weekly from someone they had not spoken to before.
- Knowing the person in real life (46%) or having mutual close friends (41%) were the most common considerations used to decide whether or not to accept a friend request from someone they haven't messaged or spoken to before.
- Around one in four 11-18 year olds (23%) said they would be likely to reply to a message on social media from someone they don't know personally. Those aged 11-13 were less likely to reply but 1 in 5 still said they would do so (19%).

Executive Summary (2/2)

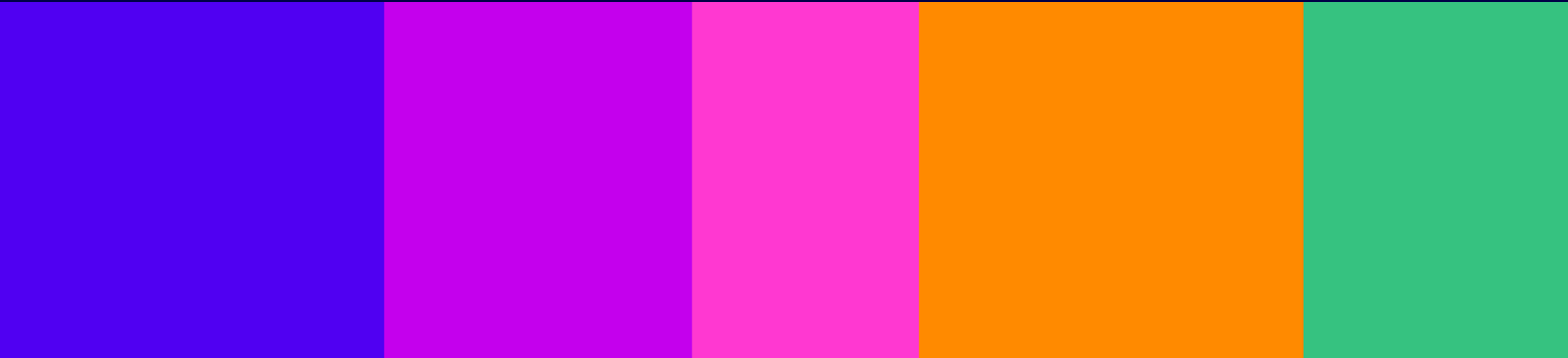
11-18 year olds' experience of potentially uncomfortable interactions/conversations

- Three in five (60%) 11-18 year olds have ever experienced some form of potentially uncomfortable interactions/conversations when communicating online at some point in the past.
- This includes 13% of 11-18s who have ever been sent pictures or videos of naked or half-dressed people and 10% who have ever been asked to share these types of pictures or videos themselves. For 11-13-year-olds, these figures stand at 6% and 4% respectively.
- These potentially uncomfortable experiences can happen on a child's first contact with another user. For example, 49% of 11-18s who received naked or half-dressed images said this was the first contact they'd had with the user. For others, these interactions/conversations occurred after a longer period of communication.
- After encountering inappropriate or unwanted behaviour, most 11-18 year olds said they ignored, deleted and/or blocked communication with the person/people in question, but a small proportion of children said they did respond.

Section 1: Understanding 11-18 year olds' social media and gaming usage, motivations and communications

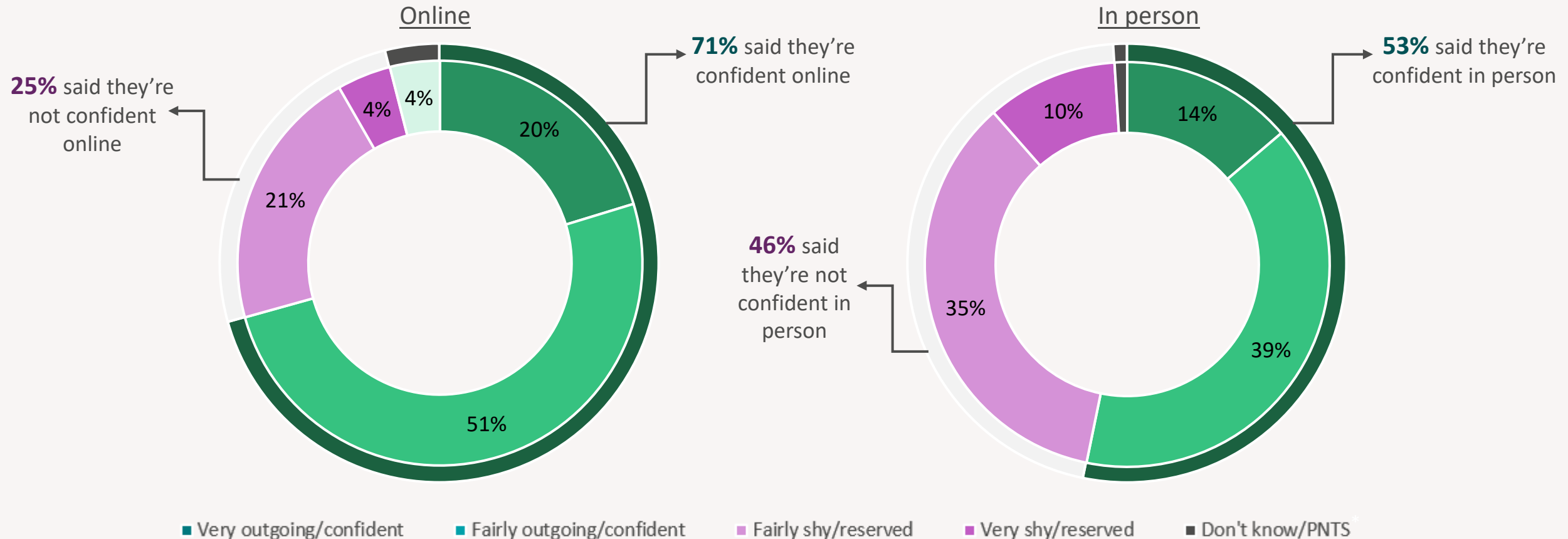


Social media



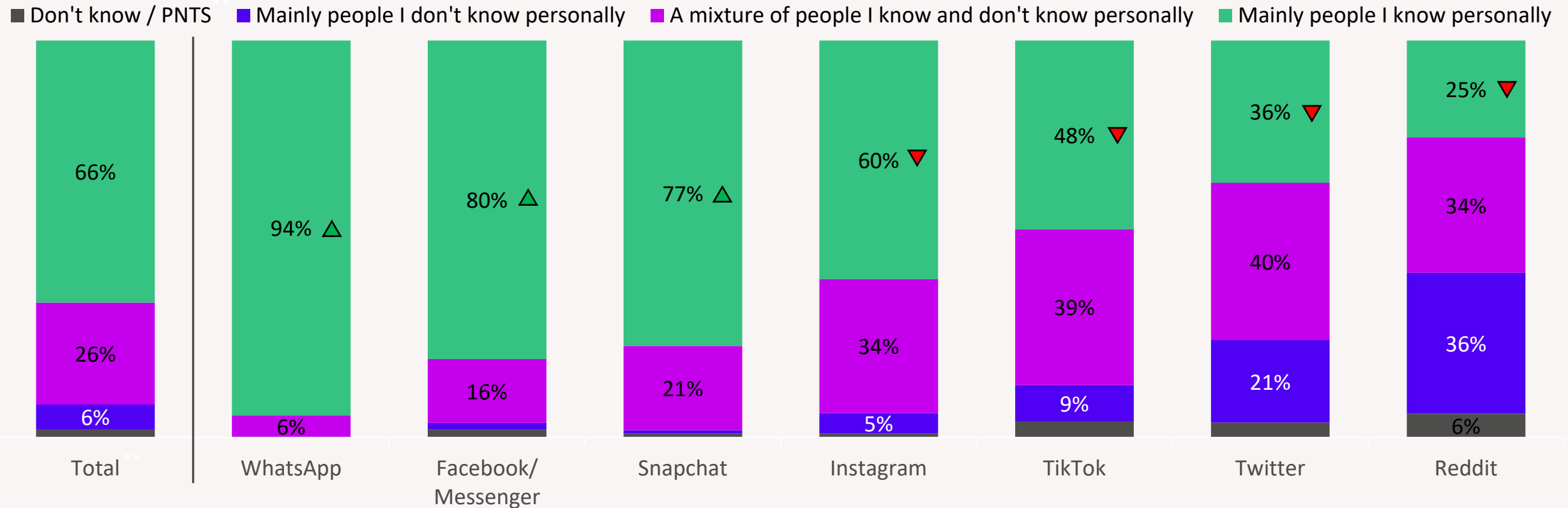
Over half of children say they are outgoing/confident in person, but a higher proportion describe themselves this way when communicating online

Confidence in different settings



Thirty two percent of children said they are connected online with at least some people they do not know personally

Who children are connected with*



**Total based only on platforms asked about in survey. Least fill approach used (for details see slide 6).

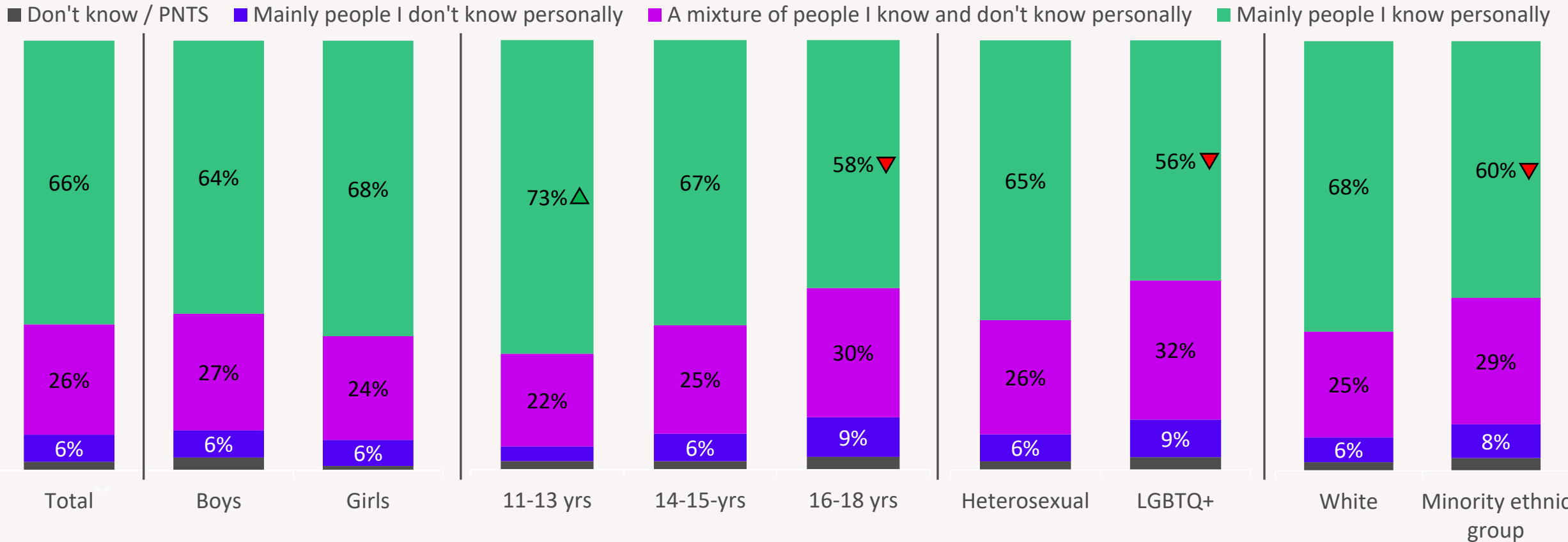
Source: A2A. How would you describe who you are connected with (i.e., friends, people who follow you, contacts) on [PLATFORM]? Base: All who use at least one platform weekly (1973), WhatsApp (337), Facebook (315), Snapchat (326), Instagram (298), TikTok (321), Twitter (104), Reddit (101)

*Questions asked who children are "connected with". This does not mean direct forms of communication are necessarily taking place. **PNTS = Prefer Not to Say

△ Significant difference against total at 95% confidence interval (summary net figures only)
 ▽ Significant difference against total at 95% confidence interval (summary net figures only)

Sixteen to eighteen year olds, ethnic minorities, and LGBTQ+ individuals are less likely to be mainly connected with people they know personally than the average 11-18 year old

Who children are connected with*



**Total based only on platforms asked about in survey. Least fill approach used (for details see slide 6).

Source: A2A. How would you describe who you are connected with (i.e., friends, people who follow you, contacts) on [PLATFORM]? Base: All who use at least one platform weekly (1973), Boys (968), Girls (972), 11-13 (762), 14-15 (496), 16-18 (715), Heterosexual (1496), LGBTQ+ (177), White (1534), MEG (435)

* Questions asked who children are "connected with". This does not mean direct forms of communication are necessarily taking place.

△ Significant difference against total at 95% confidence interval (summary net figures only)
▽

Children mainly use social media platforms to chat and interact with those they already know

Why 11-18 year olds communicate online via social media (average across all platforms*)



Commentary

- Boys are more likely than average to use social media platforms to coordinate tactics on the game they are playing (22% vs. 16%) or to discuss it / get recommendations (27% vs. 19%).
- Girls are more likely than average to use social media to talk to people they already know (61% vs. 58%) or to follow their friends (48% vs. 43%).
- 16-18-year-olds are more likely than average to use platforms to meet new people (17% vs. 13%) or to find/talk to someone they fancy (11% vs. 8%).
- Children in London are more likely than average to use platforms to meet new people (21% vs. 13%), discuss current trends (29% vs. 23%), share updates (33% vs. 26%) and discuss the games they're playing (25% vs. 19%).

*Total based only on platforms asked about in survey. Least fill approach used (for details see slide 6).

Source: A3A. Thinking about why you communicate and talk to others, which of the following do you use [PLATFORM] for?

Base: 1,973 (All who use at least one platform weekly).

The reasons why 11-18 year olds communicate online vary by platform

Why 11-18 year olds communicate online via social media (by platform)

Why platform is used to communicate	Total*	Facebook / Messenger	Instagram	WhatsApp	TikTok	Snapchat	Twitter	Reddit
To chat/interact with people I already know	58%	60%	55%	85%	36%	75%	40%	32%
To follow my friends / like or comment on their posts or photos	43%	51%	63%	17%	52%	49%	39%	21%
To share updates / posts on what I'm doing / to express myself	26%	29%	33%	19%	21%	32%	29%	24%
To share / discuss current content with others	23%	23%	24%	21%	23%	19%	28%	34%
To talk about the game I am playing / get recommendations	19%	15%	12%	20%	16%	17%	22%	38%
To video call	17%	21%	12%	35%	8%	16%	6%	8%
To coordinate tactics / strategy on the game I am playing	16%	12%	16%	20%	10%	12%	18%	29%
To meet new people	13%	9%	13%	5%	12%	12%	27%	24%
To find/talk to someone I fancy	8%	8%	7%	7%	6%	11%	5%	6%
To live stream	8%	6%	8%	4%	11%	5%	4%	8%
None of the above	7%	5%	5%	2%	14%	4%	13%	8%

*Total based only on platforms asked about in survey. Least fill approach used (for details see slide 6).

Source: A3A. Thinking about why you communicate and talk to others, which of the following do you use [PLATFORM] for?

Base: All who use at least one platform weekly (1973), Whatsapp (337), Facebook (315), Snapchat (326), Instagram (298), TikTok (321), Twitter (104), Reddit (101).

■ Significant difference against total at 95% confidence interval
■

The methods used by 11-18 year olds to communicate online vary by platform

How 11-18 year olds tend to communicate when using social media (by platform)

How children communicate on each platform	Total*	Facebook / Messenger	Instagram	WhatsApp	TikTok	Snapchat	Twitter	Reddit
Direct messages – with one person	56%	67%	53%	82%	37%	61%	38%	34%
Direct messages – in a group	42%	38%	32%	70%	23%	51%	32%	31%
Sending and receiving content	30%	27%	30%	35%	25%	42%	24%	24%
Through a comment section	23%	21%	30%	7%	31%	13%	36%	52%
Sending and receiving voice notes	21%	20%	17%	31%	11%	31%	10%	17%
Video call – with one person	20%	27%	12%	40%	7%	19%	8%	8%
Voice chat / audio calling	17%	19%	9%	30%	8%	17%	13%	9%
Video call – in a group	15%	14%	9%	27%	7%	19%	9%	7%
None of the above	10%	8%	7%	2%	21%	6%	20%	14%
Prefer not to say	1%	1%	2%	-	1%	0%	2%	2%

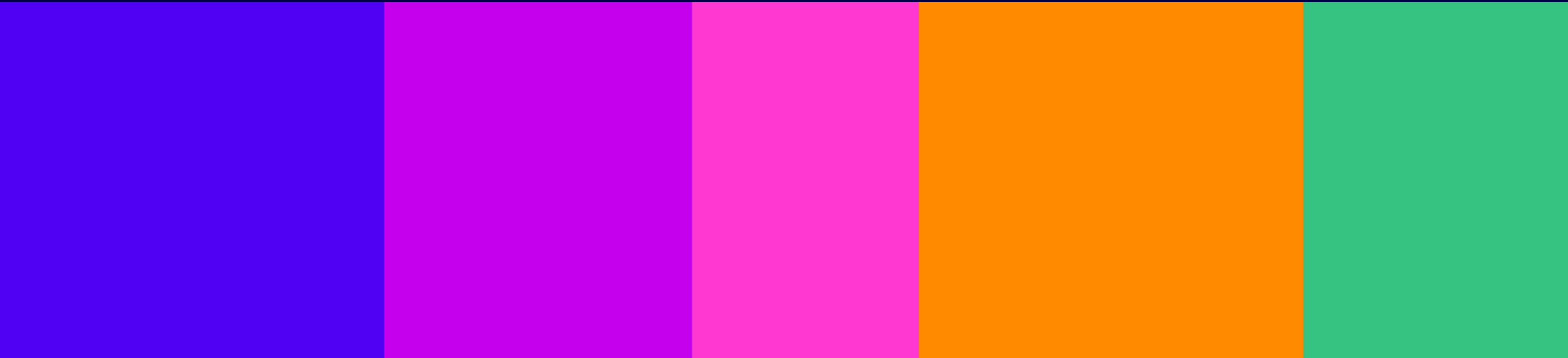
*Total based only on platforms asked about in survey. Least fill approach used (for details see slide 6).

Source: A4. When you are on [PLATFORM], how do you tend to communicate with others?

Base: All who use at least one platform weekly (1973), Whatsapp (337), Facebook (315), Snapchat (326), Instagram (298), TikTok (321), Twitter (104), Reddit (101).

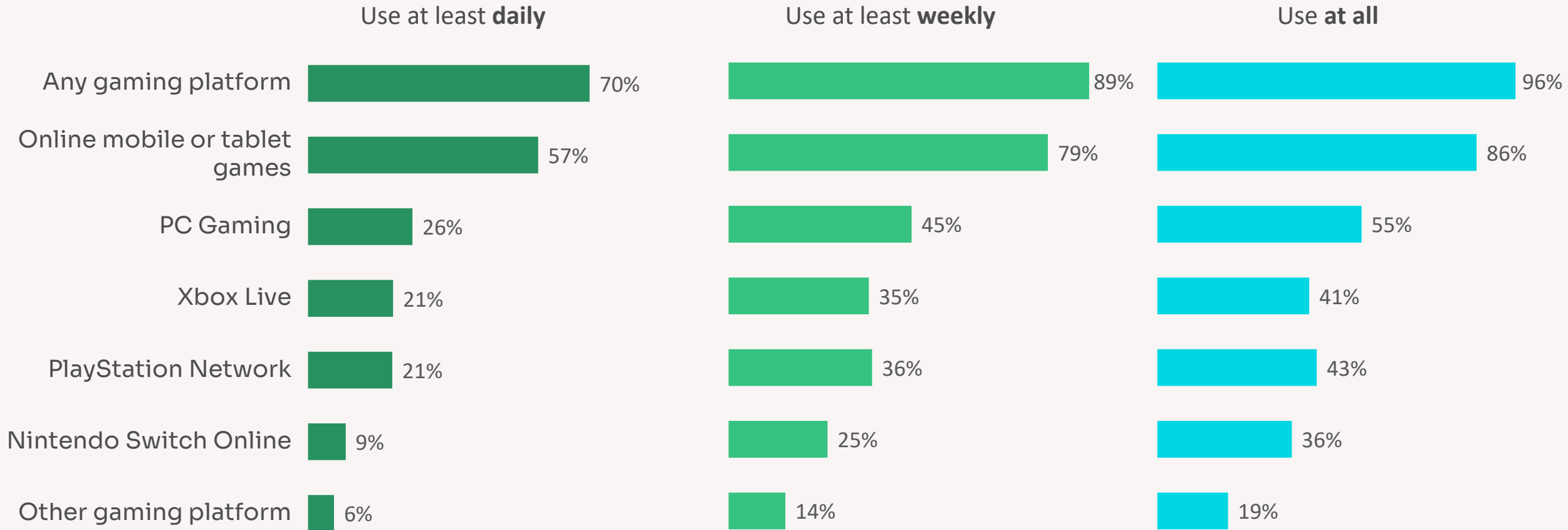
■ Significant difference against total at 95% confidence interval
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Gaming



Children game regularly across different platforms

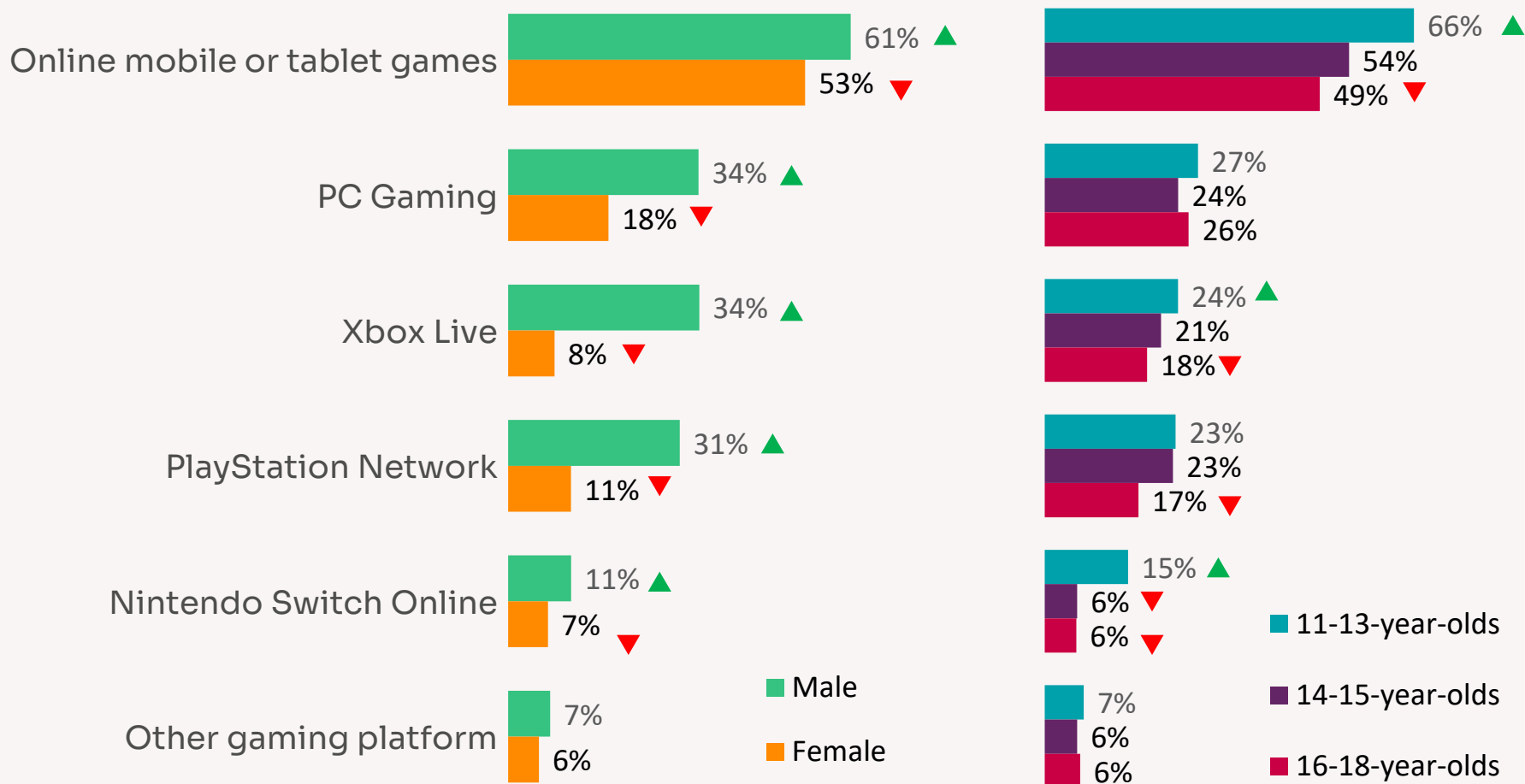
Frequency of using gaming platforms



Source: A1_GAMING. How often do you game online using any of the following?
Base: 2031 (All respondents)

Boys game more regularly than girls on each platform, and 11-13 year olds game more than older children on Xbox Live, Nintendo Switch and online games

Daily gaming platform usage, comparing by gender and age

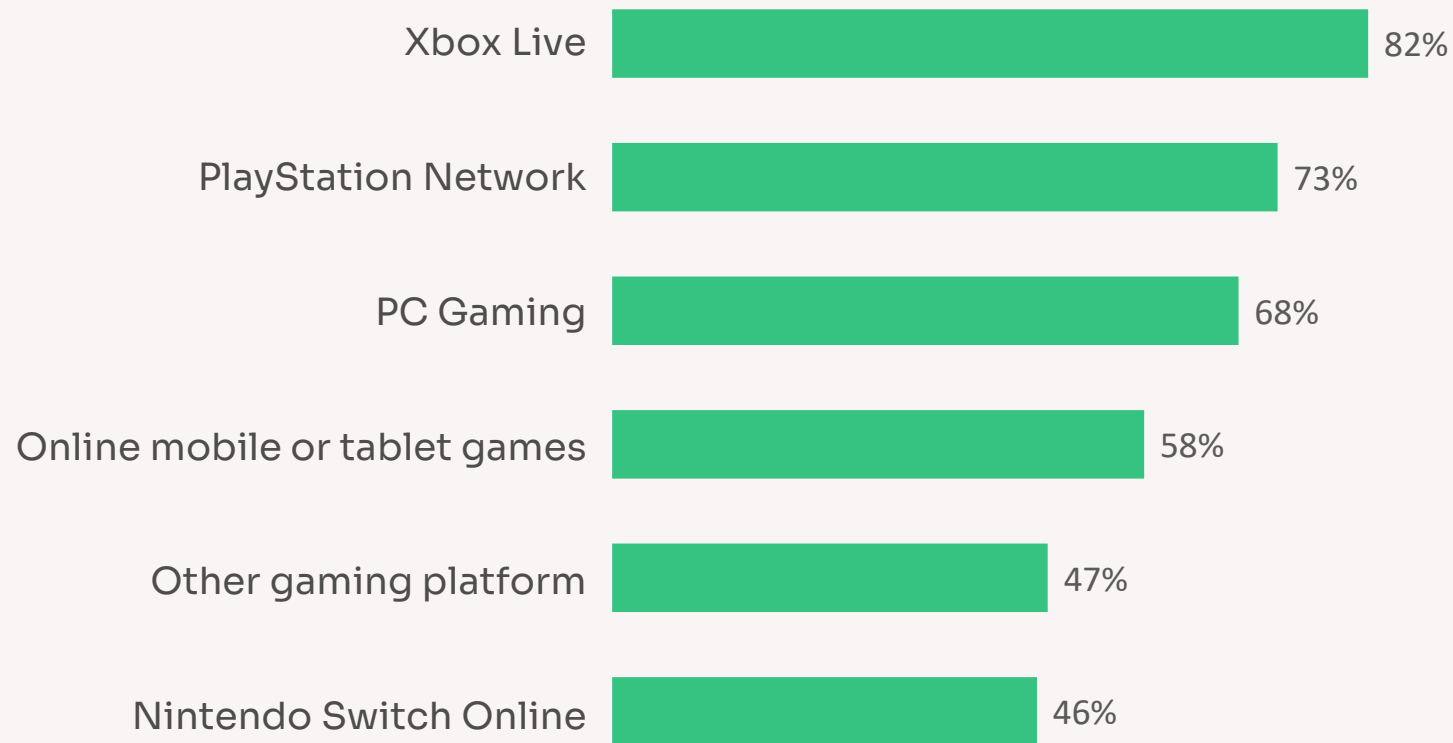


Source: A1_GAMING. How often do you game online using any of the following?
 Base: All Respondents (2031), Boys (1006), Girls (989), 11-13 year olds (805), 14-15 year olds (505), 16-18 year olds (722)

▲ Significant difference against other sub-groups at 95% confidence interval
 ▼

Four in five children who game at least weekly said they chat or message with others while playing

% who said they communicate with others online while gaming, by platform



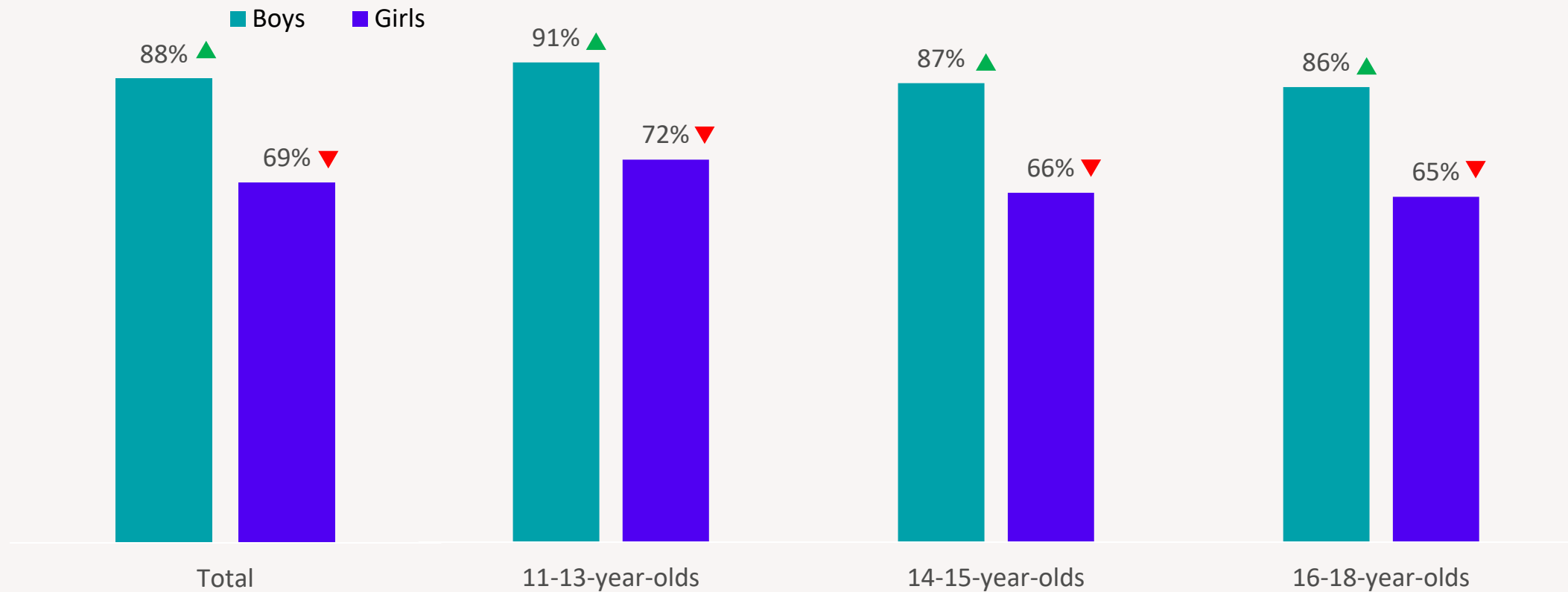
79%
of gamers chat or
message others while
gaming

Source: G1. Do you chat or message with other gamers while playing online either through the gaming platform (for example PlayStation) or through another platform (like Discord, Facetime or WhatsApp)

Base: All who game [at least] weekly (1834), PC Gaming (921), Nintendo Switch Online (498), Playstation Network (723), Xbox Live (706), Online mobile or tablet games (1608), Other gaming platform (268)

Boys are more likely to communicate with others while gaming than girls

% who communicate with others while gaming, comparing by age and gender

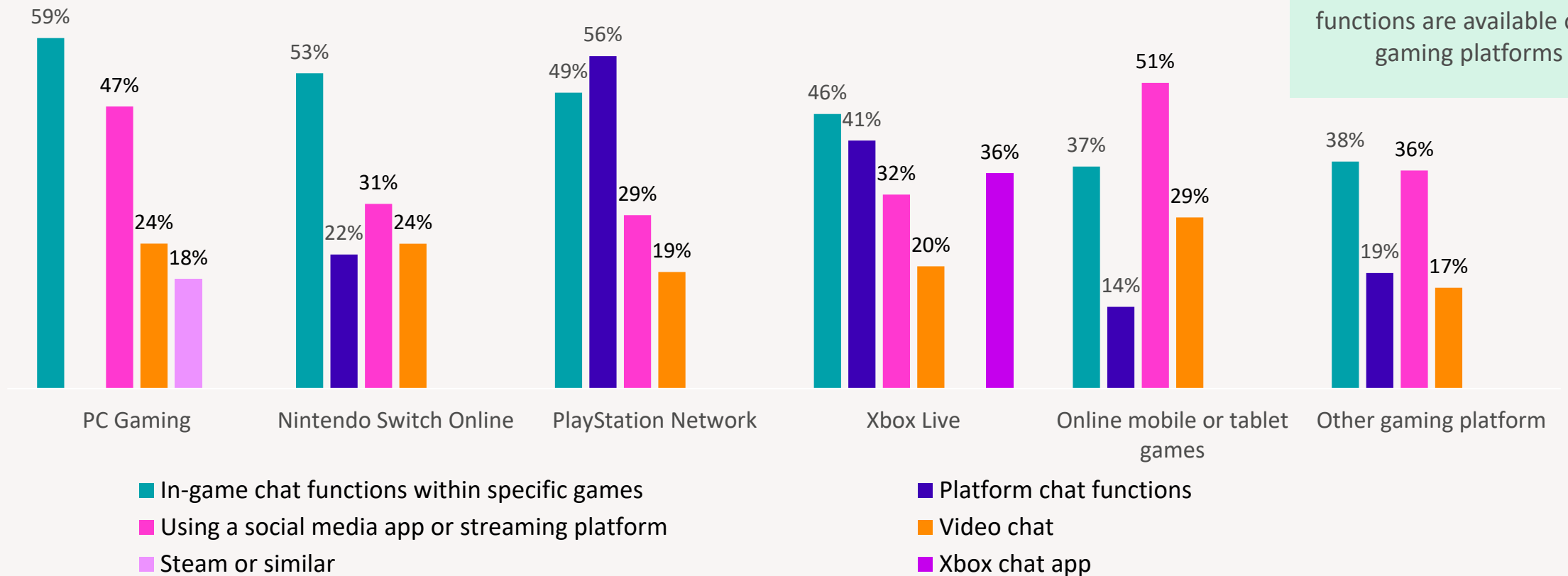


Source: G1. Do you chat or message with other gamers while playing online either through the gaming platform (for example PlayStation) or through another platform (like Discord, Facetime or WhatsApp)?
Base: All who game [at least] weekly (1834), Boys 11-13 (397), Girls 11-13 (351), Boys 14-15 (237), Girls 14-15 (203), Boys 16-18 (330), Girls 16-18 (281).

▲ Significant difference against boys/girls at 95% confidence interval
▼

In-game chat functions are generally the most popular way to communicate while gaming

Ways in which children communicate when gaming



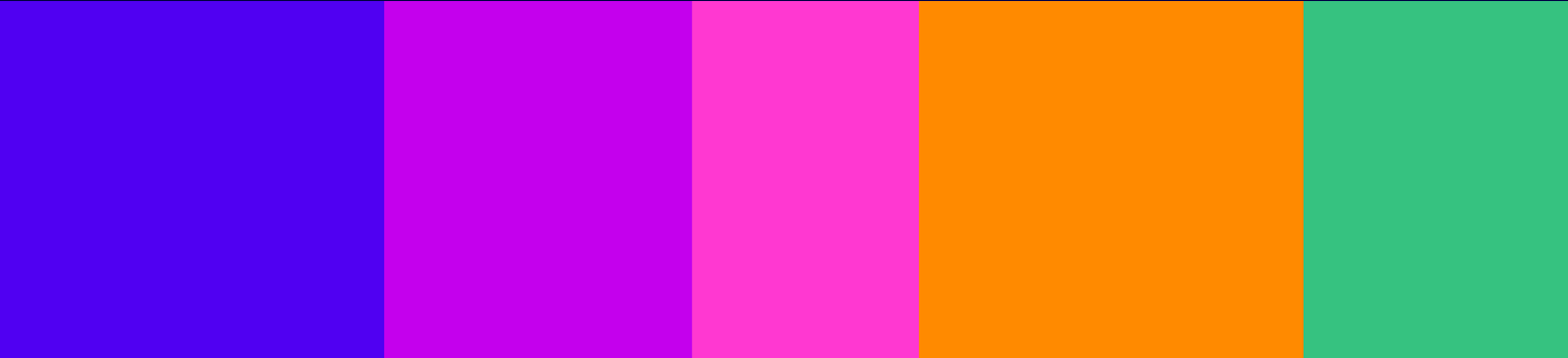
Commentary

Please note that not all chat functions are available on all gaming platforms

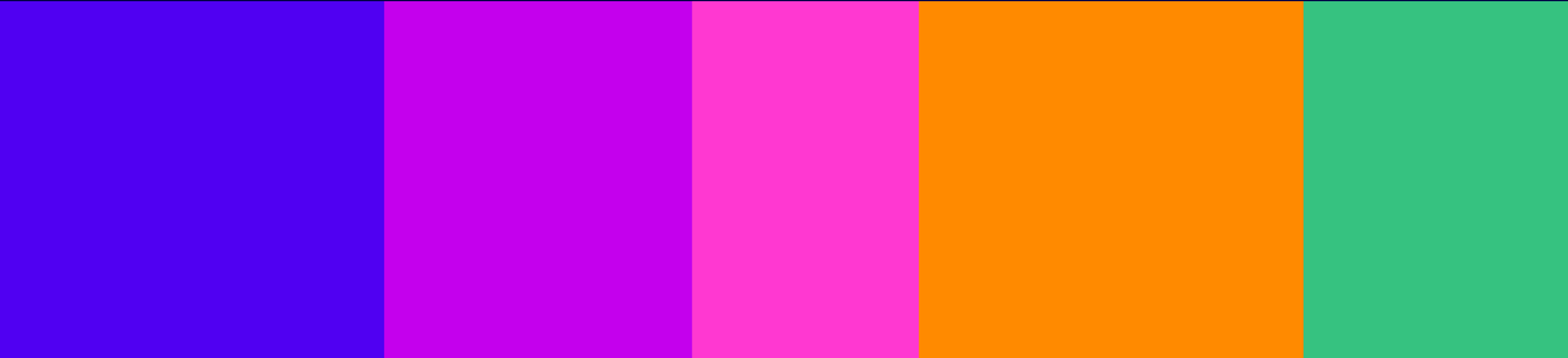
Source: G2. In what ways do you communicate with other people when gaming in the following ways?

Base: All who game [at least] weekly and communicate while doing so – PC Gaming (629), Nintendo Switch Online (231), Playstation Network (524), Xbox Live (582), Online mobile or tablet games (932), Other gaming platform (136)

Section 2: Understanding how and why 11-18 year olds expand their online networks

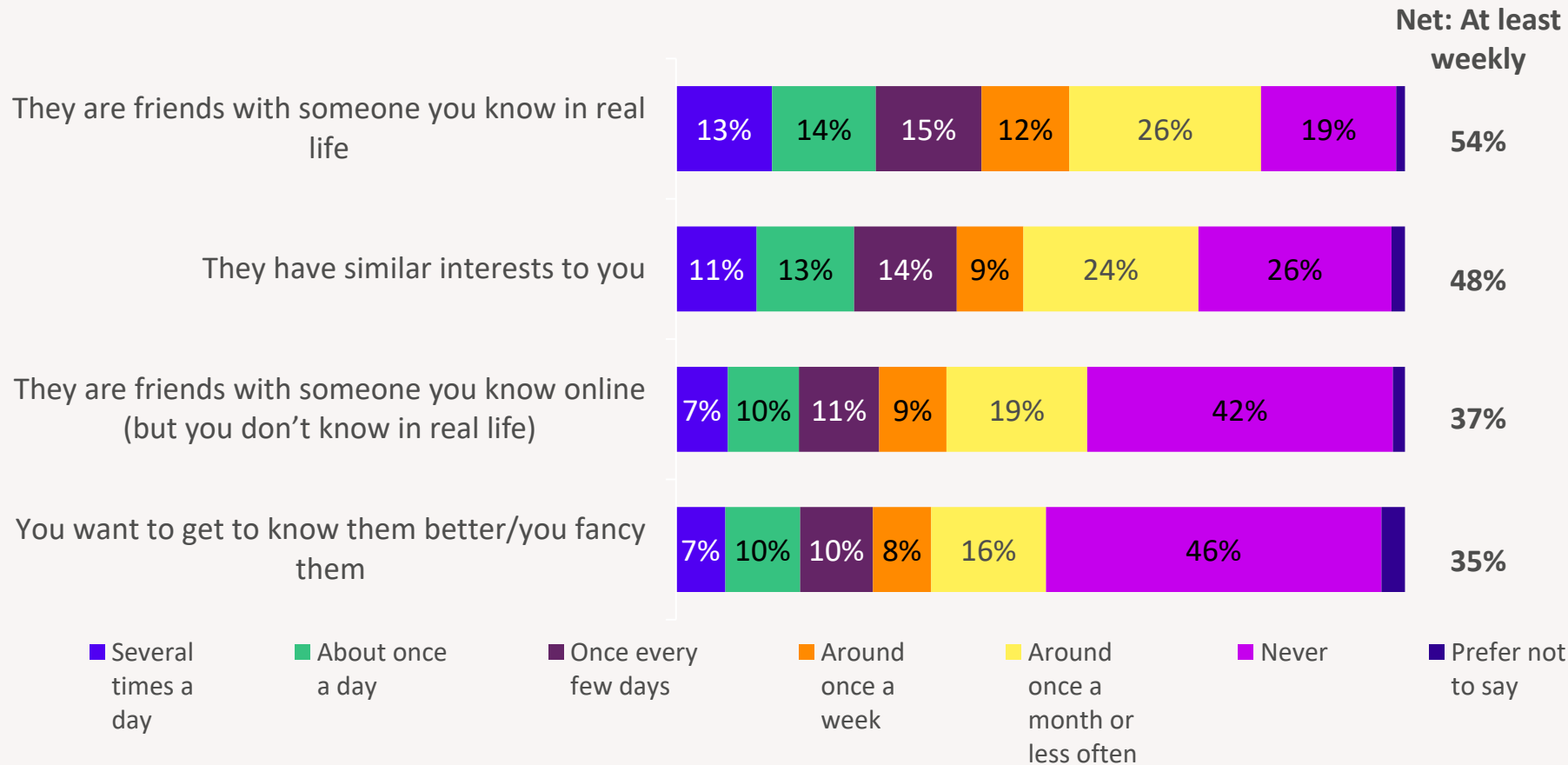


Making Connections



Eleven to eighteen year olds regularly expand their online networks, including with people they don't know in real life

Frequency of making new connections/ reason for making new connections*



Commentary

14-15 year olds are more likely to *ever* make new connections because the other person has similar interests (77% vs. 72% average) or because the other person is friends with someone they know in real life (84% vs. 80% average).

*Total based only on platforms asked about in survey. Least fill approach used (for details see slide 6).

Source: A5: How often do you make new connections on [PLATFORM] with people because...?

Base: 1,973 (All who use at least one platform weekly)

Accepting requests from others is the most common way for 11-18 year olds to expand their online networks, followed by adding people from their own phone contacts

How 11-18 year olds expand their online networks

How networks are expanded	Total*	Facebook / Messenger	Instagram	WhatsApp	TikTok	Snapchat	Twitter	Reddit
Accepting requests from others	44%	49%	56%	24%	48%	51%	36%	44%
Add from my phone contacts	41%	34%	30%	79%	32%	49%	23%	18%
Searching for someone specifically (e.g. using their snap code, user names)	31%	33%	41%	8%	33%	42%	36%	26%
Friend suggestions / Quick add / Connection request / Discover function	30%	37%	44%	5%	35%	31%	31%	28%
Add from another friend's contact	22%	24%	25%	19%	24%	23%	16%	15%
Clicking 'add' from content / users recommended for you on discover functions (e.g. For You Page)	17%	15%	21%	4%	20%	20%	25%	19%
None of the above	9%	9%	5%	9%	11%	5%	14%	21%
Prefer not to say	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	2%	1%	2%

*Total based only on platforms asked about in survey. Least fill approach used (for details see slide 6).

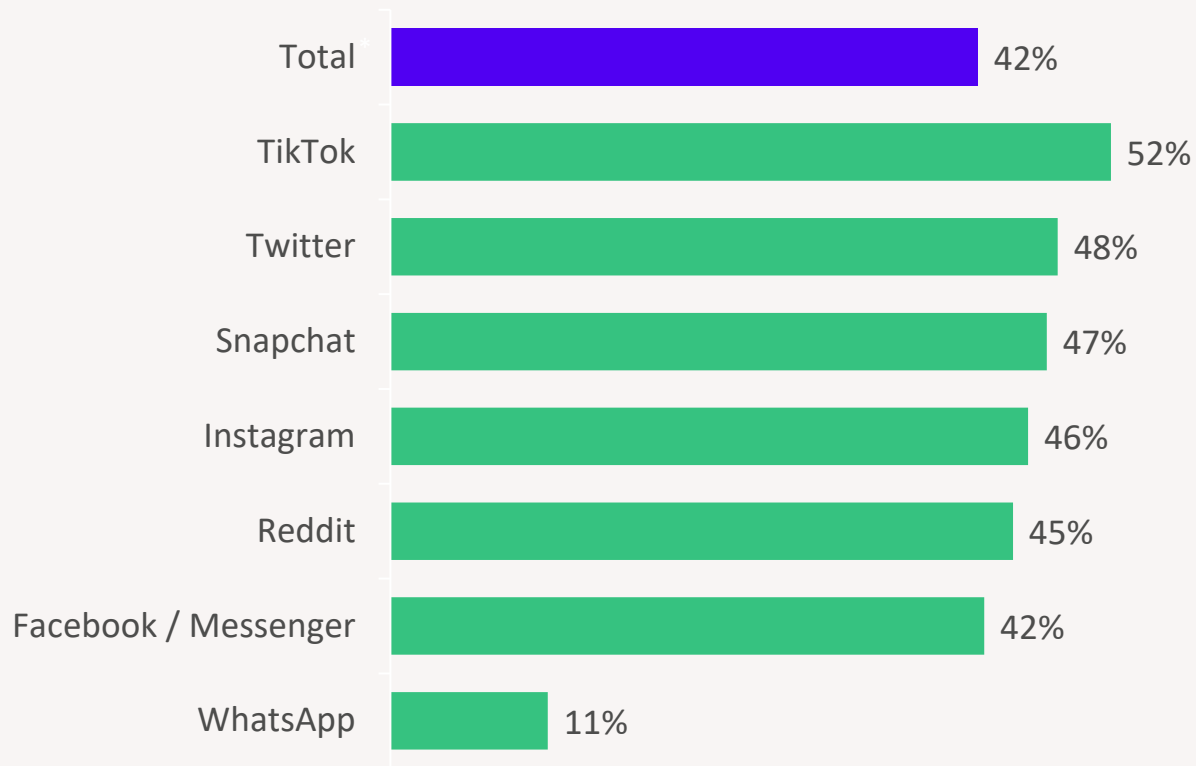
B1: When using [ONLINEPLATFORM], which of the following ways have you used to add people to your online social network?

Base: All who use at least one platform at least weekly (1973), Whatsapp (337), Facebook (315), Snapchat (326), Instagram (298), TikTok (321), Twitter (104), Reddit (101).

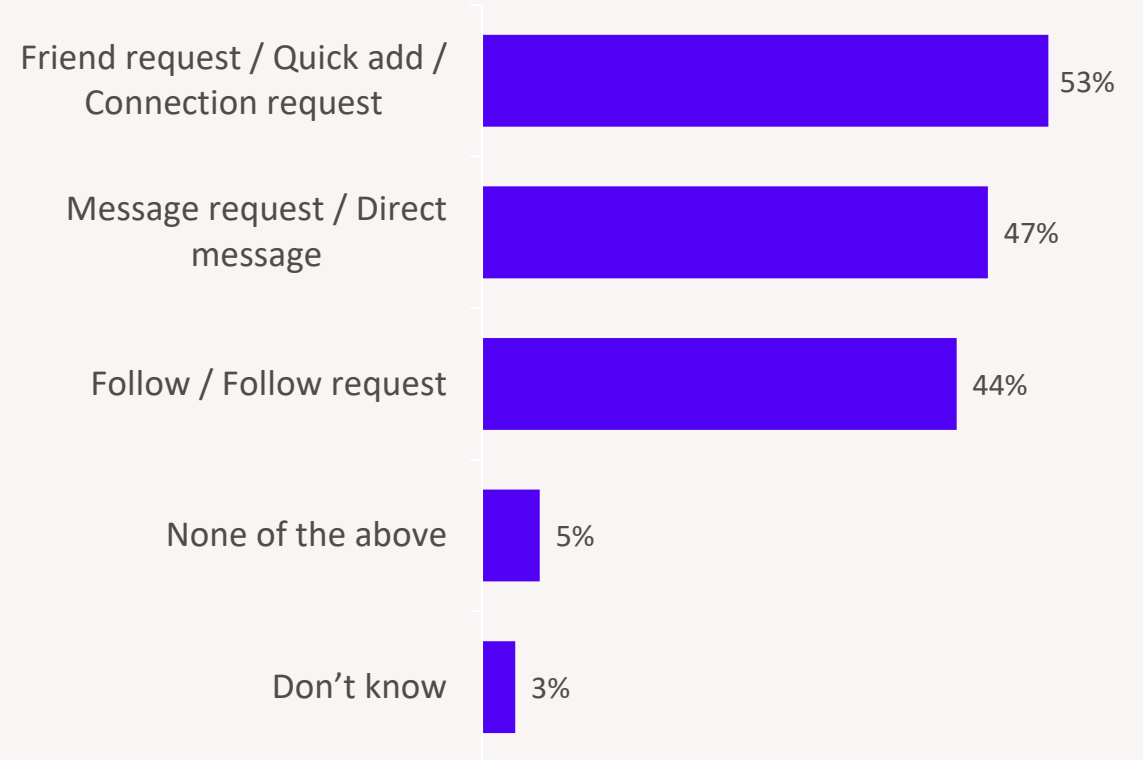
■ Significant difference against total at 95% confidence interval
■ Significant difference against total at 95% confidence interval

Two in five 11-18 year olds receive friend/ follow requests from someone they haven't messaged or spoken to before, at least weekly

% receiving at least weekly friend/follow requests from someone you haven't messaged or spoken to before



How someone you haven't messaged or spoken to before connected with you



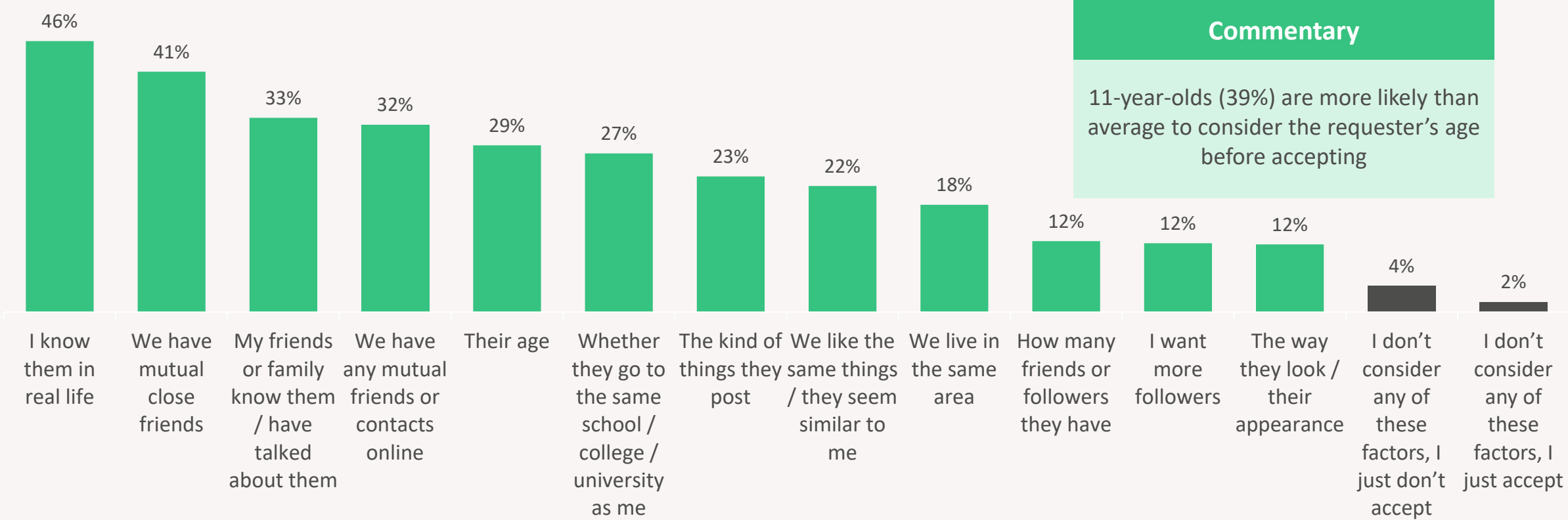
*Total based only on platforms asked about in survey. Least fill approach used (for details see slide 6).

B2A: How often do you receive friend / follow requests from someone you haven't messaged or spoken to before on [PLATFORM]? Base: All who use at least one platform weekly (1973), Whatsapp (337), Facebook (315), Snapchat (326), Instagram (298), TikTok (321), Twitter (104), Reddit (101).

B2B: And when on [ONLINE PLATFORM], which of the following ways has someone you haven't messaged or spoken to before used to connect with you? Base: 1073 (All who receive a follow request on platform at least around once a month).

The most common factor influencing children’s decision to accept a friend request is whether they know the person in real life, but around 3 in 10 would take into account the person’s age or if they have any mutual online friends

Factors influencing a decision to accept friend requests from people you have not messaged before*

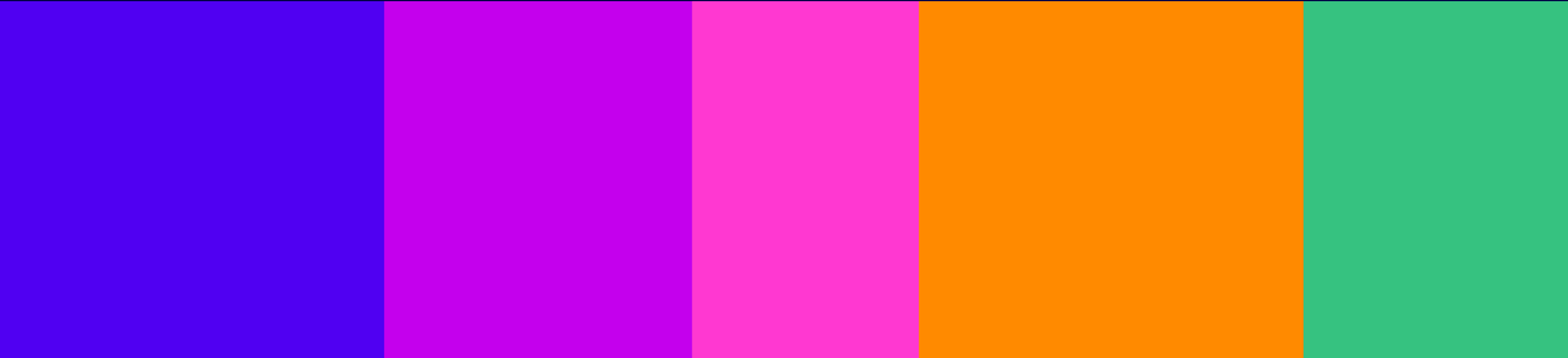


Commentary
 11-year-olds (39%) are more likely than average to consider the requester’s age before accepting

*Total based only on platforms asked about in survey. Least fill approach used (for details see slide 6).

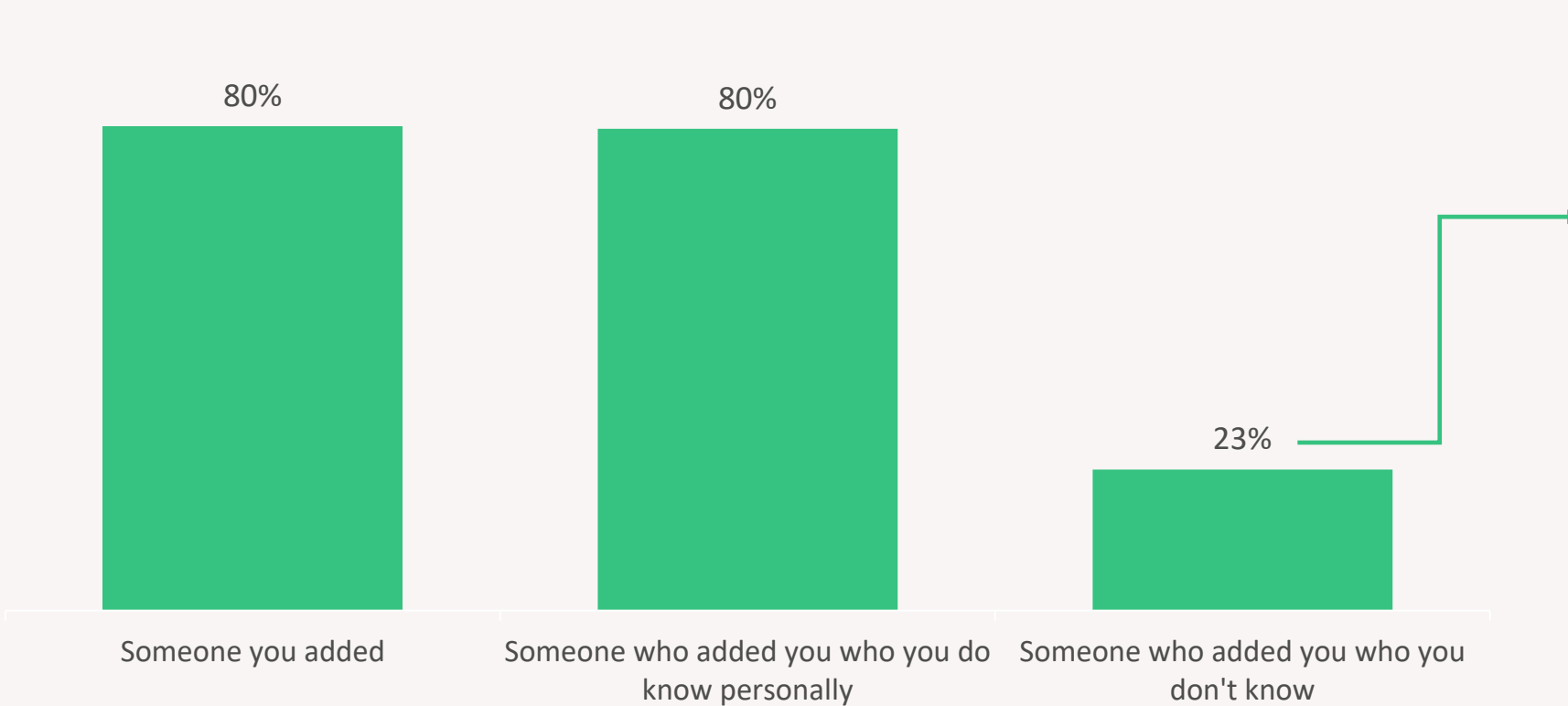
B2C: Which, if any, of these things do you think about when deciding whether to accept a friend request from someone on [ONLINE PLATFORM] who you haven’t messaged or spoken to before?
 Base: 1073 (All who receive a follow request on platform at least around once a month).

Messaging



One in four children said they would be likely to reply to a message from someone who added them on social media who they didn't know personally

Likelihood of replying to messages (% very or fairly likely)



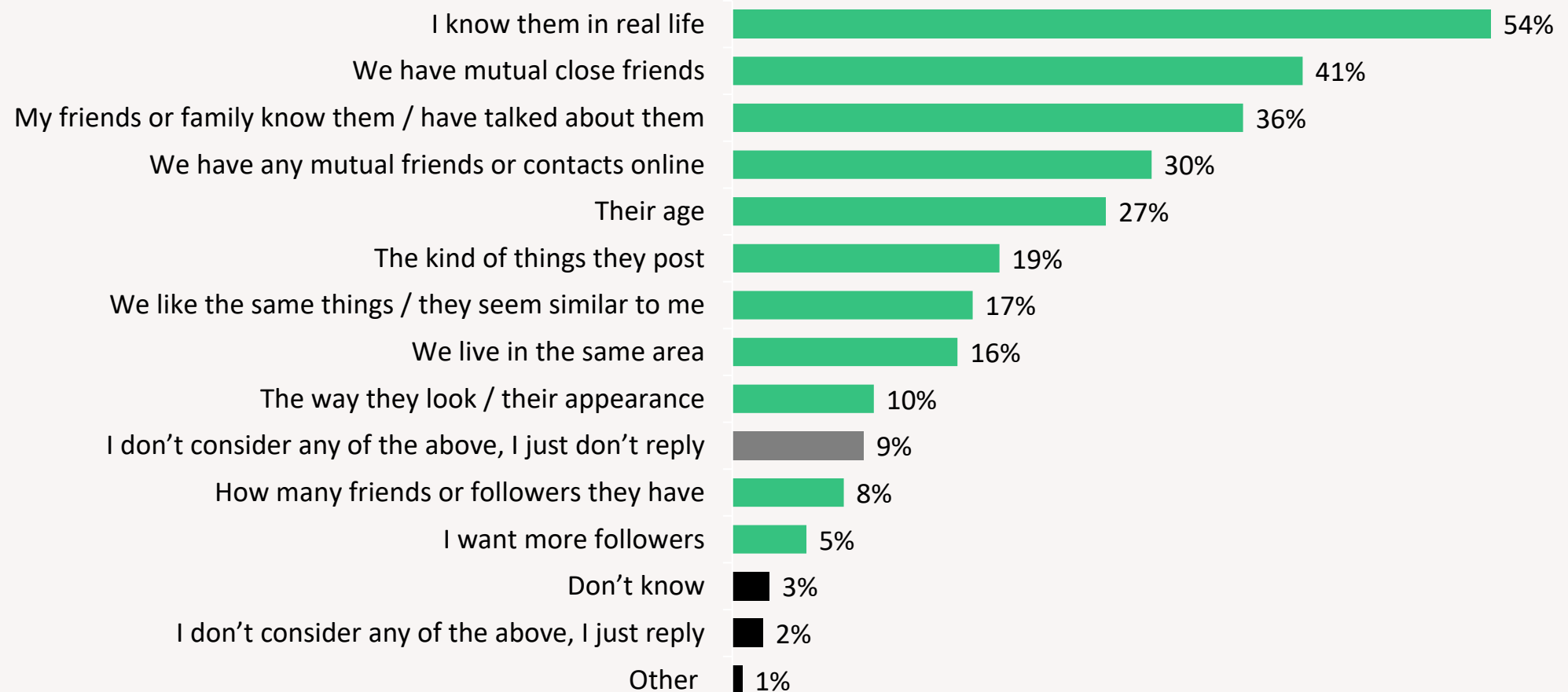
Commentary

Each of these groups are more likely to respond to a message from someone who added them whom they didn't know:

- Boys (25% vs. 21% for girls).
- 16-18 year olds (29% vs. 19% for 11-13 year olds).
- Minority ethnic groups (28% vs. 22% for white).
- Children who live with impacting or limiting conditions (28% vs. 21% who do not).

As with accepting friend requests, knowing someone in real life, having mutual close friends or having a connection through friends or family are key factors for 11-18 year olds when deciding whether or not to respond to messages from someone new online

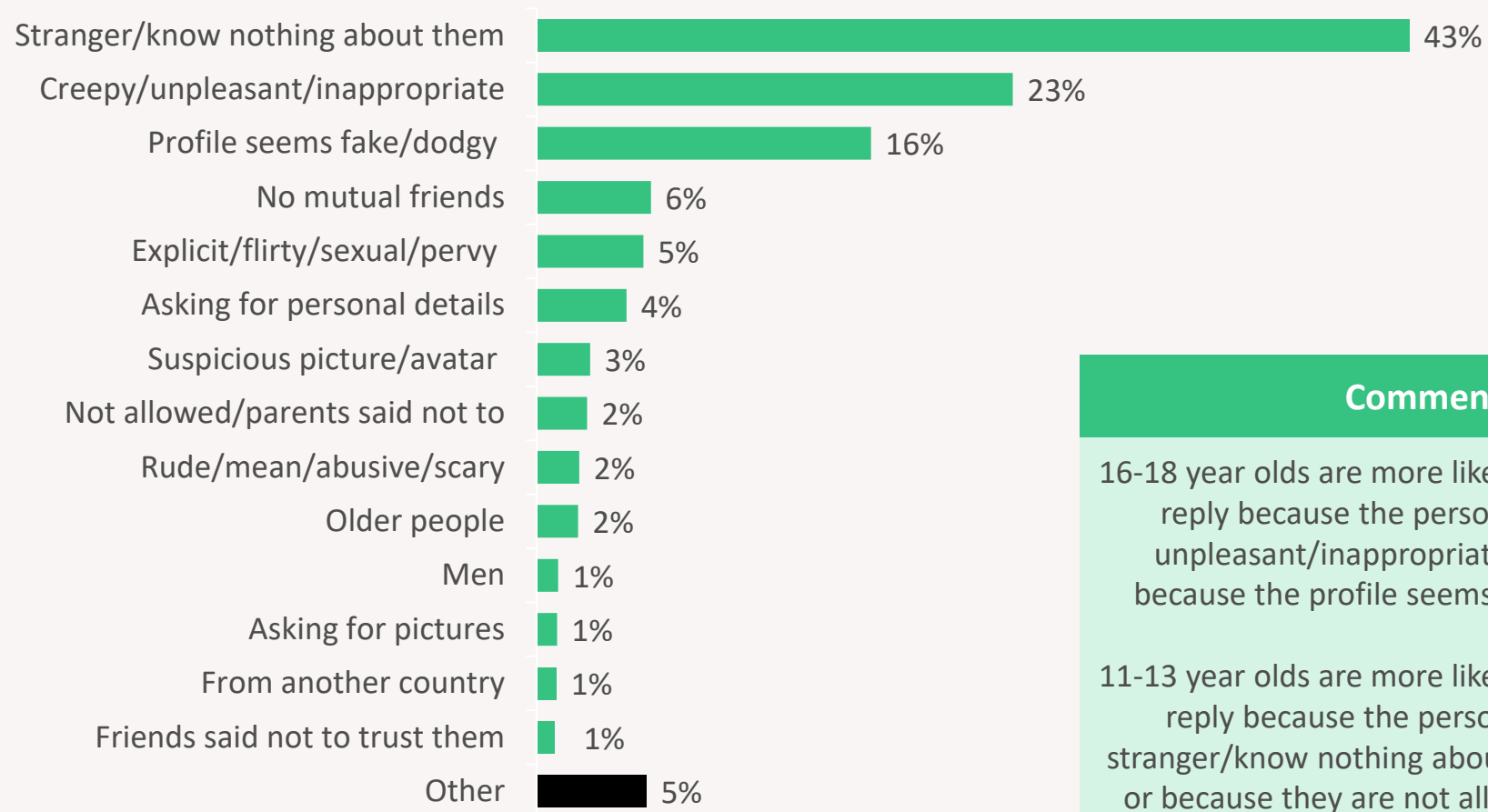
Factors influencing decision to reply to a message from someone you have not messaged before



B4: Which if any of these things would you think about when deciding whether to reply to a message from someone you haven't messaged or spoken to before ?
Base: All respondents (2031)

The most common reason 11-18 year olds gave for not responding to a message from someone they have not spoken to before online is the person being a stranger or their knowing nothing about them

Factors influencing decisions not to reply to someone you have not spoken to before online

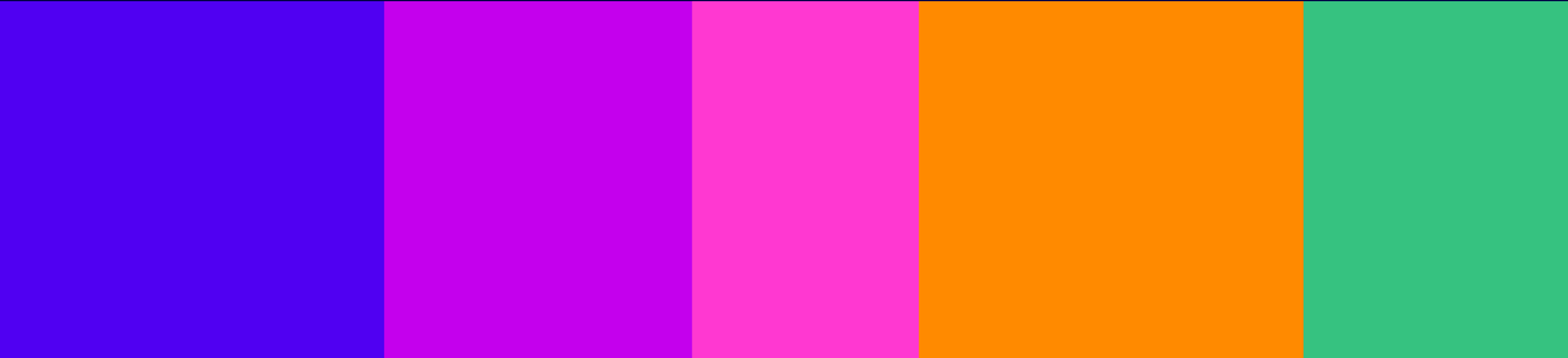


Commentary

16-18 year olds are more likely than average to not reply because the person appears creepy/unpleasant/inappropriate (28% vs. 23%) or because the profile seems fake (22% vs. 16%).

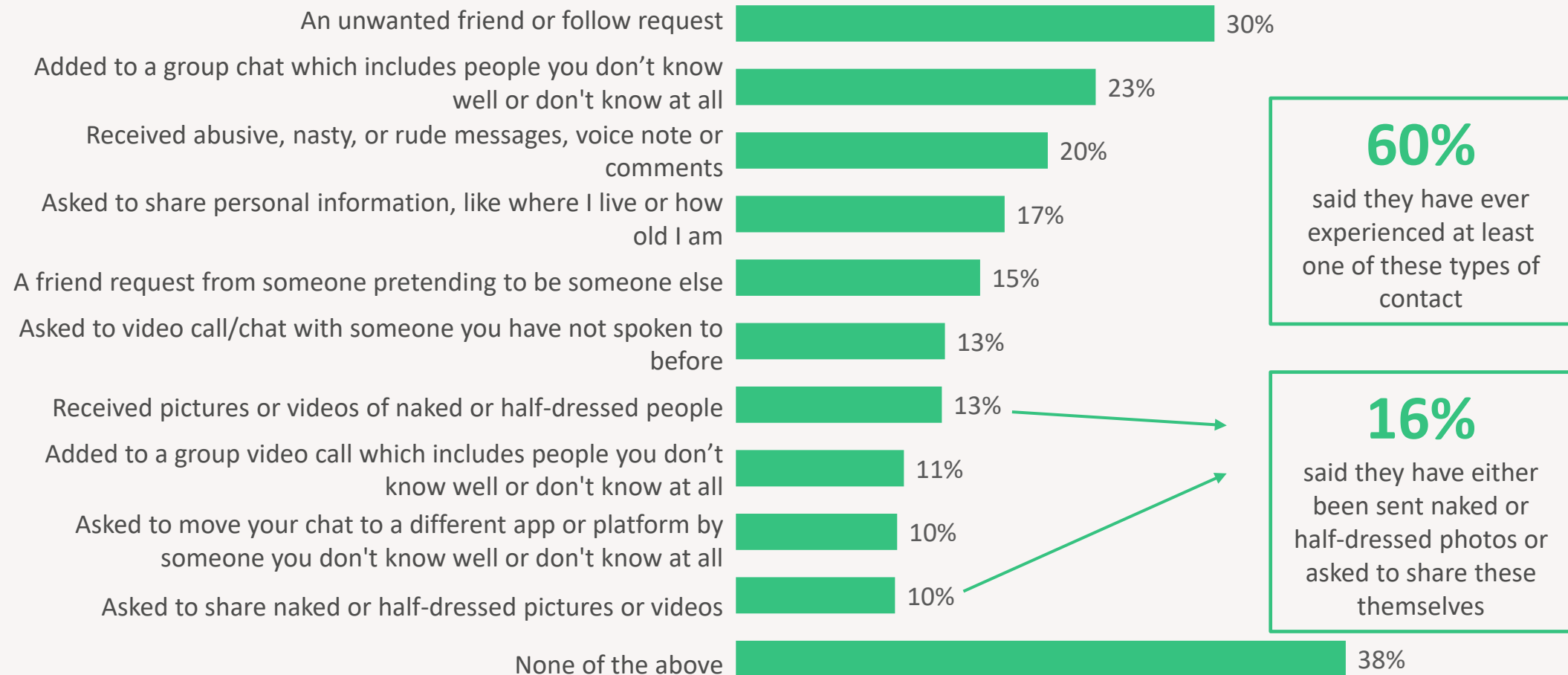
11-13 year olds are more likely than average to not reply because the person appears to be a stranger/know nothing about them (56% vs. 43%) or because they are not allowed to (5% vs. 2%).

Section 3: Understanding 11-18 year olds' experience of potentially uncomfortable contact



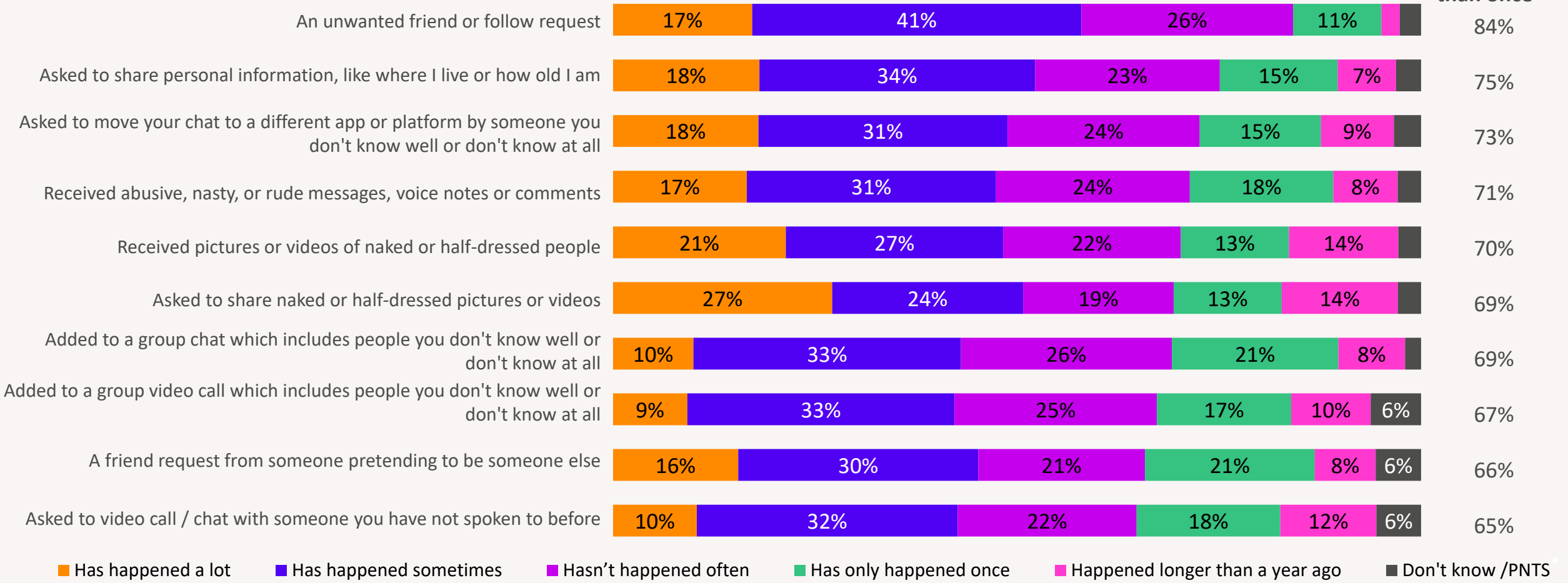
Three in five 11-18 year olds have ever experienced some form of potentially uncomfortable contact online, including 13% who have been sent naked or half-dressed pictures or videos and 10% who have been asked to share these themselves

Experience of potentially uncomfortable contact (% who have ever experienced)



The majority of children have experienced at least one of these types of contact in the last year.

Frequency of experiencing potentially uncomfortable contact among those who have experienced at least one of them Happened more than once



Source: C1A. Across all of your social media, [IF AGE = 11-17] in the last year / [IF AGE = 18] before you were 18, how often have you experienced these things?

Base: Those who have experienced [contact] online - Unwanted friend request (611), Asked to share naked or half-dressed images (203), Asked to share personal info (343), Friend request from someone pretending to be someone else (312), Received naked or half-dressed images (263), Received abusive messages (398), Asked to video call with people not known well or at all (267), Asked to move platform (206), Added to group chat with people not known well or at all (459), Added to group video call with people not known well or at all (214). *PNTS = Prefer Not to Say

Older girls are much more likely than boys to have experienced all ten of these types of contact, particularly receiving or being asked to send naked pictures or videos

Experiences of potentially uncomfortable contact, comparing by age and gender

Experience of potentially uncomfortable contact	Total	11-13-year-olds		14-15-year-olds		16-18-year-olds	
		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
An unwanted friend or follow request	30%	30%	27%	27%	33%	26%	37%
Added to a group chat which includes people you don't know well or don't know at all	23%	18%	23%	18%	17%	20%	36%
Received abusive, nasty, or rude messages, voice note or comments	20%	18%	17%	12%	19%	21%	27%
Asked to share personal information, like where I live or how old I am	17%	16%	13%	11%	15%	14%	29%
A friend request from someone pretending to be someone else	15%	10%	10%	17%	16%	18%	23%
Asked to video call/chat with someone you have not spoken to before	13%	12%	10%	8%	13%	14%	20%
Received pictures or videos of naked or half-dressed people	13%	7%	5%	9%	14%	11%	32%
Added to a group video call which includes people you don't know well or don't know at all	11%	7%	13%	9%	9%	11%	14%
Asked to move your chat to a different app or platform by someone you don't know well or don't know at all	10%	9%	8%	9%	9%	8%	16%
Asked to share naked or half-dressed pictures or videos	10%	5%	3%	8%	13%	9%	24%

Commentary

- LGBTQ+: More likely to experience most behaviours including being asked to share naked or half-dressed pictures or videos (28% vs. 10% average).
- Children that live with impacting or limiting conditions: More likely to experience most behaviours including being asked to share naked or half-dressed photos or videos (19% vs. 10% average).
- Children who live in London: More likely to receive naked or half-dressed photos or videos (18% vs. 13% average).

Source: C1. The following are types of messages or contact that you may have received and which may have made you feel uncomfortable. Which of these have you ever experienced online? Base: All respondents (2031), Boys 11-13 (405), Girls 11-13 (392), Boys 14-15 (251), Girls 14-15 (246), Boys 16-18 (350), Girls 16-18 (351)

■ Significant difference against total at 95% confidence interval
■

The types of potentially uncomfortable contact experienced by children varies by platform

% users experiencing potentially uncomfortable contact by platform

	Total (all contact types)	An unwanted friend or follow request	Added to a group chat which includes people you don't know well or don't know at all	Received abusive, nasty, or rude messages, voice notes or comments	Asked to share personal information, like where I live or how old I am	A friend request from someone pretending to be someone else	Received pictures or videos of naked or half-dressed people	Asked to video call/chat with someone you have not spoken to before	Asked to move your chat to a different app or platform by someone you don't know well or don't know at all	Asked to share naked or half-dressed pictures or videos	Added to a group video call which includes people you don't know well or don't know at all
Total (all platforms)*	60%	30%	23%	20%	17%	15%	13%	13%	10%	10%	11%
Snapchat	41%	12%	8%	8%	6%	6%	8%	6%	4%	6%	4%
Instagram	41%	15%	7%	8%	6%	7%	5%	5%	4%	5%	4%
Facebook / Messenger	25%	10%	4%	4%	5%	4%	2%	4%	3%	2%	2%
WhatsApp	25%	6%	9%	6%	3%	2%	2%	4%	2%	2%	4%
TikTok	22%	10%	3%	6%	4%	4%	1%	3%	2%	1%	2%
Twitter	7%	2%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Reddit	3%	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%

*Total based only on platforms asked about in survey. Least fill approach used (for details see slide 6). % by platforms do not add to the total as respondents may have experiences across multiple platforms

Source: C1. The following are types of messages or contact that you may have received and which may have made you feel uncomfortable. Which of these have you ever experienced online? C2. And again, in the [IF AGE = 11-17] last year / [IF AGE = 18] in the year before you were 18 which online platforms [IF AGE = 11-17] have you experienced these things on / [IF AGE = 18] did you experience these things on? Base: Those who have experienced [contact] online in last year - Unwanted friend request (581), Asked to share naked or half-dressed images (168), Asked to share personal info (308), Friend request from someone pretending to be someone else (271), Received naked or half-dressed images (220), Received abusive messages (355), Asked to video call with people not known well or at all (220), Asked to move platform (180), Added to group chat with people not known well or at all (412), Added to group video call with people not known well or at all (180)



The platform on which specific types of potentially uncomfortable contact most commonly occurs first varies depending on the type of contact.

Experiences of potentially uncomfortable contact by platform on which it first occurred

	Instagram	Snapchat	Facebook / Messenger	WhatsApp	TikTok	Twitter	Reddit
Total (all experiences)	22%	22%	16%	12%	10%	2%	1%
An unwanted friend or follow request	27%	19%	19%	8%	13%	2%	0%
Asked to share naked or half-dressed pictures or videos*	23%	39%	18%	3%	6%	-	3%
Asked to share personal information, like where I live or how old I am	18%	23%	21%	6%	15%	1%	-
A friend request from someone pretending to be someone else	18%	26%	26%	6%	11%	4%	2%
Received pictures or videos of naked or half-dressed people	19%	46%	11%	6%	5%	2%	1%
Received abusive, nasty or rude messages, voice notes or comments	23%	21%	10%	11%	10%	1%	1%
Asked to video call/chat with someone you have not spoken to before*	23%	20%	18%	14%	12%	2%	-
Asked to move your chat to a different app or platform by someone you don't know well or don't know at all*	16%	17%	21%	10%	10%	6%	3%
Added to a group chat which includes people you don't know well or don't know at all	19%	19%	13%	21%	7%	2%	1%
Added to group video call including people you don't know well or don't know at all*	16%	14%	11%	31%	13%	2%	1%

Source: C6: On which app or platform did you first come across this person or people? *Base size under 100, treat as indicative only

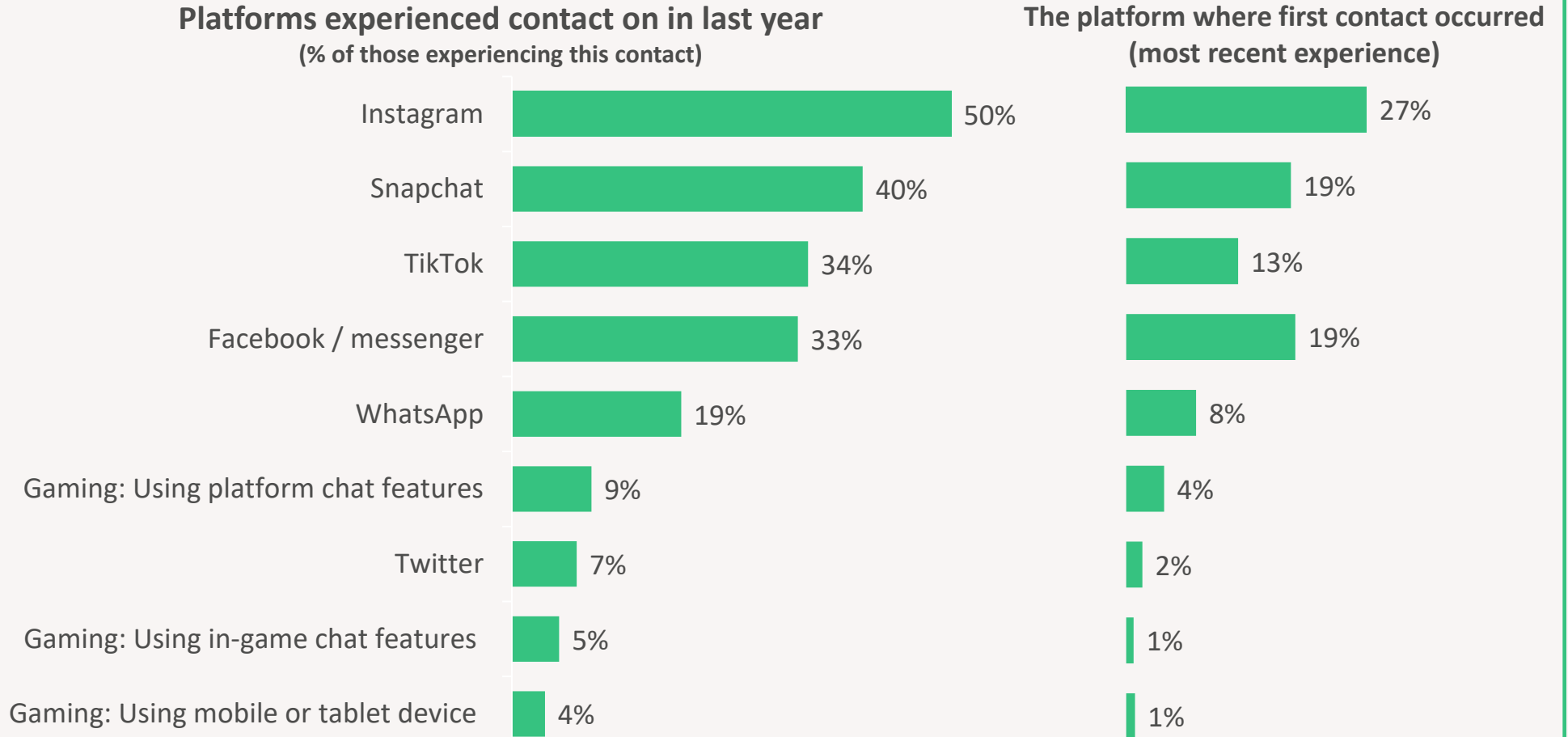
Base: All those whose most recent potentially uncomfortable contact was [CONTACT]; Total (1223), Unwanted friend request (444), Asked to share naked or half-dressed images (72), Asked to share personal info (147), Friend request from someone pretending to be someone else (132), Received naked or half-dressed images (104), Received abusive messages (174), Asked to video call with people not known well or at all (98), Asked to move platform (84), Added to group chat with people not known well or at all (225), Added to group video call with people not known well or at all (71)

 Significant difference against total at 95% confidence interval


Three in ten 11-18 year olds said they have at some point received an unwanted friend request

An unwanted friend or follow request

30%
said they have ever received an unwanted friend or follow request*



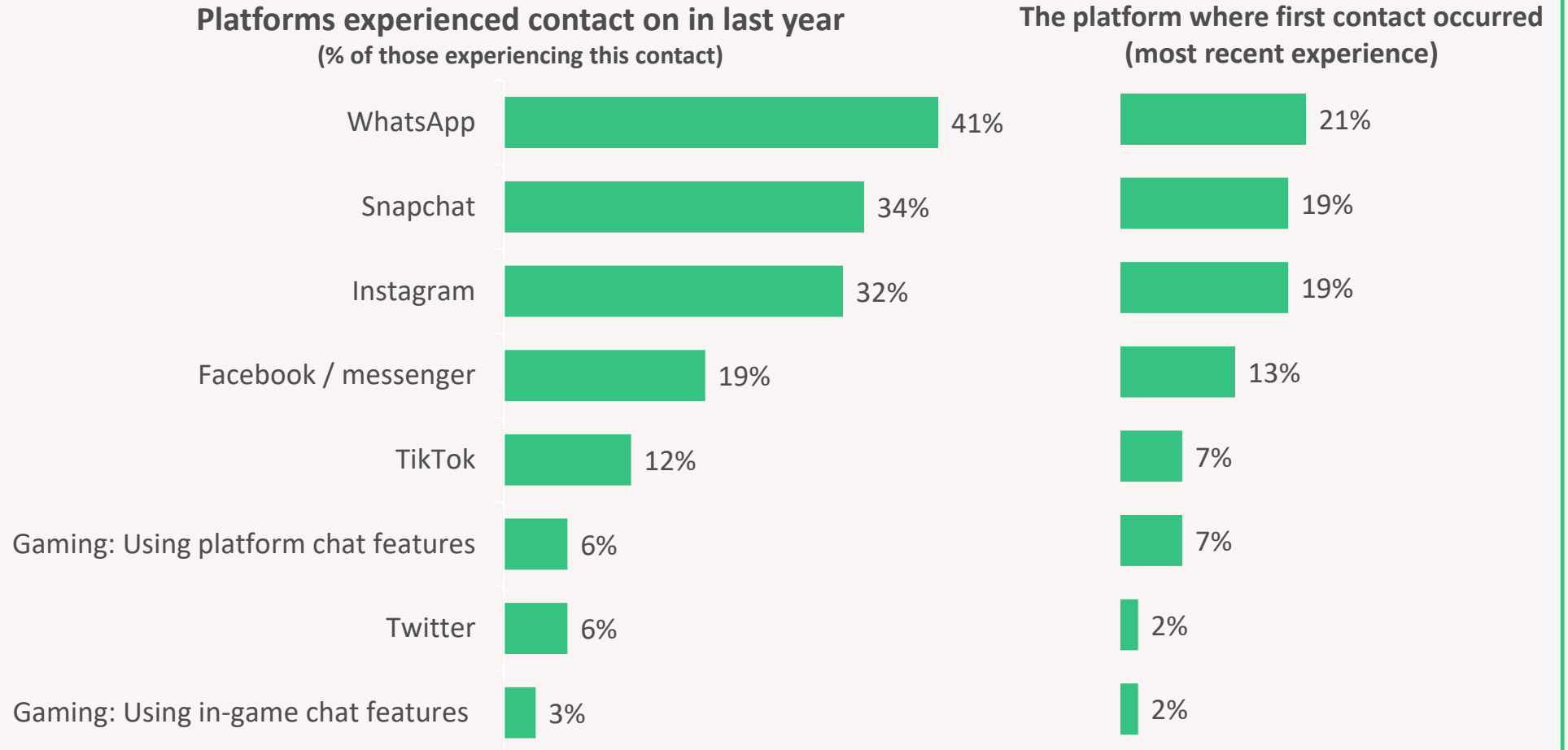
*Please note this is based on the child's experience across all online platforms, not just those specifically asked about in the survey

C1. The following are types of messages or contact that you may have received and which may have made you feel uncomfortable. Which of these have you ever experienced online? Base: All who ever received an unwanted friend or follow request (635) C2. And again, in the [IF AGE = 11-17] last year / [IF AGE = 18] in the year before you were 18 which online platforms [IF AGE = 11-17] have you experienced these things on / [IF AGE = 18] did you experience these things on? C6: On which app or platform did you first come across this person or people? Only codes above 3% shown on 'Platforms experienced contact on' Base: all those whose most recent potentially uncomfortable contact was an unwanted friend or follow request (444)

Almost one in four 11-18 year olds said they have at some point been added to a group chat with people they don't know well or at all

Added to a group chat which includes people you don't know well or don't know at all

23%
said they have been added to a group chat with others they don't know*



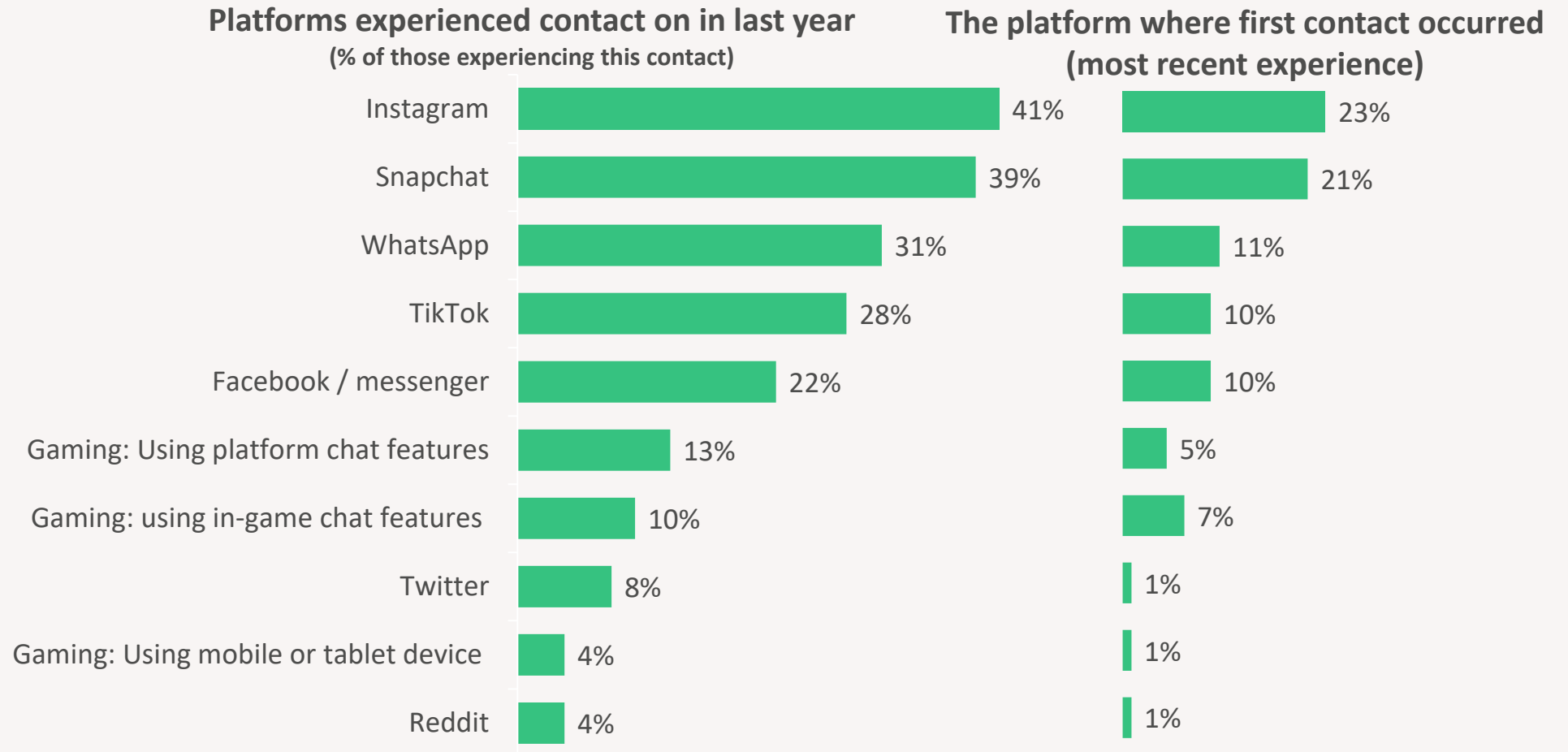
*Please note this is based on the child's experience across all online platforms, not just those specifically asked about in the survey

C1. The following are types of messages or contact that you may have received and which may have made you feel uncomfortable. Which of these have you ever experienced online? Base: All who have been added to a group chat with others they don't know (477) C2. And again, in the [IF AGE = 11-17] last year / [IF AGE = 18] in the year before you were 18 which online platforms [IF AGE = 11-17] have you experienced these things on / [IF AGE = 18] did you experience these things on? C6. On which app or platform did you first come across this person or people? Only codes above 3% shown on 'Platforms experienced contact on' Base: All whose most recent potentially uncomfortable contact was being added to a group chat with others they don't know (477)

One in five children said they have at some point received abusive or rude messages

Received abusive, nasty, or rude messages, voice notes or comments

20%
said they have ever received abusive or rude messages*



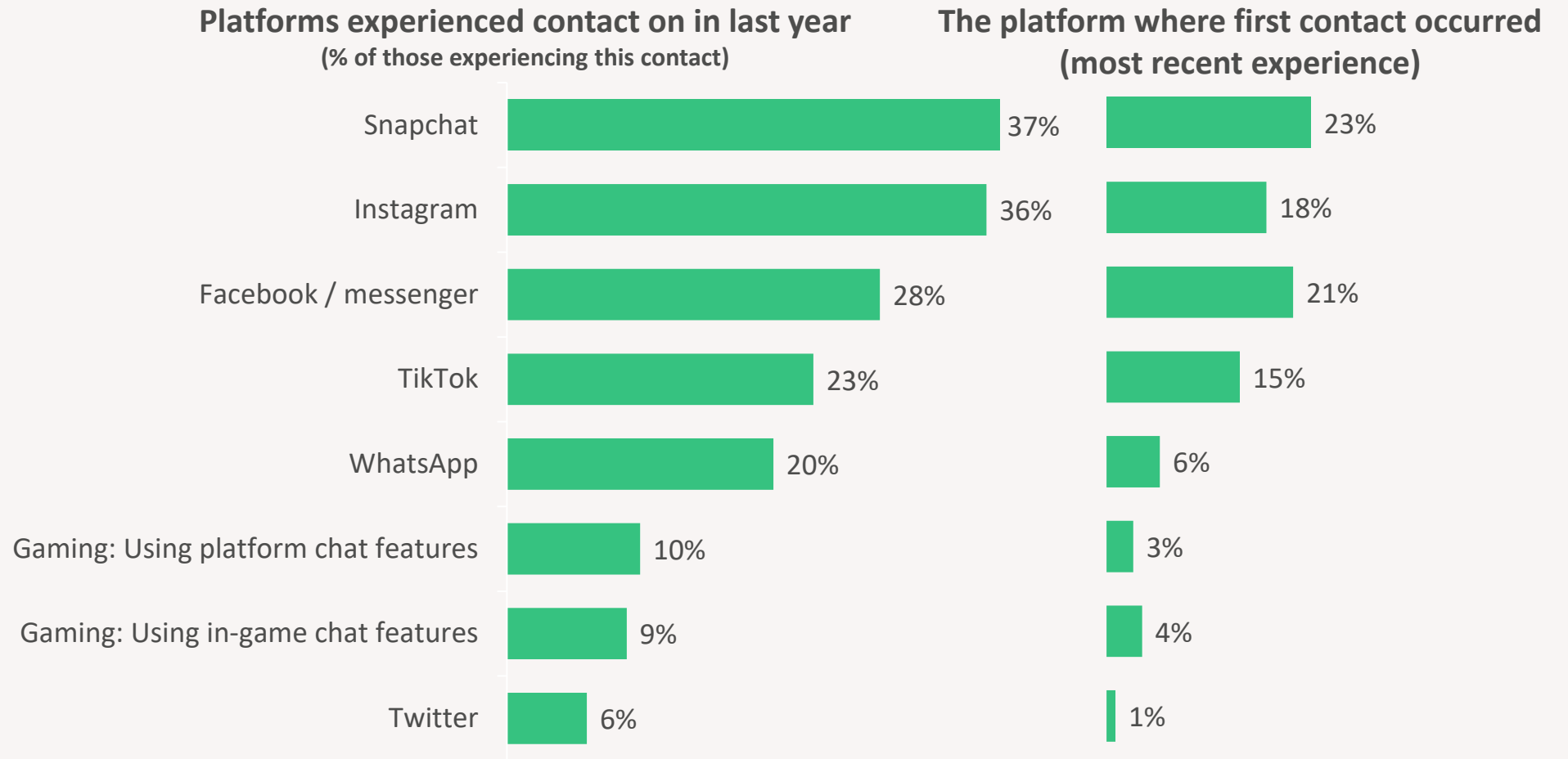
*Please note this is based on the child's experience across all online platforms, not just those specifically asked about in the survey

C1. The following are types of messages or contact that you may have received and which may have made you feel uncomfortable. Which of these have you ever experienced online? Base: All who ever received abusive, nasty, or rude messages, voice note or comments (412) C2. And again, in the [IF AGE = 11-17] last year / [IF AGE = 18] in the year before you were 18 which online platforms [IF AGE = 11-17] have you experienced these things on / [IF AGE = 18] did you experience these things on? C6. On which app or platform did you first come across this person or people? Only codes above 3% shown on 'Platforms experienced contact on' Base: All whose most recent potentially uncomfortable contact was receiving abusive, nasty, or rude messages, voice note or comments (174)

Seventeen percent of children said they have at some point been asked to share personal information

Asked to share personal information, like where I live or how old I am

17%
said they have been asked to share personal information*



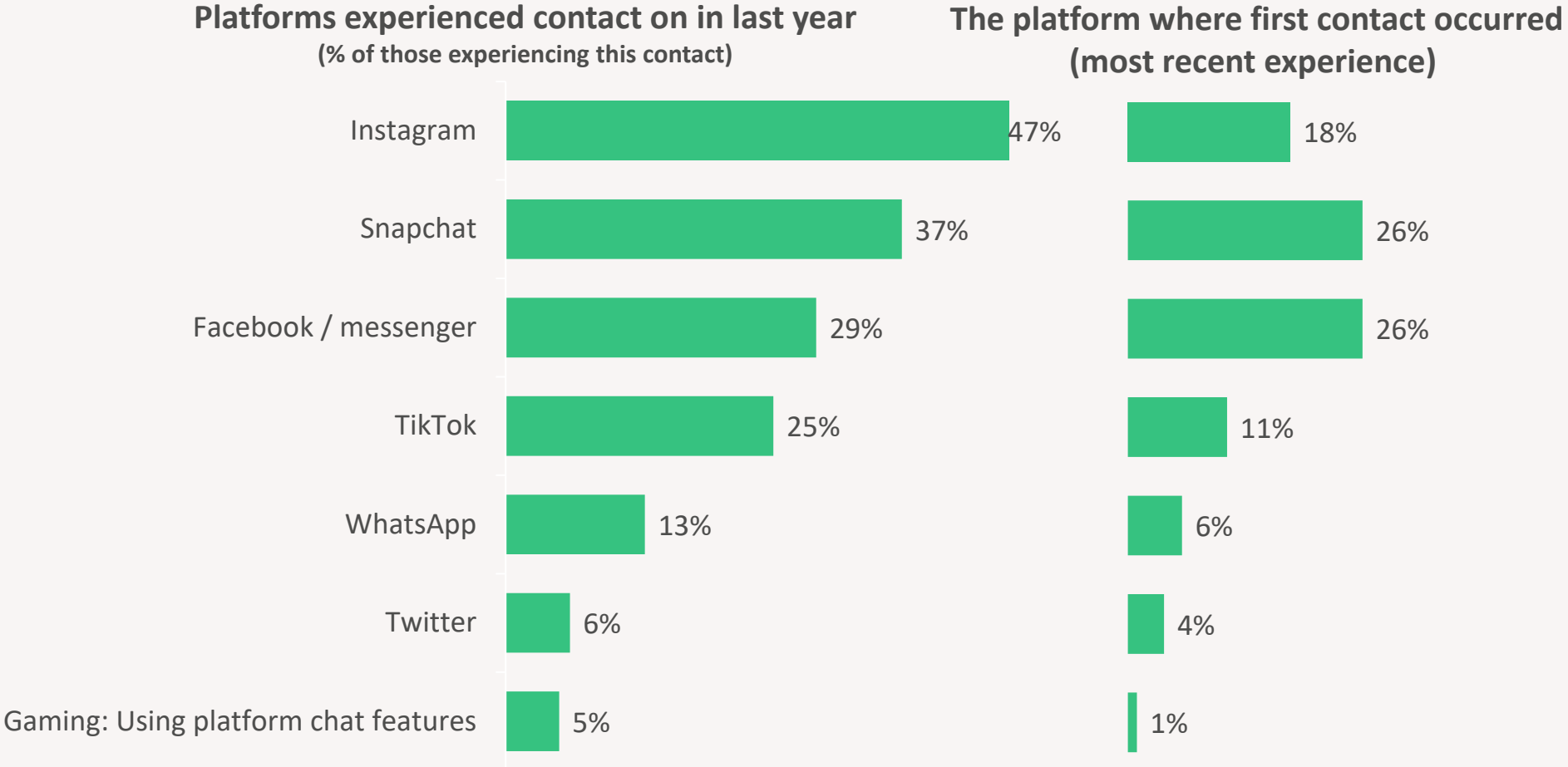
*Please note this is based on the child's experience across all online platforms, not just those specifically asked about in the survey

C1. The following are types of messages or contact that you may have received and which may have made you feel uncomfortable. Which of these have you ever experienced online? Base: All who ever been asked to share personal information, like where I live or how old I am (368) C2. And again, in the [IF AGE = 11-17] last year / [IF AGE = 18] in the year before you were 18 which online platforms [IF AGE = 11-17] have you experienced these things on / [IF AGE = 18] did you experience these things on? C6. On which app or platform did you first come across this person or people? Only codes above 3% shown on 'Platforms experienced contact on' Base: All whose most recent contact was being asked to share personal information, like where I live or how old I am (147)

Fifteen percent of 11-18 year olds said they have at some point received a friend request from someone pretending to be someone else

A friend request from someone pretending to be someone else

15%
 said they have ever been received a friend request from someone pretending to be someone else*



*Please note this is based on the child’s experience across all online platforms, not just those specifically asked about in the survey
 C1. The following are types of messages or contact that you may have received and which may have made you feel uncomfortable. Which of these have you ever experienced online? Base: All those who have received a friend request from someone pretending to be someone else (328) C2. And again, in the [IF AGE = 11-17] last year / [IF AGE = 18] in the year before you were 18 which online platforms [IF AGE = 11-17] have you experienced these things on / [IF AGE = 18] did you experience these things on? C6. On which app or platform did you first come across this person or people? Only codes above 3% shown on ‘Platforms experienced contact on’ Base: all those whose most recent potentially uncomfortable contact was a friend request from someone pretending to be someone else (132)

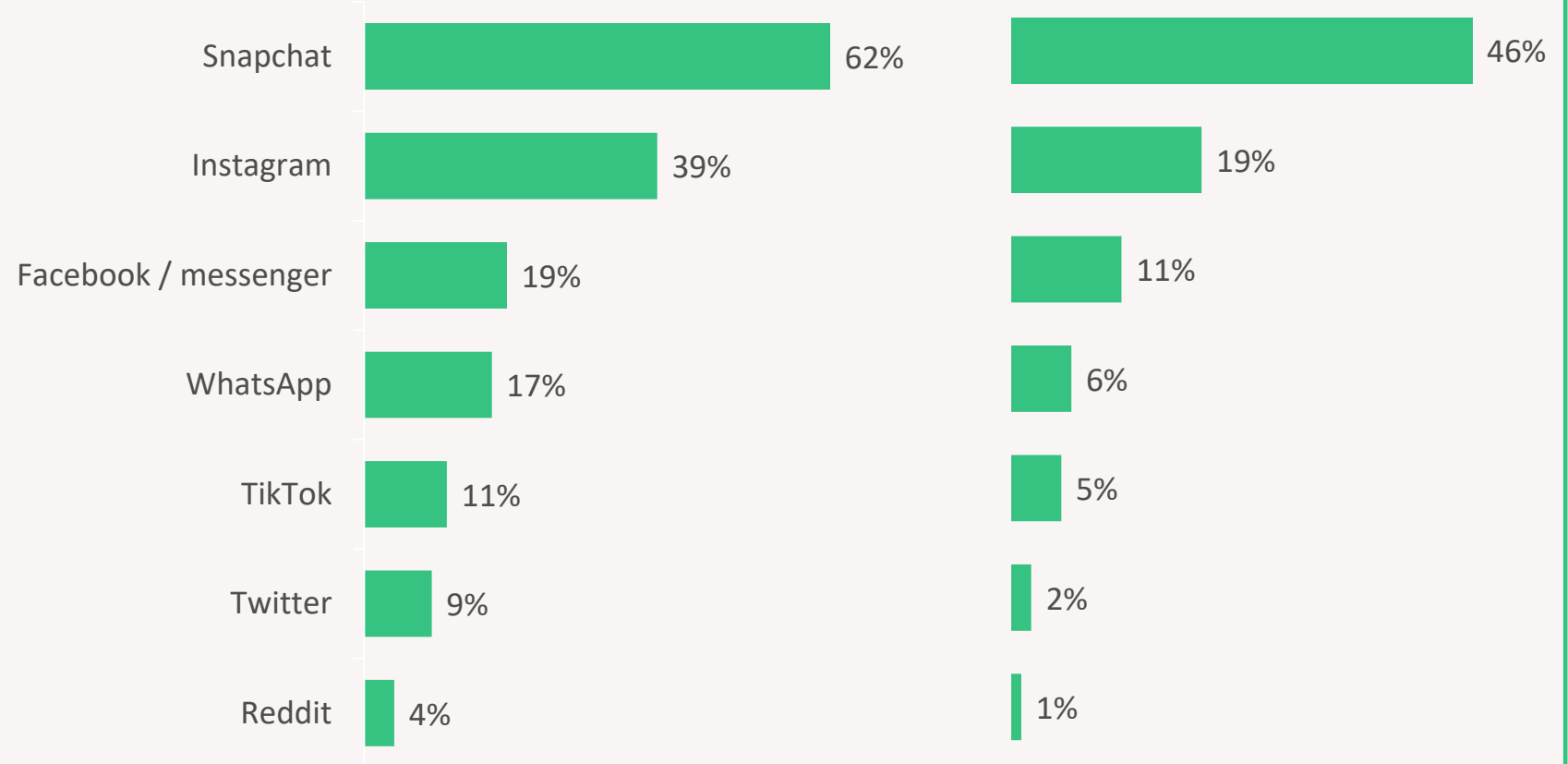
Thirteen percent of children said they have at some point received naked or half-dressed photos or videos

Received pictures or videos of naked or half-dressed people

13%
said they have ever received pictures or videos of naked or half-naked people*

Platforms experienced contact on in last year
(% of those experiencing this contact)

The platform where first contact occurred
(most recent experience)



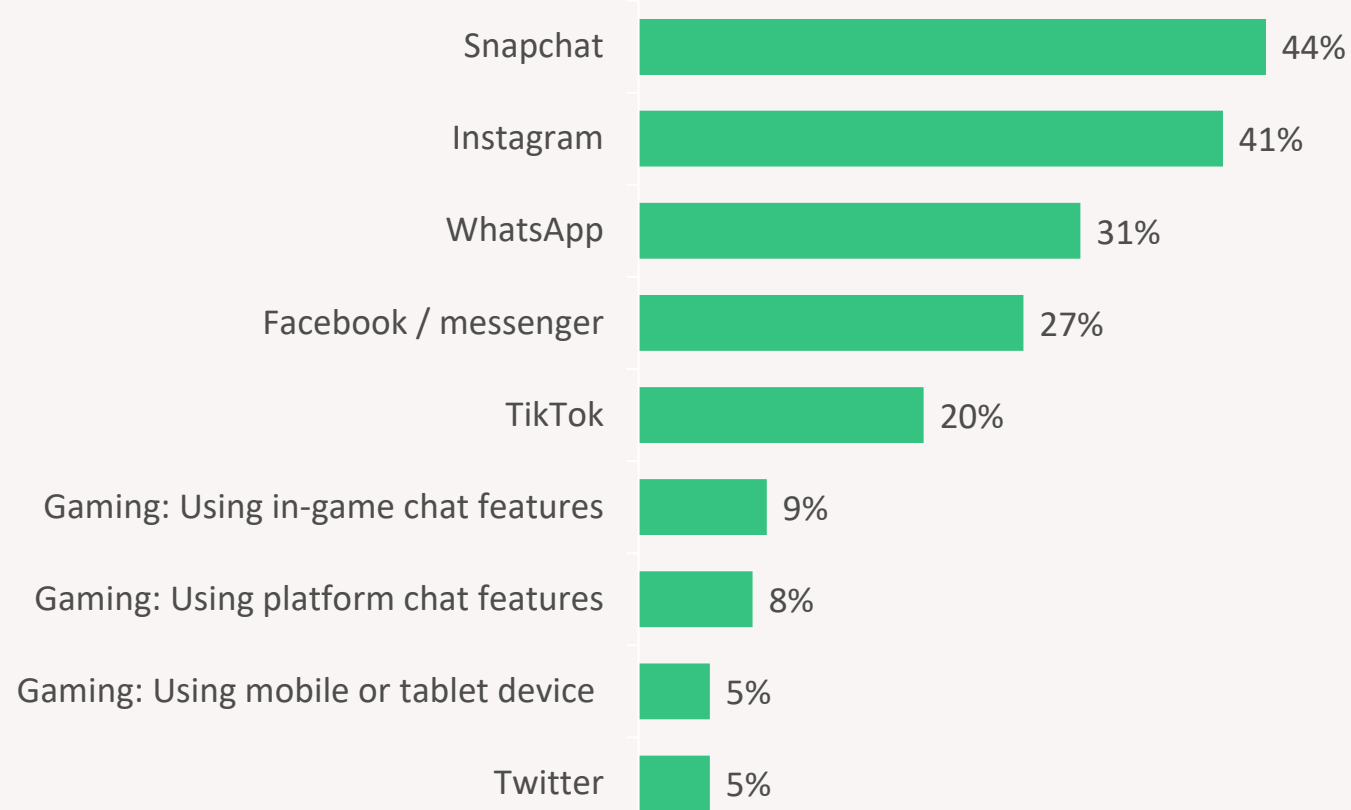
*Please note this is based on the child's experience across all online platforms, not just those specifically asked about in the survey

C1. The following are types of messages or contact that you may have received and which may have made you feel uncomfortable. Which of these have you ever experienced online? Base: All who have ever received pictures or videos of naked or half-dressed people (289) C2. And again, in the [IF AGE = 11-17] last year / [IF AGE = 18] in the year before you were 18 which online platforms [IF AGE = 11-17] have you experienced these things on / [IF AGE = 18] did you experience these things on? C6. On which app or platform did you first come across this person or people? Only codes above 3% shown on 'Platforms experienced contact on' Base: all those whose most recent potentially uncomfortable experience was receiving pictures of videos of naked or half-dressed people (104)

Thirteen percent of 11-18 year olds said they have at some point been asked to video call someone they don't know

Asked to video call/chat with someone you've not spoken to before

Platforms experienced contact on in last year
(% of those experiencing this contact)



13%

said they have ever been asked to video call/chat*

A breakdown of platforms where first contact occurred (most recent experience) is not available due to low base size

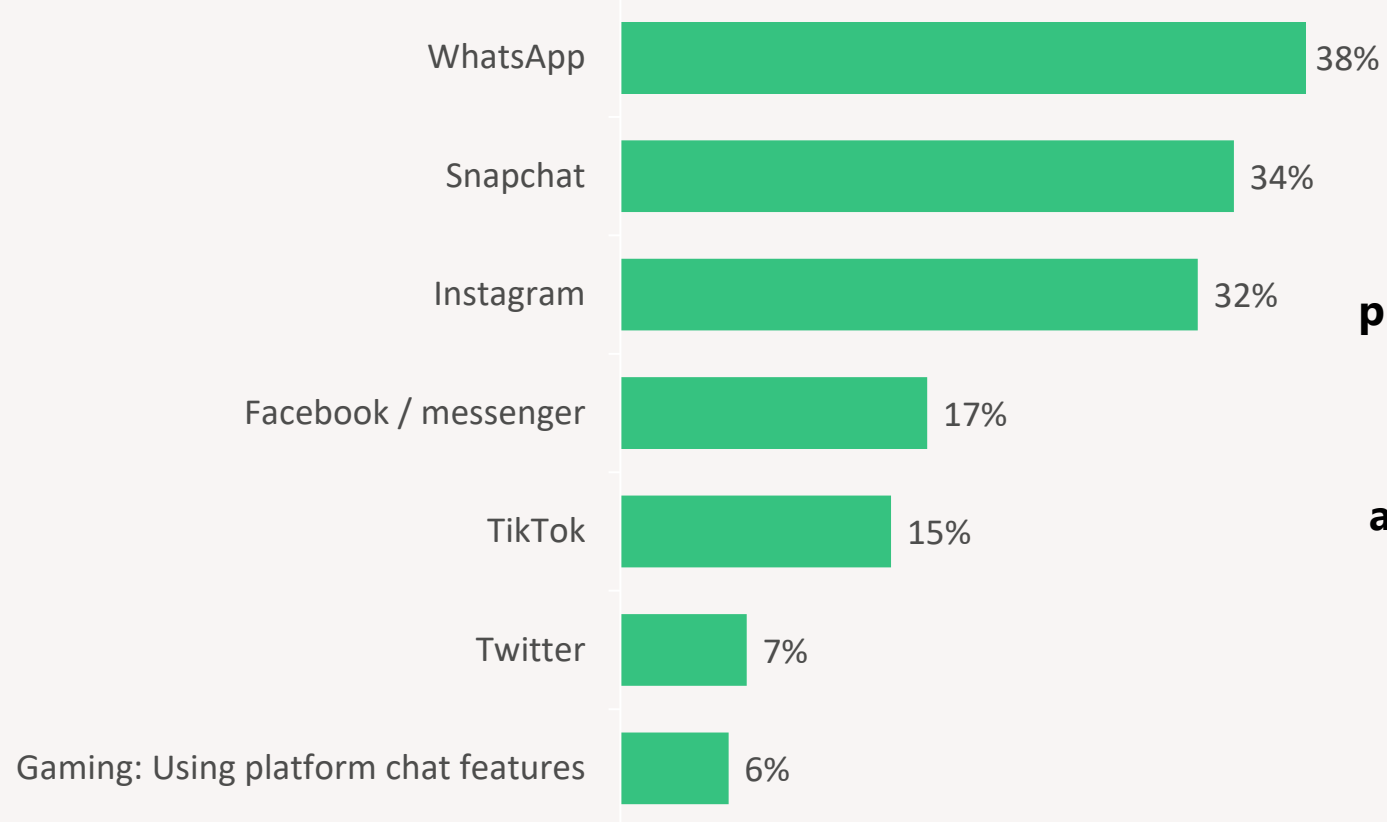
*Please note this is based on the child's experience across all online platforms, not just those specifically asked about in the survey

C1. The following are types of messages or contact that you may have received and which may have made you feel uncomfortable. Which of these have you ever experienced online? C2. And again, in the [IF AGE = 11-17] last year / [IF AGE = 18] in the year before you were 18 which online platforms [IF AGE = 11-17] have you experienced these things on / [IF AGE = 18] did you experience these things on? C6. On which app or platform did you first come across this person or people? Only codes above 3% shown on 'Platforms experienced contact on' Base: 279 (All who have ever been asked to video call/chat with someone you've not spoken to before)

One in ten children said they have at some point been added to a group video call with people they don't know

Added to a group video call which includes people you don't know well or don't know at all

Platforms experienced contact on in last year
(% of those experiencing this contact)



11%

said they have ever been added to a group video call with people not known*

A breakdown of platforms where first contact occurred (most recent experience) is not available due to low base size

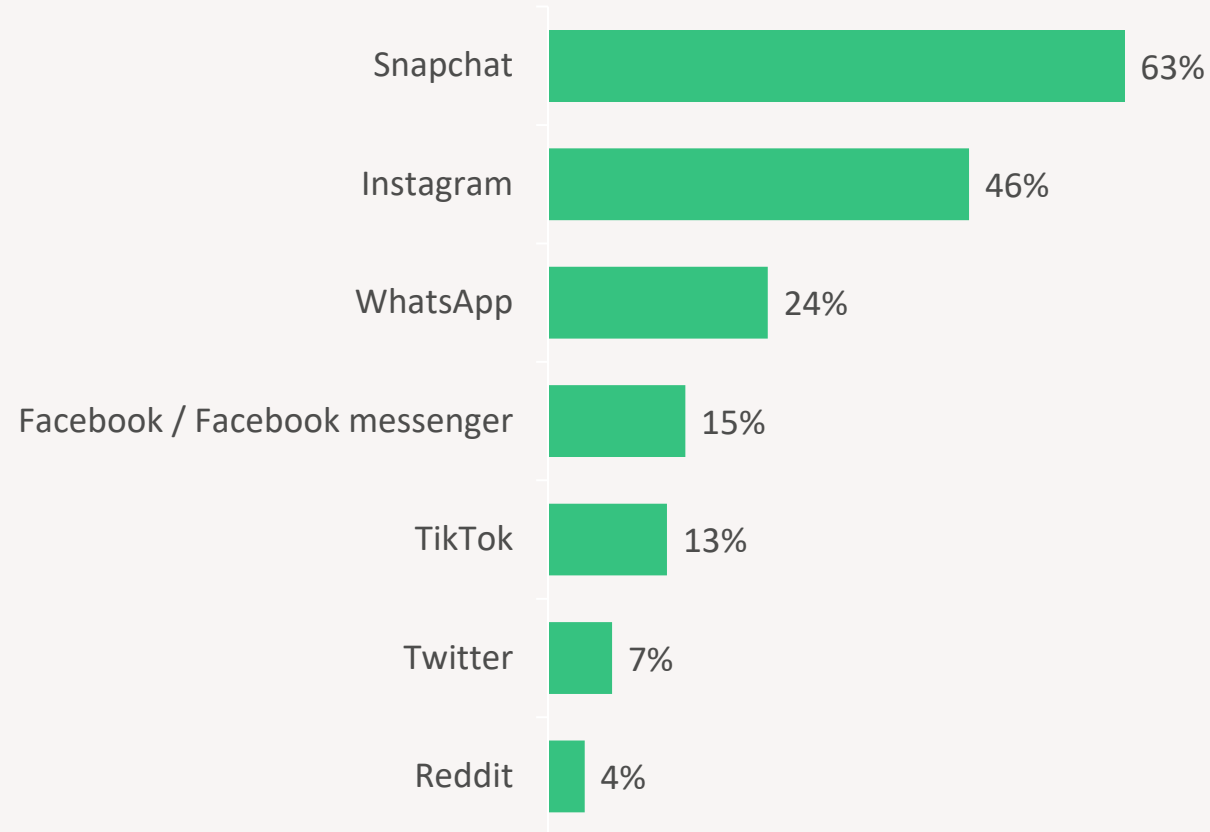
*Please note this is based on the child's experience across all online platforms, not just those specifically asked about in the survey

C1. The following are types of messages or contact that you may have received and which may have made you feel uncomfortable. Which of these have you ever experienced online? C2. And again, in the [IF AGE = 11-17] last year / [IF AGE = 18] in the year before you were 18 which online platforms [IF AGE = 11-17] have you experienced these things on / [IF AGE = 18] did you experience these things on? C6. On which app or platform did you first come across this person or people? Only codes above 3% shown on 'Platforms experienced contact on' Base: 226 (All who have ever been added to a group video call with people not known)

One in ten children said they have at some point been asked to share naked or half-dressed photos or videos

Asked to share naked or half-dressed pictures or videos

Platforms experienced contact on in last year
(% of those experiencing this contact)



10%

said they have ever been asked to share naked or half-dressed photos/videos*

A breakdown of platforms where first contact occurred (most recent experience) is not available due to low base size

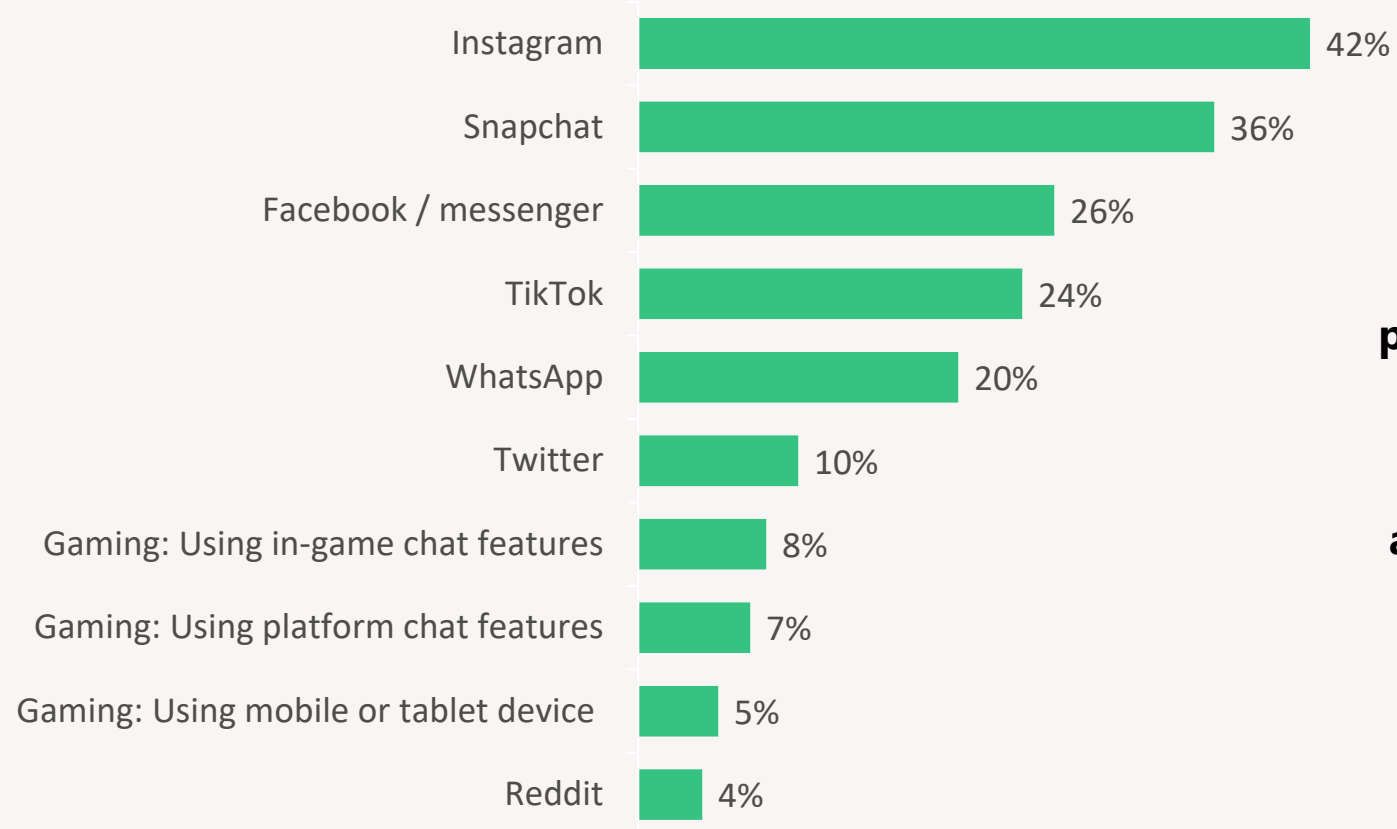
*Please note this is based on the child's experience across all online platforms, not just those specifically asked about in the survey

C1. The following are types of messages or contact that you may have received and which may have made you feel uncomfortable. Which of these have you ever experienced online? C2. And again, in the [IF AGE = 11-17] last year / [IF AGE = 18] in the year before you were 18 which online platforms [IF AGE = 11-17] have you experienced these things on / [IF AGE = 18] did you experience these things on? C6. On which app or platform did you first come across this person or people? Only codes above 3% shown on 'Platforms experienced contact on' Base: All who have ever been asked to share naked or half-dressed photos/videos (221)

One in ten children said they have been asked to move their chat to a different platform by someone they did not know well or at all. Two in five communicated on more than one platform with the last person who asked them to do this.

Asked to move your chat to a different app or platform by someone you don't know well or don't know at all

Platforms experienced contact on in last year
(% of those experiencing this contact)



10%

said they have ever been asked to move their chat*

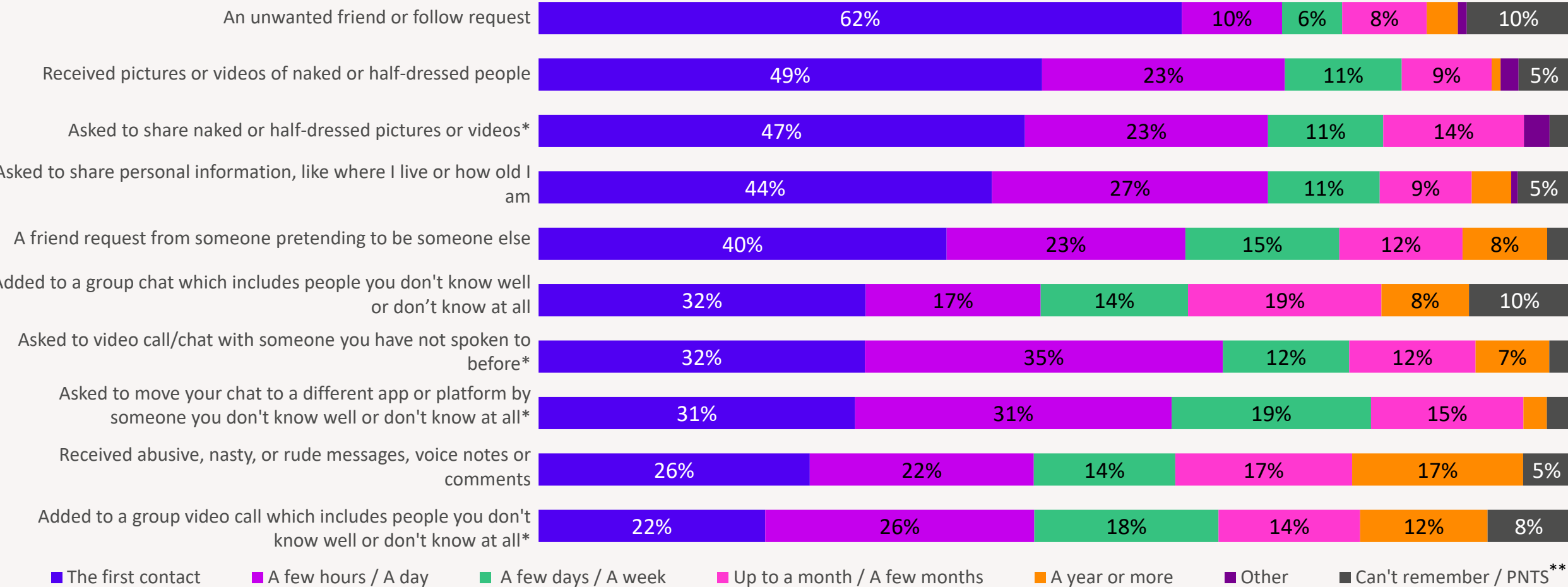
A breakdown of platforms where first contact occurred (most recent experience) is not available due to low base size

*Please note this is based on the child's experience across all online platforms, not just those specifically asked about in the survey

C1. The following are types of messages or contact that you may have received and which may have made you feel uncomfortable. Which of these have you ever experienced online? Base: All who have ever been asked to move their chat to a different app or platform (213) C2. And again, in the [IF AGE = 11-17] last year / [IF AGE = 18] in the year before you were 18 which online platforms [IF AGE = 11-17] have you experienced these things on / [IF AGE = 18] did you experience these things on? C6. On which app or platform did you first come across this person or people? Only codes above 3% shown on 'Platforms experienced contact on'. Base: All who have ever been asked to move their chat to a different app or platform (206)

For many potentially uncomfortable forms of contact, the experience often occurs within/during the first contact with the person or people in question

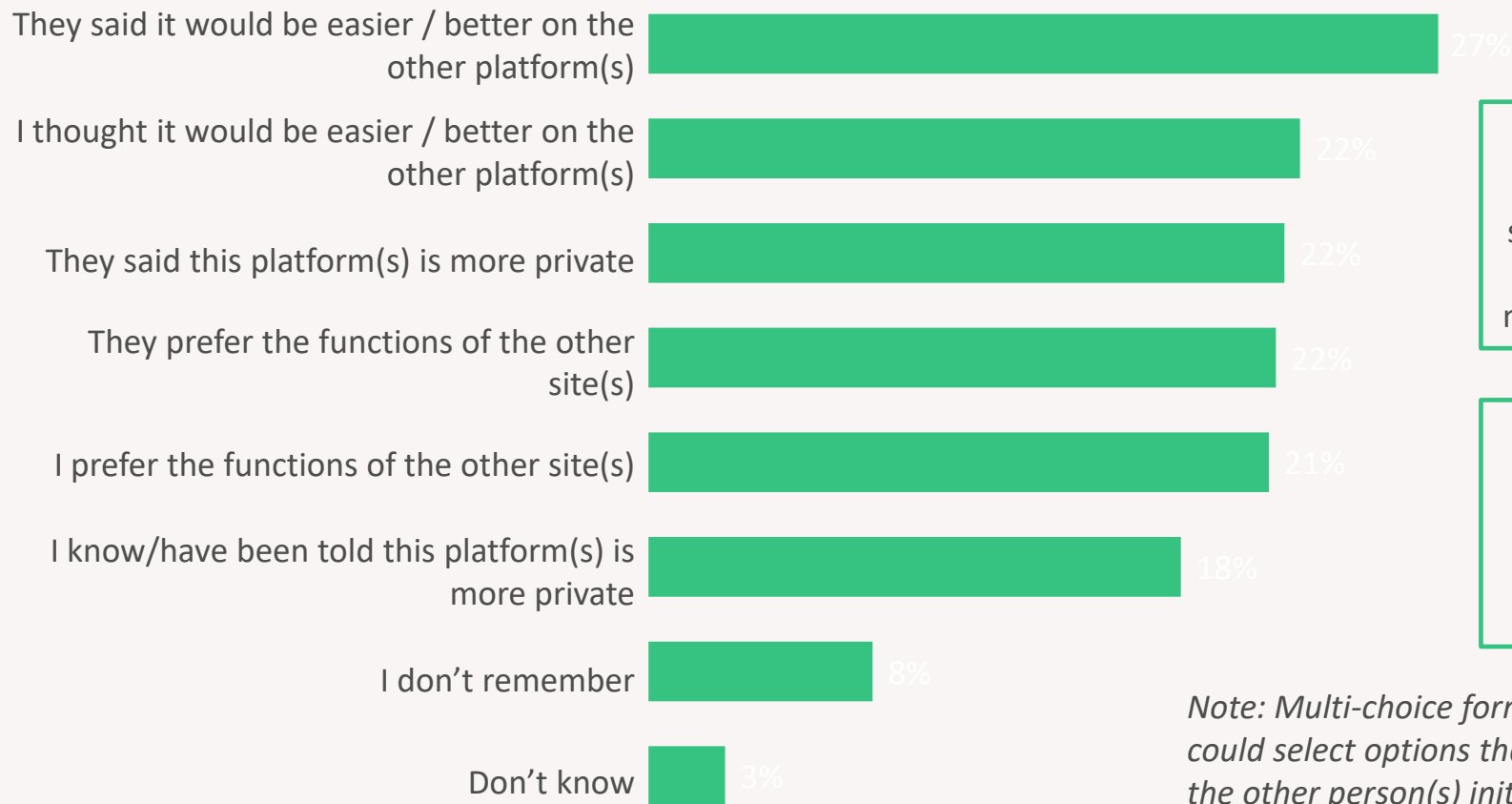
Length of contact before experiencing potentially uncomfortable contact



Source: CSB. How long had you been in contact with the person before you started experiencing the following? By being in contact, we mean how long you've known them
 Base: All those whose most recent potentially uncomfortable contact was [CONTACT]; Unwanted friend request (444), Asked to share naked or half-dressed images (72), Asked to share personal info (147), Friend request from someone pretending to be someone else (132), Received naked or half-dressed images (104), Received abusive messages (174), Asked to video call with people not known well or at all (98), Asked to move platform (84), Added to group chat with people not known well or at all (225), Added to group video call with people not known well or at all (71). *Base size under 100 treat as indicative only. **PNTS = Prefer Not to Say

One in five children said they had spoken on multiple platforms with the person with whom they had their most recent potentially uncomfortable contact online. Similar proportions said they initiated this platform move vs. the other person initiating it.

Reason(s) why chat moved to another platform



20%

of children who said they had had a potentially uncomfortable contact with someone said they had spoken on more than one platform with that person

57%

said the **other person(s)** at least partly initiated the move to the other platform

52%

said **they** at least partly initiated the move to the other platform

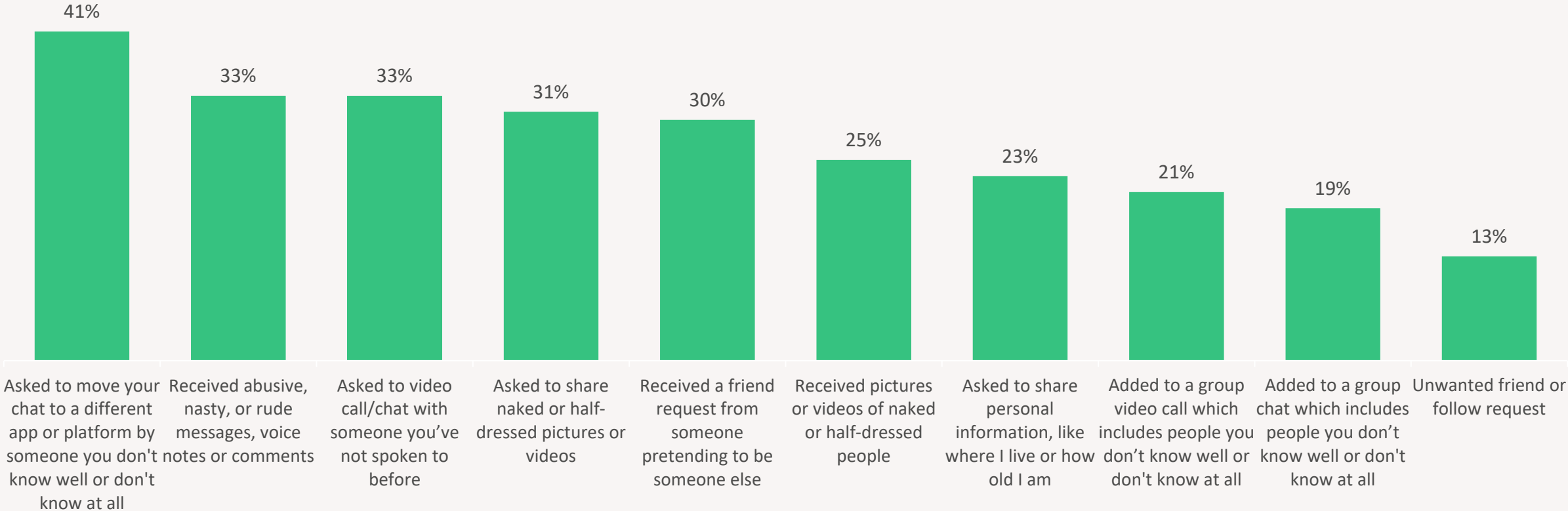
Note: Multi-choice format means respondents could select options that suggest both they and the other person(s) initiated the move.

C9: Why did the chat move to another app or platform / other apps or platforms?

Base: All who have experienced potentially uncomfortable contact on more than one platform (247)

During their most recent potentially uncomfortable contact online, children were most likely to have communicated via more than one platform either with someone who sent them an abusive message, or with someone they had not spoken to before who asked them to join a video call/chat.

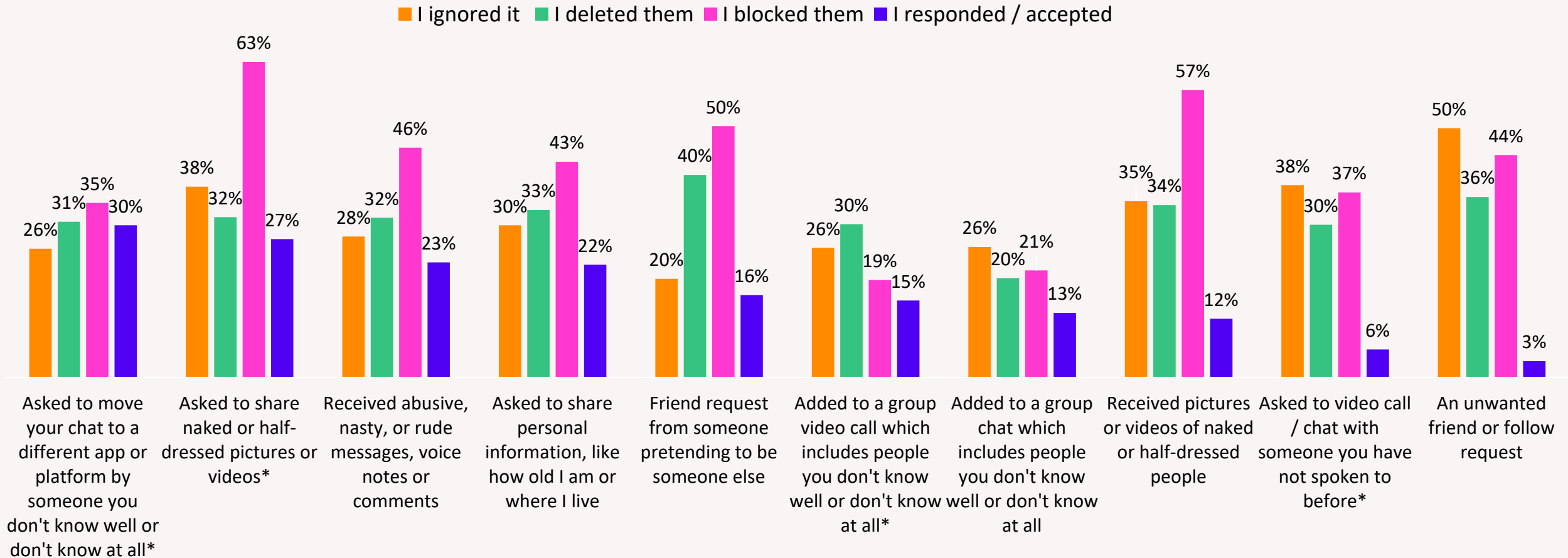
Proportion who communicated via more than one platform during the most recent potentially uncomfortable contact online



Source: C7. Still thinking about this most recent experience, did you communicate on any other apps or platforms?
 Base: All those whose most recent potentially uncomfortable contact was [CONTACT]; Unwanted friend request (444), Asked to share naked or half-dressed images (72), Asked to share personal info (147), Friend request from someone pretending to be someone else (132), Received naked or half-dressed images (104), Received abusive messages (174), Asked to video call with people not known well or at all (98), Asked to move platform (84), Added to group chat with people not known well or at all (225), Added to group video call with people not known well or at all (71). *Base size under 100 treat as indicative only.

After encountering their most recent potentially uncomfortable contact, most 11-18 year olds either ignored, deleted and/or blocked communication with the person/people in question – but notable minorities responded to some of these types of contact

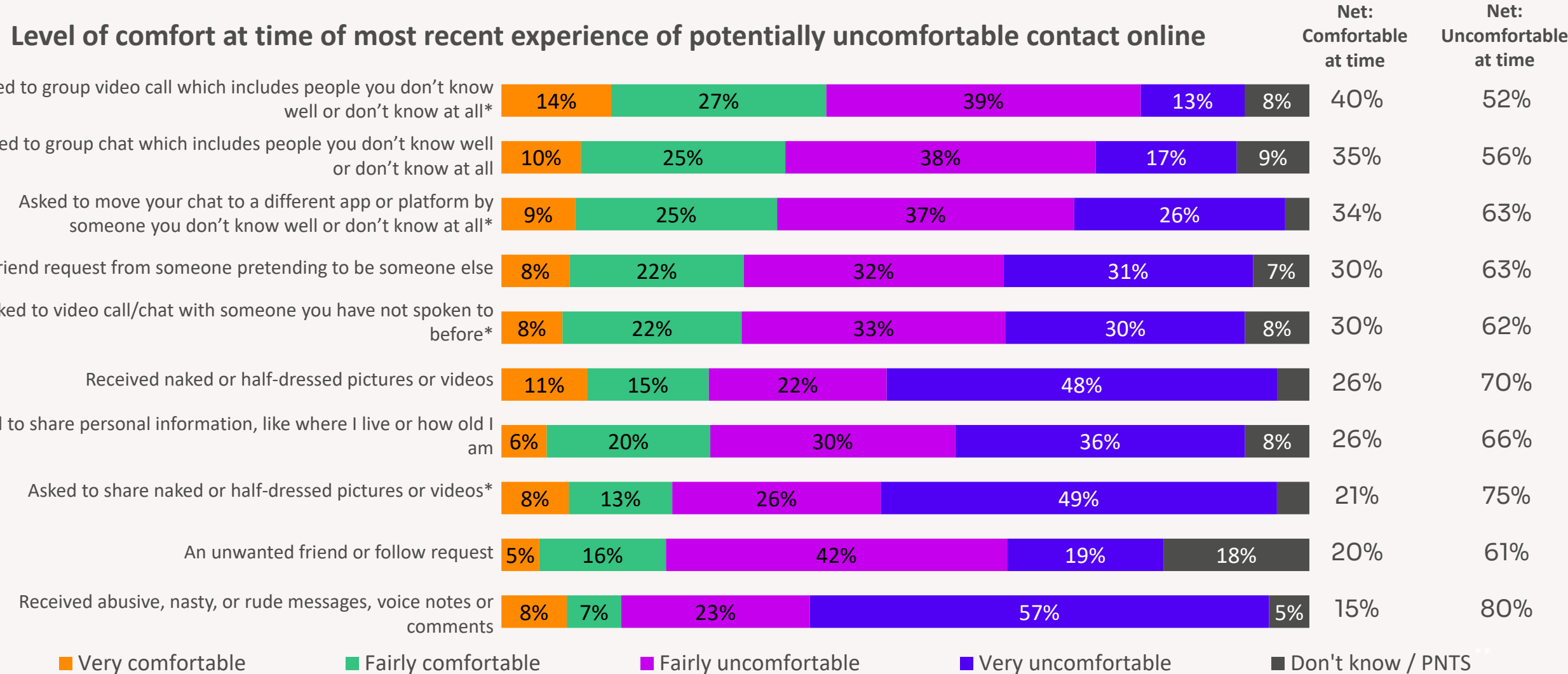
Reactions/response to potentially uncomfortable contact



Source: C5A. How did you respond to each part of the recent experience with this person or people? Think about all the different things you did...

Base: All those whose most recent potentially uncomfortable contact was [CONTACT]; Unwanted friend request (444), Asked to share naked or half-dressed images (72), Asked to share personal info (147), Friend request from someone pretending to be someone else (132), Received naked or half-dressed images (104), Received abusive messages (174), Asked to video call with people not known well or at all (98), Asked to move platform (84), Added to group chat with people not known well or at all (225), Added to group video call with people not known well or at all (71). *Base size under 100, treat as indicative only

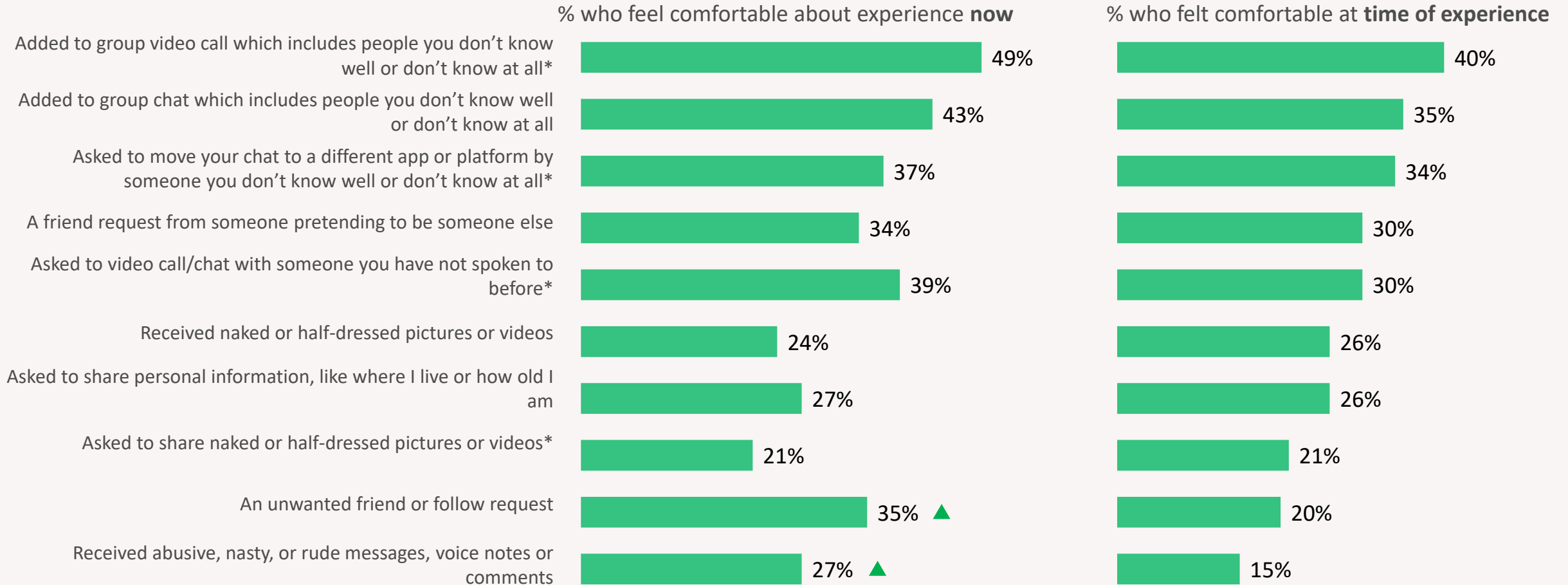
Children's levels of comfort with different forms of potentially uncomfortable contact vary widely



Source: C11A. You've told us about your recent experience of the following... How did your experience with this person or people make you feel at the time it happened?
 Base: All those whose most recent potentially uncomfortable contact was [CONTACT]; Unwanted friend request (444), Asked to share naked or half-dressed images (72), Asked to share personal info (147), Friend request from someone pretending to be someone else (132), Received naked or half-dressed images (104), Received abusive messages (174), Asked to video call with people not known well or at all (98), Asked to move platform (84), Added to group chat with people not known well or at all (225), Added to group video call with people not known well or at all (71). *Base size under 100. **PNTS = Prefer Not to Say

Children who received unwanted friend requests or abusive messages are more likely to feel comfortable reflecting back on it than they did at the time of the experience

Feelings both at the time and some time after most recent experience of potentially uncomfortable contact



Source: C11A. You've told us about your recent experience of the following... How did your experience with this person or people make you feel at the time it happened? C11B. And how do you feel about this now, thinking back on it? Base: All those whose most recent potentially uncomfortable contact was [CONTACT]; Unwanted friend request (444), Asked to share naked or half-dressed images (72), Asked to share personal info (147), Friend request from someone pretending to be someone else (132), Received naked or half-dressed images (104), Received abusive messages (174), Asked to video call with people not known well or at all (98), Asked to move platform (84), Added to group chat with people not known well or at all (225), Added to group video call with people not known well or at all (71). *Base size under 100, treat as indicative only

▲ Significant difference vs. comfortable now at 95% confidence interval
▼

