Internet users' experience of harm online: summary of survey research

Conducted by: Kantar Media

Fieldwork: June-July 2018

Background and Objectives

This research was commissioned by Ofcom. The Information Commissioner's Office provided advice on the research design and analysis.

The main objective of the research was to quantify concerns about, and reported experience of, online harm in four key categories:

- CONTENT that people view, read or listen to online
- INTERACTIONS WITH OTHER USERS
- DATA / PRIVACY
- HACKING / SECURITY

The research also explored knowledge and opinions of the current level of regulation that applies to broadcast and online environments

Methodology

Sample	• 1,686 internet users aged 16+ in the UK • Quotas set on region, gender, age, and working status using Kantar TNS Omnibus
Data collection	• Face-to-face in-home interviews • Conducted by Kantar Media • Fieldwork from 27th June to 1st July 2018

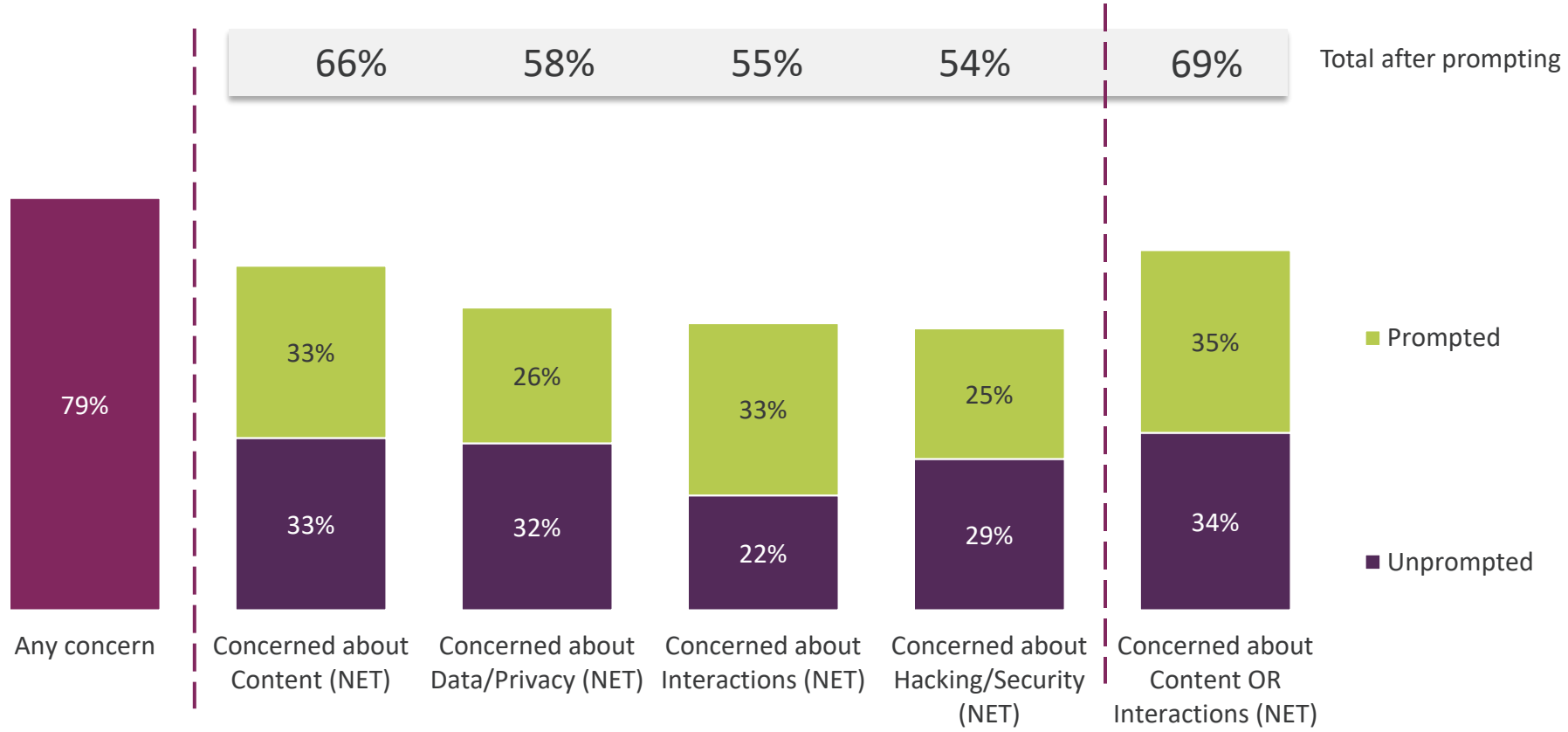
Summary of key findings

- 79% of UK adult internet users have concern(s) about aspects of going online
    - 66% are concerned about CONTENT that people view, read or listen to online
    - 58% are concerned about DATA / PRIVACY
    - 55% are concerned about INTERACTIONS WITH OTHER USERS
    - 54% are concerned about HACKING / SECURITY
- 45% of UK adult internet users indicated that they have experienced some form of online harm
- 21% of UK adult internet users have taken action to report harmful content
- The broadcast and online regulatory framework is not well understood by a significant proportion of the public
- Views are split on whether current regulations are sufficient, or whether more is required. Few believe regulation should be reduced

Section 1
Concerns about online harm

8 in 10 adult internet users expressed concerns about the using the internet

Areas of concerns about the internet



Source: Kantar TNS Omnibus 27/06/2018 to 01/07/2018 (Week 26)

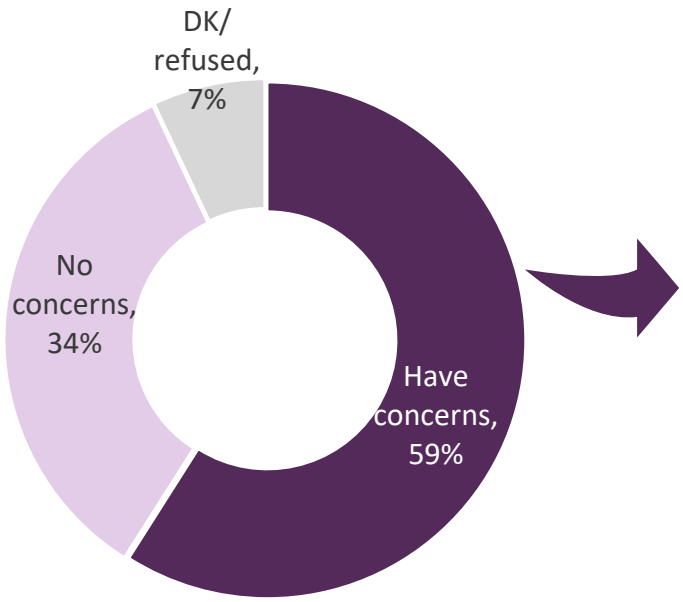
Question: Q2A/Q2B Which, if any, concerns do you have about the internet? SPONTANEOUS/PROMPTED

Base: All adult internet users in the UK (1686)

Chart shows the 'NET' proportion of all respondents who raised concerns about specific aspects of internet use.

A wide range of concerns were raised – with protection of children a key area

A range of different concerns were cited **UNPROMPTED**



Personal data being processed without knowledge/consent (19%), Loss of privacy (17%), Personal information not stored securely (14%), Spam emails (12%), Targeted advertising (9%), Fear of private or embarrassing information being made public (9%), Government/agency surveillance (8%), Targeted political messages (7%)

= 32% relating to data/privacy

Scams/Fraud/ID theft (22%), Loss or hacking of personal data/ passwords (17%), Viruses/trojans/worms/spyware/malicious software (16%)

= 29% relating to hacking/security

Child exploitation (24%), Unsuitable content for children (15%), Promotion of terrorism/ radicalisation (12%), Sex/pornography (14%), Offensive videos/pictures (11%), Fake news/ disinformation (12%), Violence (11%), Harmful or dangerous content - e.g. encouraging risky behaviour (9%), Hateful speech (11%), Bad language (8%), Offensive language in publications (7%)

= 33% relating to content

Strangers contacting children (14%), Bullying/harassment/trolling (15%), People masquerading as younger people online (13%), Threats/stalking (10%), People impersonating others or being anonymous (10%), Hateful speech from other users (9%), Offensive images from other users (8%), Unsolicited or unwelcome friend/follow/connect requests (8%), Offensive language from other users (8%)

= 22% relating to interactions with other people

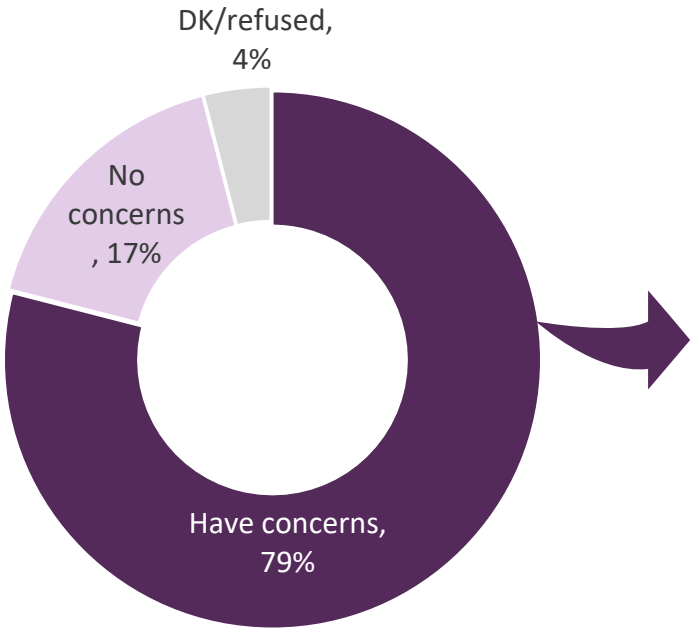
Anti-social behaviours (8%), Spending too much time online (7%), Addictive (7%), Other (6%)

Q.2a Which, if any, concerns do you have about the internet? [Data capture unprompted, then prompted. **Chart shows totals before prompting.**
Base: UK adult internet users (1,686)

A wide range of concerns were raised – with protection of children a key area

A range of different concerns were cited

AFTER PROMPTING



Personal data being processed without knowledge/consent (39%), Loss of privacy (38%), Personal information not stored securely (31%), Spam emails (30%), Targeted advertising (21%), Fear of private or embarrassing information being made public (21%), Government/agency surveillance (19%), Targeted political messages (17%)

= 58% relating to data/privacy

Scams/Fraud/ID theft (46%), Loss or hacking of personal data/ passwords (39%), Viruses/trojans/worms/spyware/malicious software (37%)

= 54% relating to hacking/security

Child exploitation (53%), Unsuitable content for children (37%), Promotion of terrorism/ radicalisation (37%), Sex/pornography (33%), Offensive videos/pictures (31%), Fake news/ disinformation (29%), Violence (27%), Harmful or dangerous content - e.g. encouraging risky behaviour (27%), Hateful speech (27%), Bad language (20%), Offensive language in publications (19%)

= 66% relating to content

Strangers contacting children (40%), Bullying/harassment/trolling (39%), People masquerading as younger people online (33%), Threats/stalking (28%), People impersonating others or being anonymous (27%), Hateful speech from other users (23%), Offensive images from other users (21%), Unsolicited or unwelcome friend/follow/connect requests (20%), Offensive language from other users (19%)

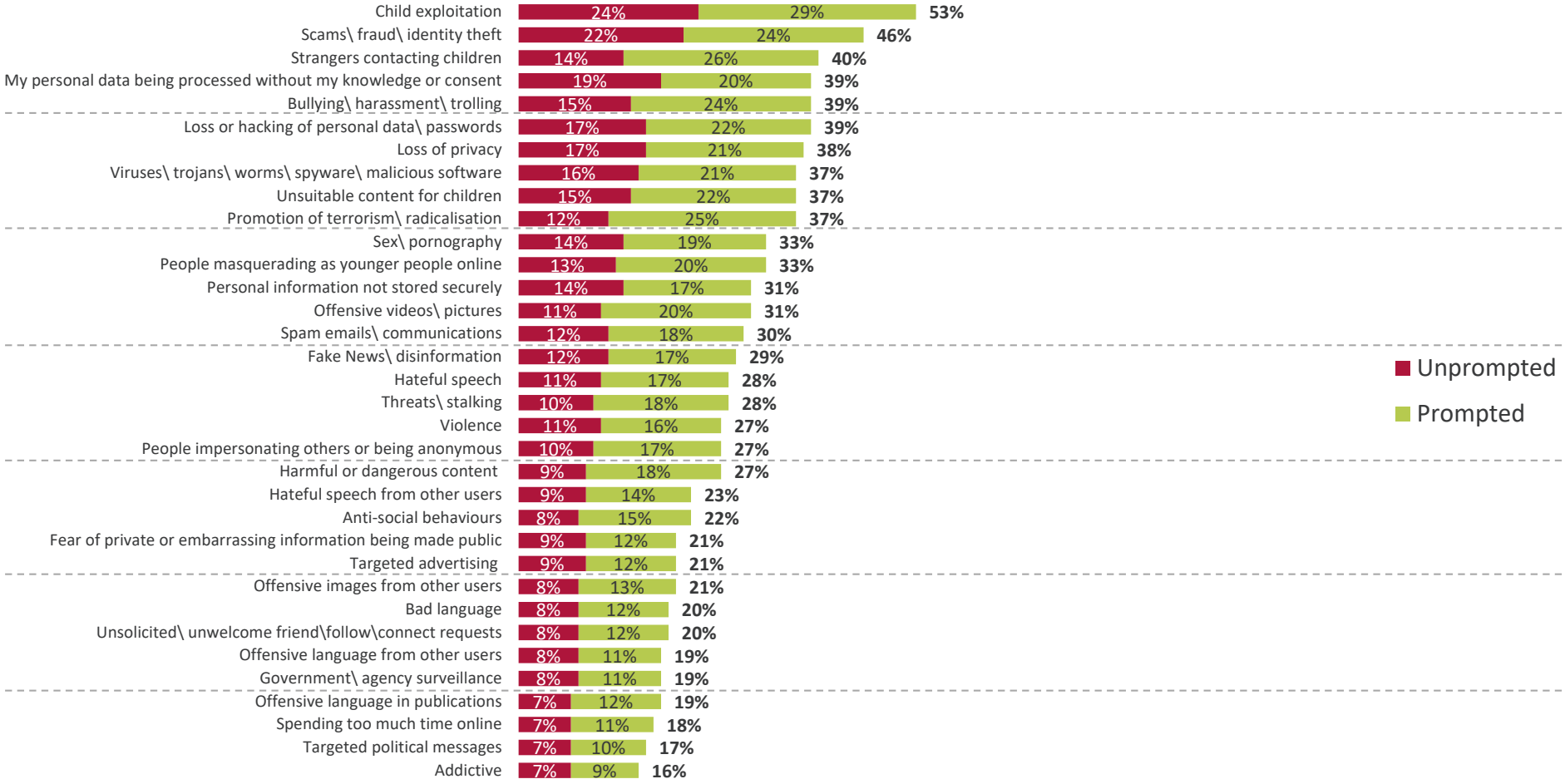
= 55% relating to interactions with other people

Anti-social behaviours (23%), Spending too much time online (18%), Addictive (16%), Other (6%)

Q.2a/b Which, if any, concerns do you have about the internet? [Data capture unprompted, then prompted. **Chart shows totals after prompting.**
Base: UK adult internet users (1,686)

Summary of concerns – unprompted and prompted

Proportion of internet users expressing a concern



Source: Kantar TNS Omnibus 27/06/2018 to 01/07/2018 (Week 26)

Question: Q2A/Q2B Which, if any, concerns do you have about the internet? SPONTANEOUS/PROMPTED

Base: All internet users in the UK (1686)

Issues relating to children were of the greatest concern

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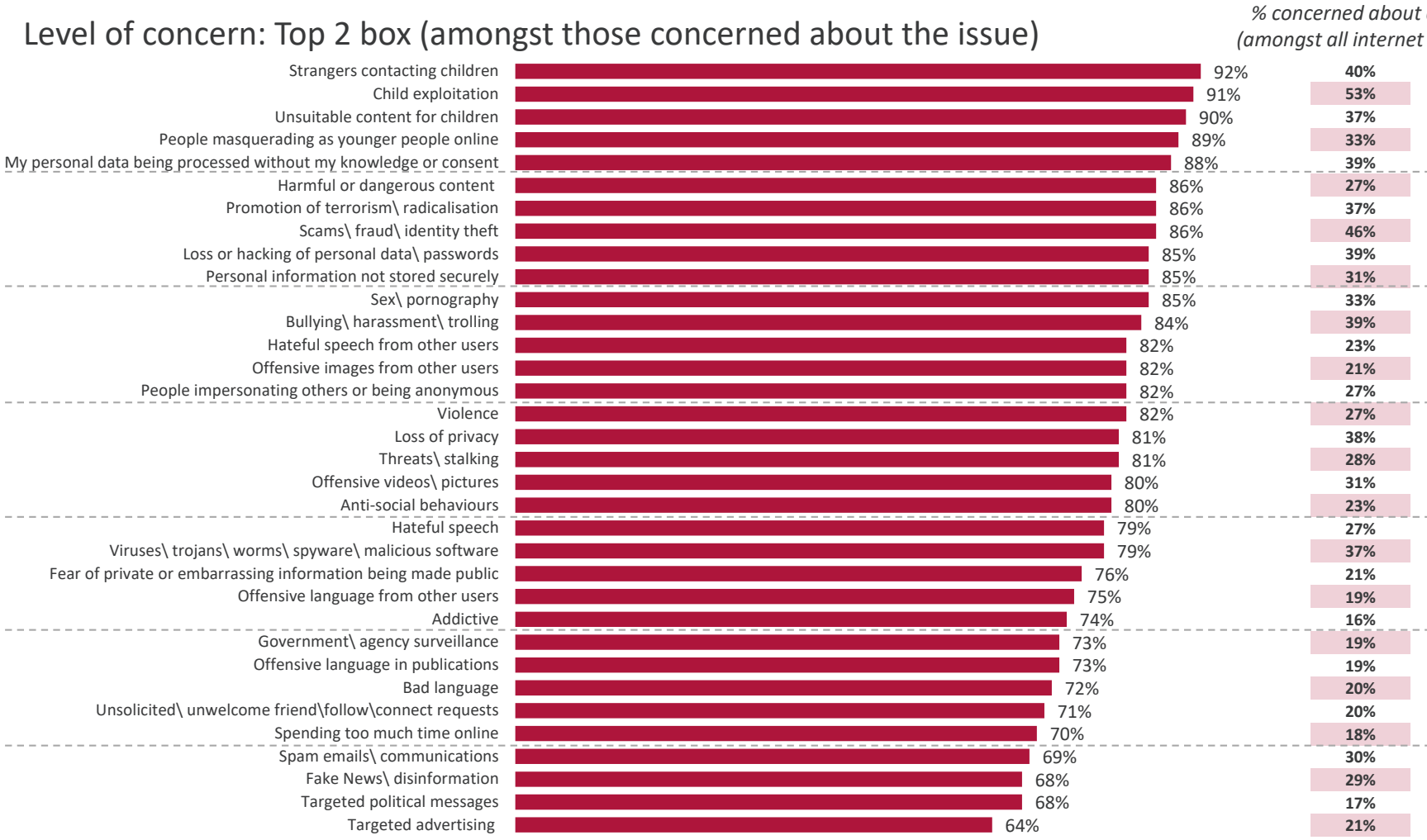
Level of concern: Top 2 box (amongst those concerned about the issue)



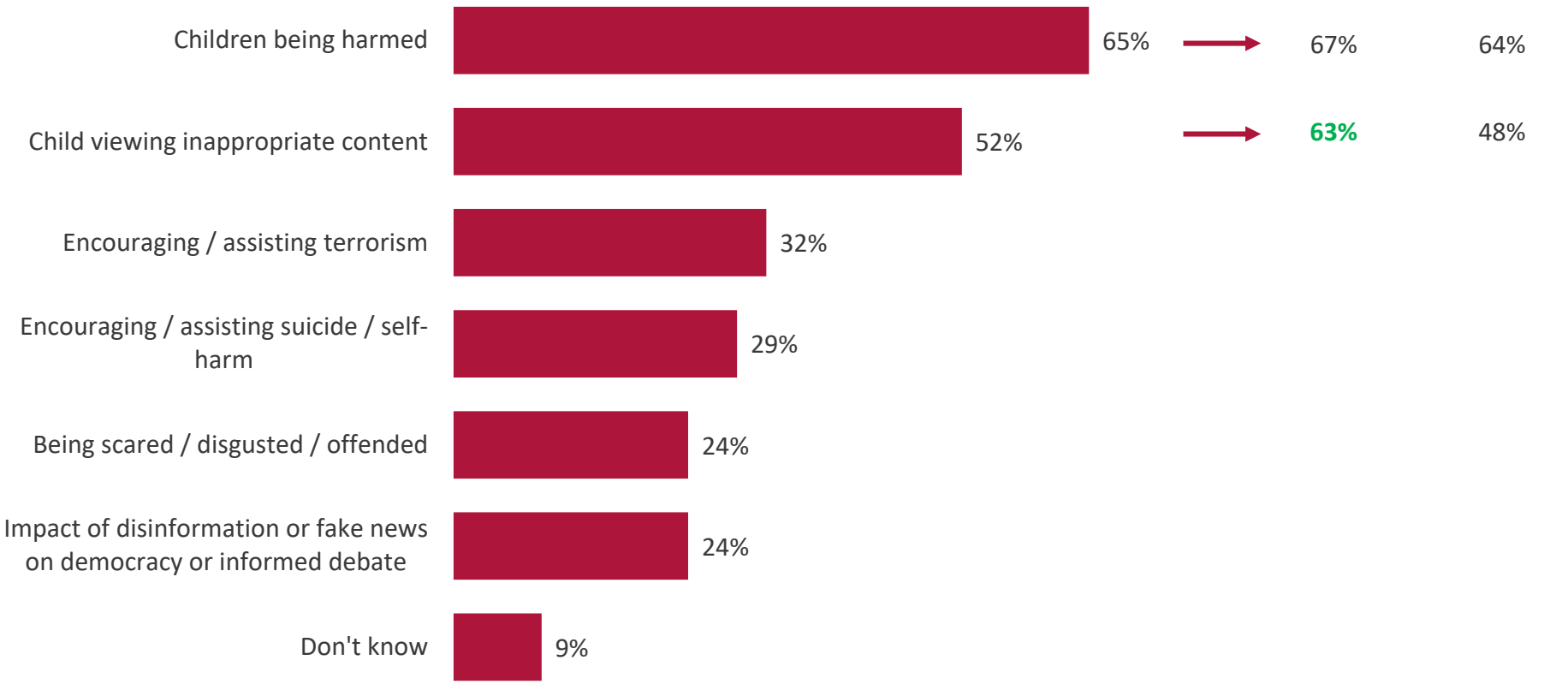
Source: Kantar TNS Omnibus 27/06/2018 to 01/07/2018 (Week 26)

Question: Q3 I am now going to read out the areas you are concerned about and I would like you to tell me on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means Not at all Concerned and 5 means Very Concerned how concerned you are about each when using the internet PROMPTED. Q2A/Q2B Which, if any, concerns do you have about the internet? SPONTANEOUS/PROMPTED

Base: All concerned about area (288-882); All internet users (1686)

The consequences of greatest concern about online content related to the potential harm of children

Consequences of harmful content concerned about



*Codes <5% not charted

Green % significantly higher than total (sig tested to 99%)

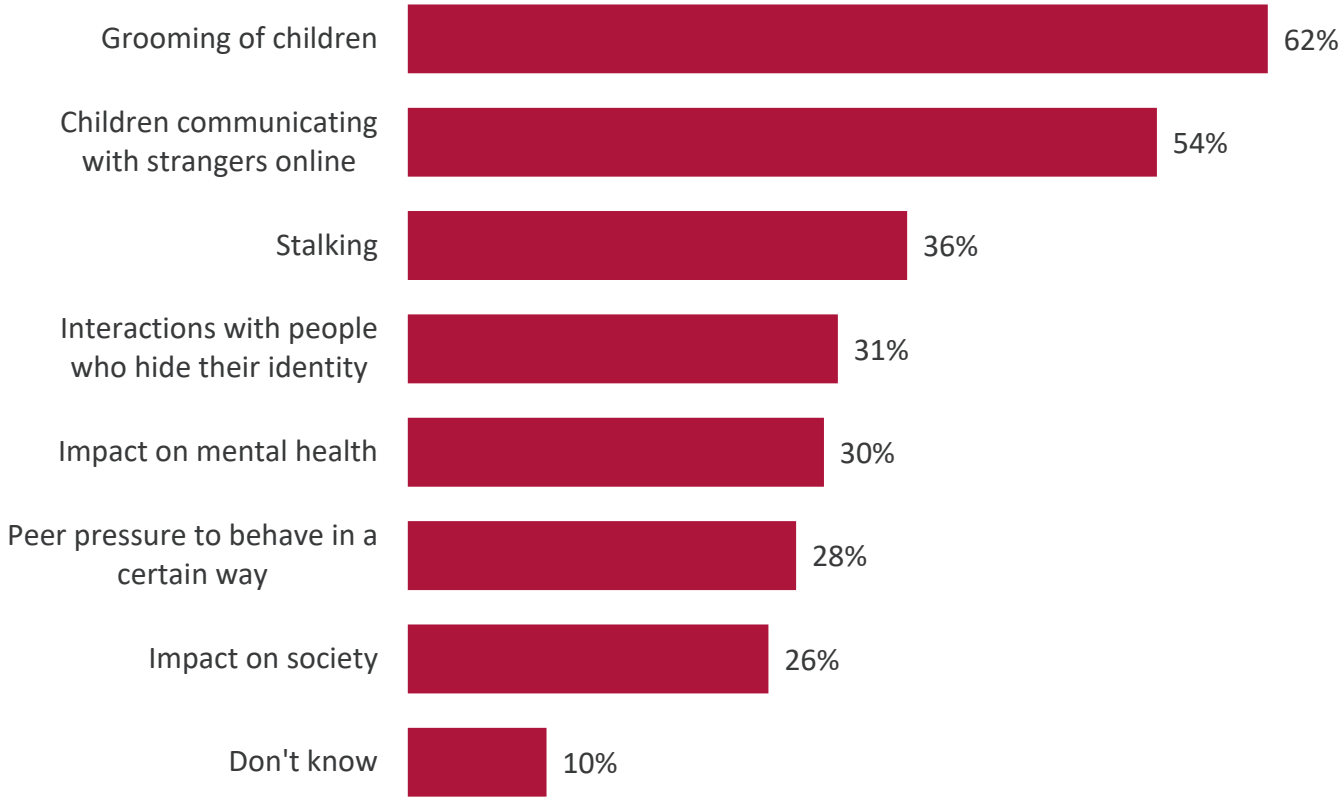
Source: Kantar TNS Omnibus 27/06/2018 to 01/07/2018 (Week 26)

Question: Q4 You mentioned you were concerned about harmful online content. What consequences were you concerned about? SPONTANEOUS

Base: All with concerns around content (1059)

The main consequences that people were concerned about relating to harmful interactions were linked to their potentially negative impact on children

Consequences of harmful interactions concerned about



*Codes <5% not charted

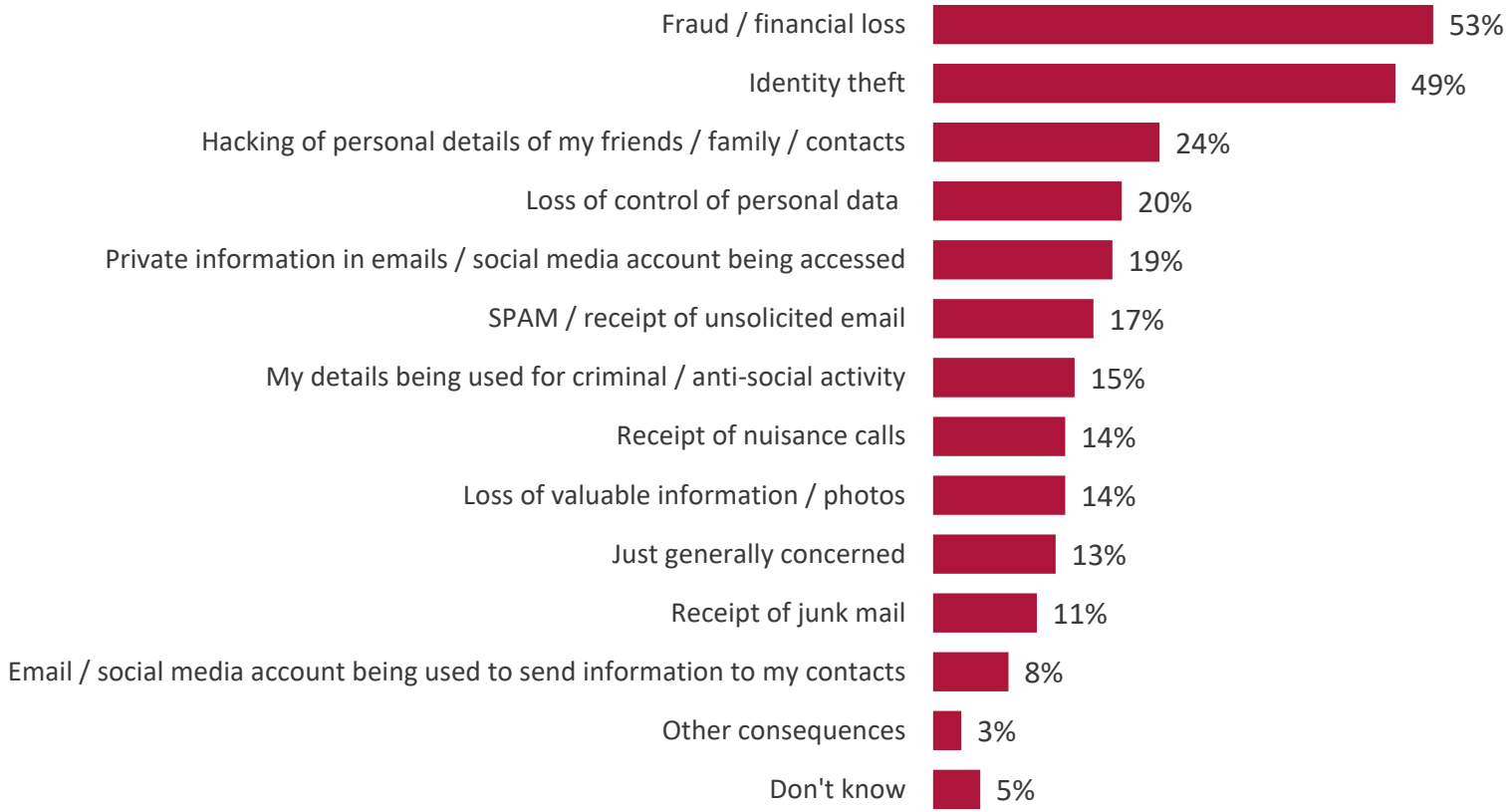
Source: Kantar TNS Omnibus 27/06/2018 to 01/07/2018 (Week 26)

Question: Q5 You mentioned you were concerned about harmful or offensive online contacts with other individuals. What consequences were you concerned about? SPONTANEOUS

Base: All with concerns around interactions (873)

Amongst those concerned about data/ privacy the consequences that people were most concerned about were fraud or financial loss, and identity theft

Consequences of harmful data/privacy concerned about



Source: Kantar TNS Omnibus 27/06/2018 to 01/07/2018 (Week 26)

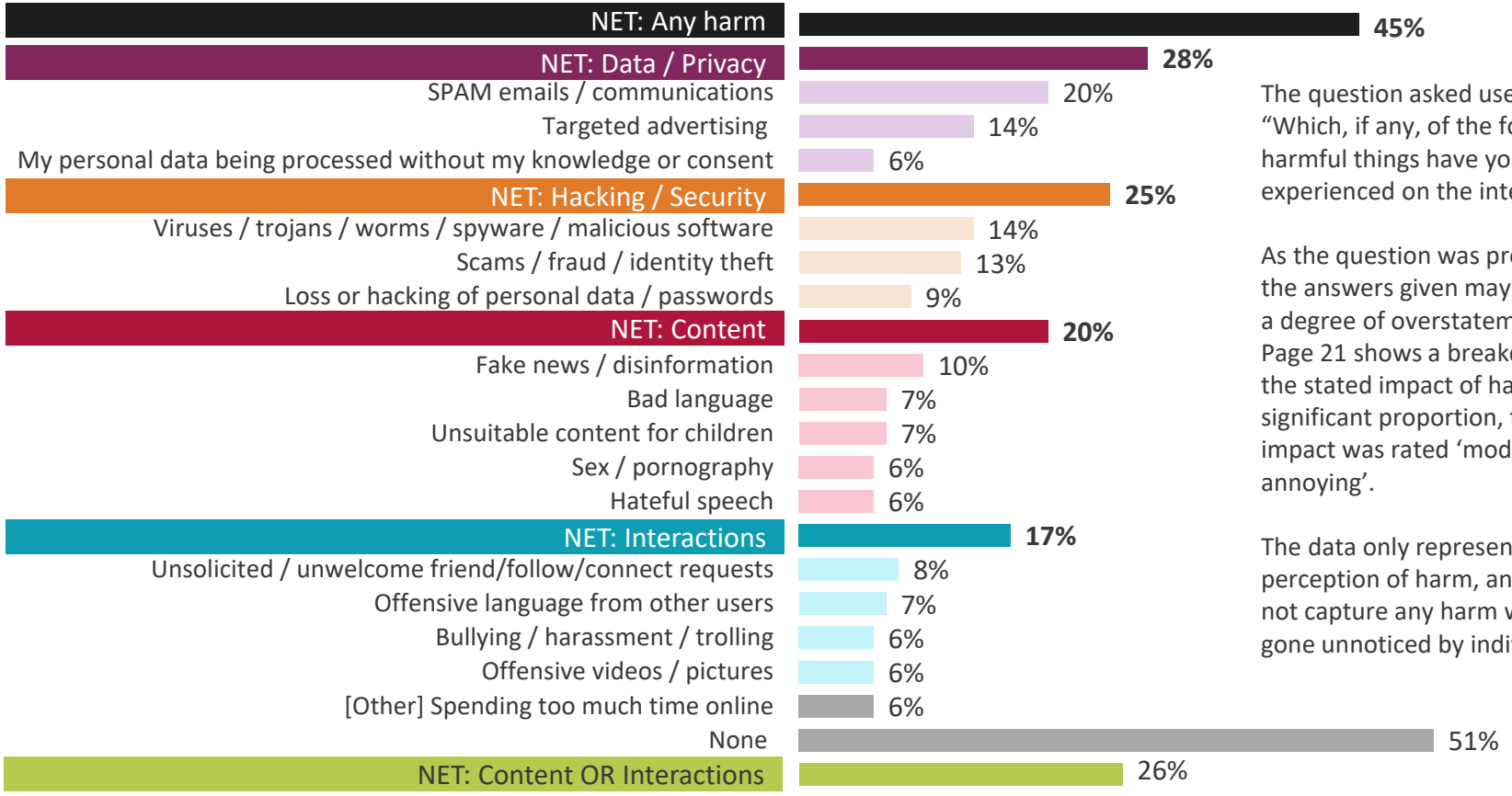
Question: Q6 You mentioned you were concerned about scams, loss or hacking of personal data and\or passwords. What consequences were you concerned about? SPONTANEOUS

Base: All with concerns around data/privacy (921)

Section 2
Reported experience of online harm

Almost half of adult internet users indicated that they had experienced harm online

Online harm experienced



The question asked users "Which, if any, of the following harmful things have you experienced on the internet?"

As the question was prompted the answers given may include a degree of overstatement. Page 21 shows a breakdown of the stated impact of harm. For a significant proportion, the impact was rated 'moderately annoying'.

The data only represents a perception of harm, and does not capture any harm which has gone unnoticed by individuals.

*Answer codes <5% not charted. See data tables for full list. 4% answered 'don't know'.

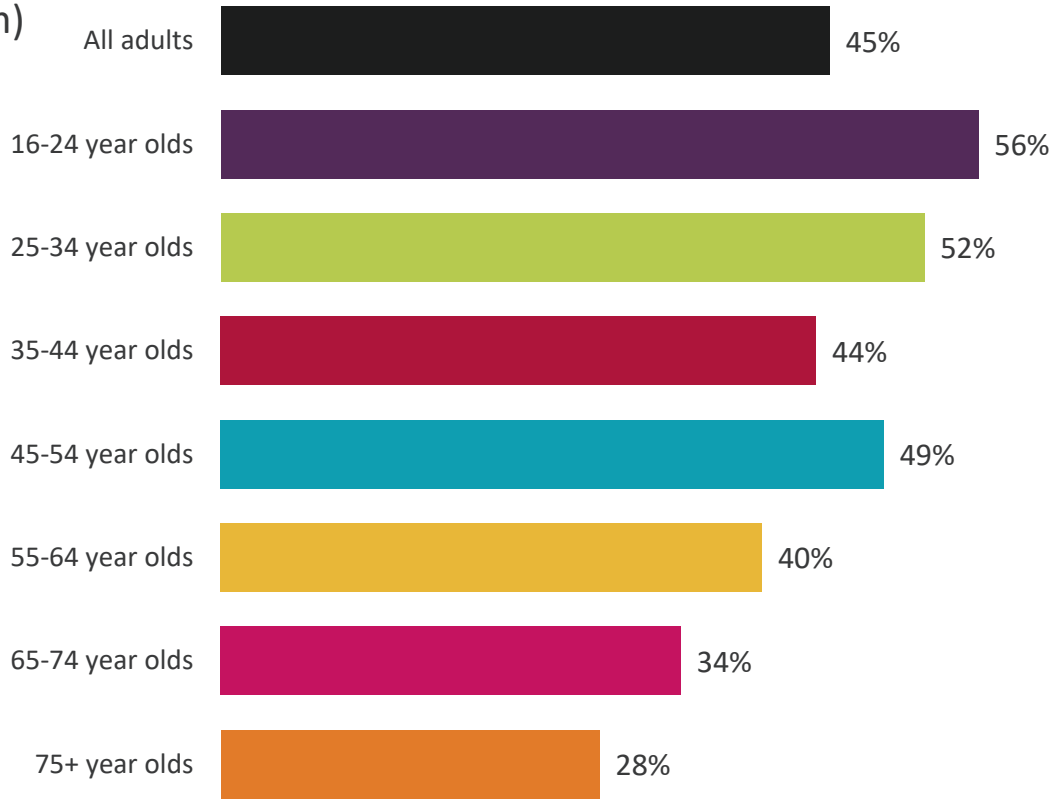
Source: Kantar TNS Omnibus 27/06/2018 to 01/07/2018 (Week 26)

Question: Q7 Which, if any, of the following harmful things you have experienced on the internet? PROMPTED

Base: All internet users in the UK (1686)

The proportion indicating that they had experienced harm was lower amongst over 65s

Online harm experienced (Net: Any harm)



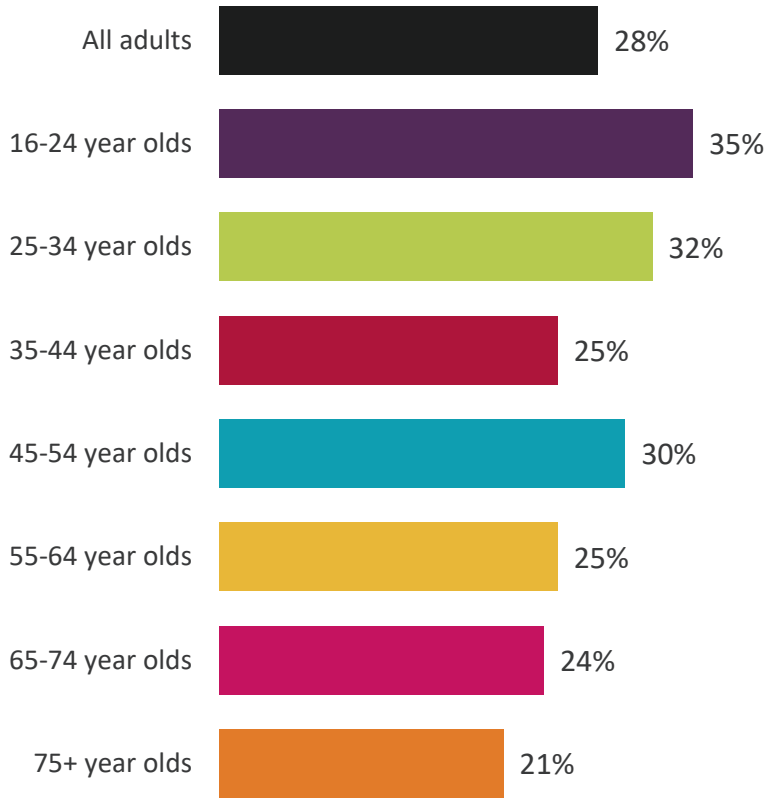
Source: Kantar TNS Omnibus 27/06/2018 to 01/07/2018 (Week 26)

Question: Q7 Which, if any, of the following harmful things you have experienced on the internet? PROMPTED

Base: All internet users in the UK (1686)

Relatively similar proportions of all age groups indicated that they have experienced harm relating to data/privacy

Online harm experienced relating to **data / privacy**



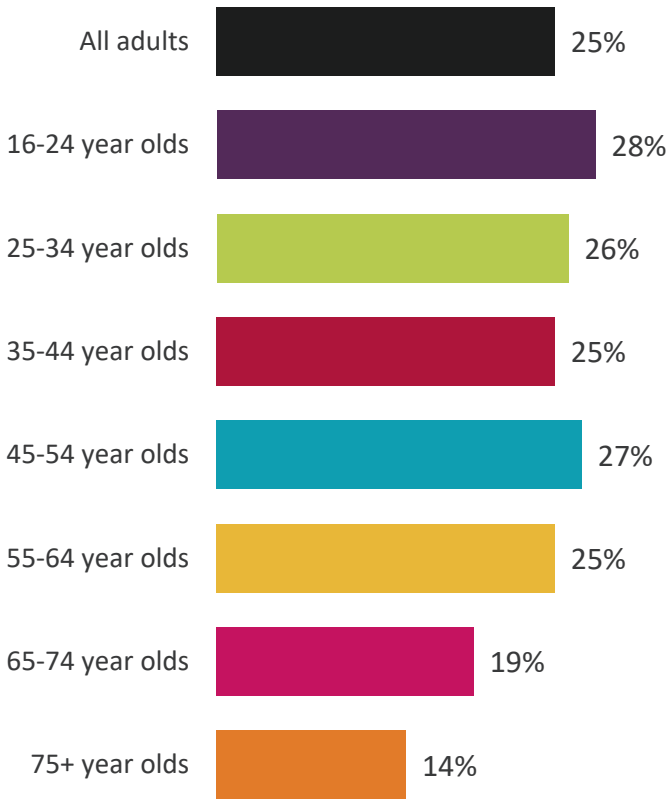
Source: Kantar TNS Omnibus 27/06/2018 to 01/07/2018 (Week 26)

Question: Q7 Which, if any, of the following harmful things you have experienced on the internet? PROMPTED

Base: All internet users in the UK (1686)

Over 65s were slightly less likely to indicate that they had experience of harm related to hacking/security

Online harm experienced relating to **hacking / security**



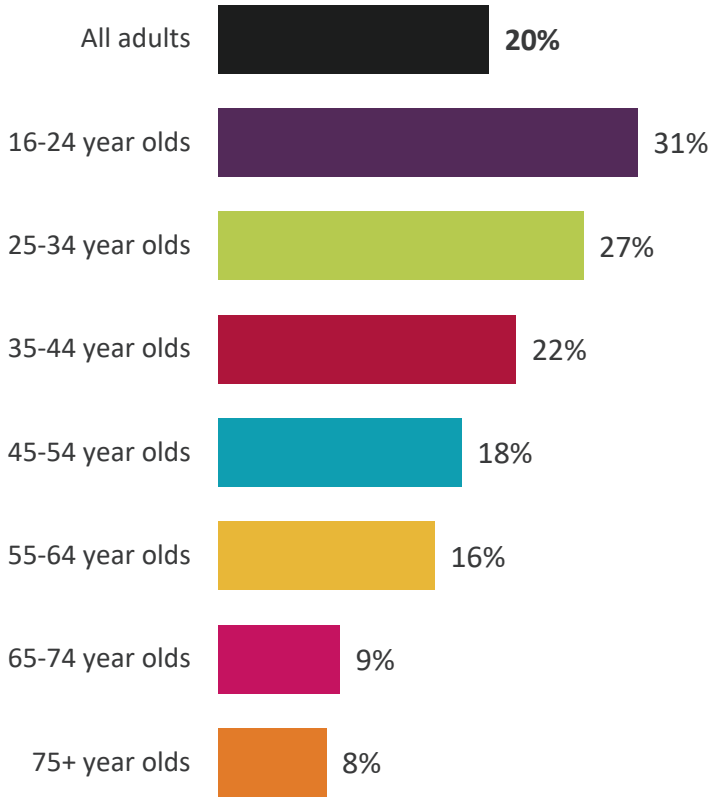
Source: Kantar TNS Omnibus 27/06/2018 to 01/07/2018 (Week 26)

Question: Q7 Which, if any, of the following harmful things you have experienced on the internet? PROMPTED

Base: All internet users in the UK (1686)

Older people were less likely to indicate that they have experienced harm relating to content

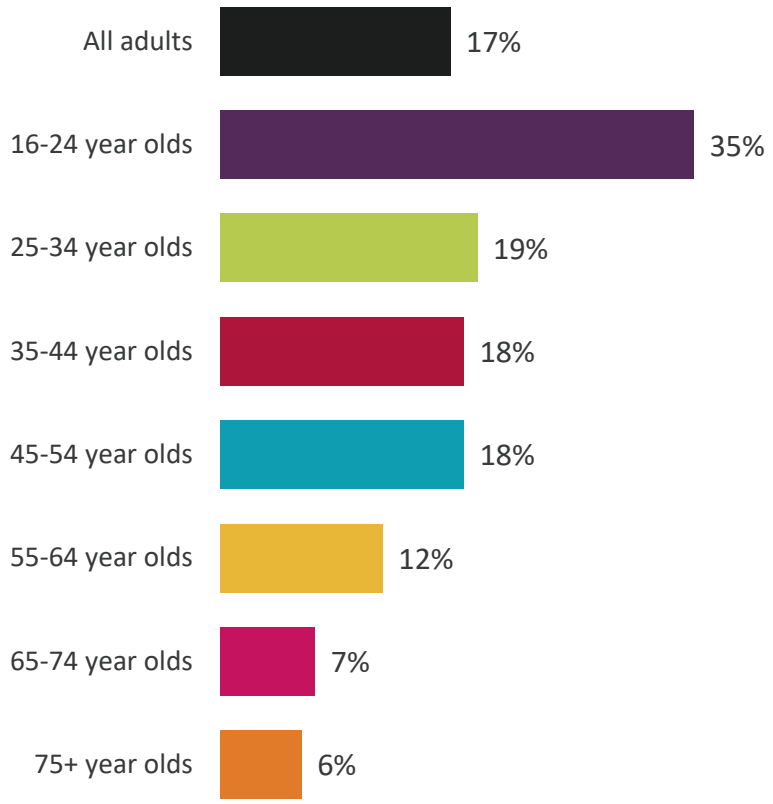
Online harm experienced relating to
content that people view, read or listen to online



Source: Kantar TNS Omnibus 27/06/2018 to 01/07/2018 (Week 26)
Question: Q7 Which, if any, of the following harmful things you have experienced on the internet? PROMPTED
Base: All internet users in the UK (1686)

Older people were less likely to indicate that they have experienced harm relating to interactions with other users

Online harm experienced relating to **interactions with other users**



Source: Kantar TNS Omnibus 27/06/2018 to 01/07/2018 (Week 26)

Question: Q7 Which, if any, of the following harmful things you have experienced on the internet? PROMPTED

Base: All internet users in the UK (1686)

When people experienced harm online its impact was varied

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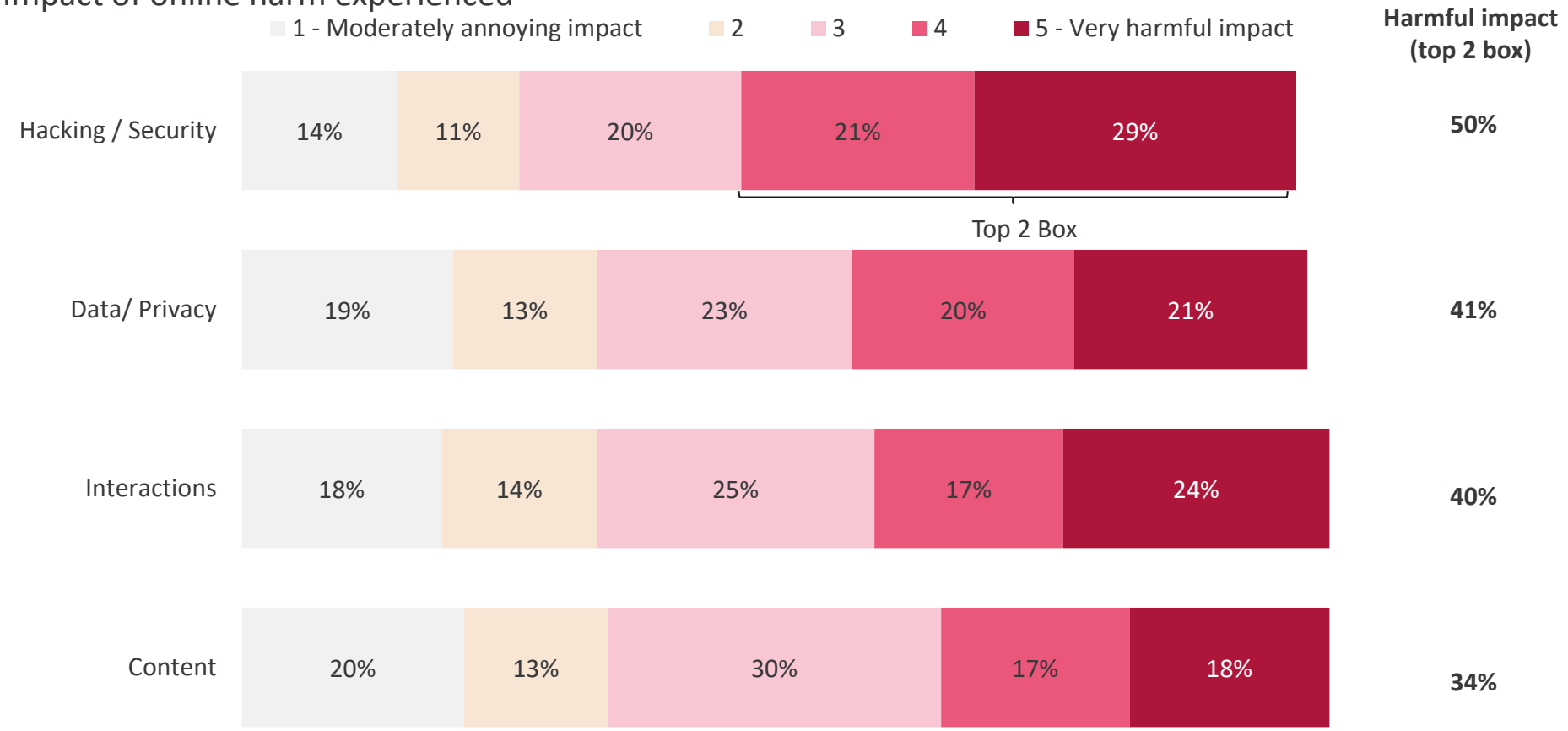
Impact of online harm experienced



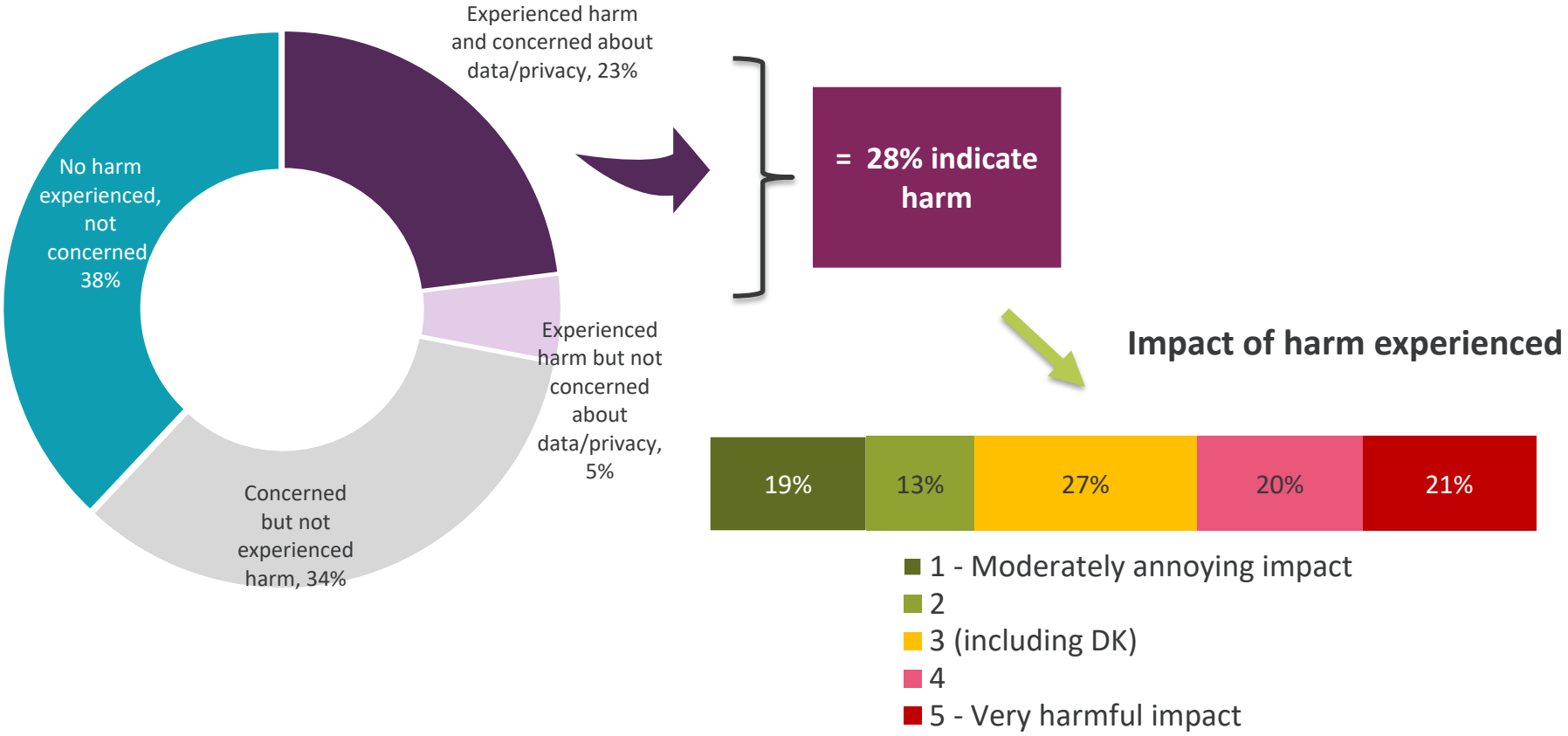
Source: Kantar TNS Omnibus 27/06/2018 to 01/07/2018 (Week 26)

Question: Q9 I am now going to read out the areas you experienced online harm and I would like you to tell me the impact it had on each using a scale of 1 to 5? PROMPTED

Base: All who experienced specific online harm (285-471)

Amongst those who indicated experience of harm relating to data/privacy, 21% rated this as having a very harmful impact

Summary of reported harms and concerns relating to **data / privacy**



Q.2a/b Which, if any, concerns do you have about the internet? [Data capture unprompted, then prompted. Chart shows totals after prompting].

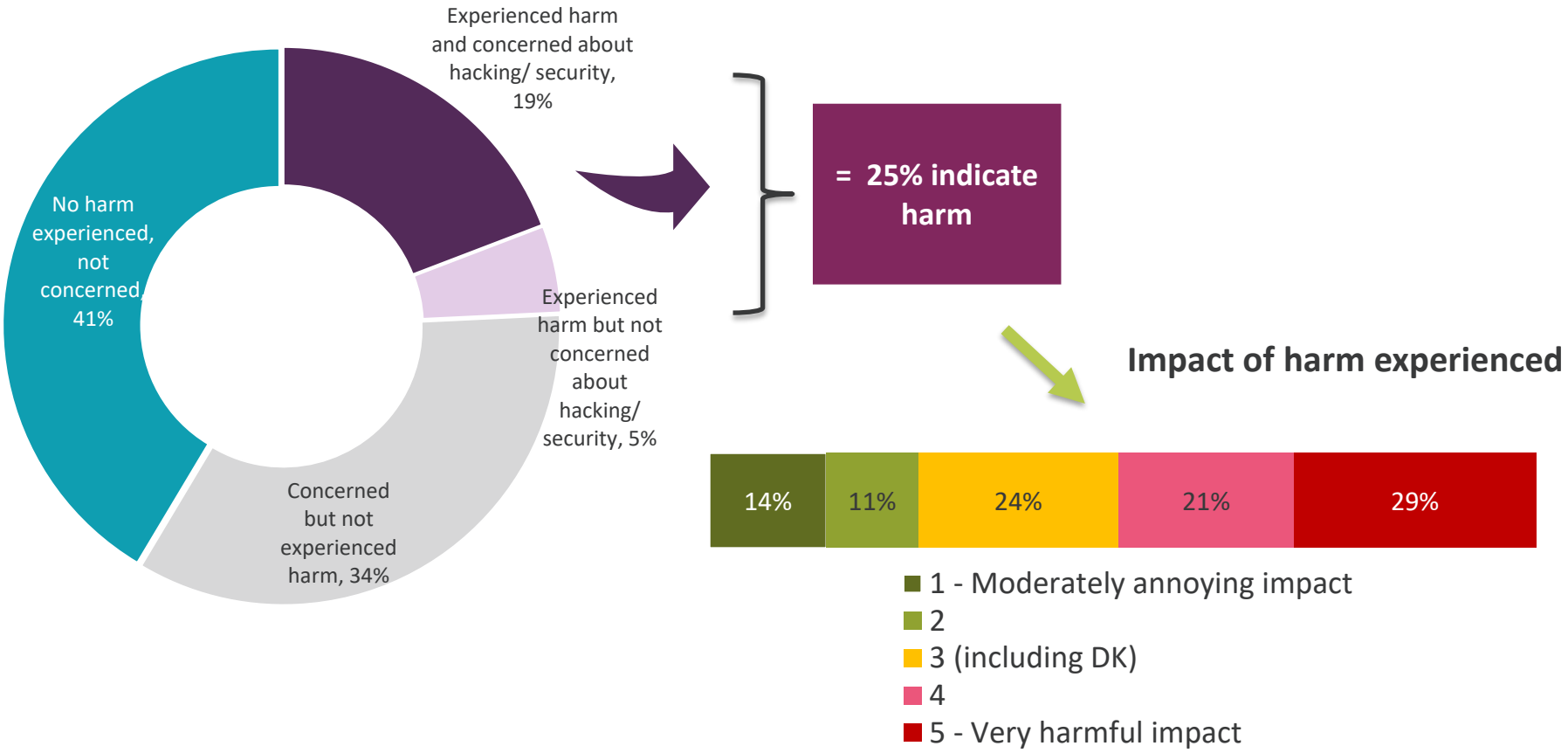
Q.7 Which, if any, of the following harmful things have you experienced on the internet? [Prompted with list]

Q.9 I am now going to read out the areas you experienced online harm and I would like you to tell me the impact it had on each using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means Moderately annoying impact and 5 means Very harmful impact.

Base: UK adult internet users (1,686), UK adult intenet users that had experience harm relating to data/privacy (471)

Amongst those who indicated experience of harm relating to hacking/ security, 29% rated this as having a very harmful impact

Summary of reported harms and concerns relating to **hacking / security**



Q.2a/b Which, if any, concerns do you have about the internet? [Data capture unprompted, then prompted. Chart shows totals after prompting].

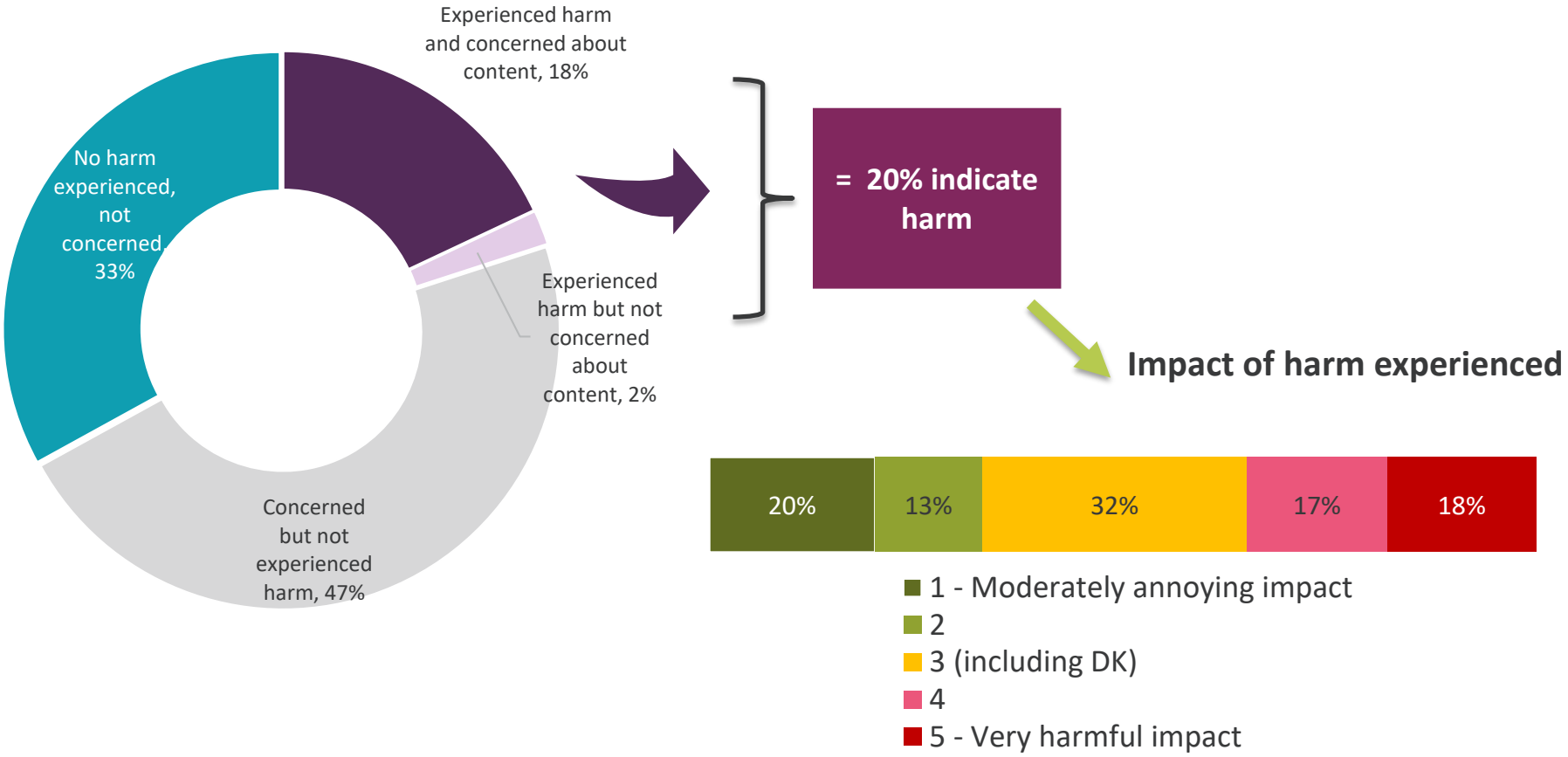
Q.7 Which, if any, of the following harmful things have you experienced on the internet? [Prompted with list]

Q.9 I am now going to read out the areas you experienced online harm and I would like you to tell me the impact it had on each using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means Moderately annoying impact and 5 means Very harmful impact.

Base: UK adult internet users (1,686), UK adult intenet users that had experience harm relating to hacking/ security (404)

Amongst those who indicated experience of harm relating to content, 18% rated this as having a very harmful impact

Summary of reported harms and concerns relating to **content that people view, read or listen to online**



Q.2a/b Which, if any, concerns do you have about the internet? [Data capture unprompted, then prompted. Chart shows totals after prompting].

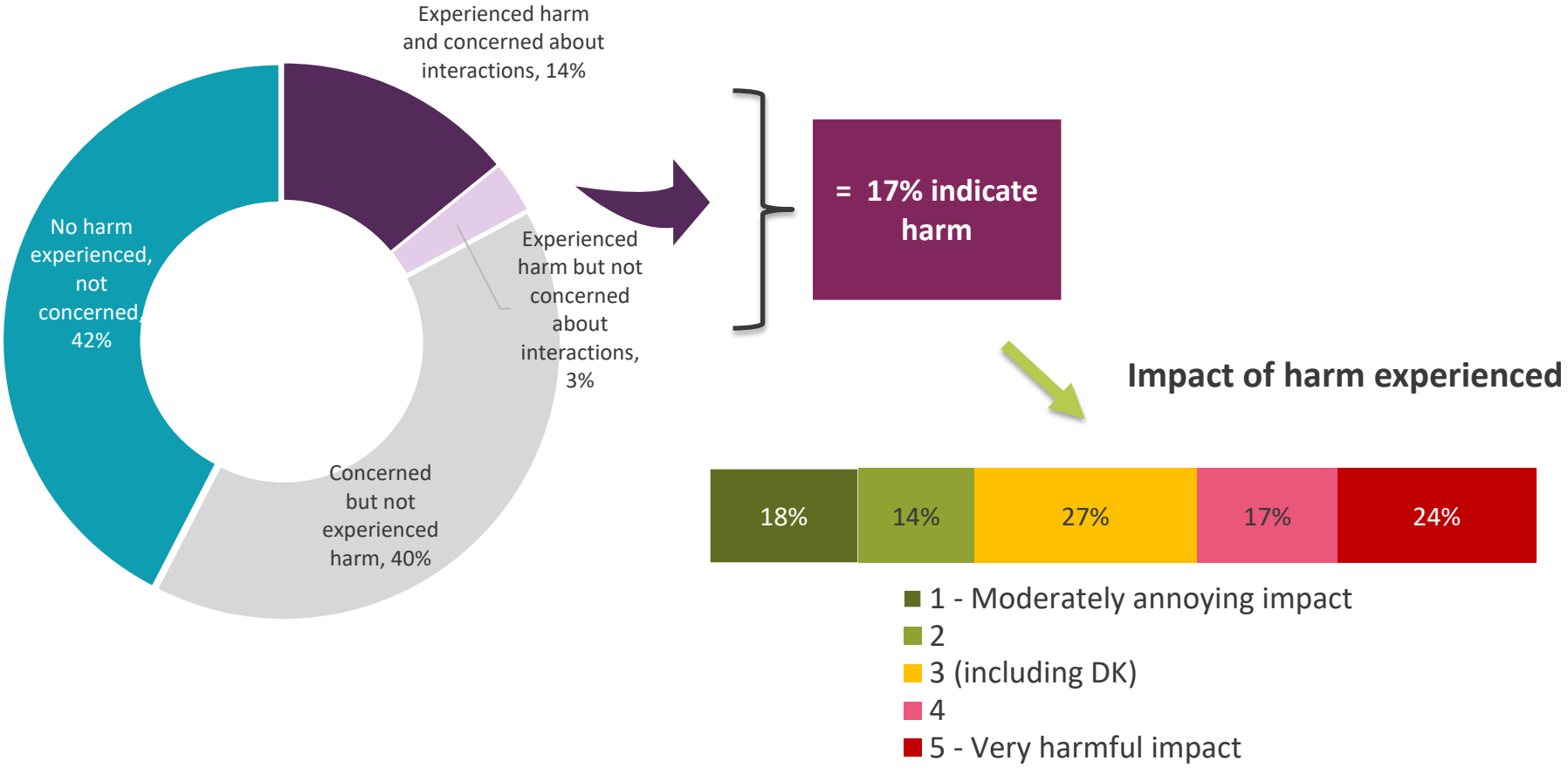
Q.7 Which, if any, of the following harmful things have you experienced on the internet? [Prompted with list]

Q.9 I am now going to read out the areas you experienced online harm and I would like you to tell me the impact it had on each using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means Moderately annoying impact and 5 means Very harmful impact.

Base: UK adult internet users (1,686), UK adult intenet users that had experience harm relating to content (328)

Amongst those who indicated experience of harm relating to interactions with other users, 24% rated this as having a very harmful impact

Summary of reported harms and concerns relating to **interactions with other users**



Q.2a/b Which, if any, concerns do you have about the internet? [Data capture unprompted, then prompted. Chart shows totals after prompting].

Q.7 Which, if any, of the following harmful things have you experienced on the internet? [Prompted with list]

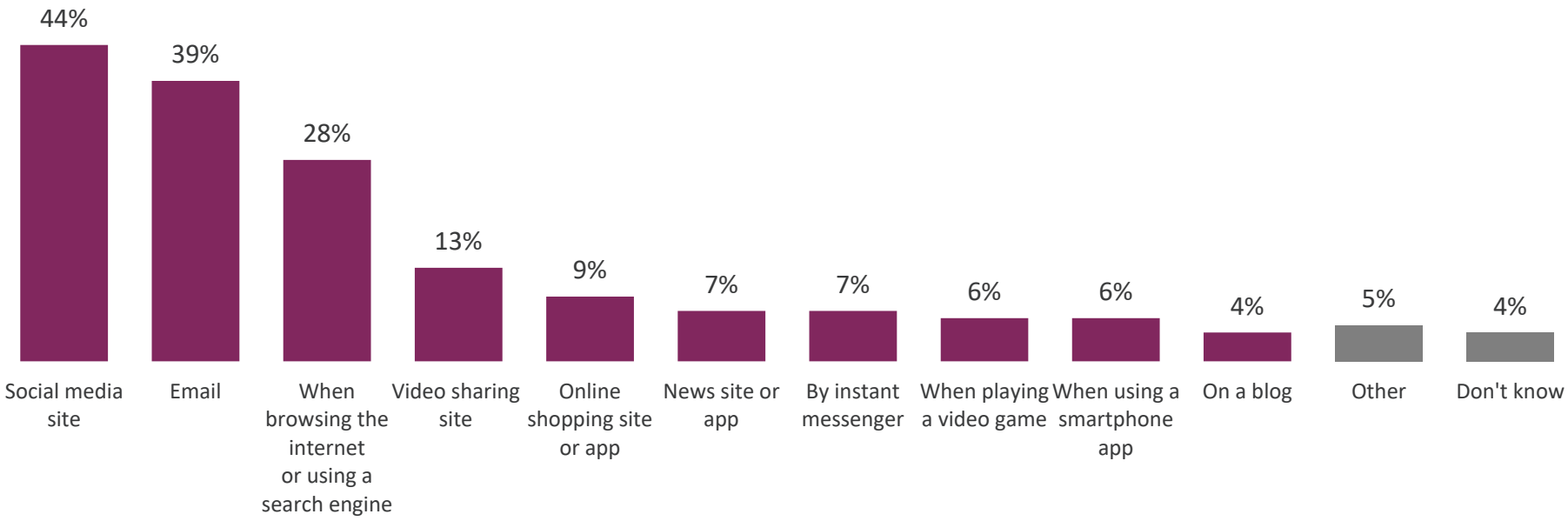
Q.9 I am now going to read out the areas you experienced online harm and I would like you to tell me the impact it had on each using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means Moderately annoying impact and 5 means Very harmful impact.

Base: UK adult internet users (1,686), UK adult intenet users that had experience harm relating to interactions with other users (285)

Social media and email are the main sources of reported harm

Places where online harm was experienced

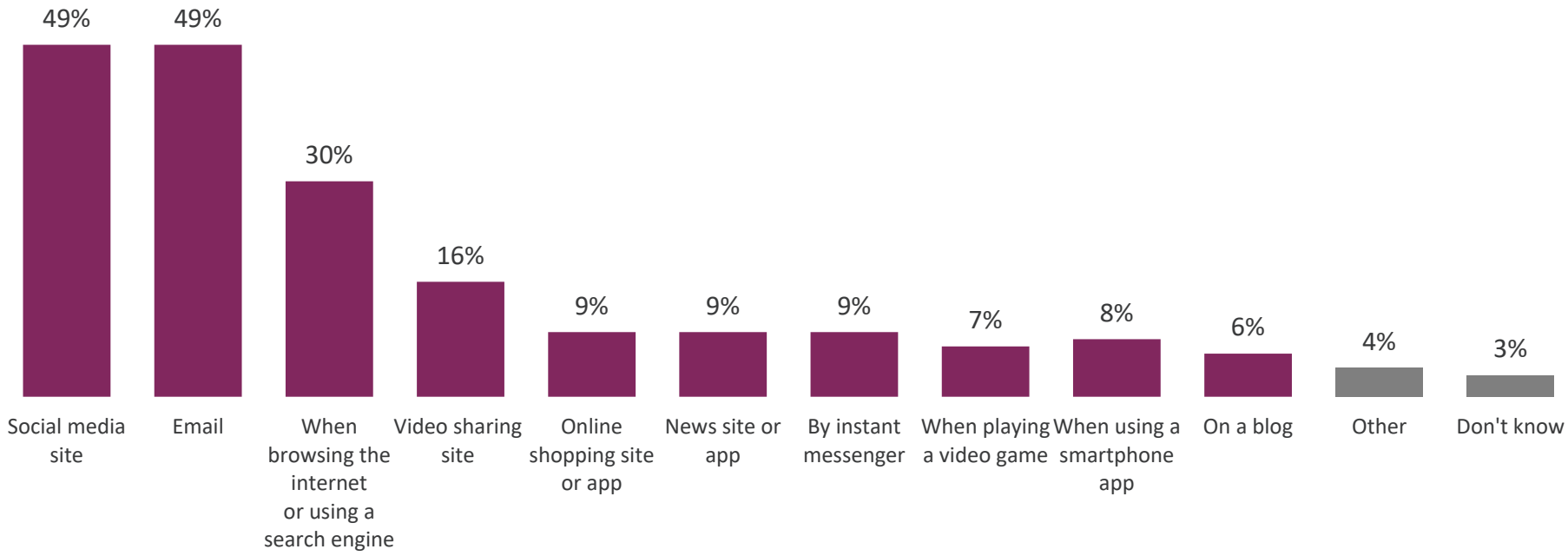
Video sharing sites were mentioned by a similar proportion of adults with children in the home (14%) as those without children in the home (13%).



Source: Kantar TNS Omnibus 27/06/2018 to 01/07/2018 (Week 26)
Question: Q8 And where did you come across this harm? PROMPTED
Base: All who experienced online harm (741)

Social media and email are the main sources of reported harm by those who experienced harm relating to data/privacy

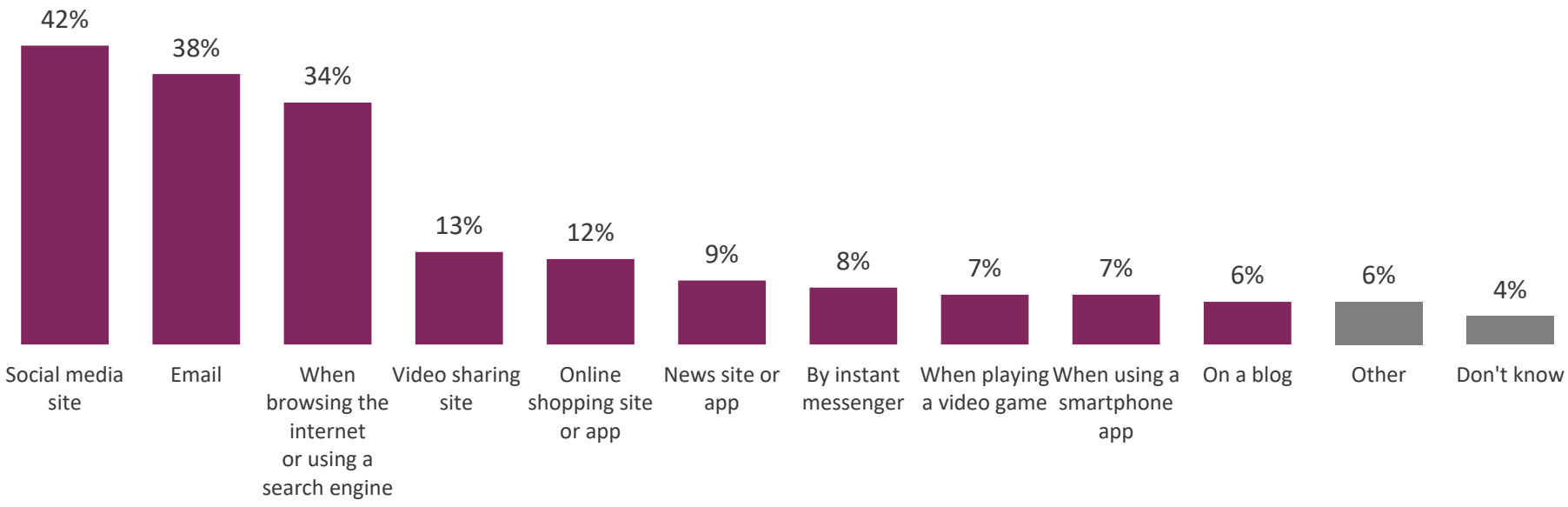
Places where online harm was experienced by those who had experienced **harm relating to data / privacy**



Source: Kantar TNS Omnibus 27/06/2018 to 01/07/2018 (Week 26)
Question: Q8 And where did you come across this harm? PROMPTED
Base: All who experienced online harm relating to DATA/PRIVACY (471)

Social media and email, are the main sources of harm by those who experienced harm relating to hacking/ security

Places where harm was experienced by those who had experienced **harm relating to hacking / security**



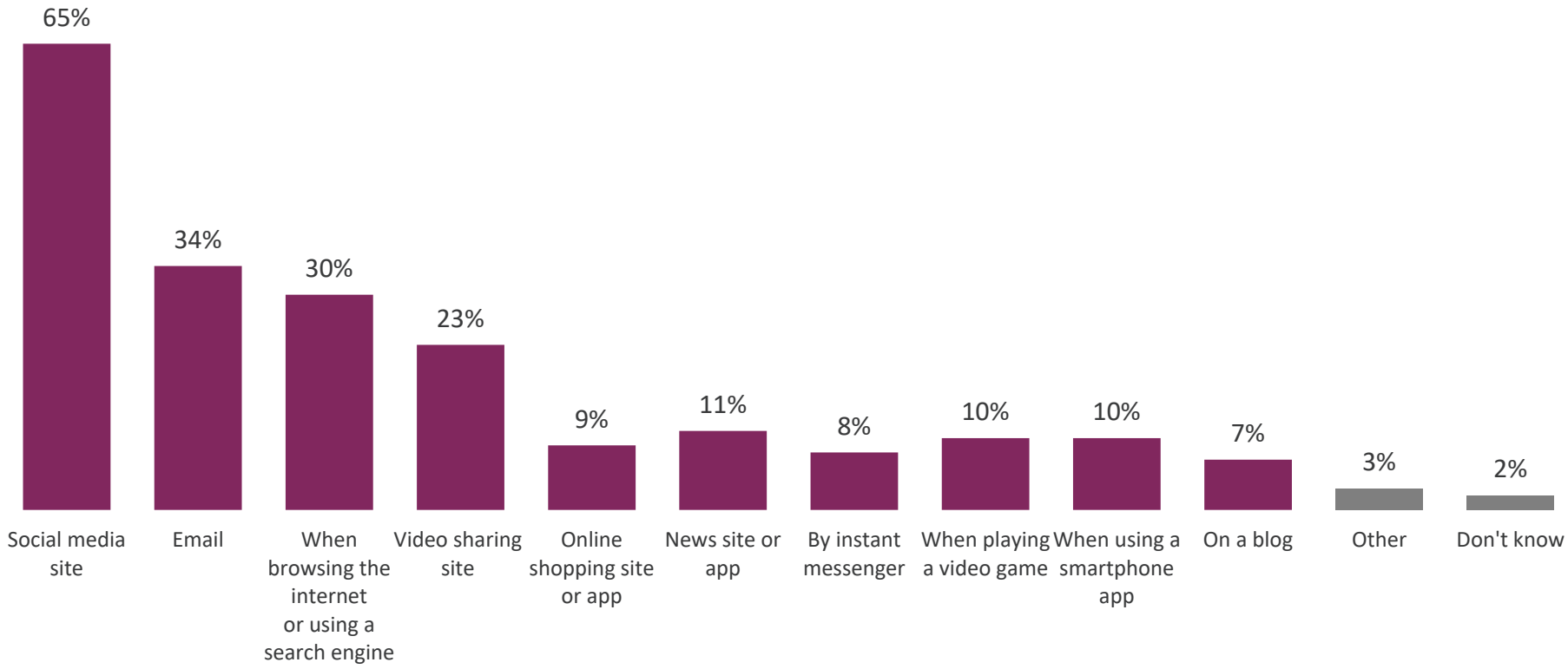
Source: Kantar TNS Omnibus 27/06/2018 to 01/07/2018 (Week 26)

Question: Q8 And where did you come across this harm? PROMPTED

Base: All who experienced online harm relating to HACKING/SECURITY (404)

Social media, email and web browsing are the main sources of reported harm by those who experienced harm relating to content

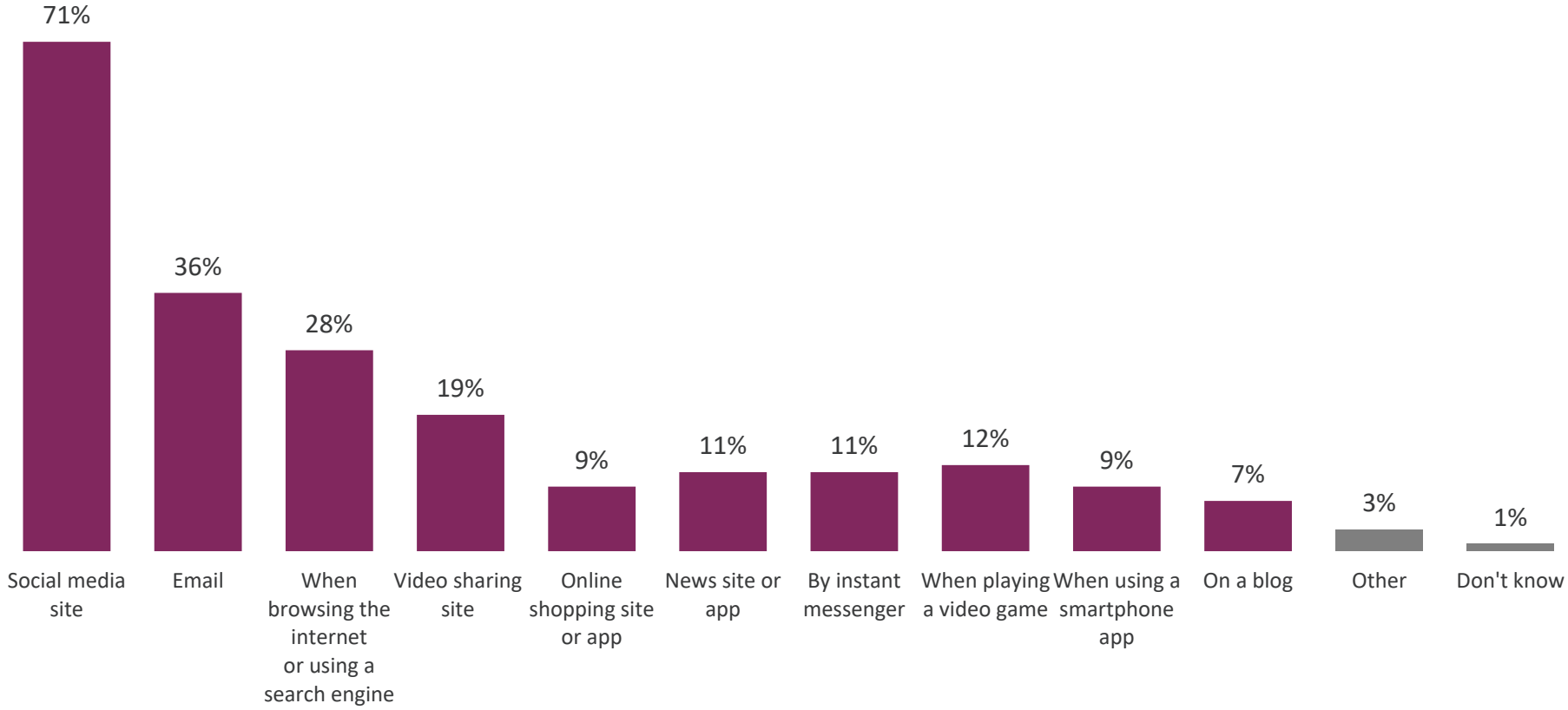
Places where online harm was experienced by those who had experienced **harm relating to content that people view, read or listen to online**



Source: Kantar TNS Omnibus 27/06/2018 to 01/07/2018 (Week 26)
Question: Q8 And where did you come across this harm? PROMPTED
Base: All who experienced online harm relating to CONTENT (328)

Social media is the main source of reported harm by those who experienced harm relating to interactions

Places where online harm was experienced by those who had experienced **harm relating to interactions with other users**



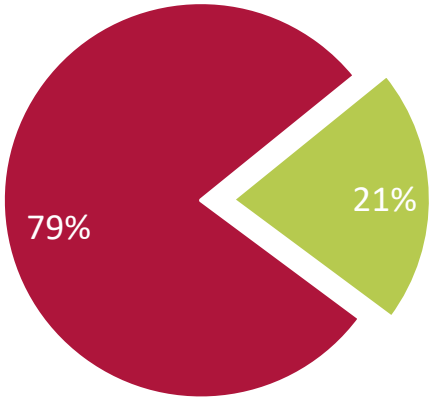
Source: Kantar TNS Omnibus 27/06/2018 to 01/07/2018 (Week 26)
Question: Q8 And where did you come across this harm? PROMPTED
Base: All who experienced online harm relating to INTERACTIONS (285)

Section 3
Attitudes towards reporting online harm

1 in 5 adult internet users has reported offensive, disturbing or harmful content; younger adults were more likely to have done so

Ever reported harmful videos / pictures

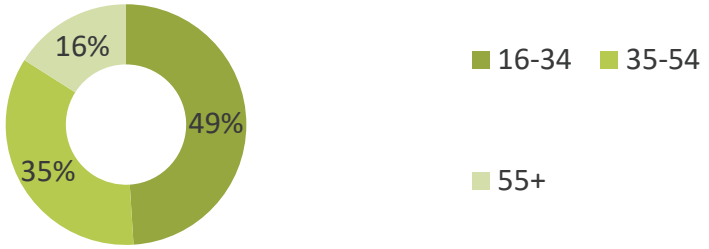
% All internet users



- Yes, reported online harm
- No, didn't report online harm*

**Including Don't know and Refused*

% those who reported harmful content



Younger adults, especially the 16-24 year old age group have the highest propensity to have reported harmful content (40% had done so). This is partially explained by the fact that they are more likely to have experienced harmful content, but may also reflect a greater confidence in, knowledge of, or ability to use reporting functions. We also asked a hypothetical question about action that would be taken if the respondent wished to report offensive, disturbing or harmful content on a social media site; we found that younger people were significantly more likely to report (page 35).

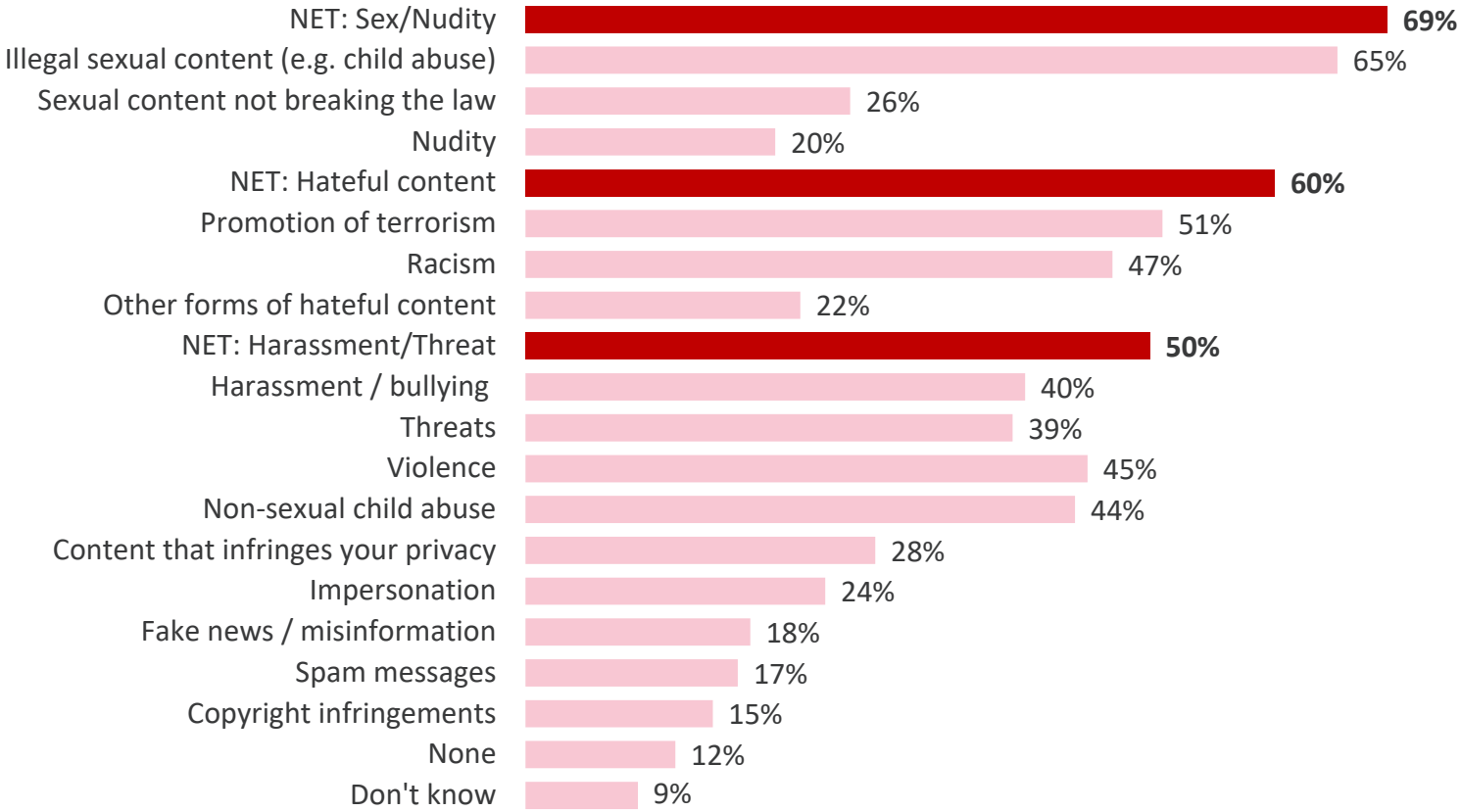
Source: Kantar TNS Omnibus 27/06/2018 to 01/07/2018 (Week 26)

Question: Q17 Have you ever taken action to report a video or picture that was offensive, disturbing or harmful on the internet?

Base: All internet users in the UK (1686), 16-34 (536), 35-54 (518), 55+ (632)

Illegal sexual content is the type of content that adult internet users claimed that they would be most likely to report, followed by promotion of terrorism and racism

Types of content likely to report



Source: Kantar TNS Omnibus 27/06/2018 to 01/07/2018 (Week 26)

Question: Q19 If you saw them, which of these types of content on the internet would you report? PROMPTED

Base: All internet users in the UK (1686)

Older people were generally less likely to say that they would report harmful content

Types of content likely to report

	All internet users	Those with children	Those with no children	16-34	35-54	55+	65+
Base	1686	479	1207	536	518	632	379
Illegal sexual content (e.g. child abuse)	65%	66%	64%	68%	64%	62%	59%
Promotion of terrorism	51%	51%	50%	52%	52%	48%	43%
Racism	47%	51%	45%	51%	49%	41%	37%
Violence	45%	46%	44%	49%	43%	42%	39%
Non-sexual child abuse	44%	43%	44%	43%	45%	44%	40%
Harassment / bullying	40%	44%	38%	43%	40%	37%	31%
Threats	39%	44%	37%	38%	42%	38%	34%
Content that infringes your privacy	28%	25%	29%	28%	24%	31%	28%
Sexual content not breaking the law	26%	27%	25%	25%	26%	26%	24%
Impersonation	24%	23%	24%	24%	22%	26%	22%
Other forms of hateful content	22%	21%	23%	21%	24%	22%	18%
Nudity	20%	23%	19%	22%	18%	21%	17%
Fake news / misinformation	18%	16%	19%	19%	16%	20%	17%
Spam messages	17%	15%	18%	16%	15%	20%	19%
Copyright infringements	15%	15%	15%	15%	14%	16%	14%

Green and red cells denotes significantly higher or lower than those with no children/16-54 or 16-64 (sig tested to 99%)

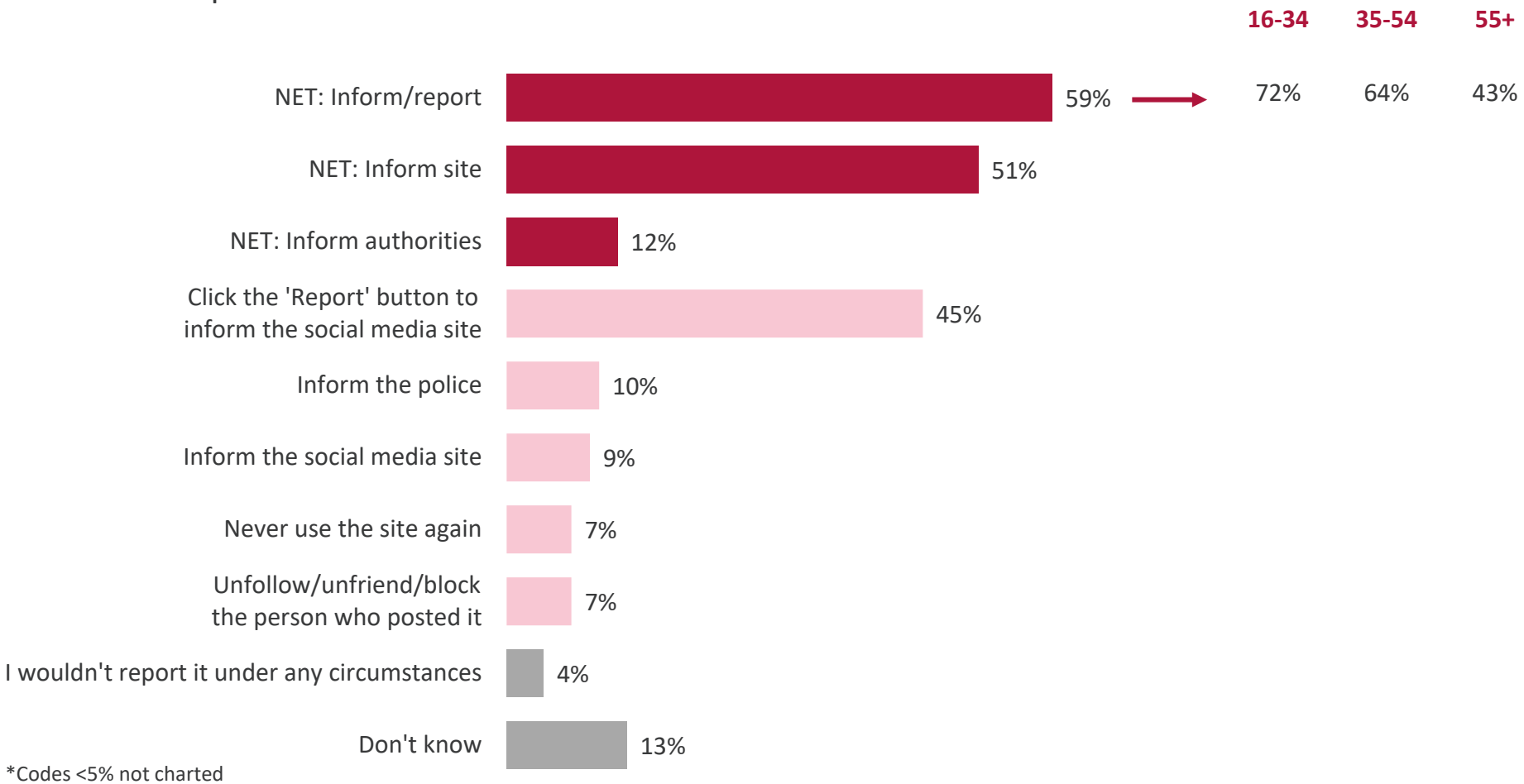
Source: Kantar TNS Omnibus 27/06/2018 to 01/07/2018 (Week 26)

Question: Q19 If you saw them, which of these types of content on the internet would you report? PROMPTED

Base: All internet users in the UK (n1686), all with children (479), all with no children (n = 1207), 16-34 (536), 35-54 (518), 55+ (632), 65+ (379)

45% of adults internet users claimed that they would use the “Report” button

How would report harmful content on social media sites



*Codes <5% not charted

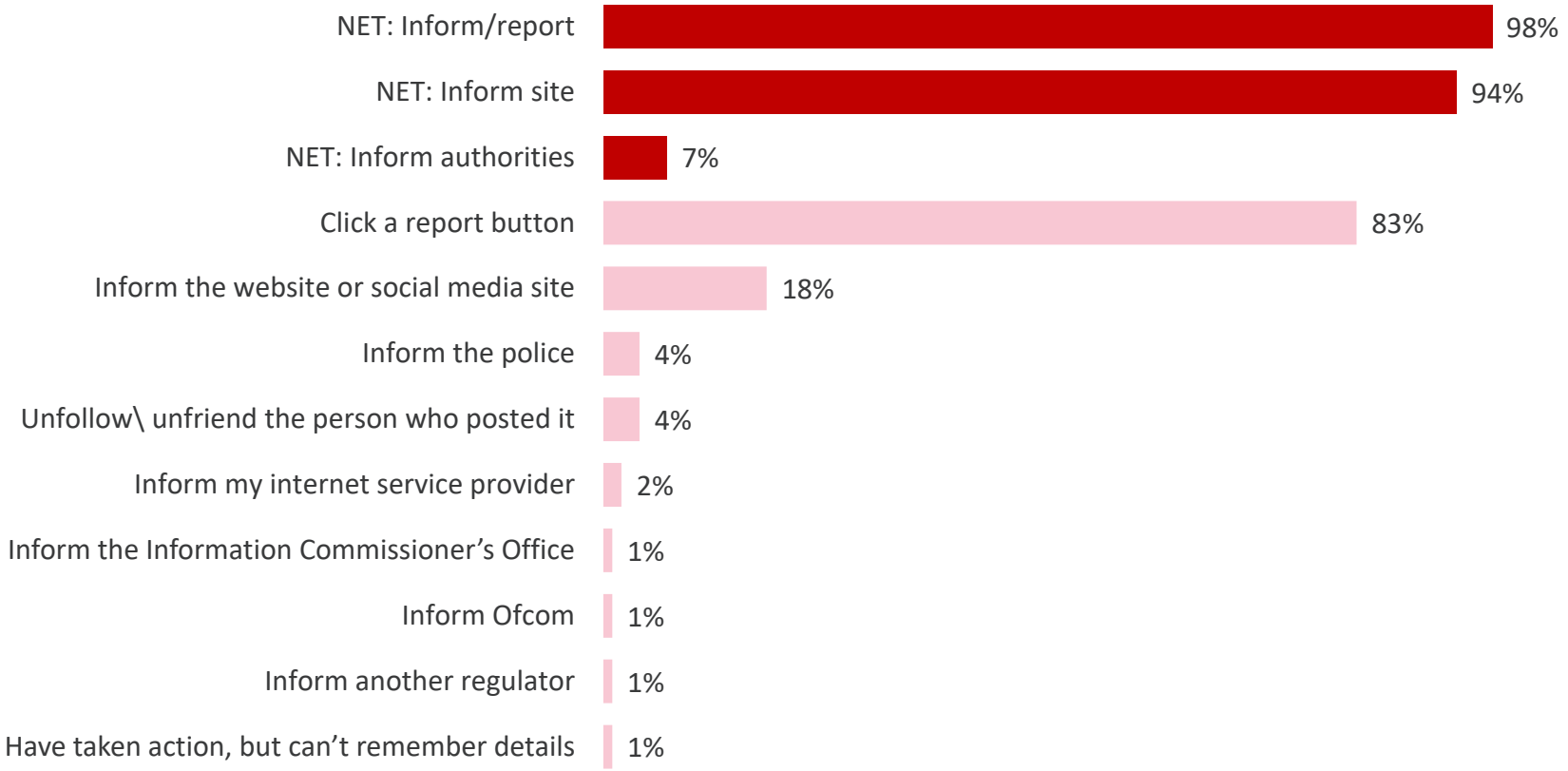
Source: Kantar TNS Omnibus 27/06/2018 to 01/07/2018 (Week 26)

Question: Q16 If you saw a video or picture that was offensive, disturbing or harmful when you were on a social media site and wanted to do something about it, what would you do? SPONTANEOUS

Base: All internet users in the UK (1686); 16-34 (536), 35-54 (518), 55+ (632)

The “Report” button was the predominant way in which offensive, disturbing or harmful content had been reported

Methods of reporting harmful videos / pictures



Source: Kantar TNS Omnibus 27/06/2018 to 01/07/2018 (Week 26)

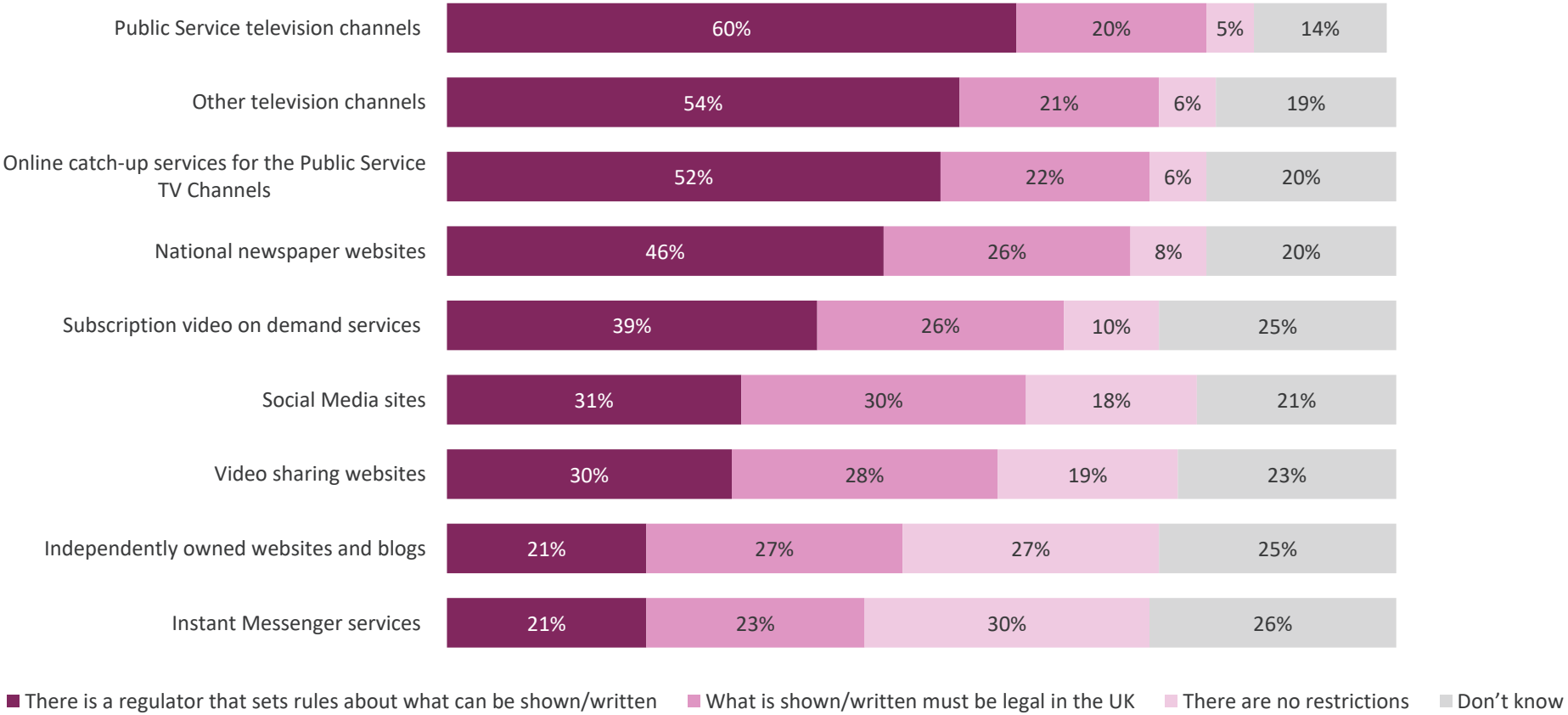
Question: Q18 What did you do? SPONTANEOUS

Base: All who have taken action over experiencing any harm when using the internet (340)

Section 4
Understanding of regulation

There is a mixed understanding of current levels of regulation among UK adults

Perceived regulation of different types of media



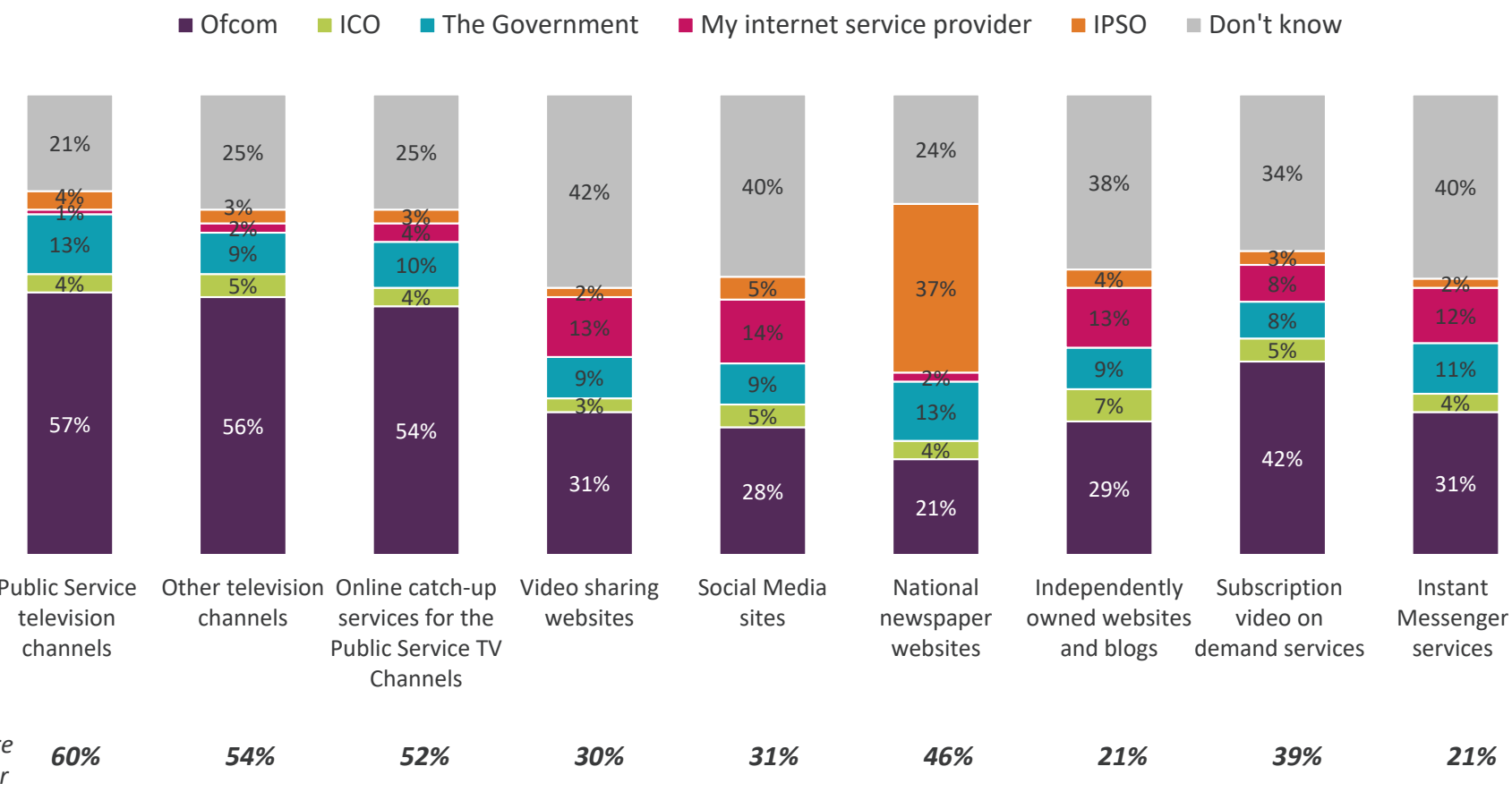
Source: Kantar TNS Omnibus 27/06/2018 to 01/07/2018 (Week 26)

Question: Q22 I'm now going to read out different types of media (for example TV, internet sites, newspapers etc.) and for each please tell me which one statement best describes your understanding of the level of regulation in the UK? PROMPTED

Base: All internet users in the UK (1686)

Perceptions of who the regulator is for different media varies across the population

Perceived regulatory body (amongst those who believed there is a regulator)



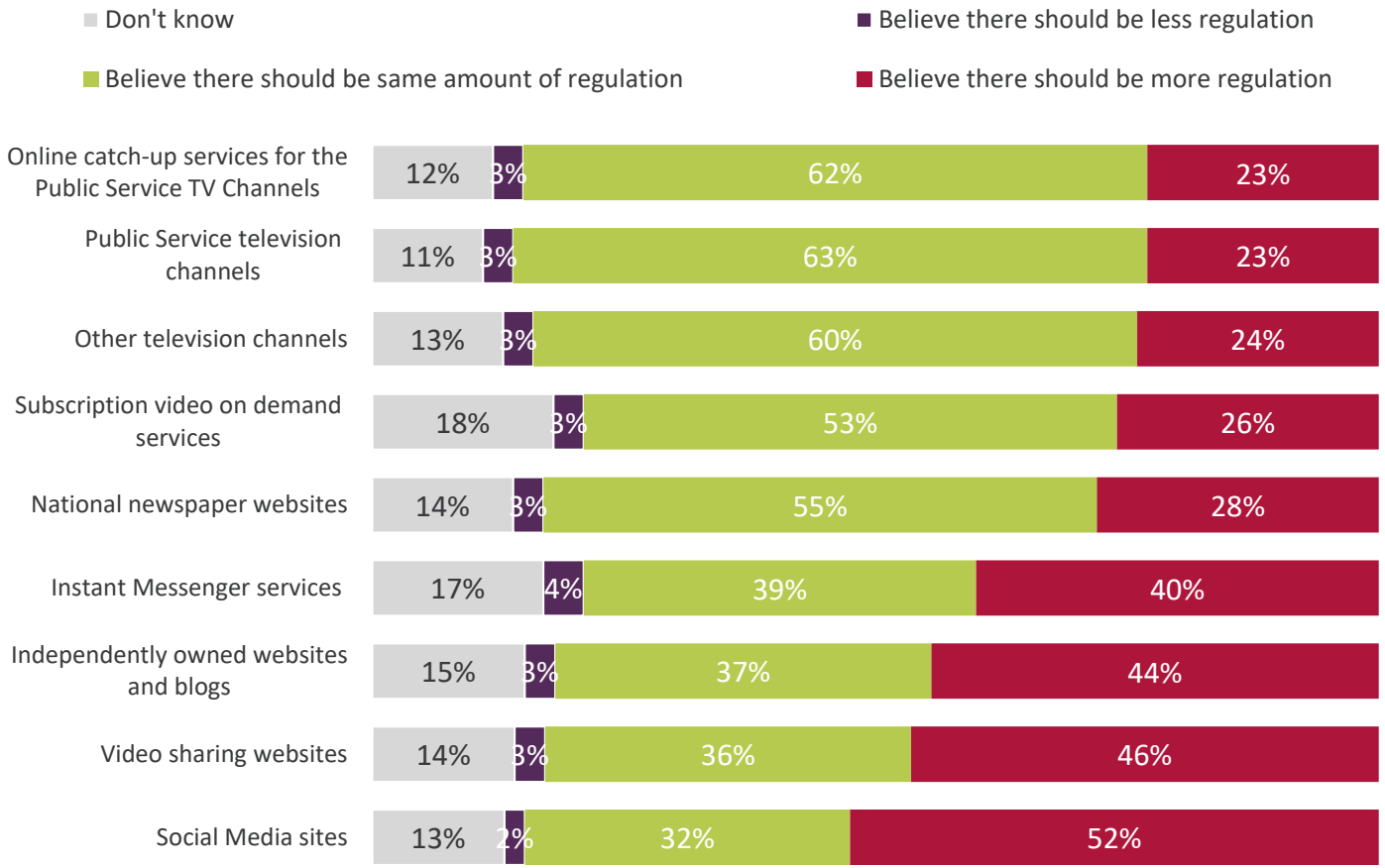
Source: Kantar TNS Omnibus 27/06/2018 to 01/07/2018 (Week 26)

Question: Q23 Thinking again about each of the following types of media, who do you think is the regulator? PROMPTED

Base: All who believe there is a regulator (354-1001)

There were mixed views on current level of regulation; over half of internet using adults believe more is needed on social media

Views on level of regulation



	% who believe there should be more regulation	
	16-34	**55+**
Online catch-up services for the Public Service TV Channels	19%	**26%**
Public Service television channels	18%	**27%**
Other television channels	19%	**27%**
Subscription video on demand services	21%	**29%**
National newspaper websites	24%	30%
Instant Messenger services	36%	40%
Independently owned websites and blogs	36%	**49%**
Video sharing websites	40%	**48%**
Social Media sites	48%	55%

Green and red figures denote significantly higher or lower than those without children/16-34 (sig tested to 99%)

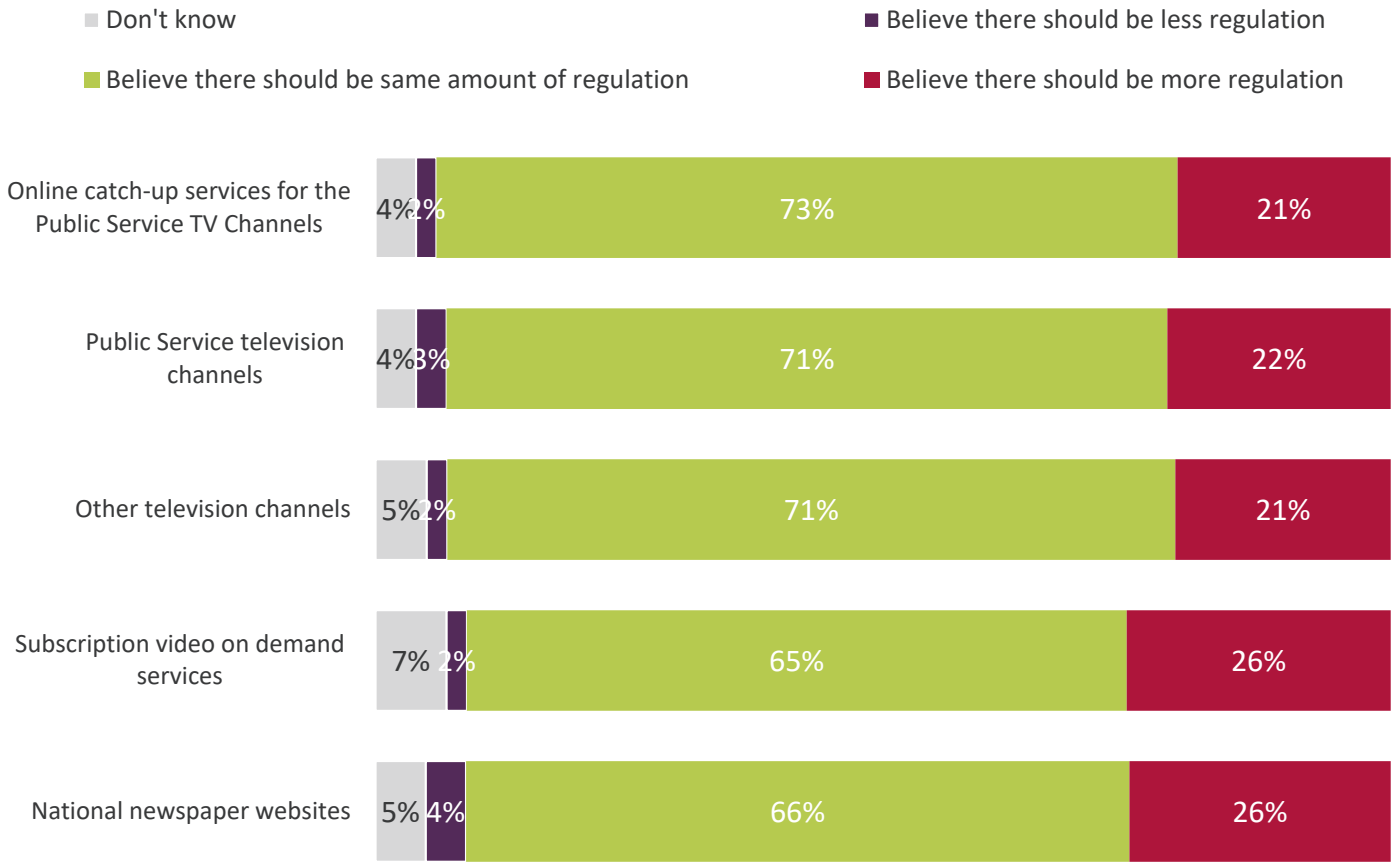
Source: Kantar TNS Omnibus 27/06/2018 to 01/07/2018 (Week 26)

Question: Q24 And for each type of media, do you think that there should be more, less or about the same amount of regulation as there is today? PROMPTED

Base: All internet users in the UK (1686); 16-34 (536), 55+ (632)

Amongst those who believe that there is a regulator that sets rules, the majority believe that the status quo is sufficient

Views on level of regulation – by those who believe a regulator exists



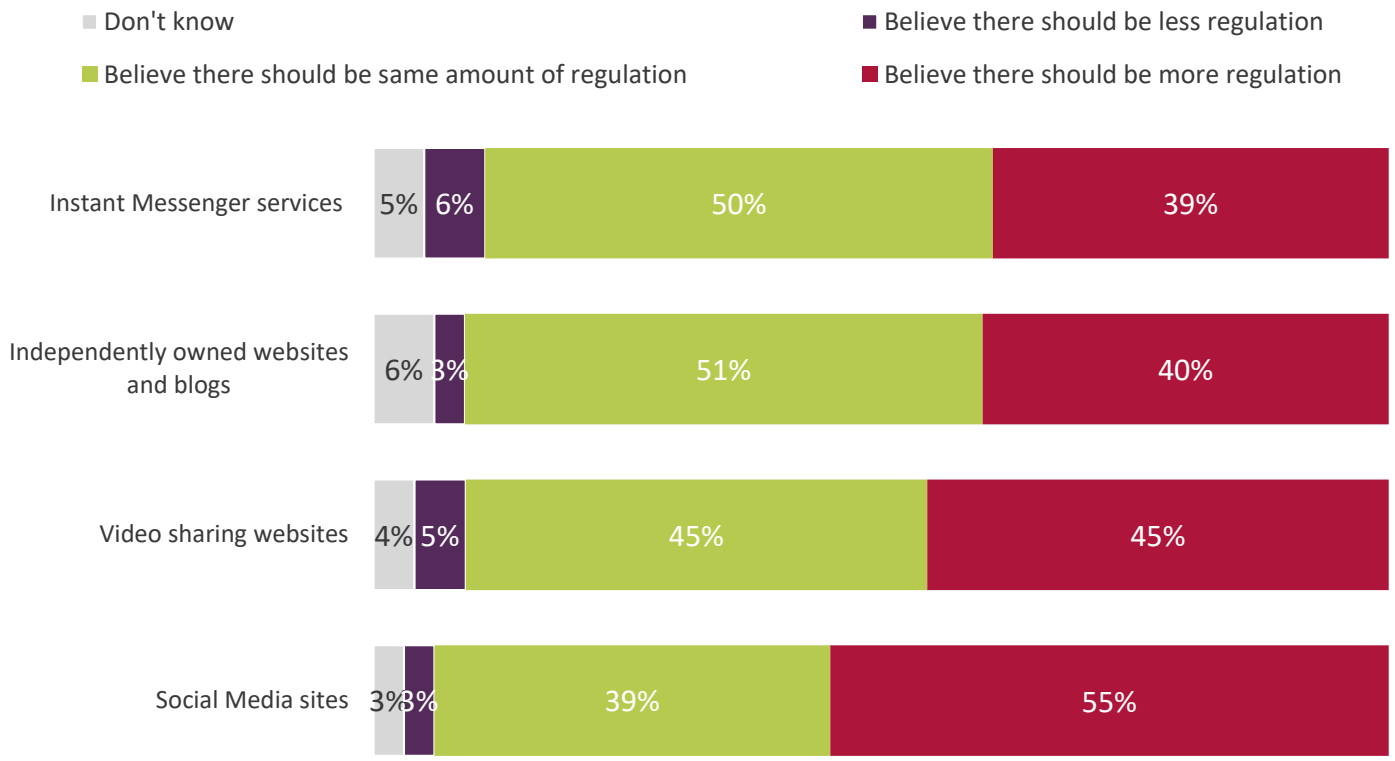
Source: Kantar TNS Omnibus 27/06/2018 to 01/07/2018 (Week 26)

Question: Q24 And for each type of media, do you think that there should be more, less or about the same amount of regulation as there is today? PROMPTED

Base: All internet users in the UK who believe a regulator exists for; Online catch-up services for PSB channels (855); Public Service television channels (1,001); Other television channels (893), Subscription video on demand services (646), National newspaper websites (764)

There were mixed views on the current level of regulation among those who believe that there is no regulation apart from the law

Views on level of regulation – by those who believe there is no regulator, but what is shown/written must be legal



Green and red figures denote significantly higher or lower than those without children/16-34 (sig tested to 99%)

Source: Kantar TNS Omnibus 27/06/2018 to 01/07/2018 (Week 26)

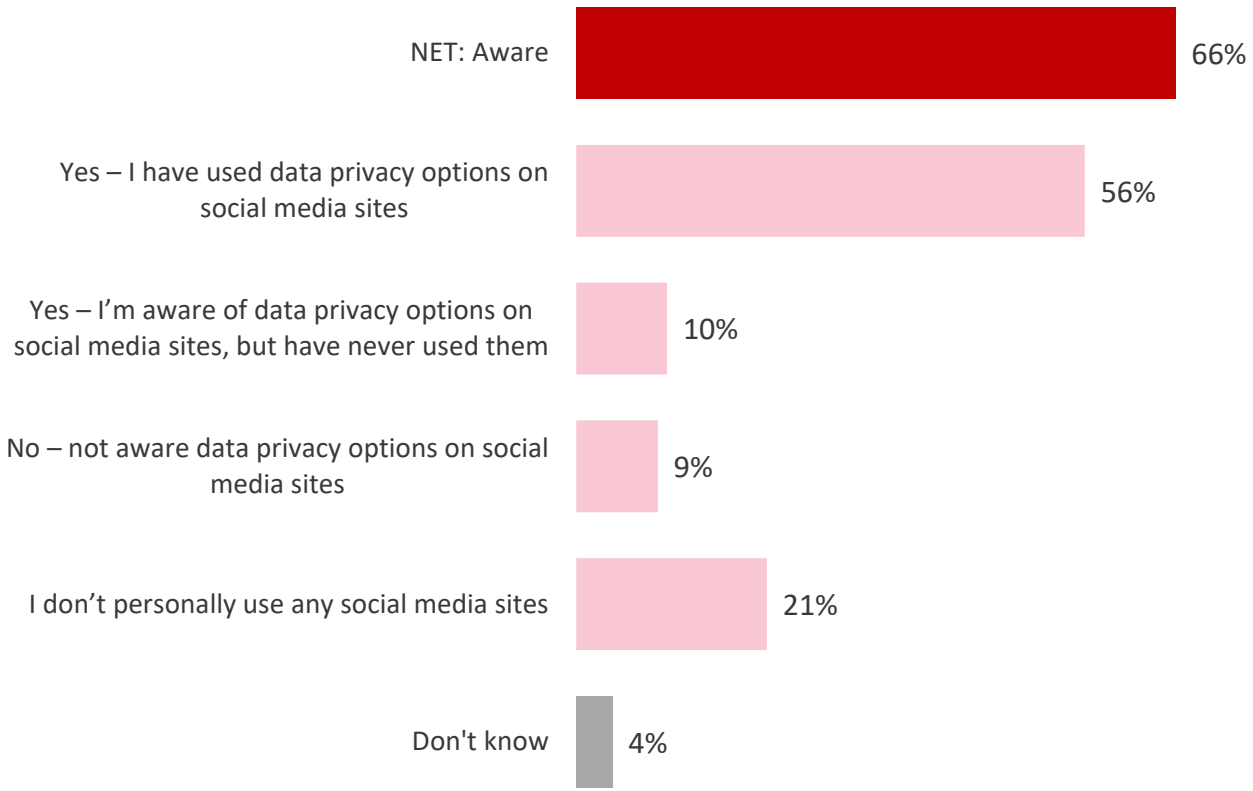
Question: Q24 And for each type of media, do you think that there should be more, less or about the same amount of regulation as there is today? PROMPTED

Base: All internet users in the UK who believe that there is no regulation apart from the law; for Instant Messenger Services (390); independently owned websites and blogs (444); Video sharing websites (468), Social media sites (496)

Section 5
Personal data & data privacy

Two thirds of adult internet users were aware of data privacy options on social media sites

Awareness and usage of data privacy options on social media sites



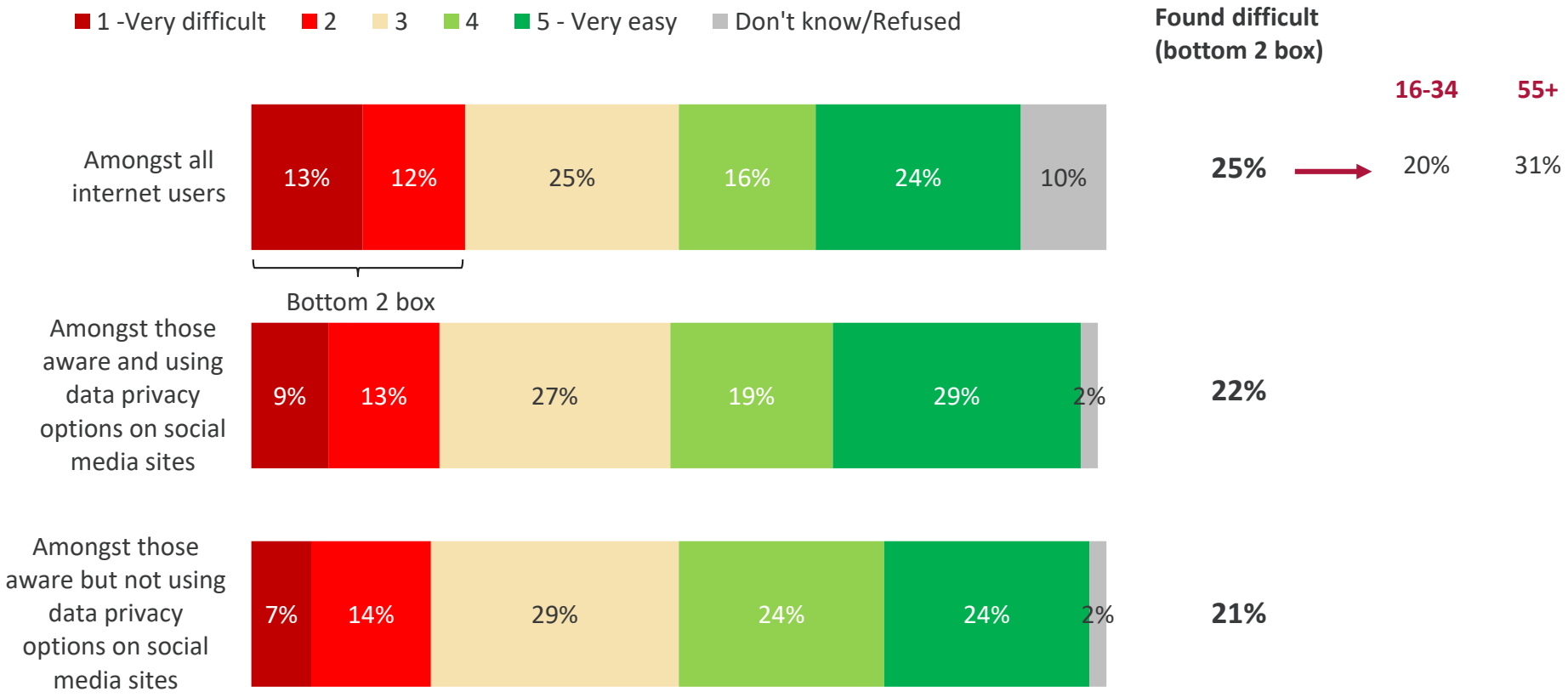
Source: Kantar TNS Omnibus 27/06/2018 to 01/07/2018 (Week 26)

Question: Q11 Before today, were you aware of or have you used any data privacy options on social media sites? These options allow you to choose who your personal data and information is shared with. By personal data we mean anything that you post on the site, the details in your profile and your list of friends or connections PROMPTED

Base: All internet users in the UK (1686)

A quarter of adult internet users found it difficult to control what happens to their personal data

Ease of controlling personal data on social media



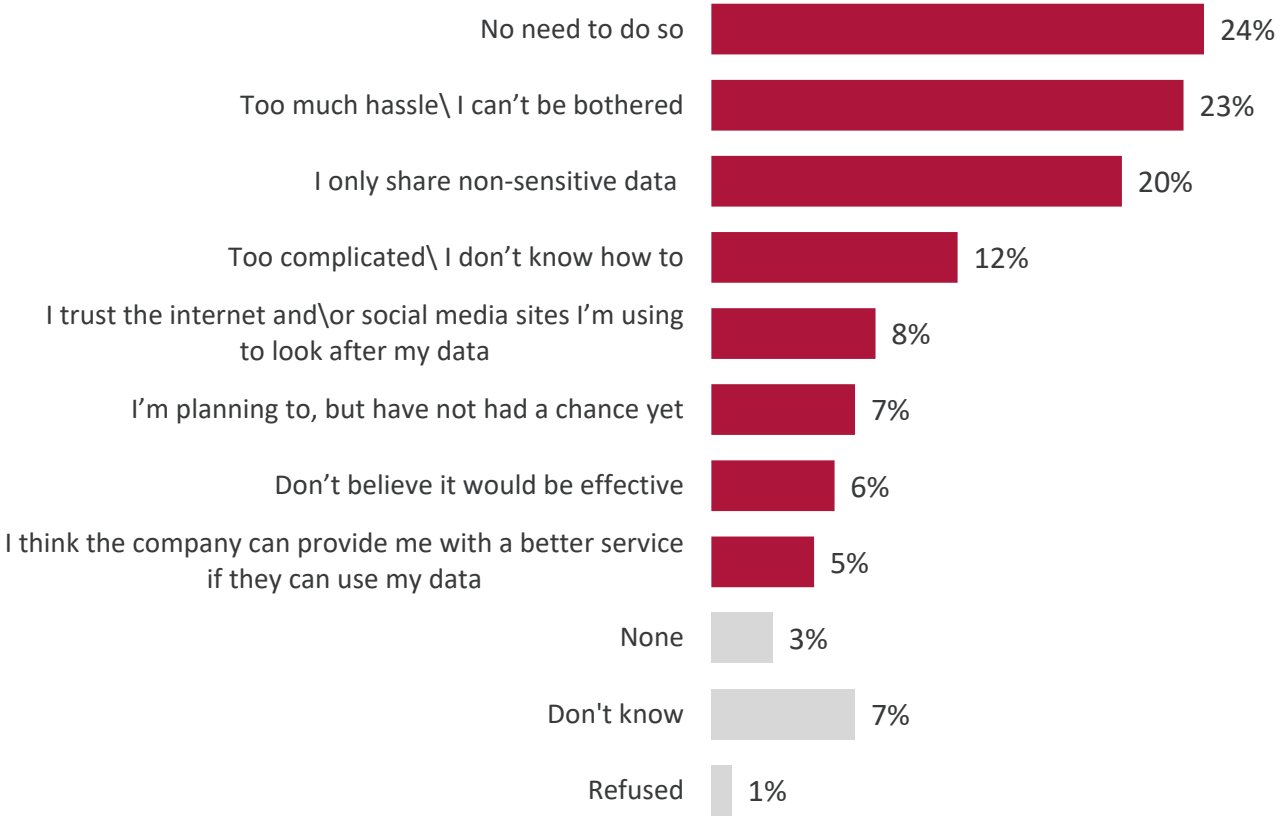
Source: Kantar TNS Omnibus 27/06/2018 to 01/07/2018 (Week 26)

Question: Q12 On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means Very difficult and 5 means Very easy, please tell me how easy or difficult you think it is to control what happens to your personal data on the internet and social media sites? PROMPTED

Base: All internet users in the UK (1686); 16-34 (536), 55+ (632)

The most-cited reasons for not changing privacy settings was that there was no need or it was too much hassle

Barriers to adjusting data privacy options on social media sites



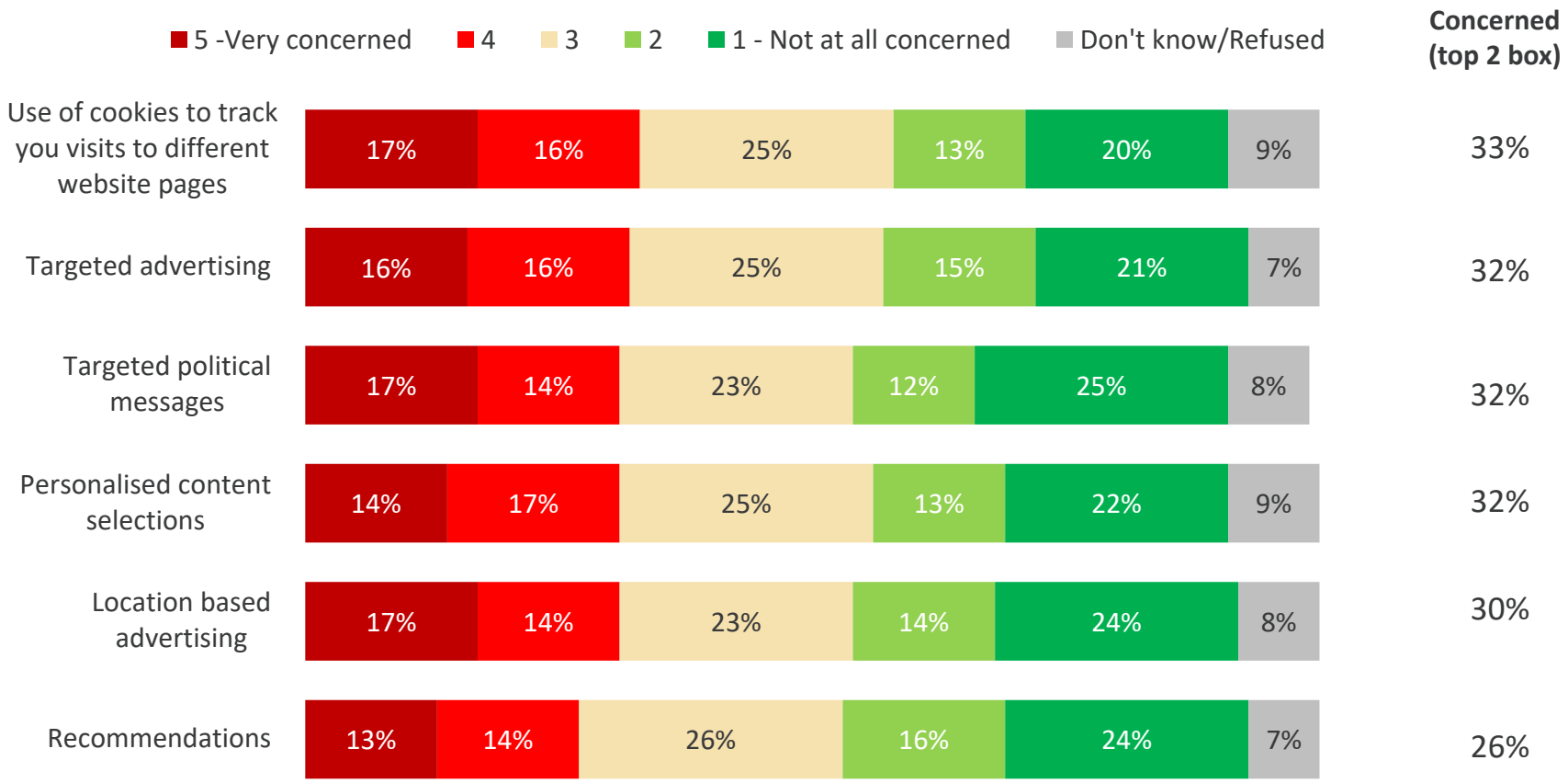
Source: Kantar TNS Omnibus 27/06/2018 to 01/07/2018 (Week 26)

Question: Q13 Which of the following describe why you haven't adjusted your data privacy options? You can select as many as you like PROMPTED

Base: All aware of but have not adjusted their data privacy options (167)

Level of concern about the ways personal data is used was polarised

Level of concern over personal data: Top 2 box



Source: Kantar TNS Omnibus 27/06/2018 to 01/07/2018 (Week 26)

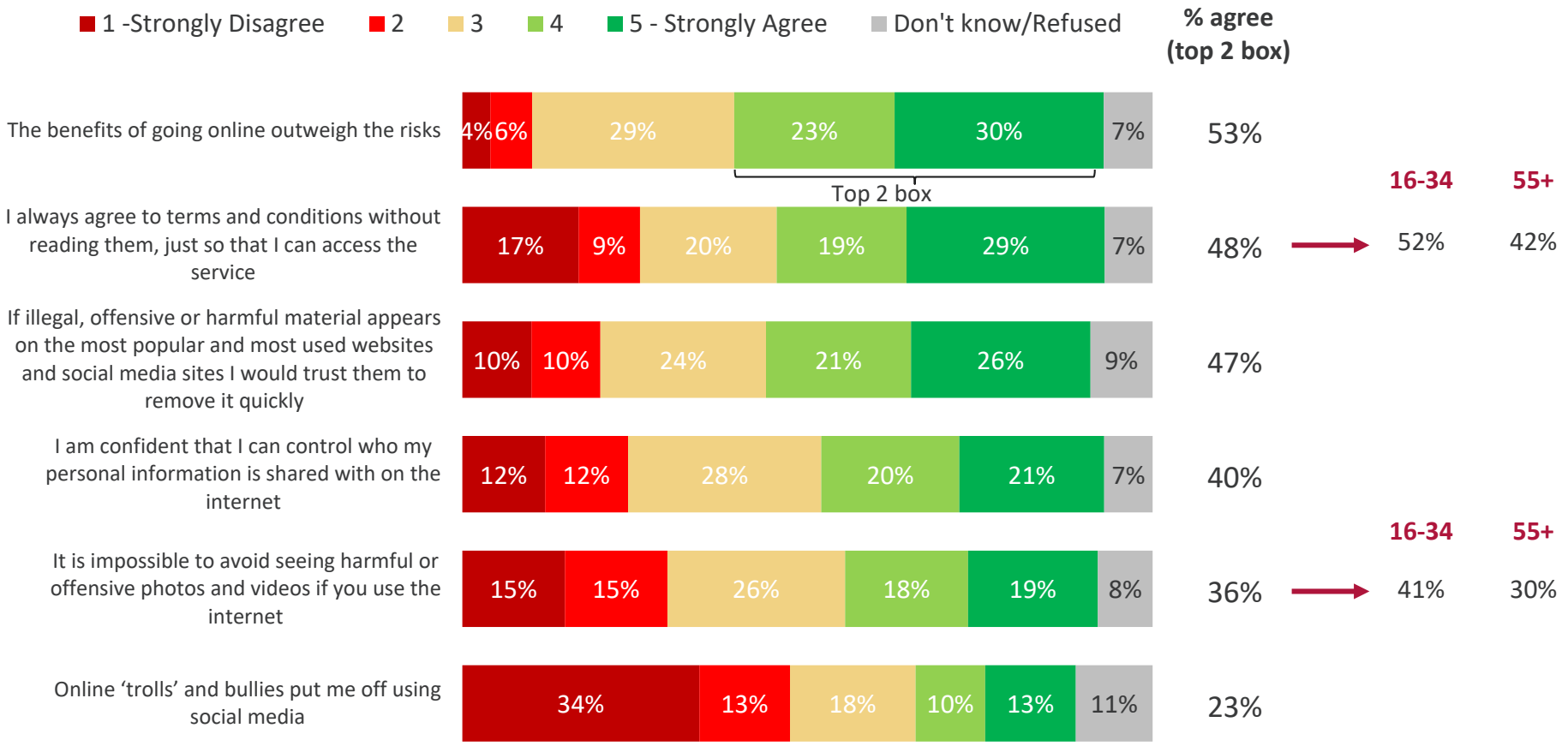
Question: Q14 I am now going to read out different reasons your personal data and information could be used by online companies and I would like you to tell me using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means Not at all concerned and 5 means Very concerned how concerned you are for each. PROMPTED

Base: All internet users in the UK (1686)

Section 6
Attitudes

Over a third of adult internet users said it was impossible to avoid harmful or offensive content

Thoughts on harmful impact



Source: Kantar TNS Omnibus 27/06/2018 to 01/07/2018 (Week 26)

Question: Q21 On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means Strongly disagree and 5 means Strongly agree, please tell me how much you agree or disagree with the following statements PROMPTED

Base: All internet users in the UK (1686); 16-34 (536), 35-54 (518), 65+ (632)