'Think Before You Share'
campaign evaluation report

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Talk about awkward.

Acknowledgements

Introduction

This report presents the evaluation findings of the *Think Before You Share* prevention campaign. This was an 18-month collaboration between The Internet Watch Foundation and the International Policing and Public Protection Research Institute, to develop, deliver and evaluate a new evidence-based targeted prevention campaign to help reduce the number of new 'self-generated' child sexual abuse images and videos on the internet.

The project comprised four main phases:

- Phase One: Building the evidence base
- Phase Two: Campaign design and testing
- Phase Three: Campaign rollout
- Phase Four: Campaign evaluation (this report)

An ever-pressing issue

Since the inception of this project in March 2023, 'self-generated' child sexual abuse material (SG-CSAM) as an issue has become ever-pressing, as evidenced from the example statistics below:

- ☹ Research conducted by Internet Matters, partnered with Nominet, in 2023, reported that 14% of UK teenagers under 16 had experienced image based sexual abuse (IBSA), equating to over 400,000 children in the UK alone. They also reported that even more children were aware of IBSA being perpetrated against their peers (Internet Matters, 2024a).
- ☹ Girlguiding UK, who conduct an annual report on the state of girls' lives in the UK, surveyed 2,500 girls and young women aged between 7-21 years. Their most recent findings (2024) detailed that 77% of those girls and young women aged 7-21 experienced online harm in the last year. More girls are also reporting feeling pressure to share images of themselves online with more than a third receiving unwanted sexual images.
- ☹ The IWF found that during 2023, 92% of the child sexual abuse content on webpages they removed from the internet contained SG-CSAM. The age of the children most frequently featuring on those webpages was aged 11-13. They also highlighted an ever-increasing number of 7–10-year-olds present on webpages containing this type of imagery, up 65% from 2022 (IWF, 2024).
- ☹ There has been an increase in reported sextortion cases (NCA, 2024) and even tragic cases of children taking their own lives after experiencing this form of online sexual extortion (Tidy, 2024: Brooks, 2024). This has resulted in the unprecedented move by the National Crime Agency sending alerts to all schools to be aware of this specific issue.

The campaign

The *Think Before You Share* campaign was commissioned by the Internet Watch Foundation and created by [Consider](), a specialist behaviour change agency. The selection of the campaign's target audience and associated messaging was informed by the research conducted by IPPPRI during Phase One of the project. The overarching campaign message was to *think before you share*, with the aim of supporting teenagers to not feel pressured to share their own, or anyone else's images. The campaign was designed with three target audiences in mind, each with specific messaging, as described below.

Target group	Key messages
Teenagers (13-18 years)	Think before you share your own images Do not share other people's images Call out this behaviour from peers
Parents and carers	Talk to your children about the sharing of their own and other children's images online Stay calm and listen to their concerns
Educators	Talk to your students about the issue of image sharing

Campaign assets

- ✓ Media assets including animated videos, static and carousel images for social media sites, including Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, TikTok style videos with actors, as well as audio assets, recorded by the well-known British actress Diane Morgan, for use on the radio and adverts during podcasts.
- ✓ A Think Before You Share microsite with tailored advice available for teenagers and their parents/carers and educators.
- ✓ School resources, developed in collaboration with schools, and made available via the Think Before You Share website and distributed via a national mailout to schools.

The campaign ran for 6 weeks over June - July 2024. In total the campaign achieved over **122 million social media impressions** with **7.1 million completed views** of the campaign assets.

Evaluation Methodology

Evaluation Framework

The evaluation used a Theory of Change approach to assess the effectiveness of the campaign in achieving its desired outcomes. The framework includes several critical components: inputs (resources), activities (program interventions), outputs, outcomes (short- and medium- term) and impacts (long-term) along with assumptions and external factors influencing these processes (see below).

Figure 1: Theory of Change
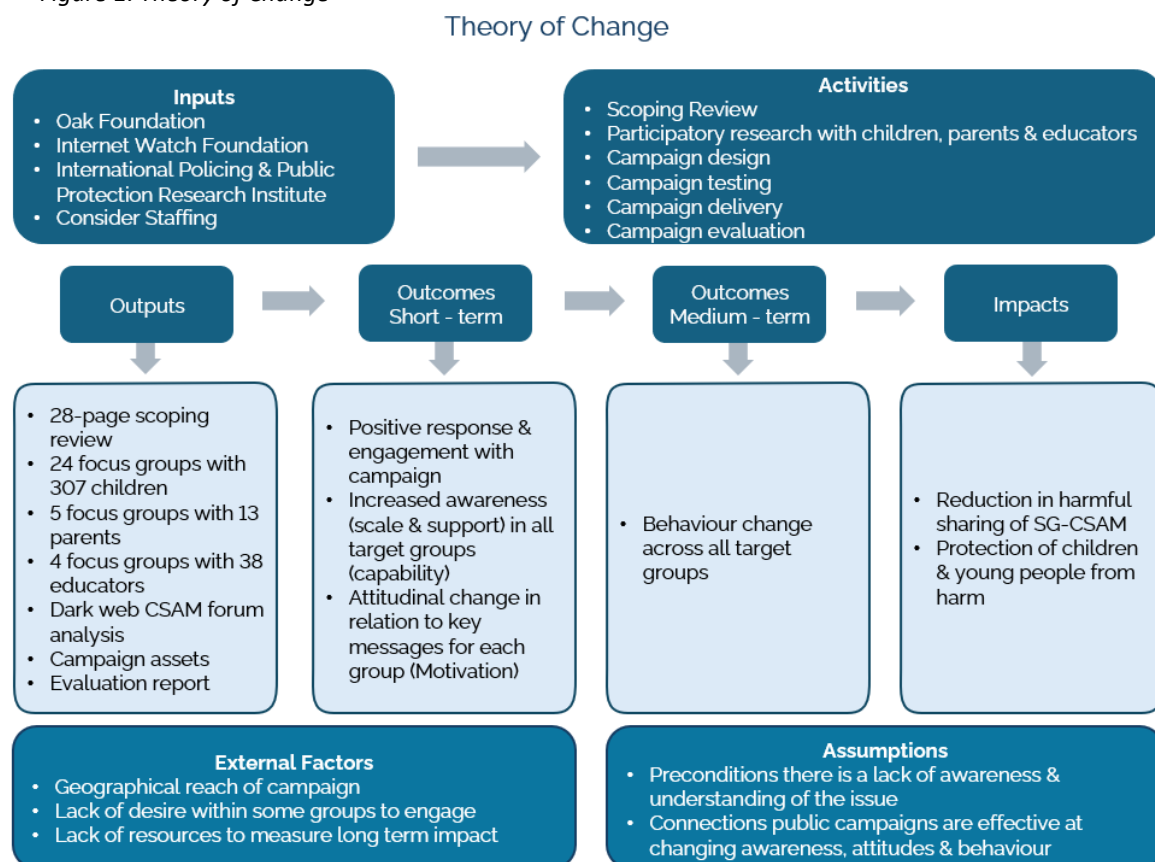
The aim of the evaluation was to measure the effectiveness of the campaign in relation to the following questions:

- ✗ How did the target audience perceive the campaign in terms of its relevance, messaging clarity, and overall effectiveness in addressing key issues?
- ✗ How successful was the campaign in raising awareness amongst teenagers, parents/carers and educators of 1) the issue of SG-CSAM and 2) where to go for support or how to provide support?
- ✗ How successful was the campaign at changing attitudes in relation to its key messages?
- ✗ Is there evidence of potential behaviour change in relation to the key messages of the campaign?

Ethics

Ethical approval was awarded by ARU Arts, Humanities, Education and Social Sciences Faculty Ethics Committee on the 13.11.2024 (Ref: ETH2324-9835). A further amendment was submitted and approved on 12.02.2025 (Ref: ETH2425-3436).

Data

Evaluation data was collected using an online survey. Two versions were developed, one for teenagers (aged between 13 and 18), and one for adults (with variations for both parents and educators). The survey comprised two sections. Section one requested background information including age, gender and ethnicity. In Section two participants were asked to spend some time looking at the campaign material including the social media assets and the supporting website (see example for teenagers below), followed by questions to elicit their views on the campaign.

> In the next section, you will be shown a range of content (website, images and short videos) from the campaign which was aimed at young people.
>
> **Please take the time to look through the campaign materials.**
>
> You will then be asked some questions about what you think of the campaign Exploring the campaign and website should take you no longer than 15 minutes.

A full list of survey items can be found in table 1 below. The survey was developed in Qualtrics and administered online.

Survey item	Response bank	Survey item	Response bank
Teenager Survey		**Adult Survey**	
Section One: Background information		**Section One: Background information**	
If you feel comfortable doing so, can you tell us which country you live in?	England/Northern Ireland/Scotland/Wales/ Prefer not to say. List of Counties/Prefer not to say.	If you feel comfortable doing so, can you tell us which country you live in?	England/Northern Ireland/Scotland/ Wales/Prefer not to say. List of Counties/Prefer not to say.

If you feel comfortable doing so, can you tell us which county you live in?	Free text response	If you feel comfortable doing so, can you tell us which county you live in?	
How old are you?	F/M/Non-binary or third gender / Prefer not to say / Other (please specify)		Free text response
Are you:		How old are you?	F/M/Non-binary or third gender / Prefer not to say / Other (please specify)
	22 ethnicity options	Are you:	
			22 ethnicity options
Please state your ethnicity:	Yes/no		
			Yes /No
		Please state your ethnicity:	
Have you taken part in any formal group discussions, linked to this campaign development, before today on the topic of sharing nude / semi-nude pictures or sexting?		Have you taken part in any formal group discussions, linked to this campaign development, before today on the topic of sharing nude / semi-nude pictures or sexting?	
Section Two: The Campaign		**Section Two: The Campaign**	
Did you see the *Think Before You Share* campaign over the summer?	Yes / No	Did you see the *Think Before You Share* campaign over the summer?	Yes / No
Where did you see the campaign (tick all that apply)	Facebook Instagram Radio / Podcast Snapchat TikTok Whilst watching online news YouTube Other	Where did you see the campaign (tick all that apply)	Facebook Instagram Radio / Podcast Snapchat TikTok Whilst watching online news YouTube Other
What do you think the key messages of the campaign are?	Free text box	What do you think the key messages of the campaign are?	Free text box
Did you find the campaign website interesting and easy to understand? If you needed information or support, are you likely to visit the Think Before You Share website and/or make use of the information that is available there? Would you be likely to recommend the campaign website to other people (such as friends or family members)?	😄 😊 😐 😕 😠	Did you find the online **parent and carers** support website interesting and easy to understand Did you find the **teacher's** guidance & resources on the website interesting and easy to understand? If you needed information or support, are you likely to visit the Think Before You Share website and/or make use of the information that is available there? Would you be likely to recommend the campaign website to other people (such as friends or family members)?	5-point Likert scale (Strongly agree, Somewhat agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Somewhat disagree, Strongly disagree).
I liked the campaign The campaign kept my attention	😄 😊 😐 😕 😠	I liked the campaign This campaign kept my attention	5-point Likert scale (Strongly agree, Somewhat agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Somewhat

I will talk about the campaign with my friends I will talk about the campaign with my family I understood the key messages of the campaign Because of the campaign, I understand more about the risks of sharing explicit / nude images Because of the campaign, I would think before I shared any images of myself in the future Because of the campaign, I would think before I shared any images of other people in the future I know that it is illegal to send explicit (nude / semi-nude) photos of myself or others Because of this campaign, I know where to get help, if I need it. The campaign has made me think about the issue of sexting / image sharing differently.		If I saw the campaign in my social media feed, I would watch it. This campaign will encourage me to talk to my child/ren and or students about this issue This campaign will encourage me to address this issue within my school. (Educators only) I know that it is illegal for children to send explicit (nude / semi-nude) photos to each other. Because of this campaign, I know where to get help for my child/ren, and or students should I need it. The campaign has made me think about the issue of sexting / image sharing differently. The information on the website is helpful to me. I understood the key messages of the campaign. Because of the campaign, I understand more about the risk of children sharing explicit/nude images.	disagree, Strongly disagree).
Please tell us anything else that you liked / disliked about the campaign.	Free text	Please tell us anything else that you liked / disliked about the campaign.	Free text
And finally, how do you think we could help young people to better understand the risks of sharing images online?	Free text	And finally, how do you think we could help young people to better understand the risks of sharing images online?	Free text

Table 1: List of survey questions and response options

Recruitment and procedure

We employed two main recruitment methods[1].

School recruitment. We invited the original schools and youth groups that had engaged in previous phases of the project to take part. Unfortunately, despite a willingness to help, only one of four schools was able to take part. The declining schools cited resourcing pressures and limited time as reasons.

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[1] The survey link was also shared widely on the research teams' social media with a request for parents/carers and educators to take part.

Other schools, who were introduced to us via our professional networks, were also approached, including a multi academy trust in Northern England who had access to multiple secondary schools, but unfortunately other than promoting the survey to their parents/carers, none felt able to support their children to take part.

The procedure for recruiting participants through this route was as follows:

1. Emails were sent to schools introducing the study and inviting participation.
2. Follow-up emails were sent and support offered to encourage participation.
3. Participant information and consent forms were sent to those groups agreeing to take part.
4. Completed consent forms were completed and returned for any child participants.

Market research panel recruitment. To boost our sample, we also engaged the market research company Savanta[2], to recruit both teenagers and adults by way of their survey panels. Recruitment began on 5th February and continued until either the agreed participant quotas had been reached, or a deadline had been met. Recruitment concluded on 3rd March 2025.

Panel members were reached via an app called YourVue, which allows participants to access appropriate surveys and complete them at a time to suit them. The YourVue app permits the profiling of the participants to ensure that the correct groups are being reached. Participants were directed to the correct profile to enter the survey, e.g. as a teenager between the ages of 16-18; as a parent of a child between 13 and 16 to provide consent for the younger teenager to complete the survey, or as a parent/carer.

Data analysis

Survey responses from the two recruitment methods were merged and descriptive and inferential statistical analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows Version 29.0.2.0 (2023). A content analysis (Bengtsson, 2016) of the free-text responses was also carried out.

Participants

In total, 1347 individuals completed the survey - 69 were recruited via the school route and 1278 via the panel route.

Teenager Sample. 573 participants were teenagers between the ages of 13 to 18 years (M = 15.18, SD = 1.70). 53.2% (n = 305) were female, and 45.9% (n = 263) were male. Most participants (73.5%, n = 419) were White, with the second most common

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[2] Savanta have extensive experience of working with children and young people and conducting research on sensitive topics, such as youth violence and contraception.

ethnic group being African/Caribbean/Black/Black British (9.6%, *n* = 55). Most (89.0%, *n* = 510) lived in England at the time of completing the survey.

Adult (Parent/Educator) Sample. 774 participants were adults between the ages of 18 to 77 years (*M* = 37.65, *SD* = 10.48). 72.1% were female (*n* = 558), while 27.3% (*n* = 211) were male. Most participants (75.4%, *n* = 558) were White, with the second most common ethnic group being African/Caribbean/Black/Black British (13.9%, *n* = 107). The majority (88.8%, *n* = 687) lived in England at the time of completing the survey.

Overall, 688 adult participants (88.9%) indicated being a parent or carer of a child under the age of 18. 84 (10.9%) indicated being a parent/carer of a child and a teacher. Two (0.2%) indicated being a teacher, but not a parent/carer. The latter category was not available to participants in the market research sample.

Knowledge of the issue

To gauge participants' knowledge of SG-CSAM, we asked both adults and teenagers the extent to which they agreed with the statement I *know that it is illegal for children to send explicit photos to each other*. On average, participants moderately to strongly agreed that they knew it is illegal for children to send explicit photos to each other (*M* = 4.60, *SD* = 0.78; see Figure 2). There were no significant differences in this finding between girls and boys or children and adults.
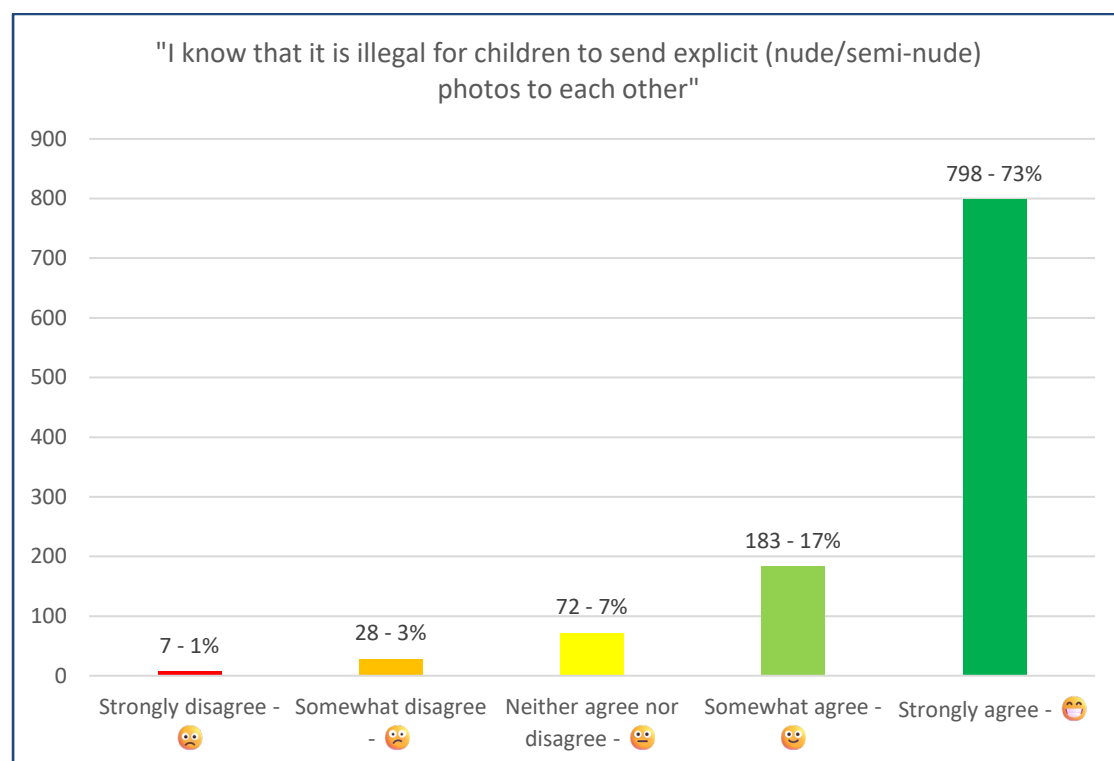

Figure 2: Participants' agreement with the statement "I know that it is illegal for children to send explicit (nude/semi-nude) photos to each other" (n = 1088)

Campaign Exposure[3]

We asked participants whether they had been exposed to the campaign when it was live over the summer of 2024. 28.5% (*n* = 389) of participants indicated that they had seen the campaign over the summer, and this did not differ significantly between adults and teenagers. However, there was a significant gender difference in the teenager sample, with a higher number of boys (36.67%, *n* = 172) reporting having seen the campaign, compared to the number of girls (25.23%, *n* = 215) who reported this [χ^2 (4) = 21.24, *p* < .001].

Most participants who had previously seen, or heard about, the campaign had done so on Facebook (15.2%, *n* = 208), followed by Instagram (12.3%, *n* = 168), TikTok (9.7%, *n* = 133), YouTube (8.5%, *n* = 116), while watching online news (7.0%, *n* = 95), on Snapchat (5.7%, *n* = 78), on the radio or a podcast (5.6%, *n* = 76), or through some other, not listed, source (1.9%, *n* = 26; see Figure 3).
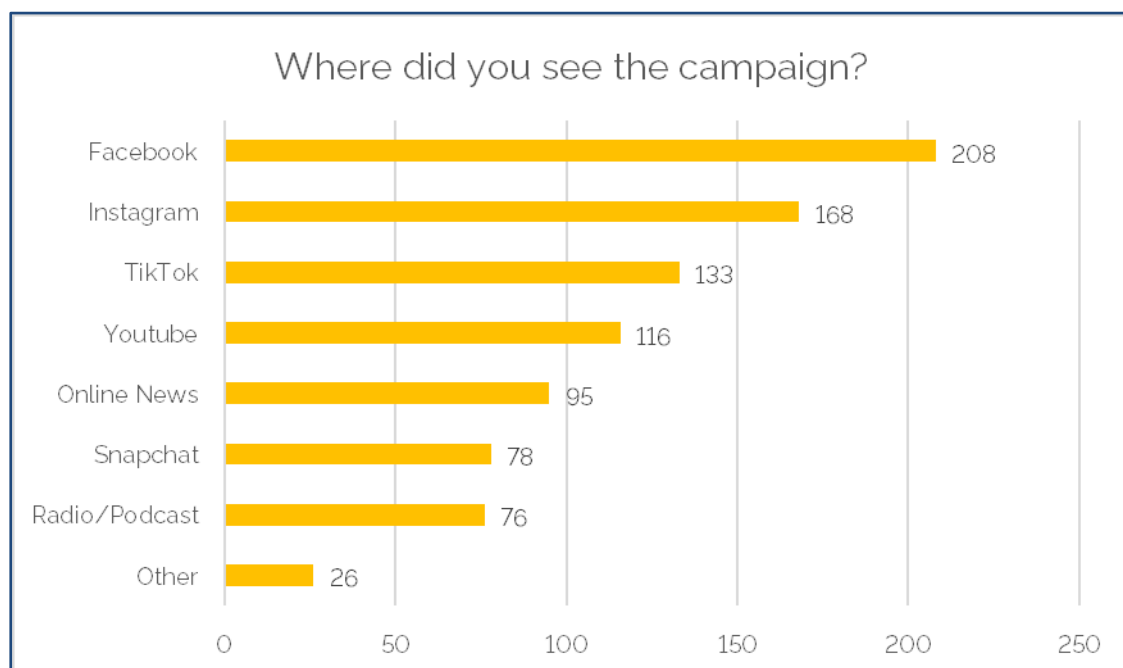

Figure 3: Participants' indication about where they saw the campaign over the summer. Note: Participants could indicate that they had seen the campaign in multiple different locations.

Teenagers more frequently reported having heard about the campaign on Snapchat [8.5% vs. 4.4%; χ^2(1) = 7.78, *p* = .005] and TikTok [14.4% vs. 8.6%; χ^2(1) = 8.12, *p* =

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[3] Further insights regarding the impact of the campaign can also be found in the reach and engagement statistics collected by Consider and Root Media, the agencies responsible for the creative development and deployment of the campaign. Overall, their data showed that the campaign achieved over 122 million impressions with 7,148,787 completed views of the campaign assets (see Appendix A for finer detail).

.004] than adults did. There were no other significant differences between teenagers and adults in whether participants had heard about the campaign from the other listed sources. There were some gender differences in where teenagers had previously heard about the campaign. When compared to girls, boys were more likely to indicate having seen the campaign on Facebook [20.5% vs. 9.2%; $\chi^2(4)$ = 15.68, p = .003] and while watching online news [8.0% vs. 4.6%; $\chi^2(4)$ = 9.47, p = .05].

Evaluation Findings

The findings are presented in four sections, each of which addresses one of the four main evaluation questions.

Evaluation Question 1: How did the target audience perceive the campaign in terms of its relevance, messaging clarity, and overall effectiveness in addressing key issues?

We asked participants if the campaign had kept their attention. On average, participants strongly to moderately agreed with this statement (M = 4.42, SD = 0.82; see Figure 4). There were no significant differences between adults and teenagers, or boys and girls in how much participants reported that the campaign kept their attention.
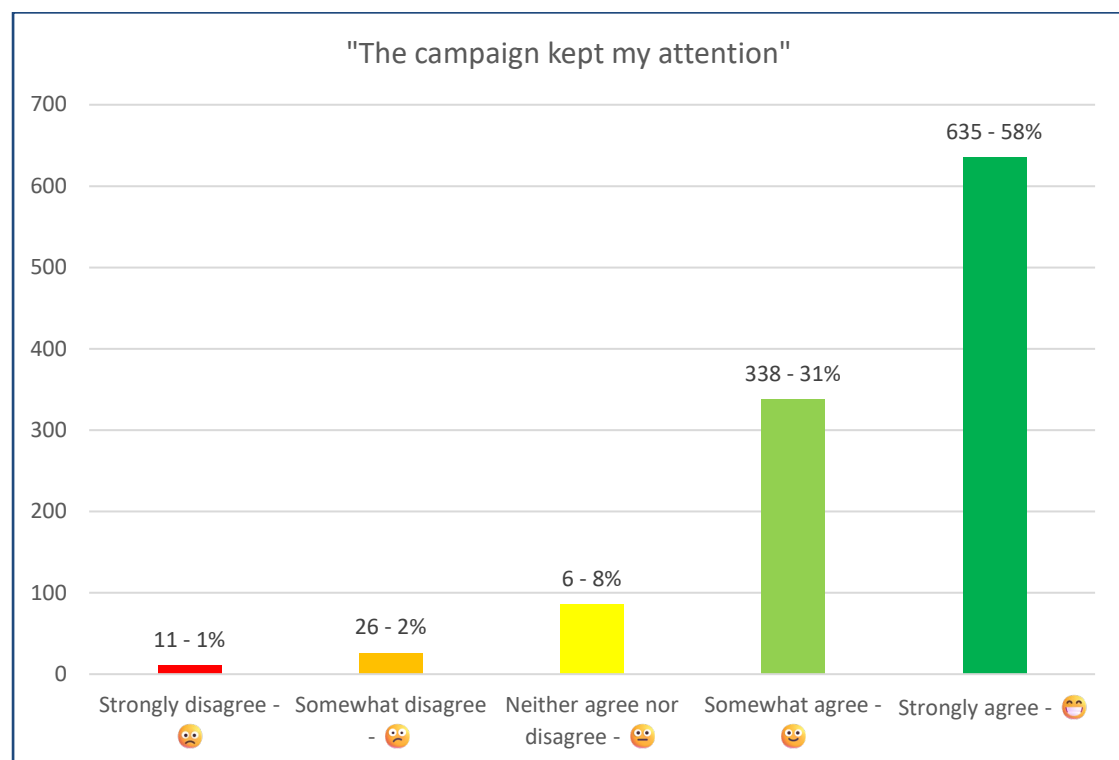

Figure 4: Participants' agreement with the statement "The campaign kept my attention". (n= 1096).

We asked participants if they liked the campaign. On average, participants indicated strongly to moderately liking the campaign (M = 4.40, SD = 0.87, see Figure 5). Here, a t-test indicated that teenagers' (M = 4.53, SD = 0.67) reported liking the campaign more than adults (M = 4.31, SD = 0.98; $t(1094)$ = 4.30, $p < .001$). There were no significant gender differences in how much teens reported liking the campaign.
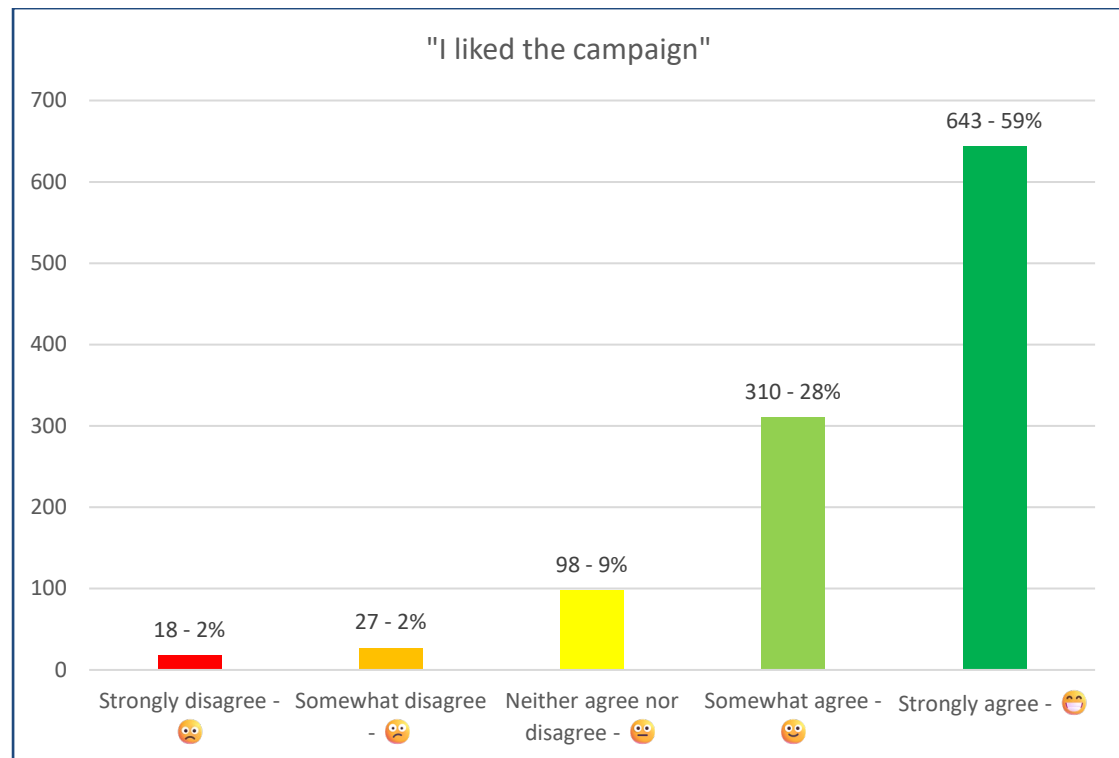

Figure 5: Participants' level of agreement with the statement "I liked the campaign". (n= 1096).

Free text comments (n=908) in response to the prompt '*please tell us anything else that you liked/disliked about the campaign*' were overwhelmingly positive, particularly from teenagers, with adjectives such as *"perfect", "great", "supportive"* and *"funny"* being used on multiple occasions. There were very few negative comments about the campaign from teenage participants (n=23), with only a few mentioning that it was either a little graphic (n=6) *"I thought the one with the orange and the hair was a bit gross"* (Teenager, female, 15 years), made them feel either uncomfortable (n=2): "*[i]t made me feeling uncomfortable about what's out there on social media*" (Teenager, male, 15 years), or that they did not like specific elements of the campaign, such as the soundtrack or the use of actors in the videos.

Adults' comments suggested more of a divide in opinion. While most comments from adults were positive (n=519), (e.g., "*I think overall it's one of the best campaigns*" Adult, female, 27 years)*, a small number of comments were negative (n=40) (e.g., *"[t]his is just about the worst campaign I have ever seen"* Adult, female, 45 years).

Teenagers and adults alike commented specifically on the **clarity** of the campaign messaging (n=32) as one of the things they most liked about the campaign:

> *"the campaign is timely and the messages are clear to understand, nothing i dislike i love all about it*." (Adult, female, 30 years)

> *"It's clear as a glass of water"* (Adult, male, 46 years)

> *"I Love the "Think Before You Share" campaign for its relatable and clear messaging. The campaign's relevance to current online issues and engaging content have helped grab the attention of young people. The campaign's positive tone, focusing on empowerment and education, has also resonated with many people."* (Adult, female, 30 years)

> *"[t]he campaign is easy to understand and helped me become more aware of the implication of posting mi[n]e or someone's nudes online"* (Teenager, female, 14 years)

> *"I liked the campaign because it got the message across easily without using complicated words and jargon. It showed me where I could get help from and where I could get it and talk too" (*Teenager, male, 13 years).

A number of comments from both teenagers and adults (n =69) focused on the **educational** benefits of the campaign with comments such as:

> *"I loved everything, I've learnt a lot"* (Teenager, male, 14 years)

> *"It make me a little bit not comfortable, but I learn a lot"* (Teenager, male, 14 years).

> *"I like that it painted the bigger picture for me on how much damage sharing a private picture could create"* (Teenager, male, 13 years).

> *"The campaign is a good one, as I have learned some salient things about the effect of sharing peoples images"* (Adult, male, 44 years).

Sixty positive references were made to the **creative** side of the campaign, with various elements attracting praise:

> *"I liked the images and the dramatic music"* (Teenager, female, 15 years)

> *"I liked that it was kids my age teaching me"* (Teenager, male, 14 years).

> *"I liked that each one was short but to the point and the fruit imagery was fun but got the message across well. I like that it was targeted at both boys and girls and from the side of people both sharing the images and those having their images shared. I'm not sure if my parents would think some of the images were appropriate or the language in the snapchats so I'm not sure if I would show it to my parents"* (Teenager, female, 14 years)

> *"it wasn't a campaign that scares you and degrades you for making a mistake like that it was very much on the side of victims and potential victims. It was also funny*

which is relatable and makes it seem less scary of being punished if you do make that mistake" (Teenager, female, 18 years)

"I like the images that were used. They are bold and very explanatory. I like that parents and teachers are advised to talk about it rather than yell at the child. I also like that the illegal images can be taken down." (Adult, female, 34 years)

"I like how visually appealing the advert was and how easily it got the message across" (Adult, female, 29 years)

"Good visual images and use of teenage actors" (Adult, female, 41 years)

Overall, comments from adults were slightly more critical of the campaign's design:

"The campaign is a bit crass especially since it's referring to minor children. I think the images used in the advertising should be a bit more sensitive" (Adult, female, 34 years)

"I disliked the images. They were like soft porn from the 70s with the innuendo. Quite disgusting" (Adult, Other, 51 years)

A small number of adults were careful to state that they were not narrow-minded but that they found the imagery used, and it appeared that the banana asset was the most controversial, distasteful, with the following quote exemplifying this view:

"the images and sounds in this ad campaign were so over the top and off-putting to the point where I would probably not visit the website just because of the suggested nature of the ads. Not to sound prudish, but I think the point could have been made without cream dripping down a banana and macaroni sounds on the radio ad." (Adult, female, 38 years)

There were also a small number of comments suggesting insensitivities relating to culture and survivor status:

"The use of images representing emoji's associated with sexual language/communication would only make sense to some audiences. For example, parents from my south Asian ethnic community may be less likely to make the sexual associations between the fruits and vegetables used in the images." (Adult, male, 50 years)

"I didn't like the banana or orange segment images. I totally get why they were used and the campaigns aim of bringing awkwardness into the open. But as a sexual abuse survivor I found those two images deeply uncomfortable and made me click off the images in order to not be triggered." (Adult, female, 36 years)

We asked participants if they felt they had understood the key messages of the campaign. On average, participants agreed moderately to strongly that they understood the key messages of the campaign (M = 4.62, SD = .68; see Figure 6). There were no significant differences between adults and teenagers, or boys and

girls in the extent to which participants reported that they had understood the key messages of the campaign.
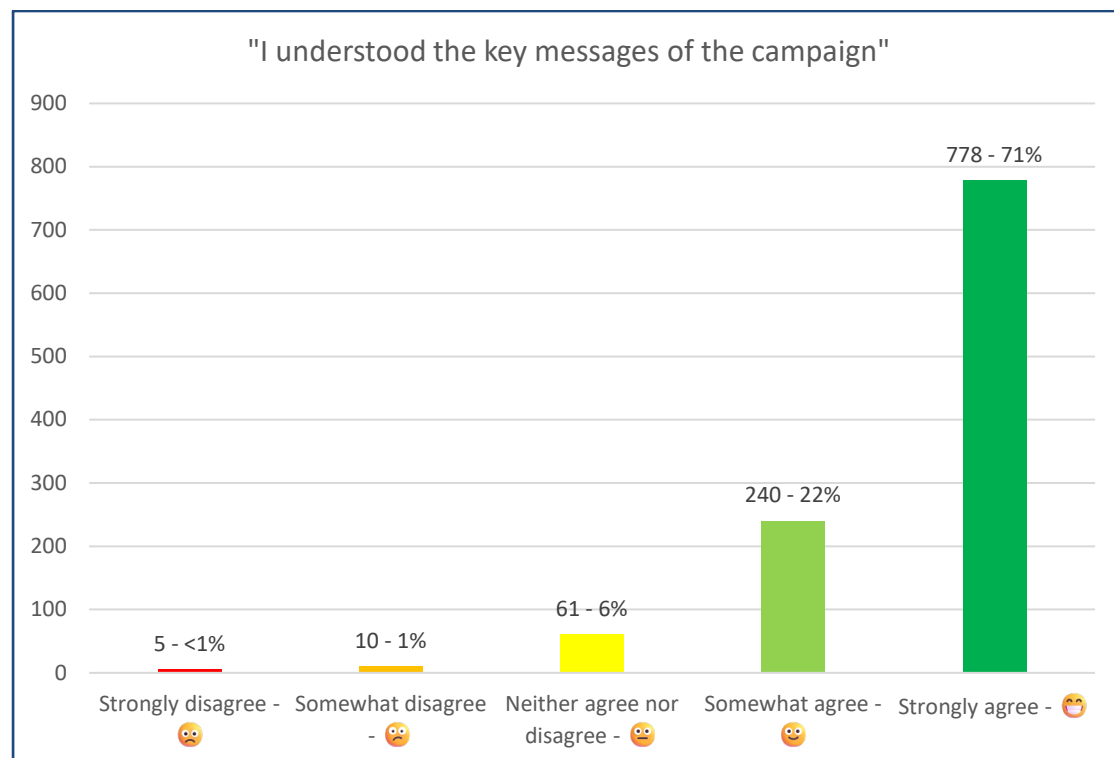

"I understood the key messages of the campaign"

- Strongly disagree - 😡: 5 - <1%
- Somewhat disagree - 🙁: 10 - 1%
- Neither agree nor disagree - 😐: 61 - 6%
- Somewhat agree - 🙂: 240 - 22%
- Strongly agree - 😊: 778 - 71%

Figure 6: Participants' level of agreement with the statement "I understood the key messages of the campaign" (n= 1094).

We further asked participants to tell us what they thought the key messages of the campaign were. 484 free text responses were made in response to this. Of the teenagers who provided a response (n=164) to this question, the majority repeated some form of the key messaging such as:

"be careful who you share things with online" (Teenager, male, 13 years)

"[t]hinking of where your pictures will end up" (Teenager, female, 14 years)

"I think it's trying to tell me about how I share my data with people online or offline" (Teenager, male, 15 years)

Adults also reiterated the campaign messaging with comments such as

"[a]lways think before you do anything and don't fell [sic] pressured" (Adult, female, 24 years)

"To educate young ones of not posting their nudes on socials." (Adult, male, 25 years).

"The key messages are consent, respecting privacy, understanding risks, thinking before sharing, and knowing where to seek support." (Adult, male, 43 years).

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"This is the best campaign message ever" (Adult, female, 25 years)

An interesting point was made by one parent/carer who highlighted that this is an issue affecting adults, who also need to be aware of the issues around sexual image sharing too:

"In one of the radio adverts she said "young people are sharing XYZ" online, I think it would have been better to say "lots of people share XYZ online, INCLUDING young people" to show its not just teens. Some parents will think this a new thing only affecting thay generation, when it reality it's everybody. [sic]" (Adult, female, 30 years).

We asked teenagers if they planned to talk about the campaign with their friends or family. On average, teenage participants moderately to strongly agreed that they will talk about the campaign with their friends (*M* = 4.17, *SD* = 1.01; see Figure 7) and family (*M* = 4.05, *SD* = 1.14; see Figure 8). There were no gender differences in whether teenagers planned to talk about the campaign with their friends or family.
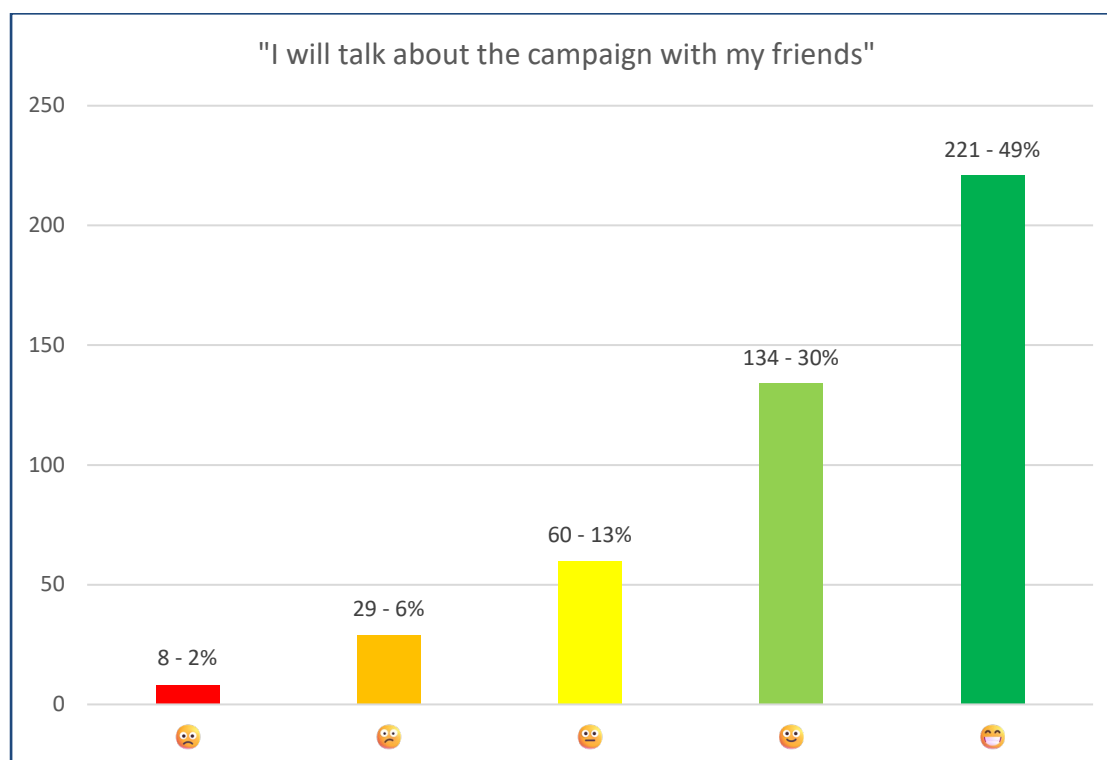

Figure 7: Teenage participants' responses to the statement "I will talk about the campaign with my friends". (n= 452).
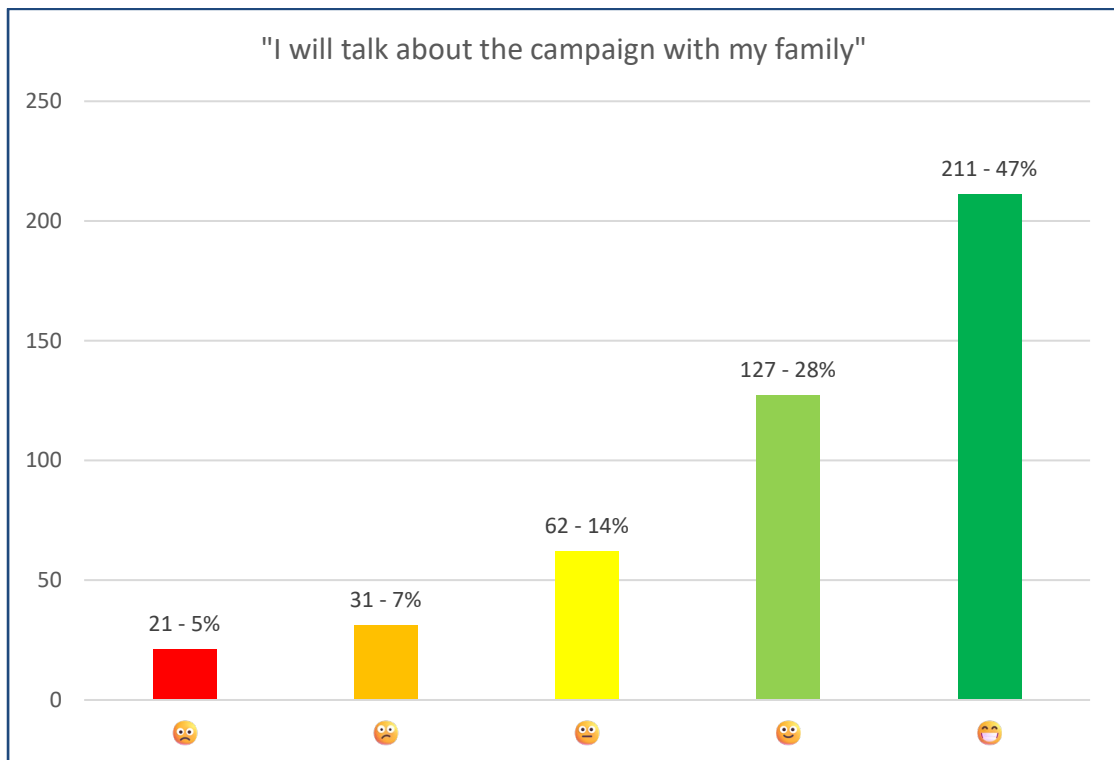
Figure 8: Teenage participants' responses to the statement "I will talk about the campaign with my family". (n= 452).

We asked participants for their views on the website that accompanied the campaign. Teenagers (*M* = 4.62, *SD* = .65; see Figure 9), parents/carers (*M* = 4.50, *SD* = .75; see Figure 10), and teachers (*M* = 4.42, *SD* = .93; see Figure 11) respectively moderately to strongly agreed that the campaign website and the information available on the website for them was interesting and easy to understand. When looking at the teenage participants' responses, there were no significant gender differences in whether boys and girls found the campaign website interesting and easy to understand.
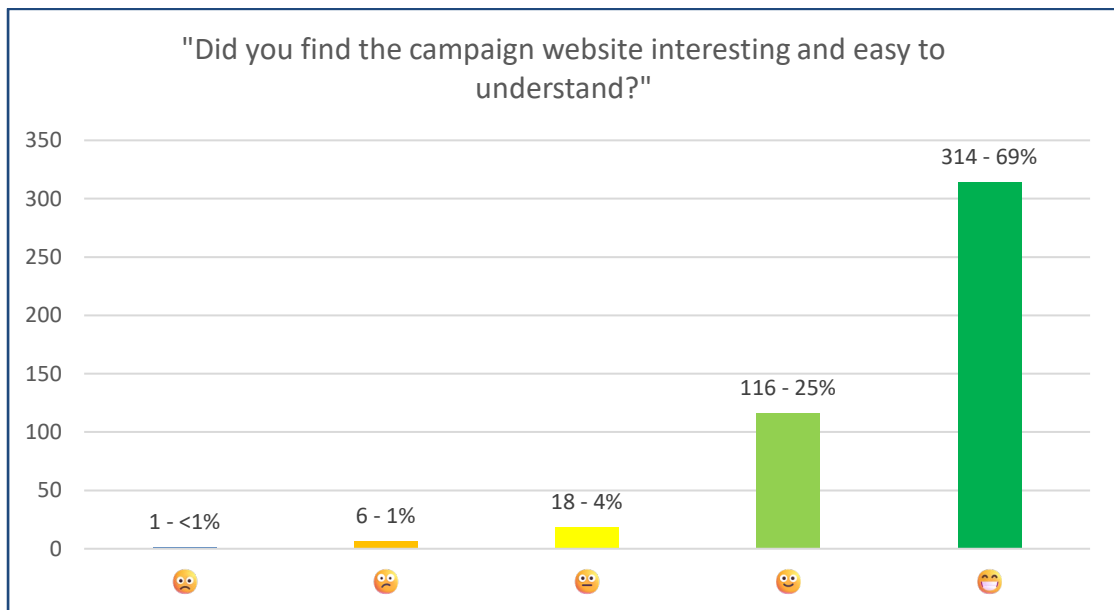
Figure 9: Teenage participants' responses to the question "Did you find the campaign website interesting and easy to understand?". (n= 455).
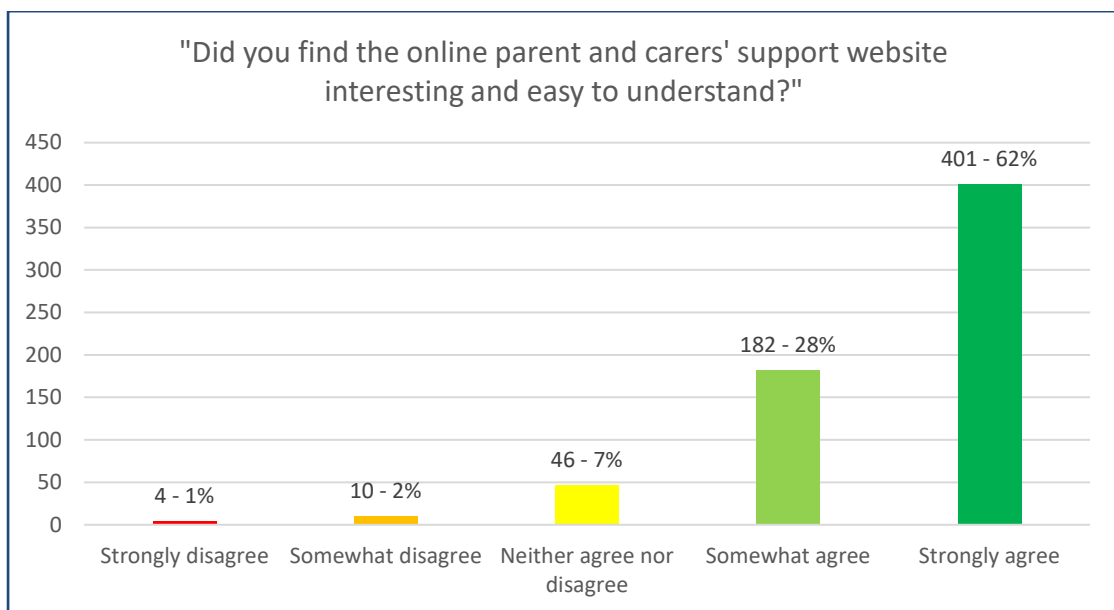

Figure 10: Parent/carer responses to the question "Did you find the online parent and carers support website interesting and easy to understand?". (n= 643).
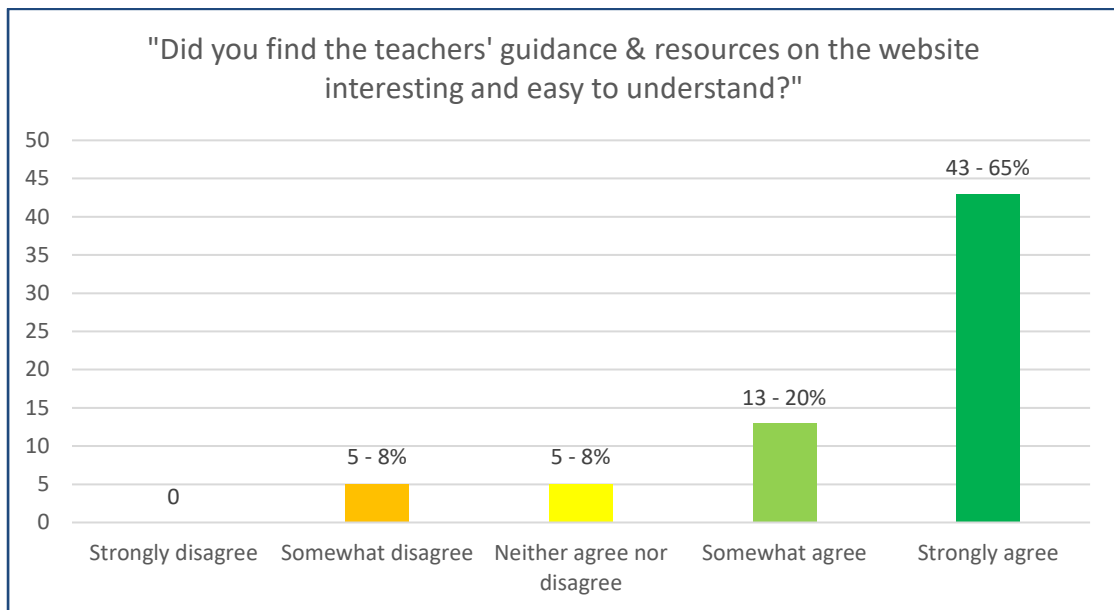
Figure 11: Teacher responses to the question "Did you find the teacher's guidance & resources on the website interesting and easy to understand?". (n= 66).

When asked about how helpful they found the information on the website, on average, adults moderately to strongly agreed that the information provided on the campaign website is helpful to them (*M* = 4.46, *SD* = .81; see Figure 12).
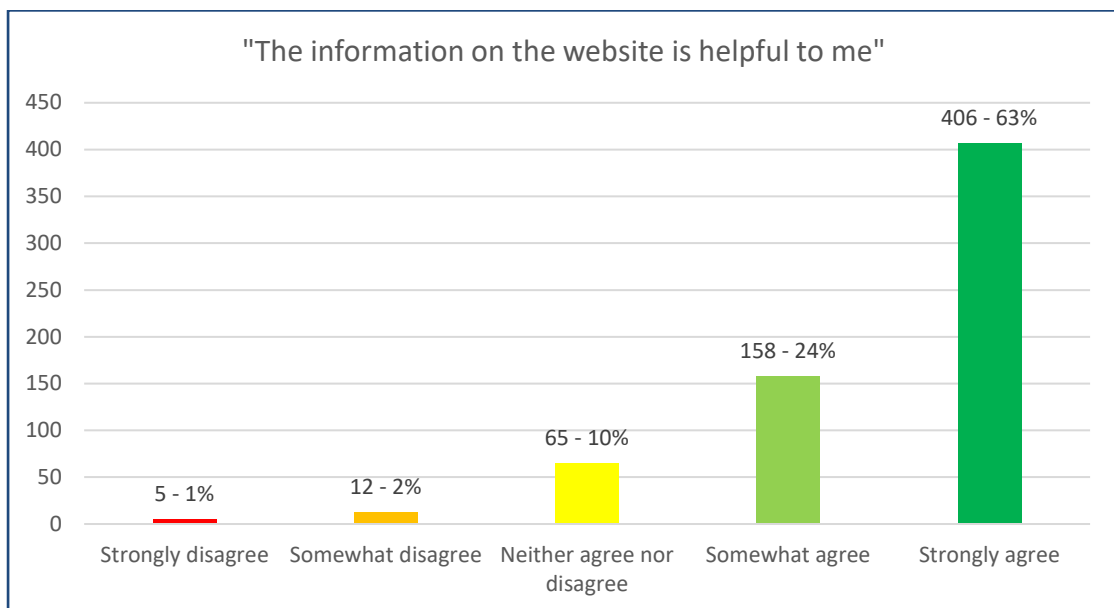

Figure 12: Adult participants' agreement with the statement "The information on the website is helpful to me". (n= 646).

Reinforcing the strong to moderate agreement with the helpfulness of the information available on the website, on average, participants moderately to strongly agreed that they would actually visit the website and/or make use of the information available on the website if they needed information or support (*M* =

4.38, *SD* = .81; see Figure 13). There were no significant differences between either children and adults or boys and girls.
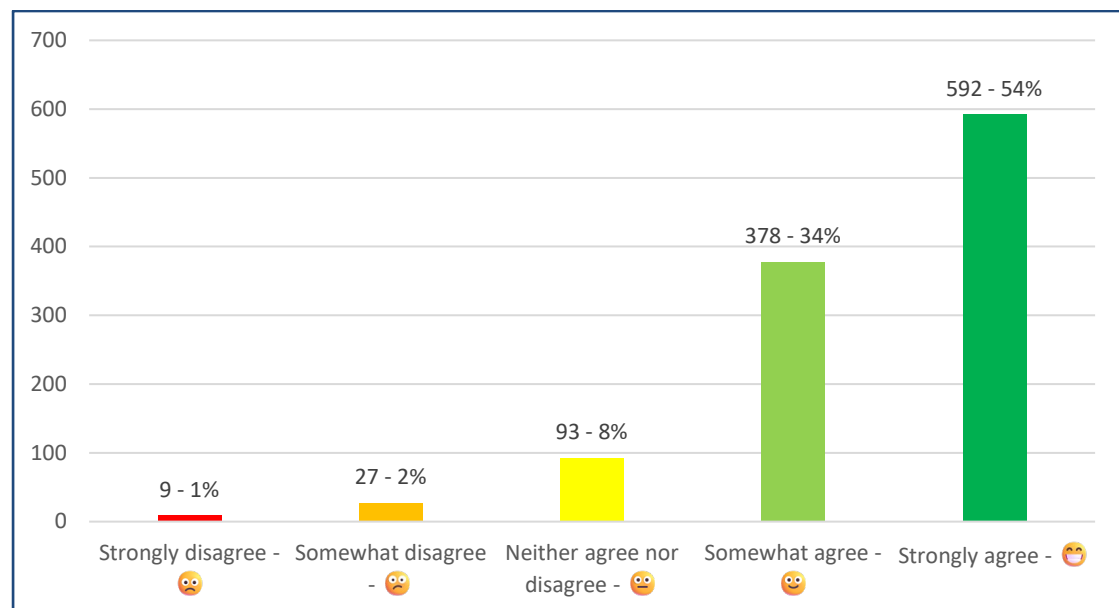

Figure 13: Participants' responses to the question "If you need information or support, are you likely to visit the Think Before You Share website and/or make use of the information that is available there?". (n= 1099).

One of the resources described on the website was the 'Report Remove' service. Originally established by the IWF and the NSPCC in 2017, this service gives children the ability to request to have images and videos of themselves that are assessed as criminal under UK law removed from the internet. Young people submit an image or video to the IWF for review via the Report Remove portal, hosted on Childline's website. In the meantime, Childline offers emotional support through counselling and online resources.

Analysis of traffic to the service between 17th June – 11th August 2024 compared to the previous two months (adjusted to match the specific days of the week) showed an overall increase in visits of nearly 37% and a 60% increase in the total number of sessions started. Most of this increase appears to have come from referrals via the thinkbeforeyoushare.org website, highlighting the effectiveness of the campaign in raising awareness of the Report Remove service.

The number of users who viewed the first step of making a report was also higher in that period:

- 13-15 years old: Number of users increased by 90%
- 16-17 years old: Number of users increased by 73%
- 18 years and over: Number of users increased by 30%

Figure 14, reproduced from the NSPCC, highlights the uptick in traffic to the service during the time of the campaign.
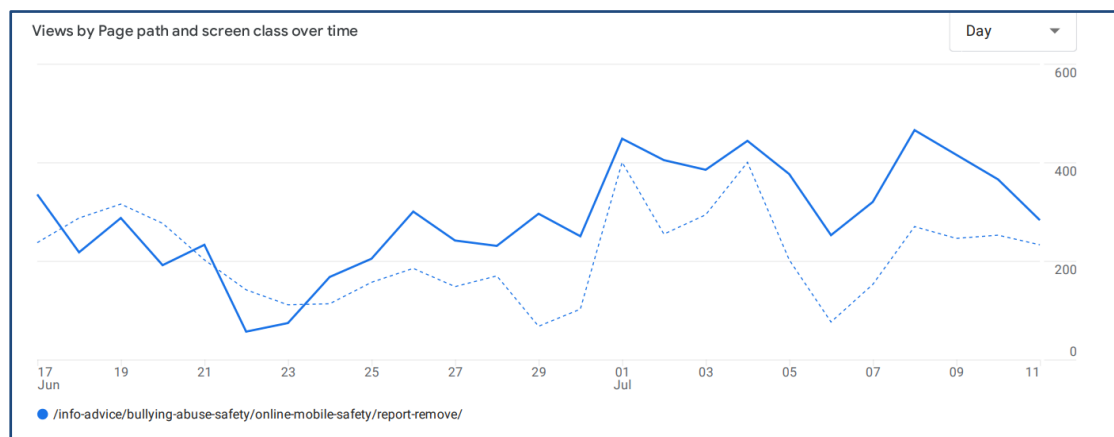
Figure 14: Internet traffic to Report Remove service 17ᵗʰ June to 11ᵗʰ July 2024

Data from the IWF showed a 44% increase in reports (n=1142) to the Report Remove service in 2024 compared to the year before (IWF, 2025).

A number of free text comments mentioned the availability of resources such as Report Remove, as the following quote demonstrates: *"[t]he resources provided, such as the tools to get images removed, are incredibly useful"* (Adult, male, 18 years). There were also a number of comments suggesting more limited knowledge of the impact of these tools; *"[t]o think before sharing private pictures as once they are on the internet they are there forever"* (Adult, female, 25 years), as one of the aims of this service is to empower children to request to have their sexually explicit images removed from the internet.

On average, participants moderately to strongly agreed that they would **recommend the campaign website to other people,** such as friends and family members (*M* = 4.36, *SD* = 0.88; see Figure 15). There were no significant differences between children and adults or boys and girls in how likely they reported they would be to recommend the website to others.
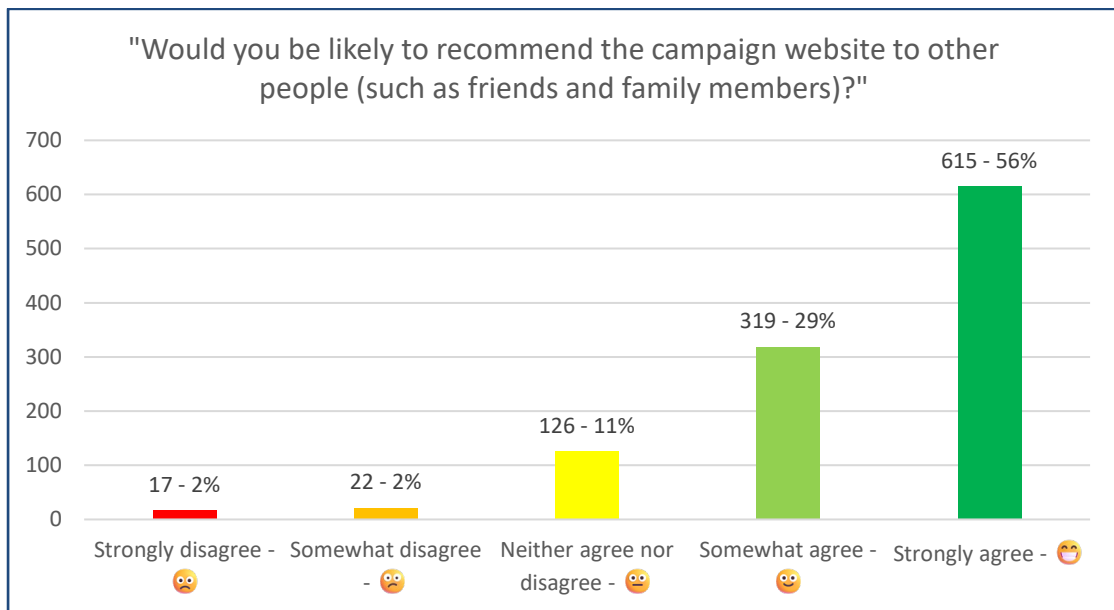
Figure 15: Participants' responses to the question "Would you be likely to recommend the campaign website to other people (such as friends or family members)?". (n= 1099).

Comments on the website ranged from the favorable:

> *"The resources provided, such as the tools to get images removed, are incredibly useful"* (Teenager, male, 18 years)

to others who had constructive comments about the website content:

> *"I think the message about talking to a trusted adult could be more prominent; it's a vital first step"* (Teenager, male, 18 years)

> *"[i]t could highlight more options for anonymous reporting or reaching out without involving an adult right away* (Teenager, female, 18 years).

> *"[s]ome might find the section on "mental health support" a bit too brief; it could provide more resources or coping strategies"* (Teenager, female, 18 years)

Comments from adults regarding the website were mostly positive with a very small number (n=2) who had negative feelings about the style. There were limited comments which identified specific areas of improvement but overall, a majority who referred to the positives of having a site to visit for reference both now and in the future:

> *"I feel that having a website to visit is helpful, because it has lots of information and support, whether you're a child, a parent or a teacher"* (Adult, female, 40 years)

> *"this something that really worries me, so it's good to know there's a website to go to. Well done!"* (Adult, female, 50 years)

"I now know where some resources are when my children are older which will be useful for the current world we live in" (Adult, female, 38 years).

The comments from adults and teenagers on this point illustrate appreciation of having somewhere to go online which hosts relevant information, to a few points on possible improvements to the design and content of it. For future campaigns, focus groups could be held to consider what information would be most helpful to include on the site for parents/carers and teachers and teenagers respectively.

Evaluation Question 2: How successful was the campaign in raising awareness amongst children, parents/carers and educators of SG-CSAM as an issue and resources available?

We asked participants whether they **understood more about the risks of children sharing explicit or nude images because of the campaign.** On average, participants moderately to strongly agreed that they did have more understanding (M = 4.44, SD = 0.82; see Figure 16). Here, children (M = 4.51, SD = 0.73) were slightly more likely to agree with this statement than adults [M = 4.40, SD = 0.87; t(1089) = 2.26, p = .024]. There were no significant gender differences between boys and girls.

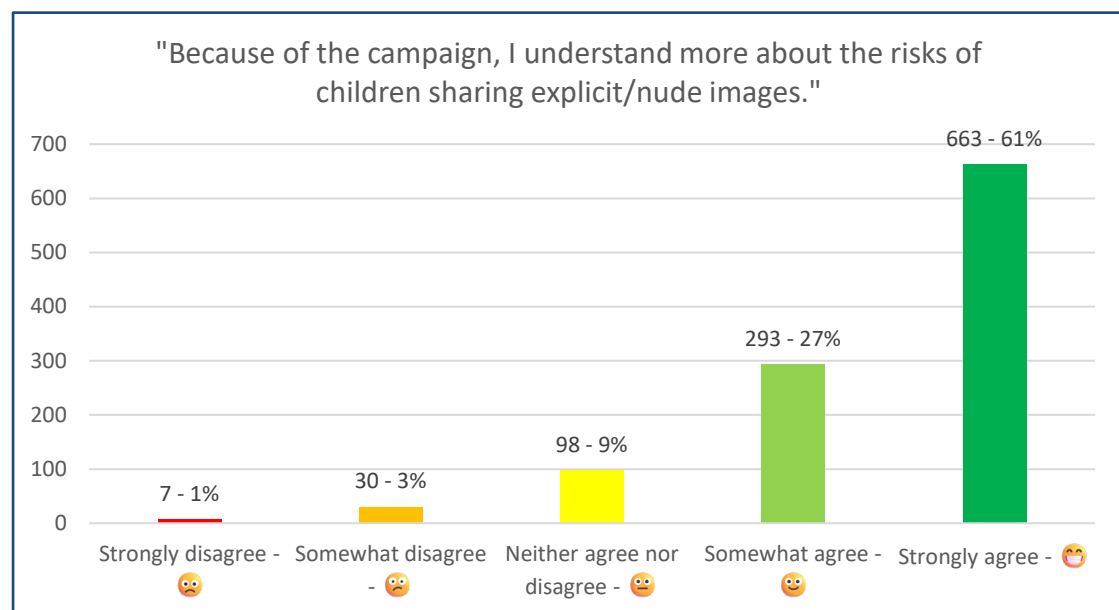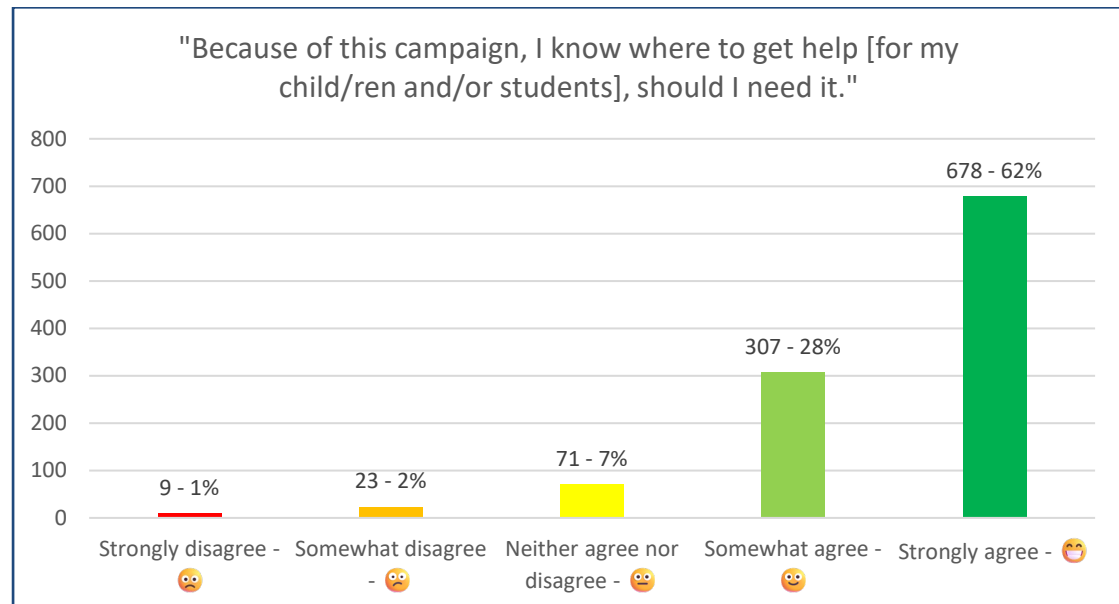*Figure 16: Participants' agreement with the statement "Because of the campaign, I understand more about the risks of children sharing explicit/nude images". (n= 1091).*

This increased awareness came through in a number of the free text comments, as illustrated by this quote: *"I like that it painted the bigger picture for me on how much damage sharing a private picture could create"* (Teenager, male, 13 years).

We asked participants if, **because of the campaign, they knew where to get help** for themselves or for their child/ren or students. On average, participants moderately to strongly agreed with the statement (M = 4.49, .SD = 0.80; see Figure 17). Here, children (M = 4.55, SD = 0.71) were slightly more likely to agree with this statement than adults [M = 4.45, SD = 0.82; t(1086) = 1.99, p = .047]. There were no significant gender differences between boys and girls.

Note. Question text in brackets was displayed to adult participants only

Figure 17: Participants' agreement with the statement "Because of this campaign, I know where to get help [for my child/ren and/or students], should I need it". (n= 1088).

Evaluation Question 3: How successful was the campaign at changing attitudes in relation to the issue?

We asked participants **whether the campaign had made them think differently about the issue of sexting and image sharing.** On average, participants moderately to strongly agreed that the campaign had made them think differently (M = 4.36, SD = 0.89; see Figure 18). Teenagers (M = 4.48, SD = 0.77) showed significantly higher levels of agreement with this statement when compared to adults [M = 4.29, SD = 0.96; t(1086) = 3.49, p < .001]. There were no significant gender differences.

"The campaign has made me think about the issue of sexting/image sharing differently"
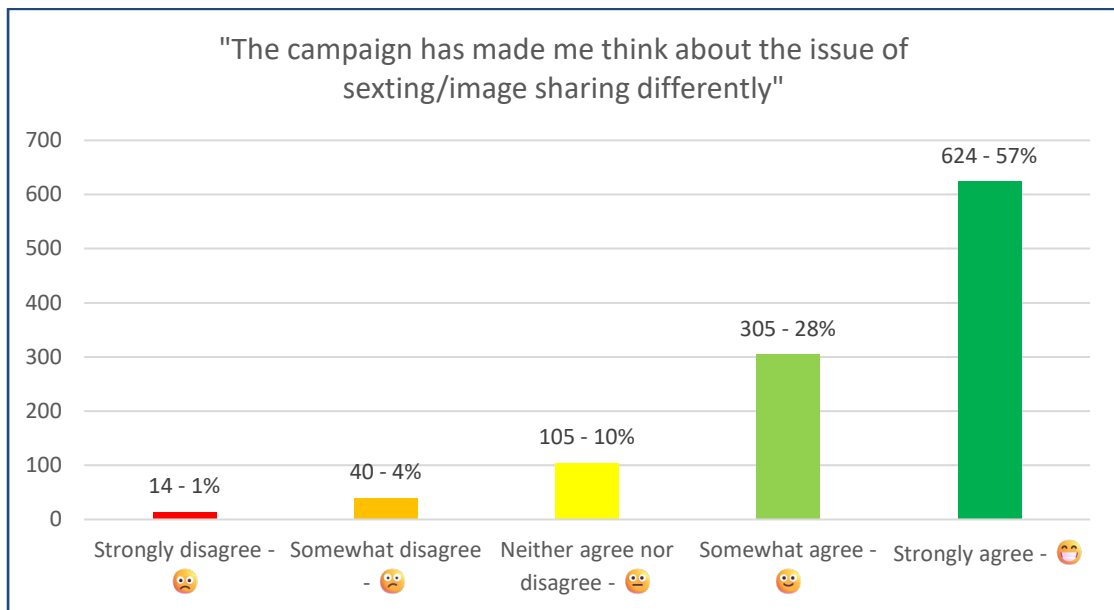
Figure 18: Participants' agreement with the statement "The campaign has made me think about the issue of sexting/image sharing differently". (n= 1088).

Evaluation Question 4: Is there evidence for potential behaviour change in relation to the key messages of the campaign?

We asked teenage participants if, because of the campaign, **they would think before sharing images of themselves and others.** Overall, teenage participants moderately to strongly agreed that they would think before sharing images **of themselves** (M = 4.51, SD =0.74; see Figure 19) or **of others** (M = 4.60, SD = 0.67; see Figure 20) in the future. There were no significant gender differences for this finding.

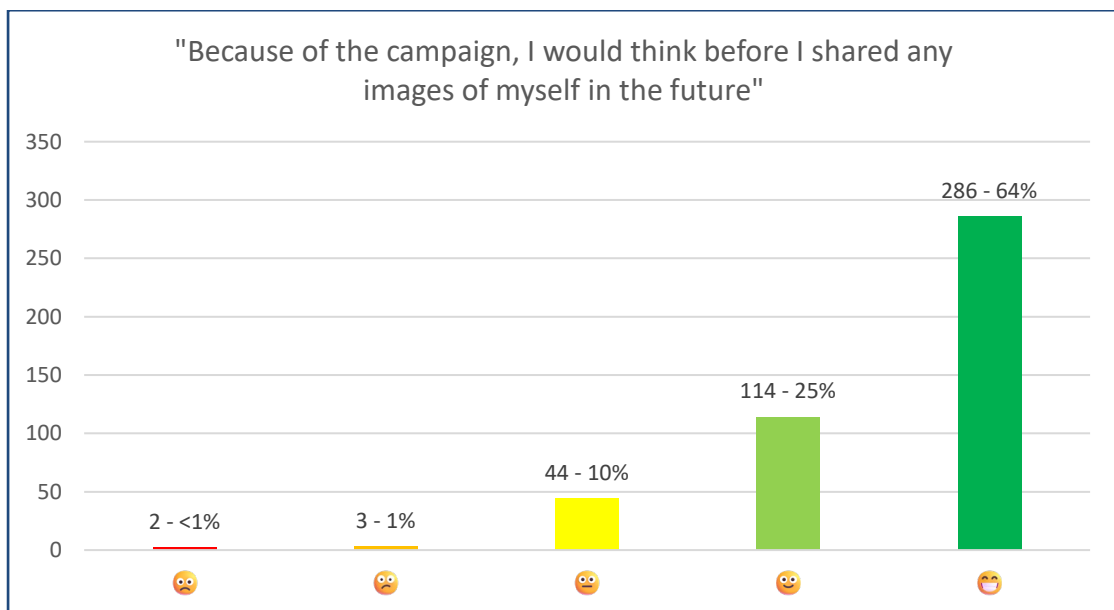"Because of the campaign, I would think before I shared any images of myself in the future"

Figure 19: Teenage participants' agreement with the statement "Because of the campaign, I would think before I shared any images of myself in the future". (n= 449).
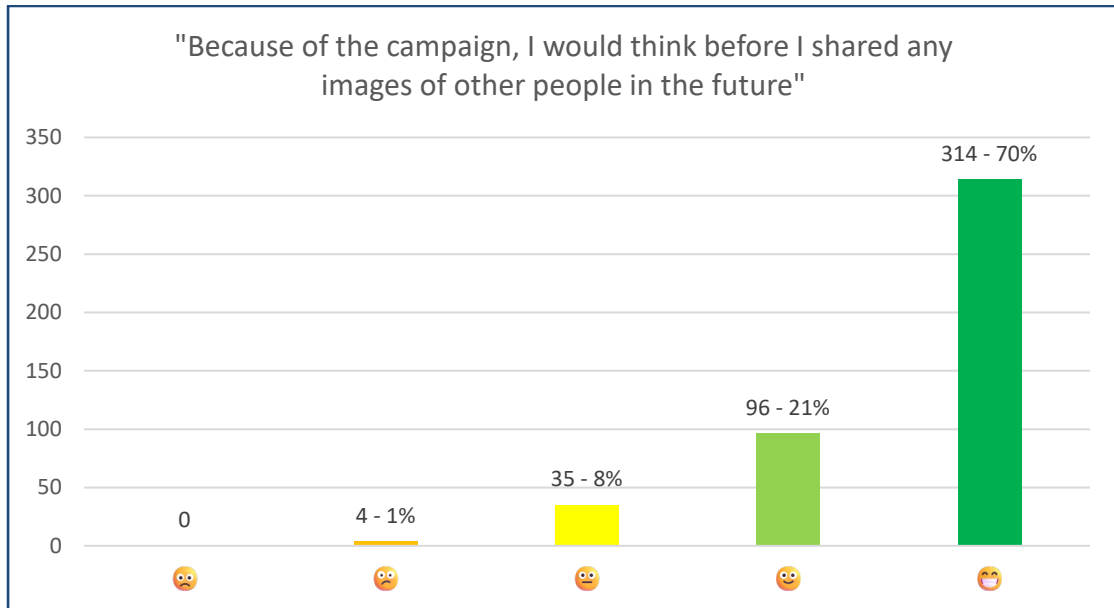
Figure 20: Teenage participants' agreement with the statement "Because of the campaign, I would think before I shared any images of other people in the future". (n= 449).

We asked adult participants whether t**he campaign will encourage them to talk to their child/ren or students about this issue**. On average, adult participants moderately to strongly agreed that the campaign will encourage them to talk to their child/ren or students (*M* = 4.32, *SD* = 0.97; see Figure 21)

Figure 21: Adult participants' agreement with the statement "This campaign will encourage me to talk to my child/ren and/or students about this issue". (n= 644).

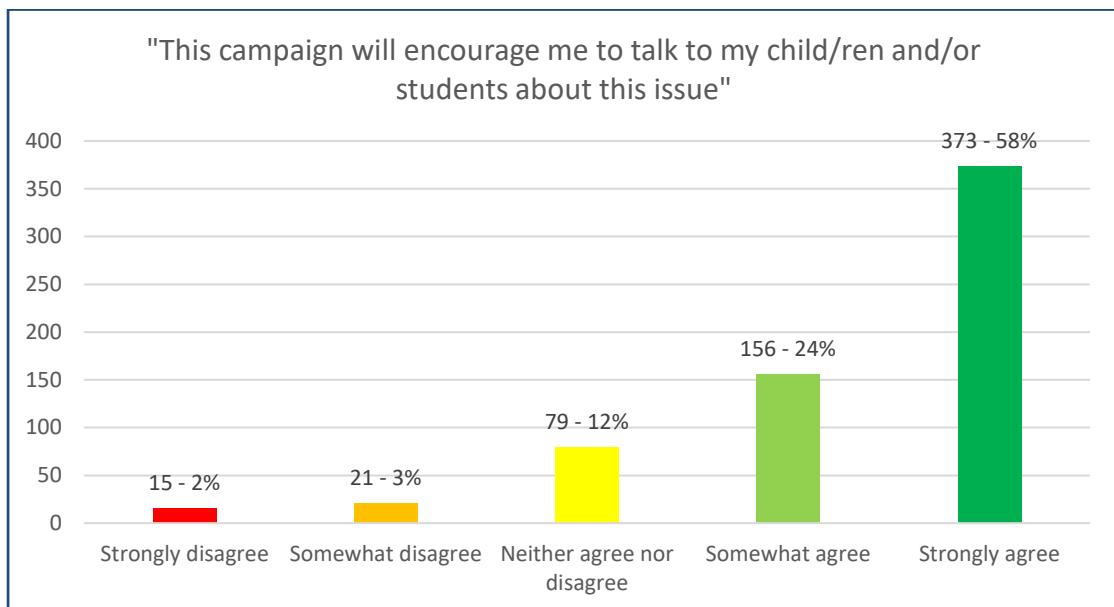We asked educators if the campaign will **encourage them to address this issue within their school.** On average, educators moderately to strongly agreed it would (*M* = 4.34, *SD* = 0.99; see Figure 22).
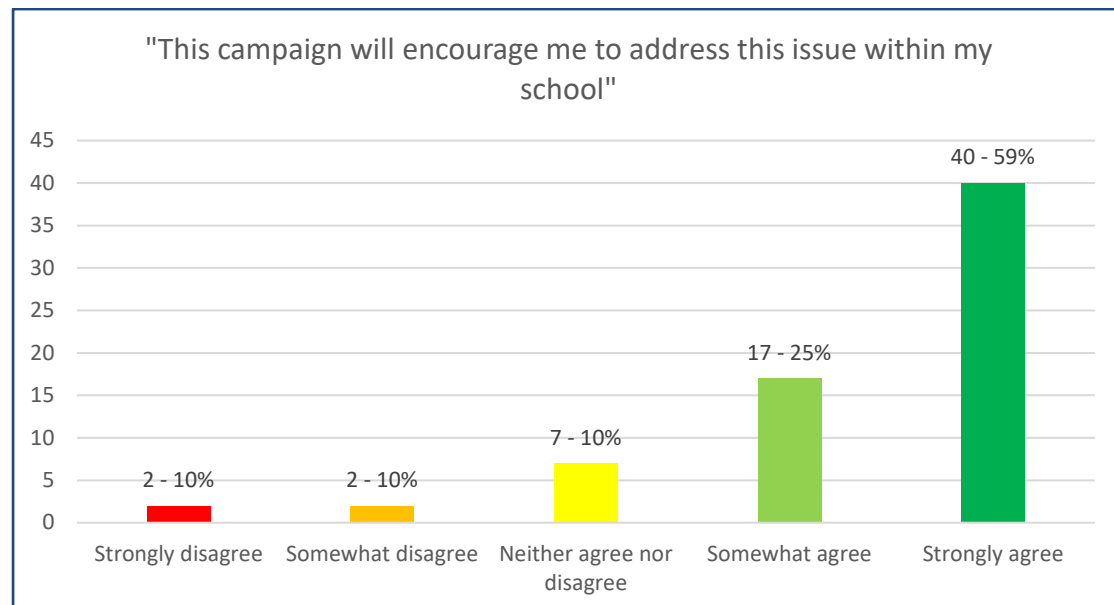

Figure 22: Educators' agreement with the statement "This campaign will encourage me to address this issue within my school". (n= 68).

There were some promising signs of potential impact on behaviour noted within the free text responses:

"I would now definitely talk to my daughter about it" (Adult, female, 58 years)

"The campaign has also intimated [sic] me to be more diligent about talking to my kids about sharing nudes online" (Adult, female, 34 years)

"it indeed gives me more insight on how to teach my young children" (Adult, female, 33 years)

"Teached me a lot, I will pass these information for my child" (Adult, female, 30 years).

The final question of the survey asked the participants for their views on **how we can better help children to understand the risks of sharing sexual images online**. 1,281 comments were made with a large number encouraging the IWF to continue promoting either this campaign or delivering further campaigns. Comments from teenagers ranged from the generic *"[k]eep doing campains [sic]"* (Teenager, female, 14 years old) and the very popular request to *"keep doing TikTok videos"* (Teenager, male, 15 years old) with some recognition by a slightly older teenager that there needs to be multi-faceted approach:

> *"Keep what your [sic] doing as what you are doing is definitely working, maybe also to have talks with the people in that age range about the issues along with more of the videos"* (Teenager, male, 17 years).

The powerful role of social media in people's lives was evidenced with a large number of participants suggesting more targeted campaigns on social media platforms, with statements from teenage participants such as *"[ke]ep showing them on social media that's where it will get the most attention"* (Teenager, male, 15 years) with one adult commenting that *"[s]ocial media is the best way to get the message across"* (Adult, male, 26 years).

In addition, many other participants wanted to improve awareness of the issue via different means, such as: encouraging much more appropriate conversation with teenagers on the topic, e.g.: *"Communication is key but unbiased non judgemental Communication [sic]"* (Adult, female, 29 years); societal change via *"creating more social awareness about this vital topic"* (Adult, male, 25 years) or technological changes *"[w]e need to keep sharing the message, I commend your efforts. I believe the Government need to tighten the laws in the Tech world where alot of young people and paedophiles exist"* (Adult, female, 59 years) and many requested that more responsibility should be passed on to schools and/or embedded into the curriculum, e.g. *"All schools should also teach us regarding this issue"* (Teenager, male, 14 years) with lessons or workshops on this topic.

There was also a strong theme of the need to warn children of the potential consequences and repercussions of sharing sexual images online. A number of both teenagers and adults highlighted that they wanted to see real and/or anonymised examples of where young people had shared their sexts and what the impact had been on them, such as *"[s]how the results of this sharing. Maybe in some shows or films for kids in secondary school (from 12-13 years)"* (Adult, female, 34 years). The teenagers were also emphatic on this point with *"I think you could talk more about the consequences"* (Teenager, female, 16 years). A topical and practical example of this was posited by another parent who believed that illustrating the possible speed and extent of sexual images being distributed would demonstrate the risks to young people:

> *"When Covid first came out someone used graphics to show how many people we came into contact with, and how many people those people did, and so forth. A similar concept could be used to show just how quickly an explicit photo could be shared"* (Adult, female, 56 years).

This could be a consideration for future campaigns as a method of awareness raising by demonstrating the possible dissemination of an image internationally, which the IWF and partners would be well placed to action.

29

Evaluation learning for future campaigns

This evaluation has found that the response to the campaign was overwhelmingly positive for all target groups. Key evaluation findings include:

💫 The campaign achieved 122 million impressions and 7.1 million completed views of the assets.

🥒 The evaluation showed clear evidence for positive changes in awareness, attitudes and potential behaviour.

🍊 Teenagers engaged well with the campaign and commented positively on the clarity, informativeness and creative elements.

🍊 Adults also engaged well with the campaign and reported finding it helpful to them.

🍒 The campaign appealed to both males and females alike.

🍆 Visits to the NSPCC and IWF's Report Remove service increased during the same period as the campaign was live.

🍋 Many participants expressed a wish to see the campaign continue.

A number of themes emerged from the evaluation which may be useful for future campaign planning. These are summarised in table 2.

Theme for future campaign direction	Example comment
Disseminate current campaign more widely	*"The campaign is a great idea, but I think it should be marketed more. before doing this survey I had not heard of it"* (Adult, female, 34 years)
Change method of awareness raising, e.g. knowledge of risks and consequences; multiple choice online activities for teenagers	*"possibly videos of a scenario where it happens and how people respond with options of 2 choices - send the picture and don't send the picture and what would happen in both scenarios"* (Adult, female, 34 years)

	"I think more information about the consequences for the person sharing might help to deter such poor behaviour. I think some sort of animation with an image being shared to 1 person and how fast it goes 'viral' as one person sends to 2,4,8,16, etc" (Adult, female, 38 years)
Use people with lived-experience to help educate teenagers and adults	"I think you can help young people understand the risk better if you get people who have been exposed to this harm before and have been able to overcome it" (Adult, female, 34 years) "Have some people share some real life experiences" (Teenager, male, 14 years) See also Appendix B for findings from YourPolice.UK on this topic.
Use more online celebrities to disseminate the current messaging more widely	"By using more celebrities and social media influencers as they take notice of their favourite influencers and all talk about them" (Adult, female, 56 years)

Table 2: Themes for future campaign direction

As mentioned above, our data highlighted that there was an appetite to see the existing campaign continue, or a new one developed, and disseminated more extensively across social media channels and beyond into the physical landscape. Depending on future funding opportunities, the IWF could consider re-promoting the existing campaign again on specific social media platforms, such as TikTok and Facebook, which appeared to be the popular apps highlighted by our respondents. Certain adaptations could also be made to highlight the Report Remove service or alternatives if promoted overseas.

Indeed, interest in using the *Think before you share* campaign assets has already come from police forces within the UK as well as overseas organisations. One of the advantages of the campaign is that it lends itself well to adoption in both English-

and non-English speaking countries alike. Indeed, the campaign messaging is simple enough to translate without too much difficulty.[4]

Conclusion

Young people have told us previously that they want to have open and frank discussions about sharing nudes and the risks involved. They also told us that they wanted to receive appropriate and calmly delivered advice from their parents and carers, if they become a victim of someone sharing their sexual images without their consent. Campaigns such as this can be a powerful and effectual tool in the prevention toolkit, helping to protect young people and allowing them to live their digital lives more safely.

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[4] For reference, there is another Think Before You Share campaign delivered by AMBER Alert Europe which uses the same key message, but with a very different creative style, and is available in 17 different languages: Think Before You Share - AMBER Alert Europe

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Appendix A: Campaign reach and engagement statistics

The following data is a synopsis of that which was reported to the IWF by Consider and Root Media regarding the campaign reach and engagement. This gives an overview of:

Campaign impressions, which relates to the number of times the content was displayed

Campaign reach, which equates to the number of individual users who see the content and engagement refers to people interacting with it in one way or another, e.g. leaving a comment or liking a post

Click through rate (CTR), which equates to the specific number of clicks on a post

View through rate (VTR) refers to the number of completed views of a skippable advert over the number of initial impressions.

The YouTube videos had 4.9 million views with an almost 100% play rate of the video assets.

The Meta channels, Facebook and Instagram, had a reach of 3.5 million people with 612,000 video plays. Consider and Root Media also reported good engagement with the IWF pages on these sites during the campaign.

TikTok reached 9.3 million people and received 7,016 likes and 166 comments, with the bedroom-based video asset outperforming the others.

Adverts on Twitch were designed to reach younger males and achieved 264,435 impressions with a view through rate (VTR) of 92% which demonstrated good audience engagement with the campaign.

Snapchat statistics revealed a reach of 3,229,109 under 18-year-olds with 989,900 completed views. The View Through Rate (VTR) was 30.66% with 32% of that figure clicking through to the IWF site. The banana advert was the asset which outperformed the others, as it did on the Meta platforms.

The advertising on Reddit was withdrawn earlier than planned due to other platforms outperforming the engagement on that site, so despite the 601,018 impressions, there was a lower VTR.

The Teads advertising was positive with 635,694 impressions, 172,636 completed views and a VTR of 50.79% which as Consider and Root Media commented speaks well of the campaign being of interest and/or relevant, especially as the content was a voluntary, not mandatory view. The agencies stated that, as with TikTok, the localised engagement within the Meridian TV area saw a better click through rate (CTR) which highlighted that those people who saw the content on different

channels, engaged more with the content. This suggests that the level of trust in the IWF may be increased by a campaign viewed concurrently on different sites and applications.

Appendix B: YourPolice.UK data

YourPolice.UK[5] is the National Police Chiefs' Council's (NPCC) digital youth engagement programme, which engages children and young people via a dedicated Instagram account. During the period 27th June until 12th September 2024, they shared 4 reels and 3 single images from the Think Before You Share campaign on their own Instagram account.

It is important to note that this is a police account and therefore the audiences and feedback are likely to be somewhat different to that of the evaluation, described above. The following information is taken from their own research findings on the reach and engagement with the campaign via their Instagram account and with their Youth Advisory Group (YAG).

Each post contained different assets but with the same caption: *"[T]here can be a lot of pressure to share images online. Think before you share. And remember, if someone has shared your pics, you're a victim of a crime - so don't be afraid to ask for help You can find help and support here: https://bit.ly/ThinkBeforeYouShareTeens"*

YourPolice.UK reported the following overall data on their posts:

Average engagement rate	**5.5%**
Total organic reach	**44498**
Average organic reach	**6357**
Total engagements (organic)	**1186**
Total comments (organic)	**126**
Total saves (organic)	**65**
Total shares (organic)	**8**
Tracked links using Bitly	**1078** clicks (excludes 2 ongoing ads)
Website clicks (organic)	**90**

Total Website visits (ad) [Any other links could have been through Facebook, accessed via stories or copy and pasted direct into a browser]	**856** (excludes 2 ongoing ads)
Average views (ad)	**43669** [Doesn't include video carousel as views not available in insights]
Each of the four reels were also shared separately in stories: Total likes	**25**
Link clicks	**18** @internet.watch.foundation sticker taps: **23**

Table 3: Data from YourPolice.UK

Feedback on the reels included the following comments, starting with the peach reel post:

"One of the best posts (that I've seen)"

"So true not enough people understand that something you post on the internet is on the internet forever! For those that want support I believe that some organisations work with social media companies to ban images like that but it's not perfect.")

[Talking about the peach asset] *"Is that a bottom at the start??? WTF* 🤬 🤬 *"* [YPUK asked: Any thoughts on this?] *"Much too suggestive max"*

Opinion: - *"That's like a disgusting thing to do to someone why would they do that."* Making light of subject: - *"GYATT"* [a shortened term for "goddamn" that is typically used when they see a girl they find attractive. Usually, the girl has a curvy figure]

Comments on the aubergine asset included:

Making light of subject: -*"Yeeeeeeah, I do fancy some fried aubergines?"* [15 likes]

Experiences: -*"Seeing this while getting pressured"*

Opinions: *"Never share anything in the first place better safe than sorry."* and *"Oi yeh this just not right tbh…"*

The banana post elicited the following statements:

Opinions: -*"It's flattering to think that a women would be able to muster up the motivation and reason to send me a pic in the first place."*

"Correct but why send anything in the first place? It might be someone you love and trust but anyone's capable of taking a picture and sharing it. Save all the fun stuff for in person 😊 😊 *"*

"Something about this post seems a little sexist 😲 😲 🫨 🫨 *dudes aren't the only ones sharing pics, chicks do it all the time and no I'm not defending it, it's awful, but this post is clearly targeting males."* [5 likes]

Feedback: *"2000s type vid"* [3 likes] -[Responding to YPUK's question about making it easier for user's bad eyesight] *"maybe the dyslexic friendly font Comic Sans. Other than that I think posts are stellar!"* [3 likes]

Social context/awareness: -*"Most of the time sharing is caring. I'm not sure what the moral of this story is tbh ngl."*

"What wrong with showing people pictures of a banana its just a bannanna im sure everyone has seen a banana before." [17 likes] - [Reply] *"Oh I thought you were talking about an actual bannanna'..."I'm not rude I genuinely didn't know im not playing any game."*

Feedback on the peach bystander reel:

Feedback: -*"Thank you whoever runs this account, I'm not even British but I hope your messages will change the morality of overly sexualised teenagers"*

"Another post targeting guys and making us look like we're the problem, I've yet to see a post targeting girls doing this and yes it is very common for girls to share literally everything with their friends." [YPUK directed to other 'Think Before You Share' Campaigns like aubergine victims (03) reel]

Opinion: -*"Your mates a cuck if he's sharing his gfs nudes mate no other way about it"*

In between the reels, YourPolice.UK shared single image posts. One of these posts [lemon asset] regarding feeling pressure to send did not achieve any comments but the analytics highlighted that a significant number of children and young people saw the post and clicked on the link to the 'Think Before You Share' help and support page.

The following single image post [peach asset] with the message '[t]hey shared it. You shouldn't' elicited comments linked to personal lived experience of how police handled SG-CSAM and sexual assault when it was reported. These were all negative, as illustrated below:

"'I was the one that got shouted at and questioned by the police when it happened to me, they didn't even bother with the boy that actually did it 🤣 🤣 🤣 🤣 *load of bs' - [reply – when asked if okay?] 'Mentally? No, I can't even leave the house anymore without my mam or dad, I don't think its fair that this is how minors are treated by the police force."*

"I reported someone trying to blackmail me with pictures online and you said nothing could be done"

"Common police pretend they give a fuck online yet never will when it comes to it."

"Wow these comments don't look hopeful for the police forces' trust in the people."

"Relative who is a minor had people sending things around of them all the police did was give a couple of verbal warnings."

"Remembering when I got sexually assaulted and the police said "he was clearly just playing" LMAO."

"'I reported someone for sharing my private images and police said it wasn't illegal. So, take that was you will… 🤷‍♂️ 🤷‍♂️ "

"Hey so when are your officers gonna stop asking people what they were wearing when they were sexually assaulted, I was 9. Pretty sure it shouldn't matter and it should never matter what someone was wearing btw."

The final single post [cucumber asset] with the caption 'If You Share It, Anyone Could See it' also garnered negative experiential comments about being a victim of SG-CSAM:

"The man who groomed me as a child told me to send nudes. I reported it and you threatened to prosecute me. You told me I was in the wrong and he hadn't broken the law. Actions speak louder than words @yourpolice.uk' [10 likes] -[Reply] 'Omg??? 😦 😦 ' -[Reply] 'Police do this all the time, it's not a shock.' [5 likes] -[Reply] 'That doesn't make it right tho' -[Reply – user of the first comment] 'Thanks Jade, I just wanted to make it clear that my case wasn't an anomaly. It's standard practice for the Police to use scare tactics on children who come forward and they don't believe. The police told me all actions were consensual.. it's lucky that a jury of 12 disagreed and he was sentenced to 20 years in June."

YourPolice.UK's Youth Advisory Group.

YourPolice.UK asked their Youth Advisory Group members to have a look at their Instagram channel and choose a piece of content that caught their attention. The members chose the 'Think Before You Share' campaign stating *"The recent stuff around sharing indecent pics was really good but many of my friends and me thought it was a bit cringe to use the peach and the aubergine a lot."*

There was a general consensus that there is not enough online safety information in schools (usually a one-off topic in year 8), and if there was more information out there on things like sextortion and sending, young people will be better equipped to spot it and therefore, be able to prevent it or know how to get help if it happened to them. They also talked about how online safety information could be conveyed, so

maybe there could be a focus on young people sharing their experience and how they were helped.

Reflections

The YourPolice.UK report finished with a list of reflections which are reproduced below in full.

- The bold and daring imagery could mean that CYP are hesitant to directly engage in comments or share with other CYP. In the same way, as they might feel in a real-life situation (like watching a film with sexual content or mentions of body parts,) they may also feel unsure or uncomfortable about engaging with the content online too. However, CYP are not required to comment, sharing this campaign on the @yourpolice.uk platform could allow them to interact in ways that feels safe and accessible to them. In other environments such as schools or smaller online communities, they might feel more exposed.

- Views don't count as engagement using social media metrics but reach and views do illustrate how many accounts saw each piece of content and is still a useful indication of education CYP and raising awareness of the issue.

- If a CYP is exposed to only one reel or scenario, they may feel excluded if the content does not resonate with their personal experience. For instance, even though data points towards this being an issue relating prominently to females, it could make a male or non-binary/third gender feel alienated or overlooked if their experiences are not represented. As we reply to every comment, we can tag users in content elsewhere on our grid, send other reels and content in direct messages and explain research, data and campaign aims.

- Social context/awareness. Younger ages and/or neurodiverse individuals, such as those with autism, may process information differently, often focusing on specific details rather than the overall context. This can make it difficult for them to grasp the broader message or to interpret symbolic content. As part of YPUK's engagement strategy, we are understanding of different ways of thinking and by fostering rapport, and engaging in open communication, we can clarify any social context. For this engagement or more information, a CYP does need to comment, read any existing comments addressing these questions or click on IWF's help and support link.

- Reflecting on the comparison between this campaign and Surrey Police's "OK to Ask" campaign, which also focuses on Self-Generated Child Sexual Abuse Material (SG-CSAM) and considering algorithm dynamics as well as feedback from YPUK's Youth Advisory Group, future campaign content could focus

more on sharing young people's experiences related to SG-CSAM. Personal stories can resonate deeply with audiences and this approach not only fosters empathy and relatability but also aligns with the algorithm's preference for content featuring people, potentially increasing visibility and reach.

- Along with the "OK to Ask" Campaign, 'Think Before you Share' had an important role in opening up conversation about SG-CSAM, and other important topics like sextortion and police procedure on the @YourPolice.UK Digital Youth Engagement Platform. Due to this, we have been able to explain the behaviours surrounding SG-CSAM, influence behaviour and support anyone who trusted us to share their personal experience.

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