Region: Northern Ireland

Young men in Northern Ireland amongst the most likely to think online grooming has increased in the past 12 months

A third (34%) of young men in Northern Ireland say they think that online grooming has increased over the last 12 months.

That's according to a new survey published today (1 August, 2017), commissioned by the Internet Watch Foundation, for a joint campaign aimed at raising awareness of internet safety with soccer giants Everton Football Club.

The report, from the polling company ComRes, looked at the attitudes of young men across the UK, aged 16 to 24, to online safety. Data in the survey reveals differences in attitudes across regions and nations, including:

- 16-24 year-old men in Northern Ireland are amongst the most likely to say they think sexting or nude selfies among under 18s are one of the biggest issues on the internet with more than one in five (22%) stating this.
- Young men in Northern Ireland are more likely than any other region to say they think online grooming has increased over the last 12 months with a third (34%) stating this. Similarly, a quarter (25%) of young men in Northern Ireland say they think images showing sexual abuse of children online has increased in the last 12 months, a higher proportion than in any other region and more than twice the proportion than in the East Midlands (11%) and Scotland (12%).
- 16-24 year-old men in Northern Ireland are amongst the most likely to say they think that if you accidentally stumbled upon images showing the sexual abuse of children online and report it, you have to explain how they found the content to whoever you report it to, with two in three stating this (67%). A third (33%) of young men in Northern Ireland say they think that if you accidentally stumbled upon images showing the sexual abuse of children online and report it, people will think you’re a paedophile, a proportion higher than in any other region.
The ComRes survey has been published to support the ‘See it, Report it’ campaign which kicked off at an Everton Football Club fixture. The campaign was designed to have two elements: firstly, raising awareness of the work of IWF’s anonymous reporting Hotline, which takes reports and removes criminal images and video of child sexual abuse from the internet. Secondly, and in a first for British football, to trial a ground-breaking online safety workshop ‘Game On’, across Everton Football Club’s youth teams and wider footballing community, including staff and participants at the Club’s award winning charity, Everton in the Community.

The central aim of the project was to tackle online issues of inappropriate sexualised behaviours, as well as educate young men to the dangers of being online, through a series of targeted educational workshops.

Susie Hargreaves OBE, IWF CEO, says: “It’s incredibly positive that nationally over 40% of young men say that they would report it, if they accidently stumbled on child sexual abuse imagery online. But we need to get that message out to more young people – and let them know that they can report these disturbing illegal images to our Hotline, anonymously.

“Working with Everton FC has been amazing; they've been pioneers in online safety education. The support Everton has across the globe, has the potential to influence tens of thousands of young men. And by running these workshops, our goal to educate these young players to keep themselves cyber-safe and in turn spread the positive online safeguarding message has been a real success.”

Adam Green, Head of Safeguarding, Everton Football Club, says: “This is a unique safeguarding initiative and we’re proud to be the first club to partner with the IWF. At Everton, we have a history of putting safeguarding first, both for our young players and in the wider Everton community. This project takes that message one step further – we want to help young men develop appropriate relationship behaviours, both online and offline. And, in a complex online world, we want to help keep our young players, staff and community participants safe.”

The ‘Game On’ project has been supported by an Advisory Board made up from leading charities and online safety experts. The work of the project has been fully evaluated by ComRes.

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Notes to editors:

1. The IWF is part of the UK Safer Internet Centre, is formed from the charities: Childnet International, IWF (Internet Watch Foundation) and SWGfL (South West Grid for Learning).
2. Written quotes from young players are available on request.
3. ComRes are a leading market research consultancy based in London. www.comresglobal.com
5. For more information on Game On visit www.iwf.org.uk/gameon

Methodology:

ComRes interviewed 2,085 UK males aged 16-24 online (including 112 in Northern Ireland) between 27th January and 9th February and between 22nd May and 2nd June 2017. Data was weighted to be demographically representative of this age group by region and age.

The UK Safer Internet Centre, includes IWF working with Childnet International and the South West Grid for Learning to promote the safe and responsible use of technology.

What we do:

We make the internet a safer place. We help victims of child sexual abuse worldwide by identifying and removing online images and videos of their abuse. We search for child sexual abuse images and videos and offer a place for the public to report them anonymously. We then have them removed. We’re a not for profit organisation and are supported by the global internet industry and the European Commission.

For more information please visit www.iwf.org.uk.