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Growing up in the online world: consultation response totals

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1. Background

On 2 March 2026, the Government launched [Growing Up in the Online World: A National Conversation](#), a public consultation seeking views on proposals to ensure children have enriching and safe digital lives. The consultation covered five core areas: understanding how children use technology; interventions for safer, more

positive experiences; effective compliance and enforcement of online safety rules; preparing children for a digital future and enriching their online experiences; and supporting families.

The consultation closed on 26 May 2026. This release provides a summary of the total number of responses received, broken down by response route.

A full analysis of consultation responses will be published separately.

2. Response routes

The consultation could be completed via the following routes:

- full consultation survey – an online questionnaire hosted on GOV.UK (via SmartSurvey), open to all members of the public. This survey contained the full set of consultation questions across all five thematic areas.
- parent and carer survey – a shorter, simplified online questionnaire designed primarily for parents and carers, and hosted on GOV.UK (via Savanta).
- children and young people’s survey – a shorter, simplified online questionnaire designed for children and young people, and hosted on GOV.UK (via Savanta).
- parent and carer panel survey – a nationally-representative survey of parents and carers, conducted by Savanta on behalf of DSIT.
- children and young people’s panel survey – a nationally representative survey of children and young people, conducted by Savanta on behalf of DSIT.
- campaign responses – responses received as part of organised campaign submissions (e.g. template emails coordinated by campaign groups).
- email responses – written submissions received by email to the consultation mailbox (OSA_consultation@dsit.gov.uk).

3. Total responses received

The total number of responses received across all routes was 116,211. There may be some double counting of responses, see ‘Caveats and limitations’.

The breakdown by response route is as follows:

Response route	Number of responses
Full consultation survey	24,534
Parent and carer survey	39,116
Children and young people's survey	5,113
Parent and carer panel survey	5,011
Children and young people's panel survey	9,017
Campaign responses	33,141
Email responses	279
Total	116,211

4. Methodology

- full consultation, parent and carer survey, and children's survey: these were self-selecting, open-access online surveys accessible via links from the GOV.UK consultation page. Any member of the public could respond. The full consultation survey was hosted on Smart Survey. The parent/carers and children's surveys were shorter, simplified versions of the full consultation and hosted by Savanta.
- panel surveys: the parent and carer, and children's panel surveys were nationally representative surveys commissioned by DSIT and conducted by Savanta. Respondents were drawn from Savanta's research panel and the samples were designed to be representative of parents and carers, and children and young people across the UK respectively.
- campaign responses: several responses were received as part of organised campaigns, where respondents submitted identical or near-identical text coordinated by campaign organisations. These have been counted individually.
- email responses: some respondents submitted their views in writing by email

rather than through the online surveys. These have been counted individually.

5. Caveats and limitations

Users should note the following when interpreting these figures:

- self-selecting samples: the full consultation, parent and carer survey, and children's survey were open to anyone who chose to respond. The results of these surveys are not nationally representative. Respondents may differ systematically from the wider population in their views, demographics and characteristics. Only those who were aware of the consultation and motivated to take part will have responded.
- nationally representative surveys: the parent and carer, and children's panel surveys, conducted by Savanta, were designed to be nationally representative. These are the only response routes from which nationally representative conclusions can be drawn.
- campaign responses: campaign responses typically contain identical or near-identical wording. They reflect the reach and mobilisation capacity of the organising group(s) rather than the independent views of a representative cross-section of the public.
- double-counting: it is possible that some individuals responded via more than one route (e.g. completing both the full consultation and a simplified survey). We have not removed any duplication; however, the government takes the integrity of consultation data seriously and has put in place several safeguards, proportionate to the different surveys involved (see 'Data integrity').

6. Data integrity

Across all surveys, information was collected to help assess who is participating and to evaluate response quality.

The parent and carer survey, and children's survey included duplicate-entry prevention and questions designed to detect and deter automated (bot) responses.

Full consultation survey: the consultation captured metadata – including start and

finish times and IP addresses – which were used during analysis to check for patterns of coordinated or inauthentic behaviour. This included identifying high numbers of responses from the same IP address, repeated identical text, or unduly fast completion times.

Campaign responses – where respondents submitted identical or near-identical text coordinated by campaign organisations – have been identified and counted separately. They are reported as a distinct response route and are not combined with individually authored responses in the figures above.

Responses identified as likely to be non-genuine or coordinated will be excluded or appropriately caveated when the full analysis is published. The consultation was designed to understand views and impacts across a range of interventions. It could not, and did not try to, produce a nationally representative estimate of support for a particular outcome or viewpoint.

7. Next Steps

A comprehensive analysis of all consultation responses, including thematic analysis of open-text responses, will be published by DSIT in summer 2026.

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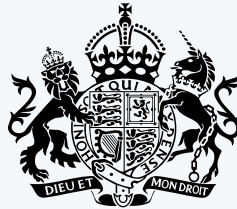
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