



Netsafe 2025 Annual Survey



2025 Report



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netsafe

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Background and methodology

Background



Netsafe is an independent, not-for-profit organisation with a mission to promote online safety among New Zealanders.

In order to effectively meet New Zealanders' needs, since 2017 Netsafe has regularly commissioned surveys to understand the ongoing role of technology in people's lives and their experiences online. Each survey measure contains a mix of questions: (a) core questions which don't change over time, and (b) topical questions, focused on providing detailed information about an issue.

The 2025 survey was focused on:

- Understanding New Zealanders' digital behaviour,
- Assessing awareness of rights and options under the Harmful Digital Communications Act,
- Measuring awareness and use of support services for unwanted digital communications,
- Gaining insight into New Zealanders' experiences of unwanted communications and the impact these have on those who receive them,
- Measuring New Zealanders' online experiences of hate speech,
- Understanding New Zealanders' experiences as perpetrators of harmful digital communications,
- Understanding perceptions around online safety for young people, including a possible law preventing young people from accessing social media.

Reporting



This year, the following reports have been produced:

1. APS 2025 results
2. Trended results for APS core questions 2017-2025
3. Online hate speech – 2025 results and trends in 2018-2025
4. Social media ban – 2025 results
5. Māori population 2025 results and trends in 2023-2025

This report focuses on the 2025 results.

Methodology



1,648 New Zealanders aged 16 years and over completed an online survey between 6 and 30 June, 2025. The sample of survey participants was sourced from the same online research panels that were used in previous waves. The sample was structured to be representative of the population in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, and region.

Additional booster interviews were conducted with people aged 16-29 years to ensure we had sufficient samples within this age group for in-depth analysis. Additional booster interviews were also conducted with Māori to ensure we have sufficient samples for analysis and to allow reporting of this group separately (see Māori population report).

All data were weighted by age within gender, ethnicity and region to ensure booster interviews did not affect the representativeness of the overall results.



Average survey length: 17 minutes

x% x%

Statistically significant differences (at the 95% confidence interval) between demographic groups are indicated by coloured text.

Methodology

The overall results have been weighted to 2023 Census figures to align the data with Census counts for age within gender, ethnicity, and region.

Comparisons between Statistics New Zealand demographic data and the unweighted survey data suggested that post-survey weighting was required to ensure representative profiles and to correct for an over-representation of Māori respondents and respondents aged 16-29 years (these respondents were over sampled during fieldwork to ensure robust analysis could be carried out on the individual subgroups).

	Unweighted sample proportion	Weighted sample proportion
16 to 17 years old	4%	3%
18 to 29 years old	34%	19%
30 to 39 years old	13%	18%
40 to 49 years old	15%	15%
50 to 59 years old	13%	16%
60 to 69 years old	12%	14%
70 + years old	10%	14%
Male	50%	49%
Female	50%	51%
Gender diverse*	<1%	<1%
Pacific peoples	7%	7%
Asian peoples	14%	17%

	Unweighted sample proportion	Weighted sample proportion
Northland	4%	4%
Auckland	34%	33%
Waikato	10%	10%
Bay of Plenty	6%	7%
Gisborne/Hawke's Bay	5%	4%
Taranaki/ Manawatū-Whanganui	7%	7%
Wellington	11%	11%
Tasman/Nelson/Marlborough/West Coast	4%	4%
Canterbury	12%	13%
Otago/Southland	6%	7%

*In this report those who are described as LGBTQI+ include: gender diverse people, those who are gay or lesbian, bisexual, Takatāpui, or another sexuality.



Key findings

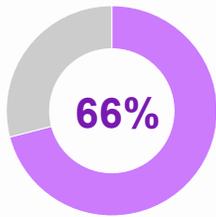
Key findings

Keeping protected online

33%

A third of New Zealanders consider scammers to be the main risk of going online.

Those over 40 are more likely to be concerned about this risk (40%).



Two thirds have taken action to protect themselves or others online in the past year.

The most common protective actions New Zealanders are taking include taking care with passwords and asking for or giving advice.

More precautions



Ninety percent of New Zealanders would consider taking more action to protect themselves and others.

They are most willing to consider keeping up-to-date with security risks, changing security settings and learning more about online safety.



Awareness of rights and options

Awareness is slightly lower for some aspects of New Zealanders' rights and options under the HDC Act.

You can be ordered to remove online content if the **district court** considers it is harmful to another person

79%
AWARE

The **illegality** of online behaviour that deliberately causes harm to a person

75%
AWARE

Ability to **lodge a complaint** about upsetting digital communications with an agency appointed by Government to help

71%
AWARE

Deliberately **causing harm** with digital communications is punishable with imprisonment or a fine

59%
AWARE

There are a set of **legal principles** that people are required to follow when communicating with others online

58%
AWARE

Key findings

Unwanted digital communications



Thirty eight percent of New Zealanders have received unwanted digital communications in the past year.

Men, those aged under 30 yrs and those from the LGBTQI+ community more likely than average to have experienced unwanted digital communications in the last year.



Fourteen percent received unwanted communications which had a negative impact on their life.

Unwanted communications which exclude victims from peer groups, try to embarrass them or make false allegations have the greatest negative impact.

Accessing support services

28%

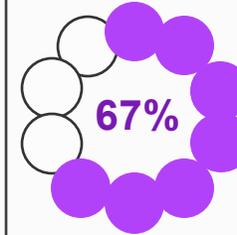


Over a quarter of those who experienced unwanted digital communications contacted a support service.

Support is typically sought from an online service/platform, Police or Netsafe.

Of those who contacted a support service, around half (51%) found it helpful. Those who contacted Netsafe were more likely to find it helpful (74%).

Reporting



Two thirds of New Zealanders are aware they can report unwanted digital communication to Netsafe. Awareness is lower for those under 40yrs and Asian peoples.

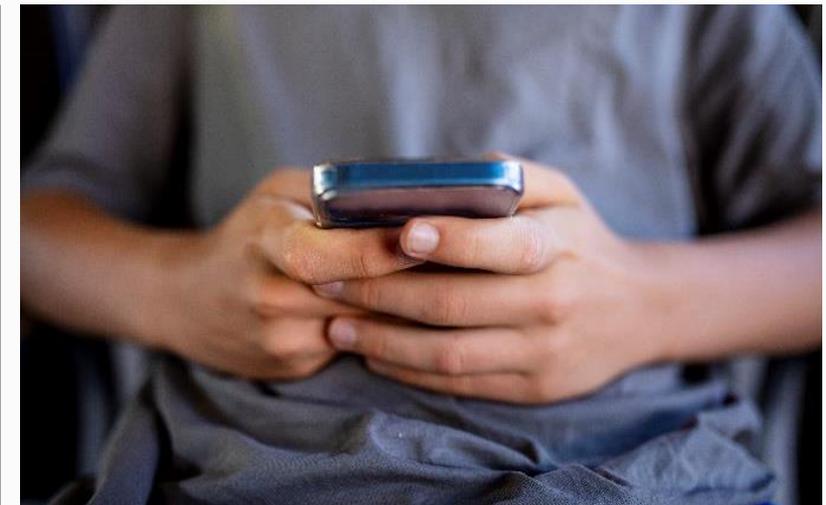
Three quarters are likely to report harmful or dangerous online content if they encounter it. Barriers to reporting include not knowing where to report it and nothing happening when it is reported.

Perpetrators

10%



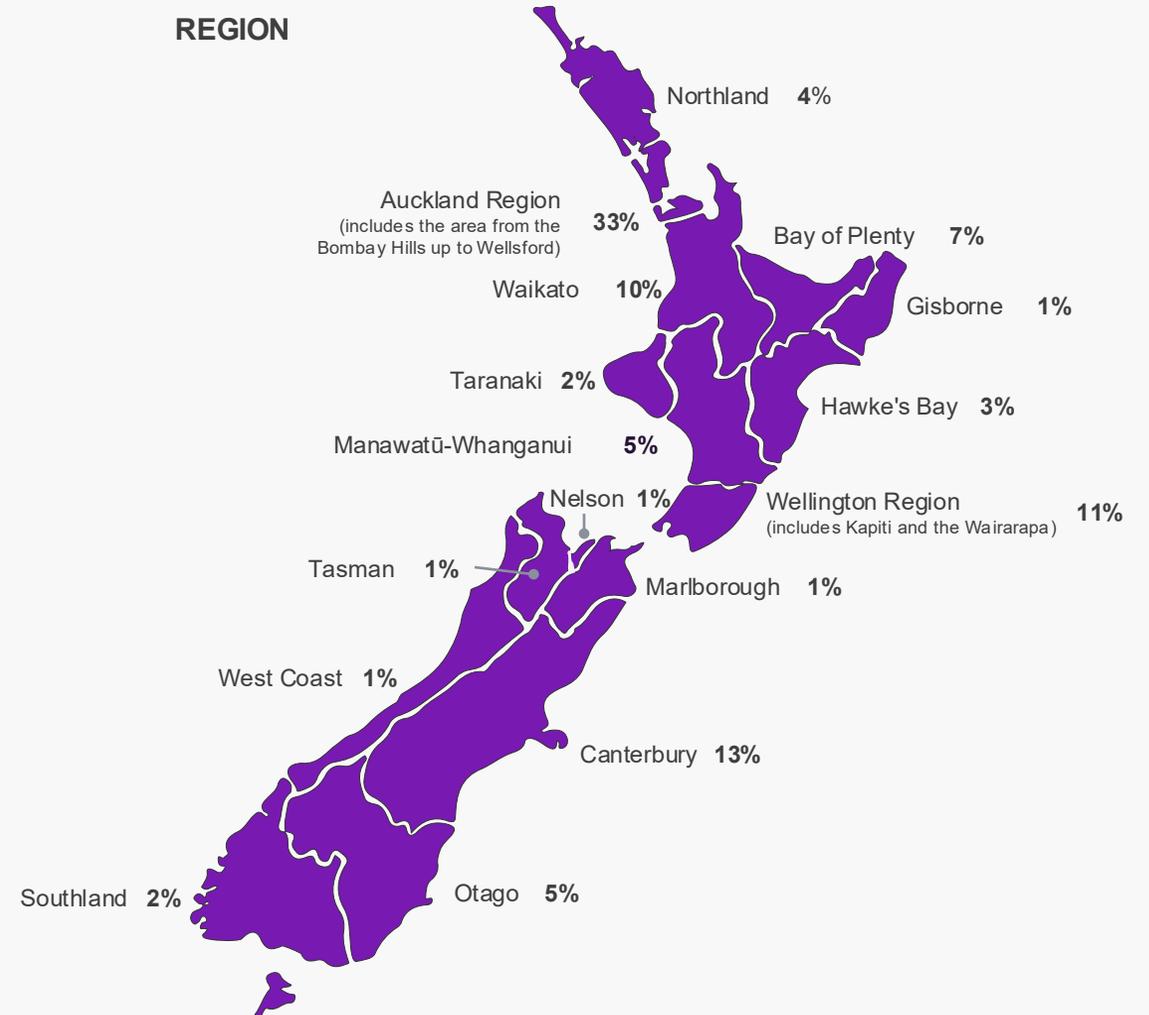
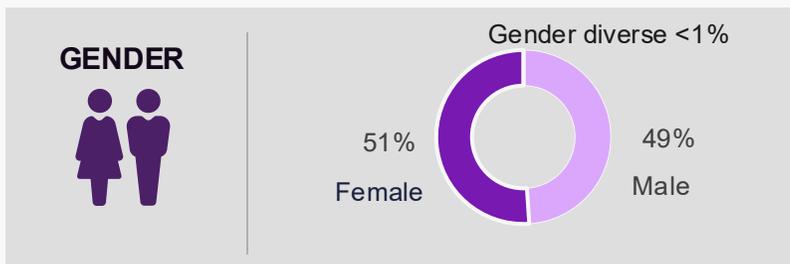
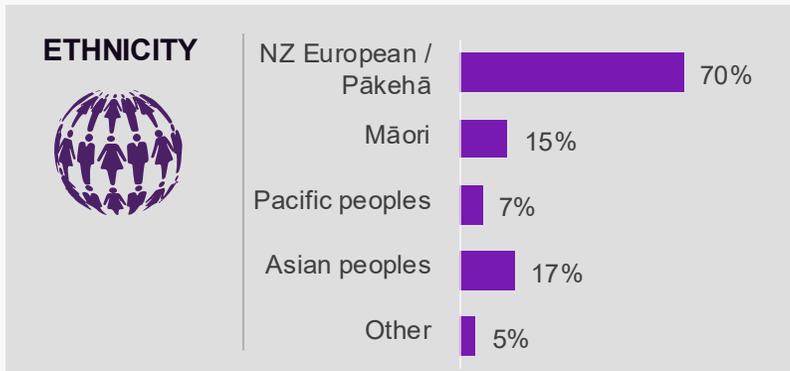
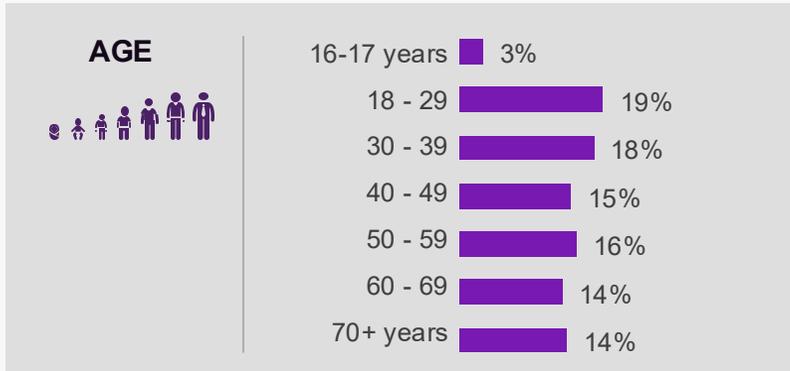
Ten percent of New Zealanders admit to having sent or shared at least one type of unwanted digital communication in the past year.





Sample profile

Weighted sample profile





Keeping protected online



New Zealanders have a wide range of concerns when it comes to online challenges and risks. Being scammed or hacked is of greatest concern, especially so for women and those over 40 yrs. Younger people are more concerned about privacy and online abuse/bullying, while those over 40 years are more concerned about online financial security and identity theft.

Biggest concerns/risks about going online

		Aged <40 years (n=841)	Aged 40+ years (n=807)	Men (n=815)	Women (n=827)	LGBTQI plus (n=140)
Being scammed/scammers	33%	23%	40%	29%	38%	
Being hacked/hackers	15%	11%	18%			
Accessing/stealing/personal information/passwords	9%					
Privacy	8%	11%	6%			
Security	8%					
Concerns about banking/using credit cards online/financial security	7%	5%	9%	5%	10%	
How accurate the information found on the internet	7%					
Getting a virus/bug/malicious bot	6%					
Data leaks/Data being stolen/personal data sold/shared	6%					17%
Malware/spyware/phishing/Trojan horses	6%					
Abuse/trolling/online bullying/ predators/keeping children safe	5%	9%	3%			12%
Identity theft/identity fraud	5%	3%	7%			

x% x% Significantly higher or lower than the average

Concerns and risks about going online in their own words...

"Scams and having personal data stolen." **Female, 50-59 years, Manawatū-Wanganui Region, Pākeha**

"My parents falling for A.I generated content and scams. My mum was scrolling through Facebook and saw a video of what she thought was cyclone Alfred hitting Australia, turns out it was actually a A.I video of a storm somewhere else. My TikTok FYP is starting to show more A.I videos of both animals singing and babies/toddlers singing." **Female, 22-25 years, Auckland, Pasifika**

"Main risk is possibility of being scammed. Challenges are difficulties with technical and data related matters on the computer. There are no clear avenues for getting help or advice. The websites offered really only provide fixed solutions and if your problem falls outside the structured categories there is little you can do." **Male, 70-79 years, Auckland region, Māori**

"Risks are having your device and connection hacked, getting malicious code enter your device due to details or internet links, risk of erroneous, malicious AI." **Male, 60-69 years, Wellington Region, Pākeha, Māori**

"Downloading a virus on my computer, clicking on a link that would steal data or bank account details and passwords." **Female, 18-21 years, Canterbury, Asian**

"Identity theft Insecure websites for making payments Illegal tracking use by third parties." **Female, 60-69 years, Auckland region, Pākeha, Māori**

"Risks like hacking, phishing, malware, and identity theft are common." **Male, 26-29 years, Auckland, Asian**

"Main risks include bad actors using scam emails, posts, messages, etc to elicit personal information and passwords from unsuspecting and or unwise people. Also 'hackers' gaining access to accounts and either stealing cash, identities, or information. Often this is achieved via accessing online storage systems." **Male, 70-79 years, Tasman Region, Pākeha**

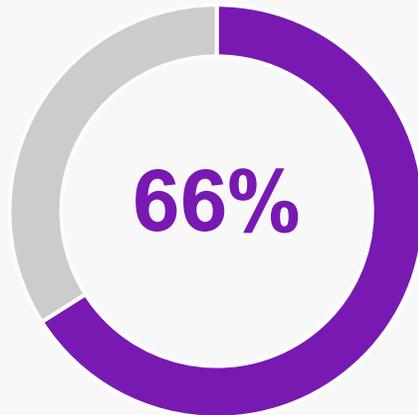
"I always fear that my privacy on the web can't be guaranteed. I feel that too much information about me and my family is given (sold?) to too many companies, governments etc. Not that I have much to hide, but it is concerning." **Female, 18-29 years, Bay of Plenty, Pākehā**

"Breach of privacy, and the consistency of the connection i.e. number of interrupted service or maintenance of the internet connection. Also the speed of fixing any connection issues." **Male, 22-25 years, Bay of Plenty region, Asian**

"Bullying, harassment, people being too "accessible". You can find out so much information about people online." **Female, 22-25 years, Canterbury, Pākeha**

Two thirds of New Zealanders have taken action in the past year to protect themselves or others from harm online. The main actions taken include care around passwords and seeking or giving advice.

Have taken action to protect themselves or others online in the past 12 months:

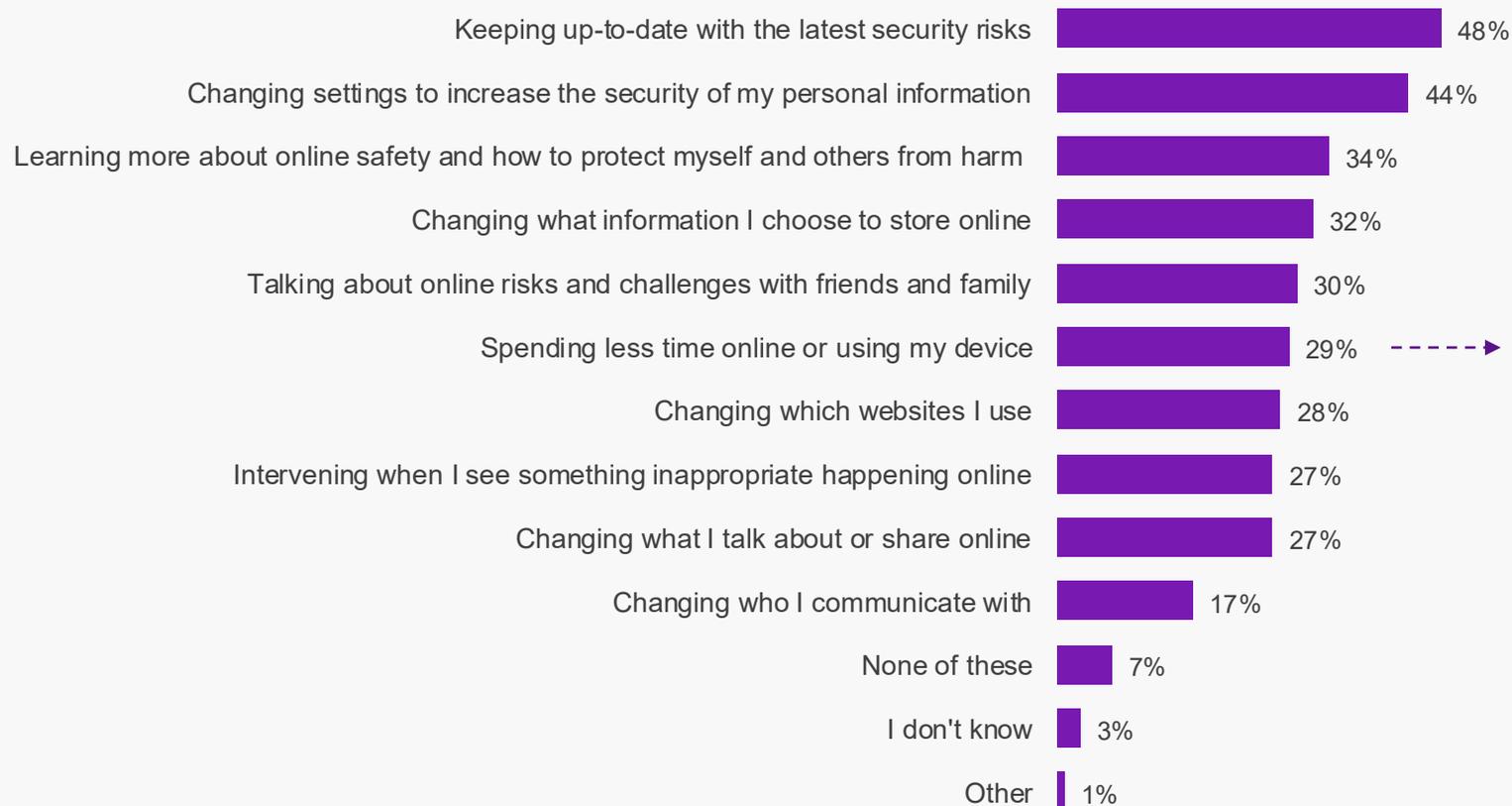


Protective actions taken				
	Aged <40 years (n=516)	Aged 40+ years (n=562)	Men (n=527)	Women (n=547)
Change passwords frequently/have strong/robust passwords	26%			
Asked for advice/gave advice (including to children)	17%		11%	22%
Be aware of dodgy websites	12%			
Anti virus software installed(includes mention of Norton)	12%			
Two factor authentication/verification /security questions	10%			
Don't open dodgy looking emails/phishing emails/spam/	10%			
Ensure auto updates are current/keep protection software updated	7%	4%	9%	10%
Buy/Install internet security software	7%	3%	9%	
Read/discuss/research about latest security issues/scams	6%			

x% x% Significantly higher or lower than the average

Nine in ten New Zealanders say they would consider taking (further) action to protect themselves and others online. The actions most likely to be taken up include keeping up-to-date with the latest security risks and changing settings to increase the security of personal information. Almost a third would consider spending less time online.

Consideration of taking protective online actions in future (actions that are not currently being taken)



Significantly higher for younger New Zealanders (34%), and women (33%).

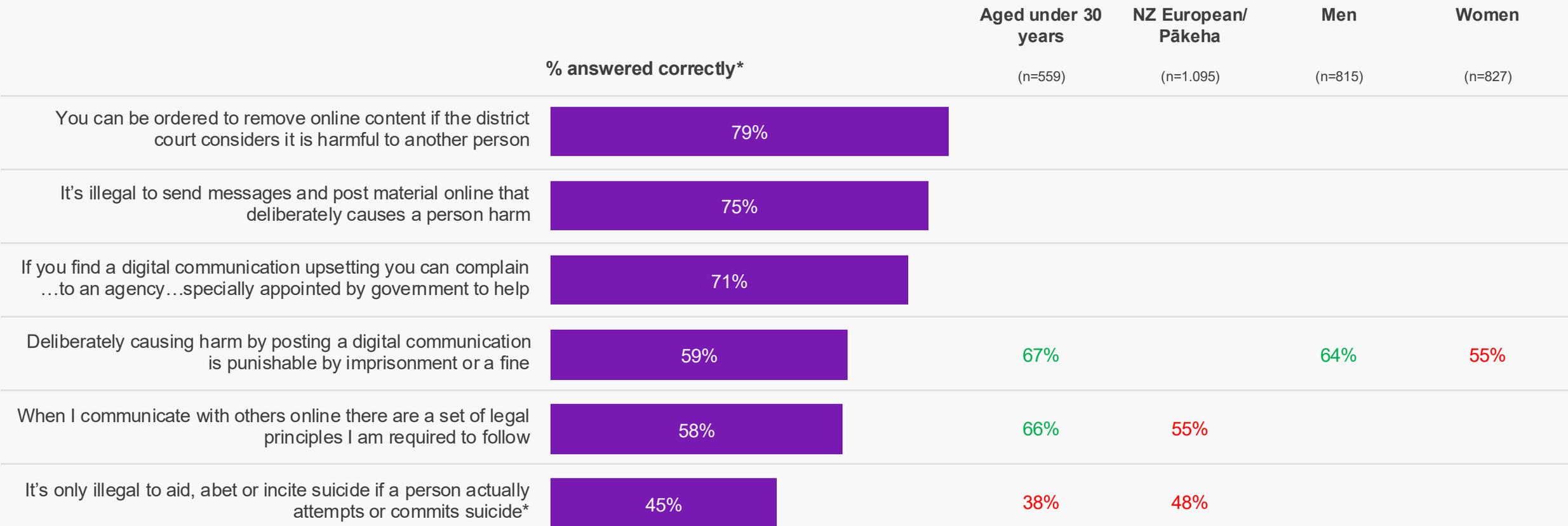
90%
would consider taking more action to protect themselves and others online above what they are currently doing



Awareness of rights and options

New Zealanders are most familiar with legislation around removing harmful content, sending or posting deliberately harmful content, and complaining to a government agency if they find any digital communication upsetting.

Awareness of NZ legislation



x% x% Significantly higher or lower than the average

The three most important things to not do or include in digital communication are trying to get someone to hurt themselves, sharing intimate images or recordings, and including indecent or obscene content.

Digital communication should not*...

	Rated in top 3 (combined, aged 16+)	Aged <30 years (n=559)	Men (n=815)	Women (n=827)	NZ European/ Pakeha (n=1,095)	Other significant differences
Try to get someone to hurt themselves (e.g. self-harm, commit suicide)	56%	47%			60%	
Share intimate images or recordings of someone without their permission	49%		44%	54%	53%	
Include indecent or obscene content (e.g., extreme violence or sexually explicit)	43%	33%	34%	52%		
Share other personal information about someone without their permission	29%	35%	33%	25%	26%	Asian peoples 41%
Threaten to hurt someone or damage their property	25%		29%	21%		
Insult someone because of their personal what they look like, their lifestyle, where they come from or what they believe in	24%					LGBTQI+ 39%
Be used as a way to get back at someone by harassing them	23%					
Encourage other people to send messages to someone as a way to try and harm them	21%					
Make a false allegation about someone	19%		23%	15%		
Include content that most people would agree is offensive to the person receiving it	11%	16%				

x% x% Significantly higher or lower than the average

The most widely used source of information to stay safe online include online searches, friends and family. Around a third use online safety organisations like Netsafe, and one in five believe it is the most useful source.

Where you find information and advice about how to stay safe online		Aged <30 years (n=559)	Aged 30+ yrs (n=1,021)	Men (n=815)	Women (n=827)	Other significant differences
	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> Most useful Sources used </div>					
Online search (e.g. Google, Bing)	16% 40%					
Friends	7% 38%			33%	42%	
Family / Whānau	10% 36%			30%	42%	
Online safety organisations (e.g. Netsafe)	19% 33%	26%	35%			
Online news websites, newspapers or magazines	7% 30%	23%	32%			
Government organisations (e.g. Police or DIA)	10% 29%	22%	31%			
Television news or current affairs	5% 27%	21%	29%			
Social media news and advertising (e.g. Facebook, Instagram)	5% 25%		32%	23%		
Radio news or current affairs	3% 21%	14%	24%			
Help and search buttons on websites and apps	3% 17%			13%	21%	
Online forums or communities (e.g. subreddits, WhatsApp)	5% 17%	25%	15%			Asian peoples 24%
Support service organisations (e.g. helpline)	2% 12%					
Manufacturers and retailers selling devices or products	2% 10%					
Net Other	7% 7%	2%	8%			

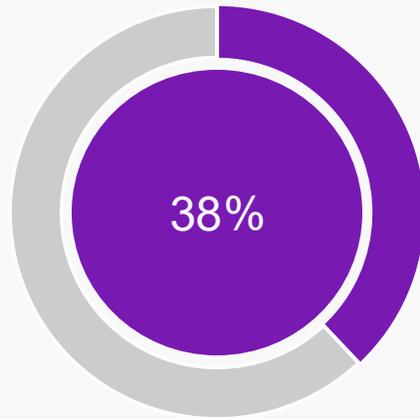
x% x% Significantly higher or lower than the average



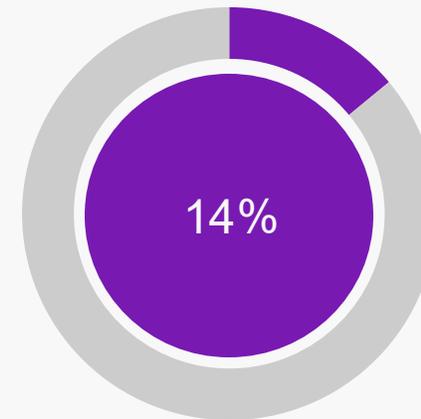
Experience of unwanted digital communications

Thirty eight percent of New Zealanders have experienced unwanted digital communications in the last year. Fourteen percent experienced a digital communication which had a negative impact on their life.

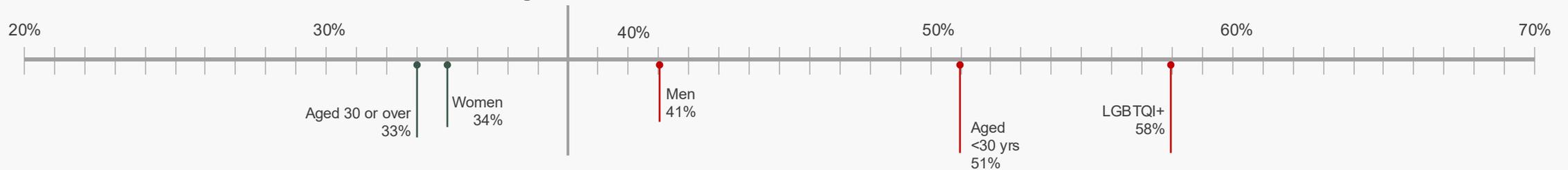
Experienced unwanted digital communications in last year



Experienced a digital communication which had a negative impact on their life

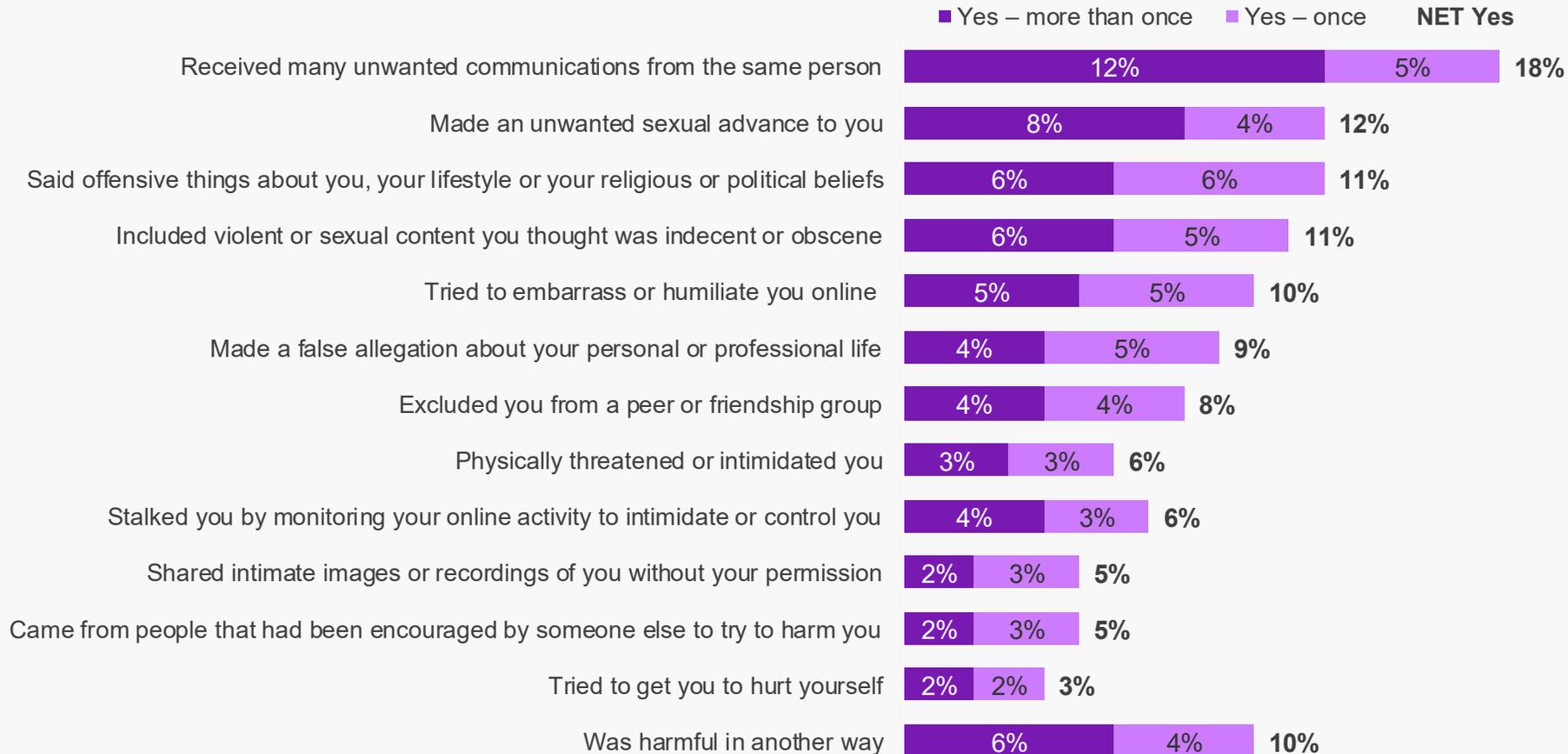


Experience of unwanted digital communications
Average: 38%



Multiple unwanted communications from the same person is the most common type of unwanted communication New Zealanders are receiving, followed by unwanted sexual advances, offensive messages, or indecent content. For most of these communications types, over half of those subjected to them have experienced it more than once in the last 12 months.

Type of unwanted digital communication



Under thirties are more likely to experience all types of unwanted digital communication. Men are more likely to experience personal offensive comments, physical threats or have communications encouraged by others.

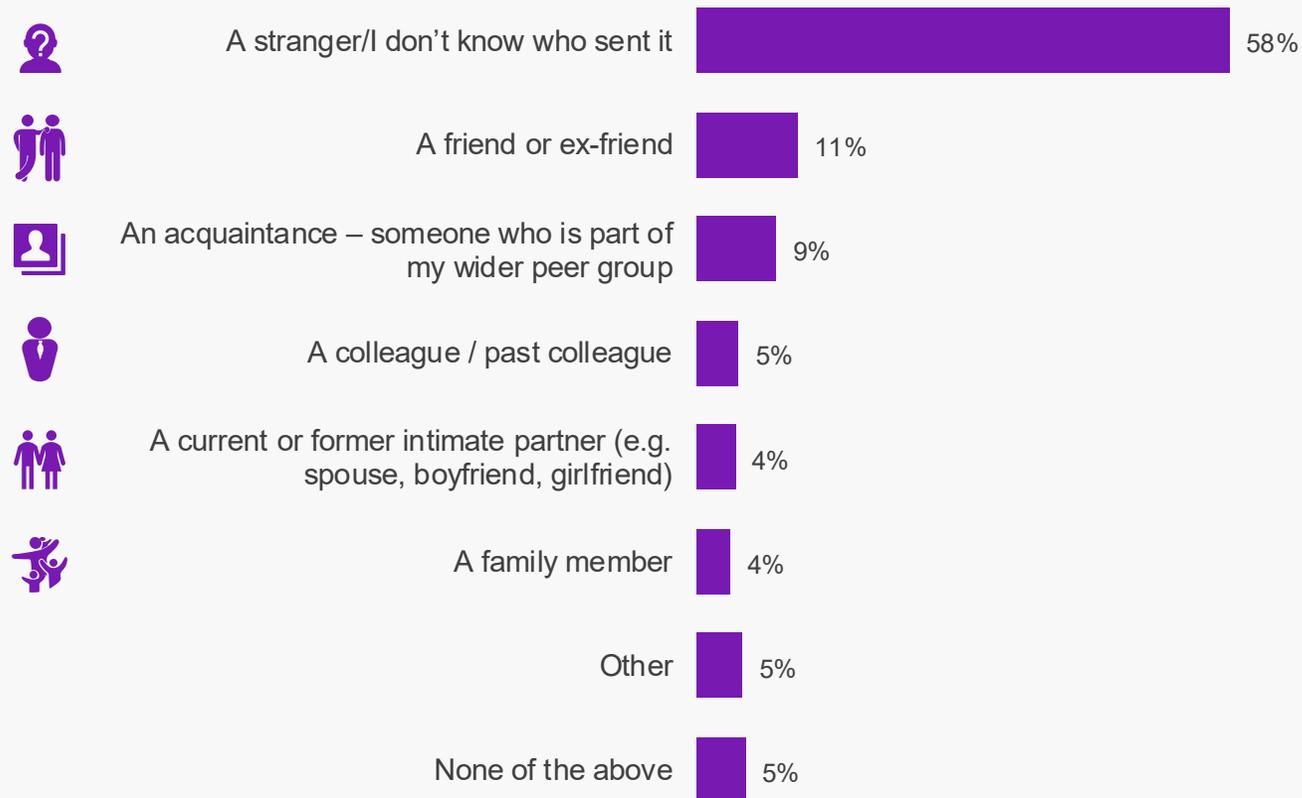
Type of unwanted digital communication

	All New Zealanders	Aged <30 years (n=559)	Aged 30+ yrs (n=1,021)	Men (n=815)	Women (n=827)	LGBTQI+ (n=140)	Other significant differences
Was just one of many unwanted communications received from the same person	18%	26%	15%				
Made an unwanted sexual advance to you	12%	24%	8%			29%	
Said offensive things about you, your lifestyle or your religious or political beliefs	11%	20%	8%	13%	9%	21%	Asian peoples 16%
Included violent or sexual content you thought was indecent or obscene	11%	17%	9%			23%	
Tried to embarrass or humiliate you online	10%	20%	7%				
Made a false allegation about your personal or professional life	9%	17%	7%				
Excluded you from a peer or friendship group	8%	17%	5%			15%	
Physically threatened or intimidated you	6%	13%	4%	8%	4%	13%	
Stalked you by monitoring your online activity to intimidate or control you	6%	13%	4%				
Shared intimate images or recordings of you without your permission	5%	12%	2%				
Came from people that had been encouraged by someone else to try to harm you	5%	13%	3%	7%	3%		
Tried to get you to hurt yourself	3%	10%	1%				
Was harmful in another way	9%	15%	7%				

x% x% Significantly higher or lower than the average

More than half of unwanted digital communications were sent to New Zealanders by an unknown person. Friends and acquaintances are the next most common senders of the unwanted communications.

Who sent the unwanted communication?

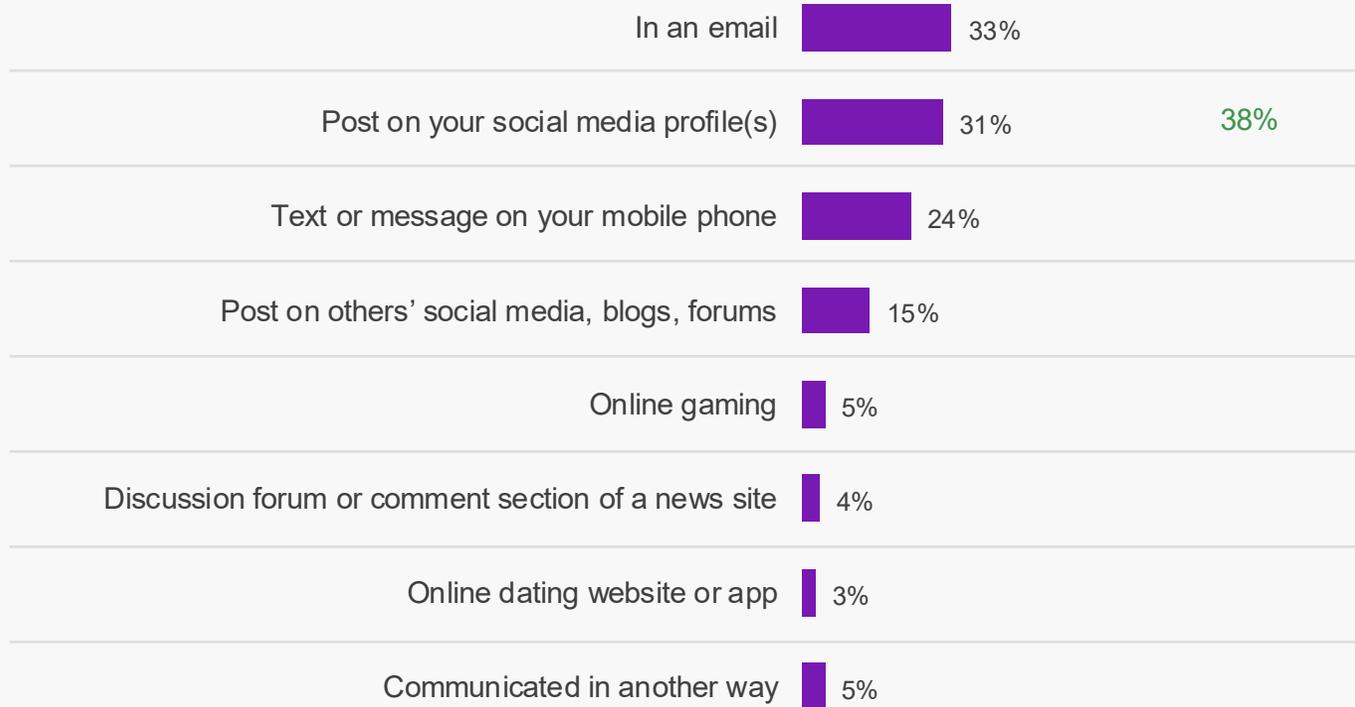


Unwanted communications are generally sent via email, posted on victims' social media profiles or text. For almost one in five of those receiving unwanted communications, this experience was part of a wider issue also happening offline.

Channel of unwanted digital communication

Aged under 40 years

(n=426)



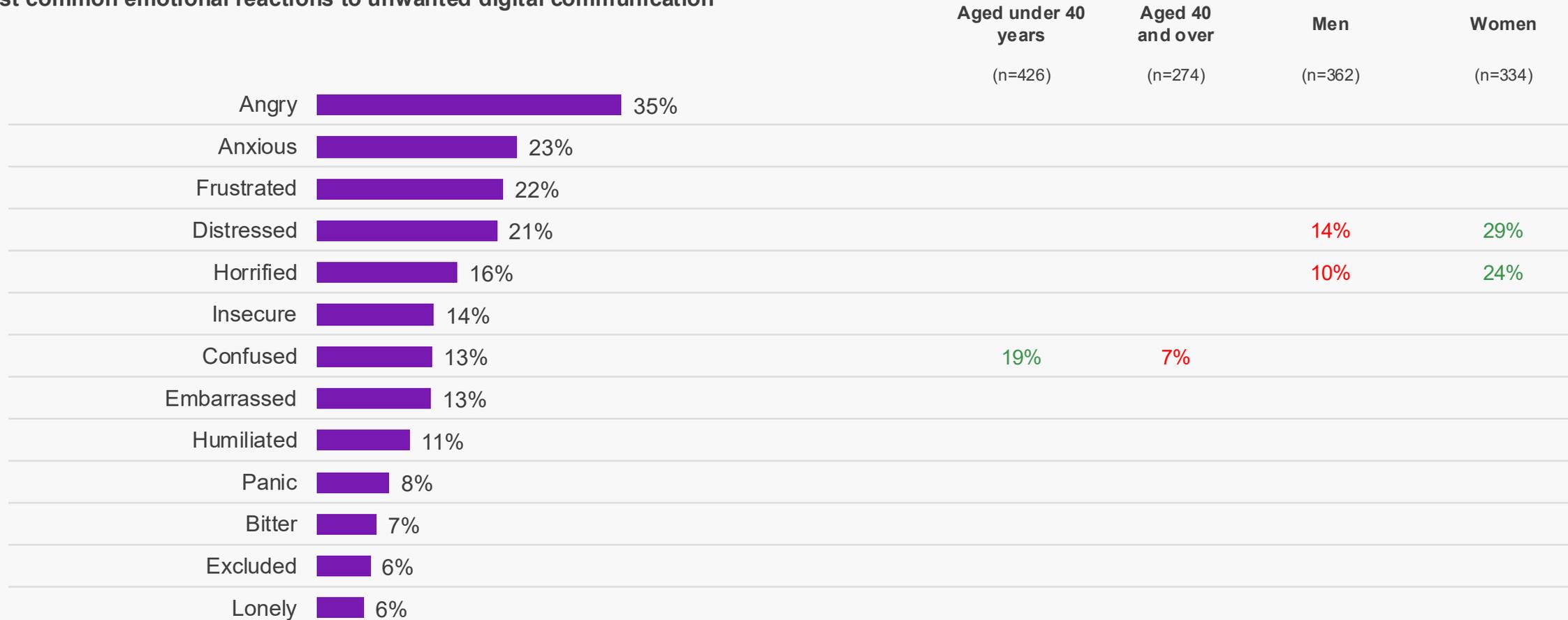
Part of a wider issue happening offline



x% x% Significantly higher or lower than the average

Among those receiving unwanted communications, the most common emotional reaction is anger, followed by anxiety, frustration and distress.

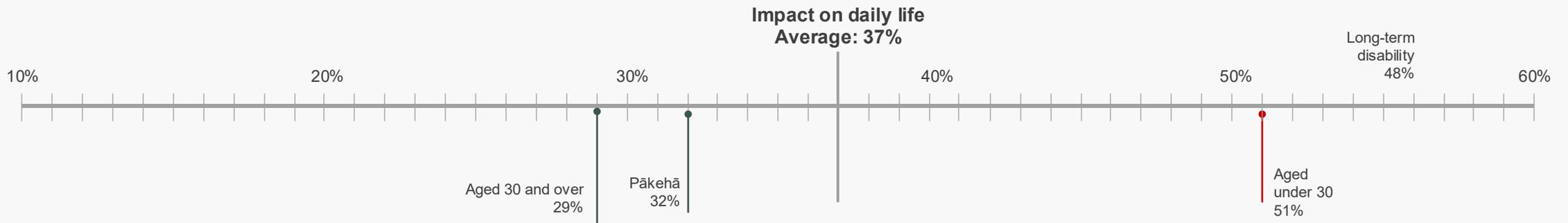
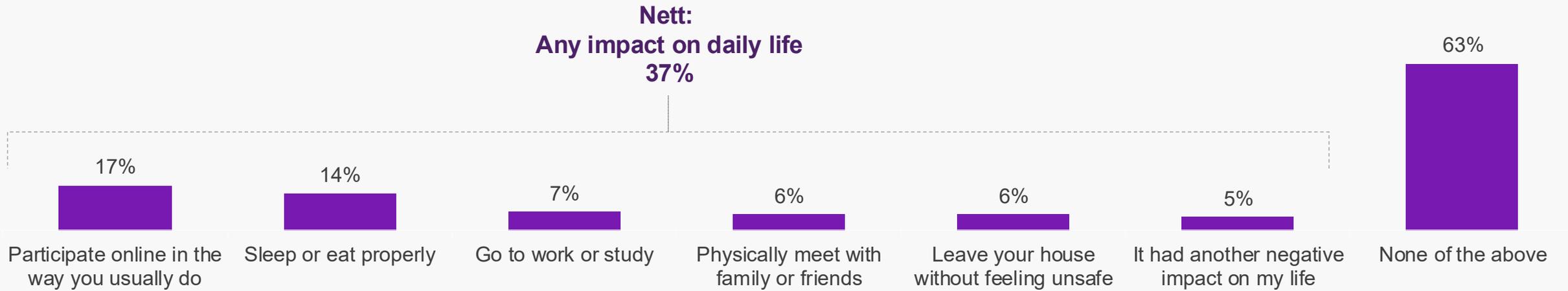
Most common emotional reactions to unwanted digital communication



x% x% Significantly higher or lower than the average

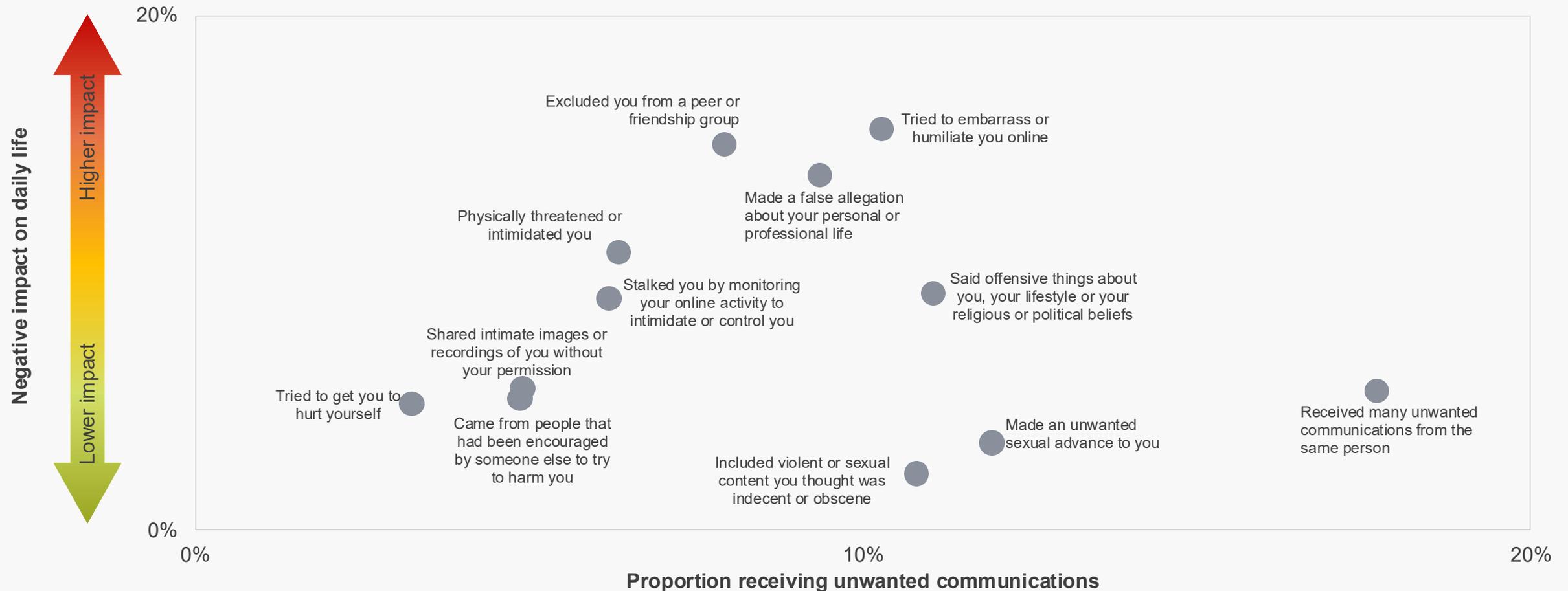
Over a third of those receiving unwanted communications say their daily lives were impacted negatively as a result.

Impact of unwanted digital communication on daily life



By looking at the derived impact of these unwanted communications we see that those which exclude victims from peer groups, embarrass them online or make false allegations are the most damaging. Communications that make physical threats, stalk online activity and say personally offensive comments also cause a greater negative impact on victims compared to other type of communication.

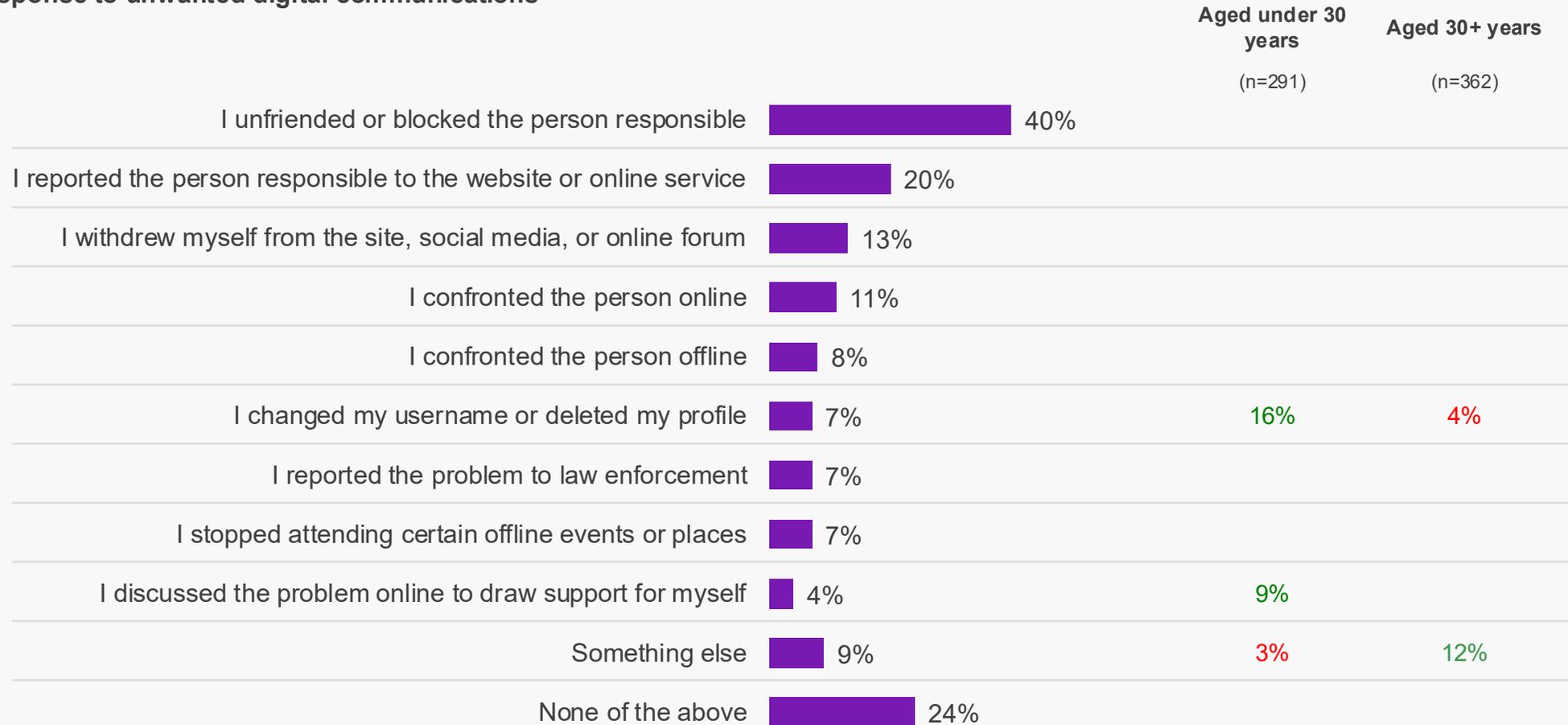
Impact of unwanted digital communication on daily life by type of communication (based on 2023-2025 data)



The most common action taken by people who receive an unwanted digital communications is to unfriend or block the person responsible.



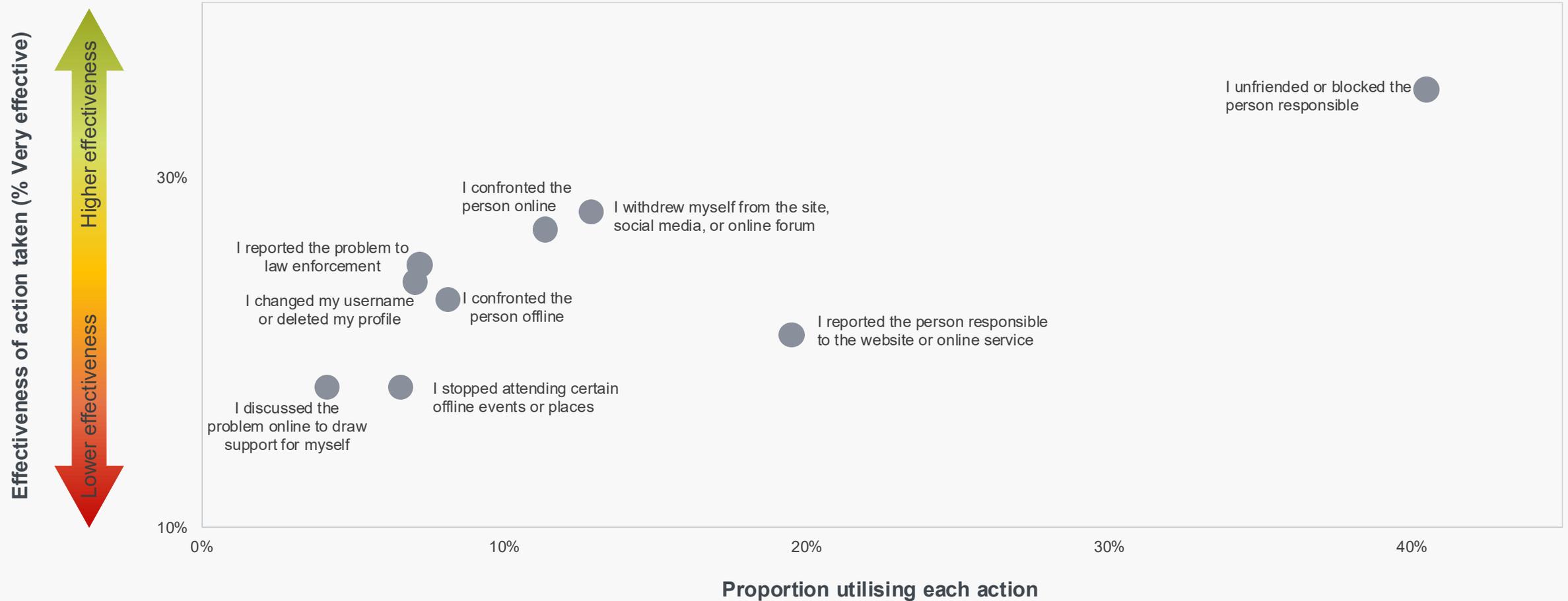
Response to unwanted digital communications



x% x% Significantly higher or lower than the average

By looking at the relationship between responses and how effective it was, we see that unfriending or blocking the person responsible is the most widely used response and is also perceived to be the most effective by far. Some of those who withdrew from the site or confronted the person online also felt their response was effective.

Perceived effectiveness of response of the different reactions (based on 2023-2025 data)

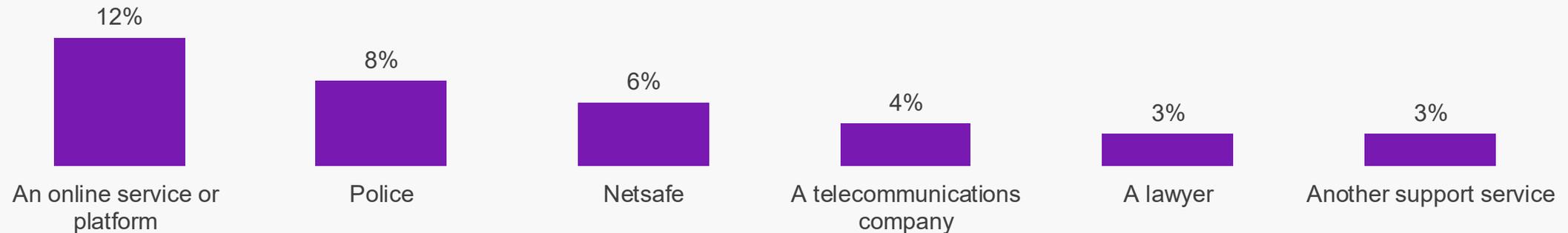




Accessing support services

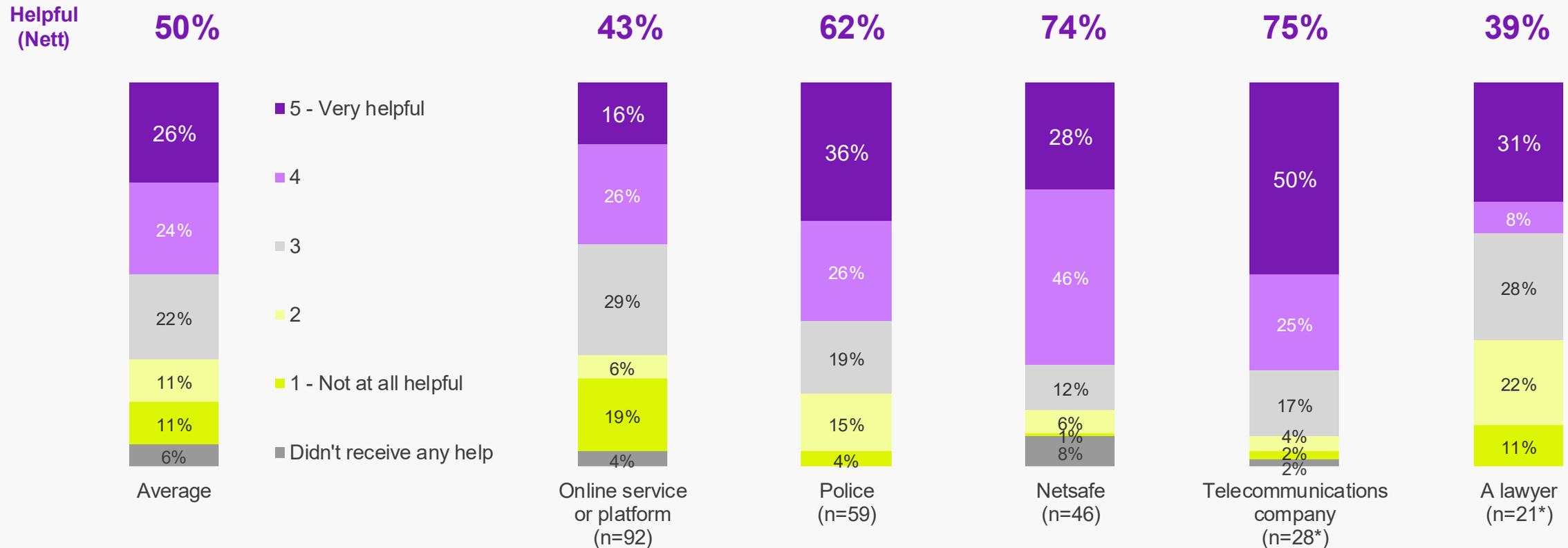
Twenty-eight percent of those who received unwanted digital communications sought out a support service to help them. Most sought support from an online service or platform. Six percent contacted Netsafe for support.

Used a support service: 28%



Half of those who sought out support thought it was helpful to them. Those who sought help from Netsafe or their telecommunications company were most likely to find the support helpful.

Helpfulness of support received



Reasons support was not helpful in their own words...

"It blocked the content at the time, but other content keeps showing up. I wanted to be able to block any/all such content."

Female, 60-69 years, Waikato Region, Māori

"Reported the post to Facebook. Response seemed automated saying it didn't breach community standards yet this was porn being posted on the account of a genuine clothing company, not by them clearly."

Female, 50-59 years, Canterbury Region, Pākehā

"They couldn't act on anything. Based on my video interview and when consent was withdrawn from the relationship could not be proven in court."

Female, 39-39 years, Otago Region, Pākehā

"Actually, online they say they're working on it, but there's actually no improvement, no responsibility, no financial gain in provision of a serious corrective change to serve the consumer, so I don't know why I'd really expect an actual change!"

Male, 70-79 years, Canterbury region, Pākehā

"Facebook rarely does anything to these people who are reported for sending threats or violent actions."

Female, 26-29 years, Auckland Region, Other ethnicity

"They couldn't do anything."

Female, 30-39 years, Canterbury, Māori

"Late reply lack of communication."

Male, 22-25 years, Auckland, Pasifika

"I felt the response was slow and lacked clear guidance on what steps to take next."

Male, 22-25 years, Auckland, Māori

"They didn't fully understand the nature of online threats."

Male, 30-39 years, Hawkes Bay Region, Māori

"Believed the person was mentally unstable, police are really only punitive."

Female, 60-69 years, Auckland, Pasifika

"They said it didn't go against standards which is them not doing their job."

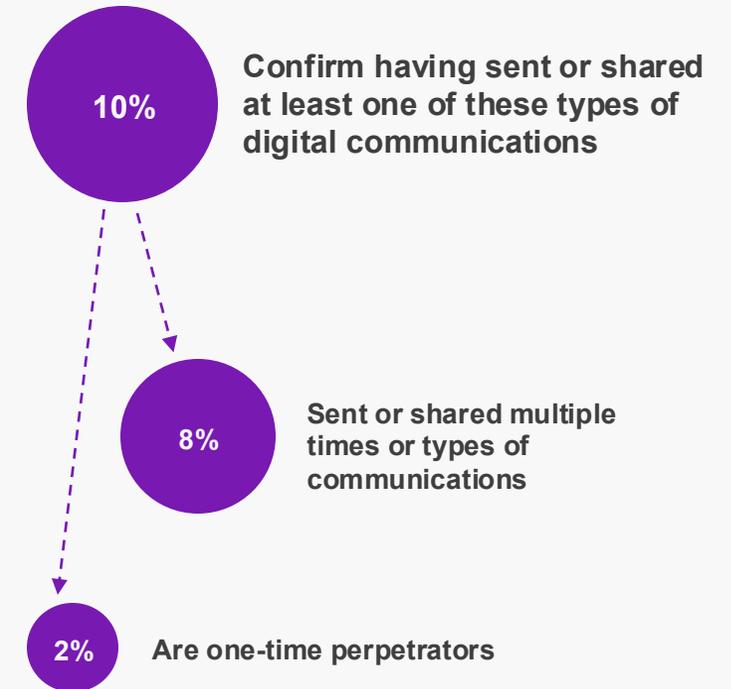
Female, 40-49 years, Wellington region, Other ethnicity



Perpetrators

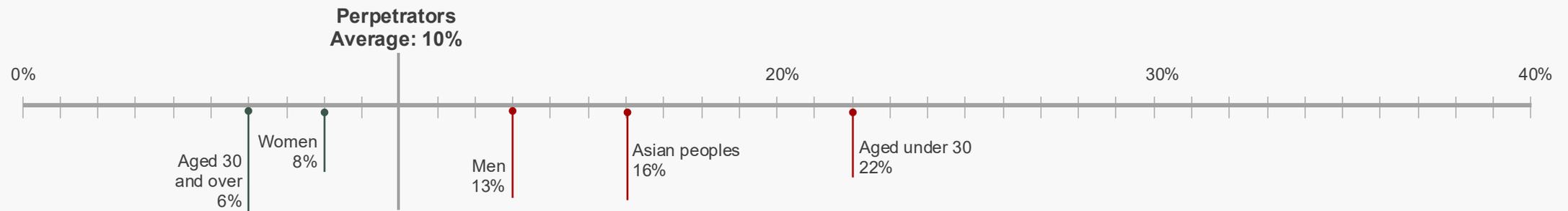
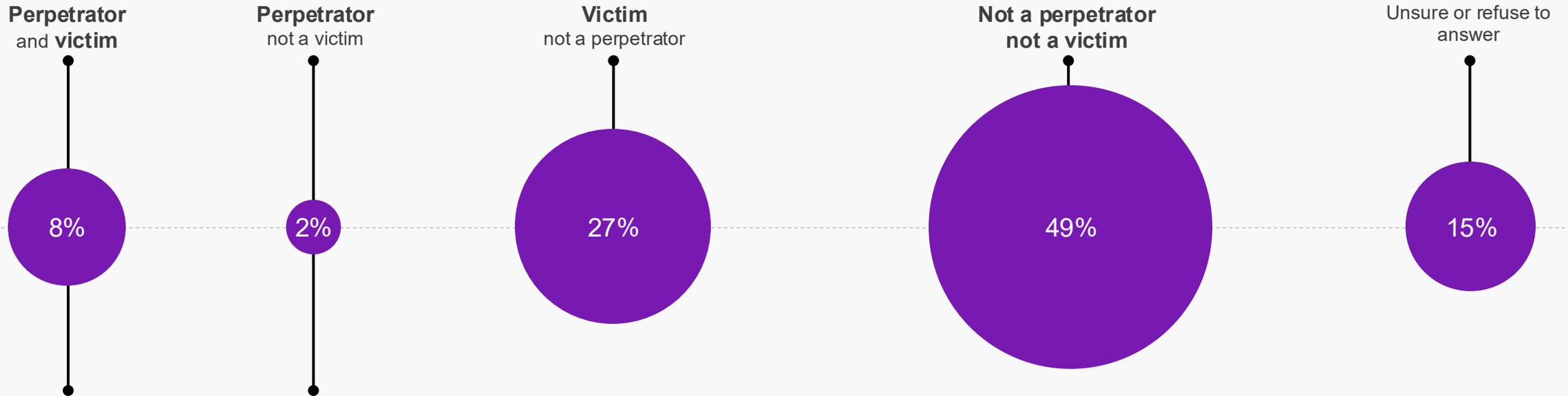
One in ten New Zealanders admit to having sent or shared at least one type of unwanted digital communication in the past year. The most common types are offensive comments, monitoring someone's online activity and sexual advances. Most perpetrators have sent or shared this type of content multiple times or used more than one type of communication.

Sent or shared digital communication(s) that...

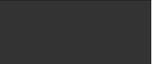


Most perpetrators of harmful digital communications are also victims. Just two percent of New Zealanders are perpetrators but not victims. However, most victims are not perpetrators.

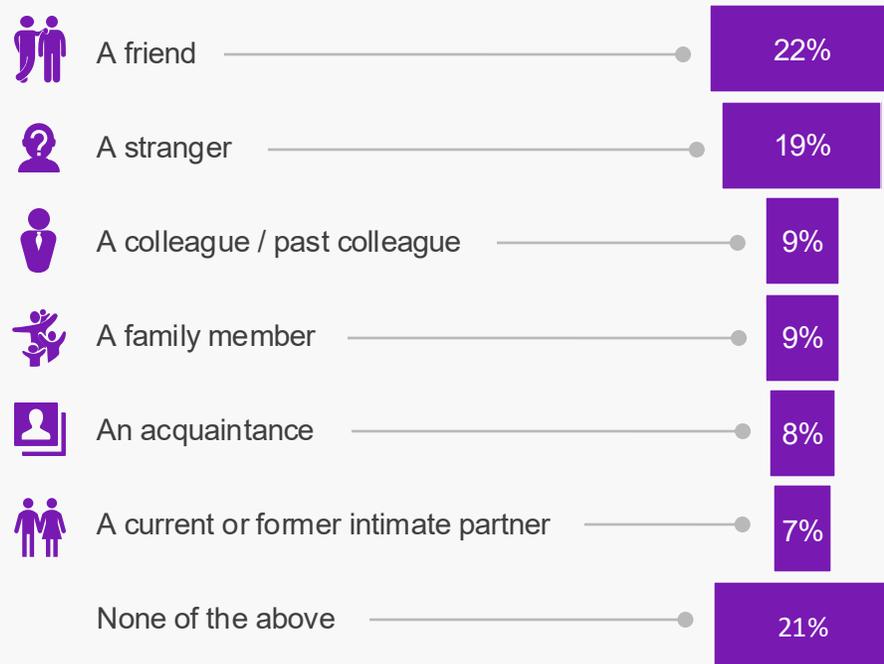
Overlap between victims and perpetrators



Victims of the unwanted communication are most likely to be a friend or stranger. For almost a third of those sending these communications, these actions are part of a wider offline issue.



Receiver of unwanted communication(s)

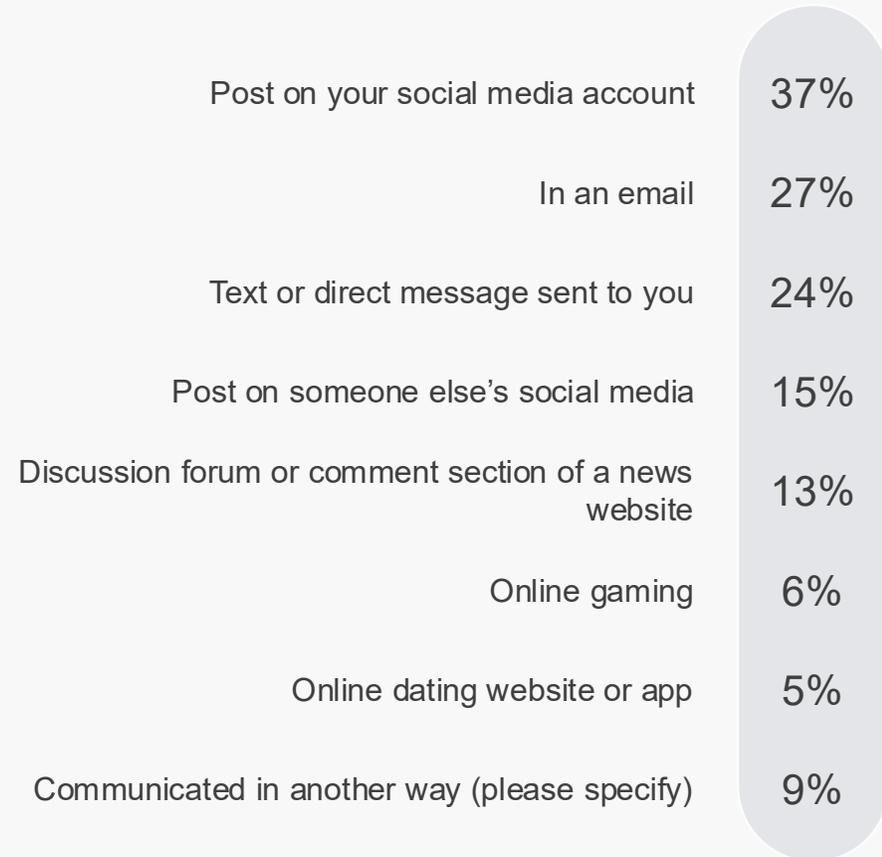


Online actions part of a wider issue happening offline

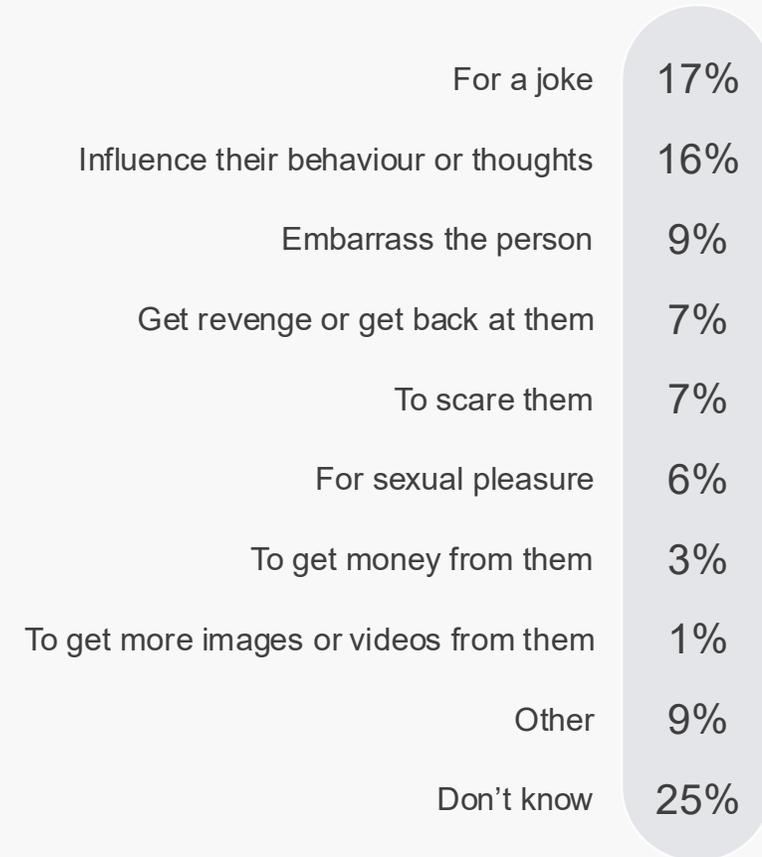


Posting on social media, email and texting are the most common forms of communication utilised by perpetrators. The motives cited by perpetrators are primarily to make a joke or to influence the victims behaviour, although a quarter of the time they don't know.

Communication method used



Reason for communication

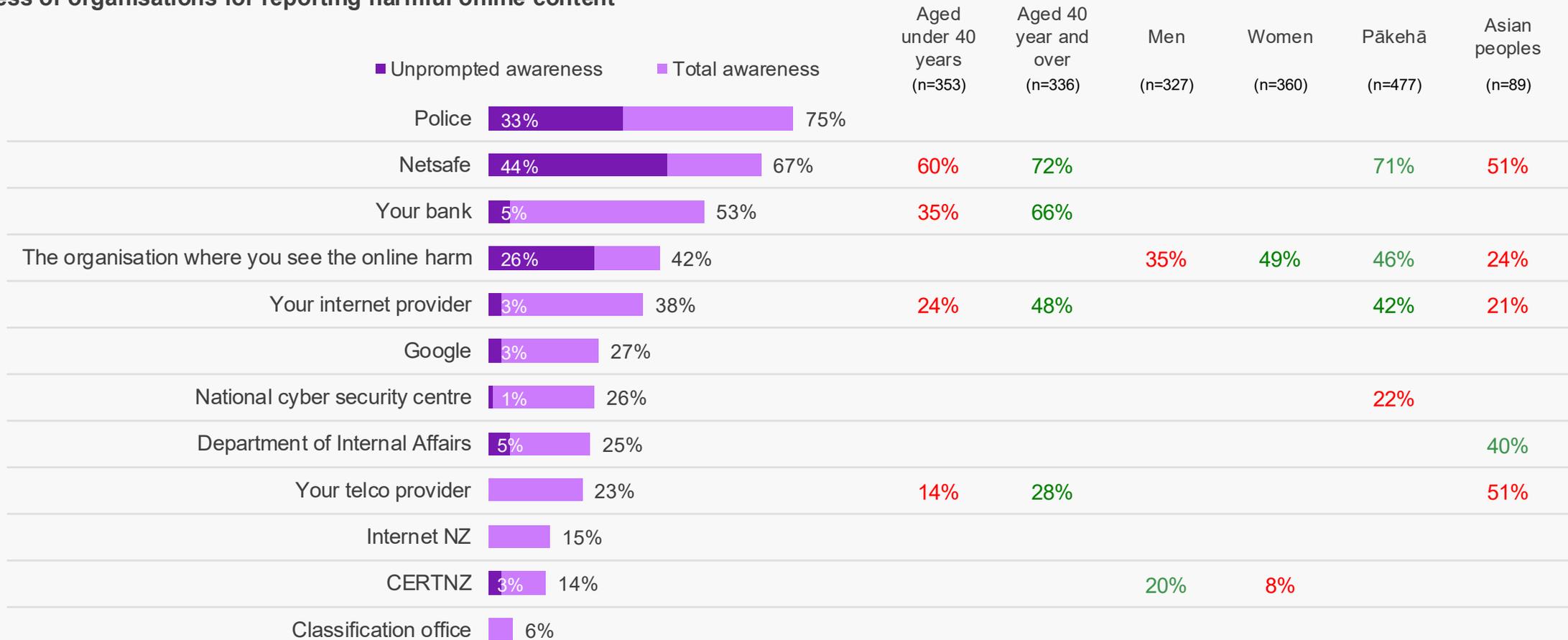




Reporting harmful content

Among those who would know where to report harmful or dangerous online content, over two thirds are aware the Police and Netsafe deal with such issues. Unprompted awareness of Netsafe is high.

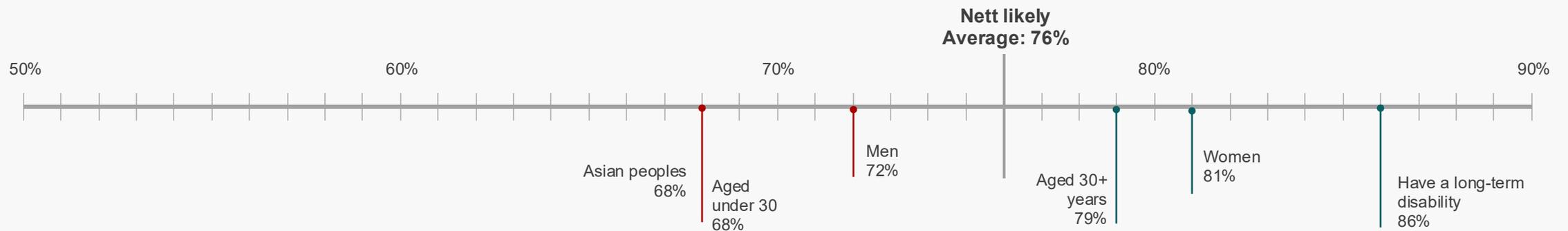
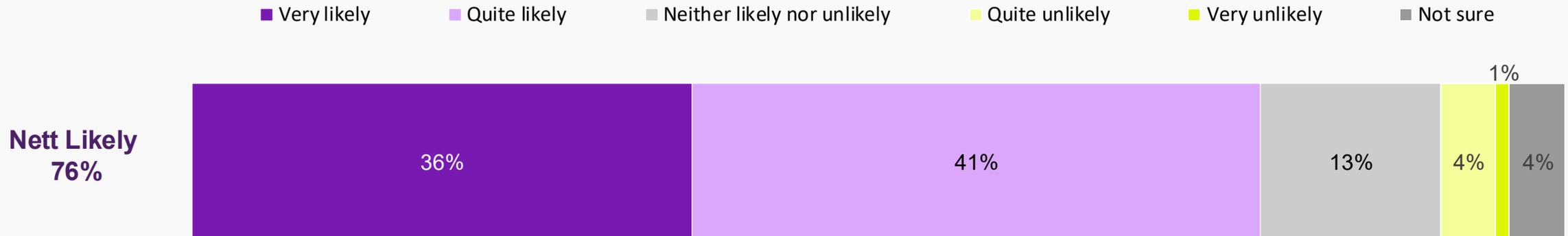
Awareness of organisations for reporting harmful online content



x% x% Significantly higher or lower than the average

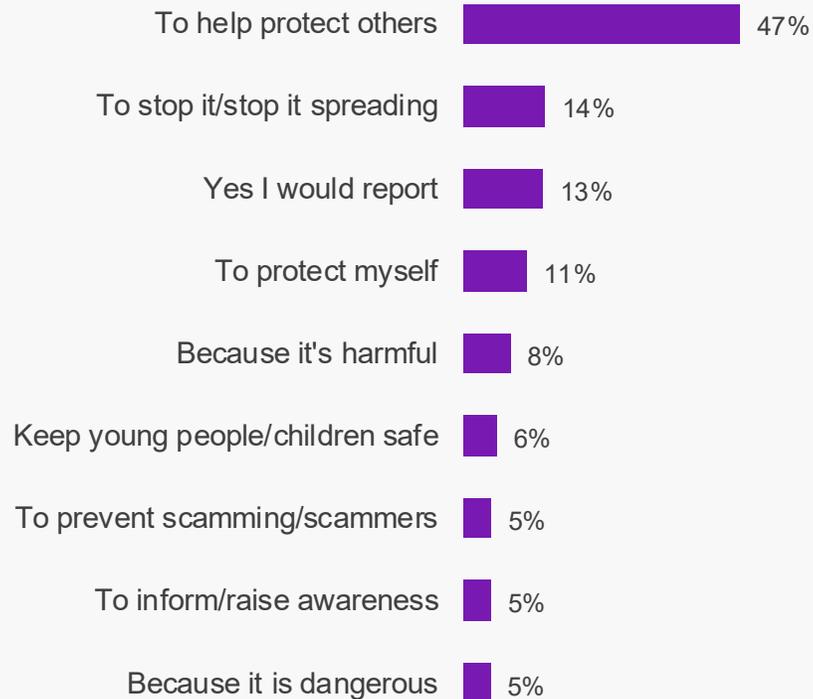
Three quarters of New Zealanders are likely to report harmful or dangerous online content.

Likelihood to report harmful or dangerous online content

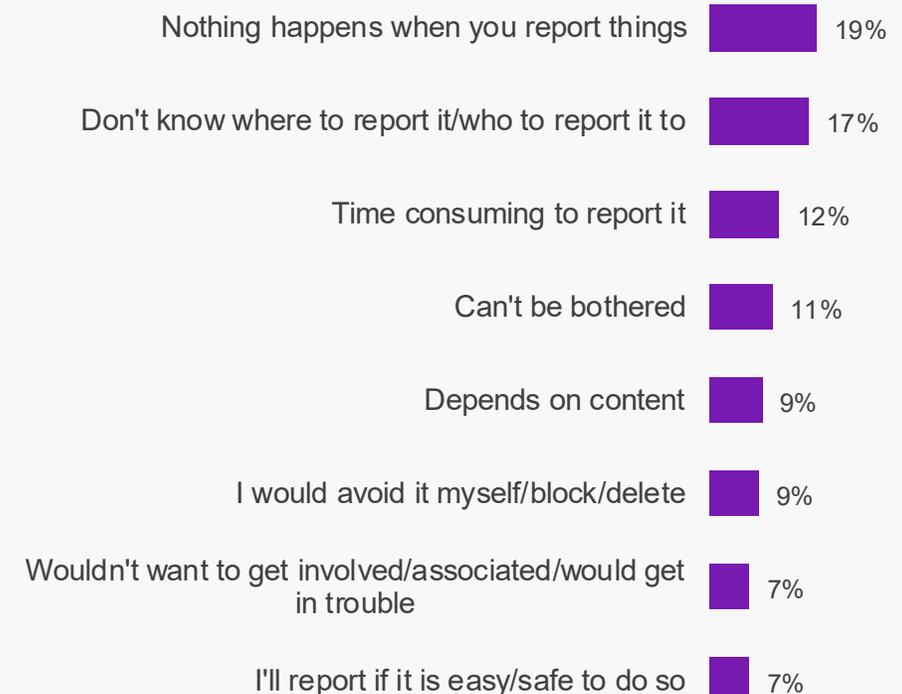


Helping to protect other people is the main motivator for reporting harmful online content. Those unlikely to report harmful content see the barriers to reporting as nothing happening as a result of the report, or they don't know where to report it.

Reasons likely to report harmful content



Reasons unlikely to report harmful content



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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