

Parents Talk Online Safety

Understanding British parents expectations and concerns about children's online safety



October 2025



**More in
Common**

This research was conducted by More in Common. More in Common is a think tank and research agency working to bridge the gap between policy makers and the public and helping people in Westminster to understand those voters who feel ignored or overlooked by those in power. We are a full-service research agency offering polling and focus group research and are members of the British Polling Council.

Website: www.moreincommon.org.uk

Executive Summary

- **British Parents are deeply concerned about children's online safety**

- Over nine in ten British parents are concerned about children's online safety – almost two thirds say they are 'very concerned'.
- Concern about children's online safety spans the political spectrum with no significant differences in levels of concern among British parents who support different political parties.

- **Many British parents are struggling with keeping their children safe online**

- A third of British parents say setting limits on their children being online leads to conflict - something that was a recurring theme in focus group conversations
- While a plurality of British parents (48 per cent) say they receive the right amount of support keeping their children safe online, a significant minority (31 per cent) say they receive too little support.

- **British parents are deeply frustrated with a perceived lack of action from politicians and tech companies on children's online safety**

- Three in five British parents say politicians and tech companies aren't taking the issue of keeping children safe online seriously enough

Executive Summary

- **Increasing online safety protections has political appeal among parents**
 - Almost two thirds of British parents (65 per cent) say they would feel more positively towards a political party that supported increasingly online safety protections - almost three in ten (29 per cent) say much more positively.
 - This view is held consistently among parents who intend to vote for Reform, Labour, Conservative, Liberal Democrat and Green at the next general election.
- **There is strong support among British parents for new laws and action from tech companies to make being online safer for children**
 - Three in four British parents (77 per cent) support **comprehensive age verification** even if it means collecting more personal data.
 - Almost four in five (78 per cent) British parents want to see **action on algorithms** so children only see what they follow.
 - More than four in five British parents (86 per cent) back a new law requiring the detection and removal of explicit images of children from the internet.
- **Parents have considered trade offs and back online safety protections for kids**
 - Almost three in four (73 per cent) of British parents say that protecting children from harmful content online is more important than protecting free speech online - a view parents also reflected in focus group conversations.

Executive Summary

- **A new segmentation analysis of British parents reveals attitudes towards children's online safety group into five different segments of parents:**
 - The **Advocates** (23% of British parents) are a group of engaged parents - highly worried about online safety, but already acting both inside and outside the home to keep their kids safe. They want to see action from parents, government and tech companies to make being online safer for children.
 - The **Battlers** (17% of British parents) are a frustrated group of parents, often fighting with their children over being online. They feel unsupported in keeping their children safe and most comprehensively back child safety online over protecting free speech or privacy.
 - The **Planners** (21% of British parents) are young parents with young children. They are deeply worried about the challenges ahead keeping their children safe online and they want support both now and in the future as their children grow up. They are frustrated with inaction from both politicians and tech company leaders.
 - The **Guardians** (17% of British parents) are a group who take a family-first approach to online safety. They are concerned about the risks, but they've spoken with their kids and they find it easier to set limits at home. While still in favour of online safety protections, they're more likely than other groups to see the case for privacy or free speech protection.
 - The **Trusters** (23% of British parents) take a trust-first, more hands-off approach to keeping their children safe online. They are significantly less concerned than other groups and less aware of their children's online activity.

Methodology

More in Common conducted online survey interviews among a representative sample of 2,012 British parents of kids aged 17 or under from May 16-22, 2025. The data were weighted to be representative according to gender/age interlocked, ethnicity, education level, region, and 2024 election vote.

More in Common performed segmentation on the survey data using latent class analysis (LCA) to identify distinct patterns in how parents think about and act on their children's online safety. A five-class solution provided the best combination of statistical performance and conceptual clarity, capturing meaningful differences in engagement levels, trust in technology, and responsibility beliefs across parents. The resulting five segments offer a replicable and interpretable framework for understanding how British parents navigate online safety for their children.

More in Common also conducted four focus groups of parents in July 2025. Participants were selected based on their segment profile and the groups were independently recruited. Each group was comprised of eight parents and was hosted online. All focus groups were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed to capture the attitudes, beliefs, and values of parents in their own words. The Planners and The Truster focus group were conducted in a single focus group. Participants from the focus groups came from the Greater London and Greater Leeds areas.

Numbers in data visualizations are rounded to the nearest whole number. Figures may total to larger or smaller than one-hundred percent due to rounding.

This study was conducted alongside similar studies in the US, Poland, France and the Netherlands. For a comparative perspective of the data, see More in Common's [global website](#).

This study was commissioned by the Kids Online Safety Hub, hosted by the Swiss Philanthropy Foundation. More in Common retained full editorial independence and the analysis and conclusions are ours alone.

Chapter 1

British parents starting points on children's online safety



More in
Common

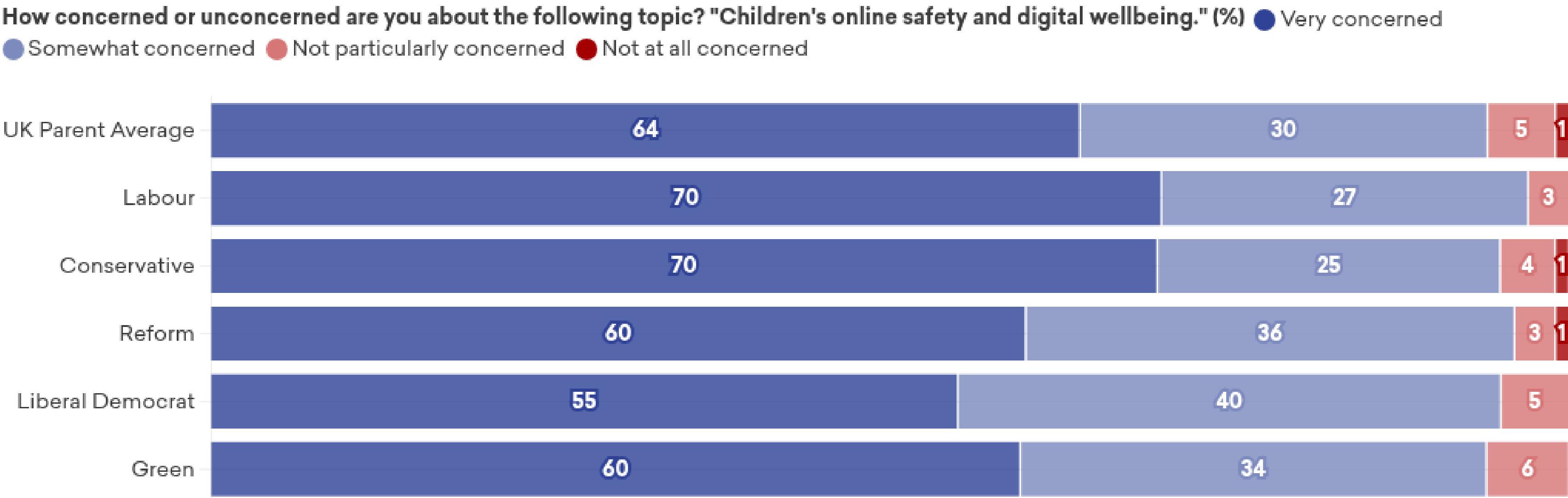
Key Insights: Starting points on online safety

- More than **nine in ten British parents say they are concerned about children's online safety** - almost two thirds of them say they are very concerned.
- Children's online safety is **an issue that concerns parents more than the other issues** tested and is almost likely to see them take some sort of action.
- Around a third of British parents say **setting limits on their children's digital use often leads to conflict** - a view also reflected in focus group discussions.
- A similar proportion (31 per cent) think that they **receive too little support** keeping their children safe online.
- Parents take a **parents-first rather than parents-only** view on questions about responsibility about keeping children safe online.

More than nine in ten British parents say they are concerned about children's online safety

Almost two thirds of British parents say they are 'very concerned' about children's online safety - concern is shared across the political spectrum.

Current voting intention ▾



”

**In focus groups,
parents shared their
concern about the
safety of their own
children online**

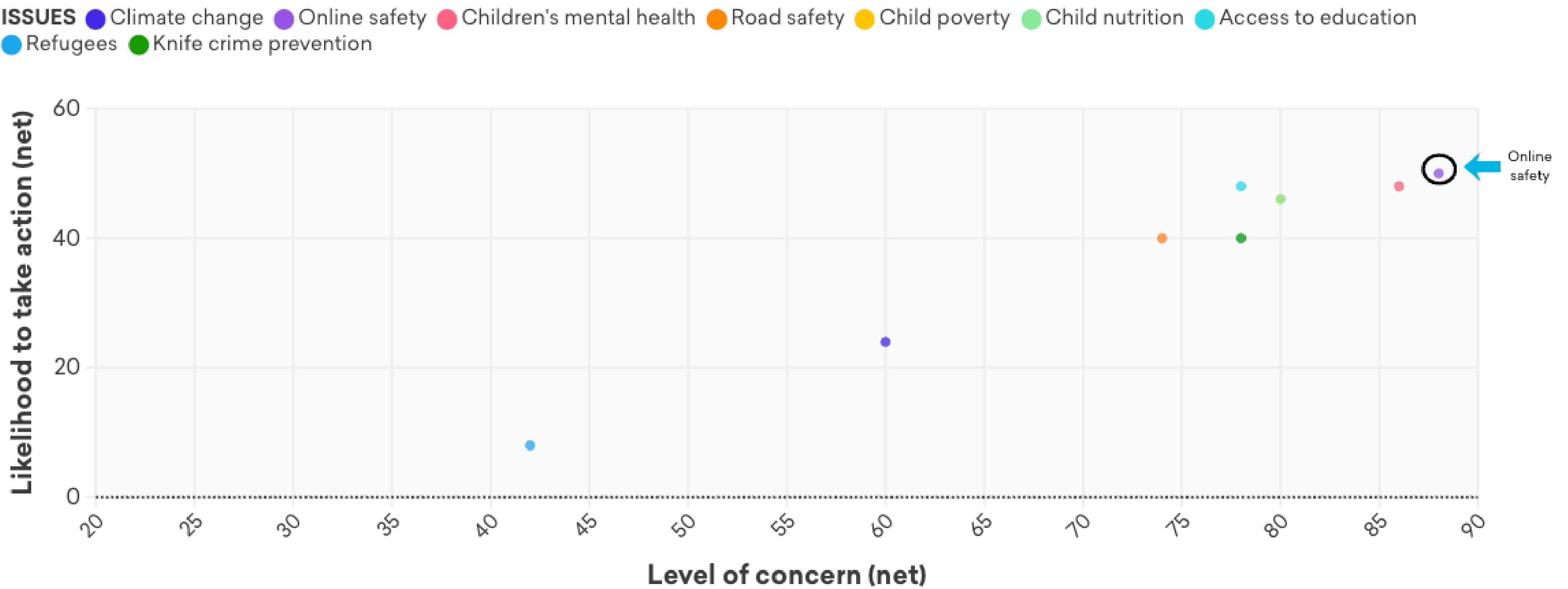
"I worry about paedophiles and people trying to talk to my child, like adults trying to talk to my child. That's my main worry and dodgy content. She's not looking at dodgy stuff. I mean whether that be, I don't know, X-rated things or just things, just dangerous things in general really. And I think that's me and my wife's worry would be adults trying to talk to her or her looking at things like...I know that's a bit extreme but I do worry about things like this because it is just sort of influencing the way my daughter thinks about things and not having a clue where she's going or what she's looking at or who she's talking to." - Adrian, Painter Decorator, London

"You got no concept of what's going on and it really is worrying about some of the stuff he'd see like in the group chats he's been in at school. And that Snapchats everyone's on it, they use it like WhatsApp and I've got to take phone off him a few times" - Matt, Electrician, Leeds

"Kids are accessible at every moment. When I was at school, if you were having an issue with a kid Friday home time, you wouldn't then see them, you wouldn't talk to them. And possibly by Monday it was forgotten about and you were best mates again. Well my kids can come home and be affected by it at 3 30, 4 o'clock, right onto early hours of the morning and it carries on and it escalates and escalates. What do you do?" - Leanne, Catering Manager, London

Source: More in Common. Focus groups conducted in July 2025.

Online safety issues concern British parents much more intensely than other issues

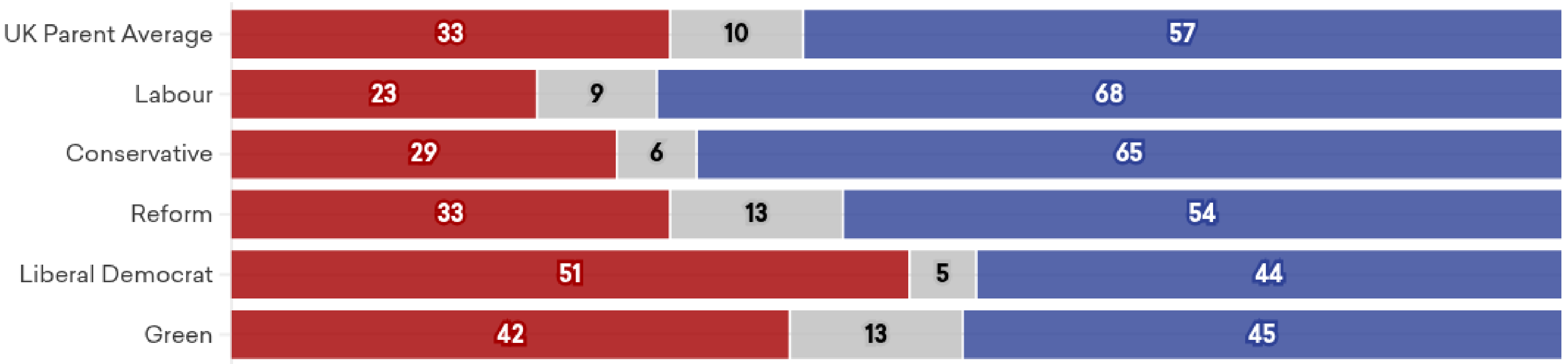


A third of British parents find that setting digital or online limits often leads to conflict

Mothers, older parents and Liberal Democrat and Green voting parents are more likely to say that setting digital limits for their children leads to conflict

Current voting intention ▾

Which of the following comes closest to your view? ● Setting limits on my child[ren]'s digital use often leads to conflict
● Not applicable - my child[ren] doesn't use digital devices
● Setting limits on my child[ren]'s digital use typically happens without conflict



”

In focus groups, parents readily shared examples of setting limits to being online led to fights and conflict with their children

"It's hard because they think they know it all...And you're old, what do you know about social media and Snapchat and you go on Facebook, they think they know it all. You can tell 'em whatever you want. They know why would I talk to strangers? Well why does anyone talk to strangers? But they do. Why do people get bullied? Why would I get bullied? Well, people don't choose to be bullied on social media, but they do, but straight away they get on defence. So it's sort of fighting a losing battle even if they're not doing no wrong, they get on the defence." - Hayley, Customer Service Advisor, Leeds

"My son's been a nightmare really. He meets people when he is on his Xbox. Even when he were younger before he had a phone, who were you talking to online? You got no concept of what's going on and it's really worrying about some of the stuff he'd be like in the group chats he's been in at school. And that Snapchats everyone's on it, they use it like WhatsApp and I've got to take the phone off him a few times" - Matt, Electrician, Leeds

"I confiscate the PS5 because I know they can talk to each other on anything. I left my son's PS5 in my office for the entire of June just because I believe I've seen kids go and get it back, but you can't get it back from a secure office." - Tuesday, Business Executive, London

Source: More in Common. Focus groups conducted in July 2025.

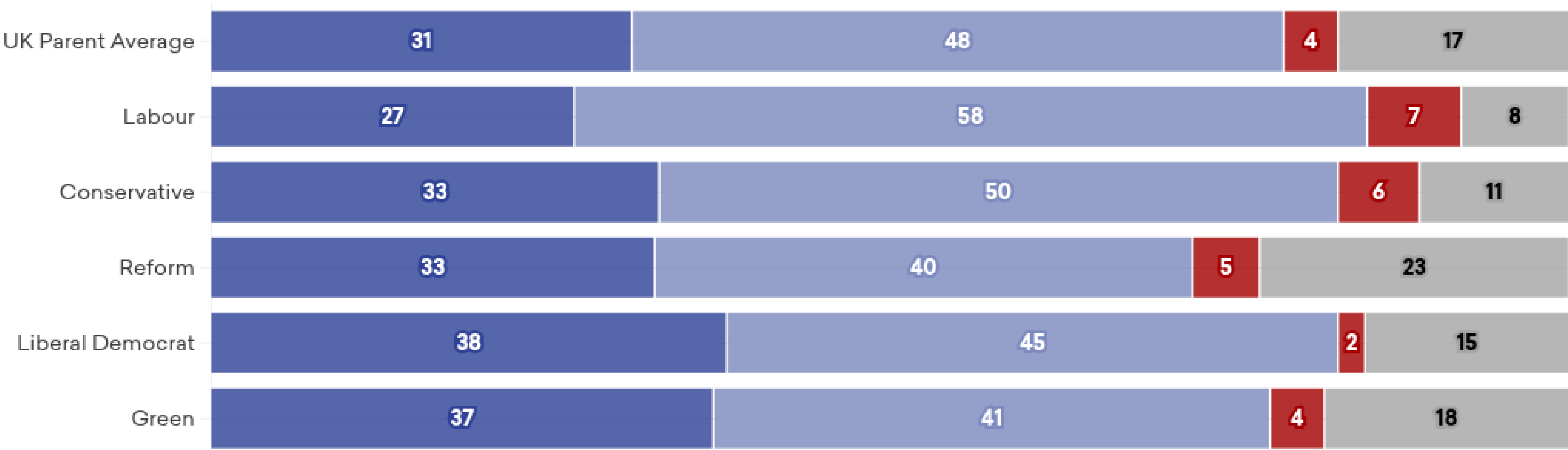
Around three in ten British parents say they receive too little support keeping their children safe online

A plurality of British parents think they receive the right amount of support, but very few think they get too much support

Current voting intention ▾

Thinking about the support you currently receive in keeping your child safe online, which of the following comes closest to your view?

● I receive too little support ● I receive the right amount of support ● I receive too much support ● I don't need any support

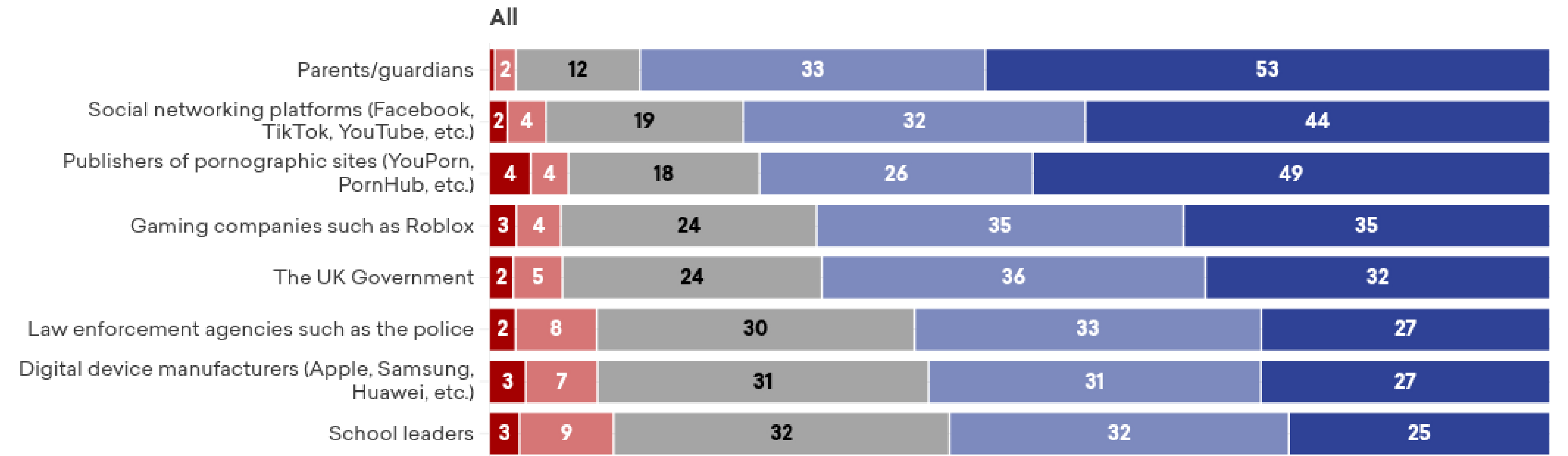


British parents take a parents-first rather than parents-only view of responsibility for online safety

Parents have high expectations of responsibility for actors across the board on children’s online safety - particularly social networking platforms, porn sites, gaming companies and the UK government

For each of the following, please rate how responsible they should be for protecting children from the dangers of the internet and social networks:

● 1 - Not responsible at all ● 2 ● 3 ● 4 ● 5 - Entirely responsible



“

In focus groups, parents talked about the most helpful types of support - both now and in the future

"I talk with some parents and my wife speaks a lot with the moms and they have the WhatsApp group we communicate, but my kids are all in the same school, and the school is great, to be fair. They showed a lot of support and they've come up with the rules where none of the kids allowed phones in school." - Jay, Restaurant Manager, London

The groups that my kid's school has put on, I would happily support anything. But I think it's also knowing how to go about stuff. I think maybe if you knew how to report stuff, don't think many people are quite aware of what to do in them situations, I guess to say they happy to support more awareness of how to deal with stuff." - Kelly, Air hostess, London

I can see that he's making calls when he's at his dad's house quite late and stuff like that. So that's quite a difficult thing I think for me to manage as a co-parent of a child where the parents don't live together. And that's definitely something that I would love more support with because you can't really, how do you have those conversations with the other parent when it's maybe not always particularly easy even though your son or daughter is at the heart of what you do." - Rebecca, Therapist, London

Source: More in Common. Focus groups conducted in July 2025.

Chapter 2

Expectations for action on children's online safety from British parents

2



More in
Common

Key Insights: Parents expectations for action

- British parents are **frustrated with both politicians and tech company leaders** for what they see as a failure to take children's safety online seriously. This frustration stretches across politics and demographic groups.
- Better online safety protections present **a significant political opportunity** in engaging parents - two thirds of parents say they'd look more positively on a political party that introduces increased online safety protections. A view that holds across the political spectrum.
- **Parents are open to a wide range of interventions** by both politicians and tech company leaders that aim to make being online safer for children - this includes strong support for better age verification systems, action on algorithms and requiring the detection and removal of explicit content.

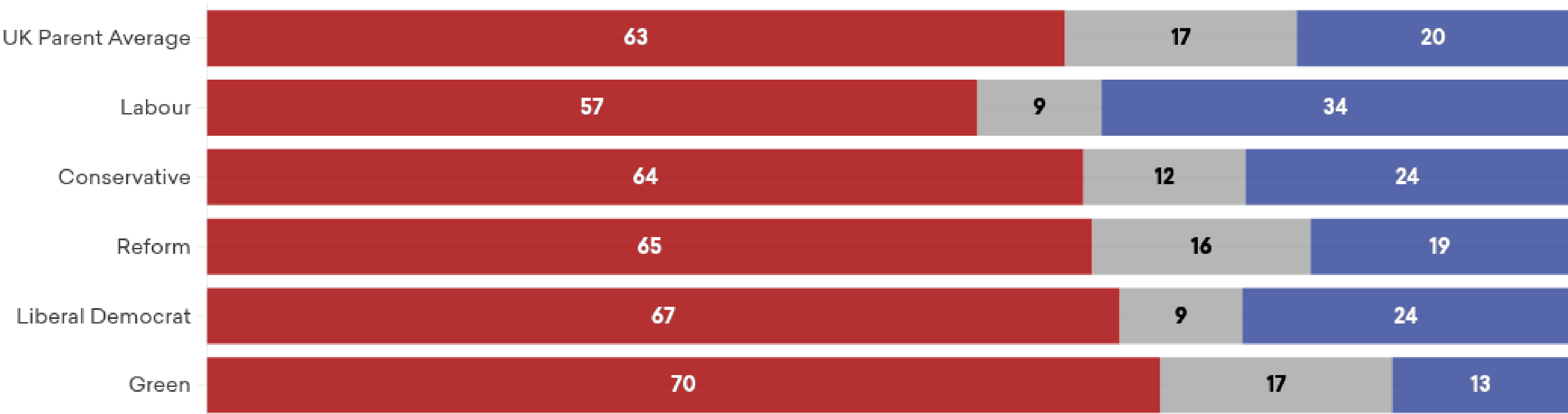
Three in five British parents think politicians aren't taking children's online safety seriously enough

A view that is held consistently across the political spectrum, by both mums and dads and by parents of all ages

Current voting intention ▾

When it comes to keeping children safe online, which of the following comes closest to your view? (%)

● Politicians are not taking this issue seriously enough ● Don't know ● Politicians are taking this issue seriously enough



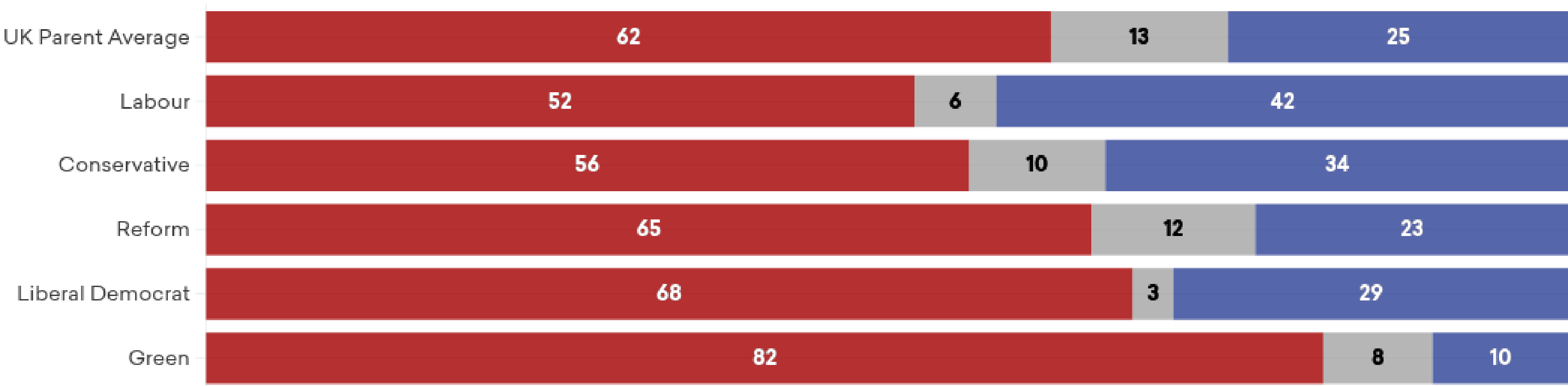
More than three in five British parents say tech companies don't take children's online safety seriously enough

Mums and older parents are more critical of tech company leaders than dads and younger parents. Green-voting, Liberal-Democrat voting and Reform voting parents are more likely than Labour or Conservative voting parents to be critical of the grip tech companies have on children's online safety

Current voting intention ▾

When it comes to keeping children safe online, which of the following comes closest to your view? (%)

● Tech company leaders are not taking this issue seriously enough ● Don't know ● Tech company leaders are taking this issue seriously enough

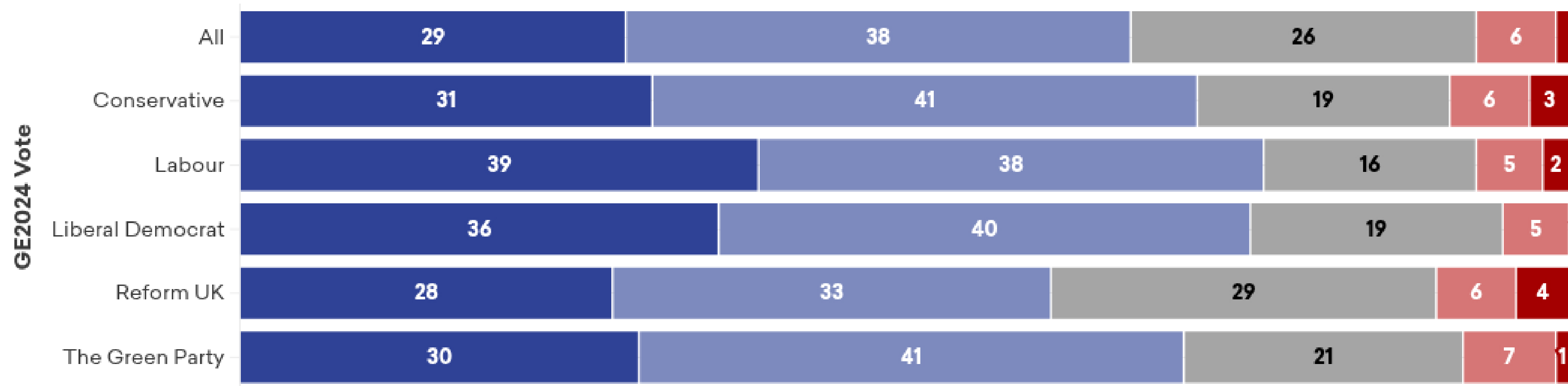


More than two thirds of British parents say they would respond positively to a political party committed to strengthening online safety protections

A significant majority among parents across the political spectrum say a political platform to strengthen online safety protections would make them view a political party more positively

If a political party were to announce that it supported increasing online safety protections, would it make you feel more positively or negatively towards the party?

● Much more positively ● Somewhat more positively ● It would make no difference ● Somewhat more negatively ● Much more negatively





In their own words

**The political risks of
inaction and the political
opportunities of action on
online safety**

"When you try to approach certain people or whether it's mps and try to talk about safeguarding children and people just give you political answers and nothing's going to be done. You almost lose the driving force to go at." - Jay, Restaurant Manager, London

"I've had this conversation with all my children regarding about ai, scammers, obviously paedophiles and everything. But yeah, as a tech company they should be doing this automatically. Everything what's just been mentioned should be used. I'm surprised it isn't used. So I'm a bit naive." - Sean, Driver, Leeds

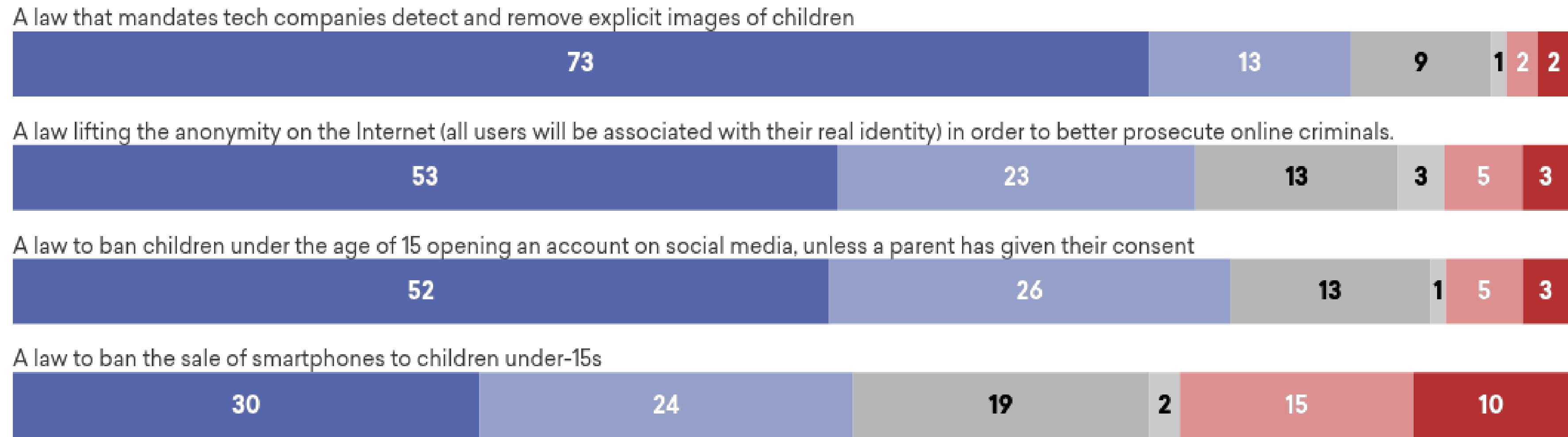
"These laws are all great and they'd all work, but it's not in the private company's interest to do so because their whole aim is to get those kids to get that dopamine hit off that TikTok and keep them scrolling. So they don't want them to question it, they don't want them to stop it and the only way they're going to be made do that is the government legislating. It's not a cost on us, it's a cost on them and there's no reason why they shouldn't do it." - Tom, Business Owner, London

Source: More in Common. Focus groups conducted in July 2025.

Parents are broadly supportive of new laws to force tech companies to act on children’s online safety

Parents are broadly supportive of legislative action to require more action from tech companies and restricting the use of social media. Outright bans still command majority support, but more scepticism in qualitative research.

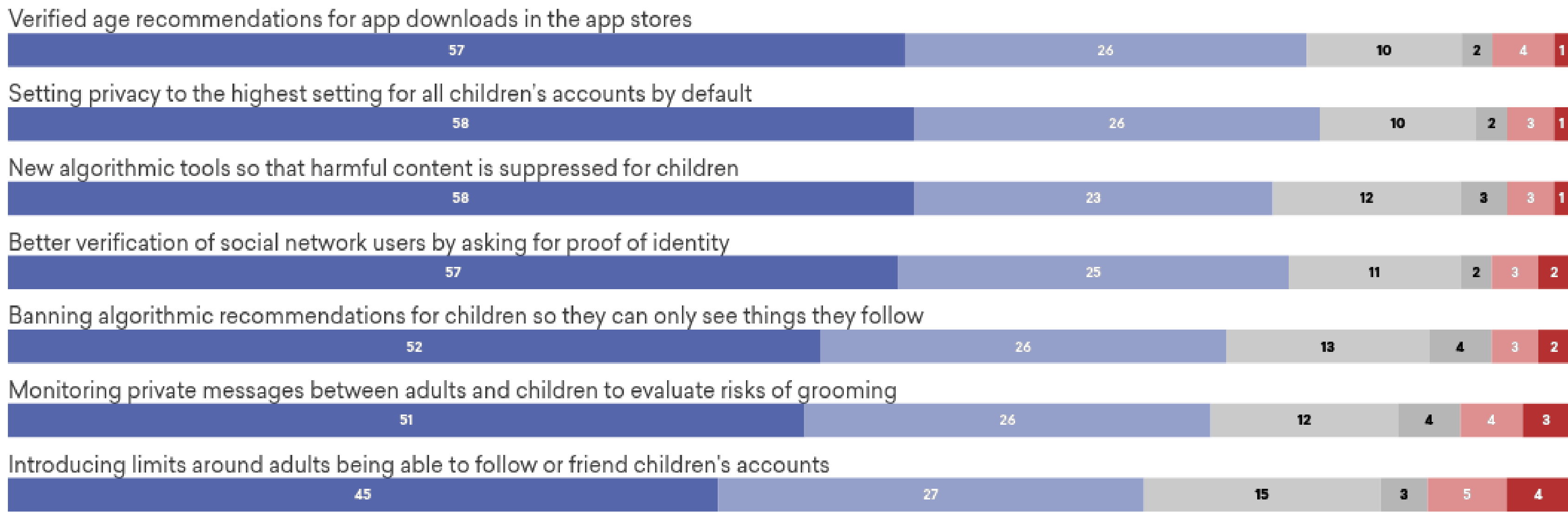
To what extent would you support or oppose any of the following laws that the government could introduce... ● Strongly support
● Somewhat support ● Neither support nor oppose ● Not sure ● Somewhat oppose ● Strongly oppose



Parents back a broad range of actions from tech companies to ensure being online becomes safer for children

Better age verification tools and actions on algorithms are among the most supported actions tech companies could take to better command the confidence of parents

To what extent would you support or oppose tech companies taking any of the following actions? ● Strongly support ● Somewhat support ● Neither support nor oppose ● Not sure ● Somewhat oppose ● Strongly oppose



“

In focus groups, parents openness to a range of new laws and action from tech company action was clear

"I always draw two comparisons and again it's back to when I was 15, 16 years of age when I was 15 years of age. If I tried to go to the Blockbuster video and get an 18 film, they would've laughed me out the store. It just seems to be that the age regulations and the restrictions just don't exist." - Tom, Business Owner, London

"I think the only thing is with that, what would be my concern is there's a lot of things in this world what's banned or illegal. And again, I think it comes down to parents because I know a lot of parents what allowed their children to have mobile phone devices well before I'd even contemplate even buying mine one... It's okay banning it, but the parent has to be willing." - Sophie, Retail Assistant, London

"I just think the company that doesn't follow them, they should just be completely banned because the fines don't really do anything. You find a billion pound company, pennies, they don't change anything. It should just be removed or restricted and banned. Like you said, you go to UAE or China and certain apps you just can't use. If you can't follow certain rules then it just shouldn't exist." - Jay, Restaurant Manager, London

"I think the ID thing, I've heard about that before. I think it were on this morning about providing ID for Snapchat like a passport and fair enough, not everyone's got id, but that would be one way that you can't get on it as simple as that. And it'd make it easier for parents because we do do out for the quiet life and we do let 'em on it for pressure and stuff like that." - Hayley, Customer Service Advisor, Leeds

Source: More in Common. Focus groups conducted in July 2025.

Chapter 3

The five segments of British parents on online safety

3



More in
Common

Key Insights

- Using latent class analysis (LCA), More in Common identified five distinct segments of British parents based on their attitudes, feelings, and behaviors related to children's online safety.
- These segments differ in key ways, including parents' level of concern about online safety, degree of engagement in the topic, and demographic characteristics such as income and the ages of their children.
- While some segments share similar demographics but differ in concern and willingness to act, others exhibit similar attitudes and behaviors despite demographic differences.

The five segments of British Parents on online safety

More in Common identified five segments that vary in their attitudes towards child online safety. Segments were constructed using an latent class analysis (LCA). Input variables include attitudes, feelings, and behaviours related to child online safety.

The Advocates

23% of GB Parents

The Advocates are a group of engaged parents - highly worried about online safety, but already acting both inside and outside the home to keep their kids safe. They want to see action from parents, government and tech companies improving children's online safety. Advocates are more likely to be younger parents.

The Planners

21% of GB Parents

The Planners are young parents with young children. They are deeply worried about the challenges ahead keeping their children safe and they want support both now and in the future as their children grow up. They are frustrated with inaction from both politicians and tech company leaders.

The Battlers

17% of GB Parents

The Battlers are a frustrated group of parents, often fighting with their children over being online. They feel unsupported in keeping their children safe and most comprehensively back child safety online over protecting free speech or privacy online. Their kids are more likely to be teenagers.

The Guardians

17% of GB Parents

The Guardians are a group who take a family-first approach to online safety. They are concerned about the risks, but they've spoken with their kids and they find it easier to set limits at home. While still in favour of online safety protections, they're more likely than other groups to see the case for privacy or free speech protection.

The Trusters

23% of GB Parents

The Trusters take a trust-first, more hands-off approach to keeping their children safe online. They are significantly less concerned than other groups and less aware of their children's online activity. They are more likely to be older parents with older teenage children.

Understanding the demographics of the five British parent segments

The segmentation analysis used attitudes, feelings, and behaviours related to children's online safety to clustered parents together, rather than demographic inputs. However, demographic differences emerge from the segmentation.

The Advocates 23% of GB Parents	The Guardians 17% of GB Parents	The Battlers 17% of GB Parents	The Planners 21% of US Parents	The Trusters 23% of US Parents
• More likely to be dads (56 v 44) • More likely to live in London • 75% Graduates • Most religious of any of the segments • Most Millennial segment • Labour leads the Conservatives by 16 points with the Advocates segment	• More likely to be dads (56 v 44) • Fairly even age spread across generations • Most Guardians have two or more children • Labour lead Reform by 9 points with the Guardians segment	• Even mix of mums and dads • More likely to be older parents - 52% either Gen X or Baby Boomer • Most Battlers have two or more children • Labour and Reform are neck-and-neck with the Battlers segment	• More likely to be mums (65%) than dads (35%) • Youngest segment • Most planners (60%) have one child • Reform lead Labour by 5 points with the Planners segment	• Even mix of mums and dads • More likely to live in Scotland • 75% non-graduates • More likely to be Gen X • More likely to be single parents • Much less likely to vote than other segments, but Reform lead Labour by 10 points in this segment

The Advocates

23% of British Parents

The Advocates: An Overview

Highly concerned and highly activated

The Advocates are the most concerned segment about children's online safety - 91% say they're very concerned. Advocates are multi-issue activists - significantly more likely than average to be both concerned about and engaged in lots of issues facing children from climate change to road safety. Almost all (92%) say they are likely to act on children's online safety.

An assured and active approach to their own children's protection

The Advocates are a group who are aware of their children's online activity, they've talked with their children about the risks of online harms, they feel prepared to deal with issues like online bullying and they feel confident that they are doing the right amount to keep their children safe online. They also find it fairly easy to set limits on their children's digital usage.

Parent-first, but high expectations for everyone

The Advocates take the strongest view of any of the segments that parents are responsible for keeping their children safe, but are also more likely to hold a whole range of actors responsible for better children's safety online including government and school leaders. They are evenly divided and more likely than average to think protecting kids online is a purely parental responsibility.

Online safety first, privacy and free speech second

Of all the segment, the Advocates most strongly back comprehensive age verification systems over minimising data collection, protecting children online over protecting free speech and ensuring access to private messages for effective online safety measure over protecting personal privacy. For the Advocates, online safety easily comes first.

An already active and engaged group

The Advocates are an already active and engaged group on children's online safety. Seven in ten have shared information with other parents, three in five have shared posts about online safety on social media, three in five have attended information sessions on online safety at their children's schools. A third have also taken part in protests already on children's online safety.

The Advocates' policy priorities

Advocates are among the strongest supporters of the proposals for new laws and tech company action tested in this study. More than nine in ten Advocates support new laws mandating the detection and removal of explicit images of children from the internet and lifting the anonymity of the internet. More than nine in ten Advocates support almost all the potential tech company actions tested in the study - the highest support was for age verification at the app store level, better social media age verification and new algorithmic tools to suppress harmful content for children.

Political opportunity with the Advocates

The Advocates are most likely segment (twice as likely than average) to say they'd think 'much more positively' of a political party if they were to increase online safety protections. Overall four in five Advocates (81%) say they would look more positively on a political party making such a proposal. While Advocates still think politicians and tech companies don't do enough on online safety, Advocates are more than twice as likely as average to think they do - they are more willing to cut tech and political leaders slack. Given their high engagement on online safety, it's clear they approach these questions through a more informational lens.

”

"I think anyone that throws out the free speech banner, they can go and talk to a parent whose child's been groomed or talk to a parent whose child's been abused because that's happened through social media... when it comes to your kids, there's no law you wouldn't break to protect them. So freedom of speech goes out the window when it comes to my 13-year-old child." - Tom, Advocate, London

In their own words
The Advocates

"I don't even think they should be fined. I just think the company that doesn't follow them, they should just be completely banned because the fines don't really do anything. You fine a billion pound company, pennies, they don't change anything. It should just be removed or restricted and banned." - Jay, Advocate, London

The Battlers

17% of British Parents

The Battlers: An Overview

Deeply concerned but struggling with online safety

The Battlers are deeply concerned about children's online safety and they are not multi-issue advocates, online safety uniquely worries them. Battlers are trying a whole series of methods to try and keep their children safe online. They are actively talking with their children, but they are struggling - 57% say they receive too little support and many feel they aren't doing enough.

Setting screentime limits is a challenge and source of conflict

Battlers are less aware of their children's online activity than other segments - just over half as likely to than average to say they are very aware than average. They also feel less prepared to respond to issues such as online harassment or online bullying. Three in five Battlers say limiting their child's digital use leads to conflict and they are most likely segment to say they find it hard to limit the amount of time children spend on their phones.

High expectations for others first, then parents second

Battlers have more systemic views on responsibility for children's online safety - they are the only segment where parents and guardians aren't held more 'entirely responsible' than all the other actors tested. The Battlers hold porn sites and social networking companies more "entirely responsible" for keeping kids safe online than parents/guardians - but they also hold a strong sense of parental responsibility as well.

Online safety comes first - a 'no brainer'

The Battlers reject free speech or privacy trade-offs on children's online safety, and say they'd put child safety first. In focus group conversations, the Battlers told us that it was a 'no brainer' that online safety for children would trump free speech or privacy considerations online. The Battlers are the segment most likely to prioritise online safety vis-a-vis free speech or privacy considerations.

A group with high engagement potential

The Battlers have high engagement potential on online safety - the second most likely segment to say they are likely to take action in support of online safety for children. Their current levels of engagement are through reporting harmful content and sharing information with other parents. Potential areas for engagement are supporting awareness raising, school information sessions and petition signing. Online safety as part of the school curriculum also has a s strong appeal.

The Battlers' policy priorities

The Battlers are among the strongest supporters of new laws and actions from tech companies aimed at making being online safer for everyone particularly children.

More than nine in ten Battlers support a new law to mandate the detection and removal of explicit images of children from the internet and a ban on under 15s opening social media accounts without parental consent. Virtually all Battlers back tech company led measures to set privacy to the highest setting by default, ensure age verification for app store downloads and algorithmic tools to surpress harmful content for children.

Political opportunity with the Battlers

The Battlers are the segment most likely to think that politicians and tech company leaders aren't taking the issue of keeping children safe seriously enough.

They are also the most likely of any segment to say that they'd view a political party more positively for announcing increases in online safety protections - 87 per cent of the Battlers say they'd look more positively on a political party making such a proposal.

”

In their own words:
The Battlers

"It's hard because they think they know it all. Nothing. And you're old, what do you know about social media and Snapchat... they get on defence. So it's sort of fighting a losing battle." - Hayley, Battler, Leeds

"She even said that to me, right to me, she just said, daddy, you don't realise that I could just delete any message before you look at it. The clever, they do know how to get around you." - Ian, Battler, Leeds

The Planners

21% of British Parents

The Planners: An Overview

Very concerned and very likely to take action on online safety

99% of the Planners are worried about children's online safety and 78% of them are very concerned about online safety. They also show high engagement potential on children's online safety - more than 8 in 10 Planners say they are likely to take action on online safety. A significant minority of The Planners (35%) say they receive too little support keeping their children safe online.

Aware, active and ready for future conversations on risks

Most of the Planners are very aware of what their children do online - while just over a third of their children aren't online, the vast majority of the rest of the Planners are either very or somewhat aware of their children's online activity. Most Planners have limited screen time and introduced parental controls. Most planners haven't talked to their children about the risks of online violence (as their kids are too young) but they intend to do so in the future.

Parent-first approach to questions of responsibility, but concerns about porn too

Most Planners take a parent-first rather than parent-only approach to questions of responsibility on online safety - they are also more likely than average to hold porn publishers responsible for keeping children safe online. Planners are more likely than average to be worried about sexual or pornographic content being shown online. They are particularly worried about such content being shown on YouTube which many of their kids use.

A safety-first approach to trade off questions

Planners take a clearly online safety first approach in navigating the potential trade offs on online safety - they comprehensively back age verification over a minimising data collection trade off, they back protecting children online over protecting free speech online, and they back access to private communications over protecting privacy. These views were reflected in focus group conversations with the Planners segment.

High potential for out-of-home engagement

Planners show high potential for outside home engagement on online safety - planners are the second most likely segment to say that action is needed outside the home to keep children safe online - second only to the battler segment. Supporting Planners practically will be key to their engagement - they are the second most likely segment to say they receive too little support. School information sessions and sharing information with other parents have appeal to Planners. Planners would also like apps to help them with monitoring and resources parents and children can use together.

The Planners' policy priorities

The Planners are strong supporters of new laws and action from tech companies to make being online safer for children. Over nine in ten Planners back new laws to mandate the detection and removal of explicit images of children and banning social media accounts for under 15s without parental consent. They are also strong supporters of a whole range of action by tech companies to make being online safer for children - including setting privacy to the highest setting by default and age verification for app store downloads.

Political opportunity with The Planners

The vast majority of Planners (74 per cent) say they'd look more positively on a political party which announced increased online safety protections. There is a clear political opportunity for engaging with this group on online safety issues.

The Planners are also the second most likely segment (next to the Battlers) to say politicians aren't taking the issue seriously enough and the same is true for their views of tech company leaders.

”

In their own words:
The Planners

"If he clicks on the wrong advert, what's he going to see? Because the adverts come up on YouTube. Is it going to be, I don't know, Viagra, is it going to be something about knife crime? And then he starts asking me, well what's this daddy?" - Marc, Planner

I know before there was people that were creating their own videos and put in whatever in the middle that you could be watching Peppa pig and there's a horror bit comes up. So it's all things like that. And my eldest will be starting in primary school come September, so again, it's just that new thing sends in her to a new place, got to meet all the new teachers and the children and just everything just with general safety and things of being in a new surroundings - Sophie, Planner

The Guardians

17% of British Parents

The Guardians: An Overview

Moderately concerned about online safety

The Guardians are concerned about online safety - but their concern is more moderate than other segments as is the likelihood to take action on an issue such as children's online safety. Tangible concerns such as online bullying drive the Guardians concerns about children's online safety, rather than a broader concern about children's online safety in the abstract.

Actively involved in their own child's online safety

Most Guardians have talked with their children about online safety and almost half have talked in depth about the most serious online harms. Guardians feel prepared to deal with potential serious issues that could face their own children and they are the segment most likely to say they are doing about the right amount to keep their children safe online. Guardians are also much less likely to have fights with their children about screen time limits and they are more likely than average to find it easy to limit time on their child's phone.

A home-first approach to questions of responsibility

The Guardians are the segment who most strongly hold the view that keeping children safe online is a matter best dealt with between parents and children at home rather than requiring action outside the home as well. More broadly, Guardians have a strong sense of parental responsibility on children's online safety expectation but have lower expectations for other actors such as the UK government or law enforcement agencies.

Privacy and free speech matter to the Guardians

The Guardians are the segment most likely to prioritise minimising the impact on personal privacy or freedom of speech when considering the implications of online safety measures. They are the segment most likely to prioritise protecting free speech and protecting personal privacy of any of the segments.

A harder-to-engage group on online safety

The Guardians are not a group currently engaged actively in online safety outside of the home and are a harder to reach group on any children's online safety action. Signing petitions, supporting awareness raising and attending school information sessions are the potential engagement activities the Guardians are most open to engaging in, but engagement beyond this is likely to be limited.

The Guardians' policy priorities

A majority of the Guardians support tech company action and laws to keep kids safe online, but they are less attracted to bans such as an outright ban on the sale of smartphones to under 15s.

The proposals most supported by the Guardians include new algorithmic tools to suppress harmful content for children, stopping algorithmic recommendations so children only see what they follow and new laws to mandate the detection and removal of explicit images of children online.

Political opportunity with the Guardians

Just over half of the Guardians say they would view a political party more positively if they announced increasing online safety protections - a positivity rate that is lower than average and much lower than other segments.

The Guardians are also more likely than average to cut politicians and tech company leaders slack for doing enough on online safety.

Both of these findings mean there is limited political opportunity in engaging with the Guardians on increasing online safety protections.

”

There should be certain checks that go into action before you are able to get an account or any of it. It's just kind of mind blowing. There's potential actions. I'm kind of a bit flabbergasted that these aren't in place straight away from the get go - Leanne, The Guardians

In their own words:
The Guardians

I've threatened to sort of look at her history, but then if I go down that path, you're kind of blowing your trust with your child and it's a real sort of rocky road to start going down and I want to keep a relationship with my daughter rather than her having to hide everything from me. So me and my wife, we kind of check in and have a look and see what she's doing. Not all the time, but every now and again just have a little sort of how doing what you up to, what you looking at, blah blah blah - Adrian, The Guardians

The Trusters

23% of British Parents

The Trusters: An Overview

Less concerned and unlikely to get involved in online safety efforts

The Trusters are a group who are least concerned about children’s online safety - consistent with their lower levels of concern across a series of issues. They are also unlikely to engage in action on children’s online safety - only 3% of the Trusters say they would be very likely to get involved in action to support children’s online safety.

A trust-first approach with limited monitoring

Trusters are more likely to rely on open communication channels with their children on online safety than using monitoring apps or checking their child’s browsing history. They are the least likely segment to have talked in depth about online safety with their children. They are also the segment most likely to say they personally don’t need any support in keeping their child safe online, and three in four say they think they are doing about the right amount to keep their child safe online.

Parent-first but lower expectations across the board

Like most other segments, the Trusters take a parents-first approach to questions of responsibility for children’s online safety. However, across the board, they are more likely than other segments to have lower expectations for a whole range of actors including the government, law enforcement agencies, device manufacturers and school leaders.

Online safety prioritised but free speech and privacy matter too

The Trusters are more likely than average to value personal privacy, data collection minimisation and protecting free speech than average. However, in all three trade offs, a clear majority of the Trusters make the trade off in favour of protecting children online. Their disengagement on online safety is shaped by trusting their children rather than a more ideological stance on issues such as privacy and free speech.

Low current engagement and limited potential engagement

Trusters are not currently engaged in broader online safety action, but they show some potential for engagement such as on reporting harmful content on platforms, sharing information with other parents and signing petitions. Practical advice on dealing with online harms might also appeal given they are the segment most likely to say that they would feel unprepared on how to respond if their child experienced online harassment.

The Trusters’ policy priorities

Trusters are less likely than average to support action from tech companies and new laws aimed at making being online safer for all users particularly children. However, even then, a majority of Trusters support most of the proposals tested. Strongest support among the Trusters appears for new laws to mandate the detection and removal on explicit images of children online, followed by strong support for setting privacy to the highest setting by default and ensuring better age verifications on social media.

Political opportunity with the Trusters

The Trusters are fairly ambivalent to the politics of children’s safety online. A majority of the Trusters say that a political party increasing online safety protections would make no difference to their views on the party - the most of any of the segments. They are also most likely to say they ‘don’t know’ if politicians and tech company leaders are taking the issue of online safety seriously enough. Their low engagement on the issues means there is limited political opportunity for engaging this group on online safety issues.

”

In their own words:
The Trusters

"I trust them. Maybe I'm a bit naive, but I have an older daughter, so she sort of tells her brother right from wrong... I trust them both and I trust them to come to me." - Sarah, Truster

It's not something that particularly worries me because we've had chats from an early age around keeping safe generally, and it's the same kind of principles, so we didn't want to obsess too much with the online side of things so they know not to, for example, talk to someone they don't know send anything to anyone, they dunno, definitely not arranged to meet someone they don't know. And the same thing applies in the outside world as it does online, and I think that's kind of what we focus on is just teaching life skills from a young age - Charlie, Truster

4

Chapter 4

**How the five segments can help
us understand how British parents
approach online safety**



**More in
Common**

Key Insights: How the five segments can help us understand how British parents approach online safety

This section looks at three key issues through the lens of the five parent segments: engagement, trade offs and solutions.

- **Engagement:** examining the likelihood of parents from different segment to engage on online safety action
- **Trade-offs:** exploring how the different segments navigate trade-offs on privacy and free speech
- **Solutions:** understanding how different segments approach different potential laws and actions from tech companies to make being online safer for children

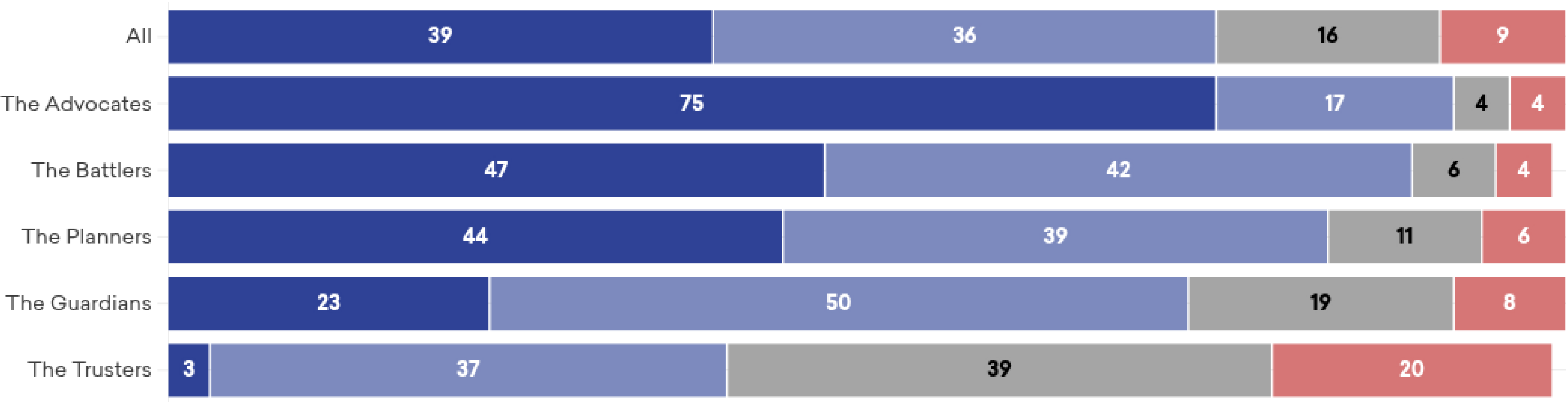
Engagement levels on online safety action vary by segment

The Advocates, The Battlers and The Planners express the most interest in taking action. The Trusters are the least interested.

For each of the following issues relating to the impact on children, please indicate how likely you are to take action in support of that issue

Children's online safety and digital wellbeing

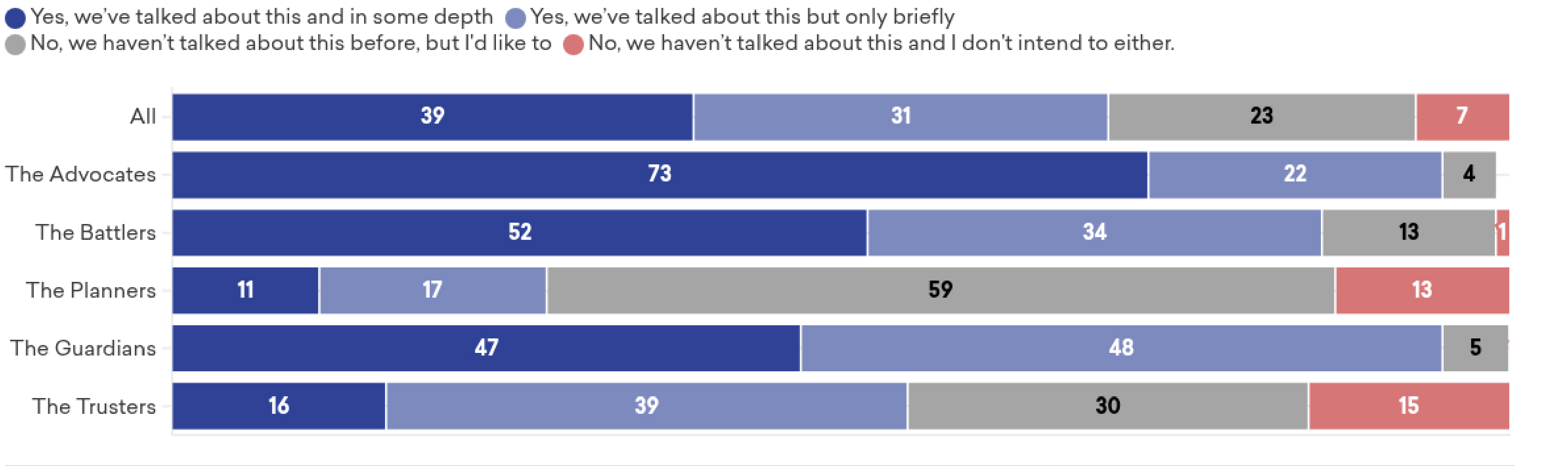
Very likely Somewhat likely Somewhat unlikely Very unlikely



Talking about online safety: the different approaches of different parents

While almost seven in ten British parents have talked about the risks of online safety with their children, there are significant differences among parents. The Advocates and the Battlers take a more maximalist approach to talking about the risks, compared with the Trusters who take a more minimalist approach.

Have you ever talked to your child(ren) about the risks of sexual abuse or violence on the internet and social networks...

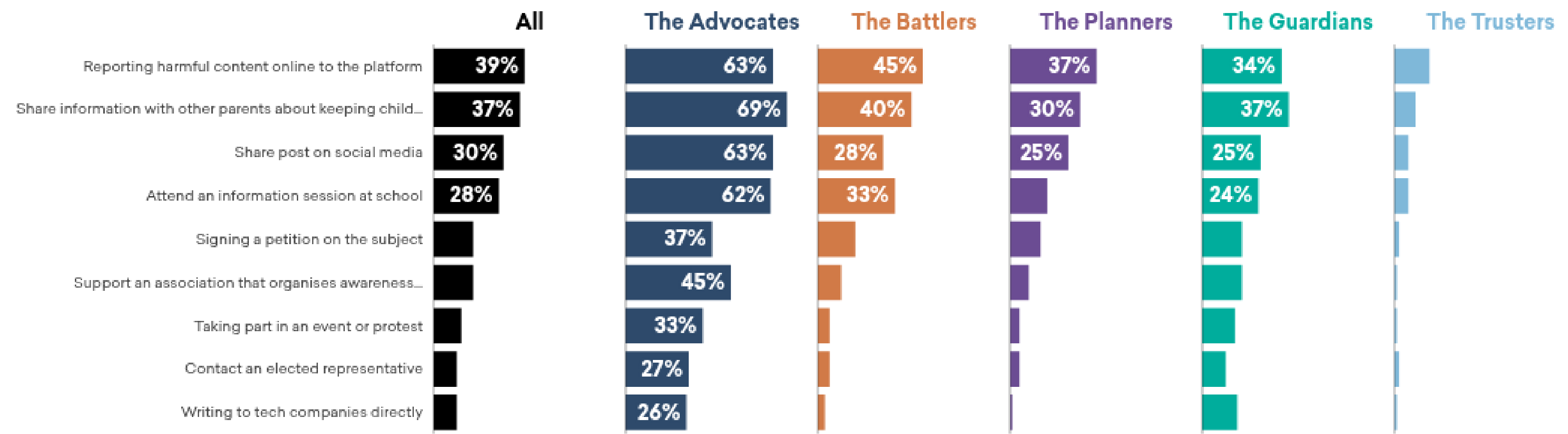


The Advocates are the most likely to have taken some form of action on children’s safety online

The Trusters are least likely to have engaged in children’s online safety action

Here is a list of actions to promote child protection on the internet and social networks. For each of them, please indicate whether you have already done it, whether you might do it, or whether you would never do it:

% I've already done it

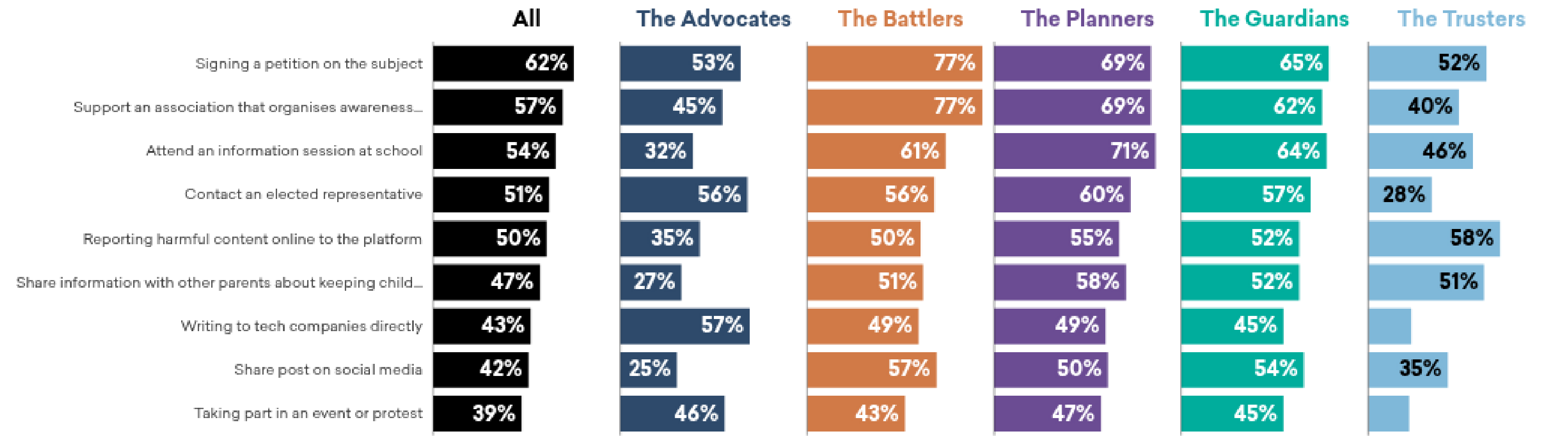


Significant groups across all segments would engage in advocacy efforts in the future on children’s online safety

The Battlers and the Planners show the most potential for engagement of any of the segments - but even Guardians and Trusters show potential engagement opportunities

Here is a list of actions to promote child protection on the internet and social networks. For each of them, please indicate whether you have already done it, whether you might do it, or whether you would never do it:

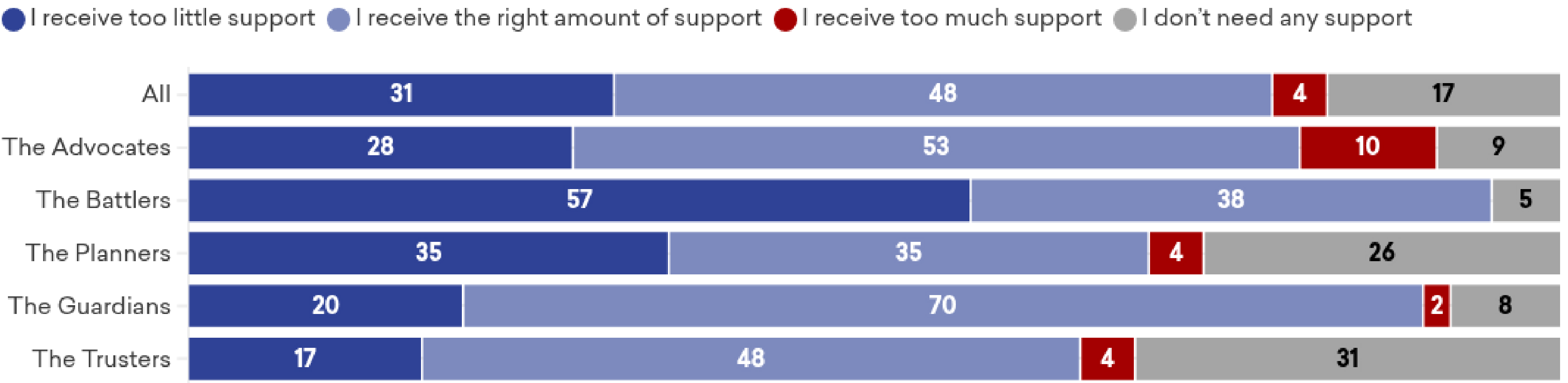
% I might do it



Who needs support: the different approaches of different parents

There are significant differences among the segments in their assessment about how much support they receive to keep their children safe online. Battlers feel the most unsupported, the Guardians most confident of current levels of support, while many Trusters don't think they need support yet with their younger children.

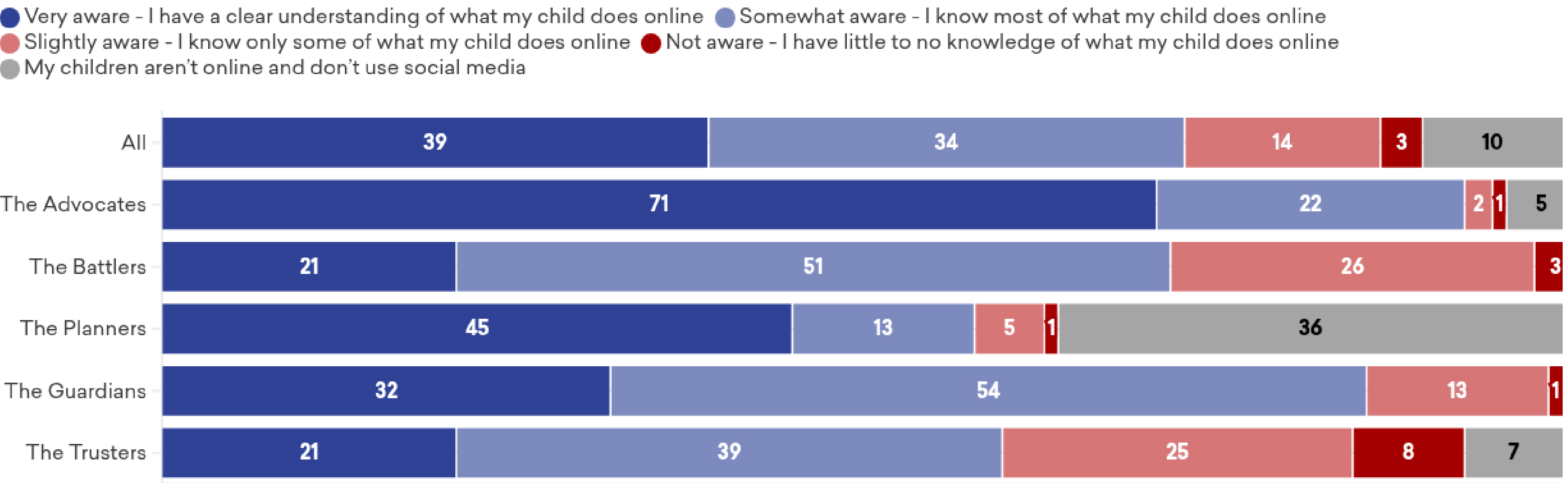
Thinking about the support you currently receive in keeping your child safe online, which of the following comes closest to your view?



Varying degrees of awareness among parents

The parents segments also show stark differences on how aware or not different groups of parents are of their children’s activity online - almost all Advocates are aware of their children’s online activity, while Battlers and Trusters are much less intensely aware of their children’s activity online.

How aware, if at all, are you of your child's activity online?

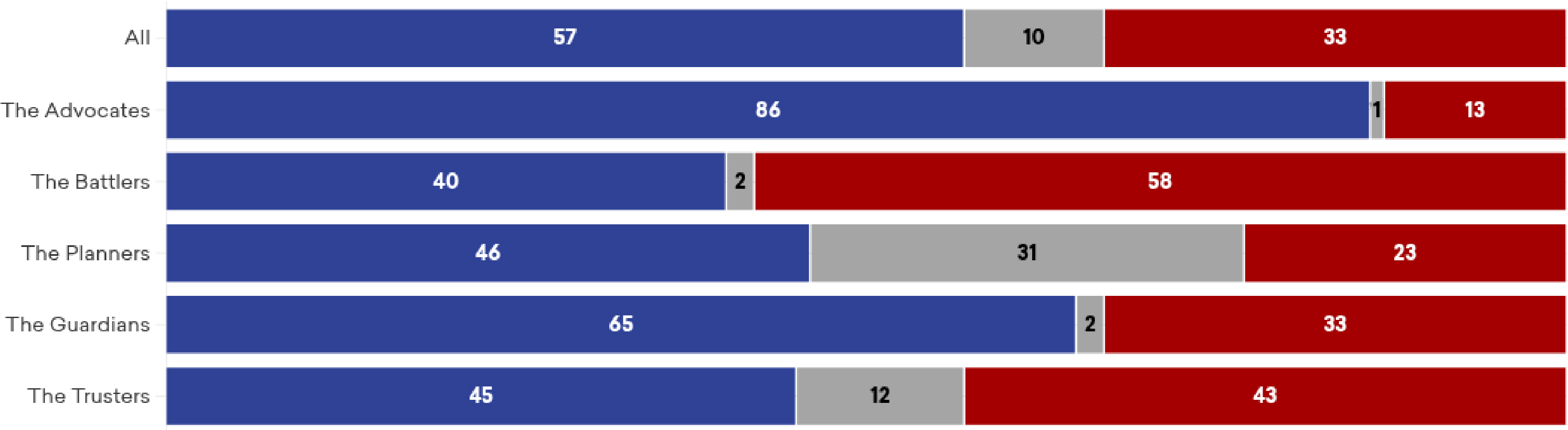


Screen time limits: a source of conflict for some parent segments more than others

The Battlers stand out for having the most conflict with their kids over limits to digital use

Which of the following comes closest to your view?

- Setting limits on my child's digital use typically happens without conflict
- Not applicable - my child doesn't use digital devices
- Setting limits on my child's digital use often leads to conflict

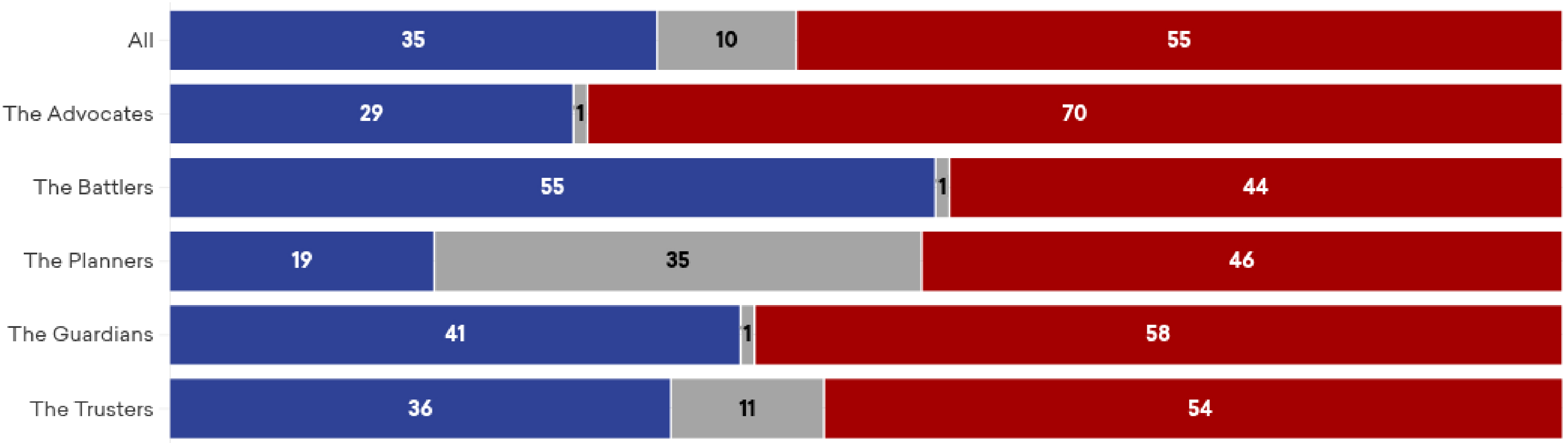


Ease of setting limits on screentime varies significantly by segment

The Battlers stand out for struggling the most with setting limits on mobile phone screen time for their children

Which of the following comes closest to your view?

- I find it hard to limit the amount of time my children spend on their phones
- Not applicable - my child doesn't use digital devices
- I find it easy to limit the amount of time my children spend on their phones

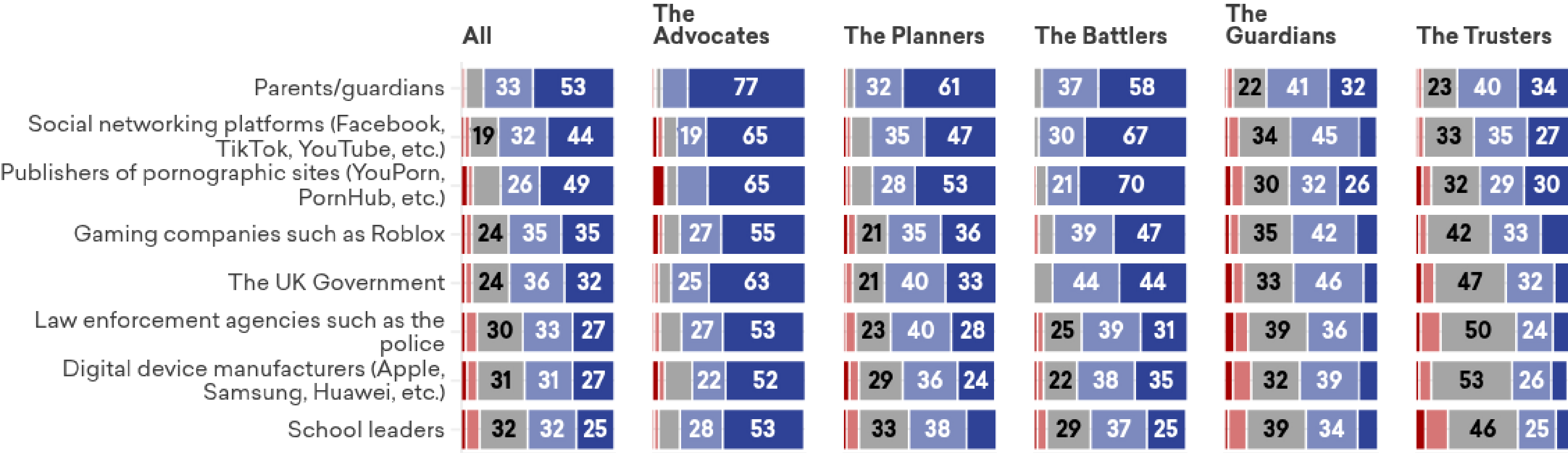


Most segments take a parent-first rather than parent-only view of responsibility

The Advocates, The Battlers and The Planners stand out for their high expectations of action from all actors on children’s online safety

For each of the following, please rate how responsible they should be for protecting children from the dangers of the internet and social networks:

● 1 - Not responsible at all ● 2 ● 3 ● 4 ● 5 - Entirely responsible



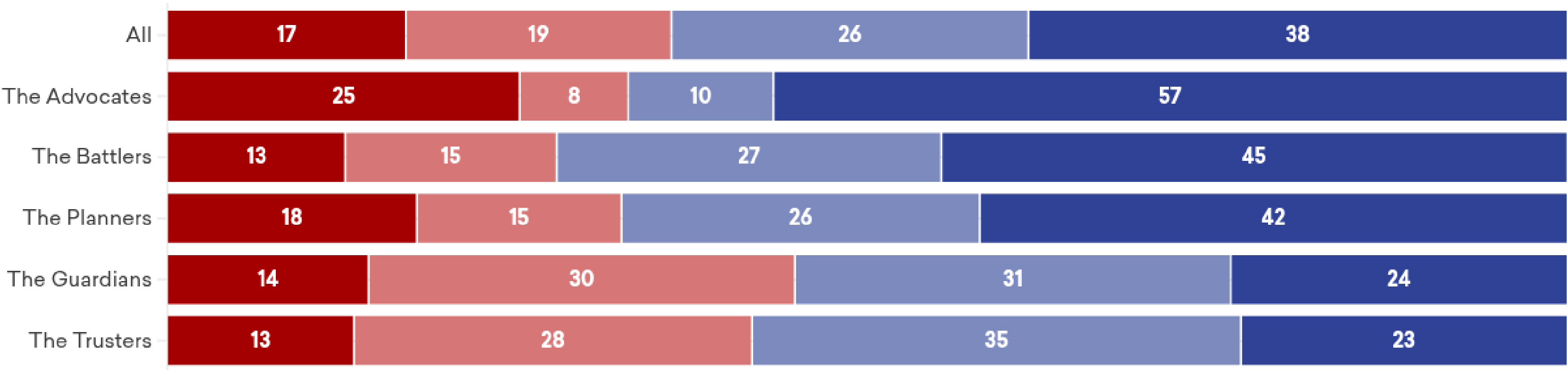
Majorities in all segment take an online safety-first approach when weighed up against potential free speech implications

How British parents navigate online safety implications for privacy

Most Britons (including majorities in all segments) prioritise authorities accessing private communications for online safety purposes in order to better protect children from harm over prioritising protecting personal privacy

Which of the following comes closer to your view?

- 1- Personal privacy online should be absolute, even if it makes it harder to protect children from harm ● 2 ● 3
- 4 - Authorities should be able to access some people's private communications, if it's needed to protect children from harm



Most British parents comprehensive back age verification over minimising data collection

Majorities across segment back comprehensive age verification - however the Guardians segment is more evenly divided

Which of the following comes closer to your view?

- 1 - We should implement comprehensive age verification systems to protect young people, even if it means collecting more personal data 2 3 4 - We should minimise data collection on users, even if it makes age verification less effective

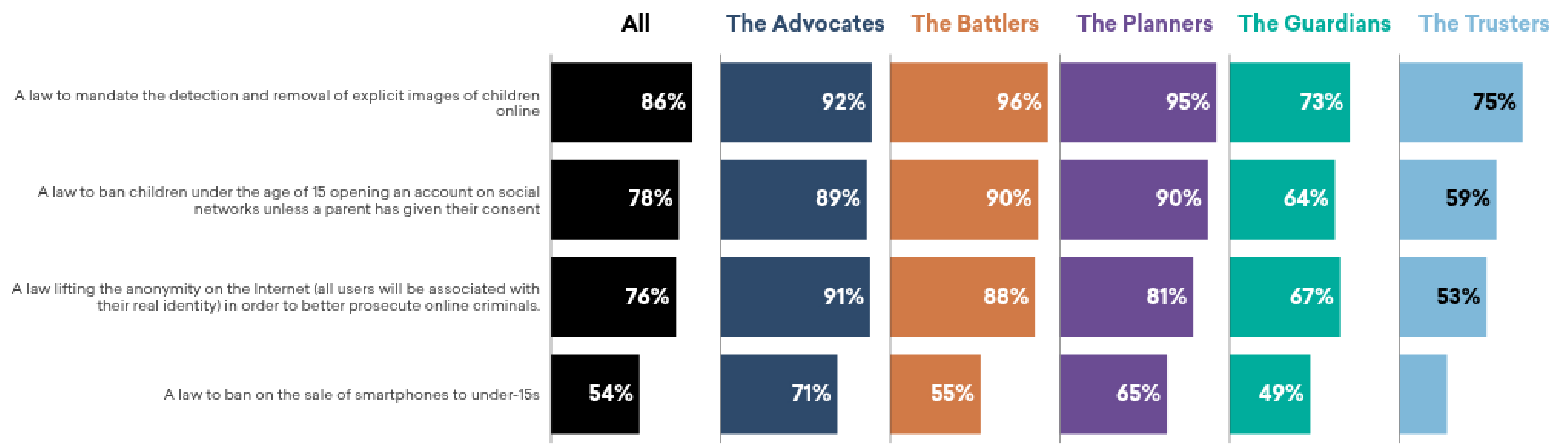


Strong support for new laws to make being online safer

There is strong support across segments for new laws focusing on mandating the detection and removal of explicit images of children, social media accounts and lifting internet anonymity. Banning the sale of smartphones commands much less support.

To what extent would you support or oppose any of the following laws that the government could introduce that deal with making using social media and the internet safer for all users. For each of the policies, please state to what extent you support or oppose it?

% Support (strongly + somewhat support)



Most parents across most segments want more action from tech companies

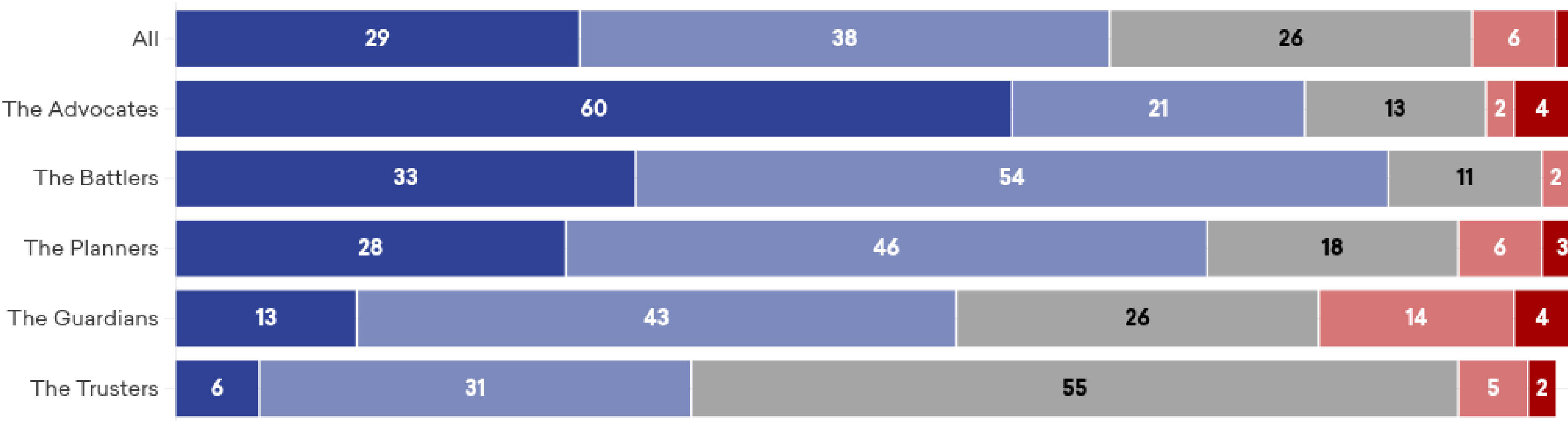
New tech tools which would set privacy to highest by default, conduct better age verification and see action on algorithms are strongly backed by parents across segments

Clear potential political rewards for action on online safety

The clearest political rewards for increased online safety protections come from the Advocates, Battlers and Planners segments

If a political party were to announce that it supported increasing online safety protections, would it make you feel more positively or negatively towards the party?

● Much more positively ● Somewhat more positively ● It would make no difference ● Somewhat more negatively ● Much more negatively



**If you have questions, please contact the
researchers at: uk@moreincommon.com**



moreincommon.org.uk