Use of communication features when playing video games

A report by Ipsos MORI for ISFE

September 2021

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Overview of Research

In Q4 2020, as part of the main GameTrack survey*, a project run on behalf of the Interactive Software Federation of Europe (ISFE), Ipsos MORI ran several questions on **child safety in video gaming, including use of communication features and exposure to potentially harmful content**. This was carried out via an online survey to parents of children aged 0-15 in their household who play online multiplayer video games. Results are reflective of claimed behaviour of children, by their parents. Questions were also asked to a sample of video game players aged 11-64 years old.

Fieldwork took place between 2nd November 2020 to 15th January 2021 via an online survey. This was conducted across Great Britain, France, Germany, Spain and Italy (base sizes from parents responding to these questions are included below).

	TOTAL	GB	FR	GE	SP	IT
Base: Parents of children aged 0-15 who play online multiplayer video games	**908**	171	178	119	222	218

Full methodological details are included in the technical appendix.

*GameTrack is a quarterly study run by Ipsos on behalf of ISFE tracking the video game market in Europe

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We asked questions to a sample of parents …

Parents with children who play video games and those who play online multiplayer video games

- For the purposes of this research a child was defined as anyone aged 0-15 years old.
- A parent is defined as either the biological parent, or a guardian
- Players on any device aged 11-64 years olds were also asked questions on their use of reporting tools.

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Overview: Online communication features and parental supervision

- **Parents of children who play video games claimed that two fifths (41%)** play online multiplayer video games. **59% - the large majority-** claimed their children **did not play** online multiplayer games.

- **4 in 5 parents (79%) who have any children who play online multiplayer video games and who use online communication features claim they supervise their children** while playing. They claim they use means such as parental controls, in-person supervision and agreements.

- **75% of parents of any children who play online multiplayer video games** claim that their children have not experienced anything that made them feel upset or uncomfortable when playing multiplayer video games.
  - Of those who have experienced this, **96% of parents claim they took action** after any of their children were exposed to potentially harmful content. This includes reporting it using an in-built reporting tool, their children telling them or another authority and avoiding the video game altogether. **Parents who use in-built reporting tools found them useful (86%).**
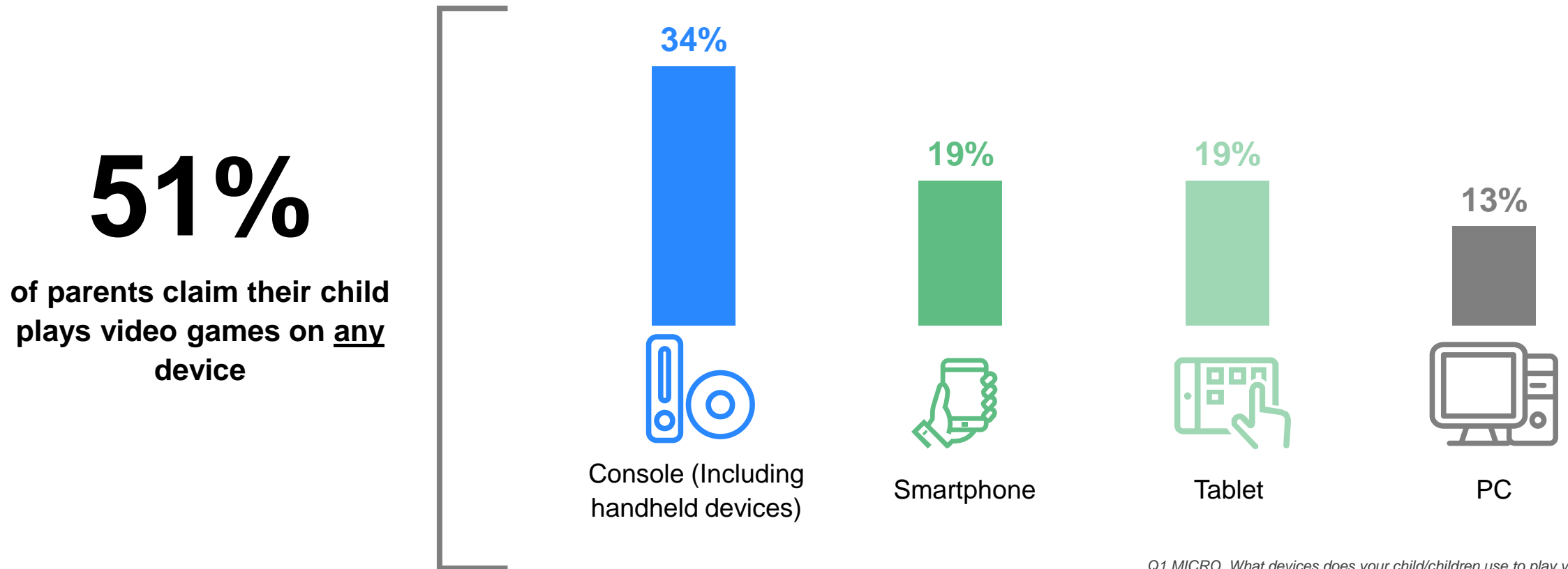
Use of communication features & parental supervision

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Half of parents claim their child plays video games on any device, with console devices the most popular.

BASE: Adults with children in the household

51%

of parents claim their child plays video games on <u>any</u> device

34%

Console (Including handheld devices)

19%

Smartphone

19%

Tablet

13%

PC

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Almost 6 in 10 parents with children who play video games claim they do not play online multiplayer video games. This is higher among parents with older children in their household.

BASE: Parents with a child who plays video games on any device

Any Children
Parents who have <u>ANY</u> children who play video games on any device

59% claim their child does **not** play online multiplayer video games

Older Children
Parents who have any children between the ages of <u>11 and 15</u> years old in their household

45% claim their child does **not** play online multiplayer video games
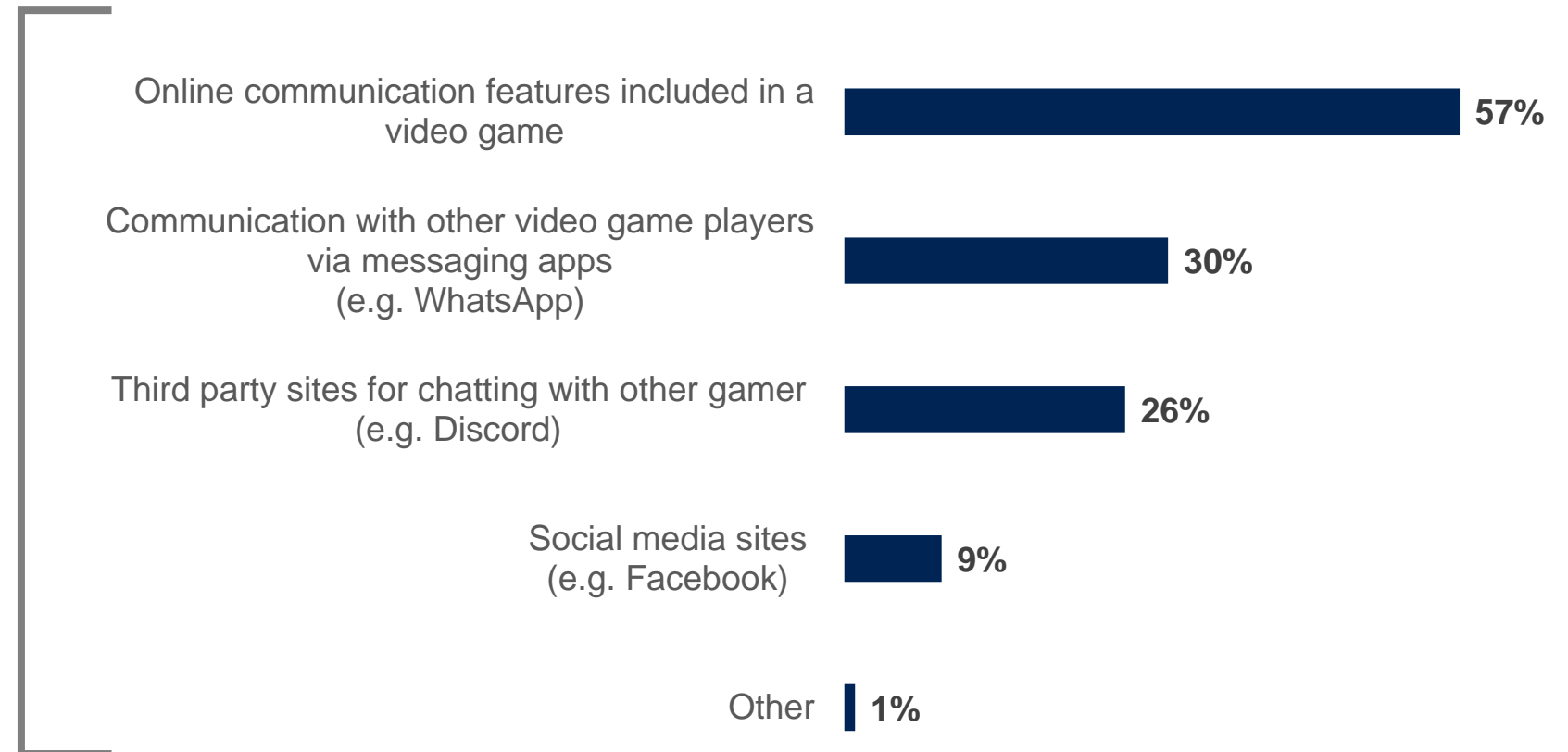
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In-game communication features are used most, according to parents of children who play online multiplayer video games.

BASE: Parents with a child who plays online multiplayer video games

85%

Of parents claim their children use at least one form of communication feature when playing online multiplayer video games

Online communication features included in a video game — **57%**

Communication with other video game players via messaging apps (e.g. WhatsApp) — **30%**

Third party sites for chatting with other gamer (e.g. Discord) — **26%**

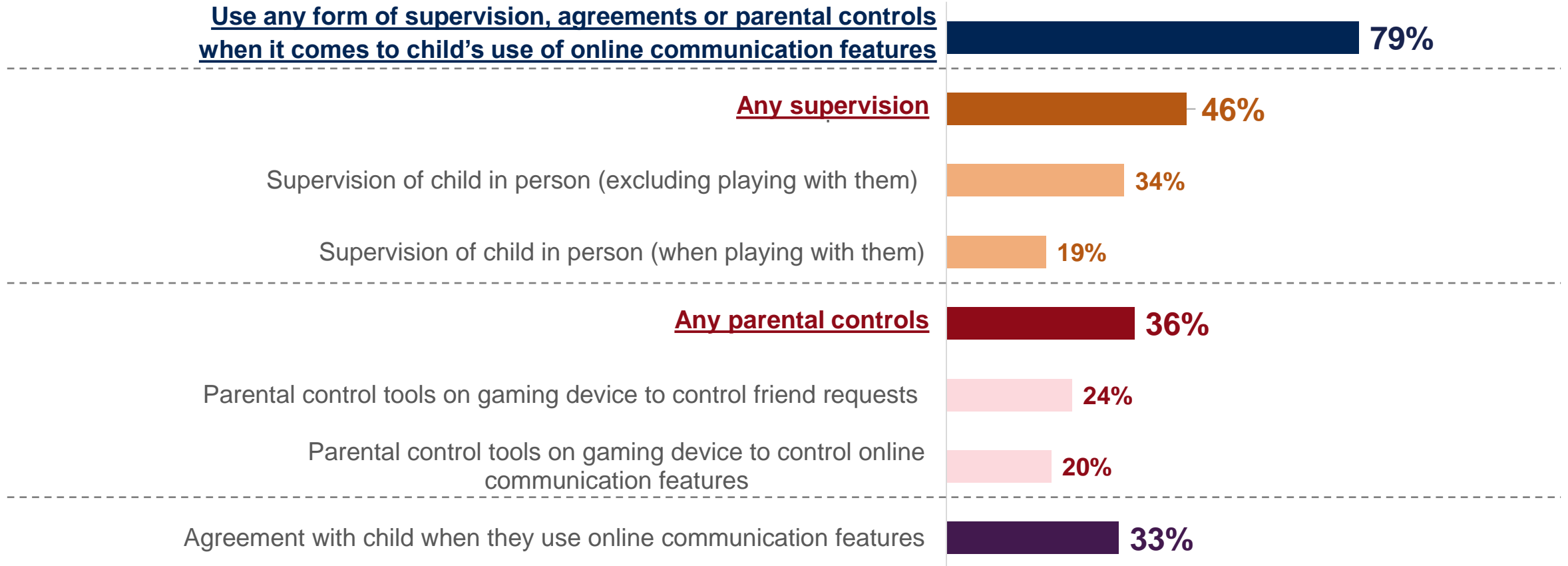Social media sites (e.g. Facebook) — **9%**

Other — **1%**

SAFE3. When playing online video games, does your child use any of the following?
BASE: Total parents with a child who plays online multiplayer video games (908)

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4 in 5 parents of children who use online communication features supervise during play, make agreements with their children or use parental controls.

BASE: Parents with a child who plays online multiplayer video games and uses online communication features

Use any form of supervision, agreements or parental controls when it comes to child's use of online communication features — **79%**

Any supervision — **46%**

Supervision of child in person (excluding playing with them) — **34%**

Supervision of child in person (when playing with them) — **19%**

Any parental controls — **36%**

Parental control tools on gaming device to control friend requests — **24%**

Parental control tools on gaming device to control online communication features — **20%**

Agreement with child when they use online communication features — **33%**

SAFE8.1. When your child has experienced content that has made them feel uncomfortable which, if any, of the following have you done?
BASE: Total parents of children who play online multiplayer video games and use online communication features (781)

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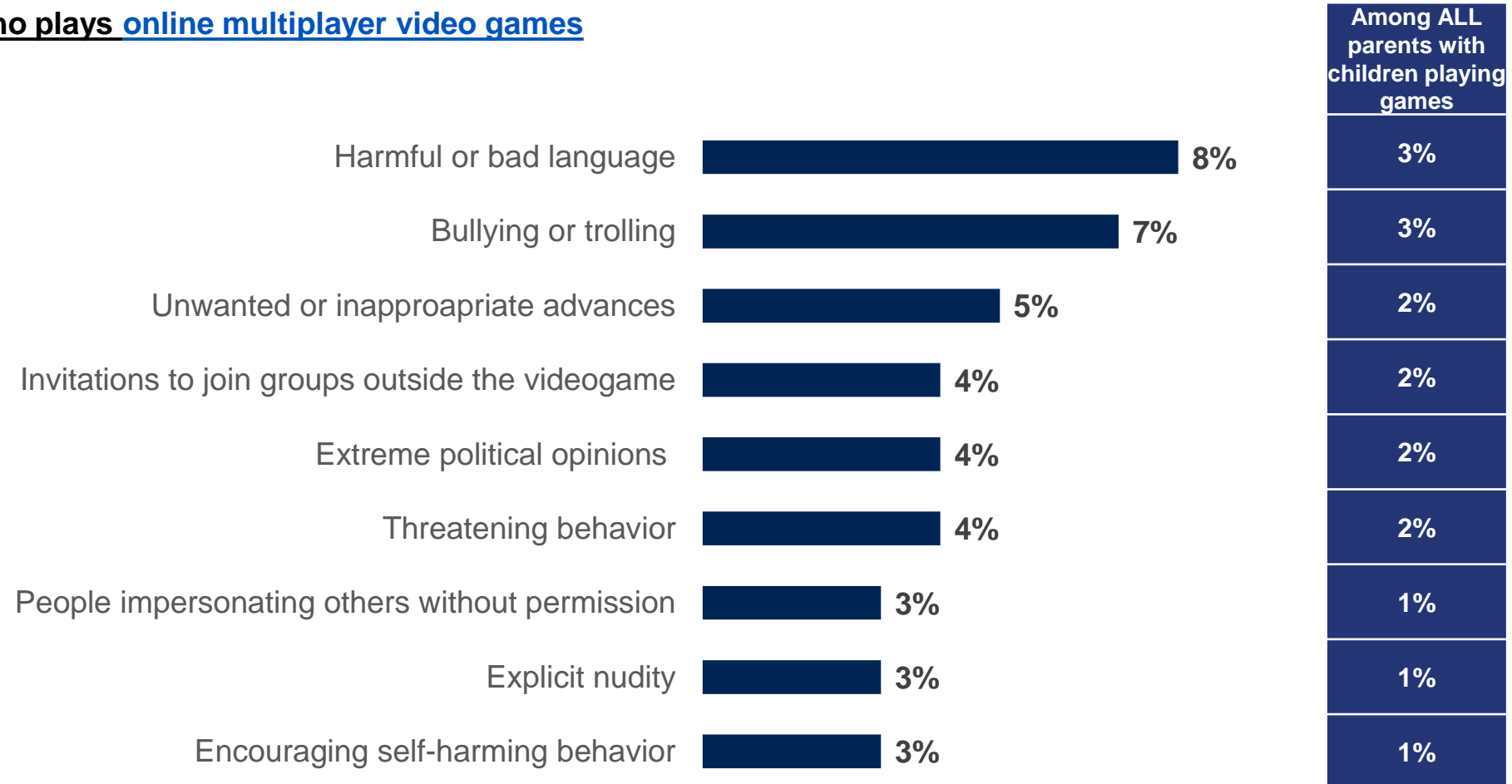# Potentially harmful content

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Prevalence of potentially harmful behaviour in video games is low according to parents with a child who plays online multiplayer video games.

BASE: Parents with a child who plays <u>online multiplayer video games</u>

75%

Of parents with children who play online multiplayer games <u>did not</u> report their child experiencing any of the listed specific behaviours that made them upset or uncomfortable
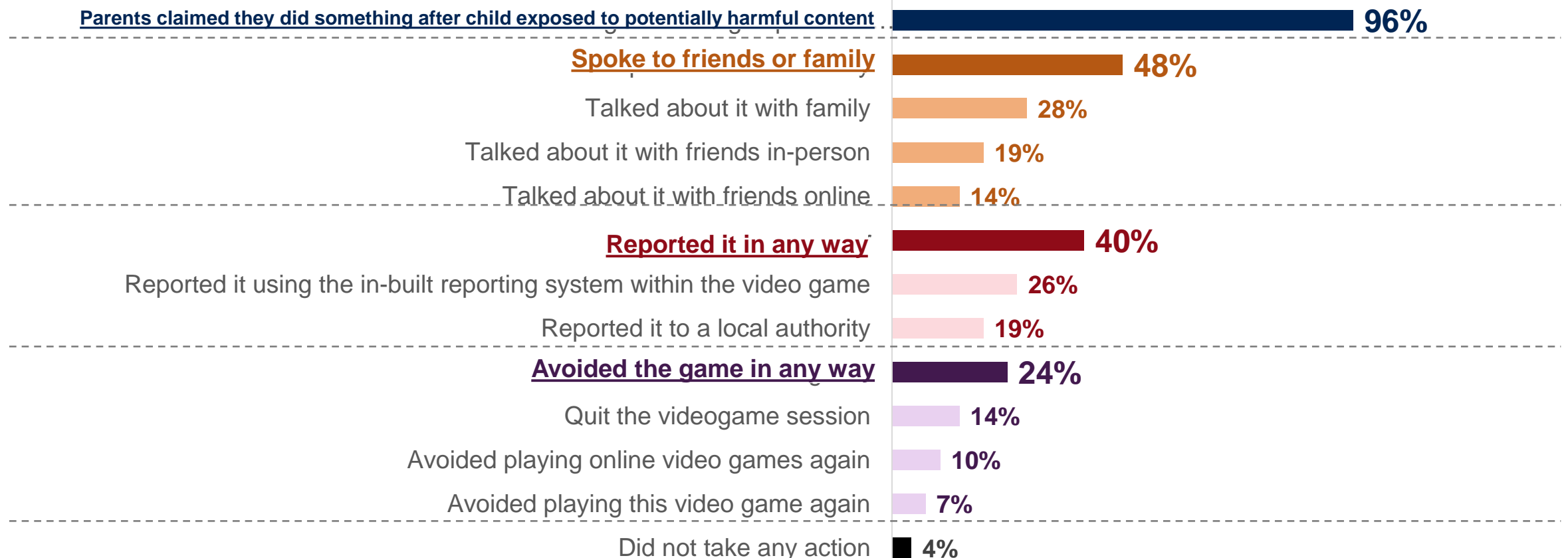
	Among ALL parents with children playing games
Harmful or bad language — 8%	3%
Bullying or trolling — 7%	3%
Unwanted or inapproapriate advances — 5%	2%
Invitations to join groups outside the videogame — 4%	2%
Extreme political opinions — 4%	2%
Threatening behavior — 4%	2%
People impersonating others without permission — 3%	1%
Explicit nudity — 3%	1%
Encouraging self-harming behavior — 3%	1%

SAFE7.2. Which, if any, of the following did your child experience that made them feel upset or uncomfortable?
BASE: Total parents with child in household who plays online multiplayer video games and have experienced something that has made them feel uncomfortable (252),

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96% of parents claimed some form of action was taken after their child was exposed to potentially harmful content.

BASE: Parents with a child who claimed child had been exposed to potentially harmful content playing online multiplayer video games

Parents claimed they did something after child exposed to potentially harmful content — **96%**

Spoke to friends or family — **48%**
Talked about it with family — **28%**
Talked about it with friends in-person — **19%**
Talked about it with friends online — **14%**

Reported it in any way — **40%**
Reported it using the in-built reporting system within the video game — **26%**
Reported it to a local authority — **19%**

Avoided the game in any way — **24%**
Quit the videogame session — **14%**
Avoided playing online video games again — **10%**
Avoided playing this video game again — **7%**
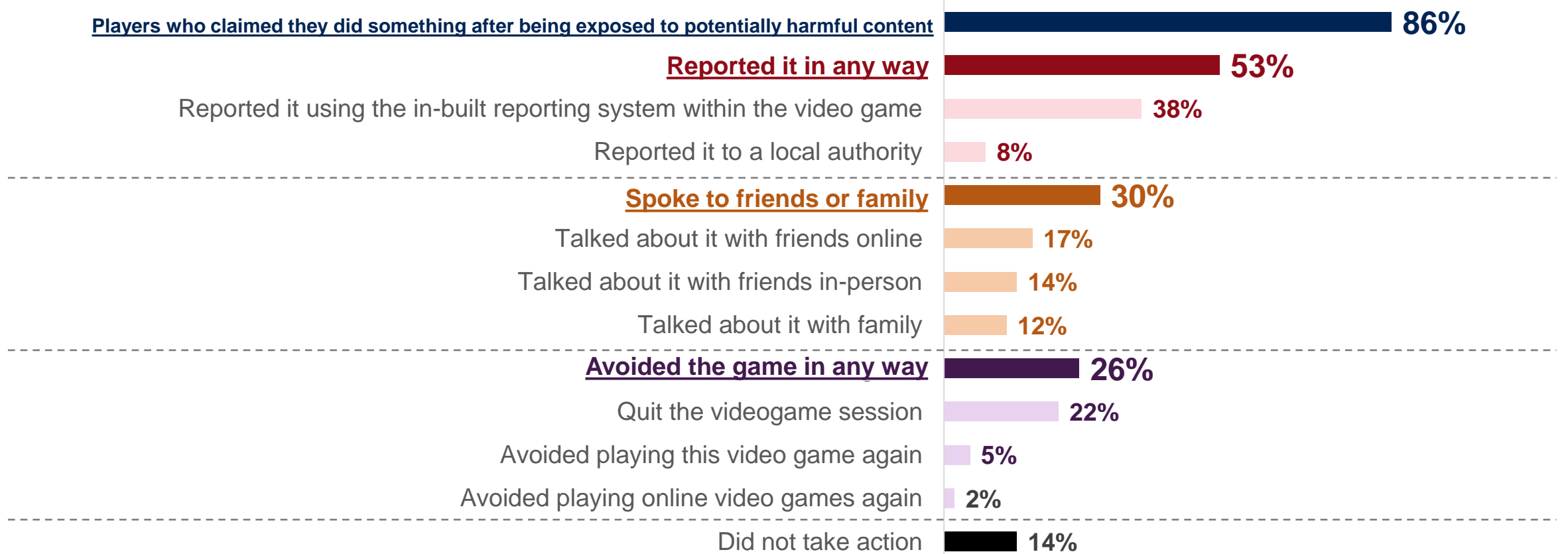
Did not take any action — **4%**

SAFE8.1. When your child has experienced content that has made them feel uncomfortable which, if any, of the following have you done?
BASE: Total parents with child in household who plays online multiplayer video games and has experienced something specific when playing online video games that made them feel uncomfortable (236)

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Players (11-64 year olds) more actively report inappropriate content, with higher use of in-built reporting tools compared to parents.

BASE: Players who claimed child had been exposed to potentially harmful content when playing online multiplayer games
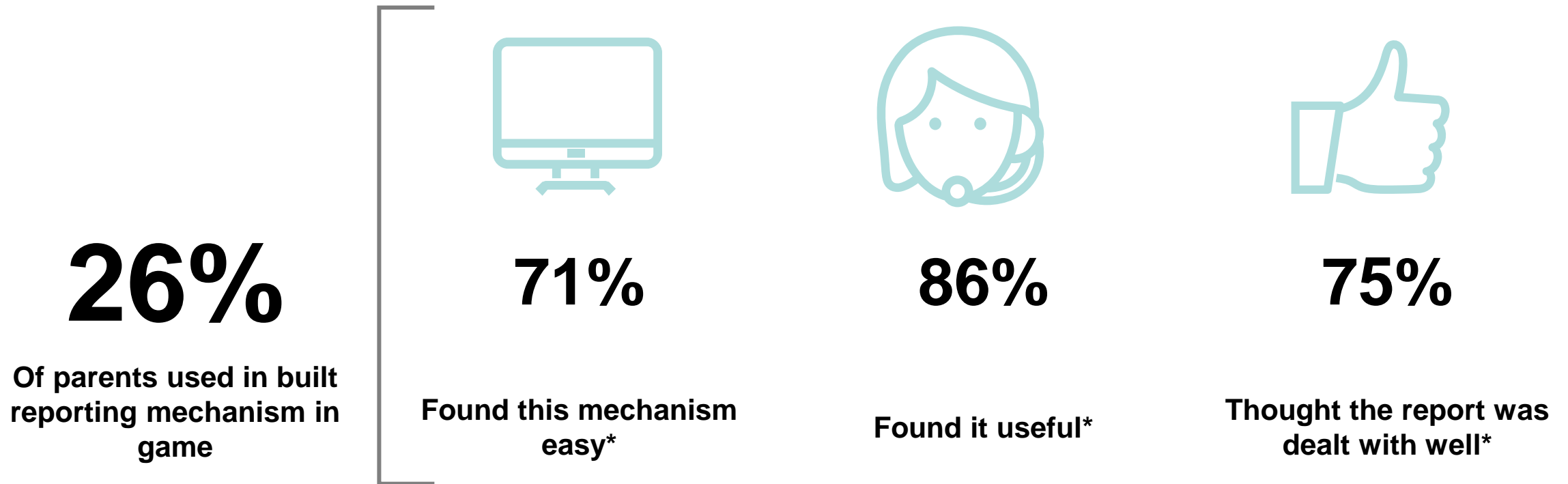

Players who claimed they did something after being exposed to potentially harmful content — **86%**

Reported it in any way — **53%**

Reported it using the in-built reporting system within the video game — **38%**

Reported it to a local authority — **8%**

Spoke to friends or family — **30%**

Talked about it with friends online — **17%**

Talked about it with friends in-person — **14%**

Talked about it with family — **12%**

Avoided the game in any way — **26%**

Quit the videogame session — **22%**

Avoided playing this video game again — **5%**

Avoided playing online video games again — **2%**

Did not take action — **14%**

SAFE8.1. When you have experienced content that has made them feel uncomfortable which, if any, of the following have you done?
BASE: Total (683)

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In-built reporting mechanisms are regarded favourably by parents as simple to use, useful, and yielding positive results.

BASE: Parents who reported using in built reporting mechanism in game

26%

Of parents used in built reporting mechanism in game

71%

Found this mechanism easy*

86%

Found it useful*

75%

Thought the report was dealt with well*

Note: base is n=62 and therefore results are indication of performance of in built reporting mechanisms in video games

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TECHNICAL APPENDIX

AREA	DETAILS
Commissioning Client	Interactive Software Federation of Europe (ISFE) https://www.isfe.eu/
Audience Surveyed	Parents of children who play online multiplayer video games within a nationally representative sample. Players of online multiplayer video games aged 11-64 years olds were also surveyed
Sampling Methodology	GameTrack uses quota sampling with quotas set on age, gender and region
Sample Size	Full details of sample size per market and per audience are provided on Page 2
Fieldwork Dates	2nd November 2020 to 15th January 2021
Method of data collection	Online survey
Weighting	Weighting was applied across the market surveyed to make each equal in size

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Ipsos MORI's Standards & Accreditations

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ISO 20252 – is the international market research specific standard that supersedes BS 7911 / MRQSA & incorporates IQCS (Interviewer Quality Control Scheme); it covers the 5 stages of a Market Research project. Ipsos MORI was the first company in the world to gain this accreditation.

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This work was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the international quality standard for market research, ISO 20252 and with the Ipsos MORI Terms and Conditions

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So that our clients can act faster, smarter and bolder.

Ultimately, success comes down to a simple truth:

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