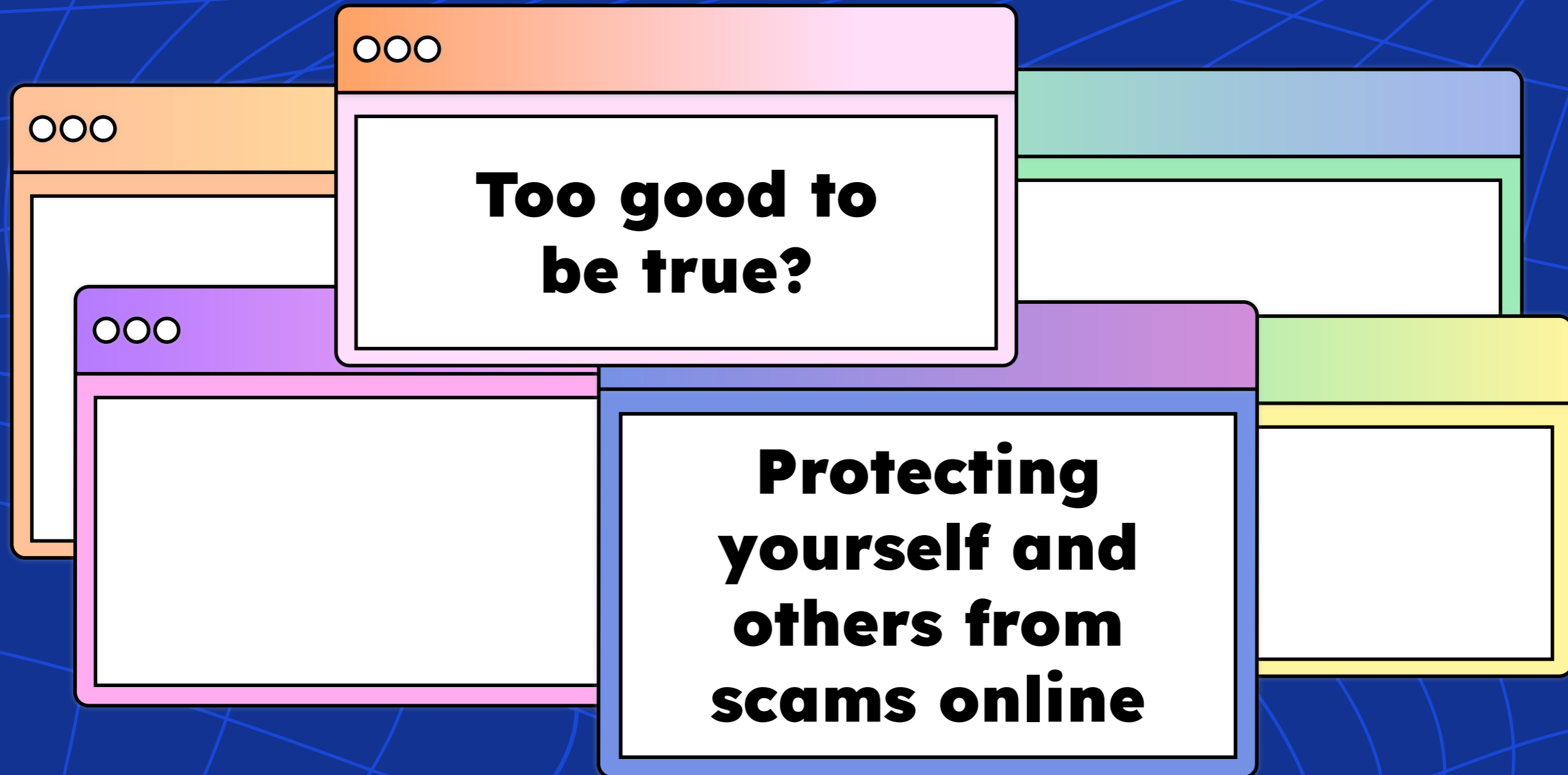


**A summary report by the  
UK Safer Internet Centre for Safer Internet Day 2025.**



**Too good to  
be true?**

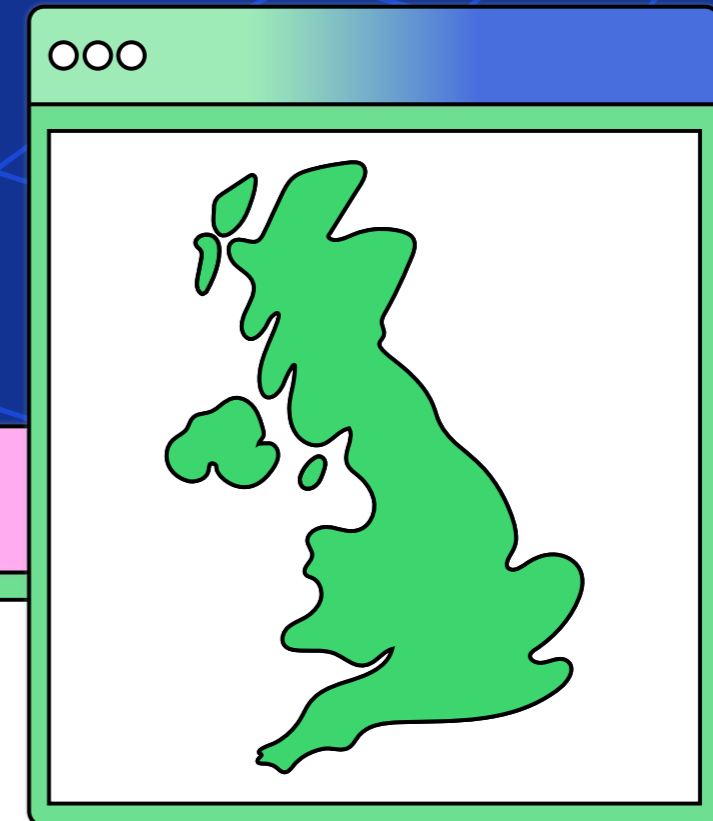
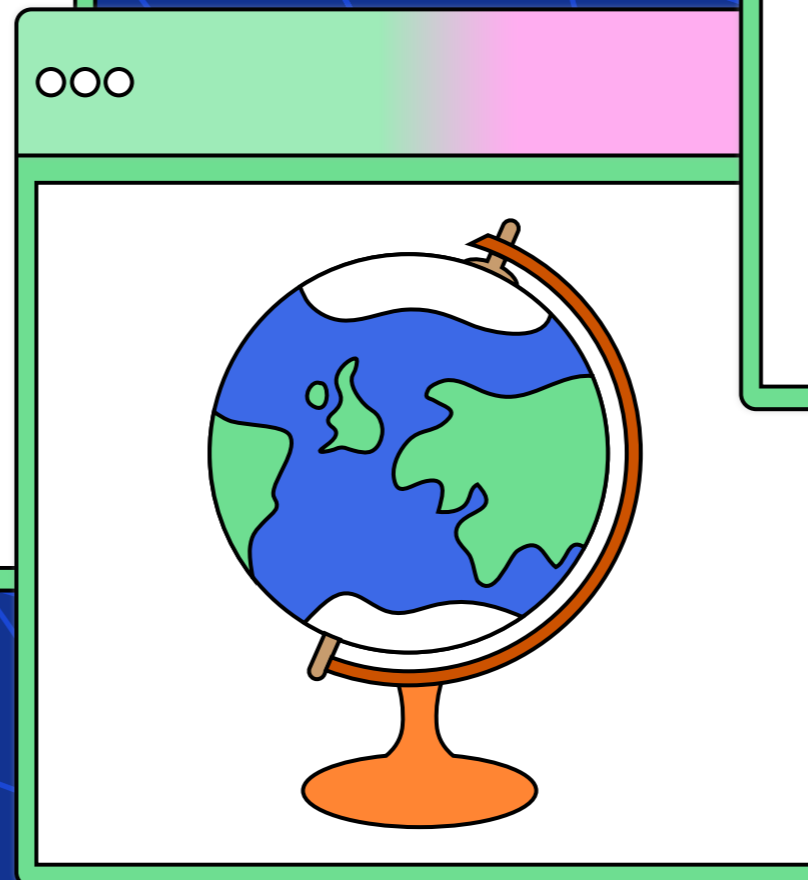
**Protecting  
yourself and  
others from  
scams online**

## ○○○ About

The UK Safer Internet Centre (UKSIC), established in 2011, is a leading global partnership helping to make the internet a great and safe place for everyone. We provide support and services to children and young people, adults facing online harms, and professionals working with children.

We are unique. Formed of three charities, **Childnet**, **Internet Watch Foundation** and **SWGfL**, we work together to identify threats and harms online and then create and deliver critical advice, resources, education and interventions that help keep children and young people, and adults, safe. We share our best practices across the UK and globally.

The UK Safer Internet Centre coordinates Safer Internet Day each year, reaching millions of young people, parents, carers and educators across the UK, giving them the vital information and support they need to keep young people safe online.



## Young people are taking steps to stay safe from scams online, but they want more support.

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“ Exposure to scams is now a regular part of life online for young people, with most, including children as young as 8, encountering them on a monthly and many on a weekly, even daily, basis. Too many are becoming victims of scams online, with our research indicating this may have happened to almost half of 8 to 17-year-olds. There is a lot of good work happening to tackle scams online, and this is welcome, but it is not always inclusive of young people, their experiences and their needs. Our research shows that young people and parents and carers alike feel there are more scams online than ever before and are worried about the future. As scammers make increasing use of new technologies, such as gen AI, we must make sure we are doing everything we can to protect young people too.

For young people, the repercussions of becoming the victim of a scam online can be serious; almost 1 in 10 has lost money to an online scam and many are left feeling angry, upset, worried or even blaming themselves for what has happened. We must break down the culture of victim blaming that can sometimes surround online scams, so that all young people who are affected feel confident to seek help.

Our research shows that parents and carers are playing a key role as the most important source of education for young people about protecting themselves from online scams, and the first port of call if a young person is worried about a potential scam. However, our research also highlighted how online scams present something of a shared problem to both young people and their parents and carers, with over a third of parents and carers having been the victim of a scam themselves. In this context, young people are helping their parents and carers too, with **40%** of parents

“Things have started to look a lot more believable and real and it’s easier for people to fall into these scams.”

Girl, aged 14

and carers saying their child has taught them how to spot online scams. This intergenerational exchange and support is vital. We hope the awareness and resources provided this Safer Internet Day can encourage and support productive discussions in homes and schools across the country, and signpost effectively to further help if young people or the adults around them are worried about a potential scam online.

In the challenging context of increasingly sophisticated technology and scam techniques, young people are already using strategies to detect scams, taking action to stay safe, and helping others, including parents and friends, identify scams online. Young people are significantly affected by the issue and we need to ensure that they are not forgotten in conversations about online scams. Our research clearly demonstrates how young people are asking all stakeholders, including social media and other online platforms, and the government, to do more to keep them safe from scams. It is vital that, this Safer Internet Day and going forward, we listen to young people and work alongside them to ensure they can make the most of their time online. ”

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**Will Gardner OBE**

Director of the UK Safer Internet Centre

○○○ **Online scams and young people:**  
The scale of the challenge

**79%** of young people are coming across scams online at least once a month, almost half (**45%**) are coming across scams online at least once a week, and 1 in 5 (**20%**) seeing them once a day or more. Social media is the place where young people, including those under 13, most often encounter scams online, with over a third (**35%**) saying this is the case.

Too many young people are becoming victims of online scams. Over a quarter (**27%**) of parents and carers say their own child has been the victim of an online scam, and our research with young people themselves suggests that almost half (**46%**) of 8 to 17-year-olds have been a victim of some kind of scam online, primarily fake giveaways (**19%**), followed closely by online shopping scams, including fake ticket sales (**15%**), trust trade scams (**13%**), and phishing scams (**11%**), amongst others.

Young people who have been the victim of a scam online say they were left feeling angry or annoyed (**47%**), upset or sad (**39%**), or worried or stressed (**31%**).

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At least  
**46%**  
of 8 to 17-year-olds say they have been the victim of some kind of scam online.<sup>1</sup>

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**9%**  
of 8 to 17-year-olds have lost money to an online scam before.

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**26%**  
of young people, aged 8 to 17, who have been the victim of a scam online, say they blamed themselves.

○○○  
**79%**  
of 8 to 17-year-olds who are coming across scams online see them at least once a month,  
**45%**  
once a week, and  
**20%**  
once a day.

“They may not be reporting it in person or to police because of the embarrassment that they feel and because they fear the consequences, such as getting their devices taken away, or being treated differently.”  
Girl, aged 17

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Over a quarter (**26%**) say they blamed themselves, highlighting how we must do more to tackle the victim blaming, which can sometimes surround online scams, causing further emotional stress and preventing some young people from seeking help.  
Worryingly, **5%** of young people say they have been the victim of online financial sextortion. This behaviour is exploitation and child abuse, and must be understood and tackled as such. However, questions on it were included in our survey, as it often starts with a deception or trick, i.e. a type of scam, before turning into exploitation, coercion and blackmail. We must urgently consider what more can be done to prevent young people from becoming victims of this crime and the online deception that can precede it.

<sup>1</sup> When asked “which types of scam, if any, have you personally been the victim of?”, 54% of 8 to 17-year-olds surveyed selected “none”. 46% selected at least once type of online scam.

**“Me and a friend...were playing an online game and another player offered to give an expensive item for free, but they would need the password to the account first. I told my friend that it was a scam.”**

Girl, aged 16

○○○ **Young people taking action:**  
Seeing the signs, staying protected

Young people are alert to a variety of signs to help them spot if something online is likely to be a scam. For example, the vast majority would be suspicious: if they came across something that seems too good to be true **(87%)**; of too much pressure to act or do something quickly **(86%)**; of a company email address that seems fake **(86%)**; if they had a gut feeling that something seems suspicious **(84%)**; of unexpected contact from someone they don't know or wouldn't expect to hear from **(83%)**.

Whilst most are alert to the signs, only about one third **(32%)** of young people feel confident they can recognise a scam online and many think things are getting worse. Almost half of young people **(47%)** feel there are more scams online than ever before and about one third worry that the use of new technology, such as generative artificial intelligence (gen AI), will make online scams much harder to identify. It is especially concerning that, in this context, **5%** of young people say they have never learned anything about protecting themselves from online scams.

If young people think they see a scam online, they are most likely to: block the person or profile posting or sharing the content **(87%)**; delete the content **(84%)**; check it with a parent or carer **(79%)**; warn other people **(78%)**; or check it with a friend **(70%)**. Almost half **(46%)** of young people, especially those aged 8 to 10<sup>2</sup>, would check what they had seen with a teacher or educator, highlighting the important role of online safety education. If they are worried they are being scammed online, young people are significantly more likely to talk to a parent or carer **(72%)** than anyone else.

There are some barriers to seeking help, however. Around half **(47%)** of 8 to 17-year-olds think that embarrassment is what most often prevents young people from seeking help if they have been the victim of a scam, and around 2 in 5 **(41%)** think that young people don't seek help because they think it is their fault and they will be blamed.

**The top three actions young people, aged 8 to 17, would take if they thought they saw a scam online:**



<sup>2</sup> 8 to 10-year-olds are most likely to check with a teacher or educator (57%), followed by 11 to 15-year-olds (46%), followed lastly by 16 and 17-year-olds (34%).

○○○ **Young people and parents and carers: facing the challenge together**

Both parents and carers and young people feel personally exposed to scams online. They are facing the challenge together and learning from each other. **77%** of parents and carers have talked with their child about how they can spot and keep themselves safe from scams online and half (**50%**) say their child has come to them for help because they thought they were being scammed online. Young people are supporting their parents and carers too. Almost half (**45%**) of parents and carers say they would likely reach out to their child for their opinion if they weren't sure about something being a scam online or not.

Many parents and carers feel equipped to take action to protect their children. **61%**, for example, know where to report online scams and **60%** where to go for help or advice if their child has been the victim of an online scam, or what seems like an online scam. Parents and carers are also more likely to have reported an online scam than their children, with over half (**56%**) having done this, compared to **40%** of young people.

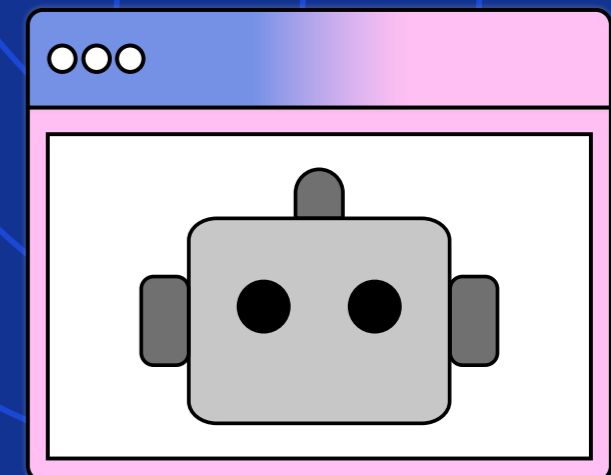
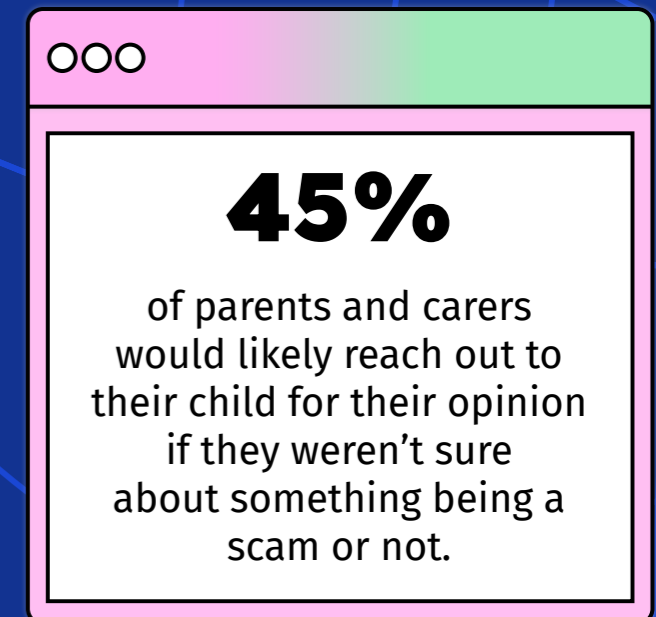
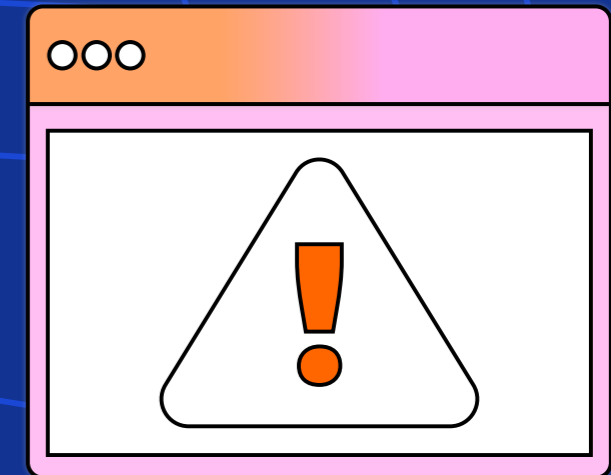
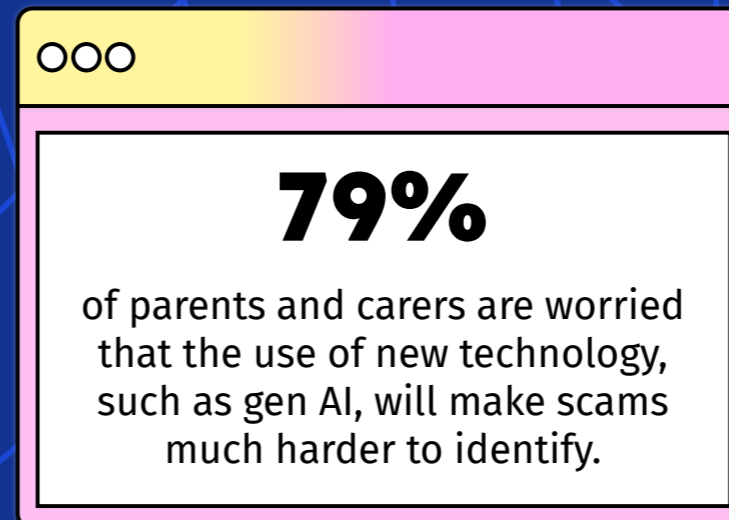
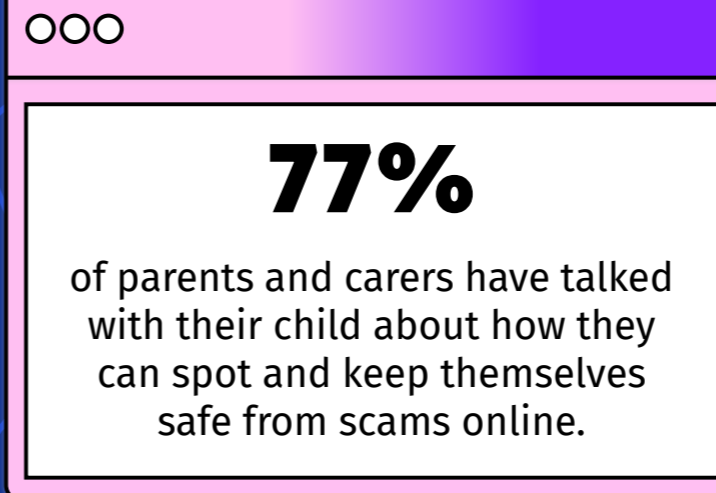
Our research demonstrates clearly how education, advice and support flows in both directions between parents and carers and their children. We must provide resources that support these valuable conversations at home, as well as effectively signpost families to further help when they need it. This is especially urgent given the level of concern of parents and carers about the future. **83%** feel there are more online scams than ever before and **79%** are worried that the use of new technology, such as gen AI, will make scams much harder to identify.

**“Our parents remind me and my sister to never purchase anything or click on links that aren't safe.”**

Boy, aged 15

**“A scammer texted my dad pretending to be from Amazon and saying that there was an issue with the order and asked him to click on a suspicious link. I told my dad that this wasn't a real Amazon text and told him to report the number and delete the chat.”**

Girl, aged 16



**“More education to students about the latest scam techniques and developments...could empower them to speak about their experiences and talk to trusted parents and other adults.”**

Girl, aged 15

### Young people are standing up to scams and seeking change

Young people are taking responsibility to protect themselves and others from scams online. **62%** believe they have a responsibility to educate their friends and family about scams online and many are already doing this. Almost half (**49%**) have helped their friends identify if something is a scam online and over 2 in 5 (**44%**) have helped their parents or carers do this. Almost three quarters of young people of all ages (**74%**) want to learn more about how to spot scams online, and **73%** want specifically to learn more about this at school, once again highlighting the vital role of online safety education.

While young people are ready to do more, they also want to see more action from others to keep young people safe from scams online. **85%** of young people think that social media and other online platforms need to do more to tackle scams and **81%** believe the government should get more involved in tackling the scams that young people face online.

Our research reveals how young people of all ages, from young children to older teens, are encountering and becoming victims of a wide variety of scams across a range of social media, messaging apps, online games, and other online platforms. We hope this Safer Internet Day can be a catalyst for important discussions about the full breadth of measures we can take, including: continuing to improve and adequately resource online safety education; providing parents and carers with the information

and resources they need to support their children; increasing awareness of reporting routes and their impact; and building better protections into online platforms to help young people avoid scams. Young people have told us they want more support to protect themselves from scams online. As the techniques and technologies used by scammers to target young people online become increasingly sophisticated, we must respond to their calls for action, doing all we can to keep pace with these changes, and to keep young people safe.

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**74%**

of 8 to 17-year-olds want to learn more about how to spot scams online.

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**81%**

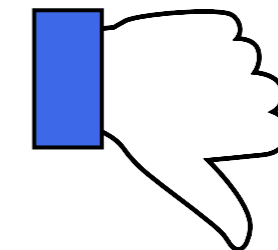
of 8 to 17-year-olds think that the government needs to get more involved in tackling scams online facing young people.

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**85%**

of 8 to 17-year-olds think that social media and other online platforms need to do more to tackle scams online.

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### ○○○ About this research

The quantitative survey was conducted online by Censuswide in September-October 2024, with a representative sample of 2,013 children, aged 8-17 years, and the same number of their parents (aged 21+) (4,026 in total). Childnet also consulted its Digital Leaders, Digital Champions and its Youth Advisory Board, aged 8-17, in December 2024.

[Read the full report here.](#)

**With thanks to:**



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