ADOLESCENTS' SOCIAL MEDIA USE

HBSC England 2022 data: Snapshot series
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WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

While social media can be beneficial for adolescents, the **rise in problematic social media use** (PSMU) may have significant long-term effects on adolescent well-being.

Our findings underscore the **need for extensive digital literacy education** and support services that foster **healthy online behaviours**.

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY & PRACTICE

- Evidence of increasing PSMU signals an urgent need for **strengthening measures on access and regulation** for young people
- The development of specific policies and programmes promoting a **healthy lifestyle in the digital age** is crucial
- Adolescents need to learn how to **balance their online activities** with offline goals
- **Educational programmes** need to be implemented throughout childhood to **support the healthy development of online behaviours**
- Parents, policymakers, and teachers need to be aware of the **difference between intensive vs. problematic use** of social media to identify *at-risk* adolescents
- **Enforceable regulation of the industry and responsible design** should be prioritised to counter PSMU arising from intensive reward mechanisms

YOUNG PEOPLE'S THOUGHTS ON THE HBSC SOCIAL MEDIA KEY FINDINGS:

> *I don't consume social media that mindfully – I find myself doing it **when I feel low**.* Anon.

> *It is usually only talked about in a negative light and I think there **should be a bigger focus on the distinction between problematic and other specific negative uses** of electronic media and the positive uses.* Max, 14

> *I think people have got used to people on social media as being **replacements for friends**.* Claudia, 14

KEY MESSAGES

*Between **2018 and 2022** –*

↑ reports of intense or 'almost all the time throughout the day' electronic media communication (EMC) increased, **most notably among 11 year old boys** (18% to 25%)

***Nearly a quarter** (23%) of young people –*

→ reported a 'problematic' relationship with social media where they **neglected other activities, had arguments with others or serious conflict with family** (almost double the figure in 2018)

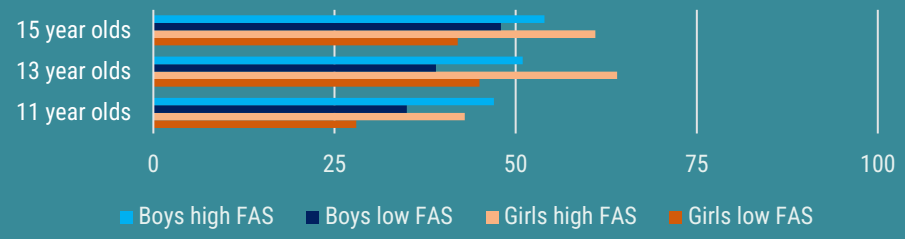
***13 year old girls** from the most affluent families –*

→ reported the **greatest proportion of intense EMC**, while 13 year old girls from the least affluent families reported the **greatest proportion of arguments and serious conflict at home** stemming from their EMC use

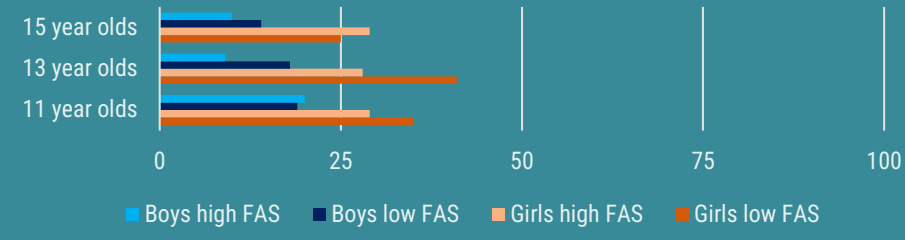
*11 year old girls **from England** –*

→ reported the highest levels of **problematic social media use** among 11 year olds across 44 HBSC member countries in the international comparison

YOUNG PEOPLE WHO **COMMUNICATE INTENSELY ONLINE** BY FAMILY AFFLUENCE (FAS)



YOUNG PEOPLE INDICATING **PROBLEMATIC USE (PSMU)** BY FAMILY AFFLUENCE (FAS)



***3 in 10 girls** (31%) indicated having a problematic relationship with social media*

- 23% of participants were identified as having a problematic relationship with social media
- Girls exhibited a much higher likelihood of problematic social media use compared to boys (14%)