



**THE CYBERSMILE FOUNDATION**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

# **Cybersmile and ITV Join Forces to Tackle Trolling Through Behaviour Change Campaign**

**LONDON, UK, April 6, 2023** - Cybersmile and ITV have launched a new behaviour change campaign titled “Would you say it?” which aims to reduce incidents of trolling and raise awareness of the potential impact that our words can have when interacting online.

New research commissioned by ITV and conducted by YouGov shows that almost one third of UK adults aged 16+ have received some form of negative comments online with 16-34s around four times more likely to say that they have been trolled by someone they didn’t know online compared to those aged over 55.\*

Highlighting the contrast between on and offline behaviours, the research showed that 93% of adults aged 16+ agree that people say things online that they would never say in real life. Posting negative comments online has become so normalised that over half (51%) of adults aged 16+ say that if people “don’t want to receive negative comments, they shouldn’t post on social media.”\*

The campaign aims to target people who make hurtful comments online but pass them off as ‘banter.’ This group of ‘casual critics’ are responsible for a majority of trolling-type behaviour and are often unaware of the impact that their words or comments can have.

A series of three advertisements will show unsuspecting social media users coming face-to-face with the real people at the receiving end of their hurtful comments. No longer able to hide behind the screen, the powerful adverts invite the viewer to think twice about what they post through the end line - “If you wouldn’t say it, don’t send it”.

\*YouGov, Jan 2023, nat rep sample of 1,001 adults aged 16+

Scott Freeman, CEO of The Cybersmile Foundation said: “We are proud to partner with ITV on such an important campaign. Unfortunately too many people are unaware of the potential impact that our words can have on those that we interact with online. We want this campaign to remind people that comments and words shared online carry great power and that we need to consider our use of them in the same way that we are mindful of what we say offline.”

Susie Braun, Director of Social Purpose at ITV said: “So much of our lives are now spent online so it’s important to think about our mental wellbeing there too. Trolling dressed up as “banter” is having a real impact on lives beyond the screen, which is why ITV is proud to partner with Cybersmile to do our bit in making a difference.”

### **Research summary**

Date: January 2023

Sample: 1,001 adults aged 16+

Conducted by: YouGov

- Almost one third of UK adults aged 16+ have received some form of negative comments online.
- 16-34s are around four times more likely to say that they have been trolled (harassed or treated negatively) by someone they didn’t know online compared to those aged over 55.
- 93% of adults aged 16+ agree that people say things online that they would never say in real life.
- Over half (51%) of adults aged 16+ say that if people “don’t want to receive negative comments, they shouldn’t post on social media.”

### **ABOUT ITV’S SOCIAL PURPOSE**

This campaign is part of ITV’s Social Purpose, which since 2019 has focused on mental wellbeing, through campaigns such as Britain Get Talking supported by Mind, YoungMinds and SAMH, and ITV2’s #WhatHetsYouThrough in collaboration with CALM.

### **ABOUT THE CYBERSMILE FOUNDATION**

The Cybersmile Foundation is a multi-award-winning nonprofit organization committed to digital wellbeing and tackling all forms of bullying and abuse online. We work to promote kindness, diversity and inclusion by building a safer, more positive digital community. Through education, research, awareness campaigns and the promotion of positive digital citizenship we reduce incidents of cyberbullying and through our professional help and support services we empower those affected and their families to regain control of their lives.

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The Cybersmile Foundation is an international nonprofit organization registered as a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization in the U.S. and as a registered charity in the U.K. (No. 1147576)