WP 1 - Examine

Interview Report **WP1 [**Ireland] by [Future in Perspective**]**

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1   Introduction

The purpose of this report is to highlight the results of the focus group interview session conducted to gather primary research on the gaming and social media behaviours of young people with additional needs. The interviews were held at Drumlin House in Ballyjamesduff, Cavan, Ireland, from 10 am to 11 am, facilitated by a training professional from Future in Perspective.

2   Participants

The focus group comprised young men and women, aged between 18 and 30. A total of 10 participants attended the session. Although participants did not disclose specific details about their impairments, it is understood that the service exclusively supports individuals with intellectual disabilities. While participants did not specify their levels of ability for this project, the interviewer observed that they were generally capable of participating in the discussion, expressing their thoughts and opinions in a group setting. However, some participants were more susceptible to being influenced by others and required additional support, such as prompts or simpler questions, to engage effectively.
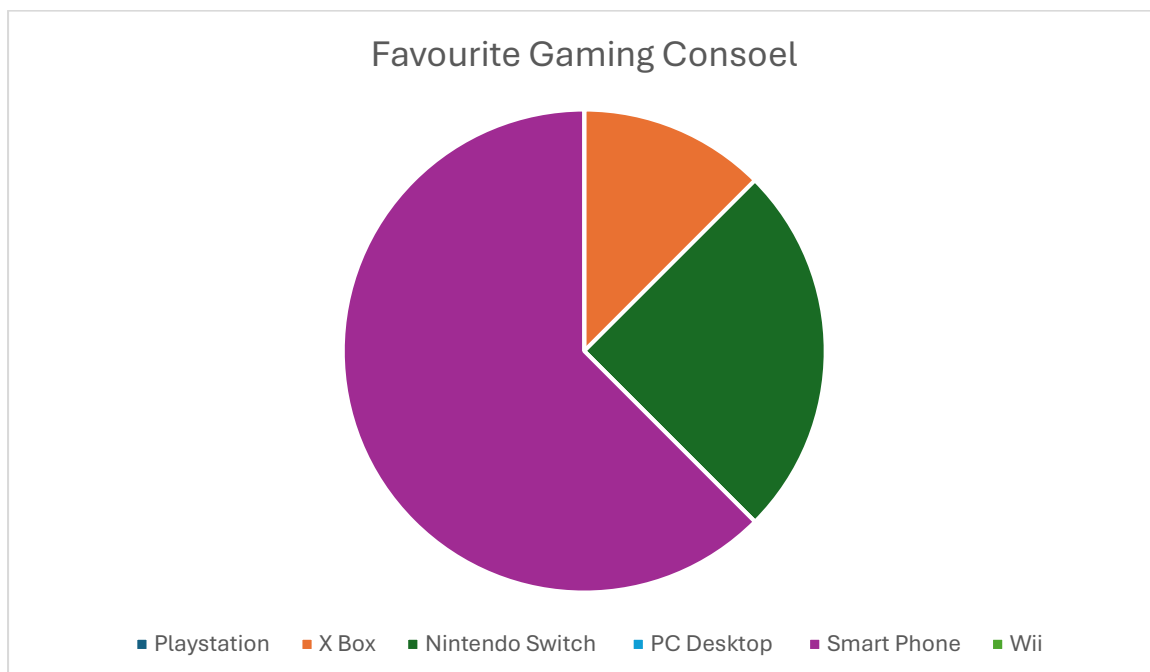
3   Event description

The interviews were conducted as a group activity based on a recommendation from the care team, who suggested that the individuals would respond best to a more engaging, visually stimulating, and fun group setting. The session lasted one hour and was structured into smaller, game-like segments where possible. To facilitate the interviews, the interviewer used visual aids, including images of various gaming consoles, durations like 30 minutes, 1 hour, and 2 hours, as well as visuals representing different times of the day (morning, afternoon, evening) and social media icons. These visuals were placed around the room in groups. The interviewer guided the participants around the room, asking questions from the prepared list and inviting them to stand by the image that best represented their response. This approach led to open-ended questions and animated discussions, allowing participants to share

their personal experiences, thoughts, and interests. The same game format was used for questions related to social media. While questions were asked according to the established guidelines, the interviewer also incorporated strategies such as raising hands for responses. Some questions were simplified or rephrased, especially when participants had difficulty understanding comparisons like "less" and "more."

4 Results

4.1 Online Games

Favourite Gaming Consoel

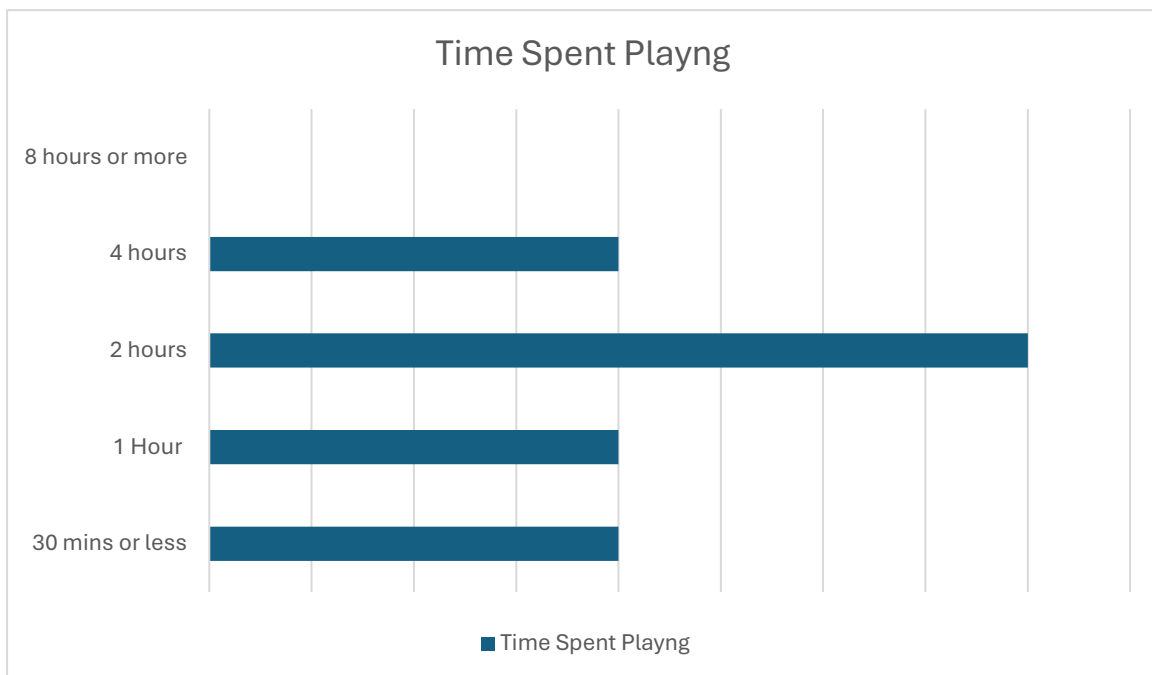■ Playstation ■ X Box ■ Nintendo Switch ■ PC Desktop ■ Smart Phone ■ Wii

The results revealed that most participants primarily used their smartphones for gaming, followed by the Nintendo Switch and then the Xbox. None of the participants reported using the Wii or a PC desktop for gaming.

When asked which games they most prefer to play, participants mentioned the following:

- Just Dance
- Mario Kart
- Animal Crossing
- Paint by Numbers

- Crosswords and Puzzles.

Time Spent Playng

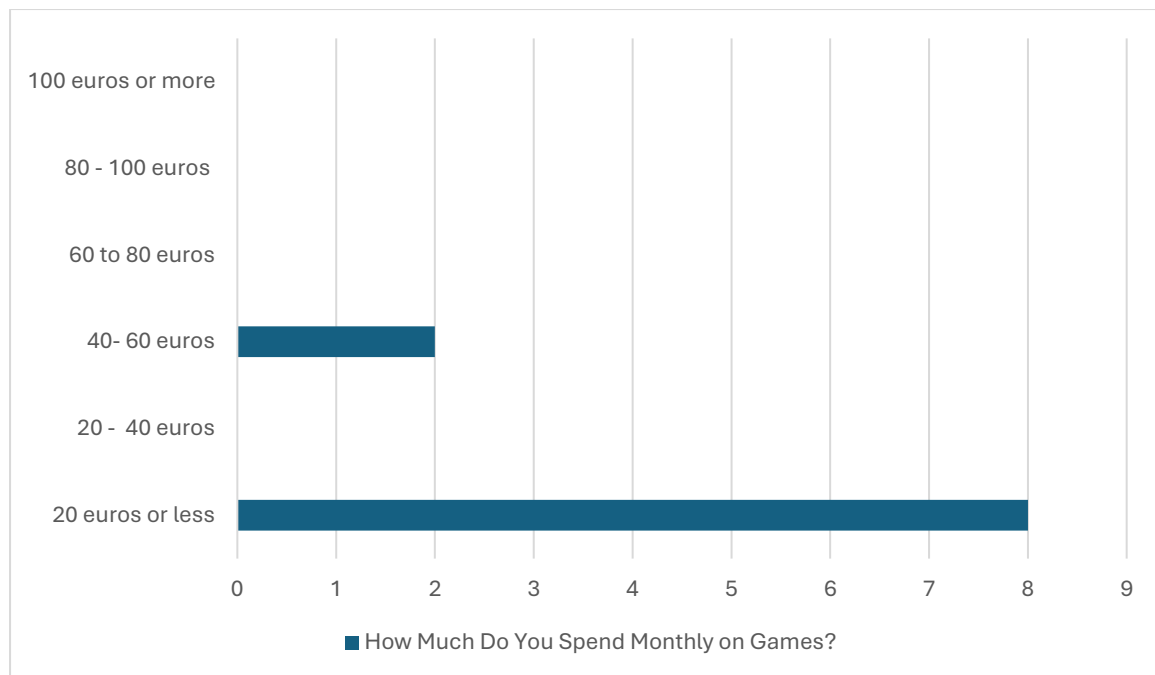|	
8 hours or more	
4 hours	
2 hours	
1 Hour	
30 mins or less	

■ Time Spent Playng

When asked how long they typically spend gaming each day, the majority of participants indicated they play for up to 2 hours. None of the participants reported gaming for more than 4 hours. They also noted that their gaming time often increases on weekends compared to weekdays.

When discussing why they enjoy playing these games, participants shared several reasons:

- They are visually appealing and colourful.
- They enjoy the sense of competition.
- They like advancing to new levels and facing new challenges.
- They appreciate the educational aspect, such as crosswords that help with spelling.
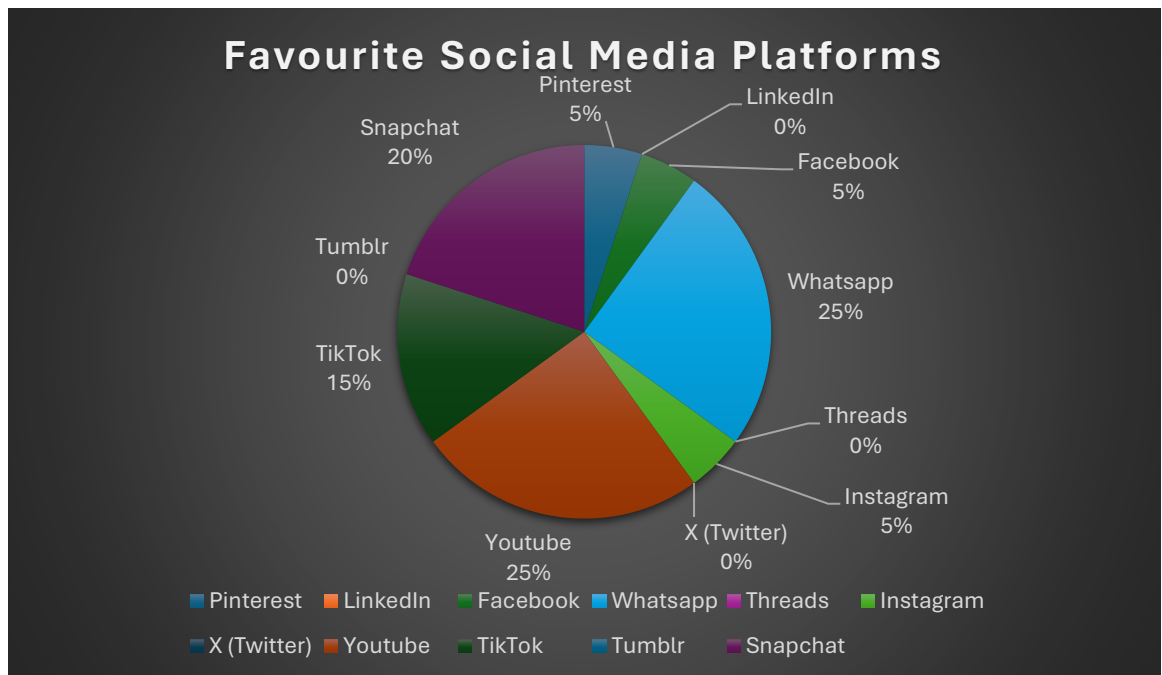
When asked about their preferred time of day for gaming, the care team clarified that participants attending Drumlin House during the week do not have access to their phones, except for contacting family members, which limits daytime use. However, participants mentioned that they primarily play games in the evening and at night, both on weekdays and weekends, as they are occupied with activities during the day. Only one participant mentioned using their phone for gaming throughout the day.

Financial and Further impact of Gaming

100 euros or more		
80 - 100 euros		
60 to 80 euros		
40- 60 euros	▇ 2	
20 - 40 euros		
20 euros or less	██████████ 8	

Axis: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

■ How Much Do You Spend Monthly on Games?

When asked about their spending on games, participants explained that they mostly use free games from app stores and do not pay for online gaming subscriptions for consoles like *Xbox*. They receive most of their games as gifts from family members for special occasions. Two participants mentioned that they would spend €50 for two games, as games are often priced at two for €50 in Ireland. None of the participants had ever purchased in-game extras. They also noted that gaming can be more social when they play two-player games like Mario Kart, with friends in person. However, since they do not play online with strangers, playing games alone can sometimes feel less social, and isolating.

4.2 Social media

Favourite Social Media Platforms

Pinterest 5%
LinkedIn 0%
Snapchat 20%
Facebook 5%
Tumblr 0%
Whatsapp 25%
TikTok 15%
Threads 0%
Instagram 5%
X (Twitter) 0%
Youtube 25%

Legend: Pinterest, LinkedIn, Facebook, Whatsapp, Threads, Instagram, X (Twitter), Youtube, TikTok, Tumblr, Snapchat

When participants were asked to vote for their preferred social media platforms, a few clear favourites emerged. No participants chose Tumblr, LinkedIn, Threads, or X (formerly known as Twitter). Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest each had one participant, Snapchat had two, and the rest of the group was split between WhatsApp and YouTube.

Time Spent Scrolling

8 Hours
4 Hours
2 Hours
1 Hour
30 mins or less

Time Spent Scrolling
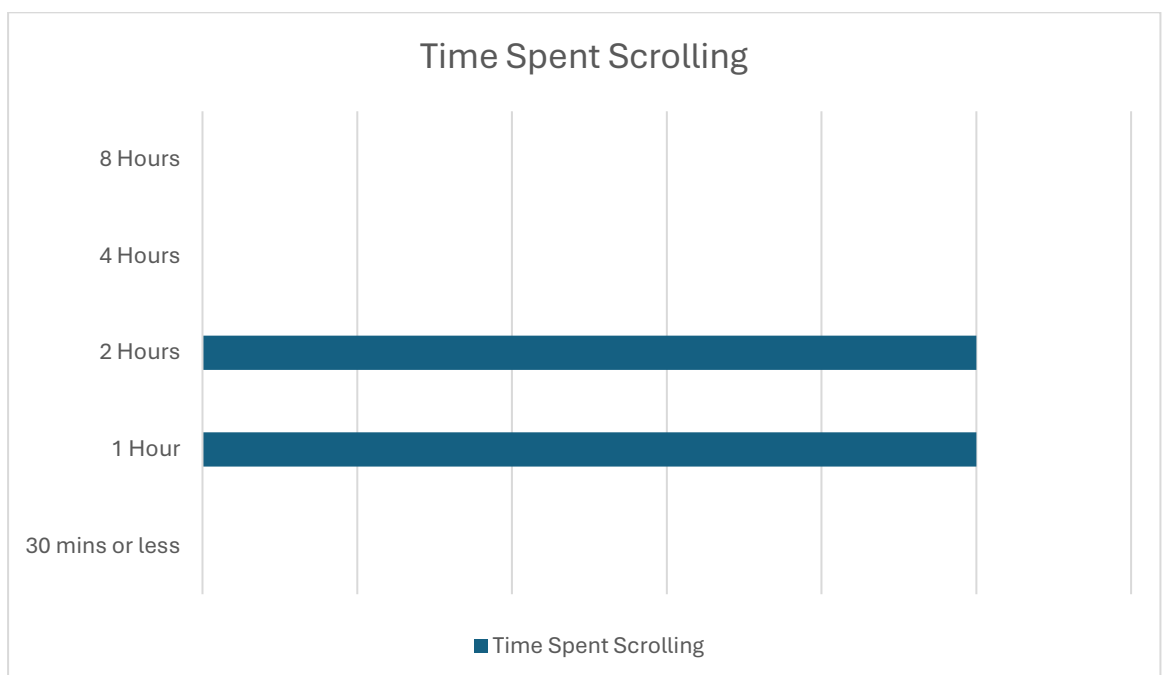
When asked how long they typically spend on social media each day, all participants reported using it for 1 to 2 hours. They noted that their usage could increase on weekends. The care team also reminded that participants do not have access to social media on their phones during the day while attending the facility.
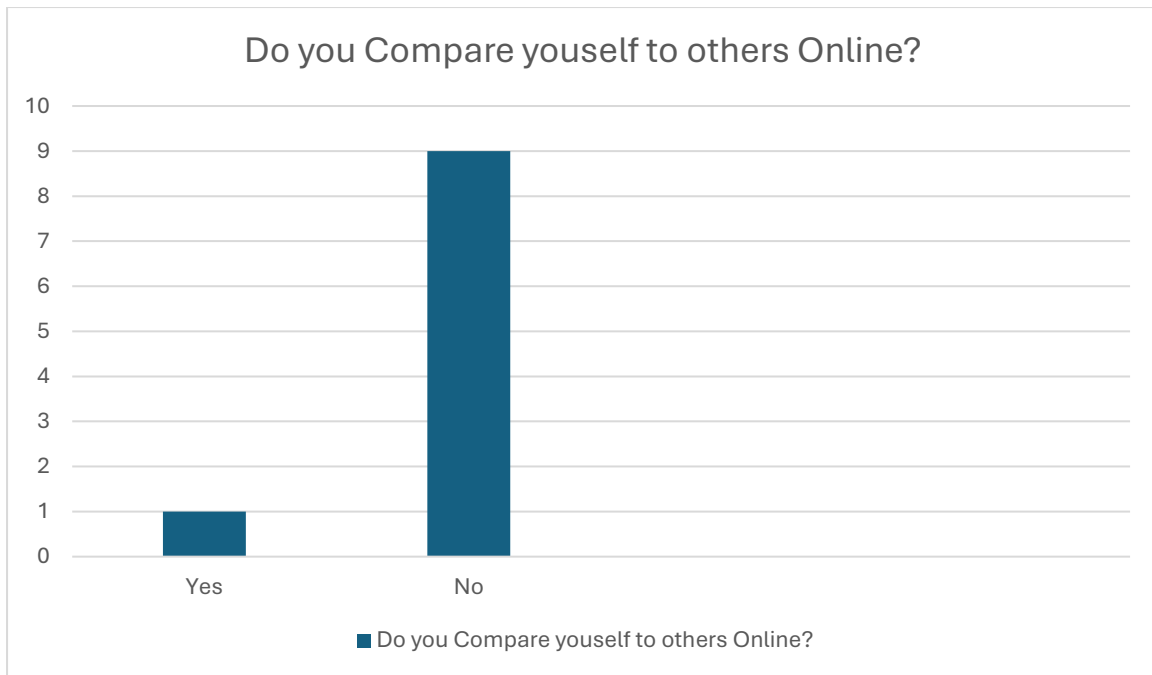
When asked about their preferred time for using social media, the responses were similar to their gaming habits:

- Morning: 0 participants
- During the day: 2 participants
- Evening/Night: 4 participants

Additionally, when asked if any of them used social media past midnight, all participants said no.
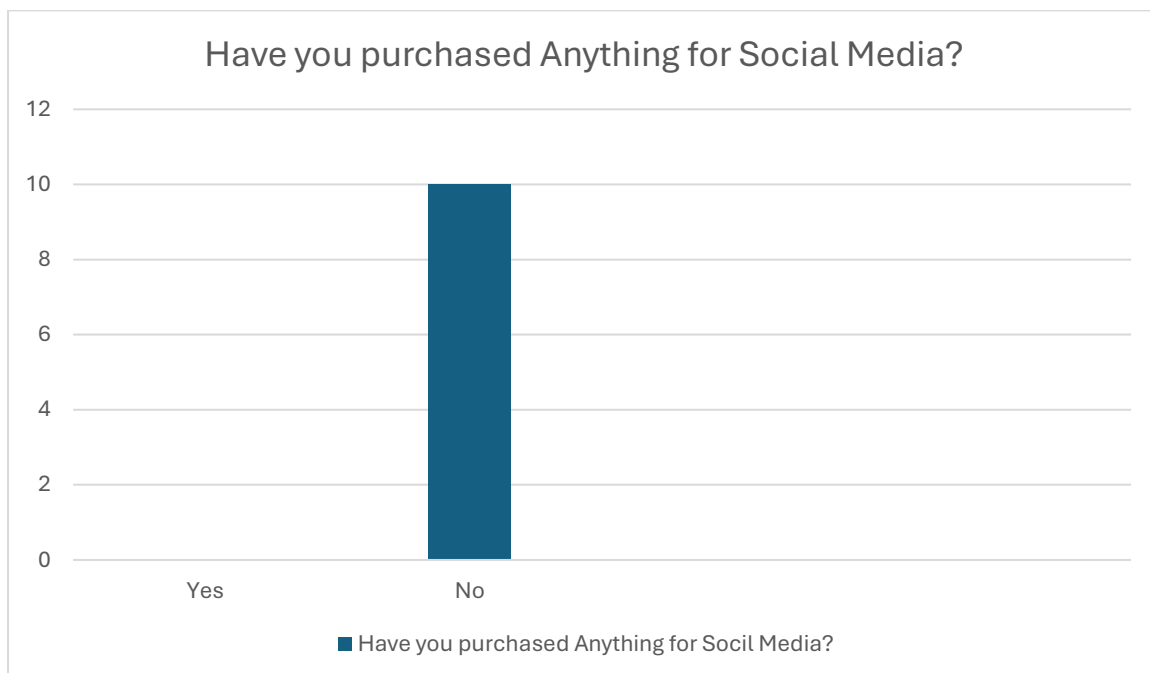
When asked if they spent money on social media apps, such as paying for Spotify Premium, using Facebook Marketplace, or purchasing filters, all participants responded that they do not. They only use free apps and do not pay to skip ads.

Do you Compare youself to others Online?

(Bar chart showing "Yes" = 1, "No" = 9)

■ Do you Compare youself to others Online?

Only one participant admitted to comparing herself to others online, mentioning that she often looks at the clothing and makeup styles of others. When asked if social media makes it easier to find new friends or stay in touch with existing ones, the majority said they use social media to message and keep in contact with friends. However, they still prefer meeting friends face-to-face. Additionally, none of the participants reported being friends online with people they did not know personally.

Have You Ever Expereinced Cyber-Bullying?

(Donut chart showing predominantly "No")

■ Yes ■ No ■ ■
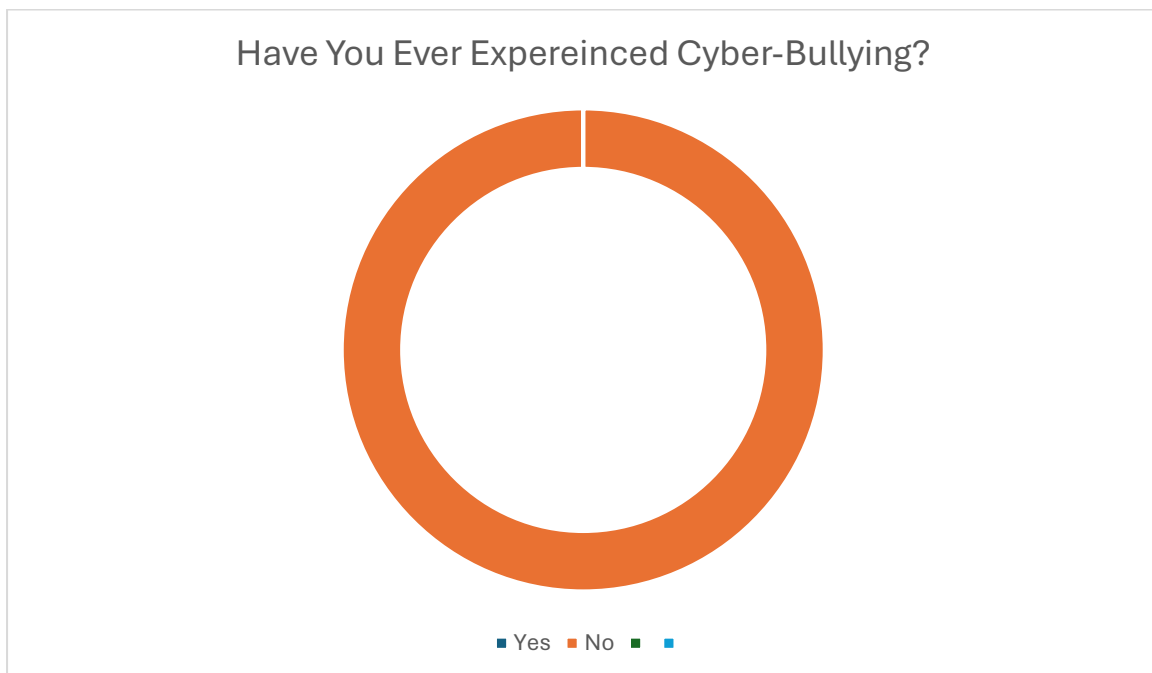
On a positive note, none of the participants reported experiencing cyberbullying themselves, and all of them confirmed that they are aware of what cyberbullying is.

4.3 Role models

When asked if they follow any specific influencers, the participants responded as follows:

- Yes: 0 participants
- No: 10 participants

The participants explained that they do not "follow" specific individuals but instead watch content suggested by the social media platform. When asked about their favourite types of content, they mentioned:

- Music, particularly Dolly Parton and Daniel O'Donnell
- Makeup and fashion
- Nail design ideas

Despite their interest in this content, they noted that most of their social media use is focused on connecting with family and friends.

Have you Ever done anything an Influencer has Recommended online?

■ Yes ■ No
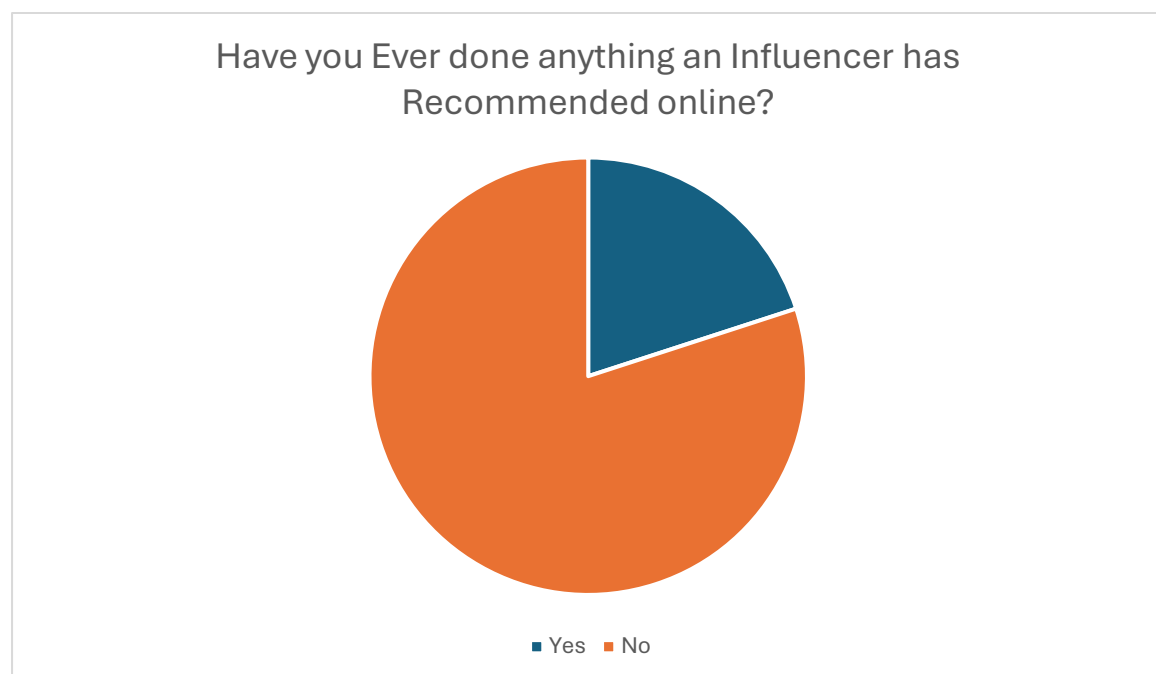
When asked about this, 2 participants mentioned that they enjoy visiting clothing stores to buy items they have seen in clothing hauls or makeup videos. However, none

of the participants had ever tried online diets or participated in trends like the ice bucket challenge.
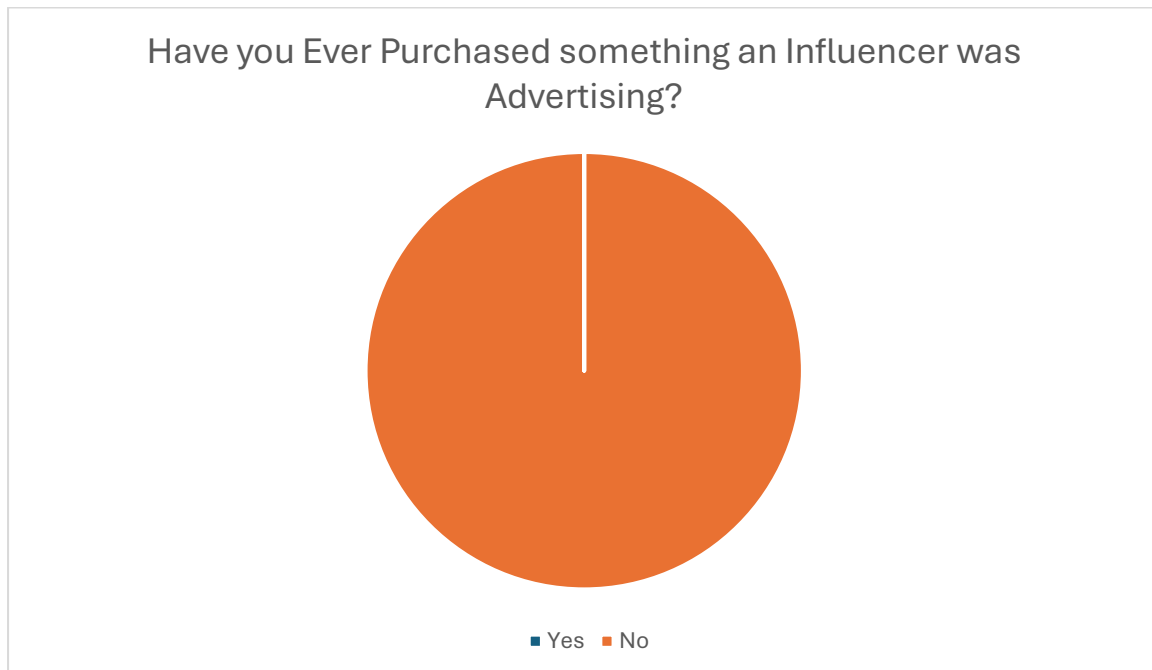
All participants stated that they had not purchased anything advertised by an influencer online. However, 2 participants mentioned that they had visited shops to look for items that influencers were seen wearing or using but were unable to find them.

4.4 Security

When asked if they had ever played a game not suitable for their age, the participants responded:

- Yes: 2 participants
- No: 8 participants

All 10 participants were aware that their data is shared with third parties and other platforms, but none of them expressed concerns about it. Although none of the participants had lost money through cybercrime, they were very conscious of scam messages and fraudulent phone numbers.

When asked about concerns regarding gaming or social media, participants mentioned worries about keeping their personal profiles private and receiving message requests from strangers.

4. Summary and Future Perspective

Overall, the interviews were highly successful. Participants were willing to engage in open discussions, share personal opinions, and express their preferences regarding gaming and social media. The atmosphere was kept light-hearted and enjoyable, with movement breaks to maintain interest and focus.

When asked if they have ever played a game that was not suitable for their age group, participants responded with the following:

- Yes – 2 participants
- No – 8 participants

All 10 participants said they are aware their data is shared with third parties and other platforms. However, none of the participants said they minded. None of the participants have lost money through cybercrime but are very aware of scam messages and phone numbers.

Lastly, the interviewer asked the participants if they had any concerns with gaming or social media online and they said they had worries about keeping their personal profiles private and receiving message requests from people they do not know.

Overall, the interviews were highly successful. Participants were willing to engage in open discussions, share personal opinions, and express their preferences regarding gaming and social media. The atmosphere was kept light-hearted and enjoyable, with movement breaks to maintain interest and focus.

Next Steps:

- How can these interviews inform the subsequent work packages?

The focus group interviews give us an informed insight into the everyday digital habits of young people with special needs. These insights will support us to design workshops and resources that really connect with the target group. Based on our findings, we now know which platforms they prefer, how much time they spend online, and what draws them to certain games or social media content. Additionally, we understand their concerns about security and social influences. With this knowledge, we can create engaging, relevant activities that address their needs and provide meaningful support.

- What actions can be taken based on the insights gathered?

Workshops:

- Develop engaging and accessible content (interactive, visually engaging resources that young people better interact with)
- Address security awareness and digital safety (online safety, privacy, recognising scams, etc.)
- Promote responsible and ethical use of digital media (screen time, online engagement, digital wellbeing)
- Support for social interactions (balance of digital engagement with real-world social experiences)

Recommendations:

- Policy paper on findings
- Advocate for policies that enhance digital competence and safety among the target group
- Provide practical resources/methodologies for educators, parents, youth workers, etc.

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