

# ITV increases its support to participants to tackle online trolling

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ITV announces today the launch of a new Social Media Awareness Hub, designed to help all participants on ITV-produced or commissioned shows deal with trolling online. The Hub is part of an ongoing commitment to duty of care for participants of its shows.

Developed by ITV's Duty of Care specialists and ITV Studios Director of Unscripted Production, Helen Killeen, and built by online training specialists Acteon, the hub provides practical advice on how to navigate unwanted attention from social media, if it happens following their appearance. The advice includes how to handle hurtful comments, manage online privacy and where to get further support.

The launch of the hub is in addition to the existing support offered to show participants which include measures to ensure they are fully supported before, during and after the filming period. For example, in Series 9 of Love Island participants were asked to pause handles and accounts on their social media platforms for the duration of their time on the show, with accounts remaining

dormant while they were in the villa.

Online trolling is an increasingly common issue. New research commissioned by ITV shows that almost one-third of UK adults aged 16+ have received some form of negative comments online, with this increasing significantly for 16-34s. 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 training materials are part of a wider initiative by ITV to tackle online abuse, with a new behaviour change campaign, “Would you say it?”, launching today. The advertising campaign, developed by ITV Creative in partnership with The Cybersmile Foundation, the nonprofit specialising in tackling all forms of bullying and abuse online, aims to get audiences who don’t necessarily see themselves as causing harm to stop posting hurtful comments online by understanding the real-world impact of their comments.

**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.”

ITV will also be airing a documentary in the summer, hosted by ex-Love Islander Olivia Attwood, as she goes on a quest to find out how bad online abuse really is and what needs to be done to stop it.

[ENDS]

**Notes to editor**

Check out the Social Media Awareness hub at [www.socialmediaawarenesshub.itv](http://www.socialmediaawarenesshub.itv)

Further information on the advertising campaign is available at [www.wouldyousayit.itv](http://www.wouldyousayit.itv)

**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 #WhatGetsYouThrough in collaboration

with CALM. The impact of trolling on mental health is significant, with wider research showing that 41% of people who experienced cyberbullying went on to develop social anxiety.

## **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."

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