

WILL THE SOCIAL MEDIA BAN WORK?

The UK Government has recently announced plans to introduce a social media ban for under-16s, with aims for it to come into effect in early 2027. Supporters of the move say that it is a vital step to keep young people safe. In the words of the Prime Minister, "Tech giants had their chance and failed, but we're stepping in to protect children, back parents and set a new normal for future generations." However, critics say that a similar ban has failed to achieve its aims in Australia, with 70% of 12-15-year olds managing to create new accounts despite the ban. They also argue that the voices of young people, those most affected by the decision, have been ignored. In an attempt to remedy this, we want to put these voices at the heart of the debate. When we asked our voters if there should be a social media ban in January, they returned a 85.7% 'No' vote. Now that the plan is becoming a reality, will their voting change?

Alex
Data Coordinator



32,472

TOTAL VOTES

9,248

VOTES AGE 5-11

23,224

VOTES AGE 11-16+

The VoteTopic questions, discussed amongst the different age groups:

Primary 5-9: "Does banning things work?"



Primary 9-11, Secondary 11-16, 16+ & College: "Will the social media ban work?"





WILL THE SOCIAL MEDIA BAN WORK?

Primary voters were unconvinced that the ban could be enforced. Many thought that children would simply find a way to circumvent it, as they had done in Australia. Some argued that it should be down to people's parents to ensure they are using it safely and fairly. A small minority were in favour of the ban, referencing potential benefits to children's mental health.

Secondary, 16+ & College voters were strongly against the ban, delivering our highest 'No' vote of the year. Many shared the view that it would be impossible to enforce, with lots of discussion of how VPNs could be used to bypass any ban. Lots were particularly shocked at YouTube's inclusion, saying that they use it for support with school work. Some 'No' voters argued that it would increase the prevalence of mental health problems amongst young people. A few made the case that removing social media could lead children into more harmful behaviours, whether online ("the dark web") or in the real world ("smoking").

A clear theme was that the Government should be taking action against those posting any harmful content on social media, rather than penalising the young people who are using the platforms. Others thought it was an issue for parents to handle with their own children, rather than something that should be decided by the state.

We think children should learn to deal with these problems better from a younger age but banning will help to ease that until everyone knows the rules.

Primary Yes Voter

Creating a social media ban could remove someone's lifeline, their way of communicating, socialising and surviving.

Primary No Voter

It will be effective but people will hate it.

Secondary Yes Voter

We are all tech savvy - more so than you think - people will find a way around this. You will be relying on parent support and our education to support this.

Secondary No Voter