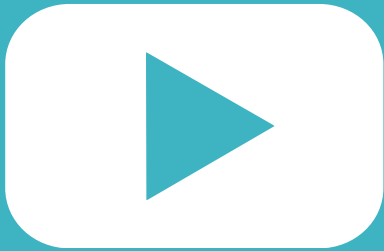




A special series from Aye Mind looking at popular social media platforms.



Social Media Series - YouTube

YouTube is a video-sharing site and app (13+) that is one of the most popular social media platforms, used by **88% of 3-17 year olds** (Ofcom, 2023).

There's also YouTube Kids, offering a "more contained environment" for those up to age 12.

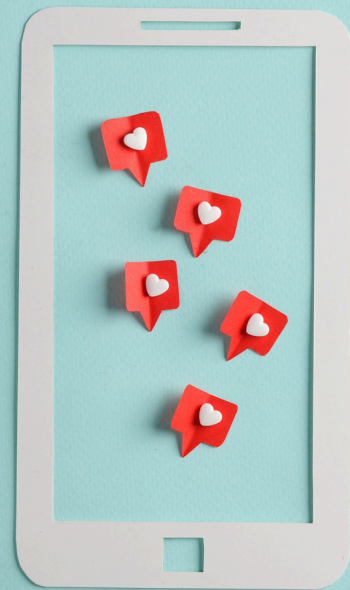
YouTube content comes in different formats - typical long-form format, YouTube Shorts, and YouTube Live for live streaming.

To see the difference, you could watch these two videos on gaming from Young Scot: a [YouTube video](#) and a [YouTube Short](#).

Popular Content

The type of content watched on YouTube will be individual to the child or young person (CYP), their age, and developmental stage. Some examples include:

- Cartoons
- Songs
- Jokes/pranks
- Challenge videos
- Games-related content (e.g. livestreams)
- Vloggers (video bloggers), e.g. "Day in the Life/What I Eat In a Day"
- Educational videos
- News, sports, and entertainment
- Exercise videos.



Potential Benefits

- Way to relax, unwind, have fun, explore hobbies
- Learn new skills e.g. learning to cook/fix household items
- Source of health information
- Helps child or young person develop sense of community, peer support, way to express self
- YouTubers sharing mental health struggles can help destigmatising mental health difficulties (***This list is not exhaustive***)

Potential Harms

- Content promoting eating disorders e.g. low-calorie diets
- YouTubers sharing controversial views e.g. misogynistic, racist, homophobic content
- Blurred lines between influencer content promoting “healthy” lifestyle choices and content glamorising harmful behaviours (e.g. excessive exercise)
- Product sponsorships/adverts from creators seeming like genuine recommendations
- Misinformation/Disinformation
- Links with body image concerns, loneliness, anxiety, impact on sleep
- Toxic comments sections where online hate and cyberbullying can take place

Specific concerns with design features:

- Algorithms recommending harmful context
- Features encouraging time spent on YouTube: [recommended videos](#), [auto-play feature](#), [“subscribe” feature](#), YouTube Shorts scroll feature (*These lists are not exhaustive*)

Helpful Tips & Resources

- Try YouTube for yourself to best understand the benefits and risks
- Chat with the child or young person about what they are watching on YouTube, what they like about it, what they are learning, and who they are following
- Be aware of YouTube’s safety/privacy settings
 - [E.g. via Internet Matters Social Media Guide](#)
 - [YouTube: Child Safety Tips and Tricks resource](#)
- Teach or support the development of digital literacy, including critical thinking skills
 - [E.g. Digital Matters /relevant RSHP resources](#)
- Know where and how a child or young person can get help and what to do if they see anything that upsets them.
 - [E.g. Our Online Harms Resource - Useful Websites, Helplines & Reporting.](#)

