

## ***Irish Film Classification Office***

***Film Classification National Research among Parents and Children***



**Prepared by:**

Dr Maggie Matthews & John O Mahony

**Behaviour & Attitudes - Milltown House, Mount St Annes,  
Milltown, Dublin 6 / +353 1 205 7500**



**RESEARCH  
& INSIGHT**

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## Executive Summary

The Irish Film Classification Office has undertaken a major study to ensure that film classifications and guidelines continue to be consistent with public expectations and to inform its strategic direction. The research captures a snapshot of the public's views about film and media content and the role and remit of IFCO. The study provides the necessary feedback for IFCO to respond to social concerns, cultural changes and to reflect them in age-ratings and classification guidelines.

Findings indicate that 80% of parents aware of the organization trust IFCO to provide reliable age ratings; and 88% of parents evaluate the sample IFCO.ie content as useful, affirming the website's potential in highlighting IFCO's activities. The quantitative feedback from parents does suggest generalised awareness raising initiatives are required for the age rating symbols; key uncertainty centres around symbols 12A & 15A. IFCO should also consider targeting key age groups of children more directly, as going through the parental channel may be ineffective for older children.

The research has specifically listened to parents' and teens' opinions to examine public attitudes to depictions of sexual violence, suicide and self-harm, the portrayal of young people on screen and the importance of context in classification.

The most concerning areas for parents are: Violence/Threat; Discrimination and Derogatory Representation/Language; Sexual Violence/Suicide/Portrayal of Young People on screen. 'Bullying' is especially perceived as an area which can be treated in an educational / supportive manner. The vast majority of parents believe the outcome of a film should influence the age rating it receives.

Among teenagers, Sexual Violence, Suicide, and the Portrayal of Young People are the areas where guidance/boundaries are most needed, along with content that can be seen to impact on mental health. Overall, teenagers would like to see less focus on age classification and more emphasis on alerting them to triggering content to help them make their own decisions about what is and isn't suitable for them to watch. It is also worth considering how IFCO could engage/promote professional support services for mental health maintenance etc.

The broader media context in which IFCO operates and the factors which could impact on the future direction of the Office generated key concerns for respondents. Parents are facing a much tougher job than previous generations in managing the material their children are watching day to day: practically all children currently use a 'solo' viewing device; with content consumed, from about the age of 13/14 often alone and with minimal parental supervision/monitoring.

In this landscape, 61% of parents reported concern about their children accessing content from streaming sites; 61% worry that with multiple media devices, children may be exposed to inappropriate content with 76% worried about the effect that may have on children. 50% of parents surveyed reported feeling overwhelmed monitoring the number of media devices in the house; and reported confusion about how streamed content is classified, recommended, and accessed. In this context, 87% indicated that 'a consistent Irish standard of age ratings across films in cinemas, films on TV such as Netflix and Amazon, and video games' would be useful. Other than films, 65% of respondents expressed a preference for all content to carry a consistently applied IRISH classification, responsive to our distinctive cultural and social identity.

Adapting to this context as a provider of trusted, consistent age-rating and guidance independent of medium, platform and provider would maximise IFCO's relevance and value.

## Research Background & Objectives

The Irish Film Classification Office (IFCO), (formerly known as the Film Censor's Office) is a statutory body established under the aegis of the Department of Justice and Equality. It was established on a statutory basis pursuant to the Censorship of Films Act 1923. Its role was expanded by the various Censorship of Films Acts and the Video Recordings Act, 1989.

IFCO's mission is to provide the public, and parents in particular, with the information and tools to make informed viewing choices for themselves and for those minors for whom they are responsible. As well as its statutory remit, the Office endeavours to engage with the public to hear their concerns and to gauge levels of satisfaction with its work. The core function of IFCO is the examination and certification of all cinema releases and videos/DVDs distributed in Ireland.

IFCO operates in a most dynamic global context where changes in media distribution and usage patterns continue to accelerate and where the unique social conditions enforced by the Covid pandemic appear likely to have accelerated online dependence and the decline in traditional linear media. Alongside this global dynamism, international classification systems draw on nationally customised models, including varying within the EU. Within this diversity however, there is a consistent emphasis on cultural norms of acceptance and nuanced judgements which highlight the context within which broadcast stories are told.

In response to the acceleration of media fragmentation and digital dominance, film classification bodies have evolved and expanded their remits: **Netflix** is now one of the British Board of Film Classification's largest customers and the organisation is now classifying VoD series, games and music videos as well as films and trailers; **Germany's FSK** (rating system organization) also offers protection to minors using the internet through its voluntary FSK online service, giving age classifications to all online audio-visual content whether it is from such players as Amazon Prime or on YouTube channels or Facebook profiles.

The purpose of this research programme was to directly inform the redrawing of IFCO's classification guidelines and the strategic direction of the Office into the future. In detail the research examined levels of awareness and understanding of the role and work of IFCO and broader national attitudes to film and media consumption and certification. In particular, the research examined public attitudes to:

- The depiction of sexual violence.
- The depiction of suicide and/or self-harm.
- The depiction of gender on screen.
- The depiction of race on screen.
- The depiction of young people on screen (issues relating to drug use and sex).
- The importance of context/overall message of a work in classification.

Ultimate key deliverables for the research included:

1. Understanding of people's awareness of the Office and its function.
2. Levels of satisfaction with the work of IFCO.
3. Areas where the public, and parents/guardians in particular, feel the classification emphasis needs changing.
4. Using the results to comprehensively review IFCO's published guidelines. This will give enhanced consumer information for use in making informed viewing choices.

## Research Methodology

The research comprised a programme of activities and close collaboration between B&A and IFCO to deliver on the project objectives: a fully **integrated research programme** where the Qualitative study findings informed the design of the Quantitative survey questionnaire.

The Qualitative research had two stages: the first stage involved a series of group discussions with parents of children between the ages of 0- 18 years.

- Given the complex and in-depth nature of the topic, respondents for the qualitative research were asked to do some work up front as part of their preparation for the group discussions to get Parents thinking about attitudes to classification and capturing their own experiences prior to coming to the groups.
- In the interests of cohesive group discussions, it was important to keep parents of similar aged children together. The concerns of the parent of an under 8 compared to a 16–18-year-old on the depiction of gender (for example) could be radically different. For fruitful discussion and a workable group dynamic, parental experiences were recruited to be broadly similar.

### Sample specification: Qualitative phase



We conducted 5 qualitative groups across the country

Group	Age of children	Primary subject focus	Secondary subject focus	Socio-economic background	Location
1	0-8	Discrimination & Derogatory Representation/Language	Violence (PG/12A/15A)	C1/C2	Dublin
2	9-12	Violence (PG/12A/15A)	Discrimination & Derogatory Representation/ Language	B/C1	Cork
3	9-12/13-15	Discrimination & Derogatory Representation/Language	Violence (PG/12A/15A)	C2/D	Dublin
4	13-15/16-18	Discrimination & Derogatory Representation/Language	Sexual Violence/Suicide/Young People (drugs and sex)	B/C1	Sligo
5	16-18	Sexual Violence/Suicide/Young People (drugs and sex)	Discrimination & Derogatory Representation Language	C1/C2	Dublin

*Fieldwork took place between 1<sup>st</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2020*

While our initial thinking focused solely on parents as gatekeepers, the feedback from Phase 1 of the qualitative study highlighted the importance of discussing key issues with young people.

Phase 2 of the Qualitative research then included talking directly to children with four discussion groups among teenagers.

Key to this phase of research was understanding how the monitoring techniques described by parents in phase 1 were experienced by the teenagers themselves and to get an understanding of how effective they are in practice.

## Sample specification: Qualitative phase- Teens

As a follow-on from the parent groups, we recruited 4 teen groups

Group	Age of children	Primary subject focus	Secondary subject focus
1	16-18	C1/C2	Mix Dublin/Cork/Sligo
2	16-18	B/C1	Mix Dublin/Cork/Sligo
3 (mini)	15	C2/D	Mix Dublin/Cork
4 (mini)	13-15	B/C1	Mix Dublin/Cork

*Fieldwork took place between 1<sup>st</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> November 2020*

A vital part of the qualitative study design was the pre-selection of a comprehensive series of film and TV scenes to illustrate issues and facilitate discussion on key topics. This preparatory work by the IFCO project team was of significant help to the study. The list of scenes chosen for the qualitative research covered the issues of Discrimination/Derogatory Representations/Language; Violence/Threat; Sexual Violence/Suicide/Young People. Over 50 film clips were selected from the broadest range of sources including: Riverdale, Pulp Fiction, 13 Reasons Why, Moonlight, Normal People, Toy Story, Jaws, The Hunger Games, Coraline, Saving Private Ryan, Bombshell, The Edge of Seventeen, The Simpsons and Casino Royale.

The second stage of the research programme was **Quantitative research** which involved a nationwide public survey of parents and guardians of children under the age of 18 examining issues of awareness, behaviour and attitudes:

A vital component of the survey research was the delivery of a sample design which was nationally representative across all key demographics, including social grade and region, and with the sample reflecting the ratio of respondents of parents/guardians of children in the age groups 0-8, 9-12, 13-15 and 16-18 years. All interviewing was conducted online using B&A's online panel; Acumen.ie

*A total of 1,007 interviews were conducted during February 2021.*



## Film Classification: National Survey of Parents

Base All Parents = 1,007

The sample of parents were recruited to quotas and then weighted based on age of youngest child; 0-8; 9-12; 13-15 and 16-18 years.

		All parents %			All parents %
Gender	Male	43	Social Class	ABC1F	50
	Female	57		C2DEF	50
Age of youngest child	0 – 8 years	58	Region	Dublin	26
	9 – 12 years	18		ROL	29
	13 – 15 years	13		Munster	27
	16 – 18 years	12		Conn/Ulster	17
			Area	Urban	66
				Rural	34

## Role and remit of IFCO

The qualitative work demonstrated that general awareness of the film classification system is strong among parents. Most can name the main classifications, though it's common to forget 16 and/or refer to U rather than G. The majority have good awareness of what the classifications mean & the expectations that are set, with some caveats. For example

- The addendum 'A' isn't always understood
- There's some lack of clarity between expectations for PG & 12A
- Many see 18 as quite a broad classification, which could refer to very problematic material or simply content that's of more interest to adults. This means there's a danger its underestimated as a classification by some.
- There's no clear understanding of what differentiates between 15A and 16

Parents see the guidelines as mostly relevant for cinema going, where they are typically perceived to be enforced strongly.

They tend to be used as a very rough guide when watching films at home – where most parents feel free to override. Parents can appear to pay more attention if other children (not their own) are watching (parties/ sleepovers/ playdates). Here there is often self-imposed parental pressure to be both particularly responsible and to be **seen** to be responsible by the parents of the other children. In fact, in these cases, they'll often want more detail than the classification can give them so will consult further guidance from sources/ websites such as Common Sense media.



Qualitatively, the majority of parents have at least heard of IFCO, but most are lacking up-to-date knowledge/associations with the organisation. There are some associations drawn between IFCO and Ireland's 'censorist' past, particularly stories around films like *The Last Temptation of Christ* (often inaccurately or partly remembered). Lately IFCO has had little reason to draw attention, either positively or negatively to itself beyond its normal station; and in some ways this is how it should be. However in



terms of the provision of consumer information on content ratings, IFCO risks being overlooked in comparison to streaming services own 'in house' ratings systems.

There is lack of clarity among parents about whether the IFCO guidelines apply to streaming services. On Netflix a classification sometimes briefly pops up (but sometimes doesn't). Parents aren't too focused on the classification when it comes to streaming services. They're much more likely to rely on parental controls or recommendations via 'the algorithm' and assume that content pushed is age appropriate to set up profiles.

However, there is no interrogation of what sits behind Netflix recommendations/controls and ultimately, when prompted, they were shocked by some of the material deemed 'suitable' for their children by Netflix.

There is good support for an Irish specific classification service, in theory at least. There's a strong sense that Ireland is culturally distinct from both US/UK (as closest comparison points). We don't always line up exactly with the norms/expectations of these countries and parents feel this should be reflected in the classification system (as referenced in the survey, 80% of parents aware of the organization *trust IFCO to provide reliable age ratings*).

To take the US as a comparison point, some types of behaviour/attitudes would be more acceptable there than in Ireland ('sass'/answering back) where other things are more acceptable in Ireland (swearing/vulgarity). Parents like the idea of capturing this kind of nuance in our classification.

In practice however, no one is checking if the classification they see when they're streaming is the IFCO one. So while the public are glad IFCO exist and have no complaints about the job IFCO is doing currently, IFCO's influence will wain as in-home and streaming continue to dominate with their perceived limited protection measures which concerned Parents.

For teenagers, classification is primarily associated with cinema going. As such, they're most tuned into and concerned about the 15a/16/18 ratings for films. They're a lot hazier on the classifications below this. They see the classifications as quite a blunt tool, not tailored to their own tolerances, which they see as quite individualized; and they find it irritating when they're prevented from seeing material in the cinema with their friends (naturally enough).

Awareness of IFCO among teens is low. However, like their parents, they **see a role for an Irish Body to classify Film & TV content**, because they also feel that Ireland has a distinctive cultural identity that necessitates tailored guidelines. Teens would like to see IFCO move in a more advisory direction, using content warnings to help teens make up their own mind what is or isn't suitable content.

In the National Survey, to provide an overview of their attitudes to the classification of media content, parents were presented with a series of statements and asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each.

Despite the challenges they admitted to facing in the current media landscape, the statement which received the most positive endorsement related to the primacy of parental responsibilities: with 83% agreeing that *'classifications are a useful guide only – at the end of the day it is the responsibility of the parent or guardian'*.

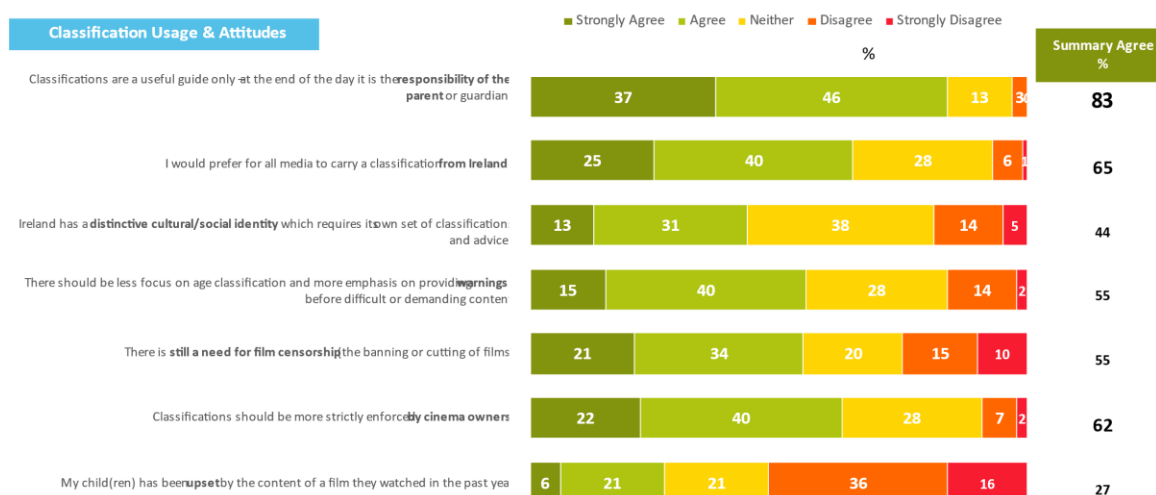
However, supplementing this was the desire for cinemas to be more active partners in guarding the content viewed by children with 62% of parents agreeing that *'classifications should be more strictly enforced by cinema owners'*.

In addition, the evolving nature of parental attitudes to classifications was evidenced in their views on content warnings:

- 89% of parents considered it useful when parents and children are provided with specific warnings/support information for difficult or demanding content in films et cetera (this sentiment peaked among those with children aged 9 to 15 years).
- 55% of parents agreed ‘there should be less focus on age classification and more emphasis on providing warnings before difficult or demanding content’; albeit in this regard there was a certain softness to the support with parents more likely to *agree* rather than *strongly agree* with the sentiment.

## Attitudes: Parents and Media

Base: All Parents-NL,007



31 ? Q.26 How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

1.201941 | IFCO | National Parents Survey | March 2021 | Confidential

The attitudinal analysis also probed the extent to which parents felt the classification system should draw on nationally customised models: while a reasonably modest 44% agreed that ‘Ireland *has a distinctive cultural/social identity which requires its own set of classifications and advice*’, one of the strongest levels of agreement was attributed to the statement ‘*I would prefer for all media to carry a classification from Ireland*’.

This agreement was consistent with an earlier measure in the survey where 87% of parents indicated it would be useful to have a consistent Irish standard of age readings across films in cinemas, films on TV such as Netflix and Amazon, and video games (this endorsement peaked amongst those parents with children aged 13 to 15 years).

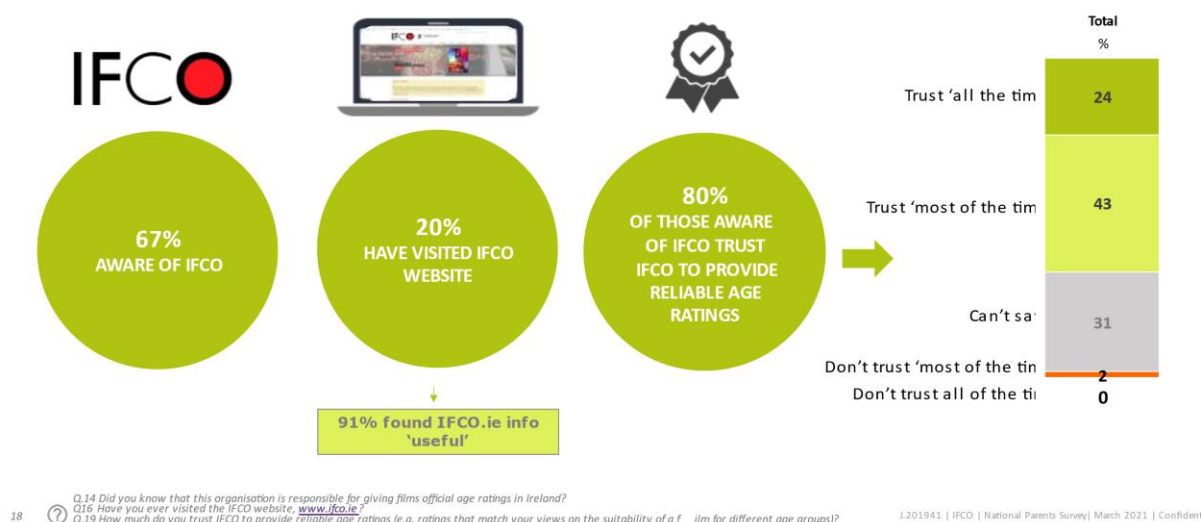
The survey included a series of measures specific to IFCO itself: first, the survey established that 67% of parents were aware that IFCO is the organisation responsible for giving films official age ratings in Ireland. This awareness level of 2 in 3 parents could be contrasted with the 40% who were aware of PEGI as the organisation responsible for giving video games official age ratings across Europe.

In relation to trust, an impressive 80% of those aware of IFCO trusted the organisation to provide reliable age ratings (e.g. ratings that matched their views on the suitability of a film for different age groups).

More generally, 66% of parents consider the age rating symbols used in the classification system in Ireland for films, DVDs and Box Sets as 'about right'; with 23% considering them as 'too strict' and only 11% as 'too lenient'.

## Awareness and Trust of IFCO: Summary

Base: All Parents-NL007



In addition, the review of the IFCO website was positive: one in five parents had visited [www.ifco.ie](http://www.ifco.ie) and of these, 91% had found the website useful.

To facilitate a broader evaluation of IFCO's online information, an example of the content that appears on the website was presented to parents in the survey with the follow-up question of how useful they felt this type of information would be when checking the suitability of film content for the children. The result was impressive, with 88% of parents evaluating the sample ifco.ie content as useful, affirming the potential of the website in highlighting and promoting IFCO's activities.

# The Secret Garden (2020)

You are here: Home / The Secret Garden (2020)



Genre: Drama  
 Director: Marc Munden  
 Cast: Dixie Egerickx, Colin Firth, Julie Walters  
 Distributor: Studio Canal  
 Release Date: 11th Dec 2020  
 (as supplied by Distributor)  
 Date Classified: 13th Mar 2020  
 Duration: 99' 31"  
 Website: [www.imdb.com/title/tt2702920/](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt2702920/)

	None	Mild	Moderate	Strong
Violence		✓		
Drugs	✓			
Sex / Nudity	✓			
Language		✓		
Other / Comments	Frightening scenes and bereavement theme.			

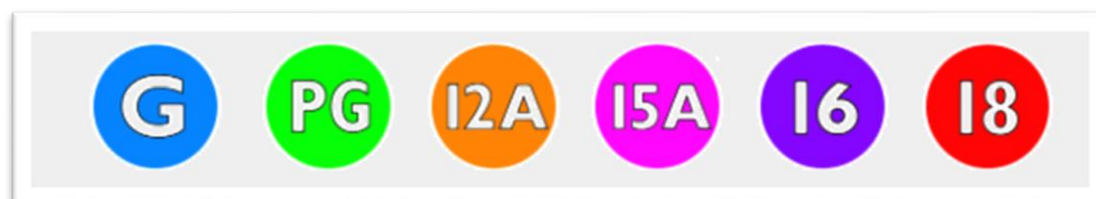
Reviews

While the overall results specific to IFCO were positive, the response from parents in relation to their awareness and understanding of the film classification system used by IFCO was more equivocal.

In terms of recognition, 87% of parents recognised the symbol for the 18 certificate and 91% recognised the PG cert; interestingly recognition declined to 67% for the general or G Symbol.

In relation to clarity of meaning (*to what extent does each of the following age rating symbols have a clear meaning for you?*), it was again the 18 and PG cert that had the clearest meaning.

While still positively assessed, the age symbols of G, 12A, 15 and 15 A each had over 30% of parents not being very clear on their meaning.



This pattern then continued when parents were asked to select the exact meaning for each age rating symbol: the 16 and 18 symbols were the most understood by parents; with the lowest understanding being associated with the 12A and 15A certs.

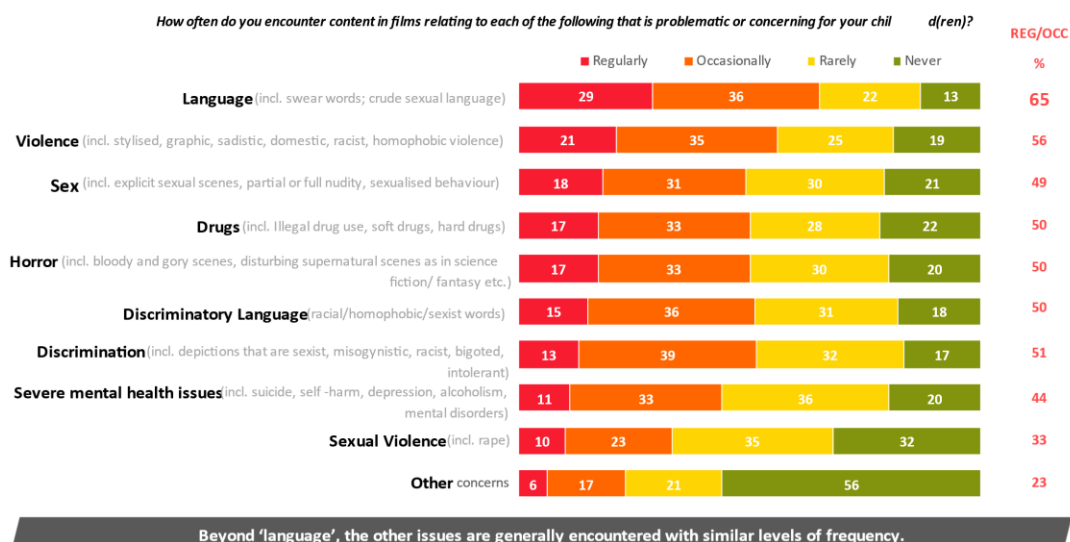
Ultimately, the feedback from parents suggests generalised awareness raising initiatives are required for the age rating symbols, with particular attention to the symbols 12A and 15A.

## Reflections on Guidelines

As part of their review of classification issues, parents were asked in the National Survey how often they encountered content in films that was problematic or concerning for their children in relation to a series of content types: language; violence; sex; drugs; horror; discriminatory language; discrimination; mental health issues; and sexual violence.

### Frequency of Encountering Problematic Content

Base: All Parents N=907



36 ? Q.27 How often do you encounter content in films relating to each of the following that is problematic or concerning for your child(ren)?

1.201941 | IFCO | National Parents Survey | March 2021 | Confidential

This review could be interpreted to suggest that parents were encountering problematic content with a high level of frequency. For 6 out of the 10 types of problematic content, half or more of parents indicated they were encountering such problematic content on a regular and/or occasional basis.

The most regularly encountered problematic content was *language* (including swear words, crude sexual language) with 65% of parents indicating they encountered such content in a problematic fashion regularly/occasionally. The next most frequently encountered type of problematic content was *violence* (including stylised, graphic, sadistic, domestic, racist, homophobic violence) - 56% of parents encountered this type of content on a regular/occasional basis.

The least frequently encountered problematic content was *sexual violence*, including rape. However, even here, 10% of parents indicated that they regularly encountered content in films relating to sexual violence that they considered problematic or concerning for their children.

In analysing the frequency of encountering problematic content by the age of children, it became apparent that the issues formed groups depending on children's age:

- for those 8 to 12 years the most frequently encountered problematic content type related to *language*;
- thereafter for children aged between 13 to 15 years there was higher incidences of parents encountering problematic content related to *violence, drugs, sex and horror*;
- for parents with older children, aged 16 to 18 years, there was a much stronger likelihood that they were exposed to content that they considered problematic related to *discrimination* (including depictions that were sexist, misogynistic, racist, bigoted, intolerant), *discriminatory language, severe mental health issues and sexual violence*.

### Frequency of encountering problematic content

Transitional issues

Base: All Parents NI;007



37 ? Q.26 How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

1.201941 | IFCO | National Parents Survey | March 2021 | Confidential

Following the qualitative study, the survey was designed to accommodate reflection by parents on those subject matters where dramatic depictions could be both positive and negative. In this part of the review parents were requested to reflect on the following 12 topics and asked:

- Which subjects have you seen presented in films where viewing was likely problematic or concerning for children older than 12 years?
- Which subjects have you seen presented in films where viewing was potentially educational/support for children older than 12 years?



Suicide	Bullying	Domestic violence	Racism
Sexual harassment	Sexism/misogyny	Child abuse/paedophilia	Depression
Other Severe Mental Health conditions	Alcoholism	Discrimination against mentally or physically disabled	Treatment of severe/fatal illness

The parental responses highlighted that, on balance, the subject of *bullying* was most likely to be presented in a way where viewing was potentially educational/supportive for children. In this regard, separately in the survey 63% of parents agreed that *'Seeing depictions of issues like relationship breakdown, bullying and death on film gives parents a better opportunity to discuss these themes with their children'*.

In contrast, parents felt the subjects of ***suicide, domestic violence, child abuse/paedophilia, sexual harassment*** and ***sexism/misogyny*** were most likely to be presented where viewing was problematic or concerning for their children.

### Detailed content review: Where viewing was problematic vs educational/ supportive

Base: All Parents-NL,007

	Problematic/Concerning %	Educational/Supportive %	Balance %
Treatment of severe/fatal illness	24	30	+6
Other Severe Mental Health conditions	27	26	-1
Discrimination against mentally or physically disabled	30	29	-1
Depression	33	37	+4
Racism	35	37	+2
Sexism/misogyny	35	18	-17
Alcoholism	36	30	-6
Bullying	41	51	+10
Sexual harassment	42	26	-16
Child abuse/ paedophilia	43	16	-27
Domestic violence	49	27	-22
Suicide	49	26	-23

39 Q.29 Which if any of the following subjects have you seen presented in films where viewing was likely problematic or concerning for children older than 12 years? Q.30 Which if any of the following subjects have you seen presented in films where viewing was potentially educational/ supportive for children older than 12 years? J.201941 | IFCO | National Parents Survey | March 2021 | Confidential

In addition, parents selected those subject areas which were of most concern when viewed by children: the top three listed were **child abuse/ paedophilia, suicide**, and **bullying** with these rankings being very consistent by age of child.

To review recommended age ratings with parents, a broad selection of film content relevant to IFCOs remit were presented during the survey (IFCO does not provide classifications or guidance for prohibited content unless in dramatic context). Parents were then asked to indicate as best they could, at which age rating it was suitable/ reasonable to encounter these types of content.

In what was an admittedly challenging task for parents, the potential types of film content were grouped around the categories of violence, sex/nudity, drugs, and discrimination/language:

## Recommended Age Rating

Base: All Parents-NL,007



### Violence

- If the violence is animated/slapstick.
- If the violence is realistic but without detail.
- If the violence is unjustified (e.g. the victim is 'innocent')
- If there is a high level and detail of blood, gore or injury.
- If the violence is sexual or involves rape.

### Sex/Nudity

- If there is non-sexual natural nudity.
- If there is full frontal nudity in sexual context
- If there is explicit consensual sexual content.
- If women are objectified, typically presented in revealing clothing, sexualised behaviour etc.

### Drugs

- If there are references to soft drugs (e.g., Marijuana).
- If there are references to 'harder' drugs such as heroin, cocaine etc.
- If there are depictions of drug use rather than verbal references about drugs.
- If problematic behaviour such as suicide or drug taking is presented as normal or glamorized.

### Discrimination/Language

- If there are depictions of all types of bullying
- If there are depictions of online shaming, coercion, etc.
- If there is sexist or misogynistic language and behaviour
- If there is racist language and behaviour
- If there is comedic language or behaviour towards groups (inc. gender, sexuality, race etc.).
- If coarse language is used with aggression.
- If coarse language resembles everyday speech.

### Other

- If the overall tone of the film is consistently sad, bleak or depressing.

43 Q.28 Please see below potential types of content in films. For each, please indicate as best you can, at which age rating it is suitable/ reasonable to encounter this type of content.

L201941 | IFCO | National Parents Survey| March 2021 | Confidential

The analysis of the survey results indicated those issues parents consider as transitional. In relation to those that mark the distinction between a 12 and 15 classification, parents often nominated issues related to discrimination/language: *if there are depictions of all types of bullying; if coarse language resembles every day speech; if there are depictions of online shaming, coercion et cetera; if there is comedic language or behaviour towards groups (including gender, sexuality, race et cetera).*

In addition, issues relating to discrimination/language were predominantly assigned to a 15 cert; albeit the judgement was more equivocal in relation to sexist/misogynistic language in particular with a significant proportion of parents, 35%, indicating this specific issue should be assigned an 18 cert.

## Recommended Age Ratings: 15

Base: All Parents-NL,007

		15	18
Discrimination/ Language	If <b>coarse language</b> is used with <b>aggression</b> .	46	27
Violence	If the <b>violence is realistic</b> but without detail.	44	28
Drugs	If there are references to <b>soft drugs</b> (e.g., Marijuana).	43	31
Discrimination/ Language	If there is <b>racist</b> language and behaviour	41	31
Discrimination/ Language	If there is <b>sexist or misogynistic</b> language and behaviour	41	35
Violence	If the <b>violence is unjustified</b> (e.g. the victim is 'innocent')	40	37

Issues relating to 'Discrimination/ Language' are predominantly assigned to a 15 cert; albeit the judgment is more equivocal in relation to 'sexist/ misogynistic' language in particular.

47 Q.28 Please see below potential types of content in films. For each, please indicate as best you can, at which age rating it is suitable/ reasonable to encounter this type of content.

J.201941 | IFCO | National Parents Survey| March 2021 | Confidential

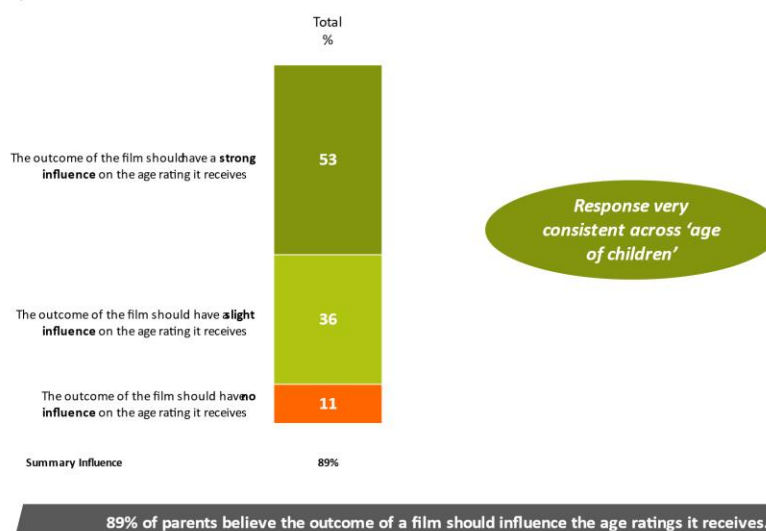
Interestingly, where it came to distinguishing between a 15 and 18 cert in the survey, the views of parents could be interpreted as being somewhat traditional with an emphasis on depictions of sex and nudity.

In addition, the issues parents most definitively felt deserved an 18 age rating focused on sexual violence and the normalisation of problematic behaviour such as suicide or drugtaking. This assessment peaked in relation to: *if there is full frontal nudity in sexual context; if there is explicit consensual sexual content; if problematic behaviour such as suicide or drugtaking is presented as normal or glamorised; if the violence is sexual or involves rape.*

As an important contextual consideration to this review of age ratings, it is important to note that the vast majority of parents believe the outcome of a film should influence the age rating it receives:

## Should the outcome of a film influence the age rating it receives

Base: All Parents NL:007



42 Q. 32 Please now consider the following:  
A film which addresses a challenging issue ends with that issue being resolved in a responsible and positive manner.  
To what extent should a film having a positive outcome or message influence the age rating it receives?

J.201941 | IFCO | National Parents Survey | March 2021 | Confidential

### Exploring core areas of concern

For the qualitative work, we explored 3 core areas in detail in order to investigate parents' views on the most important areas of concern:

- Violence/threat,
- Discrimination and derogatory representation/language,
- Sexual/violence/suicide (as applicable to young people)

### Looking into the core areas in more detail: Violence/Threat

This is overall, probably the most straightforward of the topics we explored in the qualitative research:

- There is huge tolerance of violence depicted in the media.
- This is not a new thing (though it has become more pronounced with the rise of highly violent video games, which attract much more concern from a violence point of view).
- Children are exposed to violence in the media from a very early age – and this has always been the case (classic cartoon examples).
- There are so many ways in which violence is 'mitigated' - use of animation, fantasy, wish fulfilment, humour, not showing its effects, and so on.
- Underlying all this, is a feeling that violence has a role in the world and so long as we operate within a very black and white moral universe where 'good' ultimately triumphs (which is played out time and again in film/TV) we are comfortable with seeing it.
- These ideas were reflected even more strongly among the teen groups, who appear to be even more desensitized to violence than previous generations.

- There is resentment particularly from 14-15 year olds, about violence being the reason for a 15A/16 rating. They see it as unnecessary to 'protect' them from imaginary violence when there's so much out there in real life.



However, the following came up as areas that need to be monitored more carefully under the topic of violence/threat

### 1. Graphic and Gruesome violence

- Very graphic depictions of violence make us face up to the fact that violence can have horrible consequences, therefore bringing the 'reality' home for parents/children
- Gruesome violence can evoke a disgust or fearful response, tapping into more primal emotions that children aren't as well equipped to handle.
- The younger the child, the more problematic graphic/gruesome violence can be.

### 2. Violence/Threats that feel pertinent to children's real lives

- When violence breaks through the fantasy barrier and starts to feel real, plausible, something that could happen 'to them' then it becomes a bigger concern.

### 3. When the serious consequences of violence are made obvious (often in a war/combat situation)

- When the content focuses on the pain, trauma, profound consequences, ‘sorrow’ of violence, rather than skirt over that as so many examples do, then this is deemed to have more negative/ troubling psychological impact on children
- This point is more likely to come up with an older age group (9-15), particularly in realistic portrayals of violence in war/combat.

#### **4. Violence/Threat that impacts on a psychological level**

- Parents acknowledge that children’s tolerance of horror varies dramatically and depends on the personality of the child.
- The consensus is that horror should always be classified with the more nervous end of the spectrum in mind.
- In the teen groups, concerns crystallise around realistic and serious violence that feel pertinent to teen’s real lives. For example, representation of graphic bullying, particularly when perpetrated by one’s peers, is particularly upsetting for this age group to witness as it brings home the idea that this could happen ‘to them’.
- There is a strong feeling that this kind of material should be classified very carefully, with 18 ratings freely used.

#### **Looking into the core areas in more detail: Discrimination and derogatory representation/language**

This area is where parental attitudes seem to have shifted the most over the last few years:

- Fuelled by big societal/cultural/political shifts.
- Children themselves are getting much more educated about what’s happening, how history culture/society shapes our view of what is acceptable. How attitudes change over time. As well as how/why bullying takes place and how to deal with it.
- Children then often educate ‘up’ (their parents)
- Parents generally feel empowered to discuss these topics with their children and to tease out any complexity or deal with questions.
- For this reason, this area is deemed less problematic than some of the others
- The teenage groups demonstrated that the teens feel very confident and empowered to navigate this topic for themselves, they see themselves as better educated on these topics than their parents after all. TV/Film content is a key means by which they build their understanding of these issues and explore the boundaries of what’s acceptable to their generation. Our teenage respondents were often horrified by the kind of content that was deemed suitable even 10 years ago in terms of political correctness.

The following came up as areas that need to be monitored carefully under the topic of Discrimination and derogatory representation/language

#### **1. Use of politically problematic language**

- While common or garden swearing isn't too concerning, socially unacceptable language is not something parents want children to be exposed to.
- It's fear of societal judgement is a strong motivator, so examples of hate speech like 'nigger', 'gollywog', 'retard' are all things that they want kept from children until at least age 12 – 15 (depending on child's maturity).
- Their fear is that the child will repeat it in public (without understanding it) or ask tricky questions of parents.
- In the teenage groups it was felt that 13 is old enough to handle problematic language and react appropriately.

## **2. Reinforcing of problematic stereotypes (without questioning them)**

- With regards to gender/race/sexuality in particular
- Particularly for the youngest age group (0 – 8) as they're at a formative stage and are being shaped by what they see.

## **3. Brutal and violent representations of bullying**

- Bullying is something that parents are reasonably tolerant towards when it's shown on screen.
- Bullying is a part of life, understanding the psychology of it is important, parents can drive understanding via conversations/discussion.
- The exception is brutal/violent bullying as it's a very difficult thing to face and to help young children process.
- It would be immensely upsetting for children to see the very worst examples of physical bullying like this

## **4. Inappropriate humour**

- We know that humour can be an important mitigating factor
- But this only works if it's genuinely funny.
- What's considered 'fair game' for laughs has changed very significantly in the last 10 years or so, and greater sensitivity towards people's conditions/injustice/discrimination has made some topics a lot less acceptable to mine for humour
- The teenage cohort are much more sensitive to derogatory language used to describe marginalised sections of society (*retard/faggot/etc*)
- Greater sensitivity to people's conditions/injustice/ discrimination, puts an entirely different slant on using these words as a springboard for humour.
- For many, this kind of representation isn't suitable for anyone to witness, regardless of age.

## **5. Complex political historical issues before child is informed enough to understand them**

- Particularly an issue for the 9-14 age group.
- Historic racism is a particularly pertinent example given the significant developments made in tackling this area
- Suggestion that recommendations in this area are aligned with the school curriculum.



## 6. Creating negative associations with normal states of being

- Real pushback on anything that contradicts modern day values of inclusivity, body positivity, positive feelings towards growing up, acceptance of the self.

## 7. Obvious sexual suggestiveness in inappropriate contexts

- While teenagers expressing their sexuality in regular ways is generally deemed appropriate,
- But very obvious suggestiveness in settings that feel inappropriate can be problematic.
- Particularly for a 13-15 age group who will have exposure, but little experience with sex in real life and when it's culturally appropriate to refer to it.

### Looking into the core areas in more detail: Sexual/violence/suicide (as applicable to young people).

In a qualitative review, this is where parental concern peaks:

- However, it's worth mentioning that concern really rose to the surface **after** the prompt material was shown in the group discussions.
- It became obvious in the groups that parents had little real awareness of what their children were watching
- Material like *13 Reasons Why* was mentioned in the pre-task, but only a couple of parents registered concerns about it (and these weren't very serious)
- There was a lot of shock and guilt after seeing this material. And a sense of betrayal that Netflix was allowing this material to be shown uncensored; though it was clarified that Netflix had removed this scene following consumer feedback.
- For the teens themselves, this topic dwarfs everything else as a concern. There is genuine concern that material like this exacerbates mental health problems and even leads to suicide attempts.

### The following came up as areas that need to be monitored carefully under the topic of Sexual/violence/suicide (as applicable to young people)

#### 1. Graphic representations of suicide/self-harm/sexual violence

- Similar to the violence point, a very graphic/brutal representation of these themes causes much more concern than more dialled down/ muted/ sanitised representations.
- Not just about blood/gore though, making the emotional pain clear also dials up the concern levels.
- For teens, emotional impact is more significant than graphic depiction. Anything that makes clear the very sad reality of suicide is difficult to watch and requires careful handling (for under 15s in particular).
- Coming to terms with the bleaker side of human existence, particularly given how much content they watch alone/how young and vulnerable they are, is a difficult process and one they'd like more protection from.

## **2. Normalisation, glamorisation and/or 'encouragement' of problematic behaviours (like suicide/drug taking)**

- Parents are wary of teenagers becoming familiar with how/what/where/why with regards to drug taking - the lingo, the act of doing it.
- The fear is that this will drive confidence and desire to experiment.
- Suicide is even more emotionally loaded and fear inducing. The *13 Reasons Why* scene used as stimulus in the groups was particularly startling in the degree to which it acted like a 'how to' for teens – which parents find very unsettling.

## **3. 'Depraved' behaviours like taking sexual advantage of the vulnerable**

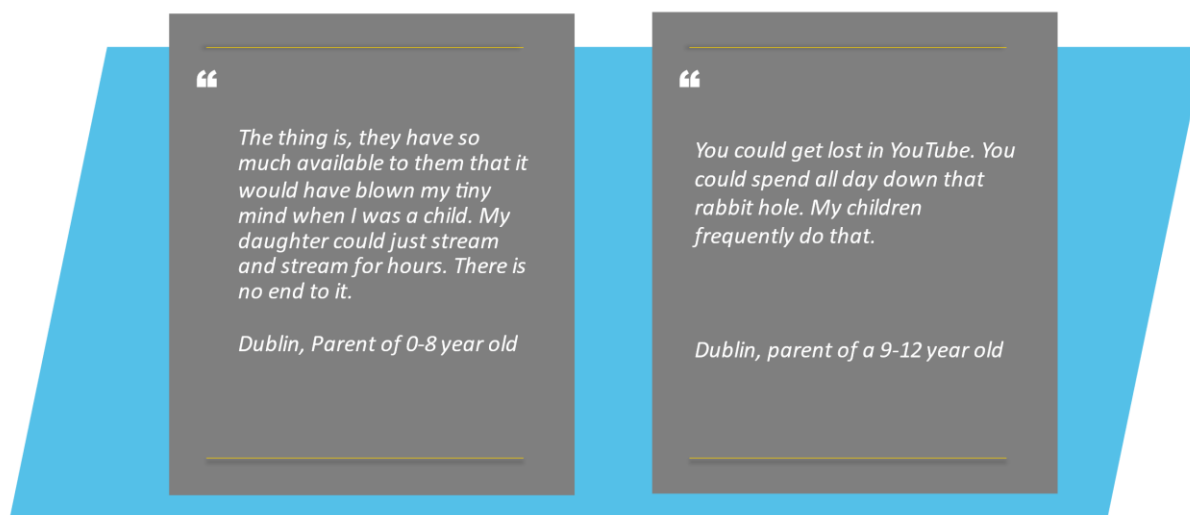
- There is particular pushback against sexual acts with some level of abnormal response.
- In particular, taking advantage of the vulnerable without explicit/strong condemnation of this in the narrative (as evidenced by the Kill Bill clip shown in the groups).

## Viewing context

The world in which today's children consume media is radically different to the world which their parents experienced when they were children (which is their benchmark for comparison).

The range of content/media/channels/ and films available to today's generation of children is vast compared to that which was available to their parents. Children's exposure to media has evolved from 2 channels, limited in their airtime (particularly for children's material) and a tightly controlled film/video market, to a vast network of terrestrial/satellite /streaming services, user generated content, social media as well of course as Film/DVD.

The majority of children today have access to more on demand content than could ever be consumed, and all of this is available to anyone with a phone.



In an important (if expected) finding from the national survey, parents indicated that children are now more likely to watch Netflix and YouTube than traditional TV channels.

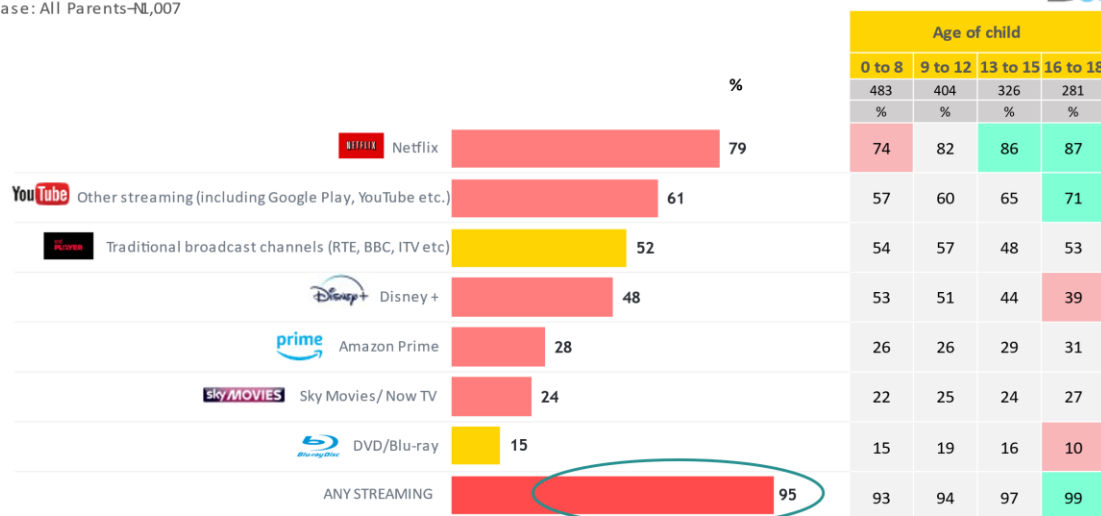
95% of parents indicated that a streaming option was available in their homes with 79% nominating Netflix as a way their children watch on screen content; the corresponding figure for YouTube was 61%.

In contrast only 52% of parents nominated traditional broadcast channels, such as RTÉ, BBC and ITV, as ways their children watched on-screen content.

Streaming has become the most common route to content, though terrestrial TV, DVDs, Cinema all still feature in children's repertoires. Both parents and children are unlikely to differentiate between different types of content and the means of viewing them and therefore a lack of cohesive, consistent guidance across platforms is concerning to them and makes their ability to monitor as parents more difficult.

## Home Profile: Broadcasters Children Watch

Base: All Parents-NL,007



According to parents, children are now more likely to watch Netflix and YouTube than traditional broadcast channels.

10 ? Q.5 In which of the following ways do your children watch on screen content?

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The context in which this media is consumed has also radically changed. We've gone from predominately family centered habits, where viewing occurs in mostly communal settings with other members of the family present, subject to a high level of parental monitoring (if only by default), to much more siloed consumption of media, particularly after the age of about 7/8 where viewing often takes place in a child's room.

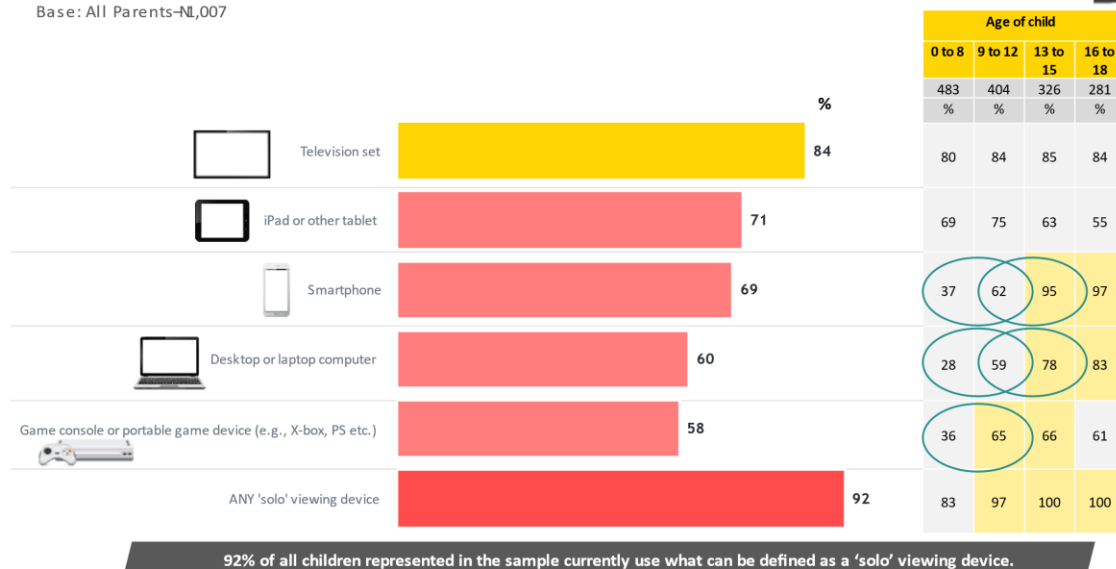
The next major milestone is getting their own phone, which is a game changing moment for most pre-teens/teens, opening up a world of independence in terms of modern consumption, freeing them from family TVs/tablets to watch more self-directed material in their own space. The qualitative feedback suggested 11/12 as the typical age for when this happens.

In the national survey, 92% of all children up to 18 years represented in the sample currently use what can be defined as a solo viewing device: by this we mean a portable device which could potentially be positioned in an area of the home where children could watch on their own.

In the table below these devices include an iPad or other tablet, a smart phone, desktop or laptop computer, and a game console or portable game device. This overall incidence of 92% fluctuated by age of child: being 83% among children up to 8 years; and then 100% among children from 13 years onwards.

## Home Profile: Devices Children use

Base: All Parents-NL,007



8 ? Q.4 Which of the following devices do you currently use?

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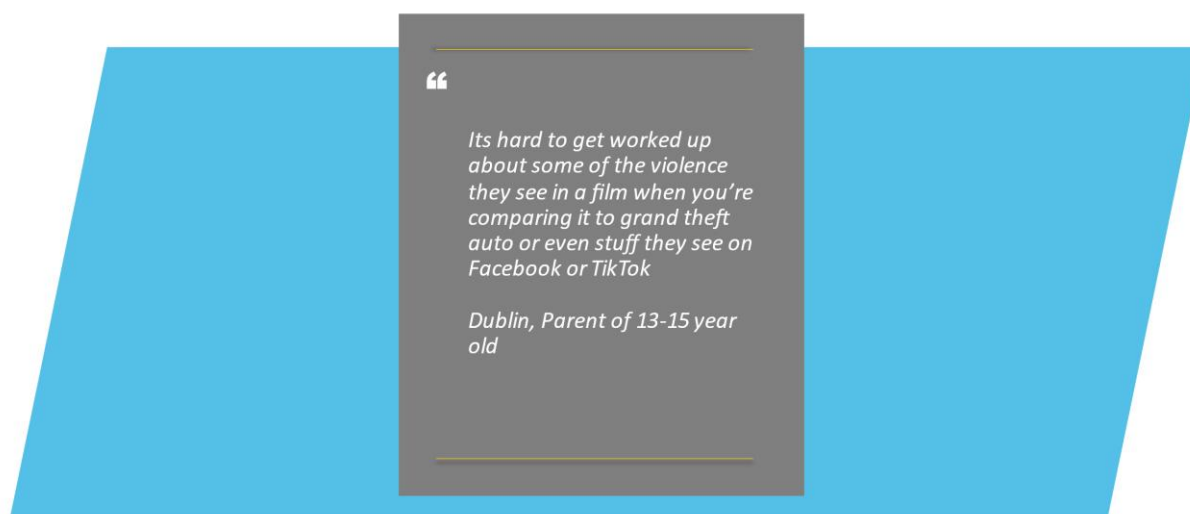
As the table above indicates the big transitional period was between the age categories of up to 8 years and then 9 to 12 years: here usage of smart phones, desktops and game consoles all rose considerably. A same sharp rise was then evident between the 9 to 12 years and 13 to 15 years categories for use of smart phones and desktop/laptop computers.

Analysis of the data also revealed that on average children use 3 *solo viewing devices*: the average being 2.4 devices among children up to 8 years; and 3.8 devices among children 16 to 18 years.

## Parental monitoring

When it comes to parental monitoring, professionally created content is less concerning to parents than user generated content on channels like YouTube and TikTok. These channels are seen as “the wild west” and deemed to be worryingly unpredictable, unregulated and uncontrollable. Gaming also prompts higher levels of concern.

There is much more confidence in cinema, DVD releases and official TV channels where classifications are already available and there is trust that content meets some degree of professional standards. When it comes to streaming services, algorithms and parental controls are relied upon (if only by default) to help monitor the suitability of material, however there is strong suspicion around the efficacy of controls and a desire for greater consistency and clarity across the board.



In the national survey, it was evident that parents could struggle with the new media environment. 50% of parents agreed ‘it can feel overwhelming monitoring the number of media devices in the house’.

As parents describe the monitoring they are doing, it is clear that this is very light touch. They talk about things like ‘keeping an eye’ or ‘keeping an ear’ on what’s going on, outsourcing to algorithms or parental controls, or checking devices retrospectively (though it is not clear how much of this is actually happening).

For parents, once children reach about 15-16, intensive monitoring (checking devices for example) seems inappropriate. There comes a point where children’s privacy takes priority, and a trust-based relationship is more important. However, teenagers themselves suggest that monitoring stops at an earlier age (12/13). Getting a phone marks the beginning of the end of parental monitoring and while retrospective ‘checking’ of devices is followed for a while, eventually this tails off, usually within a year of the phone appearing. It is clear that this is a generation taking responsibility for their viewing from a young age.

In the national survey, frequency of checking the age classification for films, TV series/box sets and video games peaked among parents of children under 13 years. Frequency of checking declined steadily

thereafter with only 28% of parents of 13 to 15-year-old children, and 22% of parents of 16 to 18-year-olds defining themselves as *frequent checkers* of classifications.

Overall, 44% of parents indicated that to their knowledge, *their children have regularly/occasionally watched content that was classified for older viewers*.

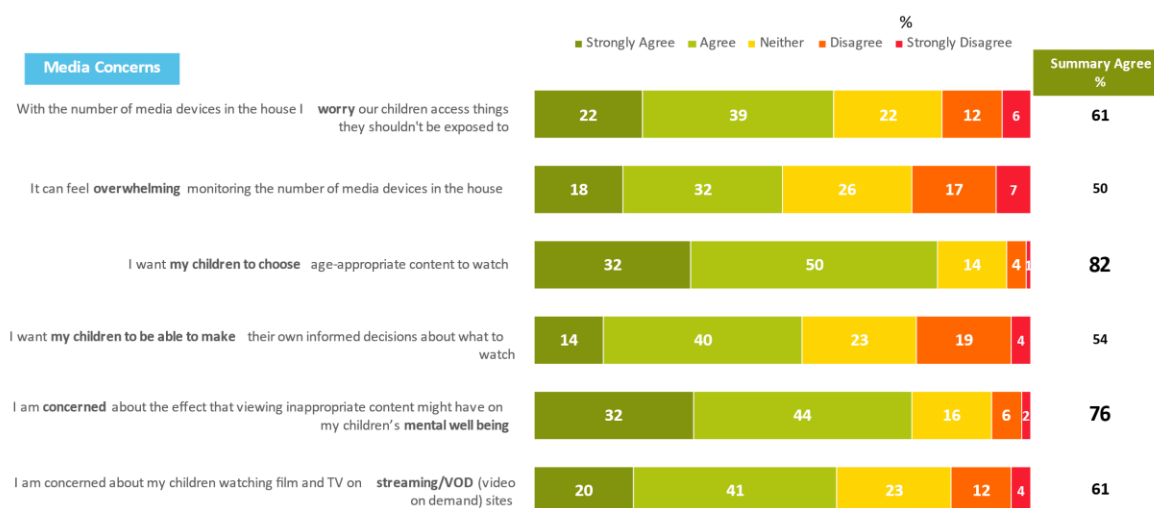
It becomes clear in the research that parental ‘light touch’ monitoring is largely ineffective. Most parents appear to lack a good understanding of what their children are watching past the age of about 8/9. The pre-tasks suggested that, prior to taking part in the research, parents were largely happy with the content their children were consuming, with high levels of trust in streaming services/commercial TV and film to shield children from problematic material. However, after spending some time in the groups, viewing material that their children had been watching, they were much less happy about the kind of content being consumed by older children in particular. Many parents started to feel let down by the streaming services (Netflix especially) for their lack of safeguarding.

Concern over the impact of the range of home devices and streamed content was evident in the National Survey. 76% of parents agreed that ‘*I am concerned about the effect that viewing inappropriate content might I have on my children’s mental well-being*’; while 61% agreed that ‘*with the number of media devices in the house, I worry our children access things they shouldn’t be exposed to*’. In addition, the same percentage of parents, 61%, agreed ‘*I am concerned about my Children watching films and TV on streaming/VOD sites*’.

The desire for self-supervision was reviewed in the national survey: 82% of parents agreed that they ‘*want their children to choose age appropriate content to watch*’; however, the extent of agreement declined to 54% in relation to ‘*I want my children to be able to make their own informed decisions about what to watch*’, indicating the continued need for forms of supervision as well as guidance.

## Attitudes: Parents & Media

Base: All Parents-NL,007



30 ? Q.26 How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

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## Summary & Conclusions

*The key learnings from the qualitative phase with parents can be summarised as follows:*

- Parents are facing a much tougher job than previous generations in getting a handle on the material that their children are watching day to day.
- The techniques/strategies they're using are not very effective and without them knowing it, their children are exposed to TV and film content that parents are not happy with.
- This is compounded by the fact that their attention and concern is elsewhere, seeing Social Media/YouTube/Gaming as much more problematic when it comes to monitoring and exposure.
- As the focus shifts towards in-home/streaming IFCO's ability to support parents in their monitoring becomes more limited.
- IFCO itself is viewed fairly positively, albeit with little recognition of recent communications of IFCO's role and remit among parents.
- There is an opportunity to communicate some of the following points more clearly to establish what IFCO does more firmly in people's minds.
  - Our classification system, what makes it different, the nuance of various aspects (A for example).
  - What material we classify and what we don't; especially given the concerns raised in relation to Netflix's perceived approach.
- When revamping guidelines in the future, it's worth paying particular attention to the most concerning areas for parents (as outlined by this report).
  - **Violence/Threat:** Graphic/ Gruesome violence, Violence/threats that feel pertinent to children's real lives, Serious consequences of violence made obvious, Threats/violence that impact on a psychological level.
  - **Discrimination and derogatory representation/language:** Use of politically problematic language, reinforcing problematic stereotypes without questioning them, Obvious sexual suggestiveness in inappropriate contexts, introducing complex political historical issues before child is informed enough to understand, creating negative associations with normal states of being, Brutal/violent representations of bullying, Inappropriate use of humour.
  - **Sexual violence/suicide/young people:** Graphic representations of suicide/self-harm/sexual violence, Normalisation, glamorisation and/or 'encouragement' of problematic behaviour, suicide/drug taking, 'Depraved' behaviours like taking sexual advantage of the vulnerable.
- Some other suggestions coming from discussion with parents that merit consideration.
  - More commonality between IFCO ratings and similar guidelines such as PEGI.
  - Using school curricula to help guide appropriateness of historical content on race/other issues open to discrimination.
  - Considering adult 'trigger' warnings for material that may be difficult to watch whatever the age.

***The key learnings from the qualitative phase with teenagers can be summarised as follows:***

- We have a generation of teens who are used to forging their own way in a challenging world that is significantly different to the one their parents grew up in.
- Resilience, self-reliance, education, prioritising of their own mental health are important skills they have developed and continue to foster.
- With regards to content consumed, from about the age of 13/14, this is mostly done alone and with minimal parental supervision/monitoring.
  - Though help and support can be sought after the fact from parents if relationships are good.
- IFCO should consider targeting this age group more directly, as going through the parental channel will be ineffective for many.
  - Knowledge of IFCO is limited for this age group, though they are very aware of 'cinema ratings'.
  - There is an opportunity to communicate IFCO's role and remit much more strongly to this group.
- Further facilitated by COVID, the focus has shifted almost entirely to in-home consumption, with streaming playing a very significant role. Consideration should be given to IFCO performing a role in this context.
- Of all the areas explored, **Sexual violence/suicide/young people** is the one where guidance/boundaries are most needed by the target (this should be expanded out to include any 'heavy' content that can take its toll on mental health).
  - Classic areas taken into consideration by the classifiers (violence/'bad' language) have less and less relevance for this group.
- This age group would like to see less focus on age classification and more emphasis on alerting them to triggering content to help teenagers make their own decisions about what is and isn't suitable for them to watch.
  - Though this is a strategy more suitable for in-home viewing. Cinema can't be a free for all and they do see that.
- Professional support services, such as those offered by Netflix, are valued by this age group, though no one shared experiences of actually using them. These will probably become more prevalent in the future, so it may be worth thinking about how IFCO could engage/promote services like these.
  - Mental health maintenance should become a key part of the strategy for IFCO.

***The key learnings from the National Survey of Parents can be summarised as follows:***

- Practically all children currently use a 'solo' viewing device; and are now more likely to watch Netflix and YouTube than traditional TV channels. Adapting to this context will maximise IFCO's relevance.

- Parental concern over what their children do and can watch is consistently evident: 76% of parents agreed that 'I am concerned about the effect that viewing inappropriate content might have on my children's mental well-being'.
- The high incidence of parents checking age classifications (film/ TV/ video games) falls off markedly when children reach their teenage years: suggesting this parental group as a key target for IFCO.
- Notwithstanding this, the attitudinal statement which received the most positive endorsement related to the primacy of parental responsibilities: with 83% agreeing that 'classifications are a useful guide only – at the end of the day it is the responsibility of the parent or guardian'.
- 80% of parents aware of the organization trust IFCO to provide reliable age ratings; and 88% of parents evaluate the sample IFCO.ie content as useful - affirming its potential in highlighting IFCO's activities.
- The feedback from parents does suggest generalised awareness raising initiatives are required for the age rating symbols; key uncertainty centers around symbols 12A & 15A.
- The vast majority of parents believe the outcome of a film should influence the age rating it receives.
- The issues parents most definitively feel deserve an 18 age rating focus on sex and sexual violence; and the normalisation of problematic behaviour such as suicide or drug taking.
- In addition, key areas of concern for parents are the treatment of child abuse, suicide and bullying. However, 'bullying' is especially perceived as an area which can be treated in an educational / supportive manner.

## Appendix: National Survey Questionnaire

### IFCO National Parents Research Survey Questionnaire

In this survey you are invited to take part in a study on family media habits. We will be asking a range of questions about how and what we watch on TV and at the Cinema. We hope you find it interesting! Even if this topic is not a priority for you, we are still very interested in hearing your opinion and experience. We are seeking responses from a broad cross-section of people to best reflect views in Irish society.

Your answers are completely confidential. Your views will be grouped with those of others so that individual people and their answers cannot be identified. As ever, participation is voluntary, so you can choose to opt out at any time by closing your browser and not returning to the survey. Only fully completed survey responses will be included.

Please tick the box below to continue. By ticking this box you confirm that you understand the purpose of the study, that it is voluntary, and that you consent to taking part.

#### Section A: Family Profile

Q.1 Are you a parent?

Yes	1	
No	2	<b>CLOSE</b>

Q.2 Do you have any dependent children living with you who are aged 18 years or younger?

Yes	1	
No	2	<b>CLOSE</b>

Q.3 Please record below the details of all your children living with you regardless of age (whether above or below the age of 18 years)

	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Age</b>
Youngest child	1	2	
2 <sup>nd</sup>	1	2	

3 <sup>rd</sup>	1	2	
4 <sup>th</sup>	1	2	
5 <sup>th</sup>	1	2	
6 <sup>th</sup>	1	2	
7 <sup>th</sup>	1	2	
8 <sup>th</sup>	1	2	

### Recruit to Quotas x age of youngest child: 0-8, 9-12, 13-15 and 16-18 years

#### Section B: Devices & Viewing

Q.4 Which of the following devices do your children currently use? It does not matter who owns them in the household.

	Child (A)	Child (B)	Child (C) etc.
Television set	1	1	1
Desktop or laptop computer	2	2	2
iPad or other tablet	3	3	3
Game console or portable game device (e.g., X-box, PS etc.)	4	4	4
Smartphone	5	5	5

Q.5 In which of the following ways do your children watch on screen content?

#### **MULTICODE POSSIBLE**

Traditional broadcast channels (RTE, BBC, ITV etc)	1
Sky Movies/ Now TV	2
Netflix	3
Amazon Prime	4
Disney +	5

Other streaming (including Google Play, YouTube etc.)	6
DVD/Blu-ray	7
None of these	8

Q.6 How often would your children **watch content at home** on any device? **SINGLE CODE**

Every day	1
At least 2-3 times a week	2
Once a week	3
Once a fortnight	4
Once a month	5
Less often	6
They never play video games	7

Q.7 And thinking back now to before the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in Ireland, how often would your children have **watched films at a Cinema**? **SINGLE CODE**

Every day	1
At least 2-3 times a week	2
Once a week	3
Once a fortnight	4
Once a month	5
Less often	6
They never play video games	7

Q.8 How often would your children **play video games** on any device? **SINGLE CODE**

Every day	1
At least 2-3 times a week	2
Once a week	3
Once a fortnight	4
Once a month	5
Less often	6
They never play video games	7

### Section C: Film Classification Usage and Attitudes

#### ASK ALL

Q. 9 In general, how often would you check the age classification of the following before your child(ren) view it?

	Always	Sometimes	Never
A film			
A TV series/box set			
A video game			

Q. 10 How often, to your knowledge, have your children watched content that was classified for older viewers? **SINGLE CODE**

Regularly	1
Occasionally	2
Rarely	3
Never	4
Don't know	5



Q. 11 And overall, do you think the age rating symbols used in the classification system in Ireland for films, DVDs and Box Sets are... **SINGLE CODE**

Much too strict	1
A bit too strict	2
About right	3
A bit too lenient	4
Much too lenient	5

Q. 12 How easy or difficult do you think it is to find information about viewing material in terms of its suitability for children and young people?

Very easy	1
Quite easy	2
Not very easy	3
Not at all easy	4
Don't know	5

Q.13 Which, if any, of the following have you used to check the suitability of content for your children? Tick which you have used most often. **MULTIPLE CODE POSSIBLE. RANDOMISE**

Film Classification website	1
Trailers	2
TV adverts	3
Packaging	4
Review in newspaper/magazine	5
Review on TV	6
Review on radio	7
Recommendation website (e.g. Rotten Tomatoes)	8

Review on social media	9
Word of mouth from friends	10
Own children	11
Google search	12
Other (please specify)	13

Q. 14 Did you know that this organisation is responsible for giving films official age ratings in Ireland?



Yes	1
No	2

Q.15 Did you know that this organisation is responsible for giving video games official age ratings across Europe?



Yes	1
No	2

**ASK ALL**

Q. 16 Have you ever visited the IFCO website, [www.ifco.ie](http://www.ifco.ie)?

Yes	1
No	2

**IF YES AT Q.20**

Q. 17 How useful did you find the IFCO website's content?

Very useful	1
Quite useful	2
Not very useful	3
Not at all useful	4
Don't know	5

Q. 18 This is an example of information that appears on the IFCO website, [www.ifco.ie](http://www.ifco.ie).  
How useful is this type of information when checking the suitability of film content for your children?



Genre Drama  
 Director Marc Munden  
 Cast Dixie Egerickx, Colin Firth, Julie Walters  
 Distributor Studio Canal  
 Release Date 11th Dec 2020  
 (as supplied by Distributor)  
 Date Classified 13th Mar 2020  
 Duration 99' 31"  
 Website [www.imdb.com/title/tt2702920/](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt2702920/)

	None	Mild	Moderate	Strong
Violence		✓		
Drugs	✓			
Sex / Nudity	✓			
Language		✓		
Other / Comments	Frightening scenes and bereavement theme.			

Reviews

Very useful	1
Quite useful	2
Not very useful	3
Not at all useful	4
Don't know	5

Q. 19 How much do you trust IFCO to provide reliable age ratings (e.g. ratings that match your views on the suitability of a film for different age groups)?

I trust them all the time	1
I trust them most of the time	2

I can't say/have no view on this	3
I don't trust them most of the time	4
I don't trust them at all	5

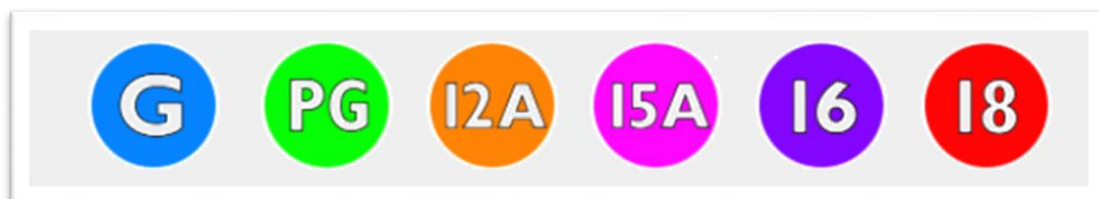
Q. 20 How useful did you think it is when parents and children are provided with specific warnings/ support information for difficult or demanding content in films, DVDs and Box Sets, Video Games?

Very useful	1
Quite useful	2
Not very useful	3
Not at all useful	4
Don't know	5

Q. 21 How useful do you think it would be to have a consistent Irish standard of age ratings across films in cinemas, films on TV such as Netflix and Amazon, and video games?

Very useful	1
Quite useful	2
Not very useful	3
Not at all useful	4
Don't know	5



## Section D: Film Classification Awareness & Understanding



Q.22 As you may know, films, DVDs and Box Sets often have age ratings. Which of the following age rating symbols for Ireland do you recognise? **MULTIPLE RESPONSE POSSIBLE**

Q.23 And to what extent does each of the following age rating symbols have a clear meaning for you? **SINGLE CODE PER STATEMENT**

	Q.22	Q.23		
	Recognise	Very Clear	Fairly Clear	Not Clear
	1	1	2	3
	2	1	2	3
	3	1	2	3
	4	1	2	3

	5	1	2	3
	6	1	2	3
None of these	7			

**NOTE FOR B&A SCRIPTING: ROTATE ORDER OF Qs 24a – 24f**

**PRESENT RANDOM SELECTION OF 3 SYMBOLS AT Q24**

Q.24a What does this symbol mean? **SINGLE CODE. RANDOMISE**



Anyone can watch the film, but young children may need parental guidance	1
Young children can only watch the film with their parents or guardians	2
The film is suitable for anyone	3
Don't Know	4

Q.24b What does this symbol mean? **SINGLE CODE. RANDOMISE**



Anyone can watch the film, but young children may need parental guidance	5
Young children can only watch the film with their parents or guardians	6
The film is suitable for anyone	7
Don't Know	8

Q.24c What does this symbol mean? **SINGLE CODE. RANDOMISE**



Only those 12 years and over can watch the film	1
Those under 12 years can only watch the film with their parents or guardians	2
Anyone can watch the film but it is more suitable for those 12 years and over	3
Don't Know	4

Q.24d What does this symbol mean? **SINGLE CODE. RANDOMISE**



Only those 15 years and over can watch the film	1
Those under 15 years can only watch the film with their parents or guardians	2
Anyone can watch the film but it is more suitable for those 15 years and over	3
Don't Know	4



Q.24e What does this symbol mean? **SINGLE CODE. RANDOMISE**



Only people 16 years and over can watch the film	1
People under 16 years can only watch the film with their parents or guardians	2
Anyone can watch the film but it is more suitable for people 16 years and over	3
Don't Know	4

Q.24f What does this symbol mean? **SINGLE CODE. RANDOMISE**



Only people 18 years and over can watch the film	1
People under 18 years can only watch the film with their parents or guardians	2
Anyone can watch the film but it is more suitable for people 18 years and over	3
Don't Know	4

### ASK ALL

Q. 25 Listed below are 4 different approaches to age ratings used when classifying content for children and young adults.

Please rank the following age ratings from (1) most understandable to (4) least understandable

- - - -

18	18	18	18
16	16	15	15
15A	14	12	12
12A	11	PG	7
PG	7	U	3
G	4		

## Section E: Attitudinal Statements – Parents & Media

### ASK ALL

Q.26 How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

ROTATE CATEGORY & RANDOMISE STATEMENTS WITHIN CATEGORY (CATEGORY TITLES <u>NOT TO BE SHOWN ON SCREEN</u> )	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagreed	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<b>Media Concerns</b>					
With the number of media devices in the house I worry our children access things they shouldn't be exposed to.	5	4	3	2	1
It can feel overwhelming monitoring the number of media devices in the house	5	4	3	2	1
I want my children to choose age-appropriate content to watch	5	4	3	2	1
I want my children to be able to make their own informed decisions about what to watch	5	4	3	2	1
I am concerned about the effect that viewing inappropriate content might have on my children's mental well being	5	4	3	2	1
I am concerned about my children watching film and TV on streaming/VOD (video on demand) sites	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Classification Usage &amp; Attitudes</b>					

Classifications are a useful guide only – at the end of the day it is the responsibility of the parent or guardian	5	4	3	2	1
I would prefer for all media to carry a classification from Ireland	5	4	3	2	1
Ireland has a distinctive cultural/social identity which requires its own set of classifications and advice.	5	4	3	2	1
There should be less focus on age classification and more emphasis on providing warnings before difficult or demanding content	5	4	3	2	1
There is still a need for film censorship (the banning or cutting of films)	5	4	3	2	1
Classifications should be more strictly enforced by cinema owners	5	4	3	2	1
My child(ren) has been upset by the content of a film they watched in the past year	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Family Communication</b>					
Seeing depictions of issues like relationship breakdown, bullying and death on film gives parents a better opportunity to discuss these themes with their children	5	4	3	2	1
Seeing depictions of issues like sexuality and mental health on film and television gives parents a better opportunity to discuss these themes with their children	5	4	3	2	1
Discussing depictions of issues like sexuality and mental health on film and television with my children makes me feel embarrassed/stressed	5	4	3	2	1
Discussing depictions of issues like relationship breakdown, bullying and death on film and television with my children makes me feel confident/happy	5	4	3	2	1

## Section F: Classification Issues

## ASK ALL

Here are issues that IFCO consider when giving age ratings to films.

Q.27 How often do you encounter content in films relating to each of the following that is problematic or concerning for your child(ren)? **SINGLE CODE PER STATEMENT**

RANDOMISE	Regularly	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
<b>Language</b> (incl. swear words; crude sexual language)	4	3	2	1
<b>Discriminatory Language</b> (racial/homophobic/sexist words)	4	3	2	1
<b>Violence</b> (incl. stylised, graphic, sadistic, domestic, racist, homophobic violence)	4	3	2	1
<b>Sexual Violence</b> (incl. rape)	4	3	2	1
<b>Sex</b> (incl. explicit sexual scenes, partial or full nudity, sexualised behaviour)	4	3	2	1
<b>Severe mental health issues</b> (incl. suicide, self-harm, depression, alcoholism, mental disorders)	4	3	2	1
<b>Drugs</b> (incl. Illegal drug use, soft drugs, hard drugs)	4	3	2	1
<b>Horror</b> (incl. bloody and gory scenes, disturbing supernatural scenes as in science fiction/fantasy etc.)	4	3	2	1
<b>Discrimination</b>	4	3	2	1

(incl. depictions that are sexist, misogynistic, racist, bigoted, intolerant)				
<b>Other concerns</b> (please specify_____)	4	3	2	1

## ASK ALL

Q.28 Please see below potential types of content in films. For each, please indicate as best you can, at which age rating it is suitable/ reasonable to encounter this type of content.

**SINGLE CODE PER STATEMENT. ROTATE CATEGORIES & RANDOMISE STATEMENTS WITHIN CATEGORY. (CATEGORY TITLES NOT TO BE SHOWN ON SCREEN)**

	OK at any age	PG	12	15	18
<b>Violence</b>					
If the violence is animated/slapstick.					
If the violence is realistic but without detail.					
If the violence is unjustified (e.g. the victim is 'innocent')					
If there is a high level and detail of blood, gore or injury.					
If the violence is sexual or involves rape.					
<b>Sex/Nudity</b>					
If there is non-sexual natural nudity.					
If there is full frontal nudity in sexual context					
If there is explicit consensual sexual content.					
If women are objectified, typically presented in revealing clothing, sexualised behaviour etc.					

Drugs					
If there are references to soft drugs (e.g., Marijuana).					
if there are references to 'harder' drugs such as heroin, cocaine etc.					
If there are depictions of drug use rather than verbal references about drugs.					
If problematic behaviour such as suicide or drug taking is presented as normal or glamourized.					
Discrimination/Language					
If there are depictions of all types of bullying					
If there are depictions of online shaming, coercion, etc.					
If there is sexist or misogynistic language and behaviour					
If there is racist language and behaviour					
If there is comedic language or behaviour towards groups (inc. gender, sexuality, race etc.).					
If coarse language is used with aggression.					
If coarse language resembles everyday speech.					
Other					
If the overall tone of the film is consistently sad, bleak or depressing.					

Q.29 Which if any of the following subjects have you seen presented in films where viewing was likely problematic or concerning for children older than 12 years? **MULTIPLE RESPONSE POSSIBLE**

Q.30 Which if any of the following subjects have you seen presented in films where viewing was potentially educational/ supportive for children older than 12 years? **MULTIPLE RESPONSE POSSIBLE**

Q.31 The treatment of each of the following subjects in films is of course important. Which are the three most important areas of concern for you as a parent? **PLEASE SELECT THREE OR MORE AS YOU SEE FIT**

Randomise	Q.29	Q.30	Q.31
Suicide	1	1	1
Bullying	2	2	2
Domestic violence	3	3	3
Racism	4	4	4
Sexual harassment	5	5	5
Sexism/misogyny	6	6	6
Child abuse/ paedophilia	7	7	7
Depression	8	8	8
Other Severe Mental Health conditions	9	9	9
Alcoholism	10	10	10
Discrimination against mentally or physically disabled	11	11	11
Treatment of severe/fatal illness	12	12	12

Other (please specify_____)	13	13	13
None of these	14	14	14

Q. 32 Please now consider the following:

A film which addresses a challenging issue ends with that issue being resolved in a responsible and positive manner.

To what extent should a film having a positive outcome or message influence the age rating it receives? **SINGLE CODE**

The outcome of the film should have a <b>strong influence</b> on the age rating it receives	1
The outcome of the film should have a <b>slight influence</b> on the age rating it receives	2
The outcome of the film should have <b>no influence</b> on the age rating it receives	3

**ASK ALL**

Q.33 Are there any other comments you'd like to make about the treatment of types of content or subjects in film? **PLEASE WRITE IN**



**Thank you very much for your participation in this study.**

## Section: Demographics

C.1 Please enter your gender below:

Male	1
Female	2
Other	3

C.2 Please enter your age below:

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C.3 Which county do you live in \_\_\_\_\_?

C.4 Which of the following best describes the area of County \_\_\_\_\_ you live in?

A city	1
A large town (5000+ population)	2
A small town (1,500 – 4,999 population)	3
A rural area	4

C.5 Marital Status

Single	1
Married	2
Cohabiting	3
Widowed	4
Separated/divorced	5
Civil partnership	6

C.6 Are you an Irish citizen?

Yes	1
No	2

Q.6 Is English your first language?

Yes	1
No	2

C.7 What is your current working status?

Working full time (30+ hrs per week)	1
Working Part time (-29 hrs per week)	2
Self-employed (including farmers)	3
Unemployed	4
Home duties	5
Retired	6
Student, not employed	7
Student, working part time	8

C.8 Are you yourself the chief wage earner in your household or not? That is the person who contributes most money to the household income?

Yes	1
No	2

**OCCUPATION OF CHIEF WAGE EARNER**

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C.9 At which stage did finish your education?

Primary level	1
Secondary level	2
Third level	3
Post graduate level	4
Still in education	4
No formal education	5