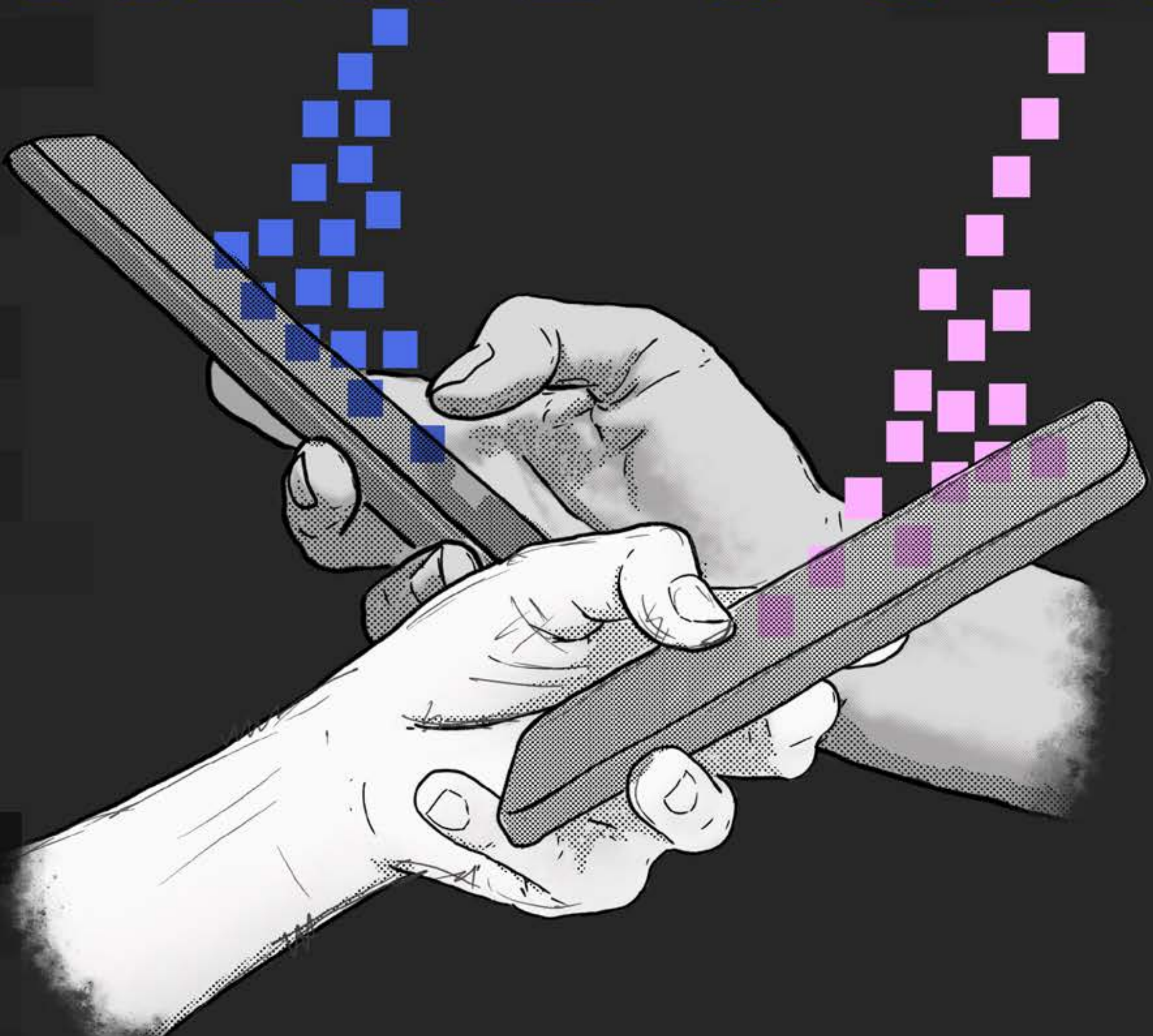
DIGITAL TRAPDOORS



GENDERED PATHWAYS TO YOUTH RADICALISATION

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Contents

Executive summary 4

Foreword 6

Introduction 8

Young people, gender, and the social media landscape 10

Data Desk study: digital tactics in youth radicalisation 16

Conclusion 22

Appendix: Technical annex 24

Executive summary

YOUTH SOCIAL ISOLATION AND POLITICAL DISENFRANCHISEMENT

Online youth radicalisation is a relatively new phenomenon, but it responds to socio-economic and identity pressures that have been decades in the making. Amid an ongoing cost of living crisis, high youth unemployment, and declining social mobility, many young people today are pessimistic about the future. Boys and young men are also experiencing an additional identity crisis, with traditional gender norms fading and a definition of masculinity currently in flux.

Many young people feeling socially isolated turn to the internet seeking connection. Equally, much political frustration and disaffection is expressed online. The far right are capitalising on this, using new online tactics to exploit grievance amongst digital-native generations.

While offline and party political far-right participation in the UK still skews older, there are increasing concerns about young people's vulnerability to far-right messaging in this context.

YOUNG PEOPLE, GENDER, AND THE SOCIAL MEDIA LANDSCAPE

In a new survey, 78% of HOPE not hate supporters believed that being online has a negative overall impact on young people. Bullying, hate speech, and pornographic content were seen as the most pressing categories of online harm because they are both common and risky. Respondents also viewed extremist political content as highly dangerous, though relatively uncommon, whereas misleading or false information was seen as widespread but lower-risk.

Young men and young women consume online content in different ways, and experience distinct forms of online harm. HOPE not hate supporters saw misleading or false information as equally experienced by young men and young women, but extremist political content was associated much more strongly with young men. While the former *can* act as a feeder into far-right spaces, it is not a direct pipeline.

There was also a common perception that the harmful content reaching girls and young women tends to make them look inward, and focus on their appearance, relationships or personal inadequacy. By contrast, harmful content directed towards boys may seek to exploit and frame their grievances in broader, more explicitly political, terms.

The risk of ideological violence perpetrated by young men has more obvious and immediate consequences for our society, but a different kind of content is also feeding on young women's grievances – and we should be equally concerned by it.

ONLINE ENGAGEMENT BAIT AND RADICALISATION PATHWAYS

New research by HOPE not hate's Data Desk has tracked the real social media accounts of a 17 year-old young man and a 22 year-old young woman with the aim of quantifying the impact of social media radicalisation tactics on young people. Analysing more than 11,000 interactions across X, Instagram, and TikTok, the research identified a clear "radicalisation funnel": a multi-stage grooming process designed to progressively isolate young people and normalise extremist ideologies through seemingly innocuous content. Rather than relying on direct exposure to hate speech, extremist networks use calculated "engagement bait" to bypass users' natural defences and slowly draw them into fringe echo chambers.

We found that Instagram sees the highest density of these "baiting" tactics, even though X hosts a much larger volume of this specific type of content overall.

We also found that there is a clear gendered split in how young people are targeted by the far-right online. Young men are primarily targeted on X through aggressive anti-immigration propaganda, conspiracy theories, "manosphere" content, and "binary polls" designed to trigger algorithmic floods of increasingly toxic material. The jump from mild grievance content to outright misogyny and dehumanising rhetoric is often very short. By contrast, young women are drawn in through "soft, appealing" content on Instagram and TikTok, including "tradwife" videos, homesteading accounts, and wellness communities where extreme ideas are hidden beneath a mask of positivity and aestheticised domestic bliss. "Traditional values" are framed as a resistance to modern culture, and influencers tell a "conversion" story of leaving feminism behind that makes radicalisation feel like personal liberation.

BOYS TO THE RIGHT, GIRLS TO THE LEFT?

Across the globe, the political divide is widening. Studies suggest that young women are leaning leftwards and young men rightwards. In the UK, however, support for far-right parties is still driven primarily by older voters, and parties such as Labour and the Greens remain more popular with young men than Reform UK. Nevertheless, the evidence in this report suggests there is little room for complacency.

Far-right actors online, aided by social media algorithms, are targeting both young men and young women. Through the incremental "microdosing" of extremism as entertainment, many young people are being radicalised without even realising it. The structural amplification of regressive ideologies online is shifting the Overton Window offline, and gradually destabilising democracy itself. For young women, the threat is particularly insidious, raising the very real possibility of a broader, slower cultural creep back towards traditional gender roles.

Foreword

By **Nick Lowles**,
CEO of HOPE not hate

‘Police! Police!’

Lee can’t remember if it was that shout or the heavy feet stomping up the stairs that first alerted him to the intruders in the house. It was shortly after 6 a.m. on a morning in September 2020, and he had been in a deep sleep. In what had become normal practice for teenage boys in COVID Britain, Lee had been up late on his computer.

As his shocked parents looked on, horrified and bemused, six burly police officers manhandled Lee in handcuffs and took him downstairs into a waiting minivan. Lee’s mind was racing. He knew why the police were there, but he couldn’t quite understand how bad it was for him. Lee was 16 years old, and he had just been arrested for allegedly disseminating terrorist material.

A few weeks before that fateful morning, Lee had reached out on Instagram to a man who claimed to lead a group called The British Hand. It was a nazi group that wanted to go beyond talking. Lee was told he would have to go through a vetting process, which turned out to be a few simple questions, like his name and why he wanted to join. From there, Lee was asked to download Telegram, a social messaging app widely used by far-right extremists, and join their group there.

Within days, he was hooked. It wasn’t long before his vague prior interests in racist and anti-establishment content gave way to an urge to do more. When complaints about immigration, Muslims, the left and political correctness turned to discussions about violence and terrorism, Lee joined in. He had always wanted to join the army, so when discussion turned to infiltrating the armed forces, he quickly volunteered to do it. From there, he told the group, he could give them weapons training. But then Lee went further. He had seen several references on the internet to the *White Resistance Manual*, an online white-supremacist terrorist handbook written by Axl Hess under the pseudonym Aquilifer in the late nineties or early noughties, which provided advice for making weapons and bombs, and explored the basic tactics of guerrilla warfare. Without a second thought, Lee found a copy online, downloaded it and then shared it in the British Hand group.

Unbeknown to Lee, though, another person had recently joined the British Hand Telegram group – Patrik Hermansson, a researcher with HOPE not hate. Patrik captured Lee’s posts about military training. He was also online when Lee shared the illegal training manual. HOPE not hate went public with the exposure of the group in September 2020. A week later, the police, who had seemingly been unaware of the group, arrived at Lee’s house with a warrant for his arrest.

Lee’s radicalisation had been swift. Literally just a matter of weeks. The COVID lockdown had cut him off from any physical contact with his friends, and he began spending more and more time on the internet. ‘Literally, I was on it all the time,’ he now recalls. ‘I would wake up and go on the computer and besides sleep I was on it all the time. I would not even leave the house, go into the garden, I just wouldn’t do anything else.’ He even took his meals upstairs so he could eat while online.

Before lockdown, he had dipped in and out of 4chan, an online messaging forum that was increasingly used by extremists. But now, as lockdown kept people inside, he began browsing even more extreme forums such as Black Pill, a deeply misogynistic and violent outlet.

The murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis by a US police officer on 25 May 2020 was a key turning point in Lee’s political development. Up until that point, Lee’s core friendship group had been split 50/50 between boys and girls, but Black Lives Matter (BLM) changed all that. ‘Most of the girls were doing Blackout Tuesday,’ he recalls. ‘They were putting black squares up on their Instagram accounts as a sign of solidarity.’ Most of the boys, publicly at least, remained silent, and few offered any public support for BLM. Lee, however, was different. He was angry, and he grew angrier by the day. Why were their lives more important than his? Especially ‘their’ lives. In his mind, his growing dislike of black people now had justification.

As the girls in school, and society at large, aligned themselves with the racial justice movement and condemned structural and institutional racism, Lee was increasingly being drawn in by an alternate reality, consuming more and more racist content and anti-black memes. Unsurprisingly, his friendship group split largely along gender lines. But just as they moved away from him, he was moving away from them: 'I started to build a narrative in my head where I was viewing the world, especially in America, about black people, about left-wing people, as negative. I was disgusted by them.'

The more online content he consumed, the more convinced he was about the righteousness of the arguments. Like many young men and boys who had been "red-pilled", he could now see the truth that was hidden to others, and it made him feel good. It made him feel special. He increasingly felt part of an online family of like-minded people, men he could look up to. By liking a post or a comment he agreed with, he was joining up with others who felt the same. Writing a comment himself that was liked by others made him feel he was being accepted and taken seriously.

While Lee's story is at the more extreme end of what we are seeing, his route to radicalisation is increasingly common. A narrative of neglect, humiliation, and belittlement is being pushed onto young men and, in truth, is felt by too many of them. This breeds a feeling of resentment that manifests in hateful worldviews and, particularly, aggressive misogyny. At the same time, we have to understand that the allure of wellbeing, health, and wealth content online (as advanced by the likes of Andrew Tate) has attracted many young men and boys. Only by recognising the complexity of all this – the push and the pull factors – can we hope to challenge and overcome it.

Lee eventually reached out to HOPE not hate in late 2024. 'I initially hated you,' Lee told me with a wry grin. 'You got me arrested. You got me convicted.'

'And now?' I asked him, trying to understand why he would reach out to his arch enemy.

After a short pause, he gave me his answer. 'I guess you saved my life and I'm thankful for that.'

Introduction

Radicalisation: The psychological process by which individuals are drawn toward extreme political, social, or religious ideologies. This process frequently involves grooming or manipulation by others, though in the digital age some people can 'self radicalise' online.

The 2025 Netflix drama "Adolescence" shocked parents and politicians across the country. The four-part series – in which a 13-year-old boy gets sucked into the online manosphere and murders a female classmate – prompted a national conversation about male youth loneliness, political disaffection, and misogyny that earned 2025 the moniker "year of the boy".[1]

But "Adolescence" was no shock to young people. Today's youth are increasingly living their lives online, and seeing first-hand among peers how hateful attitudes spread, embed, and, in the worst cases, result in co-option to violent extremism. Online radicalisation of this kind is a relatively new phenomenon – but it responds to a set of processes that have been decades in the making.

The root causes of this situation are in large part, socio-economic. Young people today are coming of age in an ongoing cost of living crisis, with youth unemployment sitting at 15.8% and almost one million young people not in education, employment, or training (NEET).[2] The Government's Milburn Review on this crisis is ongoing, but one thing is clear: absolute mobility has crumbled and young people are staring down the barrel of a future where, for the first time, they are expected to be worse off than their parents. It is worth noting that socio-economic status (SES) can also affect susceptibility to online radicalisation, with some research suggesting that young people from lower-SES households may lack the digital resilience or traditional defences (e.g. parental support) to protect them against risks they encounter online.[3]

Of course, it would be remiss not to acknowledge that the age profile of far-right activists in the UK skews older: this plays out amongst attendees of Tommy Robinson marches, people arrested following the Summer 2024 racist riots, and supporters of the radical right political parties Reform UK and Restore Britain. However, there are increasing concerns about how young people's general political outlook makes them vulnerable to radicalisation, and how this might manifest in different behaviours to those we see in older far-right supporters.

Analysis of a HOPE not hate poll of 45,335 adults and 437 16-17 year olds reveals a mixed picture when it comes to young people's political outlook and how it compares by gender and to older generations. There is no statistically significant difference between young men and young women feeling optimistic about the future or feeling disadvantaged in society, with older cohorts more likely to feel politicians don't listen to them, irrespective of gender.

However, young women are more likely to report feeling dissatisfied with how the political system works in the UK, whilst young men follow a broader gender trend with higher levels of agreement that violence can be necessary to defend something you strongly believe in. Young people are no exception to a national mood of political pessimism. What is unique to young men is a seemingly higher willingness to explore more radical avenues as an outlet for these frustrations.

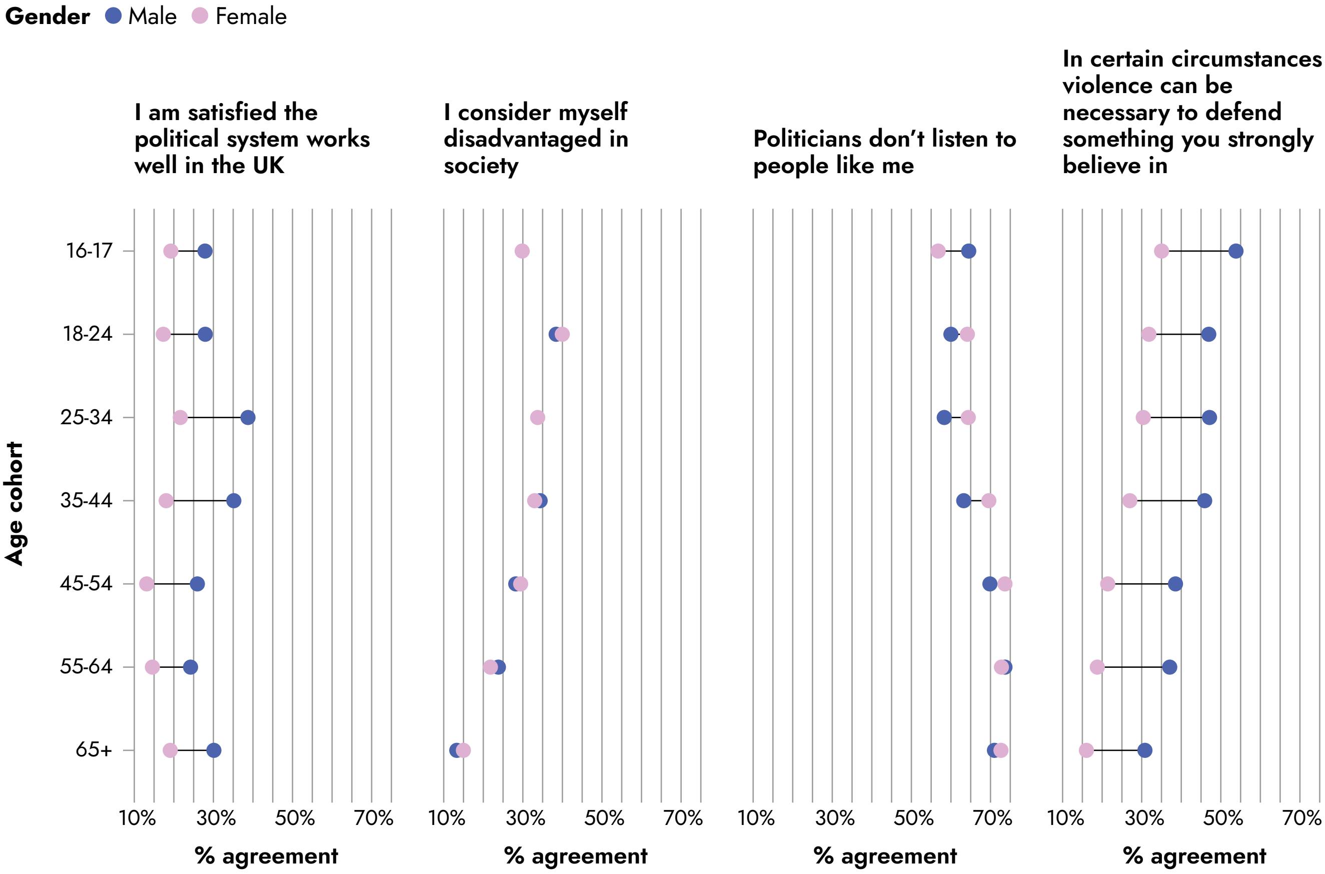
Boys and young men are also experiencing an identity crisis. Progress in gender equality and the twenty-first century mainstreaming of feminism has thrown traditional gender norms into flux. Masculinity, once easily defined through its connotations to power and dominance, is now under revision. These processes, in combination with economic instability, have brought about a crisis of purpose for those previously defined as "providers". Some boys and young men perceive themselves to be in a zero sum game: as women have gained societal status, they have lost it.

Online, these individuals are sitting ducks: filled with grievance and vulnerable to exploitation by anyone ready to give them an "other" to blame. The far right have adapted their approach to a newly digital world but their fundamental appeal remains the same: they offer disaffected young men a chance to reverse their situation, to finally feel superior and to assert power over – and instil fear in – others.[4]

The far right now carry out most of their recruiting and organising online, on 4chan boards, Discord servers, and in closed Telegram groups; but also on mainstream social media platforms such as Instagram and, especially, X (formerly Twitter). There is also a wide reach of far-right

Gender-generation gaps in attitudes to politics

% of respondent answering "strongly agree" or "agree" to statements



Source: Focaldata for HOPE not hate, n=45,335, 1 Aug – 11 Sept 2025
16-17 data conducted at the same time, n487

and "manosphere" ideology on social media beyond the formal institutional. This content is ostensibly non-political but involves the promotion of conservatism, gender essentialism, and a return to traditional values, mixed together with more toxic "red-pill" conspiracy theories.

Manosphere: A loose network of online content, influencers, and communities which promote restrictive, traditional definitions of masculinity and misogynist worldviews. The "manosphere" overlaps with far-right and conspiratorial online spaces. The Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) defines the manosphere as encompassing "multiple types and severities of misogyny – from broader male supremacist discourse to men's rights activism (MRA) and "involuntary celibates" (incels)."

This content is reaching our young people without them having to go looking for it. As reported by IPPR, advances in algorithmic technology have birthed a new type of "sticky" gatekeeping that privileges influencers, advertising, and recommended content.[5] It has made social media less "social". Research by Dublin City University in 2024 found that young men are targeted specifically by misogynistic or male supremacist content – on average within 23 minutes of being on TikTok or YouTube Shorts.[6]

Our research builds on these findings. In the second section of this report, we map out how this process is leveraged by the far right who seek to hook young people with "engagement bait" before funneling them down algorithmic pathways that progressively isolate and radicalise them.

Young people, gender, and the social media landscape

Generation Z – born between 1997 and 2012 – are the first digital-native generation. Their younger siblings, Generation Alpha, have never known a time without smartphones, streaming, and social media. Having spent their formative years conditioned to the daily use of screens, they call themselves the “iPad kids”. Both generations report that technology is central to entertainment, education, news consumption, identity, wellbeing, and connection.[7]

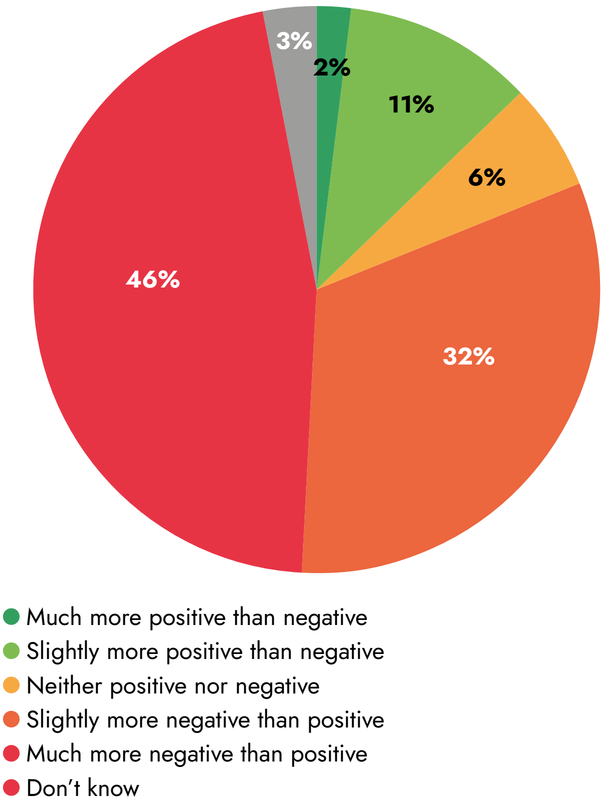
Despite these digital connections, or perhaps because of them, young people are feeling increasingly isolated. This trend is backed by a 2025 YouGov poll for OnSide which found that 34% of young people (aged 11-18) reported high or very high feelings of loneliness.[8]

Young men and young women consume online content in different ways. New research from Equimundo and Beyond Equality indicates that men are almost 10% more likely than women to report finding their online lives more rewarding than their offline lives.[9] Yet, Ofcom’s “Online Nation” research in 2024 showed that men are more likely than women to encounter misinformation (41% vs 37%), scams or fraud (36% vs 31%), and hateful content (27% vs 24%) online.[10] A study by Movember also found that 61% of young men (aged 16-25) regularly engage with masculinity influencers whilst online.[11] “Looksmaxxing” streamer-influencers such as Clavicular (real name Braden Peters) are a burgeoning part of the wider manosphere, appearing alongside far-right figures such as Andrew Tate and Nick Fuentes and bringing niche, extreme, incel-adjacent and distorted male beauty standards into the mainstream. Despite growing recognition of the ways in which body image content affects men, women are still statistically more likely than men to encounter such content (21% vs 13%), as well as to encounter unwelcome friend or follow requests (30% vs 26%) and, interestingly, misogynistic content (23% vs 19%).[12]

Looksmaxxing: the process of maximising one’s own physical attractiveness. This term originated in male incel communities but has been popularised by masculinity influencers in the 2020s. It covers everything from “softmaxxing” (skincare, grooming, and general fitness regimens) to “hardmaxxing” (which includes anabolic steroid usage, cosmetic surgery, and “bonesmashing” – the process of repeatedly striking facial bones with a hammer in the hope that they grow back larger).

HOPE not hate conducted a survey of supporters in April 2026 to understand their attitudes towards young people and online harms. The data presented reflects the view of HOPE not hate supporters and not the general public, but their

Overall, do you think the impact of being online on young people is positive or negative?

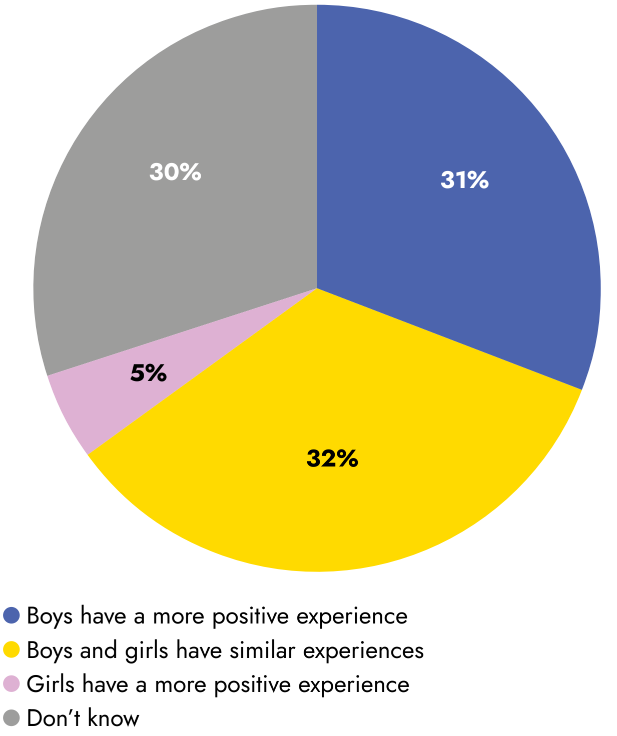


attitudes reveal widespread concerns about the types of harmful content reaching young people online, and a perception that young men and young women experience different online harms.

Of 1,063 survey respondents, 78% thought that being online had a negative overall impact on young people, with 46% saying the impact is “much more negative than positive”. Just 13% of respondents thought that being online was a net positive for young people.[13]

When asked to consider gendered experiences online, nearly a third (31%) of respondents thought boys had the more positive experiences online, whilst another third (34%) thought boys and girls had equivalent experiences. Just 5% thought girls had the more positive online experiences.

Overall, who do you think tends to have more positive experience online?



Respondents were then asked to give their thoughts on nine specific types of potentially harmful online content: which did they think young people encounter most *frequently* and which did they think posed the greatest *risk* to young people’s safety and wellbeing? Taken together, these findings give an indication of how respondents prioritise different forms of online harm according to perceived prevalence and seriousness, as opposed to actual incidence or objective risk. The diagram below depicts respondents’ issue perception on a risk x frequency matrix.

These findings suggest that bullying or harassment, hate speech, and pornographic content are viewed as the most pressing challenges because they are both common and risky. At the same time, the perception of both hate speech and extremist political content as higher-risk online harms (albeit with different frequencies) indicates concern about the socio-political consequences of what young people are consuming online. Extremist political content, though, is seen as relatively uncommon, whereas misleading or false information – often a precursor to political extremism – is seen as widespread but low-risk.

Interestingly, in the biannual Internet Matters Pulse survey, “misinformation” now polls top amongst concerns that parents have for their children online with 8 in 10 parents worried about their child being exposed. The survey found that 40% of parents are talking to their kids about the risks of misinformation and fake news. But radicalisation, which is sometimes the end product of that misinformation, is being discussed by just 13% of parents.[14]

Our respondents’ assessments, then, appear to be accurate. They reflect the fact that misleading or false information *can* act as a feeder into extremist political spaces, although it is not a direct pipeline. In other words, not all those who experience it will end up in extreme or far-right spaces. By contrast, specificity about the type of information matters. Radicalisation is certainly the common end goal of much orchestrated, top-down, political disinformation. But, by contrast, organic or community misinformation (e.g. the spread of health fads or inaccurate local news) does not intend to radicalise, although it does have the potential to distort public opinion and erode trust over time.

Misinformation: misleading or false information spread inadvertently and without intent to harm.

Disinformation: misleading or false information deliberately designed and spread with malicious intent.

Mis- and disinformation are not the only feeders of online radicalisation, and whilst we did not specifically prompt this in our survey, the Data Desk research later in this report reveals the role that softer, “lifestyle” content can play in funnelling young people toward politically extreme corners of the internet.

Frequently experienced, higher-priority risk ■ Bullying or harassment ■ Hate speech ■ Pornographic content	**Frequently experienced, lower-priority risk** ■ Misleading or false information ■ Body image content
Less frequently experienced, higher-priority risk ■ Self-harm or suicide content ■ Extremist political content	**Less frequently experienced, lower-priority risk** ■ Financial harms ■ Unhealthy gender stereotypes

Parents understandably feel concerned about misinformation online, but other types of content might also have a radicalising effect – particularly for girls and young women.

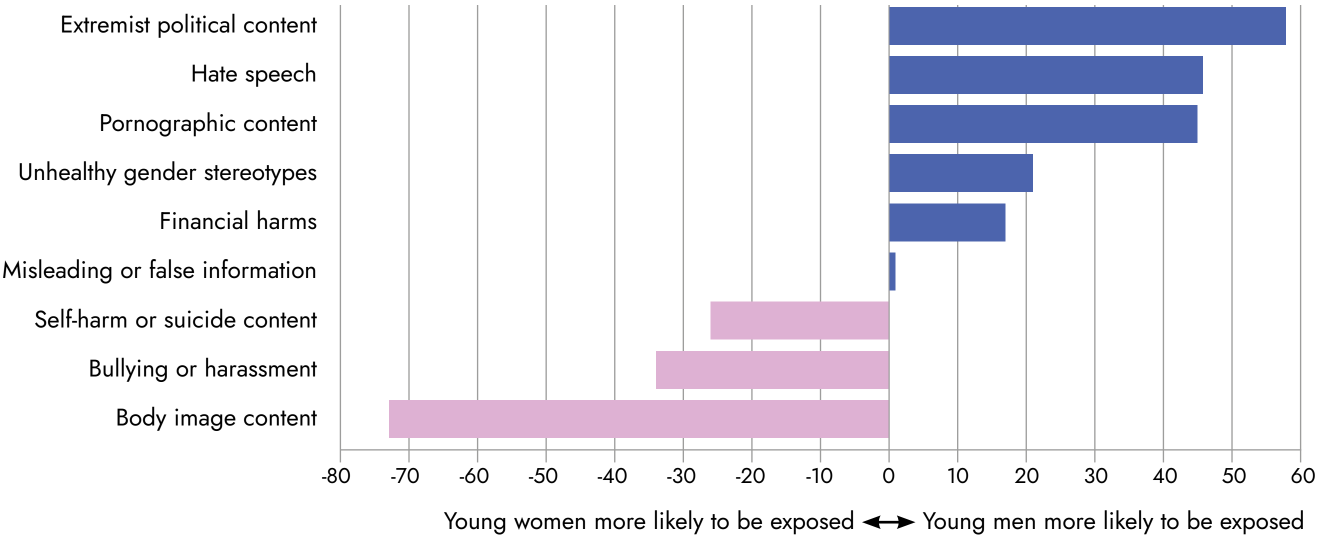
Asked to consider whether each type of content was more likely to be encountered by young men or young women, respondents saw false or misleading information as equally experienced (perhaps reflecting the breadth of the category itself) but associated extremist political content much more strongly with young men's online experiences.

Reflecting on this data as a whole, several idiosyncrasies emerge. Despite a majority belief that girls have the more negative online experiences, the prioritisation of harms did not exactly map on to those that disproportionately affect girls and young women. It is also striking that the types of online content perceived to be lower-risk are those where the potential "damage" (be it financial losses or eating disorders) would primarily be to the self. Relatedly, there appears to be a common perception that the harmful content reaching girls and young women tends to make them look inward, and focus on their appearance, relationships or personal inadequacy. By contrast, harmful content directed towards boys may seek to exploit and frame their grievances in broader, more explicitly political, terms.

The risk of ideological violence perpetrated by young men has more obvious and immediate consequences for our society. It also arguably makes for a more sensationalist and engaging story – a "youth panic" narrative. But this is a short-termist and incomplete picture. There is evidently insecurity and grievance ripe for exploitation amongst girls and young women too. Aestheticised, aspirational, lifestyle content feeds on this grievance. It is ostensibly non-political but clearly counter-progressive and, over time, risks degrading hard-won social norms. The second section of our report maps out these two, different, gendered pathways to far-right radicalisation.

Do you think that young women are more likely to be exposed to the following types of online content?

(Total % selection for young men minus total % selection for young women)



SPOTLIGHT: SCHOOLCHILDREN IN HITCHIN (HERTFORDSHIRE)

As part of the Government's Spring 2026 consultation on children's online safety, focus groups were held with 92 pupils across five secondary schools in the constituency of Hitchin. Pupils were aged between 11 and 18.

In general, it was felt that boys face distinct and gendered online harms including radicalisation, extremist content, toxic influencers, pornography, and gaming-linked risks. Exposure to real-world violence (such as the Charlie Kirk shooting) via social media is shaping boys' understanding of conflict and risk.

Evidence from Hitchin Boys' School and mixed-gender groups at other schools indicate that boys are more likely to encounter:

- Radicalisation and extremist content (in a focus group of 21 pupils at Samuel Whitbread Academy, 100% of the male pupils reported having been exposed to radical content)
- Toxic male influencers and pressure to adopt harmful masculine norms (Andrew Tate was repeatedly cited)
- Violence, gore and real-world conflict footage (including one boy describing seeing the Charlie Kirk shooting video, hearing the gunshot and seeing images circulate online)
- Political manipulation and misinformation (e.g. AI tools "praising Hitler")
- Gaming-linked risks (stranger contact, voice chat, coercion)
- Pornography
- Identity fraud and impersonation

Girls are more likely to encounter:

- Body image pressure and beauty standards
- Self-harm and eating disorder content
- Influencer-driven lifestyle pressure
- Comparison culture
- Sexualised content and exploitation risks
- Friendship-based bullying
- Self-diagnosis content

SOURCE: Office of Alistair Strathern MP

SPOTLIGHT: PARENTS IN HYNDBURN (LANCASHIRE)

As part of the Government's Spring 2026 consultation on children's online safety, 61 adults were surveyed in the constituency of Hyndburn. Respondents were predominantly parents and carers, with some additional input from professionals working in education and youth support.

There was 71% agreement that boys and girls are being subjected to different forms of online harms.

Respondents most commonly reported boys under their care accessing:

- Bullying or harassment (including hate speech)
- Dangerous challenges or risky behaviour content
- Inappropriate or sexual content
- Scam, fraud, or misleading content

Respondents most commonly reported girls under their care accessing:

- Inappropriate or sexual content
- Content promoting eating disorders or harmful body image
- Self-harm or suicide-related content
- Scam, fraud, or misleading content

SOURCE: Office of Sarah Smith MP

SPOTLIGHT: HOPE NOT HATE SUPPORTERS

In HOPE not hate supporters' free text explanations of why young men and young women may encounter different forms of online harm, algorithms were cited almost ubiquitously.

Some felt that algorithms are purely engagement-driven: recommending associated content to improve personalisation but also amplifying provocative or controversial content because it is more likely to provoke user interaction.

> ***"Part of it is the way online material is delivered, so if I search for blue trousers, I will also get information on red and green trousers, plus blue t-shirts, blue shoes and blue socks. An innocent enough search will always be manipulated into more niche content."***

[supporter, female, 45-64]

> ***"The monetisation of clicks means that controversial content is prioritised by social media companies"***

[supporter, male, 45-64]

> ***"Content selection algorithms actively select for content which provokes stronger reactions and tend to lead people down pipelines and/or into bubbles"***

[supporter, another gender, 22-44]

Respondents further suggested that content may be shaped according to the online spaces young people occupy. For example, online gaming or sports fan communities were frequently associated with exposure to more extreme or "manosphere" content.

> ***"Gaming content (more widely consumed by boys) also tends to lean towards 'edgy' humour, which lends itself to hate speech and political extremism (and can lead boys down a rabbit hole of right wing extremist content, even when this starts out as an innocent enjoyment of gaming content)"***

[supporter, female, 22-44]

But most believed that algorithms actively tailor and target content – often on the basis of users' demographic data.

> ***"All the social media, most search engines and AI are controlled by right wing billionaires so we're subtly and unsubtly fed whatever suits their political and financial interests."***

[supporter, female, 22-44]

> ***"I think algorithms target you based on demographic. All demographics are sent harmful content but the specifics change depending on information they have scraped from you without your full knowledge or informed consent"***

[supporter, female, 22-44]

In particular, this targeting was widely felt to be gendered in nature.

> ***"I think often people are exposed to the same message in different ways, for example misogyny can be packed very differently for teenage boys versus teenage girls."***

[supporter, female, 22-44]

> ***"The online platforms are designed to appeal to the stereotypical male or female and move their political views slightly further to the right at each stage until they are seeing only extreme views reinforcing those views."***

[supporter, male, 65+]

Respondents believed that boys and young men are specifically targeted with more explicitly hateful or political content.

> ***"My son certainly gets target[ed] with political content, which is ironic when my daughter is the politically active one. But the content my son sees is very right wing. He ignores it, because he isn't right wing or a racist, but the algorithm definitely seeks him out because he is a white male."***

[supporter, female, 45-64]

> ***"In my experience boys seem to be led more into right wing political extremism through accessing content about nutrition and fitness. My own son uses lots of language and memes that derive from the manosphere but that have now become mainstream... [in] content about fitness and content about what it means to be a man... I have to challenge these assumptions all the time."***

[supporter, female, 45-64]

> ***"Showing interest in stereotypically 'male' hobbies tends to prompt a lot of social media algorithms (Youtube, Tiktok etc) to start pushing hateful or 'Manosphere' type content even if it had not been previously sought out. I had this experience personally on Youtube."***

[supporter, male, 21 or under]

For some boys and young men, who may otherwise feel isolated, this content opens up seductive opportunities for connection.

> ***"Young men are searching for community when society chastises them for being vulnerable, so the content expresses their anxiety in hateful, get-rich quick fantasies"***

[supporter, female, 22-44]

> ***"Peer confirmation bias gives a sense of belonging and respect that individuals lack from real life social interaction."***

[supporter, female, 22-44]

> ***"The chance to offer an opinion – to be acknowledged – is a dangerous lure."***

[supporter, male, 65+]

> ***"Additionally there is a cohort of less visible young people such as those who are persistently absent from school or experiencing bullying – who may be particularly vulnerable. These individuals may turn to online communities for connection and support , however, in some cases, such spaces can expose them to extreme viewpoints, misinformation, or manipulation narratives. This can increase the risk of being drawn into progressively more harmful content."***

[supporter, female, 65+]

But algorithms do more than capture attention temporarily; they ingrain lasting behavioural habits in users that can persist well into adulthood. Older respondents' testimonies indicate that young people are likely to face an even longer-term risk of exploitation and radicalisation – particularly if they remain or become vulnerable later in life. Moreover, if these digital patterns are strong enough to shape how adults think and act, younger people are at even greater risk.

> ***"During a period of depression and substance abuse, youtube started feeding me culture war and misogynistic leaning content that, when I got clean, became abhorrent to me."***

[supporter, male, 22-44]

> ***"I've had one (now) acquaintance who said he was sometimes repulsed by his algorithm but a couple of months later told me he had joined a Neo Nazi group in Ireland called Clan Eireann. The last I heard about him was that he had taken a drug overdose but survived. We don't talk anymore."***

[supporter, male, 22-44]

Online radicalisation, then, is clearly understood by HOPE not hate supporters as taking place within a broader social and emotional context. Platform algorithms were frequently identified as being intentionally designed to trigger strong emotional responses – hence making social media an "inherently polarising" environment.

Finally, respondents recognised that vulnerability to harmful content and radicalisation online is closely connected to young people's offline lives.

> ***"I have little doubt that both (young men and young women) can easily fall into the rabbit holes of harmful content. What is their life like away from online? Do they feel at all hopeful about their futures? Are they being pressured by their peers? What are their relationships like with their families?"***

[supporter, female, 65+]

SOURCE: Responses to the question "If you think young men and young women tend to encounter different types of harmful content online, why do you think this is?" in HOPE not hate online survey of 1,063 supporters in April 2026.

Data Desk study: digital tactics in youth radicalisation

To start to quantify the impact of social media radicalisation tactics on young people, HOPE not hate's Data Desk have conducted a Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA) to understand how digital spaces are being leveraged for youth radicalisation. We looked at how 'engagement bait', an increasingly common tactic for pulling young users into fringe echo chambers, shows up across different social media platforms.

We analysed over 11,000 interactions[15] across three mainstream social media platforms and found a clear pattern. Extremist networks are using a step-by-step process, or "funnel" to slowly draw young people in. Far-right and manosphere adjacent accounts use clever tactics designed to bypass users' natural defences and the platforms' own safety rules. This funnel is a well-established model used for understanding how radicalisation works[16] and is increasingly applied in online spaces.

To keep our research grounded in reality, we brought together a small team of young researchers to get an insight into the digital world through their eyes. By following the authentic online experiences and real social media accounts of a 17 year-old young man and a 22 year-old young woman, we were able to track and catalogue a specific sample of engagement bait directly from their feeds, providing a clear dataset for our analysis.

The funnel

The term "radicalisation funnel" describes a multi-stage online grooming process designed to progressively isolate young people and normalise extremist ideologies. For the purposes of this assessment, we have simplified this process into three inter-related stages. Unlike traditional radicalisation models that assume direct exposure to hate speech, the radicalisation funnel operates through seemingly innocuous content that builds trust before revealing its ideological core[17]. This assessment looks at how far-right ideas are becoming normalised on social media sites like X, Instagram, and TikTok and reports the initial findings of our youth research team.

Headline findings

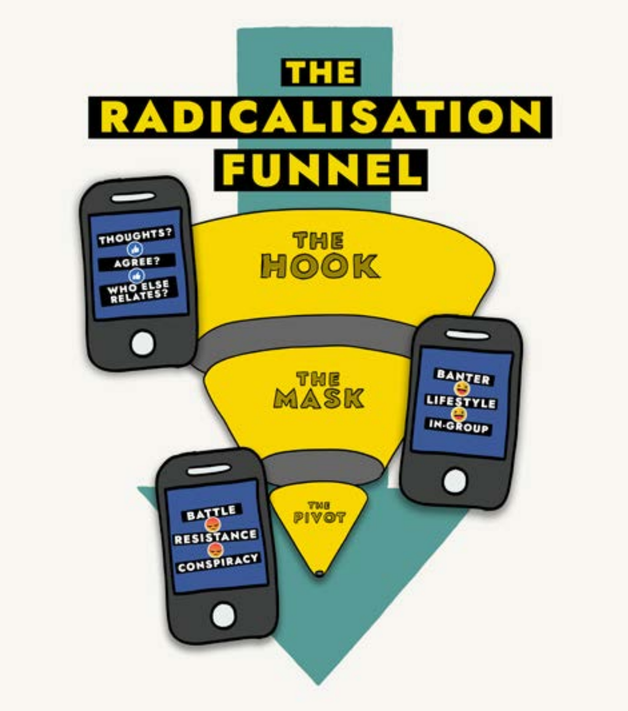
We found that Instagram sees the highest density of these "baiting" tactics, even though X hosts a much larger volume of this specific type of content overall. One of our early key findings is that young men and women are being targeted in completely different ways.

- **Young men** are targeted on X with a much more aggressive approach. This includes non-stop anti-immigration propaganda, conspiracy theories, and content from the 'manosphere' that feeds on male grievance.
- **Young women** are drawn in through "soft, appealing" content on Instagram and TikTok. Think 'Tradwife' videos, homesteading accounts, and wellness communities, where extreme ideas are hidden beneath a layer of aesthetic posts.

Once someone engages with this initial content, the platform's algorithm takes over. It quickly fills their feed with increasingly extreme material. It doesn't just share information; it creates an environment where these radical beliefs start to feel like a natural part of who you are.

How the funnel works

This funnel process isn't random. It's a multi-stage process designed to bait young people into engagement:



Stage 1: The Hook (top of funnel)

It starts with a simple question. Posts use phrases like "Agree?", "Thoughts?", or "Who else relates?" to get users to comment. When they do, the platform's algorithm sees this as interesting and starts showing that user more of the same. This is the first step down the rabbit hole.

Stage 2: The Mask (mid-funnel)

Next the content is masked. For boys and young men, it's often wrapped in irony or "banter." For girls and young women, it's the picture-perfect world of homesteading or a "simple life." This creates a sense of belonging to an in-group, while giving the creators an excuse if anyone complains: "it's just a joke" or "it's just my lifestyle." It's designed to stay just within the platform's rules.

Stage 3: The Pivot (bottom of funnel)

Once trust is built, the mask slips. Lifestyle choices are reframed as a battle. A love for home cooking is turned into an act of resistance against modern feminism. Concerns about immigration are presented as proof of a conspiracy. It's framed as a simple, almost existential choice.

Which platform uses engagement bait most?

From our initial sample of posts, comments and replies, the following chart shows the percentage of engagement bait content by platform.

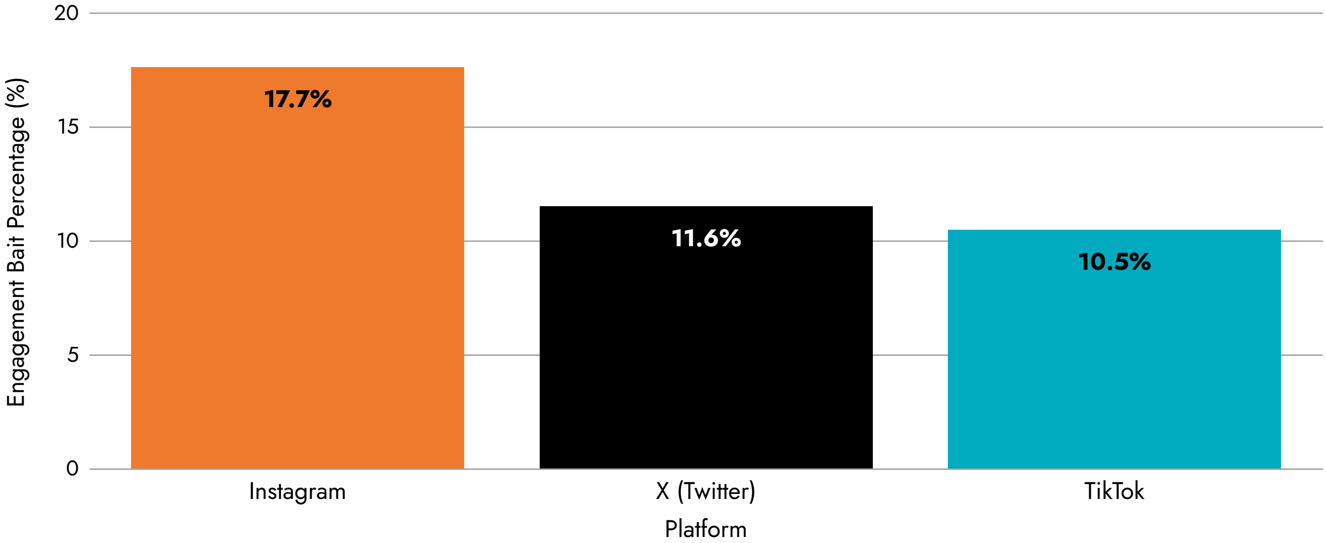
Engagement bait is used in Instagram posts more than the other two platforms analysed at 17.7% of all content with the platform acting as a main entry point for this "soft sell" approach. Its focus on reductive 'trad-wife' imagery and 'strong community' rhetoric makes it the perfect place for the mask stage to work. X and TikTok exhibit slightly lower but significant volumes of engagement bait at around 11% of total content sampled.

A full definition and methodology applied to identify engagement bait is described in the technical annex in the appendix.

Examples from the data: Two pathways

The following presents some of the key verbatim examples identified during our research, organised by target gender, platform, and radicalisation stage. All quotes are reproduced exactly as captured in the original dataset.[18] Despite some overlap, there were some clearly defined differences in approach to gender targeting.

Engagement Bait as a Percentage of Platform Sample



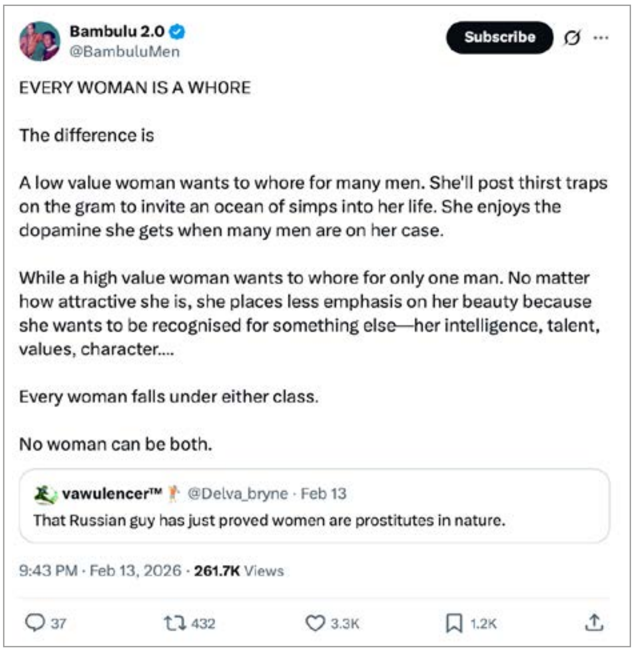
Source: HNH Data Desk, X, TikTok, Instagram, social media platforms, Jan 2026

Targeting young men: Aggression and the 'Manosphere' on X

Our research found that the radicalisation pathway for young men is prolific. X, with its quick-fire format and loose moderation, is the perfect breeding ground for this type of content.

Our researchers found that once you bypass the age checks and hover over right-wing content, the feed explodes within an hour. The algorithm does all the work: "*It becomes a breeding ground for toxicity... full of posts designed to rally groups together against anyone they can find.*"[19]

A huge amount of this content uses AI-generated images with inflammatory slogans. It pushes posts about an "invasion," with phrases like "*From the English Channel to the Sea, England will be free*" used to frame the Muslim population as an existential threat.



Bambulu 2.0
@BambuluMen

EVERY WOMAN IS A WHORE

The difference is

A low value woman wants to whore for many men. She'll post thirst traps on the gram to invite an ocean of simps into her life. She enjoys the dopamine she gets when many men are on her case.

While a high value woman wants to whore for only one man. No matter how attractive she is, she places less emphasis on her beauty because she wants to be recognised for something else—her intelligence, talent, values, character....

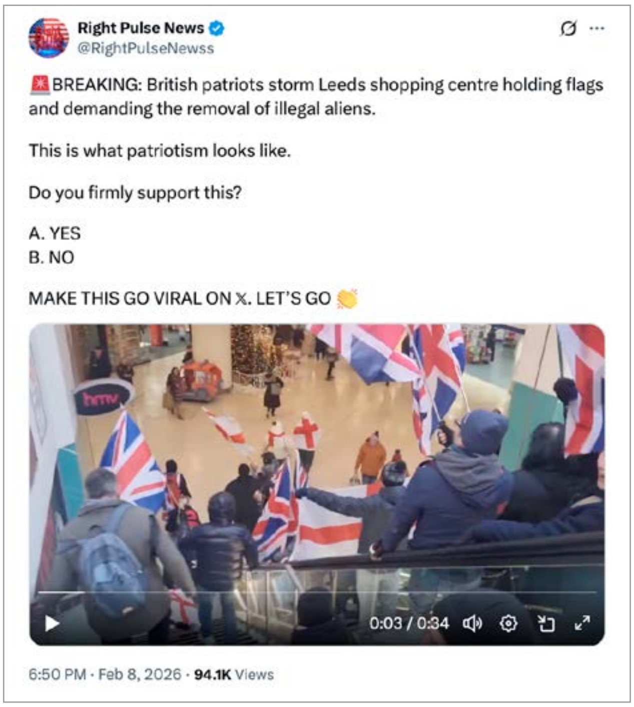
Every woman falls under either class.

No woman can be both.

vawulencer™ @Delva_bryne · Feb 13
That Russian guy has just proved women are prostitutes in nature.

9:43 PM · Feb 13, 2026 · **261.7K** Views

This often overlaps with the "manosphere." The jump from mild content to outright misogyny is very short. An account like **BambuluMen** shows the classic hook and pivot. First, a post for tribal bonding: "*Alll [sic] girls are the same.*" Then, the radical payoff under the title "every woman is a whore......": "*Too many whores, just not enough money.*"



Right Pulse News
@RightPulseNewss

🚨BREAKING: British patriots storm Leeds shopping centre holding flags and demanding the removal of illegal aliens.

This is what patriotism looks like.

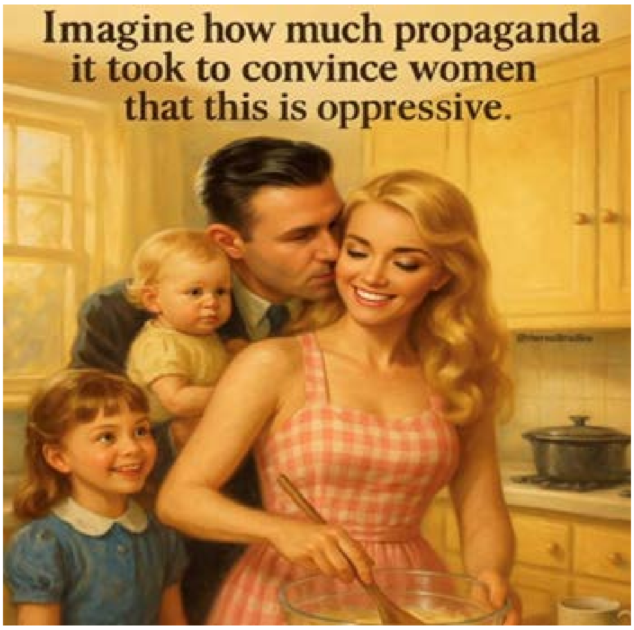
Do you firmly support this?

A. YES
B. NO

MAKE THIS GO VIRAL ON X. LET'S GO 👏

6:50 PM · Feb 8, 2026 · **94.1K** Views

Another common trick is the "binary poll." An account like **RightPulseNewss** will simply post a poll asking "Agree?" on a controversial statement. By clicking "Yes," users tell the algorithm to flood their feed with even more extreme far-right material.

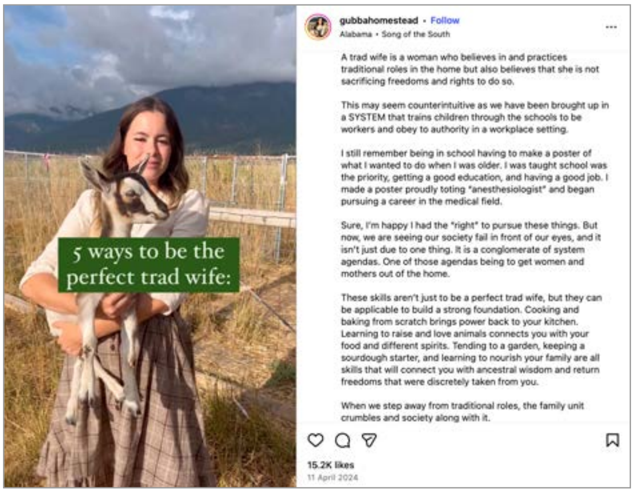


Imagine how much propaganda it took to convince women that this is oppressive.

Targeting young women: The 'tradwife' gateway on Instagram and TikTok

This pathway is all about relatability. It uses shared experiences and a sense of community to build trust before introducing the hardline ideology. It's a mask of positivity and domestic bliss.

On Instagram, it starts with heavily stylised, calming accounts that push "traditional values" as a form of wellness. A comment like "*If only more women existed like you. Are there any out there?!?*" acts as a hook, forcing interaction while keeping things friendly. Even disagreements are softened with positive emojis, like in "*Can i know where did u get ur lobotomy from?*🥰🥰" to keep the feed looking nice.



5 ways to be the perfect trad wife:

gubbahomestead · Follow
Alabama · Song of the South

A trad wife is a woman who believes in and practices traditional roles in the home but also believes that she is not sacrificing freedoms and rights to do so.

This may seem counterintuitive as we have been brought up in a SYSTEM that trains children through the schools to be workers and obey to authority in a workplace setting.

I still remember being in school having to make a poster of what I wanted to do when I was older. I was taught school was the priority, getting a good education, and having a good job. I made a poster proudly toting "anesthesiologist" and began pursuing a career in the medical field.

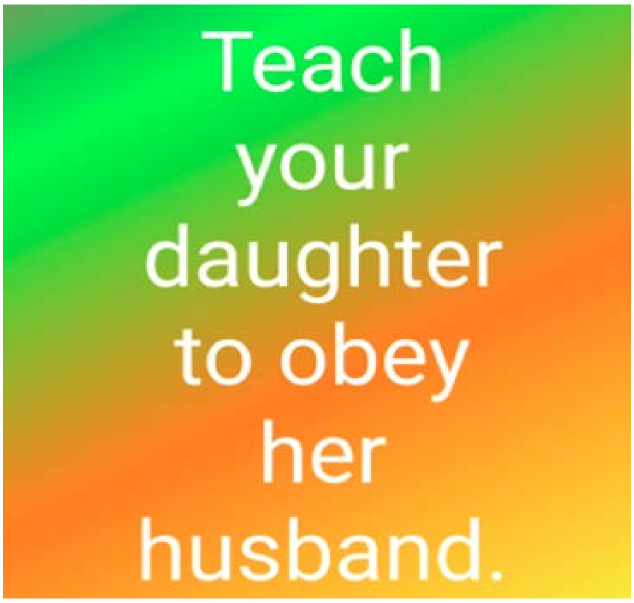
Sure, I'm happy I had the "right" to pursue these things. But now, we are seeing our society fail in front of our eyes, and it isn't just due to one thing. It is a conglomerate of system agendas. One of those agendas being to get women and mothers out of the home.

These skills aren't just to be a perfect trad wife, but they can be applicable to build a strong foundation. Cooking and baking from scratch brings power back to your kitchen. Learning to raise and love animals connects you with your food and different spirits. Tending to a garden, keeping a sourdough starter, and learning to nourish your family are all skills that will connect you with ancestral wisdom and return freedoms that were discretely taken from you.

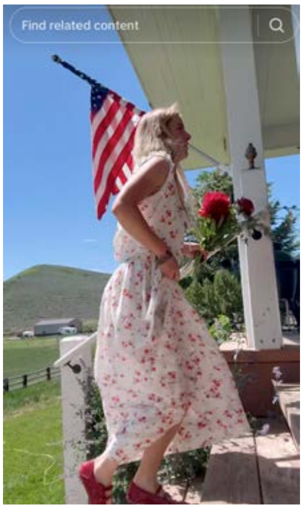
When we step away from traditional roles, the family unit crumbles and society along with it.

15.2K likes
11 April 2024

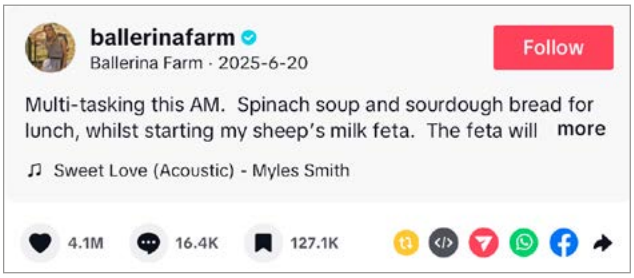
Over time, the message hardens. An account on TikTok like **sub_tradwife** makes the pivot clear: "*Teach your daughter to obey your husband... she doesn't need a career.*" What started as a personal choice has become an order.



Teach your daughter to obey her husband.



Also on TikTok, the approach works through the algorithm. You might start by watching a popular creator like **ballerinafarm**, who posts videos of family and homesteading life. It feels harmless. The app then recommends similar content.

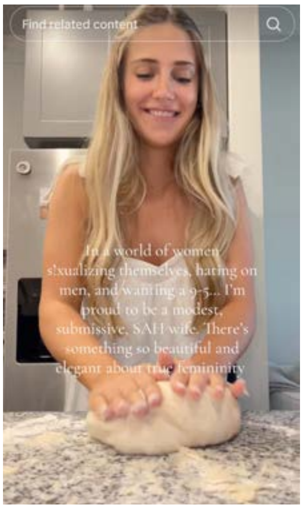


ballerinafarm
Ballerina Farm · 2025-6-20

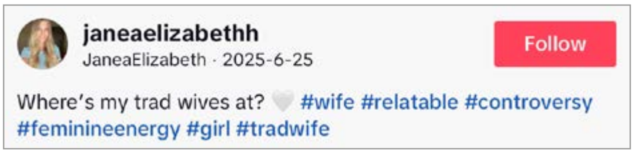
Multi-tasking this AM. Spinach soup and sourdough bread for lunch, whilst starting my sheep's milk feta. The feta will more

♫ Sweet Love (Acoustic) - Myles Smith

4.1M 16.4K 127.1K

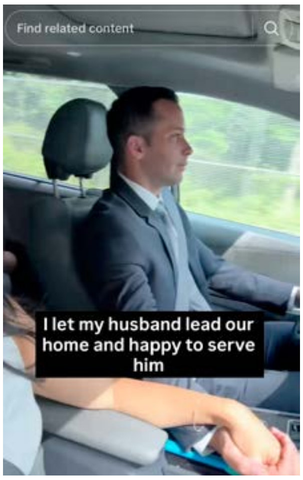

Find related content
In a world of women s!xualizing themselves, hating on men, and wanting a 9-5... I'm proud to be a modest, submissive, SAH wife. There's something so beautiful and elegant about true femininity

You might then see a video from **janeaelizabethh**, who frames being a submissive stay-at-home wife as a brave choice against modern culture: "*In a world full of women sexualising themselves, hating on men... I'm proud to be proud, submissive, SAH wife.*"



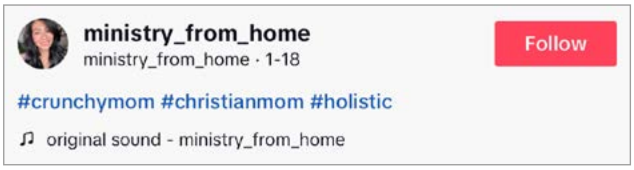
janeaelizabethh
JaneaElizabeth · 2025-6-25

Where's my trad wives at? 🤍 #wife #relatable #controversy #feminineenergy #girl #tradwife



I let my husband lead our home and happy to serve him

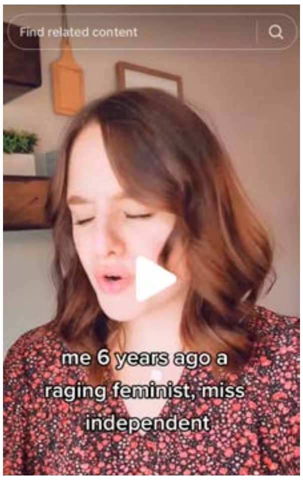
The funnel then tightens. Accounts like **ministry_from_home** link this lifestyle to wider anti-government views: “*I don’t trust the govt medical system… I don’t believe abortion is empowerment but a lie.*”



ministry_from_home
ministry_from_home · 1-18

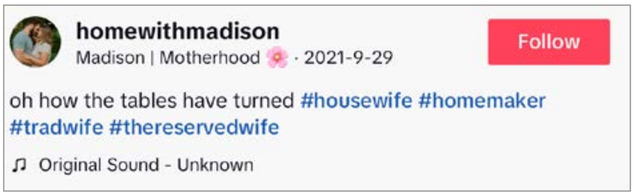
#crunchymom #christianmom #holistic

♫ original sound - ministry_from_home



me 6 years ago a raging feminist, miss independent

Finally, accounts like **homewithmadison** sell the ultimate goal: a “conversion” story of leaving feminism behind to become a happy housewife. This makes radicalisation feel like a personal liberation.



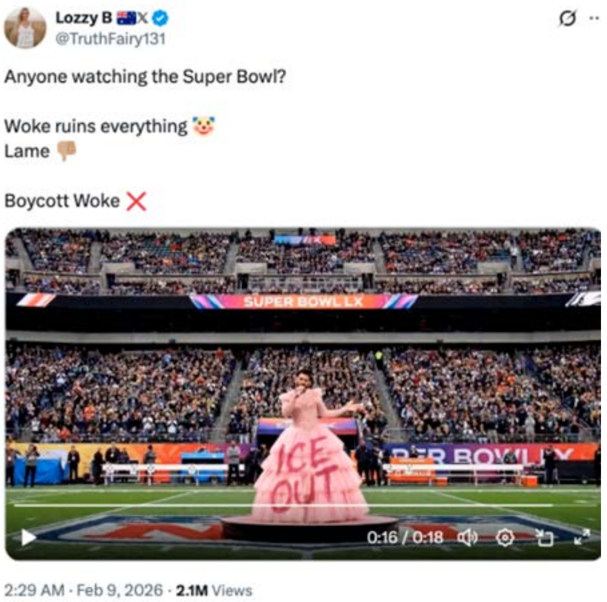
homewithmadison
Madison | Motherhood 🌸 · 2021-9-29

oh how the tables have turned #housewife #homemaker #tradwife #thereservedwife

♫ Original Sound - Unknown

Our research highlights a calculated, gendered split in how digital spaces are manipulated to pull young people into extremist orbits, relying on a process that starts with mild curiosity and can end in isolation and hardline ideological stances.

For young men, the experience on X is built around high-speed aggression and the binary poll, where simple questions like “Agree?” are used as interrogative hooks to force interaction and trigger an algorithmic flood of toxic content. This often begins with engagement bait content that criticises celebrities to stir populist sentiment before slipping into the mask stage, where videos of street harassment are reframed as “defending national values” under the guise of “just banter”.



Lozzy B 🇦🇺❌
@TruthFairy131

Anyone watching the Super Bowl?

Woke ruins everything 🤡
Lame 👎

Boycott Woke ❌

2:29 AM · Feb 9, 2026 · **2.1M** Views

Once the pivot occurs, the language hardens into dehumanising slurs, with migrants labelled as “invaders” and “beasts,” while the manosphere influence pushes slogans like “alll [sic] girls are the same” which eventually gives way to the outright misogyny of “every woman is a whore”.

In contrast, the pathway for young women on Instagram and TikTok is far more insidious, utilising “Trojan Horse” devices to hide radical politics behind a mask of domestic bliss. It starts with soft-toned homesteading content and relatable questions such as, “If only more women existed like you. Are there any out there?!?”. These platforms use aestheticised grievances and community-building to lower psychological defences before the eventual pivot.

At this stage, the content reframes personal lifestyle as a battle, using so-called conversion stories to move from “raging feminist” to “conservative housewife”. Verbatim signals become increasingly regressive, with accounts telling followers to “teach your daughter to obey your husband... she doesn’t need a career” or claiming that “independence is propaganda”. By masking these seemingly life-or-death choices in a positive, wellness-focused aesthetic, the funnel creates a “synthetic reality” where radicalisation feels like a natural extension of young peoples’ own identity.

Why this tactic is so effective

This multi-stage funnel works because it sidesteps some of the natural defences of young people. By starting with “safe” topics like cooking or fitness, it rarely triggers our red flags for political extremism. The mask stage is there to build trust and community before the real ideology is revealed.

Instagram and TikTok are exploited for building a broad audience and building trust. Conversely, X is exploited to leverage a radical payoff with its high-speed, conflict-driven environment. A simple “agree?” poll can create a feedback loop that feeds a user a constant stream of extreme content.

Ultimately, it constructs a synthetic reality. A young woman following recipe accounts is algorithmically led to content telling her feminism has failed. A young man interested in fitness is shown posts claiming women are naturally deceptive. The journey feels natural because it’s presented by the platform as simply an extension of what you already liked. Users don’t realise they’re being led somewhere, which is exactly why it works.

Accounts pushing these extremist narratives are becoming adept at gaming platform algorithms to boost the reach of their content. By tailoring posts to trigger high engagement, they stay at the top of user feeds. For accounts with large followings, this isn’t just about spreading a message, it’s a financial strategy, translating high engagement into visibility and in turn platform revenue. In other words, turning radicalisation into a profitable business: “Algorithms on social media platforms also play a role in reinforcing radical ideologies. Young users engaging with extremist content are frequently exposed to more of the same, creating echo chambers where radical views are normalised”.[20] This tactic is one of the key focuses of our ongoing research.

Ongoing research

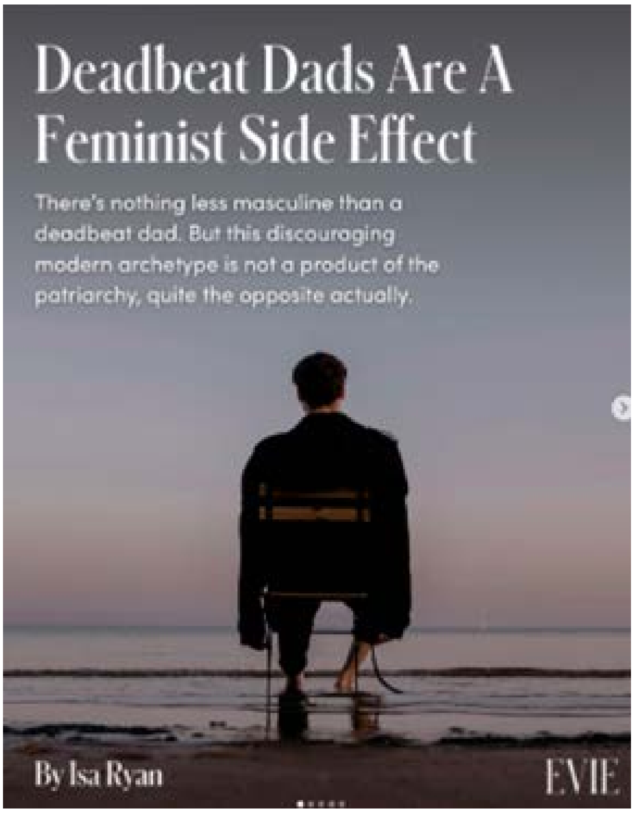
The reality is that we are no longer looking at a traditional conveyor belt to extremism, but a far more subtle and dangerous immersion into radical thought, targeting young people. Our findings show that the Radicalisation Funnel works precisely because it doesn’t feel like a political recruitment drive; it feels like a community. By the time a young person reaches the pivot stage, their online world has been so thoroughly curated that extreme views start to feel like common sense.

Instagram’s high rate of engagement bait (17.7%) suggests it has become the primary entry point for a “soft sell” approach that targets young women through aestheticised grievances. Meanwhile, the aggressive, rapid-fire nature of X creates a high-volume breeding ground for male-centric radicalisation, where the algorithm can flood a feed with toxic content in less than an hour.

Ultimately, these platforms are functioning as digital trapdoors. They use simple, interaction-forcing hooks like binary polls and basic questions to trick recommendation systems into narrowing a user’s perspective.

Our research is ongoing and aims to continue tracking the way these everyday digital habits are being weaponised to build a synthetic, often extremist reality for the next generation.

A full technical annex and method statement can be found at the end of this report.



Deadbeat Dads Are A Feminist Side Effect

There’s nothing less masculine than a deadbeat dad. But this discouraging modern archetype is not a product of the patriarchy, quite the opposite actually.

By Isa Ryan

EVIE

With thanks to Data Desk Researchers Tony Rose and Mark Nelson

Conclusion

Across the globe, the political divide is widening. Studies seem to suggest that this divide maps onto gender lines: young women are leaning leftwards and young men are leaning rightwards.[21] But is this true of the UK? And what would it mean in the context of a voting age due to be lowered to 16?

Our wider research indicates that a growing sense of disenfranchisement among boys and young men may be a significant driver for far right engagement online. But it remains to be seen what the offline consequences of this will be: on young men's political expressions, self-worth, relationships and ambitions.

A positive indication is that, unlike countries like Germany, growing support for far-right parties in the UK is currently fuelled by older, not younger, voters. It is worth re-emphasising that the Green and Labour Parties are still more popular with young men than Reform UK is.

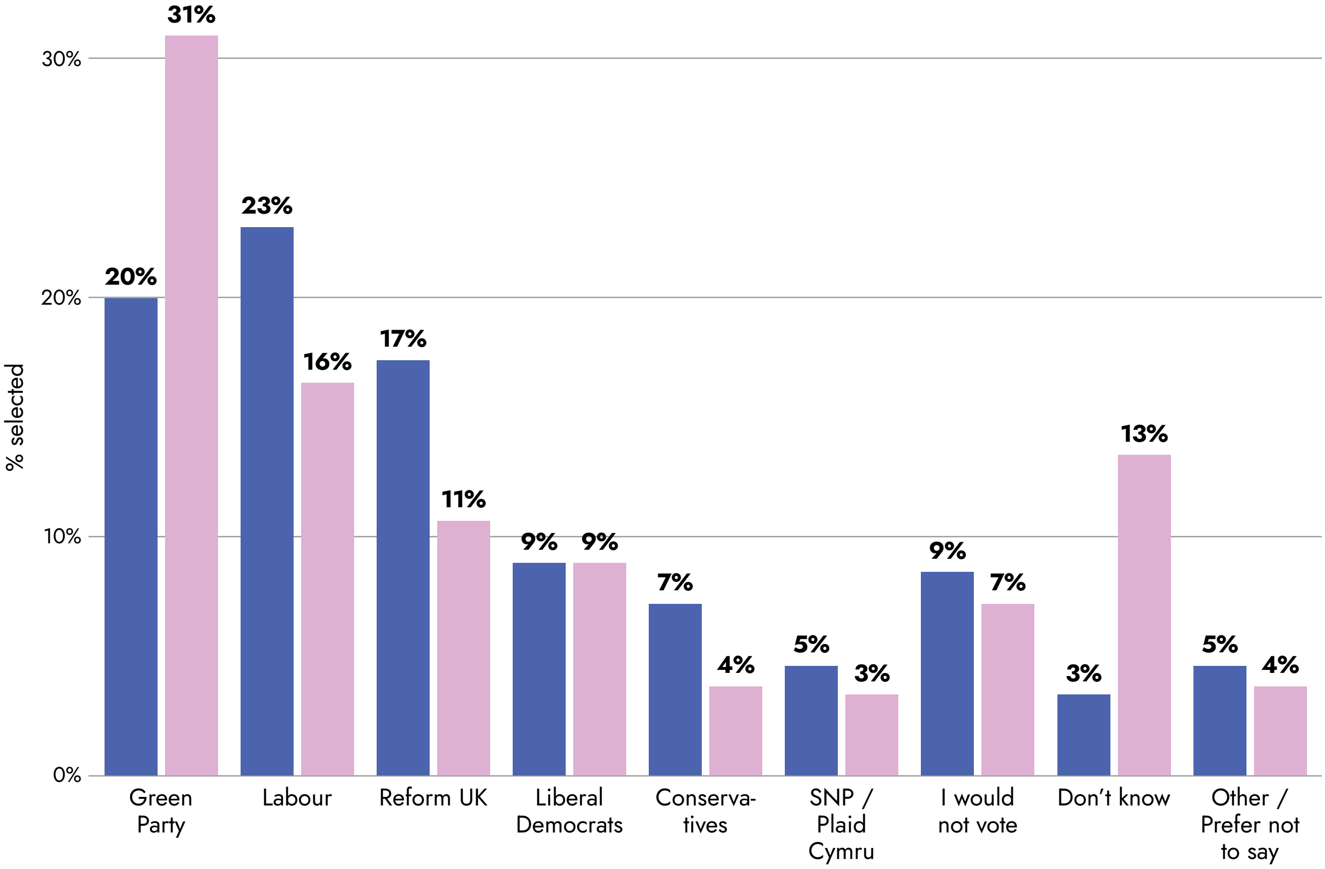
But the current party-political landscape should not encourage complacency. The evidence compiled in this report lays out how far-right actors online, aided by social media platform algorithms, are funnelling young men and women towards increasingly conservative, conspiratorial content. The incremental nature of algorithms, and the microdosing of extremism as entertainment, means many young people are being radicalised without even realising it. Online, we are witnessing the systematic and structural amplification of regressive ideologies – on gender, race, religion, and politics – the cumulative effect of which is shifting the offline Overton Window. Most concerningly, this process is still in relative infancy.

18-24 year olds' voting intention split by gender

If there was a general election tomorrow which party would you vote for, or would you not vote?

Gender ● Male ● Female

Source: Focaldata for HOPE not hate, n=888, January 2026



As these dynamics take hold, they are producing a kind of online anarchy that is fundamentally destabilising to democracy itself. As Equimundo's *State of UK Men* report revealed, men who endorse harmful online narratives are six times more likely to express anti-democratic sentiments.

For young women, the threat is more insidious. As regressive gender ideologies seep into the mainstream, both through their algorithms and through their interactions with male peers, we face the very real possibility of a broader, slower cultural creep back towards traditional gender roles.

But the proliferation of online hate and far-right bait is a design choice, not an accident. Algorithms and recommender systems that amplify controversial, conspiratorial, and violent content – as well as ostensibly innocuous features such as autoplay and infinite scroll[22] – are deliberately engineered to capture, manipulate and monetise user attention. In doing so, they drive measurable harm not only to young people, but to adults too, particularly women, minoritised communities, and other vulnerable groups.

These intentional design choices must be challenged, and tech platforms held accountable. Granted, this is not an easy thing to do. Social media corporations are notoriously non-cooperative and the logic behind their algorithms is often opaque. The speed of technological change also presents a profound regulatory challenge: the Grok nudification crisis in early 2026 was just one (particularly abhorrent) incident in a constant stream of major technological advances that UK legislators, by their own admission, have struggled to keep pace with.

But this is a battle worth having now. And this report arrives at a moment when the social media infrastructure, and its impact on young people, is being interrogated by the UK Government. The evidence we have assembled strengthens the case for algorithmic transparency and a "safety by design" approach to tech regulation. The Government must now act to insert a clear definition of "safety by design" into the Online Safety Act 2023. Ofcom must adopt and enforce a code of practice which requires that any company designing and profiting from a technological product ensures user safety from the earliest stages of development and throughout the entire product lifestyle. These changes would benefit us all. But additional, targeted safeguards must also be introduced to protect against the algorithmic surfacing of harmful content for children – with age-appropriate content filters where necessary.

Finally, just as the problems outlined in this report are not purely online ones, neither can the solutions be. Young people in this country are being chronically underserved. Offline interventions – including reinvestment in community-based youth services and the upskilling of local community leaders to act as role models – are essential if we are serious about tackling youth disenfranchisement and stemming far-right radicalisation. Alongside this, we must support young people to create a positive, alternative vision of masculinity that makes sense for the twenty-first century and is co-constitutive with gender equality and feminism.

Appendix: Technical annex

Methodology and definitions

HOPE not hate Data Desk, 2026

Method: Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA)

We used a selective sample of three prominent social platforms (X, Instagram, and TikTok) totalling 11,402 digital items.

1. The radicalisation funnel framework

The REA categorises the radicalisation process into a three-stage "funnel" designed to bypass platform moderation:

1. The Hook: Algorithm-triggering questions (e.g., "Agree?", "Thoughts?").
2. The Mask: Ideology wrapped in irony, humour, or "domestic wellness" aesthetics.
3. The Pivot: Reframing personal lifestyle as an existential battle/ideology.

2. Engagement bait definition

Engagement Bait is defined as interaction-forcing markers used to manipulate recommendation systems. This is identified via Regex pattern matching.

3. Sampling frame /margin of error

Based on a primary sample of 11,042 interactions, the following table details the prevalence of engagement bait and the associated statistical reliability.

The Margin of Error (MoE) is calculated at a 95% Confidence Level (Z = 1.96):

Platform	Total Sample (n)	Bait Found	Percentage (p^)	Margin of Error (±)
Instagram	647	115	17.7%	2.94%
X (Twitter)	5,868	680	11.6%	0.82%
TikTok	4,527	478	10.5%	0.89%
Total	**11,042**	**1,273**		**0.60%**

4. Technical sentiment analysis

Using VADER sentiment scoring, the REA found that engagement bait relies on "Positive Masking" to lower psychological defences:

- Standard Posts: 0.029 (Neutral)
- Engagement Bait: 0.178 (Positive)

Conclusion: Instagram shows the highest density of baiting tactics (17.7%), functioning as a primary entry point for the "soft sell" radicalisation pathway through aestheticised grievances.

Endnotes

1 The Guardian, From Adolescence to the manosphere: has 2025 been the year of the boy? (29 December 2025)

2 Unemployment statistics, ONS ; Youth NEET statistics, ONS

3 See, for example, Gracia, Pablo & Bohnert, Melissa & Celik, Seyma, Digital inequalities and adolescent mental health: the role of socioeconomic background, gender, and national context (2023)

4 Nick Lowles, How to Defeat the Far Right (2025), Chapter 11: Young Angry Men, p191

5 IPPR, Stuck on you: How to make social media good again (April 2026)

6 Baker, C., Ging, D., & Brandt Andreasen, M, Recommending toxicity: The role of algorithmic recommender functions on YouTube Shorts and TikTok in promoting male supremacist influencers (April 2024). DCU Anti-Bullying Centre, Dublin City University.

7 These descriptions emerged as common amongst 92 pupils aged 11-18 across five schools who were consulted in the constituency of Hitchin, as part of the DSIT consultation.

8 OnSide, Generation Isolation report (2025)

9 33% of men are online for 3 to 5 hours per day, 20% for 6 to 8 hours, and 11% for more than 8 hours daily. By contrast, most women spend 1 to 3 hours per day online. Source: Equimundo and Beyond Equality, State of UK Men (November 2025)

10 Ofcom, Online Nation: 2024 Report (November 2024)

11 Movember Institute of Men's Health, Grow a moustache

12 Ofcom, Online Nation: 2024 Report (November 2024)

13 HOPE not hate surveyed supporters via email and social media during w/c 20 April 2026. A total of 1,063 supporters completed our survey. Respondents were not compensated for completing the survey.

14 Internet Matters Pulse, nationally representative survey of 1,000 UK children (aged 9-17) and 2,000 UK parents of children aged 3-17. The most recent survey was conducted from 24 October – 13 November 2025 by Opinium Research.

15 Sample size: n=11,042 across three main social media platforms

16 The "radicalisation funnel" concept is a term widely used by experts to describe the process of narrowing an individual's worldview until only extreme action See, for example, https://www.researchgate.net/figure/The-meta-framework-an-eight-phased-funnel-model_fig4_330214077

17 Vision of Humanity, Youth Radicalisation: A New Frontier in Terrorism and Security (March 2025)

18 HOPE not hate Data Desk, 2026, v1.01

19 HOPE not hate Young Researcher, Verbatim quote, Jan 2026

20 Centre for Countering Digital Hate, "Instagram Fuels $1.3M "Hate Merch" Economy, Including T-Shirts Glorifying Hitler, New Report Finds" (November 2025); See also Centre for Countering Digital Hate, Banned But Not Gone: How YouTube bans Andrew Tate, then profits from his misogyny anyway (June 2025)

21 Financial Times, A new global gender divide is emerging (January 2024)

22 Autoplay and infinite scroll are web design patterns used by social media and streaming platforms to keep users engaged by automatically loading and playing content continuously", https://kidslox.com/how-to/stop-autoplay-on-youtube/, (2022).

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