



Celebrity

Sherbert
RESEARCH

culture
studio

The Appeal of Celebrity Ambassadors to Children & Young People Aged 11-17

A report for Gamble Aware from
Sherbert Research + CultureStudio

September 2025

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1. Background – Background & Objectives

Study Background

- The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) is the frontline regulator of gambling advertising and marcomms for GB. It reviews complaints under a code set out by the Committees of Advertising Practice (CAP).
- According to this ASA's guidance around applying this code, individuals who are **'likely to be of strong appeal to young children or persons, especially by reflecting or being associated with youth culture' including those 'whose example is likely to be followed'** should not be gambling ambassadors and therefore should not appear in adverts for companies promoting gambling*.
- GambleAware sees the **effective application** of these rules/this guidance as playing a key role in the prevention of gambling harm amongst Children & Young People (CYP) and in commissioning this project sought to examine:
 - Whether the rule is being **too narrowly applied**, with celebrity ambassadors who might be considered 'Low Risk' according to the guidelines (based largely on social media activity) having far greater reach, appeal and potential influence on CYP than this risk category would imply.
 - Whether the **term 'strong appeal' is being interpreted optimally**. For example, might the use of celebrity ambassadors who are respected/trusted or simply widely recognised by CYP (although not hugely 'popular' on social media) encourage the view that gambling is 'normal' and low-risk.

[*Gambling and lotteries guidance - protecting under-18s - ASA | CAP](#)

Study Aims & Objectives

Overall Aims

To **give a voice to children and young people (CYP) in this area of policy**, building on a growing body of evidence...



Ultimately, **allowing policy-making decisions around reviewing guidance for gambling advertising to be evidence-led, and rooted in the real perceptions of CYP**, helping to **reduce risk & prevent harm**.

Research Objectives

1.

PRIMARY: Build evidence on the extent to which **specific ambassadors / celebrities are trusted and appeal to CYP** and the **likely impact** of this on **future gambling behaviour**

2.

SECONDARY: Build evidence around the online **experience of CYP** and their **perceptions of gambling marketing**

3.

TERTIARY: Distil insights into concrete, actionable **recommendations for policy changes in the regulation of gambling marketing within the UK**

Approach informed by the Meaning Transfer Model

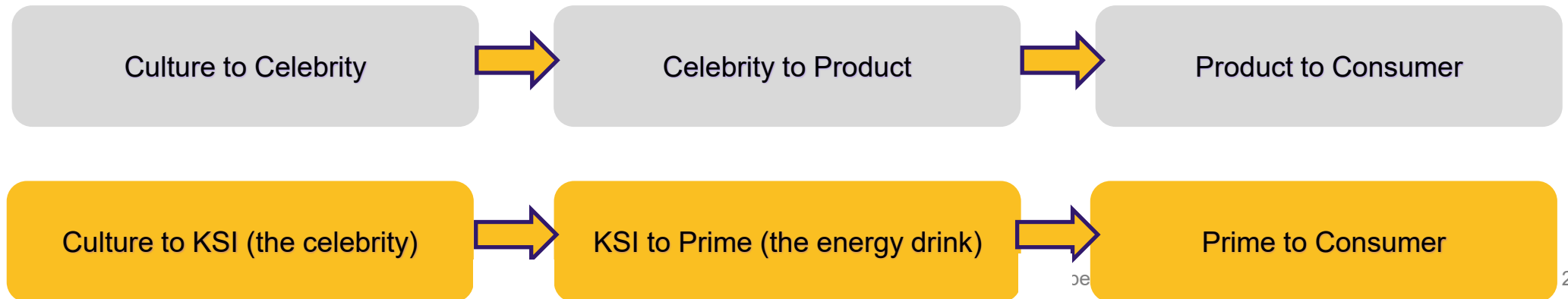
There are three dominant models for understanding how celebrity endorsement works. These are the Meaning Transfer Model (McCracken 1989) the Source Credibility Model (Hovland and Weiss, 1952) and the TEARS - Trustworthiness Expertise Attractiveness Respect - and Similarity model (Shimp 2003). Whilst there are strengths in each model, this research has drawn most heavily on the *Meaning Transfer Model* as a starting point for exploring how children and young people make sense of celebrities in advertising.

The Meaning Transfer Model takes into account the fluidity and fast changing nature of culture and feels most appropriate when exploring what is appealing about celebrities and how that appeal is transferred to the end product (e.g. the gambling brand).

The emphasis in the Meaning Transfer Model is on how the *symbolic meanings* associated with the celebrity are *transferred* to the endorsed product. McCracken sees it as a three-stage process of meaning transfer from culture to celebrity, from celebrity to product and finally from product to consumer. It is a more conceptual model which acknowledges the cultural context compared to the other frameworks which tend to emphasise specific traits (trust for example) as being important and significant.

In the survey and subsequent qualitative follow up sessions we sought to understand what CYP thought about having celebrities in (gambling) advertising and secondly what having celebrities in advertisements contributed to an advert. Finally, we sought to understand the qualities that different kinds of celebrities brought, by their inclusion in the advertisement, to perceptions of gambling.

The Meaning Transfer Model (McCracken 1989) and the model in action.





2. Methodology

Summary of Approach

At the heart of the study was a quantitative survey with Children and Young People.
This was supported and informed by two further smaller scale phases.

Phase one – late 2024

Selective Literature Review + Qual testing of survey

Selective review focused on two areas: the impact of celebrity endorsement on brands and recent work on children and gambling advertising.

Survey language reviewed with a small sample of 8 CYP aged 11-17 (30 mins)

Phase two – January 2025

Quantitative Survey n=2,100

10-12 minute online quantitative, nationally representative survey of 11-17year olds .

Permissions gained via parents/guardians as well the CYP themselves.

Phase three – February 2025

Qualitative Paired Depths n=24

12 x 45minute friendship paired depths (2 friends)
Aged 11-17 , from all 3 GB Nations

Phase two: Quantitative phase

Given both the nature of the audience and the complexity of the subject being discussed, the draft survey was tested with a small qualitative sample prior to the survey going into field: **8 x 11-17 year olds participated in 30 minute online interviews.**

The survey focussed on:

- Measuring recognition of & sentiments towards 10 specific celebrities (detail in the Appendix).
- Establishing the degree to which CYP believe that their involvement in advertising might alter attitudes/behaviours when it comes to gambling specifically.
- More general opinions of CYP to gambling advertising and its regulation, including the principle of using celebrities as ambassadors.
- Measuring the prevalence of gambling post exposure to celebrities taking part themselves /promoting the industry.
- Measuring prevalence of gambling-like activities within the digital gaming environment.
- Establishing interest in some sports typically deemed lower-risk in terms of CYP engagement.

A Total Sample of 2,100 CYP aged 11-17s Quotas were used to ensure that the sample was demographically representative i.e. the correct proportions for:

- Age & Gender: interlocking quotas with 300 per age group split evenly by gender
- Across the 3 GB Nations and by Region within England
- SEG (AB/C1/C2/DE)
- Ethnicity (White, Mixed/Multiple Ethnicities, Asian/Asian British, Black/Black British/Caribbean or African, Other)

NOTES:

Consent to participate sought initially via a parent/guardian and then from the CYP themselves

Fieldwork ran from 15th to 26th January 2025.

No additional weights applied to the data.

Phase two: Questionnaire Outline

INTRODUCTION/ SCREENING/QUOTAS: With the parent / responsible adult...

The survey initially collected data on 10 Specific Celebrities – each CYP was asked about 2 selected at random:

- Level of Familiarity
- A variety of Engagement Measures (aka transferable meaning)
- Potential Outcomes / Harms

...for the Experiment, half responded to each based only on the 3 images i.e. their own knowledge/assumptions, whilst the other half were given a few more facts (see Appendix for more detail)

The respondent was then asked more General questions:

- The principle of using Celebrities to advertise gambling
- Their level of Exposure (recall) and its Impact (gambling/being tempted to gamble themselves)
- The perceived Potential for Harm
- Levels of gambling-like activities in games
- Interest in a variety of sports

...FINAL CLASSIFICATION: Social Media Use & Affected Other Status

The 'Experiment'

CYP clearly do not exist in a vacuum and whilst social media is pivotal in their lives, they are influenced by the opinions of those around them and family members, in particular. It was hypothesised that such conversations have the potential to elevate perceptions of a celebrity who may not be central to youth culture and so may not be easily recognised or be 'strongly appealing' to CYP. With a risk that these positive attributes are then transferred via celebrity ambassadors to the gambling brands that they promote.

To test for such an impact the sample was split randomly within each age/gender sub-quota.

1. Half continued with no further information about the celebrity, only what they (thought) they already knew / felt about them and 3 images = NON-Experiment Sample.
2. Whilst the other half were given a name and 2-3 sentences to go on= The Experiment Sample)

All respondents saw three images of the celebrity



Whilst ONLY the Experiment sample were given a name + brief description

Peter Crouch - Peter Crouch is a retired English premier league and England footballer. Known for being very tall (6'7") he invented 'the Robot' celebration. He played for top clubs like Liverpool and Tottenham as well as for England. He now works in TV and has written a few books. He is married to Abbey Clancy.

N.B. Since differences in the results for the 2 samples were limited and lacked consistency across the various celebrities there are limited references to the Experiment in this report.

Phase three: Qualitative phase

12 x 45-minute online friendship paired depths (2 friends) across the UK with 11–17-year-olds

With an equal mix of gender (12 boys and 12 girls)

Two paired depths from each age group:

- 2 x 11-12s (School Year 7)
- 2 x 12-13s (School Year 8)
- 2 x 13-14s (School Year 9)
- 2 x 14-15s (School Year 10)
- 2 x 15-16s School (Year 11)
- 2 x 16-17 School Year 12)

Discussions built on the findings from the quantitative previous phase and explored in more detail what CYP had told us...

Looking in detail at:

- The impact that having celebrities in gambling advertising has on CYP's perception of gambling
- How the presence of celebrities in gambling advertising further legitimises and normalises gambling in everyday life
- Why CYP feel there should be greater regulation around gambling advertising



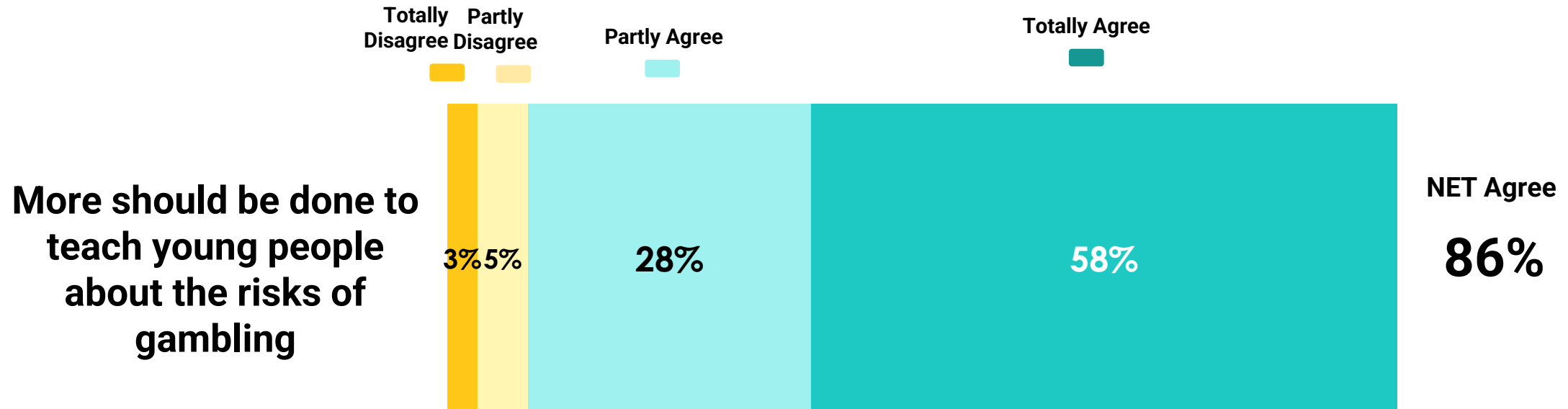
3. The Findings



Findings part one: Attitudes towards gambling and gambling advertising

Overwhelming support amongst CYP themselves for more education about the risks of gambling

"...to what extent do you agree or disagree that..."



Q10: To what extent do you agree or disagree that ...

(REMINDER: Gambling includes betting on sports like football or horse-racing, paying to play bingo, using slot machines, buying lottery or raffle tickets or playing online instant win games).

BASE: Total Sample 2,100 **Note:** the remaining 5% said that they had 'No Idea. Note that percentages may differ from their apparent sum on-slide due to rounding.

“Young people...as soon as they turn 18 will be like, oh, it's just a game and they might start playing it and not really know, understand the long-term consequences. So, I think it's good to be taught about it [the risks] at a young age.” Jazzmyra, 13

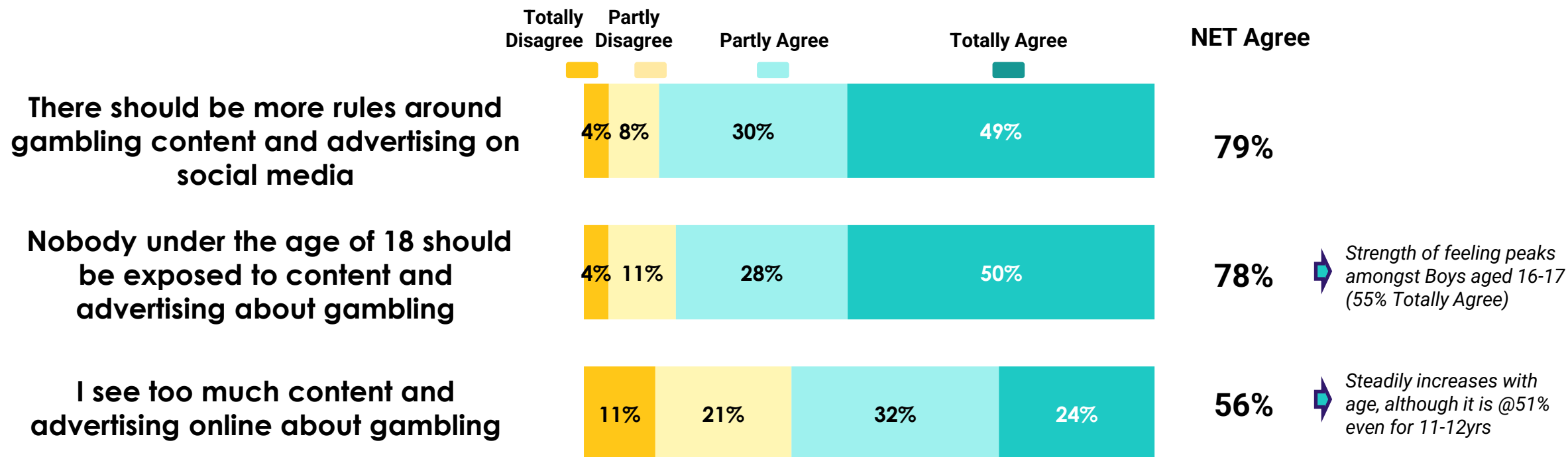
“Because you don't get taught anything about gambling...The only reason that I sort of know gambling is bad and...like, the actual statistics of gambling is because of TV shows and YouTube. Like, even just in...maths class, for example, you would think that they would teach you correct and proper statistics, but they just do a tiny little brief section, which actually is a bad thing because they give you, like, the basics on statistics which make Gambling look even better when in fact, when you dig deeper, it's significantly worse.” Finn, 17

“I definitely agree that more should be done to teach young people because honestly, they think about more of the thrill of gambling rather than the disadvantages to gambling and maybe debt too.” Ayanna, 16



CYP themselves are strongly in favour of greater regulation when it comes to gambling content

“...to what extent do you agree or disagree that...”



Q10: To what extent do you agree or disagree that ...

(REMINDER: Gambling includes betting on sports like football or horse-racing, paying to play bingo, using slot machines, buying lottery or raffle tickets or playing online instant win games).

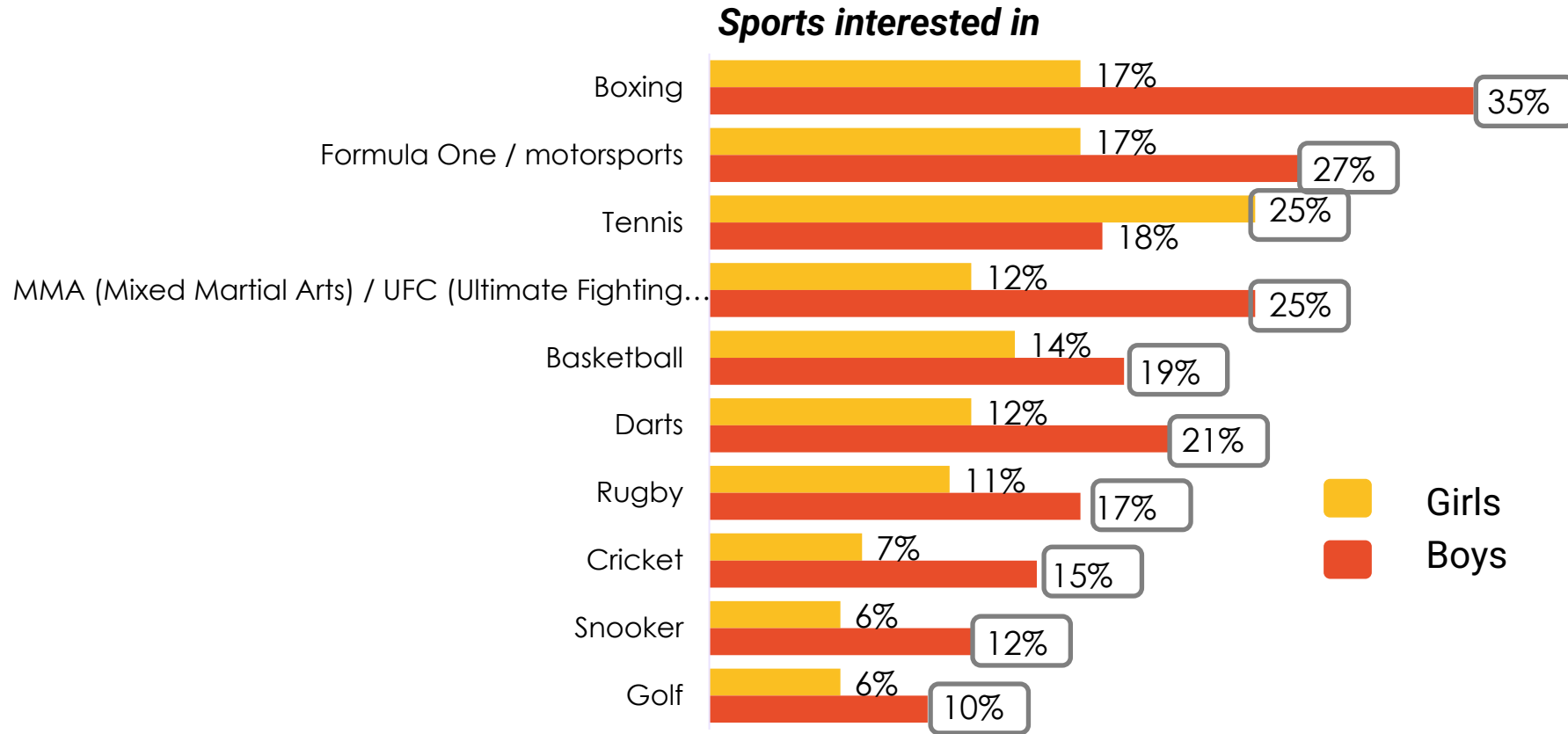
BASE: Total Sample 2,100 **Note:** the remaining 5-12% said that they had 'No Idea; Percentages may differ from their apparent sum on-slide due to rounding.

“It would be good to stop it because it, or at least significantly reduced... like smoking ads...I don't really see as many people smoking anymore.”
Jamie, 13

“I think the rules around actual advertising, gambling should, advertising gambling should be a bit harsher. They're very good at finding ways around or just ways to just slightly bend the rules. So, it's not illegal what they're doing.” Rebecca, 17

A number of the sports referred to under the CAP code as 'Low Risk' enjoy considerable reach, especially amongst boys

LOW RISK; Sportspeople involved in clearly adult-oriented sports (e.g. darts, snooker, golf, horseracing, and motorsports)"



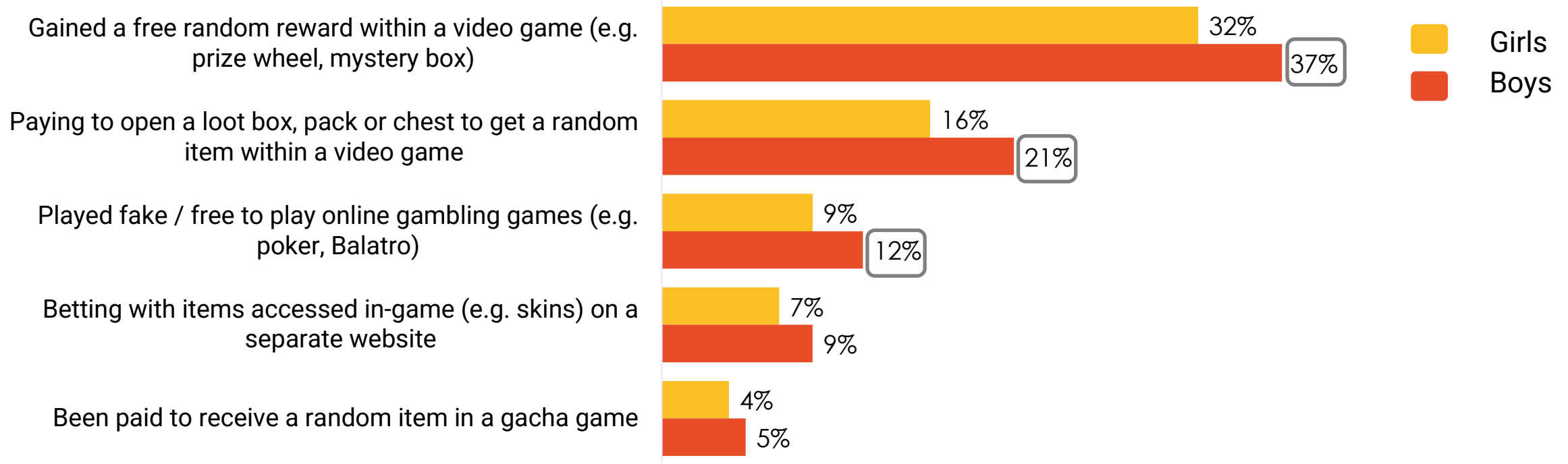
Q12: Which, if any, of these sports are you interested in? That might be taking part in yourself, watching or simply following on social media

BASE: Total Responses Girls 1046 vs 1049 Boys

indicates a statistically significant difference (@95% confidence) between Girls & Boys

Half reported recently undertaking gambling-like gaming activities

In the past month (recall)...



- There is a significant difference by Gender: 54% of Boys vs 44% of Girls recalling having done at least one of these things in the past month.
- However, there is relatively little difference by Age e.g. more than half of boys aged 11-13 recalled having done at least one of these things in the past month (55%) compared to 53% of boys aged 16-17yrs.

Q11: Which, if any, of these have you done in the last month?

BASE: Total Responses Girls 1046 vs 1049 Boys

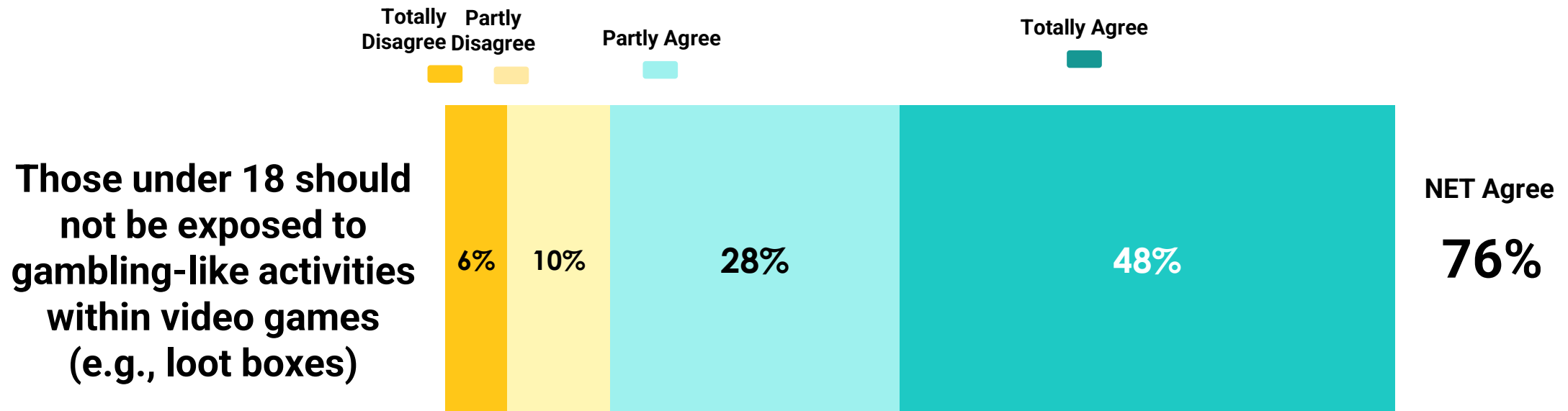
 indicates a statistically significant difference between Girls & Boys @95% confidence

“ A lot of people... our age, like some people at our school, actually do gambling....I've heard like conversations that they do the apps where like you put money in and get money out, when you like click a button and if it all lands on the same thing.” Tayyibah, 16

”I feel like it's warming like kids or maybe up to the idea of gambling... like when you spin a mystery wheel or whatever, it's like the the games that you have in an actual casino. So, it's kind of like warming people up to the idea of gambling and maybe like Rebecca said, the thrill.” Ayanna, 16

Three in four support the idea that they should not be exposed to these gambling-like activities

"...to what extent do you agree or disagree that..."



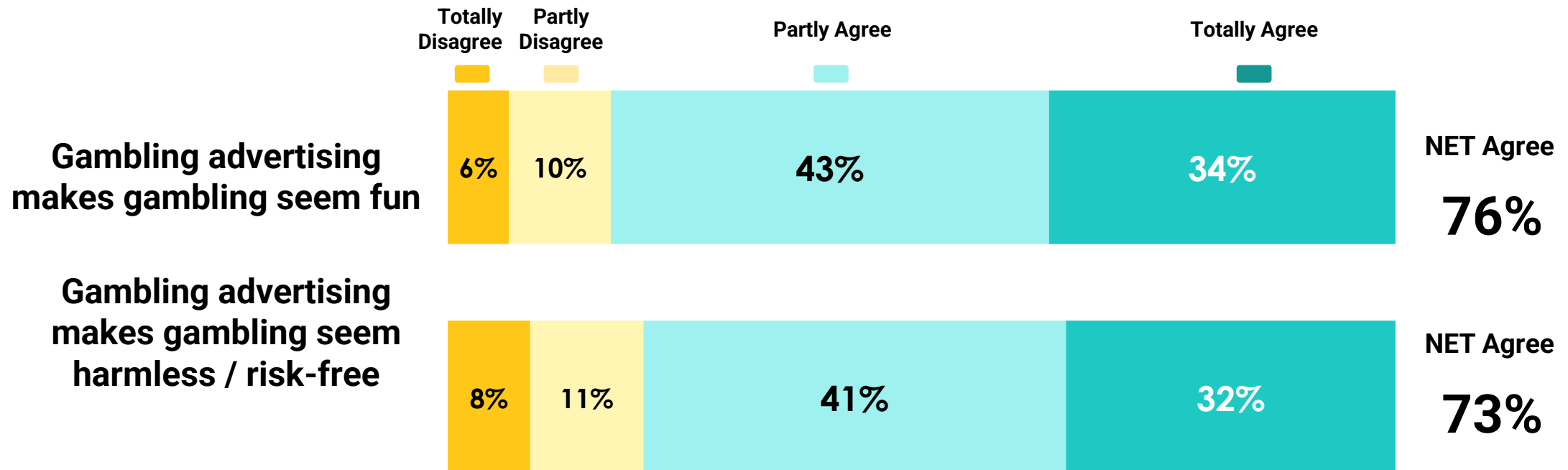
Q10: To what extent do you agree or disagree that ...

(REMINDER: Gambling includes betting on sports like football or horse-racing, paying to play bingo, using slot machines, buying lottery or raffle tickets or playing online instant win games).

BASE: Total Sample 2,100 Note: the remaining 8% said that they had 'No Idea; Percentages may differ from their apparent sum on-slide due to rounding.

Three in four agree gambling adverts make gambling seem like harmless fun

"...to what extent do you agree or disagree that..."



Q10: To what extent do you agree or disagree that ...

(REMINDER: Gambling includes betting on sports like football or horse-racing, paying to play bingo, using slot machines, buying lottery or raffle tickets or playing online instant win games).

BASE: Total Sample 2,100 **Note:** the remaining 8% said that they had 'No Idea; Percentages may differ from their apparent sum on-slide due to rounding.

“You might look at that advert (Peter Crouch) and think well he’s putting bets on the game. I should too.” Rebecca, 16



“Oh yeah, I would say they would think that it’s like a fun thing to do and is safe and also because Peter Crouch is rich, maybe if they know him as that way they’ll think that all his money came from gambling.” Tai, 12

In summary:

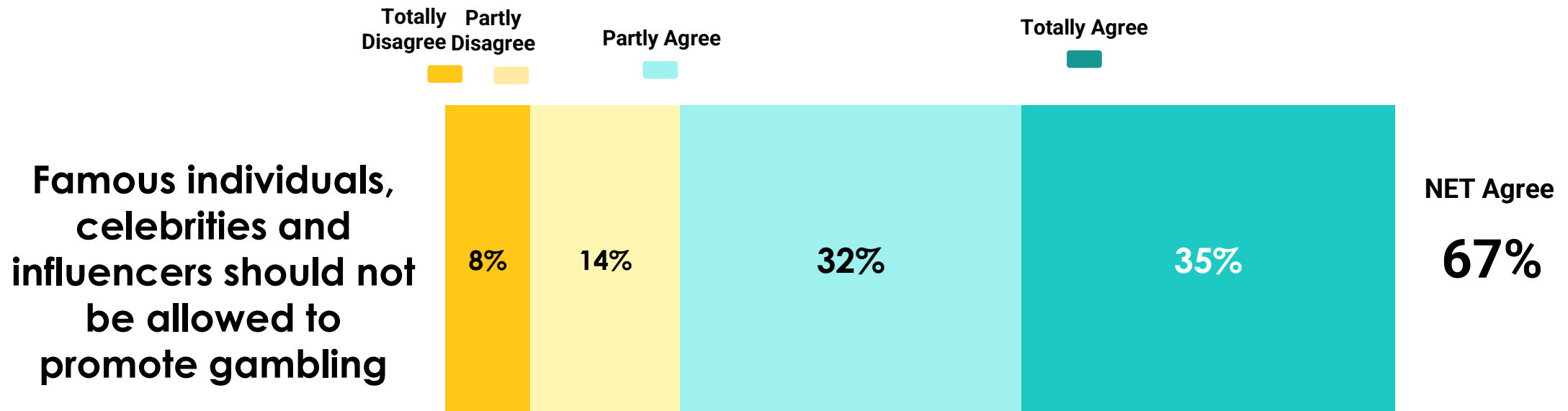
**CYP would like *more
education around
gambling as well as
greater regulatory
protection***

A high-angle, low-key photograph of a group of young people gathered around a table, all looking down at their smartphones. The scene is dimly lit, with light coming from above, creating strong highlights on the phones and the people's faces. The people are diverse in age and ethnicity. A young man with curly hair is in the upper left, a young woman with blonde hair and large white headphones is in the lower left, and a young woman with dark hair is in the lower right. A person in a green shirt is on the right side. The phones are mostly black, with one teal one visible. The overall mood is one of digital immersion and social connection.

Findings part two: Celebrity ambassadors in gambling advertising

Two in three 11-17year olds are against the use of famous individuals / celebrities as ambassadors in gambling adverts

"...to what extent do you agree or disagree that..."



Q10: To what extent do you agree or disagree that ...

(REMINDER: Gambling includes betting on sports like football or horse-racing, paying to play bingo, using slot machines, buying lottery or raffle tickets or playing online instant win games).

BASE: Total Sample 2,100 **Note:** the remaining 5-12% said that they had 'No Idea; Percentages may differ from their apparent sum on-slide due to rounding.

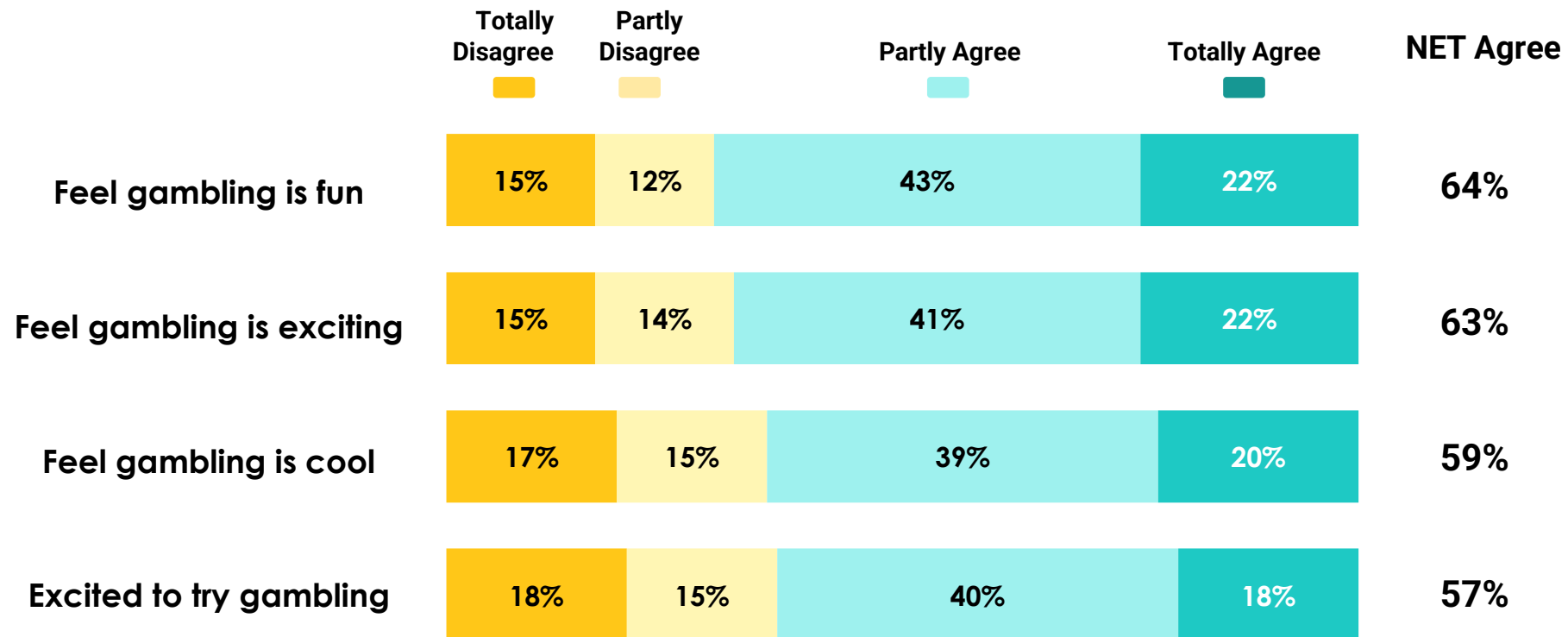
Not because they don't like seeing / hearing celebrities in adverts, but rather because they recognise that it might encourage them to try

“Like most people, including myself, I would probably go for the one with the celebrity. Just as...this is a trusted person, so this must be a good product kind of thing.” Blayne, 16

“ ...They're putting their name and image out there and like their manager and their marketing team who would do that. They wouldn't risk it if they know it's bad.” Finn, 17

11-17year olds tend to agree that having celebrities in gambling ads encourages them to think that gambling is fun/cool and increases excitement

“...including **CELEBRITIES IN GAMBLING ADVERTS** is likely to make children and young people aged 11-17 years:



Q6:To what extent do you agree or disagree that including CELEBRITIES IN GAMBLING ADVERTS is likely to make children and young people aged 11-17 years. (Remember, by gambling we mean betting on sports like football or horse-racing, paying to play bingo, using slot machines, buying lottery or raffle tickets or playing online instant win games).

BASE: Total Sample 2,100 **Note:** the remaining 8-9%% said that they had 'No Idea; Percentages may differ from their apparent sum on-slide due to rounding.

“I get this feeling when someone who is famous, you kind of get that trust in them. And even though they are getting probably paid a lot, it’s probably more convincing or like cool to see. I’d rather watch an ad with a celebrity in it, because it’s more like interesting to see than just a normal person... But if you see someone you know, you’d be like, oh, I know that person. Even if you don’t like them, you probably watch more of that than the normal person.” Xavier, 13

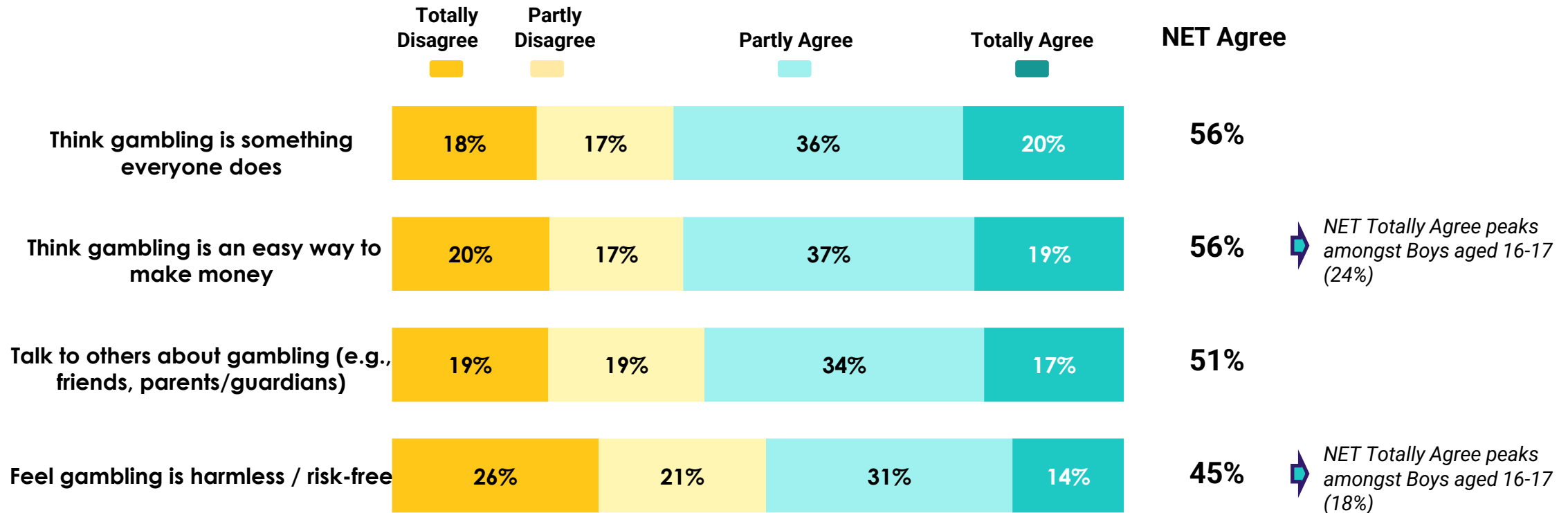
“I feel like a lot of people put trust into them (celebrities in adverts) other wise its just some random person.” Tayyibah, 16

“Because you. You would feel like they’re trustworthy because they’re famous and everyone knows them, you know” Teddy, 12



Many also believe that including celebrities in adverts normalises gambling for young audiences

“...including **CELEBRITIES IN GAMBLING ADVERTS** is likely to make children and young people aged 11-17 years:

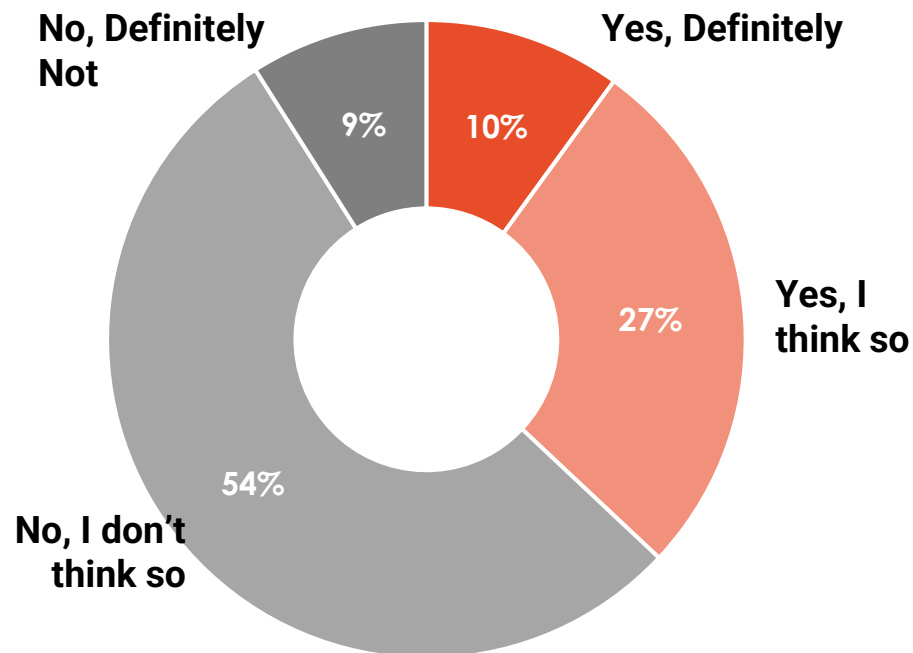


Q6: To what extent do you agree or disagree that including CELEBRITIES IN GAMBLING ADVERTS is likely to make children and young people aged 11-17 years. (Remember, by gambling we mean betting on sports like football or horse-racing, paying to play bingo, using slot machines, buying lottery or raffle tickets or playing online instant win games).

BASE: Total Sample 2,100 Note: the remaining 8-11% said that they had 'No Idea. Percentages may differ from their apparent sum on-slide due to rounding.

11-17year olds also report considerable exposure to celebrity ambassadors in gambling adverts

"Do you ever remember seeing or hearing any 'celebrities' in any gambling adverts"?

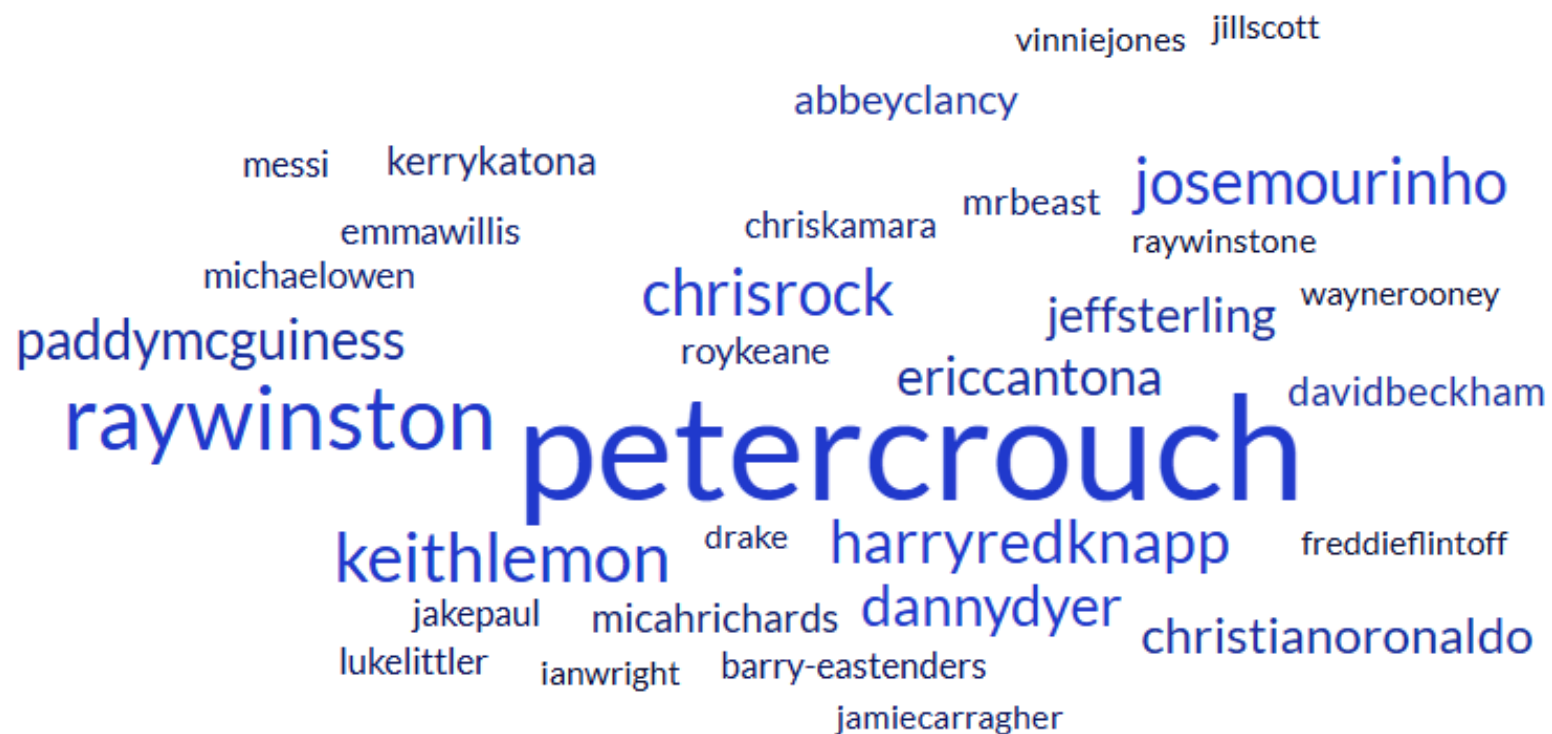


37%
say 'Yes' they do
recall seeing/hearing celebrities in
gambling adverts
(41% Boys vs 33% Girls)

Q7i: Do you ever remember seeing or hearing any 'Celebrities' in any gambling adverts?

BASE: Total Sample 2,100

Top spontaneous mentions of celebrities CYP recall seeing in gambling ads...



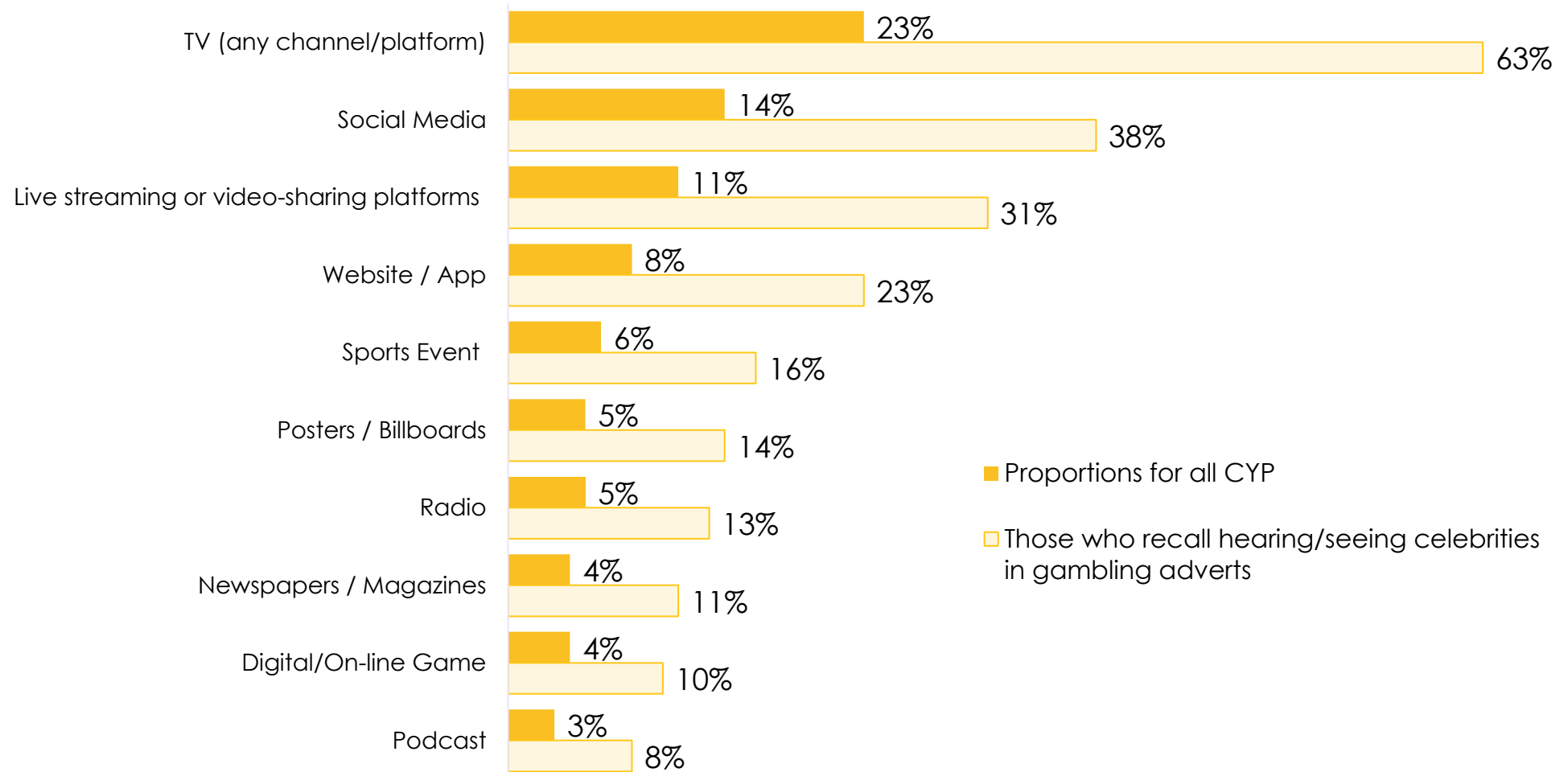
Q7ii Would you be able to type in their name(s)? Don't worry about spelling – we're just interested to know who you think you may have seen in gambling adverts...

GambleAware

Gamble Aware Celebrity Ambassadors & CYP Debrief | Sherbert + Culture



Around one in four believe they have seen/heard celebrities advertising gambling on TV and one in seven on social media



Q7iii: Can you remember where it was that you have seen/heard gambling adverts involving 'Celebrities'?

BASE: Total Sample (All CYP) 2,100 / Those who Recall 776.

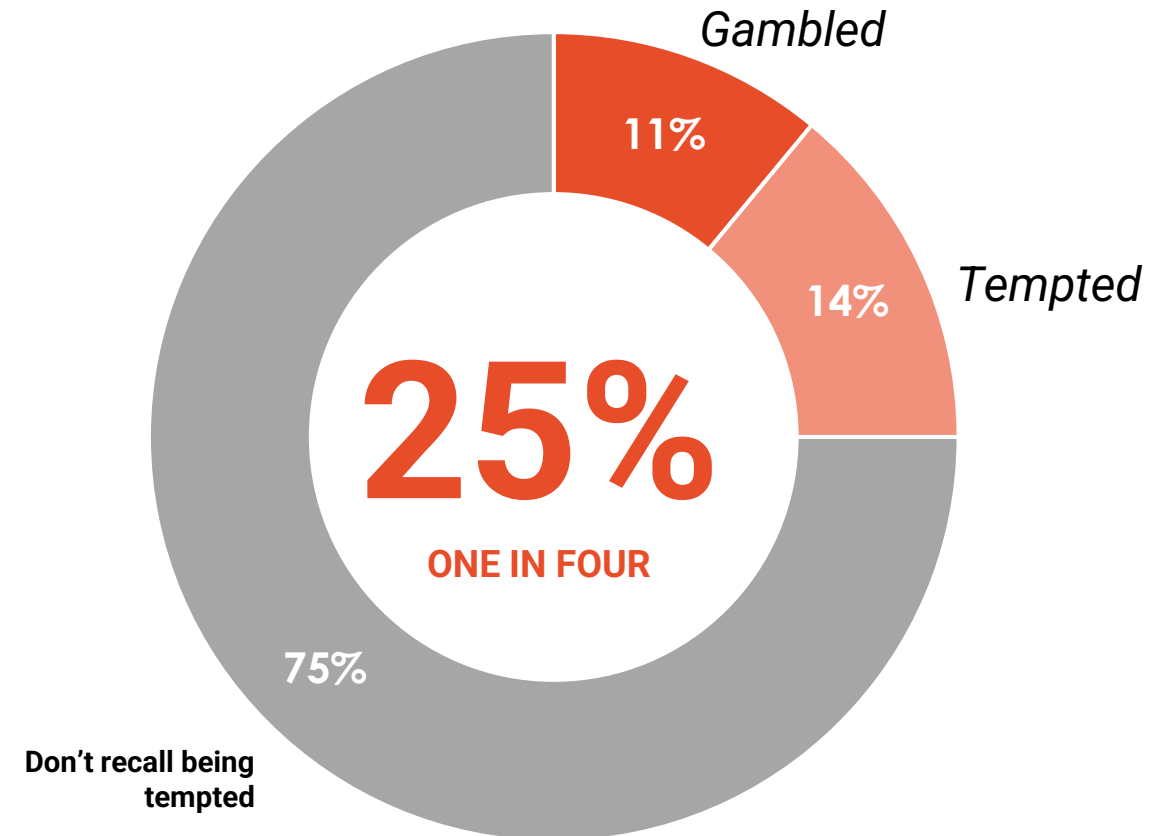
Around 1 in 10 (11%) recall taking part in gambling activities themselves after seeing a celebrity promoting/ taking part in gambling.

A further 14% have been tempted.

....

This overall figure of 25% then increases still further to 52% of those CYP who know someone who has/had a gambling problem.

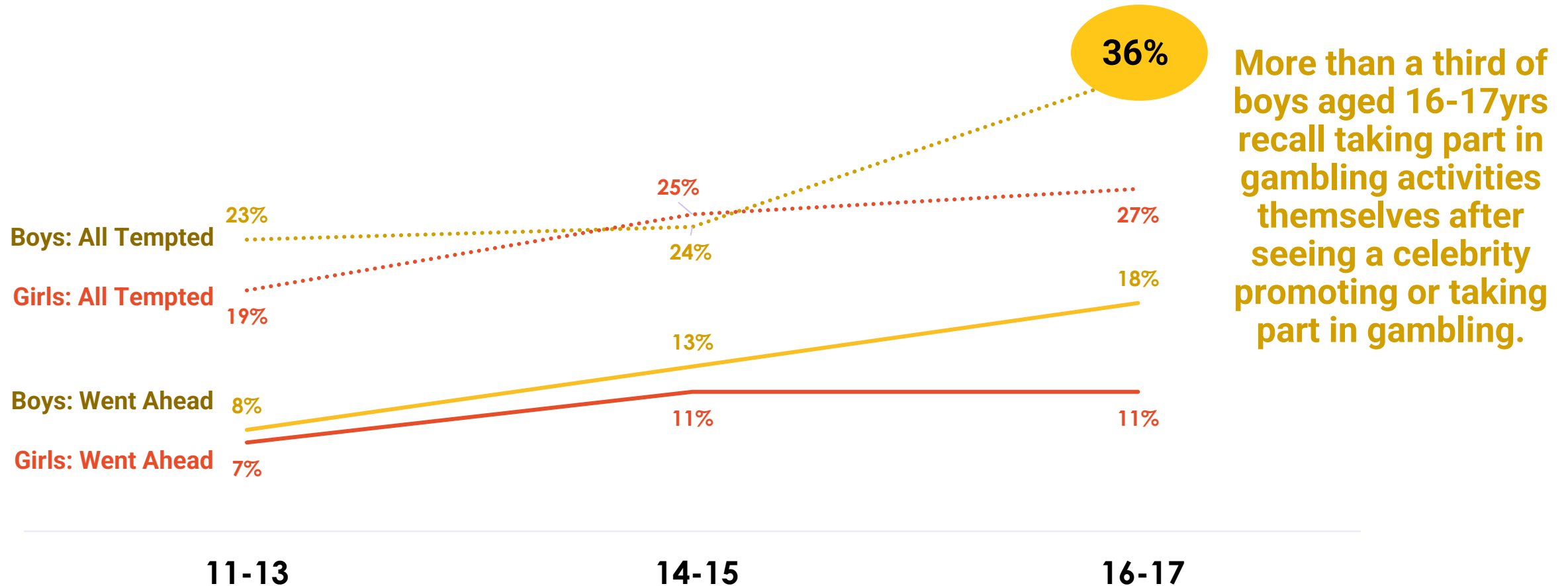
“Have you been tempted to spend money gambling *after seeing a celebrity* gambling/advertising gambling?”



Q8: Have you ever been tempted at all to spend money gambling yourself (for example buying a lottery ticket, placing a bet, paying to play bingo and so on) after seeing a celebrity promoting it or doing it? / **Q9:** And have you ever actually gone ahead and spent money gambling yourself (for example buying a lottery ticket, placing a bet, paying to play bingo and so on) after seeing a celebrity promoting it or doing it? **BASE: Total Sample 2,100. Percentages may differ from their apparent sum on-slide due to rounding.**

Older boys aged 16-17yrs most likely to report being tempted to gamble having seen a celebrity promote or participate in gambling

Looking at the results for ALL CYP may therefore disguise an unacceptable level of risk posed to certain sub-groups.



Q8: Have you ever been tempted at all to spend money gambling yourself (for example buying a lottery ticket, placing a bet, paying to play bingo and so on) after seeing a celebrity promoting it or doing it? / Q9: And have you ever actually gone ahead and spent money gambling yourself (for example buying a lottery ticket, placing a bet, paying to play bingo and so on) after seeing a celebrity promoting it or doing it? **BASE: 297 or more**

In summary:

**A majority of CYP think that
including celebrities in ads
*makes gambling seem more
fun and more exciting and that
it normalises gambling.***

Most are against their use.

A photograph of two young Black women outdoors under a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. The woman on the left has long, straight black hair and is smiling while holding a black smartphone. The woman on the right has long, thin braids, wears glasses, and is also smiling, pointing at the phone's screen. They are both wearing casual clothing; the woman on the right is wearing a green turtleneck. A yellow banner with black text is overlaid on the lower part of the image.

Findings part three: Looking at specific celebrities

The celebrities we tested with CYP (the full set of 3 images per celebrity + the descriptions used can be found in the Appendix)

Each CYP was randomly allocated 2 of these individuals to comment on

Chris Rock



Danny Dyer



Peter Crouch



Micah Richards



Emma Willis



Keir Starmer



Jill Scott



Jake Paul



Luke Littler

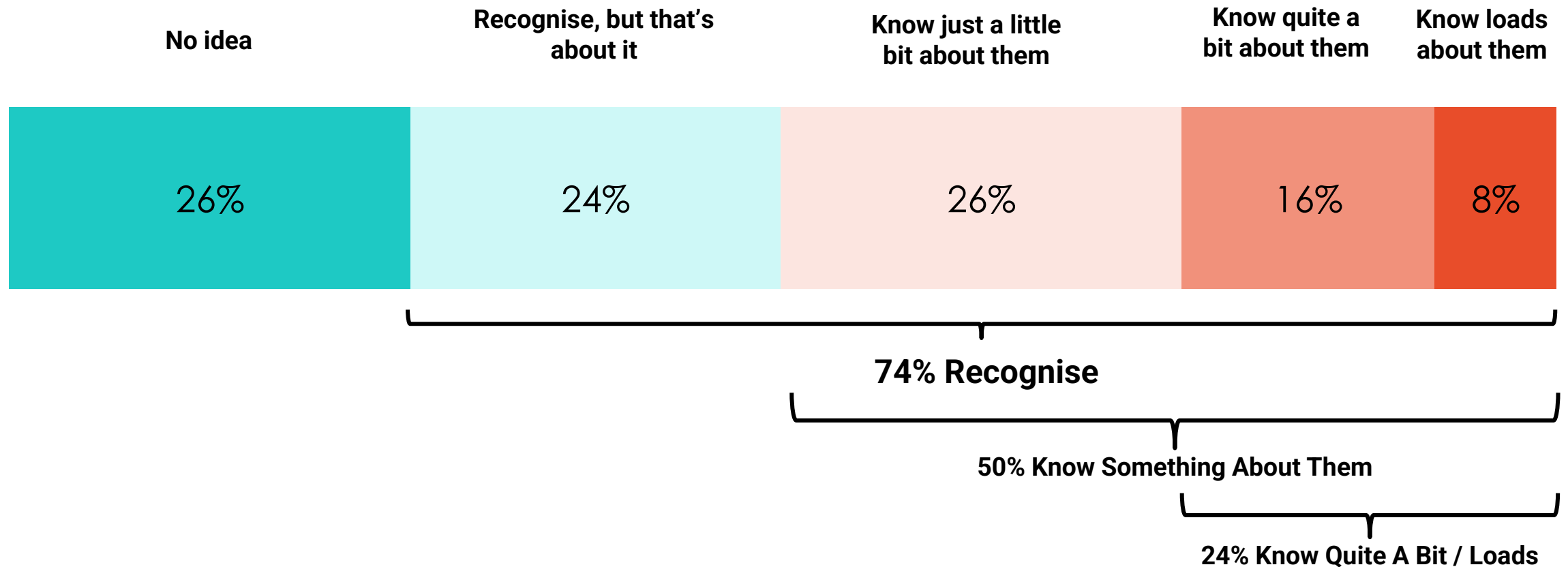


Lando Norris

There is widespread recognition amongst CYP of the individuals we tested.

Taking an average across all 10 celebrities...

We asked how well they knew the person in the photos (no name provided)

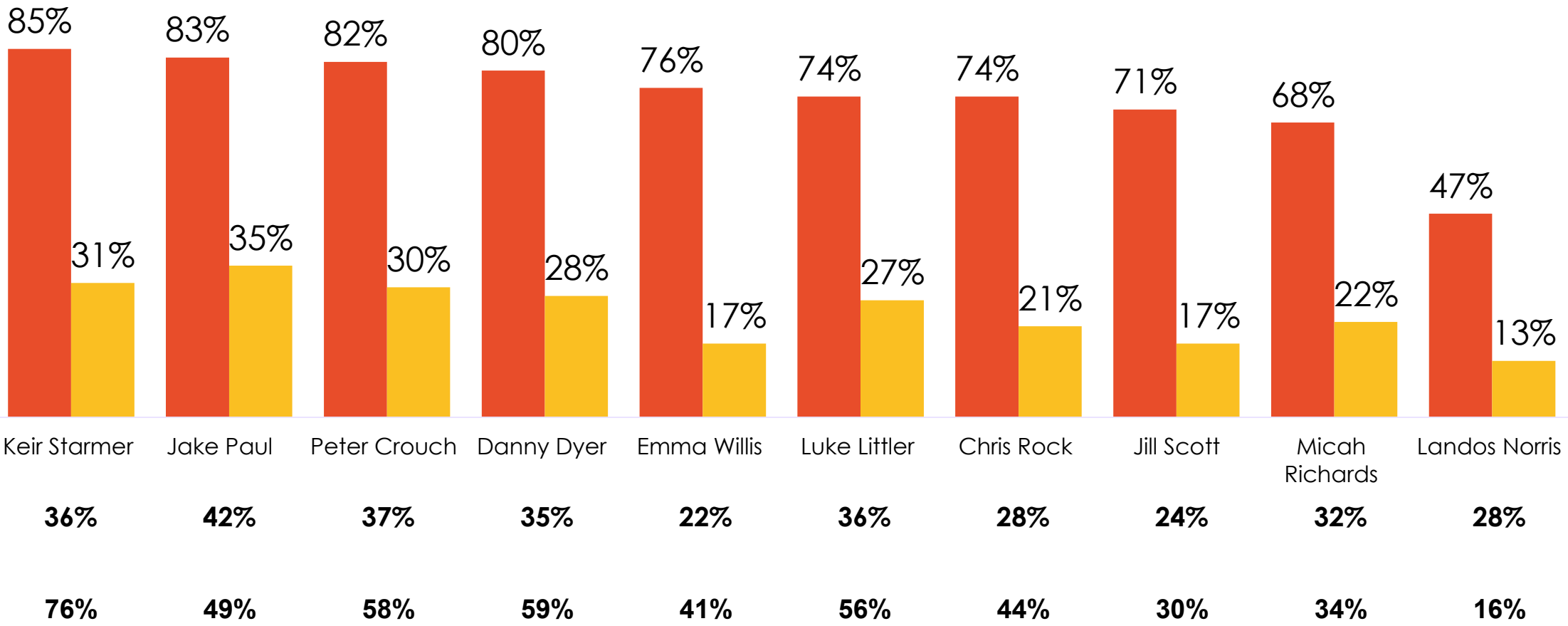


Q1i: Taking a look at these pictures, how well do you know this person?

BASE: Rating each of the celebrities: 418-422. Percentages may differ from their apparent sum on-slide due to rounding.

Very high levels of recognition by individual and often a sense of deeper familiarity

FAMILIARITY ■ Recognise
■ NET: Know quite a bit / or lots about them



Q1i: Taking a look at these pictures, how well do you know this person?
BASE: 418-422 (* names given are sometimes an approximation)

We wanted to understand if these celebrities were perceived by CYP to have positive traits available that might 'transfer' to the (gambling) brands that they advertise

There are multiple positive associations amongst CYP for almost all the 10 celebrities included.

Looking at various proxies for 'strong appeal' which might result in a transfer of positive attributes from a particular celebrity to gambling as an activity / gambling brands...

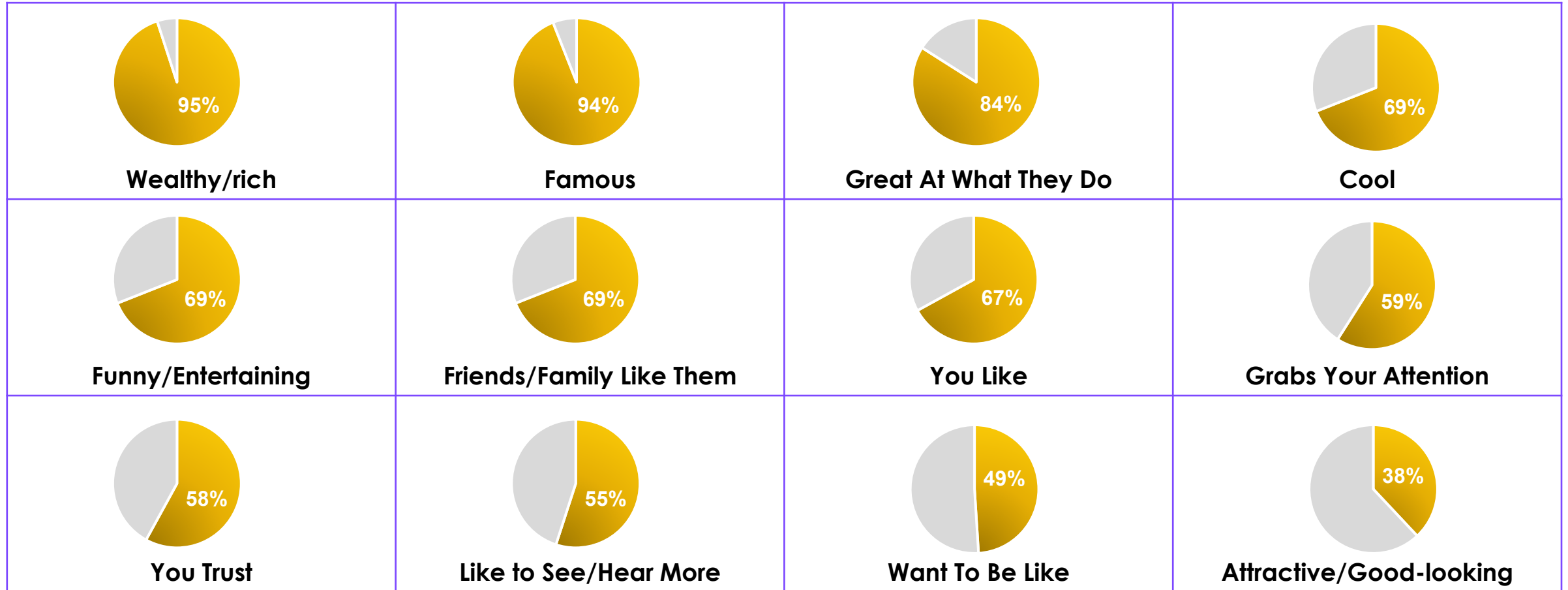
% YES 75%+ 50%+ % RECOGNISE	Keir Starmer	Jake Paul	Peter Crouch	Danny Dyer	Emma Willis	Luke Littler	Chris Rock	Jill Scott	Micah Richards	Lando Norris
	85%	83%	82%	80%	76%	74%	74%	71%	68%	47%
...is wealthy/rich?	88%	91%	95%	86%	88%	79%	91%	80%	91%	86%
...is famous?	83%	88%	94%	91%	87%	88%	90%	88%	91%	84%
...is great at what they do?	33%	68%	84%	76%	76%	89%	82%	88%	77%	81%
...is cool?	19%	58%	69%	68%	72%	71%	76%	72%	75%	75%
...is funny / entertaining?	13%	51%	69%	72%	68%	57%	84%	57%	64%	42%
...I have friends/family who like them?	38%	56%	68%	68%	64%	63%	66%	60%	59%	52%
...you like?	25%	45%	67%	60%	66%	61%	68%	65%	58%	55%
...grabs your attention?	31%	59%	59%	58%	62%	60%	64%	57%	58%	55%
...you trust?	26%	31%	58%	46%	53%	51%	45%	58%	52%	39%
...you'd like to see more of and/or hear more about?	27%	44%	55%	55%	57%	56%	56%	55%	52%	49%
...you would want to be like?	19%	31%	49%	39%	49%	45%	43%	53%	51%	46%
...is attractive/good-looking?	19%	39%	38%	54%	87%	36%	52%	62%	57%	73%

Q12 Is this someone who...? Net Yes = Definitely / Probably / Possibly

BASE: 418-422

For example, Peter Crouch is perceived by CYP to have a lot of positive and potentially transferable personal qualities

Consistent with the cultural models referenced e.g. TEARS, we looked to collect evidence of the potential 'appeal' of each of the 10 celebrities across a spectrum of inter-related attributes including, but not limited to, liking.



Q12 Is this someone who...? Net = Yes Definitely / Probably / Possibly **BASE: 420 – All respondents shown Peter Crouch.**

NOTE: This includes BOTH the Experiment AND Non-Experiment samples since there were very few significant differences in the scores (see Appendix for more details).

On seeing Peter Crouch in a gambling ad:

“I personally think it's a bad thing because a lot of younger people would have watched him as a role model ...I used to watch him when I was a child. Because he was like a part of...growing up I have more trust in what he says.” Devvain, 17

In other words, the data reveals that the 10 celebrities we tested were perceived by CYP to have a range of largely positive traits.

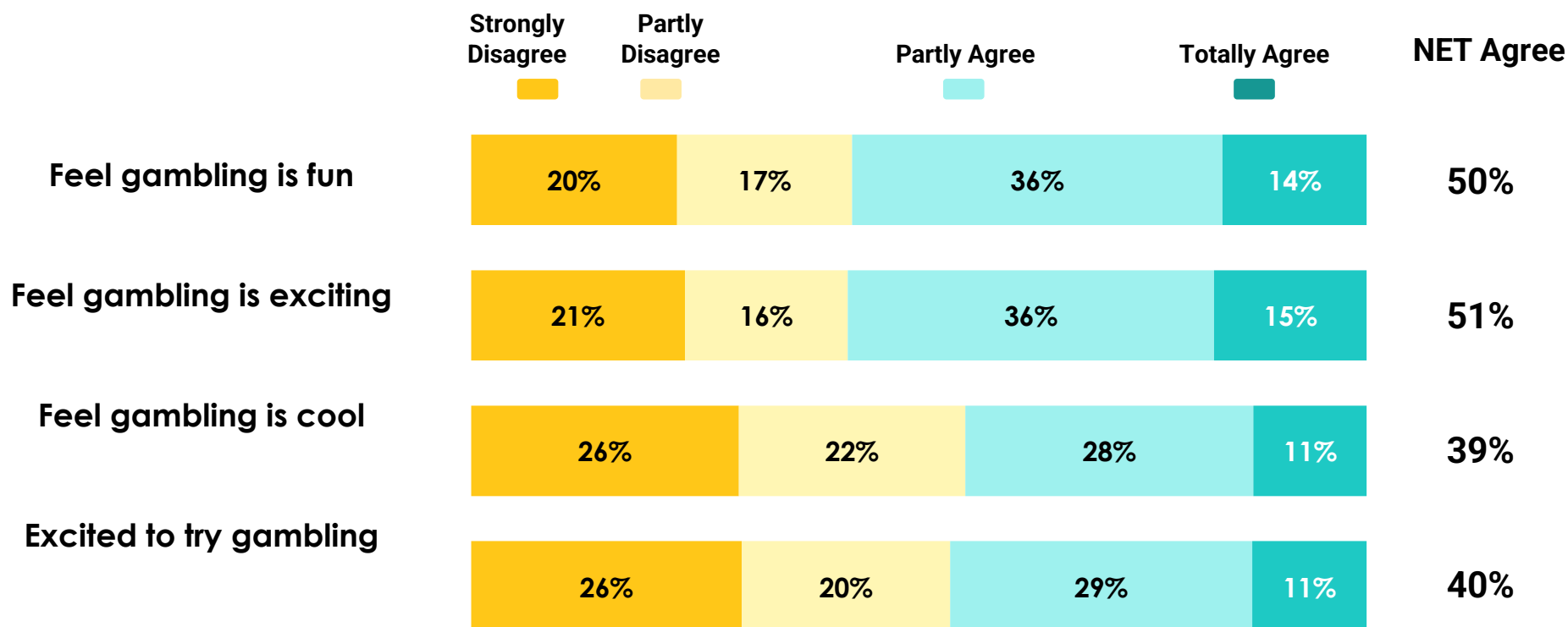
Thinking about the Meaning Transfer Model – these traits could then be ‘transferred’ to the gambling brand being advertised.

We also wanted to understand if CYP believed that having these celebrities in adverts could influence their own gambling attitudes and behaviours

Again, taking Peter Crouch as an example:

Half of all CYP feel that seeing Peter Crouch in a gambling advert would encourage them to think of gambling as fun / exciting...

"...agree or disagree that having this person, Peter Crouch, featured in a gambling advert would make you..."



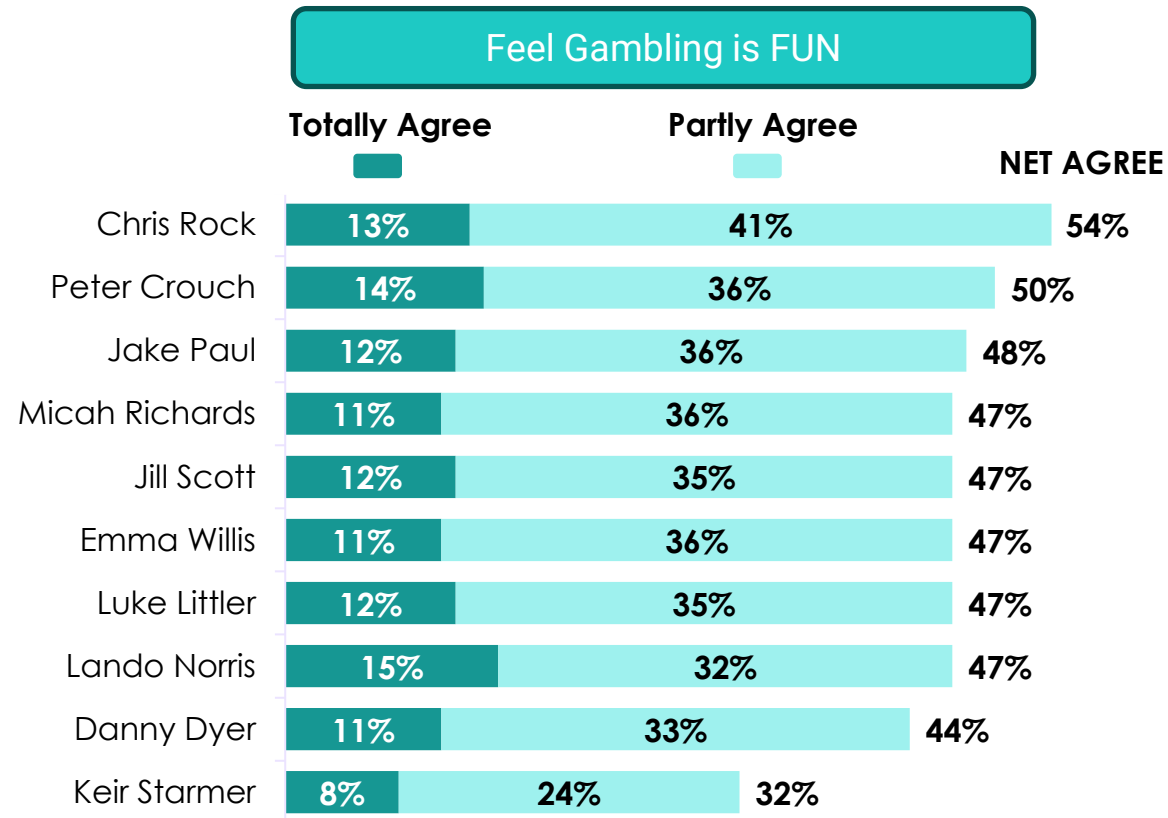
C5: 'Gambling' includes betting on sports like football or horse-racing, paying to play bingo, using slot machines, buying lottery or raffle tickets or playing online instant win games.

Do you personally agree or disagree that having this person EXPERIMENT SAMPLE: TEXT SUB NAME featured in a gambling advert would make you...

BASE: 420. Note: the remaining 8-11% said that they had 'No Idea'. Percentages may differ from their apparent sum on-slide due to rounding.

Many CYP agreed that each of the celebrities tested would make them think gambling is 'FUN'

"...agree or disagree that having this person / XXX featured in a gambling advert would make you..."

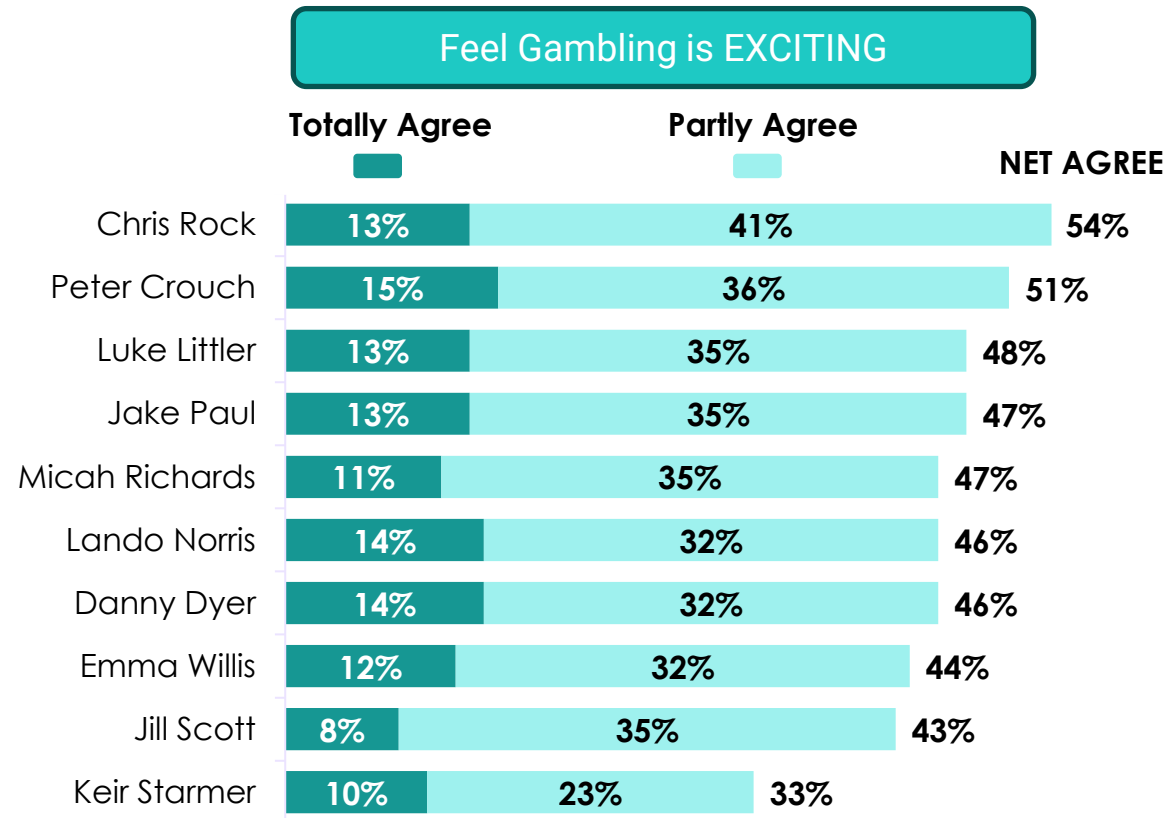


C5: 'Gambling' includes betting on sports like football or horse-racing, paying to play bingo, using slot machines, buying lottery or raffle tickets or playing online instant win games. Do you personally agree or disagree that having this person (EXPERIMENT SAMPLE: TEXT SUB NAME) featured in a gambling advert would make you...

BASE: 418-422. Percentages may differ from their apparent sum on-slide due to rounding.

Similarly, many CYP agreed that the celebrities would make them think gambling is 'EXCITING'

"...agree or disagree that having this person / XXX featured in a gambling advert would make you..."

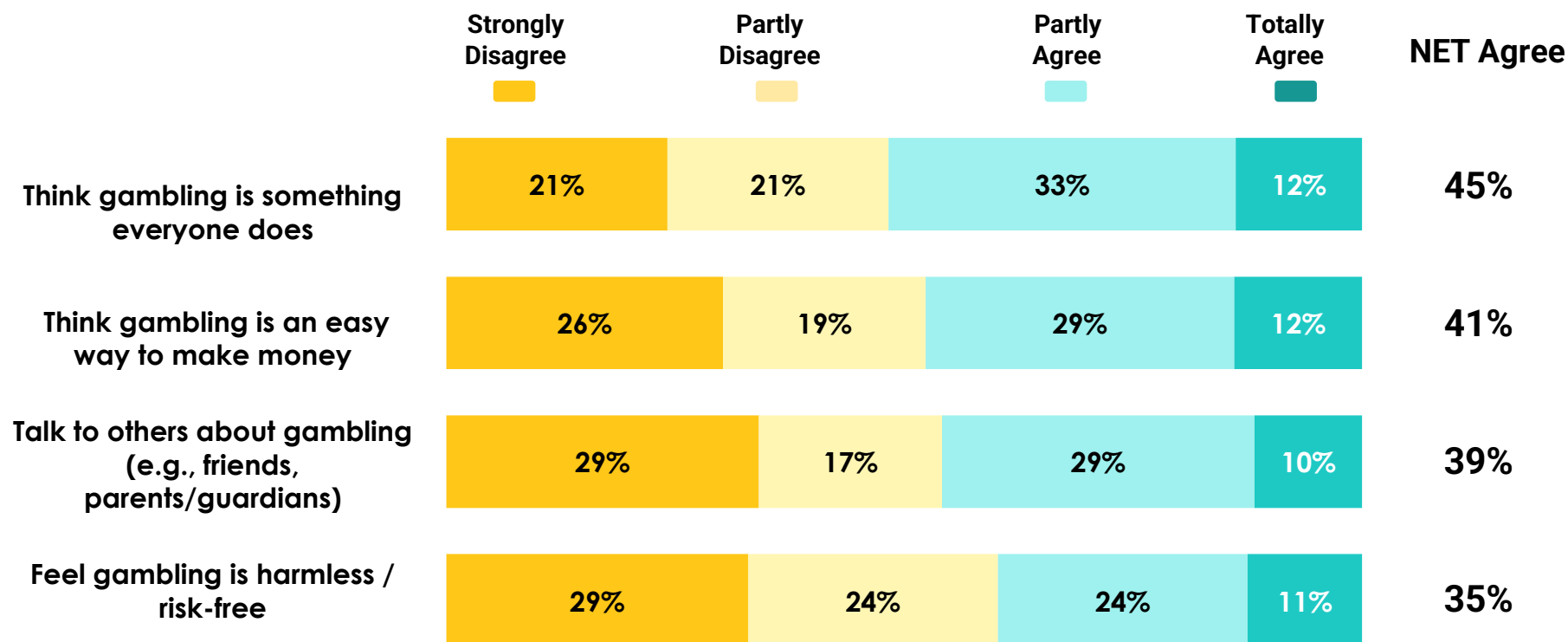


C5: 'Gambling' includes betting on sports like football or horse-racing, paying to play bingo, using slot machines, buying lottery or raffle tickets or playing online instant win games. Do you personally agree or disagree that having this person (EXPERIMENT SAMPLE: TEXT SUB NAME) featured in a gambling advert would make you...

BASE: 418-422. Percentages may differ from their apparent sum on-slide due to rounding.

And specifically, for many CYP, seeing Peter Crouch in a gambling advert would normalise gambling

"...agree or disagree that having this person, Peter Crouch, featured in a gambling advert would make you...":



C5: 'Gambling' includes betting on sports like football or horse-racing, paying to play bingo, using slot machines, buying lottery or raffle tickets or playing online instant win games.

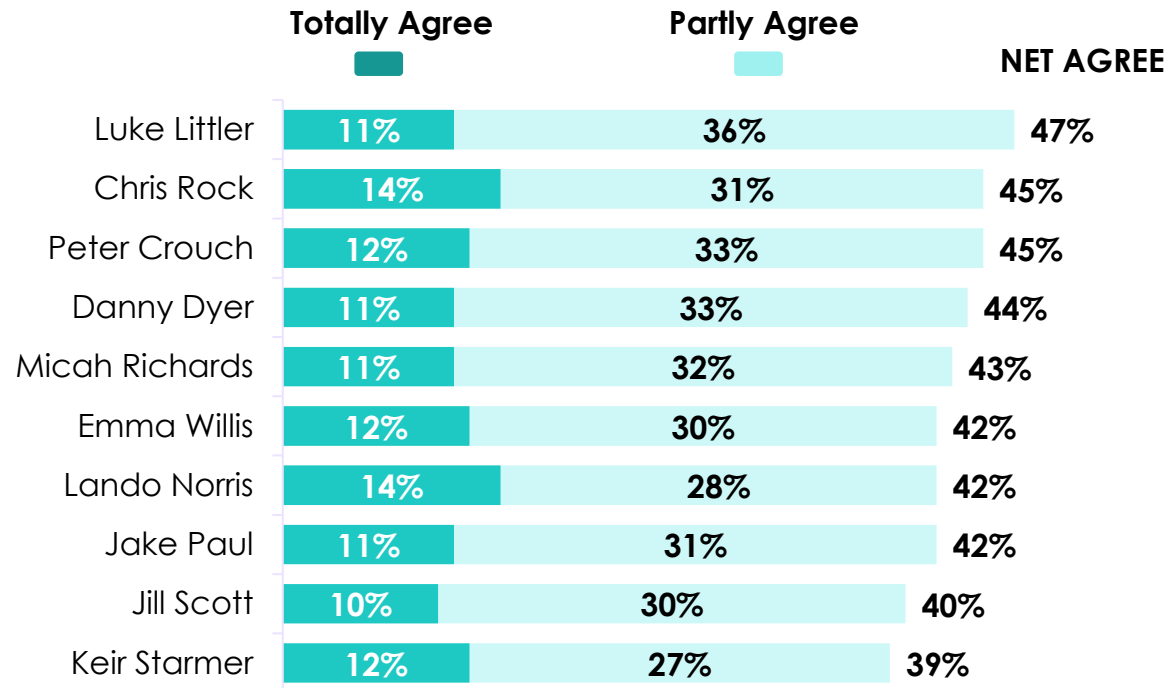
Do you personally agree or disagree that having this person EXPERIMENT SAMPLE: TEXT SUB NAME featured in a gambling advert would make you...

BASE: 420. Note: the remaining 12-15% said that they had 'No Idea'. Percentages may differ from their apparent sum on-slide due to rounding.

Across all the celebrities investigated, a substantial proportion of 11-17year olds agree that seeing them in advertising would serve to normalise gambling

"...agree or disagree that having this person / XXX featured in a gambling advert would make you..."

Think Gambling is SOMETHING EVERYONE DOES



C5: 'Gambling' includes betting on sports like football or horse-racing, paying to play bingo, using slot machines, buying lottery or raffle tickets or playing online instant win games. Do you personally agree or disagree that having this person (EXPERIMENT SAMPLE: TEXT SUB NAME) featured in a gambling advert would make you...

BASE: 418-422. Percentages may differ from their apparent sum on-slide due to rounding.

CYP have **positive opinions** about a number of these individual celebrities who might have been considered Low Risk.

What's more, a substantial proportion agree that **their inclusion in advertising would make gambling seem more fun / more exciting and normalise the activity.**

We wanted to understand if CYP have to **LIKE** a celebrity for their presence in a gambling advert to influence them

Recap: The interpretation of 'strong appeal'

- The B/CAP code which the ASA relies upon, rules out the use of celebrity individuals who are *'likely to be of strong appeal to young children or persons, especially by reflecting or being associated with youth culture'*.
- Whilst this is perhaps mostly readily equated to 'liking' a particular celebrity, academic thinking and the cultural models referred earlier (e.g. TEARS) suggest a range of alternative interpretations.
- As anticipated, within the data generated by this study, there is typically a (very) strong correlation between liking a celebrity and these other expressions of / contributors to 'strong appeal' e.g. being cool, wealthy, attractive, expert etc.
- This makes it very difficult to explore at the total level whether liking or perhaps one of the alternative measures is, in fact, most closely related to the outcome scores e.g. making gambling fun, exciting and/or something everyone does.
- However, there were a relatively small number of cases within the data where a CYP *didn't 'like' a particular celebrity BUT did still agree with one or more of these other statements* e.g. they agreed that they trusted them or that they are attractive. These numbers are shown on the following chart.

N.B. Not 'Liking' defined as Not Definitely/Probably Agreeing that they Liked them

A celebrity doesn't have to be liked by CYP to potentially make gambling seem like fun/normalise it: suggesting that interpretations of 'strong appeal' should be broader.

%NET Agree Potential Impacts – Seeing them in a Gambling Advert

<i>When it's not someone that they Like, but it someone they agree*...</i>	Proportion of all cases (i.e. how common is this?)	Feel gambling is harmless / risk-free	Think gambling is something everyone does	Talk to others about gambling (e.g., friends, parents/guardians)	Feel gambling is cool	Feel gambling is fun	Feel gambling is exciting	Think gambling is an easy way to make money	Excited to try gambling
...is wealthy/rich?	40%	24%	40%	29%	32%	43%	41%	34%	29%
...is famous?	39%	25%	41%	31%	35%	44%	42%	35%	30%
...is great at what they do?	25%	27%	41%	32%	36%	46%	45%	36%	32%
...I have friends/family who like them?	16%	29%	47%	37%	41%	52%	49%	39%	38%
...is cool?	14%	33%	47%	36%	47%	53%	52%	43%	41%
...is funny / entertaining?	13%	31%	47%	40%	44%	54%	51%	40%	42%
...is attractive/good-looking?	12%	34%	43%	39%	43%	50%	48%	40%	39%
...grabs your attention?	11%	34%	47%	43%	47%	53%	56%	46%	45%
...you'd like to see more of and/or hear more about?	8%	40%	45%	49%	49%	52%	53%	49%	43%
...you trust?	7%	44%	51%	48%	54%	54%	56%	50%	51%
...you would want to be like?	6%	40%	53%	52%	51%	62%	57%	50%	48%

* Not 'Definitely/Probably' Agreeing they Liked them, but still 'Definitely/Probably' Agreeing with the other statement about the same Celebrity

"Yeah, I would trust them more than, like, some old stranger, I would trust them more." Teddy 12

"I think you'd more trust the celebrity even if you don't like them so much just because they're just so well known." Holly 15

It is clear that CYP don't have to 'like' (and certainly not 'strongly like') a celebrity in order for their presence in a gambling advert to have the potential to influence them/cause harm.

Therefore, interpretations of 'strong appeal' need to be broader than this in order to reduce potential risk.



4. Summary of Key Findings

1. Attitudes towards gambling / gambling adverts

- A majority of Children and Young People (CYP) aged 11-17yrs in the UK agree that:
 - ❖ More should be done to **teach young people about the risks** of gambling (86%)
 - ❖ There should be **more rules** around gambling content/advertising **on social media** (79%)
 - ❖ **Nobody under the age of 18 should be exposed** to content and advertising about gambling (78%)
 - ❖ That **they see too much content and advertising online** about gambling (56%)
- Around half (54% of boys/44% of girls) reported **undertaking gambling-like in-game activities** in the previous month, and yet 3 in every 4 (76%) **agree that under 18s should not be exposed to these same activities**.
- Three in 4 agree that **gambling advertising makes gambling seem more fun** (76%) and/or **harmless/risk-free** (73%).

2. Attitudes towards the use of celebrities in gambling ads

- Two in 3 CYP feel that famous celebrities/individuals/influencers should NOT be allowed to promote gambling (67%)
- A majority of CYP agree that having celebrities in gambling adverts is likely to make CYP:
 - ❖ Feel that gambling is fun (64%,) and/or exciting (63%) and/or cool (59%)
 - ❖ Excited to try gambling (57%)
 - ❖ Think gambling is something everyone does (56%) and/or Is an easy way to money (also 56%).
- More than 1 in 3 CYP (37%) think they have seen/heard celebrities in gambling Ads.
- One in 10 CYP (11%) say they have spent money gambling themselves after seeing a celebrity promoting/doing it, with 1 in 4 (25%) saying they have at least been tempted – a figure that rises to more than 1 in 3 Boys aged 16-17yrs (36%) and to half (52%) of those who know someone who has/has had a problem with gambling.

3. Awareness & attitudes towards specific celebrities

- Most of celebrities are **widely recognised** despite not, perhaps, being considered to be central to 'youth culture' e.g. 82% believe they recognize Peter Crouch, 80% Danny Dyer and 76% Emma Willis.
- In fact, in a number of cases **a substantial minority of CYP feel that they know quite a bit or even 'loads' about them** e.g. Peter Crouch 30%, Danny Dyer 28% and Luke Littler 27%.
- What's more, virtually all were felt by CYP to be both **'famous'** but also **'wealthy/rich'** – the latter perhaps simply by virtue of being famous. In the context of the Transfer model this alone has significant implications in terms of associations with Gambling since this trait is then available to be transferred to the act of gambling via association with the celebrity (regardless of whether it is someone that they find 'strongly appealing') .
- Most were also felt to have **a number of additional positive traits would might be available to transfer to Gambling brands/activities** e.g. 59% feel that Peter Crouch **'grabs your attention'**, 69% that he is **'cool'** and 69% that he is **'funny/entertaining'**.

4. Celebrities in gambling ads - potential harms

- Many CYP believe that the inclusion of such celebrities in advertising has the potential to impact their perceptions of gambling:
 - ❖ For 9 of 10 celebrities looked at, around half of CYP feel that **including them in gambling adverts would make them feel that gambling is fun** e.g. 54% Chris Rock, 50% Peter Crouch, 48% Jake Paul.
 - ❖ For all 10 celebrities, **at least 2 in 5 CYP feel that seeing them in a gambling advert would make them think that gambling is something everyone does** (39% - 47%) – in other words, **normalising gambling**.
 - ❖ Many felt that their inclusion makes gambling seem **exciting** e.g. 51% Peter Crouch, 47% Micah Richards ...and/or that it is an **easy way to make money** e.g. 41% Chris Rock, 39% Jake Paul
- What's more, even when CYP said that they don't 'Like' a particular celebrity, this didn't necessarily negate the potential for harm:
 - ❖ For example, if they still definitely/probably **'trust'** this same celebrity, feel they are **'cool'** or maybe **'attractive'**, there are still substantial proportions of CYP agreeing that seeing them in adverts would make gambling seem fun/exciting/something everyone does, etc.
 - ❖ **...in other words, finding a celebrity 'strongly appealing' in the context of Gambling adverts might be different from simply 'liking' them.**



5. Conclusions & Recommendations

Conclusions & Recommendations

- This study heard directly from Children & Young People (CYP) and adds to the wider body of evidence suggesting the need for tighter controls in respect to the gambling adverts they are potentially exposed to which use Celebrity Ambassadors.
- The findings suggest that the current approach, focussing only on avoiding celebrities perceived to have 'strong appeal' to young people, is too limited to effectively prevent serious harm and that more of the complaints registered with the ASA should be upheld.
 - All 10 celebrities were recognised by a majority of CYP, most of whom would not be considered central to 'youth culture'.
 - In 8 of the 10 cases a majority of CYP 'liked' the celebrity.
 - In all 10 cases at least 2 in 5 CYP agreed that seeing the individual in adverts would encourage them to think that gambling is something that everyone does and around half agreed that it would make them feel that gambling is fun.
- Taking one specific celebrity as an example:
 - Peter Crouch was recognised by more than 4 in 5 CYP and a substantial minority felt that they know 'quite a bit' or 'loads' about him. A majority of CYP agreed that Peter Crouch is wealthy, that he's famous, he's funny/entertaining, he's great at what he does and/or that he's cool. Two in three like him, and more than half say that they trust him. What's more, half went on to agree that seeing Peter Crouch in a gambling advert would make gambling seem like fun and/or exciting, and almost as many agree that it makes gambling seem like something that everyone does.

Conclusions & Recommendations (continued)

- As in the Peter Crouch example, there is a self-evident risk when a celebrity is known to be liked by large numbers of CYP. However, these survey results suggest that it is important to ensure 'appeal' is not simply equated to 'liking' and is instead interpreted more broadly. Even when CYP did not especially like the celebrity under investigation this did not automatically mean they did not perceive them to be 'great at what they do', 'cool', 'funny' and/or 'attractive'.
- What's more, substantial proportions of CYP then agreed that seeing that celebrity in adverts would make gambling seem fun/exciting/something everyone does, etc. In other words, the risk of serious harm to CYP often still exists where a celebrity is known but not especially liked.
- **As a minimum, these findings suggest:**
 - **A wider range of celebrities should be considered as having the potential to cause serious harm to CYP when used as Celebrity Ambassadors in gambling adverts...**
 - **...and that it would be advisable to review the types of evidence relied upon by the ASA when reviewing complaints, in particular ensuring there is not an over-reliance of social media data as a proxy for 'strong appeal' amongst CYP, and that 'strong appeal' is not mistakenly equated to simple 'liking'.**

[*Gambling-consultation-guidance-annex-2022.pdf](#)

Conclusions & Recommendations (continued)

- There are challenges too for the current High/Moderate/Low classification within the CAP code* :
 - It could, for example, be argued that Peter Crouch and Micah Richards both currently sit under Low Risk 'a long-retired footballer now known for punditry/commentary', yet we can see from the data that many CYP recognise each of them and agree that seeing them in gambling adverts would make it look fun/exciting/cool.
 - Also classified as Low Risk currently are those involved in sports that are 'clearly adult-oriented' e.g. darts, snooker, golf and motorsports. Not only have we seen that a substantial proportion of CYP (especially boys) are interested in these sports, we also now have data indicating that many CYP readily recognise individuals such as Luke Littler and Lando Norris, and confirmation that many CYP feel they are (or at least assume them to be) 'great at what they do', 'wealthy', 'cool', etc.
- **As such, the three levels of risk classification for potential Ambassadors in the CAP code also require review.**

[*Gambling-consultation-guidance-annex-2022.pdf](#)

Conclusions & Recommendations (continued)

- CYP themselves recognise the potential for negative outcomes as a result of exposure to Celebrity Ambassadors in gambling adverts. Whether answering about a specific celebrity or more generally about the principle, many agreed that their inclusion encourages a more positive view of gambling amongst CYP.
- Analysis of the data also suggests that the potential for these negative outcomes is, again, present even where a celebrity is not especially liked, so long as they are 'appealing' in some other way e.g. trusted, cool, attractive.
- What's more, there is clearly a considerable level of exposure at present with more than 1 in 3 saying that they recall ever seeing or hearing celebrities in gambling adverts and many spontaneous mentions of Peter Crouch, Chris Rock, Danny Dyer etc.
- Indeed, 1 in 4 CYP told us that they have either already gambled after being exposed to such adverts or have at least been tempted. A worrying proportion even at a total level, but one which increases still further to more than 1 in 3 Boys aged 16-17yrs suggesting that a one-size-fits-all attitude to protecting CYP may fail audiences at particular risk.
- Gaming is also contributing to the normalisation of gambling for CYP with more than half of all boys and almost as many girls reporting that they have themselves taken part in gambling-like activities within games over the previous month alone.

Overarching recommendation:

This research supports a broader interpretation of '*strongly appealing*' under the CAP code used by the ASA - both in terms of *the types of celebrities* CYP recognise & 'like', as well as *what it is beyond simply 'liking' might constitute 'appeal'* and hence represent the threat of serious harm to CYP.

Looking to the Future

This study not only suggests aspects of current policies and processes which should be reviewed and fine-tuned but also suggests a need for a far wider piece of work which looks to both reduce levels of exposure to gambling advertising whilst at the same time increasing the understanding of how gambling works and therefore their resilience to potential harm in the future. CYP across GB are themselves on-board and overwhelmingly in favour of:

- 1. Greater Regulation**
- 2. More Education**

This research examined the presence of celebrity ambassadors in gambling advertising through a cultural lens - the meaning of specific celebrities in British culture as understood by CYP and how their presence in gambling advertising may influence or inform their views and attitudes towards gambling. Further research in this area could explore how the stages of psychological development that children and young people go through, inform and shape their understanding and engagement with celebrities in gambling advertising.

culture
studio.

Sherbert
RESEARCH

Thank you

IMAGES AND DESCRIPTIONS USED

(NOTE: only the Experiment sample saw a name+ description to go with the 3 images)



Peter Crouch is a retired English premier league and England footballer. Known for being a very tall (6'7") he invented 'the Robot' celebration. He played for top clubs like Liverpool and Tottenham as well as for England. He now works in TV and has written a few books. He is married to Abbey Clancy.



Luke Littler is a young darts player from England who became famous for making it to the final of the 2024 PDC World Darts Championship at just 16 years old (youngest darts player ever) and then winning the whole competition in January 2025.



Jill Scott is a retired English footballer who played as a midfielder and was a key part of England's women's national team, earning over 160 caps. She was part of the winning team in the UEFA Women's Euro 2022. She has since moved across into presenting and speaking out for women's sports and also won I'm a Celebrity in 2022.

IMAGES AND DESCRIPTIONS USED

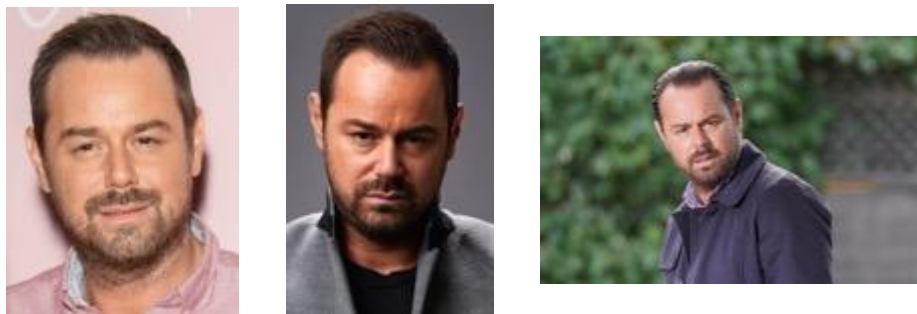
(NOTE: only the Experiment sample saw a name+ description to go with the 3 images)



Micah Richards is a retired English footballer best known for his time as a defender with Manchester City and Aston Villa. He moved into TV after retirement, becoming a football pundit on platforms like BBC and Sky Sports







Keir Starmer is the current Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, having taken office on July 5, 2024, following a clear win in the recent general election. He has been Leader of the Labour Party since 2020 and before this he was a human rights lawyer



Danny Dyer is an English actor and television personality, best known for his role as Mick Carter in the BBC soap EastEnders. He has also appeared in films like The Football Factory and hosts the game show The Wall. He is also known as being Dad to Dani Dyer who was on Love Island.

IMAGES AND DESCRIPTIONS USED

(NOTE: only the Experiment sample saw both a name + description to go with the 3 images)

	Emma Willis is an English television presenter and former model, best known for hosting shows like The Voice UK and Big Brother. She also is married to Matt Willis from the band Busted.
	Jake Paul Jake Paul is a YouTuber, boxer, and social media personality who became famous for his videos and pranks online. He later switched to boxing, (recently beating Mike Tyson) in November 2024.
	Chris Rock is an American comedian, actor, and filmmaker. He became famous in the 1990s with stand-up specials and his work on Saturday Night Live. He has also starred in movies like Madagascar (as the voice of Marty the zebra) and Grown Ups. Rock often uses his comedy to address social and cultural issues.
	Lando Norris is a British Formula 1 driver who competes for McLaren. He joined F1 in 2019. He consistently ranks among the top drivers in the sport finishing 2nd in the latest F1 Season.