

## Press Release

28 June 2018 - for immediate use

- **3 in 10** children surveyed across the UK aged 13-18 think **skin gambling** is a problem for those aged under 18.
- **10%** are **gambling online** with skins (esports betting, mystery boxes, public pots or other skins betting).
- This is equivalent to **448,744 children aged 13-18** across the UK\*.

1 in 10 children across the UK aged 13-18 are playing or gambling online with skins, a Parent Zone report has uncovered. Parent Zone set out to explore the scale of under-18s skin gambling, how it is done, and what needs to happen to prevent children from being introduced to gambling via video gaming platforms.

Following an investigation into the growth of skin gambling in young people, Parent Zone also discovered that 1 in 4 children across the UK aged 13-18 have heard of skin gambling (27%), while 29% believe it is a “big” or “fairly big” problem for those aged under-18.

Skin gambling is a relatively new phenomenon, where gamers are able to bet with virtual items called ‘skins’. Since 2015, gamers have been able to win or trade skins and gamble their collections on competitive video gaming matches (esport), in casino-style sites or on games of chance. Winners can cash in their skins for real currency, and billions of pounds are currently spent in skin gambling sites internationally. Unlike most regulated online gambling and betting sites, skins gambling sites do not enforce rigorous age verification processes, and under-18s say they can enter with ease.

As part of Parent Zone’s report, entitled *Skin gambling: teenage Britain’s secret habit*, an Ipsos MORI online survey of 1,001 children across the UK aged 13-18<sup>1</sup> revealed:

***Of all children aged 13-18 across the UK...***

**27%** have heard of skin gambling (esports betting, mystery boxes, public pots or other skins betting).

**10%** have tried some form of skin gambling.

**29%** think it is a “very big” or “fairly big” problem.

Of those aged 13-17, **46%** say they are able to access 18+ websites if they want.

Our survey reveals that 10% of children across the UK aged 13-18 have gambled skins, which amounts to approximately 448,744\* children.

\*Based on 2016 ONS data

In a series of focus groups, Parent Zone spoke to children aged 13-16, to find out more. One 14-year-old said: *“I’ve got a friend who tried one of the [skin gambling] websites. He has a huge collection of skins for a game... £1,000 worth. He put £1 on it just to try it out and he wanted to do a bit more cos he lost and wanted to get it back. He lost again and wanted to get his £10 back. He ended up winning £750, but he’s really addicted to it. He’s 15.”*

**To read and download the full report, please visit**

[www.parentzone.org.uk/skingambling](http://www.parentzone.org.uk/skingambling)

Parent Zone CEO Vicki Shotbolt said: “This report has uncovered a phenomenon that is only going to grow. We have an opportunity to step in before this problem spins out of control. It isn’t going to be easy unravelling a complex gambling ecosystem which is why we are calling for an independent review to identify meaningful solutions.”

*Vicki Shotbolt, CEO and founder of Parent Zone, is available for comment. Please contact [press@parentzone.org.uk](mailto:press@parentzone.org.uk) or call 020 7686 7225*

### **About Parent Zone**

Parent Zone are the experts in digital family life. They provide support and information to parents, children and schools, working globally to help families to navigate the internet safely and confidently. They regularly work with parents, schools, governments and businesses to study, understand and address the impact of emerging technologies on young people.