

National Counter Disinformation Strategy

Working Group – Minutes of 9th Meeting

24 November 2023

Attendees: Martina Chapman (Independent Chair)
Seamus Hempenstall (D/TCAGSM - Secretariat)
Paul Kilkenny (D/TCAGSM - Secretariat)
Fiona Shevlin (D/TCAGSM - Secretariat)
Robert O'Driscoll (Department of Foreign Affairs)
Cathal McCauley (Maynooth University)
Hugh McCarthy (Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment)
John Dunne (National Cyber Security Centre)
Vincent O'Brien (National Cyber Security Centre)
Nick Callan (An Coimisiún Toghcháin)
Tiernan Kenny (Coimisiún na Meán)
Eugene Farrelly (Department of the Taoiseach)
Paul Gordon (National Youth Council of Ireland)
Susan Daly (Press Ombudsman representative)
Niamh McDonald (Hope and Courage Collective – Presenter)
Susan Daly (Press Ombudsman representative – Presenter)

The Chair opened the ninth meeting of the National Counter Disinformation Strategy Working Group by welcoming all attendees.

1. Draft minutes of 8th meeting (28th October) and matters arising

The minutes of October's meeting were agreed by the Working Group.

2. Draft note and conclusions from the public consultation process

The Chair thanked the Secretariat for their recent work on the public consultation in relation to the Strategy. There was discussion of the review of submissions to the public consultation prepared by the Secretariat, which outlined some key themes and suggested potential

recommendations. Secretariat highlighted that it was not intended to be a scientific or statistical analysis of submissions, but to provide summary overview of the submissions received.

3. Consultation Forum – Structure & objectives

The finalised structure and objectives of the upcoming Consultation Forum were presented by the Secretariat. It was stated that the purpose of the Forum is to suggest and develop potential recommendations and actions for the Strategy. It is intended that relevant recommendations will be listed under each Principle.

The value of transparency in the Strategy development process was highlighted. The Chair also reminded members of the Working Group to confirm attendance to the Consultation Forum.

4. A.O.B.

There were no matters arising under AOB.

5. Presentations

Two presentations were given to the Working Group – the first from Niamh McDonald of the Hope sand Courage Collective, and the second from Susan Daly of Journal Media.

Niamh McDonald outlined the role of social media in the spread of disinformation and the methods that those who monetise disinformation can use to circulate false narratives. She also mentioned the importance of online platform regulation and the protection of the democratic process.

Susan Daly then discussed her study visit to the United States of America, facilitated by the US Department of State under the journalism strand of the International Visitor Leader program. She described the initiatives that they encountered, designed to combat disinformation.

She stated that media plurality and the mitigation of polarisation are considered key issues in the American media sector. The challenges of deep-fakes generated by artificial intelligence, the training of journalists in avoiding the amplification of false narratives and the need to meet people offline to discuss challenging topics were all discussed.

NCDS Secretariat

27/11/2023