

National Counter Disinformation Strategy

Working Group

24 March 2023

Attendees: Martina Chapman (Independent Chair)
Seamus Hempenstall (D/TCAGSM)
Paul Kilkenny (D/TCAGSM)
Fiona Shevlin (D/TCAGSM)
Eugene Farrelly (D/Taoiseach)
Patrick Forsyth (D/Justice)
Mary Clare O’Sullivan (An Coimisiún Toghcháin – Electoral Commission)
Vincent O’Brien (National Cyber Security Centre)
Robert O’Driscoll (D/FA)
Kathy O’Donoghue (D/ETE)
Muiriosa Ryan (D/Health, HSE)
Anthony Kilcoyne (D/Education, Webwise)
Eileen Culloty (EDMO Ireland)
Una Fitzpatrick (Technology Ireland)
Susan Daly (Press Ombudsman representative)
Rónán O’Domhnaill (Coimisiún na Meán – Media Commission)
Stephanie Comey (Media Literacy Ireland)
Paul Gordon (National Youth Council of Ireland)
Aoife Gallagher (Institute for Strategic Dialogue)

The Chair opened the meeting and members of the Group, including the Chair, introduced themselves briefly.

Draft minutes of 1st Meeting

Draft minutes of the first meeting had been circulated. There were no changes to the minutes and the group approved the draft minutes as circulated.

Revised draft Terms of Reference

Updated draft Terms of Reference were circulated after the first meeting incorporating comments of Working Group members. The revised draft Terms of Reference were read out and agreed by the Working Group with no further comment.

Presentations

A presentation on Webwise and its work was given by Anthony Gilcoyne. There was discussion about the training of teachers and the best way to adequately equip teachers with digital literacy skills. It was noted that the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) will be merging with three other organisations later this year, and that it is a timely juncture to consider their role in combating disinformation in schools.

A presentation was also given by Aoife Gallagher of the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD). The work of ISD was outlined and information was given about a current project underway to map the Irish disinformation landscape using data over a three year period. This work is due to be finished later this year. The impact of bot activity on disinformation and the software used to conduct such research was also discussed.

The Chair thanked presenters and invited members to submit suggestions for presentations at future meetings.

Process of strategy development

The Secretariat outlined the envisaged process for development of the Strategy, focusing on the work that the sub-groups will carry out. It is expected that each sub-group will produce a report on their area of work. Transparency of process was also highlighted and it is intended that the reports of the sub-groups will be published alongside the public consultation.

Subgroup descriptions and membership

The Chair brought the group through the descriptions of the sub-groups and their current membership. Suggestions were invited from Working Group members on possible organisations that could contribute to sub-groups. There was discussion about providing effective representation of different sectors of society.

A report template will be circulated by the Secretariat. It was stated that Working Group members could make additional submissions using this template, if they feel

that an aspect of the Terms of Reference is not covered by the existing sub-groups' work.

A.O.B.

There were no matters arising under AOB.

Next meeting of Working Group

The next meeting of the Working Group was proposed for Thursday 20 April.

NCDS Secretariat

24/03/2023