

Minutes of the Meeting of the National Advisory Council for Online Safety, 4 October 2018

1. Introduction

- Minister of State Seán Kyne, chairperson of the Council, opened the meeting by thanking the gathered members for agreeing to take part. He noted the wide range of issues and challenges that fall under the umbrella of online safety and that this stakeholder forum would enable broader discussion of these issues and help Government to respond appropriately to them.
- At the chairperson's request, the gathered members of the Council introduced themselves to one another.

2. DCCAIE presentation

- Dualta Ó Broin (**DCCAIE**) gave a presentation about the background to the Action Plan for Online Safety 2018-2019 and the establishment of the Council.
- He emphasised the role of the Open Policy Debate on Online Safety held in March 2018, in which there were over 120 participants, and the key themes emerging from the event, including:
 - Structures and collaboration,
 - International dimension,
 - Opportunities and rights,
 - Education,
 - Illegal content,
 - Communication, and,
 - Involvement of young people.
- He continued by noting that, following the OPD, the Department of the Taoiseach, in collaboration with six other government departments, prepared the Action Plan for Online Safety 2018-2019, which was launched on 11 July 2018. The plan contains 25 short-to-medium term actions to be implemented over 12-18 months, including the establishment of the Council to act as a multi-stakeholder forum and to advise the Government on online safety matters.

3. Terms of reference

- The chairperson introduced the Terms of Reference of the Council, noted that they had been agreed by Government, and invited comments by the members of the Council.
- Ryan Meade (**Google**) asked whether there were existing EU funded programmes for which the Council was going to assume the role of the national stakeholder forum.
 - The chairperson stated that there are a number of existing programmes and Dualta noted that one of these programmes part-funded the work of Hotline.ie, the ISPCC, the National Parent's Council (Primary) and Webwise.
- Brian O'Neill (**DIT**) welcomed the formation of the Council, the Terms of Reference. However, he noted that, while the Action Plan for Online Safety focuses on the short-to-medium term, there is a lack of an overarching long-term strategy to deal with online safety issues. He hoped that the Council may be able to advise in the future on the creation of such a strategy.
- Cormac Callanan (**Aconite Internet Solutions**) requested that persons with learning disabilities be added to the list of those in need of targeted guidance materials, perhaps in the next iteration of the terms. Jennifer Glansford (**Age Action Ireland**) agreed with this request and emphasised that adults with learning difficulties are a particularly underserved group. Alex Cooney (**Cybersafe Ireland**) agreed.
 - The chairperson stated that he did not see any difficulty with this request.
- The chairperson noted that the view of the Council was favourable towards the Terms of Reference and they were agreed.
- **ACTIONS ARISING:**
 - Persons with learning disabilities to be included in point 3 of the terms of reference.
 - The Department of Justice and Equality to be requested to give a short presentation on the EU programme at the second meeting of the Council.

4. Discussion item – Research subgroup

- The chairperson introduced the discussion item regarding the formation of a research subgroup of the Council and requested 3-5 volunteers.
- Triona Quill (**DCCAÉ**) noted that there was an absence of Irish specific research on online safety issues that could serve as an evidence base for policy making. She also noted that key messages from international research were often not being communicated to the relevant players in this area.
- Brian O’Neill volunteered to be a member of the subgroup. He noted that this was a highly challenging area and that there are conflicting messages from existing research that need to be sorted through. He emphasised that sustained ongoing attention to research is required to establish an evidence base.
 - The chairperson asked if there were any standout countries in this regard. Brian O’Neill stated that Germany were particularly good at maintaining ongoing research into online safety at both a national and regional level.
- John Church (**Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children**) volunteered to be a member of the subgroup. He noted that there is existing, or ongoing proprietary research by a number of members of the Council that could be fed into this subgroup. In this regard he noted ongoing research between the ISPCC and Vodafone. He emphasised the need to take stock of existing research to see what the emerging issues and questions are before beginning further research projects.
- Ryan Meade also volunteered for the subgroup, noting the need to establish and communicate the existing evidence-base.
- Alex Cooney and Ana Niculescu (**Hotline.ie**) also volunteered to be members of the subgroup.
- The chairperson thanked the volunteers and stated that the secretariat of the Council would be in touch to organise the formation of the subgroup.
- Ian Power (**SpunOut.ie**) stated that there was a need for a review of the existing research.
 - Brian O’Neill agreed and emphasised that the research group would need to be mindful of what can be achieved in the timeframe of the Council.

- Niamh Sweeney (**Facebook**) stated that Facebook would be hosting an event with the National Anti-Bullying Centre in the near future and that the Centre's Director would make a good addition to the Council or subgroup. John Church (ISPCC) said that the Director of the National Anti-Bullying centre was a member of the ISPCC's Cyber Safety Advisory group and agreed that he would make a good addition.
 - The chairperson agreed to consider this addition.
- **ACTION ARISING:**
 - Secretariat to contact Brian O'Neill, John Church, Ryan Meade, Alex Cooney and Ana Niculescu regarding the establishment of a research subgroup.
 - The research subgroup will make an initial report on its views to the second meeting of the Council.

5. Discussion item – Guidance subgroup

- The chairperson introduced the discussion item regarding the formation of a guidance subgroup of the Council and requested 3-5 volunteers.
- Triona Quill noted that action 15 of the Action Plan for Online Safety commits the Government to working with industry to develop a practical guide for online platforms and interactive services to support best practice in online Safety in design and that the input of the Guidance subgroup on this action was desired.
- Niamh Sweeney, Jennifer Glansford, Ian Power, Jane McGarrigle (**Webwise.ie**) volunteered to be members of the subgroup. [Following the meeting, Karen McAuley also volunteered]
- **ACTION ARISING:**
 - Secretariat to contact those mentioned above regarding the establishment of the guidance subgroup.
 - The subgroup will make an initial report on its views to the second meeting of the Council.

6. Discussion item – Annual report of the Council

- The chairperson introduced the discussion item and noted that it was intended that the annual report of the Council would be published to coincide with Safer Internet Day each February.
- There were questions from the Council members about the nature of the report and whether the first report should be a progress report rather than an annual report given the timeframes involved.
- Triona Quill noted that, given the timeframe, it is intended that the first report contain key facts and emerging themes from existing research and point to existing materials and resources. She also noted that this public-facing report is intended to be a resource and is separate to the biannual reports the inter-departmental sponsors group in charge of implementing the Action Plan will ultimately make to government.
- The chairperson concluded the item and stated that further discussion would be held at the next meeting of the Council.
- **ACTION ARISING:** Members to consider what material they would like to include in a progress/annual report for discussion at the second meeting of the Council.

7. Discussion item – Draft work programme of the Council

- The chairperson introduced the discussion item, summarised the items of the draft work programme and invited comments from the Council members.
- Brian O'Neill suggested that the Council could examine the possibility of endorsing principles that could then form the basis of its approach to a number of the items on the work programmes.
- Niamh Sweeney highlighted the single online portal for online safety materials recently launched by Government and the importance of raising awareness of the resources already available to public, particularly parents, teachers, community leaders and children.
- Jenny Dolan (**the Data Protection Commission**) noted that the DPC intends to hold a public consultation on children and data protection issues in the near-future and is working with the Ombudsman for Children in preparation. The consultation is intended to have two streams, one being engagement with children through schools and the other being a traditional call for responses.

- The chairperson noted that the members of the Council were broadly positive towards the draft work programme and asked members to consider any amendments they would like to see before the second meeting of the Council.
- **ACTION ARISING:** Members to consider any additional items they would like to see included in the work programme for discussion at the second meeting of the Council.

8. Date of Next Meeting

- The chairperson stated that it is intended that the subgroups meet before the next meeting of the Council, which is to be held in late November. He noted the ambitious timeframe for the Council's work programme and again thanked the members for their attendance.
- **ACTION ARISING:** Secretariat to circulate date and time of the next meeting as soon as possible.

9. AOB

- Ana Niculescu noted that Hotline.ie's annual report for 2017 was being published later that day and volunteered to give a presentation on the report at the next meeting of the Council.

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5/10/18