Minutes of the Meeting of the National Advisory Council for Online Safety, 8 May 2019

1. Adoption of minutes of meeting of 23 January 2019

- The minutes of the previous meeting of the Council on 23 January 2019 were agreed.

- **ACTIONS ARISING:**

  - Secretariat to publish minutes on the website of the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment (the **Department**).

2. Updates

a. Research Project – tendering for field research services

- Brian O'Neill, TUD, gave an update on the draft research proposal, noting that the research subgroup had met and a draft tender has been prepared by the Secretariat. He noted that there was a lot of discussion around the sample questionnaires and maximising value for money and the group have now come up with 3 related questionnaires: 1. a child based questionnaire, 2. a smaller questionnaire for parents and 3. an adult questionnaire. The adult questionnaire is modelled on an approach taken by the Australian eSafety Commissioner.

- The Secretariat is currently engaging with the Procurement Unit to finalise the tender and intends to issue the tender by the end of the month.

- The Chairperson, Minister of State Séan Canney, thanked everyone involved in the research subgroup for their time and input into the work of the research project thus far.

b. Sponsors Group – general update

- Ruth Carmody, Department of Education and Skills gave the update on the Sponsors Group for the Action Plan for Online Safety, noting that steady and substantial progress had been made in achieving the actions set out in the plan.

c. Sponsors Group – work on www.besafeonline.ie

- Jane McGarrigle, Webwise gave an update on the assessment of the www.besafeonline.ie website. Following the preliminary views of the Council being submitted to the Sponsor's Group, a subcommittee of the Sponsor's Group was set up to assess the usability and functionality of the site.

- They met last month to review the site and presented a number of early stage recommendations, including:

  - that the site needed to be streamlined, noting that a cleaner and simpler approach was needed,

  - that the site should primarily sign post to other advice portals and websites like ISPCC's Childline and SpunOut.ie which are more popular and frequently updated,

  - That the landing page presentation needed to be revamped.

- The subcommittee intends to meet with the developers to the site in D/Taoiseach to examine how the site can be improved.

3. Presentation: ISPCC

- John Church, ISPCC gave a presentation on Childline.ie and Child and Family Support Services. Childline answers over 310,000 contacts every year by phone, text and web chat. They have a 73% answering call rate which they are striving to further improve on. In moving with current times, calls are going down and online chats are going up. They are also looking at piloting an online counselling service

4. Update on public consultation on the regulation of harmful online content and the transposition of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive

- Ciarán Shanley (**Secretariat**) gave an update on the Public Consultation. The consultation launched on 4th March and ran for 6 weeks. It covered 4 broad themes, including proposals for a national online safety system. There have been around 80 responses. It was promoted online, in newspapers and on radio. A few trends have emerged and there is an appreciation among the replies of the complexity of the topic. There is also recognition of the need to provide a clear and robust definition or approach to harmful content in any legislation.

- The analysis of the responses is ongoing and the Department is aiming to publish the responses at the end of the month.

5. Date of Next Meeting

- The next meeting will take place in late September 2019.

6. AOB

- The Chairperson, Minister of State Séan Canney thanked all the members of the National Advisory Group for Online Safety for their submissions to the Consultation and their other contributions to the work of the Council thus far.

Moira McAuliffe
NACOS Secretariat

9/5/2019