



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

National Advisory Council for Online Safety

Progress Report February 2019

Table of Contents

Foreword	2
Background - National Advisory Council for Online Safety	4
The Environment.....	6
The Positives.....	7
The Challenges.....	8
The Terms of Reference of the Council	9
The Council's 2018/2019 Work Programme	10
The Work of the Council	11
Addressing the gaps in research	12
Appendix – Council Members	13

Foreword



Minister of State Seán Canney

As chairperson of the National Advisory Council for Online Safety, I am delighted to present this first report of the Council's work. It is intended that this progress report will form the template for future annual reports of the Council, which will be published each year to coincide with Safer Internet Day.

When launching the Action Plan for Online Safety 2018-2019 the Taoiseach said of online safety that *"as the internet affects all aspects of our lives, the only approach that will truly be effective is one that involves all stakeholders playing their part"*.

The National Advisory Council for Online Safety was established in September 2018 as part of the Government's Action Plan for Online Safety. This Government recognises that online safety cannot be the responsibility of any one organisation. The online world touches upon all aspects of Irish society and is no longer a separate space from our everyday lives. The establishment of the Council recognises this reality and draws together stakeholders from across Irish society, including Government bodies, NGOs and industry to work together to take on the challenge of ensuring the safety of all of our citizens online.

The terms of reference of the Council are designed to make the most of the experience and knowledge of its members. They include providing advice to Government on online safety issues, identifying emerging online safety issues where Government may need to take action, inputting into the development of a wide range of online safety guidance materials, and reviewing national and international research.

Shortly after its establishment the Council agreed an ambitious work programme for 2018-2019, including the commissioning of research to provide an evidence base for the policy issues to be considered by the Council and its advice to Government. The Council also communicated its initial view of the Government's single online portal for online safety resources, www.besafeonline.ie, to the interdepartmental implementation Committee referred to as the Sponsors' Group.

While the Council is still in the early stages of its work, good progress has been made in implementing its Work Programme. This report is being published to coincide with Safer Internet Day, an EU wide event which highlights the range of initiatives that are in place across the EU and in Ireland.

It is important to note that all stakeholders, whether Government, Industry or NGO, have put in place a wide range of initiatives and measures to make the online world a safer place for our citizens. However, it is clear to us all that more must be done, and we are committed to working together to meet our common goal.

As a parent and as an elected representative I am also all too aware of the challenges that the online world can pose to our communities, especially to our most vulnerable citizens. The Action Plan for Online Safety and the work to date of the National Advisory Council for Online Safety have put in place a strong foundation on which we will build in the coming months.

I would like to thank each and every one of our members most sincerely for their participation in the work of the Council to date, and I look forward to delivering on the Council's work programme in the months ahead.

Seán Canney TD

Minister of State for Natural Resources and Digital Development

Background - National Advisory Council for Online Safety

The online world brings enormous benefits to our society. We see these benefits in our everyday lives, from the small business owner using new technologies to improve their products and services, to families communicating with loved ones abroad in an instant. However, as the online world becomes more present in our day to day lives we are increasingly aware that it presents risks, especially to vulnerable members of our society including our children.

Online Safety for all, but especially vulnerable groups such as children, persons with disabilities and the elderly, is a priority for our society. On 11 July 2018 the Taoiseach launched Ireland's first Action Plan for Online Safety. This plan commits the Government to taking a robust, joined up and wide-ranging approach to implementing or substantially progressing 25 actions to improve online safety in Ireland before the end of 2019.

The actions contained in the plan are wide-ranging and involve education, guidance and awareness raising measures, legislative measures, and the establishment of robust monitoring and implementation structures. A number of key actions are:

- The establishment of a National Advisory Council for Online Safety. This Council was formed in September 2018 and held its first meeting on 4 October 2018.
- The establishment of a Sponsors Group to drive the implementation of the Action Plan.
- The creation of a single online portal, www.besafeonline.ie, for online safety resources.
- Working with industry to produce a practical guide on online safety in design for online platforms and interactive services

The implementation of the Action Plan is driven by a Sponsors Group made up of representatives from six key Government departments, including the Department of Education and Skills, the Department of Justice and Equality, the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, the Department of Health, the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

The Action Plan for Online Safety is not a once off initiative but is intended be a rolling programme of work that will be periodically refreshed.

As well as operating within the framework of the Action Plan for Online Safety the Council also operates alongside and with existing initiatives and bodies whose work touches upon online safety issues, including the Data Protection Commission, Hotline.ie, and An Garda Síochána. Many of these bodies are also members of the Council.

Online safety is a complex issue that touches upon many areas of our lives. The statistics below are just a small snapshot of how the online world affects our daily lives, the challenges we face and the positive effects of an online safety conscious society.

The Environment

82% of respondents have used the internet in the past three months, this rises to 97% among those aged between 16 and 44 and falls to 48% for persons aged between 60 and 74

Central Statistics Office – Information Society Statistics, 2018

46% of 6-18 year olds say that they are “always online”

ISPCC/Vodafone - Cyber Safety Quantitative Research, June 2018

67% of respondents use mobile phones to access the internet, email, social media and streaming websites, this rises to 86% among those aged 18 to 34

*Commission for Communications Regulation
Ireland Communicates Survey, 2017*

23% of 9 year olds have an online profile

*Growing Up in Ireland – Key Findings for Cohort '08 at 9 years old
Relationships and Socio-emotional well being*

29% of 9 year olds spend greater than 1 hour on weekdays accessing non-TV screens and this rises to 62% on the weekends

Growing Up in Ireland – Key Findings for Cohort '08 at 9 years old – Relationships and Socio-emotional well being

61% of 16-29 year olds used the internet to upload self-created content, falling to 24% of 60-74 year olds

Central Statistics Office – Information Society Statistics, 2018

The Positives

72% of 6-18 say they have not been treated badly or nastily by others, both online and offline

ISPCC/Vodafone - Cyber Safety Quantitative Research, June 2018

62% of 6-18 year olds say that it is easy to speak to their parents

ISPCC/Vodafone - Cyber Safety Quantitative Research, June 2018

92% of parents believe that they can definitely or to a fair amount help/support their child if something happens to upset them online

ISPCC/Vodafone - Cyber Safety Quantitative Research, June 2018

78% of parents have rules about for how long and when a child goes online

ISPCC/Vodafone - Cyber Safety Quantitative Research, June 2018

75% of parents expressed confidence that they know what their children are doing on the internet and 78% expressed confidence that their children would inform them quickly if they had a problem on the internet

National Anti-Bullying Centre - Cyberbullying in Ireland Parental Survey, 2016

89% of Irish consumers believe data privacy and protection are very important

We Are Social – Jan 2018, Attitudes Towards Digital in Ireland

The Challenges

Parents would prefer to child online safety advice from the following sources: school (70%), online safety websites (52%) and Government (47%)

ISPCC/Vodafone - Cyber Safety Quantitative Research, June 2018

25% of 6-18 year olds say that have been treated badly by others, 68% say that this has happened in person and 52% say that this has happened online

ISPCC/Vodafone - Cyber Safety Quantitative Research, June 2018

1/3 of 11-18 have been exposed to harmful user-generated content, including gory images, hate speech, drug related content, self-harm related content, etc.

ISPCC/Vodafone - Cyber Safety Quantitative Research, June 2018

5,789 reports of child sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation received, 524 of which were confirmed as constituting child sexual abuse under Irish law

Hotline.ie Annual Report 2017

Only 30% of parents feel that their children know how to protect themselves from online dangers

National Anti-Bullying Centre - Cyberbullying in Ireland Parental Survey, 2016

There is a correlation between children who own a phone at age 9 and doing less well in reading and maths exams at age 13 than compared to their peers

ESRI Research Bulletin January 2019

36% of older workers said they had been targeted by online scammers

Datapac / Sophos Survey, 2018

The Terms of Reference of the Council

The Terms of Reference of the NACOS, established in accordance with Action #20 of the Action Plan for Online Safety, published by the Government on 11 July 2018, are as follows:

- 1) Provide advice to Government on Online Safety policy issues;
- 2) Identify emerging issues where Government intervention may be warranted, including in future iterations of the Government's Action Plan;
- 3) Input to the development of clear and easy to understand Online Safety guidance materials for all internet users, including targeted material for children and young people, parents, persons with learning disabilities, and older people;
- 4) To act as the national stakeholder forum for the purposes of EU funded programmes;
- 5) Review national and international research and disseminate key findings to Government, stakeholders, and the wider public;
- 6) Provide an annual report for Government to coincide with Safer Internet Day.

The Council's 2018/2019 Work Programme

The Action Plan for Online Safety envisages that the Council will meet on a quarterly basis and agree a 12 month work programme. The current Action Plan is for the period 2018-2019 and therefore it is envisaged that preparatory work for the next Action Plan will take place during the latter part of 2019.

The 2018/2019 work programme of the Council is as follows:

1) Annual Report of the National Advisory Council for Online Safety

It is intended that this report will be published in February to coincide with Safer Internet Day.

- 2) Conducting a high level survey of international and national research and preparing for the commissioning of research to provide an evidence base for the policy issues to be considered by the Council and its advice to Government. It is envisaged that a research subgroup will be established and will report back to the Council with a recommendation on the initial research to be commissioned. It is intended that a call for tenders/research proposals will issue in 2019 and research will begin in 2019 with a view to publication in advance of the Council's Annual Report in February 2020.
- 3) Consideration and preparation of practical guide for online platforms and interactive services, to encourage a standardised approach to best practice in online safety at all stages of design, development and roll out. It is proposed to establish a subgroup to advance this requirement. It is envisaged that the Council would make submit a recommended guide to Government, through the Sponsors' Group, with a view to publication in Q4 2019.
- 4) Review of resources and guidance material on the Government's online safety portal, with a view to making a recommendation to the sponsors' group in relation to gaps and material which could be updated or improved. **(Advice issued – Q4 2018)**
- 5) Act as the National Stakeholder Forum for the purposes of the EU funded programmes.
- 6) Consideration and Preparation of Advice to Government of actions which should be included in the next Action Plan for Online Safety.
- 7) Other actions which may be suggested and agreed by the Council.

The Work of the Council

The Council was established in September 2018. Since its establishment it has held three meetings, one in October 2018, one in November 2018 and one in January 2019. In accordance with its terms of reference and work programme the actions taken by the Council to date include:

- The establishment two subgroups, one to examine issues relating to online safety guidance and one to examine issues relating to online safety research.
- The adoption of a proposed approach to the development of a practical guide for online safety in design.
- The adoption of recommendations to Government regarding the operation of the single online portal for online safety information, www.besafeonline.ie.
- The adoption of a proposal to conduct a phased research project on online safety – further details below.

The terms of reference of the Council, its 2018/2019 work programme and the minutes and notes of the meetings of the Council and its subgroup are available online at <https://www.dccae.gov.ie/en-ie/communications/topics/Internet-Policy/online-safety/national-advisory-council-/Pages/Minutes-of-the-Council.aspx>.

Addressing the gaps in research

Central to the work of the Council is the analysis of national and international research and the dissemination of key findings from that research. When established in October 2018 it was immediately apparent to the Council that while there is much research activity which is related to the topics of online safety taking place in Ireland – this research tends to vary in its focus and quality. The Council decided to establish a Research Sub-Group in order to consider the subject in detail, and the work of this sub-group resulted in the acceptance by the Council of a proposal to tender for online safety research.

The Council's intention is that this research, which will be procured by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment on behalf of the Council, will serve as a baseline for further research and usefully inform the work of the Council and Government policy. Funding for this research has been secured and the procurement process will begin during Q1 2019.

It is intended that the research project will provide baseline information regarding:

- Children, youth and risks/safety in use of the Internet,
- Parents and Online Safety, and,
- Adults and e-safety.

The research project will be carried out in phases with research on children and parents forming the first stage.

The outcomes sought by the research project are as follows:

- To describe the demographic profile of Internet users in Ireland,
- To determine how adults and children in Ireland use and access the Internet and the level of their digital skills,
- To estimate the prevalence of online risks and abuse experienced by Internet users,
- To identify opportunities and benefits obtained through the use of the Internet,
- To identify safety practices of adults and children when using the Internet, and,
- To identify how parents mediate in the use of Internet by their children.

Appendix – Council Members



Seán Canney TD

Seán was appointed Minister of State for Community Development, Natural Resources and Digital Innovation on 16 October 2018, was elected to Dáil Éireann as an Independent TD for Galway East in 2016 and had served as Minister of State for OPW and Flood Relief from May 2016 until June 2017 before his latest appointment. He had previously been a member of Galway County Council for three terms where he held various positions including Mayor of County Galway (2007-2008). Seán is a Chartered Quantity Surveyor and lectured at GMIT prior to his election to Dáil Éireann.



Ian Power

Ian is executive director of SpunOut.ie, Ireland's youth information website by young people, for young people. SpunOut.ie aims to empower young people with the information they need to lead active, happy, healthy lives. Over 1.2 million young people used SpunOut.ie in 2018. Ian is also president of the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) and a board member of the Citizens Information Board (CIB) and the Community Foundation for Ireland. He is a member of the HSE's Digital Advisory Board, Twitter's Global 'Trust & Safety' Council, and the Research Ethics Committee for 'Growing Up in Ireland' the ESRI National Longitudinal Study of Children in Ireland



Niamh Sweeney

As Head of Public Policy for Facebook Ireland, Niamh engages with a wide range of stakeholders on issues such as online safety, data protection and privacy. Prior to joining Facebook, Niamh worked in politics and as a print and broadcast journalist. She is a graduate of Trinity College Dublin, the Dublin Institute of Technology and Columbia University in the City of New York.



Ana Niculescu

Ana joined the Internet Service Providers Association of Ireland (ISPAI) in June 2013 and is currently ISPAI Hotline.ie Manager. The Hotline.ie Service provides a national reporting mechanism where the public may report in a secure, anonymous and confidential way, suspected illegal content online. Ana has extensive knowledge in areas such as child protection, online safety, cybercrime and public affairs. In 2018 Ana was appointed Vice-President of INHOPE (International Association of Internet Hotline), the umbrella organisations uniting a global network of 45 Hotlines across 40 countries engaged in combating child sexual abuse and exploitation online.



Áine Lynch

Áine qualified as a nurse and then completed an honours degree in Behavioural Sciences. Áine worked for two years in the area of child psychiatry then went on to work for the ISPCC as Childline Manager and Director of Services. In August 2007 Áine was appointed CEO of the National Parents Council Primary (NPC). Áine is on the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), the National Council for Special Education (NCSE) and was formerly on the Teaching Council. In December 2017 Áine was awarded a Masters in Executive Leadership, for her thesis 'Will joining the Charity Sector impact the Governance of Primary Schools in Ireland?'.



Eoghan Ó Faoláin

Eoghan is the Acting Director of Technology Ireland, the Ibec group which is a pro-active membership organisation with over 200 member companies located throughout Ireland. With origins dating back to 1968, the association was formed in 2017 by the merger of ICT Ireland and the Irish Software Association. Eoghan has over 10 years' experience with Ibec as Executive, Senior Executive and Acting Director positions in the software, ICT and medical technology sectors. Prior to joining Ibec, Eoghan completed his PhD entitled 'The use of Raman spectroscopy for the diagnosis of cervical cancer'. Eoghan alongside colleagues at FOCAS, the Radiation and Environmental Science Centre, and collaborators at the Coombe Women and Infants University Hospital in Dublin, embarked on the process of commercialising the technology with support from Enterprise Ireland, resulting in the filing of a worldwide patent of the technology developed.



Dr. Cormac Callanan

Dr. Callanan owns Aconite Internet Solutions (www.aconite.com) which provides expertise in cybersecurity risk mitigation and cybercrime. Dr. Callanan has a PhD in data privacy risks on mobile devices, an MSc in Computer Systems Design and an MSc in Advanced Security and Digital Forensics (GCHQ certified). He has over 30 years working experience on international computer networks and 20 years' experience on illegal content and cybercrime activities on the Internet. He co-authored the Council of Europe Guidelines on Cooperation between Law Enforcement and Internet Service Providers quoted by the European Court of Human Rights. Dr. Callanan is past-president and CEO of INHOPE (www.inhope.org) dealing with illegal child abuse material on the internet.



Declan Daly

Declan is the Detective Chief Superintendent attached to the Garda National Protective Services Bureau and has national responsibility for the investigation and coordination of, sexual crimes against adults and children, domestic violence, human trafficking, organised prostitution, missing persons and the management of sex offenders. He is the Child Protection Officer for An Garda Síochána. Declan has been a member of An Garda Síochána for 29 years, having spent most of that time in crime investigation in the areas of Drug enforcement, Fraud investigation and now presently in the Protective Services Bureau. He represents Ireland on the FBI led, Violent Crimes Against Children International Taskforce and has both Management and Law Degrees.



Liam O'Brien

Liam O'Brien is Director of Strategy & External Affairs for Vodafone Ireland. Liam has responsibility for Vodafone's external relationships with key stakeholders such as the media, regulators and Government, as well as responsibility for key corporate functions such as Corporate Security, Privacy, Wholesale, Vodafone Foundation & Legal Affairs. Liam is also a Board member of the Vodafone & ESB joint venture, SIRO. Liam also has extensive global experience, having spent several years working abroad, including Australia, Sweden, China & India. Liam holds a Bachelor of Electronic Engineering Degree (1993) and a Masters of Business Administration (2003) from University College Dublin.



Alex Cooney

Alex is an experienced programme manager from the not-for-profit sector. She has managed large teams of staff both in Ireland and internationally. She has spent most of her career working in the international development sector with agencies such as UNDP in East Timor and CAFOD where she was responsible for the South East Asia programme. This work involved writing strategic plans, developing funding applications and engaging advocacy programmes to effect policy change. Alex has enjoyed living and working in South East Asia, the Caribbean and in Europe. Since her return to Ireland in 2012, she has worked for Move4Parkinson's Foundation Limited as a Programme Manager and she is co-founder and now CEO of CyberSafeIreland CLG since 2015. Alex recently completed a QQI Level 6 component certificate in Child Psychology.



Ruth Carmody

Ruth is Assistant Secretary General in the Department of Education and Skills with responsibility for Curriculum and Assessment Policy, Early Childhood Education and Teacher Education Policy. She is responsible for a range of reforms in Early Childhood, Primary, Junior and Senior Cycle curricula and for Teacher Education and Supply. She oversees implementation of the Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020. Previous areas of responsibility included Higher Education and Social Inclusion. More recently, she oversaw the development of the Action Plan for Education, the ETB/Solas sector programme of reform and modernisation and the creation of the Education Shared Business Service (ESBS).



Ryan Meade

Ryan works with Google in Ireland as Public Policy & Government Relations Manager. Before joining Google in 2018 he worked for 7 years as a public policy consultant, advising private and NGO clients on policy, public affairs, strategic communications and government relations. Prior to this he spent 10 years working in politics in Ireland, including serving as Special Adviser to the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. He is a member of the National Advisory Council on Online Safety and the Advisory Group to the National Dialogue on Climate Action.



Brian O'Neill

Director of Research, Enterprise and Innovation at Dublin Institute of Technology, Brian is a researcher of young people's use of digital technologies, online safety and policy for the digital environment. He has conducted research for the European Commission, UNICEF, and the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland and is part of EU Kids Online research network. He is a member of the Internet Safety Advisory Committee (ISAC) under the leadership of the Office for Internet Safety. In 2014, Brian chaired the Internet Content Governance Advisory Group, reporting to the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources. His co-authored publication *Towards a Better Internet for Children? Policy Pillars, Players and Paradoxes* (Nordicom 2014) deals with the development of safer Internet policies in Europe as they transitioned towards a greater focus on children's rights in the digital age. His most recent work involves a mapping of safer Internet policies in European Member States. Brian is currently chair of the Interim Steering Group for Media Literacy Ireland, coordinated by the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland.

The Data Protection Commission

The Data Protection Commission (DPC) is the national independent authority responsible for upholding the fundamental right of individuals in the EU to have their personal data protected.

The DPC is the Irish supervisory authority for the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and also has functions and powers related to other important regulatory frameworks including the Irish ePrivacy Regulations (2011) and the EU Directive known as the Law Enforcement Directive. The Data Protection Commission is represented on the National Advisory Council for Online Safety by Jenny Dolan. Jenny is an Assistant Commissioner at the Data Protection Commission and heads up the Children's Policy unit within the Legal & Policy division. Jenny's role involves developing formal policy positions and drafting guidance material on matters relating to children's data protection issues. Jenny is currently leading a two-limbed nationwide consultation on the processing of children's personal data and the rights of children as data subjects under the General Data Protection Regulation, which will engage adult stakeholders generally and will separately engage children and young people directly in the classroom.



**An Coimisiún um
Chosaint Sonraí**
Data Protection
Commission

The Ombudsman for Children's Office

the OCO is an independent statutory body, which was established in 2004 under the Ombudsman for Children Act 2002. Dr Niall Muldoon is the second Ombudsman for Children and was appointed by President Michael D Higgins in February 2015.

The Ombudsman for Children is independent and directly accountable to the Oireachtas in relation to the OCO's statutory functions.

The OCO's core functions are to promote the rights and welfare of children up to the age of 18 years and to deal with complaints made by or for children about the administrative actions of public bodies. The OCO is represented on the National Advisory Council for Online Safety by Karen McAuley, Head of Policy.



**ombudsman
do leanaí
for children**

Age Action

Age Action is Ireland's leading advocacy organisation for older people. Age Action works to ensure that older people's voices are heard at the highest level of Government and that the lived experience of older people informs policy responses to their needs. Age Action strives for a rights-based approach to how Ireland supports and plans for each of us as we grow older. Raising awareness of the valuable contribution older people make to society and ensuring that there are adequate statutory safeguards in place to support independent living is a core function of Age Action. Age Action believes that central to realising appropriate policy responses to ageing is enabling the participation of older people in the design and implementation of those policies. Tackling the issue of ageism and the challenges we face as we grow older such as income security, access to adequate and affordable health care and maintaining our independence.



Webwise.ie

The Webwise initiative of the Professional Development Support Service for Teachers (PDST) acts as the awareness centre of the Safer Internet Ireland project. Webwise develop and disseminate resources that help teachers integrate internet safety into teaching and learning in their schools.

Webwise also provide information, advice, and tools to parents to support their engagement in their children's online lives. With the help of the Webwise Youth Advisory Panel we develop youth oriented awareness raising resources and campaigns that address topics such as cyber bullying. The project is co-funded by the Department of Education and Skills and the EU Connecting Europe Facility.



The Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (ISPCC)

The ISPCC is Ireland's national child protection charity. Our mission is to make the protection of children everyone's priority. The ISPCC provides a range of services directly to children and families, and

advocates for change to enhance the lives of children in Ireland. It is funded through fundraising and through funding provided by government agencies for the delivery of specified services. Services delivered by the ISPCC include Childline, Ireland's only 24-hour listening service for children and young people, as well as a Child and Family Support Service, a Mentoring Programme for children and young people and a Support Line for members of the public.



National Anti-Bullying Research and Resource Centre

The National Anti-Bullying Research and Resource Centre, is a university designated research centre located in DCU Institute of Education. The Centre hosts the UNESCO Chair on Tackling Bullying in Schools and Cyberspace.

Researchers at ABC were the first in Ireland to undertake research on bullying and cyberbullying. ABC leads the field of research, resource development and training in bullying and cyberbullying in Ireland and is an internationally recognised centre of excellence in bullying and cyberbullying research. Current funded research at the Centre is focused on cyberbullying, sexting, sextortion, online privacy and safety among young people and children in Ireland.



The Internet Providers Association of Ireland (ISPAI)

The ISPAI was established in 1997 to provide one voice for the Irish ISP Industry at National, International and EU level. The ISPAI part-funds the Hotline.ie and operates a code of practice and ethics among its members.

