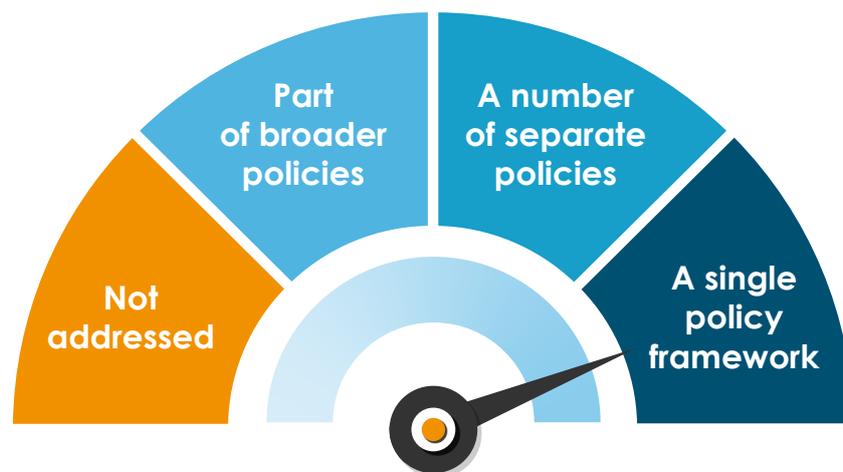# Ireland

The Better Internet for Kids (BIK) Policy Map is a tool used to compare and exchange knowledge on policy making and implementation in EU Member States on the themes and recommendations of the European Strategy for a Better Internet for Children (or BIK Strategy) first set out by the European Commission in May 2012. The third BIK Policy Map report (2020) examines the implementation of the BIK Strategy in 30 European countries, including all EU Member States, Iceland, Norway and the United Kingdom.

For each country in the BIK Policy Map study, we outline findings for Policy frameworks, Policy making and Policy implementation, and conclude by providing a selection of good practices.

Download the full BIK Policy Map report from the Better Internet for Kids website.

1. Policy frameworks

Policy frameworks refer to the organising principles and long-term goals for policies, guidelines, decisions and other statements made at the national level in the course of putting into practice the BIK Strategy.

In Ireland, the European Strategy for a Better Internet for Children has featured in national policy debates on the subject of children's use of the internet. This topic is covered in a single policy framework which addresses the four different pillars of the BIK Strategy. Some examples are given below.

The government's first Action Plan for Online Safety 2018-2019 aimed to set out and implement actions that are achievable and which will have the greatest impact on online safety for everyone in Ireland.

Pillar 1: High-quality content online for children and young people

- Action 10 of the Action Plan for Online Safety 2018-2019 states: "*In line with the EU Better Internet for Kids Strategy, we will promote best practice standards for quality content for children*". The action is to consider ways to promote positive online content for children and is the responsibility of the Sponsors Group with representatives of relevant government departments.

- The National Advisory Council for Online Safety has also initiated the process of developing a practical guide for online safety in design.

Pillar 2: Stepping up awareness and empowerment

- The Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020 was introduced in 2015 and outlines a vision for the use of digital technologies in teaching and learning. There are specific actions in the Strategy that relate to the promotion of the safe and ethical use of technology in schools.

- The Digital Strategy Action Plan 2019 builds on the progress to date in the implementation of the Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020. It reiterates the goals and objectives set out in the Digital Strategy and contains over 55 actions to be achieved. The 2019 Action Plan includes a measure to look beyond the lifetime of this strategy, with an action to consider future policy direction to build on the digital strategy for schools for the period 2021-2026.

- The Digital Learning Framework for Schools was introduced in 2018 and outlines a structure which allows schools to identify where they are on the journey towards embedding digital technologies in teaching, learning and assessment, and enable them to progress in that journey.

- In relation to awareness and empowerment, the Action Plan for Online Safety 2018-2019, introduced in 2018, provides the main overarching framework for awareness raising and empowerment in relation to online safety matters. The Safer Internet Awareness Node Webwise.ie provides a range of online educational resources addressing a range of internet safety issues.

Pillar 3: Creating a safer environment for children online

- The Online Safety & Media Regulation Bill outlines proposals to introduce a new system for the regulation of "harmful online content" in Ireland. It will also update the existing regulatory systems for television broadcasting services and on-demand audiovisual media services such as the RTÉ Player or Apple's film & TV store. Parts of these new and updated systems will come from the implementation of the revised Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) and will encompass regulations to govern video sharing platform services (VSPS) such as YouTube, television broadcasting services (TV) and on-demand audiovisual media services (ODAVMS). A number of complex issues have been identified in relation to the Bill, which will require in-depth legal and policy examination.

- The government approved the general scheme of the Online Safety and Media Regulation Bill in 2019 and the start of detailed legal drafting of the Bill by the Office of the Attorney General.

- The Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020 amends the law relating to harassment, to provide for offences relating to the recording, distribution or publication of intimate images and to provide for the anonymity of victims of those offences. It also provides for an offence involving the distribution, publication or sending of threatening or grossly offensive communication. Also known as Coco's Law, it creates two new offences which criminalise the non-consensual distribution of intimate images.

Pillar 4: Legislation and law enforcement against child sexual abuse and exploitation

- Goal 3: Stronger Protections of the Action Plan for Online Safety 2018-2019 includes actions relating to: Legislation and Regulation, Child Safeguarding Statement, Strengthen links and processes with industry for removing illegal and harmful material, and Working with online platforms based in Ireland to advance online safety measures.

- Article 25 of Directive 2011/93/EU on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography deals with Measures against websites containing or disseminating child pornography. The activities of Hotline.ie and the Garda blocking initiative together fulfil Article 25 in Ireland. The Cybercrime Division in the Department of Justice oversees these activities. The remainder of the Directive has been transposed into Irish law.

- The Garda Blocking Initiative is a process whereby An Garda Síochána and Irish internet service provider (ISP) partners block access to internet sites containing child abuse material. In 2020, An Garda Síochána – in partnership with BT Ireland, Eir Ireland, Sky Ireland, Tesco Mobile, Three Ireland and Vodafone Ireland – signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to prevent access to such pages to protect consumers, including children, from viewing documented child sexual abuse material, and to prevent the further exploitation of children who have already been abused and photographed/filmed. The Garda Blocking Initiative was first introduced in November 2014 with the signing of an MoU between An Garda Síochána and the internet service provider UPC (now Virgin Media) regarding the blocking of child abuse material.

2. Policy making

Policy making refers to the general process by which policies are developed within each country, including how coordination and oversight is managed, the extent to which the policy agenda is informed by an evidence base, and whether there are arrangements for young people to be involved in the policy process.

2.1 How are policies coordinated?

In Ireland, more than one ministry, agency or body is responsible for coordinating policies addressing the BIK Strategy with four to six ministries involved in the process.

Six government departments contribute a diverse range of activities, coordinated under the umbrella of the Sponsors Group for the Action Plan for Online Safety. The Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media leads on structured engagements by departments with online platforms and review of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD), and also provides the secretariat to the National Advisory Council for Online Safety.

The Department of Education leads on school policy development including support for Webwise.ie and support for schools, teachers, students and parents.

The Department of Justice leads on oversight of Hotline.ie, legislative changes to criminal law, liaison with an Garda Síochána on implementation/enforcement issues, and disbursement of EU funding.

The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth leads on consultative engagement with children and young people, including through Comhairles, and Children First guidance.

The Department of Health leads on the development of online mental health tools that augment existing services and implementation of Healthy Ireland.

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment leads on oversight of the E-commerce Directive (2000/31/EC) and coordination of the EU Digital Single Market strategy.

2.2 Who is primarily in charge of policy coordination?

The Sponsors Group (Action Plan for Online Safety) is the primary vehicle for policy coordination. Responsibility for coordination of BIK-related policies varies by each respective pillar of the BIK Strategy.

- Under Pillar 1: High-quality content online for children and young people, this is primarily overseen by the Sponsors Group, Action Plan for Online Safety (Action 10).

- Under Pillar 2: Stepping up awareness and empowerment, Be Safe Online is the government online safety hub providing access to a range of resources and policy initiatives.

- For Pillar 3: Tools and regulation for an online safe environment, in addition to government proposals for legislation on Online Safety and Media Regulation, the Data Protection Commission (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. In 2020, the DPC published a comprehensive draft guidance document entitled Children Front and Centre: Fundamentals for a Child-Oriented Approach to Data Processing.

- Under Pillar 4: Legislation and law enforcement against child sexual abuse and exploitation, the Department of Justice - Cybercrime division is responsible for developing policy in relation to the criminal use made of the internet and information technology generally, and coordinating a range of different cyber initiatives at national and international level.

Inter-departmental communication mechanisms include the Sponsors Group established as part of the Action Plan for Online Safety with membership comprising each of the relevant departments. The role of the group is to:

- drive implementation of the Action Plan in line with the agreed timelines.

- develop a framework for monitoring and reporting on implementation progress in line with the agreed schedule.

- publish biannual progress reports on the Action Plan implementation on each department's website (gov.ie).

- ensure a coordinated, whole-of-government approach to online safety, including working on a collaborative basis, with commitment from each department to review, consolidate and augment resources to support online safety, develop and maintain a single online point of contact, and initiate and roll out a national communications campaign directed at all users (with key messages targeted at specific user groups including children and young people, parents and guardians).

- The Sponsors Group also assists the work of the National Advisory Council through provision of information, policy papers, and other material as requested. The Chair of the Group rotates between key departments for the lifetime of the Sponsors Group. The Department of Education and Skills chaired the group for the duration of the Action Plan (2018-2019).

2.3 Data collection in the last three years

Data collection to support policy making related to the BIK Strategy includes national and regional surveys with quantitative data specifically focused on children's use of the internet, quantitative data on some topics of children's use of the internet collected as part of a broader survey, and qualitative research specifically focused on children's use of the internet. Examples include:

- A national survey of internet users in Ireland was launched in October 2019. The research is being carried out by Ipsos MRBI on behalf of the National Advisory Council for Online Safety (NACOS). It will cover a nationally-representative sample of children and their parents/guardians along with a sample of the general adult population. With an overall sample size of 2,500 people, the survey is the most comprehensive of its kind to ever be undertaken in the State.

- The Central Statistics Office collects regular data through its Information Society Statistics research covering a range of topics related to the use of ICT by households

and individuals. The survey population is households with at least one resident aged 16-74 years.

- ComReg, the Commission for Communications Regulation, has launched a new annual survey of households titled Connectivity 2020. It will include a range of questions relating to adults/parents' mediation of online safety and experiences of safety issues.

- Growing Up in Ireland, a national longitudinal study, is managed by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in association with the Central Statistics Office. It is planned that the next age 13 cohort study will include items related to digital technology and online use. Previous studies provide some limited data on ICT use.

- The Irish Social Science Data Archive includes details of researchers use of grouwing up in Ireland (GUI) data under the theme of children's media and technology use. Diverse studies and methods are included.

- CybersafeKids, a not-for-profit organisation, established in 2015 working to empower and educate children, parents and teachers to navigate the online world safely, undertakes an annual survey of all participants in its training workshops.

- Zeeko, an organisation which provides education and training in online safety, produces periodic trends reports regarding children's online behaviours.

- ISPCC in conjunction with Vodafone Ireland collects and publishes data from its Childline service – part of the helpline service offered under the Safer Internet project, and from its own commissioned research on online safety.

- The National Anti-Bullying Centre hosts a number of research projects, including qualitative and quantitative on children's use of digital technologies with a particular focus on experiences of bullying.

Evaluation of relevant policies has taken place in part through the following mechanisms:

- Two progress reports on implementation of the Action Plan for Online Safety 2018-2019 have been published covering the period up to mid-2019. The National Advisory Council for Online Safety has published one progress report and one Annual Report for 2019. The Joint Committee on Children and Youth Affairs (parliamentary committee) published its Report on Cyber Security for Children and Young Adults in March 2018, incorporating a detailed review of policy to date.

2.4 Involvement of young people in policy making

The involvement of young people in policy making is described as one whereby young people are systematically and directly consulted and informed (for example, through hearings, consultations and specific surveys). Relevant organisations involved in supporting youth participation in policy making include:

- Ireland has a [National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making 2015-2020](#), the first such strategy worldwide to specifically focus on children's participation in public decision making.

- A youth participation hub exists at [Hub na n'Óg](#) to support government departments, state agencies and non-government organisations to give children and young people a voice in decision making on issues that affect their lives, with a particular focus on those that are seldom heard. One [example](#) is that of the consultations with youth to facilitate their input into the Law Reform Commission's report on [Harmful Communications and Digital Safety](#) (2016).

- The Webwise [Youth Advisory Panel](#) is made up of 30 members and meet on three occasions during the academic year. The panel play an active role in developing the national Safer Internet Day (SID) awareness campaign.

3. Policy implementation

Policy implementation refers to the involvement of the relevant stakeholders in the delivery of initiatives and the spread of activities as envisaged under each of the four pillars of the BIK Strategy.

Pillar 1: High-quality content online for children and young people

Activities under Pillar 1 are led by the Safer Internet Centre, and the national public broadcaster with government ministries having complementary roles.

The Safer Internet Centre and the national public broadcaster lead in terms of high-quality content for children, the former in educational resources and the latter for general entertainment including the digital channel [RTÉ Junior](#). Both RTE's Young People's Division and The Broadcasting Authority of Ireland Sound and Vision Scheme support children's content.

There are a number of initiatives to support young people's creativity, particularly in the area of [film and digital media](#). Webwise.ie hosts an annual awards competition encouraging young people to contribute creative content on the theme of [online safety](#). As an example from the private sector, Trend Micro hosts an annual competition [What's Your Story?](#).

Newly introduced in 2020 is the [RTÉ Home School Hub](#). RTÉ and Macalla Teo, with support from Mary Immaculate College, have collaborated to introduce a cross-platform teaching initiative for primary school kids across the country. On RTÉ2, RTÉ Player, and [rte.ie/learn](#), children are able to watch, download and engage with curriculum-based content, project work, and fun activities that will keep them entertained and learning.

Summary of Pillar 1 actions:

	Introduced in the last 12 months	Existent before last year	Not available
Initiatives to stimulate the production and visibility of quality content for children	☐	☑	☐
Initiatives to encourage children's creativity and to promote positive use of the internet	☐	☑	☐
Initiatives to implement standards for quality online content for children	☐	☑	☐
Other relevant activity (please specify)	☑	☐	☐

Pillar 2: Stepping up awareness and empowerment

Activities under Pillar 2 are led by a government ministry or department in conjunction with the Safer Internet Centre awareness node. A range of public agencies have complementary roles.

With the publication of the Action Plan for Online Safety 2018-2019 and the launch of the Be Safe Online campaign, government assumed a leading role in stepping up awareness and empowerment. Six government ministries contribute activities, coordinated by a Sponsors Group. The EU Safer Internet Ireland project (the Safer Internet Centre) is also a leading actor in the delivery of online safety awareness and empowerment. There is an active civil society sector contributing a wide range of educational, support and awareness activities, many of whom are members of the National Advisory Council for Online Safety. Dublin City University's Anti-Bullying Centre announced in 2018 a three-year partnership with Facebook valued at over €1m.

Pillar 2.1: Teaching online safety in schools

- A new Junior Cycle Digital Media Literacy Short Course, Connected, was launched on Safer Internet Day (SID) 2020 for the Junior Cycle syllabus aiming to empower young people to be effective, autonomous and safe users of technology and online media.

- A new online course for Post-Primary SPHE Teachers was launched in early 2020. The course aims to provide educators with the skills and confidence to raise awareness and prevent potentially harmful online behaviour by students through the implementation of the SPHE curriculum at Junior Cycle, TY and Senior Cycle levels.

- In 2020, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) launched a consultation on the Draft Primary Curriculum Framework. This is a comprehensive review of the entire primary school curriculum and has proposed safe, responsible and ethical use of technology as a theme within the curriculum strand (Being a digital learner).

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- In 2019, children's charity, Barnardos, received a €1m award from Google.org to deliver online safety in schools. This four-year education programme will deliver 4,000 workshops to 1,000 schools, with Google and Barnardos aiming to reach up to 10,000 students in the first year of the programme and over 75,000 students overall.

Pillar 2.2: Digital and media literacy activities

- Technical skills to use online content and services has received much attention particularly in the area of developing coding classes and curricula in schools. Examples include CoderDojo and Kids Coder Club.

- Public-private partnerships in STEM education are encouraged and supported by the Department of Education and Skills.

- The topic of critical media literacy, while not new in Irish education (formal and informal), received a major boost in 2019 with the launch of Media Literacy Ireland – an independent association of members promoting critical media literacy. Coinciding with European Media Literacy Week, a public campaign Be Media Smart ran in 2019 and in 2020 to highlight misinformation and the importance of critical news literacy.

- Participatory activities through online media feature in many government consultation activities. A consultation on a new National Digital Strategy was launched in 2018 to update the previous 2013 National Digital Strategy, Phase 1: Digital Engagement. The Ombudsman for Children's Office has also commissioned research on promoting children's right to be heard through social and digital media.

- The National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) has been an active supporter of the Council of Europe's No Hate Speech campaign since its inception. Although the campaign has formally ceased, it continues as part of the Council of Europe's and NYCI's ongoing work around human rights and equality. NYCI has joined the Irish Coalition Against Hate Crime which is campaigning to have hate crime legislation established in Ireland.

Pillar 2.3: Scaling up awareness activities and youth participation

- National support for awareness campaigns was stepped up with the launch of the government's Be Safe Online campaign and associated Action Plan for Online Safety 2018-2019.

- To encourage participation in Safer Internet Day (SID), Webwise has developed a peer-led training programme for second-level students: the Safer Internet Day Ambassador Programme. The programme is designed and led by students. The activities within the programme cover a range of topics selected by the Webwise Youth Advisory Panel. Topics explored within the programme include online well-being, privacy, big data, misinformation, cyberbullying and rights online.

- The involvement of children when developing legislation with an impact on their online activities is present in part. The aforementioned National Strategy on Children

and Young People's Participation in Decision Making (2015-2020) and the dedicated Citizen Participation Unit in the Department of Children & Youth Affairs provides a structure for children and young people's participation.

Pillar 2.4: Simple and robust reporting tools for users

- With regard to mechanisms to report content and contacts that are harmful for children, these exist solely within the specific reporting functions made available by service providers. NGOs have consistently drawn attention to the need for independent reporting facilities (cyberbullying being a particular concern) and better oversight of industry-operated reporting mechanisms. Individual telecommunications companies, social media companies and internet service providers all provide advice on how to block and report. The Gardai and Tusla also receive reports related to cyberbullying. However, the primary route for reporting potentially harmful (as opposed to illegal) content or contact remains to the industry providers themselves.

- Informal mechanisms of cooperation exist between helplines (Childline, National Parents' Council Helpline) and law enforcement. An Garda Siochana is a member of the National Advisory Council for Online Safety and has a well-developed programme for schools in supporting online safety education.

- There is no statutory body responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of reporting mechanisms. The National Advisory Council for Online Safety (NACOS) as the multistakeholder forum representing diverse interests related to online safety provides some degree of oversight but this is limited to an advisory role, for example in identifying emerging issues where government intervention may be warranted as per its terms of reference.

Summary of Pillar 2 actions:

	Introduced in the last 12 months	Existent before last year	Not available
"Teaching online safety in schools"			
Strategies to include teaching online safety in schools	☐	☑	☐
Activities to reinforce informal education about online safety	☐	☑	☐
Activities to provide for online safety policies in schools	☐	☑	☐
Activities to ensure adequate teacher training in online safety	☐	☑	☐
Activities to support public-private partnerships in online safety	☐	☑	☐

"Digital and media literacy activities"			
Activities to support young people's technical skills required to use online media content and services	☐	☑	☐
Activities to encourage critical thinking around media industries and evaluating content for truthfulness, reliability	☑	☐	☐
Activities that encourage interaction, engagement and participation in the economic, social, creative, cultural aspects of society through online media	☐	☑	☐
Activities that promote democratic participation and fundamental rights on the internet	☐	☐	☑
Activities that challenge radicalisation and hate speech online	☐	☑	☐
"Scaling up awareness activities and youth participation"			
National support for public awareness-raising campaigns	☐	☑	☐
Involvement of children when developing national campaigns	☐	☑	☐
Involvement of children when developing legislation with an impact on their online activities	☐	☑	☐
Activities or initiatives to match the Commission's support for the national Youth Panels	☐	☑	☐
Industry funding and technical support for NGOs and education providers	☐	☑	☐
Industry dissemination of awareness material either online or at the point of sale	☐	☑	☐
"Simple and robust reporting tools for users"			
Mechanisms for reporting content and contacts that may be harmful for children such as cyberbullying or grooming	☐	☑	☐
Initiatives to facilitate cooperation between helplines and law enforcement	☐	☑	☐
Initiatives to monitor the effective functioning of reporting mechanisms at a national level	☐	☐	☑

Pillar 3: Creating a safe environment for children online

Activities under Pillar 3 are led by government ministries with the Safer Internet Centre having a complementary role.

Creating a safer environment for children online in Ireland is largely achieved through a self-regulatory process based on longstanding cooperation between the stakeholders, representing a mix of public, industry and civil society interests.

Government, industry and public agencies (for example, the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland which has responsibility for on-demand content) are the leading policy actors. While leadership for the self-regulatory process falls to government, industry's responsibility to create a safer online environment is well established in national and European policy as outlined in statements such as the ICT Principles for Children Online and the Alliance to better protect minors online. Proposals as outlined in the Online Safety and Media Regulation Bill 2019 will see a greater emphasis on an independent regulatory function assigned to a multi-person Media Commission with the statutory responsibility to oversee compliance with mandatory online safety codes.

The Safer Internet Centre continues a strong, complementary role in the safer online environment in terms of raising awareness, developing education materials, and reporting on issues that require a regulatory response, in particular through the Insafe network and Better Internet for Kids (BIK) initiative. Universities and research centres also play a complementary role in providing evidence and policy support.

Pillar 3.1: Age-appropriate privacy settings

- The Data Protection Commission (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.

- From December 2018 to May 2019, the DPC ran a public consultation on the processing of children's personal data and the rights of children as data subjects under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). This involved children and young people directly in the debate by engaging them in the classroom in a specially designed consultation process aimed at students aged eight and above.

- Webwise.ie has developed dedicated resources for awareness raising on managing your privacy with information for teachers and for children.

Pillar 3.2: Wider availability and use of parental controls

- Approximately 54 per cent of parents in Ireland say they use parental controls or other means of blocking or filtering some types of websites (ISPCC/Vodafone 2018), an increase on the 33 per cent of parents who reported using controls in the EU Kids Online survey.

- Parental controls are frequently included in online safety advice as part of an overall mix of parenting measures though no specific awareness campaigns have developed on their use.

- There are no national benchmarking tests for parental control mechanisms although Webwise does provide a detailed guide for parents on apps used by children with information about their safety measures and functionality.

Pillar 3.3: Wider use of age rating and content classification

- At present, there is no mandated system for age rating or content classification for online material and consequently no complaints mechanism for the effective functioning of those systems. The one exception relates to the operation of the Code of Conduct On-Demand Audiovisual Media Services (ODAS). This code was drawn up by the industry-led ODAS Group, the secretariat for which is provided by industry representative group, Ibec. The Broadcasting Authority of Ireland has a nominal role as a "backstop" for decisions of the ODAS Group. However, it does not oversee the code on a day-to-day basis. The code includes provisions for the protection of minors for on-demand video services under the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) (2010).

- New proposals contained in the Online Safety and Media Regulation Bill 2019 will provide for a regulatory framework for online safety which will encompass the regulation of video sharing platform services (VSPS) from the revised Directive. However, the regulatory framework will deal with a much wider range of online services and materials.

Pillar 3.4: Online advertising and overspending

- GDPR explicitly states that children's personal data merits specific protection. Automated processing and profiling of children's data "*for the purposes of direct marketing, profiling or micro-targeting*" is prohibited under the Data Protection Act 2018, implementing the GDPR in Ireland.

- The Data Protection Commission has produced draft guidance in relation to processing of children's data. The Fundamentals for a Child-Oriented Approach to Data Processing have been drawn up to drive improvements in standards of data processing. They introduce child-specific data protection interpretative principles and recommended measures that will enhance the level of protection afforded to children against the data processing risks posed to them by their use of/access to services in both an online and offline world.

Summary of Pillar 3 actions:

	Introduced in the last 12 months	Existent before last year	Not available
"Age-appropriate privacy settings"			
Activities to ensure the implementation of EU legislation	☐	☑	☐
Self-regulatory measures by industry about age-appropriate privacy settings	☐	☑	☐
Awareness-raising activities regarding age-appropriate privacy settings	☐	☑	☐
"Wider availability and use of parental controls"			
Activities to promote the availability of parental control tools	☐	☑	☐
Tests and certification for parental control tools	☐	☐	☑
Efforts to support industry implementation of parental control tools	☐	☐	☑
"Wider use of age rating and content classification"			
Activities to promote the adoption of age rating and content classification among relevant stakeholders	☐	☐	☑
A complaints process for the effective functioning of such systems	☐	☐	☑
"Online advertising and overspending"			
Activities at the national level to ensure that legislation regarding online profiling and behavioural advertising is observed	☐	☐	☐
Support industry in developing codes of conduct regarding inappropriate advertising	☑	☐	☐
Monitor implementation of codes of conduct at the national level	☐	☑	☐

Pillar 4: Fighting against child sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation

Activities under Pillar 4 are led by a government ministry or department with NGOs and civil society organisations in a complementary role.

European Commission

European Schoolnet

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- Fighting against child sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation is an area where there are well-established collaborative partnerships in place between government, law enforcement and industry. The Department of Justice Cybercrime Division is responsible for developing policy in relation to the criminal use made of the internet and information technology generally, and coordinating a range of different cyber initiatives at national and international level.

- An Garda Síochána, Ireland's national police service and specifically the Garda National Cyber Crime Bureau (GNCCB) deals with criminal investigations relating to child sexual abuse among other areas. Improved cooperation between Hotline.ie and industry for taking down child abuse and other illegal material has been the focus of recent policy through the development of an enhanced Code of Practice and Ethics.

- A new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between An Garda Síochána and Irish internet service providers (ISPs) to block access to internet sites containing child abuse material (the Garda Blocking Initiative) was announced in February 2020. This includes blocking of "Interpol's worst of" list (IWOL) containing domains that provide the most severe child sexual abuse material (CSAM) available on the open web.

- Hotline.ie, part of the Safer Internet Centre, works in collaboration with An Garda Síochána. It only deals with reports referring to suspected illegal content encountered on the internet.

- Complementary roles include NGOs such as the ISPCC, Barnardos and CARI which provide a range of support to victims of online abuse; industry which plays a critical role in taking down and removing child sexual abuse material from its services; and a number of research centres that focus on supporting research and training in the area of preventing cybercrime and child sexual exploitation.

Summary of Pillar 4 actions:

	Introduced in the last 12 months	Existent before last year	Not available
Increased resources for law enforcement bodies that fight against child abuse material online	☑	☐	☐
Effective safeguards in place to ensure democratic accountability in the use of investigative tools to combat child sexual abuse	☐	☑	☐
Activities to support the functioning and visibility of hotlines at the national level	☐	☑	☐
Activities to support the improvement of cooperation between hotlines and industry for taking down child abuse material	☑	☐	☐

4. Good practices

The following are three selected examples of good practices in supporting children's use of the internet in Ireland:

Action Plan for Online Safety 2018-2019

The Action Plan for Online Safety 2018-2019 is a noteworthy example of a policy initiative that has drawn together a whole-of-government approach to online safety. Launched in 2018, the Action Plan is based around five goals and sets out 25 specific actions (with 48 constituent actions), to be progressed over the 18-month period (July 2018 – December 2019) of the plan. A Sponsors Group established in 2018, representative of the six departments and chaired by the Department of Education & Skills, continues to drive the implementation of the Action Plan for Online Safety. Functional responsibility for relevant policy issues remains with the lead minister/department. Progress on the implementation of the Action Plan for Online Safety is reviewed on an ongoing basis with publication of bi-annual progress reports to demonstrate implementation of the plan with substantial progress being made.

Connected

Connected is a new resource developed by Webwise and launched on Safer Internet Day in 2020. The Connected resource was specifically designed for teachers of the Junior Cycle Digital Media Literacy Short Course who wish to explore online well-being; news, information and the problems of false information; big data and the data economy; and rights online. Connected aims to empower young people to be effective, autonomous and safe users of technology and online media. The resource was supported by a launch campaign on social media. A specially-commissioned short film was developed to support the initiative. Based on real-life experiences, Connected is a short film exploring how young people communicate and connect online. The film encourages young people to reflect on why their actions matter and the impact it can have on others. Targeting young people at junior cycle level (12-15 years), the campaign aims to show how we shape the internet everyday with our interactions and how each of us can play a part in creating a better, connected online world.

Media Literacy Ireland

Media Literacy Ireland (MLI) is a multi-stakeholder initiative launched in 2019 which brings together industry, civil society and individuals to promote and lead new initiatives to develop critical media literacy awareness. Facilitated by the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI), MLI is a network of volunteer members coming from a large number of sectors, organisations and interests, working together to empower people to make informed media choices about the media content and services that they consume, create, and disseminate across all platforms. Underpinned by the BAI's Media Literacy Policy, its objective is to act as a platform for shared communication about a wide range of topics related to media literacy in Ireland and abroad. A highlight of its 2019 activities was the roll out of a campaign called Be Media Smart to raise awareness of misinformation and the importance of news literacy. A noteworthy feature of the alliance is the participation of the full spectrum of media industries and professionals (Facebook, Twitter, broadcasters, regulatory bodies, community media as well as individuals).