

Plain Language Statement for Parents and Caregivers/Guardians

Amárach Research

CILTER: Protecting and Empowering Children Online

This project is called: “Cilter: Protecting and Empowering Children Online.” This research is undertaken by Amárach Research in collaboration with Cilter and the DCU Anti-Bullying Centre (ABC) and SFI (Science Foundation Ireland) funded ADAPT centre, which are all part of a larger consortium that is undertaking the project. The project is funded by the Disruptive Technologies Innovation Fund (DTIF)¹, of the Irish Department of Trade, Enterprise and Employment.

Once developed, Cilter will be a parental control technology that would allow for the filtering and blocking of harmful online content on the child’s phone. Examples of such harmful online content include grooming (child solicitation online for the purpose of sexual and other types of abuse); cyberbullying (repeated hurtful behaviour such as comments, gossip or exclusion) and self-harming content (content that discusses or shows how one can hurt oneself, including suicide).

Currently in development, the technology is state-of-the-art because it will work across the apps on the child’s phone (Cilter is not a safety app but a software modification at the phone-level, which allows it to monitor all the messaging apps on the child’s phone for harmful online content, including encrypted direct messaging apps such as WhatsApp). Furthermore, Cilter works by facilitating parent-child communication: If Cilter detects harmful online content, it notifies the parent/family member whose phone is paired with the child’s that harmful content/behaviour/interaction has been detected. It also sends a prompt to check in on the child and with specific advice as to how to do that. Cilter does *not* spy on children, and it does not allow parents and caregivers to monitor all child communication on their phone, which research suggests can negatively influence parent-child trust. You can see how Cilter should work, here.²

Clarification of the purpose of the research

More research is needed in order to build Cilter. Specifically, the research team needs to develop datasets with examples of authentic cyberbullying, grooming and self-harming content, necessary to train artificial intelligence (AI) models that allow Cilter to operate. To that end, we are looking for parents and caregivers of children aged 6-16 who may have had some experience with online grooming, cyberbullying and self-harming content i.e., who have seen or actively looked for self-harming online content (doing harm to one’s body, including related to anorexia also known as pro-ana and bulimia or pro-mia related content and suicide-related content).

As part of this research, we are conducting a public consultation with parents and caregivers who have children in the target age group and who would like to anonymously share examples of the language their children encountered in these incidents with us. If you choose to

¹ <https://enterprise.gov.ie/en/news-and-events/department-news/2022/november/202211151.html>

² <https://www.cilter.ie/#video>

participate in this research, you will be asked to provide anonymised descriptions of cyberbullying or online grooming incidents that your child encountered or examples of the type of self-harming content your child searched for or received online. We are only looking for language/text-based content, you will **not** be able to provide any photos or videos. As you, the parent or caregiver/guardian is participating in this survey and submitting information about your child's experience, we request that you do NOT involve nor allow your child to participate in this study in any way. We also recommend that you do not discuss it with your child in case it might cause them to become upset.

The form on this website is an online platform where you can fill out the requested information. For example, your child may have experienced cyberbullying by being excluded from a group on a private messaging app such as WhatsApp. If you are aware that this happened to your child and if you know the details of the incident, you can use the form to describe what happened; and also to tell us what language was used to convey to your child that they were excluded. This could be offensive language, but it need not be, in case no offensive language was used.

Anonymity and confidentiality

No personal information will be collected in this study. We will not be collecting your or your child's name or any other personal information that can reveal your or your child's identity. Please do **NOT** share personally identifiable information about your child with us. Should you provide personally identifiable information, please note that we may be obligated to report this information to TUSLA. The information uploaded, stored and processed via the online platform is safe and secure, it will be treated confidentially, and no one will be able to trace the information you enter back to you or your child. We will only ask you to enter the sex and age of your child as well as the age when the incident happened/the self-harming content was received or searched for. If you should enter any other personal information, we will ensure that this data is removed via a technological method called "scrubbing" which auto-deletes any personal data prior to processing.

Voluntary nature of the research

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary and you can stop at any time. We are asking you to enter information about your child's experience with online grooming, self-harm or cyberbullying that you are aware of or that you have information about already.

Possible risks and mitigation strategies

While we will *not* be inquiring into your child's psychological states or mental health-related issues, mentioning grooming, cyberbullying or self-harming incidents to them or recalling such an incident may re-traumatise the child, it might trigger negative emotions such as fear, sadness or anger which is why your child should NOT be involved in this process. It might, however, also be difficult for you. This is why the research team is partnering with the Irish Society for the Protection of Cruelty against Children (ISPCC) who are providing access to their helpline as well as dedicated therapy sessions. Links to these services and phone numbers will be provided in the form itself so that you can access these services any time during or after your participation in this research.

Confidentiality, anonymity, withdrawing data, data retention and disposal

For this particular reason, we will not be processing any of your or your child's personal data other than information about their age and sex and the age they were when the incident happened. None of this information is personally identifiable. Any personal information you might enter into the form will be removed prior to processing as described above. We kindly ask that you do **NOT** share personally identifiable information about your child with us. Please note that should you provide personally identifiable information, we may be obligated to report this information to TUSLA. Due to the anonymous nature of the survey, we will not be able to identify your data once you submit it. Thus, it will not be possible to withdraw your data from the survey.

After you have entered the data and read the debriefing form, you will be asked if you would like to participate in a follow up study. If yes, you can click a link to be redirected to the Cilter website where you will be asked to enter your name and email address. There will be no possibility for us to connect your personal information to your anonymous entry about the incident. Should you decide to enter your personal information, you will be provided with a separate consent form and an explanation as to data processing and storage in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation.

Destroying data

Only the anonymised data will be retained. There will be no way for us to connect that data with you. For this reason it is not possible to withdraw your data once it has been submitted. This data will only be used in the Cilter solution.

The responsible parties for the data are Amárach and Cilter SME under a joint-controllership arrangement. Should you have any questions about the data please contact: kidsonlinesafetyresearch@cilter.ie

DEBRIEFING FORM

Thank you so much for participating in our project whose goal is to understand children's experiences with grooming, cyberbullying and self-harm, in order to build Cilter technology.

Your information is protected:

Your information and the information about your child will be protected at all times during the study. We kindly asked that you do **NOT** share personally identifiable information about your child with us. Please note that should you provide personally identifiable information, we may be obligated to report this information to TUSLA. If you manually entered any personal information into the form, this information will be removed prior to processing. No one can know what you wrote in the publication form.

Need help or would like to talk to someone?

If you or your child feels the need to talk to anyone about thoughts, emotions, or anything that may be associated with these issues, please consider him/her/they calling Childline on 1800 66 66 66 or the ISPCC special line 1800 400 100. If you would like to talk to a professional (someone whose job it is to help children and adults), please contact the ISPCC's Support Line

service can be contacted by email to parentingsupport@ispcc.ie or between 9am – 1pm Monday – Friday by calling 01 522 4300. If you would like to report the incident you anonymously described in the form, you can do so by contacting TUSLA, Child Protection Agency.

Support Services

If you are concerned about online content, you can get advice and support from the Gardaí and you can report any content that you are concerned about to www.hotline.ie. If participating in this consultation has caused you to feel upset in any way, you can seek advice and support from parentline.ie and childline.ie or ISPCC as outlined above.

Other Resources:

You may find the following resources useful:

Barnardos

Works with vulnerable children and their families and campaigns for the rights of all children.

Website: <https://www.barnardos.ie/>

Telephone: 1850 222300

BeLongTo

Supports lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans young people in Ireland.

Website: <http://www.belongto.org/>

Telephone: 01 670 6223

Facebook Safety Centre

Facebook Safety Centre works with external experts, including a Safety Advisory Board, gathering feedback from our community to develop policies, tools and resources to keep you safe.

Website: <https://www.facebook.com/safety>

ISPCC/ Childline

Ireland's 24-hour national listening service for all children and young people (under the age of 18) in Ireland.

Website: <https://www.childline.ie/index.php>

Telephone: 1800 66 66 66 (24 hours a day)

Message: 50101 (10am – 4am daily)

Jigsaw

The National Centre for Youth Mental Health in Ireland.

Website: <https://www.jigsaw.ie>

Telephone: 01 472 7010

Ombudsman for Children's Office

A human rights institution and work to protect the rights of children and young people in Ireland.

Website: <https://www.oco.ie/>

Telephone: (01) 865 6800

Pieta House

Residential centre for the prevention of self-harm or suicide.

Website: <https://pieta.ie/>

Telephone: 01 6010000

SpunOut

Ireland's youth information website created by young people, for young people.

Website: <https://spunout.ie/>

Telephone: (01) 675 3554

TackleBullying

Ireland's national antibullying website.

Website: <http://tacklebullying.ie/>

Teenline

A national active listening service for children and young people up to the age of 18 in Ireland.

Website: <https://www.ispcc.ie/services/teenline>

Telephone: 1800 833 634

Transgender Equality Network Ireland (TENI)

Seeks to improve conditions and advance the rights and equality of trans people and their families.

Website: <https://www.teni.ie/>

Telephone: 01 8733575