Home > Society and culture > Online safety > Year 2 Online Media Literacy Action Plan (2022/23)

Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport

Policy paper

Year 2 Online Media Literacy Action Plan (2022/23)

Published 16 April 2022

Contents

Print this page

In July 2021 the government published the Online Media Literacy Strategy. This set out our plans to improve national media literacy capabilities by supporting the media literacy sector to undertake activity in a more effective, wide-reaching, and coordinated way.

The strategy committed to publishing annual action plans each financial year until 2024/25, detailing government-led initiatives to meet the ambition of the strategy. We published the Year 1 Action Plan (2021/22) alongside the strategy in July 2021. This document reports our progress on the Year 1 Action Plan (2021/22), and sets out the Year 2 Action Plan for the financial year 2022/23.

The case for media literacy

Since the publication of the Strategy we have seen an increasing need for a media literate population. There were record levels of online child sexual abuse in 2021, an increase of 34% of those experiencing online anti-semitic hate, as well as the continued circulation of misinformation and disinformation about COVID-19.

Ofcom's recently published media literacy research gives an indication of the media literacy capabilities of citizens in the UK. Whilst the research showed high levels of public awareness about some areas of online safety, there were still gaps in citizens demonstrating media literacy behaviours online. For example, [adults were often overconfident in their abilities to undertake some behaviours such as judging the veracity of content](#), and only [32% of children aged 12 - 17 knew how to use online flagging or reporting functions](#). It is more important than ever that citizens have access to, and are engaging with media literacy support to stay safe online. Media literacy will also be a key tool in supporting our wider objectives to strengthen our democracy; foster press sustainability; and bolster societal resilience to disinformation.

We are delivering an ambitious media literacy programme which is supporting the media literacy sector to empower and educate citizens with the skills and knowledge they need to make safe and informed choices online. An overview of the work we have undertaken so far is outlined below. Over the next financial year we will build on our successes to expand our media literacy programme, backed with over £2million of funding.

Alongside taking immediate action to support the media literacy sector, the government has introduced the world-leading Online Safety Bill to Parliament, to meet our commitment to make the UK the safest place to be online. This will create a safer online environment by making in-scope companies accountable for keeping their users safe.

The Bill also grants Ofcom new powers relating to media literacy alongside its existing statutory duty to promote media literacy. Ofcom will have information gathering and transparency reporting powers that will include media literacy, improving visibility of industry activity and spend. Regulated services will also be required to consider media literacy as a potential tool to mitigate harm on their platforms when undertaking risk assessments.

In December 2021, Ofcom published its ['Approach to Online Media Literacy'](#) document which detailed its plans to expand its media literacy programme. This approach aligns with many of the priorities set out in the government's Online Media Literacy Strategy, and we are working closely with Ofcom to ensure a coordinated approach to improving media literacy education.

Year 1 Action Plan (2021/22)

Since the publication of the Strategy, we have delivered an ambitious programme of work meeting the commitments set out in the Year 1 Action Plan (2021/22).

Media Literacy Taskforce

The Year 1 Action Plan announced the creation of the Media Literacy Taskforce, bringing experts from across the sector together to take a coordinated approach to tackling challenges in the media literacy sector. Over the next three years, the taskforce will focus on improving the reach of media literacy provision to citizens who are disengaged or do not have access to media literacy support, and making it relevant to their daily lives.

We have appointed [18 experts to oversee, govern and evaluate the taskforce](#). The steering board is made up of 18 experts from across the media literacy sector with representation from tech platforms, civil society, academia, regulators and media organisations. The first taskforce meeting took place in March and discussed the

priorities for the forthcoming year. As the work of the taskforce continues we are keen to keep engaging with organisations in the wider sector.

Train-the-Trainer Programme

We have delivered over £250,000 of grant funding to five organisations working with teachers and schools to deliver media literacy education. These organisations were funded to adapt their teacher training resources for those working with children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). This has included translating resources into British Sign Language, creating accessible online student work spaces, and creating easy-read versions of resources. This promotes an inclusive approach to media literacy by creating more accessible and ability-appropriate educational resources, and will provide more support for teachers working with SEND students.

Professional development for youth workers and library staff

We awarded grants to the National Youth Agency and Libraries Connected to develop comprehensive media literacy professional development modules for youth workers and library staff. Both library staff and youth workers play key roles in the lives of many citizens. Library workers provide invaluable support to the public to help them access information and the online world, and youth workers can play a significant role in shaping the lives of young people. The modules will ensure these workers are better equipped to support those they work with to better manage their online lives.

Safer Internet Day 2022 social media campaign

We partnered with the UK Safer Internet Centre (UKSIC) to deliver a social media influencer campaign to promote Safer Internet Day to LGBT young people. Research found that only 1% of media literacy initiatives are tailored to the needs of LGBT users, despite evidence suggesting groups within the LGBT community experience disproportionate amounts of online abuse. This campaign sought to bring these young people into the national conversation about online safety led by UKSIC, and provide advice on dealing with online abuse.

We worked with LGBT social media content creators on Instagram to promote Safer Internet Day, provide information about steps users can take to protect themselves from online abuse, and signpost to the support available on the UKSIC resource hub. As well as empowering users to be safer online, this approach allowed us to pilot the effectiveness of using social media content to deliver media literacy messaging to targeted audiences.

UK Media Literacy Forum

We have established the UK Media Literacy Forum to bring together policymakers from across the Welsh, Northern Irish, and Scottish governments, Ofcom and government to share learnings and best practice about media literacy policy. Since the publication of the Strategy the Forum has met twice covering a range of topics including tackling misinformation and disinformation, and the role of media literacy in

schools. Sharing best practice through the Forum allows us to create better media literacy outcomes across the whole of the UK.

Media literacy resources hub

We have created a [media literacy resources hub](#) that signposts to a wide range of media literacy resources in the UK for both practitioners and users. The page also includes a calendar of media literacy events taking place in the sector, supporting organisations to reach wider audiences and have a greater impact with their work.

Year 2 Action Plan (2022/23)

The Year 2 Action Plan will expand the government's media literacy programme backed with over £2million of funding. Our programme will be based around 3 activities that will continue to deliver the objectives of the Online Media Literacy Strategy and support the media literacy sector, building on the successes we have already achieved.

The Media Literacy Taskforce

As detailed above, over the past year we have established the Media Literacy Taskforce and appointed 18 experts from across academia, tech companies, civil society organisations, regulators and media organisations to oversee and govern the project.

The Taskforce will be focussed on improving the reach of media literacy provision to citizens who are disengaged or do not have access to support. We have termed these citizens 'hard-to-reach'. Over the next year, the Taskforce will be piloting innovative interventions to extend media literacy support to 'hard-to-reach' citizens in ways that are relevant to their daily lives. We will also be undertaking research to better define who 'hard-to-reach' users are, and the specific barriers they face in accessing or participating in media literacy education. Throughout the year we will be engaging with the sector on these projects and publishing updates about the activities of the Taskforce.

Media Literacy Fund

Following the success of our pilot 'Train-the-Trainer' grant scheme, we are establishing an expanded grant scheme to support organisations undertaking media literacy activity. As well as continuing work to 'train-the-trainer', this fund will have a broader scope including improving media literacy provision for citizens who are particularly vulnerable online, and improving evaluation techniques for media literacy activity. Further details about this fund will be published later this year.

Media Literacy Research Programme

We know there are many evidence gaps in the media literacy sector including relating to the effectiveness of different activities in building citizens media literacy capabilities; how technology can be used to promote media literacy; and better

understanding barriers in the sector.

The Online Media Literacy Strategy identified six key challenges which the government has committed to tackling over the next 3 years:

- lack of cross-sector coordination
- limited evaluation practices
- vulnerable users
- hard-to-reach users
- limited funding
- building resilience to misinformation and disinformation.

Effectively tackling these challenges is critical to making improvements in the media literacy sector, and ensuring better outcomes for citizens. In order to do this we need to better understand and define these challenges.

Audience resilience to misinformation and disinformation

The need to build audience resilience to misinformation and disinformation has never been greater. However, the research landscape about how to do this effectively remains mixed. There is limited understanding about the factors contributing to audience vulnerability to misinformation and disinformation, and little consensus about the most effective ways to build resilience in audiences. Working with experts across academia, civil society and platforms, to improve our shared understanding of how to effectively build audience resilience to misinformation and disinformation will be one of our key priorities.

We are establishing a media literacy research programme that will bridge some of these evidence gaps about the effectiveness of media literacy, and how to better support the sector. The findings of this research will allow us to identify effective policy interventions, and inform future action plans and activity government will undertake to improve media literacy education.

Topics

Benefits

Births, death, marriages and care

Business and self-employed

Childcare and parenting

Citizenship and living in the UK

Crime, justice and the law

Government activity

Departments

News

Guidance and regulation

Research and statistics

Policy papers and consultations

Transparency

Disabled people

Driving and transport

Education and learning

Employing people

Environment and countryside

Housing and local services

Money and tax

Passports, travel and living abroad

Visas and immigration

Working, jobs and pensions

How government works

Get involved

Help   Privacy   Cookies   Accessibility statement   Contact   Terms and conditions   Rhestr o Wasanaethau Cymraeg
Government Digital Service

OGL   All content is available under the Open Government Licence v3.0, except where otherwise stated

© Crown copyright