

Hotline.ie Publishes Annual Report 2023: Unveiling Record Surge in Public Reporting and Impactful Efforts to Combat Online Child Exploitation

Dublin, Ireland, 3rd of October 2024: Hotline.ie, Ireland's national centre for anonymously reporting illegal online content, has today launched its Annual Report for 2023. The report highlights a significant rise in public reports of child sexual abuse material (CSAM) and other illegal content, with over 40,543 reports received – a 30% increase compared to 2022. This surge underscores the growing public engagement with Hotline.ie's critical services and their pivotal role in safeguarding vulnerable individuals online.

Newly appointed CEO of Hotline.ie, Mick Moran, with over 30 years Law Enforcement experience, stressed the importance of collective action in combating online exploitation. "Our mission has always been to disrupt the cycle of child sexual abuse online, prevent re-victimisation, and support law enforcement in bringing offenders to justice. This vital work is made possible through the unwavering support of our partners, including founding member eir, and the growing engagement from the public, who continue to report illegal content in increasing numbers.

Hotline.ie encourages the public to continue using its secure and confidential platform to report illegal content. Every report helps protect victims and prevents future harm, ensuring a safer online environment for all."

Helen McEntee T.D., Minister for Justice, also acknowledged the crucial work carried out by Hotline.ie in her foreword to the report. "While the data makes for difficult reading, it is essential to recognise that behind each case is a vulnerable victim, often a child. The rise in public reports highlights that engagement is increasing, which is critical as we continue to adapt to new and sophisticated threats in the digital world. This Government remains steadfast in its commitment to ensuring online safety."

Oliver Loomes, CEO of eir, reaffirmed the company's dedication to protecting the most vulnerable. "As a founding member of Hotline.ie, eir has always taken its responsibility to safeguard service users seriously. Since our partnership began in 1999, eir and other industry members have supported Hotline's key role to remove child sexual abuse material at its source, disrupting exploitation and preventing the re-victimisation of children in collaboration with law enforcement. eir's long-standing support of Hotline.ie reflects our commitment to a safer internet."

Key Findings from the 2023 Report:

- Record Number of Reports: Hotline.ie received 40,543 reports in 2023, the highest number in its history, with over 29,906 reports confirmed to contain illegal material, primarily child sexual abuse material.
- Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM): Analysts confirmed 29,044 reports as containing CSAM, marking a significant increase from 2022. The rise in self-generated CSAM content was noted as a troubling trend.
- Intimate Image Abuse (IIA): Hotline.ie identified 470 reports of intimate image abuse, achieving a 95% removal rate for content, despite all of it being hosted outside Ireland.

- Effective Content Removal: Of the 29,906 URLs containing illegal content, only 362 remained active by the end of the year, resulting in an impressive 99% removal rate.

The report underscores the importance of collaboration between Hotline.ie, An Garda Síochána, the Department of Justice, and international partners to tackle these crimes. Minister McEntee commended Hotline.ie's work in her foreword, reinforcing the Government's priority of combating the sexual exploitation of children.

About Hotline.ie

Hotline.ie is a not-for-profit organisation operated by the Internet Service Providers Association of Ireland (ISPAI). It provides a secure and anonymous platform for the public to report illegal content online. Hotline.ie works in close cooperation with law enforcement and other national and international partners to combat online exploitation and abuse.

For more information, visit www.hotline.ie or contact media.enquiries@ hotline.ie.

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