

Task Force on Safe Participation in Political Life

The health of our democracy relies on equal and diverse representation. Recent reports in the media and survey results indicate that there is a significant level of abuse, including on-line abuse, and harassment experienced by those who participate in political life and that this abuse disproportionately impacts women. These behaviours are deeply problematic and will have long term negative impact on women and minority groups' participation in political life.

The Ceann Comhairle and the Cathaoirleach have established a Task Force to be known as the *Task Force on Safe Participation in Political Life* to examine and make proposals on how to safeguard and support participation and to promote civil discourse in political life.

Terms of Reference:

The Task force will:

1. Consider the nature, prevalence and impact of abuse, including on-line abuse, and harassment of those who participate in political life within the Irish context.
2. Consider measures to address the problem of abuse and harassment within political life such as:
 - i. raising awareness, including through education and training, of the value of political participation and public service and of the detrimental impact of abuse, including on-line abuse, and harassment in deterring political participation across Irish society;
 - ii. public policy, including legislation, to safeguard and support those in political life;
 - iii. the response of social media platforms to address online abuse and harassment;
 - iv. the response of the Houses of the Oireachtas and Political Parties in demonstrating leadership in promoting civil discourse in public life.
3. Consider how to monitor the continuing level of the problem and the effectiveness of measures that are put in place to reduce the problem.

The Task Force shall agree its own operating procedures and shall hear and/or consider such submissions as it thinks fit, either verbal or written, as relate to its remit.

The Houses of the Oireachtas Service will provide administrative, legal and research services to the Task Force.

The Task Force shall make a final report to the Ceann Comhairle and the Cathaoirleach, for transmission to the Houses of the Oireachtas Commission, not later than 31 December 2023. Any extension of the deadline for submission of the final report shall be approved by the Ceann Comhairle and the Cathaoirleach.