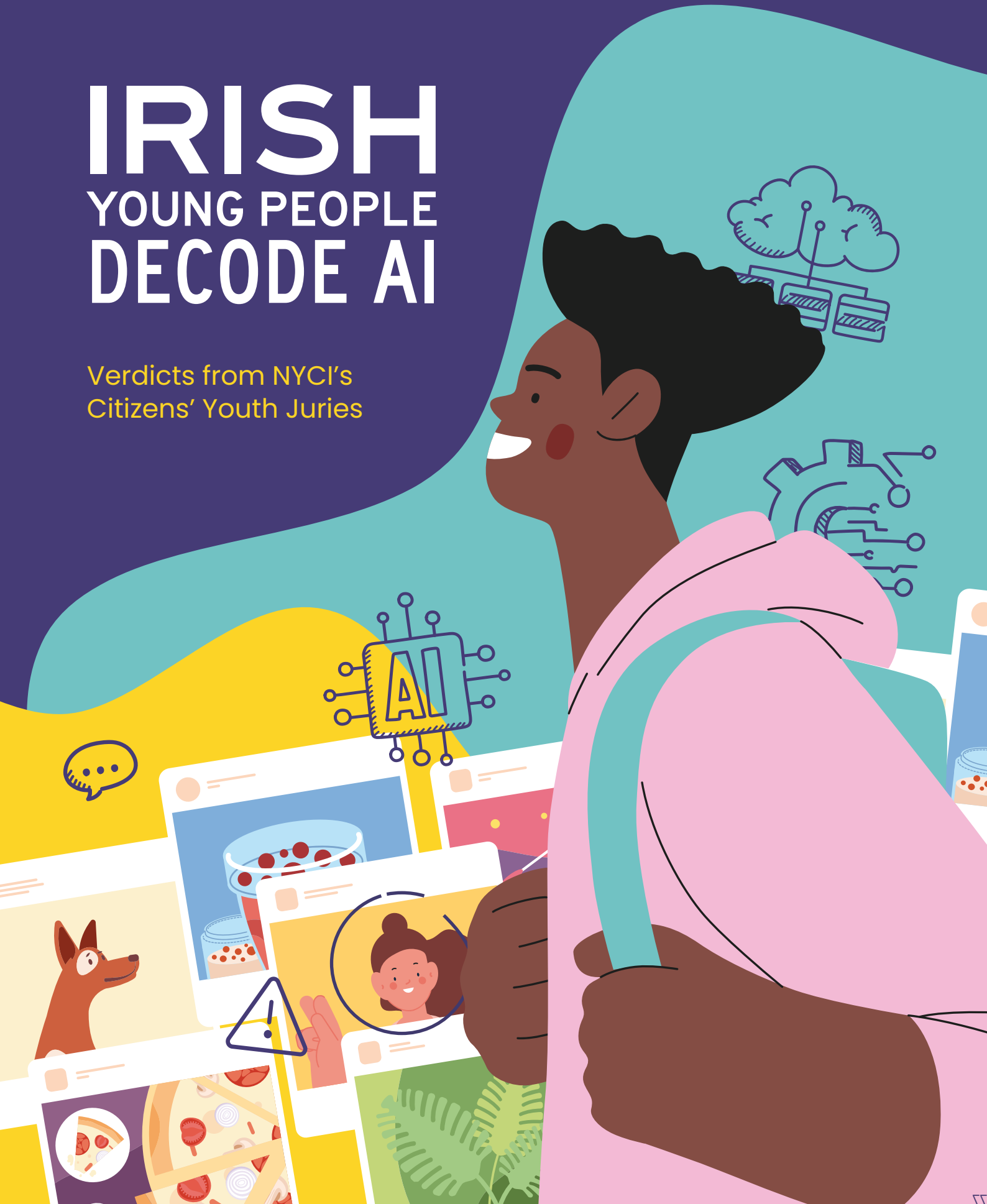


# IRISH YOUNG PEOPLE DECODE AI

Verdicts from NYCI's  
Citizens' Youth Juries



The National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI) is the representative body for voluntary youth organisations in Ireland. We use our collective experience to act on issues that impact on young people.

[www.youth.ie](http://www.youth.ie)

Empowering Young People through AI, Data and Emerging Technologies is a two-year national programme designed to build awareness and skills among young people and youth workers, with a strong focus on inclusion, participation, and shaping a more informed and equitable digital future.

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**Disclaimer:** This report represents the voices of the juries as opposed to official Ombudsman for Children's Office or NYCI policies or positions.

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# Foreword



## In just four short years artificial intelligence has transformed how we work and live. The speed and scale of this change have surpassed anything we could have anticipated.

In response, Ireland has been actively debating the place of young people in an increasingly digital society. At NYCI, we believe that the voices of young people must be central to these discussions.

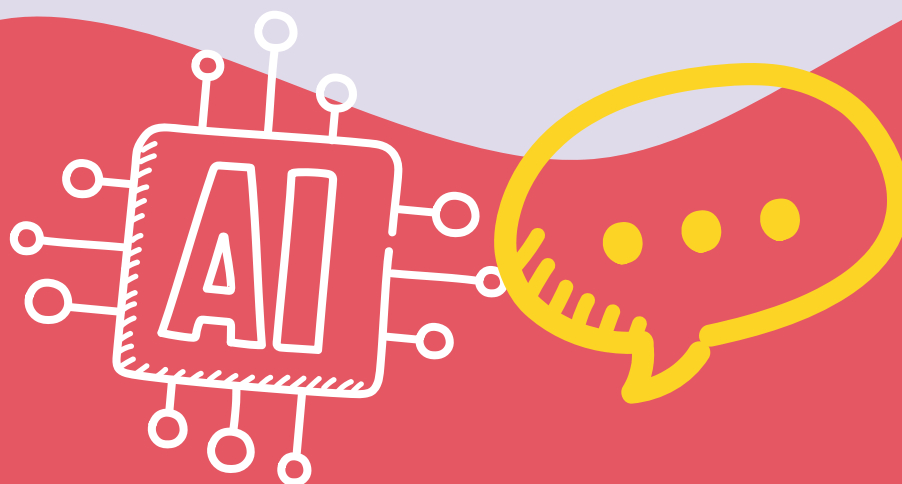
Important consultations have already explored young people's experiences with AI in Ireland. Building on this work, this report provided young people with an opportunity to share their perspectives on key policy debates in the AI space.

From the impact of AI on access to work and mental health services, to the opportunities it presents in education and the wider economy, these juries have developed thoughtful and grounded recommendations based on young people's lived experiences. Their report offers a unique insight into how AI is shaping young people's lives today, as well as the protections, opportunities, and policy responses they believe are needed.

While AI has brought many benefits to society, it also presents new challenges for young people and the youth work sector. As young people grow up in an online world, it is vital that we continue to invest in the offline spaces and supports that youth work provides.

Finally, I wish to sincerely thank all the young people who gave their time and expertise to this important and informative work, and my colleagues Orla Matthews, Reuban Murray, and Ervands Mumdzjans who supported the process. The results of this collective effort will be of significant benefit to our sector as we endeavour to navigate the AI challenges and opportunities ahead.

**Mick Ferron**  
**CEO National Youth Council**  
**of Ireland**



# Executive Summary

**This report presents the findings of the National Youth Council of Ireland’s Youth consultation on AI, which was an in-depth deliberative process inviting 48 young people across six nationally representative Citizen Youth Juries. Each Jury examined a major issue arising from the rapid growth of artificial intelligence, supported by expert input, structured learning materials, and facilitated collective decision-making. Their recommendations reflect the considered views of young people across Ireland, offering a roadmap for how AI can be governed ethically, safely, and inclusively.**

## How the Juries Worked

Participants were selected through a stratified random process to ensure broad representation across gender identity, age, disability, ethnicity, geography, and socioeconomic background. Each Jury engaged in a three-stage process of learning, deliberation, and recommendation-forming, supported by external experts and briefing papers. The resulting insights do not represent the views of NYCI as an organisation, but rather the collective judgement of the young people involved.

## Key Findings

### AI & the Environment

Young people recognise the economic importance of data centres but are deeply concerned about their environmental impact. They supported maintaining Ireland’s moratorium on new data centres until robust sustainability safeguards are in place, including renewable energy use, sustainable water-cooling systems, and heat-waste schemes. They also call for transparency in energy and water consumption and a national public education campaign on the environmental footprint of AI.

### AI Chatbots & Companions

The Jury identified significant risks for young people relying on AI chatbots for emotional support, mental-health advice, or companionship. They recommend prohibiting AI chatbots from providing health advice and requiring continuous safety warnings such as “This is not a real person.” Young people want clearer opt-out options, stronger age-verification systems, parental controls, and tailored regulation for AI “companions” that pose heightened risks. They also call for government-funded research into AI’s impact on youth development.

### AI Misinformation & Radicalisation

Young people see misinformation especially around dieting, mental health, and politics as a growing threat amplified by AI. They call on government to commence Section 30 of the Data Protection Act to limit targeted advertising to children, mandatory disclosure of paid promotion in AI systems, and strengthened oversight of recommender algorithms. The Jury emphasises the need for AI literacy, improved watermarking, and requirements for AI tools to disclose the sources used to generate responses.

## AI in Education

The Jury highlights a widening digital divide caused by unequal access to high-quality AI tools. They propose a publicly owned, ethical, free AI chatbot for students supporting learning without replacing critical thinking or acting as a therapist. They call for national guidelines on AI use in schools, a State-led AI literacy campaign, improved public resources, and compulsory AI education delivered through schools and youth work. Free AI tools, they argue, must link to sources and must not train on the data of under-18s.

## AI & the Future of Jobs

Young people are anxious about job displacement, biased recruitment tools, and opaque AI-driven decision-making in workplaces. They recommend clearer regulation of AI use by employers, required disclosure when AI is used in

recruitment, the right to explanations, and limitations on using applicants' data to train models. They also call for piloting AI systems before redundancies occur, significant investment in retraining, and stronger protections for entry-level work.

## AI Laws & Regulations

This Jury believes Ireland needs stronger, more transparent, and youth-centred AI regulation. They oppose bans on social media or AI for under-16s but urge differentiated rules for younger children. Their recommendations include prohibiting invasive age-verification methods, requiring disclosure of AI training data, protecting artists from data scraping, and introducing independent audits and liability structures for AI companies. They also stress the need for reliable watermarking, equitable datasets to reduce bias, opt-in AI features, and community access to AI infrastructure.

## Conclusion

Across all six Juries, young people expressed optimism about AI's potential but strong concerns about safety, fairness, transparency, and environmental responsibility. Their recommendations reveal a clear message:

“ AI must be governed in a way that protects the rights and wellbeing of young people, strengthens public trust, and ensures equitable access to the benefits of technological progress. ”

This report offers policymakers, educators, researchers, industry leaders and the youth sector a direct insight into the priorities of Ireland's youth at a pivotal moment in AI development. Their perspectives will help shape the full report and future engagement with decision-makers across government and civil society.



# How we ran the Juries





## What is a Youth Jury?

A “youth jury” is just another name for a “citizen’s jury” but populated by young people. A citizen’s jury is a process in which a small group of citizens are randomly selected to deliberate and make recommendations on a specific policy issue. The jury is usually given a specific question or a clearly defined scope to explore. At the end of the process the recommendations are typically detailed in a report.

These citizen’s juries function similarly to a focus group but follows a more structured approach in how participants are selected and how the process is facilitated. A citizens’ jury is based on the same principles of deliberative and participatory democracy as a citizens’ assembly, but it is conducted on a smaller scale, involving a panel of just 8–12 people.

When convening a citizen’s jury there is an emphasis on building-in legitimacy and representativeness to strengthen the group’s recommendations. The citizens jury process consists of five stages: establishing, recruitment, learning, deliberation and recommending.

### Establishing the Jury

This is the stage at which you define the scope and topic of the jury, what will they be discussing, who will their recommendations be for?

### Recruitment

This is the stage where participants are sourced. During recruitment It is important to ensure that the process is as open and inclusive as possible while ensuring a demographically representative group of young people is selected.

These citizen’s juries function similarly to a focus group but follows a more structured approach in how participants are selected and how the process is facilitated.



### Learning

During the learning stage participants work together to better understand their topic. It is important they develop a shared understanding of the issue while hearing from competing perspectives. This typically involves presentations and Q&A sessions from external experts.

### Deliberation

Deliberation is the central stage of the jury process. Participants will work together discussing the topic, responding to one another’s ideas and tease out issues until they can identify a solution they feel is best. The process does not aim to record or analyse each participant’s individual views; rather it encourages them to reach a collective position.

### Recommending

After the jurors have concluded their deliberations, they formalise a set of recommendations on their given issue. This is the “view” or “verdict” of the Jury. But this is not the end of the jury process the “follow-through” of the recommendations is an important stage after the recommendations have been agreed.

## Establishing the Jury

The juries had to focus on the issue of young people and AI, and NYCI decided to design a series of six citizens juries, each with 8 young people. The design of the process was conducted in collaboration with the Office of the Ombudsman for Children (OCO) and DCU insights.

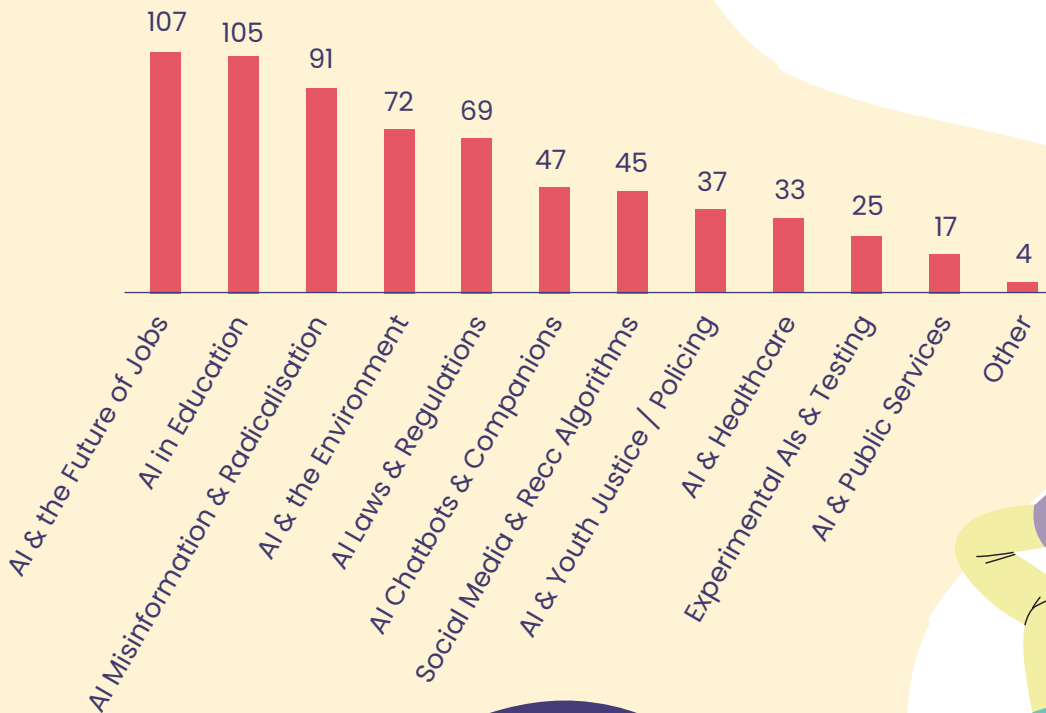
### But how did we decide the topics each jury would consider?

NYCI and the OCO identified 11 potential topics for the juries to

consider, drawing from the National Youth Assembly on AI, the AI Advisory Council Recommendations to Government, the National AI Strategy and additional research on AI and young people.

To identify the final six topics for discussion, the project invited input from a wider group of young people. When young people applied to join the juries, they were asked to pick the four topics they felt were most important to young people in an AI world. This ensured that every young person who applied but didn't get selected for a jury, still had an opportunity to influence the juries' work. The breakdown of votes by young people can be viewed below.

### Votes for Jury Topics



## Recruitment

A citizen jury's recruitment should not advantage already engaged young people. It is important to reach out to ordinary young people who might not have engaged with youth consultation or AI before.

NYCI launched an open call for young people to apply to the citizen's juries. Applicants were not asked to detail their experience or interest in AI. Instead, they were required only to provide basic contact information and demographic details through an online form.

The form was openly accessible to all young people via NYCI's website. This was complemented by pro-active outreach on social media and emails to more than 400 DEIS schools, UBU Youth Services, and Comhairle na nÓg groups.

Once a number of young people had applied it was up to NYCI to select 48 young people to be the final jurors. This involves striking a balance between making sure everyone has an equal chance of participating and ensuring that the final jurors were demographically representative of the wider Irish youth population. To find this balance citizens juries tend to employ a stratified random selection process. This is sometimes referred to as "sortion".

## So how did we select the final 48 jurors?

Using data available via the CSO and other sources, the project team developed an estimated demographic profile of Irish youth. The selection process aimed to ensure each of the following demographics were represented on the juries.

- Young people of all gender identities.
- Young people of different ages.
- Disabled young people
- LGBT+ young people
- Young people from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds
- Young people living in rural Ireland
- Young people living in different parts of Ireland and within areas experiencing economic disadvantage.
- Young people who left education early.

The estimated demographic profile informed the development of quotas and targets for the recruitment process (see below).

	Demographic	Aim	Final 48
<b>Geographic (NUTS 3)</b>	Border	4	4
	Dublin	12	15
	Mid-East	8	8
	Midland	3	4
	Mid-West	5	5
	South-East	4	3
	South-West	7	6
	West	5	3
<b>Ethnic Breakdown</b>	Irish White	≤ 36	31
	Traveller or Roma		0
	Other White		5
	Black or Black Irish	12	6
	Asian or Asian Irish		3
	Other		2
<b>Gender</b>	Male	19	19
	Female	19	23
	Other/Prefer NTS	10	6
<b>Median Income of Nearest Town</b>	Below >20%	6	8
	Below 10% - 20%	7	5
	M 1% - 10%	7	6
	M +/- 1%	2	2
	Above 1% - 10%	8	5
	Above 10% - 20%	7	8
	>20%	12	14
<b>Age</b>	12-14	8	9
	15-17	12	24
	18-20	8	9
	20-22	12	6
<b>Minorities</b>	LGBT Youth	≥ 4	20
	Disabled Youth	≥ 8	8
	Early School Leavers	≥ 4	4
	Rural Youth	≥ 15	18

A code developed by researchers at the Insight SFI Research Centre for Data Analytics in DCU was then used to randomly select 48 jurors across 6 juries while maintaining the desired demographic balance laid out in the quotas.

Naturally, not all selected young people would be able to participate. To address this, 24 alternate jurors were also identified. Where a young person withdrew from a jury, an alternate juror was randomly selected to fill their place.

## Learning

It would not be fair to ask a group of young people to make recommendations on topic as complex as AI without giving them the information and resources they need to properly discuss an issue. The learning process aims to deliver this support and create a shared understanding of the key points and challenges around a given topic.

Before their deliberations it was important that the jurors had the chance to meet each other and develop a group dynamic. To achieve this, each jury had an online prep session. This gave them the chance to meet each other and understand how the day would work.

During each jury's deliberations an external expert was invited to make a presentation. Typically, these were academics or policy experts in the relevant field e.g. AI and education, AI and misinformation. There was a Q&A session with the experts after their presentations.

However, in a citizen's jury process diverse perspectives are important. The team felt that the industry perspective in these discussions should also be represented. Kieran McCorry, Microsoft Ireland's National Technology Officer kindly prepared a series of briefing papers for the jurors to support their deliberations. These papers were shared with jurors ahead of their deliberations and were a valuable resource for them all.

## Deliberation

Each jury met in Dublin city for a "Deliberation Day" where most of their work was done. The jurors were guided through a series of carefully facilitated sessions designed in conjunction with the OCO. Each stage of the deliberation day is detailed below. The facilitator from NYCI sought advice from an external expert on facilitation before the "Deliberation Day" was finalised.



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**10:00 The Office Opens**

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**10:30 Session one: Introductions, warm-ups and initial thoughts on AI**

Following some ice breakers and energisers we will focus on your initial thoughts on AI/your topic and discuss what are the key questions you have for the experts

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**11:30 Session two: The Expert Witness**

In this session we will hear from an expert on the issue, they will give a short presentation and then a Q&A session where you can benefit from their insight and experience.

---

**12:00 Session Three: Reflections**

In the second session we will reflect on the expert's presentation and other relevant information or conduct our own research.

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**13:00 Lunch**

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**14:00 Session four: Discussion, Debate and Deliberation**

We will be discussing what do we feel are the key problems and exploring our options for finding a solution.

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**15:00 Session five: What are our recommendations?**

The final session will focus on what are the key actions/recommendations the jury wants to make on this issue.

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**16:25 Finishing up**

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## Recommending & follow-through

By the end of each jury's deliberations, the jurors agree on a set of recommendations for their allocated topic. NYCI staff then compiled the findings of each jury into a draft report.

It was important that the young people felt that the report accurately reflected their voices. Before publishing, NYCI randomly selected 2 members from each jury to attend another session in Dublin. Each set of reps were provided with the draft report and the original notes from each jury. They were invited to provide detailed feedback which the project team then incorporated into this final report

However, a report is not the final output for a citizen's jury. It is important that the recommendations of the juries are seen by decision-makers. To date NYCI has organised several meetings with public representatives to discuss the findings of the juries, this resulted in 6 jurors presenting their findings in Leinster House to TDs and Senators in May of 2026. NYCI will continue to showcase the work of the jurors through an awareness raising campaign in the latter half of 2026.

JURY

1

# AI & the Environment



This Jury aimed to give young people the opportunity to express their views on the environmental impact of AI and to consider how best to address this challenge. The jurors were supported in their deliberations by a briefing paper prepared by Kieran McCorry of Microsoft Ireland.

### Research Question:

How should we balance the environmental impact of AI and the growing demand for new data centres?

### Sub-themes:



How will the environmental impact of AI affect the lives of young people and future generations?



What measures can the government put in place to mitigate this impact?



Does AI itself have a role in tackling this issue?

## Data Centre Construction

The jurors did not oppose the construction of new data centres, acknowledging their importance to the Irish economy. Instead, they emphasised the need for stronger regulation. Drawing inspiration from Singapore<sup>1</sup>, **The Jury recommended** that Ireland should maintain the moratorium on new data centres until sufficient systems are in place to ensure that any future developments are sustainable and aligned with Ireland's emissions targets. As part of such a system, **The Jury advocated** for greater efforts to introduce sustainable water-cooling technologies in Irish data centres.

The jurors also expressed concern about the over-concentration of data centres within urban communities, while noting that new data centres could have profound impacts on rural communities as well. **They stressed the need** for the government to identify new locations that are suitable for future data-centre development. The Jury highlighted that repurposed, unused, unfarmable land could all be potential sites for these data centres.



<sup>1</sup> Between 2019–2022 Singapore had a moratorium on the development of data centres until a system of environmental safeguards could be put in place.

## Energy Consumption Caps

The jurors felt it was important to limit the energy consumption of data centres but noted these limits must be reasonable and internationally harmonised to prevent companies from relocating to different countries. **The Jury recommended** that Ireland adopt annual energy caps for data centres as part of an EU-wide system for setting national quotas /caps.

## Waste Heat Programmes

The jurors were impressed by the success of the Tallaght District Heating Scheme<sup>2</sup> and wanted to see similar heat-waste schemes implemented across Ireland. **The Jury recommended** that Ireland support or incentivise existing and new data centres to build waste heat schemes for communities.

## Data Centre Reporting Scheme

The jurors were concerned about the high levels of energy and water consumption by data centres in Ireland and supported the introduction of a system to improve transparency. **The Jury recommended** that data centre operators should be mandated to annually report energy/water consumption for each data centre for the past year and estimated consumption for the following twelve months.

## Public Education on AI and the Environment

The Jury also felt that the public and individual users had a role to play in using AI responsibly. However, they noted that this would require increased education and awareness about the environmental impact of AI. **The Jury therefore recommended** a public education campaign focused on promoting environmentally conscious use of AI.



<sup>2</sup> [The Tallaght District Heating Scheme](#) recycles waste heat from a nearby Amazon data centre to heat a number of nearby civic buildings and 133 cost-rental apartments.

# Recommendations

## The Youth Jury on AI and the Environment Recommends that

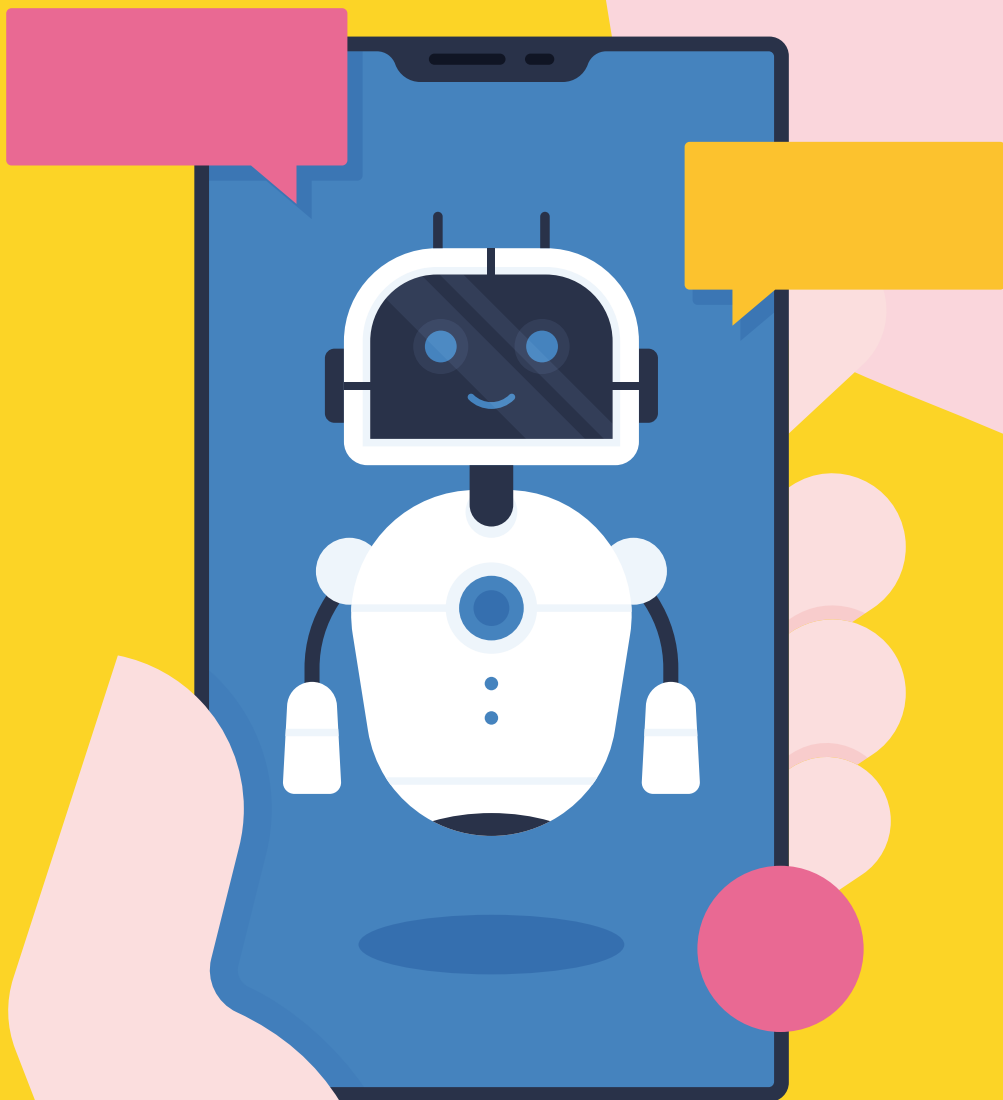
1.1	Ireland should maintain a moratorium on new data centres until systems had been put in place to ensure any new centres are built in line with Ireland's emission targets.
1.2	There must be greater efforts to deploy sustainable water-cooling systems in Irish data centres.
1.3	The government should identify new areas that are appropriate for building data centres, avoiding an overconcentration within communities and exploring repurposed, unused, unfarmable land.
1.4	Ireland should implement annual energy caps for data centres as part of an EU-wide system for setting national quotas/caps.
1.5	Ireland should support or incentivise existing and new data centres to build waste-heat schemes for communities.
1.6	Data centre operators should be mandated to annually report energy and water consumption for each data centre for the past year and give estimated consumption for the next 12 months.
1.7	Ireland should develop a public education campaign on using AI while being environmentally conscious.



JURY

2

# AI Chatbots & Companions



This Jury aimed to give young people a meaningful opportunity to shape how AI companions and chatbots (particularly those designed for children and young people) should be regulated. Their deliberations were supported by a briefing paper prepared by Kieran McCorry of Microsoft Ireland and a presentation delivered by Noeline Blackwell, Online Safety Coordinator at the Children’s Rights Alliance.

### Research Question:

How can the government ensure that AI chatbots and AI companions respect the rights of children and young people?

### Sub-themes:



What is young people’s experience of AI chatbots and companions?



Are the current rules around their use sufficient?



What role does such technology play in youth mental health?

## AI Mental Health Tools

The jurors were aware of peers struggling with loneliness and poor mental health, many of whom turned to AI chatbots for support when they were unable to find the help they needed locally. They felt that AI chatbots must be regulated to protect these vulnerable young people.

**The Jury recommended** that AI chatbots should not offer mental, or physical health advice to users. Instead, these chatbots must be required to immediately signpost users to mental and physical health supports.

While other countries are exploring using AI chatbots in youth mental health services, **the Jury was clear** that AI chatbots do not have a place in Ireland’s youth mental health system and should never be used in place of therapists.

The jurors were also worried about “AI Psychosis”; a phenomenon where users can forget that AI “is not real”. **The Jury recommended that** chatbot programmes should be required to include continuous health warnings such as: “This is not a real person” or “AI can hallucinate<sup>3</sup>”. The group also noted that AI chatbots could be designed to identify users at risk of “AI Psychosis” and gently signpost them to appropriate supports.

<sup>3</sup> AI tools can sometimes generate nonsensical or inaccurate outputs. In some cases, this can be misleading where an AI has presented responses as fact. This phenomenon is often described as AI hallucinations.

The jurors recognised that this technology is already having a profound effect on young people, with consequences that are not yet fully understood. As such **they recommended** that the National AI Office be given a mandate to address the impacts of AI on vulnerable people, including young people. **The Jury further called** on the government to fund research on the social development of young people and how AI may be influencing it.

## The Right to Opt-out

The jurors were uncomfortable with the integration of chatbots and AI features into services where they had not asked for them, for example, WhatsApp, Snapchat AI, or Google AI. They wanted the option to turn off these features but noted that many apps do not provide such a choice. **The Jury therefore recommended** that applications be required to allow users to opt out of AI features.

## Banning AI for under-18s

The jurors were clear that children and young people should be treated as distinct groups when considering this issue. **They recommended** that access to AI tools for children under-12 should be regulated differently from access for those aged 12 to 16. While the **Jury did not support** a ban on AI applications for young people, they advocated for stronger regulation and the introduction of parental controls such as supervised accounts across AI platforms.

## Age-Gating

The jurors described how many of their peers were able to bypass existing age-verification systems or “age gates” with ease. **They were clear** that the current systems are inadequate and must be significantly improved.

## Regulating AI “Companions”

The jurors highlighted that many of their peers were accessing “AI companions” and expressed concern about the vulnerability of young people interacting with these systems. Although they recognised that AI companions differ from standard chatbots, they found it difficult to clearly articulate how. Nonetheless, they felt strongly that AI companions should be subject to additional safeguards beyond those applied to regular chatbots. **The Jury recommended** that the government introduce specific regulations for AI companions, including clear definitions distinguishing “AI chatbots” from “AI companions,” along with tailored protections for young people.

## Educating Young People and Parents

The jurors felt that parents needed more support on how to supervise their children in an AI-driven world and that young people need to be better equipped with the knowledge and tools to stay safe. **The Jury recommended** that the government supports an AI-literacy campaign aimed at both young people and their parents.



# Meaningful Reporting Mechanisms

The jurors were concerned about not “being heard” when using companies’ internal reporting systems to lodge complaints about harmful or inappropriate content. They were unaware that they also had the option of submitting a complaint to Coimisiún na Meán and felt this option should be made much more explicitly available to young people. **The Jury recommended** that when users submit a report to a company, the company should be required to offer them the option of sharing a copy of the complaint with Coimisiún na Meán.

## Recommendations

### The Youth Jury on AI Chatbots and Companions Recommends that

2.1	AI chatbots should not offer mental, or physical health advice to users, but immediately signpost users to mental health/ physical health supports
2.2	AI chatbots should not be used as part of Ireland’s youth mental health system.
2.3	Chatbots should display continuous health warnings “This is not a real person” and “AI can hallucinate.”
2.4	AI chatbots should be designed to identify users at risk of AI psychosis and signpost them to relevant supports.
2.5	The National AI Office must have a mandate to address the impacts of AI on vulnerable people (including young people).
2.6	The government should fund research on the impact of AI on the social development of young people.
2.7	Apps must be required to give users the right to opt out of AI features.
2.8	The Jury opposed a ban on AI applications for young people, instead advocating for stronger regulations
2.9	AI apps should all introduce parental controls (e.g. supervised accounts) to equip parents with the tools to protect their children.
2.10	There should be different approaches to regulating access to AI tools for under-12s and 12–16-year-olds.
2.11	Current age-gate systems are not sufficient and must be improved.
2.12	The government should place specific regulations on AI companions defining “AI chatbots” vs “AI companions” with specific safeguards for young people.
2.13	Our government should support an AI literacy campaign for young people and their parents.
2.14	When users submit a report to a company, the company should be required to provide them the option to share a copy of the complaint with Coimisiún na Meán.

JURY

3

# AI Misinformation & Radicalisation



This Jury examined the issue of AI-driven misinformation, seeking to understand young people’s perspectives on how this growing challenge can be addressed. The jurors were supported in their deliberations by a briefing paper from Kieran McCorry of Microsoft Ireland and a presentation from Dr. Shane Murphy, a researcher at DCU’s Institute for Future Media, Democracy and Society.

### Research Question:

What steps must Ireland take to tackle AI-driven misinformation and radicalisation?

### Sub-themes:



Is misinformation and radicalisation a growing or shrinking problem for Irish young people, how does it manifest, and how does AI affect it?



Does AI itself have a role in tackling this issue?



How can we equip young people with the skills to recognise and address misinformation in their own lives?

## Monetised Misinformation and Advertising

The jurors were concerned about emerging efforts to “monetise misinformation,” where individuals or groups could pay for services that enable the spread of false or misleading information. They were particularly worried that children’s online data could be used to target them with such content. The group noted that Section 30 of the Data Protection Act (2018)<sup>4</sup> was intended to address this issue, but that its implementation has faced legal challenges. **The Jury believed that** it should be possible to protect young people while adhering to EU legislation

and called on the government to commence Section 30 of the Act; amended where necessary to ensure compliance with EU law.

**The jurors were also concerned** that AI chatbots could be paid to promote services or products without the user’s knowledge.

**The group recommended** that all AI applications must be required to clearly disclose any paid promotion/ advertising for goods or services.

<sup>4</sup> S30 of the Data protection act (2018) sought to make it an offence for any company to process the personal data of children for the purposes of direct marketing, profiling or micro-targeting. This section of the act has never been commenced; it faces several questions regarding its compliance with EU law.



## Recommender Algorithms

The Jury held nuanced views on the role of recommender algorithms, recognising both their potential harms and young people's right to access and use this technology. They felt that young people should have greater control over the content they are shown, rather than having those decisions made by opaque algorithms.

**The jurors recommended** that any app using recommender algorithms should provide accessible settings that allow users to manage their content preferences.

**The group further advocated** that, for users under-16, recommender algorithms should operate on an opt-in basis and be accompanied by a clear health warning. While they opposed an outright ban, they emphasised the need for increased safeguards.

Finally, the jurors expressed discomfort with recommender systems making assumptions based on characteristics such as age, gender, or location.

**The Jury recommended that** these algorithms should rely solely on a user's interactions with content.

## Combating Misinformation

The jurors highlighted that many young people struggle to recognise AI-generated content or misinformation, with some even relying on AI tools for fact-checking. They recognised that young people were most often targeted by misinformation relating to dieting, eating disorders and mental health.

The group stressed that education and support for young people and their parents is a vital tool in addressing misinformation. **The Jury called for greater efforts** to equip young people to identify and scrutinise AI-generated content, understand AI, algorithms, and recognise harmful or misleading material.

The jurors also raised concerns about how AI can accelerate the spread of misinformation, including through recycling content from biased sources or through "hallucinations"<sup>5</sup> These risks are compounded by the absence of a robust watermarking<sup>6</sup> system, leaving young people unsure what content is AI-generated. **The Jury recommended that** AI tools be required to disclose the "source information" used to generate responses, potentially as part of a broader code of practice for AI applications.

Furthermore, **the Jury was clear** that a more robust AI-watermarking system with strong enforcement mechanisms must be implemented as quickly as possible to ensure that AI-generated content can be easily identified.

<sup>5</sup> AI tools can sometimes generate nonsensical or inaccurate outputs. In some cases, this can be misleading where an AI has presented responses as fact. This phenomenon is often described as AI hallucinations.

<sup>6</sup> Watermarking is a process of embedding a unique signal (i.e. the watermark) into the outputs of an AI tool that serves to identify the content as AI-generated.

# Recommendations

## The Youth Jury on AI Misinformation & Radicalisation Recommends that

3.1	The government should commence S30 of the Data Protection Act 2018, amended where necessary to ensure compliance with EU law.
3.2	All AI applications must be required to clearly disclose any paid promotion/ advertising for goods or services.
3.3	Apps which use recommender algorithms should provide accessible settings to control content preferences.
3.4	Recommender algorithms should operate an 'opt-in' basis for under-16s alongside a health warning. The Jury opposed an outright ban.
3.5	Recommender algorithms should only be based on someone's interactions with content.
3.6	AI tools should be required to disclose the "source information" for AI responses, possibly as part of a wider "code of practice" for AI applications.
3.7	A more robust AI watermarking system supported by strong enforcement mechanisms must be quickly implemented to clearly identify AI content.
3.8	Increasing education for young people so they can recognise and critically assess AI-generated content, understand how AI and algorithms work, and recognise harmful material.



JURY

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# AI in Education



This Jury aimed to explore the profound impact of AI on education from young people’s perspectives. The jurors were supported in their deliberations by a briefing paper from Kieran McCorry of Microsoft Ireland and a presentation from Dr Patrick Buckland; Co-Director of The Irish Centre for AI Research in Education (ICAIRE).

### Research Question:

What are the minimum skills every young person should have to prepare them for life in an AI world?

### Sub-themes:



How can we use AI to bridge the Digital divide – instead of growing it?



How can we navigate the advantages and disadvantages of AI in education?

## A Publicly Owned AI Tool for Students

The jurors were concerned about peers who couldn’t afford to pay for high-quality or premium AI tools. They felt this was creating a digital divide.

At the same time, the group was conscious of the risks that AI poses to young people’s learning and critical-thinking skills. They felt that young people needed a tool that could help bridge this disadvantage while also addressing these wider risks.

**The Jury recommended** that the government develop a publicly owned AI chatbot designed specifically for students. Their vision was that all students should have access to a high-quality, free AI tool trained on ethical information and reputable sources.

**The jurors believed** that such a tool could help bridge the digital divide, while also providing opportunities to teach students AI literacy and combat misinformation.

They emphasised that the tool should not draft essays for students, but instead support their learning by offering guidance, feedback, summaries, and other forms of learning assistance. This, they felt, would help students continue to develop strong critical-thinking skills while using AI.

**The Jury noted that this tool should:**

- Be designed for use by different age groups (e.g., secondary school and/or college students).
- Avoid functioning as a therapist and instead signpost students to appropriate supports.
- Be available in Irish.

The jurors suggested that such a tool could be built using open-source programmes such as Llama and, if successful, could be expanded for use in other sectors.

## Public Education Campaign

**The Jury recommended** that the government create a dedicated webpage to host AI-education resources for the public; for example, “the environmental impacts of AI”.

They stressed that these resources should be supported by a public education campaign on artificial intelligence, aimed at all age groups and covering topics such as:

- What AI is and how to use it safely
- How to tell whether a video or piece of content is AI-generated
- Signposting to further AI-education materials and supports



The purpose of the campaign would be to raise awareness and encourage more public conversations about AI. The jurors suggested using informal communication channels such as short-form video alongside more traditional media, including print, bus posters and other public-facing formats. They specifically cited RSA campaigns as a strong example of engaging, accessible public education.

**The Jury also recommended** that the National AI Office be given a mandate to strengthen AI education and literacy across the State.

## AI in Schools & Youth Work

The jurors expressed frustration at the inconsistent rules surrounding the use of AI in education. Across both secondary schools and universities, different departments, lecturers, and teachers within the same institution often apply widely varying approaches and expectations.

**The Jury called for** clear guidelines on AI use by students, emphasising the need for consistency across the education system. They felt that these guidelines should be exhibited in schools and even displayed in a publicly owned AI chatbot for students (as recommended by this Jury).

**They further recommended** that the government, youth-work organisations, and other relevant bodies collaborate to develop compulsory AI training for young people. The group felt the training should be certified and offered by schools and youth work organisations.

## The Costs of Free Chatbots

The jurors wanted to ensure that young people who could not afford certain AI models would not be disadvantaged. They were conscious that peers relying only on free models might receive lower-quality responses. The group also noted that these free models often do not provide sources and require users to allow their inputs to be used for further training.

**The Jury recommended** that free AI Chatbots must still link “source information” in responses and free AI tools should not be trained on the inputs of under-18s.



## Recommendations

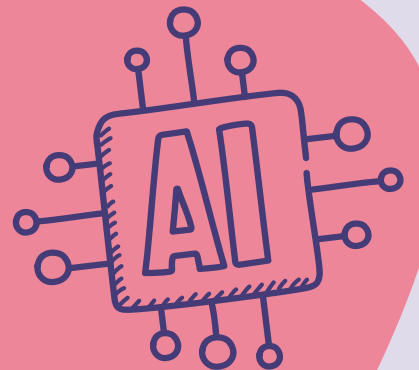
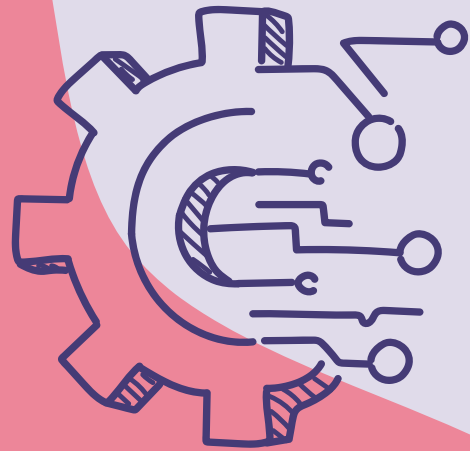
**The Youth Jury on AI in Education Recommends that**

4.1	The government should develop a publicly owned AI chatbot designed specifically for students.
4.2	The government should create a webpage to host AI education information and resources for the public.
4.3	The National AI office should have a mandate to increase AI education and literacy across the state.
4.4	Guidelines for AI usage by students must be published and displayed in schools.
4.5	The government, youth work organisations and other groups should partner to develop a compulsory AI training for young people.
4.6	That free AI Chatbots must still link “source information” in its responses and free AI tools should not be trained on the inputs of under-18s.

JURY

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# AI & the Future of Jobs

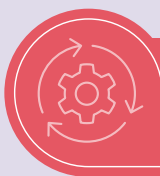


This Jury explored the increasing impacts of AI on the world of work; particularly how it affects young people's access to employment. The jurors were supported in their deliberations by a presentation from NYCI staff (the jury facilitator) on key issues for young people regarding AI and Jobs.

### Research Question:

What steps should Ireland take to address or harness AI's impact on the world of work?

### Sub-themes:



How has AI changed young people's experience of work?



How is AI affecting young people's access to work?



What can we do to ensure AI is a force for good in the Irish Job market; particularly for young people?

## AI and Employers

The jurors were concerned about how employers may use AI in the workplace, as well as the growing issue of "shadow AI," where employees use AI tools without their employer's knowledge. **The Jury recommended** that companies should be required to have clear and regularly reviewed "AI usage policies". **The group further recommended** that employers who use AI in the workplace should be required to provide regular AI-related training to their employees.

The Jury also believed it was important for the government to support both companies and employees to use AI responsibly. **The jurors recommended that** the government should provide guidelines and resources to help organisations in developing AI policies, as well as introduce regulations outlining appropriate and inappropriate uses of AI by employers.

## AI and Recruitment

The jurors noted the increasing use of AI in job recruitment and expressed concern that these processes can be unfair or contain bias. They also described how many of their peers felt deflated or disillusioned after being rejected by an AI recruitment tool. In addition, they observed that many young people also use AI to prepare job applications, resulting in recruitment stages where AI is simply talking with other AIs.

The Jury called for clear rules to be established for companies that use AI recruitment systems tools. As part of these rules the **Jury recommended that**

- Recruiters must disclose when and how AI is being used at any stage of a recruitment process.
- When AI is used to make a recruitment decision, applicants should be able to request an explanation of how and why that decision was made.
- Applicants should receive explicit disclosure if their data may be used to train AI systems, along with a clear option to opt out.

The Jury did note the distinction between manufacturers of AI recruitment tools, and companies who use/deploy these tools. Nevertheless, **the Jury recommended that** both should be held accountable for any issues that arise when these tools are deployed.

**The group also** urged for the NSAI to develop specific standards for the design and development of AI recruitment tools.

## AI Disrupting Jobs

The jurors were deeply concerned about the impact of AI on people already in work and wanted to see measures introduced to mitigate these effects. **The Jury recommended that** any AI tools that would trigger redundancies should first be piloted, evaluated, and compared with human work before being adopted. **They also concluded** that Ireland needs to highlight and invest in retraining programmes and supports for workers who become redundant because of AI.

Taking a broader view of this challenge, **the Jury called on the government** to incentivise companies to retain human jobs and take steps to stimulate the entry-level job market. **The group also recommended** that the National AI Office should have a specific mandate to address the impact of AI on workers, particularly young workers.



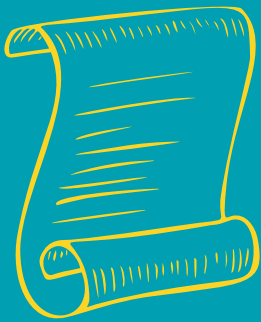
## Recommendations

### The Youth Jury on AI and the Future of Jobs Recommends that

5.1	The government continues to highlight and invest in retraining and support services for workers made redundant by AI.
5.2	The government needs to incentivise companies to retain human jobs and to stimulate the entry level job market.
5.3	The National AI Office must work to address the impact of AI on workers, particularly young workers.
5.4	Companies should be required to have "AI Usage Policies" and keep them regularly reviewed.
5.5	The government should provide guidelines and resources for establishing AI usage policies.
5.6	Employers who use AI tools in the workplace must give regular training to employees on how to use it.
5.7	The government develops clear regulations outlining what is and is not an appropriate use of AI by employers.
5.8	Rules should be established for companies that use AI-driven recruitment systems to ensure these tools are applied safely, appropriately, and without bias.
5.9	AI tools that might result in redundancy should be trialled, evaluated and compared to human work before redundancies take place.
5.10	<p>The NSAI release specific standards on the development of AI recruitment tools. Including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A recruiter must disclose where and how AI is being used during a recruitment process.</li><li>• In any recruitment process, there should be an explicit disclosure when an applicant's data may be used to train AI and a clear option to opt out.</li><li>• When AI is used to make a recruitment decision, applicants should be able to request why and how that decision was made.</li><li>• There should be accountability for both the user (company recruiting) &amp; manufacturer of AI recruitment tools when an issue arises.</li></ul>

JURY  
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# AI Laws & Regulations



The jurors were supported in their deliberations by a briefing paper from Kieran McCorry of Microsoft Ireland (re-using the same paper prepared for the AI Chatbots and Companions' Jury) and a presentation from Jennifer Waters; a PhD candidate at UCD's Centre for Digital Policy.

### Research Question:

How do we make Ireland's system of laws and regulation on AI work for young people?

### Sub-themes:



Does the current system of laws and regulations do enough to protect the rights of young people?



Are there any additional steps Ireland should take to regulate AI.

On the whole, the Jury on AI laws and regulations was clear that technology companies should not be the leading voice in debates on AI laws and regulations.

## Social media / AI Tools Ban for under-16s

**The Jury opposed** a ban on AI and social media for under-16s, instead calling for stronger regulations. **They also recommended** that access for children aged 0-12 and those aged 12-16 should be regulated differently.

## Age Gating

The Jury felt that the current age verification systems were not robust enough but did not want any new measures that infringe on the privacy of citizens. **The Jury recommended** that companies must not ask for sensitive data relating to age verification of users (e.g. passports or biometrics).

## Data Transparency for AI models

The jurors advocated for greater transparency regarding the types of data used to train AI models, **recommending that** AI tools be required to disclose their training data. **They also believed that** AI systems must clearly indicate whether a user's data or inputs (e.g. messages with a chatbot) are being used to train a model.

The Jury expressed concern about reports of AI tools being trained on artists' work without their knowledge or consent. **The Jury recommended that** Ireland should take steps to protect artists and other groups from "data scraping" and provide a mechanism that allows them to consent to their work being used to train AI models or to withdraw that consent.

## Accountability, Liability and Risk

**The Jury believed** companies should be liable for the responses produced by their AI systems. The group raised the government's "Tara" chatbot as one example of where greater accountability was required<sup>7</sup>. Accordingly, **the jurors recommend that** the proposed EU AI liability directive<sup>8</sup> should be adopted and expanded to include regular, independent audits.

The group was also concerned that risk assessments for AI tools are currently self-assessed by the companies to deploy these products. **The Jury recommended** that risk assessments for AI applications (under the EU AI ACT) should be carried out by impartial bodies.

Furthermore, **the jurors believed that AI tools must be regulated / risk assessed based on their intended use, rather than what type of AI tool it is.** For example, an AI chatbot intended to give legal advice should not be regulated / risk assessed as a normal chatbot function.

## Protection for Ethnic Minorities

The Jury were uneasy at reports of AI tools demonstrating bias against minority groups, particularly when models are trained primarily on data from a single ethnic group. They noted that such bias can present challenges when AI systems are used in sectors such as healthcare or recruitment. The Jury also highlighted that these same communities often bear a disproportionate share of the environmental impacts associated with AI. **The Jury recommended** that AI applications take concrete measures to eliminate bias, including expanding training datasets to reflect diverse ethnic groups.

<sup>7</sup> TARA chatbot was an online service provided by the department of Home Affairs and Migration. The chatbot was developed to inform applicants how to engage with the department's services and answer frequently asked questions regarding citizenship applications. The Jury was concerned that the Department's [disclaimer](#) read "no responsibility is accepted by, or on behalf of the Department of Justice to Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration for any errors, omissions or misleading statements" of the chatbot.

<sup>8</sup> [The EU AI Liability Directive](#) was a proposed EU directive intend to ensure that persons harmed by AI systems enjoy the same level of protection as persons harmed by other technologies in the EU. In October 2025 the directive was withdrawn by the EU.



## Watermarks

The Jury was clear that the current AI watermarking system is ineffective, leaving many young people struggling to distinguish AI-generated content. They noted that a significant amount of AI content carries no watermark at all, and that some apps can remove or crop existing watermarks<sup>9</sup>. **The Jury called for a stronger more reliable watermarking system to be implemented in Ireland.** They felt this was particularly important in the case of deepfakes which can spread information or cause harm to vulnerable groups.

## Supporting AI in the Community

The Jury was eager to see local communities share in the benefits of AI, without having to rely on commercial tools and licences. **The Jury recommended that** infrastructure, hardware, software and funding should be made available to community groups (e.g. libraries, universities and local businesses) to support AI adoption/innovation within local communities (e.g. publicly owned data centres).

## The Right to Opt-in

The Jury was concerned about AI features being incorporated into apps without users' consent, for example, within search engines or word processors. While other juries have called for a right to opt-out of such features, **The Jury explicitly recommended that** these features should instead operate on an opt-in basis.

<sup>9</sup> The Jury also noted that small or homemade AI models can be used to develop AI content without watermarks – presenting a particular challenge when discussing regulation.



## AI Impact on Jobs

The Jury were also alarmed by the impact of AI on the world of work. Their concerns were varied and included:

- Access to entry level jobs
- Employment for artists and creatives
- Pathways from higher education to the world of work
- Recruitment processes
- Redundancies

**The group supported** the development of clear guidelines for employers on the use of AI within the workplace **and recommended** that the government take proactive steps to address the significant impacts of AI on employees and jobseekers.

## AI and Advertising

The jurors felt that the impact of AI on advertising could be particularly significant. Ultimately, they felt that AI should be subject to the same level of regulation as alcohol when it comes to advertising.

**The Jury called** on the Advertising Standards Authority for Ireland (ASAI) to develop strict guidelines on how AI services and products may be depicted in advertising<sup>10</sup>. The group also expressed concern about AI tools recommending products or services without users' knowledge. **The jurors recommended** that all AI tools be required to disclose paid promotion in responses.

The Jury was further concerned about the use of AI to generate advertisements or content for adverts. **They stressed** that companies must ensure that any advert created with the assistance of AI still accurately represents the product.

<sup>10</sup> Some AI products are advertised as a "friends" or romantic partners, others are promoted as a lifestyle– the Jury wanted rules laid down to prevent ads like these (and others) from appearing.

# Recommendations

## The Youth Jury on AI Laws and Regulations Recommends that

6.1	Social media should not be banned for under-16s, but it should be better regulated. Access for under-12s should be regulated differently than access for under-16s.
6.2	Companies should not ask for sensitive data from users (e.g. passports, biometrics) for age verification.
6.3	AI tools should disclose their models training data.
6.4	AI tools must clearly state when a user's inputs are used to train a model.
6.5	The government must protect artists and other groups from "data scraping" and support them to stop their work from being used to train AI models.
6.6	Companies should be liable for the responses produced by their AI systems.
6.7	The proposed EU AI liability directive should be adopted and expanded to include regular, independent audits.
6.8	Risk assessments for AI applications (under the EU AI ACT) should be carried out by impartial bodies.
6.9	AI applications must take measures to eliminate bias, including expanding training data to incorporate diverse ethnic groups.
6.10	A stronger watermarking system must be implemented in Ireland.
6.11	Infrastructure, tools and funding should be made available to community groups, libraries and universities, to support AI adoption/innovation within local communities.
6.12	New AI features for apps should operate on an opt-in basis.
6.13	The government release guidelines on AI in the workplace and take action to address the profound impacts of AI on employees and jobseekers.
6.14	The ASAI develop strict guidelines on how AI services and products may be depicted in advertising.
6.15	AI tools must disclose paid promotion in responses.
6.16	Companies must ensure that adverts which use AI still accurately represent their products.

## STEAM Programme

Empowering Young People Through AI and Emerging Technologies

# IRISH YOUNG PEOPLE DECODE AI

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