



18<sup>th</sup> December 2019

Deputy John Curran, TD  
Dáil Eireann  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2.

**PQ: 50463/19**

To ask the Minister for Health the funding allocated to the HSE to carry out a national campaign to raise awareness of the risks associated with drug use in each of the years 2015 to 2018 and to date in 2019; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Curran,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to your above Parliamentary Question which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position:

The HSE support public awareness campaigns with a particular focus on harm reduction within the night-time economy. Harm reduction is a set of practical strategies and ideas aimed at reducing negative consequences associated with drug use. Harm reduction incorporates a spectrum of strategies applied in different settings, aimed at different cohorts. To reach people that may not engage with traditional addiction services in Ireland, a number of harm reduction campaigns have been developed and promoted through the Drugs.ie website.

Our own National Strategy, 'Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery: a health-led response to drug and alcohol use in Ireland 2017-2025' advocates for a harm reduction approach to the misuse of drugs as did the two previous national drug strategies stretching back to 2001. Action 1.3 in the current strategy requires us to develop harm reduction interventions targeting at risk groups. The strategy mentions campaigns carried out by Drugs.ie and the HSE such as the awareness campaign on the use of GHB/GBL or the 'What's in the Pill' as examples of targeted campaigns.

Drugs.ie, previously managed by the Ana Liffey Drug Project, developed and launched number of campaigns during the period of 2015- 2018. During this time, €15,000 was allocated annually for emerging drug trend work and campaigns. It is not possible at this time to extrapolate specific costs for the below campaigns as this budget was within the Service Level Agreement for the Online and Digital Service Team situated in the Ana Liffey Drug Project.



Year	Campaign
2015	What's in the Pill?
2016	What's in the Powder?
2017	GHB Campaign
2017	Pregabalin Campaign
2018	Cocaine – reduce the harms

In 2017, the HSE National Social Inclusion Office allocated €1,250 to collaborate with the Union of Students in Ireland on the 'What are you taking?' campaign.

In 2018, the management of Drugs.ie transitioned to the HSE National Social Inclusion Office. Since this changeover, €1,562 was allocated to the 'Safer Student Nights' campaign in 2019 and €10,614 on the HSE national festival campaign, which included outreach to 3 festivals this summer. In 2019, €67,500 was allocated for the development of a national cannabis campaign which will be implemented in 2020.

You can locate the resources for all of these campaigns at [www.drugs.ie/campaigns](http://www.drugs.ie/campaigns).

I trust this information is of assistance to you but should you have any further queries please contact me.

Yours sincerely,



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Dr Eamon Keenan  
National Clinical Lead – HSE Addiction Services