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PQ ref 17318/20

Dear Deputy Burke

Question: To ask the Minister for Health if a social media campaign on Covid-19 which is specifically aimed at young persons will be designed and implemented by his Department; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

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

HSE Response

The HSE and the Department of Health have led the overall response to COVID-19, which includes the extensive public information, advertising and education programme. Communicating with the public, listening to their needs and giving accurate and easy-to-follow health advice is considered a central part of any country's pandemic response plan.

The COVID-19 public information campaign uses a range of communications channels, including media relations, websites, social media, search advertising, digital display, posted materials, out of home (posters, projections, transport) and TV and radio advertising, to provide clear public health advice about the virus that is easy for people to understand and act on.

We conduct regular research, which is shared at the Dept of Health briefings, to check on people's understanding of and their reaction to the information and ongoing situation, allowing any new messages or content to be developed in line with their feedback. Consistently high satisfaction levels with the HSE and Dept of Health communications has been reported in our research and listening exercises.



We make sure that we include everyone in Ireland in our communications and our support. We engage widely with partners, advocacy groups and all sectors of society, asking for help to share messages, and checking that we have included everyone. We have developed an extended suite of flexible content, suitable for various audiences and people with different needs and in varied circumstances; this includes information in a range of languages, Irish Sign Language, braille, audio, easy-read and large print.

It is important to note the support that has been provided by all sectors of society to our communications programme. This has come from the wider Government, fellow public services, and from private organisations and businesses. We are grateful to everyone who has helped shape, publish and share our critical health advice at this time, and to the public who are taking the essential actions to help slow down the virus and protect people.

Tailored campaign for younger audience

In order to engage further with the younger demographic, the HSE partnered with SpunOut to create a social media campaign. SpunOut.ie is Ireland's youth information website created by young people, for young people, aimed at those aged between 16 and 25.

The campaign took the public health advice and tailored it for young people, using a different approach to other COVID-19 materials to engage the target audience. The creative look and feel reflected the style of material consumed by the younger age group; short, snappy content, using bold colours and amusing images.

Phase 1

The first phase of the campaign launched on 24 March and was shared across HSE, SpunOut and HSE Sexual Wellbeing social media channels: Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, TikTok and Twitter. The creative reflected the key public health messages being promoted nationally to the target audience in that moment. There were two creative routes:

- 'Too close' focused on social distancing and showing images of what is deemed too close.
- 'Do nothing hero' was a series of creative that encouraged young people to stay at home – by staying home, you're saving lives.



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The videos had over 9.83 million impressions (the number of times the content was displayed) and a reach of 2.9 million (the number of people who saw the content) on our social media channels. We engaged another agency to provide social amplification. This resulted in a reach of over 2 million, with well-known personalities and influencers sharing the content, such as Laura Whitmore, James Kavanagh, Holly Carpenter, Marty Guilfoyle and Philly McMahon.

Facebook will showcase the 'Too close' video in their Creative Gallery so that other government organisations have tangible examples they can aspire to when using Facebook's platforms.

I trust this addresses your question. If I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours truly,

Mary Brodie
Business Manager, Communications Directorate