



30<sup>th</sup> July 2018

Deputy Louise O'Reilly, TD  
Dáil Eireann  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2.

**Re PQ: 35320/18**

To ask the Minister for Health the developmental process of the recently announced positive harm reduction campaigns Cocaine-Reduce the Harms and Crack-Reduce the Harms; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy O'Reilly,

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:

As part of an existing arrangement the HSE funds emerging trends campaigns in conjunction with the Ana Liffey Drug Project. One of the Emerging trends noted by Addiction services in late 2017, early 2018 was a significant increase in the use of cocaine in the population in the recent past and a worrying increase in the use of crack cocaine in the drug using population. This trend was confirmed by the following pieces of information:

- General population prevalence data from the National Advisory Committee on Drugs and Alcohol
- An increase in cocaine related deaths in Ireland reported by the HRB in the National Drug Related Deaths Index
- An increase in presentations for treatment associated with cocaine use reported by the HRB in the National Drug Treatment Reporting system
- An increase in cocaine positive samples among people attending Addiction services both in Dublin and outside Dublin
- The EU Drug Market report from the EMCDDA showing Ireland to be one of the four highest users of cocaine and that the availability of cocaine was increasing with an increase in purity of samples seized



On this basis a decision was made to provide clear, credible information in relation to the harms associated with cocaine and to provide harm reduction advice to people who choose to use this substance in order to reduce the associated physical and mental health problems.

A number of meetings were held from January this year between the HSE Social Inclusion office, Drugs.ie and the Ana Liffey Drug Project to look at the available evidence in relation to this substance. Meetings involving HSE Communications took place and a submission was made to the HSE Communication Planning Group in May outlining the rationale and objectives of the project. The project was approved by the HSE and the launch planned for July 2018 to coincide with the Festival season where recreational drug use is known to be a problem.

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

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eamon Keenan', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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Dr. Eamon Keenan  
National Clinical Lead: HSE Addiction Services