



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

Deputy Aengus Ó Snodaigh, T.D.
Dáil Eireann
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

21st July 2010

PQ No: 29138/10

To ask the Minister for Health and Children further to Parliamentary Question No. 44 of 1 April 2010, the additional moneys that will be made available for the national awareness campaign regarding the dangers of legal highs; if this campaign will involve television, radio and billboards; and her views on if the delay in formulating and launching such a campaign has been unacceptably long.

Dear Deputy Ó Snodaigh,

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 and Children for response. I have examined the matter and the following outlines the position.

The HSE has responsibility for all health promotion campaigns such as alcohol, drugs, obesity etc and uses a Health Social Marketing approach in the development and execution of campaigns. With regard to the National Drug Awareness Campaigns we work closely with the Department of Equality, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs who have the lead coordinating role on the National Drugs Strategy (Interim) 2009-2016. The previous National Drug Awareness Campaign focused on creating awareness of the facts/dispel the myths around cocaine use with the tag line "The Party's Over".

On the 7th July, the HSE launched its present National Public Drug Awareness Campaign titled "Legal or Illegal Highs – They're anything but Safe". The campaign is being disseminated and promoted through the following streams;-

- Display areas in pubs/clubs washrooms and festivals laminates (Oxygen & Electric Picnic)
- Radio (the target market are heavy listeners) the Radio plan includes a focus on youth stations as well as regional stations to achieve national and regional coverage
- Cinema (use of the campaign in cinemas nationally will broaden the reach of the campaign)
- Online (Using a combination of search and Display, the campaign messages will be delivered to the target audience and drive to the site www.drugs.ie promoted) www.drugs.ie is funded by the HSE

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- Information sources (Parent information leaflet) Z card information for target audience

The campaign focus and target audience was informed by relevant national and international policy and research.

- National Drugs Strategy (Interim) 2009-2016
- European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) Annual Report 2009
- New Drugs: Difficulties in “hitting a moving target” EMCDDA No 9/2009
- Latest Drug Trends in Europe – HRB compares Irish situation with European findings

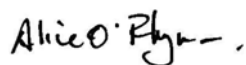
In addition, research with the target audience (those in the age group 15-40 who purchase recreational drugs available through headshops and/or the internet) was carried out, consultation took place with relevant stakeholders and in conjunction with an advertising and media agency a comprehensive fully integrated communications campaign was developed.

The HSE had prepared and planned to mount the campaign somewhat earlier in the year but given the impending changes to the law with respect to psychoactive substances postponed the date until the legislation was approved. It was important to ensure that the central message and information to support the campaign was factual, accurate and “landed” with the target audience.

The budget for this campaign was €450,000

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

Yours sincerely,



Alice O'Flynn
Assistant National Director, Social Inclusion