

AWARDS FOR  
EXCELLENCE IN  
**PUBLIC  
RELATIONS  
2020**



# Best Public Affairs Campaign



(L to R) Daragh Connolly, IPU President, Eoghan Hanly, IPU Vice President, Darragh O'Loughlin, IPU Secretary General, and Derek Reilly, IPU Contracts Manager) outside Leinster House after their meeting with the Minister for Health Simon Harris TD, who announced his decision to not proceed with cuts to pharmacy service fees and instead to commence early talks on a new pharmacy contract. Photo by Fennell Photography.

## Campaign

#SupportPharmacy

## Description of Campaign

#SupportPharmacy was a public affairs campaign that activated the grassroots membership of the IPU to prevent the Government from implementing cuts on the pharmacy sector. The outcome was the reversal of the cuts, a Ministerial commitment to commence contract negotiations, and support for the expansion of pharmacy services.



## Public Relations Consultant

MKC Communications



## Client

Irish Pharmacy Union

## Background to the Campaign

The Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU) is the representative and professional body for over 2,300 community pharmacists in Ireland. The IPU's role is to advocate, advance, and protect the role of the pharmacist, who is at the centre of primary healthcare.

In October 2019, the Department of Health informed the IPU that it planned to impose cuts, which would significantly reduce the level of structural fees paid to pharmacists for providing services on behalf of the State.

The IPU, with the support of MKC Communications, responded with the #SupportPharmacy campaign. The overarching goal of the campaign was to prevent the cuts from proceeding. This was achieved by politicising the regressive nature of these cuts in the context of their impact on rural, isolated, and disadvantaged communities.

The campaign strategy featured a grassroots campaign involving IPU members across the country, who were empowered with incisive messaging and effective campaign collateral to help bring the issue to the attention of

their local Oireachtas representatives. To ensure that the member's message was being heard, the IPU also actively campaigned on their behalf through direct engagement with senior national politicians and with members of the Oireachtas Health Committee.

After weeks of campaigning on the issue, the Minister for Health, Minister Harris TD, announced his decision to forgo the cuts. In addition to this successful outcome, the campaign also raised awareness of the need to expand pharmacy services and commence overdue talks on a new pharmacy contract. In December 2019, Minister Harris committed that his Department would commence new contract negotiations in 2020, which it is expected will lead to the expansion of pharmacy services and a commitment to talks on a new pharmacy contract. These same commitments were carried forward in the manifestos of each political party in #GE2020 and in the 2020 Programme for Government.

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