

AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN **PUBLIC RELATIONS 2020**



Best Corporate Communication

Best Campaign in Support of Organisational Values



An Post launches new Address Point Service – A personal address and mail collection service for people who are homeless or living in temporary accommodation. Pic shows Debbie Byrne, Managing Director of An Post Retail with Tara McNeill, mother, grandmother, Ireland footballer and former services user who helped launch new Address Point Service at the GPO in Dublin. Photo by Maxwell Photography.

Campaign

Address Point from An Post

Description of Campaign

Created by An Post, and a global first, Address Point is a free service that provides an address to those without a home. It enables those without a fixed home address to receive regular post and access essential services by creating a fixed proxy address at local post offices.



Public Relations Consultant

The Reputations Agency



Client

An Post

Background to the Campaign

In 2017, An Post began total business Transformation, from the old world of letters and cash to the new world of ecommerce logistics and Financial Services.

An Post has always had a very strong sense of the common good and it's restated brand purpose is clear: An Post exists to improve the quality of life for people in Ireland, now and for generations to come, leaving no one behind.

Alongside a refreshed brand identity and updated product launch, An Post wanted to activate its purpose and change the perception of customers, particularly younger customers, showing its relevance and improving the quality of life for Irish people.

In March 2019, the number of citizens in emergency accommodation reached over 10,000 people. The national crisis was dominating Ireland's media, and conversations amongst friends. This was an opportunity for An Post to step forward publicly and act, creating a solution as well as a conversation.

The irony of homelessness is that to get help, you need an address. Without an address, and reliable access to written correspondence, it is often difficult to access essential services like healthcare, education, and employment. Launched in April 2019, the Address Point service helps people arrange medical appointments, contact children's schools, apply for jobs, and keep in touch with family and friends.

An Post created Address Point – a free nationwide service that provides a fixed address to those without a fixed home, enables them to receive regular post and access essential services by creating a fixed proxy address at local post offices, and allowing them to collect their post at a time and place convenient to them.

The Reputations Agency was asked to support the initiative by helping to devise and implement a communications strategy that would bring the homeless community on-board. The campaign involved a multi-channel strategy led by pre-engagement with key influencers and stakeholders, an internal launch, a national launch with seven of Ireland's largest homeless services championing the new service; service users' testimonials; and a national and regional media campaign.

Statement of Objectives

Our objectives when it came to launching Address Point were to Inform, Influence and Inspire:

- The Reputations Agency was tasked with launching and raising awareness of – 'Address Point' – a world's first – whilst **informing** all the relevant homelessness services and charities. We wanted to deliver a reach of 1 million across national and regional broadcast print, and online media.
- We needed to **influence** and gain credible **endorsement** from the various homelessness services for the new social service from An Post. We wanted to garner support from three of the seven main homelessness charities to champion the Address Point service.
- The programme needed to **inspire** usage through the service outreach teams. We wanted to deliver 1,000 Address Point users – one tenth of the homeless community.

Programme Planning and Strategy

About Address Point – Address Point is a free personal postal address and letter collection service for people who are homeless, which helps people arrange medical appointments, contact children's schools, apply for jobs, and keep in touch with their family and friends. It is simple to operate and widely accessible via a webpage where an instant private address is generated for use on all correspondence. No personal data is collected by An Post. Homeless services direct clients to the service. Letters can be collected by the customer on production of photo ID at their post office of choice.

About the campaign – Working together, An Post and the Reputations Agency developed a Multi-phased, Multi-channel strategy which included:

1. **Engaging homeless charities and facilities** – Face-to-face partner briefings were scheduled and partner services briefing packs developed to communicate the benefits, mechanics, and simplicity of the new An Post service.
2. **Internal communication** – An Internal communications and training programme was rolled out highlighting to An Post employees how Address Point could open an opportunity for real change and progression to a more stable and permanent life.
3. **Teaser** – Address Point was mentioned at the An Post brand refresh media launch by CEO, David McRedmond.
4. **Post Office Communication** – Key to the campaign was to communicate that An Post has created an infrastructure for the homeless community across the Post Office network.
5. **Address Point Stand-alone media launch** – The media relations programme included an embargoed pre-shoot set-up with RTÉ's social affairs correspondent; a morning event for media with the seven homeless charities championing the new service; a photocall with homeless service users; high profile TV & radio media interviews (over a number of days) to communicate the Address Point Service leveraging the power of service users' testimonials to highlight the importance and the development of Video content.
6. **Regional media outreach** – Twenty-six customised media releases were developed to announce the service availability across the Post Office network.

7. **Announcement 6 months post launch** – Announcement in October 2019 detailing that 35% of the homeless community had signed-up for the Address Point service from An Post since launch in April 2019.
8. **End of 2019 media features** highlighting the uptake for Address Point nationally, with testimonials from the homeless charities.

The Agency worked with An Post to host a launch event for news and social affairs media and homeless service providers at the GPO on April 11th, 2019. Head of Retail at An Post, Debbie Byrne, explained the new service – a World's First – available in every county in Ireland in 191 post offices in Ireland.

Homeless Charity CEO's and Client Users from Services were briefed to talk about the emotional impact of not having an address, explaining the impact of not being able to get correspondence from one's children; from education providers and from other services that would assist in exiting the homelessness cycle.

Derek McGuire, a former rough sleeper spoke about how Address Point would have helped him recover his identity. Both Derek and Tara McNeill, a former rough sleeper and Dublin Simon service user, were key to the Address Point campaign and highlighted the difference the 'Address Point' service would make to families, individuals, and the country.

The services spoke about how An Post's Address Point service was a very practical response to a very human issue.

- **Andy Heffernan, National Secretary of St Vincent de Paul** said that An Post had come up with a practical response and it would be a win-win situation if it helped remove some of the stigma surrounding homelessness.
- **Sam McGuinness, CEO, Dublin Simon Community** pointed out that an address can make them feel normal and gives homeless clients a sense of identity that they haven't had in a long time.
- **Mike Allen, Head of Advocacy, Focus Ireland** was convinced that Address Point would make a big difference in terms of the ability to survive whilst homeless and the ability to get out of homelessness, giving them an anchor.
- **Tom Sheppard, Merchant's Quay Ireland** said they were delighted that An Post was willing to meet the needs of a marginalised community in such a practical way.
- **Anthony Flynn, Inner City Helping Homeless** said An Post's new service allowed dignity and discretion for the victims of the current homelessness emergency.

The launch day focus was on national broadcast news programmes, print and online and interviews featuring Debbie Byrne, Head of Retail at An Post speaking on Address Point from An Post ran from RTÉ's Morning Ireland to RTÉ 6-1 News with features on Virgin media and across national broadcast and online news.

In the days following the launch the focus was on regional radio and regional print/online media, and magazine feature style interviews.

Messaging included:

- An Post has developed 'Address Point' to provide a fixed address and a secure mail collection point to those without a permanent address.
- Address Point would enable people to stay in touch and to receive regular post relating to medical appointments, schools, job applications, family matters etc.

Launch day online headlines read – **'You don't exist without an address'**.

Next day coverage was across all nationals **and international media highlighting** the World's First initiative from An Post.

- 'Homeless postal service gets stamp of approval' – *The Herald*
- 'You don't exist without an address' – *The Irish Times*
- 'Postal service set up for homeless' – *Irish Independent*
- 'Homeless groups hail new An Post service' – *The Irish Examiner*
- 'Those in need to get Post Box help' – *The Irish Star*
- 'For all intents and purposes, I didn't exist' former rough sleeper says An Post fixed address service will be a huge help – *journal.ie*
- 'An Post launches new address service for homeless' – RTÉ

- 'An Post launches Europe's first fixed address service for homeless' – Newstalk
- 'An Post launches free postal address service for homeless' – BBC News
- 'An Post to offer homeless people address at post offices to avail of services' – msn

Measurement

With the launch of Address Point, An Post worked to improve the communities in which they operate. An Post created an infrastructure that could help break the cycle of homelessness through the new Address Point service. An Post staff and postmasters made Address Point available across the country and the service providers worked with An Post to inform their service users about Address Point every day.

- The Reputations Agency was tasked with launching and raising awareness of – 'Address Point' – a world's first – whilst informing all the relevant homeless services and charities. We wanted to deliver a reach of 1 million across national and regional broadcast print, and online media. We delivered a reach of 36 million – 35 million above target.
- We needed to gain credible endorsement from the various homelessness services for the new social initiative from An Post. We wanted to garner support from three of the seven main homelessness charities to champion the Address Point service. We gained support from all seven homeless services. 133% above target.
- The programme needed to Inspire usage through the service outreach teams. We wanted to deliver 1,000 Address Point users – one tenth of the homelessness community. Over 35% of the homeless community signed up after six month – 250% above target.
- An Post is working with several international postal companies interested in replicating Address Point.
- Great pride in the service among An Post staff, staff families, Postmasters & suppliers – and the postal industry generally.
- Address Point has won five international awards since the launch of the service in April 2019 – A Cannes Lion Award in the Sustainable Development Goals Category, a Clio Award, two Eurobest awards and a European Excellence award in CSR.

An Post worked with The Reputations Agency and Folk Wunderman Thompson to build a multi-phased, multi-platform CSR communications strategy around the launch of Address Point, a world's first, which reached over 34 million people. Integral to this was building trusted relationships with the homeless charities and service providers, who then informed their clients about the service.

KANTAR

PARAGON



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