

AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN **PUBLIC RELATIONS** **2021**



Best Issues-Led Campaign



Dublin Rape Crisis Centre CEO Noeline Blackwell with some of Ireland's top young TikTokers at the launch of #100consent in Dublin in March 2020, Photo by Andres Poveda.

Campaign

#100consent: Be 100 percent or it's not consent

Description of Campaign

With its mission to prevent sexual violence, Dublin Rape Crisis Centre created an opportunity for young people to learn about sexual consent. This multi-platform campaign included ground-breaking use of TikTok and encouraged young people to understand and engage on consent using their own language and creativity.



Public Relations Consultants

Pluto / Buck & Hound PR



Client

Dublin Rape Crisis Centre

Background to the Campaign

Sexual violence is a serious public health and human rights issue with short and long-term harmful consequences. Dublin Rape Crisis Centre has been at the forefront of the Irish response to sexual violence for more than 40 years. As part of its prevention mission, DRCC promotes understanding of sexual consent as a way to change attitudes, avert violence and foster positive behaviour.

Sexual violence can be turned on its head to sexual consent if all parties in the sexual encounter are fully, voluntarily and clearly communicating and understanding what is consent. A key target group for consent education for DRCC is young people aged 17-24 embarking on sexual relationships and encounters. This group must inform themselves about how sex and relationships work, often via peers or pornography. Even where young adults understand the need for consent, they may lack language or confidence to convey it clearly. They need guidance on consent and healthy relationships from a reliable but also engaging and non-patronising source.

DRCC conducts training for those working with young people and directly engages with schools. It runs regular

campaigns to raise awareness of and prevent sexual violence in society, aimed at broad swathes of the public. The organisation has limited funding & personnel but as a nationally recognised and experienced organisation, it is highly effective despite its constraints, with a strong media presence and contributing to legal and public policy channels.

The organisation wanted to engage with the 17-24 age group, encouraging a conversation around consent and how to communicate their feelings and preferences clearly. It equally wanted to find the best and most cost-effective way to reach a large audience that would also grab attention, pique interest, bring awareness and spark that consent conversation. The messaging needed to be communicated through reliable channels with which young people were using language they were familiar with and coming from people they trusted and listened to.

Statement of Objectives

As an overall goal, DRCC wanted to encourage a lasting conversation around consent and communication among young adults. Key objectives were to:

1. Address the consequences of non-consensual encounters in a thought-provoking way, rather than using judgmental scare tactics.
2. Reach a high volume of young adults using clear, relatable language and messaging.
3. Discover & utilise new channels/methods of awareness-raising for this target group.
4. Create a basis for further awareness-raising and engagement with this age group that could be developed over a longer term.
5. In particular, engage with young men who may sometimes be put off by messaging that seems to focus on them as potential predators and a 'problem'.
6. Steer the target group towards other DRCC information channels including its website and for those affected by sexual violence, the National Helpline.

Programme Planning and Strategy

Audience profiling and strategic targeting

The audience for this campaign belong to Generation Z (born after 1996) GenZ are the first social generation to have grown up with access to the internet and digital technology from a young age. These digital natives have an extensive online life; Gen Z sees online identity as true self-expression. They do not like to be told what to do or think – they want to be part of the conversation. We know that they listen to and trust their peers. Gen Z also differentiates itself by taking social issues very seriously, which is likely due to having such a diverse and wide-ranging connection to other people through the Internet. Our approach for this campaign was to meet Gen Z'ers on their level, communicate in their language and through their peers.

Planning and concept development

To lay the groundwork for this highly innovative campaign, Pluto and DRCC engaged in a series of meetings and lively workshop-style chemistry sessions to develop their joint approach. These sessions were challenging and constructive and the different perspectives and experiences in the relationship fed an appetite for transparency and debate.

Having benefited from the insights and expertise of DRCC, it became clear to Pluto that even though it is often considered a grey area, when it comes to making decisions around consent, if the individual is not sure whether they themselves want to proceed, or is unsure if the other party in the encounter is willing to proceed, then consent is not present. On the back of this very clear insight, Pluto devised and created the #100Consent campaign concept: the message that if someone is even 1% unsure when it comes to sexual consent, the consequences could be devastating. A play on '100 percent', the campaign focused on clarity and communication. It was a new departure for DRCC in its focus, content and execution.

Campaign Collateral and Roll out

The campaign had two main avenues:

- a) Creating a suite of digital assets designed to be thought-provoking and highly shareable.

- b) Engaging with Irish Tiktok Creators to educate them through the messaging of the 100Consent campaign, with the ambition to have the topic discussed on TikTok. Tiktok is a relatively new social channel that has in a short period won a sizeable following particularly among our target age group and which offers users the opportunity to create and consume very original and creative content.

The digital assets, to be shared on social media organically and boosted through paid ads, illustrated everyday decisions that young people face such as “Would you add your Mam to your group chat?” or “Would you wear your new kicks to a festival?” or “Would you accept a friend request from your boss?”. These decisions emphasised that if you’re not 100% sure on any decision, there can be disastrous consequences.

With 64% of 100k+ daily Irish users on TikTok aged 14 to 24, TikTok was the perfect medium to bring the message of consent to the target group in their own language. While TikTok is perceived as a channel filled with mainly humorous or musical content and no Irish organisation had yet sought to use it to amplify ‘real’ issues, Pluto and DRCC saw its potential for conveying the consent message. In addition, TikTok’s appeal to a Gen Z audience is that it allows young people to access and absorb an idea and then use their own creativity and voice to express it.

However, making a noticeable impression among the millions of daily posts was a sizeable challenge, as was the fact that its users value content that is highly authentic and genuine, from sources they identify with and respect. Ideally this is young people like themselves who speak their language, share their humour and understand the issues they face.

To overcome DRCC’s lack of profile on TikTok and to ensure the message of consent was seeded correctly and responsibly through peer-to-peer communication, Pluto sourced and invited 22 of Ireland’s leading Tiktok creators (with a combined following of 2.8 million users) to attend and participate in a voluntary day of workshops and brainstorming sessions. The Tiktok creators were joined by Pluto creatives and DRCC staff including its CEO, all facilitated through an external mediator. Topics of the workshops included “The stages of consent”, “The scale of agreement” and “The power of social influence”.

Through the #100consent concept, participants were invited to speak openly about consent and discuss how this message could be best communicated to the Tiktok audience. This style of working together celebrated diversity and the fact that different groups have different pathways to understanding. The TikTokers really engaged with the concepts and were inspired to generate their own individual take via TikToks, which had a huge uptake on the channel.

Media Engagement and Outreach

100consent was the first time Ireland’s leading Tiktok creators were brought together from all across Ireland, let alone to engage with a youth-led social campaign. This attracted a lot of attention from Irish media who were quick to show their support.

PR agency Buck & Hound was engaged to secure media interest for the campaign focusing on the innovative nature of working with TikTokers which very much enhanced the impact of the campaign. Buck & Hound won extensive media coverage for the day and beyond, and brought in photographer Andres Poveda whose creative images garnered great attention. Buck & Hound also worked to secure local media coverage with individual TikTokers in their home counties, increasing nationwide impact. Footage from the day was shared in ads across social media channels, which also ran paid posts with 100consent digital assets.

The campaign was designed to run over the fortnight from its launch day of 6 March 2020, but its impact on Tiktok meant users were still generating content and engagement well after this period.

Measurement

100consent successfully opened up the conversation on consent among the target audience and beyond. The campaign has left a legacy of over 50 pieces of online content conveying the message of consent.

- **TikTok:** Within a week of the launch, creators had issued 32 Tiktok videos under #100consent, which amassed 2.2 million views and 135,000 likes, boasting an impressive 11.5% engagement rate.

- **PR:** As 100consent was the first time Ireland's leading Tiktok creators were brought together as well as the first youth-led social campaign on the platform in Ireland, it attracted considerable Irish media attention. Buck & Hound PR agency was engaged to garner media coverage, securing more than 100 pieces of media coverage across national and regional online, print and broadcast titles with a reach in excess of 32 million. Buck and Hound also collated the media coverage post-event for future reporting.
- **Other social:** The assets and TikTok content were highly shareable across social media, including by DRCCs peer organisations. #100Consent achieved 288 mentions on other social channels, with a reach of 5.2 million. There were 388 social mentions of @dublinrapecrisis itself during the campaign's first days, with a reach of 4.4 million over the course of the campaign.
- **Website:** DRCCs website experienced a surge in traffic over the campaign – visitors rose 66% over the previous month, and sessions grew by an impressive 55%. The site saw a marked shift in demographics, with the male share of users rising from its usual quarter in February to a third of total users in March 2020. The site also saw a large rise in users in the 18-24 age group, from 13% to 23% in the same time period.
- **Support:** Anecdotally the National Helpline reported a rise in younger callers, which indicates the campaign may have helped raise awareness among that group.

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