



AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN **PUBLIC RELATIONS 2022**

Sponsored by



In-House PR Team of the Year

6 or More Employees



Amanda Kenny,
Senior Press Officer,
HSE and, Owen
Cullen, MPRII,
Chairperson, PRCA
and Mary Gleeson,
MPRII, Acting Head
of Press, HSE.



Organisation

Health Service Executive (HSE)

Citation

The judges said that the winning agency demonstrated:

“This very “hard-working team operates in a highly challenging and complex stakeholder environment. It manages day-to-day and emerging issues, alongside proactive public awareness campaigns. Across a national structure, it has comprehensive plans to ensure it delivers timely communications that are authoritative and trustworthy”.

Brief Description of the Organisation and its Objectives in the Relevant Period

The National Press and Media Team primarily focuses on delivering news events happening daily across the vast range of the health services under its remit. Through media engagement and proactive campaigns, we highlight health and social services available to the public, publicise important public health messages, and share inspiring work carried out by staff across the country every day. All of the organisational objectives were supported through the delivery of a dynamic, agile press office function operating during the global pandemic and a cyber-attack whilst continuing to promote positive HSE services, stories and people. We worked closely with Community Healthcare Organisations and Hospital Group colleagues, the Department of Health, Government Information Service and many other stakeholders.

Brief Overview of the Team's Objectives and Strategy

Our strategic plan was to position www.hse.ie as the most reliable source of accurate, factual and informed information on Covid-19 and vaccination programme for the general public and other stakeholders whilst continuing with non-Covid proactive health campaigning. We also kept the public informed during the cyber-attack despite it leaving the press office with no work devices, access to ICT network or email.

Analysis of Team Performance/Delivery Against Those Objectives

- Consistently throughout the pandemic, market research (Public Opinion Tracking Research by Amárach Research on behalf of the Department of Health) showed:
 - > Over 50% of people say they got information from the HSE website.
 - > RTÉ was the number 1 source of media information.
 - > Social media ranked under 20% showing media relations was the most effective route to public.
- Demonstrated that media relations activity helped drive behaviour change and traffic to hse.ie:
 - > 109 million page views of Covid related content to the HSE website, 74% of this was organic (between 01/03/2021 and 28/02/2022).
 - > People reported that the sources of health information they trust include their GP, their Pharmacist, nurses and other health professionals, the Department of Health, the HSE and health experts.
 - > 97% of the eligible population fully vaccinated against Covid 19 and 79% received booster (as of 14/02/2022)
 - > During week of 21/02/2022 89% of people with symptoms and 16% without symptoms took an antigen test, and of those who took an antigen test: 27% self-isolated (18% of those who were negative, 93% of those positive).
- Changed work practices to extend the press office to provide a more flexible service to cater for a significant increase in media queries and provide 'always on' access. This included early and late shift patterns, enhanced out of hours and weekend service, augmenting in-house team with 4 more members of staff.
- Tendered for and utilised a media query system.
- Worked with RTÉ to broadcast HSE press briefings and pool footage to other broadcasters. Provided spokespersons, hosted press briefings weekly, provided agency photos of same to media persons 7 days a week across radio and TV, arranged media visits to vaccination and testing centres.
- Stakeholders: Daily Government Information Service meeting participation, twice weekly meetings with Community Healthcare Organisations and distribution of National Press Office press releases and supporting materials/photos across the HSE communications network for sharing with local media and public representatives.

Summary of Outstanding Achievements in the Relevant Period

Numbers at a glance (between 1 March 2021 and 28 February 2022):

- **39** press briefings arranged.
- **605** national broadcast media interviews arranged (53 of these in the 3-week period following cyber-attack).
- **224% increase in media queries in March 2021 and 252% in April 2021** when compared to 2019 (pre pandemic/'normal year').

- **206% and 550% increase in media interviews** arranged for the same months respectively when compared to 2019.
- **4,726** media queries (excluding data unavailable for an 8-week period during cyber-attack).
- **150+ press releases issued** (proactive, reactive, health campaigns, HSE initiatives/services and pandemic).
- Recruited 4 new press officers and commenced weekend press office service.

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