



SPARK
FOUNDRY

THE TAMIs

BEST USE OF TV IN A CRISIS
(Special Award for 2020)

SPARK
FOUNDRY



Seirbhís Sláinte
Níos Fearr
á Forbairt

Building a
Better Health
Service

AWARD ENTRY

ENTRY DETAILS



Client: HSE
Campaign name: COVID-19
Entrant Company: Spark Foundry
Address: 1 WML, Dublin 2
Lead Contact: Megan Keenan

Email: Megan.Keenan@sparkfoundry.ie
Phone: 083 480 4432



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AWARD ENTRY

SECTION 1: Background & Objectives

On the 9th of March 2020, we received a brief from the HSE for an initial two-week campaign informing people about COVID-19. Little did we know that this campaign would become the longest running and largest scale we or HSE had ever worked on. At a time when people began to work remotely where possible, it was essential that HSE got their message out to the public as soon as possible. This meant discarding all of our standard processes, timelines and deadlines and working together with colleagues, suppliers and the client to get this done. As the crisis unfolded, information changed rapidly and we owed it to our client to be measured, to offer expertise, accuracy and to work at speed.

At times we had not hours but minutes to turnaround plans and secure bookings in order to deliver crucial messaging to the people of Ireland. We had to respond with agility to the changing public health measures, decisions had to be made and actioned quickly. We needed to work as a fluid, task force team.

Our key objectives were:

1. achieve mass reach of the Irish public with the most up to date public health information and advice
2. educate people on the behaviours they needed to adopt to keep themselves and others safe
3. remind people to continue these behaviours, whatever the level of restrictions
4. encourage people to download the tracker app
5. help the public stay calm by keeping them updated and informed, we needed them to see and trust that the HSE were doing all they could to keep them safe

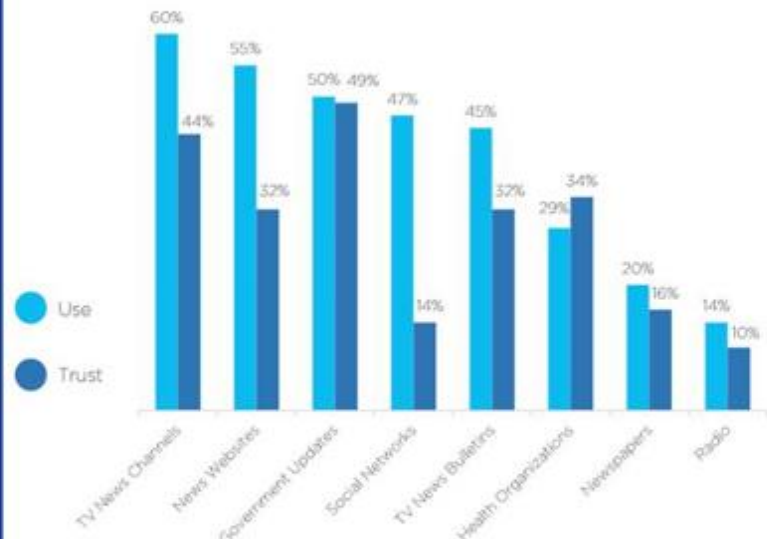
Throughout this period, misinformation was being shared on social media and WhatsApp groups. We needed to combat that with an ongoing and steady feed of timely and accurate information. It was important to connect with cohorts who had potential to drift from public health advice.

We needed a medium that would deliver mass reach, support the HSE as the trusted source of advice, allow agility in changing creative rapidly and running multiple messages at the same time. We needed a medium that could reach all age groups and demographics and place our messages in news and current affairs environments, where the public were watching in increasingly higher numbers to get information. TV was the only option to achieve all of these objectives and it was our lead medium throughout the campaign.

The below charts show TV News channels as the most trusted and used for information. It was clear TV would be our lead medium for impactful mass reaching communications during the crisis along with HSE.ie

THE TRUST GAP IS PARTICULARLY HIGH FOR SOCIAL NETWORKS

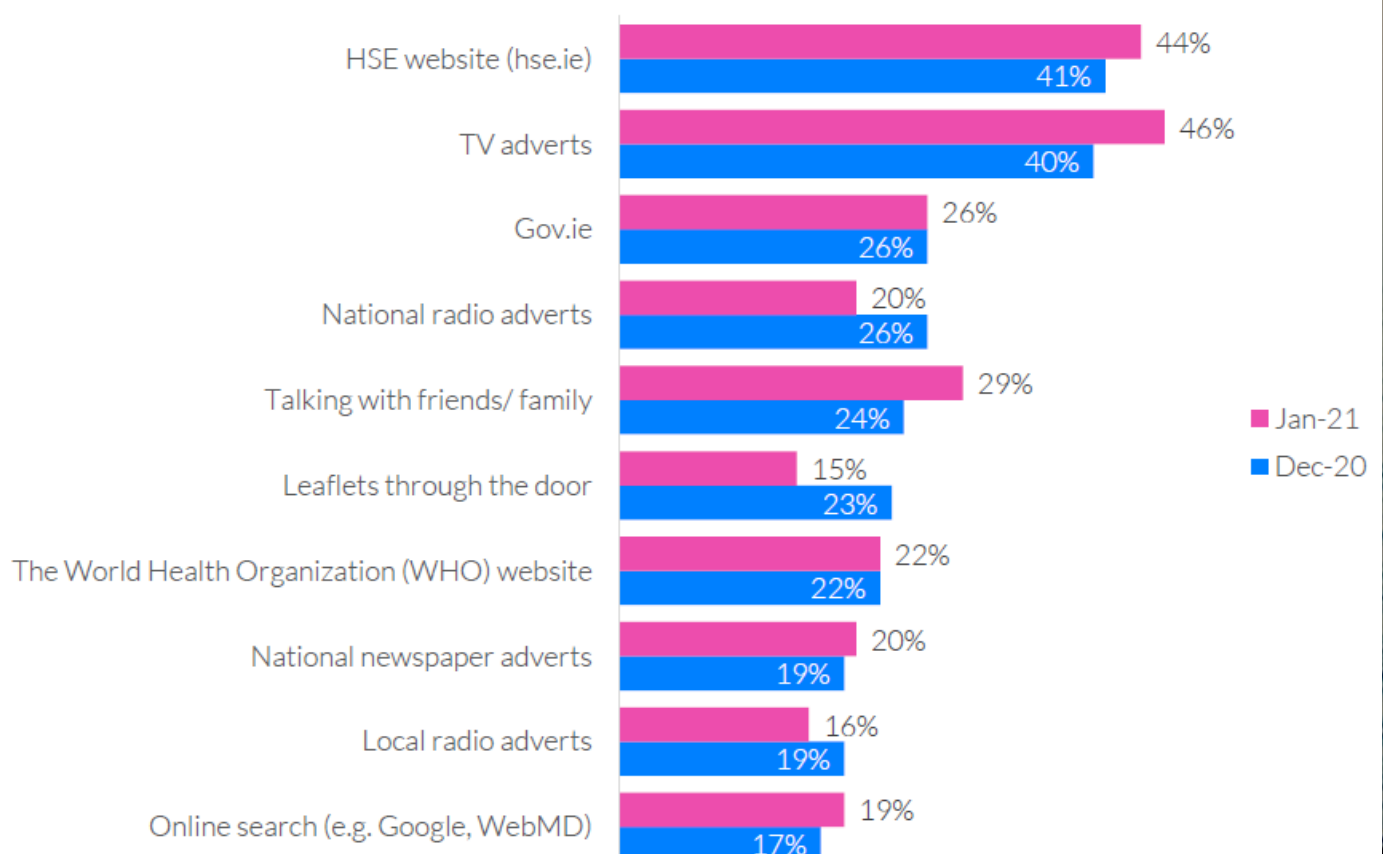
NEWS SOURCES WORLDWIDE: THE USE-TRUST-GAP



Based on the questions "Which sources are you using to keep up-to-date with news during the outbreak?" and "Which sources do you think are most trustworthy for news about coronavirus?" (multiple answers possible)

- Globally, TV news channels are the most-used source of COVID-19 information, and the second most-trusted source after government updates.
- Social networks have the biggest trust gap: while 47% use it, only 14% rank it as one of the most trustworthy sources. By contrast, less citizens turn to radio channels for news about the outbreak, but the trust gap is small.

Top Channels for COVID-19 Information





SECTION 2: The Strategy

Speed, agility and flexibility would be key to the TV strategy throughout, and all of the TV stations stepped up to help, going above and beyond what we could have expected.

Once the crisis hit in March, we knew we needed to get an ad on TV as soon as possible. Research consistently shows it is the most trusted source of information and ongoing studies from Core Research showed that TV and the HSE website were the most used channels for Covid-19 advice and information. But TV ads take time to make, especially during the most severe lockdown restrictions. While HSE's creative agencies worked on producing copy, we briefed RTE to create an interim first ad, as quickly as possible.

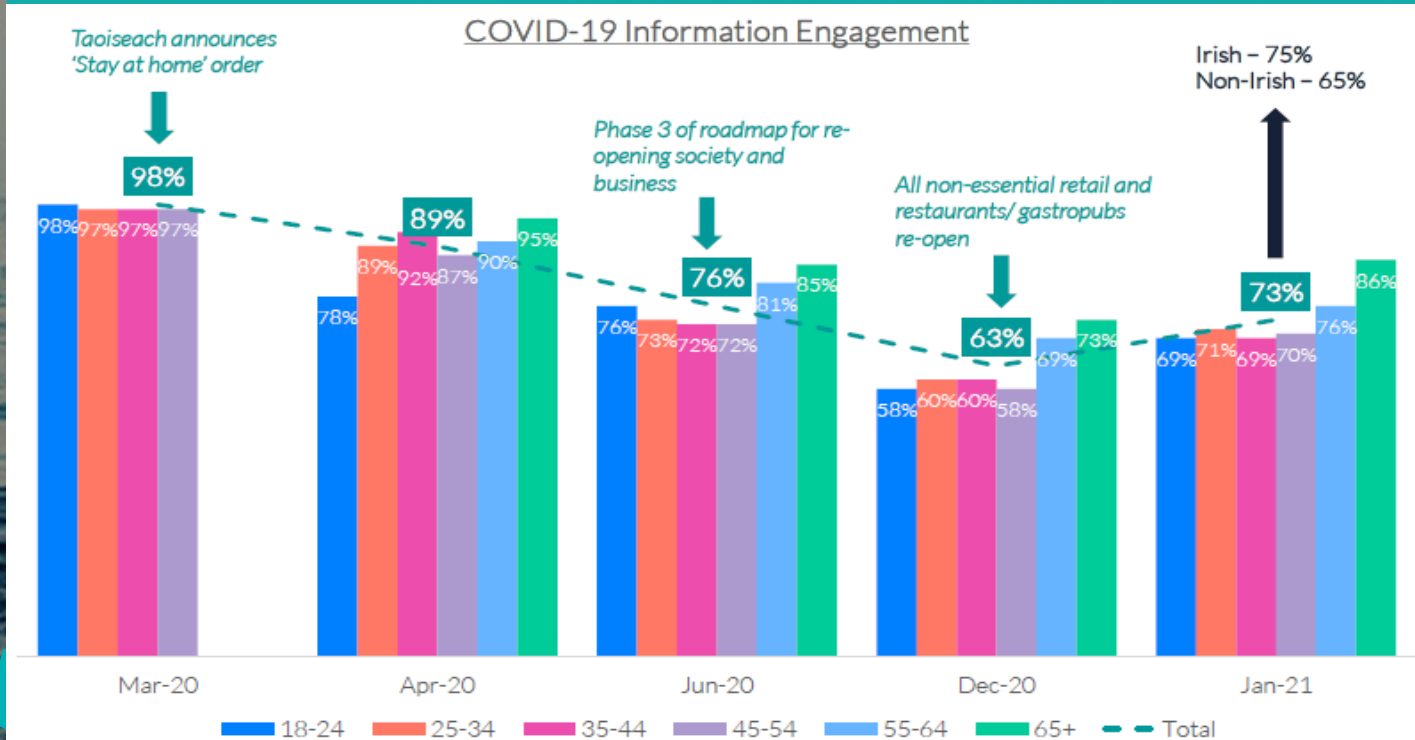
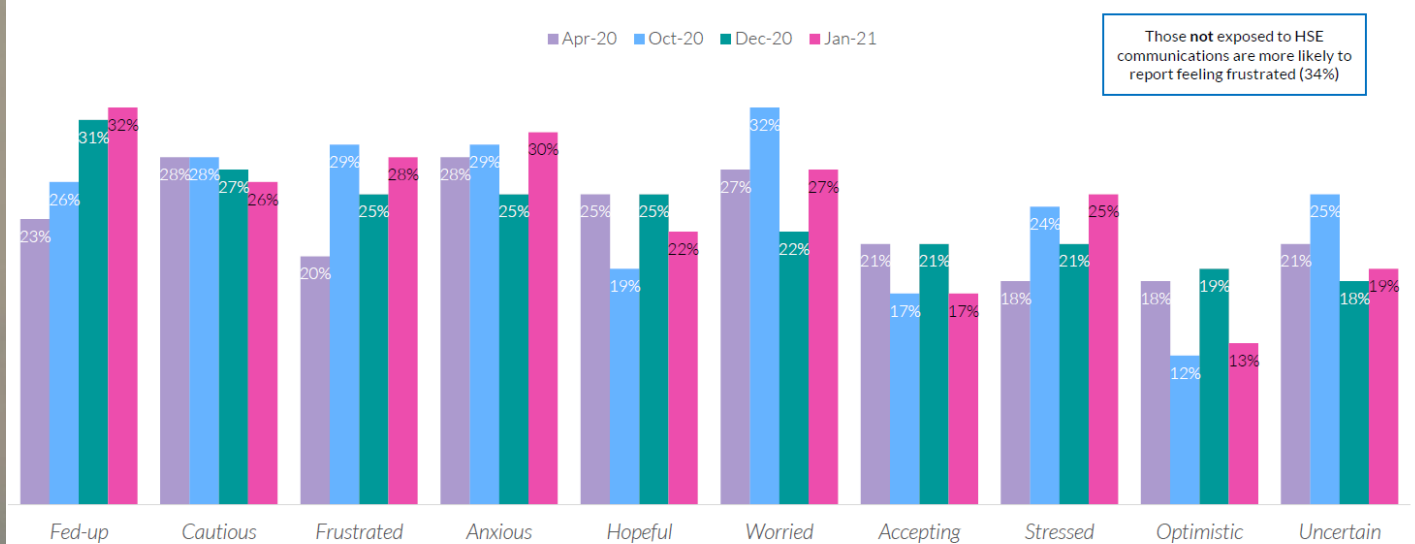
The copy was produced and on air over the course of a weekend, TG4 stepped in to translate the ad into Irish free of charge and worked with us to translate all subsequent TV ads. All TV stations offered over deliveries where they could and waived all penalties for late bookings or changes. They were on hand to take out of hours calls and help out whenever possible. RTE went on to develop a further three TV ads for us during the pandemic to fill in rapid changes needed when creative agencies were working on new copy.

Other than being agile, our strategy was simple, be always on and reach as many people as possible. We were on air with multiple messages during every single week of 2020. There was a sharp rise in TV viewing from Taoiseach Leo Varadkar's first announcement through to the numerous lockdowns and levels of restrictions in place to this day and this allowed us to deliver the very heavy weight bursts we needed. Every station was important here, we needed to have a presence in news and current affairs and around the updates from Government but equally important were ads in the Irish language and a presence on programming targeting younger audiences, or those not watching the news.

When the pandemic hit, we were overwhelmed by how much other advertisers wanted to help. Rather than cancel the airtime they had booked which was no longer suitable to run, many donated their spots to HSE. Spark Foundry worked closely with three competitor media agencies to share plans and work out the logistics of this to bring it all together, in line with our campaign objectives.

We continuously monitored our Core Research tracker to help us make informed decisions on our strategy, specifically around our TV activity. If sentiment or compliance was falling in one group, we could adapt our strategy to reach them. We targeted All Adults with upweights towards certain demographics depending on the creative messaging, for example Symptoms and Cocooning for Ads65+ and Social Distancing towards Ads25-44.

Our research also showed us that those not exposed to HSE communications were more likely to report feeling frustrated (35%). It was vital to keep our messaging always on, while avoiding wear out with continuously updated creative and targeting. The changing mood of the nation during times of high case numbers, hospitalisations and deaths was one of anxiety, worry and stress, with hopeful period in between as numbers came down. We adapted our TV communications specifically to communicate the relevant messaging at the relevant time. Over the course of the year we ran 14 different messages on TV.





SECTION 3: The Plan

We needed to build a broad reach plan with a high frequency of messaging promoting behaviours that would protect the public, like hand washing, cough/sneeze etiquette, keeping your distance and wearing a face covering. Although we all are hyper aware of these measures now, they were very new to the public in 2020. All of the behaviour change studies we had seen told us that very high frequency was needed to instil a new behaviour in the public. We had multiple new behaviours to instil. A 2019 study from the Journal of Advertising Research told us we needed a frequency of 10+ to effect change so we set monthly frequency targets of a minimum of 10 across the first months of the campaign.

As the year progressed, we needed to be in tune with public sentiment and what was gaining traction in news media, so we introduced the rotating messages as they were developed and made decisions on what copy to air at a weekly meeting with ourselves, the client and the creative agencies.

As well as the heavy paid for TV activity we were running ratings from generous donations of TV airtime from other advertisers. This meant that we had to perfectly balance this donated airtime with our paid activity to ensure the right weights were live at the right time, to the right audience. It was important that we were always on, but also that we hit specific weights each month.

We had our English language version ad airing across all stations, with the Irish language ads airing on TG4 at a high frequency. It was vital that we reach both English and Irish speaking communities living in Ireland and TV allowed us to do this.

We made the most of the powerful medium of TV by keeping a strong presence near trusted programming like the news and being present during key viewing moments like the Taoiseach's address to the nation and Prime Time. Working closely with our investment team and the stations was crucial to keeping the quickly evolving activity in line with our objectives. Our AV team developed a new way of working with the TV stations. They block booked 'holding campaigns' with the stations so that they could reserve HSE airtime in the given month. The stations then allowed us to amend the activity as much as we needed to, after the booking was in place. This allowed us to secure priority programming and airtime like the News, current affairs programmes, movies and entertainment, despite the late booking or timing change.

The 14 TV ads that ran throughout 2020 were primarily targeted at All Adults. We upweighted towards over 70s for specific messages with a focus on daytime TV and top programmes for the age group. For other messages we needed to target younger age groups who were out and about socialising and we skewed our buying audience and programme strategy accordingly.

Mass reach was always important, and we wanted to be present in shared viewing programmes, to open up the conversation in households. We were present in **every one** of the top 20 programmes in 2020.



#HOLDFIRM

Stay safe. Protect each other.



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



this is us.

SECTION 4: The Results



Our campaign, with TV as the lead medium, overachieved against the objectives we had set out.

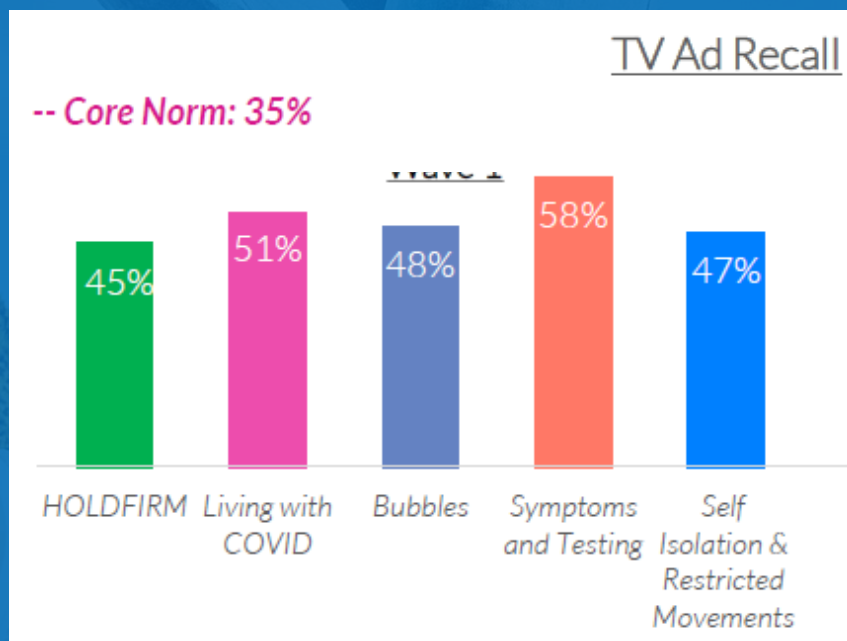
Our key objectives were:

1. Achieve mass reach of the Irish public with the most up to date health information and the restrictions place

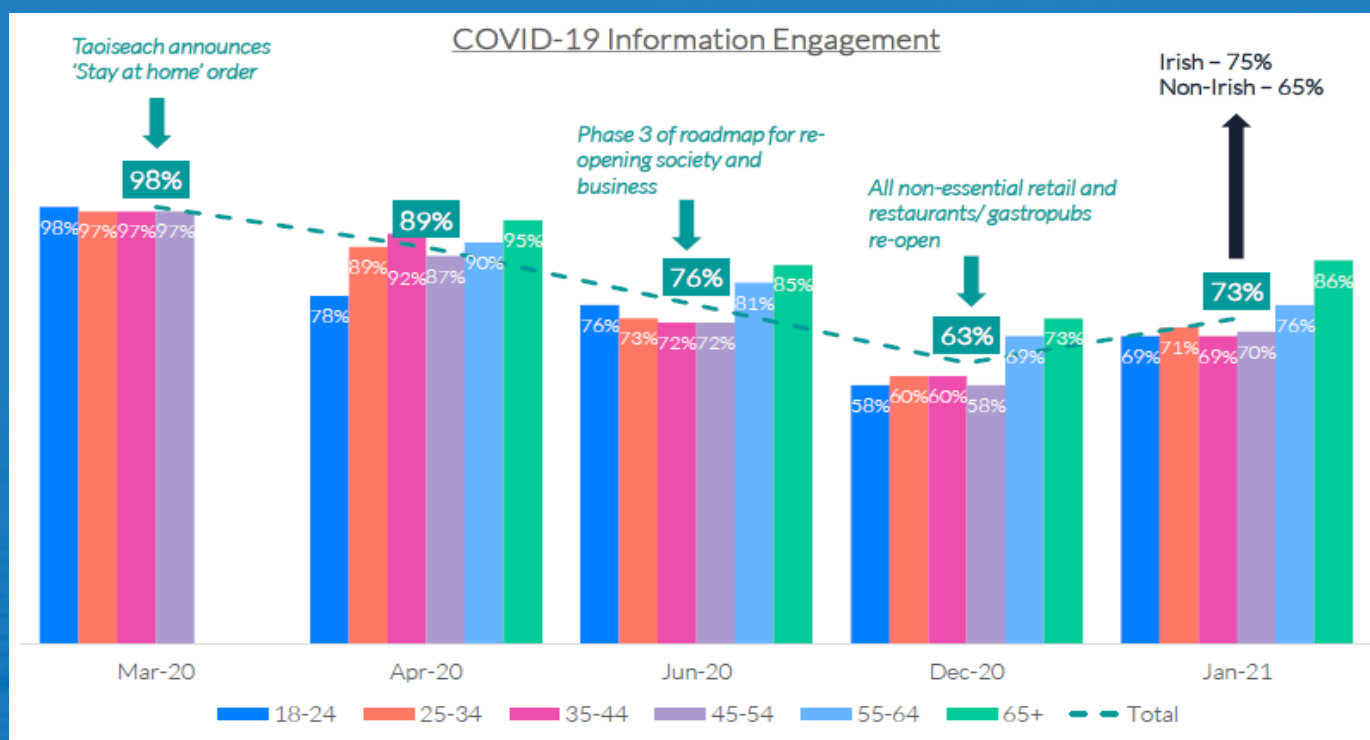
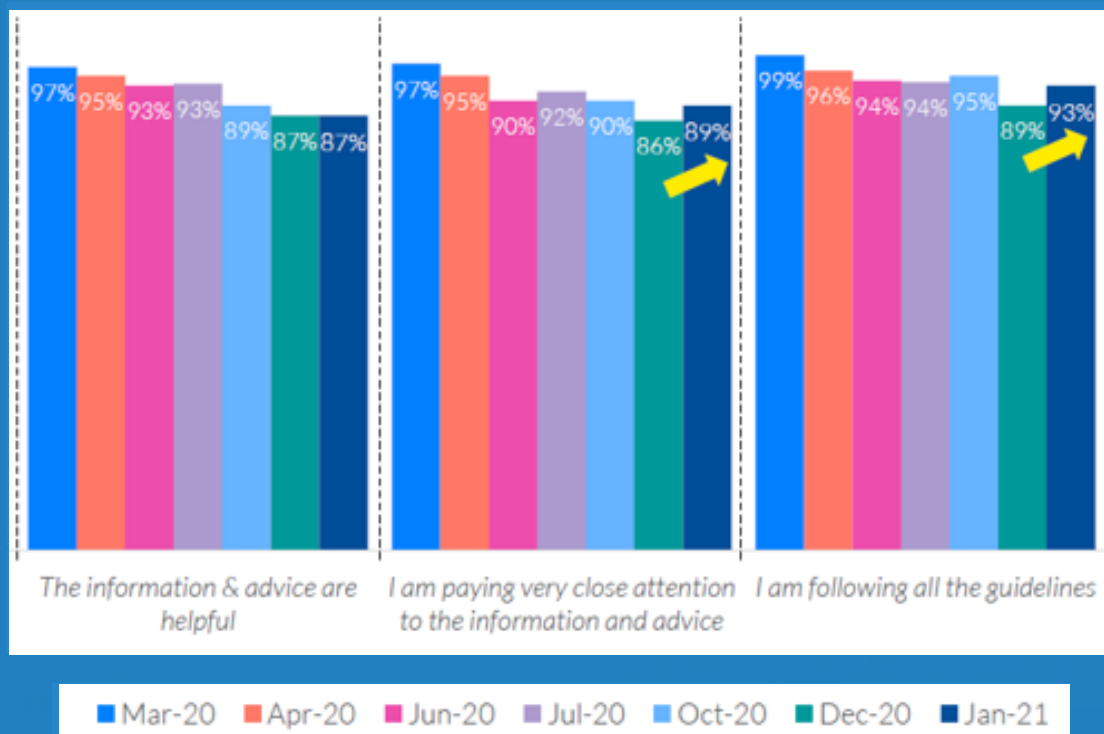
Our focus on top programmes helped us achieve mass reach. We had two spots in the first major announcement that took place on 27th March 2020, the Taoiseach's address regarding how bad the situation was, which had an enormously engaged, combined viewership of 2.4 million. In 2020, we delivered 12,800 TVRs across 60,500 TV spots and were present in all of the top 20 programmes. We achieved a total 3+ 88.9% with an average frequency of 161.5 over the course of the year, all messaging combined.

2. Educate people on the behaviours they needed to adopt to keep themselves and others safe

Throughout the pandemic the HSE scores on regular waves of quantitative studies were extremely impressive in all research on keeping the public informed and the tone and clarity of messaging. 93% of Irish Adults said they understood the messaging from HSE and 80%+ felt informed to protect themselves and their families.



3. Remind people to continue adopting these behaviours, whatever the level of lockdown



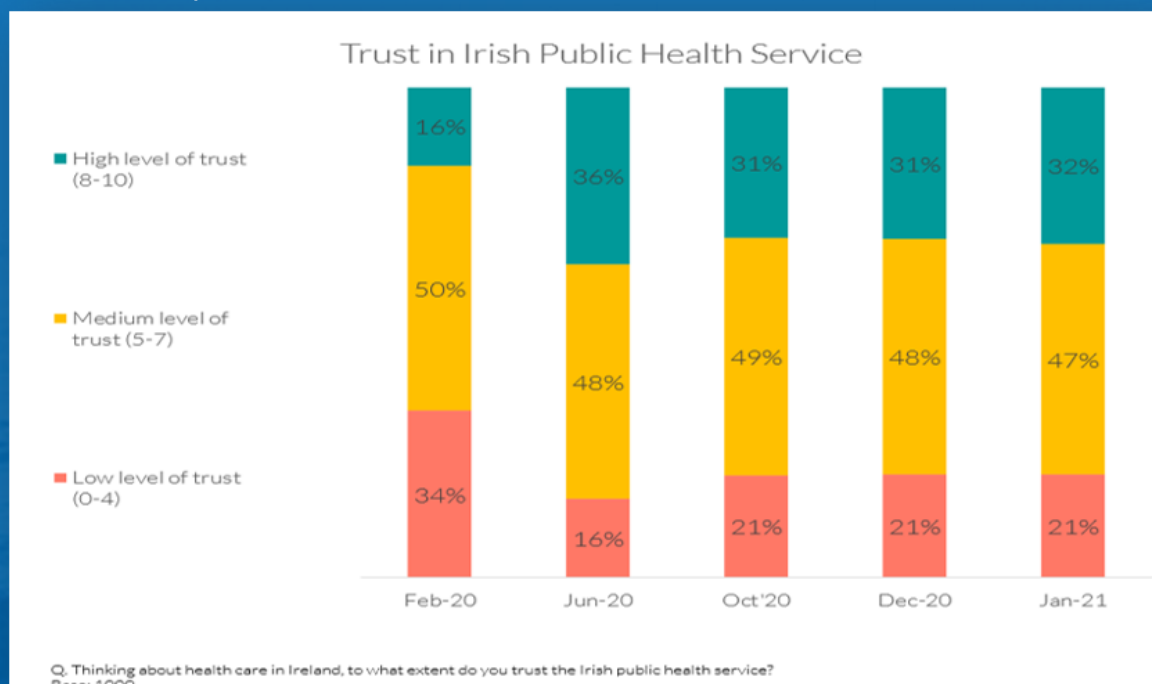
3. Encourage people to download the COVID Tracker App

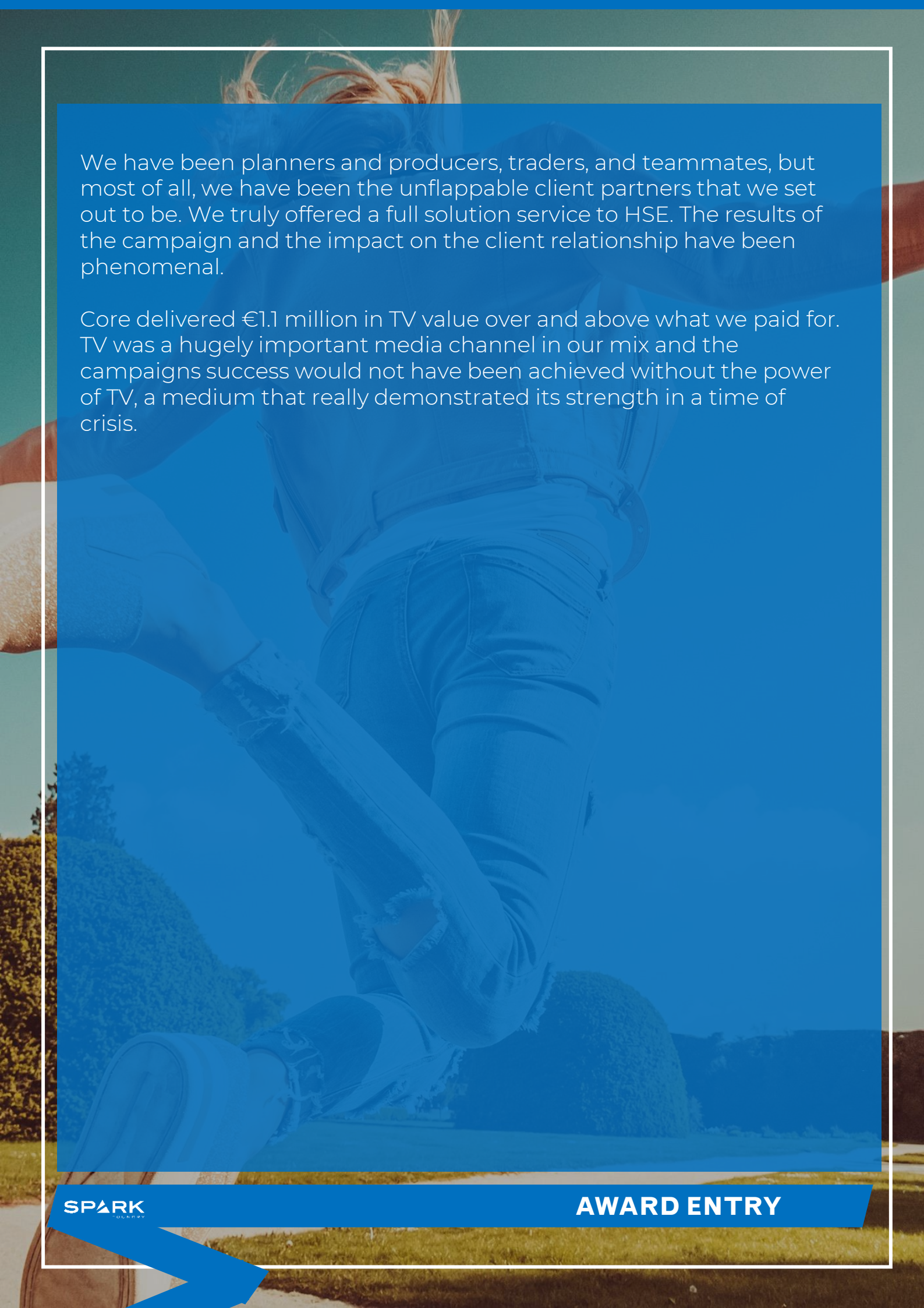
There were 2.45m app registrations, over 1m of which were recorded in the first 2 days of launch. There are approximately 1.3m active users, 35% of over 16s in Ireland.

The app has been used in nearly 16,000 positive cases, and generated over 24,000 close contact alerts.



3. Help the public stay calm by keeping them updated and informed, we needed them to see and trust that the HSE were doing all they could to keep them safe





We have been planners and producers, traders, and teammates, but most of all, we have been the unflappable client partners that we set out to be. We truly offered a full solution service to HSE. The results of the campaign and the impact on the client relationship have been phenomenal.

Core delivered €1.1 million in TV value over and above what we paid for. TV was a hugely important media channel in our mix and the campaign's success would not have been achieved without the power of TV, a medium that really demonstrated its strength in a time of crisis.

SECTION 5: Client Involvement

“2020 was of course an historic year for everyone across the globe, and each nation, industry, community and person has their own story of challenges, struggles and achievement. For the HSE, our health service teams faced an enormous set of tasks, and our communications teams had a central role in the overall response. This is because, in a pandemic, earning the support and co-operation of the public by providing information and being a trusted sources of advice is essential. This is especially vital at a time when no vaccine is yet available to protect the population from a new virus.

Our work with Spark Foundry, and our creative agencies and other supportive partners, was one of the positive achievements of the pandemic. We benefited greatly from our existing excellent working relationships and our shared experience of crisis response. We worked closely during the entire year, changing our processes on both sides to tighten the teams and reduce risk or time in completing tasks. We had excellent service from the agency and from media owners, and indeed the support of the wider marketing industry, and used the support and expertise to achieve a comprehensive, engaging and effective campaign and media buying strategy over 14 months.

The media choices were varied, but TV was the ideal lead media, especially since COVID meant the audience was bigger and more unified. It also allowed us to create work that was visually distinctive, and educational or emotional as needed, for the varied messages and phases. We are confident that without this media channel, and without the expertise and rapid response from all involved to mount the campaigns, the powerful and transformative impact on people’s behaviour, health and safety would have been reduced. For this the HSE and all our government partners are very grateful to the team at Spark and the wider multiple organisations they work with on our behalf.”

Fidelma Browne, Head of Programmes and Campaigns, HSE

“Our dedicated team in Spark Foundry were on hand at all times, never failing to respond and act whatever the time of day, and on a 7 day a week basis for as long as we needed them. They brought us innovative solutions at every point in the process that helped us to achieve our goals. They showed extraordinary commitment to providing an excellent service.” –

Aghna Harte, Campaigns Director, HSE

THANK YOU



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