

sexual health?
CENTRE  .com

Annual Report 2020



CHAIRPERSON'S LETTER

I am delighted to introduce the 2020 Annual Report on behalf of the clients, volunteers, staff, stakeholders and Board of Directors of the Sexual Health Centre.

The year 2020 brought drastic and disruptive changes to everyday life in Ireland. While these changes demanded an adaptive response to the delivery of our sexual health services, the Centre remained driven to meet the community's needs. These included supporting people living with or affected by HIV, ensuring widespread accessibility to screening and reproductive health support, increasing individual capacity to engage in healthy relationships, and promoting positive sexual health and wellbeing for all.

Having a collaborative approach to our work is imperative, in order to provide accessible sexual health services, particularly for those in marginalised and/or vulnerable settings. As part of Ireland's first sexual health network, the Centre began the year by co-hosting a Sexual Health Conference, highlighting the various sexual health resources available in Cork, in February 2020. Toward the end of 2020, the Sexual Health Centre led a virtual World AIDS Day Run in conjunction with the HSE Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme. The event promoted the U=U message and highlighted the need for everyone to know their HIV status while following Government guidelines.

In March 2020, sexual health issues experienced by clients were exacerbated by the impact of the pandemic, and the staff of the Centre worked tirelessly to counteract this. Clients reported concerns such as accessing contraception, including condoms,

difficulties in relationships, worries about HIV treatment and testing. This has been a clear indicator of the community's need for responsive, high quality, professional and inclusive services. The Centre evolved to provide remote support in the form of counselling, health promotion workshops, information campaigns, a condom mail-out service and helpline.

In line with our five-year strategic plan, and in response to the pandemic, the Sexual Health Centre provided sexual health services online and over the phone and produced a range of user-friendly publications and online resources.

While the Centre's testing and drop-in services were suspended for some months, they resumed at the Centre during the summer. A number of new services were introduced at the Sexual Health Centre with a view to further improving the sexual health outcomes of the growing Cork community, including the Sex and Love Therapy (SALT) programme, the WISE e-learning platform, and the Sexual Health Hubs for young people.

Building on old and new partnerships is of great importance to the Sexual Health Centre. By establishing relationships and collaborations with statutory and non-statutory agencies, the Centre has been able to better support the sexual health needs of an evolving Ireland. The Centre's team members remain key collaborators and stakeholders on a number of national and local policy implementation groups.

The important work of the Sexual Health Centre would not be possible without the commitment of the staff, volunteers and board of the organisation. I would like to extend my congratulations to the team in delivering a range of innovative and responsive services and campaigns, in 2020. Their commitment to the provision of high quality, equitable, accessible and inclusive sexual health services is crucial to ensuring every individual's right to a positive healthcare experience.

MR. CIARÁN LYNCH

The Sexual Health Centre, Chairperson

OUR PURPOSE

The Sexual Health Centre is a Not for Profit, Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) that was established in July 1987 as Cork Aids Alliance. The vision of the organisation is for a future where sexual health is recognised as an integral part of life, barriers to accessing sexual health services are removed, social stigma and discrimination are challenged, each individual feels safe to express their sexuality, and people make informed decisions regarding their sexual wellbeing and treat each other's life choices with the utmost respect.

In achieving this, the Sexual Health Centre sets a mission to:

"[A]lways provide the most up-to-date and comprehensive information regarding the topics of sexual health, wellbeing and sexuality, to offer a safe space for individuals to express their concerns without fear, to get non-biased answers to their most intimate questions, to normalise the perception of sexual health and sexuality and to facilitate a nation-wide acceptance of positive sexual health and sexuality as an integral part of life."

Our values include Dignity, Confidentiality, Accessibility, Safe Space, Non-Bias, Partnership, Transparency and Quality. The Sexual Health Centre believes that everyone has a right to positive sexual health and aims to provide high quality, inclusive and client-focused services. These services relate to wellbeing, healthy relationships, HIV and sexual health, and are available to every member of the community.

For over 30 years, the Sexual Health Centre has supported the community through innovative initiatives and an adaptive team, and it will continue to do so in the future.





THE YEAR IN REVIEW

The Sexual Health Network, of which the Centre is a founding member, kicked off 2020 with its first Sexual Health Conference in Cork City Hall, to highlight the various sexual health resources available in Cork. Shortly after, in March 2020, the Sexual Health Centre team began remote working.

The team were acutely aware of the ripple effects the pandemic would have on people's sexual health. While adhering to government advice and navigating remote working, the Centre successfully adapted its services with innovative delivery formats and new initiatives.

The Centre's counselling, mentoring and support services continued with clients by phone and video call. The health promotion team provided virtual workshops and practical support to young people, LGBTI+ people and members of marginalised communities, as well as professionals and the wider community.

A condom postal service was immediately launched by the Sexual Health Centre whereby condoms were mailed, free of charge, to clients across the country. The Centre's Communications team ensured that the public had access to accurate, timely information by producing a number of awareness-raising campaigns, including information on sexual health service updates and guidance on issues that arose following the COVID-19 outbreak along with new blog posts and a newsletter.

Following the success of the 'WISE' training programme in 2019, the Sexual Health Centre's 'WISE Online' e-learning platform was developed, trialled and launched in 2020. 'WISE Online' was created to assist professionals in facilitating and responding to questions on sexual health and relationships from young people. The programme was officially launched by Minister for Children, Disability, Equality, Integration and Youth, Roderic O'Gorman TD, with over 170 participants registered for the launch, which was broadcast on Zoom.

The Sex and Love Therapy programme, led by Donal Clifford, transferred into the organisation in 2020. This customised group therapy programme supports people with concerns in relation to problematic sexualised behaviour and is a further resource to support the sexual wellbeing of the Cork community.

The Centre rounded off the year with a social marketing billboard campaign by the Sexual Health Network. The '#AFewHomeTruths' campaign raised awareness about sexual health issues affecting people in Cork, and signposted to the relevant support services.





THE YEAR IN REVIEW ctd.

By continuing to build on partnerships with local, national and international organisations, the Sexual Health Centre has been able to contribute significantly to the advancement of Cork's sexual health service provision. This approach has been particularly important in ensuring that the community's needs are met during the pandemic.

In collaboration with Cork ETB and Youth Work Ireland Cork (YWIC), Ireland's first community-based Sexual Health Hub for young people was launched by the Sexual Health Centre to ensure sexual health information is easily accessible to youth along with appropriate training for youth workers. The Sexual Health Centre collaborated with GOSHH (Gender, Orientation, Sexual Health, HIV) and SWAI (Sex Workers Alliance Ireland), on the production of a COVID-19 information card for street-based sex workers who, out of necessity, continued working during the pandemic. This card was developed in cooperation with street-based sex workers and contains practical advice to try to minimise the risk of transmission while at work.

To ensure that the Centre continued to battle HIV stigma, the annual World AIDS Day Run was moved to a virtual event in light of restrictions. The Sexual Health Centre hosted a virtual, national run in conjunction with the HSE Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme. Established in 2018, the World AIDS Day run has been previously delivered in partnership with parkrun, the Health Service Executive, Healthy Ireland and sexualwellbeing.ie. The virtual event facilitated participation all over the country, tackling HIV stigma in each participant's local community with the U=U message, and encouraging people to test regularly.

OUR SERVICES

The Sexual Health Centre offers a wide range of services to the public to meet the changing and emerging sexual health needs of the Cork community.



Rapid
HIV Testing



Support for people
living with HIV



Crisis pregnancy
support



Sex worker support
programme



Full STI
screening



Sexual health
workshops



Disability support
programme



Marginalised groups
support



Professional
training



Free condom
demos and distribution

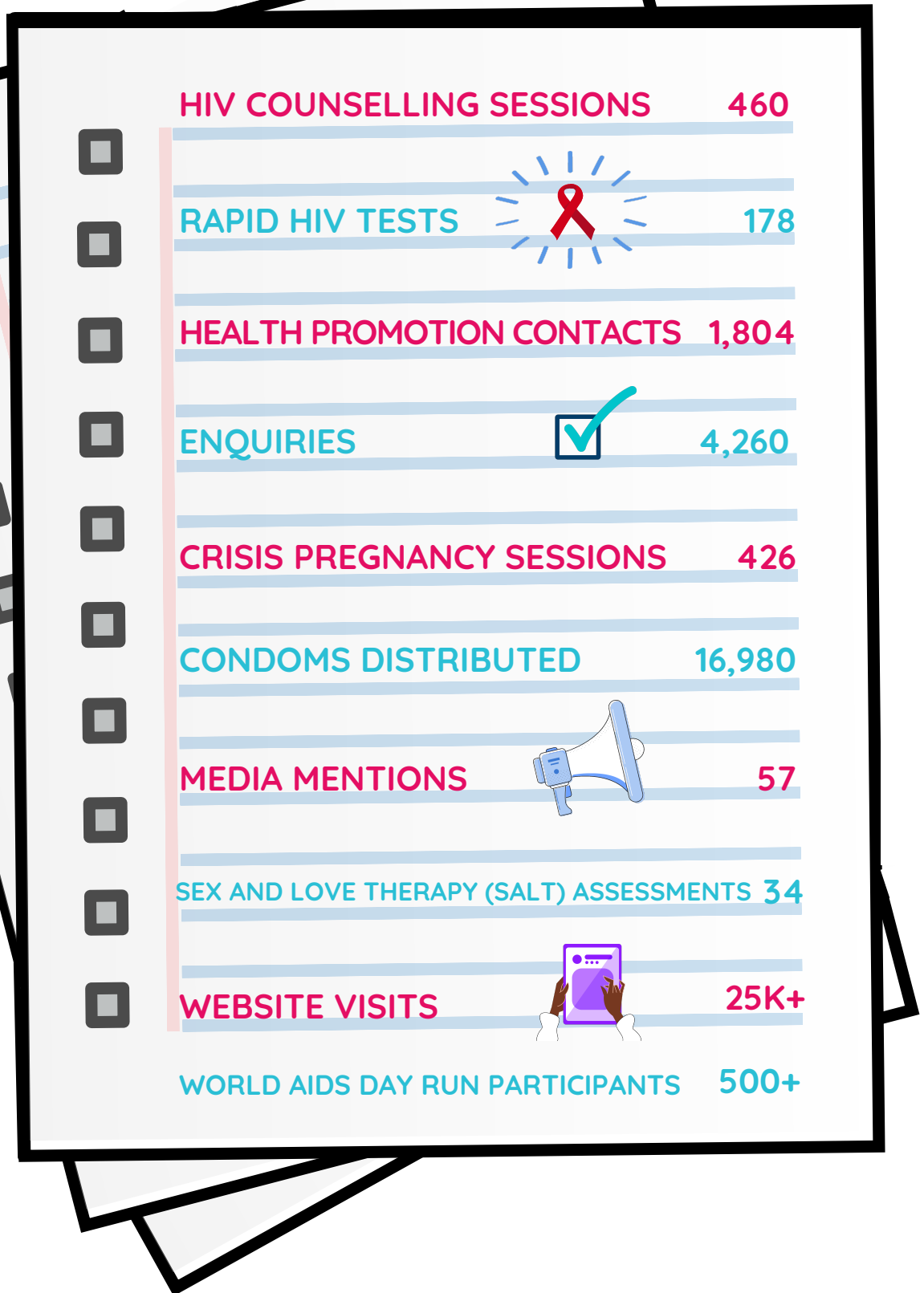


Sexual health support
for LGBTI+ community



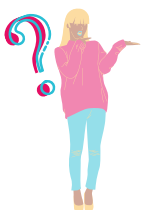
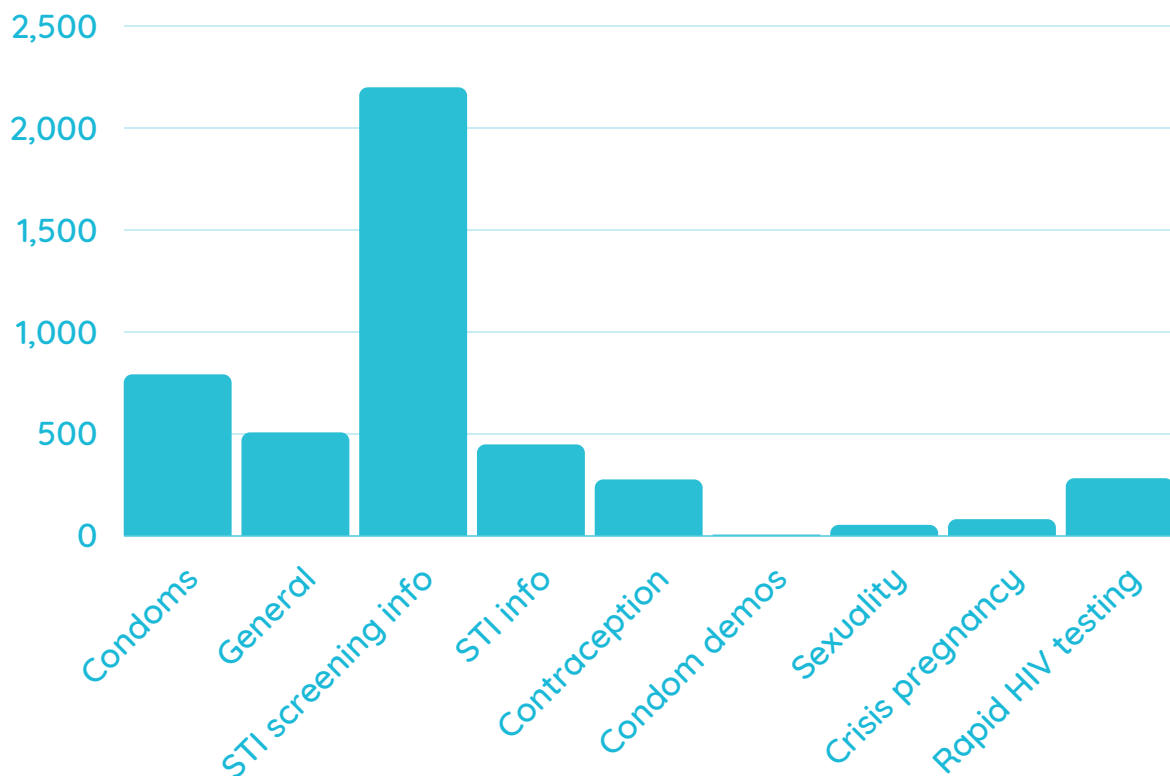
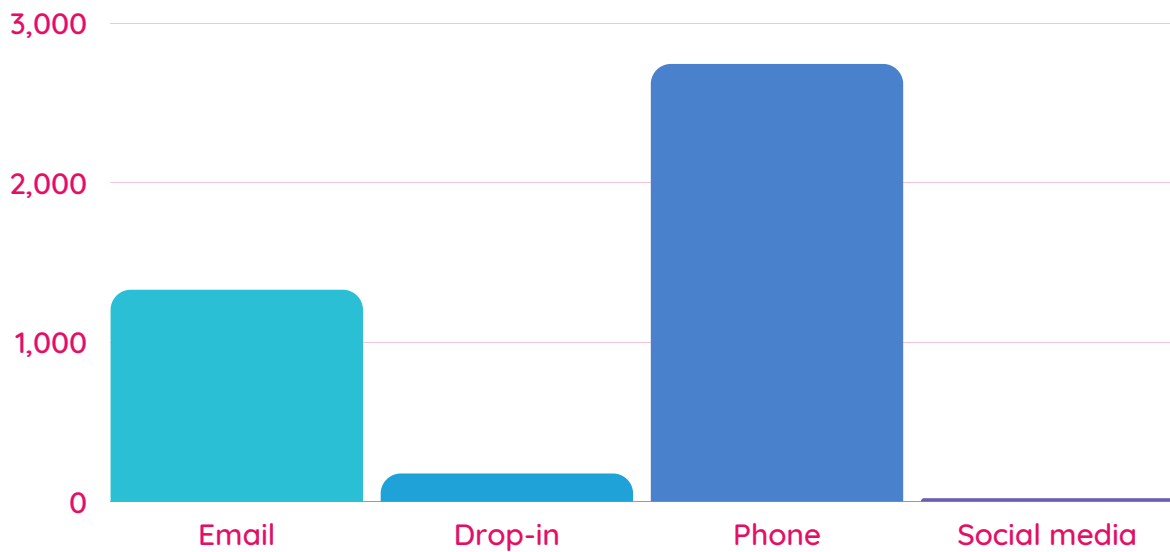
Monday - Friday
helpline

2020 IN NUMBERS



ENQUIRIES

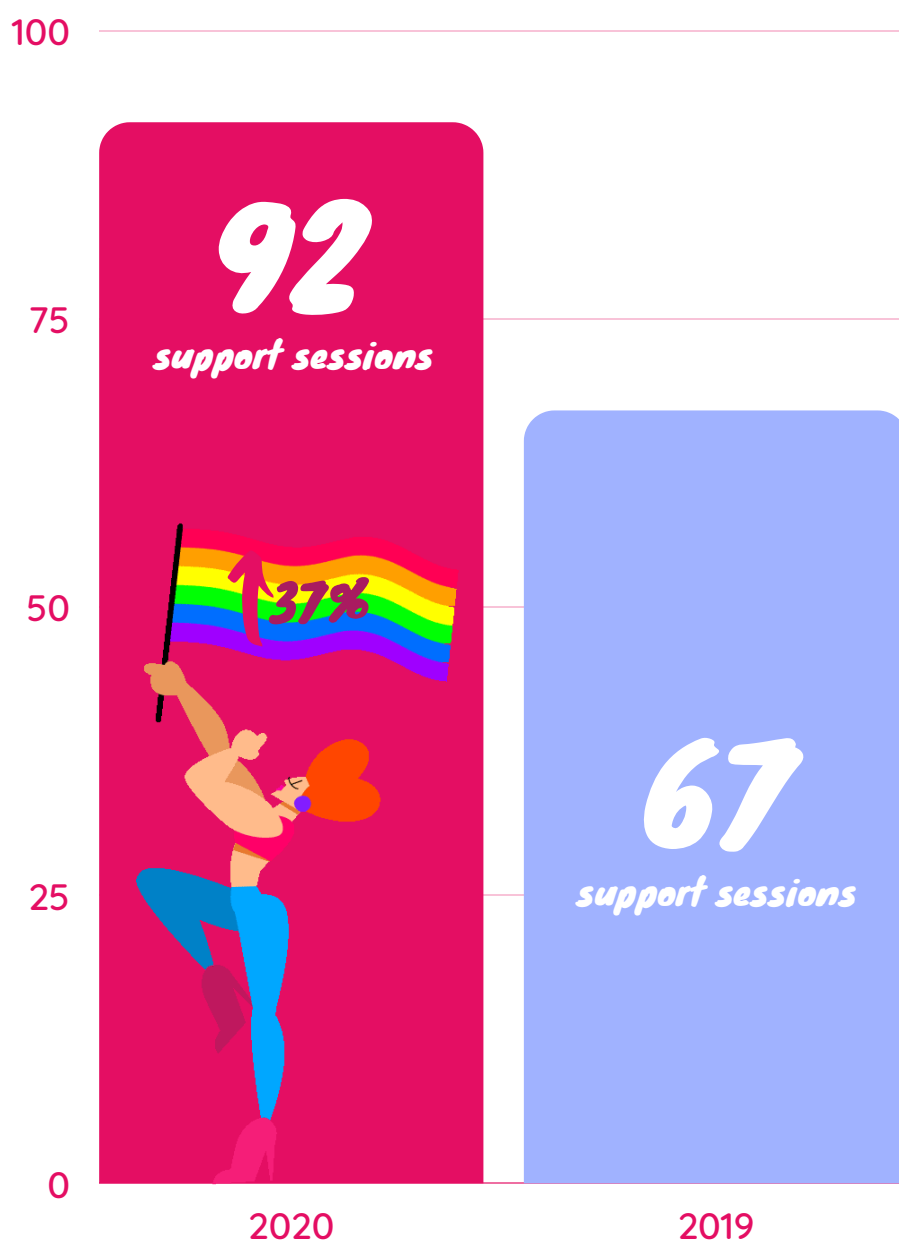
In 2020, we saw a total of **4,260 enquiries** from clients, primarily via email, phone and social media. An online form for condom orders and a chatbot were incorporated on to our website, to enhance ease of access for clients. Our helpline service continued remotely; ensuring that clients without internet access could easily avail of sexual health services and support.



Note: Several enquiries can be attributed to one client.

LGBTI+ SEXUAL HEALTH SUPPORT

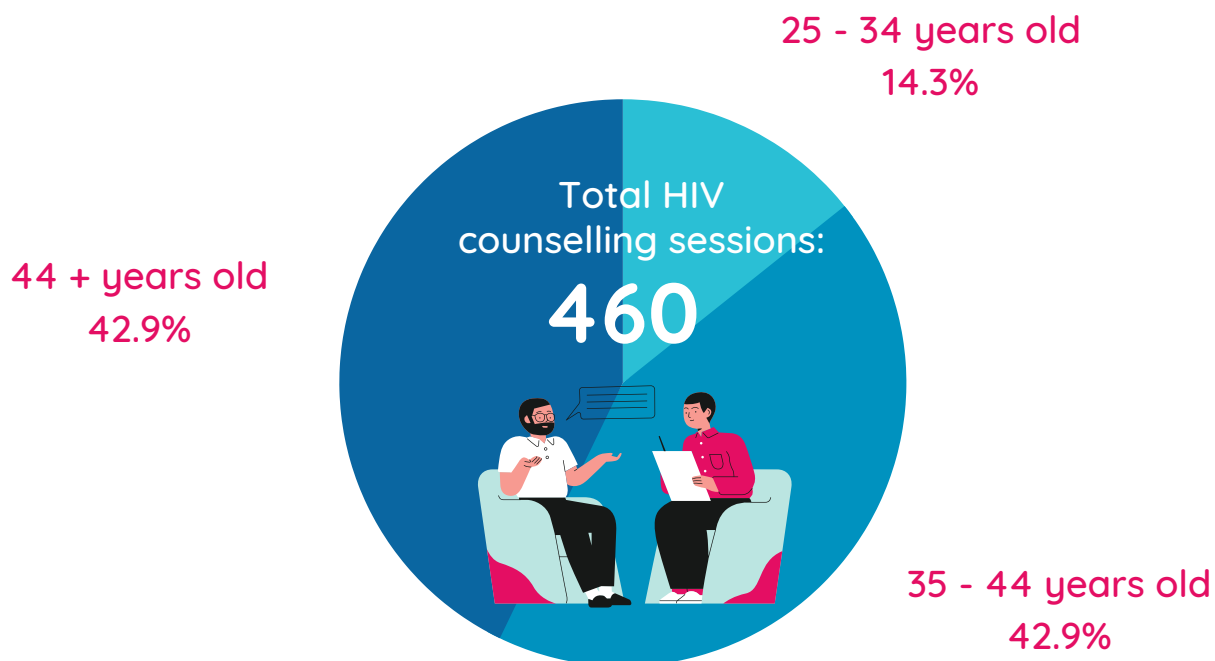
The Centre's LGBTI+ Sexual Health Support Worker provides a professional mentoring service to members of the LGBTI+ community and their loved ones. In 2020, a total of **92 support sessions** were provided - a 37% increase in demand from 2019. For the first time, the Sexual Health Centre provided support to clients via geosocial apps such as Grindr.



HIV SERVICES

HIV Counselling

The Sexual Health Centre provides professional counselling, tailored to the experiences and needs of people living with HIV. In 2020, we facilitated **460 counselling sessions** around HIV. See below the age range of new clients from 2020.



HIV Support

The Sexual Health Centre's HIV Support Worker continued to provide important practical support and mentoring to people impacted by HIV. In 2020, **97 HIV support sessions** took place. As with all of the Centre's counselling and support services, phone calls and Zoom video calls were often used.

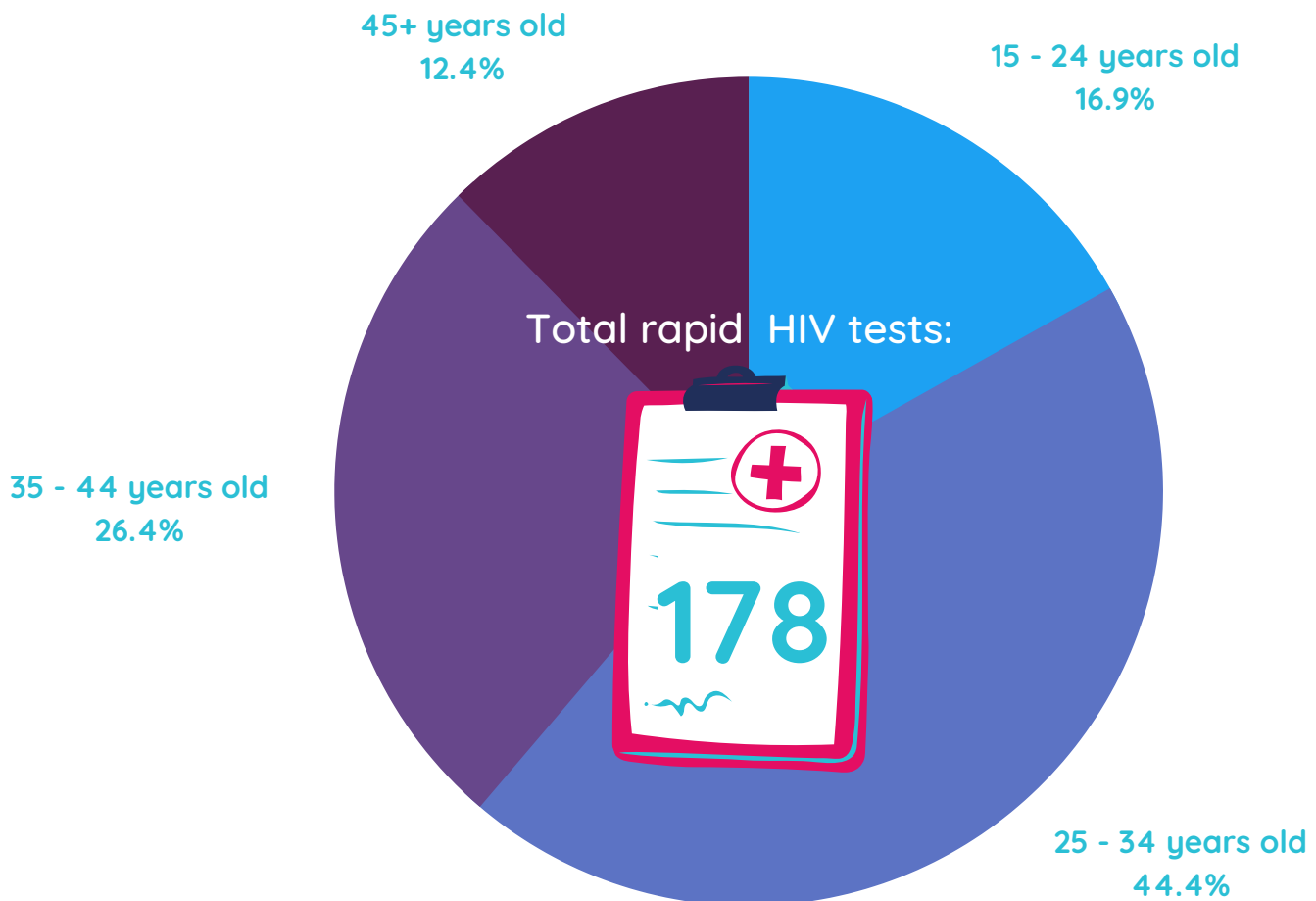


RAPID HIV TESTING



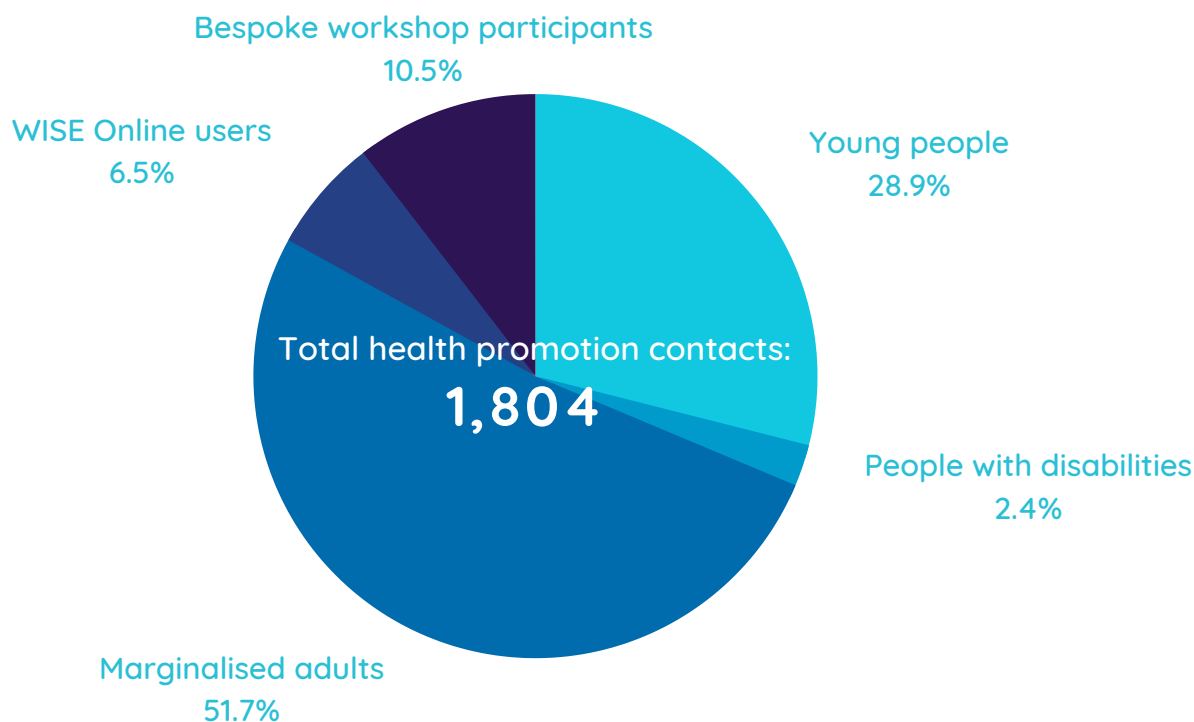
The Centre offers free rapid HIV testing, both on-site and in community settings. In 2020, we provided **178 rapid HIV tests**, as part of a partnership project with organisations across the city. This testing service is supported by volunteers as well as the Centre's health promotion and outreach workers. Due to the pandemic, the testing service was suspended for several months, and was run solely from the Sexual Health Centre by appointment only for the remainder of the year.

Rapid HIV testing clients: Age groups



HEALTH PROMOTION

Our team delivered a variety of tailored workshops during 2020. In order to support client capacity throughout the pandemic, virtual service delivery became an aspect of health promotion. Client groups supported during the year included third-level educational establishments, direct provision centres, migrant centres, youth centres, non-mainstream schools, groups within the disability sector and the travelling community.



Condom distribution

The Sexual Health Centre distributed 16,980 condoms in 2020. This included a new mail-out service, whereby condoms and lubricant were posted to client's homes. The Centre worked with its partners such as the Movement of Asylum Seekers in Ireland (MASI), Sex Workers Alliance Ireland (SWAI), the Cork Simon Community, Edel House, and others, during lockdown to ensure condoms were made available and accessible. The "bag" service for individuals engaged in sex work was also made available by post throughout the year.

TESTIMONIALS

They are amazing in there... We are so lucky to have a Sexual Health Centre in our city.

Health promotion workshops:

"Thanks so much for today's brilliant workshop."

"Very informative and valuable training session."

"I signed up for the next webinar and to say I am excited is an understatement."

"So fun and interactive! Loved it."

I FEEL LIKE I AM HAVING THE EDUCATIONAL SESSION THAT I NEEDED WHEN I WAS 16 - AND I AM NOW 44! IT'S GOING GREAT - CLEAR - AND THE VISUALS ARE GREAT. WELL DONE.

Sexual Health Hub training:

"The training was really interesting and covered everything."

"I WISH I COULD'VE GOTTEN CONDOMS LOCALLY WHEN I WAS THEIR AGE. HOW FAR WE HAVE COME."

"The training was really informative and I can't wait for the young people to see the stand and have such great information right here when they need it."

I am obsessed with the great work they are doing in [the Sexual Health Centre] in my hometown!

Pandemic-related info campaigns:

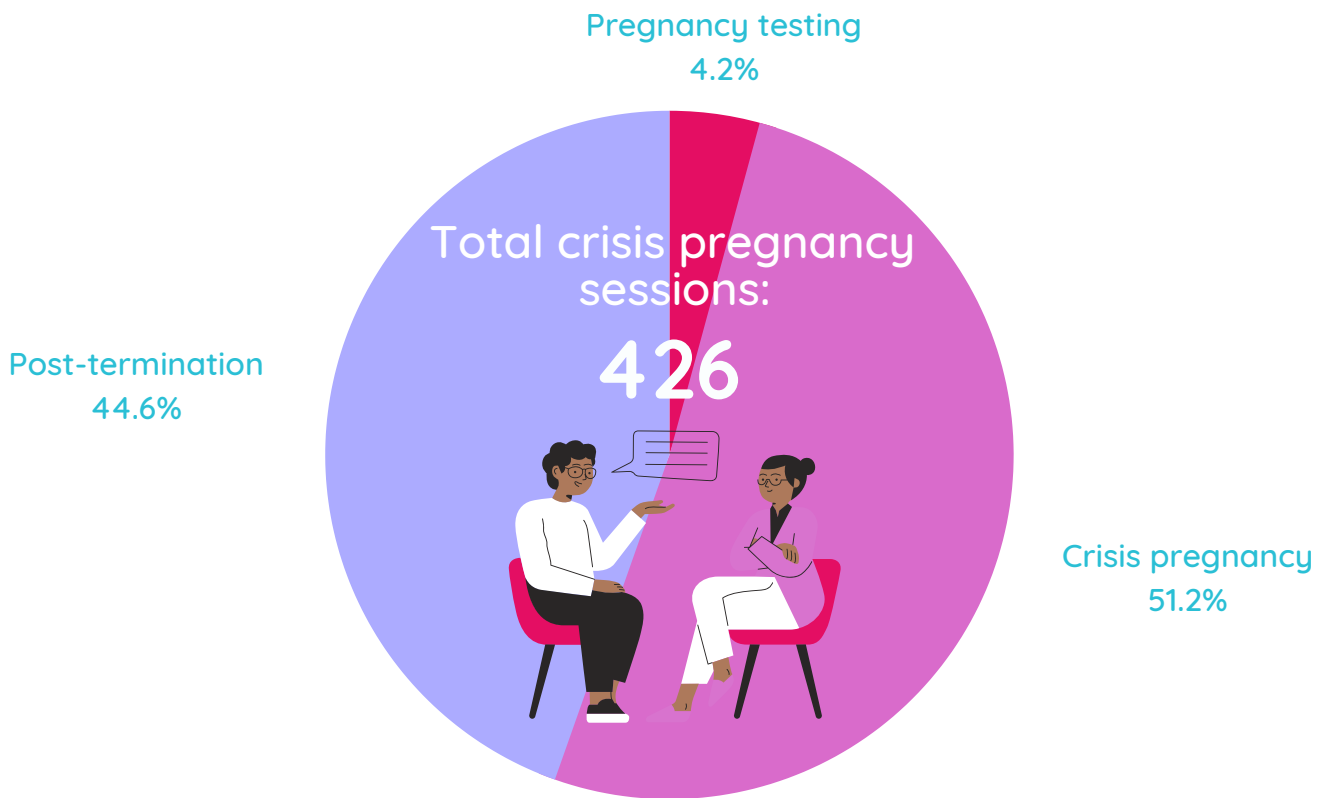
"THIS IS A FANTASTIC RESOURCE FOR NAVIGATING #HEALTHYRELATIONSHIPS AMID THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC."

"GREAT FUN EXERCISE TO DO AROUND THE DINNER TABLE WITH YOUNG KIDS. VERY ENGAGING." [Healthy relationships]

"Very helpful info here re #SafeRSexwork, well done for pulling this together so well and fast at a time it [is] much needed."

CRISIS PREGNANCY SERVICES

We provide a non-judgmental, wrap-around and free service, ranging from pregnancy testing to all-option crisis pregnancy counselling, as well as post-termination counselling and support. In 2020, the Centre provided a total of **426 sessions**, inclusive of crisis pregnancy counselling, post-termination counselling and pregnancy testing.



CRISIS PREGNANCY CLIENTS

Crisis Pregnancy Services - Age groups of new clients

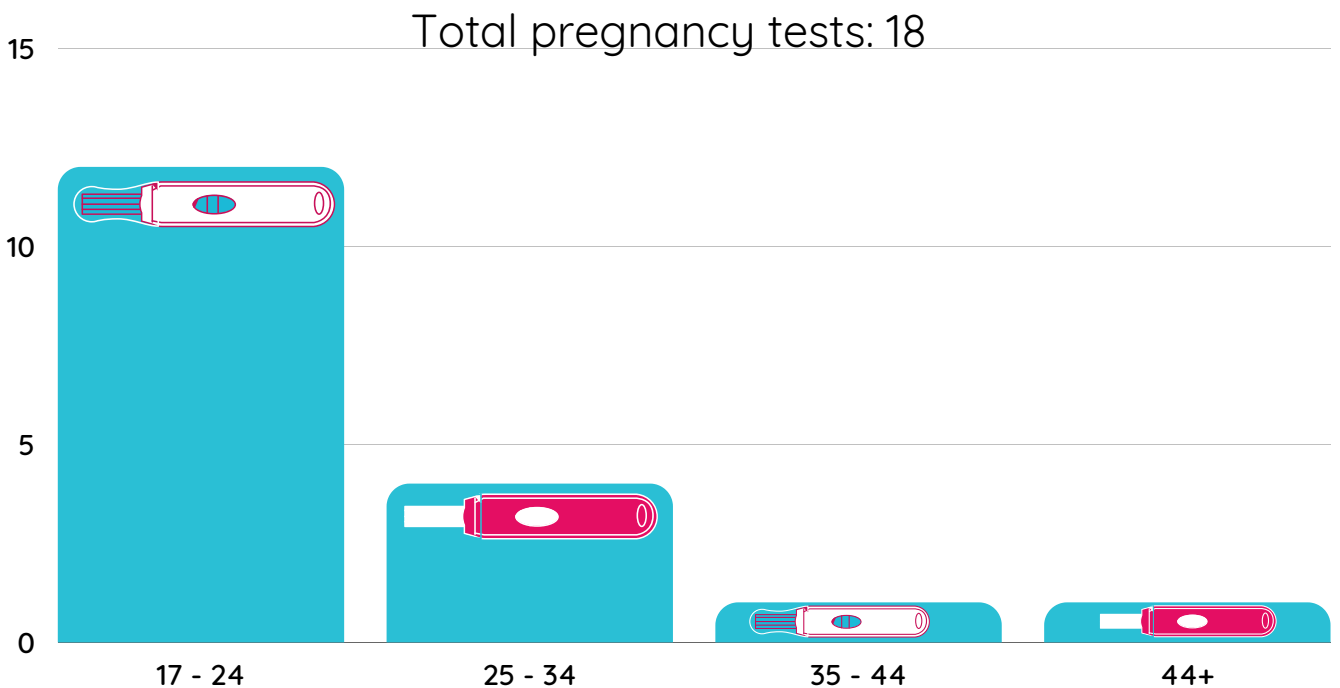
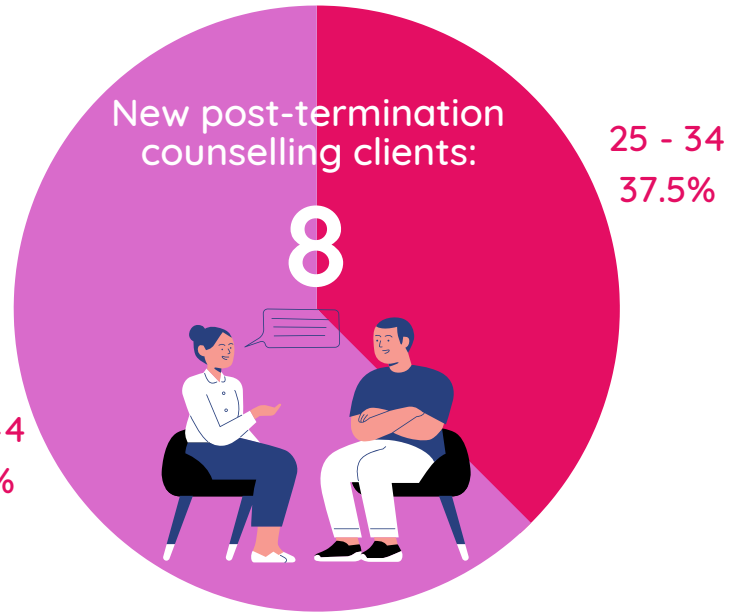


PHOTO ALBUM



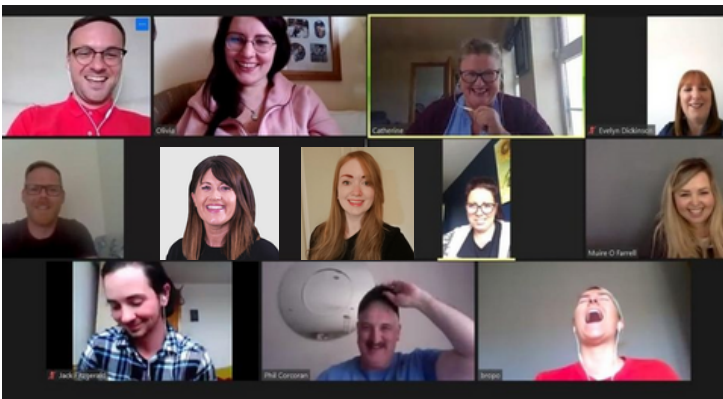
The Sexual Health Network's first conference.



The MAC Cosmetics staff donating proceeds from a bake sale & raffle to the Sexual Health Centre.



Launching "Taken'd!" in the Kino - an animated production created with the Traveller Visibility Group (TVG) and Outreach Worker, Susan.

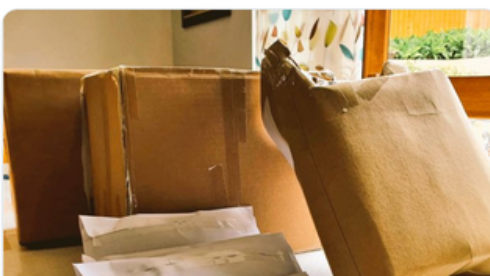


Beginning in March 2020, team meetings took place virtually every fortnight via Zoom. This continued for the remainder of the year.

Sexual Health Centre @SHC_Cork · 30 Mar 2020
 Condoms packed & ready for delivery! During the #COVID19ireland outbreak our fantastic team are offering a FREE condom postal service. Check out our #SaferSex campaign for info on #covidsex & which precautions you need to take. #StayAtHome #Communityresponseirl #Cork



Sexual Health Centre @SHC_Cork · 12 May 2020
 W/ the support of our contacts & network, our team has been able to ensure that free condoms are provided to people living in #directprovision centres during #covid19ireland outbreak. Partnerships are crucial at this difficult time to ensure that DP residents can access services.



A condom mail-out system was pioneered by the Sexual Health Centre team, ensuring access to condoms and lube for people all over the country, including local Direct Provision Centres.



The Sexual Health Centre was very proud to receive a bronze prize from the Sockies (social media) Awards. Due to the pandemic, there was no in-person award ceremony, but if there had been, our Comms team might have looked something like this... or so they'd like to think!

PHOTO ALBUM



Restrictions related to the pandemic led to a new way of delivering health promotion services. This included virtual outreach and extra health and safety precautions at 16 Peters Street!



2020 saw the launch of a number of fantastic initiatives, including the WISE e-learning platform, and the Sex and Love Therapy Programme at the Sexual Health Centre.

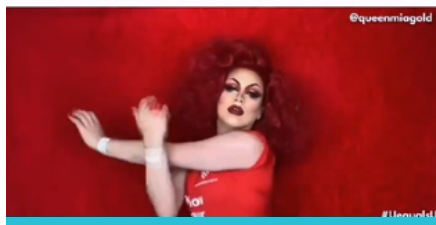


The team did selfies in red to mark Irish AIDS Day while working from home.



The Sexual Health Network launched 'A Few Home Truths' - social marketing billboard campaign.

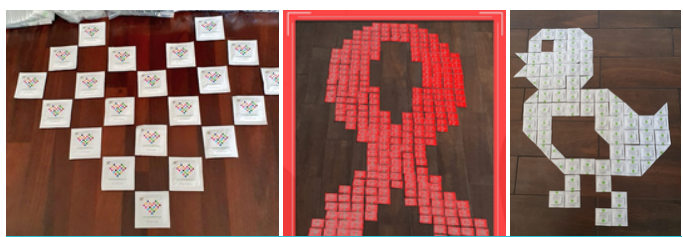
WARM UP WITH QUEEN MIA GOLD



Chats with Laura De Barra



The first Irish national virtual run for World AIDS Day got fantastic support from the wider community.. (Pictured: Left - Queen Mia Gold, Middle - Laura De Barra, Right - Lord Mayor of Cork Joe Kavanagh.)



Senior Health Promotion Officer, Phil got creative with 'condom art'!

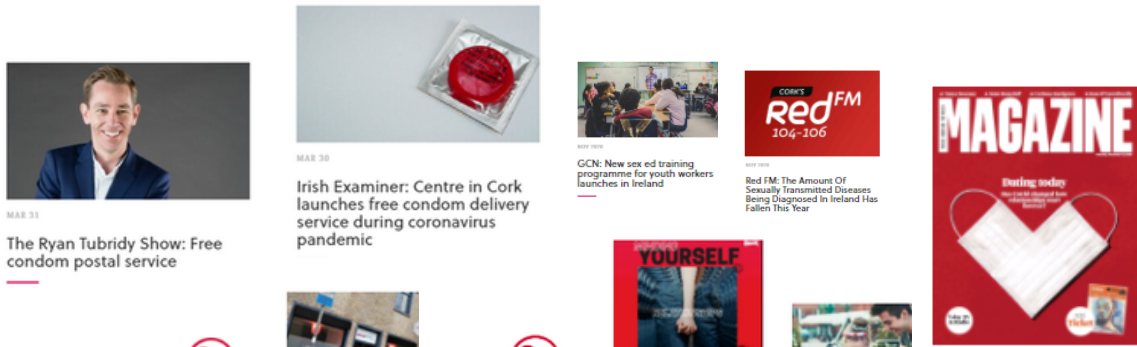


LGBTI+ Support Worker, Jack crafted a red ribbon and visited Cork landmarks to mark Irish AIDS Day.

MEDIA COVERAGE



The Sexual Health Centre's team and services featured in a range of local and national media throughout the year. This has been particularly important during the pandemic, in facilitating the communication of service updates to the wider community, including those without internet access. The Centre is grateful for the support of print and broadcast media outlets and their teams, who helped to **double the Sexual Health Centre's media coverage since 2019.**



MAR 31
The Ryan Tubridy Show: Free condom postal service

MAR 30
Irish Examiner: Centre in Cork launches free condom delivery service during coronavirus pandemic

MAR 2020
GCN: New sex ed training programme for youth workers launches in Ireland

MAR 2020
Red FM: The Amount Of Sexually Transmitted Diseases Being Diagnosed In Ireland Has Fallen This Year

MAR 2020
Irish Times Magazine: Dating in the age of Covid: 'The minute we saw each other, we kissed'

MAR 2020
Longford Leader: Sexual Health Centre launches campaign to give young people guidance around online relationships



MAR 2020
96FM: Sex talk [New Zealand Ad Campaign]



MAR 2020
Beat 102 103: Minding Yourself Episode 5

MAR 2020
SpunOut: Young people deserve guidance around online relationships

MAR 2020
Red FM: Misconceptions Around HIV Are Resulting In Stigma Among Those Affected By The Disease In Cork

MAR 2020
The Covid Care Podcast: Ep. 4 Sexual Health

MAR 2020
Echolive: Cork Sexual Health Centre calls on people to show solidarity to those living with HIV

MAR 2020
HSE Sexual Health News: COVID response resource produced for street-based sex workers

MAR 2020
HSE Sexual Health News: The Sexual Health Centre's annual report highlights a spike in demand for LGBT and post-termination supports

MAR 2020
HSE Sexual Health News: Ireland's first community sexual health hub for youth, launched by the Sexual Health Centre - Cork

MAR 2020
96FM: Ireland's first Sexual Health Hub launched in Cork

MAR 2020
C03: Covid restrictions shouldn't deter sexual assault victims from seeking help

MAR 2020
GCN: Cork's Sexual Health Centre launches Ireland's first community sexual health hub

MAR 2020
Echolive: Cork sexual health hub is a first for country

MAR 2020
Medical Independent: Sex workers' health in a pandemic

MAR 2020
The Cork: #A Few Home Truths advertising campaign, from Cork Sexual Health Network

MAR 2020
Cork Bee: Cork's Sexual Health Network delivers a few Home Truths for Christmas

MAR 2020
CorkBee: Cork researcher embarks on mission to help Ireland's sex workers

MAR 2020
Irish Examiner: Cork sexual health centre reports surge in post-termination support after repeal vote

MAR 2020
Independent: Sexual Health Centre report reveals increase in demand for LGBT, STI and post-pregnancy termination supports

MAR 2020
Echolive: Welcome to Cork City LGBT+ students

MAR 2020
Irish Examiner: Legislation to tackle image-based sexual abuse must be enacted - Caroline West

MAR 2020
KIM [Annual Report 2020 - Marín Dawsons, Exec. Director, Sexual Health Centre]

MAR 2020
Echo LIVE.ie: Cork team develop plan to fill gap in young people's sex education

MAR 2020
Echolive: More than 1,000 sexually transmitted infections notified in Cork and Kerry this year

MAR 2020
GCN: Everything happening for World AIDS Day 2020

MAR 2020
Red FM Events: Screen-age kids

MAR 2020
The Around: "For homeless people, rape is a constant fear"

MAR 2020
96FM: Cork Sexual Health Centre 2019 report is launched

MAR 2020
Echolive: High demand for post-abortion support at Cork centre, report shows

MAR 2020
The Cork: Cork's Sexual Health Centre launches Ireland's first community sexual health hub

MAR 2020
SAVE THE DATE: Sexual Health Conference 10TH FEBRUARY 2020

MAR 2020
HSE Sexual Health News: Navigating healthy relationships - a guide from the Sexual Health Centre

MAR 2020
HSE Sexual Health News: Guide for sex workers, launched by the Sexual Health Centre in Cork

FEB 25
YayCork: This Cork pub is offering free HIV testing (and you get your results in one minute)

MAR 13
GCN: Sexual Health Centre Cork launch campaign about sex during COVID-19

ONLINE PRESENCE



Social media has become an increasingly important tool for the Sexual Health Centre to connect with our clients. We use online platforms to provide news about our services and general sexual health information, as well as appointment bookings and advice. While virtual service delivery has brought significant challenges, including limitations to outreach work, the Centre's team was determined to use online communications to serve the community as effectively as possible.

+281%



+44%



+40%



+20%



+3%



The Sexual Health Centre introduced an online condom order form, and chat function at sexualhealthcentre.com, so that clients can contact the Centre quickly and conveniently. A number of pandemic-related information campaigns were published on the Centre's website and social media. For the first time, the Sexual Health Centre provided an online blog, newsletter, and health promotion outreach on geosocial apps such as Grindr.



As well as conducting regular staff meetings via Zoom, a number of virtual workshops and webinars were hosted for the wider community by the Centre's Health Promotion team. These included capacity-building workshops such as 'The Naked Truth' series with UCC Feminist Society and the 'Screenage Kicks' webinar series for professionals working with young people. Workshops were recorded with subtitles, to maximise accessibility.



The Sexual Health Centre placed 3rd in the 'Instagram for an NGO' category in the national 'Socksies' social media awards.

ONLINE CAMPAIGNS



The Centre produced a range of pandemic-related information campaigns, which were published online and promoted in local media. All campaigns can be accessed at www.sexualhealthcentre.com/resources

SafeRsex

1.
Does COVID-19 mean I must choose between being safe OR sexually active?

You can be both safe *and* sexually active if neither you nor your sexual partner have COVID-19. Please note that some people carrying COVID-19 will be asymptomatic i.e. show no symptoms at all, so while intimacy is as important now as ever, it is vital that you take extra precautions regarding any physical contact with others.

#SafeRsex #COVIDsex

The Sexual Health Centre Ltd.
16 Peter's Street | Cork | Ireland
www.sexualhealthcentre.com
info@sexualhealthcentre.com
021 427 6676
Registered Charity No. CHY 19919

A guide to navigating healthy relationships during the COVID-19 outbreak

This guide, created in collaboration with Mr. Daniel Flynn (Principal Psychology Manager, HSE Cork South Mental Health Services), provides a toolkit to help you to maintain healthy relationships in the context of social distancing measures.

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sexualhealthcentre.com
No Bias. No Judgement. No Exception.

Screen-age Kicks
Your sexual health in the virtual world

This guide was inspired by the **Screenagers International Research Project**. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, young people have been spending more time online, and have had minimal physical contact with other people. This guide was created to empower young people of all abilities to deepen their understanding of sexual health and relationships, in the context of online activity.

The Sexual Health Centre Ltd. | 16 Peter's Street | Cork | Ireland
021-427 6676 | info@sexualhealthcentre.com | www.sexualhealthcentre.com
Registered Charity No. CHY 19919

HIV Support with Phil

Phil Corcoran,
Senior Health Promotion Officer,
The Sexual Health Centre, Cork.

VIRTUAL SUPPORT

philcorcoran@sexualhealthcentre.com
021-4276676

#SafeRsexwork
The Sexual Health Centre's guide to working during the COVID-19 outbreak

The **#SafeRsexwork** campaign is a practical, step-by-step harm reduction guide for individuals undertaking sex work and escort work, during the COVID-19 outbreak. It is most advisable to take time off work if at all possible, in order to protect your health and prevent community transmission of the virus. If you can take time off work, please do. Emergency funds are available to those in need. If you are continuing to work, please follow this guide and avail of our support. Your safety is always paramount.

sexualhealthcentre.com

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CHRISTMAS SURVIVAL GUIDE
with our LGBTI+ Support Worker, Konrad Im.

WORLD AIDS DAY CAMPAIGN 2020

Over 600 participants joined the World Aids Day run on 28th November. The run was supported by the Lord Mayor, Cllr. Joe Kavanagh, and a number of political representatives at local, national and European levels. The reach of the event was also supported by local performers with a large online presence, such as Mia Gold, Laura De Barra (author), Kyla Cobbler, 'I'm Grand Mam', and more.



GRANTS



The Sexual Health Centre is very grateful for the support of its funders, and was fortunate to be successful in a number of applications in 2020, including the below initiatives:

WISE Online

This evidence-based E-learning platform assists professionals in responding to questions on sexual health and relationships from young people. The development of WISE Online was funded by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

A Few Home Truths

The Sexual Health Network, of which the Sexual Health Centre is a proud co-founding member, ran a social marketing campaign in December 2020, with the support of Cork City Council, Healthy Ireland, the Government of Ireland, and Cork City Local Community Development Committee. This campaign ran on billboards in Cork city and on social media, under the name 'A Few Home Truths', to raise awareness of the variety of sexual health issues and services impacting the Cork community.

Youth-oriented building renovation

Funding from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (formerly DCYA), via Cork ETB, enabled the Sexual Health Centre to develop its premises. The Centre's reception has been renovated to better facilitate drop-ins from young people.

SHIFT - Sexual Health Information For Teens

The Sexual Health Centre was grateful to receive LGBTI+ Dormant Account Funding via Cork City Council and Cork City Local Community Development Committee, on behalf of the Department of Rural & Community Development. This scheme enabled the Centre to develop, print and distribute an inclusive sexual health resource for young people in Cork.

DASH - Drugs, Alcohol and Sexual Health

In partnership with the Cork Local Drug & Alcohol Task Force, and supported by Healthy Ireland, the Sexual Health Centre has been able to develop a new initiative focused on delivering accessible health and harm reduction services to the wider community.

In The Know

The In The Know manual was developed in 2019. The Sexual Health Centre progressed this project in 2020 with BeLongTo and the HSE Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme, to deliver an online platform for In The Know.



An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Oige
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth



cetb
Boird Oideachais agus
Oiliúna Chorcaí
Cork Education and
Training Board



An Roinn Forbartha
Tuaithe agus Pobail
Department of Rural and
Community Development



Comhairle Cathrach Chorcaí
Cork City Council

PARTNERSHIPS



The Sexual Health Centre was proud to have established and maintained a number of partnerships aimed at facilitating public access to sexual health services, normalising the topic of sexual health, providing support to vulnerable groups and ensuring advancement of sexual education and the culture of tolerance.

The School of Public Health, UCC

The Sexual Health Centre's Executive Director holds an Adjunct Lecturer post in UCC. This role involves teaching and supervising research projects in the area of sexual health.



The Gay Health Network

The Sexual Health Centre is a proud member of the GHN, a network of organisations and individuals in Ireland promoting HIV prevention and sexual health and wellbeing for gay, bisexual and men who have sex with men (MSM).



The Sexual Health Network

Ireland's first sexual health network was established by the Sexual Health Centre in partnership with the GUM/STI clinic, the HIV clinic in CUH, the Sexual Violence Centre, the Sexual Assault Treatment Unit, Gay Project, LINC and the Youth Health Service. This was extended to include the Department of Public Health (HSE South) and Health Promotion & Improvement (HSE South). The Centre's Executive Director is the Chairperson of the Network.



National Sexual Health Strategy

The Sexual Health Centre is represented in the communications subcommittee and the migrant subcommittee of the Department of Health's National Sexual Health Strategy 2015 - 2020. The Centre's Executive Director is on the Advisory Committee for the National Sexual Health Strategy.



AIDS Action Europe

The Sexual Health Centre is part of a regional network of over 420 organisations across 47 countries, whose vision is for people living with HIV to be free from stigma, discrimination and persecution, and access the necessary prevention, treatment, care and support. The Centre's Executive Director, Martin Davoren was elected to the AIDS Action Europe Steering Committee for the 2021 - 2023 period.



PARTNERSHIPS ctd.



Cork City Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)

The Centre Manager, Catherine Kennedy, has been a community representative on the Cork City LCDC since January 2019.



Cork City Public Participation Network (PPN)

The Centre's Executive Director and Centre Manager are members of the Cork City PPN on behalf of the organisation.



Cork Healthy Cities

As Cork is a designated World Health Organisation (WHO) Healthy City, Cork City Council commits to the community's health and a process and structure to achieve it. The Sexual Health Centre is proud to contribute to Cork Healthy Cities, and the Centre's Executive Director is Deputy Chair of the project.



Cork Local Drugs & Alcohol Task Force

The Sexual Health Centre continued its partnership with CLDATF. The Executive Director sits on the Board of the task force, focused on responding to drug and alcohol issues in Cork city.



The City Centre Coordinating Group

In partnership with St. Fin Barre's Cathedral, Cork Deaf Association and Threshold, the Centre provides sponsorship to the Community Employment Scheme. The Centre's Executive Director is the Chairperson of the Board.



COMPASS Healthy Ireland Implementation Group

The Executive Director chairs the Sexual Health Action Area of the COMPASS plan for Cork Kerry Community Healthcare. The objective of COMPASS is to deliver an integrated, holistic service focusing on improving health and wellbeing and reducing health inequalities to prevent chronic disease at a network level.



PARTNERSHIPS ctd.



Keep Well initiative

As part of the Government Plan for Living with COVID-19: Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021, the 'Keep Well' initiative was launched to guide people of all ages in minding their physical and mental health and wellbeing. The Sexual Health Centre was delighted to input in to this responsive initiative.



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Sex Workers Alliance Ireland (SWAI)

In collaboration with the director of SWAI, the Centre promoted health and safety of sex workers in Ireland, as well as provided free support, rapid HIV testing and condoms to sex workers.



Cork Pride

As part of Cork's first virtual pride festival, the Sexual Health Centre submitted a number of articles to the Cork Pride Festival Magazine. The Centre also hosted a webinar event.



Cork City LGBT Interagency Group

Since 2011, Cork City Council, through its Community Section and Cork City Inter-Agency Group organises Cork LGBTI+ Awareness Week to coincide with international IDAHOT (International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia). The Sexual Health Centre's Senior Health Promotion Officer, Phil Corcoran is a member of the interagency group.

EVENTS



MARCH

The Centre's first virtual staff meeting

Remote working began in March. Virtual team meetings helped to keep team members up-to-date on service delivery and boost morale.

Launch of condom mail-out service

The Centre's responsive mail-out service facilitated ease of access and safety for clients.

Launch of [#SafeRsex](#) campaign

This information campaign provided guidance on safe sexual activity during the pandemic.

JUNE

First Hepatitis C workshop

We hosted an information session with researcher, Tim Bingham.

Irish AIDS Day

The team did selfies in red to mark the day.

Return To Work Plan

This was developed following input from the team..

AUGUST

The 'The Naked Truth' series

In partnership with UCC Feminist Society, the Centre hosted a series of sexual health workshops.

OCTOBER

Cork Pride Festival

The Sexual Health Centre was proud to support the first virtual Cork Pride Festival, and the team hosted a (very) [mini parade](#) on Peters Street!

First newsletter

The Centre's communications team published its first newsletter by email and on social media, helping to update the wider community about service delivery and sexual health issues.

Sockies Awards

The Sexual Health Centre placed third in the 'Instagram for an NGO' category at the national Sockies social media awards.

FEBRUARY

Sexual Health Network Conference

The Sexual Health Centre co-hosted a sexual health conference in the City Hall, with its partners from the Sexual Health Network.

Taken'd launch

The Centre created an animated production with the Traveller Visibility Group (TVG); launched at the Kino in Cork city.

MAY

HIV Support Video Updates

The Centre's HIV Support Worker shared updates on the supports available to people living with HIV during the pandemic.

JULY

Street sex work resource launch

With GOSHH and SWAI, the Centre produced an information card for street-based sex workers who had to continue working during the pandemic.

Return to office

After several months of remote working, some team members returned to 16 Peters Street.

SEPTEMBER

Hub launch

Ireland's first community-based sexual health hub for young people was launched by the Sexual Health Centre in Gurrabraher, supported by Cork ETB.

Screenage Kicks

This four-part training programme helped professionals to respond to young people's queries..

Blog launch

The Centre's communications team began hosting a blog on the website, detailing updates about various sexual health issues..

DECEMBER

WISE Online launch

The WISE e-learning platform was launched by Minister for Children, Disability, Equality, Integration and Youth, Roderic O'Gorman TD.

World AIDS Day run.

The Centre hosted Ireland's first national virtual World AIDS Day run, supported by the HSE Sexual Health and Crisis Pregnancy Programme

RESEARCH & EVALUATION

Research and evaluation underpin the ethos and service delivery of the organisation. As part of the Executive Director's role in the School of Public Health in University College Cork, he supervised Master's theses focused on barriers to sexual health services, sex work and intimate citizenship. The Centre's team also delivered a number of other significant research projects:

WISE Online

The research element of WISE Online was two-pronged:

1. The Centre's Research Officer undertook focus groups with teachers and LGBTI+ youth to understand what they are looking for from sexual health education, what they feel the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) should contain. It was found that teachers wanted comprehensive training and resources to use while teaching; and LGBTI+ youth wanted sexual health education to be more interactive and frequent.
2. A systematic review was undertaken to understand best practice in relation to the delivery of LGBTI+ inclusive sexual health. The aim of this review was to synthesise the evidence available regarding LGBTI+ sexual health education for people aged 16 - 23 years old, from the perspective of both the LGBTI+ youth and those who facilitate their learning. The study concluded that there was a lack of inclusive and comprehensive sexual health education; that there is a need to standardise sexual health curricula to make them LGBTI+ inclusive and to incorporate holistic aspects of health such as pleasure and healthy relationships; and that online approaches should be considered.

In The Know

The Centre's Research Officer undertook a study, 'Examining the efficacy of E-learning: A systematic review and narrative synthesis'. This explored the benefits of E-learning and reasons to employ it, factors which must be considered in the design of any platform and the barriers that exist in E-learning. These findings were used to inform the development of the In The Know online training platform.

Health Research Board (HRB): Definitive Interventions and Feasibility Awards (DIFA)

The Executive Director is a co-Principal Investigator for this research grant, with Dr. Mohamad Saab. As part of a team of national and international researchers and public representatives, they will undertake a study entitled "Enhancing Men's Awareness of Testicular Diseases (E-MAT): A Feasibility Study and Study Within A Trial (SWAT)". By collecting data from young men in Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) clubs in Ireland, and using a bespoke virtual reality intervention, this 30-month project will contribute to young men's awareness of testicular diseases.

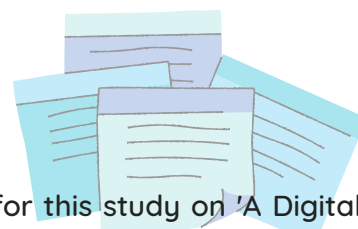
RESEARCH & EVALUATION ctd.

HIV Testing in Ireland

This report, 'Monitoring Community HIV Testing in Ireland, 2019', was prepared by Melissa Brady and Derval Igoe (HPSC) on behalf of the HIV Community Testing Monitoring Steering Group. The Centre Manager, Catherine Kennedy contributed to this report as a member of the steering group.

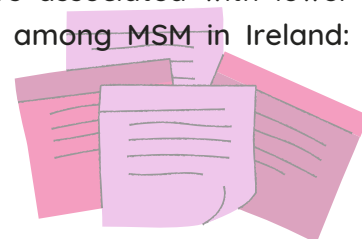
MyUse - Protocol for Project Development

The Centre's Executive Director was a co-Principal Investigator for this study on 'A Digital Substance-Use Harm Reduction Intervention for Students in Higher Education'. The My Understanding of Substance use Experiences (MyUSE) project combines a rigorous user-centered design (UCD) methodology and a robust behavioral change framework to develop a digitally delivered harm reduction intervention for illicit drug use among students in higher education.



MSM Internet Survey Ireland (MISI) 2015 (Study published: 2020)

The Executive Director is a co-author for this study on 'Factors associated with lower knowledge of HIV and STI transmission, testing and treatment among MSM in Ireland: findings from the MSM Internet Survey Ireland (MISI) 2015'.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



The Sexual Health Centre team would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to the many individuals and organisations who supported us and worked with us throughout the year.

Board of Directors

Aoife O'Sullivan, Ciarán Lynch (Chairperson), Elizabeth Murphy (Treasurer), Louise Crowley (Secretary), Meenakshi Uppal, Sheila Connolly (Resigned in September 2020) and Thomas Quigley.

Team

Antoinette Mc Carthy, Barrie Deehan, Bernard Tobin, Bronagh Power, Catherine Kennedy, Denis O'Mahony, Donal Clifford, Eimear Kelly, Elinor O'Donovan, Evelyn Dickinson, Hilda Collins, Jack Fitzgerald, Kathleen Greaney, Konrad Im, Mary Wilkins, Martin Davoren, Muire O Farrell, Niamh O'Connor, Olivia Teahan, Phil Corcoran, Philip Moore, Susan Walsh, Tara Whelan. The Sexual Health Centre would also like to thank its volunteers for their crucial contribution to its service provision.

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