





European Platform tackling undeclared work

Awareness raising campaign about Bogus Self-Employment (BSE)

Ireland

	<p>Summary</p> <p>In May 2018 Ireland's Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection (DEASP) launched a campaign raising awareness of false self-employment and its impacts on workers and the Irish economy. The campaign consisted of advertisements on national/regional radio, advertising at bus shelters/train stations as well as digital/online advertising and some print media.</p>
<p>Name(s) of authorities/bodies/organisations involved</p>	<p>The campaign was organised by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection.</p> <p>Though not involved in the campaign, inspections relating to false self-employment have involved the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) and Revenue departments.</p>
<p>Sectors</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Target groups</p>	<p>The campaign targeted all sectors and was aimed at employers/contractors and self-employed workers.</p> <p>In addition, workers in sectors with suspected high rates of false self-employment were understood to benefit most from the campaign. These sectors include the following for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction; • Information and Communication Technologies; • Financial services; • The pharmaceutical sector.
<p>Purpose of measure</p>	<p>Changing attitudes: awareness raising</p>

	<p>Aims and objectives</p>
<p>Background context</p>	<p>The campaign emerged against a backdrop of growing unionⁱ, media and political pressure to address the concerns over worker exploitation and the loss of tax/social security revenue through false self-employment scenarios.</p>




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	<p>In conjunction with Revenue the DEASP published a study in January 2018 examining the impact of intermediary-type structures on social insurance and tax revenue income. This, together with high profile political debates, publicity and discussion on the subject of false self-employment (through Parliament committees) led to the formation of a formal campaign on the issue.</p>
Key objectives of the measure	<p>General Objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To raise awareness of employment status rights and prevent undeclared work. <p>Specific Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that workers and employers are aware that DEASP can provide a determination on an individual's employment status; To encourage those incorrectly working as self-employed contractors to contact the DEASP Scope Section (SCOPE offer decisions and information on the insurability of employment in accordance with the law; they are the legal authority which determines employment status under the Social Welfare Consolidation Act 2005); To gather information on existing or emerging false self-employment trends and cases; To help to inform subsequent joint inspections (e.g. between revenue, the Workplace Relations Commission and social protection officers) who are tasked with investigating cases of false self-employment; To increase Pay Related Social Insurance (PRSI) contributions collected in the Government's Social Insurance Fund.
Main activities	<p>The main activities for the campaign comprised the production of a website (http://www.welfare.ie/employmentstatus) and advertising campaign (May 2018) inclusive of billboard advertising (e.g. bus shelters and train stations) and radio coverage (national and regional), in addition to four weeks of digital advertising (including Twitter) and two weeks of print media advertising. Web information was made available in French, Polish, Spanish, Portuguese, Romanian, Chinese and Hindi in addition to English.</p>
Funding/organisational resources	<p>In total the campaign cost approximately €165,000. This funding was made available from the DEASP's press funding (this sum includes translation costs).</p>



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	<p>Outcomes</p> <p>While it is too early to tell whether the campaign has directly led to a reduction in undeclared work, the campaign successfully reached a wide audience who were relatively proactive in coming forward with potential cases or seeking clarifications on employment status.</p>
<p>Achievement of objectives</p>	<p>Awareness raising objectives may be read in the increased internet traffic the campaign generated. For example, the web page attracted over 10,500 visits during the campaign. Average webpage visit times lasted over three minutes while the campaign's twitter advert received over 1.2 million impressions.</p> <p>DEASP/SCOPE received fifty phone calls and thirty emails as a result of the campaign (i.e. from individuals who had become aware of false self-employment concerns and the SCOPE service as a result of the advertising). SCOPE monitored whether callers had consulted the website before contacting the department. The majority of callers confirmed this was the case.</p> <p>A total of 17 individuals sought a SCOPE decision as a result of the campaign. Of these, eight required a final decision (two were found to be employees, four were deemed to be self-employed and the remaining are still in process at the time of writing).</p> <p>Qualitative feedback was also captured appraising the website indicating that the campaign had been successful in informing people of employment status risks.</p>
<p>Lessons learnt and success factors</p>	<p>The number of calls received as a result of the last campaign was modest and the DEASP are hoping to conduct an enhanced campaign in the near future which builds on several recent/intended developments in the area of self-employment regulation.</p> <p>For example, the DEASP are hoping to input into an updated code of practice in determining self-employment. The current code was developed in 2007 and a new code is intended to incorporate changes in the modern labour market (e.g. reflecting technological change and the gig economy and in reflection of modern case law rulings). The DEASP have also incorporated a new team of inspectors focussed solely on investigating self-employment cases.</p>
<p>Transferability</p>	<p>The campaign shows that government departments can react to public pressure in productive ways (here stimulated by unions in particular), working to create their own awareness raising campaigns with a view to limiting labour market exploitation. Engagement through</p>



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	campaigning is highly transferable and requires a relatively small budget.
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Further information	
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Useful sources and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Campaign website• Report on Intermediary Structures• Code of Practice for Determining Employment or Self-Employment Status of Individuals• Information on Pay Related Social Insurance (PRSI)• Information for self-employed individuals in relation to self-assessment

ⁱ Unions which have campaigned strongly on the issue of false self-employment in Ireland include the umbrella organisation the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), the Services Industrial Profession and Technical Union (SIPTU) and Unite.