

Promotional materials

From the outset it was agreed that there must be a balance struck between representing the experiences of abuse and vulnerability in prostitution, and the need to avoid showing those affected by prostitution as weak or victims.

Therefore, images and statements were chosen where possible to contrast the inner strength of the women affected and the stark reality of their experiences.

Making direct eye contact with the camera, and thus the viewer, we aimed to challenge audiences to reflect on the reality of what too many women, children and men were going through in Ireland.

Branding for the campaign put women at its centre, and chose colours that reflected its serious nature: red and black.

Social media

In the digital age, social media became a cornerstone of the campaign. In its latter years, this meant a need for an increase in imaginative visual content that could portray a political message in a moment. Survivor stories, captured in videos, quotes and images, were at the centre of this campaign.

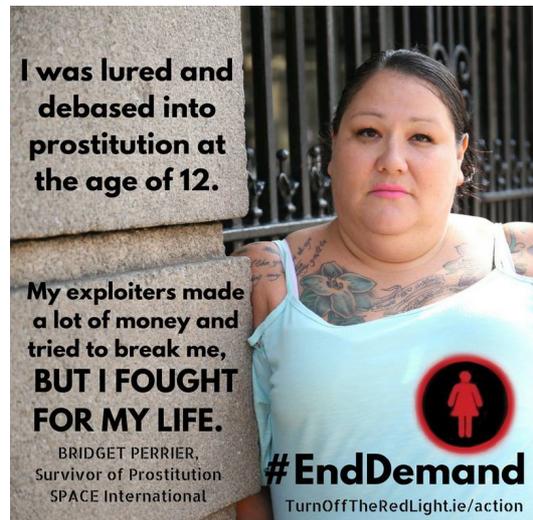
These were supported by partner messages to capture the varied members of the coalition. We asked partners to send in short clips explaining why they joined Turn Off the Red Light, to give us a bank of content for use.

Using hard evidence



for public events, and put on the side of a truck which drove around the city centre in advance of the legislation going before Government.

Anna was 14



The most successful imagery of the campaign was that of “Anna was 14”, a simple graphic showing a young woman with the words “14: The age Anna was first exploited in prostitution” followed by “She’s not the only one. You can help stop this” and a website link.

Evidence showed that girls under 18 were in brothels alongside adults. Also, many of the women in prostitution in Ireland entered the sex trade as girls.

Challenging assumptions

When the Irish Government tasked the cross-party Justice Committee to review laws on prostitution, a public awareness campaign was launched entitled “Anna was 14”.

While people had varying assumptions about adult women in prostitution, there is wide acceptance that child prostitution is always exploitation; is always rape.

To highlight the grey areas between child and adult, an older girl was asked to model as ‘Anna’, a



fictitious character that represented a typical profile of young women presenting to frontline partner organisations.

Complicity

By challenging the audience to take action, by visiting a website and contacting their representatives to seek change, the ad campaign ensured that

the public must face the reality that society as a whole is complicit in the sex trade, and thus has the power to change it. While you may not have known this is going on, now that you do – will you act?

This campaign raised awareness not only of the campaign, but also about the sex trade as a whole. Focussing on the exploitation of underage girls in the trade and forcing the viewer to challenge themselves meant the poster brings shock, urgency and the chance for action.

Visibility

The poster was featured on billboards around Ireland, and most notably as a banner on Dublin’s Liberty Hall, a famous trade union building on the city’s quays. Such prominent visibility led to wide media coverage, public debate, and helped contribute to a shift in public opinion around the need to enact the Nordic model by putting the spotlight on those who enabled such abuse.

