

## **Reporting Change**

### **An Evaluation of Headline – The National Media Monitoring Programme for Mental Health and Suicide**

**Submitted to:**

**NOSP**

**By:**



**October 2009**

## CONTENTS

1.	Foreword	3
2.	Background to evaluation	3
3.	Origins and Rationale	3
4.	Policy Context	4
5.	Evaluation Methodology	5
6.	Project Aims and Objectives	6
7.	Project Outcomes	7
8.	Review of Official Records	12
8.1	Media Monitoring Database	12
8.2	Letters Written to Media Professionals	14
8.3	Advertising and Broadcasting Complaints	15
8.4	Website Usage	17
8.5	Feedback from College Seminars	21
9.	Questionnaire Survey Feedback	22
10.	Conclusion	36
Appendix 1	Feedback from college seminars	37

## **1. Foreword**

This evaluation is completed at the end of year 3 of the operation of Headline- the National Media Monitoring Programme for mental health and suicide. Headline originates from action 9 of the Reach Out: National Strategy for Action on Suicide Prevention (2005-2014) and was spurred on by the existing Media watch programme operated by Shine.

The aim of this evaluation is to ascertain as far as possible whether Headline's objectives are being met.

This is an internal evaluation using a combination of desk research and a stakeholder questionnaire and has identified that in the main the programme is achieving its objectives. The evaluation identifies improvements which can be made to the programme. These are outlined in section 10. There are limitations to this evaluation as a self-evaluation tool was used.

On the basis of this evaluation and the anecdotal experience of many media personnel, people affected by mental ill health, and the general public, it is our opinion that the Headline programme should continue its present operation and develop as far as is possible additional and novel approaches to achieving its objectives.

John Saunders  
Director  
SHINE - Supporting People Affected by Mental Ill Health

## **2. Background to Evaluation**

On 10<sup>th</sup> February 2009, the funding body for the Headline project, the National Office for Suicide Prevention (NOSP) requested that Headline produce an evaluation of its work. The goal of this evaluation is to provide useful feedback on the project, and determine whether or not:

- Headline is on track in meeting its objectives
- The project is meeting stakeholder expectations
- Headline is accomplishing its intended impact

## **3. Origins and rationale for the project**

According to the World Health Organization, research over the last 30 years has convincingly demonstrated that the mass media are one of the most significant influences on belief systems. Consequently, people often form their attitudes about mental health problems through the television programmes, radio programmes, news reports and films they see, read and hear. The media has a significant role to play in promoting mental health and actively reducing stigma towards people with mental health difficulties.

The risk of imitative suicidal behaviour is a key issue of concern when reporting on suicide. A significant body of research exploring the link between media reporting of suicide and imitative suicidal behaviours exists. Reviews of these

studies have concluded that media reporting can lead to imitative suicidal behaviours.<sup>1</sup>

Headline is Ireland's national media monitoring programme, promoting responsible and accurate coverage of mental health and suicide related issues within the Irish media.

The vision of Headline is that all forms of the Irish media responsibly and accurately portray mental health and suicide related issues; that no one is adversely affected by media coverage of these issues; and that the mental health and mental well-being of the population be prioritised by the media.

Headline has been set up by the Health Service Executive's National Office for Suicide Prevention as part of "Reach Out" the National Strategy for Action on Suicide Prevention, and is managed by Shine.

The programme is modeled on Shine's in-house media watch programme, which operated in 2004 and 2005. The original programme focused on media portrayals of schizophrenia. However, the Headline programme expands on this brief, monitoring media coverage of all mental health and suicide related issues.

Headline works with editors, sub editors and journalists, including the National Union of Journalists, and media students to find ways to collaborate to ensure that suicide, mental health and mental illness are responsibly covered in the media.

Headline also serves as a vehicle for the public to become involved in helping to monitor the Irish media on issues relating to mental health and suicide.

Headline monitors the Irish national and regional print on a daily basis but can also, on request, monitor TV, radio, logos, adverts, posters and other forms of media.

#### **4. Policy Context**

The policy framework for Headline's work has been set out per Reach Out: National Strategy for Action on Suicide Prevention (2005-2014):

- **Implement Reach Out:**

Level A - General Population Approach

Goal: To promote positive mental health and well-being and bring about positive attitude change towards mental health, problem solving and coping in the general population.

---

<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization, 2008. Preventing Suicide: A Resource for Media Professionals.

## **Media Action Area 9**

Objective: To develop alliances with the media so that potentially harmful media portrayal of suicidal behaviour is avoided and that helpful portrayal of the issues is encouraged.

Against this background, *Reach Out* states:

“It is more likely that someone who is distressed or vulnerable will be negatively affected by media coverage of mental health or suicide related issues. At the same time, the media is a potential ally in the promotion of positive mental health and help seeking behaviour among the general public. The media can also help in tackling the stigma associated with mental health and suicidal behaviour - which is one of the greatest barriers to suicide prevention...

“In the preparation of media coverage of suicide or mental health, the most important issue to consider is whether a distressed listener, viewer or reader would be more encouraged to engage in self-harm by the piece or more encouraged to seek help (Irish Association of Suicidology and Samaritans, 2000).” (*Reach Out*, pg. 29)

Specific to Headline includes:

***9.2: Develop a system of media monitoring and response for mental health and suicide related issues (learning from the Media StopWatch campaign in Scotland and Schizophrenia Ireland’s Media Watch campaign);***

***9.5: Promote an annual award for a journalist covering mental health and suicide prevention issues.***

Additionally, all other points in Area 9 are relevant and linked to Headline’s work.

## **5. Evaluation Methodology**

In order to evaluate the Headline programme, a sub group of the Headline Steering Group was formed. This group acted as reference group. The group was supported by a Headline employee.

The methodology used to carry out the evaluation included:

1. Agreeing the evaluation framework, process and schedule.
2. Carrying out desk research – reading all relevant reports, publications ongoing evaluations, reviews and monthly and annual reports.
3. Preparing a draft stakeholder questionnaire with input from Derek Chambers and John Cullen.
5. Receiving feedback from the Reference Group.
6. Administering questionnaire and analysing results.
5. Preparing a Draft Evaluation Report.
6. Receiving feedback from the Reference Group.
7. Submitting the Final Evaluation Report.

## **6. Project Aims and Objectives**

### **Project Aim**

Headline's aim is outlined in its mission statement:

Headline is Ireland's national media monitoring programme, working to promote responsible and accurate coverage of mental health and suicide related issues within the Irish media.

### **Objectives**

#### **Headline's objectives as outlined in project proposal were:**

1. To formulate and participate in a Steering Group comprised of interested voluntary bodies relating to mental health, HSE and the National Office for Suicide Prevention to direct strategy for the project.
2. To highlight the issues around reporting on mental health and suicide for the next generation of journalists by providing lectures within the journalism/media studies courses at all colleges/third level institutions.
3. To organise a workshop for those working in the media who wish to learn more about mental health difficulties.
4. To scan national and regional sources through electronic search services.
5. To identify media sources which are not complying with the relevant media guidelines and engage with the relevant editor/journalist responsible identifying the breach in the guidelines and where necessary a course of action i.e. an information session, a printed apology.
6. To record data on the number of media pieces relating to the specific topics covered.
7. Develop a dedicated and independent website for the project with a section/specific page especially for journalists and broadcasters providing them with information and resources.
8. Seek meetings with the National Union of Journalists to discuss ideas of how the programme could be enhanced, and how best to facilitate working journalists in this area.
9. To capture top weekly stories on relevant mental health related issues and email a weekly bulletin to interested parties.
10. To lobby for a governmental media strategy for reporting on mental illness.
11. To encourage people to lobby the parties responsible for the breach of guidelines through emails and letter writing.
12. To join forces with the NUJ again to write an updated version of the 'Guide for Journalists and Broadcasters Reporting on Schizophrenia' which may broaden the topics covered.
13. Promote an annual award for a journalist covering mental health and suicide prevention issues (action 9.5 Reach Out Strategy).

## **7. Project Outcomes Steering Group**

A Steering Group of interested voluntary bodies relating to mental health, HSE and the National Office for Suicide Prevention was formed. The group meets twice a year to advise on strategy. In 2009, the group decided to expand membership to include working media professionals.

The group is currently made up of representatives from Aware, Bodywhys, Grow, HSE's press office, Irish Advocacy Network, Mental Health Ireland, National Office for Suicide Prevention, Samaritans, Shine, and print and broadcast media professionals.

### **College presentations**

Headline has delivered seminars on mental health and suicide in the media to journalism, media and communication students on the main third level journalism and media courses. The aim of the seminar is to provide the students with a better understanding of different mental health and suicide related issues, so that the students will be more comfortable and capable of producing positive media coverage in the future. The seminars are delivered on an annual basis and now form part of the syllabus in several colleges.

### **Presentations**

In addition to the annual seminars delivered to media, journalism and communication students and media professionals, Headline has delivered presentations to a variety of organisations and groups.

#### Suicide Prevention

Headline has delivered presentations on its work at a number of suicide prevention conferences and events including:

- 12<sup>th</sup> European Symposium on Suicide & Suicidal Behaviour; "Working together to prevent suicide: research, policy and practice" 2008
- International Association of Suicide Prevention's world conference on suicide prevention 'Preventing suicide across the lifespan : Dreams and realities' in Killarney, County Kerry in August 2007.
- National Office for Suicide Prevention's Annual Fora in 2007 and 2009
- The Irish Association of Suicidology (IAS) Conference "Youth Suicide in a Changing Society" 2008

#### Mental health professional and service user groups

Headline has delivered presentations to mental health professionals and service user groups including:

- Shine's Annual General Meeting 2008
- Shine's Helpline staff meeting

- Shine's Basin Club
- Shine relative peer support group
- St Patrick's Hospital as part of the Aware lecture series in 2009
- Senior registrars in Psychiatry, St Patrick's Hospital on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of April.  
The presentation was part of a media training day for senior registrars.

Headline has also delivered presentations on its work to the Equality Authority and the Northern Ireland Suicide Strategy Implementation Body.

### European Parliament

On 6 November 2008, Kahlil Thompson-Coyle, National Projects Manager for Shine and Headline gave a presentation on stigma in the media and Headline at a meeting of policymakers from the European Parliament and Commission, NGOs and advocacy group representatives convened at the European Parliament for a roundtable discussion entitled 'Mental Health – Fighting Stigma and Combating Social Exclusion'.

### **Media Workshops**

In 2008, Headline gave a training session on suicide in the media to RTE's broadcasters in conjunction with the National Office for Suicide Prevention. Headline participated in a media information session on reporting suicide hosted by the HSE on the 21st July 2009. Headline gave a presentation on the role of Headline in media monitoring and examples of international best and worst practice.

### **Media Monitoring and data collection**

In Autumn 2006, Headline travelled to Scotland to learn from the experiences of See Me and Choose Life, two Scottish organisations that are working with the media to improve on how mental health issues and suicide are reported. Following these consultations, Headline developed a media monitoring system. Media monitoring mechanisms were put in place, a database for collecting information on the articles received was developed, procedures for assessing articles were outlined, and a system for actioning articles was developed.

Headline monitors Irish print media for coverage of mental health and suicide using a list of key search terms agreed in consultation with its Steering Group. Two media monitoring companies supply Headline with articles which contain these search terms. Information from articles is inputted to a database.

The database has resulted in a rich source of data which allows trends in media reporting to be tracked over time. Headline is in the process of analysing trends in media coverage from 2008.

Headline responds to articles which breach the relevant media guidelines by contacting the relevant journalist or editor and alerting them to the breach. Headline also responds to articles on mental health or suicide which are positive and promote good mental health.

## **Website**

Headline launched its website in April 2007. The website is a key component of the Headline programme and has two main aims:

- To provide journalists and journalism students with resources and information on reporting mental health and suicide related issues
- To serve as a vehicle to encourage the public to become involved in monitoring and responding to media coverage of mental health and suicide related issues.

Information on mental health, stigma and the role the media can play in promoting positive mental health and well as guidelines and resources about reporting on mental health and suicide related issues are provided on the website. Contact details for mental health organisations are also provided so that journalists can follow up on media inquiries which they may have. Information on the Smedia awards and podcasts of the winners' work are also available on the website.

The website acts as lobbying platform for the general public to become involved in helping to monitor news stories relating to mental health and suicide. Members of the public can subscribe for media alerts. When the Headline team finds something in the media which seriously breaches the media guidelines and that needs complaint, a media alert containing details about the media piece is sent to all subscribers. Subscribers can then decide if they wish to contact the media source to make their opinions on the piece known. The relevant contact details for the media source are contained in the alert. Step by step instructions on how to make a complaint and template letters are available on the website. 401 people are currently subscribed to the media alerts.

Members of the public can also alert Headline to pieces they have seen or heard in the media which they feel are in need of further action by completing an online form.

The website also features a newsfeed of stories on mental health issues which is updated daily. The weekly news highlights bulletins which Headline distributes are also archived on the website. The website also features polls where members of the public vote on mental health related issues

## **NUJ**

Headline has met with a representative of the NUJ on several occasions to discuss how the needs of journalists can best be met and how the programme can be enhanced.

Headline spoke on a motion for the NUJ to draft guidelines about reporting on mental health issues at the NUJ Annual Conference 2007. The motion was successful.

## **Press Council**

In 2008 the Press Council of Ireland called for submissions on the reporting of suicide in the Irish print media. Headline's submission outlined the need for greater guidance for those reporting on suicide and that there should be a guiding principle incorporated into the Press Council Code of Conduct on the

avoidance of detail in reporting which may lead to imitative behaviour and copycat suicide.

### **News Highlights**

Headline has expanded the bulletin service originally supplied by Shine to cover articles on policy, research, and services relating to all mental health and suicide related issues. The bulletin is circulated to over 600 people with an interest in the area of mental health and suicide prevention. The bulletins are also archived on Headline's website.

### **Lobbying**

Headline has created a public lobbying platform through its website. Headline lobbied the Press Council for the inclusion of a clause on responsible reporting of suicide in the Press Code.

### **Public Campaign**

Headline serves as a vehicle for the public to become involved in helping to monitor the Irish media on issues relating to mental health and suicide. Headline encourages people to speak out and use their voices to improve the quality of media coverage of suicide and mental health issues. Members of the public are encouraged to notify Headline if they come across any media coverage on mental health or suicide that they feel is particularly negative or positive and which merits comment. People can decide if they would like to contact the media directly themselves to voice their opinions.

Headline's website acts as a lobbying platform for the general public to become involved in helping to monitor news stories relating to mental health and suicide.

### **NUJ Guide**

In 2007 Headline produced an updated version of Shine and NUJ Guide for Journalists and Broadcasters Reporting on Schizophrenia. In addition to this guide, Headline has worked with various mental health and media organisations to produce guidelines and resources for reporting on mental health and suicide related issues.

Headline has worked with Samaritans and the Irish Association of Suicidology to produce an updated version of the Media Guidelines for the Portrayal of Suicide which was published in October 2009.

Headline is a member of the International Association for Suicide Prevention Media Taskforce. As part of its involvement in the taskforce, Headline has contributed to the revised World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines on suicide and the media.

Headline has contributed to the development of the Lexicon: International Media Guide for Mental Health which has been produced by several international mental health organisations following discussions regarding media portrayals of mental health issues at the International Mental Health Summit held in 2008.

Headline has developed an interactive online resource for media professionals reporting on mental health and suicide related issues. The resource brings together existing guidelines and resources and presents them in an easy to use package.

## Media Award

Headline sponsored a category called the Headline Award for Journalism Relating to Mental Health or Suicide Prevention in the Smedia (Student Media Awards) in 2008 and 2009. Headline sponsors the award in an effort to raise awareness among media students of the issues involved when reporting on mental health and suicide and to recognise the good work being produced by media students. Previous winners of the award have gone on to work in the Irish media and Andrea Gilligan, winner of the 2008 award has become a member of Headline's Steering Group.

Figure 7.0

### Objective Checklist

Objective	
1. To formulate and participate in a Steering Group comprised of interested voluntary bodies relating to mental health, HSE and the National Office for Suicide Prevention to direct strategy for the project.	
2. To highlight the issues around reporting on mental health and suicide for the next generation of journalists by providing lectures within the journalism/media studies courses at all colleges/third level institutions.	
3. To organise a workshop for those working in the media who wish to learn more about mental health difficulties.	Partially Fulfilled
4. To scan national and regional sources through electronic search services.	
5. To identify media sources which are not complying with the relevant media guidelines and engage with the relevant editor/journalist responsible identifying the breach in the guidelines and where necessary a course of action i.e. an information session, a printed apology.	
6. To record data on the number of media pieces relating to the specific topics covered.	
7. Develop a dedicated and independent website for the project with a section/specific page especially for journalists and broadcasters providing them with information and resources.	
8. Seek meetings with the National Union of Journalists to discuss ideas of how the programme could be enhanced, and how best to facilitate working journalists in this area.	
9. To capture top weekly stories on relevant mental health related issues and email a weekly bulletin to interested parties.	
10. To lobby for a governmental media strategy for reporting on mental illness.	Partially Fulfilled

11. To encourage people to lobby the parties responsible for the breach of guidelines through emails and letter writing.	
12. To join forces with the NUJ again to write an updated version of the Guide for Journalists and Broadcasters Reporting on Schizophrenia which may broaden the topics covered.	
13. Promote an annual award for a journalist covering mental health and suicide prevention issues (action 9.5 Reach Out Strategy).	

## 8. Review of Official Records

### 8.1 Media Monitoring Database

#### Review of media monitoring database

Headline monitors Irish print media for coverage of mental health and suicide. Two media monitoring companies supply Headline with articles containing key search terms agreed in consultation with its steering group. Approximately 33,522 articles relating to mental health and suicide have been received since the programme began in September 2006. Information has been recorded on 24,977 of these articles.

Headline has been recording data on articles received since December 2006. Initially, only articles which were judged to be negative or positive in tone<sup>2</sup> were recorded. Information was recorded using the following fields: publication date of article, who reported the article to Headline, journalist, source, source type, item type, headline, tone of headline, emphasis of piece, tone of piece, whether the term commit suicide was used, issue with the piece, and action to be taken.

In April 2008, following consultation with the NOSP, it was decided that information on every article received by Headline would be recorded in a revised media monitoring database. This meant that positive, negative and neutral articles would now be logged instead of just positive and negative as had previously been the case.

The revised database, which has been in operation from April 2008 records information using the following dataset:

- Publication date of the article
- Headline of the article
- Headline Quality
- Source
- Source Type
- Item Type
- Journalist
- Theme

---

<sup>2</sup> As outlined in Headline's internal data collection process document and in line with the relevant guidelines and resources

- Relevance of the item to the topics of suicide/mental health. A three point scale is used
- Keywords. This field refers to the key words supplied to the media monitoring companies as search terms
- Quality/Adherence to guidelines<sup>3</sup>

It is not possible to directly compare data across all fields as two different systems have been used to capture data on media coverage since Headline was established. However, there are some fields which have been recorded in the same manner in both media monitoring databases. These can be used to give an indication of changing patterns in media behaviour over the course of the programme.

Both systems have assessed whether articles are positive or negative using the same criteria. Looking at the frequency of negative articles over the course of the programme illustrates how the quality of media coverage and adherence to guidelines has changed over time.

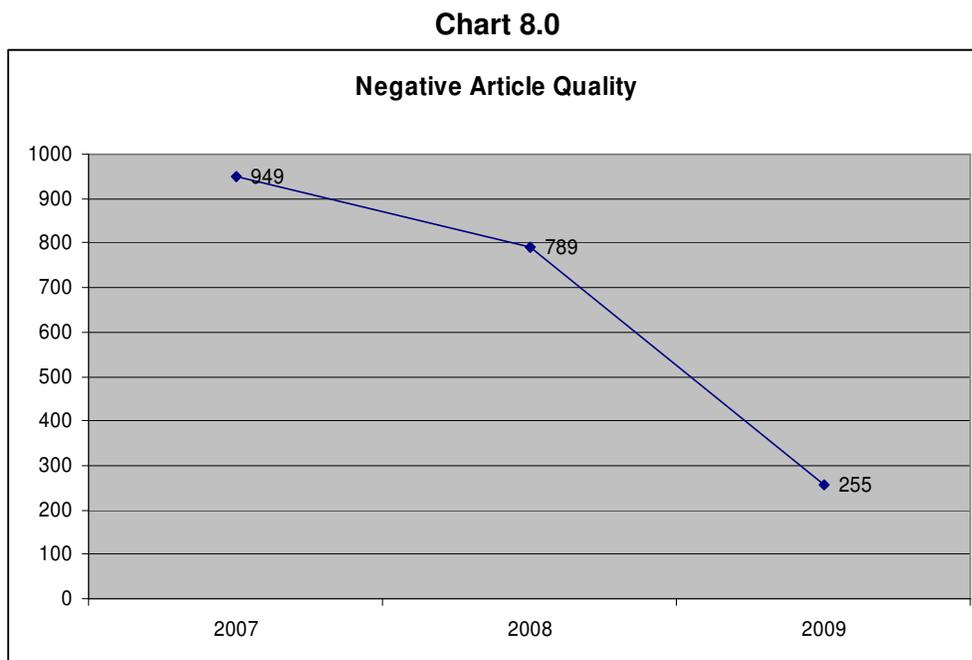


Chart 8.0 shows the volume of negative articles received from 2007 to September 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Decisions on the quality of articles are based on adherence to the Irish Association for Suicidology (IAS) and Samaritans Media Guidelines for the Portrayal of Suicide, and the Shine Guide for Journalists and Broadcasters Reporting on Schizophrenia.

949 negative articles were recorded in 2007. There was a 16.9% drop in the amount of negative articles recorded in 2008 to 789 articles.

We do not have a full year's data for 2009 to compare with the figures from 2008. However the amount of negative articles recorded for the same time period (January to August inclusive) in 2008 was 609. When we compare these to the 2009 figures we see that the amount of negative articles recorded has dropped by 44.8%.

Overall there has been a clear drop in the amount of negative articles being analysed by Headline. This decline is likely to continue in 2009.

## 8.2 Letters written to media professionals

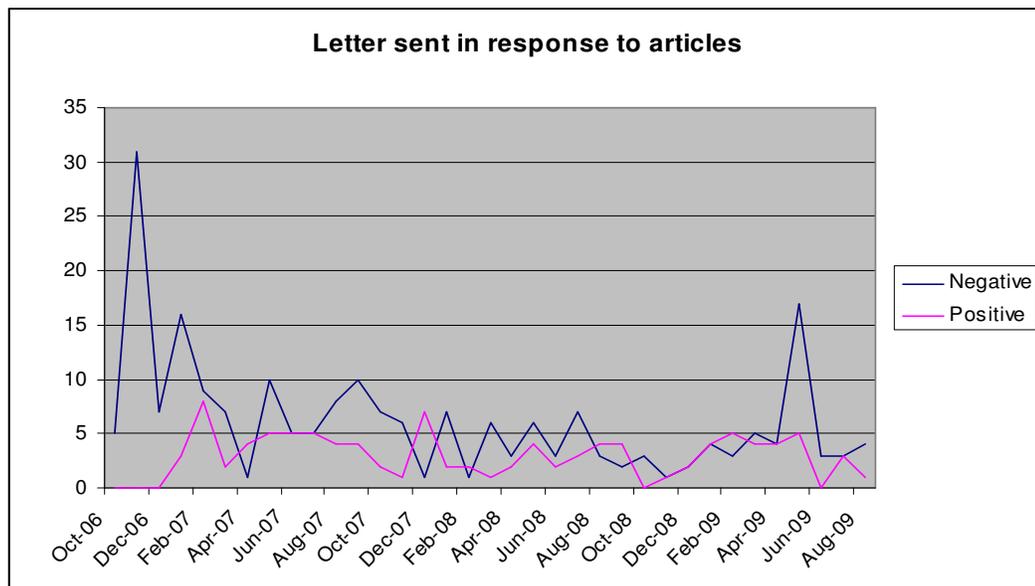
### Letters written to media professionals

Headline has written 318 letters in response to media articles relating to mental health or suicide related issues. 215 of these articles have been in response to articles which were assessed as being negative and 103 in response to articles which have been assessed as being positive in tone.

Chart 8.1 shows a decline in amount of incidences where Headline has responded to negative letters since 2006. The volume of letters sent in response to negative articles spikes when certain events occur. For example the spike in the amount of letters sent in May/June 2009 can be attributed to the negative media coverage resulting from the publication of the Monageer Inquiry Report. This suggests that adherence to the relevant media guidelines drops when extraordinary events occur.

The amount of letters sent in response to positive letters has remained more consistent with no more than 8 letters being sent per month.

Chart 8.1



### **8.3 Advertising and Broadcasting Complaints**

Headline responds to inappropriate and irresponsible advertisements and broadcasts by submitting a formal complaint to the relevant regulatory body or by contacting the broadcaster or advertiser privately. Details of advertisements and broadcasts which Headline has responded to are outlined below.

#### **Broadcasting Complaints Commission**

Headline has had three of the five complaints it has made to the Broadcasting Complaints Commission (BCC ) upheld giving it a 60% success rate.

Headline made its first complaint to the BCC in March 2007. The complaint was submitted under Section 24(2)(general advertising codes), and related to an advert broadcast on Q102. The advert promoted a Deirdre O’Kane comedy show and featured an excerpt from her show which was offensive and stigmatising to people with mental health problems. The Commission agreed that the clip used could be considered to stigmatise people with mental illness and therefore, was likely to cause offence and upheld the complaint under Section 24(2)(e)(general advertising codes).

Headline submitted a complaint to the BCC in August 2007 under 24(2)(d)(taste & decency: Code of Programme Standards – Section 3.4.3 (stereotyping/stigmatising people with a disability). The complaint was in relation to comments made during a panel discussion on Prime Time about the risk developing a psychotic mental illness from the use of cannabis. During the programme, two of the four guests called people with mental health problems ‘basket cases’ four times. This was not challenged or objected to in any way by the host. It was also suggested that people with mental health would not watch Prime Time. The complaint was upheld by the BCC.

Headline submitted a complaint about a radio advert for 123.ie insurance to the BCC under Section 24(2)(e)(General Advertising Codes – sections 3.2 and 3.2.1 offence, harm and human dignity) in October 2007. The complaint was made on the grounds that the advertisement used language and sound effects which implied that one would have to be mad not to avail of the product being advertised. The sound effects used were common forms of slang for mental illness- the sound of a cuckoo or a barking dog. Headline asserted that the use of these sound effects was derogatory and insulting to those with mental health problems. However the Broadcasting Complaints Commission (BCC) was of the opinion that the sound effects were not used with reference to mental illness and rejected the complaint.

In December 2007, Headline submitted a complaint to the BCC about an episode of the RTÉ comedy sketch show ‘ I Dare Ya’ under Section 24(2)(d)(taste & decency: Code of Programme Standards – Section 3.4.3 Persons and groups in society, stereotyping/stigmatising people with mental disability). The sketch featured portrayed a person in a straitjacket outside the Central Mental Hospital trying to ‘escape’. Headline believed that the sketch was extremely stigmatising and insulting to those with mental health problems and their families and that it perpetuated negative and uninformed stereotypes about people with mental illness and the medical treatment which they receive. The complaint was upheld

with regard to Section 24(2)(d)(taste & decency: Code of Programme Standards – Section 3.4.3 Persons and groups in society, stereotyping/stigmatising people with mental disability).

In October 2008, Headline submitted a complaint under Section 24(2)(d)(taste & decency, the Code of Programme Standards: 2.2 due care and 3.8 imitative behaviour). The complaint related to details of a suicide method which Mr Ryan gave during the review of the daily newspapers. Mr Ryan gave the name of the chemical used in the suicide and the quantity of the chemical used. Headline felt this was in breach of the Code of Programme Standards, sections 2.2 due care and 3.8 imitative behaviour, as the information read out by Mr Ryan could lead to imitative suicidal behaviour. However, the Commission found that the presentation was responsible and the complaint was rejected with regard to the Code of Programme Standards, sections 2.2 due care and 3.8 imitative behaviour.

**Table 8.0**  
**BCC Complaint rulings**

<b>Complaint</b>	<b>Ruling</b>
March 2007 Deirdre O’Kane Show radio advert	Complaint upheld
August 2007 Prime Time	Complaint upheld
October 2007 123.ie radio advert	Complaint rejected
December 2007 ‘I dare Ya’ complaint	Complaint upheld
October 2008 Gerry Ryan Show	Complaint rejected

### **Advertising Standards Agency of Ireland**

Headline made a complaint to the Advertising Standards Agency of Ireland (ASAI) about an advert for the ICAD Exhibition) which clearly implied the method a man was about to use to take his own life. The complaint was upheld and the advert was cancelled.

### **National Newspapers of Ireland**

In August 2007, Headline was alerted to an advert in the Irish Times for National Newspapers of Ireland (NNI). The advert was stigmatising in its wording and imagery. Headline contacted the Irish Times and the NNI and subsequently received a letter of apology from the NNI and a promise that the advert would not be run again.

### **Electric Picnic**

In August 2008, Headline contacted the organisers of Electric Picnic about a news release which appeared on their website announcing a ‘lunatic asylum’-themed performance area at the festival. The news release was removed from the site and the theme of the performance arena was changed to a hospital theme.

### **Puccino's Café Chain**

In December 2006, Headline received a complaint from a member of the public about the design of teabags being used by the Puccino's chain of cafes. The teabag featured an image of a man hanging himself. Headline contacted Puccino's who agreed to discontinue the teabags and replace them with a less offensive image.

### **Kit-Kat Nut Bar**

In May 2007, Headline received several complaints from members of the public about an advert for a Kit-Kat Nut Bar. Headline contacted the broadcasters and the agency responsible for the advert. The advert made various references to peoples going 'nuts' and experiencing paranoia. Headline felt that the advert was insulting and stigmatising to people with mental health difficulties. Headline contacted RTÉ and the advertising agency responsible for the advert. The ad was pulled and Headline worked privately with the advertising company to produce copy that was not offensive.

## **8.4 Website Usage**

The following are figures for all visits to [www.Headline.ie](http://www.Headline.ie) from the launch of the website of the 19<sup>th</sup> April 2007 until the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2009.

### **Visits to website**

Visits	18,305
Absolute unique visitors	14,294
New visits	78%

There have been 14,294 unique visitors to the site and 18,305 visits overall. 78% of visits to the site are new visits. The amount of visits to the site increased by 28.5% from 2007 to 2008. Provisional figures suggest that there has been an increase of 22.4% in visits to the site in 2009.

### **Page views**

Page views	48,479
Average page views	2.65

48,479 pages have been viewed by these visitors. The average amount of pages viewed per visit is 2.65.

### **Time spent on site**

The average amount of time spent on the site is 1.58 minutes. The bounce rate is 60.84%<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Bounce rate is the percentage of single-page visits or visits in which the person left from the entrance (landing) page

### Top ten countries

The 18,305 visits to the site came from 116 different countries. The top ten countries in order of unique visitors are listed below.

**Table 8.1**

	<b>Country/Territory</b>	<b>Visits</b>	<b>Pages/Visits</b>
1.	Ireland	11,943	3.10
2.	United States	1,985	1.43
3.	United Kingdom	1,745	2.25
4.	Canada	253	2.30
5.	Australia	211	1.69
6.	Germany	198	2.31
7.	India	170	1.62
8.	France	116	1.72
9.	Spain	111	1.49
10.	Brazil	83	1.41

### Benchmarking

It is possible to compare Headline's website statistics to the average statistics for similar sized websites in the activism and social affairs category<sup>5</sup>.

The benchmark for visits to similar sites is 2,181. There have been 18,305 visits to the Headline site, which is 739.3% above the standard benchmark.

The benchmark for page views for similar sites is 4,849. There have been 48,479 pages views for the Headline site, which is 899% higher than the standard benchmark.

The benchmark for average time spent on a similar site is 0.56 minutes. The average time spent on [www.Headline.ie](http://www.Headline.ie) is 110.7% higher than this at 1.58 minutes.

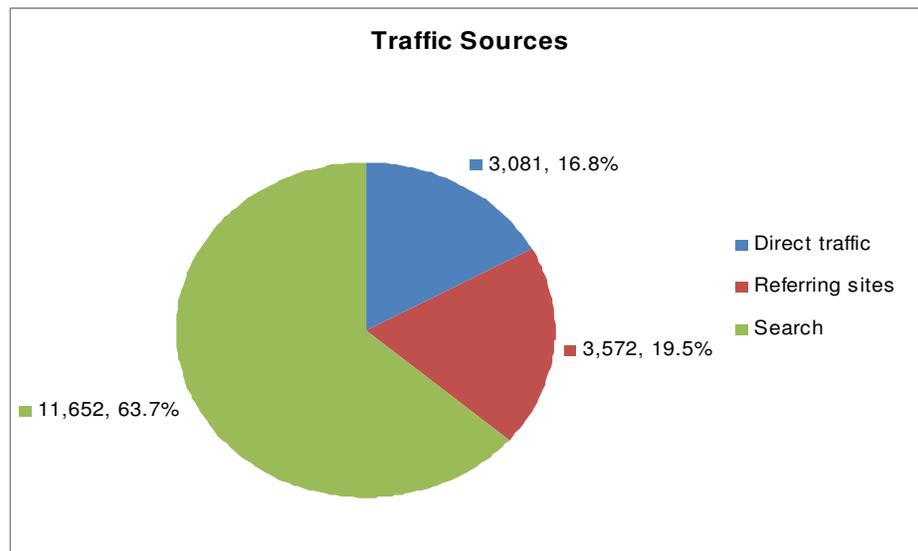
The benchmark for pages viewed per visit is 2.22. Headline's pages viewed per visit is 19.4% higher than this at 2.65.

---

<sup>5</sup> Benchmarking is carried out using the Google Analytics service. More information on this service can be accessed here <http://www.google.com/support/googleanalytics/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=89382>

## Traffic Sources

Chart 8.2



16.83% of visits to the site came directly to site using [www.Headline.ie](http://www.Headline.ie) . 19.51% visits were directed from links on other sites. 63.65% came through search engines by searching for words that are contained on the site. This shows that a high percentage of visitors to the site are proactively seeking out the site.

## Content viewed

The list below shows the top 10 pages on the site that received the most hits. Page views are the number of times the page was looked at and unique page view is the number of people who looked at this page. In all cases the page views are higher than the unique page views showing that people returned to the page a number of times.

Table 8.2

	Page	Page views	Unique page views
1	Home page	12,022	8,698
2	About Us	2,789	2,170
3	Media Info	2,618	2,020
4	Contact Us	1,614	1,373
5	Have your say	1,523	1,202

6	Awards	1,491	1,197
7	Newsheadline/2007/may/06/pro-ana-bracelet	1,297	1,216
8	News Headline (Noticeboard )	1,244	853
9	Links	1,158	945
1	Media Alerts	1,116	644

### Media Alerts

An analysis of the website figures shows that activity on the site increases on the dates that media alerts are sent out. The amount of unique visitors to the site and page views both increase on these dates. As can be seen from the table below the amount of page views increase by 23% and the number of visits to the website increases by 30.8% when a media alert is sent out. This shows that people are responding to the media alerts and accessing the website.

	Daily Average	Average when media alert sent	Percentage
Page Views	2.65	3.28	+23%
Visits to site	21.1	27.6	+30.8%

### Conclusion

The volume of visits, page views, average time spent on site and pages visited for [www.Headline.ie](http://www.Headline.ie) is considerably higher than the standard benchmark for similar websites. This is encouraging as it shows that the website has a high level of usage. The volume of visits to the site is increasing annually.

The majority of visits to the site have been from within Ireland suggesting that the website is being used by its target audience of Irish media professionals, media students and people interested in mental health and the media.

Both the media information section and the have your say section of the site are among the top five pages being viewed on the website. This shows the website is achieving its aims of providing a media resource for journalists and serving as a vehicle to the public to become involved in monitoring media coverage of mental health and suicide related issues. Figures show that the volume on the site increases on the dates on which media alerts are sent out. This is particularly encouraging as it suggests that people are accessing the site to respond to the alert.

## **8.5 Feedback from College Seminars**

### **Feedback from seminars in evaluation questionnaires**

Headline has delivered seminars on mental health and suicide in the media to journalism, media and communication students. The aim of the seminar is to provide students with a better understanding of different mental health and suicide related issues so that the students will be more comfortable and capable of producing positive media coverage in the future.

The seminar introduces students to key issues involved in reporting on mental health and suicide related issues. Students are introduced to Irish and international media guidelines for reporting on mental health and suicide. Examples of media coverage are discussed. Headline and the services it can provide to journalists are also discussed. The seminars are delivered on an annual basis and now form part of the syllabus in several colleges.

Seminars have been delivered in the following colleges:

Dublin Institute of Technology

Dublin City University

Griffith College

Mary Immaculate College, University Limerick

National University of Ireland Maynooth

National University of Ireland Galway

Independent Colleges

The seminars are evaluated by asking the students to fill out evaluation forms after each seminar. Evaluation forms are reviewed after each seminar and the seminar is updated and revised regularly in response to the feedback received.

A breakdown of the responses to the evaluation questions is given below. In general the seminars are well received with 84% of respondents finding the seminar helpful. 97.5% of the respondents felt that they had learned something from the presentation, while 97% felt that they were more knowledgeable about suicide and mental health media guidelines because of the presentation. 94% of respondents felt more knowledgeable about types of media reporting that can lead to copycat behaviour after the seminar. 91% felt more prepared to write about mental health and suicide related issues while 94% felt that they knew where to get more information about reporting on these issues. (Please see Appendix 2 for more detail).

Some of the comments received about the seminar included:

“I thought it was very helpful especially indicating what terminology is acceptable to use when reporting mental health”;

“Very, very interesting. Would not have been aware of how stories could influence and hurt people – opened my eyes. Thank you”;

“I learned a lot about how to approach people that were potentially suicidal”;

“Brilliant idea! Very informative”;

“I found this presentation very informative”;

“I found the presentation to be very clear, gave an effective insight into the issue”.

“Very clear presentation”;

“Overall it was interesting but very open to debate for journalist, editors, all media”;

“Good presentation, highlights the responsibility the media have in treating these issues sensitively”;

“Very informative. I was not expecting to learn so much about the effects of media in relation to suicide”;

“Kit-Kat censorship was a bit of a joke”;

“The end of the presentation (with examples) was good and interesting, mix this with the beginning to keep your audience”.

These results show that the seminar is achieving its aim of providing students with a better understanding of different mental health and suicide related issues so that the students will be more comfortable and capable of producing positive media coverage in the future.

The respondents were also asked for their suggestions for improving the seminar. Some of the suggestions for how the seminar could be improved included:

- To allow more time for the presentation and for discussion with the audience
- To make the presentation more interactive
- Provide more positive examples of how to report on these issues
- To provide handouts and resources that can be reference later

## **9. Questionnaire Survey Feedback**

### **9.1 Survey Methodology**

#### **9.1.1 The Questionnaire Survey**

A draft questionnaire survey was developed and circulated to Derek Chambers, NOSP and John Cullen NUI Maynooth and the Evaluation Reference Group, for critical comment. A number of modifications were made based on this consultative process. The survey was administered to 250 stakeholders from the following identified stakeholder groups; Mental health service users, relatives of

service users, media professionals, mental health professionals, Headline steering group members, and media students.

#### 9.1.2 Administering the survey

A letter email outlining the objectives of the survey and containing a hyperlink to the survey was sent to potential respondents. A date of completion was emphasised and respondents were assured that they would remain anonymous unless they decided to identify themselves. Hard copies and stamped addressed envelopes were sent to a small selection of respondents who were unlikely to have email access. This information was also sent to the Irish Advocacy Network, Aware consumer Panel, Action on Suicide Alliance, and the National Service Users Executive for distribution to their members.

#### 9.1.3 Qualitative Data Research

The main aim of this section of the research was to obtain further information with regard to Headline fulfilling its objectives and service provision and any further issues generated by the analysis of the data gathered through the questionnaire survey.

Five survey respondents who had agreed to be contacted for a follow-up interview were telephoned for a standardised, open-ended follow-up interview.

The interviews were conducted by telephone by a Headline staff member.

#### 9.1.4 Method of data analysis

SurveyMonkey.com a web based survey tool was used to prepare an online survey and collect the results.

The MS Excel software package was used to process and analyse the data and compile visual charts and tables.

#### 9.1.5 Confidentiality

As interviewees were guaranteed full confidentiality, all names have been omitted from the quotes used throughout the report. For purposes of clarity, all quotes from interviews will be presented in italic font.

### **9.2 Questionnaire Survey Feedback**

#### **9.2.1 Stakeholder category**

Respondents were asked to indicate which stakeholder category they were a part of. Respondents were allowed to select more than one option and were given the option of specifying their own category, if they felt they were not represented by the options provided.

24.10% of respondents categorised themselves as mental health professionals, while 20.7% choose the media professional category. 13.8% of respondents selected the relatives of service user category and 6.9% choose mental health services user. 6.9% of respondents selected the Headline Steering Group

member category. None of the respondents selected the media student category. This may be attributable to the time of year in which the survey was circulated, as students would not have been in college.

34.5% of respondents selected the 'other' category and the categories they specified are outlined below in table 9.1.

**Table 9.0**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Other (please specify)	34.5% (10)
Mental health professional	24.1%(7)
Media professional	20.7% (6)
Relative of service user	13.8% (4)
Headline Steering Group member	6.90% (2)
Mental Health Service user	6.9% (2)
Media student	0.0% (0)

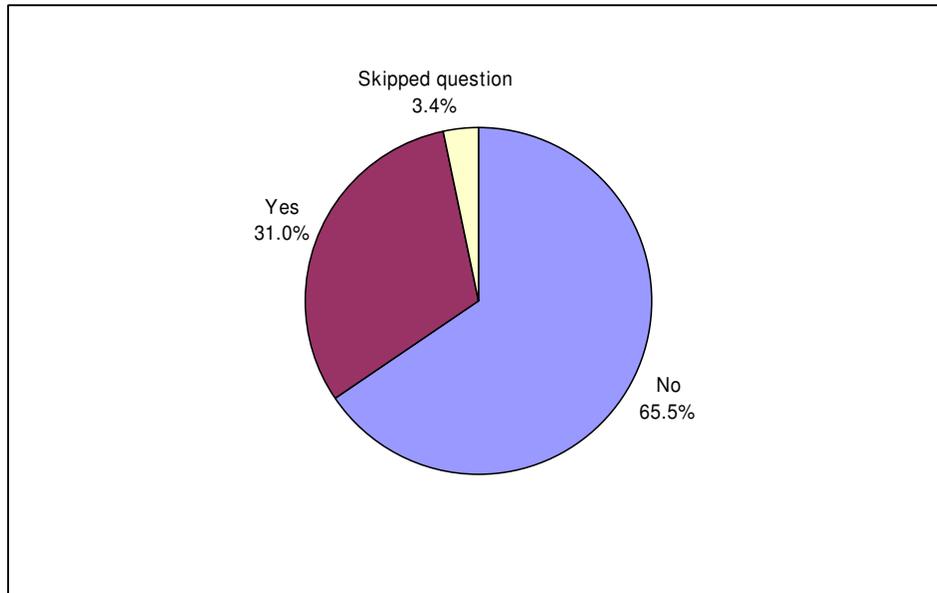
**Table 9.1**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Voluntary organisation	3.33% (1)
Journalism educator	3.33% (1)
Past user of Mental Health Services/ IT Sligo Advocacy Studies Graduate	3.33% (1)
Working in equality area	3.33% (1)
Mental health promotion specialist	3.33% (1)
Member of interested non governmental organisation	3.33% (1)
Student of the health profession	3.33% (1)
Resource Officer Suicide Prevention, HSE	3.33% (1)
Volunteer agency manager	3.33% (1)
Voluntary service	3.33% (1)

### 9.2.2 Initiating contact

Respondents were asked if they initiated contact with Headline. 65.5% (19) had not initiated contact. 31% (9) had initiated contact. The question was skipped by 3.4% (1) of respondents.

**Chart 9.0**  
**Did you initiate contact with Headline?**



Various reasons were given for initiating contact with Headline and these are outlined below. The main reason contact was initiated was to obtain information, specifically information on mental health and the media, and on Headline's work in general. Contact was also initiated because the respondent wanted to complain about a media portrayal.

*"Working on a mental health campaign I contacted Headline to find out exactly what work it did and how we could work together."*

*"I made a complaint to the B.C.C. concerning a programme on the R.T.E. programme Prime Time."*

*"I contacted headline after viewing the website and wanted further details regarding media and mental health"*

*"I met with Jane Arigho and she agreed to include me on the e mail circular every Friday."*

*"Assistance with mental health staff training"*

*"To get training material for a Family Education Course on stigma."*

*"To consider links with issue of equality, particularly stereotyping. Particularly looking at the model of media monitoring and how this could be applied for stereotyping"*

*“We initiated contact in that as an organisation we were also monitoring the media issues relating to mental health & therefore wished to collaborate with similar organisations”*

### **9.2.3 Expectations**

#### **Expectations prior to initiating contact**

Respondents who had initiated contact with Headline were asked what their expectations of Headline had been, prior to their engagement with the organisation. In general those initiating contact with Headline expected the organisation to be well informed on the issues of mental health and the media.

Respondents stated that they *“hoped that Headline would be able to provide information on the steps taken when the media is reporting or discussing the area of mental health, in particular regarding reducing stigma attached to mental health”* and expected that Headline was *“a professional experienced group of journalists familiar with reporting arrangements of mental health issues”*.

It was expected that Headline would be able to provide *“information on mental health issues and monitoring media”* and *“a regular update on newspaper reporting on suicide”*. Another respondent expected to receive *“knowledge about the issue I wanted information on. Strategies for addressing stigma”* while one respondent *“wanted to know more”*.

Other respondents were not sure of what Headline’s role was before contacting Headline. One respondent said *“I wasn’t entirely sure of Headline’s remit, but understood it worked on media coverage of mental health. I wanted to find out exactly what Headline did and how we could productively work together”*.

Another respondent *“had very little idea what Headline did when originally referred in Headline’s direction by the PR dept of the HSE. Then my expectations were that the organisation would be knowledgeable about mental health issues in the media or would be able to give guidance on how staff should interact with the media.”*

A respondent who was contacting Headline about a media complaint reported that he/she *“expected to be supported in my complaint as I felt I had a very valid complaint.”*

#### **Were expectations met?**

100% of those who had initiated contact with Headline felt that their expectations had been met. Their comments are given below.

*“Great for tracking issues in the media”*

*“I spoke with Jane Arigho and was given a very clear outline of what Headline did and of possibly ways we could work together. It was very useful to know a bit more about the various spheres of action and I would feel happy contacting Jane again as she was very helpful and interested.”*

*“I felt that I received all the support I wanted and I received regular feedback from Headline on how my complaint was being dealt with”*

*“The individual with whom I was in contact with provided me with suitable information”*

*“It’s not Headline’s role to guide mental health staff on dealing [with] appearing in the media, but Jane was highly knowledgeable and helpful on media monitoring.”*

*“I value having the compilation of specific news”*

#### **9.2.4 Is Headline fulfilling its mission statement ?**

Respondents were asked if they felt that Headline was fulfilling its mission statement as outlined in the introduction to the questionnaire- Headline is Ireland’s national media monitoring programme, working to promote responsible and accurate coverage of mental health and suicide related issues within the Irish media.

The response to this question is outlined in chart 9.1 below.

86.2% (25) of respondents felt that Headline is fulfilling its mission statement. One respondent commented that *“Headline achieves a magnificent amount bearing in mind its meagre resources. Media training and holding the media to account is massively important, and the alerts and weekly media watch lists are extremely useful.”*

Another respondent who felt that Headline was fulfilling its mission statement commented that he/she did *“feel that these types of organisations are excellent but that the general public is not always aware that they exist.”*

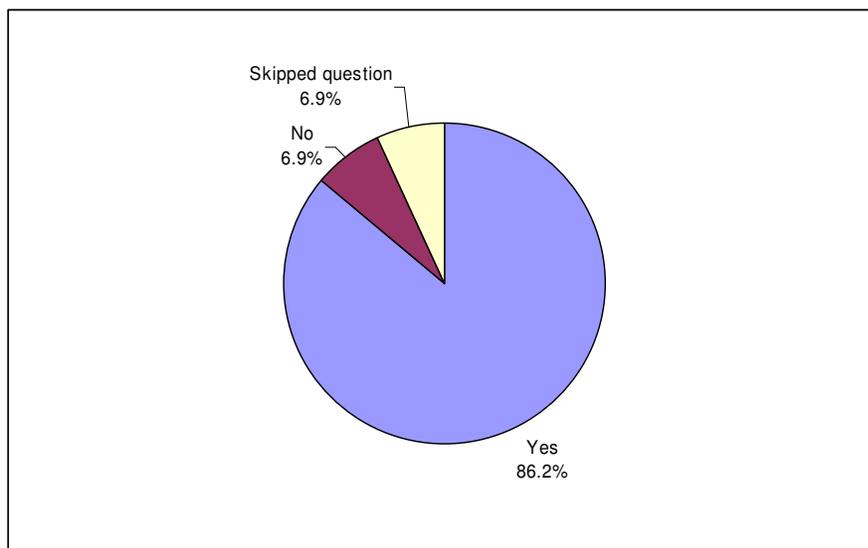
6.9% (2) did not feel that Headline was fulfilling its mission statement.

One respondent who answered that Headline was not fulfilling its mission statement expressed that he/she would have preferred the option of *“a box to let me express that I think Headline is trying its best”*. The respondent went on to express a desire *“to see Headline (in the pursuit of fulfilling its mission statement) ensuring that media articles are clear in acknowledge that there are ‘A Multiplicity Of Perspectives’ and not just the views put forward by psychiatrists.”*

6.9%(2) did not answer the question, commenting that they could not *“comment yes or no”*

**Chart 9.1**

**Do you think Headline is fulfilling its mission statement?**



A number of barriers to the achievement of Headline’s mission statement were discussed in the follow-up telephone interviews. The following barriers were identified:

- The control which sub-editors have over headlines and articles and the difficulty of reaching this group.
- The difficulty of achieving buy-in from the press
- The lack of awareness of the Headline programme
- The fact that complaints to the Press Council must be made by someone directly affected by the article in question.
- Lack of resources

### 9.2.5 Headline’s services

Respondents were asked which of Headline’s services they had utilised.

The services utilised by respondents are outlined in table 9.2 below.

Headline news highlights bulletin (66.7%) was the service most availed of, followed by Headline media alerts (55.6%) and website usage (40.7%).

**Table 9.2**

<b>Service</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Number</b>
Headline news highlights	66.7%	18
Headline media alerts	55.6%	15
Website usage	40.7%	11
Presentation by a staff member	37%	10
Information online	33.3%	9
Information by phone	14.8%	4
Support through complaint process	14.8%	4
Media training	7.4%	2
Lecture at a third level institution or further education institution	7.4%	2
Interview/Assistance with interview	3.70%	1
Media award	0.00%	0

### 9.2.6 Level of service

Respondents were asked to rate the level of each service they had utilised. The results for each service can be seen below in table 9.3.

In general the quality of services were rated highly. Lectures at a third level institution or further education institution, Interview/Assistance with interview, and information by phone were all rated as being excellent. Presentations by a staff member, support through the complaint process, Headline media alerts, and media training were either rated as being excellent or good. Information online and website usage were mainly rated as being excellent or good with one respondent in each case rating these services as fair.

**Table 9.3**

<b>Service</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>
Presentation by a staff member	81.8% (9)	18.2% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Support through complaint process	75.0% (3)	25.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Headline media alerts	66.7% (8)	33.3% (4)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Headline news highlights	66.7% (12)	33.3% (6)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Media training	50.0% (1)	50.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Information online	44.4% (4)	44.4% (4)	11.1% (1)	0.0% (0)
Website usage	36.4% (4)	54.5% (6)	9.1% (1)	0.0% (0)
Information by phone	100.0% (4)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Lecture at a third level institution or further education institution	100.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Interview/Assistance with interview	100.0% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)

### **9.2.7 Positives**

Respondents were asked what was good about Headline's services. Respondents highlighted a variety of elements which they felt were good about Headline's services.

#### **Challenging stigma and awareness raising**

The role which Headline plays in challenging the stigma towards those with mental health issues and raising awareness was highlighted as being important.

*"Headline's commitment to challenging those within the media who continue to portray mental ill health in a negative light is one of the essential driving forces in helping to destigmatise mental ill health."*

*"Headline serves an important function and presents the need to change/adapt current media practices in a clear way."*

*"The fact that it is focused on one issue which is critical in changing the attitude of the general public, thus making it easier for people to seek help"*

*"raising public awareness generally"*

*"it raises consciousness".*

*"This is an area where I feel it is very important to have an awareness that it is not acceptable to be abusive or discriminating towards families where a mental illness is present by the media."*

*"Very friendly efficient staff and this is an area where I feel it is very important to have an awareness that it is not acceptable to be abusive or discriminating towards families where a mental illness is present by the media."*

*"That it is specific to mental health. Would like to see it alerting people to British papers also. The Guardian does some great features that are informative"*

*"Raising the consciousness and sensitivity of suicide coverage in the media and improving ones skill set and awareness of the personal / human side of this very important issue."*

#### **Information provision**

The information provided by Headline was given as an example of what was good about Headline's services by a number of respondents.

*"Headline is providing an excellent service, especially for those working in the area of mental health. It provides a well of information from around the country that would otherwise go unnoticed and this information is essential for the development of services throughout the regions."*

*"Useful information generally jargon free"*

*"Wonderful dedicated staff. important to keep updated on how the media is dealing with a very important topic and adhering to the guidelines of the portrayal of suicide in the media"*

*"They keep me up to date with the latest news articles about suicide."*

*"Knowledgeable, accessible."*

*“The information, from both the website and staff, is clear, easy to follow and easy to act on. As a small team, Headline provide an extensive and excellent service.”*

*“Keeps a track on issues as they are reported in the media. Also a good source of information.”*

## **Complaints**

The support given to people who wish to make a complaint about media coverage was highlighted by a number of respondents:

*“Headline empowers you to complain directly to the editor of a newspaper and makes you feel like you can make a difference”*

*“The staff are very helpful with enquiries and provide an efficient service with regards to complaints or other issues.”*

*“the individuals who work there are willing to assist others in helping to reduce the stigma that is often associated with people with mental health issues”*

*“I found information on submitting a complaint to the Press Ombudsman particularly helpful. I look forward to receiving the news highlights on a weekly basis - it gives a great feel for what's going on around the country.”*

## **Media Reporting**

Several respondents highlighted the work which Headline does with the media professionals.

*“Media reporting on mental health issues in the main is responsible and bears in mind the difficulties and complexities around events that may occur in the lives of people with mental health disabilities. However inaccurate and sensationalist reporting of issues by some sections of the media is unfair and we need to advocate against this bad practice.”*

*“The focus on media is of utmost importance as it is consistently highlighted as one of the most important influences. Therefore the work Headline does doing media training, and highlighting instances of poor coverage is really very important.”*

*“This is an excellent professional service which offers support for appropriate reporting and advice for inappropriate reporting as well as language guidelines etc.”*

*“The lecture to our journalism students was an interesting outside perspective on a serious issue. It certainly provoked some debate”*

## **Staff**

The knowledge and professionalism of the Headline staff was also cited as a positive aspect of Headline's services:

*“The level of professionalism & knowledge of the staff and especially their communications.”*

*“Know local context and key stakeholders in the area.”*

*“Understand the policy context and how to work with the media to get best results.”*

*“There seems to be a comprehensive range of services”*

### **9.2.8 Improvements**

Respondents were asked how Headline’s services could be improved. A variety of suggestions on how these services could be improved were made.

#### **Media resources and relationships**

The need for a greater understanding of how media outlets work so that resources and materials can be tailored to suit the needs of media professionals was highlighted;

*“Greater understanding of how media organisations operate would inform your work. Sometimes, in common with other NGOs, a lack of awareness of how newspapers and broadcast organisations operate shows through in published material.”*

The need for greater engagement with media outlets was also highlighted:

*“Establish further relationships with media, encouraging that they proactively support the work of Headline and requesting that they embed links to <http://www.headline.ie/haveYourSay/informUs/> from their news websites (RTE, Irish Times, Examiner, etc).”*

Suggestions on resources for media professionals were given:

*“More resources directly to the media - e.g. media guidelines; language guidelines etc. regularly updated and revised.”*

*“More positive information sent out to press on an on-going basis.”*

*“Quick to read monthly email with a couple of points of help, examples of best practice and support information”*

Suggestions relating to media training for media professionals were given:

*“The students felt that Headline's recommendations were somewhat unrealistic in terms of how they feel journalism works in the 'real world'. I'm not sure that there's anything that can be done about this, apart from presenting them with real-world examples of the kind of reportage that Headline recommends.”*

*“Further training for media professionals and media students in relation to responsible coverage of mental health and suicide.”*

*“Overall Mental Health Ireland feels that Headline is doing an excellent job in "policing" the media and their reporting of issues. Further in-depth training of journalists and in particular the students studying Journalism in college is required.”*

*“Work with colleges and universities to develop course modules on responsible coverage of mental health within media, journalism, etc courses.”*

### **Awareness raising**

Greater involvement with mental health service users and voluntary organisations working in the area was suggested as strategies which may increase awareness of mental health issues among journalists:

*“One suggestion we would make is for journalists to come to the voluntary bodies to see how we work etc.”*

*“By having more input from people who have 'survived' mental/ emotional distress dispute the support we currently have had/ have available to us as*

*“Develop a panel of experts by experience, run media training courses so that there are people with mental health difficulties available to the media taking account of: gender difference, variety of professions, positions in the family, regional balance etc.”*

*“Continue to provide the services and seek to target hard to reach groups ensuring information and training gets to them”*

### **Information**

Several respondents expressed a wish for follow up information on complainants made to media professionals:

*“It would be nice if an editor published an apology in a newspaper following one of my letters, if I was told of this.”*

*“It would be useful to highlight any outcomes from media monitoring - e.g. outcome of complaints, record of any behavioural change in the media.”*

*“As someone working in the mental health NGO sector I would like to see more information about what happens after Headline call a paper/ broadcaster to account over inappropriate/ misleading/ dangerous coverage.”*

This issue was also raised in the follow-up phone interviews. Interviewees felt it was important that more information on the outcome of media alerts and letters sent to editors and journalists was made available. A email bulletin was thought to be a good way of sharing this information.

### **Research**

The need for research into the area of stigma and media misrepresentation was highlighted by some respondents:

*“Funding relevant research for publication”*

*“Address the issue of self-stigmatisation via research.”*

*“Themes: assess how stigma and misrepresentation in the media impact on specific issues in peoples lives: parenting, employment, relationships, housing etc.”*

### **Headline’s remit**

Several respondents expressed a desire to see Headline provide an All Island Service and to widen its remit to cover more types of media:

*“Extend to All Island Service”*

*“Also suicide is an all Ireland problem and as cross border initiatives in suicide prevention are increasing in number it would be good to have abstracts or more from NI papers”*

*“Would like to see it alerting people to British papers also. The Guardian does some great features that are informative”*

*“Although I recognise this would not be possible unless extra resources were provided, I would be interested to see Headline extend its remit to more types of media, e.g. advertising”*

### **Publicise**

The need for Headline to publicise the work it does was highlighted:

*“Most definitely to get out there and let the public know that they exist, and explain the work that they do.”*

*“I work in the voluntary sector of mental service and while I was aware of Headlines core service, I was not aware of the full range of services offered.*

*“Improve on the website and liaise a bit more with staff - I still would probably not have heard of Headline had I not been arranging training. Possibly liaise with tutors in the hospitals (nursing, medical, other) as tutors are always looking for interesting useful presentations and the presentation of mental in the media is always something people like to discuss.”*

This issue was strongly highlighted in the follow-up telephone interviews. Interviewees felt that it was crucial to raise awareness of Headline and the services which it provides. Television (in particular afternoon television) was suggested as a good way to publicise the programme.

### **9.2.9 Summary Findings**

24.10% of the survey respondents categorised themselves as mental health professionals, while 20.7% as media professionals, 13.8% as relatives of service user category, 6.9% as mental health services users. And 6.9% of respondents selected the Headline Steering Group member category. 34.5% of respondents selected the ‘other’ category.

65.5% (19) had not initiated contact. 31% (9) had initiated contact. The question was skipped by 3.4% (1) of respondents.

100% of those who had initiated contact with Headline felt that their expectations had been met.

86.2% (25) of respondents felt that Headline is fulfilling its mission statement.

6.9% (2) did not feel that Headline was fulfilling its mission statement and 6.9%(2) did not answer the question, commenting that they could not “comment yes or no”

Respondents were asked which of Headline’s services they had utilised. Headline news highlights bulletin (66.7%) was the service most availed of, followed by Headline media alerts (55.6%) and website usage (40.7%).

In general the quality of services were rated highly. Lectures at a third level institution or further education institution, interview/assistance with interview, and information by phone were all rated as being excellent. Presentations by a staff member, support through the complaint process, Headline media alerts, and media training were either rated as being excellent or good. Information online and website usage were mainly rated as being excellent or good with one respondent in each case rating these services as fair.

Respondents were asked what was good about Headline’s services. A number of elements were identified including:

- The role which Headline plays in challenging stigma and raising awareness of mental health issues
- The information provided by Headline to a variety of stakeholder groups including information to journalists, members of the public, and mental health professionals.
- The support Headline provides to people making media complaints
- The services Headline provides to media professionals reporting on mental health issues
- The knowledge and professionalism of Headline’s staff

Respondents were asked to suggest improvements to Headline’s services. Suggestions included:

- Greater engagement with the media
- Greater involvement with mental health service users
- Provide follow-up information on complaints
- Conduct research into stigma and media misrepresentation
- Expand Headline’s remit to cover UK publications and Northern Ireland
- Publicise the work which Headline is doing

## 10. Conclusion

This report has evaluated the Headline programme using a combination of desk research and a stakeholder questionnaire. The goal of this evaluation is to provide useful feedback on the project, and determine whether or not:

- Headline is on track in meeting its objectives
- The project is meeting stakeholder expectations
- Headline is accomplishing its intended impact

The results of the evaluation show clearly that Headline is on track in meeting its objectives with all of the objectives outlined in the programme proposal fulfilled or partially fulfilled.

The volume of negative articles recorded by Headline staff has dropped substantially over the course of the project. This suggests that the programme is having its intended impact.

The stakeholder evaluation questionnaire feedback shows 31% of those surveyed had initiated contact with Headline. 100% of people who initiated contact with Headline have had their expectations met. 86.2% of respondents felt that Headline was fulfilling its mission statement. This indicates that Headline is meeting stakeholder expectations.

The findings of the desk research and the feedback questionnaire survey highlight certain improvements which can be made to the programme.

1. Increase engagement with media professionals through media training, and media resources.
2. Increase awareness of the Headline programme and the services it provides.
3. Explore how editors and journalists can be encouraged to observe the media guidelines when reporting on particularly dramatic incidences of suicide.
4. Provide more feedback to members of the public and media professionals on the outcomes of articles which are actioned by Headline.
5. Involve more members of the public in the campaign.

## Appendix 1

### Feedback from college seminars

Q1. In terms of my needs or concerns, I found this presentation to be:

Very helpful	52%
Mostly helpful	30%
Somewhat helpful	13%
Somewhat unhelpful	4%
Mostly unhelpful	0.50%
Very unhelpful	0.50%

Q2. I learned something useful in this presentation:

Very true	58.5%
Mostly true	28%
Somewhat true	11%
Somewhat untrue	2%
Mostly untrue	0.5%

**Q3. I feel more knowledgeable about suicide and mental health media guidelines because of this presentation:**

Very true	55%
Mostly true	29%
Somewhat true	13%
Somewhat untrue	1%
Mostly untrue	1.5%
Very untrue	0.50%

**Q. 4 I feel more knowledgeable about types of media reporting that can lead to copycat behaviour:**

Very true	48%
Mostly true	34%
Somewhat true	12%
Somewhat untrue	3%
Mostly untrue	2%
Did not answer question	1%

**Q5. Because of this presentation, I feel better prepared to write about mental health and suicide related issues:**

Very true	40%
Mostly true	30%
Somewhat true	21%
Somewhat untrue	6%
Mostly untrue	1.5%
Very untrue	0.5%

**Q6. Because of this presentation I feel I would know where to go to get more information on reporting on mental health and suicide related issues:**

Very true	62%
Mostly true	21%
Somewhat true	11%
Somewhat untrue	4%
Mostly untrue	1 %
Very untrue	0.5%

**Q7. In general, I found the facilitator's presentations:**

Very effective	47%
Mostly effective	38%
Somewhat effective	12%
Somewhat ineffective	3%
Mostly ineffective	0.5%