



Campaigning

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It is through the understanding and awareness that we are granted through our client work that we seek to appropriately and objectively inform, challenge and engage with political, governmental and public opinion.”

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It is true that public perception of One in Four has been that it is a lobbying or campaigning group rather than a professional support service. The reality is that all of the public and policy campaigning undertaken by One in Four arises directly from, and is informed by, the support work we do with individual women and men who seek support from the service.

It is through the understanding and awareness that we are granted through our client work, that we seek to appropriately and objectively inform, challenge and engage with parliamentary, governmental and public opinion. One in Four believes that it is essential that there be a clear voice that speaks from the experience of sexual violence and that seeks to inform and be party to innovative, dynamic and meaningful responses to the experience of sexual violence.

In the period covered by this first Annual Report, One in Four became a significant voice and played a primary role in addressing issues relating to the prevalence and impacts of sexual violence in Ireland. The work undertaken by the organisation in this regard has included:

Clerical Sexual Abuse in the Catholic Diocese of Ferns

Following the broadcast of the BBC documentary “Suing the Pope”, One in Four made its primary objective the establishment of a full non-statutory Inquiry into the Diocese of Ferns. The organisation was concerned that this Inquiry be efficient and not burdened with many of the problems that have befallen other national Inquiries and Tribunals. It was, in our view, essential that the Inquiry be focused on systemic responses to clerical sexual abuse on the part of Church and State agencies and not on individual findings in relation to allegations of clerical sexual abuse. Therefore, securing a commitment to a non-statutory Inquiry from the State was vital but equally, the terms of reference for such an Inquiry were as important.

As part of its over-arching public affairs and lobbying programme, One in Four set about highlighting the need for an Inquiry through the media but also undertook an aggressive but co-operative lobbying campaign with Government regarding a State Inquiry into the Diocese of Ferns.

This included:

- A national media relations campaign, including regular press statements and opinion pieces written by the Director of One in Four.
- A comprehensive engagement with the Minister for Health and Children and his officials regarding the need for an Inquiry and the terms of reference for such an Inquiry.
- Engaging support from other organisations.
- Establishing partnerships with key influencers through the public affairs programme.
- Establishing a support and advocacy service within One in Four for people wishing to engage in the proposed Inquiry.

The Ferns Inquiry was established on a non-statutory basis in March 2003. One in Four’s engagement with the Inquiry is dealt with comprehensively in the Advocacy section of this report.



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Clerical Sexual Abuse in the Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin

In October 2003 RTÉ television screened the Prime Time special “Cardinal Secrets” which detailed clerical sexual abuse in the Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin. One in Four took part in the media and public debate resulting from this revisiting of the issue of clerical sexual abuse perpetrated by priests of the Roman Catholic Church. Two areas of particular focus for the organisation were a campaign for debate around Canon versus Civil Law to be finally addressed so that the State enforced the primacy of Civil Law in matters relating to child sexual abuse and a Statutory Inquiry into abuse in the Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin. One in Four undertook a dynamic media and policy campaign to address these concerns. This included:

- Ongoing engagement with the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform and his officials to discuss the need for an inquiry and submit proposals for that Inquiry.
- A national media campaign to highlight the need for an Inquiry and the matters raised by the Canon versus Civil Law debate.
- Ongoing dialogue with key influencers as part of this continued engagement.
- Discussions regarding new legislation that might be necessary for an Inquiry.

On October 23rd 2003, the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Michael McDowell TD, finally and unequivocally ended the Canon versus Civil Law debate when he said in Dail Éireann that Canon Law had the same status as the rules of a golf club. The Minister also undertook to establish a Statutory Inquiry into clerical sexual abuse in the Archdiocese of Dublin.

Funding for the Service

In order for One in Four to establish its service in Ireland, it was essential that the charity first receive solid financial commitments from Government. In April 2002 we began a process of engagement and dialogue with The Department of An Taoiseach and The Department of Health and Children in this regard. This led to the opening of our offices in February 2003. As has been publicly documented, difficulties in relation to the funding of the service arose throughout 2003. One in Four sought to address these difficulties through ongoing engagement with Government officials and ultimately secured funding for the service to the end of 2003 and a commitment to enter into a service agreement for 2004.

Freedom of Information (Amendment) Bill 2003

In considering the proposed amendment to section 6 of the Freedom of Information Act 1997, One in Four was informed and guided by the stated opinion of the Information Commissioner and the wider public debate. It was however, the report of the Information Commissioner that particularly addressed our concerns.

“Insofar as a request is for personal information the Bill provides for the word ‘contain’ to be substituted for the words “relate to” where records are concerned. Thus, pre-commencement records may be accessed under this provision of the FOI Act only if they ‘contain’ personal information about the person seeking access to them.”

Office of The Information Commissioner

The passing of this amendment would have, in the opinion of One in Four, further silenced and suppressed the already isolated voices of children and adults who have experienced sexual abuse and/or sexual violence.

One in Four presented a submission to the Joint Finance Oireachtas Committee on the 19th of March 2003. Following our submission the Committee was eager to see the amendment dropped. In consequence, the amendment was not enacted.

Campaigning for change in the responses of Catholic Bishops

Throughout the period covered in this report, One in Four has engaged in appropriate dialogue with Irish Catholic bishops and Catholic Church authorities to promote and inform the need for significant change in church responses to individuals who have experienced sexual abuse perpetrated by priests.

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This dialogue has included:

- Ongoing meetings and discussions with individual bishops and dioceses.
- Discussions with clergy and their representatives.
- Correspondence with every Irish bishop to highlight concerns regarding church responses to litigation.

Such discussions and engagement are ongoing.

Submission to the UN Committee on Contemporary Forms of Slavery

In June 2003, One in Four made two detailed submissions to the United Nations Committee on Contemporary Forms of Slavery detailing the Irish experience of the sexual abuse and economic exploitation of children by clergy from the Roman Catholic Church. These submissions were made both orally and in report form.

This work was significant as both Ireland and the Holy See are signatories to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It was our opinion that both parties had failed to honour their obligations under the convention and that the Holy See in particular continued to fail to put in place meaningful and mandatory child protection procedures and responses to adults abused as children, as required by the Convention.

These reports are available from the Campaigning Section of our website:
www.oneinfour.org

The Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse

Following the announcement of Ms. Justice Mary Laffoy's resignation as Chairperson of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse, One in Four worked both publicly, through the media, and politically to address the crisis faced by the commission.

In this regard One in Four had numerous meetings and discussions with Government and other political parties and submitted proposals designed to constructively move the commission forward.

Campaigning and lobbying in individual cases.

As a professional support service, a core part of the work of One in Four is to campaign and lobby in the cases of individual clients. This work is documented in some detail in the Advocacy Section of this report. This has involved lobbying government and political parties, engaging with statutory agencies such as health boards and An Garda Síochána, as well as contact with many other agencies and bodies.

The campaigning work at One in Four has been the public face of the organisation over this period. While One in Four is eager to communicate the breadth of our other work and to inform public awareness of the professional service based nature of the organisation, we recognise the importance of campaigning as both central to and an extension of our client work. It has been a challenging and yet fulfilling part of the work over this period.

The true impacts of this work become obvious to us in the movement we see in the cases of our clients and the political and public responses to sexual violence and its impacts.

One in Four was awarded The Excellence in Public Relations Award 2003 in the category Public Affairs/Lobbying by The Public Relations Institute of Ireland.

