



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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What Irish sex buyers are *really* thinking:

Ruhama's latest campaign reveals the cold reality of sex buyers' attitudes to the women they pay for sex

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE 'ANDREEA' VIDEO NOW](#)

[Ruhama](#), Ireland's only dedicated national frontline NGO supporting women affected by prostitution and sex trafficking, today reveals what Irish sex buyers *really* think about the women they pay for sex. Ruhama has released a [short video](#) highlighting the impact of the 'Andreea' campaign and what it exposes about the views and motivations of sex buyers in Ireland – in their own words.

'Andreea' – a silhouette image posed seductively above a phone number – was 'advertised' in a variety of busy [locations across Dublin](#) and beyond. Callers were greeted by the [voicemail message](#) of a bubbly young woman with an Eastern European accent who promised a fun, 'sensual' time. But her story quickly took a dark turn when 'Andreea' revealed she had in fact been trafficked into Ireland's sex trade. She closed the voicemail by asking the caller to leave her a message with their thoughts.

In just 20 short days, 'Andreea' received **over 1,000 contacts**, including hundreds from male sex buyers. Yet very few of them were in any way concerned about her circumstances or her plight. An analysis of sex buyers' exchanges with 'Andreea' reveal that their primary concern is how she can 'service' them – **82% of exchanges asked about the sexual services 'Andreea' provides**, with many also enquiring about **her prices**.

Sarah Benson, CEO of Ruhama, said: "We were immediately struck by the extent to which sex buyers saw 'Andreea' more as a service or a product, rather than an actual person. The language they used and the way they communicated with 'Andreea' just confirms to us the dehumanising nature of prostitution that so many of the women we support describe experiencing."

Sarah Benson continued: "Shockingly, **68%** of those who left voicemails, who had the opportunity to listen to 'Andreea's' message and learn that she had been sex trafficked, **still persisted in enquiring about the services she was offering**. They displayed a completely callous disregard for a victim of Ireland's vicious sex trade. These buyers were only concerned with their own sexual gratification and getting the kind of sex acts they wanted, and did not seem to care that this was at the expense of a vulnerable woman in a clearly difficult situation."

Irish sex buyers' most popular requests of 'Andreea' included explicit photos, threesomes, anal sex, various sex acts *specifically* without a condom and 'sex chats'.

Listen to what Irish sex buyers have to say right here: <https://youtu.be/9PmAxaWfXv4>

Sarah Benson stated: "Prostitution and sex trafficking are forms of violence against women and girls, and Ruhama saw this campaign as the perfect opportunity to raise awareness of the exploitation and abuse that women and girls experience in Ireland's sex trade. **It is now illegal to purchase sex in Ireland.** The attitudes of sex buyers revealed by the 'Andreea' campaign make us even more convinced of the need for this legislation – to deter those who prey on the vulnerable and put their own needs above all else, and to stop them further fuelling the growth of this harmful trade."

Sarah Benson concluded: "If we really want equality for women and girls then we must fight against the proliferation of the sex trade and the culture of male sexual entitlement it is predicated upon. This includes holding sex buyers to account for their actions and challenging their view of women as mere commodities."

Ruhama urges anyone who finds themselves in a difficult situation in Ireland's sex trade, or who is concerned about someone they know, to **contact them for support on (01) 836 0292, or text the word REACH for free to 50100**

- ENDS -

Notes to editor

1. 'Andreea' was created by the **international artist Marian van der Zwaan** as part of '**A Penny for Your Thoughts**' – a European multi-city art project designed to raise awareness of sex trafficking across Europe and beyond. The project ran in Brussels, Bucharest, Dublin, Lisbon, Paris and Sofia and was coordinated by the Samilia Foundation. Find out more here: <http://penny.mzwaan.pt/>
2. 'Andreea' is voiced in the video by a volunteer. Her story is based on the experiences of many sex trafficking victims and survivors that Ruhama supports in our frontline services.
3. 'Andreea' received **a total of 759 calls, 37 voicemail messages and 314 text messages** across a 20 day period. 209 exchanges (some featuring multiple calls and texts from the same person) were analysed to reveal:
 - **82% of exchanges were enquiring about what services** 'Andreea' provides. Of these, **25%** also asked about the **price** of services
 - **25 voice messages out of a total of 37 received enquired about services** (68% of all voicemails), despite these callers having the opportunity to hear 'Andreea's' disclosure of sex trafficking.
4. Since March of 2017 it has been illegal to pay for sex in Ireland under the *Criminal Law (Sexual Offences) Act, 2017*.

Media contacts:

Ruth Breslin, Ruhama Policy and Communications Manager: 086 259 1247

Sarah Benson, Ruhama CEO: 086 600 3115

'Andreea' as advertised in Dublin



About Ruhama

[Ruhama](#) is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) and a registered charity, which works on a nationwide basis with women affected by prostitution and sex trafficking. Ruhama offers **free and confidential** support and assistance to women who:

- Are actively involved in prostitution
- Are seeking to exit (leave) prostitution
- Are victims of sex trafficking
- Have a past experience of prostitution/sex trafficking.

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Ruhama
25 Cork Street
Dublin 8.

Download our 2016 Annual Report Here: <http://www.ruhama.ie/assets/Press-Releases/Ruhama-Annual-Report-2016.pdf>

Tel: +353 1 836 0292

Website: www.ruhama.ie

Facebook: www.facebook.com/RuhamaIreland

Twitter: [@Ruhamaagency](https://twitter.com/Ruhamaagency)

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