



SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE

CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS

2018-19



**South Yorkshire
FIRE & RESCUE**

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INTRODUCTION

South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue's communication team aims to work in partnership with its staff, public and partners to deliver world-class campaigns which make a difference.

This publication is a showcase of our leading campaigns from the last 18 months.

Each campaign supports either our organisation's purpose:

Making
**SOUTH
YORKSHIRE
SAFER &
STRONGER**

Or its aspirations:



The campaigns are based on audience insight and measured according to the impact on the people they are trying to reach.

They are delivered using the OASIS campaign planning model:

- Objectives
- Audience insight
- Strategy/idea
- Implementation
- Scoring/evaluation

The service's communication team is made up of four people.

A campaign is a sequence of communication activity which delivers a defined and measurable outcome. This way we can ensure all our work links to a clear objective and that we can evaluate the impact of everything we do.

FIRE SAFETY

PROTECT YOUR PETS

Key learning

Instead of relying on hunches and instinct, all of the tactics we applied to this campaign were based on rigorous insight and data-led knowledge of our target audiences.

What was the issue?

Electrical fires make up about a third of all accidental house fires.

Our objective for this campaign was therefore to reduce electrical house fires in South Yorkshire in December 2018 and January 2019 by at least 10 per cent compared to the average for the last three years. This links back our organisation's purpose of making South Yorkshire safer and stronger.

What did we decide to do?

Demographic profiling (we used MOSAIC) gave us the insight that the people most likely to have an accidental dwelling fire were often pet owners. Further research found:

- We'd attended 76 house fires in the last three years involving animals
- 60,000 pets have been lost in house fires in the UK
- Half of UK adults own a household pet

Additional research found that two thirds of people would worry most about losing their pets in a house fire – as opposed to other expensive items such as laptops.

Further MOSAIC analysis also showed us that the people most at risk of an accidental house fire generally:

- Have a relatively low household income
- Live in council houses and housing association properties
- Buy and sell second hand goods online
- Prefer cats, birds and small pets like rabbits and hamsters

We then looked at our key messages – with a deeper look into our incident data identifying the leading types of electrical fire, and three specific human behaviours that cause them.

With this in mind we asked our audience to 'protect their pets' by:

- Not buying cheap and potentially fake electrical items online
- Not overloading plug sockets – instead sticking to the 13amp guidelines
- Turning off appliances, such as dryers, at night and when they're out

How did we do this?

We launched the campaign on Black Friday and in the two months we delivered the campaign we produced:

- Creature comforts style videos involving pets, voiced by local celebrities, talking about their owners' bad habits. This gave us the main hook upon which we hung other elements of the campaign
- An online safety quiz, which subtly gave people safety advice, alongside the chance to win a number of campaign-themed prizes if they filled it out
- Digital advertising to get this quiz in front of our audience – people interested in pets and living in 'hot spot' house fires areas
- Articles for local council and housing association's magazines and publications in a bid to reach their tenants
- Messaging through local Facebook groups – including 'buy and sell' groups where cost-cutters seek out bargains and gamers buy equipment

- Printed materials to support on the ground activity by firefighters and community safety staff

What were the results?

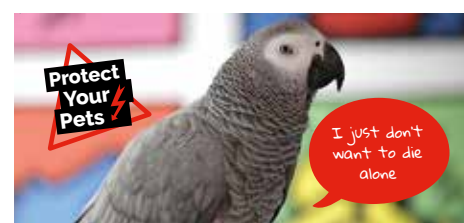
Our posts across Facebook and Twitter alone reached more than 325,000 people.

By the end of January, we'd had 1,043 people take part in the quiz – with 77% of people getting all of the basic electrical safety answers correct.

The campaign received coverage on BBC Radio Sheffield, Sheffield Star, Doncaster Free Press, Capital Yorkshire and Trax FM (Doncaster). Using circulation and listener figures, we estimate that the traditional media coverage of the campaign reached over 182,000 people.

Most importantly, the campaign resulted in a 30% reduction in electrical fires in December 2018 and January 2019 compared to the average for the previous three years (21 fires, down from 30 – a reduction by 9 incidents).

The average house fire in Yorkshire costs society as a whole £47,000. Multiply £47,000 by 9 and, for a cost of £1,400 plus staff time, this campaign has generated an estimated £423,000 saving to society.



If they could talk – they'd tell you

Firefighters have attended more than 350 electrical house fires in the last three years – as well as 75 fires where animals have been involved.

How would **your** pet get out if there was a fire, and you weren't in?

1. Don't leave appliances on, and devices charging, at night and when you're out of the house – to eliminate the risk of these malfunctioning and catching fire. This particularly applies to things like washing machines and tumble dryers!
2. Buy electrical equipment which is genuine and from trusted sources – fake, imitation products, like chargers and batteries, are prone to setting on fire.
3. Don't overload plug sockets – exceeding the advised current rating (13 amps) can cause them to overheat and catch fire.

For more information about how to keep your pets safe visit www.sofire.gov.uk.

#IfTheyCouldTalk



**THE CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTED
TO A 30% REDUCTION IN
ELECTRICAL FIRES.**

FIND THE TIME

Key learning

Your target audience isn't always the most obvious one- for us, it was the children of older relatives, instead of over 60s themselves.

What was the issue?

The campaign focused on one of the most vulnerable groups within South Yorkshire – older people. This is because local incident data shows over half of the 49 people who have died in a fire since 2013 were over 50, the majority being over 60-years-old.

However, we targeted the 'sandwich generation' which, according to our insight, were easier to reach and more likely to take action than the over 60s whose lives we wanted to affect.

What did we decide to do?

We discovered through post incident reviews that many of the older people who have previously died in fires had some level of social isolation that meant their bad habits – such as smoking in bed and ignoring faulty smoke alarms – went unnoticed. This social isolation also meant they were hard to reach by organisations such as the fire and rescue service.

This prompted us to focus our efforts on their friends and family, instead. Our key messages encouraged members of this audience – dubbed the 'sandwich generation' – to start taking specific action to make their older relatives safer. In developing these messages, we first considered whether our audience had the capability, opportunity and motivation to do what we were asking them to do.

Our three calls to action were:

- Run through a campaign-specific checklist with your loved one to identify any fire risk issues
- Help them out by testing their smoke alarms, de-cluttering & providing ash trays
- Book them a free home safety check if they answer yes to a checklist question

How did we do this?

We launched the campaign on Mother's Day when we knew people would already be thinking about their parents.

Six weeks of activity then followed, which included:


- Sharing a thought provoking narrative video which resonated with our target audience to nudge them into finding time for older family members
- Developing and sharing a 'grandparent checklist' that people could use to assess the fire risk of their older friends, relatives and neighbours
- Utilising Facebook Groups to hit our target audience in areas where we knew we had previously experienced a large number of house fires
- Linking up with news outlets, such as the Sheffield Star and BBC Radio Sheffield, to get meaningful coverage of the campaign
- Asking local authority and other partners, such as Age UK and B:Friend, to share our messaging with their service users
- Using an advertising van and a digital billboard on the Sheffield Parkway to hit a key section of our audience – busy commuters – across all four districts

What were the results?

The campaign reached hundreds of thousands of people in South Yorkshire via paid for advertising, earned coverage in the media and our owned, online channels.

More importantly though, it led to a 43 per cent increase in Home Safety Check referrals from partners agencies and a 41 per cent increase in Home Safety Checks completed in people's homes.

There was also a 20 per cent reduction in accidental house fire injuries during the campaign period.

GRANDPARENT CHECK -
how safe are your older relatives?

Run through this checklist with them – if the answer is YES to any of the questions below, they may be at an increased risk of fire. Help make them safer by visiting www.syfire.gov.uk/findthetime today to organise a free home safety visit, or call us on 0114 253 2314 and quote 'FindTheTime'.

Do they live alone?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Do they smoke?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Do they need a walking aid?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Do they take medication that may make them drowsy?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Do they struggle preparing meals on their own?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Have they experienced any trips or falls recently?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Is their property cluttered and untidy, with blocked walkways?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Do they have a hearing impairment?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Do they use emollient creams?	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>

In the meantime:

- Make sure they have working smoke alarms
- Do they smoke? Ensure they've got a proper ash tray
- Get them a working phone that stays with them all the time
- Speak to them about what to do in the event of a fire
- Help them de-clutter, particularly their exit routes



DO YOUR BIT

Key learning

Harnessing public trust and respect for the work of frontline staff can be a more powerful way of getting your message across.

What was the issue?

In 2018 the service dealt with a huge spike in 'secondary' fires- involving things like grass and rubbish- which left frontline firefighters stretched. The UK-wide heatwave that year was a big contributor to this, resulting in some massive moorland fires in some parts of the country.

That's why we developed a campaign to reduce the number of secondary fires, and deliberate secondary fires, in summer 2019 in comparison to the previous three year average.

What did we decide to do?

We know by analysing our incident data that small, secondary fires, are often started on purpose by arsonists. We also knew where the incidents were happening, and could outline a number of hot spot areas to focus on.

We know that people trust and respect our firefighters – enough to take specific action to help make their lives safer and easier. This was confirmed through public opinion surveys, a recent consultation process, the Edelman Trust Barometer and regular, anecdotal feedback from members of the public.

With this in mind, we decided we should give members of the public a full and frank reminder – first-hand – of what it is like for our firefighters dealing with endless grass fires.

We then hit them where they were, and where the fires were occurring, with some specific instructions around how they could stop summer fires.

How did we do this?

We produced a series of videos that featured our firefighters, filmed at hot spot locations. In these videos our staff talked about what it was like dealing with fires at those locations, explained how it affects them, fire engine availability and asked the public to be vigilant and follow our advice – which was clearly outlined on our social media posts.

We also spoke to our local media who got behind the campaign. Advice was given on the radio and BBC Look North were invited to a hot spot area to get a first hand look at how it affects the local landscape.

Finally we armed our staff with arson prevention boards – which gave specific advice tailored to different issues and different areas. Firefighters went out and put these boards up, themselves, in places that they knew to be an issue. Whilst there they spoke to people in the area about why they were putting them up.

What were the results?

By the time the campaign had finished we estimate we'd reached around 1,047,000 people through traditional media and our online work.

The main two outcomes we wanted were reductions in secondary fires in general, and then in the amount of them that were started deliberately.

The previous three-year average (2016, 2017 and 2018) for secondary fires, between 22 July and 22 September, was 1,007 incidents. During the same period in 2019, there were 744 incidents. This was a reduction of 26 percent.

The previous three-year average for deliberate secondary fires, between 22 July and 22 September, was 802 incidents. During the same period this year, there were 620. This was a reduction of 23 percent.

BY THE TIME THE CAMPAIGN HAD FINISHED WE ESTIMATE WE'D REACHED AROUND 1,047,000 PEOPLE THROUGH TRADITIONAL MEDIA AND OUR ONLINE WORK.



RECRUITMENT AND DIVERSITY

MY FIREFIGHTING MUM

Key learning

Facebook groups are a powerful way of reaching a very specific target audience.

What was the issue?

UK fire and rescue services seek to reflect the communities they serve by attracting a diverse workforce. With firefighting long perceived to be a male-only profession, around 95 per cent of firefighters are men.

With several rounds of firefighter recruitment planned locally, our objective was to generate a 10 per cent increase in the number of women registering their interest in the role of firefighter via a recruitment form on our website.

What did we decide to do?

We know from speaking to our own staff and researching careers in other sectors, becoming a parent can be a key time in a woman's working life, sometimes prompting them to consider an alternative vocation. We also know, from experience of delivering fire safety campaigns, that children can be powerful ambassadors for important messages. Both insights informed the creative direction of our campaign.

Our strategy was to create engaging, shareable digital content which would specifically appeal to this audience and prompt them to take the desired action- that is, to register their interest in our next round of recruitment.

But we knew we had to be really targeted in our approach, as only a small proportion of our audiences following our online channels meet this very specific audience. Our plan therefore was to take our content where we knew the people we were trying to reach spent their time

online- which for us included special interest Facebook groups and online forums, such as women's fitness and parenting groups.

How did we do this?

Inspired by TV shows like 'Secret Life of a Four Year Old', we created a video where the children of serving female firefighters spoke about the qualities that made them proud of their mums. We deliberately wanted to emphasise what are traditionally seen as 'feminine' qualities, setting things up for the end scene where the mums the children are talking about are revealed to be firefighters- a traditionally 'masculine' role. We think it's this element of surprise which meant the video really cut through with our audiences and prompted hundreds of people to share it online.

We published the video across our digital channels to coincide with International Women's Day, which offered a natural hook for our campaign. We followed this up with additional online activity on Mother's Day, which took place just three days later.

Prior to launch, we teed up local media- giving them a sneak preview of the video and setting up interviews with key staff.

For the first time, we researched and made contact with administrators of closed groups and pages on Facebook which we knew were big influencers of women in our area. It was an approach that really worked, helping us to reach more than 1,400 people exactly matching our target audience.

What were the results?

The video was viewed more than 30,000 times across multiple platforms (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube) and also generated a double page spread in The Star newspaper and a primetime slot on BBC Radio Sheffield, plus other local media coverage. As a result of our campaign:

- **59 women registered their interest in a career as a firefighter** in the two weeks following the launch of the video (8 to 22 March)
- That's almost **four times the number of registrations** received (15) during the two weeks prior to the video launch (21 February to 7 March)
- It's also a **37% increase on the number of registrations** received during the whole of the month of February (43 registrations).

Almost **all of those who registered said they had heard about recruitment as a result of the video** or our associated activity around it.



**THE NUMBER OF WOMEN
REGISTERING THEIR INTEREST IN
RECRUITMENT FOLLOWING THE
CAMPAIGN QUADRUPLLED.**

ANYONE CAN BE ANYTHING

Key learning

Regular, consistent campaigns which actually demonstrate a commitment to diversity and inclusion- as opposed to well-meaning stunts- can begin to change your workforce.

What was the issue?

Diversity in the fire and rescue service is an issue which will not be solved via a single campaign or video.

Ultimately, our aim was to again increase registrations of interest from women wanting to find out more about a career with us.

What did we decide to do?

We know from speaking to our own staff and researching similar campaigns in other sectors, that campaigns targeting the recruitment of women can often come across as patronising at worst. This **insight** helped to inform the tone and approach of our campaign.

Our strategy was to create engaging, shareable digital content which would specifically appeal to this audience and prompt them to take the desired action- that is, to register their interest in our next round of recruitment. Once we had generated their interest, we would then be in a position to provide them with further interventions and information.

Conscious of activity we had previously carried out as part of International Women's Day 2018, we wanted to broaden the appeal of our message this year by developing a campaign didn't just apply to firefighting, and reflected the multitude of other jobs available to people in the fire and rescue service.

How did we do this?

We set up an opportunity with a primary school in Sheffield. Three members of our staff went 'under cover' and spoke to the pupils about what they wanted to be when they grew up- with the answers that came back ranging from footballer (boys) to vet (girls). Our staff then called on the class to guess their own professions. When it came to the big reveal and our staff revealed their true occupations (a firefighter, a handywoman and an IT developer) the surprise and awe on the faces of the young children was palpable. Our broad, feel good message to viewers was simple- boy or girl, man or woman, **anyone can be anything**. We then used our online posts to bring the campaign back to our call to action- for women to register their interest in a career in the fire service.

We published the video across our digital channels to coincide with International Women's Day. Prior to launch, we teed up local media- giving them a sneak preview of the video.

We also carefully targeted a small amount of paid-for, online advertising (£100) to make sure that beyond the vanity likes and shares, our message was actually getting seen by the people we really wanted to reach.

What were the results?

The video was viewed more than 50,000 times across multiple platforms (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube) and also generated local media coverage, including BBC and local commercial radio.

- **76 women registered their interest in a career as a firefighter** in the two weeks following the launch of the video (8 to 22 March)
- That's a **230 percent increase in registrations** compared to two, separate two-week periods in the run up to International Women's day (an average of 23 registrations from women)
- Almost **all of those who registered said they had heard about recruitment as a result of the video** or our associated activity around it.



THERE WAS A 230 PER CENT INCREASE IN WOMEN REGISTERING THEIR INTEREST IN RECRUITMENT.

FAMILY.

Key learning

It would have been easy for us to send out a token tweet to mark Black History Month. Instead we thought big, thought creatively and delivered something completely out of the ordinary which actually made a difference.

What was the issue?

Black people have served within the UK fire and rescue service for many years. However, black and minority ethnic people continue to be massively underrepresented within the fire service- both in South Yorkshire and across the country.

The objective of our activity during Black History Month therefore was to increase BAME registrations of interest on the recruitment form on our website by 10 per cent in October compared to the average for the previous three months.

What did we decide to do?

Various research studies we drew upon consistently prove that younger people in particular can only aspire to be what they see- that is, unless they see someone like them in a job role like a firefighter, they are unlikely to consider it as a career choice.

That's why we came up with the idea of staging a fine art photography exhibition during Black History Month (October 2019) featuring black staff members, past and present. We wanted to launch the exhibition in the media, then show it to as many people in South Yorkshire as possible.

For us, this was about thinking big and coming up with a really high-profile way of celebrating the contribution of BAME staff to our work, in the hope it inspires others to consider a role in the fire and rescue service.

How did we do this?

We approached members of our BAME staff network inviting them to have their portrait taken by a member of our finance team, who happened to be a fine art portrait photographer. We also contacted retired firefighters- including South Yorkshire's first ever black firefighter- to be a part of the exhibition.

We asked all of the staff featured to tell us about their role within the fire service, what made them join and a bit about their cultural heritage. We used this information in the materials we produced as part of the exhibition.

We launched the exhibition with an event at a gallery in Sheffield city centre, to which we invited media and everyone who'd been involved in pulling the whole thing together. The launch was covered by BBC Look North, BBC Radio Sheffield and The Star newspaper.

We then took the exhibition on the road, focussing on places in Sheffield with the highest public footfall- the train station, Winter Gardens, indoor market and Ponds Forge international sports centre.

We plugged the activity on our online channels throughout October- including publishing a short film which gave people a behind the scenes look at how we put the exhibition was together, and our reasons for doing it.

What were the results?

- An estimated **485,000 people** having an opportunity to see the exhibition in October, at the public locations we hosted it
- Reaching an estimated **783,000 people** through the media coverage around the exhibition
- Reaching an estimated **200,000 people** through our online activity

Most importantly of all though, the outcome was **49 people from a BAME background registering their interest in firefighter recruitment.**

This is an **increase of 88 percent** compared to the monthly average across July, August and September.



THE CAMPAIGN RESULTED IN AN 88% INCREASE IN PEOPLE FROM A BAME BACKGROUND REGISTERING THEIR INTEREST IN FIREFIGHTER RECRUITMENT.

CONSULTATION

HAVE YOUR SAY

Key learning

Using a mixture of qualitative and quantitative feedback methods is essential to ensure a wide range of voices are genuinely heard.

What was the issue?

The service was publishing a revised Integrated Risk Management Plan- this is a document which all fire and rescue authorities must produce. It sets out the steps they will take with the resources at their disposal to improve public safety, reduce fires and save lives.

Fire and rescue authorities are required to consult with the public and their staff on their draft plans. Previous consultation exercises have been hard to engage the public in however.

The goal of this campaign was to generate at least 500 online response to the consultation survey, whilst also ensuring we gathered a wide range of views.

What did we decide to do?

Our approach was to use a mixture of qualitative and quantitative feedback methods in a bid to get more in depth responses from a broader range of people, including those with protected characteristics, who might not proactively engage in consultations carried out by public bodies.

Firefighting issues- like those being considered in the plan- can often be complex, particularly for members of the public who may have limited understanding of our approach to responding to emergency incidents. Focus groups therefore provided an opportunity to explain the options and proposals more fully, allowing for more considered and detailed qualitative feedback on the proposals.

By holding the focus groups part way through the consultation period, they also provided an opportunity to further explore other issues and suggestions which had arisen from the consultation so far, for example via the online survey.

Our aim was also to be as transparent as possible about the changes the service was proposing and its impact on its communities.

How did we do this?

The consultation was regularly advertised on the service's own communication channels throughout the consultation period. A short animated infographic was developed to simply explain the proposals and invite staff and the public to have their say, which was viewed more than 5,000 times online.

A survey was published on the service's website, asking both staff and public for their views on the two main proposals, alongside any other open comments.

We monitored the diversity of respondents to the consultation, to ensure the views of all relevant groups were adequately represented. Where relevant, we undertook additional work to ensure groups currently underrepresented in terms of consultation responses were adequately informed. This included a small amount of targeted Facebook advertising and engaging with Facebook Groups.

Focus groups were held with a representative sample of members of the public in Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield- that's four groups in total.

A special effort was made to ensure focus groups were made up of people from all sections of the community, across a range of diversity criteria plus social and economic factors. Each session was independently moderated to ensure impartiality.

Every response to the consultation was then collated, analysed and presented to Fire Authority members.

What were the results?

A total of **775 people responded to the survey**. This is 605 more responses than the last time the service consulted upon its IRMP. It is also more responses than the service has received for any similar consultation survey in the last 10 years.

Thirty-two people took part in the focus groups we ran and a report and presentation explaining the focus group outcomes was also produced, helping Fire Authority members to make an informed decision around the service's proposals.



HAVE YOUR SAY...

Your local fire service wants your views on how it delivers its service to local people.

Share your views on South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue's draft plan by:

- Visiting www.syfire.gov.uk/haveyoursay and completing an online survey
- Writing to us at SYFR Consultation, 197 Eyre Street, Sheffield, S1 3FG



**South Yorkshire
FIRE & RESCUE**

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION

SOUTH YORKSHIRE FLOODS

Key learning

Being proactive in an emergency situation is hard, but sharing positive human stories about the work of frontline staff is really important to help tell the story of your response.

What was the issue?

Widespread flooding hit South Yorkshire in early November 2019 after prolonged, heavy rainfall. The River Don broke its banks, flooding parts of Sheffield, Rotherham and Barnsley, before severely affecting communities in parts of Doncaster. A major incident was declared and people and equipment from around the country came to the region to help.

The service, alongside other public agencies, needed to warn and inform people about the widespread flooding.

What did we decide to do?

Our immediate focus was to keep people safe, whilst reassuring people about the massive multi-agency response and being proactive in telling stories about the good work of our frontline crews.

Where possible, we referred to the plans and training we already have in place for major incidents such as this, as well as nationally available guidance like the PRIMER toolkit.

This helped to guide our communication strategy which can be summarised as follows:

- Safety- telling people not to enter flood water, in a bid to protect life
- Reassurance- explaining to people what we were doing and why, as frequently as possible
- Praise- thanking our staff and highlighting their work using as many human stories as possible

How did we do this?

The service's communication team provides out of hours media officer cover on a rota basis 24/7/365, which really comes into its own when incidents like this occur. One of the team was on call when the flooding first hit on the Thursday night and worked through the night putting messages on social media, sharing the messages of our local partners and setting up interviews with local and national media so that we could warn and inform the public about what was happening.

The rest of the team then picked this up in daylight hours on the Friday and into the weekend.

We maintained this in terms of our public messaging over the next few days, facilitating more than 30 interviews with local and national media between Friday and Monday. We rotated just two spokespeople throughout- both senior fire officers. This helped to maintain consistency in terms of our message.

The service received some amazing feedback from the public for the work our firefighters did, so our next task was to capture some of this and reflect it back to frontline crews. We did this by putting together a video drawn largely from social media content and sharing it across both our internal and external channels.

What were the results?

Responding to major emergencies is always a team effort involving lots of different public agencies. The fire service was also just one of many different partners involved in warning and informing the public around the flooding which hit our communities.

However, we do know that there was a massive increase in social media traffic as a result of our activity during the floods- for example, impressions on the @SYFR Twitter account trebled during November.

Some of the positive, human stories went genuinely viral- such as a Facebook post about Rotherham firefighters who delivered food to a flood trapped older person. The story reached more than **300,000** people on that platform alone.

The video we published in the aftermath of the flooding was viewed hundreds of times by staff and more than **12,000** times online.



INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

OUR STORY

Key learning

By thinking carefully about the feelings we wanted to generate amongst staff, we created content which has genuinely had a measurable impact on staff morale and engagement.

What was the issue?

We've developed a corporate narrative for the service, called Our Story. After years of funding cuts and service changes, this was all about reminding staff (and the people we serve) who we are, what we're good at, what's important to us and why.

Part of this work has inevitably meant working with our leaders to shape a narrative, plans and documents around our values, vision and aspirations for the future. But we also wanted to create some truly inspiring, creative content to launch Our Story, packing a punch and properly bringing it to life.

What did we decide to do?

We had two audiences. For staff, it was all about reminding them why they come to work and to be proud about what they do- regardless of their rank or role. Also, it was about explaining how all the different parts of the organisation (which don't always feel very well connected) come together to achieve our purpose.

Publicly, it was about reconnecting local people with their fire and rescue service. Unlike most other parts of the public sector, people's day-to-day contact with the fire service is relatively (and thankfully) minimal.

As part of the work to develop our corporate narrative, we held focus groups with a representative cross section of staff to get their feedback on its contents.

Two bits of feedback came back time and time again:

- 1.) Despite our challenges, staff are incredibly proud of what they do and who they work for
- 2.) We now do a massive variety of work as a fire and rescue service, and it's time we shouted about it more

We used the real words and real phrases people had given us and turned them into a poem. We then recruited members of staff to voice the words and briefed a filmmaker to capture evocative footage from all corners of South Yorkshire to match the themes of the poem.

How did we do this?

It would have been really easy to just stick the video online and then let it do its thing. But we knew it made the most impact when it was shown direct to staff, in person and with an explanation around the story we were trying to tell. That's why it was first shown to staff at each of our fire stations by our top team during a programme of face-to-face visits.

We then published the video more widely across our internal channels, including our intranet, e-bulletins and the TV screens we have at every fire station.

It was only once we were confident that our staff had had a fair chance to see the video and the other work that we were doing to launch our corporate narrative internally, that we went public.

The video was viewed at least 80,000 times across our digital channels (Facebook 33,000, Twitter 40,000,

LinkedIn 6,000, YouTube 2,000). By a number of measures, it became our most talked about content of the year.

Other work around our corporate narrative involved publishing guides for line managers and staff, communicating key parts via wall graphics and table talkers and rebranding our staff communication channels to reflect 'Our Story'.

What were the results?

More important than video views, media pickup and praise, is the impact we wanted to have on the pride and purpose of our workforce.

We regularly survey our staff to ask them to rate the statement "I am clear about how my work directly contributes to the purpose of the organisation" on a scale of one to five, where five is the highest.

The average score of 3.86 was the highest of any of the 9 questions we asked in the survey. **Ratings for the statement "I am happy at work" also increased from 3.3 to 3.6 from before and after the video was launched.**

Key parts of the narrative have also been fully embedded in the service- in everything from performance frameworks, strategies and meetings papers, to the station plans fire stations use to guide their service to the public.



**RATINGS FOR THE STATEMENT “I AM
HAPPY AT WORK” ALSO INCREASED FROM
3.3 TO 3.6 FROM BEFORE AND AFTER THE
VIDEO WAS LAUNCHED.**

BE WELL AT WORK

Key learning

A multi-channel approach helped us to engage with traditionally hard-to-reach, non-desk based, internal audiences.

What was the issue?

Mental health has never had a higher profile nationally, but it's a particularly important issue for 999 staff who deal with traumatic incidents almost every day.

However, despite having a number of measures in place to support our staff for several years, perceptions of workplace mental health at South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue were low.

Our objective therefore was to measurably increase staff awareness of the mental health and wellbeing support available to them at work.

What did we decide to do?

We know, due to the nature of fire and rescue service work and research by charities like Mind, that the individuals in our organisation most likely to experience changes in their mental health are operational firefighters. What we didn't know was whether the support already available within our service was valued, understood and utilised by staff members.

To achieve this, we spoke to key staff and firefighters in a bid to gather some real-life insight into the challenges faced by our staff and their perceptions of the support that's currently on offer to them.

Having gathered the insight we needed, we timed a campaign launch to coincide with the service publishing its first ever health and wellbeing strategy.

Internal communication in an organisation where about three quarters of staff are remote and not desk-based is

always a massive challenge, so we knew we needed a multi-channel approach in order to reach as many staff as possible.

How did we do this?

In consultation with key staff, we developed the 'Be Well At Work' brand for the campaign as a way of bringing the different strands of activity together. We then delivered:

- A video featuring members of staff role playing different workplace mental health scenarios to spark a conversation about mental health and sign-post people to the support available
- Impactful posters on fire stations which sign-posted people to help available
- A booklet which was sent out to every fire station and captured - in Plain English - all of the various support mechanisms available to staff
- An animated infographic to simply explain the various different support routes available to staff
- Regular blogs from senior leaders talking openly about their own mental health struggles
- A mental health support page on our staff intranet site, adding up to date information, clearer sign-posting to other organisations and the videos we'd created as part of this campaign
- A campaign microsite as a further repository of mental health advice, sign-posting information and case studies for staff. The site is mobile optimized and can be accessed by staff outside of work
- Publicity around a new peer support role, whereby staff across the

organisation are trained to debrief fire crews after they have attended traumatic incidents.

What were the results?

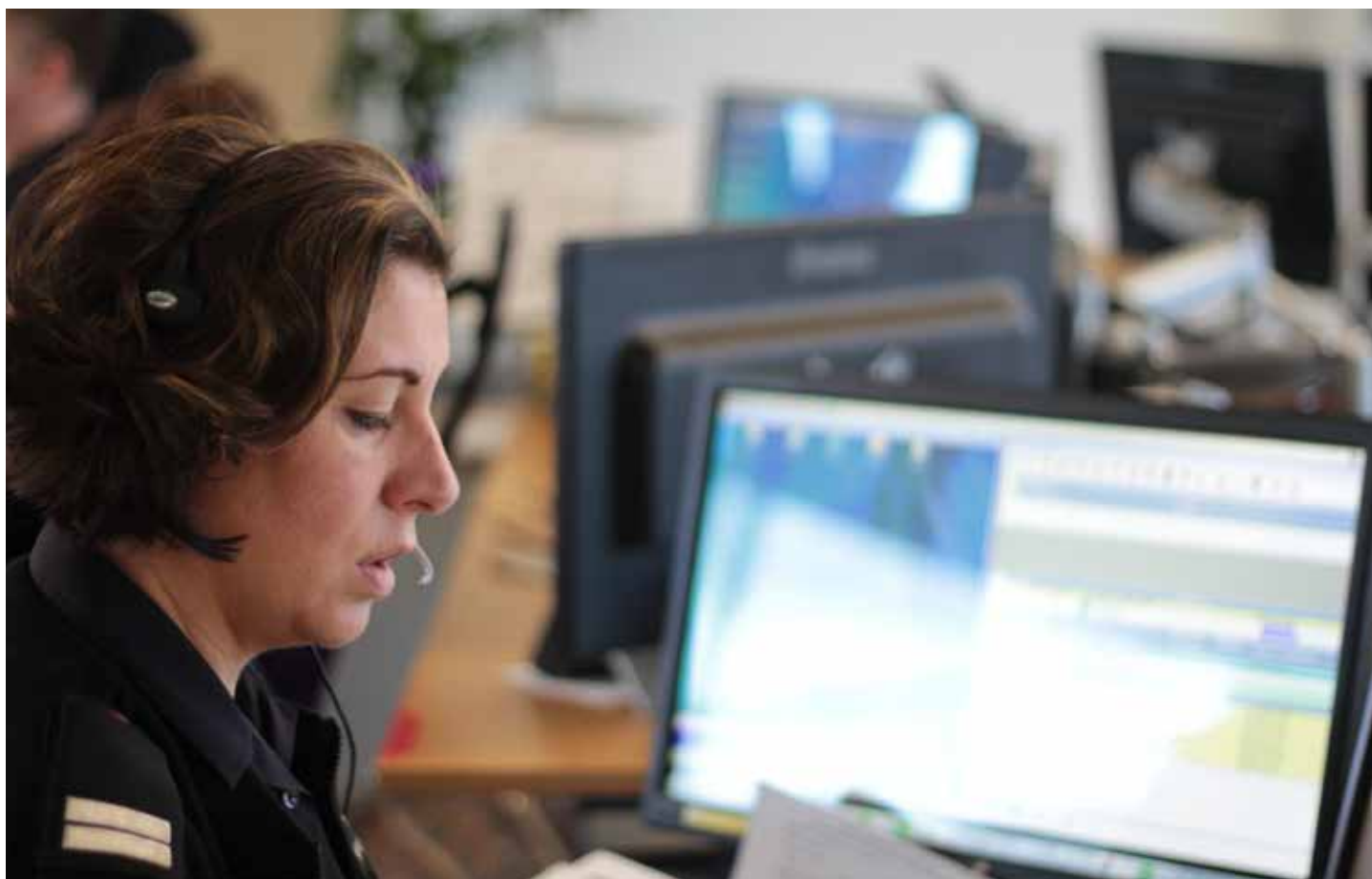
- **Visitors to our mental health intranet page increased by 200%** in the six weeks we ran the campaign, compared to the six weeks before
- More than **40 staff came forward expressing their interest in the peer support role** - easily filling the 15 volunteer roles available
- **350 views for the mental health video we published internally** (that's not including views on our TV information screens)
- **1,474 views of senior leader blogs** and other related articles in The Bulletin, our weekly staff e-newsletter

We run staff 'pulse surveys' every two months. Before the campaign kicked off, we asked staff:

How satisfied are you with the mental health support available to you at work?

This question scored 3.39 (out of 5) before the campaign launched, and **rose to 3.63 (out of 5) in the four months following the campaign launch.**

Staff sickness rates also reduced, since the campaign launched.



**"I don't
know how
I'm going to
get through
the day."**

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Be well
at work 



THANK YOU

Key learning

Awards ceremonies and formal staff recognition schemes have their place, but sometimes a simple thank you is just as powerful.

What was the issue?

Staff recognition is known to be a big contributor towards job satisfaction and happiness at work.

Historically, formal methods of staff recognition in our service have been either mainly reactive and lower level (for example, our existing 'Compliments' scheme) or higher profile and ad hoc, such as annual staff awards events, where engagement from frontline staff was very poor.

We know that public support for the work of our staff remains extremely high. Taking a more proactive and creative approach to the way we use public stories and compliments we would aim to measurably improve staff engagement.

What did we decide to do?

Staff told us via focus groups and surveys that they wanted greater recognition for the work they do, but the feedback they gave on how to achieve this was often inconsistent, with many people feeling that receiving praise sometimes felt hollow and false. We also picked up a general dissatisfaction with anything that felt forced or overly corporate. Our approach therefore was:

- Simple- not everything has to be a big scheme or initiative, as sometimes it's simpler, more personal and older forms of recognition which can have the biggest impact
- Authentic- it must reflect our local context, avoiding corporate stuffiness and banality

- Low cost- otherwise it will turn people off at a time when we're still making savings

We took inspiration from a campaign run by Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust, whereby members of the public were proactively encouraged on social media to share stories of their experiences at the hospital. Their campaign rewarded those nominated with something low cost (a reusable coffee cup) and a letter from the CEO.

The campaign also highlighted how the lines between external and internal communication channels are blurring, with staff who were nominated then being publicly recognised on the Trust's social media pages, helping to amplify positive messages and promoting it as a good place to work.

How did we do this?

For our own work around staff recognition, we:

- Published information on our digital channels to **ask members of the public to share their stories of good work**
- Researched the compliments we received and, where possible, **linked each story back to a specific individual or watch/team**
- Gave every individual who was nominated a reusable water bottle carrying the campaign branding. Where the nomination was for a watch or team, the whole group received a treat box containing low value items on a local theme (the emphasis was on providing **a tangible and useful reward, which was also low cost and fun**)

- All nominees received a **letter from the Chief Fire Officer**, thanking them personally for the work they have carried out

For support staff, who are less likely to be nominated by the public, potential individual or team nominations were discussed at Executive Team meetings. Those nominated were invited by the Chief Fire Officer to the service's Corporate Management Board to receive the thanks of senior managers from across the service.

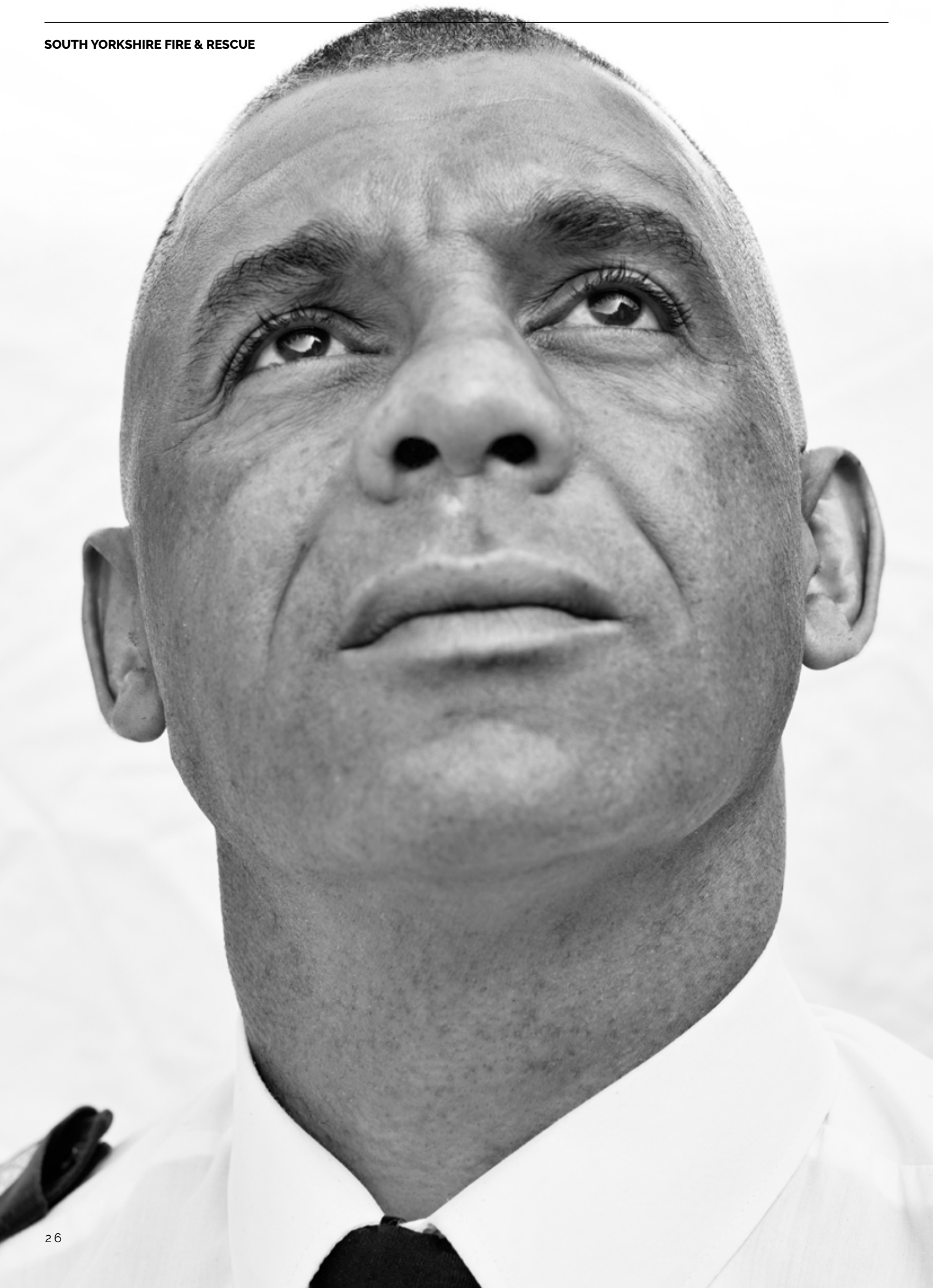
What were the results?

More than **75 frontline staff have received recognition** as part of this campaign since its launch. At least a dozen members of support staff have also received recognition at board level.

Feedback for the scheme from staff gathered either anecdotally or via staff pulse surveys has been positive, with the question 'My contribution at work is valued and recognised' consistently scoring an average of 3.1 (out of 5) since the campaign launched.



NOT EVERYTHING HAS TO BE A BIG SCHEME OR INITIATIVE, AS SOMETIMES IT'S SIMPLER, MORE PERSONAL AND OLDER FORMS OF RECOGNITION WHICH CAN HAVE THE BIGGEST IMPACT.





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