



SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE

CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS

2020



**South Yorkshire
FIRE & RESCUE**

CONTENTS

FIRE SAFETY



Keep fire safe 4

Taylor's story 6

Yesterday you said tomorrow 8

The pledge 10

Behavioural insights 12

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION



Say thank you 14

People need us 16

Shout 18

RECRUITMENT AND DIVERSITY



Complaints welcome 20

Need more 22

Family 2.0 24

Wholetime recruitment 26

CONSULTATION



Have your say 28

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION



Hatfield Moors fire 30

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 during the last 12 months.

Each campaign supports either our organisation's purpose:

Making
**SOUTH
 YORKSHIRE
 SAFER &
 STRONGER**

Or its aspirations:



**BE A GREAT
 PLACE TO
 WORK**



**PUT
 PEOPLE
 FIRST**



**STRIVE
 TO BE THE
 BEST**

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

There are four people in the service's communication team.

Given the Covid-19 pandemic, the team has delivered the majority of its work in 2020 whilst working from home.

FIRE SAFETY

KEEP FIRE SAFE

Key learning

Pop-up campaigns done right still have the power to make a big impact.

What was the issue?

The coronavirus pandemic forced fire and rescue services across the country to suspend vast amounts of prevention work in March – including home safety checks, school visits and other community engagement.

Members of the public also had clear instructions, early on in the pandemic, to stay at home. Fire and rescue services quickly grew concerned that this meant more risk of house fires as people spent more time indoors.

What did we decide to do?

We first looked at the main causes of house fires. Our incident data identified three leading causes of accidental dwelling fires in South Yorkshire, based on the previous three years' worth of data.

We knew that we couldn't do any face-to-face engagement work, for obvious reasons, so we decided to deliver the whole campaign digitally and remotely.

Time was of the essence with the campaign as, at the time of planning, a full lockdown loomed. We therefore launched a campaign on Saturday 21 March in order to get the wheels turning before the Government's announcement.

Our core message was for people to take on board our fire safety advice and share it with their friends, relatives and neighbours. This was about working together to keep everyone safe and ultimately to reduce accidental house fires.

How did we do it?

Our activity included:

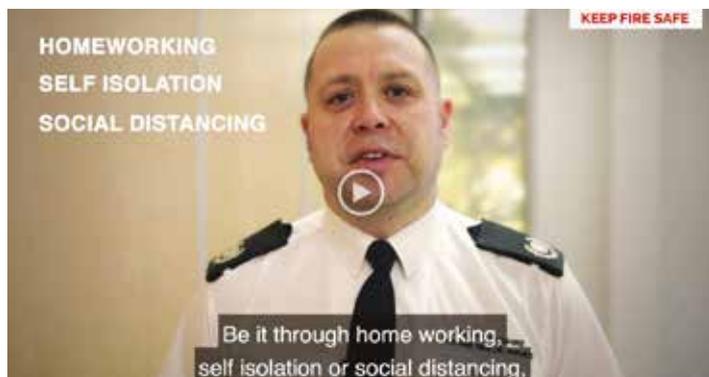
- **The development of a dedicated web page** to provide information for residents on how to stay fire safe
- **Creating a home fire safety quiz** to give people advice in an interactive way – each entrant stood a chance of winning a £100 voucher
- **Opening up a poster drawing competition** for children unable to attend school – again there were prizes up for grabs
- **Dedicated Facebook Adverts**, including advice and links to our website, targeted at people living in hot spot areas for house fires
- **The production of a quick-fire safety advice video** that was shared far and wide on our social channels and by partner agencies too
- **Safety messaging on social media** – through a series of online infographics detailing the key advice
- **Securing coverage via local media outlets** to amplify our key messaging – this included newspaper, radio and television news
- **Mailing out 6,000+ safety postcards to high risk homes** using a specialist mailing house and a target address list

What were the results?

Our Keep Fire Safe content on social media reached over 415,000 people, whilst we estimate our work with the traditional media reached over 190,000 more.

We then had 1,503 people take part in our online safety quiz, which exceeded the amount of entries we had into the quiz we ran for our successful Protect Your Pets campaign, and we were overwhelmed with poster competition entries – well exceeding 360 drawings.

This work contributed towards a 23 per cent reduction in primary fires and 11 per cent reduction in accidental dwelling fires during the campaign period, in comparison to the previous three year average.



KEEP FIRE SAFE 

Top tips for keeping safe from fire whilst at home:

<p>Don't leave cooking unattended – and ditch those chip pans.</p>	<p>Don't leave clothes and other items near heaters, hobs or other heat sources.</p>	<p>Make sure your electrical items are in good working order – never use white goods if they're faulty.</p>	<p>Get working smoke alarms on every level of your home and test them weekly.</p>
			

THE CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTED TO A 23% REDUCTION IN PRIMARY FIRES AND 11 PER CENT REDUCTION IN ACCIDENTAL DWELLING FIRES DURING THE CAMPAIGN PERIOD.

TAYLOR'S STORY

Key learning

A powerful case study combined with boots on the ground really got the message across.

What was the issue?

The fire service has responded to some fairly high profile drowning cases in South Yorkshire over the last few years and, whilst water rescue incidents are thankfully rare, when they do occur they often involve a serious injury or worse.

There were also fears, after lockdown measures got relaxed and during a particularly warm summer, that young people would flock to open water sites and start jumping in – with public pools being closed or hard to access. This proved to be true and we received many reports of large crowds swimming in quarries and reservoirs.

What did we decide to do?

This context, twinned with the fact that water is high on the agenda nationally, prompted us to quickly take action and launch our own campaign over the summer.

We knew we were targeting young people and their parents, based on information given to us by our water safety leads.

We knew from previous campaigns and research that sometimes you need to hit people in the moment, literally just as they are about to jump.

We also knew that parents were key in educating their children on the dangers of open water, given that children are often perceived to not listen to advice from public bodies and we had no way of getting to these people through schools and colleges (which at the time were closed).

Lastly, we decided to work across departments- harnessing the support of colleagues in our community safety team and from frontline fire stations to deliver our message on the ground.

How did we do it?

The heart of our campaign was a real life case study, featuring the family of a young man who had lost his life in open water in South Yorkshire.

We worked with the family of Taylor Matthews to develop a video which we shared online – reaching over 123,000 people on Facebook and 12,500 people on Twitter.

We arranged for Taylor's family to do an interview for BBC Look North alongside one of our officers to warn children and parents about the dangers. This broadcast hit around one million people across Yorkshire.

We designed and produced water warning signs featuring Taylor's image which were placed in pretty much every water hot spot across the county by our firefighters. Again, this was about hitting people in the moment.

We used Instagram advertising to target young people during the summer months – reaching over 31,000 people.

We also put out several organic social posts that struck up lots of conversation and shared the message far and wide – one particular post showing photos of young people gathering in a local water spot hit 1,700 shares and drew almost 400 comments

What were the results?

In an average summer (June to October), South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue carries out 10 rescues from water. During the same five months in 2020, we responded to seven incidents- a drop of 30 per cent.

We believe a combined reach of more than a million people, a powerful case study and the hard work of operational firefighters and community safety teams contributed to this reduction.

DYING FOR A DIP?

South Yorkshire
FIRE & RESCUE

Taylor was a strong swimmer.
He thought it would be fun to jump in open water.
It was the last thing he ever did.
You are too precious to become a drowning statistic.

STAY OUT OF THE WATER

IN AN AVERAGE SUMMER, SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE CARRIES OUT 10 RESCUES FROM WATER. DURING THE SAME FIVE MONTHS IN 2020, WE RESPONDED TO SEVEN INCIDENTS- A DROP OF 30 PER CENT.



YESTERDAY YOU SAID TOMORROW

Key learning

Measure what matters the most.

What was the issue?

Smoke alarm ownership and testing campaigns have been the most common subject of fire service messaging for nearly 20 years. Whilst a lot of these campaigns have been very successful in terms of reach and message recall, their impact has traditionally been very hard to measure. Insight also suggests the effectiveness of the message could be fading.

What did we decide to do?

We decided to run a smoke alarm testing campaign, which promoted sign-ups our already established smoke alarm test reminder service- pressthebutton.co.uk. Our objective was to increase the number of people signing up for this service- a clear outcome we could easily measure the success of our campaign by.

We also wanted to reduce the number of accidental dwelling fires in which a smoke alarm was not present or not working effectively- something we could also measure through our incident recording system.

We know that smoke alarm testing- like exercise- is something people often procrastinate over and fail to do. For this reason, we were inspired by Nike's 'yesterday you said tomorrow' campaign slogan and decided to make it the focus of our campaign.

How did we do it?

The campaign launched with a billboard advert on the Sheffield Parkway- one of

the region's busiest commuter routes- at a time when traffic to the city centre was increasing as Covid-19 restrictions were lifted over the summer months.

We followed this up with a powerful video case study in which a house fire victim spoke movingly from within the living room of her burnt out home about the fire and how a working smoke alarm had alerted her and her young daughter to the blaze.

The case study also made the front page of The Star newspaper and was covered by BBC Look North and BBC Radio Sheffield amongst others. We also published it on our own channels.

A children's poster competition which dozens of young people entered helped to reinforce our campaign messaging inside people's homes.

Lastly, we targeted digital ads at residents in parts of the county we knew were more at risk of house fires.

What were the results?

This campaign is still on-going.

We estimate our campaign launch, and the case study we teed up, reached hundreds of thousands of people through the traditional media and around 115,000 through our social media – with the video getting around 17,500 views.

Importantly, we have generated 417 sign-ups for our pressthebutton.co.uk service in the last six months of 2020 – an increase of over 5000% compared to the first six months.

WE HAVE GENERATED 417 SIGN-UPS FOR OUR PRESSTHEBUTTON.CO.UK SERVICE IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS OF 2020 – AN INCREASE OF OVER 5000% COMPARED TO THE FIRST SIX MONTHS.



South Yorkshire
FIRE & RESCUE

JUST PRESS IT.

Test your smoke alarm today



South Yorkshire
FIRE & RESCUE

YESTERDAY YOU SAID TOMORROW.

Test your smoke alarm today

JUST PRESS IT.

THE PLEDGE

Key learning

Getting people to commit to something in writing can reinforce behaviour change.

What was the issue?

Quite soon into the nationwide lockdown it became apparent that a reduction in weekly bin collections, paired with the closure of waste recycling centres, would cause us problems.

With people feeling as if they had no other option but to burn their excess waste, we saw a 161 per cent increase in garden fires during the first week of lockdown. We also received lots of complaints from people struggling with the smoke.

These incidents were tying up our crews, forcing people to stay inside, negatively affecting air quality and threatened to increase hospital admissions at a time when the NHS was facing huge strain.

What did we decide to do?

We decided to launch a campaign urging people to consider the effects of lighting a garden fire and then to pledge not to have one during the on-going pandemic.

We analysed our incident data to find out where the worst offending areas were and worked with partners to get our message out to those who needed to hear it.

Insight also told us that people are sometimes more likely to stick to a behaviour if they've made a commitment in writing.

Ultimately, our aim was to reduce the number of garden fires and other 'secondary fires' our crews were attending.

How did we do it?

We created a dedicated page on our website where people could sign a pledge, promising not to have one.

To prompt action, we created an infographic, which highlighted the effects that a single, out of control garden fire could have- including tying up firefighters and reducing air quality, thereby increasing hospitalisations for people with respiratory illness.

We arranged media interviews with local radio and newspapers and distributed a 'no garden fire' leaflet in hot spot areas.

We accessed community groups on Facebook, to share our message in target areas, supplementing this further with paid-for online advertising.

We also highlighted in the media and online the higher profile garden fire incidents our crews had attended, to explain the serious damage they can cause.

What were the results?

April and May 2020 were the driest for five years. This normally prompts an increase in garden fires and other types of secondary fire. We'd also expected incidents would increase as more people spent time at home and with other forms of waste disposal out of action.

In fact, we responded to five per cent fewer garden fires during this period compared to previous, comparative years.

We believe the campaign, which reached nearly 1 million people through traditional and online media and prompted more than 1,200 people to sign The Pledge, contributed to this drop.

Other fire and rescue services also adopted our campaign messaging.

WE RESPONDED TO FIVE PER CENT FEWER GARDEN FIRES DURING THIS PERIOD COMPARED TO PREVIOUS, COMPARATIVE YEARS.



BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS

Key learning

A scientific approach for fire safety marketing can boost outcomes.

What was the issue?

The tactics used by fire and rescue services to convey fire safety messaging rarely change and are often based upon anecdotal evidence and hunches.

For this reason, we wanted to apply behavioural science theory to test out different types of commonly used campaign materials so we could measure which ones work best.

What did we decide to do?

We decided to develop a randomised control trial to test the effectiveness of different types of image and message when communicating kitchen fire safety messages to residents.

Four separate pieces of direct marketing were mailed out to 1,000 postal addresses in known hot spot areas for cooking related accidental dwelling fires in South Yorkshire. This made the total sample size 4,000.

The marketing information asked householders to carry out a short, three-point checklist to reduce their likelihood of suffering a kitchen fire. The householders were asked to send back, by post, a notification confirming they have completed the checklist.

The checklist asked residents to:

- Check tea towels and other flammable materials are kept well away from the hob
- Check that grill pans are clean and not caked in grease
- Test their smoke alarms

The 'control' leaflet featured a cover image of a firefighter and a fire with a message referring to the risk to people's safety if they do not carry out the checks. This is a traditional route fire services often use to communicate fire safety information with residents.

Alternative sample groups received variations on this leaflet, which:

- Varied the cover image, swapping the picture of a firefighter with a photo of a child
- Varied the message, to something emphasising the financial cost and inconvenience of suffering a kitchen fire

How did we do it?

The materials were distributed by Royal Mail, via a mailing house.

The distribution address list was randomised. That is to say, whilst we targeted specific postcode areas within South Yorkshire, the address list was mixed up so that an entire street did not receive the same type of marketing material, for example.

The marketing information for each study group was distributed on the same day.

From a total study size of 4,000 addresses, 246 people returned their reply slips, making the response rate for this study 6.2%. Response rates were then analysed for each study group.

What were the results?

Using an image of a firefighter was most effective at prompting people to check their safety, compared to that of a child. We can infer from this that shocking imagery which ties closely to the message still has a role to play in prompting behaviour change. This conclusion is backed up by other qualitative research we have done in this area.

Emphasising the financial cost of suffering a kitchen fire was most effective at prompting people to check their safety, compared to emphasising the risk to life.

Combining the right image with the right message has the biggest impact on response rates.

The overall response rate is lower than other, similar studies we have previously run in this area. We infer from this that **people are more likely to respond to a single safety message or action, than several different messages**.

The response rate for this study is still far higher than industry averages for direct marketing. With a cost per response of around £7, this suggests that **postal marketing can be a cost effective way of getting safety messages to high risk groups**.




Kitchen fires kill 20 people every year

Most fires in the kitchen can be easily avoided.

Reduce your risk by carrying out **three simple checks.**

-  I've checked that tea towels and other flammable materials are well away from the hob
-  I've checked my grill pan is clean and not caked in grease
-  I've tested my smoke alarm is working (to check, hold down the 'test' button until it beeps)

Once you've carried out the checks, tick the boxes to let us know.

Detach this part and then post it back to us using the pre-paid, free post slip provided.

For more information on preventing fires, visit www.syfire.gov.uk

C1



The average cost of recovering from a kitchen fire is £20,000

Most fires in the kitchen can be easily avoided.

Reduce your risk by carrying out **three simple checks.**

-  I've checked that tea towels and other flammable materials are well away from the hob
-  I've checked my grill pan is clean and not caked in grease
-  I've tested my smoke alarm is working (to check, hold down the 'test' button until it beeps)

Once you've carried out the checks, tick the boxes to let us know.

Detach this part and then post it back to us using the pre-paid, free post slip provided.

For more information on preventing fires, visit www.syfire.gov.uk

F2

WITH A COST PER RESPONSE OF AROUND £7, THIS SUGGESTS THAT POSTAL MARKETING CAN BE A COST EFFECTIVE WAY OF GETTING SAFETY MESSAGES TO HIGH RISK GROUPS.

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

SAY THANK YOU

Key learning

Reminding staff of the power of a simple thank you can be just as important as recognition schemes and awards.

What was the issue?

We knew from staff surveys that people don't always feel recognised for their contribution, beyond their immediate manager or team. A separate staff wellbeing survey found that only 10% of staff take the time to recognise success at work.

Alongside this, there has been a perception for many years that, as a service, we don't do enough as an organisation to celebrate our good work.

What did we decide to do?

With staff recognition known to be a big contributor towards job satisfaction and happiness at work, we decided to develop a campaign to celebrate staff achievements in a concerted and meaningful way. We particularly wanted to:

- Improve staff morale and happiness at work
- Reconnect staff with their individual role and purpose of the organisation

One of our aspirations is to 'Be a great place to work', and we felt more consciously recognising the good work of our staff would also help us to achieve this.

We also wanted to remind people that recognition doesn't have to mean rewards, medals and trophies- a simple and genuine thank you can be just as meaningful.

How did we do it?

One of our first acts was to make 'thank you's'- from both public and staff a much more prominent part of our staff bulletin. We re-branded the landing page of our internal e-bulletin to the new 'Say Thank You' branding.

We knew that getting manager buy in was key, so we sent a briefing to all line managers reminding them of the power of a simple thank you and the importance of recognising, in the moment, a job well done. We followed this up with guidance to staff on how to recognise colleagues using the 'achievements' section of our staff appraisal system.

Our social media channels, whilst public facing, are often well followed by our own staff so we also created editable graphics to highlight some of the community feedback we received for individual staff members, watches or teams.

Posters went up at workplaces reminding staff of the importance of a simple thank you and a reminder of how people could recognise the achievements of others.

Some of our planned activity- such as the launch of an internal postcard system- was disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic. We still made staff recognition a big part of our response to the pandemic though.

A video which we published at work and online highlighted the contribution many of our staff had made to our county's wider response to the pandemic. We also sent thank you postcards, with a message from the Chief Fire Officer, to more than 200 staff who had spent months working from home.

What were the results?

In the period before we ran the campaign, the statement in our bi-monthly staff pulse survey 'I feel valued and recognised at work' had a net approval rating (those scoring it 4 or 5 stars out of five) of 40%. This increased by 10 percentage points to an average approval rating of 50% in the six months following the campaign.



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FIRE & RESCUE

“ Today we had a Home Safety Check carried out by three members from Elm Lane Station. I would like to express my thanks for the efficient the way they fitted smoke alarms in our property. They were very friendly and extremely helpful and I am very grateful. Thank you. ”

Say 
thank you



WE SENT THANK YOU POSTCARDS, WITH A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, TO MORE THAN 200 STAFF WHO HAD SPENT MONTHS WORKING FROM HOME.

PEOPLE NEED US

Key learning

Concise, simple messaging is key in a time of crisis.

What was the issue?

The Covid-19 pandemic presented a massive internal communication challenge, as it did for all organisations. With traditional lines of communication disrupted and a wealth of urgent, safety critical information to share with staff the issue was how to do this effectively.

With large numbers of support staff working from home, frontline firefighters continuing to go into work every day to keep our 999 service going and large numbers of people volunteering to take on additional duties, this was also about recognising the achievements of staff during a really difficult period.

What did we decide to do?

Our starting point was to develop a staff communication strategy based around delivering concise, factual messages using a small number of established, trusted channels. We knew that avoiding mixed or conflicting messages would be vital in a time of crisis. We also knew from previous experience in our sector, that being clear about where and when our most important information would be posted would be key.

Early on, we decided to make feelings of togetherness, staff wellbeing and recognition at the heart of our communication. Where possible, we also wanted to thank our staff in the most powerful and meaningful ways possible.

As the situation changed in the summer months and national restrictions reduced, we had to support the return of staff to workplaces, who had previously been working from home or shielding.

How did we do it?

We chose daily email and intranet updates as the most effective channels for getting timely, accurate information to staff in the early stages of the pandemic. Initially sent seven days a week, these reduced in frequency as we moved into new stages of the pandemic.

We knew that in times of crisis people often look to senior leaders, so we then reinforced key messages through blogs, audio and video messages from the leadership team, including the Chief Fire Officer.

As the service began to make the transition from response to recovery after the first wave, we produced walkthrough videos, building signage and a staff handbook to guide staff through the re-occupancy of key sites like our training centre and HQ.

Then, as new layers of local restrictions and a second national lockdown came into force, we produced posters and graphics to explain the 'operational parameters' we were asking staff to adhere to.

Staff absence levels rose in the second wave, with increasing numbers of frontline staff self-isolating. In response, we produced posters, videos and graphics to reinforce the key behaviours we were asking our staff to follow to reduce their risk of infection and isolation whilst at work.

Wherever possible, we thanked staff for their work- either for continuing to perform their usual roles in testing

circumstances, or for going above and beyond the call of duty to support the wider response and recovery from the pandemic.

What were the results?

Despite this being a very difficult period for staff, satisfaction with internal communication was high.

In the period before we ran the campaign, the statement in our bi-monthly staff pulse survey 'I know what is going on across the service' had a net approval rating (those scoring it 4 or 5 stars out of five) of 42%. This increased by 14 percentage points to an average approval rating of 56% in the six months following the campaign.



WE PRODUCED POSTERS AND GRAPHICS TO EXPLAIN THE 'OPERATIONAL PARAMETERS' WE WERE ASKING STAFF TO ADHERE TO.

SHOUT

Key learning

Public channels can be a powerful way of celebrating the achievements of your staff.

What was the issue?

Fire and rescue services have rightly been praised for their record in reducing emergency incidents. They also have a good track record of publicising their community activity, safety initiatives and schools education work.

However, despite falling incident numbers, firefighters still attend dozens of serious emergencies and carry out many dramatic rescues every year. Feedback from staff at focus groups and through surveys suggested that they didn't always feel their operational achievements were celebrated enough.

What did we decide to do?

We wanted to shine a light on the individual achievements of frontline staff by telling their stories in a personal, powerful way.

We deliberately didn't want to focus on support teams or senior officers- this was about telling the stories of fire station based crews.

With podcast consumption one of the fastest growing media trends, we decided to develop our own public facing podcast- Shout- as a vehicle to tell some of these fantastic stories.

How did we do it?

We went out and spoke to a range of different frontline staff from across the service.

We asked them to tell the story of a memorable, life saving incident they'd attended. They also talked about their careers, the teams they are proud to be a part of and what it feels like to have helped to save a life.

We then published to podcast platforms, including iTunes, Google Podcasts and Podbean. We created a brand for the podcast and promoted it using our social media channels.

A double page spread in the Yorkshire Post drew further attention to the podcast and the people featured in it.

What were the results?

The six episode series had more than 1,200 plays, across multiple platforms.

The series also has a five star rating on iTunes.

The proportion of staff saying they feel their achievements at work are recognised rose by 10% after the podcast series aired in April and May, compared to the last time we measured this in January 2020.

THE SIX EPISODE SERIES HAD MORE THAN 1,200 PLAYS, ACROSS MULTIPLE PLATFORMS.



RECRUITMENT AND DIVERSITY

COMPLAINTS WELCOME

Key learning

Being brave and taking on the trolls can still link back to your objectives.

What was the issue?

LGBT+ staff have served within the fire and rescue service for many years. However, they remain underrepresented within the sector.

As we strive to strengthen our reputation as an inclusive employer and to meet our organisational objective of being a great place to work, we wanted to do something big for LGBT+ History Month to make people stand up and take notice so we could make a real difference.

What did we decide to do?

It all began in 2019 we posted the rainbow flag on our social media pages for Pride month. We were immediately met with a torrent of online abuse and politely, but robustly dealt each troll in turn.

We later learned that it was this- responding to the negativity and not taking the hate lying down- which had the greatest impact on our existing LGBT staff members, some of whom contacted us to thank us for taking a more proactive stance on the issue of homophobia than simply posting a picture of a flag.

This year, we decided to take that principle one step further and use some of the hate we'd received and use it for something good- a campaign which highlighted the prejudices many people identifying as LGBT+ still face in society, whilst hopefully attracting potential applicants to consider careers with us.

How did we do this?

We always look outside our organisation and our sector for inspiration for our work.

We loved the brave, funny, self-deprecating style of Channel 4's Complaints Welcome ad and thought we could apply the same fearless principles to our own work.

We adapted their creative vision to fit our own context, wrote a script based on the hateful comments we'd received the year before and lined up key staff from across the organisation to appear in our own version of what they did.

With the video produced, we published it a few days into LGBT+ History Month (February). We'd already teed up our local media contacts, including BBC Radio Sheffield & The Star. This was supplemented by a piece on ITV Calendar on the day of release and coverage in several prominent LGBT media titles, including Attitude and Pink News.

As predicted, the video went 'viral' and in a big way. This attracted huge amounts of positivity but some negativity, too, which we tackled in the moment using key lines we had prepared earlier.

Importantly we then followed the video launch up by sharing it in LGBT+ groups on Facebook.

This was about getting people to register their interest in careers with us and was linked back to our insight – that said only 6 per cent of our registrations were from the LGBT+ community.

What were the results?

The campaign led to a 110 per cent increase in registrations of interest from people identifying as either gay, lesbian or bi-sexual via a recruitment form on our website in March - 42 people in total.

As well as this:

- The video has been viewed more than 500,000 times, liked by 16,300 and given 4,000 retweets on Twitter – numbers that far exceed anything else in our recent history
- We had a further 428,000 views on Facebook – attracting 9,600 likes, 1,400 comments and 4,900 shares
- There was then 40,700 views on YouTube – making this the most liked and second most viewed video on this account since it was created in 2008

We also had, numbers aside, an overwhelmingly positive response from people watching the video. Members of the LGBT+ community sent messages of thanks whilst others across the public sector heaped praise on the stance the service had taken.



THERE WAS THEN 40,700 VIEWS ON YOUTUBE – MAKING THIS THE MOST LIKED AND SECOND MOST VIEWED VIDEO ON THIS ACCOUNT SINCE IT WAS CREATED IN 2008.

NEED MORE

Key learning

Hyper-local marketing and neighbourhood Facebook groups get results.

What was the issue?

Despite the fact that on-call firefighters are of vital importance to maintaining affordable fire cover, recruiting and retaining them has been a long-standing issue for fire and rescue services.

The scale of this issue prompted a national recruitment campaign – utilising a new 'Need More' brand targeting people fed up of their 'routine' lifestyles.

With several fire stations in South Yorkshire in need of new on-call firefighters, we wanted to support the national activity by carrying out some targeted activity of our own, based upon local knowledge and insight.

What did we decide to do?

We knew, thanks to our insight, that targeting people in specific areas was crucial. It was no good having registrations of interest from people who don't live close enough to the fire station to be able to do the job.

This meant running a campaign that was targeted, hyper-locally, at the people living in the fire station areas we needed to focus on.

We also knew that our messages needed to be based around the things that, according to Home Office research, attracted people into the role. Our key lines were therefore around three things that we could offer people:

- The chance to earn extra money – flexibly
- The chance to push and challenge yourself
- The chance to serve your local community

How did we do this?

With all of that in mind, we pulled together a spoken word poem that was delivered, on camera, by an actor.

The actor was specifically picked out as the kind of person we felt would resonate most with our messages – and to hit the sort of demographic we knew lived locally.

We shared the video, via organic social media and targeted advertising, with people living within our target areas. These were people who had some shared, common interests and met our age requirements.

We also delivered supporting, offline activity which included:

- Producing localised 'Need More' literature to be used by firefighters to help advertise recruitment opportunities within their local community
- Filming a series of videos showing the selection tests that people need to pass, so that potential applicants had a better chance of meeting the recruitment criteria
- Ordering new recruitment banners for each on-call fire station, in line with the national branding
- Developing an editable fire station information sheet which could be used locally, to give targeted recruitment advice to aspiring applicants.

What were the results?

Our aim was to increase registrations of interest in on-call firefighters roles, from people within our identified station areas, by at least 100 per cent.

During our initial two week burst in March we received 102 registrations of interest for specific fire stations. The two week average for the previous month was 21 – meaning we achieved an increase of 386 per cent.

During our second burst in September, we had 471 registrations – an increase of 1,246 per cent compared to the number received during September 2019.

In addition to this, the video we produced was viewed more than 30,000 times across our various channels and was also used by other fire and rescue services across the country.

Many of those who registered their interest are now making their way through the various recruitment stages to become fully competent, on-call firefighters serving the communities in which they live.



DURING OUR SECOND BURST IN SEPTEMBER, WE HAD 471 REGISTRATIONS – AN INCREASE OF 1,246 PER CENT COMPARED TO THE NUMBER RECEIVED DURING SEPTEMBER 2019.

FAMILY 2.0

Key learning

Targeted digital activity had an even bigger impact than last year's physical engagement.

What was the issue?

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

A Black History Month photo exhibition in 2019 had led to a surge in BAME career registrations, but the Covid-19 pandemic meant a physical presence in public spaces would not have the same impact this time around.

What did we decide to do?

Our approach, like last year, was grounded in the insight 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.

With most public venues off limits, we decided to take last year's fine art photography exhibition featuring portraits of black staff members online.

We also wanted to expand the number of staff featured and showcase different roles across the service- like a career in our 999 Control room.

With a fresh bout of wholtime firefighter recruitment imminent, we decided to back up our online activity with targeted digital advertising which made best use of the powerful imagery at our disposal.

How did we do this?

We once again approached members of our BAME staff network inviting them to have their portrait taken by a member of our finance team, adding two new members of staff to our gallery.

We then worked with a web developer to create an online version of the exhibition which featured each of the portraits alongside a description from every staff member featured telling us about their role within the fire service, what made them join and a bit about their cultural heritage. The microsite also signposted people towards career information on the service's main website.

We then designed a series of stinger videos and photo based ads which tailored specifically for Instagram. We used a mixture of organic and paid for advertising to target these ads towards the audiences we were trying to reach.

We publicised the activity in the media, with the campaign achieving coverage in The Star and BBC Radio Sheffield.

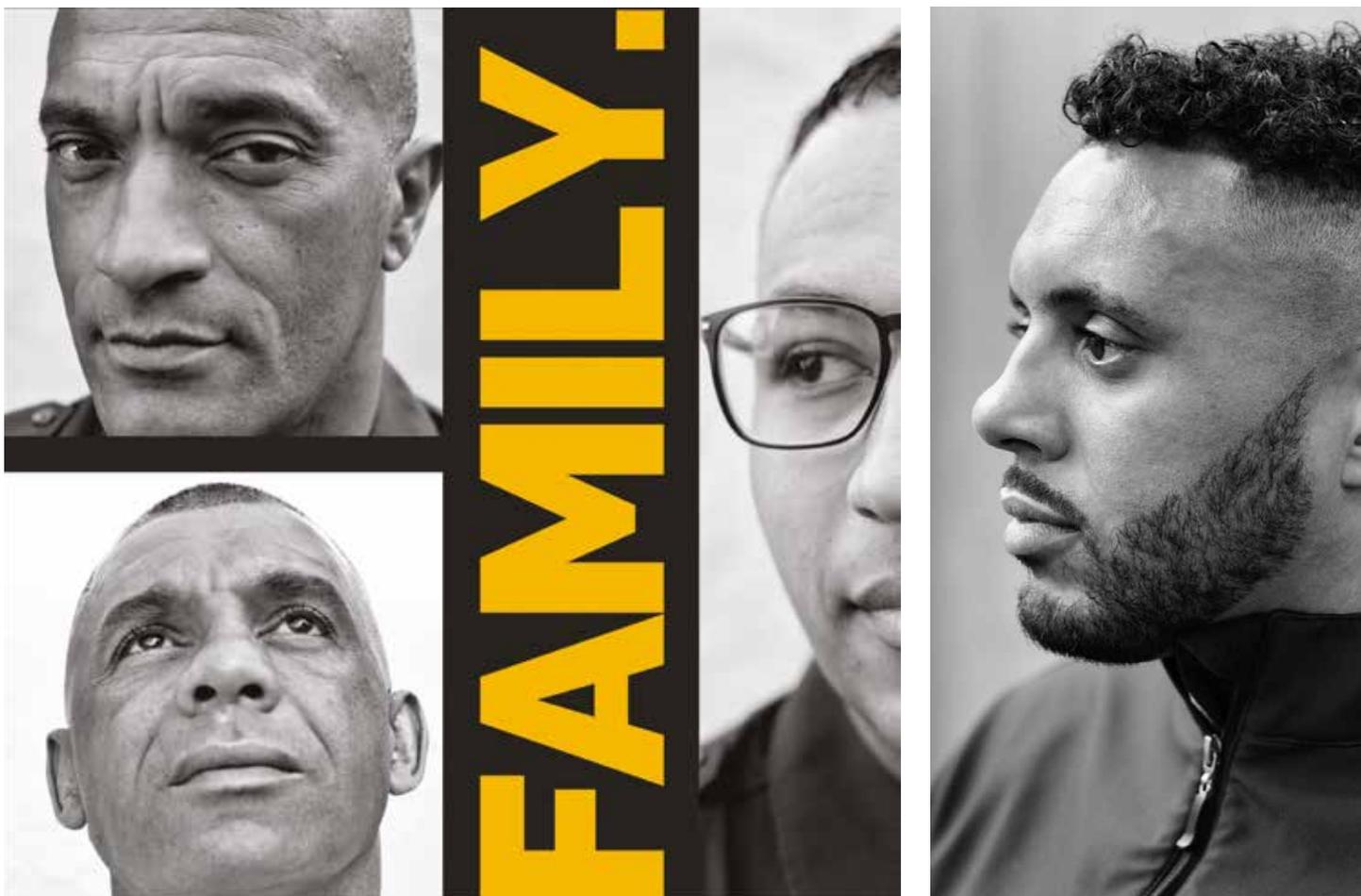
What were the results?

More than 1,000 people visited Family Online during Black History Month 2020 and we reached more than 60,000 people through our digital marketing.

This generated 1,020 registrations of interest in total -109 of which were from BAME backgrounds, which is proportionate with local population data.

The number of BAME registrations represents a 118 per cent increase compared to last October - also when we staged the physical 'Family' exhibition.

It was also an increase of 304 per cent compared to the previous six months -where BAME made up only 6 per cent of all registrations as opposed to 10 per cent during this campaign.



THE NUMBER OF BAME REGISTRATIONS REPRESENTS A 118 PER CENT INCREASE COMPARED TO LAST OCTOBER – ALSO WHEN WE STAGED THE PHYSICAL ‘FAMILY’ EXHIBITION.

WHOLETIME RECRUITMENT

Key learning

Communication campaigns are most effective when teams and departments work together towards a shared objective.

What was the issue?

The service needed to recruit a new set of wholetime firefighter recruits, in line with our workforce planning.

We knew that these were popular roles, with lots of people eager to apply, but we also needed to attract the right candidates. This wasn't just about diversity but about quality – we wanted people who would make excellent, modern-day firefighters.

This would also need to be a recruitment campaign different to others – with face-to-face engagement and positive action events off the cards due to the pandemic.

What did we decide to do?

We knew that a big bang firefighter campaign could go viral, given the historic popularity of the role, and that this might not actually be a good thing, potentially leading to an unmanageable number of applicants and having negative impact on the diversity of successful applications. Previous experiences told us that digital marketing could be hugely effective in targeting people within the county.

First, we wanted to give lots of people the chance to see that we were recruiting.

Our primary objective was then to generate an increase in applications – compared to recent campaigns.

Importantly, we wanted this increase to be consistent across under and non-underrepresented groups and for a high proportion of those applications to be meaningful – that is, getting past the first application stage.

How did we do it?

We worked closely with our Organisational Development team throughout.

We began by developing some fresh marketing materials using the national 'Need More' brand, previously adopted for on-call firefighter recruitment initiatives.

Next, we issued carefully tailored e-newsletters to an existing contact list of nearly 5,000 potential applicants, who had previously registered their interest in a career with us. These had a 60 per cent open rate and 2,451 link clicks to our website recruitment pages.

For the first time, we explored the use of Instagram influencers to spread news of the campaign with our target audiences. This resulted in us recruiting Doncaster resident and Manchester United FC footballer Jess Sigsworth to share news of the recruitment with her 53,000 followers.

Lastly, we spent £500 on several rounds of highly targeted Facebook and Instagram adverts, which reached 95,000 people and generated a further 2,735 link clicks.

What were the results?

In total 2,181 people submitted their applications – this is an increase on the last campaign of 81 per cent.

We then had 1,708 get past the first stage (meaningful applications) – this is an increase of 91 per cent on last time.

We had 599 applications from under-represented groups – this is a 92 per cent increase on the last campaign.

We had 472 of these pass the first stage (meaningful applications) – this is a 97 per cent increase on the last campaign.

The proportion of women applying also increased by four per cent.



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WE HAD 599 APPLICATIONS FROM UNDER-REPRESENTED GROUPS –THIS IS A 92 PER CENT INCREASE ON THE LAST CAMPAIGN.

CONSULTATION

HAVE YOUR SAY

Key learning

A two phase consultation meant we could genuinely use public feedback to inform our plans.

What was the issue?

Fire and rescue services have consulted on 'integrated risk management plans' for many years. Traditionally, they've done little to seek or respond to the views of local people away from these though.

A clear message nationally is that this needs to change- engaging with the public more regularly about what they want from their fire and rescue service and using this information to shape service design.

What did we decide to do?

We wanted to run a two phase consultation exercise which initially asked the public some fundamental questions like "what do you want from your local fire and rescue service?" or "which services do you want us to focus on". We would then use this feedback to inform our draft Integrated Risk Management Plan- the main public document we publish which explains how we will deliver our services.

A second phase of consultation on the draft plans themselves would follow. This included getting feedback on our proposals around the introduction of new response time targets, from staff as well as the public.

Public consultation exercises traditionally rely on a single research method. This often results in a small and non-representative sample of people influencing the design of public services. A mass consultation exercise with every person in South Yorkshire on the

other hand would be expensive and disproportionate.

For this consultation, we wanted to use a mixture of quantitative and qualitative research methods to ensure views were considered from a broad range of local people, including those with protected characteristics.

How did we do it?

For the first phase, our approach was to run an online forum with 22 people from South Yorkshire. The forum acted like a virtual focus group, with an independent facilitator generating feedback and promoting discussion around the subject areas.

We then supported this work with quantitative research methods like questionnaires and surveys which proved useful for providing a high volume of responses and ensuring that we captured views from a broad and representative sample of local people.

For this consultation we carried out:

- A telephone survey with 1,100 residents of South Yorkshire
- A postal survey which was sent out to 8,000 residents of South Yorkshire
- An online survey which was publicised in the media and online which anyone could complete

During the second consultation phase, we delivered cascaded briefings to staff via video conferencing and then asked them to complete an online survey.

A further online survey was published for the public to complete, which was promoted on traditional and digital media channels and through the use of a simple 'explainer' animated video.

Staff consultation included the delivery of cascaded briefings to every fire station, Control room watch and support staff team in the service. Staff could feedback their views using a separate, online survey following these briefings.

What were the results?

Nearly 4,000 people took part in the consultation, making it one of the biggest engagement exercises the service has ever undertaken. The results from each phase helped to inform the service's Integrated Risk Management Plan and its thinking around response times. The consultation has also set a template for how the service will deliver consultation in the future.

HAVE YOUR SAY

on your fire and rescue service



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

Share your views, for a chance to win a £50 Amazon voucher, at www.syfire.gov.uk/consultation



South Yorkshire
FIRE & RESCUE

**NEARLY 4,000 PEOPLE TOOK PART
IN THE CONSULTATION, MAKING IT
ONE OF THE BIGGEST ENGAGEMENT
EXERCISES THE SERVICE HAS EVER
UNDERTAKEN**

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION

HATFIELD MOORS FIRE

Key learning

Stamina is important when handling a major emergency.

What was the issue?

Fire took hold of a large area of peat moorland near Doncaster in May 2020, following a long period of warm, dry weather and right in the middle of the first phase of the Covid-19 pandemic. The deep seated fire took weeks to fully extinguish, with a response supported by several partner agencies.

Communication around the incident was particularly sensitive as the moorland was a designated site of special scientific interest, with the peat home to dozens of rare and endangered plants, birds and animals.

What did we decide to do?

We developed a one-page communication plan based on some core principles, which aimed to:

- Prevent injuries or loss of life by giving members of the public relevant and timely safety information about the incident
- Reassure the public and stakeholders about the response, by explaining the tactics being used by the fire service and other partners
- Highlight the collective effort to help the restoration of this internationally significant site, as the incident moved from response to recovery

Although the fire service would lead the initial communication activity, we also wanted to work closely with relevant partners to ensure public messaging remained accurate and appropriate as the incident moved from response towards recovery.

How did we do it?

We used a mixture of digital and traditional media channels to let the public know that:

- People should stay away from Hatfield Moors- it was the scene of an emergency incident
- Partners were working hard and working together to save as much of this important natural site as possible
- Whilst the cause of this incident was not known, people visiting the countryside should leave BBQs at home and dispose of cigarettes safely to prevent similar incidents from occurring

Operational updates were posted twice a day on the fire service website. Our social media channels were used to update the media and public outside of these times and to provide context and humanity to the messages being shared. We facilitated interview requests with the traditional media where possible.

Both the pandemic and the nature of the fire meant opportunities for an on the scene communication presence were limited. Wherever possible though, we used photos and videos taken straight from the incident ground to update the public and partners about our response.

These included video updates from the Chief Fire Officer who explained the tactics firefighters were using and praised our staff for their response. We also used footage taken by a firefighter from inside a helicopter to help describe the scale of the incident and explain the size of our response.

As the incident moved towards the recovery phase, we worked with partners including Natural England, DEFRA and local councils to produce marketing materials which could be used at other moorland sites in South Yorkshire.

We also produced a post-incident video which reinforced some of these messages and explained the steps which partners were now taking to restore this vital habitat.

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.

We also know that we saw a huge influx of positive feedback from grateful residents and nature lovers who, thanks to our communication, could see the work that our firefighters were doing on the ground to extinguish the fire and protect the environment.



WE WORKED WITH PARTNERS INCLUDING NATURAL ENGLAND, DEFRA AND LOCAL COUNCILS TO PRODUCE MARKETING MATERIALS WHICH COULD BE USED AT OTHER MOORLAND SITES IN SOUTH YORKSHIRE.



Making
**SOUTH
YORKSHIRE
SAFER &
STRONGER**



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