



**SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE**

# **CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS**

**2021**



**South Yorkshire  
FIRE & RESCUE**

# CONTENTS

## FIRE SAFETY



Hello Fire Service 4



Firestoppers 6



Press the button 8



Summer safety 10

## RECRUITMENT AND DIVERSITY



Choose to challenge 16



The gap 18



Make a difference 20



Need more 22

## INTERNAL COMMUNICATION



Our Story 2021 12



New fire kit 14

# INTRODUCTION

South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue's communication team works 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 use audience insight and are measured according to the impact on the people they are trying to reach.

All campaigns are delivered using the OASIS planning model:

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

Four people work in the service's corporate communication team.

FIRE SAFETY

# HELLO FIRE SERVICE

## Key learning

*Embracing artificial intelligence can change the face of safety communication*

### What was the issue?

Fire services have offered in-person safety visits and smoke alarm fitting for almost two decades. More sophisticated use of demographic and historic house fire data means these visits are now being better and more frequently targeted at those most vulnerable to fire.

We wanted to use the latest technology to offer a virtual equivalent of a home safety check to lower risk groups, as a way of providing meaningful home fire safety education to people we aren't eligible for an in-person visit.

### What did we decide to do?

We worked with industry leading artificial intelligence specialists to create a 'do it yourself' home safety check.

The check takes residents step-by-step through eight different topics in a personable and conversational style – offering important safety advice along the way. Depending on the answers provided by the resident, a recommendation could be made to book an in-person visit if required.

Our objective was to encourage as many of our target audience to begin the virtual check and follow it through to the end. We set ourselves a goal of 1,000 people completing the check in three months following launch.

### How did we do this?

After developing a brand identity and advertising materials for the new 'Hello Fire Service' virtual check, we promoted it via:

- Leaflet door drops, targeted to homes in priority areas
- Targeted social media advertising
- Local print and broadcast media
- Email marketing
- Organic social media posts, drawing upon our existing large digital reach

Our key message will be that this is a quick and easy service that can provide people with important fire safety advice and flag up any causes for concern.

Importantly, we also worked closely with our frontline referral partners, to help promote the virtual check to their service users.

### What were the results?

To date, we've had 4,138 interactions across 493 conversations – meaning hundreds of South Yorkshire households have been made safer without us having to even set foot in their home.

Of these, 136 people went on to request a home safety check from us – meaning this is a referral tool as much as a safety tool.

These interactions are not only making people safer, they are giving us an insight into where the risk is within homes across the county.



South Yorkshire  
FIRE & RESCUE

Hi! 🙋

South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue invite you to carry out a virtual home safety check 🏠 📱 👍

TEXT: 'HELLO FIRE SERVICE'

TO: 07862 126663 OR SCAN: 

HELLO LAMP POST



South Yorkshire  
FIRE & RESCUE

Hi! 🙋

South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue invite you to carry out a virtual home safety check 🏠 📱 ✓

TEXT: 'HELLO FIRE SERVICE'

TO: 07862 126663 OR SCAN: 

HELLO LAMP POST



South Yorkshire  
FIRE & RESCUE

Hi! 🙋

South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue invite you to carry out a virtual home safety check 🏠 ⚠️ ✓

TEXT: 'HELLO FIRE SERVICE'

TO: 07862 126663 OR SCAN: 

HELLO LAMP POST

**TO DATE, WE'VE HAD 4,138 INTERACTIONS ACROSS 493 CONVERSATIONS – MEANING HUNDREDS OF SOUTH YORKSHIRE HOUSEHOLDS HAVE BEEN MADE SAFER WITHOUT US HAVING TO EVEN SET FOOT IN THEIR HOME.**

# FIRESTOPPERS

## Key learning

*Sometimes a deterrent is as effective as the cure*

### What was the issue?

Arson accounts for more than three quarters of all the fires attended by UK fire and rescue services.

In South Yorkshire, we attended 4,457 arsons in 2019 alone- with many of these small, deliberate fires involving things like grass and rubbish.

Fire services have traditionally struggled to address this issue- with limited options for what we can ask communities to do about people starting fires in their areas.

### What did we decide to do?

We decided to work with Firestoppers- sister charity of the well-established Crimestoppers- to establish an anonymous reporting route for people wishing to report arson in South Yorkshire.

We would then use historic fire incident data to decide where to publicise the service in areas at high risk of arson.

Our objectives were to:

- Ensure perpetrators of deliberate fires were reported to the appropriate authorities
- Provide a deterrent- making it very clear to would-be arsonists that there is a real risk of them getting caught

### How did we do this?

We worked with Firestoppers to create a brand identity for our localised version of the campaign.

We knew through previous work and research around this issue, that for a deterrent to be effective you have to hit people with your message in the moment. That's why we produced large, high visibility, all weather signs which firefighters put up in arson hot spots- like parks and children's playgrounds.

We also promoted the service using organic and paid-for social media marketing, business cards and local print and broadcast media opportunities.

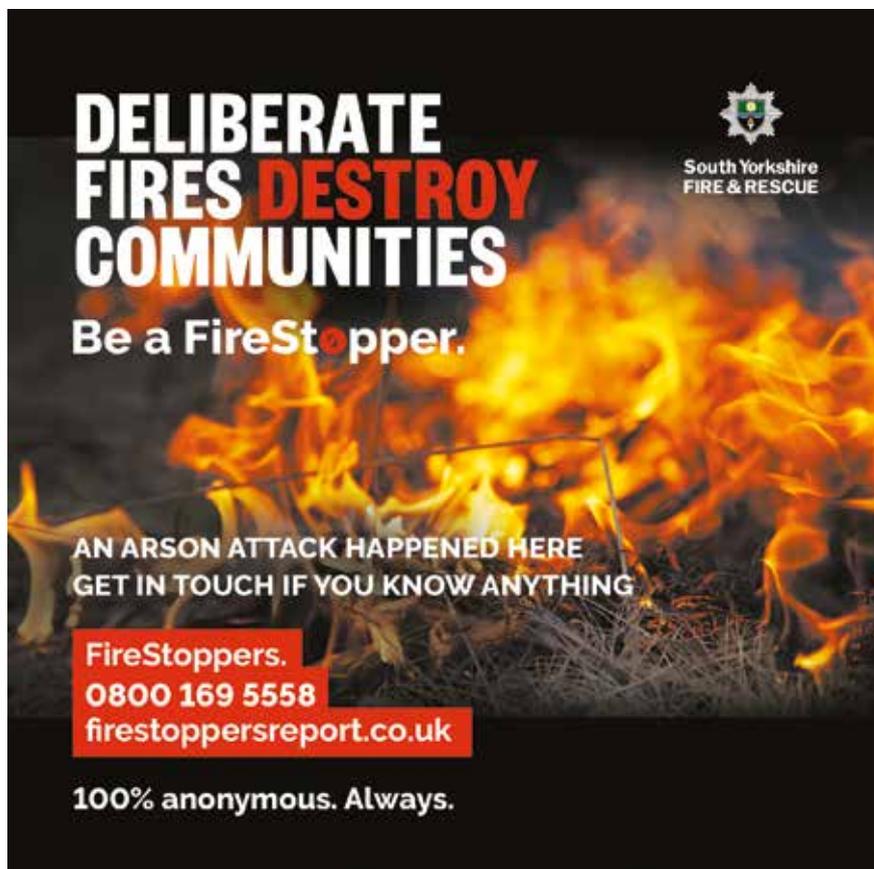
We regularly signposted people to the service when reporting on arson-related incidents that our crews had attended.

### What were the results?

We've had several reports come through the anonymous hotline, helping us to prevent planned arson attacks.

After launching in May, we saw a 7 percent reduction in deliberate fire-setting across June, July and August 2021, compared to the same period in 2020

Compared to the three year average for deliberate fire-setting across June, July and August – this year has seen a 29 percent reduction – which is almost a third less deliberate fires.



**COMPARED TO THE THREE YEAR AVERAGE FOR DELIBERATE FIRE-SETTING ACROSS JUNE, JULY AND AUGUST – THIS YEAR HAS SEEN A 29 PERCENT REDUCTION – WHICH IS ALMOST A THIRD LESS DELIBERATE FIRES**

# PRESS THE BUTTON

## Key learning

*Brave approaches and supercharged segmentation can deliver results for old messages*

### What was the issue?

Fire and rescue services have campaigned around smoke alarm ownership and testing for decades.

Our fear though was that our messaging around the subject had become stale and too easy to ignore.

We wanted to shake up our approach therefore, whilst making a measurable impact on smoke alarm testing.

### What did we decide to do about it?

We decided to harness the power of crowd sourced creative design to help us come up with fresh ways of prompting people to test their smoke alarms.

We achieved this by working with the One Minute Briefs creative community on a design competition for posters to advertise our free smoke alarm test reminder service- [presthebutton.co.uk](https://www.presthebutton.co.uk).

We also decided to use our new and growing TikTok following to bring our messaging to new audiences.

### How did we do it?

We selected winning designs from more than 120 submitted as part of the One Minute Briefs design competition.

We turned these designs into adverts which we posted across our main social media channels, all of which have established followings.

One of the designs was aimed at parents – so we deployed paid for advertising which specifically targeted mothers and fathers on young children in a bid to prompt smoke alarm reminder sign-ups.

A series of videos posted on our TikTok channel used trending sounds and in-the-moment hooks to call on people to test their alarms and sign-up for reminders. These videos were viewed more than 700,000 times.

### What were the results?

110 people signed up for the smoke alarm test reminders in December- a 633% increase compared to the monthly average.

On top of this:

- Our TikTok test reminder videos amassed 722,000 views
- We reached 330,000 people with a piece on ITV Calendar
- We reached a further 120,000 people with smoke alarm messages in newspapers and on the radio
- More than 200,000 people saw organic or paid for social media posts related to the campaign



 South Yorkshire  
FIRE & RESCUE

# DADDY PUSHED THE BUTTON.

Sign up to our completely free and easy fire alarm test reminder, so everyone you love can sleep free and easy.

**#PUSHTHEBUTTON**

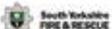


*"I've got a text!"*

You'll ❤️ our free reminder service. It offers people the chance to receive weekly or monthly reminders to test their smoke alarm by either text message or email.

 South Yorkshire  
FIRE & RESCUE



 South Yorkshire  
FIRE & RESCUE

# MUMMY PUSHED THE BUTTON.

Sign up to our completely free and easy fire alarm test reminder, so everyone you love can sleep free and easy.

**#PUSHTHEBUTTON**

**ONE OF THE DESIGNS WAS AIMED AT PARENTS – SO WE DEPLOYED PAID FOR ADVERTISING WHICH SPECIFICALLY TARGETED MOTHERS AND FATHERS ON YOUNG CHILDREN IN A BID TO PROMPT SMOKE ALARM REMINDER SIGN-UPS.**

# SUMMER SAFETY

## Key learning

*Multi-message campaigns can still work provided they are planned carefully*

### What was the issue?

Summer traditionally presents new risks to people's safety, with deliberate fires, moorland incidents, BBQ and water related incidents all tending to spike during periods of warmer weather.

They are also incident types which often attract heightened public, partner and media attention.

Our challenge therefore was to develop a coherent public safety campaign focussed on warm weather issues which actually made an impact on incident numbers.

### What did we decide to do?

We know that hitting people in the moment can be an effective way of changing behaviour – especially with things such as disposable BBQs and water safety.

Positive reinforcement around protecting our local habitats and environment can also be an effective way of prompting behaviour change.

Lastly, we know frontline crews benefit from having something they can do on the ground to support a campaign- with putting up high-visibility signage in hot spot areas a popular example of this.

Bearing all this in mind and combining it with historic incident data, we decided to develop a multi-message campaign which particularly targeted hot spot areas for summer-related incidents.

### How did we do it?

We provided fire crews with durable signs on issues such as BBQs and water safety to display in key locations.

Direct mail leaflet drops were delivered to higher-risk postcode areas, backed up by messaging sent to our 10,000 strong email contact database.

We spoke extensively to local radio and television media- particularly around the issues of BBQ and water safety.

Digital assets were shared across our social media channels, backed up by paid-for advertising at key moments-like bank holidays or during periods of particularly hot weather. We also used Facebook Groups to help us reach hyper-local audiences.

Lastly, we worked closely with local authority partners to help extend the reach of our messages.

### What were the results?

During July and August 2021 we attended 148 accidental secondary fires – a 39% reduction on the previous three year average (241) for these two months.

We attended 478 deliberate fires during July and August 2021 – a 44% reduction on the previous three year average (858) for these two months

We were supported in our efforts by frontline crews and partners such as Doncaster Council who helped share our messaging.



**WE ATTENDED 478 DELIBERATE FIRES DURING  
JULY AND AUGUST 2021 – A 44% REDUCTION  
ON THE PREVIOUS THREE YEAR AVERAGE (858)  
FOR THESE TWO MONTHS**

## INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

# OUR STORY 2021

### Key learning

*Refresh and repeat key parts of your organisation's story to keep staff engaged*

#### What was the issue?

Three years ago we launched a new corporate narrative which explained to staff who we are as a service, what we stand for and our aspirations for the future.

Much has happened since we launched this- not least a global pandemic. New national initiatives and recommendations have also come into effect, like a code of ethics for fire service staff.

We wanted to remind people powerfully and effectively of the progress we've made as a service since launching 'Our Story' and how more recent changes are affecting this work.

#### How did we do it?

We asked staff for feedback on their experiences and reflections of working during the pandemic. We turned those words into a poem and turned that poem into a video, which captured the spirit of the service and the people who work for it.

At the same time, we developed an update to our vision document, inviting staff of different ranks and roles to talk about what different parts of 'Our Story' meant to them. We also addressed the new national changes and how these tie into our existing behaviours and aspirations as a service.

We shared print and digital copies of the vision with our staff and shared key parts of it across all of our internal channels.

#### What were the results?

The video we produced has been viewed more than 50,000 times by both staff and public.

Following the release of the refreshed vision, three quarters of staff said they understood how their role directly supports the purpose of the organisation. We also recorded a record score in our regular staff pulse survey for the question 'I am happy at work'.



**FOLLOWING THE RELEASE OF THE REFRESHED VISION, THREE QUARTERS OF STAFF SAID THEY UNDERSTOOD HOW THEIR ROLE DIRECTLY SUPPORTS THE PURPOSE OF THE ORGANISATION.**



# NEW FIRE KIT

## Key learning

*A mixture of hard copy and digital communication is key for reaching frontline staff*

### What was the issue?

For the first time in a decade, we were buying new firefighting PPE for our frontline staff. We were doing this in collaboration with two other Yorkshire fire services.

As well as highlighting the benefits of the new kit to our staff, we needed to explain to staff how it should be worn, the timescales for roll out and plans for a new laundry care arrangement.

With the focus so clearly being on operational crews, we needed to develop a multi-channel campaign to ensure our messages cut through to non-desk based staff.

### How did we do it?

We published numerous articles in our weekly e-newsletter explaining the procurement process and the technical specifications of the new kit.

We backed this up with hard copy posters and briefings for fire stations and blog from key leaders.

We created two animated infographics which we shared by email, WhatsApp and station-based digital information screens to explain as simply as possible the functionality of the new kit and the after-care arrangements we were putting in place.

We also worked with our neighbouring services to publicise the kit roll out externally, particularly highlighting the collaborative nature of the procurement.

### What were the results?

Written items relating to the kit roll out were viewed by more than 800 unique users- eight out of ten of all the staff we employ. The animated infographics were watched more than 400 times.

Feedback from staff about the new kit has been very positive and the roll out was covered by local print and broadcast media.

**FEEDBACK FROM STAFF ABOUT THE NEW KIT HAS BEEN VERY POSITIVE AND THE ROLL OUT WAS COVERED BY LOCAL PRINT AND BROADCAST MEDIA.**



## RECRUITMENT AND DIVERSITY

# CHOOSE TO CHALLENGE

### Key learning

*Hit hard if you're serious about busting gender stereotypes*

#### What was the issue?

Women are still woefully underrepresented in operational firefighting roles across the UK and less than 7% of firefighters in South Yorkshire are female.

Online sentiment analysis and interviews with our existing female staff suggested we still hadn't done enough to challenge common myths about the ability of women to perform in operational roles.

#### What did we decide to do?

We've previously had success theming female firefighter recruitment campaigns around International Women's Day.

For this reason, we wanted to use 'Choose To Challenge' theme of this year's International Women's Day to call out stereotypes, bust myths and put an end to outdated views of what a firefighter needed to be.

Our objective was to increase the number of women registering their interest in becoming a firefighter by 300 per cent during the campaign period.

Registering an interest with us is the first step in starting a firefighting career. Those who are registered are put into a database by our HR team – with underrepresented groups then being invited to 'have a go' days and fitness sessions, being sent helpful and useful recruitment content and being the first to know when recruitment opens.

#### How did we do it?

We scripted and filmed a 'This Girl Can' inspired video that proved, beyond doubt, women CAN do the job, and put some of the unhelpful myths about female firefighters to bed once and for all.

We asked online influencers- like locally born Women's Premier League Player Jess Sigsworth- for support and also lined up opportunities for local media.

We used Facebook Adverts to target and push women towards our website, where they could register their interest in a career with us.

We recorded a podcast called 'Women of Fire' with four serving female firefighters that explored the issues and challenged the stereotypes in more detail.

Finally, we organised for our Chief Fire Officer (South Yorkshire's first ever female chief) to appear on Channel 4 to talk about recruitment to a national audience.

#### What were the results?

Our video was viewed 150,000 times and hit 1,139 shares in total – we then reached 650,000 across socials.

We had 128 women register their interest during launch week – a 357 percent increase on a normal week.

We also saw less negativity and more support than ever from the public – suggesting the tide is finally changing.

The campaign won gold in the 2021 Public Sector Communication Awards.



**THE CAMPAIGN  
WON GOLD  
IN THE 2021  
PUBLIC SECTOR  
COMMUNICATION  
AWARDS.**



# THE GAP

## Key learning

*Discussing complex issues openly and authentically is key to effective culture change*

### What was the issue?

Non-white staff of different races and ethnicities remain massively underrepresented across the fire and rescue service and in frontline, operational roles in particular.

Sometimes organisations are afraid to talk openly about complex societal issues like race and racism- but we knew we had to turn the tide on this if we were to ever make a lasting impact on future recruitment.

### What did we decide to do?

Following the success of previous work in this area, we decided to use October's Black History Month as a hook to launch a fresh campaign in which we talked openly about the experiences of black and other minority ethnic staff members, past and present.

We wanted the campaign to open a conversation about the potential or perceived barriers to people of different races from joining the fire and rescue service.

We also wanted our activity to prompt a fresh wave of people from diverse backgrounds to register their interest in a career as a firefighter.

### How did we do it?

Central to our campaign was an interview we filmed between a serving black firefighter Aayon and retired fire officer Trevor. This long form, in depth interview covered big issues such as the prejudice faced by Trevor at the start of his career, but also the progress the sector had made to address this. Aayon also spoke powerfully about what he saw as his position as a role model for future black recruits.

We shared the interview across our social media channels in October, where it has been watched more than 20,000 times.

We continued the campaign beyond Black History Month itself, by releasing a podcast in which members of our staff race network discussed their experiences working in the fire and rescue service, the journey the sector has been on and the steps organisations like ours can take to make them truly diverse, inclusive places to work.

We backed all this up with organic and paid-for social media activity, which called on people from all backgrounds to consider a role in the fire and rescue service, directing people towards the recruitment pages on our website.

### What were the results?

Our campaign content reached more than 100,000 people on social media, including nearly 1,000 views for the long form interview and 18,000 views of shorter snapshots. Black History Month content on TikTok was viewed more than 25,000 times.

We received 41 registrations of interest from people of diverse, ethnic origin – a 31% increase compared to the average for the previous three months.

We've had lots of positive feedback from staff, partners, and bodies such as the National Fire Chief's Council and UK Home Office.



**WE'VE HAD LOTS OF POSITIVE FEEDBACK FROM STAFF, PARTNERS, AND BODIES SUCH AS THE NATIONAL FIRE CHIEF'S COUNCIL AND UK HOME OFFICE.**

# MAKE A DIFFERENCE

## Key learning

*Use audience insight to understand your target market*

### What was the issue?

Our Business Fire Safety team was launching a big round of recruitment, in part driven by work arising from Grenfell.

However, previous recruitment drives had resulted in very low numbers of applicants, often relying on internal applicants to fill roles which had a knock-on impact in other areas.

It was also felt diversity in the team could also be improved- both in terms of protected characteristics and skills.

### What did we decide to do?

We first established the kinds of people the department wanted to bring in, based on skills and experience applicable to the role.

We then explored the barriers to people applying- like a lack of understanding about what the role entailed, not hearing about the roles through usual channels and uncompetitive salary.

Using this insight, we decided to create a campaign which showcased the role in an authentic, but attractive way and which was bold and upfront about its non-pay benefits.

### How did we do it?

High quality photographs of existing business fire safety inspectors formed the basis for the campaign- illustrating social media adverts which showcased staff performing their roles and emphasised benefits like paid training and the difference they made to their community.

Two video interviews with staff members further showcased and explained what it was like to work within the department.

These materials were shared across organic and paid-for social media, via email marketing to our database of subscribers and through printed campaign materials shared in key locations.

We also shared news of the recruitment drive with local media.

### What were the results?

We reached more than 100,000 people through targeted advertising, organic social content and email marketing.

This resulted in 62 applications for an advisor post and 76 for an inspecting officer role. As a comparison, we'd averaged 3 applications the previous few times similar posts had been advertised.

We also improved diversity, with significantly larger numbers of women applying for the roles and a smaller number of applications from minority ethnic groups.



**THIS RESULTED IN 62 APPLICATIONS FOR AN ADVISOR POST AND 76 FOR AN INSPECTING OFFICER ROLE. AS A COMPARISON, WE'D AVERAGED 3 APPLICATIONS THE PREVIOUS FEW TIMES SIMILAR POSTS HAD BEEN ADVERTISED.**

# NEED MORE

## Key learning

*Social trumps traditional media for generating applications*

### What was the issue?

Despite the fact 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 all on-call fire stations in South Yorkshire in need of new firefighters, we wanted to build upon our previous support for this the national activity by carrying out some targeted work of our own, based upon local knowledge and insight.

### How did we do it?

Prior to the campaign launch we provided on-call station staff with a range of printed materials – such as on-call firefighter information booklets – that they could use to promote the recruitment campaign locally.

Beyond that, we then shared a press release with our local media contacts, which secured both print and radio coverage. On top of this, we secured a prime slot on ITV Calendar news, with a camera crew spending an afternoon at Stocksbridge fire station.

We combined these traditional media routes with a combination of organic and paid-for digital marketing to urge people to register an interest.

### What were the results?

We reached an estimated 500,000 people through local print, radio and TV, plus a further 141,000 online.

Importantly, we attracted 316 registrations of interest- nine times more than we'd received during the previous month. Of these, more than two thirds came through our social media activity.



**WE REACHED AN ESTIMATED  
500,000 PEOPLE THROUGH LOCAL  
PRINT, RADIO AND TV, PLUS A  
FURTHER 141,000 ONLINE.**



***ON-CALL FIREFIGHTERS***  
**Information Guide**



*Making*  
**SOUTH  
YORKSHIRE  
SAFER &  
STRONGER**



[www.syfire.gov.uk](http://www.syfire.gov.uk)