



South Yorkshire  
FIRE & RESCUE

# How we used **OASIS** to get results – on a shoestring

Making  
**SOUTH  
YORKSHIRE  
SAFER &  
STRONGER**

# IWD 2021 – Choose To Challenge Recruitment Campaign



# ABOUT US

- Metropolitan fire service covering South Yorkshire, inc. four districts - Sheffield, Doncaster, Barnsley and Rotherham
- Employ around 1,000 staff and serve 1.4 million people across the county
- Small but perfectly formed communication team made up of four people
- Cover everything from campaigns to internal communications
- Lots of familiar challenges – no money, cultural challenges, lack of diversity



# OUR PLANNING MODEL

1. **Situation** | What's the issue?
2. **Objective** | What do we want to do?
3. **Audience Insight** | What do we know?
4. **Strategy** | How are we going to do it?
5. **Implementation** | Crack on!
6. **Scoring** | Have we done it?
7. **Reflection** | What have we learned?



# THE SITUATION

- International Women's Day was on Monday 8 March 2021
- We've had some great success in the last few years – My Firefighter Mum and Anyone Can Be Anything
- But there's **more to do** – women still only make up 7 percent of our operational workforce
- Clear service priority to improve when it comes to the diversity of our workforce – recent history also adds pressure
- National criticism from HMICFRS urging for services to do more – **but what?**



## O – THE OBJECTIVES

- We wanted to inspire more women to consider careers in the fire service – leading to a more diverse workforce
- Our primary objective was therefore to increase registrations of interest by 300 percent based on a normal week
- This percentage figure was based on our last IWD work where we had a 280 percent increase – we wanted more
- At this point, we'd pass the baton onto our HR and OD colleagues



## A – THE INSIGHT

- We knew that a token tweet wouldn't be enough if we wanted to make an impact
- We knew, frustratingly, there were still people who believed women weren't fit and strong enough to do the job
- We knew, through our own research, that this perception was putting women off
- We knew, again through our own research, that we had to slap people in the face to get attention
- We knew that our biggest **hit** had come from us standing up for our staff



## S – THE STRATEGY

- Have we done enough to dispel and correct the myths around women not being strong enough? No!
- We're going to blow up the old perceptions using communication activity
- We're going to use our own staff to do it and visually smash open the myths with a video (lead tactic)
- We're going to use social as our key channel – Facebook for people – Twitter for partners
- We're going to use 'wraparound' tactics to add weight and have a conversation





# I – THE IMPLEMENTATION

- Scripted and filmed a video that proved, beyond doubt, women CAN do the job
- Asked ‘influencers’ for support and sent a press release to all local press
- Utilised social media to nudge women towards our website
- Recorded a podcast with four female firefighters that explored the issue
- Organised for our CFO to appear on Channel 4 to talk about recruitment



## S – THE SCORING

- 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 IWD week – a 357 percent increase on a normal week**
- Feedback from staff, partners, the public, WFS, HMICFRS and NFCC was super positive – with lots of DM praise
- We had less negativity and more support than ever from the public – suggesting the tide is finally changing



## S – THE SCORING

- Beyond the numbers and initial reaction, we also had some really good press coverage and appeared on Channel 4
- Our Chief Fire Officer, Alex Johnson, spoke on Steph's Packed Lunch about FRS careers on behalf of all services
- We also secured coverage on regional radio stations and in local outlets, such as The Sheffield Star
- Our special podcast episode drew even more praise and hit over 175 downloads in the first week alone



## KEY REFLECTION

- Everybody is doing the same thing – you will sometimes have to take a risk or two if you want to make a difference

## EVALUATION LESSONS

- Evaluation isn't a bolt-on at the end – it starts with objective setting
- Don't overcomplicate it – keep things simple and be realistic
- Run your own race
- It's worth it!



**Questions?**