

Road Safety, Traffic Management & Enforcement



The BUS STOP! Campaign

Background

In September 2008, two school pupils were fatally injured on Aberdeenshire roads in separate incidents after alighting school buses. Following the tragedies the options available to reduce the risk of such incidents happening again became the focus of political, public and media interest. Aberdeenshire Council has examined a range of issues within the topic of school transport safety and has launched a number of pupil safety initiatives and demonstration projects designed to reduce risk and raise awareness.

Engaging and educating pupils on the importance of road safety was a key message stemming from this work. To this effect, in February 2009 the Council in partnership with Talisman Energy (UK) Limited launched the 'Bus Stop!' Campaign.

The Bus Stop! Campaign

In the period immediately following the tragedies, Aberdeenshire Council, Stagecoach Bluebird, Grampian Police, and Talisman Energy (UK), a global oil and gas company, got together with Aberdeen-based design specialists 'The Art Department' to create Bus Stop!

Bus Stop! is an interactive learning resource pack which includes a DVD entitled '1Second.1Life', a booklet for teachers with lesson plans for school pupils from Primary 1 to Secondary 6, and other material to help deliver the road safety message. The campaign is themed to increase the safety awareness of young people using public transport and focuses in on the distractions which can have tragic consequences, such as MP3 players and mobile phones.

An electronic version of the teaching pack and its accompanying films are available from the dedicated Bus Stop! website. Following the launch of the pack in February 2009, it has been rolled out in schools across the North East and promoted to other local authorities encouraging its adoption nationwide.

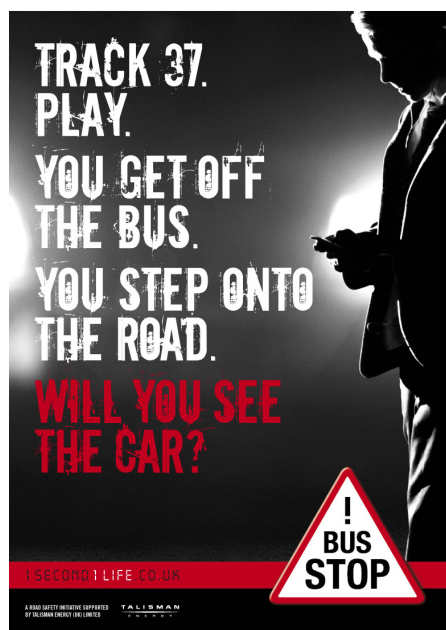
Impact

The creation of a powerful and hard-hitting campaign to engage and inform a difficult to reach audience – from young children to teenagers approaching driving age – was without doubt a challenging process.

However, through research with stakeholders, including focus groups with teachers and pupils at Aberdeenshire schools, and identifying a range of media to promote the safety messages, the Council and its project partners have risen to these challenges to deliver an innovative product that has interpreted young people's views into highly emotive imagery.

Key elements of the Bus Stop! Pack include:

- An attention grabbing one minute video entitled '1Second.1Life', using split screen techniques, no voiceover – only music and effects – to project a strong message and branding highlighting how disaster can occur through no fault of any individual.
- An emotive case study video featuring a poignant interview with a parent of one of the pupils killed in one of the accidents of September 2008.
- A Learning Activities workbook (available in print, CD, and online) to support messages brought out in the DVDs. Activities are split into age groups to maximise effectiveness.
- A series of hard-hitting posters designed to support the strategy.
- A branded pack, which pulls together the DVDs, posters and a learning resources teaching book into one place.
- A dedicated website – www.1second1life.co.uk – opening up the initiative to the home environment and parents.



The branded packs were distributed to every school in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire immediately following its publication, while Aberdeenshire Council's Education, Learning and Leisure Service also dedicated an education support officer to visit every school in the region and offer advice on how the learning resources and DVDs can be used most effectively with different age groups.

Reports from schools have been extremely positive. On viewing the DVDs in a classroom scenario, complete and utter silence is initially the most common reaction amongst pupils, followed by considerable discussion. While the majority of schools concentrate the showing of the DVDs to P7 / Secondary 1s and 2s – statistically the most at-risk age group – some schools have already stated that they will provide repeat showings to pupils approaching driving age to encourage them to consider the DVD from a motorist's perspective.

At the primary school level, some schools have also used the Bus Stop! learning packs to develop their own road safety messages as part of their School Travel Plans.

In addition to being well received by pupils, the videos and website have stimulated wide debate, creating a strong viral effect online.

Dissemination of the Work

In July 2009, Aberdeenshire Council staged a viewing of the campaign's DVDs to each of its' own in-house school bus drivers as part of a workshop held to raise driver awareness on the Council's school transport safety work and to invite views

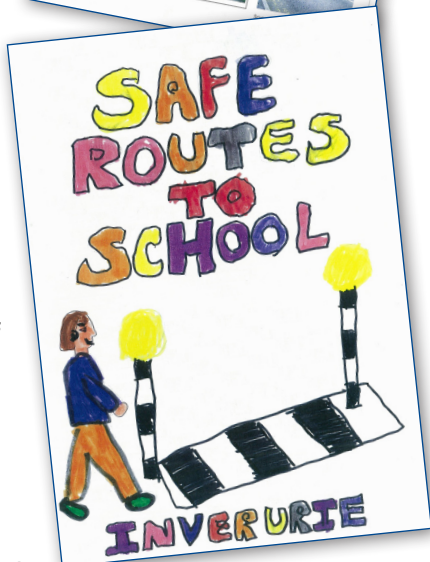
on potential improvements. Based on the positive feedback generated by drivers at the workshop, the Council has stipulated within its new School Transport Contract Terms and Conditions that the Bus Stop! DVDs should be included within bus driver induction training programmes.



Presentations have also been given on Bus Stop! to numerous external groups, including Transport Authorities, the Association of Transport Co-ordinating Officers (ATCO) Education Sub-Committee, and at relevant national transport conferences. A letter promoting the availability of the Pack and its' dedicated website was also issued to all Scottish Local Authorities on behalf of Aberdeenshire Council by the Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland (SCOTS). A number of authorities from across Scotland and the UK have subsequently contacted the Council for copies of the Pack.

Continuing Work

The strong brand developed by Bus Stop! works in partnership with other pupil safety initiatives that the Council has launched in the last 18 months. These include the trial of new, higher-visibility



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school bus signage at Meldrum Academy, School Transport Pick-up/Drop-off Assessments, and trials of the innovative SeeMe® interactive school bus stop system.

Artwork from Bus Stop! has also been included in the Council's revised Home-to-School Transport Guide, which outlines how pupils are expected to behave when travelling to and from school and reminds parents of ways in which they can help to make their children's journeys safer.



Stagecoach Bluebird also funded and distributed flashcards incorporating the '1Second.1Life' message to all 15,500 pupils who attend Aberdeenshire's 17 secondary schools.

Furthermore, the Council is currently developing a School Transport Publicity Campaign based on the branding developed as part of Bus Stop!, and specifically the '1Second.1Life' message. It is

proposed that the campaign will run from August to December 2010, and will comprise a mixture of in-school activities/pupil promotions as well as wider media publicity. Specifically, taking advantage of the strong branding already established by Bus Stop! it is proposed to develop a TV advert incorporating key shots from the existing '1Second.1Life' film to raise motorist awareness about the importance of driving with care in the vicinity of school buses.

Conclusion

Where school transport safety is concerned, Aberdeenshire Council adopts the view that everyone has a role to play (pupils, parents, schools, bus operators, and motorists) and there is no single solution to improving school transport safety.

The Bus Stop! Campaign represents a successful example of public and private sector partnership working to deliver an extremely professional, powerful and effective product in a very short space of time. The clear, engaging messages developed in the campaign, supported by its strong branding and adaptability mean that Bus Stop! will continue to play a crucial role in the Council's ongoing road safety education and awareness work.

