

Road Safety, Traffic Management & Enforcement

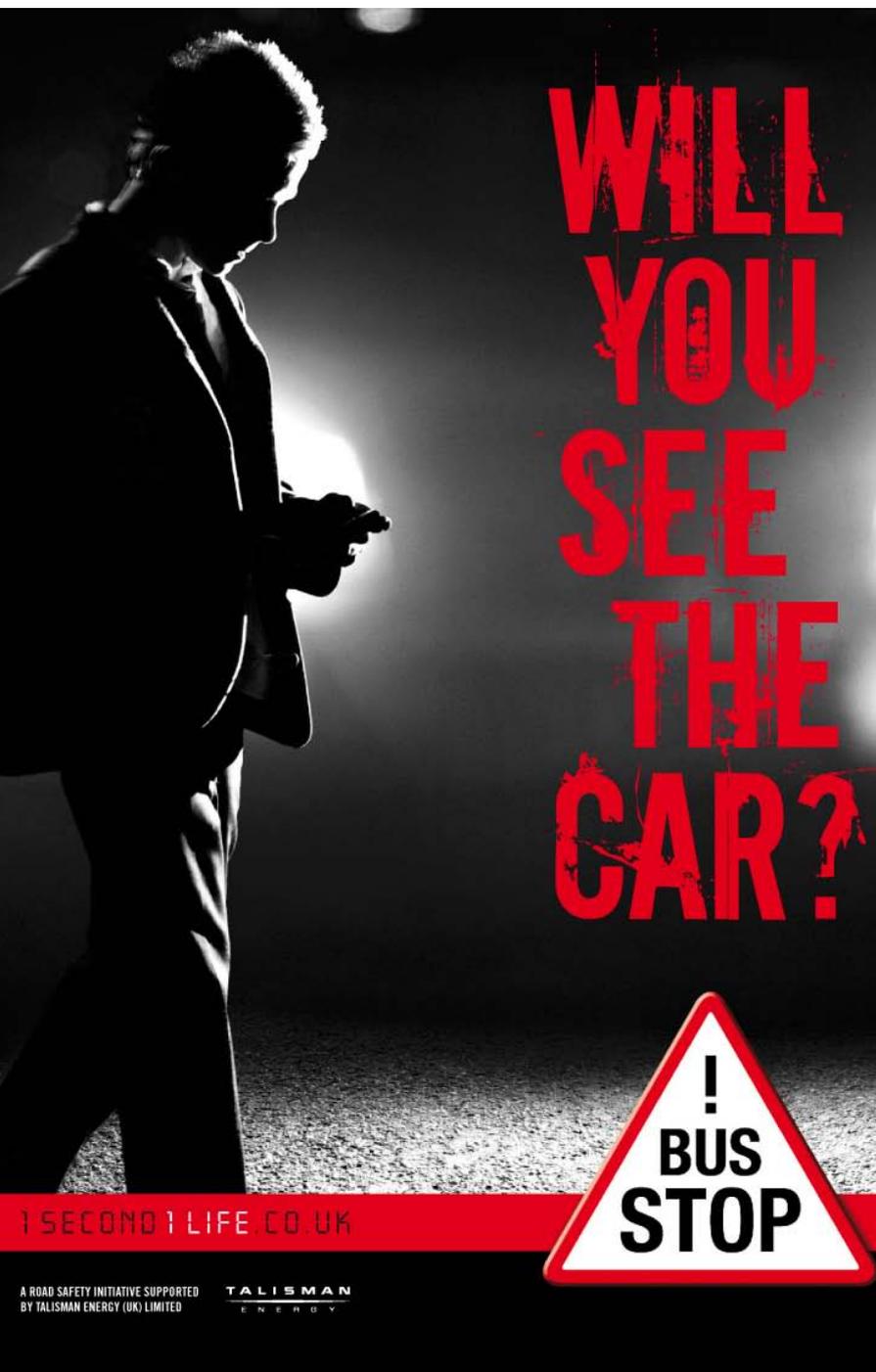
The BUS STOP! Campaign

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 subsequently 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 2009 the Council, in partnership with Talisman Energy (UK) Limited, launched the 'Bus Stop!' Campaign.

Although Bus Stop! was previously shortlisted for a Scottish Transport Award in 2010, recent months have seen the campaign developed further with the launch of a local television advertising campaign. This submission aims to demonstrate how, through innovative use of the media, Bus Stop! is helping to raise awareness of school transport safety not only in schools but in communities right across the North East of Scotland.



The Bus Stop! Campaign

In the period immediately following the tragedies involving two school pupils, who were fatally injured in September 2008 after alighting school buses, Aberdeenshire Council, Stagecoach Bluebird, Grampian Police, and Talisman Energy (UK), a global oil and gas company, teamed up 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 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 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 audience – from young children to teenagers approaching driving age – was without doubt a challenging process. By undertaking research with stakeholders, including focus groups involving 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 a range of views into highly emotive imagery.

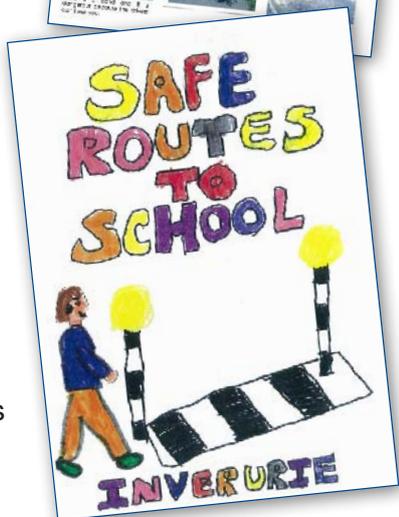
Key elements of the Bus Stop! Pack include:

- An attention grabbing one minute film entitled '1Second.1Life', using split screen techniques, no voiceover – only music and effects – to project a strong message and branding highlighting how tragedy can occur through no fault of any individual.
- An emotive case-study video entitled 'Carla's Story' 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 Rom, 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 learning resources teaching book into one place.
- A dedicated website - www.1second1life.co.uk - opening up the initiative to the home environment for parents.

The branded packs were distributed to every school in the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire regions immediately following its publication, while Aberdeenshire Council's Education Service also dedicated a former teaching 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 lively and informed 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 – a number of schools have already stated that they will provide repeat showings to pupils approaching driving age to encourage them to consider the message from a motorist’s perspective.



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

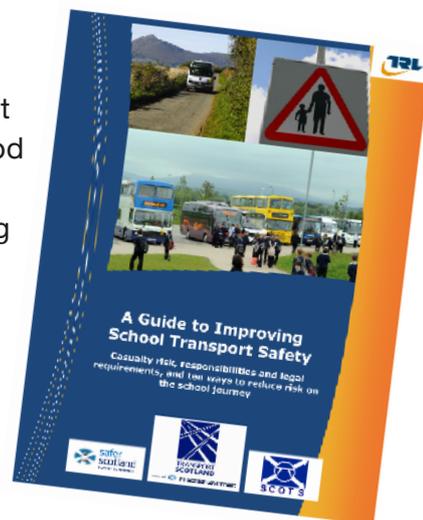
In July 2009, Aberdeenshire Council staged a viewing of the campaign’s DVDs to each of its’ contracted school bus drivers. Based on the positive feedback generated by drivers at the workshop, the Council has stipulated within its most recent School Transport Contract Terms and Conditions that the ‘Bus Stop!’ DVDs should be included within bus driver induction training programmes.

Presentations have also been given on Bus Stop! to various external groups (e.g. ATCO) and at relevant national transport conferences. Information promoting 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).

Most recently, the campaign has been promoted in Transport Scotland’s recent good practice publication, “A Guide to Improving School Transport Safety”.

Stagecoach Bluebird also funded and distributed flashcards incorporating the

‘1Second.1Life’ message to all 15,500 pupils who attend Aberdeenshire’s 17 secondary schools, while artwork from the campaign has been included in the Council’s revised Home-to-School Transport Guide.



Extending the Message

In September 2010, further funding was secured from partners to develop a 30 second TV advert incorporating key shots from the existing ‘1Second.1Life’ film; allowing the road safety messages to be delivered not only to pupils but also to parents and motorists in the home environment. Thus far, the hard-hitting advert has been broadcast on STV approximately 50 times throughout the darker autumn and winter nights at times specifically aimed at the target ‘teen’ audience, for example during the commercial break for the X-Factor® Final in December. In total, it is estimated that approximately 500,000 residents in North Scotland will have seen the advert at least once, with further broadcasts planned for the future.

As the TV advert promotes the ‘1Second.1Life’ website, additional content has been uploaded onto the site, including school transport safety video messages from a range of stakeholders, such as a local head teacher, a school bus driver



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and a school pupil. Advice from emergency personnel is also provided alongside a short message from local boxing champion Lee McAllister who helped launch the Council's 'Belt-Up' Campaign developed to encourage pupils to wear seatbelts while on school transport services.



A review of website traffic revealed that the number of visits to the website increased by 109% following broadcast of the TV campaign. Furthermore, following the completion of online surveys used as part of other road safety public consultations, the Council has automatically redirected consultees to the Bus Stop! website. For example, following an online consultation on new school bus signs in Aberdeenshire, approximately 900 motorists were directed to the website, highlighting the innovative approach that is taken to promote Bus Stop! to as many stakeholders as possible.

Conclusion

The Bus Stop! Campaign represents a great 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 school transport safety education and awareness work.

