

# Halton Housing Trust: a low budget campaign

## CASE STUDIES

### The challenge

Halton Housing Trust is a social landlord, with more than 6,000 properties across Runcorn and Widnes.

The landlord has a legal duty to carry out annual gas appliance safety checks in all properties and to issue CP12 gas safety certificates following inspection. At the end of 2006, however, there were 600 checks outstanding – due to a failure by some tenants to grant inspectors access to their homes. This was exposing occupants to the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning.

IPB was asked to deliver a short, sharp campaign to raise general awareness of the importance of gas safety, and to target non-compliers. The budget was less than £5k.

### What we did

- **Safety 'hit squad':** We advised the Trust to set up a 'hit squad', which would visit the homes of all hardcore non-compliers.
- **Media campaign:** We teamed up with a local campaign group, CO Awareness, who lent credibility and a human interest angle to our campaign. A meeting was arranged for the group's founder, and a senior housing officer from the Trust, to meet with Health and Safety Minister Lord McKenzie in London, to submit ideas for making it easier for landlords to protect their tenants. This gave us a strong news hook.
- **Publicity materials:** A suite of attention-grabbing posters and leaflets were used across housing offices, Council offices and community hubs (e.g. libraries, community centres).
- **Staff briefings:** we got a cross-section of Trust staff involved, to help spread the word to tenants. Computer records were amended, so that call centre staff were automatically alerted to non-compliers, whenever they phoned the Trust (e.g. to report a repair).
- **Use of existing communication channels:** Safety information was included in Trust literature, including the tenant magazine and welcome packs for new tenants. Trust vans were also liveried with the campaign slogan.

### Results

As a direct result of the campaign, over 580 gas safety inspections were carried out, leaving just a handful of tenants without an up-to-date gas safety certificate. The Trust is now taking these remaining tenants to court, to ensure compliance.

### What the client said

“ The campaign has been a fantastic success. It's generated a very positive response from the vast majority of our customers, ensuring that their homes are properly protected.

“ IPB made the most of a modest budget, by devising a focused strategy, and implementing it with great professionalism. The campaign will have an important 'knock-on' effect on future activity too, thanks to the momentum we have built up, and the new partnerships we have forged. We've been extremely impressed with the results.”

**Nick Atkin**, Chief Executive of Halton Housing Trust

