

Trafford Housing Trust

Taming the teens

Background

Trafford Housing Trust is a social landlord with 9,500 homes in Greater Manchester.

One of the Trust's main housing estates – Sale Moor – suffered from problems with teenage anti-social behaviour. When the Trust investigated, it found that a number of local parents simply didn't know how to cope with their children's tearaway behaviour.

The trust invited TV's Teen Tamer, Lorraine Marer, to host a six week course to improve tenants' and residents' parenting skills after seeing her in action on TV.

Lorraine, a challenging behaviour specialist, is a regular guest on Channel 5's 'The Wright Stuff.' She had worked extensively with the police, Primary Care Trusts and youth offending teams – but this was her first ever commission from a social housing trust.

It was an innovative approach for the sector and IPB Communications was asked to make the most of media opportunities.

Objectives

The aim of the campaign was to secure coverage for the initiative in regional and national press. This would help to:

- Highlight the Trust's commitment to creating stronger communities.
- Demonstrate to a wide audience that the Trust was an innovative, forward-thinking organisation.
- Make stakeholders and other housing associations aware of the scheme, so that the Trust could look at the possibility of selling the course out.

Planning and implementation

We attended an early parenting session, to meet Lorraine and the 15 local mums who had volunteered to take part. It was important that we gained the trust of participants, given the sensitivity of the issue and the fact that none of the parents had any experience of speaking to the media.

We interviewed parents about the challenges they faced and how they felt they were benefiting from the course. A photographer was commissioned to capture the session.

The resulting story and photos were initially sold in exclusively to Society Guardian, with a journalist and photographer attending the final parenting workshop. Lorraine, the mums, the Trust's Chief Executive and staff working on the project were all offered up for interview.

The story was picked up by the Daily Mail and GMTV and issued proactively to regional press and specialist housing trade magazines.

Results

The campaign generated extensive coverage, including:

- Society Guardian front page and on line.
- Page lead in The Daily Mail and on line.
- GMTV.
- Two page leads in the Manchester Evening News and online.
- A page lead in the Sale and Altrincham Messenger.
- A page lead in the Trafford Metro.
- A piece on local radio (BBC Radio Manchester).
- A page lead in the local strategic partnership magazine.

Housing trusts in other parts of the country have subsequently expressed interest in the scheme, after seeing the coverage.

Feedback from course participants has been superb and residents on the estate have commented on a noticeable reduction in problem behaviour.

Mum-of-four Nicola Cushing said: "Lorraine was brilliant, some of the techniques she taught us have been so effective. If they made a T shirt I'd wear one!"

Amanda Marsland, a mum-of-three, said: "It's really helped me change the behaviour in my house – the way I talk and act with my children and the way they behave back."

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Two mums on the course have been inspired to set up their own parenting network, to roll out the skills they have learnt to a wider audience. Trafford Housing Trust has provided financial support and the new group FACTS (Families, Adults, Children, Teen Support) is applying for additional funding to the National Lottery's People's Millions Fund

Lorraine is set to return to the estate later this summer, to hold a second course for a new intake of local parents. IPB has arranged for GMTV to cover the project exclusively, from start to finish, generating further national exposure for the Trust.

What the client said

“ This has been a groundbreaking initiative for the social housing sector. IPB's support helped us to gain extremely valuable national media exposure for the initiative. The coverage has highlighted our commitment to strong communities and enabled us to make other housing trusts aware of the scheme – with the aim of rolling it out more widely. A big thanks to IPB for their efforts. ”

Matthew Gardiner,

Chief Executive of Trafford Housing Trust

