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# ‘Ordinary People, Extraordinary Career’ National Campaign

## Issued by:

**Erin Richardson**

**Fire & Rescue Service Development Division**

## Addressed to:

**The Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority  
The Chief Executive of the County Council  
The Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority  
London Fire Commissioner  
The Chief Fire Officer**

## Please forward to:

**HR Manager  
Recruitment Manager**

## Summary

The “Ordinary People, Extraordinary Career” National Campaign is designed to raise awareness of, and change attitudes to, a career in the Fire and Rescue Service among currently under-represented groups. The campaign focuses on 14-16 year old girls and people from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds. The circular outlines the different elements of the Campaign and includes information on supporting materials.

## For further information, contact:

**Erin Richardson  
Fire & Rescue Development Division  
Zone 3/D1 Eland House  
Bressenden Place  
London SW1E 5DU**

Direct line **0303 444 2946**

Fax

E-mail [Erin.richardson@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Erin.richardson@communities.gsi.gov.uk)

Website [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

### 1.0 Background

- 1.1 In May 2008 Communities and Local Government published the National Equality and Diversity Strategy for the Fire and Rescue Service. The Strategy set out what the Service should look like in ten years time, in terms of the diversity of its workforce and culture of the organisation, and provided a framework for how change would be achieved.
- 1.2 To support Fire and rescue services in achieving this change, Communities and Local Government committed to develop a national campaign to raise awareness and change attitudes towards a career in the Service. The aim of the campaign is to break down myths and barriers in the way people perceive the Service and to encourage people from groups currently under represented in the work force to consider a Fire and Rescue Service career.
- 1.3 Research has indicated that women and people from minority ethnic backgrounds are less likely to consider a career in the fire and rescue service, and that women tended to consider the role of firefighter to be a male occupation.
- 1.4 The campaign will focus on two key audiences:
  - Girls aged 14 to 16 (the age at which the majority of girls formulate strong opinions about future career choices) with the key message that women can be, and are, firefighters, and
  - People from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds to encourage them to consider the Fire and Rescue Service as a career choice.
- 1.5 The campaign will be brought in in various phases. The first elements of both parts of the campaign will commence in November 2009. Details of the campaign, including timings and the various materials available for local use by fire and rescue services are set out in the attached Annex.

### 2.0 Evidence base

- 2.1 To provide an evidence base for the development of the awareness raising programme, four specific research projects were undertaken:
  - Project Samantha – qualitative research completed in February 2008 explored the perception of girls aged 14 -16 of a career as firefighter
  - Two further pieces of qualitative research were conducted in March 2009 exploring the views and perceptions of older and younger people from Black and Minority Ethnic background of a career in FRS, and;
  - Baseline research – a national quantitative survey regarding views on a career in the Fire and Rescue Service was conducted in February 2009 (this element of the research will be repeated annually over the next couple of years, to measure progress)
- 2.2 The above pieces of research will be published in due course.

### 3.0 Development of the Campaign

- 3.1 The research findings were used as the basis on which to develop the campaign and in March 2009, two specialist marketing agencies were engaged to develop and progress the programme: one to work specifically on the 14-16 year old girls campaign and the other to focus on engagement with people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities.

3.2 As a pivotal part of the campaign, a new website has been created to increase interest and change perceptions about what a career in the service entails. The website [www.direct.gov.uk/extraordinary](http://www.direct.gov.uk/extraordinary) contains case studies, information about the roles available, videos, interactive games and items which people visiting the site can download.

3.3 In developing the campaign further specialist agencies have been engaged to develop specific elements of the programme including digital media planning, the production of a promotional DVD and PR development.

3.4 It has been important to ensure that the communications materials provide an accurate image of the Service. This is in line with the views expressed by girls during the research phase who said they wanted to see real people doing the jobs, not actors. Fire and rescue services and individual members of staff have provided support to the campaign by, for example:

- appearing in the communications material
- providing case studies for the website and publications
- appearing in the promotional DVD

## 4.0 Stakeholder engagement

4.1 Each fire and rescue service has appointed a representative responsible for communicating information about the programme to colleagues within their Service.

4.2 Two briefing days were held for the Service in August and September 2009 and FirePRO colleagues also received a presentation on the campaign at their meeting in October. Feedback from Service representatives has been invaluable to the development of the campaign.

## 5.0 Evaluation

5.1 In March 2009, CLG commissioned quantitative research to determine awareness and attitudes towards a career in the Fire & Rescue Service with a range of our target audiences, to provide a baseline against which communications activity can be evaluated. This research will be repeated at the end of each stage of campaign activity to measure the effectiveness of the programme and provide continuing insight into the approach required to have continuing impact.

## 6.0 Launching the Campaign

6.1 National media will be informed of the campaign through a Press release on 3 November. A reception and briefing event to formally launch the campaign will be held at the end of November. Further details about the launch event will be published shortly.

**Erin Richardson**

**Fire & Rescue Service Development Division**

## 'Ordinary People, Extraordinary Career' National Campaign Details

### Young girls campaign (14 - 16 year old girls)

The young girls campaign is made up of three strands of activity: digital, in-school and PR.

**The digital activity** will be co-ordinated through a specifically appointed digital agency. Through the agency Communities and Local Government will be conducting an online campaign to encourage girls to visit the new website. Advertising also encouraging girls to visit the website will appear on a number of sites frequented by young girls including MSN Messenger, Facebook and Spotify.

Three key partners have been identified for online activity:

- **Bebo:** Reaches 1.2million 14-16 year old girls. Through a 'Meet and Join' activity we will create a Bebo profile showcasing four women working in the Fire and Rescue Service. This partnership will create dialogue for addressing misconceptions about women as firefighters.
- **Habbo:** Reaches 330,000 14-16 year old girls. Habbo is a virtual world where teens can meet, interact and be creative. Statistics show that this age group visits Habbo on average 12 times per month, for over 10 hours in total. We plan to create a virtual fire room which will be full of content (interactive games, competitions, surveys and advertorials).
- **Stardoll:** Reaches 470,000 14-16 year old girls. Activity on Stardoll will involve creating an 'I'm extraordinary' club, allowing our target audience to interact, engage, learn more about the Fire and Rescue Service, and drive the users to the website.

**In-school activity** will include posters and inspiring postcards in 250 targeted schools across England. This material will again encourage the target audience to visit the website, competitions and giveaways will be used as incentives to visit and use the site.

**PR activity** will be lead by COI who will be running a two phase campaign to debunk myths and encourage girls to consider fire-fighting as a career by sparking debate:

- **Phase 1 – "Girl Power"** will include running a poll on teen girls' and boys' perception of careers for girls, playing on rivalry between the sexes.
- **Phase 2 – "Are you ready?"** will create a celebrity challenge to showcase a well-known female spending a day in the life of a firefighter, with the focus on fitness and sportier girls. COI will also be placing advertorials in key media titles targeted at this audience with the focus on female firefighters.

### College and University Students (16 – 24 years old)

As part of the FireKills Campaign, Student Brand Ambassadors are used to promote fire safety messages on campus. The "Ordinary People, Extraordinary Career" campaign is feeding into this activity by engaging students and careers advisors to promote and highlight the different career opportunities available. Posters and postcards have been distributed across the 24 universities in England taking part and the Ambassadors are already actively engaged in using the new materials to engage with students in line with the FireKills timetable.

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In conjunction with local fire and rescue services, Communities and Local Government will attend a number of events and fairs where we can reach a large number of our target audience. We will also provide campaign materials to all fire and rescue services so that they can use them for local events they may attend.

### Black and Minority Ethnic Campaign

This strand of the campaign targets female and male audiences from the following ethnic groupings:

- Chinese
- Polish
- Bangladeshi
- Pakistani
- Indian
- Black African and Caribbean

Research showed that parents and other influencers have a part to play in career decision making. With this insight, the first part of the campaign (November 2009 to March/April 2010) will look to change perceptions about a career in the Service amongst those who have an influence on the careers chosen by people (particularly young people) within their communities e.g. parents, religious leaders etc. The second part of the campaign running through 2010 and into 2011 will focus on raising the profile and changing perceptions about a Fire and Rescue Service career among people from these communities who could be potential future recruits.

From November 2009 onwards, we will be holding a number of local events in conjunction with the Fire and Rescue Service. A number of areas around England with large Black and Minority Ethnic populations have been identified to host the events. The events will be a chance for local fire and rescue services to engage and interact with their diverse communities and tell them more about a career in the Service. Support will be made available to other fire and rescue services who would like to run local events.

Further information on the second phase of the campaign will be provided to fire and rescue services shortly.

### Material for Use Locally

In order to support the work that fire and rescue services do locally, Communities and Local Government have created and designed a number of items that the services can print for their own use. These include leaflets, posters, postcards, information packs and banners. We have also created a bespoke DVD highlighting the careers of three people within the service, to help shift perceptions. The DVD will be made available to all fire and rescue services to use for schools activity and at events.

We will shortly be engaging a specialist Educational agency to develop an information pack to help fire and rescue services work directly with schools and careers advisors to raise the profile of, and change attitudes toward, a career in the Service.

### Help and Guidance

We will also be providing fire and rescue services with a toolkit designed to help engage with local media for further impact and exposure of the campaign and the work being undertaken locally. It will provide hints and tips about using local celebrities, handling journalists and creating newsworthy stories.

Copies of the various toolkits and guidance materials will be sent to fire and rescue services as they are completed. Further information on the campaign and materials being made available will be provided to fire and rescue services on an ongoing basis through their designated representatives.