



CIPR PRIDE AWARDS 2019 GOLD WINNER

Category: Best Use of Media Relations

Company: NASUWT - The Teachers' Union

Entry title: Not Part of the Job

Brief and objectives:

The NASUWT, the teachers' union, regularly engages with members to understand the issues facing the profession.

Year-on-year, the issue of violent pupils had been growing.

With our member communications completed it was time to take the campaign externally.

Objectives:

- Raise widespread awareness of the growing issue of violence in the classroom, engaging national press as part of this
- Demonstrate the impact on teachers, professionally and personally, to add credibility to the campaign
- Show non-members that we understand the key issues in the profession, with a view to converting them to members.

The idea, research and planning:

NASUWT's member research shows that violence in the classroom is becoming an increasing issue for teachers. When asked to list the top concerns about their job:

- 2017 = third biggest concern (47% of teachers)
- 2018 = risen to 49%
- 2019 = moved up to rank as the second biggest concern (57%).

Every Easter the NASUWT's annual conference takes place. Many of the national press attend, expecting headline grabbing stories. This seemed the ideal opportunity to tell our story to a wide audience, while meeting the journalists' needs.

In addition, a motion would be debated at conference on 'Pupil Indiscipline and Violence'. As part of the debate, several members would speak about their own experiences, which supported our objective of demonstrating the impact violence is having on teachers.

Strategy, tactics, creativity and innovation:

To build on existing research, we decided to investigate the issue further with a dedicated survey on pupil indiscipline. Nearly 5,000 teachers responded to tell us:

- Nearly a quarter of teachers experience violence from pupils at least once a week
- 29% have been hit, punched or kicked
- 42% have been verbally threatened.

This was the hard-hitting headline we needed.

In our experience, the media like case studies to support teacher-focused stories, so we asked in the survey if respondents would speak to the press. This helped us to identify potential case studies and work with them to add a first-person perspective to the broader story.

We also included the option for free text so teachers could anonymously share their stories.

A week before the Saturday of Conference, when the debate would happen, we issued our embargoed story to the press, ensuring plenty of time to deal with enquiries.

From this, we secured a BBC pre-record interview for our General Secretary.

To further maximise coverage, we created regional versions of the story using area-specific statistics.

To support this activity, the media team:

- Organised social media activity to further drive awareness of the story and our key messages
- Promoted our behaviour campaign and member advice on our website homepage.

During the conference debate, we supported the media to secure a secondary story using specific cases cited by members.

Delivery:

Planning – January.

Member research/results analysis – February-March.

Media strategy meeting/finalising of press activity timetable – Week 1/April.

Embargoed press release issued – Week 2/April.

Conference – Week 3/April.

Measurement and evaluation:

Raise widespread awareness/engaging national press:

- 38 pieces of national coverage
- 66 pieces of regional coverage
- 6 live interviews on national radio including Today programme, Sky radio and BBC Five Live
- Pre-record used 43 times including BBC Breakfast, BBC news bulletins, BBC Radio 2 and 34 regional BBC radio stations
- A TV interview for an NASUWT representative plus a member in an investigative report by ITV Granada.

Two Facebook post promoting the story reached 23,798 people, and had 1,404 engagements. Tweets on the story earned 16,537 impressions with 244 engagements.

Across the seven days following our story, we saw a 62% uplift in visits to our behaviour campaign webpage, and a 15% rise in visits to the homepage, which also promoted the campaign. Teachers can also link from the homepage straight to the joining system.

Demonstrate impact:

The Today programme and ITV Granada both used anonymous case studies of NASUWT members, arranged by the NASUWT media team.

Around 80% of the print coverage (83 pieces) used our free text or real-life experiences shared during the Conference debate.

We saw a number of editorials, comments and blogs on the issue of violent pupils, and strong responses from many education stakeholders.

MSP Rona Mackay told NASUWT members at an event discussing violent pupils “I wouldn’t do your job for all the money in the world”.

An editorial column in the Plymouth News, said the statistics “sadly illustrate why so many of our nation’s school teachers – the men and women tasked with education our children – want to quit the profession.”

Showcase the union and secure new members:

During Conference and the three subsequent weeks, we gained 1,496 new members.

When asked for their reasons for joining, 90% said they agree with the campaigns and policies of the NASUWT. 176 switched from our main competitor.

This sentiment was reflected on Twitter.

“Switched to NASUWT yesterday. Had been a member of xx for 10 years.”

“I’m leaving xx and joining NASUWT following coverage of their conferences”

“Been a member of xx for 15yrs but cancelled today for NASUWT”

Budget and campaign impact:

Our in-house media team facilitated all activity, making costs negligible.

- £239: survey monkey subscription
- £1,200: monthly press cutting service
- £1,000: food/drink in the conference press office.

Total: £2,439

Our aim was to secure as much coverage as possible. Our approach certainly delivered this. Broadcast coverage meant our message reached viewers/listeners in excess of 50million. This is before any regional news, print coverage or social media, all against a nominal spend.

The story remained the second most read on BBC News for 10 hours, and the third most popular Guardian story where it stayed for most of Saturday. It was shared from the Guardian over 500 times. It was also one of the most-read stories on TES, the key news outlet for the education sector.

Recruiting new members is vitally important, as this is how we generate income. 1,496 new members means significant increases in revenue for NASUWT, over £278,850.

With no advertising, PR and social media were the only methods of communicating our messages.

£278,850 revenue against £2,439 equates to £1 brought into NASUWT for every £0.008p spent.