

## Basic Information

*Region (Check Region):* Scotland

*Category:* 28. In-House PR Team of the Year

## Entry Information

*Entrant company name:* Scottish SPCA

*Entry title:*

Scottish SPCA: In-House PR Team of the Year

## Entry

*Number of employees within the PR team and annual PR budget:*

1x Head of Communications and Engagement (Michael)  
2x Senior Communications and Engagement Officers (Kirsty & Lee)  
1x Communications and Engagement Assistant (Bella)  
1x Graphic Designer (Nick)

Total budget including overheads is approx. £345k.  
Budget for campaign activity is £37.5k.

*Business objectives and analysis of team performance against budget over the last two years:*

The Scottish SPCA is a charity which exists to support people and pets in crisis and rescue and care for injured domestic, wild and farm animals.

The charity aims to reduce the volume of animals which require support through education and working with people. It also aims to diversify income streams to generate vital finances.

Our team had an underspend of £27k compared to budget in 2020.

*A brief overview of business / team strategy:*

The team was restructured in 2019, with the newly created Head of Communications & Engagement role reporting directly to the CEO. Since then, a concerted effort has been

made to achieve three things: position ourselves as the voice of authority on animal welfare in Scotland; engage our employees in the Society's work; broaden our audience and potential supporter base.

Each of these goals ties in with wider business objectives. The first goal increases awareness of the SSPCA ahead of our competitors, the second helps to create a positive workplace culture and the third helps to diversify our fundraising activity.

Under the first objective, we have revamped our approach to stakeholder engagement, with a strategy to engage with our supporters, fosterers and volunteers but also politicians, corporates and other animal welfare bodies. We have established partnerships with a number of animal welfare charities.

Over 50 MSPs have directly engaged with the SSPCA since in the past two years, through visiting rescue centres, shadowing our rescue officers or by meeting senior leaders. This contributed to cross-party support for the Animals and Wildlife (Scotland) Act 2020, a Bill which will allow rescue animals involved in legal proceedings to be rehomed more easily and bring an anticipated saving of over £500k per year to the SSPCA.

We have made a concerted effort to move away from reactive press activity, raising awareness of key animal welfare issues and trends through proactive work and building relationships with journalists at a local, regional and national level. We have used powerful rehabilitation stories to foster goodwill.

Internally, we have revamped our annual staff strategy days, giving the majority of colleagues a say in business planning. We have introduced monthly webinars, where attendees have the chance to quiz senior leaders on burning issues. This is complimented by Workplace, our internal communications platform which has dedicated groups for different teams, committees and general interest.

A revised social media approach has seen us grow our audience on LinkedIn by a quarter in the past twelve months, and engage more young people through Instagram. This is creating a new pipeline of supporters outside our traditional donor base of women aged 45+.

A brand survey conducted by ScotPulse in late 2020 showed 89% of Scots had a positive view of the charity, and that 24% of people had donated to the SSPCA in the preceding 12 months (compared to 14% for the next highest charity, the RSPCA).

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#### *A summary of commitment to CPD and professionalism:*

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All members of the team are committed to CPD and professionalism. Michael is a CIPR member and completed his CPD for 2020, including a full day's training in turning internal communication into employee engagement.

Kirsty and Lee have both attended training on creating a PR strategy and everyone regularly attends bitesize webinars and events. Recently, this included TikTok as we look to launch an official channel.

We are also committed to learning more about animal welfare, and all team members have made use of free online learning courses through coursera. This has been coupled with regular volunteering days to get experience of what it's like to work directly with animals

with our frontline teams.

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*A summary of recent outstanding achievements:*

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We launched an urgent fundraising appeal after seizing over 70 dogs and cats in a raid. It generated over £72k in donations against a social media spend of £500.

Our new weekly email for supporters, launched in January 2020, has generated over £6k in donations and an open rate which, at the time of writing, has climbed to 32%. This has been combined with a revamped magazine for our monthly supporters. Working with our fundraising team has reduced our attrition rate by 13%.

We launched Workplace by Facebook as our new internal communications platform in March 2019. Of approx. 400 staff, 70%-75% are active each month and stories shared by colleagues on it have been used to generate over 800 pieces of positive press coverage.

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*A summary of a campaign you are particularly proud of, including details of the brief, objectives, strategy, tactics, outputs, outcomes and budget:*

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We launched a scheme for reputable puppy breeders in late 2019. Responsible breeders can be inspected by a Scottish SPCA inspector and people looking to buy a pup can do so with peace of mind. Demand for puppies shot up during the pandemic, so we launched a campaign with support from Trading Standards Scotland with the aim of raising awareness of the scheme among the general public and getting breeders to join the scheme.

We produced a stakeholder toolkit, video and written case studies, a puppy-cost checker calculator and recorded a podcast with Trading Standards. Ten pieces of press coverage were secured, with a focus on specialist publications for breeders and those with an interest in Trading Standards. 13 of Scotland's 32 local authorities shared content from the toolkit on their own channels, and two MSPs backed the campaign.

The campaign led to 15 applications to join the scheme, 10 of which were successful. This was more than double the number of members at launch (four). Activity drove 13,001 unique users to the advice website, compared to 3,079 in the period before the campaign launched.

The entire campaign was delivered in-house by a Senior Comms & Engagement Officer with support from a Graphic Designer. There was no budget to spend on activity.

The outcome means more reputable breeders are working with us, and the public have access to more of these breeders to buy a puppy safely.

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## **Supporting Information**

*Additional supporting information (images, artwork, clippings and other media):*

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Provided

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