

Spotlight on...

“Teddy” teaches safety

What the need was and how we identified it

South Elmsall and Hemsworth are predominantly White British areas of Wakefield with high deprivation, antisocial behaviour, crime and arson. Residents tend to be reluctant to work with external agencies and young people are particularly suspicious of uniformed services. Previous efforts to engage with the community through door-knocking and leaflet drops were relatively unsuccessful.

What we did and the difference we made

Keen to engage with this community, in 2008 South Elmsall crews devised an innovative education programme for pre-school children, while accompanied by their families.

Using specially-designed resources, ‘Teddy takes a tumble’ tells the story of how, on the way to grandma’s house, Teddy flies out of his car seat and hits his head because he’s not been strapped in properly. His adventures continue when he runs away and climbs a nearby tree. The Fire and Rescue Service is called and carry out a line rescue with the help of the children.

This programme allows the crews to engage with families that they’ve previously struggled to reach. It has a proven track record of generating Home Fire Safety Check referrals and educating families on road and fire safety – such as how to reduce arson risks. The education that the children receive at this early age is invaluable.

The children and their families learn the value of respect for their own community and that West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service serves all members of the public, regardless of their social background. To date, it’s been delivered by crews from across Wakefield District, including: Castleford, Hemsworth, Ossett, Pontefract, South Elmsall and Wakefield. Wakefield Fire Prevention teams have also been involved in its delivery.



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Outcomes

In addition to generating Home Fire Safety Checks (one initiative generated 40 referrals in 1 hour), it has increased WYFRS' access to hard-to-reach, vulnerable groups, increased smoke alarm ownership, ensured existing ones are operational, and helped to reduce deliberately started secondary fires.

Community members demonstrate an increased respect for and understanding of West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service, our Partner agencies, and the services available to help improve their lives.

Keys to our success

- Having strong working relationships with Sure Start Children's Centres and Primary Schools throughout Wakefield District. They provide neutral ground to deliver the initiative and identify new, high risk families – such as those who've had a change in circumstances.
- Working in collaboration with other partners such as the Neighbourhood Police Team and Antisocial Behaviour Team.
- Developing and using resources linked to the National Curriculum area of 'how people help us'.
- Engaging families through storytelling with their young children.

Contact

Station Manager Tim Jones

e | tim.jones@westyorksfire.gov.uk

or Castleford, Hemsworth, Ossett, Pontefract, South Elmsall and Wakefield Stations.

This 'spotlight on' contributes to...



**DELIVERING A PROACTIVE
FIRE PREVENTION AND
PROTECTION PROGRAMME**



**EFFECTIVE SERVICE
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