

DRS 2009/10: National Gas Emergency Service Campaign - Wales & West Utilities takes a long term outlook

Promotion of the National Gas Emergency Service has for some time taken the form of a national television and radio advertising campaign. In 2005, following network sale, the campaign – which traditionally took place for a finite time between December and January - was then managed jointly between National Grid and the GDNs.

In 2009, all participants decided to promote the ‘Smell Gas’ message independently and Wales & West Utilities took the opportunity to look at a fresh and innovative way of promoting this important message, creating a long term PR campaign, devised and launched in September 2009.

Focusing on a long term and sustained campaign was an important change.

The campaign – which has deliberately not been branded with the company’s logo - has been built around a bloodhound, called Clive and his strong sense of smell. A series of cartoons, film clips, stickers and fridge magnets have been produced, aimed at all demographics throughout Wales and the South West of England.

In addition to a significant mail-out to local authorities, Members of Parliament, Assembly Members, Universities and Colleges and schools, the campaign has also been directed at older people through Age Concern and plans are in place to roll out manned display units which will be placed strategically at shopping malls throughout the network.

Targeted sponsorship opportunities have also been created which focus on the ‘Smell Gas’ message both to schoolchildren, students and older people.

Techniquest, the hands-on science centre based in Cardiff Bay, has benefited from WWU support for its “Smell That Goes Pop” project. An innovative exhibit has been developed by Techniquest, with help and support from Wales & West Utilities, to capture the imagination of youngsters in promoting gas safety.

Educational material for teachers and pupils has also been developed through consultation with WWU, including worksheets and information to further increase gas safety and CO poisoning awareness. Anita Shaw, Deputy CEO of Techniquest said: “We were delighted to work with Wales & West Utilities on the Smell That Goes Pop project. The new Pop Gun exhibit, linked to the gas safety shows, will provide a memorable hands-on and exciting experience for the audience to learn about the properties and uses of gas”.

Looking at the student population and the wider demographic, Wales & West Utilities has begun a partnership with the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama (RWCMD). The partnership, to take interactive music workshops to schools (mainstream and special needs), community groups and care homes for the elderly, will include the facility to publicise the ‘Smell Gas’ message.

In addition, student websites, welcome packs, halls of residence providers, estate agents and renting agencies were provided with 'Smell Gas' promotional material and information, together with CO poisoning key messages.

The Wales & West Utilities 'Smell Gas' campaign will continue to grow to spread the message throughout the network.

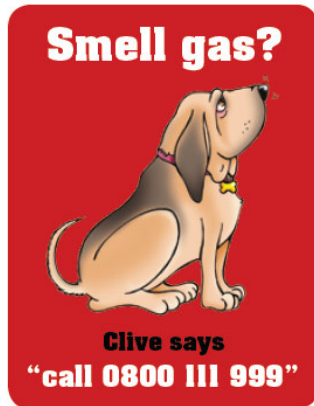
We attach a few photos showing a selection of the promotional tools and events used in Wales & West Utilities ongoing campaign for gas safety.



Local school children visiting Techniquest



Clive the bloodhound



Stickers and magnets used in WWU 'Smell Gas' campaign