

**A submission by the
Advertising Association**

**Review of
Government direct
communications
and the role of the COI**

The viewpoints and conclusions in this document are a response to the call for evidence issued by the Cabinet Office in December and briefed verbally by Matt Tee, Permanent Secretary for Government Communications and Mark Lund, Chief Executive, Central Office of Information (COI) on 16th December 2010.

They are a consensus formed by a representative sample of companies and organisations from the UK's advertising and communications sector, drawn together under the auspices of the Advertising Association (AA).

The AA provides a single voice for advertisers, media channels and agency practitioners in relation to the practice of publicity and communications. It provides a forum enabling companies and their trade associations collectively to monitor and review the effect of their activities on people, society and the economy, to shape the sector's self-regulatory systems and to advise policy makers. It exists to assure freedom of marketing and social communications and ensure that the practice of them is discharged responsibly.

The authority of the views expressed here is governed by the nature and variety of the companies consulted directly and by the standing of the associations that form the AA. Their scope is limited by the degree to which companies can and will collaborate, given their legal and competitive obligations. Accordingly, some of the questions posed in the call for evidence cannot be addressed here. They are a matter for individual negotiation between the companies providing services or channel access and the respective parts of government acting as buyers of those goods and services.

The submission focuses, therefore, on the more fundamental aspects of the review and crucially on the lines drawn currently between government as an agent of social change, the corporate and third sectors, and other agencies and actors that might emerge.

Specifically, it examines the US Ad Council question. It touches on the wisdom of radical change in policy towards government advertising as an inexpensive and generally efficient lever of policy implementation.

The depth of analysis is governed by the time given for this response to be prepared.

Advertising Association

Advertising Association members and contributors

A&N Media	ISBA. The Voice of British Advertisers
Abbott Mead Vickers. BBDO	ITV
Advertising Association	Kellogg's
Aegis Media	M&C Saatchi
Archant	M4C
Aviva	Market Research Society
Barclays Bank	Marketing Agencies Association
BMB	Mediaforce
BSKYB	Microsoft
Business4life	Newspaper Society
CBS Outdoor	Newspaper Publishers Association
Channel Four Television	Outdoor Media Centre
Cinema Advertising Association	Pearl & Dean
Clear Channel	POPAI
Credos	Procter & Gamble
DDB UK	Professional Publishers Association
Direct Marketing Association	RadioCentre
Direct Selling Association	Royal Mail
Discovery	Saatchi and Saatchi
Diversified Agency Services	Satellite and Cable Broadcasters Group
Drinkaware	Telegraph Media Group
Dods	Thinkbox
Five	TNS-BRMB
Institute of Practitioners in Advertising	Unilever
Institute of Promotional Marketing	Viacom
Internet Advertising Bureau	Vodafone

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1. Summary conclusions

- Whatever the political and economic landscape, properly harnessed advertising and communications offer government an efficient and highly cost-effective tool for policy implementation. UK society has a huge stake in ensuring that government is properly equipped to communicate and advertise in a cost-effective manner.
- The COI has produced some of the most effective, well-planned and impactful campaigns of recent years. Five of last year's highly competitive and respected IPA Advertising Effectiveness gold and silver award winners were government campaigns. COI provides a central repository of knowledge, understanding and best practice for government communications, the value of which should not be lost.
- That is not to say that government communications cannot be smarter, smaller, more results-oriented, more innovative and more partnership-driven.
- As shown in this document there is a wealth of evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of advertising in helping government to deliver its outcomes. In light of this it is important that cuts made necessary by the general condition of the economy are made carefully on the basis of the best available evidence.
- The mooted US Ad Council-style model, while valued in the US, is the product of another era. It is not fit for purpose in a modern, UK government context.
- The existing contribution of UK agencies, advertisers and media owners to socially useful marketing is significant, though hard to quantify. Making the contribution of others better understood may provide the industry with a powerful incentive to do more.
- There is potential for industry to do more. This will require a concerted effort and a significant degree of culture change on the part of both industry and the Government.
- The advertising industry is open to new ways of working, but we do not accept that it is appropriate for the industry – which has borne the brunt of recent reductions in COI spending – to fill the gap caused by proposed cuts.
- Any review of government communications must take proper account of, and integrate into any proposed solution, the UK's 'third sector'. UK charities will be crucial in the development of alternative delivery mechanisms, but currently face falling public donations and the withdrawal of government funding for campaigns.

2. How this document responds to the call for evidence

“On many occasions in the past...our approach was ‘how can Government achieve this?’ In future we will start from a presumption that others may be better placed to achieve our goals, often working in partnership with us.”

Cabinet Office call for evidence

While it is clear that the way in which Government communicates has changed, it is also clear that the need for high-quality, effective communications in support of policy aims has not gone away.

At our briefing on 16th December 2010, the industry heard loud and clear that the Government is open to new ideas and new directions. We also heard some of the thinking behind the review:

- while severe budget cuts have been necessary in the short term, this does not mean that Government does not recognise the value of effective communications.
- there will be no return to pre-election levels of expenditure.
- value for money is key.
- this review is about Government AND other stakeholders thinking anew about the delivery of communications. We are in this together.

2.1 The role of the Advertising Association

The Advertising Association provides a single voice for advertisers, media channels and agency practitioners in relation to the practice of publicity and communications. It provides a forum enabling companies and their trade associations collectively to monitor and review the effect of their activities on people, society and the economy, to shape the sector’s self-regulatory systems and to advise policy makers.

In responding to the call for evidence, we conducted a two-level consultation process:

- We asked our member associations to canvass their members with the questionnaire provided, and coordinated their responses back to the review team. This did not preclude organisations from responding individually.
- We formed a tri-partite steering group, here at the Advertising Association, to address the strategic, pan-industry issues raised (loosely, questions 3 & 4). This group comprised the heads of the industry’s associations, as well as leading figures from major UK agencies, advertisers and media owners.

3. The industry point of view

As part of its response to the review team's questionnaire, the Advertising Association hosted two industry meetings on 16th December 2010 and 6th January 2011. The focus of these meetings was to arrive at a point of view on the strategic questions raised, which impact across the industry, namely:

- In seeking to communicate directly with citizens, what type of relationship should government have with the advertising and marketing industry, media owners and brands?
- Could a 'US Ad Council' style model work in the UK? If so, how, if not, what are the reasons?

The industry view reached at these two meetings is summarised below:

3.1 The need for effective government-owned and driven communications has not – and will not – go away

Our view is that the Government has a financial incentive to communicate directly with citizens. The evidence also suggests a policy implementation incentive - however it is organised and delivered, government cannot operate effectively without significant investment in direct communications.

While close scrutiny of spend is clearly right, to pre-judge that it must be right to have fewer channels, spend less, use more (but potentially less effective) free and cheap media runs counter to evidence-based policy making.

3.2 The industry is open to change which fosters more 'Big Society' behaviour

While sceptical of the appropriateness and effectiveness of an 'Ad Council', the industry is open to new thinking which chimes with the Government's 'Big Society' agenda.

Linked to this, in responding to the review it has become clear that the role of the third sector needs to be considered more closely and in a more integrated way with industry.

The Advertising Association has reached out to major charity advertisers, including Cancer Research UK and Macmillan Cancer Support, as part of the review process. Involving the third sector in any new solutions will need to be formalised as we move forward.

3.3 There is huge value in the existing UK model

While it may not be organised under an 'Ad Council' brand, the UK corporate and third sectors nonetheless make a massive contribution to UK society through socially valuable communication.

Across agencies, media owners and major advertisers – including the third sector – there is a wealth of pro-bono work, social marketing, CSR activity, discounted or freely provided media space, as well as Public Health partnerships, such as Change4Life, and industry initiatives such as Drinkaware and GambleAware.

While the UK model can be viewed as fragmented, it can also be viewed as market-driven and highly efficient. Either way, it is clear that there is a significant (and perhaps under-acknowledged) foundation of good work and goodwill on which to build.

3.4 The US 'Ad Council' model would be neither appropriate nor effective in a modern, UK context

The Ad Council was created against the back-drop of war-time America and recognition among the advertising world that it must find a way to make a meaningful contribution to the war effort.

Today, its mission is "to identify a select number of significant public issues and stimulate action on those issues through communications programs that make a measurable difference in our society".

While the value of its work is considerable, the Ad Council model is no substitute for properly planned, resourced and measured government communications. We do not believe it would be able plan a fully integrated campaign involving optimal choice of media and timing.

3.5 Creating an environment in which partnerships flourish will require both industry and government to think differently

At our industry briefing, the review team talked about an end to the pure 'agency-client' nature of the relationship between government and industry. We would agree that there is significant potential for new ways of working.

However, better partnerships between industry and government will require new thinking on both sides. By learning from existing models of partnership and support – such as the Change4Life campaign – we can create the right conditions for better partnership and encourage new relationships in new sectors. This idea is explored in depth in Section 7.

4. Why direct government communications matter

The industry believes that government communications are a highly cost-effective policy lever and an indispensable tool for any administration that seeks to empower, educate or engage its citizens. Government communication connects the policies made in Whitehall with their success in the country at large – and though the model by which these are delivered may change, the importance of good communications does not.

4.1 Value, not cost, is the issue

The coalition's focus on cutting headline expenditure is understandable, yet the cost of government communications can only be meaningfully assessed if we also understand its value. There are scores of examples illustrating how the right campaigns can save government significant sums of money:

When, in 2008, the Department of Transport wanted to reduce road deaths, direct communications were at the forefront of its work. The THINK! brand prompted a re-appraisal of poor road safety behaviour by getting people to understand the consequences of their actions. As a result, casualty reduction targets were achieved two years ahead of schedule. THINK!'s contribution was to prevent more than 3,000 deaths and serious injuries during this period, representing a saving to society of more than £800m and generating payback of £9.36 for every £1 spent on the campaign.

Research found that the teacher recruitment problems faced by the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) were not a result of people's attitude towards becoming teachers, but a behavioural problem in that people weren't taking the steps required to become a teacher. Reframing the communication task as a behavioural problem led to a radically different media strategy, moving from 'selling' teaching as a profession to 'helping' people become teachers. A series of behavioural triggers to 'nudge' people through this journey was devised, turning a big decision into a series of small steps. The resulting campaign achieved a minimum payback of £101 for every £1 spent, increasing teacher enquiries and applications to record-breaking levels on a smaller spend. The campaign won a Gold Award at the 2010 IPA Effectiveness Awards.

Theft costs British society an estimated £9.5bn per year. Many of these thefts are opportunistic crimes that can easily be avoided if people take simple preventative measures. The challenge was to find a single campaign idea that could motivate the core target audience most at risk of crime by demonstrating the preventative measures they could take. Using a single, humorous campaign idea, executed through TV, radio and print, the strategy was to dramatise how thieves saw their victims as stupidly careless. The campaign, for the Home Office, reduced the cost of crime to the taxpayer by £189m and generated payback of £14 for every £1 spent.

The benefit to society and the savings to the Exchequer of these campaigns, and countless others, dwarf the initial outlay incurred. Whether it is by reducing smoking rates, heart disease or traffic accidents (and their associated burden on public services), boosting the recruitment of teachers or military personnel, or promoting timely compliance with tax laws, direct government communications represent a highly cost-effective way to influence the behaviour of millions of people.

4.2 Making policies succeed: education, empowerment and protection

Successful government policy often depends on citizens being properly informed about issues and entitlements that affect them. Where Government identifies the need to encourage behaviour change, direct communications are a vital tool.

Although some of these communications can be added to and built on by partnerships with third-party commercial entities, it is vital that initial announcements emanate from government itself. This is about trust and responsibility.

There will also be instances (for example, in response to short-term health threats) where government needs to be prepared to act quickly and unilaterally. Government may also be required to act alone where the notion of partnership is too politically or commercially sensitive to be feasible.

How campaigns are delivered – whether through the COI model, via an Ad Council, or in a brand new model – is for discussion elsewhere in this paper. The communications industries are as sincere in their desire to work in partnership with the Government to answer that question as they are in their belief that communications remain as vital as ever in economically straitened times. While the way we deliver campaigns may be open to change, we hope that the Government's appreciation of their importance is not.

4.3 'Nudging' may be part of an answer, but it is not a universal solution

Advertising and marketing is an industry built on understanding what it means to be human. The industry has been quick to support and embrace areas such as consumer psychology and behavioural economics in order to create an even better understanding of how advertising works, but this is very different from the notion that 'nudging' can replace direct communications.

Summary – in assessing the role of direct communications, the Government should consider:

- The cost-effectiveness and impact of direct communications.
- Whether the desired outcome is so urgent that 'outsourcing' to a 'Big Society' solution would create unnecessary delays.
- Its duty to communicate information and guidance to society.
- Whether the return on marketing investment is likely to be positive (either on the basis of past campaign evaluation or on test markets).
- Whether campaigns that demand strong negative messaging can realistically be made appealing to potential third-party partners.

5. The Ad Council model

“Advertising agencies love problems to solve more than anything else, and government activity is about really chunky problems. The industry is eager to support but we want to be engaged as professionals, here to do a job with clear goals rather than as eager amateurs ready to lend a hand in our spare time.”

Edited extract: IPA review submission

“What Government needs to do is...to create something tangible and attractive that private and third-sector parties will want to get involved in. The outcome for the Government could still be an element of gifted inventory, but more than that you would see a multitude of partners creating and driving forward positive schemes to mobilise citizens into behaviour change. A US style Ad Council does not encourage that level of involvement, and at worst it is a lazy get-out for multinationals to tick a CSR box.”

Edited extract: M4C review submission

In some regards the Ad Council is an attractive model for the industry, providing as it does, a positive focal point for good works. However, across the industry tri-partite there was a unanimous view that the model does not lend itself to the objectives of the review team. The key points to emerge included:

- The Ad Council model is the product of another era (wartime America) and a culture that is very different to the UK, dominated as it is by powerful and wealthy philanthropic foundations.
- The Ad Council is not transferable to a UK context – its output covers only a fraction of the work that UK governments are expected and required to deliver.
- The Ad Council is unable to plan effectively. While undoubtedly valuable, campaigns are largely ad-hoc and are not integrated with policy.
- At the heart of the Ad Council model is a substantial (\$2bn) contribution of free media space. Putting to one side the commercial implications of such a large donation, it would raise serious issues of media regulation and distortion of the market in the UK.
- The Ad Council model is not designed to achieve the best communication outcomes. It lacks clear commercial standards and expectations, i.e. where there is no *payment* there is little incentive to drive *results*.
- The model is geared to a bygone world in which governments informed citizens through the few channels of traditional media available. The sophisticated behaviour-change programmes executed today through policy interventions and communication across a range of interactive media channels require a team-based, coordinated approach with a much wider range of expertise.
- The US advertising industry is larger than the UK and is simply better able to support the donation of resource to government.
- The adoption of an Ad Council carries the risk of unintended consequences for current activity being undertaken. It also carries considerable risk of the third sector being undercut as industry turns away from charity partnerships and focuses on a new model.

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- The business environment has changed. Businesses and their brands are increasingly cause-driven in a way that they simply were not when the Ad Council was set up. For many businesses today, making money and doing good are not mutually exclusive. An Ad Council, with its culture of donation, risks missing the opportunity for partner brands directly to achieve positive outcomes for government.

6. The industry's contribution today

Across agencies, media owners, the third sector and major advertisers, a wealth of socially valuable communications are already being delivered. The model is fragmented and represents a mix of government-led partnerships, industry-led initiatives, brand-led initiatives, agency pro-bono contributions, third sector-led partnerships and a host of other approaches.

While it has been impossible to quantify this contribution within the review team's timescales, the following case studies provide a valuable overview of the scale, structure and nature of existing industry work.

6.1 Media Trust

The Media Trust is a registered charity. It provides other charities and voluntary organisations with the skills they need to raise awareness of their causes and to improve their communications. The Trust also brings together media professionals as volunteers to help provide support, mentoring and expertise to charities. According to the Media Trust's annual report for the period 2008/09, the Trust recruited more than 600 media professionals to be volunteer mentors, received £2.2m of pro-bono support via the Volunteering for All Campaign and received £2.7m from the National Lottery to help young people make films.

The Volunteering Filmmaking Scheme is an example of another Media Trust initiative that brings together filmmakers and charities. It enables professional filmmakers to make a film for a charity for £1,000, but worth £10,000, which is then broadcast on the Community Channel.

Corporate members

Media Trust corporate members consist of the BBC, Channel 4, Daily Mail and General Trust, Disney Channel UK, Guardian Media Group, IPC Media, ITV plc, Living TV Group, MTV Networks UK & Ireland, News International, OMD, Sky, Virgin Media TV and Warner Bros.

Pro-bono/in-kind supporters

The Media Trust lists nearly 50 organisations that offered pro-bono or in-kind support in 2008/9, including Channel 4, Five, Weber Shandwick and the BBC.

The Community Channel

The Community Channel is owned by the Media Trust and funded by the Government.

6.2 The Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC)

The Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) was formed in 1963 and is an umbrella organisation for 13 humanitarian aid agencies and charities. The DEC membership consists of ActionAid, Age UK, British Red Cross, CAFOD, Care International UK, Christian Aid, Concern Worldwide, Islamic Relief, Merlin, Oxfam, Save the Children, Tearfund and World Vision.

The DEC's remit is to unite agency efforts in times of disaster, such as flood, earthquake, famine, war or complex humanitarian crisis. Recent appeals include the *Pakistan Flood Appeal 2010* and *Haiti Earthquake Appeal*.

At the time of an appeal, the DEC coordinates a strategic response with committee members and Rapid-Response Network partners, organising a national fundraising appeal to finance humanitarian relief.

Rapid-Response Network

The DEC is supported by a network of television and radio broadcasters, the banks, the Post Office, BT, regional and national press and a range of organisations in the corporate sector, known as the Rapid-Response Network. These organisations help the DEC at the time of an appeal to publicise the situation and raise funds.

The BBC and the Independent Television Network (ITN) have supported the DEC for more than 40 years. Both provide free facilities for the production of an appeal script together with suitable footage, and a prime-time slot for "on-air" presentation by a celebrity "name". The BBC and ITN make these appeals available to Channel 4, Five, BSkyB and MTV, who broadcast the appeal. Al Jazeera and S4C have also participated in recent times.

6.3 BBC Children in Need

BBC Children in Need is the BBC's UK corporate charity. The annual telethon in November is one of the highlights of the BBC calendar and activity takes place all across the UK to help raise money.

In 2009, the BBC Children in Need Appeal raised more than £39m, which is used to support projects focused on children in the UK. Children in Need provides support in the form of grants to organisations working with children who may have mental, physical or sensory disabilities; behavioural or psychological disorders; are living in poverty or situations of deprivation; or suffering through distress, abuse or neglect.

6.4 ITV initiatives

Both on and off-screen, ITV's network and regional programming, and its employees, focus on initiatives that encourage people to improve their lives, support community projects or promote the integration of minority groups. This is done at ITV's editorial discretion to meet the interests and needs of its viewers.

On-screen

In 2010, ITV continued to be an active partner in the cross-industry and Government campaign to improve the nation's health and fitness. As a founding member of business4Life, ITV supports the Change4Life campaign both on screen and online. Specific initiatives included the ITV Feelgood Factor Award as part of the Daily Mirror Pride of Britain Awards and ITV's Walk4life campaign, which encouraged viewers across the country to get active. (See section 6.6 for more information on business4Life and Change4Life).

The People's Millions 2010

ITV and the Big Lottery Fund gave away more than £3.75m in the People's Millions competition this year. This brings the overall total to £25m over the past six years. Around 400 community projects across the UK have benefited from this competition. In 2010, more than half a million votes were cast – up 80,000 on last year.

Jubilee People's Millions

Launched in November 2010 to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012. The format is the same as the People's Millions but to mark 60 years on the throne, ITV and BIG are giving away 60 awards of £60,000. A public vote will take place in June 2011 and all winning projects must complete their work by the start of Jubilee Year.

ITV Fixers 2010

Throughout 2010, ITV regional news programmes broadcast films to showcase ITV Fixers. This is a project run by the Public Service Broadcasting Trust and funded by the Nationwide Foundation and V (the youth volunteering charity). Young people are invited to identify things in their community that need "fixing", they then recruit young volunteers and (with the support of mentors from the Trust) set about fixing them – making a film of their project in the process. Subjects so far have included a group setting up a new skateboard park, an innovative recycling scheme, recording an anti-racism rap, and taking a group of disabled actors on tour to change perceptions of disability.

Race Online 2012

ITV is an official partner of Race Online 2012. Using the power of flagship shows such as This Morning, regional news services and ITV.com, ITV aims to encourage people to learn how to use the internet. Dedicated campaign weeks such as Get Online Week and Pass It On have been featured, aiming to inspire people by showcasing others who have crossed the digital divide.

Value

In 2010, more than 31 hours of air-time were devoted to these initiatives, with an air-time value in excess of £5m.

6.5 Sky's Bigger Picture

Sky has committed to **help to protect the environment, change lives through sport and open up the arts to more people.**

Sky Ride was created in 2008 through Sky & British Cycling's partnership. The grassroots programme forms part of a campaign to transform cycling across the UK through 'Inspiration to Participation' encouraging a healthier, fitter and happier society. Sky aims to get a million more people cycling regularly by 2013 and inspire people through the Great Britain team successes and the formation of Team Sky who aim to be the first British Team to win the Tour de France by 2013.

Since the launch of 'Sky Ride' in June 2009 over 325,000 people have taken part in a Sky Ride event. Working in partnership with British Cycling and city councils the main city events involve closing down city centre roads, enabling cyclists to explore their city centre on two wheels and enjoy a day of traffic free cycling with friends and family. In 2009 they delivered five Sky Ride city events and in 2010 Sky built on the success and expanded the programme by working in ten cities across the UK and delivering twelve events including Manchester, Birmingham, Glasgow, Leicester, Southampton, Bath, Bradford, Blackpool, Middlesbrough culminating in 85,000 people cycling through the streets of London.

In each Sky Ride city they also deliver a programme of Sky Ride Locals – free, weekly led cycle rides by British Cycling trained ride leaders. A total of 730 community rides have been delivered to date and attracted over 13,000 participants.

Sky Sports Living for Sport is a free initiative that teachers can use to motivate and inspire secondary school students; helping to change behaviours, improve life skills and increase attainment through participation in sport. Sky has been working in partnership with the Youth Sports Trust to develop Sky Sports Living for Sport for the last 7 years and have worked with over 1000 schools to help over 27,000 young people. The initiative encourages pupils to take on a series of different sports activities and put their new skills and confidence into practice by managing their own sporting event. Sky, in return, provides online planning tools, free sports kit and a visit from a professional athlete mentors to provide further inspiration.

Other examples of Sky's investment in the community and to charitable causes include Sky's three year partnership to encourage environmental behaviour change with Global Action Plan (www.globalactionplan.org.uk) through which much of their community investment is channelled both through volunteering and community engagement.

Arts

The Bigger Picture team works closely with Sky Arts to invest in the cultural life of the nation by making the arts more accessible, through supporting the work of leading arts organizations throughout UK and Ireland, on the ground as well as on-air and online. This includes expanding Sky Arts' Book Show series – the first television programme dedicated entirely to books – by partnering with 5 leading book festivals across the UK and Ireland including the Hay Festival and taking them to millions of viewers on the channel as well as engaging with thousands of festival goers at each event by bringing them unique performances and workshops.

Sky Arts also run 18 smaller scale partnerships a year with arts organisations from across the UK. Each partnership sees Sky Arts produce a specially filmed Sky Arts *At...* documentary, giving viewers a unique view of the artistic process from behind the scenes.

6.6 business4Life and Change4Life

The Advertising Association's business4life coalition is a new model for government partnership with the private sector, marshalling brands to deliver programmes aimed at cutting obesity levels in the UK. By using the power of brands, and the expertise of the food and drink, retail, media, advertising and fitness sectors, we significantly amplify and extend the Change4Life message, at no cost to the taxpayer.

In the past year, the Fitness Industry Association (FIA) delivered free dance classes across England as part of the Let's Dance/Change4Life campaign. Fellow Change4Life partner ITV promoted coverage of the campaign via its regional network.

Mars and Unilever have supported the Change4Life workplace health programme, aimed at helping employees to become fitter and healthier.

ITV has produced and aired three prime-time Saturday night shows called The Feelgood Factor to help families live more healthily. ITV was also the driver of and a key partner in Walk4Life – part of the Change4Life movement that has been set up to encourage families and adults to eat well, move more and live longer.

Sky launched its campaign Skyride in June 2009 to get one million more people cycling regularly by 2013. Throughout the summers of 2009 and 2010 they held Skyride City Events to get people back on their bikes and created hundreds of weekly Skyride Local guided rides to keep people cycling (please see 6.5).

6.7 Drinkaware - a successful partnership case study

Drinkaware is an independent charity, fully funded by the drinks industry that operates across the UK. Established in 2007 through agreement between government, industry and medical/public health community, Drinkaware provides consumers with information to make informed decisions about the effects of alcohol on their lives and lifestyles focussing on three goals: increase awareness of the proper use of alcohol, change attitudes and ultimately change behaviour. This is done primarily through disseminating best-evidence information and advice, using proven social marketing principles in our campaigns, and through our work on the ground through grants to other organisations. We act on the side of consumers in a totally transparent manner and are accountable to all of our stakeholders.

Drinkaware has a unique governance model made up of 13 Trustees—five from the public health community, five from industry, and three independents (including the chair). While ensuring that no one stakeholder group holds a majority, this model provides a 'space' for all stakeholders to discuss and develop the direction of the charity and its work to inform and educate consumers. Our Memorandum of Understanding, signed in 2009 between Government and industry, outlines our goals and objectives and ensures our funding of £5million per annum.

Drinkaware works with Government, the public health community, the third sector and industry in delivering behavioural change campaigns. Through a series of highly successful partnerships we have been able to extend the reach and amplify our work across the UK. One example is the 'Why let good times go bad?' five-year, £20million annual campaign aimed at 18-24 young adult binge drinkers. The campaign was started at the behest of Government with the Home Office and industry agreeing a set of claimed behaviour key performance indicators in 2009. Having completed its second successful year, Drinkaware was able to get its message out through more than 48 industry partners 14,031 on-trade outlets, 7,700 off-trade outlets and more than 6.7 million on pack ads. This was equivalent to more than £20million of in-kind advertising support. The campaign resulted in 74% of the target audience say that they were likely to adopt tips to change their drinking behaviour.

We have also partnered with and funded other charities in support of government initiatives. For three years we have supported and worked with the Scottish Government's Alcohol Awareness Week initiative distributing more than 350,000 unit measures across to educate adults about units and unit equivalents. We have also given a grant to Scottish Sports Futures (SSF) who had developed a programme aimed at primary and secondary school children. The grant has enabled SSF's activity to be expanded to new schools and now reaches more than 14,000 with information and education about the proper use of alcohol using an education workplan approved by Alcohol Focus Scotland. The grant was also used to develop new tools (a CD and game) to extend and embed the healthy lifestyle messages with more students while in school.

Drinkaware has been able to build partnerships due in part to its unique governance model that brings together both industry and the public health community. We recognise that to reach consumers, we need to use best-evidenced, factual information that consumers can readily identify and use, as well as behavioural change and social marketing principles that employ channels they know, including websites, outlets, and products.

Drinkaware provides best evidenced medically approved information on its website. Using a consumer friendly tone and manner, the website attracts around 200,000 unique visits per month. In 2010 this results in more than 2.1 million visits with consumers spending in total more than 103,000 hours on site.

We are also able to fund grass roots activities, provide needed resources and employ an independent medical panel.

Drinkaware, as an independent charity, has successfully partnered with all stakeholders on a strategic basis recognising that some stakeholders are better at delivering certain types of consumer advice than others at different times. We recognise the core strengths of our stakeholders and work with them to harness all resources to positively change consumers' relationship with alcohol through education and information.

6.8 TV and radio Fillers

TV and radio Fillers are health, welfare and safety messages for the general public. They are used by all major TV channels and are currently distributed to over 120 Terrestrial and Digital stations, over 300 national, local and digital commercial radio stations and the emerging Outdoor Media Sector which includes screens in shopping malls, GP surgeries and local authority outlets. Promoting important issues that are relevant to today's audience, TV and radio Fillers offer reliable scheduling solutions and an alternative to programme trails.

In 2009/10:

- Last year over 300 national, local and digital commercial radio stations played Fillers, and last year 102 TV stations played Fillers.
- This Airtime was worth over £36 million pounds.
- Cleared for all media, they offer a unique and cost effective route to a large audience through TV, Radio, OOH and other digital channels.

6.9 Advertiser-funded CSR

ISBA is the body representing advertisers in the UK. Its members deliver a staggering array of corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes every year. While the examples below do not begin to quantify the multi-billion pound CSR contribution made by advertisers, they are indicative of the work and resources committed to social projects by some of the UK's major businesses.

Tackling digital exclusion with BT

With nine million people never having been online and with more services being online focused, BT is helping to bring internet technologies to disadvantaged communities. It is investing in digital inclusion strategies including: BT Community Connections, which helps communities and charities get online; BT and Age UK (Age Concern/Help the Aged) working together to tackle exclusion among older people; BT Internet Rangers, which encourages and supports the work done by young people to bridge the young/old digital divide; and NetMums, which is a BT-supported information network for parents.

Alcohol industry

The Portman Group started out with sensible drinking messages, from which the Drinkaware Trust was formed and funded. More recently, the Campaign for Smarter Drinking was launched, with the strapline "Why Let Good Times Go Bad?" and will run for at least five years. It is the biggest-ever media spend on responsible drinking messages. More than 45 companies from the drinks industry have come together to work with government and Drinkaware to tackle binge drinking among 18-24 year-olds, committing more than £100m in value.

Best Bar None – for a safer night-time economy – This scheme aims to reduce alcohol-related crime and disorder in town centres by building positive relationships between the licensed trade, police and local authorities. It provides local incentives for operators of on-trade licensed premises to improve their standards to the level of a commonly agreed national framework. It is supported by individual drinks companies; Diageo, for example, sponsors more than 30 schemes across the UK.

ASDA – Working to stop under-age sales of alcohol and promote sensible drinking countrywide – Initiatives include Challenge 25 in all stores and a £1m social responsibility fund to provide alternative alcohol-free activities for young people.

Health and hygiene

Cosmetics industry: The Cosmetic Toiletry & Perfumery Association (CTPA) worked with expert public-sector organisations (British Association of Dermatology, British Skin Foundation) to reinforce the ‘sun safe’ message and ‘temporary tattoos’. Details were published on the CTPA website.

Unilever: Global Handwashing Day – Lifebuoy worked with NGOs, governments and other companies to co-found the first-ever Global Handwashing Day, launched on 15th October 2008 in 75 countries around the world.

Signal/Pepsodent/Close Up’s improving oral health initiative is delivered through school-based oral hygiene programmes, reaching more than four million children.

6.10 Commercial radio's public service activity

All local commercial radio stations broadcast local news, weather and travel bulletins, as well as promoting and involving themselves in community and charitable activities. This activity totals around six hours of public service content per week per station. We are able to estimate that this airtime has a value equivalent to £1.8m per week across the whole commercial radio industry – or £93.6m in total per annum. In addition, commercial radio adds significant value to those COI campaigns that it runs on air – including privileged position in break, time length incentives, free on-line messaging, community messaging and airtime discounts. We are able to calculate that, for every £1 that the COI has invested in the radio industry, Government has benefited from nearly £1 in added value. Therefore, in return for the £151.8m spent on radio advertising by Government over the past five years, the industry has provided Government with £133.3m in added value.

Recent social action activity on commercial radio has included:

Real Radio Northwest – Websafe – The Websafe campaign sought to encourage parents to get more involved and take an interest in what their children are doing on the internet, and involved carrying out the biggest internet safety survey of 2009, involving 3,680 schoolchildren in all. The campaign featured hard-hitting case studies of cyber-bullying victims and detailed investigations into social networking sites.

BRMB – Walkathon – In the summer of 2010 BRMB handed over a cheque for £330,000 from its massive fundraising event to help wounded soldiers. The Walkathon raised money for a special unit in Birmingham's Queen Elizabeth Hospital which will help to enable soldiers and their families to adjust to the traumatic impact of injuries sustained in battle.

Metro Radio – Surviving Suicide – Metro Radio has been involved in a number of highly successful campaigns to encourage men in the North East to talk about their problems instead of using suicide as a way out. Working in partnership with the Samaritans, Metro Radio's programmes have featured those affected by suicide while offering advice to listeners who feel they, or someone they know, may be at risk of harming themselves.

Choice FM – I have a choice – Choice FM offered 800 16-25 year olds the opportunity to gain valuable skills in the creative sector by setting up workshops to deliver training in music production, mixing and film making. The six who showed the most potential were then offered a week long work experience placement with Global Radio. The amount of airtime donated specifically by Choice FM to this campaign represents around £150,000.

7. Looking forward: industry, government and partnership

As we have seen, agencies, clients and media owners already support charities and other socially important causes for a whole variety of reasons – from pure altruism through to more commercially inspired motives.

We have also seen that for new ways of working to be successful, there is a need to think and act differently on all sides.

We do not pretend to have all, or indeed any, of the perfect solutions. However this is a creative, innovative industry, full of thinkers. In responding to the questions set out by the review team, a number of concepts, thoughts and approaches have emerged.

These are early ideas and it should be stressed that there is not necessarily an industry consensus that they are the 'right' strategic response. However, there is a commitment from the industry to explore their suitability and feasibility together with other players and the review team.

7.1 Creating industry awareness

There has been a strong feeling throughout the process that the current contribution of UK advertisers, agencies and media owners, while highly valuable, is poorly articulated and quantified.

The case could be made that benchmarking and making public the quality and volume of activity already underway will 'nudge' the industry towards more and better programmes.

7.2 Understanding what good partnership looks like

As we have seen, there are a number of models already in existence delivering significant value. We also know that each of these models has not been created without some degree of difficulty and a huge amount of learning.

There must, therefore, be huge value in unlocking and sharing this learning and the industry is ready and willing to work with the Government to improve the efficiency and accountability of government campaigns. To do this we must jointly consider: what conditions need to exist for partnership to thrive; what are the compromises that need to be made; what has worked well previously; and what hasn't?

7.3 Developing industry good practice

Throughout our discussion, there has been support for the idea of an initiative that sets out the steps that could be taken to maintain and improve industry's contribution.

The standard could be endorsed by the Government and promoted through trade associations. Businesses that delivered more than average would be able to promote that fact to staff, clients and new business prospects as a positive aspect of their corporate brand. The importance of this type of activity is reinforced by the number of Requests for Proposals (RFPs) that ask about CSR activities as part of new business qualification processes.

Those businesses that did less than average would be encouraged by competition to step up their activities, not least by staff pressure (especially among younger staff).

“The industry is hyper-competitive and highly mobile, we are always looking over our shoulders at peers and rivals. If we see other businesses doing good work on interesting causes, we are going to want to do the same and beat them!”

Stephen Woodford, Chairman and Chief Executive, DDB UK

7.4 Exploiting existing government media

It is important to define 'government media' in this context. The industry's (and indeed society's) view of government-created, tax-payer funded, editorial/news channels has been made very clear and we have no desire to see the development of local authority or indeed national government 'news' publishing.

However, the industry could develop its relationship with the Government in realising the full potential of appropriate, existing 'owned' channels. For example, there are government buildings and sites which could be approached in much the same way that Transport for London is maximising its revenues from outdoor advertising on the London Underground. A direct mail specialist could advise on how to make much more use of all the postal and e-mail communications that are sent to citizens annually.

7.5 The role of competition in encouraging brands into partnership

Today's brands are keen to take on some of the heavy lifting in society; not to make their annual reports look good but because it is the right thing to do and, crucially, because it strengthens consumer relationships with those brands.

Creating new and better partnerships will require greater emphasis on involving the commercial sector, recognising the commercial imperatives driving brand owners and identifying where the interests of brands and government align.

Appropriate commercial partners could be sought to 'sponsor' and support the communication of issues relevant to their market sector, where there is a 'win-win-win' opportunity for the company, the Government and the citizenry.

Government could formalise the existing Cabinet Office guidelines into a standard tendering process for government properties, which commercial enterprises could compete for on an open and transparent basis.

Partnership opportunities might include, for example, financial services companies and tax returns; car manufacturers and road safety; pharmaceutical companies and health issues; healthcare companies and smoking cessation; publishing companies and educational issues; food companies and diet issues; paint manufacturers and graffiti clearance.

7.6 A role for the COI in brokering partnerships?

In fostering more Drinkaware-type initiatives there could be a role for the COI in the identification of issues, pressure points or opportunities.

Rather than having the Government as its only masters, the COI could also help to broker, 'match make' and facilitate cross-industry initiatives. The COI has the skills and credibility to take on such a role. If industry and the Government are to work more closely in partnership, then this would be most usefully organised through a single body and not by individual departments approaching industry in a piecemeal manner.

7.7 The potential for return on investment in government-created assets

There is an argument for government to consider longer-term communications investments to create assets with potential value and appeal to the commercial or third sector.

In the case of Change4Life, for example, commercial interest was only leveraged on the basis that the brand had already been created and launched by government.