



Sunderland Academies / Academy 360

Press Ahead delivered a wide-ranging and inclusive consultation and PR exercise for the key stakeholders (Cambridge Education, Gentoo, Northumbrian Water, Leighton Group and Sunderland City Council) in the project to deliver three new academies in Sunderland. Despite initial opposition, the campaign gained public support to ensure the green light was given by the government for this multi-million pound investment in the area. Following successful delivery of that stage of the project, Press Ahead has now been retained to deliver PR support for Academy 360.

Following the consultation phase, Academy 360 was the first of three groundbreaking academies to open in Sunderland now with state of the art facilities. It is an all through academy, catering for over 1000 students aged from 4-16. The academy's lead sponsor is Sunderland-based people and property business, Gentoo, and Sunderland City Council is a co-sponsor.

Objectives

To build public support for and engagement with the Academy 360 project, and ultimately Gentoo.

Approach

The approach has been to target the Pennywell community (more specifically parents of Academy 360 students), the wider Sunderland community and stakeholders. As well as helping to facilitate stakeholder events, Press Ahead has targeted local media including the Sunderland Echo and Sun FM as well as wider regional media including broadcast and stakeholder publications.

Results

A key part of the Academy 360 brief has been to engage with the Pennywell community, communicating positive messages about the academy's vision and building support for it. The coverage achieved over the past year has been very positive, and while the academy faced some challenges in its first months of operation, Press Ahead has provided issues management has helped deliver some positive media coverage.

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