

StreetKind campaign is cleaning up Sheffield's streets with kindness

3 years ago



Veolia and Sheffield City Council are taking a stand to tackle unacceptable verbal and physical abuse that frontline colleagues face on a daily basis as they carry out their essential duties.

In partnership, Veolia and Sheffield City Council provide the city with recycling and waste collection services. While executing these essential duties, frontline staff reported over 40 cases of abuse from the general public in 2022. Although most people treat frontline staff respectfully and kindly, a surge in physical and verbal abuse has prompted the council and Veolia to launch this campaign.

The campaign's primary focus is to support frontline teams by creating a safer working environment. It includes a comprehensive training program to help staff defuse volatile situations, handle incidents effectively, and understand when to involve the police.

As part of the campaign, a series of videos using actual 360° CCTV footage from collection vehicles have been created to shed light on the abuse experienced by frontline staff. In one scenario, a van can be seen mounting the pavement to drive around the vehicle while workers are emptying bins - putting them and the public in danger. In another instance, a public member can be seen physically attacking a worker for not accepting extra waste.

Sheffield residents can actively support the campaign online by using the hashtag #StreetKind and showing their appreciation to frontline teams in person with a smile and a wave as they do their duties. These dedicated staff work tirelessly in all weather conditions to ensure efficient waste collection, contributing to a cleaner city, even though their essential work often goes unnoticed.

The StreetKind campaign will also improve road safety and promote safe behaviours around collection

vehicles. Many incidents result from impatient drivers who must allow workers to carry out their duties safely.

By coming together with Sheffield residents through the StreetKind campaign, the aim is to foster a caring and respectful community.

Richard Hulland, Veolia's Chief Risk & Assurance Officer, Northern Europe said:

"I talk to our people regularly; they are passionate about their work and teams. No one should be abused simply for doing their job, and we're determined to combat this unacceptable trend. That's why I was delighted to see our StreetKind campaign win at this year's Awards for Excellence. As well as appealing to the public to show their appreciation for our teams, our campaign focuses on training and supporting our employees to respond to incidents. We stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our teams. We will take the most serious action for the most serious attacks, including criminal prosecutions, to build a safer workplace environment for our colleagues." "Our workers do an excellent job every day, and Streetkind encourages us to show even more appreciation for their efforts. We hope this campaign will reduce the abuse workers can sometimes receive while delivering critical services for our city, and I'm proud to support it." CLLR JOE OTTEN, Chair of the Waste and Street Scene Committee at Sheffield City Council